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A People's Plan for Overcoming the Hurricane Katrina Blues: A Comprehensive Strategy for Building a More Vibrant, Sustainable, and Equitable 9th Ward

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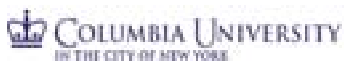
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THE PEOPLE'S PLAN

for overcoming the hurricane katrina blues

a comprehensive strategy for building a more vibrant, sustainable, and equitable 9th Ward



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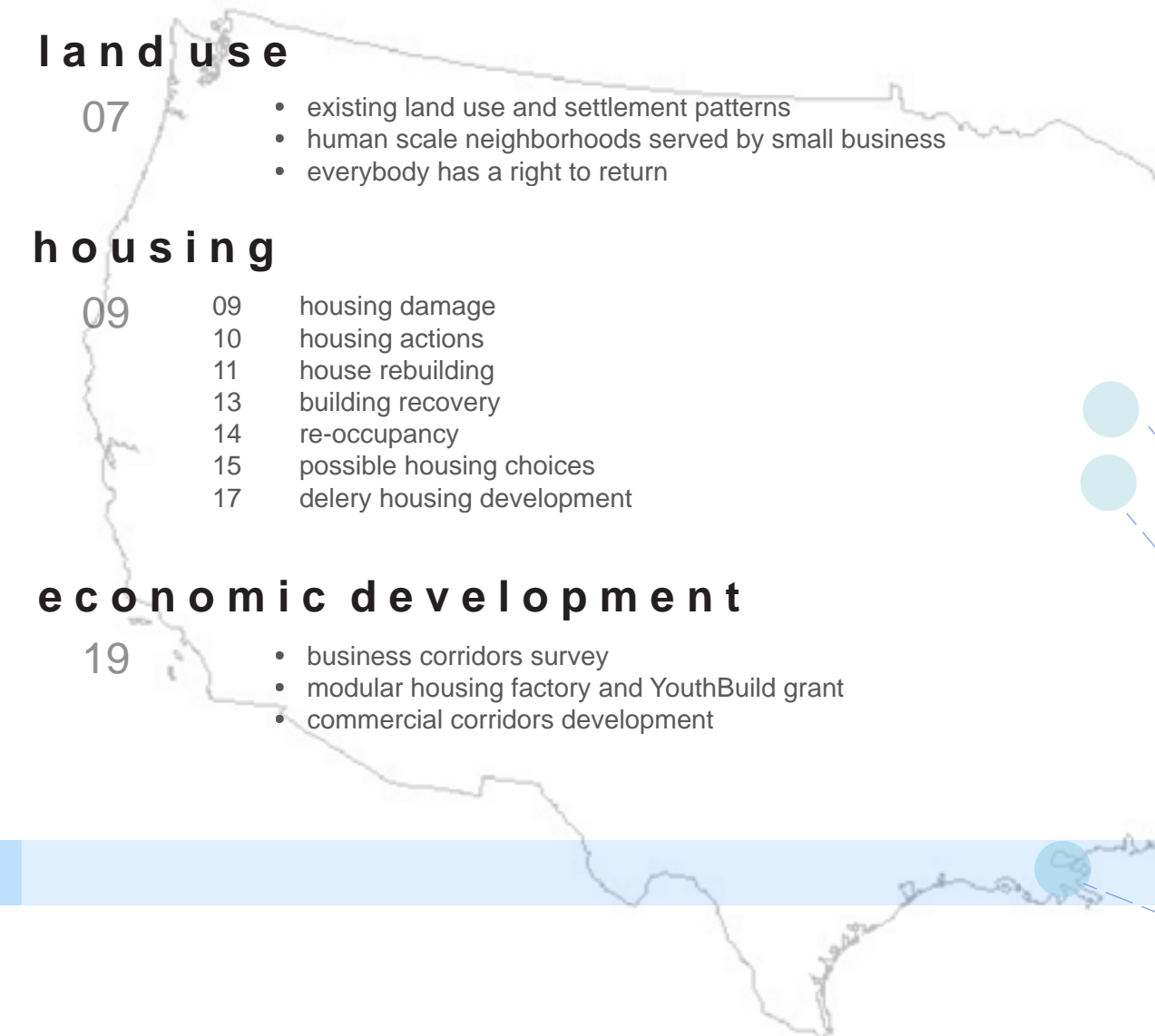
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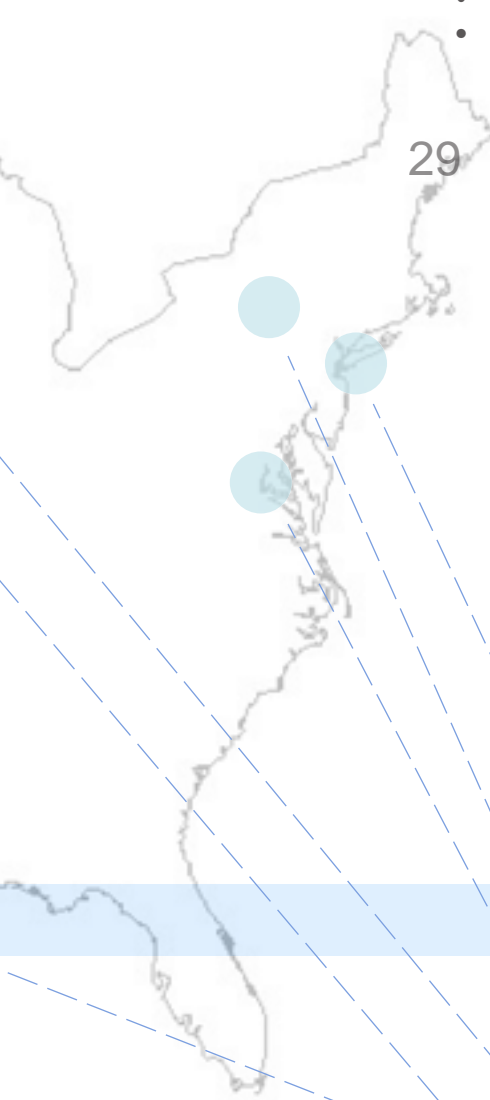
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- ACORN Housing Policy (Washington, DC)
- University of Illinois - Urbana-Champaign
- ACORN Housing (Chicago, Illinois)
- ACORN (New Orleans, Louisiana)



f o r w a r d

Overall Development Goal and Objectives:

Create a more vibrant, sustainable and equitable 9th Ward that offers former and current residents, business owners, and institutional leaders a higher quality of life and attracts new residents and investors eager to participate in an unprecedented revitalization of one of America's most historically, culturally, and socially significant urban communities.

The Peoples' Plan is a strategic action plan for the recovery of the 9th Ward. We've created it based on conversations with residents – some struggling to return home, others intent on remaining in a neighborhood that has always been there own. The Peoples' Plan provides a thorough assessment of what must be done to provide recovery in one of the hardest hit areas of the City, and provides a recovery model for all badly flooded areas.

Our Plan seeks to transform the 9th Ward as it is rebuilt. The proposed transformation will be resident-driven and will provide improved employment opportunities, better education programs as well as greater access to healthcare, childcare and numerous other community services.

Research informing the People's Plan:

- Evaluated more than 3,500 individual parcels and buildings to determine their structural integrity and rehabilitation potential.
- Interviewed representatives of more than 230 households to determine the highest-priority redevelopment needs of the neighborhood.
- Surveyed five of the 9th Ward's most important commercial corridors to determine the current level of business activity.
- Reviewed 29 public plans examining past and future conditions within the 9th Ward.
- Studied and compared recent economic, population, employment, income, and housing trends within the 9th Ward.
- Inspected 15 of the 9th Ward's most important educational, cultural, civic, and health-related facilities to determine their structural integrity and potential for reuse.
- Evaluated 28 city-owned open spaces to establish their current facilities, maintenance levels, and use.
- Surveyed more than 12 civic organizations located in the 9th Ward regarding their preferred redevelopment strategies and recommended revitalization projects.

