



CENTER *for*
PLANNING
EXCELLENCE

2021

annual report

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LETTER FROM THE CEO

What an exciting year it has been for CPEX! During another stretch of new challenges, big changes, and emerging opportunities, we have continued to deliver on our mission –

bringing vision, opportunity, and hope to communities throughout the state. We could not drive this kind of positive change without the support of our CPEX Members, so first of all, I would like to thank each and every one of you for your invaluable support.

Over the past year, CPEX has grown our team and achieved meaningful impacts – because of our work, Louisiana is more livable. CPEX’s efforts have yielded tangible results: high quality affordable housing is being built, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure is being implemented, green spaces and natural environments are being protected, and more communities have the tools they need to preserve their culture, make progress on equity, support community health, and achieve the resilience needed to thrive in the future.

As we look to the future, we see that there has never been a more important time to deploy the power of planning at all scales. Small towns and rural communities are struggling with population loss and overwhelming infrastructure needs; young professionals and families are leaving the state in search of opportunities they can’t find at home; and all of our communities are grappling with climate change impacts, complex public health needs, and deep-seated racial and economic disparities. Though there are serious challenges facing our state, we also have good reasons to feel hopeful and energized about our prospects for the future.

Sincerely,

Camille Manning-Broome

Camille Manning-Broome

Louisiana recently became the first Gulf South state to have a Climate Action Plan, and CPEX is proud to have played a leadership role in serving on the Task Force and shaping the process and plan. There are tremendous opportunities to be seized by taking the lead on building climate-resilient infrastructure and diversifying our economy to build wealth for all Louisianians. CPEX is already moving this plan forward by developing a model solar ordinance that will be a free resource, creating a Climate Action Plan in Gonzales, which we hope can serve as a model to other local governments, and working with the Department of Administration to establish an office of state planning.

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act also presents once-in-a-generation opportunities to transform Louisiana communities that are struggling to build and maintain the infrastructure they need to provide safe housing, economic opportunity, and modern transportation networks that meet residents’ needs. The choices that we make today about how we invest in our people and places will determine the viability of our communities tomorrow – CPEX is working every day to secure an equitable, economically stable, and resilient future for our state.

I am so proud of the passionate team of city planners, scientists, and policy experts at CPEX who wake up every day with a mission to improve life in Louisiana communities and create places where people want to live, work, and play – I hope you’ll feel the same as you read more about our impacts in the pages that follow.

THIS WORK IS CRITICAL TO OUR SHARED FUTURE IN LOUISIANA, AND IT WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE WITHOUT THE SUPPORT OF OUR CPEX MEMBERS.



LETTER FROM OUR BOARD CHAIR

Being Chairman of the Board for the Center for Planning Excellence means that I get to be a part of some of the best of what is happening in Baton Rouge and Louisiana. I see every day how important it is for Louisiana communities to be able to draw upon the tools and vision of planning to chart their course forward at a time when so many things are shifting. Climate change, the pandemic, economic volatility, race and health disparities, and outmigration are all bringing big changes at a rapid pace – now more than ever, our communities need vision, hope, and a path forward to a resilient, economically vibrant future.

I’m especially proud of the work that CPEX is doing in partnership with my alma mater, Southern University, and North Baton Rouge’s Scotlandville community. Over the past year, we’ve deepened our relationships with community stakeholders, completed plans for Southern’s campus and Scotlandville, and we remain committed to working with the community to realize their goals for the economic revitalization, quality housing, increased walk- and bike-ability, environmental sustainability, and cultural placemaking reflected in these plans.

Visionary planning is a long game – we must plant the seeds today for the future we want five, fifteen, and fifty years from now. As evidenced by the stories and project highlights in the pages that follow, CPEX is planting these seeds, bringing vision, thought leadership, and planning expertise to address Louisiana’s most pressing needs at all scales, from small rural communities to state agencies and international events. This work is critical to our shared future in Louisiana, and it would not be possible without the support of our CPEX Members. On behalf of all those we serve, thank you for sharing our vision and supporting our work.

Sincerely,

Preston J. Castille, Jr.

Preston J. Castille, Jr.

CREATING GREAT PLACES

PEOPLE
MAKING
PLACES

for PLANNING EXCELLENCE

Community planning is at the core of CPEX's mission, and our team brings community members and leaders together to work toward a shared vision for sustainable growth, climate change adaptation, and resilience. CPEX partners with organizations, neighborhoods, and local governments to create places that are safe, beautiful, affordable, and easy to get around.

