

AN ADVISORY SERVICES PANEL REPORT

Baton Rouge Louisiana



**Urban Land
Institute**

Baton Rouge Louisiana

Effective Comprehensive Planning

July 7–10, 2008
An Advisory Services Panel Report

ULI—the Urban Land Institute
1025 Thomas Jefferson Street, N.W.
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About ULI—the Urban Land Institute

The mission of the Urban Land Institute is to provide leadership in the responsible use of land and in creating and sustaining thriving communities worldwide. ULI is committed to

- Bringing together leaders from across the fields of real estate and land use policy to exchange best practices and serve community needs;
- Fostering collaboration within and beyond ULI's membership through mentoring, dialogue, and problem solving;
- Exploring issues of urbanization, conservation, regeneration, land use, capital formation, and sustainable development;
- Advancing land use policies and design practices that respect the uniqueness of both built and natural environments;
- Sharing knowledge through education, applied research, publishing, and electronic media; and

- Sustaining a diverse global network of local practice and advisory efforts that address current and future challenges.

Established in 1936, the Institute today has more than 40,000 members worldwide, representing the entire spectrum of the land use and development disciplines. Professionals represented include developers, builders, property owners, investors, architects, public officials, planners, real estate brokers, appraisers, attorneys, engineers, financiers, academics, students, and librarians. ULI relies heavily on the experience of its members. It is through member involvement and information resources that ULI has been able to set standards of excellence in development practice. The Institute has long been recognized as one of the world's most respected and widely quoted sources of objective information on urban planning, growth, and development.

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Cover photo by Matthew Rader.

About ULI Advisory Services

The goal of ULI's Advisory Services Program is to bring the finest expertise in the real estate field to bear on complex land use planning and development projects, programs, and policies. Since 1947, this program has assembled well over 400 ULI-member teams to help sponsors find creative, practical solutions for issues such as downtown redevelopment, land management strategies, evaluation of development potential, growth management, community revitalization, brownfields redevelopment, military base reuse, provision of low-cost and affordable housing, and asset management strategies, among other matters. A wide variety of public, private, and nonprofit organizations have contracted for ULI's Advisory Services.

Each panel team is composed of highly qualified professionals who volunteer their time to ULI. They are chosen for their knowledge of the panel topic and screened to ensure their objectivity. ULI's interdisciplinary panel teams provide a holistic look at development problems. A respected ULI member who has previous panel experience chairs each panel.

The agenda for a three-day panel assignment is intensive. It includes an in-depth briefing composed of a tour of the site and meetings with sponsor representatives; interviews with community representatives; and one day for formulating recommendations. On the final day on site, the panel makes an oral presentation of its findings and conclusions to the sponsor. At the request of the sponsor, a written report is prepared and published.

Because the sponsoring entities are responsible for significant preparation before the panel's visit, including sending extensive briefing materials to each member and arranging for the panel to meet with key local community members and stakeholders in the project under consideration, participants in ULI's five-day panel assignments are

able to make accurate assessments of a sponsor's issues and to provide recommendations in a compressed amount of time.

A major strength of the program is ULI's unique ability to draw on the knowledge and expertise of its members, including land developers and owners, public officials, academics, representatives of financial institutions, and others. In fulfillment of the mission of the Urban Land Institute, this Advisory Services panel report is intended to provide objective advice that will promote the responsible use of land to enhance the environment.

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The panel extends particular thanks to Troy Bunch, John Davies, Walter Monsour, John Spain, Kathleen Spencer, Martha Jane Tassin, and Boo Thomas for their hospitality and support before, during, and after the panel’s visit. Finally, the panel appreciates the participation of the many community members who contributed their time, experience, and knowledge to the panel process. Their participation was vital to the recommendations set forth in this report.

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Foreword: The Panel's Assignment

