“THE RIVER MOVES FROM LAND TO LAND...
reminding us what native peoples have never forgotten: that you
cannot separate the land from the water, or the people from the land.”

– Lynn Noel, Voyages: Canada’s Heritage Rivers
Unlike other States, Louisiana is more than just a swatch of square miles, marked on a map by imaginary lines. Our home is best understood as a dynamic meeting of land and water, defined more by its constantly changing coastline than by any arbitrary borders. From the marshy merger of sea and shore comes 70% of the nation’s harvest of oysters and other seafood. The Mississippi River, which formed much of Louisiana, is the spine of commerce connecting us with America between the Rockies and the Appalachians. Water from the Mississippi is pumped into the industries that line its banks for manufacturing of products that, in turn, are shipped out over the same river waters to markets around the world.

But this extraordinarily productive stretch of coastland is in crisis, and the potential costs for our country defy calculation. Rising seas and the disappearance of protective wetlands threaten Louisiana’s broad, heavily populated delta, making it the most endangered coastland on the planet. More and more coastal communities around the world now find themselves facing similar problems, whether in storm-prone cities like New York or Miami or on the disappearing deltas of Vietnam and Bangladesh.

The Water Campus is an unusual opportunity to challenge this peril. For the scientists and engineers expected to work at The Water Campus in Baton Rouge, Louisiana’s coast will be a living laboratory. There, they can research the problems and test innovations that can save coasts around the world, where more than 2 billion people now live.
The Baton Rouge Area Foundation and its real estate development firm, Commercial Properties Realty Trust, have already started building The Water Campus facilities. More than $50 million has been committed by partners, including the State of Louisiana, for developing the first phase of what will be an international destination for leading minds in science, engineering and other specialties. Ultimately, The Water Campus will attract thousands of people, all working together in an effort to understand and better manage the complex relationship between water, land, and people around the world – beginning here at home in Louisiana.
The Water Campus is being developed in partnership with Louisiana and East Baton Rouge Parish governments, the Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority, Louisiana universities, and nonprofits.

Where: Nicholson Drive, Terrace Street, Mississippi River, I-10

Size: 1.8 million square feet

Total acres: 35

First tenants: The Water Institute of the Gulf, the Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority, LSU River Modeling Center

The Water Campus will rise on 35 acres along the Mississippi, adjacent to downtown Baton Rouge. In that time, the number of researchers and support staff employed at the facility will expand to over 4,000. More than 1.8 million square feet of labs, research facilities and commercial space will enable them to carry out their vital work in a collaborative environment – studying coastal threats, formulating theories, exchanging ideas, and cooperating to arrive at innovative solutions that might never be possible working alone.

The Water Campus will be for more than science and engineering. Other types of firms are expected to occupy the Campus, taking advantage of its riverfront location next to existing employment centers, alternative transportation and unburdened road network.

The evolution of the campus will be guided by a blueprint created by Urban Design Associates, preeminent among the nation’s urban planning firms. The site and design of the destination were selected to further enrich our cityscape by stimulating new growth downtown, which has already seen more than $2 billion in comeback investments, as well as sparking development along Nicholson Drive, a key link between the city center and Louisiana State University. Urban Design Associates designed the campus to balance ample room for supporting work, public spaces and parkland – an attractive mix of different uses, all connected in a shared space along the banks of one of the world’s most powerful and important rivers.
The Water Campus will be a unique and compelling place to work. Across the levee is the river. Down the street in one direction is LSU; in the other, downtown. And within the campus are parks, fountains, conference rooms, and education facilities.
WIRED AND WIRELESS

The Campus will be connected to the world with the highest wired speeds, allowing researchers working there to share giant data sets in real time with their counterparts, like their colleagues at Deltares, the Netherlands organization protecting its country from the North Sea. Within the Campus, people will use wireless links while strolling along the river or resting on a park green.

LOCATION

The Water Campus is under construction in the Nicholson Corridor, a major artery that is targeted as a growth area under East Baton Rouge’s comprehensive plan. On one end of this corridor is downtown. On the other is Louisiana State University. Next to The Water Campus will be The Water District, a 40-acre combination of housing, retail space and offices that can be used by employees who work on The Water Campus. A modern tram is now in the pre-development phase, with the anticipated line running from downtown to The Water Campus, and onward to LSU.
The Master Plan: Once completed, over two decades, over 4,000 scientists, engineers and researchers will work on The Water Campus. It will provide approximately 1.6 million square feet of space for basic and applied research, academic functions, public education resources and displays, and administrative offices, all sufficient enough to meet current and anticipated future needs. The Campus will be the focal point of a new skyline for Baton Rouge and will enhance the efforts to restore and enhance coastal environments.
MISSISSIPPI RIVER

