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# TRANSITION REPORTS

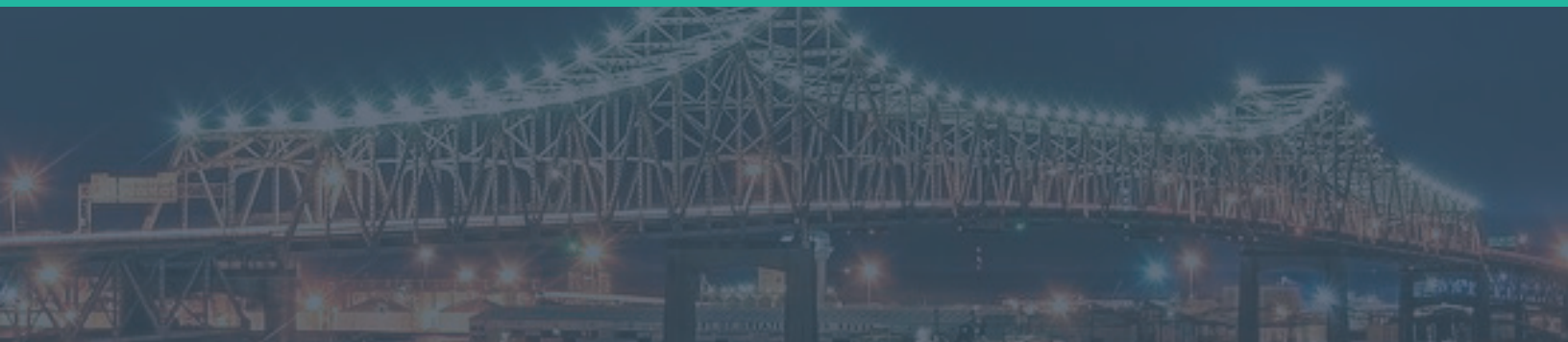
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Prepared for Mayor-President Sharon Weston Broome by BR Transitioning  
March 15, 2017

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**BR***transition*



These reports reflect the work, perspectives and opinions of a wide range of volunteer citizens. All of the information has not been verified nor sourced. It does not in any way reflect any official position of the Mayor-President or this administration. Inconsistencies may exist due to the varied thoughts and approaches of these generous citizens who donated their time in participating in the effort and assembling the work.

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## **SECTION: 1**

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### **OPERATIONAL REVIEW COMMITTEES**

# DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

**Co-Chairs:** Matthew Butler, Justin Haydel, P.E.

**Committee Members:** Larry Bankston, Alton Ashy, Lee Jenkins, Karen Khonsari, Marie Walsh, Will Williams, Ph.D. Jared Beiriger, Kahli Cohran, P.E., Bill Deville, John Eby, Carlos Giron, Rhaoul Guillaume, P.E., David Guillory, P.E., Bryan Jones, P.E., Roy Glapion, P.E., Perry Matt Thomas

## SCOPE OF REVIEW

Operational Review of Public Works Department.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Public Works is in the third year since the voters approved the re-organization. However, Public Works had not seen a change in its organization since 1944. The East Baton Rouge City-Parish Public Works is the largest combined municipal agency in the City-Parish with more than 1,000 employees and a host of critical public services. Public Works is responsible for providing critical services to the public in order to maintain a quality of life and safety. The Subcommittee performed an operational review on the current six (6) Departments, which includes the following:

- Building and Grounds
- Division of Environmental Services
- Department of Maintenance
- Transportation and Drainage
- Department of Development
- Fleet Services

## DEPARTMENT REVIEW

### *Fiscal and Budgetary Status*

Overall, the City-Parish budget is relatively stable in terms of budgeting and spending. However, there are grave concerns about the inability that each Department Head has over the autonomy to control their budget during the calendar year. Recent shortfalls facing State and Local Governments across the country have impacted Public Works to absorb more cost share of Capital Projects and Maintenance of City-Parish-owned properties and programs.

The following budget summary of General Fund Public Works functions (across separate managerial division lines) has been prepared in order to assist in understanding, from an overall perspective, the financial structure of Public Works. This does not include garbage and sewer.

### *Department/Agency Workforce*

Currently, the City-Parish has 1,100 full time equivalent (FTE) employees. There are currently 200 to 300 vacant positions. Additionally, the realities of certain positions result in additional vacant posts otherwise critical to the performance of key functions or services. The resulting situation is that fewer employees, including senior staff, are asked to take on additional responsibilities. There are two (2) Human Resource functions within Public Works that appear to be a duplication of services; hence further adding delays and confusion in the hiring process. Performance measures should be put in place for all Departments that are consistent yet germane to the function of that Department.

- William Daniel, Interim Chief Administration Officer
- Brian Bernard, HR Director
- David Childress, Interim Director of Fleet Management
- Adam Smith, Interim Director of Environmental
- Carey Chauvin, Director of Development
- Carey “Bubba” Cashio, Interim Director Building and Grounds
- Thomas “Jay” Ruffin, Interim Director, Maintenance
- Tom Stephens /Dan Rosenquist, Transportation and Drainage

## 2017 Annual Operating Budget

### Department of Public Works – All Department Summary

Budget Summary	2015 Actual	2016 Budget	Requested	2017 Proposed	FINAL
<b>Sources of Funds:</b>					
<b>Self-Generated Revenues:</b>					
Licenses & Permits	\$3,010,170	\$2,948,000	\$3,023,000	\$2,948,000	
Buildings & Grounds – Central Services Support	\$1,108,590	\$1,148,000	\$1,312,310	\$1,312,310	
Louisiana DOTD Grants	\$1,191,980	\$1,190,240	\$1,190,240	\$1,193,900	
Other DPW Revenues	\$675,720	\$615,300	\$620,300	\$615,300	
<b>General Fund</b>	\$46,193,750	\$52,148,760	\$52,901,510	\$51,280,940	
Total Source of Funds	<b>\$52,180,210</b>	<b>\$58,050,300</b>	<b>\$59,047,360</b>	<b>\$57,350,450</b>	
% Change Over Prior Year in General Fund Subsidy		12.89%	1.44%	-1.66%	
<b>Use of Funds:</b>					
<b>Department of Public Works</b>					
Administration	\$725,620	\$0	\$0	\$0	
Engineering	\$849,560	\$0	\$0	\$0	
Field Engineering	\$345,010	\$0	\$0	\$0	
Warehouse	\$110,600	\$0	\$0	\$0	
311 Call Center	\$163,860	\$0	\$0	\$0	
Architectural Services	\$195,280	\$0	\$0	\$0	
Public Building Maintenance	\$2,584,720	\$0	\$0	\$0	
Public Building Maintenance – Prison	\$121,570	\$0	\$0	\$0	
Inspection	\$1,266,360	\$0	\$0	\$0	
Traffic Engineering	\$1,196,310	\$0	\$0	\$0	
Maintenance Lots	\$4,485,460	\$0	\$0	\$0	
Operations	\$787,550	\$0	\$0	\$0	
State Highway Maintenance	\$235,080	\$0	\$0	\$0	
Street Lighting	\$1,130,400	\$0	\$0	\$0	
Neighborhood Revitalization	\$325,700	\$0	\$0	\$0	
Miscellaneous Public Works Projects	\$110,160	\$0	\$0	\$0	
<b>Total Appropriations</b>	<b>\$14,633,240</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	

Budget Summary (cont'd)	Actual	Budget	Requested	Proposed	FINAL
Re-Organization of Public Works:					
Department of Transportation & Drainage	\$8,784,490	\$13,962,230	\$14,244,550	\$13,760,540	
Department of Development	\$4,747,250	\$8,052,100	\$8,316,180	\$8,167,940	
Business Operations & Capital Programs	\$1,809,060	\$2,635,540	\$2,652,070	\$2,647,090	
Department of Maintenance	\$14,392,500	\$22,362,910	\$22,516,210	\$21,586,150	
Department of Buildings and Grounds	\$7,813,670	\$11,037,520	\$11,318,350	\$11,188,730	
Total Appropriation	\$37,546,970	\$58,050,300	\$59,047,360	\$57,350,450	
Total Appropriation	\$52,180,210	\$58,050,300	\$59,047,360	\$57,350,450	
% Change Over Prior Year		11.25%	1.72%	-1.21\$%	
Personnel Allotted	681	679	679	640	

*This budget summary has been taken from the 2017 Annual Operating Budget for Public Works- All Department Summary on page 150.*



## Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats Analysis

### Strengths:

- A central call system (311) to accept complaints and request for services from the public
- Ability to respond and manage with available staff, although not timely
- Departments are set up to support and service our citizens, City-Parish wide.
- Public Works is set up to hold the six (6) Sub-Departments' focused and accountable

### Weaknesses:

- Inability to address issues from the 311 call center in a timely manner
- Organization structures are not well designed to function between Departments. The current structure does not encourage collaboration or cross communication between Departments.
- The Business Office and Workforce Development add an additional burden as separate entities.
- Inability to attract top talent at the Department Head level leads to poor leadership and low employee morale
- No Department accountability—the re-organization has not been fully implemented.

### Opportunities:

- Upper adjustment of pay scale and pay grade
- Hire and promote from within to retain institutional knowledge.
- Use of flood recovery dollars to repair and rebuild critical components of our housing stock and infrastructure.
- Federal, State, local and private support to address traffic congestion
- Evaluate constraints of the hiring, firing and discipline for Civil Service
- Implement inter-agency coordination.
- Terminate Consent Decree at end of 2018 as scheduled

### Threats:

- Hiring process is cumbersome and a large segment of the work force is close to retirement.
- Lack of training for employees
- Inadequate scheduling of maintenance for vehicles and equipment throughout Public Works
- Pay scale is inadequate to attract and keep well-qualified employees in all Departments
- Lack of communication between all six (6) Departments
- Funding is inadequate in all six (6) Departments.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Top Three Recommendations

1. Give each Department Head the autonomy to control and be held accountable for their budget *immediately* and determine if these budgets are sufficient for the level of service.
  - A comprehensive review of pay grade and scale for all Public Works employees.
2. City-Parish should independently evaluate each Department relative to privatization within the next **120 days**. Consider Public City-Parish private partnerships to save the City-Parish money.
3. Weekly meetings should be held between the six (6) Departments where critical items that impact City-Parish Government is discussed in detail with the MAYOR AND/OR DESIGNEE in attendance for the next **120 days**.
  - Fully embrace and implement the July 2013 Report of Reorganization finding within the next **30 days**.

### Additional Recommendations

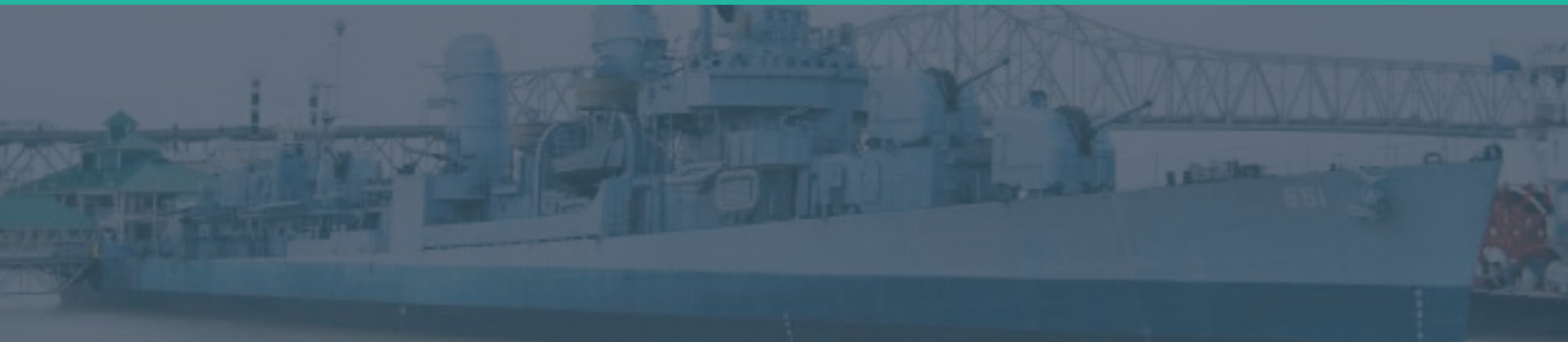
- The Assistant CAO should fully establish the mission, protocol, expectations, and goals, to engage and coordinate activities of the inter-agency meetings.
- Centralize 311 system within the City-Parish Government (Mayor's Office) versus Public Works Department. This will allow for more timely response to complaints or service calls. A statistical performance report should be provided to each Department.

### Additional Commentary

- Establish the position of Liaison that will report directly to the MAYOR AND/OR DESIGNEE, but is also set up to address Metro Council concerns and complaints.
- Address vacancies and turn over in all six (6) Departments.
  - Fill all Department Head positions on a permanent basis. All positions should be advertised *as soon as possible*
- When hiring for the Department Head position, consideration should be given to technical competence in addition to experience working in a public setting.
- Set election for Green Light Program II (based on projects previously approved).
- It is imperative that the City-Parish focuses on the current Consent Decree compliance date of December 31, 2018. The City-Parish has been under the rule of EPA for over 30 years and needs to seize the opportunity to petition the Government to be released from the Consent Decree.

- Address drainage problem both locally and regionally. East Baton Rouge should issue a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for implementation of a Stormwater Master Plan *as soon as possible*.
- Create a Steering Committee to recommend a comprehensive transportation plan.
- Establish and implement a small business participation plan.
- Every Department within Public Works needs standard operating procedures with specific performance metrics.

## BR*transition*



# DPW - BUILDINGS & GROUNDS

**Co-Chairs:** Lee Jenkins, Kahli Cohran

**Committee Members:** David Guillory, Alton Ashy, Will Williams, John Eby, Matthew Butler, Bryan Jones, Larry Bankston

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Department of Buildings & Grounds includes oversight of City-Parish infrastructure-related functions and buildings such as public buildings maintenance, which also includes prison and River Center maintenance, City-Parish parking garages (includes two public parking garages and two City-Parish employee parking areas) and architectural services.

The Department of Buildings & Grounds is comprised of three (3) divisions, Architectural Services, Public Building Maintenance and Parish Prison Maintenance. This department is solely in place for the purpose of maintaining existing facilities, constructing and renovating facilities, and providing security, as well as delivering professional leadership to agencies looking into future projects.

The Architectural Services Division (ASD) is the City Agency responsible for the oversight of all newly constructed facilities and major renovations to existing facilities. ASD utilizes its in-house architects to design renovations and oversee major renovations to city owned facilities. ASD is also the City of Baton Rouge's repository for all blueprints and specifications of city-owned facilities.

The Public Building Maintenance (PBM) Division is responsible for maintaining existing facilities (HVAC, electrical, carpentry, painting, plumbing, custodial, fire alarm safety, and roofing). PBM also is the city administrator for: the security and city-wide access control systems; renovation of existing facilities when more cost effective than contracting a project; and the support division for all downtown festivals and events providing trash collection electrical and logistical services. This division also outsources and oversees numerous contracts such as custodial for outlying facilities, fire sprinkler, fire alarm, energy management systems, and elevators.

The Parish Prison Maintenance Division is solely designated to maintain the daily operations of the EBR Parish Prison and the Juvenile Detention Center. The duties include but are not limited to HVAC, electrical, plumbing, institutional locks and equipment, painting, and exterior security.

## DEPARTMENT REVIEW

### *Fiscal and Budgetary Status*

Based upon meetings with Cary "Bubba" Cashio (Interim Director) and the budgetary documents provided, the overall Department budget is well managed and sufficient, with the exception of the Prison Maintenance Division. Maintenance costs associated with the Prison Maintenance Division are escalating annually due to aging facilities.

- The 2017 Public Building Maintenance—Prison budget is \$594,070. The Sheriff's Office provides an additional \$700k in maintenance expenses to the budget. Expenses could be reduced if specific prison/prisoner management practices were implemented. These practices may be more readily realized if the budgetary responsibility for maintenance was in the Sheriff's office. The Sub-committee advises entering into a cooperative agreement with the Sheriff's office and the Parish for maintenance of the building.
- In addition, there are concerns regarding the lack of coordination between the Department head and the Administration to develop a prioritized programmatic approach to annual budgets. Lacking sufficient input from those responsible for fulfilling the Department's mission, financial appropriations don't always reflect the priorities that would be realized from a comprehensive programmatic approach.
- Professional services includes contracts for the following: elevator maintenance, janitorial/custodial service, fire alarm maintenance, generator maintenance, HVAC maintenance, plumbing maintenance, and electrical maintenance for various City-Parish buildings; Rhino Louisiana for the operation and safety management of Galvez Stage performance truss system; and various maintenance contracts for the Riverfront Greenway.

## Department of Buildings and Grounds Budget Summary

Budget Summary	2015 Actual	2016 Budget	Requested	2017 Proposed	FINAL
<b>Sources of Funds:</b>					
<b>Self-Generated Revenues:</b>					
Buildings and Grounds – Central Services Support	\$1,108,590	\$1,148,000	\$1,312,310	\$1,312,310	
<b>General Fund</b>	\$6,705,080	\$9,889,520	\$10,006,040	\$9,876,420	
Total Source of Funds	<b>\$7,813,670</b>	<b>\$11,037,520</b>	<b>\$11,318,350</b>	<b>\$11,188,730</b>	
% Change Over Prior Year in General Fund Subsidy		47.49%	1.18%	-0.13%	
<b>Use of Funds:</b>					
Administration	\$124,190	\$264,580	\$238,200	\$238,200	
Architectural Services	\$531,720	\$868,460	\$921,900	\$921,900	
Public Buildings Maintenance	\$6,808,870	\$8,813,300	\$9,555,490	\$9,434,560	
Public Building Maintenance - Prison	\$325,570	\$591,180	\$602,760	\$594,070	
Priority Building Improvements	\$23,320	\$500,00	0	0	
<b>Total Appropriations</b>	<b>\$7,813,670</b>	<b>\$11,037,520</b>	<b>\$11,318,350</b>	<b>\$11,188,730</b>	
% Change Over Prior Year		41.26%	2.54%	1.37%	
Personnel Allotted	106	106	106	100	

\*Six (6) positions that have been vacant and not funded for three (3) years have been removed.

## Department/Agency Workforce

The Department of Buildings and Grounds had 106 position allotments in 2016 and was reduced to 100 position allotments in 2017. Based upon the Department, there are seven (7) vacant positions. Many of these positions have been hard to fill due to low compensation. The Department has promoted from within in efforts to remain efficient, but consistent with the case across many of DPW Departments, low compensation has been ineffective attracting qualified candidates that can pass a background check. In addition, much of the agency staff including the Interim Director is within two-five years of retirement. No succession plan is in place.

- Vacancies are primarily in lower-paying positions (Senior Trades Specialist, Senior Trades Technician, (2)

Custodian). The Department has been able to promote from within to fill higher-level positions.

- An urgent priority to establish a succession plan is recommended. The top three levels of the organizational chart are all approaching retirement.

## Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats Analysis

### Strengths:

Of the leadership, intimate understanding and corporate knowledge of Bubba Cashio, Interim Director is identified as a major strength of the Department. Department performance measures as provided by Bubba Cashio are outlined below:

### Weaknesses:

- Employee compensation model is not competitive. Take home pay for many allotments do not provide a

Goals/Objectives/Performance Indicators	2014 Actual	2015 Target	2016 Target
<b>Public Safety</b>			
1. Be prepared to respond to 311 service requests from citizens. a) % of service requests completed within one week.	90%	95%	95%
<b>Infrastructure Enhancement/Growth Management</b>			
1. To provide and maintain safe and efficient City-Parish buildings and grounds. a) Inspection pass rate exceeds 90% quarterly (fire) b) Work Orders Received	90% 4,136	100% 4,500	100% 4,500
2. To provide safe and well-maintained Prison and Juvenile Services buildings. a) Inspection pass rate exceeds 90% quarterly b) Work Orders Received	N/A 1,941	50% 2,000	80% 2,000
3. To oversee the construction and renovation of the City-Parish's built environment a) % of built environment managed by Buildings and Grounds	90%	90%	90%
Goals/Objectives/Performance Indicators	2015 Actual	2016 Target	2017 Target
<b>Public Safety</b>			
1. Be prepared to respond to 311 service requests from citizens. a) % of service requests completed within one week.	90%	95%	95%
<b>Infrastructure Enhancement/Growth Management</b>			
1. To provide and maintain safe and efficient City-Parish buildings and grounds. a) Inspection pass rate exceeds 90% quarterly (fire) b) Work Orders Received	90% 4,136	100% 4,500	100% 4,500
2. To provide safe and well-maintained Prison and Juvenile Services buildings. a) Inspection pass rate exceeds 90% quarterly b) Work Orders Received	N/A 1,941	50% 2,000	80% 2,000
3. To oversee the construction and renovation of the City-Parish's built environment a) % of built environment managed by Buildings and Grounds	90%	90%	90%

living wage. The dated compensation model of rich benefits and moderate take home does not attract the current generation in the workforce.

- Directors lack autonomy in managing the Department's budget.
- The current approach to developing the budget seems to be managed externally with insufficient input from the actual Department. Recommendation will be made to develop a more iterative approach to establishing annual budgets based upon a priorities annual work program.

#### Opportunities:

- Staffing/Hiring process must be addressed. Civil Service seems to be an obstacle to efficient Department management.
- The multitude of current outsourced services has proven to add efficiency to this Department. Continuation of the trend is recommended to overcome the challenges to hiring.
- A deliberate strategy to develop strong leadership for the future while the current leadership team is in place to transition corporate knowledge

#### Threats:

- Aging and inefficient Parish Prison facilities.
- Large percentage of existing workforce approaching retirement with no succession plan in place.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### *Top Three Recommendations*

1. Identify a feasible plan to respond to the aging Parish Prison (*Within 180 days*).
2. Develop a succession plan to facilitate continuity as existing staff approach retirement (*Within 120 days*.)
3. Identify and implement corrective actions to attractive qualified workforce (*Within 120 days*).



# DPW - DEVELOPMENT

**Co-Chairs:** Larry S. Bankston, Jared Beiriger

**Committee Members:** Matthew Butler, John Eby, Roy Glapion, Rhaoul Guillaume, Sr., David Guillory, Marie Walsh, Will Williams, Parry Matt Thomas

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Department of Development comprises development-related functions such as the subdivision office, which includes engineering functions involving work plan reviews, field inspections, and environmental reviews; permitting for resident and commercial purposes (building plan review and approval); inspections and code enforcement for addressing, building occupant, mechanical, plumbing, and electoral needs; code enforcement for blight elimination including zoning ordinance compliance; blight and litter elimination; and condemnations and demolitions.

## DEPARTMENT REVIEW

### *Fiscal and Budgetary Status*

Almost half of the funds for the Development Department are self-generated revenues from licenses and permits. \$4.640 Million is from the General Fund. There are some funds from a CDBG Program for Blight Demolitions. While the total budget may be adequate, the inability to hire at the present rates of pay requires shifting of funds to contractual services. There are fourteen (14) vacant and six (6) frozen positions in the Department. The present staff is unable to accomplish its mission without third party assistance.

### *Department/Agency Workforce*

The Development Department is led by Carey Chauvin who has done an outstanding job with limited staff. This Department is unable to fill positions in Plan Review and Inspections. Starting pay for Plan Reviewer is \$30,681 and Inspector I is \$27,828. This is substantially lower than Jefferson or Lafayette Parish. The Department has attempted to fill positions with no applicants to consider. These positions now require state certification in order to hold the job. HR needs to consider a pay review for these positions.

### *Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats Analysis*

#### **Strengths:**

- Organizational structure fits the function of the Department
- The major strength in this Department is the present Director

- Current leadership has proven to be knowledgeable across all functions of the department.

#### **Weaknesses:**

- The stated performance goals for the Permit Department are not currently being obtained.
- The issue of a permit for a subdivision in 14 days, 21 days for commercial building and seven days for residence is currently not being done.
- There is not a performance matrix for the Inspection Department or Neighborhood Revitalization.
- Because of the inability to reach these goals, the Council has recently passed an ordinance authorizing the use of third party plan review. -

#### **Opportunities:**

- The prior administration issued an RFP to contract with a third party for plan review and inspection. This contract was never implemented. Until HR has an opportunity to review the current pay structure, the new administration should seek contractual services to supplement the Department. There should be sufficient payroll savings to implement this contract.

#### **Threats:**

- The Department cannot effectively deliver services with fourteen (14) vacancies and six (6) frozen positions. This Department is the face of the Parish for economic development. Every delay in construction of a project cost the developer money and equally as important, the Parish loses sales tax revenues.
- The starting salary for a Plan Reviewer: Lafayette is \$42,385, Jefferson Parish \$34,209. In EBR the starting salary is \$30,681, with 19 steps to reach the maximum salary of \$52,231. The same issue is found for Inspector I: Lafayette \$37,793, Jefferson Parish, \$35,984 and EBR-\$27,828.
- There should be consideration of the consolidation of the Development Department and the Planning and Zoning Department. Planning is presently a Department under the Metro Council. At the present time, these two Departments have overlapping functions.
- The Development Department is presently considering permitting issues involving zoning. At a minimum, there needs to be better coordination with better use of technology, such as the “my permit” process. The

## Department of Development Budget Summary

Budget Summary	2015 Actual	2016 Budget	Requested	2017 Proposed	FINAL
<b>Sources of Funds:</b>					
<b>Self-Generated Revenues:</b>					
A/C & Heating Licenses & Permits	\$272,610	\$313,000	\$313,000	\$313,000	
Electrical Licenses & Permits	\$476,500	\$470,000	\$470,000	\$470,000	
Plumbing Licenses & Permits	\$430,770	\$415,000	\$440,000	\$415,000	
Building Permits	\$1,830,290	\$1,750,000	\$1,800,000	\$1,750,000	
Other DPW Revenues	\$612,500	\$579,500	\$584,500	\$579,500	
<b>General Fund</b>	\$6,705,080	\$9,889,520	\$10,006,040	\$9,876,420	
Total Source of Funds	<b>\$4,747,250</b>	<b>\$8,052,100</b>	<b>\$8,316,180</b>	<b>\$8,167,940</b>	
% Change Over Prior Year in General Fund Subsidy		302.34%	4.07%	2.56%	
<b>Use of Funds:</b>					
Administration	\$3,990	\$171,610	\$222,730	\$222,730	
Subdivisions	\$500,720	\$816,250	\$819,660	\$909,390	
Permits & Inspections	\$2,684,790	\$4,433,600	\$4,419,600	\$4,351,470	
Neighborhood Revitalization	\$1,557,750	\$2,630,640	\$2,854,190	\$2,684,350	
<b>Total Appropriations</b>	<b>\$4,747,250</b>	<b>\$8,052,100</b>	<b>\$8,316,180</b>	<b>\$8,167,940</b>	
% Change Over Prior Year		69.62%	3.28%	1.44%	
Personnel Allotted	109	108	108	108	



Department needs to do away with hand copies of applications for permits.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Top Four Recommendations

1. Issue a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for a third-party contract to supplement the activities of the Development Department (i.e. Inspection and plan review). *(Immediate action)*
2. Direct HR to begin review of all positions within the Department related to pay scale.
3. Give the Director of Department greater autonomy over budget and use of funds.
4. Need to fill the position of Chief Engineer required by the Plan of Government (such as sewer capacity permitting). *(Immediate action required)*

### Additional Recommendations

- Institute a performance metric for the department *(Within 120 days)*.
- Leverage FEMA funds for the demolition of flooded homes and comply with state and federal regulations.
- Go paperless on all permits and inspections *(Within 180 days)*.

### Additional Commentary

These comments are not specifically directed at the Development Department. These are issues related to the entire Public Works Department.

- Allow the Director to have autonomy and control over the Budget of the six Departments. A portion of the savings should be allowed to flow over to the subsequent year.
- Additional influx of permitting due to flooding related repairs.

# DPW - ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

**Co-Chairs:** David Guillory, Alton Ashy

**Committee Members:** Larry Bankston, Rhaoul Guillaume, Sr., Bill Deville, Carlos Giron, Khali Cohran, Bryan Jones, Justin Haydel, Parry Matt Thomas

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Environmental Services Department includes wastewater operations, maintenance, engineering, construction, and finance/administration resources dedicated to a single Wastewater Division. The Department also includes solid waste, landfill, recycling and solid waste environmental function housed within one Sanitation Division tasked with overseeing the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) compliance, garbage cart management, City-Parish recycling programs, landfill management, and management of the City-Parish solid waste collection contractor.

The Department of Environmental Services (DES) is comprised of divisions that were formerly under the Department of Public Works, before a Plan of Government change that occurred in 2015. These divisions include:

- Sewer Engineering
- Wastewater Collections
- Pump Stations
- Wastewater Treatment
- Landfill

DES has the largest Department and budget as a result of the Plan of Government change in 2015. There are approximately 300 allotted position in DES. This budget funds large-scale contracts such as the SSO Program, Solid Waste Collection and Landfill Operations. When the Department was created, the chosen Director resigned after one (1) year of service. For the last six (6) months, an Interim Director has been Head of the Department.

### At a glance:

- The Sewer Budget is approximately \$185,000,000 for the fiscal year 2017\*
- The Solid Waste Budget is approximately \$45,000,000 for the fiscal year 2017\*

\*It should be noted that the operations budget for sewer is only \$50,000,000, the rest is Capital Programs and debt.

\*It should be noted that the landfill operations and garbage collection contracts make up 90% of this budget. Is this one or two contracts?

### Sewer

There are significant recruitment problems within the City-Parish. This is mainly due to low pay. In the DES, there are critical needs for the vacant positions listed below:

- Sanitation Manager
- Pump Mechanics for the Pump Station Division
- Maintenance Workers for the North and South Treatment Plant Divisions
- Plant Electricians and Plant Instrument Technicians for the Pump Station Division
- Heavy Equipment Operators and Maintenance Workers for the Wastewater Collections Division
- Treatment Plant Operators and/or Trainees for the North and South Treatment Plant Divisions
- SCADA Operators and/or Trainees for the SCADA Division

The lack of employees has led to privatization in some areas, which has saved money and led to greater efficiencies. For instance, the lack of maintenance workers in Wastewater Collections—to make sewer repairs—has led to all repairs being made by one of two contractors that do all emergency and non-emergency repairs for DES. Repairs are done faster, and in the long run, cheaper (especially when you add in fringe benefits for civil service employees).

### Solid Waste

Solid Waste is mainly made up of Garbage Collection, Recycling and landfill—all of which are provided by private contractors. There is a vacant position of entitled Sanitation Manager, which seems critical and must be filled soon. The garbage collection contract and recycling contract are also ending in one year, it is critical to advertise soon to select new contractors. There is a Master Plan underway to study the needs of the City-Parish prior to selecting a new contractor.

## DEPARTMENT REVIEW

### *Fiscal and Budgetary Status*

Both the Sewer Fund and the Solid Waste Fund are self-sufficient and neither is considered General Fund so they are not a product of “budget raiding.” Both budgets are heavily dedicated to debt service or large contracts. There does not seem to be a deficit of lack of funding in either one.

## Department/Agency Workforce

The workforce in the Sewer Fund (Department of Environmental Services) is aging and, for the most part, non-skilled. It has become increasingly hard to hire qualified blue-collar employees because of pay and civil service restrictions. Many of the needed positions are being held by existing employees who lack the skill or training to properly execute the requirements. The situation lends itself to privatization—as a means of increasing productivity. DES is also having a hard time attracting licensed engineers, which is also a pay issue that needs to be addressed in order to hire qualified personnel.

## Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats Analysis

### Strengths:

- Many of the services within DES are provided by private contractors. Garbage Collection, Recycling, Landfill Operations, Sewer Repairs, Sludge Hauling, etc. Privatization works well and as a result, productivity lends itself to a very small, if any, backlog of complaints in these areas

### Weaknesses:

- Recruiting and training are the two weak points of the organization.
- Pay needs to be increased to hire more qualified employees.
- Vacant positions need to be filled or services need to be contracted out.

### Opportunities:

- The Sewer Program needs to be re-evaluated for cost effectiveness and long-term funding.
- Solid Waste Contracts are ending in 2018. The City needs to advertise an RFP ASAP to replace the current contractor for garbage collection and recycling.
- The Consent Decree needs to be finalized as planned in 2018.

### Threats:

- DES needs to fill vacant positions or hire contractors to maintain the newly renovated sewer system, which includes the Wastewater Treatment Plants, Pump Stations and SCADA systems. Without including all of the aforementioned system components, the investment was wasted.
- DES is also having a hard time attracting licensed engineers.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Top Three Recommendations

1. Landfill Cover Issue—This topic needs to be addressed ASAP. It seems that all pieces are in place for the City-Parish to negotiate with its existing contractor, Waste Management, to resolve this issue. Implementation can be quick and easy with a contract extension at the landfill. However, a Sanitation Manager is needed. Consider cooperative endeavor agreement with Amite Basin Commission for cover. **Completed immediately**
2. It is recommended to fill and/or replace vacancies with private contractors, especially at the Wastewater Treatment Plants and Pump Stations. A study should be done within the **next 120** days to outline the implementation of this process. There are leadership positions that will need to be addressed as well, such as the Sanitation Manager and Wastewater Chiefs.
3. DES needs to advertise the Solid Waste contracts immediately as the existing ones are due to expire. **As soon as the Master Plan recommendation is available**

### Additional Recommendations

- Budgetary Flexibility—Department Heads need more control of their budgets, free from the pressures of finance.

# DPW - FLEET MANAGEMENT

**Co-Chairs:** Roy Glapion, Bill Deville

**Committee Members:** Justin Haydel, John Eby, Lee Jenkins, Matthew Butler, Alton Ashy, Karen Khonsari, Will Williams

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The primary function of Fleet Management (FM) is to provide oversight and management of current Central Garage functions, including maintenance and repairs for all City-Parish vehicles (such as existing DPW vehicles, Emergency Medical Services vehicles, and City Police vehicles) as well as in-house maintenance for all City-Parish equipment such as tractors, bulldozers, and excavators.

The FM Director, like most if not all other DPW Departments, discussed the lack of efficiency and the duplication of effort with both the DPW “Business Office” and the “Workforce Development” sub-units; the Budget Office and Procurement Office processes go on with little or no communication or interaction with the FM Director, needed to manage the FM Department and be held accountable.

Questions regarding efficiencies in recent decisions such as closing service stations, creating a central tool room, and eliminating a Tool Runner have all created work flow issues. It is obvious from interviews with the Director and line staff mechanics that there is a difference in opinion regarding efficiencies, morale, productivity, etc.

## DEPARTMENT REVIEW

### *Fiscal and Budgetary Status*

The Department of Fleet Management (DFM): Resources used for the following DFM 2017 Budget came from a 30-page document provided by the DFM Director, entitled:

*Fleet Management Department*

*Transition Team Report*

*January 6, 2017*

*“Small Department – Large Operations”*

It appears to be a document with a number of assessments and recommendations made by the Director (although it may have been extracted from another public works fleet management agency or report and incorporated into this particular document intended for DFM here). The document includes the 2017 budget summary listed below and has another four pages (pages 12 - 15) with detailed budget breakdowns for further review as needed.

The Sub-committee believes there may need to be another session with the Finance Director to further discuss the budget as presented. In particular, there seems to be a material difference between the 2015 and 2016 DFM annual budgets, a significant increase in 2016 over 2015; followed by a significant decrease in 2017 over 2016. These differences fall into the purview of the current DFW Director.

The DFM Director continued the theme presented by nearly all of the other DPW Departments, pointing out that the budget process falls short of what is intended, and that preparation of the budget is a planning and operating process that should be used by the Director to manage and also be used to hold the DFM accountable by his superior.

### *Department/Agency Workforce*

Department of Fleet Management (DFM):

45 Full-Time Total Employee Positions Allotted;

38 Full-Time Total Employee Positions Filled;

7 Vacancies

7 Administrative Positions

4 Parts Positions

4 Mechanic Supervisors

30 Mechanics

2,921 vehicles and equipment items to maintain via 26 Departments (Police 1,033)

Although Fleet Management services numerous agencies—with the Police Department being the largest—the Fire, Sheriff, and Constable Departments are excluded.

The DFM Director is advocating that EMS should move to, or merge with, the Fire Department maintenance group. The current pay scale for Fleet is not competitive with the open market.

There is a current push to extend the DFM shop hours from 6 a.m. to 3 p.m. to 4 a.m. to 5 p.m. to better accommodate the 24/7 operation hours of both the Police and EMS Departments. This would also make more bays available. There are several more recommendations that may benefit Fleet, if supported by the budget:

- Hire a Fleet Asset Manager
- Convert the position of Business Officer to Business Manager
- Convert the vacant Senior Automotive Attendant position to Tool Coordinator (new position).

## Department of Fleet Management Budget Summary

Budget Summary	2015 Actual	2016 Budget	Requested	2017 Proposed	FINAL
<b>Revenues:</b>					
Billings to Department	\$10,169,760	\$14,701,090	\$12,872,300	\$12,032,400	
Non-Operating	\$6,140	\$16,500	\$12,600	\$12,600	
<b>Total Revenues:</b>	<b>\$10,175,900</b>	<b>\$14,717,590</b>	<b>\$12,884,900</b>	<b>\$12,045,000</b>	
<b>Appropriations:</b>					
Cost of Materials Sold	\$7,841,660	\$10,554,550	\$8,554,340	\$8,092,620	
Personal Services	\$1,286,180	\$1,748,730	\$1,856,270	\$1,769,460	
Employee Benefits	\$832,070	\$1,049,000	\$1,115,990	\$1,076,150	
Supplies	\$144,720	\$117,100	\$125,500	\$125,500	
Contractual Services	\$1,158,530	\$1,053,210	\$1,090,010	\$1,079,550	
Depreciation	\$26,560	\$69,500	\$69,500	\$35,000	
<b>Total Appropriations</b>	<b>\$11,289,720</b>	<b>\$14,592,090</b>	<b>\$12,811,610</b>	<b>\$12,178,280</b>	
% Change over Prior year		29.25%	-12.20%	-16.54%	
<b>Net Position, January 1</b>	\$1,886,130	\$735,380	\$803,080	\$803,808	
<b>Adjustments</b>	\$(36,930)	\$(57,800)			
<b>Net Position, December 31</b>	\$735,380	\$803,080	\$876,370	\$669,800	
Invested in Capital Assets	\$318,240	\$443,740	\$540,240	\$574,740	
Restricted	-	-	-	-	
Unrestricted	\$417,140	\$359,340	\$336,130	\$95,060	
Personnel Allotted	45	45	45	45	



- Convert the vacant Service Station Supervisor position to Automotive Shop Supervisor.

## Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats Analysis

### Strengths:

- Experienced, tenured, knowledgeable dedicated employees
- Fleet Management possesses many assets such as tools, equipment, and shops
- Procurement uses City of Alexandria via piggyback arrangements for vehicle purchases

### Weaknesses:

- Need for standard operating procedures (SOP) across Fleet Management
- Lack of control over the budget
- Too many types of vehicles and equipment causing the need for expensive high inventory of parts and parts space.
- City-Parish vehicles and equipment average life is materially beyond standards causing high repair labor and parts expenditures, and more frequent breakdowns while in service.
- DFM does not participate in determination of type vehicles purchased by the City-Parish Departments.
- Lack of availability of parts is a concern.
- Dependent upon receiving parts at the mercy of auto part vendors' delivery schedules—Previously, the Department had a “parts runner” that would expedite the delivery of parts for needed repairs to vehicles out of service.
- New toolbox method being implemented is causing concerns about shortages of needed tools, especially for the older vehicles that are still in service.
- Vehicle repairs occur primarily via breakdowns, as opposed to industry standards of “preventative maintenance inspections,” which allow repair opportunities before breakdowns.
- Duplication of efforts via HR and Workforce Development is causing issues and dissatisfaction.
- Disposing of vehicles is extremely slow, makes for safety hazards and the vehicles take up valuable space.

### Opportunities:

- Create SOP
- Standardization of the vehicle fleets
- Extend service hours to open up more service bays and be more responsive to Police and EMS who service the public on a 24/7 basis.
- Allow Mechanics and Supervisors to be a part of the changes needed. Allowing these team members' input, could improve morale and make operations more efficient.
- Recognize Mechanics and other employees for long-term service, for work accomplished, etc. to improve morale.

- With so many vehicles extended far beyond the average life span, there is an urgent need to begin a plan to procure replacement vehicles ASAP, thus allowing opportunities to reduce parts expense and overtime cost.
- Implementation of car pool as part of right sizing take home vehicles is being considered.
- Conduct a customer service evaluation
- Implement an inventory of take home vehicles throughout the Parish and evaluate the policy to minimize abuse.
- The potential to acquire additional funds through the sale of inventory is possible. (Vehicles/used tires, etc.)
- Utilizing the MunicBid more efficiently or another resource.

### Threats:

- Consistent complaints among other City-Parish entities that utilize Fleet regarding timely service and quality.
- Private competition for skilled and unskilled workers with a Civil Service pay structure that is not competitive at any level with private industry or other public agencies.
- Hiring process that is not transparent and does not result in a fully staffed workforce.
- Low morale of the current workforce.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Top Three Recommendations

The Sub-committee respectfully acknowledges that a complete review is not possible in the short period of time allowed. Also, many of the real solutions may require significant changes in hiring or procurement procedures; work load and budget reallocations; and actual process improvement or reengineering efforts.

1. The Sub-committee recommends a review of the “consultant’s assessment” recently completed by the former administration, before making more recommendations. *(Immediately)*
2. Extend the shop hours to accommodate 24/7 operation of Police and EMS. *(180 days)*
3. Invest in an Asset Management system and Director for Fleet Management. *(1 year)*

### Additional Recommendations

- Review the three-year budget presented.
- Eliminate the apparent duplication of efforts with the Business Office and Workforce Development sub units.

### Additional Commentary

- There are currently no metrics in place to measure performance, output, customer satisfaction, etc.

# DPW - MAINTENANCE DEPARTMENT

*Co-Chairs:* Carlos Giron, Marcie B. Walsh

*Committee Members:* Kahli Cohran, Karen Khonsari, Lee Jenkins, Bill Deville, Roy Glapion, Jared Beiriger, Justin Haydel, Parry Matt Thomas

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Maintenance Department of the City-Parish typifies what many citizens consider “Public Works.” The Department’s three Divisions (Streets, Drainage and Landscape) are responsible for drainage maintenance functions like roadside ditch digging and off-road canal excavation, canal debris removal, inspections of roadside ditches/canals, vector truck operations, storm drain/catch basin repair concrete work, erosion remediation, and land/surveying for property lines; landscape and forestry, beautification of city-owned landscapes and oversight of grass maintenance functions involving mowing, weed eating, and litter clean up, and tree maintenance; street maintenance functions for maintaining roadways by repairing potholes, street blowouts, and curbs. The Divisions are responsible for applying sand during icy conditions, and removing hazardous and non-hazardous waste spills.

The cleanliness and visual appearance of the City-Parish is in large part tied to the execution of their work. The work and employees of this Department are among the most visible of all in the City-Parish by virtue of their number and distributed work throughout the city, more often than not, in full view of the public. The high visibility of the physical condition of roads, bridges, canals and other infrastructure features and green spaces is also in full open view of the community. As a result, the Maintenance Department is routinely the recipient of significant numbers of complaints, which range from nuisance to emergencies, all of which require a timely response and final resolution.

Primary issues facing the Department of Maintenance as identified by the Sub-committee include:

- Constant vacancies, turnover, and inability to staff roles among the un-skilled and semi-skilled workers.
- Excessive time and effort spent in the recruiting and hiring due to ineffective, inefficient and non-transparent. HR and Civil Service processes.
- Reactive work scheduling and execution, focused on responding to complaints or other directives.
- Increasing demand due to City-Parish’s aging and deteriorating infrastructure as well as new developments.
- Lack of realistic and meaningful performance measures to establish baseline conditions and/or to track and

measure accountability and performance.

- The planned consolidation of some functions in a central location should be accompanied by an operational plan to implement changes and to establish baseline performance measures across the Department to measure the success of the Department as well as the changes to processes.
- Thousands of open complaints that are currently unresolved.

The process of recruiting and hiring qualified personnel for what are among the lowest classified positions in the City-Parish has created near crisis situations in each of the three Divisions of the Maintenance Department. The Landscape Division has solved some of these issues by contracting out more grass cutting operations; however, the contractor’s performance also needs meaningful performance measures and accountability controls. The Drainage and Street Maintenance Divisions have been impacted most profoundly where inadequate staffing levels actually limit the ability to deploy crews and perform work. The hiring process appears onerous and inefficient at both attracting and retaining workers. This issue is compounded due to the extremely low wage scale. This creates a situation of continuous turnover and unplanned position vacancies, which requires constant training, retraining, and additional supervisory efforts. The lengthy hiring process is not transparent and individual supervisors expend significant amounts of time attempting to fill positions on a nearly constant basis without resolving the staffing issue.

The Maintenance Department appears to operate in a primarily reactive mode with little ability to execute a routine or prioritized work plan. Work tasks are often assigned based on the level of political priority as opposed to a designed overarching plan with scheduling and systematic prioritization of work. Planned maintenance and successful execution is at the heart of a strong maintenance program.

Responding to complaints often takes priority over routine maintenance although the efficiency of the complaint system itself has been questioned. At present there are over 2,000 open complaints in the 311 system for Drainage Division alone. Although the 311 system can track complaints, there are large inefficiencies due to the operators creating multiple logged tickets with the same root cause (e.g.: pothole or

drainage issue) due to the lack of a Geographic Information System (GIS) linkages. This creates inefficiencies due to staff being sent out to verify each complaint and may result in higher numbers of open tickets.

The work of the Maintenance Department depends on access to supplies, tools and equipment needed to perform maintenance and repair functions. The Department seems to have addressed some of the challenges, but the issue of vehicle and heavy equipment repair came up in many of the interviews. The current method of using the Fleet Management Department for equipment repairs (in-house and in the field) reportedly results in excessive delays in making even minor repairs. This also dilutes the responsibility and “ownership” of the equipment and obscures real accountability. When the equipment does not work, it is the Maintenance Department’s productivity that suffers, not Fleet’s.

The Mission of the Maintenance Department and the individual Divisions may warrant consideration and chartering.

The City-Parish infrastructure continues to expand with new developments for which the Maintenance Department must assume responsibility. The ability to revisit the street warranty periods and timetables of filings in subdivisions is warranted due to the City-Parish taking over street repairs after a one-year acceptance period. This point becomes an issue when the development is not complete and the streets are heavily traveled during construction and used again for additional filings. In addition, the overall infrastructure including the road, bridge, and canal networks are aging and will require more attention, repair and maintenance in the future. Some of the tasks that the Street and Drainage Divisions perform might be considered more of Capital Improvements, which fall to this Department without a corresponding budget. The budget allocation for 2017 indicates a reduction in funding for the Department, which is already understaffed and underfunded. The consolidation of some of the planning, scheduling and administrative processes may help but there are no performance measures in place to truly quantify any efficiencies or impacts.

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## DEPARTMENT REVIEW

### *Fiscal and Budgetary Status*

Funding includes 289 allotted personnel and the request for 67 seasonal employees and \$130,000 for downtown holiday celebrations.

Professional services contracts listed in the proposed 2017 Budget include the following:

- Louisiana Vegetation (Canal Spraying Services): Budgeted as \$388,500, actual contract is \$456,697.

- DOTD of the State of Louisiana Street Maintenance: \$536,320 budgeted.
- Boulevard and Right of Way maintenance for various locations: Budgeted as \$1,127,370, actual contract is \$1,391,870.
- Curb Appeal and Garden Doctors; FEMA lots maintenance: \$30,000 budgeted
- Groundworks; Public building site maintenance: \$191,000 budgeted
- Sports Turf Management, LLC. Turf management for various locations in Town Square: Not to exceed \$23,000
- Groundworks, Inc. Landscape maintenance and care of Galvez Plaza, Town Square Lawn and Repentance Park: Not to exceed \$20,500

Contracts not included in proposed 2017 Budget

- Interstate Mowing Contract  
\$362,663 (Department review estimated internal annual costs to mow was over \$1.4M)
- Downtown Tree Well Maintenance Contract  
\$17,500
- Tree Removal Contract  
\$100,000 estimated, used as needed

According to the current Interim Director—with the short falls from the drainage and landscape contracts, as well as the contracts not listed in the budget, minus what is provided for other contractual services in the budget line items—the Department is short a total of \$962,195.25 for the 2017 fiscal year which will be covered using salary savings.

### *Department/Agency Workforce*

The Department had 319 positions in the 2016 budget and 289 proposed in 2017. Of the proposed decrease, 19 positions were of the Maintenance Worker I position (lowest classification in the Department); five from the Maintenance Worker II position; and two from the Maintenance Worker III. The entire Personnel summary is found in the 2017 Budget document. It should be noted that a number of positions were reportedly vacant and/or “frozen” but this information was difficult to verify. A large number of open unskilled, semi-skilled and craft workers is required. Current pay scale is not competitive. The current hiring process does not adequately support the needs of the Department. Turnover and constant vacancies impact Department performance.

The Director position vacancy has impacted Department effectiveness. The type of work performed requires strong leadership, managerial and supervisory skills at all levels in order to drive accountability to all staff in the Department. Currently, many staff may be driven by the motivation of logging the most overtime possible, rather than efficient and accountable work. This culture will require strong leadership at all levels of the organization.

The Sub-committee suggests a review of workload and



## Department of Maintenance Budget Summary

Budget Summary	2015 Actual	2016 Budget	Requested	2017 Proposed	FINAL
<b>Sources of Funds:</b>					
<b>Self-Generated Revenues:</b>					
Louisiana DOTD Grants	\$538,060	\$536,320	\$536,320	\$536,320	
<b>General Fund</b>	\$13,854,440	\$21,826,590	\$21,979,890	\$21,049,830	
Total Source of Funds	<b>\$14,392,500</b>	<b>\$22,362,910</b>	<b>\$22,516,210</b>	<b>\$21,586,150</b>	
% Change Over Prior Year in General Fund Subsidy		57.54%	0.70%	-3.56%	
<b>Use of Funds:</b>					
Administration	\$139,630	\$307,390	\$1,327,070	\$1,327,070	
Landscape Maintenance	\$5,369,410	\$8,273,370	\$8,248,400	\$7,586,060	
Street Maintenance	\$2,257,700	\$3,890,040	\$3,988,870	\$3,856,980	
Drainage Maintenance	\$5,900,200	\$9,892,110	\$8,951,870	\$8,816,040	
Miscellaneous PW Projects - Operations	\$428,140	\$0	\$0	\$0	
Miscellaneous PW Projects – RFG	\$297,420	\$0	\$0	\$0	
Maintenance & Operations					
<b>Total Appropriations</b>	<b>\$14,392,500</b>	<b>\$22,362,910</b>	<b>\$22,516,210</b>	<b>\$21,586,150</b>	
% Change Over Prior Year		55.38%	0.69%	-3.47%	
Personnel Allotted	319	319	319	289	

*\*Thirty positions that have been vacant and not funded for three years have been deleted.*

entire staffing allotment by the Division and Lot. Consider contracting some work functions or tasks out and/or augmenting personnel with additional contract workers, The Sub-committee also suggests the addition of a mechanic position at each lot or Division to improve equipment repair and operating efficiency.

## **Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats Analysis**

### **Strengths:**

- Reports of cooperation and communication between the three Divisions and other Departments
- Privatization of grass cutting duties, maintenance and tree removal services as well as herbicide spraying in canals has been successful
- Use of DPW warehouse for quick acquisition of supplies
- Recent addition of a dedicated staff/team to clear the large backlog of 311 complaints and tickets
- Increased cooperation between Road Rehabilitation Program and Program and Street Maintenance
- Core employees with knowledge and experience in road construction methodology

### **Weaknesses:**

- Extreme difficulty recruiting, hiring and maintaining qualified workers
- Pen and paper organization (e.g.: timesheets and duplicate paperwork)
- Turnover and vacancies impact work and production on a daily basis.
- Inability to plan maintenance and repair work while functioning in a reactive mode responding to complaints and perhaps urgent but less critical tasks with a reduced workforce
- Lack of efficient equipment repair and availability
- Understaffing during emergency situations
- Few, if any performance measures to determine success, opportunities for improvement, etc.
- Lack of sufficient funding for staffing and new equipment
- o Summer months may require longer hours to maximize grass-cutting days during good weather, but no overtime is approved.
- Insufficient access to drainage Right-of-Ways due to citizen/business fence construction in servitudes
- Lack of any Drainage Capital Improvement projects in the City-Parish
- Bridge maintenance crew is severely understaffed

### **Opportunities:**

- Planned consolidation could be an opportunity to document current systems and processes as well as the new and potentially improved processes. Measures to evaluate system performance as well as the satisfaction of managers and supervisors should be developed and implemented.

- Contracting or outsourcing some functions or positions
- Review the scope of responsibilities for the Maintenance Department. Are some of the more complex repair tasks or construction type projects appropriate for redesign (beyond maintenance repairs) or outsourcing?
- Full implementation of the reorganization plan with sufficient professional level support (and oversight) to develop necessary processes; performance metrics and other strategies to ensure and measure success
- Adjust summer work hour schedule.
- Workflow or electronic tools to maximize efficiencies and accountability
- Using prison labor for litter pickup
- Developing Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and additional staff training.
- Develop a policy to utilize paid staff on workers compensation for light-modified duty (e.g. flagger or attendant).

### **Threats:**

- Competition for skilled and unskilled workers with a Civil Service pay structure that is not competitive at any level with private industry or other public agencies
- Hiring process that is not transparent and does not result in a fully staffed workforce
- New infrastructure being added to system requiring maintenance
- Aging and deteriorating infrastructure requiring more time and money to maintain and repair
- Fleet Department timely repairs for equipment and vehicles
- Perception of maintenance activities in different parts of the City-Parish (North vs. South); currently no pothole repair crew in North Baton Rouge
- Increased frustration from citizens and businesses on lack of maintenance and timeliness of complaint resolution
- Perception of new businesses and visitors to our City with regards to litter and overall appearance of City and condition of assets

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## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Top Three Recommendations**

The Sub-committee respectfully acknowledges that a complete review is not possible in the short period of time allowed. Also, many of the real solutions may require significant changes in hiring or procurement procedures; workload and budget reallocations; and actual process improvement or reengineering efforts. Also, without permanent leadership, it will be difficult to accomplish significant strategic changes. In the shorter term it is recommended:

1. The Mayor should detail and communicate her vision and expectations for the Maintenance Department to the current leadership, management, and all maintenance personnel. The Sub-committee suggests the Mayor select a limited number of priorities for the Department to address that would result in some visible improvement to the public and to the employees (*Within the first year*). An operational action plan to accomplish these tasks with simple performance measures should be developed for each Division (and each lot if possible.) (*60 days*.) The plan should include the need for additional resource requirements including staff and equipment that could be considered in a longer-range plan. Examples of priority activities that would accomplish the current mission of the Department and support a vision of the new administration may include: 1) improved cleanliness and maintenance and appearance of key City areas and key satellite public facilities across the City-Parish; 2) conduct maintenance of the highest priority drainage features parish wide; and, 3) prioritize street and bridge maintenance needs parish-wide and develop a strategy to implement.
2. Recruit and hire a qualified Department Director (*6 months*) and include the following as potential first steps:
  - Review mission and scope of Maintenance Department work elements. Confirm that current work tasks and assignments are appropriate and coordinate reallocation or reassignment as appropriate to other Departments.
  - Conduct a gap analysis of current resources available to perform Department work assignments including: leadership and supervisory capacity; budget, equipment and staff to accomplish Department mission.
  - Consider challenges of recruiting and hiring in Department review and evaluate success of the grass cutting contracts and other opportunities
3. Establish long range Maintenance Department strategic plan and an operational plan with meaningful performance measures to ensure that the assets and infrastructure of the City-Parish are being maintained in such a way to ensure the safety of the community; increase the useful life of all City-Parish infrastructure; and improve the quality of life for all the citizens of the City-Parish.

### Additional Recommendations

- Develop and implement a true, pro-active, preventative maintenance program for C-P assets. Change the overall culture and direction of the Maintenance Department from a reactive organization into a robust proactive Department. (*2 years*)
- Clear all backlog of 311 complaints and establish performance and accountability measures for supervisors to track their timely resolution. (*1 year*)

### Additional Commentary

The current Maintenance Department personnel were extremely accommodating and responsive to all requests from the Transition Team. We would like to recognize their willingness to participate and provide support to our assessment. We believe that with the proper leadership, staffing and support they can greatly improve the Departments overall performance, accountability, and responsiveness to the citizens of the City-Parish.

# DPW - TRANSPORTATION & DRAINAGE

**Co-Chairs:** Rhaoul Guillaume, Sr., Bryan Jones

**Committee Members:** Marie Walsh, Bill Deville, Jared Beiriger, Carlos Giron, Kahli Cohran, Will Williams

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Department of Transportation & Drainage includes transportation-related functions such as oversight of traffic engineering, traffic operations, traffic signal and sign installation and maintenance; parking meter maintenance; road closures and public notifications; taxicab inspections; traffic volume counts; oversight of the Advance Traffic Management Center, traffic volume and average daily traffic calculations, traffic analysis and associated studies; street and curb painting; support for construction of capital improvements projects; inspections and compliance for new roadway construction; peer reviews of design and engineering plan; project management; support engineering services for capital improvements programs involving bridges, drainage, and flood control; bridge inspections; contractor oversight for hydraulic studies and design engineering; flood control including levee maintenance and inspections; bridge maintenance and repair; guard rail repair; and road rehabilitation programs with oversight of contracted program management team.

## DEPARTMENT REVIEW

### *Fiscal and Budgetary Status*

See Department of Transportation & Drainage Budget Summary (on the following page)

### *Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats Analysis*

#### **Strengths:**

- Since reorganization, the mission of the Department is narrower, allowing for efficient decision-making.
- Green Light Program has successfully delivered a number of major projects that are new and require, at least in the short-term, little maintenance
- Formulation of next Green Light Program; the planning and programming work has been done
- More collaboration with planning and MPO

#### **Weaknesses:**

- Loss of Stephen Bonnette—a high-caliber technical engineer, manager and collaborator
- Understaffed, not very deep
- Trouble recruiting and retaining top talent (hard to hire PE's)
- Poor pay scale

- Aging workforce (management and lower level employees)
- Lack of a comprehensive asset management program to guide program of projects in various disciplines (bridge replacement, overlay program, storm water/drainage)

#### **Opportunities:**

- FEMA public assistance funding for streets and drainage
- Governor's package: Baton Rouge stands to benefit substantially from this; will also provide state funds to leverage more federal funds.
- Comite River Diversion project to make major positive impact on the drainage program
- DOTD/City road swap program: rehabilitated roads and credits for future maintenance; roads have been agreed upon but not yet finalized.
- Bring Green Light Program II forward again as soon as possible.
- Cooperation of this Department with Maintenance, Streets, and Drainage Divisions

#### **Threats:**

- Without funds from GLP, Governor's package, there are no substantial recurring funds and program remains anemic.
- Significant number of local bridges is timber and approaching end of lifespan; many are posted and several are closed.
- Inability to hire talented technical professionals to manage program

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### *Top Three Recommendations*

1. Hire a seasoned transportation industry professional with both employee management and large-program management experience to serve as Transportation & Drainage Department Director, preferably a candidate with a firm understanding of federal, state and local programs and funding streams and who possesses the ability to communicate effectively to various audiences (Mayoral staff, Metro Council, other elected officials and the public). (*Immediately*)
2. Develop, with consensus from the Metro Council, a program of projects in the City-Parish to be funded by an increased local revenue source (i.e. Green Light

## Department of Transportation & Drainage Budget Summary

Budget Summary	2015 Actual	2016 Budget	Requested	2017 Proposed	FINAL
<b>Sources of Funds:</b>					
<b>Self-Generated Revenues:</b>					
DOTD- Full Signal Maintenance Agreement	\$653,920	\$653,920	\$653,920	\$657,580	
<b>General Fund</b>	\$8,130,570	\$13,308,310	\$13,590,630	\$13,102,960	
Total Source of Funds	<b>\$8,784,490</b>	<b>\$13,962,230</b>	<b>\$14,244,550</b>	<b>\$13,760,540</b>	
% Change Over Prior Year in General Fund Subsidy		63.68%	2.12%	-1.54%	
<b>Use of Funds:</b>					
Administration	\$124,710	\$273,810	\$300,030	\$300,030	
Engineering	\$1,557,350	\$2,225,440	\$2,256,690	\$2,131,250	
Field Engineering	\$578,510	\$1,264,190	\$1,453,900	\$1,443,670	
Traffic Engineering	\$3,249,100	\$5,589,840	\$5,577,980	\$5,279,640	
Street Lighting	\$3,274,820	\$4,608,950	\$4,655,950	\$4,605,950	
<b>Total Appropriations</b>	<b>\$8,784,490</b>	<b>\$13,962,230</b>	<b>\$14,244,550</b>	<b>\$13,760,540</b>	
% Change Over Prior Year		58.94%	2.02%	-1.44%	
Capital Expenditures (Fund 360)	\$133,880	\$0	\$0	\$0	
Personnel Allotted	111	110	110	107	

*\*Three positions that have been vacant and not funded for three (3) years have been deleted.*

Program II) to address local traffic concerns that would augment the state's overall transportation program, both current and future. *(1 year)*

3. Develop, with consensus from the Metro Council, a comprehensive Storm Water Master Plan that includes a comprehensive program of projects to be funded by either existing revenue sources and/or an increased revenue source to address City-Parish drainage concerns that would augment and support any federal funds that may be forthcoming as a result of the 2016 flood and future events. Develop a storm water system maintenance program. *(1 year)*

### **Additional Recommendations**

- Develop a comprehensive asset management program to guide program of projects in various disciplines (bridge replacement, overlay program, storm water/drainage) so there is visibility of needed projects and a timeline for implementation considerate of funding or lack thereof.
- Consider salary increases for a number of technical positions within the department (e.g. engineers, EITs, technicians) as a means to recruit higher caliber talent to fill critical positions.
- Ensure any flood recovery funds (e.g. FEMA Public Assistance) are highly leveraged to ensure City-Parish gets greatest return on investment in areas of greatest need. Use this opportunity to establish baseline conditions for future response activities in the event of a disaster.



