

PLAN ASCENSION

OCTOBER
2009

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

The Blueprint for Our Future!

The Comprehensive Plan is still underway and there are plenty of opportunities that exist to get involved and help shape the future of our community! The next round of public meetings will be held on October 20 and 21, 2009!

It is projected that Ascension Parish's population will double by the Year 2035. How do you think we should accommodate the projected growth coming to the area?

At the first round of public meetings in August, participants considered how the parish could adequately accommodate new growth while retaining a desirable quality of life. Participants played the "Chip Game" and decided where to locate the future growth by placing chips of varying land use types and density throughout the parish. During the meetings, participants also completed a key pad opinion poll soliciting their feedback on a variety of community issues. The input from the key pad polling, chip games and stakeholder interviews have been merged into four alternative growth scenarios (alternatives) that reflect a range of choices about how Ascension Parish could grow over the next couple of decades. A scenario can be described as an 'alternative future' and is created to compare and contrast different patterns of growth.

On the following pages are characteristics and diagrams of each concept, along with brief descriptions. As you evaluate the scenarios, you may like some aspects of one, and other aspects of another. The end result may be a mixture of elements from different scenarios. We are interested not only in which scenario (general type of growth) you like overall, but also which elements of each scenario that you find most appealing for Ascension Parish's future.



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CALENDAR

Public Meeting #2:

October 20, 2009

Gonzales, LA

6:00 pm – 8:00 pm

DPW Auditorium Room
42077 Churchpoint Road

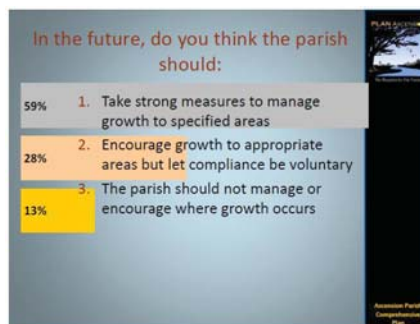
or

October 21, 2009

Donaldsonville, LA

6:00 pm – 8:00 pm

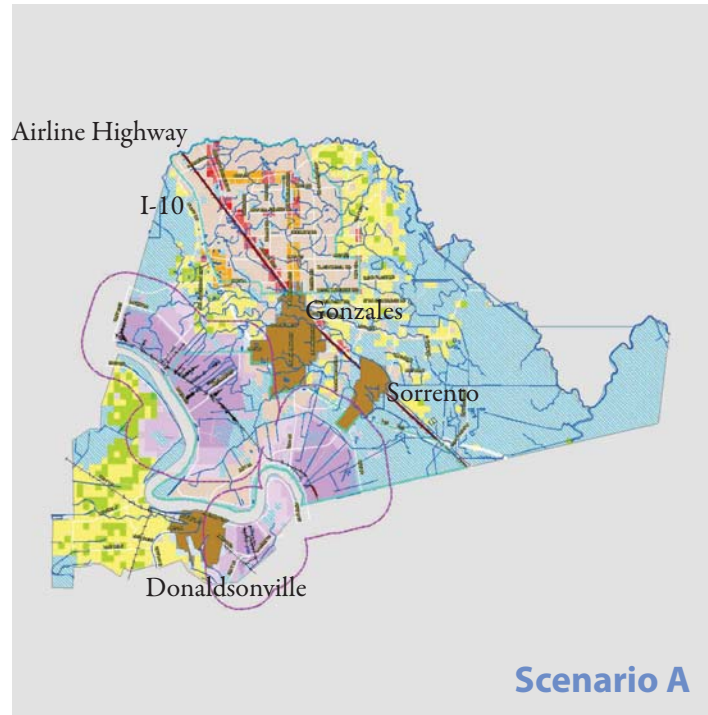
Council Meeting Room
609 Railroad Avenue



