



**Central City Neighborhood
Planning District 2
Rebuilding Plan**



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Cover Images from left to right:

- A: Brown’s Velvet Dairy Fence
- B: La Salle Triangular Park
- C: St. Charles Church

Introduction

Approximately 100 days after Hurricane Katrina struck, Motion M-05-592 was unanimously passed by the City Council of New Orleans. This motion ensured that community-based, neighborhood-by-neighborhood planning would be central to decisions associated with the recovery of the most devastated areas of New Orleans. The City Council was adamant that the people most impacted by the storm would play a central role in defining the future of their communities. Overall, 47 of the 73 neighborhoods delineated by the City’s Planning Commission have had plans prepared as part of this process.

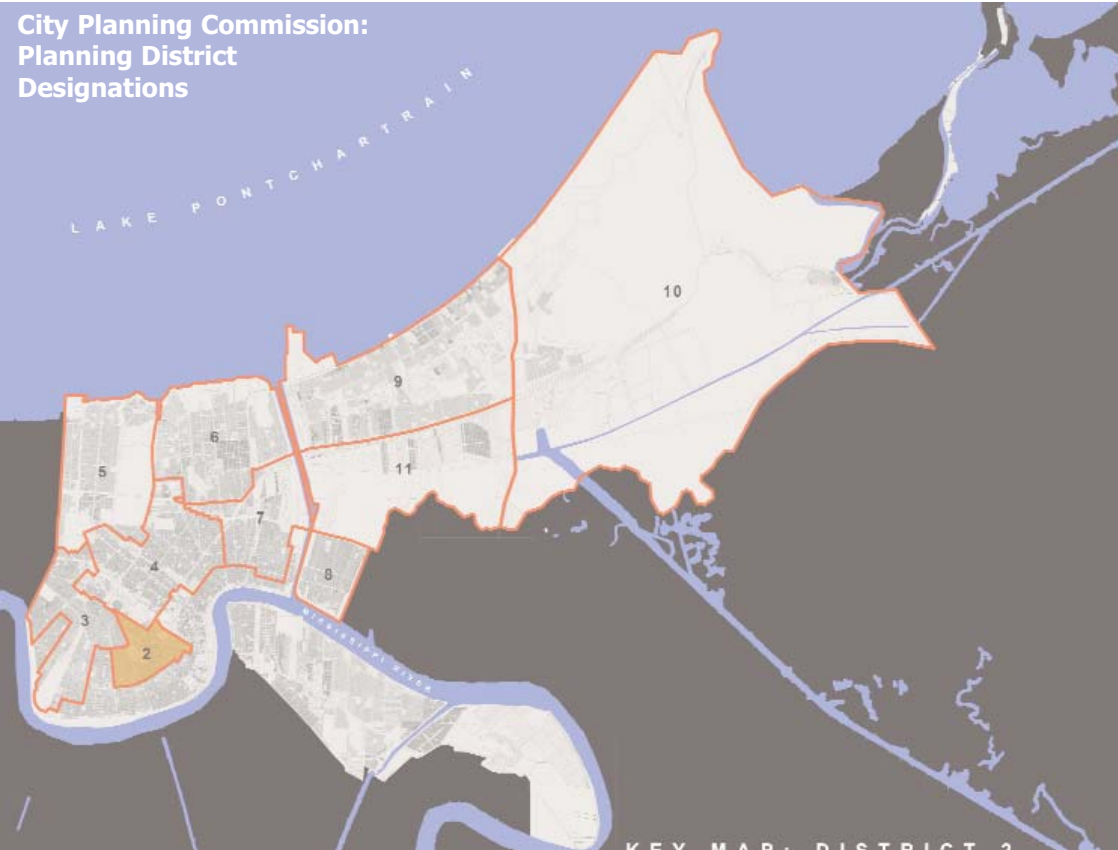
The City Council charged a team of consultants overseen by Lambert Advisory & SHEDO with assisting neighborhoods flooded by Hurricane Katrina in developing revitalization plans that are thoughtful and can be implemented, for incorporation into a citywide recovery and improvement plan to be submitted to the State of Louisiana and federal funding agencies. This document is one of forty-two (42) neighborhood plans that meet that mandate.

Planning District 2, the subject of the following report, includes two geographically specific neighborhoods: Milan and Central City.

Basic assumptions also formed the basis for the Planning District 2 Recovery Plan:

- 1) That a flood protection system will be designed to withstand future catastrophic loss from a 1 in 100 year storm and that this is a commitment by the Federal Government;
- 2) That stringent building codes will be implemented to further limit wind damage;
- 3) That the basic urban structure of the city is sound and that rebuilding will respect this structure;
- 4)That there is an organized, coherent and operable Hurricane Evacuation Program.

City Planning Commission:
Planning District
Designations



Acknowledgements

With grateful appreciation the planning team would like to thank all the residents of District 2 who participated in this planning process and without whose participation this plan would not be possible.

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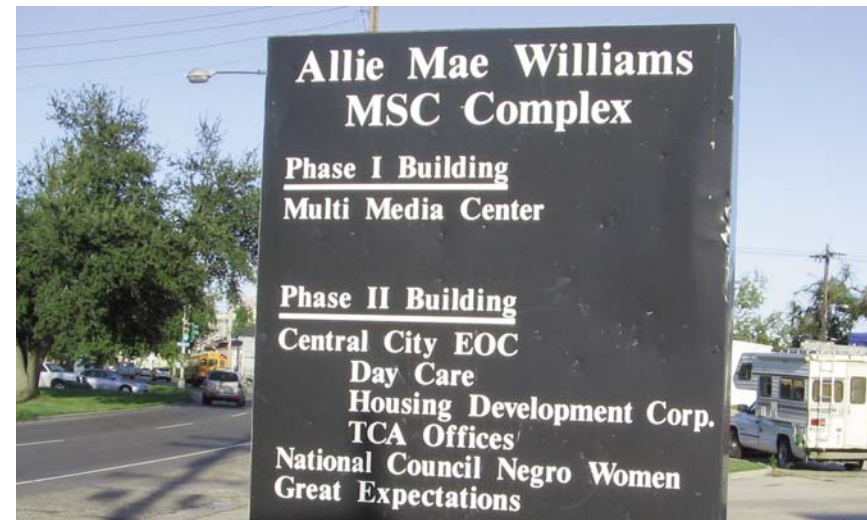
A. Central City Neighborhood

Location and History

The Central City Neighborhood occupies a triangular swath of Uptown New Orleans. Central City's boundaries are, roughly, St. Charles Avenue to S. Broad and Toledano Street to the Pontchartrain Expressway. The neighborhood also contains Zion City, a triangular shaped area north of S. Broad that ends at the vertex of Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard and Washington Avenue. Along with the Milan Neighborhood, Central City is contained within Planning District Two.

Though economically challenged, Central City is ideally located adjacent to the Garden District and close to the Central Business District. The neighborhood is ringed by major thoroughfares and delimited by the Pontchartrain Expressway to the East. Primarily residential in character, Central City was once home to several thriving commercial corridors. Its strategic location near wealthy residential enclaves and booming port facilities made it a natural home for the working class of all races and a logical entrepreneurial location for newly arrived immigrants.

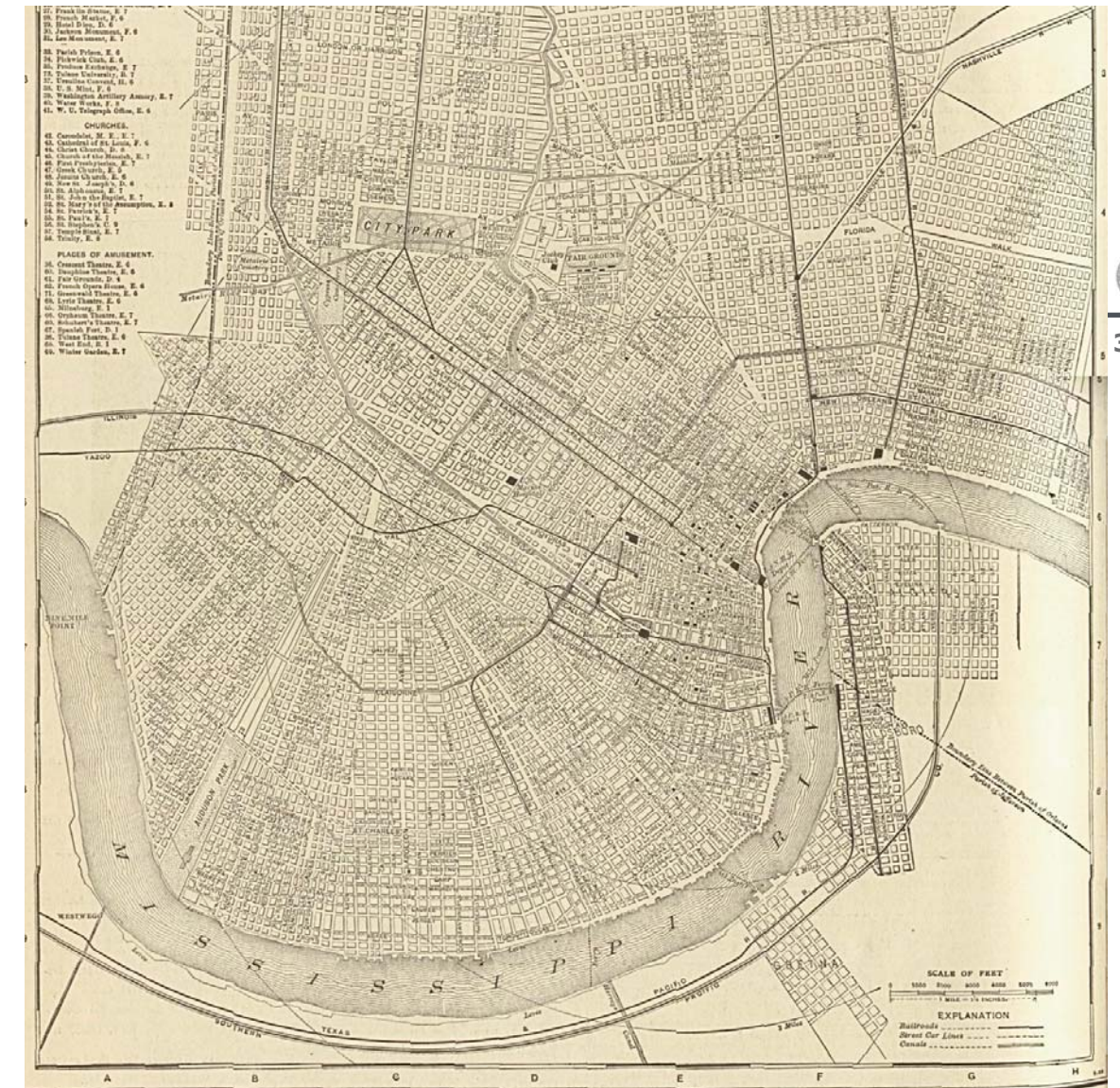
Long home to such a diverse population, Central City in recent years has become increasingly racially homogeneous and, concurrently, economically depressed. This shift away from ethnic and economic diversity belies Central City's tradition of cross-cultural commercial activity. Recent years have brought to Central City the same sort of



social and economic strife that have plagued other American cities' urban cores. Poverty, drugs, and the violence associated with the drug trade have combined to severely erode the quality of life enjoyed by the residents of Central City.

