Boom Without Bust

Connecting the Southeast Louisiana Super Region to Equitable and Sustainable Prosperity

Center for Planning Excellence

CONNECT
TRANSPORTATION • HOUSING • JOBS

Introduction

Southeast Louisiana is poised for historic economic growth in the coming years. For much of the past year, headlines have heralded the onset of an energy boom in Louisiana. Though estimates have varied, the most conservative among them cite more than **$60B in new and expanded projects for the state[1] and $21B in "energy-catalyzed investments in petrochemicals, advanced manufacturing and the energy industry" for the Baton Rouge-to-New Orleans Super Region alone.[2]** In addition to the energy boom, both Baton Rouge and New Orleans are experiencing robust growth in other sectors including education and health services, construction, and hospitality in Baton Rouge[3], and digital media, health sciences, and water management in New Orleans.[4] And as significant resources are becoming available with which to combat the threats facing our coastline, the coastal region is projected to experience a boom of investment and economic activity, as well.

On the whole, this spate of anticipated economic growth is wonderful news for Louisiana. Though by national standards, the state has done well in recent years, weathering the 2008 recession better than most, Louisiana's prospects for the future have long been hampered by generational poverty, deeply entrenched disparities and vulnerability to natural disaster. The anticipated influx of investment amounts to a historic opportunity to address these challenges and make meaningful strides towards reducing poverty, improving equity and building resilience.

However, we must also be prepared to contend with the challenges that rapid growth will bring. The Baton Rouge-to-New Orleans super region is already struggling to meet demands for affordable housing, maintain existing infrastructure, manage severe congestion, expand our transit systems, and make quality public education available to all children. Without careful planning and coordinated action, the industrial expansion will quickly exacerbate existing problems and create new ones.

Realizing long term benefits and avoiding negative impacts associated with rapid growth will require concerted efforts to strengthen our infrastructure; diversify our economy; provide workforce training and social services; plan for sustainable residential and commercial development; coordinate housing, jobs and training with transportation options; and put in place the fiscal policies that will secure resources for the future and direct revenues to areas of greatest need. Communities, regions and the super region will need to develop plans that reflect short- and long-term priorities for addressing these issues, and develop partnerships and collaborations to ensure well-coordinated implementation.

Though an economic boom will bring millions in new revenues and thousands of new jobs, vibrant, livable communities are not a guaranteed outcome. Access to opportunity and gains in economic stability for vulnerable populations are not the inevitable result of economic growth in the super region. The opportunity for lasting positive change must be deliberately seized.

$21 BILLION

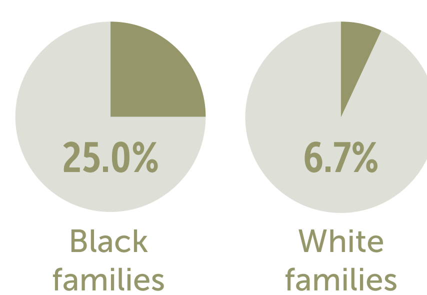
in new and expanded projects coming to the South Louisiana Super Region

"Will we become complacent with all the new revenue as our state so often has been during past booms? Or will we seize this moment as an opportunity to enact a compelling economic strategy and make targeted investment to position us for sustained prosperity?[5]

Secretary Steven Moret
Louisiana Economic Development

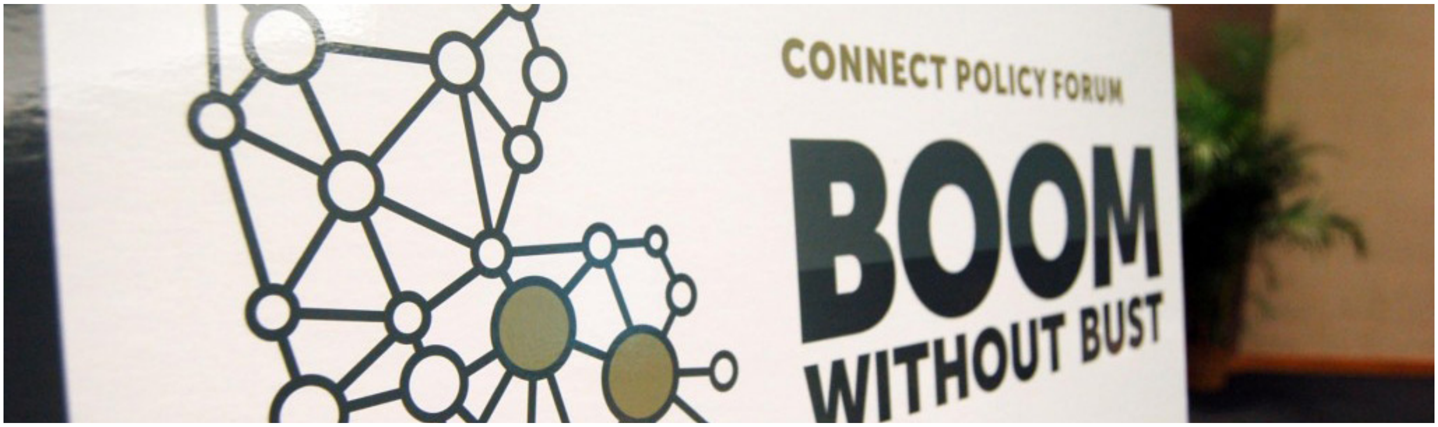
GENERATIONAL POVERTY and STARK DISPARITY

Percentage of Louisiana families earning less than $15,000 per year[6]



The Ford Foundation's Metropolitan Opportunities Portfolio has laid the groundwork for realizing the full potential of the economic growth taking place in the Super Region. Metropolitan Opportunities investments are based on the understanding that "equitable access to safe affordable housing, efficient transportation, and good jobs is fundamental to building prosperous metropolitan areas." The Center for Planning Excellence's CONNECT initiative is supported by Ford to develop and advance "integrated approaches to housing, land use and environmental planning, public transportation and community infrastructure, and aligned workforce opportunities."[7]

To that end, the Center for Planning Excellence's CONNECT initiative hosted the "Boom Without Bust" policy forum on May 29th, 2014.



Leaders and stakeholders from public, private and philanthropic sectors were invited to share their concerns, experiences and strategies for meeting the challenges associated with the energy boom and explore the full potential for healthy growth. Panels included officials from Louisiana DOTD and the two MPOs serving the New Orleans and Baton Rouge Super Region; leadership from state and regional economic development organizations and industry associations; elected officials and parish leadership from throughout the Super Region; executives from state workforce and housing agencies; industry experts; a representative from the regional HUD office; nonprofit advocates; and leadership from the Lake Charles region where another large boom is underway.

In order to foster learning not just among parishes and municipalities, but from other regions in the country experiencing growth patterns similar to those we are anticipating, CPEX brought in Representative Vicky Steiner of North Dakota, who also serves as the Executive Director of the North Dakota Association of Oil and Gas Producing Counties; Leodoro Martinez, Executive Director of both the Middle Rio Grande Development Council and the Eagle Ford Shale Consortium; Tom Wendorf of HNTB; and Beth Osborne, currently with Transportation for America and formerly of U.S. DOT.[8]

The forum was eye-opening for participants and attendees alike, as speakers detailed the magnitude of opportunity before us, the potential for impacts that could seriously compromise our collective quality of life and long-term economic competitiveness, and innovative solutions that can help the region leverage the boom and avoid a bust. The pages that follow summarize the forum proceedings, elaborate upon some of the key takeaways and offer a set of recommendations to guide our Super Region's preparations for the energy boom.

Leodoro Martinez

Executive Director, Middle Rio Grande Development Council

Chairman, Eagle Ford Shale Consortium

Beth Osborne

Senior Policy Advisor, Transportation for America

Rep. Vicky Steiner

Executive Director, North Dakota Association of Oil and Gas Producing Counties

Industrial Expansion in the Super Region

"What we're looking at right now is the largest manufacturing boom in America," announced Susana Schowen of Louisiana Economic Development (LED). "It's a consequence of the energy boom, but the real activity we're seeing is in the manufacturing section of that sector."[9] **According to LED, industrial projects totaling $60B have been announced or are currently under development in the state. The Data Center locates $21B worth of those projects within the Baton Rouge-to-New Orleans super region.[10]**

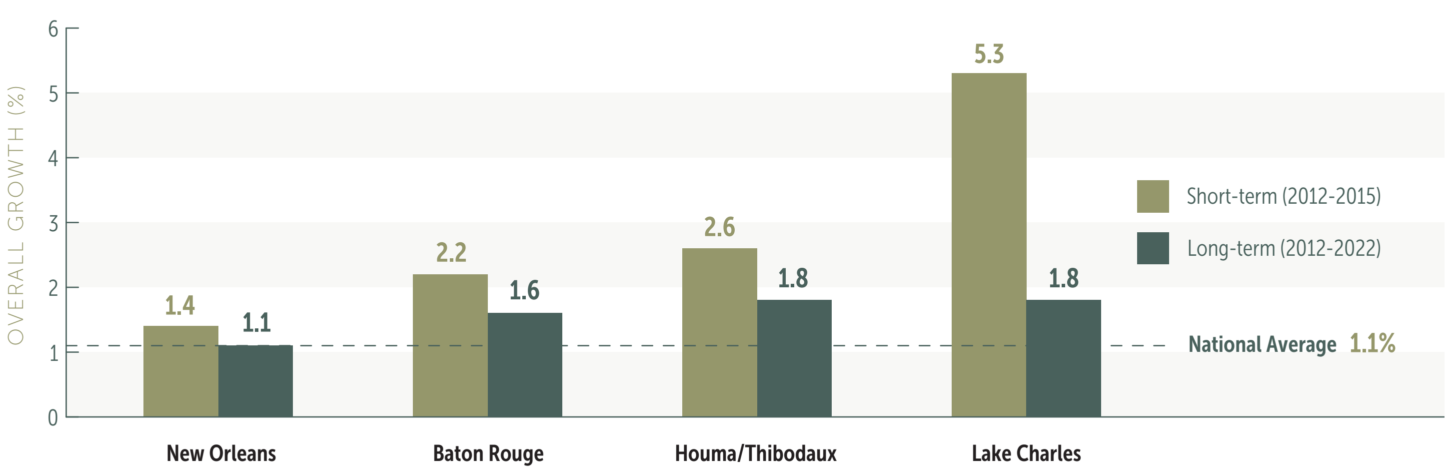
In addition to natural gas, economic development officials cite other "local advantages" that are driving growth, such as "pipelines to transport oil, gas and other chemicals; industrial electricity prices that are among the lowest in the nation; and easy access to the Mississippi River and the deepwater Gulf of Mexico."[12] Joel Kotkin notes more general features of the region that have fostered accelerated growth, such as "low cost of living, cultural cachet that attracts educated workers," and a "cost and regulatory environment that appeals to investors."[13]

> "Because of the natural gas miracle, instead of exporting jobs and shutting down plants, we're now importing jobs and building plants in Louisiana."[11]
>
> **Dan Borné**
> President of the Louisiana Chemical Association

Indeed, for the first time in many years, Louisiana is projected to beat the national growth rate over the next 10 years, and that growth will be led by industrial construction. Statewide, manufacturing employment is expected to grow over the next few years by 14.5% — tremendous growth, according to Susana Schowen. And, Schowen adds, "As a consequence of that manufacturing boom, we're looking at construction growing by almost 20%. That's an enormous number."[14]

In the short term (2012-15), New Orleans' overall growth rate is expected to be 1.4% compared to 1.1% nationally. During that same period, Baton Rouge's overall growth is anticipated to be a robust 2.2%, with the Houma area outpacing even that figure at 2.6%. Long term (2012-2022), Baton Rouge and Houma are expected to grow at rates of 1.6% and 1.8% respectively, and New Orleans is set to keep pace with the national average at 1.1%. Beyond the boundaries of the Baton Rouge-New Orleans Super Region, the Lake Charles area is expected to grow at an astonishing 5.3% over the short term, largely due to the Sasol plant under construction, an investment in excess of $20B.[15] Due to the magnitude of the expansion over a short period of time and its relative proximity, we can expect that the Super Region and the Baton Rouge area in particular will feel impacts of this growth, as well.

