

# Vision Calcasieu

## Appendix C: Survey Summary

2009





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## 1. PURPOSE

An online community survey was conducted at the beginning of the Vision Calcasieu planning process. The purpose of the survey was to learn the concerns and ideas about Calcasieu Parish's future from the people who live and work here.

The survey was not a scientific survey because it did not attempt to poll a random sample of Parish residents to achieve statistically meaningful responses. The survey was open to all interested Parish residents and attempted to collect as many responses as possible. No demographic information was collected by the survey, so conclusions about the typical survey respondent are unavailable.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

The survey was developed by Planning Works with the cooperation of Calcasieu Parish staff. The questions asked respondents for their opinions about existing conditions in the Parish and about future opportunities and threats to the quality of life. The questions were designed to build on and refine the results of the Louisiana Speaks survey.

The survey was available on the Vision Calcasieu website during February and March, 2008, and was publicized in local newspapers and on the Police Jury's web site. In addition, hardcopies of the survey, containing the same introductory material and questions, were distributed via newspaper and through public libraries. Completed hardcopy surveys were manually entered into the survey database by Parish staff.

A total of 356 surveys were completed and analyzed by Planning Works staff.

## 3. RESULTS

### 3.1. PARISH STRENGTHS

Respondents were asked to share what makes them proud of Calcasieu Parish. Responses included a wide range of Parish characteristics and features. To get a sense of shared beliefs and priorities, key word searches were used to find common themes and ideas.

Local residents were cited as the greatest local asset by 143 respondents. The word "friendly" was used by 64 respondents, who offered comments such as:

*"The People! A great sense of community."*

*"Attitude of people and our friendly way of life"*

*"Friendly people, I know because I moved away for 2 years and was SO glad to be back."*

Many respondents enjoy the local food; "food" was the third most popular response to this question with 63 respondents mentioning the local cuisine.

Respondents also value the Parish's natural resources. "Water" was mentioned 35 times, the words "nature" or "natural" were used 32 times, "land" was used 19 times, "recreation" was mentioned 17 times, and "rivers" and "parks" were each mentioned 11 times. Some of these responses included:

*"Come see the sunset on the bayou"*

*"Unique natural beauty"*

*"Scenic waterways/lake – Sportsman's paradise"*

The area’s culture was also seen as a positive attribute. Forty-two respondents mentioned culture or cultural activities in their responses, including:

*“Strong interest in culture and art”*

*“I like the culture we have here because it’s homegrown.”*

*“Culture and entertainment for everyone”*

### 3.2. THREATS AND CONCERNS

The survey also asked about factors that threaten quality of life in Calcasieu Parish. Responses included a wide range of perceived threats. To get a sense of shared concerns, key word searches were used to find common themes and ideas.

The threat most often mentioned by respondents was traffic, which was raised by 124 respondents. Roads were mentioned an additional 35 times. Some of these responses included:

*“Traffic – too many areas of congestion”*

*“Slow response to traffic problems”*

*“Horrible traffic conditions everywhere”*

*“Traffic, traffic, traffic”*

The second most mentioned threat was employment related. “Jobs” were mentioned by 114 respondents. Some of these responses included:

*“Job opportunities – not everyone wants to work at a casino”*

*“More jobs to keep our young people here; growth opps.”*

*“Lack of professional, diversified job opportunities”*

Schools were mentioned by 89 respondents. School-related concerns included concerns about overcrowding, about general school quality and reputation, and about teachers. Some of these responses included:

*“High variability in quality of school districts”*

*“Schools are in a crisis situation, and it’s getting worse”*

*“Schools: lack of planning for growth, overcrowding”*

Other common responses included crime (25 respondents), a lack of amenities (50 respondents), sewer-related problems (15 respondents), and utilities (21 respondents). Planning-related concerns were mentioned by 25 respondents and zoning was mentioned ten times, generally in relation to a lack of zoning or zoning enforcement. Some of these responses included:

*“Lack of amenities (shopping and recreation)”*

*“Environmental issues: air and water quality, sewerage, floodplain, tree preservation”*

*“Above ground utilities, in residential areas”*

One response to this question captured the intent of Parish planning:

*“Traffic, utilities, schools, amenities, housing, and jobs all can be laid out and provided for if you do the parish wide planning like your trying to do now... plan it, lay it out, and push the GO button when the money and population growth are in sync.”*

