Vision
The Lafourche Parish Comprehensive Resiliency Plan
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Acknowledgements
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table of contents

Introduction - 2
A Plan Built on Community Input - 6
A Resilient Future: The Lafourche Vision - 10
Strategies for a More Resilient Parish - 14
Lafourche Parish residents treasure the Parish’s beautiful natural scenery, its fishing, recreation, historic towns, Cajun culture, quality of life, and hospitable neighbors. These characteristics keep people coming to Lafourche Parish to live and work. Parish residents know that Lafourche offers tremendous natural assets and a welcoming place to call home. Wherever you live in Lafourche Parish, you are connected to the water – be it up the bayou in Thibodaux, down the bayou in Galliano, or next door to the Gulf of Mexico in Point aux Chenes –

the water provides the economic sustenance and cultural heritage that defines living in Lafourche Parish.
Why is a Comprehensive Resiliency Plan important?

While there is much to treasure in the Parish, living with water can have its challenges, and residents understand the need to protect wetlands and coastal areas to ensure that they can maintain their current high quality of life.

Most of Lafourche Parish’s current assets and future potential are because living with water is integrated into all aspects of parish life. Tremendous potential exists in the future with the expansion of Port Fourchon, the increasing tourism opportunities, the educational benefits of Nicholls State University, and the growth of the shipping and logistic industries as well as the preservation of agricultural lands and sugar cane production. Living with water has tremendous advantages and challenges, and residents understand the need to address coastal issues in the near and long term in order to continue to sustain current lifestyles. Many residents who participated in the planning process are directly affected by landscape changes due to erosion, subsidence and sea level rise, making it important to understand these impacts on the Parish’s long-term resilience.

Throughout the planning process residents indicated that a key issue is the need to preserve wetlands, plan for anticipated future land loss and for coastal restoration. If it is not addressed, much of the parish will be at risk in the future. The Parish has many initiatives addressing these coastal restoration issues and the continuing impacts of subsidence, sea level rise and storm surges on the lives of Parish residents.

The Lafourche Parish Comprehensive Resiliency Plan is a strategic document meant to maximize opportunities, reduce risks, and ensure that the Parish remains a great place for current and future generations.

The Plan seeks to look comprehensively at coastal issues along with other important issues facing the Parish, such as the need for diverse jobs and housing, a desire for improved transportation...
facilities, and improving the quality of life of current and future residents. The Plan proposes policies, programs and tools to reduce the overall vulnerability of the Parish and ultimately, is intended to make the Parish more resilient in the future. It reflects the knowledge, expertise and aspirations of the Parish’s residents and is a blueprint for how the community will grow and change over time in a way that preserves the Parish’s many assets and ensures that it remains a great place for current and future generations, while also preparing for a new era of changes. It also identifies areas of improvement needed so that the Parish is prepared to deal with future growth and increased land loss as it occurs.

The Plan lays out the future development of the Parish in pictures and images, maps, and written goals and strategies. Collectively, these will serve as a guide for residents and policy makers on how to invest in roads and infrastructure, public facilities and development. The goal of the Plan is to enhance the quality of life of existing and future citizens by planning strategically – in concert with local input – for future population growth and the corresponding development.

The Lafourche Parish Comprehensive Resilience Plan and the Vision are not regulatory documents.

Instead, once adopted, the Plan will be used to guide Parish development and investment decisions in a manner aligned with the community’s vision. The Plan will also provide the planning framework needed to be eligible for future funding opportunities through the state, RESTORE, and other programs requiring an adopted plan for grant eligibility. In addition, the Planning Commission and Parish Council will consider recommendations and strategies in the Plan before making development decisions or adopting or approving ordinances or regulations, as required by state law. The successful implementation of the Vision and the Plan will take a concerted effort by Parish leaders, area businesses, community leaders, residents, staff, and investors.
What is the purpose of a Vision document?

The Vision serves as a high-level, graphic and descriptive summary of the Plan.

Based on many months of public input, the Vision for Lafourche Parish is intended to capture citizens’ shared “vision” for the future, a vision that includes coastal restoration, economic growth, strong communities, and preservation of the many natural, cultural and historic resources that Parish residents hold dear. This shared vision for the future of the Parish is communicated using the Vision map (on page 11) to illustrate key concepts, along with a short narrative of the community’s desired future. The Vision also describes how the Plan was developed, highlighting important aspects of the public engagement activities and the guiding principles used to develop the Plan.

Another important role of the Vision is to summarizes key strategies that are detailed and expanded upon within the Plan. These strategies identify how the Parish can use its many strengths and opportunities to move towards its goals and shared vision. The strategies, starting on page 14, are grouped into eight topic areas:
• Complete communities
• Economic development opportunities
• Transportation connections
• Housing choices
• Recreation, cultural and historic resources
• Safety and resiliency – living with water
• Infrastructure for the future
• Coordinating effectively

Creating the Plan

The creation of the Vision and the Plan are headed by the Lafourche Parish Government and supported by an advisory committee of appointed officials, agency representatives, and Parish stakeholders. Together, with input from Parish residents, these groups have created an exciting and resilient blueprint for the future.
A Plan Built on Community Input

The public engagement effort involved citizens across the Parish to ensure broad representation and gather important local insights.

Listening to the People of Lafourche Parish

The Vision and the Plan are rooted in the wisdom of the Parish’s stakeholders and citizenry.

An advisory committee comprised of Parish representatives from diverse backgrounds worked with the planning team to ensure that the process reflected the needs and culture of the Parish. The public engagement effort involved citizens across the Parish in a combination of stakeholder interviews, parish-focused public workshops, specific topic workshops, interest group presentations, surveys, and an up-to-date project website and Facebook page which ensured broad representation and provided key local insights. Through these efforts, which reached out to residents in all parts of the Parish—north, central and south—stakeholders generously shared their opinions, ideas, and future visions.