According to research done by the Central City Renaissance Alliance as part of their Community Plan, the area now referred to as Central City was called "Back-of-Town." Land in this area north of the inhabited St. Charles Avenue corridor could not be settled until the invention, by A. Baldwin Wood in 1915, of a system of pumps capable of draining this swampland. Prior to the introduction of this network of pumps, drainage of Central City was an uncertain proposition. Even this tentative balance of man and nature was not enough to stop the market-driven development of the land.

Because of unique social forces at work in New Orleans, the Central City area was never a physically segregated neighborhood. Laborers and artisans, black and white, all settled in the areas near the docks, train yards, and mills that were interspersed throughout the neighborhood. The working class ethos of the neighborhood was physically manifested in traditional New Orleans architectural styles. Shotgun houses dominate with larger homes occasionally dotting the landscape. As labor trends shifted the number of unskilled workers in Central City rose and, concurrently, the number of skilled laborers declined. This



Images from left to right:

A: Allie Mae Williams MSC Center

B: O.C. Haley Mixed-Use

Map: Old Map of New Orleans



Above: Aerial Map of Central City Neighborhood

change led to an underutilization of the existing housing stock and the creation of tenement-level housing conditions. Additional, external pressures were placed on Central City by the construction, in the 1950's and 1960's, of large public housing developments on the periphery of the neighborhood.

Prior to Hurricane Katrina, many in the community believed that Central City had turned the corner and was poised for a rebirth. Newfound community activism, championed by groups such as the Central City Renaissance Alliance, had positioned the neighborhood for growth. Emphasis was placed on restoring commerce to traditional locations such as Oretha Castle Haley Boulevard and Claiborne Avenue and returning civic institutions, such as the Dryades YMCA, to the area. Combined with the redevelopment of the adjacent housing developments, Central City, prior to Katrina, was poised for dramatic redevelopment.

Recovery Vision and Goals

The Central City Neighborhood Rebuilding Plan provides a vision and framework for physical improvements, new service structures, and community development opportunities in Central City.

Vision

Central City is an historic, unique neighborhood located in the heart of Uptown New Orleans. The residents of Central City envision a community in which people of varied racial and economic backgrounds can coexist and thrive in an environment that is fair, equitable, and just. The resulting redeveloped neighborhood should provide a high quality of life and opportunities for meaningful employment and home ownership. The restored Central City community will be rebuilt upon the same urban framework that existed prior to Hurricane Katrina.

Neighborhood Recovery Goals

In an effort to rebuild and improve Central City's built-form environment to pre-Hurricane Katrina levels, residents have communicated the following, basic goals for their neighborhood:

- Rebuild and enhance the streets, sidewalks, and infrastructure of the Central City Neighborhood;
- Remodel and restore the neighborhood's existing schools;
- Preserve and enhance Central City's intricate, historic architectural fabric;
- Improve public safety by reconstructing Central City's First Responder network of police and fire stations.

Images from left to right:

- A: Carondelet Street Apartments**
B: Brown's Velvet Dairy Fence
C: 1519 Carondelet Residence



In addition to these basic prerequisites for redevelopment, the Central City community proffers the following specific recovery goals:

Create Equitable Redevelopment Options

- The recovery of Central City should be just, humane, and democratically controlled by the people of Central City;
- When possible, Community Benefits Agreements, such as the one agreed to by Home Depot, should be negotiated between residents and developers;
- Mixed-use buildings, with appropriate, locally owned businesses interspersed with private residences should be encouraged.

Restore and Redevelop Existing Commercial Corridors

- Turn O.C. Haley’s designation as a Main Street Program designee into a catalyst for economic growth and cultural education;
- Reinforce Claiborne Avenue as a commercial corridor;
- Redevelop St. Charles Avenue as Central City’s “Front Door;”

Provide Attractive Residential Options

- Revitalize the C.J. Peete and B.W. Cooper housing developments in a manner that benefits both the residents of Central City and the public housing developments;
- Create attractive, architecturally

appropriate, and affordable residential infill construction options;

- Develop affordable housing solutions that include home ownership as well as rental options;
- Aggressively restore blighted properties to the marketplace or civic use;

Upgrade Existing Parks and Open Spaces

- Adaptively reuse empty lots as public parks;
- Where appropriate, add attractive landscaping to public spaces.

Planning Process and Neighborhood Participation

The Central City neighborhood is served by several active associations. Included among these are Central City Partnership and the Central City Renaissance Alliance. More than any other New Orleans neighborhood, Central City is well served by a multitude of Churches and faith-based organizations. Throughout this process input was gleaned from these and other sources.

Schedule of Neighborhood Meetings

Over a period of four months, several neighborhood and district-wide, meetings were held by the SHEDO/ Lambert Advisory planning consultants to allow citizens to

voice their concerns about their neighborhood. The meetings were held as follows:

- Saturday, May 20th, 2006 – 2:00 P.M. at Holy Ghost Church, 2015 Louisiana Avenue. At this District Two meeting, residents from both the adjoining Milan Neighborhood and Central City were present to begin the community visioning process with the New Orleans Neighborhoods Rebuilding Team consultants.
- Saturday, July 22nd, 2006 – 6:30 to 8:30 P.M. at Israelite Baptist Church, 2100 Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard. At this meeting input was sought from the leadership of the Central City Renaissance Alliance. Prior to Katrina the CCRA had been actively engaged in a neighborhood planning process for Central City.
- Saturday, August 19th, 2006 2:00 to 4:00 P.M. at Central City EOC, 2020 Jackson Avenue. This was the second formal meeting with members of the EOC and the CCRA.

Images from left to right:

A-C: Milan Residences
D: Louisiana & South Claiborne Avenue



Planning Efforts Pre-Katrina

Pre-Katrina planning efforts in Central City were quite extensive due to the efforts of the Central City Renaissance Alliance and the Central City Partnership. In 2004 the City of New Orleans contracted with Concordia, LLC to begin a community planning initiative in Central City. Funded by local and national organizations, the planning team engaged various members of the community, including businesspersons, religious leaders, artists, laborers, students, and non-profit staff members.

At the conclusion of their nine-month commission, the CCRA Steering committee issued key recommendations in the following areas: Community Connections, Telling the Community Story, Housing in the Community, Community Beautification, Employing the Community, and Community Wealth Building, An Educated Community, and A Healthy and Safe Community. Their recommendations are incorporated into this report’s Recovery Plan.

Additionally, a series of city-wide planning initiatives were undertaken in recent years that examined both district-wide and neighborhood-specific issues. Planning efforts included the City of New Orleans’ 1999 Land Use Plan, the New Century New Orleans Parks Master Plan of 2002 and the Transportation Master Plan of 2004.

The 1999 Land Use Plan identified several key issues and challenges that affected the quality of life in Central City. These included:

- Disinvestment and blight in both residential and commercial areas
- Problems relative to improvements of public housing developments
- Pressure from institutional uses and area hospitals
- Allowed uses that are incompatible with quality, residential life, i.e., bars, bed and breakfasts
- Inadequate respect for historical properties

In response, the Plan made several key recommendations for District Two and Central City. The most significant recommendation for the district was the application of two types of Mixed-Use land categories in areas where residential activity has traditionally coexisted with commercial interests (neighborhood-scale mixed-use) and in industrial areas such as along the Pontchartrain Expressway (Urban-Scale Mixed-Use).

The New Century New Orleans Parks Master Plan of 2002 inventoried and assessed the condition of District Two’s 28 acres of parks and open spaces.

The Plan determined that Central City should be considered for a multi-purpose recreation center and identified the old

Central City incinerator site at 7th Street and Saratoga as a possible location.

The Transportation Master Plan of 2004 recommended a variety of improvements in District Two. In particular, it recommended the creation of bicycle lanes, a study of possible mass transit route extensions, and designation of specific roads as truck routes.

B. Pre-Hurricane Katrina Neighborhood Existing Conditions

Land Use and Zoning

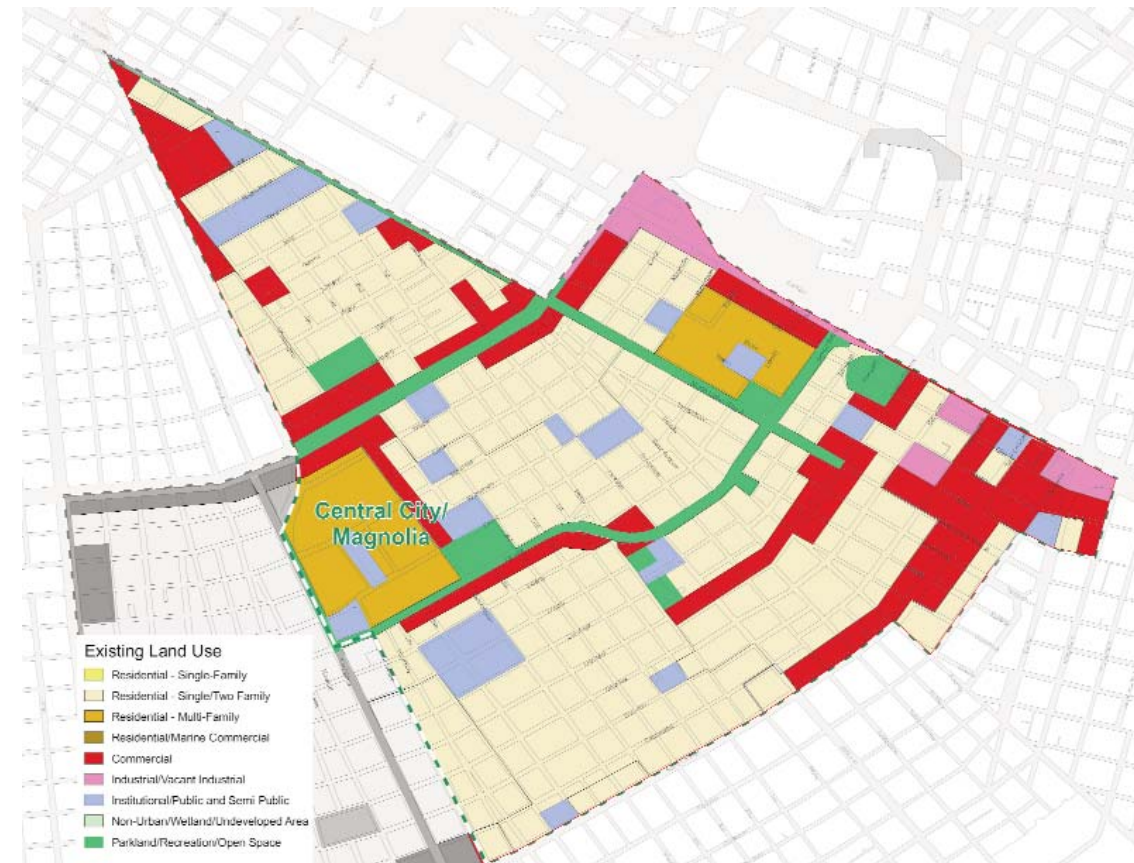
Changing land uses and an organic growth pattern have resulted in a variety of zoning classifications being present in Central City. The predominant classification is RS-1, which permits single-family detached dwellings. This gives the majority of the neighborhood a residential character. The C-1, or General Commercial District, zoning designation applies mainly to the portion of Central City from St. Charles Avenue to Claiborne and from Louisiana Avenue to MLK Boulevard.

