AN ADVISORY SERVICES PANEL REPORT

Shreveport/Bossier City Louisiana

Urban Land Institute

Shreveport/Bossier City Louisiana

A Strategy for the Red River Communities

April 23–28, 2006
An Advisory Services Panel Report

ULI–the Urban Land Institute
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About ULI–the Urban Land Institute

ULI–the Urban Land Institute is a nonprofit research and education organization that promotes responsible leadership in the use of land in order to enhance the total environment.

The Institute maintains a membership representing a broad spectrum of interests and sponsors a wide variety of educational programs and forums to encourage an open exchange of ideas and sharing of experience. ULI initiates research that anticipates emerging land use trends and issues and proposes creative solutions based on that research; provides advisory services; and publishes a wide variety of materials to disseminate information on land use and development.

Established in 1936, the Institute today has more than 34,000 members and associates 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 America's most respected and widely quoted sources of objective information on urban planning, growth, and development.

This Advisory Services panel report is intended to further the objectives of the Institute and to make authoritative information generally available to those seeking knowledge in the field of urban land use.

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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. Many 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, participants 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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Foreword: The Panel's Assignment

Representatives from the Northwest Louisiana Board of Realtors asked ULI to assemble an Advisory Services panel to help the public and private sectors take a fresh look at some regional issues facing the Shreveport/Bossier City area. The panel was to provide a prospectus and recommendations on how to help the region prepare for its future, maximize its resources, and capitalize on the planning and economic development studies that have been completed.

The ULI team reviewed extensive briefing materials before coming to Shreveport/Bossier City. It started with a preliminary set of questions regarding the region's market potential, economic viability, planning environment, and organizational culture. After reviewing the extensive data and information available, touring the region, and interviewing more than 120 community members, business leaders, stakeholders, and civic leaders, the panel formulated its report. This report is based on what the panel believes is a structure that will help the community as a whole move beyond planning and report writing to action and visible results. There are many assets in this community and many exciting projects and initiatives. There are also areas of neglect and opportunity waiting to be seized.

Overview

This panel report is about moving beyond planning into the realm of doing. It is about taking key action steps, making assignments, being leaders in addressing those things in the region that need improvement, strengthening those things that are assets, and working together to make Shreveport, Bossier City, and the region the premier area that the panel believes it can be.

To be honest, the panel was working on information overload. Many studies, reports, and documents have been prepared. The panel reviewed them (some in greater detail than others) and believes they form a solid foundation on which to build beyond planning into action. It appears to the panel that there is a general fear—for lack of a better word—of putting some of the plans into action. Priorities need to be set, and both cities and the region need to begin being proactive in shaping their futures, not reactive to what is brought to them in development proposals.

Location map.

Regional map.

The intent of this report is to help the region create a unified vision, set priorities, establish the steps—the list of tasks—for getting each priority action done, and identify who should do what. No one person or organization can do all that is set forth in this report or all that needs to be done to achieve the vision. Doing it all will take teamwork and leadership. This means that people and organizations need to work on identifiable tasks that all come together to make the whole, without duplicating efforts.

Summary of Recommendations

The panel recommends that the cities undertake the following tasks:

- Initiate the rebranding of the entire metropolitan area as the Red River Communities. Provide leadership by speaking with one voice and portraying one vision for the Red River Communities.
- Focus organizational leadership to move beyond planning and report writing into discrete and action-oriented short-, mid-, and long-term tasks and responsibilities.
- Prepare new master plans for Shreveport and Bossier City that complement and reinforce each other and support the region as a whole. Plan each jurisdiction as a series of urban villages that have both a common theme (Red River Communities) and distinguishing features. Make design a key component of each urban village.
- Create a nonprofit historic preservation alliance to maintain and commemorate the entire array of historic structures and locations in the two cities.
- Prepare an outdoor recreation and open space strategy that cuts across all jurisdictions and celebrates the appeal of the Red River Communities. Foster and promote outdoor recreational activities such as hiking, biking, kayaking and canoeing, and leisure walking. Link the Red River and adjacent stream valleys, nearby wildlife refuges, and existing public parks into a coherent and traversable system.
- Work to maintain existing economic drivers such as the medical complex, the universities, Barksdale Air Force Base (AFB), the port, and the airport. Focus on new drivers that feed off existing development. Establish public/private partnerships that promote a strategy for future uses in and around the existing drivers.
- Complete four specific projects that will contribute to and will establish a track record for the rebranding of the cities as the Red River Communities:
  - Build a pedestrian bridge across the Red River to reconnect the downtowns. Complete construction by November 2008.
  - Revitalize Ledbetter Heights by promoting and encouraging new mixed-income, mixed-use development.
  - Revitalize Old Bossier by promoting and encouraging new mixed-income, mixed-use development.
  - Develop a mixed-use project in an adaptively used historic commercial building in the Texas Street corridor in downtown Shreveport.

The panel report is divided into the following sections:

- Regional overview: the panel's perception of the region;
- Master planning: what it is and what it means in this region;
- Guiding principles: what the Red River Communities can learn from successful regions;
- Districts and neighborhoods: moving from projects to community; and
- Implementation: the action items that can start today.

Regional Overview

The focus of this report is the greater Shreveport/Bossier City area, with specific scrutiny on the downtowns and commercial corridors of both cities. The Red River is the conspicuous natural feature in the study area. More than just a physical barrier, the river imposes a psychological rift between the two cities. This rift is embodied in the perception of Shreveport as the older, declining central city and Bossier as the "white flight" jurisdiction with both recent successes and emerging problems. Incorporated in 1839 as a steamboat and railroad town, Shreveport now acts as the economic and cultural center of northwest Louisiana. The oil boom in the early 20th century established Shreveport as the center of the oil industry for the three-state region known as Ar-La-Tex (Arkansas, Louisiana, and Texas). Allied industries, manufacturing, financing and banking, and agriculture dominated the economy through the end of the 1980s. Education was a natural offspring of the population and employment growth. Shreveport is home to several colleges, including Louisiana State University in Shreveport, Centenary College of Louisiana, Southern University at Shreveport, Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center Shreveport (a medical school), Bossier Parish Community College, and Louisiana Baptist University. With a combined population of more than 375,000 in the metropolitan area, Shreveport is the third largest city in Louisiana.

In the 1980s, the downturn in the oil industry adversely affected the two cities. In the 1990s, the two cities were successful in attracting the gaming industry to their downtowns. Both Shreveport and Bossier have several riverboat casinos that are the focus of both the local nightlife and the tourist industry. The casinos attract a substantial number of visitors from Texas. Both cities have used the revenue from these casinos to construct a variety of well-executed public works projects. However, there is some concern about how long the gaming industry will continue to be viable in the region if Texas passes gaming legislation. The state border lies only 20 miles west, so it is unlikely that the casinos will continue to be as lucrative as they have been. The attention that is being given to the downtowns from these gaming revenues, in the form of public projects, has not generally translated into a resurgence of commercial or residential development in the downtowns. In the meantime, typical sprawl development along commercial corridors has developed at the expense of the downtown cores.

The Shreveport Riverfront Park with the illuminated Texas Street bridge in the background.

This report outlines strategies and policies that will help all the jurisdictions begin to reassess the value of the urban core, establish a series of urban villages to help reduce sprawl and strengthen commercial areas, and reestablish the downtowns as the center of commercial and cultural life. The panel sees positive growth in fields such as medicine, multimodal transportation, and high technology associated with Barksdale AFB and the universities, and the emergence of an ethnically diverse downtown that can be cultivated into successful alternatives to the oil and gaming industries. The panel also sees the Red River as a tremendous asset that can be a unifying feature for the region.

Why a Master Plan?

Shreveport and Bossier City have each conducted various degrees of master planning that represents significant effort and thought. The panel received and reviewed the following documents (either master plans or components of master plans):

- Bossier Comprehensive Land Use and Development Plan (Wilbur Smith Associates, 2002);
- Bossier Parish Transportation Plan (2004);
- 1987 Master Plan Compendium Update for the Shreveport Metropolitan Planning Area (adopted October 21, 1987);
- Shreveport Metropolitan Master Plan, A Report on the 1980—1982 Amendments to the 1978 Plan (Stephen H. Pitkin, 1982);
- Shreveport Metropolitan Master Plan (August 1978);
- City of Shreveport Consolidated Plan '04–'08 (J. Quad & Associates, 2003, with the City of Shreveport Department of Community Development); and
- Shreveport Comprehensive Revitalization Strategies Addendum—Martin L. King Jr. Neighborhood and Cedar Grove Neighborhood (2003, prepared by J. Quad & Associates with the City of Shreveport Department of Community Development).

ULI believes that the master plan process is critical to smart growth and urban land development. This is true for both existing urban areas and greenfields at the fringes. The panel recommends first, that additional effort be expended to review the existing plans and strategies and consolidate recommendations into an updated master plan for each municipality and second, that a regional master plan that incorporates the several master plans be developed. The updated master plans must be specific and go beyond the existing plans' strategic approach to detail spatial layouts. Spatial master plans must set out how streets, squares, and open spaces are connected; define heights, bulk, and massing of buildings; and so on. Good spatial plans help shape places, making them distinctive and pointing them in directions for future change.

A master plan serves as a guide for future use of both urbanized land and undeveloped farm land. It should reflect a long-term vision as well as enable short-term decisions. Good master plans guide municipalities in two ways: (1) by creating a sense of place for the city and taking a proactive stance on what the city will be in the future and (2) by laying out the desired uses, determining major thoroughfares and their extensions, and planning water and sanitary sewer extensions.

Without a guide, development is more difficult to propose and approve. Homeowners should know what neighboring land uses are, so as to feel confident about what will be built around them; developers and investors need predictability in order to make significant economic decisions. A good land use plan helps all parties and facilitates land use decisions. Politics become much less of a factor in making zoning decisions. City and planning staff also need a guide to use when processing zoning applications. A master plan serves as the guide for the development of a city; zoning ordinances direct the implementation of development.

Design must be a key component of the master plan. Design standards for landscapes, hardscapes, and buildings must feed off the rich history of the two cities and the surrounding parishes. Development in the Ledbetter Heights and the Old Bossier neighborhoods should cater to the vivid architectural vernacular (shotgun style) while providing the modern conveniences of 21st-century building materials and standards. Likewise, greenfield development should strongly en-

A project announcing traditional neighborhood development is located in the southern suburbs of Shreveport.

courage design that re-creates, reflects, and commemorates the local past, using techniques from the traditional neighborhood development such as walkable streets, four-sided architecture, and a design approach focused on pattern, hierarchy, and detail.