Stakeholder interviews and interest group presentations were conducted with a variety of public and private entities. These included community leaders, social service agencies, utilities, local, state and federal governmental agencies and officials, economic development groups, business and property owners, schools, non-profits, and housing and transportation organizations. Stakeholders were asked to share their perspectives on the opportunities and challenges in the Parish, its positive attributes, their overall views on living in the Parish, and their hopes for the future.
The planning team hosted three parishwide workshops and two topic area workshops. At the parishwide workshops, held in Thibodaux, Matthews and Galliano, citizens were asked to provide their input about key questions for the future of the Parish. The topic area workshops explored different opportunities to expand and coordinate the tourism industry, and discussed ideas to grow the economy and increase access to the rest of the state and nation.

After the workshops, the team identified populations who had not participated in the project input through interviews, presentations and workshops and met one-on-one with members of those communities to ensure that input was received from all parts of the Lafourche community.

Throughout the planning process, a variety of outreach methods, such as email blasts, posters, flyers and postcards were used to communicate to a wide spectrum of audiences. Team members attended local festivals to get the word out about the Plan and to receive survey feedback on initial strategies. The project website was a key element of the public engagement and included project news, events, documents, and presentations (www.planlafourche.com). In addition, citizens and stakeholders were invited to participate through an online survey posted on the website.

The feedback gathered through the public involvement process provides the foundation of the Plan and the Vision. Still a work in progress, the team will continue to gather public input on the Vision and Plan throughout the summer and fall.
Guiding Principles

Guiding principles are a summary of Parish citizen’s core values. They answer the questions: “What values do we want to retain and enhance as we move into the future?” and “What is most important to us?” Having a clear understanding and agreement of these values provides a basis for the goals, recommendations and strategies within the Plan and ensures a standard for their evaluation. In this way, the Plan’s outcomes are consistent with the stakeholder’s core values and will move the Parish toward the residents’ collective vision of the future.

Enhance Our Safety and Increase Our Resiliency

Residents are concerned about the impacts of land loss and the need for coastal restoration. They live in the Parish knowing that their homes and businesses are vulnerable to storms, flooding and storm surges, land loss and saltwater intrusion. High-priority guiding principles to address these concerns and to make the Parish more safe and resilient include:

• Plan for anticipated future land loss and coastal restoration; create plans to support the State’s Coastal Master Plan for a Sustainable Coast and RESTORE Act and other potential funding sources.

• Invest in infrastructure improvements, from improved roads, levees to restored wetlands. Plan for, and prioritize, infrastructure and other needs to ensure efficient recovery. Restore the region’s natural hydrologic function, where possible. Preserve wetlands and areas along bayous and other waterways.

• Continue to implement the Parish’s hazard mitigation plan to prepare for natural disasters such as flooding and storm events. Promote the importance of public readiness. Reduce the time to restore essential services following storm events. Improve methods for taking care of those who cannot care for themselves including children, elderly, disabled, and pets during times of natural disaster.

• Preserve Lafourche Parish’s unique cultural heritage and build on the many assets derived from this culture. Improve resiliency through learning from examples of the cultural practices of people who have lived with the water for decades.

Create a Livable Community

Parish residents expressed a desire to increase the quality of life of all residents and to create a community in which their children and their...
children’s children wish to continue to live. Guiding principles to improve the quality of life for both long-term and new residents include:

- Improve the Parish’s recreational facilities by providing more opportunities such as neighborhood parks and recreational facilities for youth sports in all parts of the parish.
- Expand the selection of transportation within the Parish by providing for walking and biking and provide public or alternate transportation services parish wide.
- Create vibrant entertainment and arts centers in towns and city centers to attract and retain youth.
- Make Bayou Lafourche a central natural, recreation and tourism amenity and build off this vast cultural asset by locating additional recreational facilities along the bayou and increasing places to access the water for boating and canoeing.
- Strengthen the Parish’s educational system, from pre-school to job training and higher education. Expand on the quality educational programs at Nicholls State University to develop a highly educated, job-ready citizenry.
- Develop a mix of housing types to meet population forecasts and to provide quality housing for the aging population, for young families wanting to live and work in the Parish, for relocating workers employed in the oil and gas and ship building industries, and for youth and families needing affordable housing opportunities. Ensure that a variety of types and styles of housing are available throughout the Parish.
- Implement innovative water management strategies in new and existing housing and commercial development to ensure that the water is an asset and contributes to the quality of life Parish resident’s desire.
- Preserve Lafourche’s unique Cajun and Native American culture and emphasize these community and lifestyle values.

Make Our Economy Strong

Lafourche residents want to protect and enhance their existing industries while at the same time diversifying the Parish’s economy by exploring new ways to build on the natural and cultural assets that are the foundation of the current economy. Assets include the ability to live off of the water and share these experiences worldwide through tourism, ship building, fishing, agriculture, and Port Fourchon. Priority principles to make a stronger economy include:

- Protect natural resources, agricultural lands and the sugar cane industry and continue to use these assets to build the economy.
- Grow the tourism sector, with an emphasis on bringing together the Parish’s history, culture and natural assets. Promote tourism activities such as fishing and ecotourism opportunities and catering to French speakers that build off the cultural heritage of the Parish.
- Provide educational opportunities through technical training or programs at Nicholls State University and Fletcher Technical College that build a workforce with skills that match future employment demands.
- Promote the entrepreneurship values which are strong in the Lafourche culture. Create an environment that encourages the Parish’s entrepreneurial spirit.
- Capture more individual spending locally by providing needed stores and services so residents can travel less and reinvest in their community.
- Support the expansion of LA 1 and Highway 3235 and other roadway improvements needed to support industry and provide a safe and resilient community.
- Target new businesses that are related to industries that have potential for growth in the parish such as health care and logistics.
- Provide transportation facilities and services to ensure that workers have easy access to jobs.
Envision the Future

The Lafourche Vision captures the dreams and inspiration of Parish residents and stakeholders. It consolidates the diverse input into a description and Vision map of how the Parish might look and feel in the future, with enhanced planning and implementation as described in the Plan. Lafourche residents envision their future as…

…a safe and resilient community that celebrates its cultural heritage.

