



HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT

The Guiding Principles...

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

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

Goals

- 1: Protection of Ecologically Sensitive Areas**
- 2: Reduce environmental impacts on riparian and wetland areas and promote the integration of development drainage needs with site development, landscaping and open space requirements**
- 3: Implement programs to protect and retain the parish's natural assets**



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. Provide incentives through establishing a program to allow the transfer of development rights where appropriate.

POLICY 2

Protecting Riparian Areas

Identify riparian areas and target them for land banking to protect from future encroachment. When developing near riparian areas, implement cluster development and conservation development ordinances to protect natural assets.

POLICY 3

Environmental Protection

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

POLICY 4

Use of Native Plants

Use native plants and avoid the planting of non-native plants, especially in areas adjacent to environmentally sensitive areas. Projects adjacent to environmentally sensitive areas shall be conditioned to install native plants adjacent to the sensitive area. Require private developers to install low-water native planting whenever feasible.

POLICY 5

Land Trusts for Conservation Purposes

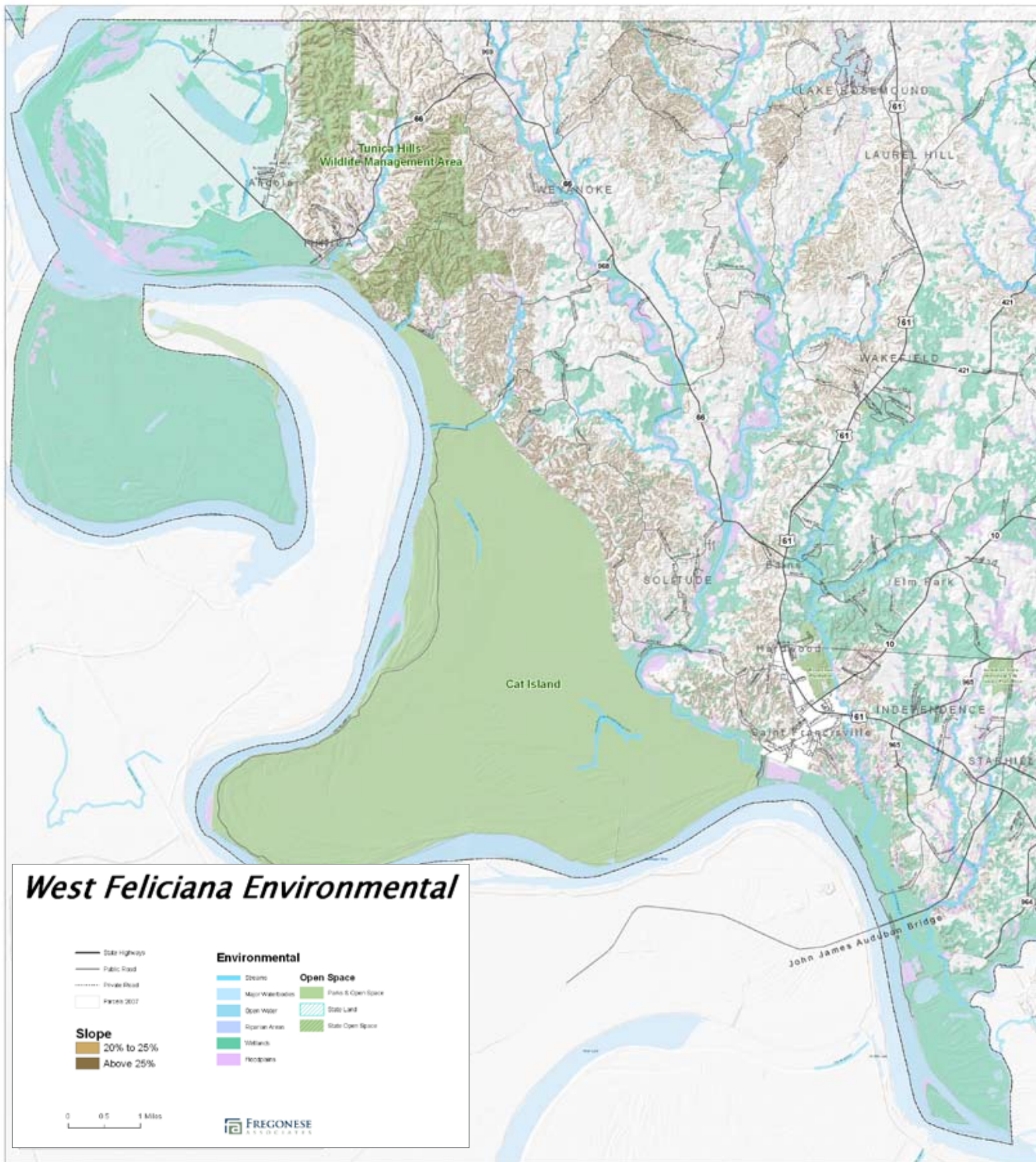
Create a nonprofit land trust to support and work in concert with the Parish's resource protection goals.