FOUR SCENARIOS FOR HOW WE COULD GROW

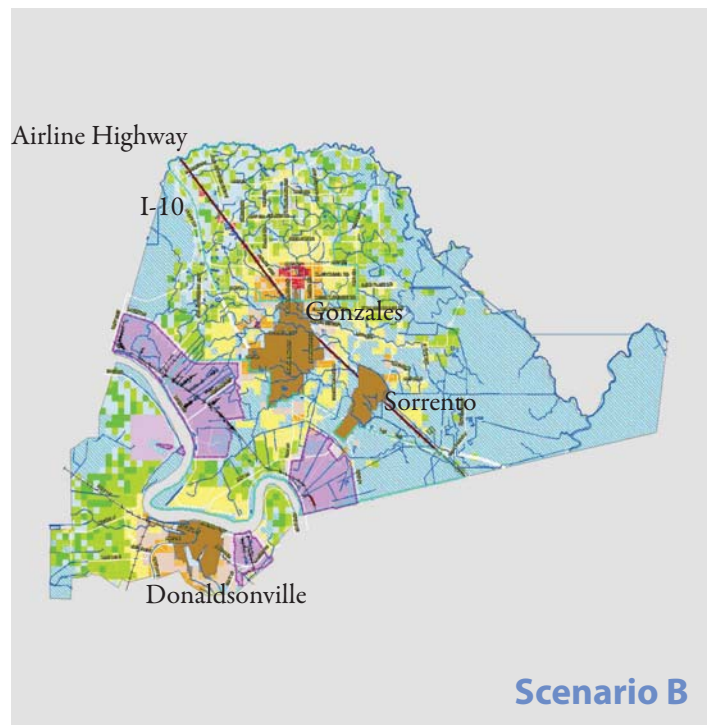
Scenario A

- New residential growth is predominantly a low density pattern (estate and suburban single-family lots) throughout the parish. Some multi-unit housing occurs along corridors.
- Commercial development (retail and business) continues to happen in strip pattern along major roads, at major intersections, and highway corridors.
- A 1 ½ -mile buffer would be established around existing industrial properties. Heavy industry, light industry, agriculture, and rural land uses would be allowed within the buffer.
- An external loop road system is established to accommodate increased commuting.
- There is no formal attempt made by the parish to preserve agriculture.
- Development is allowed in the floodplain at 1 dwelling/acre with raised structures (piers) or on-site balance of cut and fill.



Scenario B

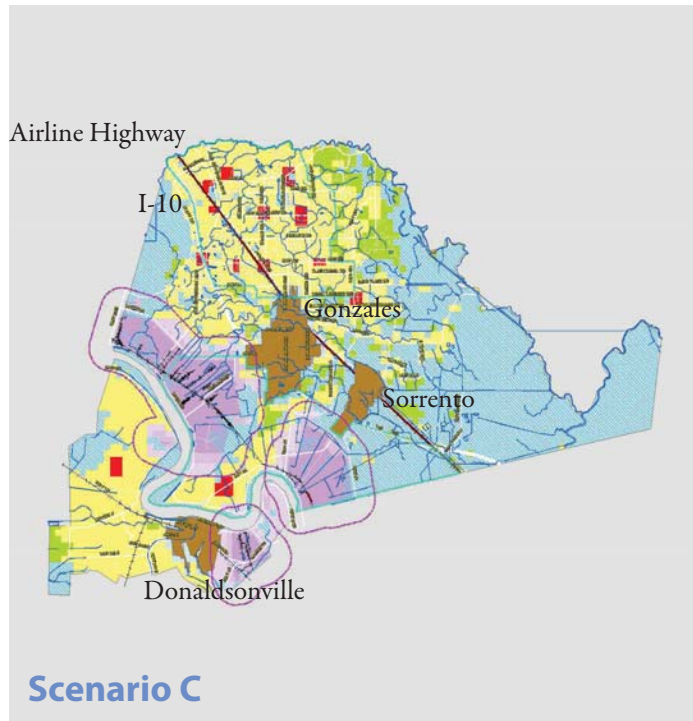
- Future growth is encouraged to occur in and adjacent to existing cities.
- Future residential growth includes estates and large lot homes. Significant infill of vacant land within and adjacent to existing cities (Gonzales, Sorrento, Donaldsonville) in multi-unit, town homes, single-family small lots is encouraged.
- Commercial (retail) is encouraged to focus in downtown areas or at the edge of existing cities (Donaldsonville, Gonzales, Sorrento) through infill and redevelopment.
- In downtown areas and at major intersections, compatible uses are encouraged to mix vertically (offices and condos above stores).
- A 600-foot buffer is established around existing industrial areas. Light industry or warehouse uses are allowed within buffer.
- Transit within cities is improved and expanded to alleviate transportation issues.
- No formal attempt to preserve agriculture is made by the parish. Agriculture is preserved in some areas by incentives that encourage growth closer to existing communities.
- Development is allowed within the floodplain at 1 dwelling unit per 3 acres with raised structures (piers) or balanced cut and fill.