The master plan should be broadly based. Community organizations, businesses, churches, educational institutions, the development and building industry, land owners, and neighborhood associations are among the groups that should be involved in the planning process. Because the plan will be developed through broad citizen input, it will reflect consensus as much as possible. Major issues can thus be dealt with before they arise, not in a heated session of the zoning commission in front of dozens of angry homeowners and applicants.

City staff and these stakeholders should carefully consider the future use of each tract of land within the city. Existing uses will generally be accepted, but future uses that better reflect consensus should be studied. Land use decisions should be made to best represent, as closely as possible, the goals of individual property owners, neighborhoods, and the metropolitan area as a whole. In many cases making such decisions will not be easy. Collaboration and compromise will be necessary.

Plans for undeveloped (outlying) property should reflect the vision of those crafting the master plan. Planning for such land can be more difficult because it entails applying a long-term vision to property that may not be developed for many years. Careful consideration must be given to projecting the impact of future traffic and the implications of utility extension, as well as costs, on the metropolitan area as a whole. When possible, urban villages should be considered when planning these outlying areas.

Because each tract and land parcel should be considered, the master plan process could take as long as a year. However, it is impossible to overemphasize the importance of spending this much time on something so productive.

After such significant effort has gone into the master plan, updating it will require much less time. Ideally the plan should be updated each year. That may seem unnecessarily frequent, but it means that much less time will be needed to update it. At the very least, the master plan should be updated every three years. It is crucial that this process focus on a sustainable, achievable vision and be done with as much citizen input as possible.

Guiding Principles

As the cities begin implementing the recommendations of this panel report, all involved should keep several principles in mind.

Make Decisions Regionally, Act Locally

The panel has named the region the Red River Communities to include not only Shreveport and Bossier City but also the smaller towns and unincorporated areas of Bossier and Caddo parishes. The Red River Communities is a regional economy with regional issues. It is now time to start thinking and acting as a region. Although many activities now happen on a regional level—marketing the region, some economic development activities, etc.—these actions need to be institutionalized among all government entities at all levels. That should include the city, parish, and federal (for Barksdale AFB) governments. Some decisions need to be made on a local level, but those should still be made in the context of the region. This is how the state of Florida approaches planning, and several other areas around the country are adopting this model.

Town vs. sprawl.

Consider the Region as a Collection of Urban Villages

Where past development has radiated from a central urban core, new development patterns around the country exhibit a more multicentric pattern. There are nodes of development around central activities. Instead of one downtown there may be a regional central business district and several smaller urban village centers that provide their immediate areas with an identity and a sense of community. Using this pattern is a key to avoiding sprawl. Design of the communities should be foremost in the decision-making process.

Restructure Regulations toward Public/Private Incentives

The regulations that support the regional and local plans (if applicable) need to allow government to be proactive, not just reactive. The panel's sense is that if a project comes in and it looks good, it is approved. There is not a lot of thought devoted to where a project fits into the overall regional vision or how it will enhance the community as a whole. The regulations that come from the master planning process should focus on partnerships, so that both the public sector and the private sector win. The regulations should also provide incentives that will result in the type of development that the communities want, not just what they are offered.

Emphasize the Public Realm to Connect Neighborhoods

The region is blessed with beautiful natural assets—the Red River and gently rolling hills—that should be incorporated into the overall vision and master plan for the region. Other areas of the public realm, such as streetscapes that are or can be made inviting, and parks and public open space, all need to be connected. Connected neighborhoods

and communities are easier to sustain than those that are cut off from each other by natural or built barriers. The challenge is to maintain the distinctiveness of each area while connecting them. Design must play an important role in the real estate development process. The sustainability of neighborhoods is strengthened when good design is considered and implemented.

Brand the Red River Communities

The panel developed the name Red River Communities, but the citizens of the region may choose a different name. The point is to create a name and a brand that will unify the region. Everyone knows that the Twin Cities are Minneapolis and St. Paul; the Bay Area is San Francisco, Oakland, Berkeley, and the surrounding communities; South Florida is Miami, Fort Lauderdale, and West Palm Beach; and Chicagoland includes not only the city of Chicago but also the surrounding communities. A brand will allow the region to market internally and externally.

Use Bottom-Up Community Involvement

For any region to succeed and prosper, planning and strategy building must develop from the community, not be directed by a select few. The more open and inclusive the process, the more community buy-in there is, and the greater the chance for success. Although an open, inclusive, bottom-up process may seem arduous to some, the result is a plan that will stand the test of time. Consensus cannot be achieved on every issue or proposal. However, following a process that allows consensus building will strengthen the city government's new approach to work for the greater good of the community.

Key Commercial and Mixed-Use Districts

The structure of today's metropolitan commercial districts has evolved. Instead of one commercial district downtown, metropolitan areas now have multiple commercial districts. In the Red River Communities, the panel has identified four major commercial districts:

- Red River District (all of downtown Shreveport and the Bossier City waterfront; area focused on culture, entertainment, and dining);
- Golden Triangle (the area of the hospital, Intertech Science Park, and Mall St. Vincent);
- Youree Drive District (specialty and big-box stores, auto, service); and
- Bossier Town Center (specialty and big-box stores, service).

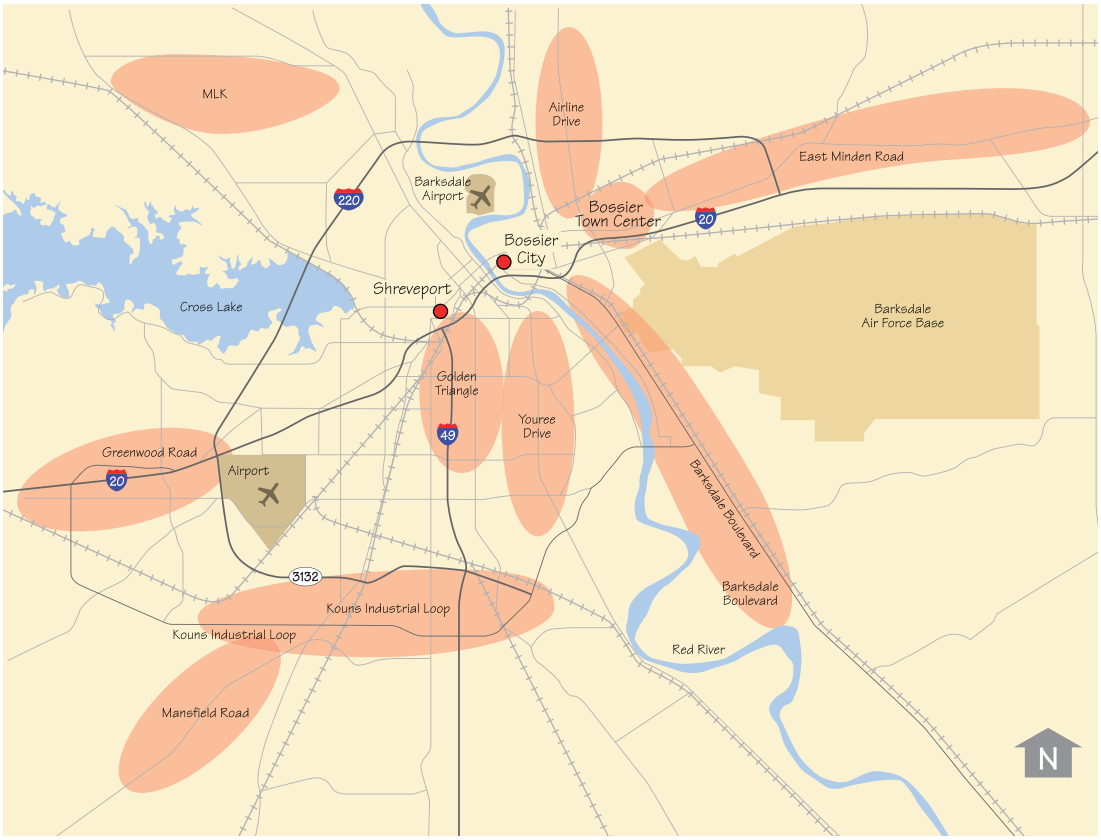
The panel supports the designation of the Red River District as the employment, cultural, entertainment, and dining center of the metro area. The Golden Triangle is the high-value location for emerging technologies and biomedical industries, along with Mall St. Vincent. The Youree Drive District, together with the nearby Mall St. Vincent, has become the retail center of the region with the most diverse selection of goods and services. Public policy should support this clustering of retail uses. Bossier Town Center is currently the municipal center for Bossier City, the site of Pierre Bossier Mall, strip malls, and big-box stores. All four districts should be designated urban villages. The public sector will need to assist in this transformation by creating appropriate regulatory mechanisms to support the evolution of these districts into more urban, mixed-use districts with pedestrian orientations, an evolution needed to strengthen their competitive positions.

In addition to these four urban commercial districts, the metropolitan area has numerous retail strips:

- Mansfield Road (south Shreveport);
- East Texas and Old Minden Roads, US-79/80 (east Bossier);
- Barksdale Boulevard (south Bossier);
- Airport Road (north Bossier);
- Greenwood Road, US-79/80 (west Shreveport);
- Martin Luther King Drive (MLK neighborhood); and
- Kouns Industrial Loop (Shreveport).

These and other retail strips in the region are in various states of economic health. A few are thriving, but most show unmistakable signs of slow deterioration, with marginal tenants and visual blight. This deterioration has a strong negative effect on surrounding neighborhoods and hastens both their loss of a sense of community and middle-class flight to other neighborhoods. In Shreveport and Bossier City, as in the rest of the country, the market for retail is evolving rapidly; consumer demands are changing and these strips are deteriorating because there is too much retail in better locations. Wal-Mart and similar stores are soaking up demand at the value end of retailing (the metro area has five—soon to be six—Wal-Marts). In addition, specialty shoppers are looking for different environments than strips provide.

The panel believes that both cities should focus on creating commercial districts rather than strips. A hierarchy of regional, community, and neighborhood commercial districts should be designated on the basis of the strength of the market along each strip. The cities should create an area plan for each commercial district or strip that reduces the amount of land zoned for retail at its outer edges. In addition, the zoning should be changed at selected locations along each strip, such as key intersections, to allow higher densities of mixed-use



Key commercial and mixed-use districts.

development and more urban building configurations (no setbacks) while maintaining low-density, auto-oriented areas, in line with evolving consumer demand. On deteriorating strips, areas should be rezoned for higher-density residential development or open space, recreational use, and services that are needed but not provided. This will strengthen neighborhoods near those strips, making them more livable and more desirable so that people remain in and want to move into them.

Walkable places with a higher-quality environment and design should be required at the densest locations along each strip. Single-family neighborhoods should be protected from encroachment by commercial development, and they should be linked by encouraging higher-density residential uses and standard pedestrian requirements—especially sidewalks, pedestrian signals, and higher standards for landscaping and building design. The goal should be to build an image along each strip that reinforces the role that the market will support for each district in the coming years.