PROPOSED USE KEY

- RESIDENTIAL
- OFFICE
- INSTITUTIONAL
- HOTEL
- RETAIL
- PARKING GARAGE
Phase One: $55 million in commitments from the partners (Louisiana Economic Development, the Baton Rouge Area Foundation, and East Baton Rouge Government) will fund three buildings for three tenants: The Water Institute of the Gulf, the Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority, and LSU River Modeling Center.
LA COASTAL PROTECTION & RESTORATION AUTHORITY

The Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority will relocate from rented offices in downtown Baton Rouge to a new building on The Water Campus. CPRA is implementing a $50 billion master plan for the Louisiana coast. The agency will house its 165-member team on the Campus. Implementing the coastal plan is estimated to produce up to 20,000 direct jobs and up to 25,000 indirect jobs through 2030.

LSU RIVER MODELING CENTER

Under construction in late 2014, the first building on The Water Campus will be a lab that allows scientists to create scale models of the lower Mississippi River. The lab will enable scientists to understand the highly complex interplay between land and water. Operated by LSU and funded by the Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority, the $16 million lab will be built on a park at the Campus.

Scientists will use the lab for applied testing of new levees and barriers to better predict and prepare for rising seas. They will also study the real effects of surges on the eroding wetlands that buffer Louisiana against violent storms.

THE WATER INSTITUTE OF THE GULF

Built in the 1920s, the old Municipal Dock was left behind by advances in the shipping industry. This long-abandoned eyesore will be reinvented as a new 36,000-square-foot home for the Water Institute of the Gulf, and the icon of the Campus. The Institute was created in 2012 to study – and defy – the global crisis of disappearing wetlands. Scientists at the Institute are tackling tough questions, like how to build new land; which places along eroding coasts can be saved and which cannot; what can be done to help the threatened communities and preserve their cultures. The Institute provides the kind of unassailable science needed to guide Louisiana’s $50 billion coastal plan.

Construction will begin early next year to transform the hulking old Municipal Dock into a $25 million, four-story contemporary facility for The Water Institute. Visible to more than 50,000 people crossing the Mississippi River Bridge into Baton Rouge each day, the Institute’s building will not only facilitate vital research, but it will also include educational space devoted to teaching how they can adapt to the double peril of rising seas and disappearing deltas.
The Water Campus, when fully complete, will have over 1.6 million square feet of commercial space. It will house over 4,000 research, construction, engineering and infrastructure development professionals over the next two decades. It will be a catalyst for a new knowledge-based economy in Baton Rouge.
The Water Campus is a transformational project that will serve to increase the resources and capacity of the workforce in Baton Rouge. It will also attract private sector investment and employment opportunities for professionals in the knowledge-based industries of water management, environmental engineering and coastal sciences. With the addition of these professionals, combined with the retention of the premier graduates from Louisiana's universities, Louisiana Economic Development projects a world-class water management and engineering institute, and expertise in related legal and policy decisions, as a business sector in Louisiana. It has the potential to result in 10,000 to 20,000 direct jobs and 10,000 to 25,000 indirect jobs in Louisiana through 2030, in association with managing Louisiana’s own water projects and providing expertise for water projects around the world.

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

The location for The Water Campus was carefully selected, and its importance cannot be overstated. Visible to thousands of motorists who travel east on I-10, the iconic building on the old Municipal Dock will supply valuable meeting space for researchers as well as an exhibition area for educating the public about critical water issues.

The creation of a modern new facility like The Water Campus in this location will be a catalyst for redeveloping Old South Baton Rouge, three square miles of neighborhoods between LSU and downtown. This area has been in decline for decades as residents left for the suburbs and other cities, but it’s situated in the sweet spot between the parish’s two biggest employment centers – LSU and the downtown business district.

More importantly, The Water Campus will define Baton Rouge as the region’s leading research center and spur on the development of Louisiana’s workforce and economy.

- Diversification of the regional economy;
- Attract innovation-based industry that creates higher-skill, higher-wage jobs;
- Provide high-paying, knowledge-based jobs to recruit and retain young, knowledgeable workers to the region;
- Enhance traditional industry to expand the regional economy and foster innovation, entrepreneurship and regional collaboration;
- Promote information-sharing, collaboration, and best practices among higher educational institutions and leaders; cultivate scientific and technological development/exploration centers.

