

ST. TAMMANY PARISH COUNCIL

RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION COUNCIL SERIES NO. C-1662

COUNCIL SPONSOR: PRESIDENT/STEFANCIK PROVIDED BY: FINANCE DEPARTMENT

A RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR PURPOSES OF THE LOUISIANA COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM.

WHEREAS, St. Tammany Parish Government ("STP") has been awarded \$1,000,000 in FY 2005 Louisiana Community Development Block Grant ("LCDBG") funds to provide for upgrades to Sewer District #6's wastewater treatment facility in the Abita community which will double its capacity, upgrade the main pump station and upgrade the lift station.

WHEREAS, the LCDBG program requires all grant recipients to have a Community Development Plan. The St. Tammany Parish Council previously adopted a Community Development Plan for the period April 2002 through April 2005.

WHEREAS, the Community Development Plan for the period January 2006 through January 2009 is attached as Exhibit A.

THIS RESOLUTION HAVING BEEN SUBMITTED TO A VOTE, THE VOTE THEREON WAS AS FOLLOWS:

MOVED FOR ADOPTION BY \_\_\_\_\_, SECONDED BY \_\_\_\_\_

YEAS:

NAYS:

ABSTAINING:

ABSENT:

THIS RESOLUTION WAS DECLARED ADOPTED ON THE \_\_\_ DAY OF \_\_\_\_\_ 2006 AT A REGULAR MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL, A QUORUM OF THE MEMBERS BEING PRESENT AND VOTING.

\_\_\_\_\_  
STEVE STEFANCIK, COUNCIL CHAIRMAN

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
DIANE HUESCHEN, COUNCIL CLERK

1. Period of Applicability

January 2006 to January 2009

2. Community Development and Housing Needs

A. Neighborhood Revitalization Needs

Most of the neighborhoods in St. Tammany Parish are viable and stable; and the Parish has enjoyed steady growth over the last twenty years with an annual population increase of about 3 percent. Prior to Hurricane Katrina in August 2005, the Parish had a population of approximately 216,000. The conservative current population is estimated at approximately 245,000 as a result of New Orleans and surrounding area residents relocating to the Parish. It is uncertain at this time how many of these additional 29,000 persons will permanently reside in the Parish. There are many small residential subdivisions and rural neighborhoods throughout the Parish. A small number of those areas stand out as having basic housing and infrastructure problems; and these areas are described herein. The most noticeable neighborhood needs are in the areas of housing rehabilitation, and the provision of water and sewer systems for lower income residents in various parts of the Parish. These areas would in general be eligible for CDBG funds if such funds were available.

Those areas of the Parish having a majority of low-to-moderate income households and a majority of minority population include the following. These areas will be considered community development target areas.

Lacombe

The rapidly growing Lacombe area that needs improvements is primarily located south of U.S. Hwy. 190 along LA Hwy. 434. The area is presently serviced by shallow, individual, private wells on small lots; and there is no community sewerage and no fire hydrants. This combination results in an unsafe water system and a poor fire rating. Environmentally, this area drains into the Lake Pontchartrain Basin, probably causing water pollution problems downstream. This area is in desperate need of a potable water system because of the shallow water wells. The area is primarily occupied by lower income residents living in single-family houses.

Additionally, this area is in need of housing rehabilitation to individual homes.

Claiborne Addition

This area located generally to the east side of U.S. Hwy 190 near Covington is economically depressed and in need of housing rehabilitation. This area is located within both sewer and water districts, which help to meet the residents' needs for those items. It is primarily a minority neighborhood.

Abita Nursery

Abita Nursery, located north of LA Hwy 36 and west of the Town of Abita Springs, is in need of housing rehabilitation as well as sewer and water improvements. Ninety percent (90%) of the residents have community sewer service and one hundred percent (100%) have water service. Residents are primarily African-American, lower income, and living in single family housing units.

Ben Thomas

Ben Thomas, an economically depressed area with a high minority population, is in need of an improved sewer collection and treatment system. This area near Slidell has received past grant funding for both water improvements and housing rehabilitation, although housing rehabilitation for some homes is still needed.

Alton

This area north of Slidell and off of U. S. Highway 11 did receive a FY 1988 LCDBG grant for a potable water system. Currently this area is slated for sewer collection improvements through the 2004 LCDBG Program. Construction is targeted for spring and summer of 2006. Housing rehabilitation is also a significant concern in this lower income, minority area in eastern St. Tammany Parish.