Short-term and Long-term Growth Trends in the Super Region



The Super Region was already expecting to gain 45,000 jobs by 2015 and an additional 75,000 jobs in the following seven years (2016-2022). An additional 25,000 jobs per year are slated to open due to attrition and retirement. These numbers amount to tremendous growth and opportunity – and don't even account for the jobs associated with the megaprojects in the pipeline identified by LED.[16]

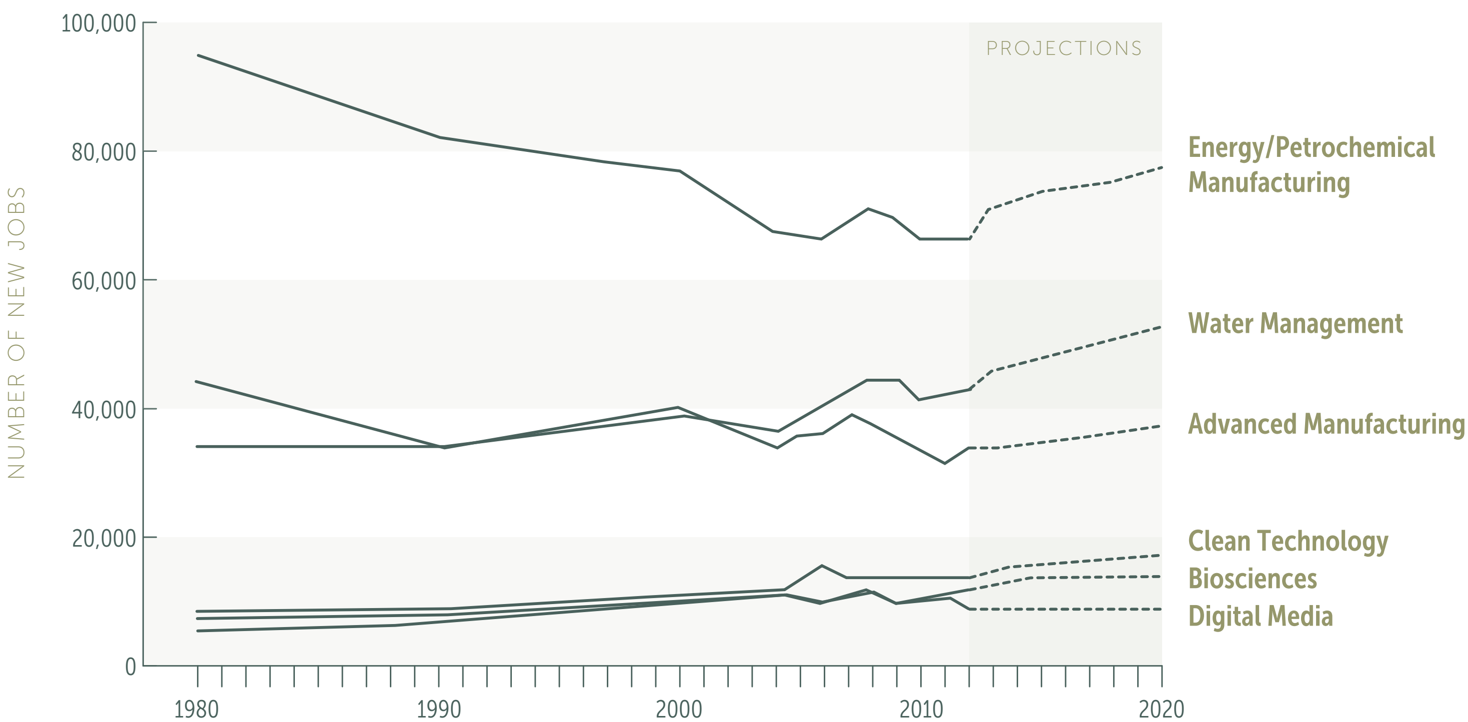
45,000+
projected new job openings in the Super Region by 2015

75,000+
projected new job openings in the Super Region by 2022

25,000+
additional jobs per year due to attrition and retirement

In addition to the growth associated with the energy boom, coastal communities just south of the I-10 corridor are also experiencing growth and are projected to experience much more. In addition to substantial oil and gas extraction operations on and just off the coast, recent attention to pressing issues of subsidence, sea-level rise and coastal resiliency has resulted in development of the State's Comprehensive Master Plan for a Sustainable Coast and the Greater New Orleans Water Plan. Both plans call for a myriad of major infrastructure projects and set the stage for development of a water management sector that is projected to grow and create jobs at a rate second only to the energy and petrochemical manufacturing sector.[17] Alongside private investment, local, state and federal tax dollars and RESTORE Act funds will drive another wave of economic activity in Southeast Louisiana.

Short-term and Long-term Growth Trends and Projections for the Super Region[18]



Source: GNOCDC analysis of historical data from Moody's Analytics (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics: CES, QCEW) and projections from EMSI

Workforce and Employment: Making the most of our human capital

Even though Louisiana's unemployment rates are very low — 4.5% as of April 2014, which places Louisiana 10th in the nation and best among southern states — those calculations do not take into account people who are chronically disconnected from the workforce and are not actively seeking employment. Louisiana's workforce participation rate lags behind the rest of the nation at below 60%. The number is particularly dire for working age African American men, of whom only 54% are employed. **According to Helveston, "2 out 5 working age adults in Louisiana aren't working, and many of them would love to be in the workforce and want to provide for their families, given the opportunity."[20]**

LED posits that the largest job growth in the coming years will be in the industrial craft trades. Demand for machine operators, maintenance mechanics, welders, process technology technicians, as well as supervisors, is expected to rise significantly. Importantly, the majority of these jobs will be available to workers with a high school education or equivalent and some additional skills training or certification.[21] **These are well-paying jobs that are in reach for those who need them most.** Professional jobs will also see substantial growth in a number of sectors. Susana Schowen points out that, "Growth in Louisiana's manufacturing and construction industries will inevitably lead to professional job growth, as well, including an increased demand for healthcare practitioners and educators."[22]

Job growth at different levels in various sectors presents critical opportunities both to connect un- and underemployed residents with quality living wage employment and retain some of Louisiana's home-grown professional talent that has too often been compelled to leave the state in pursuit of better opportunities elsewhere. Of course, these opportunities come with significant challenges. **With such a large population of disenfranchised and disconnected workers, creating a ready pipeline of skilled labor to meet rapidly growing employer needs will require coordinated efforts that go above and beyond traditional training programs.** According to CEOs for Cities and other leading regional economic development experts, "human capital is the single most important input for economic growth ... to have an impact, however, it must be properly deployed into jobs."[23] If we don't connect those who need jobs to training and employment opportunities, our available human capital is being underutilized and the entire region misses out.

Outreach will be critical. As Ashley Shelton of One Voice Louisiana asserted, "You've got to meet people where they are. We've got to do a good job of connecting folks, and not just assume they're going to visit a website."[24] Other members of the CONNECT coalition working in affordable housing have also emphasized the importance of such outreach, relaying that many of their residents want jobs, but are routinely cut off from information about training and employment opportunities. Along with developing programs that break down

"This is a life-changing opportunity for so many people in our communities."[19]

David Helveston
Louisiana Workforce Commission

THE CASE FOR INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

If we fail to connect those who need jobs to training and employment opportunities, our available human capital is being underutilized and the entire region misses out.

"You have to meet people where they are. We've got to do a good job of connecting folks, and not just assume they're going to visit a website."

Ashley Shelton
One Voice Louisiana

the barriers to re-entering the job market, tailoring outreach efforts to residents in low-income neighborhoods and affordable housing will help bridge this gap. Engaging employers in local-hire agreements is another important strategy for prioritizing Louisiana residents who need jobs.

Enhancing employers' ability to recruit and retain professional staff is also essential to the long-term economic success of the Super Region. Creating and sustaining communities large and small that offer a high quality of life is key to retaining native professionals and attracting the new talent that will be required to sustain healthy growth. Studies show that, more and more, "walkable places with urban character attract 'knowledge talent,' and that jobs near transit are more accessible to the growing population of people in their twenties who are 'transit dependent by choice.'" Thus, "increasingly, ease of access, cost of living and quality of life are among the factors that firms look for when deciding where to locate and expand their businesses."[25] Troubled public schools, outsized traffic congestion, aged infrastructure and high levels of racial and economic disparity threaten to obscure the appeal of the cultural and economic assets our region has to offer.

Shelton stated that, "At the end of the day, if we don't address the struggles of those who are not entering the workforce, we will continue to be challenged across the board."[26] Her contention is consistent with a growing body of research that demonstrates two mutually reinforcing negative economic dynamics: one, greater job access for low-income residents does not necessarily result from economic growth and in fact, growth has in many cases worsened disparity. And secondly, while it is recognized that some degree of disparity actually fuels growth, high rates of inequity and income disparity such as those present in Louisiana actually slow growth and compromise a region's economic development capacity.[28]

Much good work is already underway both in the Super Region and at the state level to get our workforce pipeline ready for the opportunities that are on the horizon. The Governor's office, Louisiana Workforce Commission, the Louisiana Community and Technical College System and Louisiana Economic Development are all working to develop responsive new programs that will better align curriculum, degrees and training certificates with emerging industry needs. However, connecting those who are chronically disconnected from the workforce will be more complicated and will require additional investment in social services, transit options and coordination of wrap-around programs.

