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## Using smart growth principles for development in St. Landry Parish

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USING SMART GROWTH PRINCIPLES FOR  
DEVELOPMENT IN ST. LANDRY PARISH

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
Louisiana State University and  
Agricultural and Mechanical College  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
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in

The School of Landscape Architecture

by  
Rebecca L. Scheffler  
B.S., Troy State University, 2000  
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## **Abstract**

Since the end of World War II, many American cities have seen an outward migration from their core into open spaces along the city's edge. The urban/suburban sprawl phenomenon not only affects urban cores but the rural lands and open spaces surrounding them. As landscape architects, we study humans and their interactions with the environment and have an important position in making informed decisions about issues of sprawl and unmitigated growth in communities. This study was conducted to provide city and parish officials and planning boards with options for beneficial growth in St. Landry Parish, a rural parish in south central Louisiana.

A study of Smart Growth and its ten principles was completed. Also, three areas – Lancaster County Pennsylvania, Talbot County Maryland and the Wasatch Area in Utah - were examined for comparison and insight on how suburban sprawl had been mitigated in their communities. Recommendations for a comprehensive growth plan in St. Landry Parish were made based on the analysis of Smart Growth principles and case studies. It was determined that three Smart Growth principles would benefit the rural character and sense of place in St. Landry Parish. The principles were (1) preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty, and critical environmental areas (2) strengthen and direct development towards existing communities and (3) foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place. Community involvement in the planning process and the establishment of community vision and goals were highly encouraged. Smart Growth can be used as a step stone in the planning process for St. Landry Parish.



## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

As urban/suburban sprawl becomes the common growth pattern in the United States, the unique characteristics of rural lands surrounding urban cores are threatened. Louisiana's large metropolitan areas, such as New Orleans, Baton Rouge and Shreveport have seen this growth pattern. St. Landry Parish, a rural parish in south central Louisiana, is feeling sprawl pressure from Lafayette, another growing metropolitan core.

St. Landry Parish contains many small towns, agriculture lands and woodlands. Through the development of the *Heritage Area Management Plan* by the Atchafalaya Trace Commission, St. Landry Parish expressed a desire for growth strategies. An analysis of Smart Growth principles will determine relevant principles that can be applied to the rural lands of the parish. The overall goal of this thesis is to make informed recommendations to assist St. Landry Parish in achieving growth strategies in best interest of the community.

#### **Introduction to Research Topic**

Uncontrolled growth is a problem for both metropolitan areas and rural areas. Ever spreading homogeneous suburbs and strip malls devour valuable open space and prime farmland, while congesting highways. Sprawl is “the continual use of more land than is necessary to accomplish a given development goal. Sprawl is the consumption of resources and land in excess of what is needed to create a comfortable, livable and functional city” (Thompson Brent).

Sprawl, as we know it today began to take form after World War II and was made easier by American's fascination with the automobile. This fascination continued to grow with the building of interstate highways during the 1950s and 1960s. Sprawl was exacerbated by the much-publicized problems in the inner cities and lower costs of property on the urban fringe.

With every ring of sprawl, more money for roads, infrastructure and maintenance is needed. Grady Clay, former editor of *Landscape Architecture* magazine stated "A single family suburban house notoriously under pays taxes in proportion to the services it gets" (Thompson William 68). Revenues from local tax bases cannot cover necessary infrastructure and its maintenance as well as added expenses of services such as fire and police protection, school transportation, and mail service.

In an attempt to combat sprawl and provide communities with growth options, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and other non- profit organizations joined forces to form the Smart Growth Network in 1996. Smart Growth serves the community, economy, and environment, relying largely on public participation. It provides suggestions for growth management and allows communities flexibility about their growth.

Many small towns and rural areas are affected by sprawl but there are ways to minimize the impact of it. States such as Oregon and Washington initiated urban growth boundaries around their cities and towns. New development occurs within the boundary, which accommodates projected growth for twenty years. Maryland implemented a Smart Growth incentive based program through state legislation.

The program subsidizes only infrastructure in pre-determined development zones. Hawaii enacted state wide zoning ordinances to preserve farmland and scenic areas. Growth is not only addressed at the state level, but the local level as well. Lexington, Kentucky has created a boundary for its city in order to protect the horse farms surrounding it.

Like so many others across the United States, Louisiana's cities and small towns suffer due to sprawl. After the construction of Interstate 49 in the 1980s, many of Louisiana's rural areas became easily accessible. In 1990, 63.8 percent of the population in St. Landry Parish was categorized as rural; by 2000, the figure had decreased to 44.3 percent (*1990 and 2000 Census*). With the convenience of interstate travel, parishes such as St. Landry are seeing their rural lands disappear.

### **Problem Statement**

Louisiana's communities have not been immune to sprawl. Evidence of rapid and uncontrolled growth along the north shore of Lake Pontchartrain from New Orleans and flight to Ascension and Livingston Parishes from Baton Rouge are two examples. It is necessary for rural parishes, such as St. Landry, now beginning to feel pressure from sprawl, to plan and accommodate this influx of growth.

St. Landry Parish is perched on the northern fringe of Lafayette, the state's fourth largest metropolitan area. The parish has experienced a 9.2 percent population increase over the past ten years. Neither comprehensive plans nor zoning ordinances are enacted within the parish, leaving it with no organized method to guide growth. By exploring the feasibility of Smart Growth as a framework for development decisions and growth options in rural lands, this thesis strives to

establish the relevant principles that will provide parish and city officials and planning boards with options for beneficial growth in their community.

### **Scope**

This thesis is directed to the cities, towns and open lands within St. Landry Parish Council District 2, District 7, District 8, District 9 and District 10.

The thesis is limited to implementation suggestions pertaining to non-policy principles of Smart Growth. The focus will be principles having a direct connection to planners and designers.

### **Objectives**

There are two (2) objectives for this thesis:

1. Assess Smart Growth principles in terms of applicability to St. Landry Parish.
2. Make recommendations based on selected Smart Growth principles to aid St. Landry parish in its development goals.

### **Method**

- Assess applicability of Smart Growth principles to St. Landry Parish.
- Assessment of sustainable growth through case studies.
- Apply principles and develop recommendations.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Sprawl and the Smart Growth Response**

#### **The Advent of Sprawl**

Since the end of World War II (WWII), American cities have seen an outward migration from their cores into previously open spaces along the city's edge. To a large extent, the trend has been motivated by the relentless pursuit of the so-called "American dream," a house on a large lot in a quiet neighborhood. Americans have sought to leave behind many of the problems typically associated with modern urban environments – congestion, safety and security, and educational underachievement. Quite predictably, the move away from the urban core resulted in desirable, quiet neighborhoods growing farther and farther away from the central cities, creating the contemporary phenomenon of suburban sprawl. Sprawl is defined as "the continual use of more land than is necessary to accomplish a given development goal. Sprawl is the consumption of resources and land in excess of what is needed to create a comfortable livable and functional city" (Thompson Brent).

Trends in land use moved from a monocentric core, "a strong central business district – and industrial facilities...served as major employment centers" to the now commonplace polycentric core consisting of "multiple clusters of development dispersed over a large area" (EPA 4). With a polycentric core, necessary services, such as grocery stores, drug stores, and doctors, serve several communities. Because communities are farther away from these necessary services, automobile dependence has increased and encouraged separation of land uses.

Several factors in land use, dating back to the late 1940s, can also help explain the suburban sprawl phenomenon. Highway development and other transportation infrastructure improvements, public policy, and wealth and social status evolved tremendously since the WWII era. In 1956, President Dwight D. Eisenhower enacted the Interstate Highway System. Originally intended to provide WWII veterans with job opportunities and to address issues of national security, namely the ease of transport of military supplies, the interstate system also provided improved access to rural areas that had not been developed. “The development of interstate highways and other freeways allowed the expansion of residential development into formally rural areas” (EPA 8). As ease of access spurred urbanization, many rural areas began experiencing faster losses of open space. Michael Ratcliffe stated: “The divide between urban and rural areas is disappearing. We tend to think of metropolitan as urban and not as rural. Yet within these metro areas there is quite a bit of rural territory” (Tibbets 7). Ratcliffe’s statements are supported by trends pointing to heavy losses in rural populations in the last five decades of the twentieth century. Much of this population decline was primarily due to the mechanization of the agricultural sector and a reduced demand for labor in rural areas. However, the loss of rural populations can also be contributed to city expansion. Since the 1950s, cities have expanded their limits, encompassing more and more land in attempt to generate more revenue. This expansion has caused rural populations to lose their rural classification. Table 2.1 shows decreases in rural populations of six states from 1950 to 2000.

**Table 2.1 Comparisons of Rural Populations from 1950 to 2000.**

State	1950 - % rural	2000 - % rural	% of change
Louisiana	45.2%	27.4%	-17.8%
Maryland	31.0%	13.9%	-17.1%
Oregon	46.1%	21.3%	-24.8%
Pennsylvania	29.5%	22.9%	-6.6%
South Carolina	63.3%	39.5%	-23.8%
Utah	34.7%	11.8%	-22.9%

Better highway conditions, direct routes between destinations, post WWII optimism, and improved access, brought about a new fascination for the automobile. As a result, governments have spent millions of dollars since the 1960s improving highway conditions, mainly for commuters' benefit (Tibbets 4). In recent decades, automobile design has produced sleeker, more fuel-efficient vehicles. Today, "the automobile's dominance as the transportation of choice means little room for new gains from public transportation or carpooling" (Belsie). Many Americans depend on automobiles for travel between home and work, home and school and home and retail areas. "People are migrating from center cities to suburbs; from suburbs to farther-flung rural areas; from larger, denser metros to smaller, less dense metros; and even from rural towns to the outskirts" (Tibbets 6). According to the *Nationwide Personal Transportation Survey*, the average commute had increased from 9.9 miles in 1969 to 11.6 miles in 1995 ("US Commuting Travel Times").

Many workers throughout the United States cross county lines for their employment. Seventy percent of Arlington County Virginia's residents leave "the county to work somewhere else. Meanwhile, an even bigger phalanx of

nonresidents come in to the county to do their jobs” (Belsie). On a more regional level, 60 percent of West Baton Rouge Parish residents work outside the parish; a similar percentage of workers commute from elsewhere to jobs within the parish (Belsie). According to Gerard Perron, executive director of St. Landry Economic and Industrial Development District, the Parish has a workforce consisting of 31,000 workers, of which approximately sixteen percent commute to jobs outside parish lines (Johnson 19 Jan 2003).

Along with highways and automobiles, public policy has influenced changes in land use. For instance, the federal government encourages homeownership by subsidizing interest paid on home loans in the form of tax deductions on federal returns. Government also subsidizes infrastructure, funding sewer and water treatment and constructing and maintaining streets in suburban neighborhoods (EPA 10). Zoning ordinances have also dramatically changed land uses, especially in cities and towns. They set standards on amounts of parking, building setbacks, and housing densities. While originally intended to keep residential areas safe from hazardous industries, zoning now separates all land uses - commercial, retail, office, residential and open space. Today, in many communities, it is illegal to develop mixed-use communities based on current zoning ordinances (EPA 10).

Wealth and social status has increased dramatically since the 1950s. Americans have seen an improved standard of living and an increase in disposable income and personal leisure time. The median income for a four-person family in 1980 was \$24,332. By 2000, the figure increased to \$62,228



("Median Income for 4 Person Family"). Increases in income are attributed to more and more people obtaining college educations and training in specialized fields. People are entering the workforce with an increased basis of knowledge, which is compensated with higher salaries. Increases in disposable income combined with the desire to have a large home in the suburbs and improved access to outlying areas also spurred the sprawl phenomenon.

Outward migration to the suburbs left inner cities with decreasing property values and increasing crime rates. As residents left, so did businesses, leaving large vacant and abandoned buildings in downtown areas. Fiscal problems within the inner city increased the appeal of suburbs. Higher costs are paid in the urban core for services such as utilities, phone, water and gas. Most of these services are charged on an "average-cost" basis (SGN 1998 23). "Because all customers pay average costs, residents in more urban, higher density areas subsidized those on the fringe" (23). For some cities, costs for providing service to homes on fringe areas can reach as much as \$10,000 more than the homes in core areas (23).