When discounting open space, residential uses account for about 59% of total land in District Two while commercial uses account for about 29% of total land. As is the case in many older neighborhoods, Central City has an opportunity to redevelop in a way that that refocuses redevelopment around a variety of land uses that enhance the character of the neighborhood.

Pre-Katrina Demographic Profile

Prior to Hurricane Katrina, according to Census 2000 data, the population of Central City was 19,072. The 2000 Census identified 8,147 households in the area with an average household size of 2.34 persons.

More than thirty percent of the population was under the age of eighteen. This



relatively high number of school-aged children is significant due to the per-pupil apportionment of education funds by governmental agencies.

The move toward racial homogeneity in Central City continued, according to the Census. In 2000, the neighborhood was more than 87% African-American with Whites comprising approximately 10% of the population.

Several indicators point to the persistence of poverty and social distress in Central City. First, only 16.3 percent of Central City residents live in owner-occupied housing. The national home ownership average is 66.2 percent.

Residents often point out that the lack of owner-occupied housing contributes to many ills in the neighborhood relating to crime and safety. Secondly, the 2000 Census identifies nearly one-fourth, 21.2%, of all housing units in Central City as vacant, compared to the national vacancy average of 9%.

Most telling may be the number of children and others living below the federally-defined poverty line. Central City, regrettably, leads New Orleans in this category with 75.2% of children under the age of five living below the poverty line.

This population of children in poverty must be considered by any recovery plan due to

Image at right:

A: Erato and S. White in Zion City

Maps at center:
Central City Neighborhood Present Land-Use Map (Above)

Central City Neighborhood Present Zoning Map (Below)





their reliance upon an intricate network of social programs for their survival. The total percentage of residents living below the poverty line is 48.8%.

Mobility and Transportation

More than 56% of the total occupied housing units have no vehicle available. Of the total number of workers living in the area, more than 29% rely on public buses, streetcars, taxis, and other modes of transportation to get to their place of employment. Nearly 40% of the residents travel less than thirty minutes to work while the remainder requires 30 to 60 minutes travel time. More than residents of other New Orleans neighborhoods, Central City residents’ ability to go to and from work is a function of a reliable public transit system.

Recreation and Open Space

Central City offers relatively few recreation areas within the neighborhood. There are, however, several recreational areas in adjacent neighborhoods such as Milan and the Lower Garden District. The 2002 Parks, Recreation and open Space plan identified three formal parks/playgrounds in Central City:

- **A. L. Davis Playground-**
Davis playground is a large, 4.59-acre city-owned park with a full list of amenities including playground equipment, basketball courts, a multi-purpose field, baseball diamond, and lights. Additionally, it serves a dual purpose as a gathering spot for several tribes of Mardi Gras Indians during carnival season and the springtime parading season.
- **Taylor Playground-**
Taylor Playground is a 3.23-acre NORD playground that features a multi-purpose field, baseball diamond and swimming pool. It is located in the Hoffman Triangle section of Central City.
- **Van McMurray Park-**
Van McMurray Park sits on a 2.61-acre site and features a multi-purpose field, baseball diamond, and a basketball court.

The Recreation Plan proposed the creation of new parks in the area including a major community park at the site of the Saratoga Incinerator.

Images from left to right:
A: Two-Family Home in Zion City
B: Freret near 3rd
C: Triangular Park at at Washington Avenue and Toleda Avenue



Racial & Ethnic Diversity (2000 Census)	Central City	Orleans Parish	Louisiana	United States
Black/African American	87.10%	66.00%	32.20%	12.10%
White	9.90%	26.60%	62.60%	69.20%
Other	0.70%	2.70%	1.80%	4.60%
Two race categories	0.70%	1.00%	0.90%	1.60%
Hispanic (any race)	1.60%	3.10%	2.40%	12.50%

Average Household Income (2000 Census)	Central City	Orleans Parish	Louisiana	United States
Average Household Income (1999)	\$ 23,237	\$ 43,176	\$44,833	\$ 56,644

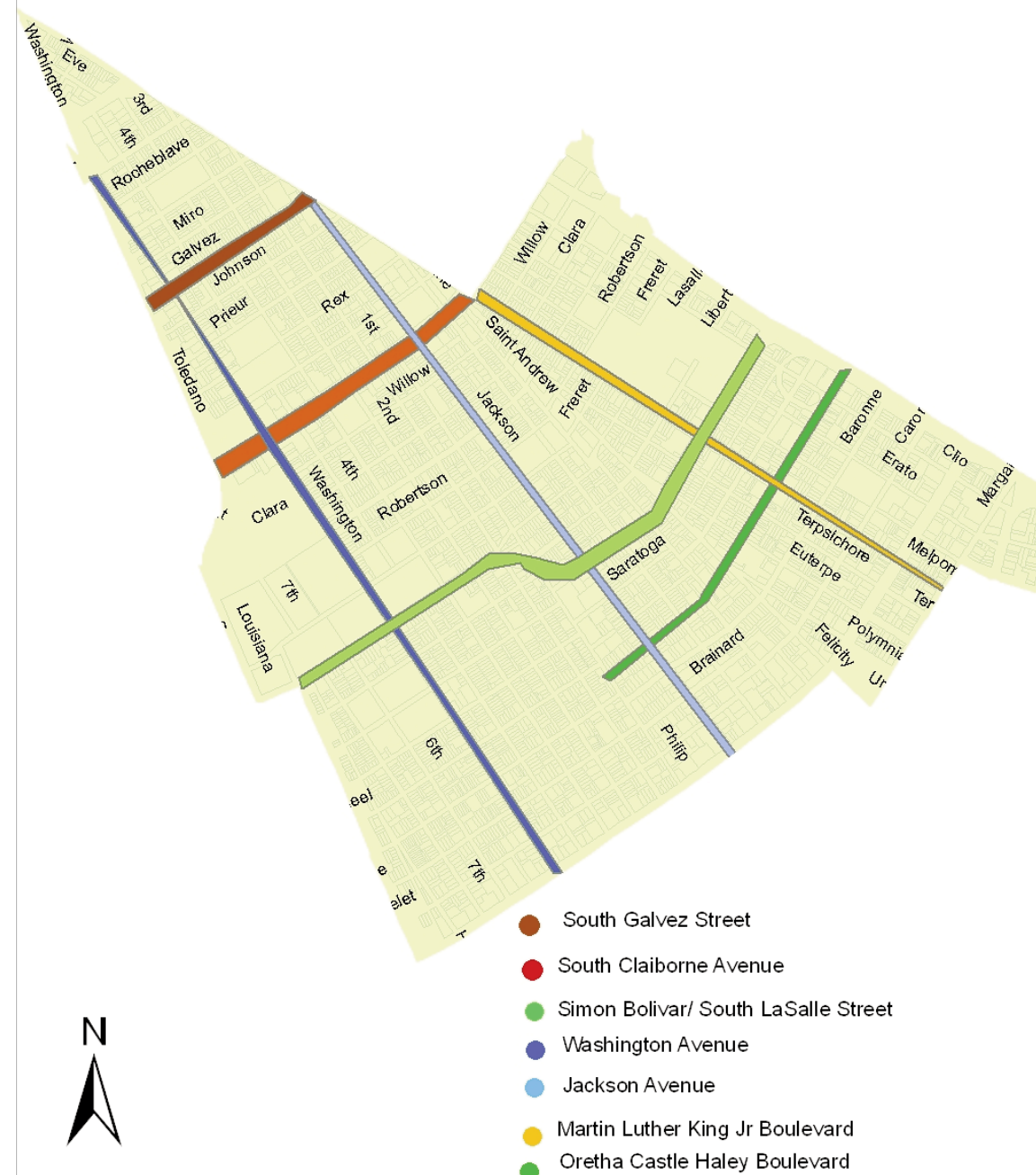
Population in Poverty (2000 Census)	Central City	Orleans Parish	Louisiana	United States
Percent of Population In Poverty	49.80%	27.90%	19.60%	12.40%
Percent of Children Under 5 in Poverty	75.20%	43.00%	29.00%	18.10%
Percent of Population Over 65 in Poverty	39.40%	19.30%	16.70%	9.90%

Vehicles Available (2000 Census)	Central City	Orleans Parish	Louisiana	United States
No vehicle available	56.50%	27.30%	11.90%	10.30%

Type of Transportation (2000 Census)	Central City	Orleans Parish	Louisiana	United States
Use of public transportation to work	29.60%	13.00%	2.20%	4.60%

Source: U.S. Census 2000; the Greater New Orleans Community Data Center at <http://gnocdc.org/orleans/>

Central City Major Thoroughfares



Images from left to right:

A: Typical Street

B: Shotgun Row on Freret near 3rd

Central City Neighborhood - Major Thoroughfares



Roadway Hierarchy and Jurisdiction

Central City is defined by a road network that includes almost every type of roadway classification and jurisdiction. There are roads under local control, a state highway (U.S. 90-Claiborne Avenue), and portions of the federally funded Interstate Highway System (I-10 and the Pontchartrain Expressway).

Major arterials that bisect the neighborhood include St. Charles Avenue, South Claiborne, South Galvez, Washington Avenue, Jackson Avenue, and Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard.

The most important commercial corridors run along an east/west vector. They include St. Charles Avenue, O.C. Haley, and Claiborne Avenue. Each, at various times, has occupied an important, distinct niche in the city's history. Currently, Claiborne Avenue serves primarily as a traffic thoroughway while St. Charles Avenue retains more of an upscale character. O.C. Haley's recent designation as a Main Street will probably lead to increased vehicular and pedestrian traffic along its commercial corridor.

Central City is also bordered by the St. Charles Avenue Streetcar Line, which provides service to Carrollton as well as the universities and downtown New Orleans. Currently, the streetcar has been



replaced by bus service while repairs to the Carrollton Car Barn and streetcars are underway.

In general, the neighborhood benefits from its central geographic position while not suffering the fate of other centrally-located neighborhoods, such as Treme, that are bisected by elevated expressways. Central City's street grid remains conducive to residential and commercial development.

Housing, Architecture and Historic Preservation

Housing

As previously noted, Central City is home to a disproportionately high number, 83.7%, of renters. Of the 8,147 total occupied housing units in Central City only 16.3% were owner-occupied, according to the 2000 Census. Significantly, 51.8% of the housing stock was constructed prior to 1949. The high proportion of rental units combined with a high concentration of low to moderate income renters partially explains the relatively poor condition of the housing stock in the neighborhood prior to the storm. Rents of these homes, generally, did not support the cost of regular upkeep. This exacerbated the damage done by absentee landlords who may have purchased scatter-site units with the intention of maximizing profits by



Central City
Community Gardens

- Existing Community Gardens
- Proposed Garden Locations
- Saratoga Incinerator Site



Central City Neighborhood - Community Gardens



putting as little investment into the property as possible or who inherited the home but live elsewhere.

This convergence of factors led to Central City having the highest vacancy rate in the city at 21.2%. A significant number of these homes, over the years, became blighted and were either abandoned or tied up in a cumbersome adjudication process. Blighted and adjudicated properties consistently top the lists of resident concerns.