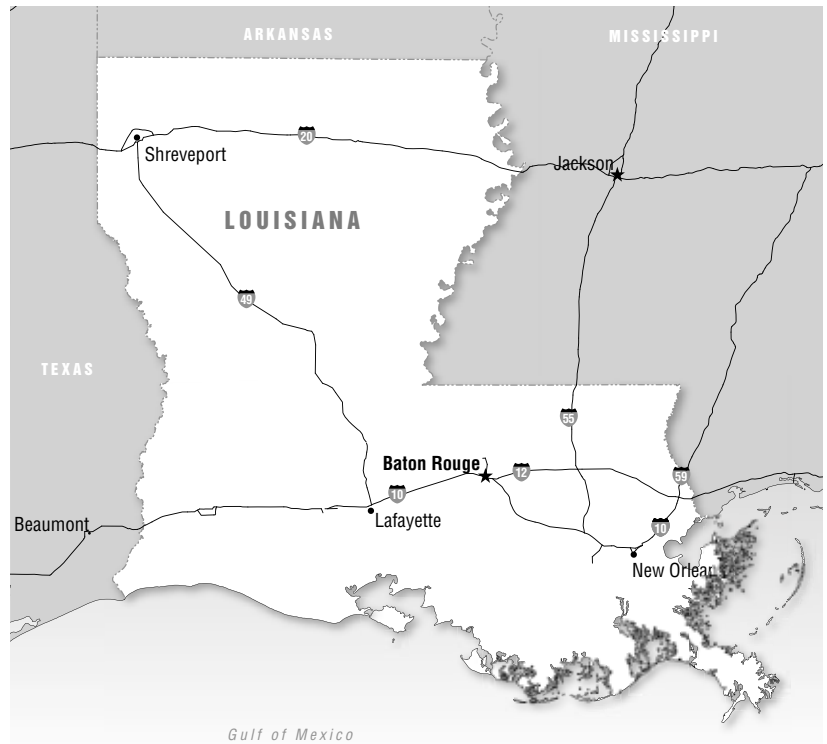
Baton Rouge is a vital, dynamic, and growing city with strong prospects for the future. The City of Baton Rouge, Parish of East Baton Rouge invited a ULI Advisory Services panel to recommend ideas for creating a new comprehensive plan to guide Baton Rouge's physical growth. The panel worked in Baton Rouge July 7–10, 2008, met with more than 30 local stakeholders, and formed its recommendations. The panel presented its recommendations to the Administrative Committee appointed by Mayor-President Melvin "Kip" Holden to develop a strategy for the new comprehensive plan. This report details the panel's recommendations.

Capitalize on Strengths

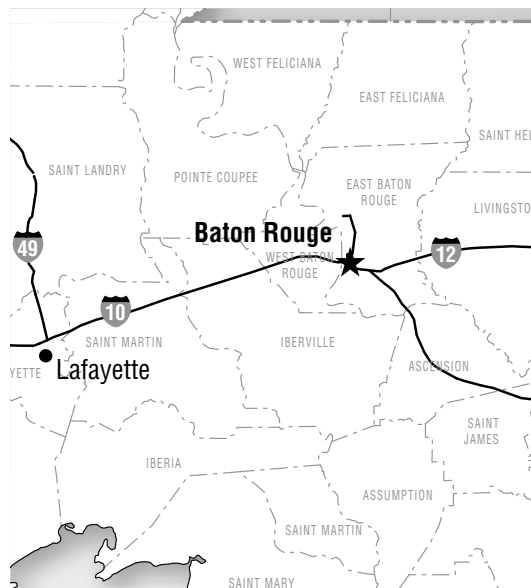
Baton Rouge is an important center for government, business, culture, and higher education. Citizens passionately care about the city and want to improve it. A sophisticated cadre of public, private, and nonprofit agencies and companies provide strong civic leadership and have a proven ability to work together. Baton Rouge's natural environment features remarkable water sources, stunning landscapes, and a promising mix of urban and rural land uses. Mayor-President Holden is very popular and a robust leader. Civic leaders recognize the importance of taking the next step toward creating an effective plan to guide the city's development.

Understand the Challenges

Comprehensive planning and collaborative work can help address significant challenges present in Baton Rouge. Today, the transportation system lacks the capacity, connectivity, and service needed to support passenger and freight movement by all modes (pedestrian, bicycle, automobile, transit, and rail) throughout the city and parish. The public education system needs improvement to prepare citizens to support a robust economy. Hous-



Location map.



Regional map.

ing choices are limited, and lower-income workers lack affordable housing options near job centers.

Elected and appointed leaders lack a commitment to following the comprehensive plan in making coordinated decisions on development and infrastructure investment. The public expresses confusion about the role of planning and the potential of planning to create a more livable, vibrant city for all citizens.

Move Forward

The panel's report offers observations and advice on how to use comprehensive planning and implementation strategies to create a bright future for Baton Rouge. The recommendations encourage elected officials, planning staff, nonprofit organizations, and the larger community to work together to create a robust vision and a comprehensive plan that can guide implementation of that vision. The panel offers two cautionary notes: leaders must support the plan and use it to guide future development decisions and infrastructure investments, and citizens must feel ownership of the future growth direction proposed in the plan. Reality requires an implementable vision.