From the beginning of the twentieth century, America has seen a change in planning and land use. A dramatic shift occurred after WWII from a tight urban core to an urban core surrounded by rings of suburbs. Infrastructure improvements, a fascination for automobiles and changes in public policy made access to rural, outlying areas easier. Many areas in the United States experience increased travel times and traffic congestion because workers live farther from jobs. Sprawling metropolitan areas covering large tracts of land are

now commonplace. In recent years, a nationwide movement developed to mitigate the effects of suburban sprawl on cities, towns and rural areas. However, the movement must be accompanied with changes in land use, planning, and policy.

### **Sprawl in Louisiana**

No community is immune to the effects of sprawl, including Louisiana. According to Jim Harvey, director of the New Orleans Regional Planning Commission, the state is not well known for its planning efforts, and most of the time, planning is considered “an afterthought” (Eggler). Sierra Club released an analysis entitled “Solving Sprawl” ranking “Louisiana 50<sup>th</sup> in community revitalization programs, 47<sup>th</sup> in open space protection and 30<sup>th</sup> in land-use planning” (Warner 6 Oct 1999). A Washington highway research organization released the Road Information Program, a study of highways and bridges, their conditions, available maintenance funds and traffic congestion (Anderson). The study ranked Louisiana’s roads second worse in the country. Twenty-seven percent of the state’s interstates and other major traffic corridors are “in poor condition” (Anderson). According to the study, approximately one-third of urban streets in Louisiana carry higher traffic volumes than they were design to transport (Anderson).

Crowded streets and poor road conditions are a few of Louisiana’s issues related to sprawl. Jefferson Parish, just west of New Orleans, was considered “the boom parish of the 1950s and 60s” (Warner 9 Apr 1999). The parish saw an increase in population and wealth when the oil industry came to the area during

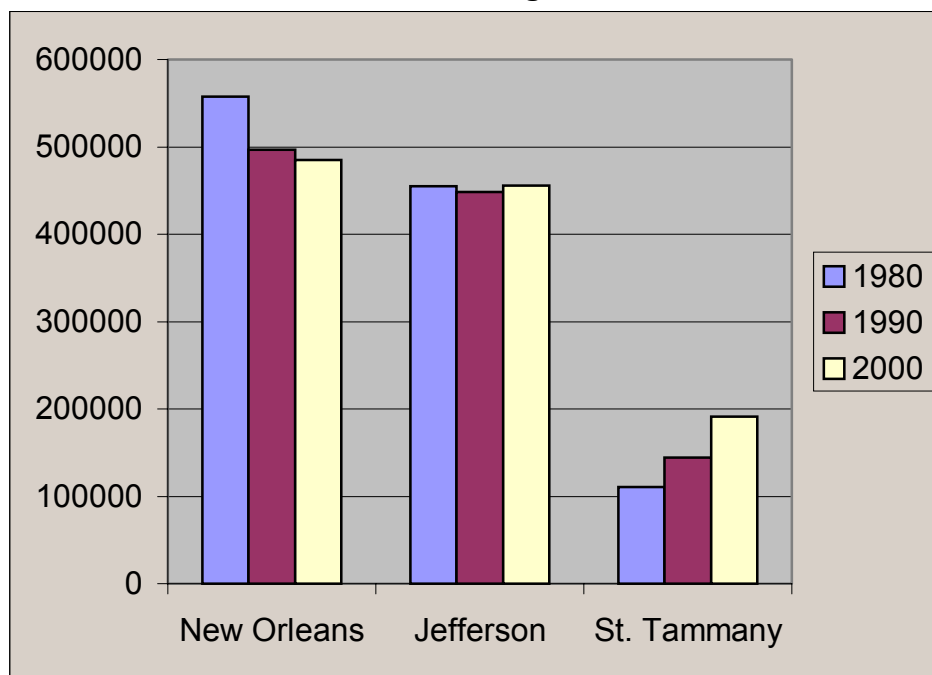
the 1930s, marking the transition from a farming community to a suburb (East). After WWII, land in Jefferson Parish was cheap and with subsidized home loans, many New Orleans' city dwellers sought the respite of suburban life. During the 1960s, Interstate 10 was expanded through the parish, making the commute to jobs in New Orleans easier (East). But, along with the development has come a "myriad of problems: periodic flooding, traffic congestion and the erosion of the coastline due to saltwater intrusion" (East). According to David Rusk, an urban analyst, Jefferson Parish is now "a declining inner suburb" (Warner 9 Apr 1999). Residents of Kenner, one of Jefferson Parish's cities, experienced the effects of sprawl from New Orleans in their community. In 2002, University of New Orleans planners conducted a series of workshops throughout the city to gain insight of residents' feelings about planning issues for their community (Grissett). Residents sought to make their community "more people-friendly" and focus less on the automobile (Grissett). Kenner residents envision their city to be "one that values neighborhoods and families over concrete and commerce" while incorporating more green spaces and well-planned development (Grissett).

In recent decades, the northshore of Lake Pontchartrain, particularly St. Tammany Parish, experienced a new wave of sprawl from New Orleans. Since 1980, St. Tammany Parish's population has increased by 73 percent (*1980 and 2000 Census*). Many residents of St. Tammany Parish escaped sprawl on the southshore, but now are seeing sprawl take over their community once again. "Sprawl started around Mandeville and Slidell and spread out haphazardly like

the fingers of a hand, as major thoroughfares like US 190 and I-10 became gateways for growth” (Ritea, et. al.).

St. Tammany Parish appeals to many people because of the “quality of life, good schools, a skilled labor force and access to the interstate highway” (Chapple). New Directions 2025 is St. Tammany Parish’s comprehensive plan for growth. But according to Covington Mayor Keith Villerie, the plan “is just going to pretty up sprawl” rather than seek changes in land use and policy needed to control sprawl (Eggler). Table 2.2 illustrates a decrease in population in metro New Orleans since 1980. Jefferson Parish’s population growth leveled off while St. Tammany Parish experienced an influx of growth.

**Table 2.2 New Orleans and Surrounding Parishes’ Growth Since 1980.**

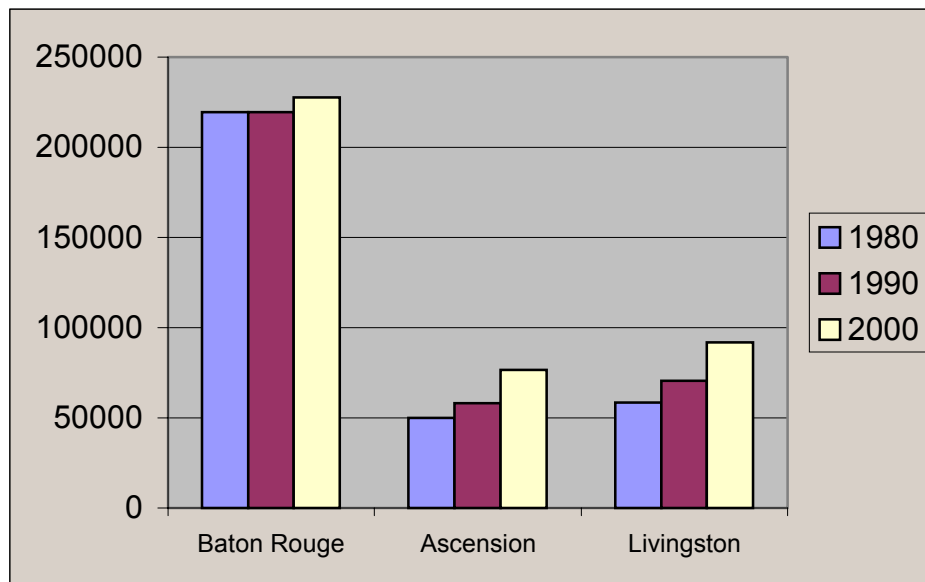


Not unlike New Orleans, Baton Rouge’s population grew minimally over the past few decades. However, Ascension and Livingston Parishes, to the south and east of Baton Rouge respectively, experienced population increases.

The two parishes “now lead population growth in Louisiana” (Nunnally).

Livingston and Ascension are considered bedroom communities of Baton Rouge and suffer from low tax bases and lack money for necessary infrastructure, such as roads, sewers and drainage (Nunnally). Parish Presidents of Livingston and Ascension state, “the problem with being a growing bedroom community is that it doesn’t help a parish’s tax base grow much” (Nunnally). Livingston Parish does not have the tax base to support infrastructure for its residents. The parishes look favorably on growth, but according to Joe Harrell, a resident of Ascension Parish, would “like to be able to try to keep up with it [growth] with our infrastructure” (Nunnally). Illustrated in Table 2.3, Baton Rouge’s growth rate has been static since 1980 while Livingston and Ascension parishes have flourished.

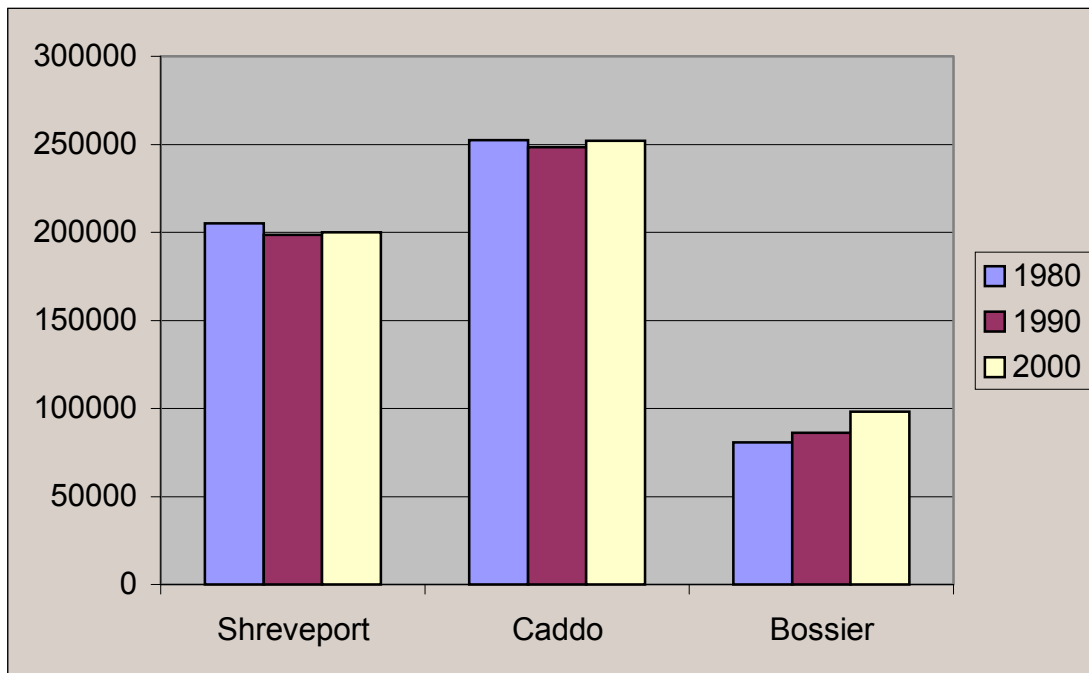
**Table 2.3 Baton Rouge and Surrounding Parishes’ Growth Since 1980.**



Just as its southern counterparts, Shreveport also suffers sprawl pains. Interstate 49 opened through the city in 1995 (Blanchard). Along with casinos, the interstate increased commercial businesses in the area. The interstate

completed a loop around the southern part of the city and “miles of what used to be cotton fields have been transformed into parking lots, shopping centers and restaurants” (Blanchard). Also, Shreveport experienced a residential influx on the southern side of the city, and businesses followed the residents. A new hospital, a Super Wal-Mart, car dealerships and shopping centers all have been built in the area (Blanchard). Table 2.4 shows the growth in the city of Shreveport, Caddo and Bossier Parishes. While Shreveport’s growth is stagnant, populations increased in the outlying area of Bossier Parish.

