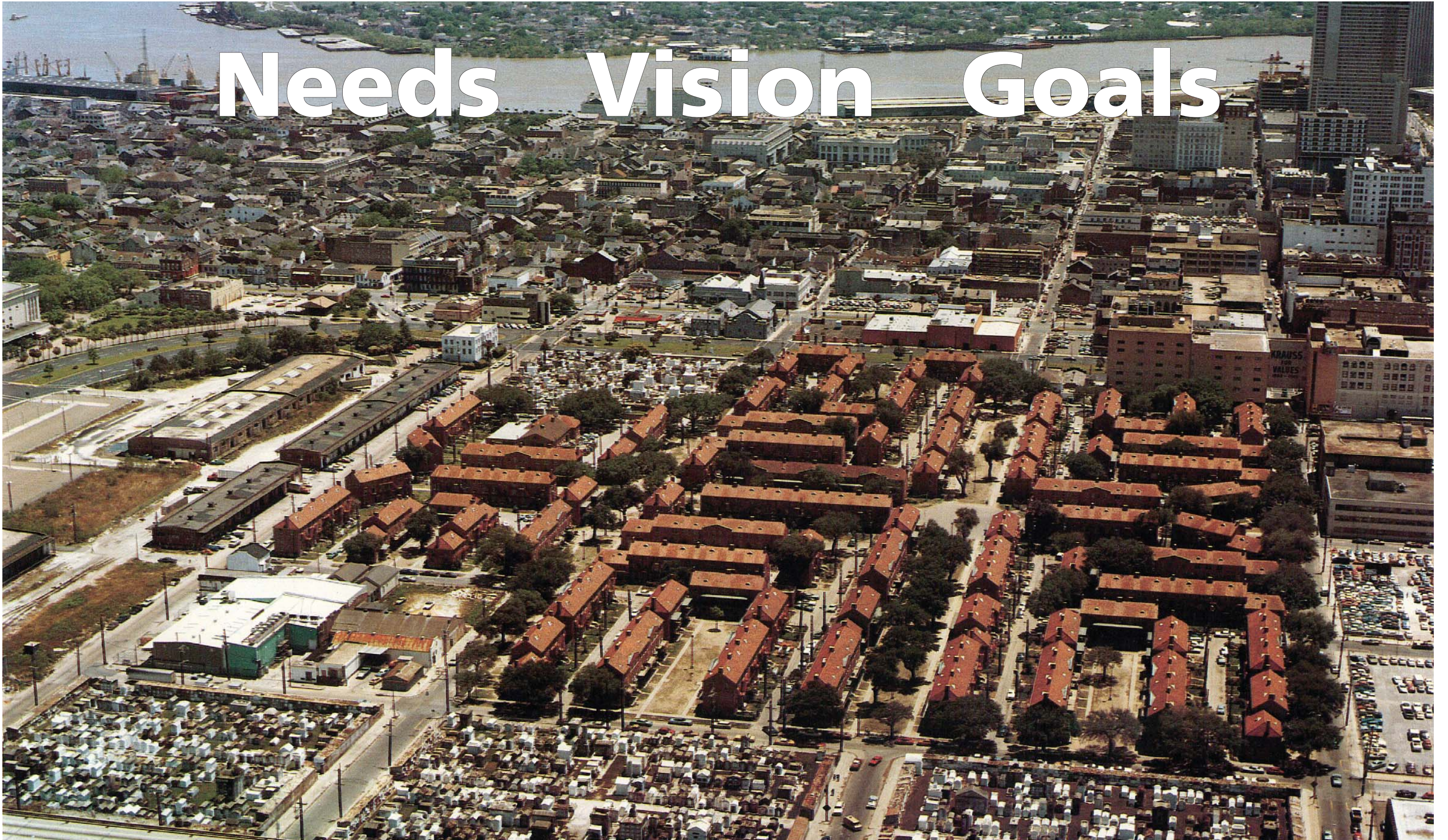


# Needs Vision Goals





*This Recovery Plan represents the needs, visions and goals of the citizens of District 4 who have participated in over 60 public meetings since September 2006. It is a ground-up, self-determined, people's participatory plan for the future built on consensus, transparency and inclusiveness. For their tireless participation and dedication, we thank the hundreds who helped us with our work.*

