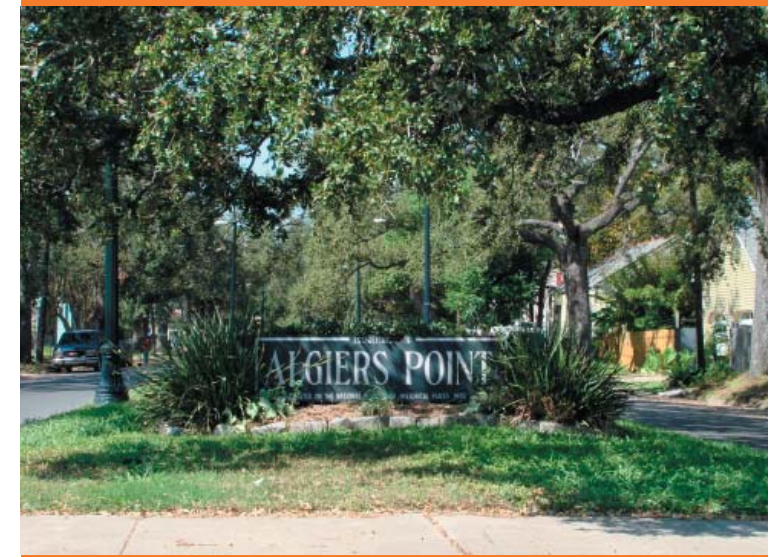


“Ultimately continued citizen involvement and advocacy will be the main determinant in successful funding and implementation. Elected officials need citizen advice and support in prioritizing additional funding requests and effective implementation strategies.”

--UNOP Website FAQs



7.1 DISTRICT IMPLEMENTATION THROUGH THE CITYWIDE PLAN

Under the UNOP planning process two different plans have been developed, the District Plans and the “Citywide Recovery and Rebuilding Plan” (Citywide Plan). The Citywide Plan will be submitted to the City Planning Commission, the City Council and the Mayor for formal approval. Following this process, it will be submitted to the Louisiana Recovery Authority to be incorporated into the State’s overall recovery planning and project funding efforts. The Citywide Plan will be an action-oriented document, primarily focused on infrastructure projects designed to hasten the recovery of the City, guide public investment decisions and stimulate private investment. Every recovery project that is identified within the District Plans will also be incorporated into the Citywide Plan and will, therefore, be considered by the LRA as a potential recovery project.

In order for the recommended projects resulting from the UNOP process for District 12 to be as effective as possible they will require changes to various City plans, ordinances and policies. These may include the City’s Master Plan, Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance, building codes and capital improvements program. There are other recommended projects that will require little or no regulatory changes but will require modifications to existing program guidelines, e.g. disposition of adjudicated properties as a resource for increasing homeownership and the role of community-based organizations in the neighborhood development process. Other implementation issues and recommendations beyond the District level will be further articulated in the Citywide Recovery and Rebuilding Plan, which will be made available to the public via the Internet and local community resource facilities identified for each district.

7.2 NEXT STEPS TO MOVING THE PLAN FORWARD

The UNOP plans and suggested projects, both District and Citywide, have been prepared to be a user-friendly reference guide for short-, medium- and long-term recovery oversight and implementation by the City’s new Office of Recovery Management. This office, under the direction of Dr. Edward Blakely, the city’s new recovery manager, will now coordinate recovery management for all City agencies as well

as all other local, state and federal agencies involved in recovery. Mr. Blakely recently outlined his five point recovery strategy for the City of New Orleans at a Neighborhood Rebuilding Plan leadership meeting held at St. Maria Goretti Church in New Orleans East (District 9) on January 13, 2007. His top five action strategies include: (Source: www.nolanrp.com)

“Healing and Consultation – Build a comprehensive program that engages residents and resources in the recovery process and sustains community participation in shaping the future development of the City, Parish and Region.”

“Physical and Emotional Security - Reduce physical and emotional threats to personal security and re-establish basic human health and educational services that enhance emotional and social quality of life in the city for all residents in all locations.”

“Infrastructure Reconfiguration for the 21st and 22nd Centuries - Use the recovery process as the opportunity to design and develop leading edge physical and social infrastructures in order to make the city competitive globally.”

