

REBUILDING AFTER HURRICANE KATRINA



ACORN PLANNING PRINCIPLES

July 2006



ACORN PLANNING TEAM

Beginning in September 2005, ACORN (Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now) assembled a highly-skilled team of architects and planners from ACORN Housing Corporation (AHC), Cornell University, Louisiana State University School of Architecture, New Jersey Institute of Technology, and Pratt Institute to help develop its plan for rebuilding the City of New Orleans. The combined team has extensive experience with architecture, landscape architecture, community development, neighborhood planning, public policy and administration, urban design, and city planning. Team members have a decades-long track record in developing cost-effective affordable single family housing, assembling properties, preparing construction financing, and managing construction.

ACORN's team is experienced with Department of Housing and Urban Development programs (CDBG, HOME, HAPP, etc.), homeownership counseling, and collaboration with neighborhood groups.

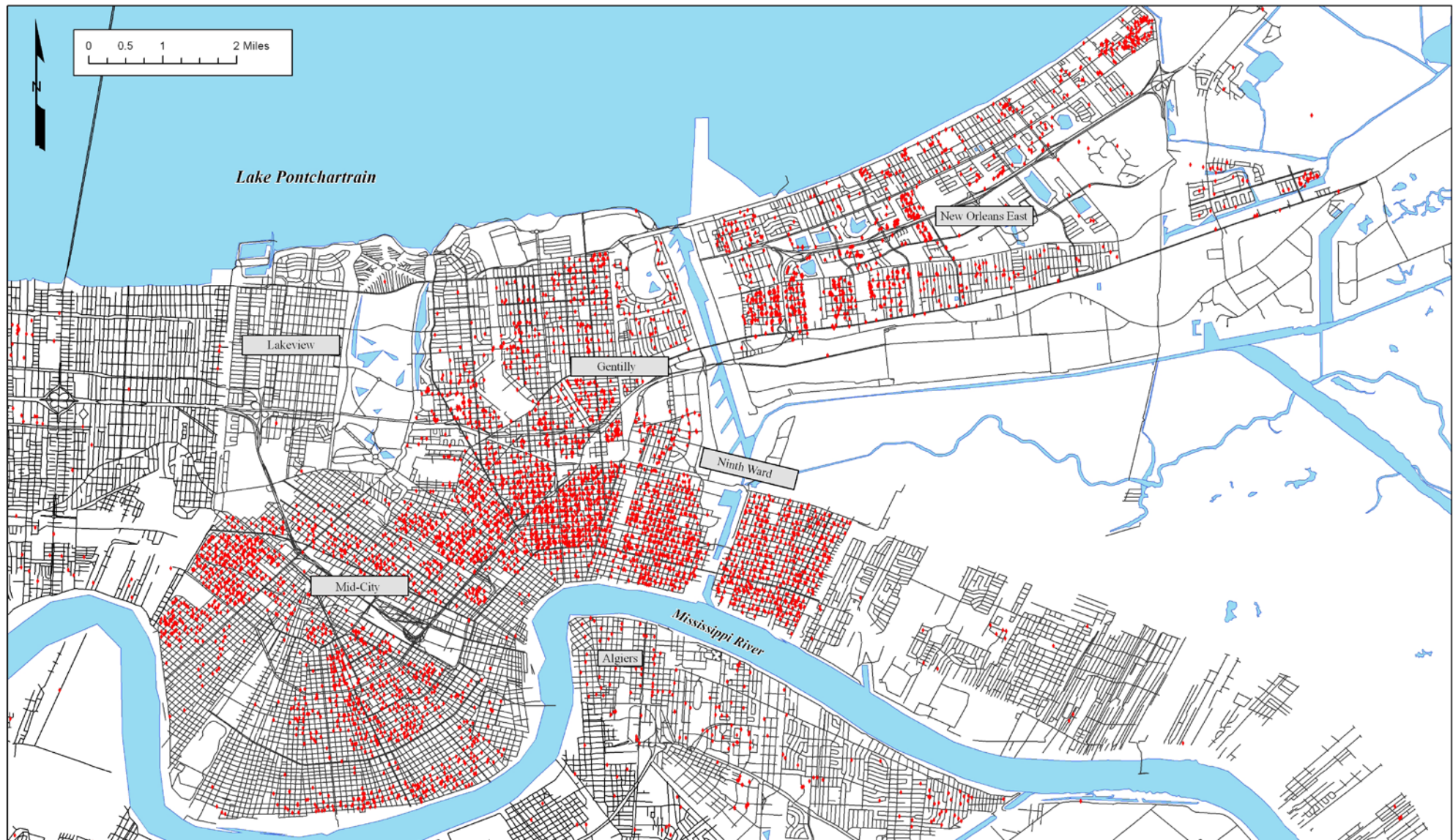
"It's still a shock. All I can think of is, it's not my home....Thank God ACORN is going to gut it out. We're going to come back and fix it up, and it's going to be our home again."

- Dorian Theodore, ACORN member

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ACORN MEMBERSHIP HOUSEHOLDS, NEW ORLEANS 2006



• ACORN Members
— Roads

FAMILY



NEIGHBORHOOD



CITY



ACORN VISION FOR REBUILDING NEW ORLEANS

ACORN is the nation's largest grassroots community organization of low- and moderate- income families, with its headquarters in New Orleans. Before Hurricane Katrina, ACORN had 9,000 member families in New Orleans and active chapters in neighborhoods across the city. ACORN members in New Orleans, and those displaced in cities across the country, are committed to preserving and strengthening New Orleans. We believe that, in time, the majority of displaced New Orleans residents will return. We cannot wait until the City is repopulated for the necessary infrastructure to be built. We must ensure that our basic rights such as safety, schools, and street infrastructure, are in place as people return. This will inspire those who are still displaced to come home.