Parish-Wide Vision

Strong vision will provide the direction, clarity, and purpose Baton Rouge needs to become “America’s next great city.” The panel challenges public and private leaders to lead the community in creating, embracing, and implementing a vision that enhances the quality of life, encourages healthy economic growth, and inspires strategic public and private investment. The vision must be developed through an inclusive process of community engagement that draws from across societal segments, agencies, and institutions.

A strong vision will engage the entire community and will feature

- Commitment from public and private leaders;
- Wide community input;
- Bold, aspirational thinking;
- Understanding of economic and market realities;
- Creation of “a better Baton Rouge,” not replication of other cities;
- Urban and rural dimensions;
- Strengthening of downtown Baton Rouge as the region’s urban center;

- Strong local and regional collaboration;
- A process for cautious and deliberate amendment; and
- Clear, prioritized implementation strategies.

Vision without implementation is illusion. The panel recommends crafting a strong vision and then developing a comprehensive plan and implementation strategy to make the vision a reality.

Effective implementation will require long-term commitment with adequate, appropriate, and continuous funding from all leaders to embrace the vision and align their priorities with its implementation. Stakeholders must identify one agency to lead plan implementation and empower and fund that agency to do so. One implementation tool is the creation of a set of development codes that reflect the vision and goals in the comprehensive plan. Without a rewrite of the Unified Development Code, the comprehensive plan will remain on the shelf.

Integrated Comprehensive Planning

The Horizon Plan introduced comprehensive planning to Baton Rouge and laid the groundwork for future planning efforts. A new century and unexpected population growth demand a new comprehensive plan that will guide public and private investment in Baton Rouge's growth. The new plan must integrate and coordinate all major aspects of Baton Rouge's ongoing development: land use, natural systems, transportation, housing, and infrastructure.

Effective implementation will require each element to support the others. For example, transportation plans support land use plans by providing connections and capacity needed to serve clearly identified neighborhoods and commercial and employment centers and guide the formation of new ones. Land use plans must work with natural systems to provide a safe, healthy quality of life; infrastructure anticipates new demands by being located, sized, and renovated to meet identified needs.

Build on Existing Plans

Existing plans provide a solid base for creating the new comprehensive plan. Louisiana Speaks and the Smart Growth Audit provide crucial building blocks for undertaking the new parish-wide comprehensive plan. These plans voice public and private support for reinvestment and redevelopment, diversified and improved multimodal transportation networks, and enhanced environmental and sustainability policies.

Plan Transportation Comprehensively

Transportation offers a good example of what integrated planning can do. Truly comprehensive transportation planning embraces all modes: pedestrian, bicycle, transit, freight, and emergency and general traffic. The new comprehensive plan

should include an in-depth transportation plan that will enhance the quality of life across the city and the parish by

- Creating better connections between cities, growth centers, activity and job hubs, and neighborhoods;
- Enabling efficient movement of goods and services into, out of, and through the parish;
- Providing a greater hierarchy of streets;
- Reorganizing transit service to meet identified mobility needs; and
- Improving pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

Integrated planning offers an opportunity to evaluate the Loop and other major projects currently under consideration. The Loop will significantly affect land use, and its effect should be considered throughout the plan. Comprehensive planning could show the land use consequences of its proposed alignments and consider measures to manage those consequences. Planning should identify which segments will have the most benefit and help plan appropriate phasing. The plan can also determine what other transportation projects should be coordinated with the Loop to maximize its benefits.

Although neither the city nor the parish controls the process of planning the Loop, the panel recommends that the transportation plan help identify road alternatives to the Loop that better serve the region. Because the project is already in the planning stage, the panel suggests strongly that the Loop be tested soon to identify segments essential for relieving congestion by providing alternatives for through traffic. Segments primarily intended to connect parish communities or facilitate new development should be evaluated in the comprehensive plan process.

Create a Local Transportation Model

The panel recommends creating a multimodal, local transportation model for East Baton Rouge Parish. The new model will expand on the existing regional highway network model to include most local streets.

The local model should be built using the same software as the regional model and should use software required by funding agencies. This method will require coordination and data sharing between the Capital Region Planning Commission (Baton Rouge's metropolitan planning organization), the Capital Area Transit System, and the Department of Public Works. The new model should be multimodal and capable of analyzing person-trips by car, bus, carpool/vanpool, walking, or cycling. The multimodal model should also assess freight movements by truck and rail.