Haas Road

This area refers to a portion of land north of Haas Road, east of U.S. Hwy. 11, north of Slidell and south of Pearl River. It is not supported by a public water system and is a racially mixed area. Some housing rehabilitation is also needed in this area.

Hill and Dawson Road Area (North Folsom)

This area is located north of Folsom, east and west of LA Highway 25. Although four housing units were recently rehabilitated, this area is in desperate need of more housing rehabilitation. The dominant housing choice in this area is the mobile home. The area is also in need of community sewer and water systems so residents can abandon their shallow wells.

Green Quarters Area

This area is located near the City of Slidell, north of LA Highway 433 near Salmen Street. This area is severely depressed, primarily minority, and is in desperate need of water and sewer system improvements.

Reno Hills

Reno Hills is located northeast of Mandeville outside the City limits and is a lower income, minority area. The area is in need of a community sewer system as well as housing rehabilitation.

Sewerage District Number 6

The District encompasses an area generally described as east of the corporate limits of Covington, south of Lowe Davis Road, west of the corporate limits of Abita and north of Abita River. The area is in need of significant rehabilitation and expansion of its sewer treatment facility. In addition, numerous residential structures are in need of rehabilitation.

B. Community wide Housing Needs

Community wide housing needs relate to the need for more affordable housing and more housing choices for the lower income families that cannot afford the new housing being built.

St. Tammany Parish does not have a Housing Authority at this time, although the Cities of Mandeville, Covington, Pearl River and Slidell do. Subsidized housing exists in all parts of the Parish, and Covington and Slidell both have Section 8 housing units for single and multi-family housing. New subsidized

units are being built by private developers in various parts of the Parish. Affordable housing in St. Tammany Parish is usually obtained through the use of mobile homes, especially in the rural portions of the Parish. Mobile homes account for approximately 15% of the total housing units in the Parish. Without the use of mobile homes, not much site built housing is available to poorer households. St. Tammany Parish is one of the most affluent parishes in the State. Approximately 80.46% of all housing units are owner-occupied, substantially more than the national rate of 64%. The most recent information regarding median values for housing indicated that the values have a range from west to east St. Tammany Parish. Those values are substantially higher than the State median with the higher values in the western section of the Parish and decreasing toward the eastern portion of the Parish.

The most important Community wide housing need seems to be the availability of apartments and more subsidized housing for low-to-moderate income households.

First-time homebuyer programs that are targeted to lower income but employed workers are also badly needed. St. Tammany Parish does have a Community Action Agency where housing assistance information is available. This includes special financing and community assistance programs, such as the programs listed in Community wide Housing Strategy.

It is also suggested that a program be implemented to help lower income households clear up housing credit problems that may hinder them in obtaining home loans.

C. Community wide Needs for Public Facilities and Improvements

The major Community wide needs for public facilities include the following:

1. General road improvements throughout the Parish
2. Comprehensive Drainage Improvements
3. Transit programs consisting of park and ride locations

D. Economic Development Needs

The St. Tammany Economic Development Foundation, Overall Economic Development Committee, composed an Overall Economic Development Plan in 1992 and has recently updated the Plan through the Regional Planning Commission. This plan examined St. Tammany Parish in relation to the economy and proposed a development and implementation plan for St. Tammany Parish. The primary goals of the Parish's plan include:

- Develop and maintain community's family climate and image
- Land and infrastructure development needed to keep up with growth
- Market development to attract varied businesses to the Parish
- Access capital resources for infrastructure development, market development, community development and human resource development
- Human resource development through training opportunities

This plan also specifically listed objectives relating to the above goals and strategies for acquiring each objective. Overall, as proposed by the Parish Economic Development Foundation, the Parish is seeking to continue its role

as a growth oriented, family parish with fewer economic ties to New Orleans. However, in order to do this, the Parish economy must diversify from its service orientation and bring in more financial and manufacturing employment.

The current unemployment rate for St. Tammany Parish and all parishes surrounding the greater New Orleans area cannot be compiled at the present time due to the affect on employment by Hurricane Katrina. Prior to Hurricane Katrina, the unemployment rate had continued to be lower than the State's average. The service-oriented economy is having trouble finding workers to fill the lower skilled and lower paying jobs. Though the unemployment rate for African-Americans has traditionally been twice the rate of white-Americans in St. Tammany, the need for employment has not been a major issue. Rather, the issue has related to the low pay scale for many types of jobs that are available. All current information concerning average weekly wages for the area are also unavailable due to Hurricane Katrina.