Architecture

While the variety of house styles and types precludes the selection of a typical home, the native architectural language of New Orleans is spoken in Central City. Stately Victorian-era commercial buildings along St. Charles Avenue give way to more humble shotgun-style accommodations as one penetrates further into the neighborhood. Almost all of the significant homes feature above-grade construction with the older homes having unoccupied first floors. Most commercial buildings in

the area are utilitarian in design and speak little to the local architectural vernacular.

Historic Preservation

The Central City Neighborhood, especially near St. Charles Avenue, is recognized as a local historic district by the New Orleans Historic Districts Landmarks Commission and a National Register District by the federal government. The national designation covers the majority of the land mass in Central City while the local designation applies only to the most historic properties in the vicinity of St. Charles Avenue. Of the two, the local designation is the only one that has enforcement power. Changes to the exterior of historic structures must be approved by the HDLC. If the changes or building plans are approved a Certificate of Appropriateness is issued and work is allowed to begin.

The preservation of the historic structures along O.C. Haley is the key to rejuvenating large swaths of Central City. The recent designation of Haley as a Main Street will



Images from left to right:

- A: Daughters' of Universal - St. John Grand Lodge on Haley
- B: 1519 Carondelet - Single-Family Residence

Tenure (2000 Census)	Central City	Orleans Parish	Louisiana	United States
Owner Occupied	16.30%	46.50%	67.90%	66.20%
Renter Occupied	83.70%	53.50%	32.10%	33.80%



allow stabilization measures to take place that will protect these structures. If this street were to be drastically improved, the resulting momentum would have a multiplying effect on other historic properties in the area.

Many of the historic structures in the area are houses of worship and public school buildings. This includes several synagogues that have been converted to Christian houses of worship. The synagogues were reminders of a time when Jewish immigrants populated the area and were merchants along Dryades (O.C. Haley) Street.

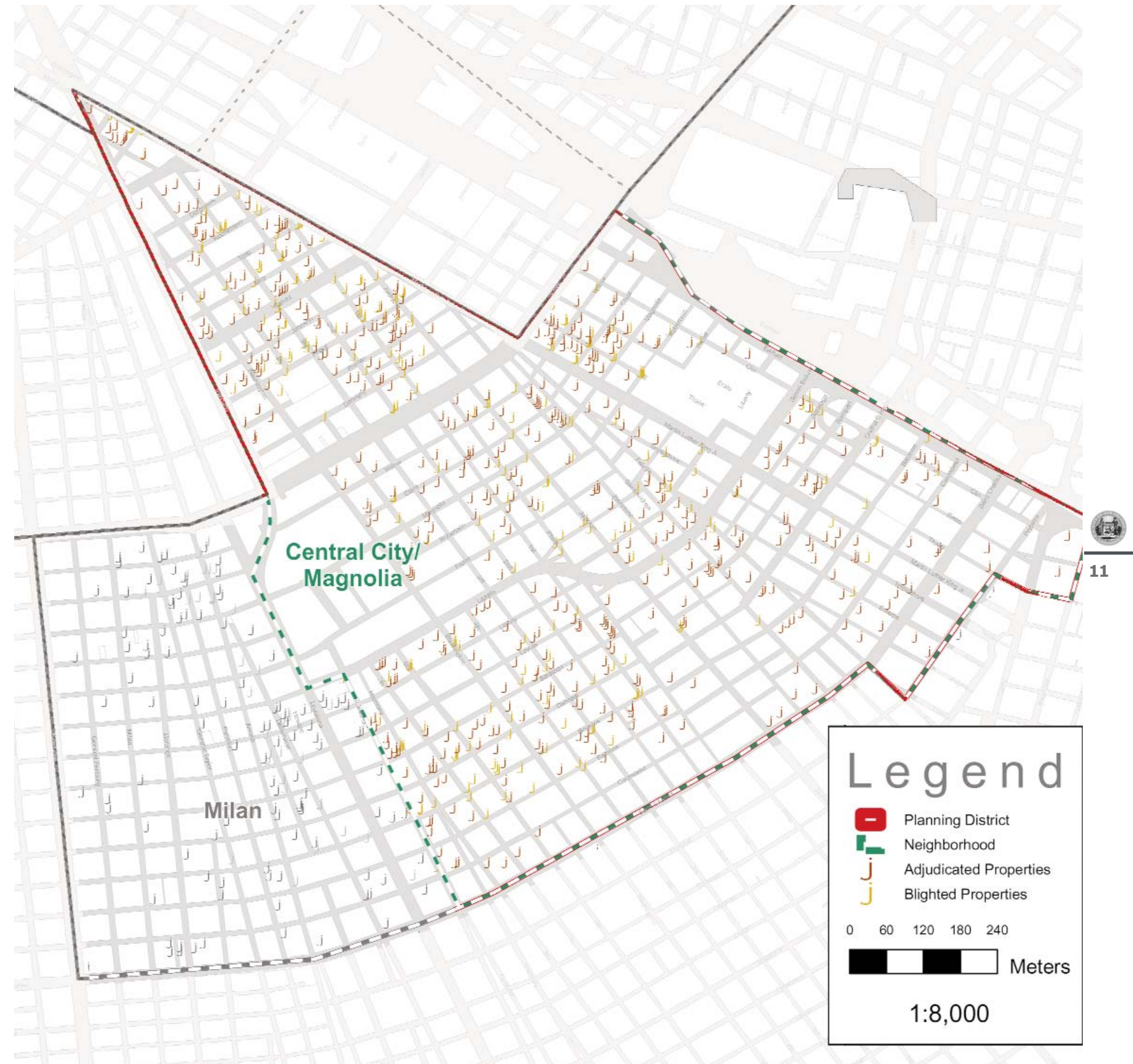
One of the key concerns of the neighborhood is the judicious designation of certain buildings as historic structures. Residents would prefer that individual structures be designated rather than wide areas that might preclude them from being redeveloped.

Also, given that Central City is ripe for infill housing development, an overlay district is a palatable compromise between the two points of view. Under this scenario, redevelopment is allowed to commence under strict guidelines that govern things like setbacks and traditional building styles.

Images from left to right:

A: Rhodes Funeral Home on Washington Avenue
Map:

Blighted and Adjudicated Properties -
1999 Land-Use Plan, City of New Orleans





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C. Hurricane Katrina Neighborhood Impacts

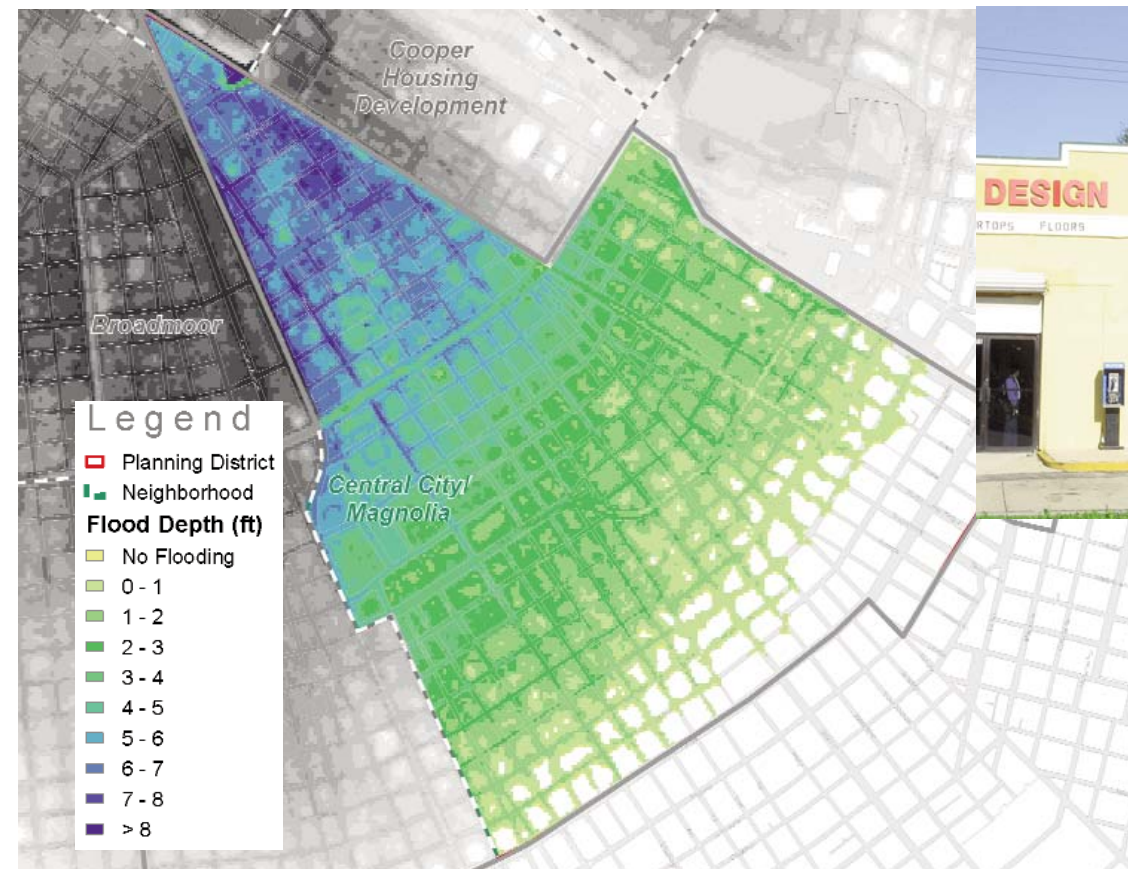
Extent of Flooding

The Central City neighborhood experienced severe to moderate flooding during the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Water depths ranged from six to eight feet in the Hoffman Triangle/Claiborne Avenue area to less than two feet near St. Charles Avenue. The severity of the flooding was directly proportional to the distance from the Mississippi River and its natural levee. The northern portion of Central City, including Zion City, is the center of the oft-mentioned “bowl” where flood and runoff water accumulates.

Residential Properties Damage Assessment

Damage to residential properties in Central City mirrors the extent of flooding as previously outlined. Wind damage destroyed roofs throughout the neighborhood while serious water damage was limited to the Hoffman Triangle and the areas north and south of the Claiborne corridor. Properties classified as severely damaged by FEMA (more than 50% damaged) are highly concentrated in the Hoffman Triangle and Zion City areas. Scattered throughout the neighborhood are severely damaged properties that were compromised pre-Katrina and further damaged during the storm.

Combined with the high concentration of lower and moderate income rental housing



under small landlord ownership in Central City, the high concentration of seriously damaged properties raises significant concern with regard to the ability and inclination of non-occupying property owners to restore their units without some underlying write-down, funding support, or long-term rental. Without a focused rental revitalization program many of these properties will fail to meet the economic threshold for quality reinvestment.



Commercial Properties Damage Assessment

While most commercial properties in Central City were heavily impacted by Hurricane Katrina, and the vast majority of the neighborhood-scale establishments remain closed, there appears to be a steady trend towards reinvestment and revitalization of these properties. Observations regarding commercial activity in Central City can best be observed by studying the various nodes of activity that are scattered throughout the neighborhood.

- O.C. Haley Boulevard from Philip Street to the Expressway-In October of 2006, Oretha Castle Haley Boulevard was designated a Louisiana Urban Main Street recipient. Grants awarded through this program will help efforts already begun by neighborhood organizations as well as to

Maps at center:
Central City Neighborhood Flood Damage Map showing inundated areas of the neighborhood (above).

