

AN ADVISORY SERVICES PANEL REPORT

Bayou La Batre Alabama



Urban Land
Institute

Bayou La Batre Alabama

A Strategy for Rebuilding

September 17–22, 2006
An Advisory Services Panel Report

ULI—the Urban Land Institute
1025 Thomas Jefferson Street, N.W.
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About ULI—the Urban Land Institute

The mission of the Urban Land Institute is to provide leadership in the responsible use of land and in creating and sustaining thriving communities worldwide. ULI is committed to

- Bringing together leaders from across the fields of real estate and land use policy to exchange best practices and serve community needs;
- Fostering collaboration within and beyond ULI's membership through mentoring, dialogue, and problem solving;
- Exploring issues of urbanization, conservation, regeneration, land use, capital formation, and sustainable development;
- Advancing land use policies and design practices that respect the uniqueness of both built and natural environments;
- Sharing knowledge through education, applied research, publishing, and electronic media; and

- Sustaining a diverse global network of local practice and advisory efforts that address current and future challenges.

Established in 1936, the Institute today has more than 35,000 members from 90 countries, representing the entire spectrum of the land use and development disciplines. Professionals represented include developers, builders, property owners, investors, architects, public officials, planners, real estate brokers, appraisers, attorneys, engineers, financiers, academics, students, and librarians. ULI relies heavily on the experience of its members. It is through member involvement and information resources that ULI has been able to set standards of excellence in development practice. The Institute has long been recognized as one of the world's most respected and widely quoted sources of objective information on urban planning, growth, and development.

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About ULI Advisory Services

The goal of ULI's Advisory Services Program is to bring the finest expertise in the real estate field to bear on complex land use planning and development projects, programs, and policies. Since 1947, this program has assembled well over 400 ULI-member teams to help sponsors find creative, practical solutions for issues such as downtown redevelopment, land management strategies, evaluation of development potential, growth management, community revitalization, brownfields redevelopment, military base reuse, provision of low-cost and affordable housing, and asset management strategies, among other matters. A wide variety of public, private, and nonprofit organizations have contracted for ULI's Advisory Services.

Each panel team is composed of highly qualified professionals who volunteer their time to ULI. They are chosen for their knowledge of the panel topic and screened to ensure their objectivity. ULI's interdisciplinary panel teams provide a holistic look at development problems. A respected ULI member who has previous panel experience chairs each panel.

The agenda for a five-day panel assignment is intensive. It includes an in-depth briefing day composed of a tour of the site and meetings with sponsor representatives; a day of hour-long interviews of typically 50 to 75 key community representatives; and two days of formulating recommendations. Long nights of discussion precede the panel's conclusions. On the final day on site, the panel makes an oral presentation of its findings and conclusions to the sponsor. A written report is prepared and published.

Because the sponsoring entities are responsible for significant preparation before the panel's visit, including sending extensive briefing materials to each member and arranging for the panel to meet with key local community members and stakeholders in the project under consideration, partici-

pants in ULI's five-day panel assignments are able to make accurate assessments of a sponsor's issues and to provide recommendations in a compressed amount of time.

A major strength of the program is ULI's unique ability to draw on the knowledge and expertise of its members, including land developers and owners, public officials, academicians, representatives of financial institutions, and others. In fulfillment of the mission of the Urban Land Institute, this Advisory Services panel report is intended to provide objective advice that will promote the responsible use of land to enhance the environment.

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Acknowledgments

On behalf of the Urban Land Institute, the panel members would like to thank the city of Bayou La Batre for inviting them to assist in planning and redevelopment efforts. Special thanks are extended to the host committee members for their vision and leadership in involving ULI in the planning process. The host committee included Mayor Stan Wright; City Planning Board President Barry McKee; City Council Member Phuong Huynh; City Building Inspector Tommy Reynoso; City Administrator Debbie Jones; Walton Kraver, owner, Deep Sea Foods; Greg Marshall, owner, Marshall Marine; Wallace Davis, president, Volunteers of America; and Sherri Atchison, project manager, Volunteers of America Southeast. Their dedication, wisdom, and leadership are examples of what makes Bayou La Batre a vibrant community.

Special thanks go to Laura Davis and Win Yerby of Fannie Mae for providing support in the preparation for this panel. The countless hours that they spent preparing for, informing, and assisting the host committee and the panelists were truly appreciated. Their hard work and dedication is an

asset to the city of Bayou La Batre. Special thanks also go to Fannie Mae and the ULI Commercial and Retail Development Council, Silver, which provided financial support for this panel through the ULI Foundation.

Very special thanks go to the students and teachers of Alba Middle School who participated in this panel process. The students provided recommendations and insights from a point of view not often considered in the panel process. The panelists and ULI staff are very appreciative of their contribution.

In all, the panel had the opportunity to interview more than 40 community stakeholders, all of whom provided valuable and insightful information. The interviewees included government officials, residents, business leaders, developers, property owners, and community activists. Their shared perspectives were essential to the panel process. This group of stakeholders is a major asset in advancing and maintaining the interests of this community.

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Foreword

Half the population of the United States of America, 148 million people, now lives within 50 miles of a coast. With that explosive population growth has come a sameness in most of the coastal areas, defined by condos, resorts, and commercial development, with some land for the occasional traditional industrial use. National and state parks provide the only respites to a seemingly continuous wall of development up and down the coasts. Yet some communities have somehow been able to maintain their uniqueness, with a charm and a sense of place. In Maine, on the Chesapeake, in Oregon, these places exist. Often, rampant tourism threatens to disrupt the very qualities that attract tourists to these places.

When Hurricane Katrina swept onto the Gulf Coast on August 29, 2005, with unprecedented storm surges, millions of lives were changed. While the plight of New Orleans received much of the media coverage, many other cities never received that level of attention. Along the Mississippi coast, town after town was devastated—even into Alabama, which caught the eastern edge of the storm. On the far eastern edge of the destruction sits one of those special places of coastal America: Bayou La Batre.

Immediately after the storm ULI's members asked, "How can we help?" In November 2005, at the request of the mayor and civic leaders, ULI hosted an Advisory Services panel in New Orleans to make recommendations on how to proceed with the rebuilding. In early 2006, through the generosity of the ULI Commercial and Retail Development Council, Silver, the ULI Foundation decided to sponsor another panel along the Gulf Coast. At about the same time, Laura Davis, senior deputy director of Fannie Mae's Alabama operation and an active ULI member, raised the idea of a ULI-Fannie Mae partnership in rebuilding



Location map.

efforts on the coast. ULI and Fannie Mae agreed to underwrite an Advisory Services panel.

Initially, the thought was to do the panel in one of the larger Mississippi coastal towns. But Laura Davis kept whispering to anyone who would listen, "Bayou La Batre, Bayou La Batre." Most of us had never heard of "the Bayou," but if one had, it was because the Bayou was Bubba's home and the town where Forrest starts his shrimp business in *Forrest Gump* and for movie trivia buffs it is where the ship in *Pirates of the Caribbean* was built. It is also the shrimp capital of Alabama and home to 2,300 people, a community in which 60 percent of the buildings were destroyed by the storm and 75 percent of the shrimp boats were washed ashore. The destruction that Bayou La

The hurricane destroyed much of the Bayou's industrial infrastructure.



Batre suffered was more or less the same as many communities along the coast. So why hold a panel in the Bayou and not in one of the many other communities? Well, you need to go there.

As one drives across the Bayou Bridge amid the clutter of shipbuilding, fishing vessels, shrimp processing plants, and storm damage, a stunning natural beauty still shines through. The bayou meanders about two miles inland from Little Bay on the Mississippi Sound. Four hundred years ago it attracted the French, who built a fort. Over the years it became a place of commerce, with businesses that line the bayou and, in places, camouflage its beauty but cannot hide it. As one drives toward the confluence of the bayou with the bay, one comes to Lighting Point—an open, undeveloped beach with spectacular views to the west of great sunsets and coastal wetlands protected under the state's Forever Wild land conservation program. The Point itself is not protected; one immediately wonders why condos haven't been built there yet. And then one of Charleston, South Carolina, Mayor Joe Riley's favorite sayings comes to mind: "The best places ought to be in the public realm."

Bayou La Batre is a community largely untouched by the real estate boom sweeping America's coast-

lines. It is a hard-working, small business place where people know how to work, know how to run businesses, and understand what it means to be part of a community in a very intense way. It is a multigenerational community. There is a real sense of place to the Bayou, not only geographically but in its residents' hearts. People identify themselves as from the Bayou long after they move away; those who live there have a remarkable pride in their community.

The Bayou has not gone unnoticed by developers. Before Katrina, a developer had proposed condos at the Point and other developments that would have significantly altered the character of the Bayou. It was a matter of considerable debate in the community. It looked like a lot of money. And then Katrina came and priorities became surviving, helping each other, and trying to rebuild lives and businesses.

Maybe Katrina caused people to rethink what kind of Bayou they wanted. Maybe people thought that they should define the Bayou's future, not developers. Maybe after a year of pulling shrimp boats out of trees, cleaning out, and rebuilding houses; maybe after a year of living in, seeing everyday, and being overwhelmed by the sheer immediacy

of the challenges; and maybe after a year of grieving, the people of the Bayou became empowered. There is a community will in the Bayou that is inspiring. Despite all its challenges before and because of Katrina, there is a fierce determination in the people of the Bayou to rebuild.

Leadership. It's what causes good intentions to become reality. Vision and leadership shapes the course of action. In the Bayou, as if by magic, after the storm there was this convergence of remarkable leadership. Mayor Stan is a presence and a character; Tommy Reynoso and Debbie Jones his loyal and competent staff; Greg Marshall and "Uncle" Walton Kraver, businessmen whose passion for the Bayou is inspirational; and others who are drawn into this defining moment. Lots of people call themselves leaders; many elected officials think of themselves as leaders, but many of them are timid, slow to act, weighing the political risks, safer in inaction than action. After the hurricane the Gulf Coast became a vast leadership laboratory, a place where would-be leaders were tested under extreme situations. The Bayou shone like a star. It is a book waiting to be written: how in this small fishing village on the Alabama coast the community and its leaders rose to the challenges that lay before them.

It became obvious to the entire panel after the first day that Bayou La Batre is one of those special places. It should not look like everywhere else on the coast. This is the Bayou, not Destin, or Baldwin County, or a hundred other new coastal towns. It needs to build on its authenticity. The panel's recommendations attempt to create a vision of an authentic future. The plan will build a sustainable economy based on traditional industries as well as the spectacular natural beauty and protected land surrounding the Bayou. This report details a strategy that—given the quality of leadership in the Bayou—can work. It is a plan that does not settle but makes a commitment to excellence.

This was unlike any other ULI panel, in part because of the inspiration of Diane Knott, wife of panelist John Knott, and Laura Davis. They organized with Alba Middle School a contest that challenged the students to articulate though models, papers, or drawings their vision of the future for

the Bayou. The students' response to the question was surprising—they said, "We are always being asked to describe what it was like to live through the hurricane, but no one has asked us about the future." Whether it was animal shelters, skate parks, new homes, movie theaters, or food stores, the students saw a vibrant community of which they are a part. Remarkably, their recommendations very much tracked those developed by the panel. The day that the panelists visited the school to look at the projects and to hear some of the presentations was a precious time. Clearly, the students had worked and thought hard about their projects (and consulted their families about their views). Their excitement was contagious. It injected both enthusiasm and gravitas into the panel's work.

The Bayou is a special place. It has a beauty just waiting to be fully revealed. But it's the character of the place—and the characters—that make it so special. Intuitively, the students know that they have something to cherish and rebuild. The people who have left the Bayou know that they left someplace special; you can hear it in their voices. People have dreams of what the Bayou can be. A favorite quote says: "Some people see things as they are and ask why; I see things as they could be and ask why not?" I encourage the citizens of Bayou La Batre to keep asking, "Why not?"

On behalf of the panelists and staff of ULI, we thank the mayor and citizens of the Bayou for enabling us to share in planning the future of their community. We hope that through our work we have brought their dreams of a better future a little closer to reality. All of us cherish our experience in the Bayou. And a special thanks to Laura Davis for whispering insistently to anyone who would listen, "Bayou La Batre, Bayou La Batre."

Thomas Murphy
Senior Resident Fellow
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The Panel's Assignment

At the invitation of the city of Bayou La Batre, a ULI Advisory Services panel convened to evaluate redevelopment opportunities in areas damaged by Hurricane Katrina and to provide guidance on rebuilding housing and commercial activities.

Background

Bayou La Batre (the Bayou) is a small fishing village in Mobile County along the Alabama Gulf Coast. Founded in 1786 by Joseph Bosarge, the Bayou has a vibrant history—as a shelter for pirates and smugglers, a bustling fishing village, and a regional resort community. In the early 1900s the Bayou was a booming community with multiple canning companies, a growing population, a railroad, and resort hotels along the area's pristine beaches. The community's decline began after devastating hurricanes in 1906 and 1916 destroyed the resorts and many of the nearby attractions. With the advent of World War I, however, the fishing industry rebounded and a shipbuilding industry emerged. The Bayou's geography and natural resources were ideal for wartime ship construction. Many residents built ships and worked in the numerous sawmills that opened to aid ship construction.

The Bayou was fortunate to have a versatile economy when the Great Depression of the 1930s hit the nation. The canneries were able to diversify by canning fruit in addition to seafood, allowing residents to survive the turbulent times. The post-Depression lead-up to World War II was not as kind to the Bayou. With the growth of major defense plants at Brookley Air Force Base near Mobile and shipyards in Pascagoula, Mississippi, the economic base shifted as the workforce migrated out of the area and away from the seafood industry.

