

## Introduction

### What is a Comprehensive Plan?

A Comprehensive Plan is a document that, in broad terms, is a policy statement to guide the future placement and development of community facilities and it is the basis for a community's subdivision and zoning regulations, official maps and amendments to the subdivision and zoning ordinances. The Comprehensive Plan identifies a future vision for the community, determines the projected growth for the community and identifies policies to plan, direct and accommodate the growth. The new Comprehensive Plan took into consideration the Plan developed by the City in 2000.

The Mississippi legislature, through Mississippi Code §17-1-1 defines those minimum elements required to be addressed within a Comprehensive Plan. These include:

- *Goals and objectives* for the long range (20 to 25 years) development of the City. Required goals and objectives shall address at a minimum: residential, commercial and industrial development; parks, open space and recreation; street or road improvements, public schools and community facilities.
- *A land use plan* which designates in map or in policy form the proposed general distribution and extent of the uses of land for residences, commerce, industry, recreation and open space; public and quasi-public facilities and lands.
- *A transportation plan* depicting in map form the proposed functional classifications for all existing and proposed streets, roads and highways for the area encompassed by the land use plan and for the same time period. Functional classifications shall consist of arterial, collector and local streets, roads and highways.
- *A community facilities plan* as a basis for a capital improvements program including, but not limited to, the following: housing; schools; parks and recreation; public buildings and facilities; and utilities and drainage.

The 2007 Update to the City of Bay St. Louis Comprehensive Plan is organized in the following manner:

Chapter 1	Existing Land Use
Chapter 2	Goals and Objectives
Chapter 3	Future Land Use Plan
Chapter 4	Transportation Plan
Chapter 5	Community Facilities Plan
Chapter 6	Demographic and Economic Profile

Chapter 7	Implementation Recommendations and Plan Maintenance
Appendix A	Hancock County Greenways Plan
Appendix B	Mississippi Renewal Forum “Rebuilding Bay St. Louis”
Appendix C	Citizen Comment

This plan was initiated with funding from Mississippi Development Authority with a grant secured through the U.S. Economic Development Administration. The Mississippi Development Authority recommended the Bay St. Louis City Council and the Hancock County Board of Supervisors to develop their comprehensive plans in conjunction and coordination with each other. Additionally, the Mississippi Development Authority recommended that the Comprehensive Plan build upon planning efforts initiated by the Governor’s Commission on Recovery, Rebuilding, and Renewal, and consider methods to grow smarter, considering neo-traditional planning ideals and Smart Code based concepts proposed in the Governor’s Rebuilding Process. The City also received a grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, through CDBG Hurricane Katrina Supplemental Funds. These funds were utilized to make additions, amendments and revisions to the draft, funding specific action strategies for economic development, housing and the development of neighborhood plans.

### **Regional Coordination and Plan Interaction**

The City of Bay St. Louis hired urban planning consultants Slaughter and Associates, PLLC to develop the comprehensive plan update for the City of Bay St. Louis. The Hancock County Board of Supervisors hired Gulf Regional Planning Commission and Planning Works to develop the comprehensive plan update for Hancock County. The consultants worked together to share tasks and to coordinate public meetings and advisory committee meetings. Additionally, the City of Bay St. Louis and Hancock County appointed one member shared by both committees, and the County appointed several members to the County Committee that were residents of the Cities of Bay St. Louis and the City of Waveland.

Gulf Regional Planning Commission (GRPC) provided the transportation elements of the project and developed the methodology for the capture of existing land use within the County and both Cities. GRPC also oversaw the collection and coding of the land use data into a GIS based system for analysis.

Additionally, Growth Allocation Workshops were held in the City of Bay St. Louis and Hancock County to determine how the people wanted the community to grow. Two workshops were held in December, 2006. From these two workshops, Planning Works developed three potential growth scenarios for Hancock County. These scenarios were discussed by the Citizen Advisory Committees to determine the effects of each of these models on the City of Bay St. Louis.

### **Planning Efforts After Hurricane Katrina**

In the days after Hurricane Katrina, Governor Haley Barbour and State leaders saw the devastation of the Mississippi Gulf Coast and pledged to help the Mississippi Gulf Coast build back better, stronger and smarter than before. The Governor convened architects, urban designers, and planners from across the Country to help the communities on the Mississippi Gulf Coast consider new patterns for redevelopment in the face of the devastation.

The following plans were developed after Hurricane Katrina for Bay St. Louis and Hancock County. These plans provided insight into the community and their vision for recovery. Planners utilized these visions and these goals to begin the planning process.

