

**FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR
ST. TAMMANY PARISH
POST-KATRINA**

**Summary Report of a Development Charrette
on Feb. 22, 2006**

for:

ST. TAMMANY PARISH



March, 2006

FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR ST. TAMMANY PARISH POST-KATRINA

INTRODUCTION

St. Tammany leaders in government, education and business met on Feb. 22, 2006 to set priorities for the recovery and reconstruction of St. Tammany in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Approximately 120 leaders from all corners of the parish, and from diverse sectors, met at the Castine Center for the day-long charrette. A series of five task forces were organized after the storm (Infrastructure, Housing, Education and Workforce Training, Business Facilities and Programs, and Health Care and Services). Each presented the results of their work at the charrette. The task forces were organized to address issues that were priorities in the strategic plan for economic development adopted in 2003 or those that had surfaced as a result of Hurricane Katrina. Leaders were briefed on the population, economic and housing situation in the region and parish and then were presented with a series of goals and priority actions from each of the task forces.

COMMUNITY AND REGIONAL ASSESSMENT

Before a community decides where it would like to be in the future, it must understand its current economic situation. The following are the key findings from our assessment of the regional & parish situation as of February 2006:

- The metro population has declined by 35% to about 1 million from a pre-storm population of 1.4 million.
- The population distribution in the region has changed because of the severe flooding in Orleans and St. Bernard Parishes. The Southshore parishes have dropped from 1 million to 600,000 population but the Northshore parishes population have jumped from 310,000 to 370,000. The Northshore is a bigger share of the regional population and workforce as a result of the storm.
- Employment in the metro area dropped from 582,000 in August 2005 to 392,000 after the storm. A larger share of the employment is located on the Northshore but exact figures are not yet available.
- A significant base of businesses were displaced by flooding. Metrowide approximately 9000 companies, employing 140,000 workers had 6 ft. or more of water (based on a GIS analysis of Zip Code Business Patterns from the US Bureau of the Census).
- Flooding depleted the stock of warehouse, office and retail space in the metro area. The following figures are the best estimates by a leading appraisal firm:

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- 2,500,000 s.f. of office space closed (-12%)
- 5,000,000 sf of retail space closed (-25%)
- 3,260,000 of warehouse space closed (-6%)
- The economic base of the region governs the recovery since little new investment, outside of construction services or materials, is likely during the recovery. An analysis of the vulnerability of the economic base by Tamerica suggests that 60 percent is likely to remain in place in the next 5 years because of its locational needs or because of significant levels of past investment in facilities. Forty percent of jobs could relocate outside of the metro area and 15 percent could relocate to other states. Enhanced competitiveness of the region and state are critical to the long term survival of the New Orleans region. Unless leaders push for reforms that enhance the business climate and economic competitiveness of the region, the job situation is likely to deteriorate.
- The recovery of the current economic base will be constrained by the availability of housing in the region. Even with the delivery of more temporary housing and the recovery of some storm-damaged properties, the region will have a shortage of 100-125,000 housing units in September 2006. The housing shortage will constrain recovery to 70% of pre-storm levels during 2006.
- Reconstruction will be at least a 5-10 year process. It would take 340,000 construction workers 5 years to rebuild the structures that were damaged or destroyed. It would take 170,000 workers ten years, based on construction figures from the 2002 Census of Construction for Louisiana. Louisiana had 98,000 construction workers prior to the storm. Unless the industry employs new technologies, such as modular housing, the rebuilding could take 1-2 decades.
- St. Tammany suffered with the rest of the metro area as a result of Katrina. The parish lost a significant number of businesses and jobs in the Slidell area.
- The population of the parish has grown significantly as a result of Southshore evacuees. Best estimates are that the parish added 40-50,000 new residents as a result of the storm. The population in St. Tammany today exceeds projections of population for 2015. St. Tammany has to provide for a decade of normal growth to recover from Hurricane Katrina.

Changes in the Parish's Strengths and Weaknesses for Economic Development

Tamerica made a professional assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the parish for economic growth and recovery. We used our professional judgment to reassess the strengths and weaknesses for development that had been developed for the strategic plan adopted in 2003. The following is our assessment. Issues that deteriorated as a result of the storm are shaded (none strengthened as a result of the storm).

