

Ama, Louisiana
St. Charles Parish

Land Use And Zoning Study

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Executive Summary

This study was initiated to assess existing conditions, public input, and future growth considerations to determine appropriate recommendations for the land use and zoning in Ama.

Census data was collected to establish a general community profile. Since 1980 the population of Ama has remained in the range of 1,200 to 1,400 citizens. 53% of the population is between the ages of 18 and 54. Average household size has varied between 2.8 and 3.4 persons. Approximately 65% of the population is white, 34% is black. The housing vacancy rate is 8.6%. Median income, as of Census 2000, was \$41,691.

A field survey of existing land use was conducted in February 2008. It was determined that 75% of housing units are permanent single family homes, and 25% are trailers or mobile homes.

Meetings were conducted with the St. Charles Parish Administration, members of the St. Charles Parish Council, staff member of the St. Charles Parish Planning and Zoning Department, and citizen activists to identify issues of concern. A preliminary issue raised by citizens was a desire to reduce the number of trailers and mobile homes in the community.

Subsequent to the above baseline information, a public meeting was held whereby all citizens of Ama were invited to attend and offer comment. The following conclusions and recommendations were developed, based on public input and information derived from the baseline research data of the community.



Conclusions

1. The residents of Ama enjoy the rural nature of their community and do not want the integrity of their “country lifestyle” disrupted.
2. There is a desire to eliminate the permitting of new trailers and mobile homes in the Ama area. Residents acknowledge and accept existing trailer sites but do not want to see a continuation of permitted trailers/mobile homes/RV sites in Ama.
3. There is a desire for affordable newer housing. Ama residents have expressed that there are few, if any, homes available to their children seeking to return to Ama to live. However residents do not want small-lot, “cookie-cutter” subdivisions that often deteriorate quickly in quality and aesthetics. Larger lot subdivisions are desired.
4. While traffic was mentioned as undesirable, residents believe that the existing roadway network is adequate and the need for a direct roadway connection to US 90 is not pressing.
5. Ama residents are concerned that existing codes and regulations are not actively or regularly enforced. There was also concern that the public notification process and sign posting procedure for zoning changes was ineffective.
6. Residents have expressed a desire for more neighborhood commercial sites, such as a grocery store/food market. Presently, most residents travel to Boutte or Luling for basic goods and services.
7. Many residents have expressed a desire to have the Mississippi River levee bike/pedestrian path completed.



Recommendations

1. Consider rezoning a significant percentage of property currently zoned R-1AM (Single Family Residential – Allows Mobile Homes) to R-1A (Single Family Residential) or O-L (Open Land). See Figure 3-A compared to Figure 5-A. Based on field observations conducted in February 2008, there are currently forty-one (41) trailers between the ADM Grain Elevator and Kennedy Street and sixty-seven (67) trailers between Kennedy Street and the Jefferson Parish line. The areas currently zoned R-1AM that are recommended for rezoning to R-1A are predominantly occupied by permanent single family homes. The areas recommended to remain R-1AM have the highest concentration of trailers and mobile homes.
2. Consider rezoning all property currently zoned C-1 (General Commercial - Commercial Offices) to C-2 (General Commercial – Retail Sales) to allow for a greater ability to provide for neighborhood commercial convenience businesses. See Figure 3-A compared to Figure 5-A.
3. Consider rezoning approximately 5 acres of the Bunge tract which front on River Road and is currently zoned O-L to C-2 to accommodate future commercial activities. See Figure 3-A compared to Figure 5-A.
4. Rezone property on east side of Ama north of the Union Pacific Railroad that is currently zoned W (Wetlands) to O-L. See Figure 3-A compared to Figure 5-A.
5. Expedite completion of the bicycle/pedestrian path atop the Mississippi River levee.
6. Improve the existing recreational facility near the ADM Grain Elevator with lighting for night-time use of ball courts, additional play equipment for children, and other improvements requested by area residents.
7. Work with the community to focus on code enforcement efforts, particularly as they relate to blighted properties and junk/assorted rubbish on property.
8. Offer economic development incentives (i.e. temporary reduction/elimination of property taxes; reduced utility rates) to encourage development of neighborhood businesses in proposed C-2 zoning (recommendations #2 and #3 above).



9. Consider a direct roadway connection from River Road to US 90 via the eastern levee of the Davis Pond diversion canal. Coordination with railroads and the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (LADOTD) will be necessary.
10. Consider modification to the Zoning Code to require all trailer permit applications to comply with the following regulations:
 - Meet the latest HUD quality standards
 - Meet the State of Louisiana minimum installation standards
 - Provide skirting with vinyl or lattice
 - All running gear to be removed
 - Trailer exteriors to be vinyl siding
 - Roof to be shingled with a 3-on-12 pitch



1 Introduction

The Ama Land Use and Zoning Study was undertaken as a response to community concern over recent development in the area. The focus of the study is to determine the appropriateness of the existing zoning land use designations in Ama and recommend modifications based on the community input. This combines the efforts of Ama residents and landowners, in coordination with St. Charles Parish leaders, to evaluate the conditions and opportunities necessary to shape growth and development, sustain community viability, and enhance the quality of life in Ama. This report presents the preliminary results of the planning process and addresses the opportunities and challenges faced by the Ama community over the next several years. This project will serve as an initial component of future Comprehensive Land Use planning efforts that will encompass the entirety of St. Charles Parish.

Ama is located on the easternmost edge of the St. Charles Parish west bank between Luling and the Jefferson Parish line. The community is bounded by River Road to the north, the Union Pacific Railroad tracks to the south, the St. Charles/Jefferson Parish line to the east, and the Davis Pond diversion canal to the west. Historically the community developed as a family-oriented area. Entire families would live along the same street, often named after their particular family.