Central City Neighborhood Assessment Map showing the extent of the damage to neighborhood structures (below). *Source: City of New Orleans - April 2006*

Image at top: Captain Sal's Seafood on on Toledano



begin new initiatives in the area. The program is designed to restore once thriving commercial corridors to economic viability. Fortunately, O.C. Haley anchors like Café Reconcile and the Ashe Center are open for business. As residential developments, such as the proposed Felicity Place on the Albertson’s site, inch towards the Haley corridor a new mix of businesses is expected to open. The nature of these enterprises will be dictated by the character and economic realities of the future and current residents.

- St. Charles Avenue from Toledano to the Expressway-This stretch of St. Charles Avenue is a mixed bag of commercial activity. Fast food outlets, Walgreen’s, and several upscale restaurants have reopened but several large restaurants (Bravo, Cheesecake Bistro, and others) remain closed. Given that these establishments served the larger, citywide community it is expected that, as local population rises, these locations will return to commerce. Properties along St. Charles Avenue suffered no damage from floodwaters.
- S. Claiborne From Toledano to the Expressway- Extensive flooding ravaged all commercial property along Claiborne Avenue and most remains closed. The former scrap metal recycling yard at the intersection of S. Claiborne and the Pontchartrain Expressway has closed and will become the site of a Home Depot store. Central City community leaders



Images from left to right:

A: Bohn Motor Company on S. Broad

At center: State of the Streets in the Neighborhood

have negotiated several key concessions from Home Depot. Included among these is a Community Benefits Agreement that requires the company to hire employees from the area. Further, residents have received several design concessions with regards to scale and building materials in an effort lessen the big-box store's impact on the community.

- **MLK JR. Boulevard-** This corridor is home to two of New Orleans' iconic culinary institutions: Brown's Velvet Dairy and Leidenheimer Bakery. Brown's has returned to full business, as damage to their plant was minimal. The bakery has yet to resume full operations at the historic location.

- **Industrial Corridors-** The industrial activity in the neighborhood, particularly along the Expressway and in the Hoffman Triangle/Zion City area, appears to be largely restored to the pre- Katrina levels.

Infrastructure Damage Assessment

The infrastructure damage assessment carried out was limited to drive-by evaluations of street conditions conducted by the Neighborhood Planning Consultant. No underground utilities were assessed; however the consultant and neighborhood groups were able to determine that BellSouth has been working to install fiber optic lines in the area. One planning

challenge has been the fact that fiber optic lines require aboveground connection box installations, which are considered by the neighborhood to be visually intrusive in exposed areas. Entergy has restored power to the entirety of Central City.

Information based upon visual inspection included specific conditions as follows: missing street signs, damaged street lights, sidewalks and pedestrian circulation, etc.

Street Conditions

Damage to the streets of Central City during Hurricane Katrina and the subsequent clearing of debris was substantial. Based on a block-by-block, street-by-street assessment, it was determined that many streets require some degree of repair or resurfacing. While the main east-west thoroughfares of S. Claiborne Avenue and St. Charles avenue are still in relatively good condition, most minor, north-south streets are in a severe state of disrepair. Streets in the Hoffman triangle and Zion City, in particular, present a hazard for motorists and pedestrians.

The CCRA Planning committee and general membership identified, on June 30th, 2006, several roadways that are in immediate need of resurfacing and repair. These include: Jackson Avenue; Josephine Street (Hoffman Triangle); Washington Avenue; S. Galvez, Magnolia Street, Baronne, Erato, and Broad Street.

Street Signage and Way-Finding

Street signs and way-finding signs sustained heavy loss in Central City. In October of 2006 the City of New Orleans, using a federal grant, began a systematic replacement of damaged street sign in the city. This process began in the more heavily populated Uptown section and will continue until the Spring of 2007. In this instance, Central City's location works to its advantage in that it will be one of the first areas to be targeted.

Street Lights

Individual installations sustained damage from wind, flooding, etc. Repairs have been made incrementally.

Sidewalks/Pedestrian Circulation Damage Assessment

There are broad areas of sidewalks within Central City that were damaged as a result of Hurricane Katrina. The majority of these sidewalks were either broken by overturned trees or the weight of debris removal equipment.

Parks and Open Space Damage Assessment

Hurricane Katrina had a tremendous impact on the parks of Central City. Parks are particularly at risk, given that FEMA

allocates virtually no funding for the recovery of green space and trees. Compounding this is the fact that federal funding for the removal of dead and potentially missile canopy has been difficult to obtain.

All of the parks in the neighborhood were damaged including A.L. Davis Playground, Taylor Playground, and Van McMurray Park. Wholesale renewal of these open spaces is in order. Since Davis Playground is home to a large FEMA trailer park the residents believe that it should be restored to a condition that is better than what it was before the storm.

Passive green spaces, such as the neutral grounds in the area, suffered loss of landscaping and tree canopy. In addition to their aesthetic benefit it has been observed that the planting of indigenous trees near homes can be a buffer to the winds and may even dissipate the force. It is strongly encouraged that these trees be replaced.

Community Facilities, Schools and Universities

There is a broad range of public and community facilities located in Central City. As is expected of a neighborhood with a large juvenile population, a large portion of the community facilities are public schools. All public schools in the area sustained

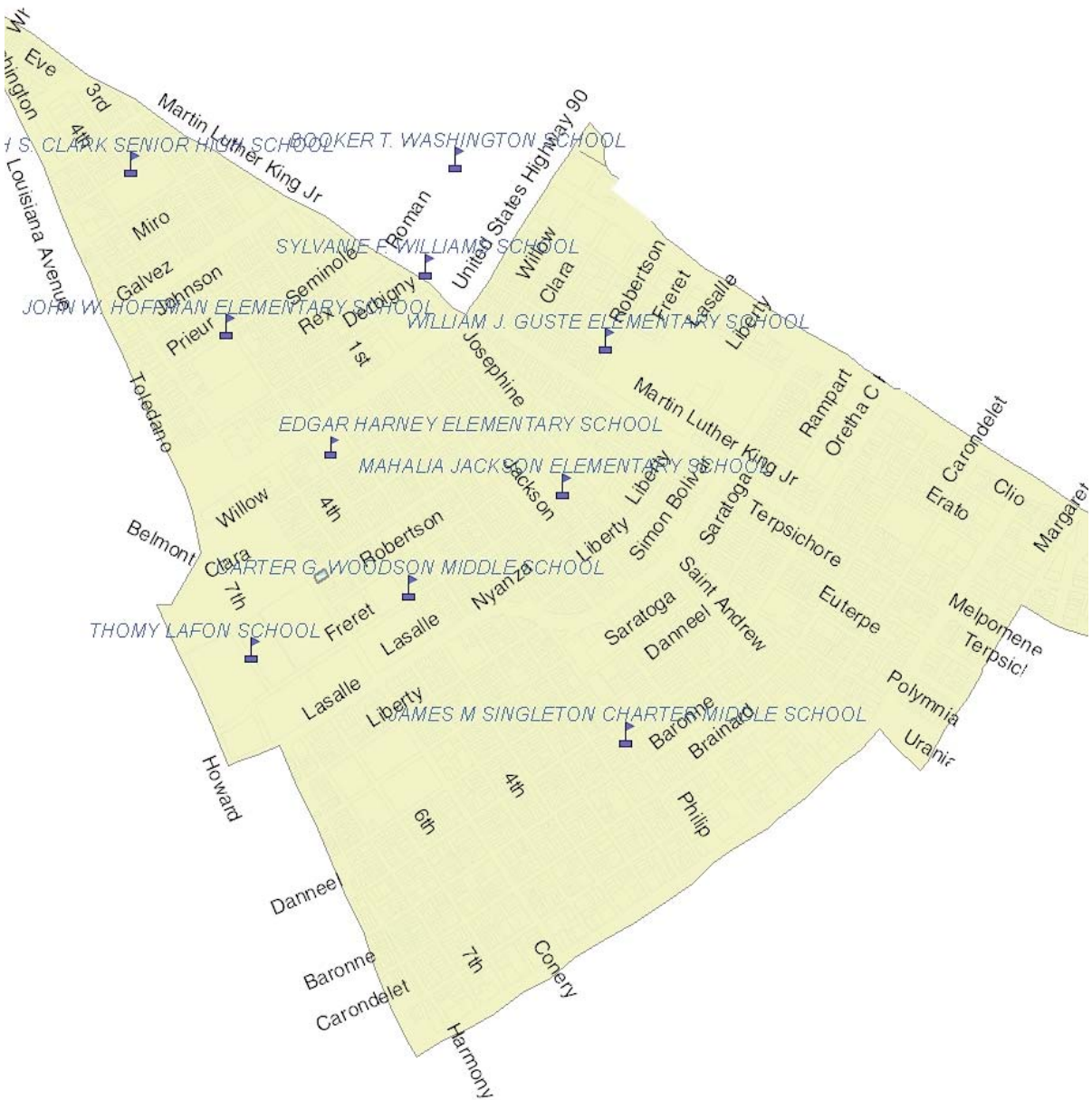


Central City Public Schools

some form of damage during Hurricane Katrina. One elementary school, Oretha C. Haley Elementary suffered serious fire damage in an October 2006 blaze. Again, the most serious damage was to schools in the Hoffman Triangle area. New Orleans schools, Post-Katrina, are run by myriad agencies and schedules for reopening are in a state of flux. As of October 2006, the status of Central City's public schools is as follows:

- **Edgar Harney Elementary School**-now open as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. School for Science and Technology, RSD
- **James M. Singleton Charter School**-Open as RSD Charter
- **Carter D. Woodson Middle School**-Remains Closed
- **Thomy Lafon School**-Closed
- **Joseph S. Clark Senior High School**- Open as Recovery District School
- **Sylvanie Williams School**- Closed
- **John Hoffman Elementary School**-Closed
- **William J. Guste Elementary School**-Closed

Other major community facilities in the area include the Allie Mae Williams



Community Center located at 2020 Jackson Avenue and the Dryades Street YMCA complex located at 2220 Oretha Castle Haley Boulevard. Both facilities sustained a moderate amount of damage and have resumed a limited schedule of activities.

One community facility that has assumed a prominent role in the post-Katrina cultural landscape is the Ashe Cultural Arts Center at 1712 O.C. Haley Boulevard. The Ashe Center serves a variety of roles including performing arts venue, gallery and meeting space.

D. Neighborhood Rebuilding Scenarios



The proposed recovery plan will conform to the existing neighborhood urban structure. The recovery plan is predicated upon the fact that residents, investors, and businesses can flourish and property values can be enhanced based upon the existing street grid and pattern of development with limited intervention as it relates to zoning and other land use changes.

Changes that may occur will be concentrated in areas that are conducive to a wide range of development options. Prime candidates for redevelopment include the S. Claiborne Avenue corridor, a variety of sites in the Hoffman Triangle area, and the entirety of Zion City.

Central City benefits from having gone through two complete planning processes: the Central City Renaissance Alliance's Community Plan before Katrina and the City Council-sponsored Danzey/Lambert Neighborhoods Rebuilding Plan after Katrina. The community has identified several specific goals and over-arching policies for the recovery of the neighborhood.

- Manage issues and pressure related to gentrification. The community wants to assure that local CDC's with the capacity to develop affordable housing are given the opportunity to do so. This initiative, identified in the Concordia/CCRA plan, is a natural companion to the "Lot-Next-Door" policy that this plan proposes and will detail

in Section E. Central City residents desire new and creative policy initiatives that will result in increased home ownership and stake-holding in the community.

