



Plan Ascension
Ascension Parish Comprehensive Plan

DRAFT PLAN

Principles and Key Concepts – March 2010

The Ascension Parish Comprehensive Plan establishes 8 key principles that will help shape future growth in the parish. These principles

1. **Sustainable Growth Patterns** - Fiscal sustainability where we grow efficiently and cost-effectively. The plan encourages smart growth development and discourages growth patterns that cause disproportionate increases in cost of services. Growth should occur where it avoids threats to health and safety, where it can be supported with adequate infrastructure and where it does not result in negative impacts on existing roadways.
2. **Focus some future growth in centers and areas served by utilities, leave some areas rural** – Residents want to preserve some of the extensive agricultural and open space land surrounding the urban areas within the parish. They also want the benefits of more efficient street and utility services. More compact development patterns will support both of these objectives. This Comprehensive Plan includes an emphasis on mixed-use ‘centers’ as a key growth pattern, accompanied by encouragement of development around existing municipalities more than low density development across the parish. Rural areas occur outside sewer districts. These concepts represent important new directions in the community’s efforts to balance the pressures for outward growth with the desire to promote smart growth.
3. **Create a Jobs / Housing Balance through Economic Development** – The plan identifies where new employment opportunities can locate in order to support and promote economic development and help reduce commuting to employment centers outside the parish.
4. **Provide a Balanced Transportation System** – Traffic congestion was identified as a major negative impact as a result to high paced, low density development feeding onto rural standard roads. The Comprehensive Plan encourages an interconnected road network that provides alternative modes of transportation (transit, bike walking). The plan identifies key corridors that need capacity improvements to sustain, and allow, new development in appropriate locations.
5. **Provide housing for the needs of the entire community** - The plan allows, and encourages, more variety in housing types (besides just large lot single family homes) that will better meet the needs of our diverse population—singles, couples, families, those just starting out in their own home, children who have left home, retirees, etc – and at all income levels.



6. **Opportunities for an active community** – As the parish is transitioning from a rural parish to a more populated parish, residents increasingly seek greater opportunities for both active and passive recreation. Because Ascension Parish began as a rural parish, sidewalks, parks, trails and recreation facilities often associated with larger populations have not been established. The plan considers opportunities for an active community through compact development where people can walk to the store, a trail system along bayous, and a new pattern for street design that includes sidewalks and bike lanes. The plan also encourages that a more extensive park system be created, in centers and other locations as development continues.
7. **Respecting our physical setting** – The recreation and visual aspects of the natural environment are key parts of Ascension Parish’s “crown jewels” that attract residents and businesses to the parish. At the same time, wetlands and floodplains play an important role for drainage and protection from flooding. The plan recommends less development in, and much stronger protection of, floodplain and wetlands—to avoid negative impacts on existing development and habitats.
8. **Retaining our Historic assets** – There are several historic places within the parish including Houmas House and downtown Donaldsonville. Tourism associated with these areas provides some alternative revenue sources for the parish. These historic areas are a foundation to the Ascension Parish culture and should be preserved.