Ama encompasses approximately 2,200 acres, 25% of which are designated wetlands. The remaining developable land is primarily utilized for residential or agricultural uses. The ADM Grain Elevator, near the community's western boundary, is the largest active industrial land use. Adjacent to it is a community playground/recreational facility. Very sparse commercial/retail uses are located on River Road, and there is a small grass airstrip located on the eastern end of Ama.

River Road is the only major arterial roadway in Ama. All other vehicular roads are small local streets or driveways that access private/residential property. These local roads all tie-in to River Road with no secondary access for ingress and egress. Two active railroad lines run in an east-west direction between River Road and US 90. Figure 1-A presents the general area of Ama.

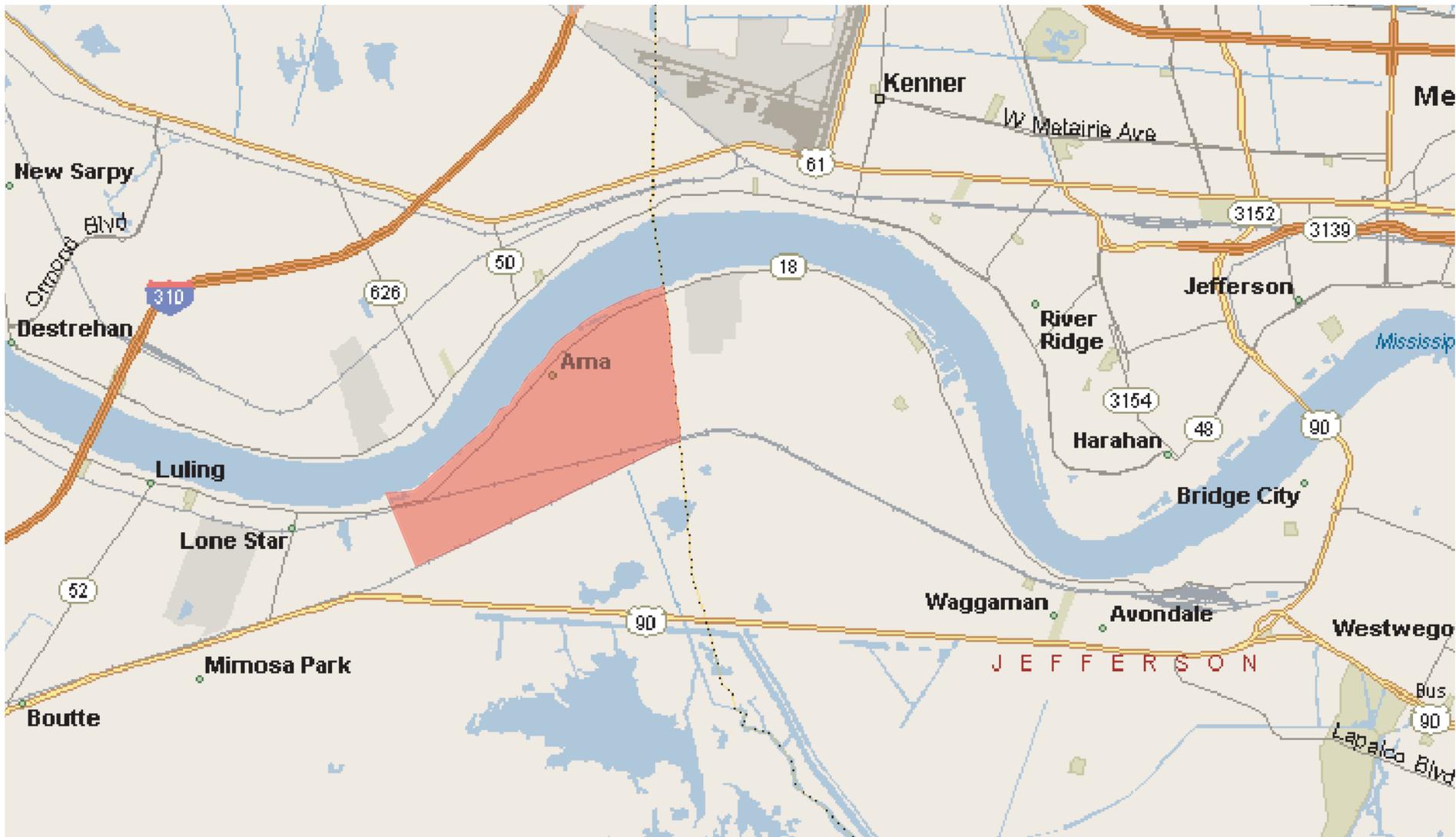


Figure 1-A
Vicinity Map

Ama Land Use & Zoning Study
Ama, Louisiana

NOT TO SCALE
FOR PLANNING PURPOSES ONLY



The elements and details of the planning process are explained in the sections of this report, as follows:

- Community Profile (Section 2)
- Zoning and Land Use Assessment (Section 3)
- Public Participation Process (Section 4)
- Recommendations and Conclusions (Section 5)



Methodology Overview

The major tasks taken on as part of this project are essential to assessing community needs. In addition to traditional methods of data collection and technical analysis, simply engaging in a starting point by exchanging ideas between stakeholders, planning consultants, and Parish officials had a significant impact on shaping the overall methodology used for plan development. The four methods used during this project are discussed in this section.

Public Participation

The primary stakeholders in Ama's planning process are residents, property owners, business owners, and local government. There were several opportunities for stakeholder participation and comment during the process and their involvement was central to plan development.

