



**Ascension Parish  
Comprehensive Plan**

Preferred Alternative Draft – January 2010

Aspect	Direction	Policy Implications	Notes
<b>Overall growth pattern</b>	<p>Encourage new growth to occur in and around existing cities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Donaldsonville</li> <li>• Sorrento</li> <li>• Gonzales</li> </ul>	<p>A. Parish will work with cities to accommodate growth in and adjacent. Potential actions might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modifying sales tax sharing agreement as an incentive in areas around the cities</li> <li>• Commercial non-compete in areas near cities</li> <li>• Exempting growth areas from new sewer treatment system, in exchange for extension of city services.</li> <li>• Creating flood plain mitigation bank in growth areas.</li> </ul> <p>B. Parish may have to work with cities to develop water pressure system to allow taller buildings in centers.</p> <p>C. Cities and Parish may need to assist school district to designate and preserve school sites and delay purchase until needed.</p>	<p>Modifying sales tax sharing agreement might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remitting back to local community when certain smart growth objectives are met.</li> <li>• Treating sales tax on a regional basis to avoid competing for commercial.</li> </ul>
<b>Commercial</b>	<p>Create a large mixed-use center in the west Prairieville area, near I-10 / Airline Hwy.</p> <p>Encourage smaller mixed-use centers at evenly spaced locations near major intersections, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amite River</li> <li>• Darrow</li> <li>• Geismar</li> </ul>	<p>E. The Centers will be accomplished by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Zoning designations</li> <li>• Density incentives</li> <li>• Processing incentives</li> <li>• Infrastructure priorities (roads, sewer)</li> <li>• Not approving development that would preclude centers (rezoning according to CP)</li> <li>• Transit priorities (locating stops, stations)</li> </ul> <p>F. Parish will work with Corps of Engineers to modify</p>	<p>Some designated centers are outside proposed sewer treatment service area.</p> <p>“Center” designation includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• mix of housing types</li> <li>• vertical and horizontal mix of uses (commercial, residential, office)</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dutch Town</li> <li>Burnside/Darrow</li> <li>NW of Donaldsonville</li> </ul>	sewer treatment system boundary to include designated centers.	
<b>Agricultural protection</b>	<p>Agricultural preservation will focus on existing, productive (large, efficient) agricultural properties, primarily:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Darrow area</li> <li>NW of Donaldsonville</li> </ul>	<p>A. Agriculture is protected by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Very large lot zoning (20 ac.+)</li> <li>Right-to-farm legislation</li> <li>Avoiding adjacent conflicting uses (feathering densities)</li> </ul>	Family partitions? Require compliance with road master plan?
<b>Rural character</b>	<p>Preserving rural character will focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Areas not served by sewer</li> <li>Floodplains</li> <li>Areas between cities and centers (avoid continuous sprawl)</li> </ul> <p>Primary emphasis for preserving rural character will be in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Geismar</li> <li>Dutch Town</li> <li>West of Donaldsonville</li> <li>East side of the parish</li> <li>Adjacent to Sorrento</li> </ul>	<p>A. Rural character is preserved by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Large lot zoning (5 ac+)</li> <li>Clustering to leave open areas (say 50%)</li> <li>Large setbacks from roadways</li> <li>Not allowing abrupt changes in adjacent uses (feathering densities)</li> <li></li> </ul>	
<b>Sewer treatment</b>	<p>The parish must abandon the practice of surface drainage of septic effluent.</p> <p>Assume sewer treatment</p>	<p>A. WITHIN proposed sewer treatment zone</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All properties less than 2 acres must connect</li> <li>Assume overall density of 4 du/ac for infrastructure planning</li> <li>No minimum density requirement for new</li> </ul>	Need additional technical information to determine appropriate lot size threshold for safe, non-polluting septic system.

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	<p>extended per Corps of Engineers plan, expanded to include proposed centers.</p> <p>Areas outside sewer service allowed to develop only at densities that will not present health or environmental hazard.</p>	<p>development</p> <p>B. New development OUTSIDE sewer treatment zone:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 du/5 ac. maximum density (Rural)</li> <li>• No new package treatment plants</li> </ul>	
<b>Floodplains</b>	<p>Prohibit development that will increase flood levels in the parish.</p>	<p>A. Stricter limitations on floodplain development, and more aggressive enforcement.</p> <p>B. OUTSIDE of sewer service area, development allowed at density of 1 du/<b>10</b> acres.</p> <p>C. WITHIN sewer service area, higher densities and clustering allowed with demonstration of no net rise in flood level.</p> <p>D. Floodplain banking will be allowed, and perhaps jointly developed, WITHIN sewer service area, especially in areas where small lots make property assemblage and collective flood mitigation action otherwise difficult.</p> <p>E. Establish a permit process to monitor filling of floodplain (even without development).</p>	<p>Higher density may be allowed outside sewer service area with demonstration of no net rise in flood level.</p>
<b>Transportation</b>	<p>Strategic transit connections between existing and new communities serving major destinations.</p> <p>Connect "missing links" in parish road grid to provide multiple</p>	<p>A. Establish new policy to prohibit single access subdivisions, and require connectivity to existing or future development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Require easements to connect to future adjacent development</li> <li>• Future development must connect to easements</li> </ul>	<p>Lower cost of curb&amp;gutter vs. loss of rural character?</p> <p>Sidewalks and bike lanes will greatly increase the ROW requirement (and cost) of new roads.</p>

