

University Research Initiative

Offshore Petroleum Development and the Comprehensive Planning Process



U.S. Department of the Interior
Minerals Management Service
Gulf of Mexico OCS Region



Cooperative Agreement
University Research Initiative
Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium

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November 1992

Prepared under MMS Contract
14-35-0001-30470
by
College of Urban and Public Affairs
University of New Orleans
Lakefront
New Orleans, Louisiana 70148

Published by

**U.S. Department of the Interior
Minerals Management Service
Gulf of Mexico OCS Region**

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CITATION

Emmer, R.E., A. Rheams, and F. Wagner. 1992. Offshore Petroleum Development and the Comprehensive Planning Process. Final report submitted to Minerals Management Service, New Orleans, LA. Contract No. 14-35-0001-30470. OCS Study MMS 92-0064. 76 pp.

ABSTRACT

Planning has been possible by the municipalities of the Louisiana coastal zone since 1926 and parishes (counties) since 1928. State government became active in planning in 1936. By 1946 the authority to plan had been revised and updated for all levels of government. Any significant attempt at planning did not take place until 1954 with the passage of the Federal Housing Act that provided support for planning through Section 701 grants. Most communities took advantage of these monies to have some plans prepared, but few of these documents were updated. The Department of Public Works eventually initiated a comprehensive plan for the State with 701 money and served as the administrator for the program. Eventually, planning responsibilities were transferred from Public Works to a newly created Office of State Planning in the Governor's Office. After 20 years the Office of State Planning lost status and was transferred to the Division of Administration. In 1989 the Office was abolished and its few remaining personnel incorporated into the Office of Planning and Budget in the Governor's Office.

Outer Continental Shelf petroleum activity began in 1947 when the first well was drilled in the Gulf of Mexico out of sight of land. Communities had the opportunity to plan for what would take place as a result of OCS activities and some did through the Section 701 program. But the Department of Public Works, the parishes, and the municipalities were operating with guidance from obsolete State laws. The State statute that defines the comprehensive plan was based on the Standard City Planning Enabling Act of 1928, which was known to be out of date by the end of World War II. In most instances medium and small communities could not afford full-time planners and did not keep abreast of the changing concepts in planning.

Discussions with planners and decisionmakers in the study area of coastal Louisiana revealed additional problems. Some communities had planning commissions but no comprehensive plans as required by State law. Other communities had unofficial planning commissions that advised parish governments, but were never legally formed. As a consequence the community would not have to prepare plans. Planning is not considered an important element in parish or community structure. Several planning commissions are inactive or have ceased to exist. Planning staffs are minimal and then probably do almost anything but planning. Finally, most of planning that does take place is in response to mandated actions, such as the national flood insurance program, rather than because planning is best for the community to have a sense of direction as delineated through the goals, objectives, and policies in a comprehensive plan.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many planners were very cooperative in supplying information about planning activities in their communities. These included, in alphabetical order, the following:

Regional Planning Commissions

Walter Brooks
Jim Edmonson
Layton Miller
Jake Mullican
Don Neisler

Parish and Municipal Planners

Ernie Broussard
Wendell Curole
Roger Hedrick
Dietmar Rietschier
Jimmy Vickers

Especially important to this study were the individuals in the four communities that were visited who spent valuable time discussing planning. These individuals are Mr. Derhyl Hebert, St. Mary Parish; Mr. Hayes Picou, Ms. Bonnie Conner, and Ms. Tina Horn, Cameron Parish; Mr. Pat Gordon, Terrebonne Parish; and Ms. Lula Auenson, Golden Meadow.

In addition to the above Mr. Clark Forrest provided valuable information on the status of Section 701 planning and Community Development Block Grants in Louisiana. Dr. Ralph Thayer reviewed and commented on the draft and Ms. Suzanne Shean helped solve the computer problems when they arose.

INTRODUCTION

Development of Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) oil and gas caused a hasty expansion of the industrial, commercial, and residential land uses in coastal Louisiana (Davis and Place 1983; Gramling and Brabant 1984; Gramling and Freudenburg 1989; Mumphrey et al. 1976a; Mumphrey et al. 1976b; Mumphrey et al. 1977; Stallings et al. 1977). OCS activities are those primary and secondary industries located in the Louisiana coastal zone because they result from petroleum extraction in federal waters (Mumphrey et al. 1976b). As a consequence of intensive economic pressure and the availability of support from federal programs, formally rural parishes (counties) and small to medium size municipalities quickly organized planning efforts. Numerous articles review the authority of the state and local governments to control and direct land use in Louisiana (Conner 1977; Forman 1980; Hershman and Mistic 1975-76; Hershman and Fontenot 1976; Livaudais 1982; Marcel and Bockroth 1980; and Midboe et al. 1976) and discuss and describe environmental regulations that apply to the coastal zone (Emmer 1984; Houck 1983). In fact, the Coastal Management Division, Department of Natural Resources evaluated the status of the local-state coordination process for managing coastal development (Emmer and Thayer 1989). In comparison to Louisiana, several states, for example Florida, California, and Oregon, have responded to development by mandating comprehensive planning including management of activities in the coastal zone (Hildreth and Johnson 1985; Brower and Carol 1984; Christie 1987; Blair and Rosenberg 1987; McGilvray 1987; Owens 1987; Kamimura et al. 1987; Healy and Zinn 1985).

With the fall of oil prices, many workers moved to other states; commercial ventures and support bases closed. Alternative uses are being considered for abandoned or underutilized OCS related infrastructure and facilities (Emmer et al. 1990). However, no analysis or report is known which evaluates the planning process in the Louisiana coastal zone, the primary area of OCS growth and development.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the affect of planning on growth and development of the parishes and municipalities that have been most affected by OCS support facilities and population expansion. The study hypothesis states: In parishes and municipalities with OCS dependent activities and a resultant population planning was in reality a reactionary process that owed its direction and achievements to federal and state guidelines promulgated for environmental conservation, flood damage reduction, and protection of the public health and safety. Beyond these basic federal and state requirements little coordinated planning was actually accomplished and most communities still lack comprehensive plans and the ability to formulate them. In other words, even though parish and municipal governments could have prepared for and directed OCS growth and development, most chose not to plan. Once the relationship of the planning procedures and the community decisionmaking process are better understood alternative courses of actions can be recommended in order not

to repeat the mistakes of the recent past and to provide for achieving long-term community goals.

The investigation centers on the application of the comprehensive planning process to meeting the demands arising in communities confronted with the adverse effects of rapid growth. Comprehensive planning is the suggested preferred rational methodology for addressing land use, facilities, and transportation decisions, especially in those situations where the economy oscillates between boom and bust. Consistency through formulation of long-term community policies, systematic incorporation of critical social, economic, and environmental issues, and predictability characterize the approach and make it desirable for those times when the frenzy of emotions and economic gain rather than logic prevails.

The next section presents the study methodology. The third section is a general introduction to the concept of comprehensive planning and serves as the model for comparing what has transpired in Louisiana. Section four traces the evolution of comprehensive planning in the state. This is followed by a description of the physical, biological, and cultural setting of the study area and the relation of OCS development to the physical and cultural systems. Finally, the results of the research are presented and recommendations are made for improving planning in the study area.

STUDY METHODOLOGY

The study area corresponds to the twenty parishes in southern Louisiana that were identified by the Minerals Management Service as being directly impacted by OCS related development activities (Emmer et al. 1990; McKenzie and Xander 1990). Detailed analysis of demographic characteristics (McKenzie 1990; McKenzie and Xander 1990) demonstrates the economic dependency of coastal Louisiana on OCS production. Several reports (Gramling and Brabant 1984; Gramling and Freudenburg 1989; Mumphrey et al. 1976a; Mumphrey et al. 1976b; Mumphrey et al. 1977) describe the relationship between specific parishes and cities and the oil and gas industry. These studies investigated the social and economic characteristics of coastal Louisiana and identified the regulatory programs, such as zoning, subdivision regulations, and building codes, that were in place and used by the parishes and cities. Only Gramling and Freudenburg (1989) address planning and indicate that their preliminary findings suggest that past planning efforts may have contributed some of the problems that affect a community when the economy becomes depressed.

In order to determine the status of comprehensive planning in the study area and whether the methodology was used to address OCS related activities, data were collected in three ways. First, information was compiled from published and unpublished literature. Second, requests for information were made to federal and state agencies and directly from parishes and municipalities. Finally, site visits were conducted in selected communities to gather more detailed material.

For purposes of this report, it was necessary to determine which parishes and municipalities have planning commissions and departments. As was explained the parishes in the study area were derived from Minerals Management Service information. Names, addresses, and telephone numbers of planning commissions and planning departments were compiled from three sources: first, by contacting the Regional Planning Commission for Jefferson, Orleans, St. Bernard, and St. Tammany Parishes in New Orleans (Mr. Walter Brooks), the Capital Regional Planning Commission in Baton Rouge (Mr. Don Neisler), the South Central Planning and Development Commission in Thibodaux (Mr. James Edmonson), the Acadiana Planning and Development District and Evangeline Economic and Planning District in Lafayette (Dr. Layton Miller), and the Imperial Calcasieu Regional Planning and Development Commissions in Lake Charles (Mr. Jake Mullican); second, by reviewing the membership of the Louisiana Chapter of the American Planning Association; and third, by acquiring a list of planning directors compiled by Mr. Roger Hedrick, Executive Director, Lafayette Areawide Planning Commission.

Identifying the municipalities that had the authority to plan proved to be somewhat more difficult. It was decided to use the list of municipalities that were eligible for

participation in the National Flood Insurance program. These communities have a demonstrated capacity to regulate activities within the base floodplain (the 100-year floodplain) and if they can control activities in floodprone areas they could undertake other forms of land use regulation. A list of eligible communities was obtained from the Office of Floodplain Management, Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development.

Twenty parish and 55 municipalities were sent requests for information (Appendix). Approximately two weeks after the initial mailings, a postcard was sent to those who did not return the fact sheet and requested documents. After an additional two weeks, telephone calls were made to those who had not yet returned the requests for information. The total number returned and those providing information during site visits were 30, representing a 40% response.

During the search for ancillary information on the status of planning in the study area, the team contacted several government agencies including the state office of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development in New Orleans, the regional office in Fort Worth, Texas, and headquarters in Washington, D.C., the Floodplain Management Section, Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development, the Office of Planning and Budget now housing the residual employees of the State Planning Office, and the Regional Planning Commissions referenced above. Searches were conducted at the Middleton Library, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge and the Long Library, University of New Orleans, New Orleans.

Twelve worksheets were used when compiling information and during community visits (Appendix). Use of worksheets standardized information collection especially for the four communities visited (two parishes and two municipalities) and were valuable references when interpreting the information and preparing the conclusions and recommendations.

Community visits were very important. First, a meeting with local planners and other public officials helped document the role of planning in the evolution of community growth, their response to environmental problems, and their concern for land use conflicts that may were present in the community. Second, a community visit allowed the team to observe the presence of conflicting land uses. Third, reports, studies, and similar technical information could be collected and discussed with local officials. Fourth, time spent in the community allowed the team to gain a first hand sense of the problems that the officials are facing, such as limited high, dry land in suitable locations along watercourses. Finally, being in the office with local representatives gave the team a better understanding of the related issues that determine how planning affects community development. Telephone calls, letters, or, the bane of interpersonal communication, the fax machine could not provide the insight into activities and attitudes that meeting with individuals affords.

Two parishes and two municipalities were selected for site visits. In combination with the information collected during this effort additional data from a related study (McKenzie and Xander 1990) are incorporated into the report. Table 1 shows the site selection criteria that were used. The first column lists the 20 parishes in the study area. Column B shows the offshore production workers by place of residence. Column C is the place of work for offshore employees. Column D presents the 1984 population of each of the parishes. In order to estimate the relative significance of OCS employment to the parish as a whole the OCS residence (Column B) is divided by the total parish population (Column D). Finally, the zones of concentration of OCS related facilities are identified.