03

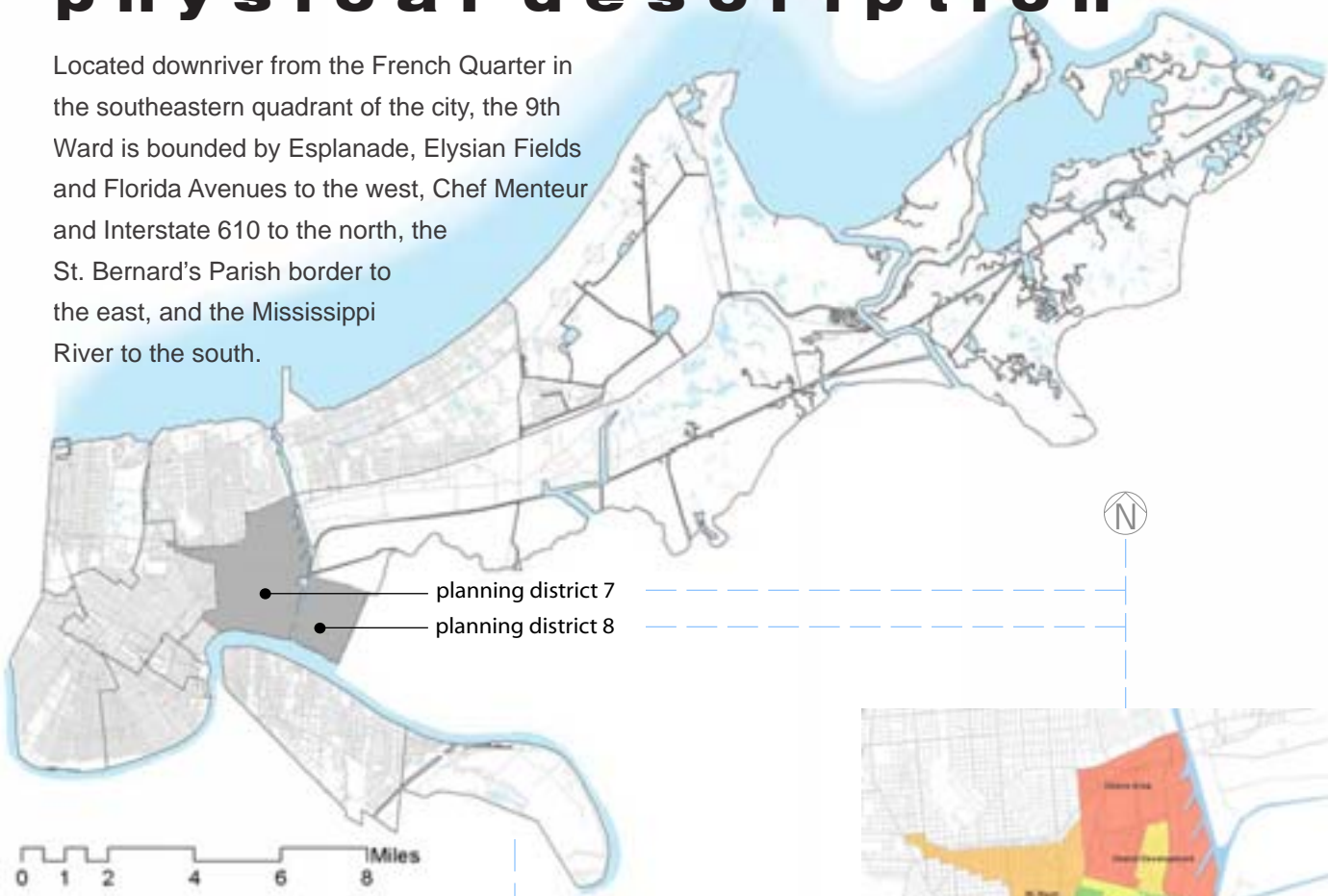
“Let the neighborhood decide what they want.”

“This is the family! Everybody helps everybody else, all you gotta do is ask.”

9th Ward Residents

physical description

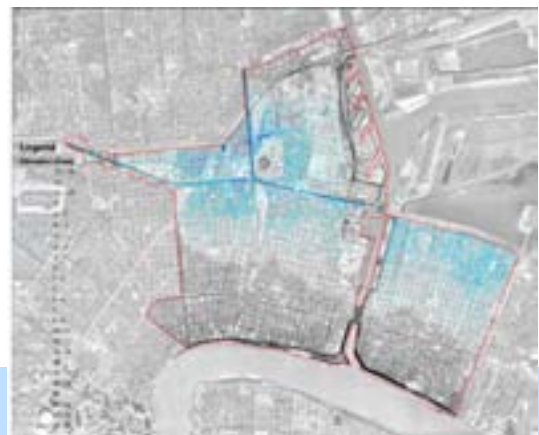
Located downriver from the French Quarter in the southeastern quadrant of the city, the 9th Ward is bounded by Esplanade, Elysian Fields and Florida Avenues to the west, Chef Menteur and Interstate 610 to the north, the St. Bernard's Parish border to the east, and the Mississippi River to the south.



Our planning work covers the 7th and 8th planning districts, which approximates the historic boundaries of the Upper and Lower 9th Ward. Since few residents recognize the planning district boundaries as meaningful areas, we decided to use the term “9th Ward” to describe our focus area even though it is not geographically exact.



neighborhoods



elevation

Contrary to popular belief, a significant portion of the 9th Ward is located on the alluvial plain of the Mississippi river, which is well above sea level.



katrina flood extent

Levee failure and flood damage resulted from heavy rainfall and winds as New Orleans was brushed by an arm of the hurricane. In the 9th Ward, flooding extended to St. Claude Avenue and engulfed lower neighborhoods. Only blocks immediately adjacent to the Mississippi levee were spared.

barriers to return

resident survey

When queried about the types of services residents needed to return to their neighborhood, survey results indicate that residents placed a high priority on the need for schools, medical facilities, public transportation, community and recreational facilities, parks and playgrounds, affordable housing and grocery stores.

What do you feel you need to have before you can return?



What things or services does the neighborhood need before you can return to it?

public transit

Public transportation services in New Orleans before Katrina were fairly good, with buses and light rail cars spanning most of the city. Currently, only 49% of all public transportation routes, and only 17% of bus routes are operational.

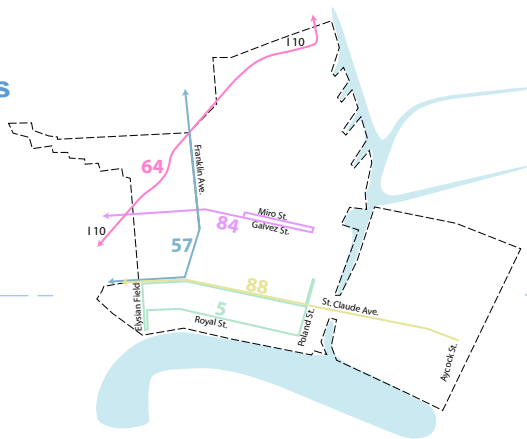
education

In December 2006, only 49% of New Orleans former public schools were open (as opposed to 74% at the regional level). In the 9th Ward, only three public schools reopened.

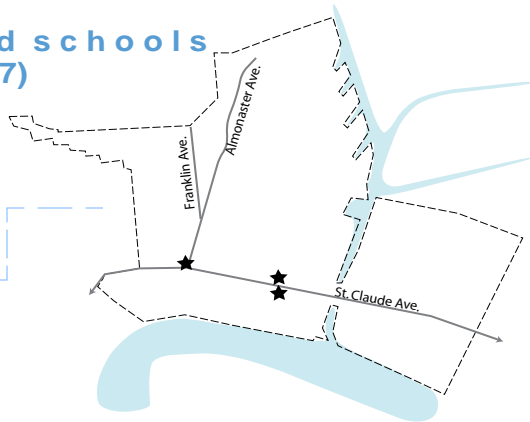
safety

Only one police sub-station sits in the Upper 9th Ward, none in the Lower 9th Ward. While members of the New Orleans Police Department and the National Guard regularly drive through the neighborhood, residents believe they made little effort to develop the kind of relationships with local residents needed to form an effective community-based crime prevention program. Fire stations appear to be appropriately located throughout the neighborhood in order to assure reasonable emergency response times.

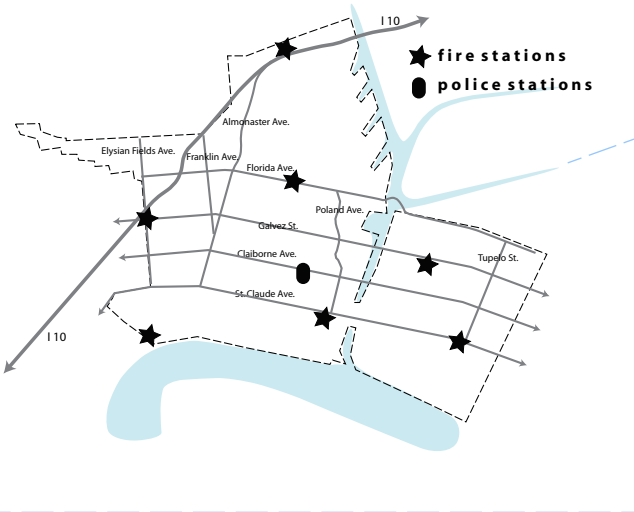
operational bus routes (march '07)



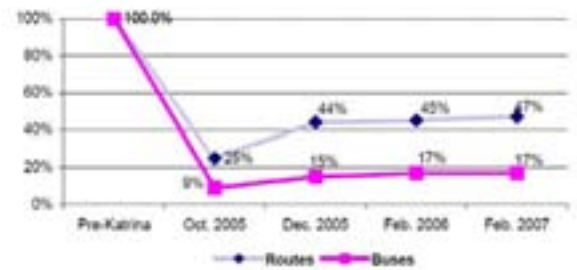
opened schools (march '07)



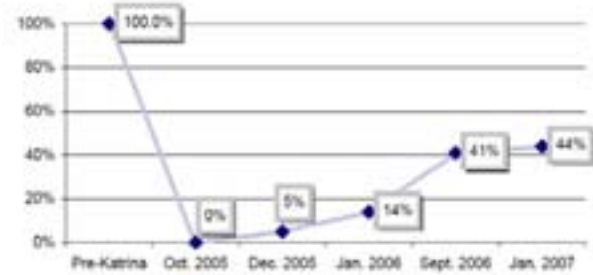
police and fire stations



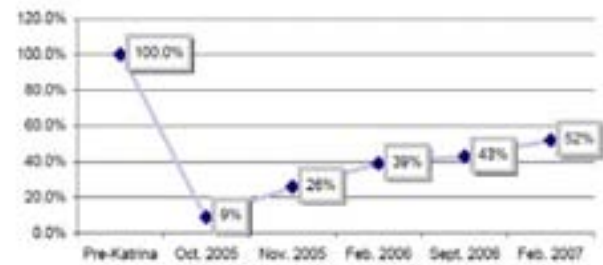
new orleans operational public transit: the brookings institution (feb. '07)



new orleans schools in operation: the brookings institution (feb. '07)



new orleans hospitals in operation: the brookings institution (feb. '07)



There was only one operational hospital in the Ninth Ward, pre-Katrina – the Bywater Hospital. This facility is scheduled to be converted into a senior center once it will be renovated.