# FINANCE

*Co-Chairs:* Jacqui Vines-Wyatt, James L. Llorens

*Committee Members:* James Moffett, Michael Hunt, Philip Hackney, Collis Temple III, Buddy Bonnacaze, Jan Moller, Jim Richardson, Chadrick Kennedy, Mark Drennen, Janet Olson, Monica Zumo, Etta Jane Harris

## SCOPE OF REVIEW

The Finance Sub-committee reviewed the operations and functions of the Finance Department. The Sub-committee addressed the internal functions of the department and, through its review, identified critical financial issues that had a significant impact on the general operations of City-Parish government.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

East Baton Rouge Parish/City of Baton Rouge is at a pivotal point. The Finance Sub-committee reviewed the operations of the Department of Finance and, concurrently, attempted to identify those policies and budgetary actions that have impacted the overall operations of City-Parish government. Multiple interviews were conducted with the Director of Finance, the Chief Administrative Officer, and the Director of Human Resources. Information was requested and reviewed with an emphasis on personnel, budget/revenue, contract effectiveness, and technology. The Sub-committee acknowledges that its assessment and recommendations reflect less than a total in-depth analysis, but believes that sufficient information has been provided to reach the general conclusions presented in this report. The Sub-committee also had discussions and reviewed factors external to the Department of Finance that impacted the financial stability of City-Parish government.

The Finance Department has benefited from stable leadership at the senior management level for many years with a practice of promotion from within. The department has been operated and managed efficiently. Current senior management is to be applauded for sustaining an effective operation. The Sub-committee believes, however, that there also exists the possibility of a sudden and detrimental impact on the operations of the department with several senior administrators, including the Director and Assistant Director, in a retired/rehired status. The Sub-committee believes that the overall impact of the availability of the provision in the retirement system that allows an employee to retire and continue employment under rehire status, albeit at a supposedly reduced work week, should be reviewed by the Mayor-President to consider implementing additional guidelines and restrictions on mayoral appointees and senior level administrators. The City-Parish is implementing

a new Enterprise Resource Planning System (ERP) that is scheduled to go live in October. The Sub-committee believes it is prudent to retain current leadership, with their institutional knowledge, in the Finance Department, in some capacity, to facilitate the implementation of the new system.

The Sub-committee considers the current practice of promoting from within the department an advantage in that it results in stability and retention of institutional knowledge. However, the Sub-committee believes that the Mayor-President should also consider a review of the role of the Director of Finance with the possibility of expanding the responsibilities of that office into that of a Chief Financial Officer with significant input into the role of economic development, public/private partnerships, and financial strategies.

The Sub-committee, in its review of the finance department, as previously stated, had significant discussions concerning the overall general fund budget of the City-Parish. As a result of discussions with the Director of Finance, the Chief Administrative Officer and the Director of Human Resources, the Sub-committee identified several areas of concern related to revenues and expenditures: unfunded positions throughout the City-Parish departments, but mostly concentrated in the Department of Public Works; contract review and compliance; debt recovery; health care costs; and prison operations. The Sub-committee expects that these concerns would be addressed by other Sub-committees that are focused on those specific operational areas, however, this committee believed it necessary to cite the impact of these factors on the City-Parish budget and overall operational efficiency of City-Parish government.

The City-Parish must consider revenue-enhancement measures in order to more effectively address the needs of the parish in the areas of street and road maintenance, capital improvements, deferred maintenance backlogs, and personnel. The large number of unfunded and frozen positions in DPW is an indicator of the need to increase funding and address the backlog of critical projects.

The Sub-committee was limited in its ability to do a comprehensive review of contracts, due to the number of existing contracts. The Sub-committee, in its review, recommended a more comprehensive contract review and

compliance committee structure. Contracts are essential to the operations of government but they must not suffer from a process that is inefficient and less than effective in its monitoring capability. The Sub-committee noted that the authority of the Mayor-President to approve contracts has been reduced to a maximum contractual amount of \$17,500. The Sub-committee strongly recommends that the Metropolitan Council consider increasing the authority of the Mayor-President to at least \$50,000 and preferably to \$75,000.

The City-Parish must consider all resources available to increase its collection of recoverable debt. There is a current authorization to enter into a contract for recovery of parking fines and management of the parking garages. That contract has not been executed. We recommend that the Mayor-President review the proposed contract to ensure maximum benefit to the City-Parish before execution of the contract. The Sub-committee also recommends the exploration of a memorandum of understanding with the Louisiana Department of Revenue as a potential partner in debt recovery efforts.

Revenue enhancement measures must include a thorough review and assessment of the City-Parish's burgeoning costs in the areas of health care and prison costs. The Department of Finance and the Department of Human Resources both cite the cost of health care as being a major cause of the growth of expenditures in the City-Parish. The Sub-committee recommends an extensive review of the health care benefit plan and the cost of administering that plan as a means of identifying measures that result in a healthier workforce and reduced health care costs. The City-Parish expends significant financial resources in housing prisoners outside of the City-Parish due to the limited capacity of the parish prison. The Sub-committee understands that a separate Sub-committee is reviewing the criminal justice and incarceration policies but believes it incumbent upon this Sub-committee to stress the impact of the parish prison operations on the general fund budget. The Sub-committee recommends that the Mayor-President give immediate attention to a comprehensive review of the current situation with a goal of developing a long-term plan to address a more cost effective operation of the parish prison facility.

In summary, the Finance Sub-committee commends the current leadership of the Departments of Finance and Human Resources in managing those departments with limited financial resources. The Sub-committee recommends that the Mayor-President exercises her authority to conduct a comprehensive and detailed analysis of the immediate and long range needs of the City-Parish with emphasis on revenue enhancement measures that would address the critical needs of the City-Parish.

## DEPARTMENT REVIEW

### *Fiscal and Budgetary Status*

This Sub-committee reviewed the Department of Finance with some review of the Department of Human Resources. The department operates with a 2017 budget of \$10,097,660. Approximately 40% of its budgeted revenue is self generated from sales tax collection charges, occupancy tax collection charges and general sales and use tax audit collections. The remaining revenue is general fund appropriations. The department is currently allotted 121 personnel positions.

The current budget allocation of the department and the organizational structure of the department appear to be sufficient and the department operates efficiently and effectively. There could be an increase in efficiency and productivity in the audit section if the department contracts with external parties to assist with audits.

### *Department/Agency Workforce*

The department operates primarily with a civil service staff. The Director, Assistant Director and Executive Assistant are unclassified. The total staff for the department is 121. Currently, the Director, Assistant Director and Executive Assistant are in the retired/rehired status. This status allows the employee to retire and be rehired at a less than full time workload of 29 hours per week. The current leadership team consistently works beyond the 29 hours limitation. This arrangement presents a threat to stability at the senior leadership level. The departure of the three employees would represent a significant drain on institutional knowledge, especially as the department is preparing to implement a new Enterprise Resource Planning System in October 2017.

The Sub-committee recommends that consideration be given to retaining the current leadership team through the implementation of the ERP. The Sub-committee recommends that a review of the department to determine the feasibility of considering contracting certain functions of the department as it relates to external audits and collections.

### *Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats Analysis*

#### **Strengths:**

The strength of the Department of Finance is in its commitment to adhering to standards and practices of the Government Finance Officers Association in regards to budget preparation and financial reporting. The department has received the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award and the National Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting. The department has focused on accountability and maintained its bond ratings with Moody's, Standard and Poor's and Fitch Investors. Employee turnover is minimal at less than 12% for the past three years.



### Weaknesses:

Finance Department as an organizational entity operates efficiently. The weaknesses cited by this Sub-committee would be more focused on weaknesses inherent in the overall financial strength of the City-Parish. The reserve fund of the City-Parish has been steadily declining due to the need to balance the budget by drawing on the reserve fund. Hence, the reserve fund is below the goal established by the Department of Finance and recommended by industry standards.

Capital improvements and maintenance have suffered due to a lack of annual appropriations in the general fund budget. The City-Parish has relied upon the fund balance from previous years to address capital improvements and maintenance, which has proved insufficient to meet critical needs.

Expenditures on health benefits and prisoner housing has also increased dramatically and necessitates a comprehensive review of these two areas to minimize the impact on the general fund budget.

### Opportunities:

The Department of Finance has taken measures to implement the new Enterprise Resource Planning System along with the Department of Human Resources. This implementation, slated to begin in October, will provide a much more efficient processing system which could enhance the financial processing and reporting activities of the department. The full implementation of the system may result in the ability to reduce the staffing level in the department and/or lead to a reclassification of employees tasked with processing transactions.

The Department of Finance should investigate a partnership with the Louisiana Department of Revenue to utilize the state's debt recovery program available to local governments. The City-Parish is limited in its ability to contract with debt recovery contractors in the private sector. The department could realize a significant increase in recovery through a partnership with the Department of Revenue.

The Mayor-President should explore the opportunity to enhance the department's role in economic development and financial strategies. The Department's current economic development activity consists of processing Enterprise Zone rebate requests. Enterprise zone applications should be more thoroughly investigated and analyzed by the department for its impact of City-Parish revenues. The Mayor-President should explore the opportunity to enhance the department's ability to be more proactive in economic development initiatives.

### Threats:

The most significant threat to the department is the depletion of the reserve fund. Another significant threat is the inability of the resources of the City-Parish to fully fund the manpower needs of the Department of Public Works, resulting in a backlog of critical improvements and a decline in the condition of many of the City-Parish's physical facilities. Another significant threat is the increasing cost of health benefits, which is demanding greater resources from the general fund budget.

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## RECOMMENDATIONS

### *Top Three Recommendations*

1. A complete review of health benefits and premiums should be initiated in the first two quarters of 2017 and completed in time to present a comprehensive proposal to the Metropolitan Council for the 2018 fiscal year.
2. A joint (Mayor-President/Metropolitan Council/Citizen) task force should be created to review and recommend revenue enhancement measures. The task force should begin its task no later than the second quarter of 2017 with the goal of presenting a revenue enhancement proposal to the Metropolitan Council. All options—including increases in taxes and fees,, whether general or dedicated—should be discussed and presented as valid strategies to increase general fund and capital improvement revenues.
3. The Departments of Finance and Human Resources should collaborate on a comprehensive review of the current personnel allocation and position classifications within each department to determine a more realistic allocation and classification of personnel to be presented in the 2018 budget proposal.

### *Additional Recommendations*

The Mayor-President should create a joint task force to include the Sheriff of East Baton Rouge Parish to develop a comprehensive strategy to address levels of incarceration and the burden on the City-Parish revenues in housing East Baton Rouge Parish prisoners in other parishes. This task force should also include a recommendation on the renovation of the existing prison or construction of a new prison, which could be offset by reducing the cost of housing prisoners out of parish.

The Mayor-President should review current staffing and resources dedicated to the recovery of general fund expenditures on the flood recovery efforts to ensure maximum effort is directed toward the recovery of general fund monies and the replenishment of the City-Parish stabilization/reserve fund.

### *Additional Commentary*

The Finance Sub-committee believes that there is an opportunity to utilize the power of the office of the Mayor-President to establish productive lines of communication and cooperation with all governmental offices in the Parish. This dialogue would help address the fiscal needs of EBR and develop a comprehensive plan to enhance revenue, create efficiencies in operations, and address the critical needs of the parish.

# HUMAN DEVELOPMENT & SERVICES

**Co-Chairs:** Johnny G. Anderson, Pat McAllister LeDuff

**Committee Members:** George Bell, Dr. Jay Brooks, Sarah Broome, Sherry Guarisco, Anita Krail, Linda Lee, Dr. Kenya Lenoir Messer, Erika McConduit, Randy Nichols, “AJ” Anh-Dang Joseph Nguyen, Stasha Rhodes, Jason Thrower, Dr. Walter T. Tillman, Jr., Michael W. Victorian, Dylan Waguespack, Carmen D. Weisner, Rev. Lee Wesley

## SCOPE OF REVIEW

Mayor-President appointed a diverse group of community leaders, educators, social service experts, and engaged citizens, and tasked them with conducting a thorough examination of the Division of Human Development & Services and the existing human services offerings of the combined government of the City-Parish. She charged the committee with examining from “top to bottom” as to how the inherited governmental structure serves, protects, and enhances the human dignity and individual and collective health of the residents of our community, thereby, strengthening the opportunities for city growth and development.

The Sub-committee selected cities with positive results from across the nation to identify proven best practices and deliverables. The cities identified were Austin, Texas; Charlotte, North Carolina; Mobile, Alabama; Atlanta, Georgia; Baltimore, Maryland; and Seattle, Washington. From this list Austin, Texas; Charlotte, North Carolina; and Mobile, Alabama, were identified as primary peer cities for this work.

After identifying peer and aspirational cities to model, the Sub-committee divided into the following workgroups: 1) Office of Social Services, 2) Ryan White/Housing Opportunity for People with AIDS (HOPWA), and 3) Early Head Start/Head Start. In addition to these three workgroups, the committee identified ten (10) performance objectives, which if implemented, can make East Baton Rouge Parish a better place for future generations.

### Performance Objectives

- Improved Opportunities for Children, Youth, Collegiate, and Young Adults
- Improved Incomes for Working Adults (Workforce Development)
- Increased Homeownership and Quality Affordable Living Options in East Baton Rouge Parish
- Strengthened Community-based Organizations
- Create and Sustain an Innovative Education Enterprise
- Enhanced Business Environment

- Enhanced Economic Opportunity for Minority and Small Businesses
- Invigorated Traditional and Contemporary Arts Community
- Increased State and Federal Sponsored Programming
- Enhanced, Data-driven Health and Social Services Inventory

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report was developed by a Sub-committee of 20 volunteers with different backgrounds, experiences, identities, and professions. It represents the product of general committee meetings, sub-committee meetings, conference calls, and many other conversations. ↪

The Sub-committee made recommendations focusing on structure and priorities for the division as well as programmatic suggestions. In crafting these recommendations, the Sub-committee met with the Executive Director of DHDS to discuss the effectiveness of current policies and structure. The team also engaged with other cities to gather information and best practices that are being used in other metropolitan areas. We used information from cities including Austin, Texas; Charlotte, North Carolina; Mobile, Alabama; Baltimore, Maryland; and Seattle, Washington. We had the opportunity to have an in-depth discussion with Mayor Kasim Reed of Atlanta, Georgia regarding structure and policies in areas relevant to DHDS.

The report highlights the following recommendations:

- Restructure and completely overhaul of the Division of Human Development and Services with special attention given to leadership
- Strengthen, enhance, and expand opportunities for Early Head Start and Head Start Programs
- Improve Opportunities for Children, Youth, Collegiate, and Young Adults

## DEPARTMENT REVIEW

### *Fiscal and Budgetary Status*

Status of internal budget:

1. DHDS – 100% General Fund
  - a. Current budget FY16 - \$743, 850
  - b. Requested budget FY17 - \$741, 850
2. Head Start – 100% Federal Funds – Department of Health and Human Services/Office of Head Start/Administration for Children and Families
  - a. Current budget FY16 - \$9,813,085
  - b. Requested budget FY17 - \$10,041,443
3. Early Head Start – 100% Federal Funds – Department of Health and Human Services/Office of Head Start/Administration for Children and Families
  - a. Current budget FY16 - \$1,132,340
  - b. Requested budget FY17 - \$1,098,470
4. Child Care Food Program – 100% Federal Funds – United States Department of Agriculture/Louisiana Department of Education/Bureau of Nutrition
  - a. Current budget FY16 (Oct 1-Sept 30) - \$1,344,450
  - b. Requested budget FY17 (Oct 1-Sept 30) - \$1,344,450
5. Office of Social Services – 100% Federal Funds
  - a. Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) – Louisiana Workforce Commission
    - i. Current budget FY16 (Oct 1-Sept 30) - \$1,434,860
    - ii. Requested budget FY17 (Oct 1-Sept 30) - \$1,434,860
6. Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) – Louisiana Housing Corporation
  - a. Pass through Funds – Crisis and Non-Crisis funding
    - i. Current/Requested budget FY16-17 (Oct 1-Sept 30) – approximately \$1.5 million
  - b. Administrative costs for program management
    - i. Current/Requested budget FY16-17 (Oct 1 – Sept 30) - \$329,000
7. Federal Emergency Management Assistance (FEMA) – Local Area 133
  - a. Current/Requested budget FY16-17 – varies from \$12,000-\$15,000
8. Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) – U.S. Housing and Urban Development/Office of Community Development
  - a. Current budget FY16 - \$400,000
  - b. Requested budget FY17 - \$200,000
9. Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program – Health and Human Services/Health Resources Services Administration
  - a. Current budget FY16 (March 1 – February 28) – \$4,405,300
  - b. Requested budget FY17 (March 1 – February 28) - \$4,513,210

### *Department/Agency Workforce*

Staff Allocations – 406 Total = 328 Full time; 78 Part Time

1. DHDS Administration – 10 Full Time
2. Head Start – 320 Total = 242 Full Time; 78 Part Time
3. Early Head Start – 24 Full Time
4. Child Care Food Program – 23 Full Time
5. Office of Social Services – 24 Full Time
6. Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program – 5 Full Time

Significant Recommendations:

1. Rename the division to reflect the commitment of the Mayor-President to a robust and effective division that supports healthy and productive citizens in the city/parish.  
Suggested Name: The Department of Human Empowerment and Neighborhood Enhancement
2. Update the division's vision statement to reflect a comprehensive commitment to the whole person, including living conditions.  
Suggested Vision Statement: The Department of Human Empowerment and Neighborhood Enhancement seeks to be an innovative, high-performing, and culturally sensitive public agency that utilizes data to drive outcomes which seek to ensure that all East Baton Rouge Parish residents are able to realize their fullest potential.
3. The division needs to increase staffing in order to most effectively and efficiently fulfill their responsibilities to the city-parish. Currently there is a director and a deputy director position. We are proposing maintaining those two positions as well as adding three (3) additional deputy director positions. Each deputy director would have a specific area of responsibility and oversight.
  - a. Grantwriting
    - a. Headstart
    - b. Partnerships with School Board
    - c. Partnerships with Higher Education
  - b. Deputy Director of Health and Social Services
    - a. Sponsored Programs
    - b. Healthy Baton Rouge Initiative
    - c. Ryan White Programs
    - d. Food Pantry
  - c. Deputy Director of Neighborhood Enhancement and Community Development
    - a. Community & Community Engagement
    - b. Community Development Block Grant Programs
    - c. Home Ownership Programs
    - d. Neighborhood Pride Initiatives
    - e. Code Enforcement
  - d. Deputy Director or Programmatic Performance, Innovation, and Fund Development



## Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats Analysis

### Strengths:

- **HIV/AIDS Services and Programming**  
The City of Baton Rouge manages The Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program. The program is for individuals living with HIV/AIDS who have no health insurance (public or private), have insufficient health care coverage, or lack financial resources to get the care that they need for HIV. Among federal grantees, the City of Baton Rouge meets the standards for linkage to and retention in HIV care. The city's role is entirely in grants management and does not administer direct program services itself.
- **The City of Baton Rouge's Office of Community Development (OCD)** is a current grantee of the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development's Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) Program. Baton Rouge's Division of Human Development and Services (DHDS) is a subgrantee of OCD and is tasked with providing short-term housing assistance to eligible clients referred from Family Services, Capital City Health, the HIV/AIDS Alliance for Region 2 (HAART), and Volunteers of America. This program, as administered by DHDS, provides short-term rental, mortgage, and utility assistance to low-income persons with HIV/AIDS and their families.

Both of these programs have been eligible for renewal at the end of their most recent funding cycles.

- **Early Head Start / Head Start**  
EBR Head Start and Early Head Start received 100% compliance on the Federal Triennial reviews in 2014. The Program Information Report (PIR) shows that the program is meeting key health measures, such as ensuring that all children enrolled are up-to-date on immunizations (100%) and have health insurance (99.9%).

EBR Head Start is focused on child safety. Critical safety systems including sound and 360 cameras are being installed at all city-owned facilities.

The program has strong fiscal controls. The Fiscal/ERSEA (Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment and Attendance) review conducted in May, 2016 found the program compliant with 17 of 19 measures. The two noncompliant findings were corrected in a subsequent visit and no corrective action was recommended.

### Weaknesses:

- **HIV/AIDS Services and Programming**  
Currently, Baton Rouge is ranked highest in the nation in three HIV/AIDS outcome areas: 1) highest rate of new cases, 2) highest rate of HIV progression to AIDS, and 3) highest AIDS mortality rate. Additionally,

the Greater Baton Rouge area has seen a high rate of new diagnoses among youth ages 13-24. While great progress has been made in preventing and treating HIV, there is still much to do particularly in our community. Most of our work is currently involved with the treatment of HIV/AIDS. There is limited prevention work being done because of lack of fiscal resources and public policy restrictions. The historical data demonstrates that we need to be much more proactive in this area than what we have demonstrated by just using federal dollars to provide limited services.

- **Early Head Start / Head Start**

Staffing issues are significant. The Head Start/Early Head Start program employs about 266 staff and shows a vacancy rate of approximately one-third (over 90 positions either vacant or frozen). Many of the staff, including Head Start/Early Head Start teachers, are employed on a part-time basis. Salaries for all positions, including Head Start teachers, are very low as compared to school system teacher salaries for Pre-K programs. When calculated for part-time employment, EBR Division of Human Development and Services (DHDS) staff suggests that teachers earn just over \$19,000 annually while local school system entry salaries for Pre-K are in the \$40,000 range. The program meets state licensing child-staff ratio requirements by maintaining a substitute pool that includes positions funded at 29 hours with no fringe benefits. Head Start/Early Head Start staff recruitment, retention and pay must be addressed if East Baton Rouge is to be recognized as a vibrant innovative early childhood education program.

Since 2009, Louisiana offered a voluntary 5-star quality rating system for all child care centers, including Head Start. Although some Head Start programs across the state earned high ratings (4 and 5 star), the East Baton Rouge Head Start centers are currently shown at a one-star rating, the lowest designation. While there may be administrative reasons why higher ratings weren't sought, we find it disappointing that the EBR Head Start centers did not more fully participate in this rating system in an effort to showcase the quality of the services we believe they are providing.

- **Office of Social Services**

The mission of the Office of Social Services is to "work in collaboration with governmental and community agencies to provide a variety of human economic services and activities to low-income individuals and families, thereby increasing opportunities for achieving self-sufficiency." We believe that the office could better fulfill this mission by increasing collaboration and partnerships to ensure they are not operating in isolation.

## Opportunities:

- HIV/AIDS Services and Programming  
Baton Rouge should pursue more competitive grant funding in order to provide wrap-around services to people living with HIV/AIDS. When people living with HIV/AIDS are able to maintain housing and employment and have access to treatment and care, they are more likely to have a low viral load, which not only slows the progression of the illness, but also makes them less likely to transmit the virus to others. The goal of treatment of HIV/AIDS is to reduce the viral loads to a level at which they are undetectable, at which the virus cannot be transmitted.

In addition to direct services for those living with HIV/AIDS, the City-Parish should fully invest in an education and outreach-focused campaign, the goals of which would be:

1. to educate the public on the availability of HIV testing;
2. to reduce stigma surrounding HIV/AIDS in order to help more people feel comfortable getting tested regularly, accessing pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) to prevent HIV transmission, and accessing treatment for HIV/AIDS;
3. to educate the public and providers on the availability of PrEP, a once-a-day pill that reduces the risk of acquiring HIV to zero percent excluding human error, which is available cost-free or very low-cost for most people up to 400% of the poverty line; and
4. to educate the public on the availability of treatment for HIV/AIDS;
5. to educate the public on other STI/HIV prevention methods, including the use of condoms, the practice of open communication about STIs and HIV with prospective sexual partners, and getting tested regularly to ensure one knows one's HIV status;
6. to educate the public on harm reduction methods and services available to intravenous drug users, including the availability of safer injection kits and addiction treatment services.

The focus of any public campaign should be on getting people tested and into treatment should they test positive. Effective medical treatment of HIV/AIDS is the best and most cost-effective prevention strategy, since the goal of treatment is to reduce viral load levels to an undetectable level at which the virus is not transmittable to sexual partners.

Strategic partnerships with regional and local service providers, the Louisiana Department of Health, public health NGOs should be pursued and formalized. A number of prevention/education initiatives are already underway to address HIV/AIDS in the Capital Region, and coordination is necessary to determine where

programming can be strengthened by city-parish efforts.

Louisiana Public Health Institute's HIV/STI team is working with the Capital Area Reentry Program to develop, implement and evaluate a Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) education and navigation program for young Black gay and bisexual men in the Baton Rouge area. The men who participate in the project will be trained to provide PrEP education and referrals for others in their social networks who may benefit from the medication.

It's estimated by the CDC that among African American men who have sex with men in Baton Rouge, more than 50 percent of 18 year olds will have contracted HIV by their 40th birthday. The city-parish must prioritize this issue. In order to execute an effective campaign, the city-parish should create a staff position, which focuses on HIV/AIDS prevention, education, outreach and treatment.

Atlanta, Georgia, has employed innovative community approaches to preventing HIV/AIDS transmission that have proven to be successful. We should examine their model and consider using a similar model

### • Early Head Start / Head Start

East Baton Rouge City-Parish is one of a very few cities across the country that is the federal grantee for the Head Start and Early Head Start program. East Baton Rouge parish has another Early Head Start program operated by the YWCA, the first EHS program in the city. As the Head Start grantee for East Baton Rouge Parish, the Mayor-President is uniquely positioned to lead a broad early childhood agenda that focuses on pregnant women, infants, toddlers and preschool children. To that end, we recommend that the Mayor create a Taskforce on Young Children that promotes school-readiness and family engagement. The Taskforce should include participation by the Early Childhood Care and Education Networks in the local school systems (East Baton Rouge, Baker, Central and Zachary as established by the LA Department of Education). The Taskforce should study best practices for early childhood programming with emphasis on other cities that are Head Start grantees.

The cumulative program enrollment for 2015-16 was 1,811, however the program has a waiting list of approximately 828 children who qualify for Early Head Start or Head Start services. Head Start and Early Head Start is 100% funded by federal funds. Examining possibilities for increased funding could both expand the program to serve more at-risk children and could also address the staffing issues outline above. We recommend that Taskforce study innovative funding models for early childhood including braided funding, diverse delivery/use of delegate agencies,

recommending a millage to support expanded early childhood programming, and the possible outsourcing of the child nutrition program to maximize savings.

- Office of Social Services

A number of recommendations are offered as opportunities for improvement in efficiency and service delivery for the Office of Social Services below:

1. Strengthen agency-wide infrastructure and support

It is recommended that support be made available for an agency-wide review of technology and its use for data collection and review, assessment and program evaluation and that provision be made for additional support for the following areas:

- a. Assessment -- Conduct an audit of services including Community Centers
- b. Evaluation
- c. Training
- d. Capacity building
- e. Infrastructure
- f. Sustainability

Note - Review Boston's plan for assessment and the templates used

2. Focus on service delivery: repurposing how services are "packaged, branded, marketed, and delivered" to constituents/citizens.
  - a. Following further review of best and effective practices from peer cities (Austin, Mobile, Charlotte, Birmingham), we propose the re-packaging of the delivery of services to constituent groups based on identity. For example: Seniors, Youth, Homeowners, Veterans

#### Threats:

- HIV/AIDS Services and Programming

The newly sworn-in Congress has yet to signal support in the appropriations process for continuing the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program. Threats to the Ryan White Program undermine the ability of Baton Rouge to continue its efforts in increasing access to care and improving health outcomes for people living with HIV.

Additionally, while services such as those provided under the Ryan White program are essential for meaningful access to HIV care and treatment, alone they are insufficient to overcome long-standing and entrenched social factors such as HIV-related stigma, discrimination, and criminalization. While these factors must be addressed, social change of this degree takes time to achieve.

Inadequate investment in a sound public health response to HIV continues to lead to disproportionately high new diagnosis rates and AIDS mortality in the Greater Baton Rouge area. Ultimately, unless we are able to dramatically increase our focus

and investment in reducing HIV/AIDS, we will continue to lead the nation in diagnosis rates, disease progression, and AIDS mortality.

- Early Head Start / Head Start

The HHS Administration for Children and Families, Office of Head Start, the agency responsible for Head Start/Early Head Start, began a competitive process for all Head Start programs several years ago. The EBR program is currently in the third year of a five-year program grant (2015-2019). While the East Baton Rouge program appears to be meeting all criteria, we believe that it would be prudent for the program to develop a sustainability plan designed to minimize potential negative impact in the event of any unanticipated loss of federal funding. The plan should prepare the City-Parish for any unexpected transition including property management and lease structures including requisite "out-clauses" in the event of funding changes or losses.

Act 3 of the 2012 Legislative Session made sweeping changes to early childhood programs in Louisiana. Any program receiving state or federal funding, with the exception of the Food Program, must be licensed as a Type III center that meets the accountability measures as outlined by the Louisiana Department of Education and participate in the common enrollment process coordinated by the local networks. We categorize this as a threat because in the past, Head Start has only had to focus on meeting state licensing regulations and maintaining compliance with federal regulations. This change means that EBR Head Start will now need to focus critical efforts on satisfying state accountability regulations as well.

- Office of Social Services

Considerable funding for the Office of Social Services comes from the Community Services Block Grant Program (CSBG) through a grant from the Louisiana Workforce Commission. Should the state's budget issues continue to grow, this funding could be under threat. This concern is echoed on the federal level. Should federal funding for programs be discontinued, the Office of Social Services would have great difficulty continuing its operations.

Staff morale has been identified as a recurring issue inside the Office of Social Services, which should be addressed. If turnover continues, the loss of institutional knowledge will become a major issue for the office.



# RECOMMENDATIONS

## Top Three Recommendations

1. Restructure and Complete Overhaul of the Department of Human Development and Services with Special Attention Given to Leadership. (2017)
2. Strengthen, Enhance and Expand Opportunities for the Early Head Start and Head Start Program (2018)
3. Improve Opportunities for Children, Youth, Collegiate and Young Adults (2021)

## Additional Recommendations

- Improve Incomes for Working Adults (Workforce Development)
- Increase Homeownership and Quality Affordable Living Options Throughout The Parish
- Strengthen Community-based Organizations
- Create and Sustain an Innovative Education Enterprise
- Enhance Business Environment
- Enhance Economic Opportunity for Minority and Small Businesses
- Invigorate Traditional and Contemporary Arts Community
- Increase State and Federal Sponsored Programs
- Enhance Data-driven Health and Social Services Inventory

## Additional Commentary

- It is the Sub-committee's recommendation in the segment of "...if the stars align..." that the Mayor-President begin an initiative entitled "Building a Better Baton Rouge For Tomorrow." This expands on the "Cradle to College" framework to strategically implement the following youth-focused programs that will support the goals and desired outcomes for transforming today's young people into productive citizens of tomorrow:
  - 1) The Mayor-President's Early Childhood Development Agenda
  - 2) The Mayor-President's Youth Initiative
  - 3) The M Mayor-President's Collegiate Community Action Plan
  - 4) The Mayor-President's Young Adult Success Agenda
- The effective use and expansion of Community Centers that Atlanta, Georgia established which helped to decrease juvenile crime by 25%. We believe that would transform today's youth into productive citizens for tomorrow.
- It was important to the Sub-ommittee to recommend that the Mayor-President would establish a Commission similar to the Task-Force on Childcare by the City of Austin.
- Recommend that the Mayor-President would heighten awareness of HIV-AIDS Awareness, Prevention and

testing should be the focus of this Task-Force, given Baton Rouge ranks first in the rate of HIV cases, HIV that progress to AIDS and the death of people with AIDS.

- Establish a clear partnership with the Office of Community Development for homeless assistance, fair housing and Community Partners Initiative.
- Review current service offerings and consider expansion, restructuring, or collaboration of services.

### Current Services in OSS

- a. Commodity Food Program
- b. CSBG Emergency Assistance - Rent, Utilities and Medicine
- c. Emergency Food Pantry
- d. FEMA - Emergency Rent and Mortgage Assistance Program
- e. HOPWA - Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS
- f. Income Tax Service
- g. LIHEAP - Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program
- h. Ryan White Care Act
- i. Solid Waste Fee Increase Waiver Program

### Suggested areas for growth

- a. Workforce development (expanded EmployBR initiative)
  - b. Higher education workforce pipeline partnership (workforce training, placement, and internship program)
  - c. Higher education and research partnership
  - d. Pipeline to homeownership (renters and homeless population)
  - e. Youth programs (afterschool, summer, workforce, volunteer corps, community service and revitalization programs)
  - f. Veterans programs
- Collaborate with the following Office of Community Development services:
    - a. Community Partners Initiative
    - b. Homeless Assistance
    - c. Fair Housing
    - d. Housing program

*Note - Consider conducting Town Hall meetings or open forums at the Community Centers to hear feedback from the citizens about Social Services*

- Conduct research and develop a clearly defined five-year plan to combat defined focus areas (similar to Birmingham's plan to combat homelessness).

The Sub-committee proposes that Baton Rouge defines what the key social services areas are that should be addressed in concert with the overall strategic vision and plan for the city. This would be a good opportunity to partner with area foundations, seek state, federal, and private resources, and utilize higher education partners in the city to actualize.



# INFORMATION SERVICES/TECHNOLOGY & COMMUNICATION

**Co-Chairs:** Todd Sterling, Maranda White  
**Committee Members:** Sue Lincoln, J'Michael Francois, Zac Lemoine

## SCOPE OF REVIEW

This Sub-committee reviewed the operations of the Information Services/Technology & Communication Department

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The overall goal of the of the Information Services/Technology & Communication Department is to maximize public understanding and civic engagement for the citizens of Baton Rouge through effective and efficient communication across all platforms.

The following are items the Sub-committee believes must be addressed:

- Re-brand the Information Services/Technology & Communication Department by re-naming it: City Public Information Office (PIO). The current office needs a stronger presence and the various department heads should be identified on the city organization chart to facilitate contact with the public and the media on various issues. So as not to be confusing, we suggest changing the title of these department leaders from Public Information Officers (PIOs) to Communications Directors.
- The BRGOV website should be kept current through a regular review schedule, including ensuring its ability to host open data and data-driven communication. More specifically, a new website needs to be built that is mobile and user friendly.
- Create/hire a Crisis/Strategic Management Team of local communication experts apart from City PIO staff to advise the Mayor-President.
- Review and revise communication policies and protocol to assure local SBE/DBE understand how to do business with the city and launch a marketing campaign to facilitate this communication.

## DEPARTMENT REVIEW

### *Fiscal and Budgetary Status*

The 2017 proposed Public Information Office budget of \$414,150 is .14% less than 2016.

Due to the evolution of digital media, this budget should be increased to reflect this type of citizen-preferred communication resulting in increased public awareness.

### *Department/Agency Workforce*

The Public Information Office currently shows three employees in the budget for 2017.

The committee questions the ability of three staffers to handle the workload created by a DPW reorganization, which resulted in support for six departments plus the communication responsibilities from the Mayor-President's Office, the Metro Council and other departments.

Transparency must be brought to the budget as it pertains to contracted services, which come under the communications area.

The streamlining of all communications specialists is recommended. Coordination of all local area taxing authorities for shared resources like technology and equipment, as well as an open information exchange could benefit citizens with efficient operations and increased transparency. The Mayor-President's Office should take the lead on this coalition by establishing a Communications Director to coordinate opportunities where there is a shared mission and purpose.

### *Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats Analysis*

#### **Strengths:**

We believe the City-Parish's strengths in communication have been in the broadcasting of Metro Council meetings, Planning and Zoning meetings, School Board meetings, and Library Board meetings via Metro 21. The public is given an opportunity to see City-Parish business done in real time, and also in replay format.

#### **Weaknesses:**

The committee believes the City-Parish has great weakness in the area of crisis communication and emergency communication. In both traditional media and social media, the lack of planning and execution has had dramatic effects. The committee recommends bolstering those areas.

### Opportunities:

A greater number of local firms will have the opportunity to benefit from city-generated projects if a better communication process is utilized. Additionally, the City of Baton Rouge can create economic opportunities for small and minority businesses via DBE participation.

Many times it appears the same firms are getting the lion's share of City-Parish business, as recently documented in the Baton Rouge Business Report article that noted about 10 companies are receiving \$480 million of city business.

### Threats:

The City-Parish must control the narrative by being proactive. The committee believes that the most serious issues of 2016 were inappropriately communicated. The city failed to execute a professional communication strategy during the environment created by the Alton Sterling shooting, the police officer shootings and the floods.

A Crisis/Strategic Communications team would be crucial for mitigation of issues dealing with matters of public safety and the general welfare.

A comprehensive communications plan would bring inclusiveness to activity throughout all parts of the city.

### Additional Recommendations

The Sub-committee recommends immediate action and implementation for the following:

- Review or create protocol and policies for SBE/DBE communication and establish goals for City-Parish DBE participation.
- Review communication and procurement methods for the City-Parish's creative and media placement.
- Review or create and enforce policy regarding social media presence/engagement.

The Mayor-President should review current staffing and resources dedicated to the recovery of general fund expenditures on the flood recovery efforts to ensure maximum effort is directed toward the recovery of general fund monies and the replenishment of the City-Parish stabilization/reserve fund.

### Additional Commentary

- The Sub-committee suggests the following:
- Update the City Organizational Chart to reflect the latest departmental reorganizations.
- Review City internal and external communication policies to foster collaborative and consistent messaging.
- Consider the creation of a position to help with communication flow and serve as facilitator or fixer.
- Investigate opportunities to use emerging technologies to foster better civic engagement; for example, Live Chat on BRGOV.
- Provide push notification for subscribed citizens.

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## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Top Three Recommendations

The Sub-committee recommends immediate action and implementation for the following:

1. Mayor-President to create a Crisis /Strategic Communication Team
2. Review and regularly update BRGOV.com website, including content management system (CMS), and incorporate data-driven communication. Specify individual with CMS Administrator responsibility.
3. Create a website for City-Parish work similar to that of LAPAC and LATRAC.

# INFORMATION SERVICES/TECHNOLOGY

**Co-Chairs:** Sonia Perez, Curtis Heroman

**Committee Members:** Dave Baxter, Gary Chambers, Dr. Byron Clayton, Nick Defelice, J'Michael Francios, Zac Lemoine, Sue Lincoln, Todd Sterling, Padma Vatsavai, Maranda White, Stafford Wood

## SCOPE OF REVIEW

The Operational Review Sub-committee has reviewed and made recommendations to Mayor-President Broome on the inner-workings of City-Parish government. The Sub-committee conducted an in-depth assessment of departmental function and performance, addressing issues such as organizational structure, budget, and overall effectiveness. The committees also considered issues of public policy related to department priorities and possible future areas of focus, as well as staff-related issues. The Sub-committee solicited input in the form of reports, presentations, and interviews from the department heads, staff and outside-knowledge experts as well as through research and review of national and international best practices and benchmarks.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Baton Rouge has a tremendous opportunity before it to make its operations more efficient, secure, and cost effective. The strategies, initiatives, and actions presented in this report are just a beginning point, providing a roadmap for the coming years. As a result of this review, the Sub-committee set forth several major recommendations, which include:

- Creating a Chief Information Officer role
- Consolidating IT procurement
- Investing in IT Security
- Strengthening the Open Data initiative

The primary recommendation of this committee is to create a Chief Information Officer role and consolidate IT authority, IT security, IT procurement, etc. under that role. This CIO position will help establish consistent standards and priorities, normalize costs organization wide, and protect our resources from security and privacy risks. As part of the effort to consolidate IT activities under a CIO, the city should create a centralized IT procurement budget that is managed by the CIO's department. By developing a standard IT asset management lifecycle, the city can potentially receive volume discounts and can procure and retire assets on a defined schedule, which will improve forecasting of IT costs, increase security, and decrease required resources for ongoing maintenance and support.

In addition, it is the Sub-committee's belief that once a CIO is hired and assumes proper control and authority, IT security should become a top priority for the administration. The city faces tremendous financial and legal exposure from cyber-attacks, as well as internal threats. Taking appropriate steps to mitigate these risks should be of the utmost importance.

Finally, the Sub-committee recommends strengthening the current Open Data initiative by requiring departments to liberate its data either through an executive order, or city ordinance. This step will help reduce future development costs, increase public transparency, and invigorate civic engagement.

While the current Information Systems department has done an admirable job achieving much within an imperfect organizational structure, the Sub-committee feels that by making foundational changes to the way IT operates, the city can experience exponential growth, efficiency, and productivity.

## DEPARTMENT REVIEW

### *Fiscal and Budgetary Status*

N/A

### *Department/Agency Workforce*

In most cases the city/parish is not going to be competitive with private sector IT salaries in the current market. Therefore, the department should engage in strategic partnerships and outsourcing to close voids in the employment gap.

### *Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats Analysis*

#### **Strengths:**

- Currently embracing Open Data initiative
- Deep institutional knowledge
- Collaborative approach
- Ability to do more with less

#### **Weaknesses:**

- No budget
- No authority
- No one responsible for creating vision

- No standard procurement process
- Weak security profile
- No consolidated IT standards or policies
- No established systems-development lifecycle
- No involvement of IT during planning phase of any and all projects

#### Opportunities:

- Continue to promote Open Data initiative via executive order to require departments to liberate appropriate data. Invite public to write apps that benefit the greater BR community to drive citizen engagement and transparency
- Lack of leadership, create CIO role—invest in a strategic technology leader for the city that can demonstrate the business value of IT in improving the efficiency of city government.
- Create standardized procurement policies for IT assets to reduce complexity, improve supportability, and enable the potential of volume discounts. This action will also allow IT to maintain better controls over cybersecurity threats.
- Public/Private/Higher Ed partnerships—engage in more projects with LSU/Southern to drive IT innovation in areas that benefit the citizens of EBR. These partnerships enable a low-cost/no-cost solution to staffing challenges that hold the city back from making IT an asset versus a cost.

#### Threats:

- Cybersecurity—the #1 threat of any organization. The city needs to take this danger seriously, and develop a strategy for protecting city assets, monitoring digital traffic, and responding quickly to potential attacks. Ignoring this issue could lead to the exposure of personally identifiable data, credit card data and other highly sensitive data that the city captures and maintains.
  - Example: lack of off-boarding process could potentially allow former employees to retain unauthorized access to key business systems within the city government.
- Wasting resources on having to liberate data when required—without access to public data, the citizens may see the administration as lacking transparency. The city must adopt an Open Data stance to enable transparency, and also save time and money associated with responding to FOIA requests, etc.

- Sticking with the Status Quo—Baton Rouge can no longer continue to accept the status quo just because “that’s the way it’s always been done.” The City-parish will continue to waste time and money with the broken processes currently in place, and therefore needs to centralize, standardize and authorize IT to own ALL the digital/IT assets of the city.
- Operational Continuity and Disaster Recovery (Mechanical/Physical threat to the Data Center)—the current data center sits in the basement of city hall, which is probably the most undesirable location for a data center in any organization. As the city transitions some services to the cloud, they should also consider migrating IT assets to a location that is less susceptible to flooding (both natural and through potential building issues).
- Losing the competitive edge to other cities, blocking economic growth opportunities and image issues

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Top Three Recommendations

The committee recommends the following:

1. Invest in a CIO—immediately
2. Standardize and consolidate IT and Procurement
3. Invest in Cybersecurity initiative—immediately

### Additional Recommendations

The committee recommends the following:

- Adopt an agile procurement process
- Revamp city website—immediately

### Additional Commentary

The Information Services/Technology Sub-committee suggests the following:

#### Management

- CIO Position
- Create IT Budget

#### Policy

- Cybersecurity
- Open Data Initiative

# METROPOLITAN ORGANIZATION

*Co-Chairs:* Mary Olive Pierson, Domoine Rutledge

*Committee Members:* Dianne Hanley, Trey Ourso, Tania Nyman, Kizzy Payton, Andy Batson, Preston Castille, Vicki Brooks, Chris Whittington

During Mayor-President Broome's campaign, she steadfastly held to her laudable promise to make sure that our community, both City and Parish, remained united and would not be divided. The mission of the Metropolitan Organization Sub-committee met to confer on the path forward to achieve that goal in light of the threatened repeat performance by the proponents of the attempted breakaway of the residents of the proposed St. George Incorporation put forward in 2013-2015. That effort failed for lack of support in the petition stage. As a result, the proponents were prohibited from making another effort for two full years from the date of their failure. The two years will lapse in June of 2017 and, although we have no hard evidence, we have reason to believe that they will try again at that time, although with a so-called "smaller footprint."

Since 2015, there have been some positive changes in the law. First, there is now a time limit of nine (9) months for any petition drive. Also, several strict procedural requirements have been added to any petition drive, which provide for more information to be provided by the organizers of the drive so that the public may be better (although not fully) informed about the consequences of the effort to breakaway.

Additionally, the Sub-committee reviewed two reports presented during the previous attempt to breakaway, which actually disclose the harm and consequences to all of the citizens of this parish if such a breakaway were to occur. One report was prepared by Better Together entitled: "The Impact and Consequences of the St. George Incorporation," which was first presented to a public assembly on February 4, 2014. The second report was about finances (or lack thereof) for the proposed new city. This report was prepared under the auspices of the Baton Rouge Area Foundation and the Baton Rouge Area Chamber of Commerce entitled "A review of the Finances for the Proposed City of St. George" prepared in December 2014 by Faulk and Winkler, LLC, Certified Public Accountants. Both reports are attached to this Final Report.

The Sub-committee submits to you that what was true in 2014 when those reports were prepared remains true today. Depending on the "footprint" of the possible new breakaway attempt, the consequences of such a breakaway may even be more negative this year.

Since the Sub-committee is not sure about the scope of the "rumored" drive, it is difficult to predict our exact strategy, but it was decided that the previous effort, with the help of Together Baton Rouge, BRAF, the Chamber, many dedicated City and Parish leaders and many private individuals, is definitely the way to proceed again this year. The Sub-committee has several specific plans going forward, but for strategic reasons, we do not believe that disclosure of those possible avenues is advisable at this time.

After the transition and the sunset of our transition committee, members of our Sub-committee have agreed to continue to work on keeping our City and Parish together and do all that may be necessary to achieve that goal. The Sub-committee would like to thank you for the trust you have placed in all members and this vital function during your transition. The Sub-committee members are all supportive of your goals and especially the goal of keeping our City and Parish together.



# OFFICE OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

**Co-Chairs:** Darryl Gissel, Brian LaFleur

**Committee Members:** Amanda Spain Wells, Antoine Pierce, Beverly Amador, Brian LaFleur, Chris Trahan, Chris Nichols, Christopher Odinet, Darryl Gissel, Dr. Cheria Lane-Mackey, Dr. Lue Russell, Carl Dillion, Jr., Kenya Jarmon, Rev. Derrius Montgomery, Rev. Theodore Major, Rodney Braxton

## SCOPE OF REVIEW

The Sub-committee divided into four internal groups: Flood Recovery, Affordable Housing, Homelessness/HIV, and Inter-Agency Efforts to examine existing programs and community needs. This review involved an investigation into the number of grants currently outstanding with OCD and the process by which these funds are processed and paid to grant recipients. The Sub-committee also reviewed the organizational structure of OCD, paying special attention to the essential functions of the office and the way in which personnel are allocated to execute OCD tasks. Lastly, the Sub-committee reviewed the HUD Inspector General's 2016 audit report of this office.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### *The Importance of Community Development in EBR*

The Transition Review Sub-committee for the Office of Community Development (the "Sub-committee") believes that a strong, well-coordinated, and robust community development program is vital to the future success of East Baton Rouge Parish. In light of the recent floods and in connection with ongoing issues related to declining or stagnant portions/pockets of the parish, the Sub-committee believes that the Mayor-President should be focused on creating a mechanism for community development (including the creation of affordable housing and economic opportunity) that involves long-term planning, the execution of targeted and strategic projects, and the ability to leverage various public and private resources on a large scale.

### *Community Development in EBR*

Under the current structure, redevelopment and housing efforts in East Baton Rouge Parish are spread across three separate agencies. The East Baton Rouge Public Housing Authority (EBRPHA) deals exclusively with low- to moderate-income housing through its public housing stock and through its section 8 voucher program. The EBRPHA also constructs a number of mixed income projects through its Partners for Progress, Inc. nonprofit housing affiliate. The East Baton Rouge Parish Redevelopment Authority (the

RDA) focuses on redevelopment and blight elimination, which naturally encompasses aspects of housing as a conduit for neighborhood revitalization. The RDA's programs also include the allocation of gap financing loans and façade improvement grants, the maintenance and administration of a land bank, and community planning. Lastly, the Office of Community Development (OCD), housed within the Mayor-President's office, provides a number of fair housing and public services, as well as allocates federal grants to housing and community development non-profit and for-profit partners.

Research reveals very little, if any, systematic coordination goes into the planning or goal setting of these three entities. While the Mayor-President and the Metro Council have appointments to the boards of the EBRPHA and the RDA, and the OCD is under the direct authority of the Mayor-President's office, no direction or guidance has come from past administrations seeking to steer the agencies toward creating unified solutions to achieve common goals. While there is occasional coordination (some quite significant, such as between the EBRPHA and the RDA on the Ardendale project), each entity often acts in isolation and in accordance with different development goals and initiatives even when there is significant overlap. The funding model for each of the agencies is also rather different, with some having a mix of federal and self-generated funds, and others having a mix of local, state, and federal dollars, and still others having a combination of private funds, federal subsidies, and local government grants. The EBRPHA receives its entire operating budget from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), although its board is appointed by the Metro Council. The RDA currently lacks a stable or sustainable revenue stream for its operations. It is currently funded through a one-time allocation by the Metro Council from the parish general fund, as well as through some self-generated revenue from past projects/assets. OCD has been entirely funded through federal grants except for the 2015-2016 budget year in which it received a general fund allocation of \$500,000. Currently it is not budgeted to receive any general fund dollars in 2016-2017. Based on the current staffing, OCD will deplete its funding before the end of the budget year unless it receives a supplemental allocation of general fund dollars.

## Recommendation

The Sub-committee believes that East Baton Rouge Parish and the City of Baton Rouge would be best served by a more coordinated and coherent approach to community development—one that would include revitalization, blight elimination and affordable housing efforts at its core. Rather than continue the piecemeal approach where coordination and inter-agency cooperation is dealt with on an ad hoc basis, the Sub-committee recommends a merger of agencies and resources so as to allow for bolder and more aggressive community development projects, for achieving greater administrative efficiencies, and for creating synergies that will result in the better deployment of public and private resources. With one agency tasked with creating programs that will drive development and reinvestment in our communities, neighborhood groups, nonprofits, community leaders, local businesses and residents can work with a single agency to create comprehensive plans for particular neighborhoods and areas. The Mayor-President can issue policies and direct the priorities of this agency through her appointments to its governing board and through cooperative endeavor agreements between the City-Parish and the agency.

To that end, a small number of housing and redevelopment authorities across the country have a combined structure whereby the housing and redevelopment needs of a given community are addressed by a unified agency. We recommend that such an approach be adopted by the leadership of this parish—the creation of an East Baton Rouge Housing and Redevelopment Authority (the H&RA). The H&RA would serve as an affordable housing, community development, and economic growth engine for the parish, and would be established by a merger of the EBRPHA, the RDA, and OCD. The unified agency would be able to utilize CDBG and HOME funds, project-based section 8 vouchers, Low-Income Housing, Historic, and New Market Tax Credits, and bond financing to achieve a greater impact in revitalizing areas of the parish that have long been neglected. The potential for what a coordinated approach to parish-wide development can achieve is already evident as viewed through the lens of the early stages of the Ardendale (formerly Smiley Heights) project. The project envisions mixed income housing, job training, public infrastructure and amenities, and education in a single real estate project. Under the Sub-committee's unified agency approach many more footprint/corridor-style catalytic projects will be possible.

Such projects would include or be supplemented by the rehabilitation of single-family homes for occupancy by low- and moderate-income households; assistance to first-time homebuyers; the construction or redevelopment of public facilities and amenities near affordable housing and job hubs; the acquisition and demolition/rehabilitation of

substandard properties (both residential and commercial); and the creation of a robust program for connecting youth services, employment assistance, crime prevention, health services, and homeless prevention services—all of which are frequently provided by area nonprofits who are OCD grant partners—with the ground-floor planning of new developments on a project-by-project basis. The nonprofits and entities that provide supportive services can participate in community planning meetings at the H&RA so that comprehensive plans can be tailored for the specific area discussed. Focused projects that align with the Mayor-President's redevelopment agenda can be fully funded and supported rather than have each agency devote resources in a piecemeal fashion throughout the parish.

Alongside these new synergies, the H&RA would continue to administer those traditional tasks that have been performed by the EBRPHA and the RDA. This includes the management of the EBRPHA's public housing portfolio and section 8 voucher program, as well as the RDA's land bank and loan and grant programs.

Another positive effect of the unified agency approach is that it would allow for the consolidation of back-office operations, which would ultimately achieve cost savings. As a preliminary matter, the Sub-committee offers the potential organizational structure for the H&RA as depicted on Exhibit B attached hereto. Further, the Sub-committee offers the working checklist/timeline of tasks attached hereto as Exhibit A for consideration by the Mayor-President as to how the merger/unification could proceed.

## The New Office of Community Enrichment

Lastly, the Sub-committee recommends that the existing Office of Community development be replaced with a newly created Office of Community Enrichment (OCE). This office would undertake some of the functions formerly handled by OCD, but would do so with a different focus and a more limited staff. OCE would: develop the overall strategy, action plan and priorities for community development, issue cooperative endeavor agreements with the H&RA and various non-profit homeless service providers (such as the Homeless Alliance), monitor compliance with federal and state guidelines, and aggressively seek grant opportunities.

With regard to grant administration, OCE would develop a robust strategy to identify grant opportunities (outside the normal HUD community development program) for which the City-Parish is eligible. OCE would also pass along grant opportunities appropriate for other agencies or non-governmental organizations as they may arise. Once identified, OCE would contract with outside grant writers holding the requisite grant area expertise to draft the application on behalf of the City-Parish. The Sub-committee believes that a staff person solely dedicated to seeking out



grant opportunities would be greatly beneficial, particularly in light of any future infrastructure programs offered at the federal level and a decrease in funding for the standard HUD federal program

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## DEPARTMENT REVIEW

### *Fiscal and Budgetary Status*

With the exception of the 2015-2016 budget year, OCD's funding has come from administrative dollars earned through the various federal grants that it administers. However, federal grant dollars have been declining each year. In the 2015-2016 budget OCD received \$500,000 in City-Parish general fund revenue. OCD has not received an allocation of City-Parish general fund dollars in the 2016-2017 budget. A supplemental allocation of City-Parish general funds will be needed for OCD to complete the current budget year based on its current operations.

### *Department/Agency Workforce*

OCD's staff was reduced from 30 people in the 2015-2016 budget year to 20 at the present time. The office appears to be top heavy in high-level administrators. To the best of the Sub-committee's knowledge, the staff is covered under civil service guidelines, with the exception of the Urban Development Director (the title given to the director of OCD). An audit conducted by HUD Inspector General in 2016 indicated that the staff is not properly trained, procedures needed to comply with federal grant guidelines are not in place, and the staff indicated that the working relationship with fellow staff members is often hostile and non-communicative. OCD has also suffered from a continual change in directors over the past 10-years. It was stated by several individuals interviewed that the previous administration was deliberately sabotaging OCD by under-funding and reducing its staff. This made it difficult for them to perform their jobs effectively, and work overload contributed to an unpleasant work environment that would lead to frustration and poor performance of duties. The audit reflected some of these related issues in its findings.

### *Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats Analysis*

#### **Strengths:**

The Office appears to be meeting the federal requirements (at least facially) by generating the required Five-Year Strategy Plans and the Annual Action Plans.

#### **Weaknesses:**

While OCD is generating the required plans required by HUD, the Office appears to be lacking genuine community input in the crafting of such plans. Program monitoring and grant compliance also appear lacking (as pointed out in the HUD audit).

The area nonprofit service providers with whom the Sub-committee engaged felt that in many cases they were dealt with in a hostile manner by OCD staff and that many opportunities for community enhancement were being missed. The providers also stated that they continually experienced extensive delays in having contracts issued and in receiving payment. One nonprofit provider indicated that it had over \$700,000 in outstanding invoices, a sum that makes it difficult for them to operate. In addition, OCD ranks last among local participating jurisdictions in Louisiana in the commitment and distribution of HOME funds. The Sub-committee was also surprised to learn that OCD retains project funding from Gustav, which it has yet to closeout.

#### **Opportunities:**

The Sub-committee believes that the Baton Rouge community would be best served by a more coordinated and coherent approach to community development—one that would include revitalization, blight elimination, and affordable housing efforts at its core. Rather than continuing the current piecemeal approach where coordination and inter-agency cooperation is dealt with on an adhoc basis, the Sub-committee recommends that the Mayor-President lead the charge to pull together the efforts and available resources of the Office of Community Development, the Redevelopment Authority, and the Housing Authority. The Mayor-President's election highlights the need for community revitalization. Now is the time to engage in meaningful and thoughtful streamlining and coordination in order to achieve the results we all desire.

#### **Threats:**

The City-Parish is currently working to address the issues raised by the HUD audit, which calls for the repayment of more than \$2.2 million based on the improper administration of federal grant funds administered by OCD. The audit outlines office functions and procedures that must be improved going forward. As stated above, based on its current expenditures OCD will run out of funding before the end of the 2016-2017 budget year unless a supplemental budget request is put forward or the current expenditures are cut.

The poor audit report and ongoing issues with this office has lead HUD to direct that current disaster relief funds being allocated to Baton Rouge be administered by the State Office of Community Development (housed within the Louisiana Division of Administration, under the control of the Governor). The current environment in OCD appears to be a threat to effective implementation of a flood recovery program, and it must be carefully weighed whether additional responsibilities should be given to the agency. If a locally run recovery program is

considered, it may be advisable to insulate it from OCD so as to avoid additional scrutiny by HUD or the state.

Further, HUD's rating of OCD's use of HOME Funds indicates that our community is not receiving the full benefits with which we are being afforded by this federal program. Funds not used are being lost and communities are not being served.

The poor performance of this office in processing contracts, issuing payments, and working in cooperation with non-profit providers in fulfilling their contracts poses a threat to the community as a whole—particularly the many that rely on these services.

3. The Office of Enrichment (OCE) would work with the H&RA and the existing Alliance for Homelessness (See Exhibit C) agreements to administer federal grant funds by way of cooperative endeavor.

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## RECOMMENDATIONS

### *Top Three Recommendations*

1. The Sub-committee recommends that the current Office of Community Development (OCD) be renamed the Office of Community Enrichment (OCE). The OCE would have revamped staffing which would:
  - A. Develop the overall Strategy and Action Plans and Priorities as required by HUD with special emphasis on long-term planning and meaningful community engagement.
  - B. Issues cooperative endeavor agreements with other key agencies that are working in redevelopment and housing efforts in East Baton Rouge, namely the Homeless Alliance and the newly created Housing and Redevelopment Authority. By doing so we believe administrative cost can be cut and better results can be achieved.
  - C. Provide administrative, monitoring, and review functions as required by HUD
  - D. Aggressively seek grant opportunities that may be available.
2. The Sub-committee recommends that the EBRHA and the RDA be merged into one organization named the Housing and Redevelopment Authority. (See Exhibit B)

# ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

**Co-Chairs:** Dennis Blunt, Christel Slaughter, Ph.D.

**Committee Members:** Jim Brandt, John Walsh, Cordell Haymon, Joshua Hollins, Rachel DiResto, Cheryl Teamer, Karen Khonsari

## SCOPE OF REVIEW

The Organizational Structure Sub-committee reviewed the operations of the following City-Parish departments: Mayor-President's Office and City Government.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Organizational Structure Sub-committee was asked to study the structure and functions of the Mayor-President's Office and City-Parish government with the objective of providing the Mayor-President with recommendations for improvement. This report represents the consolidation of the Sub-committee's institutional knowledge and insights on current operations as well as research regarding the best practices of governmental and non-governmental organizations around the country. The focus of the committee extended beyond the Office of the Mayor-President and City-Parish government to include the operational structures and relationships of other governmental and quasi-governmental entities who can contribute to the growth and success of East Baton Rouge Parish.

As the elected "CEO" of the parish, the Mayor-President has the opportunity to set strategic priorities and shape the future vision of the parish however, she does not have authority over many of the entities—both public and non-governmental—that play important roles in the success or failure of any parish-wide initiative. Given this reality, the committee considered how the Mayor-President and the Office of the Mayor-President could leverage their internal and external relationships to foster better coordination of public services and investments. **Recommendation 1: Foster an accessible, high-functioning local government by addressing the lack of continuity between public bodies addresses this issue.**

The unified City-Parish model is a strength that cannot be underestimated. Best practices research shows that a vibrant and growing community will not exist without downtown and the consolidated form of government has provided a growing tax base to allow for this type of rebirth and has made Baton Rouge an attractive place for business attraction and retention. Unlike many cities around the country, Baton Rouge enjoys a strong, stable financial position. This fiscal

stability is a reflection of talented elected and appointed leaders who have provided efficient public services and have created best-practice policies and procedures to create cash reserves and reduce ever-growing burdens such as unfunded pension liability.

Baton Rouge has experienced significant challenges recently and as the City-Parish (CP) continues to grow, it will be important to maintain a cohesive community and ensure that citizens have input into the fair and equitable distribution of resources. A strong planning function can play a vital role in development and redevelopment efforts across the parish and engage diverse organizations and citizens as resources are prioritized and deployed. **Recommendation 2 is based on this premise: Improve the planning function across the CP by engaging relevant organizations and the public, ultimately creating community cohesion across the CP.**

**Recommendation 3: Utilize the Mayor-President's and Metro Council's appointments to boards and commissions to address significant productivity and public safety issues and the lack of continuity between these public bodies. Investigate charter changes to increase the Mayor-President's appointment authority and work to provide alternative processes for grievances and appeals. Evaluate the role(s)/status of protected classes of the civil service, including Chief of Police.** This recommendation also addresses these structural issues and outlines the importance of working with the Metro Council to appoint individuals to boards and commissions who will be philosophically aligned with the Mayor-President's priorities. In other cities, some of these appointments go to Assistant CAOs or individuals who are part of the Office of the Mayor-President.

There are also organizational challenges that emanate from either current practice or the City-Parish Charter that can hinder the effectiveness of the new Mayor-President and her plans. For example, in the current Charter, the Office of the Mayor-President does not direct the Parish Attorney, Planning, the Airport, Animal Control, Public Information Officer, Mosquito and Rodent Abatement, Downtown Development District, EBRP Communications District, the Fire Department and Fire Protection District, Library Board and Community Centers. These entities report to the Metro Council, which is unusual and conflicts with best practices found in other areas. Since the Parish Attorney

does not report to the Mayor-President, this structure can inhibit effective and informed decision-making and policy formulation and new initiatives or projects requiring legal advice may often be delayed due to a lack of dedicated legal resources.

