

ST. BERNARD PLAQUEMINES PARISHES

Land Use and Transportation Vision Plan 2008

St. Bernard and Plaquemines Parishes, LA
State Project No. 700-92-0018
FAP No. STP-9206(500)
RPC No. 0018-STB

Submitted to

The Regional Planning Commission

November 2008

ST. BERNARD & PLAQUEMINES PARISHES Land Use and Transportation Vision Plan 2008

**St. Bernard and Plaquemines Parishes, LA
State Project No. 700-92-0018
FAP No. STP-9206(500)
RPC No. 0018-STB**

Submitted to

**The Regional Planning Commission for Jefferson,
Orleans, St. Bernard and St. Tammany Parishes
1340 Poydras Street
New Orleans, LA 70112-5276**

Prepared by :

**N-Y Associates, Inc.
2750 Lake Villa Drive
Metairie, LA 70002**

In association with:

**Burk-Kleinpeter, Inc.
Fernandez Plans , LLC**

November 2008

FOREWARD

The *St. Bernard & Plaquemines Parishes Land Use and Transportation Vision Plan - 2008* was funded by the Regional Planning Commission (RPC) as part of a coordinated effort to analyze land use and transportation in St. Bernard and Plaquemines Parishes following the devastation of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

Hurricanes Katrina and Rita caused considerable destruction and resulting displacement in both Plaquemines and St. Bernard Parishes. It is a given that the parishes should – and will-- be redeveloped, but along different lines than before.

The purpose of this study is to work with the governments and citizens of the two parishes to develop a Strategic Vision and Conceptual Plan for Redevelopment for each parish. The following document presents two (2) consensus plans (one for each Parish), based on input from local citizens' advisory committees, elected and agency officials, as well as data from the Louisiana Recovery Authority (LRA) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

This study serves to reassure that the redevelopment of both St. Bernard and Plaquemines Parishes will occur in a logical and responsible manner, developing broad future land use generalizations based on sustainable concepts.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary ES-1

Chapter One: Introduction 1-1

 Project Purpose and Need 1-1

 Project Parameters 1-1

 Policy Context..... 1-4

 Regional Goals..... 1-9

 Report Organization..... 1-10

Chapter Two: Existing Conditions..... 2-1

 Demographics 2-1

 Economy 2-7

 Environment..... 2-10

 Land Use 2-11

 Current Land Use Implementation..... 2-15

 Infrastructure..... 2-29

 Transportation..... 2-31

Chapter Three: Planning District Assessment 3-1

 Planning District One: Chalmette West and Old Arabi 3-2

 Planning District Two: Paris Road 3-5

 Planning District Three: Chalmette East..... 3-5

 Planning District Four: Meraux 3-7

 Planning District Five: Violet and Poydras 3-9

 Planning District Six: Lower St. Bernard 3-10

 Assessment Implications for Future Land Use 3-10

Chapter Four: Vision and Goals 4-1

 Vision Statement..... 4-1

 Goals 4-4

Chapter Five: Land Use and Transportation Recommendations 5-1

 Policy Areas 5-1

 Implementation Plan 5-4

 Future Land Use Map 5-7

 Future Transportation Plan 5-25

 Conclusions..... 5-33

List of Tables

<u>Number</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Page</u>
2-1	School Enrollment.....	2-14
2-2	Wastewater Facilities	2-30
2-3	Existing Major Thoroughfare Network.....	2-33, 2-35
3-1	Planning District Summary Table	3-11
5-1	Residential Land Allocation.....	5-9
5-2	St. Bernard Parish Projects from the Transportation Improvement Program	5-25
5-3	Action Implementation Table.....	5-34, 5-35

