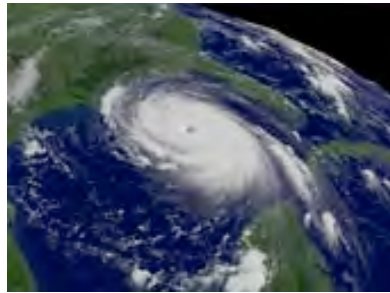


Sustainable Restoration

Holy Cross Historic District & Lower 9th Ward



Prevention – Protection – Preservation – Prosperity – Posterity – People

June 2006

Sustainable Restoration Plan of Holy Cross/Lower 9th Ward

Introduction

After being damaged or destroyed by natural disasters, several communities in the United States have engaged in “sustainable recovery” since the mid 1990s – the practice of improving the social, economic, environmental and physical condition of the community so it is stronger than it was before the disaster occurred.

This document is a preliminary plan for the sustainable restoration of the Lower 9th Ward in Orleans Parish, including the historic Holy Cross neighborhood.^[1] This report was written eight months after Katrina, when conditions in the Lower 9th varied widely, from utter destruction and debris in the northern portions of the Lower 9th Ward to more moderate damage in Holy Cross, where most buildings remain standing. Because the condition of the Holy Cross neighborhood held out hope of more rapid recovery, the Bring New Orleans Back Commission designated it an “immediate opportunity area” where rebuilding could begin sooner than in some other parts of the City. That created an opportunity for Holy Cross to demonstrate sustainable restoration practices for the rest of the Lower 9th, the City of New Orleans, and other damaged communities along the Gulf Coast.

The Lower 9th Ward faces formidable challenges as do all disaster-affected communities. All but 60 of the 6,000 residents of Holy Cross that fled the City after Katrina have returned. By the eight-month anniversary of the disaster, few were able to return because the area did not have utility services to support returning residents even if their property was habitable until Mid-May when the overnight curfew for residents was lifted. The City’s planning process and resources remained unclear, and individual neighborhoods proceeded to develop their own recovery plans at the urging of the mayor. And while the federal, state and city governments set no restrictions on where people could rebuild, it appeared likely that the availability and cost of private hazard insurance would become a *de facto* arbiter of whether people could afford to rebuild in the lowest and most-damaged parts of the City.

Holy Cross and the Lower 9th Ward have impressive assets and strengths as they prepare for recovery despite these challenges. They have a strong history and sense of community, excellent leaders, and a plausible hope that an intelligent plan to restore the Ward would bring back those who left.

Holy Cross and the rest of the Lower 9th Ward have been the subject of numerous planning exercises in recent years sponsored by the City and by organizations such as: the Preservation Resource Center; the American Institute of Architects; the University of New Orleans and various community-based committees. These exercises identified an array of problems and opportunities in the Lower 9th Ward, ranging from blighted

^[1] The Holy Cross neighborhood is part of the Lower 9th Ward. It often is referred to separately because it is a unique historic district within the Lower 9th.

housing and vacant lots to the need for commercial services, recreational opportunities for children, health facilities and better transportation to other parts of the City.

Many of the problems identified in the past remain unsolved today. But if there is a silver lining in Hurricane Katrina, it is the opportunity to incorporate many of the goals of past planning exercises – as well as new goals identified by residents — in restoration and reconstruction of the Lower 9th Ward.

Background

Ironically, Holy Cross owes its survival from post-Katrina flooding to the fact that it is located on the banks of the Mississippi River. Nestled against the river's levee, the neighborhood sits higher than the rest of the devastated Lower 9th Ward.

The Holy Cross historic district is located in the final area of eastward expansion of the old City of New Orleans. It is principally a residential neighborhood, with most of its building stock dating from the 1880s to the mid-twentieth century. However, it also features a number of non-residential historic landmarks, including the Holy Cross High School, Jackson Barracks, St. Maurice Church and the two unique Steamboat Houses.

In short, Holy Cross is one of the neighborhoods in which the unique architectural flavor of New Orleans was not destroyed by Katrina – and its restoration is therefore important to the City's goal of remaining a unique cultural asset for the nation.

In the months following Hurricane Katrina, Holy Cross and the Lower 9th Ward received help from a wide variety of individuals and organizations, including:

- Tulane/Xavier Center for Bioenvironmental Research,
- Louisiana Department of Natural Resources,
- Mercy Corps,
- Architects for Humanity,
- Sierra Club,
- Louisiana Department of Natural Resources,
- University of Colorado-Denver,
- AmeriCorps,
- University of Florida,
- Preservation Resource Center,
- World Monument Fund,
- Natural Resources Defense Council,
- Gulf Restoration Network,
- Louisiana Bucket Brigade,
- Louisiana Environmental Action Network,
- Common Ground,
- ACORN,
- Peoples' Hurricane Relief Fund,
- Lake Ponchartrain Basin Foundation,
- Tulane University Environmental Law Clinic,

- Loyola Law Clinic,
- House by House,
- Lower 9th Economic Development Foundation,
- Lower 9th Homeowners' Association,
- Citizens Against Widening the Industrial Canal,
- Mississippi River Basin Alliance,
- Physicians for Social Responsibility,
- Preservation Trades Network,
- Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors,
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency,
- U.S. Department of Energy,
- Rebuilding Together,
- Operation Comeback,
- Global Green, its legislative delegation and many individuals.

Holy Cross was selected by specialists from Tulane/Xavier Center for Bioenvironmental Research and the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR) in February 2006 as a pilot project to demonstrate not only what could be done to restore or rebuild damaged neighborhoods elsewhere, but *how* it could be done. DNR commissioned experts from CBR to work with the Holy Cross Neighborhood Association and members of the community with funding from a grant from the U.S. Department of Energy. DNR also enlisted the assistance of three outside specialists in sustainable community development:

- Bob Berkebile of BNIM Architects in Kansas City, Mo.;
- Bill Browning of Browning + Bannon LLC in Washington, DC; and
- Bill Becker of Golden, Colorado, a senior advisor to the Global Energy Center for Community Sustainability.

All three had considerable experience working with disaster-stricken communities. In recognition of their initials, the three experts were dubbed the “B Team”.

The B-Team, DNR and CBR engaged residents of Holy Cross and the Lower 9th Ward in two on-site planning exercises. On February 20-21, they met with the neighborhood leaders and residents to conduct a “situation analysis” and assessment of the community’s needs. Representatives of FEMA, Global Green, Entergy (the local electric and gas utility) and other organizations also attended.

On April 26-29, DNR and the B-Team facilitated a design workshop that involved residents and individuals from across the Lower 9th Ward, the Holy Cross Neighborhood Association, DNR, Tulane University, the Preservation Resource Center, the Unitarian University Foundation, the Sierra Club, the University of Florida, representatives of City Planning, Paul Lambert and colleagues (a Miami-based firm designated by the City Council to help the Lower 9th create its recovery plan), FEMA, the Preservation Trades Network, the Mercy Corps, prominent New Orleans architect John Williams, and John Anderson of Eskew, Dumez, Ripple Architects.

During these two exercises, neighborhood residents framed a restoration plan based on the “neighborhood center model” — “an integrated urban plan organizing neighborhoods around central focal points such as public squares, main streets, schools and community centers.”^[2] They attempted to comply with the “New Orleans Principles” (Attachment 4), a set of 10 recovery guidelines developed during meetings between national experts and representatives of the City at the U.S. Green Building Council’s Green Build Conference in Atlanta in November 2005. At the suggestion of the B-Team, they considered six objectives of sustainable disaster recovery: prevention, protection, prosperity, posterity, and people

This report is based on the results of the meetings and serves as a preliminary planning document for disaster recovery in the Lower 9th Ward. In addition to direct conversations with residents of the Lower 9th Ward, the report draws upon information and guidance from the following sources:

- The City’s Master Plan, including its land use, parks and open space, and transportation elements.
- Previous planning exercises for and by the Holy Cross neighborhood, including the “Neighborhood One” plan created in 2004 for seven New Orleans’ neighborhoods declared economically distressed and blighted, and targeted for redevelopment by Mayor Ray Nagin and the City’s former Division of Housing and Neighborhood Development..
- The “Action Plan for the City of New Orleans”^[3] and its vision for a “sustainable, environmentally safe, socially equitable community with a vibrant economy” and for neighborhood plans that “preserve and celebrate (the neighborhoods’) heritage of culture, landscape and architecture.”
- Guidance from the Bring New Orleans Back Sustainability Subcommittee, which emphasized urban sustainability, smart growth, green architecture and social sustainability.

What follows are recommendations from the residents of the Lower 9th, including Holy Cross, on the reconstruction, repair and restoration of their neighborhood. The report is divided into four main sections. The first, Urban Design and the Built Environment, is followed by recommendations in three categories traditionally associated with sustainable development: Economy, Environment and Quality of Life.

^[2] This definition was offered in Architectural Record News on May 10, 2006. It is a model embraced by all of the organizations involved in recovery planning in New Orleans, including the City Council, the Bring Back New Orleans Commission, the Louisiana Recovery Authority and the Greater New Orleans Foundation.

^[3] “Action Plan for New Orleans: the New American City”, Jan. 11, 2006, Bring New Orleans Back Commission/Urban Planning Committee.

Key Recommendations on Urban Design and the Built Environment

Safety and Survivability

A difficult challenge facing all of the badly damaged neighborhoods in New Orleans will be to rebuild in ways that optimize both the safety of future residents and the affordability of their homes and businesses. At the time of the Holy Cross/Lower 9th design workshop in April, there were no definitive estimates of what hazard insurance would cost property owners who returned to their neighborhoods — but there was the prospect that insurance rates would be a more critical factor than FEMA’s flood maps in influencing the location of buildings and, possibly, entire neighborhoods.

The B-Team advised that if former residents are discouraged from returning to New Orleans because they are vulnerable to future disasters and to prohibitive hazard insurance rates, some neighborhoods may not achieve the critical mass of population they will need to be economically, socially and politically viable.

During their April design workshop, residents of the Lower 9th Ward confronted these issues head-on by taking a new look at the design and location of the built environment (buildings, roads, infrastructure, etc.) in their neighborhood. They endorsed a courageous, intelligent and sensitive goal: to encourage families whose homes were destroyed to rebuild, purchase or rent in the higher portions of the Ward. In practice, that decision would consolidate buildings and residents in the northern portions of the Lower 9th Ward, principally the Holy Cross neighborhood.

This new, less-vulnerable “footprint” for the developed portions of the Lower 9th is plausible because of the many vacant lots and available buildings at the higher elevations in and near Holy Cross. The residents at the April workshop recognized that consolidating the Ward’s built environment in a safer footprint offered a number of benefits that will be critical to making the Lower 9th safe, affordable and economically vibrant, including greater safety and affordability.

Recommendations:

1. Reach out to Lower 9th Ward residents who could not attend the workshops and build broad support for a master plan that encourages displaced homeowners to locate in the higher areas of the Ward.
2. Identify vacant lots that could become new home or commercial sites (as opposed to being preserved as open space or developed as park or recreational space).
3. Inventory available housing stock in the new “footprint,” including homes for purchase or rent.
4. Identify beneficial uses of those parts of the Ward that are left undeveloped to avoid future damage. For example, declare these areas, which suffered most loss

of life and property, to be “sacred space”^[4] and create a memorial park to honor and preserve the memory of the Ward’s disaster victims and its history.

5. Provide residents/land owners at the time of Katrina first rights on purchasing property in the Lower 9th Ward, including the Holy Cross area.

Preservation

Disaster recovery in the Lower 9th Ward will involve reconstruction, repair, elevation, relocation and new construction of buildings. But, because of the historic nature of Holy Cross and other portions of the Lower 9th, recovery must involve restoration and preservation.