Two meetings were conducted as part of this phase. The first meeting was coordinated by the St. Charles Parish Planning and Zoning Department and was attended by department personnel, citizen stakeholders/community activists, and parish officials. The purpose of this initial meeting was to identify common issues of concern and to establish a project schedule for completion of the report.

The second meeting was an official public meeting open to all citizens. The meeting time and place was advertised in the official Parish journal and meeting notices were mailed to 484 Ama residents using mailing addresses from the Parish Department of Waterworks. This meeting was designed to engage the citizens and other stakeholders regarding major planning issues (i.e. land use, zoning, code enforcement, transportation) as they relate to: (1) the community-level and (2) the parish as a whole. The attendees participated in an "open house" style process for collecting their ideas and concerns. Comments were taken during the meeting and also taken outside of the meeting by encouraging attendees to mail in comment forms or contact the project team directly by email or telephone.



Government Officials Participation

The involvement of Parish officials in this effort was essential. Parish President V.J. St. Pierre, Jr., and several parish council members, planning commissioners and other officials were able to attend the public meeting and offered firm support and leadership. The Planning staff was directly involved in all stages of the project. Their involvement and knowledge of current planning and community issues was vital.

Demographic Analysis / Growth Projections

Population and permitting activity was investigated to determine growth and development trends. Two sources were used to acquire this information. Census 1990 and 2000 was used to assess population trends and building permit data was researched for years 2004 through 2007.

Land Use Survey

Existing land use in Ama was obtained from aerial photography, a field survey conducted in February 2008, and knowledge from the St. Charles Parish Planning and Zoning Department staff.



2 Community Profile

This section outlines the results of research conducted to determine population, development, and socio-economic characteristics of the Ama community. A combination of sources was utilized to develop the data:

1. St. Charles Parish Comprehensive Land Use Plan (1990)
2. Census 1990
3. Census 2000
4. 2008 Field Verification Survey
5. St. Charles Parish Permits Department

Population

The community of Ama is contained within census tract #630 of St. Charles Parish. According to Census 2000 the population of Ama was 1,285. See Table 2-1 for a summary of population data.



**TABLE 2-1
Population (Source: Census 2000 Data)**

Age Group	Group Population	Percent of Total Population
Under 5	77	6%
5 – 17	297	23%
18 – 34	275	21%
35 – 54	408	32%
55 – 69	151	12%
70 and older	77	6%
TOTALS	1,285	100%
Race	Population by Race	Percent of Total Population
White	834	65%
Black	442	34%
American Indian, Asian, other	9	1%
TOTAL	1,285	100%
Gender	Population by Gender	Percent of Total Population
Male	654	51%
Female	631	49%
TOTAL	1,285	100%

A review Table 2-1 indicates that the population of Ama is fairly young, over 80% of the residents are below age 55. Two thirds of the population is white and one-third is black. The male-to-female ratio is nearly 1:1.



Housing and Socio-Economic

Over the past twenty-eight (28) years, the community of Ama has had very little growth. Tables 2-2 and 2-3 illustrate historical trends in housing and population.

**TABLE 2-2
Population, Housing and Income Trends**

Census Data	1980 ¹	1990 ²	2000 ³	2008
Population	1,240	1,419	1,285	n/a
Housing Units	390	519	488	510 ⁴
Average Household Size	3.18	3.46	2.88	n/a
Median Household Income	n/a	\$35,938	\$41,691	\$48,847 ⁵

¹Source: 1990 Comprehensive Land Use Plan
²Source: 1990 Census
³Source: 2000 Census
⁴Source: Field Survey
⁵Year 2000 figure grown at 2% annually

**TABLE 2-3
Households, Housing Units (Source: Census 2000 Data)**

Number of Units	Average Household Size	Median Income	% with Public Assistance Income	% Rental vs. Owned	% Vacant vs. Occupied
488	2.88	\$41,691	1.3%	11.2%	8.6%

One of the preliminary issues at the forefront of this study was the presence of mobile homes compared to permanent single family residences. A field survey was undertaken in February 2008



to identify housing unit types in the Ama community. Results of the survey are illustrated in Table 2-4.

TABLE 2-4
Summary of Housing Unit Structures (Source: 2008 Field Survey)

Housing Unit Type	Number Observed	Percent of Total
Single Family Detached (slab or raised)	384	75%
Trailer (mobile or fixed)	126	25%
TOTAL	510	100%

Permit Activity

Building permit activity was researched by the St. Charles Parish Department of Planning and Zoning to identify any potential growth trends of trailers/mobile homes versus single family dwellings. Table 2-5 illustrates residential building permits issued in Ama from 2002 thru 2007.

TABLE 2-5
Ama Residential Building Permits

Housing Type	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Single Family Detached	5	5	15	18	22	6
Mobile Home	4	3	4	10	8	3
Total	9	8	19	28	30	9



On closer inspection of the permits, one single family permit in 2003 replaced an existing mobile home. In each of the years 2002 thru 2004, one of the total number of mobile home permits was for replacement of an existing mobile home. In 2005 there were two replacement permits.

A review of Table 2-5 indicates little activity during years 2002, 2003 and 2007. Permit activity more than doubles from 2003 to 2004 and continues to grow during years 2005 and 2006. The growth in years 2005 and 2006 may be attributed to relocation tendencies of New Orleans area residents after hurricane Katrina. Detached single family home development outpaces mobile homes permitted in all years. Of the mobile home permits issued, 26 replaced pre-existing mobile homes. The overall trend indicates little if any growth in the Ama area.