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	<p>ways of getting around and reduce traffic concentration on a few wide roadways.</p> <p>Use eminent domain to speed up the process of ROW acquisition.</p> <p>Sidewalks should be provided in new AND existing residential and commercial development.</p>	<p>provided by prior adjacent development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adopt street connectivity standards for block length and street spacing.</li> </ul> <p>B. Identify key Collector and Minor Arterial streets that are needed to complete the ½ mile grid, and develop a priority ranking to complete these “missing links”.</p> <p>C. Complete Streets --modify development standards to require:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sidewalks on all streets (except in rural areas), with or without ditch</li> <li>• Bike lanes or bikeable shoulders</li> <li>• Or, multiuse paths where most appropriate</li> </ul> <p>Allow exception if an alternative ped/bike route is available.</p> <p>D. Adopt a policy similar to State, to use eminent domain in acquisition of street ROW’s.</p> <p>E. Sidewalks can be retrofitted to existing commercial areas by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upgrade permits require compliance with new standards</li> <li>• Sidewalk improvement district</li> </ul> <p>F. Fund needed road improvements and maintenance through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New sales tax dedicated to roads</li> <li>• Remove minor roads and driveways from Parish maintenance (revert back to owners)</li> <li>• Require adequate streets, sidewalks, bike lanes, and transit infrastructure/service to be in place</li> </ul>	<p>Road hierarchy</p> <p>BMP for road and sidewalk separation for major roads</p> <p>BMP for roadway widths</p> <p>Access spacing</p> <p>Sidewalks required in all new subdivisions; retrofitted as roads are improved; sidewalk districts in areas according to researched need (separate effort)</p> <p>Eminent domain still requires parish to fairly compensate owner, it merely means the parish can take possession of land and determine value afterward.</p> <p>Transit?</p> <p>Airline hwy? – access points / policy?</p> <p>Further data needed: compare Parish’s 6 miles of road/1000 population (600 miles for 100,000 population) with other communities.</p> <p>Requiring adequate road network to be in place as a condition of new development approvals will either act as a moratorium, and/or</p>

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		concurrent with any new development	stimulate private sector participation in solving road maintenance problem.
<b>Baton Rouge Loop</b>	Parish residents generally find the current alignment of the BR Loop to be beneficial to the parish.	A. A means is needed to prevent speculative development from occurring along the BR Loop and especially at interchange locations.	Approximately 50% “strong” and “somewhat” support. 30% strongly opposed.  Location of BR Loop at outer periphery of Ascension Parish means BR-bound residents will have to backtrack, and take much longer routes than currently. Auto-oriented development will occur at interchanges, increasing traffic congestion.
<b>Housing</b>	Future residential growth includes estates and large lot homes, as well as suburban lots single family small lots, town homes, and small multi-unit dwellings (apartments, condos).	A. The parish will encourage housing attractive to a range of life stages (singles, starter families, families w children, empty nesters, retirees), spread throughout the parish.  B. Housing for workers can be achieved in a variety of settings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A range of housing types in infill of existing cities</li> <li>• A range of housing types in new village and neighborhood centers</li> <li>• Encouraging a range of housing types in new subdivisions</li> <li>• Making mixed density neighborhoods attractive by providing amenities (parks, nearby schools, convenient shopping)</li> </ul> C. The parish encourages non-regulatory efforts to	The parish currently has housing that is affordable to workers, but it is not of quality, quantity or location to dissuade commuting.  It will be important to DISCOURAGE practices that make compact living undesirable: Monotonous, repetitive design Concentrating on a single income level Not providing attractive amenities areas of a single unit type outside centers but within the sewer district

