

**RESOLUTION NO. 2021 – August 02-01**

**A resolution to adopt a new master plan for West Feliciana Parish; and to provide for related matters.**

**WHEREAS**, the needs of West Feliciana Parish have changed over the years since the adoption of the original master plan;

**WHEREAS**, a new master plan has been crafted and proposed to the West Feliciana Parish Planning and Zoning Commission, entitled “West Feliciana Parish Rural Development Plan 2021”;

**WHEREAS**, the West Feliciana Parish Rural Development Plan 2021 is intended to guide development of the Parish into the future;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the West Feliciana Parish Planning and Zoning Commission that the West Feliciana Parish Rural Development Plan 2021 is hereby adopted as the new master plan for West Feliciana Parish.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that a summary of the West Feliciana Parish Rural Development Plan 2021 be filed with the West Feliciana Parish Council and with the Clerk of Court for West Feliciana Parish.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the date of the adoption of this Resolution noted on the West Feliciana Parish Rural Development Plan 2021 along with the signature of the chairman of the West Feliciana Parish Planning and Zoning Commission.

This resolution having been submitted to a vote on this \_\_\_\_\_ day of August, 2021, the vote thereon was as follows:

YEAS:

NAYS:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Alan Kirkpatrick, Planning & Zoning Chairman

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Emily Cobb, Planning & Zoning Secretary

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

CERTIFICATE

I, the undersigned Secretary of the West Feliciana Parish Planning & Zoning Commission, do hereby certify that the foregoing constitutes a true and correct copy of the resolution adopted by said Parish Council on \_\_\_\_\_, 2021, at which meeting a quorum of the members of the Planning & Zoning Commission were both present and voting.

IN FAITH WHEREOF, witness my official signature and seal at St. Francisville, Louisiana, on this, the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2021.

---

Emily Cobb, Planning & Zoning Secretary

INTRODUCTION

# West Feliciana Parish Rural Development Plan

2021

7-13-2021

# Contents

Contents.....	1
Chapter 1: The West Feliciana Vision.....	3
Introduction and Purpose .....	3
The West Feliciana Vision .....	3
A Future Rich in Natural and Cultural Amenities .....	3
Building Off the Parish’s Historic Charm .....	3
Guiding Principles .....	3
Livable Community .....	3
Healthy Environment .....	4
Prosperous Economy .....	4
How We Want the Parish to Look.....	4
Private Development .....	4
Streetscapes.....	5
Action Plan .....	6
Managing & Servicing Existing Development and Future Growth .....	6
Community Improvement.....	7
Economic Development.....	8
Chapter 2: Developing the Plan .....	8
Driving Forces.....	8
History of West Feliciana .....	8
Demographics .....	9
Land Use Snapshot.....	9
Total Land Area .....	9
Developed Land .....	9
Constrained Land .....	10
Buildable Land.....	10
Chapter 3: Livable Communities: Goals, Policies & Actions.....	12
The Guiding Principles.....	14
Growth – .....	14
Land Use/Housing – .....	14
Transportation – .....	14
Goals .....	14

Goal 1 .....	14
Goal 2 .....	18
Goal 3 .....	21
Goal 4 .....	24
Goal 5 .....	25
Chapter 4: Healthy Environment: Goals, Policies, & Actions.....	26
The Guiding Principle .....	26
Goals .....	26
Goal 1 .....	26
Goal 2 .....	27
Chapter 5: Intergovernmental Coordination: Implementation and Monitoring.....	27
Local Coordination .....	27
Regional Coordination .....	28
State coordination .....	28
Chapter 6: Keeping the Plan Alive: Implementation and Monitoring.....	28
Recommended Updating Procedures.....	29
Amendment Procedures .....	29

# Chapter 1: The West Feliciana Vision

## Introduction and Purpose

The intention of the 2021 West Feliciana Parish Rural Development Plan is to envision the parish in the next 10 years. To accomplish that vision the adoption and implementation of planned actions should guide future development. West Feliciana is uniquely positioned to move towards this—a future that preserves the rural character of the parish, enhances the quality of life for residents, and plans for future growth.

The plan is the parish’s “blueprint” for future development, and expresses how the parish should encourage a resilient, livable, prosperous, and healthy community in a fair and equitable way for everyone. The plan is not a regulatory document. Instead, once adopted, the plan will be used to guide parish development decisions. In addition, the Planning and Zoning Commission and Parish Council shall consider the plan before adopting, approving, or promulgating local laws, ordinances, or regulations, as required by state law.

## The West Feliciana Vision

The nature of the parish as it looks forward should include:

### A Future Rich in Natural and Cultural Amenities

A rural setting with a predominance of green spaces—pastures, ponds, fields, forests, and agricultural elements such as barns, fences, and animals. The rural environment retains its signature hills and hollows, country roads lined with trees and tree canopies, and expansive rural vistas from the highways and roadways.

### Building Off the Parish’s Historic Charm

Buildings shall remain low in height but become more diverse in terms of the mix of uses they harbor. The design and architecture of new development should play off the region’s historic charm but also breathe new life into communities by infusing modern influences. Further, an emphasis on preserving existing historic buildings, improving conditions of existing housing, and blending new construction in harmony with historic influences shall be encouraged.

## Guiding Principles

The Plan is based on Guiding Principles that reflect citizen’s core values and are divided into three sections:

### Livable Community

**Growth** – Embrace and retain the rural and historic character of the parish. Strive for unified goals and compatible laws and regulations between the parish and town.

**Land Use/Housing** – Emphasize sustainable and resilient development with a focus on providing attractive and safe neighborhoods. Respect the architectural scale and historic character of St. Francisville and other historic areas.

**Transportation** – Direct new development toward areas where there are adequate roads to accommodate growth.

## Healthy Environment

Preserve the natural beauty of the parish and its assets—our wildlife, fields, woodlands, and country roads—using conservation development practices such as greenbelts and cluster development. Provide more walkable connections, trails, and bike paths to provide diverse recreational opportunities.

## Prosperous Economy

Plan for and provide infrastructure to encourage future growth. Emphasize tourism and eco-tourism. Attract new economic development to the parish in targeted areas.

## How We Want the Parish to Look

The way that the parish looks is defined by both the private realm (development on private lands), and the public realm (the characteristics of the roads and streets). The following desired development types are derived from public input.

**Desired development types fall into two categories:**

- Private development with rural housing, rural clusters, and neighborhoods.
- Streetscapes with rural parkways, rural roads, and neighborhood streets.

## Private Development

### Rural Housing

The purpose of rural housing is to provide residential housing that is appropriate for a sparsely populated area. Rural Housing provides for a working landscape where homes are separated by large, expansive lots used for mostly ranching, farming, agriculture, and natural area protection. To ensure the long-term use and health of rural lands, this development type allows for a limited amount of housing on a per acre basis. The idea is to maintain large parcels and low density which is appropriate for a rural area.

### Rural Clusters

Rural clusters allow for country living while maintaining the integrity of natural features such as streams, wetlands, natural streetscapes, and standing trees. The overall building footprint of the development should remain small, allowing for the protection of natural systems including wildlife habitat and corridors. Rural clusters also provide for a more efficient and cost-effective provision of urban services including roads, sewage, water, and electricity. Instead of running new lines or roads to individual properties separated by expansive lots, the parish will require developers to provide single access lines to the location of the clustered development cutting costs and overall maintenance.

### Neighborhood

A neighborhood becomes a reflection of its inhabitants and nearby activities. Neighborhoods located in outlying areas remain quieter and more secluded. West

Felicianá's new neighborhoods will continue to be comprised primarily of single-family, detached homes.