Cameron and St. Mary Parishes, Golden Meadow, and Houma/Terrebonne were selected for site visits. Cameron has the highest OCS employee to population ratio (2.32) of all of the parishes and includes facilities at Cameron, Mermantau, and Grand Chenier. The parish is the only government as there are no incorporated municipalities. In addition, the parish has neither an active planning commission nor a comprehensive plan. St. Mary Parish has the third highest OCS employee to population ratio (1.35) of the parishes and includes a very high concentration of OCS facilities in the Morgan City-Amelia area and in Cypremort. The parish has a planning commission and a planner dealing with the problems in the unincorporated parts of the parish. Their most recent comprehensive plan was completed in 1960. Golden Meadow represents an incorporated community in a parish (Lafourche) that has one of the highest OCS employee to population ratios (1.11) and supports OCS related facilities. The community has a planning commission and a comprehensive plan. Finally, although Terrebonne Parish has a lower OCS employee to population ratio (0.43) than several other potential candidates, it was chosen because it represents a regional planning effort between the Terrebonne Parish and the City of Houma. Houma with the Houma Navigation Canal and the bayous flowing south past Dulac and Cocodrie are a focus of OCS related industries. The parish has a long history of active planning, beginning in 1963 with its comprehensive plan. Today, planning is through the consolidated government.

Although it appears obvious why other sites were not selected (low residence to population ratio or not an area of concentrated OCS activities) omission of Plaquemines Parish from the site visits deserves an explanation. Plaquemines Parish has the second highest OCS employee to population ratio (2.16) and facilities concentrated in the Venice area. But planning for development by the parish is limited to the lands within the hurricane protection levees, a very narrow belt along the Mississippi River. Activities outside the levees are controlled by the Corps of Engineers, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Coastal Management Division, Louisiana Department of Natural Resources. The team believes that Cameron Parish offered a better opportunity to observe the role of planning because development was not confined to a strip of land protected by levees.

Table 1. Site selection criteria.

| Parish | EmpXRes | WrkPlc | Population | Emp%Pop | Location of OCS Related facilities |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|--------|------------|---------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Ascension | 69 | 0 | 57300 | 0.12 | |
| Calcasieu | 439 | 224 | 175100 | 0.25 | |
| Cameron | 232 | 856 | 10000 | 2.32 | Lake Charles (A) Cameron (D) Mermentau (D) Grand Chenier (D) |
| East Baton Rouge | 243 | 97 | 390100 | 0.06 | |
| Iberia | 619 | 0 | 68500 | 0.90 | New Iberia (A,A,B,C,D) |
| Jefferson | 3665 | 0 | 478500 | 0.77 | Grand Isle (D) |
| Lafayette | 1524 | 1289 | 168800 | 0.90 | |
| Lafourche | 974 | 1669 | 87800 | 1.11 | Fourchon - Golden Meadow (D,D,F) |
| Livingston | 384 | 0 | 69500 | 0.55 | |
| Orleans | 4524 | 10219 | 561000 | 0.81 | New Orleans (B,C,C,C,C,E,E,F,F) |
| Plaquemines | 577 | 2439 | 26700 | 2.16 | Venice (C,D,F) |
| St. Bernard | 243 | 0 | 68100 | 0.36 | |
| St. Charles | 468 | 0 | 41600 | 1.13 | |
| St. James | 15 | 0 | 22300 | 0.07 | |
| St. John | 112 | 0 | 39700 | 0.28 | |
| St. Mary | 879 | 3577 | 65000 | 1.35 | Amelia - Morgan City (A,B,C,D,D,D,F) Cypremort (A) |
| St. Tammany | 1489 | 0 | 135300 | 1.10 | |
| Terrebonne | 440 | 566 | 101200 | 0.43 | Cocodrie - Dulac (D,D) Houma (A,B,C,D,F) |
| Vermilion | 496 | 919 | 52700 | 0.94 | Abbeville - Intracoastal City (C,D,D,D) |
| West Baton Rouge | 9 | 0 | 20600 | 0.04 | |
| EmpXRes=Offshore Production Workers by Place of Residence | | | | | |
| WrkPlc=Offshore Production Workers by Place of Work | | | | | |
| Population=1984 Population per U.S. Census | | | | | |
| Emp%Pop=EMPXRES Divided by POPULATION | | | | | |
| PETROLEUM INDUSTRY RELATED FEATURES: | | | | | |
| A-Major Platform Fabrication Yards | | | | | |
| B-Major Pipeline Coating Yards | | | | | |
| C-Major Pipeline Fabrication Yards | | | | | |
| D-Supply Bases | | | | | |
| E-Major Shipyards | | | | | |
| F-Selected Ports | | | | | |
| SOURCES: McKenzie and Xander 1990; U.S. Minerals Management Service 1990; Wicker et al. 1990. | | | | | |

THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Historical Overview

In 1911, F. L. Olmsted, Jr., son of the famous landscape architect, and A. Bettman, solicitor of Cincinnati, shaped the initial thinking about the constituents of a comprehensive plan (Black 1968). These ideas influenced cities as they began to realize the need for some measure of control over growth and development. Zoning ordinances, widely known, were being misused. Emphasis was being placed on an overall plan outlining interrelated aspects of a city's development. Zoning was gradually being accepted as simply a method for plan implementation. The Olmsted and Bettman approach defined comprehensive planning until 1930 (Black 1968). A typical comprehensive plan consisted of several elements including: zoning as a land use scheme, streets, transit, rail, and water transportation, public recreation, and civic art or civic appearance (Scott 1969). In 1925, Cincinnati officially adopted the first comprehensive plan with a legal connection to zoning. In their concept, legal control of community development was used as a tool for a set of long-range community goals. This was in distinct contrast to the comprehensive zoning concept of the New York City Zoning Code of 1916 which established controls without reference to long-range community development policies (So 1979). In 1928 the Standard City Planning Enabling Act prepared by an Advisory Committee on City Planning and Zoning, U.S. Department of Commerce, appeared. This single document influenced the approach many states and local governments, including Louisiana, followed when preparing legislation authorizing planning. The Act dominated the thinking until after World War II.

After the War planning began to change (Black 1968). Urban growth placed many problems before the state assemblies and sparked an interest in planning in municipal legislators. The profession began to expand to meet the needs of a changing city and its new suburbs. Federal programs, such as the Housing Act of 1949 for redevelopment and the Housing Act of 1954 that required comprehensive plans before federal dollars could be matched encouraged planning. The comprehensive plan was transformed as well. Plans became more general as politicians became involved to a greater extent in the process. Policy was emphasized rather than techniques so what evolved was quite different from what was proposed in the 1920s (Black 1968). It is now recognized that planning precedes zoning; piecemeal planning and adoption of plans are not good planning, and in fact has become rare (Black 1968), and the plan must be a process that is always subject to review and amendment.

The Comprehensive Plan

In the field of planning the terms "comprehensive plan," "general plan," and "master plan" are used synonymously (So and Getzels 1988). The term "comprehensive plan" is most commonly used by professional planners and, therefore, will be used throughout this document. There are three basic characteristics of a comprehensive plan: first, it is an official document that has been adopted by a local government as a policy guide to decisions about the community; second, it is a physical plan which encompasses all geographical parts of a community and all functional elements which influence physical development; and third, it is a long-term plan which usually indicates in a general way how government wants the community to develop in the next 20 to 30 years. That is, the plan sets community goals and objectives, such as growth and how it will be achieved.

As originally conceived during the early part of this century, the comprehensive plan depicted future land uses that were static. All community efforts were focused on achieving this idealistic configuration and support systems. However, because of deficiencies that were later realized, the comprehensive plan evolved into a dynamic process which includes both documents and maps, but more importantly a procedure for continuously adjusting the plan to meet the needs of a changing community. Today, planners first assemble background information describing the forms and processes that comprise the community. This is commonly referred to as baseline studies of the physical, biological, and cultural systems of the study area. Tables, figures, maps, and text are compiled on data that includes, but is not limited to the following:

1. Private land use - residential, commercial, industrial;
2. Community facilities - public and private structures which provide supporting services for community and basic non-residential activities such as schools, hospitals, police, fire, churches, and civic centers;
3. Transportation routes - adequate traffic patterns for and the identification of the locations, types and dimensions of streets, roadways, thoroughfares, railroads, highways, viaducts, and mass transit;
4. Public housing facilities - the extent and layout of public housing and the replanning of blighted districts and slums; and
5. Public utilities - such as water, electrical, sanitation, communication, and gas;

6. Public ways and open spaces - including bridges, waterways, lakes, waterfronts, boulevards, parkways, playgrounds, squares, parks, and aviation fields; and

7. Economic and environmental issues and problems that are found in the community (Levy 1988).

At the same time baseline information is being assembled, the staff with public participation identifies the problems and issues of importance and develops goals and objectives that will result in the community achieving its aspirations and desires (So and Getzels 1988). The third step is the preparation of alternative scenarios for accomplishing the community goals and objectives. Each scenario proposes the general land use patterns with approximate boundaries, but does not specify sites or facilities, a product that is far too detailed for the comprehensive plan. It must also be kept in mind that the comprehensive plan addresses the needs and desires of the entire community, not just one aspect, such as housing, transportation, or utilities, or a single area or district.

Once the alternatives are evaluated a decision can be made by the community, through the planning commission and subject to voter approval, adopts the actions it will undertake and the plan is implemented. The time needed to complete a plan varies from one community to another and depends on several variables, such as financing, availability of staff, or public acceptance of the plan. The final phase of the comprehensive planning process is reserved for review and revisions, including public hearings (Levy 1988). This fifth phase is very important because it allows for continual assessment of the plan elements in a timely manner and permits updating the parts as conditions in the community change or to resolve conflicts (So 1979). In other words the plan evolves through time until the community chooses to abandon the planning process.

Several methods are used by local governments when implementing comprehensive plans. These implementation tools, zoning ordinances, subdivision regulations, and building codes, should not be confused with the plan itself. Zoning ordinances are very precise and are in a short-term perspective. The community is divided into districts (zones) which allow specific activities that must comply with minimum and maximum standards, such as density, portion of the lot occupied by a building, or adverse impacts on neighbors. Subdivision regulations control the division of the land, provide for infrastructure, and establish minimum standards for services and designs that protect the individual (So and Getzels 1988; Daniels et al. 1988). Finally, building codes regulate materials and construction of structures within the community (Daniels et al. 1988). These instruments should not be confused

with the plan which is more general and long-term in nature and which should precede the regulatory vehicles.

Summary

Whereas the first comprehensive plans were so specific that particular facilities were identified, present plans are more policy-oriented and provide general guidelines which development must follow (So and Getzels 1988). Today the elements in a comprehensive plan reflect a rapidly changing time when governments must be prepared to respond to growing populations with particular housing needs, federal programs such as urban renewal, regional coordination with neighboring communities to provide for capital improvements required by suburban growth, hazardous and solid waste disposal, conservation of natural resources, and historic preservation.

In some states the comprehensive plan has no legal mandate; it is simply an informal guide to the development of a community. In other states, such as Florida where it is called a "growth management plan," there is legal authority attached to the plan in which its components act as an official guide to growth and development (So and Getzels 1988). The comprehensive plan must be designed for communities in states which have legally mandated the preparation of plans.