**Additional recommendations include:**

- **Recommendation 4:**  
Establish a “Kitchen Cabinet.”  
It is important that the CP retain our current consolidated form of government. The Mayor should appoint and convene a relatively small “kitchen cabinet” consisting of individuals representing diverse parts of our community who can function as trusted allies.
- **Recommendation 5:**  
Recognize and remedy the need for legal counsel within the Office of the Mayor-President.
- **Recommendation 6:**  
Change the charter to move the departments that report to the Metro Council to report to the Mayor-President.
- **Recommendation 7:**  
Combat blight and boost redevelopment efforts by combining the Housing Authority, the Office of Community Development and funding the Redevelopment Authority (RDA) to provide affordable, quality housing throughout the parish and to provide a base of funding for the RDA. Direct the Parish Attorney to address and update all ordinances relating to zoning and code violations to allow for fair and uniform enforcement. Grow talent and build processes in the six new departments—formerly Public Works—to better focus on achieving their individual missions.
- **Recommendation 8:**  
Implement the recommendations from the Total Compensation Study—shifting funds away from benefits to bolster the salaries of CP employees.
- **Recommendation 9:**  
A City Manager/Chief Administrative Officer’s salary should not be limited by the salary of the Mayor-President and the Assistant Chief Administrative Officers should receive market-based pay as well.
- **Recommendation 10:**  
Create an extended transition period for the Mayor-President’s Office.
- **Recommendation 11:**  
Study the need/value of a Public Health Officer or a Health Department within the CP.
- **Recommendation 12:**  
Utilize best practices research to design selection processes for large consulting contracts (over \$500,000). Outsource services when warranted, but resist using consultants to perform functions that are better provided by CP employees.

## DEPARTMENT REVIEW

### *Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats Analysis*

#### **Strengths:**

##### *City-Parish (CP) Government:*

- The unified City-Parish model is a strength that cannot be underestimated. It has allowed for growth and redevelopment of areas such as downtown, has made Baton Rouge an attractive place for business attraction and retention, and has offered a growing tax base.
- Strong, financial position.
- Unlike many municipal and County-Parish entities, our City-Parish has reduced its unfunded pension liability.

##### *Mayor-President’s Office:*

- Perceived as a “strong-Mayor-President” form of government due to budget control and processes.
- Charter spells out functions and duties of key elected and appointed officials allowing clear lines of authority and responsibility.
- Strong community-based, nonprofit, philanthropic, faith-based and economic development partners.

#### **Weaknesses:**

##### *City-Parish (CP) Government:*

- Lack of a strong planning function that can create cross-agency collaborations.
- Unfunded pension liability inhibits ability to redirect dollars to employee pay, public safety, etc.
- Citizens do not readily tax themselves for needed infrastructure improvements.
- Loose or non-existent collaboration between taxing bodies and elected and appointed officials at all levels on complex problems such as planning, blight, crime and public safety, public transportation, public education, infrastructure, etc. Entities operate in silos.
- Too little time for transition from a Mayor-President and administration that had been in place for 12 years to a new Mayor-President and team.
- There is no Department of Health in CP government.
- Sometimes rely on contractors to perform functions that should be performed by CP workers.
- Slow to adopt best practices and change to compete with neighboring parishes and growing jurisdictions in Texas, Alabama and Florida.

##### *Mayor-President’s Office:*

- Projects requiring legal advice may often be delayed due to a lack of dedicated legal resources.
- The Executive Branch does not direct the Parish Attorney, Planning, the Airport, Animal Control,



Public Information Officer, Mosquito and Rodent Abatement, Downtown Development District, EBRP Communications District, the Fire Department and Fire Protection District, Library Board and Community Centers.

- There is no one in the Mayor-President's Office who is officially responsible for the health of our community.

#### Opportunities:

##### *City-Parish (CP) Government:*

- Unify our community through collaborative processes and goals and develop a vision and strategic priorities for the next five to 10 years.
- Utilize best practices for contractor selection on projects over \$500,000 and implement a periodic review process for these large contracts.
- Outsource functions and services (such as grass cutting) to reduce cost and improve outcomes.
- Develop a community focus on children and youth, and participate in statewide collaboratives such as the Children's Coalition.

##### *Mayor-President's Office:*

- Recruit and retain top-notch talent in the Mayor-President's Office to assist and lead important initiatives.
- A strong, experienced Chief Administrative Officer who can manage CP government, freeing the Mayor-President up for indispensable duties that only the CEO of our community can perform.
- Review market compensation for unclassified staff in the Mayor-President's Office to provide recommendations for the future.
- Grow talent and build processes in the six new departments—formerly Public Works—to better focus on achieving their individual missions.

#### Threats:

##### *City-Parish (CP) Government:*

- Flood recovery
- Highest rate of AIDs in the nation, high percentage of citizens below the poverty line, high rate of chronic diseases (diabetes, etc.)
- Blight
- High tax rate created by state lawmakers
- Regulatory agencies such as the EPA

##### *Mayor-President's Office:*

- Inability to remove employees and law enforcement officers for egregious acts or significant performance problems
- Another effort to split the consolidated CP

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### *Top Three Recommendations*

1. **Foster an accessible, high-functioning local government by addressing the lack of continuity between public bodies.**

#### **Background: Coordination of Public Services and Investments**

The East Baton Rouge Plan of Government and the historical development of various public and quasi-public entities over the years to meet emerging community needs has led to a lack of focus among similarly-situated service sector entities, and often, a failure to maximize public and private sector resources. It is the strong recommendation of this transition Subcommittee that the Mayor-President leverage internal and external relationships with these service sector entities in order to foster the development of joint projects to be prioritized according to the greatest needs geographically throughout the CP. Utilizing this format, these public service entities such as the East Baton Rouge Parish School Board and the EBR Library System could establish development plans to target disinvested segments of the community for additional infrastructure development and capital projects. Those entities, along with BREC, could enter into interagency agreements to leverage spending in a manner to redevelop entire segments of the city, which would also spur private sector development spending.

#### Single purpose Governmental Entities:

- Capital Area Transit System
- Department of Transportation and Drainage
- Capital Region Planning Commission
- EBR Library System
- Baton Rouge Area Chamber
- Louisiana Workforce Commission
- East Baton Rouge Parish School Board System
- BREC Park System
- Council on Aging
- Fire Department and Independent Fire Districts

The Mayor-President typically has no direct authority over these public bodies. In some instances, the Mayor-President may have appointment authority. In other cases, there may be limited budgetary authority. These bodies, however, largely work independently of the Office of the Mayor-President without coordination or input from the Mayor or Metro Council.

During the campaign, Mayor Broome recommended “coordination of housing, transportation and social services, which have traditionally been conducted



as separate efforts to reduce duplication of efforts or worse—efforts that are at cross purposes—and lost opportunities for leveraging investments, maximizing impacts and sharing information and lessons learned.”

- In a perfect world, the number of independent public bodies could be reduced and the responsibilities of each group synthesized. The Mayor-President, however, lacks such authority. The Mayor-President may use her “bully pulpit” to drive coordination between the various public bodies.
- An initial strategy may be to hold joint meetings with the Metro Council and the executive officers of the various boards to organize these disparate bodies into a working relationship. The prestige of the Mayor-President may be needed to begin these meetings initially.
- The Mayor-President may also consider appointing a cabinet-level “Czar” to coordinate feedback between the Mayor-President’s Office and public bodies.
- To coordinate these activities, the Mayor may consider appointing one or more Mayor-President’s Outside Advisory Boards. These advisors may consist of private members of the public that may serve as advisors to the Mayor-President’s Office on a formal/informal basis. The advisory boards may be organized by issue, i.e. transportation, crime, etc. The Mayor-President’s Office may designate staff to attend the meetings of the advisory board to create a feedback loop.
- It is important that the Mayor-President appoint a strong, experienced Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) who can manage CP government, freeing the Mayor-President up for indispensable duties that only the CEO of our community can perform. The CAO’s salary should reflect their experience and level of responsibility regardless of the salary of the Mayor-President. This is true for the ACAOs as well. The well-respected International City/County Management Association (ICMA) uses the title of City Manager, County Manager and Chief Administrative officer interchangeably and clearly states on their website:
  - *In nearly 85 percent of U.S. cities with populations greater than 2,500, however, and in an additional 372 counties, there is ... a professional manager in place who’s responsible for overseeing the day-to-day operations of the community. Professional managers add considerable value to their communities, including:*
  - *Freeing up members of the governing body to develop a community vision and related policies;*
  - *Providing the expertise of a highly trained, nonpolitical, experienced professional who has the experience, administrative qualifications, and education to produce results;*

- *Providing accountability to citizens through the elected governing (individual or) body, who hire the manager as an “at-will” employee and who can fire that person at any time.*

## Challenges

- Systemic change of the organizational structure of municipal government may require a new charter or plan of government. Such a move could place the consolidated CP Plan of Government at risk of break-away districts such as City of St. George, as well as political pressure from within Baton Rouge city-proper.
- Systems and processes are needed to institutionalize local and regional coordination among public agencies such as the Capital Area Transit System, Department of Transportation and Drainage, City Parish Planning Commission, Capital Region Planning Commission, East Baton Rouge Library System, Baton Rouge Area Chamber (BRAC), Louisiana Workforce Commission, East Baton Rouge Parish School System, the BREC Park System and others. Among many other benefits, consistent coordination will reveal ways in which public funds can be leveraged and the built environment can be designed and improved to best meet the needs of all residents. The public should be engaged in actively determining priorities and allocation of public resources.

## Timeline and Action Steps

- Provide leadership to the greater Baton Rouge community by breaking down silos and convening public agency and department heads regularly to coordinate efforts and taxpayer investments—begin immediately.
- Make the City budget available in a more user-friendly format—begin immediately.
- Publish annual funding priorities, progress and current project lists by Labor Day, well in advance of budget adoption— September 2017.
- Increase investment in new technology platforms and open data tools to improve, enhance and coordinate City-wide operations, programs and services—2018.

## 2. Improve the planning function across the CP by engaging relevant organizations and the public, ultimately creating community cohesion across the CP.

Recognizing that social cohesion comprises the very fabric of community and is key to the resilience of our City, the Mayor-President and the Mayor-President’s Office should take action to unify our city and decrease

racial and socioeconomic disparities by focusing on public engagement that bridges racial divides and making equity an explicit guiding criteria for all city investments. Further, the Mayor-President should help lead flood recovery efforts that seize every opportunity to rebuild better and smarter, reducing vulnerability to future disasters, maintaining and strengthening social networks, and improving the ability of residents and businesses to connect to opportunity.

Planning is an invaluable tool in this endeavor. It can lead to a more just society, better coordination and a more balanced approach to investment that benefits all areas of the community.

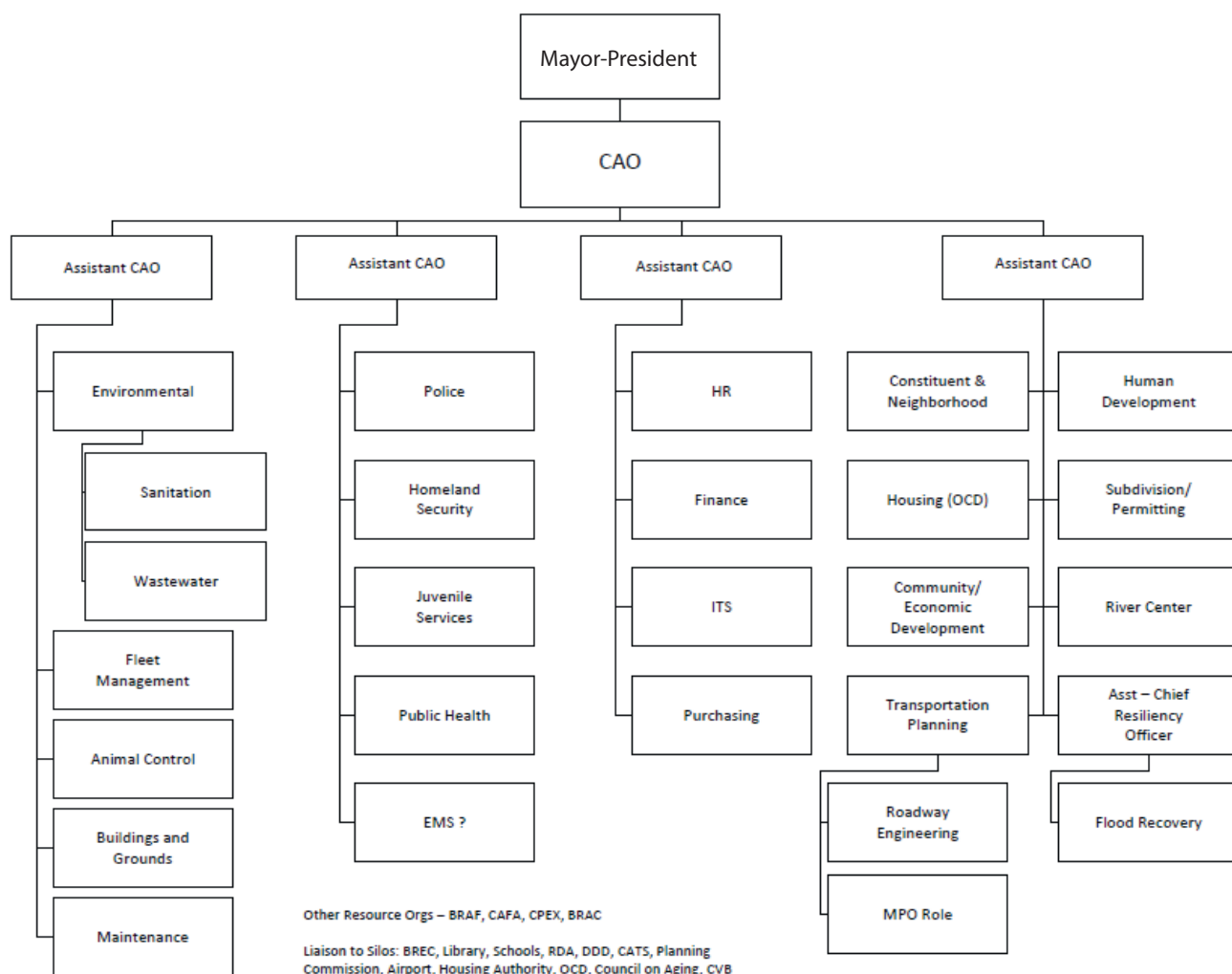
### Increase Planning Capacity

Planning plays an important role in not only improving quality of life, but also in building consensus around a set of priorities that can guide decisions and public expenditures. Without planning, politics ultimately drives decision-making. Currently the City-Parish

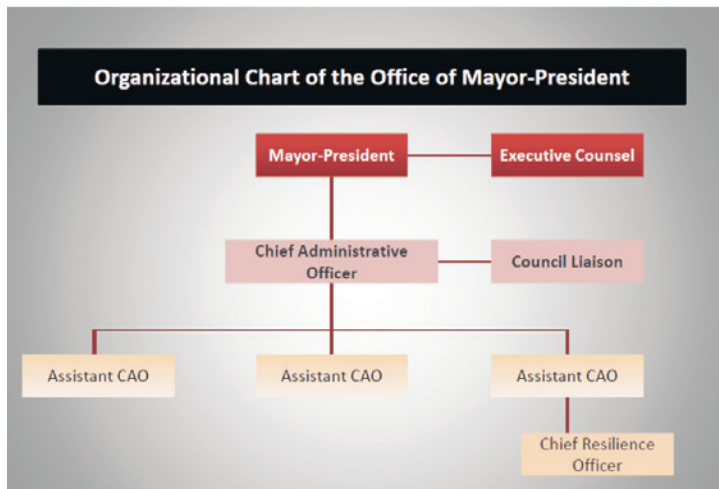
Planning Department is understaffed for a city of our size and limited in their capacity to adequately handle the review of incoming projects while also proactively engaging the public in building consensus about how Baton Rouge grows in the future. In addition, the Planning Department reports to the Metro Council through the Planning Commission creating distance between the function and the Mayor-President's Office. Here are some action steps to enhance the effectiveness of the planning function in East Baton Rouge Parish.

**2.a Position the City-Parish Planning Commission to increase impact.** Ideally the Director and staff would report to the Mayor-President. This change, however, would require a Charter change, which would be a long-term strategy.

- Utilize the Mayor-President's Office staff through the Assistant Chief Administrative Officers (ACAOs) to work directly with the Planning Department to coordinate diverse entities with related missions.



- Appoint a Chief Resiliency Officer solely responsible for developing and implementing drainage and flooding strategies that will achieve the singular goal of mitigating the risk of flooding. The chart below reflects projected changes in the staffing in the Office of Mayor-President.



- Equip the Planning Commission with the budget and staff consistent with other mid-size cities needed to anticipate future needs, provide proactive planning services and work with neighborhoods to plan for future growth.
- Provide urban design, complete streets and smart growth training to key personnel across CP departments on an ongoing basis.
- Provide information and seminars to the public to help them to understand the principles of smart growth and market demand including incentives for in-fill, vibrant downtowns and center city public spaces, mixed use developments and the challenges created by “sprawl.”
- Invest in tools that calculate the long-term costs of development and facilitate performance-based planning.
- Adopt performance measures that benchmark progress and ensure a balance of public investments to benefit all areas of the community.

## 2.b Align the Capital Improvement Plan budget with Future BR priorities and implementation.

3. Utilize the Mayor-President’s and Metro Council’s appointments to boards and commissions to address significant productivity and public safety issues and the lack of continuity between these public bodies. Investigate charter changes to increase the Mayor-President’s appointment authority and work to provide alternative processes for grievances and

## appeals. Evaluate the role(s)/status of protected classes of the civil service, including Chief of Police.

Having studied best-practices across several different cities, parishes and counties, <http://www.nlc.org/build-skills-and-networks/resources/cities-101/city-structures/list-of-consolidated-city-county-governments-.WHfZHcnXRmo.yahoo> the Sub-committee learned that although many mayors have no direct authority over separate boards, commissions and various other entities, there are expectations that all of them will follow the Mayor-President’s direction. As an example, the New Orleans Mayor appoints board members to many of these types of entities, and these appointments are made very intentionally to give the Mayor as much control as possible. In some cases, the Mayor will even appoint his own Deputy Mayors (similar to the EBR Assistant Chief Administrative Officers or ACAOs) to be members of these boards. He also expects the ACAOs to serve as liaisons to these individual entities.

In East Baton Rouge Parish, former Mayor-Presidents have experienced challenges when attempting to remove classified employees and law enforcement officers who have broken the law or have documented incidents of misconduct. These removals are often overturned by the Personnel Board and the Municipal Fire and Police Board. It is important that the Mayor-President and the Metro Council work together to place professional, objective representatives on each of these boards to enforce high standards of performance and accountability to the community.

Currently the Mayor-President has no appointments to the five-member Municipal Fire and Police Board, although the Metro Council has three appointments. The Mayor-President has one appointment to the five-member Personnel Board, the Metro Council has two and the remaining two seats are elected by employees.

Several years ago, the State Civil Service Department in Louisiana radically changed their internal grievance and appeals processes to provide more timely and better-informed hearings with trained hearing officers to significantly reduce the number of hearings at Commission meetings. While changing the appointing authority of boards and commission members and the hearing processes may require charter changes, it is recommended that the Mayor-President’s Office investigate, develop a plan, create community awareness and pursue a Parish-wide vote to amend the charter to reflect best practices from other governmental entities. This recommendation should be pursued immediately as it will require significant time and effort to ensure successful completion.

Equally important are appointments to the:

- Baton Rouge North Economic Development District
- Capital Area Finance Authority
- Capital Area Transit System (CATS)
- Capital Region Planning Commission
- Employee's Retirement System Board of Trustees
- Recreation and Park Commission

The Mayor-President has limited appointments and in some cases no appointments to these important governing and policymaking bodies.

## Additional Recommendations

### 4. Establish a "Kitchen Cabinet."

It is important that the CP retain our current consolidated form of government. The Mayor-President should appoint and convene a relatively small "kitchen cabinet" consisting of individuals representing diverse parts of our community who can function as trusted allies. This group can serve as both a sounding board for policy decisions as well as excellent sources of information about community issues from various parts of the parish.

### 5. Recognize and remedy the need for legal counsel within the Office of the Mayor-President.

There is a clear need for legal counsel within the Mayor-President's Office. The Mayor-President currently relies on the Parish Attorney for legal counsel and the Parish Attorney is tasked with a myriad of other responsibilities. In addition, the Parish Attorney's Office reports to the Metro Council potentially creating issues due to differences in priorities. Legal assistance in the Mayor-President's Office can come from two different sources. In the recent past, the Mayor-President contracted with an outside firm for legal services. That is still a viable option. However, equally viable would be a dedicated resource that functions as legal counsel for the Mayor-President and the Office that is funded and provided out of the Parish Attorney's budget. This could be handled through a contractual arrangement with the Mayor-President's Office and the Parish Attorney's Office.

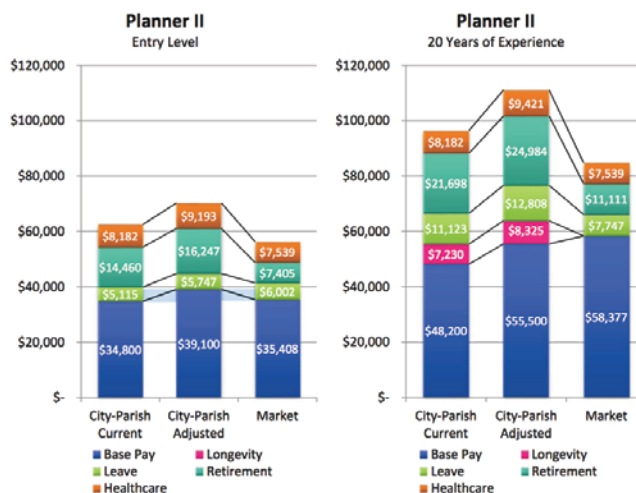
### 6. Change the charter to move the departments that report to the Metro Council to report to the Mayor-President.

Systemic change of the organizational structure of municipal government may require a new charter or plan of government. Such a move would place the consolidated CP Plan of Government at risk of break-away districts such as the City of St. George, as well as political pressure from within Baton Rouge city-proper.

7. **Combat blight and boost redevelopment efforts by combining the Housing Authority, the Office of Community Development and funding the Redevelopment Authority (RDA) to provide affordable, quality housing throughout the Parish and to provide a base of funding for the RDA. Direct the Parish Attorney to address and update all ordinances relating to zoning and code violations to allow for fair and uniform enforcement. Grow talent and build processes in the six new departments—formerly Public Works—to better focus on achieving their individual missions.**

8. **Implement the recommendations from the Total Compensation Study—shifting funds away from benefits to bolster the salaries of CP employees.** The CP offers its employees very rich benefits, however, many employees today do not value these benefits and would rather have higher base pay. Figure 15 from the 2013 City-Parish Total Compensation Study <http://brgov.com/totalcompensationstudy.pdf> is attached. It illustrates the fact that in 2013, about half of what the city paid a 20-year employee [\$48,233] is not base pay and does not go into their paycheck. It is instead paid as benefits [\$48,199] in longevity, leave, and retirement. This example below shows a Planner II who starts out with a comparable salary, but the longer they stay with the CP, the more their salary begins to lag the market range. Although the salary is lower, the CP is paying more in TOTAL compensation as the benefit costs after 20 years grow to almost the same amount as the employee's salary. The Figure below illustrates this problem and if the Mayor-President and Metro Council would adopt policies to realign benefits such as sick and vacation leave and change policies related to retirement accruals, it would shift the total spend and the CP could increase salaries to better attract and retain talented staff. (Note: Longevity pay policies were changed after this example and other changes may have been made that are not reflected in this example.)

Figure 15: Planner II, Entry Level vs. 20 Years of Experience<sup>28</sup>





Two interesting paragraphs from the report relate to how much retirees receive from the CP when they retire: “Normal Retirement Changing the Formula, Age, or Vesting Period. A primary factor that drives up pension costs and is a focus of cost cutting for many cities is the determination of when an employee becomes eligible for retirement benefits. The City-Parish has a unique plan that allows full retirement at any age with 25 years of service rather than a formula combining age and years of service. This means that a new employee who becomes employed by the City-Parish when they are 25 years old can retire with full pension benefits when they are 50 years old and could easily live another 30 to 35 years while drawing pension benefits.”

*“Pay Calculations: Closing Loopholes that Allow Spiking* A key element of the formula that sets the amount of a retiree’s monthly pension check is the employee’s final average salary. Cities differ on how far back the plan looks to calculate final salary, as well as whether overtime and sick leave can be counted.

*The City-Parish, as well as a number of other cities, has allowed workers to include overtime, unused, and even unlimited unused sick leave or unused vacation time to boost or “spike” their final average salary that is generally used to establish their level of benefits. Some public organizations find supervisors and employees creating late-career promotions to increase salaries shortly before retirement. The Pew study notes, “The shorter the periods used to determine final salary, the easier it is to bump it beyond normal levels. More cities are tightening how final salaries are calculated because they can have a surprisingly*

*large effect on the size of the pension.” Memphis calculates the benefit over the last five consecutive years and Atlanta does not allow overtime as part of the calculation. The City-Parish calculates the benefit over the highest three years.”*

- **A City Manager/Chief Administrative Officer’s salary should not be limited by the salary of the Mayor-President and the Assistant Chief Administrative Officers should receive market-based pay as well.** Study salaries of similar municipal governments in order to bolster recruitment and retention of top-tier talent.
- **Create an extended transition period for the Mayor-President’s Office.** The existing transition period is too short. It is virtually impossible for the incoming Mayor-President to fully craft her goals and implement a strategy in such a short period of time. A change to the transition period would require municipal legislation.
- **Study the need/value of a Public Health Officer or a Health Department within the CP.** Examine the availability of external foundation funds that could make this revenue-neutral to assist the CP to combat chronic diseases like diabetes and rising levels of heart disease, cancer and AIDs.
- **Utilize best-practices research to design selection processes for large consulting contracts (over \$500,000).** Outsource services when warranted, but resist using consultants to perform functions that are better provided by CP employees.



# PUBLIC SAFETY

**Co-Chairs:** Rep. Edward “Ted” James and Don Cazayoux

**Committee Members:** Brandon Williams, C. Denise Marcelle, Dan Lennie, Kenny Pointer, Louis Reine, Mark Dumaine, Chief Danny Edwards, Mary Jane Marcantel, Reginald Brown, Carolyn Reed, Marcie Blaize, Joe Delpit

## SCOPE OF REVIEW

Public Safety Sub-committee reviewed the operations of the following City-Parish departments: Fire, Police, EMS, and Juvenile services as they relate to Mayor-President Broome’s highlighted priorities on public safety.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Over the past several years, East Baton Rouge Parish and the City of Baton Rouge have been faced with several public safety challenges, organizational shortcomings and communication barriers between agencies. Dwindling or stagnant government funding has halted and limited most every agency’s ability to address and improve staffing issues, structural deficiencies, and general community needs. Despite the prevalent difficulties, East Baton Rouge continues to provide excellent City-Parish public safety services, upholding the positive integrity and reputation of the capital city.

The Baton Rouge Police Department handles some of the city’s most difficult and controversial public safety matters, while juggling the challenges of a limited street patrol staff, outdated fleet vehicles, a dilapidated prison facility, and technological inadequacies. Despite these challenges, the police department has found successes with minority officer recruitment and retention within the department and has thrived in implementing and maintaining the BRAVE program initiatives in high-crime areas. The Baton Rouge City-Parish murder rate is lower than it has been in years, and community events, such as Boo with the Blue, have proven effective in increasing positive community-department relations.

Baton Rouge Juvenile Services is seeing tremendous results in its efforts to provide pre-detention interventions for high-risk youth in our community. The juvenile justice reform has enabled juvenile officers to better serve our community’s youth by reducing caseloads and providing alternative rehabilitation programs rather than punitive approaches to juvenile delinquency. An approaching challenge for Juvenile Services will be the additional juvenile jurisdiction of 17-year-old offenders. This influx of cases will likely add strain to the office’s already limited resources; however, the

department leadership is taking proactive approaches to prepare for the changes in administrative responsibilities. Emergency Medical Services in Baton Rouge has fared well over the years, with its main challenge being that of vehicle maintenance turnover and the absence of an extensive employee mental health program. EMS has high-quality technology resources and highly trained individuals that provide excellent service, both in emergent situations and everyday patient care through program initiatives such as Community Paramedicine. As it pertains to Baton Rouge public safety, EMS is thriving in many areas, but is seeking to improve services by adding vehicles and manpower. This expanded capacity has proved challenging to attain in the past few years due to budgetary constraints

The Fire Department has deservedly met and maintained a number 1 rating for the past several years, despite its setbacks in limited technology usage and funding to support necessary maintenance of facilities and equipment. While minority staff recruitment needs to be a continued commitment, the Baton Rouge Fire Department has continued to exceed the minimum manning requirements, per industry standards. The department has done well with community engagement and working with other agencies, such as Juvenile Services, to benefit the community in ways that exceed their standard scope of services. The Fire Chief heaped deserving praise for the efforts of his employees during an extremely challenging year; his employees were called on to work long hours providing heroic efforts during the historical flooding, even while many were forced to deal with the catastrophic destruction of their own homes.

The Public Safety Sub-committee’s overall suggestions to Mayor-President Broome include fostering a relationship and open communication lines between the mayor’s office and that of law enforcement in the City-Parish; encouraging community-agency engagement; supporting funding initiatives that allow for the hiring of new personnel and purchasing new and needed equipment; advocating for our youth through allocation of resources and time; and investing in technological improvements and advances. This committee believes in the potential of our community to overcome the numerous public challenges and to, in turn, set the standard in the state of Louisiana. Through ongoing collaborative efforts with the Mayor-President’s Office, it is

possible that the public safety agencies of City-Parish will meet and expectations as well as create a legacy of excellence in public service during this administration's leadership. contractor.

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## DEPARTMENT REVIEW

### *Fiscal and Budgetary Status*

See below

### *Department/Agency Workforce*

See below

### *Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats Analysis*

#### **Strengths:**

- **Police Department**

The Baton Rouge Police Department has had successes in the reduction of the crime rate, specifically, the number of murders in the City-Parish. The youth group association and violent crime involvement has been decreased in high-crime areas by the BRAVE program, which continues to prove to be a viable and effective program. Minority recruitment and retention through the academy's program has increased and maintained higher numbers in the past few years.

- **Juvenile Services**

The department of juvenile services has undergone substantial changes with juvenile justice reform. It has reduced its officer caseload from over ninety children per officer to approximately thirty-five children per officer. Additionally, it has significantly reduced the detention rate through the risk assessment instrument (RAI) which focuses on whether the child is a safety or flight risk. Services, such as the Evening Reporting Center, have also been a very effective tool in reducing delinquency.

- **EMS**

The department is finding successes in several areas, including a pilot program it initiated called Community Paramedicine, in which house visits are made by paramedics in an effort lower the number of calls and transports for less urgent medical needs. Through this program, medics help patients find local primary care physicians that can treat the patient on a regular basis to avoid frequent EMS transports and unnecessary ER visits. The costs for this program have been offset by funding through insurance companies such as Blue Cross Blue Shield, Humana, and Medicaid.

- **Fire Department**

The Baton Rouge Fire Department has met and maintained a No. 1 rating in the 1-10 ranking system of fire departments that is based on the ability to

provide adequate and exceptional fire protection to its jurisdiction. Additionally, the Baton Rouge Fire Department's minimum manning numbers are higher than any other department in the state.

#### **Weaknesses:**

- **Police Department**

There have been communication and coordination issues between the City and Sheriff's office resulting in a less than optimal public safety approach parish-wide. Additionally, aggressive measures targeting street crimes by officers were erroneously labeled as part of the BRAVE initiative, undermining the intervention piece of the BRAVE initiative. Recent local and national events have strained relations between police personnel and the public at large. Thus, highlighting the need for a different approach to community policing. A fleet maintenance and replacement plan has not been followed, resulting in a costly, aging and inadequate fleet. The outdated detention center is unsafe and does not fill the housing needs of the parish's prison population, costing the parish a significant amount of money per year to house EBR prisoners outside the parish. Complications in verifying warrants in a timely manner has caused ongoing difficulties in the arrest and booking processes.

- **Juvenile Services**

The juvenile services administration facility has been housed in a temporary trailer for 15-20 years. The department is in need of a new and larger office space to handle daily operations and programming more efficiently. Similar to the East Baton Rouge Prison, the East Baton Rouge Juvenile Detention Center is also outdated and unsafe for the youth confined there. An additional challenge will present itself as the jurisdiction over seventeen-year-old offenders is vested in the Juvenile court system, as it will increase the caseload of offenders in the juvenile system by twenty to thirty percent.

- **EMS**

Baton Rouge EMS is in need of employee mental health programs to assist medics with coping with day-to-day work stresses, PTSD, and other mental health burdens that can arise from workload, call volume, and/or the nature of certain emergency response situations. Additionally, the EMS department is challenged with slow maintenance turnaround in its fleet vehicles, as the department has to outsource maintenance requirements such as preventative maintenance and emergency repairs. When vehicles are out of commission in the Department of Public Works repair shop, the number of operational vehicles is limited, therefore limiting the number and range of responses to emergency calls.

- **Fire Department**

The Fire Department's fire fleet is not fully equipped with GPS/GIS software and/or tracking devices, nor does the department have an online or computerized

scheduling system. These two technological setbacks hamper the ability to perform at the highest capacity. The department should undertake increased efforts to recruit and maintain minority fire fighters.

#### Opportunities:

- **Police Department**

1. Social media usage—to expand outreach to the community, quell negative messages or incorrect data from other media sources, and increase positive message output.
2. Community policing and involvement—continue to engage and foster relationships with civilian community members to build trust, reliability, and cooperation with, from, and to the police department in efforts such as community events (Boo with the Blue, Cops & Kids Camp). Expansion of the BRAVE concept beyond the two high crime areas currently under BRAVE would increase community involvement and overall public safety.
3. Misdemeanor Amnesty Day—similar to the existing traffic amnesty day, the implementation of misdemeanor amnesty day would allow individuals charged with lesser offenses the opportunity to go before the DA's office to expunge criminal records.
4. Communication—improved communication and collaboration by the leader of the City-Parish with the District Attorney's and Sheriff's office could help alleviate the usual tensions between these equally vital aspects of public safety in East Baton Rouge Parish. Improvements on these communication lines will improve relations within and between the community, the police department, and all other public safety agencies in the city.

- **Juvenile Services**

Community Resources—increases in the number of resources available to the juvenile services department would allow for more individuals and families to be served (i.e. HiSET and work-force prep programs)

- **EMS**

1. Expanding capacity with three additional vehicles and twenty-four new employees, as the budget increases will allow the community to be served more effectively.
2. Community Paramedicine—expand and improve current program benefitting community members with special health and resource needs

- **Fire Department**

Training opportunities—seek and implement ongoing training programs for fire department staff as it pertains to emerging community needs, disaster response and recovery, maximizing manpower and equipment.

#### Threats:

- **Police Department**

Funding appears to be a threat to public safety as it pertains to the Police Department and Juvenile Services. The ability to fulfill the need for more manpower for the police force and juvenile services under current resources is questionable at current funding levels. Likewise, the need for major capital investment for a new adult and juvenile detention center and for fleet improvement in the police department is paramount and dependent on a funding source not yet ascertained.

- **EMS**

EMS is threatened by the need for additional manpower and vehicles, especially when maintenance of current vehicles lessens the number of trucks available for use on the streets. With a call volume of 61,000 calls per year, the EMS is in need of additional vehicles and staff to adequately service these calls.

- **Fire Department**

A decrease in revenue from the flood's effect on millages has caused some challenges within the department. The trucks on duty now need to be on a path to replace one or two per year to avoid costly maintenance as they age.

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## RECOMMENDATIONS

### *Top Three Recommendations*

1. **Community Engagement**

Best practice cities ensure that community engagement is integral to the jobs of every officer as well as having community engagement units and activities. These cities are the that have made it through recent difficulties with members of the community, including faith-based representatives, working together with police to address community problems. The Sub-committee has found through research and hearing from key representatives within the Police Department and District Attorney's Office that community policing is proven effective when consistently implemented. The top recommendation from the Sub-committee is that community-policing tactics (BRAVE, Cops-Clergy programs, officers "walking the beat" and engaging with people in neighborhoods, and special events held within the community by law enforcement) need to be continued and encouraged as a consistent, measurable practice. "Community police" should become more than an inspirational statement and evolve into the culture of the department. In terms of involving the citizens with public safety initiatives, the Sub-committee recommends the development and implementation of Community Advisory Committees that work with the police to address specific community concerns, such as done in High Point North Carolina Community Against Violence. As expressed by the Chief of Police, Baton Rouge would greatly benefit from having



a committee in which representatives from every district or neighborhood meet on a regular basis to focus on the latest on EBR law enforcement, public safety and citizen participation.

## 2. Staffing

One of the major issues EBR law enforcement faces with combatting public safety threats is the limited number of uniformed personnel. Of the 650+ police officers, less than half are assigned to police units on street patrol. While the uniform patrol division is the largest division of the department, with several sub-divisions within (i.e. housing, mall patrol, etc.), the high incoming call volume facing street officers interferes with the community policing tactics that are encouraged as part of their daily assignments. A separate staffing recommendation from the District Attorney's office calls for the creation of a law enforcement position tasked with managing intervention programs for newly-released prisoners to aid with the successful transition back into society and to help reduce recidivism. Additionally, the District Attorney believes staffing a resource officer at the booking departments within the prisons can help with the identification and assignment of arrestees based on group affiliations, religious practices, or the need for special services, such as mental health, to reduce the costs and increase the efficiency associated with the booking procedure. Best Practice cities also have sufficient on-the-street police resources to do both call response and community outreach or prevention.

## 3. Capital Improvements

Budget shortage is a challenge faced across the entire public safety spectrum. One of the more pertinent budget recommendations is to update, rebuild, and expand the East Baton Rouge Parish Prison due to an overcrowded population and outdated facility. The inability to house all of the East Baton Rouge inmate population is costing the City-Parish a significant amount of money. The juvenile detention center is also completely outdated and does not provide a safe environment for offenders or victims. With the Police Department, the annual budget increase to replace and repair the police car fleet has been denied in recent years, costing the department more funds in maintaining the outdated and worn down vehicles already in use. The District Attorney's Office suggests additional funding for staffing specialty groups such as a crime strategy unit, along with purchasing of vital crime-fighting equipment such as shot spotters, crime cameras, and license plate readers.

## Additional Recommendations

- **Budgetary Flexibility**—Department Heads need more  
**Crime Cameras**—The District Attorney recommends the encouragement of local business owners (such as

convenient stores, hotels, motels, etc.), to implement the usage of crime security cameras along their buildings. This recommendation comes as a result of successful outcomes with business owners in certain parts of the community that have already installed and have begun using crime cameras. In addition to posting the cameras, making their presence known with visible signage identifying the cameras in use and making available any pertinent footage to law enforcement when requested is also recommended.

- **Internal Affairs Protocol**—State civil service law currently dictates the protocol that the department is required to follow in handling a complaint or disciplinary action regarding a police officer employed by the department. Amendments to the civil service law regarding the internal affairs protocol could allow for more efficient processing of complaints and/or disciplinary action.
- **Investing in our youth**—Investing into the lives of our local youth now can help to reduce crime in our parish in the future. Virtually each investment made in our juvenile system had paid significant dividends. Today's juvenile crime rates are 25% below those from 10 years ago. A significant part of this reduction has been achieved by a greater focus on juveniles, including our Family Youth and Services Center, Truancy Center, and our Evening Reporting Center. Just like with the police department, more significant reductions could be achieved through increased juvenile case worker staffing and improved data systems.
- **Data driven policing**—Best practice cities collect, analyze, and share their policing data for transparency and for crime strategy development. Recently, data was released in Baton Rouge showing greater marijuana crimes enforcement in economically depressed areas of the city. What was not shown was the related staffing of police resources. When data is only presented by the presenter and not in a manner that can be verified by others, conclusions drawn from the data can suffer. Baton Rouge has a great advantage in its open data platform but insufficient data is being collected to provide the citizen with information. The District Attorney's Crime Strategies unit has shown that through the use of data crime can be reduced by as much as 70% in high crime areas through the development and implementation of law enforcement strategies that address the "who, why, and when" of crime. Best practice cities are moving forward from analyzing and responding to historical crime data to responding immediately to data collected in Real Time Crime Centers. Baton Rouge has many of the tools to follow these cities in development with little additional funding needed.

- **Post-release programs**—Virtually every Baton Rouge citizen convicted of crime will return to the streets of our city after serving time. Some of the lowest hanging fruit in crime reduction can be grasped by providing resources to assist these individuals with their transition back to society: with housing assistance, job assistance, identification and expungement assistance, and mentoring.
- **Prison Improvements**—Our prison system is outdated and bordering on cruel and inhumane. This needs to change and some of the cost of these changes can be accrued by reducing our parish prison population through more effective pre-trial screening for mental health and substance abuse along with the resources to support those afflicted. At least 33% of the prison comprises these individuals.
- **Monthly Meetings**—Monthly meetings should be implemented that are open to the general public. Hosted by the local districts, the meetings should be used to discuss and educate the public on police activities, department concerns, receive community input, etc.

## Additional Commentary

- **Technology Integrations**—Continued technological advances present opportunities and challenges in the Public Safety arena. Investments in this area should be pursued across the spectrum of public safety functions, with particular emphasis on an integrated or universal platform, which allows information sharing between departments and agencies.
- **Civil Service Rules**—Recent discussions have produced several recommendations to take a deeper look at these provisions. From the seniority system of promotions, to the ability of the chief to discipline or move officers, the current civil service rules have been discussed as an area for additional review. Other jurisdictions have used metrics regarding education, training, community engagement, and other performance measures as a basis for promotions.





# PURCHASING & PROCUREMENT

*Co-Chairs:*

Ron Smith, Jack Whitehead

## SCOPE OF REVIEW:

The Purchasing & Procurement Sub-committee met with various City-Parish employees, and management consultants, and conducted independent research for best practices with similarly situated governmental entities throughout the Deep South.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Sub-committee arrived at a list of simple goals: what helps Baton Rouge create a more positive environment to do business with City-Parish Government.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

What follows is the Sub-committee's collective recommendations for the Mayor-President's review. There should be an immediate review of the director's position and serious consideration given to the opportunity to create co-director roles (Operations Director and Administration Director).

- There should be a high-level directive from the Mayor/ CAO to the Co-Directors of Purchasing to ensure that the Directors of Purchasing has a commitment of constantly obtaining broad competitive bids at every level of purchasing. This must include purchases below the \$5,000 level, purchases from \$5,001.00 to \$30,000.00, in which the buyers have great discretion. It should also include purchases where the amounts are greater than \$30,000.00, and require sealed bids and/or counsel approval.
- There should be an immediate review and commitment to speed up the implementation of the new computer software that would allow or enable the purchasing department to rapidly bring the entire department online.
- There should be a position created entitled "Fair share Coordinator." This position should report directly to the Mayor President and it should ensure that for every purchase made by the City-Parish government, there is the opportunity for women owned, minority owned and disadvantaged businesses to participate in the purchasing process. This position should also ensure that proper notices be given to trade organizations, internet sites, media outlets, and any other reputable business source that would house information of qualified potential minority vendors, women owned vendors, or disadvantaged vendors.
- The Office of Purchasing should develop a flow chart on its website that should show the steps followed for a potential vendor to use in responding to a solicitation from the City-Parish.
- The Office of Purchasing should publish a flow chart on its website outlining the steps that a potential vendor would go through if that vendor wanted to protest the process in which it attempted to solicit business from the City through the Office of Purchasing.
- The Office of Purchasing, through the Director, should capture a complete list (from all City-Parish agencies) of all vendors used. This list should be maintained by gender and race.
- There should be monthly meetings with the Directors of Purchasing, the Director of Finance and the Parish Attorney, to determine time tables for approvals for any and all contracts in which the Directors of Purchasing submits for approval.
- The Directors of Purchasing should segregate and remove from the regular purchasing staff all functions of annual contracts and consider having those functions done by one section in the Office of Purchasing. The annual contracts should be maintained, reviewed, and developed by its own separate staff.
- The Fixed Asset Management System should be reevaluated for adequate staffing and positive cash flow from asset sales.
- Vendor Performance Metrics should be established and shared with all departments on a quarterly basis.
- Human Resources must develop and implement performance evaluations shared and implemented with all Purchasing Department employees with semi-monthly summaries delivered to the CAO.
- The Committee notes that the Purchasing Staff lacks professional training that is readily available through nationally recognized sources.
- There should be more community outreach on a quarterly basis by a staffer, i.e. Fair Share person allowing the public to interact in order to educate them.
- An Electronic Signature system should be implemented (with any necessary legislation presented this Legislative Session) to avoid the paper log jam throughout City Parish Government.
- The Mayor-President should appoint a similar Committee to continue as an Advisory Committee with oversight responsibility for implementation and independent reporting to the Mayor-President to ensure that the appropriate recommendations are in progress and the City-Parish Leaders develop unabashed confidence in Purchasing Department

## **SECTION: 2**

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### **COMMUNITY INPUT TRANSITION TEAMS**

# ARTS, CULTURE & LEISURE

**Co-Chairs:** Fairleigh Jackson, Walter “Geno” McLaughlin

**Committee Members:** Adrienne Moore, Casey Phillips, Jody Hanet, Megan Matt, Kathy Victorian, Melanie Couvillion, Mary Joseph, Jill Hackney, Xero Skidmore, Sam Corso, Renee Chatelain, Marcus Robinson, Luke St. John, Robin McAndrew

## FOREWORD TO THE FINAL REPORT

In Louisiana, our greatest asset and export is that of its people, spreading our unique, world-renowned art and culture internationally. Southeast Louisiana, along the I-10 corridor and extending outward, is the cultural epicenter. Our French, Cajun, Creole, and African origins have made for a flavor pot of gumbo, the fruit of that fusion being the things we are most known for: food, music, art, dance, photography, film, fashion, technology, architecture, design, and language.. So often, we underestimate the impact our culture has because it is difficult to monetize. But take it away and you lose the spirit of a community. Take it away and you lose the young people, whom we’ve spent a generation educating, but can’t find the inspiration to stay because of lack of jobs and no outlet for their energy. You lose the entrepreneurs and creatives who work to build, beautify, and uplift the neighborhoods in which they live. A 2015 study published in *Economic Development Quarterly* concludes that art and culture aids cities, irrespective of metro size, by attracting “knowledge class” talent and growing the economy. For instance, the authors found that the presence of just one professional performing arts organization, as is the case in Baton Rouge, can lead to an additional 2,500+ jobs and upwards of \$200 million in annual employment income, with over \$300 million dollars in annual economic impact. On a local level, we should take note and begin an intentional march towards a progressive community that highlights the very best we have to offer.

Baton Rouge, Louisiana, is a rapidly growing metropolitan area, but one still in search of an identity. An hour to the east is New Orleans, the hallmark of all things culturally distinctive in our state, and a shining example of how the creative class can benefit from city-wide artistic awareness and policies. The Crescent City does a masterful job of both defining and exploiting the image it wants to promote to the world. Travel an hour to the west, and you are in Cajun country, with Lafayette as its hub. This area is the home of Zydeco music, line dancing, trail rides, and some of the best local cuisine in the country. Unique and authentic, the region is vibrant, embracing its selfhood, while providing platforms to showcase its talent and individuality.

And situated somewhere in between is Baton Rouge. Ask around and you will get varying responses as to who we are: the seat of government and the state capitol of Louisiana; a college town, home to the state’s flagship university in LSU, and a historical black college in Southern University. And yes, we love family, food, and football, but none of those things equate to an identity that will attract and retain millennials, or excite the imagination of onlookers. However if you peel back the layers, the one thing overlooked by most is the untapped pockets of creative, pioneering and independent spirits, who are presently making their communities into enviable spaces worthy of duplication. Our commodity is our people. We have long articulated our desire to follow the blueprint laid out by metro areas, like Austin and Nashville, but have failed to execute a strategy to deliver on this promise. At 200 years of age, this city embarks on a new era, with a new mayor, emboldened by a mandate to deliver her vision of unity, diversity, and equity. And a gateway to achieving this goal is through the prism of our very reflection—our art and culture. A 2014 study published in the journal, *Urban Studies*, found that mayors, arts and cultural policy makers, and economic developers would be better served by taking a more localized, place-specific approach to arts initiatives. In their words: “[A] comprehension of arts clusters requires specificity and particular attention to the uniqueness of the type of art and place itself. Targeted local development may be the most important means by which to support the arts, rather than broader, federal, state, or regional efforts. Distinction between arts clusters occur at localized level and thus ought to be supported as such.”

Our approach as a committee was to ask ourselves how we can use art to solve societal, environmental, and economic issues. We believe our underlying work will answer many of these questions. We have laid out a multitude of policy proposals ranging from increasing the number of bike lanes and trails, to the pouring of resources into North Baton Rouge and other areas long starved of access to existing art programs, creative spaces, and leisure opportunities. We have identified no less than two areas prime for cultural district designation, complete with artist live/work spaces, co-ops, and rehearsal/ exhibition areas. We will outline below how usage of historic tax credits can lead to the restoration of buildings throughout these communities,

and believe that a reexamination of how city-government addresses issues faced by these communities is needed. Cultural opportunities abound throughout OCD, HUD, and RDA and those cross-sector opportunities should be explored. It is imperative to recognize the role art can play in revitalizing and reinvigorating entire neighborhoods. It should be seen as an economic driver, which could impact downtown and uptown alike. A perfect example of this can be found in ArtWorks Cincinnati and their public art murals. Lastly, we see this new Mayor-President advocating for a creative and performing arts high school, similar to NOCCA in New Orleans, to help signal a shift from the S.T.E.M. model to S.T.E.A.M., one inclusive of the arts. This school would create a pipeline for professional artists in the city, and empower the next generation of artists to become a part of this new movement, while staying home to further nurture it. A mechanism for implementation of these recommendations has been outlined, and we see an Art and Culture Ambassador, as well as an advisory committee, as critical to the success of these endeavors. We ultimately hope to position Baton Rouge as a haven for the independent arts and technology community, and in concert with Visit Baton Rouge and other organizations, seek to champion events and initiatives to that effect.

As we stand at the intersection of our past, present, and future, East Baton Rouge Parish is poised to take its place amongst the great cities in our country. By declaring who we are and controlling the narrative, we shall, with one voice, assert ourselves as a safe space for artist professionals and entrepreneurs.

“Send us your risk-takers, creatives, your independent thinkers, yearning to breathe free. The cut-off and discarded of distant shore. Send these, the doers, the makers, to me: I lift my lamp beside the golden door.” – (inspired by the sonnet, *The New Colossus*, by Emma Lazarus)

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Sub-committee met several times as a full committee and as sub-topic groups. The Sub-committee divided itself into eight main groups to cover the scope of work outlined by the Mayor and the committee. The subtopics included Access, Support for Cultural Professionals, Diversity, Support for Cultural Organizations, Best Practices/Roles/Promotion of and by Local Government, Leisure, and a Survey & Final Report Committee.

Beyond evaluating the current state of our topics using our own expertise and experience, the general committee, comprised of arts and culture professionals and engaged community members, initiated a survey to collect feedback from the general public collecting data and input from close to 530 community members. The responses accurately reflected what the committee had identified and proposed

as related to our current landscape. Overall, while an overwhelming 92% of respondents feel arts and culture are integral to the quality of life in metro cities, the following was expressed: access to arts and culture in our schools is considered poor; access to our cultural institutions and diversity within our arts and culture community is decent; support for cultural professionals and organizations is seen as poor. The role of City-Parish government appears solid, until we identify the large amount of funding going to a small number of organizations over a long period of time. On a positive note, 89% of respondents would support a more robust granting program from the City-Parish—people view creative placemaking as a way to reduce blight and other community issues. Diversity within arts, culture and leisure was a common topic of concern in the areas of access, arts in education, diversity of mediums, and geography of programming.

If we want to be a 21st Century City, entice new businesses, retain talent, improve the living conditions of our children, live healthy lifestyles, and preserve our unique stories, we have to shift our mindset to realize that arts, culture and leisure is an actual need of a community. Access to these vital aspects of quality of life and forces of change are key to thriving communities, social change, innovation, and revitalization.

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## BACKGROUND AND VISION

### *State of the Issue*

City-Parish support and engagement in arts, culture, and leisure seems to reflect general community engagement and support. It is lacking in diversity, and seems to operate on a model of support developed years ago that has not been reevaluated to mirror changes in the sector, in support for the sector, community needs, and does not reflect an understanding of the positive economic impact of arts and culture on our community and economy. We have seen a dramatic increase in the number of arts organizations in our area, an increase in the number of individuals served; yet funding has not adjusted to support the organizations. This lack of financial support is consistent with state and national trends, yet local funding allocated to organizations in the past through today has not been evaluated to ensure it is impact-driven and fairly allocated. Four large organizations receive the bulk of funding totaling \$1,310,280, while only \$50,000 of that amount is re-granted in a competitive grants process open to all of the more than the almost three dozen organizations in the community eligible to receive funding. In other words, four entities receive 96% of the city's arts and culture funding (a five-year summary of contributions from the general fund can be found following the final report). It is estimated that an additional \$24.66 is spent with each ticket sold to a cultural event (babysitter, parking, dinner, drinks, etc.). If we take annual ticket sale numbers from Manship



Theatre alone (24,533), we see an economic impact of \$671,851 for 2016. Using data collected by the Arts Council of Greater Baton Rouge, support for arts and cultural sector can be estimated as an amount of only \$.07 per person.

When we compare ourselves to our near neighbors and comparable cities, we fall far short of support for our arts and culture. For example, Lafayette, with significantly less population, and less arts organizations, allocates \$70,000 to regranting as opposed to the \$50,000 allocated to regranting in Baton Rouge. Creative placemaking has swept our nation with the result of more active, more creative, diverse, and revitalized communities. However, a critical component of these successful endeavors is a brick and mortar anchor—live and/or work spaces with retail for creative professionals. In many areas, this is achieved by incentives provided by the city varying from specific tax credit benefits to establish such creative hubs, or by donating property within creative communities.

Our near neighbors explore creative ways of supporting arts, culture and leisure while we remain stagnant in this area. New Orleans implements a percent-for-art-program not much different from our statewide incentive to incorporate art in new structure development. The city has invested in brick and mortar projects such as Art Egg and Bell—providing spaces and retail for creative professionals.

In summation, the current support mechanism of our arts and culture lacks leadership in both government and on the nonprofit level, fails to evaluate regularly, and does not reflect the current landscape. As a key part of quality of life, and often a key component in the decisions of corporations, businesses and individuals to relocate or remain in our city, arts and culture needs to be treated as, the economic driver it is. Further, the potential and role for arts, culture and leisure to assist in reducing crime, blight, food deserts, etc. should be taken seriously and thus considered as a component of solutions across various segments of government. Communities with thriving arts and culture require an effective Arts Council, and that entity's success relies greatly on support from, collaboration with, and accountability to city government. Due to decreased funding over the last several years on the state and federal level, amid corporate departures from philanthropy, the Arts Council has been hampered in its traditional and ideal role as a service provider focused on regranting, identifying and connecting public/private partnerships, creating and maintaining a community cultural site for tourism and economic development, providing marketing and other professional development opportunities for artists and arts organizations, and working with educational/ faith-based/social service and other groups to seek creative solutions to pressing issues. One main concern is that for various reasons, whether in seeking revenue or simply the preference of previous leadership, the Arts Council has taken

a role of presenting, rather than existing, to support arts organizations and artists. The committee identified several roles (common in most metro city arts councils) that have been neglected: professional support, promotion of arts and culture, professional services, a community calendar, a roster of arts organizations and artists, and the collection and dissemination of data regarding arts and culture in the community, to name a handful.

### *Major Initiatives Underway for 2017*

In reviewing the approved budget for 2017, and after discussions with City-Parish staff members (no longer employed), our committee fails to see anything noteworthy as major initiatives underway for 2017. Based on information provided, the budget remains unchanged from the following several years, still providing a large amount of funding to only a handful of organizations (for some projects that are not even in existence at this point) and the amount of funds designated for reallocation remains unchanged and disappointingly low.

### *Proposals for New Initiatives*

While this scope of work covers a broad spectrum of services and the daily lives of our community members, the Subcommittee has identified several new initiatives that are needed, realistic, in line with best practices, and can result in a return on investment by the City-Parish as evidenced in similar practices in execution in various communities across the country.

- The City-Parish will designate a staff member as community liaison to fulfill the duties of communicating with organizations and entities within the city requesting funds from the City-Parish. This person should have a knowledge of the needs of the community, the need for frequent evaluation of funds contributed to organizations within the community, the fiscal health of these organizations as recipients of funds, the return and impact of the investment, and should keep in mind collaboration and cross sector initiatives.
- The City-Parish should appoint an on-going arts, culture, and leisure committee to act as a liaison to aforementioned staff member and the arts, culture, and leisure community. The appointed committee should meet regularly (quarterly) with the Mayor-President and the designated staff member to review issues, needs, and successes regarding arts, culture, and leisure. The committee should serve in some capacity as checks and balances of the granting process including the allocation process administered by the Arts Council. The committee would also work with EBRPSS to bring to the forefront issues of access to arts in our schools.
- An increase in funding for regranting purposes is needed, and possible with reallocation of funds already designated. It is the committee's consensus in reviewing



the current fund distribution to arts and culture organizations that a more fair and diverse allocation is possible with the existing funds allocated. Beyond the 2017 fiscal year, the committee recommends an extra allocation with committee oversight to the Arts Council to provide more services to support the tradition role of an arts council as a service organization. This includes in-kind contributions the city can make to benefit arts and culture such as waiving parking fees and decreasing rental fees for city buildings such as the River Center. It is the opinion of the committee that a goal of increasing funding to be regranted should be increased by a minimum of 50% in 2018 and beyond.

- Implement incentives for investing in arts in creative placemaking initiatives– including brick and mortar incentives (donating city-owned property or providing monetary/tax incentives to developers) to create live work retail space for cultural professionals. This starts with the city maintaining an accurate inventory of potential spaces. Houston is a great example of city government adding incentives to creative funding mechanisms to increase the number of affordable studio spaces, housing options, and increased retail space for their creative community. National models include spaces developed by Artspace, which provide concrete examples of how cities can participate in creative funding strategies to initiate such change. These brick and mortar projects benefit the community by revitalizing areas, providing space for creatives, reducing crime, and eliminating blight, to name just a few. Such a project would also help greatly with the retention of our creative professionals. Potential partners in this endeavor include the Mid City Redevelopment Alliance, C-PEX and possibly BREC.
- The Sub-committee recommends an approach to creative cross-sector recurring funding that engages and utilizes the resources of other aspects of City-Parish government. The committee and individuals designated above would be key in facilitating such discussions. For example, dollars allotted in the DPW budget for paint to cover graffiti or other acts of vandalism could be reallocated to arts organizations engaging professional artists and youth in creating murals in our communities. Law enforcement could actively engage with arts organizations doing work in crime challenged communities to create more trust and meaningful relations with citizens.
- The Sub-committee recommends that the city advocate for sources of recurring funding for arts and culture, and adopt incentives that benefit the arts and are supported by the private sector. For example, Lafayette is exploring a rental car tax that would benefit arts and culture by providing a revenue stream to be allocated to their grants program. Such a program puts the burden of the tax on visitors as opposed to residents. New Orleans has

a percent for arts program similar to the state, which allows a percentage of dollars spent on renovations to be spent on art. The program is made possible through funds generated by one percent of eligible municipal capital bonds. Such a practice is recommended, and an additional incentive on incorporating art to private developers is recommended.

- The Sub-committee recommends the creation of a “Cultural Pass” that makes arts, culture, and leisure more accessible to our youth and educators. For example, youth under the age of 18 years old and educators could visit the library and check out a week long “Cultural Pass” that would provide them and three guests free access to transportation that would deliver them to identified cultural venues/spaces (i.e. museums and BREC facilities) and grant them entry to such spaces at no charge. New York City has a similar program for School Leaders. Such a program would increase access to the arts and increase diversity in those who are able to benefit from arts and culture.
- The Sub-committee also recommends an evaluation of current cultural districts with consideration of expansion and the addition of districts to include more diverse areas (in race, socio-economic and geography). Many successful communities across our state such as Arnaudville and Farmerville have revitalized and transformed communities through the use of cultural districts, especially due to the benefit of historic tax credits for the renovation of structures. We suggest one entity (possibly the Arts Council) should act as the connector for the districts, pooling resources for guidance and promotion.

### *Opportunities for Partnerships and Collaboration*

In discussing how various entities have received funding from the city in the past, it became evident that there is a lack of procedure and process. This impedes the potential for great partnership and collaborations. With a point person to facilitate all grants and support for community projects, there is more potential for collaboration among organizations as well as sectors of the City-Parish government. The partnership mentioned above between the DPW and an arts organization is a perfect example. The “Cultural Pass” initiative listed above is a perfect example of creating partnerships and sharing funding for a program that has multiple benefits to the community. Further, dollars could be allocated to multiple organizations to support creative placemaking initiatives that would benefit and revitalize communities (i.e. a farmers market) that occurs every Saturday in tandem with an arts market, a faith based community, and mural painting. Funding could come from various sources to fulfill various needs at once creating a more wide-reaching and measurable impact. BREC is a natural partner in connecting arts, culture and leisure. An inventory and plan to maximize underutilized spaces

managed by BREC should be executed with arts, culture, and leisure at the forefront. The national landscape is a tough one for funding for the arts, so the most profitable partnerships would be with private entities and those businesses who benefit with revitalization of their communities. Support for such projects would be specific to the area and focus. A partnership with entities such as BRAC is crucial, and the city's support and advocacy for such partnerships is key.

### *Fiscal and Budgetary Implications*

The committee is sensitive to the budgetary restrictions facing the new administration and to the fact the 2017 budget is set. The impact of our arts and culture is one that is measurable and tangible. As noted, we suggest an immediate review of the current allocations of dollars to arts, culture, and leisure and the exploration of reworking the outdated allocation to be more diverse and improve impact. While the committee agrees the Arts Council has serious work ahead to become more of a service organization, the most efficient and effective model remains one where funding is provided to the arts council for both regranting to cultural entities and for the council to provide services that directly benefit organizations and individuals advancing arts and culture in our community. It is the opinion of the Sub-committee that a goal of increasing funding to be regranted should be increased by fifty percent in 2018 and beyond.