## Streetscapes

### Rural Parkway

The parkway streetscape helps preserve the rural character of the parish by incorporating extensive trees and other vegetation in a wide landscaped buffer on either side of the roadway. In areas of more intensive development, the use of landscaped berms further shields the visual impact of buildings and parking lots. Development is set back behind the visual screen, minimizing the impact to the rural character of the major roadways in the parish.

Only at the entrance to commercial areas are buildings allowed a limited amount of visual prominence. For a limited area on either side of the entrance road to commercial areas, buildings would be allowed to be seen and oriented towards the highway. Building visibility at entrances is important for the commercial viability of development, while limiting the area where buildings are visible helps preserve the rural character of the roadway.

### Rural Road

Rural roads characterize the quality most cherished by residents of West Feliciana Parish. Networking through a diverse terrain, it is from these winding passageways that "rural character" is experienced. Many roads, clearly historic in nature, are narrow, tree-lined, and sunken deep in the earth indicating hundreds of years of local use. Gravel roads and one lane bridges are not uncommon. Collectively, these are essential parish assets; country roads that serve a local population and attract thousands of visitors annually.

Acknowledging the uniqueness of rural roads as the window to "rural character" is to set all the corridors apart to be respected. While striving for all roads to be safe, special effort is to be made to preserve tree canopies, historic roadbeds, and special vistas, whenever possible. It is recognized that many parish roads do not meet conventional engineering standards regarding width, shoulder, drainage ditches and even gravel versus asphalt. However, effort is to be made to compensate for such deficiencies before proceeding with improvements that would diminish the rural quality and value of the road.

### Neighborhood Street

The neighborhood street should be safe, inviting, and pleasant to walk along. Design features can improve the safety of streets within neighborhoods. Keeping the roadway relatively narrow and including street trees along the edges serves to slow traffic down. In addition, orienting the front of houses and porches towards the road keeps more watchful eyes on the street. Sidewalks, at least on one side of the street, encourage walking and neighbor interaction.



## Action Plan

The Action Plan is a short-term framework detailing specific actions that should be undertaken immediately and completed in a short period of time. The following actions are the first implementation steps that the parish should take to quickly move the parish towards the desired vision. These implementation measures address high priority issues. If completed this will show clear movement of the parish towards the citizen's vision and will make a significant impact on the quality of life in the parish.

These actions are grouped into three categories: **Managing & Servicing Existing Development and Future Growth, Community Improvement and Economic Development.** The following actions are not intended to be implemented sequentially, but rather as funding and timing permits.

### Managing & Servicing Existing Development and Future Growth

#### Action 1:

##### **Infrastructure**

A first step in plan implementation is to provide a centralized water and sewer system to incentivize development in designated potential growth areas. By accommodating this projected increase in demand at a centralized location, it is possible to size the facilities and conveyance so that the increased capacity that will be required for future projected developments can be engineered into the design over the design life of the system.

Having this existing capacity in place and the ability to accommodate future service demand for both residential and commercial development is fundamental to meeting demand with no loss in service quality. Loss in service quality can have serious human health and environmental impacts. This preservation in both human health and environmental quality is essential criteria in maintaining the very standard of living and preservation of the natural resources that make West Feliciana such a desirable place to live and work.

#### Action 2:

##### **Unified Development Ordinance**

Provide a set of up-to-date ordinances that can be modified to address the plan recommendations and the needs of the parish. Update the development regulations so that the parish's regulations are in line with plan recommendations. **Key issues to address in revising the ordinance include:**

- Restructuring the ordinance to reflect updated practices, consistency, and ease of understanding of ordinance—including such items as combining residential and non-residential use charts; incorporating guidelines for decision making that ensure objective evaluation of proposals; standardizing regulations for overlay districts, as well as several other issues:
  - Providing a structure that minimizes subjective reviews by incorporating simple performance measures.
  - Allowing flexibility for creative development and the incorporation of smart growth principles.
  - Including standards to address landscaping, lighting, signage, buffering, and other quality of life issues addressed in the plan.

- Including up to date approaches on several other planning and zoning issues.

### Action 3:

**Prepare and use an evaluation checklist to ensure requests are consistent with the adopted plan.** Evaluation of the planned developments should include at a minimum, the following:

1. Overall consistency with the Plan Policies.
2. Uses and configurations that are consistent with the West Feliciana Plan Map (on page 13) and land use recommendations.
3. Promotion of connectivity and controlled access, including the provision of streets to connect to a parish street network.
4. Screened setbacks along highway and primary street frontages.
5. Sewage treatment facilities designed to have the ability to hook up to a future parish interceptor line to a larger parish sewage treatment facility.
6. Single family design and streetscapes that preserve the rural character.
7. Provision of detailed open space plans for the site, including long term ownership and management.
8. Provision of erosion control plans for the development of the site.

### Action 4:

#### **Parish Housing Development Strategy**

A more diverse type and range of housing is needed to meet the current and future needs of West Feliciana residents. To ensure that this need is addressed as growth occurs, the parish should adopt and implement a housing strategy that is geared toward ensuring that a wider range of housing opportunities are provided in the parish. Steps to ensure this include:

1. Prepare and adopt a housing strategy that includes clear policy approved by the Parish Council to expand the parish's housing selection. This type of policy document will ensure that requests for housing are approved consistently and at a policy level, rather than subjectively on a case-by-case basis. Include locational standards consistent with the Plan in this policy document.
2. Change the zoning code to allow mixed-use development by right in appropriate areas to meet the needs of seniors, young professionals, and growing families. As the parish grows and develops, regulations should be regularly reviewed and updated to ensure that developers can build innovative and desirable housing types as the needs change in the parish. The zoning code should also be strengthened regarding treatment of manufactured housing to ensure that they meet minimum standards and are compatible with surrounding residential units. The zoning codes should include clear and objective residential design guidelines that can be implemented consistently by planning staff and without a special design review committee.

## Community Improvement

### Action 5:

**Housing Maintenance Program** The parish should establish an ongoing housing maintenance program to bring substandard housing up to minimum health standards, with adequate plumbing, electrical and other minimum requirements.

## Action 6:

### **Street Improvement Program**

The parish should inventory roads and score them as to the need for improvements. Following this effort, a prioritized improvement program, projected out for five years should be developed, based on priorities that are consistent with the plan, the level of disrepair, and level of service of the roadways.

## Economic Development

### Action 7:

#### **Attractive Employment Environment**

The keys for successful economic development, retention and expansion will be based on a continuation of the parish's development efforts. The West Feliciana Parish environment and culture promote a sense of entrepreneurship—where people who live in the parish have a strong desire to work in the parish. Strategies to continue to enhance the parish as an attractive employment environment include:

1. Focus new development, through land use regulations, into designated development areas with resulting multi-use areas desirable for both employers and employees.
2. Pursue high-speed internet infrastructure to appeal to live/work employees.
3. Protect the parish's existing industrial land and locational opportunities along the river. Establish policies to retain the existing industrial and commercial properties from residential encroachment. Exploration of a port along the river should also be continued as an economic priority.
4. Provide educational opportunities at every level to ensure a skilled workforce. Develop post-secondary options, including a community college branch and/or technical education which build on the growing sectors and provide well-located educational options for the parish's residents and workers.