PLANNING IN LOUISIANA

Introduction

The study area includes the twenty parishes in southern Louisiana that were identified by the Minerals Management Service as being directly impacted by OCS related development activities. The study area encompasses the physical/biological coastal zone and adjacent uplands, a dynamic system that is constantly being modified by natural and man-related processes. As a result many environmental problems have emerged (Boesch et al. 1989; Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana 1987; Department of Transportation and Development 1984; Emmer et al. 1984; Louisiana Wetland Protection Panel 1985; Turner and Cahoon (eds.) 1987; Wicker et al. 1990). Natural processes of primary concern are wetlands loss due to subsidence, possible sea level rise, and the general deterioration of older deltaic cycles. Man-caused impacts include excavation of canals for navigation and hydrocarbon extraction, encroachment into wetlands, modification of hydrologic conditions and sediment distribution by spoil banks, levees, and canals, and water pollution. Development in coastal Louisiana has expanded in unprecedented proportions from the end of World War II to the early 1980s. As a consequence subdivisions, commercial strips, and industrial facilities are sited at lower elevations and in those locations where they are subjected to higher risks (Emmer and Davis 1987). Runoff from development and the discharge of sewage either not treated or only partially treated (Cole et al. 1986; Kilgen et al. 1985) has resulted in the pollution of the adjacent wetlands and other critical habitats, such as oyster beds (Broutman and Leonard 1988; Kilgen et al. 1988). This problem is having a significant short-term economic impact on the coastal parishes because as a consequence of the oil and gas bust more unemployed workers turn to harvesting renewable resources at a time that many oyster beds are closed because of contamination.

The Federal Role

Federal, state, and local governments each have roles in addressing these problems, but in distinctly different manners. The federal government does not have direct control over land use, except on those tracts they own, such as wildlife management areas and military reservations. However, the federal government has programs and policies that indirectly influence activities or the planning for activities (Conner 1977; Goldman-Carter 1989; Goldstein 1988; Houck 1983; Kusler 1983; Office of Technology Assessment 1984; Office of Coastal Zone Management and Coastal Management Section 1980; Ransel and Fish 1989; Want 1989; Zinn and Copeland 1982).

Of all the federal agencies active in the study area the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has the potential to exert the most influence on the distribution of activities. The Corps administers Section 10 of the River and Harbor Act of 1899 (33U.S.C.401-406) which protects navigable waters from obstructions and pollution and the Clean Water Act (33U.S.C.1251-1376). Section 404 of the Clean Water Act makes the Corps partners with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in regulating the disposal of fill in waters of the United States. The Corps' permitting program includes coastal and inland waters, interstate waters and tributaries of navigable waters. The permitting program can directly influence the placement of roads, levees, fill for industrial sites, and the location of almost any type of development. Projects exempted from the permitting process include normal farming and ranching activities, silviculture, farm and stock ponds, and farm and forest roads. The exemption does not apply to those projects that are designed to change the land use of an area.

The EPA coordinates with the Corps through its review responsibilities. A Section 404 permit may be denied if EPA finds that the project has unacceptable adverse impacts. This occurs when a project

1. violates any applicable state water quality standards;
2. violates applicable toxic effluent standards or is prohibited under Section 307 of the Clean Water Act;
3. jeopardizes threatened or endangered species;
4. violates any marine sanctuary;
5. significantly degrades waters of the United States;
6. has a significant adverse effect on human health and welfare (for example, water supplies, shellfish, or wildlife sites);
7. significantly affects the aquatic ecosystem, including polluting and loss of habitat;
8. significantly affects recreational, aesthetic, and economic values of the area; or
9. has practical alternatives.

Acceptable projects are water-dependent, that is, they require access or proximity to or location within special aquatic sites to achieve their purpose. Applicants must consider practical alternatives not involving the discharge of

dredged or fill material into waters of the United States. The EPA determines that a project is practical if it can be accomplished considering costs, existing technology, and logistics.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) indirectly has an impact on land uses through the National Flood Insurance Program (42U.S.C.4001-4128). When communities become eligible for flood insurance they agree to abide by performance standards that reduce the potential for damage from a 100-year flood event. These actions, such as constructing the first floor at or above the 100-year flood level, flood proofing commercial structures, or removing substantially damaged structures, can prove to be costly and may discourage unwise development in the floodprone area.

The Coastal Barrier Resources Act (16U.S.C.3501-3510), administered by the Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, applies to specific barrier islands and beaches. The Act prohibits most federal expenditures (flood insurance, Corps' structural projects that encourage development, or federal moneys for roads, bridges, or water supplies) that promote, either directly or indirectly, development on the barriers. Through the program Congress hopes to reduce the loss of life, minimize the destruction of fish and wildlife habitat and associated natural resources, and save the federal government money. In other words, the financial risk of building in these high hazard areas is placed on the individuals who invest or live on the barriers.

Many other federal programs apply to activities in the study area, but are concerned with site specific considerations. These include: Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (16U.S.C.661 et seq.); the Endangered Species Act (16U.S.C.1531 et seq.) as they apply to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Marine Fisheries Service, and Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries; the Food Security Act of 1985 (P.L.99-198) as it applies to the U.S. Soil Conservation Service; and the National Environmental Policy Act (42U.S.C.4321-4361) which applies to everyone.

The State Role

States have the power to control land use through the Tenth Amendment to the Constitution that gives them the "police power" (Barrows 1982). They can plan for and regulate activities that affect the public health, safety, and welfare. Normally, states do not practice comprehensive planning because it is an impractical job for most of them (So et al. 1986). This is certainly true for Louisiana where the concept of planning has been around for a long time. The state does administer federal programs and coordinate activities between federal and local governments.

Louisiana is also active in controlling what takes place in the political coastal zone as defined by Act 361, the State and Local Coastal Resources Management Act of 1978 (LRS49:213.1-.23) and, to some degree, on the adjacent uplands. The Coastal Management Division (CMD), Department of Natural Resources is responsible for the state coastal zone program (Office of Coastal Zone Management and Coastal Management Section 1980). The CMD administers a permitting system that applies to activities that are below five feet mean sea level, outside of fastlands, or activities that have a direct and significant impact on coastal waters. The CMD reviews and makes consistency determinations for oil and gas activities. General guidelines exist for all activities and for such specific uses as: levees; linear facilities; shoreline modifications; surface alterations; hydrologic and sediment transport modification; alteration of waters draining into coastal waters; and oil, gas, and other mineral activities. Projects must conform to the guidelines to the maximum extent practicable in order to reduce adverse impacts on the physical, biological, cultural, and economic systems.

The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (DWF) reviews and comments on permit applications to CMD. The Department's primary function is to protect the renewable resources within the state, both upland and wetland species. The Department also administers a permit program for activities associated with state designated scenic streams. Prohibited activities on scenic streams include: channelization, clearing and snagging, channel realignment, and reservoir construction.

The Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) protects water quality (Louisiana Water Control law, LRS30:2071-2074). The law gives DEQ the authority to develop, implement, and enforce a water pollution control program for river basins. The DEQ activities include permitting both industrial and municipal discharges, compliance monitoring, water quality monitoring and analysis, and special programs for nonpoint source pollution. In addition, the DEQ prepares water quality standards and other water regulations for surface and ground waters. Section 401 of the Clean Water Act establishes a certification process that applies to federally permitted or licensed activities. If a project does not comply with state water quality standards for effluent limitations on discharges, DEQ can deny certification. Should this happen, then federal agencies cannot issue permits or licenses (Ransel and Fish 1989). A state may expand the scope of the 401 certification process to include wetlands by incorporating the term in its definition of surface waters in its enabling legislation.

The Department of Health and Hospitals is responsible for human health. They monitor and regulate discharges of sewage, control the oyster and shell fishing

industry, and monitor drinking water quality and the regulation of treatment and distribution systems.

The Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism (CRT) manages state parks and commemorative areas and strives to protect archaeological and National Register sites and other cultural resources. The CRT reviews and comments on permit applications to federal and state agencies.

Evolution of Planning in Louisiana

Planning in Louisiana has roots that go back to the first part of the century. The seeds for planning developed from the piecemeal zoning in New Orleans, a practice that was successfully challenged in the courts (Parker 1965). Zoning, a way of enforcing plans, was taking place before plans or planning commissions were possible (Parker 1965). In response to the courts, the 1918 Louisiana legislature by Act 27 granted cities with populations over 50,000 the ability to enact zoning ordinances (Fordham 1946) (Table 2). Act 240 of 1926 gave municipalities (defined by the Lawrason Act (Act 136 of 1898) as having 5,000 or more inhabitants) the power to zone (Fordham 1946) and, more significantly, provided that zoning regulations be "in accordance with a comprehensive plan." This is the first appearance of a reference to planning as it applies to the duties and responsibilities of governments in Louisiana. During the same session, Act 305 authorized cities to plan and allows for a fifteen member planning commission. However, the act neither allows for organizing the planning effort nor discusses procedures that should be used. In fact, it does not address the preparation of a master (comprehensive) plan, adoption of an official map of streets, parks or public places, or the power to enter private property for official business (Fordham 1946). It was not until two years later that parishes gained a measure of planning authority when the 1928 legislature passed Act 234. Police juries could now broadly plan for streets, parks, public improvements, and private subdivision of lands. But no provisions were made for a planning body or an administrative structure (Fordham 1946). And this remained the status of parish and municipal planning for almost two decades.

During this embryonic stage for local governments, the state became involved in planning when the 1936 legislature created the State Planning Commission (SPC) (Act 38). The SPC consisted of seven persons appointed by the Governor and a staff deemed necessary for its work, but within the limits of the amounts appropriated by the legislature. It was the function and duty of the SPC to develop and adopt a master plan for the physical development of the state.

Table 2. Milestones in the evolution of planning in Louisiana.

| Year | La. Act | Action |
|---------|---------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1918 | 27 | Authorizes cities over 50,000 the ability to enact zoning ordinances. |
| 1926 | 240 | Provides procedures for municipalities when exercising power to zone, including compliance with a comprehensive plan; first mention of planning. |
| 1926 | 305 | Planning Enabling Act; applies to municipalities (cities of 5000 or more inhabitants); no master plan required. |
| 1928 | 234 | Parishes granted a measure of planning authority. |
| 1936 | 38 | Creates State Planning Commission (SPC); SPC is to make and adopt an official plan for the physical development of the State. |
| 1938 | | SPC issues First Progress Report on its three major undertakings. |
| 1941 | | Governor issues an executive order creating the Department of Public Works (DPW); duties of SPC transferred to DPW. |
| 1941 | | Parish Resource Planning Boards (PRPB) established by resolution of police jury; PRPB organized to prepare social and economic surveys to facilitate community planning. DPW acts as a liaison between local planning boards and state and federal planning agencies. |
| 1942 | 2 | Legislature creates Department of Public Works; moves functions of SPC to DPW. |
| 1942/43 | | DPW works with other state departments and agencies to prepare the capital improvements part of a state master plan for physical development. A tentative plan presented. |
| 1944 | | DPW publishes a guide for PRPB's inventory of resources and facilities. |
| 1946 | 300/319 | Authorizes the creation of parish and municipal planning commissions and the preparation of master plans. Act 305 of 1926 repealed. |
| 1955 | | DPW becomes state administering agency for U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Urban Planning Assistance Program (1954, as amended) 701 planning studies. |
| 1956 | 239 | Regional Planning Enabling Act; provides for regional planning areas; coordination and advice from DPW. |

A master plan shall show the SPC's recommendations for:

the development of the State, and may include, among other things, the general location, character and extent of highways, bridges, waterways, waterfront developments, flood prevention works, parks, reservations, forests, wild-life refuges, aviation fields, drainage and sanitary systems, works for the prevention of stream pollution, railroad and motor vehicle routes, power transmission facilities, public buildings, and other public ways, grounds, spaces, utilities, facilities, structures, buildings and works which by reason of their function, size, extent, location, legal status or other reason or the location construction or authorization of which fall, according to law, within the province or jurisdiction of State bodies or State officials or which for any reasons are appropriate subjects of or fall appropriately within the scope of a State, as distinguished from a mere local, program or plan; also the general location and extent of forests, agriculture areas and open development areas for purposes of conservation, flood and water supply, sanitary and drainage facilities or the protection of urban and rural development; also a land utilization program, including the general classification and allocation of the land within the State amongst agricultural, forestry, recreational, soil conservation, water conservation, industrial, urbanization and others uses and purposes (Act 38, Section 3).

The description of a comprehensive plan in Act 38 seems to follow the Standard City Planning Enabling Act of 1928 with minor adjustments that make it apply to projects of state scope.