By May 2006, water and electrical services were restored throughout New Orleans with the exception of a few select areas of the Lower Ninth Ward and Lakeview District that were targeted for demolition by City Hall. The percentage of former customers that were using gas and electrical services in November 2006 was 41% and 60% respectively – the same percentages registered in April 2006.

“People who can’t get back are stressed, worn out and worrying about money.”

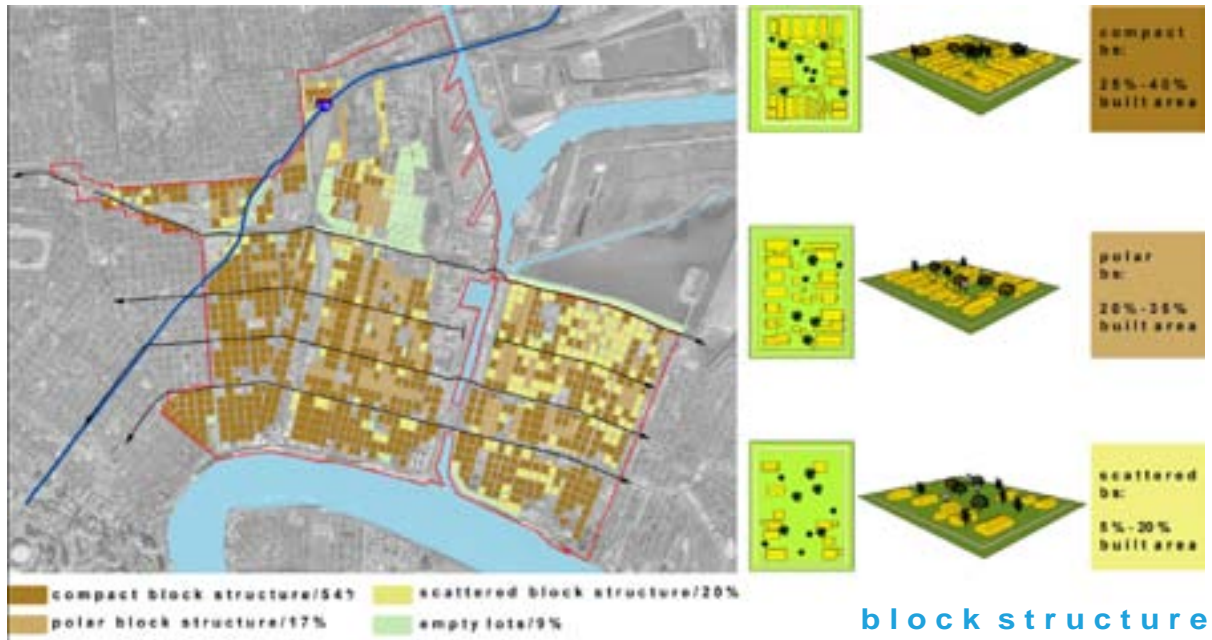
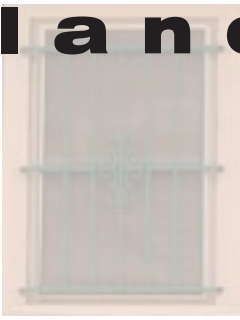
“Get all of the older people back, they are the rock of the neighborhood.... They are giving up because no one is helping.”

9th Ward Residents

Land use

pre-katrina land use

Land uses vary significantly within neighborhoods comprising the 9th Ward. Residential uses, primarily single and small multi-family buildings (less than 5-unit buildings) dominate, followed by neighborhood-oriented retail, community and public facilities, industrial and warehousing facilities, and shipping and port facility uses. The neighborhood also contains two public housing facilities: Florida and Desire. In the past, these projects provided critical housing for families with extremely low incomes.



block structure

07

Four distinct block types constitute the study site: compact, polar, scattered, and empty. As one moves from the city center towards the outskirts of the Lower 9th, the progression from a solid, compact block structure in the Western part, to a dominantly polar type in the middle, and a predominantly scattered type in the East becomes evident. We progress from a compact block typology along the banks of the Mississippi to a looser one in the Northern areas.

land use proposal

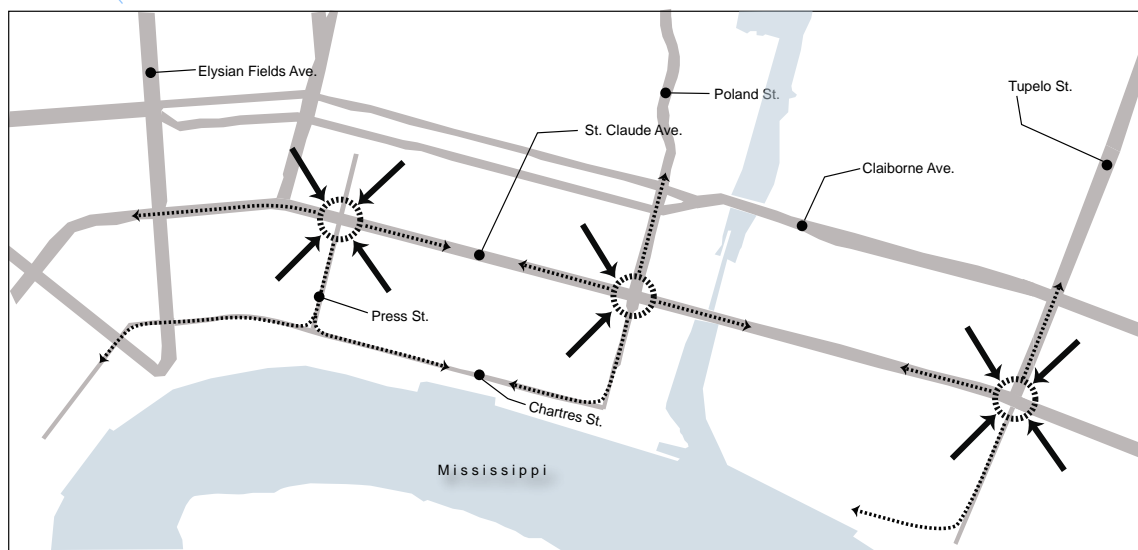


A new land-use plan for the Ninth Ward, with accurate flood plain maps and new building standards and designs could restore confidence in people to return and be used as a guide for ecologically responsible rebuilding in certain areas of the Ninth Ward. Maps that overlay topography, soil types, depth-to-water table zones, pollution zones, and main drainage areas ought to be compared to new building standard overlays after which local land use pattern options can be considered with the community.

A survey done by university students and faculty in October 2006 showed that residents were mostly concerned about the undesirable appearance of the neighborhood, rent inflation and lack of funds to rehabilitate homes, shortage of local jobs and retail opportunities, poor educational facilities, endemic crime, and lack of alternative occupational/recreational opportunities for youth. Redeveloping the neighborhood's major arteries and creating a series of strategic nodes and condensers could respond to these problems by attracting people and businesses and by creating a vibrant and dynamic community.

nodes of activity and flow

We propose public investments in three nodes of activity: at the intersection of Press St. and St. Claude Ave., around the St. Claude bridge between the Lower Ninth and the Upper Ninth, and at the intersection of Tupelo St. and St. Claude Ave. These nodes should be landscaped and developed to include institutional and private uses that serve a large clientele. They could serve as points of socio-economic activity and as general meeting points for people.



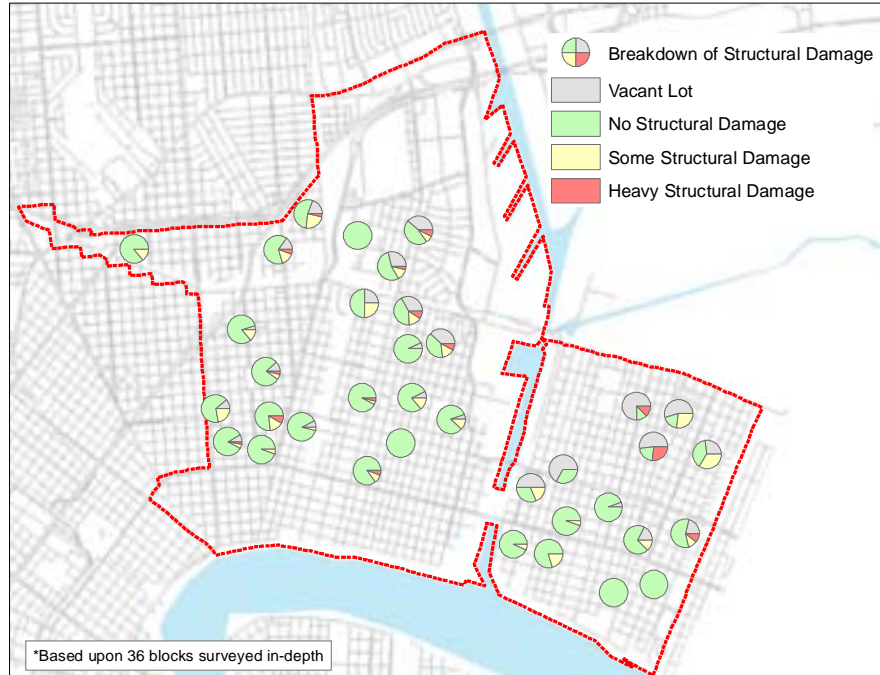
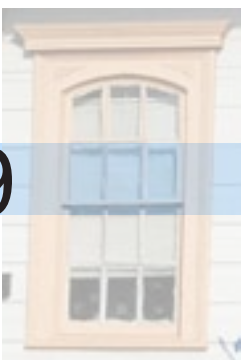
“We want our lives back. We must have hope, we’re not going to give up. Can no longer borrow a ladder from one another.... We need our community back again.”

housing damage

Over 80% of housing had **no structural damage**.