As City officials have noted in the past, the vernacular architecture and design of the Holy Cross neighborhood (and some other portions of the Ward) already contain many features that are advocated today by proponents of New Urbanism and Livable Communities. Holy Cross has retained an undeniable sense of place. Small front yards and nearby sidewalks contribute to the “stoop culture”, i.e., the social interaction catalyzed by the close proximity of people’s porches to the streets.

Residents said they want to achieve historic preservation while maintaining a “living and diverse neighborhood”. They said historic preservation should apply to buildings at least 50 years old as well as to properties officially designated as historic; should preserve the continuity and integrity of building styles and types; and should assure consistency in the scale of structures.

Recommendations:

1. In new construction, encourage architecture that is compatible with historic designs in the Holy Cross neighborhood, while incorporating high levels of energy efficiency and green building practices.
2. Develop and distribute guidelines for energy efficiency features compatible with historic preservation.
3. Keep and expand the historic area.
4. Create a design review district on St. Claude and Claiborne Avenues.
5. Site new, larger buildings with existing large units along Caffin Ave.
6. Consistently and strictly enforce building codes.
7. Provide neighborhood representation on the HDLC and other committees.
8. Reinstate and reinvigorate programs that deal with blighted housing.
9. Create a neighborhood covenant to prevent blight.
10. Convert larger units and doubles into condos to increase density without “building up”.
11. Create a centralized location to provide appropriate restoration materials.
12. Create incentives for low-income residents to rebuild and restore their homes

^[4] The term “sacred space” was introduced during the April workshop by City Councilwoman Cynthia Willard-Lewis.

13. Develop a second national historic district between St. Claude Avenue and N. Claiborne Avenue.

Open Space

In 2003, the Preservation Resource Center counted as many as 500 vacant lots and larger parcels of vacant land in the Lower 9th Ward. In March 2002, the City Planning Commission noted that Holy Cross and the Lower 9th contain 14 acres of parkland and five neighborhood playgrounds – one of them the Delery Street Riverfront Playground built by neighborhood volunteers in 1996.

A key design issue is how best to use the many vacant lots and open spaces. Some should be used for infill development others should remain open to maintain green space and buffers between residential and industrial areas, as recommended in the City Planning Commission’s 2002 master plan for parks, recreation and open space.

Recommendations:

1. In consultation with urban planners assigned to assist the Ward, determine and maintain the appropriate mix of density and open space while retaining the community’s right to approve plans.
2. Revisit a 1995 recommendation to create a Community Garden Committee to work with Parkway partners to create a plan for green space and community gardens.^[5]
3. Continue efforts to purchase vacant properties that are blighted because of neglect by absentee property owners.
4. Assure that open spaces do not become “drug parks”. Site them near institutions, commercial space or more densely populated areas.
5. Create raised, sheltered small lot or fraction of lot sized play spaces/community spaces with benches, appropriately sized playground equipment, art sculpture throughout the neighborhood.
6. Collaborate with residents, Jackson Barracks, NOPD, Harbor Police, DEA, foundations, businesses to assure safety
7. Assure that sufficient trees and open green spaces will limit the community’s heat island profile while providing energy-saving shade to the dwellings in the community.

^[5] “The Holy Cross Neighborhood: Planning for Community Development”, College of Urban and Public Affairs, University of New Orleans, 1995



Illustration 2: Sample Efficiency Features on Historic Home

Compact Development

Like a growing number of urban dwellers across the U.S., participants in the Holy Cross/Lower 9th workshops recognized the value of compact urban design that allows residents to reach critical services within a five-minute walk. Walkable design not only provides greater convenience for residents; it also allows residents who cannot drive, including the very young and the elderly, to have better access to community assets.

In addition, compact neighborhoods reduce the need for cars, which in turn reduces air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. Thus, compact design and greater neighborhood walkability are one way for residents of the Ward to help reduce global climate change, a phenomenon that climatologists say will produce more violent and more sustained hurricanes. Participants in the April workshop developed a plan that creates three “walkable-radius” zones in the Ward and identifies how commercial and other services should be clustered to serve nearby residents. (Insert Illustration 3: Overview of walkability circles in Lower 9th footprint.)

Residents also identified several areas within the proposed new footprint for the Ward where commercial development should be concentrated to place services within easy walking distance of neighborhoods and along major routes within the community.

Recommendations

1. Identify vacant buildings and available lots within the three walkability zones and target them for the development of commercial, institutional or other services to serve nearby residents.
2. Use infill development and the conversion of vacant buildings to residential or commercial use to keep the neighborhood compact, transit-oriented, and walkable.

3. Encourage mixed-use development in the community, *i.e.*, the integration of residential, commercial and institutional uses.

Housing

The Holy Cross neighborhood is committed to the preservation and enhancement of the existing, historic housing stock and, as noted earlier, shows a very strong interest in “green” building technologies and designs, including better insulation, glazing, energy systems, etc.

Residents defined energy efficiency in housing as “the least use of energy to get the job done (and the) use of renewable energy whenever possible.” They expressed interest in a wide array of energy efficiency technologies and products, including:

- Heat pumps and heat recovery systems
- Energy Star appliances and efficient fluorescent lighting
- Instantaneous water heaters
- Insulation and air leakage reduction
- Deconstruction and salvaging of materials
- Communal use of some technologies to save on infrastructure and space:
 - Geothermal cooling and water heating
 - Solar photovoltaic
 - River water cooling/heating
 - Wind and water turbines
- Low emission glass in windows, and magnetic inserts to retain old windows while making more efficient
- Landscaping with native deciduous trees
- Porches and galleries, overhanging eaves for sun mitigation

The B-Team noted that urban design is an important component of energy efficiency for individual buildings as well as neighborhoods. Strategic tree plantings produce shade that cuts cooling costs. Landscaping and infill development can be done in ways that channel summer breezes through the neighborhood and that avoid casting shadows on buildings and in areas that could host solar energy systems.

Recommendations:

1. Use long-lasting materials in reconstruction and repairs to reduce maintenance, long-term costs and environmental impact. Examples:
 - a. Salvaged cypress
 - b. Cementitious wood (hardiboard)
 - c. Real wood shutters
 - d. Well-designed eaves and gutters
 - e. Long-term roofing materials that meet preservation codes
 - f. Bamboo flooring, grown on vacant lots in the neighborhood
 - g. Concrete countertops

2. Build for resilience, using materials and techniques that increase each building's ability to withstand and quickly recover from disasters.
3. While preserving historic architecture, retrofit buildings with energy efficiency improvements and install energy systems that use indigenous resources.
4. Continue educating residents about available technology and how it could save them money. Continue to bring in experts to help throughout the recovery process.
5. Increase the mix of available housing with "resilient diversity" – for example, new options such as co-housing. Provide a variety of housing types to accommodate different income levels and family types.^[6]
6. Provide information on financial assistance and Federal/State/local tax incentives for purchasing energy-efficient products and technologies.
7. Contact suppliers of energy-efficient appliances and building materials to determine whether they will offer price discounts for bulk purchases. If so, aggregate the Lower 9th Ward's needs—and possibly the needs of other parts of the City – to place bulk orders.
8. Review housing recommendations from past planning exercises and re-adopt those that remain relevant. For example, a recommendation that emerged from a 1995 plan developed with the University of New Orleans^[7] called for creating a Housing Renovation Committee to help residents apply for assistance.
9. To mitigate blight, encourage stricter building code enforcement by Neighborhood 1 (which writes citations) and Administrative Adjudication hearing officers (who levy and enforce fines).
10. Establish and maintain relationships with political and city housing agencies, boards, commissions, as well as other neighborhood groups to assure neighborhood association notifications and review of permits, variances, and permissions.
11. Establish a system for assisting city departments by alerting them to problems and making sure they carry out their mission.
12. Help in the efforts to establish a comprehensive master plan for the city.
13. Investigate and establish commercial overlay design review districts throughout the neighborhood. People, who do not desire the added regulations, could choose to relocate elsewhere in the community.
14. Assure that federal, state, city programs, and processes to facilitate new housing and restoration incorporate Holy Cross/Lower 9th plans and standards into their plans for our area.
15. Form a coop to investigate, mass purchase, sell, and install energy efficient technologies in the community while retaining the profits for the residents who participate in the program.
16. Assure that sufficient shade from trees and other vegetation will reduce the heat island effect of most urban areas.

^[6] See "Charting the Course for Rebuilding a Great American City: An Assessment of the Planning function in Post-Katrina New Orleans", American Institute of Architects, Nov. 15, 2005, p. 13.

^[7] The Holy Cross Neighborhood: Planning for Community Development, College of urban & Public Affairs, University of New Orleans, 1995

The housing breakout group at the April workshop raised a number of additional issues that they felt need further discussion:

- Negotiate with the Port of New Orleans about land acquisition and use.
- Investigate the development of a Green Building Resource Center in the neighborhood.
- Provide property tax relief for owners of historic homes, whether the owner uses it as primary residence or not.
- Continue reaching out to Lower 9th Ward residents and improving the new Holy Cross/Lower 9th relationship. Invite Lower 9th residents to move closer to the river into Holy Cross.
- Create a database of reliable contractors.

They also recommended further exploration of the following:

- Eminent domain issues.
- Lead paint remediation.
- Regulations on roofing in the Historic District.
- Dealing with termites in a sustainable way.
- Clarifying business zoning rules.
- Disposition of old applications to take over blighted properties.
- The relationship of housing and landscape
- Landscaping
- Deconstruction and salvaging
- Preserving existing materials
- Large-volume discounts on building materials
- Energy independence
- Diversity of housing types
- Soil Capacity
- Insurance/Financing
- A Water ferry to the CBD and Algiers Point

Infrastructure

During the April workshop, one breakout group discussed infrastructure issues in Holy Cross/Lower 9th and decided that an “overarching theme” is the need to be involved and heard in all planning and infrastructure decisions – whether Federal, State or local. The group identified these recommendations, listing the first two as priority areas:

1. Industrial Canal. Residents recommended that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers be required to conduct an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process before dredging as a matter of public safety because of soil instability and toxic sediments. As for the existing lock structure, it has been recently (1998) refurbished completely and is in excellent shape to handle barge and small ship traffic indefinitely. This historic lock was built (1918-23) by the Goethals crew immediately after the Panama Canal and pioneered important engineering and

construction features that make it a valuable historic asset for our region. A Corps study (1986) has identified this lock to be a structure of national maritime and engineering significance.

2. Storm Water Protection. Residents identified storm water control as a key issue during heavy rains, hurricanes and tropical storms. Because of poor maintenance and subsidence, the present system is not adequate. They recommended an outside needs assessment of the current system; holding the City and property owners responsible for cleaning gutters; adding additional catchment basins to the 400 blocks of all streets; and enhancing the existing system with long-term sustainability and disaster survivability in mind. Enhancements should include cisterns, more use of permeable surfaces and green spaces to retain rainfall, collection and retention systems, and a pumping infrastructure able to move floodwater as needed.
3. Provide adequate protection for infrastructure from future flooding and wind damage.
4. Become actively engaged in decisions by the Port of New Orleans and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.
5. Ensure that residents are represented on appropriate planning committees.
6. Make the participatory planning process outlined in prior City planning documents a reality.
7. Resurface the neighborhood's streets.
8. Enhance levee protection at GIWW and the Industrial Canal.
9. Upgrade water, sewer, electric, gas, cable, and internet lines.
10. Provide better maintenance of fire hydrants and provide alternatives for children who turn on the hydrants to cool off during hot weather.
11. Fix sub-surface drainage throughout the Lower 9th Ward.
12. Work with the waste removal company to establish a hotline for citizen complaint and to address "sloppy" trash pickup, which, before Katrina, left containers strewn about the streets.
13. Install street lighting where needed to enhance public safety.
14. Integral with the lock is the St. Claude Avenue Bridge, one of the finest examples of the bascule bridgework of renowned bridge builder Joseph Strauss, who also designed the George Washington and Golden Gate Bridges, the Duwamish River Bridge in Seattle, and the lift mechanism for the Potomac Bridge. The St. Claude Bridge forms the signature gateway for Holy Cross, and links it with Bywater. The neighborhood views both bridge and lock as critical historical assets, and a "green connector" to the rest of the city, and strongly recommends their continued use consistent with their design.
15. Immediately begin a 5-10 year program to improve the infrastructure of Holy Cross and the Lower 9th.
16. Prioritize these projects and lobby the City to include them in its capital improvement plan.^[8]
17. Implement disposal system, recycling system, standardized garbage cans

^[8] The City's capital improvement plan comes out of the Capital Projects Office of the CAO and has to be approved by the City Planning Commission and the City Council.