Geographically, the majority of the Parish's job positions are in the southern part of the Parish whereas much of the job creation need is in the northern parts of the Parish.

3. **Data Sources**

The information provided herein is taken primarily from the 2000 U.S. Census and updates from the Department of Labor, the St. Tammany Parish Land Use Ordinance Number 523, the Overall Economic Development Plan, 1992, and update; the *La. Employment and Wage Survey* by the La. Dept. of Labor, and from personal interviews with the Parish Economic Development Foundation, Department of Environmental Services, Department of Planning and numerous other applicable Parish agencies.

4. **Comprehensive Strategy**

A. **General Strategy**

The St. Tammany Parish has not had the funding necessary to aggressively pursue a community development strategy on a neighborhood basis. Most important general improvements are scattered throughout the Parish instead of being located in one concentrated area, as in most small cities or towns. The Parish of St. Tammany would like to develop a coordinated approach to end blight in low-to-moderate income areas while also providing help with essential community services such as water and sewerage service. The priorities for the use of Community Development Block Grants include the following:

1. Sewerage and Water System Improvements and installation in low to moderate-income areas.
2. The provision of improved fire protection to low-moderate income neighborhoods
3. Housing rehabilitation for owner-occupied lower income households.
4. Street improvements

The factors that were taken into account during the selection of the target areas for use of Community Development funds include:

1. Areas with a high percentage of low-to-moderate income households
2. Community Development Funds may be used for the needs associated with that target area

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3. A high degree of need or level of deterioration
  4. Public input and input from public officials provided through public forums

Some of the Community wide needs mentioned in Section 2(c) above are items that do not qualify for CDBG funds so are not listed as priorities for use with those funds although they are still important to the Parish. An example of these items mentioned includes drainage projects and transit projects. The Parish would like to apply for additional outside funding or budget their own funding for those projects that are compatible with the priorities listed above.

**B. Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy**

This section will focus on "Other neighborhood improvement efforts". This section was chosen due to the large number of rural neighborhoods and subdivisions throughout St. Tammany Parish that have needs for both lower income and non low income households. Although areas in need of improvement have been defined previously in this plan, St. Tammany Parish has many scattered community development problems not defined by neighborhood boundaries. Efforts to improve these areas will include both CDBG and non-CDBG funding.

Other Neighborhood Improvement Efforts:

The provision of good quality water and community sewerage service to many areas of the Parish is a top priority and an objective mentioned in the *General Strategy* above. One mechanism available to aid in the provision of these utilities is the creation of sewerage and water Utility Districts. These districts could focus their initial efforts on providing these services to the more densely populated areas and then could solicit financial assistance through grant or loan programs. CDBG funds could be used in some cases and in other cases; revenue bonds would be secured to help fund the improvements. Low to moderate income areas with primarily minority populations that need sewer and water service include Lacombe, Green Quarters, Ben Thomas, Alton, Hill and Dawson Road Area, Reno Hills, Tammany Hills, and Haas Road. The responsibilities of the sewer and water districts would include estimation of costs and design of sewer and water systems, solicitation of funding in conjunction with Parish government, (including CDBG funds, local funds, and other applicable state and federal funds) for the implementation, operation and maintenance of proposed sewer and water systems. The creation of these special districts would help alleviate blight and improve the health, welfare, and safety of the many citizens of St. Tammany Parish.

The short-term objective in these neighborhood efforts would be to create the appropriate legal utility entity, to select a Board of Directors, and then to solicit support and funding from neighborhood residents (i.e. tax election, user fees). The long-term objective would be to get the utility system designed and constructed so that the water or sewerage service could be offered.

The anticipated timing of these projects is from 3 to 10 years. Some Districts are in the process and expect to be operating within 3-5 years while others have not yet started the legal work. The Parish would like to see the provision of community water in Lacombe within the next three years. It will probably warrant another ten years to complete service to the other neighborhoods mentioned previously. In some rural areas of the Parish, it is not feasible to provide and operate community water and sewer systems because of the lack of population density.

