

LOUISIANA TRANSFORMATION: RESILIENCE IN ACTION

A Report from the 2018
Smart Growth Summit
Workshop



LOUISIANA
**SMART
GROWTH
SUMMIT**
2018



CENTER *for* PLANNING EXCELLENCE

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Workshop and Report developed by:

Camille Manning-Broome
Center for Planning Excellence

Joyce Coffee
Climate Resilience Consulting

Jeannette Dubinin
Center for Planning Excellence

Jessica Kemp
Center for Planning Excellence

Justin Kozak
Center for Planning Excellence

Report Design:
Ryan Benton, Center for Planning Excellence

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Key Definitions

For the purposes of the workshop and this report:

Resilience is defined here as decreasing threats to human well-being and to the natural and built systems on which humans depend while creating new opportunities by addressing threats in ways that solve related social, environmental, and economic problems.

Retreating communities are those that are experiencing a population decrease due to environmental risks such as increased flooding and land loss.

Receiving communities are those communities that are experiencing a population increase either due to acute or chronic events. Receiving communities are those that take on populations from retreating communities.

Resilience gap is the chasm between adequate levels of climate change mitigation and climate change adaptation that is especially profound where social cohesion and equity are lacking.

Social equity means that people—regardless of race, gender, class, or any other trait—have access to the rights, legal protections, assets, and resources they need to create healthy, productive, and meaningful lives for themselves. Ensuring equity in this way will vastly improve the adaptive capacity of those most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.

SMART GROWTH SUMMIT CONTEXT

In November 2018, Center for Planning Excellence (CPEX) held its annual Smart Growth Summit in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. The Summit is the Southeast's premier Smart Growth forum, promoting interdisciplinary dialogue on resilience, livability, planning, design, infrastructure, development, placemaking, transportation, connectivity, and economic development. For thirteen years, the Smart Growth Summit has attracted local, national, and global leaders and practitioners in support of CPEX's mission to make all Louisiana communities resilient, economically vibrant, and extraordinary places to live, work, and play.

In order to provide an opportunity for Summit participants to engage more deeply in one of the most pressing issues facing Louisiana, CPEX developed the Louisiana Transformation: Resilience in Action workshop, funded by The Kresge Foundation. The more than seventy workshop participants included Louisiana practitioners whose on-the-ground experience and knowledge is essential to informing a shared understanding of the mission, strategies, assets, and gaps for building resilience throughout the state. Joyce Coffee, Climate Resilience Consulting, and Jessica Kemp, CPEX, facilitated the workshop and Camille Manning-Broome and Jeannette Dubinin, CPEX contributed to this report.

The aim of the workshop was to identify resilience assets, gaps, and a set of near-term actions that will serve to catalyze a shift in both thought and practice toward proactive resilience-building. The workshop activities created three primary outputs:

- 1. Identification of Louisiana's existing assets that contribute to resilience based in social equity**
- 2. Identification of gaps that need to be filled in order to address Louisiana's significant land loss, climate change, and social equity challenges**
- 3. Identification of aspirational actions to take to close the gaps and create "Resilience in Action"**

Based on input from workshop participants and other partners as well as local and global trends, the following resilience vision and mission was developed and refined during the workshop.

SURVEY OF ORGANIZATIONS PARTICIPATING IN THE 2018 SMART GROWTH SUMMIT



64% agree that social equity is a key priority



50% work on land loss and climate change adaptation



33% work on greenhouse gas mitigation

LOUISIANA'S RESILIENCE VISION & MISSION

RESILIENCE VISION: We envision a state in which all Louisiana Communities are economically vibrant and extraordinary places to build a career, raise a family, and enjoy a high quality of life.

But currently, Louisiana communities are threatened by a significant resilience gap where environmental, social, and economic vulnerabilities are increasing. Based on the workshop, we suggest three urgent resilience missions in support of this vision:

- **Focus on receiving communities.**
- **Develop policy to support resilience beyond cycles of disaster recovery funding**
- **Diversify Louisiana's economy.**

RESILIENCE MISSION I: Focus on Receiving Communities for the Short Term and the Long Term.

Given the growing vulnerability of Louisiana's coastal communities, Louisiana's receiving communities need to be actively planning and preparing for receiving more people: putting social equity first by creating economic and housing opportunities, investing in physical infrastructure (transportation, water, electricity) and social infrastructure (education, healthcare, culture) and adopting policies that prevent development in hazardous areas. Policy makers must address the gradual but real transition of Louisiana residents away from high-risk coastal communities immediately. This retreat can easily devolve into gentrification and increased vulnerabilities if well-off residents leave, while lower-income residents without means to relocate are left behind with few services and job prospects, de-populated schools and eroded social cohesion.