The coastal protection networks that include expanded and new levees, restored wetlands, and effective coastal barrier islands helps make Lafourche residents feel secure. Drainage follows the region’s natural hydraulic patterns and lessens the need for forced systems. Coastal land is restored and the rate of land loss is reduced. Wetlands that have lost their tree stands through saltwater intrusion are slowly coming to life again, and residents in lower Lafourche feel safer and more protected.

When storms do beat down on coastal Lafourche, needed infrastructure is in place for managing the water and maintaining safety at all levels of the community. Residents are informed about dealing with storms and coastal impacts. Emergency readiness programs are in place to lessen the economic and disruptive impacts of regular storm events through the provision of raised shelters and services, evacuation procedures, utility restoration programs, and creating more resilient developments.

The community values the many cultures and traditions that give Lafourche its character, from the Cajun heritage and the Native American roots to the new residents who come
The Vision Map

The draft Vision Map shows the desired land use patterns of the Lafourche Parish Vision. This map, based on input from the public workshops, reflects city centers, town and neighborhood centers and special economic areas in the northern, central and southern parts of the Parish. This map should be used when considering future development decisions and investments.
to Lafourche to work in shipping, oil and gas, or one of the new emerging industries. Traditional resiliency and practices for living with water serve as a foundation for maintaining a high quality of life in all parts of the Parish north, central and south.

...a community with a strong, diverse economy and a trained employee base.

Lafourche has a diversified economy that is based on the historic trends of fishing, oil and gas, sugar cane, and ship building. Port Fourchon serves as a specialized logistics center for the Gulf coast and has diversified its services. New employment centers in the US 90 and Highway 308 area provide new, high-quality logistics and technology-oriented industries. Businesses and industries work closely with Nicholls State University and Fletcher Technical College to provide quality, targeted training to maintain an employment pool. With the growth of employment centers and additional housing, more commercial, retail and services are provided within the Parish, retaining a larger proportion of the income within the Parish.

...a community with diverse resilient housing choices and amenities.

New housing is built with resiliency in mind. Houses and neighborhood service areas are raised so that they are more protected from storm surges and flooding. Residential infill housing is designed so that it does not impact adjacent homes, and new subdivisions provide adequate utilities, connections and water management.

A new mixed-use town center and main street is located near the intersection of US 90 and Highway 308 to provide housing for an emerging economic center and logistic facility. The new town center
contains local residential and commercial centers, with shops and offices, single-family homes, townhomes, and multifamily housing. Additional centralized main streets and town centers are located in Lockport, Larose, Galliano, and Thibodaux. These centers provide a variety of housing types and amenities that are attractive to the expanding workforce and provide a needed housing selections, from executive and family housing to workforce, retirement and other affordable housing choices.

...a community with increased access to jobs and bayous.

New connections separate industrial and truck traffic from local traffic, creating a safe and efficient roadway network along the bayou. LA 1 is completed, as is Highway 3235, and access on these truck-oriented, high-traffic roads is managed to protect the traffic flow. People traveling through the parish, or transporting goods down the bayou have clear access without having to mix with local residential traffic. New connections are created along LA 1 and Highway 308 to enable local traffic access away from the main roadways. Pathways and sidewalks are provided where possible to increase walking and biking travel options, and a public transportation system provides transportation between Thibodaux, Houma and Golden Meadow.

Access to the Parish’s many amenities, including the bayou and recreational areas, are provided so residents and tourists can experience and appreciate the Lafourche’s unique culture. Leeville is a recreational and tourist center where people enjoy fishing, ecotourism activities, and boat access to the marsh and the coast. Bayou plazas provide new recreational amenities for tourists who want to visit the bayou and enjoy the Cajun food.

... community and region that works together for the health and safety of coastal Louisiana.

Regional coalitions continue to work to protect coastal areas and provide a safe environment for coastal residents. Lafourche Parish works with adjacent parishes to ensure that protection and restoration measures are in place to the benefit of all coastal parishes. Parishes share in service provision and support restoration activities.
Complete Communities

What is the land use vision?
Over the next twenty to thirty years, growth and expansion of urban areas occurs in places with good existing infrastructure capacity. The Parish has planned for future land loss and population growth resulting in quality infill, redevelopment and the development of new walkable communities.

Why is this important?
Coordinating expansion efforts and intentions for growth between different communities and government agencies at the local and regional level will ensure it proceeds in a logical manner supportive of other Parish-wide goals.

What can we do?
Expansion will be focused in approximately 5,000 acres of developable land, primarily in areas with a high level of existing resiliency due to solid infrastructure and flood protection from levees. It should comprise a balanced mixture of community neighborhoods, community centers, and employment centers. Facilitating cooperation between local and regional entities will establish common expectations and practices for annexation and areas of new growth.

A concept-level land use map will provide a basis for coordinating expansion efforts, and to gauge the appropriate spatial relationships and degree of balance between community neighborhoods, community centers and employment centers such as downtown areas, Port Fourchon and Thibodaux’s medical district.
Lafourche Parish
DRAFT Land Use Concept Map

- **Community**
- **Community center**
- **Agriculture**
- **Industrial**
- **Existing wetlands**
- **New or restored marshland, 2050 projection (CPRA)**

**Legend:**
- Parish boundary
- Levee
- Roads
- Rail
- Potential new road

- Lake Pontchartrain
- New Orleans
- Gulf of Mexico
How do we get to the vision?
The following strategies will be refined and expanded upon in the Plan.