The specific and general district Needs, Vision and Goals were developed from weekly individual sector meetings, a joint sector steering committee meeting (representing 11 officially mapped neighborhoods and other neighborhood associations) and District-wide Meeting #1. The following incorporates the overlapping needs, visions, goals and ideas gathered from many meetings in the homes and on the front porches of neighborhood leaders, phone calls with citizens, a constant stream of emails, and the plans, documents and newsletters provided to us by the following neighborhood associations: Gert Town Enterprise Economic Development Corporation, Friends of Lafitte Corridor, Mid City Neighborhood Association, Urban Open Space Foundation and the Faubourg Saint John Association, among others.

### Sector Steering Committees

In order to organize, expedite and facilitate the exchange of information, four steering committees of adjacent neighborhoods were formed at the first District-Wide Meeting on October 14th. These committees are composed of approximately 75 self-appointed neighborhood representatives that gave their valuable time. To assess recovery needs, planning teams facilitated discussions with steering committee members on current, neighborhood conditions of housing, education, healthcare and other community facilities, economic development, public safety, historic preservation, transportation and transit, infrastructure and city services and

flood protection. During steering committee meetings, needs were prioritized based on short and long-term perspectives (see also Appendix). Fundamental points of view recorded in the meeting minutes served as a foundation for our district and neighborhood "ground-up" understanding of the citizen's needs, vision and goals. The four sectors were geographically organized as follows:

#### Sector A led by HOK & Schwartz Architects

- Gert Town
- Zion City
- B.W. Cooper

#### Sector B led by HOK & Schwartz Architects

- Mid City
- Tulane / Gravier

#### Sector C led by Wayne Troyer Architect

- St. Bernard
- Fairgrounds
- Bayou St. John

#### Sector D led by Eskew+Dumez+Ripple

- Treme / Lafitte / 6<sup>th</sup> Ward
- 7<sup>th</sup> Ward
- Iberville



District needs are divided into short-term and long-term categories and focus primarily on physical recovery needs and the physical characteristics of the District. Short-term needs are those critical to immediate recovery while long-term needs are those issues critical to a more sustainable future and a better quality of life in the District. Both short-term and long-term needs should be prioritized.

## Prioritization of Needs

With the exception of properties located along the Esplanade Ridge and Bayou St. John, the entire district endured flooding caused by Hurricane Katrina. Due to extensive flood impacts to the district, neighborhoods underwent previous planning activities mandated by New Orleans City Council, including the Lambert Planning process. Unique to this district is the existence of four public housing developments – St. Bernard, Iberville, B.W. Cooper, Lafitte – in varied condition but all slated by the Housing Authority of New Orleans (HANO) and HUD to be demolished. Despite HUD/HANO’s plans, the citizens of this district have specific and greatly varying viewpoints about how to best restore and/or redevelop these areas in concert with the adjacent neighborhoods.

Short term or high priority needs address problems related to providing opportunities for pre-Katrina residents who want to return but are unable due to New Orleans’ fragile condition, maintaining neighborhood cultural and historical integrity and establishing public safety. Much of the district’s rental and affordable housing has not been restored, creating limitations for lower income people who want to return. This population also needs medical services, jobs and job training, small business assistance, child care, improved bus routes and bike lanes. Concerns impacting the ability of some to return to the city include gentrification due to redevelopment ventures. Activities like these tend to push low income homeowners and renters out of the market. Steering committee members discussed public housing strategies including establishing a two-year transitional program that includes job training. Discussions also reiterated the need to consider salvaging the more historic and intact public housing buildings, particularly Lafitte.

Maintaining neighborhood character relies upon not only restoring the built environment but also preserving specific components. Neighborhoods like DeSaix want to remain mostly single-family residential, while

some St. Bernard representatives want to retain the older multiple-family structures from the public housing development. Many significant African American cultural sites located in the district need to be preserved. New construction sometimes does not fit the neighborhood fabric in scale or design. Demolition of historic structures and property buyouts for larger parcel development are a grave threat to the community’s legacy and integrity.