**Table 2.4 Shreveport and Surrounding Parishes’ Growth Since 1980.**



Sprawl is evident in Louisiana. Since 1980, Louisiana’s population has grown by only six percent (*1980 and 2000 Census*). During the same time, areas such as St. Tammany, Livingston, Ascension and Bossier Parishes saw greater population increases. Even though planning is not a strong point for the state, Louisiana does not have to endure suburban sprawl.

## **The Smart Growth Response**

Counties, cities and towns throughout America are experiencing growth challenges. Communities face problems with traffic congestion, increased commuter times, air pollution, inefficient energy use, loss of open space and habitat and lessening of their sense of place. They also face issues of where and how to grow. With environmental degradation, rising costs, deteriorating infrastructure and operation and maintenance problems, many communities are seeking options for growth.

One such option is Smart Growth. In 1996, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and other non-profit organizations joined forces to form the Smart Growth Network (SGN) and tackle the issues associated with sprawl. The SGN is quite diverse and includes private and public sectors and non-governmental organizations. All have joined to serve their communities, economies and environments and rely heavily on public participation. Smart Growth provides a framework and choices to communities about how and where they can grow while protecting its sense of place.

Cities and communities are recognizing that conventional development patterns are not in their best interest. Since World War II, growth has been characterized by urban flight from the core into the suburbs, which in turn left behind decaying downtowns and often dying communities while devouring open space.

Many communities question abandoning existing infrastructure and brownfields in older neighborhoods, jobs moving to the suburbs and workers

remaining in the cities, and air quality degraded by increased commuter times (SGN 1998 1). Demographic shifts, depletion of resources, concerns with diminishing budgets and negative views of growth spurred the beginning of the smart growth movement.

### **Why Smart Growth?**

The key concept behind Smart Growth is for communities to have “a vision of where they want to go and what things they value in their community” (SGN 1998 2). With a vision, communities realize their objectives and goals, which benefits them over time. They have the necessary tools to assess new development in their community and ensure it complies with their goals. Communities are better prepared to use growth in positive ways, rather than absorbing development that is later abandoned.

Another key concept of Smart Growth is recognizing “[the] connection between development and quality of life” (SGN 1998 1). Communities are motivated by the economic benefits that come with new growth. However, growth incurs a negative response when the environment is degraded, local taxes are increased to pay for new infrastructure, roads become congested, and commuter times increased.

Each community, whether new or existing, can benefit from Smart Growth and its principles. Smart Growth helps existing communities “invest time, attention and resources in restoring community and vitality to center cities and older suburbs” (SGN 1998 1). Newer planned communities focus on the ideas of pre-World War II neighborhoods where streets were pedestrian friendly, traffic is



slower, and towns are a mixture of residential and commercial areas (SGN 1998 1).

Growth is necessary for communities to remain viable and meet the changing needs of its residents. Whether managed well or poorly, growth impacts the health of existing neighborhoods. With a community's best interest in mind, growth "enhances the value and character of existing business and community investments and accommodates growing regional populations" (SGN 1998 8). Communities able to manage growth provide residents healthy, viable places to work and live and also become centers for new growth and investment.

### **The Ten Principles of Smart Growth**

The Smart Growth Network completed a series of three primers providing communities with necessary tools to control growth. Getting to Smart Growth: 100 Policies for Implementation is the fourth in the series and offers ten implementation suggestions for each principle. The strategies cover planning and policy procedures for implementation. The scope of this thesis limits the strategies and implementation suggestions to those pertaining directly to land use and planning. The following section provides an overview of each principle and discusses relevant implementation strategies for each.

**Mixed Land Uses.** Mixed land uses provide diverse and sizable populations with strong commercial bases, which can support public transit. Walking and biking become viable alternatives thus increasing the number of people on the streets and help heighten the sense of security. Mixed land uses create meeting places for social activity and increases economic activity by

attracting pedestrians back onto the streets. The relationship between commercial and residential areas results in higher property values. The diverse land uses allow local tax bases to support vital services by utilizing existing infrastructure.

Reviving desolate shopping malls and strip commercial developments utilize large tracts of abandoned land, existing infrastructure and regenerates lost tax bases. Single use commercial and retail development also present areas for mixed-use development. Use of missed-use areas is determined by access between differing uses and opportunities for interaction among users. No model exists for mixed-use developments since each community is different and proper scale is difficult to imagine. Communities must decide what is an acceptable scale for development to ensure its fit into the community.

**Take Advantage of Compact Building Design.** Compact design allows neighborhoods to absorb new growth and development resulting in unique, denser areas. Existing infrastructure is utilized and its maintenance is supported by local taxes. Compact design focuses development in existing communities, cities and towns easing development pressures on open spaces and agricultural lands. Also, it promotes efficient use of land and resources. Necessary services are located within closer proximity to each other, reducing the dependence on automobiles and lessening the demand for parking lots.

Planned and maintained open spaces compensate where private yard space is reduced due to compact design. Parks and open spaces within compact developments provide residents with a wide variety of choices – plazas,

playgrounds, gardens and recreational fields. Regional planning efforts encourage development into existing communities, ensuring they are able to absorb higher densities while protecting surrounding open spaces and agricultural lands.

**Create a Range of Housing Opportunities and Choices.** Housing is crucial to the way a community grows. Typical American homes are no longer made up of parents and children as they once were. Single adult households and households without children have increased. Aging baby boomers and empty nesters may either be unable or unwilling to care for larger homes and yards. By providing diverse housing opportunities, these citizens remain active participants in their neighborhoods.

Housing near commercial centers, which are active, vibrant areas during daytime hours, stimulates economic activity during evening hours and weekends when businesses may suffer from lack of patrons. It also determines availability of transportation options, needed services and promotes efficient use of natural resources. Vacant buildings present opportunities for revitalization and redevelopment in a community and can increase the amount and types of housing an area offers.

**Create Walkable Communities.** Walkable communities promote pedestrian activity and social interaction among users. Increasing the number of people enhances a sense of safety in the community. By locating goods and services within comfortable walking distances, dependency on the automobile decreases. Less use of automobiles improves air quality and the need for large

parking lots decline. Benefits of walkable communities “include lower transportation costs, improved personal health and fitness, and expanded consumer choice” (SGN 2002 26).

Promoting walkable communities can be accomplished through a variety of design standards. Designing narrower streets, providing on street parking and incorporating pathways through parking lots help calm traffic speeds making pedestrian use more comfortable. In busy commercial areas, including buffers between pedestrian and automobile traffic and cross walks at busy intersections allows pedestrians an increased sense of safety. Design standards determining minimum widths for sidewalks in various areas – residential and commercial – also provide comfort for users.

**Foster Distinctive, Attractive Communities with Strong Sense of Place.** “Smart growth supports the idea that development should not only respond to basic commercial or housing needs...but should also help create communities that are distinctive and unique” (SGN 2002 33). Communities that define their vision and goals create unique places, maintaining their historical, cultural and geographical identity. Within the vision and goals, provisions for new development should complement, rather than compete with, existing features. Identifying buildings, spaces and neighborhoods as assets in neighborhoods ensure their preservation and contribution to the area’s sense of place. Visual clues mark boundaries in communities and direct residents and visitors to various areas within the community.

### **Preserve Open Space, Farmland, Natural Beauty and Critical**

**Environmental Areas.** Conventional development patterns devour valuable open space and prime farmlands. Once these greenfields are developed, reclaiming them is almost impossible. Open spaces not only provide recreational areas for residents and habitats for numerous plants and animals, they add a visual variety not always found in congested urban areas. They also prevent flood damage by reducing the amount of impervious surfaces, filter runoff, replenish groundwater sources and improve air quality.

Protection of open spaces, farmlands and natural areas are an “important component to achieving better places to live” and should be incorporated into a community’s vision (SGN 2002 43). In turn, conservation is planned and incorporated into a larger greenfield system which links open spaces. More importantly, protected open spaces and farmlands guide development into the existing community, creating a stronger economic core.

### **Strengthen and Direct Development Towards Existing Communities.**

Directing development into existing cities and towns relieves development pressures on open spaces and prime farmlands located on the fringe. Strain on local tax bases is reduced because existing infrastructure is utilized. Through infill, brownfield development and preservation of existing buildings, communities create a stronger core and enhance their sense of place by minimizing sprawl. Residents enjoy the convenience of being closer to their jobs and needed services rather than incurring long commutes between destinations. Conducting

infill check ups ensure that areas where development can occur are not overlooked, leading development into the core.

**Provide a Variety of Transportation Options.** As traffic congestion worsens across the United States and commuter time increases, transportation options become viable solutions for communities. Newly constructed roads reach their maximum capacity as quickly as they are built. Offering a variety of transportation options reduces dependency on the automobile. Transportation plans should successfully connect pedestrian, bike, transit, and roads while providing linkages between homes, jobs, schools, commercial areas and services.

**Make Development Decisions Predictable, Fair and Cost Effective.** The relationship between public and private sectors is crucial for smart growth development. With conventional development patterns, zoning determines setbacks, densities, land uses, etc. Smart Growth development challenges these conventional patterns. The private sector finances a majority of projects in communities. Provisions should be made for the private sector, allowing ease in obtaining permits for development. The private sector invests large sums of money in loans, and timely, cost effective development decisions benefit not only the developer, but the community as well.

**Encourage Community and Stakeholder Collaboration.** Involving and educating residents, local leaders and investors from the beginning, decreases the reluctance to make new development decisions. The community provides insight into certain needs and concerns. Addressing those needs and concerns

can lead to creative design solutions for difficult areas. Design charrettes are excellent ways to involve community residents and leaders in solving difficult problems. Inclusion of all perspectives insures “greater understanding of the importance of and challenges associated with good planning and investment” (SGN 2002 78).

## **Conclusion**

Suburban sprawl has become commonplace in mainstream America. It affects cities and towns as well as rural areas. Changes in highway transportation, public policy and wealth and social status have evolved immensely since World War II, spurring the sprawl phenomenon. Communities are concerned with traffic congestion, increased commuter times, air pollution, inefficient energy use, loss of open space and lessening of sense of place. Louisiana is no different. While planning is not a strong point of the state, sprawl issues must still be addressed.

The Smart Growth Network formed in 1996 as a response to suburban sprawl. It offers a framework to communities focusing on how and where they can grow. However, communities must decide which principles work best for them and how those principles should be implemented. Smart Growth represents only one way to address sprawl and its’ effects on cities, towns and rural areas. Completion of a comprehensive master plan ensures all tools used to control sprawl work in harmony.

## **Chapter 3 Case Studies**

### **Introduction**

The following chapter discusses relevant case studies and implementation practices for three different areas – Lancaster County Pennsylvania, Talbot County Maryland and Wasatch Area in Utah. Through primary research, the case studies were overviewed and pursued for different reasons. Further information on each study was obtained from comprehensive plans of each area found on local websites maintained by the respective community. Lancaster County Pennsylvania and Talbot County Maryland are rural areas pressured by suburban sprawl from neighboring metropolitan cores. Both case studies are comparable to St. Landry Parish and offer different aspects for growth management. Each county's comprehensive management plan differs in the beginning stages and the implementation process. Maryland has state enabling legislation for planning, whereas planning in Pennsylvania is dependent upon local governments. Key points from each case study can be applied to St. Landry Parish. The Wasatch Area of Utah comprises a much larger area than the two previous mentioned case studies. Through closer research, the process for establishing the growth management plan contained excellent suggestions.

### **Lancaster County Pennsylvania**

Lancaster County, Pennsylvania is home to the Amish, a Plain Sect people who live a simplistic lifestyle without modern conveniences. The Amish have lived in and farmed the area for nearly 250 years (SGN 1998 11). Between 1981 and 1990, the county experienced a 50 percent population increase, while construction



increased by 300 percent (11). “As its population and economy have boomed, the county has begun to look more like the rest of suburban America” (Grunwald).

New residents were drawn to Lancaster County by its rural character, natural beauty and culture. In turn, they were endangering the same characteristics that drew them there. Traffic began filling the county’s roads and highways. Three thousand acres of farmland disappeared annually into new development and big box retail stores (Stetz). Residents and newcomers realized their quality of life and future were fading with suburban sprawl. In response, Lancaster County began “one of the nation’s most aggressive efforts to preserve farmland and hold the line on sprawl” (Grunwald).