## Chapter 2: Developing the Plan

### Driving Forces

#### History of West Feliciana

West Feliciana Parish was part of the West Florida region on the north shore of the Gulf of Mexico. This region underwent several boundary and sovereignty changes during its history. Parts of the territory were held at various times by France, Spain, Britain, and the United States, as well as the short-lived Republic of West Florida and the Confederate States of America. The Florida Parishes are unlike much of the state of Louisiana, as this region was not part of the Louisiana Purchase, and remained under Spanish control after the purchase. After a rebellion in 1810 the parish formed part of the Republic of West Florida. The Flag of the Republic of West Florida was known as the "Bonnie Blue Flag" and was the first use of the lone star. The capital of the Republic of West Florida was St. Francisville. The region was soon annexed by the United States and incorporated into the Orleans Territory.

## Demographics

Commensurate with national trends, the Parish's population is aging, meaning most of the growth is and will be concentrated in those younger than 20 and older than 35 years of age. Most of that growth will be attributed to in-migration. The Parish's aging population will present several challenges, particularly in terms of housing. Older residents will be more likely to want homes that are smaller, require less maintenance and are close to shopping and services.

## Land Use Snapshot

West Feliciana Parish is characterized by its "hills and hollows" which both defines the breathtaking beauty of the parish and limits the way in which the parish can be developed. The parish has beautiful wooded and natural areas that create a serene and pastoral environment much loved by residents. The Tunica Hills of West Feliciana are the southernmost end of the northern deciduous forest. The loess geology supports this beautiful hardwood climax forest.

An important part of the planning process is to identify, far in advance, which lands are suitable for development and which are not. This analysis helps a community determine where to focus development, where to prevent it, and how to integrate natural resources like open space into the community.

Just under 10% of the Parish's total land is developed or in use. Single family homes make up the largest portion of developed land, at 8,037 acres (3% of total Parish lands). Agriculture makes up about 15% of the Parish's land, and forests 33%. While sizeable, not all the Parish's land is suitable for building or development. Water and riparian areas, lands within 50 feet of wetlands, floodplains, and steep slopes make up 53% of the total land area of the parish. Dedicated parklands comprise the remainder of constrained lands. Of the 100,000 acres of land considered buildable, the majority are forest (55%), followed by agricultural (27%), and other lands (20%).

The Parish has an ample land supply, even given the large number of constrained lands. Careful planning to protect environmental resources will help the Parish retain the rural character that has made it an attractive place to live.

## Total Land Area

The parish contains approximately 273,000 acres of land, with almost 26,000 acres developed. Over 40,000 acres are in agricultural use and almost a third of the parish is forested. The remaining acreage, approximately 117,000 acres, is comprised of parks, wetlands, water, brush, and grass lands.

## West Feliciana Land Use Breakdown

	Developed	Agriculture	Only Forest	Other	Total
Acres	25,662	40,677	89,817	116,844	273,000
Share	9%	15%	33%	43%	100%

Source: Fregonese Associates

## Developed Land

A large amount of the parish's developed land is in the Angola Penitentiary, with approximately 18,000 acres, much of it used as working farmlands. Over 8,000 acres or 31% of the developed land is in single

family uses. Industrial and commercial uses make up 7% or 1,700 acres of the developed land with the remaining 14% in green spaces such as lawns, and unclassified developments.

### West Feliciana Developed Land

	Commercial	Industrial	Civic	Single Family	Other	Total
Acres	219	1,484	12,380	8,037	3,598	25,718
Share	1%	6%	48%	31%	14%	100%

Source: Fregonese Associates

### Constrained Land

Constrained lands are areas that have characteristics that affect development. Constrained land may or may not be developable. Approximately 151,000 acres, or over 50% of the land in the parish has some development constraints. The largest type of constrained land is wetlands, which comprise over 50% of the constrained lands. Other constrained lands include water bodies, riparian areas, floodplains, parks, and areas with steep slopes.

### West Feliciana Constrained Land

	Water	Riparian	Wetlands*	Within 50 ft of wetland	Floodplain	Steep Slopes >25%	Parks	Total
Acres	15,540	4,775	77,139	15,724	21,121	12,422	4,435	151,156
Share	10%	3%	51%	10%	14%	8%	3%	100%

\* Wetlands include woody areas with 20% land cover in forest or shrub periodically covered by water, as well as herbaceous vegetation covering 80% of the land that is also periodically covered by water. Definitions and data provided by the USGS.

Source: Fregonese Associates

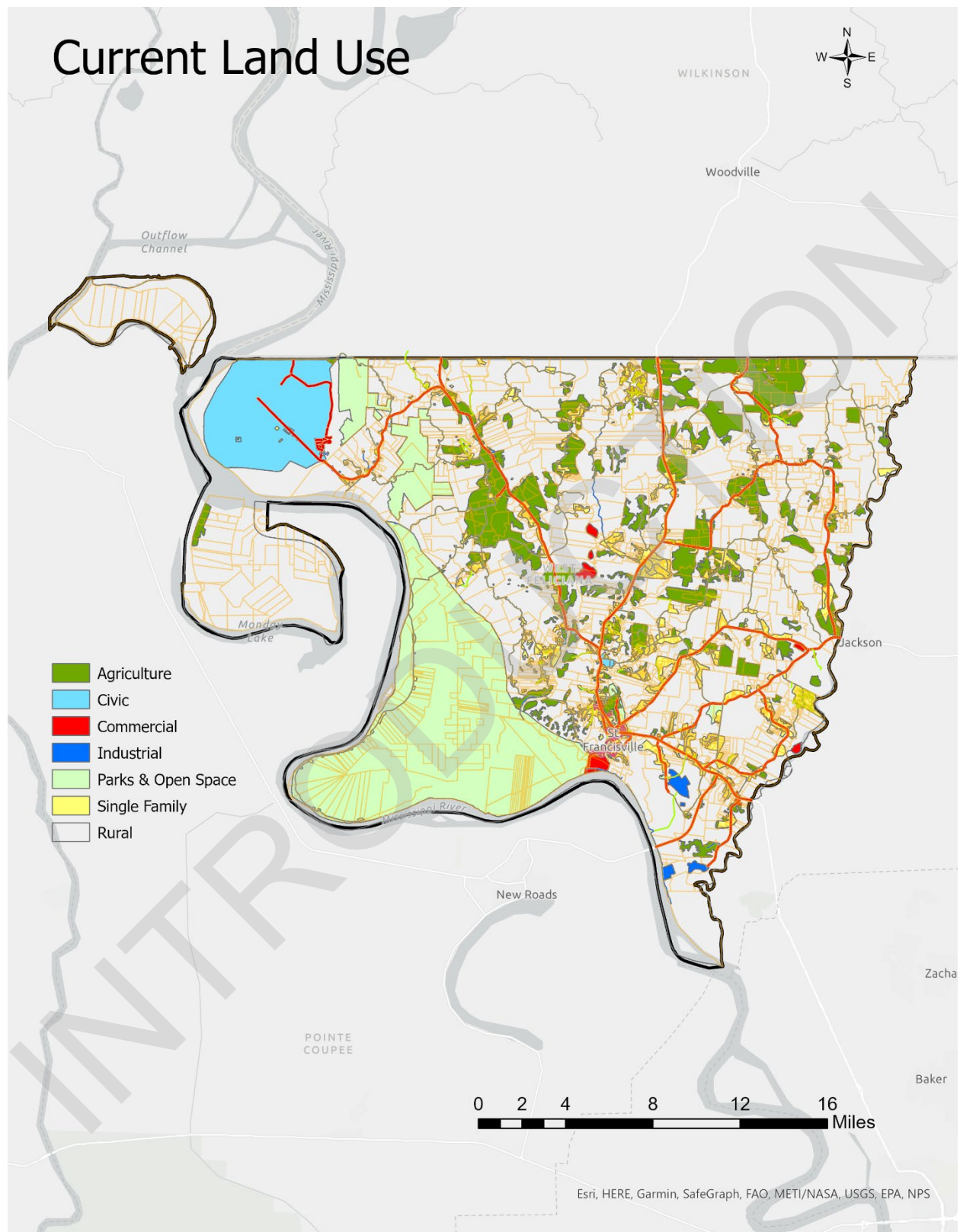
### Buildable Land

Almost 40% of the land area is buildable with the 105,000 acres of buildable land made up by agriculture, forests, brush land, grass land, and barren lands.