In Louisiana, two out of every five working-age adults is unemployed[29]

TREND ALERT

Jobs are no longer enough. Livability — walkable urban areas, green space, access to transit and cultural amenities — is a priority for top talent and young professionals.

"Even as we attract those young, smart folks to our state, we don't want to further suppress disenfranchised communities."[27]

Ashley Shelton
Executive Director
One Voice Louisiana

MATTER OF FACT

High rates of inequity and income disparity slow growth and hamper a region's economic development potential.

Transportation: Essential Connections

Concern regarding the capacity of our super regional transportation network in the face of rapid growth and new levels of demand was the initial impetus for CONNECT to host the "Boom Without Bust" policy forum.

The Center for Planning Excellence's CONNECT initiative, which, with the support of the Ford Foundation, is dedicated to ensuring equitable access to jobs and affordable housing by strengthening connectivity throughout the Super Region, aims to minimize the opportunities lost due to a lack of transportation options and efficient systems.

Long before news of an energy boom began appearing in local headlines, the Super Region has struggled with transportation issues. Baton Rouge has some of the worst traffic congestion in the nation for a city its size. U.S. Census data shows that "more people commute to Baton Rouge than any other Louisiana city" — about 144,000 people each day — and that 58% of the Capital City's workforce are nonresidents." The New Orleans area faces similar problems, with large numbers of residents commuting into Jefferson and Orleans Parishes from adjacent parishes. Though Metairie has a smaller number of workers overall, their percentage of nonresident workers commuting into the city is the highest in the state at 62%.[30]

There are also a significant number of commuters traversing the Super Region. As of 2010, 76,000 workers were commuting on a daily basis between the New Orleans, Baton Rouge and Houma-Thibodaux metros. This number represents an 11% increase since 2004.[31] With the addition of thousands of new jobs, many of which are located in the rural areas between the two major metros, we may reasonably expect this number to continue to grow.

As the volume of traffic increases and congestion worsens, Super Region residents have few – if any – alternatives to driving a personal vehicle to and from work. Residents who don't have access to an automobile are often stranded. Of regions nationwide, metro areas in the South have the lowest transit coverage rate for zero-vehicle households, resulting in limited mobility and restricted access to economic opportunity.

According to 2010 data, both Baton Rouge and New Orleans have high percentages of households without vehicles – 11% and 27% respectively, compared to 9% nationwide[33] – yet these residents, the majority of whom are low-income, have no or limited access to transit. It is reasonable to extrapolate from these figures that as training and job opportunities expand in Southeast Louisiana, **access to transportation will be a major hurdle for many who need these opportunities the most.** Historically, high poverty areas tend to be "isolated from primary job centers," resulting in chronic unemployment and underemployment. This challenge will be further exacerbated in the Super Region by the rural locations of many of the projected job openings, where there are currently no transportation options for those without a car. Investing in the training required to ensure that the workforce is equipped with skills that

76,000+

residents commute between the Baton Rouge, New Orleans and Houma-Thibodaux metros on a daily basis

ONLY 32.5%

of jobs in Southern metros are available via a transit trip of 90 minutes or less.[32]

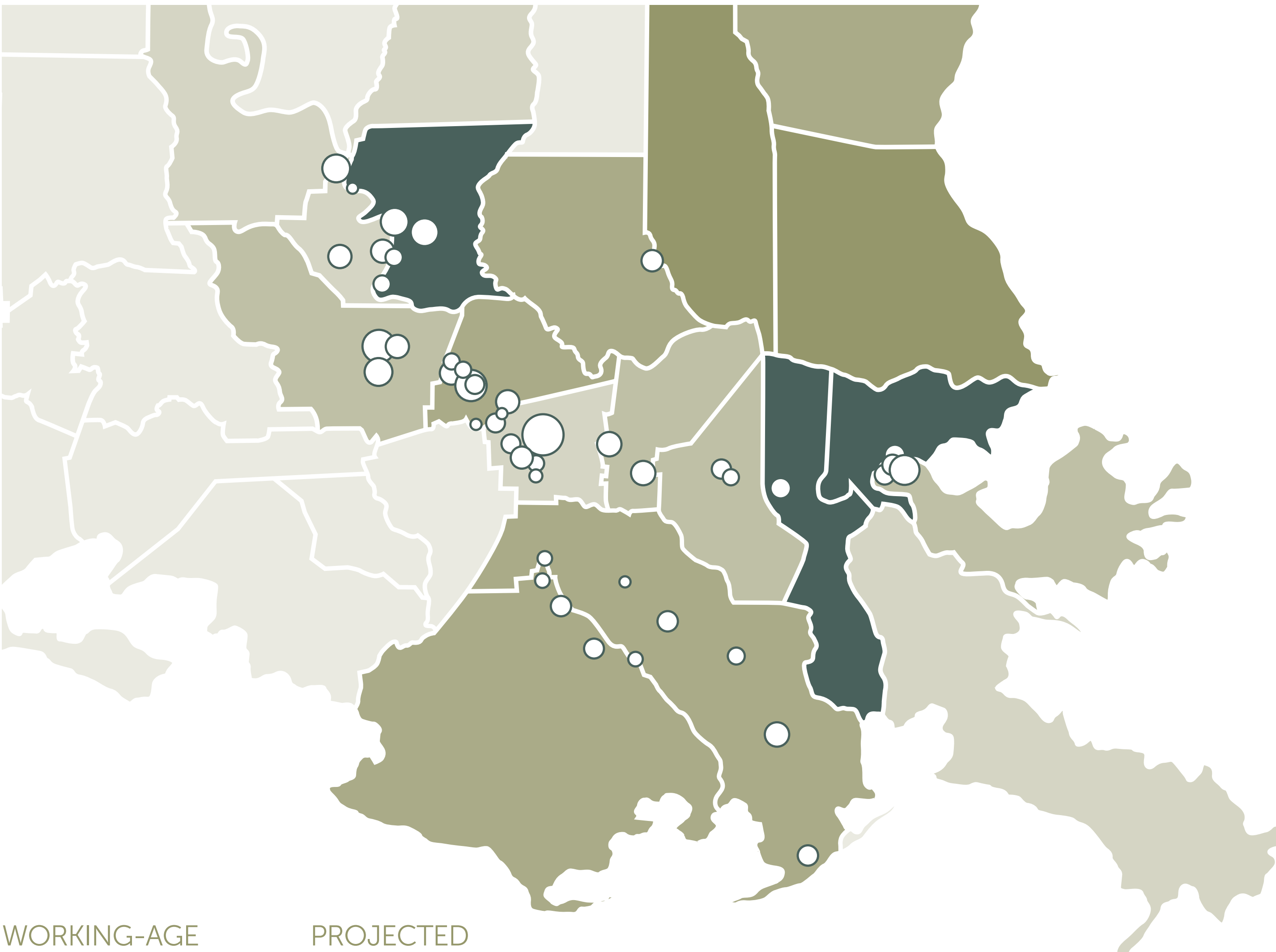
"I think we know when we talk about transportation, we are talking about one of the most important drivers of wealth creation and equity in our communities."[34]

Kristin Gisleson Palmer
Chair of the Louisiana Super Region Rail Authority

match employers' needs is only one part of the equation – a "spatial mismatch" between workers and employers is "another barrier to labor market efficiency," [35] which negatively impacts workers, employers and the Super Region at large.

In addition to the efficiency of the labor market, the quality of the super-regional transportation network has other significant implications for businesses and employers. "Concentrating and connecting assets promotes higher productivity and more efficient economic activity" – the strength of the infrastructure in a region determines transportation costs, which are a "function of the proximity of businesses to their suppliers, employees, and consumers and the efficiency of the connections between them," and "influences many economic benefits of agglomeration," such as access to supplies, services, expertise and markets, as well as labor pools. "Keeping these costs low requires focusing on the concentration of these economic actors and the connections among them."[36]

Relative Locations of Job Clusters and Unemployed Residents[37]



WORKING-AGE UNEMPLOYED

- Data not available
- Less than 10,000
- 10,000 - 14,999
- 15,000 - 29,999
- 30,000 - 59,999
- 60,000 or more

PROJECTED NEW JOBS

- 0-25
- 26-50
- 51-100
- 101-250
- 251-1,000
- 1,001-1,250

Super Region Spotlight: Ascension Parish

Ascension Parish is currently the fastest-growing parish in the state and is shaping up to be "ground zero" of the industrial expansion. The site of many of the new industrial plants and expansions, Ascension is a rural parish with small population centers. Though the parish has been growing at a rapid clip as increasing numbers of families move in to take advantage of good school systems and a lower cost of living, Baton Rouge still serves as the primary job center, and Ascension has largely retained its small town character, which residents value. **As thousands of new jobs open up in Ascension, changes are inevitable.**

Because of its relatively rural demographics and a road network that was developed when the parish was even more rural, Ascension is already struggling with traffic and congestion associated with shift work at existing plants. **According to Parish President Tommy Martinez, "We have about 507 miles of local roads in the parish. With all those miles of roads, the only 4-lane highways we have are the interstate and Highway 61. We haven't built a new road since 1954, so we are in the position of trying to catch up.** We do have plans, but to implement a plan, you certainly have to have the funds to do so, and we have not been able to convince the public of that need. Just to maintain the 500 miles of roads that we do have takes about $9M a year. We actually take in about $6M a year that's dedicated to roads, so we continually fall behind every year."[40]

From 2000 to 2012, Ascension Parish experienced historic growth with a

45.1%

increase in working-age adults[38] ... yet, a new road has not been built since

1954[39]

Challenge: Prioritizing Projects on a Tight Budget

Unfortunately, the funding dilemma described by President Martinez is shared by many parishes and reflected at the state level, as well. With such a hefty backlog of highway needs, investing in multi-modal transportation and other future-oriented network improvements doesn't seem feasible to many local leaders.

At the CONNECT policy forum, Deputy Secretary Eric Kalivoda provided an update on the work Louisiana DOTD is doing to prepare for these and other infrastructure needs that are critical to the economic future of the Super Region and the state. Most significantly, DOTD is completing an update of the state transportation plan, which should be finalized in the fall of 2014.

Kalivoda explained, "It's a 30-year plan; it addresses all modes of transportation and much of that plan is focused on freight transportation. It's the long haul and the heavy haul, and that's the business the state is in. That's really to support our traditional industries in the state — agribusiness, mining, the petrochemical industry, heavy manufacturing and shipping ... We are also going to be looking at investing in the major travel corridors, particularly the interstate system."