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The Water Campus will be a catalyst for economic growth in Baton Rouge. New development along Nicholson Drive between downtown and LSU will provide long-awaited economic vigor into Old South Baton Rouge. When all the projects are completed, the area between LSU and downtown will become one of the most populated and vibrant areas of the city.
REDEVELOPMENT OF THE CORRIDOR

Big developments are expected to draw thousands of people to live and work in the Nicholson Corridor, an area that East Baton Rouge government wants to make into a model for “dense living,” which aims to reverse suburban sprawl through a carefully planned and efficient use of revived urban spaces. It means bringing new life to long-neglected parts of town. The Water Campus will be a cornerstone in the building of this renewed neighborhood.

LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY

The University is undertaking a $200 million remaking of prime land, stretching from the site of the former baseball stadium to the North Gates on Nicholson Drive. On 100 acres, LSU will build 1,240 beds for students, 89 apartments for faculty and staff, 110,000 square feet of offices and 137,000 square feet for retailers.

MODERN TRAM

A tram is in pre-development to run between downtown and LSU, connecting the entire corridor with alternative transportation. Two tram stops are planned on Nicholson at The Water Campus.
With dedicated support from all levels of government, private sector and institutional organizations, The Water Campus is guided by strong and experienced leadership. The project is spearheaded by The Baton Rouge Area Foundation and Commercial Properties Realty Trust which has extensive development, redevelopment and project management experience.
THE BATON ROUGE AREA FOUNDATION

The Baton Rouge Area Foundation is ranked in asset value among the largest of more than 700 community foundations in the country. The Foundation has nearly $600 million in assets, with about half in real estate developments that share their profits for the betterment of all people.

The Foundation works in two ways to improve the quality of life across South Louisiana and the world. One, the Foundation connects donors who open charitable accounts with nonprofits that provide services to the community. Over the last 50 years, fund donors and the Foundation have granted more than $350 million.

Two, the Foundation undertakes projects that solve fundamental problems and advance the communities it serves. The Water Campus is one of these projects. Others include creating The Water Institute of the Gulf to provide reliable science for guiding the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority’s $50 billion plan for Louisiana.

The Foundation develops real estate for the public good through its real estate management firm, Commercial Properties Realty Trust.

COMMERCIAL PROPERTIES REALTY TRUST

CPRT works in partnership with the Baton Rouge Area Foundation as its real estate investment trust, managing and developing its property holdings. Together, the Foundation and CPRT have successfully redeveloped historic downtown Baton Rouge. Projects in downtown include The Shaw Center for the Arts, as well as the renovation of the Hilton Baton Rouge Capitol Center from an abandoned hotel.

As a result of an innovative partnership, the State of Louisiana, East Baton Rouge Parish Government, CPRT and the Foundation are building offices to house 800 IBM employees in a new software development center on the river. Further, this collaboration is triggering the expansion of computer science programs at LSU, as well as riverfront redevelopment in downtown Baton Rouge.

CPRT is also redefining downtown living in Baton Rouge with two residential buildings under construction. Onyx Residences is a five-story urban apartment complex with 28 one- and two-bedroom apartments built above 5,600 square feet of commercial space. The other residential building, 525 Lafayette, is Baton Rouge’s newest and most exciting downtown address. Connected to the IBM Complex, 525 Lafayette occupies a prestigious place on the bank of the Mississippi, boasting 85 riverview apartments and 6 separate luxury town homes.
DEVELOPMENT TEAM

Architectural
Coleman Partners Architects LLC, Baton Rouge, LA
Perkins + Will Architects
Antunovich Associates, Chicago, IL

Urban Planning
Urban Design Associates, Pittsburgh, PA
Urban Design Associates, Pittsburgh, PA
Stantec Engineering

Government & Civic Leadership
The Honorable John Bel Edwards, Governor of Louisiana
The Honorable Sharon Weston-Broome, Mayor-President, City and Parish of East Baton Rouge
The Honorable Garrett Graves, United States Senator
Johnny Bradberry, Governor’s Executive Assistant for Coastal Activities
Michael Ellis, Executive Director, Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority
Jay Dardenne, Louisiana Commissioner of Administration
Don Pierson, Secretary, Louisiana Economic Development
Carolyn E. Martin, President and CEO, Commercial Properties Realty Trust
Johnny Bradberry, Governor’s Executive Assistant for Coastal Activities

Strategic Research Partnerships
The Water Institute of the Gulf
Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority
Deltares, Netherlands
Delft, Singapore Water Alliance
Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College
University of Louisiana System
Tulane University

Supporting Agencies
The State of Louisiana
Louisiana Economic Development
Louisiana Division of Administration
The City of Baton Rouge and East Baton Rouge Parish
United States Army Corps of Engineers
Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries
Louisiana Department of Natural Resources
United States Geological Survey

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