

Our Voice. Our Plan. Our Future.

Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan

Vision and Strategies
for Recovery and Growth
in South Louisiana

May 2007



Louisiana Speaks is the long-term
community planning initiative of the LRA



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Lori Waselchuk



Allen C. Smith, Wurtele Foundation





UDA/La. Speaks Pattern Book



Executive

Summary

LOUISIANA SPEAKS

A PLAN FOR ACTION

THE LOUISIANA SPEAKS REGIONAL PLAN IS SET TO GUIDE OUR STATE AND ITS PEOPLE ON A BOLD NEW COURSE, THROUGH OUR RECOVERY AND INTO A SAFER, STRONGER, SMARTER FUTURE.

This is a time of challenges, but we will become stronger because of them. We are a state and a people blessed with rich natural and cultural resources and opportunities. South Louisiana will continue to provide us with land for homes and jobs, water for food and industry, and wetlands for safety from storms and flooding. In exchange, we promise to be stewards of this treasured landscape, of our cities, our towns, and our people.

We will build better levees, and we will restore the barrier islands, wetlands, and seashores that provide our first line of defense against storms. We will reinvest in our communities and we will build sustainable, vibrant new neighborhoods. We will create a diverse, resilient economy and provide the education necessary to attract more and better jobs, and we will supply quality healthcare. We will work to ensure that everyone has a choice of where to live and how to get around—by car, on efficient modern transit systems, and by foot or bike.

We will work together as a region to realize this vision, combining our talents and resources to meet the challenges we face. The Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan embodies our commitment to three Vision Goals: **Recover Sustainably, Grow Smarter**, and **Think Regionally**.

Louisiana Speaks is the long-term community planning initiative of the Louisiana Recovery Authority. This Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan document lays out a clear plan based on Louisianians' aspirations for the future, and it provides specific actions to get us there.

LOUISIANIANS SPOKE. LOUISIANA SPEAKS IS WHAT THEY SAID.

The Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan is a living document. It establishes a dynamic, flexible framework that can accommodate contingency and change while remaining true to a unifying vision. As the plan is implemented—as levees are built, wetlands restored, communities enhanced, and economies strengthened—we will learn from reality as it plays out. This plan will be constantly updated, revised, and improved.

Vision Goal 1: Recover Sustainably

Strategies for Near-Term Recovery



CLEAR

A sustainable recovery means reinvesting in our communities, building key protection systems, stemming wetland loss, and meeting the immediate needs of our businesses and workers.

Strategies for a Sustainable Recovery and the recommended actions that will help us achieve them are explained in full in the chapter **Vision Goal 1: Recover Sustainably** on page 29.



Our recovery from hurricanes Katrina and Rita is well under way, led by federal, state, and local efforts to meet short-term needs. We now have an opportunity to coordinate these recovery efforts with a vision for long-term sustainability to create a better future. Now is the time to rebuild smarter and stronger, combining the best of our communities and cultures with a forward-looking framework that coordinates our efforts to create a more resilient coast, stronger communities, and a more robust economy.

Rebuilding sustainably requires that we tackle immediate and approaching problems today. We must build levees that protect our communities and rich history without compromising natural systems. We need to restore lost wetlands and prevent future losses. We must engage in an aggressive strategy for reinvesting in our communities. We must meet the immediate needs of workers and businesses. We need to secure access to affordable insurance for businesses and homeowners. And we must extend successful recovery programs and support the recovery plans of cities and towns across South Louisiana.

KEY STRATEGIES FOR A SUSTAINABLE RECOVERY

1. **Enable our Recovery** by adopting the Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA) Master Plan to make us safer from storms, and by linking land use, transportation, and economic development policies to the CPRA's investments and strategies.
2. **Insure our Recovery** by identifying obstacles to affordable insurance and acting to keep private insurance available to households and businesses.
3. **Align Recovery and Growth Planning** by coordinating local, parish, state, and federal recovery efforts with implementation of the Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan.
4. **Reinvest in our Communities** by focusing infrastructure and new development into existing communities and urbanized areas.
5. **Bridge the Immediate Needs of Businesses and Workers** by providing financial assistance, housing, quality healthcare, and training programs.
6. **Expand Recovery-Critical Industries** by building a robust local housing industry, supporting a coastal-sciences technology sector, and using existing infrastructure to capture growth opportunities.
7. **Provide Reliable Social and Community Services** by expanding access to quality healthcare and K-12 educational opportunities.



Lori Waselchuk



Lori Waselchuk



Mid City Redevelopment Alliance



Vision Goal 2: Grow Smarter

Strategies for Long-Term Reinvestment and Growth



UDA/La. Speaks Pattern Book

Now is our opportunity to build a sustainable recovery and pursue a safer, stronger, smarter future. We need a comprehensive approach that addresses the varied and complex challenges on the horizon: growing threats to our coastal environment, rising transportation and housing costs, traffic congestion, healthcare shortages, and competitive national and global economies.

Growing smarter requires that we begin now to lay the groundwork for a safer and more resilient future. We must manage risk from future storms, working to protect and preserve our communities and cultures. Future development must revitalize our communities, and it must be coordinated with strategies for managing risk through levees and coastal restoration. We need to build diverse, vibrant communities with a range of housing options and robust economies. And we must create transportation networks that will serve and connect all Louisianians well into the future and get us all out of harm's way when storms threaten.

KEY STRATEGIES FOR GROWING SMARTER

- 1. Comprehensively Manage Future Risk** by coordinating protection and restoration with public investment, private development, and state and local policies.
- 2. Develop and Invest Smarter** by focusing investment in existing cities and towns and by building new mixed-use, walkable communities coordinated with transportation and protection infrastructure.
- 3. Move Louisiana Forward** by building efficient, cutting-edge passenger and freight transportation networks over road, rail, air, and water.
- 4. Build a Robust and Resilient Economy** by taking advantage of traditional strengths, educating the workforce of tomorrow, and pursuing emerging opportunities.
- 5. Meet our Future Housing Needs** by ensuring an adequate supply of housing to meet a wide range of future needs throughout the region.
- 6. Preserve our Communities and Protect Our Unique Cultures** by sustaining the places we treasure and the things that make us Louisianian.
- 7. Provide Quality Social and Community Services**, including healthcare and education.



The Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan integrates our land-use decisions, transportation investments, building regulations, and insurance strategies with protection and restoration projects and plans.

Strategies for Growing Smarter and the recommended actions that will help us achieve them, are explained in full in the chapter **Vision Goal 2: Grow Smarter** on page 47.



Vision Goal 3: Think Regionally

Planning and Implementation



The Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan builds a framework in which planning at the state, regional, and local governments are coordinated to create stronger communities supported by a restored coast and a resilient economy. A top priority is extending this framework to Central and North Louisiana.

More than ever before, we live our lives within the context of a larger region. Our economic opportunities, cultural assets, social lives, and recreational destinations extend beyond neighborhood, city, or parish boundaries. In tackling recovery and opportunities for future growth, the Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan embodies a regional, coastwide approach to planning for our future, and we will extend this vision to encompass the entire state of Louisiana.

There is much that we already share, and we all depend on common resources. Major infrastructure investments should be seen as assets to the many communities that they connect. Preservation and stewardship of our coast should be understood as a regionwide responsibility. The decisions each of us make about the location and type of new construction should be seen for their effects on our region's economy through our insurance rates and other shared costs. Providing workforce housing should be treated as fundamental to sustaining our region's economic vitality. Educational excellence and accessible, quality healthcare at all levels should be understood as the foundation of a healthy society and economy. And preserving the complex cultural fabric that makes South Louisiana unique is at the heart of our common identity and future. In short, the things we share at a regional level—the strengths as well as the risks—will define our shared future and our individual opportunities.

Thinking regionally means working together to achieve sustainable recovery and smarter growth. It involves important decisions about how we invest public dollars. It will mean devoting legislation, policy changes, and resources to increase capacity for planning, coordination, and implementation at the state, regional, and local levels. It will require cooperation among the private, nonprofit, and public sectors. It will not be easy and it will not happen overnight. That is why the unifying vision in the Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan is necessary to help guide the way.

KEY STRATEGIES FOR REGIONAL PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

1. **Extend the Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan** to include areas that were not directly affected by Katrina and Rita, including Central and North Louisiana.
2. **Achieve Effective Statewide Planning** by providing resources and legislation to enable state, regional, and local governments to integrate and coordinate planning and implementation.

Strategies for Regional Planning and Implementation, and the recommended actions that will help us achieve them, are explained in full in the chapter **Vision Goal 3: Think Regionally** on page 79.



LDOTD



What Will Louisiana Speaks Do?

Building Smarter and Safer for the Next Generation



Lori Waselchuk

The Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan is a concrete, coastwide vision and action plan that builds upon existing recovery efforts to create a sustainable recovery and a safer, stronger, smarter future. It is part of an unprecedented planning effort that combines parish recovery plans, environmentally sustainable architectural and urban design guidelines, and neighborhood demonstration plans.

Louisiana Speaks has been working with local and regional officials, business leaders, and world-renowned economists, urban planners, and coastal scientists to create an integrated set of strategies and actions for a stronger Louisiana. The planning process included an unprecedented public campaign that involved workshops, newspaper inserts, television broadcasts, and online and telephone surveys. Nearly 27,000 Louisianians from across the planning region and in the diaspora participated in outreach activities, providing essential guidance for the vision and strategies included in this document.

A PLAN WITH ACTION

The Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan arises out of the worst natural disasters in U.S. history. Katrina and Rita exposed system failures—from coastal land-loss and unprotected communities to poverty, poor education, crime, and substandard healthcare. This plan brings hope, through action, by bringing together the collective wisdom of Louisiana into a blueprint for short-term recovery and long-term growth.

The plan is organized around three goals: Recover Sustainably, Grow Smarter, and Think Regionally. Each goal is supported by a set of strategies—broad directions for realizing the goal—and actions—specific steps required to achieve the strategies. Timelines and funding characteristics are contained in Appendix B. A more detailed Louisiana Speaks Strategic Implementation Plan, including benchmarks and responsible parties, will be available in July 2007.

Through Louisiana Speaks, the people of Louisiana have set forth a mandate for change. We are ready to invest in the long-term viability of our communities, and we understand that to do so, we must invest in our coast and our economies. We know these things will require working together and pursuing long-term, comprehensive solutions. But Louisianians do not want change for change's sake. We want to preserve and reinforce those things that make us and our home uniquely Louisianian.

DOCUMENT STRUCTURE

Vision Goals



This plan is organized into chapters addressing each of the Vision Goals: **Recover Sustainably**, **Grow Smarter** and **Think Regionally**. A set of strategies is presented to accomplish each vision goal. Each strategy is reinforced by a suite of concrete implementation actions.

A more detailed **Louisiana Speaks Strategic Implementation Plan** document will be available in July 2007.



Lori Waselchuk

Tens of thousands of Louisianians participated in the Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan process, providing essential guidance for the strategies and actions included in this document.

LOUISIANA SPEAKS REGIONAL VISION MAP

This map illustrates a future for South Louisiana based on the input of tens of thousands of citizens and stakeholders. It also includes elements of the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority's Master Plan.

The vision builds on a sustainable recovery that restores coastal wetlands, constructs strategic levees, and reinvests in historic communities. New growth is focused in and around existing communities, linked to investments in protection infrastructure, regional transportation, and economic zones.



George Armstrong/FEMA

Recover Sustainably

We must face immediate and approaching problems today by building levees that protect our communities and rich history, by restoring wetlands, by reinvesting in communities and supporting their recovery, and by meeting the immediate needs of workers and businesses.

Reinvestment Areas*

- **Urban Center:** The largest national/regional centers—major offices, shops, civic, and cultural facilities and multifamily housing. Accessible by major national and regional transit and roadways.
- **City Center:** Major subregional centers—offices, shops, civic, and cultural facilities, and a mix of multifamily housing, townhomes, and single family homes. Accessible by regional transit and roadways.
- **Town Center:** Local residential and commercial centers—local shops and offices, and single family homes, townhomes and multifamily housing. Accessible by local transit and roadways.
- **Existing Urbanized Areas:** Development within existing communities—single-family homes, townhomes, multifamily housing, and local retail. Accessible by transit and roadways.
- **Special Economic Zones:** Key economic centers that do not have levee protection, but do have storm risk mitigation through hazard planning and limits on new development. Includes commercial fishing facilities, industrial plants, ports, and recreational sites.

New Growth Areas

- **Town:** Centers serving new communities—regional offices, shops, and civic and cultural facilities, as well as a mix of multifamily housing, townhomes, and single family homes. Accessible by regional and local transit and regional roadways.
- **Neighborhood:** A mix of single family homes, townhomes, multifamily housing and local shops. Accessible by transit service and roads.
- **Industrial Expansion:** New or expanded industrial districts.

Transportation Systems

- ▬ **New Primary Transit Corridor** (Intercity high-speed and/or regional commuter rail)
- ▬ **New or Existing Secondary Transit Corridor** (fixed-route public transit, such as light rail or street car)
- ▬ **New or Improved Roadway**
- ▬ **Existing Interstate**
- ▬ **Existing US or State Highway**
- **Major Port Facility**
- +++++ **Existing Rail Corridor**

* Reinvestment centers highlight communities that already serve as anchors for surrounding areas, or would serve as anchors in the future. This was determined based upon a combination of land use density and functional characteristics such as regional location and links to major transportation corridors. Example centers serve to illustrate reinvestment opportunity areas derived through discussions with local officials as well as qualitative and quantitative analysis, but are not an exhaustive list. Many rural communities do not appear on the map.



Grow Smarter

We must pursue strategies for a safer and more resilient future by integrating coastal restoration and levee protection with land use and investment policy, and by building diverse communities with a range of housing and transportation options.



Think Regionally

We must work to achieve sustainable recovery and smarter growth by linking state and regional investments in transportation, levees, and coastal restoration to land use and risk management priorities, and by providing resources to enhance local and regional planning capacity.

Landscape Features

- Existing Wetland
- New or Restored Wetland 50-year projection
- Agricultural, Upland Forest or Open Land
- Open Water

Jurisdictional Boundaries

- State Boundary
- Parish Boundary

CPRA Master Plan Features**

- New Levee
- Upgraded Levee
- Existing Levee
- Increased Protection for Major Urban Areas Using Hurricane Protection Systems (Other hurricane protection systems envisioned; see CPRA Master Plan**)
- Shoreline, Barrier Island or Navigable Waterway Restoration/Stabilization
- River Diversion
- Water or Sediment Conveyance

** For more information on the CPRA Master Plan, visit www.louisianacoastalplanning.org

RECOVER SUSTAINABLY

Reinvest in Our Communities

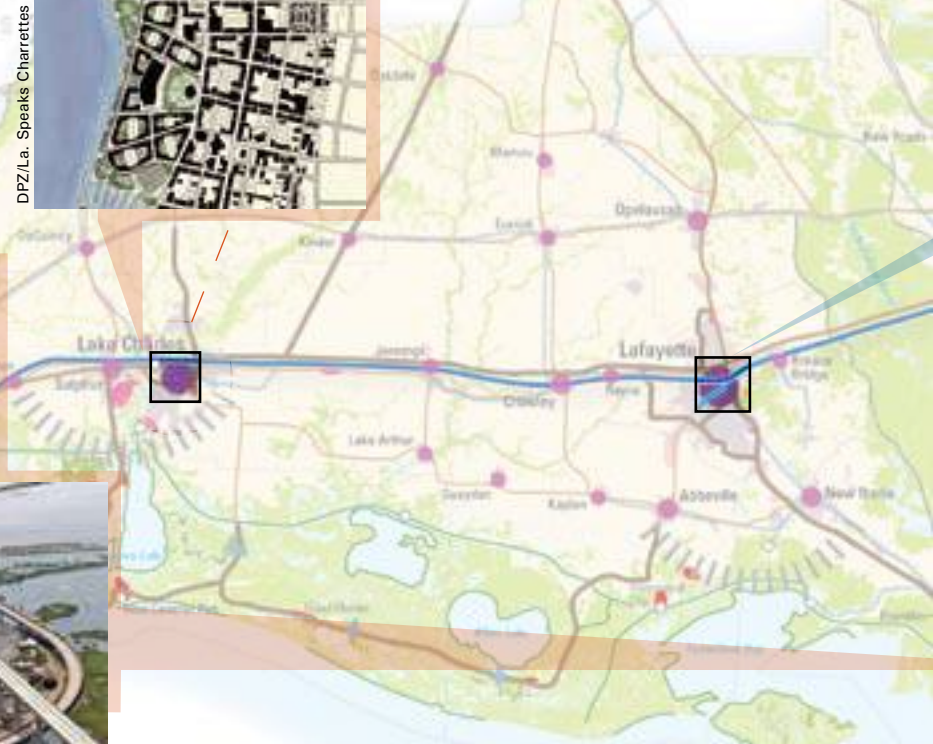
Many of our communities have seen decades of declining populations and employment, and now face an urgent need for reinvestment. The Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan proposes to immediately focus infrastructure and development in existing communities, reduce financial and regulatory barriers to infill development, and create local capacity for spurring reinvestment.



DPZ/La. Speaks Charrettes

Immediately Fund Strategic Recovery Projects

Rather than separating short- and long-term planning, the Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan will leverage short-term recovery projects to create momentum for a stronger future. Near-term projects include building key recovery-related transportation lines, extending successful economic recovery initiatives, and implementing local and parish recovery plans.



Restore Our Coast and Build Stronger Levees

Achieving greater storm protection, restoring our wetlands, and reducing risk begins now by adopting the Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA) Master Plan and Annual Plans. Short-term priorities of these plans include accelerating hurricane protection around key population centers and river diversion projects to rebuild our coastal wetlands. These projects will support community reinvestment efforts such as the New Orleans Rebuild, Redevelop and Renew Areas.



City of New Orleans Targeted Recovery Areas

■ Rebuild Area ● Renew Area ■ Redevelopment Area

GROW SMARTER

Invest and Develop Smarter

Many long-term priorities—sustained reinvestment in our communities, efficient use of public investments, preservation of sensitive land, and effective risk management—are closely linked to the location of development and state investments.

The Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan coordinates future development and infrastructure with these priorities to sustain and strengthen our communities while making us safer from storms.



CMTA, Austin, TX



James Mohler

Build the Transportation Network of the Future

The Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan focuses on cutting-edge passenger transportation to support our communities and robust goods movement to support our economy. The plan aims to create a seamless network of regional and local transportation service. Land development and public investments will be focused along these corridors.

Manage Storm and Flood Risk

The Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan proposes a multi-pronged risk management strategy: continue restoring our wetlands, build strategic levees, invest in systems of secondary defense, enforce building codes, implement coastal zoning ordinances, focus new development in low-risk locations, educate homeowners living in high-risk areas, manage our watersheds, and purchase high-risk and environmentally sensitive land.

DPZ/La. Speaks Charrettes





Lori Waselchuk



Lori Waselchuk



Lori Waselchuk



Louisiana Speaks. Now is the Time.

Background, Context, and Process



Hurricanes Katrina and Rita struck the Gulf Coast less than four weeks apart, damaging more than 200,000 homes, 81,000 businesses and 870 schools. More than 1,500 lives were lost and more than 1.3 million Louisianians were displaced. Areas along the southwestern Louisiana coast were decimated by winds and water, and nearly 80% of New Orleans was flooded when the federal levees failed.

The storms left a legacy that will be felt for generations. But they did not diminish the spirit and determination of Louisiana's people. Since the storms, millions of tons of debris have been removed from devastated areas. Homes and businesses have been gutted or demolished, and rebuilding is under way.

Communities are recovering. From Cameron to St. Bernard, residents are making tough choices about their futures and taking steps to rebuild better than before. And local, state, and federal governments are working together to move the recovery forward.

Louisiana Speaks

Louisiana Speaks is the long-term planning initiative of the Louisiana Recovery Authority (LRA), supported with private funds through the LRA Support Foundation. It works toward the development of a sustainable, long-term vision for South Louisiana. It combines local, state, and federal efforts with the work of experts, stakeholders, and citizens into a comprehensive approach that will guide recovery and growth over the next 50 years.



Louisiana Speaks. Now is the Time.

A Critical Moment in History



Lori Waselchuk

Guiding Principles

The vision and strategies embodied by the Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan grow out of an extensive process of consensus-building and public outreach. The very first statement of guiding principles was drawn up in December 2005 at the Louisiana Recovery and Rebuilding Conference, and soon after adopted by the Louisiana Recovery Authority:

- Create infrastructure that supports recovery by restoring confidence, enhancing quality of life, and withstanding future disasters.
- Promote economic growth that benefits everyone.
- Provide public services that enhance quality of life for everyone.
- Pursue policies that promote a healthy environment and healthy people.
- Plan and design communities that advance livability.

Go to www.lrrc-prod.aia.org for more information

FROM RECOVERY TO REBUILDING

Despite the progress we've made, much remains to be done. In the coming years, our construction economy will take root and tens of thousands of homes will be rebuilt. Billions of dollars will be invested to restore bridges, roads, and sewer and water systems. Families will continue moving back. More tourists will come to experience our rich culture, and private business will reinvest.

But these advances will not come without challenges and obstacles. We face rising housing costs and traffic congestion. Insurance is costly and hard to obtain. And we remain vulnerable to storms. As we face these challenges and move from short-term recovery to long-term growth, it is more important than ever that we share a unified vision for the future.

A CRITICAL MOMENT IN HISTORY

The 2005 hurricanes left behind the most complex rebuilding effort in United States history. But they also created new opportunities. With billions of dollars in federal recovery funds and unprecedented private-sector investments that will infuse the state over the next decade, Louisiana has a once-in-a-generation chance to rebuild safer, stronger, and smarter than ever before.

The hurricanes created opportunities. Louisiana is now uniquely positioned to become a worldwide leader in new housing technologies, coastal sciences, and restoration techniques. Louisiana also has a historic opportunity to capitalize on its existing strengths—its natural resources and distinctive cultures—to build a more diverse and resilient economy.

To take advantage of these emerging opportunities, we need a realistic plan that moves us in a new direction, together. We need a plan that identifies near-term strategies for rebuilding our communities, but also provides a vision for long-term growth. This road map for our future is the Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan.



Lori Waselchuk





THE BROADER LOUISIANA SPEAKS INITIATIVE

Working to turn tragedy into opportunity in the aftermath of the devastating hurricanes, the LRA has embarked on one of the most ambitious planning efforts in history: Louisiana Speaks. The Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan is one track of the broader Louisiana Speaks initiative, which is planning for Louisiana’s recovery and its future. Like pieces of a puzzle, these tracks are overlapping and interconnected.

Building Planning

Through planning for buildings and urban design, Louisiana Speaks is changing the way we plan for emergency housing and showing homeowners and developers how to build safe, environmentally sustainable houses that look at home in Louisiana.

- The *Louisiana Speaks Pattern Book* and *Planning Toolkit* provide practical tools and resources to help Louisiana rebuild its homes and communities. For more information, visit www.louisianaspeaks.org.
- Louisiana’s Alternative Housing Pilot Program—the “Katrina Cottage” program—provides affordable, easy-to-assemble, hurricane-proof housing for displaced citizens. Visit www.lra.louisiana.gov.

Neighborhood Planning

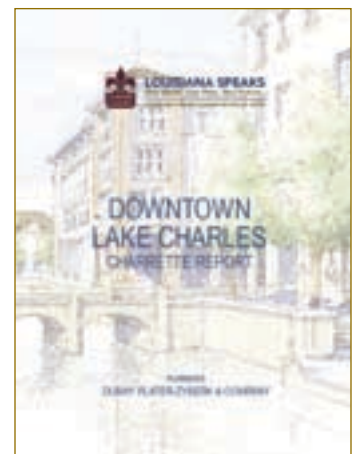
Through local design workshops—called “charrettes”—Louisiana Speaks developed model plans for recovery and redevelopment in Lake Charles, Vermilion Parish, and St. Bernard Parish. These plans are among the building blocks of the Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan. They demonstrate how big ideas can be implemented at the local level, one neighborhood at a time. These charrettes have since been developed into full-blown redevelopment plans for downtown Lake Charles, St. Bernard Parish, and at the National Guard’s Jackson Barracks. Louisiana Speaks also supported a design workshop in Cameron. Visit www.louisianaspeaks.org.