### *Department/Agency Workforce*

The committee recommends a staff person within the Mayor-President's administration to be the point person for all community organizations, working directly with the committee for Arts, Culture, and Leisure. Such a process would increase collaboration and organizational effectiveness, eliminate funding duplicate services, and provide for measurable impact. Our ideal scenario would be a staff member dedicated to Arts, Culture & Leisure who works directly with the point person for all community organization funding.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### *Top Three Recommendations*

1. Committee appointed with assignment to Mayor-President team member (Immediate)
2. Re-evaluation of current funding with Mayor-President Mayor-President team member, committee (Within 2 months)
3. Discussions with other departments regarding collaboration with Mayor-President team member, committee members and representatives of other departments (Immediate, within 2 months completed)

### *Additional Recommendations*

The committee recommends the following:

- Review of all recommendations with Sub-committee chairs, appointed committee, Mayor-President and appointed team member (Within 3 months)
- Implement "Cultural Pass Program" discussion with stakeholders to increase access to arts, culture, and leisure (Within 3 months)
- Locate properties as candidates for brick and mortar space for creative placemaking initiatives and begin comprehensive inventory (Within 3 months)

### *Additional commentary*

This Sub-committee is incredibly grateful to tackle the plans of our city's Arts, Culture & Leisure. Many hours were invested in collecting data, deliberating realistic goals and plans, and compiling information for review. This document is the start of a strategic, thorough, and ongoing process where the city supports our vibrant cultural and leisure scene with the input of dedicated community members, creative professionals, and organizations. The hope is to meet with Mayor Broome and her team as soon as possible to review this Sub-committee's initiatives and proposals in person. Again, thank you for the opportunity.

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & ENTERPRISE

## *Co-Chairs:*

Donald R. Andrews, Rolfe McCollister

## *Committee Members:*

Dezmion Barrow, Peter Breaux, Will Campbell, Camille Conaway, Jennifer Fowler, Fran Gladden, Trey Godfrey, Jennifer Harding, Edmond Jordan, Ben Marmande, Davis Rhorer, Theo Richards, Robert Schneckenberger, Deborah Sternberg, Mike Stubblefield, LaTanja Silvester,, David Thompson, Elliot Temple , Keith Tillage, Kyle Zeringue

## SCOPE OF REVIEW

This Sub-committee considered the state of the City-Parish's economic development efforts as well as support for businesses of all types and sizes. The team assessed how Baton Rouge, specifically through City-Parish government, can continue to increase its standing as a nationally and internationally recognized site for new business location and existing business growth. The team considered how the City-Parish could better support large businesses as well as small and emerging businesses. The team discussed issues that include, but are not limited to, the City-Parish's existing economic development efforts; the capacity to attract and retain businesses of all types and sizes; how to increase minority business access to City-Parish contracting opportunities; how to expand the focus on workforce development; and the promotion of Baton Rouge to a wider audience of businesses and economic development opportunities.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

East Baton Rouge Parish/City of Baton Rouge is at a pivotal crossroads. Our local economy has seen successful growth over the past few years, including throughout the national recession. We have benefited from a strong state-led effort to attract new industries to our City-Parish and continue to capitalize on the significant investments made into our higher education system for engineering, computer science and software development. Further, Baton Rouge had the foresight to make strategic investments in its downtown, which has been a catalyst for additional improvements essential to attracting new industries and the next-generation workforce required to diversify our economy and become a high-quality place to live/work.

As a result of these accomplishments and leveraging our low-cost value proposition, Baton Rouge has been able to validate its position as a viable location for digital media, advanced shared services, innovative manufacturing, expanded agricultural technology development, global water solutions, and bio/pharma related to obesity and diabetes. However, our progress and opportunity to advance this momentum

is at risk and we must rally behind a bold new vision that creates opportunity for our entire city.

Prior to 2016, a national survey of working professionals funded by the Baton Rouge Area Chamber (BRAC) determined that Baton Rouge was "fairly unknown" to "completely out of mind." Unfortunately, the events that occurred in 2016 placed Baton Rouge in the national spotlight and in a less-than-positive way. In addition, we are faced with a State budget situation that underfunds our efforts and reduces our competitiveness for jobs that will diversify and grow our economy.

The Economic Development & Enterprise Transition Sub-committee was comprised of a diverse group of professionals, all bringing a unique perspective to the group. The Sub-committee heard from a number of respected professionals and was able to discuss the issues that needed to be addressed to achieve greatness. While we did not come to consensus on every item, one thing rang true to all—"Baton Rouge must make a renewed commitment to Economic Development both financially and with its time and focus. We must aspire to be truly great and recognize that being good enough is no longer good enough." Our city needs a strong and bold vision that we all can rally behind—one that can bring people together to attract economic opportunity to our city and allow our citizens to start up new businesses, build companies and compete for high-paying, quality jobs in a diverse set of emerging sectors.

Community development in North Baton Rouge is critical to address the needs of our city. There are a number of strategies that can be developed and executed in this neglected area, but there is no need to re-create the wheel. There are examples throughout the country of underserved areas coming back through special taxing districts and other programs. North Baton Rouge can benefit from these examples to become a national success story that will only raise our profile throughout the country.

In addition, the quality of place in Baton Rouge should be a priority for the Mayor-President's office. For far too long, Baton Rouge and surrounding areas have allowed their neighborhoods and corridors to become blighted,



embarrassing eyesores to not only the residents of our great city, but also visiting business executives that perceive the poorly maintained areas of our city as an indicator of crime and low quality of life. This is directly under the control of the Mayor-President and should be low-hanging fruit to enforce our development codes, ensure accountability from City-Parish government agencies responsible for trash pickup, roads, curbs, gutters, intersections, etc., and leveraging our premier higher education resources, including the number-one-ranked landscape architecture school in the U.S. at LSU, to create a master development plan to make Baton Rouge a beautiful city that attracts businesses and their employees..

As part of this commitment to taking Baton Rouge to the next level, the City-Parish must evaluate where its funds are being invested and choose to reallocate funding to efforts that receive a higher return. One of the areas recognized as a valued resource in the community is the work that the Baton Rouge Area Chamber (BRAC) does as the “economic development arm” of the City-Parish. Recognizing that BRAC’s efforts generate an average of \$10.42 on every dollar invested, the Sub-Committee recommends the Mayor-President consider increasing the investment in BRAC to support the recruitment of new companies to the region play an important role on behalf of the City-Parish in number of the initiatives outlined in this report.

The Sub-committee recognizes that our city is facing the headwinds of reduced state-level funding and a national image issue with companies and the future workforce we are seeking to attract. To mitigate our exposure here, Baton Rouge will need an aggressive marketing campaign to not only educate our citizens on the tremendous potential our city can realize, but to improve awareness amongst executive decision-makers that our city is a great place for business and offers a high quality of life. This will neither be cheap nor will it come easy, but we must act on these opportunities to ensure our community will fulfill its potential.

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## BACKGROUND AND VISION

### *State of the Issue*

While economic development efforts in East Baton Rouge Parish have been successful in the recent past, including victories such as IBM, CB&I, and Brown and Root, the parish must continue to diversify its economy and improve its national perception. In order to compete with peer and aspirational cities, East Baton Rouge must continue to pursue a variety of economic development projects, while also working to improve its infrastructure and maintenance, repairing its national image and ensuring that the Parish’s workforce and talent pipeline remains strong. Ultimately, the goal is for Baton Rouge to be viewed as a vibrant capital city, which is a business-friendly location capable of growing and

attracting talent because of its quality of life and abundance of professional and personal opportunities.

In order to successfully achieve that goal, the City-Parish must recognize and aggressively address issues of education, quality of place, and business climate. Baton Rouge and surrounding areas have been neglected for far too long, and while still an attractive location for new investment, the city is not executing to reach its full potential. Our low-cost alternatives for labor, real estate, transportation options and utilities and strategic location for manufacturing are attracting strong projects, but those will not propel the city into the next generation of great cities. These strong projects typically mean higher wages for Baton Rouge, but not the high wages that our competitor or aspirational cities are attracting. To get there, Baton Rouge must make an aggressive commitment to re-branding and getting in front of key decision-makers to effectively pitch the city’s unique value proposition. At the same time, the City-Parish needs to prioritize to ensure that when executives visit, they are greeted by a clean and well-maintained city with beautiful corridors, exciting entertainment options and features attractive to emerging growth industries that we are targeting in an effort to diversify our economy.

### *Major Initiatives Underway (in this area) for 2017*

#### *Workforce Development and Recruitment*

Both nationally and locally, workforce availability is one of the major hurdles businesses face. We realize that alignment between the educational/training provider and local businesses is of paramount importance: efforts are underway to ensure that Baton Rouge schools and secondary institutions prepare local students to successfully enter high-wage, high-demand jobs upon graduation. One major goal is to increase access to and quality of workforce development training by providing timely occupation and industry growth information to relevant stakeholders, facilitating public-private partnerships between businesses and area colleges and universities, and leveraging area workforce development entities to increase access for all students.

In addition, we realize that the attraction and retention of these well-trained individuals is a growing concern. Our universities are key to attracting young people from around the nation and around the globe. East Baton Rouge has an out-migration of individuals aged 25 to 34, with a lower in-migration for the same age range. Emerging talent tends to look for growth opportunities in a place that’s interesting, diverse, inclusive, and open to new ideas and change—Baton Rouge must embrace these factors to attract and retain this demographic. We also must provide good careers and support those who wish to create start-ups. The ultimate goal is to create a program to attract and retain talent.

## Business Attraction

EBR and BRAC are currently engaged in a multifaceted plan to attract new businesses from a variety of industries to East Baton Rouge. The plan is based on both advantages provided by state programs and tax structure, and local assets, such as local colleges and universities, high-quality hospitals and medical research centers, proximity to the Mississippi River, and others. Working closely with Louisiana Economic Development (LED), maintaining strong relationships with site selection consultants through area familiarization tours and other events, and attending conferences and trade shows throughout the country continue to provide economic development project leads and wins for the Parish. However, the City-Parish will be limited in 2017 and future years due to State funding being cut for promotion (Tier 1) and product development (Certified Sites Program). In addition, with reduced commitments at the State level, the City-Parish will have to take a more aggressive position in attracting companies via increased investment to allow for efforts that showcase our city and generate a high ROI. Local incentives are more common and our competitors are stepping up their game in this area. Free land, performance-based grants, tax abatements, etc. are part of our competitive landscape. BRAC has proven its ability to effectively model the economic impact and recommend aggressive incentives based on a positive payback, but the City-Parish must recognize and remain committed to being competitive where it makes sense and in a timely manner.

## Business Retention and Expansion

Through BRAC's business retention and expansion (BRE) efforts, the City-Parish can successfully gauge common obstacles that local businesses of all sizes face, as well as connect these businesses with public or private sector partners that can provide assistance. In addition, the data and feedback collected from business retention and expansion visits is tracked to better gauge the local and state business climate. While this effort has been strong in recent years, the City-Parish is attempting to align and deepen the way in which it target businesses for visits, specifically so that it may assist local small and minority-owner businesses. The City-Parish's BRE efforts must continue to focus on companies that have the most impact on our economic base. These are not companies that are service oriented and site their locations based on demographics, economic statistics, etc. (i.e. retail operations). BRE is focused on companies that show high growth potential and generate revenue/wealth by selling >50% of goods and services outside of the region. The City-Parish has worked hard to retain many companies in recent years, but has lost them due to education, workforce or quality-of-life issues, to places like Nashville, Charlotte and others. Baton Rouge must

commit the resources needed to improve the city for all that live and visit.

## Proposals for New Initiatives

Over the course of four meetings, several themes emerged from the Sub-committee members. While these may or may not constitute "new initiatives," these four themes denote a desire for a new direction or renewed focus on economic development in the City-Parish. (Specific new initiatives are outlined in the "Recommendations" section below.)

***Make Economic Development a Major Priority:*** Economic development must become a major priority in the parish. Without high-quality jobs and growth, we will not be able to overcome the systemic challenge of poverty and emerge as the next great American city. More resources—financial, time, and human capital—must be devoted to growing and diversifying the City-Parish economy. The "Recommendations" section below outlines possible ways to renew a parish-wide focus on economic development.

***Concentrate Economic Growth Throughout the Parish, Including North Baton Rouge:*** It is time to target our resources on North Baton Rouge. Without growth in all areas of the parish with opportunities for all people in the parish, the city cannot be truly successful. A unified, comprehensive approach is needed to revitalize underserved areas of the city, including North Baton Rouge, and move the City-Parish forward into the future.

***Better Leverage of Economic Development Resources:*** We must better leverage the multitude of entities, assets and resources for economic development across the City-Parish in both the public and private sectors. More often than not, individuals and organizations are doing important work in silos, potentially duplicating effort, but certainly missing opportunities to build on one another's strengths to maximize impact. The Mayor-President's Office should lead coordination across these entities through a strategic, comprehensive plan for economic growth that includes visionary goals, short-term actions, metrics for accountability and an implementation process.

***Flood Recovery:*** We must build back better after the Great Flood of 2016. Federal and state dollars will begin flowing into the parish this year to local government, schools, businesses and homeowners. The City-Parish must use this opportunity wisely, not just to restore areas to their status before the flood but also to take specific action toward a comprehensive plan for economic growth.

## Opportunities for Partnerships and Collaboration

Throughout the discussions in the Sub-Committee, there were repeated calls for more collaboration to maximize the City-Parish impact on economic development. (See the



“Recommendations” section below for more details.)

In brief, important projects, such as the IBM re-location in downtown Baton Rouge, rely on partnerships across the public (federal, state and local) and private sectors and even with institutions of higher education. This is a model that should be replicated in attracting businesses. We need to operate as one team as a City-Parish, pooling all our resources.

Across East Baton Rouge parish, especially in North Baton Rouge, a number of local public entities are involved in re-development and revitalization, ranging from BREC to RDA to the new Baton Rouge North Economic Development District. The Mayor’s Office should call for partnerships across the public sector, which will be increasingly important to have a real impact, rather than sporadic progress.

Recognition of the need for regional collaboration with neighboring parishes was also an important point that arose in a number of discussions. With mobility, our success is their success and vice versa.

### **Fiscal and Budgetary Implications**

Following the recommendation to increase the City-Parish investment in economic development to be in alignment with our peer and aspirational cities will demonstrate the Mayor-President’s commitment to becoming more aggressive and investing taxpayer dollars in areas where the city earns a high rate of return. In addition, we recommend dedicated funding towards a sustained marketing campaign that effectively educates our citizens on the tremendous potential and positive elements of our city and markets nationally to reach decision-makers in targets that we have identified as being well-aligned with our overall value proposition.

### **Department/Agency Workforce**

Because the City-Parish contracts the functions of economic development to a third party, this section is largely not relevant for the Economic Development and Enterprise Sub-committee. That said, the Transition Team does recommend the Mayor-President consider delegating the function of economic development and/or workforce development to an Assistant Chief Administrative Officer or appointing a liaison for economic development within the Office of the Mayor-President. (See “Recommendations” section below.)

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## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Sub-committee gathered recommendations in several ways. First, more than a dozen presenters addressed the group in three public meetings. Second, all Sub-committee members were asked to identify their top priority in our second meeting, which is recorded in list form in the Appendix. Third, individual Sub-committee members were

provided by the co-chairs with a recommendations template, to which several responded with details on their own suggestions for the Mayor-President. (See the Appendix.) Finally, the Sub-committee worked in small groups and in a full-group discussion to flesh out and prioritize recommendations.

Rather than identify only three top priorities, the Sub-committee decided as a group to categorize a number of recommendations within three priority areas, outlined below.

### **I. Create and Expand Economic Opportunity in the City-Parish**

*This category cuts across many of the Mayor-President’s areas of interest provided to the Sub-committee, and members offer the policies and strategies below to create and expand economic opportunity for all in the City-Parish.*

- **The City-Parish should invest additional resources for economic development.**  
After evaluating the ideas and objectives advanced in this report, the Mayor-President and Metro Council must decide which aspects they wish to pursue and then invest the necessary capital to execute the plan to achieve success. Based on peer cities, and what responsibilities are designated, it will require a substantial increase. If the Mayor-President decides to maintain the current model whereby economic development functions are outsourced, this increase would support the effective execution of a more aggressive and comprehensive effort, which would further enhance the successful delivery on goals, metrics, accountability, and public reporting. With economic development and high-quality net new jobs being a priority for growth in our parish, dollars in the budget would be prioritized and possible federal and foundation grants should be pursued. In addition, all agencies or nonprofits that receive money for economic development should be evaluated for outcomes and fulfillment of their mission and “return on investment.”

The City-Parish via BRAC has seen its funding cut in 2017 by the State via Tier 1. LED does not envision that this money will be restored for several years, if at all, due to the State’s financial problems. This funding supported critical functions including but not limited to marketing, outreach, training, travel, Baton Rouge familiarization tours and lead generation, all to promote the City-Parish and the Capital Region to targeted companies and industries. Further, the State has cut the Certified Sites program, which covered 75% of the cost to make a site “shovel ready.” Consultants and companies move at the pace of business and don’t have time to complete due diligence, incur additional cost or delay their critical path for construction. Since we are competing globally,

having a site “ready to go” is critical, as our competitors have done an excellent job creating a portfolio of sites that meet company demands. That said, Louisiana is fourth in the nation for Certified Sites and the Capital Region has more sites certified than any other parish. However, our competitors are gaining on us every day and we should strive to be number one in everything we do.

Under the current model, BRAC has implemented and will be seeking to accomplish very aggressive goals for the City-Parish. This includes addressing quality of place, transportation, education and workforce—all things that are critical to the city’s future success. The Mayor-President should consider doing everything within her power to support efforts that enhance our quality of life and education, as those are the most often cited areas of weakness that expressed by companies and consultants.

- **The Mayor-President should consider appointing a liaison for economic development within her office.**

Because of the importance of economic development, the Mayor should be the number one salesperson for EBR. As for dealing with the day-to-day, the Mayor may choose her Chief Administrative Officer to serve as that liaison with the outside contractor. This role would allow for an official point of contact with guidance, insight and oversight over economic development funding and programs. This individual could also coordinate with public, private and nonprofit sectors on economic development (and could designate an Assistant CAO to serve as a surrogate at times to work with other organizations).

- **The Mayor-President should continue to prioritize the revitalization of blighted and underserved areas of Baton Rouge, including North Baton Rouge.**

There was widespread consensus in the Sub-committee that developing these areas of town should be a top priority. There are blueprints, ideas and resources being applied already, such as the newly created Baton Rouge North Economic Development District and the recently completed Fregonese study on the Plank Road and Florida Boulevard corridors. These plans and effort must be closely coordinated by the Mayor-President’s office to achieve maximum effect. Various Sub-committee recommendations touch on this topic in the report. Several of the discussions indicated Southern University and the airport located in this region as major anchors (assets) to assist in the revitalization efforts for this area. The University Center for Entrepreneurial and Economic Development at Southern University supported by the Economic Development Administration (EDA) has provided workshops and conferences in support of economic development in North Baton Rouge. The Metro Airport and its industrial park (with its

tax advantages) should be marketed aggressively and packaged with other City-Parish and state incentives to attract tenants and new jobs. They should also consider having additional Louisiana Certified Sites approved for the park, establishing economic development districts in specific areas, including Howell Place, and possibly advanced by the RDA on the old Earl K. Long hospital site, which is owned by the City-Parish. The current North Baton Rouge incentive passed by the Metro Council has not been effective thus far and has not been used once to date. This idea should be re-evaluated and made user friendly. We will continue with aggressive downtown development and inner city development.

- **The City-Parish should seek to foster an entrepreneurial ecosystem, which should start with better coordination of existing resources for small business and raising awareness of these opportunities in the public.**

There are a number of incubators, technical advisors, and other such resources available to entrepreneurs and small businesses, but they frequently operate in silos that may be hard to find. Not only do they operate in silos, but also frequently have overlapping activities that could be better coordinated for maximum impact in the ecosystem. Again, it was suggested that there be an evaluation of those in the eco-system funded with public dollars to determine if they have been effective. If not, that funding should be terminated. It can be money saved or re-directed for another purpose. The Research Park Corporation has created NEXUS-LA with federal grants and is currently populating an Innovation Ecosystem Portal ([www.nexus-la.org](http://www.nexus-la.org)) that will serve as a resource for entrepreneurs and those who serve them in the region. BRAC assisted NEXUS-LA in mapping the entrepreneurial ecosystem and continues to work together to expand assistance to small business and start-ups as part of its BRE efforts. The NEXUS-LA portal currently includes resource providers, capital providers and events—all with very specific search criteria available so entrepreneurs can pinpoint resources that meet their specific needs. The administration should participate in these efforts not only as a resource for best practices regarding economic development and funding, but also to identify potential areas where partnerships could be beneficial. In the immediate term, the city should link to NEXUS-LA on its own website and promote this resource in social media and other outlets.

Sub-committee members noted that while there are a number of resources locally available to those seeking to start a business, there is far less focus on growing mid-tier companies. The Mayor-President should seek ways to fill this gap, potentially assisting in the establishment of mentorships, for example.

Access to capital continues to be a challenge for many small and mid-size businesses. Bridge funding, technical advice, industry-specific mentoring, and even shared workspace would all support growth in the small business sector of the Baton Rouge economy. BRAC, the Baton Rouge Area Foundation (BRAAF), LSU, Tech Park/NEXUS, LED and others are partnering to focus on low-growth/high-need areas that could be important targets of this effort.

- **The Mayor-President should ensure that the Baton Rouge area receives its fair allocation of Small Business Development Center (SBDC) funds to support small business growth.**

In short, the citizens of Baton Rouge are not receiving an appropriate allocation of both state (LED) and federal (SBA) funds, which flow through the Louisiana SBDC and are distributed into SBDCs throughout the state. As of September 2015, the Capital Region had one SBDC at Southern University with two staff members, and the funding accounted for approximately four percent of the total statewide budget for SBDCs. The Louisiana SBDC suggested that six staff members and \$500,000 would be a more appropriate budget for our region's population. Additional resources should be directed to scale up at Southern and/or offer multiple locations to ensure access for entrepreneurs.

BRAC's Small Business and Entrepreneurship Council and staff, the LSU Office of Research and Economic Development, the LSU Office of Innovation & Technology Commercialization, and the Louisiana Technology Park worked together to create a plan and budget for a newly reestablished SBDC at LSU with satellite locations throughout the city. The budget, which included matching funds, was approved by LSU and delivered to the LSBDC in July of 2016. As of today, the budget has not been approved by the LSBDC and the Capital Region remains underserved by this program, which is touted as Louisiana's primary small business assistance program by LED. The need is greater now due to the flood's impact on small businesses.

Furthermore, there is a need for staffing within the SBDC network in the Baton Rouge market to help small business break the lending code. Each lender has its own loan policy tailor-made for its institution. Therefore, the SBDC should provide a consultant that will be able to help small business navigate the banking system to gain access to capital. They should be preparing both start-up and existing businesses the knowledge and experience to become bank, credit union or investor ready.

- **The City-Parish should develop a streamlined, transparent, and customer-friendly process for opening up a new business.**

In the area of licensing, permitting and inspections, the process and costs should be clear. City-Parish personnel should operate with the assumption and goal of encouraging business openings and growth, processing applications in a timely manner oriented toward customer service. The Downtown Development District is one example of an entity that has prioritized helping business navigate red tape with great results. If the bureaucracy is a problem for everyone, it should be corrected by the City-Parish and streamlined in a way that promotes new and growing businesses, rather than discourages investment.

- **The City-Parish should work with the state to improve the Hudson Initiative (and other such programs), which exists to encourage eligible small entrepreneurs to participate in state contracting.**

In practice, however, few businesses are currently certified and on the State's Hudson list, which is seen as overly bureaucratic and doesn't meet the needs of the private or public sector. The City should work with LED and the Capital Region Legislative Delegation to streamline the Hudson Initiative, and then raise awareness of its existence among eligible Baton Rouge businesses to encourage more participation and access to state contracting. BRAC is currently implementing a process via its BRE efforts to track its outreach to small, disadvantaged, minority-owned businesses to ensure those owners are aware of the resources available to them. Metrics or goals should be set and annual reports provided to the public.

- **The City-Parish should commit to increase participation in City-Parish contracts by minorities and evaluate the benefits of creating a Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE) and/or Minority Business Enterprises (MBE) program.**

Sub-committee members were in agreement that the City-Parish has lacked participation by minority firms in contracting. In order for the city to flourish and reach its full potential, every citizen must have the opportunity to share in its prosperity. We should address this weakness, although there was not a consensus on the Sub-committee on the mechanism. Some suggested researching best practices from other cities with DBE/MBE programs, including evaluation of how the City-Parish can increase transparency of reporting, fairness of mandates, goals, clear notification of bids, equitable support on bid processes, networking, and point systems that achieve the objective in the process, among other initiatives. Other Sub-committee members suggested a mandatory inclusion program, such as those already underway in the cities of New Orleans and Shreveport, should be implemented with a three- to five-year phase-in to address the availability of capable and qualified DBE firms. In sum, the City-Parish should actively seek out



and promote DBE/MBE involvement in contracting, and there should be regular reporting on the results of any program designed to meet this goal, with the potential to make mid-course corrections to improve results.

- **The Mayor-President should continue to explore and discuss her campaign commitment to increase the minimum wage in the City-Parish to \$10/hour by 2020.**

Increasing the minimum wage is an important issue to many and generates a spirited dialogue, as it did in our committee. We also discovered that any changes would have to happen at the state level, which has been tried and failed. The Mayor-President's proposal would adjust the wages of those currently receiving the minimum wage to its 1968 equivalent. However, there were concerns with the impact that the implementation of the proposal could have on employment and competition with surrounding parishes that may not implement such an initiative. The research on the effects of the minimum wage is mixed. When considering minimum wage increases the distributional impact on the workforce as to who may benefit and who is likely to lose should be considered. As Bureau of Labor Statistics data indicates, low-skilled younger workers are most vulnerable to employment effects of increased minimum wages. A sub-minimum wage for teenagers and high school dropouts that would provide firms with the incentive to hire and provide training such as the Jobs Training Partnership Act (JTPA) could be implemented to reduce any unemployment impact of a wage increase on low-skilled workers. It is recommended that the City-Parish evaluate the full impact of a minimum wage increase and whether or not it is the best use of resources in the context of potential outcomes and total impact on the regional economy.

- **The City-Parish must continue and expand a robust economic development recruitment effort, which includes tax incentives for targeted industry sectors, to attract investment that will grow and diversify the city's economy.**

The Mayor-President should lead the evaluation and development of a predictable, efficient process for utilizing parish and local tax incentives, particularly the Enterprise Zone Program and the Industrial Property Tax (ITEP) exemption that now includes a local component across four entities in East Baton Rouge. The changes to ITEP at the state level offer a unique opportunity for Baton Rouge to create a streamlined, clear process for business attraction potentially through an Industrial Development Council with representatives from each tax entity in the parish.

The City-Parish may choose to make the Capital Region the leader in the state by creating a new model. The

Mayor-President may pursue legislation that gives the ITEP decision completely to locals and remove the state from the process in order to streamline and make it less burdensome and more timely (like Texas). These are all local taxes that would be exempted in EBR.

An even more advanced and better long-term solution could be for the Mayor-President and local elected leaders to simply adopt a framework and rules that would apply to any project, which would provide predictability that is badly needed. The City-Parish should consider that the ITEP process must be transparent to provide companies here in the parish (Exxon, etc.) the opportunity to compete within their own organizations for modernization, capital investments and improvements in existing facilities. ITEP has been a staple of Louisiana's industrial investments and taking it away reduces our competitiveness. If EBR starts to lose out on these ongoing investments, we risk losing the plants that provide the backbone of our economy.

In general, the City-Parish should be targeted and strategic with the use of incentives, attracting companies that diversify the economy and offer a living wage. The return on investment for tax incentives needs to be well-defined on the front end for companies, and the city needs to hold businesses accountable on the back end that benefit from these tax abatement programs.

## **II. Prepare a Foundation for Economic Growth**

*Sub-committee members agreed that a number of foundational elements are required to set the stage for long-term economic growth in the City-Parish. Members offer the policies and strategies below to lay this critical groundwork*

- **The City-Parish must utilize federal and state flood recovery resources to build back better, utilizing the opportunity to advance long-term economic development goals and improve quality of life and place.**

The state has set aside \$12 million for businesses in the first Congressional appropriation. Businesses across the parish should be made aware of resources available to them and connected to this support making it clear and simple with a single contact.

- **To grow over the next few decades and attract and keep millennials and talent, Baton Rouge must make improvements to the real and perceived quality of life in the city.**

The Mayor-President should lead a process and vision to address long-term challenges of crime, education, workforce, healthcare, blight, and transportation. Targeted incentives are currently necessary to diversify the city's economy in desirable industry sectors. However, the need for these financial incentives will lessen over

time as conditions improve and momentum builds. The Downtown Development District is a good model for how zones of the city can be developed, diversified, and then expanded to other areas.

- **The City-Parish should have a comprehensive approach to redevelopment that ramps up blight reduction and enforcement.**

Sub-committee members suggest that a comprehensive strategy in targeted zones would be more effective than the well-intended and helpful but scattershot approach underway today. One presenter proposed a volunteer conservation corps for an intensive effort that would kick start blight reduction with neighborhood cleanup and beautification, ultimately growing into a standing effort. As north Baton Rouge has experienced the demolition of Earl K. Long Medical Center and the need for deconstruction of blighted areas, the Sub-committee recommends an enhanced blighted property enforcement program and adjudication in order to move this property back into commerce and open up possibilities for new and redevelopment. This would include residential and commercial sites.

- **The Mayor-President should lead a citywide focus on workforce development, improving the skills and education needed to attract and increase 21st century jobs in the parish.**

The Sub-committee suggests the possible creation of a Workforce Development Team in the Mayor-President's Office as a way to centralize the coordination of workforce training efforts for the parish and get maximum return on the educational assets in the community.

While minimum wage policy is one way to increase wages to working low skill workers, a win-win method is to raise worker productivity such that they can demand and receive higher wages without the possibility of unemployment. Investment in human capital in the form of education and job training are critical elements in this area. In the rapidly changing economy, where information and biotechnology, globalization, innovation, and entrepreneurship are constantly impacting our workforce, it is paramount that we position our workforce for success through smart educational and job training programs.

Sub-committee members stressed the need for coordination on the part of our educational institutions—Baton Rouge Community College, Louisiana State University and Southern University—perhaps a regular meeting (development roundtable) with the mayor on economic development initiatives. We are fortunate to have the state's flagship university and a leading HBCU with both being land-grant institutions. The mission of the land-grant institutions is to develop talent

(teaching), innovation (research) and place (service to the community). We are the only city in the nation to have two such land-grant institutions with the mission for economic development. The ability to draw talent and to work with renowned scholars that can lead to scientific breakthroughs can be a major engine for growth and development in the area. This strategy should be coordinated with industry as a key investor in that state funding is a diminishing resource to higher education.

The K-12 educational programs are critical to this discussion as well. The partnership underway with BRCC, the East Baton Rouge Parish School System, and industry to create the automotive center of excellence in North Baton Rouge is an excellent model. Among other programs recommended were vocational, technical, soft skills, and dual enrollment (youth programs) training. The Sub-committee recognized the need for more specific-skill certification training programs such as information technology (IBM Project) are increasing in importance for workers in business and industry.

The City-Parish itself needs to revamp its programs and entities charged with workforce development, including the Workforce Development Board and one-stop centers, so that under-employed and unemployed EBR citizens can get the training they need to pursue job opportunities while also helping businesses address workforce shortages that are hindering their growth. In addition, the Sub-committee recommends that career centers be considered for both parents and youth as a way to keep the entire family involved with workforce training and development. This could be part of a statewide collaboration with the community and technical colleges.

- **The Mayor-President should continue to prioritize resources for infrastructure, working with state and federal partners to enhance mobility in the Baton Rouge area.**  
Efforts should range from congestion and capacity projects to multi-modal transportation to public transit—all of which will provide better access to jobs.
- **National perceptions of Baton Rouge matter, and the City-Parish should consider investing in efforts that will improve our image and brand.**

BRAC conducted a baseline survey in the spring of 2016 to understand how consumers perceive the Baton Rouge Area and to identify the messaging that will have the best chance of attracting professionals/talent (and over time, businesses) to the region. The survey of nearly 2,000 working professionals in the five major media markets (Atlanta, Chicago, Los Angeles, New York, and Washington, D.C.) showed low familiarity with the Baton Rouge Area. Of those respondents, over a fifth could not



name anything about Baton Rouge, and one in seven had a negative association. Those familiar with the region had favorable associations, indicating that awareness and favorability are linked.

Funds for a branding campaign would maximize the impact and return on investment on these committed funds. BRAC has aligned with major partners in our area, including media relations/ advertising/marketing firms to receive discounted rates and in-kind services that can be leveraged for a bigger, better and most effective campaign. For example, an arrangement with Southern University during the Bayou Classic in New Orleans and others would be a great way to leverage resources and better align with partners.

- **The City-Parish should identify and build upon our assets as we consider how to market our region for economic development.**

Two higher educational institutions, a robust technical and community college system, a globally recognized deepwater port, regional airport, close proximity to international airport, six Class 1 railroads, interstate access, certified sites, including one at the airport with tax-exempt property, a foundation in energy and petro-chemical manufacturing, and a lower cost of energy, labor and living and doing business are just a start. These assets must be better developed and marketed as part of a comprehensive economic development plan.

BRAC's strategic plan includes better alignment and coordination with the assets that demonstrate the most promise. BRAC has Capture Strategies developed, along with targeted events/companies on schedule, to market these assets in a way that has never been done before. However, due to reduced funding the organizations is limited in its ability to be as aggressive as needed. LSU and Southern Agricultural Resources, Pennington, The Water Campus (Water Cluster), LIGO, Software/ Technology via LSU and Southern, and others are ripe for opportunity. Currently, these organizations are not set up for proactive business development to promote corporate partnerships and global exposure. Additional resources and cooperation will make these goals a near-term reality

### **III. Leverage Resources through Coordination and Planning**

*A remarkable number of presenters and Sub-committee members pointed to a variety of economic development entities, resources, and activities underway in Baton Rouge. There is room for improvement regarding alignment, dialogue, cross-pollination, and leveraging of these assets and actions to maximize the impact on the City-Parish and produce a higher return on investment for taxpayers and citizens. The Mayor-President is uniquely positioned to bring these actors and*

*entities toward a unified approach that coordinates and builds upon their important and unique missions toward a common goal of a strong, diverse City-Parish economy. Members offer the policies and suggestions below to accomplish a more coordinated, strategic approach.*

- **The Mayor-President should lead a multi-stakeholder process to create a comprehensive multi-year strategic plan for economic development in the City-Parish that incorporates infrastructure, workforce, quality of place, small business needs, marketing, and business attraction and development.**

Identify the efficient and effective partners who consistently execute their mission and purpose resulting in the desired outcomes. Get the BEST talent to be "stars" on her team.

- **The City-Parish should adopt annual metrics and establish accountability mechanisms for public dollars spent on economic development.**

For example, under its current contract, BRAC should be given specific targets (i.e, an annual job growth target, net new jobs, payroll etc.) to then annually report to the Mayor, Metro Council, and the public on those results. All agencies in economic development that receive public dollars should have annual metrics, which are measurable and transparent to public. One presenter noted that one major attribute of cities successful in economic development is to be innovative and take certain risks, which allows for leveraging successes, but also learning from failures. Without establishing measurable goals for success, such as job creation, we will not be able to track our progress toward economic development on an ongoing basis.

- **The Mayor-President should convene regular meeting of entities tasked and funded to undertake economic development, including companies in the private sector, nonprofits, and public entities and city programs.**

We must do a better job to leverage assets and resources already being expended around the parish. A variety of public and nonprofit entities are investing in areas of Baton Rouge such as: the airport, BREC, CATS, the East Baton Rouge Parish School System, three higher education institutions, BRAC, United Way, BRAE, RPC, RDA, LED, the housing authority, law enforcement, existing and new neighborhood development districts, hospital districts, the port, the parish libraries, and others. All of these entities are making capital investments, and growing staff and enhancing programs. The Mayor-President is well-positioned to bring these entities together on a regular basis (quarterly) and allow for better communication. It appeared to the Sub-committee that many of these operate in silos and miss opportunities. Often, they could unite their work on projects, saving

money and improving results. By maximizing our assets, taxpayers would benefit from a coordinated and collaborative effort creating a strong team and synergies, resulting in better outcomes across the parish. s..

- **The Mayor-President should consider appointing a standing “business roundtable” to meet quarterly and offer guidance and feedback to her and the Metro Council and monitor the execution of a strategic plan for economic development.**

This group could contribute with both short-term and long-term visioning of the City-Parish and identifying changing trends that affect the marketplace and job creation. It would include diverse representation: entrepreneurs, millennials, economic development professionals, small and large business owners, and others representing various industry sectors and geographies in the City-Parish. They could help set metrics, monitor and evaluate the outcomes contracted for by the City-Parish, and possibly “score” the job done by all economic development entities receiving public dollars.

- **The Mayor-President should use her convening authority to encourage a variety of creative partnerships, including public-private as well as public-public partnerships and public-nonprofit partnerships. .**

Important projects, such as the IBM relocation in downtown Baton Rouge, rely on partnerships across the public (federal, state, and local), nonprofit and private sector—and even with institutions of higher education. This partnership model should be replicated in attracting businesses. We need to play as one team as a City-Parish, pooling all our resources.

Across East Baton Rouge Parish, especially in North Baton Rouge, a number of local public entities are involved in redevelopment and revitalization ranging from BREC to RDA to the new Baton Rouge North Development District. The Mayor-President’s Office should call for partnerships across the public sector, which will be increasingly important to have a real impact, rather than sporadic progress. Sub-committee members discussed co-locating parish libraries with K-12 schools or universities, for example, or coordinating BREC and RDA to address blight in a particular area in a unified way.

In some cities, universities are serving as anchors to redevelop neighborhoods with master plans that support the surrounding community, connect infrastructure, align workforce and community development, and create jobs. Drexel University in Philadelphia offers one model of an “Innovation Neighborhood” with a mixed-use setting that brings K-12 and higher educational and research entities together with commercial businesses, health and safety

initiatives, and more with a goal of symbiotic economic and community growth

- **The City-Parish should continue to collaborate across the region in our approach to economic development.**

Recognition of the need for regional collaboration with neighboring parishes was also an important point that arose in a number of discussions. With mobility, our success is their success and vice versa.

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## FINAL THOUGHTS

In conclusion, while we have submitted our ideas and suggestions from our one Sub-committee related to “Economic Development and Enterprise,” we are aware that many of the transition committees listed below have some tie-in to or impact on the success of economic development. It may be a direct impact such as information services, infrastructure or education—or maybe a quality-of-life issue like the arts, health care or race relations. We are aware of the possible overlap on some ideas and realize there are new ideas too that could enhance our report. We recommend and encourage the Mayor-President and the transition leaders to sort out suggestions related to economic development and combine them into an even stronger final plan of action for 2017 and the future.

- Public safety
- Homeland security
- Finance
- Community development
- Internal organization
- Public works
- Human development and services
- Information services
- Purchasing
- Arts, culture and leisure
- Flood recovery
- Infrastructure, transportation and mobility
- Economic development and enterprise
- North Baton Rouge revitalization
- Health care, social services and mental health
- Housing and land use
- Metropolitan organization
- The millennial agenda
- Women’s issues
- Race relations
- Education

## APPENDICES

1. MAYOR BROOME'S CHARGE TO SUB-COMMITTEE
2. AGENDAS for four Sub-committee meetings conducted in January 2017
  - Meeting #1: January 4, 2017
  - Meeting #2: January 11, 2017
  - Meeting #3: January 18, 2017
  - Meeting #4: January 25, 2017
3. INDIVIDUAL SUB-COMMITTEE MEMBER RECOMMENDATIONS
  - List of All Individual Ideas and Suggestions
  - Donald Andrews: Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development
  - Donald Andrews: Establishment of a Patient Capital Fund
  - Donald Andrews: Regional Collaboration for Economic Development
  - Dezmion Barrow: Millennial Investment for Millennial Development
  - Peter Breaux: Quality of Life Approach to Economic Development
  - Jennifer Fowler: Economic Development Plan and Advisory Committee
  - Davis Rhorer: Downtown Development
  - Davis Rhorer: Downtown Development Expansion
  - Latanja Silvester: Local Control and Minimum Wage Increase
  - Michael Stubblefield: Regional Anchor Institutions Master Plans
  - Kyle Zeringue: BRAC Funding at Peer EDO Levels
  - Kyle Zeringue: Improve Workforce Development Processes/Programs in EBR
  - Kyle Zeringue: Industrial Tax Exemption
4. PRESENTATIONS AND HANDOUTS from invited speakers
  - Adam Knapp, Baton Rouge Area Chamber (SLIDES)
  - Don Pierson, Louisiana Economic Development (N/A)
  - King Alexander, Louisiana State University (HANDOUT)
  - Ray Belton, Southern University (N/A)
  - Larissa Littleton-Steib, Baton Rouge Community College (SLIDES)
  - Dennis Cuneo, Fisher & Phillips LLP (SLIDES)
  - Gwen Hamilton, East Baton Rouge Redevelopment Authority (SLIDES)
  - Vickie Hendershot, US Economic Development Administration (SLIDES)
  - Ralph Hennessy, Baton Rouge Metropolitan Airport (SLIDES)
  - Byron Clayton, Research Park Corporation (HANDOUT)
  - Davis Rhorer, Downtown Development District (SLIDES)
  - Rinaldi Jacobs, Baton Rouge North Economic Development District (SLIDES)
  - Woody Jenkins, Chamber of Commerce of East Baton Rouge Parish (HANDOUT)
5. BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND RESEARCH
  - Contracting Barriers and Factors Affecting Minority Business Enterprises
  - EBR Lowest Earnings and Occupations spreadsheet
  - Florida and Plank Corridor Study
  - Louisiana Community Development Financial Institutions
  - Summary of Minimum Wage Research by Co-Chair Donald Andrews

# EDUCATION

**Co-Chairs:** Sherry Brock, Dr. Diola Bagayoko

**Committee Members:** Sherry Brock, Dr. Diola Bagayoko, Atty. Joyce M. Plummer, Linda Johnson, Drake Warren, Michelle Clayton, Atty. Preston Castille, Jada Lewis, Liz Smith, J. D., Patty McMurray, Dr. Larissa Littleton-Steib, Fran Harvey, GISP, Alisa Welsh, Carla R. Parks, Dionne McCurry, Dr. Tia T. Mills, Sara West, Dr. Girard Melancon, James Gilmore, Jr., MPA, PHR, PhD, Hugh McIntosh, Kristen Smith, Eva Kemp, Daniel Banguel, Thomas Beer, Sam Carlos, Dianne Pizzalato, Zanovia Curtis, Dr. Jewel J. Reuter

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Education Sub-committee convened to consider how City-Parish government can support advancements in educational opportunities and outcomes in Baton Rouge. Team members leveraged their existing knowledge and awareness of our community needs while exploring national and international best practices, innovative approaches and benchmarks. Further, the scope of work explicitly noted aspects or segments of the educational continuum for the Sub-committee to explore and the team decided to address the following topical areas.

- 1 Higher Education
- 2 K-12 Education: Public School Systems and Charter Schools
- 3 K-12 Education: Private and Parochial Schools
- 4 Head Start and Cradle to K (Birth to 5)
- 5 Truancy Prevention Program
- 6 Adult Mentor Program
- 7 Parental Involvement (Through the Mayor-President-President's Office)
- 8 The Unique Role of an Education Mayor-President-President

At the first meeting, the Sub-committee formed smaller groups, each of which focused on one of the above topical areas. The entire Sub-committee brainstormed on the vision of a model "Education Mayor-President." This final report of the Education Sub-committee, in light of the above topical areas, is provided in the following eight (8) reports on the listed topical areas. We underscore here, however, that these reports recognize the multidimensional complexity of education, including key partners that include the students, their parents, the schools and school systems, public and private entities with significant stakes in the outcomes of education. Hence, the overlaps between some of these reports is by design, in order to address the educational continuum in its complexity and diversity.

The ladder and taxonomical structure of progressive, educational attainment, from Cradle to K to the doctorate and professional degrees, is explicitly apparent in the

above listing. Please see Reports 4-1, in that order, for the ladder structure. Indeed, Early Childhood education outcomes, irrespective of socio-economic, ethnic, or other considerations, have causal effects on K-12 education, public or private. Longitudinal studies<sup>1</sup> have definitively established the direct impact of pre-college (i.e., K-12) preparation on admission, retention, and progression in college as well as graduation from college. "In the beginning, there is reading; then, and only then, formal learning follows successfully." The Sub-committee reiterates the well-known fact that higher education outcomes (i.e., continuing education, certificate attainment, and Bachelor's, doctorate, and professional degrees) are engines of economic growth and prosperity, socioeconomic mobility,<sup>2</sup> and low crime-rate, among other benefits.

The journeys of students along the pathways of education, from early childhood education to college education, are significantly affected by parental involvement (or the lack of it) and positively influenced by effective mentoring by adults, including parents and relatives. Truancy prevention, by ensuring that children remain in school, effectively promotes better educational outcomes. These issues are comprehensively addressed in Reports 5 -7. The predictable relation between truancy and absenteeism from school, on the one hand, and crimes committed by juveniles, on the other hand, partly underscores the need to ensure that children continue on their educational journeys. The enormous costs associated with juvenile crime simply beg for significant and effective mentoring of children, beginning with critically important parental support.

Report 8 elaborates on the unique role an education Mayor-President can play in unifying all the parties involved in education for much better outcomes for our children, the City-Parish, and the public and private sectors. The fact that the Mayor-President does not have a direct control over schools, school systems, and colleges and universities, far from being a handicap, is actually an asset. As per the content of topical Report 8, playing the "super-education Mayor-President" mostly requires "passion, leadership, and facilitation." Significantly improving educational

outcomes in the city, from early childhood to high school graduation, is viewed as a formidable way to stave off any break-away effort. The report specifically calls for addressing “the education-related concerns of supporters of the incorporation of St. George.”

The Sub-committee hopes that the provision of this final report, as a set of topical area reports, will enable the needed focus on each one of the important areas listed above. We appreciated the opportunity to serve on this Education Community Input Transition Team.

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1. Clifford Adelman, 1999. “Answers in the Tool Box: Academic Intensity, Attendance Patterns, and Bachelor’s Degree Attainment.” Washington, DC: US Department of Education. Also see the follow-up study: Clifford Adelman, 2006. “The Toolbox Revisited: Paths to Degree Completion from High School Through College.” Washington, DC: US Department of Education.

2. “Mobility Report Cards: The Role of Colleges in Intergenerational Mobility.” A 96 page report of the finding of an extensive study by Raj Chetty (Stanford University), John N. Friedman (Brown University), Emmanuel Saez (UC-Berkeley), Nicholas Turner (US Treasury), and Danny Yagan (UC-Berkeley). This report is available at [http://www.equality-of-opportunity.org/papers/coll\\_mrc\\_paper.pdf](http://www.equality-of-opportunity.org/papers/coll_mrc_paper.pdf), and it can be found by searching for its title above.



# 1. Higher Education

*Committee Members:* Jada Lewis, Atty. Preston Castille, Dionne McCurry, Dr. Girard Melancon

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The role of Mayor-President should focus on being a convener, collaborator, and leader with higher education leaders of Southern University, Baton Rouge Community College, Louisiana State University, Louisiana Board of Regents and Louisiana Board of Education on key issues impacting post-secondary credential attainment within public and private K-12 school systems in East Baton Rouge Parish. The East Baton Rouge Higher Education sub-committee's recommendations are in alignment with the objectives in Governor John Bel Edwards' Higher Education Transition Advisory Report and will focus on data and recommendations around the following:

1. Increasing education attainment in East Baton Rouge Parish
2. Improving student affordability in East Baton Rouge Parish
3. Strengthening institutional accountability with a focus on student outcomes, workforce alignment, and addressing East Baton Rouge Parish's needs
4. Improving the quality of life for students at LSU, SU, and BRCC

## BACKGROUND AND VISION

### *State of the Issue*

#### **Attainment and Recidivism:**

Educational attainment in East Baton Rouge Parish is a challenge that must be overcome to achieve improved quality of life and opportunity for residents. Current data shows huge gaps along racial and gender lines. 45% of white residents in East Baton Rouge Parish have a bachelor's degree or higher with African-American and Hispanic residents at 20% and 22%, respectively. The disparity among black males is even more profound at 16% obtaining a bachelor's degree compared to 48% of white males.

This data is most significant given that East Baton Rouge is home to the largest Historically Black College and University (HBCU) system in the country. Mayor-President Broome should press upon Southern University, Louisiana State University, and Baton Rouge Community College to cultivate system-wide priorities to equitably bridge the attainment gap within the Capital City.

Mayor-President Broome should convene or initiate

a meeting with the leadership of all post-secondary institutions in East Baton Rouge Parish (BRCC, LSU, & SU) to explore options by which all institutions can collectively play a stronger role in solving this epidemic. It is our belief that with cooperative, strategic planning and discussion that our city's community college and university systems have the structural capacity to educate Baton Rougeans from college freshmen through PhD and professional degrees. Mayor-President Broome should aggressively seek the support of these universities to expand the involvement of the City-Parish in both elementary and secondary education as well as post-secondary education.

Mayor-President Broome should seek both the administrative and student leadership of all universities in the Capital City to participate in a think tank that constructs strategies to improve the quality of life for all of its students. These strategies will serve as a mechanism to effective recruiting and to retaining of students by improving their admission, persistence and graduation rates. A stronger partnership with the elementary, secondary and post-secondary educational system should improve the results measured in these performance indicators.

There is a direct correlation between low educational attainment and high incarceration rates. Low educational attainment and high incarceration will plague economic development and further divide this city as the more affluent members of the community will continue to flee to outlying parishes. Communities such as St. George could continue to pursue opportunities to separate from the city and parish. Currently, East Baton Rouge Parish's recidivism rate is 46.9 percent, while the regional average is 46 percent. Over 50 percent of that incarcerated population is housed in correctional facilities where there is limited or no re-entry programs to acclimate them back into institutions of higher learning or the workforce. According to the Louisiana Department of Public Safety and Corrections roughly 50 percent of the offender population is assigned to state correctional facilities, while the other half is assigned to local-level jails and transitional work programs.

#### **Affordability and Accessibility:**

Access to post-secondary opportunities is tied to affordability. Affordability is connected to financial aid and assistance. In Louisiana, TOPS is an avenue for students to achieve the desire to pursue post-secondary opportunities. In East Baton Rouge Parish, the findings of 2015 indicated

the following:

- Approximately 88% of students deemed eligible for a TOPS award in EBR Public schools have accepted the award and subsequently enrolled in a postsecondary education institution in Louisiana and the same percentage approximately 88% of EBR private school students accepted award and enrolled.
- The majority of TOPS recipients in East Baton Rouge Parish are white (63%) and female (58%).
- The average ACT score of all TOPS recipients in EBR for 2015 was 25 and the average high school GPA (Core GPA) was 3.27.

Note: Please see appendices for attainment data and charts and TOPS specific information for East Baton Rouge Parish, for both public and private schools.

### **Workforce Development:**

Strengthening institutional accountability with a focus on student outcomes, workforce alignment and addressing Baton Rouge workforce needs by utilizing sector partnerships coordinated through the Mayor-President's public workforce development center can be a valuable entity in our city.

### **Major Initiatives Underway (in this area) for 2017**

Since 2012, Baton Rouge Community College has been coordinating a sector partnership with ExxonMobil. This sector partnership is called the North Baton Rouge Industrial Training Initiative and it provides a sustainable process to recruit, train and develop north Baton Rouge residents for successful industrial careers with local employers.

NBRITI ensures students are "Ready To Go!" after the last day of their training. This innovative practice has been achieved by utilizing the framework that was created through BRCC's partnership with CB&I. The Ready To Go! framework monitors student's daily timeliness, safety practices, use of hand tools, use of PPE, housekeeping, and teamwork. This framework is designed to be a fair and easy process for the instructors, and most importantly, to empower the students to be accountable for their own success in skilled craft careers. The NBRITI also offers comprehensive training at no cost to qualified participants. Upon successful completion of the program, graduates earn credentials from the National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER), with a focus on pipefitting, welding or electrical crafts.ity.

### **Proposals for New Initiatives and Recommendations**

1. Mayor-President Broome should immediately convene a meeting with the leadership of all three institutions of higher learning in our city, i.e., Baton Rouge Community College, Louisiana State University &

Southern University System. This meeting should not only include the university presidents, but be inclusive to the collegiate student leaders (SGA leaders from each institution), as well. Collectively, all parties will work to develop strategies that will improve the educational attainment within the city and parish.

- a. Mayor-President Broome should impress upon these leaders the need to have all East Baton Rouge post-secondary institutions more deeply engaged in strengthening the education pipeline that makes up elementary, secondary and higher education. Moreover, there should be collegiate student and school adoptions in both the communities in which the institutions are housed, but also within communities where each individual institution's presence may not be as visible.
  - b. Mayor-President Broome should request that these collegiate systems collectively consider expanding their involvement in the North Baton Rouge community and the Baton Rouge community as a whole to provide equitable educational opportunities for the citizens of this community. Likewise, Mayor-President Broome should seek to collaborate with each institution's College of Education to investigate ways to address the shortage of instructors in our parish.
  - c. Mayor-President Broome should seek a specific plan from the collective collegiate systems' leadership for improving the quality of life of its students and to assist in the recruitment, retention and graduation of more students from the City-Parish area and beyond. A specific focus should be placed on adults who have a high school degree, but not post-secondary education.
  - d. Mayor-President Broome should also seek a plan to expand each college's systems presence from pocketed areas in the city to diverse locations to increase the accessibility to opportunities to partake in post-secondary education.
  - e. Mayor-President Broome should impress upon the educational leaders that Baton Rouge's status as a college town is an incredible asset for our City-Parish and stress that much of the economic development that will occur over the next four years of her service as Mayor-President will be largely dependent upon the success of our education systems, for which Southern, BRCC and LSU will play a vital role.
2. Mayor-President Broome should also convene a Higher Education Summit with representatives from all post-secondary education leadership and PreK-12 to collaborate and discuss how to "connect the dots" between high school and both college and career to increase educational attainment, accessibility, and affordability in East Baton Rouge Parish.
  3. Mayor-President Broome should host an annual "College

Fair” for all East Baton Rouge Parish public high school students to showcase opportunities at the local universities in Baton Rouge and throughout the state.

4. Mayor-President Broome’s office can collaborate and sponsor state, national, and international STEM events, programs, and competitions to brand Baton Rouge as an “education city” (e.g. SeaPerch and STEMNOLA)
5. Develop a “Collegiate EBR and Work EBR” marketing campaign around obtaining post-secondary education, in addition to high-wage jobs with workforce development agencies and nonprofit organizations throughout the parish, especially targeting non-traditional populations and citizens returning from incarceration.
6. Focus on new areas of opportunity in East Baton Rouge Parish around technology and entrepreneurship.
  - a. Mayor-President Broome can develop a computer systems training institutes (coupled with soft skills) to train incarcerated populations to meet the need of the digital occupations that our city currently cannot serve. This initiative, Baton Rouge Boot Up, can allow students or former incarcerates to gain certificates in HTML, JAVA, Python, and other software, which can be a pipeline program to the other post-secondary programs throughout the city. Currently, LSU offers certificates through its continuing education program where certificates can be earned in Web Development, Net Programming, Desktop Applications, Web Design, Database Development, etc. If coupled with a developed recidivism task force, this program could offer positive alternatives to deter individuals from resorting to criminal activity. This initiative can be modeled after the Last Mile program in California. Baton Rouge Boot Up would serve as a beneficial initiative since the city has secured the business partnership of the IBM Corporation, as well as the fact that there are over 160 computer-based or digital media companies in the Baton Rouge area. The Baton Rouge Boot Up would serve as a catalyst to building a base of qualified and certified computer programmers.
  - b. Mayor-President Broome should develop and seek city wide grants to create small businesses for former incarcerates who complete the program. As a result, the recipients of the grants must pledge to employ and train other former incarcerates to create opportunities for employment for those returning to society, which in turn will create economic growth in our city.
7. Sector partnerships (also called industry partnerships) can provide a framework to supplement quality assurance processes with a method for incorporating industry feedback.[1] Because these partnerships bring together all relevant stakeholders,

they enable educational institutions to provide students with the skills industry needs.

- a. Sector partnerships “convene multiple employers with education, training, labor, and community-based organizations to address the local skill needs of a particular industry.”[2] These partnerships enable the assessment of local industry workforce needs, so that institutions may create or refine their education and training programs to match area needs. A key feature of sector partnerships is that each is different, because they are tailored to a particular area and particular industry. However, many sector partnerships function similarly. Sector partnerships are often convened by an organization, such as a chamber of commerce or community-based organization that will find funding and staff the partnership’s activities. Membership must include local employers from a given industry and may include education and training providers, government agencies, philanthropists, and community-based organizations. Typically, a sector partnership will begin by analyzing the local industry’s current and future skills needs, and identify potential skills gaps (where there will not be enough trained workers for the available jobs). Once the gaps are identified, they will create plans to close those skills gaps. These plans may include creating common skills standards, building career pathways, or creating or adjusting education and training programs. Although only 21 states have policies promoting sector partnerships, this number will soon expand. WIOA makes sector partnerships a required strategy and requires states to use a portion of their discretionary funds to support these activities.
- b. States looking to implement sector partnerships to evaluate industry credentials may seek guidance from Tennessee, which has robust sector partnerships, two of which will be discussed here. These sector partnerships have enabled Tennessee to foster a skilled workforce that meets employers’ needs. One sector partnership in Tennessee is the Middle Tennessee Regional Workforce Alliance, a partnership between the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce, Middle Tennessee’s Workforce Investment Boards, the Tennessee Board of Regents, and the area’s community and applied technology colleges. The partnership governs regional “skills panels” intended to: (1) identify the skills and competencies needed by regional employers; (2) articulate those needs; (3) recommend ways to close the skills gaps; and (4) assess the value of that work. These skills panels are chaired by local business leaders facing a shortage of skilled workers in their industries, and

also include members from the local workforce system and postsecondary education institutions. There are panels in Healthcare, IT, and Advanced Manufacturing, sectors vital to Middle Tennessee's economy. As a result of the panels, area community colleges have implemented unified curriculums in these areas, tailored to employer demand.

- c. A second program, entitled the Tennessee Labor Education Alignment Program (LEAP), is modeled, in part, upon Nashville's skills panels. The program was established through legislation (Public Chapter 338), and provided ten million dollars to 12 local programs intended to "identify regional workforce needs and establish pipelines of trained job candidates." [3] Specifically, the grants were awarded to partnerships that were seeking to "enhance, expand or create an academic program, at an institution of higher education, that fills a critical, demonstrable local workforce need," or to "acquire equipment for a higher education institution or industry education facility that is crucial to the development or enhancement of new workforce-essential competencies." [4] Each partnership had to include representatives of a local economic development agency, K-12 schools providing "early postsecondary opportunities," local businesses, and higher education institutions. [5]
- d. One LEAP-funded project is the "Filling the Gaps Between Industry and Employees with Manufacturing Technology" project. South Central Tennessee has a demonstrated need for "maintenance technicians with competencies in basic electricity, motors, mechanical drives, hydraulics and pneumatics, programmable logic action controllers, and robotics." [6] Accordingly, LEAP funds enabled the Tennessee College of Applied Technology–Shelbyville—to offer its Industrial Maintenance program at four branch facilities across the region. In total, 80 more students were able to enroll in this program at the new facilities. Graduates may be offered an entry level position or may earn 30 credits towards an Associate of Applied Science degree from Motlow State Community College. A second LEAP-funded project, the "Regional Apprenticeship Preparedness Program" (RAPP), has created dual enrollment and dual credit manufacturing courses in local high schools, enabling students to prepare for a career in manufacturing. As these programs demonstrate, sector partnerships are a relatively simple way to ensure that programs are recognized by industry.

## Opportunities for Partnerships and Collaboration

- Developing partnerships with the informational systems small businesses and major corporations, such as IBM to begin the Baton Rouge Boot-Up Coalition.
- Developing a Recidivism Reduction Task Force that works integrally with the institutions of higher learning within the city
- Improving the utilization of the Mayor-President's WIOA funding streams
- Improving the utilization of the state's Rapid Response funding for workforce development programs
- Improving the utilization of all K-16 funding from foundations, local, state, and federal funding stream.

## Fiscal and Budgetary Implications

1. Leverage grant funds through entities such as the Justice Center or the Wilson Foundation to help facilitate the programs along with other educational funds that may be accessible through the East baton Rouge parish, Louisiana and federally.
  - a. Develop pipeline programming between the Louisiana Department of Education's Special School District and the East Baton Rouge Transitional Work Program to identify inmates that possess the skill set or can be trained to build a workforce to accommodate the growing needs of our city's working digital community.
  - b. Reframe the current East Baton Rouge Transitional Work Release Program to partner with research-based coalitions, such as the Capital Area Reentry Coalition. This partnership can find mentors and advisees that specifically serve as liaisons between institutions of higher learning and not just workforce development.
2. Leverage all of the education dollars to improve and enhance workforce outcomes.

## Department/Agency Workforce

N/A



## 2. K-12 Education: Public School Systems & Charter Schools

*Committee Members:* Dr. Tia Mills, Michelle Clayton, Sara West, Atty. Preston Castille

### SCOPE OF REVIEW

The duties of the K-12 Sub-committee encompasses “leveraging existing knowledge and awareness of our community needs while exploring national and international best practices, innovative approaches and existing assets and strengths.” Individuals included in the aforementioned committee are practitioners from the public and charter school sector of the district. The following information provides a synopsis of the district as a whole and what is recommended to move the community forward to fully support our children.

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

One Team, One Mission: Building the Future of Baton Rouge. The preceding statement is the bold goal that has been embarked upon by the East Baton Rouge Parish School System for the past couple of years. The school system, however, cannot accomplish this goal alone. There are many challenges faced by the EBRPSS and co-existing charter schools as they work side-by-side to educate students who primarily (87.1%) come from impoverished backgrounds. Historical perspective student performance data show disparity between students of high SES (socioeconomic status) and students of low SES (socioeconomic status) also known as economically disadvantaged students. Both national and state data reveal lower proficiency levels for economically disadvantaged students. Research also indicates that student suspensions and expulsions are often due to factors related to growing up in poverty and/or single parent homes.

Ensuring equitable learning opportunities is the goal of all educators as they provide quality education for all students, full of learning experiences that prepare them for college, career and life as productive citizens. The goal of central office based educational leaders, as well as school based principals, teachers and staff is to unite the efforts of home and school to provide a support system that nurtures each student’s potential through teaching, modeling, developmental nurturing, supervision and experiences, yielding productive, well-rounded students who are lifelong learners.