**Complete Community Strategy 1:**
Adopt the vision and land use maps and use as guides in making development and investment decisions.
- Map future growth areas.
- Define general nature of growth (residential, commercial, business).
- Identify areas of expansion for potential 5,000 acres of expected development.
- Pay special attention to U.S. 90/Highway 308 area.
- Identify long-term natural areas.
- Identify long-term agricultural areas.
- Identify new communities (if any).

**Complete Community Strategy 2:**
Coordinate with cities to define future growth areas.
- Cooperate with cities and settlements to define future growth.
- Define probable annexation areas around incorporated cities.
- Develop cooperative agreements between cities and parish to determine growth, future service areas, development plans.

**Complete Community Strategy 3:**
Develop small area community and neighborhood plans to address special areas of concern.
- Conduct community/neighborhood level plans to address special area concerns such as the need for affordable housing, the need for workforce housing, needs of underserved populations, including low income residents in and around Thibodaux, immigrant oil and gas and ship building workers, and the Houma Nation.
**Complete Community Strategy 4:**
Continue to address FEMA and insurance issues.

- Partner with regional, state and federal agencies to ensure that Louisiana residents can continue to obtain insurance for homes and businesses.

**Complete Community Strategy 5:**
Create a program of community-level solutions to make small-scale improvements that address quality-of-life issues.

- Prioritize community-level improvements, package them together and create a small bond program to pay for them.
- Projects could include improvements such as: drainage improvements that address internal flooding within existing developments; sidewalk and neighborhood connections; neighborhood parks and trails.

**Complete Community Strategy 6:**
Use development standards to ensure that future development does not create impacts on transportation, drainage and quality of life.

- Establish drainage development standards that make sure new development does not create drainage problems for existing uses.
- Incorporate drainage study recommendations.
- Include access standards to keep roads and highways safe and connected.
- Establish setback standards so that new buildings are placed consistently and do not create site conflicts with neighboring buildings.
- Provide landscaping standards in commercial areas.
Economic Development Opportunities

What is the economic development vision?
Lafourche Parish’s economy is expanded through the entrepreneurial spirit of residents. The economic growth helps retain young people in the Parish, with new jobs in emerging sectors filled by well-trained employees who enjoy living and working in Lafourche Parish.

Why is this important?
Lafourche Parish’s population is stable with a modest growth rate anticipated. The Parish’s 2011 population is estimated at 96,666. Between 2000 and 2010 the parish had a 0.7% growth rate. The largest segment of Lafourche’s population is under twenty years of age; with the parish’s future population following national trends and becoming older on average, as the baby boomers age group ages. While the state forecasts minimal or no growth between 2010 and 2030, based on current local, state and nation trends, the Plan expects an annual average growth rate of at least 0.5%, or over 10,000 new residents, in 2030.

The Parish job growth rate between 2005 and 2010 was 13%, which is more than double the state’s job growth rate for the same time period. The majority of this job growth was in new private sector jobs, with less than 100 new jobs in farm employment and no job growth in the government sector. Given the national and regional economies, employment is strong in Lafourche Parish. The strongest employment, compared to state levels is in the transportation & warehousing, forestry & fishing, and management sectors. Lafourche is low in retail trade, health care, manufacturing, and several other service areas, compared to state levels in these sectors.

The Parish added about 7,000 new jobs between 2005 and 2010, with 4,500 of these occurring in the top five growth industries in the Parish. Of these 7,000 new jobs, 2681 were in the Transportation and Warehousing sector, alone. Almost 3,000 of these new jobs were created by entrepreneurs or proprietors, representing a 7% change between 2005 and 2010.
Another important factor is that the Parish is “under-retailed” in several categories, while others are over-supplied. Many people have indicated that they have to go to Houma for shopping, medical care and other services. This gap creates an opportunity for future growth.

Nationally the labor pool is shrinking with the projection of having more jobs than workers in the next several decades. Cities are competing for employees and there is a trend to create livable, quality communities that will attract and retain employees to fill future jobs and fuel the local economy.

**What can we do?**

Given these trends, it is important to develop strategies to capitalize on the Parish’s entrepreneurial spirit, its economic base, and emerging trends and address the challenge of retaining young people to live and work in the Parish by creating an environment that embraces innovation.

Strategies to achieve economic growth in the medical, high-tech and business fields; the information technology sector; and education and healthcare industries are clear opportunities to expand the local economy and to provide jobs that have a future and that will be in demand and of interest to a younger population. In addition, to attract and retain young people, the Parish will need to place an emphasis on providing new housing choices, education and training, a quality school system and a diverse social and cultural lifestyle. Entrepreneurs and small businesses will need a variety working environments from flexible office space to affordable warehouses. Much of this type of growth and cultural development is anticipated to occur in and around Thibodaux. Additionally, the Parish and Port’s efforts to expand and diversify Port Fourchon will provide many opportunities for job growth in the Parish. Given the Port’s proximity to deep water means that less dredging is necessary to accommodate larger container shipping, which opens up the Port for potential uses beyond the current support of the drilling industry.

A third opportunity area is coordinating and expanding the Parish’s tourism program to build on the many offerings the parish now has and to create a consolidated tourism program that is nationally and internationally marketed.
How do we get to the vision?
The following strategies will be refined and expanded upon in the Plan.

**Economic Development Strategy 1:**
Establish a comprehensive economic development organization for the Parish.

- Obtain assistance of Louisiana Department of Economic Development to establish organization and provide direction on how agencies are set up and the funding mechanisms and budgets required.
- Have a full-time person on staff to interface with potential corporations and other economic development entities.
- Partner with economic development agencies on a state and regional basis.
- Become involved with the New Orleans/Baton Rouge Chambers economic partnership to expand the economies of the state and region.
- Work with Nicholls State University, Fletcher Technical College and South Central Louisiana Technical College to set up training programs geared to the needs of emerging industries.