While current and projected infrastructure needs are pressing, Kalivoda also emphasized that overbuilding should be avoided. "What happens when all this goes away or reaches a steady state position? Everything you build has to be maintained, and you wind up digging yourself into a deeper and deeper hole — you have to keep pushing public funds in to maintain that infrastructure, so you need to be careful that what we're building can be affordably maintained over time."[41]

This is especially true amidst the budget crisis currently facing transportation agencies at all levels of government. According to Louisiana DOTD's assessment of state highway and bridge needs, **the existing backlog of projects for the state totals more $12B.** $9.397B of that total is constituted by highway needs alone, and need in the two districts that comprise the majority of the Super Region – Districts 61 and 2 – account for more than a third of that amount. The funds available to address this backlog are inadequate. Louisiana's total transportation budget for fiscal year 2013 was less than $1B.[42] The federal Highway Trust Fund, a large source of state DOTD funding, would have been bankrupt by August 2014 if the Senate hadn't passed a stop-gap bill appropriating $11B to keep the fund solvent through May 2015. State revenues have been declining as well, failing to keep pace with inflation. Since it was implemented, Louisiana's state gas tax has lost half its value because the tax has remained static rather than being indexed to inflation. Clearly, new funding strategies and mechanisms will be needed to enable the state to meet transportation needs in a changing economic environment.

Better Planning, Bigger Returns

A primary consideration for investing limited transportation resources should be economic value and return on investment. Ensuring that transportation spending is coordinated with housing and job centers in order to maximize the economic efficiency and growth potential for the region will catalyze the kind of development that will generate additional revenues. Recognizing the importance of multi-modal networks to successful regional economies, Jamie Setze, Executive Director of the Capital Regional Planning Commission spoke to the importance of investing in transit and passenger rail in addition to highways. **Indeed, strategic expansion and improvement of multi-modal transportation is one way we can leverage the opportunities associated with the energy boom – investing in assets that will serve the Super Region over the long term, providing the choices and accessibility that will drive continued economic prosperity.** In his remarks, Setze alluded to the fact that access to transit serves a broad range of constituencies and needs: "Keeping people active and healthy in their communities for as long as possible is an important goal, and one of the big keys to doing that is to have adequate transit. Having a transit network that's not just for today, not just for the urban core, but that goes to these worksites, goes to where the elderly are and brings people to where they need to go for their daily life activities, is going to be an overarching goal."[43]

Jason Sappington, a senior transportation planner for the New Orleans Regional Planning Commission, also pointed out that transit options appeal to a wide variety of users and potential users: "A lot of people have moved into New Orleans in recent years, and they want things like good public transportation, especially the young folks moving in from out of the area. It's important to remember that transit is not just for people who absolutely need it, but also for discretionary ridership. We need to make it attractive to everybody. The priority is folks who do need it, and we do have a large population that relies on public transportation to get around, and that's going to be increasingly true as these new jobs come online, not just in the urbanized area, but throughout this larger super-regional network."[44]

Transit: An Investment in the Future

Though important improvements and expansions have been made at the local level, Louisiana has not historically prioritized investments in public transportation. Louisiana DOTD's annual budget allocates $4.96M – 0.5% of the total budget – to the Parish Transportation Fund, which comprises the state's contribution to public transit.

Additionally, the two major public transit agencies serving the Super Region have both had their share of challenges. The Capital Area Transit System (CATS)

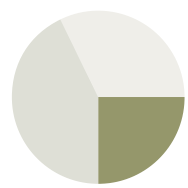
DOUBLE BOTTOM LINE

Access to transit services bolsters housing prices and decreases the amount households must spend on transportation.

Multi-modal transit-oriented location

Disposable Income: 59%
Housing: 32%
Transportation: 9%

Auto-dependent location



Disposable Income: 43%
Housing: 32%
Transportation: 25%

Source: Transportation and Housing Costs, U.S. Dept. of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration

"Transit is not just for people who absolutely need it, but also for discretionary ridership. We need to make it attractive to everybody."

Jason Sappington
New Orleans Regional Planning Commission

was underfunded and plagued with leadership and management challenges for years. A significant step in the right direction was taken in April 2012 when residents in the City of Baton Rouge voted to support a new dedicated funding source for the system. With new leadership in place at the executive and board levels, the system is making progress towards implementing improvements, expanding service and tightening operations.

As of 2012, the New Orleans Regional Transit Authority (NORTA) had restored less than half of the service level provided in 2005, pre-Katrina. "In terms of the total number of trips made each week, only 36% of pre-Katrina transit service had been restored by 2012" — this despite the return of 86% of the city's population. Also troubling is the fact that "service reductions have been worst in areas where transit service is needed most: low-income neighborhoods, communities of color, and areas where people have less access to personal vehicles."[45] NORTA also faces dire financial circumstances. According to Ride New Orleans' analysis, the agency has been operating at a significant annual deficit — "this high-cost, low-revenue situation is unsustainable and will bring the RTA to the end of its operating funds by 2015."[46]

An increased demand for transport into outlying areas where many new jobs will be located will compound the deleterious effects of existing shortfalls. Despite robust ridership and growing need, an important super regional connector, the LaSwift bus service, was discontinued in July 2014 when a local match was required to sustain the service, which had previously been 100% federally funded. When DOTD did not allocate the funds necessary for the match, municipalities and businesses throughout the Super Region expressed their support via letter campaigns and in-kind contributions to the required match. However, in the absence of a cash match, FTA declined the proposed package and the service was discontinued.

Existing transit agencies do not yet have regional reach and struggle with discontinuity across existing service areas. Though Sappington credits both the NORTA and Jefferson Transit Authority (JET, serving adjacent Jefferson Parish) with "doing well within their own spheres for planning and operations," he notes what too many experience first hand — that the services are not coordinated. Despite the fact that the two agencies rely on one another for ridership, there are obstacles and inefficiencies such as duplication of routes, people having to pay a full fare to go from one system to the other, and transfers between systems to the other requiring excessively long wait times. Sappington acknowledged that the NORPC is "in a unique position as a regional entity" to "step back and look at the grand picture and try to find ways to make them work together, whether it's day passes or fare coordination or looking at how these routes are configured."

Though transit expansion is a pressing need, funding remains a major barrier. "Our big priority at the RPC," says Sappington, "is just keeping the roads that we have in good repair and trying to do more low-cost ways of improving operations and improving management through travel demand management and operations management – these are things that are relatively low-cost and don't necessarily require building capacity."[47]

THE CASE FOR ADDITIONAL SAFETY MEASURES

Safety on our roadways is also an issue that deserves additional consideration. Increased traffic among both commuters and industrial workers presents increased risk — especially in areas less accustomed to heavy traffic. Leaders from other regions experiencing rapid growth connected to industrial expansion are seeing dramatic increases in incidents:

"Safety is a huge issue for us. The number of accidents, fatalities are just unbelievable. When you have 150 heavy commercial trucks running through a community that has only one stop light, and then you have tens of thousands of white pickups that are running around throughout the region ... ***First responders used to get maybe 2-3 calls a week. All of a sudden, they're getting 10 to 15 calls every day."***[48]

Leodoro Martinez
Executive Director, Middle Rio Grande Development Council

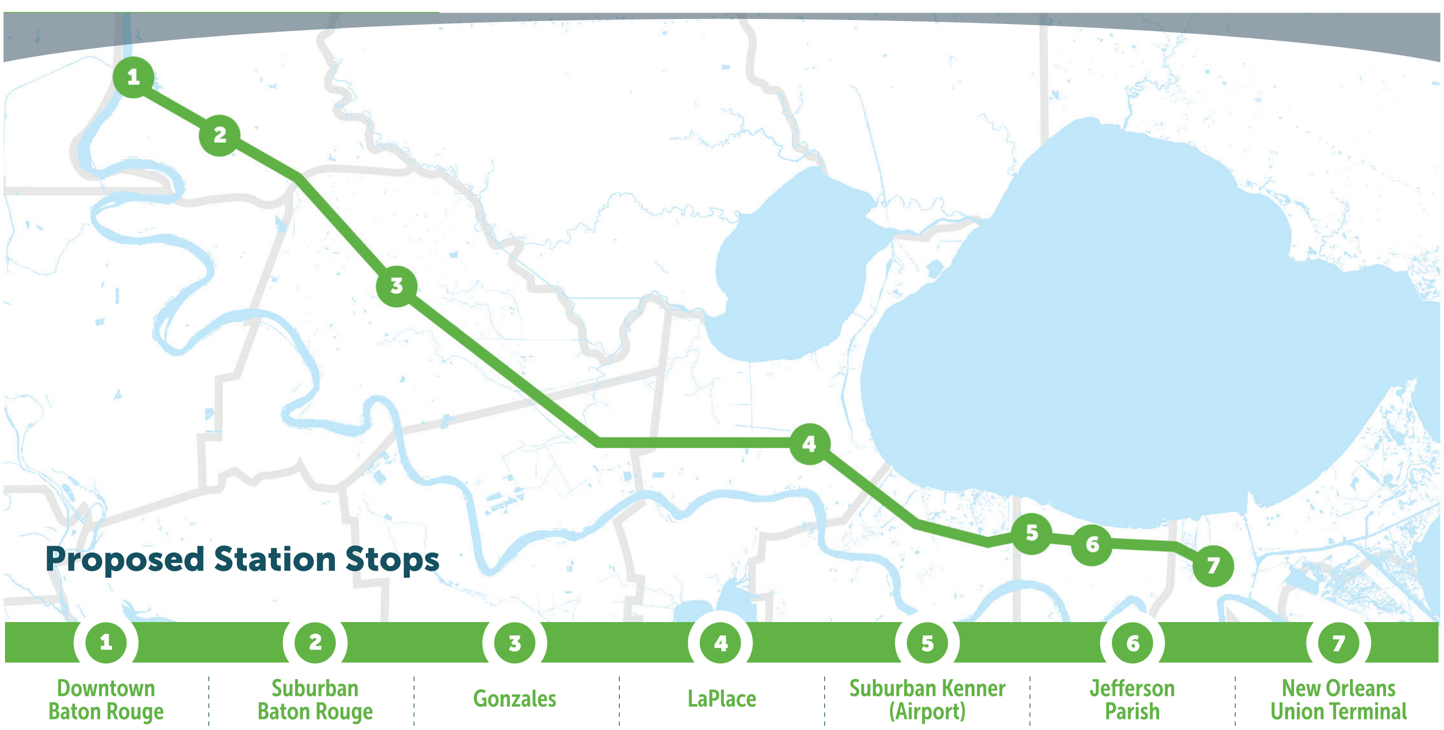
Passenger Rail: A Super-Regional Spine for Intermodal Transportation

As of 2010, 48% of the state's jobs were located along the Baton Rouge-to-New Orleans corridor — the industrial expansion taking place in the Super Region will increase this share. **Passenger rail along this corridor would connect Louisiana's two largest metro regions, enabling the state's largest job centers to function as a single economic unit.** More than 88% of the ridership for the proposed passenger rail line is expected to be work-related,[49] indicating the importance of the service as a connector of people, jobs and economic opportunity throughout the Super Region. The 90-minute rail trip between Baton Rouge and New Orleans is also a critical link in the larger Gulf Coast mega-region that extends from Houston, Texas to Ft. Walton, Florida[50] and the federally-designated passenger rail corridor that traverses the mega-region and connects to Atlanta, Georgia.