It is the panel's opinion that these roles will differ greatly from the current dysfunctional strip retail, and that in the future cities will have to accommodate these differences to be successful. To achieve this gradual change, the Red River Communities should aggressively design and use incentives such as density bonuses, transfer of development rights, tax abatements, and direct public infrastructure improvements.

The Red River District

The panel believes strongly that the Red River District should be extended to take in all of downtown Shreveport as well as the Bossier City waterfront. This is more than a symbolic decision; it reflects the need to rebrand the greater downtown area based on its greatest strength. It reflects the reality that the economic energy is scattered on both sides of the river and in sections away from the riverfront. It also embraces the fact that residents and visitors move back and forth across the river seamlessly while engaged in

The Red River entertainment district.

their day-to-day activities. Decisions made in both communities should recognize this reality and reinforce the opportunity for more connections.

A larger Red River District has significant competitive advantages that each city's downtown does not have independently. Within the combined district are found most of the region's casinos, the boardwalk and cinema complex, other entertainment venues, restaurants and clubs, the major concentration of offices, the new convention center, museums and tourist attractions, theaters, riverfront parks, and an emerging arts and cultural district. This is an impressive amount of activity, and both cities have made tremendous progress in transforming this combined downtown district and creating a regional destination. The panel applauds these efforts. But some projects are struggling, some have failed, and the downtown is not yet fulfilling its potential.

To rebuild momentum and to sustain progress requires filling in the missing pieces in the downtown puzzle and creating more bridges between them. The panel believes that both cities need to move more aggressively from developing anchor projects, which the downtowns now have, to creating successful areas that function synergistically within the Red River District. Strategies that connect these projects with smaller-scale retail, dining, and arts and music–related activities need to be reinforced, so that downtown demand grows, momentum builds, and activities better support one another to achieve a successful whole.

The panel strongly believes that the most important missing piece of the puzzle—the key to success—needed to make all these other activities doable from a development perspective and sustainable from a market perspective, is a critical mass of residential development. Without significant residential development in the Red River District, the panel does not believe that these additional activities will evolve downtown. To this end, a major short-term recommendation is for both cities to immediately initiate a development process to bring the recommended critical mass of housing to both sides of the river. This process will support the regional vision for a thriving and exciting regional downtown that will continue to drive the regional economy.

The Golden Triangle

The Golden Triangle is the rebranded name proposed for the primary center of high-technology, new-economy employment in the metro area. It is an established, urban, medium-density hospital district that is slowly growing as a mixed-use location with a strong regional draw. It has the potential to be a model for the kind of urban village that the panel envisions for other locations, with a mix of high-value jobs, retail services, institutional uses, and housing types that are not well represented in the regional market, including retirement housing, urban mixed-use housing, and affordable housing.

The opportunity to leverage the attributes of this district are great, not only because of the hospital and associated high-tech jobs but also because this district is adjacent to the higher-end shopping at Mall St. Vincent, the exclusive residential neighborhoods such as Fairfield and South Highland, and the more affordable neighborhoods to the north and west. Other draws are its proximity to downtown and great regional freeway accessibility. In addition, this district has ample land that has outlived its usefulness for industrial use and needs redevelopment. All these factors give this location a strong competitive advantage. The panel strongly supports the type of pedestrian, lifestyle-oriented, live-work-play environment planned by the Medical Research Foundation in this district. This environment can be a prototype of the type of contemporary urban development that could occur in this location and that could be seen in other parts of the metro area if the recommendations made today are implemented.

BioSpace 1, part of the Intertech Office Park.

There are many challenges to overcome to achieve this vision, including environmental cleanup; reuse or replacement of existing buildings; provision of infrastructure such as landscaped streets, sidewalks, and other pedestrian amenities; and competition from other metropolitan areas. Developments of this type and complexity usually require some type of public/private partnership to achieve success, as well as a champion to drive the project from inception to completion. The city of Shreveport should develop incentives for the higher-value, mixed-use environment that the market will support in this location, in order to leverage the private investment needed to achieve the vision.

Residential Communities

Shreveport and Bossier City are blessed with many beautiful, livable, and distinct neighborhoods. As in other cities, some are historic and need revitalization to serve 21st-century needs. Others are newer and fall in a range of prices, from modest to luxurious. To be competitive in a global economy, the metro area must value all its neighborhoods, old and new, and create the kind of residential environment in each that will ensure that residents want to remain and that new residents are attracted. Diversity of housing types, opportunities, and social environments should be every community's goal, but some neighborhoods have been left behind, to the detriment not only of their residents' quality of life but also of the health of the metro area.

In partnership with the private sector, the cities need to actively protect and preserve the character of neighborhoods as a whole, not just individual buildings. They need to establish long-term programs to restore and maintain infrastructure in all neighborhoods to the standards currently applied in new development areas. They need to develop incentives for mixed-income housing to replace public housing and to fill in empty sites adjacent to and within commercial districts and in other urban locations, so as to provide more choices and stabilize neighborhoods. The panel strongly believes that the cities should avoid creating isolated low-income residential enclaves, whether in inner-city neighborhoods or near the fringes of the metro area.

The Red River Railroad Bridge is a testament to the multimodal nature of the transportation system in Shreveport and Bossier City.

Strong neighborhoods offer the cities the opportunity to leverage their appeal and expand their success into surrounding neighborhoods that need to be strengthened. But all neighborhoods require basic prerequisites to be successful. These prerequisites usually include security, good schools, commercial and governmental services, affordable housing, access to good jobs and a living wage, and an environment that reflects and enhances the lifestyles of residents. Each city should aggressively work toward providing these prerequisites.

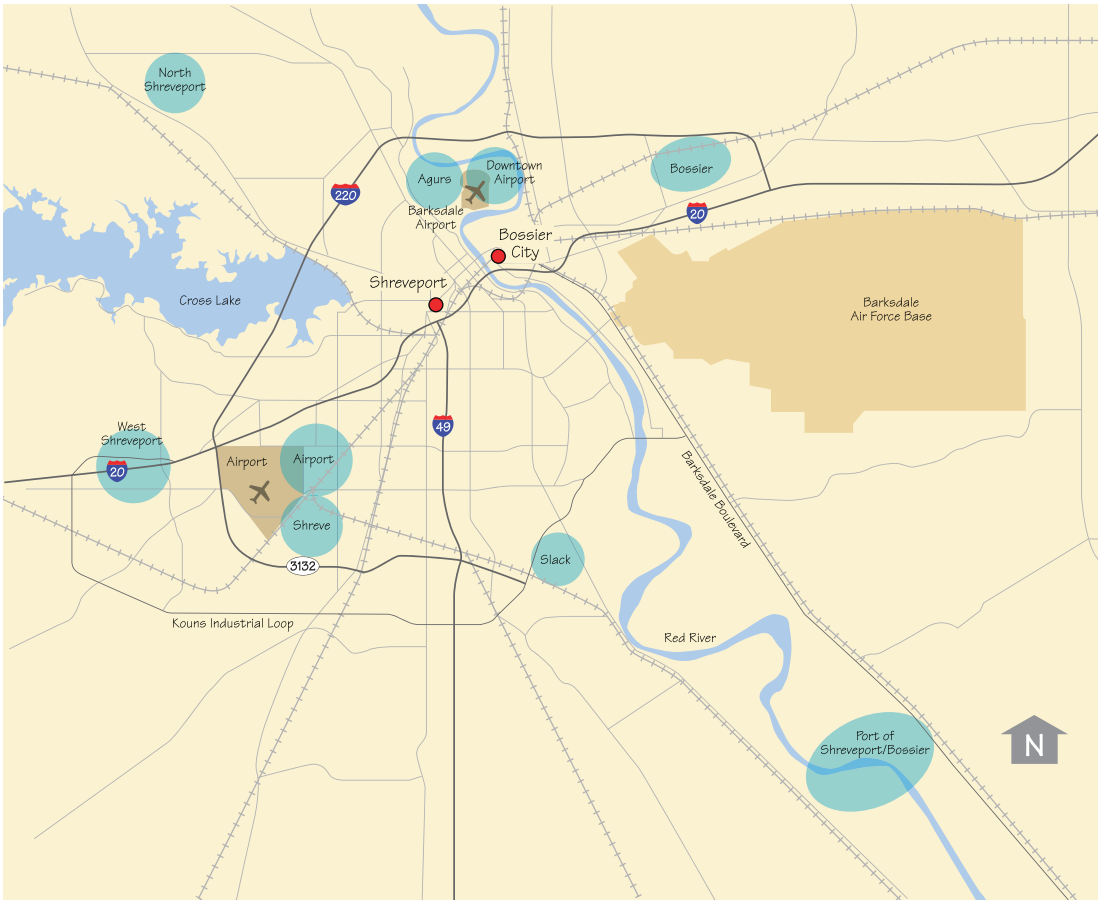
To achieve these goals, each residential neighborhood should have its own area plan that is coordinated by the city but generated from the bottom up. Each plan must be underpinned and supported by a market study that identifies existing land uses and future land uses by parcel, changes zoning where required, and lays out strategies and incentives for achieving development and redevelopment goals. Each neighborhood has different needs, and the specifics of each plan will differ. For example, several low-income neighborhoods require a strategy for property adjudication.

Industrial Parks and the Port

The Red River Communities are ideally located and equipped to continue growing as a major transportation center and transshipment point for use by trains, trucks, ships, and airplanes. The market has 16 million square feet of industrial space, renting for about $3 to $3.50 per square foot. Occupancy is currently about 75 percent. Most industrial space is in Shreveport, and considerable land and buildings are available in parks on both sides of the river. The cities own most industrial parks; the port is a public industrial development authority.

The metro area has an impressive combination of major transportation systems and nodes:

- Kansas City Southern (KCS) and Union Pacific Class 1 rail access;
- KCS switching yard;
- I-49 and the planned I-49 extension;
- I-20 and I-220;
- Planned I-69;



Key industrial parks.

- Shreveport Regional Airport;
- Port of Shreveport-Bossier; and
- Shreveport Downtown Airport (adjacent to Agurs Business Park).

The metro area also has an abundance of industrial parks that are well located, with ample undeveloped land to serve the needs of the community for many years:

- West Shreveport Industrial Park;
- North Shreveport Industrial Park;
- Shreve Park Industrial Campus;
- Bossier Industrial Park;
- Agurs Business Park;
- Freestate Industrial Park;
- Shreveport Airport Regional Airport Park; and
- Slack Industrial Park (privately owned).