- Create a network of parks and green spaces that afford all residents of Central City, regardless of economic condition, access to the health benefits afforded by public parks. Neighborhoods parks should be made more user-friendly by including human-scale amenities. Recreation should be decentralized by shifting emphasis away from large, group-oriented parks to the creation of pocket parks and walking paths.
- Focus on both for-sale and rental housing redevelopment and reconstruction and the implementation of key policies detailed later in this document that will assist in ensuring that the housing stock of the neighborhood is restored in an sensitive fashion (particularly as it relates to the historic character) and the condition of the housing stock and stability of neighborhoods in improved to a housing level beyond that which existed prior to Katrina;
- Restoration of basic public services and utilities such as efficient trash and debris collection and door-to-door postal service serve as benchmarks and signal to residents that the community is viable and worthy of reinvestment.

- Build community wealth by providing financial services to residents. Hope Credit Union's range of services should be enhanced and extended to as many residents as possible. Initiatives such as the micro-loan program and training for entrepreneurs can provide the basis for economic growth.
- Create a safe community by involving residents in a variety of proactive crime-fighting measures. Central City residents desire a citizen-led solution to the gripping waves of violence that plague their community. In addition to traditional New Orleans Police Department techniques it is suggested that crime in Central City can be combated by implementing quality-of-life measures such as litter abatement, empty lot management, and faith-based initiatives.

The economic future of Central City is the key to its recovery. Long home to a wide variety of seemingly incompatible land uses, Central City's organic growth pattern must be respected by future commercial and industrial enterprises. The community is committed that any future commercial redevelopment scenario ensures:

- Full commitment to the O.C. Haley Main Street project. Revitalization of the core of Central City depends upon the success of this project. The Main Street designation is but the first step. New businesses must be lured, new residents

must move in, and the community as a whole must be convinced that this is a safe and viable area.

- Central City is a walkable neighborhood and the qualities that make it such must be preserved. Code items such as minimum setback rules must be combined with pedestrian amenities that keep people moving through public spaces and enhance public safety by keeping eyes on the street.
- The community will ensure a symbiotic relationship between residents' needs and concerns and the needs and concerns of neighborhood businesses.
- Central City must encourage the recovery of the small business community in any way possible.

- Central City must seek a way to capitalize on the cultural assets embedded within the community. An example of this is the culture surrounding the Mardi Gras Indians, many of whom reside in the neighborhood. Locals and visitors come to the area for an authentic experience. Central City must find a way to capture this revenue by adding value to the experience. Past plans have proposed the creation of historic, resident-led tours that would be offered to visitors. Solutions such as these capture tourist revenue and multiply it through the local economy by employing neighborhood residents.

Images from left to right:

A: View towards Downtown New Orleans





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E. Neighborhood Recovery Plan

The following details the neighborhood recovery plan broken down by key projects and stages of implementation. The plan's elements fall into one of two general categories: capital projects for which there is a direct investment associated with the project and policies which call for changes in regulations or enforcement. Additionally, both capital projects and policies may have recurring operating costs associated with them and these are noted within the context of the recovery plan.

It is important to note that what is highlighted herein principally ties to the prioritization matrix included as part of this report. At this stage it must be noted that Central City has been active in formulating a community revitalization policy statement and goals both before and after Hurricane Katrina.

Critical Early Action Recovery Initiatives and Objectives

The following are recovery projects that the neighborhood's residents consider critical to Central City's revitalization. Projects identified with a letter refer to the map. The specific projects and neighborhood wide projects and policies are:

Specific Neighborhood Projects

- **A. Renew Oretha Castle Haley Boulevard -**

As previously mentioned, O.C. Haley has been formally accepted as an Urban Main Street project. In addition to this significant step, municipal and other resources should target Haley in a comprehensive fashion that ranges from tax incentives for residential conversions and construction to enhanced city services such as trash collection and additional police patrols.

Main Street grants must be viewed as seed money for future development. Enhanced services will require the city to incur recurring expenses that need to be accounted for in the annual budget. It is hoped, however, that an increase in captured tax revenue will offset this expenditure.

Residents propose adaptively reusing Myrtle Banks Elementary for a civic purpose, such as a Civil Rights Museum. Other uses for now-vacant structures include restaurants, community theaters, dance studios, art galleries, a youth center, book stores and faith-based endeavors.

All renovations or new construction must be designed in a manner that is compatible to the existing architectural vernacular of the street. This includes the removal of suburban style lighting standards and the installation of historically appropriate fixtures.

• B. Central City Neighborhood Health Clinics-

The community center located at 2020 Jackson Avenue currently provides mental health care while other clinics scattered throughout Central City provide various degrees of general health care. Central City is underserved by neighborhood clinics. Before the hurricane, a school-based health clinic operated out of Booker T. Washington High School at 1201 S. Roman Street.

Often overwhelmed with Central City and public housing residents, the clinic was never fully staffed or supplied. It is proposed that the existing clinics have their capacity increased and that new clinics be created as part of a decentralized local health care system. This is consistent with recent federal funding decisions that favor such an approach. In particular, Central City residents require enhanced care in the following areas: Female Health, Hypertension, Diabetes, Dental Care, and Pre-Natal Care.

• C. Rezone Claiborne Corridor -

Consistent with other neighborhoods along the S. Claiborne Avenue Corridor, the residents of Central City support the rezoning of S. Claiborne to allow for a larger variety of acceptable uses. Residents also support extending the commercial zoning through the block so that the first entire city square south of S.

Claiborne can be converted to full commercial zoning. Acceptable uses for these parcels include a movie studio complex, a variety of grocery stores, museums, a library, restaurants, and various entertainment-oriented uses.

• D. Develop a separate Zion City strategy for redevelopment-

Due to the isolated nature of Zion City (located at the northernmost tip of the Hoffman Triangle), it is recommended that further study continue related to potential redevelopment options. This recommendation is made because of the character of land ownership in this area. Zion City is a mix of industrial and residential with large swaths of the property controlled by a few landowners.

Due to the difficulty in discerning their intentions, it is recommended that the market forces at work be allowed to play themselves out. The fundamental choice to be made is whether or not to let either one of the predominant land uses take over the whole of Zion City. Also, the lack of residents that have returned to this neighborhood makes it difficult to discern whether or not rezoning is a desirable outcome.

• E. Create Senior Citizen's Village-

The large number of residents aged 65 and over requires the creation, for seniors, of safe housing options near transportation corridors and with access to

Images from left to right:

A: Toledano at St. Galvez

B: MLK Neutral Ground at OC Haley



At right:
Central City Neighborhood Projects Map

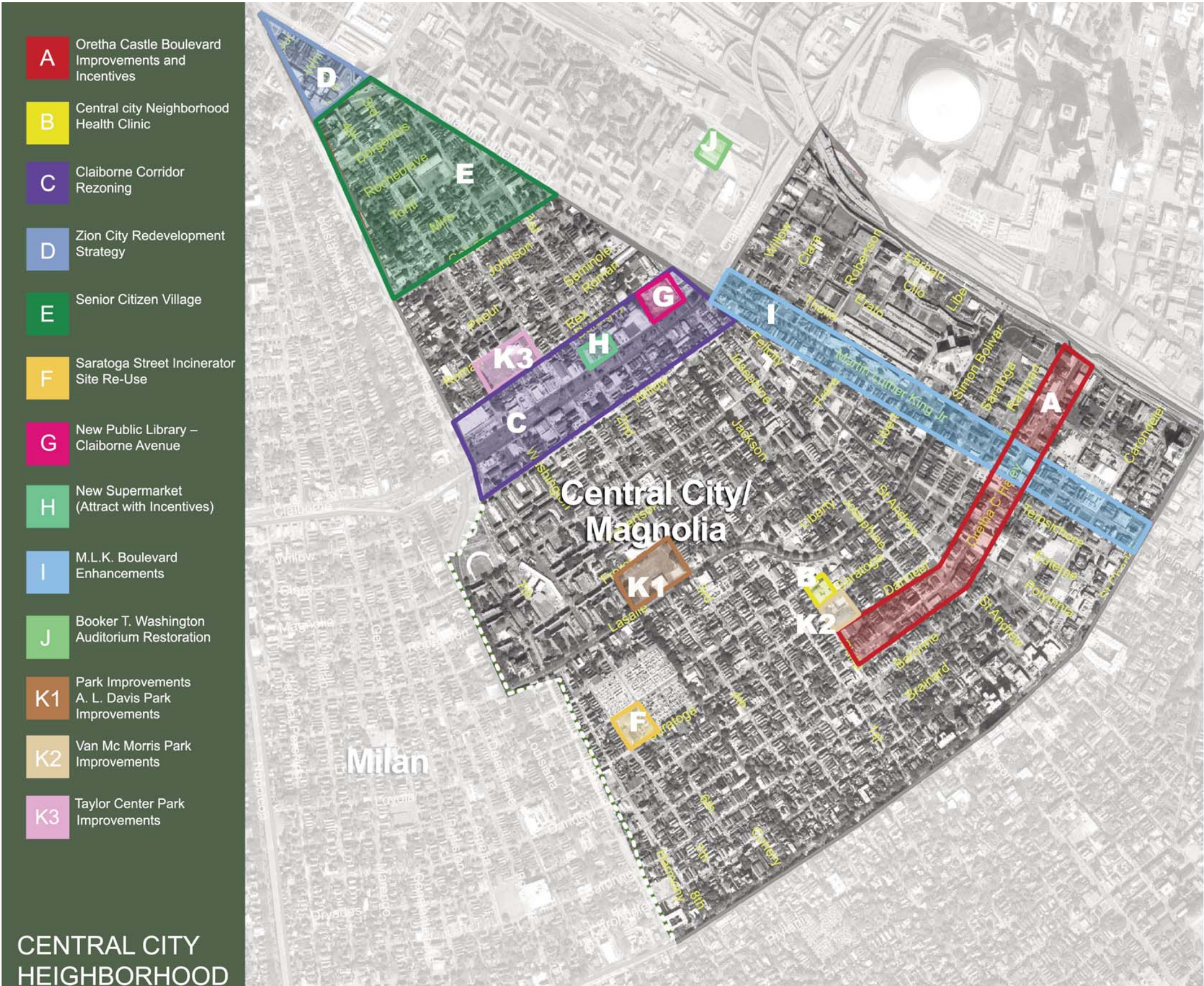
health care facilities. The best option is to build upon the existing presence of senior facilities along the Louisiana Avenue corridor. By concentrating resources in this area a critical mass can be reached, thus allowing for a wide range of services for seniors to be concentrated and an economy of scale to be obtained.



- **F. Redevelop the Brownfield at the Saratoga Street Incinerator site-** Federal funds should be leveraged to remediated ground contamination at the Saratoga Street Incinerator site. Central City residents would like the remediated site to become a passive greenspace.
- **G. New Public Library on S. Claiborne-** It is becoming increasing clear that parking limitations and building disrepair have become major issues at the Loyola Avenue Main Library Branch. Combined with a shift westward of the city's center of population, Central City becomes the logical choice for a proposed new Main Public Library Branch.

The proposed change in zoning will allow for a large parcel of land to be assembled for the library. This would allow for the creation of numerous parking options for citizens as well as provide a location that is accessible by a number of Regional Transit Authority lines.