Bayou La Batre had a population of 2,106 when it officially incorporated in 1955. The city saw tremendous growth in the late 1950s and modest growth during the 1960s and eventually peaked at just over 2,600 residents in 1970. The trend of increasing population reversed during the 1970s and 1980s owing to a national recession and increasing competition in the seafood industry. The city experienced growth once again in the 1990s because of numerous factors including a high birth rate, the introduction of natural gas drilling stations off the Gulf Coast which created many job opportunities, and a large in-migration of Vietnamese, who settled in the Bayou as part of a federal relocation program to link them to the established fishing industry.

Economic Base

The Bayou's economic base and livelihood derives from the seafood and marine industries. The community is home to many commercial fishing boats whose crews catch shrimp, oysters, crabs, and other seafood from the Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic Ocean. The commercial vessels return to the Bayou with their harvests to sell to the city's processing plants. The fishing boats and processing plants have earned the city the title of the Seafood Capital of Alabama. The Bayou's seafood industry also has national significance: it produces 10 percent of the shrimp and 40 percent of the oysters consumed in the United States.

While the seafood industry is the lifeblood of the community, it has been in a steady decline for a number of decades. Factors such as the increasing cost of fuel, rising insurance premiums, and competition from both Asian and Latin American imports have taken a toll. The workforce has also shrunk, as many young people now choose to obtain a higher education rather than take on their elders' difficult work in the seafood industry.

In addition to the seafood industry, the Bayou has a stable shipbuilding industry. Attracted by a



Many of the fishing vessels in the Bayou were seized by the U.S. government following foreclosures of federal small business loans.

skilled labor force and excellent access to the water, ship manufacturers produce boats for many applications in the Bayou. Currently ship manufacturers produce boats for the seafood industry, the oil and gas industry, the military, and Hollywood.

Hurricane Katrina

Hurricane Katrina hit the Bayou with a vengeance on August 29, 2005. With sustained winds of more than 120 miles per hour and a storm surge of up to 14 feet, the community was the hardest hit on the Alabama coast. More than 500 of the community's 864 homes were damaged or destroyed. More than 80 fishing vessels were sunk or violently carried as far as 1.5 miles onto land, as their moorings and the Bayou's natural protective geographic features were no match for the force of the hurricane. It has been estimated that the economic impact of the hurricane on the seafood industry was more than \$200 million, exclusive of infrastructure. The community's sewer and wastewater treatment facility was also severely damaged in the storm. Although it was in poor and

only marginally functioning condition before the hurricane, the damage highlighted the dire need for a new system.

Bayou La Batre Today

With nearly 60 percent of the community's housing stock damaged or destroyed and the commercial fishing industry struggling to rebound, the Bayou has lost a significant portion of its pre-Katrina population. City officials estimate that only 1,700–1,800 people remain in the Bayou. It is unknown whether the displaced residents will return to the Bayou, because many have been forced to start new lives elsewhere.

A year after Hurricane Katrina, the city of Bayou La Batre is in the midst of a comprehensive rebuilding effort to renew a community that had long been in decline before the storm devastated it. The community has been active in cleaning up the damage. Through rigorous efforts by city staff, nearly all the displaced commercial vessels have been moved back to the water. Many homeowners have begun to rebuild or upgrade their

Regional map.



homes to exceed the yet-to-be-determined FEMA requirements for houses in surge and flood areas. The city of Bayou La Batre has secured more than \$2 million for the acquisition and development of affordable housing on land near the high school. The city has also secured more than \$22 million in a special Katrina allocation of the Community Development Block Grant for the relocation and replacement of the community's sewage and storm-water treatment facility.

The community still has much work to accomplish to bring the city up to a basic level of service and maintenance. Although the hurricane both literally and figuratively kicked Bayou La Batre when it was down, it mobilized the community to focus on larger issues that are critical to its long-term survival. Community leaders now openly recognize that the Bayou of the past, based solely on the seafood and marine industry, is no longer sus-

tainable. To survive and prosper, the Bayou needs to reinvent itself by recognizing its past and using its natural assets to bring life back to this once proud community.

The Study Area

For the purposes of the panel process, the panel defined the study area as the entire city of Bayou La Batre and the immediate surrounding areas. Although many of the physical problems and issues are specific to the city, they are broad based and affect the surrounding areas and the neighboring community of Coden.

The Assignment

The panel was asked to develop an overall framework for the city's rebuilding process and to develop detailed plans and strategies that can be

implemented going forward. To accomplish this, the panelists decided to attack the problem through three specific categories:

- Market potential,
- Planning and design, and
- Development and implementation strategies.

The panel members believe that this approach will provide the city with the best plan for moving forward.

The ULI Process

Before arriving in Bayou La Batre, the panelists received briefing books that included history and background information on the city; demographic and market information for the county and the city; descriptions of proposed projects in the city; and an overview of the planning and development review process. When the panel members arrived in the Bayou, they were briefed by representatives from Fannie Mae, the Volunteers of America, and the city.

The panel then toured the Bayou—first by boat, to get a visual reference for the community from the water and then by bus, to see the areas beyond the Bayou. The panel also visited shrimp, oyster, and crab processing and packaging plants to gain a firsthand understanding of the community's main industry. The panel then met with community leaders and stakeholders, who explained the work that they are doing in the community, described their successes and challenges, and shared their hopes for a rebuilt and sustainable Bayou. A special element of this panel was a presentation by students of Alba Middle School of



The backbone of the seafood industry workforce: immigrants from Latin America and South-east Asia.

their visions of the future of Bayou La Batre. The students' contributions provided insight into the future of the Bayou and demonstrated the community's commitment to long-term sustainability.

The panelists spent the next two days examining the issues, discussing and debating solutions, and framing recommendations. The panel presented its findings and recommendations to the community in a public forum. This report summarizes the panel's key recommendations and provides a plan for moving forward.

Vision

City leaders charged the panel to think outside the box to create a new vision for the Bayou. Asking the panel to do this is a rather complex request because the panel is a group of outsiders who have little connection to the Bayou or to Alabama. While one may view this predicament as a hindrance to the panel's recommendations, it is actually a benefit to the visioning process. The panel is able to view the community with a set of completely fresh eyes and listen to the dreams and desires of its residents free of preconceived notions and judgments.

Panel members spent numerous hours interviewing more than 40 citizens. The panel heard time and time again during the interviews that the citizens of the Bayou have a deep passion for the past and their immediate natural surroundings. This recurring theme stuck with the panel and helped it create a vision for a new, thriving community built on the Bayou's rich heritage.

The Bayou is a simple place. It is authentic and will remain authentic if it respects its past and moves forward with a strong vision for the future that represents the desires and dreams of its residents.

A Sustainable Working Waterfront Village

The panel's vision is for a sustainable working waterfront village. This is not an entirely new typology in the Bayou, as its origin is embedded in the community's roots. Decades of decline have changed the form of Bayou La Batre. The panel's envisioned waterfront village recreates much of what was lost long ago. A waterfront village as a product type can be both new and old. It can be urban, suburban, or even rural. A village center is a place for people, for commerce, for socializing, and for civic life. It is alive all day and long into the night, seven days a week. It is a place of safety, of beauty, of education, and of entertain-

ment. Although creating such a place sounds like an overly visionary task, numerous examples can be found throughout the United States of successful, ongoing efforts to develop or redevelop waterfront properties into mixed-use centers that have a strong sense of place.

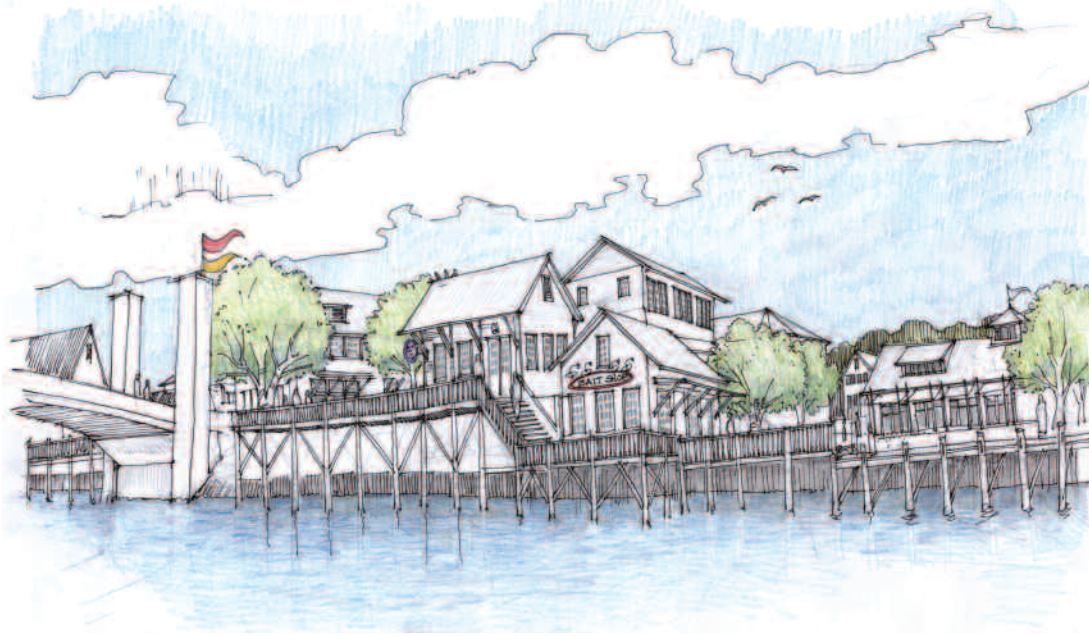
In planning to implement this vision, the panel believes that seven principles are key to its realization:

- Tap deeply into, celebrate, and teach the Bayou's rich history and culture.
- Inventory, understand, and weave connections between the region's cultural and environmental assets.
- Adhere to sustainability as the core value for design, building, land use, infrastructure, and community management.
- Commit to building a strong regional partnership with south Mobile County neighbors.
- Aggregate each economic cluster to create maximum efficiency and synergy.
- Understand and respect the growing vulnerability of the community's location in a world that is experiencing significant climate change.
- Build a brand that is rooted in truth and uniqueness, live the brand in every decision, and act to grow a new future.

Economically Durable Communities

In addition to adhering to these seven key principles, the panel charges the community to strive to be an economically durable community. Economically durable communities share several core elements that create long-term socially and economically healthy communities:

Old Town waterfront.



- Each member is deeply aware of his or her unique history and heritage.
- Each member holds in common a vision for the future, which he or she helps contribute to.
- The community understands its uniqueness in the context of its national and regional position.

The panel has listened to the community and heard its sense of what is important from the past and its dreams for its and its children's future. Panel members are confident that residents of the Bayou share these beliefs and that the Bayou is well on its way to becoming an economically durable community.

The panel believes that the community's future success must be built on a foundation that includes a healthy and respectful long-term relationship with regional neighbors and with the area's spectacular and unequaled natural beauty. This approach will generate a growing return of historic family descendants to their ancestral home, a healthy and renewed Bayou La Batre. This



The picturesque natural beauty of Bayou La Batre is an important asset in attracting new development to the area.

regional strategy is critical because Bayou La Batre on its own will suffer. As the heart of south Alabama's Wilderness Preserve and a sustainable working waterfront, however, the Bayou will become a model for Gulf Coast renewal. Authenticity is the key.

Market Potential

Located roughly between Biloxi, Mississippi, to the west and the beaches of Baldwin County, Alabama, to the east, Bayou La Batre is the last area on the Gulf Coast that has limited environmental protection and can still be developed into a number of uses. Conventional wisdom would focus development efforts toward the commercial and recreational fishing industries, but the panel challenges the community to think differently. The panel believes that there is much more to the Bayou than simply fishing and boating. The Bayou's location along the Gulf Coast provides it with the opportunity to cluster other assets to create a new industry for the community.

Upon arrival in the Bayou the panel quickly noticed the abundant environmental assets in and around the community. These assets are largely untapped and have the potential to transform the nature of the community and launch it into the 21st century. Bayou La Batre is located close to a number of regional draws that have diverse ecological features:

- Point aux Pins,
- Dauphin Island,
- Grand Bay Savanna,
- Bellingrath Gardens,
- Forever Wild Land Trust areas,
- Sand Hill Crane National Wildlife Refuge,
- Commercial and recreational fishing,
- Nationally renowned birding,
- The Coffee Island habitat recovery project, and
- The Mobile Delta.

Ecotourism

The proximity of these ecological assets has made the Alabama coast a natural destination for ecotourism. Ecotourism is a form of tourism that aims to be both ecologically and socially conscious. It focuses on local culture, wilderness adventure, volunteerism, and learning new ways to live on the planet—typically involving travel to destinations where the flora, fauna, and cultural heritage are the primary attractions. Responsible ecotourism entails programs that minimize the adverse effects of traditional tourism on the natural environment and enhance the cultural integrity of local people. Therefore, in addition to evaluating environmental and cultural factors, hospitality providers can promote recycling, energy efficiency, water reuse, and the creation of economic opportunities for local communities as an integral part of ecotourism.

Ecotourism provides the opportunity for the community to use its roots and natural surroundings as tools for economic development. The growing demand for ecotourism can translate into the need for a number of supporting businesses. The panel sees the environment as a key to the Bayou's future. Although fishing, seafood processing and distribution, and boating are and have been the community's lifeline, the panel feels that the community can afford to diversify without having to attract outside or foreign industry to the city. Instead, the Bayou should use the region's natural resources as the resource for a new industry.