Public safety problems include flooding, hazard mitigation, poor drainage, increased theft and less police, illegal dumping and accumulation of debris, no gas service in some areas, unsafe streets and sidewalks for driving, biking and walking, lack of access to medical facilities, and poor educational conditions both physical and academic. Unsafe neighboring land uses such as Gert Town residential properties sharing space with a cement-mixing plant and potential remediation at Hunter’s Field in the Treme are needs associated with addressing and correcting current and future hazards. Utilizing sustainable rebuilding materials and practices was suggested to help minimize future impacts due to flooding and wind events.

Improving the quality of life for current and future citizens are long term or lower priority needs, but essential to full scale recovery from both Hurricane Katrina and previous years of neglect. Quality of life issues include integrating a sustainable infrastructure with the urban fabric, providing elder care and senior services, constructing a library and improving and increasing neighborhood park space. Construction of a senior center was suggested on Miro Street between Tulane Avenue and Iberville Street. Bayou St. John and Mid-City residents fully support the Lafitte Corridor Project, linking an underutilized stretch of green space from the center of the city to downtown with a bikeway.

## Short Term Needs

- Layered hurricane protection and levee strengthening
- Wetland restoration including closing the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet
- Emergency evacuation plan
- Infrastructure repair including pumping station and drainage capacity
- Regular storm drain cleaning
- Utility repair and restoration
- Regular waste collection and grass cutting
- Debris removal from structural gutting
- Street, curb, and sidewalk repairs
- Street signs and functioning signals
- Improved bus system and street car lines
- Housing repair and restoration
- Building code enforcement and guidance to preserve historic character
- Affordable housing programs including senior housing
- Reestablishment of commercial services
- Range of employment options, from light industrial jobs to small business retail
- Improved relationships with key institutions and industries
- More social services (public schools, health clinic, child and senior care, medical services)
- Public schools achieving academic excellence
- Rebuilding trades-focused high schools
- Safety signage, lighting and security around industrial and infrastructure zones
- Improved oversight, regulation and remediation of environmental contamination sites
- Stop crime and increase police patrols
- Stop drug dealing

## Long Term Needs

- Flood protection system
- Public safety improvements including centrally located fire and police stations
- Relocation, rezoning and buffering of areas where residential uses abut industrial uses
- Utility system improvements and maintenance including prevention of energy rate increases and possible burial of utilities or alternative installation sites, such as rear yards
- Historic preservation oversight
- Restructure access to isolated neighborhoods
- Bicycle lanes and paths (support City Planning Commission Transportation Plan)
- Alternative public transit, regional, light rail
- Improved pedestrian & automobile circulation
- Recycling programs
- Job training center
- Small business development and assistance
- Regulatory zoning overlays for commercial corridors
- Community facilities including libraries, community and recovery centers
- Parks and open space repair and improvement for active and passive recreation
- Neighborhood gateways/identification
- Replanting and beautification programs
- Restore library system
- Signage: provide consistent transportation and cultural signage
- Stop crime and drug dealing

## Vision Statement

At neighborhood, steering committee, sector-wide and district-wide meetings, we have heard countless voices with visions for their neighborhoods and for their city.

### Mid City and Tulane / Gravier proposed the following Vision Statement:

*“Mid City and Tulane / Gravier are both at the geographic center of New Orleans and in the heart of the city. These neighborhoods are characterized by large stocks of historic residential fabric, many of New Orleans’ most significant institutions of education, health, transportation and law, and prominent urban corridors. Housing opportunities, strengthened institutions, commercial revitalization, and economic development can serve as mutually supportive engines for rebuilding in ways that offer high quality of life for people of all races and backgrounds. The recovery of Mid City and Tulane / Gravier should embrace pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly planning practices, encourage mixed-use development where appropriate, and support policies that both foster home-ownership and respect the needs of renters. Overall, the recovery effort should be equitable, humane, and democratically controlled at the neighborhood level.”*

### 7<sup>th</sup> Ward, Lafitte, 6<sup>th</sup> Ward, Treme, Iberville agreed to a Vision Statement for their community:

*“A clean, functional, and vibrant community that values its historic roots, is visually pleasing, and is safe in terms of both the physical and social environment.”*

The neighborhoods of planning District 4 will have a vision of a vibrant, diverse and renewed physical environment that is beautiful, inspiring and gracious. The reconstruction and restoration will be

accomplished using sound principles of planning and urban design to re-generate the highest quality civic realm. Restoring the traditional housing fabric and using crime prevention design techniques will further advance the quality of life resulting in a district attractive to investment. A diverse, sustainable and affordable stock of housing with adequate services is essential to the district’s and city’s recovery.

