Redevelopment in Baton Rouge: Facing New Challenges

The sudden population increase resulting from the Hurricane Katrina diaspora heightened the urgency of long-standing questions in Baton Rouge: How can housing needs of old and new residents be met? How can the thousands of vacant properties in the city be used to create healthy, vibrant neighborhoods? What's the best redevelopment model for Baton Rouge? The goals of the Forum are to explore the kinds of tools available to redevelopment authorities in a variety of different settings; learn about successful and innovative models of redevelopment from across the country; and work with the presenters to determine an effective approach for the Baton Rouge area.

On March 6th, The Bruner•Loeb Forum, working with the Mayor-President, Fannie Mae Foundation, Baton Rouge Area Foundation, Center for Planning Excellence, the Smart Growth Leadership Institute and the National Vacant Properties Campaign, will bring together national and local experts to talk about how different redevelopment models have worked around the country to achieve long-term success, and what Baton Rouge can learn from these examples.

Melvin “Kip” Holden
Mayor-President
City of Baton Rouge, Parish of East Baton Rouge

Frank Alexander
Emory Law School

Andy Altman
former Executive Director
Anacostia Waterfront Corporation

Harriet Tregoning
Executive Director
Smart Growth Leadership Institute

Ann Coulter
former Deputy Director
River City Partners

Jim Stockard
Harvard Design School

Jair Lynch
The Jair Lynch Companies

Daniel Kildee
Treasurer
Genesee County MI

John Spain
Baton Rouge Area Foundation
The Bruner•Loeb Forum is a partnership between the Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence (RBA) and the Loeb Fellowship Program, two of the preeminent national programs dedicated to the urban built environment. The goal of the Bruner•Loeb Forum is to advance the thinking on a wide variety of challenges facing our cities, and to make the experience and creative thinking inherent in RBA winners and in the work of the Loeb fellows, available to practitioners and policy makers around the country.

The Bruner Foundation sponsors the Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence (RBA), a national award for urban places. Established in 1987, the RBA involves mayors of major metropolitan areas and other experts in the urban built environment in honoring five urban projects in each biennial award cycle. The Gold Medal Winner receives $50,000, and four Silver Medal winners each receive $10,000. In addition, the Bruner Foundation publishes in-depth case studies on each winner of the Rudy Bruner Award; these books are available through the Foundation. Coincidentally, the 2005 Rudy Bruner Award cycle just concluded, and has named Portland Streetcar Project as the 2005 Gold Medal Winner. The award ceremony will take place in Portland on June 16th. Please visit us at: www.brunerfoundation.org.

The Loeb Fellowship Program, established in 1970 at the Harvard Design School, offers mid-career fellowships to 12 outstanding professionals whose work involves revitalizing the built and natural environment. Loeb Fellows are engaged in a wide variety of projects and programs in the private and public sectors across the country. The Loeb Fellowship web address is: www.gsd.harvard.edu/loebfell. Together the Loeb Fellowship Program and Rudy Bruner Award bring together outstanding projects and professionals who offer a depth of knowledge on a wide variety of subjects relating to the built environment. The Forum is intended to serve as a resource for those involved in some of the most critical placemaking issues in the country.

The Baton Rouge Area Foundation unites human and financial resources to enhance the quality of life in Louisiana's capital region. To achieve our mission, we serve donors to build the assets that drive initiatives and solutions; engage community leaders to develop appropriate responses to emerging opportunities and challenges; and evaluate our work and share the results with our stakeholders.

The Center for Planning Excellence (CPEX), formerly Plan Baton Rouge, serves as a planning and design resource for residents, community organizations, developers and elected officials. CPEX is dedicated to educating and advocating best practices in planning and development to ensure livable and sustainable communities, thus providing a higher quality of life for the citizens of Louisiana.

The National Vacant Properties Campaign exists to provide everyone – individuals, advocates, government agencies, developers, non-profits, and others – with information resources, tools, and assistance to support their vacant property revitalization efforts. The Campaign is a project of Smart Growth America, Local Initiatives Support Corporation, and the Metropolitan Institute at Virginia Tech.

The Smart Growth Leadership Institute is dedicated to helping state and local elected, civic and business leaders design and implement effective smart growth strategies.

We believe that plans, policies, codes and regulations can be designed by the community so that it encourages rather than discourages healthier neighborhoods; promotes quality investments; eliminates red-tape; provides incentives to level the playing field for developers; fosters active citizenship; and, safeguards the future for their children.

We believe that the best community leaders have long-term vision and the necessary people skills and know how that will motivate their community and inspire citizenship.