The community invested time, effort and money into developing a plan that would accommodate new growth without diminishing its way of life or economy (SGN 1998 12). Through citizen participation in surveys, questionnaires, meetings and forums, residents expressed their concerns about development in their community. The public noted farmland and open space preservation, urban growth boundaries and revitalizing Lancaster City among the best trends in the community (Lancaster County). Local leaders and policy makers along with residents “recognize[d] the interconnectedness among economic growth, natural and cultural heritage protection, social equity and quality of life” (Lancaster County). As a result, a growth management plan was developed. The main focus of the plan kept most new development inside determined urban growth boundaries (UGBs), focused on traditional neighborhood design and preserved the area’s rich farmlands (Grunwald).

The management plan contains the vision and goals Lancaster County has for itself. The vision includes a diverse community coming together to offer its residents a high quality of life (Lancaster County). Cities and towns are revitalized, full of activity and “sustainable agriculture, manufacturing, tourism and services remain the foundations of our strong and diverse economy” (Lancaster County). Goals include preserving open spaces, agricultural lands and natural resources, maintaining quality of life and sense of place for residents and enhancing and promoting a sustainable economy (Lancaster County). By analyzing the goals, Lancaster County determined six key focus areas, which guided them in reaching their goals. The key focus areas include “(1) protecting and preserving our natural and cultural heritage (2) revitalizing our urban communities (3) developing livable communities (4) creating a sustainable economy (5) celebrating, investing in, and mobilizing the talents of our human resources and (6) promoting strong leadership, awareness, responsibility and involvement in community issues” (Lancaster County).

Policies and actions needed to achieve the goals associated with each key focus area were identified. Lancaster County implemented urban growth boundaries, developed design guidelines for development in historic districts, implemented regional comprehensive plans, directed resources toward maintaining and improving existing infrastructure, used tourism to celebrate the county’s rich heritage and included citizens in the entire planning process (Lancaster County).

The management plan is government produced and implemented. The Amish do not rely on government, but they have recognized the threat of sprawl on their community as well. In their own way, they have begun to protect their

farmlands and way of life. Amish businessmen are buying approximately half of the farms for sale in Lancaster County (Grunwald). Amish farmers are transferring development rights of their properties to the Lancaster Farmland Trust, “a private group working with the government” (Grunwald).

Lancaster County recognized its viable community and prime agricultural lands were threatened by suburban sprawl. Through combined efforts from local leaders, citizens and the Amish, Lancaster County has a vision for its future. The management plan does not stop growth, but controls it while protecting the county’s rural charm and simple way of life.

### **Talbot County Maryland**

Talbot County Maryland is a rural county on the eastern shore of the Chesapeake Bay and consists of many small towns, farms and woodlands. The lands are part of the Choptank River Watershed that flows into the Bay (Talbot County 8-5). In 1950, Chesapeake Bay Bridge was built and created easier access into the rural areas of Maryland’s eastern shore (ELI 6). Over the past thirty years, growth rates in the area have been high (ELI 1).

Talbot County considers its beauty, environmental richness and sense of history to be among its most important characteristics (ELI 8). Easton, the county seat, is a major area for jobs, commercial and residential areas in the county. Strip malls and homogeneous subdivisions began to overtake the landscape and the residents’ realized they were losing their sense of place (ELI 7). New development devoured open space and wetlands, created traffic congestion and increased water

pollution into Chesapeake Bay. Residents were concerned with loss of farms and open spaces and decreases in the quality of the natural environment (ELI 7).

In 1992 and 1997, Maryland enacted Smart Growth initiatives through state legislation. The state identified seven land use visions including “(1) development is concentrated in suitable areas; (2) sensitive areas are protected; (3) in rural areas, growth is directed to existing population centers and resources are protected; (4) stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay and land is a universal ethic; (5) conservation of resources is practiced; (6) economic growth is encouraged and regulatory mechanisms are streamlined to support 1-5; and (7) funding mechanisms are provided to fulfill the visions” (ELI 3). The land use visions acted “to promote orderly growth, ensure continued economic development and protect the natural resources of the state” (ELI 3). Components of the state legislation target rural communities. The Priority Funding Areas Act, Rural Legacy Program and Sensitive Areas are crucial to Talbot County and its comprehensive plan.

The Priority Funding Areas Act designates development areas. They are areas where “state and local government want to target their efforts to encourage and support economic development and new growth” (ELI 4). A capacity analysis determines the amount of land within the Priority Funding Area by analyzing the potential growth rates, natural restraints for development, and availability of infrastructure within lands, both infill and redevelopment that is suitable for development. Talbot County’s Land Use Plan corresponds to the Priority Funding Areas Act. The goal of the Land Use Plan establishes patterns of growth in suitable areas of the county (Talbot County 4-1). Areas near villages and towns in the

county are considered suitable areas because of the existing services and infrastructure provided. The Land Use Plan encourages infill development in existing residential and commercial areas and medium density development in new areas (Talbot County 4-2). The county feels by directing growth into existing towns and villages, sprawl is prevented and development pressures on open spaces and agricultural lands is reduced (Talbot County 4-3).

Rural Legacy Act identifies areas “to preserve large contiguous areas of land possessing significant farm, forest, historical and environmental resources” (ELI 5). To implement the Rural Legacy Act, Talbot County has a Rural Land Agriculture Conservation section in its comprehensive plan. Farmland is a valuable resource in Talbot County and contributes to the rural character (Talbot County 7-1). Talbot County preserves rural land and farms by directing most development into its existing towns and villages. Low-density single-family detached homes are permitted outside Priority Funding Areas, but cluster development is encouraged to preserve large tracts of land (Talbot County 7-2). Currently, 11,141 acres of land in Talbot County are part of agriculture preservation districts (Talbot County 7-5).

Sensitive Areas are defined as “streams and their buffers, 100 year floodplains, habitats of threatened/endangered species and steep slopes” (ELI 5). Talbot County has taken steps to protect the abundance of natural resources it possesses (ELI 1). Through the Natural Resource Conservation and Sensitive Areas Protection of the comprehensive plan, development is directed away from designated sensitive areas and guided into areas where the environmental impacts

will not be as severe. The county protects its water quality and groundwater resources, conserves habitats, forests and woodlands (Talbot County 8-10).

Through state legislation initiatives, Talbot County Maryland has been able to protect its rural character and vast farmlands. Its comprehensive plan targets development into existing areas without jeopardizing the environment.

### **Wasatch Area in Utah**

Envision Utah, a growth management plan for Utah, began as a response to urban/suburban growth. The plan focuses on a ten county area near Salt Lake City and the Wasatch Mountains. Nearly 80 percent of Utah's population lives in the 100-mile strip, which encompasses both sides of the mountains (Envision Utah 1).

Eighty percent of the state's future growth is projected to occur in the Greater Wasatch Area. It is predicted that the young, educated workforce's ability to attract businesses to the state will also lead to more growth (Envision Utah 15).

Development in fringe areas is also expected to increase leading to the loss of agriculture lands and open space (15). Despite road reconstruction, commute times are expected to increase along with traffic congestion and air pollution (15).

Envision Utah involved community, local and state leaders from the very beginning. A series of public opinion surveys lead by Wirthlin Worldwide were distributed among residents of the area (Envision Utah 13). From the surveys, the key issue concerning residents was future growth. Residents also noted a "sense of peace or peace of mind...living in Utah" and expressed interest in providing opportunities for future generations (13).

Officials and the community wanted the process of establishing a growth plan to be “unique to the region’s own personality and geographic constraints” (Envision Utah 16). The Quality Growth Steering Committee, a group of public and private sector representatives from different segments of the community, was formed to direct the development of the growth plan (Envision Utah 2). The committee concluded to develop a process rather than a project for their management plan. Reviewing and updating the process was a necessary step to address future growth trends.

In a series of workshops, participants mapped out places that needed protection from future growth and decided the applicable areas where growth needed to go. The workshops renewed the community’s “commitments to find solutions that could address Utah’s growth challenges” (Envision Utah 17). Rather than one solution, several scenarios were developed and then compared to an established baseline model. The baseline model for Utah’s growth was “to identify future conditions that would prevail if no further actions or initiatives were taken to alter the future” (Envision Utah 14).

Four scenarios were developed. Scenario A became the baseline model and was based on current development patterns (Envision Utah 19). It consisted of large suburban lots and depended heavily on automobiles. Scenario B mapped out 1997 municipal plans by state and local governments. Like Scenario A, growth was still based on large suburban lots, though it was not spread as far out and depended on automobile use (19). Scenario C based development on walkable communities, where walking and biking were encouraged. New growth was incorporated into

existing urban centers to protect open space and agriculture lands on the fringe (19). Varieties of housing options were provided with a mixture of commercial and transit options. Scenario D took Scenario C one-step further. Fifty percent of the new growth was aimed into urban areas and clustered around town centers (19).

An analysis of each scenario was completed based on land use, water consumption, transportation, air quality and costs (Envision Utah 20). When presented to the public, most people favored Scenario C (26). The analysis showed a decrease in lot sizes where homes were closer together. The majority of new homes were single family, but a variety of housing choices were offered (22). New housing was concentrated around major highways and transit lines reducing the need for more and more infrastructure into rural lands (22). Urban land reuse slowed land consumption on the fringe and preserved open space and farmland (22). Scenario C was truly the best option because transportation options were available, affordable housing offered, infrastructure costs lowered, air quality improved and water consumption lowered.

In 1999, the “Quality Growth Act” was introduced and passed with revisions (Envision Utah 27). The Act established the Quality Growth Commission and determined criteria for growth areas and open space preservation. Education on all levels, local and state, provided necessary guidance in planning and land use policies. In 2000, steps for an implementation plan, Quality Growth Strategy, began for Envision Utah. The strategy strives “to guide businesses, residents, and government bodies in planning for growth management and land use policies and practices well into the next century” (32). The goal for Quality Growth Strategy is to



serve as a guiding tool for government and planners on future development in the Greater Wasatch Area (32).

## **Conclusion**

Each case study represents communities concerned with future growth trends in their areas. St. Landry Parish can incorporate elements from each case study into the development of their comprehensive plan. Community involvement was a common theme in each case study and the ideas of residents were included in the overall comprehensive plans. Development was targeted into existing communities where infrastructure and services were already in place. Agriculture lands and woodlands were desirable amenities and efforts to protect these lands were set in place. The case studies provide a valuable insight for St. Landry Parish in developing a growth plan for their area.

## **Chapter 4**

### **St. Landry Parish in a Regional Context**

In 1997, Louisiana State legislation created the Atchafalaya Trace State Heritage Area (also referred to as Atchafalaya Heritage Area). The heritage area is made up of thirteen parishes, comprising some 838,000 acres in south central Louisiana. Parishes included in the heritage area are Assumption, Avoyelles, Concordia, East Baton Rouge, Iberia, Iberville, Lafayette, Pointe Coupee, St. Landry, St. Martin, St. Mary, Terrebonne and West Baton Rouge. State legislation required forming a commission and advisory board and completing a management plan. The Atchafalaya Trace Commission is a 13-member board of locally elected representatives. The Commission was established to promote, protect and enhance the natural and cultural resources of the Atchafalaya Region (DCRT Ex. Sum. 5). Board members provide a linkage between grassroots stakeholders and the state program ensuring that local interests are represented on the regional level. The advisory board consists of “individuals representing key partners and interest” and offered assistance and expertise in development of the Management Plan (DCRT Man. Plan 2).

Mary Means and Associates completed the Management Plan, which provides a framework for sustainable change in the Atchafalaya Region. The mission of the Atchafalaya Heritage Area is “to build understanding and identity, raising local, regional, and national awareness of the Atchafalaya; to strengthen the fabric of the place; to expand economic opportunities; and to increase the community capacity within the 13 parishes that constitute the heritage area” (DCRT

Man. Plan 25). The state legislature approved the management plan under HCR 42, which was filed with the Secretary of State on 17 April 2002.