Parish Planning

Through Louisiana Speaks, the LRA also worked with FEMA’s ESF-14 division to establish long-term community recovery teams to help prioritize parish recovery needs in the most heavily impacted parishes. The parishes’ identified priority recovery projects underpin the Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan. Visit www.louisianaspeaks-parishplans.org.

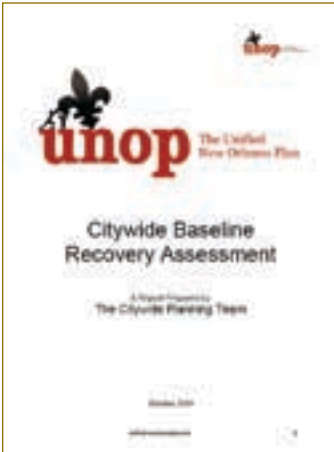
Regional Planning

The Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan is the final piece of the puzzle. It brings everything together and coordinates it with other state and local planning initiatives.



Louisiana Speaks. Now is the Time.

Allied Planning Efforts



ALLIED PLANNING EFFORTS

The Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan was developed in close cooperation with several independent, parallel planning efforts.

The Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA) is charged by the state with creating a long-range Master Plan that integrates enhanced levee protection with a new emphasis on coastal restoration. The Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan and CPRA have exchanged data, mapping, modeling, and public input throughout their processes. The planning efforts have also worked closely on the development of risk-management policies and strategies.

The Louisiana Speaks Regional Planning process also worked with the Unified New Orleans Plan (UNOP), which the LRA supported and which involved a massive public involvement effort and real-time preference voting. Thousands of people were linked by satellite in multiple cities for three “congresses.” UNOP’s work is directly informing the City of New Orleans’ Recovery Plan, and Louisiana Speaks and the LRA have continued to work with the city to support the development and implementation of its recovery plans. The Louisiana Speaks planning team has also worked with recovery plans and planners from other parishes across the coast.

Additionally, the Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan has taken into account years of existing planning in Louisiana, including state and regional transportation plans, state and regional economic development plans, and numerous other existing studies and strategic documents. And the planning team has worked closely with local, regional, and state agencies to keep up-to-date on new projects, plans, and strategies as they are developed.



Anthony Patton



Anthony Patton





A STRONG FOUNDATION

The Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan takes as its starting point years of solid planning in Louisiana. Significant elements of the plan rest upon this work, including:

- The State Transportation Plan—the Department of Transportation and Development’s comprehensive transportation plan—as well as the updates and plans of the regional planning entities that inform the state plan
- Vision 2020, a forward-looking economic development plan by the Louisiana Economic Development Commission
- The Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority Master Plan
- The PriceWaterhouseCoopers Report on Healthcare and other healthcare studies
- Paragon’s analysis of a Louisiana Hurricane Catastrophe Fund
- And more

For a full bibliography and list of additional resources on planning in Louisiana, see Appendix G. For related plans, see Appendix H.

The Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan also draws heavily from data created and provided by numerous state agencies and regional planning entities. For a full discussion of data sources and modeling, see Appendix B.





Lori Waselchuk

Support for a Regional Approach

Louisiana Speaks citizen and stakeholder polling indicated strong support for a large-scale, regional approach to planning for recovery and growth. This reflects an understanding, heightened by the 2005 storms, that some issues—such as coastal restoration, levee protection, transportation, evacuation, and economic development—cross jurisdictional boundaries and thus must be dealt with in a comprehensive and coordinated way.

LOUISIANA SPEAKS REGIONAL PLANNING

A COMPREHENSIVE VISION FOR RECOVERY, GROWTH, AND RISK MANAGEMENT

The Louisiana Speaks regional planning effort represents the most extensive project of its kind ever undertaken. Covering more than 25,000 square miles and 35 parishes across South Louisiana, the project addresses the full spectrum of challenges associated with our state's recovery and long-term growth. It represents a comprehensive approach to managing risk and growing smarter, and it is at its core a plan of concrete actions and policies.

UNDERSTANDING THE PAST AND PRESENT TO PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

The Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan cast a wide net in developing background and data resources to inform the planning process. This included detailed reviews of pre- and post-hurricane local and parish planning efforts, broad public surveys, and regular coordination meetings with the five South Louisiana regional planning commissions and with key state agencies. In addition, data resources were compiled from numerous government and private sources, and, in some cases, entirely new data sets were created.



Louisiana Speaks Planning Area

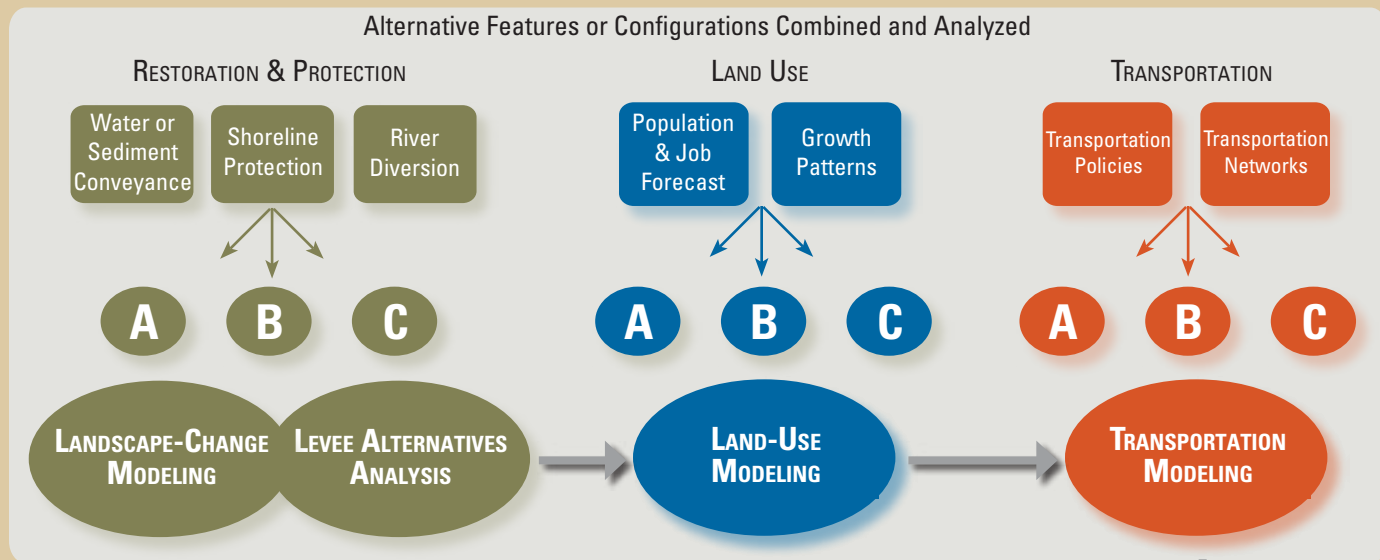
Baseline data collection began immediately following Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Wherever possible, the planning team evaluated all post-storm data for consistency and completeness against multiple sources, and new data sources were incorporated as they became available from ongoing research and surveys. Key data sources and layers included: US Census data; post-hurricane population and economic data; environmental land cover data; flood zone data; elevation and bathymetry; and a comprehensive land-use coverage map of the entire study area compiled for the project (the first-ever statewide map of its kind for Louisiana).

The resulting rich library of plans, data, and other resources provided an essential base on which to explore future alternatives, and still serves as an excellent collection of local and regional data for governments and agencies to utilize in their own future planning and decision making.



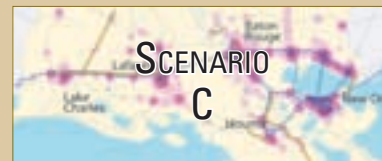
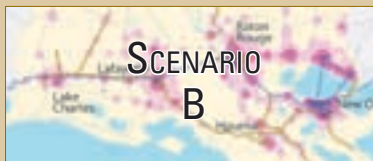
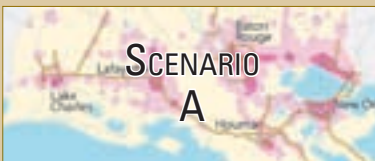
Modeling Options for the Future

The Louisiana Speaks Regional Planning process utilized computer modeling to test the effects of different land-use, transportation, storm protection, and restoration scenarios for a variety of safety, livability, and transportation indicators. A series of scenarios represent possible futures based on historic patterns, emerging trends, and different policy directions. The following diagram shows some of the key variables and technical models used to develop the scenarios and their modeled consequences. Please see Appendix B for more information on the modeling process.



Modeling of Restoration/Protection, Land Use, and Transportation Informs Composite Scenarios

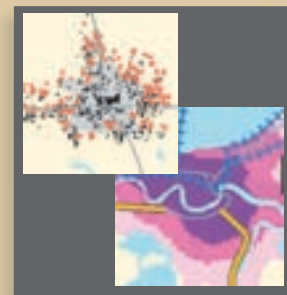
See Community Growth and Transportation Options inset on page 19 for more on the Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan scenarios.



Modeling of Composite Scenarios

Indicators

Indicators measure the impacts or consequences of an option. Examples include area of wetland gain or loss, mix of new housing types, commute times, open land developed, new development in floodplains, or the cost of building a new transportation system. The Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan utilized these indicators to compare future options, querying the preferences of Louisiana residents in the 2007 Regional Vision Poll. Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan options and trade-offs are described in further detail in this section.



SAMPLE INDICATORS

Open Land Developed

New Development in Floodplain

Commute Time

Housing Mix

Annual Household Expenses

Highway Congestion

Transit Ridership

Automobile Emissions

Wetland Gain & Loss

Infrastructure Costs

Housing Density

Louisiana Speaks. Now is the Time.

Scenario Planning and Technical Analysis

Projections

National and regional economic forecasts were used to estimate population and economic growth throughout South Louisiana. Assumptions were developed based on consultation with the Brookings Institution, Moody's Economy.com, the Greater New Orleans Community Data Center, and economists and demographers in Louisiana. The forecasting makes two assumptions: that the growth rate will approximate the national average, and that population and jobs loss due to the 2005 hurricanes will be recovered by the end of the planning horizon.

Such projections will surely be modified as new information about population and economic recovery and growth emerges. However, notwithstanding the precision of projections, the patterns of development and choice of transportation systems depicted in the various growth options—whether they emerge in 30, 50, or even 70 years—are instrumental in conveying the consequences of how and where we develop in South Louisiana.

SCENARIO PLANNING AND CUTTING-EDGE TECHNICAL ANALYSIS

The Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan process is based upon scenario-planning techniques. Rather than simply projecting trends into the future and then accommodating them, scenario planning models the differing impacts of policy decisions and investments. By comparing the costs and benefits of future scenarios, the process allows policymakers and the public to make educated decisions about the future.

The planning team used sophisticated computer modeling to test the impacts of different protection and restoration strategies combined with different land-use and transportation options for South Louisiana. Landscape-change modeling, run by coastal scientists at Louisiana State University, measured the impacts of coastal restoration projects and levee alignments, enriching the discussion of the costs and benefits of different strategies.

The scenarios were analyzed according to a number of measures, including a variety of safety, livability, and transportation indicators. The page at right illustrates three distinct growth and transportation scenarios for South Louisiana. Each one accommodates the same projection of approximately 1.7 million additional people and 1.25 million jobs between December 2005 and 2050 (see sidebar on projections).

Through the scenario-planning process, the people of Louisiana were given clear choices about their future, including comparisons between the costs and benefits of different futures. Armed with this concrete information, they made the meaningful choices that drive the Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan.



Modeling Coastal Landscape Change: This sample map shows projected change in wetland area over 50 years with no increased action. This model tested the consequences of different approaches to restoration and protection, and served as key information for the CPRA in developing its Master Plan.

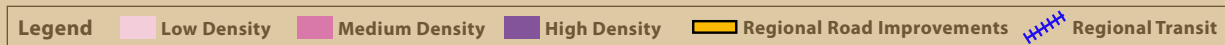
Modeling Transportation Impacts:

Using the State Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD)'s traffic model, this map shows projected congestion levels in the year 2050 if current development patterns continue and if all planned and proposed state roadway improvements are built. This trend-driven future became Scenario A (see page at right for more about the scenarios).



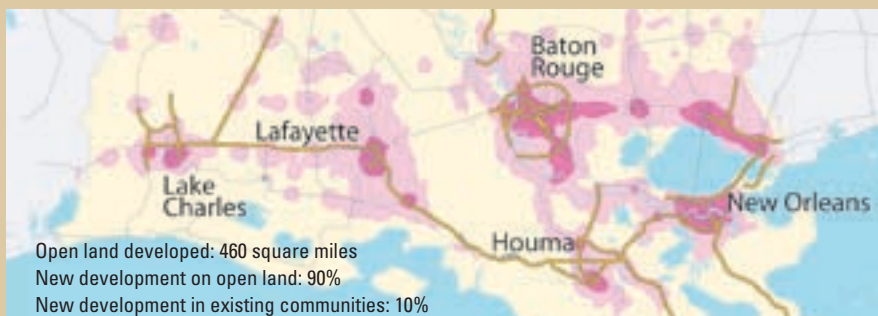
Community Growth and Transportation Options for South Louisiana

The Louisiana Speaks Regional Vision Poll asked citizens to choose one of the following as the best future for the next generation. Each option accommodates the same number of projected people and jobs from December 2005 to the year 2050 (1.7 million new people and 1.3 million jobs). Option A develops the most new land, while Options B and C develop less by placing some development within existing communities, often at higher densities.



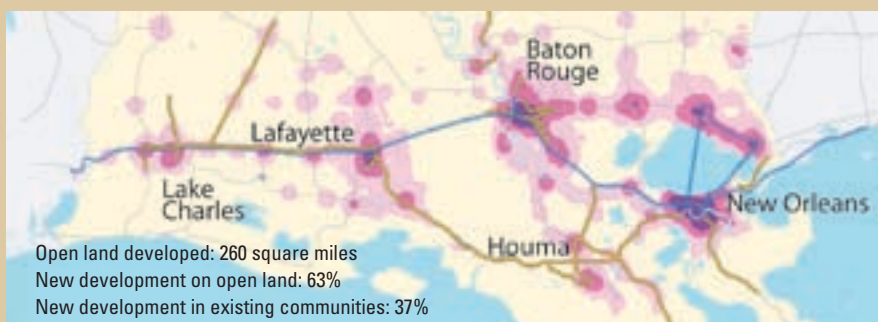
A. KEEP BUILDING AND DEVELOPING AS WE ARE

Currently we build mostly single-family homes, mainly at the edge of metropolitan areas, connected by roadways.



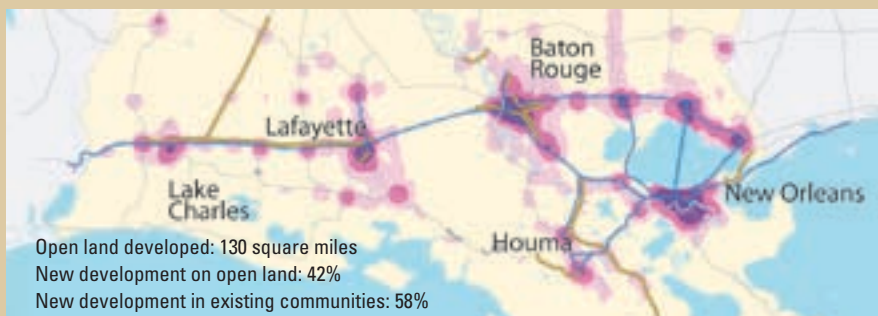
B. MODIFY DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

Build more in-town condos, apartments, and townhouses, as well as single-family homes. Balance new public transit with road improvements.



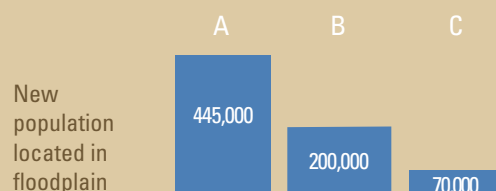
C. FOCUS DEVELOPMENT IN EXISTING CITIES AND TOWNS

Build mainly in-town condos, apartments, and townhouses, connected by public transit such as modern buses or commuter and intercity trains.

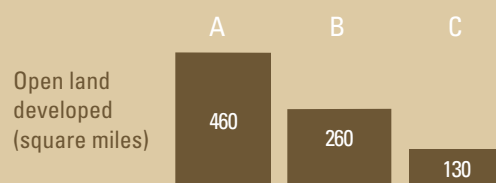


MEASURING CONSEQUENCES

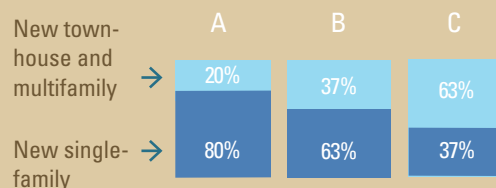
Development in Floodplain



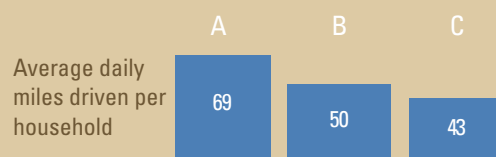
Open Land Developed



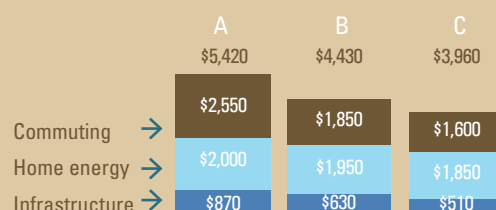
Housing Mix



Commute Times



Household Expenses



Louisiana Speaks. Now is the Time.

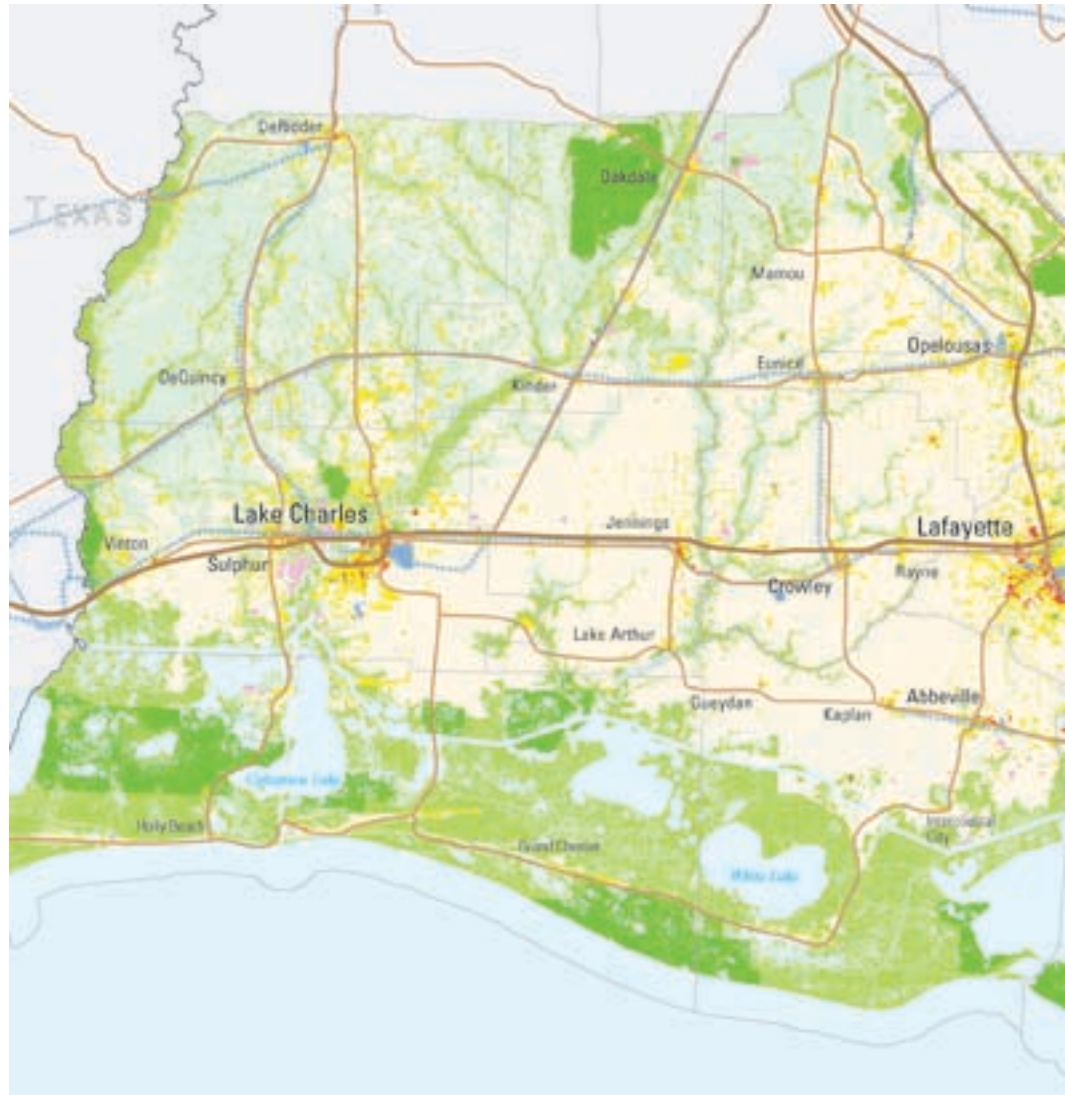
Existing Land Use



Land-Use Map (2005)












Louisiana Speaks compiled the first ever coastwide land-use database for the 35-parish planning area. Four parishes had pre-existing land use inventories: East Baton Rouge, Iberville, Lafayette, and Orleans. For areas outside these parishes, the planning team interpreted and digitized data from 2004 USGS aerial photographs, hand-coding land uses based on the interpretation of these photographs.

This comprehensive land-use database will be available to government agencies and the public. A more detailed description about these data can be found in **Appendix B**.





Land Use Map: Existing Conditions (2005)

Land Use or Land Classification

 Commercial	 Marsh or Wetland
 Industrial	 Upland Forest or Scrub Vegetation
 Civic or Institutional	 Open Water
 Single-Family Residential	
 Multifamily Residential	
 Other Urbanized Area	
 Park or Open Space	
 Agriculture, Cropland or Grassland	

Jurisdictional Boundaries

	State Boundary
	Parish Boundary

Protection Features

	Levee
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Transportation Systems

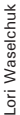
	Rail Corridor
	Interstate
	US or State Highway





Existing Environmental Features

Existing Environmental Features



Environmental Features Map (2005)

This environmental features map depicts the rich variety of public ownership and landscape data compiled as part of the Louisiana Speaks process. It includes park and open space data, as well as landscape features such as wetlands, marsh, upland forest, agricultural lands, and water bodies.

The map also depicts historic coastal land loss, indicating wetland or marsh lost from 1932 to 2000 in red. Louisiana Speaks aims to stop and reverse this trend of coastal loss to both protect important fisheries and habitat and provide an essential first line of defense from hurricanes and storm-related flooding.



