Introduction: Even at the start of this year, during early development of this platform and discussions with stakeholders, a major theme emerged about the need for strong, unifying leadership within East Baton Rouge elected leadership. Following the tragic events of the summer, that need has only been amplified. The next Mayor-President and Metro Council Members will occupy pivotal positions in bringing communities together and advancing solutions that speed recovery and improve the economic competitiveness of the Capital City. East Baton Rouge has experienced unprecedented economic growth over the past few years, but it clearly faces challenges if it is to maintain economic momentum and provide even greater levels of opportunity and prosperity for all its citizens. As the lead economic development agency of the city-parish and the region, BRAC surveyed its business membership, and worked with stakeholders and business leaders to create the following platform of policies and initiatives that we hope will be embraced by all candidates for mayor-president and metro council.

Based on input received throughout its development, as well as previous BRAC policy research, the platform is divided into four components that we encourage all of our future parish leaders to embrace.

Mission: The next Mayor-President and Metro Council must unite the parish, build on recent unprecedented economic growth, lead flood recovery efforts, address challenges to future economic expansion, and extend opportunities for prosperity to all citizens.

Overarching Requirements:

- Demonstrate unifying, collaborative vision and bold leadership across geographical, racial, and income lines to foster inclusiveness and consensus instead of divisiveness and conflict
- Emphasize the value of diversity, including non-discrimination policies
- Think and act regionally with other Capital Area parishes

Challenge to All Candidates: Must pledge to …

- Keep the parish unified and oppose St. George incorporation
- Demand public school excellence and new quality public school choices, including high-performing charters, in underserved areas (North and Southeast EBR)
- Hire an experienced, professional manager as CAO to help administer government operations

Top 6 Issue Areas

1. Pursue major solutions to improve transportation infrastructure to relieve congestion and enhance mobility
2. Drive policies and initiatives that bring change to the criminal justice system that build trust in law enforcement and that effectively reduce crime rates and increase public safety
3. Champion public education and workforce solutions to develop more quality options, improve public perception, and prepare young people for college and career
4. Pursue robust economic growth policies
5. Lead improvements for parish government services to be run more effectively and efficiently
6. Implement policies to improve the parish’s physical attractiveness, cleanliness, and “quality of place”

Goal 1: Pursue major solutions to improve transportation infrastructure to relieve congestion and enhance mobility

- Secure funding for major regional transportation megaprojects
- Administer the Green Light Plan 2, if approved by voters, by prioritizing road capacity projects based on data-driven metrics of need and anticipated congestion relief
- Improve Metropolitan Planning Organization transportation planning, funding, and results
- Implement Complete Streets policies
- Support incentives for more direct flights to and from Baton Rouge Metropolitan Airport
- Pursue plan to modernize CATS and develop rail infrastructure

Goal 2: Drive policies and initiatives that bring change to the criminal justice system that build trust in law enforcement and that effectively reduce crime rates and increase public safety

- Institute effective community policing and recruitment and training of officers
- Advocate for sentencing reforms to address the incarceration rate, and work toward training opportunities for those leaving incarceration
- Prioritize and fully fund the Baton Rouge Area Violence Elimination (BRAVE) program
- Promote continued innovative, data-driven policing strategies and collaboration among area law enforcement and criminal justice officials
- Implement “broken windows” strategies, aligning agencies with community policing programs
- Support early-intervention programs like the Truancy Center to address social issues among young people that may lead to criminal activity

Goal 3: Champion public education and workforce training solutions to develop more quality options, improve public perception, and better prepare young people for college and career opportunities

- Demand public school excellence and new quality public school choices, including high-performing charters, in underserved areas (North and Southeast EBR)
- Conduct regular and frequent meetings with parish school superintendents
- Streamline and restructure Workforce Investment Board operations to align training with business needs
- Unify the programs and enrollment of early childhood education, namely Head Start and Early Head Start, with the EBR School System and the community’s childcare providers

Goal 4: Pursue robust economic growth policies and community reinvestment

- Develop a parish economic infrastructure strategy, including industrial park plans
- Especially in light of recent events, elevate Baton Rouge’s external image nationally as top destination for talent and business
- Promote and invest in economic assets like universities, the Water Campus, the Health District, and a new medical school
- Actively engage in and incentivize economic development, including small business growth, entrepreneurship, and corporate recruitment
- Fully fund the East Baton Rouge Redevelopment Authority in support of efforts that eliminate blight, attract more investment, and build stronger neighborhoods
- Support economically competitive reforms to major state tax issues, like unified sales tax collection, ITEP reforms, and inventory taxation

Goal 5: Lead improvements for parish government services to be run more effectively and efficiently
• Hire experienced, professional manager as CAO to help administer government operations
• Propose and/or support a bond election to address critical services and infrastructure for sewer, drainage, public safety and mental health
• Set and meet approval deadlines for building and business permitting
• Streamline and modernize government services through greatly expanded online services and open data, create single Chief Technology Officer, and explore privatization where appropriate

**Goal 6: Implement policies to improve the parish’s physical attractiveness, cleanliness, and “quality of place”**

• Establish robust program for upkeep of public spaces, corridors, and gateways
• Support further development of signature destination places, like downtown, the riverfront, and other natural assets
• Properly fund the planning department, support the new Unified Development Code, and strict implementation of requirements
• Expand code enforcement to reduce blight and require property owners to maintain property

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