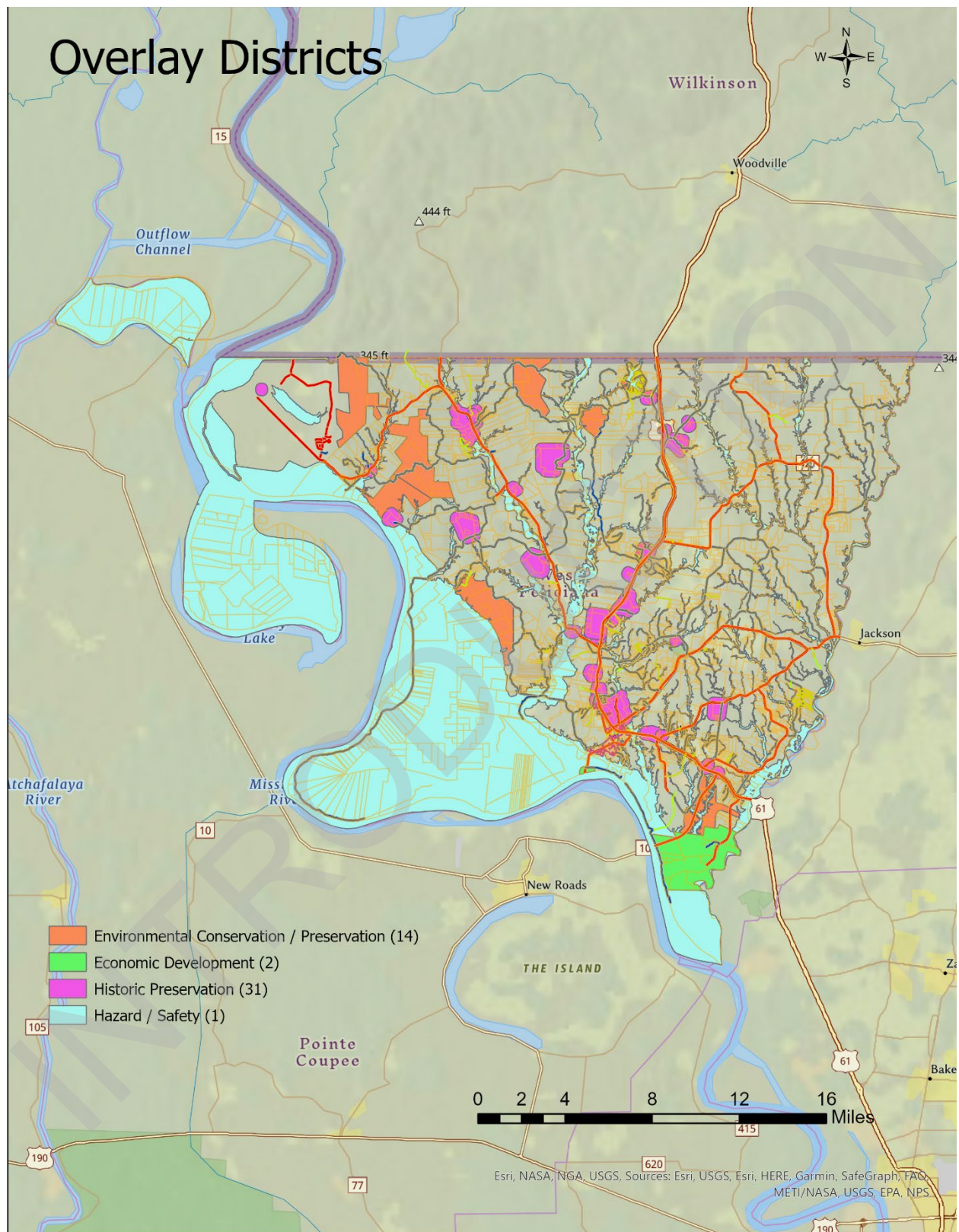
### West Feliciana Buildable Land

	Agricultural	Forest	Other	Total
Acres	28,770	55,644	20,866	105,280
Share	27%	53%	20%	100%

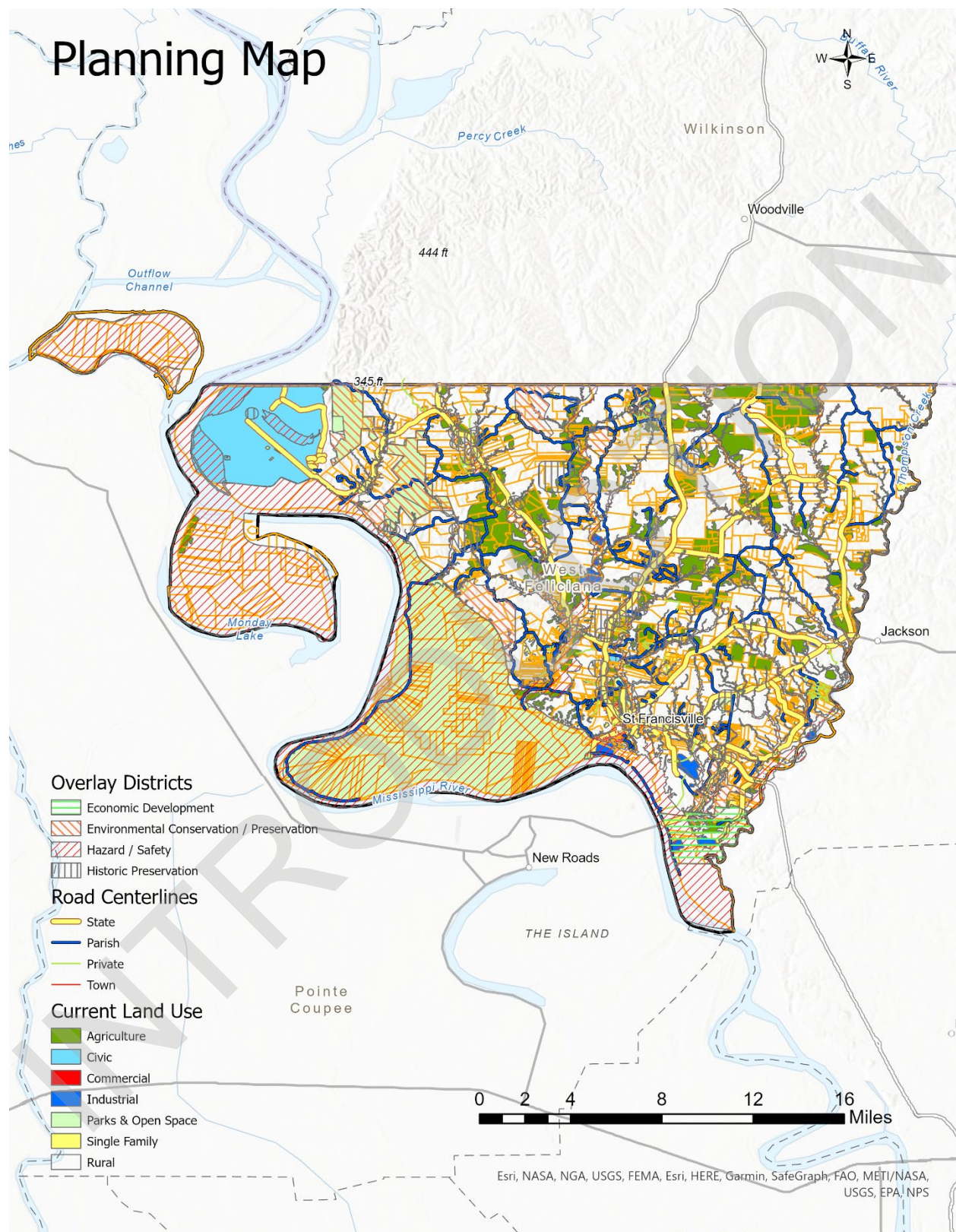
Source: Fregonese Associates













## Chapter 3: Livable Communities: Goals, Policies & Actions

The Livable Community chapter includes policies and actions to encourage the quality of life desired by West Feliciana's citizens and stakeholders.