The city-parish should own and maintain the model and incorporate it in land use and capital planning decisions. The city-parish should retain a consultant to develop the model and train staff in its use. Maintaining and operating the model in house will increase its usefulness and availability to assist key agencies in their planning and development review tasks. At least one additional staff member will be required to maintain and operate the model.

The model will help forecast future transportation demands based on the land use plan. Planners can use the model to determine how land use and population assumptions will generate impacts on individual streets. This information could be used to refine all aspects of the comprehensive plan, develop strategic capital improvement plans, and determine transportation impact fees for new developments.

The model can also test the effectiveness of potential street improvements, including new connections, street widening or narrowing, and transit improvements. The model can quickly assess which improvements best reduce congestion, minimize vehicle miles traveled, reduce energy consumption, enhance air quality, enhance pedestrian and bicycle safety, and reduce travel time. The model can play a key role in restructuring trans-

it services to provide better service and attract more riders. The model can also be used as a tool for public outreach for transportation initiatives.

Planners can use the model to assess the traffic impact of individual development proposals. Using the same local model for each study will create more consistent analysis, rationalize impact fees, and keep the model up to date on land use and traffic volumes. The city-parish could charge a reasonable fee for modeling service to offset expenses.

The model should integrate state, regional, and local evacuation plans and will help reduce emergency access response times and planning for construction detours. Most current models integrate with the Geographic Information System (GIS) for automated mapping and database management to enable time- and cost-efficient integration of land use data.

In short, a local transportation model would play a crucial role in delivering an integrated comprehensive plan and in justifying important transportation projects. Existing street design standards, manuals, and specifications may need to be updated to accomplish the plan's transportation goals.

Address Environmental and Social Sustainability

Many citizens stressed that the parish must take steps to maintain or improve its present quality of life as it urbanizes. Proactive planning will be needed to protect resources and retain the current environment. The panel believes that protecting and enhancing quality of life will require an effective plan for addressing environmental and social sustainability.

Understand Natural Systems

To maintain and enhance the natural environment, leaders must first understand the existing natural resources. The new plan must be based on an inventory and mapping of natural systems. Emerging environmental regulations are likely to require higher stormwater management standards than currently required. Good mapping is the first step toward achieving both quality of life

and possible regulatory goals. Planning for natural systems should consider drainage and explore opportunities to use waterways and drainage ways for green spaces, bicycle trails, lakes, and recreational areas.

Balance Jobs and Housing

The new comprehensive plan should also help create affordable and workforce housing. Land use plans can identify areas for such housing and create opportunities to link housing to nearby jobs, a key feature of successful workforce and affordable housing.

Mixed-income housing (market-rate, workforce, and affordable housing in both rental and ownership tenancies) woven into the same areas can provide a range of housing alternatives for a broad spectrum of Baton Rouge residents. This approach can open opportunities for households to remain in the same neighborhoods as their economic conditions change.

Colocating jobs and housing can reinforce street life and cultural activity, reduce auto trips, and in the case of downtown Baton Rouge, make use of existing transportation and utility infrastructure. Focusing plans for future mixed-use developments at growth centers can further these goals.

Mass transit can assist in both fostering mixed-use growth in transit corridors and reducing automobile trips. Although densities may not justify a major investment in transit, the panel believes a frequent bus transit system on Nicholson or Highland Street between Louisiana State University and downtown, two densely developed nodes, may be feasible in the medium term. Such a system may require coordination with the Capital Area Transit System.

The plan should examine the role of public agencies, including the East Baton Rouge Housing Authority, the East Baton Rouge Mortgage Authority, the East Baton Rouge Redevelopment Authority, and the Office of Community Development, in achieving affordable and workforce housing goals.

Take Incremental Steps toward Sustainability

Environmental sustainability—particularly with reference to such issues as global warming and even the cost of gasoline—is gaining traction in the public arena. Although various communities across the county have taken bold steps toward greater sustainability, every community needs to embrace this dimension of its well-being based on agreed-upon objectives and approaches.

Steps toward greater sustainability can be achieved by some relatively minor public actions. As an example, some cities and counties have adopted lists of better, more environmentally friendly building practices and encourage their adoption by local builders. In many instances, hewing to these standards requires little, if any, additional cost and often provides builders with a marketing advantage. The city-parish could take a small step toward sustainability by following the state's lead and requiring that rehabilitation and construction of public buildings meet green building standards.