Environmental Features Map: Existing Conditions (2005)




Restoration or Protection Features

- River Diversion Structure
- Shoreline, Barrier Island or Navigable Waterway Restoration/Stabilization
- Levee

Protected Land

-  National Wildlife Refuge, Wildlife Management Areas, National Park, or State Park

Landscape Features

-  Wetland
-  Historic Wetland Loss (1932-2000)
-  Upland Forest or Scrub Vegetation
-  Agriculture, Cropland, or Grassland
-  Open Water
-  Urbanized Area

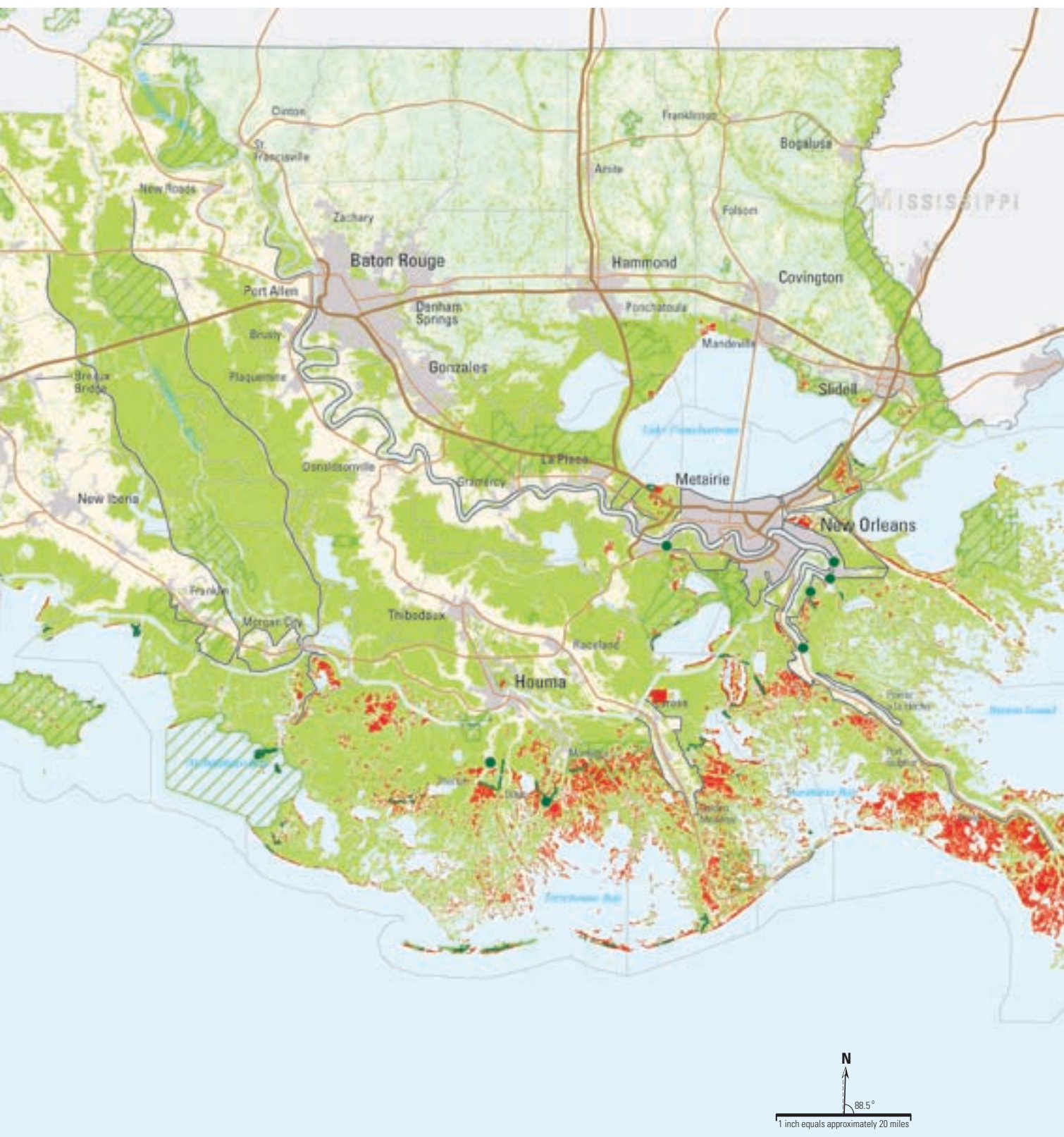
Jurisdictional Boundaries

- State Boundary
— Parish Boundary

Transportation Systems

- Interstate
— US or State Highway





Louisiana Speaks. Now is the Time.

Existing Infrastructure Features



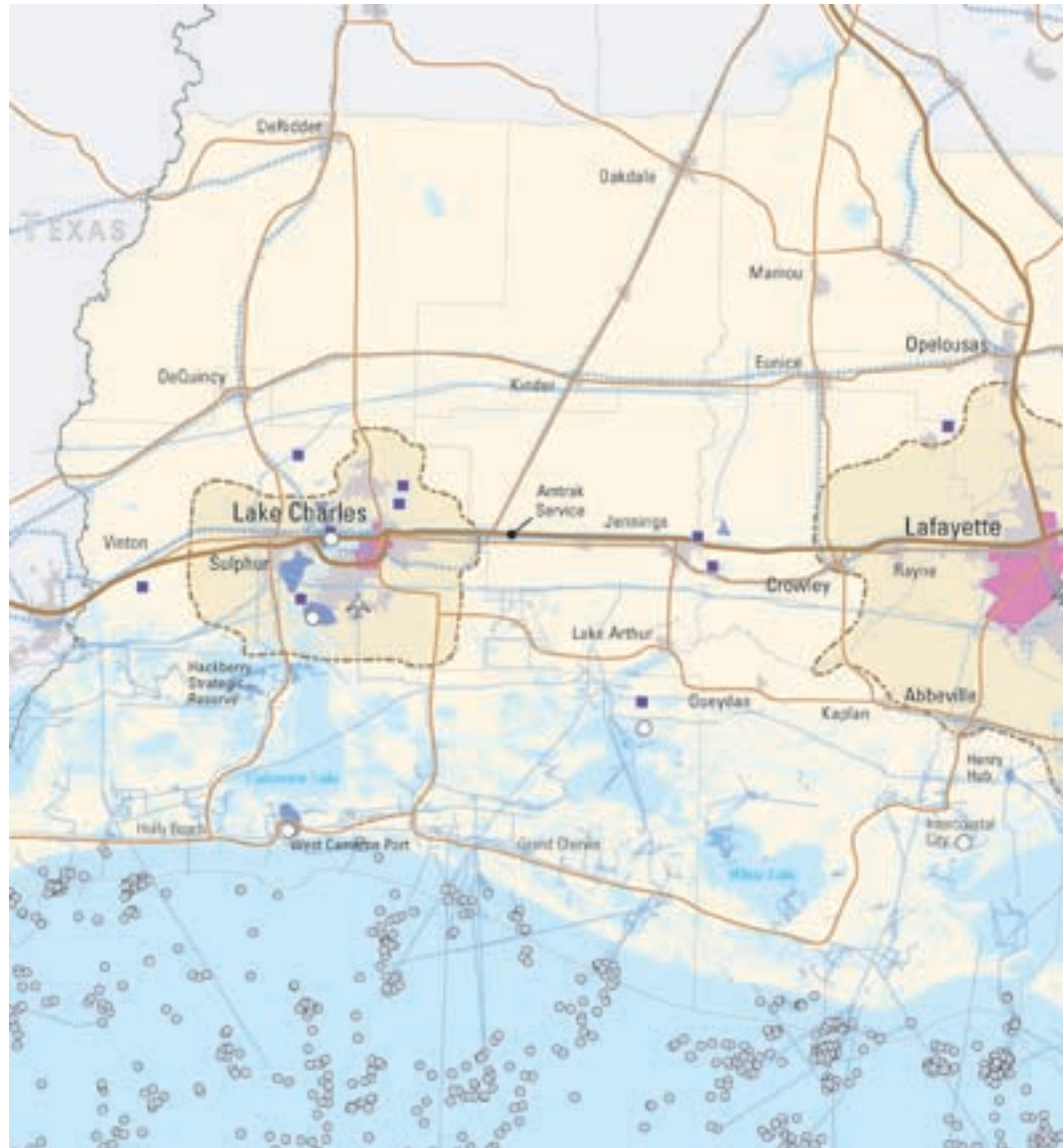
Lori Waselchuk

Infrastructure Features Map (2005)

The Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan is built around existing and planned transportation and other regional infrastructure. This map illustrates current state and regional transportation, protection, port, and industrial infrastructure.

The map also shows the primary commute areas (2005) for the five major metropolitan areas in South Louisiana. These shaded areas represent the extent of the majority of typical trips in and around each of the metro areas.

Of special note is the extensive network of offshore oil platforms and pipelines that contribute considerably to the nation's energy supply.



Infrastructure Features Map: Existing Conditions (2005)

Industrial and Port Features

- Major Industrial or Port Area
- Major Port Facility
- Offshore Oil or Gas Platform
- Petroleum Refinery
- Pipeline

Protection Features

- Levee

Transportation Systems

- Local Transit Service Area
- Primary Commute Areas for the Five Metropolitan Statistical Areas*
- Overlapping Commute Areas
- Major Airport
- Rail Corridor
- Interstate
- US or State Highway
- New Orleans Streetcar

Landscape Features

- Urbanized Area
- Agriculture, Wetland, Upland Forest, or Open Land
- Open Water

Jurisdictional Boundaries

- State Boundary
- Parish Boundary

*Primary commute areas are derived from post-Katrina/Rita Louisiana statewide transportation model.





Outreach

In total, nearly 27,000 Louisianians gave their input to the Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan in 2006 and 2007. See **Appendix A** for more information on survey research, workshops, and polling.

Survey Research

In spring 2006, a survey of 2,500 residents and evacuees provided input on regional planning priorities and preferences on issues critical to recovery and growth. This research was augmented with in-depth interviews with community leaders of all types.

Stakeholder Workshops

More than 1,000 stakeholders participated in six hands-on workshops in summer 2006. This input, and more than 100 in-depth phone interviews, provided direction on coastal restoration and protection, growth and transportation, and economic development. The results fed the recovery and development scenarios that helped create the Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan.

(continued on p. 27 sidebar)

UNPRECEDENTED PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan is derived from the input of nearly 27,000 Louisianians and stakeholders participating in three distinct phases of public input during 2006 and 2007. People from all walks of life were engaged throughout the process with surveys and hands-on workshops, as well as an outreach effort in which people across the state and in diaspora communities learned about choices for the future via radio, TV, newspaper, the Internet, and community meetings. Louisianians weighed in using paper polling forms, the Internet, a toll-free number, and a statistically valid outbound survey. This input reflects a truly representative cross-section of the people that call South Louisiana home. For more information see sidebar and Appendix A.

The public input paints a clear and consistent picture of what Louisianians envision for their future. The Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan reflects this input in its vision for recovery and growth and the strategies and actions it lays out to move Louisiana forward.

MAKING CHOICES

To arrive at a plan of action, the Louisiana Speaks Regional Planning process evaluated the economic, environmental, and social forces that shape South Louisiana and explored alternatives for how the region can recover and develop over time. The stakeholder workshops and public polling asked citizens to weigh in on how South Louisiana should approach economic development, which coastal protection and restoration strategies to prioritize, which pattern of future growth and development the region should pursue, and how to balance individual rights with community risk.

HIGHLIGHTS OF PUBLIC INPUT

Overall, Louisianians expressed a strong desire for a comprehensive approach to planning that addresses risk management, infrastructure planning, economic and land development, and transportation. The results of workshops, surveys, and polling indicate support for a plan that:

- Accelerates funding and implementation of coastal recovery
- Integrates coastal recovery and protection with economic recovery and development plans
- Advances policies that minimize community risk while balancing property rights
- Creates a wider range of housing choices and new public transit options
- Focuses on strengthening Louisiana's existing economy with renewed emphasis on higher education and job training





Protection and Restoration: There is wide support for a combination of aggressive coastal restoration and strategic levee protection for existing communities. Poll results underscore the importance of accelerated funding for and implementation of protection and restoration plans.

Managing Risk: There is a common understanding, highlighted by the 2005 hurricanes, that when people build in unprotected areas with high risk of storm damage, we all share the risk they assume, in the form of rising insurance premiums and the shared public cost of disaster recovery. Nearly 90% of citizens polled favor managing our shared risk through a combination of development incentives and regulations and smart investments in protection, restoration, and transportation infrastructure.

Growth and Transportation: Workshop participants and fully 80% of poll respondents expressed a preference for shifting development patterns toward reinvesting in existing cities and towns, building communities that are more compact and walkable, and creating places with more transit options and a broader mix of housing types. Louisianians also expressed a clear understanding that our patterns of growth directly influence the resilience of our communities.

Economic Development Priorities: Louisianians' top economic priorities included a focus on keeping and recruiting companies, greater investment in higher education and job training, and support for small business. There was also support for broad housing choice in all communities and near-term housing to support recovery and support workers and economic activity.

Polling

In early 2007, more than 23,000 Louisianians, in-state and in the diaspora, engaged in a Regional Vision Poll. They were reached through direct community outreach, a Louisiana Public Broadcasting television program, and a multi-media ad campaign. Citizens responded through newspaper inserts, online polling, a toll-free number, and a statistically representative telephone survey. Their responses provided clear guidance on South Louisiana's preferences for the future.





Lori Waselchuk



DPZ/La. Speaks Charrettes



Lori Waselchuk



Lori Waselchuk

Vision

Goal 1

Recover Sustainably

Strategies for Near-Term Recovery



Lori Waselchuk

If our recovery is to be successful it must also be sustainable. We must immediately move critical recovery projects and initiatives from plan to efficient, strategic action, guided by a clear vision of a safer, stronger, smarter future.

We must meet the urgent, short-term needs of our communities. To do that, we must begin to protect and restore our coast and to jump-start our economies. Many of our communities continue to suffer from disinvestment that existed prior to the storms and has increased as a result of them. Our coast continues to lose nearly 200 acres of wetland each week. Thousands of businesses have not returned to full operation due to labor shortages and a lack of infrastructure and insurance.

As the recovery continues, we must use this moment of rare opportunity to help our region achieve stability and prosperity. This section of the plan identifies strategies to heal our communities by committing to take on the challenges of coastal protection and restoration, and by stabilizing and improving our cities and towns and our economies. This comprehensive approach for a sustainable recovery can set the stage for a better future for South Louisiana.

A sustainable recovery involves integrating community, coast, and economy into a comprehensive approach for recovery that sets the stage for a safer, stronger, and smarter Louisiana.





Lori Waselchuk

Nearly 70% of citizens polled by Louisiana Speaks believe that the qualities that made their communities special can be reestablished through recovery.

This section of the plan is physically represented by the **Recover Sustainably Map** on pp. 32-33 and it is described in strategies and actions on pp. 34-45. Timelines and funding characteristics are contained in **Appendix F**. A more detailed **Louisiana Speaks Strategic Implementation Plan**, including benchmarks and responsible parties, will be available in July 2007.

RESTORING CONFIDENCE

Our top priority, in the near-term, is repairing the disruptions to our communities. But although programs and investments have been launched to start this process, true recovery cannot happen until confidence in the future is restored in those South Louisiana cities and towns most affected by hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Private investment demands confidence in a predictable future and a manageable level of risk.

Restoring confidence requires that many very real and concrete things happen, but each turns on the success of the others. Levees must be improved and wetlands restored. Insurance must be made available and affordable. Business must reopen and remain open. Housing must be available. Workers with the skills businesses need have to be able to afford that housing. People must see their neighbors returning.

The Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan intends to restore confidence in the future by providing a flexible, coordinated, integrated framework into which all of these moving parts fit. Each component of the framework builds on the others, fostering success, and leading South Louisiana to a sustainable recovery.



CLEAR



LDO TD

The 2005 storms consumed 219 square miles of Louisiana's coast. This is in addition to the thousands of acres lost annually prior to the hurricanes. The Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan and state agencies emphasize actions that reduce land loss rates and build new wetlands and barrier islands by diverting or piping sediment into targeted areas.

INVESTING IN FULL RECOVERY

Public policy and investments are among the most powerful tools for addressing our communities' short-term needs, while also providing sustained benefits by investing in our coast and our economies.

The first and most crucial step to restoring confidence in South Louisiana's future is to provide physical safety from storms by adopting the Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA) Master Plan and identifying funding for implementation of its near-term steps, such as accelerating protection projects for key population centers, including New Orleans. The plan then calls for implementing strategies that link land use, transportation, and economic development to the locations of CPRA's planned investments and strategies. These strategies will help protect existing communities and keep new development out of harm's way. Together, they represent a key step toward creating confidence in the long-term stability of South Louisiana, clearing the path for affordable insurance—a precondition for a sustainable recovery.

The Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan proposes to integrate planning for recovery with planning for the longer-term by using the strategies and actions outlined in the plan to guide ongoing federal, state, and local recovery efforts. This would focus recovery projects and new development within already-urbanized areas of cities and towns, where land is better protected from storms and thus easier to insure. It would also focus development and investment in areas in need of economic stimulus by guiding investment decisions and reducing financial and regulatory barriers to such "infill" development. Implementation of these strategies would propel the state toward smarter growth and greater regional coordination.

The plan would also address the immediate needs of businesses in New Orleans and across the coast by providing financial assistance and supporting a labor force. It would meet the immediate needs of that labor force with strategies to provide workforce housing, quality healthcare, and training programs matched to market demands. The Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan also supports the recovery in the short term by expanding recovery-critical industries—including housing construction, coastal sciences, and restoration technologies—and in the longer term by expanding these sectors into sustainable, specialized local industries that take advantage of our existing infrastructure. Finally, the plan would provide near-term stability through reliable, conveniently located social and community services—including access to quality healthcare and a sufficient capacity of quality K-12 educational opportunities.

All together, the Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan's map and strategies for recovering sustainably provide a short-term guide to maintaining our communities, protected by a recovering coast and supported by a revived economy.



Schwartz/Silver Architects

Completed in 2005, the Shaw Center for the Arts in Baton Rouge is an example of cultural and economic reinvestment within an existing community center.

Among the more than 23,000 citizens polled during Louisiana Speaks, 81% supported increased reinvestment in existing communities and centers.



RECOVER SUSTAINABLY: FIVE-YEAR PRIORITY INVESTMENTS FOR REGIONAL RECOVERY

The initiatives and projects on this map support a sustainable recovery by restoring coastal marshes, constructing strategic levees, supporting recovery-critical industries, building or enhancing key transportation routes, and reinvesting in historic communities.

DPZ/ La Speaks Charrette



Reinvest in Our Communities






Many of our communities have seen decades of declining populations and employment, and many were hit hard by hurricanes Katrina and Rita. To reverse this pattern, the Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan proposes to immediately focus infrastructure and development in existing communities, reduce financial and regulatory barriers to rebuilding and infill development, and provide technical assistance.

Immediately Fund Strategic Recovery Projects







Clear priorities have emerged from the state, regional, and local recovery efforts set in motion by hurricanes Katrina and Rita. It is time to move these priorities from plan to reality. Rather than separating short- and long-term planning, the Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan uses recovery projects to create momentum toward a stronger future. Key initiatives include extending successful economic recovery projects, building recovery-related transportation infrastructure, and implementing local and parish recovery plans.

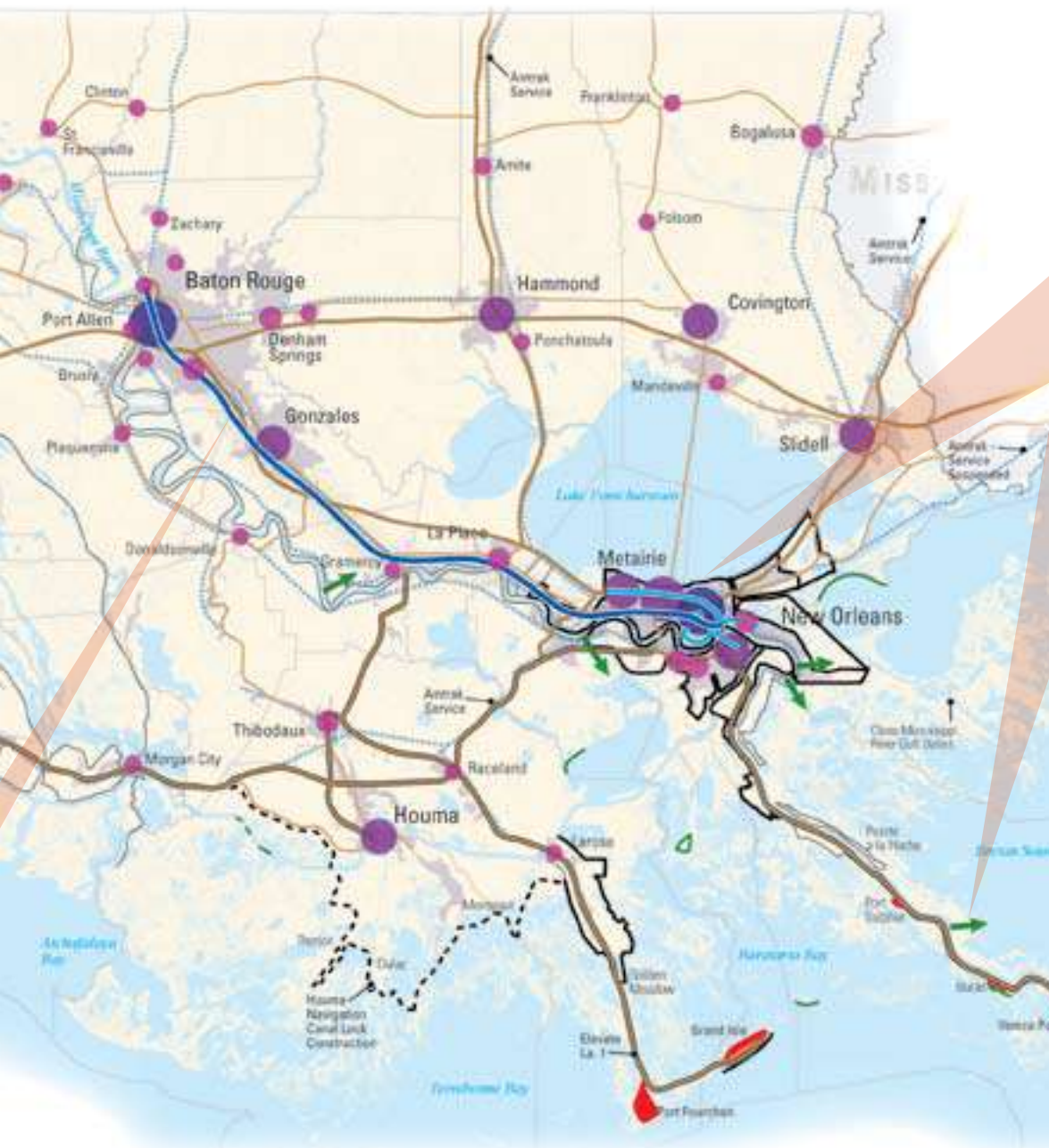


Reinvestment Areas*

-  **Urban Center:** The largest national/regional centers—major offices, shops, civic and cultural facilities, and multifamily housing. Accessible by major national and regional transit and roadways.
-  **City Center:** Major subregional centers—offices, shops, civic and cultural facilities, and a mix of multifamily housing, townhomes, and single family homes. Accessible by regional transit and roadways.
-  **Town Center:** Local residential and commercial centers—local shops and offices, and single-family homes, townhomes and multifamily housing. Accessible by local transit and roadways.
-  **Existing Urbanized Areas:** Development within existing communities—single-family homes, townhomes, multifamily housing, and local retail. Accessible by transit and roadways.
-  **Special Economic Zones:** Key economic centers that do not have levee protection, but do have storm risk mitigation through hazard planning and limits on new development. Includes commercial fishing facilities, industrial plants, ports, and recreational sites.