An example of our work in this area is the Opelousas Downtown Master Plan, which won the 2021 "Planning Achievement Award for a Plan" from the Louisiana Chapter of the American Planning Association. **CPEX worked with the Opelousas community to help develop a shared vision for the future of downtown Opelousas and lay out a clear road map to achieve that vision.** Guided by public input, the plan celebrates Opelousas's heritage while identifying the actions needed to revive the downtown to be an accessible, inclusive, vibrant district where businesses and professionals can thrive and families, residents, and tourists can all enjoy the historical treasures Opelousas has to offer.

CPEX also worked with several other Louisiana communities to help them advance their vision for the future:

- CPEX helped the town of Ville Platte create a series of unity-themed pocket parks designed to facilitate social connections and healthy activities, and is continuing to assist with implementation of the parks.
- CPEX helped St. John the Baptist parish remove barriers to economic growth and improve code enforcement by conducting a code audit and updating the development code.
- CPEX is working with Lafayette parish to draft zoning districts for the unincorporated parts of the parish to be integrated into the existing Lafayette Development Code. CPEX will support implementation of the zoning districts into the parish through a public engagement process. Once implemented, development will be aligned with the goals of the Lafayette Comprehensive Plan and will be directed towards areas with adequate infrastructure.
- CPEX is working with St. Charles parish to update their 2015 Comprehensive Plan. CPEX led a resident-driven visioning process to obtain input that will inform the comprehensive plan and implementation strategy. The updated plan will help the parish achieve its goals by directing growth, emphasizing a sound infrastructure system that provides reliable protection from natural disasters, supporting diversification of the parish's economy, and creating mobility alternatives and a balanced development pattern with a variety of development types that will serve to attract more retail, restaurants, and services.



SUPPORTING REDEVELOPMENT IN NORTH BATON ROUGE



Baton Rouge will only be strong when all areas of the city are healthy and prosperous. North Baton Rouge has suffered deeply from decades of disinvestment. However, in recent years, community-led efforts to restore the area to a bustling, economically thriving hub have gained momentum. CPEX is honored to be part of this exciting groundswell in partnership with Southern University, Southern University System Foundation, and the Scotlandville community, creating synergistic plans designed to unite and transform these special places.

During 2021, CPEX worked with Southern University to develop a campus master plan to help Southern achieve its goals of strengthening the university system, increasing student enrollment, and expanding the university's footprint throughout the city of Baton Rouge and the state of Louisiana. The plan aims to celebrate and enhance the campus's natural assets; direct investments to new and remodeled facilities; provide conceptual plans for complete streets, walkability, common areas, and green space; and create a Main Street with housing, mixed-use development, and entrepreneurship opportunities.

Especially important is the plan's aim to strengthen connections with the surrounding community and create a welcoming environment for both on- and off-campus residents.

CPEX also worked with the Scotlandville community to develop a community-driven strategic plan to guide revitalization and enhance quality of life in the area. The plan includes strategies to expand housing opportunities, spur mixed-use development, address blight, and guide redevelopment. The plan also calls for enhancing community gathering spaces that reflect the community's cultural traditions, support for local entrepreneurship, and implementation of complete street policies to improve walkability and support multimodal transportation.

In partnership with the Jewel J. Newman Community Center and Councilwoman Chauna Banks, CPEX developed accessibility recommendations that complement the Scotlandville plan, promoting overall community health by improving access to the Center and the valuable health and social services it provides, and encouraging increases in physical activity by improving facilities for active transportation to connect residents to the Center and other nearby destinations.



CREATING HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES

When people think about health, they may think about the doctor's office, regular checkups, eating right, or getting exercise. As planners, we think about the ways in which land use and community design affect our ability to get to the doctor, engage in regular physical activity, access healthy foods, and breathe clean air. In order to address place-based health disparities, CPEX launched its Healthy Community Planning and Design Initiative with support from Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana Foundation. We're developing plans, resources, and data to create places that help residents live the healthiest lives possible.

To kick-off this initiative, we first dug into the data. CPEX partnered with Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana's data analytics team to pioneer a study designed to yield a better understanding of which features of the built environment, such as sidewalks,

parks, or bike lanes, are associated with improved health outcomes among specific populations. CPEX is making data, research, and best practices for planning and designing healthy places available to all communities via *Building a Healthier Louisiana: A How-To Guide for Communities*, forthcoming later this year.

Another essential element of CPEX's Healthy Community Planning and Design Initiative is practical application. With the support of BCBSLA Foundation, the Huey and Angelina Wilson Foundation, and the Louisiana Department of Health's Well-Ahead program, CPEX was able to develop and implement a model for incorporating local health needs into existing planning processes to inform development of strategies and project concepts designed to improve health outcomes based on the specific health needs of the Bunkie, Ville Platte, and Scotlandville communities.