Fifteen teams of university students conducted a survey of the residential housing on 165 blocks in Planning Districts 7 and 8. The survey covered 12% of the building stock in these districts. The teams captured information on the types of residential structures and the recovery activity evident at the time of the survey.

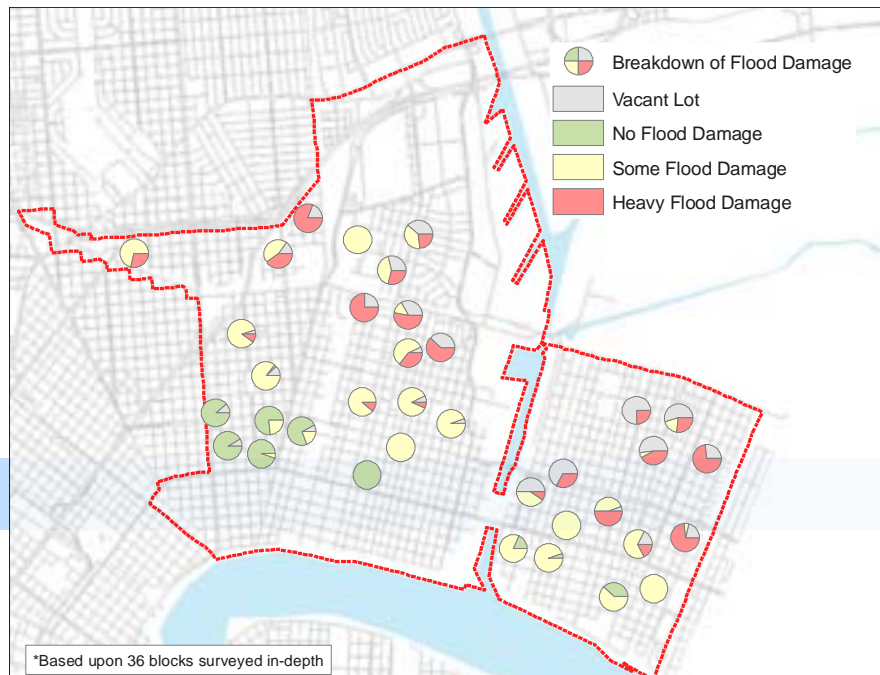
Over 90% of the approximately 3,000 parcels surveyed were residential lots. Of the lots with buildings on them, 85% had a main structure that was single story, 14% had a structure with two stories, and 1% had a structure over two stories.



Structural damage – collapsed walls, caved in roofs, or houses that have moved off of their foundation - is limited across Planning Districts 7 and 8. Over 80% of the remaining homes had no structural damage when surveyed in October 2006. While this housing may have been heavily flooded, much of it is potentially cost-effective to repair.



heavy structural damage



flood damage

Flooding was extensive throughout Planning Districts 7 and 8. Homes with some flood damage will typically cost \$35,000-\$50,000 to repair. Homes with heavy flood damage will be more expensive. More importantly, these heavily flooded homes will likely need to be elevated to new FEMA guidelines. This procedure will add an additional \$20,000-\$30,000 in repair cost to the 75% of the homes on pier foundations and will be too costly to perform for 25% of homes on slab foundations.



heavy flood damage

h o u s i n g a c t i o n s

"We want our lives back. We must have hope, we're not going to give up. We can no longer borrow a ladder from one another...we need our community back again."

immediate

temporary/workforce housing

Aggressive steps must be taken to secure FEMA trailers and identify lots for these trailers and to expand the rental housing stock. As rebuilding drags on, the wealth of the community and families diminishes.



design and development rebuilding...

- will require residents to weigh the importance of the character and culture of neighborhoods against safe design.
- in this area will focus on rehabbing existing housing since much of the housing can be saved.
- in the most severely damaged areas may require higher densities to make it affordable for residents to return.



short term

signature housing development

A mixed-income, mixed-use housing development, which respects the existing pattern of ownership, encourages municipal reinvestment in the community, allows residents to return, and encourages the establishment of much needed community businesses and services.

community planning and design center

Provides a centralized resource of information about housing design, community development projects, zoning, permit process, building codes and regulations, resources for rehabilitation, materials, and financial assistance.

housing trust fund

Provides a local source of funding for affordable housing. Nonprofit organizations and eligible for-profit developers can use HTF funds to build affordable housing.

community land trust

Strengthens communities and makes housing permanently affordable. Community land trusts create an additional subsidy by removing the value of land from the cost of housing, promote community-minded response to redevelopment, enhance resident input, and leverage public resources for maximum benefit and efficient results.

"There is still a need to help people clean their houses out. People need help with renovating."

9th Ward Resident



rent stabilization

Protects tenants from excessive rent increases by landlords.

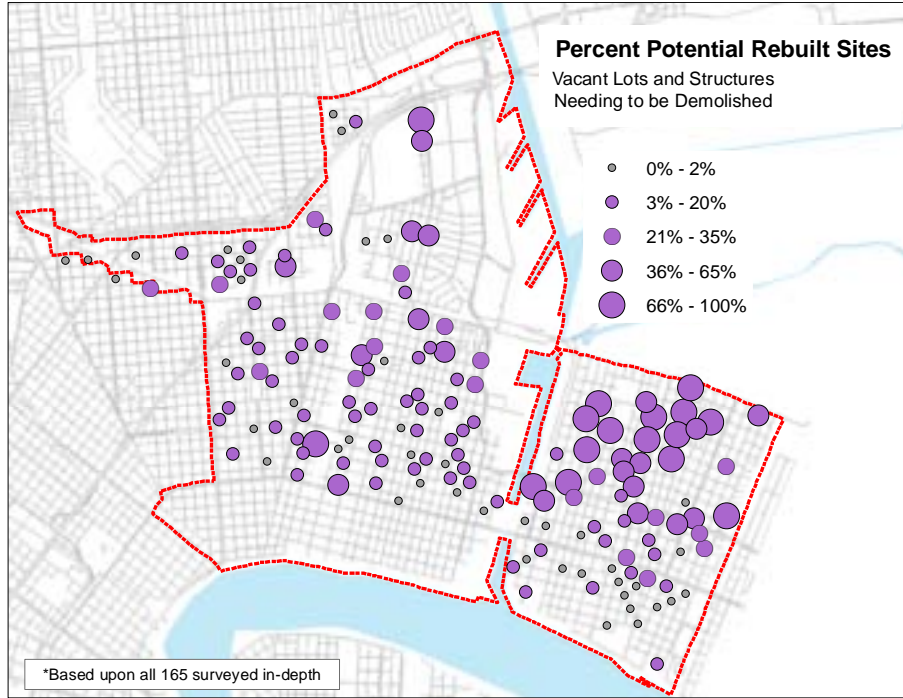
open public housing

Gives community members who were elderly, disabled, or working, but poor the same opportunity to return to the city.

house rebuilding

The heaviest structural damage was in the northern section of the Lower Ninth. Here 10% of the existing homes had heavy structural damage. Another 43% of the lots were vacant. Much of this vacancy is due to post-storm demolition. Areas like this have the highest percentage of lots that will need to be rebuilt from the ground up.

potential rebuild sites



The northern section of the Lower 9th has a high percentage of vacant lots, heavily damaged structures and structures with slab foundations. These lots are potential sites for future rebuilding. As such, this area is a potential site for extensive infill development and new large-scale development.

In the southern section of the Lower 9th, Holy Cross, and St. Claude and St. Roch neighborhoods, potential rebuild lots were a much smaller percentage of the building stock. These areas are more suitable to limited infill development and refurbishing of existing housing stock surveyed.

heavy structural damage



house on slab foundation



house on pier foundation



“I want to come home, but I have no where to come home to.”

“People need to get out of the trailer!”