Strengths:

- Worker productivity & labor relations
- Manufacturing labor supply
- Quality of life
- Access to global and Gulf Coast markets
- Quality of schools
- Corporate office and back office labor supply
- Entrepreneurial climate
- Interstate highway access
- Cost of office & warehouse leases

Weaknesses:

- Business park supply and prices
- Supply of warehouse
- Tax rates
- Water and wastewater rates and capacity
- Traffic congestion
- Affordable housing
- Zoning and permitting
- Conference & meeting facilities
- Support for economic development programs

Changes in the Vision for Parish Growth and Development

A survey was made of local leaders to determine their perception of how elements of the vision adopted in 2003 had changed as a result of the storm. Virtually every element of the vision was judged as more important as a result of the current economic situation in the region (see table on next page).

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For each of the vision elements below give us your opinion of whether it is more or less important than it was pre-Katrina

St. Tammany Parish needs:	More important	Less important	Same
Improved traffic flow	54	0	2
to control more of its economic destiny	50	1	4
effective collaboration among business and government leaders	50	1	5
improved telecommunications infrastructure	49	0	7
a healthy and diversified economy	42	0	13
new business parks	41	6	9
improved drainage	40	1	15
regional water and sewer systems	40	1	15
housing for a wide spectrum of employees	39	1	15
new high quality mixed-use planned developments	37	3	15
state-of-the-art medical facilities	29	1	26
local campuses of higher education institutions	28	5	23
residents to feel safe and free from crime	28	1	26
primary and secondary education systems that lead the state	26	2	28
a wide variety of recreational & cultural facilities	19	6	31
to become the entertainment center for the region	10	19	26

Total Respondents

56

Online poll conducted December 2005 by Tamerica

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Several elements that hadn't been significant before the storm had moved to the forefront: 1). Building a sustainable local economy; 2). Providing housing for a broad cross section of employees. These elements were incorporated into a modified vision statement for the recovery and future growth of the parish, shown below:

In the year 2016, St. Tammany Parish has a health, diversified and self-sustaining economy with an outstanding quality of life in both its incorporated and unincorporated areas. Civic and business leaders and local government officials across the Parish and the metro region collaborate effectively, which has led to a strong sense of unity and local pride. Parish-wide planning and zoning, along with reasonable building codes, have reduced the inefficiency of suburban sprawl while providing housing for the entire spectrum of employees working in the parish. A variety of revenue sources, including State and Federal funds, help meet the development needs of the Parish.

The Parish is very "business-friendly." Capitalizing on Stennis and the UNO tech park, it has recruited high technology manufacturing, office operations, and professional firms that provide high wage employment for the growing workforce in the Parish and a sustainable tax base. New business parks in St. Tammany Parish are attracting these quality employers. Small business, including home-based, flourishes locally, enhancing the Parish's reputation as a center for entrepreneurial activity. Colleges and universities, technical training, and continuing education meet career skill needs from local campuses. College graduates continue to be attracted to the expanding professional and technical job base in the community.

The infrastructure of the Parish has kept pace with new development. New local arterials have been constructed and existing highways have been widened to modern four-lane thoroughfares, and other highways, service and local roads have been upgraded to improve traffic flow, with a particular concern for evacuation routes. The telecommunications infrastructure across the Parish meets all the technology demands of the local businesses and residents and operates continuously during hurricanes and natural disasters. Drainage improvements have removed most flooding problems, and a regional water and sewer system serves all of the Parish. The high quality of the natural environment is recognized throughout this region of the South.

The quality of life of St. Tammany Parish is second to none for its population size. The older sections have been revitalized, and new high quality mixed-use planned developments that are environmentally friendly continue to be constructed. Local housing, in clean and attractive neighborhoods, is available for the wide spectrum of employment in the Parish from starter homes for working class families to

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upscale developments for retirees. Residents feel safe and secure throughout the Parish. The primary and secondary education system is a leader in the State and produces graduates with competitive skills that meet the key needs of technology-based employers. State-of-the-art medical facilities provide the latest in medical technology and have virtually eliminated the need to travel elsewhere for medical care. A wide variety of recreational and cultural facilities and activities have established the Parish as an entertainment center for the region.

This vision statement is not written in stone. As the area changes and as circumstances change, this statement needs to be reviewed and modified to reflect more current views.