We must keep in mind that vulnerable and low-income residents bear a disproportionate burden related to the coast's environmental degradation: their jobs are more likely to be disrupted, they are less likely to be

insured, they have fewer resources available to replace damaged assets and they may have less flexibility to make significant changes like moving or securing new jobs.

RESILIENCE MISSION II: Create Resilience Policy beyond Recovery Funds.

Louisiana must move beyond heavy reliance on federally-funded post-disaster resilience investments to new policies implemented at various scales of government that do so. For instance, at the local scale:

- **Focus on planning and land use regulations** and other means to engage the private sector in solutions with shared benefits.
- **Embrace social equity** considerations for infrastructure, housing, mobility, and economy that contribute to a thriving Louisiana with all residents having access to livelihoods that improve their wellbeing rather than perpetuating systemic inequity.
- **At the state level, focus on funding to implement restoration and protection projects**, and develop and implement policies and programs that lead to expansion of local and community-driven strategies.
- **At all scales, create resilience-related policies** like resilient design standards, freeboard, no-fill construction, heat shelters, and the latest international building codes.
- **Improve the "investability" of projects** by connecting them to multiple benefits, rate-paying utilities, market-based risk transfer and capital budgets. Always be aware of the flow of both public and private resources and ask "is this contributing to the equity Louisiana needs to thrive?"

LOUISIANA'S RESILIENCE VISION & MISSION

RESILIENCE MISSION III: Diversify Louisiana's Economy Beyond Oil and Gas to a Water Economy.

Louisiana's strong, longstanding relationship with the oil and gas industry makes the state susceptible to global booms and busts and thus can exacerbate existing economic inequities and vulnerabilities. At the same time, economic change, land loss, and the State's Coastal Master Plan are spurring investment in protection and restoration jobs, leading to growth in the water management sector. Leaders are working to ensure that this growing industry brings fair-paying jobs to all levels. Beyond oil and gas, the state's water management expertise in both coastal and riverine contexts are areas of global expertise. Higher education and workforce training can help to build the knowledge base and technical expertise in water economy fields such as watershed planning, levee construction, desalination technology and wetland restoration. Louisiana's businesses can build assets to protect Louisiana's water resources and communities and export this knowledge to the global market.

CRITICAL DRIVERS OF THREAT TO LOUISIANA'S FUTURE

CPEX has identified nine drivers that define the urgency and importance of Louisiana's resilience vision. Efforts to build community resilience should address the critical drivers that threaten Louisiana's future in ways that solve these interrelated vulnerabilities.

Louisiana's coastline is changing, and the state is losing land.

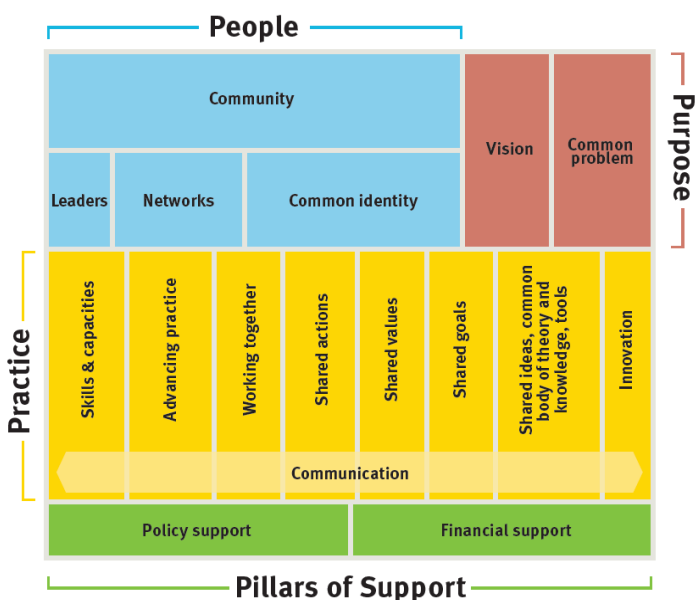
1. The entire state is at risk for flooding. In 2016, every Parish in the state had a declared flood disaster, illustrating that flood risk is not confined to Louisiana's coast.
2. Flood risk costs are increasing. In some coastal parishes, homeowners' and flood insurance has doubled in the past 15 years. Building a home with the necessary elevations also increases costs.
3. Poverty increases vulnerability to environmental hazards. Louisiana's lower-income households have fewer resources to dedicate to preparing for and recovering from an adverse event.
4. Population changes stress communities. For receiving communities, growing populations stress social (e.g. hospital, school, library, park) and physical (e.g. roadway) infrastructure. Depopulating communities face decreasing access to social services, dwindling private sector activity and fewer cultural resources.
5. Older residents may have fewer options. With potentially less mobility, fixed incomes, wealth tied up in devalued property, and greater need for social services, older residents have additional challenges recovering and moving from harm.
6. Social cohesion is imperiled. As communities are disrupted by flooding and land loss, people are forced to move away from familiar social networks and informal support structures, decreasing overall community resilience.
7. Health risks are increasing. As annual temperatures warm, air quality deteriorates, increasing health stress on those with respiratory and cardiac conditions. Anxiety about risks and disruptions caused by loss of property, retreat, and loss of employment can also imperil mental health.
8. Economic dependence on a single industry makes the state susceptible to global booms and busts.