**Economic Development Strategy 2:**
Build the economy on innovation and entrepreneurship.

- Create working environments that appeal to entrepreneurs.
- Create flexible office space.
- Create live-work housing.
- Provide warehouses and warehouse offices.
- Create business, food preparation, and restaurant incubators.
- Emphasize new housing choices that appeal to younger creative business owners.
- Partner with Nicholls State University to offer programs to train for emerging industries.
- Partner with the Chef John Folse Culinary Institute to build food and culture experience in Thibodaux.
**Economic Development Strategy 3:** Expand and diversify Port Fourchon.

- Investigate the market and operational potential for adding freight import/export to the port operations.
- Explore an initial freight operation of offloading freight at Port Fourchon and barging it via the Houma Shipping Channel.
- Add the ability to truck freight through the Parish after the completion of LA1 and LA 3235 to remove the potential for conflicts between freight and local traffic.
- Provide for the long-term option of extending rail service to the port in conjunction with national and/or international logistics partners.
- Design LA 3235 as a Parish freight route with controlled and planned access to protect the traffic flow.
- Plan for a logistics employment center located at Highways 90 and 308.
- Attract oil and gas related companies to develop in the Parish.

**Economic Development Strategy 4:** Create a regional tourism program.

- Expand the scope of current tourism activities to create a consolidated tourism approach based on the Lafourche culture.
- Include providers of fishing and hunting; ecotourism and bird watching; coastal recreation; bayou, swamp and coastal tours; dinner tours on the bayou; cultural tours, music and food; bed and breakfast owners and local lodging.
- Prepare an organizational and marketing approach.
- Market nationally and internationally to targeted audiences (French speaking).

- Build a full service, quality RV Parks and camp ground, with a focus in the southern parish area.
- Target RV and campers by advertising in magazines and newsletters targeting traveling public.
- Provide uniform signage in the parish to assist tourists and visitors.
- Meet need for boat launches and docking facilities.

**Economic Development Strategy 5:** Attract additional retail and services in the Parish.

- Capture the expenditures that are currently going to Houma businesses.
- Identify retail shortages and promote retail to fill gaps.
- Develop a strategy to attract family entertainment and restaurants.

**Economic Development Strategy 6:** Certify properties through the LED Site Certification program.

- Prioritize potential sites that could be certified and advertised on the Louisiana Economic Development Site Certification program, such as the Port Fourchon area; Lockport industrial park; Galliano airport area; Highway 90 and 308 area.
- Create a list of ten potential sites and certify one to two a year.
- Inform and educate landowners about the advantages of LED Site Certification.
- Continue to explore sites to be certified and placed on list.
Transportation Connections

What is the transportation vision?

Lafourche Parish has a system of waterways, roads, and trails that supports the Parish’s economy, responds to the desires and needs of citizens, and makes the Parish more accessible to visitors who wish to experience the culture and beauty of this special place.

Why is this important?

Lafourche is primarily served by two two-lane roadways – LA 1 and Highway 308 – with local and freight users mixing from the north to the south. While some travelers are trying to traverse through the Parish – from Thibodaux to the Port, school buses are delivering children, and residents are accessing shopping and services. An accident can shut down a roadway for hours. LA 3235 in the southern part of the Parish was built to facilitate truck traffic, however it is being compromised by uncontrolled access from adjacent uses, which creates tremendous conflicts and unsafe conditions between travelers going high speeds through the Parish and local traffic accessing their homes, built off of the highway.

Transportation problems and issues can rarely be solved by large, sweeping improvement like the construction of a large highway or putting in additional traffic signals. Incorporating Complete Street principles that look at many options for future road design in the Parish at an early stage is essential to developing a healthy, robust transportation system.

Complete streets are intended to incorporate multiple modes of transportation options within a single roadway network including bikeways, parking, sidewalks, planting buffers, and transit ways.
What can we do?

To help Lafourche Parish prosper in its role as a gateway to some of the most important fuel and fishing resources in the Gulf, while remaining a great place to live and visit, roadway capacity will need to be increased through new road alignments, expansions and rebuilding of roads and bridges. This will increase vehicle capacity on the Parish’s roadways and make evacuation safer and more expeditious. Supporting major highway initiatives such as LA 1 and LA 3235 will bolster economic development efforts by opening up freight routes through the parish, increase evacuation functions and enhance national security efforts in the region.

In addition, expanding multi-modal transportation options, including transit service, will support a robust economy. Currently it can cost a non-auto owning resident of southern Lafourche Parish over $100 to travel to Thibodaux or Houma. A transit system to move people from the local communities into the cities to meet needs such as shopping, doctors’ visits, or participating in entertainment activities will increase the overall health and economy of the Parish.

Creating a hike and bike trail system along the banks of Bayou Lafourche would use an untapped opportunity for walking and recreation trails. The public health and well-being benefits to Parish residents are well documented and walking also ranks high for accessibility and popularity. While current conditions do not make walking beside the Bayou appealing in many places, with limited improvements this could change. Lafourche Parish should explore the opportunity to create a trail that would provide an attractive option for residents and visitors to walk and bike safely to their destinations. Developing a series of Bayou Plazas will open up the natural beauty and culture to locals and visitors alike. People, the world over enjoy overlooking the water. Lafourche is blessed to have Bayou Lafourche running throughout the full reach of the Parish from Thibodaux down to Golden Meadow. The Bayou is underutilized, undervalued, and in some places, downright trashed.
How do we get to the vision?

The following strategies will be refined and expanded upon in the Plan.

