
**Baton Rouge City Court
STRATEGIC PLAN 2011-15**



*A Five Year Plan for
Maintenance, Growth, & Development of
Baton Rouge City Court*



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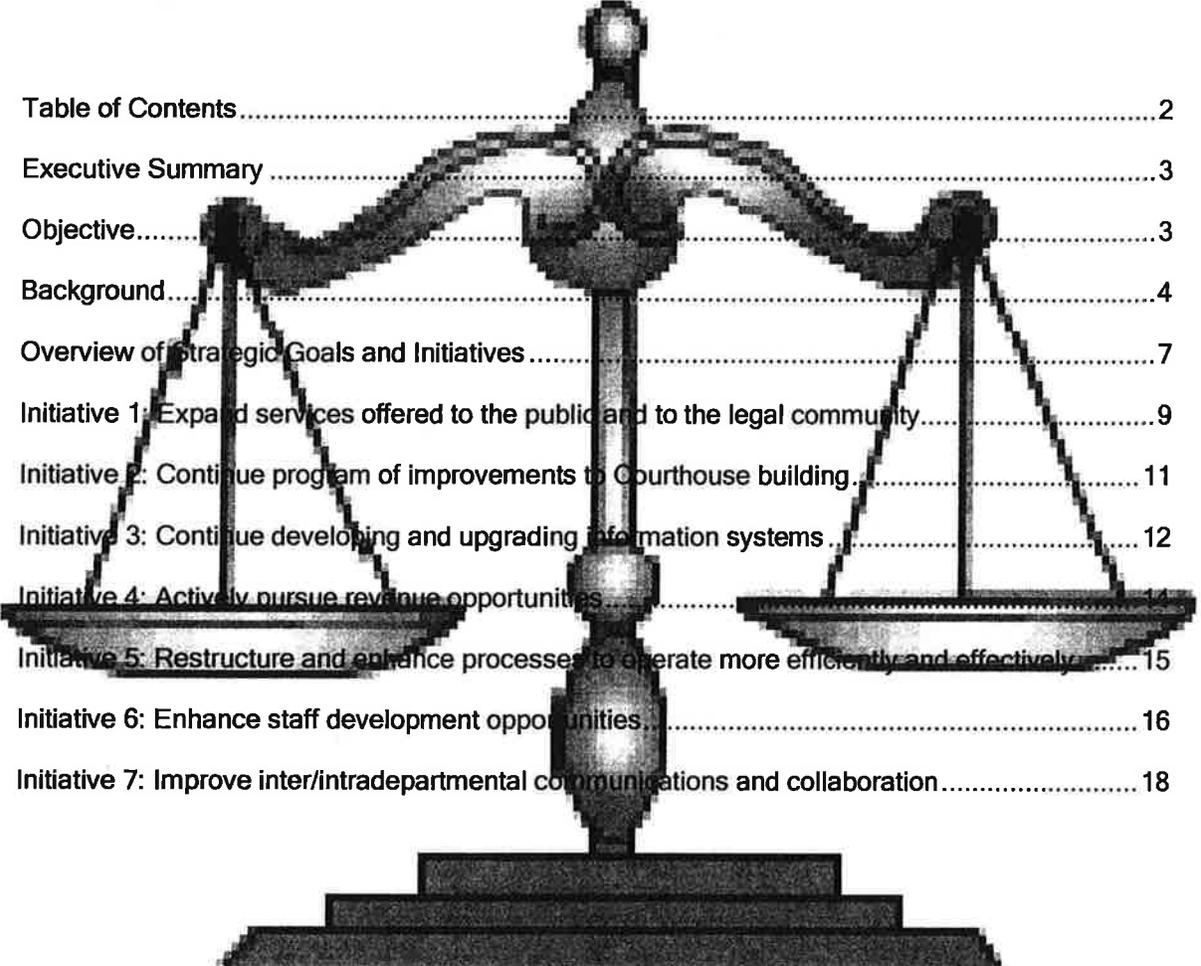


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Executive Summary

Baton Rouge City Court seeks to serve the needs of many customers. It offers services to the citizens who need to resolve matters of the law. It collaborates with law enforcement, legal professionals, and community organizations to ensure efficient, accurate, and courteous service to all of its customers. And it serves all citizens of East Baton Rouge Parish by partnering with law enforcement and government to maintain a safe community while protecting individual rights.