18. The route to Arabi along Dauphine Street through Jackson Barracks should be reopened.
19. Community pick-up and disposal or reuse large items (i.e. Larry Spencer's program)
20. Implement system for materials handling during reconstruction
21. Install underground utilities
22. Install fiber-optics throughout community
23. Bellsouth upgrade of equipment
24. Enhance street lighting equipment
25. Formally partner/consult with energy provider and other utilities
26. Investigate broadband, cable options

Key Recommendations on Quality of Life

Public Safety

In 1996, the College of Urban and Public Affairs at the University of New Orleans (UNO) engaged the Lower 9th Ward in a community development planning exercise. UNO reported that crime was a "major concern," including some areas that were "notorious" for drug trafficking. Among the recommendations that emerged from the exercise were 24-hour maintenance of the Fifth District police substation and the creation of a Neighborhood Watch program.

During their February 2006 workshop, Holy Cross residents still were concerned about public safety and about crimes in and near the neighborhood. Some suspected that drug dealing was occurring at some neighborhood retail establishments — and by the time of the April workshop, some residents reported that drug dealing had returned.

An immediate security concern, residents reported, was the prevention of looting. Looting of historic items — for example, fencing around the Steamboat Houses — was evident in Holy Cross, with looters taking advantage of the fact that the neighborhood remained unoccupied. With regard to environmental concerns, residents said they need an assessment of toxic contamination in the Ward and would like to remove the contaminated soil and other materials from the area.

Longer term: several residents expressed the need for better street lighting and for lighting at the local playground to inhibit crime. Despite the importance of trees and shrubs to help control storm water, reduce the cooling costs of buildings and add beauty to the neighborhood, some residents said that people would be afraid that trees and bushes were hiding muggers.



As the Lower 9th Ward remained unoccupied, looting has begun in Holy Cross, with the community's historic items a major target. Providing security in the Ward is ranked as a high priority by residents.

Residents said they had formed a Neighborhood Watch program and many had been formally trained to participate. But several seemed lukewarm about this solution. One resident said he resented having to create such a program. Residents were torn on the idea of more police presence in Holy Cross. They acknowledged it would help deter crime, but they didn't want heavy police patrolling in the neighborhood.

Recommendations:

1. Provide immediate security in Holy Cross and remaining portions of the Lower 9th Ward to prevent looting and other crimes.
2. Assess environmental hazards in the Ward, such as contaminated soils and water, and mitigate the hazards as soon as possible.
3. Close the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet (MRGO).
4. Create and publicize an evacuation plan in the event of future flooding. Identify locations where residents can find safety during flooding. Place signs within the Ward to clearly identify safe places and evacuation routes.
5. Install adequate street lighting and lighting at playgrounds and other open-space areas. Use lighting fixtures compatible with, or complimentary to, the neighborhood's traditional architecture.

6. As the neighborhood's destroyed trees are replaced, practice accepted crime-prevention measures such as adequate pruning and lighting.
7. Continue the Neighborhood Watch program.
8. Keep local police informed of active drug-dealing areas and increase neighborhood patrols in those specific areas.
9. Improve police protection, but without creating an overwhelming police presence.
10. Discourage or prohibit panhandling.
11. Support for moving big ships from Port MRGO facilities back to the River, and rejection of the New Lock plan of the Corps of Engineers and Port of New Orleans, that has been judged by the neighborhood as poorly planned and imprudent.
12. Re-open the 6400 block of Dauphine Street along Jackson Barracks that has been temporarily closed after 9/11. This is a critical route to and from Arabi, necessary for public safety.
13. Open the levee route to and from Arabi through Holy Cross, for public safety.
14. Implement pilot project for interagency/interparish cooperation-include Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms bureau, Drug Enforcement Agency, Harbor Police, New Orleans Police Department , Jackson Barracks, and St. Bernard Parish police departments

Recreation

Past plans identified a need to develop parks and playgrounds on abandoned lots within the Lower 9th Ward. During the February planning workshop, current Holy Cross residents took pride in their community-wide project to build an all-wooden playground. But residents indicated that recreational opportunities for the children and young people remain a problem, scoring 3 on a scale of 10. Again in their April workshop, residents gave a high priority to developing more parks, as well as recreational opportunities along the riverfront.

Leslie Alley of City Planning recommends that Holy Cross/Lower 9th “think out of the box” in planning how to maintain its recreation facilities – for example, looking for outside sources of funding to “adopt” and maintain parks and playgrounds. She reports that before Katrina, the City had a lot of property that had been designated as playgrounds, but were in bad shape due to a lack of maintenance.

Recommendations:

1. Identify open spaces and vacant lots within the neighborhood that are prime locations for playground equipment.
2. Create state-of-the-art playground facilities, including fountains designed for kids to play in during hot weather — an alternative to children's present practice of turning on fire hydrants for relief from the heat. Find sources outside City government to adopt and maintain the facilities.
3. In the event the neighborhood acquires or influences the future of the Holy Cross School, seek to have its recreational facilities open to all neighborhood residents.

4. Build a community center with recreation facilities on the site of the old Lawless Elementary School.^[9]
5. Support and oversee maintenance of the Delery Street Riverfront Playground.
6. Make sure there are employees to provide oversight and maintenance for parks funded by or through NORD or through some entity.
7. Look at all possibilities regarding ownership options and responsibilities for parks, (Nature conservancy, Larry Schmidt's groups, etc.)
8. Explore levee and community as part of the National Park System.

Mobility

According to the 2000 Census, Holy Cross residents of working age (16 or older) relied heavily on cars, trucks and vans to commute to work prior to Hurricane Katrina. Nearly eight of 10 workers drove to work. Three of four drove alone. Only 25% of workers carpooled and only 17% used public transit. Two percent of workers walked or used bicycles.

Residents relied heavily on motor vehicles despite the strain that car ownership and related expenses place on low- and moderate-income families. The data may indicate that public transit should be improved in the neighborhood – a development that would benefit not only workers, but also residents who cannot drive.

Two bus routes served the neighborhood prior to the hurricane, but residents regarded them as only marginally reliable because they often were delayed by the drawbridge and by trains. Some residents reported that they often were late for work and other appointments when they used the buses, but in cars they were able to take alternate routes that avoided delays.

Members of the Holy Cross Neighborhood Association said they hope that light rail can be brought to the Ward and noted that some parts of the traditional trolley tracks still are in place in the community.

Residents characterized Holy Cross as a reasonably safe place to walk and bike, and reported there was a “bike culture” in the neighborhood. But they said bicycle riding was more dangerous crossing the bridge.

With the exception of ramps at the entrance to some homes, the neighborhood generally is not equipped to promote mobility for handicapped residents — for example, with ramps and breaks in the curbs at street corners.

Residents repeatedly identified the path along the top of the levee as a key feature of their neighborhood. They strongly recommended that the path be extended from Jackson Barracks to Florida Ave, or farther.

^[9] This idea appears in “Community Planning for Community Development in the Lower 9th Ward”, College of Urban and Public Affairs, University of New Orleans, 1996

When asked who they regarded as close neighbors — and to whom they want easier access — Holy Cross residents at the February workshop named the Port, the Holy Cross School, Jackson Barracks, the rest of the Lower 9th Ward, Bywater and Faubourg Marigny.

Recommendations:

1. Reinstate the Dauphine Street/St. Bernard/Arabi corridor.
2. Provide buses or streetcars that run from St. Bernard to Canal Street.
3. Provide daily military water route to Holy Cross from Algiers
4. Provide smaller buses or vans and extend their schedules and routes for better access to jobs, education and services outside the neighborhood.
5. Extend the walkway atop the levee from Jackson Barracks to Florida Avenue.
6. Enhance the walkway atop the levee with signage noting historic sights and with more benches and resting places. Determine what role Holy Cross should play in implementing past recommendations for a continuous pedestrian promenade, streetcar route and bicycle path along the river.^[10]
7. Change bus routes and/or schedules to more successfully avoid delays at the train tracks and draw bridge.
8. Make the St. Claude Bridge safer and more pedestrian friendly.
9. In future repairs or improvements of streets and sidewalks, continue to accommodate bicycling and walking traffic and increase the number of designated hiking and biking paths where possible.
10. Study the feasibility of extending light rail to the Holy Cross neighborhood, possibly using remaining trolley tracks. Use light rail to link the community with downtown employment centers, cultural amenities and the airport.
11. Create hiking and biking corridors and paths that link the main part of the neighborhood to key neighbors and historic sites.
12. As sidewalks and streets are repaired, improve the neighborhood's accessibility for the physically handicapped.
13. To foster greater interaction, evaluate access between Holy Cross, the rest of the Lower 9th, Bywater and Faubourg Marigny and plan improvements, if needed.
14. Create streetcar service between Canal Street and the Chalmette Battlefield.
15. Work with local service stations to install equipment necessary to make alternative fuels (non-petroleum transportation fuels) available to residents.

Public Health and Health Care

According to the 2000 Census, nearly 29% of the people over 5 years old in the Holy Cross neighborhood reported some type of disability. Children under 5 years old and adults above the age of 75 – two categories that typically require higher levels of health care – constituted 16% of the neighborhood's population.

^[10] “The New Orleans Riverfront Charrette”, American Institute of Architects, City Planning Commission and Port of New Orleans Board of Commissioners, date unspecified.

According to the Preservation Resource Center, no emergency medical facility exists in Orleans Parish on the Holy Cross side of the canal.^[11] As they identified needed medical services, Holy Cross residents listed ambulance service; pharmacies; a full-service medical clinic; doctors and dentists; mental health services; and a “senior service center”.

Recommendations:

1. Work with City, State and Federal public health agencies to identify programs that help recruit medical personnel to urban settings.
2. Explore local incentives for doctors, dentists and other health professionals to locate in Holy Cross or the Lower 9th Ward, such as free or subsidized clinic space.
3. Determine whether public transit routes are adequate to provide timely and convenient access to hospitals, clinics and other health care facilities. If not, explore the cost and availability of grant funds for specialized transport services for high-risk groups.
4. Determine whether response times are adequate for ambulance and emergency services that cover the neighborhood. If not, work with appropriate private and public officials to improve response times.
5. In business recruitment efforts, place a high priority on pharmacies or retail stores that include pharmacy services and that sell healthy foods.

Education

During their April workshop, residents said they would like elementary, middle and high schools in the Ward.

Holy Cross High School is located at the heart of the neighborhood, adjacent to the Mississippi River. Nevertheless, most of the neighborhood’s children attend school elsewhere in the City — for example, Lawless High School, Douglas High School, St. David’s and St. Maurice. Catholic officials reportedly are preparing to sell the Holy Cross High School and several developers are rumored to be interested.

While private development would put the property back on tax rolls, many residents expressed the desire to “integrate” or “re-include” the school into the neighborhood and to capture the social, cultural and educational advantages of keeping Holy Cross School as a public educational and community facility.