### The Guiding Principles

**Growth** — Embrace and retain the rural and historic character of the parish. Focus on attracting new housing and jobs to existing developed areas already served by infrastructure. Influence how we grow and what our parish will look like in the future by adopting fair and objective ordinances.

**Land Use/Housing** — Emphasize mixed-use sustainable development with a focus on providing attractive and safe neighborhoods and commercial areas in which to live, work and visit. Promote a wider range of housing options—both in style and size—as well as more shops and services. Respect the architectural scale and historic character of St. Francisville and other historic areas.

**Transportation** — Provide convenient access to stores and services from all areas of the parish. Direct new development toward areas where there are adequate roads to accommodate growth and scale new streets to fit their surroundings to promote safety and attractiveness.

### Goals

#### Goal 1

**Maintain the parish's rural character and environmental assets; accommodate future growth in a sustainable and equitable development pattern.** To achieve this desired vision, the parish must adopt policies and implement strategies to protect environmental areas; maintain the character of the rural parish; and direct new growth to areas that have or will have required infrastructure to efficiently serve future growth.

#### Policy 1

**Preserve the parish's agricultural lifestyle, a major part of the rural character.** Maintaining and protecting the agricultural lifestyle, which is characterized by the parish's farms, timber operations, hunting and fishing, is important to support the land and keep the land productive in a rural manner.

##### Action 1:

Promote agricultural uses and appropriate ancillary uses such as farmer's markets, organic farming, and biotech industries.

##### Action 2:

Review setbacks for rural residential uses adjacent to agricultural land.

#### Policy 2

**Plan for future growth, preserve environmentally sensitive areas, and follow the adopted plan when evaluating development requests.** If West Feliciana Parish captures just 3 percent of the Baton Rouge region's projected growth estimated for 2040, the parish will see an increase of approximately 16,000 people, 6,000 new households, and 6,000 new jobs. While this increase in households and jobs will bring

economic growth to the parish, the parish must implement a clear plan to ensure that the rural and natural environment is maintained.

#### Action 1:

Use the West Feliciana Plan Map that delineates environmental and rural areas and future development areas to guide parish planning decisions. The boundaries shown on the Plan Map are not intended to be absolute but are generalized to indicate the type of future envisioned for the area. Site conditions will determine the exact location of the boundary for these areas.

The West Feliciana Plan Map accommodates the projected 2040 growth in a sustainable development pattern. This map, along with adopted policies in the Plan, shall guide the Parish's land use, capital improvement and economic development decisions.

The Plan Map reflects the need to concentrate at least 80 percent of the parish's residential and employment growth in a future development area that is fully served by urban scale infrastructure. The provision of a full complement of services in this area will provide incentives for development to occur here.

#### Action 2:

Adopt guidelines to use to evaluate development requests and their compliance with the Plan. Establish procedures for amending the Plan on a regular basis to adjust to changing conditions.

#### Action 3:

Adopt the Environmentally Sensitive Area Map to delineate watersheds, floodplains, designated parks and open space and other environmentally sensitive areas. Maintain these areas as outlined in policies in the Healthy Environment Chapter of this plan.

### Policy 3

**Preserve the rural character and the natural beauty of the parish and its assets—the wildlife, fields, woodlands, and country roads.** Most of West Feliciana's citizens feel strongly about preserving the rural and small-town atmosphere of their parish. This is expressed in the desire to maintain the rural character of parish roads and reduce or eliminate unsightly strip development along Highway 61 as well as the other highways; the desire to maintain large lots and agricultural uses; and the desire to reduce the potential for random residential development in predominantly rural areas.

#### Action 1:

Adopt master streetscape standards and enforce requirements along Highway 61 and for rural streetscapes using deep setbacks, heavy tree coverage and canopies, rural fencing, and shared driveways. Apply master streetscape standards for new construction.

#### Action 2:

Accommodate nonresidential rural uses that support a rural lifestyle and that are in character with surrounding uses. Appropriate nonresidential uses include rural commercial uses such as feed and hardware stores, vegetable stands, and agricultural support uses; civic uses such as community and recreational centers and government offices; and religious institutions.

#### Action 3:

Discourage traditional large-scale subdivisions in un-serviced rural areas of the parish.  
Incorporate development standards to ensure appropriate open space ratios and development patterns.

### Policy 4

**Guide most of the projected residential and employment development to areas served by existing water and sewer infrastructure in the southern part of the parish.** Because of the parish's proximity to Baton Rouge, West Feliciana Parish will grow. This growth can occur following existing patterns—with uncontrolled sprawling development without adequate services, that may incrementally not seem intrusive, but over time compounds into inefficient land uses that are not sustainable; or it can be planned to be located efficiently, concentrated in an area that can be economically served by a parish utility system. A basic premise of smart growth is to provide for areas of compact development while retaining open space and protecting environmental areas.

In applying this concept, this plan should retain approximately 99 percent of the parish's land area in rural land uses and focus 80 percent of future growth in areas served by the existing water and sewer system. This area can be expanded outward as growth demand occurs, and infrastructure is installed to expand the service area.

While planning for full serviced growth does not make growth happen, it prepares the parish, in case it does happen, so the parish is ready financially and organizationally to deal with the pressures of development. This strategy ensures that the parish has a contingency plan in place in case the growth occurs, ensuring that the parish is not caught without adequate infrastructure and resources for the future. Growth may occur in other areas of the parish, but it is not anticipated that the parish will provide services to areas that are beyond recommended service areas.

#### Action 1:

Designate future development areas served by the existing water and sewer system on the West Feliciana Plan Map.

### Policy 5

**Create complete communities in existing village/community centers.** West Feliciana has several established village centers—from the incorporated town of St. Francisville to unincorporated centers, including Tunica, Weyanoke, Independence, Elm Park, Lake Rosemound, Laurel Hill, Wakefield, Solitude, the Bluffs and Star Hill/Independence. These areas should attract the majority of the residential and supporting service uses that occur outside of the growth area.

#### Action 1:

Designate village/community centers on the West Feliciana Plan Map.

#### Action 2:

Prepare small area plans for village centers to establish desired development patterns and to guide future development decisions and capital improvement plans. Generally, plan for concentrated uses in the center of the village with transitions to areas with less density the farther away from the centers.

## Policy 6

**Provide for the creation of new development in rural areas.** As growth occurs in the parish there may be a demand for new development areas—especially in areas where there are none currently located such as in the northeastern portion of the parish. Evaluation measures and procedures should be in place to accommodate this demand.

### Action 1:

Require a minimum threshold to establish new development, such as a combination of two of the following:

- A minimum of 50 acres
- A minimum of 5,000 square feet of retail and commercial uses
- Require a mix of land uses and development of a traditional street pattern.
- Require an infrastructure and utility plan to ensure adequate service.