Baton Rouge City Court consists of 154 staff members and 5 elected Judges. This Court processes civil, criminal, DWI, and traffic matters. Civil claims heard include personal injury, property damage, contract, and landlord-tenant cases up to \$35,000, as well as small claims cases of \$3,000 or less.

The criminal jurisdiction encompasses misdemeanors, which are offenses generally punishable by a fine of not more than \$1,000 or less and/or jail time of not more than 6 months. All fines, costs, and forfeitures levied by the Judges are collected and accounted for by the Office of the Clerk of Court.

The Clerk of Court Office comprises the following divisions:

- Accounting
- Criminal/Traffic
- Civil
- Network Services
- Records
- Probation
- Appeals
- Court Services
- Administration

Ancillary agencies that are located with the Courthouse include the Offices of City Prosecutor and City Constable.

The City Prosecutor's Office is divided into four sections: Traffic, Criminal, DWI, and Pretrial Division. It prosecutes all criminal and traffic violations of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Baton Rouge. It also diverts certain first offenders out of the normal judicial process.

The City Constable Office executes and enforces all orders of the Court, such as civil mandates, judgments, seizures, warrants, and evictions in a timely manner. As a law enforcement agency, the Constable Office has the power and authority to enforce and all local and state laws. It also provides security for the City Court building and its occupants and operates the city jail.

Objective

The objective of this strategic plan is to create a prioritized blueprint for the growth and future development of Baton Rouge City Court for the next generation, to provide an understanding of the intent of the initiatives listed in this plan, and to explain how these specific areas of focus were identified.

Background

Baton Rouge City Court

Committed to Courtesy, Confidence, & Change

Mission Statement

To fairly and impartially facilitate the administration of justice
and to promote public confidence and trust
by protecting and safeguarding individual rights and liberties

Contributors

"Meet Me at the Wall" participants
Clerk of Court Office
Office of City Prosecutor
City Constable Office
Judges, Baton Rouge City Court
Administration, Baton Rouge City Court
Human Resources, City-Parish (East Baton Rouge)

Special acknowledgement to Ms. Christee Atwood for her expertise and guidance in the development of this strategic plan. Ms. Atwood is the author of numerous publications on organizational planning including *Succession Planning Basics*, *Knowledge Management Basics*, *Manager Skills Training*, *Presentation Skills Training*, and *Ultimate Basic Business Skills: Training an Effective Workforce*.

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Summary of Steps Taken

- This strategic plan was developed as a result of various formal and informal employee and customer surveys. Upon realizing that a more systematic approach was needed to address the needs of Baton Rouge City Court, an Administration team met to discuss a plan of action.
- Using the input of supervisors and employees, along with written surveys and informal personal interviews, this team identified areas of concern that would serve as goals for the upcoming years of the City Court's operations.
- In order to ensure input from all levels of the organization, the team then planned a "Meet Me at the Wall" event. This event, held on June 3, 2010, was publicized at leadership meetings, by posters, emails, buttons, and Division visits by Administration and ancillary agency personnel.
- The "Wall" event was structured in a "low-tech" method to make it accessible to all employees.



Meet Me At The Wall Program

- Employees signed in, picked up markers, and then were free to travel through the Arbitration Room, where posters were affixed to every wall with the areas of concern that had been previously identified.
 - A consultant was used to facilitate the event so that employees could submit ideas anonymously if desired.
 - Participants were invited to write any ideas, concerns, or improvements they would like to see for City Court directly on the posters.
 - Because of the advance notice, some brought lists that their divisions had discussed and agreed upon. Others had lists of ideas from co-workers who were unable to be present at the session. The time span was planned to last all afternoon so that as many participants as possible would be able to visit.
 - To ensure a creative and inviting atmosphere, refreshments were served and a PowerPoint presentation played with idea-starter questions and notes.
 - Over 130 employees attended the session, giving excellent representation of the overall employee population of approximately 200, and producing literally hundreds of ideas for actions to support the areas of concern and to identify areas for improvement and development.
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- These ideas were compiled into a list, which was then evaluated using a process called the *Nine Block Grid*. This method evaluates ideas by considering two main factors – 1) impact that the idea will have on the organization, and 2) the level of difficulty of implementing the idea.
 - This list was narrowed down to the activities that would have the greatest impact on the organization. These ideas were assigned to the areas of concern, improvements, and future developments previously identified. They were reviewed to determine the common themes, which were adapted into the general initiatives for each area.
 - The individual ideas will be under the direction of the owners of each initiative as listed in this document. A list of the top ideas was incorporated into this strategic planning document for implementation over the next three years. And, while not all submissions will be implemented, the general direction of that initiative will be influenced by those additional ideas and suggestions that were received.

