

CITY OF NEW ORLEANS

LATOYA CANTRELL
MAYOR

TYRA JOHNSON BROWN
DIRECTOR

PUBLIC COMMENTS
REGARDING RCIP/HRP FUNDS

During the public comment period, the City of New Orleans received 4 positive e-mailed comment cards. 13 citizens attended the public meeting held at the New Orleans Public Library also had positive feedback. In attendance were various entrepreneurs new to the area, while others were New Orleans natives that read or received word of mouth about these federal funds and its usage.

Please see comments submitted to Beyonka Wilson.

Janna Wisniewski -2515 Banks Street, New Orleans, LA
(517) 927-4371 jannawis@gmail.com

I am writing in support of the city using \$3mm of CDBG-DR dollars to fund the removal of concrete on the public rights-of-way in Central City. I have lived in New Orleans since 2007. I have experienced floods and heat waves and watched the city sink. As I write this, the heat index is 103°F. I don't hear birds anymore, and my garden has been dead for weeks. As I left my downtown office today, the amount of heat radiating off the concrete that completely surrounds my building was dangerous. And if we got a strong rainstorm, my building would flood. Every single time. We can fix this. I have volunteered as a team leader planting trees with SOUL NOLA for the last five years. I have watched the hundreds of trees that my teams have planted grow and protect the neighborhoods around them. They make shade, habitat, prevent subsidence and floods. They muffle noise and reduce crime. They make people happy. We have to dig up the concrete and bury the city in native trees. It is existential. And if we have limited funds, we have a moral obligation to start with the neighborhoods like Central City that have been red-lined and under-invested in for decades.

Josh Montgomery josh.r.montg@gmail.com

I write in support of the removal of concrete on the public rights-of-way in Central City to allow for the planting of trees. Central City is an incredible neighborhood full of true New Orleans locals who deserve to have a greener and more vibrant neighborhood.

Ann-Grace Martin anngrace.martin572@gmail.com

I write in support of the city utilizing \$3 million of CDBG-DR dollars to fund the removal of concrete on the public right-of-ways in Central City. This will create space for the planting of trees which are badly needed in this area to help manage stormwater, lower air temperatures and energy bills, and create a shaded & livable neighborhood.



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I volunteer with SOUL to plant trees and have seen the difference they make in quality of life, infrastructure and livability.

Thank you for reading! Best, Ann-Grace Martin

SOUL Staff, Jazmin Castillo jcastillo@soulnola.org
504-233-4639

To Whom It May Concern: Sustaining Our Urban Landscape (SOUL) is a nonprofit organization founded in 2016 with the mission of driving a resilient and environmentally equitable New Orleans through reforesting the city. Since 2016, SOUL has led volunteers in community tree planting events, installing 7,969 trees throughout Orleans Parish. Additionally, SOUL led the development of the New Orleans Reforestation Plan, which was completed in December 2022. We write to express our support for the \$3 mm funding proposal for the removal of concrete in Central City. The New Orleans Reforestation Plan designates Central City as one of its pilot neighborhoods. However, it is the costliest and most challenging pilot project to execute due to the excessive pavement covering its rights-of-way. Removing pavement requires expensive equipment to remove the concrete, plus its removal and disposal, and a great deal of labor costs. We enthusiastically support the usage of \$3mm of CDBG-DR funding to support concrete removal, which will in turn create space for the planting of trees. A tree's impact lies in its relation to other trees. Data shows that just a single Bald Cypress can absorb 880 gallons of water in a day, while a square block lined with 40 or so native, water-loving trees can absorb tens of thousands of gallons of stormwater, changing how a community responds to a storm. Tree-lined blocks create "green infrastructure" – mitigating flooding, the urban heat island effect, and air pollution.

The 7,969 trees that SOUL has planted since 2016 have immediately resulted in*

- 175,000 gallons of water immediately prevented from entering our drainage system
- 779,470 gallons of water captured by the trees' leaves annually
- 162,860 kWh of electricity saved 239,000 lbs of carbon avoided (CO2 emissions in heating/cooling a building)
- 135,500 lbs of carbon sequestered

*This data was produced from the i-Tree Planting Calculator version 2.4.0 for New Orleans. These numbers will exponentially increase as the trees grow larger. As stated in the Reforestation Plan, within Central City we have the opportunity to plant upwards of 7,570 trees, increasing its tree coverage to 10% canopy, thus enhancing the numerous benefits that trees provide.

Other key considerations:

It is important to also allocate funding and expenses towards the following:

- Staff time utilized towards tree planting
- Community engagement and outreach
- Watering and maintaining trees after they are installed
- Monitoring the health of trees post planting

Thank you for considering Central City in your decision about awarding the CDBG-DR funding.
Sincerely, The SOUL Staff



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Please see comments provided at the July 24th in-person meeting

Jerel Butler (1561 N. Derbigny Street, New Orleans, LA) 504-717-1414

The food incubator program is much needed in the City of New Orleans. The Algiers Social District Development would be a great potential landing spot for a food incubator program. The Algiers Food Hall is scheduled to open Q1 2025, a food incubator would complement very well to assist small business growth.

FOLLOW UP QUESTION:

How would the operator for the food incubator be selected?

CNO Replied: **Competitive proposals** are used to purchase professional services where the total cost will exceed \$100,000. Under this procurement method, the grantee must publish a written request for submissions and then review these submissions based on established selection criteria.

Jesse George (4505 S. Claiborne Ave., New Orleans, LA 70115) 337-405-8271

Like the idea of resilience hubs for use post-disaster as well as the idea of publicly owned renewables. Would like to see some funding for pre-weatherization of homes and businesses in order to leverage energy efficiency improvement opportunities through federal legislation. This would go a long way toward day-to-day resilience.

Anonymous Constituent asked about developing an information storing system for the community to house insurance documents, FEMA documents, etc. This would be just in case of emergencies.

CNO Replied: The grant will not establish a document storage system but the idea will be shared in our Voluntary Organizations active in Disaster Team.

Anonymous Constituent: wanted to inform the city of a canopy style heat protection that spans between buildings to decrease the heat caused by tree removals. He then stated that we can research more on this topic singulargreen.com- it speaks more about vertical green infrastructure. The Urban Heat Island affect is prevalent in New Orleans.

CNO Staff: How can the City of New Orleans continue this conversation in more areas?

Anonymous Constituents shared the following statements:

1. There's an overwhelming lack of awareness.
2. Information can be shared at social events, local restaurants, community pop-ups, or by local influencers.