Transportation Systems

-  **New Primary Transit Corridor** (Intercity high-speed and/or regional commuter rail)
-  **New or Existing Secondary Transit Corridor** (fixed-route public transit, such as light rail or street car)
-  **New or Improved Roadway**
-  **Existing Interstate**
-  **Existing US or State Highway**
-  **Existing Rail Corridor**



Restore our Coast and Build Strategic Levees Now

Achieve greater storm protection, restore our wetlands, and reduce risk now by adopting the Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA) Master Plan and Annual Plans. Short-term priorities of these plans include accelerating hurricane protection around immediately threatened population centers and projects to rebuild our coastal wetlands.

The state will coordinate short-term recovery efforts related to economic development, land use, and transportation with policies and near-term protection and restoration investments.

CPRA Master Plan Urgent Early Action Features**

- New Levee
- Upgraded Levee
- Existing Levee
- Shoreline, Barrier Island or Navigable Waterway Restoration/Stabilization
- River Diversion

** For more information on the CPRA Master Plan and Urgent Early Actions, see the FY 2008 Annual Plan at www.louisianacoastalplanning.org

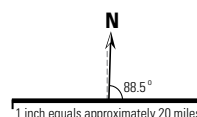
* Reinvestment centers highlight communities that already serve as anchors for surrounding areas, or would serve as anchors in the future. This was determined based upon a combination of land use density and functional characteristics such as regional location and links to major transportation corridors. Example centers serve to illustrate reinvestment opportunity areas derived through discussions with local officials as well as qualitative and quantitative analysis, but are not an exhaustive list. Many rural communities do not appear on the map.

Landscape Features

- Agricultural, Wetland, Upland Forest or Open Land
- Open Water

Jurisdictional Boundaries

- State Boundary
- Parish Boundary



The Issue

Hurricanes Katrina and Rita damaged critical levees and destroyed 217 square miles of wetlands. Despite ongoing efforts to rebuild and strengthen levees and stimulate wetland and barrier island recovery, we continue to lose nearly one football field of wetlands every half hour. Our coastal lands provide the first line of defense against storms. We need a comprehensive strategy that addresses both levee protection and wetland recovery.

The Solution

The best strategy for protecting our communities and economic assets from future disasters is a combination of restored wetlands and levee construction, but we have lacked a clear plan that addresses restoration and protection. The Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA) Master Plan and Annual Plans provide a comprehensive coastwide approach to protecting our communities and natural and economic assets.

1

ENABLE OUR RECOVERY

Enable our recovery by legislative adoption of the Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA) Master Plan and Annual Plans. The health of our region requires that significant investments in long-term projects begin now. The CPRA plan provides a long-term framework for levees and coastal restoration that will begin by accelerating implementation of hurricane protection projects in key population centers, restoration of critical landforms (such as marshes and barrier islands), and implementation of river diversion projects. The CPRA plan will help provide a predictable investment environment, commercial insurability, and safer communities. To take full advantage of the CPRA plan, the State should also ensure that short-term recovery efforts related to economic development, land use, and transportation are consistent with the physical plans for protection and restoration. This integrated approach would leverage the efforts of the CPRA, the Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan, and local governments into a comprehensive strategy for addressing our restoration, protection and risk-management challenges.

ACTIONS

- 1.1 Adopt the CPRA Master Plan.** The Legislature should adopt the CPRA Master Plan to provide a guiding framework and overall direction for development of long-term coastal restoration and protection strategies.
- 1.2 Adopt and Fund CPRA Annual Plans.** Formally adopt CPRA Annual Plans as guiding documents for implementation of urgent early restoration and protection projects. These should be funded by state, federal, and/or local sources. Planning for local and Army Corps of Engineers projects should be coordinated with CPRA planning via a mechanism that the Army Corps recognizes.
- 1.3 Maintain and Enforce the State Uniform Construction Code.** The Uniform Construction Code—a tough, storm-safe building code—was adopted by Louisiana in 2005 and went into effect in January 2007. The Legislature should reject any effort to repeal the Uniform Construction Code, although reasonable allowances for non-hurricane-prone parts of the state could be considered. The State should undertake a review of local efforts to implement the code. The State should also continue and expand the LRA's existing program of salary-support for local code-inspection positions.
- 1.4 Elevate and Strengthen Existing Structures.** Support parish mitigation efforts—through local use of the FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP), Road Home grants, or other funds—to bring existing structures into compliance with the Uniform Construction Code and to elevate existing homes and key utility infrastructure such as pumps and generators above flood levels. Allowances should be made in determining code compliance for historic structures that meet performance criteria. Also, efforts should be made to acquire additional mitigation funding.



- 1.5 Coordinate Short-Term Implementation of the Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan with State Protection and Restoration Plans.** Ensure that relevant sections of the CPRA Master Plan and Annual Plans shape planning initiatives and projects required to implement the Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan. Involve CPRA leadership in frequent reviews.



SPOTLIGHT: COASTAL PROTECTION AND RESTORATION AUTHORITY MASTER PLAN

In the wake of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the state of Louisiana took on the challenge of coordinating levee investment with coastal restoration to create a sustainable, long-term plan for storm and flood protection. The Legislature created the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA) to coordinate federal, state, and local agencies, and to develop a comprehensive plan to managing risk from future hazards. The CPRA was charged with providing “aggressive state leadership and direction” by establishing a clear set of priorities for hurricane protection and coastal wetland restoration, and by developing a unified plan for a sustainable coast.

The result is the CPRA Master Plan and the associated action plans for near-term projects and investments. At the heart of the CPRA’s work is the understanding that ensuring the future of Louisiana’s people and natural resources requires a comprehensive solution. Thus, the Master Plan lays out a framework to sustain both the coastal landscape and coastal communities. To restore the coastal landscape, “processed based” solutions—like river diversions—are proposed to work in tandem with restoration of landscape features such as marsh and barrier islands to provide the long-term solution for sustainability. The Master Plan also calls for a “multiple lines of defense” approach to provide hurricane protection to residents, businesses, and key economic assets. This strategy relies on reinforcing and rebuilding natural

and coastal features such as wetlands, shorelines, and barrier islands. These help reinforce man-made structures such as levees, and they help decrease the intensity of storm surges. The other “lines of defense” consist of evacuation routes and being smarter about how and where we build—making our communities more resilient by building stronger structures in less risky locations.

Together, each of these “lines of defense” reinforces the others to minimize risk from future natural hazards. Implementing the CPRA Master Plan promises to reverse longstanding land-loss trends and protect the unique cultural, economic, and environmental assets that depend on Louisiana’s coast.

A “multiple lines of defense strategy” ties together levee protection and coastal restoration with smarter land development, coordinated transportation investments, evacuation corridors, stronger building codes, and a strategic approach to insurance and land regulation.

For more information on the CPRA Master Plan, visit www.louisianacoastalplanning.org

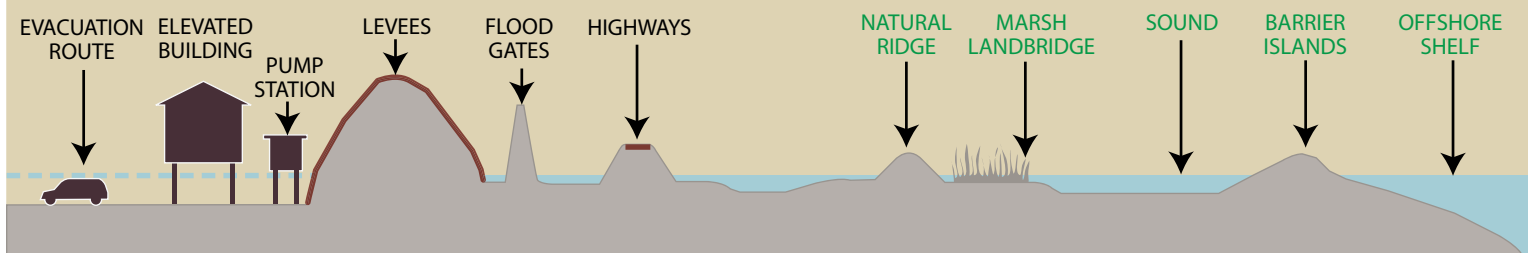


Diagram Illustrating CPRA Multiple Lines of Defense Strategy

Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation: Lopez, 2006

2

The Issue

Affordable insurance is at the heart of our recovery, but it is unclear if insurance will remain available and at rates that are affordable to South Louisiana homeowners and businesses. Without reasonably priced insurance, our economy and communities cannot recover or prosper.

The Solution

Making insurance affordable means demonstrating to private insurers that Louisiana is committed to making its homes and businesses safer from future disasters. By managing risk through safer buildings, safer communities, and a restored coast, South Louisiana will become more insurable. This strategy provides a set of specific actions to encourage insurers to do business in Louisiana through outreach and risk management.



Greg Hanshall/FEMA

INSURE OUR RECOVERY

Affordable commercial insurance options for residential and commercial property owners are critical not only for economic development, but for the survival of South Louisiana. Without affordable insurance, many businesses and homeowners will not be able to stay in the region. It is critical to identify obstacles to insurance capacity and affordability and take action to make insurance within reach of Louisiana households and businesses. This strategy aims to comprehensively meet the pressing needs of businesses and households. Recruiting underwriters to issue affordable coverage for residential and commercial property owners begins with effective strategies to reduce the risk facing the structure in question. This means it is essential that new development be consistent with the guidelines set forth in the Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan.

ACTIONS

2.1 Increase Private Insurance Capacity through Statutory and Regulatory Reform.

Eliminate and prevent the creation of any unreasonable regulation that inhibits the expansion of private insurance capacity. Adopt statutory and regulatory reform that encourages private insurers to do business in Louisiana by allowing pricing and portfolio management reasonably free from government control, including abolition of the Insurance Rating Commission.

2.2 Explore Short-Term Public Funding to Attract Private Insurers.

Evaluate the state's ability to attract private insurance capacity using short-term public investments that reduce the short-term costs of coverage and the long-term risk to taxpayers in the wake of catastrophic disasters, consistent with the conclusions of the Paragon "Cat Fund" study.

2.3 Achieve Public and Individual Risk Management.

To complement consistent enforcement of the State Uniform Construction Code, enact incentives or requirements that encourage owners to upgrade existing properties to the code or otherwise mitigate against future catastrophic loss, including insurance premium reductions. Create a standard statewide process for deeming a given structure code-compliant so as to reduce uncertainty among insurers about enforcement.

2.4 Model the Impact of Public Risk-Management Strategies.

Engage catastrophe risk-modeling firms to assess and quantify the potential positive reduction of risk generated by the CPRA Master Plan, the Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan, future hazard mapping by the Army Corps or others, and other State and local recovery initiatives in the wake of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Identify and implement additional risk-management policies and engineering/design solutions that would further reduce risk.

2.5 Promote Louisiana's Progress to Insurers. Educate the major insurers currently not writing policies to businesses in Louisiana on the progress made since Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in restoring coastal flood protection, promoting wise land-use decisions through the Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan and other initiatives, adopting the Uniform Construction Code, investing in building-elevation and hazard mitigation, and other risk management strategies that will reduce future catastrophic damage and make Louisiana more insurable.



CASE STUDY: LOWERING INSURANCE PREMIUMS BY REDUCING COMMUNITY FLOOD RISK

Before Hurricane Katrina, Hurricane Andrew held the distinction of being the costliest storm ever, causing \$15.5 billion in insured damage in Florida. Though communities in Florida have a natural imperative to reduce their storm risks, FEMA provides a further incentive. Through the Community Rating System (CRS) of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), local governments can lower their insurance premiums by implementing measures to reduce flood losses, facilitate accurate insurance ratings, and promote awareness of flood insurance. As communities take more actions—such as upgrading drainage system maintenance, initiating flood warning programs, or requiring open space preservation—they earn higher ratings, which lead to greater discounts. Regulatory and damage reduction measures qualify for more credits than public information activities.

Since 1991, 216 Florida communities have taken advantage of the program. In 2003, this translated into \$180 million in savings for 1.8 million policyholders. Twenty-three of the CRS cities and counties, including Miami-Dade, receive discounts of at least 20% in special flood hazard areas. The program also provides communities with technical assistance to develop and implement their activities, making CRS a

significant factor in encouraging communities to better manage flood risk. While Florida has a high participation rate, its communities can yet improve by taking further actions to earn higher rankings. Likewise, each of Louisiana's 39 CRS-eligible cities and parishes might realize the potential of greater CRS participation—currently, the majority rank at the bottom end of the scale.



Johanne Wallace

Florida



The Issue

Since Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, planning efforts statewide have focused on immediate recovery. To achieve success, the medium- and long-range actions proposed in the Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan must carry forward the momentum created by the recovery effort.

The Solution

This strategy links recovery and growth by funding key regional recovery projects identified in the Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan and by earlier efforts, supporting implementation of recovery plans, and offering technical support to local and parish governments.



Lori Waselchuk

3

ALIGN PLANNING FOR RECOVERY WITH PLANNING FOR GROWTH

Federal and state recovery funding have given Louisiana the opportunity to be thoughtful in how we recover, so that long-term goals are also met. Therefore, the strategies and actions outlined in the Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan should serve as a guide for ongoing recovery efforts. Since shortly after the devastation and aftermath of hurricanes Katrina and Rita, tremendous effort has gone into creating local, parish, and state plans for short-term recovery. Harnessing these efforts will extend the short-term momentum required for a sustainable recovery and a stronger future, and aligning the priorities of short-term recovery plans with the Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan is a critical step toward achieving the plan's vision.

ACTIONS

3.1 Prioritize Funding for Local/Parish Projects with High Recovery Value and Regional Significance. Work with state, regional, municipal, and parish officials to identify and prioritize projects of regional significance, including those identified through FEMA/LRA's Parish Recovery Planning Process, the Unified New Orleans Plan (UNOP) process and New Orleans Recovery Plan, the Louisiana Speaks demonstration charrettes and follow-up plans for Lake Charles, Vermilion Parish, and St. Bernard Parish/ Jackson Barracks, existing regional plans, and other approved local or parish recovery planning processes. Use the Parish Recovery Planning Tool (RPT) for uniform reporting and to provide guidance on funding criteria; include consistency with the Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan among RPT criteria. Work with parish planners and regional planning entities to coordinate regionally significant recovery projects that cross parish lines, including multi-parish flood protection, stormwater management, sewer and transportation projects, to consolidate efforts into a single initiative. Fund parish and regional recovery projects using the LRA's existing CDBG allocation, as well as with CDBG funds freed up by a waiver of local 10% FEMA-match requirements, and any future allocations.

3.2 Immediately Fund Priority Regional Projects. Regional infrastructure projects with clear economic-recovery value and/or clear evacuation importance should be funded immediately (see "Recover Sustainably Map"). These include:

- Intercity passenger rail service for commuters between New Orleans and Baton Rouge, to aid in the economic recovery of metro New Orleans and provide for evacuation
- Completion of the I-49 corridor between Lafayette and metro New Orleans, to aid in the economic recovery of metro New Orleans and provide evacuation routes for much of coastal Southeast Louisiana
- Enhancement of U.S. 165 to provide evacuation routes from Southwest Louisiana

- Enhancement of La. 1, La. 23, and La. 20/24 to provide evacuation routes from much of coastal Southeast Louisiana
- Enhancements to mass transit systems in the New Orleans metro area to aid in the economic recovery of metro New Orleans and to provide for evacuation capacity

3.3 Support Local Recovery Plans, including the City of New Orleans' Recovery Plan.

Ensure that the recovery and rebuilding of New Orleans and the implementation of the New Orleans Recovery Plan and other parish plans are supported through the Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan. Support and coordinate road and rail transportation projects that support regional economic integration, and provide funding through FEMA Hazard Mitigation (HMGP) and HUD Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) sources that support local recovery planning and efforts. Also support grant writers and grant administrators at the local level (see "Think Regionally," Action 2.4).

3.4 Coordinate and Provide Technical Support for Municipalities and Parishes Applying for HMGP Funds.

HMGP can be spent effectively on repetitive-loss buy-out programs, for improving drainage, creating secondary defenses against flooding, and for elevating vital infrastructure such as electrical equipment. Regional planning entities should work with local jurisdictions to package municipal and parish HMGP requests into one request, especially for drainage improvements and vital infrastructure mitigation (such as elevating pump stations or generators). Local governments using HMGP to raise properties should be encouraged to raise entire streets or areas, rather than individual homes.

3.5 Use The Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan to Provide Ongoing Guidance and Criteria for Allocation of Federal and State Funds.

Ongoing state match for FEMA Public Assistance funds, state selection process for Louisiana Housing Finance Authority projects, project selection for future allocations through FEMA's Alternative Housing Pilot Program, GO Zone incentives, and other federal- and state-funded projects in South Louisiana should be prioritized and evaluated using the vision and policies outlined in the Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan.

3.6 Leverage GO Zone Extensions.

Through outreach and "piggybacking" of state programs, leverage the extension of Gulf Opportunity Zone federal tax incentives for devastated areas through 2010.

3.7 Use the Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan to Provide Guidance for the Transfer of Properties in the Road Home Corporation.

Properties acquired by the Road Home Corporation through a buy-out should be deeded to local redevelopment authorities for mitigation or redevelopment consistent with local recovery plans and the Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan.



Local Recovery Plans

Many recovery plans and projects are already under way or completed. Across the state, parishes have prioritized their recovery projects, and in many cases they have fully developed recovery and reinvestment plans. In Lake Charles, for example, a recovery plan created the framework for a bond-funded downtown reinvestment plan. In New Orleans, the Unified New Orleans Plan presents an action-oriented array of high-priority recovery programs and projects to repair and rebuild the City over the next five-to-ten years. This plan provided the foundation for the City of New Orleans' Recovery Plan.



The Issue

Many of our historic downtowns and neighborhoods have seen declines in population, economic disinvestments, and concentrated poverty over the past decades. Hurricane Katrina brought the extent of this decline in New Orleans to the nation's attention. Our recovery depends upon strong communities and ample opportunity throughout the region. Recovery requires a comprehensive strategy for reinvestment within existing communities.

The Solution

We can take steps now to help our communities recover and grow stronger. Urban centers and neighborhoods can become more vibrant, diverse places—acting as anchors for our cities and regions. This strategy will accomplish these objectives by reducing obstacles to reinvestment, offering incentives through tax and building codes, and providing technical assistance to local officials and developers to facilitate reinvestment where it is needed most.

4

REINVEST IN OUR COMMUNITIES

Hurricanes Katrina and Rita caused massive upheaval, dislocation, and change in our communities. Some communities have lost population. Others face rapid growth for which they are unprepared. But many of our communities had already experienced disinvestment in recent decades, and many were already losing businesses and population.

Recovering sustainably will require that we create vibrant and resilient urban centers, healthy neighborhoods, lively commercial streets and corridors, and self-sufficient small towns. Creating stronger communities will require that we focus state infrastructure and new development in existing communities, reduce financial and regulatory barriers to infill development, and train local officials in effective techniques for creating redevelopment and reinvestment. This strategy will result in an innovative, comprehensive program for combining knowledge and resources to invigorate existing, rebuilt, and new communities.

ACTIONS

- 4.1 Focus Public Investment into Developed Areas and Centers.** Adopt, by legislative action or executive order, a requirement that all deliberate efforts be made to locate new state buildings and infrastructure investments within the urbanized area of existing cities and towns. Within already-developed areas, development sites in city and neighborhood centers and small-town downtowns should be given priority for public investments wherever possible and appropriate. In New Orleans, this policy should be linked to the Priority Reinvestment Areas identified in the City of New Orleans' Recovery Plan (see "Vision to Action" map, p. 8). This policy should also guide—where appropriate and possible—state assistance and incentives for municipal and parish projects.
- 4.2 Revitalize Key Community Corridors.** Create a "State Reinvestment Trust" that would provide grants to support plans and projects that reinvigorate existing commercial and civic streets, spaces, and corridors, including downtowns, historic districts, and main streets. Such plans would include neighborhood plans done through Louisiana Speaks, the Unified New Orleans Plan, and other processes. The Reinvestment Trust should dispense funds to governments through an annual application process. This Reinvestment Trust should work in parallel to and in coordination with Louisiana's existing Main Street program. (The existing Main Street program is targeted specifically to rural and urban low-income areas).
- 4.3 Streamline Development in Reinvestment Areas.** Work with Louisiana Economic Development (LED) and regional economic development entities to reduce the time and cost of developing in reinvestment areas by streamlining permitting and maintaining a list of "shovel-ready" development sites. Reinvestment areas are identified generally in the "Recover Sustainably Map" and "Grow Smarter



Map,” and these categories would be developed in greater detail through a Louisiana Location Index. (See “Grow Smarter,” Action 2.2.)

- 4.4 Maintain and Provide Incentives for Reinvestment.** Work with the development, mortgage, and insurance industries, as well as local and regional chambers of commerce, regional economic development entities, and LED, to propose a package of financial and tax incentives to prospective developers in reinvestment areas.
- 4.5 Permit Development in Master-Planned Districts As-of-Right.** Enable and encourage local governments to create and adopt detailed Master Plans for targeted redevelopment districts. Development proposals that meet the performance criteria set in the Master Plan would be permitted without additional review (“as-of-right”). Provide technical support to assist local governments in implementing this approach to predictable, sound development.
- 4.6 Create Local Reinvestment Expertise.** Train local officials to develop and implement reinvestment plans, build support for reinvestment, and create effective local incentives.
- 4.7 Identify and Clear Obstacles to Infill.** Assemble a team—including local and regional planning entities, private-sector developers and financiers, and others—to identify and propose ways to remove obstacles to development within already-urbanized areas (“infill”). These might include guidelines for establishing redevelopment authorities, conservation trusts, or land banks, and reform to laws governing acquisition of adjudicated property, challenges created by the recent reform of state expropriation (eminent domain) law, or other challenges.



CASE STUDY: COMMUNITY REINVESTMENT IN MARYLAND

Maryland addressed underinvestment in its communities through innovative efforts that serve as a potential model for Louisiana. In 1997, the state enacted a package of five Smart Growth and Neighborhood Conservation Initiatives. This includes the Priority Funding Areas Act, which directs state infrastructure funding to existing communities and areas designated for future growth by local governments and the state. While permitting local governments to retain ultimate control over planning decisions, this policy gives the state power to guide investment and growth according to broad objectives supported by the public.

Though the Act has successfully steered investment into priority funding areas, the state recognized the need for more direct action. To encourage reinvestment in older neighborhoods, the Office of Smart Growth (OSG) introduced the Priority Places program. Introduced in 2004, the program aims to revitalize communities by expediting development plans that have

the potential to catalyze broader change. Each selected “priority place” receives funding, resources, and technical and regulatory assistance from OSG and the ten other state agencies with smart growth interests (the “Smart Growth Subcabinet”). OSG coordinates the competitive selection process, then monitors the progress of each project through its three-to-five year lifespan.



The Issue

The impact of Katrina and Rita reverberated throughout the economy of South Louisiana. Approximately two-thirds of all businesses in the state were interrupted. While in a normal year 15,000 homes are built in Louisiana, nearly 250,000 now need to be replaced. The state's core economic sectors, such as oil and gas, chemicals, and fisheries, were severely impacted and many companies have not returned to full operation.

The Solution

Economic recovery requires healthy, stable businesses, an adequate labor force to serve these businesses, and housing for workers. This strategy funds the workforce training and development programs required to create the workforce needed to supply businesses, provides temporary housing to meet immediate workforce housing needs, and continues to fund existing small business assistance programs.