- Maintenance of this plan will be accomplished by:
 - A lead individual or team shall be appointed for each initiative
 - Semiannual meetings will be held to assess progress. These meetings will include the following activities:
 - Each lead team will present a progress report on their initiative to Administration and leadership of Baton Rouge City Court.
 - Recommended adjustments and additions to the plan will be presented.
 - Closure may be recommended for selected initiatives.
 - Discussion time will include any issues or challenges that are preventing teams from moving forward on their initiatives.
 - A written update for each initiative will be attached to this plan annually.
- In order to maintain the commitment and involvement of all City Court employees, Baton Rouge City Court leadership will create opportunities to share information and celebrate successes in the forward progress of these initiatives.

Summary

This plan should be considered a flexible and living document that will need adjustment as necessary to ensure that the mission and objectives of the court continue to be fulfilled, while still retaining focus on systematic and orderly completion of the strategic plan initiatives.

Official Extract of En Banc Order

City Court of the City of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, sitting en banc with the Honorable Suzan S. Ponder, Administrative Judge presiding, was opened pursuant to adjournment.

Declaration of Support

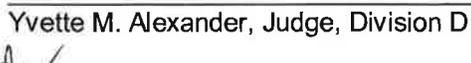
It is hereby resolved by the Honorable Judges of the Baton Rouge City Court that the Baton Rouge City Court Strategic Plan 2011-15, "Destination: Next Generation," is hereby adopted by the Court, sitting en banc, and the Judges acknowledge that the goals and initiatives contained therein support and advance the Mission of the Court.

Baton Rouge, Louisiana, on this 8th day of February, 2011.


Laura P. Davis, Judge, Division A


Kelli Terrell Temple, Judge, Division B


Alex "Brick" Wall, Judge, Division C


Yvette M. Alexander, Judge, Division D


Suzan S. Ponder, Judge, Division E

Overview of Strategic Goals and Initiatives

GOAL	INITIATIVE
1. Court Services <i>Expand services offered to the public and to the legal community</i>	1.1 Create information centers to educate public on services offered by Baton Rouge City Court.
	1.2 Create additional methods for users and employees to give input for improvements to the city court processes and facilities.
	1.3 Develop system to continually analyze and evaluate new services to be considered for the public and legal community.
2. Building Improvements <i>Continue program of improvements to courthouse building</i>	2.1 Create schedule of improvements to the Courthouse building.
	2.2 Regularly review and revise improvement plans based on needs, priorities, and changing of city court operations and processes.
3. Technology Improvements <i>Continue developing and upgrading information systems</i>	3.1 Create a task force to research, analyze, and determine which technological changes will be implemented at city court.
	3.2 Create a system for input of ideas, challenges, and requests for additional technology at city court.
	3.3 Develop a schedule for implementation of approved new technology improvements.
	3.4 Develop methods to train employees on new technology and information systems and how to use existing systems more effectively
4. Revenue Generation <i>Actively pursue revenue opportunities</i>	4.1 Create a process to consider revenue recommendations
	4.2 Evaluate and implement revenue-generating projects
5. Process Improvements <i>Restructure and enhance processes to operate more efficiently and effectively</i>	5.1 Solicit input from all divisions to improve city court processes and organizational structure.
	5.2 Evaluate and implement revised city court processes and organizational structure.
6. Staff Development <i>Enhance staff development opportunities</i>	6.1 Survey and expand upon training and development opportunities for employees of the city court system.
	6.2 Continually evaluate training to determine effectiveness and areas for expansion.
	6.3 Create a support system for supervisors to assist in growth and development, workforce planning, and knowledge management activities.

7. Communications Systems <i>Improve inter/intrdepartmental communications and collaboration</i>	7.1	Create venue for ongoing communication between employees, divisions, administration of Baton Rouge City Court and other departments and agencies within the City of Baton Rouge.
	7.2	Apply the information gained from that communication in the development of new programs, improvements, and adjustments to current court practices.