Each water and sewer system to be developed within the low-to-moderate income areas will take at least the maximum amount of dollars available from the Community Block Grant Program. A maximum of two grants per funding period per Parish are available from the Block Grant Program; and existing Block Grants must be closed out in St. Tammany Parish before new grants are funded. Farmers Home Administration (Rural Utilities Service) funding can be combined with Block Grant funds where feasible and where additional funding must be secured to pay for the project. Each project undertaken is estimated to cost from \$500,000 to \$2 million dollars. Sewerage treatment and collection systems are thought to be the most expensive systems to install.

Present plans also call for the future consolidation of many of the existing private utilities into regional treatment systems.

In addition, the rehabilitation and expansion of the sewer treatment facility in Sewer District No. 6 is currently proposed for construction in the latter half of 2006 and the first quarter of 2007. Funding for this project will come from \$1 million in Community Development Block Grant funds combined with approximately \$1.7 million in USDA Rural Development funds.

A second neighborhood improvement effort designed to prevent or eliminate slums and blight relates to housing code enforcement and other code enforcement actions, such as for abandoned vehicles and rubbish removal. The short-term objective of this action is to clean-up neighborhoods with the intent of reducing crime and fires relating to arson. The long-term objective is to bring back community pride and increase property values while encouraging investment in neighborhoods. This problem is substantial and of greatest concern in the lower income areas of St. Tammany Parish. The code enforcement activity will be carried out by the staff of the Parish Code Enforcement office with the use of local Parish funds only.

This is an on-going project that does not end with the cleanup of one neighborhood. Unfortunately, the project will have to continue after a targeted neighborhood has been impacted because neighborhoods can relapse into deterioration.

C. Community wide Housing Strategy

1. St. Tammany Parish is committed to neighborhood revitalization and understands the need for affordable housing, housing choice, and improved housing conditions for low-to-moderate income families.

Community wide housing programs includes:

- Weatherization Program: to assist low-to-moderate income households with weatherization repairs that reduce energy costs by minimizing air infiltration

- Mortgage and Rental Assistance: to assist qualified low-to-moderate income households with mortgage and rental assistance for non-conventional loans

- Rehabilitation efforts through Farmers Home Administration (St. Tammany Parish rehabilitated approximately 8-10 homes through efforts from the last FmHA loan fund), state LHFA SHARE funds, CDBG housing funds, and Habitat for Humanity funds.

Housing Preservation Grants have recently provided moderate rehabilitation to 10 homes with 7 or 8 more homes slated for repair.

- Technical assistance to low-income owners and renters who would like to apply for other housing programs offered by the Federal and State government as well as by local banks
- LIHEAP Utility Assistance Program to reduce financial burden of home energy costs on low-income families
- Emergency Food and Shelter Program to assist families who, through unforeseen circumstances, are experiencing economic difficulties which threaten their basic needs of food and shelter.
- Homeless assistance ESG program to provide shelter and prevent homelessness
- Section 8 rental housing assistance is provided by both the City of Covington and the City of Slidell. Privately managed but subsidized rental apartment units continue to be built by private developers.

The objectives, activities, timing, and costs for a Community wide housing strategy during the next five-year period include the following measures as well as any necessary actions required to be taken in response to the affect on housing caused by Hurricane Katrina:

- Rehabilitation of fifteen (15) homes for lower income families through applications submitted to the Farmer's Home Administration, USDA
- Coordination with the City of Slidell, the City of Covington, and the St. Tammany Housing Resource Board to share community notices to the public for dealing with special home financing availability from the State or from local lending institutions
- Encouragement of private housing developers to provide more subsidized housing units in St. Tammany Parish
- Leave many areas of the Parish open to the citing of mobile homes when such housing is affordable and meets the minimum housing standards.
- Update the Parish Fair Housing Ordinance

Participate in Emergency Shelter Grant funding for the Homeless when such funding is made available by the State.

Continue efforts to clean-up abandoned housing through the code enforcement process.

2. The Parish of St. Tammany has a Department of Development, which includes Code Enforcement Officers. Code Enforcement responds to complaints related to housing maintenance, demolition and code enforcement. St. Tammany Parish does not directly get involved with housing loan programs so the Parish does not practice redlining of areas. The Parish plans to support efforts aimed at financial institutions that relate to possible redlining activities. Through coordination with the St. Tammany Housing Resource Board, homeowner training workshops can take place throughout the parish several times per year. This program is funded in part by financial institutions and by parish and municipal government.