A SPC plan was to guide the coordinated and efficient economic development of the state in accordance with present and future needs and resources and to promote the health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity, and welfare of the people (Act 38, Section 4). This master plan could be adopted as a whole or in part. For implementing the plan the SPC could prepare drafts of legislation on zoning, land use regulations, and regulations for the conservation of natural resources. In addition to a plan, the SPC was to advise municipal, parish, or other planning commissions and cooperate with them to achieve a coordinated effort among levels of government. Public officials were to furnish information that would assist the SPC in completing its work. Finally, the SPC personnel could enter onto private land to conduct surveys and examinations and maintain monuments and marks.

In 1938 the SPC issued its first progress report (Louisiana State Planning Commission 1938). Its efforts were limited to:

1. assisting to federal agencies, and state or state subdivisions for selecting projects for federal funding;
2. conducting research on parks and recreational areas throughout the state; and
3. pursuing studies of tax delinquencies, land adjudication, and land use classification in cooperation.

These projects were undertaken in cooperation with and heavily dependent on the Works Progress Administration, the National Park Service, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, respectively. This was necessary because the legislature only appropriated sufficient funds to allow for a Chairman of the Commission and two administrative assistants. By the publication of the second progress report in 1940 (Louisiana State Planning Commission 1940) the SPC became an active participant on the Council of State Governments. Act 79 of the 1938 legislature created a Louisiana Commission on Interstate Cooperation. Even though more money was provided, the SPC was still heavily dependent on the federal agencies, such as the National Park Service and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

In January 1941 the Governor issued an executive order establishing the Louisiana State Department of Public Works (DPW). The DPW was formed by combining the functions of the State Planning Commission, the Board of State Engineers, the Housing Commission, the Flood Control and Water Conservation Commission, the Board of Control of the New Basin Canal and Shell Road, the Aeronautics Commission, and the Flowage Right Commission. The DPW was created purportedly to systematize the planning and construction functions of government. Duties of the SPC were housed in the Planning Section of DPW. The section assumed responsibility for coordinating the planning and activities of the other state departments, such as highways, and to advise the governor and legislature on programs and policies for future plans (Louisiana Department of Public Works 1941).

The state was encouraging parishes and municipalities (245 incorporated places) to prepare detailed plans for public improvements through local planning boards specifically organized for that purpose. In fact, Parish Resources Planning Boards (PRPB) were created to begin the process. The DPW only worked with communities when an invitation was issued by the local government requesting assistance. Apparently, the DPW did not see as one of its responsibilities the formulation of independent plans. Rather, the DPW

functioned as the liaison between local planning boards and state and federal planning agencies.

Act 2 of the 1942 legislature created the Department of Public Works and made it responsible for the preparation of the state master plan (Louisiana Department of Public Works 1943; 1945). A tentative plan on capital improvements for the state was developed by the Planning Section of DPW working with other state departments and agencies. Planning at the parish level was relegated to the parish planning boards because DPW felt that local problems were best solved by local people. All PRPB's began by compiling an inventory of parish resources and facilities based on a manual published by DPW (Odom 1944).

By 1946 it was apparent that existing legislation was not sufficient to encourage planning at the local level of government (Fordham 1946). Planning must come before zoning if the whole process is to work and this was not happening. Limited planning was possible at the state level through the DPW, but at the parish and municipal levels problems persisted. Planning was only authorized for communities of 5,000 or more (of which there were very few) and for parishes. Even then, the planning commission was set at fifteen "freeholders", a number too large to be effective and too restrictive because of the freeholder provision (Fordham 1946). There was no requirement for a master plan, maps, guiding standards, or authority for the commission to adopt regulations or impose conditions (Fordham 1946). Even worse the parishes were not authorized separate planning agencies. In order to correct these deficiencies the 1946 legislature passed Acts 300 and 319.

Act 300 deals with municipal planning while Act 319 addresses parish planning. The two acts which contained essentially the same provisions and were consolidated by the 1950 Constitution as LRS 33:101-21 (Parker 1965). Planning commissions were reduced to five to nine members and should be supported by a professional staff with adequate equipment to function properly. The planning commission shall make and adopt a master plan for the physical development of the parish or municipality. The master plan which shows the commission's recommendations for the development of the community could be adopted in whole or in part as the work progresses, a concept borrowed from the Standard City Planning Enabling Act of 1928. A plan may be amended, extended, or added to as necessary. Andrews (1947) suggested an outline for the master plan process in Louisiana (Table 3).

The comprehensive plan as it applies to Louisiana is primarily derived from the Standard City Planning Enabling Act of 1928 from the U.S. Department of Commerce (Parker 1965). In fact, the state legislation describing the comprehensive plan reproduces a portion of the Standard City Planning

Table 3. Components of the master plan (Andrews 1947).

| | |
|-------|------------------------------------|
| I. | General Aims and Objectives |
| II. | Factors Controlling Growth |
| III. | Transportation |
| | A. Streets |
| | B. Railroads |
| | C. Airlines |
| | D. Waterways |
| IV. | Utilities |
| | A. Water and Sewerage |
| | B. Drainage System |
| | C. Electrical |
| | D. Gas |
| | E. Telephone |
| V. | Recreation |
| VI. | Public Protection and Health |
| VII. | Education |
| VIII. | Civic Center |
| IX. | Finance |
| X. | Zoning and Subdivision Regulations |
| XI. | Housing |
| XII. | Timetable |

Enabling Act of 1928. The master plan should contain maps, charts, and descriptive matter that shows:

the general location, character, and extent of railroads, highways, streets, viaducts, subways, bus, street car and other transportation routes, bridges, waterways, lakes, water fronts, boulevards, parkways, playgrounds, squares, parks, aviation fields, and other public ways, grounds, and open spaces; the general location of public buildings, schools, and other public property; the general character, extent and layout of public housing and of the replanning of blighted districts and slum areas; the general location and extent of public utilities and terminals, whether publicly or privately owned or operated, for water, light, sanitation, communication, power, transportation, and other purposes; and the removal, relocation, widening, narrowing, vacating, abandonment, change of use or extension of any or the foregoing ways, grounds, open spaces, buildings, property, utilities, or terminals; as well as, in the case of a parish planning commission, a zoning plan for the control of the height, area, bulk, location, and use of the buildings and premises in urban areas or areas suitable for urbanization outside municipal limits (LRS 33:106).

The potential for planning reached a new level in 1946. Parishes were preparing and revising resource inventories while some of the larger municipalities were having master plans developed. For example, in 1946 Baton Rouge contracted for a master plan that was completed two years later (Harland, Bartholomew and Associates 1948). But it would take federal action, more specifically money, to spur greater interest in planning and this did not occur until 1954 with the passage of the Housing Act. Title I, Section 701, established the Urban Planning Assistance Program which provided a one for one federal match with local moneys for communities under 25,000 (So and Getzels 1988). The Department of Public Works became Louisiana's administering agency in 1955 and continued in this role until 1968 when these duties were transferred to the newly organized State Planning Office.

Numerous parishes and municipalities in the study area took advantage of the 701 program and had plans developed, either internally or by consultants. Potential opportunities for planning were expanded by the Housing Act of 1959 which makes funds available to metropolitan, regional, state, and interstate governments for comprehensive plans. The state participated in the program and in 1963 the Department of Public Works, using 701 money, hired a consultant to prepare the state comprehensive plan, something that was initially

prescribed to the State Planning Commission in 1936. A summary document was released in 1968. Regional planning commissions, such as the Capital Regional Planning Commission located in Baton Rouge and serving part of southeast Louisiana and the Imperial Calcasieu Regional Planning and Development Commission (IMCAL) in Lake Charles and working in southwest Louisiana, prepared comprehensive plans for their respective regions. These plans included sections on transportation, community facilities, socio-economic conditions, land use, and planning, including model zoning ordinances and subdivision regulations. In the case of the Capital Regional Planning Commission the reports were available for distribution by 1974. Planning moneys continued to flow into Louisiana through the 701 program until 1981 when the program was abolished by the federal government.

A second federal program affected planning in the state, but not to the degree of 701. As part of the Nixon administration's New Federalism, Congress passed the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program in 1976 (So and Getzels 1988). Some of these allocations could be used for planning and were used this way by several communities in Louisiana, such as Lafayette, Lake Charles, Litcher, and New Orleans. The 701 planning effort was integrated into the CDBG program in 1982 (Hamilton 1989).

Through 1955 the state was authorized to plan through the Department of Public Works while parishes and municipalities were able to plan through planning commissions. To fill a void that existed between these two levels of government it was became necessary to consider planning at the regional level. Act 239 of 1956, the Regional Planning Enabling Act, provided for regional planning by two or more contiguous parishes or municipalities who agreed to cooperate in formulating a regional development plan. The commission would be composed of five to nine representative of the participating governments. Plans would include land-use designations, transportation systems, and public facilities that were of regional magnitude rather than local in nature. The New Orleans Regional Planning Commission was organized in 1961 (Parker 1965), while the Houma-Terrebonne Regional Planning Commission was created in 1963 and continues today as part of the consolidated form of government. Cooperation among neighboring governments was carried one step further in 1964 when the legislature (Act 343) authorized police juries to work with counties in other states to conduct planning activities.

Regional planning had the potential for existence since 1956, but it was only as a result of the Federal Works and Economic Development Act of 1965 that definitive boundaries were established throughout the state. A study published in 1967 recommended action on the planning districts (Planning Systems Corporation 1973). Executive Order 73 in 1973 created eight regional planning district boundaries, four years after the Office of Management and Budget

issued Circular A-95 requiring that regional planning agencies review local proposals for participation in federal development programs (So and Getzels 1988). In 1977 the legislature (Act 472) established the regional planning and development commissions. Originally the emphasis of the commissions was on economic development, but they did some comprehensive planning through the 701 program. At present the commissions have moved from comprehensive planning to focusing on contracts that support the office. Emphasis is now on transportation and energy conservation planning because federal grants are available and on contract work with the communities in the region.

In 1967 the governor requested a study on organizing planning in the state. The study recommended the creation of a State Planning Office (Planning Systems Corporation 1973). In 1968 the governor issued Executive Order 83 creating the Office of State Planning. The legislature formalized the State Planning Office (SPO) later that year by Act 288 and charged it with coordinating comprehensive planning in the state. The function and duties of the State Planning Office as they relate to planning were (Public Affairs Research Council of Louisiana, Inc. 1979):

1. review current programming and future planning of all state agencies;
2. review current programming and future planning of all municipal and regional planning commissions;
3. encourage development of planning programs;
4. provide technical assistance to operating departments and agencies of state in developing planning programs; and
5. advise governor and other officials with respect to long-range planning.

Over the years the State Planning Office has shrunk in size although their responsibilities have remained the same, that is, long-range strategic planning that is comprehensive in nature. The emphasis remains on issues of state concern. By 1986 the SPO was so reduced in status that the governor transferred the staff and its duties and responsibilities to the Division of Administration. The State Planning Office ceased to exist in 1989 when it became part of the Office of Planning and Budget and was fully integrated into the structure of the Division of Administration. Today there appears to be no agency responsible for or undertaking comprehensive planning at the state level of government.

Summary

The authority to plan for growth and development has been in place since 1926 when municipalities of 5000 or more inhabitants could initiate the process. This opportunity was extended to the parishes in 1928 and at the state level in 1936 with the creation of the State Planning Commission. These first efforts were limited in scope and required revisions to make them more effective. Changes came in 1942 with the formation of the Department of Public Works and in 1946 when the legislature more precisely described parish and municipal planning, planning commissions, and the development of comprehensive plans.