Initiatives



Goal 1: Expand services offered to the public and to the legal community

Baton Rouge City Court is proud to offer a wide range of services to the community. The desired outcome of this initiative is to develop additional services so that the court can offer more convenience, more value, and an improved experience for users. It will create a review process for those services recommended by the public and by employees. It will then allow for the implementation of those services which are determined to be most beneficial.

Task Force:

Division Heads – with input from each department

Owner:

TBD

Initiatives:

- *Create information centers to educate public on services offered by Baton Rouge City Court.*

ACTION ITEMS	TIMELINE
• Select and implement programs to educate the public about court services and other related public services in the community	6 Months
• Provide support programs for customers requiring assistance to use court services	6 Months
• Improve internet presence of Baton Rouge City Court	6 Months – 1 Year

- *Create additional methods for users and employees to give input for improvements to the City Court processes and facilities.*

ACTION ITEMS	TIMELINE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop survey methods for patron input on court services 	3 Months
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop survey methods for employee input on court services 	3 Months
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine reward and recognition system for those who submit ideas 	3 Months

- *Develop system to continually analyze and evaluate new services to be considered for the public and legal community.*

ACTION ITEMS	TIMELINE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create review process to consider ideas and suggestions from surveys and interviews 	4 Months
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construct implementation process for new ideas and services 	4 Months



Goal 2: Continue program of improvements to Courthouse building

A building fund exists for the purpose of maintenance, equipping, and improvements to the Courthouse building. Funds used in this initiative do not impact the budget or employee benefits. The most important element of this initiative is to ensure that improvements are well-planned and conducted in a timeframe that keeps the building safe and aesthetically pleasing for both citizens who visit and employees who operate in the facility on a daily basis. This initiative will create a schedule and priority levels for Courthouse improvements.

Task Force:

Administration

Owner:

Lon Norris

Initiatives:

- *Create schedule of improvements to the Courthouse building.*

ACTION ITEMS	TIMELINE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a schedule for replacement of flooring and other regular maintenance procedures for courthouse 	6 Months
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate suggestions for improvements to staff and public areas 	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create and implement plan for approved changes 	Ongoing

- *Regularly review and revise improvement plans based on needs, priorities, and changing of city court operations and processes.*

ACTION ITEMS	TIMELINE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review signage and information posting areas and determine improvements needed 	120 days
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review safety issues to determine additional construction or changes 	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedule sessions to review improvement plans and document successes, challenges, and recommendations for future planning 	6 months



Goal 3: Continue developing and upgrading information systems

Because new technology is continually being developed to address the needs of court systems and business processes, it would be unrealistic to try to forecast the technological and information services issues that will affect the court in coming years. Instead, the goal of this initiative is to create a system to continually research and evaluate new technology that could make the activities of court personnel easier and more efficient, increase public access to information, and provide more user friendly services for the public.

Task Force:

Information Technology Task Force (Network Services, Chief Deputy Judicial Administration, Division representatives)

Owner:

Lynn Maloy

Initiatives:

- *Create a task force to research, analyze, and determine which technological changes will be implemented at city court.*

ACTION ITEMS	TIMELINE
• Create Information Technology Task Force	30-60 Days
• Research software and technology for court processes, communications systems, and automation opportunities	Ongoing
• Create report to present to Administration with recommendations and plans for technology improvements	6 Months

- *Create a system for input of ideas, challenges, and requests for technology at city court.*

ACTION ITEMS	TIMELINE
• Create a regular system of communication between the Information Technology group and employees	30 Days and Ongoing
• Conduct surveys to determine problem areas and areas for improvements	Every 3-6 Months

- *Develop a schedule for implementation of approved technology improvements*

ACTION ITEMS	TIMELINE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine cost of technology improvements and the appropriate budget year to request funding. 	1-3 Months
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine which divisions and employees are needed to coordinate implementations of technology improvements. 	1 Month
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine amount of time needed for purchase and implementation of technology improvement 	1-3 Months

- *Develop methods to help employees learn and use city court technology and information systems more effectively.*

ACTION ITEMS	TIMELINE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer help systems to teach employees to use technology effectively 	1-3 Months and Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Training Personnel to offer training on latest technology and procedures 	3 Months and Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate effectiveness of new technology improvements implemented 	3 Months and Ongoing



Goal 4: Actively pursue revenue opportunities

While the main purpose of the court is not to be a money-making entity, it can help to fund its operations through efficient use of capital and resources. This initiative takes this concept a step further. It will create a process to research revenue-generating opportunities such as grant programs and improved collection processes for fines. These opportunities will be evaluated and implemented if they are determined to be beneficial to both the city court operation and to all of its users.