3. The Parish, through its association with the Housing Resource Board, Parish Housing Authorities, and private developers, has a number of good programs that facilitate choice in housing opportunities for low-to-moderate income people. Subsidized housing units are located throughout St. Tammany Parish, on both the east and west sides of the parish. In addition, the St. Tammany Housing Resource Board provides homeowner training programs, fair housing seminars, and informational housing programs targeted to the lower income family. There are public housing units and Section 8 single-family rental housing available in Covington, Mandeville, Slidell, and Pearl River. In addition, there are both a West St. Tammany and an East St. Tammany Habitat for Humanity office. These offices coordinate the selection of housing applicants and construction of new housing units for low to moderate-income applicants. The Parish has also helped to coordinate the financing and construction of HOME financed single-family housing for lower income families in Covington and Slidell. A private developer is completing this work. In all cases mentioned above, female headed households, elderly, and handicapped headed lower income families are given a priority based upon need.
4. There are presently no community facilities being built in order to further the Parish's housing strategy except the sewer collection improvement lines proposed in the Alton area under the 2004 LCDBG program. These improvements will help to make the existing homes more marketable and will make the area a more valuable and stable location.
5. No existing or proposed Community Development activity will result in the displacement of persons or businesses. However, if displacement were to occur, the Parish would follow their adopted Residential Anti-Displacement and Relocation Plan passed by the Parish Council.

D. **Strategy for Providing Community wide Public Facilities and Improvements**

As noted previously in Section 2 C, major Community wide needs for public facilities and improvements include:

1. General road improvements throughout the Parish
2. Comprehensive Drainage Improvements
3. Transit program consisting of park and ride locations

**General Road Improvements throughout the Parish.**

Many roads in the Parish, including local and state roadways, are in need of improvement, overlay, or widening. The objective to be accomplished is the improvement of roadways in order to reduce congestion and to improve safety for existing and future traffic volumes. The improvement of the current roadway network remains an ongoing planning and construction process. Local roads are improved according to the current capital improvements program in St. Tammany Parish. State maintained roadways are improved according to the State's capital improvement program and overall Highway Construction Program. Currently, a twenty year plan prioritizing roadway projects is being composed through a joint effort of St. Tammany Parish, the Regional Planning Commission, and the Department of Transportation and Development. This effort will be updated on an annual basis. Funding for local road improvements is generally provided through local sales tax funds. CDBG funds are not figured into the costs because those funds have been targeted toward water and sewer improvements, as well as housing and fire protection. No Louisiana Community Development Block Grant funds will be

used for general road improvements in the near future. Approximately \$5 million per year is spent on local roadway projects by the St. Tammany Parish.

Comprehensive Drainage Improvements

The objective of this Community wide need is the improvement of drainage flow on a comprehensive basis throughout St. Tammany Parish. Funding sources, including local, state and federal funds, are presently being analyzed to implement this improvement. First, a comprehensive drainage study must be completed followed by implementation of the recommendations in that study. This project is not eligible for Louisiana Community Development Block Grant funds. It is estimated that the comprehensive drainage study will cost close to \$1 million and can be completed in two to three years. There is no cost estimate relating to the drainage improvements because no improvement plan has yet been approved and all drainage needs have not yet been identified.

Transit Program including the Development of Park and Ride Facilities

The objective of this proposed transit program is the provision of a ride-sharing auto and van transit system targeted to the citizens of St. Tammany Parish and designed to reduce traffic volumes. The activities to be carried out include the development of park and ride facilities, initiation of more van service for commuters traveling to and from New Orleans and Jefferson Parishes, and development of a fixed transit route in the Mandeville/Covington areas. It is assumed that this would be a joint public-private venture. This is proposed as a long-term project that will take another five years to develop in its infant stages. Funding will be provided through a combination of federal, state, and local resources. No Louisiana Community Development Block Grant funds will be used for the transit program. The park and ride facilities and ride share programming is estimated to cost in excess of \$2 million initially (development and construction costs), with more moderate annual maintenance and administration costs thereafter.

Amendment of Plan

This Community Development Plan may be amended by the Parish President with input from Parish Councilpersons and staff.

William S. Oiler  
Chief Administrative Officer

Date Approved