

A note to the reader

In response to the devastating impact of Hurricane Katrina, the Unified New Orleans Plan (UNOP) took shape as one of the most intensive grassroots city-wide planning initiatives ever undertaken for a great American city. Across New Orleans, thousands of “citizen planners” worked with planning teams to become authors of their city’s future, contributing a rich and nuanced understanding of the needs and aspirations that should drive recovery. Planners drew on this inspiration to create frameworks for each of the city’s districts and to contribute to the formation of a citywide plan.

No national media coverage has succeeded in conveying the breadth or depth of the human and physical tragedy unleashed when the levees failed in New Orleans. The toll is easy to see in the faces of residents—many of whom have not been able to return to their homes. Yet the city’s trial has come at a time of remarkable urban renaissance across America, where neighborhoods both within and outside urban centers have begun to emerge from decades of disinvestment. For New Orleans this reversal of fortunes brings with it an opportunity to address long-term challenges and to build a city of unmatched livability and economic opportunity.

Achieving this promise will demand more of the immense courage and commitment of people who have already contributed so much to rebuilding their city. Further struggle and choices lie ahead—perhaps none more essential than forging a new partnership among government, the private sector, institutions, and the community. This era of opportunity holds particular promise for District 1—for the downtown as a whole and for each of its distinctive neighborhoods and subdistricts. Years of careful stewardship have preserved a place that is uniquely rich in historic and cultural amenities. These assets can now pay rich dividends for downtown and the entire city: a vital Medical District and a growing creative economy, significant residential growth, more inviting public spaces, expanded support for regional transit, a flourishing cultural economy, and other benefits that stem from a community that values a commitment to preservation and a spirit of innovation.

Existing view



Future view of the proposed “Theater District” at the Canal-Rampart intersection, showing restored Saenger, State Palace, and Joy theaters.