

Why are land use regulations and policies important to Plaquemines Parish? How well are these regulations and policies being enforced and followed?

Big Ideas

- Identify areas that should be preserved, those in need of revitalization and those appropriate for development.
- Use Council initiated rezoning and incentives to encourage the growth of existing communities and nodes development on the East Bank and in South Plaquemines.
- Establish appropriate development regulations to allow for a wide variety of home based businesses while providing protection to neighboring properties from adverse impacts.
- Encourage the development of a series of farmers markets in communities outside of Belle Chasse to provide fresh produce, proteins and other goods to residents in rural areas of the parish.

Big Decisions & Questions

- Will the Parish adopt FEMA's National Flood Insurance Program Advisory Base Flood Elevations (ABFEs) for new and rebuilt structures?
- What opportunities are available for developing affordable housing in the Parish?
- Updating the Parish's land development codes reflect current development best practices, including open space preservation, building codes, and stormwater management regulations.

Related Big Issues

- ❖ Need stormwater management regulations to help control erosion and sedimentation in built up areas of the parish
- ❖ Extension of sewer service to all areas of the parish to support development and water quality
- ❖ Further development of the Parish's tourism industry
- ❖ Mitigation of traffic congestion in Belle Chasse is necessary for sustaining existing commercial uses along Highway 23 and attracting new businesses
- ❖ Development of a new port facility in Plaquemines will create additional opportunities for commercial and industrial development
- ❖ Acquisition of additional land for parks and community facilities

(below) Undeveloped land provides opportunities for the Parish to shape future development.



Plaquemines Parish
MASTER PLAN



President Billy Nungesser

PURPOSE STATEMENT: *To determine current land use patterns in Plaquemines Parish in order to identify areas that should be preserved, those in need of revitalization and those appropriate for development in order to determine appropriate strategies for land use and development for the future.*

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The largest and southernmost parish in Louisiana, Plaquemines Parish is a peninsula that covers some 90 miles south of New Orleans which is bisected by the Mississippi River. Despite the large size, very little of the parish is actually dry land (5 percent) most of it is water or low-lying wetlands.

Although not "developable" by conventional standards, the wetlands and water areas of the parish are arguably the most used areas of the parish. The Plaquemines Parish economy is heavily dependent on the oil and gas industries and marine fisheries. Large oil and natural gas reserves are located in the coastal waters surrounding the parish. The warm Gulf waters and extensive estuary systems in the parish support the aquaculture industry; Plaquemines is ranked fourth nationally in volume of annual fish and shellfish harvests. Additionally, the vast marshlands and the excellent sport fishing available fuel the Parish's tourism industry.

Due to its unique geography, the majority of the areas suitable for development within the parish lie in the two thin strips of dry land located within the levee system on either side of the river. Hurricanes have destroyed or significantly damaged the majority of structures south of Belle Chasse. Rebuilding began almost immediately and many residents have used the Road Home program to finance residential rebuilding while the Parish government has been successful in leveraging federal funds to re-establish community facilities and services.

Land Area Analysis		
Land Classification	Acres	% of Parish
Developed	72,613	5%
Undeveloped	430,616	28%
Water	1,025,079	67%
Total	1,528,308	100%

Data Sources: LRA 5/1/07 Land Use Data for S. LA and NORPC

Developed Areas - Land Use Analysis		
Land Use	Acres	% of Developed Area
Industrial	10,206	14.06%
Transport - Communication	500	0.69%
Residential	9,574	13.19%
Forest	7,836	10.79%
Commercial	924	1.27%
Agricultural	39,926	54.98%
Civic or Institutional	2,895	3.99%
Parks or Open Space	752	1.04%
Total	72,613	100%

Data Sources: LRA 5/1/07 Land Use Data for S. LA and NORPC

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MANAGING DEVELOPMENT & FACILITATING DESIRABLE GROWTH

Land use in the parish falls into a number of categories.

Industrial: The Parish's natural resources coupled with its location at the mouth of one of the world's most important waterways for the transport of goods and materials has led to significant industrial land development throughout the Plaquemines.

Agricultural: Activities in these areas include livestock pastures, citrus groves, and areas with logging or mining activity. These areas are located between the many small communities along the east bank and south of Belle Chasse on the west bank.

Residential: Residential land uses include households living in single and multi-family structures as well as institutional living arrangements including nursing homes, correctional institutes, college dormitories, etc. The largest concentration of residential land use is in the Belle Chasse area. Current estimates show 8,701 housing units in Plaquemines¹, of these approximately 6,807 (78 percent) are occupied: 4,635 (68 percent) owner occupied and the remaining 32 percent (2,172) rental properties¹. (¹ U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2008 American Community Survey, 3-year Estimates.)

Commercial: Commercial land uses encompass retail and service establishments. These land uses are mostly located in Belle Chasse, although there is some commercial activity in Braithwaite on the east bank. The rural development pattern and unique geography of the Parish create challenges for delivering goods and services to residents in the southern end of the parish due to high costs of transport and comparatively low-demand.

Transportation and Communications: This category contains a variety of uses including cell towers, airports, road right-of-ways for major roads, and ferry landings.

Civic/Institutional: The land use category includes public and semi-public land uses such as schools, medical facilities, government offices, churches and community centers. The largest civic/institutional land use in Plaquemines is the Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base located in Belle Chasse. The highest concentration of civic/institutional land use is in Belle Chasse; however there are Parish government offices, community centers, schools, and churches spread throughout the Parish.

Parks and Open Space: A little over one percent of the developed area of the parish is comprised of parks and open space. This category includes areas such as the Cypress, Oakville and Diamond parks as well as Ft. Jackson and Ft. Saint Phillip. A number of the Parish's recreation facilities sustained damage from Hurricane Katrina and steady progress has been made in repairing and rebuilding affected facilities as well as expanding facilities and adding new ones to better serve the community.



(left) Agricultural Uses – Citrus Groves



(right) Rural Residential Development

(below) East Bank – Industrial Use



(left) Commercial Activity



(right) Civic/Institutional Uses



(above) "Use" of the water

LAND DEVELOPMENT

- Development in Plaquemines Parish is overseen by the Parish Permitting Department which administers a number of Parish ordinances.
- The Plaquemines Parish Zoning Ordinance controls the uses and densities of various land uses throughout the Parish, the Subdivision Regulations that provide oversight for the division of parcels and development of new (residential) subdivisions and communities and the Coastal Zone Management and Floodplain Development Regulations that control development and economic activity in these sensitive environmental areas.
- The Parish is divided into 20 zoning districts.

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