WORKSHOP PROCEEDINGS: DEVELOPING THE MISSIONS

Fundamental to the design of the workshop was an acknowledgment that the scope and magnitude of coastal, riverine and inland climate change impacts require Louisiana to leverage every available opportunity to adapt and mitigate. Effective strategies will address the full complexity of human, economic, and environmental risks and opportunities; prioritize socioeconomic equity and sustainability; and meet immediate needs while also building resilience for the long-term.

“We’ve seen the maps, we’re aware that the coast is losing land and will continue to lose land. We also know that populations are shifting. This is leading to a myriad of changes in Louisiana and the need for transformative resilience-building strategies and action.” – workshop participant

The workshop used elements of a recent report commissioned by The Kresge Foundation, *Rising to the Challenge, Together*, as loose organizing principles. In particular, the report’s elucidation of four critical elements of resilience-building – Purpose, People, Pillars, and Practice – were used as a framework to help ensure a comprehensive approach that considers existing assets, gaps and needed actions.



The 4Ps of a Field: A field is made up of four basic components—purpose, people, practice, and pillars. [Kresge Foundation’s *Rising to the Challenge, Together*]

Workshop participants used the four-part framework to identify collective actions and shifts needed to make resilience a successful practice in Louisiana:

Purpose: shifting from disaster response to a proactive resilience-building approach

People: leveraging existing institutions’ success for increased future resilience

Practice: advance a shared understanding of the nature and extent of Louisiana’s future risks and working together towards a solution

Pillar: identifying new and existing streams of funding and finance that match resilience needs and advancing policies to increase security, safety and stability

At the workshop, CPEX presented the critical drivers noted above, and workshop participants were encouraged to consider opportunities to address those drivers via expanding and accelerating resilience-building efforts within existing systems (mainstream resilience) and via transformation of systems to create resilience.

Mainstream Resilience

Resilience that works within current systems and within existing funding (e.g. climate information incorporated into existing decision-making), and enhance existing laws to make them resilience-centric.

Transformational Resilience

Resilience that changes existing systems, addressing deep-seated inequities and concurrent stresses (e.g. decision making that acknowledges disproportionate risks), and changing legal systems that have perpetuated racism.

WORKSHOP PROCEEDINGS: DEVELOPING THE MISSIONS

Louisiana’s Resilience Aspirations

Workshop participants considered how Louisiana can build upon existing assets and progress, close gaps and seize new opportunities that accelerate progress towards mainstreaming resilience and transforming systems to build Louisiana’s resilient future.

Here are five aspirations per functional category for closing Louisiana’s resilience gap, created by workshop participants after they had considered both Louisiana’s resilience assets and their areas for growth.