3 Zoning and Land Use Assessment

An inventory of existing zoning and land use was conducted to identify developable land areas for future growth and to identify the location and patterns of existing development. The zoning information was provided by the St. Charles Parish Planning and Zoning Department. The land use inventory was compiled using aerial photography, field observations, and input/knowledge from the Planning and Zoning Department.

St. Charles Parish is divided into the following zoning districts, as listed in Table 3-1. Those districts indicated in *italics* and with an asterisk (*) are the zoning districts that can be found in Ama. Figure 3-A presents a map illustration of existing zoning in Ama.



**TABLE 3-1
St. Charles Parish Zoning Districts**

<i>O-L*</i>	<i>Open Land District (Rural, low density residential)</i>
<i>R-1A*</i>	<i>Single Family Residential Detached District (Medium Density)</i>
<i>R-1A(M)*</i>	<i>Single Family Residential Detached District – Allow Mobile Homes</i>
<i>R-1B</i>	<i>Single Family Residential Detached District (Light to Medium Density)</i>
<i>R-1M*</i>	<i>Single Family Residential Detached Mobile Homes [Manufacture Home/Recreational Vehicle (RV)] Park</i>
<i>R-2</i>	<i>Two Family Residential District</i>
<i>R-3</i>	<i>Multi-Family Residential District</i>
<i>CR-1</i>	<i>Residential – Commercial Transition District</i>
<i>C-1*</i>	<i>General Commercial District – Commercial Offices</i>
<i>C-2*</i>	<i>General Commercial District – Retail Sales</i>
<i>C-3</i>	<i>General Commercial District – Wholesale and Retail Sales</i>
<i>M-1*</i>	<i>Light Manufacturing District</i>
<i>M-2*</i>	<i>Heavy Manufacturing District</i>
<i>M-3*</i>	<i>Heavy Manufacturing District</i>
<i>B-1*</i>	<i>Batture – Non Industrial</i>
<i>B-2*</i>	<i>Batture – Industrial</i>
<i>W*</i>	<i>Wetland District</i>
<i>MS</i>	<i>Medical Service District</i>
<i>G-1</i>	<i>Gambling District</i>
<i>H</i>	<i>Historical District</i>
<i>AV-1</i>	<i>Aviation District</i>

**Zoning districts found in Ama.*

The Ama area is comprised of approximately 2,200 acres. Table 3-2 illustrates the percentage breakdown of acreage for each zoning district compared to the overall land area of Ama.



**TABLE 3-2
Percentage of Ama Land Area by Zoning District**

Zoning District	Approximate Acreage	Percent of Total Land Area
W	519	22.8%
R-1AM	439	19.3%
O-L	324	14.3%
M-3	277	12.2%
M-1	205	9%
B-1, B-2	204	9%
M-2	162	7.1%
R-1A	112	4.9%
C-1	15	Less than 1%
R-1M	9	Less than 1%
C-2	4	Less than 1%
TOTAL	2,270	100%

Description of Residential Zoning Districts

Based on information contained in the St. Charles Parish zoning ordinance, the following section describes the four (4) residential zoning districts in Ama.

O-L (Open Land) - This district is composed mainly of large open unsubdivided land that is vacant or in forestry, agricultural, or residential use. The regulations are designed to protect the open character of the district, and to allow residents to retain their traditional ways of living, by prohibiting the establishment of scattered businesses, industrial and other uses that are unrelated to any general plan of development and that might inhibit the best future utilization of the land.



R-1A (Single Family Residential Detached) - This district is composed of areas containing one-family dwellings constructed on a permanent foundation, connected to public utilities and which meet the architectural standards of a permanent residence. The district regulations are designed to protect the residential character of the areas by prohibiting all commercial activities; to encourage suitable neighborhood environments for family life by including schools and churches; and to preserve the openness of the areas by requiring certain minimum yard and area standards to be met.

R-1A(M) (Single Family Residential Detached, Allows Mobile Homes) - This district is composed of areas containing one-family dwellings constructed on a permanent foundation, connected to public utilities, and which meet the architectural and aesthetic standards of a permanent residence. Mobile homes which meet special provisions are allowed.

❖ R-1A(M) Special Provisions

- All manufactured housing and mobile homes shall be secured according to the FEMA 1985 publication Manufactured Home Installation in Flood Hazard Areas.
- Skirting or foundation plantings as approved by zoning and regulatory administrator in accordance with the manufacturer's installation instructions to ensure aesthetic compatibility with residential character of the neighborhood. The entire under floor shall be completely enclosed, except for the required openings.

R-1M (Single Family Residential Detached Mobile Homes [Manufacture Home/Recreational Vehicle (RV)] Park - This district is established to allow single-family residential usage of manufactured housing and recreational vehicles (RV) in a specially designed community or park with public and private amenities provided by the park developer as opposed to the park tenants. This district will allow a greater density of single-family residences to locate in an aesthetically pleasing environment by requiring certain spatial and buffer requirements.



Spatial Requirements for Residential Zoning Districts

Tables 3-3 and 3-4 illustrate minimum lot sizes and minimum yard setbacks for residential zoning districts in St. Charles Parish.