LDOL

5

BRIDGE THE IMMEDIATE NEEDS OF BUSINESSES AND WORKERS

Louisiana's long-term economic future relies on our ability to meet current critical business needs. We rely heavily on small businesses, but small businesses face greater possibility of failure in a crisis. For businesses, particularly in the New Orleans area, one of the most pressing issues is the shortage of skilled workers. This shortage stems from both a shortage of workforce housing and a longstanding lack of skills-based training. The region must increase the number of skilled workers available to companies by attracting and training workers, providing temporary and/or transitional housing for workers, providing access to healthcare and services, and developing a plan to better meet the long-term workforce needs of businesses.

ACTIONS

- 5.1 Enhance and Adequately Fund Workforce Development and Training Programs.** Work with the Workforce Commission, Louisiana Department of Labor, LED, the Louisiana Community and Technical College System, the four-year university systems, and the technical education component of high schools to coordinate and strengthen existing sector-based workforce training programs, and expand existing programs or create new programs to fill identified needs. Unify these strategies by creating a stronger leadership body. Align funding streams to support regional sector-based training, assess funding needs, including infrastructure and equipment needs, and determine funding gaps.
- 5.2 Provide Temporary and Transitional Workforce Housing.** Programs to increase the amount of workforce housing are now being implemented, but it will be months or longer before much of that housing is available. In the interim, temporary and/or transitional housing should be made available for workers, particularly in the construction sector.
- 5.3 Support Small Business Recovery.** Continue the LRA small business assistance programs and other emergency grant and loan programs for struggling businesses.

Recover Sustainably

Strategies for Recovery-Critical Industries

EXPAND AND ENHANCE RECOVERY-CRITICAL INDUSTRIES

6

A number of business sectors have taken on critical importance since Katrina and Rita. These challenges also present Louisiana with economic opportunity. They include a need for new homebuilding methods that are fast, reliable, and inexpensive, and that use materials and designs that can withstand high water and winds. They also include protection-and-restoration technologies including levee engineering and construction, wetland restoration sciences, and computer modeling of hurricanes, storm surges, and long-term environmental and coastal change. Now is the time to capitalize on these new opportunities and facilitate the recovery.

ACTIONS

- 6.1 Create a Robust Building Technology and Construction Industry.** Regional and state economic development leaders should spearhead a coordinated effort to broaden and strengthen a new regional “systems-built” industry (including modular, panelized, steel-frame, cast-concrete, and other new building technologies) to meet the housing and commercial-building needs for recovery and beyond. A cooperative organization comprised of LED, local governments, regional economic development entities, universities, and the private sector should work to launch a systems-built housing industry in Louisiana. Development of “green” building technologies would also be a priority, and could benefit from tax incentives as appropriate. The new systems-built housing industry would take advantage of Louisiana’s cargo-shipping infrastructure and universities to make the state a production and research and development hub for the industry.
- 6.2 Become a Worldwide Leader in Coastal Science and Technology.** Increase Louisiana’s leadership in technologies and expertise related to coastal and storm modeling, storm protection and coastal restoration techniques, and risk theory and estimation by establishing a centralized office that would provide assistance in identifying start-up capital, attracting private investment, and facilitating technology transfer and commercialization. These efforts should be linked to regional job training in order to ensure that the needs of the recovery and emerging industries are served.
- 6.3 Utilize Existing Infrastructure to Spur Recovery-Critical Industries.** Louisiana’s retired and inactive infrastructure can be leveraged to capture opportunities to sustain and expand recovery-critical and emerging industries. Identify retired infrastructure that can be used to support new industries. (For example, retired oil platforms to support new fisheries practices, greenhouse gas sequestration, wind energy, and recreational fishing and diving parks.) Support legislation that would allow the use of this infrastructure for innovative technologies by limiting liability to owners. Seek federal funds to utilize this infrastructure to support industry growth, as other states are doing.

The Issue

To move our recovery forward, we need certain industries to grow immediately. To rebuild our homes, we need a robust construction industry. To rebuild our wetlands, we need an industry focused on coastal restoration. We need a strategy to speed the growth of these and other recovery-critical industries.

The Solution

This strategy begins to expand industries critical to our recovery in the very near term, by focusing state resources on creating an industry capable of meeting Louisiana’s unique housing needs, developing and exporting technology addressing the needs of coastal communities and economies, and capitalizing on opportunities to use existing infrastructure to support new industries.



LDOL



The Issue

Hurricanes Katrina and Rita dealt serious blows to Louisiana's healthcare and education system. Some 870 schools were temporarily closed, leaving tens of thousands of students without classrooms. Our healthcare system, already one of the poorest performing and most expensive in the nation, was left with severe infrastructure and labor shortages. These challenges require immediate attention.

The Solution

To Recover Sustainably, we must immediately restore consistent healthcare access for all residents. Regular, timely access to primary and comprehensive care, medications and specialty care is critical to the health of returning residents and the stability of recovery. We must meet these immediate needs while implementing policies that ensure a system of care that meets modern guidelines established by the Institute of Medicine: safe, effective, patient-centered, timely, efficient, and equitable.



7

PROVIDE STABILITY THROUGH RELIABLE SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

Hurricanes Katrina and Rita decimated Louisiana's healthcare system, creating extreme and immediate infrastructure and labor shortages related to long-term care, mental health, trauma and ambulatory care. Also, approximately 840 school facilities were damaged or destroyed by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, placing South Louisiana's public education system in a period of dynamic rebuilding opportunity. A sustainable recovery will require that residents—including those considering returning or relocating to impacted areas—have access to quality healthcare and a sufficient capacity of quality K-12 educational opportunities. These needs are particularly acute in New Orleans.

ACTIONS

- 7.1 Retain Healthcare Providers.** Ensure sustainability of providers currently serving the areas most heavily affected by the 2005 storms by providing temporary funding and labor-cost adjustments to those who commit to continue caring for the burgeoning volume of patients that are unable to pay and lack alternative options, until a long-term solution to the lack of a safety net and financing shortage is implemented.
- 7.2 Expand the Supply of all Types of Health Care Professionals.** Provide immediate recruitment and retention incentives that make it worthwhile for nurses and physicians to serve in the most affected areas, and create new training opportunities to expand the home-grown supply of providers.
- 7.3 Build Primary-Care Capacity.** Sustain operational support for primary and comprehensive care clinics and create new medical homes distributed among neighborhoods in a manner consistent with the redesigned system of care envisioned by the Louisiana Health Care Redesign Collaborative.
- 7.4 Diversify Healthcare Options.** Pursue changes in public policy and financing that ensure regular, timely access to preventative and comprehensive care—in a broader variety of settings—for patients of all means.
- 7.5 Improve Mental Health and Related Social Services Care and Delivery.** Develop, implement, and fund a five-year redevelopment and prevention plan for behavioral health services, including mental health and substance abuse services and care for citizens with developmental disabilities, and expand Medicaid coverage to people with severe mental illness.
- 7.6 Establish a World-Class Academic Medical Center in Downtown New Orleans.** This medical center would be a linchpin to reestablishment of the region as home to a strong biosciences cluster and employment opportunities.



7.7 Support Federal Legislation to Attract Teachers. Support proposed federal legislation to bring \$30 million in incentives, to be used over the next 10 years, to get additional teachers and school leaders to come to the Gulf Coast to work in hurricane-impacted school districts.

7.8 Integrate Schools and Medical Facilities into Neighborhoods. Schools, clinics, and other community and social-services facilities should be built (or rebuilt) so that they are integrated into the urban fabric, easily accessible to the populations they serve by foot or public transit. When possible, such facilities should cluster so as to share space and parking capacity and to provide off-hour community centers.





Lori Waselchuk



UDA/La. Speaks Pattern Book

Goal 2

Grow Smarter

Strategies for Long-Term Reinvestment and Growth



A successful, sustainable recovery can provide the foundation for our state's long-term prosperity. In order for this to happen, we need to begin rethinking how we plan and build our communities—starting now, but looking 50 years into the future.

To continue the momentum created by the recovery, we must translate the lessons of the past and the emerging opportunities of the present into a better future. This section of the plan looks into the years ahead and identifies strategies and actions we can take to achieve a safer, stronger, and smarter future for Louisiana.

The catastrophic hurricanes of 2005 and their aftermaths created many new challenges for our communities, and they also exacerbated existing long-term problems. A better future requires that we create safer, more sustainable *communities* by building in safe, sustainable locations. That will mean investing in storm protection and a restored *coast*, and pursuing strategies to nurture strong and growing *economies*.

The strategies in this section will guide long-term state policy and investments, which will complement local expertise and knowledge to support implementation of the Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan.

By looking into the years ahead and identifying strategies and actions, we will achieve a safer, stronger, smarter Louisiana



This section of the plan is physically represented by the **Grow Smarter Map** on pp. 52-53, and it is described in strategies and actions on pp. 58-77. Timelines and funding characteristics are contained in **Appendix F**.

A more detailed **Louisiana Speaks Strategic Implementation Plan** document including responsible parties and benchmarks will be available in July 2007.

INTEGRATED PLANNING FOR A STRONGER FUTURE

We live in a coastal environment. At the heart of the Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan is the recognition that the risk of hurricanes and flooding is a part of life in South Louisiana. Therefore, we must comprehensively manage future risk and mitigate hazards by addressing coastal restoration, levee construction, secondary defenses, and evacuation, as well as the storm-worthiness of new construction and the safety of its location.

The cost and availability of insurance is a direct expression of how successfully we manage risk and mitigate hazard. If we fail at these things, our risk will be high enough that insurance may be unaffordable or unavailable—even in places that are not themselves directly at risk. Without access to insurance, economies and communities are not sustainable. Businesses cannot operate. Banks will not extend credit. Mortgage lenders will not make loans.

Managing the long-term risk posed by storms and flooding can only be done on a regionwide basis. The Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan offers strategies and actions to grow smarter by linking the future of our communities to that of our coast and our economies.

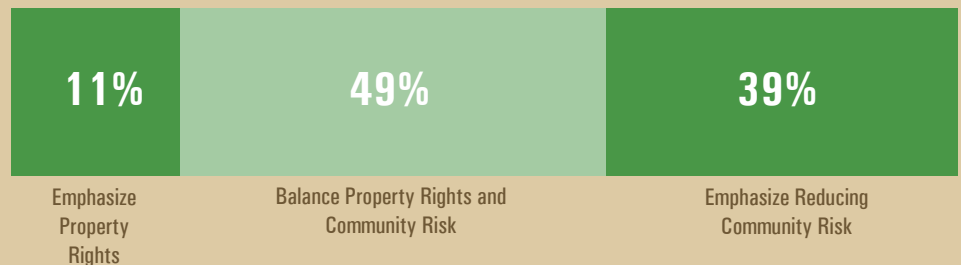


Recovery can facilitate positive change by reinvesting in existing communities. Initial public investments in infrastructure and other improvements set the stage for private investment and development over time. Such in-town development can increase the diversity and overall affordability of housing in the region and take the pressure off of development on sensitive lands and hazardous areas.

WHAT IS THE RIGHT MIX OF PROPERTY RIGHTS AND COMMUNITY RISK?



Citizens across South Louisiana overwhelmingly supported either balancing collective risk with property rights or reducing community risk in unprotected, flood-prone areas. Nearly 90% of the 23,000 Regional Poll responses indicated a preference for land-use regulations and incentives that would shift development away from unprotected high-risk areas and wetlands.



MANAGING RISK AND GROWTH COMPREHENSIVELY

The Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan comprehensively manages risk from future hurricanes, river flooding, and other stormwater damage by coordinating public infrastructure investment, private development, and state initiatives with the protection and restoration investments in the CPRA Master Plan and management of our regional drainage basins (watersheds).

The Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan reduces our overall risk by encouraging development and investment within existing cities and towns—or in new areas identified as low-risk—rather than in exposed, high-risk, or flood-prone areas. “Infill” development would also strengthen traditional town-centers and historic places, reinforcing our sense of community and continuity, and would be complemented by new, walkable communities that offer a vibrant mix of uses and a variety of housing and transportation options. This pattern of development would also decrease the strain on municipal finances created by dispersed, expensive-to-serve development patterns, and would begin to redress persistent disinvestment and inequality in parts of many Louisiana cities and towns.



George Armstrong/FEMA



Mid City Redevelopment Alliance





How Should We Grow?

How we grow affects many things, including our safety from storms, housing costs, community revitalization, and the cost of roads and utilities. The Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan emphasizes actions that improve protection, provide more housing choice, reinvest in our cities and towns, and ensure efficient use of public dollars for infrastructure.

Additionally, the plan calls for the construction of “multi-modal” transportation networks—including roadways as well as new public transit systems and improved cargo shipping—that will connect our communities and our economies and provide evacuation capacity for all of us when hurricanes threaten. These strategies can also help stabilize communities, large and small, that are not experiencing growth, thus helping to keep our local cultures vibrant and sustainable.

The plan further provides strategies to strengthen our economic base and improve our relatively low wages by building a diverse, resilient economy that takes advantage of our historic strengths and pursues emerging opportunities—including those posed as challenges by Katrina and Rita. It would invest in education, both to create a skilled workforce and to seed economic growth through new technology and innovation. The Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan would meet our future housing needs by ensuring that a range of housing types affordable and accessible to people in all phases of life is provided throughout the region, and is close to employment, public amenities, and social services. It would also directly address the issue of preserving our communities and preserving our unique cultures by ensuring that we sustain the places we treasure and the things that make us Louisianian. Finally, the Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan would support the provision of quality social and community services that are necessary for healthy communities and economies, including healthcare and education.

All together, the Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan’s map and strategies for growing smarter provide a long-term guide to creating stronger communities, protected by a restored coast and supported by a more robust economy.



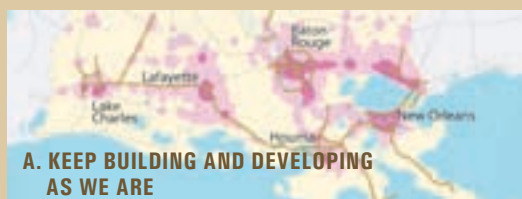


CITIZENS SPEAK UP ON GROWTH AND TRANSPORTATION CHOICE

More than 80% of the 23,000 participants in the Regional Vision Poll indicated a desire to change Louisiana's current land-use and development patterns. They chose futures that increase housing choice with a variety of multifamily and single-family homes, invest in a combination of transit and roadways and coordinate housing and jobs with new transit and levee infrastructure (see page 19 and Appendix B for more information on the community growth and transportation options). The Louisiana Speaks Regional

Plan and the strategies and actions it includes strive to move South Louisiana in the direction preferred by citizens, enhancing housing and transportation choice, fostering new walkable neighborhoods and reinvesting in existing cities and towns, and improving our resiliency by linking where we build to storm safety and public investment criteria.

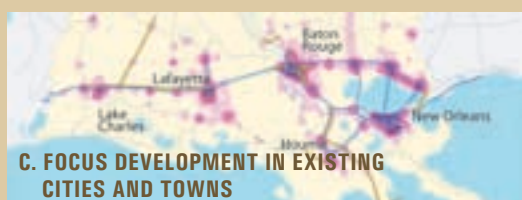
POLL RESULTS



A 18%



B 51%



C 30%

81%



GROW SMARTER: THE VISION FOR A SAFER, STRONGER, SMARTER REGION

This map illustrates long-term projects and initiatives to move South Louisiana toward a stronger future by integrating coastal restoration and protection projects, land development, and state and regional infrastructure investments.

UDA/La. Speaks Pattern Book



Invest and Develop Smarter

Many long-term priorities are closely linked to the location of private development and public investments. These priorities include reinvesting in our communities, efficient use of public dollars, preservation of sensitive land, effective risk management, and creating new walkable, mixed-use communities—all while making us safer from storms.

Reinvestment Areas*

- **Urban Center:** The largest national/regional centers—major offices, shops, civic, and cultural facilities and multifamily housing. Accessible by major national and regional transit and roadways.
- **City Center:** Major subregional centers—offices, shops, civic, and cultural facilities, and a mix of multifamily housing, townhomes, and single family homes. Accessible by regional transit and roadways.
- **Town Center:** Local residential and commercial centers—local shops and offices, and single family homes, townhomes and multifamily housing. Accessible by local transit and roadways.
- **Existing Urbanized Areas:** Development within existing communities—single-family homes, townhomes, multifamily housing, and local retail. Accessible by transit and roadways.
- **Special Economic Zones:** Key economic centers that do not have levee protection, but do have storm risk mitigation through hazard planning and limits on new development. Includes commercial fishing facilities, industrial plants, ports, and recreational sites.

New Growth Areas

- **Town:** Centers serving new communities—regional offices, shops, and civic and cultural facilities, as well as a mix of multifamily housing, townhomes, and single family homes. Accessible by regional and local transit and regional roadways.
- **Neighborhood:** A mix of single family homes, townhomes, multifamily housing and local shops. Accessible by transit service and roads.
- **Industrial Expansion:** New or expanded industrial districts.

Transportation Systems

- ▬ **New Primary Transit Corridor** (Inter-city high-speed and/or regional commuter rail)
- ▬ **New or Existing Secondary Transit Corridor** (fixed-route public transit, such as light rail or street car)
- ▬ **New or Improved Roadway**
- ▬ **Existing Interstate**
- ▬ **Existing US or State Highway**
- **Major Port Facility**
- ++++ **Existing Rail Corridor**

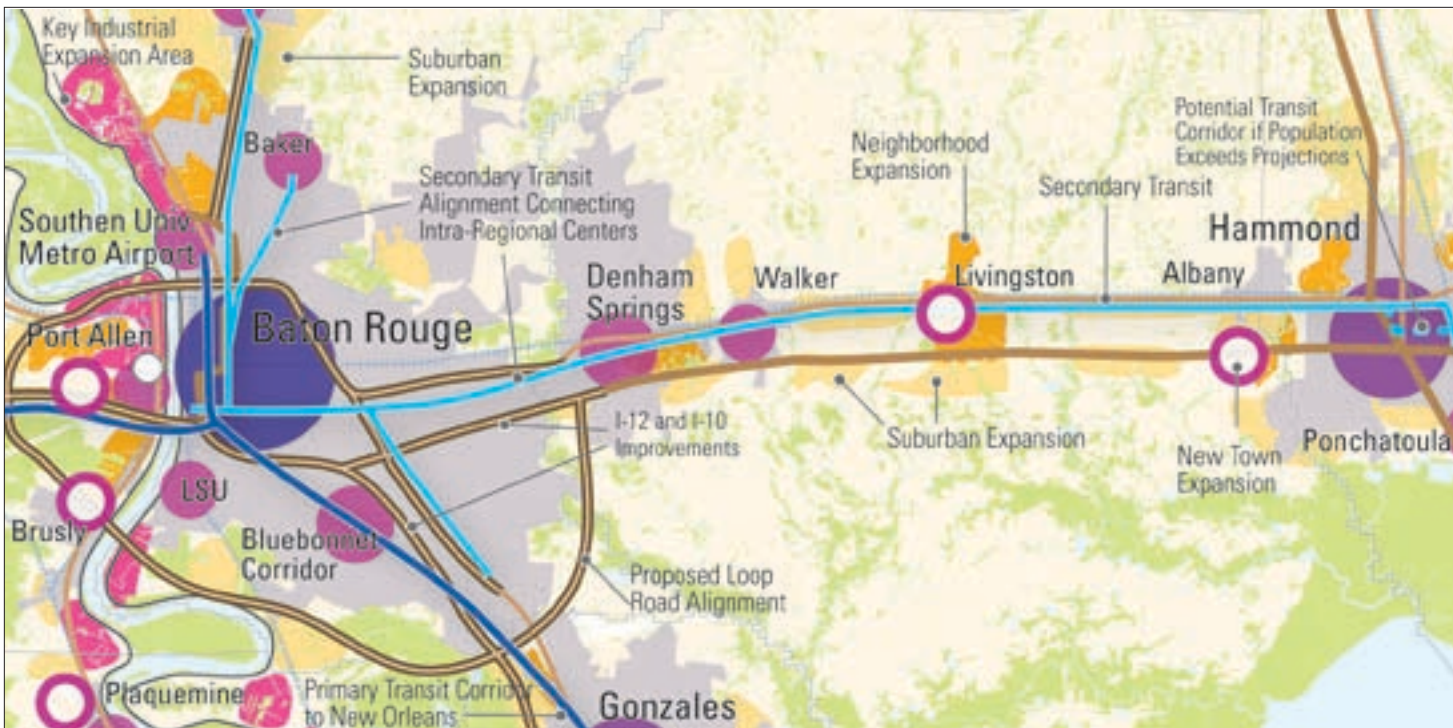
* Reinvestment centers highlight communities that already serve as anchors for surrounding areas, or would serve as anchors in the future. This was determined based upon a combination of land use density and functional characteristics such as regional location and links to major transportation corridors. Example centers serve to illustrate reinvestment opportunity areas derived through discussions with local officials as well as qualitative and quantitative analysis, but are not an exhaustive list. Many rural communities do not appear on the map.



GROW SMARTER: METROPOLITAN AREA FOCUS MAPS

These maps take a closer look at the Louisiana Speaks Vision within the five major metropolitan areas of South Louisiana. The Vision was developed based on input from surveys and workshops through 2006, and the 2007 Regional Vision

Poll. There was great consensus across most of the region, but where specific input varied, the Vision was adapted to reflect local preferences. Please see Appendix A for more information on public outreach activities and input.



Baton Rouge Metro Area

The Baton Rouge area sees significant reinvestment and new development in the Vision. Much reinvestment activity and new growth is focused around new regional transit service, with some new suburban growth clustered around improvements to the highway system.

Reinvestment Areas*

- Urban Center
- City Center
- Town Center
- Existing Urbanized Areas
- Special Economic Zones

New Growth Areas

- Town
- Neighborhood
- Suburban
- Industrial Expansion

Landscape Features

- Existing Wetland
- New or Restored Wetland 50-year projection
- Agricultural, Upland Forest or Open Land
- Open Water

Transportation Systems

- New Primary Transit Corridor
- New or Existing Secondary Transit Corridor
- New or Improved Roadway
- Existing Interstate
- Existing US or State Highway
- Major Port Facility
- Existing Rail Corridor

CPRA Master Plan Features**

- New Levee
- Upgraded Levee
- Existing Levee
- Increased Protection for Major Urban Areas Using Hurricane Protection Systems
- Shoreline, Barrier Island or Navigable Waterway Restoration/Stabilization
- River Diversion
- Water or Sediment Conveyance

REGIONAL POLL RESULTS BATON ROUGE METRO AREA

More than 86% of Baton Rouge area residents favored reinvestment within existing cities and towns and/or modifying existing regional development patterns. Baton Rouge area residents were overwhelmingly in favor of regulations and incentives to manage risk in flood-prone, unprotected areas, with 93% of poll responses favoring such policies.

Focus in Existing Areas or Modify Existing Patterns 86%

Develop As We Have Been 13%

Development Patterns

Emphasize Property Rights 6%

Balance or Emphasize Reduction of Community Risk 93%

Community Risk

* Reinvestment centers highlight communities that already serve as anchors for surrounding areas, or would serve as anchors in the future. This was determined based upon a combination of land use density and functional characteristics such as regional location and links to major transportation corridors. Example centers serve to illustrate reinvestment opportunity areas derived through discussions with local officials as well as qualitative and quantitative analysis, but are not an exhaustive list. Many rural communities do not appear on the map.

** For more information on the CPRA Master Plan, visit www.louisianacoastalplanning.org

New Orleans Metro Area

The Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan envisions significant development and reinvestment activity in the New Orleans area. Development is focused within areas that receive the highest levels of levee protection, and around new and existing investments in transit service.

REGIONAL POLL RESULTS NEW ORLEANS METRO AREA

People who call the New Orleans metro area home indicated strong support for focusing development within existing cities and towns and/or modifying existing regional development patterns, totaling more than 83% of Vision poll responses. Nearly 90% favored land-use and risk management regulations that would reduce community risk in flood-prone, unprotected areas, with only 10% favoring a property-rights focus in such areas.