### Action 2:

Create a process to accommodate new growth in either existing or growth areas. These new growth centers should support current level infrastructure and should be designed to protect environmental assets.

## Policy 7

**Align the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances with desired development patterns and types.** A prevailing guiding principle is the expressed desire to influence how West Feliciana grows and what the parish will look like in the future by adopting fair and objective ordinances.

### Action 1:

Revise the Parish's development regulations to align them with the plan and to promote sustainable development at the scale and densities recommended by the plan.

### Action 2:

Create and adopt ordinances that remove the need for subjective decisions and that have clear and objective standards that can easily be interpreted and administered fairly.

### Action 3:

Create and adopt ordinances that can be easily administered at current staffing levels and that can be modified to include more comprehensive tools as the parish grows, needs a more detailed regulatory structure, and is able to increase staffing levels.

### Action 4:

Consider the adopted Plan before adopting, approving, or promulgating any local laws, ordinances, or regulations which are inconsistent with the adopted plan.

### Action 5:

Use the adopted Plan as the primary guide when considering zoning changes. Adopt procedures to review requests in the context of the Plan.

#### Action 6:

Establish review criteria that must be met when approving zoning that does not comply with the adopted plan.

### Policy 8

**Implement sustainable financial policies.** The Parish Council desires to provide high quality services to citizens in a cost-effective manner. Planning for future growth and infrastructure needs enables the parish to project future expenses and plan for the possibility of substantial growth and how to address the needs of that growth. A financial plan to expand infrastructure and services as the parish grows should be put in place before growth occurs so the parish is well positioned to address the increasing needs of its citizens.

#### Action 1:

Encourage most of the development where infrastructure exists or is planned soon through the provision of an urban water and sewer system and streamlined zoning and development processes.

#### Action 2:

Evaluate the cost of future capital investments based on growth scenarios and develop programs to recoup a portion of those costs through development fees from new development and user fees.

#### Action 3:

Implement impact fees and/or development charges that encourage development consistent with the adopted plan.

#### Action 4:

Phase in user fees to sustain the cost of public services over time.

#### Action 5:

Adopt a rate plan that accommodates expanding utilities as demand grows and start saving for future improvements through the establishment of a utility fund.

#### Action 6:

Prepare a Capital Improvement Program that monitors improvements and maintenance needs on a parish-wide basis and establishes a priority list to address highest priorities annually. Include opportunities for citizen input into this process.

### Goal 2

**Plan and build a parish transportation system that accommodates forecasted growth, minimizes congestion, provides safe bike routes, and improves roadway safety to the extent possible.** Planning a transportation system before growth occurs allows the parish to maximize the efficiency of the current system and create new transportation options to expand connectivity and accessibility.

### Policy 1

**Implement a transportation system plan that accommodates future growth.** There are several State and one US designated highways located within the parish. US 61 is the major north-south corridor that

traverses the limits of the parish. Historically, this road was a two-lane rural highway, but it has been widened to a four-lane undivided road. US 61 is a critical component of the National Highway System (NHS). The NHS is approximately 160,000 miles of roadway important to the nation's economy, defense, and mobility. Also, US 61 is classified by the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (LADOTD) as a Principal Arterial. These provide access between an arterial and a major port, airport, public transportation facility, or other intermodal transportation facilities.

Another critical function of US 61 is to provide a regional evacuation route. There are two primary types of evacuation: "with and without notice". "With notice" evacuations are utilized when the danger can be anticipated with enough time to react, such as hurricanes. Since US 61 is a north-south route, it can be used to travel farther inland to higher ground. "Without notice" evacuations are triggered when an accident involving hazardous materials occur with little to no warning. There are several major chemical plants to the south of West Feliciana and a nuclear power reactor within the parish. It is imperative that a road with sufficient capacity be available to move people out of the area when needed. If reoccurring daily congestion is present on this critical evacuation route, the ability to quickly move evacuees away from areas of threat is diminished.

In terms of economic impact, US 61 carries a considerable amount of daily traffic. Several businesses that benefit from pass-by customers have located on US 61. These types of businesses are fuel stations, fast-food restaurants, and other stores of convenience. While these businesses provide an essential service, they can compete for the capacity of the road. Segmentation of the road based on land use is a tool used to consolidate access points. If businesses are grouped together, it is easier to limit the number of access points to the main road and provide increased cross-access. The practice of limiting access points on the major arterials is known as Access Management and is a key element in preserving the capacity of the road.

Another tool to preserve the rural character of the area is the scenic by-way program. West Feliciana has one of 18 Scenic Byways in the State of Louisiana—Tunica Trace Scenic Byway (Louisiana Highway 66). This 20-mile, winding road passes through the Tunica Hills and ends at the State Penitentiary at Angola. The name of the byway honors the aboriginal trail later used by Tunica Indians in this historic region.

To promote the scenic by-way program, the National Scenic Byways Program, which is part of the Federal Highway Administration, can be utilized as a resource. The program is a grass-roots collaborative effort established to help recognize, preserve, and enhance selected roads throughout the United States. The Parish should also endeavor to work with the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development to determine which roads should be widened to accommodate expected traffic increases and which roads should be protected for historic and scenic purposes.

#### Action 1:

Prepare a Thoroughfare Plan for new construction and improvements to existing facilities. Use the transportation system plan map that is part of this plan to guide and establish future transportation improvements for:

1. Major and minor arterial and collector roads
2. Rural, village and urban local roadways

#### Action 2:

Coordinate with the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (LADOTD) and the District Engineer in developing a transportation plan to ensure that improvements proposed by both agencies are consistent and meet established guidelines and designations for federal and state routes.

#### Action 3:

Pursue state and federal programs (e.g., Scenic Byways) that help preserve rural character of appropriate roadways and identify potential funding sources.

#### Action 4:

Develop policy guidelines to define roadway elements and right-of-way requirements for all roadway classifications. Create exhibits of each classification.

#### Action 5:

Plan for limited access onto state highways and major arterials to improve efficient and safe movement on these roadways.

### Policy 2

**Manage access to major roadways with the intent of maintaining traffic flow, maintaining rights-of-way, providing drainage, and protecting the functional classification of the system.**

#### Action 1:

Implement or enforce standards for state highways, major roads, and minor streets.

#### Action 2:

Implement standards for shared access agreements.

#### Action 3:

Implement standards for specific access management tools such as restricted access; required turn lanes, signalization, and signage.

### Policy 3

**Implement the master streetscape plan with context sensitive standards that maintains the rural feel of the roads for rural roads, and village, urban and residential streets.**

#### Street Design for Rural Communities in Subdivisions

One of the key elements in maintaining a rural feel is the width of the subdivision street. Two travel lanes with a width of 10 feet is adequate for the typical volumes and speed in residential areas. Over the past few decades, subdivision streets have been widened to include 12-foot lanes. One of the main reasons for providing wider streets was to provide adequate on street parking. If adequate parking is provided by way of a two-car garage and a driveway, the extra width is not necessary. In fact, the occasional parked car will cause opposing vehicles to slow down when passing. This traffic calming effect is desirable where children and pets are present.

Smart Growth developments incorporate and promote other modes transportation, such as walking and bicycling. This can be accomplished by providing dedicated bike lanes and wide sidewalks and tree lined streets for shade.

When establishing a desired speed for a road, posting a speed limit does not necessarily result in that desired speed. Other elements influence the speed of motorists, such as geometric design. High speed motorists pose a serious threat to pedestrians. Slower motor vehicle speeds allow drivers to stop in shorter distances and reduce the chance of injuring a pedestrian or bicyclist. The braking difference between motor vehicles traveling at 35 MPH and 25 MPH is significant.