**TABLE 3-3
Minimum Lot Size for Residential Zoning Districts**

Zoning District	Minimum Requirements
O-L	20,000 square feet. Additional dwellings on unsubdivided property shall be permitted at the rate of one (1) dwelling unit for each ten thousand (10,000) square feet of lot area.
R-1A	6,000 square feet
R-1AM	5,000 square feet. Additional dwellings on unsubdivided property shall be permitted at the rate of one (1) dwelling unit (i.e. trailers/mobile homes) for each seven thousand (7,000) square feet of lot area. Under no circumstance will the total number of dwellings per unsubdivided lot exceed four (4).
R-1M	Minimum lot size per development is 10,000 square feet. Each manufactured home space shall contain a minimum of three thousand one hundred fifty (3,150) square feet. Each RV space shall contain a minimum of one thousand four hundred (1,400) square feet
R-1B	10,000 square feet
R-2	6,000 square feet (3,000 square feet per family dwelling)
R-3	10,000 square feet (2,500 square feet per family dwelling)



**TABLE 3-4
Minimum Yard Sizes (Property Setbacks) for Residential Zoning Districts**

Zoning District	Front Yard	Side Yards	Rear Yards
O-L	35'	10'	20'
R-1A	20'	5'	20'
R-1AM	15'	5'	5'
R-1M	20'	10'	10'
R-1B	25'	8'	25'
R-2	20'	5'	20'
R-3	20'	10'	20'

A review of Tables 3-1 through 3-4 indicates that residential zoning and subsequent land uses are generally limited to single family development. While a few multi-family properties do exist in Ama, single family development is the predominant residential use. Regarding density, single family development in Ama is present on both ends of the spectrum. The O-L district contains approximately 14.3% of developable land in Ama with relatively few large, low density parcels. The R-1AM district contains approximately 19.3% of developable land in Ama with many small parcels; many existing R-1AM parcels do not meet the minimum 5,000 square feet area requirement. A significant number of trailers/mobile homes, often located immediately adjacent to permanent single family dwellings, are present in the R-1AM district. The few streets located in the R-1A district represent the only parts of Ama which resemble single family suburban neighborhoods. The Ama RV Park is the only parcel zoned R-1M.



Land Use Carrying Capacity

An assessment of existing zoning and land use acreage, combined with minimum area development requirements, was undertaken to determine the potential for future population growth in the Ama area.

The methodology used to develop future population potential was implemented through the following steps. *It should be noted that the numbers calculated herein are strictly estimates based on zoning overlay maps, visual observations from aerial photography and field notes. No survey data or property legal description information was provided.*

1. Identify the total acreage of existing residential zoning districts with undeveloped and unimproved (i.e. streets, utilities, etc.) land. This includes the O-L and R-1AM districts. While it is acknowledged that some of the property zoned R-1A is vacant, projections for added population in these areas were not factored into this calculation because this zoning designation exists on developed subdivisions and will have a negligible effect on population increase.
2. Estimate the total acreage of developed land in each of the two above residential zoning districts.
3. Subtract developed acreage from total acreage per zoning district to identify developable acreage.
4. Calculate 75% of developable acreage (subtract 25% of developable acreage to account for roadways, right-of-way, utilities, etc.)
5. Divide remaining developable acreage (75% of total developable acreage) by the minimum required lot sizes for each zoning district (20,000 square feet in O-L; 5,000 square feet in R-1AM) to determine the potential number of home sites.
6. Apply average household occupancy rate (2.88 from Census 2000) to the number of potential home sites to determine potential population growth.



It must be noted that the numbers presented in Table 3-5 represent a maximum density scenario assuming that every developable acre in Ama is put into commerce as residential use. Other conditions that affect future population growth include market demand, financial feasibility, utility and infrastructure limitations. Given these factors the population projections depicted herein are not likely to occur, however given the existing zoning it is possible that these numbers could occur.

**TABLE 3-5
Population Projections Based on Zoning Density**

Methodology	O-L District	R-1AM District
1. Total acreage in zoning district	324 ac.	439 ac.
2. Estimated acreage of developed land	44 ac.	161 ac.
3. Total acreage estimate of developable land	280 ac.	278 ac.
4. 75% of developable land	210 ac.	208 ac.
5. Potential number of home sites based on minimum lot size	457	1,816
6. Number of home sites x average household occupancy = Potential Population Growth	1,316	5,230

Table 3-5 indicates that if all undeveloped and unimproved land in Ama that is zoned for residential use was developed in accordance with existing regulations and development guidelines set forth in the St. Charles Parish Zoning Ordinance, the existing population of 1,300 to 1,500 could increase by 6,546 residents – a significant increase of five times the existing population.

The amount of developable land available is similar for the two zoning districts illustrated in Table 3-5 (210 acres vs. 208 acres). However the low density regulation requirements for O-L produces a much lower population growth potential than R-1AM.



Infrastructure Considerations

Regardless of whether the population of Ama could potentially grow by another 1,300 and/or another 5,200, the burden of a significant increase in population would emphasize the need for an expansion of existing infrastructure facilities.

Currently River Road is the only arterial road that services Ama. Access to US 90 is restricted due to the presence of wetlands and two railroad lines between the parallel corridors of River Road and US 90. An in-depth traffic analysis would be warranted to explore potential roadway connectivity within the area.

Water service to the Ama area is accessible from service lines along River Road and along the Union Pacific Railroad. New development would be likely be required to utilize the service line along the railroad tracks. Significant growth in Ama is expected to warrant upgrades to existing water service capabilities.

All wastewater from the Ama area is processed at a treatment facility in Hahnville (Luling Pond). Currently there is an administrative order prohibiting additional flows to Luling Pond. Under existing conditions, St. Charles Parish has indicated a need for a new sewerage treatment plant in Paradis to reduce flows to the Hahnville Plant. This situation presents a significant limitation to future growth in Ama.



4 Public Involvement Process

Two meetings were conducted to facilitate public comments and input to help shape the recommendations of this study. The first meeting was an assembly of community stakeholders including elected officials, parish administration staff, citizen activists, and planning and zoning staff members. The meeting was held on Thursday, February 14, 2008 at the Department of Planning and Zoning office.