This sentiment appears to correspond well with plans reported to be under development by City and State officials — and in fact, it could open the opportunity for the Holy Cross neighborhood and School to become a pilot or prototype for the future of the City’s education systems. According to news reports, 99 of the New Orleans’ 117 public schools were destroyed or badly damaged by Katrina. By March 2006, fewer than 10,000

^[11] “Holy Cross: Living with History in New Orleans Neighborhoods”, Preservation Resource Center, 2003.

of the City's 60,000 public school students had returned, but the number was expected to double by the fall of 2007, requiring children to attend school in temporary classrooms.

The State reportedly was considering whether every neighborhood in New Orleans should feature a school that serves as part of a "community nexus" – a collection of public amenities including a library, recreation center, health clinic and performing arts space, all of which would serve not only students, but also all residents of the neighborhood. One option for the Ward is to work with State and City officials to incorporate the Holy Cross School into the public school system, making it the center of the "community nexus" for the Lower 9th Ward.

Other ideas to utilize the School include:

1. Create a community center and a place for community meetings.
2. Open a public library, or a private/university library.
3. Establish a senior citizen and day care center at the same site.
4. Create a vocational school and conduct other training workshops and programs.
5. Teach "green" construction, restoration and renovation of historic homes, including carpentry, home painting, electric wiring, insulation, green building design, solar energy system installation, etc.
6. House a think tank for the sustainable redevelopment of historic areas.
7. Create a landscape design center.
8. Make the Holy Cross school the headquarters of the Jean Lafitte National Park Service, to serve as an education center and museum on the culture and history of the Lower 9th Ward.
9. Create a Mississippi River Research Center that includes a "Mark Twain Center of Creative Writing;" an artist-in-residence program for painters, musicians, writers and historians; a biological research center; and a center for studying/planning the restoration of the City's wetlands and other natural flood-control features.
10. Build upon the neighborhood's attraction to musicians and artists to create a school that teaches the music, visual arts and culinary arts of New Orleans — one way to ensure that unique cultural qualities of the City are preserved in future generations.

Intergovernmental Communication and Effectiveness

Holy Cross residents expressed a strong desire to improve and maintain communications with other neighborhoods and with City government and to conduct recovery in ways that strengthen future communications.

These goals are consistent with recommendations from the 1999 planning exercise, “Renaissance on the River”^[12], which called for an effort to “alleviate the isolation of the community from public services.”

Recommendations:

1. Establish a Federal/State/City Hall/Utility “substation” in Holy Cross
2. Create a Center for Civil Engagement for adults and children at the regional or national level
3. Establish a Town Hall in the neighborhood
4. Conduct open planning processes within the City and its neighborhoods

Key Recommendations on Economic Prosperity

Nearly 70% of the households in the Holy Cross neighborhood had incomes below \$35,000, according to the 2000 Census. Thirty-six percent earned less than \$15,000. The neighborhood’s unemployment rate was 7.1%, higher than Orleans Parish (5.5%) and the State of Louisiana (4.3%) and nearly twice as high as the national jobless rate -- 3.7%. Jobs and adequate incomes clearly are a critical issue for Holy Cross.

When asked to identify their organizational assets, related to economic prosperity, residents named the Lower Ninth Ward Economic Development Corporation, Teigra’s Helping Hands, Light City CDC, Mark’s Muffler, St. Paul Church of Christ (Rev. Ernest Dison, Pastor), True Value Hardware and the banking expertise of State Sen. Ann Duplessis.

To help the community receive grants for economic and other development, residents said they would like the Holy Cross Neighborhood Association and other neighborhood groups to obtain nonprofit status.

Economic Renewal

During the April workshop, residents structured their discussion about economic prosperity around a four-point “economic renewal” strategy taught by the Rocky Mountain Institute (RMI). While most communities immediately try to recruit companies from the outside, RMI maintains that recruitment is the last, not the first, step in economic renewal. RMI’s four steps are:

1. Plug leaks in the local economy
2. Help existing businesses grow
3. Find new local business opportunities
4. Recruit outside firms

^[12] Renaissance on the River: Strategic Planning Implementation Workbook for the Lower 9th Ward Enterprise Community”, 1999. The exercise included residents, businesses, civic leaders, faith-based organizations and other stakeholders in the Lower 9th Ward.

Step 1: Plug Leaks: Residents discussed energy efficiency and the use of indigenous resources for energy production as a principal leak-plugging strategy. In the typical U.S. community, 70 cents of every energy dollar immediately leaves the local economy. The energy savings that each household can realize from energy efficient appliances, improved insulation and more efficient HVAC systems results in new, tax-free disposable income.

Consumers typically spend much of their new income locally, creating a “multiplier effect” that according to some studies can produce \$3-\$7 of economic activity for every retained energy dollar.

Savings are particularly important to low-income families, who spend a disproportionate amount of their income on energy. They are able to use saved energy dollars on necessities such as food, clothing and health care. And while boosting the local economy, energy efficiency can increase the comfort and health of the community’s residents while contributing to larger goals, such as improved air quality and reduced greenhouse gas emissions (see the section on Environmental Quality).

An added benefit of energy efficiency and renewable energy technologies is that they can help insulate the residents of Holy Cross/Lower 9th from rising energy prices. Unlike oil and gas, the wind and sun are free and are not vulnerable to supply shortages and price spikes.

When electricity is produced near its point of use^[13], as it can be with solar photovoltaic systems or wind turbines, it does not place new demands on utility infrastructure and it avoids transmitting power over long distances, which causes a significant loss of energy. And some forms of local electric generation allow buildings and businesses to take advantage of waste heat-to-heat water or provide heat for industrial and commercial purposes.

Residents discussed a wide array of energy efficiency and renewable energy measures (many mentioned elsewhere in this report), but added a new dimension: The prospect of establishing an energy cooperative in the Lower 9th.

Step 2: Help Existing Businesses Grow: Residents identified the need to bring back the most desirable of the community’s former businesses. Prior to Katrina, the neighborhood contained a small number of “mom and pop” shops, but residents said some sold inferior products and some became sites of drug dealing and panhandling. In recovery, residents said, they want to foster locally owned businesses “with a large emphasis on those that will contribute to the community and not just exploit it.”

Leslie Alley of City Planning offered another idea to foster local businesses. Prior to Katrina, the Lower 9th Ward experienced a proliferation of “shade tree mechanic shops” that frequently violated zoning regulations, dumped parts and created other problems. “From a zoning perspective,” she advises, “if you don’t find a way to provide an

^[13] This practice is called “distributed generation”.

opportunity for needed neighborhood services, many will pop up illegally within an area.” She suggests that the Lower 9th identify an area where mechanic services can be concentrated with appropriate facilities, at reasonable cost, with business training.

In addition to meeting the Lower 9th Ward’s immediate needs for power, water, security and safety, neighborhood residents cited these steps to bring back local businesses:

1. Identify and begin communicating with businesses that plan to return.
2. Establish a temporary structure to serve as a Business Resource Center that offers zoning information, training, seminars, grants to replace lost commercial equipment, and other services.
3. Create a strong Better Business Bureau to enforce adequate standards.

Step 3: Find New Local Business Opportunities: A shortage of skilled workers — and the means to house them — appears to be a barrier to timely reconstruction of damaged neighborhoods in New Orleans. Residents of the Lower 9th Ward recognize that new job and business opportunities exist in the construction trades.

Residents also regard the riverfront and the historic nature of the Lower 9th as potential business assets. One emerging opportunity may be the conversion of a nearby port area and Naval facility for use by cruise ships whose passengers are potential new tourism business for the Lower 9th.

1. Provide training for local workers of all ages and access to current job opportunities in disaster recovery, including debris removal, trailer maintenance, construction, building elevation and relocation.
2. Develop jobs related to historic preservation — for example, jobs that specialize in retrofitting energy efficiency and renewable energy equipment in historic buildings.
3. Develop day care services.
4. Create a business incubator in the Business Resource Center discussed above.
5. Ensure that building and health and safety codes are enforced in reopening businesses.
6. Provide linkage to government-supported business development programs such as the Service Corps of Retired Executives and Small Business Development Services to train and support local entrepreneurs.
7. Identify an area for legal auto repair and mechanic shops; provide owners with reasonably priced facilities, business training and other incubator-type services.
8. Use energy efficiency and renewable energy technologies as an economic development tool. Consider creating a community energy cooperative.
9. Create a flea market and farmers market.
9. Create a marketing campaign to draw tourists and visitors to the neighborhood. Consider developing the Lower 9th Ward as a “Cultural Village” that features the City’s traditional architecture and streetscapes.
10. Provide propane for trailers.

11. Use green space for gardening and agriculture. To seed this idea, participants in the April workshop suggested sunflower gardens on Chartres Street and the corner of Douglass and Andry Streets.
12. Create a Community Co-Op to sell goods and building materials and to raise money for the Holy Cross Neighborhood Association.
13. Widely publicize the historic features of the neighborhood; widely circulate the Preservation Resource Center brochure that features a Walking Tour and map that identifies neighborhood attractions; identify volunteers to provide guided tours.
14. Create a Monument and Museum for those who died or suffered in Hurricanes Katrina and Betsy^[14].
15. Open a museum on Mississippi River boats and ships.
16. Rename streets to reflect the history of the neighborhood.
17. Take creative steps to draw former resident artists back to the neighborhood and to attract others. Develop a vacant building into artist studios and shops to encourage the return of the community's artists.^[15]
18. Use "huge street signs" to better advertise community events.
19. Attract tourists from cruise ships to the community to visit its historic and other features.

Step 4 – Recruit Outside Businesses: Residents recommended the beautification and development of commercial corridors within the Lower 9th. They strongly emphasized beautifying and creating adequate parking along the St. Claude Avenue corridor to attract essential retail and other services that have not been available locally. They recommend that beautification include "retro" street lighting, palm trees and other streetscape enhancements that would attract small businesses and customers. Specific recommendations were:

1. Conduct a post-Katrina inventory of the neighborhood's key assets for economic development — for example, the St. Claude Corridor, strategically identified locations within the residential areas, and the Riverfront^[16]
2. Engage the Lower 9th Ward Economic Development Corporation in a well-organized, City-supported effort to beautiful and bring retail development to the St. Claude and Dauphine corridors.
3. Identify and work with the City to create any necessary changes in zoning to accommodate this development.

^[14] A flood caused by Hurricane Betsy in 1965 covered 80% of the Holy Cross neighborhood with at least six feet of water.

^[15] One source of economic activity and community pride prior to Katrina were the neighborhood's resident artists, attracted to Holy Cross by its affordable housing and diverse character. Some artists had studios in or behind their homes, and some of those were destroyed by post-hurricane flooding, including the home owned by two nationally known photographers. A business development opportunity suggested by a member of the B Team is to develop an abandoned industrial or institutional building as an "artist colony" containing studios, workshops and retail outlets for local artists' goods. A possible model is the Torpedo Factory in Old Town Alexandria, Virginia, where a World War II munitions factory has been converted to studios housing a wide variety of working artists and attracting large numbers of tourists.

^[16] According to a report from a Riverfront charrette conducted by the American Institute of Architects, redevelopment of the riverfront area between Jackson Avenue and Jackson Barracks can have a "major impact on the neighborhoods and the City as a whole".



Holy Cross’ unique “Steamboat Houses” are among the historic treasures that could draw more visitors to the Lower 9th Ward.

4. Revisit a past recommendation to create a Neighborhood Commercial Committee to work with the City’s Office of Economic Development to revitalize North Claiborne Avenue and St. Claude Avenue.^[17]
5. Marshal the neighborhood’s organizational assets to create a plan of action for these areas. Revisit and revitalize past recommendations from charrettes and other planning exercises — for example, the recommendations for a continuous pedestrian promenade and bicycle path along the river’s edge, multiple public access points, and stronger connections between the riverfront and adjacent
6. neighborhoods, and the development of arts and cultural activities that bring 24-hour activity to the Riverfront^[18]

The April breakout group listed a number of issues for future discussion, including:

1. Identify and expand the network of experts to continue researching the feasibility of energy efficiency plans and local generation technologies.
2. Maintain current lot sizes (space) when new homes and businesses are built.
3. Enforce State laws on buying used materials.
4. Volunteer to cut the grass for absentee landlords.