The panel's vision for a sustainable working waterfront village combined with the abundant natural resources in the area fully captures the essence of ecotourism. Visitors are constantly seeking an authentic sense of place. A working waterfront village meets the need and the Bayou is primed to deliver a unique experience. The Gulf Coast region is full of other beaches, hotels, and casinos. None tap into the \$85 billion ecotourism industry.



Grand Bay Savanna is a pristine natural amenity that will help anchor the Bayou's resurgence.

If Bayou La Batre were to capture 1 percent of this business at its fingertips, that would translate into \$850 million in revenue for the region. Three percent would translate into \$2.55 billion in revenue. The panel believes that the community can build an economy based on its natural assets while coexisting with the current seafood and marine industries to make the community viable through economic diversity.

Regional Environmental Assets

Bayou La Batre has been uniquely dependent on and engaged with the natural setting of the central Gulf of Mexico for nearly 120 years. Its livelihood and economic base derives from the harvest of the Gulf's natural resources. The community has developed along the bayou and has proven remarkably capable of coping with the vagaries of one of the last wild harvests in the world and an apparently increasing climatic threat. As the community looks to the future, it will once again look to its abundant natural resources to create a new economic base, a key to its survival.

It is clear from the many messages that the panel heard from the community in Bayou La Batre that residents have a deep and abiding love of the his-

tory, culture, and productivity of the setting. The entrepreneurial instinct is alive and well in the community, and the indomitable spirit of the people shines through in the products and insight that the panel saw at Alba Middle School on the first day. The children were articulate, creative, and unfettered by bias. There was no doubt that they had experienced trauma, and the community remains far from recovered a year after the storm. The adults interviewed seemed deeply concerned about the future of the city while still quite cognizant of the connections to the past.

Shrinking Economic Base

For many years, the rich bounty of the Gulf withstood the consumptive activities of human fishers of all types but over the past decade, the multiple demands have stressed the ability of the natural system to deliver an economically viable product. The overwhelming community commitment to the seafood industry had begun to shift to the diminishing shipbuilding sector, and this trend is not projected to change in the foreseeable future. The intense activity of all phases of the seafood industry has taken its toll on the natural system, and conflicting demands have created a critical business environment as well as documented degradation of the aquatic

Processing machines clean and devein shrimp before they are frozen and boxed. Inset: Local business owner Walton Kraver explains how the seafood industry's infrastructure in Bayou La Batre was damaged in Hurricane Katrina.



ecosystem—further jeopardizing the future of the community.

Unfortunately, the growing recognition of the possibly, if not probably, increasing threat of tropical storm activity has influenced a geographic move of much of the population to elevations above the real and projected floodplain. As usual, this emigration is dominated by those who can afford the move, leaving the economically disadvantaged behind. The uncertainties of climate change have diminished over the past five years and now must be taken seriously while planning for the future.

Encouraging Trends

Perhaps the most promising asset is one that has expanded as all the other assets appear to be threatened: the remarkable conservation efforts that have brought together enormously attractive natural features that have the potential to contribute to the economic vitality of the community. The state's Forever Wild program has extended its holdings almost to the western shore of the bayou. More than 3,000 acres of natural habitat, including Little River and the University of Alabama's holdings at Point aux Pins have become part of the Grand Bay Savanna tract that abuts the Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve and the Sandhill Crane National Wildlife

Refuge, together totaling more than 37,000 acres. The community of Bayou La Batre is therefore immediately adjacent to more than 40,000 acres of some of the most beautiful and exemplary natural habitat of the central Gulf of Mexico.

The testimony that the panel heard during its time in the community showed a recognition that the future of the Bayou may hinge in part on celebrating the preservation of the natural system and treating it as a dividend, on a level nearly equal to the consumptive practices of the past century. It is clear that there are some ancillary assets of the larger community that extend beyond the city boundaries.

Coastal Birding Trail

The state has constructed a Coastal Birding Trail in an effort to exploit the \$626 million that birders are estimated to spend in Alabama. Twelve sites are identified within south Mobile County and two are inside the city limits of Bayou La Batre. The potential presented by the adjacency of the city to this vast unspoiled area should be obvious.

The panel's vision of a sustainable working waterfront village and ecotourism resort highlights the growing potential of the recreational canoeing and kayaking industry. This is rapidly becoming an

economic driver that may eventually rival birding. The incredible venues of Little River, Point aux Pins, and Grand Bay are within a six-mile paddle of the proposed access point. The biodiversity and ecosystem quality are without parallel, and the opportunities for birding, fishing, wildlife photography, and observation from boat platforms and land trails (to be constructed by various entities) are enormous.

The development of canoe and kayak “trails” originating from public access points is a rapidly growing activity. A major effort is the Bartram Canoe Trail in the Mobile–Tensaw River Delta lands acquired through the Forever Wild program. The proximity to the proposed concept in the ULI vision should allow cross-marketing that should benefit both. The paddling community is extraordinarily well organized, and interest in this activity is growing dramatically.

Scenic I-10 Loop

The proposed renewal of the Bayou includes a broader suite of activities. It should be noted that the city has been incorporated into the proposed scenic byway project that is best characterized as the scenic I-10 loop. The concept involves a departure from the I-10 corridor that would approach the coast from either the Mississippi or the Florida line and follow a coastal route that would link Bayou La Batre with Bellinger Gardens, Dauphin Island, and the beach communities of Baldwin County via the Mobile Bay ferry. If the scenic loop is built, Bayou La Batre is positioned to capitalize on visitors to the loop. It must be ready with amenities and attractions to capture those ecotourism dollars.

Conservation Research/Education

Other regional assets that mesh with the ecotourism concept include the Dauphin Island Sea Lab (DISL), a designated Coastal Ecosystem Learning Center that is one of the leading marine education institutions in the nation; the Auburn University Marine Extension and Research Center; and the University of South Alabama Department of Marine Sciences. DISL has interests both on the bayou and at Point aux Pins, where research is actively pursued. These interests are complemented by habitat restoration efforts led by the Marine Resources and Land divisions of the Alabama Department of Conservation and

Natural Resources, the University of South Alabama, and DISL (with funding from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s Habitat Restoration program and the Corps of Engineers). The most significant interest may be in the expansion of coastal shorebird habitat on Coffee Island and Cat Island, which are both within a 7.5-mile paddle of the proposed access point at Bayou La Batre.

Ecotourism Fishing and Birding Outpost Resort

During the interviews the panelists continually heard about the desire for a hotel in the community so visitors could share in the unique surroundings. While a resort hotel in Bayou La Batre’s current condition sounds far-fetched, there is historical precedent for such a venue. The Bayou was once home to numerous resort hotels, including the Villa Alba. The panel believes that the right product should be an early priority for the community. The panel’s concept is to tap into the vast and lucrative ecotourism market through the development of an ecotourism resort at Lighting Point.

An ecotourism and fishing and birding outpost resort is a concept developed in response to the enormous popularity across all age groups of water-oriented recreational sports. Recreational fishing and diving are preferred leisure pastimes for millions worldwide and intimately tied to fishers’ and divers’ lifestyles and their definitions of quality of life. To these sporting enthusiasts, this popularity has increasingly pressured all theaters of marine biodiversity. Fortunately, the sportsman’s passion for these pursuits has brought deepening appreciation for stewardship, in protecting the marine environment for current and future generations.

This is a recreational real estate and hospitality product that brings together—through its facilities, services, and amenities—water-oriented recreational enthusiasts with those who are both disciplined and passionate about the marine environment and the sustainable development of unique eco-oriented lodging experiences. The genesis of the concept derives from the confluence

A shrimp boat returns to the Bayou from the Gulf of Mexico.



of several major demographic and recreational factors:

- The growing demographic of active, affluent, preretirement baby boomers who have significant disposable wealth;
- The broad-based appeal of waterfront locations to vacation-goers and buyers of second-home and resort recreational property;
- The extensive worldwide ranks of water sports enthusiasts, who enjoy such activities as salt-water fishing, freshwater fishing, fly fishing, scuba diving, underwater photography, kayaking, and birding;
- The increasing popularity of untraditional lodging experiences and destinations with environmentally oriented design and operation; and
- The growing affinity for and awareness of environmental and marine conservation, among all consumer demographics.

With a nod to the tremendously successful safari camp industry, the intent is to create a physical environment that offers comfort and style to camp guests, fostering a social environment that promotes the sharing of daily experiences. The design

is not intended as a conventional lodging experience, where the standard of excellence is a rather predictable experience predicated on uniformity. Rather, the distinctiveness of the setting becomes the foundation for the design, suggesting a diversity that is separate and unique to the destination.

The centerpiece of the experience is a lodge or great house, comprising five elements:

- A library and trophy room,
- A theater,
- A bar and grill,
- An outfitter, and
- Guest rooms.

Although the panel believes that this is the right product for the Bayou, it is imperative to learn from others. The lessons learned from ecotourism cases around the world can—and need to—be replicated for Bayou La Batre.

Planning and Design

As Bayou La Batre embarks on rebuilding the community, the city will need to successfully address a number of planning and design issues. These issues include but are not limited to waterfront development, the National Trust's main street revitalization program, urban design guidelines, and housing. The panel focused its planning efforts on three key areas in the city. Currently these areas are activity nodes, important intersections, or prime developable land. This section highlights the panel's areas of focus and recommended actions, which are intended to produce highly visible results and to create a viable road map for the future.

Urban Design as Public Policy

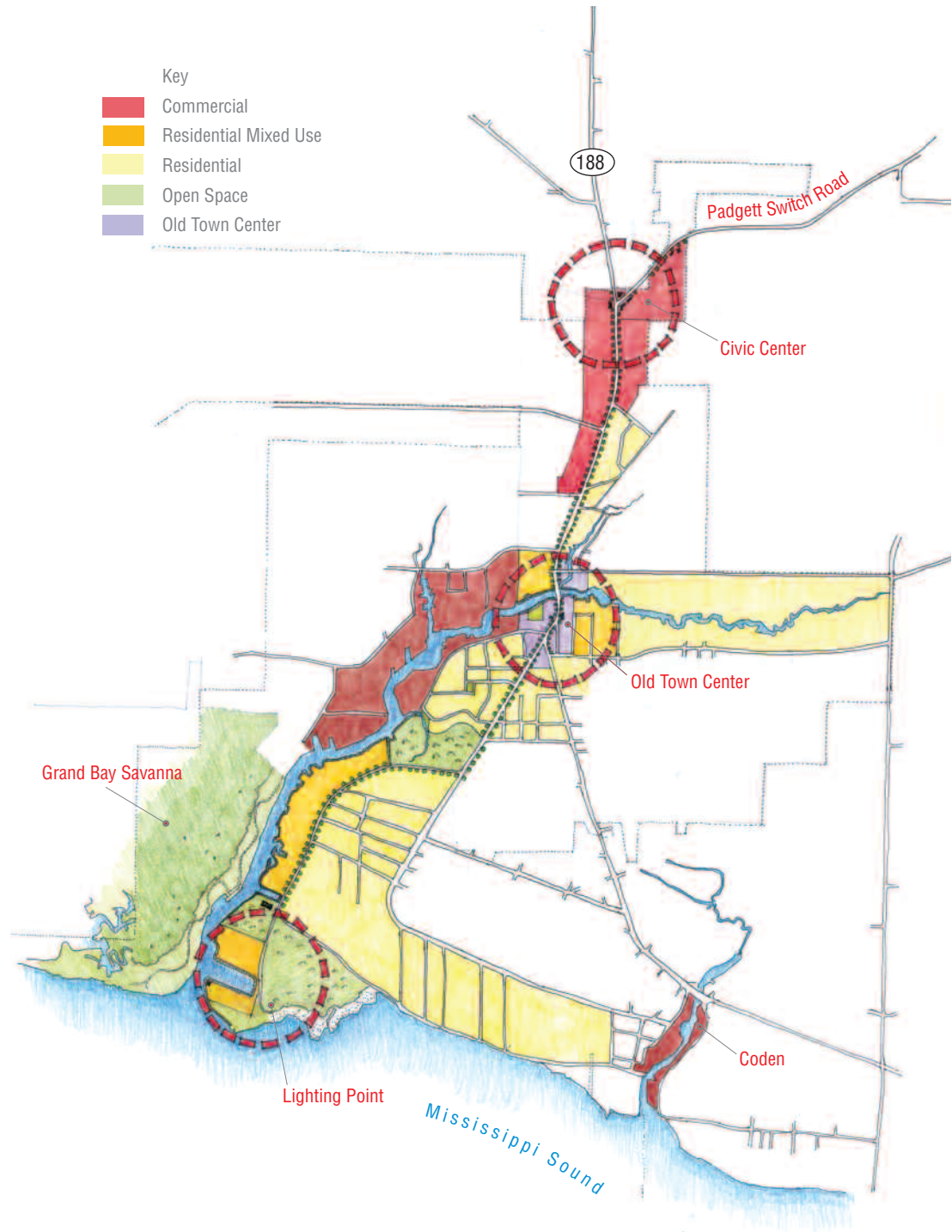
Bayou La Batre is a small community that has never had to plan proactively for development. The community evolved in an organic way over time and the government role in regulation has primarily been reactive. Since Hurricane Katrina, this has changed drastically and the city is now faced with the daunting task of rebuilding and planning for development. While this is a major burden on such a small city, it is also an opportunity to fix mistakes and reclaim land for the public good. This is difficult for the city because it does not have the resources to launch full-scale redevelopment planning efforts, but it is critical for the transformation of the community.