### 3.3. FUTURE GROWTH

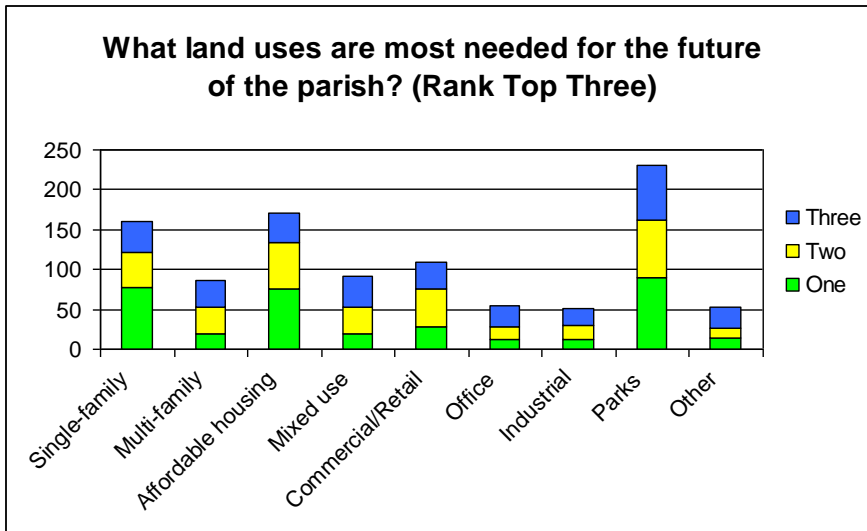
The future growth section of the survey asked a variety of questions about land uses, growth patterns, and the rate of growth in the Parish.

3.3.1. LAND USES

Respondents were asked to identify the land uses most needed for the future of the Parish by ranking the top three needed land uses. Parks were the most often cited needed land use, with both the most number one rankings and the highest ranking overall. Single-family and affordable housing were the second and third ranked land use needs, with 77 and 75 number one rankings respectively. Commercial/retail uses were ranked fourth overall.

Of those who ranked “Other” in the top three needed land uses, the additional land use most often mentioned were civic or cultural amenities such as cultural centers, museums, or other attractions. Sixteen

**What land uses are most needed for the future of the parish? (Rank Top Three)**



respondents added some type of cultural amenity as a top-ranked land use need. Schools and protected, preserved, or enhanced natural areas were the second most added land use, with seven respondents mentioning these uses as a top-ranked need.

3.3.2. GROWTH PATTERNS

The survey described three possible growth patterns and asked each respondent to rate each option on a scale of one to five, with one being least desirable and five being most desirable. The three growth options – Dispersed Development, Activity Center and Growth Corridors, and Compact Growth – were loosely based on growth patterns defined in the Louisiana Speaks planning process and used in the Regional Vision Poll conducted in January and February, 2007. That survey document identified three “Ways to Grow:”

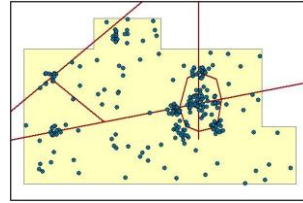
*Somewhat Change Development Plan, defined as more condos, townhomes, apartments with single family, in existing towns and along highways, with some transit and roads;*

*Focus Development in Existing Cities and Towns, defined as mainly build condos, townhomes, apartments, with transit in existing cities and towns; and*

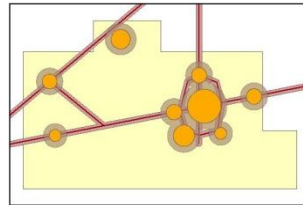
*Keep Development Plans As Is, defined as single family houses, along the edge of urban areas, roads.*

Because the Louisiana Speaks project was well-known to Parish residents, the growth patterns used in the Community Survey were developed to generally correspond to the patterns suggested in that project. Each growth pattern was described with attributes for land use and transportation and with a generalized map of the parish illustrating the growth pattern. The Community Survey identified three possible growth patterns:

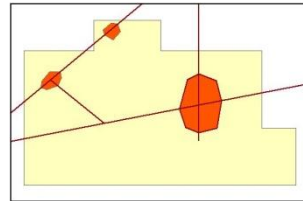
**Dispersed Development**, in which most new growth is in low density developments outside or at the edges of existing cities and towns, expanding into rural areas.