The key issues that were raised during this meeting were:

- Concerns of lack of monitoring at the ADM grain elevator
- Concerns about the public notification process
- Residents do not want trailer park developments or small lot “cookie cutter” subdivisions
- Residents accept mobile homes that are existing but do not want more
- Residents want Ama to retain its rural character

The second meeting was an advertised open meeting for the general public held on Wednesday, March 12, 2008 at the Ama American Legion Post on River Road. The meeting was conducted as an “open house” format. Attendees were asked to sign-in upon entry to the hall. A two-page survey was distributed and all attendees were asked to complete and submit the survey before leaving the meeting. Attendees who chose to fill out the survey in greater detail were given the option of mailing the survey back to the project consultant.

Information stations, manned by Planning and Zoning staff members, were set up around the room whereby attendees could review information and offer written and/or verbal comments. The information stations included a summary of population, housing, and socio-economic data; a zoning handout packet describing the residential zoning districts; maps and aerial photographs of the Ama area depicting the location of zoning districts with respect to the street network; and a



slide show of properties in the Ama area illustrating the various combination of land uses throughout the community.

According to the sign-in log, the public meeting was attended by sixty-seven (67) people. Although based on unofficial observations during the meeting, actual attendance was closer to eighty (80).

A total of thirty-four (34) surveys were submitted. The survey contained ten (10) questions which focused on community/neighborhood issues such as quality of life, transportation, commercial services, land use, and code enforcement. Additional space was provided on the survey for residents to elaborate on issues of concern that may not have been addressed in the specific questions. A summary average of survey responses is included in Tables 4-1 through 4-9. See the following two pages for a copy of the public meeting survey.



TABLE 4-1
Summary of Question #1
“What do you like most about living in Ama?”

General Subject of Comments Received	Percentage Frequency of Comment Compared to All Comments
Close knit community with ‘good’ people	24%
A very quiet area to live	22%
Enjoyment of country living	20%
Family oriented atmosphere	18%
Low crime rate; a very safe area	10%
Ama is situated in a good location	2%
River levee is a good recreational feature	2%
Ama is a mixed community	2%
TOTAL	100%



TABLE 4-2
Summary of Question #2
“What do you like least about living in Ama?”

General Subject of Comments Received	Percentage Frequency of Comment Compared to All Comments
Traffic (i.e. speeding, congestion, # of trucks on River Road)	18%
Too many junk cars and abandoned properties	14%
Lack of growth and businesses	11%
Drainage problems	11%
The ADM grain elevator	7%
Lack of code enforcement	7%
River Road is only connector road for local streets	7%
Lack of recreational amenities	7%
Lack of a local grocery store	4%
No levee protection from south	4%
No community center or performing arts center	4%
Small tracts of unusable land	3%
Lack of communication among citizens	3%
TOTAL	100%

TABLE 4-3
Summary of Question #3
“If overall conditions remain unchanged for the most part over the next five (5) years,
Do you intend to continue living in Ama?”

YES	90%
NO	10%



TABLE 4-4
Summary of Question #4
Neighborhood Issues – Scaled Responses (1 thru 5)

Neighborhood Issues	Yes, it is a problem					No, it is not a problem				
	1.0	1.5	2.0	2.5	3.0	3.5	4.0	4.5	5.0	
Traffic							X			
Mix of trailers with houses						X				
Street Widths					X					
Sidewalk Condition			X							
Availability of Retail Services					X					
Code Enforcement				X						
Zoning				X						
Subdivision Standards					X					
Poorly Maintained Properties				X						
Build Setbacks					X					

TABLE 4-5
Summary of Question #5
“How well does the existing street network in Ama connect to places you want to go?”

Not Very Well					Very Well				
1.0	1.5	2.0	2.5	3.0	3.5	4.0	4.5	5.0	
					X				

Note: Responses to questions 4 and 5 were averaged based on the total number of survey responses for each question, then rounded to the nearest “half” number to develop the quantified tables.



TABLE 4-6
Summary of Question #6
“Are there enough commercial / retail services in Ama?”

Yes					No				
1.0	1.5	2.0	2.5	3.0	3.5	4.0	4.5	5.0	

TABLE 4-7
Summary of Question #7
“Where do you go for most of your retail needs?”

Boutte	24%
Luling	20%
Kenner	13%
Metairie	12%
New Orleans	11%
Houma	5%
LaPlace	4%
Waggaman	4%
Westwego	4%
Avondale	3%

TABLE 4-8
Summary of Question #8
“Do you believe Ama needs a direct roadway connection to US 90?”

Yes					No				
1.0	1.5	2.0	2.5	3.0	3.5	4.0	4.5	5.0	



TABLE 4-9
Summary of Question #9
“Do you believe there is a need to revise and update the zoning classifications in Ama?”

Yes					No				
1.0	1.5	2.0	2.5	3.0	3.5	4.0	4.5	5.0	

Note: Responses to questions 6, 8 and 9 were averaged based on the total number of survey responses for each question, then rounded to the nearest “half” number to develop the quantified tables.

A review of Table 4-1 indicates that many of the survey respondents enjoy the close-knit, quiet and safe, country living of the Ama area. This general opinion was also echoed by survey respondents who expressed they wanted conditions in Ama to remain the same.

A review of Table 4-2 indicates that traffic on River Road is the most recurring comment regarding what residents disliked about living in Ama. Although it was acknowledged that traffic volumes were concentrated during the shift change times at the ADM grain elevator and at the Cytec industrial plant nearby in Jefferson Parish. Lack of businesses, drainage problems, and neglected properties were other issues of concern to Ama residents.