> "Passenger rail will allow the Super Region to compete at a higher level — not against ourselves, but against the rest of the country."[51]
>
> **Kristin Gisleson Palmer**
> Chair, Louisiana Super Region Rail Authority

Residents of the Southeast Louisiana Super Region understand the value of passenger rail service, both for improving quality of life and strengthening our economic position. **The Louisiana Speaks Plan and a later poll administered in 2010 revealed that passenger rail service is a priority for residents throughout the Super Region with more than 75% in favor of the service.** Respondents cited reduction of traffic, increased transportation options, easier commutes, job creation and evacuation capacity as reasons for support of passenger rail.[52]

Responding to growing support for passenger rail in the Super Region, Louisiana passed legislation creating an intrastate rail compact in 2010. The compact has the authority to bond, take on debt, raise funds, acquire property and operate facilities, thereby empowering local governments participating in the compact to pursue rail and other infrastructure projects. The compact officially convened in 2013. As of 2014, the rail compact — now known as the Louisiana Super Region Rail Authority



Source: Baton Rouge-New Orleans Intercity Rail Feasibility Study, March 2014, Baton Rouge Area Foundation, New Orleans Regional Planning Commission, Capital Region Planning Commission

— has been joined by 6 parishes along the corridor: East Baton Rouge, Ascension, St. Charles, St. John, Jefferson and Orleans.

Referring to the feasibility study completed in early 2014, Rail Authority Chair and former New Orleans Metro Councilmember Kristin Gisleson Palmer reported that, "now we have the updated feasibility study completed and we are each going to our constituencies in each of the parishes to talk about what this study said and how it can affect us … it doesn't really matter which parish you're from or which part of the state you come from – we need access to jobs and that is how we're going to do it." The feasibility study identifies stop locations, capital and operating costs, projected ridership, possible funding mechanisms and opportunities for station area planning and development.[53]

Palmer continued, "If we had that rail line, we don't have to compete. We add to each other without putting our people in a situation where they have to determine where they want to live in order to get a job. When we look at the economic boom that's happening not just in Orleans Parish, but in all the river parishes and Baton Rouge, this would be the connecting line." Furthermore, implementation of passenger rail would help solidify the Super Region as a cohesive economic force – "When businesses consider a site, they look at your job and labor pool and the connectivity of that labor pool. **When you add us all together, we are competitive with places like Houston and Atlanta. The passenger rail line will allow us to compete at a higher level – not against ourselves, but against the rest of the county."**

"The unique nature of this is that already we have existing freight lines that we would use, so any type of infrastructure repair would absolutely also benefit our freight travel because we would be using the same lines. In fact," Palmer pointed out, "on the Bonnet Carre spillway alone, our trains can't go over 10 miles an hour" due to the poor condition of the trestle. "A project like this would include significant upgrades to support passenger rail that would have valuable benefits for the freight lines as well. So you're looking at not just increased opportunities for passengers, but also for the economic development of our freight lines coming through the region."

Palmer also noted benefits to those most in need of public transportation options — "We have more than 20% of the population in New Orleans that does not have access to a vehicle. And that's in a city where you often have to deal with evacuations. So you can imagine what this passenger rail component would do, not just for the New Orleans area, but for the greater region."[54] Passenger rail would also offer increased access for tourists and for super region residents to engage in a wider range of recreational activities on a more frequent basis.

Along with its partners, the CONNECT coalition has been successful in creating a groundswell of support for passenger rail in the super region. However, an important opportunity was missed with Louisiana did not apply for federal funds that were available with no match requirement in 2009. Since then, the rail project has been included as a megaproject in DOTD's statewide plan, but no state funding has yet been allocated for the project. **New leadership at the state level will be needed to establish passenger rail as a DOTD funding priority; in the meantime, the Louisiana Super Region Rail Authority is equipped and motivated to make progress toward implementation at the local level where support continues to be very strong.**

In conclusion to his remarks, NORPC senior transportation planner Jason Sappington summed up the ways in which a super regional focus and multi-sector collaboration are essential to strengthening our shared transportation network. "Things like the intercity rail project and regional transit – they're just a couple of manifestations of the symbolic shift in thinking that's going to be required as we move from looking at our own little regions and start looking at this Super Region. As we look at ourselves through that lens, we need to really find out what our common goals are … throughout the entire state and throughout all the MPOs, but also among private industry, rail supporters, public transportation providers, the parishes and municipalities that we serve, so that we can come together as a truly united voice to convey to our decision-makers what our needs are."[55] As transportation needs at the municipal, regional and state levels continue to face significant budget constraints, we must collectively maintain focus on proven strategies for "deliver[ing] transformative infrastructure," which requires prioritization of "investments with the greatest potential to advance the region toward the next economy and further the goal of economic growth" such as "transit infrastructure, … rail and intermodal hubs, smart technologies that reduce congestion" and "'smart city' engagement platforms." Further, we must commit to "innovative, merit-based systems that are transparent, accountable and performance-driven" for financing infrastructure.[56]

Housing: Building for the Next Generation

The size, pace and primary location of the boom, along with the circumstances specific to large-scale industrial construction, present a number of housing-related challenges. However, with effective leadership and good planning, our response to growing housing needs can be an opportunity to staunch the spread of costly sprawl, develop workforce housing that de-concentrates poverty, and create livable, walkable communities that are in great demand across a range of demographic profiles.

The issue of temporary housing is one of the most immediate concerns facing the Super Region as well as other regions of the state. Construction jobs will comprise a large percentage of the job growth in the near-term. Many of these jobs will be temporary and many will be located in rural areas. In other regions experiencing similar growth, such as the Bakken play in North Dakota and Middle Rio Grande in Texas, temporary housing has been installed for workers. **Ranging in size from hundreds to thousands of units, these "crew camps" or "man camps" provide easy access to work sites and an affordable housing option for employees who are not permanent residents of the area.** However, these temporary dwellings have quickly become controversial in the areas in which they've been established. In addition to being unsightly, the camps have been plagued with problems such as violence, vandalism, prostitution and public drunkenness. Some camps have responded with strict policies banning weapons, alcohol and women, and have implemented severe security measures to regulate traffic in and out of the camps.

In Louisiana, construction of a 200-acre worker village in the Lake Charles area is already underway. Pelican Lodge will provide temporary housing for about 4,000 workers and is equipped with sports fields, a medical clinic and full-time security.[58] The decision was not an easy one – Bryan Beam, CAO of Calcasieu Parish, explained that when the village came up for a vote before the Southland Airport Board, which has jurisdiction over the rural area where it is to be located, "about 200 people showed up at the public hearings," despite the fact that "about 10 people live with a mile of the site." **Beam explained, "We're already out of apartments. So the need is there, but how do you tell locals this is not going to ruin the neighborhood? It's a challenge, because they're valid concerns."[59]**

In Ascension Parish where they are "anticipating ... nomadic tradesmen to move into the parish in coming years," officials have declared a moratorium on RV parks while they "address gaps in their development and zoning code." Demand is growing quickly — Parish Planning Director Ricky Compton reported in October of 2013 that "the parish has been getting one to two calls a week about RV parks for workers. St. James Parish adopted revisions to its RV and mobile home park rules in response to growing demand associated with the need for worker housing, as well.' "To comply with our growing economy, we felt revisions were necessary to ensure the safety of communities and to promote smart growth," St. James President Timmy Roussel said.[60]

"We're working with one city in Texas that went from a 2010 population of 3500 to a current population of nearly 14,000 people. They have 21 hotels that have been built in the last couple of years and they have four more ready to be built. So they're going to have 25 hotels. That need is going to go away at some point and time. What are they going to do to adaptively re-use those structures and integrate them into the community?"[57]

Tom Wendorf
HNTB Corporation

"Our goal is to build affordable and sustainable housing that has a lasting impact and value for the communities where these investments will be made."

Fred Tombar
Louisiana Housing Corporation

North Dakota state representative Vicky Steiner explained that for her state, crew camps were unavoidable. In her region alone, there are about 27,000 people living in camps. "The oil and gas industry and the construction and food trade and everything that came behind them has been spending almost $2B a month in our state. **You can say 2 billion, but you don't really understand what that means. But it means crew camps. It means we don't have enough roofs and toilets for all these people.** They're going to live in tents; they're going to live in RVs; and if we do crew camps, then maybe we're going to be able to control some of that." Steiner acknowledged that crew camps are unpopular, describing it as a love-hate relationship: "you love the fact that they house these temporary workers, but you hate the fact that they're temporary workers. You don't want them two-weeks on here and two weeks back home. You want them to move here, you want to capture those people. So there is a lot of pressure to push people into homes because they want them to be part of their community, pay taxes, and not fly in for two weeks, treat our state like an outpost, and then fly back." Steiner also makes the point that crew camps can be done well, with quality materials, good security, an ability to relocate from project to project and minimal disruption to the surrounding community.[62]

Fred Tombar, Executive Director of the Louisiana Housing Corporation, explained his commitment to addressing both short- and long-term housing needs: "We at the Housing Corporation are working closely with officials in Lake Charles and the Super Region to stay on top of housing needs. Ultimately, our goal is to meet community needs, which includes advancing broader thinking about sustainability and housing opportunities."[63]

The Louisiana Housing Corporation released a Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) in August 2014. The LSU Public Administration Institute conducted the assessment as part of a 5-year cooperative endeavor agreement that also includes development of "a process for incorporating local groups, including universities, nonprofits and civic groups into the long-term planning of affordable, safe and energy-efficient housing in Louisiana." The emphasis on civic engagement is an innovative step forward that will help LHC better understand community-level needs and the variable impacts that statewide policy may have at the local level. The HNA itself differentiates market conditions throughout the state and helps to pinpoint connections between employment and housing trends by dividing assessment areas according to the boundaries of the eight regional labor market areas defined by the Louisiana Workforce Commission. This measure, combined with the process developed to incorporate community input on a regular basis, will create a tool that is more flexible, responsive and up-to-date to assist LHC in setting policy designed to "make communities sustainable by minimizing public expenditures over the long run for transportation, education, public safety and other public services that are closely coupled with housing conditions."[64]

In addition to conducting a statewide housing assessment, the Louisiana Housing Corporation is, for the first time, using projections of economic growth clusters throughout the state to guide its allocation of tax credits to support the development of affordable housing that will meet the needs of workers. LHC's most recent round of funding for development of multi-family housing focused on economic development areas within the state — of 14 projects funded, 7 were in the Super Region and 3 were in Ascension Parish. "In setting the policy to invest in those areas, what we recognized was the burgeoning growth that's on the horizon and that we have to get out in front of it as best we can," said Fred Tombar, Executive Director of the Housing Corporation.