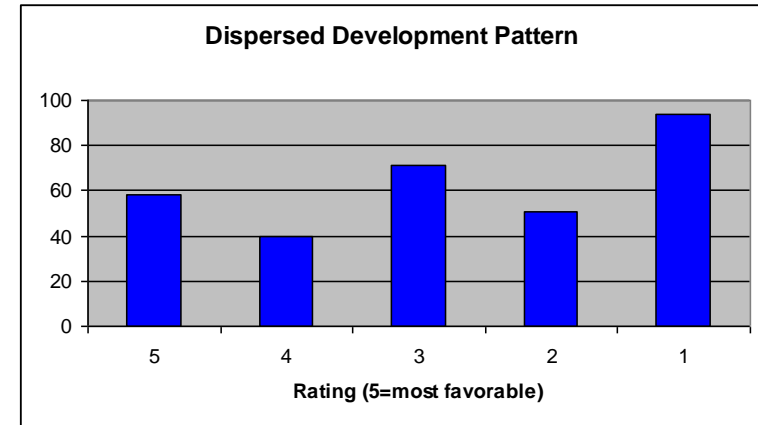
**Activity Centers and Growth Corridors**, in which most new growth occurs within existing communities, along major road corridors or as part of mixed use centers.



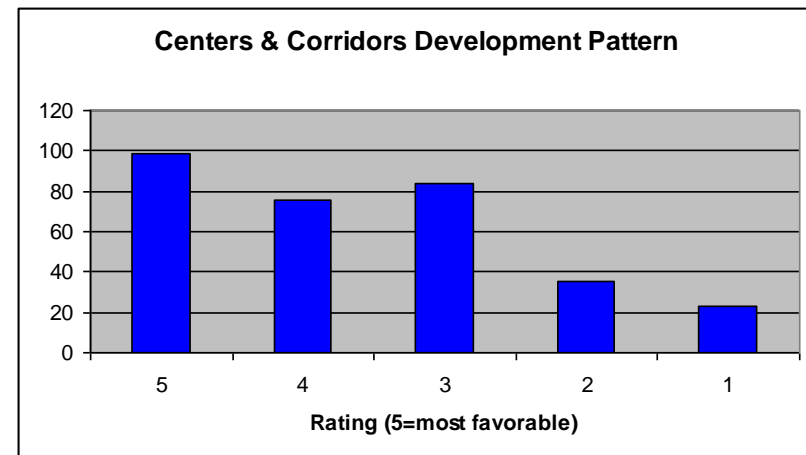
**Compact Growth**, in which growth is focused in existing communities, with an emphasis on redevelopment and creation of higher density mixed use centers.



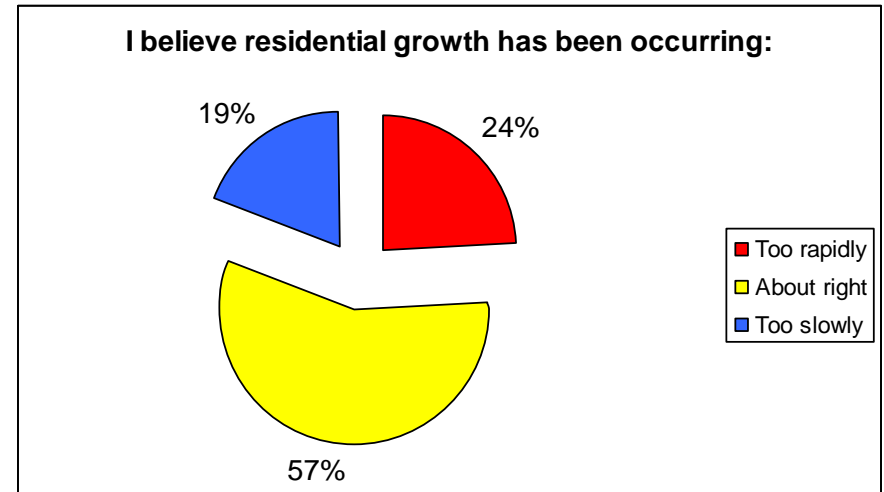
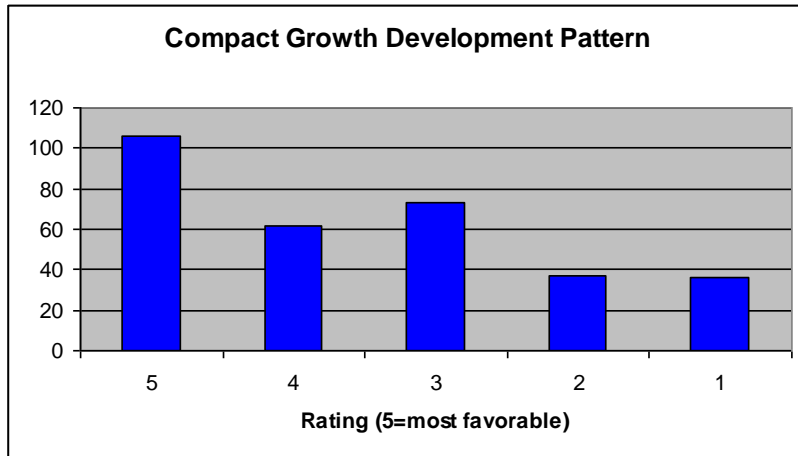
The **Dispersed Development** pattern received the lowest ratings from survey respondents. The average rating for this pattern was 2.7. Dispersed Development received the most “1,” least favorable, ratings and received more “1” ratings than the other two growth patterns combined.