To begin the planning effort, the panel recommends that the city create a set of design standards to guide the physical form of development. By applying proven urban design principles, Bayou La Batre can create a consistent, predictable set of public policies to guide development decisions, facilitate the development and approval process, and promote the public good. The panel recommends that the city engage a qualified urban design specialist to create guidelines to be adopted by the City Council and made an integral

part of the city's general plan. This is described in greater detail in the Development and Implementation Strategies section. Guidelines should address the following elements:

- A pedestrian-friendly environment that encourages the sense of independence and freedom of mobility for those who do not drive, such as senior citizens and youth.
- Properly configured streets that provide connectivity to adjacent areas for both automobiles and pedestrians.
- Parking located behind buildings to bring the buildings forward, to help define the public realm and create continuity in the streetscape and the pedestrian experience by reducing the number of curb cuts and moving turning traffic to street intersections.
- New land uses clustered along major city thoroughfare corridors at natural nodes, such as intersections between the thoroughfare and major highways, with infill development along the thoroughfare that helps define the public realm and forms a continuous pedestrian experience uninterrupted by frequent curb cuts.
- Civic squares and parks that are large enough for public gatherings, festivals, group recreation, and community celebration, to strengthen civic bonds and increase citizens' knowledge of and respect for each other.
- Parks and other green open spaces, and landscaping along corridors that helps both define and connect spaces, districts, and the corridors themselves. Future development, both private and public, should continue this precedent by including substantial, well-maintained borders and trees. In particular, dense, well-maintained hedges bordering surface parking lots reduce the visual impact of such lots while enhancing the continuity of the pedestrian experience.

Focus area.



- Size, proportion, height, bulk, and architectural design of new construction that define the street space and public places of shared use between buildings and reinforce the edges of these spaces. New projects should respect, be compatible with, and link with existing structures. This issue transcends style but addresses fit and propriety. Proper architectural design helps orient people in space, time, location, and culture.
- Appropriate design of streets and buildings that reinforces safe environments while preserving access and openness as well as a sense of community. Street grids that extend through oversized blocks create more walkable, manageable environments, facilitating access for fire trucks, ambulances, and patrol cars.

Core Planning Areas

The panel has designated three locations in Bayou La Batre as core planning areas. These areas are currently activity nodes and have the greatest potential to serve as a catalyst for future development. They are primarily commercial in use and are in various conditions because of flood damage.

Civic Center

The panel has identified the Civic Center as the corridor along Padgett Switch Road. This area includes many civic uses such as the community center, the new public library, the sports complex, and the Lighthouse Restaurant. The hurricane damage in this area was minimal compared with that in other parts of town, but it was damaging nonetheless. The Civic Center has several key attributes:

- An important intersection,
- Existing community buildings,
- Existing sports fields,
- A commercial “main street,” and
- The “front door” to the community.

There has been significant gravitation of community assets to Padgett Switch Road since the hurricane, because this area was affected less than

other parts of the city. The area is primarily auto oriented and spread out. The Civic Center plays an important role because it is essentially the front door to the community. The panel recommends that the city reinforce the prominence of the intersection of Padgett Switch Road and Wintzell Avenue through the use of signage, decorative lighting, and banners. It recommends that streetscape improvements such as sidewalks, lighting, crosswalks, and bike lanes be constructed in this area to improve the pedestrian experience. This is especially critical because of the concentration of civic uses where children are the primary users.

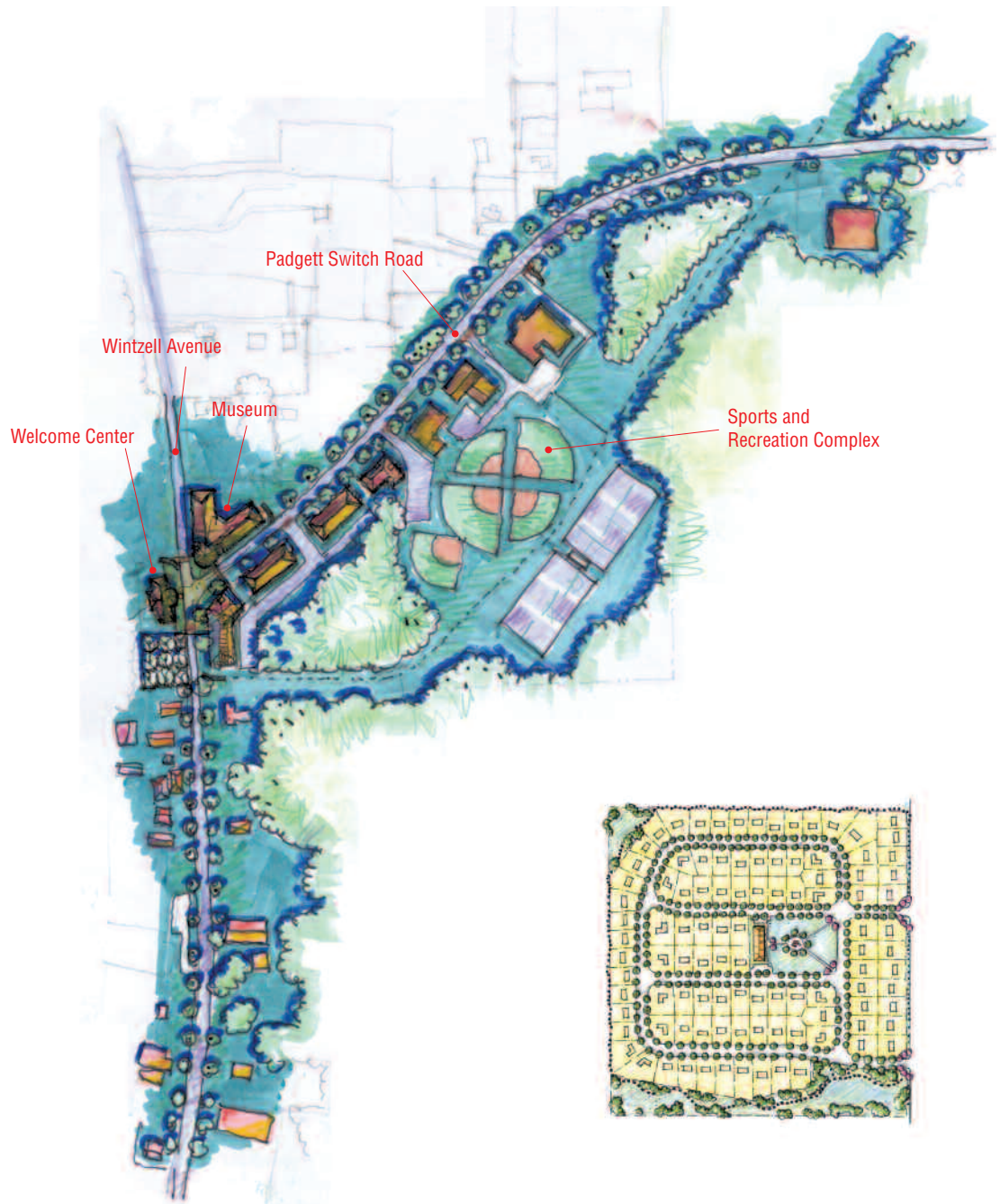
Old Town Center

The panel defines the Old Town Center as the area that immediately surrounds the intersection of Shell Belt Road, Railroad Street, and Wintzell Avenue. This is the heart of the community. The picturesque drawbridge creates an iconic gateway to the area. The area contains the city hall, the old library, a bank, and a small waterfront park behind the church. The general condition of the area is poor because of severe hurricane damage. The Old Town Center has these key attributes:

- An important intersection,
- Existing civic buildings and activities,
- The heart of the community,
- Public space, and
- Community access to the waterfront.

This Old Town Center is the historic center of Bayou La Batre. It was once a vibrant core with shops, housing, and civic uses. It has long been in decline and the hurricane destroyed what little was left. The panel envisions this area as the re-established heart of the community, where residents gather with friends, family, and children. The panel envisions a park reaching up from the bayou, complete with play structures, water features, and a place of imagination and engagement for children and adults alike, encompassed by the bayou, and a pedestrian plaza and walkway lined with a fresh seafood market and other small shops. A centerpiece of this gateway is a

Civic Center.



Inset: Volunteers of America site.

monument in the plaza commemorating the history of the Bayou.

The panel recommends that the area be improved with sidewalks, crosswalks, decorative street lighting, street signs, landscaping, and sidewalk furniture. These improvements are necessary because they will help bring back a sense of place to the heart of the city.

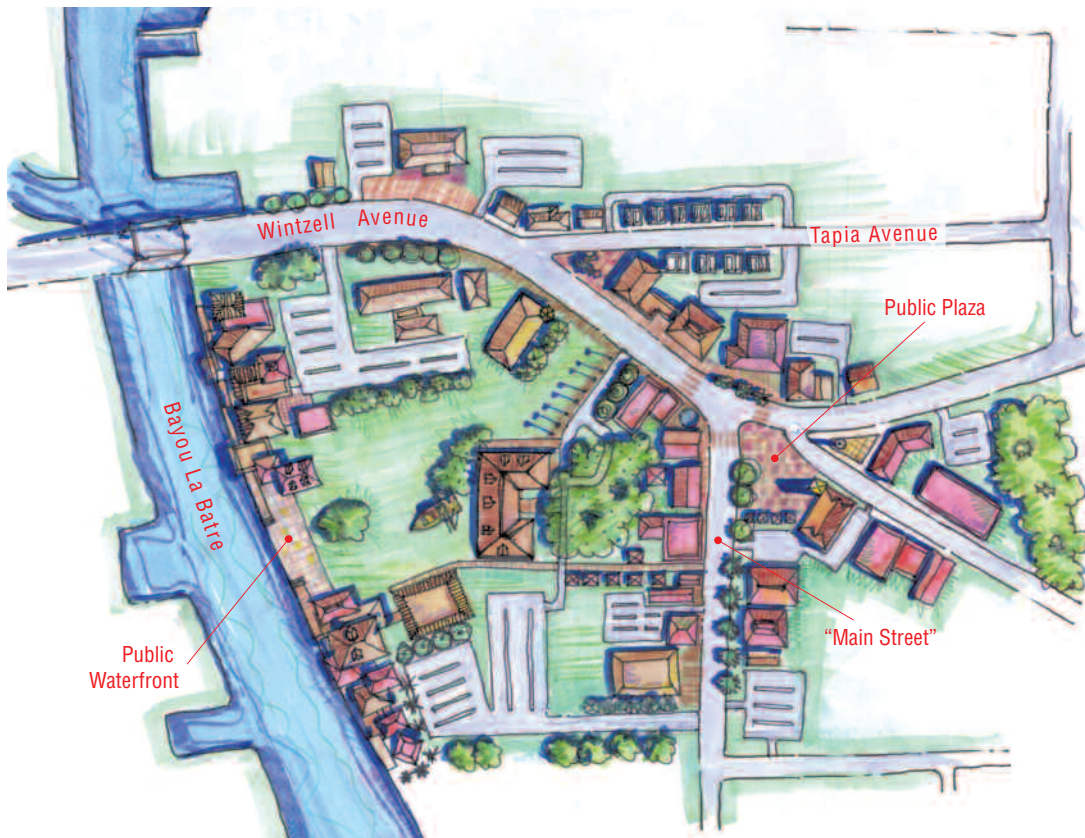
Lighting Point

Lighting Point is located on Shell Belt Road near the mouth of the bayou. This area fronts the Mississippi Sound and is near the state boat docks

and a number of seafood processing facilities. Hurricane damage was severe in this area. Lighting Point has these key attributes:

- A prominent location at the mouth of the bayou, and
- Views of and access to the surrounding environment.

The panel recommends that the area around the present public dock be planned for low-density, two- and three-story housing built around a marina and the ecotourism resort. The panel envisions the architecture and materials for this development as



consistent with the local vernacular. The development will front directly on the bayou, with a public dock for boat access and automobile ingress and egress. This key property should be a public space and kept for the public to enjoy. The panel believes that this development will serve as a catalyst for development. A development of this nature will be a regional attraction and destination.

Housing Initiatives

Housing is a major planning issue facing the city in its rebuilding efforts. More than 500 of the city's 864 housing units were destroyed or damaged in the hurricane. The process of rebuilding or restoring homes is difficult because of the displacement of jobs in the community, insurance issues, and uncertainty about where FEMA will set the flood insurance boundaries. The housing initiatives the city must undertake are described in the following sections.

