

The Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan illustrates a future for South Louisiana based on the input of tens of thousands of citizens and stakeholders. The vision builds on a sustainable recovery that restores coastal wetlands, constructs strategic levees, and reinvests in historic communities. New growth is focused in and around existing communities, linked to investments in protection infrastructure, regional transportation, and economic zones.

Hurricanes Katrina and Rita struck the Gulf Coast less than four weeks apart in the summer of 2005, damaging more than 200,000 homes, 81,000 businesses, and 870 schools. More than 1,500 lives were lost and more than 1.3 million Louisianians were displaced. Areas along the southwestern Louisiana coast were decimated by wind and water, and nearly 80% of New Orleans was flooded when federal levees failed. These storms left a legacy that will be felt for generations.

Calthorpe Associates was honored to be chosen to lead the effort to produce a vision for recovery and long-term growth for South Louisiana in the wake of this unprecedented disaster. This ambitious 18-month undertaking—representing the largest ever public engagement in American planning—incorporated a broad array of issues ranging from storm protection and

coastal restoration, to land use patterns and transportation systems, to economic development and housing challenges. Integrating a diverse team of coastal scientists, demographers, and transportation specialists, the project explored alternative ways that growth and development could be accommodated in the context of varying storm protection and coastal restoration schemes, economic futures, and cultural patterns. Detailed regional growth scenarios illustrated and explored the various ways Southern Louisiana and its constituent communities can recover and evolve over the long-term. The scenarios clearly delineated the consequences of choosing different approaches, providing the public and policy-makers with a set of options for creating a cohesive vision for the region's future.

PROJECT SUMMARY

CLIENT: Louisiana Recovery Authority and The Center For Planning Excellence (Baton Rouge, LA)

TYPE: Regional Plan

SCALE: South Louisiana - 25,000 sq. mile-area impacted by 2005 hurricanes

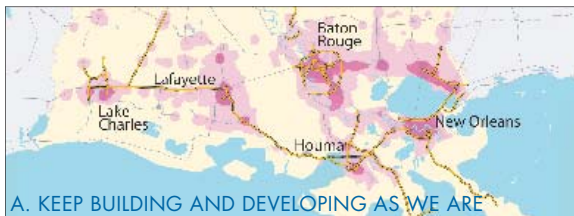
SUMMARY: Comprehensive regional visioning project, including scenario development and largest public process in US history. Final products included regional vision maps and detailed action and implementation plans.

DURATION: ~18 months (2006-2007)

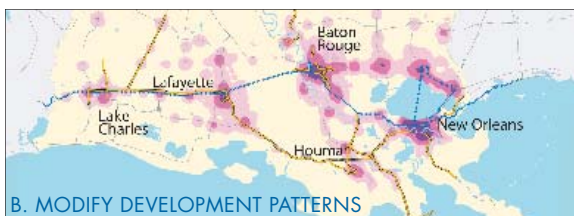
LINKS: www.louisianaspeaks.org/planning

The “Louisiana Speaks” regional vision that emerged was driven by the input of more than 27,000 citizens and stakeholders. Calthorpe Associates designed and ran hands-on workshops across the state as well as an extensive campaign to engage citizens in determining the direction and quality of hurricane recovery and future growth. Final products included physical vision maps that illustrate the stages of recovery and growth, as well as a detailed strategic plan that tackles near-term recovery actions, long-term growth policies, and the intuitional framework required to realize the vision. Development of the final plan was closely coordinated with public and private sector leaders to facilitate institutional commitment and short and long-term implementation.

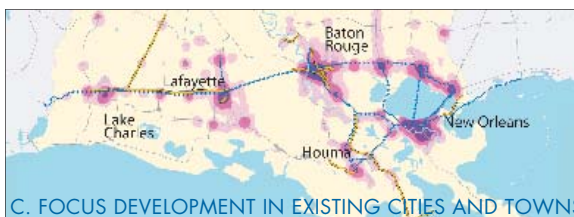
The Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan was adopted by the Louisiana Recovery Authority in May 2007 and early actions are underway to realize its key components. These include passage of the State’s storm protection and coastal restoration plan, the development of model codes for local governments, planning for a passenger rail system between New Orleans and Baton Rouge, and a bold effort to create a new State Office of Planning that can coordinate the roles and funding of state, regional, and local agencies and jurisdictions.



A



B



C

More than 80% of the 23,000 participants in a Regional Vision Poll indicated a desire to change Louisiana’s current land-use and development patterns. They chose futures that increase housing choice with a variety of multifamily and single-family homes, invest in a combination of transit and roadways and coordinate housing and jobs with new transit and levee infrastructure. The Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan and the strategies and actions it includes strive to move South Louisiana in the direction preferred by citizens, enhancing housing and transportation choice, fostering new walkable neighborhoods and reinvesting in existing cities and towns, and improving resiliency by linking where Louisiana builds to storm safety and public investment criteria.