

# Chapter 1

## PROJECT OVERVIEW

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### Background - Why Plan?

Comprehensive plans focus on the ability of a community to create a vision for its future. It then allows the community—its citizens and elected officials—to create that vision by guiding and legislating future land use and community character.

This vision’s focusing mechanism is based on the community’s collective input. This input will be obtained from elected officials, planning and zoning officials, and other citizens of the community. The desires of the community will be presented in the comprehensive plan.

In that regard, accomplishing manageable goals within an implementation strategy has proven to be a successful approach. It allows a community to manage its growth (or lack thereof) by capitalizing on its strengths, strengthening its weaknesses, minimizing threats, and making the most of opportunities. The plan captures the vision of the community and commits the local government and its representative citizens to implement specific tasks while maintaining focus on the long-term outcome(s).

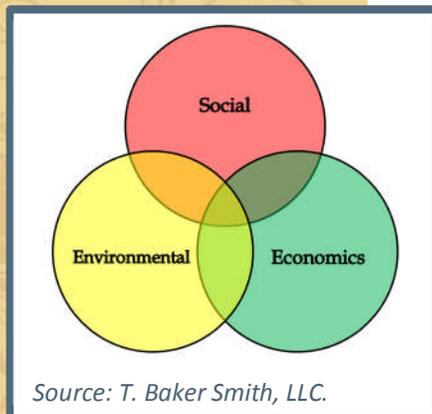
*“By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail” – Benjamin Franklin*

### By Who’s Authority?

The municipal planning commissions of Louisiana have been empowered with the ability to draft and adopt their own comprehensive plan by as defined by statute *LRS 33:101*. Once approved, approval by the municipality’s governing authority is required.

### Resiliency and Sustainability

Louisiana is geographically located in an area that is often the victim of storm events. To recover from these events, a substantial amount of resources from individuals and local, state, and federal government is often required. It is a goal of the plan to promote a sustainable and resilient environment in which a community can thrive—economically, socially, and environmentally.



An overriding objective of this comprehensive plan is resiliency, i.e., to minimize impacts resulting from future hazard events and allow for rapid, efficient recovery.

Another overarching goal for this plan as established by the funding authority is to plan within a framework focused on sustainability as it relates to the health, safety, and welfare of the community. This, too, must be comprehensive economically, socially, and environmentally.

Guiding principles of the planning process relative to Smart Growth are the following ten principles:

- 1) Mix land uses
- 2) Take advantage of compact building design
- 3) Create a range of housing opportunities and choices
- 4) Create walkable neighborhoods
- 5) Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place
- 6) Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty, and critical environmental areas
- 7) Strengthen and direct development toward existing communities/infrastructure
- 8) Provide a variety of transportation options
- 9) Make development decisions predictable, fair, and cost effective
- 10) Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration in development decisions

## Purpose

The objective of the comprehensive plan is to develop guidance tool for Breaux Bridge in creating a long-range scope to shape economic, environmental, and social development. This plan will serve as a tool to facilitate the planning process by bringing to light current issues and presenting viable methods, which if implemented, can lead to successful development. This plan supports future infrastructure development, recreation, economic investment and reinvestment, tourism, and community beautification. Thus the overall purpose is to create a sustainable and resilient Breaux Bridge.

## Mission

The mission of this comprehensive plan is to extend the cultural flavor of the Downtown area to all parts of the community and define the character by this extension.