MUNICIPAL/PARISH GOVERNMENT	STATE GOVERNMENT	PRIVATE SECTOR	NON-PROFITS	INDIVIDUAL LEADERSHIP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring resilience responsibility to the local government level, ensuring that resilience is a key consideration for any ongoing and new projects policies, regulatory changes, etc. • Work with regional plan commissions and amend land use, stormwater and building ordinances to prohibit floodplain/storm surge development. • Increase public awareness of flood and land loss risks, demonstrate solutions and celebrate resilience success. • Encourage local planning to focus on both dignified retreat and inspiring supportive communities. • Lay the groundwork for stormwater and sewer fees to provide revenue streams that support bonds to pay for resilience projects beyond federal funding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tax and regulate extractive industries based on the externalities they create. Allocate the revenue to impacted communities for dignified retreat and receiving communities for resilient housing, small business development, job opportunities, health care, etc. • Develop model ordinances for parish/municipalities to adopt (in whole or in part). Clarify what resilience measures can be adapted locally that support higher regulatory standards and more effectively protect people and buildings from flood damage (free board, preventing development in high risk areas, prohibit “slab on grade” residential construction within the coastal zone, constructing flood resilient buildings, etc.). • Create a State office for planning and resilience that drafts and implements a plan that goes beyond coastal issues and coastal parishes and helps to mainstream resilience in all elements of State governance. • Change the incentive structure from bailing out disaster-stricken communities to supporting resilience and pre-disaster mitigation, including through land use planning and building codes. • Create a statewide campaign related to land loss and climate change losses and climate resilience opportunities, scaling and improving successful components of LA SAFE. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a hazards and resilience knowledge base for civic leaders, making them. • Examine climate change and land loss risks and work with communities to transition away from risks. • Identify and promote the benefits of resilience to markets, consumers, employees and communities. • Create best practice and models for resilient receiving communities with local developers, agencies, & professional firms. • Promote Louisiana’s resilience and water expertise to national and global interests. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand coalition building to include for-profit and not-for-profit actors, in addition to government. • Advocate for government policies that create equitability and livability. • Help communities define their priorities based on land loss and climate risk (retreating) as well as resilience assets (receiving). • Provide tools for hazard assessment and best practice for protection of natural and human systems. • Expand the support of community leaders and use power to engage communities that are most impaired in the decision-making process, helping to define priority positions as well as shared goals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with other resilience experts and across disciplines to align projects and priorities with a focus on equitable outcomes for Louisiana communities. • Educate Louisiana elected officials, connecting with government officials to look at land loss and climate change data. • Advocate for flexibility in FEMA recovery spending and for changes in the National Flood Insurance Program that perpetuate loss. • Calculate the benefits (including costs saved) of pre-coverty or mitigating risks. • Demand resilience features in all projects, not just those which “prescribe” resiliency.

Louisiana’s Resilience Assets

Workshop participants considered what resilience assets Louisiana already has in place, whether there is a collective of stakeholders working on resilience in Louisiana, and what progress towards resilience is already underway in the state. The following identifies and categorizes Louisiana’s past and ongoing successes in the resilience field and is organized according to the resilience field’s purpose, people, practice and pillars. It serves as a shared narrative of Louisiana’s resilience strengths.

PURPOSE ASSETS: What are Louisiana’s commonly understood resilience risks and goals?

Louisianans’ lived experiences have contributed to a shared understanding of common risks. The 2016 Great Floods further increased awareness and comprehension of risks that the state and individual communities are facing.

Workshop participants agreed unanimously that decreasing the state’s vulnerability to flood hazards is a high-priority goal.

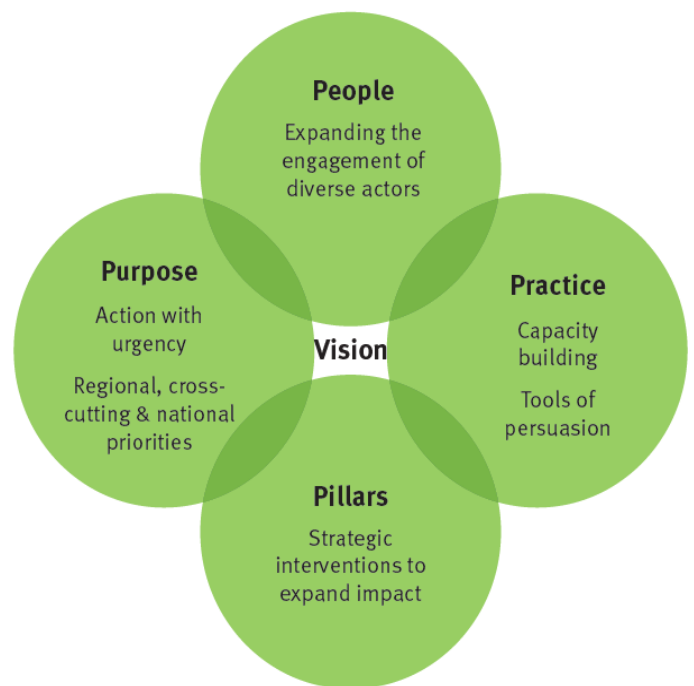
Another goal that many leaders have embraced is the promise of building a local water economy with resilience benefits for many sectors including

- Coastal
- Industry
- Agriculture and Fisheries
- Municipal Infrastructure
- Law & Policy
- Tourism & Culture
- Maritime & Import Industry

While discussing future risks, some participants cautioned that leaders should not expect future crises to look like past events. Floods can come from rain and stormwater inundating infrastructure, coastal storm surge, and overtopping banks of streams or inland water bodies, and these risks are anticipated to increase with climate change. Continuing recent development patterns that contribute to sprawl and increase the overall amount of impervious surfaces will further exacerbate these risks.

“Every LA resident has been impacted by flooding. Leaders can use community experience of flooding to grow support for resilience.” – workshop participant

In part due to our developing water economy and watershed initiatives, some participants noted that Louisiana has a reputation for its resilience leadership nationally and even globally, and should use this reputation to create economic opportunities within the state.