9th Ward Residents

new housing developments



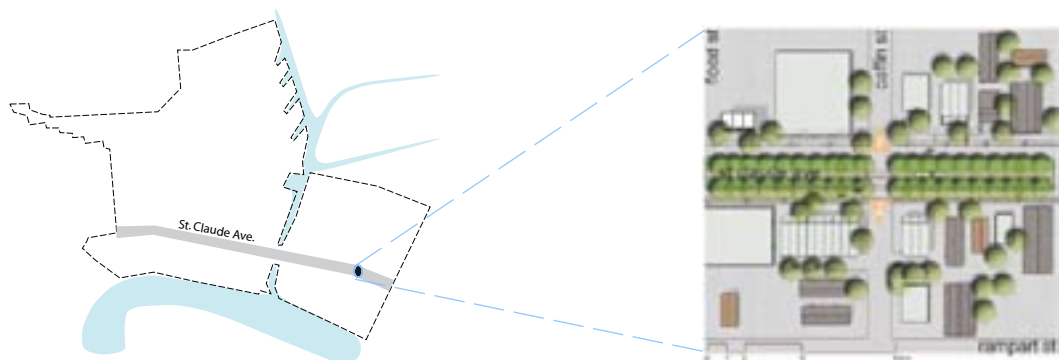
phase 1
post-katrina undamaged and repaired homes on existing lots



phase 2
infill of salvaged homes from dismantled 9th Ward blocks and newly planted street trees



phase 3
infill of newly constructed homes and maturation of street trees



mixed-use infill development along st. claud

Areas that were severely affected by the floods (such as the northern section of the Lower 9th), as well as areas that are underutilized (e.g. the St. Claude commercial/retail/institutional corridor) present potential sites for new development, and mixed-use infill development. A Cornell urban design team made specific recommendations for how commercial/retail/institutional arteries, like St. Claude, could be developed, and it proposed a series of building designs that would be both affordable and respond to the specific requirements of the site (ground elevation, flood resilience, potential buyers, and already existent uses).



street elevation 1

Structures that have a commercial/retail use on the first floor and housing on the second floor create a mixture aimed at satisfying both housing and amenities needs. These structures will largely provide infill alternatives for parcels of land that are currently undeveloped or are occupied by decrepit or abandoned structures.



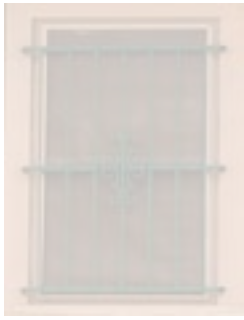
street elevation 2



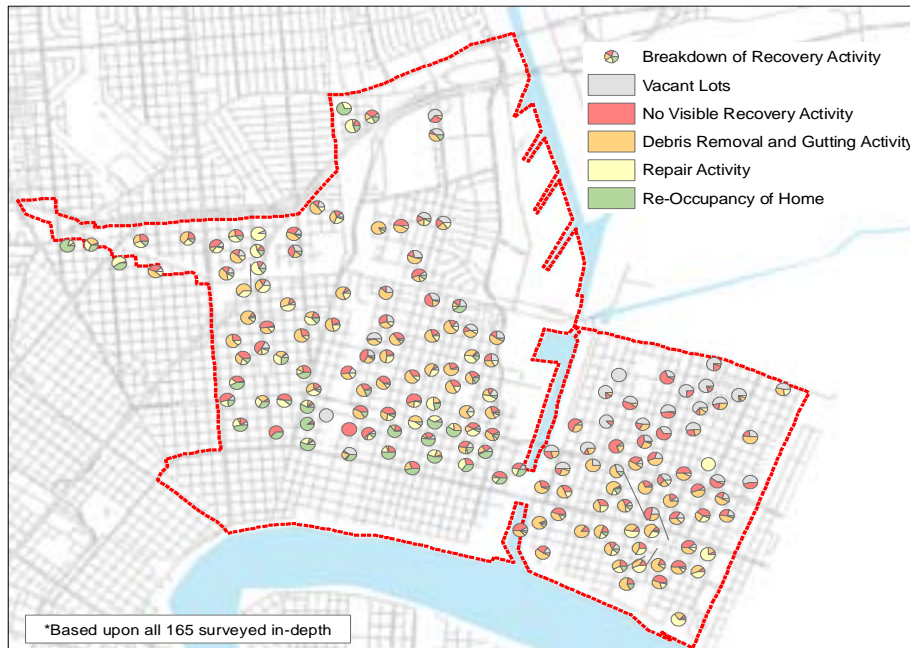
“People are dying to get back to this city... there ain’t no other city like it!”

9th Ward Resident

building recovery



building recovery



The October 2006 survey indicated significant recovery activity in the flooded neighborhoods of Planning District 7 and 8. Approximately 70% of the homes had been gutted or debris had been removed. In a third of all homes – many in the southern sections of St. Roch, St. Claude and Holy Cross - repairs had been started or completed. Recovery activity was more limited in the heavily damaged northern section of the Lower Ninth. There, 40% of the homes surveyed showed some sign of recovery, typically gutting.

resident survey

What condition is your home/apartment in New Orleans now?



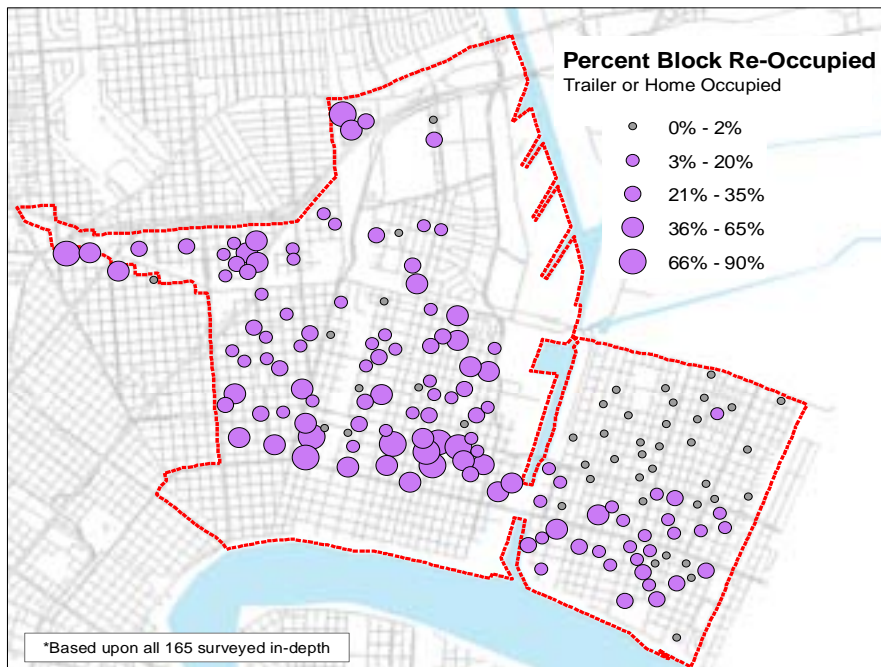
While doing resident surveys we were struck by the resilience of residents in each of the four quadrants represented - not only in their overwhelming desire to move back to New Orleans (94% Lower Ninth, 100% Holy Cross, 88% St. Claude and 85% Bywater, but also in their commitment to rebuilding and returning to their pre-Katrina homes.

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“I am not waiting on no people to help me. I give up no hope.”

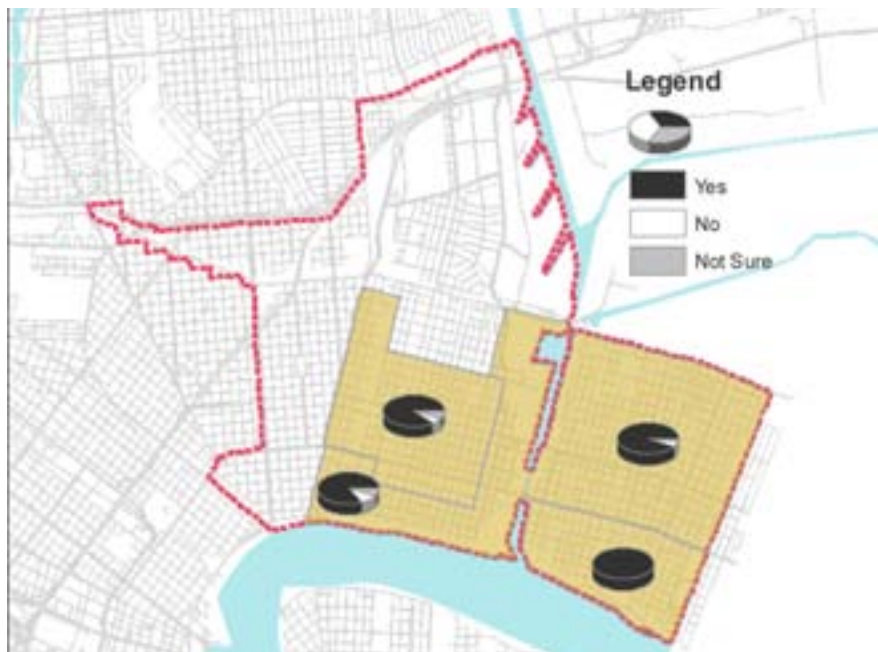
9th Ward Resident

block re-occupancy



re-occupancy

Residents had returned to live in their homes or in FEMA trailers on their lots all across Planning District 7 and 8. In October 2006, residents had returned to live on over 25% of their lots in the flooded neighborhoods of Planning District 7. There were also residents on 15% of the lots in the Holy Cross neighborhood and 12% in the southern section of the Lower Ninth neighborhood. Only 1% of the residents had been able to return to their lots in the northern section of this neighborhood.



resident survey

Do you want to move back and stay in New Orleans?












In St. Claude, resident reoccupation was at 38%, rehab was at 43%, debris removal was at 6%, and 13% had gutted their houses. Resident recovery and rebuilding efforts in the 8th district were not as far along. Only 8% and 12% of residents surveyed in the Lower Ninth and Holy Cross, respectively, reported reoccupation of their homes. Close to 80% were in the process of rehabbing or gutting.