He went on to give two reasons: "One, people who are going to work in these areas are going to be looking for decent, safe and sanitary places to live, and two, there are people who currently live in these communities who run the risk of being pushed out because as the demand for housing in those areas goes up, the prices that one can get for housing – especially rental housing – goes up as well, and it puts pressure on existing residents. So we're doing our best to preserve housing opportunities for the folks who call those communities home."[65]

Planning at all scales

Ultimately, coordinating housing, transportation and employment opportunities to create a prosperous, sustainable region characterized by highly livable communities requires concerted planning at the local, regional and state levels. Further, as many contemporary economic experts have pointed out, "planning economic growth requires a focus on the economy first and the geography second – good planning has to reflect the boundaries of economic activity, not the political boundaries that separate cities, suburbs or even states." Planning at the super-regional level is essential because the cities, neighborhoods, and suburbs therein "share labor and housing markets; business-to-business relationships and supply chains; infrastructure and commuting patterns; cultural, recreational, retail and other amenities; and anchor institutions, such as hospitals and universities."[67] As The Data Center has demonstrated, these synergies and interdependencies throughout the Super Region are growing, and that growth is poised to accelerate.[68]

Echoing Dr. Kalivoda's caveat about overbuilding, Transportation for America's Beth Osborne observes that, "During growth times, it's really easy to put coordination of transportation, land use and economic development aside, but then later on, you find out that when you hadn't properly coordinated, you overbuilt in some areas, and then you have more infrastructure than you can afford to maintain, or vacant properties – and then other areas are underbuilt, dealing with congestion and crumbling infrastructure." Data-driven regional planning enables resources to be directed to the projects that will provide the greatest return on investment and reduce future financial liabilities. **Planning from a regional perspective also helps communities better understand the total costs of development decisions.** As Osborne points out, it is important to consider the costs of development broadly, over time. She explained that, for example, "The average suburban development does not bring in the taxes needed to maintain the roads. People have found out in many cases that it would take them 75 years to raise enough tax money from a suburban development to pay for roads that need to be replaced every 30 years. That's not a good deal."

"So how do you focus on this coordination at a time of boom?" asks Osborne. "One of the first questions you have to ask is, who's coming in? What often happens when jobs are expected is you go out and do more of what you've always done. You build for the community you already have. You build the housing that people used to want. And you never question who is coming in and whether they're looking for those same things."[70] **As early as 2007, the Louisiana Speaks plan revealed that most residents do not want more of the same and would like to change the course of our current development patterns.** When polled, 80% of residents across South Louisiana expressed a preference for shifting development patterns towards investment in existing cities and towns, building communities that are more compact and walkable, and creating places with more transit options and a broader mix of housing

"I believe the light bulbs are going off and we are realizing that some planning is needed, along with a better understanding of who's going to do what."[66]

Michael Songy
CEO, CSRS

GOOD DATA IS ESSENTIAL

Data-driven regional planning directs resources to the projects that will provide the greatest return on investment.

"Local governments need to be planning for the future. Each community is going to have to decide what it wants to be and how they are going to manage growth."[69]

Dr. Eric Kalivoda
Deputy Secretary, LADOTD

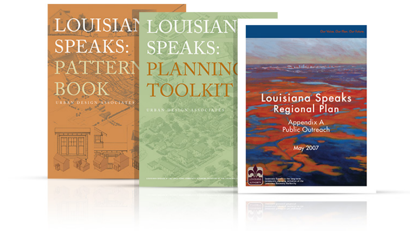
types.[71] Knowing that these kinds of developments are also attractive to older adults and young professionals, have the capacity to reduce congestion and emissions, reduce infrastructure costs and create ripe opportunities for inclusion of quality affordable housing, our collective focus should be trained on ways to prioritize and incentivize “growing smarter” in this way.

Although many communities are starting to adopt new comprehensive plans that will facilitate this kind of healthy growth, more multi-jurisdictional coordination and collaboration will be needed to determine super-regional infrastructure priorities, collect accurate and comprehensive data, and coordinate efforts and investments occurring at all scales. Transportation, housing and economic development can no longer be treated as separate functions with little or no coordination across levels of government. Before investing limited funding, local and state agencies must work to understand and carefully evaluate the short-term impacts and prepare for long-term outcomes to ensure that each investment delivers multiple returns, including improved quality of life in our communities.

For example, to accommodate short-term job growth associated with building the new plants, it will be necessary to employ creative solutions such as vanpools, ride-shares and transit, which can add more capacity quickly and efficiently without overbuilding what we cannot maintain. Housing for temporary workers should be developed with access to these transportation options in mind, as well as a clear plan for how that housing will be re-deployed once the workforce need in the area diminishes. Precise data as to the number of jobs, their locations, their temporary or permanent status and their pay grade is critical to scaling development appropriately. Improving coordination of agencies and jurisdictions in this way and others will boost revenue by both enhancing the quality of life that attracts new investment and providing a greater return on investment of public dollars.

The Air We Breathe: Balancing Environment and Economy

Both HNTB’s Tom Wendorf and NORPC’s Jason Sappington mentioned another planning issue that has not yet gained adequate attention. Growth of the industrial corridor has implications for air quality planning. As Sappington stated, “This type of industry offers a lot of positive things, but it also has impacts on air quality and emissions. These are things we’re going to have to be very cognizant of because they’re very deeply involved with how our public transportation process is mandated at a federal and state level.” He goes on to contend that, “there needs to be an ongoing dialogue between private industry and transportation professionals. Not just touching base every so often, but a constant conversation to make sure that these needs are being met and that our existing population base can accrue the benefits of this job expansion.”[72]



Louisiana Speaks hosted more than 1,000 public workshops, collected over 2,500 surveys, and polled 23,000 people.

The Louisiana Speaks Plan calls on the region to “grow smarter” by building diverse communities with a range of housing and transportation options, and to “think regionally” when it comes to policies and investments.

Download the complete Louisiana Speaks plan at:

cpex.org/louisiana-speaks

PLANNING ON A SUPER-REGIONAL SCALE

More multi-jurisdictional coordination and collaboration will be needed to determine super-regional infrastructure priorities, collect comprehensive data and coordinate investmentsat all scales.

Tax Revenues and Fiscal Policies

Though the excitement surrounding the energy boom is largely focused on the prospect of new wealth, funding the measures necessary to accommodate growth and grow responsibly will likely continue to be a struggle. Government budgets are being squeezed at every level, and growing profits in the private sector do not necessarily translate into increased funding for public infrastructure projects, especially at the local level. When new revenues do accrue, it can be years down the road, while infrastructure needs are often immediate and near-term, especially in rural areas where infrastructure may be minimal to begin with.

Capital Region Planning Commission Executive Director Jamie Setze noted what several others have also lamented regarding transportation funds, "We're working on a 1980s tax structure in the transportation world, and we're having explosive growth." According to Setze, "even in the most optimistic scenario, we'll still be $12B short in the state for the needs through 2044. That's with the vehicle sales tax that's estimated to come into the highway trust fund in 2020 and with another $300M in federal funding."[73]

Staggering amounts of public debt can be the cost of trying to keep up with rapid growth in the absence of adequate tax revenues. Working in Texas where the population has grown at more than twice the rate of the nation over the past decade, Tom Wendorf, Vice President of Texas Infrastructure Growth Services for HNTB, noted, "As you grow, you need improvements. The state's six largest cities, including Austin and Houston, owed more than $39B in debt in 2012. This represents a 46% increase since 2003. This debt has largely been for roads, water systems, schools and other services."[74]

DOTD Deputy Secretary Eric Kalivoda gave an example of similar impacts occurring in the northern part of Louisiana. "The oil and gas exploration that has taken place in the northern part of the state has had significant impacts … to the transportation infrastructure. The wastewater gets hauled away in trucks on roadways that were never designed to carry a thousand trucks a day, and it has just wreaked havoc on the infrastructure there. Our estimate from a few years ago on state highways in the northwest corner of the state was $40M of damage. I suspect the damage to the local infrastructure was equal to that or maybe even higher. So it is significant and it is something that has to be dealt with."[75]

But even amidst a scarcity of resources, Setze maintains, "we need to figure out how we're going to finance this growth going forward. At some point locals are going to have to come up with funding, and that's where it gets really dicey. Tolls have not fared well in Louisiana, bonds have been voted down repeatedly, and we don't have the option for a local option gas tax at this time. I think the key is to align state funding with growth opportunities." Setze closed by saying, "The road to tomorrow won't be built with the funding structure of yesterday."[76] Even without an influx of revenue, our current structures of revenue collection and allocation should be evaluated to ensure that our tax structure and fiscal policy are designed as well as possible to adapt to current needs and aspirations, especially in this rapidly changing economic landscape.