A series of workshops were conducted in each of the thirteen parishes of the Atchafalaya Trace Heritage Area in 2001. The workshops were conducted by Mary Means and Associates, along with the Atchafalaya Trace Commission and Advisory Board and produced a better understanding of how each parish fits into the broader realm of the Heritage Area (DCRT Man. Plan 52). One of the outcomes was the identification of the top three goals in each parish. A goal identified by St. Landry Parish was a “city development plan (growth strategies, guidelines to protect the character of a city)” (52).

St. Landry Parish is located in south central Louisiana, and is one of the twenty-two Acadiana parishes. It is bordered by Acadia and Evangeline parishes to the west; Avoyelles Parish to the north; Pointe Coupee and St. Martin parishes to the east; and Lafayette Parish to the south (Figure 4.1).

St. Landry Parish lies within close proximity to some of Louisiana’s larger metropolitan areas. Baton Rouge is 62 miles to the east; Alexandria is 65 miles to the north; Lafayette is 22 miles to the south; and Lake Charles is 77 miles to the southwest (Figure 4.2).

### **Thesis Study Area**

This study focuses on the cities, towns and lands located within St. Landry Parish Council District 2, District 8, District 9 and District 10. These districts contain lands to the east and west of Interstate 49 (I-49), from the parish line in the south, continuing northward to the city of Opelousas. The city of Opelousas, the towns of



**Figure 4.1 Regional Context of St. Landry Parish**

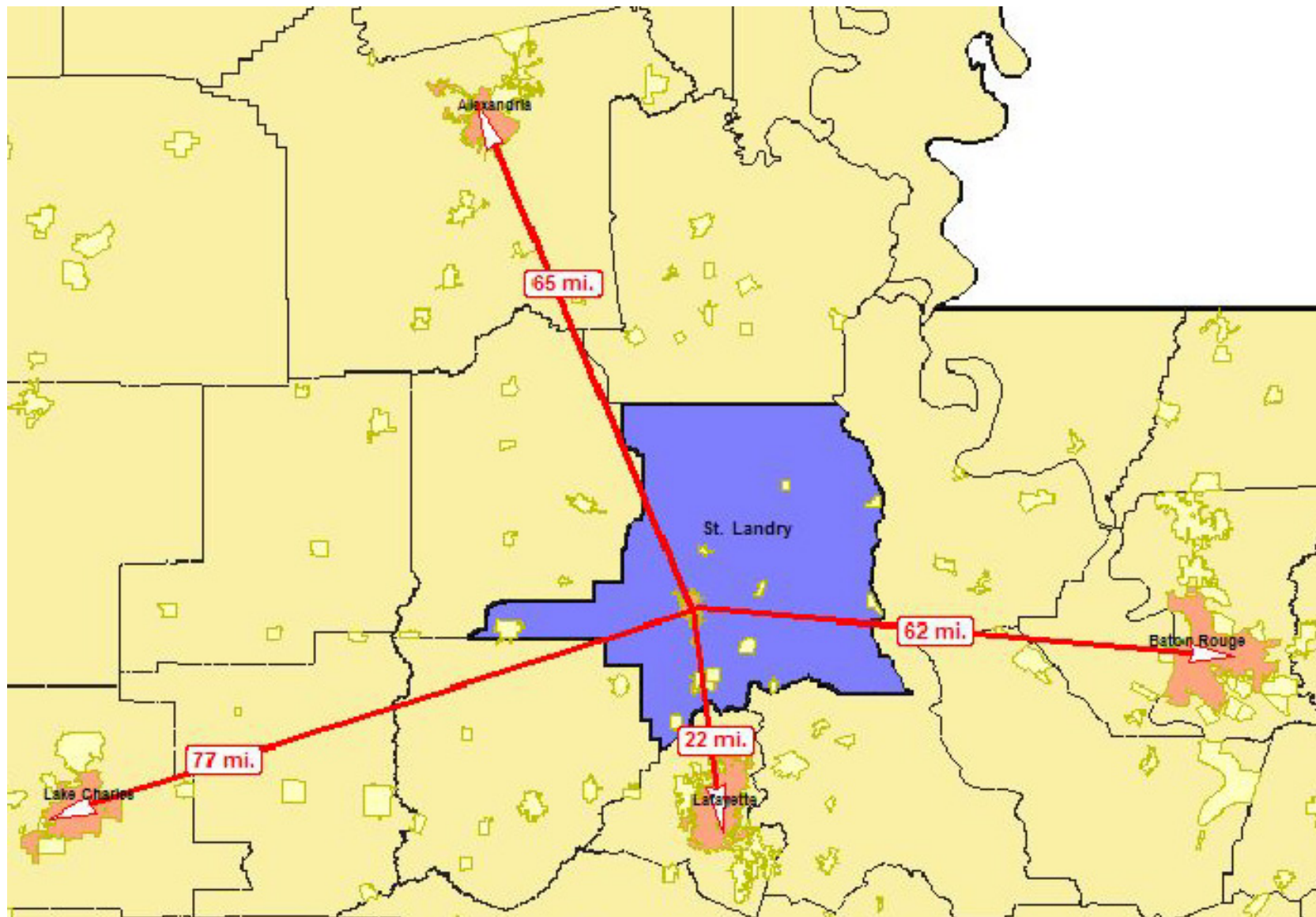
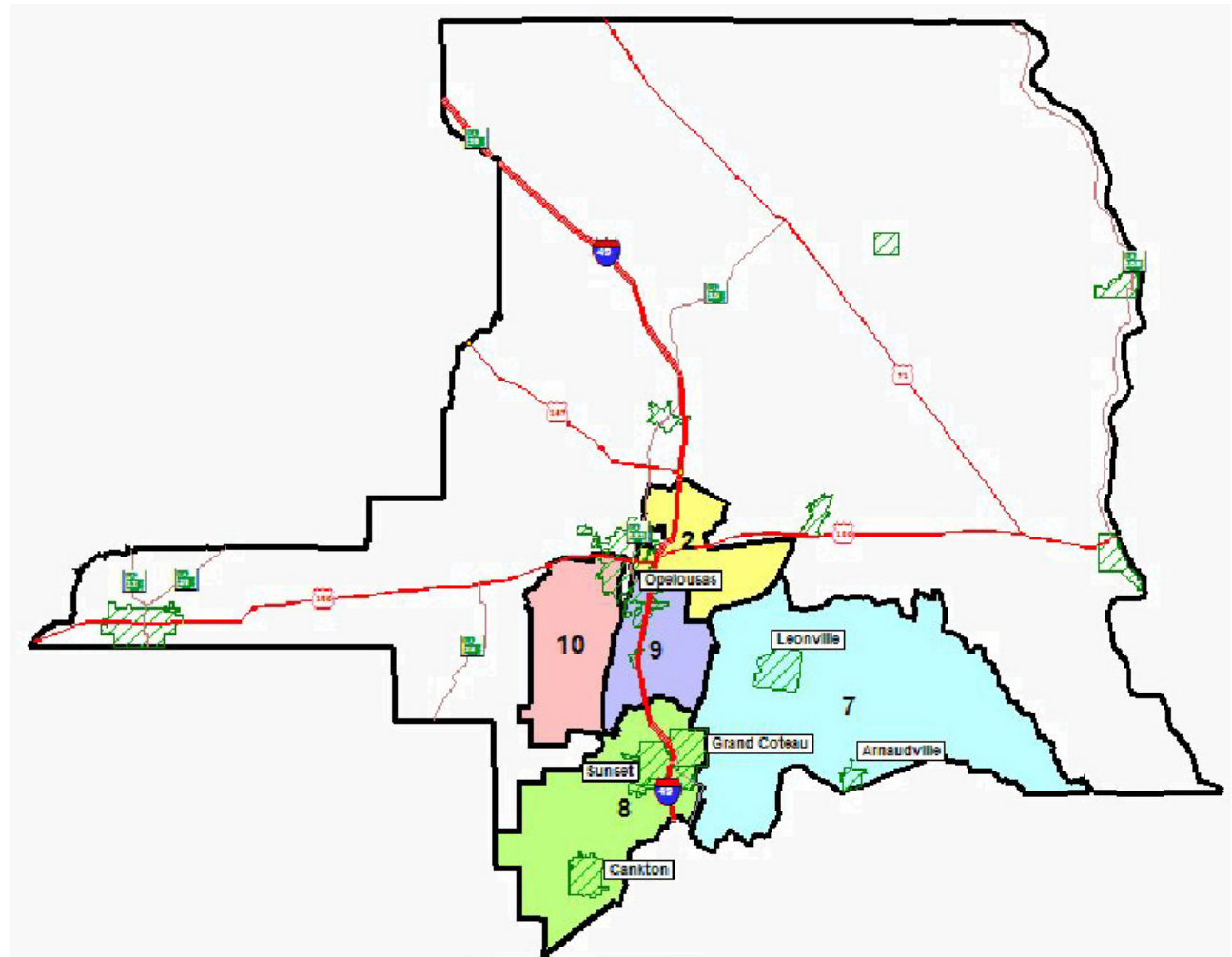


Figure 4.2 Distances to Major Cities from St. Landry Parish

Arnaudville, Grand Coteau, Leonville and Sunset and the village of Cankton lie within the given districts (Figure 4.3). (Specific boundaries for each Parish Council District in the study area are listed in the Appendix).



**Figure 4.3 St. Landry Parish Council Districts**

### **History of St. Landry Parish**

Founded in the early 1700s by the French, and named for the Opelousas Indians that inhabited the area, Poste de Opelousas was established as a trading post and market (Hartley 1). The first Acadians, people exiled from Nova Scotia, came to the territory in 1765 and settled around Bayou Teche where they

established many of the livestock and agricultural farms found in the area today (Martin 1974 6). The major crops are sugar cane, rice, sweet potatoes, soybeans and cotton, which are grown primarily in the western part of the parish (7).

Bottomland hardwood timber was a prime resource in St. Landry Parish but during the 1920s and 1930s, much of it was cut and the land cleared for agriculture. There remains, however, extensive forested lands in the eastern portions of St. Landry Parish that are either protected or not conducive for timber harvesting; most of these lands lie in the Atchafalaya Basin Floodway.

St. Landry Parish was established in 1805 soon after the Louisiana Purchase in 1803. At the time, it was the largest parish in Louisiana, “bound by the Atchafalaya River on the East, the Sabine River on the West, Rapides and Vernon Parishes on the North and Lafayette and St. Martin Parishes on the South” (Hartley 1). The city of Opelousas became the parish seat and was incorporated in 1821 (1).

During the Civil War, Louisiana’s capital moved to Opelousas when federal troops occupied Baton Rouge. Later, in 1882, the parish’s first railroad, Morgan’s Louisiana and Texas Railroad, was built through Opelousas, a stopping point for travelers going from New Orleans to Natchitoches (Hartley 3). “By 1908, Opelousas was called one of the most progressive towns in the south” (11). Also during this time, a steamboat port was established at Washington, just north of Opelousas. The port was a critical shipping point in southwest Louisiana.

## **Demographics**

The 2000 United States Census provides the most recent, comprehensive population data for St. Landry Parish. Earlier censuses were also consulted to

obtain a general overview of population growth trends in the parish and the area's main communities. This information is a key focus of this study.

Recent growth trends (Table 4.1) show an increase in St. Landry Parish's overall population from previous censuses. Since 1990, St. Landry Parish has grown by 9.2 percent; this figure is substantial because it experienced a loss of population during the 1980s.

**Table 4.1 Population Changes in St. Landry Parish.**

	1990	2000	% change
<b>St. Landry</b>	80,331	87,7000	9.2
Arnaudville	1,444	1,398	-3
Cankton	323	362	12
Grand Coteau	1,118	1,040	-7
Leonville	825	1,007	22
Opelousas	18,151	22,860	25.9
Sunset	2,201	2,352	6.8

As observed in Table 4.1, a majority of the growth has occurred in the cities and towns near Interstate 49 (I-49). Residential growth is advancing from the south as Lafayette Parish is experiencing a greater growth rate. Since 1990, Lafayette Parish grew by 15.6 percent, while the total number of households increased by almost 20 percent (*1990 and 2000 Census*). Table 4.2 further illustrates the population increases in St. Landry Parish by parish council districts. Also, the districts in northern Lafayette Parish and their population increases are compared. There are some discrepancies between parish information and census data concerning the Lafayette Parish districts. Lafayette Parish lists nine council districts designated with Arabic numerals. Census data list only seven council districts designated by letters.