It is from this vision that the goals and priorities of action should emanate for the strategic plan. The vision supplies the general sense of direction for the Parish; the goals and strategic actions provide the specifics on how to get there.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

The foundation of an effective strategic planning process is a clear understanding of the issues that the community is confronted with. The following are the 5 priority issues embodied in the strategic plan for economic development adopted in 2003:

Goal #1: *The highway and street infrastructure throughout St. Tammany Parish meets the needs of the community's residents without congestion and with ample capacity.*

Goal #2: *The economy of the Parish is diversified, consisting of a balanced mix of high technology companies, professional firms, and office operations.*

Goal #3: *The Parish has a sustainable and adequate source of funding for its infrastructural and economic development needs.*

Goal #4: *The amount of land available for new industrial and office development within the Parish meets the needs of business and industry into the future.*

Goal #5: *Development infrastructure for business, including Internet trunk fiber lines, water, sewer, and drainage meet the needs of business and industry into the future.*

REVISING GOALS AND DEVELOPING AN ACTION PLAN

Because of the unique circumstances stemming from Hurricane Katrina, the parish did not have time for a traditional strategic planning process. Task Forces developed goals and priority actions for business recovery and development. Leaders were asked to adopt a list of priority actions needed to accomplish these goals. In other words, the goals and action plan steps of a traditional process were combined.

The final exercise in the afternoon of the charrette was the identification and prioritization of key recovery and development issues from the 25 actions submitted by task forces. Leaders were given a list of actions and were asked to accept, reject or modify each. Each of the small groups identified and ranked their list of issues, including modifications suggested by group members. These lists were then combined into one list, and the group as a whole ranked their economic development priorities. The result of this Nominal Group Technique was the following list of economic development actions that are critical to the recovery and redevelopment of St. Tammany Parish (See table on the next page). Each action includes a party that is responsible for its completion.

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PRIORITY ACTION FROM CHARRETTE			
	ACTION	Party	Votes
A	(IN 1) Adopt infrastructure plan including preservation of open space	Government/Parish	156
R	Expedite comprehensive parish zoning plan & develop professional, accountable planning & zoning approval process	Government	64
F	(HO 5) Streamline the public process & create more flexible development regulations	Government/Public	51
B	(BF 1) Identify and rezone possible locations for ED sites	Development District/STEDF/Parish Gov't	48
D	(BF 4) Develop & fund land banking mechanism	Public/Private	39
P	(HO 6) Educate P&Z commissioners, elected officials and the public on successful workforce housing and mixed income developments around the country [Qualify in addition to educate]	Parish/Chambers Public/Private	32
O	(HO 3) Provide infrastructure north of I-12 to allow development for lower-priced land	Parish Government	25
Q	Housing solutions be guided by definition of sustainable, livable community as defined by the American Institute of Architects (i.e.: requirement of greenspace per certain # of homes)	Parish Government	25
H	Education/workforce training aligned with business needs	Government/Public/Private	24
N	(HO 2) Change minimum lot sizes	Parish Council	17
M	Build arts/science/tech center [or provide extra funding source to assist secondary & post-secondary institutions in this effort]	Public/Private/Non-Profit	15
L	Develop a seamless transition of articulated programs from one institution to another.	School Boards	12
J	Housing – pre-zone yet undeveloped land – no modular housing – keep minimum lot sizes		9
I	Explore multi-family construction		5
K	Education – 3,4 & 7 – coordinate w/Board of Regents to avoid repetitive programs – create liaison between parish/school boards		5
V	(HHS 3) Insure increased local, state & federal funding/spending in health care arena (All health care)	Dept. H&H/Northshore Legislators	5
U	Develop Medical Destination Services Hub		4
T	(HHS 1 &2) Health care – Primary care physician-specific – cap on research – public health family practice	Parish	3
C	(BF 3) Develop new height codes for E.D. corridors	Parish Administration/STEDF	2
E	Airports upgraded w/federal funds	Parish/Local Government	0
G	(ETWF 8) All programming will culminate in college credit and/or industry based certification	Board of Regents	0
S	Packaging federal & state incentives	Government	0

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Nine Actions emerged as the most critical to the group with infrastructure dominating all other priorities. (Seventy-five percent of participants rated implementation of the parish's infrastructure plan as the most important recovery issue.)