ACORN believes that the current planning process is fundamentally flawed. A realistic planning process must begin with a commitment from the city, state and federal governments to provide for the basic recovery and stability of badly damaged neighborhoods. The covenant between the residents of these neighborhoods and their elected officials, which promised to provide a safe community, failed them. In order to make meaningful decisions about the future of their families and communities, community members need access to the basic means to feed and house themselves and a guarantee that their rights to return and rebuild in a reasonably safe community will be respected.

This document outlines ACORN's position on critical issues. It shows how ACORN's efforts in the rebuilding process stem directly from our members' most urgent concerns. It will show the one-to-one relationship between needs and results. We want to encourage members to continue confiding in ACORN while motivating non-members to join us. The more members we have, the stronger we are, and the more effective we will be in rebuilding New Orleans. We will get many previously ignored needs on the table as the City of New Orleans reinvents itself in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

ACORN will not concede to an official planning process that does not involve local residents and our members in every step along the way. We will fight until we see their demands incorporated into the City's plans for rebuilding.

GATHERING INFORMATION FROM OUR MEMBERS

This document is the result of extensive collaboration between ACORN and many of its 9,000 members. From the very first days after the storm, ACORN has relied on local residents to determine how to assist and represent them during the rebuilding process.

- On **November 7-8, 2005**, displaced New Orleans residents, representatives from the ACORN Katrina Survivors Association (ASKA), and leading urban planners, architects, and affordable housing specialists convened in Baton Rouge to participate in the “ACORN Community Forum on Rebuilding New Orleans.” The two-day conference focused on developing plans for New Orleans that speak to the needs and dreams of the city’s low- and moderate-income residents.

- In **December 2005**, ACORN launched the first major house-gutting initiative, called Home Clean-out Demonstration Program, committed to gutting houses, free of charge, for returning residents.

- In **February 2006**, ACORN organized the “9th Ward Action Team Steering Committee” to discuss next steps in the planning process with 9th Ward residents and members, along with Cornell and Louisiana State University (LSU) faculty and students.

- In **March 2006**, ACORN organized a community forum where residents provided planning and design input to Cornell and LSU staff and students. More than 250 community residents participated in this planning kickoff, the results of which helped shape further planning recommendations by the university planning partners.

- In **March and April 2006**, ACORN conducted a series of planning committee meetings and solicited community input on a variety of recovery and rebuilding issues such as community safety, health care, employment, schools, and housing.



- In **May 2006**, the City Council initiated its Neighborhood Rebuilding Plan process and ACORN organized its members to attend and participate in these meetings throughout the city. ACORN leaders and staff also continued to attend Neighborhood Planning Network meetings to collaborate with other grassroots planning initiatives and organizations across the city.

- In **June 2006**, ACORN participated in a large-scale, local community planning festival to inform residents on planning initiatives in their neighborhoods as well as participate in various, broader planning initiatives throughout the city.

COMMUNITY PLANNING PRINCIPLES

ACORN has adopted these community planning principles in developing its vision for rebuilding the 9th Ward and New Orleans East.

- A **resident-driven** process that actively involves local business owners, institutional leaders, elected officials, and most importantly, ALL community members, regardless of race, income, and age, at each and every step in the planning process from problem identification to program evaluation.
- A **historically informed** model of neighborhood planning that identifies goals, policies, strategies and action plans that build upon the rich cultural history of New Orleans and previous planning efforts.
- An **empirically based** planning approach that uses a careful and systematic analysis of the best available environmental, economic, and social data.
- A **sustainable** approach to neighborhood planning that emphasizes the importance of the environment.
- A **collaborative** approach to planning and development that emphasizes the importance of public and private partnerships to mobilize public resources with leverage from the private market.
- A **participatory** approach that encourages and supports participation by local and displaced residents by arranging for participation in remote locations, providing day care during sessions, and other support that will encourage and enable active participation.



- A process committed to **principles of good practice** for neighborhood planning that has emerged from other successful post-disaster planning efforts.
- A process where **information is presented honestly** and objectively, without the use of jargon, and employ visual representations whenever possible, to make data accessible to all residents.
- A process that is **sensitive to the difficulties** that residents have endured in their survival and recovery while moving the planning process forward toward positive outcomes.

ACORN fully engages residents in a meaningful discourse about what they envision for their neighborhoods. Two types of engagement include the use of community meetings and surveys.



MEETINGS rely on our community members' participation:

- ACORN has held community meetings regularly to discuss the rebuilding of the Lower 9th Ward, the Upper 9th Ward, Carrollton/Hollygrove, the 7th Ward/Gentilly, Central City, and Little Woods/New Orleans East. Meetings were attended by 50-300 residents each. Because these areas were especially hard hit, large numbers of residents have been forced to relocate and have not been engaged in the official planning process.
- ACORN Katrina Survivors Association (AKSA) has also conducted regular meetings and conference calls with Katrina survivors in Houston, Dallas, San Antonio and Little Rock as well as special meetings in Washington, DC and Atlanta.
- ACORN and ACORN team members have been regular participants in planning and community meetings with the Neighborhood Planning Network at "Neighborhood Rebuilding Plan" meetings in the 9th Ward and New Orleans East.
- ACORN holds monthly meetings with the Louisiana Round Table for the Environment to address ground contamination issues and mold remediation processes.

SURVEYS make possible the analysis of existing conditions and up-to-date data:

- **Building by building surveys** identify the degree of damage to properties and the intent of owners to return and refurbish those properties. This form will help to gauge the potential of a neighborhood to support given services.

Over 6,000 buildings in New Orleans East were surveyed, and a building-by-building assessment of the Lower 9th Ward will be finished by August 2006.

- **Neighborhood assessment surveys** identify the condition of private and public properties throughout a particular neighborhood. This survey will help to track changing conditions over time.

- **Land use surveys** identify available land for redevelopment, sale, swapping, and open space. This survey will identify high ground, vacant lots, and salvageable structures.

A survey of city-owned adjudicated properties, vacant land, and available land for sale is underway for Plum Orchard and Pines Village in New Orleans East and in the Lower 9th Ward.

- **Neighborhood resident surveys** poll and document current and displaced residents about their intent to return. It is particularly important to reach out to residents who have been displaced in order to make their voices heard.

