



Ascension Parish Moratorium Ordinance

A **moratorium** should not be imposed in an effort to solve infrastructure-related problems. Sound infrastructure planning is not a short-term fix. It is a long-term process that requires diligence, commitment, and professionalism on the part of professional planners and elected leaders.

During a rare rain event on Tuesday, May 18, 2021, Ascension Parish President Clint Cointment released a document outlining a temporary moratorium ordinance on **future subdivision of property, both residential and commercial development**, for twelve months. The moratorium ordinance was prompted by the flooding of 54 homes and introduced at the Ascension Parish Council meeting on May 20, 2021.

The **Home Builders Association (HBA)**, which includes all aspects of development from the ground up, is ready to work with Ascension Parish Administration to plan infrastructure and create smart growth. As residents and business owners, we want to work alongside Ascension Parish to protect and enhance the public health, safety and welfare of the community.

OUR STANCE: A moratorium halting development is **not** necessary to accomplish traffic and drainage infrastructure improvements. Therefore, we oppose needing a moratorium to accomplish gaining better traffic and drainage.

OUR KEY POINTS:

- **Support Innovation:** HBA encourages research to develop new building materials, techniques, and equipment, as well as improved methods of home financing, to ensure every home purchaser receives the greatest value possible for every dollar.
- **Adhere to Guidelines:** Prior to any development approval, those developing property work through the preliminary plot process with the Planning Commission that mandates extensive review by administration engineers, outsourced to CSRS. FACT: The May 2021 Planning Commission report shows several proposed subdivisions have been in-process for as long as 5 years, which demonstrates the critical examination during the application phases.
- **Comply with Fees:** As of 2017, Transportation Impact Fees have generated over \$10 million through new construction permits in the parish. On June 3rd at the Donaldsonville AP Council meeting, a vote will be taken to increase the Transportation Impact Fee on all new building permits. Ascension administration also intends to do an assessment of a potential Drainage Impact Fee. There is little justification for raising impact fees when there are funds already designated for infrastructure improvements. When growth is limited by impact fees, the direct and indirect benefits of growth—such as a larger property tax base, increased employment opportunities, increased disposable income, increased sales and other tax revenues—will also be limited. In regions where communities are competing for growth, impact fees can push the growth to other areas if the fees are high enough and the market is sensitive.
- **Government Regulation:** On a percentage basis, the latest estimates show that regulations imposed by government at all levels account for 23.8 percent of the final price of a new single-family home built for sale. When residents buy a home, the regulatory costs are included in the final price. These are government-imposed fees, again not allowing the residents of the community to decide to vote for or against.
- **Participation:** HBA members have been engaged with Ascension Parish efforts including the FEMA Consumer Rating System, parish development standards, and sewer sale vote. In other surrounding parishes, industry has dedicated seats on the Louisiana Watershed Initiative Region 7, EBR Stormwater Management Committee, Livingston Citizen Drainage Board, EBR Board of Adjustments and Appeals, as well as Georgetown Climate Center and Capital Region Planning Commission Resilience Work Committee, etc.
- **Master Plans:** Ascension Parish adopted separate master plans for Land Use and Transportation and has executed a contract with HNTB, an engineering consulting firm, to create a \$2 million Flood Plain Master Plan. The parish has spent tens of millions of dollars on engineering, master plans, and studies.

- **Ascension Residents:** Concerns from residents presented during the public comment section of the May 20, 2021, council meeting agenda overwhelmingly suggested the lack of drainage maintenance of waterways was to blame for the flooding. Resident outrage was centered around blocked drainage, time and money spent on consulting, and no action taken on implementation of the plans in place to address flooding.

PARISH & INDUSTRY FACTS:

- Ascension Parish, with a population of 126,604, grew 18% from 2010 to 2019 making it the fastest-growing parish in Louisiana. Residents want quality of life and a community that provides great amenities.
- In 2018, Construction and Extraction Occupations accounted for 7.3% of the workforce in Ascension Parish making it one of the most common and specialized occupations accounting for 4,000 employees.
- HBA has 134 members that are registered businesses located in Ascension Parish with the majority of our members providing resources and services to the Ascension Parish community.
- The home building industry benefits the community through a variety of taxes including one time sales tax and annual property taxes. If Ascension were to build 881 new homes, the parish would benefit from roughly \$3.4 million sales tax, \$1.7 million in annual property tax, and \$1.7 million sales tax from in-parish spending. Only including the tax implication and not the regulatory or impact fees, new construction conservatively generates \$6.8 million in tax revenue.

What will be done in Ascension to decrease or prevent flooding that requires a twelve-month moratorium on **future subdivision of property, both residential and commercial development?**

HOW YOU CAN VOICE YOUR STANCE & TAKE ACTION:

- **AP Residents** - Start with your neighbors and communicate your position on the moratorium with a focus on the resident perspective and educate other residents that it is not the new development that caused the flooding. *Development standards are regulated and enforced by parish government.* How does stopping new development fix the traffic and drainage issues?
- **Contact** your council member – Numbers Matter:
 - *Inquire:* Is this moratorium necessary to accomplish the goal?
 - *Provide:* Information on how you as a business/employee would be impacted by any disruption in development.
 - *Request:* HBA's involvement and open lines of communication.
- **Attend** the Ascension Parish Council Meeting on Thursday, June 17, 2021, and complete a **red form** to stand in opposition of the moratorium ordinance.

To join our advocacy efforts, please contact Melissa Parmelee, Vice President of Government & Community Relations, at 225-937-0092 or melissa@hbagbr.org.

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