

Greenlink System

Why does East Baton Rouge Parish need a Greenlink System? Such a system can create an elaborate chain of public open space and be connected to a greater network of regional, state and federal systems. Greenlinks preserve natural areas, conserve plant and wildlife habitats, increase the aesthetic and property value of the area they serve, and reduce automobile use by providing a commuting alternative, thereby reducing traffic and air pollution. River and creek banks, drainage servitudes, lakeshores and parks are common sites for the Greenlinks because they are most often owned by the public.



The Comite River is designated as a Louisiana scenic river

The 1972 *Land Use Plan* for East Baton Rouge Parish encouraged green open spaces in the developed portion of the parish. Created in an organized and orderly manner, these spaces would interrupt the continuous development of buildings and hard-surfaced areas such as streets and parking lots. The belt of green open spaces would follow the flood plains of drainage channels connecting major park and recreation area. Native vegetation would be retained requiring minimal maintenance, making these strips of open space both beautiful and pleasant.

The 1986 *Regional/Urban Design Assistance Team Plan (R/UDAT)* for Baton Rouge included a Corridor Concept. These Corridors would follow seven of the natural drainage ways in the parish. Included are Bayou Fountain, Wards Creek, Jones Creek, Beaver Bayou, Comite River, Hurricane Creek and Baton Rouge Bayou. Recreation and transportation amenities would be provided for in the 'Green Fingers' plan.

The *Horizon Plan*, the 20 Year "Comprehensive Land Use and Development Plan" for the City of Baton Rouge and Parish of East Baton Rouge includes a Greenlink System Concept Plan. Unlike the previous plans in 1972 and 1986, the Horizon Plan provides for recreation, transportation and a reasonable means for commuting. Several of the existing pedestrian and bicycle paths are incorporated into the system including University Lake, City Park Lake, Nicholson Drive, Brightside Lane, Westdale Drive

and the Scotlandville Parkway.

The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries identified "Potential Conservation Areas" which, are also part of the Horizon Plan. The planned Greenlinks for East Baton Rouge Parish include routes that run through these Conservation Areas. They are located along Scenic Highway near Lily Bayou, Cypress Bayou, LA Highway 19 near Baker Canal, Comite River, between Little Sandy Creek and LA Highway 409, Beaver Bayou, the confluence of the Comite River and Hurricane Creek, River Road, Bayou Fountain, Jones Creek and Clay Cut Bayou.

The East Baton Rouge Parish Greenlink System is local and no other paths exist in the neighboring Parishes. The Greenlink System would provide paths along water courses, waterbodies, major streets, property easements, and public rights-of-way. The complete system of paths would be accessible for walking, jogging, and cycling through parks, fields, wetlands, and water courses and natural areas.