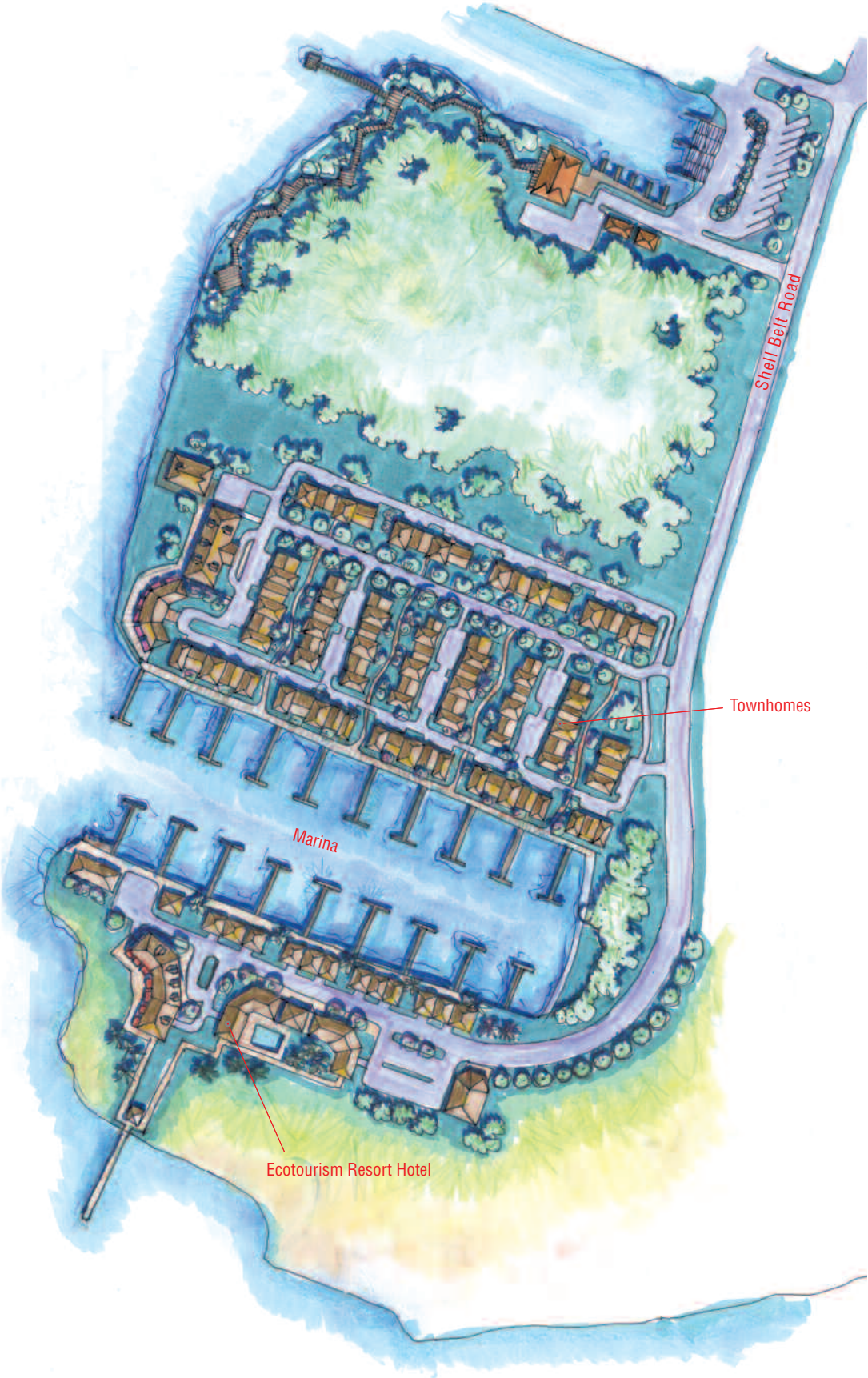
First Priority

The top housing priority is to house currently displaced people and new workers who will come into the area as the economy grows. This housing needs to be geared to people with low to moderate incomes and, if possible, located near activity centers so that they can work, play, and shop without a car.

The housing needs of these individuals must be addressed immediately, which requires a concerted and ongoing effort to find ways (grants, subsidies, and tax credits) to eliminate the gap between what a resident can afford and what code-conforming construction costs. Waivers of taxes or impact fees may be needed to achieve this objective. Also integral to this endeavor is the continuing cooperation of nonprofit groups such as the Volunteers of America (VOA).

A substantial revamping of the zoning regulations to allow somewhat higher residential density and permit residences above shops and offices is

Lighting Point.



necessary. This kind of construction can provide housing for those in the community who wish to be close to work and shopping. This can be done in two- or three-story buildings that complement a village atmosphere.

Innovative solutions should be encouraged. For instance, many communities that face a housing scarcity allow a second, smaller unit to be constructed on the same lot as a single-family home. The second unit is generally limited to about 600 square feet or one-third the size of the primary home. Often called a “granny flat,” this unit allows the family to house an elderly relative or use the space for a rental unit. This “1+1” zoning is technically called an accessory housing unit.

One solution to the higher costs of building homes above the flood line is to model them after beach houses on pilings in combination with 1+1 zoning. The platform that supports the living quarters can accommodate both a primary house and an independent unit. That unit can then be rented out or used as a granny flat. The rent can help defray mortgage costs.

Furthermore, residents could use the space beneath the living platform as a small shop. With reasonable screening and noise restrictions, this space could be used to create another income stream without annoying neighbors. It is currently popular for professionals to work from home, but zoning frequently discriminates against small business ventures by prohibiting them in residential areas. A creative zoning ordinance can eliminate this problem. Another important function of the zoning board should be to ensure that any replatting is consistent in scale with the village environment. Sometimes a 100-foot frontage requirement discourages small lots, which are appropriate in town.

Second Priority

The second housing priority is to house people and families who are attracted to the area for vacation and retirement and who want to be in a vibrant environment near the water and the natural amenities there. These households have high enough income to invest in upscale housing and may be only part-time residents. This is a developer-driven market. Careful planning on the

part of the city and close cooperation between the developer and the community can result in a winning outcome that improves the environment as well as the local economy.

Housing for vacationers and well-to-do retirees usually requires such amenities as a pool and a clubhouse, which lend themselves to sharing. For those who do not want the upkeep of single-family houses, the townhouse model is a good solution but a difficult one to implement under current zoning regulations. With parking underneath, such homes are generally two to three stories and fit well with a village atmosphere. Anything higher than four stories should be considered very carefully so as not to overshadow the scale of the existing town.

Recommendations for VOA Parcel

The 40-acre site that the VOA is developing in partnership with the city will make a much-needed addition to the community’s housing stock. To perpetuate the flow of affordable housing in the community, a housing trust fund should be established. Given the large subsidies that some of the new residents here will receive, there should be a shared equity requirement so that when the house is sold, a portion of the appreciation is placed in a trust fund that can produce more affordable housing.

The panel has evaluated the site plan for the tract of land and recommends some minor modifications that can have dramatic results. The panel proposes to replace seven lots with public open space that will provide play space and gathering space for the community. To compensate, a row of seven 1.5-story townhouses should be constructed facing this green square. The panel also recommends a street planting program, with appropriate trees planted at 30 feet on center; this program will quickly produce shaded walkways. In addition, a walking trail could be established around the periphery of the site, with easements at the rear of the homes that abut the property lines.

Development and Implementation Strategies

Moving forward with an aggressive redevelopment strategy is a daunting task for a small community that has very little history with public redevelopment. In fact, the work that needs to be accomplished to create a renewed sustainable Bayou would be daunting for even the most experienced communities.

Next Steps

The panel recommends that the city of Bayou La Batre focus on 12 key issues to guide the redevelopment process. The 12 issues are divided into three main categories:

- Governance,
- Institutional capacity, and
- Development.

The ideas set forth by the panel for future success and growth have short-term as well as long-term implications and opportunities that are explained later in this section. Although these definitions are somewhat arbitrary, for the purposes of this planning exercise the panel suggests that the city focus on short-term issues first. The long-term issues can wait until the redevelopment builds and maintains momentum, keeping in mind that they should be on the city's radar but recognizing that they will take a longer period of time to materialize. The panel understands that the tasks it has set forth are overwhelming, but it is confident the Bayou can achieve long-term success if internal capacities are expanded to manage both the governance and the development challenges.

The issue overlaying all the panel's recommendations is that Bayou La Batre residents need to remember their core values, which define what the community is and what it wants to be. Future land use decisions should reflect these core values.

These values are rooted in the rich history and pride of Bayou residents. The challenge that lies ahead is to embrace the community's core values during the revitalization of the Bayou. If those values remain at the core of the redevelopment process, the panel strongly believes that the city can be a model for Gulf Coast renewal and stewardship.

Governance

Governance is how the city of Bayou La Batre manages itself to realize its dreams of becoming a vibrant, economically sustainable community. This includes understanding what the community is good at and knowing what it needs to improve and, most important, recognizing when and from whom it needs to seek guidance. The panel recommends that the city address the following five key issues through strong governance.

Sewer and Water

Although the Utilities Board controls the sewer and water system, the system's capacity and functioning determine the Bayou's future. With \$37 million in committed funds, it is imperative that the planned system be constructed to the highest and most technologically advanced operational standards and environmentally safe standards. The commitment to install this state-of-the-art system is a momentous statement that Bayou La Batre is embracing a stewardship ethic that can be replicated along the Gulf Coast.

To implement an adequate sewer and water system that will last the community many generations, the panel recommends the following actions:

- The city should make every effort to ensure that the proposed sewer system is the most innovative and effective possible. The state of the art in wastewater disposal has largely moved away from surface-water discharge. The vast majority of high-end systems use either tertiary

polishing systems or land disposal. In many instances local golf courses have been the grateful recipients of this cheap fertilizer. Given the importance of this issue among the core values identified, it is imperative that the city seek outside consultation—perhaps with the civil engineering department at the University of South Alabama—regarding the location and the technology used.

- Ensure that the system is a regional one. It is essential that the city work with its neighbors to include them. If necessary, it must go to arbitration or hire a mediator, but all need to settle their differences and move forward together.
- Build for the future. The capacity for future expansion is critical to allow for growth and ensure a long-lasting system. The city must see that additional capacity exists or can be added easily.

Insurance

The availability of home and property insurance is absolutely essential to the community's rebuilding efforts. It must be realized that the creation of insurance options will take time. The community's immediate need for an insurance solution must be focused on and resolved; this will take cooperation from a multitude of agencies and people.

The panel recommends the following actions to implement a strategy to address insurance needs:

- Hire a consultant. This is an important step for exploring the best means to provide affordable insurance to all the city's residents, whether through an insurance pool or through some other mechanism.
- Gather feedback on insurance issues. The city should gather perspectives from residents, underwriters, and brokers to formulate a strategy for creating affordable insurance options.

Tax Structure

For any community to thrive, its tax structure needs to be fair and equitable. In a community that is changing as dramatically as Bayou La Batre, the tax structure that worked yesterday might not work or be equitable today because of changing land uses. The panel understands that



The removal of boats thrown onto land by Hurricane Katrina's surge has been a difficult and long process for Bayou La Batre.

most of the revenues the city collects come primarily through a gross receipts tax from commercial operations. By its very nature, this form of taxation is regressive. Even before Hurricane Katrina this tax structure hurt small business, as some were in decline or failure. After Katrina the tax burden drove many of these operations out of business.

The panel's proposal suggests different land uses for existing parcels within the city limits. All these changes shout out that the tax structure needs to be altered. To implement an alternative tax structure, the panel recommends the following actions:

- Create a Bayou 21st Century Tax Commission. This commission should be composed of a broad cross-section of the community, including representation from churches, a variety of ethnic

groups, the Chamber of Commerce, industry, and school and state leadership.

- Empower the commission. The city needs to empower this commission to hire the necessary expertise, such as an Alabama tax lawyer to examine the existing tax structure for its equity, fairness, and long-term viability for supporting the city's operations and continued growth.
- Examine other municipal tax structures. The commission should examine other tax structures in Alabama and other jurisdictions that have community profiles similar to that of Bayou La Batre.
- Recommend viable alternatives. Within six months after the creation of the commission, it should send a set of recommendations to the mayor and city council. The recommendations should include viable alternatives that provide long-term financial stability to the city in its efforts to provide quality services.

Zoning

A community's zoning and entitlement system is the cornerstone for attracting developers and quality investment. Investors from the "mom and pop" landlord to the region's largest development companies seek both guidance and an element of certainty that a community will approve proposals if use objectives and conditions or requirements are met. Therefore, the panel recommends the adoption as soon as possible of a revised zoning map and text based on the consensus on the community vision.

To implement a revised zoning code and map, the panel recommends the following actions:

- Establish an adoption date. The city needs to set a desired date for adopting the revised zoning code and a revised zoning map and text. The panel recommends that the date be as soon as possible.
- Select an attorney. The city should retain an attorney to assist the planning commission, council, and mayor in the rezoning process.
- Work with the South Alabama Regional Planning Council (SARPC). The city should work

with SARPC to select a land use consultant to draft the final code to ensure that the goals of both organizations are met.

- Commit to a schedule. The city needs to commit to a timetable or schedule to update the plan, based on the regional comprehensive plan and market conditions, in three to five years.

Communication

In the past year Bayou La Batre has accomplished much, to the envy of other communities in the Gulf Coast. In all the activity, time for communication has been limited. Now as resources begin to arrive, communication, transparency, and even marketing should be essential and required parts of the process. The panel recommends that the city implement the following actions to foster communication:

- Establish regular communication. As the construction or reconstruction begins, establish regular communication with residents, businesses, and other stakeholders through a monthly newsletter or other vehicle to communicate the progress made and the issues ahead.
- Require a clear and open process. All consulting, engineering, and construction contracts should include a proposed public information process to be carried out through the web, the mail, or community meetings that will provide opportunities for awareness and involvement.
- Develop a web page. Bayou La Batre needs to develop a web page to communicate with residents, encourage tourism, and recruit businesses and residents.

Institutional Capacity

Institutional capacity is about having an effective organization and structure in place to accomplish the mission and goals set forth in rebuilding. Although it is quite extraordinary for a town the size of Bayou La Batre to have accomplished the work that it has, a number of capacity-building institutional initiatives and partnerships will need to be undertaken to build on those successes and take advantage of the opportunities outlined in this report. Supplementing the efforts of the city and the

Utilities Board, the panel suggests the enhancement or formation of two additional entities to aid in the community's capacity to implement redevelopment projects: a Community Development Corporation (CDC) and a Seaport Industrial Task Force.

Community Development Corporation

The panel believes that a CDC can be an effective implementation vehicle for many of the activities that will need to take place in the rebuilding efforts. In order for the city to be able to use the full range of resources a CDC may offer, the panel recommends that the following changes be explored.