**Action 1:**

Implement streetscape standards and right-of-way cross sections for rural roads, and residential, village and urban streets.

**Action 2:**

Use standards when reviewing development proposals and for parish road improvement.

**Action 3:**

Require underground utilities and wiring with new construction when feasible.

### Goal 3

**Plan for an infrastructure system that will accommodate forecasted growth in targeted growth areas while also maintaining quality rural services.** The majority of the parish's anticipated residential population increase is projected to occur in the southeastern corner of the parish, primarily in an area to the southeast of Highway 10. While this concentrated increase in population and associated development places a service demand more than current infrastructure (water and wastewater) capacity, the localized and concentrated nature of this development facilitates centralized infrastructure improvements.

#### Policy 1

**Develop a water plan that identifies and prioritizes the improvements required to accommodate forecasted growth.** The recommended scenario anticipates that the majority of both the residential and commercial development will occur to the southeast of Highway 10. This concentrated development will include additional residential developments, commercial retail/business uses as well as the development of a formal light-industrial park. The water plan needs to not only address the private residential service needs, but also the commercial service demand, as well as the associated commercial employment base that may not necessarily be located within this specific service area.

Also, to make the industrial park development an attractive development for prospective commercial developers, the water and fire-fighting service capacity should be sized to not only meet current and near-term development demand, but also include additional capacity for long-term future needs. This plan will be sized and engineered to accommodate future demand, with additional capacity included, but operated within the service range of current demand.

**Action 1:**

Plan and develop a water system in future growth areas.

**Action 2:**

Develop an action plan that includes a cost estimate and financing plan for improving the parish water system.



#### Action 3:

Develop minimum standards for current and future village centers.

1. Tie growth to provision of services.
2. Explore responsibility of connection fees (developer vs parish responsibility).

#### Action 4:

Rural Water

1. Strategically locate additional wells to meet service demand.
2. Explore responsibility of connection fees (developer vs parish responsibility).

#### Action 5:

Plan for parish fire protection water and facilities to improve current ratings as parish grows.

1. Maintain adequate pressure volume for fire protection.
2. Evaluate need for enhanced equipment to meet fire protection needs.
3. Evaluate needs for adequate fire substations and personnel to accommodate growth.

### Policy 2

**Develop a master wastewater plan with standards/requirements for growth area, village centers and rural areas.** Following the reasoning for a centralized location of water infrastructure improvements, a new centralized wastewater treatment system should be developed. The existing grade and terrain should be used when possible. Gravity feed interceptor lines should be used when possible. Because of the undulating nature of the terrain, it is anticipated that lift-stations and forced mains will be required in specific locations. However, the gravity feed system will dominate the interceptor & collection system to keep the cost of infrastructure improvements down. Collection and conveyance systems will also be required.

#### Action 1:

Plan for a sewage treatment system in growth areas that can be tapped into as growth occurs.

1. Build plants in southern parish area.
2. Explore partnership opportunities to adjacent industrial uses.
3. Implement a connection plan where community and individual systems are required to be built to parish standards and can connect to parish-wide system as it is built.
  - a. Establish a policy for right-of-way requirements.
  - b. Develop a plan to acquire right of way.
4. Prepare and adopt an action plan and financing for an urban wastewater system that can be expanded based on demand and the ability to service demand.
  - a. A full scoping plan is recommended to develop, plan, design, fund and build the new wastewater treatment systems.
  - b. The current wastewater systems are not supported by tax revenue and are funded solely by user fees. It is anticipated that development and impact fees will be utilized to fund the wastewater treatment system improvements.

#### Action 2:

Follow and enforce Louisiana DEQ and DHH standards for wastewater systems. Density of population development and associated service area will be the trigger to develop centralized urban systems.

### Policy 3

**Adopt and implement green drainage policies.** Typically, increased development leads to an increase in impervious area, which leads to increased stormwater run-off, both in volume and rate, which can lead to localized flooding. The undulating nature and relief of West Feliciana promotes natural drainage. Fortunately, it is possible to incorporate specific design and landscape architecture practices to minimize the impacts of residential and commercial development. Low Impact Development (LID) strategies utilize an alternative innovative comprehensive suite of lot-level land development principles and practices to minimize the hydrologic regime alterations that typically result from land development activities. This approach combines a variety of conservation strategies, pollution prevention practices, minimization measures, strategic timing techniques, and micro-scale management practices that are integrated into the landscape features and distributed throughout the site and region.

Through the combined cumulative beneficial impacts of all such integrated site design and LID management techniques, it is possible to develop a site and multiple sites in succession with little impact on hydrology or water quality. This approach to site planning and design represents an environmentally and ecologically sensitive approach to land development.

#### Action 1:

Establish requirements for on-site detention/retention of drainage for existing uses and proposed developments with significant impervious surfaces or significant increase in post development impervious area. The recommended Best Management Practice and sizing is determined by the percent increase in impervious area over pre-development levels.

#### Action 2:

Develop a Green Drainage program that addresses the following issues:

1. Control post-development peak run-off discharges to predevelopment levels using structural controls and landscaping approaches.
2. Coordination of on-site detention with required landscaping and open space requirements.
3. Use of and incorporation of vegetated filter strips and vegetated swales in the development design.
4. Inclusion of lot-level, on-site run-off prevention measures to minimize impacts and changes in post-development impervious characteristics.
5. Use of “porous pavement” or block-paved structures with filter strips on large impervious developments to promote on-site infiltration and minimize run-off.
6. Use of “Unified Sizing Criteria” in the design and development of stormwater BMPs and strategically located retention facilities/ponds that store run-off for infiltration, exfiltration, or evaporation.

7. Use of Unified Sizing Criteria in the design of detention facilities in site development (particularly the industrial park) for the temporary store of run-off with controlled release to a permitted receiving stream.

## Goal 4

**Influence how the parish looks in the future.**

### Policy 1

**Maintain the rural character of the parish.** Many factors affect the parish's rural character beyond density: the quality of the roads, the uses along roadways, the amount of green space, and the character of development can all contribute to an area's rural feel. The Parish should seek to preserve and enhance visual enjoyment of natural and historic features within West Feliciana, as well as the enjoyment of natural and agricultural areas of the parish—such as outdoor recreation, hunting, biking, hiking, and bird watching. The Parish should also influence the character of visually prominent locations, such as gateways into the parish and its developed areas.

#### Action 1:

Promote desired development types and appropriate architectural designs.

#### Action 2:

Adopt an aggressive policy and standards to require landscaped buffers along designated rural roadways. Create rural streetscapes using deep setbacks with heavy tree planting and/or pastoral views of open lands, pasture, woods, farm uses or farm buildings.

#### Action 3:

Designate and map rural highways and thoroughfares and specifically identify segments that should be offered incentives for maintaining buffers. Preserve scenic and historic roads and by-ways.

#### Action 4:

Establish gateways by designing and implementing signage and landscaping for major points of entry into the parish.

### Policy 2

**Preserve the historic character of the parish.** Provide clear and consistent policies and regulations to protect, preserve and maintain historic resources. Use overlay zones to restrict development in culturally and historically significant areas.

#### Action 1:

Historic Preservation Ordinance: Develop and adopt a historic preservation ordinance that promotes the preservation of historic properties, follows the state and federal criteria for designation of historic properties, and protects historic resources in the parish.

#### Action 2:

Overlay Zones: Since the parish contains intact recognized historic areas, create historic overlay zones in targeted areas. Explore the use of preservation, heritage, and conservation overlay zones to restrict development in culturally and historically significant areas.