To be successful going forward, the following actions should be taken:

- Jointly market the metro area's publicly owned industrial parks.
- Better identify themes or types of uses in different locations based on accessibility and proximity to affinity industries; aggressively direct potential tenants to appropriate sites, no matter which park those sites are located in.
- Accommodate future expansion at the port to the east and west, so that it becomes not only a place for receiving materials but also a place for exporting products. Expansion to the west will provide a link to the KCS class 1 rail line, which will facilitate NAFTA (North American Free

Trade Agreement) trade opportunities. Expansion should avoid conflicts with other land uses in the future.

- Link industrial uses with local educational institutions, Barksdale AFB, and other institutions to create synergy.
- Market the port as a better strategic location for major port facilities in the Gulf Coast region, a location outside the major hurricane areas.

Barksdale Air Force Base

Barksdale AFB is home to the Eighth Air Force, the 2nd Bomb Wing, and the 917th Wing Air Wing. Home of the "Deuce" and the "Mighty Eighth," Barksdale serves as a primary location for active B-52 bombers and reserve attack aircraft and as the strategic and administrative center for one of only three numbered Air Forces within Air Combat Command. The technology and information resources of the air wings and headquarters operation constitute an economic and intellectual community that must be leveraged. Around the country, cities with military bases are attempting to forge links between the technology of the base and the private sector.

In order to keep Barksdale as an economic engine, the panel recommends the following actions:

- Identify an individual or organization to act as the lead for both cities in their dealings with the base.
- Continue to make the installation part of the Red River Communities' future.
- Involve the commander, tenant commands, planners, and facility managers in decisions that could affect Barksdale in the near term.
- Encourage and participate in updating the Joint Land Use Study that is being pursued by the base managers.
- Abide by the recommendations of the Air Installations Compatible Use Zones (AICUZ) regarding noise and accident potential zones.
- Recognizing that no change is planned for operations at Barksdale, begin a dialogue that will prepare the community for life beyond the B-52. Prepare an outline of a marketing plan that can leverage the current knowledge base, technologies, and secure location to attract additional missions, product lines, and technologies. Determine what other components of the Air Combat Command and other major commands can relocate to the area.
- Engage major stakeholders at the local, state, and federal levels (read: members of Congress) to move new military and civilian missions to Barksdale and the immediate area.

Historic Preservation, Arts, and Cultural Contributions

To diversify its tourist attractions, the cities should improve the visibility of the arts community and strengthen access to the cities' historic character. This class of activities is likely to attract visitors who are looking for experiences in addition to gaming and could result in longer visitor stays and improved quality of development in the historic core.

Historic Preservation

Even a casual visitor to the area will be struck by the presence of many fine historic buildings, though many are boarded up and deteriorating. Some are literally empty facades, while others appear to be in sound condition but unused. The west edge of the Texas Street corridor downtown is beginning to see adaptive use as an arts and cultural district, which is to be applauded and supported vigorously. In other districts and corridors the remaining building stock is in severe danger of being lost forever, as much of it already has been.

The preservation of historic structures is, in and of itself, a worthy goal, because such structures are touchstones to our collective past and are, frankly, not duplicable today at any cost. Simply put, once they are gone, they are gone forever. Adaptive use of architecturally interesting buildings in the mixed-use building typologies that contribute so strongly to a sense of place can be very lucrative for developers. This has been proven in cities large and small across the country, though often governmental incentives are needed to get

The historic buildings in downtown Shreveport offer excellent opportunities for more vibrant urban living.

the process started and to maintain the momentum of development.

The existence of such renovated structures in a vibrant, mixed-use downtown area is a strong draw for downtown and hospitality workers, young professionals, empty nesters, and, in particular, the mobile knowledge workers called the creative class, who can live anywhere around the country and who are so highly sought by all communities. The preferred building types feature high ceilings, large windows, wooden floors, visible ductwork, piping, and wiring, and wide open areas with minimal walls. These structures are cost-effective though not inexpensive to renovate. Examples of highly desired mixed uses are residential lofts above retail, live-work spaces, office lofts, galleries, performance spaces, restaurants, and cafés. Adding culture and the arts to the mix brings additional economic benefits in terms of quality-of-life enhancement for all citizens and accelerated tourism generation.

The panel was not made aware of any historic preservation organization in the region, so the first, short-term goal is to create one.

Historic preservation alliance. Create a nonprofit historic preservation alliance, encompassing concerned citizens, property owners, architects, developers, investors, lenders, artists, and members of the media. The initial objectives of the preservation alliance, which is a long-term organization, should include the following:

- Creating an inventory of historic structures and neighborhoods, starting with the Texas Street corridor on both sides of the Red River and the Ledbetter Heights area;
- Raising funds to perform emergency preservation measures, such as roof repair;
- Researching and disseminating information on state and federal historic, low-income, and new markets tax credits, as well as promoting historic tax abatements to community development groups, for-profit developers, and the relevant governmental authorities;
- Raising awareness throughout the community of the importance of and obligation to achieve preservation;

Many buildings can be renovated to help reinvent downtown.

- Creating an awards program for well-conceived and -achieved projects;
- Building alliances with arts pioneers and groups as well as commercial tenants to use revitalized structures; and
- Designing, financing, and developing catalytic projects, in concert with such groups as the Strategic Action Committee and FAME, such as those proposed in the Organizational Leadership section of this report

Historic preservation ordinance. A medium-term goal to be pursued by the preservation alliance is the creation and adoption of a historic preservation ordinance by all the municipal governments affected. For the purposes of simplicity and regional unity, the ordinance should be the same in all municipalities in the area, because the issues are identical. The ordinances will require protection for historic structures and areas, making it less easy for property owners to demolish historic structures and requiring at least minimum upkeep to prevent the buildings from becoming endangered. Many municipalities have preservation ordinances that work very well in accomplishing these purposes and can serve as guides for the creation of strong, equitable ordinances in this region.

Historic districts. A second medium-term goal is the identification, through the proposed inventory, of appropriate historic districts and their subsequent recognition by city, state, and federal authorities. The creation of historic districts, of which the Red River Communities could have several, simplifies the process of securing tax credits and abatements. It also leads to the creation of strong property owner groups within each district, which could lobby the appropriate city for a protective overlay district or could build consensus for the voluntary adoption of districtwide deed restrictions that achieve similar purposes.

Historic preservation. The long-term goal, which by definition the region must begin work on immediately, is the preservation of every structure considered historic as well as those that will attain that distinction with the passage of time. This does not imply that every building existing today should qualify for historic structure designation and protection from demolition. In fact, many ex-

isting old buildings are functionally obsolete, using land inefficiently and detrimentally to the course of redevelopment. There are well-established guidelines, put forth by the U.S. Department of the Interior as well as local jurisdictions, for the qualification of areas and structures for historic tax credits and abatements. These guidelines can provide a ready guide to understanding the preservation value of individual properties and districts.

Arts and Culture

Advancement of the arts and culture can often be linked with the preservation and adaptive use of historic structures in a mutually synergistic way. The Shreveport/Bossier City region has done an admirable job of reinvigorating the existing historic infrastructure to promote these essential elements of what is called quality of life, but it has not fully taken into consideration the necessity for clustering that is so vital to the long-term viability of these structures.

Although the Strand Theater and Municipal Auditorium is somewhat isolated, thereby raising issues of security, the renovation of the building successfully pays tribute not only to the historic value of the building but also to the productions and performers who have appeared there over the long course of the building's existence and who continue to perform there. The current offerings contribute to the richness of daily life and cultural tourism, as well as paying homage to the legends, such as the Louisiana Hayride radio show, that are part of the history of this place. Dedicated support groups, such as FAME (the Foundation for Arts, Music & Entertainment), should be applauded and supported as they seek to broaden the appeal and offerings of these facilities and surrounding areas.

The presence of museums in the historic buildings, such as the Antique & Classic Vehicle Museum and the Spring Street Museum, is augmented by the development of new, purpose-built attractions nearby, such as Sci-Port and the Army Corps of Engineers Regional Visitors Center. All contribute to the sense (and reality) of the collective downtown as more than a central business district that rolls up the pavement at 5:01 p.m. each day.

The Strand Theater is the focus of the resurgence of cultural activities in downtown Shreveport.

A particularly intriguing congregation of renovated and current reuse projects is beginning to form a small cultural district on Texas Street near the First United Methodist Church. In what is called the West Edge in the Downtown 2010 Redevelopment Strategy plan, the number of small to medium-sized installations is beginning to reach critical mass, though public and private support is still critical to ensure the survival of these facilities. These entrepreneurial and nonprofit endeavors, such as the ArtSpace multidisciplinary art center, Tipitina's Music Coop, and Odyssey Sound Lab, are soon to be joined by the Robinson Film Center, currently under construction, and the River City Repertory Theatre, currently in the fundraising stage. These facilities should be surrounded, sooner rather than later, by the ancillary development of loft residential and office uses, restaurants, and cafés, that will help enrich people's experience of the area.

Across the Red River, the Old Bossier Municipal Building has been adaptively used and expanded by the Bossier Arts Council into the East Bank Theatre and Gallery. Tying both cities together is a particularly impressive series of large-scale wall murals, creating a continuous thread of public art along Texas Street and through the heart of the region. Throughout the united urban core are installed numerous impressive statues, sculptures, and amenities, such as the metal flowers sculpture, amphitheater, and fountains at the new Riverfront Park. Gateway monuments are planned as well.

Taken individually, pieces of public art may not make much of a statement, but taken as a whole, a well-planned and well-maintained program of public art makes a grand statement about a community's view of itself as a creative, culturally attuned place. This is an excellent message to deliver to residents, who will come to their unified downtown ever more frequently for work or for shopping, dining, gaming, or performances. It is also an excellent message to deliver to the growing number of tourists from other regions who will visit for conventions, gambling, recreation, or cultural tourism. With historic preservation, the arts and culture form the bedrock on which efforts to retain and attract creative class workers are based. The panel cannot emphasize enough that the positive efforts already undertaken and future initiatives to promote historic preservation, restoration, and adaptive use, as well as arts and cultural manifestations, will enrich the region far beyond the dollar investments required.