Broaden the mission. A review of the activities that the CDC can accomplish in Bayou La Batre shows the need for a broader mission that many communities believe reflects the activities required to advance growth. The panel recommends that the mission be expanded through the following actions:

- **Land acquisition.** For many of the activities envisioned in this report an entity will need to acquire or assemble land. A CDC is the vehicle of choice to accomplish this task. Many of the potential funding sources available for land acquisition and site development activities require the use of an entity that is separate from the city. In addition, this entity protects the city from a host of liability issues.
- **Developer recruitment.** Recruitment, selection and partnering with private and nonprofit partners will be required to accomplish the community's goals. The CDC should be that entity.
- **Financing assistance.** Many of the programs established for the Gulf Coast rebuilding efforts can be facilitated through a CDC. An example of such an effort would be the New Markets Tax Credits (NMTCs) that were specifically established to fund primarily commercial enterprises and development in areas such as Bayou La Batre. Entities that have NMTCs are looking to partner with local nonprofits to place the credits. The town center and Lighting Point resort project would be ideal projects for partners seeking to place credits. The credits mandate involvement by the CDC for seven years, and

the onerous recapture provisions will deter private partners if stability and institutional capacity is not created.

The NMTCs are just one opportunity in a menu of financing programs available for redeveloping this area. Other programs to explore include (residential) HUD grants, FEMA mitigation funds, Federal Home Loan Bank Grant Funds (for nonprofit construction or renovation of housing), HUD Section 202 (for the elderly), HUD Section 811 (for the disabled), the HUD Home Investment Partnership Program, low-interest loans, Community Development Block Grants, bond programs, tax credit programs, and Fannie Mae programs. For commercial projects, tax increment financing and NMTCs should be explored. Grant programs and private foundation monies may be available for housing or the arts. Given the magnitude of the pool of financing instruments that may be available to assist in development efforts, the panel recommends that the CDC form a task force whose sole purpose is to explore these financing options. Of particular importance is the inclusion of the Alabama Retirement Board as a member of the CDC.

Broaden the board. While the mayor, City Council, and city staff focus on the many activities required in the reconstruction and development efforts, the CDC could be reconstituted to reflect or forge the partnerships required to achieve the objectives of this report. Membership on the CDC board should be representative of the community. The panel recommends that the CDC board contain the following types of members:

- City Council and mayor (three).
- Chamber of Commerce and local business owners (three).
- Community stakeholders (five) with specific areas of expertise appointed by the mayor from banks, foundations, and the ranks of professionals, and foundations.

Outsource staffing. The CDC will require a core staff and funding to support it. But given the amount and scope of the activities required, the CDC should outsource some staffing functions through strategic partnerships with nonprofit

Bayou La Batre is home to an active fleet of fishing and shrimping boats that travel as far as the Atlantic Ocean to catch seafood to be processed in local plants.



and for-profit entities. The panel suggests that the CDC partner with an organization such as Dependable, Affordable, Sustainable Housing (DASH), a nonprofit that is headquartered in LaGrange, Georgia, but involved in Gulf Coast activities.

DASH brings expertise and experience that the community needs immediately in both residential and retail development. Its national reputation with leading financial institutions such as Whitney Bank, combined with its hands-on expertise blending public and private financing partnerships, make DASH an immediate asset. DASH has partnered with Fannie Mae on several projects in the Mobile area and on the Gulf Coast. Besides managing development, DASH maintains a homeownership center that works with individuals to help them overcome the obstacles to homeownership.

Seaport Industrial Task Force

The panel recommends that the city establish a partnership with the local Chamber of Commerce,

the Mobile Chamber, the Bayou La Batre Port Authority, the Alabama Development Office, tenants and owners, and the local development and brokerage community to market and improve the Seaport area. A Business Improvement District should be created and Covenants, Codes, and Restrictions (CC&Rs) or an owners and tenants code for improvement of the industrial section should be implemented. These would serve as the rules of engagement for and by tenants. The task force, composed of users and stakeholders, should consider the issue of the aggregation, effectiveness, and efficiency of Bayou operations. The task force should request a staff person from the Mobile Chamber of Commerce to be assigned exclusively to this task force to support its efforts.

Development

Development entails recognizing the highest and best use of the land for the betterment of the community. This often requires community leaders to put the interests of the community as a whole

above their own self-interests. The panel has framed its strategies for development in terms of short- and long-term priorities.

Short-Term Priorities

The panel recommends that the following development actions be considered short-term priorities.

Old Town Center. This is the historic center of Bayou La Batre. It needs to become, once again, the hub of the community, where people gather with friends, family, and children. The panel envisions a park reaching up from the bayou, complete with play structures, water features, and a place of imagination and engagement for children and adults alike, encompassed by the Bayou and a pedestrian plaza and walkway lined with a fresh seafood market and other small shops. A centerpiece of this gateway would be a plaza adorned by a monument commemorating the city's history. The city or CDC needs to accomplish the following steps to revitalize the Old Town Center:

- Identify the boundaries of park and commercial development;
- Acquire property;
- Write a Request for Proposals (RFP) for commercial development;
- Write an RFP for park design and installation;
- Design and build the plaza;
- Implement the financial plan to secure public and private funding sources; and
- Create an entrance to the Bayou with an exciting streetscape that has trees, sidewalks, and flowers from the welcome sign on Highway 188 to the bridge.

Lighting Point marina and housing. The area around the present public dock presents an opportunity for building low-density, two- and three-story housing around a marina. The panel envisions that the architecture and materials for this development will be consistent with local buildings. Fronting directly on the bay would be a public dock with boat access and automobile ingress and egress. The panel believes this key property should be kept for the public to enjoy. The city or

CDC need to carry out the following implementation steps:

- Develop an architectural plan for this property.
- Consider options for ownership of the property, including city ownership of land with a long-term land lease or direct sale to a developer, keeping in mind the cash flow requirements and benefits to the city.
- Write an RFP for developer response.
- Negotiate the site plan, implementing mixed use of property between marina requirements, public access, and housing.

Affordable housing. A large percentage of Bayou La Batre's population occupied affordable housing—both as tenants and as homeowners—before Hurricane Katrina. There is an urgent need to replace the housing lost in that catastrophe. There is also an opportunity to significantly upgrade the housing offered to this valuable component of the community. A number of agencies are helping residents rebuild their homes; a number of developers have also received financing commitments to develop new housing units, again for homeownership and as rental units.

While exciting, all these initial actions should be seen as components of a larger picture that sees a revitalized Bayou La Batre as one community. The risk is that these developments will be islands unto themselves rather than integral components of the community. The links within the community to these developments and their residents need to be thoughtfully integrated. The following actions should be taken to see the realization of affordable housing:

- The planned 40-acre site held by the partnership between the city and VOA represents an exciting opportunity to showcase a sustainable mixed-income community with the “highest and best use” development practices. It is important that this be a mixed-income community. To achieve the successful impact envisioned for this project and its planned residents, it is imperative that the project be creatively and effectively designed and implemented. The panel has suggested some design changes to

encompass some public open spaces within the community.

- The CDC needs to complete a current inventory of housing developments and individual units that are funded, approved for funding, built, and under construction. It must be sure to identify for-sale units and for-rent units. These projects should be mapped to create a current picture of how the housing market in the Bayou is reshaping itself.
- The CDC needs to identify additional housing sites created by topography and availability, working with property owners to stimulate development.
- The CDC needs to work with for-profit and non-profit groups to implement housing goals for the community.
- The CDC needs to work with business owners who employ immigrants with H2H visas to create housing capacity for that group.

Civic Center. There has been significant gravitation of community assets along Padgett Switch Road, including the community center, library, medical center, ball fields, fire department, and several churches. This corridor will continue to expand as the planned sports complex is developed. The panel recommends that the city undertake the following tasks to see the implementation of the Civic Center:

- As this part of the community continues to expand in the lives of residents, bike and walking trails and sidewalks should be built to connect each asset to itself and to the rest of the community.
- Implement a landscaping plan consistent with the area, with particular attention paid to lining the road with trees.
- Engage in designing and developing an expansion of Padgett Switch Road to ensure that it provides an inviting entrance to this part of town—one that calms traffic and is pedestrian friendly.
- Create a cultural and industry heritage museum as an integral component of the Civic Center,

both as a reservoir of historic documents and artifacts and as a place where history can be revealed to visitors. Funding sources should be one-third industry families, one-third tourism entities, and one-third foundation and governmental sources.

- The Bayou has received funds from FEMA to restore its sports complex. Instead of simply replacing what was lost, the city should make this space a great sports complex. It should engage the community in determining what activities and facilities need to be included.

Old Town Village. Two key properties are available for immediate development adjacent to the Old Town Center. They should be developed into for-sale, high-density, low-rise units. The following steps are necessary for implementation:

- The CDC needs to confirm the availability and ownership of the properties.
- The CDC needs to work with existing owners to market the properties.
- The CDC needs to develop and issue an RFP for planned development in cooperation with the land owners.
- The city needs to develop compatible zoning to accommodate this project.

Long-Term Priorities

The panel recommends that the following development projects be considered as long-term priorities.

Safe harbor. Bayou La Batre has long recognized the need for a safe harbor for its fleet during storms. A site has been identified immediately off the Bayou; significant dredging will be required to create the harbor. Presently the site is a wetland dedicated to mitigation of the original federal dredging project. Given the appeal of a safe harbor, the panel recommends that a conversation should begin with the Army Corps of Engineers.

Tourist trail. Not only is the Bayou a spectacular setting and a natural destination, getting to it can be an enjoyable experience. The panel recommends that the city undertake the following steps to see the realization of the tourist trail:

- Work with the state Department of Transportation to designate the road from Mobile to the Bayou as a scenic byway.
- Partner with communities along the way to create bike access, signage, and physical improvements, including wider berms.
- Partner with communities to ensure preservation of the scenic nature of the area as improvements continue.
- Work with appropriate agencies, such as historic and nature organizations, to identify specific sites, provide signage, and preserve natural habitats.

Research center. The University of Alabama owns a site adjacent to the Forever Wild parcel. Development of research focused on natural habitats and viewing areas seems to be an obvious next step in taking advantage of this beautiful preserve. The goal is to create yet another strong link between the community and an educational institution. The city needs to undertake the following actions for implementation of a research center:

- Confer with DISL to act as the liaison between the community and the university.
- Create a partnership between various entities to develop a research center.

Identifying the Bayou: the Alabama environmental success story. A great story is the foundation of a brand. Part of the Bayou's brand is already in place—the community looks at it every day. It is

the surrounding natural environment. The Bayou sits in the middle of one of the largest unspoiled areas on the Gulf Coast. The city should build on that asset to promote itself, and its decisions on the new wastewater treatment, community building, and development should reinforce that brand. The rich history of shrimping, oystering, crabbing, finfishing, and shipbuilding is a story worth sharing. The city should undertake the following actions to market the natural assets of the Bayou:

- On the city's web site, tell the community's story—share its history. Include this history and the city's mission in all newsletters and communications with residents. Incorporate the city's slogan on all city letterhead and in all announcements.
- Build an events strategy that focuses on the community's strengths—industry, arts, and the environment.
- Confer with the Mobile County Convention and Visitors Bureau to incorporate the city's slogan, history, and activities into its material. The city should seek the Bureau's advice on reinvigorating tourism, bringing a visit to Bayou La Batre into the south Alabama experience.

Conclusion

The panel members have provided their best professional opinions to address the rebuilding efforts in Bayou La Batre; however, they realize that the hard work of implementation and solving these challenging problems remains with the local community. The solutions are multifaceted. They are not short term, and they require constant monitoring and vigilance to determine what is working and what is not. Changes in the local economy and the real estate market will likely require changes to policy.

The vision and guiding principles that the panel has recommended provide Bayou La Batre with a

framework from which to begin the planning and rebuilding process. The panel believes that its vision for a renewed Bayou La Batre is representative of the community's dreams and desires. It is impressed by the determination, will, and faith in this community that has been deeply devastated but refuses to give up. It sees an authentic community on the rebound, and it is confident that with strong leadership, communication, and hard work the community will rise again.

About the Panel

Smedes York

*Panel Chair
Raleigh, North Carolina*

A Raleigh native, York is president of York Properties, Inc. He is board chairman of two related companies—York Simpson Underwood and McDonald-York Construction. He also serves on the board of SCANA, a major public corporation.

York has spent his professional career in real estate and construction. He has served in a leadership capacity in many organizations, including as past chairman of the North Carolina Citizens for Business and Industry and with the Greater Raleigh Chamber of Commerce, the Urban Land Institute, and the Board of Trustees at NC State University. Currently he holds positions on the boards of directors and executive committees of the Research Triangle Park Foundation, the Triangle United Way, and the YMCA of the Triangle.

From 1964 to 1966, York served as a lieutenant in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, receiving an Army Commendation medal in 1966. He also spent time in elective office as a Raleigh city councilman (District E) from 1977 to 1979 and as mayor of Raleigh for two terms, from 1979 to 1983.

York received a bachelor of science degree in civil engineering from North Carolina State University and a master of business administration degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He is past chairman of ULI and a member of ULI's Board of Trustees.

John Anderson

Winter Park, Florida

Anderson, owner of a real estate development company, JH Anderson Holdings, Inc., has been a developer, owner, and manager of hotel and resort (including residential, golf, spa, and marina) proj-

ects since 1980. At age 30, he formed a partnership to develop the Fort Lauderdale Marriott Hotel and Marina, with Marriott Corporation and Aetna Life & Casualty as partners. Since that time, he has participated in the development of numerous projects throughout the United States and abroad, represented by such properties as the Marriott's Harbor Beach Resort and the Hyatt Regency Pier 66 Resort, in Fort Lauderdale, Florida; the Gainey Ranch Hyatt, in Scottsdale, Arizona; the Ritz-Carlton San Juan Hotel and Casino, in San Juan, Puerto Rico; and the Sonoma Mission Inn & Spa, in Sonoma, California.