Over 100 residents of New Orleans East have already been surveyed, and on-going surveys are underway.

FAMILY



RIGHTS

Every family has the right...

To return to a home in their neighborhood.

To safe, high-quality, affordable housing.

To choose in what neighborhood they wish to live.

To full and complete information regarding their rights and options for returning and rebuilding.

Prior to Hurricane Katrina, many areas of New Orleans were long overdue for major reforms in housing policy. The strengths of New Orleans housing, such as the high home-ownership rate among low-income and African American families, were weakened by concentrated areas of extreme poverty, poor quality structures, and senior citizens living alone. Then, as a result of the storm, over 70% of housing units in New Orleans alone were damaged, leaving a critical housing void (Source: GNODC).

HOUSING

CURRENT SITUATION

HUD plans to demolish over 5,000 public housing units, a decision made without notice to or input of residents (Source: The Times-Picayune, June 23, 2006).

The City plans to declare a public nuisance by August 29th, 2006, any house that has not been secured or gutted, putting anywhere between 30-60,000 housing units at risk (Source: The Times-Picayune, June 27, 2006).

Rental rates in New Orleans have increased upwards of 25-30% since Katrina, decreasing the number of affordable units further (Source: HUD).

In the Upper 9th Ward and New Orleans East neighborhoods, about 65% of the houses can be rehabilitated (Source: Columbia Earth Institute).

Residents are coming back and rebuilding their communities, with 10,101 building permits issued in New Orleans East and 6,346 in the 9th Ward as of June 2006 (Source: City of New Orleans).

ACORN RECOMMENDATIONS

In the battle against eminent domain, there should be no demolition without the permission of the home owner for at least one year after notification.

Preserve existing housing stock.

All owners of residential property should be given options for free cleaning and gutting of their properties and this should be government funded.

100% of the affordable units removed from public housing must be replaced.

Ensure affordability of replacement housing.

The City should use inclusionary zoning to require 25% percent of new units to be affordable by leveraging the increased revenues of developers.

The residents of a neighborhood should have first priority to purchase property in their own community.

All publicly owned lands and facilities, housing developments should be retained for the use of the public. Residents of adjacent neighborhoods should have the right to determine the use of vacant buildings.

Affordable housing must remain affordable.

Low-interest rate loans and target tax credit allocations must be made available to residents in the worst hit communities and in communities that lost the most affordable housing stock.

Fast track the expenditure of CDBG and HOME funded to support affordable housing and neighborhood redevelopment.

Ensure there is adequate gap financing for low-income residents who wish to return.

Provide gap financing for residents who intend to rebuild using best practices for energy efficient, green, and hurricane resistant housing construction.

“What do we want? ... Money to rebuild our homes is a step in the right direction. We need to fight so that it happens and funds are used to rebuild our homes, not to displace African-American and other low to moderate income families from their communities.”

- Maude Hurd, ACORN President



First house to be gutted by ACORN in the 9th Ward.



FAMILY



Our long-term vision for housing in New Orleans is to convert the destruction wrought by Hurricane Katrina into something positive for the residents who struggled with unsafe, poor quality, and inefficient housing prior to the storm. Many of our families built, owned, and lived in their homes for decades, and are deeply committed to moving back into them.

By cleaning out and rehabilitating homes, provide financial counseling to members, designing and building new houses, and training local workers to construct them, ACORN is pursuing a comprehensive line of action that will enable residents to rely on our services to get the quality of housing we demand.

HOW ACORN IS HELPING

ACORN members have already won the declaration of the Lower 9th Ward – between St. Claude and Florida Avenues - as a “hardship” area that will be protected from the August 29th property demolition deadline. Extend the hardship area to all hard hit areas where the residents petition for this designation.

Every day, ACORN provides one-on-one housing counseling to all residents who wish to return home.

ACORN has worked with over 6,000 displaced homeowners in major shelters across the region to help them obtain financial assistance so that they may return to New Orleans and rebuild.

Support and provide high quality rental housing for low-income seniors, working families and disabled residents.

HOUSING

FUTURE PROJECTS

Create a revolving loan fund to provide at least \$10 million in bridge loans for homeowners.