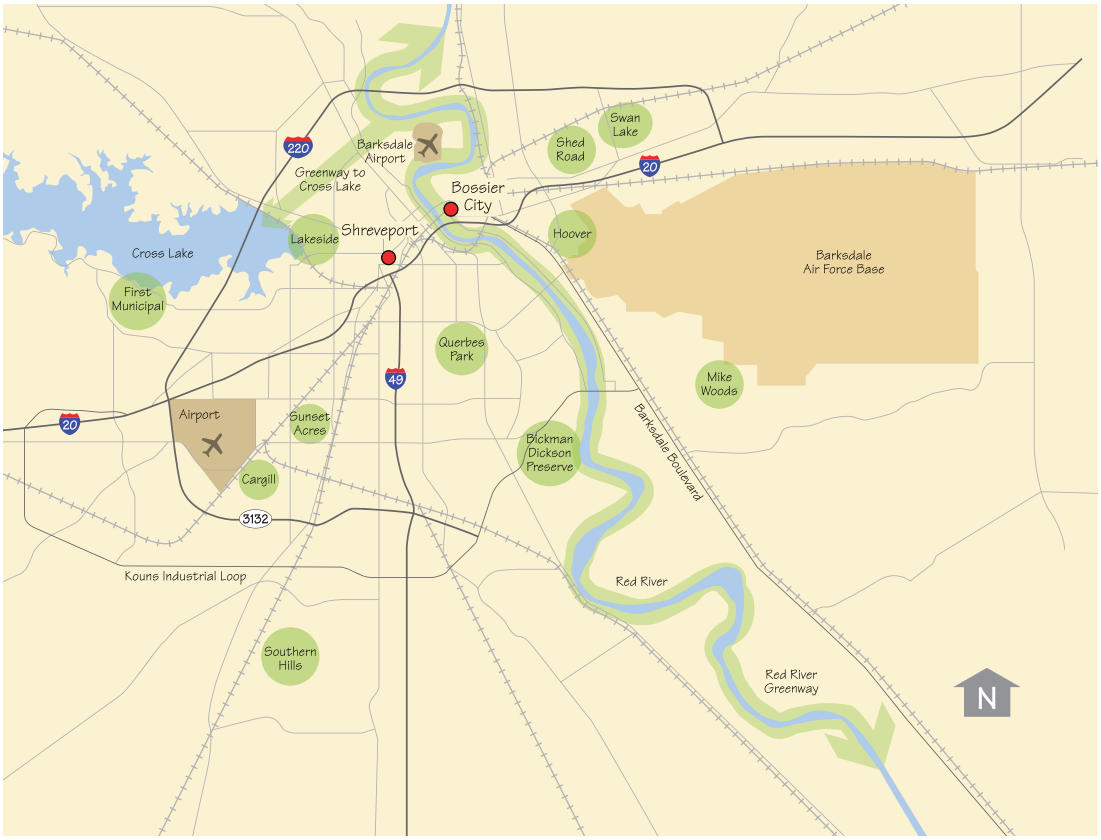
Regional arts congress. As a starting point to further the aims of arts and culture development, a short-term implementation goal is this: Hold a regional arts congress to assess the state of the arts, build alliances between organizations and artists, and start the process of creating a regional alliance to promote cooperative funding and marketing mechanisms. The arts congress should be composed of existing nonprofit and for-profit organizations such as the Shreveport Regional Arts Council, the Bossier Arts Council, FAME, the museums, theater groups, the film center, gallery managers and owners, the new sound stage company across from the Shreveport casinos, the Red River Entertainment District, and individual artists and cultural providers across the broadest spectrum possible.

Regional arts and cultural alliance. A medium-term goal, to come out of the arts congress, is to create a truly regional arts and cultural alliance to promote cooperative funding and marketing mechanisms for all nonprofit and for-profit individuals and groups. Speaking with a united voice in marketing offerings to the local populace and to visitors should improve attendance at all venues, which in turn automatically helps resolve the constant funding issues that arts venues and artists always struggle with. Also, the potential exists to tap into new governmental funding resources, such as a portion of the hotel tax, which funds the arts in many municipalities. The regional structure is essential to continue the panel's theme of building bridges. Strengthening the arts and culture of the region will improve the self-image of the population and enhance the viability of the area for tourism, thus increasing the revenues that fund the hotel tax.

Shreveport's Historic Music Village. Another goal is to assess the capacity of FAME to create Shreveport's Historic Music Village, with its attendant historic restoration, historic appreciation, musical heritage, and digital media features. The village is proposed to be located in the Ledbetter Heights neighborhood. If necessary, FAME should create an alliance with other groups to put this plan into action. Considerable worthy effort has gone into this plan, and there is much in it that the panel applauds, but it is likely that a considerably larger alliance will be required to bring about the ambitious arts and real estate components. The fund being sponsored by the Strategic Action Committee could well be the financial backbone for a multiphased, multianchored, long-term redevelopment effort in Ledbetter Heights and the Blue Goose neighborhood.

Outdoor Recreation

The opportunities to build on the richness of the land and waters in the region are apparent but not fully realized. Local residents enjoy the Red River and Cross Lake for boating and fishing. On



Outdoor recreation areas.

a sunny day, the riverfront park is full of families with small children enjoying the fountains; the trails along both sides of the river are enjoyed daily by walkers, runners, and bikers. Those assets provide a glimpse of the opportunities to engage both residents and growing numbers of visitors in this obvious but often taken for granted resource. As the region develops, if the natural assets are not valued, explicitly identified, and protected, their full potential will be wasted.

Bossier City has done an excellent comprehensive plan, in which significant areas are identified as open space and floodplains as well as traditional sports parks. Shreveport has not done a master plan for at least 20 years, but a few years ago a private group developed a plan called "The String of Pearls" that proposed a comprehensive trails system connecting the Medical Center, universities, parks, and neighborhoods throughout the city. Building on these two efforts, with vision and leadership, the region can protect its natural resources and develop them as a major competitive advantage and as a quality-of-life choice.

The following actions should happen:

- A combined overlay map of both plans should become the basis for public discussion.
- A parks conservancy should be created and empowered to develop the regional recreation plan. This organization would not have responsibility for local municipal parks.
- An explicit funding source should be identified to provide predictable resources to develop and maintain the parks.
- Both parishes should provide protection so that the waterfronts continue to be accessible to the public.

Cleveland, Denver, and a host of other cities are good models to follow.

Implementation

The ability of Shreveport and Bossier City to become a vibrant, viable, and diverse economic region will depend in large measure on the actions taken by their leaders. The following section outlines specific actions that can be undertaken to achieve the recommendations of this panel report.

Organizational Leadership

Leaders should focus first on taking care of local needs and then on acting regionally. However, on several occasions the panel was struck by a lack of sensitivity to the Red River Communities' regional nature and to the potential for leveraging it. The panel observed that the community is penalizing itself through lack of coordination and through competition in efforts to grow each city and the region, resulting in a drain of energy and potential. The overriding theme in responses to the interview question about what people wished for was more collaborative leadership in economic development.

Economic development requires both organization and leadership. This report has emphasized the need for a master plan to inform and shape the physical development of a city. But the best-crafted master plan in the world cannot create a sense of place in its inanimate form. Just as the words articulating the vision need to be drawn from a wide cross-section of stakeholders, people are needed to breathe life into a master plan. Without individuals and organizations that understand, are committed to, and are empowered to implement the vision, the best master plan will remain a document on a shelf. People do the work of economic development. It can truly be said that economic development is "of the people, by the people, and for the people."

Cities are a reflection of the people who live, work, and play within their boundaries. The community's self-perception will project the city's culture to outsiders and to newcomers. The attitudes of those one encounters when visiting a city send inherent messages, whether delivered through verbal or nonverbal cues. Therefore, the city's culture is the foundation of its external reputation and it must be understood and managed.

Culture can create the physical space of a city, and the physical space in a city can influence its culture. The influence of the human psyche on decision making regarding land use cannot be underestimated. The attitudes and perceptions of the individuals in a city cause them to make judgments about what will and what will not work, where to build or not, where to work or not, where to play or not, and where is safe or not. These judgments may not be based in reality. Individual judgments turn into the decisions made by the groups and organizations to which the individuals belong. As newcomers are integrated, a cycle occurs that can be positive or negative depending on the particular judgment.

The Red River Communities present an interesting case in this regard because two cities with somewhat different cultures are attempting to combine efforts for economic development. Yet there is much similarity in their cultures, despite the apparent differences in demography and income. "Southern hospitality and heritage run deep in the soul of these two cities," as stated on the Red River Communities website, and there is a certain relaxed sense of being in a small town. Almost every interviewee indicated that the geographic boundaries of the physical systems of the two cities were for formal political and legal purposes of governing and that the human system, the individuals living and working in both Shreveport and Bossier City, considers the two cities more as "communities rather than cities." This is not to say that there are not differences. Bossier City, "spunky and proud," no longer wants to be

"the stepsister or afterthought" to Shreveport and has taken on an entrepreneurial, can-do attitude, though residents nonetheless often think of Bossier City as the "little sister." Shreveport is proud of its history yet hampered by its awareness that it is only as strong as its weakest link.

The panel notes that the Red River Communities suffer from an inferiority complex, a focus on weaknesses instead of strengths. Citizens, business owners, and officials have a sense that the cities are not good enough. There is a critical need to come together in partnership to ensure that the image that the Red River Communities project accurately reflects the reality of the area in 2006. Partnership will be equally important for helping residents to stop viewing the region as a victim of circumstance. The spirit of willingness is pervasive, but the flesh of action is weak. It is time to harness the energy that abounds within the communities.

Economic development initiatives cannot succeed unless the city's quality-of-life issues are addressed. Quality of life comprises factors that relate to health, education, housing, welfare, and safety. It also requires attention to the sustainability factors of environment, arts, culture, and recreation. There is a direct correlation between successful economic development and improvement in quality of life. The panel believes that the Red River Communities must address these issues to enhance the region's desirability and its prospects for economic development. Interviewees spoke both positively and critically on the current quality of life in the Red River Communities. The ease of living in the communities was lauded by all. Many noted that many neighborhoods had been "looked through," while some went as far as to comment that the "polarization of housing is insane." A recurrent theme was the quality of education, both of children and for the workforce in the city.

Collaboration

Committed civic groups with community, business, and nonprofit leaders have demonstrated a desire to maximize the possibilities of the Red River Communities. These groups include people and organizations who were committed enough to "put their money where their mouth is." The breadth and depth of support are evident in the sponsorship of the ULI Advisory Panel: of the 26 groups involved, no single group contributed more than 20 percent of the underwriting of the costs and the private sector sponsors jointly contributed more than 60 percent of the costs. This is to be celebrated. The region has all the ingredients for inclusivity and partnering. Its various long-tenured communities are represented by at least 64 neighborhood associations. This diverse set of community and neighborhood groups is eager to work with the administration of the Red River Communities to maximize the region's possibilities.

Now is the time to bring the community together, heal its old wounds, boost its confidence, and move forward toward a common future. This process will help the region develop a winning community spirit. Bringing the community together can happen only by leveraging the perspectives of everyone who lives and works in the Red River Communities. Collaboration and relationship building will help position the region and defeat many of the negative perceptions. To accomplish this, the region must come to grips with its public image.

Interviewees expressed a real concern for, but most importantly a commitment to, improving the economic future of the Red River Communities as a region. They cited workforce development, transportation, taxation, social disparity, and the quality of education as the primary issues to address in order to transform the region. They also expressed the belief that securing greater state support would require that the Red River Communities be consistent in its approach to the state government and have a unified plan and agreed-on list of priorities, given the competing needs in southern Louisiana since Hurricane Katrina.