The districts have some geographical overlapping but are not consistent with each other.

**Table 4.2 Population Changes in Parish Council Districts.**

	1990	2000	% change
<b>Lafayette Parish</b>			
District A	24,699	26,525	7.3
District B	31,404	41,338	31.6
<b>St. Landry Parish</b>			
District 1	5,751	6,835	18.8
District 2	6,545	7,858	20
District 3	6,734	7,084	5.1
District 4	5,848	6,223	6.4
District 5	5,029	5,499	9.3
District 6	6,668	6,780	1.7
District 7	6,189	7,201	16.4
District 8	6,677	6,900	3
District 9	6,642	7,368	10.9
District 10	6,528	7,496	14.8
District 11	5,644	6,118	8.3
District 12	6,427	6,354	-1
District 13	5,649	5,984	5.9

Since 1980, St. Landry Parish's housing occupancy has increased by 22.8 percent (*1980 and 2000 Census*). Much of this increase has occurred in Opelousas (44.6%), Cankton (38.8%) and Sunset (30.7%); all of which are immediately adjacent to I-49. It is noteworthy that I-49 received its interstate highway status in the early 1980s. The Lafayette to Opelousas route was part of US Highway 167 before becoming a limited-access interstate highway.

Until the interstate highway was completed, growth in St. Landry Parish had been slow. Between 1950 and 2000 there was only an 11.7 percent increase in

population (Table 4.3). Despite this overall trend, St. Landry's cities and towns have experienced growth trends in the last fifty years.

**Table 4.3 Fifty-Year Population Growth Chart in St. Landry Parish.**

	<u>1950</u>	<u>2000</u>	Percent Growth
<b>St. Landry Parish</b>	<b>78,476</b>	<b>87,700</b>	<b>11.7%</b>
Opelousas	11,659	22,860	96%
Arnaudville	872	1398	60%
Grand Coteau	1,103	1,040	-5.7%
Leonville	514	1,007	96%
Sunset	1,080	2,352	117%

According to the 2000 Census, the racial make up of the parish is heterogeneous; 56.5 percent of the population is classified as white, 42.1 percent as African American and 1.4 percent other ethnicities. The median family income is \$28,908 and the average age of residents is 34 years of age (*2000 Census Data*). Only 10.7 percent of the population has a college degree (*2000 Census Data*).

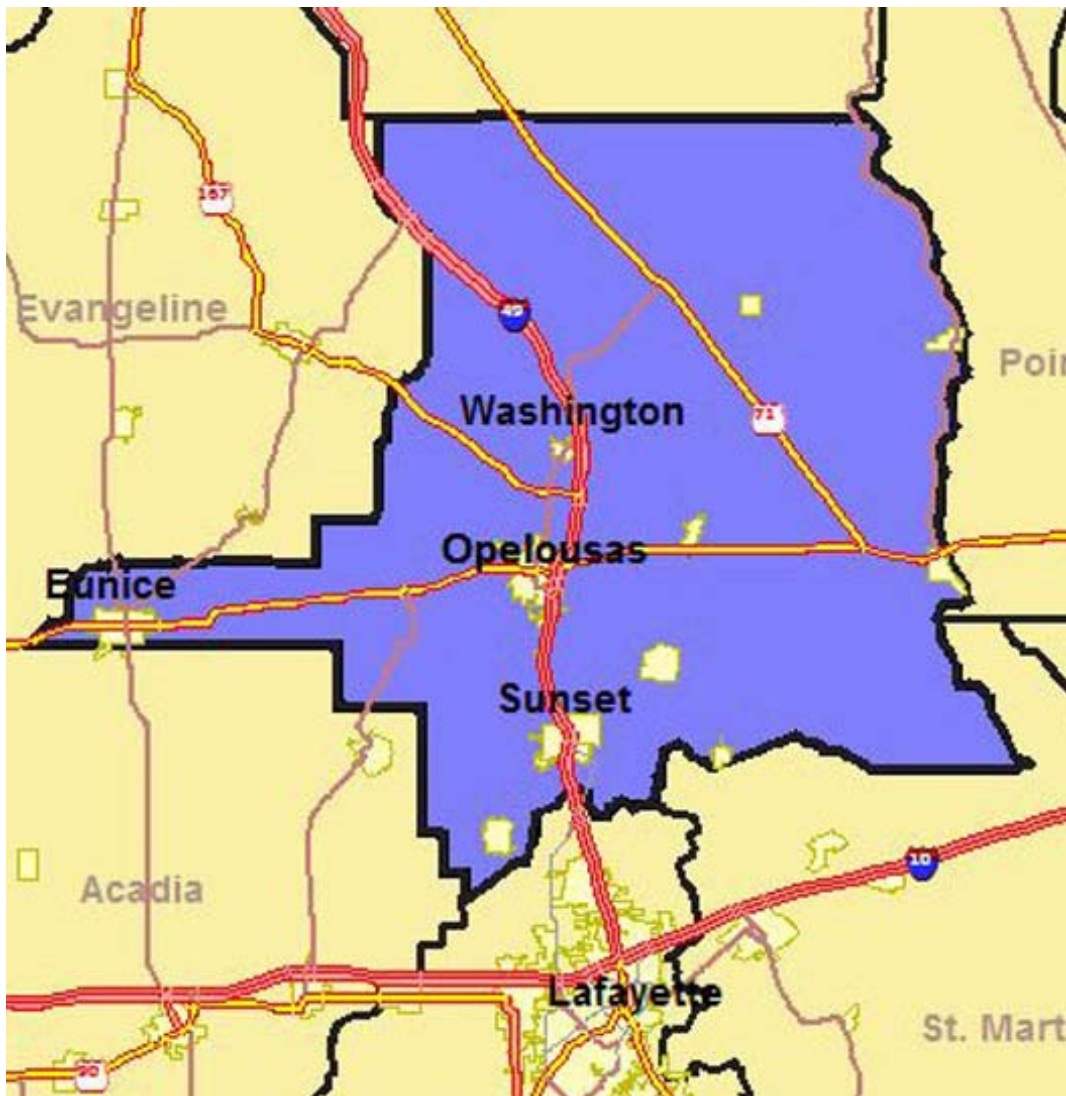
### **Land Use**

There has not been any recent land use study conducted in St. Landry Parish. The most recent one was by Dan Martin and Associates, Inc., completed in 1974. The plan included a land use survey, which was completed over thirty years ago in the summer of 1972. The plan contained suggestions concerning future land uses, including reducing clearing of bottomland hardwood forest for agricultural use (Martin 1972 19), establishing "minimum standards for road right-of-ways requirements, road design, road construction, drainage, etc." (22), regulate rural land subdivisions (22) and develop recreational areas (23). However, the comprehensive plan was never implemented.

The land use survey indicated agriculture and woodlands dominated much of the land use in the Parish during the mid-1970s, and from most indications, few of those land uses have changed since that time. Much of the eastern portion of the parish is woodlands, which makes up part of the Atchafalaya Basin Floodway. The central and western portions of the parish are primarily agricultural lands. The only government-protected land in St. Landry Parish is Thistlethwaite Wildlife Management Area located in the central part of the parish. The Wildlife Management Area consists of 11,100 acres and is privately owned by Thistlethwaite heirs (State of Louisiana). The cities and towns are small. Opelousas, the parish seat, is the most populated with 22,860 residents (*2000 Census Data*). Interstate 49 is the major north-south route through the parish. US Highway 190 bisects the southern part of the parish. US Highway 71 crosses the parish diagonally from northwest to southeast terminating at the junction with US Highway 190 (Figure 4.4).

Currently, zoning does not exist for any city or town in St. Landry Parish. In November 2001, the City of Opelousas adopted an ordinance creating the Historic District Commission. The purpose of the ordinance is “the preservation and stewardship of all structures in the designated Historic District of the City” (City of Opelousas Ordinance No. 8 of 2001). The commission is given power to enforce a “Certificate of Appropriateness” for improvements only within the boundaries of the defined Historic District. Buildings and architectural characteristics are protected and preservation is encouraged within the District. Amenities may be added to existing structures, but the overall character and value of the building or space may not be jeopardized. Any proposed changes to structures or spaces within the

Historic District must be submitted to the Historic Commission and the Certificate of Appropriateness must be obtained before any of the changes can be made.



**Figure 4.4 Major Transportation Corridors in St. Landry Parish.**

### **Issues Facing St. Landry Parish**

The 2000 Census redefined the Metropolitan Statistical Area or MSA. An MSA is now defined as “a large population nucleus, together with adjacent communities having a high degree of social and economic integration with that core” (2000 Census Data). The new classification for MSA requires twenty-five percent of

the working population to commute (Johnson 19 Jan 2003). Prior to 2000, St. Landry Parish was included in the Lafayette MSA, but since only sixteen percent of St. Landry Parish's workforce commutes to jobs outside parish lines, the parish is no longer included within the Lafayette MSA. St. Landry Parish is now considered part of the Lafayette Combined Statistical Area (CSA), a new definition of metropolitan areas.

The City of Opelousas has experienced difficulties with infrastructure. A recent article in The Daily World cites an "abundance of broken water pipes and leaks in town" (Kirk 12 Feb 2003). William Jarrell, an engineer with Morgan Goudeau and Associate, stated, " [the] problem is that the pipes are old and need to be replaced" (Kirk 12 Feb 2003). Many of the water lines were installed during the 1950s and 1960s and have reached their life expectancy (Jarrell 2003). They now create a "reoccurring problem" for the City's Public Works Department (Kirk 12 Feb 2003). Opelousas has not repaired the water pipes, as they should have due partially to financial constraints (Jarrell 2003). The City is also contending with maintenance problems with water pipes it owns located outside the city limits (Kirk 12 Feb 2003).

Not only suffering with infrastructure problems, Opelousas is also struggling with providing affordable water costs to residents and businesses. Residents are helping underwrite water costs for businesses that use large amounts of water (Kirk 6 Feb 2003). The Wal-Mart Distribution Center is one such business. The city maintains water to the Distribution Center, but the Distribution Center underpays for the water services it receives (Kirk 6 Feb 2003).

Sunset also has problems with old pipes throughout the town, which are in need of replacement, while the town's revenue stream suffers constant problems. In 2002, Sunset cut its budget by \$150,000 (Johnson 16 Feb 2003). The budget cuts have hindered the growing town's drive to solve its infrastructure and maintenance problems. Also, Sunset lacks adequate police protection (Johnson 16 Feb 2003). Matters have been made worse by residential and commercial development that has contributed to flooding in residential neighborhoods. Residents are concerned with new subdivisions being built and the strain they are placing on the town's storm water systems (Johnson 16 Feb 2003).

## **Conclusion**

St. Landry Parish is centrally located among key urban areas in Louisiana. It has great potential for growth in the years to come. With the influx of population in Lafayette, the parish will certainly see increases in its population. Cities and towns in the parish already face problems with infrastructure and strained budgets. With Interstate 49 creating easier access to St. Landry's rural lands, new development pressures add to area's struggle to keep up with the current demands of its citizens.

As development pressure increases, St. Landry Parish should strive to protect its rural character and agriculture and open lands. With Smart Growth principles as a guide, St. Landry can achieve its goal for development plans and growth strategies.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Recommendations**

Through the *Heritage Area Management Plan*, St. Landry Parish has expressed its interest in developing growth strategies, while maintaining its sense of place. Since the 1980s, Interstate 49 (I-49) has provided easy access to the rural lands of the parish. Comparisons of recent census data show an increase of population in the parish, especially in the council districts along the I-49 corridor. Louisiana's larger cities, New Orleans, Baton Rouge and Shreveport have already and are still experiencing pressures of urban/suburban sprawl. The parishes located adjacent to these larger cities are seeing increases in the number of residential neighborhoods while their open lands disappear. Lafayette, Louisiana's fourth largest city has recently experienced these same trends. Perched on the northern boundary of Lafayette Parish, St. Landry Parish will see an influx of residential growth in years to come. Currently, St. Landry has no plans or means of controlling growth. With future population increases expected, the parish will certainly experience suburban sprawl pressures from Lafayette.