**Transportation Strategy 1:**
Increase roadway capacity and safety.

- Extend LA 3235, north of U.S. 90, and include access management improvements for the new portion and the existing LA 3235.
- Construct of a new two lane road between Chackbay and Thibodaux and 307.
- Continue to improve and build an elevated LA-1 to Port Fourchon.
- Build a loop road around Thibodaux.

**Transportation Strategy 2:**
Expand multi-modal transportation options.

- Fund public transit service to provide basic service to major hubs in the Parish. Explore coordinating with Port Fourchon to provide morning and evening shuttle transportation for the 2000 dock workers.
- Integrate land use and transportation facilities by incorporating a “Complete Streets” approach for future transportation improvements.
- Design turn lanes, signal timing, sidewalks, bus shelters and other amenities to make Parish more multi-modal friendly.

**Transportation Strategy 3:**
Create a hike and bike trail system.

- Create a plan to transform the edge of Bayou Lafourche by creating a multi-use trail.
- Provide a bike path from Nicholls State to the Downtown area.
- Research similar efforts across the state, and prepare a report on best practices.
Transportation Strategy 4:
Support major highway initiatives.

- Complete the construction and elevation of LA-1 to open us a future trucking system throughout Lafourche Parish with access to the nation. With this new road and elevated bridge segments connecting the region, imports will not have to be moved by barge to Houma. The Parish should continue their efforts to work with DOTD and regional planning agencies to secure the funding complete this important project.

- Extend LA 3235 to connect with I-90 north of Mathews to provide a major highway initiative that will improve safety for evacuation and serve as a trucking route alternative to LA-1/308.

- Protect freight routes from encroaching local traffic and development through access management and land use development standards.

Transportation Strategy 5:
Develop bayou plazas.

- Create Bayou plazas so locals and visitors can enjoy the Lafourche culture through public docks, park areas, private rentals, local fish and produce markets, restaurants, shops and recreational facilities, and water taxies all located next to the bayou.

Transportation Strategy 6:
Outline a long-term rail strategy to serve the port.

- As a long-term strategy, plan to provide a rail connection from the northern parish along existing rail right-of-way to Raceland/Valentine.

- Extend the rail line from Valentine to the Port.

- Explore partnerships with potential shipping interests to fund this project over the long term.
Housing Choices

What is the housing vision?
Lafourche Parish has a balanced housing mix to meet the needs of future residents.

Why is this important?
Housing needs in the Parish are changing and will continue to change as the population ages and becomes increasingly diverse. Though projected population growth for the Parish over the next twenty years is moderate (a need for approximately 3,600 new units is estimated), it is clear that existing housing stock will not meet expected future demand, in terms of both in type and quantity. Emerging housing market trends will require providing housing for multiple generations, including baby boomers in their 60’s and 70’s, generations X and Y, and first- and second-generation immigrants.

What can we do?
An effective strategy for meeting future housing needs will be to integrate new housing types and ownership opportunities into existing housing stock. This can include both owner- and renter-occupied apartments in rehabbed buildings with a mix of affordable and high-end units. Small multifamily developments will best fit the scale of Lafourche’s towns. Two- to three-story townhomes and live-work units will be a good fit for transitional neighborhoods (i.e., those on the outskirts of town centers). New single-family homes can be constructed on smaller lots to accommodate more households in a given area. The potential for new mixed-use centers could also provide townhomes and live-work units. There is also a strong community preference for elevated structures in order protect homes from flood damage.
How do we get to the vision?
The following draft strategies will be refined and expanded upon in the Plan.

**Housing Strategy 1:**
Develop prototype example plans for preferred housing types so that people who want to build infill housing can do so at reduced costs. Housing plans should be designed to result in resilient structures that blend with the existing character.

**Housing Strategy 2:**
Partner with the housing authority and other entities to build affordable housing that is resilient and develops housing that will create a balanced housing mix.

**Housing Strategy 3:**
Partner with large employers to create workforce housing for current and future employees.

**Housing Strategy 4:**
Work with large property owners in the LA 1/Highway 308 area to plan for a town center that provides a mix of housing opportunities.
Recreation and Cultural Resources

What is the recreation, cultural and historic resources vision?
The residents of Lafourche envision a Parishwide parks and recreation network with highly accessible parks, ample playing fields, and numerous connecting trails and greenways for hiking and biking. Agricultural land and activities, such as sugarcane fields and shrimping, will be protected and elevated in visibility as integral parts of local culture and values.

Why is this important?
Improving the quality of life for residents will be achieved by protecting the things they love and enhancing opportunities for enjoying those cultural experiences. Preserving Lafourche’s unique local culture, as well as highlighting natural resources, will provide a solid framework for protecting community values and building a vibrant and resilient local economy.

What can we do?
Conservation and restoration efforts will transform Bayou Lafourche into a recreational amenity and regional attraction for birding, fishing and hiking, reinforcing Lafourche’s regional reputation as a sportsman’s paradise. Continuing to implement previously approved projects, such as the 2007 Bayou Lafourche Corridor Plan is critical. The projects recommended in this plan addresses a variety of strategies to reach the Parish’s recreation and cultural resources vision, including:

• Create and enhance access to neighborhood and community parks and boat ramps.
• Restoration of eco-parks and protected areas.
• Expand opportunities for habitat viewing, birding, environmental education, and hunting.
• Create more places to play and relax, such as sports fields.
• Develop recreational programs and special use facilities for exercise and education.

It is also critical for the Parish to coordinate with Jean Lafitte National Park in support of the Park’s vision. Individual components of this vision have been expressed in response to the Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration (LACPR) Plan of 2009, but are well-aligned with the Parish’s recreation, cultural and historic resources vision and coordination with the Park will provide a central information source for the historic sites within Lafourche.