The local perception is that the public and private sectors cannot work together to achieve economic development goals. Yet there are examples of collaboration in activities such as transportation planning. Throughout the panel's week-long visit, panel members heard recurring themes of exclusion of the rank-and-file public from the city's decision-making processes. Nearly every constituency believed that there was limited opportunity for providing meaningful input or receiving attention in economic development activities. The

gap in trust between government, business owners, and residents creates a roadblock to investment in the region.

The rest of this section outlines two initiatives that are intended to increase community participation and inclusion. The first, which we call Red River Communities 20/20, is an ongoing commitment to broaden public participation and the inclusion of the region's constituents. The second brings the region's corporate and private sector leaders together in an ongoing consortium of key leaders that we call One Voice on One Vision. This consortium should advise the city, foster regional cooperation, and present a unified voice and vision for economic development policy and initiatives.

Short-Term Action Item: Red River Communities 20/20

The Red River Communities 20/20 partnership process seeks to create a platform for genuine community outreach and involvement, with the end goals of economic development and enhanced quality of life, by creating a culture of collaboration and pride. It is in bringing people together to address the community's demands that people begin talking to each other and that they sell themselves to themselves. The function of Red River Communities 20/20 is to provide community participation in economic development and other city processes, with the goal of increasing awareness of opportunities and desire to take advantage of those opportunities. The partnership process is a symbolic joining of the cities and parishes with their citizens to ensure an inclusive decision-making process that creates the foundation for one voice or one vision for the development of the region. The goal is to provide a forum in which, through a series of summits and events, people who work, live, and play in the Red River Communities can:

- Connect and learn about each other's neighborhoods, organizations, and businesses;
- Identify needs and desires for the future of the region;
- Understand the inventory of assets already abundant within the region; and
- Openly tackle the challenges that everyone perceives so that participants can celebrate the strengths of their communities from a perspective based on realities.

Step 1: Disseminate the panel's findings. The sponsors of the Advisory Panel should meet and draft a summary of the findings of the panel. It should be made public and posted on the websites of the cities and other sponsoring entities as appropriate.

Step 2: Host a Red River Communities 20/20 summit. The partnership should be started by a day- or weekend-long summit convened by either the mayors or an independent third party such as America Speaks. This summit should take place within 60 days of this report's publication. Participants should include a variety of constituents from across the region, similar in scope to the cross-section of stakeholders interviewed by the ULI panel. Neighborhood action councils, community development councils, business leaders, religious leaders, arts and entertainment groups, and the general public should be invited. Attendance should be mandatory for all political leaders, including elected city council members, appointed city board members, and state delegates. The goal is to come together and begin the process of building consensus on what the Red River Communities want to become. Each participating organization should prepare organizational goals, activities, and concerns to share with others.

The summit has three principal goals. First is to discuss this report with the citizens of the Red River Communities. Second is for the assembled group to outline the economic development and quality-of-life goals and concerns of the citizens. A written report should be circulated by the convening group. The individual communities may also wish to draft or revise agency mission statements that reflect the outcome of the summit. Third is to settle on a format for community input into master planning, visioning, and economic development goal setting. The community participants may decide to hold workshops, public hearings, or town halls or to conduct charettes or surveys, or to use other public involvement tools. An important part of this goal is to raise the profile of the neighborhood- and community-based organizations; these groups should play a substantial

role in the summit and in future events involving the public.

Red River Communities 20/20 is not a new agency or entity. It is a commitment between the corporate, public, nonprofit, and private sectors to come together on a regular basis to share ideas and develop a clear vision of mutual concerns. The panel hopes that the summit will help resolve any grievances that citizens of the Red River Communities harbor. Further, the panel hopes that the public interest and involvement seen during the panel visit will carry over into the series of public events held under the auspices of Red River Communities 20/20. The region's governments should be proactive in soliciting the input of the entire community, which will help build community consensus.

Regional Leadership Council

The panel proposes a regional leadership council to help foster a coordinated approach to communications among the jurisdictions. This regional leadership council will act as the clearinghouse for all Red River Communities initiatives. The Red River Communities 20/20 summit will be the starting point for the council's deliberations.

Mid-Term Action Item: One Voice, One Vision

To begin to address the region's needs, corporate leaders proposed initiating a dialogue between the mayors and state leaders through the creation of a corporate leadership roundtable, similar to a successful initiative implemented in Bridgeport, Connecticut. This roundtable should be a strong regional council consisting of committed leaders from the private sector who have clear authority to represent their organizations and constituencies. Working with the mayors and parish administrations of the region's urban core, the council should seek to achieve consensus on common regional strategies and priorities for economic development. The council also may choose to commit its collective financial, time, and staff resources to achieving these priorities.

This regional leadership council should advise and inform the mayors on their ongoing efforts to reorganize the Red River Communities' economic development organizations by clearly defining roles, eliminating competing priorities, and consolidating responsibilities. The council can work to identify and prioritize the objectives of the region's economic development plan and can maintain focus and momentum without regard for election cycles.

In the interviews, corporate leaders said that the development of a consensus plan is essential to securing continued state investment in the Red River Communities. Such a plan—when presented to state legislators and private sector decision makers—will clearly demonstrate the region's unity and its commitment to achieving economic development goals. The region's corporate leaders can likely connect with state lawmakers and agencies in a different way than local government leaders can. Therefore, a major goal of the leadership council is to work with the state government to repair state-city relationships and move forward into a new era of cooperation.

The ULI panel recommends the establishment of this regional leadership council within 90 days of this report's publication. The council will immediately begin work to provide a vision and direction for the development and implementation of a comprehensive agenda for regional economic development. Three organizations already in place should be incorporated into this council. The Strategic Action Council is a self-anointed group of seven organizations that came together following the Belden-Daniels study of economic development needs; it has developed excellent strategies that need to be acted on. This group recognizes the need to create a broader constituency of stakeholders. The second group is the Northwest Louisiana Council of Governments. The third group is the Consortium for Research and Technology, which provides an excellent model for regional collaboration. A select number of citizens groups should also be included.

The council leaders must identify champions in various arenas that require ongoing advocacy: education, workforce training, business, arts and entertainment, and environmental quality. These individuals will serve as the go-to people, committing their passion to ensuring a holistic approach and adding their insights to inform the vision for the Red River Communities. For example, affordable housing provision and neighborhood revital-

ization must be championed by someone with knowledge of and connection to the housing sector. Ensuring quality education (K–16) in all neighborhoods will be a critical role of the council; this effort could be championed by the Consortium for Research and Technology.

Leveling the Social Playing Field: Implementation Strategy

In order for the Red River Communities to grow in a coordinated, unified fashion, it is imperative to consistently ensure that people in traditionally disadvantaged groups—specifically, minorities, women, and locally based businesses—participate significantly in future development opportunities. The following sections outline an approach to addressing this concern.

Construction Initiatives to Encourage Participation

The development of a business participation model for minority business enterprises, women-owned business enterprises, and locally based business enterprises (MBE, WBE, and LBE, or MWLBE collectively) needs attention. The local municipal governments have promoted a Fair Share business program, which has garnered some success in ensuring the participation of disadvantaged businesses in economic development initiatives. However, there is an opportunity to capitalize on targeted segments of the community that are not captured in this program. Creating initiatives to spur the development of MWLBEs is a means to ensure that within the category of disadvantaged businesses, these three categories of businesses obtain targeted participation in new initiatives.

Short-term goal. Develop enhanced strategies for significant MBE/WBE participation in construction and real estate development programs. This should be accomplished through legislative changes to Fair Share requirements to include a MWBE focus, to encourage the development of these businesses. Responses to public requests for proposals (RFPs) that comply with the guidelines for MBE/WBE participation should get more weight in the selection process. More weight can also be given to respondents who use MWBEs located in certain economic development regions.

Mid-term goal. Determine whether the established goals are being met, then recalibrate the program to address whether the goals should be increased or decreased.

Development Plans: Ledbetter Heights and Allandale

The Red River Communities need to develop methods to encourage the development of historically African American communities such as Ledbetter Heights and Allandale. A strategic plan needs to be created for the development of these areas, one that can catalyze long-term sustained community development, to make these communities both more livable for their residents and more appealing destinations for visitors and tourists.

Short-term goal. Begin the process of establishing participation goals within the contracting and subcontracting industries. Develop a certification process, modeled after federal and other successful municipal programs that require minority and women ownership of firms to compete on MWBE projects. Establish participation goals to be implemented over designated time frames. Establish a set of aggregate goals for MWBE participation.

Mid-term goal. Analyze the success rate of progress toward participation goals. Determine whether the established goals are being met, and whether they should be increased or decreased at this point. Evaluate whether targeted goals are in line with local and national projections. Establish whether members of designated groups believe that local government is doing all it can to fairly encourage the participation of these groups.

Construction Mentorship Program

MWLBEs should be encouraged to participate in construction and development opportunities through a mentorship program. This program should be created in such a way that small firms lacking experience, capacity, and depth could be mentored by more established, larger firms (generally majority firms). This program could be sponsored by a regional governmental agency responsible for approving development projects. Where private developers are performing work,

regional authorizing entities should award work, in part, on the basis of those developers' proposals to involve MWLBEs as key players.

Short-term goal. Establish a framework for incorporating MWLBE participation in construction and economic development initiatives. Develop a certification process so that only certified MBEs, WBEs, and LBEs are authorized to be designated as firms in these respective categories. Establish participation goals that are scaled for the region in all possible trades.

Mid-term goal. Establish specific time frame goals for completion and graduation from the mentorship program. Ensure that the first MBE/WBE firms graduate from the mentorship program within the specified time frame. Permit successful graduates to participate in a large-scale project such as those that might contribute to the broader goals of the regional leadership council.

Artistic and Cultural Inclusion

The region's stakeholders should work to create artistic and cultural centers that focus on the legacies of the African American, Native American, and general historical sectors. These traditional communities should be made into historical districts.

Short-term goal. Host a summit to determine the interest in, appropriate membership of, and likely sponsors of a series of artistic and cultural centers that focus on the African American, Native American, and general history of the Red River Communities. Determine an approach to providing a reliable funding stream for such centers.

Shotgun-style homes dominate the Ledbetter Heights neighborhood. Re-creation of this indigenous housing style can help revitalize Shreveport.

Mid-term goal. Create historical tax credit benefits for the redevelopment of the physical aspects of these communities.

Long-term goal. Set a goal that at least half these communities will be completed as restored historic communities, with residential, commercial, and cultural venues to be supported by residents and tourists.