In these early stages administrative and financial support for planning was not very high, even among the few municipalities with populations of more than 5000 who could plan. The State Planning Commission had a budget for only three persons and worked on federally supported programs, not on a comprehensive plan as it was mandated. The Department of Public Works did some planning at a gross scale for public works projects and assisted parishes and municipalities only when invited to do so. Except for the larger municipalities, such as New Orleans and Baton Rouge, little evidence exists to suggest there was much of an attempt at organizing planning offices. Planning efforts radically changed with the passage of the Housing Act of 1954, as amended, when federal moneys were made available for developing plans. Approximately 200 plans at the state, regional, parish, and local levels were prepared through the 701 program. Attempts were made in the mid-1960s to better coordinate planning by defining regional planning districts and establishing a state planning office. But again it appears that a lack of support has resulted in the demise of both entities.

The opportunity existed for parishes and municipalities to do comprehensive planning and to control the elements of growth that conflict with each other. Authority for planning remains in the Louisiana Revised Statutes (LRS 33:101-120, Physical Development of Parishes and Municipalities; LRS 33:131-140, Regional Planning Commissions; LRS33:140.61-140.64, State Planning and Development Districts). In fact parish and municipal planning commissions once created "shall make and adopt a master plan for the physical development" of the jurisdiction (LRS33:106). This appears to mandate a plan when a planning commission exists. Planning can be done. It is a governmental responsibility to determine how it will be accomplished and the effectiveness of the plan.

THE SETTING

To have an appreciation for some of the land use issues in the study area, the reader must understand the physical constraints found throughout the area of concern. These factors may seem obvious to the person familiar with south Louisiana, but to someone with no background in an alluvial and deltaic coastal system it is an essential introduction and gives them a feeling for the region. This section provides the common base for everyone and serves as the denominator upon which occupancy and planning are superimposed.

The study area can be divided into four geographic areas that have characteristic physical, biological, and cultural elements. In the southwest corner is the Chenier Plain, bounded on the west by the Texas stateline, on the north by the Pleistocene terrace (the prairie uplands), on the south by the Gulf of Mexico, and on the east by the Mississippi River delta. The Mississippi River delta is south of a line between Franklin and Donaldsonville and the Pleistocene terrace commonly referred to as the Florida parishes. The eastern boundary is the Mississippi stateline and to the south is the Gulf of Mexico. The Pleistocene terrace trends west to east, from Texas to Mississippi, and is bisected by the alluvial valley of the Mississippi River, the fourth geographic unit. Each of these units is described in the following sections.

Chenier Plain

The Chenier Plain is a marsh wetland that is crossed or segmented by a series of abandoned shoreline features known as cheniers. The cheniers are elongated low ridges which range in width from 100 to 1500 ft and in elevation from sea level to 10 ft at the crest of the dunes or storm berm. Cheniers are asymmetrical in section view, having a steep beach front and grading into the wetlands inland from the old shoreline. At several points the cheniers converge to create high ground that may be as much as 3000 ft wide. Their origin is related to the relative position of the mouths of the Mississippi River. With the Mississippi discharging into the Gulf along the western side of the deltaic plain mudflats formed on the Gulf shoreline between Atchafalaya Bay and Galveston Bay. When the main channels shifted farther east, the mudflats eroded and beach ridges were formed as a retreating shoreline. This cyclic advance and retreat of the shoreline has continued since sea level reached its present stage. Natural vegetation on the cheniers is a live oak association on the higher elevations and grasses on the lower, inland side. Marshes between the ridges are fresh to saline in character and serve as valuable coastal habitat.

Three major rivers cross the Chenier plain: the Sabine, forming the Texas-Louisiana state boundary, the Calcasieu, and the Mermentau Rivers.

The Sabine and Calcasieu Rivers are artificially maintained through dredging and jetties by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for international commerce and support of the petroleum industry in the Gulf. The Mermentau River was excavated to support of the OCS industry (Emmer 1990) The greatest natural hazard threatening the coast is hurricane storm surge. During the worst of storms almost the entire coastal zone will be inundated by water depths as much as 18 ft.

Human activity is for the most part restricted to the slivers of higher ground. The major highways are on the cheniers and fill is used where the roads cross between cheniers. Pecan Island, Grand Chenier, Mermentau, Cameron, and Holly Beach, as well as several recreational communities, are all found on the cheniers. Water dependent industrial development supporting the OCS are supply bases along the Calcasieu River at Cameron and on the Mermentau River at Mermentau. Helipads and other commercial enterprises are scattered across the Chenier plain, but are almost always found on the higher and more stable cheniers. The result is a concentration of industrial, commercial, and residential activities on the only ground suitable for intensive development. To give some idea of the limited extent of these available lands, that is the cheniers, the U.S. Soil Conservation Service estimates that in Cameron Parish only 6.9 % of the parish has soils characteristic of cheniers. This is 100 sq mi of 1444 sq mi.

Mississippi River Delta

To the east of the Chenier plain is the Mississippi River delta, a broad, low expanse of coastal wetlands owing its existence to the dynamic processes associated with a shifting channel system building onto a shallow continental shelf. A sequence of sedimentary lobes have migrated east and west from Mississippi to southwest Louisiana creating a series of meander belts of natural levees and filled channels. Elevations are highest along the crest of the natural levees near the channels and decrease in a downstream direction and as one progresses into the adjacent basins. Soils on the levees are predominantly sands and silts closer to the channels. As the swamps are approached a transition occurs to clays and clays high in organic material. The natural levees are the least susceptible to floods because they are high and in most places protected by either hurricane protection levees or river levees and an elaborate and expensive network of pumps. Storm surge, which may reach 18 ft, is a severe problem nearest the Gulf.

Between the meander belts are estuaries or intertributary basins of bottomland hardwoods, cypress swamps, fresh to saline marsh, and lakes. Elevations are at or near sea level. Soils are clays rich in organics or in some areas peats, both of which shrink and subside when drained. Sands with a

shell hash form the barrier islands and beaches facing the gulf. Sluggish bayous, overland flow, and quiet lakes, the natural hydrologic system characteristic of the estuarine environment, have been significantly modified by the excavation of navigation channels, access canals for extraction of nonrenewable resources, and the placement of spoil embankments. The landscape has changed drastically during the last 100 years as a result of natural and man-related processes.

Historically, intensive development was voluntarily restricted to the natural levees along the major watercourses (Davis and Place 1983). The Baton Rouge to New Orleans corridor and the natural levees along the Mississippi River in Plaquemines Parish displays a characteristic evolution of economic expansion. Towns grew on the crest of the levees while adjacent lower extremes of the levees were cleared for agriculture. Bayou Lafourche, from Donaldsonville to the Gulf of Mexico is known as the world's "longest street", a reference to the importance of the bayou for communication, transportation, and the focus of economic life. However, as pumps got larger, better equipment became available to build levees, and populations grew, development expanded from the levees into the adjacent wetlands (Emmer and Davis 1987). This is particularly true in four areas: New Orleans and along the Mississippi River south of the city; in lower Lafourche Parish where towns such as Golden Meadow and Larose are surrounded by levees; throughout Terrebonne Parish where an extensive drainage district complex exists or is proposed; and in St. Mary Parish, specifically in the Patterson, Berwick, Morgan City, and Amelia area.

Industry and commercial water-oriented activities crowded the banks of the rivers and bayous, seeking access to deep water for docks, maintenance facilities, and berths. Yards for the construction or repair of commercial boats and supply bases crowd next to each other on Bayou Lafourche, Bayous Boeuf, Black and Chene near Morgan City, and the many watercourses south of Houma. Navigation canals have also drawn industry, especially the Houma Navigation Canal and the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway support major platform fabrication yards, pipeline coating and fabrication yards, supply bases, and related port activities. Both here and in the Chenier plain the people have a history of living close to the water and keeping their boats and industries intermingled with their house and commercial areas. Thus, small boat repair facilities are on narrow strips of land adjacent to bayous and next to or across the road from where they live.

Pleistocene Terrace

In the corners of the study area north of the Chenier plain and the Mississippi River delta are the Pleistocene terraces. These geologically older surfaces are

weathered duplicates of the present coastal systems. The primary differences are that the Pleistocene has been uplifted, weathered, and slightly tilted to the south during the past 20,000 years. Now even though the terraces are flat the elevations range from approximately five feet above sea level to 100 ft and more farther inland. The soils are silt loams and clays. Rivers, creeks and bayous have eroded channels and distinct valleys as opposed to the meandering bayous in the Chenier plain and delta. Flooding is primarily caused by precipitation and overbank flow rather than by hurricane storm surge.

Prairie grasslands once dominated the western terrace, but this region of the state has been converted to crops, primarily rice. Deciduous forest grows in the river valleys that dissect the terraces. In the east are the coniferous and mixed forests, again with the deciduous forests in the river bottoms.

Urban and industrial development is concentrated around Lake Charles, Lafayette, and Baton Rouge, and in St. Tammany Parish. The latter, on the northshore of Lake Pontchartrain, is a bedroom community for New Orleans. OCS related facilities are only located in the Lake Charles area which has immediate access the Gulf through the Calcasieu River. Lafayette is a headquarters center for the oil companies and the support businesses, but does not have the heavy industrial zones commonly associated with the OCS.

Mississippi River Alluvial Valley

The Mississippi River alluvial valley extends from Cairo, Illinois to an imaginary line between Franklin and Donaldsonville, Louisiana. This line marks the southern limits of the confining valley walls formed by the older geologic formations. Several Mississippi River meanderbelts occupy the valley, separating vast bottomland hardwood forests and low cypress swamps. Elevations are highest in the north and decrease to the south and away from the river channels. Soils grade from sands near the channel to silts and eventually clays in the swamps. For the most part, the natural levees have been cleared of native vegetation for agriculture and towns. Regional hydrology is controlled by levees, canals, and pumps.

Municipalities are on the highest ground adjacent to the Mississippi River. The greatest industrial concentration is along the Mississippi River south of Baton Rouge where much of the OCS oil and gas is processed or manufactured into the many petroleum products that are found in modern society. The valley is essentially void of support and supply bases, although towns do serve as places of residence for offshore workers.

Population and OCS Activities

Population in the twenty south Louisiana Parishes included in the study area has grown steadily since 1950 (Table 4). The exception to this steady increase is Orleans Parish which peaked in 1960 and has declined ever since. In the four parishes that were visited (Cameron, Lafourche, St. Mary, and Terrebonne) population increases have occurred steadily since 1950. Terrebonne Parish has been consistently the most populated parish of the four with Lafourche, St. Mary, and Cameron placing second, third, and fourth, respectively. In terms of the percentage of increase in population from decade to decade between 1950 and 1980, Terrebonne Parish has consistently shown the highest percentage of growth, with a 40.3% increase from 1950 to 1960, 25.1% from 1960 to 1970, and 24.1% from 1970 to 1980. Cameron Parish saw the lowest percentage of growth overall with 10.7% growth from 1950 to 1960, 18.6% from 1960 to 1970, and 13.9% growth from 1970 to 1980. St. Mary Parish outranks Lafourche Parish in rate of population growth of the population, but only slightly (1950 to 1960 36.2% to Lafourche's 31.2%). During the period 1960 to 1970 the two parishes are almost equal with Lafourche at 24.5% and St. Mary at 24.4%. A large difference between the two parishes' growth rate occurs during the period from 1970 to 1980 with Lafourche leading with 19.6% and St. Mary declining to a 5.8% population growth rate. These growth percentages indicate that the highest growth rate on average for the four parishes occurred during the period from 1950 to 1960 with sharp decreases in the rate of growth between 1960 and 1980. For example, St. Mary Parish declined in its growth rate from the 1960 to 1970 period of 24.4% to 5.8% in the period 1970 to 1980.

Table 4 displays the demographics of the OCS industry in the south Louisiana parishes in terms of offshore production workers by place of residence, place of work, 1984 population by parish, percentage of population that are OCS employees, and the location and types of OCS related facilities. Of the four parishes targeted for site visits, Cameron, Lafourche, St. Mary and Terrebonne, Cameron Parish has the highest percentage of OCS workers that reside in the parish in relation to its total population. The 2.32% employee to population ratio is also the highest in the entire study area.