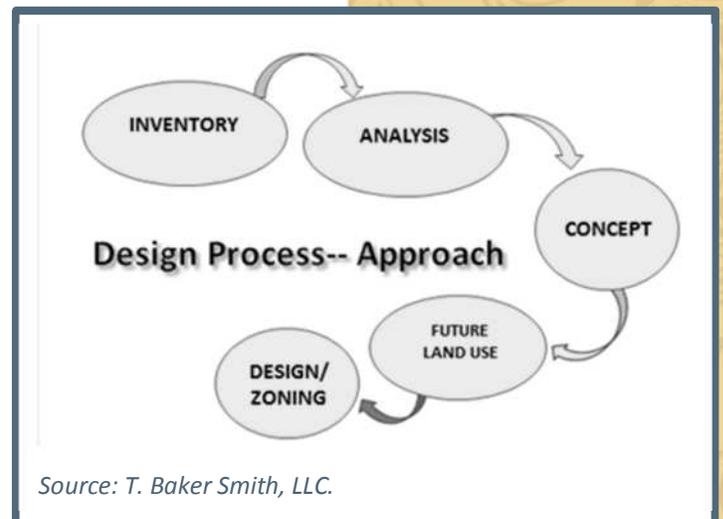
## Vision

Through meetings with Breaux Bridge citizens, business owners, and government officials a vision for the future of Breaux Bridge was developed.

*“Breaux Bridge should strive towards becoming a resilient and sustainable Acadian community, committed to molding its future growth in a pattern that preserves its heritage and cultural appeal while promoting modern opportunity for its future generations.”*

## Approach and Methodology

The approach of the comprehensive plan is a multi-faceted attempt to develop a plan to lessen issues and threats and capitalize on existing strengths and opportunities inherent in the community. In an effort to achieve an equitable balance between economics, environment, and social aspects, a comprehensive inventory of the community focused on these three areas has been prepared followed by an analysis of empirical and anecdotal data. This data provides evidence used to develop strategic recommendations to guide policy decisions for the city, elected officials, and its citizens in everyday life and in business.



## Public Involvement

Though data modeling plays a significant role in the planning process, public input is also necessary in developing empathy for the community, understanding the desires of the citizens, and shaping the plan to fit the specific needs of Breaux Bridge. By developing such a high level of public involvement, an informed constituency develops, thus giving the community the opportunity to direct its own future. A SWOT analysis was conducted using community input and analysis. The SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) are evaluated and analyzed in an effort to determine what existing factors will affect the comprehensive plan.

- **Council Briefings** — The City was briefed at quarterly intervals with updates as to the status of the project.
- **Key Person Interviews** — During the project, a series of key person interviews was conducted. These interviews included persons working in infrastructure and city administration as well as concerned citizens volunteering information, and others randomly selected. Interviews were conducted to develop a better understand of the needs and desires of the community. A substantial number of the initial SWOT findings (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) were determined through these interviews as the citizens communicated opinions and concerns about the community.

### Town Hall Meeting



Source: T. Baker Smith, LLC.

- **Committees** — Committees were assembled to capture both technical and citizens' input. Those petitioned for guidance included city staff, elected officials, general citizenry, regional affiliates, and consultants. The input helped to direct the project to ensure that its recommendations were specific to the desires of the community.
- **Round Table Meetings** — Small groups of individuals from similar backgrounds were assembled for a specific and detailed discussion about key issues discovered by staff through the interview process.
- **Town Hall Meetings** — Two Town Hall Meeting forums were held to reaffirm the accuracy of initial citizen input, to inform the public as to initial findings, and to receive additional feedback from the community.

## Review of Literature

The plan is evolved from not only field work and public input but also from extensive research into prior related studies, existing ordinances and codes, regional and state data sources, and other published works. Listed below are the primary literary sources used in the development of the comprehensive plan.



Source: T. Baker Smith, LLC.

- Breux Bridge Transportation Study (May 1977)
- Breux Bridge Housing Study (October 1977)
- Breux Bridge Code of Ordinances (1979)
- Breux Bridge Proposed Zoning Ordinance (2008)
- St. Martin Parish Hazard Mitigation Plan (November 2009)
- Breux Bridge-Urban Design for a Small Town (1998)
- Roadside Geology of Louisiana (1995)
- Soil Survey of St. Martin Parish, Louisiana (April 1977)
- Lafayette Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)
- Additional Research: Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), United States Geological Service (USGS), ATLAS-Louisiana Statewide GIS, US Census Tiger/Line, Louisiana Department of Transportation (LDOT, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), The Nature Conservancy, Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ), Municode.com.