Development Projects

To help Shreveport and Bossier City begin the process of rebranding the cities as the Red River Communities, the panel suggests that they undertake specific development projects. The panel has chosen four projects that the cities can begin working on immediately and complete in the next few years. They are two mixed-income housing communities, one mixed-use historic preservation project, and one public infrastructure project.

The three real estate projects were chosen because they are prototypes of the kind of development that the central areas of both cities need but that are currently not being built. Each should be designed to be the centerpiece and anchor for its district and carefully linked with surrounding activities to encourage spin-off development. The success of these projects will help establish a market and track record for additional construction of the same types, construction that is desperately needed to reestablish the urban core of the region as a desirable place to live. The fourth project is a pedestrian bridge that is designed to connect the two sides of the Red River, unifying the region's two-city downtown for the first time and supporting its revitalization.

Project 1 and Project 2: Mixed-Income Housing Communities

Project 1 is adjacent to downtown Shreveport; project 2 is adjacent to the Boardwalk in Bossier City. The panel believes that each city has the opportunity to develop a mixed-income residential community of at least 100 units at a variety of price points. Care should be taken to target and attract a diverse group of buyers, in terms of socioeconomic status and race, to these communities. This will ensure that the units sell faster and with less risk to the developer. Additional financing sources are available for buyers in older, at-risk neighborhoods such as Ledbetter Heights and Old Bossier, and these sources will reduce risk even further. The specific sites chosen by each city should be easily obtainable (not encumbered) and should have good access to jobs and transportation. The projects should be built on a scale at which the developer can provide necessary services and amenities if they are not available. Special Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, and Federal Housing Administration financing of nearly 100 percent of project cost is available at favorable terms. For lower-income purchasers, specialty financing makes the projects even more doable. They can tap into a variety of local, state, and federal financing assistance plans. Creation of diverse, mixed-income neighborhoods is the future of urban development, and the panel believes that a market for such projects exists today.

Schedule for Projects 1 and 2:

November 2006 (6 months)
Identify site

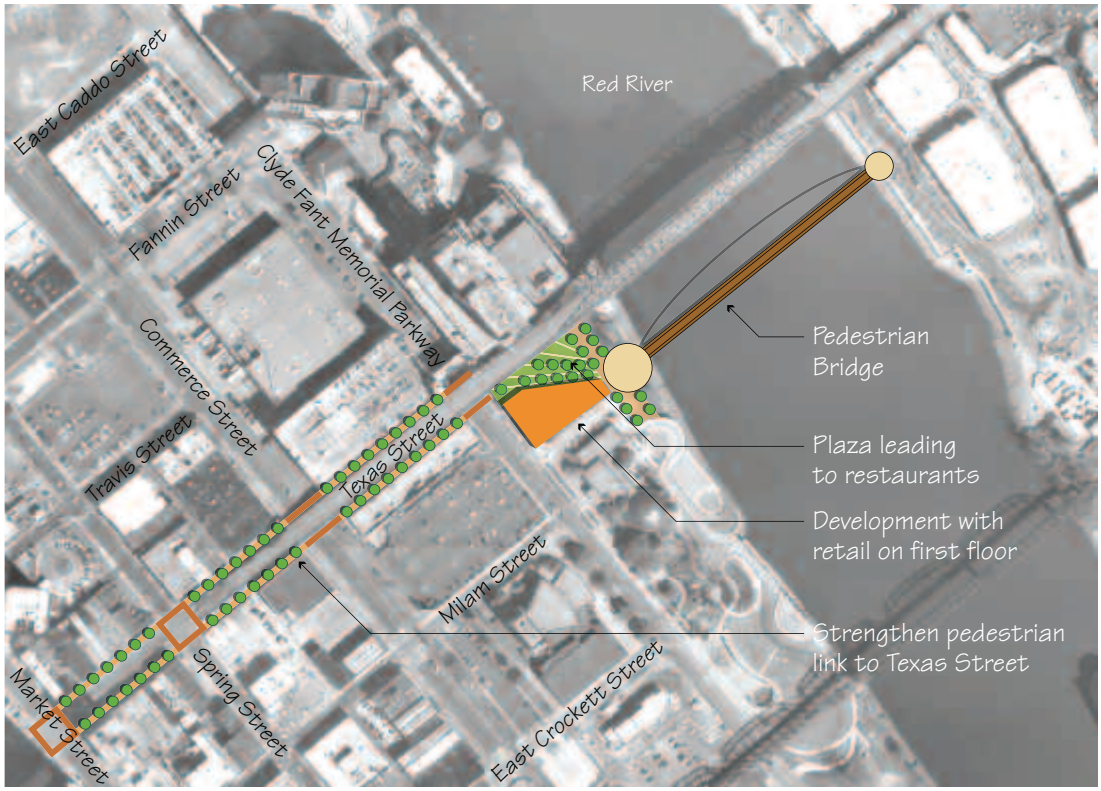
April 2007 (1 year)
Issue RFP and select developer

April 2008 (2 years)
Begin construction

April 2011 (5 years)
100 units sold and occupied

Project 3: Mixed-Use Historic Preservation Project

The panel believes that Shreveport should develop a mixed-use project in an adaptively used historic commercial building in the Texas Street corridor downtown. The project should include a minimum of 50 to 100 units of rental housing on the upper floors and retail, dining, and entertainment uses on the ground floor. A project of this size is needed to attract a developer and to make ongoing management feasible without requiring a local subsidy. The project can be financed with a mix of low-income tax credits, historic tax credits, and new markets tax credits (if 20 percent of the project is nonresidential). The project should be targeted to a mix of empty nesters, military retirees, casino workers, artists and musicians, and



Proposed pedestrian bridge linking Shreveport and Bossier City.

young professionals. The panel believes that a market exists for this project today.

Schedule for Project 3:

November 2006 (6 months)
Identify site and secure building ownership

April 2007 (1 year)
Issue RFP and select developer

April 2008 (2 years)
Apply for and secure various tax credits

November 2009 (3 years, 6 months)
Complete construction

April 2010 (4 years)
Complete lease-up

Project 4: A Pedestrian Bridge

The panel believes that the two cities, in partnership, should build a spectacular pedestrian bridge that links the two riverfronts, creates a more powerful regional draw for their downtown attractions, and ties the two communities together in a way that immeasurably improves the quality of life for residents and visitors alike. The pedestrian link today is the Texas Street bridge and it is virtually unusable owing to its length, narrowness, proximity to roaring traffic, and general unpleasantness. Few use it. The proposed new bridge would begin in Shreveport just south of the Texas Street bridge and connect to the boardwalk in Bossier City. On both ends, iconic towers should create a powerful identity for the bridge. At the Shreveport end, in place of the current small parking lot, an exciting point of arrival should be created. Pedestrians should be steered to the existing but struggling retail and entertainment street under the bridge by a new pedestrian walkway leading through a new retail and entertainment building. The new bridge should be animated with special lighting, LED imaging, and sound, in order to make the bridge itself an entertainment attraction.

The length of the new bridge would be about 1,000 feet, including 890 feet over water and 110 feet over land—much shorter than the Texas Street bridge. Access to the bridge would be by ramps like those on the new pedestrian bridge over the

The Texas River bridge is an iconic vehicle link between Shreveport and Bossier City.

Thames in London, or by escalators. Costs are estimated in the range of $150 per linear foot, totaling about $1.5 million. Bridge supports are estimated to cost about $1 million, and design and engineering is estimated to cost about $500,000 (20 percent of direct construction costs). Total cost is estimated at about $3 million. The panel cannot overstate how important this bridge would be as a real and symbolic link between two communities that should see themselves as one and should act as one. The panel further believes that the payback in spin-off development, economic activity, visits by residents and tourists, and livability in the region would be significantly higher than the modest cost.

Schedule for Project 4:

November 2006 (6 months)
Memorandum of agreement executed, with dedicated funding sources in place

April 2007 (1 year)
Design, engineering, and permitting complete
Construction contracts awarded

November 2008 (2 years, 6 months)
Construction completed
Grand opening with Santa Claus leading the parade on Thanksgiving weekend, 2008

Conclusion

Shreveport and Bossier City are inextricably linked by culture, economic interdependence, and proximity. The cities are also united by the natural features of the Red River valley. But both cities continue to pursue what the panel believes to be separate visions and a potentially unhealthy economic competition that helps neither. The overreliance on gaming revenues, the focus on greenfield and sprawl development patterns instead of downtown revitalization, and the lack of regional leadership limits the economic and cultural opportunities for the region. The panel believes that by providing a new focus on leadership, caring for the older communities in the downtowns, recognizing and leveraging the Red River as a natural feature, and developing a series of representative construction projects, the vision for the cities can be changed.

People and activity are the keys to revitalizing the downtowns of Shreveport and Bossier City. Maintaining and improving the quality of life is the key to attracting new residential development and tourism. Tremendous assets make the downtowns of Shreveport and Bossier City the logical focus of urban activity. The panel is optimistic that a series of actions implemented by both cities and the adjacent parishes will help unite the communities even further. The panel suggests that the region create one vision and speak with one voice. This will help bring about a rebirth of the downtowns, help focus the region's economic exuberance, and help find new life for residents while diversifying the economy.

The Louisiana Boardwalk in Bossier City is a successful nongaming destination on the Red River.

About the Panel

Leigh M. Ferguson

Panel Chair
Birmingham, Alabama

Ferguson is the director of urban living and executive vice president with the Sloss Real Estate Group. His primary duties include operating the residential and mixed-use real estate development and management division, with a focus on urban mixed-use community development projects as a continuing part of revitalizing Birmingham's Center City. Ferguson also managed Sloss's participation in a joint venture for a $100 million HOPE VI, mixed-income residential development.

Before joining Sloss, Ferguson was the president of Corker Group, Inc., where he managed a portfolio of 2 million square feet of office, commercial, and industrial properties; supervised all leasing, administrative, maintenance, and financial operations; and prepared monthly and annual business plans, budgets, and reports to ownership.

From 1991 to 1999, Ferguson was president of Chattanooga Neighborhood Enterprise, Inc. He managed lending, development, financial, and property management functions of approximately $30 million per year. Previously, Ferguson was president and chairman of John Laing Homes, Inc., and vice president of development for the Van Metre Company; he worked in the same capacity for the Winkler Companies.

Ferguson studied chemistry and mathematics at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and completed graduate-level studies in investment management and real estate at George Washington University. He is a full member of ULI–the Urban Land Institute and a member of the Affordable Housing Council.

Michael D. Beyard

Washington, D.C.

Beyard is an urban planner and economist with more than 20 years of experience in the related fields of real estate development, land use planning, and economic development. His experience is focused in the United States and Europe on commercial and retail development, shopping centers, e-commerce, location-based entertainment, and downtown revitalization.