By clustering development into directed areas, natural resource areas can be preserved preventing the severing of resources through property line delineation.



West Feliciana Parish riparian corridor



WEST FELICIANA ENVIRONMENTAL MAP

This map shows West Feliciana Parish’s many environmental features including streams, major watersheds, riparian areas, wetlands, parks, and open space.



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.

GOAL 3

Implement programs to protect and retain the parish's natural assets

POLICY 1

Limit light pollution

Develop a dark sky ordinance to limit light pollution.

POLICY 2

Provide for proper waste disposal and recycling opportunities

Develop a program that encourages proper waste disposal through location of waste collection sites and recycling centers. Investigate curbside recycling and other ways to make recycling more convenient for parish residents.

POLICY 3

Develop a heritage tree plan and preservation program to identify and protect historic, trophy, and majestic trees.

POLICY 4

Develop a tree replanting program that can be sponsored by schools and businesses.



PROSPEROUS ECONOMY

The Guiding Principles...

This section includes key goals, policies, and programs to ensure a prosperous economy for parish residents.

Plan for and provide infrastructure to encourage future growth. Emphasize tourism and eco-tourism; and attract new economic development to the parish, especially in targeted areas. Plan for a variety of jobs for parish residents and encourage entrepreneurs. Include public input in economic development planning activities and decisions.

Goals

- I: **Build and strengthen the local West Feliciana parish economy.**

WEST FELICIANA PARISH & THE REGIONAL CONTEXT

The Baton Rouge regional economy has experienced robust growth in both the number of firms in operation and employment. Overall, the number of total firms in the Baton Rouge region grew by 5.7% between 1998 and 2005, compared with 2.7% for the state as a whole.

Firm growth tended to be in high-tech, high-skill industries like information services (i.e. software, publishing), professional and scientific and technical services, management of companies (i.e. holding companies), finance, insurance, and health care.

Following Hurricane Katrina in 2005 (for which these numbers do not account), Baton Rouge experienced a surge in population and surpassed New Orleans as the largest city in the state by population.

WEST FELICIANA'S ROLE IN THE REGIONAL ECONOMY

In 2006 the public and private sectors employed 6,710 people in West Feliciana Parish. The parish's job base is roughly divided between government and private sectors; 37% of jobs were in local and state government, while 58% worked for private firms. The largest private industry by employment was Manufacturing (727 jobs, 11% of total), followed by Other Services (348 jobs, 5% of total) and Retail Trade (325 jobs, 5% of total).

ATTRACTING WORKERS AND ENTREPRENEURS

Entrepreneurship is a small but growing part of the parish's economy. Sole proprietorships increased their share of total parish employment from 9% to 13%. This trend was commensurate with the Baton Rouge region as a whole (13% to 16% over the same period).

There is further evidence that West Feliciana is a place where people want to both live and work. A full 50% of people who live in the parish also work there (compared to 29% in East Baton Rouge Parish and 5.4% in East Feliciana Parish). This is a positive sign, given demographic trends nationwide that point toward a declining proportion of working-age people. The competition for workers will increasingly be based on quality-of-place: good schools, flexible housing supply, and well-designed communities that provide for a range of jobs, services and shopping.