Critical needs identified by study participants. A unifying vision is central to all 4Ps. [Kresge Foundation’s *Rising to the Challenge, Together*]

PEOPLE ASSETS: Who are the organizations and networks that carry out the resilience goals in Louisiana?

Significant federal disaster recovery and resilience dollars have spurred involvement of many Louisiana stakeholders in creating climate change adaptation strategies. Regions in the state that have been devastated by floods have many home-grown resilience leaders. Along with community engagement supported by federal disaster recovery funds, several university-based initiatives have also contributed to best practices in community engagement around resilience.

Participants found it easy to identify Louisiana's resilience field actors, including Louisiana's Coastal Protection and Restoration Agency (CPRA), Louisiana Office of Community Development, and nonprofits like CPEX, The Water Institute of the Gulf and Foundation for Louisiana (FFL) that collaborate with those state agencies while also advancing their own initiatives. Most frequently mentioned were state government-led initiatives like LA SAFE and the Watershed Initiative. FFL was noted in particular as an institution that organized training for community members to help translate climate science to action, and bringing together communities, the state, and academia (including University of New Orleans, Louisiana State University) around shared resilience goals.

In addition to the project-based LA SAFE, stalwart community engagement actors like Louisiana SeaGrant and LSU AgCenter were also recognized as positive influences on resilience practice.

We ask the question 'who is not a part of this conversation' since there are so many people that are. It seems like a large task to coordinate and collaborate, but we have assets in willing people and their willing spirits." – workshop participant

"Good community involvement takes a lot of money." – workshop participant

A generally agreed-upon conclusion about those institutions leading resilience, especially OCD and CPRA, is that work follows money, and resilience leadership generally comes from an opportunistic relationship with the federal disaster recovery and resilience funds.

PRACTICE ASSETS: What are the resilience actions underway in Louisiana?

Three most frequently cited resilience initiatives underway include:

1. The Coastal Master Plan and periodic updates by CPRA, an entity supported by steady state funding, focused on coastal restoration and protection
2. LA SAFE, a project funded through a competitive federal grant, focused on extensive community engagement to develop climate change and land loss adaptation strategies, and build knowledge and support for resilience in six federally-designated coastal parishes
3. The Watershed Initiative, a federally-funded project that is expected to set the foundation for watershed planning and floodplain management throughout the state.

LA SAFE was noted by participants for its robust community engagement and information-sharing on current and future water and land hazards. The LA SAFE process helped elected leaders to better understand the varied interests and needs of community members and allowed previously untenable resilience solutions to be considered and implemented, including community retreat. Notably, some of this success is attributed to working closely with community members from start to finish throughout the planning process, rather than presenting communities with pre-determined solutions. Replication of the LA SAFE community engagement process for future efforts was recommended by several participants.

The new Watershed Initiative is funded by \$1.2 Billion awarded from the federal government for pre-disaster flood control and mitigation. Key expectations of the initiative include policy changes; an emphasis on regional, decision-making; a grounding in hazard models and science-based and long-term decision-making; a means to engage elected officials in guiding growth and development within the watershed; coordinated efforts with shared power and responsibility; and, ultimately, a coalition of leaders working to create a resilient Louisiana.

“We need to be clear that though they differ, the entire state has resilience needs. This will also be essential to getting the statewide support we will need to support a comprehensive approach to resilience from the state. While past resilience efforts have generally been focused along the coast, the Louisiana Watershed Initiative science-based emphasis could create more resilience thinking for the state as a whole.” – workshop participant

PILLAR ASSETS: What are the funding and policies that support Louisiana resilience?

FEMA and HUD are major post-disaster funders in Louisiana, though not without controversy. FEMA programs especially are criticized for subsidizing reconstruction in high-risk areas and for unfair distribution of resources that don't prioritize those with greatest need and fewest assets.

Participants said that policies to support better land use and emphasize resilience in receiving communities are nascent, but encouraging.

Several federal government agencies and departments have had an outsized impact on resilience funds in Louisiana, especially Federal Emergency Management Agency and Housing and Urban Development, though workshop participants noted that these federal entities are not requiring property owners to rebuild out of the way of future floods, and, in effect, are subsidizing more risk.

The federal government was also acknowledged to be giving the state more control. This autonomy is welcome at all levels, even as participants acknowledge it might mean more local funds are needed.

Workshop participants suggested that Louisiana should work to leverage federal funds to attract private sector money. Some acknowledged the need to pivot towards using government funds to inspire private sector investment and collaboration through public-private partnerships.