The **Activity Centers and Growth Corridors** pattern received the highest average rating, with a 3.6 average. This pattern received the fewest “1,” least favorable ratings of the three patterns.



The **Compact Growth** pattern was also highly rated, with an average rating of 3.5, and received the most “5,” most favorable, ratings.

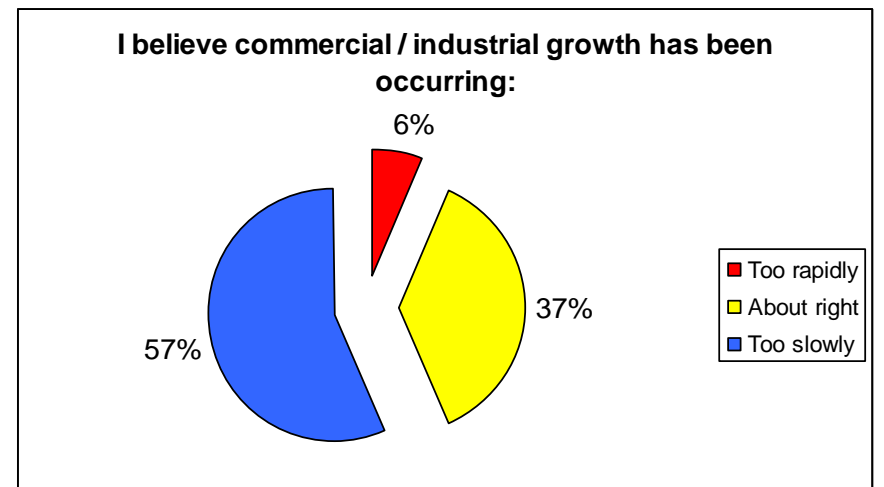


### 3.3.3. RATE OF GROWTH

The Community Survey included two questions about the rate of growth in the Parish. Respondents were asked their opinions about the historic rate of growth for residential development and for commercial and industrial development.

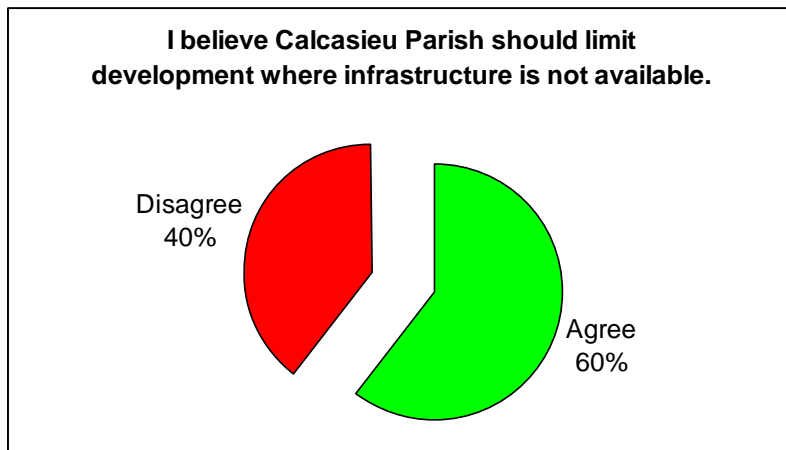
The majority of respondents were positive about residential growth, indicating that the growth rate in the Parish was “about right.” Just under a quarter of respondents felt the growth rate was too fast and less than one-fifth felt that residential growth happening too slowly.