^[17] “The Holy Cross Neighborhood: Planning for Community Development”, College of Urban and Public Affairs, University of New Orleans, 1995

^[18] Ibid

5. Explore commercial uses of old warehouses.
6. Create a 5-year plan that focuses on making Holy Cross/Lower 9th a self-sufficient community by promoting tourism and using Holy Cross School as a “base”.
7. Create a 10-year plan to make Holy Cross and the rest of the Lower 9th Ward a green neighborhood.

Top-Priority Businesses & Services

Following the February workshop, members of the Holy Cross Neighborhood Association identified the following as their top priority for retail and other services:

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Pharmacy | 5. Restaurant/Bakery |
| 2. Supermarkets | 6. Coffee shop |
| 3. Hardware store | 7. Convenience stores |
| 4. Banks | 8. Book store |

The following additional businesses and services were named but not ranked:

- Energy efficiency businesses
- Deconstruction and green construction
- Car repair
- Dry cleaners
- Shoe repair
- Wharf business
- Bars
- Barber/Beauty shops
- General services
- Warehouses
- Bookstore
- Freight facilities
- Ship cleaning
- Other related, non-intrusive river and canal servicing
- Gas stations
- Unique retail or wholesale outlets
- Offices for nonprofit groups

Key Recommendations on Environmental Quality

Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy

Energy efficiency and renewable energy are important tools for improving environmental quality — in addition to their importance in plugging economic leaks, increasing disposable income, reducing housing costs, insulating families and businesses from price spikes and supply disruptions, and creating job opportunities in the Lower 9th Ward.

Energy efficiency technologies reduce the consumption of fossil fuels and the resulting air pollution. Many renewable energy technologies produce no air emissions at all. They can help the City of New Orleans avoid non-attainment or near non-attainment problems under the Clean Air Act, while helping people in the utility service area avoid health problems associated with air pollution from fossil fuels.

These technologies can dramatically reduce the Lower 9th Ward's "carbon footprint," *i.e.*, its greenhouse gas emissions that cause global warming. Some experts advise that all nations will have to achieve dramatic increases in energy efficiency and renewable energy use in the next 10 years. By attempting to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions, the Lower 9th Ward can become an example to communities around the country.

Recommendations:

1. Make Holy Cross a green neighborhood, as energy efficient and as energy independent as possible.
2. With resources such as the storefront center established by Global Green and tools such as Entergy's Home Energy Calculator, along with the numerous DNR resources, provide ongoing technical assistance to building owners on energy efficiency improvements as an intrinsic part of reconstruction and rehabilitation.
3. Determine which households are eligible for the Department of Energy's Weatherization Assistance Program, which pays for energy audits and efficiency improvements for low-income households. Link those households with weatherization providers.
4. Provide residents with information on the upgrades or improvements in homes and appliances that are allowed by their insurance policies.
5. Contact wholesalers and manufacturers and other large retailers to explore discounts for aggregated, bulk purchases of insulation, Energy Star appliances, *etc.* If discounts are offered, begin aggregating orders.
6. Work with DNR to form a Lower 9th cooperative to bulk purchase green technology and develop a business to research, purchase, and install energy efficient technologies in the rebuilding process.
7. Explore innovative energy technologies, including geothermal heating and cooling systems (GeoExchange), Passive Solar Engines, river and wind turbines and passive and active solar energy.
8. Explore the use of these technologies at group and community scale, as well as on individual buildings.

Preservation and Expansion of Natural Areas

In several of its sections, this report mentions the preservation of open space and natural areas in the Lower 9th Ward. This is especially important along the levee area. In addition to helping beautify the community, these areas have several benefits:

First, they absorb rainwater and reduce the need for stormwater control. Second, they reduce the “urban heat island effect” — the higher temperatures that occur in urban areas with large amounts of asphalt and other dark surfaces. Cooler vegetative surfaces reduce the need for air conditioning, resulting in energy savings.

Shade trees can significantly reduce a home’s air temperature and increase its comfort level. As the U. S. Department of Agriculture notes, “trees modify air temperature, solar and thermal radiation exchanges, wind, and humidity of the air, and all of these influence human comfort.”^[19]

An additional benefit of trees and green space is further reduction in the Lower 9th’s carbon emissions, because plants absorb carbon. In fact, the planting of vegetation and trees — including urban forests — is a critical part of the nation’s effort to improve “carbon sequestration”.

Recommendations

1. Conserve existing green spaces.
2. Undertake an “urban forestry” initiative to preserve existing trees and plant new trees in selected areas of the community. Use available computer planning tools to identify strategic tree plantings whose shade reduces cooling costs in buildings.

Remediation of Contaminated Areas

Residents need immediate assistance to evaluate and mitigate contamination of land, materials and infrastructure by Hurricane Katrina and subsequent flooding.

Recommendations:

1. Work with City, State and Federal officials to refine the identification of contaminated areas.
2. Obtain funding and expertise as soon as possible to remediate toxic materials and any other health hazards.
3. Work closely with non-governmental organizations and foundations to provide oversight and advice.
4. Demand a house-by-house assessment for hazards.

^[19] See: <http://www.fs.fed.us/ne/syracuse/index.html>

Immediate Next Steps

To begin recovery, the Lower 9th Ward must take several immediate next steps, many mentioned earlier in this report. Debris removal must be completed. Potable water and other essential services and infrastructure must be restored. Security must be put in place to prevent looting and other crime until the Ward is re-inhabited. The community will need to find temporary housing for returning residents and for workers and contractors.

But there are other, perhaps less-obvious steps that residents need to take as soon as possible for the Ward to have its best chance at implementing the goals and recommendations identified in the February and April workshops.

Get input from as many residents as possible to this report by any means and then:

1. Give this report to planners provided by the City, State and/or the Greater New Orleans Foundation, and seek their help in finalizing its design elements, including architectural standards consistent with historic preservation, a detailed master plan for overall urban design and a plan for the beautification of the St. Claude Corridor.
2. Work with City officials, elected representatives and/or volunteer organizations to identify elements of State Law, City Building and Zoning Codes, and Historic District regulations that are regulatory obstacles to carrying out the community's restoration goals. Recommend changes needed in each and strategies for accomplishing the changes.
3. Identify a contact, or create a neighborhood center, to provide residents with help and current information on the following:
 - a. Insurance coverage for rebuilding and repairs, including equipment and appliance replacement;
 - b. Post-Katrina hazard insurance rates and coverage, including the rate impact of elevating buildings or locating them at higher elevations;
 - c. Grants available to building owners;
 - d. Building-by-building consultation on requirements for repair or construction, *i.e.*, requirements by the City, State, FEMA or other Federal agencies, building codes, historic preservation rules, *etc.*;
 - e. Consultation on property assessments for historic and non-historic buildings.
4. Secure volunteer legal assistance to develop a design overlay to City Codes, standards in the Lower 9th Homeowners' Association covenants and other legal mechanisms to implement and enforce the community's restoration plan.
5. Engage Rep. Marchand, Senator Duplessis and council people and the Lower 9th Ward Homeowners Association to address improper parking, blighted lots and homes and similar problems in the Holy Cross neighborhood.

6. Engage Mayor Nagin and staff, City Council Representative Cynthia Willard-Lewis, City Council Representatives-At-Large Oliver Thomas and Arnold Fielkow and other city agency representatives in our cause.
7. Explore the “re-inclusion” of the Holy Cross School into the neighborhood and the New Orleans public school system. For example:
 - a. Meet as soon as possible with school officials to discuss the neighborhood’s desire to integrate the school into community life, to discuss ideas for reintegration and to learn school officials’ plans.
 - b. Meet as soon as possible with State and City officials to discuss the acquisition of Holy Cross School as one of the City’s first community nexus sites.
 - c. Explore possible partners and funding sources to purchase the school and preserve it as a community resource, if it cannot be made part of the public school system.
8. Identify *pro bono* technical assistance to thoroughly assess the Ward’s alternative energy options, such as wind turbines, water turbines, multi-building geothermal systems, ground-mounted and roof-mounted photovoltaic systems, Solar Engines, Dish Sterling solar, *etc.* Analyze these systems at building scale and multi-building scale to determine whether multi-building applications would produce cost-savings for residents.
9. Continue working with volunteer experts and residents on selected design projects, such as playground and park development and further improvement of the riverfront area.
10. Form a coalition of Holy Cross’s organizational assets to create an economic development and business recruitment plan for the neighborhood and the Lower 9th Ward.
11. Provide copies of this report to other “helping organizations” involved in the City’s recovery to enable them to identify expertise and additional resources to implement the plan.
12. Create a newsletter and web site to establish communications with Holy Cross/Lower 9th residents who have not yet returned to the Ward. Convey optimism, seek their input and report progress.
13. Develop protocols and standards for working for profit, non-profit, and government developers; stick to them and be prepared to fight for them (civily).

Attachment 1: Summary of Recommendations

Urban Design

Safety and Survivability

1. Create and build broad support in the Lower 9th for a master plan that encourages displaced homeowners to locate in the higher areas of the Ward.
2. Identify vacant lots that could become new home or commercial sites (as opposed to being preserved as open space or developed as park or recreational space).
3. Inventory available housing stock in the new “footprint,” including homes for purchase or rent.
4. Identify beneficial uses of those parts of the Ward that are left undeveloped to avoid future damage. For example, declare these areas, which suffered most loss of life and property, to be “sacred space”^[20] and create a memorial park to honor and preserve the memory of the Ward’s disaster victims and its history.
5. Provide residents/land owners at the time of Katrina first rights on purchasing property in the Lower 9th Ward, including the Holy Cross area.

Preservation

1. In new construction, encourage architecture that is compatible with historic designs in the Holy Cross neighborhood, while incorporating high levels of energy efficiency and green building practices.
2. Develop and distribute guidelines for energy efficiency features compatible with historic preservation.
3. Keep and expand the historic area.
4. Create a design review district on St. Claude and Claiborne Avenues.
5. Site new, larger buildings with current large units along Caffin Ave.
6. Consistently enforce building codes.
7. Provide neighborhood representative on HDLC and other committees.
8. Reinstate and reinvigorate program to deal with blighted housing.
9. Create a neighborhood covenant to prevent blight.
10. Convert larger units and doubles into condos to increase density without “building up”.
11. Create a centralized location to provide appropriate restoration materials.
12. Create incentives for low-income residents to rebuild and restore homes.
13. Develop a second national historic district between St. Claude Ave and N. Claiborne Avenue.

Open Space

1. In consultation with urban planners assigned to assist the Ward, determine and maintain the appropriate mix of density and open space.

^[20] The term “sacred space” was introduced during the April workshop by City Councilwoman Cynthia Willard-Lewis.

2. Revisit a 1995 recommendation to create a Community Garden Committee to work with Parkway partners to create a plan for green space and community gardens.^[21]
3. Continue efforts to purchase vacant properties that are blighted because of neglect by absentee property owners.
4. Assure that open spaces do not become “drug parks”. Site them near institutions, commercial space or more densely populated areas.
5. Create raised, sheltered small lot or fraction of lot sized play spaces/community spaces with benches, appropriately sized playground equipment, art sculpture throughout the neighborhood.
6. Collaborate with residents, Jackson Barracks, NOPD, Harbor Police, DEA, foundations, businesses to assure safety
7. Assure that sufficient trees and open green spaces will limit the community’s heat island profile while providing energy-saving shade to the dwellings in the community.