“We need to find ways to fund resilience. The goal is not to have to spend as much disaster recovery money -ours or the federal government's- in the future.” – workshop participant

Participants expressed substantial hope that a local water economy created as an output and outcome of ongoing Watershed Initiative efforts will help to create more funds to support resilience. Some thought local governments have opportunities to generate funds for resilience through tourism taxes and better coordination between departments. Participants also emphasized funding for development and redevelopment in receiving communities – rather than continuing to rebuild in risky places – as a unanimous priority.

Workshop participants offered examples of policies that could contribute to resilience-building in receiving communities, such as the School Board Plan for redistricting adopted in 2013, new coastal zone ordinance in New Orleans that mandates stormwater mitigation on new projects, and tax incentive laws such as the Louisiana Industrial Ad Valorem Tax Exemption Program (ITEP).

Louisiana's Resilience Gaps

Workshop participants considered what the resilience gaps are that hamper Louisiana's progress towards achieving equitable resilience. The list below summarizes the gaps that were identified and is organized according to the resilience field's purpose, people, practice and pillars. Ideas from the workshop serve as a shared narrative of Louisiana's areas for growth needed to ensure resilience in Louisiana communities.

Workshop participants identified several overarching gaps:

- Reacting to extremes and protecting property and the Louisiana way of life on a day-to-day basis can get in the way of longer-term efforts to build resilience proactively and address ways that concurrent hazards (e.g. lack of affordable housing and flood susceptibility) interact.
- Local governments (parishes and municipalities) do not incorporate flood hazards and other current

and future risk data in their land use policies and planning. Science and an understanding of the urgency and gravity – as well as the opportunities – associated with Louisiana's flooding and land loss risk must be shared by all.

- Retreat from hazardous areas is haphazard and creates shrinking tax bases in areas that still require public services for residents who choose not to or cannot leave. Transition plans for public resources supporting physical and social infrastructure in retreating communities are crucial, especially given the state's limited resources.
- Receiving communities are not addressing social equity issues in their land use planning, infrastructure development and housing policies. Leaders need to not only ensure that inequity in Louisiana does not get worse as residents move out of harm's way, but also use this time of transition as a chance to address longstanding disparities.
- Water management has historically entailed pumping – which means water moving south. As more and more people move to towns further north to reduce their flood risk, these communities often end up pushing water south – reducing their own flooding, but contributing to floods in neighboring areas. Being on the receiving end of another community's excess water creates conflict.

"We can't break the laws of nature here. I don't think people understand how big these risks are. The October, 2018 International Panel on Climate Change report said we have a decade and a half to deal with the climate becoming unlivable. The Mississippi Delta is falling apart. The Louisiana Coastal Master Plan is unlikely to address the entirety of the problems." – workshop participant

PURPOSE GAP

The biggest gap in Louisiana's resilience purpose was a lack of support for enhancing receiving communities. This was followed by a need to communicate the land loss and climate change risks the state faces with both urgency and responsibility, but without despair.

Many acknowledged that a key gap in the state's resilience purpose is that the oil and gas industries do not publicly acknowledge climate science and risks. Their tremendous power and influence leads to elected and other officials not leading with climate change-related solutions.

"There is a great fear among many that if we address climate change risks too aggressively we will lose our economic base. This is a huge obstacle for awareness raising and action." – workshop participant

PEOPLE GAP

The largest gap in organizations that work to build resilience is both the lack of a permanent agency focused on proactive and competitive resiliency strategy and the overlapping and siloed work being done by existing organizations that is not leveraged or coordinated for efficiency and maximal impact.

In spite of a prevalent opinion that community engagement along the coast is effective, other workshop participants felt that proper community engagement is lacking and that the absence of significant coordination between resilience field actors has created overlap and inefficiencies. Still, there is a desire for increased capacity at the grassroots level to support major resilience action and continue to inform the government sector.

In addition, more harmonization and coordination between government at all levels, as well as among corporations, academia and nonprofits, will help to ensure that one-off efforts that otherwise expire at the end of a

funding period will instead result in collaborations that can deliver cumulative benefits and scale progress.

"It tends to be "don't flood me" instead of "don't flood us". From oyster fishermen to residents in New Orleans it's a matter of individual rights, not collective good." – workshop participant

The younger generation's knowledge of Louisiana's resilience challenges is consistently mentioned as a gap that is more easily resolved than some others, especially since "high schoolers have a better attitude about the future," but the lack of investment in education is seen as a foundational problem for building future resilience.

PRACTICE GAP

The biggest gap in the relevant actions underway is short-term thinking on the part of elected officials, property developers, fisherman and others who are not yet considering the major hazards Louisiana faces – including land loss and inland and coastal flooding. This short-sightedness contributes to a lack of emphasis on enhancing receiving communities. Ultimately, these gaps mean that Louisianans do not have adequate policies and infrastructure to support efforts to build long-term resilience.