Focus in Existing Areas or Modify Existing Patterns **83%**

Develop As We Have Been **16%**

Development Patterns

Emphasize Property Rights **10%**

Balance or Emphasize Reduction of Community Risk **89%**

Community Risk



City of New Orleans Targeted Recovery Areas

- Renew Area**—area or facility where trigger investments or administrative action will add to renewal
- Redevelopment Area**—area with some recovery, potential to spur future redevelopment, demonstrates key recovery strategies
- Rebuild Area**—area requiring major rebuilding and significant public or private investment



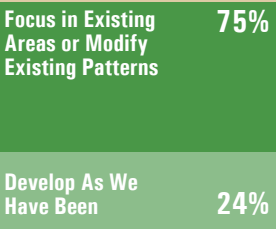
GROW SMARTER: METROPOLITAN AREA FOCUS MAPS

Houma Metro Area

The Houma area sees a combination of reinvestment and new growth activity, with a focus on development within protected areas and in and around existing community centers.

REGIONAL POLL RESULTS HOUMA METRO AREA

About 75% of citizens polled favored greater reinvestment and focused new development, and 87% favored regulations and incentives that emphasize reducing community risk in flood-prone, unprotected areas; 12% wanted to emphasize private property rights in such areas.



Development Patterns



Community Risk



Lafayette Metro Area

The Lafayette metro area sees significant reinvestment activity in and around downtown. New development and reinvestment is focused around highway improvements and new investments in regional transit and national rail service.

REGIONAL POLL RESULTS LAFAYETTE METRO AREA

More than 88% of Lafayette area poll respondents indicated a preference for more compact land-use patterns, and 87% favored policies that manage community risk in flood-prone, unprotected areas and coordinate land uses and public investments with risk management goals.



Development Patterns

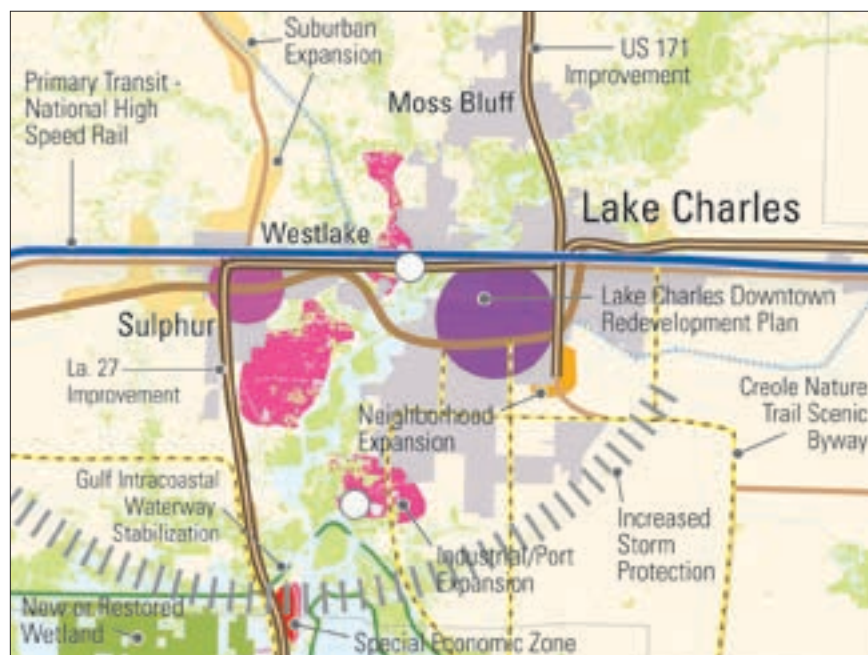


Community Risk



Lake Charles Metro Area

The Regional Plan envisions a balance of reinvestment activity and new growth in the Lake Charles metro area. Reinvestment is focused within existing areas, with new neighborhoods extended around existing roads and roadway improvements. Recovery and growth includes single-family and multifamily development and investments in economic engines in the area.



Reinvestment Areas*

- Urban Center
- City Center
- Town Center
- Existing Urbanized Areas
- Special Economic Zones

New Growth Areas

- Town
- Neighborhood
- Suburban
- Industrial Expansion

Landscape Features

- Existing Wetland
- New or Restored Wetland 50-year projection
- Agricultural, Upland Forest or Open Land
- Open Water

Transportation Systems

- New Primary Transit Corridor
- New or Existing Secondary Transit Corridor
- New or Improved Roadway
- Existing Interstate
- Existing US or State Highway
- Major Port Facility
- Existing Rail Corridor

CPRA Master Plan Features**

- New Levee
- Upgraded Levee
- Existing Levee
- ||| Increased Protection for Major Urban Areas Using Hurricane Protection Systems
- Shoreline, Barrier Island or Navigable Waterway Restoration/Stabilization
- River Diversion
- Water or Sediment Conveyance

REGIONAL POLL RESULTS LAKE CHARLES METRO AREA

Just over 70% of area respondents favored focusing development in existing cities or towns and/or modifying developing patterns, with just under 30% wanting to maintain existing development patterns. More than 80% of Lake Charles area poll responses favored regulations and incentives to reduce community risk in flood-prone, unprotected areas.

Focus in Existing Areas or Modify Existing Patterns **72%**

Develop As We Have Been **28%**

Development Patterns

Emphasize Property Rights **19%**

Balance or Emphasize Reduction of Community Risk **80%**

Community Risk

* Reinvestment centers highlight communities that already serve as anchors for surrounding areas, or would serve as anchors in the future. This was determined based upon a combination of land use density and functional characteristics such as regional location and links to major transportation corridors. Example centers serve to illustrate reinvestment opportunity areas derived through discussions with local officials as well as qualitative and quantitative analysis, but are not an exhaustive list. Many rural communities do not appear on the map.

** For more information on the CPRA Master Plan, visit www.louisianacoastalplanning.org



The Issue

Over the past decades Louisiana has seen suburban expansion much like the rest of the country, despite our sensitive coastal environment, stormwater-management problems, and other hazard risks. Investments in levees and wetlands restoration have not been coordinated with the location of development to reduce vulnerability. Our first lines of defense—our wetlands and barrier islands—continue to be lost due to strong storms, development in wetlands and the channelization of the Mississippi River.

The Solution

Managing our risk from natural hazards means balancing property rights against the need to protect community health and prosperity. There are reasonable limits on where new building construction should be allowed, and reasonable steps property owners in risky areas can take that can mitigate costs when disasters strike. A comprehensive approach is needed to coordinate development and risk management with protection and restoration investments, conservation of sensitive and high-risk areas, and assistance to local governments.

1

COMPREHENSIVELY MANAGE FUTURE RISK

We need a clear, comprehensive strategy for managing the risks associated with living in South Louisiana if we are to achieve long-term commercial insurability, private investment, and safety from natural hazards. The people of the state have spoken through the Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan process. They provided a mandate for a new, comprehensive approach for managing risk that integrates storm-protection and flood-control infrastructure, coastal restoration, public awareness, and land-use policy. This approach bolsters the Coastal Restoration and Protection Authority (CPRA) “multiple lines of defense” strategy by coordinating the location and intensity of land-use and infrastructure provision with the protection and restoration investments in the CPRA Master Plan. This approach goes beyond protection from catastrophic storms to include overall flood safety and watershed management.

ACTIONS

- 1.1 Focus Infrastructure Investment and Development in Lower-Risk Areas.** Utilize the proposed Louisiana Location Index (see “Grow Smarter,” Actions 2.1-2) and the CPRA Master Plan at its phase of implementation to identify lower-risk locations for new development and infrastructure investment. Prioritizing funding for transportation and utility infrastructure in existing communities and low-risk areas will foster private development in these locations. Public funding should not flow to higher-risk, unprotected areas unless such improvements serve a vital and demonstrable economic-development need.
- 1.2 Implement Coastal Zoning Codes.** Specialized coastal zoning codes would provide guidance for regulating development so it will support—and be supported by—the protection measures in place or planned through the CPRA Master Plan and other protection measures. Such codes could cover designated coastal and high-risk zones and be keyed to categories in the proposed Louisiana Location Index (see “Grow Smarter,” Actions 2.1-2). Such codes would also guide risk-management strategies for development in areas outside of levees, where exposure to storms is inevitable but limited development is vital for Louisiana’s economy. Additionally, these codes would restrict development in wetlands within levee-protected areas and the areas immediately behind new levees that would be at greatest risk during an overtopping or levee breach event. This program could potentially be placed under the Coastal Zone Management (CZM) program of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR).
- 1.3 Enforce Mitigation Requirements on Building in Flood Zones, and Enforce Building Codes.** Use FEMA’s Base Flood Elevations (BFEs) as a guide for flood-risk and augment this as other relevant hazard-mapping becomes available. Mitigation within flood zones typically involves raising structures above the 100-year flood mark. Implementation of this action should make allowances for nonconforming structures, especially hunting and fishing camps, that are designed to be “expendable” in a flood or that are designed to flood and not be permanently



CASE STUDY: COASTAL MITIGATION IN NORTH CAROLINA

North Carolina's 1974 Coastal Area Management Act (CAMA) aims to integrate coastal management and land-use planning. Representing one of the first state-local partnerships for coastal protection, the Act mandates that all coastal counties prepare comprehensive plans. The county plans, which are certified by the state's Coastal Resources Commission, must include policies to reduce storm hazards and protect natural resources, as well as address future growth and economic development. By 1997, 72 coastal cities and towns had joined the 20 counties in adopting plans.

The state's Division of Coastal Management (DCM) provides technical assistance and grants for local planning efforts, and in turn it uses the plans to make regulatory decisions in the state-designated Areas of Environmental Concern and elsewhere within the coastal counties. DCM works on many levels: recognizing the importance of public awareness of hazards risk, it developed a coastal-hazard GIS and Internet tool to allow property owners to assess factors such as erosion rates and flood zones.

Though the CAMA planning mandate has been generally successful in getting local governments to attend to coastal management issues, a

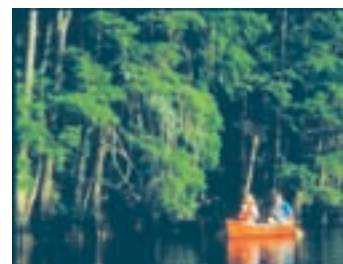
2000 evaluation of the land use plans revealed some weaknesses. These included inconsistent plan quality, weak local land-suitability analysis, inadequate resources for the planning process, and fragmented analysis and policies for ecosystems that span jurisdictional borders. The resulting recommendations—many involving greater state support—include the classification of different types of plans according to local needs, clearer plan requirements, and incentives and monitoring to improve implementation. These lessons learned can inform Louisiana in developing strategies to plan comprehensively and effectively for storm safety and environmental protection.

Tom Stiles, www.skyshots.com



damaged. Such structures would not be eligible for flood insurance unless they meet program standards. Also continue to enforce the Uniform Construction Code (see "Recover Sustainably," Action 1.3).

- 1.4 Implement Building Protection Techniques.** Educate citizens about building-protection techniques to protect against wind, flood, and storm risk, including techniques such as building hardening, building raising, use of waterproof materials, tree plantings, and on-site stormwater retention. Refer to the *Louisiana Speaks Pattern Book* and *Planning Toolkit* for preliminary guidance on these issues.
- 1.5 Purchase High-Risk and Environmentally Sensitive Land.** Establish a state "Conservation Trust" and coordinate it with federal, state, local, and private funds to acquire rights (or surface rights) to high-risk and/or environmentally sensitive land, or to acquire permanent conservation easements on such land. Work with state, regional, and local entities, as well as nonprofits such as the Trust for Public Land and the Nature Conservancy, to achieve effective and efficient administration of these efforts. Pursue legal mechanisms to sever underlying mineral rights so as to ease property transfers and create more willing sellers. In those cases when refusal to sell would cause immediate impediments to the implementation of protection and restoration plans, "quick-take" could be reserved as a last resort.



Since 1988, voters nationwide have approved 75% of ballot measures funding conservation trusts—more than 1,500 in all—totaling more than \$44 billion. (Trust for Public Land)





- i. **Land Purchases and Conservation Easements.** Use the Conservation Land Trust and other funds to purchase land outright (“fee simple”) or through conservation easements for ecologically sensitive and high risk land, identified using scientific criteria (such as storm surge, subsidence zones, and wind zones) and/or through the proposed Louisiana Location Index (see “Grow Smarter,” Actions 2.1-2).
- ii. **Repetitive Loss Buyout.** Utilize the proposed Conservation Trust and FEMA Hazard Mitigation (HMGP) funds at the parish level to execute repetitive-loss buyouts for properties repeatedly damaged by storms or floods. Pursue opportunities for additional HMGP funds.
- iii. **Property swaps.** Work with the Road Home Corporation and municipal and parish redevelopment authorities to establish mechanisms for facilitating and encouraging property swaps. Publicly held parcels located in lower-risk areas and/or areas targeted for clustering by recovery plans would be transferred to property owners, in exchange for parcels located in higher-risk areas and/or areas not targeted for near-term clustering. The publicly acquired parcels would be reserved for future redevelopment or preserved as recreational and/or natural space.
- iv. **Transfer of Development Rights.** Establish a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) clearinghouse for environmentally sensitive and high-risk land not already acquired through the programs described above. The state would work with regional and local planning bodies to designate areas of protection (“sending zones”) and areas of land-use intensification (“receiving zones”). In exchange for voluntarily removing their land from commerce, landowners in the sending zone could recoup forgone development value by selling “credits” to the clearinghouse, which would, in turn, sell them to landowners or developers in the receiving zone. Developers in the receiving zone could build at a higher level of density than otherwise permitted by applicable

CASE STUDY: THE NEW JERSEY MEADOWLANDS PLAN FOR CONSERVATION



New Jersey Meadowlands

Since 1970, the New Jersey Meadowlands Commission (NJMC) has implemented a Master Plan guiding the preservation and targeted development of an ecologically sensitive 20,000-acre area spanning 14 municipalities. Central to the plan is an effort to preserve an 8,400-acre area of continuous wetlands as a nature preserve. The preserve area, which would be roughly 10 times the size of Central Park in New York City, has been designated by the NJMC as nondevelopable open space in perpetuity. The

NJMC, a state planning and regulatory authority, has acquired thousands of acres through a combination of outright purchases, transfers of development rights, and the purchase or donation of conservation easements. Funding has come through federal appropriations, state funds, and nonprofit land trusts. This combined approach to land protection and acquisition can be instructive in Louisiana’s efforts in protecting high-risk locations and sensitive habitats.

development regulations—thereby increasing the value of their property. This would require strong local enforcement of existing zoning, so that the additional value represents a real increase.

- 1.6 Support Rigorous Review of Development and Other Projects in Coastal Areas.** Use the existing CZM program of the DNR, along with additional or expanded programs as necessary, to thoroughly review and screen projects proposed in coastal areas. Such review would have the power to deny permits or require appropriate mitigation and may require additional fees for expanded administration. Certain projects would also fall under CPRA review. Conservation areas in the proposed Louisiana Location Index (see “Grow Smarter,” Actions 2.1-2) should encompass all areas that currently require DNR review. Although exemptions should continue for camps and single structures that meet other applicable criteria, CZM review should include all subdivisions—even if parcels are developed individually. Review should also continue in areas newly encircled by levee infrastructure. State auditing of approved local CZM programs should be tightened to ensure consistency with regional and state objectives.
- 1.7 Require and Fund Coastal Protection Elements in Comprehensive Plans.** For coastal parishes, provide match-funding for local governments to produce a required Coastal Protection element in Master/Comprehensive Plans that would coordinate local land use with existing and planned state protection and restoration investments (see “Think Regionally,” Action 2.4).
- 1.8 Develop Secondary Defenses Against Flooding.** In New Orleans and other low-lying urbanized areas, create sub-basins to mitigate catastrophic flooding if primary defenses fail. Use parks, open space, and natural ridges in concert with existing and planned infrastructure including levees, canals, roads, rail lines, and port facilities, and coordinate this strategy with pump systems.
- 1.9 Create a Statewide Watershed Management Structure Consisting of Appropriate State, Regional, and Local Organizations.** Create a State Watershed Management Working Group (including all relevant state agencies, the Army Corps of Engineers, the Governor’s Office, regional planning entities, and others) responsible for developing a Watershed Management Plan, as well as a long-term implementation plan that includes organizational structure and inter-organization communication strategies.
- 1.10 Implement a Plan for Stormwater Drainage and Watershed Management.** Create a statewide Watershed Management Plan based on sound science, strong communication and partnerships with stakeholders, and cost-effective management decisions. Using the Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan, the CPRA Master Plan, and Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)’s existing Basin Water Quality Plans as a starting point, the Watershed Management Plan would address flooding, water quality/pollution, municipal and agricultural supply, and ecosystem restoration in Louisiana’s 12 basins.



Citizens of Louisiana overwhelmingly supported either balancing collective risk with property rights (49%) or emphasizing reducing community risk (39%) in unprotected, flood-prone areas.



Lori Waselchuk



- 1.11 Provide Watershed Management Planning Resources to Local Governments.** The State would work with and provide technical resources to municipal/parish offices of planning and public works to manage the watersheds, and it would assist in coordinating adjacent parishes to ensure watersheds are managed integrally and fairly. The State would consolidate and utilize DEQ basin, watershed, and mapping data to provide environmental mapping and analysis for state, regional, and local planning functions. It would also assist local governments in making planning decisions consistent with the Watershed Management Plan—including providing DEQ's existing model zoning work—while also streamlining permitting procedures.
- 1.12 Coordinate Inter-Agency Capital Programs.** The state would coordinate capital programs contained in the Watershed Management Plan with those of other state agencies and the Army Corps of Engineers.
- 1.13 Establish Education Programs and Partnerships to Raise Awareness of Watershed Management and Stormwater Best Management Practices.** The State would work with local governments to enhance awareness of watershed management through partnerships with stakeholders, universities, state agencies, and the private sector. It would also promote, in cooperation with ongoing DEQ efforts, a package of stormwater best management practices (BMPs).

CASE STUDY: NEW JERSEY SMART GROWTH LOCATOR

After creating a State Planning Commission in 1985, the State of New Jersey adopted its State Plan in 1992. The Plan includes a map that divided the state into five planning areas where growth was encouraged or discouraged. Although local adoption of the Plan map is voluntary, it reflects the collective ambition of the state's cities and towns: large portions of the state are protected from growth, and other areas are targeted for smart growth and infrastructure investments.

The Smart Growth Locator, developed in 2004 by the New Jersey Housing Mortgage Finance Agency (HMFA), is a free website (sgl.state.nj.us) where users can type in an address or location and find out if a property is within a State-designated smart growth area. The website also provides more information about the property, including census information and eligibility for any HMFA program. In 2005, the site logged more than 15,000 hits a month.

The Locator has been particularly useful for the state Board of Public Utilities, which provides incentives for infrastructure improvements in smart growth areas, but requires developers to bear the burden of most costs for projects outside targeted areas. The Locator is used by developers and the Board to make smart business and infrastructure decisions. The user-friendly website is also used by potential homeowners to see if they or a certain property qualifies for special incentives or loans related to the State Plan. And the Smart Growth Locator can be adapted to many other applications as well.

With a plan in place and the requisite support, Louisiana could develop its own version of the Smart Growth Locator to support the Louisiana Location Index and other initiatives.



A sample from the New Jersey Smart Growth Locator website.



Grow Smarter

Strategies to Develop and Invest Smarter

DEVELOP AND INVEST SMARTER

Through the Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan process, clear priorities for the state's future growth emerged. Louisianians want to focus investment and development into our cities and towns, and we want new communities to feature a rich mix of uses, a variety of housing options, and convenient access to both roads and public transit. The State, working with a broad coalition of stakeholders, should create clear and easily understood criteria for determining where to focus reinvestment, where to focus new investment, and where land should be conserved. This would provide a guide that would effectively link land-use decisions to the implementation of the Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan and vision and the CPRA Master Plan. It would help maximize the effectiveness and efficiency of state policies and infrastructure spending, provide a framework for local planning, and create a sound basis for monitoring implementation of the Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan.

ACTIONS

- 2.1 Establish Criteria for Land Classification to Manage Risk.** Convene state, regional, and local experts—from the public and private sectors—in land use, transportation, coastal restoration and protection, cultural resources, economic development, housing, and ecology to jointly develop criteria for land-development suitability. Begin by identifying objective, defensible criteria for conservation areas, including high storm risk, subsidence zones, vulnerable habitats, priority conservation areas, water bodies, and cultural-heritage areas. Then identify criteria for targeted reinvestment areas, including damage from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, historic patterns of disinvestment, and the presence of excess infrastructure capacity. Continue by creating criteria for other categories, as appropriate, that delineate the relative suitability of land for different intensities and types of development, based upon hazard risk, reinvestment potential, economic assets, wildlife habitat, and proximity to existing and planned transportation and utilities infrastructure.
- 2.2 Create a “Louisiana Location Index” to Guide the Location of Land Development and State Investments.** Link the land-development suitability criteria described in the previous Action to a Geographic Information System (GIS) map database, creating a “Louisiana Location Index.” This index would build upon the GIS data collected during the Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan process from regional, state, and other sources, and it would use the vision maps created for the plan as a foundation for identifying appropriate locations for conservation, reinvestment, and different intensities of future development. This effort would be coordinated with existing Louisiana Economic Development (LED) studies that identify prime sites for economic development, Trust for Public Land’s “Greenprinting” work, DNR Coastal Management Zones and hazard mapping, additional hazard mapping from the Army Corps or other groups, DOTD long-range plans, regional planning entity plans, and other existing planning

2

The Issue

How we invest our infrastructure dollars and where we build new homes and workplaces help determine our quality of life and safety from storms. Like many other states, Louisiana has often funded infrastructure projects and allowed new development without considering whether they further important goals such as reducing our risk from natural hazards and spurring reinvestment in our communities.

The Solution

A clear strategy for spending our infrastructure dollars and shaping where our homes and workplaces are built will enable us to achieve many of the key goals of this plan. To develop and invest smarter, we need an effort that brings together state, regional, and local stakeholders to establish clear guidelines on where, why, and how we invest our public dollars and build our communities.



Ed Edahl/FEMA



Sides & Associates



Mark Wolfe/FEMA



and land-classification efforts. At a minimum, the Index would address natural hazards, level of existing and planned transportation and utility infrastructure, and identified reinvestment need. The Index would provide a “one-stop” guide for state and local governments in locating infrastructure and permitting development. Local governments could also use the Index as a starting point for developing Comprehensive Plans and zoning codes.

- 2.3 Develop Model Codes for Community Development.** Create model development and zoning codes for safe, walkable communities that address building massing and density, block standards, buffers, street design, parking, and fire and public-safety standards. Tailor these codes to the conditions of Louisiana, including addressing reinvestment in existing communities and development in coastal environments. These codes would be keyed to the Louisiana Location Index described above and would comprise a free resource for local land-use planning and regulation
- 2.4 Require Permits for Development in Designated High-Risk Areas.** Require state permits for proposed private development and public projects in locations designated as high-risk areas by the Louisiana Location Index. This review would be coordinated with the existing CZM program of the DNR, and enhanced or augmented as appropriate (See “Grow Smarter,” Action 1.6).
- 2.5 Coordinate Planning for Large Economic Development Projects.** Major economic development projects and potential sites should be identified and planned cooperatively by LED and local and regional economic developers, with technical assistance from a State Planning Office (see “Think Regionally,” Action 2.2) to ensure that adequate infrastructure capacity is either in place or can be put in place, and to plan for mitigation of environmental, stormwater, sewer, traffic, and other impacts.
- 2.6 Build “Greener.”** Educate developers, builders, the public, and local governments on the value of environmentally sustainable (“green”) construction—including lower lifetime costs. Adopt, by legislation or executive order, a requirement that all new state buildings be built to LEED or other green standards, and encourage local governments and the private sector to do the same. Provide tax incentives for green construction. Use the *Louisiana Speaks Pattern Book* and *Planning Toolkit* as educational resources and introductions to green building techniques.