In terms of the location of OCS related facilities, both St. Mary and Terrebonne Parishes display the most numerous and diverse OCS industry activities within the entire study area. In both of these parishes the OCS industry is represented in all forms, with the exception of major shipyards, and include major platform fabrication yards, major pipeline coating yards, major pipeline fabrication yards, supply bases, and selected ports. In Cameron the predominant OCS facility is supply bases while Lafourche Parish has supply bases and selected ports.

Table 4. Population.

| Parish | 1950 | 1960 | 1970 | 1980 | 1984 |
|-----------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Ascension | 22,387 | 27,927 | 37,086 | 50,068 | 57,300 |
| Calcasieu | 89,635 | 45,475 | 145,415 | 167,223 | 175,100 |
| Cameron * | 6,244 | 6,909 | 8,194 | 9,336 | 10,000 |
| East Baton Rouge | 158,236 | 230,058 | 285,167 | 366,191 | 390,100 |
| Iberia | 40,059 | 51,657 | 57,397 | 63,752 | 68,500 |
| Jefferson | 103,873 | 208,769 | 337,568 | 454,592 | 478,500 |
| Lafayette | 57,743 | 84,656 | 109,716 | 150,017 | 168,800 |
| Lafourche * | 42,209 | 55,381 | 68,941 | 82,483 | 87,800 |
| Livingston | 20,054 | 26,974 | 36,511 | 58,806 | 69,500 |
| Orleans | 570,445 | 627,525 | 593,471 | 557,515 | 561,000 |
| Plaquemines | 14,239 | 22,545 | 25,225 | 26,049 | 26,700 |
| St. Bernard | 11,087 | 32,186 | 51,185 | 64,097 | 68,100 |
| St. Charles | 13,363 | 21,219 | 29,550 | 37,259 | 41,600 |
| St. James | 15,334 | 18,369 | 19,733 | 21,495 | 22,300 |
| St. John | 14,861 | 18,439 | 23,813 | 31,924 | 39,700 |
| St. Mary * | 35,848 | 48,833 | 60,752 | 64,253 | 65,000 |
| St. Tammany | 26,988 | 38,643 | 63,585 | 110,869 | 135,300 |
| Terrebonne * | 43,328 | 60,771 | 76,049 | 94,393 | 101,200 |
| Vermillion | 36,929 | 38,855 | 43,071 | 48,458 | 52,700 |
| West Baton Rouge | 11,738 | 14,796 | 16,864 | 19,086 | 20,600 |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| * Onsite visits. | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| Source: McKenzie and Xander 1990. | | | | | |
| | | | | | |

Summary

To understand the close physical relationship between OCS onshore support facilities and communities one must know and appreciate the physical setting of coastal Louisiana. With few exceptions, historic development was confined to the higher and drier natural levees along natural watercourses and the cheniers or old beach ridges. Vast expanses of the study area regularly flood and most areas are wetlands with clay and organic soils, limiting their suitability for intensive development, such as residential, commercial or industrial uses. Therefore, any activities that were built to serve the OCS were constructed on the higher lands next to navigable waterways and as close as possible to the offshore platforms they were supporting. For the most part these locations were already occupied by trade centers, agricultural enterprises, and fishing communities, such as those found down Bayou Lafourche, around Morgan City, and in Cameron. The more inland parishes and municipalities were the locations for company offices, or the manufacturing and processing of the OCS hydrocarbons. These sites are exemplified by New Orleans and Lafayette the two nodes for offices and residences and the Baton Rouge to New Orleans industrial corridor and the Lake Charles industrial complex for processing oil and gas. The OCS activities are concentrated in ten of the twenty parishes in the study area: Calcasieu, Cameron, Iberia, Jefferson, Lafourche, Orleans, Plaquemines, St. Mary, Terrebonne, and Vermilion. To be even more specific 14 communities are the focus of activities (Table 1).

CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions of this basic research effort are presented in the following sequence: first, the results from developing the history of planning in the state; second, an analysis of information supplied by parishes and municipalities; and third, the insights derived from the site visits. Federal, state, and local governments guide planning and the evolution of regulatory programs in Louisiana. These legislated acts and actions served as the guidelines and standards against which local comprehensive plans were developed and made part of the community decisionmaking process. An analysis of the information furnished by the communities suggests the overall role of planning throughout the study area and was one of the elements used when selecting two parishes and two municipalities to visit. But it was the site visits that allowed for a greater understanding of the role of planning in the medium to small parishes and municipalities that are OCS related.

The federal government limits its planning in the study area to those projects and lands for which it has primary responsibility. Federal interests include construction and maintenance of navigation channels and aids, hurricane and flood protection levees, wildlife management areas or refuges, national parks, and military reservations. The Corps, Environmental Protection Agency, and Fish and Wildlife Service may and, in many instances, do influence the activities that can occur, for example the filling of wetlands for development or the placement of obstructions in navigable waterways. None of the federal agencies plan for land uses on property other than their own. They are not directly involved in planning for OCS related facilities.

Louisiana functional agencies likewise control only those lands and the related uses that are under their jurisdiction. The state plans for parks, wildlife refuges and management areas, water control structures, highways, and public facilities. Similar to the federal government state agencies exercise oversight of activities through regulatory programs, such as coastal zone management, pollution discharge, or the construction of public works. State government has traditionally not been an active participant in land use planning beginning with the creation of the State Planning Commission in 1936. Activities were restricted to subjects considered within the purview of the state as determined by function, size, extent, location or legal status as distinguished from local program or plans. The Department of Public Works contracted for a state comprehensive plan and provided technical information and coordination with federal agencies. But DPW did not do plans for communities and would not enter a parish or municipality to participate in the process unless invited by the local government. As a result land use decisions and the places where planning addresses conflicts are the parishes and municipalities (Acts 300 and

319 of 1946). And it is at the most basic level of government that plans are either implemented or relegated to the library shelf. For these reasons the remainder of the study is focused on local government.

The most significant problem identified through this research, and one that should cause the profession and decisionmakers the most concern, is the reliance of parish and municipal staffs on obsolete principles and standards in the state statutes. When asked about planning in municipalities and how they get information of planning a representative of the Louisiana Municipal Association referenced the Louisiana Revised Statutes and provided a copy (King 1989). Even today LRS 33:106, partially copied from the Standard City Planning Enabling Act of 1928, function as a guide for municipalities and parishes and serves as the standard against which plans are compared when determining content and procedure. Black (1968) describes several weaknesses and contradictions of the 1928 Act and the manner in which it was implemented. For example, the 1928 Act proposes that "a zoning plan for the control of height, area, bulk, location and use of buildings and premises" be included in the content of a comprehensive plan. This is dutifully reproduced in the Louisiana law. Such specificity is appropriate for zoning ordinances which are short-range and precise and not for comprehensive plans which should be general and focusing on the long-term (Black 1968). Second, the idea of piecemeal adoption of distinct elements of the comprehensive plan is based on the ideas presented in the 1928 Act. This approach contradicts a basic principal of comprehensive planning that requires coordination of functional and geographical elements (Black 1968). Finally, the Louisiana statute again demonstrates the deficiencies identified by Black (1968) because it does not present the technical elements of the comprehensive plan or the minimum requirements for such a plan.

Parishes and municipalities can not be expected to practice realistic and rational comprehensive planning for OCS activities or any other land uses when the state guidelines are more than 60 years old and have been recognized as obsolete since the end of World War II (Black 1968). Essentially, Louisiana legislation (Acts 300 and 319 of 1946) was out-of-date at the time it was being integrated into the system and there appears to have been no move on the part of the state to correct the problem for the past 45 years. Opportunities for updating existed with the revision to the state Constitution in 1950 and 1973 and during the regular legislative sessions. It becomes embarrassingly obvious that the state has been encouraging local comprehensive planning founded on ideas that have been significantly modified by the planning profession through incorporation of new concepts and methodologies. Any planning that relied on the state statutes for guidance was doomed because governments were planning using an outdated methodology.

Materials supplied by the parishes and municipalities and information compiled from other studies allows for the presentation of an overview on the status of comprehensive planning in the study area, and thus about planning for OCS related activities. Unfortunately, not every community returned the request for information (40% response), even after a post card and telephone call asking for cooperation. There appears to be no linkage among those that supplied information and the communities that did not. Size, existence or lack of professional staff, or geographic location in the study area did not seem to make a difference on returns. With this qualification and a clear understanding of the source of material the following conclusions are presented.

Municipalities could plan as early as 1926 and parishes two years later. But except for New Orleans there was no rush to develop a comprehensive (master) plan by those who could. In fact it would be three decades, and then only after federal moneys became available, before planning would take place on more than a limited basis. Delays in the preparation of comprehensive plans or a lack of comprehensive plans conflicts with LRS 33:106 which states in part:

A parish planning commission shall make and adopt a master plan for the physical development of the unincorporated territory of a parish.

A municipal planning commission shall make and adopt a master plan for the physical development of the municipality.

This requirement has been in place since 1946. A number of parishes (Table 5) and municipalities (Table 6) have planning commissions, but do not have comprehensive plans. Five of 20 parishes acknowledge having comprehensive plans, while two are known to have comprehensive plans but did not respond to the request for information. Several municipalities have comprehensive plans.

One possible explanation may be confusion about what constitutes a comprehensive plan and whether it is implemented on a piecemeal basis. Most parishes (18 of 20) and municipalities (49 of 59) have either Section 701 or community development block grant (CDBG) plans and therefore may believe they have satisfied the requirement for a comprehensive plan or are proceeding as state law allows adopting each element of a plan as it becomes available. However, the Section 701 or CDBG plan may not be a comprehensive plan even using the older definition appearing in the state statutes (LRS 33:106) and certainly would not be one if modern theories are applied. Only a thorough review of each document could answer this question and that is beyond the scope of this research.

Table 5. Status of planning in the parishes of the study area.

| Parish | Planning Commission 1973/1976 | Planning Commission 1990 | Planning Agency | Initial 701 Plan | CDBG Plan Year | Comprehensive Plan | Economic Plan | Zoning Regulations | Subdivision Regulations | Sanitary Code | Flood/Envir. Ordinance | Planning Staff |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|---------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|
| Ascension | X | X | | 1966 | | | | | | | Flood | |
| Calcasieu ** | X | X | Police Jury | | | X | | X | X | | Flood, CZM | X |
| Cameron ** | X | X | | | | | | | | | Flood, CZM | |
| East Baton Rouge** | X | X | I | 1955 | | | | X | X | X | Flood | X |
| Iberville ** | X | X | | 1972 | | | X | | X | X | Flood | |
| Jefferson ** | | Advisory Bd | I | 1965 | 1975, 77-79 | X | X | X | X | X | Flood, CZM, ENVIR | X |
| Lafayette ** | X | X | I | 1972 | 1978-80 | | | | X | | Flood | X |
| Lafourche ** | X | X | I | 1959 | | X | X | | X | X | Flood, CZM, ENVIR | X |
| Livingston | X | X | | 1956 | | | | | X | | | |
| Orleans | X | X | I | 1965 | 1976-80 | X | X | X | X | X | Flood, CZM | X |
| Plaquemines | | | | 1970 | | | | X | | | Flood | |
| St Bernard ** | X | X | w/Z, S & P | 1961 | | | X | X | X | X | Flood, CZM, ENVIR | X |
| St Charles ** | X | X | I | 1964 | | | | X | X | | Flood | X |
| St James ** | | | Parish Pres | 1973 | | | | | X | | Flood, CZM | |
| St John ** | X | X | I | 1961 | | | | X | X | X | Flood | |
| St Mary ** | X | X | I | 1960 | | | | | X | | Flood | X |
| St Tammany | X | X | I | 1956 | | X | | X | X | X | Flood | X |
| Terrebonne ** | X | X | I | 1963 | | X | | X | X | X | Flood | X |
| Vermilion | | | | 1960 | | | | | X | | Flood | |
| West Baton Rouge** | X | X | | 1962 | | X | | | X | X | Flood, ENVIR | |
| X = The element exists in the parish. | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Flood = Parish is part of the Regular Flood Insurance Program | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| CZM = Parish has an approved Local Coastal Program | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| CDBG = Community Development Block Grant | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| I = Independent Agency | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Envir = Environment | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| w/Z, S & P = with Zoning, Safety, and Permits | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| ** responded to request for information or were visited and provided information | | | | | | | | | | | | |

