

How do public facilities and services affect quality of life in Plaquemines Parish? How will related decisions impact fellow community members and me?

Plaquemines Parish MASTER PLAN



President Billy Nungesser

PURPOSE STATEMENT: *The destruction caused by Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and Gustav severely damaged many parish government and community service facilities. The purpose of this component is to identify opportunities for improving the delivery of services within the parish and to coordinate the expansion of programs and facilities with the community's changing needs and settlement patterns.*

Big Ideas

- Create a library "System" not just a main library, including expansion of library services to the east bank. The District 1 councilman has agreed to provide space in the Woodlawn Building for a small branch library.
- Incorporate sustainable design standards for new Parish buildings to reduce operating costs.
- Consolidate services into multi-use facilities located in communities throughout the Parish to reinforce community identity and reduce travel time required for citizens.
- Conduct a study to ascertain the space (office, storage, etc.) needs of the various Parish departments by considering staffing levels, storage needs, special space needs, etc. and use industry space standards to determining how much space is needed and plan buildings accordingly.
- Update the Parish GIS system related to Parish-owned facilities to include data on departments and services located in each structure and the size and location of the structure.
- Enhance service delivery through expansion of on-line services offered by the Parish, including on-line applications for planning and zoning activities, jobs, facility rentals, etc.

Improved public facilities and services equals:

- Better delivery of services throughout the community.
- Lower insurance rates through better fire protection coverage.
- Enhanced programs for youth and seniors.

Related Big Issues

- ❖ Government financing for capital improvements
- ❖ Appropriate tax rates and user fees needed to support services and facilities
- ❖ Economic impact of consolidating government services in key locations; opportunity for co-location of retail services in rural areas of the parish
- ❖ Strategic location of community facilities to serve as emergency response centers
- ❖ Sustainable design reduces operating costs and impact on and from the natural environment

Big Decisions & Questions

- How to consolidate facilities and services to reduce operating costs and space needs while maintaining tailored services/facilities as a focal point in each community?
- Determine a permanent location for the Parish seat.
- How to expand access to services to children, seniors and those with limited options for getting around?
- How can recreation programs better serve adults and seniors?
- What can we do to better prepare our community facilities today than we were in 2005 for the next hurricane?

(below) Rendering of Phoenix High School



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EXISTING CONDITIONS

Public Safety

- Law enforcement in Plaquemines Parish is provided by the Sheriff's Office. Plaquemines is under 24-hour patrol by the criminal division. All patrol vehicles are radio equipped to maintain constant contact with headquarters in Port Sulphur. The Sheriff's Office also maintains a Marine Search and Rescue Division consisting of a fleet of boats that patrol the parish's recreational and commercial waterways. This division works closely with the US Coast Guard and LA Department of Wildlife and Fisheries.
- In addition to traditional services provided by a law enforcement agency the Sheriff's Office is responsible for the collection of property taxes, serving court orders, subpoenas, and performing civil seizures for the courts.
- The Sheriff's Office has three patrol districts: 1st District (Belle Chasse south to Myrtle Grove); 2nd District (Myrtle Grove south to Venice); and 3rd District (entire east bank). Three captains command these districts. They are assisted by 58 deputies. (Plaquemines Parish Sheriff's Office Website. <www.ppsso.net> June 2010.)

Fire Protection

- Plaquemines Parish is divided into 7 fire districts with a network of 12 fire stations serving the parish.
- Until recently this system was staffed entirely by volunteer fire fighters; however, the one percent Parish sales tax increase established in January is dedicated to funding a paid fire fighter system.
- In early 2010, the Parish ordered nine new fire fighting vehicles for five of the seven fire districts: Point a La Hache, Woodlawn, Port Sulphur, Buras and Boothville-Venice. The three commercial mini pumpers, three commercial pumpers, one commercial air

support van, a 77-foot ladder truck, and commercial hose tender are scheduled to arrive between April and August, 2010.

- The O'Brien (Empire), Braithwaite, Phoenix, and Lake Hermitage fire stations were completed in 2009 and four new fire stations are scheduled to open this year: Buras (February), Port Sulphur (March), Boothville-Venice (April) and Point a La Hache (Summer). (Plaquemines Parish Press Release, "Plaquemines Parish orders nine new fire trucks" January 29, 2010.)

Parish Government Offices

- Pointe a la Hache has been the seat of government in Plaquemines since the formation of the Parish. On January 12, 2002 the Parish courthouse there was severely damaged by arson. Since then, the Parish government has used several temporary buildings in Belle Chasse.
- The Parish maintains approximately 139 buildings located throughout the parish ranging from pump stations to Council offices. Hurricane Katrina damaged or destroyed many of these structures, the list of capital improvement projects included here provides an update on the status of their rebuilding and repair.



(above) New fire station in Belle Chasse

MEETING THE DAILY NEEDS OF OUR COMMUNITY

(continued from previous page)

Healthcare services

- Before the 2005 Hurricane Season, Plaquemines residents could receive medical care and health services at the Plaquemines Medical Center Hospital and the Medical Human Resources Annex building. Both facilities were destroyed during the storm. As of last fall, FEMA had agreed to allow funding previously provided for the replacement of each of the two destroyed medical buildings to be consolidated into one grant with that will fund the construction of a new, three-story medical facility in Port Sulphur. Construction of the new facility began in February 2010. (LRA, Recovery News release, September 15, 2009).