Compact Development

1. Identify vacant buildings and available lots within the three walkability zones and target them for the development of commercial, institutional or other services to serve nearby residents.
2. Use infill development and the conversion of vacant buildings to residential or commercial use to keep the neighborhood compact, transit-oriented, and walkable.
3. Encourage mixed-use development in the community – *i.e.*, the integration of residential, commercial and institutional uses.

Housing

1. Use long-lasting materials in reconstruction and repairs to reduce maintenance, long-term costs and environmental impact.
2. Build for resilience, using materials and techniques that increase each building’s ability to withstand and quickly recover from disasters.
3. While preserving historic architecture, retrofit buildings with energy efficiency improvements and install energy systems that use indigenous resources.
4. Continue educating residents about available technology and how it could save them money by using efficient construction methods and materials.
5. Continue to bring in experts to help throughout the recovery process.
6. Increase the mix of available housing with “resilient diversity” – for example, new options such as co-housing. Provide a variety of housing types to accommodate different income levels and family types.^[22]
7. Provide information on financial assistance and Federal/State/local tax incentives for purchasing energy-efficient products and technologies.
8. Contact suppliers of energy-efficient appliances and building materials to determine whether they will offer price discounts for bulk purchases. If so,

^[21] “The Holy Cross Neighborhood: Planning for Community Development”, College of Urban and Public Affairs, University of New Orleans, 1995

^[22] See “Charting the Course for Rebuilding a Great American City: An Assessment of the Planning function in Post-Katrina New Orleans”, American Institute of Architects, Nov. 15, 2005, p. 13.

aggregate the Ward's needs—and possibly the needs of other parts of the City – to place bulk orders.

9. Review housing recommendations from past planning exercises and re-adopt those that remain relevant. For example, a recommendation that emerged from 1995 plan developed with the University of New Orleans^[23] called for creating a Housing Renovation Committee to help residents apply for assistance.
10. To mitigate blight, encourage stricter building code enforcement by Neighborhood (which writes citations) and Administrative Adjudication hearing officers (who levy and enforce fines).
11. Insist that any “affordable housing” in the neighborhood be sustainable housing, energy efficient, storm, and flood resistant.

Infrastructure

1. Industrial Canal. The Industrial Canal Lock has recently been refurbished for long continued service and is adequate for anticipated traffic levels. It is, together with the St. Claude Bridge, and invaluable national historic asset that should be preserved and honored, together with its companion stand of live oaks.
2. Storm Water Protection. Residents identified storm water control as an issue during heavy rains, hurricanes and tropical storms. Because of poor maintenance and subsidence, the present system is not adequate. They recommended an outside needs assessment of the current system; holding the City and property owners responsible for cleaning gutters; adding additional catchment basins to the 400 blocks of all streets; and enhancing the existing system with long-term sustainability and disaster survivability in mind. Enhancements should include cisterns, more use of permeable surfaces and green spaces to retain rainfall, collection and retention systems, and a pumping infrastructure able to move floodwater as needed.
3. Provide adequate protection for infrastructure from future flooding and wind damage.
4. Become actively engaged in decisions by the Port of New Orleans and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.
5. Ensure that residents are represented on appropriate planning committees.
6. Make the participatory planning process outlined in prior City planning documents a reality.
7. Resurface the neighborhood's streets.
8. Enhance levee protection at GIWW and the Industrial Canal.
9. Upgrade water, sewer, electric, gas, cable and internet lines.
10. Provide better maintenance of fire hydrants and provide alternatives for children who turn on the hydrants to cool off during hot weather.
11. Fix sub-surface drainage throughout the Lower 9th Ward.
12. Work with the waste removal company to establish a hotline for citizen complaint and to address “sloppy” trash pickup, which, before Katrina, left containers strewn about the streets.

^[23] The Holy Cross Neighborhood: Planning for Community Development, College of urban & Public Affairs, University of New Orleans, 1995

13. Install street lighting where needed to enhance public safety.
14. Preserve the St. Claude Avenue Bridge.
15. Immediately begin a 5-10 year program to improve the infrastructure of Holy Cross and the Lower 9th.
16. Prioritize these projects and lobby the City to include them in its capital improvement plan.^[24]
17. Implement disposal system, recycling system, standardized garbage cans
18. The route to Arabi along Dauphine Street through Jackson Barracks should be reopened.
19. Implement community pick-up and disposal or reuse of large hurricane debris.
20. Implement system for materials handling during reconstruction.
21. Install underground utilities.
22. Install fiber-optics throughout community.
23. Bellsouth should upgrade telephone cables and other equipment.
24. Enhance street lighting equipment.
25. Formally partner/consult with energy provider and other utilities.
26. Investigate broadband, cable options.

Quality of Life

Public Safety

1. Provide immediate security in Holy Cross and remaining portions of the Lower 9th Ward to prevent looting.
2. Assess environmental hazards in the Lower 9th Ward, such as contaminated soils and water, and mitigate the hazards as soon as possible.
3. Close the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet (MRGO).
4. Create and publicize an evacuation plan in the event of future flooding. Place signs within the Lower 9th Ward to clearly identify evacuation routes.
5. Install adequate street lighting and lighting at playgrounds and other open-space areas. Use lighting fixtures compatible with, or complimentary to, the neighborhood's traditional architecture.
6. As the neighborhood's destroyed trees are replaced, practice accepted crime prevention measures such as adequate pruning and lighting
7. Continue the Neighborhood Watch program.
8. Keep local police informed of active drug-dealing areas and increase neighborhood patrols in those specific areas
9. Improve police protection, but without creating an overwhelming police presence
10. Discourage or prohibit panhandling.
11. No new inner harbor navigational canal lock.
12. The Dauphine Street corridor through Jackson Barracks needs to be reopened for public use and safety, and the levee along the Barracks need to be reopened for public access and safety.
13. Open the levee route to and from Arabi through Holy Cross, for public safety reasons.

^[24] The City's capital improvement plan comes out of the Capital Projects Office of the CAO [spell this out] and has to be approved by the City Planning Commission and the City Council.

14. Implement pilot project for interagency/interparish cooperation-include Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms bureau, Drug Enforcement Agency, Harbor Police, New Orleans Police Department, Jackson Barracks, and St. Bernard Parish police departments.

Recreation

1. Identify open spaces and vacant lots within the neighborhood that are prime locations for playground equipment.
2. Create state-of-the-art playground facilities, including fountains designed for kids to play in during hot weather— an alternative to children’s present practice of turning on fire hydrants for relief from the heat. Find sources outside City government to adopt and maintain the facilities.
3. In the event the neighborhood acquires or influences the future of the Holy Cross School, seek to have its recreational facilities open to all neighborhood residents.
4. Build a community center with recreation facilities on the site of the old Lawless Elementary School.^[25]
5. Support and oversee the maintenance of the Delery Street Riverfront Playground.
6. Make sure there are employees to provide oversight and maintenance for parks funded by or through NORD or through some entity.
7. Look at all possibilities regarding ownership options and responsibilities for parks, (Nature conservancy, Larry Schmidt’s groups, etc.)
8. Explore levee and community as part of the National Park System.

Mobility

1. Reinstate the Dauphine Street/St. Bernard/Arabi corridor.
2. Provide buses or streetcars that run from St. Bernard to Canal Street.
3. Provide daily military water transport to Holy Cross from Algiers
4. Provide smaller buses or vans and extend their schedules and routes for better access to jobs, education and services outside the neighborhood.
5. Extend the walkway atop the levee from Jackson Barracks to Florida Avenue.
6. Enhance the walkway atop the levee with signage noting historic sights and with more benches and resting places. Determine what role Holy Cross should play in implementing past recommendations for a continuous pedestrian promenade, streetcar route and bicycle path along the river.^[26]
7. Change bus routes and/or schedules to more successfully avoid delays at the train tracks and draw bridge.
8. Make the St. Claude Bridge safer and more bicycle and pedestrian friendly.
9. In future repairs or improvements of streets and sidewalks, continue to accommodate bicycling and walking traffic and increase the number of designated hiking and biking paths where possible.
10. Study the feasibility of extending light rail to the Holy Cross neighborhood, possibly

^[25] This idea appears in “Community Planning for Community Development in he Lower 9th Ward”, College of Urban and Public Affairs, University of New Orleans, 1996

^[26] “The New Orleans Riverfront Charrette”, American Planning Association (APA), City Planning Commission and Port of New Orleans Board of Commissioners, date unspecified.

using remaining trolley tracks. Use light rail to link the community with downtown employment centers, cultural amenities and the airport.

11. Create hiking and biking corridors and paths that link the main part of the neighborhood to key neighbors and historic sites.
12. As sidewalks and streets are repaired, improve the neighborhood's accessibility for the physically handicapped.
 1. To foster greater interaction, evaluate access between Holy Cross, the rest of the Lower 9th, Bywater and Faubourg Marigny and plan improvements, if needed.
14. Create streetcar service between Canal Street and the Chalmette Battlefield.
15. Work with local service stations to install equipment necessary to make alternative fuels (non-petroleum transportation fuels) available to residents.

Public Health and Health Care

1. Work with City, State and Federal public health agencies to identify programs that help recruit medical personnel to urban settings.
2. Explore local incentives for doctors, dentists and other health professionals to locate in Holy Cross or the Lower 9th Ward, such as free or subsidized clinic space.
3. Determine whether public transit routes are adequate to provide timely and convenient access to hospitals, clinics and other health care facilities. If not, explore the cost and availability of grant funds for specialized transport services for high-risk groups
4. In business recruitment efforts, place a high priority on pharmacies or retail stores that include pharmacy services and that sell healthy foods.
5. Determine whether response times are adequate for ambulance and emergency services that cover the neighborhood. If not, work with appropriate private and public officials to improve response times.

Education

1. Create a community center and a place for community meetings.
2. Open a public library, or a private/university library.
3. Establish a senior citizen and day care center at the same site.
4. Create a vocational school and conduct other training workshops and programs.
5. Teach the "green" construction, restoration and renovation historic homes, including carpentry, home painting, electric wiring, insulation, green building design, solar energy systems, etc.
6. House a think tank for the sustainable redevelopment of historic areas.
7. Create a landscape design center.
8. Make the school part of the Jean Lafitte National Park, to serve as an education center and museum on the culture and history of the Lower 9th Ward.
9. Create a Mississippi River Research Center that includes a "Mark Twain Center of Creative Writing"; an artist-in-residence program for painters, musicians, writers and historians; a biological research center; and a center for studying/planning the restoration of the City's wetlands and other natural flood-control features.

10. Build upon the neighborhood's attraction to musicians and artists to create a school that teaches the music, visual arts and culinary arts of New Orleans – one way to ensure that unique cultural qualities of the City are preserved in future generations.

Intergovernmental Communication and Effectiveness

1. Establish a Federal/State/City Hall/Utility “substation” in Holy Cross
2. Create a Center for Civil Engagement for adults and children at the regional or national level
3. Establish a Town Hall in the neighborhood
4. Conduct open planning processes within the City and its neighborhoods

Economic Prosperity

Economic Renewal

1. Identify and begin communicating with businesses that plan to return.
2. Establish a temporary structure to serve as a Business Resource Center that offers zoning information, training, seminars, grants to replace lost commercial equipment, and other services.
3. Create a strong Better Business Bureau to enforce adequate standards.
4. Provide training for local workers of all ages and access to current job opportunities in disaster recovery, including debris removal, trailer maintenance, construction, building elevation and relocation.
5. Develop jobs related to historic preservation— for example, jobs that specialize in retrofitting energy efficiency and renewable energy equipment in historic buildings.
6. Develop day care services.
7. Create a business incubator in the Business Resource Center discussed above.
8. Ensure that building and health and safety codes are enforced in re-opening businesses.
9. Provide linkage to government-supported business development programs such as the Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE) and Small Business Development Services to train and support local entrepreneurs.
10. Identify an area for legal auto repair and mechanic shops; provide them with reasonably priced facilities, business training and other incubator-type services.
11. Use energy efficiency and renewable energy technologies as an economic development tool.
12. Create a flea market and farmers market.
13. Create a marketing campaign to draw tourists and visitors to the neighborhood. Consider developing the Lower 9th Ward as a “Cultural Village” that features the City's traditional architecture and streetscapes.
14. Provide propane for trailers.
15. Use green space for gardening and agriculture. Participants in the April workshop suggested getting this suggestion off the ground by creating sunflower gardens on Chartres Street and the corner of Douglass and Andry Streets.
16. Create a Community Co-Op – for example, to sell goods and building materials— and raise money for the Holy Cross Neighborhood Association.