The National Park Service’s vision calls for construction techniques that minimize habitat destruction (especially in the proposal to build a new outer ring levee system), consideration of altering waterways to help restore a more naturally functioning hydrology, measures to counteract land loss, and preservation of natural and cultural resources with minimal disruption of cultural and socioeconomic uses of the Bayou. The Jean Lafitte Park vision also supports Lafourche’s vision for resiliency, saying “structural modification of the delta, such as building levees and other forms of surge barriers and gates, are doomed to failure if restoration is not pursued quickly and aggressively.”
How do we get to the vision?
The following strategies will be refined and expanded upon in the Plan.

**Recreation and Cultural Resources Strategy 1:**
Coordinate an inventory of parks and recreation facilities.
- Coordinate and inventory between the eight recreational districts and develop a program to market and share services between districts.

**Recreation and Cultural Resources Strategy 2:**
Continue to implement the 2007 Bayou Lafourche Corridor.
- Prioritize recommendations that can be feasibly funded and completed in the near future.
- Projects include creating a promenade along Company Canal in Lockport; developing a trail system through publicly owned swampland forest in Lockport; creating a new seafood market and safe harbor marina in Golden Meadow; and creating a nature park and marina in Larose.

**Recreation and Cultural Resources Strategy 3:**
Locate new and renovated bayou plazas along Bayou Lafourche.
- Design public access facilities along the bayou with boat docks, water taxis and picnic areas to offer local families high quality recreation opportunities as well as attract visitors to enjoy water access and unique experiences of the Gulf’s beautiful and diverse wildlife.

**Recreation and Cultural Resources Strategy 4:**
Coordinate Lafourche Parish’s recreation vision with the vision for Jean Lafitte National Park.
- Support Jean Lafitte National Park’s vision which focuses on restoring its ecosystem; improving hydrologic function; providing a beautiful natural setting with many recreational and educational opportunities.
Safety and Resiliency: Living with Water

What is the resiliency vision?
A resilient Lafourche will be a Parish where:

- Structural and non-structural protection measures improve every community’s level of flood protection.
- Economic centers are resilient and hardened to potential floods and storms, and bounce back quickly.
- Hydrologic and wetlands restoration provide increased storm buffering capacity, simultaneously generating new, quality habitats for wildlife, and increasing the local populations’ access to nature and recreational opportunities, while also building upon a growing ecotourism sector.

Why is this important?
Water is a major part of the life in Lafourche. Most of the economy is founded on goods and services, like oil and seafood produced in the Gulf. Water based recreation – fishing, boating, hunting and bird-watching – are major regional and national draws.

Focusing on improved resiliency is central to minimizing the impact of storm and flooding events on human health and safety, economic vibrancy, and natural resources. A principle of increased resiliency also refers to maximizing economic vibrancy and diversity, so the parish is not vulnerable in the case of a downturn in any one particular industry.

What can we do?
Strategies to increase resiliency will facilitate economic diversification, and provide a solid framework for implementation of structural and non-structural measures to increase local storm buffering capacity. A major component of resiliency also involves continued expansion of policies and programs to protect and restore wetlands and other natural areas.

Strategies to improve hydrologic conditions and slow land loss include marsh and maritime forest ridge creation, sediment diversion, and offshore protection infrastructure. Hydrologic and wetlands restoration will increase environmental, social and economic resiliency by creating new habitats for wildlife and improving existing habitats, restoring natural functions to the ecosystem that serve to protect and prevent further land loss and damage to housing and infrastructure, and will improve quality access to nature and recreation opportunities that can be leveraged into a thriving ecotourism economy, capitalizing on Lafourche’s natural assets in a way that preserve and enhance them while also contributing to economic vitality. Smaller-scale efforts such as structural elevation and timely restoration of essential services will also contribute to a resilient Lafourche Parish.
How do we get to the vision?
The following strategies will be refined and expanded upon in the Plan.

**Safety and Resiliency Strategy 1:**
Improve resiliency to floods and other natural disasters by utilizing best practices for coastal development.
- Land building: marsh creation; sediment diversion; barrier island restoration
- Shoreline protection
- Levees
- Pumps
- Hardening infrastructure

**Safety and Resiliency Strategy 2:**
Use site-specific solutions to improve resiliency.
- Clustering land uses on naturally high areas to reduce the area vulnerable to storm damage.
- Adopting a practice to elevate buildings beyond minimums to reduce the likelihood of flooding.

**Safety and Resiliency Strategy 3:**
Restore the region’s natural hydrologic function, where possible.

**Safety and Resiliency Strategy 4:**
Preserve and rehab wetlands and sensitive areas along bayous and other waterways.

**Safety and Resiliency Strategy 5:**

**Safety and Resiliency Strategy 6:**
Adopt risk-reducing standards as outlined in the Louisiana Coastal Land Use Toolkit to increase resiliency of development.

**Safety and Resiliency Strategy 7:**
Coordinate with the CPRA on implementation of the State’s Coastal Master Plan.
Infrastructure for the Future

What is the infrastructure vision?
Lafourche excels in meeting residents’ health and safety needs by improving the built environment as a means of enhancing protection, improving economic health, creating community cohesion and providing recreational opportunities.

Why is this important?
Lafourche needs increased capacity to meet the needs of Parish residents in an efficient and cost-effective manner and to handle storm and flooding events while promoting human health and safety. Infrastructure supporting the protection and enhancement of natural resources will improve quality of life and also increase the Parish’s ability to leverage these resources as local economic drivers.

What can we do?
Infrastructure upgrades in the next five years will catalyze Lafourche Parish’s progress toward being a place that better meets the health and safety needs of its residents.

Pump upgrades for forced-drainage levees will increase resiliency and capacity for lessening the impacts of storm and flooding events on the natural and built environment. Capacity will be increased from 300 cubic feet per second to 1,000 cubic feet per second, and natural gas backups will ensure continuation of these essential services in case of electrical system failure.

