

**FOCUS GROUP: PRESERVING COMMUNITY ASSETS - Jo-Anna Jones and Cullen Curole**

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
Rich history of 250 years-St. James landing place of Acadians River/River Road St. James Catholic Cemetery *Plantations (Laura, Oak Alley, Felicity, St. Joe, Poche')	*Local businesses have to advertise in multiple markets	**New Orleans and Baton Rouge growing toward each other—will meet at St. James	**Natural disasters (proximity to Gulf)
Green space abundant	Poor coverage by New Orleans media market	*Possible New Orleans/Baton Rouge high speed rail stopover	Chemical plant/hazardous substance transport accidents
Manresa	Poor signage identifying parish	Ecotourism in wetlands and via River, plantations	Corporate mergers leading to layoffs
Historic structures Little Texas St. James Church	Problem in removing derelict structures	*Enhance parish's day trip capacity—additional attractions	
*Vicinity of New Orleans (within 1 hour)	Not enough population to attract appropriate media and social networking (cable, internet, phone, etc.)	Make use of levee	
French language	Large, natural geographic barriers (River, wetlands) divide parish—require duplication of services on both sides of the River "Like two separate parishes before the bridges were built."		
	No concentration of population		

August 23, 2010

**[ST. JAMES PARISH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOCUS GROUP MEETING NOTES WEST BANK  
RECEPTION HALL]**

**Strong sense of community (still considered home, even if people move away)			
Christmas Bonfire Festival on levee	No retail capacity – only small retail outlets/capacity on East Bank—not on West Bank		
Sidewalks on River Road	Developable land not for sale		
Central proximity to New Orleans and Baton Rouge	Grant opportunities not utilized		
Still has a local newspaper	Limited Access		
Churches	Litter		
Two major bridges over Mississippi River			
Recreation Centers	<b>Note: retail capacity, developable land and grant opportunities linked--*****</b>		
Unique, slow-paced lifestyle			
Restaurants			

**[\* indicates dots]**

**FOCUS GROUP: HUMAN SERVICES - Jo-Anna Jones and Mart Black [\* indicated dots placed on item]**

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
Parish has Human Resources Department—allows one-stop shop relative to Human Services	***Lack of more diverse recreational programs for youth aged 16-24 years, both boys and girls.	****Ability to see “big picture” and provide what is needed to parish as a whole.	*Assumption that all problems can be “fixed” by Social Services—dependency/entitlement mentality
Wide range of human services in parish, from age 3 to age 60 +	Distribution of recreational services throughout the parish is unequal.		****Financial resources could be affected by budget cuts.
Location/Access is good to obtain services	Limited, though available transportation services in parish to Human Services and Medical Services.	Potential to increase transportation Services to Human Services and Medical Services also seen as opportunity.	*Difficulty in partnering with larger departments in either Baton Rouge or New Orleans.

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
*Departmental collaboration in providing services to community.			**Limited access to Mental Health services and more specialized Human Services needs of age group 19 to 45 years.
			Emergency Transportation Services seem to have problems finding the correct location (address) in an emergency (E911 System issue?)

**FOCUS GROUP: Economic Development Focus Group – Alex Wesley-Smith and Cullen Curole**

Strengths	Opportunities	Weaknesses	Threats
River Gertility- Raw Land	Tax Incentives Targets	Manufacturing- net value added	Education Systems
Railroad	Competitiveness	Need Parish-Wide Plan/ Study	No Job Skills/ Need Training
Highways- Interstate Hwy 20	Targeted Industries	Lack of ED Diversity	Chronically Unemployed
Bridges	Small Business	Concentration of tax base	Uncertainty of Land Use
Historic/Cultural Landmarks	Distributions Centers- Tiffs/ Business Parks	Funding Source- for ED	Lack of a Defined Vision
Plantations	Film-Creative Industries	Regulations	(need out the box thinking)
Tourism- Bonfires, Swamp Tours,	Tie In to Tourism	Lack of Zoning-	Loss of Young People
Fishing/ Hunting	Value Added Manufacturing	Only in Municipalities	(brain drain)
Des Allemands	Retirement Communities	Inability of Residents	Need Financial Manag't
Blind River	Food, culture, recreation	Loss of Sales/ Prop Taxes	(ED leaders w/ adequate trainings)
Industrial Plants	Economy	Lack of Avail Properties	Non- Attainment of Quality-
Agricultural	Local Branding	Residential and Commercial Dev't.	Industrial Competitiveness
	Agriculture-	(largest lots held for industry)	Non- Attainment

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>	<b>Threats</b>
	Organic	Lack of Utilities/infrastructure in Place	DEQ Permits
	Specialized Farming	Poor Education System	
	Tobacco	Historically high drop- out rate	
	Attract Green Industries	Workforce Issues	
		Untrained/ low skills/no skills	

**FOCUS GROUP: Land Use – Simonne Caesar and Mart Black**

STRENGTH	WEAKNESS	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
Rural character of land use	Need some type of land use regulations	Not enough affordable housing	Concern about proposed industry site next to residential areas.
Need some type of land use regulations	Conflict between economic needs and quality of life. Giving away more than the Parish is getting back.	Need for quality of life regulations for land use	Uncertainty about adjacent land use.
	Land with no restrictions – companies does not have to contend with land use regulations.	Available land – assessor needs to identify.	Lack of parish oversight
		Not enough recreation	Conflict between economic needs and quality of life. Giving away more than the Parish is getting back.
		Need some type of land use regulations	Land with no restrictions – companies does not have to contend with land use regulations.
		Mitigation banks or borrow pits land is being taken out of commerce.	Need some type of land use regulations.