The trend toward the growth of smaller firms made up of highly-skilled people who provide services to clients across the globe has some potential land use implications. Communities that seek to attract these new types of firms need to create places



Baton Rouge Region Firm Growth			
Industry	Firms 1998	Firms 2005	Growth
Information	203	246	21%
Professional, scientific & technical services	1,744	2,053	18%
Management of companies & enterprises	81	92	14%
Utilities	62	70	13%
Accommodation & food services	1,073	1,200	12%
Finance & insurance	1,196	1,336	12%
Health care and social assistance	1,524	1,656	9%
Other services (except public administration)	1,674	1,792	7%
Admin, support, waste mgt, remediation services	770	817	6%
Educational services	176	186	6%
	8,503	9,448	11%

Source: US Census, County Business Patterns

The growth of new firms (known as firm births) is an important factor for a region's economy, because that is one of the largest contributors to job growth. Between 1998 and 2005 employment in the Baton Rouge Region grew from 269,881 to 310,428. The top ten industries (next page) accounted for 90% (36,341) of that net growth (40,547 jobs).

that serve their needs. The parish’s highly rated school system is one such asset. Another is access to recreation and outdoor amenities like parks and open space. A third is the ability to provide a range of housing options, particularly in-town housing that makes it easy to reach work, shopping, and services by foot, bicycle, transit, and automobile. West Feliciana’s ability to remain economically competitive will be dependent on creating a high quality of life that remains affordable to its potential workforce.

ECONOMIC STRATEGIES

Fair and predictable land use policies will help West Feliciana Parish develop jobs in targeted economic sectors. This means that developing the parish economically by protecting historic and cultural amenities; preserving environmental features; developing first in identified opportunity areas; recruiting and retaining existing businesses in existing and new industries; and providing educational opportunity at every level is inextricably linked to the parish’s land use and transportation planning.

The parish has a number of historic, cultural and recreational amenities which attract tourists. Land use decisions can help ensure the preservation of historic structures by prohibiting incompatible uses and creating design standards for historic districts. Similarly, the rural character surrounding the parish’s antebellum plantation houses should be protected through agricultural and open space preservation.

The natural features which both contribute to parts of the parish’s rural feel and provide opportunities for fishing, hunting and other outdoor activities should be preserved. This means that the uses of land around natural areas should be carefully considered; in particular, new development should be carefully scrutinized to ensure that its congruent with the parish’s economic development goals.



Industry	1998	2005	Change
Information	4,068	6,671	64%
Professional, scientific & technical services	15,411	17,629	14%
Management of companies & enterprises	2,056	3,750	82%
Utilities	1,826	1,750	-4%
Accommodation & food services	23,151	27,161	17%
Finance & insurance	13,742	13,741	0%
Health care and social assistance	34,090	37,731	11%
Other services (except public administration)	14,802	26,700	80%
Admin, support, waste mgt, remediation services	17,129	24,088	41%
Educational services	3,936	7,331	86%
	130,211	166,552	28%

Source: US Census, County Business Patterns; Bureau of Economic Analysis

Most of these top ten industries also provide relatively high-income jobs. In 2005 the Baton Rouge region had a median household income of \$37,538. Five of the top growth industries had an average per employee payroll above this figure.

Baton Rouge Region Average Pay by Industry	2005
Information	\$ 42,186
Professional, scientific & technical services	\$ 41,440
Management of companies & enterprises	\$ 75,426
Utilities	\$ 64,841
Accommodation & food services	\$ 12,168
Finance & insurance	\$ 45,053
Health care and social assistance	\$ 30,003
Other services (except public administration)	\$ 19,591
Admin, support, waste mgt, remediation services	\$ 22,488
Educational services	\$ 25,101

Source: US Census, County Business Patterns, Bureau of Economic Analysis, Fregonese Associates

The average pay for jobs in many of the top ten industries in the Baton Rouge Region could comfortably support a household, particularly in management, utilities, and finance and insurance.