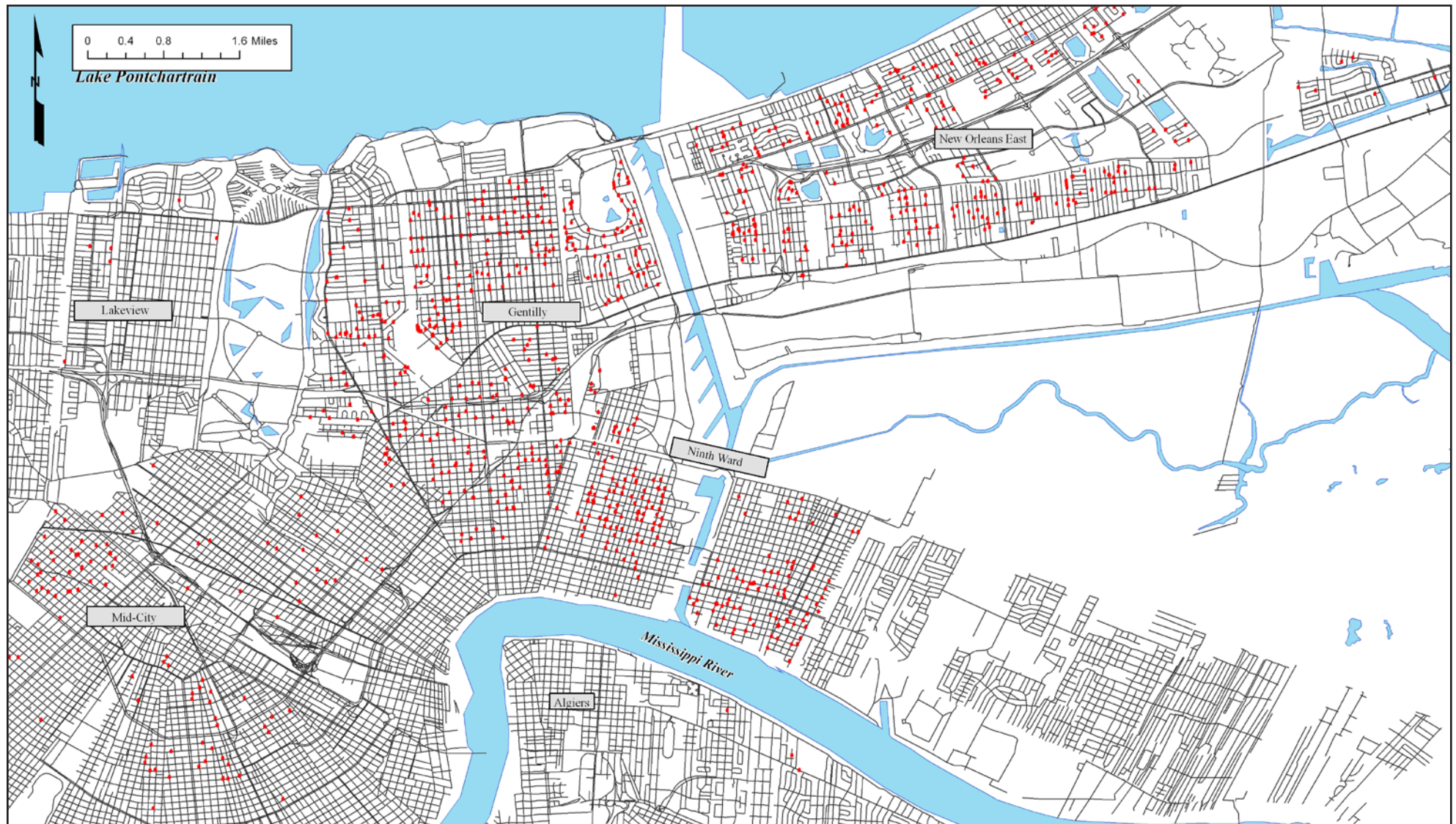
Work with architects and designers to create a Design Book with affordable, permitable, energy-efficient housing plans for returning homeowners.

Collaborate with LSU to create a Mobile Technical Assistance Program that will train female heads of household in the 9th Ward in home repair and basic construction skills.

Construct 1,000 homes through a variety of demonstration programs, partnerships and other innovative housing development projects. These pilot programs include the LSU-Lower 9th Ward project to build 30 homes over the next 6 months using local workers, a partnership with PRC to renovate historic structures and a cluster home demonstration in New Orleans East in partnership with the Pratt Institute.

In partnership and with Total Community Action, ACORN will rebuild the homes of elderly residents in phases so they may move back before they obtain LRA money.

KATRINA DAMAGED HOMES GUTTED BY ACORN, JUNE 2006



Map created by Kerry McLaughlin and Andrew Rumbach
on behalf of ACORN and ACORN Housing Corporation on June 21, 2006.
Map shows damaged homes gutted by ACORN in Orleans Parish and
parts of Jefferson and St. Bernard Parish.
Data Sources: Louisiana State University GIS-Store, ACORN.
Projection: GCS North American 1983.

As of July 2006, ACORN has placed thousands of volunteer workers with hired construction crews to gut over 1,400 homes in preparation for their rehabilitation, and the effort continues today.

FAMILY



RIGHTS

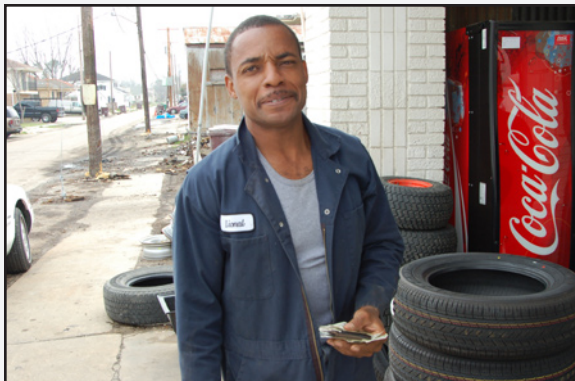
Every family has the right...

To fair access to employment opportunities.

To safe working conditions and a livable wage.

To training and education that increase their employment opportunities.

To full and complete information regarding their rights as working citizens.



CURRENT SITUATION

The New Orleans metro area lost a sizeable number of its workforce in all industries, including leisure/hospitality (down 34.7 percent), education and health services (down 42.5 percent) and trade and transportation (down 28.4 percent) (Source: Brookings Institute, July 5, 2006).

As of January, 10.6% of people who had returned to New Orleans were unemployed and seeking work (Source: GNODC).

309,000 New Orleans residents are still displaced from Katrina, making temporary or permanent work more difficult to find (Source: The New York Times, July 5, 2006).

The minimum wage is still only \$5.15/hour, keeping many families from earning a living wage.

JOBS

ACORN RECOMMENDATIONS

The city should retain and expand their current staff in order to meet the increasing demand for public services.

The city should create job training programs in the construction, hospitality, and industrial sectors.

The city and state should award its contracts, wherever possible, to firms that employ local workers, including minority and women-owned businesses.

The LRA economic development plan should provide job search assistance centers throughout Southern Louisiana.

The State legislature should raise the state minimum wage by \$1.50 and require companies with more than ten employees to provide health insurance.

HOW ACORN IS HELPING

Unemployment in New Orleans today calls for urgent organizing and reform. Prior to Hurricane Katrina, the city's unemployment rate was almost 12% - over twice that of the national rate. This reflects major systematic disadvantages among those unemployed such as limited education, concentration of jobs in lower-wage industries, and residential racial segregation (which is associated with low levels of employment and lower earnings among African Americans) (Source: Holzer, Harry J. and Robert I. Lerman, "Employment Issues and Challenges in Post-Katrina New Orleans," Rebuilding Opportunity and Equity into the New New Orleans, The Urban Institute, February 2006). Hurricane Katrina left thousands of people without jobs, deepening the employment crisis.