Task Force:

Administration with input from Supervisors and Division Heads

Owner:

Barbara Robertson

Initiatives:

- *Create a process to consider revenue recommendations*

ACTION ITEMS	TIMELINE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create criteria checklist to evaluate revenue-generating programs 	TBD
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appoint personnel to research and report on potential revenue-generating programs 	TBD

- *Evaluate and implement revenue-generating projects*

ACTION ITEMS	TIMELINE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present projects to Administration and Division Heads for consideration and discussion 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create plan and implement approved programs 	



Goal 5: Restructure and enhance processes to operate more efficiently and effectively.

Baton Rouge City Court recognizes that even innovative and effective processes do not work effectively forever. They require constant monitoring, evaluation, and modification as changes occur, in order to maintain and improve caseflow management and service to the public. This initiative will provide a mechanism to continuously evaluate processes, identify problems, and manage and communicate the changes necessary to effectively facilitate the administration of justice.

Task Force:

Lon Norris with input from Division Heads

Owner:

TBD

Initiatives:

- *Solicit input from all divisions to improve city court processes and organizational structure.*

ACTION ITEMS	TIMELINE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate meetings with Administration and Division heads to discuss potential changes to City Court processes and organization structure 	TBD
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create implementation schedule for the plan 	TBD

- *Evaluate and implement revised city court processes and organizational structure.*

ACTION ITEMS	TIMELINE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use input to develop a recommended plan for process improvements and potential organizational changes 	TBD
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedule regular meetings to evaluate and revise plan as needed 	TBD



Goal 6: Enhance staff development opportunities

The Baton Rouge City Court is only as effective as the personnel who perform the day-to-day processes and procedures. This initiative recognizes the need of employees to have access to ongoing development activities and resources in order to continue to grow in their roles and ensures an ongoing priority of supplying educational opportunities to employees at all levels.

Task Force:

City Court Training Personnel

Owner:

Sandy Accardo

Initiatives:

- *Survey and expand upon training and development opportunities for employees of the city court system.*

ACTION ITEMS	TIMELINE
• Solicit input for additional training topics on all training evaluation forms	TBD
• Meet regularly with Division Heads and supervisors to determine additional needs	TBD
• Conduct series of classes focused on Customer Service Skills	TBD
• Expand New Employee Orientation and Onboarding Programs	TBD
• Expand New Supervisor Orientation	TBD
• Review different formats of training and development for potential implementation	TBD

- *Continually evaluate training to determine effectiveness and areas for expansion.*

ACTION ITEMS	TIMELINE
• Use evaluation forms in every training program	Ongoing
• Attend TDI (Trainers Development Institute) meetings and events to keep abreast of trends and offerings from City-Parish Human Resources Department	Ongoing

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow up with supervisors to evaluate effectiveness of training on workplace behavior and adjust practices based on results 	Ongoing
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- Create a support system for supervisors to assist in growth and development, workforce planning, and knowledge management activities.*

ACTION ITEMS	TIMELINE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a cross training program to develop abilities and broaden understanding of court functions 	TBD
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enlist mentors throughout City to work with individuals who are interested in advancing their skills and responsibilities 	Ongoing



Goal 7: Improve inter/intradepartmental communications and collaboration

During the course of producing this strategic plan, the importance of communications, collaboration, and teamwork was highlighted. That emphasis and the positive result of incorporating these elements into this plan prompted the addition of this initiative. The goal of this initiative is to build upon the improved open communications that made this document possible.

Task Force:

Leadership Committee composed of representatives from each division

Owner:

Aresa Christophe

Initiatives:

- *Create opportunities for ongoing communication between employees, departments, and administration of Baton Rouge City Court.*

ACTION ITEMS	TIMELINE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedule regular meetings between Administration, Supervisors, and Division Heads to discuss opportunities and issues 	TBD
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create incentives and employee recognition programs 	TBD
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement regular communication channels to ensure consistent messages, communication of changes, and celebration of successes in City Court 	TBD

- *Apply the information gained from that communication in the development of new programs, improvements, and adjustments to current court practices.*

ACTION ITEMS	TIMELINE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insert surveys and other methods for employees to submit ideas and suggestions into communication channels 	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold debriefing sessions to review program changes and evaluate results. 	Ongoing