“Diversify The City And Regional Economic Base - Develop a new, diverse economy that strengthens and augments the traditional economic base of culture, tourism, and natural resources with a strong focus on international trade, digital media and production, health systems and preventative health management. The goal of this diversification is the repositioning of New Orleans as the gateway for international trade with South America, Sub-Saharan Africa, and the Caribbean trade zones.”

“Develop a Safe, Secure, and Environmentally Sustainable Settlement Pattern - Ensure that the residential and commercial rebuilding and resettlement plan improves community physical land use hazard security while meeting the challenges of global climate change, environmental justice, and community sustainability (economic, social, and physical).”

The immediate implementation of each of these strategies will now provide the umbrella framework needed for carrying the UNOP

plans and supporting projects forward in an organized and efficient manner. The District 12 Recovery Plan and supporting projects align with the strategies set forth by Dr. Blakely, setting the tone for the City’s Recovery Management Office and other agencies to follow through as recovery implementation proceeds.

The District Plan becomes a Mandatory Reference Tool

The District 12 UNOP Plan and supporting projects will be referenced in a number of ways by a number of different groups. First and foremost, they will be a required reference tool for elected officials, such as the Mayor, City Council and special City Council Recovery Committee, as they make daily recovery investment decisions. Second, they will be used as a guide by all public agencies currently involved in recovery such as the school district, utilities commissions and public works department to name a few. Third, the plans will be a guide for the City Planning Commission in future planning and review of development projects and related updates to the City’s Master Plan and Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance. In addition, the District plans will endure as a formal record of the Community’s will and vision for building a safer, smarter and stronger Algiers community and New Orleans. It is important that public officials embrace the use of the plan as a mandatory reference tool. Public input into the development decisions should be formally sought and evaluated against the recovery framework established by the UNOP Plan.

District Plan Report Card Assessments

The District 12 recovery will be an incremental process occurring over the next five to ten years depending on funding, phasing and resources available to the Parish. In order to properly document the recovery progress over this period, there will be a need to create a formalized “report card” process established for each District. The District plans and matrices can be used as a checklist for monitoring and reporting recovery progress and fulfillment of community needs, goals and vision. These “Report Card” assessments should be conducted every six months minimum with a public “State-of-the-District” address to the Algiers Community highlighting project/program successes, changes, challenges and new action items. It

is assumed that a comparable “State-of-the-City” address would also be conducted around the same time period for overall context. In addition, there should be a formal monthly meeting established between the District Council person and the Steering Committee established during the UNOP planning process. The purpose of the meeting would be identify issues and concerns that may impede project implementation on an ongoing basis rather than wait 6 months to assess progress.

District Plan Updates

Given that the District Recovery Plans have been forecasted for the next five to ten years, any number and combination of economic, political and environmental conditions may change over that time period. In response, the Recovery Plans must endure but remain flexible to adapt to changing conditions as New Orleans gradually and steadily gains its strength and stature back in the local, regional, national and international arenas. To best facilitate and keep pace with change, the District Plans should be monitored, revisited and updated annually over the next five years and semi-annually for another five year period. As a national average, municipalities typically reassess their community plans every five to seven years as change is generally slower paced. Hopefully in New Orleans, the pace of change will be much more rapid and require a more frequent assessment update to reinforce the “building smarter, safer stronger” aspects of the UNOP theme.

The District Plan Leveraged as a Fund Raising and Neighborhood Planning Tool

The District plans should also be used to attract additional funding: private, non-profit, and foundation support on a local regional and national level. District 12 is fortunate to have some well-formed organizations, such as the Neighborhood President’s Council, The Algiers Group and The Algiers Economic Development Foundation, that can help to communicate the district vision for rebuilding and community enhancement. The District plans should also serve to build consensus on approaches to implementing priority projects, provide baseline information needed to apply for project funding support, and to guide neighborhood councils, community development

corporations (CDC's), and other community organizations to self administer their own recovery.

Internal vs. External Competition for Funding

It is important to note that there are a large number of proposed initiatives suggested across all of the UNOP Planning Districts, all of which are competing for attention and funding, much like Orleans Parish is competing for funding with other Parishes and States that were devastated by Hurricane Katrina. As the recovery effort continues to move forward it is important for the citizens of Algiers and all other Districts to maintain respect and support for each others needs, goals and visions in creating one unified New Orleans again. Parochial values and the promotion of self-serving agendas should be set aside in favor of advancing the common good of the City as a whole, with careful attention given to all Districts benefiting equitably from the recovery efforts and funding.