The following five goals, and the priority actions supporting each, are shown below (actions with less than 18 votes were deemed as priorities by less than half of voters, suggesting that they are not consensus priorities):

Goal #1: *Infrastructure, including highways & streets, Internet trunk fiber lines, water, sewer, and drainage meet the needs of residents and business and industry into the future without congestion or delaying projects.*

Action A: Adopt parish infrastructure plan including preservation of open space (Responsible party: Parish Government)

Action B: Provide infrastructure north of I-12 to allow development for lower-priced land (Responsible Party: Parish Government)

Goal #2: *Land use in St. Tammany is governed by an up-to-date comprehensive plan & zoning maps with flexible and transparent development regulations and an expedited review process, supported by planning professionals reporting to a board of commissioners appointed for their qualification and knowledge of planning and zoning issues.*

Action A: Expedite comprehensive parish zoning plan & develop professional, accountable planning & zoning approval process (Responsible Party: Parish Government)

Action B: Streamline the public process & create more flexible development regulations (Responsible Party: Parish Government)

Action C: Educate P&Z commissioners, elected officials and the public on successful workforce housing and mixed income developments around the country (Responsible Party: Chambers of Commerce & Business Associations)

Action D: Identify and rezone possible locations for ED sites identified by the St. Tammany EDD as prime business development sites (Responsible Party: Parish Government)

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Goal #3: *The amount of land available for new industrial and office development within the Parish meets the needs of business and industry into the future.*

Action A: Develop and fund a land banking mechanism for acquiring and developing business park sites (Responsible Party: New public/private venture created by Economic Development District)

Goal #4: *Adequate housing is available near work centers for all levels of employees in both incorporated and unincorporated St. Tammany.*

Action A: Incorporate AIA definition of sustainable, livable community into St. Tammany requirements for new housing subdivisions (responsible Party: Parish government).

Goal #5: *Secondary and higher education programs in the Parish prepare students for careers needed in the region and are designed to provide a seamless transition from one institution to another with coordinated offerings and facilities.*

Action A: Align education and training programs to the needs of area businesses (Responsible Party: Higher education and workforce institutions)

Action B: Build an arts/science/ tech center in St. Tammany for joint use on a site that is accessible to students from all parts of the parish. (responsible Party: New public/private non-profit)

Action C: Develop a seamless transition of articulated programs from one institution to another (School board and Post-Secondary institutions)

This list is not necessarily inclusive of all the development problems or issues facing the community. Because no organization or local government can tackle all of the local issues equally well given the limitations of funding, resources, and staffing, it is very important for the community to focus on those particular issues that are most critical to its future. The local economic development effort should target its activities on those elements that are *directly* related to the successful improvement of the local economy.

Implementation of the Recovery Strategy

The ultimate success of this planning process will depend on how well the appropriate organizations manage the implementation of the various strategic actions. The plan by itself is worthless. Its value lies in the direction it provides to local agencies and organizations, and the reminders it gives as to the priorities for accomplishing and sustaining future economic health in St. Tammany Parish.

It is critical, therefore, that an oversight committee is set up a process whereby the plan can be and will be systematically and periodically reviewed and evaluated. If the implementation of the strategic actions is not resulting in the desired changes in the community, why not? What needs to be done differently? What is a more effective approach?

It is recommended by Tamerica that the following steps be taken to facilitate the implementation of this strategic plan:

- Establish an Oversight Committee that will have the task of monitoring, revisiting, and modifying as necessary the Strategic Actions. This Committee should meet quarterly to review the reports on activity submitted to them by the organizations that are tasked with implementing the plan. While the Oversight Committee should monitor activity, it should not manage the day-to-day activities of the organizations tasked with implementation. Its role is to determine whether the plan is working, and if not, why not. Membership in the Oversight Committee should be broad and include the school board, representatives of higher education institutions, the parish council, economic development boards and commissions, chamber of commerce boards and officers, parish administration, and city councils and mayors. The Chairman of the Oversight Committee shall be the chairman of a chamber, business association or economic development board.
- The Oversight Committee should request that the Parish, Foundation, Development District, and Chambers execute a Memorandum of Understanding to implement the strategic plan.
- The Oversight Committee will be charged with the responsibility to annually evaluate the progress of the implementation of the plan and make a report to the Parish, towns, cities and villages that contribute financially to the effort, and Chamber boards on their findings. The executive leadership of the organizations charged with implementing the plan will prepare their reports and evaluations and submit them to the Oversight Committee for review.
- The executive leaderships of the Economic Development Foundation will develop annual work plans that describe the specific tasks and steps that will

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be taken to implement the strategic plan, the amount budgeted to such purposes, and the timing involved.