**Governor’s Commission on Recovery, Rebuilding and Renewal:**

“The Commission proposes the following priorities that should be supported by resources available from the Commission or a state office continuing the Commission’s efforts and by extended public efforts that will rebuild the Mississippi Gulf Coast:

- **Mixed use.** Each county and city should adopt amendments to land use ordinances for mixed-use alternatives which promote walkability. Walkability can be defined as pedestrian access to basic services, recreation, and retail within a five-minute walking distance from their homes. Mixed-use alternatives include: (a) business and residential in downtown area; (b) mixed use in neighborhoods using “community-based” retail, which incorporates only commercial amenities needed and approved by residents; and (c) neighborhood residential areas without mixed use but connected to other areas by a sidewalk or pedestrian path system.”
- **Safe, affordable housing.** Redevelopment efforts should provide safe, affordable housing that can be easily financed for the Coast residents. Residential and mixed use development should encourage a specified percentage of affordable housing that is compliant with building standards.
- **Environmental sensitivity.** All counties, cities and regional authorities should make land use and economic development decisions that accommodate and are sensitive to the protection of existing natural areas including watersheds, wetlands, urban forests, and natural habitats.
- **Regional shared services.** On a regional level, coastal cities and counties should consider the feasibility of shared water and sewer systems while maintaining a sense of community identity.
- **Waterfronts and waterways.** Economic growth and development should match citizen expectations for protection of South Mississippi’s natural resources. Plans should take advantage of the waterfront as the Gulf Coast’s unique aesthetic and economic asset, balancing public access with potential development which is consistent with community identity.
- **Coastal access.** Public access to coastal waters should be encouraged through waterfront parks and networks of boardwalks and piers that connect areas with public spaces on the waterfront. Marinas should provide dockage and access to commercial and recreational boats of diverse sizes and price ranges, from working shrimp boats to small pleasure craft and large inter-coastal traveling yachts that enhance the tourism industry.
- **Working waterfronts.** Each coastal county and city should promote working waterfronts that coordinate water-related recreational and commercial uses and that specifically coordinate wharves and docks for commercial shrimp and oyster fleet with

inland seafood park or parks. Land use and economic development decisions should preserve and promote public use and enjoyment of the beach, waterfront parks, the Mississippi Sound and inland waterways. Port facilities should institute emergency planning measures to minimize risk of damage and debris caused by shipping containers that are not secure.”

- **Transportation.** Additionally, the Commission proposed a vision for transportation along the Mississippi Gulf Coast. The vision sought to develop sustainable communities with a high quality of life, in which wise land use decisions were aligned closely with appropriate transportation planning to reverse the Post- World War II wisdom of street design.

The **Mississippi Renewal Forum** held a forum in **Bay St. Louis** and indicated they heard from the community that the following elements were important to the community:

- Keep the small-town character, the architectural heritage, and the natural beauty. Build on the arts character. Provide for growth without destroying what makes Bay St. Louis so livable.
- Make the town more appealing and safer for bicycles, walking and recreation.
- Rebuild the great architectural heritage in a more hurricane-resistant form.
- Make the gateways and Highway 90 corridor more inviting and more compatible with the character of the town.

The **Hancock County Long Term Recovery Plan** developed by FEMA ESF-14 (Federal Emergency Management Agency Emergency Service Function) in support of the Governor’s Office of Recovery and Renewal summed up previous planning efforts developed in the County and post-Katrina planning efforts in their vision statement:

“As a result of the Mississippi Renewal Forum and the efforts of the Long-Term Community Recovery team, the following visions have been identified for Hancock County:

- Rebuild housing in a manner that is consistent with historic precedence;
- Incorporate appropriate mitigation techniques when rebuilding;
- Preserve the small-town character of Bay St. Louis and Waveland;
- Preserve affordability of housing in Hancock County including the incorporated municipalities;
- Create safer environments for walking and bicycling in the community;
- Improve the Hwy. 90 corridor and the gateways to the community.”

And concurrently, the **Hancock County Task Force to the Governor’s Commission** tackled how to translate the broad goals from the region to Bay St. Louis, Waveland and Hancock County. Their statements in many cases become the starting point for goal identification and in many cases become the objectives to this Plan and the Hancock County Plan.

The **Governor’s Task Force for Sewer and Water Infrastructure** was established in the Spring of 2006 to realize one of the goals of the Governor’s Commission. The **Mississippi Gulf Regional Water and Wastewater Plan** was developed to address the regional need for shared water, wastewater and storm water infrastructure. Recommendations from that plan that are

specific to Hancock County and Bay St. Louis are discussed within this Comprehensive Plan Update.

### **Existing Plans Reviewed**

In addition to the plans that were developed after Hurricane Katrina, consultants also reviewed the following plans:

- Regional Long Range Transportation Plan
- Hancock County Greenways Plan
- City of Bay St. Louis Comprehensive Plan Update, 2000

Recommendations from these plans have been incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan.

Planners were confronted with incorporating recovery actions into a long term plan. And while this document looks to the future, it does so during a period of uncertainty. This plan should be reviewed and updated, periodically. Additionally, the City Council, with assistance from City staff may consider establishing benchmarks to determine the extent of the City's recovery. This information will aid City leaders in their implementation of this plan and reformulation of strategies, if needed.