SECURING A CLIMATE- RESILIENT FUTURE

Building climate resilience in Louisiana is more than just hardening our infrastructure and reducing emissions. Resilience requires strengthening governance, our economy, and social networks that largely determine how a city, region, or state functions on a daily basis and during times of disaster.

Throughout 2021, CPEX worked with organizations and thought leaders across the state to connect decision-makers to current data and information and make policy recommendations designed to reduce the state's greenhouse gas emissions; improve health, economic, and social conditions in communities across the state; and advance Louisiana's transition to renewable energy.

CPEX President & CEO, Camille Manning-Broome, served on the Governor's Climate Initiatives Task Force, and several CPEX staff members served on advisory committees to the Task Force, which is responsible for creating the Gulf South's first Climate Action Plan. The Plan makes

recommendations about how our state can meaningfully reduce greenhouse gas emissions to improve health, economic, and environmental conditions in communities across Louisiana. **While on the Task Force, CPEX produced an expert speaker series to provide members the most current climate data and analyses of industrial decarbonization strategies and to encourage evidence-based decision-making.**

In October 2021, Manning-Broome also joined Governor John Bel Edwards and his delegation to represent Louisiana at the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) in Glasgow, Scotland. COP26 served as an important opportunity for accelerating progress toward climate resilience in our state. Manning-Broome assisted in connecting global climate leaders to our state partners and providing policy guidance to help position Louisiana for new opportunities in renewable energy and climate adaptation leadership.



COMPLETING OUR STREETS

Complete Streets are streets designed for everyone. Complete Streets policies and facilities help build stronger local economies, provide transportation choices, improve community health through walking and biking, improve air quality, and are essential for developing vibrant, more sustainable communities.

CPEX continues to work tirelessly to bring Complete Streets to communities throughout the state, making our streets safer with more equitable, accessible, and climate-friendly transportation options. Members of the CPEX team advance complete street policies throughout Louisiana by serving on the Baton Rouge Complete Streets Advisory Committee, Statewide Complete Streets Committee, and Sustainable Transportation Action Committee.

CPEX's multi-year partnership with the LSU AgCenter and Healthy Community Coalitions in Tensas, East Carroll, Assumption, and St. Helena parishes is bringing more options for walking and biking safely and enhanced green spaces for outdoor recreation and social interaction in high-need rural areas. We are working with civic leaders and elected officials in these communities to build relationships and increase local capacity to pursue federal funding and other resources to support major infrastructure improvements.

CPEX also worked with the Louisiana Department of Health and the town of Bunkie, Louisiana to develop a community-driven Complete Streets Action Plan focused on increasing residents' physical activity levels, fostering social connectedness within the community, and improving health and safety outcomes.





MAKING GOVERNMENT WORK

Good governance is essential for creating high-functioning towns, cities, and regions that are equipped to meet residents' needs and adapt to changing economic and environmental conditions.

CPEX provides best practices, technical assistance, and knowledge resources to elected officials and government agencies at the state and local levels as they work toward a shared vision for future growth and sustainable development within their communities. Throughout the year, CPEX has worked with local governments and the state's executive branch to create tools and policies to help Louisiana mitigate and adapt to climate change, help Louisiana communities cope with COVID-19 and recover from disasters, and help our state to take a leadership role in the transition to renewable energy.

CPEX's Adaptive Governance Initiative is a transformative state-level effort, working to ensure that our state agencies can provide the leadership and resources needed to carry out their missions to serve the people of Louisiana amidst changing environmental conditions.

CPEX and the state's Chief Resilience Officer have worked together closely to build capacity within state agencies to consider climate change impacts, develop tools to help agencies better understand vulnerabilities, and recommend adaptation actions to address the specific needs of each agency. CPEX has been leading the Adaptive Governance Initiative in partnership with the state's Chief Resilience Officer since 2019.

In 2021, CPEX also continued its partnership with state agencies to advance the Louisiana Watershed Initiative—coordinating resources and utilizing data in transformative ways to assess vulnerability, reduce risk, plan for climate adaptations, and manage our watersheds wisely.

One of the priority recommendations from the 2008 regional LA Speaks Plan was creation of a statewide planning entity. In 2021, CPEX partnered with the Department of Administration to obtain an EDA grant to support development of an office of state planning – this is a landmark achievement that will empower the state to advance a unified vision for the future and eventually provide badly-needed planning support to local communities.