GOAL I

Build and strengthen the local West Feliciana parish economy.

POLICY I

Building on opportunity areas

Focusing the development of new housing and jobs in areas identified by the parish leadership and residents is critical. Maintaining West Feliciana's attractiveness to employers will be based on the parish's ability to focus new development, through land use regulations, into key development areas. The ideal result will be multi-use, pedestrian-friendly areas desirable for both employers and employees.

A number of opportunity areas exist in the parish. These areas are expected to experience change in the near future and include:

John James Audubon Bridge

This bridge, planned to be finished in 2010, will link the parish to the east and west, and will result in increase traffic via the Zachary Taylor Parkway. Opportunities for increased employment uses exist in this corridor. West Feliciana Parish is centrally located in this travel pattern and will benefit from additional bridge traffic if development is planned to ensure a high quality in design and use.

Nuclear plant

A second nuclear plant is under consideration for the parish. If approved, this plant will result in 5,000 new jobs.

River and port

West Feliciana parish boasts one of the few areas along the Mississippi River with no levees. Exploration of a port in this area should continue to enhance trade and tourism opportunities.

4-Laning of Highway 61

Highway 61 is being built to four lanes, which will increase traffic through the parish and shorten the commuting times of workers traveling to and from the parish.

POLICY 2

Business attraction, retention and expansion programs

The keys for successful business attraction, retention and expansion will be based on a continuation of the parish's Community Development Foundation efforts, the availability of land zoned for desirable employment types, and the ability of parish employers to find well-trained employees in the parish. Particularly as rising energy costs may make long-distance commuting cost prohibitive, the parish can recruit and retain companies by ensuring that a balanced mix of housing is available near jobs centers.

POLICY 3

Education and training programs

The parish has a top-ranked school system which provides graduates with a high quality secondary education. However, the parish also has an opportunity to 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.

POLICY 4

Linking land use and economic development

The parish's economic development and land use activities should go hand-in-hand. Well-considered land use regulations will help attract new development, and jobs, to the parish. Economic development, including the recruitment of new business to the parish, will be enhanced by an adequate amount of land zoned for key industries, balanced housing for potential employees, and a transportation system which allows the easy movement of people and goods.

POLICY 5

Include citizen input in identifying target industries

Compile a list of target industries that are consistent with the comprehensive plan and are supported by West Feliciana citizens. When possible, include citizen input in refining and updating this target industry list.



IMPLEMENTATION & MONITORING

CH: 7 INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION



Photo courtesy of Jimmy Emerson

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION PLAN



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 Police Jury 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

COORDINATION WITH ADJACENT PARISHES

The new James Audubon Bridge will bring new opportunities for coordinating with adjacent parishes. In the near term, West Feliciana and Pointe Coupee Parish should coordinate the impacts of the bridge by jointly considering plans for the gateways and corridors on each side of the bridge. New economic opportunities will arise on both sides of the bridge, and a coordinated planning effort would ensure that quality developments take place that benefit the entire corridor, while protecting the special characteristics of each parish. The bridge will likely open up new coordinated planning opportunities with the parishes to the east as well. West Feliciana Parish should also coordinate planning efforts with East Feliciana Parish as both parishes share Highway 61 and will be jointly impacted by the new development that occurs in the south.

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 Metropolitan Planning Organization and the Baton Rouge Area Chamber will benefit the region as a whole.