Implementation

Implementation holds the key to a successful plan. Even the best plan, unimplemented, fails. A multifaceted implementation effort must begin with the planning process. The planning process must generate prioritized action steps, recommend funding mechanisms, and identify a lead implementation agency. The plan should also define clear benchmarks for measuring success.

Involve and Educate the Community

To be successful, the plan needs broad-based community understanding, involvement, and buy-in. Branding the plan is a critical first step toward engaging the community. The panel recommends retiring the Horizon brand and giving a new name to this fresh, 21st-century planning effort. Branding is more than a name; in this case, the brand should connect the plan to the mayor-president's goal of creating the "Next Great American City."

The planning process must include a user-focused communication plan that will carry through into the implementation phase. The panel talked with local stakeholders who were not aware of the Horizon Plan. Although the updates are on the Internet, the original plan is not. To enhance community buy-in and acceptance, the new planning process must be inclusive. People should be aware of the effort, understand how they can be involved, and be cognizant of its effect on them.

Everything from the process to the words of the plan itself needs to be in language understandable to the community. The communication strategy should be interactive and use diverse media, such as blogs, forums, and other electronic communication, to reach the broadest possible community. The Federation of Civic Associations, the Baton Rouge Growth Coalition, the Planning Commission, and the Metropolitan Council are a few of the organizations that could provide a platform for public engagement and education.

The panel also encourages the city to develop an outreach program that educates all stakeholders about the importance of the plan, the future vision for East Baton Rouge Parish, the decision-making process to advance that vision, and the plan amendment process. The review process should be clearly described and easily available, clearly defining the roles of each department.

Although the plan needs community buy-in to be effective, the panel cautions against dismissing new, bold ideas based on negative community feedback. Such ideas may be just what Baton Rouge needs.

Prioritize Action Items

The new plan must prioritize action items. Top priority should be given to actions essential to the vision, accomplishable in the short to medium term, and doable with available resources. Concerted, prioritized, and sustained effort should be put into accomplishing those items. The total number of critical items should still respect the limits of work that can reasonably be done with available human and financial resources. In addition, a reasonable number of implementation items should be assigned to each implementing agency.

To ensure that transportation and other public facilities keep pace with development and that development occurs in locations where it can be supported by public infrastructure, the city-parish may need to consider including in the plan requirements to phase development to the availability of adequate infrastructure.

The plan must be owned by all stakeholders because successful implementation is dependent upon all of them carrying out certain roles and responsibilities to the greatest extent possible. The plan must define clear roles, responsibilities, and expectations for all stakeholders, from Metropolitan Council members, planning commission-

ers, the Baton Rouge Redevelopment Authority, the Department of Public Works, and city staff to local nonprofit organizations and private developers. The plan could model stakeholder engagement strategies on the collaborative downtown revitalization effort led by the Metropolitan Council, the Planning Commission, the Downtown Development District, the Baton Rouge Area Foundation, the state of Louisiana, the Center for Planning Excellence, the East Baton Rouge Mortgage Authority, and the newly created redevelopment authority.

The existing impact fee system should be reviewed to determine changes that may better support plan implementation goals. One opportunity the panel noted would be to earmark impact fees for improvements in the immediate area from which they are collected when this system is appropriate to help achieve planning goals.

The city-parish must empower the East Baton Rouge Redevelopment Authority with the political support, financial tools, staffing, and authority needed to address its mission. Early redevelopment authority efforts should focus on land assembly and land banking to help accomplish the plan's redevelopment goals.

The panel encourages the city to create incentives to help implement the vision. For instance, incentives could encourage development in designated growth centers and discourage sprawl development. The city-parish should develop a toolkit of incentives that could include tax increment financing, tax credits, mortgage financing, impact fee waivers, land assembly, and bonus densities and policies to guide their use. Policies should clearly state when, how, under what circumstances, and following what procedures incentives can be used. Clear policies will lead to reasonable expectations and consistent treatment.

Monitor the Plan Carefully

The plan must be forward thinking, future oriented, and flexible to accommodate alternative futures. At the same time, it must remain responsive and current.

The planning process must prescribe a system for periodic plan monitoring. Plan monitoring should ask the following questions: Is the plan being implemented consistently with the vision? If not, why not? Does it need modification in response to new best practices, trends, and market conditions? In general, this monitoring should be policy oriented and not reactive to specific proposals, although a specific proposal may inform policy considerations.