| Table 6. Summary of information on the status of planning in the municipalities of the study area. | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|------------------|----------------|--------------------|---------------|-------------|------------------|---------------|------------------------|----------------|---------------------|
| Municipality | Planning Commission 1973/1978 | Planning Commission 1980 | Planning Agency | Initial 701 Plan | CDBG Plan Year | Comprehensive Plan | Economic Plan | Zoning Regs | Subdivision Regs | Sanitary Code | Flood/Envir. Ordinance | Planning Staff | OCS Related Studies |
| Abbeville | X | X | Inactive | 1960 | 1975 | | | | | | | | |
| Abita Springs | | | | 1962 | | | | | | | Flood | | |
| Addis | | X | | 1958 | | | | | | | Flood | | |
| Albany | | | | | | | | X | X | | Flood | | |
| Baker | | X | | 1958 | 1975 | | | | | | Flood | | |
| Baldwin | | X | | 1975 | 1978 | | | | | | Flood | | |
| Baton Rouge** | See East Baton Rouge Parish | | | | | X | | X | X | | Flood | | |
| Berwick ** | X | X | | 1960 | | | | X | X | | Flood | | |
| Broussard | | | | | | | | | | | Flood | | |
| Brusly | | X | | 1962 | | | | | | | Flood | | |
| Covington | X | X | I | 1956 | | | | X | X | | Flood | | |
| DeQuincy | | | | | | | | | | | Flood | | |
| DeCadeville | | | | | | | | | | | Flood | | |
| Denham Springs** | X | X | In DPW,B&P | 1956 | | | X | X | X | X | Flood | X | |
| Donaldsonville | | | | 1966 | | | | | X | | Flood | | |
| Duson | | | Inactive | 1972 | | | | Draft 1975 | Draft 1975 | | Flood | | |
| Erath ** | X | X | | 1972 | 1975 | | | Draft 1975 | X | | Flood | | |
| Franklin | | X | | 1972 | | | | | | | Flood | | |
| French Settlement | | | | 1961 | | | | | | | Flood | | |
| Golden Meadow** | | X | | 1961 | | X | | X | X | | Flood | | |
| Gonzales | X | X | | 1961 | | X | | X | X | | Flood | | |
| Gramercy ** | X | X | I | 1957 | | X | | X | X | X | Flood | X | |
| Grand Isle | X | | | 1961 | | | X | X | X | X | Flood | X | |
| Gretna | | | | 1958 | | | | | | | Flood | | |
| Gueydan ** | | | | 1976 | | | | X | X | | Flood | | |
| Harahan | X | | | 1957 | 1978-80 | | | | | | Flood | | |
| Houma ** | See Terrebonne Parish | | | 1963 | | | | | | | Flood | | |
| Iowa | | X | | 1975 | | | | | | | Flood | | |
| Jean Lafitte | | | | 1962 | 1978 | | | Draft 1975 | X | | Flood | | |
| Jeannerette | | X | Inactive | 1971 | | | | Draft 1975 | | | Flood | | |
| Kaplan | | Inactive | Inactive | 1956 | | | X | X | X | | Flood | X | |
| Kenner ** | X | X | | 1956 | | | | X | X | X | Flood | X | |
| Kilian | | X | | 1962 | 1976-80 | | | X | X | | Flood | | |
| Lafayette ** | X | X | | 1962 | 1975-80 | X | | X | X | X | Flood | X | |
| Lake Charles ** | X | X | I | 1964 | | X | | X | X | X | Flood | X | |
| Livingston | | | | | | | | | | | Flood | | |
| Lockport | | | | | | | | | | | Flood | | |
| Loreauville | | | | | | | | | | | Flood | | |
| Lutcher ** | X | X | Mayor | 1957 | 1978 | X | | X | X | | Flood | | |
| Madisonville | X | X | | 1971 | | X | | X | X | X | Flood | | |
| Mandeville ** | X | X | I | 1957 | 1975 | X | | X | X | X | Flood | X | |
| Maurice | | | | | | | | X | X | | Flood | | |
| Morgan City | | X | Inspection Dep | 1957 | 1978-79 | | | X | X | X | Flood | | |
| New Iberia ** | X | X | | | 1976-80 | | | X | X | | Flood | | |
| New Orleans | See Orleans Parish | | | 1960 | | | | X | X | | Flood | | |
| Patterson | | X | | 1960 | | | | X | X | | Flood | | |
| Port Allen | X | X | | 1962 | 1978 | | | X | X | | Flood | | |
| Port Vincent | | | | | | | | | | | Flood | | |
| Scott | | X | X | ND | | X | | | X | | Flood | | |
| Sidell | X | X | X | 1957 | | X | X | X | X | X | Flood | X | |
| Sorrento | | | | 1963 | | | | | | | Flood | | |
| Sulphur | | | | 1964 | | | | | | | Flood | | |
| Thebodaux | X | X | | 1957 | | | | | | | Flood | | |
| Vinton | | | | 1958 | | | | | | | Flood | | |
| Walker | X | X | | 1958 | | | | X | X | | Flood | | |
| Westlake ** | | X | Mayor | 1964 | | | | | | | Flood | | |
| Westwego | X | | | 1967 | | | | | X | | Flood | | |
| Youngsville | | | | | | | | | X | | Flood | | |
| Zachary | X | | | 1967 | | | | | | | Flood | | |

X = The element exists in the municipality.
Flood = The municipality is part of the Regular Flood Insurance Program.
ND = The municipality has a 701 plan, but the date could not be determined.
DPW, B & P = Department of Public Works, Buildings, and Permits
CDBG = Community Development Block Grant
I = Independent Agency
** responded to request for information or were visited and provided information

A second indicator of the status of planning in the study area is the presence of planning commissions at the parish and municipal level. In the period 1973/76, 17 of 20 parishes had planning commissions. By 1990 two parishes planning commissions became inactive and the three that never were organized still did not exist. Thirty-four of 59 municipalities have planning commissions. Statistics only give an indication of what officially happens in planning. There is a gray area to planning in local government which is seldom acknowledged and has not been studied in detail. In discussing the place of planning commissions a local planner described the existence of a special committee established by the local governing authority. This special committee, although not a designated planning commission, advises the decisionmakers on land use issues. By having a special committee and not a planning commission, the community circumvents the state requirement for development of a comprehensive plan. Planning is not as widely accepted as it should be and communities thus lack a key method for defining their goals and objectives and how they can be achieved.

The presence of a professional staff within government suggests the importance of planning within a parish or municipality. Just over half (11 of 20) of the parishes have professional staffs that are recognized as planners and operate in a planning capacity. Even this is deceiving because the staffs range in size from a single individual to a department, such as in Orleans Parish, that has several sections and numerous specialists within each unit. Only nine municipalities plus four combined parish and municipal governments (East Baton Rouge and Baton Rouge, Terrebonne and Houma, Lafayette and the City of Lafayette, Orleans and New Orleans) are known to have planning staffs. Several communities have personnel that may serve as planners on an as-needed basis, such as West Baton Rouge Parish, when the police jury, mayor, or council requests information, studies, or recommendations. But the primary responsibility of these individuals does not seem to be planning.

External control of development activities within the jurisdiction are avoided except when required by the federal government. Half the parishes (10 of 20) do not have zoning regulations in the unincorporated areas. Although governments may not be directing land uses, they certainly are dictating the acceptable ways for implementing a project. Seventeen of 20 parishes have subdivision regulations. Only half of the parishes have special sanitary codes. The remainder apparently rely on the state to control sanitation. When programs are required, such as flood insurance, everyone participates. But on other voluntary federal programs, for example local coastal zone management and environmental regulations, only some parishes participate.

Municipalities almost mirror the results of the parish efforts. Less than half of the municipalities have zoning and subdivision regulations. However, only nine of those that responded have individual sanitary codes. Using information obtained from state government it is known that all the municipalities participate in the national flood insurance program. Similar to parishes, municipalities will enact a program when it is mandatory and someone will be checking on them.

Two parishes and two municipalities were selected for site visits: Cameron and St. Mary Parishes and Golden Meadow and Houma/Terrebonne. Interviews were conducted with parish staff and/or officials; additional documents were collected; the OCS related industrial complexes were observed in their regional setting; and standardized information forms were completed for each community. The purpose of the visits was to learn the status of comprehensive planning in the community and the effects planning had on OCS related activities and not to criticize the way any community chooses to participate in the planning process. Therefore, observations and comments are summarized and not attributed to a specific source.

The first thing that became very clear is the common problem shared by the communities, especially as the consequences of these issues that impact planning. Local economies are depressed and the communities are striving to contain spending and limit revenue generating programs while providing basic services. Attention of decisionmakers is directed at short-term programs that have immediate and readily observable results by constituents. Because planning is long-term, does not provide instantaneous satisfaction, and is not a high profile office often seen by voters, planning has been demoted on the list of local priorities.

Parishes or municipalities may select any one of several methods for showing displeasure or no interest in planning. Planners are simply not hired. If a planning office exists, it is underfunded and/or inadequately staffed to do the job. Or the staff may have too many assignments that are only peripherally related to planning so minimal time remains for preparing plans and programs.

Other factors affect the role of planning in the community. There was strong feeling among some of those interviewed that planning dictates what people can do with their land, a fact that is not acceptable especially outside incorporated boundaries. Part of this negative perception of planning may be traced to the static land use plans proposed through the Standard City Planning Enabling Act of 1928 and so faithfully reproduced in the Louisiana Revised Statutes. As a consequence planning is not favorably received and in fact is avoided.

Two forms of OCS facilities appear: clusters and interspersed. Clusters of OCS facilities were observed along the Calcasieu River in Cameron, in the Amelia to Morgan City area, along the Houma Navigation Canal south of Houma. There was a conscious effort made to concentrate the facilities (Davis and Place 1983). Interspersed land uses are throughout the study area and result in land use conflicts. Several conflicts were observed in both the cluster and interspersed districts of the four sites visited. Residential areas were mixed with heavy industry or commercial activities and were competing for the available higher ground along watercourses. In some cases this was because there was only one road along the bayou and the community was there first, but OCS facilities needed deep draft access. Industry purchased tracts with dock space and just became a neighbor. In other instances family businesses, such as boat repair or building, are located on land already owned which happens to also be the place of residence. Fourteen settlement strips characterize this type of development pattern in south Louisiana and are described in detail by Davis and Place (1983).

In general, some form of planning for twenty to thirty years into the future is considered important by local planners and some public officials. However, it is not considered to be practical at this time, in part due to economic conditions and political considerations. Police jurors and council members are apparently not sufficiently impressed with what planning offers to fund greater efforts. Without their support, little can be done. Day to day issues are treated as they come, leaving little if any time and no sense of importance for completing, updating, or using comprehensive plans. The parishes and municipalities are practicing a type of reactionary planning where issues and problems are handled as they surface, and then the most serious first. It is evident that few communities practice comprehensive planning or are even updating the Section 701 or CDBG plans that were prepared for them. Many decisions rely on plans that are as much as 30 years old. It appears that only the larger cities and selected parishes are trying to keep their plans current. For example, East Baton Rouge, Jefferson, and St. Charles parishes are revising their plans at the present time. New Orleans, Lafayette, and the Calcasieu Parish-Lake Charles area are continuously updating parts of their plans by adding new information and ideas.

In relation to the OCS industry, no extensive planning has taken place in terms of preventing land use conflicts resulting from OCS activities, nor has planning been implemented for location/land use analysis, economic impact studies, or environmental impact assessments concerning OCS activities. Yet those interviewed acknowledged the impact the OCS industry has had on the landscape and the population and recognize the need for future comprehensive plans. Any future community efforts would not be limited to only OCS activities.

