



Lori Waselchuk



DPZ/La. Speaks Charrettes



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Vision

Lori Waselchuk

Goal 1

Recover Sustainably

Strategies for Near-Term Recovery



Lori Waselchuk

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

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

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

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





Lori Waselchuk

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

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

RESTORING CONFIDENCE

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

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

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



CLEAR



LDOTD

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

INVESTING IN FULL RECOVERY

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

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

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

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

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



Schwartz/Silver Architects

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

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



RECOVER SUSTAINABLY: FIVE-YEAR PRIORITY INVESTMENTS FOR REGIONAL RECOVERY

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



DPZ/ La Speaks Charrette



Reinvest in Our Communities

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

Immediately Fund Strategic Recovery Projects

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

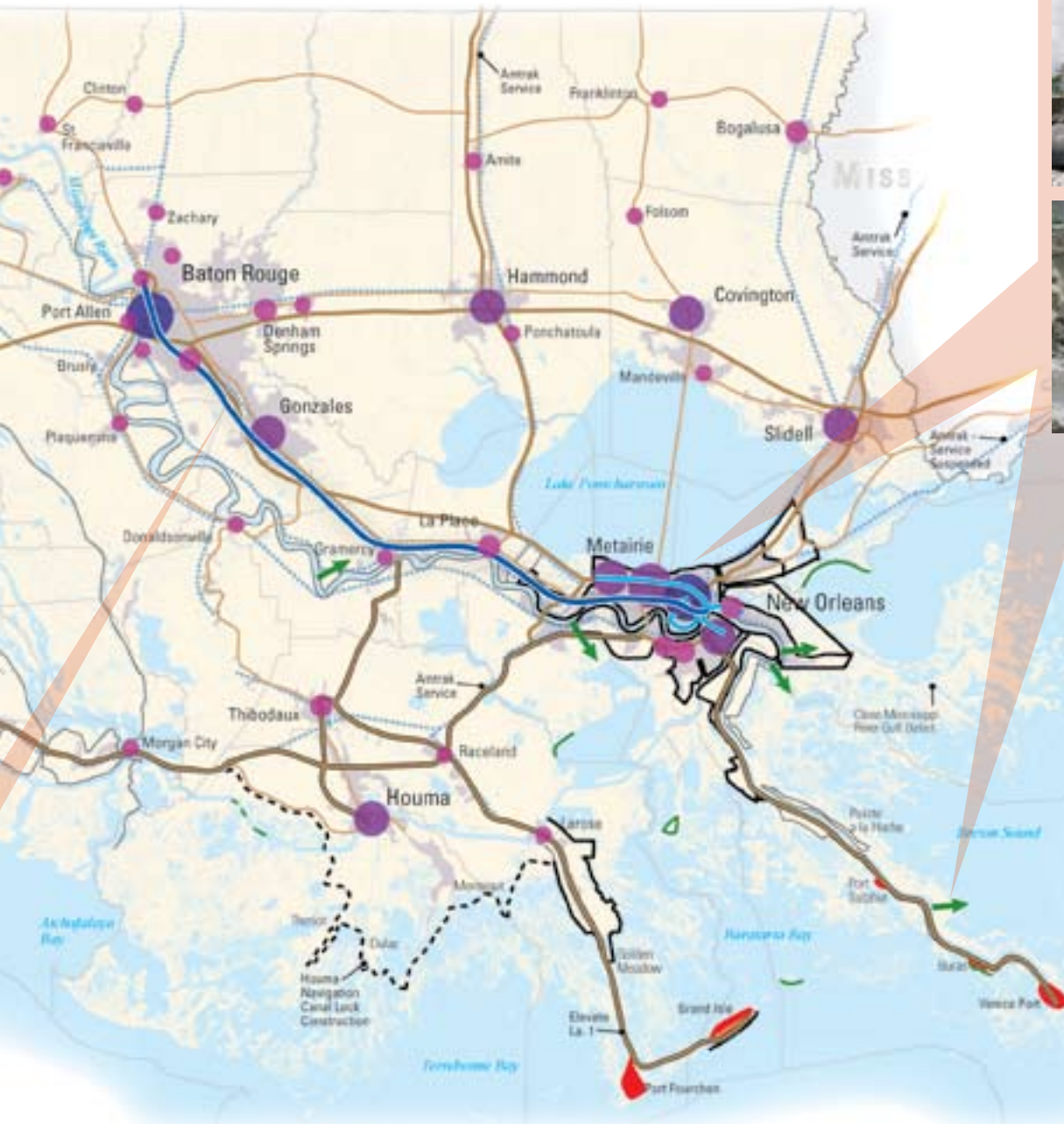


Reinvestment Areas*

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

Transportation Systems

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



Restore our Coast and Build Strategic Levees Now

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

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

CPRA Master Plan Urgent Early Action Features**

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

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

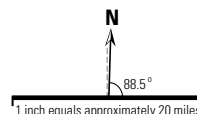
* Reinvestment centers highlight communities that already serve as anchors for surrounding areas, or would serve as anchors in the future. This was determined based upon a combination of land use density and functional characteristics such as regional location and links to major transportation corridors.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

Landscape Features

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

Jurisdictional Boundaries

- State Boundary
- Parish Boundary



The Issue

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

The Solution

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

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ENABLE OUR RECOVERY

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

ACTIONS

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



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



SPOTLIGHT: COASTAL PROTECTION AND RESTORATION AUTHORITY MASTER PLAN

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

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

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

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

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

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

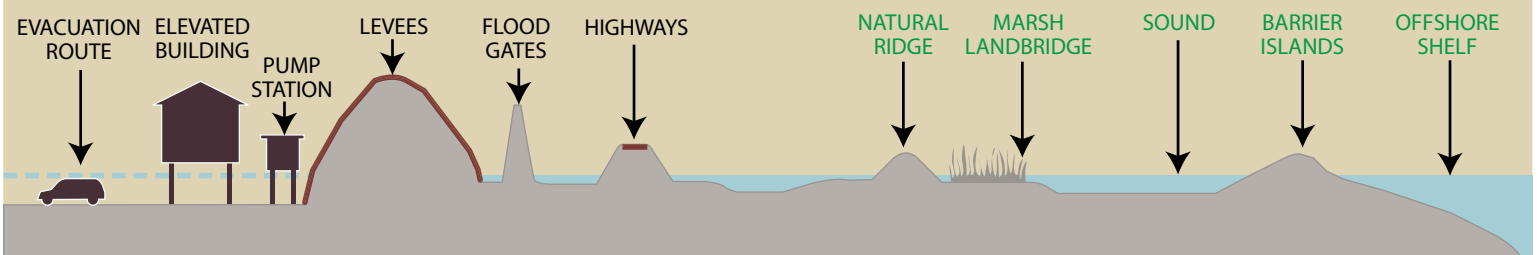


Diagram Illustrating CPRA Multiple Lines of Defense Strategy

Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation: Lopez, 2006

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The Issue

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

The Solution

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



Greg Hanshall/FEMA

INSURE OUR RECOVERY

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

ACTIONS

2.1 Increase Private Insurance Capacity through Statutory and Regulatory Reform.

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

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

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

2.3 Achieve Public and Individual Risk Management.

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

2.4 Model the Impact of Public Risk-Management Strategies.

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

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



CASE STUDY: LOWERING INSURANCE PREMIUMS BY REDUCING COMMUNITY FLOOD RISK

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

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

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



Johanne Wallace

Florida



The Issue

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

The Solution

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



Lori Waselchuk

3

ALIGN PLANNING FOR RECOVERY WITH PLANNING FOR GROWTH

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

ACTIONS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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



4

The Issue

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

The Solution

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

REINVEST IN OUR COMMUNITIES

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

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

ACTIONS

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



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

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



CASE STUDY: COMMUNITY REINVESTMENT IN MARYLAND

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

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

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



The Issue

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

The Solution

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



LDOL

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BRIDGE THE IMMEDIATE NEEDS OF BUSINESSES AND WORKERS

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

ACTIONS

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

Recover Sustainably

Strategies for Recovery-Critical Industries

EXPAND AND ENHANCE RECOVERY-CRITICAL INDUSTRIES

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

ACTIONS

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

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The Issue

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

The Solution

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



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The Issue

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

The Solution

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



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PROVIDE STABILITY THROUGH RELIABLE SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

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

ACTIONS

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





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

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