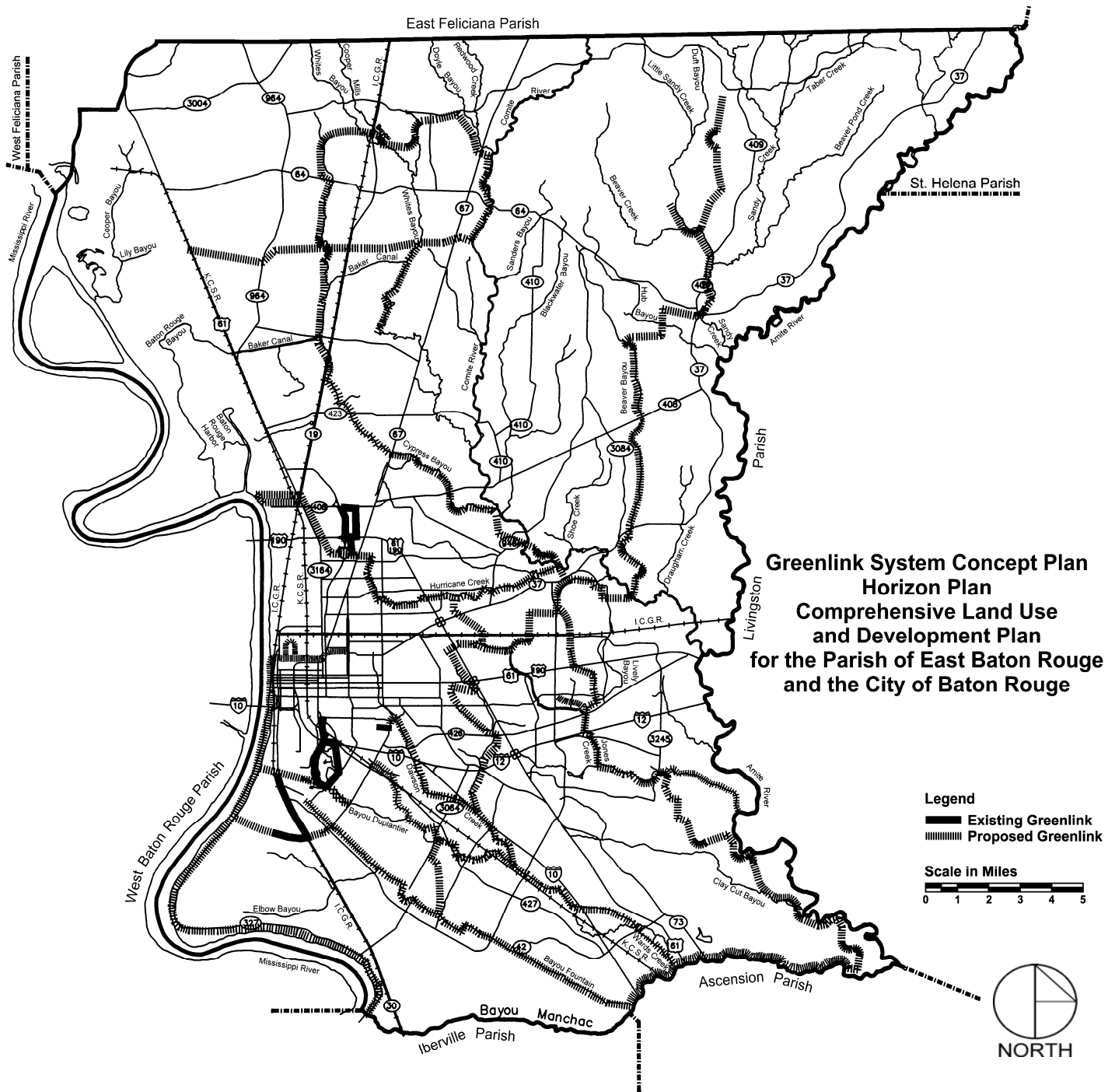
A section of the Comite River between the East Feliciana Parish line and Whites Bayou was designated as a scenic river by the Secretary of the State for the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, under the "Louisiana Scenic Rivers Act" in 1988. A proposed Greenlink is identified within that portion of the Comite River.

Action Items

Action Items are strategies to address the Goals, Objectives and Policies of the Horizon Plan to guide implementation of the Plan. They are assigned to 33 Lead Agencies that include City-Parish, State and private organizations. Within the seven elements of the Horizon Plan there are five Action Items dedicated to a Greenlink System. These include the Land Use Element; Transportation Element; and Recreation and Open Space Element.

Action Item LU5.G Improve the image, environmental, and aesthetic quality of targeted neighborhoods and subareas through the repair and improvement of public streets, sidewalks, sanitary sewers, storm drainage facilities, parks, street tree planting projects, and construction of the Greenlink System for pedestrians, joggers, and cyclists. *Lead Agency* Department of Public Works

Action Item T8.A Include implementation of bikeway improvements and Greenlink System projects in the 5-year C.I.P. and other roadway and drainage improvements. *Lead Agency* Planning Commission



Action Item T8.B Periodically update the Comprehensive Short-Range Pedestrian and Bikeway Plan for East Baton Rouge Parish, including incorporation of the proposed Greenlink System. *Lead Agency* Capital Region Planning Commission

Action Item R1.B Continue the Advance Planning Process for planning and development of recreation and open space. The focus of the process will be on the review and coordination of long range planning and establishment of plans for cooperative development of recreation properties and protection of important natural areas. *Lead Agency* Baton Rouge Recreation and Parks Commission

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