Though well intended, these efforts are often diminished by the impact of living within a low socioeconomic environment. Children from low SES environments have greater challenges with academic skills, language skills

and experience reading difficulties. Many of them arrive to school lacking the basic foundational needs that come from the home environment that help them meet school expectations. We know that there is a direct relationship between the SES and the level of learning a child will experience at school.

Many of the challenges they face as a result of their poverty, both mental and physical, are due to a lack of adequate healthcare and nutrition. The absence rate and mobility rate from school, of the students, are high due to their parents’ need to frequently move, in most cases, in search of housing. Students are forced into an “orientation” stage at new schools, throughout an academic year, having to learn new systems, routines/procedures and staff. Their attention shifts from learning, to the new set of environmental factors they now face. When children in poverty do not receive an educational foundation offered through enriching activities such as family trips and vacations or educational opportunities, outside of the school environment, usually afforded by educated adults who can provide the experiences, they are immediately at a disadvantage compared to children who do have those opportunities. Practical every day engagement through conversation, help with homework, etc., may not exist between parents and child due to parents having to work during hours when children are home and awake. These missed moments of interaction deprive children of the advantages that children from high SES experience through talking with their parents over dinner or while watching a television program. Mentoring and guidance, structure and nurturing are lost and many children of low SES are left to fend for themselves, causing them to assume adult roles of caregiver, provider and protector at early age.

### BACKGROUND AND VISION

#### *State of the Issue*

The accountability system in Louisiana public schools is based mainly upon how students perform on the end of year state assessment. Upon completion of the testing cycle, schools receive letter grades, from the state, that reflect the level of student performance, aligned to specific levels of achievement or “proficiency bands.” From highest to lowest, they are:

- A – Advanced
- M – Mastery
- B – Basic

- AB – Approaching Basic
- U - Unsatisfactory

During the course of the academic school year, school leaders work to implement and ensure learning experiences that are interesting, engaging and provide “real world” applications that prepare students for opportunities beyond the school setting. Once assessment results are received, school teams meet to analyze the results (the data) and to determine appropriate intervention to address inadequacies found in the performance results. While analyzing data, trends are often discovered, that show patterns of negative impact that also require well thought out plans for implementation to overcome challenges and improve performance. One such trend that has proven consistent across schools within the United States, Louisiana, and East Baton Rouge Parish School System is the negative impact of low-socioeconomic status of a population of school students. Data show that students who are identified as having low-socioeconomic status consistently perform lower on standardized state tests. These students are also referred to as “at risk” or “economically disadvantaged”. This status is determined by free or reduced lunch qualification. 2014 data show Louisiana Recovery School District, Baton Rouge Recovery District and St. Helena school district to be the lowest three performing school systems in Louisiana. Approximately 97.5% of students in the schools systems were on free or reduced lunch. Within the state of Louisiana, all other school systems’ data indicate a relationship between students’ performance and their level of poverty. The data below shows the relationships between poverty and student performance

#### DATA ANALYSIS:

The data represented on the following charts are points of reference for supported discussion of how poverty/low socioeconomic status affect the academic performance of children in school.

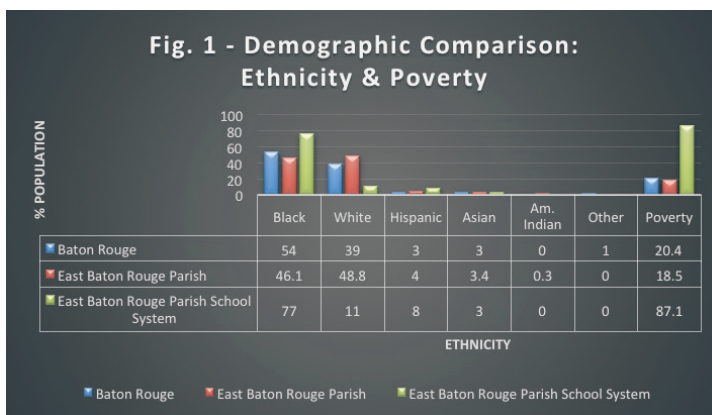


Fig. 1 - Notice the high percent (majority) of students who live in poverty, who attend school in East Baton Rouge School System. EBRPSS’ percent of poverty far exceeds that of the city and parish.

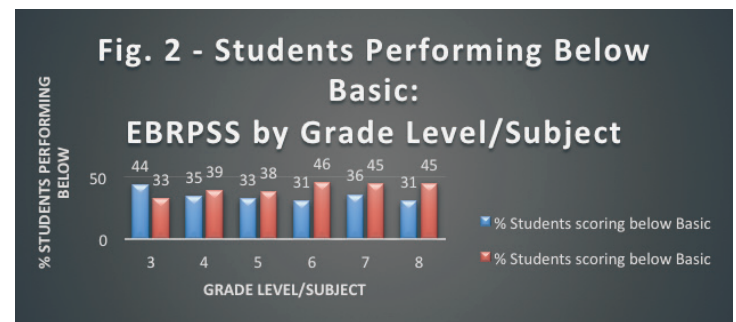


Fig. 2 - Data reflects student performance in Math and ELA. Student performance in EBRPSS is aligned with trends that show students of poverty (low socioeconomic status) having low academic performance, according to national student assessment data.

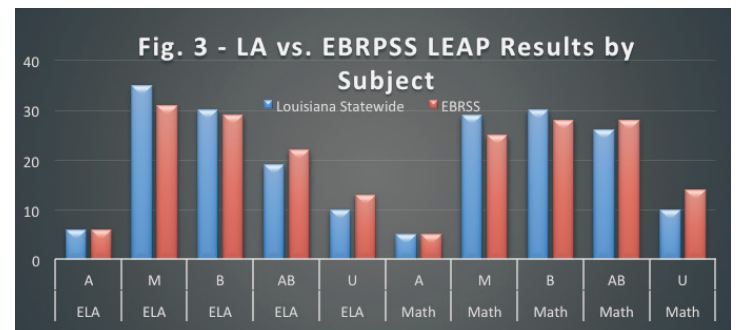


Fig. 3 - US Census data reveal that Louisiana has the second-highest poverty rate (27.4%) in the United States, second only to the state of Mississippi (See Fig. 4).

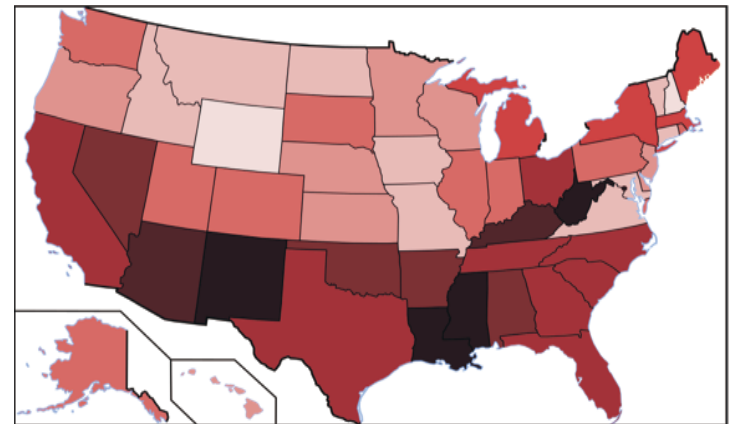
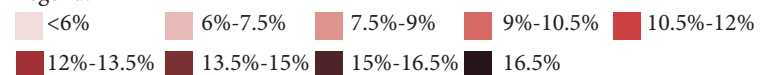


Fig. 4 - Map of poverty rate in the United States in 2014.

#### Legend:



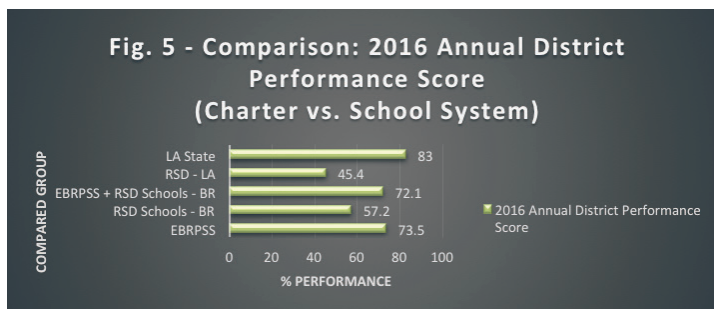


Fig. 5 - According to Louisiana believes assessment results, EBRPSS shows higher test performance when compared to RSD BR and RSD LA Charter assigned schools.

The figure below displays data for school systems within East Baton Rouge Parish:

Site Name	% of students on free or reduced lunch	Letter grade assigned for 2013	Ranking for % proficient for 2014	2014 Basic or Above (Percentile Rank)
ZACHARY COM. SCHOOL DIS.	44.3%	A	1	100
CENTRAL COM. SCHOOL DIS.	50.6%	A	2	97
EAST BATON ROUGE W/O RSD	81.9%	C	49	30
CITY OF BAKER SCHOOL DIS.	82.4%	D	70	5

Source: [http://louisianaeducator.blogspot.com/2014/06/the-most-powerful-predictor-of-student\\_26.html](http://louisianaeducator.blogspot.com/2014/06/the-most-powerful-predictor-of-student_26.html)

The figure below shows the status of the current school performance grades at type 2 and 5 charter schools in the district:

School Name	Charter Type	School Performance Grade	Number of Students	Location	At Risk	Grades	Year Started
Advantage Charter Academy	2	D	552	Baker	80.30%	K-8	2014-2015
Apex Collegiate Academy Charter	2	n/a	110	Baton Rouge	87.30%	6	2016-2017
Baton Rouge Bridge Academy	5	n/a	144	Baton Rouge	73.60%	K-1	2015-2016
Baton Rouge Charter Academy at Mid-City	2	F	672	Baton Rouge	80.7%	K-8	2013-2014
Baton Rouge College Preparatory Charter School	5	C	167	Baton Rouge	95.20%	5-6 grade	2015-2016
Baton Rouge University Preparatory Elementary	5	n/a	252	Baton Rouge	98.40%	K-1	2015-2016

School Name	Charter Type	School Performance Grade	Number of Students	Location	At Risk	Grades	Year Started
Celerity Crestworth Charter School	5	T	155	Baton Rouge	80.60%	K-8	2014-2015
Celerity Dalton Charter School	5	F	442	Baton Rouge	79.20%	K-8	2014-2015
Celerity Lanier Charter School	5	T	359	Baton Rouge	83.30%	K-8	2014-2015
Democracy Prep Baton Rouge	5	C	276	Baton Rouge	73.70%	K,1, 6, 7	2015-2016
Friendship Capitol High School	5	C	410	Baton Rouge	90.20%	9-12 grade	2014-2015
GEO Prep Academy Greater Baton Rouge	2	C	254	Baton Rouge	89.70%	K-3	2015-2016
Impact Charter Elementary	2	D	317	Baker	80.80%	K-4	2014-2015
Kenilworth Science and Technology Charter School	5	D	576	Baton Rouge	93.60%	6-8 grade	2009-2010
Laurel Oaks Charter School	2	n/a	43	Baton Rouge	95.30%	K	2016-2017
Louisiana Connections Academy	2	C	2274	Baton Rouge	59.30%	K-12	2011-2012
Louisiana Key Academy	2	F	294	Baton Rouge	75.50%	1-4 grade	2013-2014
Louisiana Virtual Charter Academy	2	D	1912	Baton Rouge	73.50%	K-12	2011-2012
Madison Preparatory Academy	2	C	511	Baton Rouge	80.40%	9-12 grade	2009-2010

\*References

Louisiana Charter Schools by Type  
Louisiana Enrollment Counts by Site



## COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS

### 2016-2017 Advanced Placement Course Enrollment Counts (EBRPSS)

School	Seniors enrollment #	# Of AP courses offered	Students enrolled in all courses
Baton Rouge Magnet High	351	25	1900
Broadmoor High	241	9	117
Glen Oaks High	117	3	61
Lee High	64	16	547
McKinley High	290	19	365
Mentorship STEAM Academy	112	4	73
Scotlandville Magnet	274	2	19
Tara High	240	7	105
Thrive Baton Rouge High	(9-10 grade only school)	1	105
Woodlawn High	246	17	225

### 2016-2017 Advanced Placement Course Enrollment Counts (EBRPSS)

School	College/ University	# Of dual enrollment courses offered	Students enrolled 1st semester	Students enrolled 2nd semester
Baton Rouge Magnet High	SLU BRCC	4	146	146
Belaire High	Dual	1	2	2
Glen Oaks High	Dual	3	12	13
Lee High	Dual LSU	12	52	43
McKinley High	BRCC LSU SLU Dual	14	161	154
Scotlandville Magnet	Dual	1	0	84
Tara High	Dual	1	0	4

## Major Initiatives Underway (in this area) for 2017

In order to help meet the needs of the low SES student population, EBRPSS has developed specific programs to instill basic and fundamental skills and utilizes programs listed below to help bridge the gap between our low and high SES students so that the low SES students are exposed to the same and similar support systems. Below is a list of some of the initiatives that are currently underway, although it is not a comprehensive list:

- **“Triple A + C”**  
An initiative that provides focus on: Academics, Arts, Athletics/Activity; Character. Goals are set for each category and actionable steps toward attaining those goals are written and implemented. Students and staff are the active participants, ensuring the steps are taken towards goals until they are attained. Students gain the benefits offered through instruction provided and knowledge attained relative to each category. They learn core beliefs and practices that prove beneficial as they make noted incremental steps forward toward improved levels of academic achievement, and gain personal confidence.
- **High Schools of Excellence**  
An initiative involving all East Baton Rouge Parish high schools whereby diverse committees plan out the academic and career pathways to be offered by each high school.
- **BRYC – Baton Rouge Youth Coalition**  
[thebryc.org](http://thebryc.org)  
During and after-school programs that provide activities, teach leadership, conflict resolution skills and encourages and prepares high-achieving, under-resourced high school students to enter, excel in, and graduate from college so they can become full participants in society.
- **LOOP - Louisiana Outdoors Outreach Program**  
Provides outdoor education to underserved and at-risk by utilizing positive outdoor experiences to promote healthy social-emotional development of its target audience.
- **YMCA**  
Organization that offers structured after school and summer programs for children
- **After-school care**  
School sponsored care that provides supervision, academic support and planned activities.
- **City Year**  
Supports the school with supervision and active student engagement during the course of the school day.
- **iCARE**  
Teaches through activities and lessons key character traits, personal care and awareness and conflict resolutions.
- **JumpStart**  
State initiative - Jump Start is Louisiana’s innovative career and technical education (CTE) program. Jump Start prepares students to lead productive adult lives, capable of continuing their education after high school while earning certifications in high-wage career sectors.
- **Boys Hope Girls Hope**  
A network of 15 US and three Latin American sites that prepare young people to thrive in college, career, and life. Scholars are enrolled in the program in middle school and they participate in a wide spectrum of youth development and academic programming and receive support through college degree completion.
- **My Brother’s Keeper**  
Addresses persistent opportunity gaps faced by boys and young men of color and ensures young people can reach their full potential. Through this initiative, cities and towns, businesses, and foundations are taking important steps to connect young people to mentoring, support networks, and the skills they need to find a good job or go to college and work their way into the middle class.
- **TRIO Programs**  
TRIO Programs are federally funded programs such as Upward Bound and Educational Talent Search that assists students from low-income families. Upward Bound provides fundamental support to participants in their preparation for college entrance. The program provides opportunities for participants to succeed in their precollege performance and ultimately in their higher education pursuits. Upward Bound serves: high school students from low-income families; and high school students from families in which neither parent holds a bachelor’s degree. The Talent Search program identifies and assists individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds who have the potential to succeed in higher education. The program provides academic, career, and financial counseling to its participants and encourages them to graduate from high school and continue on to and complete their postsecondary education. The program publicizes the availability of financial aid and assist participant with the postsecondary application process.
- **Big Buddy**  
Big Buddy provides ongoing asset-based programming for youth ages 5 to 18 focused on building resiliency against poverty, crime and academic failure.
- **Gloryland Baptist Church Summer Experience**  
Summer program that provides reading, cultural and social enrichment activities, music, drama, dance, computer lab, weekly library visits and field trips every Friday for children in pre-K through middle school

- **BRAC's Virtual Schoolhouse**  
An online portal that connects business and industry representatives to classrooms and students for mentoring, work-based learning and more.
- **Black Family Initiative**  
Pastor Donald Hunter (Target Glen Oaks)

### **Proposals for New Initiatives**

Understanding that the home environment of many of our schools' low SES population cannot provide some of the necessary support needed to advance students forward toward academic success, it is necessary for the community to become involved in the process. Although engaged during the school day, many students are left without necessary nurturing, food, academic help, supervision, etc. once they leave school. Focus should be directed toward creating programs and engaging activities for students during 3 important categories of time where the academic achievement gap tends to become exacerbated:

- after school
- weekends
- summer

Community organizations, businesses, churches, non-profits, etc., must work to provide financial and/or programmatic services that support the success of ALL EBR children. These programs could potentially take the form of tutoring, mentoring, job/internship opportunities, field trips/ experiences for students, providing internet/computer access, providing books for students' personal libraries, etc.

#### **Locating programs, organizations, funds, volunteers and facilities is beneficial to meeting the needs of children.**

One suggestion is to get the process started, to be used as a poll of services needed, would be to establish a central call line and/or website where parents could access and inform the community of their needs – from clothes, school uniforms, food, summer activities, tutoring, after school care/athletics, etc. Having a centralized system, with options to choose from would give parents a way of informing those who are capable of providing help.

### **Opportunities for Partnerships and Collaboration**

Examples of ways the community can get involved in creating a supportive environment for ALL EBR students:

- Contact businesses to discover what services and resources they might be able to contribute.

Groups might consider establishing themselves as non-profit organizations to better solicit help from business and companies that would contribute to non-profit organizations.

- Thoroughly understand the mission so that one is able to articulate it in a meaningful way to others the need for “reproducing” the quality, nurture, and care of a high SES home environment through mentors and caregivers who run programs that service students.

- Reach out to stores to discover what products they are able to donate–Walmart, Academy, Wendy's, McDonald's, etc. These entities are all organizations that might be interested in giving back to those who support their businesses.
- Visit traditional colleges, technical colleges and trade schools, community colleges and universities to determine what pipelines can be established between them and local school campuses in an effort to prepare students for higher education and work.
- Recruit organizations to provide various programs for students and/or determine their ability to donate to organizations providing after-school, summer, and weekend programs for students.
- Connect with Habitat for Humanity to learn of special projects that students can be involved in so that they learn core values and the importance of community service.
- Contact churches to find out about afterschool, weekend, and summer programs, choirs and sponsored by the church. Find out about transportation that might be available to worship service so that children can be picked up for church on the weekend or throughout the week.
- Recruit businesses to hire young adults and help students learn how to fill out applications and how to prepare for an interview – from their appearance to etiquette.
- Reach out to local community civic association meetings and address the group to learn what services to children the community in the area might want or need.
- Survey community public schools and meet with principals and PTO to discover their needs and then work to meet those needs through personal or business contacts.
- Seek national support from groups already organized that may be looking to donate to a “worthy” cause.
- Contact corporations–New Orleans Saints, NFL, etc. with a list of ways you can use their help, and then ask for it.

### **Fiscal and Budgetary Implications**

The fiscal and budgetary implications will be based upon the decision of the Mayor-President to use volunteers or staffed positions to carry out the recommended activities.

### **Department/Agency Workforce**

The recommended activities could incorporate the use of volunteers, existing staff, and/or new staff positions.

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## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Recruit businesses, organizations, churches, etc. who are willing to provide resources and/or services to students afterschool, on weekends, and/or during the summer in the following areas:

- Tutoring
- Mentoring
- Field Trips
- Athletic Teams/Opportunities
- Jobs/Internships
- Experiences (Ex: Bring STEM camp to students' neighborhoods; Etiquette Classes; etc.)
- Resources (Ex: computers; books for personal libraries; funding for groups who are willing to provide the activities listed above, etc.)
- Provide a centralized data collection system (either website or phone system) that catalogues student/community/parent needs as well as resources (as defined in the categories above) available to meet those needs.
- Assign staff (either volunteers or paid positions) to coordinate and set up programs in the six categories listed above throughout neighborhoods in East Baton Rouge Parish.

## 3. K-12 Education: Private & Parochial Schools

*Committee Members:* Hugh McIntosh, Daniel Banguel, Dr. Jewel J. Reuter

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- East Baton Rouge ranks #4 in the country in percent of students attending private & parochial schools (not including charters). The number is 19.1%, which is too big to ignore.
- Private and parochial schools in general are open to engaging in joint projects with public and charter schools. Everyone wants public schools to succeed.
- Reach Out and Read (ROR) is a national reading program for infants to three (3) year old children. Citywide Read, used in other cities, engages adults, teenagers, and children in reading. It fosters family reading. These programs are hereby highly recommended; they will uplift learning outcomes in schools. Public, Charter, Private, and Parochial Schools will reap the benefits of a sustained implementation of these programs.
- Opportunities for combined teacher professional development, particularly at the AP and honors levels, are present and should be encouraged.

Teacher Professional Development—Retaining good teachers, in many cases, is determined by how they feel about their career development. Ensuring the presence of good professional development opportunities among schools in Baton Rouge would contribute to stability and would enhance student performance. The school systems in Baton Rouge already employ great teachers who could be recruited to assist with enlarging professional development.

### *Major Initiatives Underway (in this area) for 2017*

We could not find any major, city-wide initiatives in early reading, beyond Head Start. Each private or parochial school seems to manage its own professional development independently through its budgeting process. EBR has a large professional development budget. Episcopal School of Baton Rouge sponsors an Advanced Placement Summer Institute which is open to broad participation by teachers in Baton Rouge and this region.

### *Proposals for New Initiatives*

Reach Out and Read—a national program designed to put books into the hands of infants-3 year olds, could help Baton Rouge greatly. ROR places books in the health clinics that help parents with healthy-infant/child visits from infancy through 3 years of age. Each time a parent comes to the clinic, a book is chosen/given to the parent to take home for the child's library. By the time a child is 3, he or she should have a personal library of 5-6 age-appropriate books. The research on this is highly persuasive in terms of preparation for academic success in elementary and beyond.

Citywide Reads—these events have been used in other cities. In Baton Rouge, the Mayor-President could lead the

### BACKGROUND AND VISION

#### *State of the Issue*

Early Reading and Preparation—Citywide, all schools across Baton Rouge—private, parochial, and public—would benefit from programs that help kids read more. Even at the highest performing schools, national testing shows weakness in “Reading” and related topics. All schools would perform better if more students were advanced in reading in ages 3-6.



announcement of a multi-level community read with a book for adults, one for teenagers, and other books for younger children. Anything that fosters family reading will show up quickly in school results. San Antonio is a good case study. A coalition of schools could help the Mayor-President advertise the programs and provide venues for discussion and promotion.

Advanced Placement Professional Development and Other High Performance Collaboration—there is a great opportunity for Baton Rouge schools of all types to join together to sponsor highly effective professional development here in Baton Rouge. Helping teachers do better in teaching Advanced Placement courses will help many students to be turned on to learning and to be better prepared for college admissions.

### ***Opportunities for Partnerships and Collaboration***

Please see above.

### ***Fiscal and Budgetary Implications***

Reach Out and Read—ROR operates independently and raises its own funds. The Mayor-President's role would be one of encouraging donors in the city to contribute. The "labor" of putting books into the health clinics is done by volunteers (which could include students).

Citywide Reads—The Mayor-President's role in this would be to recruit a core group of leaders/volunteers from the community to develop the program around the books chosen. The Mayor-President's office of communication would work in the early going to publicize the program. The appearance by the Mayor-President at public events promoting and celebrating this program's success would be a minor expense.

Collaborative Teacher Professional Development—Encouraging the various educational leaders in Baton Rouge to collaborate in teacher professional development would be the major expenditure of the Mayor-President's time, plus time of the office of communication.

### ***Department/Agency Workforce***

No new employees.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### ***Top Three Recommendations***

1. Reach Out and Read—When the Mayor-President is ready to gather a group of volunteers.
2. Citywide Read—Begin when the Mayor-President and staff are ready to assemble a group of high-level community volunteers to design and implement. Depending on the starting date, shoot for January 2018 for announcement with program running through 2018.
3. Collaboration on Professional Development—As part of this report to the public have the Mayor-President simply "encourage" this collaboration to assist highly performing students in all Baton Rouge schools.

### ***Additional Recommendations***

- Support of the Baton Rouge Youth Coalition (BRYC), which helps able public school students prepare for college admissions testing and for life in college should be encouraged. It is doing a masterful job. Have Mayor-President Broome meet with and honor these hardworking students when they are admitted to colleges. BRYC is a "community asset" of significance that could benefit from recognition by the Mayor-President's office.
- Use of MasteryPrep, a local company, to prepare students for ACT testing should be encouraged. MasteryPrep is nationally recognized as an effective aid to students, including those who struggle with testing. This is a nationally-recognized resource right here in Baton Rouge, under local ownership.
- Given the magnitude of the needs in the City-Parish, other programs should be sought in order to serve as many students as possible. In particular, the Timbuktu Academy at Southern University and A&M College has been recognized with a U.S. Presidential Award for Excellence in Science, Mathematics, and Engineering Mentoring—based mainly on the results of its college entrance test preparation of high school students.

## 4. Head Start Program, Cradle to K (Birth to 5)

*Committee Members:* Dr. Larissa Littleton-Steib, Carla Parks, Patty McMurray, Linda Johnson

### SCOPE OF REVIEW

The Head Start Program and PreK-4 programs are recognized as drivers of educational performance and attainment throughout the life cycle. The Head Start and PreK-4 Sub-committee conducted interviews with the following:

- Rebecca H. Ferguson, President, Louisiana Head Start Association
- Dr. Michelle Clayton, Deputy Superintendent, East Baton Rouge Parish School System
- Melanie Bronfin, Executive Director, Louisiana Policy Institute for Children

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Louisiana is placing new focus on the care and education of children from birth to four; however, reductions in funding hinder progress. According to a recent report from Louisiana Policy Institute for Children during the last eight years, state funding to reduce the tuition charged to working parents for quality early care and education for kids from birth to four was cut by almost seventy percent (70%). As a result, the yearly average cost for quality childcare in our state is almost as much as the cost of annual public college.

In East Baton Rouge Parish, there are 16,925 infants through four year olds needing access to early care and education; however, according to the Louisiana Public Policy Institute for Children, there are only 5,405 publicly funded seats. This means that there are 11,520 children who do not have access to early education. Here lies a key source of achievement gaps from pre-K to college.

90% of brain development occurs from birth through the age of four. High quality early learning experiences that are rich in stimulation nurture brain development. Children who have not had early learning experiences do not do well in school and school districts across the state spend millions of dollars to help these children catch up, but, unfortunately, many will not. Fundamentally, research has shown that children who enter kindergarten behind are more likely to stay behind. In our review of the Head Start Program and Pre-K4 Program, we learned that in order for a child to be eligible for Head Start he/she must be 100% in poverty. That means that kids who are 99%, 90%, or 80% in poverty are not poor enough to have access to early education. Additionally, Head Start is a federally funded program and there have not

been any efforts to leverage additional resources that would enable the program to increase the number of children served.

Governor John Bel Edwards and our legislature has done a good job sustaining funding for our Pre-K Programs. As a result, East Baton Rouge Parish Public School System has the ability to serve every four year old. However, the reality is that not all of kids are being served, because seats may not be available at schools close to home. So parents opt not to send their kids.

In the Sub-committee's review, there are several initiatives that can be undertaken to provide greater access to children.

- Create an Early Childhood Leadership Council that would bring together all stakeholders to develop a master plan for early care and education for children from birth through age four;
- Leverage various private, public and federal funding sources as a means of expanding the number of kids served;
- Explore a mixed delivery model in which Head Start and PreK-4 programs are one that also includes private pay children and child care assistance children; this approach would enable a greater number of children to have access to early childhood education;
- Time constraints for this project prevented the committee from analyzing the current effectiveness of the Head Start program. The success of students when they leave Head Start and enter the public school system should be tracked.

### BACKGROUND AND VISION

#### *State of the Issue*

Here are some basic thoughts and facts:

- 11,520 0-4 year old children do not have access to early education;
  - Federal funding does not cover the cost to fill the need;
  - Must become innovative and leverage other funding sources;
  - Review of other states that are combining federal and private funding to meet the needs of children;
- 2 out of 3 young children have both or their single parent working; yet they do not have access to education;

- Must provide access to all;
- A child must be 100% in poverty to be eligible for Head Start;
  - Must seek additional funding streams to provide access to all children in poverty;
  - PreK-4 has the ability to serve every 4 year old; however, parents may not want to send their child to the school that has the opening because of location;
  - Must ensure that seats are available in the most needed area. Parents do not want to send kids to schools that are far away from home; however we must ensure that all four year olds have access to high quality preschool programs.

### Major Initiatives Underway (in this area) for 2017

The Office of Head Start Advisory Committee on Quality and Expansion mandated that Head Start develop a new initiative to encourage qualified mentor teachers to support classroom staff. Head Start teachers will receive observation, feedback, and support to promote developmentally appropriate practice. The goal is to promote continuous quality improvement and build local capacity in developing teachers as they provide high-quality educational services and improve child outcomes. The Sub-committee agrees that an excellent way to enhance teacher capacity and to promote developmentally appropriate practice is through mentoring. The individualized nature of mentoring makes it a particularly valuable approach for all teachers, whether they are new to the profession or have years of experience. Mentoring provides a model of on-the-job training, guidance, apprenticeship, and support that is well suited to staff in Head Start and Early Head Start. Budgetary implementation of this initiative will include contract positions that have the sole responsibility for mentoring new and existing classroom staff. The Sub-committee estimated that four (4) Mentor-Teachers will be needed at an approximate cost of \$30,000 each for a total cost of \$120,000. Please note this is an unfunded mandate and the existing Head Start/Early Head Start budgets will be adjusted to absorb this cost.

### Proposals for New Initiatives

N/A

### Opportunities for Partnerships and Collaboration

- The City-Parish has an opportunity to partner with Baton Rouge Area Foundation (BRAAF), Baton Rouge Area Chamber (BRAC), and the United Way to provide additional funding other than the federal Head Start funding. This would enable East Baton Rouge Parish City-Parish Government to serve more kids.
- The City-Parish has an opportunity to work with Louisiana State University (LSU) and Southern

University (SU) to assist with providing professional development and teacher training to Head Start teachers and research driven curriculum.

- The City-Parish have an opportunity to partner with hospitals and inform mothers early of the importance of early childhood education.

### Fiscal and Budgetary Implications

N/A

### Department/Agency Workforce

N/A

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Top Recommendations

- Create an Early Childhood Leadership Council that would bring together all stakeholders to develop a master plan for early care and education for children from birth through age four (4) in Baton Rouge. The leadership council should consist of stakeholders from child care, Head Start, school districts, parents, Chamber, workforce training programs and private philanthropy. Industry-Chambers are key because child care is not just about children—it is an issue that also provides a means for stability for parents to work and employers who need reliable employees. Many industries don't even realize that a portion of their absenteeism and turnover is due to breakdowns in their employees' child care situations. When a community has access to quality, reliable and affordable child care, parents win AND their employers do too. Louisiana Policy Institute for Children will have a Workforce Productive-Child Care Report coming out in April. This report will show the effects of child care breakdowns on parents' ability to work productively or even complete job training programs, etc.
- Find ways to leverage various private, public and federal funding sources (seek funding from BRAAF, BRAC and United Way)
- Ensure that every 4 year old is enrolled in a PreK-4 program and that every 0-3 year old has access to a Head Start program
- Explore a mixed delivery model in which head start and PreK-4 programs are one that also includes private pay children and child care assistance children; this would allow the federal funding to be leveraged further;
- Construct Head Start facilities throughout the city to move all programs from leased facilities to a permanent City owned facility
- Increase the salaries for all Head Start/Early Head Start staff, to align them favorably with salaries in surrounding school systems

- EBRPSS Early Head Start Program has a tremendously long wait list. There is a need to expand services and facilities
- Track success of students when they leave Head Start and enter public programs
- Develop a reporting system that will track the performance of each kindergarten student. This reporting system will provide data to track the readiness and educational performance. Such a system may

allow comparisons between children who were enrolled in head start programs, children who were enrolled in private pay centers, students enrolled in PreK-4 programs and students who were not enrolled in early education.

- Partner with four-year universities to provide teacher training opportunities to Head Start teachers and to develop a research driven curriculum.

## 5. Truancy Prevention Program

*Committee Members:* Kristen Smith, Thomas Beer, Dr. Girard Melancon

### SCOPE OF REVIEW

This Sub-committee conducted a review of state and local agencies and organizations that are working directly or indirectly on the issue of truancy in East Baton Rouge Parish and in the City of Baton Rouge. The Sub-committee's research also included local media coverage on this issue and a preliminary review of best practices nationally.

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Mayor-President Sharon Weston Broome is in a strong position to lead and to unite stakeholders for a meaningful impact on the issue of truancy in the City-Parish. She enters this office with a significant legislative track record in education. Early in her legislative career, Representative Broome established the Saturday Academy program that provides tutoring and mentorship for young people. More recently, Senator Broome passed a law to help prevent unnecessary suspensions and expulsions of elementary school students. Both of these acts of legislation are helping right now to keep kids in school and to reduce truancy across Louisiana.

Additionally, the Office of Mayor-President is uniquely positioned to govern directly and indirectly through multiple layers of municipal-, parish-, and state-level government. There are more than 50 entities engaged in tracking, reducing, and preventing truancy in some form or another, including more than 15 governmental agencies and offices, several nonprofit community organizations, and more than 30 Local Education Agencies (LEAs). Statewide data systems enable tracking of truancy cases and analysis of student attendance patterns. However, with so many agencies and organizations involved, there are almost certainly still some

gaps in leadership and oversight related to truancy. The Office of the Mayor-President appears to be the only one of these entities with both the power and position to set a Vision that includes all students and families in East Baton Rouge Parish. Throughout East Baton Rouge Parish, every school day for every child matters! However, our schools are working in vain to provide high-quality, research-proven instruction if the students who need it most are not there. So in 2012, Mayor-President Holden worked with the District Attorney to launch the Baton Rouge Area Violence Elimination project (BRAVE) a local initiative to reduce violent crime. Working with the District Attorney, School Superintendent, and Sheriff, he opened the Family and Youth Service Center (FYSC), the parish's first truancy center, to improve school attendance and reduce juvenile crime. FYSC has listed several goals to reach families and students in the local school system:

"100% of the students in EBRP will have 100% support from 100% of the adult citizens in EBRP. 100% of the students will be assessed to determine obstacles that make learning difficult. 100% of the students in EBRP will be provided the resources that makes success in school achievable."

Under Mayor-President Holden's administration, these aggressive goals were not met. Significant gains were made early on—truancy decreased by 29 percent—but this subcommittee was unable to find data or testimonials on the FYSC website more recent than 2013. Meanwhile, the Louisiana Department of Education's (LDE's) data for 2015-2016 show that the truancy rate for East Baton Rouge Parish School System (EBRPSS) was over 47%. The truancy rate for City of Baker School District last year was 40%, and some of our local charter schools had truancy rates above 30%. Clearly truancy and chronic absenteeism are persistent



problems in our communities and have deep, long-lasting implications for the vitality of the City-Parish.

Moving forward, Mayor-President Broome should set goals to understand the scope of this truancy problem and its many contributing factors, and then to take action to refine existing systems or create new, multi-faceted solutions for the future. This subcommittee highly recommends the following actions:

1. Convene Stakeholders for a Major Summit scaffolded by smaller-scale events and virtual space for ongoing collaboration. Wherever we are headed on this issue, it is clear that all stakeholders and entities working on truancy must feel bought-in and energized to take action together.
2. Develop an overarching Vision and Strategy for our Communities.
  - a. Allocate staff positions or time in the Mayor-President's office itself to drive Vision and Strategy, and to serve as a shepherd for all of the stakeholders, agencies, and organizations working on truancy prevention.
  - b. Reinvigorate or reconstitute, or launch anew an interagency task force to evaluate the status of current initiatives and collaboration in East Baton Rouge Parish.
  - c. Set in motion an independent review of existing initiatives and interagency collaboration, enlisting the expertise of an outside evaluator to help ensure accountability and transparency for the change process.
3. Develop the first parish-wide truancy initiative to communicate the Mayor-President's Vision and to drive Strategy across all stakeholder groups going forward.

Of course, a multi-faceted approach to truancy prevention and reduction will first require an assessment of current funding streams and interagency working agreements. Then, as the Office of Mayor-President moves forward, she will be in a position to leverage existing resources to drive her Vision. Additionally, a strong Vision on this issue may serve to open doors to other funding streams including corporate sponsorship, competitive grants, and other kinds of public-public and public-private partnerships. The actions and initiatives that we are proposing will require an investment of existing resources, but they are also key opportunities to communicate the Vision and to attract targeted resources for addressing the issue of truancy in the City-Parish.

The Sub-committee strongly believes that Mayor-President's administration will lead our City-Parish in becoming a national trailblazer on the issue of truancy, and we are committed to supporting her however we can for the good of our communities.

## BACKGROUND AND VISION

### *State of the Issue*

Truancy is a serious issue affecting children, families, and communities. The state's calculated truancy rate<sup>[7]</sup> last year for East Baton Rouge Parish School System (EBRPSS) was over 47% and was almost as high in certain other EBR municipalities and charter schools. At present, truancy programs are administered by school district with very little cohesive oversight or vision for truancy prevention as a parish-wide issue.

The state does have systems in place to identify and track truant students, but with an increasing number of Local Education Agencies (LEAs) in our parish there may be widening gaps for students to slip through the cracks. The total number of LEAs in the parish has grown from just one at the turn of the millennium, East Baton Rouge Parish School System (EBRPSS), to now more than 30 LEAs including the school districts of Baker, Central, and Zachary and more than two dozen charter schools. This number will continue to grow into the next decade, and so parish-wide government may need to take an increasingly central role in identifying potential gaps and encouraging collaboration across LEAs

High truancy rates are known to correlate strongly with high juvenile crime rates, and both problems can have long-lasting effects on our neighborhoods and cities. Data within East Baton Rouge Parish demonstrate a strong correlation between the truancy rates and the domicile of juvenile crime offenders within designated zip codes<sup>[8]</sup>. In East Baton Rouge Parish, 41% of juvenile crime is committed by juveniles living in only three zip codes (70805, 70802 and 70807), and 71% of juvenile offenders live in only eight zip codes. One zip code alone (70805) accounts for 17.55% of crimes committed by juvenile offenders. However, it has been demonstrated elsewhere that effective truancy-reduction programs reliably yield a high return-on-investment in terms of employment, crime-reduction, and economic growth. Therefore, the leaders and citizens of Baton Rouge must continue to acknowledge and address the problem of truancy if we hope to ensure peace and prosperity in the future.

Local intervention programs, such as the creation of the Family and Youth Services Center (FYSC) in 2012, have helped to reduce truancy at times in the past. However, the current data suggest a growing need to re-address truancy and re-engage with all stakeholders: parents, teachers, students, community leaders, social workers, researchers, business leaders, government officials, and faith-based leaders. The truancy problem is complicated and derives from a multitude of factors in homes, schools, and neighborhoods, and so intervention programs work best when services are well-coordinated and individualized.

Truancy is a serious issue in public education nationally, and our community should seek to learn from success stories in other cities around the country. So far, this Sub-committee has identified some important trends and commonalities in best practices around truancy intervention. Cities that are effectively fighting truancy are the ones that find ways to avoid criminalizing truancy and build community partnerships for collaborative assessment and problem-solving. One such example is underway in New York City:

In the summer of 2010, Mayor-President Bloomberg launched the Interagency Task Force on Truancy, Chronic Absenteeism and School Engagement—the first-ever interagency effort to reduce truancy and chronic absenteeism in public schools in NYC.<sup>[9]</sup> The interagency Task Force implemented several key initiatives:

- NYC Success Mentor Corps: Chronically absent children are matched with Success Mentors and are provided with comprehensive in-school mentoring.
- Parent Engagement: Developed new strategies for engaging parents such as Parent Summits in schools and family homeless shelters.
- Ad Council Awareness Campaign: Created a partnership with AT&T connected families with an innovative web-based Help Center that shows them how to track their children's attendance and school performance.
- Asthma-Friendly Schools Campaign: Launched an innovative new campaign to reduce asthma-related absences.
- Operation Start Strong: Coordinated a strategic outreach effort during the first critical months of school.
- New Data and Early Warning Tools: Created the first-ever data sharing confidentiality agreements, giving Success Mentors and partner community-based organization access to student data in real time.
- Wake UP! NYC: Created a multi-media celebrity wake-up call campaign with inspiration morning messages from celebrities.
- Family Homeless Shelters: Created the first-ever homework centers at all NYC family shelters.
- New Models for Connecting Schools to Community Resources: Created interagency infrastructure to help schools identify and access existing services in the community.
- Innovative Public-Private Partnerships: Created strategic incentive programs with corporate partners to improve attendance and school performance.

In their latest independent review, NYC Task Force Schools saw increases in the number of students with strong attendance (95% or above). Also, chronically absent students who were overage for grade particularly benefitted from having a Success Mentor.<sup>[10]</sup> Although the demographics of New York City are vastly different from those of Baton Rouge, the Sub-committee believes that our city and parish

can implement several of the interagency efforts and ultimately new programs and initiatives that will foster school engagement and further reduce truancy and chronic absenteeism. For example, Mayor-President Broome could implement an initiative similar to Start Strong and work closely with schools in developing partnerships to create a cultivating a strategic effort to ensure that the first few critical months of school are spent in school.

Here in Baton Rouge, media outlets have typically focused on the criminalization of truancy rather than on the efforts to decrease truancy. Our community has an opportunity now to increase dialogue about truancy and focus on innovative approaches similar to initiatives already proving successful elsewhere.

### *Major Initiatives Underway (in this area) for 2017*

Moving forward, Mayor-President Broome should set goals to understand the scope of this truancy problem and its many contributing factors, and then to take action to refine existing systems or create new, multi-faceted solutions for the future. This subcommittee highly recommends the following actions:

1. FYSC:
  - a. The Family and Youth Service Center is a component of EBR Truancy Assessment Inc., a non-profit corporation with a Board of Directors comprised of the major funding agencies.
  - b. The Family and Youth Service center works with the community to provide health, education, and human services supporting children and families in their progress toward success in school. This assistance for the students ultimately also provides support for the family as it progresses toward self-sufficiency.
  - c. In 2003, the Louisiana Legislature directed the Department of Social Services to develop an integrated service delivery system in order to meet the needs of clients. The goal is to provide the full range of social services in a coordinated and seamless manner.
  - d. Phase I includes locating participating partners that provide services to children, students, and families, which include the State of Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services, the East Baton Rouge Parish School System, and the East Baton Rouge Parish Offices of the District Attorney, Mayor-President, and Sheriff. Phase II includes incorporating non-profit organizations that provide services to children, students, and families.
  - e. Truant students and their families are assessed and an individualized service plan is created for each

child and family member to foster a successful outcome.

- f. Community Support: Elementary, middle, and high schools are identified to become the home school for FYSC students who require additional support to break the chain of failure.
- g. Neighborhood Place: Direct services are provided to the children and their families on-site at Family and Youth Service Center.

2. TASC:

- a. "...provides prompt delivery of coordinated interventions to truant children and their families in order to prevent continued absences from school."
- b. Focuses on grade K-5.
- c. Based on Best Practice Principles from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP).

3. Early Intervention Program

- a. Legislatively created
- b. Funded by court costs
- c. Managed by the District Attorney
- d. Modeled on existing program in 16th Judicial District Court

## Proposals for New Initiatives

The Sub-committee recommends that Mayor-President Broome start by providing support for existing programs and stakeholders working on truancy in East Baton Rouge Parish, but also consider establishing one or more truancy related initiatives as a part of her Vision for the community and her legacy on education. This section outlines three possible ways for the Mayor-President to take action and lead our community forward:

1. **Convene Stakeholders for a Major Summit scaffolded by smaller-scale events and virtual space for ongoing collaboration.**

Wherever we are headed on this issue, it is clear that all stakeholders and entities working on truancy must feel bought-in and energized to take action together.

2. **Develop an overarching Vision and Strategy for our Communities.**

- a. Allocate staff positions or time in the Mayor-President's office itself to drive Vision and Strategy, and to serve as a shepherd for all of the stakeholders, agencies, and organizations working on truancy prevention.
- b. Reinvigorate or reconstitute, or launch anew an interagency task force to evaluate the status of current initiatives and collaboration in East Baton Rouge Parish.
- c. Set in motion an independent review of existing initiatives and interagency collaboration, enlisting the expertise of an outside evaluator to help ensure accountability and transparency for the change process.

- d. Seek to understand deeply any and all truancy programs that are showing signs of success in addressing this problem for other cities. An independent evaluator or office staff will need to conduct a thorough literature review and then follow through with first-hand research (i.e. phone interviews) with national experts and city leaders.

Some key questions to address as the Mayor President develops her Strategy and Vision include:

- How can we aggregate and better use local data on truancy to increase our impact in high-needs areas?
- If 56.88% of juvenile crime is committed by juveniles living in only three zip codes (70805, 70802 and 70807), how does this fact inform programs and partnerships that will reduce juvenile crime and increase school attendance? What intervention programs or community-needs assessments have been done there?
- What is the present status of FYSC's work? Do they have more recent data or testimonials than what is available on their website (most of which is from 2010 or earlier)? Has Phase II of FYSC's work started?
- What direct support is offered to schools that have FYSC students? Are schools that have a higher truancy rate flagged? If so, what are their truancy prevention programs and/or programs for increasing attendance?
- Does TASC still focus only on grades K-5? What is the impact of focusing only on grades K-5, and not K-12?
- Is there some kind of resource map that can tell us how much public and private money is being spent on truancy-related programs, and how those resources are allocated across multiple agencies and organizations? If not, does the Mayor-President's office need to create something like that to navigate existing systems and make strategic decisions?

3. **Develop the first parish-wide truancy prevention initiative to communicate the Mayor-President's Vision and to drive Strategy across all stakeholder groups going forward.**

At present, truancy programs are administered by school districts with very little cohesive oversight or vision for truancy as a parish-wide issue. The state does have systems in place to identify truant students, but with an increasing number of Local Education Agencies (LEAs) in the parish there may be widening gaps for students to slip through the cracks. The Mayor-President Office's strategic analysis, Vision-setting process, and Truancy Summit will all help to shape any kind of parish-wide initiative. Possible directions for a parish-wide initiative include things like a media campaign, the



establishment of a review board at the parish level, or intensification/reconstitution of existing working groups and collaborative structures under the Mayor-President's oversight.

### **Opportunities for Partnerships and Collaboration**

The following outline is intended to help the Mayor President start building an inclusive list of stakeholders and potential partners. The list will evolve and certain stakeholders will play more central roles at various times as we move forward.

1. Education and Social Services agencies
  - a. LEAs
    - i. EBRPSS
    - ii. Baker
    - iii. Central
    - iv. Zachary
    - v. Charter Schools
    - vi. Special School District
    - vii. Recovery School District (RSD)
  - b. Louisiana Department of Education (LDE)
  - c. Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS)
  - d. Health Centers in Schools
  - e. Capital Area Human Services
  - f. Department of Juvenile Services of Baton Rouge
  - g. Private Schools
2. Executive Governments
  - a. East Baton Rouge City-Parish Government
  - b. US Department of Education
  - c. Governor of Louisiana
  - d. Municipal Government in Baker, Central, and Zachary
  - e. Adjacent parishes' City-Parish Governments
3. Law Enforcement
  - a. East Baton Rouge District Attorney's Office
  - b. Baton Rouge Police Department
  - c. East Baton Rouge Parish Sheriff's Office
  - d. Cities of Baker, Central, and Zachary Police Departments
  - e. Baton Rouge Constable Office
  - f. Office of Juvenile Justice
  - g. Juvenile Court
4. Community organizations, programs, and nonprofits
  - a. Family and Youth Service Center (FYSC)
  - b. Baton Rouge Area Chamber (BRAC)
  - c. Religious and Civic Organizations
  - d. Capital Area United Way
  - e. Louisiana State University
  - f. Southern University
  - g. Baton Rouge Community College

### **Fiscal and Budgetary Implications**

There are several government agencies and nonprofit organizations that already use public and private monies

for truancy prevention and related programs, including the City-Parish. So, it is likely that by strengthening working relationships and collaboration across those entities, we will be able to implement the proposed initiatives through existing funding streams. It is not clear at this time whether there are adequate resources being dedicated to the problem, whether it is underfunded, or whether there are financial inefficiencies across those agencies and organizations (i.e. things like duplicated efforts and ineffective programs). However, the Mayor-President's Office will need to take the first step by allocating some of its resources (initially staff positions or time) to fully understand this complicated landscape, build relationships, and set the Mayor-President's ultimate vision and legacy on the issue of truancy.

It should be noted as well, that the message matters a lot! The Sub-committee advises the Mayor-President to be visible, vocal, and relentless in making the case that her vision for truancy-reduction is a smart investment that will yield greater returns for our communities and citizens in terms of employment, crime reduction, and economic growth.

Finally, the Sub-committee wishes to highlight this issue as one that could open the door to other funding streams including corporate sponsorship, competitive grants, and other kinds of public-public and public-private partnerships. The proposed Truancy Summit and parish-wide truancy initiative will cost money to implement, but they are also key opportunities to communicate the vision and attract targeted resources for the City-Parish.

### **Department/Agency Workforce**

Oversight of any executive-level plan on truancy will require the regular/ongoing allocation of staff positions or time in the Mayor-President's office itself. This may range from a few hours a week to multiple Full Time Equivalents (FTEs) at certain points in this process. In holding a Summit on Truancy, we anticipate that hundreds of professionals working across all of the stakeholder organizations and agencies would spend one day together. Many of them might also commit to occasional or ongoing engagement via virtual workspace and future events as a part of their normal roles and responsibilities. Some staff from one or more of the participating agencies would likely contribute days' or weeks' worth of time in planning, organizing, leading, and following through with the Summit and all related objectives.

The development of any kind of parish-wide truancy initiative depends largely on what needs are identified and how well various stakeholders are already working together. A low-impact approach focused on outreach and messaging from the Mayor-President's office might require only one FTE or less. Whereas the creation of a new task force, office, resource center, etc. would almost certainly require



significant reallocation of several full or partial FTEs across multiple agencies and organizations.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Top Three Recommendations

1. Convene Stakeholders for a Major Summit scaffolded by smaller-scale events and virtual space for ongoing collaboration (Spring/Summer 2017). Wherever the City-Parish is headed on this issue, it is clear that all stakeholders and entities working on truancy must feel bought-in and energized to take action together.
  2. Develop an overarching Vision and Strategy for our Communities (January – April 2017).
    - a. Allocate staff positions or time in the Mayor-President's office itself to drive Vision and Strategy, and to serve as a shepherd for all of the stakeholders, agencies, and organizations working on truancy.
    - b. Reinvigorate or reconstitute, or launch anew an interagency task force to evaluate the status of current initiatives and collaboration in East Baton Rouge Parish.
    - c. Set in motion an independent review of existing initiatives and interagency collaboration, enlisting the expertise of an outside evaluator to help ensure accountability and transparency for the change process.
  3. Develop the first parish-wide truancy initiative to communicate the Mayor-President's Vision and to drive Strategy across all stakeholder groups going forward (Fall 2017).
3. Four partner agencies each provide \$100,000 annually toward the FYSC operating budget: the Mayor-President-President's office, the District Attorney's office, EBRSO, and BRPD. As the primary tenant of this state-owned facility, FYSC can also generate additional revenue through lease agreements with other agencies and nonprofits (such as the THRIVE Charter Academy in prior years).
  4. FYSC started with data collection around truancy and juvenile crime in 2008, and launched the facility for families in 2012. The idea for this initiative arose from community meetings in which the need for a "one-stop shop" kept coming up.
  5. The Executive Director identified some important challenges and opportunities for increasing FYSC's impact in the community:
    - a. Right now, schools can drop a student who is absent for 10+ days without knowing where that student went. Ms. Welch suggested that one solution would be for the Legislature to enact a law requiring the local district to inform FYSC of any cases in which they cannot find a student who has apparently dropped out or moved.
    - b. Relationships matter significantly, especially in working with the city's charter schools. Ms. Welch believes that there is room for greater collaboration overall, and especially with City of Baker Schools which is geographically contiguous with north Baton Rouge and also has high rates of truancy and juvenile crime.
    - c. There is a gap in the public's understanding and knowledge about FYSC that could be addressed with some kind of awareness campaign.
    - d. There may be some gaps in trust between agencies (e.g. EBRPSS employees seem wary about working with the Office of Juvenile Justice for fear of "putting a target" on certain students).
    - e. The FYSC facility is on the grounds of the former Louisiana School for the Visually Impaired, and so there is ample space for additional programming and partner/tenants. Some of Ms. Welch's suggestions include:
      - i. Co-locating public health providers at FYSC to give families easier access to certain medical services (e.g. vision, dental), social workers, and mental health services.
      - ii. Creating a Teen Center to provide rich engagement with the arts and afterschool/evening activities for at-risk students.
      - iii. Converting the institutional kitchen into

## APPENDIX:

### Interview with Roxson Welch, Executive Director of the Family and Youth Service Center (FYSC), 1/26/2017.

On Thursday, January 26, Dr. Girard Melancon and Thomas Beer spent approximately two hours meeting with Ms. Welch and touring the grounds of the FYSC facility. These are the key findings:

1. The reception area for students and families is warm and welcoming, and includes a small library for adults and children as well as a play space for young children. A sign by the entryway provides some statistics about FYSC's impact, including a "35% reduction in truancy" and that over 15,000 families have been helped by the Center.
2. The Director indicated that FYSC is serving 5,000 families right now. Several state and local agencies have offices and/or personnel on-site to provide services in collaboration with FYSC, including East Baton Rouge Public Schools, the East Baton Rouge Sheriff's Office (EBRSO), the Baton Rouge Police Department (BRPD),

Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), and the Truancy Assessment and Service Center (TASC) for elementary-age children.

learning space for a culinary program, which could also include a small restaurant or catering company along the lines of education and workforce development models pioneered by Café Reconcile and Liberty’s Kitchen in New Orleans.

- f. A persistent barrier to FYSC’s impact is that many students and families lack regular access to reliable transportation to and from the facility.

- 6. Executive Director Roxson Welch is enthusiastic about strengthening the existing partnership and finding ways to increase FYSC’s impact for the community. She can be reached at 225-239-7800 or at roxson@fysebr.org.

## 6. Adult Mentor Program

*Committee Members:* Lucas Spielfogel, Atty. Joyce Plummer

### SCOPE OF REVIEW

Within this report you will find observations and recommendations that have been developed over the course of more than ten years of work in the adult mentoring space. Given time constraints, the Sub-committee researched as extensively as possible and has been able to shed light on national best practices around coordinating community assets as well as data on the critical importance of adult mentors to low-income students’ educational attainment. The Sub-committee is confident that this report contains viable, cost-effective solutions to many of the challenges preventing our city’s mentoring ecosystem from realizing its full, immense potential.

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

(Summarized Below)

### BACKGROUND AND VISION

#### *State of the Issue*

There is copious scholarship that confirms what is intuitive: young people who consistently and formally engage with positive adult mentors attain better educational and personal outcomes than those who do not. Formal mentoring relationships between young people and caring, well-trained adults are universally valuable, but these relationships are particularly important for low-income youth, who disproportionately face resource/information/opportunity/support inadequacies and adverse life experiences that their higher-income peers generally do not.

East Baton Rouge’s public schools must commit to improving

academic offerings and building cultures that celebrate high achievement, while taking responsibility for dealing more empathically with behaviorally challenging students. To take a deficit-based approach with these students is to potentially facilitate their entry into the criminal justice system. To recognize their myriad assets is to provide the public education they deserve.

East Baton Rouge Parish’s non-school mentoring programs must also engage at a higher level. By partnering with schools, families, community members, and one another, these programs can create a web of positive adult support that enables low-income youth to overcome challenging life circumstances that impede learning outcomes and derail formal education.

In fact, East Baton Rouge Parish is home to dozens of mentoring programs that address needs all along the educational spectrum in innovative ways. City-Parish youth can find mentors to guide them from bicycle repair and spoken word poetry to creative writing and digital arts. Our city boasts initiatives that offer remediation in core subjects, ACT preparation, essay writing support, college process and financial aid guidance, safe spaces for LGBTQ youth, and much more. However, there are several challenges that prevent our city’s mentoring ecosystem from reaching its full, immense potential. These challenges can be summarized as one: a lack of coordinated collaboration.

First, EBRP mentoring programs spend considerable time, energy, and funds in their individual efforts to recruit students. There is no formal, coordinated campaign between City-Parish government, schools, and mentoring agencies to build a streamlined, collaborative student recruitment process, which would save untold resources and, more

importantly, increase outreach to thousands of students and families who currently may not be benefitting from such programs. In response to this issue, we recommend an annual, city-sponsored symposium at which all mentoring agencies could share information about their services. The symposium would introduce students, parents, and guardians to the many programs at their disposal.

Second, it is unclear just how many and exactly what types of mentoring programs exist in East Baton Rouge. The Urban Congress on African American Males in Baton Rouge is currently engaged in an effort to take stock of initiatives focused on increasing high school and college graduation rates of young Black males. We recommend that the City-Parish government support the efforts of the Urban Congress and dedicate resources for the development and maintenance of a comprehensive mentoring agency database that is easily accessible by the public.

Third, the majority of EBRP mentoring programs are not capable of offering formal transportation services, which of course negatively impacts participation. The fact that many students do not live near their schools makes it difficult to arrange for centralized school pickup and/or home drop-off locations. Because public transportation, in general, is among our city's most pressing concerns, we pay less attention to the specific, problematic relationship between inefficient public transportation and students' educational trajectories. We recommend the implementation of a public transportation service designated specifically for youth who participate in beyond-school mentoring programs. Funding for this service would come from a public-private partnership between City-Parish government and private corporations, philanthropists, and foundations.

Fourth, many of our EBRP's mentoring programs are unaware of opportunities, if they exist at all, to apply for City-Parish government funding. Many mentoring programs have shown a consistent ability to improve short- and long-term educational outcomes for East Baton Rouge Parish School System students, yet they rely almost solely on private philanthropy. We recommend that City-Parish government create a designated fund for beyond-school mentoring programs with an open, competitive grant application process. The administration of this process can be internal or via the commission of an outside agency.

Fifth, many EBRP mentoring agencies have determined that local corporations and higher education institutions are gold mines of mentoring support. The Baton Rouge Youth Coalition (BRYC), for instance, reports that just as agencies are looking for volunteer mentors, professionals and college students are seeking these meaningful service opportunities. We recommend that the City-Parish government offer incentives to corporations and institutions who connect their

employees and students, respectively, with local mentoring opportunities.

Finally, as with most cities, the nonprofit mentoring space could be described as competitive and even territorial. While it is natural that a certain degree of competition would exist, especially given the number of programs and the constant race for philanthropic support, citizens cannot ignore the efficiencies that could be reaped through the City-Parish government's facilitation of sensible collaboration between agencies that provide overlapping and/or complementary services. The Sub-committee believes this is possible to achieve without diluting individual agencies' identities or missions. To this end, the team proposes two recommendations: 1) City-Parish government promote the creation of efficiencies and elimination of overlap by incentivizing collaboration through joint grant opportunities; and, 2) City-Parish government explore models that build alliances not only within the nonprofit mentoring space but across multiple sectors.

In our report, the Sub-committee has drawn your attention to "Say Yes to Education," which models the coordinated collaboration between government, educational institutions across the age continuum, families, religious institutions, community-based organizations, corporations, philanthropists, foundations, and other entities/assets to build a powerful coalition that works in concert around students, ensuring high school and college completion. "Say Yes to Education" has achieved success in partnership with multiple cities. Our team recommends that the Mayor-President explore this and similar models.

In sum, the Sub-committee believes EBRP has the necessary resources to create a powerful adult mentoring force for all youth in need. The recommendations in this report focus on maximizing EBRP's existing resources through refinement and coordinated collaboration of current initiatives.

### ***Major Initiatives Underway (in this area) for 2017***

The only initiative underway is the Promise Neighborhood Grant, which could bring up to \$30 million over five years to North Baton Rouge.

### ***Proposals for New Initiatives***

At the center of the concerns presented in the "State of the Issue" section is a lack of coordinated collaboration by and between City-Parish government, mentoring agencies, schools, corporations, and other community assets. The Sub-committee discovered an opportunity to increase coordinated collaboration not only in the adult mentoring sector but across multiple realms to improve long-term educational outcomes for all Baton Rouge students.

"Say Yes to Education" is a remarkable organization

that partners with entire cities to mobilize existing infrastructure and assets—city government, corporations, families, philanthropy, professional associates, the school district, higher education institutions, community-based organizations, and religious leaders—to create an ecosystem in which students can not only graduate high school but continue onto and complete college.

Say Yes began with a pilot in 2008 in Syracuse, New York, and has since successfully established sites in Buffalo, New York, and Guilford County, North Carolina. The organization recognizes that many cities, including and especially Baton Rouge, tend to seek quick, disconnected fixes rather than adopting a holistic, sustainable, and community-wide approach to improving education that empowers all of a community's assets. Say Yes facilitates collaboration between the aforementioned entities in order to build a network of supports that works in concert around students, and the organization ensures that its partner cities are self-sufficient and operating sustainably before it withdraws. In Say Yes partner cities, public high school graduates who gain admission to in-state public colleges and universities are guaranteed free tuition—regardless of family income and after federal and state aid have been taken into account—through a locally-raised scholarship fund. Moreover, Say Yes National provides partner cities with \$15 million in seed capital.

We encourage Mayor-President Broome and her team to take a deeper look at whether Baton Rouge may be a strong fit for Say Yes.

### **Opportunities for Partnerships and Collaboration**

The following outline is intended to help the Mayor. As mentioned in the “State of the Issue” section, there are several relatively simple and cost-effective opportunities for mentoring agencies to collaborate under the guidance of the City/Parish government. The Sub-committee proposes that these efforts be focused on youth ages 12-18 who come from families earning \$60,000 or less annually.

- **Mentoring Agencies Annual Symposium:**  
It is recommended that the City-Parish government sponsor and administer a symposium where all mentoring agencies could share information about their services, and students/families could peruse the many programs at their disposal. This could happen over the summer, since most mentoring agencies' program calendars mirror that of the school system. For this opportunity, please contact Lucas Spielfogel (lucas@thebryc.org) to discuss further.
- **Shared Transportation Service for Mentoring Agencies:**  
Since many mentoring agencies are unable to provide transportation to their clients, it would be beneficial if there was a public transportation service designated specifically for youth who participate in beyond-school mentoring programs. Participating agencies could

be responsible for partially funding the operation, with City-Parish government sharing the remaining expense with corporations, private philanthropists, and foundations.