ACORN's long term vision is to mitigate the employment crisis in New Orleans by promoting economic development activities that improve the quality of jobs and the skills of workers. ACORN will be an advocate for coordinating the triad of employment, housing, and transportation initiatives in post-Katrina New Orleans.

ACORN identifies displaced and current residents for training in living wage jobs in various trade occupations and places them in one of three areas: the City of New Orleans, the Carpenters' Union pre-apprenticeship program, and a new workforce training center on Canal Street to open late summer, 2006.

AHC's housing construction program will train local residents to build and repair homes themselves.

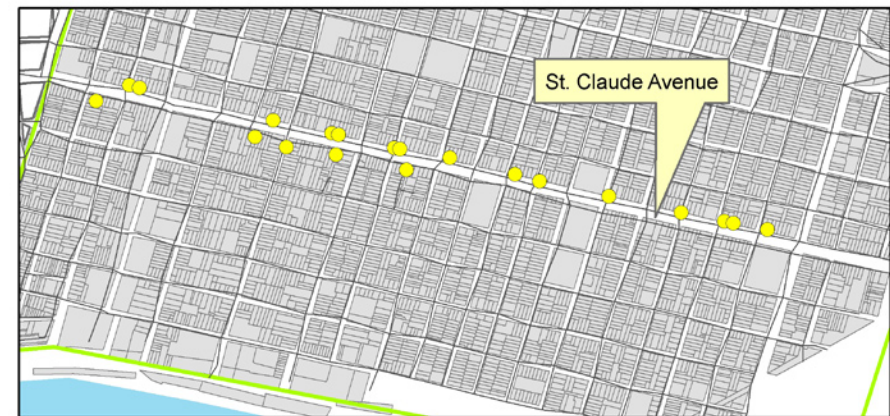
AHC and LSU's Mobile Technical Assistance program will train women in home repair.

ACORN is working with local unions to secure employment for local union workers.

ACORN is working with state political leaders to pass a living wage bill that would help the lowest paid workers across the state.

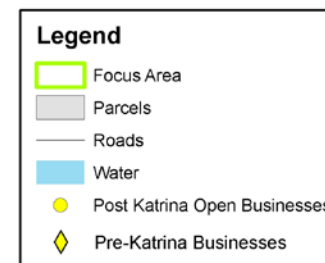


Open Businesses on St. Claude Ave:
Pre-Katrina



Open Businesses on St. Claude Ave:
Post-Katrina

This map presents the number of businesses open on St. Claude Avenue in the Upper Ninth Ward before and after Hurricane Katrina. Before Katrina, according to a listing on the Urban Conservancy's website there were 115 businesses open along the avenue. In February 2006 there were 46 businesses open, as indicated by a survey conducted by Cornell University students.



BUSINESSES ON
ST. CLAUDE AVENUE,
PRE- & POST-KATRINA

RIGHTS

Every child has the right...

To a seat in a classroom.

To a safe, nurturing learning environment.

To dedicated and qualified teachers in the classroom.

NEIGHBORHOOD



All families have the right...

To direct the educational future of their children.

To send their children to school within the community.

CURRENT SITUATION

In the Orleans Parish School district, 112 of 128 schools have been placed under the jurisdiction of the Recovery School District, the state-led school district.

Orleans Parish School Board voted against renegotiating its contract with the Teachers' Union in June 2006.

Fifty-six schools are scheduled to open for Fall 2006. Only five are operated under the Orleans Parish School Board while 18 schools are operated by the state under the Recovery School District.

EDUCATION

ACORN RECOMMENDATIONS

Provide a classroom seat for every student and those who plan to return.

Restore local control of schools back to communities.

Allocate sufficient resources to restore and create new afterschool programs.

Hire visionary, effective leadership at the top levels.

Recruit highly trained, qualified, passionate teachers and renegotiate the contract with the local teachers' union.

Implement community-centered curriculum that inspires interest in and knowledge of students' history, heritage, and culture.

Adopt smaller class sizes to allow greater interaction and facilitate a more responsive learning environment.

Reopen schools before viability is established to encourage repopulation of communities.

Provide free tutoring programs so children may pass mandatory exit exams.

HOW ACORN IS HELPING

ACORN views the educational component of the rebuilding process as vital to sustained economic, social, and political empowerment. ACORN's vision encompasses every aspect of the educational process, emphasizing:

- Small class size
- Parental involvement
- Afterschool programs
- Highly trained, qualified, enthusiastic teachers
- Essential materials for each student
- Local rather than state control over schools and curriculum

ACORN organizes for immediate action in allocating resources and opening schools despite there being a limited number of students in the city at the present moment. It is imperative that the numbers of students intending to return – and not only those who are already back – guide the planning process.

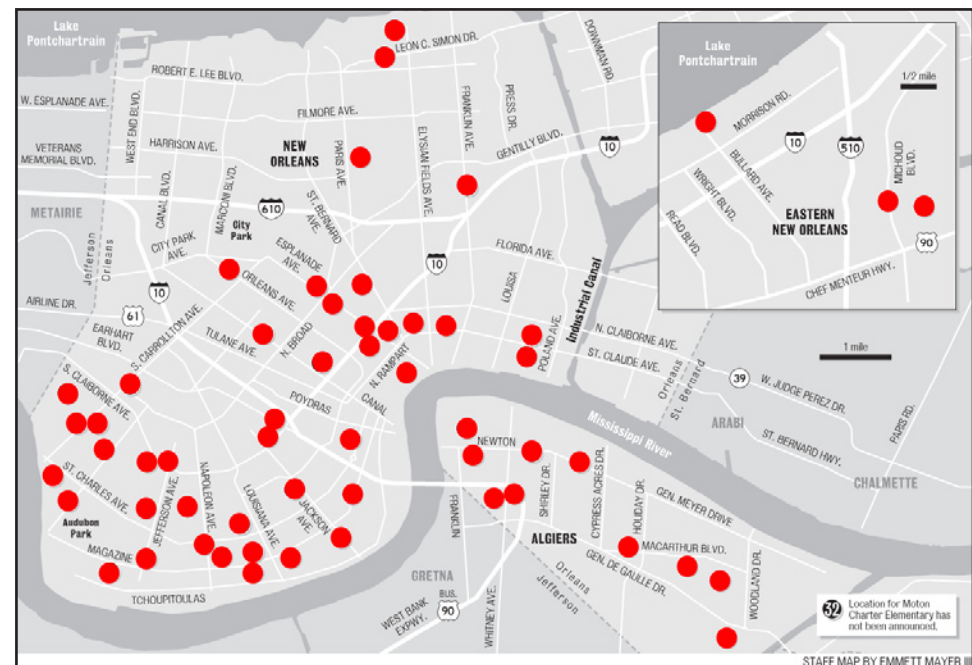
ACORN supports our teachers' rights. Often amid difficult circumstances, the teaching corps in New Orleans has worked diligently to educate our children. Their contributions must be recognized and commended. We view the School Board's unwillingness to return teachers as an unfair indictment against those who have persevered and devoted their talents and energy to educating our children.