Schools

- There are currently seven public schools in the parish. After Hurricane Katrina, the three flooded high schools on the West Bank (Boothville-Venice, Port Sulphur and Phoenix) were permanently consolidated into the new South Plaquemines High School located at the site of Buras High School.
- Phoenix High School is the only school on the East Bank. It services students in Pre-K through 12th grade.
- Pre-Katrina public school enrollment was 4,975.
- Public school enrollment (Fall 2009) was 3,851. Belle Chasse Academy (private school) enrollment was approximately 850 (Fall 2009).

Libraries

- There are three library facilities in the parish: Belle Chasse, Buras and Port Sulphur. The Buras and Port Sulphur libraries were destroyed by Hurricane Katrina, with the Belle Chasse library also sustaining damage. The Buras library has been rebuilt, with a new 8,900 sq. ft. facility. Reconstruction of the Port Sulphur library has been delayed as an alternate site is considered; however, the temporary library located in a trailer continues to operate. Additionally, a large, fully equipped bookmobile was purchased by the Gulf Coast Libraries Project to serve as a replacement. This library provides weekly service to Buras, Port Sulphur, Boothville, Woodlawn (East Bank), Ironton, and Jesuit Bend.
- A needs assessment for a new Belle Chasse library was completed in September 2009 and recommends razing the current library building and constructing a new state-of-the-art facility to serve as the headquarters of the Plaquemines Parish Library System.
- After an initial post-Katrina drop in circulation, library usage is rebounding. In 2007 the circulation was 16,789; however, this grew to 25,179 in 2008 when the temporary Port Sulphur location was opened.

Community Centers:

- Pre-Katrina there were ten community service facilities in Plaquemines.
- In 2008, FEMA approved the Parish's plan to consolidate these facilities into four new community centers located in Port Sulphur, Boothville, Buras, and Davant. These new centers are being provided through partnerships between the Plaquemines Parish Council, FEMA, LRA, United Way, YMCA, and local businesses.

Solid Waste

- The Parish operates three solid waste transfer / collection facilities located in Belle Chasse, Port Sulphur, and Boothville.
- The Parish provides curbside residential solid waste collection service for citizens and utilizes the transfer stations for staging prior to transport to landfill facilities.
- The Parish provides residential collection services for yard waste and debris.
- The landfill facilities currently disposing of waste from Plaquemines Parish include Coast Guard Road Landfill for MSW and Industrial Pipe Landfill for C&D waste.
- The transfer/collection facilities provide recycling containers for various items. The Parish also provides recycle drop-off bins for paper, plastics, and other recyclables.

Fall 2009 School Enrollment for Plaquemines Parish.

School	Enrollment
Belle Chasse High School	893
Belle Chasse Middle School	678
Belle Chasse Primary School	1070
Boothville-Venice Elementary School	392
Phoenix High School	191
South Plaquemines Elementary School	262
South Plaquemines High School	365
TOTAL	3851

(below) Public library in Belle Chasse



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CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

Completed Improvements

- Edna LaFrance Building, Braithwaite Parish Offices - Completed 2008
- Lake Hermitage Fire House - Completed 2009
- O'Brien Fire House - Completed 2009
- Phoenix Fire Substation - Completed 2009
- Popich Building Elevator Repairs, Belle Chasse Parish Office - Completed 2010
- Buras Auditorium Repairs - Completed April 2010
- District 8 Council Building - Completed April 2010

Under Construction

- Animal Control Renovations
- Diamond Community Center, Empire Civic Center Repairs and Port Sulphur Council on Aging
- Boothville-Venice Fire Station - Expected completion summer 2010
- Buras Community Center - Expected Completion May 2010
- Buras Library Repairs - Expected Completion: June 2010
- Buras Fire Station Repairs - Expected Completion May 2010
- (Rev. Percy M. Griffin) Davant Community Center, Magnolia Center and District Council Office - Expected completion April or May 2010
- Pointe a la Hache Fire Station - Expected completion summer 2010
- Port Sulphur Civic Center Repairs
- Port Sulphur Medical Center
- Port Sulphur Government Building
- Domestic Violence Office & Port Sulphur Lockup
- Boothville-Venice Senior Center, Venice Community Center and District 9 Council Office
- Public Right of Way Maintenance Building PROM

On Hold

- Braithwaite Auditorium - Pending Woodlawn Building Acquisition
- Port Sulphur Library - Pending relocation decision
- Port Sulphur Fire Station/EMS - Delayed due to cold weather
- Parish Welcome Center
- Buras Library Parking

Unscheduled/Pending Funds

- Renovation/Repair - Woodlawn Fire Station
- Parish Welcome Center
- Pointe a la Hache Old School Board Building
- District 1 Council Building
- Woodlawn Building Acquisition and Renovations
- New Government Complex
- Courthouse Renovations
- Acquisition of Building – Special Needs Citizens
- Emergency Operations Center
- Sheriff's Office Building Complex
- Belle Chasse Fire Station Renovation/Repair
- New Parish Courthouse
- Empire Maintenance Building Repairs

(below) Old Court House – East Bank