- **Promote Collaboration Through Joint Grants:**  
The Sub-committee recommends that the City-Parish government promote the creation of efficiencies and elimination of overlap by incentivizing collaboration through joint grant opportunities.
- **Say Yes:**  
As described above, it is recommended that the City-Parish government explore the “Say Yes to Education” model of coordinating and mobilizing community assets across sectors to improve educational outcomes.

### **Fiscal and Budgetary Implications**

The aforementioned proposals would require a moderate amount of funding, but the Sub-committee cannot speak meaningfully to their budget implications. Notwithstanding that team members have admittedly little knowledge of the City-Parish government's capacity to financially support mentoring agencies, it is believed that our proposals are financially viable.

### **Funding opportunity**

The federal government reserves hundreds of millions of dollars annually in its Gear Up fund. Higher education institutions can apply for large, multi-million-dollar awards and commission Baton Rouge mentoring agencies to support local high school students. The City-Parish government can support institutions of higher education in applying for these grants and coordinate an effort whereby mentoring agencies could submit proposals to be commissioned under them.

### **Department/Agency Workforce**

It is difficult to predict exactly how many full- and part-time staff members would be required for the aforementioned proposals and below recommendations. However, it is recommended that the Mayor-President commission a small team of full-time staff members as part of her administration who could better coordinate mentoring agencies' efforts, including but not limited to our recommendations.

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## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Top Three Recommendations**

1. Shared Transportation Service for Mentoring Agencies. (Start of 2018-2019 school year)
2. Mentoring Agencies Annual Symposium. (Summer 2017)
3. Explore “Say Yes to Education” to determine if Baton Rouge is a good fit to be a partner city. Or, at least, consider the tenets that drive the model. (Summer 2017)



## Additional Recommendations

- Create financial incentives for corporations and colleges/universities to connect employees and students, respectively, with youth mentoring opportunities. (August 2017)
- Create designated fund for beyond-school mentoring programs and administer open, competitive grant application process. Or, commission an outside agency to do the same. Capital Area United Way could support the City-Parish government since they have experience conducting this exact process. (August 2018)
- Create a comprehensive, easily accessible database of all youth mentoring programs in the city so students and families have a “menu” to choose from. (May 2018)
- Explore best practices for running a Mayor-Presidential administration that builds a collaborative nonprofit space and promotes alliances without loss of agency identity. (ASAP)

## Additional Commentary

When it comes to youth mentoring, the Sub-committee believes our city has many of the assets it needs to make a significant dent in the support gaps low-income students disproportionately face. The Mayor-President is uniquely positioned to mobilize and coordinate these agencies in order to create an impact that is greater than the sum of its parts.

At the Mayor-President’s request, this Sub-committee would be happy to further explore or discuss the abovementioned recommendations. Our team’s suggestions are concrete, actionable, and relatively cheap considering the return on investment they promise in the form of educational attainment and future economic stimulation—not to mention foregoing the cost that comes when young people become a drain on the society that was first a drain on them.

# 7. Parental Involvement (through the Mayor-President’s office)

*Committee Members:* Fran Harvey, Dr. James Gilmore, Alisa Welsh

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

It is this Sub-committee’s recommendation that an initiative to better understand parental involvement and how it directly affects student achievement begin immediately as a pilot project. Such a project can lead to improved student achievement and ultimately build better and stronger connections between schools and community organizations.

## BACKGROUND AND VISION

### State of the Issue

It is well noted that the City of Baton Rouge’s newly elected Mayor-President, Sharon Weston-Broome, brings a wealth of successful public service experience to her position as Mayor-President the City-Parish. The position she has accepted involves some very important and complex issues. The Mayor-President is in a unique position to make a positive impact on the quality of our educational system by appealing to her constituency—many of whom are parents or guardians of EBR Parish school students.

Of the issues, parental involvement is an important area which offers the opportunity for significant gain for all our students<sup>1</sup> (public [121], non-public [63] (private and parochial), and early childhood centers [133] in the educational system [317]) throughout East Baton Rouge

Parish. Improved parental involvement will also help our community at large by building stronger connections between schools and community organizations.

This committee intends to clearly indicate where our community may need parental improvement and to offer recommendations about how to accomplish objectives addressing the needs. Effective parent involvement can be divided into six core categories outlined in this report. The Mayor-President’s efforts and broad geographic reach, parish-wide, will help facilitate a two-way communication link between school and parents. The Mayor-President and her office with the support of the EBR Parish School System Superintendent, can help to provide a non-intimidating environment to promote and encourage parental support.<sup>2</sup>

### Major Initiatives Underway (in this area) for 2017

The following major initiatives are as provided in the Report #2, K-12 Education: Public School Systems and Charter Schools.

- “Triple A + C”

An initiative that provides focus on: Academics, Arts, Athletics/Activity; Character. Goals are set for each category and actionable steps toward attaining those goals are written and implemented. Students and staff are the active participants, ensuring the steps are taken

towards goals until they are attained. Students gain the benefits offered through instruction provided and knowledge attained relative to each category. They learn core beliefs and practices that prove beneficial as they make noted incremental steps forward toward improved levels of academic achievement, and gain personal confidence.

- **High Schools of Excellence**  
An initiative involving all East Baton Rouge Parish high schools whereby diverse committees plan out the academic and career pathways to be offered by each high school.
- **BRYC – Baton Rouge Youth Coalition**  
**thebryc.org**  
During and after-school programs that provide activities, teach leadership, conflict resolution skills and encourages and prepares high-achieving, under-resourced high school students to enter, excel in, and graduate from college so they can become full participants in society.
- **LOOP - Louisiana Outdoors Outreach Program**  
Provides outdoor education to underserved and at-risk by utilizing positive outdoor experiences to promote healthy social-emotional development of its target audience.
- **YMCA**  
Organization that offers structured after school and summer programs for children
- **After-school Care**  
School sponsored care that provides supervision, academic support and planned activities.
- **City Year**  
Supports the school with supervision and active student engagement during the course of the school day.
- **iCARE**  
Teaches through activities and lessons key character traits, personal care and awareness and conflict resolutions.
- **JumpStart**  
State initiative - Jump Start is Louisiana's innovative career and technical education (CTE) program. Jump Start prepares students to lead productive adult lives, capable of continuing their education after high school while earning certifications in high-wage career sectors.
- **Boys Hope Girls Hope**  
A network of 15 US and three Latin American sites that prepare young people to thrive in college, career, and life. Scholars are enrolled in the program in middle school and they participate in a wide spectrum of youth development and academic programming and receive support through college degree completion.
- **My Brother's Keeper**  
Addresses persistent opportunity gaps faced by boys and

young men of color and ensures young people can reach their full potential. Through this initiative, cities and towns, businesses, and foundations are taking important steps to connect young people to mentoring, support networks, and the skills they need to find a good job or go to college and work their way into the middle class.

- **TRIO Programs**  
TRIO Programs are federally funded programs such as Upward Bound and Educational Talent Search that assists students from low-income families. Upward Bound provides fundamental support to participants in their preparation for college entrance. The program provides opportunities for participants to succeed in their precollege performance and ultimately in their higher education pursuits. Upward Bound serves: high school students from low-income families; and high school students from families in which neither parent holds a bachelor's degree. The Talent Search program identifies and assists individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds who have the potential to succeed in higher education. The program provides academic, career, and financial counseling to its participants and encourages them to graduate from high school and continue on to and complete their postsecondary education. The program publicizes the availability of financial aid and assist participant with the postsecondary application process.
- **Big Buddy**  
Big Buddy provides ongoing asset-based programming for youth ages 5 to 18 focused on building resiliency against poverty, crime and academic failure.
- **Gloryland Baptist Church Summer Experience**  
Summer program that provides reading, cultural and social enrichment activities, music, drama, dance, computer lab, weekly library visits and field trips every Friday for children in pre-K through middle school
- **BRAC's Virtual Schoolhouse**  
An online portal that connects business and industry representatives to classrooms and students for mentoring, work-based learning and more.
- **Black Family Initiative**  
Pastor Donald Hunter (Target Glen Oaks)

### *Proposals for New Initiatives*

A new initiative would be a pilot project model focusing on geographically selected school in our inner city. A total of 89 schools will be evaluated for their current parental involvement and for increasing parental involvement where needed, see attached map.<sup>3</sup> The map's legend includes early learning centers (31), public schools (31), non-public schools (19) and charter schools (8). The initial phase includes efforts to better understand the current level of parental involvement and the second phase would identify critical metrics, (such as brochures, panels, phone calls,

transportation, childcare and parent liaison) and objectives to meet. The initiative would evaluate the phases over one (1) to two (2) years. “Barriers to achievement within schools” must be identified.<sup>4</sup>

The pilot project model could then be implemented parish-wide.

### ***Opportunities for Partnerships and Collaboration***

Opportunities for partnership and collaboration between educators, parents, teachers, students, and community leaders—each uniquely qualified to serve—will consider costs of the pilot project. For example, outreach to foundations to foster the project and lend resources to sustain fiscal and budgetary implications will be developed. Another phase of the pilot project is to establish a Parent University to promote lifelong learning.

### ***Fiscal and Budgetary Implications***

The workforce investment to launch the Mayor-President’s new initiative on parental involvement will achieve a level of success not previously seen throughout our City-Parish and will far exceed the capital required.

### ***Department/Agency Workforce***

High-performing schools with involved families and communities share three key practices as a report in “A New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family, and Community on Student Achievement”. This study was conducted by The National Center for Family and Community Connections with School. The three key practices are:

- Focus on building trusting collaborative relationships among teachers, families, and community members.
- Recognize, respect, and address individual family needs, as well as class and cultural differences.
- Embrace a philosophy of partnership where power and responsibility are shared.

Footnotes:

1. No matter the economic status or background (Jeynes 2007), students with more involved parents are more likely to earn higher grades and test scores, enroll in more demanding academic programs, attend school regularly, demonstrate better social skills, graduate from high school, and go on to post-secondary education (Henderson and Mapp 2002).

Henderson, Anne T. and Karen L. Mapp. “A New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family, and Community Connections on Student Achievement.” National Center for Family and Community Connections with Schools, Southwest Educational Development Laboratory. (2002) Web. 11 Jan 2017.

2. The Sub-committee will work with other Sub-committees and their respective findings; Head Start Program, Cradle to K (birth to 5), Truancy and Adult Mentor Program and lifelong learning through Parent University.
3. Map of EBR Parish Inner City Schools Pilot Project Map, F. Harvey, LA RS GIS Institute, January 2017.
4. Dervarics, Chuck and Eileen O’Brien. “Back to School: How Parental Involvement Affects Student Achievement”. Center for Public Education. 30, Aug 2011. Website 11 Jan 2017.

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## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### ***Top Three Recommendations***

1. Pilot Project to begin immediately
2. Pilot Project Phase 1 Evaluate status of current Parental Involvement with support from EBR School Board.
3. Pilot Project Phase 2 Report findings and make recommendations

### ***Additional Recommendations***

Any additional recommendations will come as a result of the Pilot Project

### ***Additional Commentary***

As a result of this Sub-committee’s research, it has received several important documents to submit for the Mayor-President’s review.

1. EBR Parish School Board Policy Manual on Parental Involvement in Education
2. EBR Parish School Systems’ 2013 Strategic Policy Committee on Education Excellence
3. The Leadership Conference Education Fund ~ Parent and Family Engagement Provisions in the Every Student Succeeds Act

## 8. The Unique Role of an Education Mayor-President

*Committee Members:* Liz Smith, J. D., Eva Kemp

### SCOPE OF REVIEW

The scope of the this Sub-committee's report includes a vision of a "super education Mayor-President," and a set of practices and actions undertaken by Mayor-Presidents of other cities in the realm of education.

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overwhelmingly, our subcommittee has a vision of a "super-education Mayor-President" who serves as a unifying voice for our city-parish. The members envision a Mayor-President who brings together both the citizenry and the leaders of education to form a cohesive plan for improvement that serves all parts of the City-Parish and all of her children. This vision of the "super-education Mayor-President" is one who actively engages in the conversations about education in our city-parish, and uses her position as a way to drive a learning culture, guide disparate opinions toward the greater good of serving student interests, as well as create and maintain a variety of specific programs. Each member of the subcommittee made recommendations of actions that such a Mayor-President might take, which fit into seven overarching categories:

1. Be a unifier
2. Be visible in schools and in education issues; be an advocate for education, be engaged in the issue
3. Work toward universal Pre-K / birth to 5 schooling
4. Lead conversations about school quality, standards, and expectations
5. Meet regularly with school superintendents, BESE members, and K-12 educators
6. Lead the creation of a compact between traditional public schools, charter schools, and parochial / private schools; build bridges between traditional public schools and charter schools
7. Create and manage a variety of programs

The Sub-committee offered fewer suggestions in response to the question regarding practices of Mayor-Presidents in other cities. The responses included:

- Houston and San Antonio have exceptional reading programs
- Cities should serve as a support mechanism to productive schools
- Some cities are engaged in the "my brother's keeper" initiative
- Indianapolis

- West Sacramento
- Washington, D.C.
- St. Louis

Education systems drive the vitality of cities. High levels of education attainment translate into a citizenry prepared to engage in the social contract, able to foster economic growth and innovation, and more. The reputation of education systems either supports or undermines talent development and recruitment, as people and businesses seek high-quality public education where they make their homes or places of work. It is because of this ubiquitous effect of education in all other aspects of a city-parish's success that the Mayor-President must engage on the issue. In no small way, education system success begets local government's success.

At this moment, there are several key education issues facing our city-parish that a Mayor-President can address. These include: 1) the threat of a fourth breakaway school district—and incorporated city—driven by dissatisfaction with the existing EBR School System; 2) the financial, facility, and enrollment issues faced by both charter and traditional public schools in the City-Parish; and 3) overarching and crucial problems caused by low levels of education attainment of our citizenry including poverty, crime, a lack of social vitality, and others.

The Mayor-President serves a special role that currently does not exist in our education system. She is the single person in the City-Parish who was chosen by a majority of the citizenry. That cannot be said for any one school leader, school board member, or even superintendent. She therefore maintains a unique position of being able to serve as a single, unified, voice for the children and citizenry of the city-parish. Further, her lack of direct authority over our education systems can be viewed as an advantage, as she can step outside the day-to-day activities of running schools and present a high-level view for change unaffected by ego. The Mayor-President's special position should allow her to ask that those egos and their related concerns about turf and tradition be left at the door, so that all education stakeholders can focus on one thing: better serving the entirety of our city-parish's children in a holistic and realistic way. As former Mayor-President Beverly O'Neill of Long Beach, CA said, "If there are issues in education, the Mayor-President is the only person who can typically bring all the stakeholders together to identify solutions. This is the most important role a Mayor-President can play regarding education."



## BACKGROUND AND VISION

### State of the Issue

Education in the City-Parish is a complex issue. It spans subjects such as quality, equity, choice, race, access, poverty, and more. It includes complex problems like transportation, technology, finances, facilities and others. School quality is the lifeblood of a city, playing a critical part in whether the city prospers, enjoys economic opportunity, and is a magnet for talented and creative people. In the recent past, the City-Parish's Mayor-President has been relatively hands-off in the traditional realm of education—a typical trend across the country up until the early 2000s. While programs within the former Mayor-President's Office have certainly existed and operated for out-of-school programming, youth jobs, mentoring, and others, the regulatory set-up of our state (which gives little direct authority for education institutions to the Mayor-President) and the complexity of the issue, have likely been the greatest reasons past Mayor-Presidents have engaged only on the periphery of the issue.

Nonetheless, there is a role in education for the Mayor-President that does not require statutory or other official authority—it requires only passion, leadership, and facilitation. Some of the major issues apparent within our education system can be solved if stakeholders are willing to come together, set egos aside, and make difficult but critical decisions for all children in our city-parish. Addressing the concerns of the people of the parish—From all corners of the parish—can be done with strategic leadership from a Mayor-President. As stated by the U.S. Conference of Mayor-Presidents, “Because education is such a complex enterprise, even the savviest superintendent, the most harmonious school board, and the most engaged parent community can benefit from the additional capacity a Mayor-President's leadership can provide to a school system.”

(Fritz-Edelstein, U.S. Conference of Mayor-Presidents, Mayor-Presidential Leadership and Involvement in Education: An Action Guide for Success, <https://www.usMayor-Presidents.org/74thWinterMeeting/edguide2006.pdf>)

### Major Initiatives Underway (in this area) for 2017

St. George—preventing the resurgence of a movement to form a new city and new school district within our parish is vital to future success of EBRPSS and the City-Parish. A study by Drs. Jim Richardson, Roy Heidelberg, and Jared Llorens (*On the Possibility of a New City in East Baton Rouge Parish*, 2013) showed the devastating economic impact on the existing school system and City-Parish that would result from formation of the new city. A second study by Drs. Richardson and Heidelberg (*School District Restructuring and Reform*, 2012) demonstrated the increase in inequity and racial disparity that would take place should a new

district be formed. While advocacy efforts have thus far successfully prevented this threat from coming to fruition, a lack of publicly visible action by education and other leaders to address the concerns of the many parish citizens in favor of the breakaway is concerning. This lack of action may serve as a catalyst to those individuals in support of the breakaway, invigorating them for another attempt, and even more concerning, invigorating their neighbors who may have been sympathetic to their movement but unsure about participating. Promises were made by civic and education leaders to reach out to the supporters of the breakaway district and city, but no real movement has taken place and their concerns have as yet gone unaddressed.

School Choice—the expansion of school choice in the City-Parish continues. Many parents, dissatisfied with the quality of public education provided by the parish school system, have chosen to enroll their children in charter schools. Nonprofit and other organizations have worked diligently to ensure that the newest group of charter schools growing in the parish have a track record of success in increasing student achievement. In a place where dissatisfied parents with means regularly choose private education providers for their children, the right of dissatisfied parents without means to choose a better option for their children must be protected. While that right is vital to providing excellent educational options for all kids, the financial and other effects of school choice on the existing system should not be ignored.

Nonetheless, it is clear that both charter schools and traditional public schools are struggling in their situations. Resources, including finances and facilities, are being stretched. Further, the contentious relationship between the two types of entities—wherein students are referred to as “ours” and “theirs”—is not healthy for student achievement and limits a gold standard of educational service. An equitable solution, one that focuses on providing families choice in schools and providing an excellent education to all the children in the parish, can be reached if all stakeholders agree to address the issues collectively.

School Improvement—many of the schools in our City-Parish, both traditional public schools and charter schools, do not meet the bar of school quality that our children and their families deserve. This has been a catalyst for a number of negative actions in our history, among them are the movement for St. George and the Southeast School District, the out-migration of many EBR families to nearby parishes with higher-ranked public education systems, and the difficulty many local businesses face in recruiting talent to the area. Social problems like crime and poverty are exacerbated by low-levels of education achievement, and can only be truly addressed when high-quality education is available to all students.

## Proposals for New Initiatives

The Sub-committee has several specific suggestions for new initiatives in the form of programs. These include:

- a. Reading programs—visit local elementary schools regularly to read to the children; a “city read” for students and adults
- b. Student jobs / work-based learning
- c. Student recognition
- d. Book supply
- e. Behavior / truancy
- f. Nutrition in schools
- g. Health classes / P.E.
- h. Out-of-school activities
- i. Learning materials / technology for check-out
- j. Parent support / training
- k. Alternative schools with vocational / technical education
- l. Career and technical education

Mayor-Presidents in other cities have been engaged in education in the following ways:

- St. Louis Mayor-President Francis Slay has made education a priority and has run two different slates of candidates for the school board. He worked with the school board during its process to select a new school superintendent. Mayor-President Slay has been instrumental in driving a fast pace of reform in the city’s school district. He also took the lead in making sure that information about the school deficit and future school budget conversations became more public and transparent.
- Indianapolis Mayor-President Bart Peterson has a unique form of partial control: he is the only Mayor-President who has been given charter school authority by the state legislature. As such, he oversees a system of public charter schools that is separate from and parallel to the traditional public school system.
- Denver Mayor-President John Hickenlooper has supported and helped obtain very strong public support for a new teacher’s contract based on performance.
- During three terms as Mayor-President, Long Beach Mayor-President Beverly O’Neill’s key priority has been establishing and maintaining a working partnership with the superintendent, the city, business, and higher education.
- San Jose Mayor-President Ron Gonzales works not only with the San Jose Unified school district superintendent, but all of the superintendents in the school districts located within San Jose to ensure that the city’s policies don’t adversely affect students and teachers.
- Louisville Mayor-President Jerry Abramson established “Neighborhood Place,” a program that links education and related social services focused on children and families.
- Miami Mayor-President Manuel Diaz has a hands-on working relationship with the Miami-Dade County

school superintendent, even though Miami-Dade is a county school system, and encompasses more than the city of Miami.

- Akron Mayor-President Donald Plusquellic and the school system are working closely together to plan the construction of new schools so they will be joint use facilities. The city is co-funding this project with the state.
- Bridgeport Mayor-President John Fabrizi works closely with the city’s new school superintendent so that education is part of the city’s strategic plan for economic revitalization.
- Philadelphia Mayor-President John Street, as well as Mayor-Presidents in Oakland, Trenton and Providence help select school board members.
- In Des Moines, the Mayor-President has a close relationship with the school superintendent to help address ongoing challenges such as changing demographics.

(Fritz-Edelstein, U.S. Conference of Mayor-Presidents, Mayor-Presidential Leadership and Involvement in Education: An Action Guide for Success, <https://www.usMayor-Presidents.org/74thWinterMeeting/edguide2006.pdf>)

Seven-term Mayor-President of West Sacramento, Christopher Cabaldon, started engaging in education through after-school programs, and support for high-quality early childhood education. He then moved to supporting school choice and higher levels of accountability for schools. At a conference for the National Association of Public Charter Schools in 2014 he stated, “I have no direct authority for public schools, but I have total responsibility for what happens in my city because of their failures...as the Mayor-President, I force the conversation about closing failing schools.” He stated that his support for schools is, in part, a strategy for urban restoration, in which he uses block grants to assist in building high-quality schools.

According to the National League of Cities, there are several key roles that Mayor-Presidents can play in education that do not require official authority over their local education system. These include:

- Set the public’s agenda and articulate the city’s vision to reach consensus around specific goals for school improvement.
- Facilitate ongoing communications with school district leaders to build trusting relationships, lay the groundwork for collaboration, and minimize “turf” issues.
- Bring community partners together—including business, community and faith-based organizations, libraries, museums, and others—to assess progress regarding school improvement and to leverage their resources to support schools.
- Remove obstacles to achievement by using city resources

to help children and youth maximize their learning potential, address health and social service needs, and enhance student safety.

- Build public awareness and commitment by engaging parents and community residents, using public forums and media outreach to raise critical issues and share responsibility for shortcomings and successes.

(Hutchinson & Wyngaart, Stronger Schools, Stronger Cities, <http://www.nlc.org/Documents/Find%20City%20Solutions/IYEF/Education/stronger-schools-stronger-cities-cs-2004.pdf>)

According to the Center for American Progress, however, there are benefits to Mayor-Presidents of larger cities having a far more active role in education.

- In Washington, D.C., a more active Mayor-Presidential role in education has led to increased test scores, more efficient budgeting, and serves as a catalyst for reform.
- Of important note, the often referenced “Mayor-Presidential control” does not always refer to complete control or authority of the local school system. Rather, Mayor-Presidential governance can impact schools in a variety of ways, including appointing a member or members to the school board or creating an ancillary, support organization.
- Washington, D.C. has also proven to be a model for how charter schools and traditional public schools work in partnership rather than in competition by forming two oversight boards that work in conjunction with the Mayor-President’s office to determine performance, enrollment capacity and planning.

(Wong & Shen, Mayor-Presidential Governance and Student Achievement, <https://cdn.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Mayor-PresidentialControl-6.pdf>)

### Department/Agency Workforce

Mayor-President should have a senior-level staffer who serves as the education liaison and policy person for her administration. This person should be familiar with the educational landscape of East Baton Rouge Parish, including its many educational providers—traditional public school districts, charter schools, private schools and parochial schools. This staff member should also be versed in state and federal education regulations, so as to fully understand the reality of requirements placed upon education institutions and the realm in which they operate. This person should deal with implementation of high-level policy changes, partnership and relationship building, and more. In addition, the Mayor-President should hire and maintain adequate staff to implement those programmatic activities that are of priority to her.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Top Three Recommendations

1. To address the possibility of a new city and school district: The possibility of this district and city poses a threat to the prosperity of the existing district and city, and if it were to become a reality, it would fundamentally change the operation of the City-Parish government. The Mayor-President is in the best position to hold education leaders accountable to fulfill their promise to address the concerns of the supporters of the breakaway district. She can facilitate these conversations, propose meaningful solutions, and hold both sides accountable.
2. To address the complexities of school choice: The Mayor-President should use her role as the unifying voice of the City-Parish to demand better for her citizenry. Rather than a fight over “our” kids and “their” kids, rather than accusations about stealing resources, rather than working in silos and only engaging when required by law—and even then, with tension and anger—education leaders must come together to develop solutions. The Mayor-President should lead development of strategic plan or compact for public education providers that addresses the complex issues existing in our City-Parish and builds relationships between education providers and leaders. This is vital to protecting the right of City-Parish parents to “vote with their feet” on school quality, providing an excellent education to all students in the parish, and protecting the existence and future of all education entities.
3. To address school performance: The Mayor-President’s position allows her to drive discussions about school quality, and to use her bully-pulpit demand that low-performing schools of all types be redeveloped with a greater focus on student achievement. The reality of a child’s life is that they only have one shot at each year of high-quality education. If their school does not serve them well for several years in a row, they will never recover those years, nor gain a second chance at educational success. This reality makes it imperative that low-performing schools make immediate and bold changes, so that the brief time that children spend in them is not wasted. The Mayor-President should serve as a visible curator of education excellence, setting a tone and culture for the entire city-parish and using her position to publicly hold education leaders to her high expectations.

Each of the above issues is complex and long-standing. Solving the problems in our education system certainly won’t happen overnight, but immediately starting work in visioning, setting goals, making plans, and forging relationship can ensure that we reach successful solutions as soon as possible.



## Additional Recommendations

- Within the first six months in office, the Mayor-President should include the school superintendents (EBRPSS, Central Community Schools, Baker City Schools, Zachary Community Schools, and the Recovery School District Baton Rouge) or their appointee in her cabinet in order to ensure unity between the City-Parish and its school systems.
- Within the first year in office, the Mayor-President should create a commission that can support the ever evolving portfolio of schools in the City-Parish. This commission would be responsible for oversight and public accountability of the public schools in Baton Rouge, including traditional and public charter schools. This commission would provide information to the community around enrollment opportunities, gifted/talented opportunities as well as performance. This commission would also be tasked with analyzing enrollment capacity across the City-Parish to ensure greater opportunity and equity across Baton Rouge. This commission should lead the development of a public school compact and should include leadership from the following organizations: East Baton Rouge Parish Public Schools, the Recovery School District, New Schools for Baton Rouge, Teach for America, the EBR chapters of the Louisiana Association of Educators and Louisiana Federation of Teachers, Together Baton Rouge, Our Schools Our Excellence, Stand for Children, and the Baton Rouge Area Chamber.
- Within the first 18 months, the Mayor-President should conduct a review of after school providers, as well as school safety.
- Within the first 18 months, the Mayor-President should create a task force on early childhood education, in partnership with the Louisiana Department of Education, the parish public school systems (including RSD), and the metro council to review existing early childhood education options and to explore current and potential funding sources for expansion.
- Within the first six months, the Mayor-President should host her first town hall on education for parents, teachers, students and community members.
- Within the first 6 months, the Mayor-President should create a task force to explore and address the education-related concerns of the supporters of the St. George incorporation. This task force should include the Mayor-President or her designee, the EBR leadership of that effort.
- The Mayor-President should have a senior-level staffer who serves as the education liaison and policy person for her administration. This person should be familiar with the educational landscape of East Baton Rouge Parish, including its many educational providers—traditional public school districts, charter schools, private schools and parochial schools. This staff member should also be versed in state and federal education regulations, so as to fully understand the reality of requirements placed upon education institutions and the realm in which they operate. This person should deal with implementation of high-level policy changes, partnership and relationship building, and more. In addition, the Mayor-President should hire and maintain adequate staff to implement those programmatic activities that are of priority to her.

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[1] WIOA Sec. 3(26) includes the first formal definition of “industry or sector partnership,” and includes requirements for states and local areas to develop and implement such partnerships. The term “sector partnership” is used in this paper.

[2] Brooke DeRenzi and Bryan Wilson, “Skills in the States: Sector Partnership Policy,” National Skills Coalition, August 2015. <http://www.nationalskillscoalition.org/resources/publications/file/2015-08-Skills-in-the-States-Sector-Partnership-Policy.pdf>.

[3] “Labor Education Alignment Program Annual Report 2016,” Tennessee Higher Education Commission, last accessed April 29, 2016, <http://www.tn.gov/assets/entities/thec/attachments/LEAPReport2016.pdf>.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid.

[6] “2015 Annual LEAP Report: An Occupational Analysis,” Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development, last accessed April 29, 2016, <https://www.tn.gov/assets/entities/thec/attachments/leap2015-111915.pdf>.

[7] <https://www.louisianabelieves.com/resources/library/district-state-data-reports>

[8] <http://www.fysc-eb.org/>

[9] NYC Report

[10] [http://www.nyc.gov/html/truancy/downloads/pdf/esummit\\_presentation.pdf](http://www.nyc.gov/html/truancy/downloads/pdf/esummit_presentation.pdf)



# FLOOD RECOVERY

**Co-Chairs:** Perry Franklin, Bryan Jones

**Committee Members:** Aneatra Boykin, Edgar Cage, Jason Field, Lillian Grossley, Adam Knapp, Donald Lewis, Camille Manning-Broome, Jimmy Screen, Tim Temple, Robert Twilley, Vanessa Walker-Lee, W.T. Winfield

## SCOPE OF REVIEW

In Louisiana, our greatest asset and export is that of its The Flood Recovery Sub-committee considered the state of flood recovery; specifically the immediate and long-term needs of flood-affected residents that the Mayor-President can directly impact through leadership, policy, and action.

The Mayor-President recognizes the heavy involvement to date of state and federal resources in flood recovery.

The Sub-committee will develop recommendations for how the City-Parish can increase its involvement in flood recovery considering existing state and federal efforts. The team sought information from state and federal entities currently administering flood recovery as well as local recovery efforts and individual accounts.

The team should address issues including, but not limited to, restoring damaged property; clearing title to damaged property; neighborhood clean up; waste removal and storage; social services support; and outreach to affected individuals, families, and businesses.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to record and advance the recommendations made by the Flood Recovery Sub-committee, to build East Baton Rouge City-Parish capacity for the mitigation, response, and long-term recovery from the August 2016 flood event.

## BACKGROUND AND VISION

### *State of the Issue*

The 2016 Louisiana floods damaged or destroyed approximately 155,000 residential and commercial structures—many of them outside the 100-year flood zone and therefore not required to carry flood insurance. The state and capital region now face a staggering housing and economic crisis, where many residents must decide whether to and/or how to rebuild. As a result, like with past disasters, an opportunity now exists to rebuild resilient homes,

businesses, and critical infrastructure in East Baton Rouge Parish and the surrounding areas.

The United States had fifteen 500-year rain events in 2016, two in Louisiana. Globally, the planet has seen record temperatures each month in 2016, and annual temperatures have set records the past three years according to The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). NOAA also finds since 1960, there has been a 27% increase in precipitation in the southeast United States. The Midwest, which drains through Louisiana via the Mississippi River, has also experienced a 37% increase in severe rain events. Higher temperatures mean more moisture in the air, resulting in more significant rain and flood events. East Baton Rouge Parish's watershed flows into Lake Maurepas, which due to the combined factors of sea level rise and subsidence, now receives tidal influences from Lake Pontchartrain. The newly released State Coastal Master Plan predicts changes in Lake Maurepas could threaten East Baton Rouge Parish's watershed. The devastating floods of 2016 present not only an opportunity for the City-Parish to rebuild stronger and more equitably in every corner of the parish, but to formulate policies and protocols that will place East Baton Rouge Parish in a stronger position when the next flood event occurs.

### *Major Initiatives Underway for 2017*

- East Baton Rouge Parish, as a Housing & Urban Development (HUD) Entitlement Community, received nearly \$12 million in HUD Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds. The Mayor-President and her administration should review the City-Parish plan that was submitted to the State of Louisiana's Office of Community Development (OCD) and HUD to ensure it is in line with the Mayor-President's priorities and transition team reports. There may be time to review and amend the original plan previously submitted.
- An initial \$438 million in HUD CDBG funds will be dispersed by the State to a number of parishes including East Baton Rouge Parish, with the majority dedicated to long-term housing recovery.
- \$1.2 billion has been approved by Congress to allocate towards Louisiana flood recovery. The action plan for these funds was approved by the Governor's Restore

Louisiana Task Force, published for public comment and submitted to HUD to ensure funds are dispersed as quickly as possible to affected homeowners. If the City-Parish has a strong enough inclination either against an inclusion or for an omission, there may be an opportunity to amend the action plan as it works through the approval and implementation process. It remains of utmost importance the Mayor-President continue to present a detailed assessment of the current conditions and flood recovery needs of the City-Parish, as they continue to evolve, along with a comprehensive strategy for how East Baton Rouge Parish (inclusive of Zachary, Baker and Central) will strategically leverage federal funds to ensure a robust and sustainable recovery. It remains the intent of the Governor and the congressional delegation to seek additional funds from the Congress.

### *Proposals for New Initiatives*

Louisiana is embarking on yet another long and expensive disaster-recovery process, preparing to program billions in recovery funds. It is urgent that the long-term interests of our residents and businesses are protected by ensuring resiliency is the backbone of the state and region's recovery strategies. East Baton Rouge Parish has the opportunity to be a leader in its recovery by incorporating "resilience" as a guiding principle into East Baton Rouge government policy, especially for City-Parish recovery programs, plans and investments.

The August flood also highlighted the substandard housing conditions in many lower-income neighborhoods across the parish. With residential codes being honored more in the breach than in the observance, the flooding revealed—in the absence of a comprehensive housing strategy or a prioritization of the housing needs of vulnerable populations—there exists the risk that recovery within communities that struggled with inadequate housing before the flooding may be uneven, incomplete, or unrealized. For the City-Parish to recover quickly from disasters—natural or manmade—neighborhoods must be healthy before an event.

### *Opportunities for Partnerships and Collaboration*

- Conduct a "resiliency academy" workshop—The workshop will focus on constructing and retrofitting resilient infrastructure in East Baton Rouge Parish. The goal of the multi-day exercise is to ground participants in key concepts of risk and resilience so they might develop a more comprehensive approach to their planned and proposed infrastructure projects going forward.

The workshop should open with plenary presentations on risk and resilience, including best practices in innovative resilient design. A majority of the workshop should take place in the context of facilitated breakout

groups. Assigned teams of 5-10 participants should workshop planned infrastructure projects to determine their resilience values, identify key stakeholders, optimize project design, and outline a plan of action for implementation.

The Center for Planning Excellence (CPEX) and partners in January 2017 conducted a similar highly successful workshop based on the proposed model for Lafayette Parish Mayor-President Joel Robideaux.

- Develop a housing strategy for East Baton Rouge Parish that addresses substandard housing—Addressing substandard housing will strengthen neighborhoods, make them less vulnerable to future events, and promote healthy, resilient and long-lasting communities. Embedded in this strategy is the recognition that regular and routine code enforcement for residential structures, in large measure, is practically nonexistent in East Baton Rouge Parish, creating an abundance of housing stock that was substandard before the August floods. The flood compounded this challenge and highlights how a policy of benign neglect created neighborhoods that have even greater obstacles to recover. For decades, resistance to a robust code enforcement has centered on the argument that it would seriously compromise housing affordability, particularly in rental properties.
- Ensuring code enforcement is adequately funded—This strategy is a critical element in fighting neighborhood decline, preserving sound neighborhoods, and restoring distressed areas. The significant role that code enforcement plays as a first responder to substandard, vacant, and foreclosed homes and the policy value that code enforcement can offer in protecting neighborhoods and stabilizing property conditions has not been fully appreciated. When used proactively, code enforcement can help local governments identify, halt and reverse the negative impact of vacant, abandoned, and problem properties. Relationships with local and national philanthropy should be deepened or developed to assist with the development of such a strategy.
- Explore grant opportunities in spring 2017—It is important to pursue grant opportunities with organizations such as Pew, Robert Wood Johnson, Healthy BR and CPEX to incorporate Health Impact Assessments into recovery and resilience planning. Such an effort would maximize benefits of recovery and resilience investments by including health metrics and improved public health outcomes in planning and project design, thereby addressing both longstanding health disparities as well as adverse health effects resulting from the floods.
- Develop comprehensive partnerships with the nonprofit community for future disaster events. The nonprofit community in the City-Parish played a major role in the immediate response and recovery phases

following the August flood event—and continues its efforts. It is recommended that the Mayor-President and a sub-organization of City-Parish government formally establish a nonprofit liaison position to coordinate ongoing activity to ensure not only nonprofit organizations are efficiently utilized but private organizations as well (e.g. shelters like Celtic Media Studios) to maximize response and recovery while assisting those in need of housing options to reduce the risk of homelessness following a disaster.

- Identify, review and leverage best practices and maintain key relationships with organizations that could prove to be partners of the City-Parish—Entities such as The Water Institute of the Gulf, City-Parish Office of Community Development, the East Baton Rouge Redevelopment Authority, CPEX, the East Baton Rouge Housing Authority, the Governor's Office of Homeland Security & Emergency Preparedness (GOHSEP), OCD, FEMA Region VI, as well as local and national philanthropic organizations could all play important partners.

### **Fiscal and Budgetary Implications**

East Baton Rouge Parish will have access to three primary sources of funds from this disaster: Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP), HUD CDBG, and FEMA Public Assistance (PA) program. State and local governments will receive far fewer resources than the cost to repair and recover from this disaster. East Baton Rouge Parish must be smart and efficient in how it uses its resources for public infrastructure and resilient recovery. As an example, project audits should be conducted to determine where they are in the planning process and if the projects could be enhanced to add long-term benefits such as increased water storage capacity, decreased run-off, etc.

The City-Parish currently has a five percent (5%) budgetary contingency established for disaster-related expenses. It is recommended that City-Parish leadership review this practice and thoughtfully consider any modifications—decrease, remain the same or increase—to this policy. From discussions with City-Parish finance officials, this contingency appears to be adequate for emergency funds and initial match for the August flood event but may not be sufficient once all FEMA PA damages are assessed and realized.

The State's full \$1.6 billion plan for HUD-CDBG disaster funds for the March and August events now include \$105 million for reimbursing local governments for their share of match expenses due to FEMA PA. It is likely that the City-Parish plans to replenish the funds or plans to expend to FEMA PA from the contingency funds. It is recommended the replenished funds be held aside for other disaster recovery needs that will arise, particularly related to possible additional PA and HMGP match costs to come in the future.

The City-Parish should, as previously noted, cultivate deeper relationships with local and national philanthropy, and research and advocacy organizations to assist in the development of a plan that captures best practices, proven solutions and clearly articulated measures of East Baton Rouge Parish housing goals.

### **Department/Agency Workforce**

Given the significant number of flooded homes—and potential for significantly increased blight across the parish—there is great need for increased resources to lead the inspection and condemnation process for the City-Parish. From interviews with City-Parish staff, residents and other stakeholders, it is estimated there are hundreds of homes that are either already condemned or could be condemned. Increased positions needed include but are not limited to inspectors, laborers to demolish structures and haul off material and legal services. It is suggested the City-Parish prepare a RFQ for legal services associated with the condemnation process.

The need for additional code enforcement personnel is a longstanding challenge we urge the City-Parish to address. Strategic, integrated code enforcement does not need to present deterrents to housing affordability, but can instead act as a driver for healthier neighborhoods with increased values. The “Building American Cities Toolkit” produced by Enterprise Community Partners contains strategies and recommendations which can serve as a guide for policy changes by the City-Parish in the areas of vacant, blighted and substandard housing (available at <http://www.communityprogress.net/toolkit-home-page-pages-292.php>).

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## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Top Three Recommendations**

1. Institute a long-term solution to combat the forthcoming significant number of abandoned and blighted structures that are predicted to pose a significant health and safety hazard in the future as these structures deteriorate over time. Unlike Hurricane Katrina, it is highly unlikely any Road Home-like acquisition program will materialize. A robust data repository to track damaged properties at risk of abandonment should be developed to monitor progress or lack thereof. The magnitude may warrant a multi-parish solution to acquire, reposition and place back in commerce these properties under the leadership and direction of an agency (e.g. East Baton Rouge Redevelopment Authority).
2. Implement a major two-pronged increase in code enforcement activities that will encourage rebuilding and encourage swift action on abandoned properties:
  - a. Enforce the City-Parish's existing ordinances regarding property maintenance to ensure homeowners are not surrounded by poorly



maintained landscaping, litter, abandoned vehicles and other structures and trash

- b. Fees and fines that are levied for failure to maintain properties should be dedicated solely and directly—by ordinance—to the East Baton Rouge Redevelopment Authority for restoration of blighted and abandoned neighborhoods
3. Prior to the Mayor's inauguration, there has been a dearth of leadership on flood recovery efforts. Mayor Broome and the administration should expeditiously meet with Governor John Bel Edwards and host a meeting of the Restore Louisiana Task Force in East Baton Rouge Parish to present the real cost of the flood disaster for the City-Parish and its residents. Outreach should also be made to HUD demonstrating leadership and a commitment to a resilient flood recovery. Other parishes have made this outreach and are realizing extra resources as a result.

### Additional Recommendations

- Conduct a review of the \$11.1 million “sanctioned funds” allocation to City-Parish Office of Community Development that will be managed by the State's Office of Community Development. Mayor-President Broome should review and sign-off on the current program of projects.
- Immediately maximize all FEMA PA program funding and approve, if not yet granted, funding the further assessment of damages for all remaining, un-assessed FEMA PA projects (e.g. roads, bridges and other infrastructure). The City-Parish has conducted some but not all of its estimates of damages to determine FEMA PA eligibility in new project worksheets, including some infrastructure damage assessments. All remaining PA worksheets must be on a tightly controlled schedule for completion and regularly monitored for progress. The battle over cost estimates with FEMA takes years and cannot be forgotten. A coordinated FEMA PA plan in partnership with the other parish governmental entities (e.g. East Baton Rouge Parish School System, BREC, Baton Rouge Library System and others) may help coordinate strategies to maximize PA funds for a more comprehensive view of the long-term recovery of the parish.
- Strongly demonstrate public support for the completion of the Comite River Diversion project and a willingness to partner with neighboring parishes to develop a joint strategy (e.g. Livingston) to see that the project is funded and constructed.
- Create an East Baton Rouge Disaster Recovery Commission that will include critical local agencies from all parish governmental bodies (not only those under the City-Parish budget), as well as private business, impacted citizens and housing experts. Other parishes have established the practice of managing long-term recovery at a local level through a coordinating committee.

It should meet regularly and provide citizen input opportunities as a public body. Livingston and Ascension parishes have established such commissions for this flood event.

- Review debris and waste disposal contracts and plans and make necessary modifications. The current debris and waste disposal contracts and plans in place were established based on traditional storm-related disasters that have been primarily wind events. A significant majority of debris from prior events (e.g. Hurricane Gustav) has been vegetative debris (trees, limbs, etc.) and not structural debris (sheetrock, carpets, flooring, studs, etc.) or electronic debris (appliances, wiring, etc.). Debris collection and landfill contracts in place do not adequately address these types of debris and should be updated to include these considerations for future events. Fortunately, the City-Parish had contracts in place for debris removal after the August floods, allowing for a quick response and higher FEMA reimbursement to the City-Parish. The City-Parish should review all the post-event activities it contracts for and have as many in place before an event in order to speed recovery.
- Develop a comprehensive housing strategy that incorporates best practices, proven solutions and clearly articulated and measurable parish housing goals. The housing strategy would recognize the importance of a diverse range of housing options for City-Parish residents and would include code enforcement strategies to provide the foundation for stronger and healthier neighborhoods that can withstand future events and recover more quickly when they occur. Such a plan should be developed in the context of the efficiencies and impact that could be achieved by the possible consolidation/greater coordination of the City-Parish Office of Community Development, a sustainably funded East Baton Rouge Redevelopment Authority and the East Baton Rouge Housing Authority.
- Conduct a comprehensive review of all ordinances and codes in place that may be outdated and do not properly address latest trends and innovations associated with disasters (e.g. discourage use of flood-resistant materials for future construction, etc.)
- Consider a leadership role in development of comprehensive regional drainage model (like the New Orleans Urban Water Plan) and plan of projects (even if unfunded) that outlines projects that could mitigate flood damage as a result of future events. This model should be developed in coordination with neighboring parishes, other municipalities, state agencies and flood protection authorities.
- Develop and implement a Regional Water Management Plan with Livingston and Ascension Parishes to build on existing resources such as the Amite River Basin Commission and The Water Institute of the Gulf to develop current basin-wide systems and evaluate historical projects (e.g. Amite River Diversion, Wards



Creek dredging) and evaluate future projects and potential impacts. Such a plan may consider:

- a. Identification of areas (possibly for acquisition of frequently flooded drainage ways) for multi-functional mitigation such as increased water retention in the Comite Diversion, expanded conservation areas, expanded flooding areas, natural stream/channel design and implementation to increase hydraulic capacity
  - b. Review building ordinances, proposed and current infrastructure for unintentional adverse flooding impacts (e.g. parishes without flood mitigation, existing infrastructure preventing drainage)
  - c. Combine UDC and requirements under Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ) to achieve benefits such as including increased carrying capacity, better infrastructure and quality storm water runoff
  - d. Encourage use of inherently-resilient residential building practices such as pier and beam construction that can easily be raised if necessary
10. Assist residents (homeowners and renters) through a comprehensive communications campaign and revision of City-Parish ordinances and policies emphasizing the importance of making smart decisions that will build stronger, safer, and more resilient communities. Implicit in this is the need for a science-based approach to understanding the watershed and how our land-use decisions impact the natural system. We cannot continue to allow haphazard development to occur in floodplains and other high-risk areas. Resilience planning should not solely be a public works exercise, but should be an integrated, multi-disciplinary process incorporating the work of multiple departments, such as work in neighborhood planning, land use planning, economic development and transportation planning. Recommendations may include:
- a. Work regionally on the development of a regional systems-based watershed plan (as noted above)
  - b. Layer development decisions over the watershed plan to understand negative consequences
  - c. Work to remove political injection from Planning and Zoning decisions
  - d. Audit the UDC through a resiliency lens to ensure the City-Parish is incentivizing and supporting healthy and high-standard homes that will not be susceptible to flooding in the future
  - e. Hire an expert Resiliency Officer to work across departments and agencies to build resilient design into all aspects of planning, infrastructure, housing and drainage
  - f. Maximize resiliency-building measures that retain, store, and drain water to reduce risks from flooding events in the future
  - g. Ensure infrastructure projects reflect system-level thinking in which disparate projects are thought of as part of larger infrastructural networks (e.g. roadway project impacts should be considered as part of the larger network of roads)
- h. Consider update to Future BR Comprehensive Plan as a result of the flood event
  - i. Ensure there is staff skilled in reading and interpreting abstracts
11. Develop a “Playbook” or Pre-Disaster, Mitigation Plan that clearly define roles and responsibilities for each department as it relates to the Emergency Management Cycle (Planning, Response, Recovery, Mitigation)
- a. Data and systems (e.g. Web EOC, LouisianaPA.com) should be combined with policies
  - b. Must have qualified staff to implement and work during a crisis
  - c. Identification of assets, status of damages, etc.
  - d. Timekeeping policies to appropriately track labor for reimbursement
  - e. Review all contracts (debris removal and monitoring, grants management, CDBG, etc.) and Cooperative Endeavor Agreements (CEAs) with other jurisdictions (Baker, Central, etc.)
  - f. Ensure other existing contracts (e.g. Sanitary Sewer Overflow contract, etc.) have the ability to exercise “emergency work” eligible for reimbursement
12. Develop a communications plan for all stakeholders. Such a plan should set appropriate expectations in a detailed timeline and phased approach based on what the public should expect at various stages (planning, response, recovery, mitigation). Make it a known and annual program inclusive of both public and private organizations. It is critical the City-Parish be an indispensable resource for information for citizens seeking information about recovery efforts after an event. Robust and varied communication strategies after a disaster are ways for the City-Parish to affirm its role as a trusted source of timely, accurate information. A full use of social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram), the City-Parish “Metro 21” channel and informational sessions coordinated through neighborhood-based and faith organizations is essential to calm residents’ fears, dispel disinformation and provide guidance on sources of assistance and the phases of recovery.
13. Leverage local and national philanthropy after a disaster and take a leadership role in coordination. In the wake of the August floods, citizens and organizations from across the country donated over \$3 million to the Baton Rouge Area Foundation (BRAf) to support recovery efforts in East Baton Rouge Parish. National philanthropy also contributed toward relief and recovery efforts. The City-Parish should be engaged with private, charitable institutions after an event to ensure public and private support is coordinated as best as possible to leverage impact and aid impacted populations.

14. Instruct the various public works departments to implement a comprehensive cleaning of all gutters, catch basins and other drainage structures ahead of anticipated spring rains minimize potential for localized flooding. It is recognized many neighborhoods have substantial debris remaining near streets and drainage infrastructure that could pose drainage obstruction.
15. Consider development of a parish-wide storm water master plan that outlines a robust program of projects to address parish-wide drainage issues. Funding for such work may require increased revenue through a ballot initiative or some reallocation of existing City-Parish funds.

### *Additional Commentary*

All City-Parish personnel were extremely accommodating and responsive to all requests and the Sub-committee would like to recognize their willingness to participate and provide support to this assessment and recommendations. The Sub-committee strongly believes the City-Parish will fully recover from the devastating floods of 2016 and will emerge as a stronger and more resilient community.

# HEALTHCARE, SOCIAL SERVICES & MENTAL HEALTH

**Co-Chairs:** Alma C. Stewart, RN, MS, CCHC, Steven Kelley, MD

**Committee Members:** Annette Austin, George Bell, Rev. Eugene Collins, Judy Ewell Day, Teri Fontenot, Dr. Stewart Gordon, Jan Kasofsky, Kimberly Hardy-LaMotte, Rep. Edward “Ted” James, Karen Lee, Dr. Jeff Littleton, Eric McMillen, Deana McClain, Tonia Moore, Andrew Muhl, Tonja Myles, Jade Poitier, Rob Reardon, Pat Robinson, William Silvia, Susie Sonnier, Edgardo J. Tenreiro, K. Scott Wester, Rani G. Whitfield, Betsy Wilks

## SCOPE OF REVIEW

In Louisiana, our greatest asset and export is that of its people. The Healthcare, Social Services & Mental Health Subcommittee was charged with considering how East Baton Rouge City-Parish government can improve its approach and response to the healthcare and social services needs of its residents. Community well-being, economic development, crime and education are all impacted by the quality and quantity of a community’s healthcare, social services, and mental health support programs, institutions and delivery models. The team addressed how the City-Parish can improve its performance in these areas.

The Healthcare, Social Services & Mental Health Subcommittee also considered Mayor-President Broome’s campaign priorities with regards to healthcare, social services and mental health. Her specific statements included:

1. Create a community health center in North Baton Rouge that serves as a national model for high-quality, efficient health care delivery for the underserved.
2. Utilize the existing resources to strengthen primary care, and leverage existing city, state, and federal partners to create a standing emergency room.
3. Decriminalize mental health and support the creation of a mental health and behavioral stabilization center.
4. Create a healthy city model and eliminate food deserts in underserved communities.
5. Sustain and strengthen existing hospitals and services in all corridors of the city.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The healthcare industry is experiencing considerable uncertainties as the Affordable Care Act (ACA) is facing “repeal and replace” on the federal level. This may impact Medicaid and could have a major effect on Louisiana as the state has a large Medicaid population and recently implemented Medicaid expansion under the ACA. Further complicating matters is the longstanding budgetary reductions in Louisiana that resulted in the state placing an increased burden on local governments for healthcare and

public health services. The closure of Earl K. Long Hospital contributed to a problem with access to healthcare in the Baton Rouge and surrounding areas. Behavioral health services are also lacking with even fewer resources since the closure of this public hospital’s Mental Health Emergency Room Extension. Additionally, some residents of the City-Parish are underserved when it comes to access to healthcare, globally and in pockets of north Baton Rouge and other areas within the parish.

This report provides a summary of the major initiatives underway related to healthcare, social services and mental health in East Baton Rouge, opportunities for partnerships and collaboration, potential financial and budgetary implications, and recommendations for the Mayor-President’s consideration. The subcommittee developed three key recommendations to address significant barriers in access to healthcare, social services and mental health. The more daunting barriers include limited resources for mental health to address the needs of adults and youth and inequitable access to healthcare, social services, mental health services. A lack of primary care coupled with challenges in navigating a complex healthcare systems are a major obstacle to care, and transportation is another barrier.

The subcommittee proposes three key recommendations as follows:

- I. Leverage existing and potential increases in federal, state, local, private, and foundation resources and programs to maximize financing and improve population health.
- II. Develop and maintain leadership, innovation, integration, and coordination across systems, among East Baton Rouge programs, including social services and with communities to address the needs of the community.
- III. Strengthen and develop equitable access to healthcare, social services, mental health services that meets the diverse needs of East Baton Rouge residents appropriately.

Additional details and commentary for the Mayor-President’s consideration are so included in the Sub-committee’s report. For example, incorporating the social determinates of health

through the lens of health equity into the development of a plan to implement innovation, integration, and coordination across systems, and among East Baton Rouge programs; adopting a health in all policies ordinance as many systems impact the health and well-being of area residents; and exploring the creation of a local health department and hiring a Health Commissioner to serve as the Chief Health Strategist. Additionally, the subcommittee concluded that the Mayor-President's administration should create an interim Health Transformation Task Force to advise the Mayor-President on continued efforts to address and implement the Sub-committee's recommendations. The report recognizes that Healthy BR is the foundation for a healthy city model; however, it needs to be expanded to meet the needs in underserved communities.

The Sub-committee encourages local officials to seek partnerships and collaborations with Louisiana colleges/universities, the U.S. Public Health Service, local law enforcement agencies, and primary care providers to assist with improving access to healthcare, social services and mental health, and to assist with curbing violence and crime prevention efforts. The subcommittee's report provides several examples and models to consider as the City-Parish tackles improving access to and coordination of care.

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## RECOMMENDATIONS

### *Top Three Recommendations*

1. Leverage existing and potential increases in federal, state, local, private and foundation resources and programs to maximize financing and improve population health.
  - a. Create a funding mechanism that will increase and leverage all means of financing, hire someone with strong health finance expertise to lead the City-Parish in expanding its resources in this area. Streamline the existing infrastructure by reducing unnecessary duplication of administrative functions and consolidating all healthcare and social services related services. These efforts can take place by looking at how parish funding is being used and whether it is effective and efficient. It is also recommended that the administration consider 'zero-based' funding and seek more grant funding.
  - b. Redefine the role and job description of Healthy BR staff with the position reporting to a high level within the Mayor-President's Office. This person will be responsible for reorganizing healthcare and social services. Healthy BR has been recognized by the National League of Cities as a collaborative healthy city initiative to increase healthy food access and physical activity. It provides an existing structure for a healthy city model that has promoted measures to eliminate food deserts
2. Develop and maintain leadership, innovation, integration, and coordination across systems, among East Baton Rouge programs, including social services and with communities to address the needs of the community.
  - a. Explore creating a health department and hiring a Health Commissioner to serve as the Chief Health Strategist, to coordinate and oversee all health care, health-related and social services in the parish as well as evaluate and organize current resources and services. This could include, but may not be limited to, Emergency Medical Services, Emergency Preparedness, Anti-Drug Task Force, and the Department of Human Development and Services. The Health Commissioner (HC) should also develop a health promotion program through education and the enactment of health-related policies to eliminate health disparities. This individual could work with the multiple entities within the City-Parish to improve service integration. The HC would not manage healthcare service delivery options, but serve in a leadership role for the following:
    - Population health
    - Coordination of hospitals, primary care services, social services, and mental health
  - c. Explore the feasibility of creating a Hospital Service District as allowed for under Louisiana law (LRS 46:1051 of 2011). This parish-wide district can be an entity by which the City-Parish government can leverage health dollars to maximize access to care and improved outcomes for its citizens.
  - d. Assess the implications of Medicaid repeal and potential efforts to block grant Medicaid and develop a clear understanding of what that may mean for access to healthcare within East Baton Rouge Parish.

in underserved communities. Healthy BR leads the work around the four prioritized needs (HIV, Overutilization of Emergency Departments, Mental and Behavioral Health, Obesity) of the unified Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) conducted jointly by the five local hospitals (Baton Rouge General Medical Center, Lane Regional Medical Center, Our Lady of the Lake Regional Medical Center, Surgical Specialty Center of Baton Rouge, and Woman's Hospital). All area hospital executives serve on the Board of Directors of Healthy BR—this structure helps to fulfill the hospitals' requirements under the Affordable Care Act. The Mayor appoints the members of the Board of Directors and should review its composition to ensure that it is diverse, includes primary care providers and members of the community. There is also an advisory board that could be expanded to create an infrastructure to work in collaboration with additional stakeholders.



- Take on public health issues/crisis
- Coordinate with environmental agencies
- Coordinate with emergency preparedness for communities
- Coordinate with all healthcare agencies
- Healthcare leadership
- Data warehousing, tracking, and surveillance
- Incorporate community-wide resiliency efforts including training, planning and services to mitigate the impact of recent floods and potential future disasters
- Work with providers to increase accountability for meeting the needs of the underserved

The HC could partner with Healthy BR to implement a plan of action. The HC could work with the Governor's office and the Louisiana Department of Health (Medicaid Division) to explore ways to maximize healthcare financing to the betterment of the City-Parish. In light of the decreased state support for local public health (closure of Earl K. Long Hospital, Mental Health Emergency Room Extension, poorly funded public health unit), this is a critical time in history in terms of how best to maintain a quality health system for our citizens. The HC could explore the possibility of creating a single Parish Health Unit/Community Health Center with satellite services available in the six parish Community Centers (Chaneyville, Kelly, Newman, Butler, Martin Luther King, and McKinley). Given the great need for mental health services in this community, and in light of the recent failure of the crisis center tax, it is imperative we quickly establish the financial means to create such a center. The HC could build upon the community's interest and momentum to lead this effort as well. The HC should work with the Council on Aging to allocate part of the new spending authority for developing senior healthcare programs throughout the parish.

- Create a Health Transformation Task Force that is action-oriented, composed of individuals who are experts in the field, to advise the Mayor on how to prioritize health access, and review Healthy BR further. Creating an integrated and innovative Health Transformation Task Force will be inclusive of the community. During its creation, it's important to not only include the viewpoints of the providers, but also the voices of the community. The Task Force should be time limited for six to twelve months and report to the Health Commissioner or to the highest level possible within the Mayor-President's Office.
  - Create or adopt a strategy for addressing health equity such as the Minnesota Triple Aim of Health Equity. The Triple Aim of Health Equity provides a framework to address health disparities that includes the following: implement health in all policies with health equity being the primary goal, expand our understanding of what creates health and strengthen the capacity of communities to create their own healthy future. City-Parish policies and programs should be drafted through the lens of health, as many impact the health and well-being of the population. Stakeholders need to commit to understanding the root causes of social determinants of health, such as poverty and lack of education and healthcare, and working together to addressing those root causes. This practice will advance health promotion and population health. Furthermore, the dialogue between healthcare providers and the community needs to be strengthened in order to have a prodigious impact on the community.
  - Develop a master plan to establish priorities for addressing the social determinants of health, including affordable housing, education and poverty. This plan should include II.3 above. Together, the administration and community members and providers can develop guiding principles that will help address block grants and contracts among partners. Perform community assessments to build and establish relationships among members of the community and include using wellness coaches and advocates to educate and engage the community.
  - Seek partnerships and collaborations as well as maintain communication with stakeholders to align and mobilize our resources around a common goal. It is important to bring the appropriate people to the table to ensure that everyone has the same goal and allow differences to be discussed.
  - Conduct a review of the existing systems to identify and address any disincentives to encourage providers to coordinate around a common goal of implementing the best practices for healthcare, mental health and social services.
  - Incorporate crime prevention and education into healthcare by developing a partnership and collaborating with local law enforcement and community policing to address the crime/violence issues that impact healthcare and healthcare access such as gun violence, gang violence, domestic violence, sexual trauma, drugs and alcohol use/abuse, bullying, etc., and victim assistance services.
- Strengthen and develop equitable access to healthcare, social services, mental health services that meets the diverse needs of East Baton Rouge residents appropriately.
    - Meet the diverse needs of the community by focusing on access to healthcare globally and in pockets of North Baton Rouge and other underserved areas within the parish. Partner with primary care providers to improve access and

coordination of care in our City-Parish. Expand community-based health clinics in underserved communities to increase access to integrated primary and preventative care, implementation of innovative best practices, and enhanced use of technology.

- b. Develop a multi-disciplinary approach to solving the behavioral health crisis that focuses on appropriately treating mental illness and substance abuse, and on keeping mentally ill patients out of jail. Support the creation of a mental health and behavioral stabilization center. Use Baton Rouge General Mid City or the former Woman's Hospital, which is already owned by City-Parish, to intake and treat patients. Look at potential avenues for supporting treatment services.
- c. Develop more resources for behavioral health to address the needs of children and youth. Invest in our youth through Early Head Start (EHS) and Head Start (HS); both programs are under the direction and leadership of local government. Mayor-President Broome's team can work with the Metro Council to invest more dollars into the EHS and HS programs thereby helping as many children possible enter school ready to learn. Local government currently does not invest many, if any, parish dollars into EHS and HS. A greater investment of local dollars would increase access to children currently on the EHS and HS waiting lists. Assist the schools in having providers place social workers to ensure that mental health assistance is provided in schools. Seek partnerships and collaborations with Louisiana colleges/universities to provide interns and graduates with appropriate degrees to help meet the behavioral health needs of youth in the East Baton Rouge School System.
- d. Utilize the existing resources in North Baton Rouge to strengthen primary care and leverage existing city, state, and federal partners to create a full-service standing emergency room. As stated in I.3 above, explore creating a Hospital Service District as recommended by Together Baton Rouge. Develop a neighborhood of business incubators for local jobs and create incentives to attract healthcare providers into the area. Officials can also utilize existing resources by looking at the utilization rates of those who access healthcare using geo-maps to determine where the primary care facilities/ different institutions and providers are within the city. It's important to know exactly what exists and through this research, officials can better determine where the facilities need to be placed strategically.
- e. Create a community health program in North Baton Rouge that serves as a national model for high-quality, efficient healthcare delivery for the

underserved that includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Reducing non-urgent emergency services
- Advancing the practice of patient and family centered care
- Promoting medication therapy management for at-risk populations
- After-hours, school based services
- Increase access through telemedicine
- Data driven with community input about the needs

Work with providers to develop community/ medical home models. Consider the Together Baton Rouge proposal for co-locating primary care providers and behavioral health providers in North Baton Rouge. The proposed model will focus on primary care and prevention. There are some "health deserts" in North Baton Rouge that need to be addressed such as a lack of pharmacies, primary care provider's offices, and of course transportation.