Nearly two-thirds of respondents indicated some dissatisfaction with the non-residential growth in the Parish. A majority felt that commercial and industrial growth has been occurring too slowly.

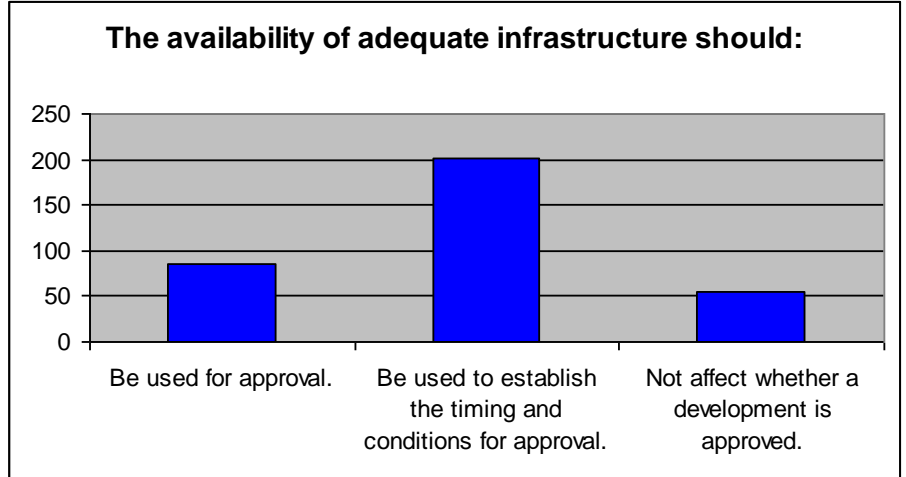


### 3.3.4. INFRASTRUCTURE

The Community Survey included two questions related to infrastructure. Respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement “I believe Calcasieu Parish should limit development where infrastructure (roads, water, sewer, schools, parks) is not available.” Sixty percent of respondents agreed with the statement.



Respondents were also asked how the availability of adequate infrastructure, including streets and utilities, should affect development applications. Nearly 60 percent of respondents felt that the availability of adequate infrastructure should be used to determine the timing and conditions for approval for development. Interestingly, 16 percent of respondents felt that the availability of infrastructure should not have an affect on development approval.



### 3.3.5. VISION

The final survey question asked respondents to briefly describe the Parish as they would like to see it in 20 years. Many of the vision statements shared in this section reflected the continuation of the Parish’s strengths as described in the first survey question or the remedy of concerns described in the second survey question. Additionally, many of the vision statements included statements of commitment to the Parish and its future. Some of the visions included:

“I see a parish with population centers featuring walkable neighborhoods, viable public transportation, and congestion-free traffic corridors. Population centers would cooperate with one another to achieve a cohesive parish identity.”

“A business friendly atmosphere with a high quality of life. People want to move here and stay here because of the great things we offer....parks, recreation for kids, great education from pre-K through Grad School or

vocational school, proud citizens, bustling economy, and unified parish working towards the same goal.”

“An authentic, vibrant community that has more mixed use development and a range of housing and transit options. Growth should be concentrated within areas of existing infrastructure and historic resources should be retained and preserved to maintain our authenticity. There should be a range of recreational and cultural opportunities available.”

“I would like to see the parish as a community where people still want to call home and raise their families. I would like to see industrial growth spur good jobs for the citizens. I would like our local schools to prepare our children to meet the challenges of new technology. I would like to see that industrial growth be an avenue for the entire nation. We are privileged to have the elements of commercial vitality (airports, deep draft port, pipelines, rail access, major interstates). But the economic growth that will be stimulated by industry and tourism must not overshadow the rich culture, history, and nature scenery.”