Colors on map: blue = wetlands (no development area); purple = existing industrial land; green = more rural areas; yellow - orange - red indicate increased population areas from less (yellow) to more (red) concentration comparatively

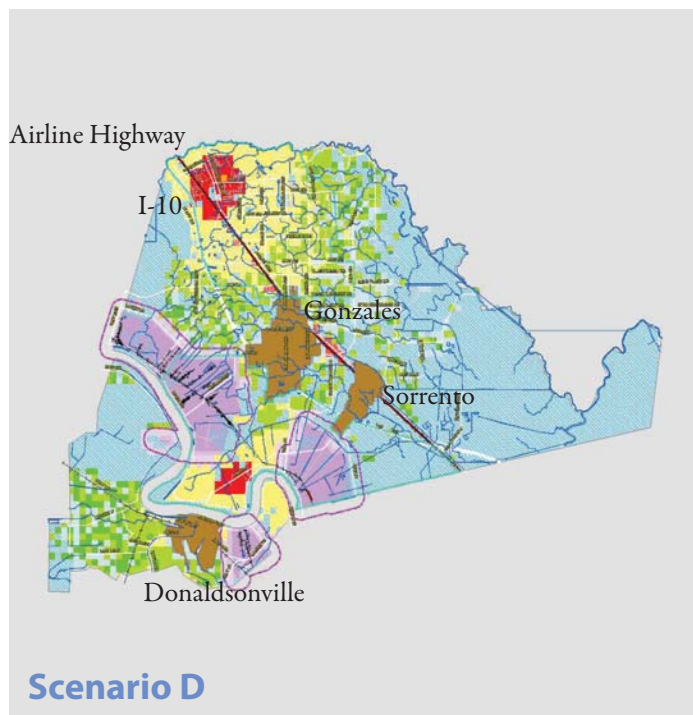
FOUR SCENARIOS FOR HOW WE COULD GROW

Scenario C

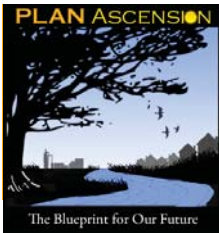


- Future growth is targeted to multiple, compact, walkable centers of various sizes, from small “hamlets” to towns and villages scattered throughout the parish at major intersections.
- Centers should include a mix of commercial, office and residential uses. Commercial is encouraged to focus in existing cities as well as in centers.
- Future residential growth parish-wide includes estates, large lots and suburban single-family homes, but also town homes, small condos, and homes on small lots in and around centers.
- A 1-mile industrial buffer is established around the industrial properties. Uses allowed within buffer include light industry, agriculture and rural levels of development.
- Expansion of heavy industry assumed to be within existing zoned properties, and on Mega Site at Sunshine Point.
- Connection of “missing links” in parish road grid would be completed to provide multiple ways of getting around and reduce concentration on a few roadways.
- Agriculture is preserved through incentives to cluster development in rural areas, leaving farmland intact.
- Development would be allowed in the floodplain (avoiding floodway) at 1 dwelling unit per 10 acres, no cut/fill balance required (for home-related fill).

Scenario D



- Future growth is encouraged to be concentrated in a few larger urban centers (such as near Darrow, Prairieville, Donaldsonville). The rest of the parish remains as rural development.
- A significant portion of future residential growth is encouraged in these “new towns”. Residential unit types include: townhomes, condos, small lot and suburban single family homes.
- Commercial is encouraged to focus in existing downtowns as well as in major new towns.
- A 1/2-mile industrial buffer would be established. Light industry, agriculture and rural levels of development would be allowed within the buffer.
- Transit connections would be created between existing and new communities.
- Agriculture is preserved through: incentives to develop in major new towns, very low density zoning in rural areas, and incentives to cluster rural development.
- Development is allowed in the floodplain (avoiding floodway) at 1 dwelling unit per 10 acres, no cut/fill balance required (for home-related fill).



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THINGS TO THINK ABOUT AS YOU REVIEW SCENARIOS

- Who's moving to Ascension Parish and why?
- What kind of homes and neighborhoods are they looking for?
- What kind of home will your children want, and be able to afford?
- Should development be steered to existing towns (Gonzales, Sorrento, Donaldsonville) before occurring in more rural areas?
- Do we want communities where we can walk to schools, parks and other amenities?
- How do the locations of schools, parks, libraries, police and fire stations, affect our neighborhoods?
- What kinds of business and industry do we want here? What types want to be here?
- Is there adequate infrastructure to accommodate the growth in different areas?
- Are we willing to pay for the preservation of natural areas and agricultural land?

WHAT'S YOUR VISION FOR ASCENSION PARISH?

The Comprehensive Plan is built around a vision statement —what our community should look and feel like in the distant future. A vision statement is based on the collective values and aspirations of residents, community leaders, and businesses. Think about nice communities you've lived in, or visited (including Ascension Parish). What makes them nice and memorable: shady parks, graceful tree-lined streets, public paths along a riverfront or a lake, nice walkable shopping areas, trails through the community? Your list may be different but the items on it usually came about as a result of foresight (planning) and effort by the community. Very rarely did they happen by accident. The vision statement along with the goals and policy directions that support the vision are then used to evaluate future projects—such as what density to allow, where to place a park or school, how big should the roads be, etc. By envisioning where we eventually want to be, we can make decisions today to get us there.

For more information on scenarios and the Comprehensive Plan process, visit:
www.PlanAscension.org