List of Figures

<u>Number</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Page</u>
2-1	Historical Census Data	2-2
2-2	Population Estimate Timeline	2-3
2-3	Race	2-4
2-4	Age	2-5
2-5	Income.....	2-6
2-6	Employers, 2004 - 2006	2-7
2-7	Employees, 2004-2006.....	2-8
2-8	Average Wages, 2004-2006	2-9
2-9	Average Home Sale Price, 2004-2007	2-12
2-10	EPA Determination of severity of damage.....	2-13
2-11	Existing Land Use: Planning Unit 1: Arabi/Chalmette West.....	2-17
2-12	Existing Land Use: Planning Unit 2: Paris Road	2-19
2-13	Existing Land Use: Planning Unit 3: Chalmette East	2-21
2-14	Existing Land Use: Planning Unit 4: Meraux	2-23
2-15	Existing Land Use: Planning Unit 5: Violet/Poydras.....	2-25
2-16	Existing Land Use: Planning Unit 6: Lower St. Bernard	2-27
2-17	Existing Transportation Network	2-37
3-A	Planning Districts and Elevation	3-13
3-1	Recovery Assessment: Planning Unit 1: Arabi/Chalmette West.....	3-15
3-2	Recovery Assessment: Planning Unit 2: Paris Road.....	3-17
3-3	Recovery Assessment: Planning Unit 3: Chalmette East	3-19
3-4	Recovery Assessment: Planning Unit 4: Meraux.....	3-21
3-5	Recovery Assessment: Planning Unit 5: Violet/Poydras	3-23
3-6	Recovery Assessment: Planning Unit 6: Lower St. Bernard.....	3-25
5-A	Policy Areas	5-2
5-1	Future Land Use: Planning Unit 1: Arabi/Chalmette West.....	5-13
5-2	Future Land Use: Planning Unit 2: Paris Road	5-15
5-3	Future Land Use: Planning Unit 3: Chalmette East	5-17
5-4	Future Land Use: Planning Unit 4: Meraux	5-19
5-5	Future Land Use: Planning Unit 5: Violet/Poydras.....	5-21
5-6	Future Land Use: Planning Unit 6: Lower St. Bernard	5-23
5-7	Future Transportation Network.....	5-27
5-8	Major Arterial Schematic Section	5-30
5-9	Minor Arterial Schematic Section.....	5-30
5-10	Collector Street Schematic Section	5-31
5-11	Local Street Schematic Section.....	5-31

Appendices

- A** Population Projections
- B** Migration
- C** Road Home Program
- D** Economic Cluster Data
- E** Flood Elevation Data
- F** Pedestrian and Bicycle Policy Recommendations

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

St. Bernard Parish 2007 Land Use and Transportation Vision Plan

The *St. Bernard Parish 2007 Land Use and Transportation Vision Plan* was funded by the Regional Planning Commission as part of coordinated effort to analyze land use and transportation in St. Bernard and Plaquemines Parishes following the devastation of Hurricane Katrina.

The Land Use and Transportation Plan for St. Bernard Parish was prepared for the Regional Planning Commission by Burk-Kleinpeter, Inc., in association with N-Y Associates, Inc., and Fernandez Plans, LLC. The contractual elements of the scope of work for the Land Use and Transportation Vision included the following:

- Description of Existing Conditions
- SWOT Analysis
- Vision Statement
- Conceptual Land Use Plan
- Conceptual Major Thoroughfare Plan

The resulting analysis of existing conditions and recovery data were incorporated into the future land use and transportation recommendations. This study was accomplished by utilizing existing information sources, field observations, public forums, meetings with elected and appointed officials, and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) analysis.

The study's key findings are outlined below:

- Literature Review: Chapter One outlines the planning processes and reports which have occurred in the period from August 29, 2005 to the publication of this report. This report is inclusive of these processes and their goals, objectives, findings and recommendations.
- Population: Chapter Two describes existing conditions and compares pre- and post-Katrina demographic conditions. It appears that during that period, St. Bernard Parish has recovered approximately 35 to 40% of its pre-Katrina population, or 21,000 to 26,000. Anecdotal evidence suggests it could be even higher.

Post-project population projections by the RPC in coordination with GCR are included in Appendix A. Appendix B includes a migration study of St. Bernard Parish, completed by the RPC. This migration study analyses a

history of IRS data to track migration trends (only those completing a tax return would be included).

- Demographics: Race, age and income, demographic trends following Hurricane Katrina are similar to those before the storm.
- Economy: Between 2005 and 2006, the number of employers in the economic sectors of Retail Trade, and Health Care and Social Assistance dropped the most. The number of employees dropped across nearly all economic sectors during the same time frame, however, Retail Trade, Health and Social Assistance, Educational Services, and Accommodations and Food Services saw the greatest job losses in that same time frame.

The RPC purchased post-Katrina economic data and is currently developing business “cluster” analysis to be compared with pre-Katrina data. This information will not be available until further ‘ground-truthing’ has occurred by the RPC on the economic data. These data will be made available to the parish in 2008 for future planning activities.

- Recovery Activity: Recovery activity is sporadic throughout the Parish, with about 35% of the population returned. Areas showing the lowest levels of recovery activity tend to be located north of Judge Perez Drive and away from Paris Road. Violet, Poydras, and Lower St. Bernard appear to have higher recovery rates, although they also have the least dense populations.

Home owners’ intentions -whether to stay and rebuild in their current location, purchase elsewhere in Louisiana, or sell and leave the state as reported by the Louisiana Recovery Authority (LRA) Road Home program - are incorporated into Appendix C in a map series by the RPC. The RPC obtained the data and mapped in through March, 2008 with the most current information provided demonstrating the choice of the homeowner. The information however, does not allow insight as to the specific relocation even if the relocation is within the same parish.

- The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has been working to address hazardous conditions since September 2005. Their work has progressed from ensuring safe drinking water, to assessing federally permitted facilities; to the collection and disposal of hazardous and non-hazardous waste.
- Since Hurricane Katrina, the Corps of Engineers has repaired the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet (MR-GO) levee breaches and restored

that levee to a height of 20 feet in St. Bernard Parish, with the expectation that it will settle to 17.5 feet, the pre-Katrina levee height.