Consistent, vigilant, and appropriately funded code enforcement increases public confidence in the planning process and in government, encourages investment, and discourages disinvestment. The mayor-president's Operation Restore Pride initiative should be built upon and adapted as a model for future code enforcement efforts.

Following generation of the plan, the Unified Development Code should be revised to be supportive of and consistent with the comprehensive plan. As a result, the code may be comprehensively revised or it may be limited to certain provisions, zoning districts, or overlay districts. Revising the Unified Development Code may require an outside consultant and will include participation by the Planning Commission staff and the Zoning Advisory Committee.

Amend Cautiously

The plan should be allowed to stand the test of time. Modifications should occur periodically, but not too frequently—mainly as realities change (major economic shifts; demographic changes) or as experience shows the plan's strengths and weaknesses. Such changes should be deliberate and thoughtful, reflecting important policy considerations.

It is a given that such integration of plan elements requires close collaboration among the many city-parish agencies responsible for development and the area's other nonprofit and private institutions. Coordinating their efforts will be a central and crucial task in developing a responsive and manageable plan that can be implemented.

Provide Resources for Implementation

The planning process should determine what kind and level of staff resources are needed to implement the plan. The city-parish should provide appropriate funding and training to meet these needs. The panel also suggests that the city-parish could reduce turnover in planning staff by offering more-competitive compensation.

During the planning process, the Planning Commission, the Metropolitan Council, and other stakeholders should identify and empower one lead agency to implement the plan. The city-parish should consider establishing a position to facilitate certain projects determined to be particularly beneficial in achieving the vision. These may be projects in growth centers or meeting other criteria determined by the Metropolitan Council.

The city-parish must lead efforts to foster collaborative, solution-oriented problem-solving strategies, particularly because so many stakeholders are involved in land use issues.

Education and Workforce Development

The panel repeatedly heard about the need for improved public education. Although educational reform lies outside the panel's assignment, the panel believes that a high-performing public education system is critical to success in achieving the vision for America's Next Great City. High-performing public education is crucial in developing and sustaining a diverse economy that creates new opportunities for all residents of Baton Rouge and promotes a healthy quality of life.

The panel encourages the Metropolitan Council to institutionalize collaboration with the School Board to improve public education by seeking ways to share responsibilities more effectively to increase graduation rates and enhance workforce capacity. The Metropolitan Council may also consider providing financial support to preschool programs, particularly in economically disadvantaged populations.

The panel also encourages the city to foster improved relationships and collaboration with higher education institutions (Louisiana State University, Southern University, and Baton Rouge Community College) and the private sector for the physical, economic, and cultural improvement of the region. Regular contact among the mayor-president, university chancellors, and the school board is one approach to improving relationships. The new comprehensive plan should consider the planning and development goals of major institutions in Baton Rouge and weave those into an integrated planning effort.

Consultant Selection and Approach to the Work

The planning process must start with internal consensus that the new plan will follow a community-defined vision and guide all land use and infrastructure decision making. The new plan must provide the road map to the future. Before a consultant is selected, stakeholders must agree that zoning will follow the comprehensive plan, not vice versa.

When the Horizon Plan was adopted, comprehensive planning was a new idea but zoning had a long history. Development decisions have continued to focus on amending the zoning code, with little consideration for the guidelines of the comprehensive plan. The new plan should mark the beginning of a new approach. The Unified Development Code should be updated to respond to the plan's guidelines. Development decisions should be based on the comprehensive plan.

Select a Consultant

Consultants can be retained through either of two processes: request for qualifications (RFQ) or request for proposals (RFP). In an RFQ, consultants form teams and present their background, experience, and understanding of the proposed project for evaluation by a selection committee. The selection committee picks a team that provides the experience and perspective needed to implement the project and then negotiates a scope of work and price. In an RFP, consultants are asked to lay out a detailed scope of work and price on day one. The panel recommends using an RFQ process to select a planning team with the right balance of national perspective and local experience.

The RFQ invitation should stress the importance of crafting a clear vision and creating a simple, usable plan with clear implementation strategies. The plan should be both visionary and easy to understand. Although actual implementation often presents challenges, the plan should clearly lay out steps toward implementation. The plan should

clearly state a vision, prioritize implementation measures, and recommend specific incentives to achieve the vision. The plan could include a list of the most important actions to complete in the first five years.

Understand the Planning Process

The planning process should begin with comprehensive data gathering and mapping. The city-parish should define the availability of existing materials in the RFQ document. The plan needs to be built on solid baseline information to effectively direct infrastructure and development.