In addition to real estate development, Anderson's companies provide consulting, asset management, and litigation support services to publicly traded companies and private owners. In 1993, Anderson completed the binding arbitration between Lanai Resort Partners (Dole Foods, Inc.) and Rockresorts, Inc. in Los Angeles, California. He was the party arbitrator for Rockresorts in a dispute involving the two resort properties on the island of Lanai, Hawaii. In the capacity of development manager for others, he has worked for Banyan REIT, Chicago, Illinois, a publicly traded real estate company, successfully obtaining the necessary government approvals for a modification to a mixed-use project and negotiating a settlement to litigation between the local community and the property owner. In a similar capacity with Grupo Huarte, Madrid, Spain, he directed the master planning for a 1,200-acre mixed-use resort development in Mexico.

Anderson, an alumnus of the Harvard Graduate School of Design and the University of Kentucky, is a member of INTA, the International Urban Development Association in The Hague; the Urban Land Institute, where he is a governor of the ULI Foundation; the Advisory Board for the College of Landscape Architecture at the University of Florida; and the Real Estate Academic Initiative

at Harvard University. He has been a guest lecturer at several forums, including the Harvard School of Design, the University of Florida's Annual Real Estate Outlook Conference, and the Cornell University Conference of Hospitality Industry Strategy. As a founder of the Center for Caribbean and Latin American Development, a joint venture of Barry University's Andreas School of Business and a coalition of private sector companies, he served as chairman of the Advisory Board.

He began his career in banking in 1970 with the First National Bank of Cincinnati. Subsequently, as vice president and eastern regional manager of Chemical Bank's (JP Morgan) real estate subsidiary, he specialized in development lending and investment banking.

Marshall A. Anderson

Birmingham, Alabama

Anderson has nine years of professional experience coordinating and contributing to multidisciplinary teams on a variety of project types. He has been responsible for the success of a variety of award-winning buildings and designs. Since 1997, he has been project architect and designer on many wide-ranging projects including single- and multifamily residential, retail, and commercial work.

Anderson graduated from Auburn University *magna cum laude* with a bachelor of architecture degree.

George Crozier

Dauphin Island, Alabama

Crozier received his Ph.D. in marine biology from Scripps Institution of Oceanography (University of California, San Diego) in 1968. Although trained as a comparative biochemist, he has spent most of his professional career in coastal zone management, which might be considered a specialization in applied marine ecology. He has been the executive director of the Dauphin Island Sea Lab at the mouth of Mobile Bay since 1979. As the director of the Coastal Policy Center at the Lab, he is active

regionally in most management issues. Crozier received NOAA's Walter B. Jones Coastal Steward Award for 1999–2000 and has been honored by the state of Alabama as a science educator. He is currently deeply engaged in the issues emerging from urban sprawl in coastal areas and the mitigation thereof.

Jon Eisen

Bethesda, Maryland

A native of Washington, D.C., Eisen has contributed to conceiving, creating, and completing more than 50 mixed-use planning, architecture, and development projects. As managing principal of StreetSense, he leads the company as a whole and the consulting and development division in particular. He speaks annually at ULI and ICSC conferences and strives to be on the leading edge of the industry through innovative analysis and planning.

As senior project manager at the Washington, D.C. Main Street Studio of Cooper Carry, Eisen oversaw and participated in the planning and design of multiple public and private developments. From these projects, he has gained considerable experience in creating great urban places.

During his tenure as the director of projects for Street-Works, Eisen assisted the following cities with development advisory services and mixed-use market analyses: Washington, D.C.; Reston, Virginia; Denver, Colorado; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Charlotte, North Carolina; Seattle, Washington; Tempe, Arizona; and Bellevue, Washington. In addition, he helped create and implement numerous other retail and mixed-use developments across the country.

Jana Freedman

Portland, Oregon

A native Oregonian, Freedman is executive vice president of development with locally owned Ocancrest Properties, LLC in Portland, Oregon. In that capacity, she is responsible for site selection and development planning of mixed-use and industrial properties, project feasibility and

financial analysis, interfacing and negotiating with tenants, and asset management.

Freedman began her professional career in commercial real estate finance with Bank of Montreal on Wall Street, then moved to Dallas, Texas, with Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce. Freedman transferred with Block Bros.' local commercial real estate loans to Sunbelt Savings Association, where she was fully integrated with the borrower's development team during all phases of projects including identification and acquisition of parcels, master-planned communities design, zoning requests, architectural review, creation of CC&Rs, parcel sales, development of neighborhood associations, and infrastructure buildout. Further, she was the key liaison between the developer, Sunbelt as lead lender, and more than 30 participating lenders. Block Bros.' (and other Block-related entities) loans totaled more than \$500 million for raw land and mixed-use properties. Valley Ranch, a 2,600-acre master-planned community in Irving, Texas, was the premier project developed from raw land assembled during Freedman's tenure with the Dallas lenders.

In 1986, Freedman moved to Los Angeles, where she successfully devised several commercial real estate financing packages for many prominent clients, including the Disney family. In 1989 she briefly relocated to Portland, before returning to Dallas to open, staff, and manage a regional commercial equipment leasing office. After the sale of that firm, Freedman returned to Portland to resume her commercial real estate activities as a developer and asset manager.

As founder of the Oregon/Southwest Washington District Council, Freedman maintains an active ULI role on that Council's Executive Committee. She is also on the founding Leadership Committee and serves as vice chair on the UDMUC-Purple Flight product council.

John L. Knott, Jr.

North Charleston, South Carolina

Knott is a third-generation builder and developer who strives to balance the community, the environment, and the financial bottom line in his proj-

ects. His experience includes the renovation and restoration of historic properties and city neighborhoods and the development of planned communities, commercial offices, and hotels. Dewees Island, a private retreat off the coast of Charleston, South Carolina, is his most recent accomplishment. Dedicated to environmental preservation and the fostering of strong community, Dewees Island has been recognized as a national model for environmentally sound infrastructure design, green building principles, environmental protection and enhancement, community involvement, and financial success. Dewees was chosen by the Urban Land Institute as a recipient of the 2001 Awards of Excellence—one of the country's most prestigious real estate development awards.

Knott's current focus is on a 3,000-acre urban redevelopment in the North Charleston area adjacent to the Cooper River that includes the historic city center and hundreds of acres of the former naval base. Using environmental principles and a community-focused design process, the project aims to be the largest sustainable redevelopment in the country. Knott's national and international leadership experience includes service as chairman of the White House Exchange with the Soviet Union for City Re-Development/Historic Preservation, national life director for the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB), member of the NAHB President's Council, faculty member for the "Main Street" program of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and faculty member for the "Urban Ventures" and "Art of Rehab" schools of the National Housing Partnership.

Knott also is the primary building and construction adviser for the University of Texas Houston Medical Center's multibillion-dollar sustainable redevelopment and new development activity. He is also very involved in the Urban Land Institute's South Carolina Smart Growth Initiative and is the chairman of its Coastal Region Roundtable. Knott is also active nationally as a member of the Sustainable Development Council and participates in ULI's panel advisory service. He has been a keynote speaker for conferences focusing on environmental study schools, green building design, and universities wanting to implement sustainability

initiatives. Recently nominated as a thought leader by *Professional Builder* magazine, he is committed to helping the development industry transform to a community-centered, environmentally active, and process-focused industry.

Jack L. Luft

Sanibel, Florida

Luft has established a 35-year record as one of south Florida's highest-profile urban planners. He has helped shape the dynamic and complex growth of urban Miami as an urban designer, master plan author, and director of the City of Miami Development and Planning Departments. He also served for ten years as vice chairman of the Miami Beach Design Review Board. His major projects include the Downtown Master Plan; the redevelopment of the 65-acre downtown waterfront park system; plans for Coconut Grove, Dinner Key, and Little Havana; the publicly owned 86-acre Watson Island and 1,000-acre Virginia Key; and the station area planning for the region's Metrorail high-speed rail transit system. Other projects include the comprehensive master plan for Sunny Isles Beach, a strategic redevelopment plan for the historic Goulds Storeporch district, and strategies for a new town center in Coral Springs. He is currently preparing the comprehensive plan update for the town of Surfside, Florida, as the community planner.

Luft wrote the first historic preservation ordinance, the first environmental preservation ordinance, and the first scenic corridor/urban design review ordinances adopted in Miami. He has been recognized by the Florida chapter of the American Planning Association with three awards of excellence and merit for plans he created.

Having retired from active public service in 1998, Luft is now engaged as a private planning consultant for the town of Surfside, Florida, and has served as development adviser to private sector developers and community groups throughout south Florida.

Thomas Murphy

Washington, D.C.

Murphy is a senior resident fellow and ULI/Klingbeil Family Chair for urban development. A former mayor of Pittsburgh, he joins six other ULI senior resident fellows who specialize in public policy, retail and urban entertainment, transportation and infrastructure, housing, real estate finance, and environmental issues. His extensive experience with urban revitalization—what drives investment, what ensures long-lasting commitment—is a key addition to the senior resident fellows' areas of expertise.

Since January 2006, Murphy has served as ULI's Gulf Coast liaison, helping coordinate with the leadership of New Orleans and the public to advance the implementation of rebuilding recommendations made by ULI's Advisory Services panel last fall. He worked with Louisiana state leaders, as well as leaders in hurricane-affected areas in Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida, to identify areas appropriate for ULI involvement.

Murphy served three terms as the mayor of Pittsburgh, from January 1994 through December 2005. During that time, he initiated a public/private partnership strategy that leveraged more than \$4.5 billion in economic development. Murphy led efforts to secure and oversee \$1 billion in funding for the development of two professional sports facilities and a new convention center that is the largest certified green building in the United States. He developed strategic partnerships to transform more than 1,000 acres of blighted, abandoned industrial properties into new commercial, residential, retail and public uses; and he oversaw the development of more than 25 miles of new riverfront trails and urban green space.

From 1979 through 1993, Murphy served eight terms in the Pennsylvania General Assembly's House of Representatives. He focused legislative activities on changing western Pennsylvania's economy from an industrial to an entrepreneurial one and authored legislation requiring the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania pension fund to invest in venture capital. In addition, he authored legisla-

tion created the Ben Franklin Technology Partnership, which is dedicated to advancing Pennsylvania's focus on technology in the economy, and legislation to encourage industrial land reuse and to transform abandoned rail rights-of-way into trails and green space.

Murphy served in the Peace Corps in Paraguay from 1970 through 1972. He is a 1993 graduate of the New Mayors Program of Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government. He holds a master of science degree in urban studies from Hunter College and a bachelor of science degree in biology and chemistry from John Carroll University.

He is an honorary member of the American Society of Landscape Architects; a board member of the Pennsylvania League of Cities and Municipalities; and a board member of the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy. He received the 2002 Outstanding Achievement of City Livability Award from the U.S. Conference of Mayors and was selected as the 2001 Pittsburgh Man of the Year by Vectors Pittsburgh.

Mark Schneider

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

For close to 20 years, Schneider has been a leader in community and economic development, overseeing more than \$500 million in innovative real estate projects, including the Summerset at Frick Park and Washington's Landing developments, which have garnered national praise for their ground-breaking approach to land use, brownfield redevelopment, and community building.

Schneider began his real estate development career in 1982 while director of development and special projects for the Northside Civic Development Association, where he was responsible for the planning and development of projects of scale, including a joint venture to develop a six-acre office and technology park at Washington's Landing. Projects also included the \$60 million MXD development on North Shore and the planning and site acquisition for a \$15 million hospital redevelopment.

Moving into the private sector in 1988, Schneider worked as director of development at Carnegie Properties, where he identified new real estate projects for development and led planning, feasibility, financing, and marketing aspects of development projects of more than \$90 million.

In 1990, Schneider joined The Rubinoff Company, and in 1999 he became president. In this capacity, he was responsible for development, financing, and construction of office and industrial projects, including Washington's Landing, a mixed-use waterfront development; Summerset at Frick Park, a 700-home traditional neighborhood development; Alcoa Business Services Center, a 250,000-square-foot office building; and the Offices at Clair Boyce, totaling \$300 million in development.

In May 2006, Schneider and two other former executives from The Rubinoff Company formed Fourth River Development, LLC. The real estate firm offers a full range of development, leasing, brokerage, property management and consulting services. Currently, Fourth River is providing exclusive development, leasing, and brokerage services for Starpointe Business Park, a 1,200-acre job creation project commissioned by the Washington County Council on Economic Development.

Schneider and his partners have also worked closely with local community groups to develop and market an abandoned 4.3-acre brownfield site in the city's Manchester district. When completed, the project will reflect the historic character of its urban setting and contribute to the resurgence of the North Side.

Ortrude White

Atlanta, Georgia

White's practice focuses on housing design and community planning. Established in 1988, it draws on White's broad background in the full spectrum of residential design and development, as well as her skills in team building and facilitation.

Her design experience includes thousands of units of both publicly and privately financed housing, ranging from very-low-income rental communities to luxury condominium towers. Her responsibili-

ties have often include site selection, site planning, architectural design, and construction supervision. She has strong experience in land use planning and zoning regulation. In 1996, she participated with the Peter Drey Team in a year-long planning process for the renewal of downtown Albany, Georgia, the results of which were featured recently in *Georgia Trends* magazine.

As a board member of the Georgia Conservancy's Blueprints for Successful Communities, White served on the Professional Advisory Panel for two Atlanta-area workshops—one for the inner-city neighborhood of Home Park and one for fast-growing Gwinnett County—on the location of future rail stations and recommended land uses along the proposed commuter rail line. She served

on a ULI Advisory Panel for northeast Kansas City, Kansas, in 1999; on the Chicago Workshop on Urban Infill Housing in 2001; and on the Brass Site panel in Kenosha, Wisconsin, in 2003.