- f. Work with the Capital Area Transit System to strengthen and improve access to appropriate transportation. Develop reasonable hours of operation and location/pick up sites and look at how this design can be a more affordable form of transportation. Determine whether or not transportation is adequate in remote or rural pockets of the parish. Other services may include park and ride and timely bus services. It is suggested that Uber-like services and even hiring community drivers to increase workforce activities be implemented. Transportation apps and services via cellphones or smart phones can also be implemented that would provide riders information to see where the bus routes, location and when it will arrive through an online tracking system.
- g. Seek out a partnership and collaboration with the U.S. Public Health Service to establish East Baton Rouge as a duty station which would attract more healthcare providers and assist with improving access to healthcare in North Baton Rouge.
- h. Explore opportunities to assist the Office of Juvenile Services with high quality provision of coordinated medical, dental and behavioral health services for youth frequenting the services provided in the Juvenile Detention Center. These vital services are necessary for incarcerated adults and could be part of the same services needed to support the adults housed in the Parish Prison. By investing in correctional health care services, the detained and incarcerated are more likely to remain healthy and require less costly services upon release from detention or prison.

## APPENDIX A:

### Models for Consideration

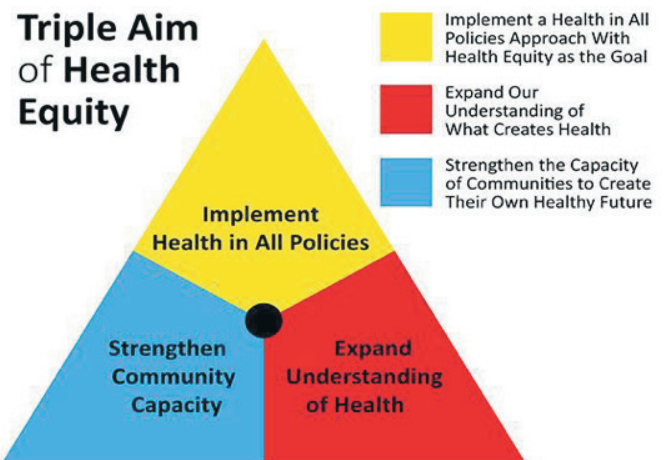
#### The Minnesota Triple Aim of Health Equity Model

The “Triple Aim of Health Equity” was developed under Dr. Edward P. Ehlinger’s leadership in his role as Minnesota Commissioner of Health, President of the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO). The Minnesota Department of Health developed a philosophy that values improving health equity. The Triple Aim of Health Equity is a multi-pronged approach to improve health equity by:

1. Expanding our understanding of what creates health
2. Implementing a Health in All Policies approach with health equity as the goal
3. Strengthening the capacity of communities to create their own healthy future

Improving health equity requires multi-sector organizations. The model benefits from strong support and coordination from stakeholders from local health organizations, federal agencies, nonprofits, foundations, universities, and other organizations, to operationalize the Triple Aim.

For more information, please visit the following websites:  
<http://www.astho.org/Health-Equity/2016-Challenge/Ehlinger-Commentary-Article/>



#### American Hospital Association

American Hospital Association is a national organization that represents and serves all types of hospitals, health care networks, and their patients and communities. Their mission is to improve the health of individuals and communities. The AHA leads and assists hospitals, health systems and other related organizations that are accountable to the community and committed to health advancement. The American Hospital Association’s framework for health reform, Health for Life embraces the need to engage patients and families and contemplates the role of hospitals and health care systems in improving the overall health of the population and communities they are serving. The framework is described in their report, American Hospital Association’s Engagement of Health Care Users: A framework for Healthy Individuals & Communities.

For more information, please visit the following websites:  
[http://www.aha.org/research/cor/content/engaging\\_health\\_care\\_users.pdf](http://www.aha.org/research/cor/content/engaging_health_care_users.pdf)

#### Pathways to a Healthy Bernalillo County Program

The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality Health Care Innovations Exchange to improve quality and reduce disparities has identified a model, the Pathways to a Healthy Bernalillo County Program. This program uses an innovative approach to the original Pathways

Model to identify vulnerable, low- and very low-income, underserved residents and connect them to a wide variety of health and social services. Clients are identified through interagency referrals, word of mouth, street outreach, and other means by the program’s network of 14 community-based organizations. Community health navigators help individuals and families access additional health and social services, assists with coordination of care, and monitors client progress. Participating agencies receive payments based on their ability to identify at-risk clients, connect them with needed services, and achieve positive outcomes, while a central hub and database help coordinate client services. The program has enhanced access to needed services for many of the more than 2,860 unduplicated clients served in its first five years of operation, with more than 1,570 completing all

their pathways and exiting the program which indicates a successful outcome.

To learn more, please visit the recommended websites below:  
<https://innovations.ahrq.gov/profiles/community-health-navigators-use-pathways-model-enhance-access-health-and-social-services>

<http://www.cjaonline.net/publication/view/pathways-partner-interview-summary-report-june-2016/>

<http://hsc.unm.edu/community/chwi/pathways/program-model.html>

## Accountable Health Communities Model

The Centers for Medicaid and Medicare's Accountable Health Communities Model is based on emerging evidence that addressing health-related social needs through enhanced clinical-community linkages can improve health outcomes and reduce costs. Unmet health-related social needs, such as food insecurity and inadequate or unstable housing, may increase the risk of developing chronic conditions, reduce an individual's ability to manage these conditions, increase health care costs, and lead to avoidable health care utilization. The model aims to recognize and address beneficiaries' health-related social needs in at least the following main areas:

1. Housing instability and quality,
2. Food insecurity,
3. Utility needs,
4. Interpersonal violence, and
5. Transportation needs beyond medical transportation.

For more information, please visit: <https://innovation.cms.gov/initiatives/AHCM>

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## APPENDIX B:

### Major Initiatives Underway

#### Healthy BR Initiative - Mayor's Healthy City Initiative (MHCI)

The Mayor's Healthy City Initiative (also known as Healthy BR) is an initiative based on communication, coordination, and collaboration that promote a better and healthier life for all people in the great city of Baton Rouge. The Mayor's Healthy City Initiative (MHCI) facilitated a collaborative Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) among five of Baton Rouge's acute care hospitals. Healthy BR plans to continue to facilitate the Community Health Needs Assessment process, implement and collect data on the Community Implementation Plan and continue to support the City-Parish's implementation of Complete Streets, which are designed with consideration for users of all ages and physical ability, and allows for multiple modes of transportation.

Major grants discussed in Healthy BR Implementation Plan include the Pause & Play Grant for \$75,000 and Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana Foundation (BCBSLAF) Challenge Grant for \$576,000. Capital Area Human Services District has applied for a grant to fund a pilot program to provide a more focused approach to reduce challenging behaviors and to equip staff with the skills needed to create an environment in which all children can succeed. Our Lady of the Lake Regional Medical Center runs the Medline BR

hotline on behalf of MHCI, which began the service through a grant. Over the years, partners in healthcare, government, community non-profits, and business have come to rely on the Mayor's Healthy City Initiative.

More information about the Community Health Needs Assessment can be found at: <http://www.healthybr.com> <https://www.communitycommons.org/chna/> <http://www.astho.org/Programs/Access/Community-Health-Needs-Assessments/>

#### The Bridge Center

Through a collaborative effort of the District Attorney, the Sheriff, the Public Defender, the state and local judiciary, and behavioral health professionals, The Bridge Center plans to offer targeted interventions that will provide an alternative to taking people who have encountered the criminal justice system because of uncontrolled behavioral health issues to the Parish Prison or to an emergency department. The Bridge Center's projected opening date is during 2018. The Center's primary customers will be law enforcement officers who come into contact with non-violent individuals suffering from mental health or substance abuse issues. Any funding devoted to this would be more than offset by cost associated with housing inmates in other jails around the state. There have been several attempts to pass a tax to support The Bridge Center. The Bridge Center has applied and possibly received an Innovation Fund Grant from the McArthur Foundation / Urban Institute for a behavioral health pre-trial initiative in the amount of \$50,000. The grant will be used to pay for a caseworker and cover LSU data analysis cost. The following links and examples are of systems that have successfully assisted in managing services to divert people with behavioral health issues out of the criminal justice system.

#### Loop Capital Report

<https://docs.google.com/viewerng/viewer?url=http://WAFB.images.worldnow.com/library/6818cda9-30b9-4936-98d4-333cbbccc791.pdf>

#### Initiative to Decriminalize Mental Illness EBR

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/57ec1589414fb5771787eaf0/t/57ec2eb359cc68a5459a7ed1/1475096245655EBR%2BInitiative%2Bto%2BDecriminalize%2BFinal%2BReport%2B2162016.pdf>

#### Jail Diversion for Mentally Ill

<http://www.mhac.org/pdf/jail%20diversion%20information.pdf>

#### Mental Health Jail Diversion Project Multnomah County

For more information, please visit <http://www.brbridge.org/about>



## The Louisiana Campaign for Tobacco Free Living

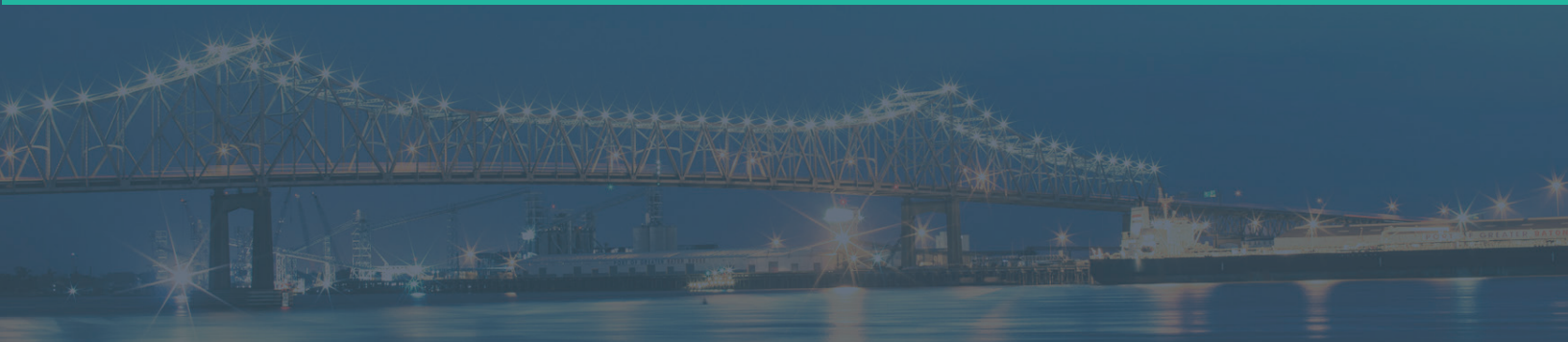
The Louisiana Campaign for Tobacco Free Living promotes a Smoke Free Baton Rouge. There have been previous attempts to pass a Smoke Free Baton Rouge ordinance, which would ban smoking in Baton Rouge's casinos and bars. Guided by best practices in tobacco control as outlined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), as well as by the many successful tobacco control programs in effect nationwide, TFL works to implement and evaluate tobacco control initiatives that can reduce and prevent the use of tobacco, as well as eliminate exposure to secondhand smoke. TFL is a statewide, nonprofit organization dedicated to reducing tobacco use in Louisiana through regional tobacco prevention and control initiatives throughout the state and it improves the ability of local communities to promote tobacco control from within. This is done primarily through TFL statewide staff, nine Regional Louisiana Healthy Communities Coalitions, Community Advocacy Grantees, and local and statewide partnerships.

For more information, please visit  
<http://tobaccofreeliving.org/>

## Hospital Service District

Together Baton Rouge is recommending that the City-Parish adopts or creates a hospital service district within the parish. Louisiana Revised Statute 46:1051 states, "Parishes are authorized and empowered, upon their own initiative, to form and create one or more hospital service districts within the respective parishes." Louisiana Revised Statute 46: 1052 defines what can be included in the Hospital Service District under including "(1) To own and operate hospitals for the care of persons suffering from illnesses or disabilities that require that patients receive hospital care, (2) To administer other activities related to rendering care to the sick and injured or in the promotion of health which may be justified by the facilities, personnel, funds and other requirements available, (3) To promote and conduct scientific research and training related to the care of the sick and injured insofar as such research and training can be conducted in connection with the hospital, (4) To participate so far as circumstances may warrant in any activity designed and conducted to promote the general health of the community and (5) To cooperate with other public and private institutions and agencies engaged in providing hospital and other health services to residents of the district.

For more information about Health Service Districts, please visit: <http://www.legis.la.gov/legis/Law.aspx?d=96478>



# HOMELAND SECURITY

**Co-Chairs:** Gen. Russell Honorè, Paul Rainwater

**Committee Members:** Patrick Mulhearn, Bethany Fields, Mike Steele, Col. Mike Barnett, Kirk Fisher

## SCOPE OF REVIEW

The Homeland Security Operation Sub-committee reviewed, researched and recommended best practices improvements related to the operation of the City-Parish Homeland Security Division. The committee identified the following focus areas for discussion and recommendations: Preparedness, Response, Recovery and Mitigation.

### Preparedness

**Critical Trigger Activity (CTA)**—A critical trigger activity is an activity or event that initiates immediate action to occur based on the threat of weather emergency, industrial emergency or no-notice emergency.

#### Recommendations

- Consider CTA officially between the time period a watch and warning are identified by the national, state, or local news service
  - CTA activates the following:
    - Employee, staff, volunteer alerts, and mobilization
    - Public service announcements (media, social media, etc.)
    - Joint communication with plants, schools, universities, TV media, etc.
    - Shelter openings
    - Immediate and assisted evacuation for citizens with no transportation, disabled, elderly, and poor
- Create emergency plan when resources are victims
- Use City-Parish subdivided map to drive evacuations, plans, shelter placement, distribution center placement, etc.
- Designate POC
- Use of NIMS for direct indications and warnings
- Areas of Improvement
  - Mass Communication—optimize all available technology
    - Community Alert System
    - Emergency Alert System
    - Siren Alert System
    - TV media
    - Social media
  - Planning and assistance for vulnerable population
  - Budget restructuring

### Recovery

#### Recommendations

- Re-opening and availability of CATS for the most vulnerable population
  - Consider opening for 14 days immediately after the storm at no charge; expenses can be reimbursed by FEMA and other forms of funding.
- Community Centers become dual purpose as service sites
  - i.e. FEMA application sign up and location for citizens to pick up needed items
  - Case management on site
  - School resources or information area for those in close proximity
- State and Federal declarations
  - Pre-filled declarations and plans based on type of disaster
    - Reduces the time to sit down during each event and draft
  - Update date, POCs, and names

### Mitigation

#### Recommendations

- Immediate request to FEMA for assistance with mitigation activities needed (this can and should be completed for the August Flood)
  - Flood control activities, updated flood maps, land use development, cleaning and irrigating, flood insurance assistance for residents, elevation program
- 10-year recovery expectation on named and massive no-notice events
- Pet accommodations
- Create a “Pre-Need List” for City-Parish at a certain trigger point to engage Governor and ask for resources
- Offer shelter operation designation training
  - Require/encourage annually
- Improve/Optimize all current technology systems
- Work with DCFS on information sharing and official logging of victims upon entry to sites
- Develop elevation plan
- Coordinate with the Statewide Sheriff’s Task Force
  - Develop plans, trainings and resources for areas of assistance
- Draft plan for critical infrastructure and commerce (bridges, ports, highways); include consideration for terrorist sites

# HOUSING & LAND USE

**Co-Chairs:** Candace Parker, Keith Cunningham

**Committee Members:** Anthony Kimble, Chad Ortte, Charlette Minor, Gary Patureau, Helena Cunningham, Kali M. Johnson, Lynn Clark, Mark West, Samuel Sanders, Steve Myer

## SCOPE OF REVIEW

Housing & Land Use Sub-committee received direction from the Transition Team to access opportunities to improve the City-Parish land use regulatory system as well as the state of its housing market including public housing. The Sub-committee convened five meetings for the purpose of creating a balanced and fair housing market. The following is a scope of the work actually performed by the Sub-committee.

12/28/16

Reviewed Housing & Land Use Sub-committee Scope and Guidelines, discussed the FutureBR Plan, identified issues and/or barriers to creating a fair and balanced housing market, and discussed successes and areas of improvement within Baton Rouge housing market. Formulated comprehensive list of organizations involved in land use and housing in East Baton Rouge Parish.

1/9/17

Established structure within the Sub-committee to include "Section Leads" responsible for research, solicitation of input from industry experts, City-Parish staff and Sub-committee members, and report implementation plan to the Housing and Land Use Sub-committee.

Discussed and identified two proposals for new initiatives: Inclusionary Zoning and Reducing Blight.

1/13/17

Established time line for Section Lead reports on Major Initiatives Underway, Opportunities for Partnerships and Collaboration and Proposals for New Initiatives.

Explored existing knowledge of partnerships and collaborations. Originated an all-inclusive list of potential partners along with their contact information.

1/18/17

Received data from Section Lead regarding presentations from Carey Chauvin (Department of Public Works), Consuella Hall (Office of Community Development), and Frank Duke (City-Parish Planning Commission). Discussed and developed recommendations for Partnerships and Collaboration, Inclusionary Zoning, Blight Reduction,

and Fiscal & Budgetary Implications.

1/25/17

Finalized recommendations and list of Major Initiatives Underway for 2017.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Housing and Land Use Sub-committee considered the state of Baton Rouge's land use regulatory system and the city's housing market. It should be noted, that the Sub-committee identified that lack of inclusion and related responsibility with the Baton Rouge Metro Council would serve as a destabilizer for any positive movement for the City of Baton Rouge. Further deriving that opportunities to work with and include the City Council should be sought after, aggressively pursued, and would truly serve as a conditional change in the operation of City-Parish Government.

While the group noted several different and daunting issues, the transition team focused on areas that either involved simple steps to implement, or were identified as high and efficient targets that would ultimately lead to higher and multiple gains.

Outside influences (housing market downturns, disasters, and Louisiana precarious financial state) have taken a toll on Housing and Land use issues here in Baton Rouge. Ultimately the status of the current market is a result of a past illustrative of bias and individual concerns. Lack of planning and coordination of resources has led to certain communities appearing abandoned while growth and opportunity abound in other segments and areas of the city. For Baton Rouge to reach its full potential this committee recommends a strategy that entails partnership, accountability, and efficiency. Strategies we believe will help remediate blight, establish strong lasting partnerships, engage the community, and create livable workable affordable communities for one Strong Baton Rouge.

One of the greatest tools poorly implemented is Baton Rouge's Office of Community Development (BROCD). The Sub-committee recognizes that not only does BROCD have a tremendous responsibility to the Community, (the responsibility includes issues related to housing, economics, and infrastructure) those responsibilities were designed to

help areas of our community, those areas that are made up of individuals that are identified as Low to Medium Income. The failure of BROCD to effectively operate and implement its programing and use of HUD funds evidences itself as the sores and pot marks in our community. Immediate and efficient steps to develop a successful relationship with HUD and redefine the role and responsibility of BROCD are highly encouraged. Additionally, a responsive department that works to focus and enhance efforts already underway by civic minded community groups who have labored and accomplished task here-to-for without the necessary assistance simply allows those groups to achieve higher success.

Identifying partners and opportunities unites three entities within the City Parish all with similar missions designed to address Housing Conditions for the City. Capital Area Finance Association (CAFA), Redevelopment Authority of Baton Rouge (RDA), and BR OCD. Sighting the funding of CAFA with the statutory authority of RDA with a plan and coordinated approach from BROCD would lead to sizeable gains for the Baton Rouge Community. A shared vision and dream of the one Baton Rouge concept can only be derived from the creation of a meaningful plan that identifies challenges and opportunities in every segment of Baton Rouge. One major concept gaining traction in areas of high growth and development is the concept of inclusionary zoning. The Sub-committee is requesting that immediate steps be taken to evaluate the applicability of inclusionary zoning to the high growth areas of Baton Rouge. Also recognizing past initiatives like the Future BR plan were not easily understandable or widely supported in individual communities is not a challenge but a base to develop a more sustainable set of goals. The Mayor-President should seize the opportunity to utilize vetted concepts and designs for the City by creating small units with specific tasks around each strategy identified in pervious plans:

1. Evaluate the Current Need
  - a. Re-prioritize or Remove
2. Evaluate Implementation Strategies
  - a. What Works
3. Develop New Implementation Strategies as Necessary
  - a. Refocus and Re-aim

Being able to identify initiatives that were implemented with a high rate of success and taking additional steps to prioritize “what’s next” gives the Mayor-President the ability to create a complete plan from start to finish while implementing a process that requires continuous feedback and improvement. Smart Streets, Green Light Plan, Sidewalk Initiative, are just a few examples of previous plans that the community demanded and were successfully implemented.

The act of creating a plan with an embedded process that continually evolves ensures the plan becomes a part of growth initiatives for the city, further assuring that Baton

Rouge can plan for the tomorrow it intends to be not the tomorrow that inevitably will come.

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## BACKGROUND AND VISION

### *State of the Issue*

The vision of creating a balanced and fair housing market is shared by many cities; however, how cities accomplish that vision is as diverse as each city itself. There are many natural, financial and political obstacles that stand in the way of true growth yet, the key to a balanced and fair housing market is opportunity.

The Sub-committee outlined the prevailing challenges and prioritized steps to point Baton Rouge in the right direction. The key to a successful outcome is “opportunity.” The citizens of Baton Rouge, in particular, the leadership of Baton Rouge, have the opportunity to reverse years of inability to work together in aligning current resources and planning for new development, especially in areas that are stretching existing infrastructure while not forgetting older areas of the city.

A shared vision and a common political resolve by the Mayor-President and the Metropolitan Council is critical to addressing the evolving housing needs of our citizens. Model cities consistently share a resolve to move past just developing a plan—they take action. This is our opportunity to further implement key elements of the Future BR for housing and land use.

As outlined in the committee’s report there are significant existing resources that are not used in a coordinated manner leading to community frustration and ultimately a loss of more resources. Again, the key is opportunity. The main priorities as outlined by the committee are for the Mayor-President to reestablish a working relationship with HUD and to harness the power of the OCD while strengthening the strategic alliances between the OCD, CAFA and the RDA. This can only be accomplished by developing an actual partnership with the Metropolitan Council.

The major obstacle to successfully accomplishing the mission is political will. If the leadership of Baton Rouge can find common ground, then existing resources can be used effectively and success will beget success. As Henry Ford stated “Some succeed because they are destined to, but most succeed because they are determined to.” Baton Rouge is at an historic juncture, by aligning our resources with a determination to succeed, we can create a balanced and fair housing market.



## Major Initiatives Underway for 2017

1. Housing First Alliance
2. Planning Commission is updating the UDC
3. Complete Streets
4. Processing Adjudicated property through Civic Source and RDA.
5. Greenlight Plan

## Proposals for New Initiatives

The Sub-committee is proposing two new initiatives for the City-Parish to focus on: Implementing Inclusionary Zoning and the Department of Public Works working with the Federation of Greater Baton Rouge Civic Associations to reduce blight.

1. Inclusionary zoning requires a certain percentage or number of newly constructed units are made affordable so a city can advance its efforts to not concentrate low-wage and poverty in certain areas. It is a controversial provision for a variety of reasons, but cities use the measure to provide opportunities that might not otherwise become available in the open market. The controversy dictates individual community assessments to determine how best to implement and where to add more appropriate local incentives to help promote the tenets of the provision.

Baton Rouge is not doing anything on this issue, according to the Planning Director. Louisiana law does allow it, but Baton Rouge has not elected to pursue it to date.

Implementing inclusionary zoning will be expensive for the city, because there needs to be an administrative enforcement body in order to implement inclusionary zoning so that resales, rent control, refinancing, repair and maintenance, and tenant selection is regularly monitored. The research on inclusionary zoning has shown that without the administrative mechanism for comprehensive enforcement, the programs are not as successful.

The recommendation is to have a task force appointed to review and research this matter and bring forth a full implementation plan. This could be one of those Future BR Implementation Teams that would help bring the high concepts to a grassroots level.

Some of the research indicates that inclusionary zoning tends to promote gentrification since it would not apply to redevelopment. This team would need to weigh the advantages and disadvantages and form a measured recommendation.

2. All of the following are defined as blighted properties by East Baton Rouge Department of Public Works:
  1. Abandoned Vehicles

2. Inoperable Pools
3. Tall Grass
4. Trash
5. Abandoned and Boarded Structures

Before the August Flood, blight was a principal factor plaguing many of our older, historic neighborhoods. Add to this already significant problem is the aftermath from the devastating August Flood and many neighborhoods may never recover without a city-wide comprehensive, and enforceable—yet compassionate—plan.

The Department of Public Works has partnered for two years with the City of New Orleans' Blight Team to establish a mirror plan for East Baton Rouge. The August Flood has added even more layers to the problem as DPW works hard to identify blighted properties and those that should be condemned.

The Sub-committee recommends that the entire community be engaged in a measured approach to eliminating blight including turning some areas into green space. This can be accomplished by working through the Federation of Greater Baton Rouge Civic Associations to contact homeowners to learn the intention of each and then creating a master list of properties that can then be prioritized by DPW for further action. This empowers each neighborhood to directly establish a blight plan for their neighborhood.

To make this plan as successful as the one in New Orleans will require funding. The current budget funding for blight remediation is \$146,000. The Sub-committee proposes urging lawmakers to direct some of the HUD funds for flood relief be earmarked for blight remediation (as was done in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina). This funding would be used to insure appropriate staffing levels so that a significant impact can be made on the blight problem.

## Opportunities for Partnerships and Collaboration

1. The Sub-committee proposes a strategic collaboration between the Office of Community Development (OCD), Capital Area Finance Authority (CAFA), and the East Baton Rouge Redevelopment Authority (RDA).

CAFA has funding and operates under a mission that would give it the ability to invest in projects facilitated by RDA, which has the purpose of remediating blight and creating home ownership opportunities. Individuals would then be qualified to acquire loans from CAFA to purchase such housing opportunities.

The Sub-committee believes that the OCD would operate best as the leader of this municipality collaborative effort. The OCD should develop a strategic and collaborative plan that incorporates the existing plans of RDA, CAFA,

and other high-performing housing entities. This method establishes a plan from the “top down” and convenes the community from the “bottom up.”

**Objectives:**

1. Create cooperative agreements between high-performing housing entities.
2. Ensure the proper coordinated use of the limited resources available.

**Contact Person:**

Helena Cunningham- CAFA - hcunningham@nhcsla.com

2. Work closely with the state partners (Office of Community Development and Louisiana Housing Corporation).

**Contact Person:**

Keith Cunningham- Louisiana Housing Corporation - kcunninghamjr@gmail.com

### *Fiscal and Budgetary Implications*

Any money that will be needed to implement our proposals is already included in the City-Parish budget or a grant can be acquired.

### *Department/Agency Workforce*

Department of Public Works will need additional employees to help address the blight issues.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### *Top Three Recommendations*

1. Committee appointed with assignment to Mayor-President team member (Immediate)
2. Re-evaluation of current funding with Mayor, Mayor team member, committee (Within 2 months)

3. Discussions with other departments regarding collaboration with Mayor-President team member, committee members and representatives of other departments (Immediate, within 2 months completed)

### *Additional Recommendations*

- The Mayor-President should personally meet with HUD to gain a deeper understanding of HUD’s mission and goal for our parish Office of Community Development, OCD office. Prioritizing this relationship and completing their request will help restore HUD’s confidence in our parish ability to fulfill the mission of an OCD department. (Timeline: April 31, 2017)
- The Planning Commission and Complete Streets Committee should work together to identify areas where sidewalks are a high priority and prioritize the funds within the Green Light Plan to create the sidewalks. Since Baton Rouge has a high rate of pedestrian deaths, sidewalks should be a high priority. In exchange for waving sidewalk requirements for developers, we can require them to put money in a “Sidewalk Fund”. This will elevate some of their work and give the parish the option to put sidewalks in an area where they are needed the most. (Timeline: May 31, 2017)
- Explore Inclusionary Zoning Implementation. (Timeline: January 31, 2018)

### *Additional Commentary*

The Mayor-President should work with the Planning Director create mini FIT Teams, comprised of three to four individuals, and charge them with a focus on certain aspects of the Future BR plan to effectively implement it. (Timeline: July 31, 2017)

# INFRASTRUCTURE, TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY

*Co-Chairs:* Ann Forte Trappey, Scott Kirkpatrick

*Committee Members:* Carlos Giron, Darius Bonton, Shanan Waters, Doug Moore, Eric Dexter, Karen Khonsari, Deric Murphy, John Spain, Logan Anderson, Jeanne George

*Transportation Advisory*

*Sub-committee:* General John Basilica, Jr., Randy Smith

## SCOPE OF REVIEW

The Infrastructure, Transportation & Mobility Community Input Sub-committee considered the state of public infrastructure, transportation systems and mobility issues throughout the City-Parish. The team drew from the aforementioned subjects and other topics to craft a set of recommendations for the incoming administration.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Sub-committee met on three different occasions. The first meeting was a brainstorming session featuring input aligned with the various modes of transportation in our City-Parish and the relationships of these to each other. The Sub-committee's recognition of the poor state of mobility in East Baton Rouge resulted in a host of observations and suggestions applied across all modes of transportation. The second Sub-committee meeting gathered input from various agencies/entities in the parish. This included not only each entity's role in the overall transportation infrastructure of the Parish, but also what initiatives are currently being pursued, and what they saw as their primary work moving forward. Representatives from the Capital Area Transit System, Planning Commission, Metropolitan Planning Commission and City-Parish presented to the sub-Sub-committee and fielded questions from the membership. The third meeting was a review of the draft report, and discussion of the Sub-committee's top recommendations. While the Sub-committee felt strongly about a number of important initiatives, the top three recommendations of investment, a Complete Streets pilot program, and the "smart on congestion" program were embraced by the Sub-committee.

## BACKGROUND AND VISION

### *State of the Issue*

Transportation infrastructure in East Baton Rouge Parish (EBR) is severely challenged. The current Texas Transportation Institute rankings list Baton Rouge as the third-worst congested mid-size city in America. A 2015 report from national transportation research group, TRIP,

found 38% of roads in the capital region were in poor condition, costing drivers an extra \$705 per year. According to the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), for a region our size, the number of major arterials allowing access through the region is far less than other regions our size in the country. Many of our community's transportation problems cross multiple city and parish lines—Livingston, Ascension, West Baton Rouge, and Iberville all have more than 70% of their workers employed outside of their home parish. Many of these workers either work in or travel through EBR, making the mobility concerns of the parishes interdependent and emphasizing the importance of regional collaboration.

One notable example of this regionalism is the need for an additional crossing over the Mississippi River. The current crossing on the Horace Wilkinson Bridge is the only place in the United States where Interstate 10 is reduced to one lane. While this is not purely an EBR problem, it greatly affects traffic flow on major thoroughfares in and through Baton Rouge on a daily basis. Large-scale "megaprojects," such as a new bridge, will depend both on collaboration between regional partners and the availability of additional transportation dollars at the state level. Both regional collaboration and state funding have been missing in past Capital Region megaproject efforts.

The Green Light program has gone a long way in alleviating gridlock at major intersections throughout the parish, but it is evident additional investment in major thoroughfares must continue as EBR continues to grow. The need to take some of the vehicular traffic off of the interstate and facilitate greater connectivity on surface streets is important to relieve pressure on the interstate system, maximize the utility of existing infrastructure, and increase the network's resiliency by providing redundant routes on "incident days" when roads close due to bad weather or accidents. This last point is particularly important due to the Baton Rouge region's dual status as both an impact area and an evacuation and staging site for natural disasters.

Despite having more data than ever before regarding traffic patterns, Baton Rouge remains unable to effectively compile and use much of this data. An IBM Smarter Cities Challenge

electric buses. CATS is also working closely with city-parish departments and community groups to improve route and shelter planning. CATS is actively engaged with the TRAM project and commuter rail project. Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)

The MPO is currently updating its long range plan with a completion date set for the beginning of 2018. This significant effort will include extensive traffic and air quality modeling. A public outreach process is beginning and will continue in the coming months. Input will be received regarding proposed projects and strategies as well as anticipated future growth and development.

- ***Streets and Traffic Engineering***

The City of Baton Rouge continues work, funded by the Green Light Program, to expand and improve a number of major arteries in East Baton Rouge. The city is seeking ways to fund roundabouts and bridge improvements where appropriate. East Baton Rouge has a significant challenge with the deterioration of a number of timber pile bridges and actively seeks grant funds to supplement city bridge funds. Efforts to update traffic signals and school zone flashers continue.

- ***Planning Commission***

The Planning Commission is engaged with the Technical Sub-committee called for in the Complete Streets policy and the Complete Streets Advisory Sub-committee to better understand new development and how implementation of Complete Streets can become the norm. Existing infrastructure does not easily accommodate biking and pedestrian users, and retroactively implementing Complete Streets on existing roads will take decades without a dedicated program. The Planning Commission is also seeking to bring together the set of multiple, independent bike plans created without a comprehensive or collaborative approach.

- ***Statewide Transportation Funding***

Governor John Bel Edwards' Task Force on Transportation Infrastructure Investment recently completed six months of work and issued a report recommending an additional \$700 million annually to go towards mobility improvements across the state. This level of funding would allow significant megaprojects to be funded in and around East Baton Rouge and help address the backlog of projects in the Capital Region totaling more than \$3 billion dollars. The governor is reviewing the task force's recommendations and is expected to introduce transportation infrastructure investment legislation in the 2017 legislative session.

## ***Proposals for New Initiatives***

Baton Rouge and the broader Capital Region face a number of daunting transportation challenges, many of which are outlined in the "State of the Issue" portion of this document. In this section, we attempted to capture the areas that were most appropriate to tackle at the local level, and opportunities where the Broome administration could have a significant impact on mobility

## ***Opportunities for Partnerships and Collaboration***

Mayor-President Broome can use the Metropolitan Planning Organization venue to increase regional transportation collaboration. As the region grows, so must collaboration across parish lines. The increased need for travel options requires additional collaboration between EBR parish government, the MPO, CATS, TramLink, the planning commission and other local and regional transportation providers. Collaboration across transportation modes can set the tone for area residents to feel they can use multiple modes of transportation in the parish.

## ***Fiscal and Budgetary Implications***

The majority of the new initiatives in this report are either reliant on new funding or their effectiveness will be greatly improved by new resources. Current federal, state and local transportation funding is insufficient to meet EBR's needs. While discretionary federal and state transportation dollars can and should be pursued to support new initiatives, even if EBR is successful, these discretionary amounts of grant funding and the like are relatively minor. It is important residents of this region understand the opportunities new transportation revenue can have on improving mobility. Analysis shows a positive return on investment for a number of transportation investments in EBR. Positioning EBR to dramatically improve its mobility through smart investments of new transportation revenue is a critical need for this region and one the Mayor is well-positioned to lead.

There are a variety of different means to raise additional transportation revenue. With sales taxes at an all-time high, property taxes are a revenue stream that should be examined. The constitutional prohibition on local gas taxes require either the state to raise this revenue stream or a change in the constitution.

## ***Department/Agency Workforce***

The director position of the Department of Transportation and Drainage has recently been vacated. Quickly filling this position with a highly qualified individual is vital to advancing EBR's transportation initiatives. A replacement who can quickly and effectively contribute to the myriad of mobility initiatives outlined in this report is crucial. EBR residents clearly view mobility as a top concern and the new



director should be a person capable of responding to this city-parish's considerable mobility challenges. Also, overall staffing of the Transportation and Drainage Department should be reviewed to ensure appropriate support for this vital issue. Does the section have sufficient expertise in critical areas and does it have the overall manpower to effectively execute its mission are important considerations in this review.

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## RECOMMENDATIONS

### *Top Three Recommendations*

1. Investment: While there are important initiatives that can and should be pursued in EBR absent additional funding, no combination of these initiatives can have the impact of a significant infusion of new revenue for transportation. The Broome administration has the ability to influence new transportation revenue initiatives in two significant ways.
  - A. First, the Capital Region can and should be a leader in pursuing statewide transportation funding legislation. Mayor-President Broome should seek opportunities to lead the region as engages on this issue and to leverage her strong relationships in the legislature to advocate for a compelling transportation revenue package that will benefit EBR, the Capital Region and the state. With the regular legislative session running through early June, this is a significant near-term opportunity to for Broome administration.
  - B. Second, an after action review of the failed Green Light II ballot initiative should be initiated and completed before the end of June. While widespread EBR resident frustration with mobility is evident, understanding why this did not translate into voter support for Green Light II is important. Mayor-President Broome has the opportunity to lead a broader and more effective community discussion on this matter, allowing a future revenue raising effort to be successful.
2. Complete Streets Pilot Program: The Complete Streets Pilot Program is designed to accelerate implementation and broaden public awareness and engagement of Complete Streets. The assignment of a top city-parish representative (perhaps the Director of the Department of Transportation and Drainage) to the Complete Streets Pilot Project within the next thirty days, and having that person regularly report to Mayor-President Broome, would be a major step forward for the overall Complete Streets effort. Mayor-President Broome can help enable the selection and design of several pilot project areas, which should be completed before the end of 2017.

Successful implementation of these pilot projects can build momentum for the overall Complete Streets effort and leadership from the city-parish is vital. As the public is able to see more examples of successful Complete Street projects, it is expected support and understanding of Complete Streets will grow.

3. Smart on Congestion: The Broome administration should develop and implement a congestion relief strategy that focuses on using transportation technology and data. Promoting greater use of smart phone traffic information, sharing traffic data across agency silos (thereby allowing better traffic data analysis) and analyzing rush hour traffic patterns to develop policies and programs to address demand management are all examples of components of a Smart on Congestion initiative. It is recommended the development of this plan be completed before the end of 2017 with a swift implementation to occur in 2018.

### *Additional Recommendations*

- Regional Collaboration: Enhance collaboration with surrounding parishes to allow major regional transportation projects to move forward including a new south bridge and commuter rail. A strong working relationship with the surrounding parishes can lead to regional consensus around necessary megaprojects for the region like a new south bridge. The Capital Region Metropolitan Planning Organization can and should be an effective convener to allow for regional collaboration and Mayor-President Broome's leadership at the MPO level can result in major mobility improvements in the region. Likewise, Mayor-President Broome's leadership in promoting the commuter rail between Baton Rouge and New Orleans holds the promise of strengthening the southeast Louisiana Super Region. Collaboration with local, state, federal and private partners will be critical to the successful development of this commuter rail line.
- Americans with Disabilities Act Plan: There is currently funding set aside to create an ADA compliance plan for the city-parish and releasing the Request for Proposals is an important step in this process. This is important work not only to improve mobility for residents, but also to address a significant liability the city-parish currently faces. Once completed, the Broome administration should work diligently to implement the plan.
- Collaboration with CATS: The Mayor-President has a unique role to play in both demanding improved performance from the Baton Rouge transit system, and in advocating on the system's behalf where appropriate. As a vital element of transportation in EBR, mayoral engagement with CATS would be very meaningful. For example, examining how bus rapid transit opportunities can fit within the overall mobility solutions for the city-parish would be a compelling point of collaboration between the city-parish and CATS.

- **Bike/Pedestrian Master Plan:** While aspects of bike and pedestrian plans exist with different entities, a master plan is needed and should reside with one entity charged with its implementation. It is recommended the Mayor-President designate a representative work to coordinate compilation of this master plan.
- **Road Swap:** Engage with DOTD to finalize plans for a road swap and allow efforts like the Government Street diet to advance.
- **North Baton Rouge Mobility:** Seek to integrate transportation initiatives with North Baton Rouge economic development efforts. Use the Florida – Plank Road Corridor Study as a general framework for evaluating ways to integrate transportation corridor improvements in North Baton Rouge.
- **Light Synchronization:** Develop/implement a plan to fully utilize the light synchronization capabilities of traffic signals in the parish. Past light synchronization efforts have been incomplete and their improved synchronization remains a compelling opportunity to improve mobility.
- **Street Lighting:** Identify deficiencies in the current street lighting and seek a plan and funding to improve lighting, thereby increasing roadway and pedestrian safety. Also, there may be opportunities to lower the cost of street lighting that should be explored.
- **Project Prioritization:** Support data-driven project prioritization whereby the public has a better understanding of project prioritization and the anticipated improvements from new projects.
- **Improved Connectivity:** Planning needs to account for pedestrian, bike and auto connectivity. Even auto connectivity has been hampered in the past despite connectivity requirements in the Uniform Development Code. The Mayor-President has the ability to showcase the need for better connectivity and highlight where this is being done well and not done well.
- **Transportation Policy:** Examine policy-oriented congestion relief efforts, such as the promotion of carpooling, transportation demand management, ridesharing and high occupancy vehicle lanes.
- **Public Input:** Seek ways to improve public feedback on transportation initiatives. Technology improvements now make it easier for the public to register their mobility opinions through their smartphones and other means. The Broome administration should strive to improve transportation public outreach using new technology.

## FINAL THOUGHTS

Baton Rouge City-Parish has significant transportation challenges. Our recommendations cover fundamental congestion issues but also those that our Sub-committee believes will make us a more progressive, ADA compliant, bike friendly and walkable community. We believe mobility efficiency and quality of life are both critical factors in transportation planning and both are key economic development drivers for EBR.

It is our hope in all transportation planning efforts that we do not plan simply for the immediate future, but set our city in motion to be an extremely progressive place where the younger workforce of today want to live, work, and play. Transportation technology is advancing at a rapid pace. East Baton Rouge can and should be a place that embraces these changes. As traditional transportation is disrupted by new technologies, strong leadership is needed to help the public understand the implications of these changes and how to embrace the changes.

Transportation challenges within East Baton Rouge City Parish will not be resolved over night. However, the Sub-committee feels EBR is overdue for mobility improvements and the Broome administration is well-positioned to set a strong transportation agenda that results in a lasting legacy of improved mobility throughout the region.

# NORTH BATON ROUGE REVITALIZATION

**Co-Chairs:** Cleve Dunn, Jr., Elizabeth “Boo” Thomas

**Committee Members:** Senator Regina AshfordBarrow, Will M. Campbell Jr., MA, Rachel Emanuel, Jason Hughes, Rinaldi E. Jacobs, Johnny Koch, Anthony Marino, Bettsie Miller, Michael AV Mitchell, Lafanery Reado, Ronald L. Smith, Terrie Sterling, Sateria TateAlexander, Tyrus Thomas, Lana Venable, Byron Washington

## SCOPE OF REVIEW

The Many have said that Baton Rouge has become a tale of two cities with divergent commercial, residential and employment options across Florida Boulevard. Life chances are also different across Florida Boulevard, with most of the region’s poverty and crime concentrated in North Baton Rouge. The divide that has emerged across north and South Baton Rouge is palpable and threatens the health, vitality and economic development trajectory of the entire Baton Rouge region.

The North Baton Rouge Revitalization Community Input Transition Team was charged with examining how City-Parish government can address issues of economic development, neighborhood stabilization and community uplift in the neighborhoods of North Baton Rouge. The team was asked to address issues of metropolitan equity in Baton Rouge, specifically the plans for the revitalization and expansion of opportunity in the neighborhoods of North Baton Rouge. Members of the team represented the #NBRNow Blue Ribbon Commission and the Baton Rouge North Economic Development Commission as well as representatives from industry, non-profit organizations, and a State Senator. The team reviewed The Scotlandville Comprehensive Community Development Plan, and the EBRRA Community Improvement Plan for Zion City & Glen Oaks. The Plans are excellent but implementation of the plans has been difficult because of lack of funding.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Baton Rouge North Economic Development District as defined by State Senator Regina Barrow (RS-33:2740.67) is an excellent starting point for a concentrated effort to revitalize North Baton Rouge. Baton Rouge has experienced two successful development districts with Mid-City Redevelopment Alliance and the Downtown Development District. Both of these districts border North Baton Rouge and should be leveraged as a catalyst to replicate successful funding strategies.

Employing the following strategies are imperative to prospective developers:

1. Defined boundaries
2. Favorable financing within the District
3. Identification of tax credits
4. Economic Development Zone
5. Tax Increment Financing (TIF)
6. Traffic and sewer impact fees
7. State Sales and Local Tax exemptions
8. New Market Tax Credits (NMTC)
9. Economic job links
10. Historic tax credits (Federal and State)
11. Foundations

The revitalization of North Baton Rouge should also utilize proven strategies from the Democracy Collaborative <http://democracycollaborative.org/cities>. The Democracy Collaborative, a non-profit, is a national leader in equitable, inclusive, and sustainable development. The seven drivers of community wealth building cited include:

1. **Place:** Leverages many kinds of assets rooted in community, for maximum benefit of local residents.
2. **Ownership:** Promotes local, broad-based ownership as the foundation of a thriving, resilient local economy.
3. **Multipliers:** Encourages institutional buy-local strategies to keep money circulation local.
4. **Collaboration:** Brings many partners to the table, including nonprofits, philanthropy, anchor institutions, and cities.
5. **Inclusion:** Aims to create inclusive, living wage jobs that help families from all walks of life enjoy economic security.
6. **Workforce:** Links training to employment and focuses on jobs for those with barriers to employment.
7. **System:** Develops new institutions and supports ecosystems, to create a new normal of political-economic activity.

## BACKGROUND AND VISION

Baton Rouge North Economic Development District as The Sub-committee determined that the project’s core values are Unity, Clarity, Transparency, Respect, Trustworthiness, and Hope. With these values in mind, we believe that North Baton Rouge can be a thriving and integral part of Baton Rouge, the city and the parish. Its residents and workers

should be provided with every opportunity for a quality of life that will encourage quality jobs, safe neighborhoods, adequate infrastructure, and healthy lifestyles.

Nine task forces were formed to address the barriers for north Baton Rouge revitalization:

TASK FORCE CHAIRS	TASK FORCE
Rinaldi Jacobs	NBR Asset Mapping
Rinaldi Jacobs	NBR is...
Byron Washington, MBA	NBR Needs & Attractions
Tyrus Thomas	Employment (Workforce Development, Barriers to Employment)
Will Campbell	Entrepreneurship & Business Education
Anthony Marino	Criteria for Business Partnerships
Lana Venable	Improve NBR's PR Issues and Image
Terrie Sterling	Community Healthcare Needs & Services
Ronald Smith	Flood Recovery

Task Force reports are attached to this document. In addition to 5 Transition Team meetings and a 4-hour tour of North Baton Rouge, the task forces independently conducted additional meetings and conference calls to complete the assignment.

State of the Issue

The issues in North Baton Rouge are addressed throughout this document. Major issues revolve around the declining economy and population and the attending divestments that follow them. To that end, our Sub-committee has concentrated on safe neighborhoods, healthy living, economic investments, and the retention and strengthening of existing businesses and attractions. North Baton Rouge is not only a food desert, but also an education desert, a healthcare desert, and an economic development desert. Oftentimes, when people do not have access to jobs and income opportunities, they turn to crime in order to provide for their families. The North Baton Rouge elevated crime rate is a perfect example of that. The natives and residents of North Baton Rouge have been very vocal about their need for transformation in the area. They seek the same level of transformation and revitalization that Downtown Baton Rouge has experienced since the Downtown Development District (DDD) was created in 1983. For this to happen, it will take an intentional approach from our state and local elected officials, business leaders, community leaders, and North Baton Rouge residents.

The northern portion of Baton Rouge has been commonly known as North Baton Rouge. The geographic area has expanded over the years as white and middle class residents

moved south. Today most people agree that North Baton Rouge is defined as everything north of Florida Blvd and south of Thomas Road. Many of North Baton Rouge's businesses have relocated south or have closed their doors. North Baton Rouge has been in a slow decline over the past thirty years. During this period the area lost two emergency rooms and a hospital, including the closures of Earl K. Long Hospital/Emergency Room and the Baton Rouge General Emergency Room. Major vendors at the area's two largest retail centers did not renew leases, thus causing Bon Marche Mall to close and Cortana Mall to decline. In the early 90's, North Baton Rouge had grocery stores that offered healthy produce. Today North Baton Rouge is considered a food desert because most area grocery stores closed their doors.

The Baton Rouge metro area business community once recognized the East Baton Rouge Parish Public School System (EBRPSS) as a fertile ground to recruit potential employees. In recent years the business community has lost confidence in the EBRPSS, because of low performance evaluations from the Louisiana State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE). Many of the low performing schools are located in North Baton Rouge, and the area's graduation rates decrease as dropout rates increase. As business and property owners leave North Baton Rouge, many of them have failed to maintain their properties. Thus North Baton Rouge is filled with blighted properties that are eyesores in the community. Neglected properties are counterproductive to new developments efforts. Blighted properties are prime locations for loitering and vandalism, which can become crime magnets. North Baton Rouge's blight problem, along with lack of jobs and income opportunities, plus a challenged education system have significantly contributed to the increased crime rate.

Mayor Sharon Weston Broome should focus on the health care industry in her efforts to revitalize North Baton Rouge, because the health care industry plays a critical role in the economic development of a community while providing access to health care. The health care crisis exists because of the lack of access to emergency rooms, primary, and preventive care. As stated in the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta article "Rethinking the Relationship of Health Care and Economic Development", companies have long demanded local access to quality health care services for their workers and have viewed health care as a critical piece of infrastructure in the community where it locates or expands.

City-Parish incentives and investments in healthcare in North Baton Rouge will create jobs, and attract additional investments. The Cambridge Healthcare Facility in Howell Place is a logical location to create a Healthcare/Economic Development oasis in North Baton Rouge. There is a 70,000 sq. ft. state of the art healthcare facility that is 50% vacant.



Howell Place is uniquely positioned near many community assets and economic drivers; the Baton Rouge Metro Airport, Mayor's Office of Homeland Security, Southern University and A&M College, ExxonMobil refinery and the Baton Rouge Coca Cola Bottling Company. The location is surrounded by other economic drivers that can support and enhance the development, as well as numerous acres of green space for recreation or development. The Healthcare/Economic Development Oasis at Howell Place would create higher paying jobs that will attract grocery stores to expand to North Baton Rouge and help to increase access to healthy produce in the area. The additional jobs will provide residents with employment opportunities, which decrease the crime rate in North Baton Rouge. Criminologists believe that tough economic times make more people willing to commit crimes. According to authors Gary Kleck and Dylan Jackson in the article "What Kind of Joblessness Affects Crime? A National Case-Control Study of Serious Property Crime," they indicate that unemployables, for whatever reasons are most likely to commit burglary and robbery.

Another desired outcome that can help transform North Baton Rouge is the retention of Greater Baton Rouge Zoo in its current location. The Mayor's office should partner with BREC to design and develop a new "Destination Style Zoo." The zoo should first be a sustainable animal preserve with natural humane exhibits. The revitalization efforts should extend beyond animal habitats and education. These efforts should include an emphasis on fun for the whole family, with attractions such as zip lines, water parks, safaris, nature trails, rock climbing, camping, hiking and overnight lodging which are referenced in the Baker Recreation Hub Study under the direction of LSU Professor, Dr. Austin Allen. A "Destination Style Zoo" will be a job generator that will provide another economic driver to support the North Baton Rouge economy.

### Major Initiatives Underway (in this area) for 2017

The following is a list of major initiatives that are underway for North Baton Rouge in 2017. They are not listed in any specific order of value or size.

1. Kateon Natie Warehouse, Thomas Rd – 500,000 Sq. Ft. (Est.250+ new job opportunities)
2. 380 unit assisted living facility at Howell Place
3. 300 unit multi-family unit, Airline @ Evangeline
4. LSU Health Baton Rouge-North Campus Emergency Room expansion \$5 million
5. Our Lady of the Lake Urgent Care Center Mid city \$16 Million on the site of the former Brian Harris Auto Dealership
6. New Race Trac gas station, Airline at Tom Drive
7. Brock Services Industrial, Choctaw @N. Foster
8. BRRDA1 by LaFleur's Industries Housing Development in Zion City 20 homes planned. Will bring approximately 40 construction jobs to the area with a total estimated cost of \$ 3.1 million

9. Renovation of former Specialty Metals site Tecumseh
10. Boulle' Enterprises, LLC renovation of the Plank Plaza Shopping Center (Plank Road at Hooper Road)
  - a. New Johnny Pizza opening on Hooper at Plank Road
11. Mckay Automotive Training Center in the Career Academy Public High School Development (2018)
12. Family Dollar, Mickens at Silver Leaf
13. BRCC Welding School expansion at Lobdell Boulevard
14. Investar Bank Drive-In Location on Harding Boulevard
15. Multiple renovations & expansion projects due to the Great Flood of 2016
16. Aviation Business Park at the Baton Rouge Metro Airport, over 600 acres for potential development
17. Baton Metro Airport Development Projects

2017 Construction Projects:	Cost	Jobs
Taxiway F	\$ 10,423,624	198
South Ramp Taxiway Connector	\$ 922,000	18
South Ramp Rehab	\$ 2,250,000	43
Northwest Box	\$ 2,000,000	38
North General Aviation (Road)	\$ 3,000,000	57
Multiplex/Mike	\$ 0,942,487	208
Parking Garage and Lighting	\$ 6,055,556	115
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 35,593,667</b>	<b>676</b>

### Proposals for New Initiatives

1. **DEVELOP A WORKER-OWNED COOPERATIVE:**  
We propose the development of a community cooperative in North Baton Rouge modeled on the Evergreen Cooperatives in Cleveland, OH ([www.evgo.com](http://www.evgo.com)). The Evergreen Cooperatives of Cleveland have become a global innovation model for creating more sustainable regional economies. Local residents earn an ownership stake as they create thriving businesses, while playing a transformational role in building vibrant neighborhoods.
2. **DEVELOP A COMMUNITY LAND TRUST:**  
Develop a Community Land Trust acquiring properties and accessing funding through federal and state sources, as well as private foundations (BRAF etc.). This initiative should be modeled on the Dudley Neighbors, Inc. by acquiring properties through the East Baton Rouge Redevelopment Authority, and property donations. Dudley Neighbors, Incorporated (DNI) (<http://www.dudleyneighbors.org>) is a Community Land Trust created by the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative (DSNI) to implement and develop DSNI's comprehensive master plan that was drafted by residents to guide the revitalization of the neighborhood. Through a comprehensive organizing and planning initiative, Dudley residents were able to establish community control over a critical mass of the 1,300 parcels of abandoned land that had come to characterize the neighborhood. As part of this effort, the City of Boston

adopted the community's comprehensive development plan and granted the power of eminent domain over much of the privately-owned vacant land in the 62-acre area known as the "Dudley Triangle." The DNI Community Land Trust was created to take ownership of that land and realize a vision of development without displacement.

**3. NBR IMAGE CAMPAIGN:**

Engage a PR firm to create a multi-faceted campaign utilizing data and personal stories to show what is good about working, living and playing in NBR. This campaign should include new and existing/emerging businesses as well as individual/family success stories. The campaign should feature both traditional and social media.

**4. FUNDING PROCUREMENT ACCESS OFFICE :**

The responsibility of this department will be to help local and small businesses understand and navigate the City-Parish procurement process.

## ***Opportunities for Partnerships and Collaboration***

**1. SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT**

Identify business opportunities for new and existing businesses by partnering with:

**POTENTIAL PARTNERSHIPS:**

Baton Rouge North Economic Development District, S. U. Small Business Development Center, LA Workforce Commission, LCTCS, Employ BR, SCORE, LED, SBA, USDA, Visit Baton Rouge, and SBDC- Southern University

**2. SECURING FUNDING PARTNERSHIPS**

Develop new funding sources through the Mayor's Lenders' Roundtable:

**POTENTIAL PARTNERSHIPS:**

Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI), Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta, credit unions, banks, micro lenders, brokers, and Angel investors

**3. BATON ROUGE ZOO REVITALIZATION:**

Develop an action plan to transform the Baton Rouge Zoo at its current location, and expand it into an Eco-Adventure destination.

**POTENTIAL PARTNERSHIPS:**

BREC, City-Parish Government, Visit Baton Rouge, LSU, Southern University, Greenwood Park, and Clark Park

**4. FEDERALLY QUALIFIED HEALTH CARE CENTERS (FQHC):**

The purpose of this partnership is to provide primary and preventative health care to the community in an effort to reduce the excessive usage of emergency services. The FQHC is a federal vehicle that funds community health centers to serve a variety of federally designated underserved areas/populations.

**POTENTIAL PARTNERSHIPS:**

This collaboration should be considered with all health care providers.

**5. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING:**

Access funding from State and Federal sources to enhance existing workforce development programs – LCTCS/LA Workforce Commission, BRCC (Dr. Girard Melancon, melancong@mybrcc.edu; 225-907-3887), CDBG funds to support Employ BR and other related programs.

- a. Private foundations to provide matching funds and/or fund public/private partnerships to address key issues.

**POTENTIAL PARTNERSHIPS:**

BRAF, Wilson Foundation (mental health & education), Pennington Foundation (health), Thurgood Marshall Foundation, Kellogg Foundation, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, BlueCross/Blueshield Foundation, The Walton Foundation

- b. Partner with non-profit organizations to improve community outreach, crime reduction, and workforce development.

**POTENTIAL PARTNERSHIPS**

Against all Odds, Dream True, Stop the Killing Inc., The Butterfly Society, Project 70805, BRAVE, My Brother's Keeper, The Promise Grant Initiative, Set Free Addiction Recovery Services, Community Against Drugs and Violence (CADAV), HOPE Zone (Byrne Criminal Justice Institute Initiative)

- c. Develop workforce training and opportunity programs that reintroduce former offenders back into the workforce through gainful employment.

**POTENTIAL PARTNERSHIPS**

Against All Odds, Crème De La Crème, Dream True, BRAVE, Capital Area Re-entry Coalition

**6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVES:**

- a. Partner with businesses to help fund/provide matching funding and/or provide volunteer support for neighborhood and community projects Partner with faith-based community to address neighborhood issues, including revitalization of neighborhood/civic associations and addressing crime and blight.

**POTENTIAL PARTNERSHIPS:**

All faith-based community organizations

- b. Partner with businesses to help fund/provide matching funding and/or provide volunteer support for neighborhood and community projects:

**POTENTIAL PARTNERSHIPS:**

ExxonMobil, Turner Industries, BlueCross/BlueShield, Entergy, EMCO, ARKEL Constructors, Orion Instruments, Car Quest Auto Part & Supplies

**7. YOUTH OUTREACH:**

Develop youth outreach programs that focus on civic engagement, entrepreneurship, job skills development, mentoring, and higher education preparation.

**POTENTIAL PARTNERS:**

Big Buddy, Boys & Girls Club, Walls Project, Pink Blossom Alliance Inc., Baton Rouge Youth Coalition, Community Against Drugs and Violence, MetroMorphosis, Boys Hope Girls Hope, Wyman's Teen Outreach Program (Family Road of Greater Baton Rouge)

**8. SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY ALUMNI COMMUNITY INVESTMENT:**

Encourage Southern University Alumni to invest in opportunities for community development initiatives, entrepreneurship opportunities, mentorship, and civic engagement.

**POTENTIAL PARTNERS:**

Southern University and A&M College, Southern University Alumni Federation, and Southern University Faculty and Staff.

## *Fiscal and Budgetary Implications*

**ADDITIONAL FUNDING NEEDS:**

**1. BLIGHT REMEDIATION:**

- a. The backlog of blight removal projects is growing astronomically. Funding is inadequate and must be included in the first budget supplement and/or the 2018 Budget.

**2. CRIME REDUCTION:**

- a. Additional resources should be dedicated to community policing and/or other crime reduction programs with visible activities that engage neighbors, business owners and community leaders of all demographic backgrounds.

**3. CITY /PARISH STAFFING NEEDS:**

- a. Add additional Code Inspectors to the current staff to provide adequate inspections of blighted properties, residential and commercial. The challenges presented by flood-damaged homes will be overwhelming. There should be two inspectors per councilmanic district.
- b. Add additional staff to the Mayor's Office of Neighborhoods—two staff per councilmanic district. The duties of this office need to be revamped and coordinated with the Permit Office and Code Inspectors.

**4. NEW INITIATIVES:**

- a. Create new department within the Mayor-President's office to increase contracts with DBE- Disadvantaged Business Enterprise for Contract Procurement. Consider a "workforce czar" to coordinate training and employment opportunities as well as eliminate barriers for North Baton Rouge residents (and across the City/ Parish).
- b. Invest in a revolving fund for a local community land trust (see New Orleans' Crescent City Futures Fund). Possible partners are local lending institutions, Community Development Financial Institutions, Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta Office of Community and Economic Development.

**5. MATCHING/ALLOCATING FUNDS:**

- a. Recommend matching funds from the City-Parish for the Baton Rouge North Economic Development District as modeled by the Downtown Development District (DDD).

## *Department/Agency Workforce*

It is recommended that the Office of the Mayor-President review the current staffing and resource structure to address key issues impacting North Baton Rouge and barriers to its revitalization. Two of the primary issues impacting those who live, work, play, and pray in the area—as well as general public perception of North Baton Rouge as a whole—are crime and blight. Additional focus areas that have a direct impact on both of these issues are neighborhood engagement, workforce development, and increasing contracting opportunities for Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE).

**1. CRIME INITIATIVES**

Efforts should be made to continue Project BRAVE and publicly showcase its positive impact on crime in 70802 and 70805. Additional resources should be dedicated to community policing and/or other crime reduction programs with visible activities that engage neighbors, business owners and community leaders of all demographic backgrounds, as well as the media. These programs should showcase progress being made to improve race relations and positively impact crime rates in North Baton Rouge, further contributing to a more unified city and region.

**2. BLIGHT INITIATIVES:**

The Mayor's Office of Neighborhoods should be revamped to direct additional staff (recommend at least two per MetroCouncil district) to partner with Council members in creating and/or reenergizing existing neighborhood, civic, and business associations. Neighbor engagement is essential to addressing the underlying issues of blight, crime and neighborhood pride to demonstrably improve conditions in North Baton Rouge, as well as other parts of the City-Parish. Funding should be dedicated to promoting the "roll out" of the new structure, including a visible presence on the City-Parish website (or separate landing page) and on social media platforms. The process for reporting concerns should be reviewed to improve use of RedStick311 and realize additional efficiencies.