The research was designed to test the hypothesis: Planning in communities (parishes and municipalities) that have a concentration of OCS dependent activities was in reality a reactionary process that owed its direction and achievements to federal and state guidelines promulgated for environmental conservation, flood damage reduction, and protection of the public health and safety. Beyond these basic federal and state requirements little coordinated planning was actually accomplished and most communities still lack comprehensive plans and the ability to formulate them. In other words, even though parish and municipal governments could have prepared for OCS growth and development, most chose not to plan.

The hypothesis appears valid for the medium to small communities in the study area. Planning is reactionary rather than anticipatory for the reasons discussed. Parishes and municipalities had the authority to plan for impacts that resulted from the construction of industries related to OCS activities and population growth, but they chose not to exercise this option. If any group should be cited not responding to adverse impacts it is the people in each parish or municipality that took no actions to control its own destiny.

Those federal or state programs that are mandatory (flood insurance, coastal zone, and wetlands conservation) have a better chance of being integrated into the decisionmaking process than comprehensive planning even though planning is mandatory when planning commissions exist. Planning is required when a planning commission exists, but no one in state government seems to be enforcing the statute. Perhaps this is because planning is not perceived to be a priority issue that commands the same level of state or community response as do crime and road repairs and planning tells people what to do with their land, which is not acceptable, particularly in less densely populated areas. Economics limits the potential for staff and its size and what can be done because communities apparently feel they can function satisfactorily without planning. In addition, communities are relying on an outdated state law that encourages a methodology that is obsolete, a factor that does not contribute to the understanding of planning and its value. There is a feeling that planning tells people what to do with their land, a fact that presents planning in a negative manner. Finally, most communities have some form or element of a comprehensive plan in place. It is likely that this is a 701 plan that has not been kept current.

RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of this research several recommendations are made for improving the comprehensive planning effort throughout the study area and subsequently the state. **First**, the state statute defining the scope and content of a comprehensive plan must be revised. The existing Louisiana Revised Statute (LRS 103:106) envisions a depiction of land uses at some time in the future. All activities are directed at achieving these development scenarios with little if any provisions made for changes. Current thinking explains the comprehensive plan not as a static document but as a process and continuing exercise that guides officials in making decisions by expressing community expectations. Any revision should be expanded to include pertinent and timely issues that have been neglected, such as protection against pollution, both point and nonpoint source, the overall degradation of the physical and biological setting, and enhancement of the quality of life within the community. An up-to-date approach allows for greater flexibility in deciding issues and in anticipating in or responding to problems and hopefully would enhance the role of planning. If the image of a comprehensive plan moves from the inference of dogmatic land use regulation as it currently appears to one of performance within designated areas and the benefits that will be derived by the community, parishes and municipalities should be more receptive to the idea of updating and implementing comprehensive plans.

By implementing a planning process that is more responsive to community needs and can be demonstrably valuable to the health and economic vitality of the community perhaps local decisionmakers will be more receptive to the creation and maintenance of a planning office. This is certainly not the case today in most communities in the study area. Even when communities have professional planning staffs they are usually short of personnel and are assigned many duties not necessarily related to planning. They, therefore, have minimal time to learn and then integrate new concepts into their jobs. This is not the case for all planners as many are active in professional organizations, such the American Planning Association, where they are exposed to new ideas and innovative methodologies.

Second, any reference to piecemeal planning should be purged from the state statute. This only causes confusion on how comprehensive plans should be implemented.

Third, one way planning can be made of value to local governments is to educate leaders on the functions and benefits of comprehensive planning. In general, and based on the onsite visits and interviews, it is apparent that there is a lack of knowledge and understanding by local decisionmakers about

comprehensive planning and the tools accompanying it. Either the universities or the professional organizations should initiate an aggressive educational program directed at medium and small communities that explains the basic theory and benefits of planning and why it is necessary for the future. As an example, the educational program should explain the economic benefits of protecting a natural or historical area through zoning or a conservation program because of the jobs and income that can be derived from tourism. This tactic may show local decisionmakers the benefits planning can bring in terms of diversifying a community economy and how it can become more independent of the OCS industry. Such an approach means going to where the audience is and not waiting for them to come seeking assistance or information. For example, a session could be prepared for the annual meeting of the Police Jury Association or the Municipal Association. Brochures, short reports, presentations at police jury or council meetings, and cooperative projects between larger planning departments and their smaller neighbors should be tried.

Fourth, the Governor should resurrect the State Planning Office (SPO) and provide sufficient funds and staff to accomplish its objectives. The SPO mission would be to work with medium and small communities and to assist them by supplying technical information and contacts with federal and state agencies. At the same time SPO would be charged with proposing long-term economic and environmental goals for the state and working with the functional agencies in achieving these goals.

Fifth, the regional planning commissions should be revitalized to again help coordinate activities among the communities within the region. They have role in getting communities to work together to solve problems that are beyond the jurisdiction of a single parish. For example, they should have a place in solving the pollution problems in the Lake Pontchartrain estuary and the Barataria Basin. In both instances, ad hoc groups have been formed to plan when a governmental structure existed, but no one took advantage of it.

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APPENDIX

INFORMATION REQUESTS & WORKSHEETS



COLLEGE OF
URBAN AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

University of New Orleans

Lakefront • New Orleans • Louisiana 70148 • (504) 286-6277

January 16, 1990

Dear:

The College of Urban and Public Affairs has initiated a study of the planning process and planning organizations in selected parishes throughout south Louisiana. The objectives of this effort are: first, to determine where planning commissions and departments exist and their organizational structure and staffs; second, to identify, the historic role planning has had in influencing development and economic growth in the community; third, to ascertain who has an approved comprehensive plan; and finally, to find out if these plans are being used once they are approved. I am, therefore, writing to ask your assistance. In order to take the minimum amount of time and effort on your part, I have attached a worksheet with space available for your answers and self-addressed stamped envelope.

The information you are providing is an essential part of the overall study. To my knowledge it has never been assembled before and we really do not have any indication of the level of planning that is done in the state.

Thank you for your cooperation and assistance in providing this information and the requested material. If you would like to have a copy of the final report, please indicate so in your letter of response. Should you have any questions please do not hesitate to call or write either Anne Rheams or myself at UNO.

Sincerely,

Rod Emmer, Ph.D.
Adjunct Professor

November 14, 1989

Please provide the following information and materials. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact Anne Rheams or Rod Emmer at UNO. Thank you.

1.) Would you send a copy of the local ordinance creating the Planning Commission? Please indicate if it is not available.

2.) Please include an organizational chart or diagram of the _____. Please indicate if this is not available.

2a.) Relationship of the _____ to other units of government: Is planning part of the (an)

Mayor's office _____ Department of Public Works _____

Independent Office _____ Other _____ (specify)

3.) Please attach a list of the plans and economic studies the Commission has completed. Indicate if not available.

4.) Would you send a copy of the most recent comprehensive plan approved by the _____? If not available from your office, please indicate where we may find a copy.

4a.) Please indicate if the _____ undertakes the following:

1. Zoning and year of ordinance:

2. Subdivision regulations and year enacted:

3. Please attach a list of the plans and economic studies the Commission has completed. Indicate where they may be found if unavailable.

 4. Sanitary codes and year enacted:

 5. Flood plain regulations and year enacted:

 6. Environmental regulations and year enacted:

 7. Policy statement on growth and planning and year enacted:
-
- 5.) Does the _____ prepare its plans and studies with permanent staff or do they have the work prepared by private or public contractors? Please indicate the approximate percentage of work for which each is responsible.

 - 6.) Did the _____ have any studies done to determine if the recent oil and gas bust affected the community? If such study exists, could you please send a copy or indicate where one may be available?

WORKSHEET 1
COMMUNITY PROFILE

NAME OF COMMUNITY: _____

Worksheet 1 is an overview of the community in its setting. It is designed to assist in the compilation of basic information about the community which will be visited during the research.

1. Contact person, address, telephone number:

2. Total community population:

- 1950
- 1960
- 1970
- 1980
- Most recent

3. Type of Government: Police Jury; County Commission; Home Rule; Mayor/Council; specify. General description

4. Historic planning documents and dates

5. Areas and types of conflict

6. General economy and dependence on OCS related activities

7. Impact of OCS decline on community economy

8. General physical setting of the community

9. Description of planning office and staff

WORKSHEET 1A

RATIONALE FOR SELECTING FOUR COMMUNITIES FOR VISITS

1. Municipality: _____

2. Municipality: _____

3. Parish: _____

4. Parish: _____

10/14/89

WORKSHEET 2

LAND USE MAPS AND DATA

NAME OF COMMUNITY _____

Worksheet 2 is a compilation of information of land use and identification of maps which show land use data.

1. Name and date of maps which show land use for the study area.

2. References which estimate area of land use for the study area. After full citation provide a table of land uses and the date of the information. Attach additional sheets if necessary.

3. Citations to maps or studies that characterize wetlands and floodplains within the study area.

WORKSHEET 3

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN DATA

NAME OF COMMUNITY _____

1. History of Comprehensive Planning.

Name & Date of 1st plan:

Name & Date of subsequent plans:

2. Brief description of the components of each of the Comprehensive Plans.

3. Areas or jurisdictions covered by the Comprehensive Plan.

4. If no Comprehensive Plan, identify the planning elements available

A. Transportation Plan(s) and year

B. Land Use Plan(s) and year

C. Infrastructure Plan(s) and year

D. Facilities Plan(s) and year

E. Economic Development Plan(s) and year

F. Environmental Plan(s) and year

5a.. Dates and places of Public Hearings.

5b. Dates of approval of comprehensive plan by the governing body and/or the general public.

6. Is there a Planning Commission?

Year formed? _____

Composition? number of members - _____

How are they named to the Planning Commission:

Appointed by? _____

Elected by? _____

Meeting schedule:

WORKSHEET 4

ORDINANCES AND REGULATIONS

NAME OF COMMUNITY: _____

1. Zoning ordinances and year:

2. Subdivision regulations and year:

3. Building codes and year:

4. Sanitary codes and year:

5. Flood plain regulations and year:

7. Environmental regulations and year:

8. Policy statements on growth and planning and year:

WORKSHEET 5

PLANNING OFFICE - HISTORY AND STAFF

NAME OF COMMUNITY: _____

1. Formation of Planning Office, original location in government, and year

2. Location of Planning Office in governmental structure today.

3. Number of personnel and titles in 1989.

4. General responsibilities of personnel in 1989.

5. Organization of the Planning Office (chart or diagram?)

6. Changes in Planning Office staff, responsibilities, size, etc. through time.

WORKSHEET 6

LAND USE CONFLICTS OBSERVED
(for four field visits only)

NAME OF COMMUNITY: _____

1. Date of visit: _____

2. Field personnel: _____

3. Title and responsibilities of local representative visited:

4. Site visited: neighborhood, district, ward, street, watercourse, etc.

5. Land use conflicts observed:

Type

Location

History of conflict

6. Actions taken to resolve the land use conflicts

WORKSHEET 7

GENERAL PHYSICAL SETTING

NAME OF COMMUNITY: _____

1. Physical components:

Geology

Soils

Hydrology

watercourses/waterbodies

floodplains

water quality

Climate

Other

2. Biology

Vegetation

Wildlife/fisheries

Wetlands

3. Conflicts among uses of physical and biological parameters.

WORKSHEET 8

LOCATION & DESIGN OF PUBLIC SERVICES, FACILITIES, AND
CIRCULATION SYSTEMS
(for four field visits only)

NAME OF COMMUNITY: _____

1. Plans for:

Public services and year

Facilities and year

Circulation systems and year

2. Problems and conflicts. Brief description.

WORKSHEET 9

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

NAME OF COMMUNITY: _____

1. Names of plans and years completed.

2. Description of implementation and success of program.

As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering the wisest use of our land and water resources, protecting our fish and wildlife, preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places, and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The Department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to assure that their development is in the best interest of all our people. The Department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in Island Territories under U.S. Administration.