In Chapter 3, three case studies were discussed; each place, Lancaster County Pennsylvania, Talbot County Maryland and Wasatch Area in Utah, was concerned about future growth in their areas and maintaining their sense of place. All three case studies supported and encouraged community involvement during the planning process. A combination of surveys, meetings and forums was used in each study. Residents were able to express their concerns about the community and contribute to the planning process. Understanding residents' concerns and incorporating their ideas gave policy makers and legislators better ideas about

planning for their area. All three communities defined goals and set forth a vision of where and how they wanted their community to grow in the future.

Following the examples presented in Chapter 3, St. Landry Parish should seek public opinions about its future growth, planning and land use. The question, “What do I value in my community?” must be addressed by everyone - residents, business people, local leaders, and legislators. Issues such as zoning, current land uses, future growth and current policies should be addressed during the beginning stages of the process. Using newspaper surveys or distributing surveys by mail can provide planners with a variety of responses and points of view about growth. Holding public meetings or design charettes will bring different points of view together to work out problem areas. Understanding how the public views its future will better aid planners and local leaders in the planning process. Including everyone in the definition of goals and establishing an overall vision will ensure all interests and points of view about St. Landry Parish’s future are taken into consideration.

After the community’s goals have been identified and its vision set forth, a process for implementing the goals can be identified. As examined in the Utah case study, growth management and land use in St. Landry Parish should be seen as a process rather than a project. Establishing a planning commission will ensure that growth management and land use works toward the good of the community. The commission must represent a variety of the community – local leaders, legislators, business people and residents. The process will need revision, refinement and updating throughout its implementation phase in order to meet the future growth



trends the parish will experience. The planning commission will need to review growth and land use every five to six years, in order to incorporate unforeseen trends into its growth strategy.

Through the analysis of the ten Smart Growth Principles in Chapter 2, the following paragraphs suggest how three of the principles can be applied to St.

Landry Parish for planning and land use. The principles are:

- Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty, and critical environmental areas
- Strengthen and direct development towards existing communities
- Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place

In the comprehensive plan completed in 1974, Dan Martin suggested St. Landry Parish take steps to protect its open space, farmlands and woodland areas (Martin 1972 19-23). Lancaster County and Talbot County wanted to protect their farmlands and open lands, which were contributing factors to their sense of place. As in the case studies, farmland and open space adds to the rural character of St. Landry Parish. Woodlands that make up part of the Atchafalaya Basin Floodway cover the eastern portion of the parish. Future development should be restricted from this flood prone area. By protecting these sensitive areas, stewardship of the Basin is promoted.

St. Landry Parish has a distinct history in agriculture dating back to the 1700s. Prime farmlands must be protected under the land use plan. Lancaster County, Pennsylvania protected its agriculture lands by adopting and maintaining urban growth boundaries (UGBs), enacting agricultural zoning and conservation easements. Urban growth boundaries examine future growth of an area by population projections, combined with estimates of “vacancy rates, household sizes

and densities of development” (“What is an Urban Growth Boundary?”). Based on an analysis of the given factors, a growth boundary can then be determined to accommodate the area’s projected growth. New development is allowed only within the boundary, relieving pressures from fringe areas. Talbot County Maryland enacted a Rural Legacy Program focused on protecting rural areas and preserving farmland and forest. The program protected farmlands and forested areas by obtaining development rights of the properties.

St. Landry Parish can follow these examples. An infill study of abandoned sites, empty buildings and underutilized open spaces in the cities and towns should be performed to direct the growth boundaries in the right direction. Urban growth boundaries will help relieve development pressures from the surrounding farmlands and open spaces. Landowners may sell development rights of their property to ensure its protection. And, agricultural zoning could also be used to protect these lands. However, the later two suggestions are beginning to branch into the policy-making aspect of planning.

One way to ease development pressures from farmlands and open spaces is to direct development towards existing communities. Fringe areas are desirable places for development because of low property costs. But, eventually, communities are left to absorb the maintenance costs of roads and water and sewerage lines to these developments. By developing UGBs around cities, towns and villages in St. Landry Parish, development would be directed into the established communities. Existing infrastructure in the cities and towns is utilized and the local tax base increased by new residents and businesses. Sunset and Opelousas are two towns

within St. Landry Parish already combating infrastructure maintenance problems, due partly to stressed budgets. An urban growth boundary would relieve maintenance costs and upkeep of infrastructure built outside the boundary. Promoting infill, the use of existing sites, and the re-use of historic buildings are also other ways to direct development into the community core. A distinctive edge between rural and urban areas should be evident.

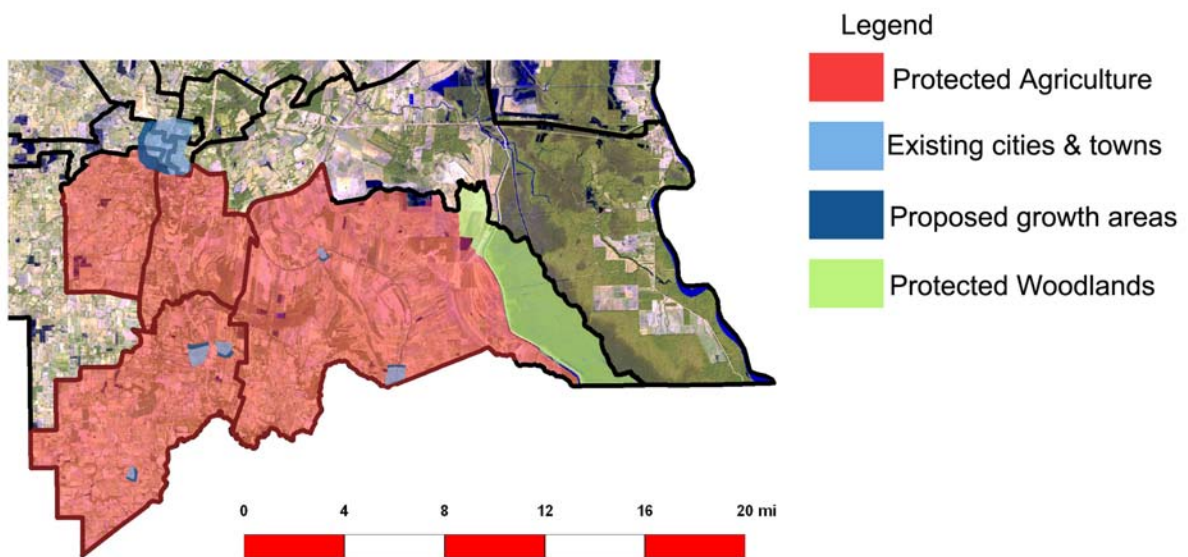
St. Landry Parish has also expressed interest in ways to maintain its sense of place. To aid in promoting sense of place, planning must provide that all elements – streets, buildings, open spaces, neighborhoods and towns – work cohesively in the community. Historic districts and neighborhoods are two entities within a town that add to its sense of place. Providing visual clues, such as banners or signs, to such areas allow visitors to understand the meaning and context of the area. Establishing design standards in historic areas also adds to the feel and helps maintain the character of the area. New development should keep with the overall architecture and scale of the district ensuring its fit into the area. The City of Opelousas began the process of preserving and promoting its historic district by enacting Ordinance No. 8 of 2001. The ordinance defines acceptable improvements to buildings and spaces within the boundaries of the historic district. More ordinances such as one will also promote and preserve the city's sense of place.

### **Principles Applied to Study Area**

The following map is a brief example of Smart Growth principles applied to the study area. Woodlands and agriculture lands have been noted and designated

for protection. Existing communities are defined and areas for their future growth suggested.

The map is a GeoTIFF form from a satellite image by Louisiana Oil Spill Coordinator's Office (LOSCO). A comparison of the GeoTIFF image and topographic maps from the Louisiana Atlas and Gazetteer were completed to suggest growth areas. The areas were predicted by comparing natural constraints for growth such as parish boundaries and natural features such as bayous.



**Figure 5.1 Applications of Smart Growth Principles to Study Area.**

### **Implementation of other Smart Growth Principles**

As pointed out in previous discussion, zoning ordinances do not allow for mixed-use development. Since there are no current zoning ordinances in St. Landry Parish, mixed-use neighborhoods can be easily designed and promoted. Services, commercial and retail areas can be located within walking distances of residential areas. Converting abandoned strip malls into mixed-use centers promote reuse of empty space and utilize existing infrastructure. The community is able to capitalize

on the revitalization in these areas. Bringing back small businesses and providing residential opportunities in the abandoned areas will regenerate the tax revenues lost due to abandonment.

Implementation of basic design guidelines can strengthen a community's sense of place and promote walkable communities. Design standards for minimum widths of sidewalks in commercial and residential areas should be determined based on number of users. Planting shade trees along pedestrian areas provides comfort from summer temperatures. Traffic calming techniques, such as narrower streets and on-street parking can be implemented to promote walkable areas also. Buffers between pedestrian and traffic areas allow pedestrians a more comfortable space to travel.

## **Conclusion**

For St. Landry Parish to achieve effective growth management and land use planning, community goals and a vision first must be defined. A process for implementing those goals then must be established. Including residents, local business people, local policy makers and legislators throughout the entire process encourages success in community planning efforts. Smart Growth establishes a framework to guide growth and promote the well being of a community. While there is no cure-all for sprawl, there are ways to mitigate its effects on communities, towns and open spaces.

## **Chapter 6**

### **Conclusions**

#### **Summary**

St. Landry Parish is poised for future growth. The rural character and agricultural lands add to its unique sense of place. St. Landry Parish lacks any formal means to control future development. With encroaching development pressures from Lafayette, the parish stands to lose its rural character and sense of place. This thesis serves as a stepping-stone for parish leaders and policymakers in their desire for growth strategies in their community.

The overall goal of this thesis was to assess the feasibility of Smart Growth principles for rural areas such as St. Landry Parish and make recommendations based on relevant principles. To meet these goals, an analysis of Smart Growth principles and case studies in sustainable design were conducted. Through the analysis, it was determined that three primary Smart Growth principles were applicable to St. Landry Parish. The principles were:

- Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty, and critical environmental areas
- Strengthen and direct development towards existing communities
- Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place

In addition, it was also determined additional Smart Growth principles could be applied to St. Landry Parish through inventive design standards since it lacks any policies on planning or land use issues. They were:

- Mix land uses
- Create walkable communities

For the planning process to promote success, community involvement is highly recommended. Including citizens, local leaders, business people, and

legislators, difficult planning and land use issues can be negotiated leading to quicker, efficient results.

### **Contributions of the Research**

This thesis acts as an informational tool for the local leaders and policy makers of St. Landry Parish. Although the study focuses on one particular geographic location, the same techniques can be applied to other rural communities facing growth problems around Louisiana. Each community must determine the applicable Smart Growth principles and implement them to enhance existing or future planning efforts.

No formal request has been made to present the subject matter to the local police jury or local leaders of St. Landry Parish. If the opportunity arises, it will be met with optimism. It has been arranged for selected leaders and prominent citizens of St. Landry Parish to receive a completed copy of this thesis.

### **Limitations of the Research**

Defined by the scope of the thesis, policies for implementing Smart Growth principles were not addressed. However, a thorough examination of planning and land use policies aimed at rural communities, such as zoning, transfer of development rights, agriculture preservation techniques, open space zoning, cluster development, and conservation easements, is necessary for a complete and successful comprehensive plan for St. Landry Parish. Local leaders will need to examine the positive and negative contributions of each policy, and make informed decisions about necessary techniques for implementation. The positive contributions of one policy should overcome the negative aspects of another.

### **Areas of Future Study**

Because this study only focused on one aspect of the planning process, the next steps should be to examine other planning techniques for rural communities and policies for implementation. Also, conducting surveys and meetings to gain insight on citizens' interest and concerns for their community could be another route in determining the proper planning avenue.