Grow Smarter

Strategies to Move Louisiana Forward

MOVE LOUISIANA FORWARD

In recent decades and especially since the storms of 2005, South Louisiana has developed regional economies and regional systems of automobile and freight transport—but our public transit infrastructure lags most successful U.S. regions. We should immediately begin planning and implementing a transportation network comprised of multi-modal corridors that will serve us well into the future. This strategy seeks to coordinate regional and sub-regional transportation planning and investment, providing a new capacity for implementing the Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan. Service would be divided into two tiers, shown in the “Grow Smarter Map.”

- A proposed *Primary Transportation Corridor* would encompass the I-10 corridor across Louisiana (and into Texas and Florida), as well as connections between New Orleans and the Northshore. It would include roadways as well as limited stop, intercity and commuter rapid rail service between major downtowns and selected intermediary locations targeted for high levels of growth.
- Proposed *Secondary Transportation Corridors* would exist within metro areas and between major destinations within the Baton Rouge-New Orleans area. These would include roadways plus convenient local or commuter public rail-transit or dedicated busway service. They would link neighborhoods, employment centers, and key existing and planned destinations within metro areas.

ACTIONS

- 3.1 Prioritize Regional and Sub-Regional Transportation Projects.** Work with DOTD and regional planning entities (Metropolitan Planning Organizations) and their transportation plans and programs to immediately evaluate the viability of different modes along regional and sub-regional transportation corridors. As appropriate, commission multi-modal corridor investment studies (known as “Major Investment Studies,” or MISs) to assess the viability of public transit in the context of existing transportation networks, existing and future land uses, and key economic development projects. Also, identify and address key roadway bottlenecks and design flaws that can be improved to enhance vehicular flow without the need to add overall system capacity.
- 3.2 Complete a Statewide Goods Movement Study.** Use existing DOTD freight studies, including the State Transportation Plan and the Latin American Trade and Transportation Study, as the basis for an evaluation of statewide goods-movement to prioritize corridors and intermodal centers for truck, rail, air, and ship freight transfer. Work with freight carriers to identify bottlenecks at freight yards and interchanges, bridges and waterways, and other operational constraints. Identify new corridor opportunities, and prioritize grade separation projects along existing and new corridors. Investigate the potential for shared or exclusive track usage, and coordination with other multi-modal corridor improvements.

3

The Issue

Increased congestion and longer auto travel times are predicted throughout the state in coming years. Southeast Louisiana has seen worsening traffic congestion since Katrina, and that trend is predicted to continue. And with a population that is getting older and less independently mobile, we need a wider range of travel options to meet our changing needs.

The Solution

Future projections tell us that more highways alone will not solve all our traffic and mobility issues. We need to provide other options, and to think about how and where we build highways and transit affects our communities and impacts growth. By building new roads and transit lines in places that serve existing communities and shape smart new growth, we will get a better return on our investment by reducing congestion, creating greater opportunity, and limiting investments in high-risk areas.





3.3 Plan for the Future of Louisiana's Airports. Continue to study potential expansions of existing air passenger and cargo capacity, and/or construction of new facilities. Future projects should be accessible by major automobile, public transit, and freight infrastructure, and they should benefit the entire region, consistent with the vision of the Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan.

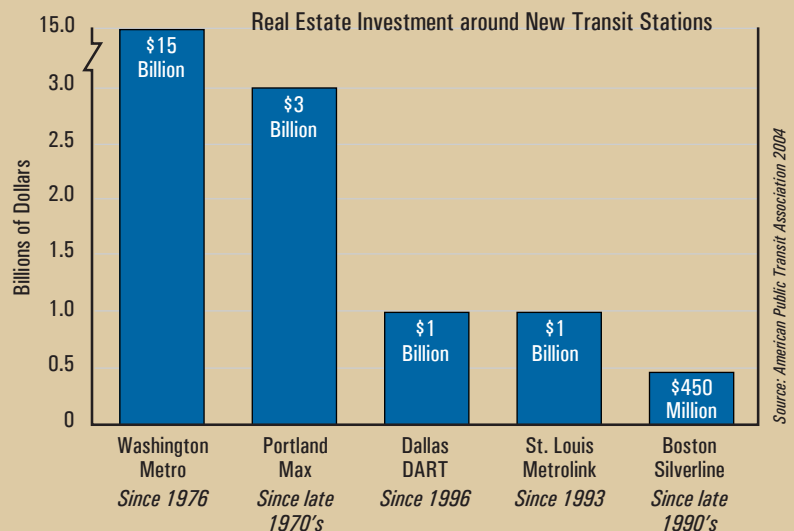
3.4 Make Full Use of Existing Transportation Funding Options, and Pursue New and Innovative Options. Explore all methods for funding transportation and goods movement investments. These might include:

- Toll authorities, including for operation of new and/or existing roads
- Public-private partnership agreements to design/build/operate and/or long-term operating leases
- Recapturing the value of land development around transit stations through Transit Oriented Development (see "Grow Smarter," Action 4.7)
- As appropriate, the Office of State Planning, DOTD, and regional planning entities should recommend effective structures for regional or super-regional authorities that could raise revenues to fund, build, and operate roads, transit, freight, and/or other major infrastructure, and recommend such authorities for approval by the Legislature.
- The Legislature should also support efforts to direct transportation-related fees, taxes, and other revenues into transportation-specific funding pools, rather than into the General Fund.

CASE STUDY: GROWING SMARTER AROUND TRANSIT CORRIDORS

Integrated local/regional transportation networks increase travel options and allow people to get around faster. They also have measurable benefits for communities and economies. Across the nation, the opening of high-quality public transit lines has been

accompanied by major reinvestment in neighborhoods served by new stations. As the chart below demonstrates, new transit often means higher property values and greater investment in commercial and residential development.



- The state and regional planning entities should aggressively pursue Federal Transit Administration New Starts funds
- It should be noted that even assuming full use of both existing funding and innovative options, maintenance and expansion of transportation systems may require additional new revenue streams in the form of taxes, bonds, and/or impact or use fees at the local or state level, as well as additional federal appropriations.

3.5 Build Transportation Infrastructure within Multi-Modal Corridors. Based upon the recommendations of corridor and freight studies and the funding sources identified, issue Requests for Proposals (RFPs) to design, build and possibly operate improvements within corridors as part of integrated multi-modal regional transportation systems. Such corridors would accommodate some mix of automobile, dedicated-lane buses, trucks, freight rail, and passenger rail within the same rights-of-way.

3.6 Integrate Transportation Modeling and Planning. Develop a program to include a land-use and economic-development strategy in the next update of the Transportation Improvement Plans (TIPs) by consolidating and/or coordinating the functions of regional Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs—the existing, federally mandated regional planning entities in Louisiana) and regional economic development agencies with other regional functions (See “Think Regionally,” Action 2.3). Integrated regional planning entities would spatially integrate these strategies into DOTD’s Statewide Travel Demand Model. The regional planning entities would develop coordinated schedules, and would integrate their planning with the Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan’s strategies for land use, transportation, and economic development, plus the CPRA Master Plan’s priorities for coastal protection and restoration.

3.7 Clear Obstacles to Building Transit-Oriented Development (TOD). Fixed-route public transit is most effective when the areas near station-stops are targeted for intense commercial and residential development. This acts as a means to promote transit ridership, create walkable community centers, and recapture revenues created via transit investments.

- The State should create an action team to identify and remove statutory, legal, and financial obstacles to TOD.
- Potential TOD sites should be identified and prioritized through the Louisiana Location Index (See “Grow Smarter,” Actions 2.1-2).
- The State should also provide TOD development and design guidance, including appropriate parking locations, connections to sub-regional transportation networks, and effective means of leveraging local “feeder” transit service.



James Mohler



The Issue

Louisiana is at an economic crossroads. Many of our traditional industries are not projected to expand in coming years, and we have not kept up with other states in creating the high-technology, high-wage jobs of the future. Our incomes and education levels remain below the national average.

The Solution

Building a stronger, more resilient economy requires a multifaceted approach that improves our education system, builds upon our historic strengths, integrates specialized high-technology fields, transforms our recovery experience into valuable expertise, and invests strategically in emerging industries that capitalize on our unique environment and culture.



LDOL

4

BUILD A DIVERSE, RESILIENT ECONOMY

In order to build a more prosperous future, Louisiana must develop and grow industries that provide quality jobs with good wages. The state must provide the education and training required to meet a range of existing and emerging workforce needs; serve ongoing basic needs and support technology development for existing industries; target investment in local emerging industries and attraction of emerging industries; and support innovation at all levels. This strategy brings together a variety of key economic development objectives into an integrated approach.

ACTIONS

- 4.1 Educate the Workforce of Tomorrow.** Provide the financial, technical, and human resources necessary to train a world-class workforce. These efforts should work closely with companies and industry groups to determine workforce needs and sector-based training solutions, using regional community and technical colleges, proprietary schools, and technical education programs at secondary schools. The State should create new scholarships and subsidized loan repayment programs targeted toward recovery-critical and high-need sectors, including technology. Implement intensive efforts to fund, promote, and provide adult and drop-out education services throughout the state. The State should also continue and increase its focus on math and science instruction, pre-K-12 education, and the GED program.
- 4.2 Strengthen our Universities.** Build Louisiana's universities to support and facilitate technology-based economic development. Provide the financial resources our universities need to support outstanding faculty and their research and provide quality education for students. Educate students to provide the high-quality workforce the state needs to fully participate in the knowledge economy, as these jobs provide the higher wages and salaries needed to increase incomes and wealth. Facilitate technology development and the commercialization of university-developed technologies in Louisiana.
- 4.3 Stimulate the Growth of Knowledge-Based Industries.** Develop knowledge-based industries that build on existing industries, recovery-critical sectors, and existing efforts to develop new sectors. These would include, for example, technologies related to the oil-and-gas and petrochemical industries, coastal sciences, and the biotechnology and biomedical sectors. Evaluate and implement, as appropriate, the strategic plan being prepared for the Board of Regents to recommend targeted research areas and propose a system for transferring technology from university laboratories to Louisiana companies. Assess the success of current efforts to increase private-sector R&D in emerging fields, and adjust or add programs to further increase private-sector R&D. Evaluate the ongoing infrastructure requirements of these industries, and meet these requirements in advance.





SPOTLIGHT: VISION 2020

Louisiana Speaks draws heavily on public input and ongoing state and regional economic development initiatives. One such effort is Vision 2020—the Louisiana Economic Development Council (LEDC)’s master plan for long-range economic vitality. Vision 2020 was created in 1999 and is regularly updated. The plan aims to make Louisiana a “top ten” state in which to live, work, and do business by guiding economic renewal and diversification. The plan envisions a vibrant, balanced economy, a fully engaged, well educated workforce, and a high

quality of life. The plan includes a comprehensive set of strategies for creating a “learning enterprise” in Louisiana. We would commit to excellence in lifetime learning, balancing retention of existing businesses with attracting new ones, and increasing personal income and dramatically reducing poverty.

The plan is driven by a series of specific initiatives and benchmarks for measuring progress toward long-term goals.

- 4.4 Increase the Capacity of Entrepreneurs and Small Firms.** Increase access to appropriate capital, including forms of debt and equity with various terms and conditions required by different types of businesses in different stages of development. Streamline regulations, restructure taxes and develop incentives to facilitate formation of new businesses and encourage investment in job- and revenue-generating ventures. Address cost obstacles to start-up viability, including business insurance, and develop a comprehensive support network that provides training and assistance on the range of issues facing small businesses and entrepreneurs—from daily operations to long-term planning.
- 4.5 Make Louisiana an Attractive Environment for Capital Investment and Business Attraction.** Continue restructuring Louisiana’s tax system to encourage business investment and provide equitable taxes for businesses and individuals. Additionally, the State should continue to streamline regulations to bring compliance times in line with other states, and provide state and/or local incentives to reward those companies that invest in their workers.
- 4.6 Bolster Our Traditional Economic Strengths.** Continue to improve and expand the economic sectors in which Louisiana is an international leader, including energy production, chemicals, ports and shipping, wood products, and tourism and cultural businesses. Develop a Sector Action Plan for each traditional industry sector. These would include workforce needs by industry; infrastructure needs, including research infrastructure; and plans for joint university-industry research to encourage innovation and develop new technologies that can spur private investment.



- 4.7 Increase Maritime Trade.** Identify and fund targeted investments that will expand port infrastructure capabilities and capacity to meet future needs, and implement a statewide maritime marketing program. Also, work to address the problem of skilled labor shortages in the inland barge industry and maritime sector through targeted training programs. Work with the recommendations in the Latin American Trade and Transportation Study, and others.
- 4.8 Bolster Development in Rural Communities and Urban Neighborhoods.** Louisiana's economy, families, and communities would benefit from the equitable and efficient distribution of commercial and industrial development. Work with local and regional economic development groups to develop strategies for redevelopment of commercial corridors in rural communities and urban neighborhoods, including targeted use of Louisiana's Main Street program and the proposed Reinvestment Trust (see "Recover Sustainably," Action 3.2). Use incentives or other methods to ensure that broadband Internet access is universally available in rural and urban areas.
- 4.9 Expand Opportunity for Working Families.** Many Louisianians who work full-time do not earn enough to support a family above the poverty line, and many others who want to work cannot find employment that allows them to be free of public assistance. The Legislature should increase the minimum wage to a living wage for all workers. The State should enhance and expand existing federal Workforce Investment Board efforts to initiate a comprehensive asset-building program to enable low-income and working families to save, build assets, and enter the financial mainstream. The State should also increase child-care subsidies for low-income working families and provide transportation assistance, incentives to ensure that public contracts include provisions for local hiring, minority contracting, jobs with good wages and benefits, and "green" technologies.



SPOTLIGHT: LOUISIANA'S WORKING COAST

Louisiana's working coast is vital to the U.S. economy:

- Our ports complex is the largest on Earth, handling \$75 billion in cargo annually, including more than 25% of waterborne exports from the lower 48 states, and more than 40% of all U.S. grain exports.
- Our extensive gas-and-oil infrastructure is tied to 50% of the nation's refining capacity.
- The state's \$3 billion commercial fishing industry produces 25% of all the seafood in the lower 48 states, and is the nation's largest shrimp, oyster, and blue crab producer.
- Our coast supports a multimillion dollar, world-class recreational hunting and fishing industry.



Simon Gunning, www.simongunning.com

4.10 Restart, Retain, and Expand Louisiana's Cultural- and Tourism-Related Industries.

To counter the uncertainty that remains in many people's minds across the country and beyond about the status of New Orleans' recovery, and the adverse effects this may be having on the tourism-and-convention industry, fund a massive campaign to promote (and potentially re-brand) New Orleans and Louisiana. Provide and expand tax incentives to artists and cultural industries and encourage the creation of cultural districts that support the Louisiana residents and firms—the residents and firms that produce Louisiana cultural products, attract creative talent and businesses, create new jobs, and make Louisiana a national center of the film, music, digital media, literary, and visual arts industries.

- 4.11 Support a Vision 2020 Update.** Support efforts to convene representatives from LED, local and regional economic development groups, private sector business leaders, and others to update Vision 2020—the state's strategic plan for economic development—in cooperation with the Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan, and to marshal the political will for implementation.



The Issue

For Louisiana to remain economically competitive, we must provide the housing needed by all segments of our workforce. Housing shortages have hindered recovery from Katrina and Rita by making it difficult for workers to live within commuting distance of available jobs. As housing demand rises and available land declines in coming years, providing the range of housing needed for a diverse economy becomes increasingly important.

The Solution

Over the long run, meeting our housing needs means adapting to shifts in demand for different kinds of housing. This strategy quantifies the demand for housing in each metro area over time, and it sets targets that local and parish governments will integrate into comprehensive plans. Enforcing fair housing laws, establishing regional homeowner purchase programs, and providing affordable and workforce housing in new developments will allow Louisiana to meet its future needs.

5

MEET OUR FUTURE HOUSING NEEDS

Balance the location of jobs, housing, and infrastructure within the metro areas of South Louisiana. Ensure an adequate supply of housing, at prices affordable to the labor force, to support the needs of local industries and their employees. Ensure that workforce housing is adequately served by infrastructure and conveniently located to employment, social services, and public facilities.

ACTIONS

- 5.1 Set Regional and Sub-Regional Housing Targets.** Perform a housing-needs assessment by income range within each metro area and sub-metro area; set targets based upon existing and anticipated need, while ensuring that low-income housing is not concentrated in any one neighborhood or parish. Representatives of the housing industry and major regional employers should be involved in developing these targets.
- 5.2 Require Regional Affordable and Workforce Housing Elements in Comprehensive Plans.** Require each regional planning entity and required municipalities and parishes to demonstrate the capacity to meet existing and future affordable and workforce housing needs in their Comprehensive Plans and Regional Strategies (see “Think Regionally,” Actions 2.3-4). These plans will delineate actions required to meet affordable and workforce housing targets, as well as the facilities required to serve housing residents, including day care, public transit, and primary medical care. The State would provide technical assistance and match-funding to complete these plans.
- 5.3 Adopt a State Law Requiring Affordable and Workforce Housing in Major New Developments.** Continue and support the work of the existing legislative inclusionary zoning study to establish a statewide policy requiring a percentage of affordable and workforce housing to be provided within each residential development of a certain size. Affordable and workforce housing should include a mix of housing types (including types appropriate for singles, families, and extended families). Affordable and workforce housing supply should meet the anticipated income profile of the region, and it should be integrated into market-rate housing, not isolated.

UDA/La Speaks Pattern Book



UDA/La Speaks Pattern Book



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5.4 Establish Homeowner Purchase Programs. Work with the Louisiana Housing Finance Agency (LHFA) to support and expand homeowner purchase programs, administered at the regional or parish level. These could include:

- Below-market-rate mortgages,
- Closing cost and down payment assistance, and
- State-administered tax credits against federal income taxes (such as Illinois' I-Loan Certificates).

The State, regional or local public-sector entities, or private groups could also work to develop innovative financing instruments such as:

- Community land trusts, which use underlying land ownership and covenants to keep properties affordable from one owner to the next,
- Location-efficient mortgages, in which rates would be keyed to proximity to transportation infrastructure or land-suitability categories in the Louisiana Location Index, or
- Energy-efficient mortgages, in which rates would be lower for qualified "green" buildings.

Government rent-subsidy programs such as tenant-based Section 8 should also be integrated into new-homeownership programs. In addition, private industry could offer employer-assisted housing programs to assist employees with down payments and closing costs, reduced-interest mortgages, and mortgage-guarantee programs.

5.5 Enforce Fair Housing Laws. Aggressively enforce fair housing laws to insure that affordable and workforce housing needs are not impeded by the actions of individuals or private, public, or nonprofit organizations.



The Issue

South Louisiana is defined by our cultural diversity and vitality. Culture sustains our way of life and economy and is the foundation of any vision for the future. As our state evolves, we must not allow the qualities that make Louisiana our unique home to be eroded or lost.

The Solution

A stronger future requires a sustained commitment to preserving and strengthening the diversity of cultures across South Louisiana. This will be achieved by educating Louisianians of all ages about our cultures, developing and maintaining talent in the arts and other cultural fields, protecting our architectural heritage, and fully capitalizing on the potential of our cultural economy.

6

PROTECT OUR UNIQUE CULTURES

Louisiana is known throughout the country and the world for its unique cultures and the expression of those cultures through music, food, architecture, literature, and visual arts. This cultural resource base can serve as the basis of a rich, thriving cultural economy. The state must sustain its cultural resource base through the recovery and into the future by maintaining and nurturing local talent. It must also preserve and capitalize on its unique built and natural environments as cultural assets.

ACTIONS

- 6.1 Educate Louisiana about Our Cultural and Environmental Resource Base.** Create a curriculum and public-education resources that promote appreciation of Louisiana's culture and environment, including coastal restoration and ecology. Develop educational materials and publications targeted to adults and children, and make cultural documents, photographs, and publications available through a web portal.
- 6.2 Nurture the Development of Talent.** Increase investments in K-12 arts education, after-school programs, community-based cultural activities, and apprenticeship and internship programs. Develop cultural career resources and outreach programs to encourage students to consider careers in cultural occupations, and replicate successful youth cultural development programs.
- 6.3 Value Our Creative People.** Raise the profile of Louisiana's cultural talent both within and outside the state by ensuring that cultural property rights are adequately protected and by developing venues and working with local media to promote the achievements of Louisiana artists, artisans, and performers.
- 6.4 Maintain the Talent Base.** It is critical to retain our skilled cultural talent in the state, attract new cultural talent, and engage the expatriate community in the cultural economy. Develop incentives to provide affordable health insurance and housing to assist local cultural talent to make a sustainable living at their craft in Louisiana. Identify and connect with Louisiana's out-of-state artists and develop ways to engage them in promoting Louisiana's culture.
- 6.5 Invest in and Cultivate the Cultural Economy.** Protect our unique cultures by developing them as the basis for economic growth. Build the technical workforce, facilitate the growth of cultural businesses, invest in research and development, invest in cultural facilities, and increase the amount of private financing for cultural enterprises.





- 6.6 Protect Our Architectural Heritage.** Provide technical assistance, financial guidance, and incentive packages for historic renovations and adaptive reuse projects. Use the *Louisiana Speaks Pattern Book* to help new construction be architecturally sensitive to its surroundings.
- 6.7 Preserve Louisiana's Sportsmen's Culture.** Ensure that building codes and locational restrictions make specific allowances for modest buildings—including camps—that are designed to be expendable in storms or to flood and be recovered. Such structures would not be eligible for insurance or disaster-recovery funds, and they should not expect infrastructure provision.



The Issue

The healthcare and education crises created by hurricanes Katrina and Rita require immediate action, but they also have long-term consequences. Without a comprehensive strategy for long-term change, recovery efforts will not solve the systemic problems facing Louisiana's healthcare and education systems. And without marshaling the state's best ideas and existing strengths, such a strategy will have difficulty succeeding.

The Solution

The disruption of Louisiana's existing healthcare and education systems presents an opportunity to create a more effective and efficient system. Opportunities for effective reform and innovation of our healthcare system include improving record keeping, bolstering New Orleans' medical cluster, enhancing emergency response healthcare, and establishing universal care standards. And rebuilding medical and educational systems provides the opportunity to create new anchors for healthy communities.



Lori Waselchuk

7

PROVIDE QUALITY SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

Hurricanes Katrina and Rita created infrastructure and labor shortages for a state healthcare system that already had some of the worst health outcomes and highest costs in the nation. The physical disruption of the old system presents the state with an opportunity to build a modern system of care, detailed in recent reports by PricewaterhouseCoopers and the Louisiana Health Care Redesign Collaborative. We must implement a long-term strategy to make essential healthcare services in Louisiana patient-centered, quality-driven, efficient, and accessible to all citizens. Similarly, recovery and expansion needs in our educational system provide us with the opportunity to advance long-term planning goals.