A key factor in library location ought to be proximity to the local public schools.





Images from left to right:

Top: Projects Map for the Hoffman Triangle

At right: Rendering of the Proposed Central City Branch of the Main Public Library

Anytime that that a synergy can be created between public projects it should be aggressively pursued.

Neighborhood Wide Projects Identified

- **Repair streets, sidewalks, traffic signals/signs, street lights, and Replace missing drain, manhole, catch basins and water meter covers-**
- A significant portion of the streets in Central City require total curb-to-curb reconstruction. Based on the results of the previously mentioned street survey ##### linear feet of roadway in Central City needs partial or total reconstruction. While many streetlights have already been





repaired, the introduction of more attractive pedestrian-scale lighting is preferred in areas where reasonable. All drain, manhole, catch basis and water meter covers also require replacement.

• **Restore Public Schools in the neighborhood-**

As part of the planning process, residents were able to prioritize which schools they would like to see open and the order in which they would accept students. They also envisioned a completely restored feeder-school network in which schools would be opened on both the Lakeside and Riverside of S.Claiborne Avenues. Unused schools should be placed in the control of community-based organizations that would utilize the sites for community benefit purposes.

Specifically, Booker T. Washington should be reopened as a city-wide access school for career and vocational development. Carter G. Woodson should be rebuilt as the centerpiece of a Central City feeder-school system. Residents living on the Lakeside of S. Claiborne prioritize the reopening of Hoffman, Chester, and Sylvanie Williams schools in the aforementioned order. Riverside schools to be reopened include, in order, Harney, Guste, Lafon, and Mahalia Jackson.

If not reopened as public schools, Myrtle Banks, Durham, and Mahalia Jackson school sites can be converted to

Community Benefit locations. Adaptive reuse of these buildings and coordination with existing recreation facilities can create a variety of redevelopment or reuse options.

• **Repair, Restore and Improve all Underground Utilities –**

The City’s water system continues to require repair despite significant progress in recent months. It is important that the Federal government and State entities insure that the Sewage & Water Board has the necessary resources to quickly repair systems and the Sewage & Water Board develop a rational plan for addressing the leaks and breaks in the system so that above ground improvements can begin.

• **Home Depot location at S. Claiborne and Pontchartrain Expressway-**

Plans have recently been announced to construct a Home Depot in Central City. It will occupy an industrial site bordering on the expressway. Currently, the site is being remediated and cleared. Residents of Central City have secured several concessions from the developers with regards to building design and lot placement.

To mitigate the fact that this is still a big-box store, Home Depot will go through a design process that will ensure construction of a culturally and architecturally appropriate building.

• **Public Safety -**

A decentralized Sixth District Police Station, with a Milan or Central City substation would better serve the needs of the restored community. The Neighborhoods Rebuilding Plan promotes consistency between plans in adjoining neighborhoods. The Police Substation that is proposed for a site on Louisiana Avenue in the Milan neighborhood would go a long way towards providing enhanced safety for both areas. The Central City Plan additionally requests a storefront substation along the O.C. Haley commercial corridor. The resulting increased visibility promotes public safety as well as fosters improved police/community relations.

The CCRA community visioning process also identified several crime “hotspots” in the neighborhood where residents would like to see enhanced security or surveillance measures such as remotely monitored cameras and Police/Fire Call Boxes.

• **Develop an Infill Strategy-**

Severely damaged, yet highly accessible, areas of Central City will likely experience a wave of demolition followed by infill housing construction.

A successful strategy for managing this process must take into account the history of the area, the local architectural styles, and the lifestyles and socio-economic conditions of potential residents. Architectural review and creation of a set

of style guidelines will result in infill projects that maintain and improve the integrity of the neighborhood.

• **Bike Paths -** Where possible, bike lanes and paths should be created to allow residents a variety of options to commute to and from work or recreational activities. Aside from the health benefits associated with physical activity, post-Katrina bicycles have become the primary mode of transportation for many residents who live in areas that are underserved by New Orleans Regional Transit Authority.

• **Add street lighting and trees along Central City’s main corridors-**

The replacement of street lighting damaged in the storm, coupled with the addition of new lights in high-crime areas, can increase pedestrian safety by providing well-lit thoroughfares. The addition of trees can make designated streets “pedestrian corridors”. The resulting increase in foot traffic adds “eyes-on-the-street”.

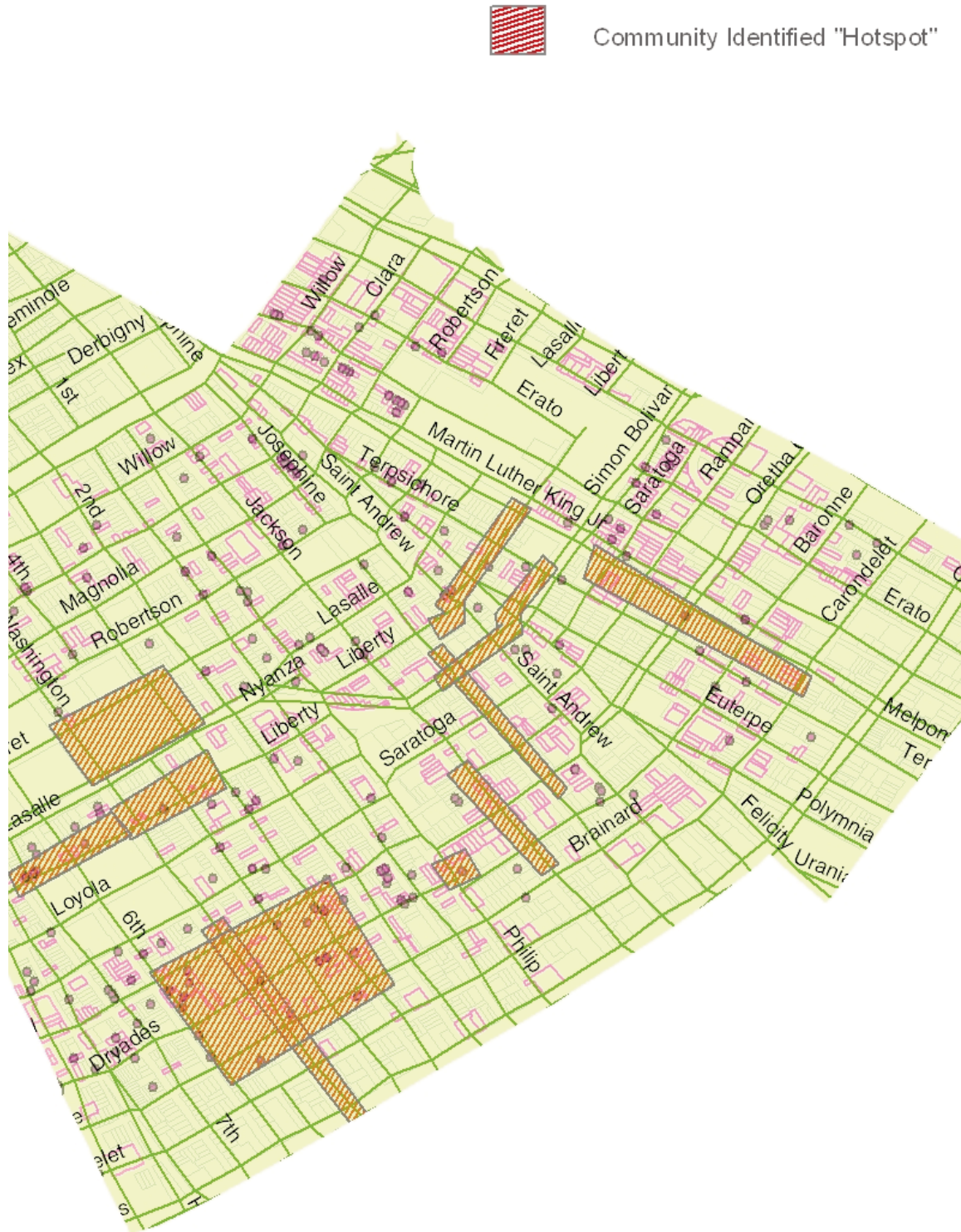
• **Create affordable homes and mixed-income developments-**

To encourage the development of affordable housing units municipalities must take proactive measures to ensure that the affordable units make fiscal sense to developers. Housing developers can be granted variances for projects that are dedicated to the creation of affordable units. Another tool at the city’s disposal is

Violent Crime Hotspots Identified by Community



Drug Activity Hotspots Identified by Community



the power to grant tax abatements on the increased value of renovated housing, provided the owner continues to offer the unit at an affordable rate.

- **Clean Up, Rapid Restoration of City and Other Services –**

One of the key elements that will restore a sense of normalcy in the neighborhood is the basic clean up of the neighborhood and the restoration of day-to-day municipal services. This includes once-a-week removal of debris and hazardous substances, restoration of twice a week garbage removal, and the reintroduction of door-to-door postal service.

- ***Bus Shelters-*** Shelters that protect transit customers from the wind, rain, and cold are to be constructed on major streets such as S. Claiborne and St. Charles Avenue. If contractually permitted by the R.T.A., local artists and architects should design structures that are compatible with central City architecture and d an aesthetically pleasing to the residents.

- **Focus on Rehabilitation of Damaged and Blighted Housing and Commercial Structures –**

The neighborhood cannot recover without a viable housing stock to accommodate displaced residents and attract new residents into the neighborhood. This can only be accomplished by addressing the large number of damaged and blighted



homes in the neighborhood. While the neighborhood supports the Road Home initiatives at is relates to both homeowner and rental housing, the neighborhood believes there needs to be a richer range of housing programs to address the blighting conditions that both existed before the storm and which were exacerbated by Katrina.

shopping as an impediment to their return. A large national chain should be pursued for a central location, such as near the Martin Luther King Jr. and S. Claiborne intersection

Needed and Mid-Term Initiatives and Objectives

Specific Neighborhood Projects

- **I. Enhance MLK Jr. Boulevard, S. Claiborne, and other thoroughfares in Central City** - A complete landscape and tree planting initiative is necessary to replace the tree canopy and flora that was lost in Hurricane Katrina. Residents should select a menu of approved tree and plant species that, when planted, would give Central City a unified, recognizable appearance.
- **J. Booker T. Washington High School Auditorium** - This New Orleans and African-American cultural landmark should be restored as a community performing arts and communication center. Its location next to or near several public housing developments that are scheduled to be redeveloped, as well as the school-based health clinic onsite, makes it a natural cultural and artistic redevelopment hub.

- **K. Park Improvements**
 - o **K.1** Redesign A. L. Davis Park-Davis

park should be reconfigured to meet the uses that residents demand. While team sports are still popular and require field space, Davis Park is also home to many Second-Line celebrations and Mardi-Gras Indian events. With those given events factored in, a new vision of the park emerges. A redesign park has designated parade grounds and stands that coexist with other, traditional park amenities.

Neighborhood Wide Projects

- **Code Enforcement**- The City of New Orleans and its agencies should aggressively enforce all code and ordinance violations, regardless of how small. Residents believe that enforcing minor, quality of life issues leads to a respect for the rule of law. And the creation of a community that is clean and safe for all.
- **Fund Youth Outreach, Vocational Training, Crime Prevention Techniques and a Judicial Liaison Program to Ensure Neighborhood Safety** – It is important that a holistic strategy be undertaken to address crime in the neighborhood and that the strategy be implemented at the neighborhood level.