A review of Table 4-3 indicates that a majority of residents intend to continue living in Ama if general conditions remained unchanged over the next five years.

A review of Table 4-4 indicates that the specific neighborhood issues that are considered to be problematic include sidewalk conditions, (lack of) code enforcement, zoning, and poorly maintained properties. Ironically the issue of traffic was not considered to be a problem, which is somewhat contradictory from comments documented in Table 4-2.

A review of Table 4-5 somewhat confirms that residents want things to remain the same, indicating the connectivity of the street network is acceptable.



A review of Table 4-6 confirms that residents would like more retail services. Table 4-7 indicates that many Ama residents seek commercial goods and services primarily located to the west in Boutte and Luling. The quantity and availability of goods and services in the Kenner/Metairie/New Orleans area also proved to be a popular destination for Ama residents. Surprisingly the proximity of Waggaman/Avondale was not an attractive retail destination for many survey respondents.

A review of Table 4-8 confirms that residents believe a direct connection to US 90 is needed. Table 4-9 indicates that residents believe zoning revisions/updates are needed.

Page two of the survey included blank space for respondents to elaborate in detail on issues that may not have been directly addressed on page one of the survey. The following is a list of the most frequently mentioned comments:

1. Better enforcement of existing codes/regulations
2. Completion of bike/pedestrian path atop River levee
3. Newer affordable housing
4. Lower density subdivision development
5. Retain small town atmosphere; desire for things to remain the same
6. More recreation and community facilities
7. No more mobile homes in developed areas
8. More neighborhood commercial development (i.e. grocery store)



5 Conclusions and Recommendations

This section is a summary of the results of the planning process. Based on meetings with elected officials, parish staff members, citizen activists, and the general public, the following conclusions have been established and subsequent recommendations identified. It should be noted that the public input quantified in Section 4 was based on a limited number of surveys submitted, which represent less than 5% of the population of Ama. However the public comments received are considered the best available information.

Conclusions

1. The residents of Ama enjoy the rural nature of their community and do not want the integrity of their “country lifestyle” disrupted.
2. There is a desire to eliminate the permitting of new trailers and mobile homes in the Ama area. Residents acknowledge and accept existing trailer sites but do not want to see a continuation of permitted trailers/mobile homes/RV sites in Ama.
3. There is a desire for affordable newer housing. Ama residents have expressed that there are few, if any, homes available to their children seeking to return to Ama to live. However residents do not want small-lot, “cookie-cutter” subdivisions that often deteriorate quickly in quality and aesthetics. Larger lot subdivisions are desired.
4. While traffic was mentioned as undesirable, residents believe that the existing roadway network is adequate and the need for a direct roadway connection to US 90 is not pressing.
5. Ama residents are concerned that existing codes and regulations are not actively or regularly enforced. There was also concern that the public notification process and sign posting procedure for zoning changes was ineffective.
6. Residents have expressed a desire for more neighborhood commercial sites, such as a grocery store/food market. Presently, most residents travel to Boutte or Luling for basic goods and services.



7. Many residents have expressed a desire to have the Mississippi River levee bike/pedestrian path completed.

Recommendations

1. Consider rezoning a significant percentage of property currently zoned R-1AM to R-1A or O-L. See Figure 5-A. Based on field observations conducted in February 2008, there are currently forty-one (41) trailers between the ADM Grain Elevator and Kennedy Street and sixty-seven (67) trailers between Kennedy Street and the Jefferson Parish line. The areas currently zoned R-1AM that are recommended for rezoning to R-1A are predominantly occupied by permanent single family homes. The areas recommended to remain R-1AM have the highest concentration of trailers and mobile homes.
2. Consider rezoning all property currently zoned C-1 to C-2 to allow for a greater ability to provide for neighborhood commercial convenience businesses. See Figure 5-A.
3. Consider rezoning approximately 5 acres of the Bunge tract which front on River Road and is currently zoned O-L to C-2 to accommodate future commercial activities. See Figure 5-A.
4. Rezone property on east side of Ama north of the Union Pacific Railroad that is currently zoned W (Wetlands) to O-L. See Figure 5-A. See Table 5-1 for a summary of potential population estimates considering the zoning recommendations described.
5. Expedite completion of the bicycle/pedestrian path atop the Mississippi River levee.
6. Improve the existing recreational facility near the ADM Grain Elevator with lighting for night-time use of ball courts, additional play equipment for children, and other improvements requested by area residents.
7. Work with the community to focus on code enforcement efforts, particularly as they relate to blighted properties and junk/assorted rubbish on property.
8. Offer economic development incentives (i.e. temporary reduction/elimination of property taxes; reduced utility rates) to encourage development of neighborhood businesses in proposed C-2 zoning.



9. Consider a direct roadway connection from River Road to US 90 via the eastern levee of the Davis Pond diversion canal. Coordination with railroads and the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (LADOTD) will be necessary.
10. Consider modification to the Zoning Code to require all trailer permit applications to comply with the following regulations:
 - Meet the latest HUD quality standards
 - Meet the State of Louisiana minimum installation standards
 - Provide skirting with vinyl or lattice
 - All running gear to be removed
 - Trailer exteriors to be vinyl siding
 - Roof to be shingled with a 3-on-12 pitch

**TABLE 5-1
Population Projections Based on Recommended Zoning Density**

Methodology	O-L District	R-1A District
1. Total acreage in zoning district	787 ac.	237 ac.
2. Estimated acreage of developed land	44 ac.	112 ac.
3. Total acreage estimate of developable land	508 ac.*	125 ac.
4. 75% of developable land	381 ac.	94 ac.
5. Potential number of home sites based on minimum lot size	830	682
6. Number of home sites x average household occupancy = Potential Population Growth	2,390	1,964

*Does not include acreage currently zoned “wetlands” that is recommended for rezoning to O-L.