17. Widely publicize the historic features of the neighborhood; widely circulate the Preservation Resource Center brochure that features a Walking Tour and map that identifies neighborhood attractions; identify volunteers to provide guided tours. Create a Monument and Museum for those who died or suffered in Hurricanes Katrina and Betsy^[27].
18. Open a museum on Mississippi River boats and ships.
19. Rename streets to reflect the history of the neighborhood.
20. Take creative steps to draw former resident artists back to the neighborhood and to attract others. Develop a vacant building into artist studios and shops to encourage the return of the community's artists.^[28]
21. Use "huge street signs" to better advertise community events.
22. Attract tourists from cruise ships to the community to visit its historic and other features.
23. Identify potential business and tourist opportunities in the Riverfront Expressway Plan.
24. Conduct a post-Katrina inventory of the neighborhood's key assets for economic development – for example, the St. Claude Corridor, strategically identified locations within the residential areas, and the Riverfront^[29]
25. Engage the Lower 9th Ward Economic Development Corporation in a well-organized, City-supported effort to beautify and bring retail development to the St. Claude and Dauphine corridors. Identify and work with the City to create any necessary changes in zoning to accommodate this development.
26. Revisit a past recommendation to create a Neighborhood Commercial Committee to work with the City's Office of Economic Development to revitalize North Claiborne Avenue and St. Claude Avenue.^[30]
27. Marshal the neighborhood's organizational assets to create a plan of action for these areas. Revisit and revitalize past recommendations from charrettes and other planning exercises—for example, the recommendations for a continuous pedestrian promenade and bicycle path along the river's edge, multiple public access points, and stronger connections between the riverfront and adjacent neighborhoods, and the development of arts and cultural activities that bring 24-hour activity to the Riverfront^[31]

^[27] A flood caused by Hurricane Betsy in 1965 covered 80% of the Holy Cross neighborhood with at least six feet of water.

^[28] One source of economic activity and community pride prior to Katrina were the neighborhood's resident artists, attracted to Holy Cross by its affordable housing and diverse character. Some artists had studios in or behind their homes, and some of those were destroyed by post-hurricane flooding, including the home owned by two nationally known photographers. A business development opportunity suggested by a member of the B Team is to develop an abandoned industrial or institutional building as an "artist colony" containing studios, workshops and retail outlets for local artists' goods. A possible model is the Torpedo Factory in Old Town Alexandria, Virginia, where a World War II munitions factory has been converted to studios housing a wide variety of working artists and attracting large numbers of tourists.

^[29] According to a report from a Riverfront charrette conducted by the American Institute of Architects, redevelopment of the riverfront area between Jackson Avenue and Jackson Barracks can have a "major impact on the neighborhoods and the City as a whole".

^[30] "The Holy Cross Neighborhood: Planning for Community Development", College of Urban and Public Affairs, University of New Orleans, 1995

^[31] Ibid

Environmental Quality

Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy

1. Make Holy Cross a sustainable neighborhood, as energy efficient and as energy independent as possible.
2. Though resources and tools such as those the storefront center being established by Global Green and Entergy's Home Energy Calculator, along with the numerous DNR resources, provide ongoing technical assistance to the neighborhood on energy efficiency improvements to homes and other buildings as an intrinsic part of reconstruction and rehabilitation
3. Determine which households are eligible for the Department of Energy's Weatherization Assistance Program, which pays for energy audits and efficiency improvements for low-income households. Link those households with WAP providers
4. Provide residents with information on what upgrades or improvements in homes and appliances are allowed by insurance policies
5. Arrange agreements with manufacturers, distributors, and/or large retailers for bulk to explore discounts for aggregated, bulk purchases of insulation, Energy Star appliances, etc. If discounts are offered, begin aggregating orders
6. As Stated earlier, explore the use of innovative energy technologies, including geothermal heating and cooling systems (GeoExchange), Passive Solar Engines, river and wind turbines and passive and active solar energy.
7. Explore innovative energy technologies, including geothermal heating and cooling systems (GeoExchange), Passive Solar Engines, river and wind turbines and passive and active solar energy.
8. Explore the use of these technologies at group and community scale, as well as on individual buildings.

Preservation and Expansion of Natural Areas

1. Conserve existing green spaces.
2. Undertake an "urban forestry" initiative to preserve existing trees and plant new trees in selected areas of the community. Use available computer planning tools to identify strategic tree plantings whose shade reduces cooling costs in buildings.

Remediation of Contaminated Areas

1. Work with City, State and Federal officials to identify those parts of the community and its resources that were contaminated by flooding.
2. Obtain funding and expertise as soon as possible to remediate contaminated materials and any other health hazards.
3. Work closely with non-governmental organizations and foundations to provide oversight and advice.
4. Demand a house-by-house assessment for hazards.

Attachment 2: Neighborhood Assets

During their February 20-21 workshop, representatives of the Holy Cross neighborhood identified nearly 40 community assets that they believe should be retained or strengthened in the restoration process. Many of the same assets were identified by a wider cross-section of residents in the April design workshop, including residents of other portions of the Lower 9th.

Social assets: Holy Cross has a strong sense of community; a “go-getter attitude;” a diversity of race, income and age groups; a solid sense of history and loyalty to place; and a deep feeling of intergenerational continuity, with several generations living in the neighborhood, often in extended families. Neighbors are brought together by bingo and card clubs and by the neighborhood’s “stoop culture”— the interaction that takes place between people sitting on their porches and neighbors passing by.

Because of its eclectic population, sense of community and affordable housing, Holy Cross was home to several artists before Katrina— a source of local pride. Residents also regard their proximity to other unique neighborhoods as social assets, including the “quirky” St. Bernard Parish and the rest of the Lower 9th, with its music (Fats Domino’s house is in this area) and Mardi Gras Indians.

Holy Cross has an unusually high percentage of home ownership compared to the rest of New Orleans, which residents say contributes to a strong sense of pride and ownership in the neighborhood.

In 2004, Holy Cross was one of several neighborhoods cited by the City for “active community organizations (and) supportive leaders and elected officials.”

Physical assets: Two principal features characterize the physical neighborhood: its historic buildings and its water culture along the Mississippi River. Residents highly value both features. Their riverside location offers a spectacular panorama of the French Quarter and downtown New Orleans across the river. The river contributes to the ambience of Holy Cross with the sights and sounds of boats of all sizes, recreational fishing and morning fog. A walking path atop the levee creates a place for hiking and social gathering. Residents felt strongly that any future improvements to flood control structures in their neighborhood should not interfere with these assets.

Approximately 80% of the neighborhood’s homes are registered as historic assets. The City’s Preservation Resource Center has been active in restoring several of the neighborhood’s older houses and in building several new homes in the traditional, local architectural style. Jackson Barracks, the Holy Cross school and several historic churches add to the neighborhood’s historic architecture.

Holy Cross also is distinguished by its unusually spacious lots, a holdover from the neighborhood’s agricultural history. In 2003, the Preservation Resource Center counted as many as 500 vacant lots and larger parcels of vacant land in the neighborhood, which

create opportunities for green space, park and playground development, commercial and residential infill and other community uses. In March 2002, the City Planning Commission noted that Holy Cross and the Lower 9th contain 14 acres of parkland and five neighborhood playgrounds— one of them the Delery Street Riverfront Playground built by neighborhood volunteers in 1996.

Residents also identify their streets as physical assets because of their unique layout and famous names (many streets carry the same names as their counterparts in the French Quarter).

Finally, residents value the fact that Holy Cross is a distinct village within New Orleans, yet proximate to its “big City” assets.

Some of these characteristics are well recognized by City officials, who have described Holy Cross as one of the neighborhoods with the following features:

These neighborhoods targeted for redevelopment contain the assets necessary for success and have physical attributes...which other communities throughout the country are attempting to create. Many of these neighborhoods function as small independent communities. (They) are centrally located and fall along transit routes, they contain existing supportive infrastructure; they have distinctive historic style and character and their buildings have architectural attributes that allow for neighborhood interaction such as front porches and minimal building setbacks that relate to the existing pedestrian-scaled streets. ^[32]

Environmental assets: In addition to the Mississippi River, the neighborhood’s environmental assets include ample green space and although several were destroyed by Katrina, a number of large trees including the Guichard Oak, more than a century old. Neighbors have created a community garden on one vacant lot.

Economic assets: The neighborhood’s current and potential economic assets include the riverfront; the Holy Cross School; organizations such as the Lower 9th Ward Economic Development Corporation; several “mom and pop” stores (prior to Katrina); the large number of vacant lots that hold potential for development; the large old warehouses by the river; the riverfront; harbor and boat operations; the St. Claude Avenue and North Claiborne Avenue corridors; and the tourist appeal of the neighborhood’s historic buildings.

^[32] “Neighborhood 1” plan, pp. 4-5.

Attachment 3: Rebuilding Smart Article
Posted on BestofNewOrleans.com, May 9, 2006

From tax incentives to technology, homeowners have lots of reasons to rebuild with energy efficiency in mind.

By [Frank Etheridge](#)



Back in town from Texas to check on friends, family and her destroyed lakefront home, Claire Foster Burnett hit the brakes when she noticed a crowd as she drove past Ashe Cultural Arts Center two weekends ago.

"When there's a bunch of cars parked at Ashe, I park too, because I know something good is going on," says Burnett, a retired Orleans Parish schoolteacher and artist.

"Right now, we are living in the first time period in which a major American City is being rebuilt," says Micah Walker- Parkin, program director for the Alliance for Affordable Energy.

Strolling through a series of demonstrations, lectures and information booths inside Ashe and other arts and community centers clustered in the 1700 block of Oretha

Castle Haley Boulevard, Burnett and hundreds of others attended the first-ever Build Smart Expo. Organized by a coalition of local businesses and environmental groups, and featuring ideas and information from a variety of government and industry figures, the Build Smart Expo strived to show New Orleanians facing the massive task of reconstructing their homes various ways to rebuild safer and stronger. The expo showcased materials and methods that not only could help save the environment, but also save the homeowner money on utility bills. Federal and State tax incentives for investment in energy efficiency, plus new building codes that will force contractors and homeowners to look at home construction in new ways will propel the new ideas, housing experts say. But educating the public about homebuilding options and changing the way business is done in Louisiana remain huge challenges to implementing "green" building on a large scale.

Locally, the Utility, Cable and Telecommunications Committee of the New Orleans City Council was on the verge of implementing the City's highly touted and years-in-the-making New Orleans Energy Efficiency Program (NOEEP) immediately prior to Katrina. But like all aspects of life in the City, that has changed. Plans for a City-sponsored push for greater energy efficiency are still supported by the council, but higher priorities must be addressed first, council sources say.

"Right now, we are living in the first time period in which a major American City is being rebuilt," says Micah Walker-Parkin, program director for the Alliance for Affordable Energy. "We're trying with this expo to get the word out to people that there are ways to reconstruct a healthy home that lasts longer. Ways that not only reduce greenhouse gases, but utility bills as well."

"We, more than anybody, know the dangers of global warming," says Leslie March, director of the local Sierra Club chapter, referring to increased sea levels and hurricane frequency and strength as a result of higher temperatures. "And in New Orleans right now, we have the chance to fight this problem on a house-by-house approach."