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

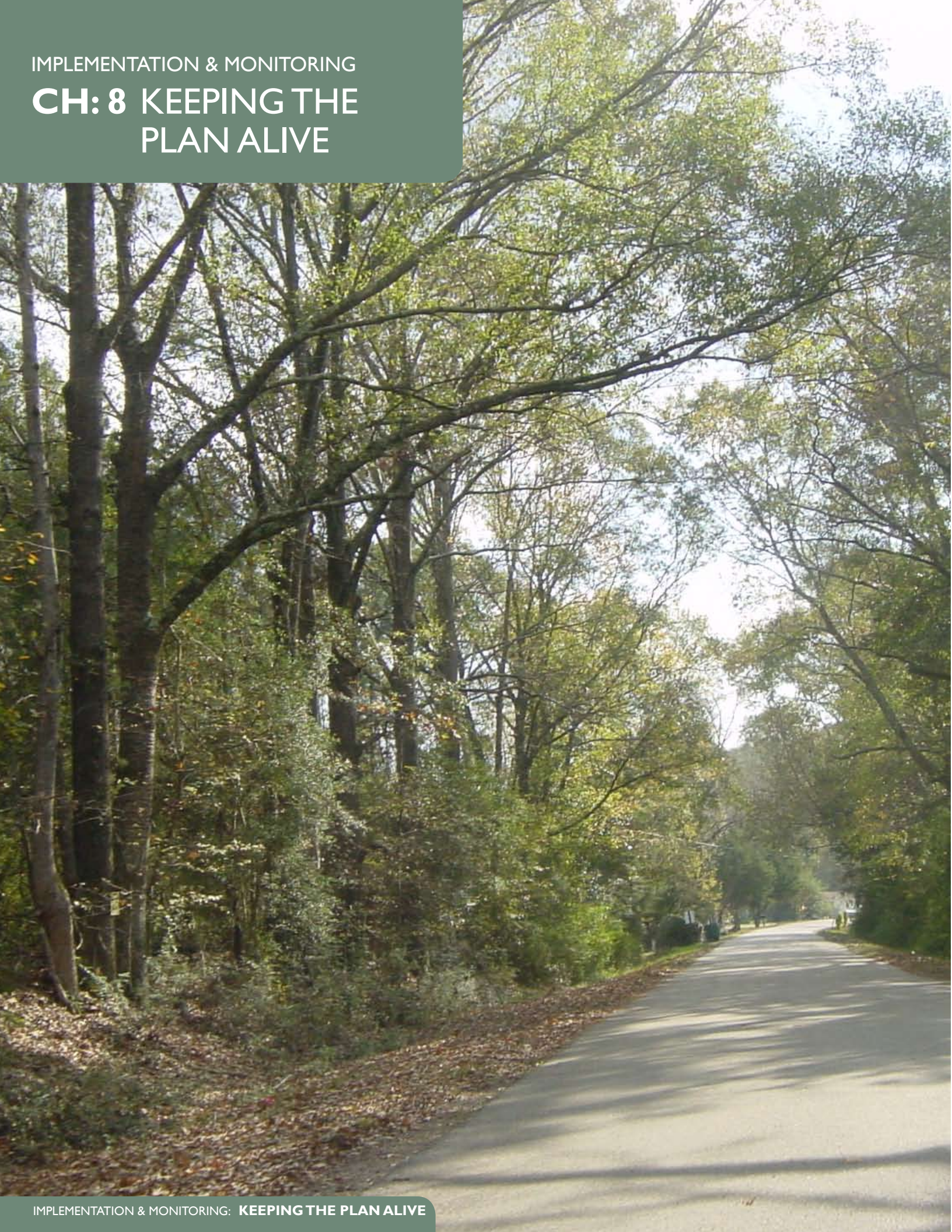


The John James Audubon Bridge is proposed to be the longest bridge across the Mississippi River, regardless of type of structure.



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.

IMPLEMENTATION & MONITORING
CH: 8 KEEPING THE
PLAN ALIVE



Keeping the Plan Alive

West Feliciana's Comprehensive 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 COMPREHENSIVE 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 Comprehensive 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 Comprehensive 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 comprehensive plan as a living document, the Action Plan should be updated annually or every other year 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 Police Jury may make site specific decisions that are not consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. These decisions may be the result of changing conditions, new technology, or other unforeseen circumstances. The Police Jury should follow a process to amend the Comprehensive

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 Police Jury.



The West Feliciana Parish Comprehensive Plan is based on the participation of hundreds of residents.



The West Feliciana Parish Comprehensive Plan should continue to reflect the aspirations and goals of its residents now and into the future.