At the Urban Land Institute, Beyard is senior resident fellow for retail and entertainment development. He holds the Martin Bucksbaum chair. He is the author or project director of numerous books including *Developing Urban Entertainment Centers*, *Shopping Center Development Handbook*, *Dollars & Cents of Shopping Centers series*, *Value by Design*, *Developing Power Centers*, *Downtown Development Handbook*, *The Retailing Revolution*, *Ten Principles for Reinventing Suburban Strips*, and *Business and Industrial Park Development Handbook*. He created and directs ULI's International Conference on Urban Entertainment Development and its technology and retail real estate forum. He also created *ULI on the Future*, ULI's annual publication devoted to emerging land use and development trends and issues, and *Entertainment Zone*.

As senior resident fellow, Beyard is a featured speaker in the United States, Europe, and South America on retail, entertainment, and downtown development issues. Before moving into his current position, he was vice president of strategic development and responsible for the Institute's research, data collection, books, and conferences in the commercial development field as well as its new strategic initiatives. He created ULI's program in the retail entertainment field including international conferences, books, *Urban Land* magazine supplements, and strategic partnerships

with other organizations. He is the past director of ULI's advisory work in Central Europe under the auspices of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and the coordinator of program activities for ULI Europe.

Before coming to ULI, Beyard was a senior consultant in urban planning and real estate development. He spent 10 years at Booz Allen & Hamilton, Planning Research Corporation, and Gladstone Associates, advising both public and private clients on market analysis, feasibility, and development planning. Beyard has been honored with membership in Lambda Alpha, the international land economics honorary society, and was an appointed member of the Mayor's Interactive Downtown Task Force in Washington, D.C. He holds a B.A. in international economics with honors from Rutgers College and a master's degree in urban planning and development from Cornell University, where he was elected to Phi Kappa Phi.

Carolyn A. Dekle

Hollywood, Florida

Dekle is executive director of the South Florida Regional Planning Council, a planning and public policy agency serving Broward, Dade, and Monroe counties. Specific responsibilities include development and administration of the local plan review process and development and implementation of the regional plan for South Florida. Building consensus on the identification and resolution of critical issues and policies for the South Florida area is one of her primary responsibilities. Before October 1991, she served as assistant director of the South Florida Regional Planning Council; she was responsible for program management.

Dekle was a member of the governor's staff from 1979 to 1986. Her responsibilities began with assessment of the Community Schools Task Force Report. She also spent one year as the Florida urban impact coordinator, one year as the Florida state clearinghouse coordinator, and then four years in the governor's Strategic Planning Policy Unit. The Strategic Planning Policy Unit was primarily responsible for the creation of Florida's growth management legislation and specifically the development of Florida's state plan. Participating in developing public policy for the management of the Office of Planning and Budgeting and for the governor led to Dekle's understanding of the interrelated nature of managing Florida's future.

Dekle received a B.A. from Catawaba College, Salisbury, North Carolina, in 1976. She received her master's degree in postsecondary education from Florida State University in 1979.

James R. Harris

Fort Worth, Texas

Harris is president and owner of the James R. Harris Company, a single-family residential development company. The company has been developing quality residential neighborhoods and master-planned communities in the Dallas—Fort Worth area since 1979. It has developed more than 17,000 residential lots. It has also developed residential property in Aspen, Colorado; Austin, Texas; and Tyler, Texas. Harris also owns Village Homes, a custom home building company specializing in urban and infill sites, and Sun Creek Homes, a partnership that develops manufactured home communities.

Harris has been a member of the Urban Land Institute for 20 years and a ULI Residential Council member for ten years. He is also a member of the ULI Leadership Group. Harris is a governor of the Urban Land Foundation and has served as a member of two ULI Advisory Panels.

Harris is a longtime member of the Fort Worth and Tarrant County Builders Association, has held numerous committee positions, and is currently serving on the Association's Executive Committee and the Board of Directors. He is a member of the Board of Directors of the Texas Association of Builders and has also been active in the National Association of Home Builders. He has received the lifetime Spike award given by the Association for his achievements.

Harris has served as a member of numerous boards and committees with the city of Fort Worth concerning zoning and development policies. He is vice chairman of the Board of Commissioners of the Fort Worth Housing Authority and

a member of the Board of Directors of Wells Fargo Bank of Fort Worth. He has served as chairman of the Board of Trinity Terrace, a continuing care retirement community in Fort Worth. He is a member of the Downtown Fort Worth Rotary Club.

Harris received a B.A. degree from Austin College and earned an M.B.A. from Texas Christian University.

Cecilia A. Mowatt, Esq.

Chicago, Illinois

Mowatt is an attorney with extensive experience in corporate strategy, asset management, and real estate transactions. Formerly the first international president of GVA Worldwide, a real estate services firm, she launched her own real estate consulting firm, Strategies In Site, Inc., at the end of 2002.

Before that, Mowatt was an executive with McDonald's and Ameritech. During almost eight years at McDonald's, Mowatt acquired tremendous experience in real estate transactions from conception to completion. Throughout her six years at Ameritech, Mowatt was instrumental in developing process improvements and performance measurements, as well as in handling outsourcing of real estate transactions to align real estate with overall company strategies. She started her career with the Securities & Exchange Commission.

Mowatt has a B.A. from Stanford University and a J.D. and M.B.A. from the University of California, Berkeley.

Paul Moyer

Alexandria, Virginia

Moyer began his career with EDAW, Inc., in 1987 shortly after graduating from college and has advanced to become managing principal of the Alexandria office, regional director of the Eastern Region, and a vice president of the firm. A certified planner with a diverse background in architecture, urban design, land use planning, and environmental analysis, Moyer has applied his talents to community-based projects for both public and private sector clients, from the military to developers.

The plans he has worked on include the Schuylkill River master plan; the Mt. Vernon Avenue business strategy; the Laurel Hill Adaptive Reuse Plan; the Big Darby Accord Watershed Plan; the Norfolk Southside community revitalization plan; the Hampton commercial corridors study; and the Lee Highway revitalization study, to name a few. They serve as models for the way he conducts the planning process and interacts with those involved: communicating facts, thoughts, and creative ideas in an open forum to create a plan based on the community's shared vision for the future.

Thomas Murphy

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Murphy is ULI's Gulf Coast Initiative coordinator. He is a former mayor of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. When Murphy took office in January 1994, Pittsburgh was suffering from one of the worst inferiority complexes in its history. The city had yet to right itself after wrenching changes in the steel industry that began in the early 1980s. The physical environment reflected the economic and psychological depression running through the region. The city was desperate for a leader who would direct a physical and psychological turnaround. After Murphy's two terms in office, the Pittsburgh that he inherited is a dim memory. Replacing it today is a high-energy, cosmopolitan city that glows with optimism about its future.

As a government manager, Murphy trimmed the city's workforce by more than 1,000, a reduction of nearly 21 percent. He turned yearly runaway budget deficits into budget surpluses. He completed three consecutive budget agreements with the City Council that carried healthy cash balances.

As an economic revitalization visionary, Murphy has directed more than $4 billion in new investment in the city—from office towers for two of the city's nationally ranked banks to new world-class facilities for the city's professional football and baseball teams, to an expanded downtown convention center. City neighborhoods, tarnished from

decades of neglect, have been refurbished through the mayor's Neighborhood Needs Program. Nearly all of the city's 169 neighborhood playgrounds have been renovated to meet or exceed today's most stringent safety standards. That effort recently won Pittsburgh an award from the Consumer Products Safety Commission, the first ever given to a public body.

As a technology booster, Murphy has made Pittsburgh a model for northeastern cities transitioning from economies based on heavy industry. The city is now experiencing an explosion of new economic ventures, with anchors in high technology and Internet-based startup companies. The Murphy administration also encouraged partnerships between government and world-class local universities, especially Carnegie Mellon and the University of Pittsburgh. RAND, the world's best-known policy research think tank, has located its fourth worldwide office in Pittsburgh.

Zane Segal

Houston, Texas

Segal is a developer, marketing consultant, and real estate broker and president of Zane Segal Projects, Inc. Focusing on mixed-use, residential, retail, historic, hospitality, urban, and resort properties, Segal has 27 years of experience in real estate venture management, development, construction, brokerage, and marketing for a range of property types including land, lofts, townhomes, custom homes, low- and mid-rise condominiums, hotels, retail centers, office buildings, subdivisions, and sports facilities, as well as mixed-use projects incorporating several property types.

Segal is vice chair for advisory services of the Urban Land Institute Houston District Council, has chaired one and served on seven more ULI Advisory Services Panels across the country, and has chaired ULI Houston's first two Technical Assistance Program panels. He is a member of a City of Houston Planning Commission committee studying urbanization of the suburbs, is on an advisory committee overseeing a regional visioning project, and serves on the boards of the Citizens Environmental Coalition and Blueprint Houston. Segal received a Bachelor of Science degree from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and a Master of Fine Arts degree from the University of Southern California and has studied graduate-level architecture at the University of Houston.

Warren Whitlock

New York, New York

Whitlock is the director of construction coordination for Columbia University and has 25 years of varied experience in disaster relief and recovery, construction coordination, strategic planning, real estate development, finance, and government. One of the top economic development professionals in New York City, Whitlock is a senior executive member of Columbia University's facilities department as well as a senior planning team member of the university's initiative to acquire 18 acres and expand into the Manhattanville section of West Harlem. This 30-year project involves, among other things, the construction of an expandable bathtub to ensure nonaqueous penetration of the project site to depths of 180 feet in soil and sand conditions. Whitlock is the university's primary liaison for all construction activity, which, since 2000, has delivered more than $1 billion in capital construction projects. He also oversees Columbia's MBE, WBE, and LBE participation initiative, which, through the first quarter of 2005, exceeded 39 percent participation by such businesses in its large-scale construction projects.

Before joining Columbia University in 2002, Whitlock managed New York State's economic development efforts in Harlem as the director of the Harlem Community Development Corporation. He initiated a series of successful commercial and residential development initiatives that not only led to the current successful revitalization of Harlem, but did so while preserving the historic and cultural authenticity of this revered African-American neighborhood. As the first deputy commissioner of the New York City Community Development Agency (currently, the New York City Department of Youth & Community Development), Whitlock leveraged his knowledge of city and state government to create several successful first-time initiatives for the city of

New York using federal Community Service Block Grants. Between 1989 and 1992, Whitlock served as a senior project manager at the New York City Economic Development Corporation, where he worked to finance small to medium-sized industrial-based businesses throughout New York City.

Whitlock is an adjunct professor of urban planning at Brooklyn College's Graduate Center for Worker Education. He is an executive member of ULI's New York District Council, where he has been a member since 1997, and he served as a member of the ULI Advisory Services Panel at the University of New Orleans in 2003.