The district vision celebrates New Orleans’ rich and diverse neighborhood history, integrating it with the Parish’s unique role as one of the world’s great cities. This will be accomplished by planning rooted in the redevelopment of the traditional urban fabric and architectural legacy that makes New Orleans unique and beautiful. This will only be accomplished by major investment in establishing a state-of-the art approach to sustainable infrastructural and environmental concerns.

The district will be composed of neighborhoods served by improved transportation and open space networks – a diverse system of many different levels and sizes. The transportation and open space systems will involve connectivity at the level of the neighborhood, the district, the Parish and the region – for all citizens, young and old, able bodied and not, and at all economic levels.

The district’s neighborhoods will enjoy improvements that will enhance the quality of life by the most advanced environmental design methods and “best practices” that help the streets and other public spaces have higher levels of safety. The district’s vision is to promote a national model of education, health, safety and welfare by demonstrating a far, overarching sustainable vision. Once a comprehensive recovery and strategic redevelopment plan is in place it will help potential investors that have confidence in the future of the neighborhoods, district and the Crescent City.

## A Vision of Voices

We heard a hundred voices from residents across the district during our months of planning.

*Our vision requires investment in the restoration of our barrier wetlands and repair of all levees, pumps and protection systems not just in our district but in the entire Parish so we “don’t have to worry anymore and can get on with our lives.”*

*Our vision is for the best school system in the nation – why not? – so people will move here just for that fact alone.*

*Our vision is for the clearing of all blighted and abandoned properties by the government now “with anymore damn delays – that year is up sir.”*

*Our vision is for main streets, avenues and boulevards to be lined with majestic live oaks as they were during our glory days – plant 300,000 live oaks by 2018 the 300th Anniversary of New Orleans.*

*Our vision is for a single levee board that treats all five basins as equals throughout our Parish and one single elected assessment board.*

*Our vision is for flourishing neighborhood retail centers that we can walk to from our homes.*

*Our vision is for economic empowerment zones with triple-free taxes for small business owners to jump start the local economy.*

*Our vision is of new streets and sidewalks with proper curbs with no potholes: “Why can’t we get rid of those damn potholes on my street?”*

*Our vision is for parks to be cleaned of all their toxic soils, with new benches, playground equipment and grass and trees, with new lighting and afternoon and evening supervisors to provide jobs and security.*

*Our vision is for neighbors and neighborhoods to walk across the neutral ground and embrace their brothers and sisters in a new era of respect.*

*Our vision is to not only preserve the unique architectural heritage of our neighborhoods but to promote their cultural richness through historic district improvement guidelines, programs and festivals.*

*Our vision is for school and after-school programs that teach respect for our elderly by our youth and respect of our young people by our elders.*

*Our vision is for the right of every single public housing resident to return to their own neighborhood, to safe, affordable, sustainable, quality housing.*

*Our vision is for neighborhoods free of crime so “I can go walk my dog at night.”*

*Our vision us for neighborhoods to have a real say in their future with Neighborhood Councils – elected and run by the citizens with the power to make recommendations to City Council and City Planning. (modeled after New York City Community Boards).*

## Prioritization of Goals

Community needs and vision provide the basis for prioritizing District 4 goals by identifying problems and issues that must be addressed in the short and long term and establishing a vision to guide future decisions. Goals in District 4 were prioritized based on implementing a comprehensive approach to renewal and preservation. Renewing the district may be attained by upgrading infrastructure, correcting environmental hazards, improving transportation networks, addressing safety and providing models of affordable housing, public education and health care. District-wide preservation is represented by maintaining human diversity and promoting a mix of architectural styles. The community identified short-term goals that concentrate on safety, improving investment, establishing green corridors and providing equal access to housing, education and health care.