A major contributor to gaps in practice is a persistent short-sightedness of community, business, and government leaders, despite the significant impact of disasters in the last 15 years. Politicians lack the inspiration to look beyond election cycles and do not have a library of exemplary resilience practice from which to draw. Developers have no disincentive to build in hazardous areas.

"We talk about developers as potentially helpful, but Baton Rouge has issues because of them. Burbank is going to flood but is still being developed, the planning commission allows it and there's no way to stop it. How can we make proactive decisions?" – workshop participant

WORKSHOP PROCEEDINGS: DEVELOPING THE MISSIONS

Workshop participants identified the following resilience action gaps caused by this short-term thinking.

For Receiving communities:

- Lower-risk communities are not receiving resources to support revitalize efforts in anticipation of newcomers.
- Local leaders are not making connections between community priorities and resilience projects.
- Existing social and physical infrastructure in receiving communities are insufficient to accommodate newcomers.
- The stress of migration and resettlement after buyouts is exacerbated by higher home prices in receiving communities.

For Retreating communities:

- Limited government money is being spent to buy out some communities.
- Inequities are being perpetuated by short-sighted actions such as mechanisms that allow low-income housing to be sited in flood-prone or economically depressed areas.
- The migration of families – one at a time or in groups – out of high-risk communities results in diminished social networks and community cohesion as well as a shrinking tax base.

“As we look down the road in the next 20 years, is the funding apparatus in place to accommodate this mass exodus from Louisiana?” – workshop participant

PILLARS GAP

Participants identified the largest gap for policy as silos existing within and between entities, jurisdictions and scales (e.g. Senate resolutions/committees, watershed jurisdictions, state agencies and local resilience efforts that lack clear lines of authority and mechanisms to institutionalize coordination). The Watershed Initiative is expected to close some of this gap.

The lack of local zoning and comprehensive planning informed by climate hazards was also identified as a significant policy gap, especially for receiving communities.

Workshop participants also expressed a desire for more autonomy over funding decisions and funds beyond federal grants.

Pillars gaps included:

- Lack of a statewide climate change strategy and thus a lack of a common understanding of the various inland and coastal risks the state faces.
- Lack of state and local policies that work in tandem to support resilience.
- The lack of consistent funding for resilience initiatives such as LA SAFE – too many are contingent upon one-time funding and federal guidelines that are often ill-suited to current needs.
- Lack of political capital to adequately fund the Coastal Master Plan.
- The gap created by the community rating system, since some lower-income home and building owners cannot meet the flood insurance requirements, and thus cannot participate in the program.
- The lack of local zoning and comprehensive planning informed by climate hazards.

Perhaps given the state's history of receiving disaster recovery aid, many leaders do not see the value of investing in prevention and are also not familiar with mechanisms to monetize resilience such as incorporating resilience criteria into funding decisions, involving the private developer community in resilience profits, and inviting philanthropy to help with foundational resilience efforts (such as pilots, measurement systems, finance catalysts, etc.).

As noted above, local government policy does not integrate risk factors into comprehensive planning and does not follow basic good governance principles for developing a well-informed plans that coordinate with regional and state plans, provide staff to implement the plan, and provide staff to enforce regulation.

Participants also noted that there is an uncomfortable split between the oil industry's role in damaging the coasts and oil industry money and support of coastal issues.

Communications and Education

The gravity of Louisiana's climate change risks is not being communicated by many public officials, and attempts to communicate the urgency of the situation as well as the need for all to take responsibility without causing despair, were noted as major challenges. Many pointed to two key communication opportunities:

1. Through the education system, transfer knowledge to the next generation of leaders, creating informed advocates and normalizing climate risk and resilience concepts.
2. Cultivate an informed electorate empowered to advocate elected officials to acknowledge Louisiana's specific land loss and climate change hazards and demand proactive actions.

A third key communications theme emerged to support

the resilience vision: Through educational campaigns and strategic messages of revitalization, resilience and state-wide collaboration, confirm the risks that Louisianans face and provide elected officials with a narrative of collaboration and shared accountability between residents and officials that makes it possible to live with water and reinvigorate lower-risk communities so that they are well-positioned to receive Louisiana neighbors moving out of harm's way.

Participants also recognized that a key element of a successful communications effort is to listen to and amplify sentiments and experiences of residents who are already dealing with climate change impacts.

"Community members are saying the truth:

It won't be okay." – workshop participant

Conclusion

The workshop participants were inspired to consider a transformed future Louisiana that solved for resilience challenges – land loss, climate change and social inequities. Many felt emboldened to go beyond mainstream patterns of thought and strategy to consider how they can hold public officials accountable to acknowledge the risks Louisiana faces, focusing on receiving communities, and support development of an economy beyond oil and gas. Participants also expressed strong interest in development of policies at the local level that protect the and enhance the lives and livelihoods of Louisianans in the present and the future. By sharing their commitment to specific actions, participants agreed to increase their accountability, advance new ideas and partnerships, and motivate one another to take on work towards building transformative resilience for Louisiana.