### **Concluding Thoughts**

St. Landry Parish officials and citizens may or may not utilize the recommendations presented in this thesis. However, it can serve as a catalyst to inform and involve a unique community in its pursuit of development goals. This study represents only a preliminary step in the planning process. If communities such as St. Landry Parish are to maintain their rural character and sense of place, citizens and local leaders must look at assets in the community and strive to protect and enhance them. As a comprehensive plan is sought for St. Landry Parish, the benefits will be greater if all points of view and concerns are taken into consideration.



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**Appendix**  
**Boundaries for Parish Council Districts in Study Area**

**District 2**

All of that portion of St. Landry County bounded and described as follows:

Beginning at the point of intersection of Cresswell Lane and I-49 S, and proceeding westerly along Cresswell Lane to Stardust Street, and proceeding northerly along Stardust Street to the Opelousas city line, and proceeding northerly along the Opelousas city line to Hollier Street, and proceeding westerly along Hollier Street to Edith Street, and proceeding northerly along Edith Street to E. Leonard Avenue, and proceeding westerly along E. Leonard Avenue to S. Walnut Street, and proceeding northerly along S. Walnut Street to E. Jefferson Street, and proceeding westerly along E. Jefferson Street to S. Main Street, and proceeding northerly along S. Main Street to E. Landry Street, and proceeding easterly along E. Landry Street to S. Lombard Street, and proceeding northerly along S. Lombard Street to N. Lombard Street, and proceeding northerly along N. Lombard Street to Lombard Street, and proceeding northerly along Lombard Street to Perry Lane, and proceeding easterly along Perry Lane to Stream/river, and proceeding southerly along Stream/river to Bayou Rawles, and proceeding easterly along Bayou Rawles to I-49 S, and proceeding northerly along I-49 S to the Opelousas city line, and proceeding northerly along the Opelousas city line to Bayou Rawles, and proceeding northerly along Bayou Rawles to Katherine Drive, and proceeding westerly along Katherine Drive to Canal/aqueduct, and proceeding westerly along Canal/aqueduct to Bonjour Lane, and proceeding southerly along Bonjour Lane to Pine Tree Road, and proceeding westerly along Pine Tree Road to McNeese Street, and proceeding

westerly along McNeese Street to the Opelousas city line, and proceeding westerly along the Opelousas city line to McNeese Street, and proceeding westerly along McNeese Street to the Opelousas city line, and proceeding westerly along the Opelousas city line to McNeese Street, and proceeding westerly along McNeese Street to the Opelousas city line, and proceeding northerly along the Opelousas city line to Highway 182, and proceeding northerly along Highway 182 to State Route 182, and proceeding northerly along State Route 182 to Kennerson Road, and proceeding easterly along Kennerson Road to State Highway 182, and proceeding easterly along State Highway 182 to Nonvisible boundary, and proceeding easterly along Nonvisible boundary to Bay Ridge Road, and proceeding easterly along Bay Ridge Road to Powerline, and proceeding easterly along Powerline to Bayou Little Teche, and proceeding southerly along Bayou Little Teche to West Teche Lane, and proceeding southerly along West Teche Lane to Parish Road 1-335, and proceeding southerly along Parish Road 1-335 to Jennings Road, and proceeding southerly along Jennings Road to Missouri Pacific Railroad, and proceeding easterly along Missouri Pacific Railroad to Bayou Little Teche, and proceeding southerly along Bayou Little Teche to State Route 742, and proceeding westerly along State Route 742 to Highway 31, and proceeding westerly along Highway 31 to State Route 1244, and proceeding westerly along State Route 1244 to I-49 S, and proceeding southerly along I-49 S to the point of beginning.

#### **District 7**

All of that portion of St. Landry County bounded and described as follows:  
Beginning at the point of intersection of the county line and Little Fordoche Bayou,

and proceeding westerly along the county line to Carmen Drive, and proceeding northerly along Carmen Drive to Boxie Road, and proceeding westerly along Boxie Road to State Route 182, and proceeding northerly along State Route 182 to the Grand Coteau town line, and proceeding northerly along the Grand Coteau town line to Villa Road, and proceeding northerly along Villa Road to Unnamed Local road, and proceeding northerly along Unnamed Local road to Unnamed Vehicular trail, and proceeding northerly along Unnamed Vehicular trail to Nonvisible boundary, and proceeding northerly along Nonvisible boundary to Tom Schexnader Road, and proceeding northerly along Tom Schexnader Road to State Route 31, and proceeding easterly along State Route 31 to Nonvisible boundary, and proceeding northerly along Nonvisible boundary to Bayou Teche, and proceeding northerly along Bayou Teche to Nonvisible boundary, and proceeding easterly along Nonvisible boundary to Unnamed Local road, and proceeding southerly along Unnamed Local road to Canal/aqueduct, and proceeding easterly along Canal/aqueduct to Stream/river, and proceeding easterly along Stream/river to Bayou Portage, and proceeding easterly along Bayou Portage to Stream/river, and proceeding southerly along Stream/river to Bayou Portage, and proceeding southerly along Bayou Portage to Bayou Gerimond, and proceeding easterly along Bayou Gerimond to Stream/river, and proceeding easterly along Stream/river to Bayou Chenevert, and proceeding southerly along Bayou Chenevert to Water feature, and proceeding southerly along Water feature to Bayou Courtableau Outlet Chan, and proceeding southerly along Bayou Courtableau Outlet Chan to Bayou Fordoche, and proceeding southerly along Bayou Fordoche to Water feature, and

proceeding southerly along Water feature to Little Fordoche Bayou, and proceeding easterly along Little Fordoche Bayou to the point of beginning.

### **District 8**

All of that portion of St. Landry County bounded and described as follows:  
Beginning at the point of intersection of the county line and Carmen Drive, and proceeding northerly along the county line to State Route 356, and proceeding easterly along State Route 356 to Jessie Richard Road, and proceeding northerly along Jessie Richard Road to State Route 754, and proceeding easterly along State Route 754 to Unnamed Local road, and proceeding easterly along Unnamed Local road to State Route 754, and proceeding easterly along State Route 754 to Unnamed Local road, and proceeding easterly along Unnamed Local road to State Route 754, and proceeding northerly along State Route 754 to Bayou Bourbeux, and proceeding northerly along Bayou Bourbeux to State Route 178, and proceeding easterly along State Route 178 to Bayou Bourbeux, and proceeding northerly along Bayou Bourbeux to Spanish Tr, and proceeding easterly along Spanish Tr to N Service Road, and proceeding northerly along N Service Road to Bayou Bourbeux, and proceeding easterly along Bayou Bourbeux to Nonvisible boundary, and proceeding southerly along Nonvisible boundary to Unnamed Vehicular trail, and proceeding southerly along Unnamed Vehicular trail to Unnamed Local road, and proceeding southerly along Unnamed Local road to Villa Road, and proceeding southerly along Villa Road to the Grand Coteau town line, and proceeding easterly along the Grand Coteau town line to State Route 182, and proceeding easterly along State Route 182 to Boxie Road, and proceeding easterly along Boxie Road to



Carmen Drive, and proceeding southerly along Carmen Drive to the point of beginning.

## **District 9**

All of that portion of St. Landry County bounded and described as follows:  
Beginning at the point of intersection of State Route 178 and Bayou Bourbeux, and proceeding westerly along State Route 178 to State Route 182, and proceeding northerly along State Route 182 to Abandoned Railroad, and proceeding northerly along Abandoned Railroad to W. Bertheaud Avenue, and proceeding easterly along W. Bertheaud Avenue to Bayou Tesson, and proceeding northerly along Bayou Tesson to W. Jefferson Street, and proceeding easterly along W. Jefferson Street to Pike Avenue, and proceeding southerly along Pike Avenue to W. Leonard Street, and proceeding easterly along W. Leonard Street to E. Leonard Avenue, and proceeding easterly along E. Leonard Avenue to Short Union Street, and proceeding northerly along Short Union Street to E. Jefferson Street, and proceeding easterly along E. Jefferson Street to S. Walnut Street, and proceeding southerly along S. Walnut Street to E. Leonard Avenue, and proceeding easterly along E. Leonard Avenue to Edith Street, and proceeding southerly along Edith Street to Hollier Street, and proceeding easterly along Hollier Street to the Opelousas city line, and proceeding southerly along the Opelousas city line to Stardust Street, and proceeding southerly along Stardust Street to Cresswell Lane, and proceeding easterly along Cresswell Lane to I-49 S, and proceeding southerly along I-49 S to Nonvisible boundary, and proceeding easterly along Nonvisible boundary to the Opelousas city line, and proceeding easterly along the Opelousas city line to

Linwood Loop, and proceeding easterly along Linwood Loop to the Opelousas city line, and proceeding easterly along the Opelousas city line to Linwood Loop, and proceeding southerly along Linwood Loop to Country Ridge Road, and proceeding easterly along Country Ridge Road to Little Teche Road, and proceeding easterly along Little Teche Road to Coulee Rouge, and proceeding easterly along Coulee Rouge to Bayou Teche, and proceeding southerly along Bayou Teche to Nonvisible boundary, and proceeding southerly along Nonvisible boundary to State Route 31, and proceeding northerly along State Route 31 to Tom Schexnader Road, and proceeding southerly along Tom Schexnader Road to Nonvisible boundary, and proceeding southerly along Nonvisible boundary to Bayou Bourbeux, and proceeding westerly along Bayou Bourbeux to N Service Road, and proceeding southerly along N Service Road to Spanish Tr, and proceeding westerly along Spanish Tr to Bayou Bourbeux, and proceeding southerly along Bayou Bourbeux to the point of beginning.

#### **District 10**

All of that portion of St. Landry County bounded and described as follows:  
Beginning at the point of intersection of State Route 358 and State Route 182, and proceeding westerly along State Route 358 to Stream/river, and proceeding northerly along Stream/river to Nonvisible boundary, and proceeding northerly along Nonvisible boundary to Montgomery Road, and proceeding northerly along Montgomery Road to State Route 357, and proceeding northerly along State Route 357 to Parish Road 6-176, and proceeding northerly along Parish Road 6-176 to Unnamed Local road, and proceeding northerly along Unnamed Local road to

Blossom Road, and proceeding northerly along Blossom Road to Austin Road, and proceeding westerly along Austin Road to Bayou Plaquemine Brule, and proceeding northerly along Bayou Plaquemine Brule to Wisdom Road, and proceeding westerly along Wisdom Road to Grapevine Road, and proceeding northerly along Grapevine Road to United States Highway 190, and proceeding easterly along United States Highway 190 to W. Landry Street, and proceeding easterly along W. Landry Street to Wisdom Road, and proceeding southerly along Wisdom Road to Parish Road 1-190-5, and proceeding easterly along Parish Road 1-190-5 to Bayou Plaquemine Brule E Fork, and proceeding northerly along Bayou Plaquemine Brule E Fork to W. Landry Street, and proceeding easterly along W. Landry Street to the Opelousas city line, and proceeding easterly along the Opelousas city line to W. Vine Street, and proceeding easterly along W. Vine Street to the Opelousas city line, and proceeding easterly along the Opelousas city line to W. Vine Street, and proceeding easterly along W. Vine Street to the Opelousas city line, and proceeding easterly along the Opelousas city line to Conrad Street, and proceeding easterly along Conrad Street to S. Bullard Street, and proceeding northerly along S. Bullard Street to W. Landry Street, and proceeding easterly along W. Landry Street to Bayou Tesson, and proceeding southerly along Bayou Tesson to W. Bertheaud Avenue, and proceeding westerly along W. Bertheaud Avenue to Abandoned Railroad, and proceeding southerly along Abandoned Railroad to State Route 182, and proceeding southerly along State Route 182 to the point of beginning.

## **Vita**

Rebecca Scheffler grew up in rural south Alabama. She obtained her Bachelor of Science degree from Troy State University in 2000. Before completing her degree, she realized a career change was necessary. Having an arts background from years of dance and a love of the outdoors, she discovered the field of landscape architecture and entered into the graduate program in the School of Landscape Architecture at Louisiana State University in the fall of 2000. Rebecca anticipates graduating in August 2003 with a Master of Landscape Architecture.