The consultant team will need comprehensive GIS data to prepare opportunities and constraints maps that graphically illustrate development strategies. The mapping phase should also include creation of a local transportation model.

Address These Issues in the Plan

In addition to the range of issues usually addressed by comprehensive plans, the panel believes the plan should consider the following issues that are especially important in Baton Rouge:

Managing collaboration: The number of groups involved in planning and land use decisions will likely be somewhat surprising to an outside consultant. The RFP should require the consultant to evaluate the current situation and make recommendations for improvements to the process.

Economic analysis: As a part of the planning effort, experienced consultants should work locally to prepare economic and financial analyses and cost/benefit calculations and establish possible returns on public investments.

Communication and education: Disseminating information as widely as possible in the community will be important. The consultant team should be

required to define a complete communications program for disseminating information and providing online updates and e-mail opportunities.

Guide the Planning Process

The panel believes the following ideas might be valuable to pass on to prospective consultants.

Proactive versus reactive activities: The new plan should be designed to be proactive in directing the urbanization of the parish. Policies directing development to areas currently served or about to be served with road, utility, and drainage infrastructure would help accomplish such a goal. These policies could also be used to establish linkage between transportation projects and land use decisions. At a minimum, mapping of road and infrastructure capacity and possibilities for environmental degradation should be available to all parties.

Establishing planning standards: The planning process should establish standards for various planning activities. For example, parks planning would benefit from standards. The panel repeatedly heard interest in the planning process for parks. Many communities across the country have established standards for parks based on population. For example, a city could require five acres of parks per 1,000 persons. These parks would then be distributed within the appropriate planning areas. Comprehensive plans map proposed

parks and distinguish between community parks and neighborhood parks.

Get the Right Team

The planning team should include the diverse perspectives needed to create an interdisciplinary, comprehensive view of development and infrastructure investment in East Baton Rouge Parish. At a minimum, the team should include expertise in or have access to knowledge or experience in the following areas: land planning; urban design; landscape architecture; environmental and water resources; traffic, transit, and pedestrian movement planning; comprehensive plan and development implementation; fiscal and financial analysis; demographic forecasting; public outreach and communication; government structure; and civil engineering. During the RFQ process, the city-parish should work with the prospective planning teams to identify the right mix of expertise.

The consultant team should include national and local firms. National firms can bring the perspective of similar efforts in other communities. Local firms can bring experience with local government, stakeholders, natural systems, and GIS mapping.

Conclusion

The panel encourages the city-parish to take strong steps to craft a bold vision, embrace it, and create a comprehensive plan to implement it. Effective planning and implementation will require strong collaboration among all of the public and private stakeholders active in Baton Rouge. Most important, these stakeholders and the community must take ownership of the plan and link their efforts to its implementation.

All implementation roles must be clearly defined at the outset, and the lead agency must be established to manage implementation and set goals. In short, creating and implementing an effective plan for Baton Rouge will require collaboration, organization, and commitment from all public and private leaders. With the right effort, the plan could lead to America's Next Great City.

About the Panel

Abe Farkas

*Panel Chair
Portland, Oregon*

Farkas is the development services director with ECONorthwest. He has nearly three decades of experience in structuring successful public/private partnerships that have improved urban neighborhoods, business districts, and university environments. Farkas formerly served as development director for the Portland Development Commission; planning and development director for the city of Eugene, Oregon; economic development manager for the city of Seattle; director of community development and planning for the city of Fort Wayne, Indiana; and assistant professor of housing and public policy at the University of Tennessee.

Most recently, Farkas was president of the Farkas Group, a Portland development services company. Several mixed-use, public/private partnership projects that Farkas helped structure have been transit-oriented developments, achieved LEED certification (silver to platinum) for sustainability, and were recipients of regional or national awards. His Portland projects include the Brewery Blocks, South Waterfront, Museum Place, Jamison Square, and Portland Streetcar.

Farkas is a member of the Urban Land Institute and served on the board of the Council for Urban Economic Development.

Barbara Byron

Fairfax, Virginia

Between 1986 and 2007, Byron was director of the Fairfax County, Virginia, Zoning Evaluation Division. In that position, she was responsible for direction and oversight of all aspects of a 40 to 50 person division that negotiated and evaluated the

400 to 500 rezoning, special exception, special permit, and variance applications per year that are presented to and decided by the Board of Supervisors, the Planning Commission, and the Board of Zoning Appeals. She had substantial personal involvement in negotiations on high-profile applications, those with unusual issues, and those that pertained to high-priority public improvements. These included the Reston Town Center, multi-million-square-foot mixed-use projects in Tysons Corner, headquarters for major corporations such as Gannett and Sallie Mae, planned unit developments of up to 5,000 units, and secure federal complexes.