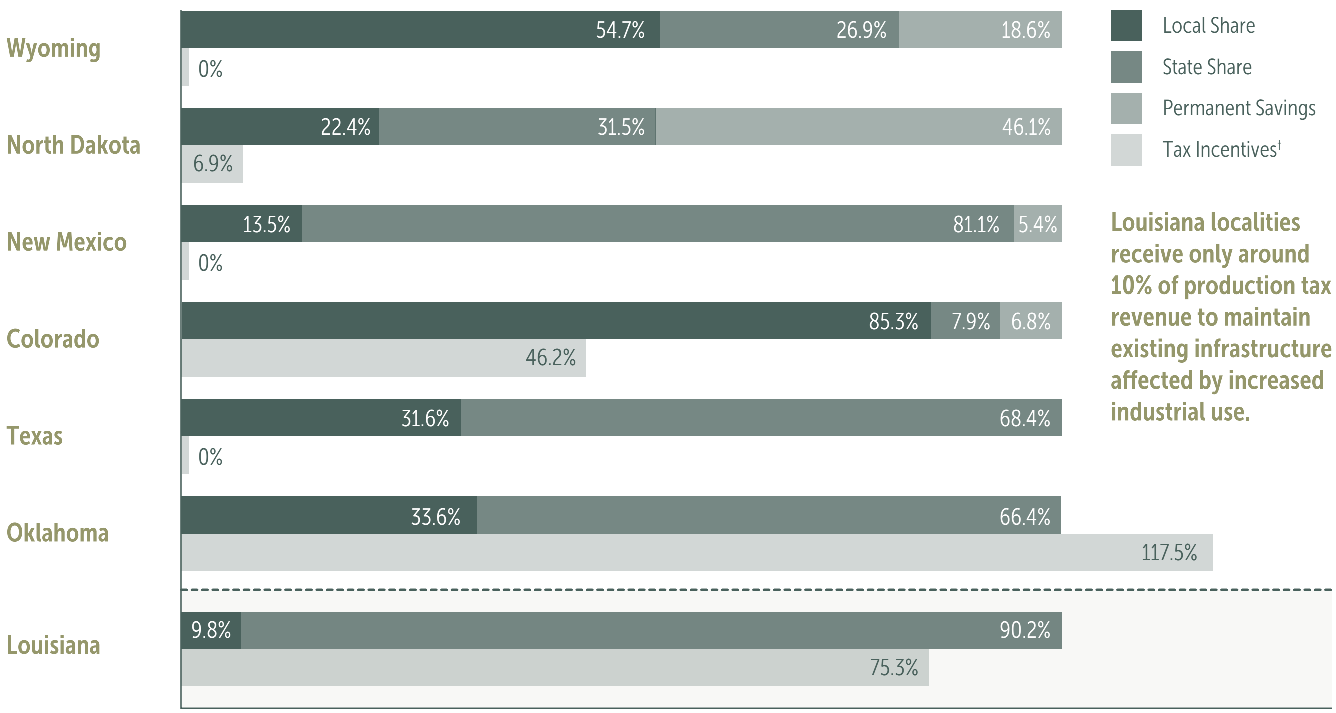
Mark Haggerty, an economist and researcher at Headwaters Economics who studies economic development in rural areas that are dependent on natural resources, contends that "fiscal policy – the way natural resources are taxed and the way that revenue is distributed and spent on mitigating impacts and on long term economic development – is central to mitigating the volatility of energy development." Though Headwaters' studies focus primarily on revenues associated with oil and gas extraction rather than the kind of second-order industrial activity that is fueling economic growth in the super region, their findings are certainly relevant as we anticipate both deleterious impacts and increases in tax revenues associated with rapid growth connected to the petrochemical industry.

Haggerty explains that largely because of advances in technology, the scale of activity that accompanies the energy industry today has increased dramatically. "The job opportunities are tremendous … there's more need for a labor force, more need for industrial services and there's a lot more population growth that goes along with it. The impact on those communities is also unprecedented." For this reason, Haggerty asserts that **"the roles that communities can play themselves in establishing monitoring efforts and liaisons with the state and federal government and other players" are also of critical importance to positive long-term outcomes.**

Headwaters has identified three components of fiscal policy that are essential for ensuring and maintaining healthy growth. One, "Energy development has to pay enough money in the right place, at the right time, and in the right certainty to ensure that communities can mitigate the impacts of development." Second, "you have to have the resources available to invest in economic diversification," and finally, "you need long term security in fiscal resources."

Haggerty provides examples of fiscal policies in different states, noting that policies vary widely, and there is almost no exchange of learning among states with similar challenges regarding development and implementation of these policies, despite the fact that communities are deeply affected by the policy structures.

Comparative Allocation of Production Taxes*



* Data based on FY 2013 tax policies. Allocations may change from year to year.

† Expenditures comparative to revenue collected

In their analysis of North Dakota counties, Headwaters found that a relatively small portion of tax revenues go to local governments. **This has meant that rural communities in particular have been struggling mightily to keep up with the infrastructure demands that have come along with the huge expansion in industrial activity — "communities are not getting the kind of support they need to make sure that they have the resources available to actually fix their roads, upgrade water and sewer systems, and to make sure that public safety and other social service systems are able to deal with the expansion in population."**

On the other hand, their analysis finds that North Dakota does a good job of saving money – putting about 60% of all revenue into a legacy fund that will be there for the long term, available for state use even after revenues slow. Montana, however, has made a different policy choice, using the majority of revenues for immediate tax relief rather than long-term savings. The difference between the two approaches is that, "if North Dakota decides to use some of their revenue in permanent savings for tax relief, they can guarantee that tax relief in perpetuity, without having to raise taxes in the future. Montana is taking a great risk, exposing themselves to the volatility associated with oil revenue and potentially having to come back and raise taxes later on citizens."

Looking at the Haynesville shale as an example of current policy practice for tax distribution in Louisiana, Haggerty found that "the amount going back to local governments is quite low. There is nothing going into long-term permanent savings, and there are significant expenditures in terms of incentives for drilling going back to industry." He concludes, **"When we look at Louisiana's policy in relation to other states, we see an immediate need for more money to go back to local governments and possibly some of that going into savings as well."**[77]

NEXT STEPS + RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on our research, the presentations delivered at the "Boom Without Bust" policy forum, and the stakeholder discussions that have ensued, below is a list of recommendations for next steps to prepare the Super Region to harness the opportunity of the energy boom into equitable and sustainable growth for the long term.

1. ENGAGE INDUSTRY

The elected officials and leaders of regional collaborations who spoke at the "Boom Without Bust" Policy Forum all emphasized the importance of partnering with industrial stakeholders to establish priorities, develop solutions and manage implementation. Leaders of industry associations and plants located throughout the Super Region have also indicated interest in participating in collaborative efforts, recognizing that our transportation networks and community resiliency and vitality are essential to their success.

Understanding industry needs is essential to ensuring that the Super Region maintains its economic competitiveness over the long term. Industry support of super regional priorities for addressing challenges associated with growth will help garner the attention of elected officials and prompt more immediate action.

Acknowledging Sasol's decision to fund a regional impact study, Calcasieu Parish CAO Bryan Beam credits the company's leadership for seeing that "they're not just coming and having some ethane cracked. Their people are living here, they go to schools, they go to community events, their kids are in soccer – they saw the impact and they wanted to help. That's something industry can do, and I encourage you to pursue that with some of the ones that are in the Super Region."

2. SUPER REGIONAL ASSET MAPPING

It is beyond the scope of this report to describe the full range of efforts that are underway to ensure that the impending economic boom brings lasting prosperity to the Super Region, but as alluded to in the previous page, there are a number of organizations and initiatives that have already taken on important elements of this work, focusing on various aspects of workforce development, zoning and land use, housing, economic development and transportation and other public infrastructure. Compiling a compendium of current efforts is the first step towards identifying gaps and understanding how best to organize a collaboration that will build upon and align the work already being done and support new initiatives to close gaps and leverage opportunities.

3. INVEST IN DATA COLLECTION AND DISSEMINATION

What we heard from industry leaders, elected officials and those working in the field alike is that more data is needed to establish baselines, understand trends, help set priorities and inform decision-making. Investing in quality, comprehensive data collection will save money in the long run, enabling more effective and efficient use of limited resources.

Preparing for impacts on the super-regional scale and coordinating efforts in the areas of housing, workforce development, and transportation across agencies will require an increased willingness to explore and share information from multiple entities. Inter-agency agreements to share data will facilitate development of a multi-layered big-picture forecast of what's to come. A web-based clearinghouse of super regional data should make existing data publicly accessible and easy to navigate and should incorporate new information as it becomes available.

4. EXPLORE REGIONAL MODELS

A wealth of recent national research makes a solid, evidence-rich case for regional and super-regional approaches to economic development, planning and equity, and the necessity of weaving all three into a collaborative, coordinated effort. Case studies provide excellent examples of policy impacts, economic trends and tendencies, and dynamics of human and social capital associated with regional development from which we can learn.

The organizational models operating in North Dakota and Middle Rio Grande that were featured at the "Boom Without Bust" policy forum are particularly well-suited for adaptation to our own needs, having been formed in response to rapid economic growth fueled by the oil and gas industry, impacting rural areas with limited planning capacity amidst a conservative political environment. However, there are additional lessons to be learned from other regions. For instance, Midland, Texas has experienced astronomical growth associated with the oil and gas industry and is facing many of the challenges resulting from the confluence of rapid growth, insufficient infrastructure, and public policy that does not favor increasing revenue flows to local municipalities within an urban context that is more similar to our two major metropolitans in the Super Region.

Forming relationships with leaders of these organizations and taking advantage of the learning they have to offer will help expedite the process of developing a model that is best suited to the specific needs and opportunities in the southeast Louisiana Super Region.

5. FORM A SUPER REGIONAL CONSORTIUM

In order to address the full breadth of interrelated issues that are critical to the long-term outcomes of the energy boom, a collaborative structure is needed. This entity would have the ability to leverage existing super-regional collaborations such as the CONNECT Coalition, the Super Region Committee, and the Super Region Rail Authority, and build upon their work to date by expanding the scope of focus, coordinating strategies, identifying shared priorities, securing funding, facilitating communication and data-sharing, orchestrating community outreach, promoting civic engagement, and developing a unified voice with which to advocate to legislative bodies, elected officials and state and federal agencies.

6. IDENTIFY AND NEW SUPER REGIONAL LEADERSHIP

In recent years, and especially in the wake of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, a new and invigorated cadre of leaders at both the grasstops and grassroots levels have emerged in southeast Louisiana. Thanks to them, the nonprofit sector has expanded, civic engagement is more robust, advocacy efforts are more effective, and economic development is more strategic and equity-minded. Of particular note are the growing efforts of economic development organizations to foster collaboration at the super regional level – an endeavor that has steadily chipped away at longstanding rivalry between the two major metro areas, promoting instead a sense of shared interests and expanded horizons of possibility. Expanding the scope of super regional collaboration to include a broader range of participants, perspectives and areas of practice will require new leadership to join forces with those who are already engaged in this work. Those leading this endeavor must be cognizant of both the challenges and the necessity of connecting economic development efforts driven by the business sector with equity advocates and community development work most often situated in the nonprofit sector.

7. TARGET ELECTED OFFICIALS

Elected officials throughout the Super Region and across the state need to understand the dynamics of the energy boom and the challenges and opportunities specific to municipalities, parishes and the region at large. Many stakeholders recognize that the best opportunity for meaningful policy change and re-prioritization is the gubernatorial election coming up in 2015. Developing and promoting a broadly-supported super regional agenda will shape candidate platforms, bring priority issues to the forefront of their campaigns, and help voters identify which candidates are most likely to advance the interests of the Super Region during this critical time of growth and opportunity. A targeted effort to engage and educate national, state and local elected officials already serving in office will help engender support for and action on a shared set of priorities.