### Policy 3

**Good Form through Residential Design.** Foster good form through residential design. Revise zoning provisions and other policies to maintain the scale and character of established neighborhoods and create new neighborhoods consistent with the provisions of this plan.

#### Action 1:

Relations of Buildings to Street: Every residence's front facade should face a street, public trail, or landscaped walkway; and street frontages should be addressed by front facades. The front facade should include a clearly defined primary entrance that includes a porch, stoop, or windowed vestibule. Mitigate the visual impact of parking, garage doors, mechanical equipment, and refuse containers.

#### Action 2:

Infill Housing: In established neighborhoods, infill housing should be of a similar scale, orientation, and form as nearby structures, except when adjacent to St. Francisville's downtown and main street where higher density and commercial building types may be appropriate.

#### Action 3:

Integration of Parks, Trails, and Other Community Facilities: New development should integrate open space, parks, trails, and civic features. Streets should provide convenient physical and visual access to these community features. New projects should also face building entrances and windows toward these features to provide informal surveillance. Front facades should face into parks, and cottages, townhouses and apartments should be used to enclose parks spatially and place residents who have little or no yard adjacent to parks.

#### Action 4:

Consider adopting ordinances that allow solar panels and encourage homes to be built for solar orientation. Include standards to allow windmills.

### Goal 5

**Capitalize on the parish's natural assets and establish aggressive standards for open space, parks, recreation areas, and trails.** Stakeholders highly value the environmental and natural assets of the parish. In addition, citizens want to establish and maintain high quality recreational opportunities for all citizens. Providing high quality recreational opportunities that preserve and capitalize on the quality of the natural environment will enhance the quality of life for residents and can serve as a foundation for economic development efforts.

### Policy 1

**Require minimum standards for parish park and recreation facilities.**

#### Action 1:

Establish programs to provide parks at the following recommended levels of service as development occurs in the parish.

#### NRPA & ULI Level of Service Park Standards

Type of Park	Recommended Size in Acres	Recommended Service Radius	Recommended Acres/1000 Pop
Parish Park	200 to 600	10 miles	5 to 15
Sub-regional Park	100 to 200	3 miles	2
Community Park	30 to 50	.5 to 3 miles	5 to 8
Neighborhood Park	5 to 10	.25 to .5	1 to 2

#### Action 2:

Establish siting recommendations to preserve natural and environmental areas.

### Policy 2

**Plan for a robust trail and open space system throughout the parish.**

#### Action 1:

Adopt a trail system connectivity plan that promotes biking and walking to accommodate daily needs. Establish linkages between existing centers and surrounding areas, such as St. Francisville, Independence and Solitude.

## Chapter 4: Healthy Environment: Goals, Policies, & Actions

### The Guiding Principle

The Healthy Environment section includes policies and actions to preserve the environmental quality enjoyed by West Feliciana's citizens.

### Goals

#### Goal 1

**Protection of Ecologically Sensitive Areas.** Encourage protection of ecologically sensitive areas in the environmentally sensitive settings found in West Feliciana. Seek to protect ecologically sensitive riparian and upland areas. Extend protection to other environmentally sensitive areas defined to meet the Army Corps of Engineer's definitions of wetland, or if found to contain federally or state listed sensitive species through project specific environmental review processes.

#### Policy 1

**Resource Zoning.** Designate and zone clearly identified environmentally sensitive areas to limit development and to preserve natural resources.

## Policy 2

**Protecting Riparian Areas.** Identify riparian areas and target them for protection from future encroachment.

## Policy 3

**Environmental Protection.** Protect ecologically sensitive areas and provide for their continued health using appropriate setbacks and limitations on potentially detrimental activities. Sensitive areas may be protected through the dedication of open space, open space, permanent conservation easements, setback requirements, and other tools.

## Goal 2

**Develop a drainage system plan to reduce environmental impacts on riparian and wetland areas and promote the integration of development drainage needs with site development, landscaping and open space requirements.**

## Policy 1

**Keep parish streams healthy.**

### Action 1:

Adopt polices addressing erosion prevention in areas with steep slopes—generally greater than 25%.

1. Identify and map areas with greatest potential for erosion issues.
2. Target these areas for increased erosion control.

### Action 2:

Develop and adopt regulations limiting de-vegetation, especially in environmentally sensitive areas.

### Action 3:

Prohibit the use of ravines and drainage basins as garbage depositories. Enforce existing dumping regulations and actively prosecute offenders.

### Action 4:

Develop standards for clearing and filling to eliminate silting of streams to minimize impacts on water quality.

# Chapter 5: Intergovernmental Coordination: Implementation and Monitoring

## Local Coordination

St. Francisville remains the historic and cultural center of West Feliciana Parish. Both the parish and the town could benefit from increased plan coordination to ensure that consistent development occurs in the planning area that encompasses the town to enhance both the parish and the town. The parish and town should consider establishing a planning area that goes beyond the current boundaries of the town

limits as a “Joint Planning Area.” Changes in this joint planning area would be reviewed by parish and town Planning and Zoning Commissions and both the Parish Council and Town Council for consistency in development and cooperative opportunities for service provision. In addition, the town and parish could address the potential, if any, of future annexation areas, allowing both entities to plan accordingly. Other areas that could be considered jointly by parish and local governments include:

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

## Regional Coordination

West Feliciana Parish will play an increasingly important role in the Baton Rouge Metropolitan Area as anticipated growth occurs. Continued efforts to coordinate land use, transportation, housing, and economic development initiatives with the Capital Region Planning Commission will benefit the region.

## State coordination

Louisiana Economic Development, the Department of Transportation and Development, the Department of Environmental Quality and the Department of Health and Hospitals, as well as other state agencies, are instrumental in implementing policies at a statewide level that ensure the health and safety of the state’s citizens. Parish coordination with these agencies to provide services consistent with state standards is needed. In addition, several of these agencies have expressed interest in promoting Smart Growth concepts and incorporating new standards as technology advances and to support parish planning efforts.

## Chapter 6: Keeping the Plan Alive: Implementation and Monitoring

West Feliciana’s Rural Development Plan includes three key components:

- **The Vision** – the description of the future that reflects the aspirations and values of its residents.
- **The Strategic Action Plan** – a short-term framework detailing specific actions that should be undertaken in a short period of time.
- **The Plan** – the components that make up the institutional base of the plan, including policies and implementation strategies.

If the Vision has captured the shared desires of West Feliciana, it should reflect its values, which change only slowly through the years. As such, the Vision should not need to be modified for many years. The Plan should be updated to reflect changing conditions but should remain viable for 20 years or more if regular updates are conducted on a 5-to-10-year cycle.

The Strategic Action Plan, however, should be updated annually, detailing the inventory of projects that will be used to implement the Rural Development Plan, and reflecting both the changing priorities of the parish and the experience gained from preceding activities.

The Strategic Action Plan includes specific activities that are to be undertaken in the immediate future, detailed and ready for immediate implementation. Projects should be completed in one-year to two-year period. As these projects and programs are completed, the parish should schedule additional action plan items for completion.

## Recommended Updating Procedures

To maintain the rural development plan as a living document, the Action Plan should be updated as individual implementation actions are completed and new issues and opportunities are identified, consistent with the plan. A key component will be a review of how critical goals are being met and monitoring the progress of the parish's ability to achieve set goals.

## Amendment Procedures

It is possible that the Parish Council may make site specific decisions that are not consistent with the Plan. These decisions may be the result of changing conditions, new technology, or other unforeseen circumstances. The Parish Council should follow a process to amend the Plan to adjust to these changing circumstances. Amendment procedures should include public notice and public hearing with review and recommendations by the Planning and Zoning Commission and Parish Council.