**3. EMPLOYMENT/WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT:**

Review current programs to address employment/workforce development issues within City-Parish; measure effectiveness and impact on North Baton Rouge. Develop workforce employment program that places emphasis on the training and job placement of ex-offenders. Ensure appropriate resources dedicated to Employ BR, Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs) and partnerships with educational institutions including Baton Rouge Community College



(workforce development hub located at NBR campus on Winbourne), Associated Builders and Contractors, etc. Consider a “workforce czar” position to coordinate training and employment opportunities as well as eliminate barriers for North Baton Rouge residents (and across the City-Parish). This position could also address the specific need for increasing Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) contracting opportunities, as well as accessibility of these and all resources for area residents to gain employment and/or further develop skills for better employment opportunities.

4. **EXISTING PROGRAM IMPROVEMENTS:**

Continue/enhance existing programs including RedStick311, Community Service Officer and Healthy Cities initiative. These are all critical to addressing, crime blight and public health issues not only in North Baton Rouge, but across the City-Parish.

5. **PROCUREMENT ACCESS OFFICE:**

It is the Subcommittee’s recommendation that Mayor-President Sharon Weston Broome create an East Baton Rouge Parish Office of Procurement Access. The duties of the department will be including, but not limited to explaining when and where the contract opportunities are posted, explaining the basic approach to bidding on the contract opportunities, describing to vendors the insurance and bonding obligations associated with a particular contract, and helping vendors to identify contracting opportunities that they have the capacity to fulfill. The staffing structure of the department should include a Director of Procurement Access, an Assistance Director of Procurement Access, Insurance and Bonding Administrative Specialist, a Contracts and Bidding Administrative Specialist, and an Office Manager. Currently most local and small businesses in North Baton Rouge do not have the capacity, time or money to effectively participate in the City-Parish procurement process. As stated in the Business Advise article “Small companies face uphill struggle when it comes to public procurement contacts”; much larger, and older, businesses in the US and in the UK dominate when it comes to winning bids for both local and central government contracts. The Office of Procurement Access department will help local and small businesses located in North Baton Rouge have a better chance at landing a City-Parish contract.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Top Three Recommendations

I. **LIVE, WORK, PLAY: (Needs & Attractions)**

1. Place focus on identifying lending sources that are willing to lend to small businesses in NBR.
  - Mayor to convene Lenders’ Roundtable to identify barriers that hinder lending in NBR and provide sources of capital.

- Invite Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta Office of Community and Economic Development representatives to attend and identify resources. **TIMELINE:** Host the Lenders’ Roundtable in 2017.

- Engage Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) funders to develop a Small Business Development Fund and Baton Rouge’s version of New Orleans’ Crescent City Futures Fund, a revolving fund for a local community land trust.

2. **CRITERIA FOR BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES:**

- Concentrate on “low-hanging fruit” such as Howell Place development projects, Baton Rouge Metro Airport expansion, Southern University Alumni Center development on SUBR campus, and the transformation of the BREC Zoo at its current location.
- Establish a target zone Uptown (Uptown: Area includes north of Hwy. 190 to Blount Road, east to around the airport and west to Southern University) for development, informing prospective developers of critical issues and incentives, such as Defined Boundaries, favorable financing, identification of tax credits, economic development zone, Tax Increment Financing (TIF), traffic and sewer impact fees. Partner with #NBRNow Blue Ribbon Commission & the Baton Rouge North to continue development and implementation efforts on this initiative.

**TIMELINE:** Identify the boundaries of the Uptown target zone and establish guidelines for the District within the next 6 months.

- Improve critical thoroughfares (Swan Street entry to Southern University etc.) and incorporate storm water management techniques as well as Complete Streets initiatives. RE: Scotlandville Comprehensive Community Development Plan (SCCDP) Study **TIMELINE:** Evaluate street and roadway improvements and identify funding sources within 2-4 years.
- Develop strategies to address social determinants of health, such as the built environment (complete streets, active transportation options, green space, quality affordable housing); environmental quality; health literacy; and access to transit, health care, healthy food, jobs, training, and diverse social networks. Coordinate with Mayor-President’s Healthy City initiative.



## II. ENHANCE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN NORTH BATON ROUGE:

1. Strengthen local businesses, with emphasis on small businesses. See Entrepreneurship & Business Education Task Force report.
  - Develop a small business education program with the goal of training participants on the fundamentals necessary to build and maintain efficient and effective businesses.
    - Work with SBDC to standardize offerings and provide accountability.
    - Develop accountability measurements to track the effectiveness and success of the programs.
  - Breaking the Lending Code: Categorization & Business Tiering
    - Work with the SBDC to appropriately identify Business Tiers in accordance with SBA Small Business Size Standard and NAICS Code.
2. Create jobs and income opportunities
  - Existing industries and businesses must be incentivized to hire and retain neighborhood residents, including ex-offenders.  
**TIMELINE:** Legislation modification in 2017.
  - Adopt innovative neighborhood redevelopment strategies as demonstrated by Democracy Collaborative.
  - Identify next generation entrepreneurs.
    - Leverage existing resources by utilizing Southern University College of Business Resources, Southern University Economic Development Center and Southern University Incubator.
    - Develop a matrix of services to allow customized action plans to be easily created to fit the needs of the small business owners.
    - Accountability measurements must be developed that track the effectiveness and success of the program.
  - Attract new businesses that create wealth for the community.
  - Investigate the creation of the Evergreen Cooperatives (Cleveland, OH model) for a sustainable job-creation model to be sustainable over the long-term.
  - Adopt a Community Benefits Policy (Cleveland, OH model).  
**TIMELINE:** 4th Quarter, 2017

## III. Engage residents/business owners in civic/neighborhood associations, blight clean-up and community beautification efforts.

1. NBR Image campaign—engage firm to create multi-faceted campaign utilizing data and personal stories to show what is good about working, living and playing in NBR. This should include new and existing/emerging businesses as well as individual/family success stories in both traditional and social media.
  - Public Relations Task Force
  - Needs and Attractions Task Force
  - Request The Advocate to produce a Thursday North Baton Rouge Section that focuses on new and existing/emerging businesses as well as educational achievements of NBR residents and scholars.
2. Properly fund blight remediation:
  - Funding for two (2) code inspectors per councilmanic district.
  - Include a person that is skilled in reading and interpreting abstracts.
  - Impose a time limit for demolition deferrals that are granted at the Council level.  
**TIMELINE:** In the next budget, or include in next budget supplement.
3. The Mayor-President's administration should meet immediately with the Governor and the Restore Task Force to give input on how recovery dollars are allocated to East Baton Rouge Parish. Enact a comprehensive strategy for flood-damaged properties, ensuring that Community Development Block Grant funding is proportionately allocated to north Baton Rouge neighborhoods. Future funding should be leveraged to maximize the benefit to the flood-recovery neighborhoods.  
**TIMELINE:** The Mayor-President should meet with the Governor's Restore Task Force In the next 30 days.
4. Consider implementing a Community Land Trust modeled on the Dudley Neighbors Community Land Trust. <http://www.dudleyneighbors.org>

# RACE RELATIONS

**Co-Chairs:** Dr. Albert Samuels, Ms. Michelle Gieg

**Committee Members:** Sister Judith Brun, Errol Domingu, Jared Loftus, Bishop Robert W. Muench, John Noland, Joseph Possa, Sadie Roberts-Joseph, James Santiago Vilas

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Race Relations Transition Sub-committee began its work with three core principles:

1. Race is a social construct.
2. Race is an issue that has meant (and means) different things to different people over time and by geography.
3. Race in America—and therefore in Louisiana and in Baton Rouge—is deeply rooted in institutional slavery.

Knowing this, the Sub-committee approached its work in crafting the recommendations in this report through the following lens: *First, what issues are we currently facing in our city that are most tied to race?* Second, if we look deeply at the issues through the lens of race relations, *what recommendations most align to dismantling the systems of privilege that currently allow race to dictate outcomes?*

Put simply, the Sub-committee believes that Baton Rouge is plagued by our racial divide. People with privilege must recognize it, understand it, and act against it in order for our city to move past the divisive lines history has drawn. Baton Rouge must all identify where structural racism and white privilege create a system of preference in economic, political and social systems. *We all must actively create offsetting systems that level the playing field for people of color, especially those living in poverty.*

We must all acknowledge the past wrong-doing and its effect on the present, and look to the future. The Sub-committee hopes that future is one where citizens meet in the middle as opposed to extending invitations to the other side. No one should have to be “converted” as much as encouraged to become aware of a different perspective. Baton Rouge aspires to be a city that seeks out our differences and learns to appreciate them, that acknowledges our history yet seeks to create a brighter tomorrow for all of its citizens, and that is a beacon of light to other cities facing their own race-related issues. Baton Rouge should act as an example of what TO DO as opposed to what NOT TO DO.

As a transition committee, we recognize that race is difficult to discuss in the public domain, but it is the “current” that underpins everything. This Sub-committee has chosen three issues that are bringing the “current” of race to the surface: St. George Breakaway Movement, Neighborhood

Redevelopment and City Policing. This report further details recommendations in each of these three areas.

*A full glossary of terms that we use throughout this report is available in Appendix A.*

## BACKGROUND AND VISION

### *Historical Context: Race, The American Dilemma*

*We hold these truths to be self evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness — That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of those ends, it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it. . . . .*

It is no small matter that when Thomas Jefferson penned the famous words in the Declaration of Independence, chattel slavery of men and women of African descent in the newly christened nation had already been legal for more than a century. European observers of the American Revolution that was transpiring an ocean away could not miss the irony of a struggle justified in the name of universal human liberty being led by slaveholders. The French nobleman, Alexis de Tocqueville, after visiting the United States in the 1830’s, called the institution of slavery the most “formidable threat” to the future of the nation in his classic work, *Democracy in America*.

A century later, following a brutal civil war, Reconstruction and decades of both de jure racial segregation in the South and de facto racism in other parts of the country, Swedish sociologist Gunnar Myrdal (1944) echoed Tocqueville’s assessment. The “American dilemma,” Myrdal writes, is essentially a moral one: it represents the contradiction between **our nation’s ideal of equality for all and its history of systematic racial discrimination against African Americans**. While significant social and economic progress has been made since the civil rights revolution of the 1950’s and 1960’s, substantial gaps in equal opportunity across

racial lines remain stubbornly resilient in the United States. Given the historical sweep of the race problem, it would be shocking if Baton Rouge, Louisiana, did not face significant issues with regard to race relations.

The term “race” has no biological significance. The Human Genome Project has demonstrated conclusively that there is no biological basis for the belief that there is a “natural” foundation for racial distinctions: Researchers have found more genetic similarity within so-called “races” than within “races.” Moreover, the term has been defined differently over time and across nations, and even differently within the same nation. (For example, the term “white” in America encompasses groups such as Jews, Poles, Greeks, Czechs, Italians, and others who have not always been considered “white.”) Thus, **race is a social construct** that has varied greatly over time and cultural contexts.

For our purposes in this report, what is relevant is how race has been defined in the United States. *In our country, race<sup>1</sup> refers to specific, physical characteristics that are believed to be evidence of inherent and permanent differences among men. These differences are held to be so significant that human beings may be legitimately divided into separate categories based on their possession of these characteristics.*

Most prominent among the physical characteristics relied upon to designate difference is skin color—hence, the categories “white,” “black,” “red,” and “yellow.” *Racism<sup>2</sup> is the worldview that arbitrarily assigns a hierarchy to these racial categories and asserts the inherent superiority of those who are members of the favored caste. It provides the rationale for members of that caste to monopolize the lion’s share of the economic and political power of society and to dominate other socially significant arenas within the nation.*

In the United States, the “white” race occupies the top rung on the ladder of racial hierarchy. Thus, “whiteness” represents the cultural norm of American society. Members of all other racial groups are measured by the extent to which they conform with, or deviate from, the “objective” standard of white Americans. *White supremacy is the worldview that assigns preeminence to characteristics shared by members of the white race and provides the ideological justification for their overwhelming domination of the nation’s economic, social, political, and cultural institutions.* Whites achieved their exalted place in the American racial hierarchy as a result of the need to justify the institution of slavery in the English colonies that would eventually become the United States of America. The eminent historian Edmund Morgan in *American Slavery, American Freedom* (1975) traces the origin of the American idea of race to the colonization of seventeenth century Virginia. After several failures, fits and starts, Virginians resorted to chattel enslavement of Africans as a solution to the persistent problems associated with labor shortages, growing economic demand, and social unrest

from landless, disenfranchised poor English indentured servants.

The English colonists of Virginia, of course, were hardly strangers to the concept of social inequality. The aristocratic, hereditary monarchy from which they emigrated personified inequality as a social norm. Indeed, had it been possible for the colony’s masters to simply transplant the identical social hierarchies that they were familiar with in England, there is little reason to believe that they would not have done so. However, creating a civilization out of the Virginia wilderness required a stable labor force that could be more ruthlessly exploited than the type of drudgery that English peasants and urban dwellers were accustomed to. Moreover, it was difficult to reduce English indentured servants to slavery (which had disappeared in most of Europe by this time) because even though they were used to being treated as the inferiors of the noble class they nevertheless had some consciousness of having “rights”—no matter how imperfectly they may have existed in reality. The shift to reliance on African labor solved the problem in a number of ways. Slavery created solidarity between the poor and the slaveholding aristocracy by creating the category of “whiteness,” hence bestowing upon poor whites a social status that they could have never achieved in England. As a result, poor whites had a vested interest in maintaining the racial status quo and thereby aligned their sympathies in the main with the slaveholding class as opposed to the enslaved Africans. In effect, race served as a new form of aristocracy in that it shared the same basic premise—the belief in both the inherent and permanent nature of social inequality and class difference. Therefore, no matter how trying the hardships that the poor white man might be required to endure in the New World, he could take solace in one certainty—at least he wasn’t black. Whiteness meant that one can never be a slave.

Thus, when the Founders proclaimed in the Declaration of Independence that “all men are created equal,” their words presumed a social consensus on the doctrine of white supremacy. The same Thomas Jefferson who penned the familiar words in the nation’s founding document also wrote *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1782) in which he openly speculated about the natural inferiority of blacks when compared to the white race. In this regard, Thomas Jefferson was not alone: He personified the soul of a nation. Rather than viewing the inconsistency between the Founders’ ideals of universal liberty and the reality of slavery as a puzzling moral contradiction in their thinking, it is best understood as a house built on the foundation of the doctrine of white supremacy. This doctrine never contemplated incorporating African Americans as equals, entitled to full citizenship in the new nation they were forging.

*However, ideas have consequences, and sometimes they have reverberations that extend far beyond what their original adherents and practitioners may have intended*

*or ever contemplated.* This is true of the Declaration of Independence. As a practical matter, it is merely academic who the “men” were that the Founders intended their declaration of universal liberty to apply to at that particular moment in history: *What matters is that they said “all men are created equal.”* By using such universal language, the Declaration serves as an open invitation to every group of Americans who legitimately believes that they are being illegitimately excluded from the mainstream of American society and unfairly deprived of the bounty of America.

As a consequence, black protest movements spanning from abolition to the Black Lives Matter movement today have been spared the task of either importing a theory of revolution from abroad or developing their own. Rather, they need only invoke the nation’s own founding documents to support their cause. Thus, David Walker merely had to say, “Are we not, men?” or Sojourner Truth could ask, “Ain’t I a woman?” It is both noteworthy and not accidental, for example, that Martin Luther King’s “I Have a Dream” speech draws inspiration from the Declaration of Independence, not *The Communist Manifesto*. Indeed, the issue of “race relations” in the United States boils down to the ongoing struggle to square America’s social reality with its founding ideals.

This report represents one more step in that ongoing struggle. In our case, it is an attempt to move the Baton Rouge community closer toward the goal of building “a more perfect union.”

## **An Access Divide**

We believe that there is a serious “Access Divide” in Baton Rouge that is rooted in issues of race. Put simply, the geography of our city is divided along racial lines. In addition to this, income inequality in our city is divided along racial and geographical lines. Thus, there exists what is popularly known as a “North” and “South” Baton Rouge. These communities within our city are largely known for how they are different. While “North” Baton Rouge is known for being predominately people of color, “South” Baton Rouge is known for being mostly white. While “North” Baton Rouge is known for being predominately underprivileged, “South” Baton Rouge is known for being mostly privileged. While “North” Baton Rouge is known for being under-resourced, “South” Baton Rouge is known for being well-resourced. In recent years, several issues have heightened this divide, and have created a perception that the community north of Florida Boulevard is less worthy of investment. For example, the proposal to move the Baton Rouge Zoo to South Baton Rouge, the closing of Earl K. Long Hospital and the Baton Rouge General Emergency Room in Mid-City all highlight this problem. This sits on top of what we see as a 50-year investment gap in the neighborhoods north of Florida Boulevard.

This divide is the base from which racial problems in our city manifest themselves. Essentially, if a person in Baton Rouge lives in either “North” or “South” Baton Rouge, they are able to opt-out of understanding or experiencing the area in which they do not live. This lack of human understanding, which can be attributed to structural racism<sup>3</sup> and white<sup>4</sup> privilege, leaves us largely unaware of our collective experience as citizens in this community.

Put simply, our committee believes that people with privilege must recognize it, understand it and act against it in order for our city to move past the divisive lines history has drawn. We must all acknowledge the past wrong-doing, its effect on the present, and look to the future. We must all identify where structural racism and white privilege create a system of preference in economic, political and social systems. ***We all must actively create offsetting systems that level the playing field for people of color, especially those living in poverty.***

The Sub-committee recognizes that race is difficult to discuss in the public domain, but it is the “current” that underpins everything. Therefore, the Sub-committee has chosen three issues that are bringing the “current” of race to the surface:

- Issue 1: St. George Breakaway Movement
- Issue 2: Neighborhood Redevelopment
- Issue 3: City Policing

## **Proposals for New Initiatives**

### **Issue 1: St. George Breakaway Movement**

#### ***Why is this issue connected to race?***

The campaign by a citizens’ group in the southeastern portion of East Baton Rouge Parish to incorporate a separate city after two failed legislative efforts to create an independent school district has drawn national—and unflattering—attention to the Baton Rouge community. The proposed city, if created, will be named St. George. It would instantly become the fifth largest city in Louisiana with over 107,000 residents.

In 2013, an economic study commissioned by the Baton Rouge Area Chamber of Commerce documents the wide disparity that exists between the per capita income of the proposed city of St. George and the city of Baton Rouge. The average per capita income of residents of St. George is over \$88,000. Meanwhile, the average per capita income of Baton Rouge city residents stands at over \$58,000—a \$30,000 difference. Additionally, the proposed city includes three of the wealthiest subdivisions in the state of Louisiana: Westminster, Shenandoah and Oak Hills Place.

More than 70 percent of the population in the proposed new city is white, whereas 55 percent of Baton Rouge residents are black and 40 percent are white.



The study also warns that the incorporation effort, if successful, will reduce the revenues of Baton Rouge's city-parish government by an estimated \$53 million. Such a scenario would force city leaders to propose either dramatic tax increases, drastic budget cuts to city-parish services, or some combination of the two.

Seeking to "head off" the renewal of the campaign to incorporate the city of St. George ranks as one of the priorities on which Mayor-President Broome's administration should focus. The Sub-committee believes that a fight over St. George would be an unmitigated disaster at a time when the Baton Rouge community desperately needs to strive toward pulling together. If the St. George movement succeeds, it will serve to further exacerbate racial tensions in Baton Rouge, not alleviate them.

### *Proposed Initiatives*

1. **Make every effort to sit down with the organizers of the St. George incorporation movement with the aim of finding common ground that will both satisfy supporter concerns without compromising the interests of the rest of the parish.** The Mayor-President and her team should take the initiative to meet with the St. George petitioners to seek solutions to the outstanding issues. It is hoped that such outreach will be received as good faith efforts that can set the stage for open, honest dialogue about the future of our parish. Hopefully, the organizers can be persuaded that a breakaway effort would be needlessly divisive and disruptive—particularly in a community still reeling from the impact of the August 2016 floods. Furthermore, a rerun of this controversy will damage Baton Rouge's national reputation and hamper the city and the region's ability to market our community as a good place to locate businesses and attract and retain top talent.
2. **However, if compromise with the organizers of the St. George movement is not possible, their effort must be defeated. Should an all-out campaign to defeat the incorporation campaign become imperative, the following steps should be followed:**
  - a. Currently, a small minority of the parish's citizens would have power to visit economic carnage on the rest of the parish. The Mayor-President should lobby the Louisiana legislature to change the law regarding the minimum threshold required to bring an incorporation vote to the ballot. This could happen in one of three ways:
    - i. Current law requires petitioners obtain the signatures of only 25 percent of the registered voters in the proposed area in order to force a vote. We propose to increase the percentage of petitioners required to force a vote on the issue.
    - ii. There is currently no deadline or set time period for the petition to gather the requisite

number of signatures once started. The Sub-committee propose a mandated timeline for petition completion (ideally 180 days).

- iii. Once successful, only the voters in the proposed area can vote on incorporation. The administration should seek to amend the law to require that any vote on St. George incorporation allows all voters in the parish to participate.
- b. The administration should reassemble the political coalition that successfully defeated the St. George campaign in its first effort.
- c. The administration should engage in a public advertising campaign to persuade the public that the incorporation of St. George would be disastrous for East Baton Rouge Parish. In particular, data from the Baton Rouge Chamber of Commerce's 2013 study should be utilized to highlight the massive economic repercussions that a breakaway would have on the City-Parish's finances as well as its prospects for economic development. Additionally, information from Together Baton Rouge's 2014 study can and should be highlighted to point out that the proposed St. George school district would be far costlier and far more disruptive, both to the citizens of Baton Rouge and St. George, than its organizers have been willing to acknowledge.
- d. The administration should rebut the "pet" talking points of the breakaway proponents:
  - i. Example 1: The St. George organizers deny that their residents will experience significant increases in their property taxes if they incorporate because their area generates so much sales tax revenue that property tax increases are not necessary. The experience of the breakaway districts of Central and Zachary contradict that argument. That is patently nonsensical.
  - ii. Example 2: Even if incorporation is successful, that does not assure the residents of St. George that they will get a school district in the end. St. George would still have to go to the state legislature to seek approval to create a school district. Once adopted by the legislature, the measure then must be approved by the voters as a constitutional amendment. Therefore, the incorporation of St. George and the establishment of the school district are actually two separate processes. They are not the same, as some supporters of the petition drive seem to believe.
  - iii. Even if an incorporation vote takes place and succeeds, the actual "divorce" between Baton Rouge and the new city of St. George,

in all likelihood, could be tied up in litigation that could drag on for years. This controversy will enrich lawyers on both sides of this case for an indefinite amount of time into the future.

3. **Most important of all, craft a positive vision of a confident, inclusive, optimistic, Baton Rouge to counter the negative, divisive character of the St. George movement.** Former Mayor-President Kip Holden got it right in 2004 when he campaigned on the slogan “One Baton Rouge is Better.” The administration needs to develop a catchy, easy-to-remember slogan that encapsulates the Mayor’s President to build an inclusive, progressive Baton Rouge. This will appeal to all voters, and give people a reason to advocate for the collective.

*For a more detailed report on the context of the St. George Breakaway Movement, see Appendix B.*

## Issue 2: Neighborhood Redevelopment

### *Why is this issue connected to race?*

Generational poverty self-perpetuates. It deepens and sustains our racial divide. Products such as food and shelter will not end generational poverty. Relationships are at the root of human change. **Redeveloping whole neighborhoods** will revitalize relationships and create changes needed for a more inclusive city. As stated in our definition of the problem, Baton Rouge is a community divided by race along geographic lines roughly demarcated into what is known as “North” and “South” Baton Rouge. “North” Baton Rouge is a community with several neighborhoods in which the conditions and lack of access to proactive services sustain our city’s divisions along racial lines.

### *Proposed Initiatives*

1. **Properly fund the Baton Rouge Redevelopment Authority (RDA) and give it the necessary support it needs to bring impact to the city.** Historically, the Baton Rouge Redevelopment Authority (RDA) has invested in the five council districts represented by African Americans. Its priorities are blight removal, employment growth, and a promotion of a general climate to increase economic growth and development. The RDA began with an \$80 million new market tax credit. It received about \$7 million from the Capital Area Finance Association (CAFA) and \$3 million from federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG).
  - a. The administration should fund the RDA with the following levels of support: \$1 million in year one, \$2 million in year two and \$3 million yearly thereafter.
  - b. The administration should charge the RDA with the following initiatives to better *whole*

**neighborhoods** throughout the city:

- i. Implement Land Banking, so that whole areas can be re-thought and redeveloped over time through pooling adjudicated property
- ii. Address Blight, so that blighted neighborhoods are reimagined in partnership with the neighbors in that area
- iii. Increase Capital Access, so that we can reverse years of disinvestment
- iv. Create Opportunistic Projects, so that we can replicate successful redevelopment in other American cities (such as the Entergy site on Government Street)
- v. Utilize Tax Incentives, so that individuals and businesses who are willing to invest in neighborhoods that they may ordinarily dismiss

## Issue 3: City Policing

### *Why is this issue connected to race?*

The Sub-committee understands that it was tasked with the issue of how to better address and improve race relations within the City-Parish. It also understands that there is a separate committee established to deal with the Baton Rouge Police Department. Our team has taken the approach of how to possibly improve Race Relations within the Baton Rouge Police Department and the community.

One cannot watch the cell phone video of Alton Sterling’s death and not conclude that something isn’t right. Sterling’s death brought to the surface the difficult reality our community faces as it relates to race and racism. This is a divisive and difficult topic, as it’s couched in deep-seated mindsets and habits among the public and the police force. The Sub-committee is recommending systemic changes in the way that our community polices and views policing so that we may, in time, create a more inclusive and aware system.

*“There can be no perfect democracy curtailed by color, race or poverty. But with all, we accomplish all, even peace.”*  
W.E.B. DuBois

### *Proposed Initiatives*

1. **Mayor-President Broome should be part of the conversation related to the Alton Sterling investigation verdict.** The Sub-committee suggests that the Mayor-President be a key voice in helping our community cope with the verdict, no matter what the result. Baton Rouge should use the verdict as a platform for tough conversations about race and policing, like the forum Together Baton Rouge on Police Reform on January 31st.
2. **Leverage the Mayor’s appointee to the Civil Service**

**Board as a crucial representative.** The Civil Service Board is comprised of one member from the BRPD, one from the BRFD, two from the community and one from the Mayor-President's office. The Subcommittee believes that the overall makeup of the police department is comprised of good people wanting to do good work. However, the good work that they do is being tarnished by the actions of a few "bad apples." It is our understanding that these "bad apples" are known to many, but have been largely left to go free because of how difficult it is to terminate someone when the need arises to go before the civil service board.

- a. The administration should appoint a person of sound judgment who can approach complicated decisions from an unbiased perspective.
  - b. The administration should ensure that all officers be informed that they will be held accountable for their actions, regardless of race and the color of the alleged perpetrator, and that there will be stricter discipline for those few that don't follow proper protocol.
  - c. The administration should establish measures of accountability ensuring transparency in all levels of operation.
  - d. The administration should audit the documentation practices of incidents and employment expectations at the BRPD so that proper documentation is always accessible and up-to-date.
3. **Shore up body camera logistics. It is imperative that ALL police officers on-duty have a body cam operational at all times.**
- a. The administration should ensure that guidelines be put in place IF the cam is turned off or falls off.
  - b. The administration should ensure that any mishaps be placed in an officer file for future reference.
4. **Increase activities that promote diversity and inclusiveness among the police force.**
- a. The administration should hold an annual bi-racial training session for all officers. This training should cover conflicts, best practices and de-escalation of situations.
  - b. Wherever possible, officers of different race and/or backgrounds be placed in patrol teams together, or covering adjacent areas of the city-parish.
  - c. Officers are to have a constant visual of their purpose, "to serve and to protect" the community in which they work. Through education, the department will realize the diversity of the population, including ethical, educational, economic, and other variables.
  - d. The administration should increase funding for more competitive pay (as compared to state police or other high paid municipalities), while simultaneously increasing focus on recruiting more officers of color.

5. **Build a greater sense of public trust in the police.**
- a. The administration should make use of public service announcements, ministers, community leaders, media, Mayor-President Broome, and all others to actively profess and educate that without police and security, we would have anarchy; that community policing is needed and required so that residents feel comfortable knowing and going to report crime to "their" officer; that each community be respected by all who live and patrol there. Some ways in which this could happen are:
    - i. by "Putting Feet on the Street," parking the patrol car and walking the beat, enabling officers to break down walls of fear and build relationships of mutual respect;
    - ii. by increasing the number of bicycles on patrol, improving health and fitness, building stronger community relations and possibly leading to improved youth involvement;
    - iii. by creating easier access and safety for reporting suspicious drug-related activity in neighborhoods;
    - iv. by re-implementing the Neighborhood Watch Program; and
    - v. by having group conversations, where people and police listen to each other and establish common grounds.

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## RECOMMENDATIONS

### *Top Three Recommendations*

1. Currently, a small minority of the parish's citizens would have power to visit economic carnage on the rest of the parish. The Mayor-President should lobby the Louisiana legislature to change the law regarding the minimum threshold required to bring an incorporation vote to the ballot. This could happen in one of three ways:
  - i. Current law requires petitioners obtain the signatures of only 25 percent of the registered voters in the proposed area in order to force a vote. We propose to increase the percent of petitioners required to force a vote on the issue.
  - ii. There is currently no deadline or set time period for the petition once started. We propose a mandated timeline for petition completion (ideally 180 days).
  - iii. Once successful, only the voters in the proposed area can vote on incorporation. The administration should seek to amend the law to require that any vote on St. George incorporation allows all voters in the parish to participate.
2. Properly fund the Baton Rouge Redevelopment Authority (RDA) and give it the necessary support it needs to bring impact to the city. Historically, the Baton Rouge Redevelopment Authority (RDA) has



invested in the five council districts represented by African Americans. Its priorities are blight removal, employment growth, and a promotion of a general climate to increase economic growth and development. The RDA began with an \$80 million new market tax credit. It received about \$7 million from the Capital Area Finance Association (CAFA) and \$3 million from federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG).

- a. The administration should fund the RDA with the following levels of support: \$1 million in year one, \$2 million in year two and \$3 million yearly thereafter.
3. Leverage the Mayor-President's appointee to the Civil Service Board as a crucial representative. The Civil Service Board is comprised of one member from the BRPD, one from the BRFD, two from the community and one from the Mayor-President's office. We believe that the overall makeup of the police department is comprised of good people wanting to do good work. However, the good work that they do is being tarnished by the actions of a few "bad apples." It is our understanding that these "bad apples" are known to many, but have been largely left to go free because of how difficult it is to terminate someone when the need arises to go before the civil service board.
  - a. The administration should appoint a person of sound judgment who can approach complicated decisions from an unbiased perspective.
  - b. The administration should ensure that all officers be informed that they will be held accountable for their actions, regardless of race and the color of the alleged perpetrator, and that there will be stricter discipline for those few that don't follow proper protocol.
  - c. The administration should establish measures of accountability ensuring transparency in all levels of operation.
  - d. The administration should audit the documentation practices of incidents and employment expectations at the BRPD so that proper documentation is always accessible and up-to-date.

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## APPENDIX A:

### GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Retrieved from: <http://www.racialequityresourceguide.org/about/glossary> and <http://www.cssp.org/about/race-equity/GLOSSARY-OF-TERMS.pdf>

**CLASS:** A group of people with similar levels of wealth, influence, and status.

Source: Manza, J., & Sauder, M. (2009). *Inequality and society: social science perspectives on social stratification*. New York, NY: Norton.

**CLASSISM:** Differential treatment based on social class or perceived social class. Classism is the systematic oppression of subordinated class groups to advantage and strengthen the dominant class groups. It's the systematic assignment of characteristics of worth and ability based on social class. Source: Manza, J., & Sauder, M. (2009). *Inequality and society: social science perspectives on social stratification*. New York, NY: Norton.

**CULTURAL DIVERSITY:** The makeup of various social structures, belief systems and strategies that other cultures use to adapt to life situations in all parts of the world. Source: Schaefer, R. T. (2008). *Encyclopedia of race, ethnicity, and society*. Los Angeles: SAGE Publications

**CULTURAL PLURALISM:** Recognition of the contribution of each group to a common civilization. It encourages the maintenance and development of different life styles, languages and convictions. It is a commitment to deal cooperatively with common concerns. It strives to create the conditions of harmony and respect within a culturally diverse society. Source: Institute for Democratic Renewal and Project Change Anti-Racism Initiative. *A Community Builder's Tool Kit*.

**CULTURAL RACISM:** Those aspects of society that overtly and covertly attribute value and normality to white people and whiteness, and devalue, stereotype and label People of Color as "other," different, less than or render them invisible. Examples of these norms include defining white skin tones as nude or flesh colored, having future time orientation, emphasizing individualism as opposed to a more collective ideology, defining one form of English as standard and identifying only whites as the great writers or composers. Source: Maurianne Adams, Lee Anne Bell and Pat Griffin, editors. *Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice: A Sourcebook*. New York: Routledge.

**CULTURE:** A social system of meaning and custom that is developed by a group of people to assure its adaptation and survival. These groups are distinguished by a set of unspoken rules that shape values, beliefs, habits, patterns of thinking, behaviors and styles of communication.

Source: Institute for Democratic Renewal and Project Change Anti-Racism Initiative. *A Community Builder's Tool Kit*.

### DENIAL

Refusal to acknowledge the societal privileges (see the term "privilege") that are granted or denied based on an individual's ethnicity or other grouping. Those who are in a stage of denial tend to believe, "People are people. We are all alike regardless of the color of our skin." In this way, the existence of a hierarchical system or privileges based on ethnicity or race can be ignored.



Source: *Institute for Democratic Renewal and Project Change Anti-Racism Initiative. A Community Builder's Tool Kit.*

## DISCRIMINATION

The unequal treatment of members of various groups based on race, gender, social class, sexual orientation, physical ability, religion and other categories.

Source: *Institute for Democratic Renewal and Project Change Anti-Racism Initiative. A Community Builder's Tool Kit*

## DIVERSITY

The wide range of national, ethnic, racial and other backgrounds of U.S. residents and immigrants as social groupings, co-existing in American culture. The term is often used to include aspects of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, class and much more.

Source: *Institute for Democratic Renewal and Project Change Anti-Racism Initiative. A Community Builder's Tool Kit.*

## EMPOWERMENT

When target group members refuse to accept the dominant ideology and their subordinate status and take actions to redistribute social power more equitably.

Source: *Maurianne Adams, Lee Anne Bell and Pat Griffin, editors. Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice: A Sourcebook. New York: Routledge.*

## EQUALITY

Access or provision of equal opportunities, where individuals are protected from being discriminated against.

Source: *Manza, J., & Sauder, M. (2009). Inequality and society: social science perspectives on social stratification. New York, NY: Norton*

## EQUITY

A state in which all people in a given society share equal rights and opportunities.

Source: *Manza, J., & Sauder, M. (2009). Inequality and society: social science perspectives on social stratification. New York, NY: Norton*

## INCLUSION

Inclusion authentically brings traditionally excluded individuals and/or groups into processes, activities and decision/policy making.

Source: *Crossroads Charlotte Individual Initiative Scorecard for Organizations Scorecard Overview, revised 3/12/07.*

## INSTITUTIONAL RACISM

Institutional racism refers specifically to the ways in which institutional policies and practices create different outcomes for different racial groups. The institutional policies may never mention any racial group, but their effect is to create advantages for whites and oppression and disadvantage for people from groups classified as non-white. Examples: Government policies that explicitly restricted the ability

of people to get loans to buy or improve their homes in neighborhoods with high concentrations of African Americans (also known as “red-lining”). City sanitation department policies that concentrate trash transfer stations and other environmental hazards disproportionately in communities of color.

Source: *Maurianne Adams, Lee Anne Bell and Pat Griffin, editors. Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice: A Sourcebook. New York: Routledge.*

## PREJUDICE

A pre-judgment or unjustifiable, and usually negative, attitude of one type of individual or groups toward another group and its members. Such negative attitudes are typically based on unsupported generalizations (or stereotypes) that deny the right of individual members of certain groups to be recognized and treated as individuals with individual characteristics.

Source: *Institute for Democratic Renewal and Project Change Anti-Racism Initiative. A Community Builder's Tool Kit. Claremont, Calif.: Claremont Graduate University.*

## PRIVILEGE

A right that only some people have access or availability to because of their social group memberships (dominants). Because hierarchies of privilege exist, even within the same group, people who are part of the group in power (white/Caucasian people with respect to people of color, men with respect to women, heterosexuals with respect to homosexuals, adults with respect to children, and rich people with respect to poor people) often deny they have privilege even when evidence of differential benefit is obvious. See the term “right” also in this glossary.

Source: *National Conference for Community and Justice—St. Louis Region.— Unpublished handout used in the Dismantling Racism Institute program. (Source for 1st Part) Institute for Democratic Renewal and Project Change Anti Racism Initiative. A Community Builder's Tool Kit. Claremont, Calif.: Claremont Graduate University. (Source for 2nd Part)*

## RACE

A social construct that artificially divides people into distinct groups based on characteristics such as physical appearance (particularly color), ancestral heritage, cultural affiliation, cultural history, ethnic classification, and the social, economic and political needs of a society at a given period of time. Racial categories subsume ethnic groups.

Source: *Maurianne Adams, Lee Anne Bell and Pat Griffin, editors. Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice: A Sourcebook. New York: Routledge.*

## RACIAL EQUITY

Racial equity is the condition that would be achieved if one's racial identity no longer predicted, in a statistical sense, how one fares. When we use the term, we are thinking about

racial equity as one part of racial justice, and thus we also include work to address root causes of inequities, not just their manifestation. This includes elimination of policies, practices, attitudes and cultural messages that reinforce differential outcomes by race or fail to eliminate them.

Source: Center for Assessment and Policy Development

## RACISM

Racism is a complex system of beliefs and behaviors, grounded in a presumed superiority of the white race. These beliefs and behaviors are conscious and unconscious; personal and institutional; and result in the oppression of people of color and benefit the dominant group, whites. A simpler definition is racial prejudice + power = racism.

Source: National Conference for Community and Justice — St. Louis Region. Unpublished handout used in the Dismantling Racism Institute program.

## STRUCTURAL RACISM

“The structural racism lens allows us to see that, as a society, we more or less take for granted a context of white leadership, dominance and privilege. This dominant consensus on race is the frame that shapes our attitudes and judgments about social issues. It has come about as a result of the way that historically accumulated white privilege, national values and contemporary culture have interacted so as to preserve the gaps between white Americans and Americans of color.” For example, we can see structural racism in the many institutional, cultural and structural factors that contribute to lower life expectancy for African American and Native American men, compared to white men. These include higher exposure to environmental toxins, dangerous jobs and unhealthy housing stock, higher exposure to and more lethal consequences for reacting to violence, stress and racism, lower rates of healthcare coverage, access and quality of care and systematic refusal by the nation to fix these things

Source: Karen Fulbright-Anderson, Keith Lawrence, Stacey Sutton, Gretchen Susi and Anne Kubisch, *Structural Racism and Community Building*. New York: The Aspen Institute. (1st part) Maggie Potapchuk, Sally Leiderman, Donna Bivens and Barbara Major. *Flipping the Script: White Privilege and Community Building*. (2nd part)

## WHITE PRIVILEGE

Refers to the unquestioned and unearned set of advantages, entitlements, benefits and choices bestowed on people solely because they are white. Generally white people who experience such privilege do so without being conscious of it. Examples of privilege might be: “I can walk around a department store without being followed.” “I can come to a meeting late and not have my lateness attributed to your race;” “being able to drive a car in any neighborhood without being perceived as being in the wrong place or looking for trouble.” “I can turn on the television or look to the front page and see people of my ethnic and racial background

represented.” “I can take a job without having co-workers suspect that I got it because of my racial background.” “I can send my 16-year old out with his new driver’s license and not have to give him a lesson how to respond if police stop him.”

Source: Peggy McIntosh, “White Privilege and Male Privilege: A Personal Account of Coming to See Correspondences Through Work in Women Studies.”

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## APPENDIX B:

### THE ST. GEORGE BREAKAWAY MOVEMENT

#### Context

National media portrayed the St. George incorporation movement as an effort by affluent whites to secede from their poorer, less advantaged black neighbors. The organizers of the St. George effort bitterly resist this characterization. They vehemently deny that their desire to incorporate has anything to do with racial animus. Rather, they insist that they are motivated by a desire to create better schools for their children and exercise more local control over their tax dollars. They accuse the East Baton Rouge School Board and the City-Parish Government for failing to adequately serve the needs of the residents of the St. George area. After a significant number of EBR schools were labeled as “failing” by the state Department of Education, the St. George movement organized in the hope of creating a separate school district. When those efforts failed, they decided to incorporate a new city in order to secure the establishment of a school district. After a protracted petition campaign, the St. George organizers in June, 2015 fell a mere 71 signatures short of meeting the legal threshold necessary to bring the issue of incorporation to a referendum.

State law prohibits the supporters of failed petition efforts such as these from restarting their campaign for two years after the initial thrust has been declared unsuccessful. St. George organizers have reportedly vowed to restart the incorporation drive later this year as soon as the legal prohibition inhibiting their efforts expires this upcoming June. The prospect of a renewed breakaway effort involving the desire of residents of the wealthiest area of the city seeking to separate from the remainder of the parish represents a counterproductive diversion of time and resources for Baton Rouge. This is particularly true in light of the racial tumult our city experienced this past summer surrounding the shootings of Alton Sterling and the Baton Rouge police officers. Moreover, Baton Rouge and the surrounding region are still recovering from the impacts of Great Flood of 2016. Thus, we can ill afford to engage in a divisive fight over incorporating St. George. The following section details how the St. George movement represents another unfortunate chapter in the long history of racial segregation in Baton Rouge. This is true despite the adamant denials and/or best intentions of the organizers of the breakaway campaign.

## Linking St. George to the History of Racial Politics in East Baton Rouge Parish

The St. George movement traces its origins to the failure of the Baton Rouge community to embrace the ideal of *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954. A unanimous Supreme Court held that state laws requiring racial segregation in public schools were unconstitutional: In the field of public education, the doctrine of separate but equal has no place. Separate schools for the races are inherently unequal. In 1956, a group of black plaintiffs filed suit, alleging that the East Baton Rouge Parish School Board operated a dual public educational system — one for whites, one for blacks — in violation of the Fourteenth Amendment's Equal Protection Clause and the ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education*. The original plaintiffs probably could not have imagined that their action would commence what would turn out to be one of the most protracted school desegregation battles in U.S. history. A court order requiring mandatory busing to force school desegregation was not put into place in Baton Rouge until 1981, a full 25 years after the original lawsuit was filed. Additionally, this decree was issued a full decade after the famous *Swan v. Charlotte Mecklenberg Board of Education* case ("The Busing Decision") authorized federal judges to impose such order to force recalcitrant school districts to move beyond token compliance with *Brown* to make meaningful progress toward complying with the Court's mandate. In the interim, Baton Rouge's white community did as close to nothing to implement *Brown* as they could get away with. The parish school system, with the blessing of Judge Gordon West, even maintained a so-called "freedom of choice" plan (which was designed purposely to make it virtually impossible for more than a token number of black students to be admitted to white schools) for years after the U.S. Supreme Court had ruled that such desegregation plans were woefully inadequate to meet their obligations to comply with *Brown*'s mandate. Additionally, white fears of the prospect of integration served to undermine support for public education in the parish more broadly. This manifested itself in the refusal of Baton Rouge voters, after the late 1960's, to approve bond measures for construction of new schools and the tendency of real estate developers to build new subdivisions in the growing suburban sprawl south and east of the city's center without setting aside land for the building new public schools. This includes some of the neighborhoods that would become part of the city of St. George should the petition organizers succeed.

Judge John Parker, appointed by President Jimmy Carter in 1977 to the federal bench, imposed a mandatory busing order on the East Baton Rouge Parish School System in 1981 after concluding that efforts to convince the parties to agree to a voluntary desegregation plan were fruitless. Judge Parker's decree was exceedingly unpopular in large swaths of Baton Rouge's white community. Thousands of white parents pulled their children out of EBR public schools almost

immediately, and a steady stream of the city's residents relocated to nearly Ascension and Livingston parishes to escape desegregation (Ascension and Livingston parishes became the two fastest growing parishes in Louisiana during the 1980's and 1990's.) Other whites retreated to private schools: from 1980 to 1998, the percentage of the school age population in East Baton Rouge Parish enrolled in private schools ballooned from 20 percent to 48 percent. Thus, the rapidly changing racial demographics of the parish's school system meant that East Baton Rouge's schools became increasingly more and more black as whites abandoned the system in favor of private schools and the surrounding districts. The formation of two breakaway districts within East Baton Rouge Parish—one in Zachary and the other in Central—further exacerbated this trend.

In 1996, the plaintiffs and the EBR School Board entered into a consent decree that provided for a transition to "neighborhood schools." It detailed a series of measures that, if complied with, would pave the way for East Baton Rouge Parish to be released from federal judicial supervision. Judge Parker's 1996 decree was consistent with a growing trend of federal courts during that period releasing local school districts from judicial oversight. These decisions were rendered in spite of continued evidence of racial segregation in enrollment patterns in many parts of the country. Courts held that the continued existence of racial segregation did not reflect continued unlawful state action, but rather the result of the "private choices" of individual citizens as to where to live, work, and send their children to school. In 2003, the East Baton Rouge Parish School System was declared "unitary" and thereby released from court supervision, ending 43 years of litigation.

In part because the EBR desegregation lawsuit was dismissed in 2003, the St. George organizers insist that their movement has nothing to do with the desire to maintain racial segregation. After all, the Jim Crow days in public schools in Baton Rouge are long over. This insistence ignores the extent to which a strong segment of Baton Rouge's white community fought school integration at every turn from the very beginning. Even though the Baton Rouge lawsuit was one of the first school desegregation lawsuits filed after *Brown*, the city was one of the last to move beyond mere token integration, and only when it was finally forced to by a federal court. Significant segments of the white community had already withdrawn support from the public school system long before busing was mandated: after Judge Parker's decree, many whites intensified their determination to "vote with their feet," by abandoning the city's public schools in droves.

Additionally, the incorporators argue that the EBR School District has ignored the public educational needs of the residents of St. George. Not only is this false, but it once again denies the connection between their perceived



injuries and the long-running desegregation lawsuit. First, the very existence of the St. George area is the product of long-term demographic shifts of the city's population to the south and eastern portions of the parish that are partially related to race. Second, many of the subdivisions in St. George were created purposely with little regard for public education: the idea was that the educational needs of a substantial percentage of the population would be met by private schools. Thirdly, once Judge Parker imposed busing on EBR's school system, the School Board was precluded from building new schools in the St. George area in any event. Indeed, such actions in the context of more rigorous judicial oversight would be interpreted as evidence of blatant violation of the judge's order. Furthermore, voters in this area were among many other Baton Rouge residents who consistently rejected bond measures for an astounding three-decade period spanning from the late 1960's to 1998 for new school construction. The withering criticisms lodged by St. George organizers at the EBR School Board for its supposed "neglect" of their concerns conveniently ignores their community's own role in creating the very conditions for which they are now complaining.

Most tellingly, Baton Rouge voters rejected a \$935 million bond measure for new school construction in 1997 by roughly a 2-to-1 margin. This bond measure was promulgated as the School Board's attempt to implement the transition to "neighborhood schools" to pursuant to the 1996 consent decree. Years of inadequate support for public schools by taxpayers had left the parish's schools in a state of gross disrepair. Despite these facts, the voters (but especially the parish's white voters) overwhelmingly turned the proposal down. Eventually, Baton Rouge's electorate finally did approve a much smaller bond measure in 1998 — the first bond measure for new construction in three decades. But this bond measure only authorized EBR to refurbish and/or rebuild existing schools rather than build new ones. As the old adage goes, "elections have consequences." If voters in the St. George community had embraced, rather than rejected the 1997 bond measure, they might have the neighborhood schools now that they hold East Baton Rouge Parish responsible for not providing for them.

Finally, the organizers of the St. George movement maintain that theirs is not a "secessionist" movement since their community has never been incorporated into the city limits. How can they be accused of "seceding" from something they were never part of, they say? This view sets aside the fact that the St. George community benefits from city-parish services (paid for by citizens of the entire parish, not just the residents of St. George). St. George has also been the beneficiary of substantial infrastructure spending in recent decades (The Green Light Program, for example, spent a disproportionate share of its revenues on projects in the St. George area.) It also ignores one of the reasons why the St. George area was not incorporated into the city limits decades earlier: the existence of a long-running lawsuit that argued that the East Baton Rouge Parish Plan of Government violated the Voting Rights Act of 1965. The city-parish government allows the citizens of the cities of Baker, Zachary, and the residents of the unincorporated areas of the parish to vote for mayor of Baton Rouge and to elect members to the Metro Council. The suit alleged that this arrangement illegally diluted the voting strength of black voters (This suit was dismissed after Melvin "Kip" Holden was elected Mayor-President in 2004.) Had the city of Baton Rouge incorporated the community of St. George, the plaintiffs could have argued that that decision represented evidence of the city-parish's intent to diminish the voting strength of African Americans.

Thus, for all of the aforementioned reasons, the proposition that the St. George movement has nothing to do with the racial politics and history of Baton Rouge is simply without merit. Their contention rests on the proposition that racism is merely a problem of individual prejudice. Consequently, if those individuals who are involved and/or leading the petition drive are persons who do not harbor racial prejudice, then there can be no racial implications of their actions. This view denies the connection between historical legacies of racial discrimination and animus (including very recent histories) and the political issues of the present.



# WOMEN'S ADVANCEMENT

**Co-Chairs:** Twahna Harris and Racheal Hebert, LCSW

**Committee Members:** Dawn Collins, Melissa Flournoy, Sabrina Galloway, Dimi Ghawi, Sarah Holliday James, Robyn Merrick, Susan Nelson, Dianna Payton, Michael Tipton and Angele Wilson

## SCOPE OF REVIEW

The Women's Advancement Sub-committee considered how City-Parish government can promote policies and services that address and respond to the needs of women of all ages and their families. From promoting pay equity to preventing sexual assault, increasingly our society is aware of gender-based gaps, disparities and inequalities that persistently impact the lives of women and girls. The team broadly considered the range of opportunities for the City-Parish to improve the lives and status of women and girls in Baton Rouge through public policy, service delivery and the promotion of cultural norms that advance equity, equality and safety. The team identified national and international best practices with a specific focus on how mayoral leadership has advanced the status, economic opportunities and safety of women and girls in local communities. The team is also encouraged to leverage the efforts of locally based organizations and programs.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

East Baton Rouge Mayor-President Sharon Weston Broome charged this Women's Advancement Sub-committee with the task of considering how City-Parish Government can promote policies and services that address and respond to the needs of women of all ages and their families. To achieve this task, committee members met on three occasions during the months of December 2016 and January 2017.

During our meetings, the Women's Advancement Sub-committee organized our discussions around three broad topics that encompass many areas in need of improvement to advance the lives of women and girls in East Baton Rouge Parish: 1) leadership and economic opportunities; 2) safety and violence prevention; and 3) health and well-being.

Four critical questions were explored during discussions:

1. How can the City-Parish influence policies to improve the lives of women in the workplace, specifically in the areas of pay equity, workplace harassment and violence and family leave?
2. How can the City-Parish better organize or coordinate services offered to create safe homes and safe communities to significantly decrease instances of gender-based violence?

3. How can the City-Parish ensure that women and girls receive necessary health education and healthcare services to promote health and prevent disease and infection?
4. What existing community-based organizations and businesses are providing services targeted at women and girls, and how do they work together towards the central mission of improving the lives of women and girls?

Sub-committee members gathered data to help further identify the gaps and needs presented during these discussions. First, the committee administered a short survey to local organizations and businesses whose missions aligned with the scope of this committee; of 72 organizations identified, 22 completed the survey. This survey data gave the committee more insight into the current challenges and barriers to providing services to women and girls in East Baton Rouge.

In addition to the survey, the committee researched similar-sized cities' Mayor's Offices to learn what type of programming they provide specifically for women and girls. This research helped the committee identify 13 cities that are directly working to advance the lives of women and girls through the creation of a Mayor's Women's Council.

Based on discussions and research, the committee has provided several recommendations in this report to help improve the lives of women and girls in East Baton Rouge.

## BACKGROUND AND VISION

### *State of the Issue*

State and national statistics indicate that women earn less than their male counterparts in nearly every work sector, experience sexual and domestic violence at higher levels than men, and struggle to obtain adequate healthcare, paid leave and affordable childcare. The following snapshot paints a grim picture of the status of women in Louisiana.

- 12.5% of the seats in the Louisiana State Legislature are occupied by women
- Louisiana women earn \$0.67 to every \$1.00 earned by similarly employed men
- 27.7% of those working in science, technology,

engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields are women<sup>1</sup>

- 23.8% of Louisiana women have a bachelor's degree or higher<sup>1</sup>
- 18.3% of women are raped in their lifetime
- 16.2% women have experienced a severe case of stalking in their lifetime<sup>2</sup>
- 24.3% women have experienced severe physical violence by an intimate partner<sup>2</sup>
- 14% of women aged 19 to 64 in Louisiana have no health insurance
- 16.1% of women in Louisiana report have no health care provider<sup>3</sup>
- 19.3% of Louisiana women smoke<sup>3</sup>
- 65.5% of Louisiana women are clinically overweight or obese<sup>3</sup>

These are just a few statistics that demonstrate that we have a long way to go to improve the lives of women and girls in our city. The Sub-committee views these statistics as interconnected and interrelated. Women's inability to achieve high economic earning power is related to their high experiences of gender-based violence. Further, women who experience rape, stalking and interpersonal violence in their lifetime are more likely to experience negative physical and mental health outcomes.

At this point, there are no City-Parish initiatives that address these issues as they relate to women and girls in our community. There are a handful of community-based organizations and businesses focused on women's health and violence intervention, though given the high demand for these services, they are often working beyond their capacity to meet the need. Further, there are little to no opportunities to bring together these organizations to coordinate around a central vision to help the entire City-Parish advance the lives of women and girls.

### **Major Initiatives Underway (in this area) for 2017**

At this time, there are no major initiatives addressing women's advancement on a large scale in the City-Parish. During this transition phase, the Sub-committee administered a community assessment survey to community-based organizations and businesses to assess how the community responds to this area of need. Overall, the committee identified that many of the groups with missions targeting women and girls lack resources to effectively and adequately meet the needs of the community.

### **Proposals for New Initiatives**

Women's advancement is an expansive topic, which includes

several components that are connected to broader issues in our community. In order to effectively work on these issues, the Mayor's Office would need to implement a sustained effort to begin chipping away at the key areas to improve the lives of women and girls.

As part of our research, the Sub-committee reviewed similar-sized cities' Mayor's Offices to learn what type of programming they provide specifically for women and girls. Through our research, the committee identified 13 cities with specialized programs or projects focused on improving the lives of women and girls. The list of cities compiled included Chattanooga, TN; New York City, NY; Kansas City, MO; Atlanta, GA; Washington DC; San Francisco/Oakland, CA; Philadelphia, PA; Boston, MA; Shreveport/Bossier, LA; Greensboro, NC; Rochester, NY; and Salt Lake City UT. Many of these cities have established a Women's Council, which is coordinated and funded by the Mayor's Offices. These councils are often tasked to conduct research and inform the Mayor's Office and the State Legislature on key areas, which help establish policy to improve the lives of women and girls. Some of these councils also offer specific programs and services to the community, such as workshops teaching women how to negotiate higher pay.

Given the need for additional ongoing evaluation and work towards women's advancement, as well as the demonstrated efforts of other city governments, this committee proposes that the Mayor's Office establish a Council on Women's Advancement. This Council would be composed of existing active members of the transition committee, and include additional representation from key community-based organizations, businesses, local foundations, health care organizations, and state agencies.

### **Opportunities for Partnerships and Collaboration**

At this time, we have not firmly identified collaborators for this proposal, though we would recommend representatives from the following organizations be added as part of the Council:

- Baton Rouge Area Foundation
- Louisiana State University
- Woman's Hospital
- Baton Rouge Area Chamber
- Louisiana Economic Development

### **Fiscal and Budgetary Implications**

To implement the Mayor's Council on Women's Advancement and the subsequent recommendations put forth by this committee, the following resources from City-Parish would be needed in our first year:

<sup>1</sup>The Status of Women in the States, an annual research project conducted by the Institute for Women's Policy Research in 2015.

<sup>2</sup>The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey administered by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in 2010.

<sup>3</sup>The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, 2015.

1. A designated webpage on the Mayor-President's website to include information about the purpose, initiatives and strategies, and members of Mayor's Council on Women's Advancement; this webpage would also include a listing of community resources for women and girls in the key areas of leadership and economic opportunities, safety and violence prevention, and health and well-being
  2. A space to host meetings for the Mayor's Council on Women's Advancement
  3. A City-Parish staff member to be present at the Mayor's Council on Women's Advancement to act as a liaison to the Mayor
  4. Support to host a semi-annual women's summit in partnership with local community-based organizations, businesses, local foundations, health care organizations, and state agencies; with the Mayor's permission the Council could approach local businesses to sponsor the cost associated with the summit, which would include venue rental, food/beverage costs, materials and supply costs
3. **Implement gender equity policies within City-Parish government and require that all government contractors demonstrate equity policies as a condition of their contracts with City-Parish government.**
    - The Mayor's Council on Women's Advancement could assist in drafting sample policies to address diversity in the workforce, pay equity, gender violence, sexual harassment, and family leave.

### Additional Recommendations

To help us identify our top recommendations, the committee first envisioned the components of a community that actively worked towards advancing and improving the lives of women. We organized our recommendations into three major groups: leadership and economic opportunities, safety and violence prevention, and health and well-being. The following is our comprehensive list of recommendations; the timeline and plan for action would be developed through the Mayor's Council on Women's Advancement and the semi-annual women's summit.

### Department/Agency Workforce

During our research into other cities, the committee found that many Mayors' Offices with existing Women's Councils often have a full-time staff person dedicated to women's programming and policy initiatives.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Top Three Recommendations

1. **Establish a Mayor's Council on Women's Advancement.**
  - This Council would assist the Mayor in advancing the lives of women by conducting research and proposing policies in the following areas:
    1. leadership and economic opportunities
    2. safety and violence prevention
    3. health and well-being
2. **Identify ways to increase support and resources for community-based organizations and businesses working to advance the lives of women in our key focus areas.**
  - The committee recommends launching a semi-annual women's summit to bring together representatives of key organizations and businesses to establish and monitor a long-term strategic plan to improve the lives of women and girls in East Baton Rouge.

### Leadership & Economic Opportunities

- Implement policy initiatives that make significant strides towards pay equity
- Assist women with securing non-traditional jobs to increase salary
- Improve opportunities for girls & women/minority advancement/leadership opportunities
- Increase visibility of leadership opportunities for young girls
- Increase skills of women to negotiate higher pay
- Provide incentives for women/minority-owned businesses
- Encourage public and private sector employers to implement parental leave policies
- Increase access to safe and affordable childcare
- Increase access to safe and reliable public transportation

### Safety & Violence Prevention

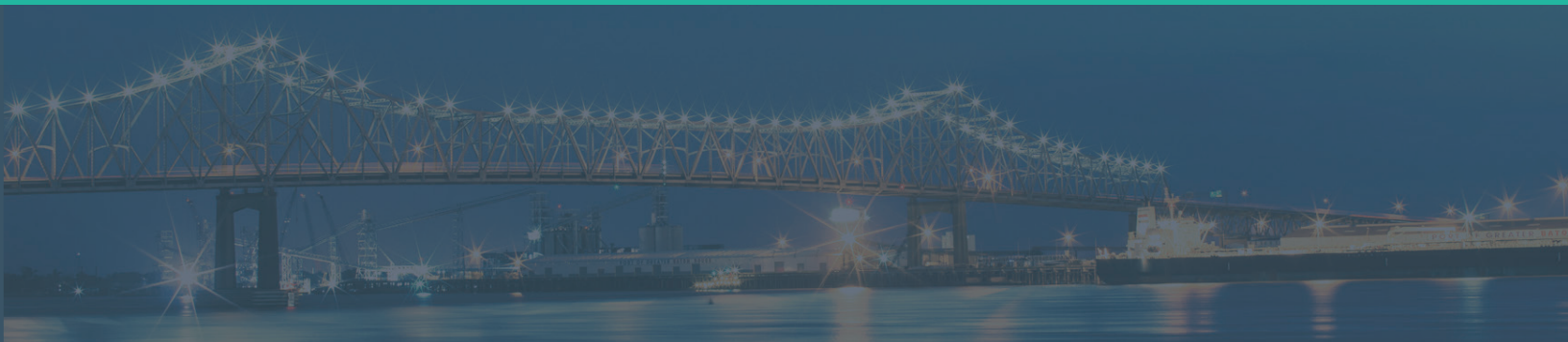
- Increase public trust in the criminal justice system by training police on how to better respond to domestic and sexual violence victims
- Work with local organizations to implement healthy relationship/sexuality workshops to increase individual/community knowledge on ways to prevent domestic and sexual violence
- Implement child abuse prevention and bullying prevention programming in K-12 schools
- Provide sexual harassment training to employers and guidance on sexual harassment policies within workplaces
- Provide training to employers on warning signs of domestic violence and policies on how to provide employee protections and safety plans

- Implement screening tools for abuse and violence within medical and mental health communities and educate providers on intervention measures and local referral sources
- Ensure easy access to safe, immediate shelter for individuals & families fleeing interpersonal violence, including domestic violence, sexual violence and human trafficking
- Ensure easy access to medical care and forensic examination for survivors of domestic and sexual violence
- Increase community awareness of power-based violence and ways to intervene through widespread marketing campaigns
- Coordinate and connect services for homeless women experiencing violence and abuse

## Health & Wellbeing

- Ensure access to basic needs, including quality food, water and shelter
- Ensure access to safe and affordable housing
- Ensure access to healthcare, including medical, dental and vision care
- Provide public information on health promotion and disease prevention, such as heart disease, cancer and sexually transmitted infections
- Increase access to reproductive/family planning services
- Increase access to trauma-informed mental health services, including crisis intervention, grief counseling, anxiety/depression medication management services, substance abuse treatment and in/out-patient treatment services for psychological disorders

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