



January 14, 2019

*Via email and hand delivery*

Amber Shepard, Public Information Officer  
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Dear Ms. Shepard,

Pursuant to the Louisiana Public Records Act, La. R.S. §§ 44:1, *et seq.*, Louisiana Bucket Brigade, RISE St James, 350 New Orleans, Gulf Restoration Network, and the Center for Biological Diversity are requesting public records relating to the development, consideration, adoption, revision, and 5<sup>th</sup> District implementation of the St. James Parish Land Use Plan, all versions of the Plantations Schools and Churches 2Mi Buffer Map, all versions of the Generalized Future Land Use Map (including the 2011, 2014, and 2018 versions), and related Ordinances (in particular 14-03, 17-21, and 18-02), including the following records, in whatever form, electronic or otherwise:<sup>1</sup>

- (1) Records related to community meetings related to the Land Use Plan, Maps, and Ordinances occurring between 2008 and 2019 in the 5<sup>th</sup> District of St James Parish,

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<sup>1</sup> La. R.S. § 44:1(A)(2)(a) defines public records as all “books, records, writings, accounts, letters and letter books, maps, drawings, photographs, cards, tapes, recordings, memoranda, and papers, and all copies, duplicates, photographs, including microfilm, or other reproductions thereof, or any other documentary materials, regardless of physical form or characteristics, including information contained in electronic data processing equipment, having been used, being in use, or prepared, possessed, or retained for use in the conduct, transaction, or performance of any business, transaction, work, duty, or function which was conducted, transacted, or performed by or under the authority of the constitution or laws of this state.”

including but not limited to the community meeting held at the Welcome Senior Center on May 5, 2011 (e.g. records of public notice and outreach about the meetings, internal and external correspondence of the City Council, meeting participants lists, meeting materials, meeting notes and reports, and public comments).

- (2) Records of communications occurring from 2008-2019 between the St James Parish Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee (and/or any of its members, including but not limited to Blaise Gravois) and the South Central Planning & Development Commission (SCPDC) (and/or any of its members, including but not limited to Kevin Belanger, SCPDC CEO, and Simonne Caesar, Project Manager) about the St James Parish Land Use Plan, Maps, and Ordinances.
- (3) Records of communications occurring during the period 2008-2019 between the St James Parish and the law firm Butler Snow (including but not limited to Victor Franckiewicz, Jr.) about the St James Parish Land Use Plan, Maps, and Ordinances.
- (4) Records used, prepared, possessed or retained for use in relation to meetings of the City Council, Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee, SCPDC, and St. James Planning Commission that involved the development, consideration, approval, public input to, and/or revision of the St James Parish Land Use Plan, Maps, and Ordinances, including but not limited to those meetings listed in the Appendix to this request.
- (5) All records (including internal and external communications) of the City Council, Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee, SCPDC, St. James Planning Commission, and St James Parish consultants/contractors relating to the research, development, consideration, approval, and/or revision of the “residential/future industrial” and “industrial” land use designations in the 5<sup>th</sup> District, including any input sought or received from landowners in those designated areas.
- (6) All records (including internal and external email communications) relating to the list of schools and churches included on the map titled “Plantations Schools and Churches 2Mi Buffer” dated April 2, 2014 adopted as part of ordinance 14-03.
- (7) All records (including internal and external email communications) relating to the restriction on subdivisions within the “residential/future industrial” land use designation § 86-37(c)(1).
- (8) All records (including internal and external email communications) relating to the environmental and public health impacts considered as part of the hybrid land use designation “residential/future industrial” § 86-37(c)(1).
- (9) All records (including internal and external email communications) relating to the definition of “impact area” referenced in Ordinance 17-21 § 6-37(g)(3)(a) and criteria development for suitable “buffer zones” in accordance with § 86-37(j).

- (10) All records (including internal and external email communications) relating to the development of criteria for “approval of uses not listed as allowable uses.” Ordinance 17-21 § 86-37 (e).
- (11) All records from 2010-2019 relating to South Louisiana Methanol LP (SLM)’s application for a permit from St James Parish, including all records used, prepared, possessed or retained for use in relation to the Planning Commission’s April 23, 2014 special meeting on the permit application, as well as any subsequent records relevant to that permit, including communications between St James Parish and SLM.

Disclosure of the information sought by this request is in the public interest and will contribute significantly to the public’s understanding of land use planning and development in St James Parish. We are not seeking this information for any commercial purpose. Accordingly, we request a waiver of any fees associated with this request. However, if there are any fees for searching or copying these records, please inform us of these costs *prior to searching and copying*.

Section 44:32(A) of the Louisiana Public Records Act requires a response to a request within five business days. If access to the records we are requesting will take longer than five days, please let us know when we can expect the responsive records or the ability to inspect the requested records in person.

If you deny any part of this request, please cite each specific exemption you feel justifies the refusal to release the records requested and notify us of the appeal procedures available under Louisiana law. Louisiana’s Public Records Act must be construed liberally, with any doubt resolved in favor of the right of access. *See, e.g. First Commerce Title Co., Inc. v. Martin*, 887 So.2d 716 (La. App. 2 Cir. 2004).

Thank you for considering this request.

Sincerely,



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**APPENDIX**  
**PARTIAL LIST OF MEETINGS RELEVANT TO THIS REQUEST**

- (1) July 12, 2010: meeting of the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee.
- (2) May 5, 2011: community meeting held at Welcome Senior Center.
- (3) March 5, 2014: when the comprehensive land use plan was first proposed as a new order of business.
- (4) March 12, 2014: public hearing regarding proposed Ordinance 14-03 (land use plan)
- (5) April 2, 2014: public hearing regarding proposed Ordinance 14-03 (land use plan).
- (6) April 23, 2014: Planning Commission special session on South Louisiana Methanol LP
- (7) September 27, 2017: Planning Commission meeting that considered the recommendations of its subcommittee regarding changes to land use Ordinance 14-03.
- (8) October 4, 2017: introduction of proposal to amend § 86-37 of land use Ordinance 14-03 and 18-5 of the code of Ordinances.
- (9) November 1, 2017: public hearing on proposal to amend § 86-37 of land use Ordinance and § 18-5 of code of Ordinances (held in Convent, LA).
- (10) November 15, 2017: public hearing on proposed Ordinance 17-21, to amend § 86-37 of land use Ordinance and § 18-5 of code of Ordinances (held in Vacherie, LA).
- (11) February 21, 2018: council action on Ordinance 17-21, including discussion of land use plan changes.
- (12) March 7, 2018: discussion of land use map change.
- (13) April 4, 2018: two items of interest: (i) resolution in opposition to the Port of South Louisiana's request to locate an industrial facility within a St James Parish Land Use Plan area classified as residential; (ii) proposed amendment of § 86-37 of the Land Use Plan.
- (14) April 18, 2018: public hearing on proposed Ordinance 18-02, to amend § 86-37 of the St James Parish Land Use Ordinance, and to amend the Land Use Plan.
- (15) May 2, 2018: public hearing and action on proposed Ordinance 18-02.
- (16) August 6, 2018: special meeting held for consideration of application for expansion of the Ergon Facility in St James Parish.
- (17) August 8, 2018: action on the Planning Commission's recommendation to approve the land use application from Ergon St James for expansion.
- (18) December 19, 2018: special meeting regarding RISE St James' letter of appeal concerning FG LA LLC, otherwise known as Formosa.