PARTICIPANTS AND AFFILIATIONS

TABLE FACILITATORS

Charla Blake

Project Build a Future

Alex Carter

APANO

Steve Cochran

Environmental Defense Fund

Joyce Coffee

Climate Resilience Consulting

Andrew Doss

Future Tide Partners

Jeannette Dubinin

Center for Planning Excellence

Mark Goodson

CSRS Inc.

Bobbie Hill

Concordia

Sara Judson

Southwest Louisiana Community Foundation

Adam Knapp

Baton Rouge Area Chamber

Justin Kozak

Center for Planning Excellence

Jessica Kemp

Center for Planning Excellence

Connor McManus

Concordia

Andreanecia Morris

Greater New Orleans Housing Alliance

Corey Miller

Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana

Christopher Pulaski

Terrebonne Parish Consolidated Government

Liz Williams Russell

Foundation for Louisiana

Denise Reed

University of New Orleans

Carmen Randolph

Greater New Orleans Foundation

Charles Sutcliffe

Governor's Office of Coastal Activities



SCRIBES

Lauren Bergeron, Jazmin Castillo, Sarah Dai, Devin Foil, John Fox, Max Perret, Stephen Sigle, Bradley Spiegel

PARTICIPANTS AND AFFILIATIONS

PARTICIPANTS

James Andermann

CSRS, Inc.

Barrie Black

Bike Easy

Janet Brown

Louisiana State University HSC

Honora Buras

Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority

Lynette Cardoch

Moffatt and Nichol

Jazmin Castillo

Friends of Lafitte Greenway

Steve Cochran

Environmental Defense Fund

Joyce Coffee

Climate Resilience Consulting

Nancy Curry

Federation of Civic Associations

John Day

Louisiana State University

Lois DeBacker

Kresge Foundation

Rashida Ferdinand

Sankofa Community Development Corporation in Orleans Parish

Monica Ferris

University of New Orleans-CHART

Dakota Fisher

Louisiana Office of Community Development

Jerome Fournier

Ascension Parish

Abby Genese

Lafayette Consolidated Government

Mack Giancola

Louisiana Healthcare Connections

Kelly Hagar

Lawyer

Lakesha Hart

Federal Emergency Management Agency

Meridith Hernandez

Recreation Program

Bobbie Hill

Concordia

Jessica Kemp

Center for Planning Excellence

Scott Kirkpatrick

Roedel Parsons Koch Blache Balhoff & McCollister Law Corporation

Tara Lambeth

University of New Orleans-CHART

David Lindenfeld

Together Baton Rouge

John Lopez

Lake Ponchartrain Basin Foundation

Matthew Martinec

City of Gretna

Kellie McGaha

East Baton Rouge Mayor's Office of Disaster Preparedness

Delaney McGuinness

Dana Brown Associates

Grasshopper Mendosa

Adaptation Strategies

Taffy Morrison

Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals

John O'Donnel

Southwest Louisiana Area Health Education Center

Steve Picou

NOLA Vibe

Mark Ripple

Eskew Dumez Ripple Architects

PARTICIPANTS AND AFFILIATIONS

Diana Searl
GCR Inc.

Sandra Serna
Louisiana Public Health Institute

Jessica Sims
Louisiana Office of Community Development

Jeff Supak
Global Green

Janet Tharp
Center for Planning Excellence

Katie Wholey
ARUP

Jim Wilkins
Louisiana Sea Grant

Tara Zachary
East Baton Rouge Parish Mayor's Office of Disaster Preparedness

Rachelle Thomason
Foundation for Louisiana



About the Center for Planning Excellence

Mission

CPEX brings people, culture, and planning together to make great communities happen. CPEX brings people, culture, and planning together to make great communities happen.

CPEX is a non-profit organization that coordinates urban, rural and regional planning and implementation efforts in Louisiana. We provide best-practice planning models, innovative policy ideas, and technical assistance to individual communities that wish to create and enact master plans dealing with transportation and infrastructure needs, environmental issues, and quality design for the built environment. CPEX brings community members and leaders together and provides guidance as they work toward a shared vision for future growth and development.

Since our founding in 2006, CPEX has been involved with the planning efforts of more than 30 Louisiana cities, towns and parishes. We have also leveraged more than \$6 million on behalf of communities all over the state.

For additional information, contact Dr. Jessica Kemp at jkemp@cpex.org

www.cpex.org