A review of Table 5-1 indicates a projected population growth estimate of 4,354 with zoning recommendations described herein, compared to a projected population growth estimate of 6,546 (see Table 3-5) under existing zoning conditions.

Acreege of Land in Ama by Zoning

District	Acreege	% of Total
O-L	787	35
W	284	13
M-3	277	12
R-1A	237	10
M-1	205	9
B-1, B-2	204	9
M-2	162	7
R-1AM	86	4
C-2	19	<1
R-1M	9	<1
Total:	2270	

ZONING

- B1-Batture, Non Industrial
- B2-Batture, Industrial
- C1-General Commercial Commercial Offices
- C2-General Commercial, Retail Sales
- M1-Light Manufacturing
- M2-Heavy Manufacturing
- M3-Heavy Manufacturing
- OL-Open Land, Rural low desity residential
- R1A-Single Family Detatched, Medium Density
- R1AM-Single Family Detatched, Allow Mobile Homes
- R1M-Single Family Detatched Mobile Homes,RV
- W-Wetland

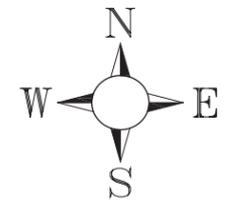
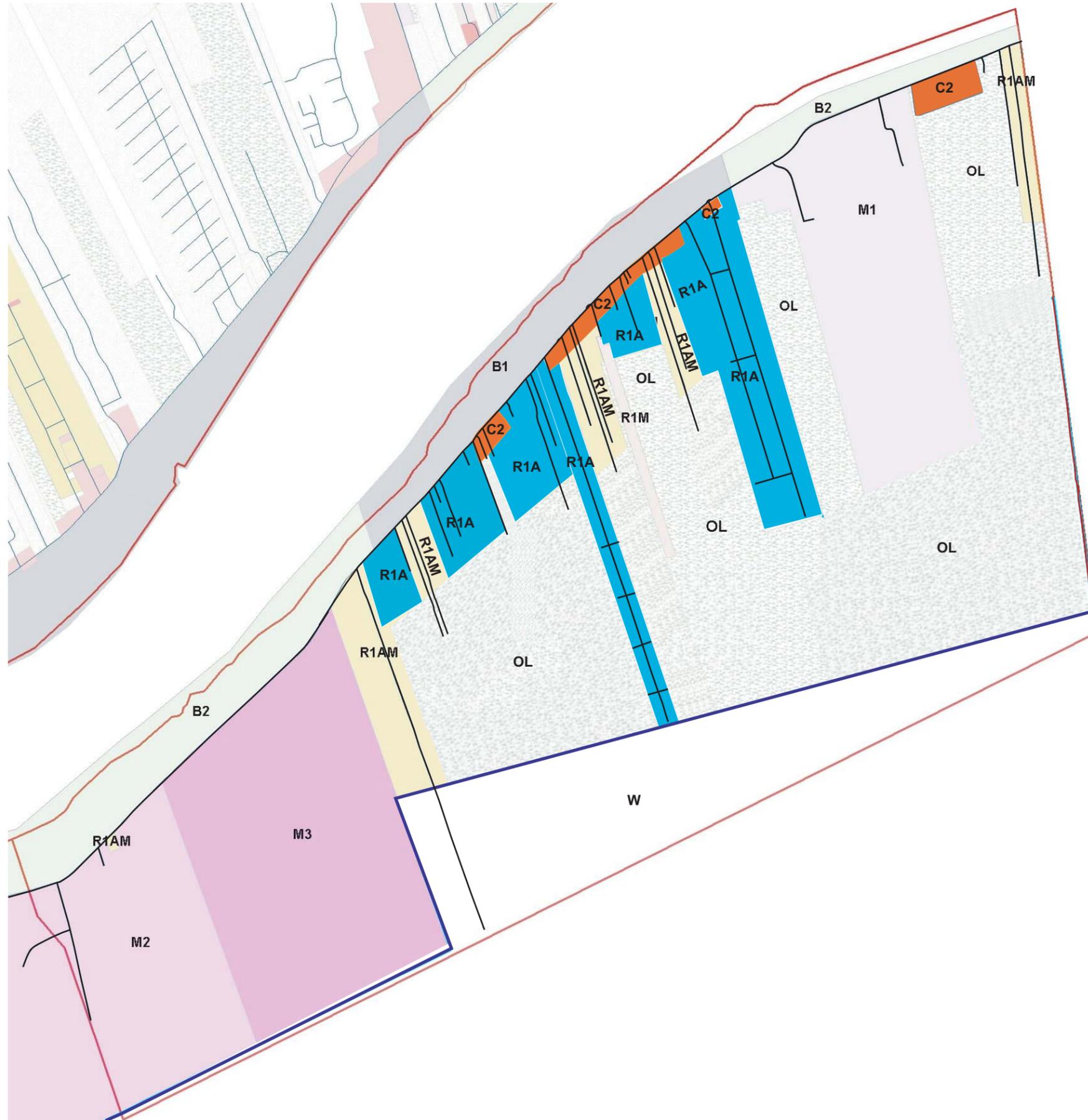


Figure 5-A
Recommended Zoning
Ama Land Use & Zoning Study
Ama, Louisiana

NOT TO SCALE
 FOR PLANNING PURPOSES ONLY