A new recreation center will be built in a central Parish location, increasing opportunities for improved health and wellness, social well-being and community cohesion for a large number of Parish residents. A drop-off facility for discarded materials at a central location (the old Raceland Landfill site) will facilitate increased rates of recycling throughout the Parish, and reduce the amount of waste being deposited in the Bayou. This will not only lower the costs of trash pickup throughout the Parish, but also enhance wildlife habitat and human enjoyment of local natural resources.
Ongoing marsh creation as a strategy for increased storm buffering capacity will help slow gulf-wide land loss, and also provide additional high-quality wildlife habitat and opportunities for ecotourism. Many other ongoing projects and programs will continue to focus on restoring and beautifying the coast, wetlands and potable water resources within the Parish.

How do we get to the vision?
The following strategies will be refined and expanded upon in the Plan.

*Infrastructure Strategy 1:*
Implement the parish’s 5-year budget plan and the water district’s plans to provide adequate services of drainage, sanitary sewer, potable water, solid waste and recycling.

*Infrastructure Strategy 2:*
Review drainage and development standards and consider incorporating additional standards to decrease impacts of new development.

*Infrastructure Strategy 3:*
Plan for adequate service to growth areas.

*Infrastructure Strategy 4:*
Continue to support programs that focus on restoring the coast and wetlands.
Coordinating Effectively

What is the coordinating effectively vision?
All parts of Lafourche Parish work together and there is close coordination with the cities in the Parish as well as with other coastal parishes. The coordination of diverse areas of the Parish make the whole Parish stronger and more resilient.

Why is this important?
What happens in one part of the parish closely impacts other parts. Likewise, the coastal parishes are so interconnected that one parish’s actions can affect the others’ actions. In addition, there are many opportunities for shared and coordinated services.

What can we do?
There are several levels of coordination that will enhance the quality of life and health and safety of the Parish. Implementation of the Plan will be most successful with the coordinated effort of Lafourche Parish, working with representatives from adjacent Parishes and other governmental organizations or agencies, both within and outside of Lafourche Parish.

Local Coordination
Both the Parish and Thibodaux could benefit from increased coordination to ensure that consistent development goals exist to enhance each. The Parish, Thibodaux, Lockport, and Golden Meadow should consider establishing a planning area that goes beyond the current boundaries of their city limits as a “joint planning area.” Changes in this joint planning area would be reviewed for consistency in development and cooperative opportunities for service provision. In addition, the cities and Parish could address the potential, if any, of future annexation areas, allowing both entities to plan accordingly. Other areas that could be considered jointly by Parish and local governments include:

- Facilitating common development standards
- Coordinating of sewer and other facilities
- Economic recruitment opportunities
- Provision of an integrated trail system
- Coordinated transportation planning

Coordination with Adjacent Parishes
Water management, transportation and economic development are three areas that cross parish boundaries. Parishes need to coordinate to ensure that water management practices do not negatively affect adjacent parishes. Similarly, new economic opportunities will arise and a coordinated planning effort would ensure that quality developments take place that benefit the entire coastal region, while protecting the special characteristics of each parish.

Regional Coordination
The Parish should continue to work with the Houma-Thibodaux Metropolitan Planning Organization which very successfully provides coordinated transportation, planning and organizational assistance to the region and serves as a coordinating agency.

State Coordination
Louisiana Economic Development, the Department of Transportation and Development, the Coastal Planning and Restoration Agency, the Department of Environmental Quality and the Department of Health and Hospitals, as well as other state agencies, are instrumental in implementing policies at a statewide level that ensure the health and safety of the state’s citizens.
How do we get to the vision?
The following strategies will be refined and expanded upon in the Plan.

**Coordinating Effectively Strategy 1:**
Support shared goals between different parts of the parish, with the Parish’s cities and towns and with adjacent parishes.

**Coordinating Effectively Strategy 2:**
Create a joint planning area and annexation and boundary agreements between the Parish and cities and towns.

**Coordinating Effectively Strategy 3:**
Create programs to share data and services within the Parish and between the Parish and cities and towns, and adjacent parishes.
- Consider sharing data requirements that cross political boundaries, such as water management, land management (GIS), and safety data bases (911).

**Coordinating Effectively Strategy 4:**
Work with Terrebonne Parish to discuss effective service provision to the Point aux Chenes area of Lafourche Parish. The parish boundary cuts the community in half, creating many destabilizing issues.

**Coordinating Effectively Strategy 5:**
Use the Implementation Plan as a guiding document to identify and prioritize the Parish’s many initiatives.
- Organize recommendations and priorities of various studies and documents.
- Identify resources that need to be considered and balanced in future planning efforts.
- Create links between major initiatives such as CPRA programs, DOTD programs, and the Parish’s drainage study.
Next Steps

This document describes the preliminary content of the Plan to be finalized this fall. Between now and then, we need the community to help us cultivate the best plan possible. What do you think is missing? What should change? What new ideas do you have? This feedback will sharpen the focus of the Plan to best meet the needs of Parish residents.

Any effective plan depends on a strategy of doing the most important things first, including identifying and carrying out the most practical and high-priority projects. In addition to commenting on the Plan’s ideas, help us determine the most important things for the Parish to pursue first. What would be the most effective actions? What actions have the most potential partners? How can we make a big difference in the near term through affordable actions?

During the summer, you will be able to send us your comments on the Plan’s website, and help us prioritize potential near-term actions the Parish can take to transform the Vision into reality. In late August, the draft Plan will be released and the public will have another chance to review and comment. As the Plan moves to adoption by the Parish Council in the fall, we want to ensure that all interested residents have the chance to participate.

Please go to www.PlanLafourche.org to fill out a short survey about the proposed strategies presented here in the draft Vision.