Desired and Long-Term Initiatives and Objectives

- **K. Parks** - Renovate, Re-imagine, and

Reposition all Central City parks- As previously discussed with A. L. Davis Park, neighborhood playgrounds should provide activities and uses that are appropriate to the local population. Areas with high concentrations of senior citizens, for example, should provide recreation options that are age-appropriate.

- o **K.2** Van McMurray Park
- o **K3** Taylor Center Park

Neighborhood-Wide Projects

- **Build Community Centers on or near Public School complexes**- Using the existing Dryades YMCA as a model, more large, multi-purpose community centers should be constructed in Central City. In addition to providing recreational opportunities to residents, these centers can offer a range of services to clients including health screenings and counseling. The number and size of these centers shall be directly proportional to the number of residents that return to each sub-neighborhood in Central City.
- **Extend Existing Transportation Options and Maintain Neighborhood Walkability** – A concerted effort should be made to extend the various transportation options in the area through the extension of streetcar lines and by adding pedestrian and bike paths wherever feasible.
- **Study Construction of Internal**

Images from left to right:
A: S. Galvez Neutral Ground
B: Greater St. Stephen Full Baptist Church
C: Woodson School Yard



Flood Protection Levees – While the restoration of the flood protection system for the City is currently underway, the residents of the neighborhood believe that it is critical to look at a layered system of defense with regard to hazard mitigation and flood protection and therefore encourages the study of a secondary internal flood protection system that would protect Central City and adjoining neighborhoods in the event of a break in the existing levee and the broader City/regional flood protection network.

- **Faith-Based Policy**– Central City is home to a large number of churches and faith-based organizations. Some of these groups, before and after the storm, were active in the housing and social services arena. As the hurricane recovery projects continue, special consideration should be given to creating public-private partnerships with these groups.

Brown Derby and other establishments present an opportunity to reduce the number of ABO permits and, simultaneously, eliminate several non-conforming uses in Milan.

A number of housing initiatives are proposed as part of the Neighborhoods Rebuilding Plan and are presented in the overall policy element of the plan and issued under separate cover. Below is a summary of these policies.

HISTORIC NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

There are a number of general and specific housing development and policy considerations within the historic neighborhoods of New Orleans that received significant damage in Hurricane Katrina. The challenges of rebuilding are particularly severe in those historic neighborhoods where a significant number of low and moderate income households resided prior to the storm.

The City of New Orleans, prior to Hurricane Katrina, generally made \$25,000 soft second mortgages available through the HOME program to write down the cost of acquisition for eligible families in Community Development neighborhoods throughout the City. However, even before the storm, this amount was generally not enough to cover the gap in funding that was required to rehabilitate units that were historic structures and required special consideration.

Typically construction costs related to historic buildings is as much as 30 percent above non-historic new construction, and while the City made exceptions and increased the maximum funding available in some cases due to historic considerations, given the limited funds available, the increase in funding for historic homes meant that fewer units would be rehabilitated overall.

Today, rapid escalation in construction costs in the post-Katrina period has further eroded the degree to which the \$25,000 fills gaps in funding for new construction, let alone more costly historic rehabilitation. There is a need for expanded historic and blighted housing gap funding in order to ensure the long term health and character of these unique neighborhoods.

Assuming that the gap for new home construction (maintaining affordability for low and moderate income families) now stands at \$30,000, the amount required for the restoration of a historic home could be in excess of \$50,000 (covering the additional cost of not only that portion addressed by the \$30,000 in new construction, but a widened gap associated with the entire unit reconstruction).

While gap financing of \$50,000 per unit or \$5.0 million for every 100 units of blighted units of historic housing is quite significant, it is difficult to see how the historic fabric of many low and moderate income neighborhoods will be maintained without the provision of this funding. Otherwise, the character of many neighborhoods will be placed at risk by displacement of the neighborhood's low and moderate income residents or the further erosion of a neighborhood's historic character.

Currently, no gap funding program is addressing this challenge, and without

additional use of CDBG funds to fill these gaps, the historic and community fabric of many of the historic moderate income neighborhoods of New Orleans remains threatened. Changes in the Road Home and other gap funding efforts should take into account the historic nature of the neighborhood and make enhanced funding available, which will allow the neighborhoods to retain their historic character while concurrently continuing to serve moderate and low income households.

LOT NEXT DOOR

The principal thrust of redevelopment programs and policies that encourage the speedy redevelopment of neighborhoods must match various government powers and financing tools to the local housing and real estate market conditions.

A key question will be how to most effectively encourage the redevelopment of homes and residential lots that fall into public ownership.

The "Lot Next Door" program is one of a series of proposed housing policies that have been developed as part of the Neighborhoods Rebuilding Plan and takes direct aim at some particular market hurdles that slow the redevelopment of many of these properties.

In its simplest form the Lot Next Door

Images from left to right:

A: St. Charles Church

B: St. John the Baptist Church on Haley

C: Church on La Salle Street



program will offer homeowners who are committed to redeveloping their homes, the ability to purchase publicly owned adjoining properties prior to these properties being offered to any other buyers. This option would be provided should the property end up in public ownership either through the adjudication process or through the sale of the property to a public entity through the Road Home or other public acquisition program.

**ELDERLY MODERATE INCOME
CONDOMINIUM ROAD HOME TIE-IN**

It has become quite apparent through the neighborhood planning process that senior households, which have some of the strongest ties to the community and have expressed some of the strongest voices for rebuilding and returning to the City, also face some of the most significant challenges in redeveloping or rebuilding their homes.

First, there are many areas of the City that had a high concentration of elderly homeowners (Lower Ninth, Pontchartrain Park, and Lakeview) that sustained substantial damage and which will require the demolition and reconstruction of many homes.

Historically, the challenges of dealing with contractors, permit inspectors, lenders, etc. have proven particularly difficult for elderly households after they have

experienced similar trauma. Additionally, there are a substantial number of areas of the City where rebuilding homes with damage in excess of 50 percent will require the total reconstruction at three feet above grade or the Base Flood Elevations, whichever is greater. Many of these homes will have to be raised close to one story making them a difficult housing product type for people with physical frailties.

Elderly homeowners are clearly a special group with specific needs, and currently there are no programs targeted to this subgroup of homeowners.

A targeted elderly homeowner program, which will allow elderly households to tie their Road Home grant to senior specific elevator multi-story condominium projects to be developed throughout the City, is needed. There has been wide support for dedicated multi-family senior housing product in many parts of the City, but particularly in areas where younger homeowners have aging parents living nearby.

In some cases, there may be a need to increase the grant amount or provide a low interest loan to the household if there is a gap between the value of the buyout (and insurance proceeds) and the market value price of the condominium unit.

**USE OF SECOND GENERATION FUNDS
AND EXPANSION OF HOME
PURCHASER ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS**

One of the principal issues that has come up repeatedly in neighborhood meetings is how properties that end up in public ownership either through the adjudication or buy back process are going to be resold in the marketplace.

While the Lot Next Door program provides one method for recycling lots in the market, there are going to be numerous lots that are not acquired by next door neighbors that are going to have to be sold to third party purchasers.

Assuming that there are few new regulations associated with developing housing (i.e., some requirement that certain units must be homeownership vs. rental) it is likely that the value placed on many properties for sale will determine how quickly that property will be rebuilt for housing.

Additionally, and realistically, there are a variety of neighborhoods throughout the City where reducing the cost of a lot or unit to essentially zero will not be enough to ensure the redevelopment of the property. These are generally those neighborhoods prior to Hurricane Katrina where land values were quite low and homes were not built unless there was significant targeted public assistance related to construction.

Given the different market factors influencing the redevelopment of housing in different neighborhoods, there are a variety of strategies that will have to be employed with regard to the sale of lots acquired through the acquisition program on the open market. These strategies include the following.

- Recycle second generation proceeds from higher income neighborhood property sales to properties in neighborhoods where values are lower. This will ensure that more housing redevelopment dollars will follow to low-income areas than could otherwise have be imagined prior to Katrina.
- Sell adjacent lots and blocks of lots in public ownership to experienced for-profit and not-for-profit developers when not purchased through the Lot Next Door program.
- Re-sell properties at fair market value and reduce price of lots only when very specific policy objectives are being met, such as providing for mixed-income housing in a neighborhood.

Images from left to right:

- A: Canal Trust Bank**
B: Cafe Reconcile on Haley
C: Commercial Structure on Haley

A. Central City Neighborhood

FUNDING MATRIX

The connection between the Neighborhoods Rebuilding Plan and potential funding sources is graphically represented by the Implementation Priority Matrix. The costs estimates are provided on an order-of-magnitude basis. As such, variations as to the scope of the project could result in variations in the final cost of construction.

In the process of cost analyses, consultations were carried out with the City of New Orleans Public Works Department to identify general cost guidelines typically used for the calculation of street improvements and reconstruction. Other sources of cost identification included the Means Cost Data and our team’s professional experience inside and outside New Orleans.

No single source of funding or financial plan will be capable of dealing with the capital improvement needs for total redevelopment and reconstruction of all the neighborhood projects and needs. However, the funding matrix included in this report shows different funding sources that could be made available for specific projects and it should be expected that layering of multiple sources of funding will be required in most cases. The ability to obtain these funds will rest with the City of New Orleans and neighborhood groups and advisory committees.

Each matrix matches proposed projects with potential funding sources identified through the planning process and while not exhaustive in its scope, it serves as a guide to where funds could originate. Substantial financial commitments by federal and state entities are a vital ingredient in the recovery effort and will provide the necessary economic infrastructure to attract the private investment required to create stable and vibrant communities.

Each funding matrix, based upon consultation with neighborhood residents through the community meeting process, also ranked projects based upon priority of need with regard to recovery: “Early Action/Critical”; “Mid-Term/Needed”; and “Long Term/Desired”. This ranking provides a general guide as to what communities believe are the most important priorities with regard to revitalization and redevelopment.

Finally, there are a variety of items or initiatives listed on the funding matrix where a capital cost can not be attached or determined without further study, but the community believed needed to be a central part of the plan. These include:

- Undertaking specific further studies to determine the actual cost to governmental entities for certain public/private initiatives (for which we have noted the cost of the study);

- Housing initiatives for which there may be dollars already allocated through the Road Home, LIHTC, private funding sources, or other sources but where the additional gap in funding is impossible to determine at this point;

- Other policies, including land use and zoning regulations, which the community believed to be in the short and long term interest of the community; and

- Recurring operations (i.e., expanded police patrols, library operations, park operations, etc.) that either tie to certain capital improvements or are important to the health of the community through the expansion of existing services.

Acronyms
FEMA: Federal Emergency Management Agency
CDBG: Community Development Block Grant
HUD: U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development
USACE: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
CIP: Capital Improvement Plan
LRA: Louisiana Recovery Authority
SWB: Sewage & Water Board
LHFA: Louisiana Housing Finance Agency
HANO: Housing Authority of the City of New Orleans
HOME: HUD Low Income Housing Program
EDA: Economic Development Administration
TIF: Tax Increment Financing
NMTC: New Market Tax Credits
BID: Business Improvement District
FHWA: Federal Highway Administration
FTA: Federal Transit Administration
LDOT: Louisiana Department of Transportation
NGO: Non-Government Organizations