8. DEVELOP A SUPER REGIONAL METROPOLITAN BUSINESS PLAN

Metropolitan business plans use a market-based approach to identify opportunities at the regional level and chart a course for equitable and sustainable economic development. A metropolitan business plan creates and coordinates paths forward for local, state and federal government, in partnership with the philanthropic and business sectors. Financial and operationalization plans ensure that implementation is feasible and focus energy and resources on action. Emphasis on equity, collaboration and coordination creates time- and money-saving efficiencies, leverages existing capacity, and fosters regional cohesiveness.

Supported by the Brookings Institute, metropolitan business plan pilots were launched in three large metro areas in 2011. Nearly four years into the process, checking in on the progress of these pilots in Northeast Ohio, the Puget Sound region, and Minneapolis-St. Paul will help leaders in the southeast Louisiana Super Region identify best practices and lessons learned that can inform adaption of this tool to our particular market context.

9. REVISIT FISCAL POLICIES

Funding can be a daunting subject that nonetheless must be considered carefully. Dedicated efforts to examine existing policies and practices governing funding and allocations for planning and infrastructure is essential to ensuring that the energy boom doesn't come at a cost to everyday citizens; that revenues are invested in the long-term good of the region; and that our policies and investments position the Super Region for sustainable growth and maximum federal investment to support local initiatives.

10. EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY OUTREACH

As Bryan Beam, Leodoro Martinez, Ashley Shelton and others have made clear, effective community outreach is essential to long-term success. As the Super Region faces significant changes over the next few years, engaging residents in planning and decision-making that will shape their communities and their futures is critical. Making meaningful efforts to ensure that all residents, regardless of income, race, age, or location within the Super Region, have the opportunity to participate in both the rewards and responsibilities of economic growth is the only way to ensure that that growth is equitable, inclusive and sustainable.

MODELS TO EXPLORE

Though solutions and strategies must be tailored to our Super Region and the specific set of challenges, assets and opportunities that comprise our current context, other regions have developed and implemented innovative structures, strategies and plans to address similar challenges. Their models and the lessons they've learned should inform collaborations, strategies and investments in the Baton Rouge — New Orleans Super Region.

Eagle Ford Consortium

MIDDLE RIO GRANDE, TEXAS

The Eagle Ford Consortium was formed in response to the tremendous swell of economic activity surrounding oil and gas exploration in the Eagle Ford Shale. Located in south Texas, encompassing more than 20 counties, the Eagle Ford Shale play is the largest oil and gas development in the world based on capital invested. In 2012 alone, the play had an impact greater than $60B and supported more than 116,000 jobs.[78] Leodoro Martinez chairs the Eagle Ford Consortium and serves as executive director of the Middle Rio Grande Development Council (equivalent to MPOs in Louisiana), spearheading a comprehensive and collaborative approach to managing growth.

The Consortium's stated mission is "to address the issues that are the result of the economic impact of the oil and gas exploration that is taking place within the Eagle Ford Shale."[79] According to Martinez, the Eagle Ford Consortium is "a group that came together for the betterment of the region — it's all our universities, our community colleges, our training institutions, our Texas Workforce Commission, it's state agencies, local government, county judges, mayors and, very important – industry. The key thing is that since day one, at the table with us has been the oil and gas industry, working side by side with us. We have found that we're not always going to agree on everything, that's a given. But since it's a working relationship, we're also not going to walk away from the table, so that's been key for us."

In addition to strong partnerships, Martinez identified data collection in general and an economic impact study in particular – as the essential first step and foundation for the later successes of their multi-sector, multi-county collaborative.[80]

Objectives of the Eagle Ford Consortium include:

- Develop & foster effective lines of communication between industry, local communities, public schools, nonprofit groups, workforce training providers and others
- Coordinate workforce and education efforts to improve employment of dislocated and underemployed workers
- Coordinate and collaborate to procure additional public and private resources, including grants and private contributions to benefit workforce/ community development efforts
- Maximize economic opportunities for communities in the Eagle Ford Shale region through collaborations with the oil and gas industry and through development of localized economic development efforts

Eagle Ford Consortium (cont.)

MIDDLE RIO GRANDE, TEXAS

STRUCTURE: The Eagle Ford Consortium is comprised of five committees that are led by a Steering Committee whose membership includes chairs or each of the five committees. The committees focus on education and workforce, community investment, industry, infrastructure and natural resources, and community and economic development.

Committee membership includes elected officials, utility companies, housing authorities, chambers of commerce, small business development centers, social service organizations, environmental protection and stewardship organizations, land owners, producers, service companies and industry associations, philanthropy, industry foundations, and other investors.

Vision West ND

WATFORD CITY and 19 SURROUNDING COUNTIES, NORTH DAKOTA

This planning project began in response to the struggles faced in North Dakota's northern counties – especially among smaller communities – amidst the rapid expansion of the oil industry in that region.

The Vision West ND plan and planning process are guided and managed by a consortium. Membership is comprised of representatives of western North Dakota counties, economic development regions, universities and state organizations. The Consortium is supported by an administrative team that includes a liaison from USDA along with full-time staff.[81]

The project focuses on six initiatives:

1. Economic Development and Diversification Plan

2. Infrastructure Needs Planning

3. Planning and Zoning Recommendations

4. Individual Project Schematics

5. Lessons Learned Webinars

6. Regional Strategic Plan

Objectives include:

- Address immediate, short term needs of communities to meet growth management challenges
- Capitalize on one of America's strongest rural economies for entrepreneurial development
- Set the stage for economic diversification based on the strength of the oil and agriculture industries
- Support livability and environmental objectives
- Establish a diversified economy in the future – looking past the current oil boom

This regional planning effort was funded through a partnership of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the ND Energy Development Infrastructure and Impact Grant Fund.

Vision WEST ND

Go Group

LAKE CHARLES, LOUISIANA

According to Calcasieu Parish CAO Bryan Beam, the Southwest Task Force for Growth and Opportunity – known as the "Go Group" formed in response to Sasol moving to the Lake Charles area. "We figured we've got to plan for this like we have never planned before."

"Even though we're split into parishes and cities and all that, the growth that is coming doesn't care about those borders, so you have to get smarter and organize yourself voluntarily."

Beam highlighted the **two main purposes of the Go Group: sharing information and coordinating planning efforts.** "It's amazing how much is going on daily in different bodies – government, public, private, schools, sheriff – that we would not know otherwise. So we get together and share that just to know what's going on. You really need that." Beam also spoke to the importance of partnership, which he described as "essential for planning for growth. By building those relationships, when an opportunity comes up, you're ready. That relationship building has already paid great dividends.

The Go Group quickly identified the need for data. Beam related that, "in creating the Go Group, we did great, got great people involved, brainstormed and everybody knows you've got to think about traffic, drainage, schools, all that stuff, but then you kind of hit a wall. Because we could speculate how much traffic is going to grow, we speculate on population and all these other things, but what can you do with very limited data?" The Go Group has commissioned four studies – a regional impact study, a housing study, a transportation study, and a public transit study. Each study is aligned with a Go Group committee charged with working with local entities to implement plans. "All of that information becomes data that we can then use as our launching pad," said Beam. "The outcome of these studies will inform our regional strategic plan." [82]

Michael Songy, co-founder of CSRS, remarks that, "Simple economic data in terms of jobs is great to hear, but if you don't know where they are, it doesn't necessarily tell you what you need to know." Funded by Sasol, CSRS is currently leading the regional impact study referenced by Beam above. The study will establish baselines on a wide range of indicators and project demographic trends, housing and infrastructure needs, revenue streams and numbers of new jobs opening along a timeline that will help local leaders understand what will be needed when. Songy explained that the study will also document "secondary impacts and secondary growth. For every person you add, you are almost adding another person in the medical profession. The people who move here will have some children with them — where are all these children going to go to school? The model will predict tax revenue over time — even beyond the 10-year industrial exemption — to all entities, and it can be broken down to every school board, every drainage district, every ward, the city, the sheriff ... it will also forecast changes in commuting patterns."[83]

The Go Group has also recognized that community outreach and public engagement are key to the success of their effort and the success of the region. "The thread through all of this is public engagement," said Bryan Beam. "We've tried to do a good job of pulling in the public. Public participation is important if people are going to feel like you're really listening to them."[84]

Metropolitan Business Plans

A New Approach to Economic Growth and Inclusive Market Development

Metropolitan Business Plans are gaining traction as an innovative approach to regional planning that focuses on leveraging opportunities and fostering collaboration and coordination. Based on the observation that "leading U.S. metropolitan areas — which drive the economy — are mounting increasingly strategic, locally developed and sophisticated initiatives" to move toward productive "next economies" that are "export-oriented, lower-carbon, and innovation-driven as well as opportunity rich," the proponents of this concept assert that "federal, state and philanthropic actors all need to approach metros not as problems requiring programmatic handouts, but as compelling investment opportunities for driving ... prosperity."

"Metropolitan business planning adapts the discipline of private-sector business planning to the task of revitalizing regional development. Such planning provides a framework through which regional business, civic and governmental leaders can rigorously analyze the market position of their region; identify strategies by which to capitalize on their unique assets; specify catalytic products, policies and interventions; and establish detailed operational and financial plans. These plans can then, in turn, be used to restructure federal, state and philanthropic engagement in ways that invert the current top-down, highly siloed and often ineffective approach to cities and metropolitan areas while bringing new efficiency to development activity."[85]

Metropolitan business planning is an opportunity for consortiums of local governments, businesses and civic organizations, and the private and non-profit sectors to engage in coherent strategic action. Espousing equity as a value and recognizing that high levels of disparity have crippling effects on long-term economic growth, metropolitan business plans include strategies for integrating low-income communities and vulnerable populations into mainstream economic life.

Metropolitan Business Plans ....

- Transcend politically-driven deal-making to focus on building long-term regional advantage
- Advance comprehensive and integrated strategies that reflect the interactive dynamics of local economies rather than narrow programmatic siloes
- Call for regions as well as governments and other potential investors to collaborate in new ways
- Produce data-informed, market-oriented and multi-disciplinary regional business plans proposing concrete, locally-developed strategic investments that challenge key stakeholders to respond and invest in ways that are similarly integrated and targeted
- Provide a new basis for state and federal programming. Rather than fragmented requests to hundreds of siloed programs in dozens of agencies, comprehensive MBPs demonstrate their 'returns' can be translated into investment prospectuses, enabling more flexible, performance-based funding

Pilots are underway in Northeast Ohio, the Puget Sound region and the Minneapolis-St. Paul area.

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