"This neighborhood isn't known for its schools or education, but the residents of the lower ninth are hard working people. We have always worked hard and we will always work hard. We aren't going anywhere."

9th Ward Resident




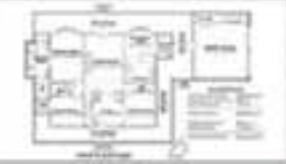


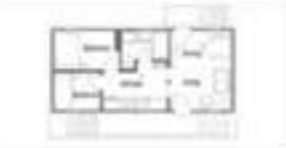





possible housing choices



	Type	Cost	Area	Individual vs Planned Construction
rehab	 Shotgun	\$15,000 - \$100,000	600-1400 sq ft 3 bedroom	?
	 Creole	\$15,000- \$100,000	600-1400 sq ft 3 bedroom	?
temp	 FEMA trailer	Free for 18 mths \$75,000 deliver and install	30-40 ft travel trailers	 Mass Produced Prefab Trailers
	 Katrina Cottage	\$25,000 - \$50,000 above	300 - 1200 sq ft 1-2 bedroom	 DIY Easy+fast to build. Materials at Lowes
permanent	 LIFT House by MIT	Material Cost Sweat Labor - Volunteer	Flexible	Unskilled and semi-skilled volunteers
	 St. Bernard Parish Charette	\$80,000 - \$100,000	?	Resolution to the State of LA to have the Katrina Cottage as an alternate standard for FEMA trailers
	 Biloxi Home Program	Up to \$110,000	12 Designs max 1600 sq ft size: 50' x 170'	Individual
	 High Density on Hight Ground Competition	?		Pre-fabricated unites 160 units
	 Sustainable Design Competition New Orleans	Low can DIY	?	1.6 acres. 18 unit (12 multi-family and 6 single family) and a community center

“Let the neighborhood decide what they want.”

9th Ward Resident

Sustainable Design Features	Potential for Future Extension	Flood Resistance	Hurricane Resistance	Repairability	Typical Floor Plan
X	X			Pending	
X	X			Pending	
X	Temp Housing only Max 18 months	X	X	Repair Centre	
X		X	Withstand at least 140 mph winds (meet most hurricane codes.)	?	
X	X	8' - 10' above ground	X	?	Generic Concept
X			X	?	X
Depends on individual proposal	✓	6' - 12' above ground	X	?	Oriented on an east-west axis in the longer direction
Filters rainwater for plants	X		X	?	
Rain water collection and recycle - no electric bill	X	Raised building Use lower level for garden	X	?	

“I think you can hear the anger in my voice... this city can be up in five years if people stopped sitting on the money”

9th Ward Resident

delery housing

ACORN housing developments

"Raising the two houses on Delery St. is just one of many more steps in bringing back New Orleans. Our next step is to work [...] to repair or rebuild 150 more homes in the 9th Ward."

(Tanya Harris, ACORN Organizer)

On February 2007, ACORN Housing inaugurated the first two new developments to be raised in the Lower 9th since Hurricane Katrina hit in August 2005.



sanborn map

location of new developments



site: pre-katrina



site: post-katrina



the site-pre-construction

The Delery houses were built in one of the hardest hit areas of New Orleans. The images above show how the site looked before, and after the storm.

delery houses and their owners
courtesy New York Times (Feb 23, 2007)

With the assistance of ACORN Housing, Louisiana State University, HUD, and Countrywide Bank, former next-door neighbors – Gwendolyn Guice and Josephine Butler – received keys to their new houses on Delery St. on February 22, 2007.



construction phase



inauguration



“The destruction of the Lower Ninth Ward, which was working-class and black before the hurricane, and its subsequent failure to begin recovering, have become symbols for what some see as inequities in the city’s halting revival.”

Adam Nossiter, The New York Times – Feb. 23, 2007

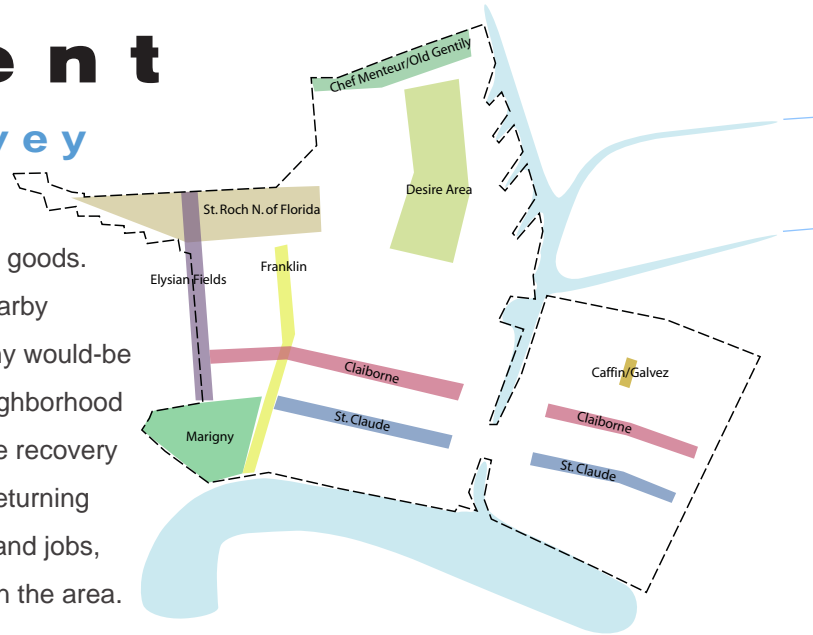
“We aren’t crying for money, we are crying to get back into our houses.”

9th Ward Resident

economic development

business survey

Healthy residential areas require convenient access to basic consumer goods. The stability of a residential area's nearby commercial corridor is viewed by many would-be investors as a leading indicator of neighborhood stability. In a post-disaster context, the recovery of local commercial corridors offers returning residents access to goods, services, and jobs, and encourages further investments in the area.



business clusters



A total of 364 businesses were surveyed in the **7th district**. About 54% of these businesses have reopened, 5% are in the process of being renovated, and 38% are closed, while the status of 3% of the businesses is unknown. Three-fourths of the district's businesses have intact facades, and 81% have signage that is functional.



Restaurants and bars are by far the most common business type throughout the district. Almost 25% of the total businesses surveyed — and of the open businesses — are restaurants or bars. Other local businesses include several grocery stores, salons and beauty shops, auto repair shops, and offices throughout the district. However, many of these businesses remain closed.



Whereas 80% of the businesses in the Marigny neighborhood appear to have successfully re-opened, fewer than half of the businesses located along the St. Claude and Claiborne corridors and in the Desire and St. Roch (north of Florida Avenue) areas have done so. In fact, only eight of the neighborhood's existing businesses were back in operation in the Desire area.



Businesses have been slowly returning to the **8th district**. In October of 2006, only seven (11.9%) of the district's fifty-nine previously-operating business establishments were open, and 3 (5.1%) appeared to be under active renovation, while 49 (83%) remained shuttered.



In mid-October of 2006, nearly 60% of the commercial buildings within the district appeared to have sustained significant damage to their facades, while 39% of the establishments formerly operating from these buildings had severely damaged or missing signage. Approximately 30% of the district's vacant commercial buildings appeared to have experienced minimal structural damage and may be ready for immediate occupancy if the demand for this space should develop.

economic opportunities

Apart from developing a series of commercial corridors (such as St. Claude and Claiborne), there are opportunities to bank on the available work-force in the 9th Ward, as well as on existing needs. In particular, we propose the development of a modular housing industry, in tandem with a YouthBuild program, and the development of a flea market.

A **modular housing factory** in the Ninth ward would offer well-paid employment opportunities in close proximity to an available workforce. This local industry would accelerate the neighborhood reconstruction process, generating infill housing that could be easily adapted for sites near the factory.

The adjacent figure maps the areas with industrial zoning in the Ninth Ward. Also, the neighborhood's proximity to the Mississippi River and a nearby harbor, as well as an extensive railway system, could revive this underutilized industrial area into an important regional and national export zone. A modular housing factory could serve its immediate area, and potentially act as a catalyst for housing production in the entire Gulf Coast.



modular housing factory

commercial arteries



Fostering a series of institutional/commercial/retail arteries throughout the neighborhood will offer much needed amenities to residents, will create jobs, and will create a vibrant and dynamic community.

These arteries would serve local, city-wide, and regional retail shopping needs (food store, drug store, barber/hair salon, sporting goods store, video rental outlets, credit union, etc.). St. Claude could cater to a larger audience (e.g. through a senior center, cinema, or a large supermarket), Claiborne would serve a city-wide and local audience (e.g. through local restaurants, rental stores, grocery stores, or local banks), while Galvez would serve neighborhood needs (laundromats, corner stores, or a day care center).



YouthBuild grant

The physical rebuilding process in the Ninth Ward stimulates economic and workforce development, and an emphasis must be placed on developing local skills in the building trades. Community empowerment and swift redevelopment depend on programs that connect residents to careers in the building trades, which they can focus on the recovery of housing and business in their own communities. Such programs should, if possible, be developed around the sites of existing or proposed housing development facilities.

parks + playgrounds



One team conducted a two-day survey of the 22 local parks and playgrounds in the 9th Ward. They documented whether the parks had been damaged, their current status and use. While neutral ground on many New Orleans Avenues provide areas for recreation, we did not survey these green spaces.