7.3 GRASSROOTS APPROACH TO DISTRICT IMPROVEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

Each of the District Steering Committees members takes great pride in many aspects of their community. They demonstrated this pride through their participation in a series of neighborhood and District-wide meetings and a strong willingness to participate in activities designed to rebuild, maintain, and improve the community. Their participation displayed ingenuity, and in a brief amount of time established a number of important priority projects, programs, and initiatives for their community. Most of the participants are active community leaders in their neighborhoods and are engaged in neighborhood improvement activities. Given their connections and existing networks, there exists a great opportunity for citizen mobilization and collaboration for long-range recovery and rebuilding. For some who were involved in the UNOP process, these meetings provided a place to meet and share ideas with others who have the same goals, if not always the same approach.

All of these leaders share a common vision for their respective Districts: recovery to a pre-Katrina level, revitalization that generates a safe family-friendly community and builds in safeguards to make

their communities safer and stronger in the event of another catastrophic hurricane. These goals can be more readily achieved when community leaders collaborate with each other to address common community concerns as well as support each other's vision.

Three key themes emerged as a way to build on the Grassroots community capacity that surfaced through the UNOP process:

Getting Organized - Organize a District Recovery Plan Community Structure – This could evolve out of the Steering Committee or Sounding Board process. Equal representation should be sought from all interest groups with a stake in the District's recovery. During the community meetings residents made several suggestions for organizing themselves at the neighborhood, district and city-wide levels. They also offered suggestions for community improvement beyond recovery projects or ideas incorporated into UNOP. It is important that the momentum created through this planning process be built on as a catalyst for maintaining grassroots public involvement.

Unified Advocacy - Develop a Strong Advocacy for Basic Needs and Services – The "squeaky wheel gets the grease philosophy." Encourage unified buy-in and support for the recovery plan. This approach entails being unified in the District's approach to requesting funding, labor, materials, and housing assistance. As the District-wide planning and implementation process moves forward, residents groups will be pushing for funding for potential projects contained within the Plan. If local government is able to determine that there is unified advocacy they are more likely to identify resources to support these ideas. A collaborative approach will ignite further resident interest in community development and the District plan.

Community Clean-up and Safety - At the district and neighborhood level, efforts can be made to address cleanliness and safety within the district. Citizens are motivated by common self-interest. Clean and safe neighborhoods are interests that connect all residents and appeals to their self interest. If city government is able to support and encourage residents' ideas for neighborhood improvements within and beyond UNOP, the city government will be linking neighborhood

conditions to citizens' motivation to act. This will increase chances of attracting more community leaders to the neighborhood group and engaging them in neighborhood development while strengthening their capacity to contribute.

7.4 CONCLUSION

It is clear that the impacts of Hurricane Katrina on District 12 were catastrophic and will be felt for many years. The premise of the Unified New Orleans Plan is that this district can be replanned and rebuilt safer, smarter and stronger. The key to the success of UNOP will be the provision of adequate funding for these plans and the continued active participation of district residents. Without a partnership between government and citizens, the recovery's pace and impact will be severely hampered and could stall. The continued active involvement of the community's residents will be essential to moving the process forward.

The UNOP process has provided a framework for intensive community interaction in which recovery strategies and community improvement projects were initiated, developed, debated and prioritized. Public outreach and involvement was critical to the process and brought the community's wisdom and opinions into every step of the work. Steering Committees were formed and mobilized to meet regularly to express a wide variety of concerns and provide ideas, strategies and approaches. They became a direct conduit to the greater community and helped facilitate neighborhood outreach both directly and indirectly. This process was useful in itself to help mobilize and unify the various district organizations and the overall community.

The goal of the Unified New Orleans Plan is to set the framework for decisions as part of the overall Citywide Recovery Plan. The intent of this District plan is to represent and record the sentiments and desires of the community. The plan will also communicate recovery strategies and projects in a succinct way to the Citywide team as well as to public officials and decision makers. We fervently hope that this document will be useful in the process of swiftly moving the City's recovery ahead.