CONNECTING PEOPLE TO BIG IDEAS

CPEX brings big ideas, new knowledge, and best practices to elected officials, community advocates, businesses, and civic leaders to inspire and inform efforts to make Louisiana a place we can all be proud to call home.

Engaged residents are at the heart of everything we do, from community outreach and gathering stakeholder input to public education and demonstration projects. We know that engaging with those who have historically been under-represented is especially critical to realizing our shared vision for making Louisiana a thriving, resilient place for our children and grandchildren.

One of the biggest ways that CPEX connects people to big ideas is through our annual Smart Growth Summit. For the 16th year, CPEX proudly presented the Southeast's premier planning event. **More than 700 attendees from 6 different continents participated in 7 sessions to share bold ideas and actionable strategies to address some of today's most pressing challenges.** The 2021 Virtual Smart Growth Summit brought in experts on climate resiliency, renewable energy, community health, stormwater management, and equitable

engagement. Attendees also had the opportunity to hear from federal leaders at the U.S Department of Transportation and Housing and Urban Development on opportunities to enhance mobility, reduce flood risk, adapt to climate risk, and address housing issues. The Summit successfully brought together multi-disciplinary experts, elected officials, policy makers, business leaders, and engaged residents to network, learn, and collaborate to foster healthier and more resilient, equitable communities.

Members of the CPEX team traveled throughout Louisiana, the U.S., and Europe to deliver presentations and share expertise on the climate challenges faced by our front-line communities and demonstrate the critical role that planning must play in addressing climate change, inequities, and public health. Our team also engaged stakeholders around the state at conferences, universities, and other gatherings in CPEX's "Water You Gonna Do?" – an interactive game that simulates the decision making required for effective watershed management and the tools available to manage stormwater and flood risk and foster collaboration across jurisdictions.



PLANNING PAYS OFF

Planning is a long game that is essential to responsible growth and development. Quality planning preserves cultural identity and sense of place, supports equitable access to opportunity, creates sustainable economic prosperity, and protects and restores our natural resources.

If we don't plan, we risk uncoordinated, disjointed development that hinders more than it helps. As planners, we envision possibilities for a brighter future – and understand that change doesn't happen overnight. We know that if we continue to educate, inspire, and equip communities with planning tools and resources, we can create a more innovative, resilient, and livable Louisiana in the long run.

Government St. in Baton Rouge is a great example of how planning pays off. In 2013, CPEX spearheaded the "Better Block BR" demonstration project along with the Mayor and a coalition of community organizations and volunteers. For two days, residents were able to try out bike lanes, pocket parks, pop-up shops, and street trees, and share their vision for their community. The resulting improvements have calmed traffic, improved bike and pedestrian mobility and safety, and attracted new businesses, transforming Government St. into a vibrant destination where people and businesses want to be. In 2021, CPEX joined Mayor Sharon Weston Broome, the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development, and other stakeholders for a ribbon-cutting to celebrate the official grand opening of the Government St. redesign – community vision made a reality.

In 2014, CPEX worked with four neighborhoods in Baton Rouge's Mid City to put on the Street Smart demonstration project, installing 13 traffic calming and bike/ped demonstrations to showcase how changes to roadway design can transform neighborhood streets. In 2021, sidewalks recommended in the Street Smart plan were added to the streets surrounding Webb Park, making them safer and more comfortable for pedestrians.

In 2018, CPEX partnered with the Governor's office and cabinet-level officials to host the State Agency Resilience Building Workshop. This workshop fostered a shared understanding of the full range of challenges related to climate change and Louisiana's coastal crisis and engaged agency leaders in developing strategies for building the collaborative, comprehensive approach that is needed to successfully navigate these challenges.

In early 2022, CPEX had the opportunity to host our state leadership once again at the Louisiana Resilient Infrastructure Workshop. This workshop brought agency leaders together to collaborate on ensuring that Louisiana takes advantage of opportunities for transformative change in climate resilience and equity associated with the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. **The cumulative results of this work demonstrate the power of vision and planning for the long term, and we are committed to continuing to build on the foundation for climate resilience we have helped create for our state.**