The adjacent map shows that the parks and playgrounds surveyed are within a five minute walking distance from many neighborhoods. Residents in Holy Cross and between N. Claiborne and St. Claude Avenues in the St. Claude neighborhood, however, did not have easy access to parks and playgrounds even before Hurricane Katrina.



parks, playgrounds, and open space

District	No. Parks	Storm Damaged	Closed	Used As Park	Status of Closed Parks/Playgrounds
7	7	6	4	2	Three overgrown or unkempt, one used as construction staging area.
8	15	13	11	4	Four used as FEMA trailer parks, one used as a parking lot, six overgrown or unkempt.
9 th Ward	22	19	15	6	

parks, playgrounds, and open space conditions (oct. '06)

converted parking lot



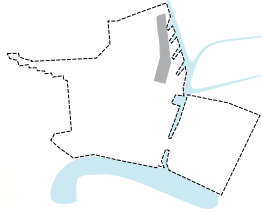
Over three-quarters of 9th Wards 22 parks showed signs of damage from Hurricane Katrina in October 2006. A third of the parks were open and used as parks. The remaining two-thirds of the parks were un-maintained or used for post-storm recovery. Five were used as FEMA trailer parks, another as a construction staging area, and a seventh as a gated parking lot.

“We want more action, the government is moving too slowly and not serving our needs ”

9th Ward Resident

open space proposals

The need for open space, as well as the need to bridge the transition between neighborhoods, and between neighborhoods and working areas prompted the proposal of two parks: one along the Desire industrial area, and one along the railway-line separating the Upper 9th from the rest of the city.



desire park would become an extensive natural system that weaves together the neighborhood's industrial past, new park spaces, and rebounding native habitats while providing links to the greater New Orleans park system through dedicated bike routes, nodes, and improved roadway connections.



1. long view towards downtown



3. view of the wetland looking south



2. view from france rd. looking roads

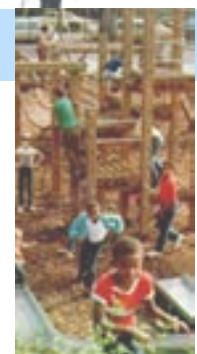


railway park would protect the neighborhood from the railway lines. A vegetative berm would serve as a noise and flood buffer. The park would connect the Bywater, St. Roch and Florida Area neighborhoods. Existing bridges would be improved with separate pedestrian/bike lanes, and a new pedestrian bridge is proposed for the northern part of the site. The bridge would connect with a new community park built on the vegetative berm.



new play-grounds and tot-lots

Residents cite the lack of safe spaces for their children as one of their top concerns: several respondents to our surveys cited playgrounds for kids as the most important thing they would like to see incorporated in a recovery plan. A comprehensive system of playgrounds, often physically linked to community institutions like schools can help prevent criminal activity from taking control of single, unregulated playgrounds. Neighborhood participation in both the design and construction of these playgrounds increase both the quality of community stewardship over these new public spaces.



education

school system

Prior to hurricane Katrina, the public school system in Orleans Parish was not providing high quality education. As cited by the Recovery School District Legislatively Required Plan, the public school system in New Orleans was persistently plagued by poor academic performance, wide achievement gaps, low graduation rates, racial and class inequities, high levels of illiteracy and poverty, building neglect, financial woes, and increasing turnover in administrative leadership. Given the current state of the school system, it is not surprising that in "2004–2005, 63 percent of schools in the New Orleans Public School system (NOPS) were deemed academically unacceptable."



public school conditions in planning district 7

School Name	Address	Neighborhood	Current Status (Sept. 2006)	% Damaged (Sept. 2006)
Carver, George W. Jr. High	3019 Higgins Blvd.	Desire Area	Closed	49%
Carver, George W. Sr. High	3059 Higgins Blvd.	Desire Area	Closed	49%
Colton, Charles J. Jr. High	2300 St. Claude Ave.	St. Roch	Closed	21%
Douglass, Frederick A. Sr. High	3820 St. Claude Ave.	St. Claude	Open	21%
Drew, Dr. Charles Richard Elem.	3819 St. Claude Ave.	St. Claude	Closed [now Open]	29%
Edwards, Helen S. Elem.	3039 Higgins Blvd.	Desire Area	Closed	57%
Frantz, William Elem.	3811 N. Galvez St.	St. Claude	Closed	54%
Haley, Oretta C. Elem.	2515 N. Robertson St.	St. Roch	Closed	45%
Hansberry, Lorraine Elem.	1339 Clout St.	St. Claude	Closed	12%
Lockett, Johnson C. Elem.	3240 Law St.	Florida Area	Closed	39%
Morton, Robert R. Elem.	3000 Abundance St.	Desire Area	Closed	18%
NOCEA	1815 St. Claude Ave.	Margry	Closed	15%
Reed Pre K-5	2521 Marais St.	St. Roch	Open	Not Included in Report
Shaw, John A. Elem.	2518 Arts St.	St. Roch	Closed	24%
Truancy Center	Unknown	St. Roch	Closed	Not Included in Report

Source: New Orleans Public Schools Informational Planning Package. Sept. 2006. Draft Report

Before hurricane Katrina struck New Orleans there were 15 public schools in Planning District 7. Currently, only three public schools have reopened: Reed PreK-8, Frederick A. Douglass Sr. High School, and Dr. Charles Richard Drew Elementary School.



public school conditions in planning district 8

School Name	Address	Current Status (Sept. 2006)	% Damaged (Sept. 2006)
Armstrong, Louis D. Elem.	5909 St. Claude Ave.	Closed	70%
Edison, Thomas Alva Elem.	1339 Fanstall St.	Closed	39%
Hardin, Joseph A. Elem.	2401 St. Maurice Ave.	Closed	100%
King, Martin Luther Jr. Elem.	1617 Caffin Ave.	Closed	21%
Lawless, Alfred Sr. High	5300 Law St.	Closed	84%
Noble, J.B. Special School	2201 Dubreuil St.	Closed	Not Included in Report

Source: New Orleans Public Schools Informational Planning Package. Sept. 2006. Draft Report.

The post-Katrina educational environment calls for greater innovation and exploration of alternative and community-based models of education. Partnerships should be created between schools and local organizations, businesses and foundations to provide financial and volunteer assistance when available.

opportunities

immediate

school exploration committees

Comprised of residents and experts on youth and education, should be formed to explore options for opening more area schools. This group could encourage new schools that are responsive to educational need within the community.

summer youth employment program

That offers teenagers stipends for work focused on revitalizing the Ninth Ward would foster personal growth and empowerment and it would move the community forward.



short term

community schools

... are community centers that integrate education, social services, and recreation, promote contact between neighbors, and connect residents with services. A middle/high school with a hands-on community development curriculum would compliment services such as dental care and job placement and all ages recreational space.

non-traditional high school and vocational programs

Vocational schools that give residents skills in living wage construction industry jobs would serve to enhance the lives of previously under-employed residents, add desperately needed construction labor to the New Orleans workforce, and increase money being spent in the local economy.

cultural arts school

... could celebrate what is great about the Ninth Ward and New Orleans – Jazz, traditional cuisine, architecture, and the visual arts.



Schools were very segregated

and “not really beautiful.”

9th Ward Resident

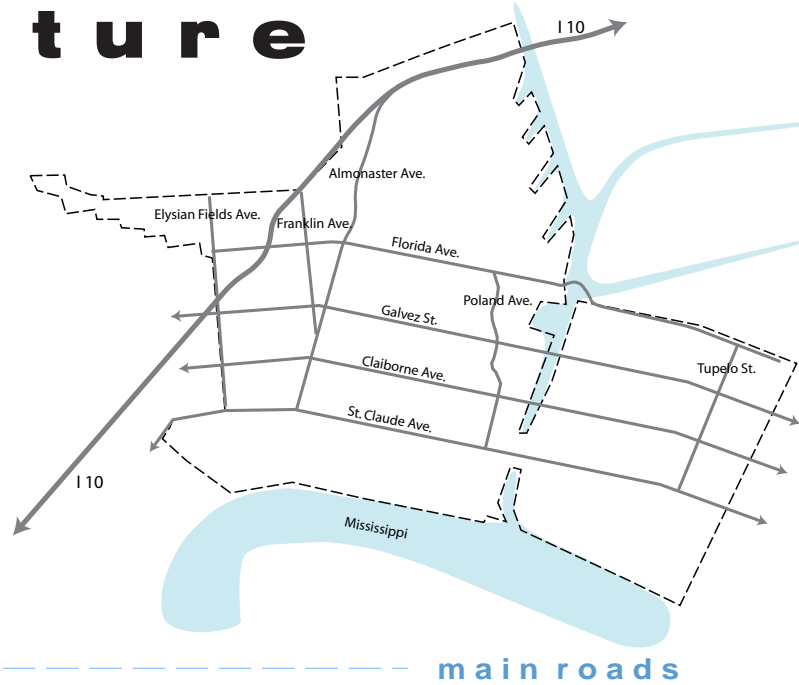
“If you live in New Orleans and you have any money, even to pinch by, you don’t send your kids to public schools. I don’t think they could be any worse”