Byron also issued approximately 300 determinations per year on proffer and development condition interpretations as they pertained to approved zoning actions. As a member of the Department and Zoning Management Team, she participated in the collaborative management for all of the agency's responsibilities, including the direction and oversight of amendments to the county's Comprehensive Land Use Plan and amendments to the county's Zoning Ordinance. She was a primary author of amendments to the ordinance, including those for planned developments and affordable dwelling units. She directed the development of a relational database computer system to track zoning activity.

In 2007, Byron assumed responsibility for Fairfax County's newly created Office of Community Revitalization and Reinvestment. In that capacity, she heads an office charged with the revitalization of the county's older commercial and mixed-use areas. Among other responsibilities, she has a primary role in the county's public/private partnerships, including the formulation of community development associations and tax increment financing initiatives.

Prior to her experience in Fairfax County, Byron was an associate at EDAW, Inc., an international

landscape architecture and planning firm. She has a master's in landscape architecture from the University of Virginia and is an AICP.

William L. Clarke

Ross, California

Clarke is licensed as both a civil engineer and a landscape architect and has over 30 years' experience in planning, design, and construction projects. He currently consults to developers and other planning and design firms and public agencies on issues ranging from new community plans to site planning and engineering.

For over 20 years, Clarke was with two of the largest landscape architecture firms in the country. As a principal at the SWA Group in Sausalito, California, he worked on projects including the Weyerhaeuser Corporate campus outside Tacoma, Washington; the engineering planning for the Woodbridge new community in Irvine, California; and ARAMCO compounds in Saudi Arabia. As a principal at EDAW, Inc., Clarke led a team that won a design competition for a government complex in Doha, Qatar; prepared two specific plans for over 6,000 homes and 800,000 square feet of office industrial land in Tracy, California; and prepared construction documents for Washington Harbour in Washington, D.C.

In recent years, Clarke's work has centered on the planning and implementation of a variety of projects. Among these projects have been an 11,000-acre residential development near Livermore, California, and a 300-acre business park in Livermore. He was also part of a team preparing a resource management plan for the country of Palau. Currently, he is working on the implementation of a town center for the new community of Mountain House, California.

Ross Tilghman

Seattle, Washington

Tilghman heads the Tilghman Group, providing transportation planning services. He brings 24 years of urban planning experience to providing transportation-related revenue projections, market studies, and planning and development strategies to government, not-for-profit, and private sector clients facing real estate development challenges. His projects typically involve downtown revitalization, academic and institutional campus planning, historic district redevelopment, mixed-use projects, special event access, and parking.

Frequently working with nationally recognized planning teams, Tilghman has recently provided detailed downtown transportation requirements for Evansville, Indiana; Natchez, Mississippi; St. Louis, Missouri; Green Bay, Wisconsin; and Parker, Colorado. Parking studies to determine future demands and market requirements have been provided for Savannah, Georgia; Portland, Oregon; Sioux City, Iowa; and Olympia, Washington. Transit market studies were conducted in Denver and Los Angeles.

Tilghman has also specialized in transportation planning for state capital campuses, working with Washington, Iowa, and Minnesota on their access and parking programs. Additionally, he has completed special event and recreation area transportation plans for San Diego's Balboa Park; Joe Robbie Stadium in Miami; the Iowa Events Center in Des Moines; Stones' River National Battlefield, Murfreesboro, Tennessee; Shreveport Riverfront in Louisiana; and Vicksburg, Mississippi's downtown and riverfront.

Since 2000, Tilghman has been working with the city of Tacoma to address its downtown parking needs, including the parking plan for the city's new convention center. Tilghman also served

three years as director of a downtown business improvement district in Illinois. He oversaw maintenance, facade improvements, parking, and upper-story redevelopment efforts in concert with Main Street redevelopment principles.

Tilghman frequently participates in national resource panels assisting communities with development questions, including several ULI Advisory Services panels; an AIA R/UDAT team in San Angelo, Texas; and Ohio Design Assistance Teams in three Ohio communities. He received an AB from Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri, and an MA from the University of Washington, Seattle.



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