Public Schools to Open 2006-2007
from *The Times-Picayune*, July 3, 2006



"We strongly believe that the pulse of the city will return to a sense of normalcy when schools reopen and neighborhoods are re-populated with families."

- Brenda Mitchell
Head of New Orleans Teachers' Union



RIGHTS

Every resident has the right...

To a safe and secure environment to live, work, and raise a family.

To a police department that responds to community needs.

NEIGHBORHOOD



Mural in Algiers Point, LA.
Photo by Sophie Mintier

To a regular police presence in neighborhoods that is supportive rather than threatening.

To regular patrol of parks and open spaces that historically have seen high rates of crime.

To a police department that is accountable for misconduct by officers.

ACORN recognizes neighborhood safety as a crucial issue for returning residents. If individuals and families feel that their neighborhoods are unsafe, they will be less likely to return. The rebuilding of New Orleans provides a unique opportunity to improve community-police relations, and to improve the safety and security of every neighborhood.

SAFETY & SECURITY

CURRENT SITUATION

For the past 20 years, New Orleans has had one of the highest violent crime rates in the United States.

Despite a 2/3 reduction in the overall population of New Orleans, crime is still rampant, especially in the neighborhoods that are struggling most to rebuild.

Over 80% of the city's police officers lost their homes during Katrina (Source: <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,201758,00.html>, June 30, 2006).

Since Hurricane Katrina, the police force has been reduced by over 25% (Source: <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,201758,00.html>, June 30, 2006).

ACORN RECOMMENDATIONS

Raise the pay of police officers to reflect post-Katrina cost-of-living in New Orleans.

Create a citizen oversight mechanism that is empowered to hold police departments accountable with:

- Citizen oversight as a safe mechanism for filing complaints;

- A system of review that is fair to both police officers and citizens;

- The power to punish police officers found guilty of misconduct.

Form neighborhood watch programs in conjunction with neighborhood police departments.

Create a community policing system to:

- Encourage a variety of police foot and vehicular patrols, and a regularly staffed substation in each neighborhood;

- Encourage police officers to live in the neighborhoods they patrol, using a housing credit program for officers who buy homes in selected neighborhoods;

- Support crime mitigation programs, such as afterschool programs and youth sports leagues.



9th Ward ACORN members turn out to protest leaking water main and lack of police protection.



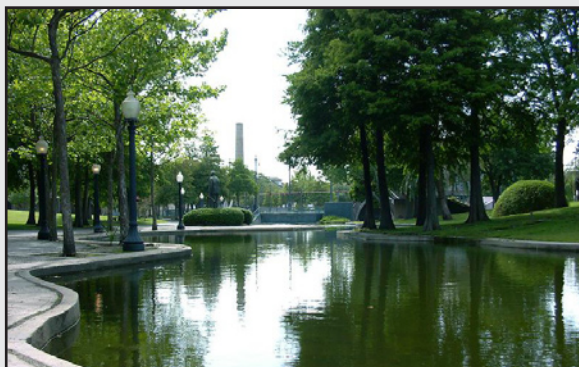
RIGHTS

Every neighborhood has the right...

To access to nearby public parks.

To a diversity of recreation facilities to accommodate different age groups and interests..

NEIGHBORHOOD



To both natural parks and athletic facilities.

To allow landscape to properly drain and absorb water.

To allow community members to adopt unused land for community gardens and parks.

To participate in city plans for vacant and destroyed lots.

Katrina did enormous damage to the parks and recreation resources of New Orleans neighborhoods. ACORN recognizes that parks, recreational areas, and shared community spaces are critical for residents wanting to recover, reconnect, and rebuild their neighborhoods.

PARKS & RECREATION

CURRENT SITUATION

Five of the 16 citywide pools operated by the recreation department before Katrina should be open in summer 2006 (Source: The Times-Picayune, Thursday, June 29, 2006).

Free summer recreation programs for youth are extremely limited.

The Riverfront Plan has been passed and includes plans to build new parks along the river.

ACORN RECOMMENDATIONS

Neighborhoods with space for recreation are integral to both the physical and mental health of a community, especially the children.

A proper recreation facility should forge a partnership with local schools to incorporate educational aspects into the parks, such as science based activities where children are able to learn about nature, biology, and zoology.

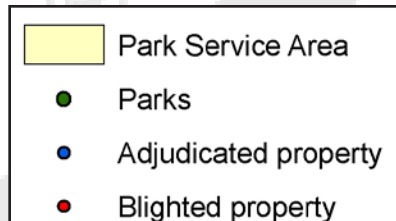
UPPER 9th WARD PARK SERVICE AREA, POST-KATRINA

"Every neighborhood should have safe parks, community centers, and recreation facilities."