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		<p>assure our businesses can attract workers in the future. Incentives and programs to supplement market forces include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non-profit organization to take advantage of private sector grants</li> <li>• Zoning that allows a variety of housing types</li> <li>• Density bonuses for meeting objectives</li> <li>• Encouraging employers to assist employees to obtain local housing (down payment assistance, etc.)</li> <li>• Design review to make sure that various housing types are compatible with adjacent uses</li> </ul>	
<b>Recreation</b>	<p>Parish-wide system of small (Neighborhood) parks near centers and a few large active recreation (Parish) parks.</p> <p>The parish will aggressively pursue creating a system of trails along bayous, utilizing the public easement if possible.</p>	<p>A. The parish will become actively engaged in providing Neighborhood (5 ac) and Parish (15+ ac) parks in areas that are conducive to walk/bike users.</p> <p>B. To actively provide more consistent public parks will require:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significantly expanding PARC</li> <li>• Establishing a Parish-wide recreation district (including Gonzales, Sorrento, Donaldsonville)</li> </ul> <p>C. Current park dedication CONSIDERATION is dedication of (land only) of 3.5 ac/1000 population. Park dedication needs to be made a requirement, and augmented to require provision of a finished park (not just land) or an equivalent fee-in-lieu.</p> <p>D. Neighborhood parks and schools should be located together.</p> <p>E. Centers should provide more urban-type parks (plazas, greens, pocket parks).</p>	<p>Very strong public support for more expansive park system.</p> <p>There is no requirement for sidewalks in parish subdivision regulations. Adding sidewalks to typical road ROW's will require significant additional land.</p> <p>Additional research needed to explore means and feasibility of using bayou servitudes for public trails.</p> <p>As the parish reaches 200,000 population a Regional park will be justified/needed.</p>

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<b>Environment / Conservation</b>	Preservation of wetlands is a consensus priority.		
<b>Healthy communities</b>	Ascension Parish must do more to make it possible to exercise and lead a healthy lifestyle. Initiatives include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sidewalks</li> <li>• Trails</li> <li>• Bike lanes</li> <li>• Nearby parks</li> </ul>	See Transportation and Recreation.	
<b>Industrial transition</b>	Establish a 1/2 mile industrial transition zone, within which is allowed: light industry, agriculture and rural levels of development.  Expansion of heavy industry assumed to be within existing zoned properties (maintain 1/4 mile internal buffer) and on Mega Site at Point Houmus / Sunshine Point.	A. Preserving the viability of existing industrial operations in the parish is a high priority.  B. An important means to protect industrial uses is to allow adjacent to industrial properties only uses that are compatible with typical heavy industrial operations and practices.  C. Within the ½ mile buffer will be allowed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heavy commercial</li> <li>• Light industrial</li> <li>• Rural residential</li> <li>• Agriculture</li> </ul> D. Buffer is created by creating an overlay zone.	The ½ mile buffer is to a large degree already within the Conservation Zone north of the industrial area.  The internal ¼ mile buffer requirement effectively creates a ¾ mile buffer zone.  This buffer is a melding of input from both industry and the public. Additional research needed to determine if a greater or lesser buffer is warranted.
<b>Light industrial uses</b>	Moderate to significant role for light industrial in parish. Light industrial is encouraged to locate in industrial buffer, and in concentrated areas throughout parish.	A. Assure that a minimum of acres is designated and zoned for light industrial uses in the parish.  B. Track with assessment every 5 years.	Light industry currently intermixed with residential and commercial areas (esp west of Airline Hwy). Need more specific designations on Comp Plan, or allow greater flexibility?

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<b>Community separation buffers</b>	Communities should retain separate identities and not grow together.	<p>A. This goal can be achieved by one or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• floodplain density</li> <li>• rural density allowed outside of sewer district</li> <li>• public purchase</li> <li>• overlay zoning</li> <li>• cluster development incentives</li> </ul>	<p>60% support for community buffers if taxes do not go up. Only 30% support if taxes go up, and 30% opposition in either case.</p> <p>Additional analysis needed to identify degree to which flood plain and conservation lands already create community buffers.</p>
<b>Economics</b>		<p>A. Items that will require significant Parish financial support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New roads</li> <li>• Sidewalks</li> <li>• Path system</li> <li>• Park system expansion</li> <li>• Water service for mixed use</li> </ul>	Parish cannot afford to maintain a sprawl infrastructure.
<b>Schools</b>	The parish should take an active role in identifying school sites and create a mechanism to preserve them until the school district needs them.	<p>A. Designated sites for future schools, especially those in centers and cities, must be remain undeveloped until the school district is capable and ready to acquire them.</p> <p>B. Cost of school sites should be shared/contributed by all the development properties that will use the school site.</p> <p>C. Adequate public schools should be part of Concurrency requirement.</p>	
<b>Infrastructure</b>	An alternative to the low water pressure of BR Water will be necessary if mixed density centers are to be developed.	A. Parish may need to establish own water district in commercial/mixed use areas to provide adequate water pressure for 2-3 story buildings.	May need to assist fire depts. With equipment purchase or require sprinkler systems in buildings