ACTIONS

- 7.1 Fund and implement emergency-response healthcare capacity.** To improve emergency care and prepare Louisiana for future disasters, fully fund and complete implementation of the Louisiana Emergency Response Network (LERN). LERN is a telecommunications network that will be connected to pre-hospital, hospital, post-acute and injury programs across the state through nine regional command centers capable of expanding capacity during an emergency to provide the required elements of disaster medical care.
- 7.2 Establish and Incent Healthcare Standards.** Convene a forum comprised of public- and private-sector healthcare leaders and experts to create and maintain universal standards of care against which provider performance can be incentivized and measured.
- 7.3 Improve Record-Keeping Capacity.** Ensure widespread electronic medical record (EMR) adoption and continue expansion of projects including the Louisiana Health Information Exchange (LaHIE).
- 7.4 Locate and Design Schools and Medical Facilities to Create Better Neighborhoods and Spur Community Development.** New schools, clinics, and other community and social-services facilities should be integrated into the urban fabric, easily accessible to the populations they serve by foot or public transit. Such facilities should be strategically sited and developed to function as community centers and to spur private development. Such facilities should cluster so as to share space and parking capacity and to provide off-hour community centers.







UDA/La. Speaks Pattern Book

Lori Waselchuk

Vision



Goal 3

Think Regionally

Planning and Implementation



Lori Waselchuk

Louisiana is at a crossroads. We must make tough decisions about how to move the diverse communities of the state forward—through recovery and into a stronger, more resilient future.

To recover sustainably and grow smarter, we must work together. By planning regionally for our recovery and future, we can solve immediate and long-term problems that no single municipality or parish can address. This section of the plan proposes a framework in which state, regional, and local governing bodies integrate their overlapping responsibilities and their varied perspectives to implement the Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan and arrive at the shared vision it expresses: stronger communities protected by a restored coast and supported by a resilient economy.

Countless unique local cultures, traditions, and natural features define different parts of South Louisiana, but we are one region in many important ways. Single jurisdictions cannot effectively build better levee systems, restore the coast, create stronger regional economies, ensure adequate housing for our workforce, or build a transportation system that will serve us into the future. It is only through cooperation among cities and towns acting together as a region, and through regions acting together as a state, that we will be able to effectively engage these challenges.

Thinking regionally involves linking land use, storm protection, and economic development into a cohesive strategy to manage risk.





BRIDGING JURISDICTIONAL BOUNDARIES

COMPREHENSIVE RISK MANAGEMENT AND RECOVERY

State policy is the most efficient and effective means of managing risk in both the short and long term. The State has the power to create a solid foundation for regions and localities by setting firm guidelines for hazard mitigation and storm protection. The state can also create a transparent, predictable, and flexible framework for planning and implementation that supports regional and local efforts to create smarter growth, economic health, and sustained community character. Together, this solid foundation and flexible framework will create the confidence necessary to make Louisiana an attractive environment for private investment and stable insurance rates.

The Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan recommends extending the regional planning process to include a vision for Central and North Louisiana, making Louisiana Speaks into a coherent statewide framework. The Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan would also establish new opportunities for local and regional planning, and it would support these efforts with new resources. It calls for increased and formalized coordination of existing state, regional, and local agencies. It also calls for the creation of a coordinating and capacity-building entity at the state level—a State Planning Office.

In many cases, Louisiana already has the structures in place to make and implement effective plans for land use, transportation, economic development, disaster recovery, and other functions. However, planning capacity varies significantly across the state, and mechanisms for communication and coordination are often lacking. Moreover, there has not been a cohesive, consensus-based vision to provide overarching direction. The Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan provides this vision. In doing so, it will elevate the importance of planning and implementation at all levels of government.

An organizational chart presenting a structure for implementing the Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan is on p. 83, and this structure is described in strategies and actions on pp. 84-91. Timelines and funding characteristics are contained in **Appendix F**. A more detailed **Louisiana Speaks Strategic Implementation Plan** document, including benchmarks and responsible parties, will be available in July 2007.





Florida Everglades

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CASE STUDY: EXAMPLES OF STATEWIDE RISK MANAGEMENT AND PLANNING

FLORIDA

With one of the most comprehensive state planning systems in the country, Florida has been active in assessing its needs for responsible growth management. A statewide survey in 2000 revealed serious public concern over issues such as traffic congestion, urban sprawl, and loss of wildlife habitat and showed widespread support for intergovernmental coordination to enact changes. Florida's strong framework has ensured a measured approach toward future growth. The state has also been effective in protecting open space: The Preservation 2000 program and its successor, Florida Forever, have raised over \$4 billion to acquire 2.3 million acres of sensitive land, including wetlands, coastline, floodplains, and habitat conservation areas throughout the state and the Everglades, the largest wetland area in the United States.

MARYLAND

Maryland is recognized for its leadership in open space planning, coastal protection, and smart growth policy, beginning with its groundbreaking effort to revive the Chesapeake Bay. The Smart Growth Areas Act of 1997 minimizes infrastructure costs and protects open space by directing state funds to Priority Funding Areas (PFAs). PFAs include county-designated areas for growth and, most notably, areas with existing development. This incentive-based measure has resulted in only 27% of all single-family residential units being built outside the PFAs from 1990 to 2004. To ensure the preservation of natural resource lands, Maryland also enacted the Rural Legacy Program in 1997, which encourages local governments and private land trusts to apply for funds to purchase land or obtain easements in vulnerable areas. These programs work in concert to guide urban growth and protect the state's most valuable land.

HAWAII

Hawaii was at the forefront of statewide risk management and land-use planning when it adopted its Land Use Law in 1961. The state classified all land into four categories: urban, rural, agricultural, and conservation. The classification scheme has been successful in limiting encroachment on natural and high hazard areas: during the first 30 years of the plan, only 5% of land in the rural and conservation zones was converted to urban uses. Between 1982 and 1997, urban land increased by 21%—lowest among states with programs for managing future development. Some of the challenges Hawaii has faced, including difficulty by local jurisdictions implementing the state plan with available resources, and a lack of benchmarks and incentives, serve as lessons informing the legislation and actions proposed by Louisiana Speaks.



Henry H. Hsieh

Hawaii



A Clear Call to Manage Risk

More than 23,000 people weighed in on how to balance individual property rights and collective risk in South Louisiana. Nearly 90% of them favored reducing our overall risk—even if this means reasonable limits on individual property rights. Even in coastal parishes, the majority held this view.

Managing collective risk will be accomplished first by smart public investments in protection and restoration investments. Within that framework, risk can be further managed by regulations and incentives covering land-use and building techniques in unprotected, flood-prone areas, and by siting transportation infrastructure and public facilities so as not to encourage poorly-located development.

There is a clear understanding, especially after Katrina and Rita, that when people build in areas with high risk of storm damage, we all share in that risk in the form of higher insurance premiums and less access to insurance, and in the shared public cost of disaster recovery. Louisiana has spoken, and there is a mandate for change.

A STRUCTURE FOR IMPLEMENTING THE LOUISIANA SPEAKS REGIONAL PLAN

The Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan empowers communities to chart their own course through recovery and on to future growth by planning and implementing within a guiding framework. Implementation of the plan will require streamlining and coordination of planning in Louisiana. To start, Comprehensive Plans would be required for large or growing localities, with matching funding and technical support provided. Additionally, local plans would be coordinated at the regional level. Finally, state programs would be coordinated across agencies so they are mutually consistent and support the priorities expressed in the Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan, CPRA plans, and regional and local plans. An autonomous public-private partnership board and a nonprofit membership group would ensure oversight, advocacy, and support for sound planning at all levels.

The organization chart at right shows the coordination of planning responsibilities and the transfer of resources under the proposed structure.

Local Planning: In Louisiana, as in most states, the power to plan and regulate land use resides at the municipal and parish level. There is currently great variation in planning capacity and technical expertise among local jurisdictions. The Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan proposes that local jurisdictions above given population/growth criteria create required Comprehensive Plans. The State Planning Office would provide match-funding, staff funding, training, and technical assistance to localities whose planning processes and principles meet program criteria.

Regional Planning: Regional planning entities—the five in South Louisiana and the three in the North—would play a key role in the implementation of the Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan. They would coordinate local jurisdictions' planning and implementation to ensure that local plans are consistent with each other and meet regional goals. Governance at the regional level would be achieved without compromising municipal/parish independence through a combined representative “Council of Governments” and “Citizens Advisory Committee” structure, where this is not already in place. Regional entities would also be responsible for consolidating local plans into regional strategies consistent with the Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan. Regional entities would also serve as a conduit between state assistance and local planning.

The functions of Metropolitan Planning Organizations, regional economic development entities, and other regional planning functions should be combined, where they are not already. Where this is not possible, these functions should be closely coordinated. In this way, local and regional planners can consider land-use, transportation, economic development, and other infrastructure planning and programming comprehensively—a key principle of the Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan.



State Planning: The State Planning Office serves several key functions in the implementation of the Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan. It would coordinate state agencies, issue and enforce regulations, help maintain consistency with state protection and restoration work, fund major regional projects, provide support for planning and grant-writing capacity at all levels of government, provide model planning codes, develop a statewide Location Index, and monitor achievement of Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan benchmarks.

The state's planning function would be overseen by an autonomous public-private board of commissioners, serving staggered terms, which would help insulate the State Planning Office from politics. And the implementation of the plan would be supported and monitored by an independent non-profit group with members across the state. Together, these two groups would serve as the conscience of the Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan.



Lori Waselchuk

LOUISIANA STATEWIDE PLANNING STRUCTURE

CITIZENS' OVERSIGHT

- Review State Planning Activities
- Monitor Progress Toward Louisiana Speaks Benchmarks

STATE LEGISLATURE

- Adopt State Planning Legislation
- Allocate Funding

STATE PLANNING

- Implement State Planning Legislation
- Map High-Risk, Reinvestment, Conservation and Other Areas Statewide
- Set Statewide Standards for Infrastructure Investment, Plans, Preservation, and Development Consistent with State Protection and Restoration Projects
- Coordinate State Agency Capital Plans
- Fund and Review Regional Strategies and Regional Improvement Plans
- Provide Matching Funds, Technical Support, and Data for Local Comprehensive Planning
- Provide Technical Support and Project-Specific Planning Services to Local Governments
- Monitor Plan Implementation

REGIONAL PLANNING

- Create Regional Strategies and Regional Infrastructure Improvement Plans
- Review and Coordinate Local/Parish Comprehensive Plans
- Provide Technical Assistance and Data to Local/Parish Planners

LOCAL/PARISH PLANNING

- Create Comprehensive Plans
- Review and Inform Regional Strategies

\$

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

\$

REGIONAL STRATEGIES + INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENT PLANS

\$

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

\$

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE + PLAN COORDINATION

LOCAL COMPREHENSIVE PLANS

The Issue

The Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan is based upon broad public involvement across South Louisiana, which has led to a plan that captures the aspirations of citizens coastwide. To achieve an integrated statewide approach, a visioning process is needed in Central and North Louisiana to extend this plan so that it also addresses the unique challenges of these parts of the state.

The Solution

The Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan can be extended into Central and North Louisiana by creating an extensive public outreach and planning campaign based on the model of Louisiana Speaks. This process would produce results tailored to Central and North Louisiana.

1

EXTEND THE LOUISIANA SPEAKS REGIONAL PLAN NORTH

The Louisiana Speaks process achieved wide-ranging public involvement across South Louisiana. To extend this planning effort and identify the unique regional solutions that reside in Central and North Louisiana, we must extend this long-range planning process to the other parts of the state. This effort should be led by a combination of state, local, and nonprofit entities. This planning effort would address the same breadth of issues as regional planning in South Louisiana, but it will reflect the unique challenges facing Central and North Louisiana, such as upland flood threats.

ACTIONS

- 1.1 Complete a Regional Visioning and Planning Process.** The planning team will begin by developing a comprehensive understanding of existing conditions in Central and North Louisiana, including community growth and transportation, economic development, flood safety, and watershed management. This will involve compiling available data, and consulting with regional and local planning staff, leading environmental scientists and economic development specialists. The next step will be creating a projection of future economic and population growth, which will inform a range of future options for flood safety, economic development, community growth, and transportation. These options will be presented for public feedback through workshops and public outreach.
- 1.2 Integrate the Vision.** Based upon public input and analysis of possible future development and infrastructure investments, complete a vision plan similar in level of detail and intent as the vision for South Louisiana. Then integrate the vision for North Louisiana into Louisiana Speaks, creating a state plan for Louisiana.



Think Regionally

Strategies to Achieve Effective Statewide Planning

ACHIEVE EFFECTIVE STATEWIDE PLANNING

Implementing a state plan for Louisiana will require the coordination of state, regional, and local agencies, as well as enhancing planning capacity at all levels. A comprehensive, consistent approach to statewide planning is the most effective and efficient way to guide recovery, manage risk, reinvest in our communities, and shape future development. Additionally, planning and implementation processes that are predictable and consistent—grounded in both sound analysis and public participation—will contribute to a stable investment environment and a more prosperous future. The actions below provide a cohesive framework for coordinating planning and implementation in Louisiana in order to achieve the vision of a Louisiana Speaks plan that includes the entire state.

2

The Issue

Implementing the Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan will be a challenge. Some structures for implementing recommended actions in the plan exist, but planning capacity varies significantly between jurisdictions and levels of government. Without enhanced coordination and capacity, it will be difficult to achieve effective implementation of this or other state and regional plans.

The Solution

A successful statewide planning structure will create the framework required to realize the vision embodied in the Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan and foster an attractive environment for private investment and insurers. Predictable decision-making about the location and priority of infrastructure investments and development will generate confidence and predictability. This will be achieved by a strategy that coordinates state, regional, and local planning, and provides additional capacity to regional and local planning agencies to achieve implementation of the Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan and related plans.



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ACTIONS

- 2.1 Implement Legislation to Address Comprehensive Risk Management, Recovery, and Growth Planning.** Work with state agencies, regional planning entities, local officials, and private-sector leaders to draft legislation enabling coordinated statewide planning to address risk management, statewide emergency planning, economic development, housing, and community growth and transportation, and coastal restoration and protection. Then, adopt this legislation.
- This legislation would enable and fund the creation of a State Planning Office which would be responsible for the functions described in Action 2.2.
 - It would also enable the regional and local planning and implementation described below in Actions 2.3 and 2.4.





The Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan creates a cohesive vision for the future and elevates the importance of planning at all levels of government.

This legislation would specifically enhance and support Louisiana's system of local planning by:

- Reforming the state's existing Master Plan requirement to require that by a reasonable set deadline after legislative action, any municipality or parish above a benchmark population or growth rate, or that regulates land use through zoning or subdivision ordinances, must produce a 20-year Comprehensive Plan and update it at a specified interval. Comprehensive Plans would have force of law, and land-use regulations such as zoning and subdivision ordinances would be required to be consistent with them. Local plans would be required to be consistent with state protection and restoration plans.
- Establishing a state matching-funds and technical-assistance program to assist municipalities and parishes that are required to prepare Comprehensive Plans, if their plans meet criteria for consistency with the Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan; municipalities and parishes that are not required to, but choose to create Comprehensive Plans, would also be eligible for assistance.
- Linking disbursement of state and federal infrastructure and other funding to the priorities outlined in a Comprehensive Plan, and recognizing that the failure to create a Comprehensive Plan, where required, would limit access to those funds.
- Directing regional planning entities, through a combined representative Council of Governments (COG) and Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) structure, to create Regional Strategies. These strategies will coordinate and integrate the Comprehensive Plans of municipalities and parishes within the regional planning area, as well as Regional Infrastructure Improvement Plans identifying key future projects.
- Directing each local Comprehensive Plan and Regional Strategy to address elements including: community growth, transportation, public facilities, housing (including affordable and workforce housing), economic development, conservation, and consistency with state protection and restoration plans (where applicable).



CASE STUDY: LOCAL COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING IN WASHINGTON STATE

The Washington State Growth Management Act created a clear, predictable structure for creating local plans consistent with common goals adopted by the state legislature. Beginning in 1990, cities and counties in fast-growing and densely populated areas were required to produce 20-year comprehensive plans addressing 13 goals including containing urban growth, stimulating economic development, and protecting critical natural environments. The state Office of Community Development (OCD) provides funding, guidelines, technical assistance, and collaborative reviews to help local and county governments produce plans consistent with state goals. Since 1990, the vast majority of cities and counties in Washington have successfully adopted comprehensive plans.



2.2 Enhance State Planning Capacity and Coordination. Create a State Planning Office. This office would be governed by a public-private board comprised of leadership from cabinet-level agencies and regional planning entities, as well as private citizens in positions of civic and/or business leadership, or with specialized technical expertise. Board members would serve staggered terms. Dedicated funding for this office and its programs would be established and protected—potentially by Constitutional mandate.

The office would be responsible for integrating and coordinating state-level planning for risk management, emergency planning, economic development, housing, conservation, community growth, and transportation. Staff would periodically present technical reports, plans, and budgets to the board for approval. Full disclosure, an annual external audit, annual plan updates, and reporting to the Governor and the Legislature would ensure transparency.

Specific responsibilities of this office would include:

- Providing planning matching funds and technical assistance to local governments creating Comprehensive Plans consistent with the Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan.
- Providing model codes, technology, technical assistance, and training to regional and local planning and governing entities. Also, providing them with funding, hiring, and staff support.
- Providing emergency- and project-specific planning capacity to local jurisdictions (a planning “SWAT team”), including planning around major new projects, post-disaster recovery planning, and post-disaster clean-up/waste management.
- Establishing and implementing standards for siting of state (and state-funded) buildings and infrastructure investments, including linking the disbursement of state and federal program funds to the existence of local Comprehensive Plans (where required).





- Creating a “Louisiana Location Index” in partnership with state agencies, regional planning entities, and others (see “Grow Smarter,” Actions 2.1-2)
- Creating and maintaining a statewide GIS database identifying general land classifications based upon the “Louisiana Location Index” (see “Grow Smarter,” Actions 2.1-2), including regular updates to reflect changes to and/or implementation of CPRA and other plans
- Reviewing and funding Regional Strategies and Infrastructure Improvement Plans
- Coordinating capital plans and budget requests of state agencies
- Creating transparency and monitoring achievement of Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan benchmarks through annual reports and annual updates to the plan

CASE STUDY: CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT IN STATE AND REGIONAL PLANNING

The past two decades have seen citizens groups throughout the country take leading roles in promoting and facilitating coordinated statewide and regional planning. Recognizing that government action is often enhanced by citizen coalitions, groups such as New Jersey Future and Envision Utah have brought together civic, religious, and business leaders to support planning that balances the needs of the economy, community, and environment.

New Jersey Future is a nonprofit organization working to support implementation of the state’s plan, and provides analysis, technical support, and advocacy. The organization promotes “smart growth” policies that revitalize the state’s existing cities, protect its open spaces, increase transit access, and ensure housing choice. In addition to its political activities, the organization also maintains an online “Smart Growth Gateway” providing information and technical tools, including model zoning ordinances, case studies, and financing resources. The nonprofit organization Envision Utah ushered in the first regional planning effort in Utah, holding an extensive public involvement process that led to state adoption of a long-range “quality growth strategy” that focuses new growth around existing communities and transit investments. The organization

offers technical assistance in the form of local visioning projects, site design, and resource guides for local governments and developers. As an advocate, the organization was instrumental in a successful campaign to use sales taxes to fund mass transit. Envision Utah has begun to address barriers to implementation of the voluntary quality growth strategy by seeking alterations to state laws to facilitate more compact, transit-supportive development.





2.3 Enhance Regional Planning Capacity and Coordination. Streamline the existing regional planning structure and geographical coverage areas of Regional Planning Commissions, Planning and Development Districts, Metropolitan Planning Organizations, and regional economic development entities to create regional planning entities that integrate transportation, economic development, and land-use planning (some regional planning entities in Louisiana already combine these functions). These entities would serve as a coordination mechanism among local governments, and as a bridge between local and state governments. Specific responsibilities would include:

- Providing technical assistance to local jurisdictions in the form of direct planning services, grant-writing, technology support, and GIS, demographics, and other data.
- Maintaining a regional GIS database including existing and planned regional infrastructure, general land classifications defined by the Louisiana Location Index, specific land uses defined by local/parish Comprehensive Plans, and other data and demographic information.
- Coordinating the development of local and parish Comprehensive Plans, and reviewing plans for consistency with other local Comprehensive Plans, Regional Strategies and Regional Infrastructure Improvement Plans, the Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan, CPRA plans, and other applicable state plans.
- Coordinating municipal/parish government planning and policy through a combined representative Council of Governments (COG) and Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) structure.
- Creating Regional Strategies and Regional Infrastructure Improvement Plans, that address transportation programming, as well as utilities and other key regional investments.



Enhanced Planning Capacity

The Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan enhances the capacity to plan comprehensively at all levels of government. It will facilitate the development of planning expertise across all jurisdictions through staff training and the provision of a full complement of regional data and technical resources—including a statewide GIS spatial database. Refer to **Appendix B** for more on GIS and modeling.





Model Codes

The development of model codes will be a vital tool for local jurisdictions in implementing local land-use planning that supports the Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan. These codes will be tailored to unique challenges such as reinvestment in existing communities and hazard mitigation in coastal communities.

- Integrating—through their function as Metropolitan Planning Organizations—Regional Strategies and Regional Infrastructure Improvement Plans with federally mandated Transportation Improvement Programs, which are the basis of state transportation planning and funding
- Maintaining (and, where applicable, extending) regional sewerage and utility service boundaries consistent with regional plans
- Regional planning entities would not be permitted to administer criteria for grants or other programs for which they compete
- The state would provide new capacity-building salary support for planners and grant writers at the regional level through a budget line or dedicated fund. Grants would be administered on the basis of need and anticipated role of added staff. Grants would step down over several years, giving regional planning entities time to develop funding to continue the positions.

2.4 Enhance Local Planning Capacity. Municipal and parish planning would be conducted within existing governance structures, except in cases in which cooperative agreements or other reforms are initiated by local governments. Local planning agencies would create Comprehensive Plans and local zoning and land-use ordinances, where required or applicable (See “Think Regionally,” Action 2.1). These should specifically address integration of land use with state protection and restoration planning.

The state would take the following steps to expand the capacity of municipal and parish planning and implementation:

- Supporting local comprehensive planning by establishing a budget line or dedicated fund to match costs of local comprehensive planning, provided such plans are consistent with the overall framework and principles of the Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan
- Supporting local planning staff by establishing a budget line or dedicated fund for salary support for planners and grant writers/administrators at the municipal or parish level, and establish a budget line or dedicated fund for salary support and training of building inspectors. Grants would be administered on the basis of need and anticipated role of added staff. Grants would step down over several years, giving local governments time to develop funding to continue the positions.
- Providing model codes for recovery and growth in Louisiana. To support the creation of safe, walkable communities, these codes would address building massing and density, block standards, street design, zoning, parking, and fire and public safety standards. Additionally, the state would provide specialized model codes that address coastal, wetland, and levee-related land-use issues. “Off-the-shelf” model codes save local governments the cost of creating new zoning and development codes. (See “Grow Smarter,” Action 2.3.)



- Creating a “qualified planner and grant-writer clearinghouse” that would assist local governments in identifying and hiring qualified staff. Graduation from an accredited planning, landscape architecture, public policy, or allied program, a professional certification, or four years prior experience in planning would be a prerequisite.
- Expanding education for the planning profession in Louisiana by supporting the expansion and integration of planning, architecture, and landscape architecture programs at public and private universities across the state
- Ensuring training and expertise of planning commissions by providing required annual training sessions through professional associations of planners, architects, landscape architects, and/or civil engineers. Provide guidelines for composition of Planning Commissions, including seats reserved for persons with technical expertise.



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Local Planning and the CPRA

In areas affected by state protection and restoration planning, all local and regional planning and implementation would have to be consistent with CPRA plans. This power is spelled out in CPRA's enabling legislation:

The [CPRA] shall ... take actions against any entity, including political subdivisions, to enforce compliance with the comprehensive master coastal protection plan.

— First Extraordinary Session, 2005; Act no. 8, §213.4