9th Ward Resident

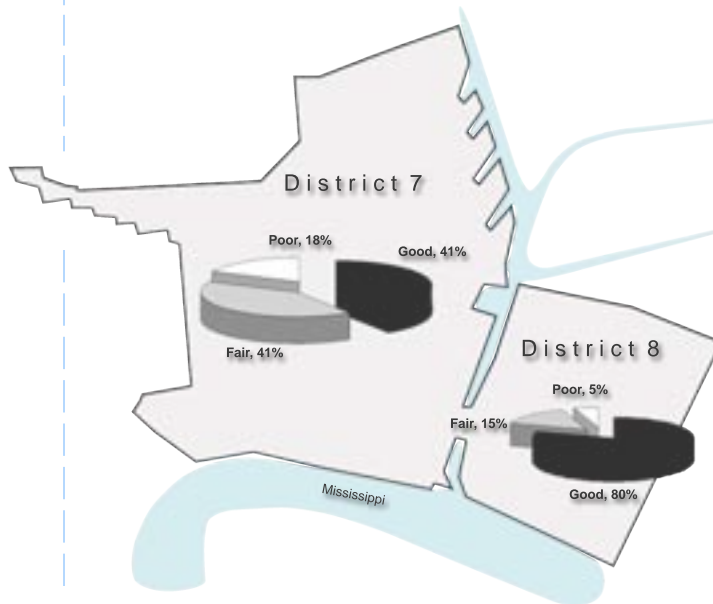
infrastructure

existing conditions

In order to determine key areas for investment in public infrastructure that will foster swift recovery, ACORN Housing – University Partnership team investigated current conditions of street-level infrastructure. We surveyed 42 sample blocks throughout the districts to assess the conditions of street infrastructure, including pavement conditions, street signs, fire hydrants, and storm drains.



Streets, even in severely flooded areas, remain at generally “fair” or better condition. Streets conditions were “fair” where the pavement allowed easy passage by car or bicycle but the presence of scrapes, cracks, or missing pavement require repairs. However, along several streets that rarely entered our sample, ground subsidence and pavement buckling has made street tops nearly impassable.



ad-hoc street signs



**9th Ward Infrastructure Survey
(October 2006)**

	PD 7	PD 8
Stop Signage		
Standing	72%	71%
Not Standing but in Ground	22%	5%
Missing	6%	24%
Street Signage		
Standing	53%	30%
Not Standing but in Ground	0%	1%
Missing	47%	69%

Most traffic lights surveyed were not functioning. Missing street signs announcing street names were more frequent than missing stop signs, but both pose a dangerous problem. In the Lower 9th, many unlabeled streets have been replaced by unofficial, hand-painted signs created by non-governmental organizations.

debris removal
courtesy FEMA 2005



Systematic, block-by-block disposal of road debris by a conglomeration of residents from the area can prove more efficient and economical. The following steps will lead to a more rapid recovery:

- Initiate disaster debris pickup.
- Create a director's board.
- Award local contracts and encourage local hirings.
- Repair houses and streets systematically and holistically.
- Identify types of debris and designate locations for disposal.
- Consolidate similar materials to increase recycling possibility.



median improvement

Street medians can become more functional and pleasing with some pruning, a series of targeted projects (e.g. the adopt-a-neutral-ground program from Parkway Partners), and a series of design projects:

- Accomodate St. Claude for proposed street car line and walking-paths for pedestrians.
- Bike paths can run along a center aisle of the neutral ground for recreational and commuter use.
- Implement heightened curbs and pedestrian-protecting treatments (like curb 'skirts').
- Support continued tree planting efforts.
- Add street furniture along neutral grounds to set the tone of these avenues as civil, public spaces to be used recreationally and economically.



infrastructure repair
courtesy FEMA 2005

In an effort to encourage residents to return home, infrastructure repairs (water, electric, gas, sewer, drainage systems) should be made to the major arteries, collector streets, and service streets. Drains need to be cleaned, lines restored, and streets repaved. Doing so without incurring future costs will depend upon thoughtful critique of existing systems, guidance of land use maps, and updating current infrastructure in conjunction with other city departments and the quality of life goals of residents.

“Poor sidewalks - they are not maintained ... they have gaps. My daughter is in a wheelchair and the unevenness of the pavement makes it very difficult for her to get around.”

9th Ward Resident

art, culture, history

The 9th Ward has a wealth of resources in the arts, architecture, and **music**, resources that should be preserved and protected for future generations.



The “streetcar named Desire” ran through the St. Claude neighborhood. In 1960 Ruby Bridges, a 6-year-old African American child, made civil rights history by attending an all-white school in the Florida neighborhood



The Lower 9th Ward is home to the Doulet Steamboat Houses, Jackson Barracks, **Fats Domino’s** recording studio, and a host of musicians and artists. **Holy Cross** is renowned for its rich architectural tradition, including shotgun and Creole cottage homes and the St. Maurice Catholic Church.



A mural arts program in the 9th Ward would hire local artists to work with children and adults on **public mural projects**. Through commissions, grants, or donations, the mural program would beautify businesses, schools, and eyesores in the neighborhoods

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“It’s very important for me to come back, because it keeps the culture going.”

“I’m not Ray Charles, I’m not Stevie Wonder, but I know what love is”

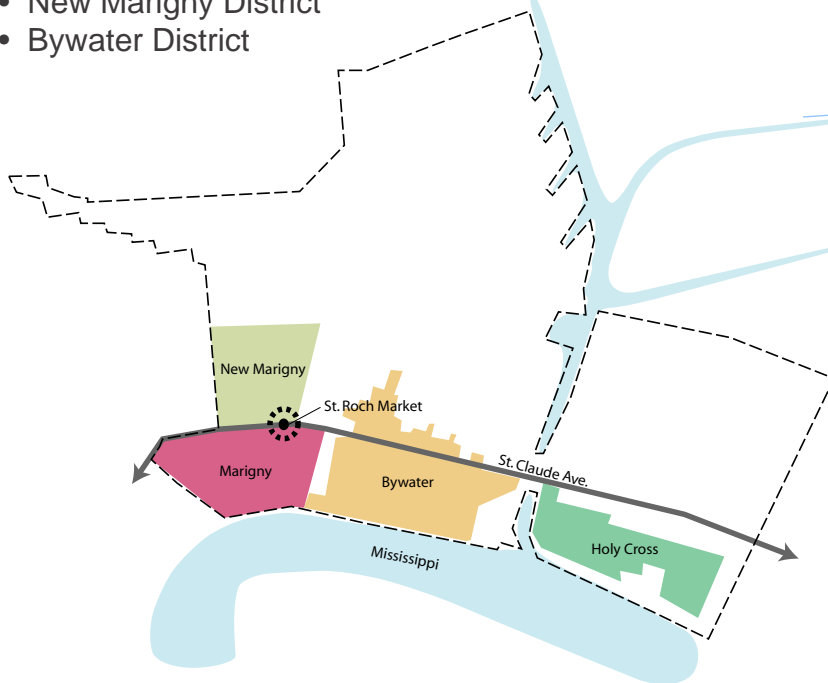
9th Ward Residents

historic preservation

The rich social history, unique architectural features, protected open spaces and scenic views of the 9th Ward represent a significant resource, which, when guided by the local residents, institutional leaders, elected officials, and their regional and national allies, such as the National Trust for Historic Preservation, can support the long-term recovery of the 9th Ward.

The 9th Ward contains **Four Historic Districts**, which appear on the National Registry of Historic Places:

- Faubourg Marigny District
- Holy Cross District
- New Marigny District
- Bywater District



St. Roch Market represents a historical structure and cultural landmark of great importance to the history, character, and identity of these neighborhoods. Bringing the market back could serve as a catalytic economic development project for the area and would offer an inspiration for other development and redevelopment projects.



Recognizing that deeply engaged citizens were involved with the market and its future, a group of 36 students, 3 alumni, and 4 faculty from Cornell undertook a study trip in the Spring of 2006, assessing the market's post-Katrina condition and possibilities for rehab and redevelopment.

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ACORN Housing/University Partnership students, faculty and staff wish to acknowledge the inspiration of Cleveland's long-term Planning Director Norm Krumholz, who's pioneering equity planning activities have set the standards for professionals seeking to promote social justice in our field.

Please go to our website www.rebuildingtheninth.org to download addition copies of the plan and for updates on planning activities.

background

The ACORN Housing – University Partnership began, in effect, shortly after the flooding of August, 2005. Faculty and students responded to requests from ACORN leadership to show solidarity and give support to its recovery and rebuilding efforts. What began with student volunteers gutting homes blossomed into a formal partnership to truly serve the needs of New Orleans' residents in their struggle to recover their city and their lives

history

From the immediate aftermath to today, ACORN and ACORN Housing Corporation (AHC), in cooperation with their university partners, have conducted community-based planning and recovery activities.

highlights

- | | |
|--|--|
| November 2005 | August, 2006 |
| First community forum on rebuilding New Orleans | AHC awarded adjudicated properties for affordable redevelopment |
| January 2006 | August, 2006 |
| Community planning initiative with university partners begins | AHC selected to serve 9th Ward under Unified New Orleans Plan |
| March, 2006 | October, 2006 |
| Planning forum to gather input with 250 resident participants | AHC-University Partnership continue community planning effort despite retracted UNOP contract |
| May, 2006 | January, 2007 |
| Cornell & Pratt complete plans & designs based on residents' needs | AHC-University Partnership completes 9th Ward plan & presents to residents, community and city leadership, prospective investors and funders |
| June-August, 2006 | |
| Cornell & Pratt students intern with ACORN Housing | |