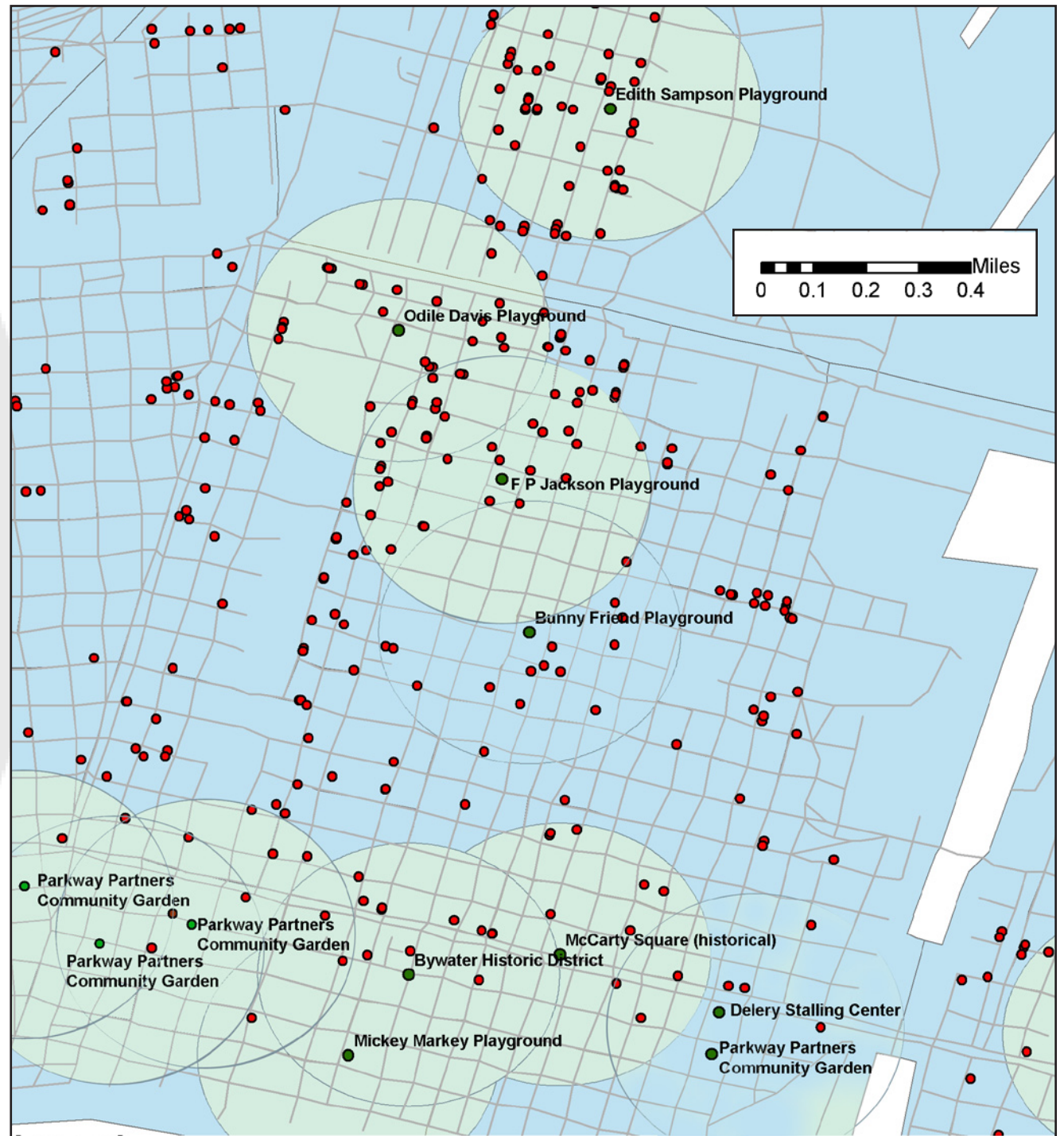
- ACORN member
ACORN National Convention
in Ohio, July 9, 2006



LEGEND



Source: Regional Planning Commission for Jefferson, Orleans, Plaquemines, St. Bernard and St. Tammany Parishes.



RIGHTS

Every resident has the right...

To public transportation that will assist them in returning to New Orleans to work and rebuild.

To take public transit in case of evacuation, especially the disabled, elderly, and residents without access to a private automobile.

To have public transit services in New Orleans that serve the public and adapt to the city's growing population.

To better sidewalks and bicycle routes to reduce toxic emissions.

To public transit that will provide equal access to all residents.

CITY



The public transit system in New Orleans is overseen by the New Orleans Regional Transit Authority (NORTA) and currently funded by FEMA (funding will expire on November 30, 2006). It is comprised of 28 bus lines and one operating streetcar line. The NORTA must reconcile its budget and staff issues by that time in order to deliver even minimal service to New Orleans and the surrounding parishes. The regional transit system is a critical component of equitable recovery. To make New Orleans a place where all residents have the opportunity to return, a means must exist for the residents to commute to their jobs and travel within the city.

TRANSPORTATION

CURRENT SITUATION

Displaced New Orleanians living in Baton Rouge have free access to the LA SWIFT bus service, which is funded by FEMA and has been extended through November.

Southern Rapid Rail Transit Committee proposed a semi-permanent rail shuttle service from Baton Rouge to New Orleans.

Negotiations between the state government and AMTRAK are pending for use of trains in the event of an evacuation.

ACORN RECOMMENDATIONS

The short- and long-term benefits of a light rail system must be carefully examined, as fixed rail stations will not be flexible for long-term recovery.

Bus systems, which remain the most flexible option for route changes and present the cheapest operational costs for public transportation, must be strengthened.

Because many residents of New Orleans do not have access to an automobile, public transportation is one of the main links in the cycle of recovery and must be treated accordingly.

As residential patterns shift, the public transportation routes must remain flexible in order to service all neighborhoods as they repopulate.

Biking and walking trails should be provided between neighborhoods that will create opportunities for exercise and social interaction.

Street lighting must be provided to encourage street activity to create a safer environment for all.

"People want to know [there will be bus service] before they come back. They're not going to come back and hope there will be service."