White is a past president of AIA Atlanta and past chair of the national AIA Housing Committee. She is currently vice chair of the Housing Committee of the Atlanta ULI and serves on the board of the Community Design Center of Atlanta.

Today's Vision for Tomorrow's Future

In conjunction with the ULI Advisory Services Panel, volunteers engaged local students at Alba Middle School in “Today’s Vision for Tomorrow’s Future,” a visioning process to design a future for Bayou La Batre. Although the student projects are not part of the panel’s recommendations, they are noted in this report to reflect the energy invested by residents of Bayou La Batre in this effort. The panel attended a presentation of the projects and awarded a top prize to the “ULI Pick.”

Laura Davis, a native of Bayou La Batre and now the chief executive officer of the Mississippi Gulf Coast Renaissance Corporation, describes the process and product of the visioning process here.

Immediately following John Knott’s acceptance of participating in the Advisory Services panel on the Bayou, his wife Diane asked how she could volunteer. Her first thought was to donate school supplies or books to the local school—Alba Middle School. Meetings with school officials showed that the outpouring from communities across the globe following Hurricane Katrina had been more than the community itself could handle—so much so that excess supplies were being sent to hard-hit communities to the west.

I contacted Alba’s assistant principal, Wade Whitney, and pitched the idea of the students doing a visioning process of their own. Mr. Whitney was beyond thrilled to engage students in taking a healthy look at future possibilities for their community. No one had ever asked them about the future and, to be honest, the idea of looking back anymore was depressing and, frankly, not healthy. Mr. Whitney engaged one of Alba’s star teachers, Jennifer Brown, to lead the visioning effort. And, with the obvious love and respect that these students have for her, they, too, embraced the idea of creating “Today’s Vision for Tomorrow’s Future.” With the enthusiastic support of Principal James Gill, Mrs. Brown created an assignment and all 600 students in grades 6, 7, and 8 participated. The assignment was called “Rebuilding the Bayou—Better, Stronger” and was rolled into social studies classes.

When the panel arrived in the Bayou, the excitement was palpable. Alba Middle School swarmed with media. The top 20 projects were selected, and it was showtime for those students, the Bayou’s future visionaries. What was uncanny about the entire effort was that the students “got it.” They know that the Bayou is a special place, and they understand how important it is to preserve it. Their intuitive sense of

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what creates a good community is taught in graduate planning schools across the nation. Through this effort, a number of students discovered talents and gifts that would not have been tapped into otherwise.

The top ten themes from the students' presentation to the ULI panelists, "Today's Vision for Tomorrow's Future," are outlined below.

- Preserve the area's rich heritage. The "soul of the city" is the seafood industry. Create an attraction that enables visitors to tour the seafood businesses and watch the boats unload their catch.
- Maintain Bayou La Batre as a quaint village, allowing for condominium development, where appropriate, at a scale that maintains the character of the community.
- Create lots of gathering places.
- Reestablish the core of the city with shops and a theater—all within walking distance.
- Connect the city with sidewalks and trails.
- Create a mega sports complex at Zirlott Park.

- Preserve the Mose Hudson Tapia log cabin library and use it as a welcome center for the city.
- Demolish decaying buildings but preserve historic structures, where possible.
- Create a welcoming entrance to the city with attractive landscaping and clean streets throughout.
- Embrace the multicultural makeup of the community.

No one knew when embarking on this effort what impact it would have on a community that suffered so deeply in Hurricane Katrina. On behalf of the city of Bayou La Batre and Alba Middle School, I extend our deepest gratitude to all the ULI panelists, the ULI Foundation, the Commercial and Retail Development Council, Silver, Fannie Mae, and Diane Knott, whose persistence in finding a way to serve led to the idea of embracing the students. A special thanks to Tom Murphy, who understood the depth of this effort and carried the Bayou La Batre torch back to D.C. and beyond.

If you ever visit the Bayou, be sure to learn this pronunciation lesson from the locals: Bayou La Batre = "byla-batre," or "the By-yo" for short.



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Project Winners

Brandon Bryant, ULI Pick

Brandon Bryant's vision, selected as the "ULI Pick," was identified by the panel as one of the most comprehensive of the project plans. His complex rebuilding plan calls for many positive additions to Bayou La Batre—a sportsplex with indoor and outdoor sports for all ages, a docking area called Safe Harbor that will protect boats during storms, condominiums throughout the Bayou, a green space at the center of town, an amphitheatre, several museums, a movie theater, a boardwalk, restaurants, bakeries, coffee shops, marinas, and gift shops. His plan was designed to attract tourists; provide additional goods, services, and opportunities for current residents; and create many new jobs. His plan recognizes that the proposed changes will not happen overnight. He stated, "It took years for the Bayou to get to where it is today, and it will take time and careful planning to keep the Bayou's history as we are trying to change with the times so it can be successful for many generations."

Curtis Eldridge, First Place

Curtis Eldridge traced the history of Bayou La Batre to its founding in 1780 by French-born Joseph Bosarge. He realized that the community has endured many hardships but said its people "never turned their backs on an opportunity." He designed a large-scale project that expanded opportunities for fishing, boating, and waterfront properties by adding piers, bird-watching tours, cafés, beaches, ghost-hunting tours, and restaurants. He wants to make Bayou La Batre a "thriving self-sufficient community."

Connor Hill, Second Place

Connor Hill's rebuilding plan is multifaceted. A small mall will have a variety of stores to keep shoppers closer to home and will include a food court, theater, and arcade for evening fun. The boat docks will offer boat rentals and tours and host an annual fishing rodeo. Zirlott Park will become a multipurpose park with everything from skateboarding to swimming. New motels and condominiums will serve new visitors. Connor knows this would be a long process, but he feels "We must think big and never give up."

Glenn Nelson, Third Place

Glenn Nelson's ideas are to preserve pieces of the past while creating new, even brighter pieces for the puzzle we call our future. His plan calls for the restoration of the Hudson Tapia Library and the conversion of the old Schambeau's building into a skating rink or bowling alley. He thinks a trip down memory lane is in order to bring back some of the great things about the area that have been forgotten—penny candy, old-fashioned milk shakes, and soda fountains. He would add "nice, wide sidewalks with colorful awnings" and a lot of shade trees. The ultimate blast from the past would be the construction of a drive-in movie theater. He also would add better docks and dredge the ship channel to help those in the seafood industry. He says "Katrina may have damaged the city, but nothing can take away the glory Bayou La Batre has and always will hold."



Project Finalists

Ashleigh Ross, Finalist

Ashleigh Ross feels that one way to recover from a natural disaster such as Hurricane Katrina is to prepare better for the next one. Her idea is to build a state-of-the-art hurricane shelter where residents could go to be safe and relax. In addition to the common needs of a shelter, there would be a huge play area with a playground for kids to play, have fun, and forget the trauma for a while. The playground area could be used year-round, not just in stormy weather. It could make days brighter all year.

Carly Fox, Finalist

Carly Fox used San Antonio, Texas, as the inspiration for her project for rebuilding Bayou La Batre. She would like to see Bayou La Batre have a riverwalk area with great tourist attractions, restaurants, souvenir shops, ice cream shops, and bakeries. New hotels would serve visitors to the riverwalk. She feels that her ideas would provide jobs that would help boost the area's economy and "help [Bayou La Batre] grow."

Samuel Brown, Finalist

Samuel Brown's project really made him stop and think. As a ballplayer, he was saddened when the ball park was destroyed to house FEMA trailers. So his design for a rebuilt Bayou La Batre began with a focus on rebuilding the ball park, with new additions such as a track for parents to walk on while children practice. However, his thoughts shifted deeper—if there were that many FEMA trailers, there were people with no homes. This helped him touch on a crucial need for the area—housing. His design for colorful apartments "complete with a beautifully landscaped courtyard" is what he felt was needed to allow the city to become "home, sweet home" to many in need.

Neal Barbour, Finalist

Neal Barbour would like to see Bayou La Batre become a tourist town comparable to Gulf Shores or Orange Beach. He would like to see the town become a location for new restaurants, grocery stores, water parks, condos, and souvenir shops. He would add a campground to the area to give families a relaxing place to stay. He feels these additions would help everyone in the area as jobs are made available and give a sense of pride to everyone as well. This is one dream Neal feels could become a reality.

Meagan Bosarge, Finalist

Meagan Bosarge's project led her to reflect on how fortunate she had been compared with others in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. She feels the rebuilding efforts need to address many areas of people's lives. Her plan calls for renovation of area churches, a park, a "first-rate athletic facility," new restaurants, bakeries and coffee shops, and leisure activities such as putt-putt golf and a public swimming pool. She feels the condemned houses need to be torn down to allow space for new and updated structures. She believes that with such a plan in place "the Bayou could be great again and Hurricane Katrina will be in the past where it belongs."

Hannah Brouillette, Finalist

Hannah Brouillette can see "great potential" for the quaint little city of Bayou La Batre. She looks at it as "God's creation [that] gives a great backdrop to paint on"—a real opportunity. Her rebuilding plan calls for the addition of new shops and services centered around the bayou as it flows through town. Restaurants, a souvenir shop, a bait shop, a gas station and convenience store, and cabin rentals would be strategically placed near the bayou. Current local landmarks would undergo landscaping to enhance their appeal. A large playground with a lighted walking track would also be placed near the bayou. It is a plan that she would love to see "become reality."

Joe Johnston, Finalist

Joe Johnston's project focus was on bringing in new industry. He would develop the State Docks for small industrial shipping, which would support the air transportation industry that is in development at Brookley Field. He would redesign the waterfront with a variety of shops and restaurants. As the city's economy begins to thrive as a result, he would use the extra capital to improve youth programs in the area. In his plan, one accomplishment can lead to another, which will make Bayou La Batre better for everyone.

Haley Straub, Finalist

Haley Straub's rebuilding plan would require cleaning up first, then rebuilding, all integrated with "some tender, loving care." She envisions a YMCA becoming a central place for all the area's citizens to relax with family members. A waterfront condo near a golf course and boardwalk would encourage people to visit. Then, a nice little shopping outlet would provide a place for them to purchase mementos of the area.

Cody Clarke, Finalist

As a ballplayer, Cody Clarke missed Zirlott Park when the fields were destroyed, when the site was chosen for FEMA trailers following Hurricane Katrina. So, naturally, he focused his rebuilding efforts on this area. Not only did his project design include a new ballpark, it also included an entire athletic complex complete with baseball and football fields, tennis and basketball courts, a playground, and a swimming pool. He says the “park should be a universal place to benefit the entire community.”

India Payne, Finalist

India Payne realized the area was fortunate during Hurricane Katrina because no deaths were caused by the storm. She recognized that over time, however, people had to “face the lasting effects of lack of food, heat exhaustion, dehydration, uncontrollable mold situations, and strange illnesses.” She feels that health care is a major issue. Her project design calls for a “first-class hospital.” Not only would it provide health care, but it would also create new jobs in the area.

Trey Graham, Finalist

When asked to complete the Bayou La Batre Rebuilding project, Trey Graham came up with ideas and discussed them with family members to get their thoughts as well. Although he feels the seafood industry is a “good thing” for the community, he feels it lacks excitement. He thinks many children in the area get bored—and bored kids could get into trouble. To prevent this from happening, he designed a blueprint for an area skate park for skating, rollerblading, and skateboarding. He feels it would not only be fun for the kids, but it could also provide a “giant boost for the economy.”

India Higgins, Finalist

India Higgins’ idea seems simplistic, but the potential for the community is anything but. She envisions the waterfront area lined with sandy beaches. Building up beaches would provide a great family fun place while allowing people to take advantage of the natural resources the area already has. Considering all the past devastation, India is hopeful. She believes Bayou La Batre “deserves something good to happen.”

Brittini Stevens, Finalist

Brittini Stevens thinks condominium complexes are just what Bayou La Batre needs to “have a successful economy.” Near the condominiums she envisions neatly done landscaping surrounding a sidewalk mall with coffee shops, souvenir shops, and cafés. There would be a safe harbor for commercial fishermen to help keep the seafood industry alive. Her design is aimed at putting Bayou La Batre “back on the map as a tourist destination.”

Erica Tharpe, Finalist

Erica Tharpe would like people visiting Bayou la Batre to get a “great feeling of a small town with shopping and a quiet place to retire or raise a family.” Her vision for the area is renovations with “a French-style theme.” With condos, a visitor’s center at the old log cabin, piers, and a recreational department, you just would not want to leave. She loves her town and wants to watch it grow and be respected for its value. She believes Bayou La Batre “can be a wonderful and beautiful place to live.”

Marissa Hill, Finalist

Marissa Hill’s plan is a nice, relaxing boardwalk surrounded by some simple pleasures: a malt shop, hot dog stands, and “other delights.” Adjacent to the boardwalk would be a more grand-scale idea of condominiums and cobblestone roads in front of a fishing dock. She feels her ideas would allow the people of Bayou La Batre to get beyond the devastation of Hurricane Katrina so they can move forward.

Haley Pham, Finalist

As she completed her project, Hayley Pham thought about the many different cultures that call Bayou La Batre home. She realizes that no matter who you are, you need a nice, comfortable place to feel welcome. She wants to clean up the town and add shops and restaurants that reflect the different cultures. She also wants to add places to shop for basic necessities such as clothing and to add a YMCA to provide a place where residents “could just chill or hang out.” She feels that if her suggestions were to come alive and work, the city of Bayou La Batre would “look gorgeous.”



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