This charrette is clearly just the beginning. The process will continue with the implementation of the strategies by the organizations identified as responsible for their completion. Apathy, divisiveness, redundancy, and inadequate funding of key programs will only make the economic situation worse in St. Tammany Parish. Now it is time for key leaders to step forward and facilitate the steps necessary to bring about the needed changes.

APPENDIX

St. Tammany Development Charrette February 2006 Goals and Strategic Actions Education, Training and Workforce Task Force (ETWF)				
Goal	Actions	Accept	Reject	Modify
Coordinate secondary and higher education efforts in the region	1. Develop a seamless transition of articulated programs from one institution to another			
	2. Build a St. Tammany arts/science/technology center in an accessible location to house these efforts			
	3. Begin with a school without walls concept using existing available facilities			
	4. Enlist private and public partnerships			
	5. Begin programming with high school students in specialized or post secondary programming			
	6. Include post secondary education programs that meet market needs			
	7. Use varied modes of instructional delivery (face to face, electronic, etc.)			
	8. All programming will culminate in college credit and/or industry based certifications			

St. Tammany Development Charrette February 2006 Goals and Strategic Actions Health & Human Services Task Force (HHS)				
Goal	Actions	Accept	Reject	Modify
Ensure equitable and adequate funding for all who provide health, mental health care and daily living assistance for the uninsured	<i>1. Make reimbursement follow the patient.</i>			
	<i>2. Research how medical schools and Graduating Medical Educators fund these types of services in other states</i>			
Increase mental health services throughout the parish focusing not only on the ability to respond to emergency situations but also the needs for extended care, both inpatient and out patient	<i>3. Insure increased local, state and federal funding / spending in this arena adequate to serve the need.</i>			
	<i>4. Indemnify non profit service providers stay viable through adequate government reimbursement</i>			

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St. Tammany Development Charrette February 2006 Goals and Strategic Actions Housing Task Force (HO)				
Goal	Actions	Accept	Reject	Modify
Provide adequate housing near work centers for all levels of employees in both incorporated and unincorporated St. Tammany	1. Allow modular housing construction in St. Tammany Parish			
	2. Change the minimum lot size to broaden the range of housing options available in St. Tammany Parish			
	3. Provide infrastructure north of I-12 to allow developers to acquire lower priced land above hurricane flood surge			
	4. Package federal, state and local incentives to developers who broaden their range of housing price options			
	5. Streamline the public process and create more flexible development regulations			
	6. Educate planning and Zoning commissioners, elected officials, and the public on successful workforce housing and mixed income developments around the country			
	7. Engage business associations in St. Tammany as active advocates for broader housing choices			

St. Tammany Development Charrette February 2006 Goals and Strategic Actions Infrastructure Task Force (IN)				
Goal	Actions	Accept	Reject	Modify
The highway and street infrastructure throughout St. Tammany Parish meets the needs of the community's residents without congestion and with ample capacity	1. Implement and fund the parish overall infrastructure plan using bonds and CDBG grants.			
Development infrastructure for business, including high capacity Internet fiber, water, sewer, and drainage meet the needs of business and industry into the future.				

St. Tammany Development Charrette February 2006 Goals and Strategic Actions Business Development Facilities & Econ. Dev. (BF)				
Goal	Actions	Accept	Reject	Modify
Ensure that St. Tammany Parish has sites for future growth of desired office and technology based manufacturing, keeping St. Tammany Parish competitive and well positioned and prepared to attract desired economic development growth.	1. Identify all possible locations for economic development sites			
	2. Rezone land areas to accommodate appropriate economic development growth (see map for interstate corridors)			
	3. Develop new height codes for economic development corridors			
	4. Develop and fund a land banking mechanism for large sites. Funding sources would be CDBG or private investors			
	5. Infrastructure improvements (roadways, sewer, water) to support growth, including fiber optics			
	6. Develop airport improvements to accommodate small corporate jets			