- Connie Goodly, Regional Transit Authority Board Member
commenting on proposed cuts in service
and staff after the FEMA funding ends
The Times-Picayune, June 17, 2006



St. Charles Trolley Photo
from www.heritagetrolley.org



“Providing medical care is one of the most daunting challenges for New Orleans as it rebuilds.”

- Ceci Connolly
New Orleans Health Care:
Another Katrina Casualty
Washington Post October 25, 2005

RIGHTS

Every resident of New Orleans has the right...

To affordable, high-quality health care regardless of income, race, or age.

To affordable medical insurance coverage.

To medical facilities in close proximity to their homes.

CITY



Of the 22 hospitals operating in Orleans Parish before Katrina, only 8 are currently in operation, leaving residents with one-third of their health facilities (Source: Louisiana Hospital Association).

Emergency rooms, overburdened before Katrina, are now many residents' primary source of health care. The major public facility, Charity Hospital, that served the uninsured and underinsured, is closed with no plans to be reopened in the near future.

Before Katrina, 26% of adults and 7% of children living in New Orleans did not have health insurance, and those figures have risen since the storm due to unemployment and lost income (Source: LSU Public Policy Research Lab for the LA Department of Health and Hospitals).

HEALTHCARE & PUBLIC HEALTH

ACORN RECOMMENDATIONS

New medical care facilities should include a system of small, neighborhood clinics connected to the rebuilt Charity Hospital system.

Medical care facilities should be located throughout the city based on pre-Katrina neighborhood populations, and should be built in communities even before all residents have returned.

The state should reform the Medicaid program to provide universal healthcare.

The state should supplement Medicaid with subsidized health insurance so that low-income citizens who do not qualify for Medicaid can still be covered.

Redirect Federal Medicaid and Medicare Disproportionate Share (DSH) payments towards more outpatient care facilities.

Industrial pockets in residential communities should be removed to non-residential areas. Storage areas for toxins should be moved from all residential areas including wharves, railroad properties, etc. to areas that are far from people.

HOW ACORN IS HELPING

Prior to Hurricane Katrina, many residents were greatly underserved by the city's hospitals and clinics. Since the first days of flooding, New Orleans residents have struggled even more to gain access to medical attention.

In our effort to heal, recover, and rebuild, ACORN members have advocated at every level of government for a network of medical care facilities and public health policies that improve the care all New Orleanians receive, especially those most vulnerable.

Hospital use by ownership status	US (%)	LA (%)
<i>Total admissions per 1,000 population</i>	119	154
State and local government	13	32
Not for profit	74	42
Investor owned	13	26
<i>Emergency room visits per 1,000 population</i>	382	556
State and local government	16	45
Not for profit	71	30
Investor owned	13	26
<i>In-patient visits per 1,000 population</i>	676	861
State and local government	16	31
Not for profit	72	41
Investor owned	12	28
<i>Out-patient visits per 1,000 population</i>	1,937	2,409
State and local government	17	36
Not for profit	75	45
Investor owned	8	18

Source: 2004 Area Resource File; 2005 AHA Hospital Statistics; Kaiser Family Foundation State Health Facts. As cited in "Initial Health Policy Responses to Hurricane Katrina and Possible Next Steps" by Stephen Zuckerman and Teresa Coughlin in *After Katrina: Rebuilding Opportunity and Equity into the New New Orleans*, eds. Turner, Margery Austin and Sheila R. Zedlewski. April 2006. The Urban Institute.



PLANNING FOR A HEALTHY CITY.



NEXT STEPS FOR ACORN

This is intended to be a learning document, summarizing the status quo and offering our recommendations for rebuilding a better New Orleans. In the coming weeks, we plan to survey our members for additional feedback, and then use this critical information as the basis for our next steps.

We have outlined some of the next steps already underway, and we welcome your comments.

NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING

ACORN Housing (AHC), with its university partners, Cornell University, Pratt Institute, New Jersey Institute of Technology (NJIT), and Louisiana State University (LSU), has been designated one of five district planners for the City of New Orleans through the Rockefeller Foundation grant.

ACORN will hold a Community Forum at Southern University in Baton Rouge to provide displaced residents living in Baton Rouge with critical information on how to return to New Orleans. It will also be an opportunity to gather community input and to report to members on the progress of the ACORN Planning Team.

HOUSING AND FINANCE COUNSELING

Revolving Loan Fund

AHC will create a Loan Pool/Revolving Loan Fund to provide at least \$10 million in bridge loans for homeowners wanting to rebuild their homes while waiting for other sources of funding.

Design Book

AHC is creating a book with usable plans for homeowners of various types of homes including Creole cottage, single shotgun, double cottage, and ranch. Professional architects will be available for consultation.

Mobile Technical Assistance Program

AHC is working with LSU to create a Mobile Repair Van, targeting displaced female heads of household in the 9th Ward to teach them to repair and renovate their homes. With the help of two trained interns and a van equipped with tools, women can teach women

24 do-it-yourself home repairs.



DEVELOPING HOUSING

Redeveloping Properties Abandoned Pre-Katrina

AHC has submitted a proposal to develop affordable housing on 250 adjudicated properties (properties that are tax-delinquent for at least three years) in the Lower 9th Ward and New Orleans East.

Rehabilitation of Historical Units in Lower 9th Ward

AHC, in a partnership with the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the Preservation Resource Center, will rehabilitate two affordable historic single homes with a possibility of five additional homes.

Model Housing Design in New Orleans East and Lower 9th Ward

AHC in partnership with LSU will train 20 local workers to build two affordable homes in 30-45 days.

Model Housing Cluster in New Orleans East

AHC in partnership with Pratt Institute and NJIT will help New Orleans East homeowners find good contractors, financial resources, and provide design and engineering help for a housing style that fits each family's needs by rebuilding homes in small groups.

Green Buildings

AHC will experiment with environmentally friendly building materials and alternate energy sources.

Identifying Reputable Contractors

AHC will work with residents to identify reputable contractors who can assist them with rebuilding their homes.



FAMILY



NEIGHBORHOOD



CITY





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