During the two-day event, workshops provided advice on tax incentives for purchasing energy-efficient appliances and construction materials, remediation of mold and contaminated soil, geo-thermal heat pumps, salvaging flooded tools and working with contractors.

Services and products in tune with the ideals of the Build Smart Expo were highlighted in booths lining the various venues hosting the event. Harvey-based Conservation Technologies showcased efficient designs of vinyl windows and compact fluorescent light bulbs. The Marigny-based Green Project detailed its free service of "deconstruction," described as an alternative to demolition that salvages and ultimately recycles housing materials rather than disposing of them. NOLA Rising Construction Services revealed its patent-pending "passive thermal engine technology," which can give new homes "off-the-grid," independent energy and water sources (an advantage Katrina dramatically revealed), along with hurricane- and flood-resistant construction materials and designs. Another NOLA Rising technology pumps silt underneath a home, causing it to rise gradually, thereby allowing homeowners to raise a house above flood levels.

"We're here to provide to the local public information on what is available to them as they begin to rebuild their houses," March says. "We aim to educate the homeowner as well as the contractor. People are interested. They're here to learn."

After returning to the Dallas suburbs armed with new ideas about how she and her husband can rebuild their house, Foster Burnett says she appreciates the advice offered at the expo.

"It was excellent," she says. "The information was really helpful. The ideas are just so different from how things used to be in the City. But right now, with the energy crisis and the constant hurricane threat, we don't have a choice at this point. We're going to have to rebuild, and build it right this time."

"We were totally swamped with and questions the whole weekend," Buddy Justice, environmental consultant with the State Department of Natural Resources (DNR), says of his booth at the Build Smart Expo.

The DNR booth featured a solar panel, with Justice on hand to explain its benefits in terms of both an individual home's energy efficiency -- the panels can heat water and generate electricity -- and the global environment in using a natural, sustainable energy source.

"But have you ever seen one of these things around town?" Justice asks, pointing to the solar panel and not needing an answer.

While Justice says that demand for solar panels has increased sharply in Japan, Europe and California in recent years, Louisiana lags far behind. "Frankly, these panels are still just too costly for most people to afford," he says. "And even if you can afford it -- these systems can run from \$30,000 to \$70,000 -- they're hard to come by. The waiting list for solar panels can be as long as two years. But, as energy rates continue to go up, [solar energy panels] are going to be more and more attractive to the typical homeowner."

Justice and others at the expo point out a number of government tax incentives that will perhaps cause further interest in converting homes on an energy-efficient model. Tax breaks for investments on items such as solar panels were included in the Energy Policy Act of 2005 passed by Congress and signed by President Bush last year. For example, tax credits provide a 30 percent rebate on the total cost of buying and installing solar panels. The tax incentives extend to windows, roofing, insulation and heating and cooling systems. (To see a full list of what items are eligible, plus details about each incentive, visit www.energy.gov/taxbreaks.htm.)

The Federal government has further encouraged such eco-friendly investments by supporting Energy Efficient Mortgages (EEMs), loans that allow the up-front costs of upgrading an existing home or expenses incurred in new construction focused on energy efficiency to be paid over the course of a low-interest, long-term mortgage. While the program started with Federal agencies such as Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the Federal Housing Administration (FHA), a number of private, nationwide and local mortgage companies have started offering EEMs.

On a State level, the Louisiana Public Service Commission recently approved the idea of net metering, which directly rewards homeowners for investing in solar panels and other alternative energy sources. With net metering, when a home is generating its own power -- i.e., the solar panel when the sun is shining -- the meter on the house runs backwards. Net metering thus brings market-rate reductions from the power bill for the power a home generates on its own. Justice adds that the State is in the process of developing its own program of tax incentives and low-interest loans for energy-efficient investments.

Another huge advantage to solar panels is to have a reserve of power and water when local utilities are not in service, such as the days and weeks -- and in some neighborhoods, months -- after Katrina.

The New Orleans City Council sought to develop its own set of incentives with NOEEP. The City's energy efficiency program would have complemented State and Federal

efforts to promote energy efficiency, with programs ranging from weather-stripping older houses to make them more efficient, to providing home-energy audits to educate a resident on how to refit their homes toward better efficiency, to programs to educate the general public, businesses and builders on what incentives are available to them.

"NOEEP was a cutting-edge, progressive program where New Orleans was way ahead of the curve in terms of what energy-efficient programs were being offered," says Mike Sherman, an attorney advising the City Council's utilities committee while also serving as Council President Eddie Sapir's chief of staff. "Not only was it going to save energy, but it was going to save everybody money."

Funding for NOEEP was to come from a charge added to Entergy New Orleans customers' bills. Sherman says the charge would have added \$1 a month to the typical bill, with NOEEP estimated to operate with an annual budget of around \$5 million. But, in the months following Katrina, with Entergy facing bankruptcy, a battered system, a lack of ratepayers and no revenue to fund the ambitious program, NOEEP was placed on the back burner.

"We had people screaming that they needed their power and gas turned back on," says Clint Vince, the council's chief legal adviser on utility regulatory matters. "We didn't have people screaming that they needed an energy-efficiency program. Rebuilding the system has to be our highest priority."

The Alliance for Affordable Energy contests the notion that NOEEP had to be delayed because of Katrina.

"The argument doesn't make sense that because of a smaller ratepayer base you don't have the funding for the program, because doesn't that mean you're funding a smaller program?" Walker-Parkin of the Alliance for Affordable Energy asks. "Plus, the time was right. People were making changes to their house already with repairs. Why not encourage, with financial incentives, that the work they already have to do should be energy efficient? People's appliances were ruined, so they had to buy new ones. Why not reward them for purchasing energy-efficient appliances? We really missed a great opportunity with this."

She adds that roughly \$6 million that was won in a 2002 lawsuit against Entergy New Orleans for overcharging customers could have been used to start NOEEP -- but was instead used to cover Entergy's "uncollectibles" in the months after Katrina.

"That's our money, the ratepayers' money," Walker-Parkin says. "It should have gone back to us, not back to the company."

Walker-Parkin's comments about the money's allocation "are almost completely true," Vince says. He notes that the allocation of the \$6 million back to the utility still means a dollar-for-dollar reduction in what customers have to pay, as the deficit caused by uncollectibles is ultimately paid for by customers as part of the company's rate base.

Vince says the City's focus now is to enforce a resolution calling for greater energy efficiency in the construction of new buildings and homes. "We'd love to offer people a rebate on energy-efficient investments, but there just isn't money for that right now," he says.

Vince adds that the City may better understand what type of energy-efficiency program it can offer after post-Katrina Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) are announced, perhaps by mid-summer. The Federal government provided New York City's utilities \$750 million to recover from 9/11, Vince says. Though the White House has been reluctant to do the same for Entergy New Orleans, Vince hopes Congress will allocate \$300 million to \$400 million for repairs to the utility's infrastructure via CDBG funds.

"We want an energy-efficiency program in this City, and we'll have one as soon as we can afford it," Vince says.



"The City Council remains committed to energy efficiency," Councilman Eddie Sapir, chair of the utilities committee, echoed in a Statement to Gambit Weekly. "Unfortunately, Hurricane Katrina blew away NOEEP as we knew it by destroying most of the homes it was designed to retrofit, the program's funding source, and most of the assumptions behind its design."

GIVEN THE POSITIVE, GLASS-IS-HALF-FULL outlook that many New Orleanians hope to maintain in the wake of Katrina, housing and environmental advocates say the time is right for big changes in the ways that citizens protect themselves from the winds and floods of hurricanes while reducing utility bills and greenhouse gas emissions.

In the special legislative session held last fall, and in response to Katrina, Louisiana legislators finally adopted the International Building Code,

which will require new buildings and houses to be elevated 3 feet above a flood hazard and to withstand 130-mph winds, a 10-mph improvement over existing regulations.

While that represents a big step forward, environmental advocates insist that Louisiana's problems require a more complex response than just improved resistance to storm winds.

The LSU AgCenter, located in a corner of the university's Baton Rouge campus, features an energy-efficient model home that individual homeowners who are rebuilding can

emulate post-Katrina. Dubbed LaHouse, the model home is intended "to stimulate consumer demand and industry adoption of high-performance housing and landscape," according to Sandy Scallan, education and outreach director for the project. The house, which is now open for public tours, is designed with energy efficiency and hurricanes in mind.

A team of scientists and engineers designed LaHouse to showcase ways of maximizing energy efficiency, water conservation, waste management, pollution prevention and storm water management -- all while using environmentally responsible materials. (For more information on the house, visit www.louisianahouse.org.) "People are excited," Scallan says. "They need to know what the new codes will make them do and what's available to them to meet the requirements."

Despite enthusiasm among promoters of LaHouse and environmentalists, some in the housing industry are skeptical that even a disaster on the scale of Katrina will inspire significant change.

"We have a tremendous opportunity to develop alternative methods of construction right now, simply because there is so much construction going on in New Orleans," says Jim Payne, a contractor with a degree in environmental studies.

For more than 20 years, Payne has built homes in the metro area with a structural base of polystyrene, the material found in most coffee mugs. Polystyrene's properties include water resistance, durability in high winds and energy efficiency by virtue of a tight seal that holds in hot and cold air. The material also allows for quick construction, which is crucial in a City struggling with a massive housing shortage. A model house constructed of polystyrene, using a method that allows for anything from brick to stucco to be applied as walls, was on display at the Build Smart Expo.

"You can build one of these houses with one contractor and four to five low-skilled laborers in just a few days," Payne says. "The storm has given us a real opportunity. We could be the headquarters of this industry, which will boom in the Gulf South in the next few years because of the constant hurricane threat. We're behind the eight ball right now, but we're also in a position to be the national leaders in this."

Attachment 4: The New Orleans Principles

1 • Respect the rights of all citizens of New Orleans

Displaced citizens who wish to return to New Orleans should be afforded the opportunity to return to healthy, livable, safe, and secure neighborhoods of choice.

2 • Restore natural protections of the greater New Orleans region

Sustain and restore the coastal and floodplain ecosystems and urban forests that support and protect the environment, economy, communities, and culture of southern Louisiana, and that contribute greatly to the economy and well-being of the nation.

3 • Implement an inclusive planning process

Build a community-centered planning process that uses local talent and makes sure that the voices of all New Orleanians are heard. This process should be an agent of change and renewal for New Orleans.

4 • Value diversity in New Orleans

Build on the traditional strength of New Orleans neighborhoods, encourage mixed uses and diverse housing options, and foster communities of varied incomes, mixed age groups, and a racial diversity. Celebrate the unique culture of New Orleans, including its food, music, and art.

5 • Protect the City of New Orleans

Expand or build a flood protection infrastructure that serves multiple uses. Value, restore, and expand the urban forests, wetlands, and natural systems of the New Orleans region that protect the City from wind and storms.

6 • Embrace smart redevelopment

Maintain and strengthen the New Orleans tradition of compact, connected, mixed-use communities. Provide residents and visitors with multiple transportation options. Look to schools for jumpstarting neighborhood redevelopment and for rebuilding strong communities in the City.

7 • Honor the past; build for the future

In the rebuilding of New Orleans, honor the history of the City while creating 21st century buildings that are durable, affordable, inexpensive to operate, and healthy to live in. Through codes and other measures, ensure that all new buildings are built to high standards of energy, structural, environmental, and human health performance.

8 • Provide for passive survivability

Homes, schools, public buildings, and neighborhoods should be designed and built or rebuilt to serve as livable refuges in the event of crisis or breakdown of energy, water, and sewer systems.

9 • Foster locally owned, sustainable businesses

Support existing and new local businesses built on a platform of sustainability that will contribute to a stronger and more diverse local economy.

10 • Focus on the long term

All measures related to rebuilding and ecological restoration, even short-term efforts, must be undertaken with explicit attention to the long-term solutions.