After the completion of the draft of this report, the MR-GO was officially deauthorized when the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works (ASA-CW) forwarded the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers Chief's Report for the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet (MRGO) Deep-Draft De-Authorization Study to Congress. This action officially deauthorized the MRGO from the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway to the Gulf of Mexico in accordance with the Water Resources Development Act of 2007. Also included was the recommendation for a rock closure of the channel near Hopedale. This recommendation came from the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) prepared by the ACOE for the project.¹

- The South Louisiana Submerged Roads Program has included over \$20 million dollars committed by FEMA for local street repair projects. All repairs are scheduled to be completed by the end of 2009. As part of this program, approximately eight collector or arterial streets which are part of the federal aid network will be repaired and overlaid.
- Water, electric, cable, phone and natural gas connections were restored throughout the parish in a relatively timely manner. All wastewater treatment plants and 89 of 92 lift stations were severely damaged following Hurricane Katrina. Container trucks were being used to drain the system and transport sewage to the plant for treatment. Three of the Parish's eight Drainage Pumping Stations were severely damaged by the storm. One had minor damage, and three remained in service throughout the dewatering operations.

These findings have led to a number of recommendations, which are detailed in Chapter Five. These recommendations include:

- Fully staff the Planning Department so that it can take on a Comprehensive Plan for redevelopment. Recovery is a fluid process and it is going to take many years. The Parish will need experienced professionals dedicated to tracking recovery, planning, and implementation. Developing databases of data related to recovery indicators will be a key component of tracking recovery to effectively guide decision-making.

¹ Mississippi River Gulf Outlet. US Army Corps of Engineers, New Orleans District. June 5, 2008. <http://mrgo.usace.army.mil/>.

- Strategize for recovery. Adopt policies according to flood risk and present rate of rebuilding based on policy areas concepts of ReInvent, ReThink and ReBuild. Flood risk combined with repopulation and investment activity should be the guiding elements of recovery policies. This report proposes that policies and strategies be delineated into the following categories based upon flood risk and activity: ReInventing, ReThinking, and ReBuilding.

ReInvent: High risk of future flooding, low rate of return.

Strategies: Keep densities lower, and elevate structures. Redevelop property using land-banking, “lot next door” programs, or keep it in public stewardship as greenspace. The Parish should zone for rural residential, conservation, and recreation², and repair infrastructure on an ‘as needed’ basis.

ReThink: Moderate or lower risk of future flooding, moderate or low rate of return.

Strategies: Land bank properties and steer new development projects to these areas. Zoning strategies should include the use of Planned Unit Developments, a mixed use category added to the existing ordinance or the use of a form based code to encourage a range of housing choice and a mix of uses, sometimes referred to as a town center concept or traditional neighborhood design. Repair infrastructure when necessitated by private investment.

ReBuild: The risk of future flooding is somewhat lower (because these areas to be at higher elevations) and population return is higher.

Strategies: The strategy for grayfield properties is infill, so despite the use of the lot next door strategy, preservation of the streetscape and the neighborhood context should be encouraged. There is the greatest demand in these areas, and as such, public infrastructure improvements and repairs should be prioritized in these locations. Emphasis should be placed upon area form based reviews to help give a cohesive appearance to the pre-existing and infill development.

² This could include eco-tourism destinations with the appropriate supportive infrastructure.

- Update zoning codes to do the following:
 - Revise Planned Unit Development (PUD)
 - Adopt Mixed Use Category
 - Adopt Corridor Overlay

Once a fully staffed planning department is in place, Planners will need an updated zoning code achieve the mixed use, compact, traditionally designed neighborhoods that are desired in some parts of the Parish. These tools can also facilitate improved aesthetics.

- **Future Land Use Map (FLUM):** Restrict the amount of land available for development to correspond with demand. This will stabilize property values and allow the Parish to steer development to where it is most appropriate. This also allows the potential for new uses that may be more appropriate in the areas of reduced demand with higher flood risk. This study makes some preliminary recommendations, but ultimately a comprehensive planning process including a market analysis is recommended, around 2010. It is hypothesized that population and recovery activity will have stabilized by then and allow the Parish to more acutely steer development. Availability of functioning utilities should also be a prominent factor in the FLUM.

In conclusion, the *St. Bernard Parish 2007 Land Use and Transportation Vision Plan* acts as a bridge between earlier recovery plans which were visionary or project-oriented and some of the later steps which will ultimately need to be taken to implement these ideas. It is a guiding document which makes the first attempts at assessing recovery geographically throughout the Parish, and bases recommendations and strategies on those findings with the intent to lead the parish into a future comprehensive land use plan.