Planning in Post-Katrina New Orleans
Hurricane Katrina

Stephen D. Villavaso, FAICP
Before dawn on the morning of Monday, August 29th, Hurricane Katrina made landfall just east of New Orleans in Plaquemines Parish, with wind speeds up to 145 miles per hour.
Hurricane Katrina

• Near midday on August 29th, the pressure from the storm surge overwhelmed New Orleans’ levees and the city began to flood

Photos: CNN
Hurricane Katrina


Source: CNN, Google Earth, and Army Corps of Engineers
Hurricane Katrina

• 80% of New Orleans was flooded

• Nearly 228,000 occupied housing units were flooded

• Over 100,000 households had more than 4 feet of flood water

Source: GCR, WRT Final Report, and Brookings Institution
Hurricane Impacts

Repopulating New Orleans

Population Pre-Katrina: 484,674

Population January 2006: 181,400

Population September 2006: 240,000

Source: US Census 2000; City of New Orleans; University of New Orleans; WRT
Hurricane Impacts

In Louisiana:

- Over 650,000 residents displaced
- Over 200,000 homes destroyed
- Over 835 schools damaged
- Over 40 schools destroyed
Hurricane Impacts

In Louisiana:

- Over 18,700 businesses destroyed
- Over 200,000 jobs lost
- Unemployment in New Orleans rose to 17.5% in November 2005, compared with a rate of 4.6% in November 2004

Source: LRA, University of New Orleans
Hurricane Impacts

- Housing shortages, both short-term and long-term continue to plague the metropolitan area

Waiting for Trailers

Nearly 90,000 families in Louisiana have requested units of "manufactured housing" — travel trailers or mobile homes — but only about 36,000 requests have been met. Many jurisdictions have resisted efforts to put group sites in their communities.

Source: New York Times

Source: FEMA
Planning Efforts in Post-Katrina New Orleans
High Ground In New Orleans

An 1878 map reveals that **maybe our ancestors were right** to build on higher ground.

Almost every place that was uninhabited in 1878 flooded in 2005 after Katrina.

Source: Times-Picayune
Planning in Post-Katrina New Orleans

• Competing State and Local Planning Efforts:
  – Louisiana Recovery Authority (LRA): launched by Governor Blanco in October 2005
  – Bring New Orleans Back Commission (BNOBC): launched by Mayor Nagin in October 2005
26 member planning and coordinating body appointed by Governor Blanco

Held Louisiana Recovery Conference in November with local planners, activists, and community members

Authority has established short and long term planning priorities for areas affected by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita
Authority has established short and long term planning priorities for areas affected by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita:

- Housing
- Long-Term Community Planning
- Education
- Infrastructure and Transportation
- Public Safety
- Environmental
- Public Health and Healthcare
- Human Services
- Coastal Protection
- Federal Legislative
- State and Local Legislative
- Economic Development
• The LRA will be the vehicle for the distribution of federal funds to affected communities

• Louisiana Speaks:
  – Multifaceted planning process, endorsed by the LRA, to develop a sustainable, long-term vision for South Louisiana
  – Similar model used in Mississippi
Lousiana Speaks

Comprehensive approach will combine the efforts of many experts, stakeholders and citizens:

1) Parish recovery plans by FEMA;

2) Local design charrettes by Duany-Plater Zyberk;

3) The development of an architectural toolkit by Urban Design Associates; and

4) A long-term regional vision led by Calthorpe Associates.
Bring New Orleans Back Commission

• Urban Land Institute (ULI) served as staff for the Bring New Orleans Back Commission

• In November, ULI members visited New Orleans to develop a Rebuilding Strategy:
  – Conducted over 300 interviews with local planners, architects, activists, and community members
  – Toured devastated areas
  – Held town hall meeting, which was attended by over 700 people
  – Held town hall meetings in other states to reach out to displaced New Orleanians
  – Made final recommendations in public presentation
• ULI Strategy for Action

Source: ULI
Urban Land Institute

Key Recommendations:

• Rebuild first in priority areas

• Have one plan that is fair and equitable

• Form the Temporary Financial Oversight Board

• Form the Crescent City Rebuilding Corporation
Neighborhood Planning Initiative

- The publication of the final neighborhood development plan sparked grassroots neighborhood planning efforts across New Orleans.

- In Gentilly, Lakeview, Broadmoor, and other neighborhoods, visioning and planning efforts are focusing on housing, education, transportation, parks, economic development and other issues.
Neighborhood Planning Initiative

Current Concerns:

• Lack of coherent planning model for neighborhoods
• Lack of consistent professional guidance across the city
• Lack of direction and information as to how neighborhood plans will be submitted
• Possibility that process will lead neighborhoods back to status quo before the storm, rather than creating new visions for community development
UNOP: The One Plan That Unites Them All...
Sources/Links/Contacts

• http://www.unifiedneworleansplan.com/home/
• www.villavaso.com
• svillavaso1@cox.net

Thanks to the Department of Planning and Urban Studies at the University of New Orleans for technical support