Sportsman's Paradise **Safety**

Complete Streets

Healthy Communities Connectivity

Equity Quality of Life

Economic Opportunity

Clean Air, Land, and Water

Affordable Housing Safe Streets

Adaptation

Talent Retention **Green Spaces**

Livable Communities Preservation

Living With Water **Vibrant Rural Communities**

Access to Basics **Unique Culture**

Mobility Options

Job Opportunities

Vision

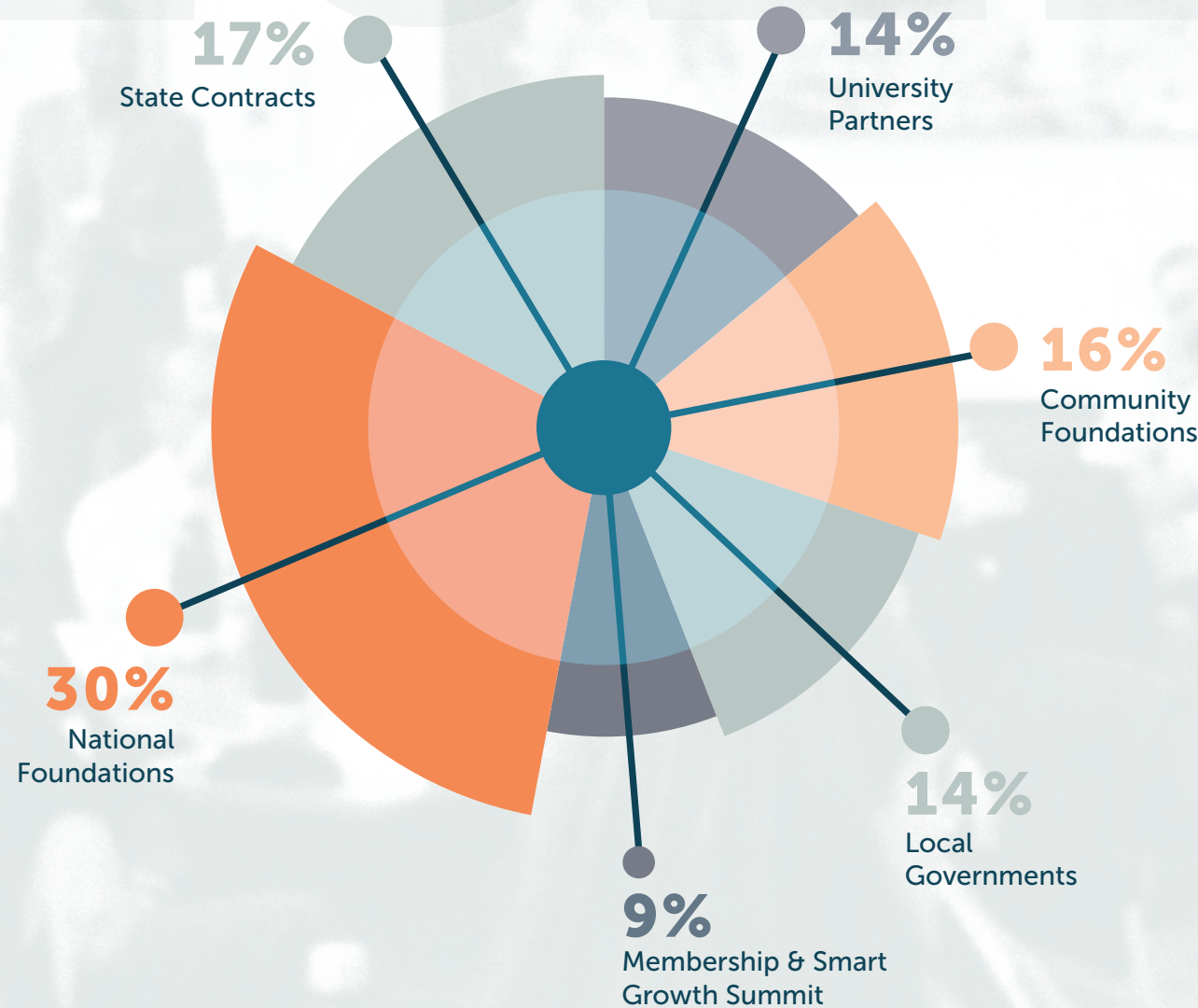
Louisiana Pride

Empowered Citizens



INCOME

Our strong financial position is the result of a diversified business model that includes mission-driven consulting revenue, restricted program grant funding, event sponsorships, and membership support.



TOTAL REVENUE
\$2,142,686.13

**2021 Revenue & Expenses are unaudited*

BOARD & STAFF

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CPEX Members share our commitment to planning for a better future and our vision for a healthy, resilient, and equitable Louisiana. Member support empowers CPEX to take bold steps towards transformative change in Louisiana.

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Great places don't just happen. Becoming a member of CPEX is the easiest way to invest in the healthy growth and development of our state. Your support allows us to help communities capitalize on their unique cultural, natural and economic assets.



CENTER for PLANNING EXCELLENCE

Just plan extraordinary.™

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