Safety issues include avoiding future flooding, but also address environmentally hazardous sites. Thompson Hayward, located in Gert Town has just started remediation after years of negative impacts to the neighborhood. Safety is also defined by keeping crime rates down. One idea suggested by citizens is to place security cameras in high crime areas.

Most recovery and improvement goals are impacted by economic development possibilities. There are several commercial corridors that present a variety of business investment opportunities. Tulane Avenue features ample-sized parcels offering potential for larger-scale commercial development. Oak and Freret streets are smaller streets with neighborhood businesses set on the sidewalk for easy pedestrian access. Residents are interested in maintaining this scale.

The Lafitte Corridor is a project founded by the community to transform a mostly industrial railway into a green space that stretches from Bayou St. John to Rampart Street in the French Quarter. Implementing projects like this one will satisfy the goal of providing green corridors and may encourage infill residential and neighborhood commercial development.

Citywide, the population is demanding equal opportunity to quality housing, education and health care. Affordable housing demand is addressed mostly with policy or programs related to reopening, redesigning and/or redeveloping public housing like B.W. Cooper and St. Bernard, and crafting economic incentives to restore rental housing.

District 4 citizens support long-term goals to implement best urban planning and design practices in order to establish a sustainable New Orleans in which to live, learn, work and play. Combining commercial and residential land uses, maximizing community facilities and expanding public transportation modes are methods to help create a long lasting city. In District 4, citizens support mixed land use development along Broad Street as well as bringing back the streetcar line. School buildings whether being utilized or not, are asked to house multiple community needs including public libraries, clinics and playgrounds.

The community intimately understands the problems they face for recovery and improvement. Prioritized goals aid in the identification of actions and projects that will solve community issues. A summary of short and long-term goals follows.

### Short Term Goals

- Implement recovery efforts that are just, humane, and democratically controlled at the neighborhood level.
- Provide hurricane evacuation resources for residents without cars.
- Restore and repair damaged utilities, streets, sidewalks, curbs, and drainage basins timed properly with all other infrastructure needs.
- Provide delivery of regular city services including waste collection, zoning enforcement, emergency medical and police.
- Complete all Katrina-related debris removal.

- Replace missing street signs & broken signals.
- Study elevating low-lying roads including those that run under train trestles.
- Re-establish bus and streetcar routes.
- Increase frequency along bus routes using smaller buses (this also reduces bus weights that impact aging architecture).
- Provide pedestrian amenities including seating, crosswalks and trash receptacles.
- Encourage displaced homeowners from more heavily damaged areas of New Orleans to relocate and redevelop core residential areas in District 4.
- Create affordable neighborhoods with opportunities for home ownership and rentals.
- Create pattern book of methods for infill housing development.
- Promote a clear policy for blighted property redevelopment opportunities.
- Remove impermeable slabs from demolished housing sites and rebuild on piers.
- Restore and renew landscaping along streets and parks.
- Provide incentives and assistance for residents, businesses and institutions to move back into neighborhoods.
- Develop relationships among neighborhoods and surrounding institutions and industries for mutual benefits.
- Encourage sustainable building practices for new development and street improvements such as using permeable materials and reusing salvageable materials.
- Reduce crime by using video cameras in high crime areas.
- Create safe places for children after school.

- Reduce nuisance industry impact through mitigation, remediation or relocation.
- Establish an expanded, accessible and maintained open space network consisting of a variety of green spaces including linear parks like the Lafitte Corridor.
- Preserve historic character of neighborhoods through code enforcement and construction.

### Long Term Goals

- Improve internal flood protection and drainage systems.
- Reconnect neighborhoods through physical and cultural linkages.
- Create safe neighborhoods that encourage walking and biking.
- Modify street grid in neighborhoods that remain isolated.
- Increase transit / transportation linkages to the surrounding city. Expand existing streetcar lines.
- Encourage the development of multiple use, community facilities to provide an efficient use of resources for maximum public benefit.
- Provide one-stop community centers for social and recovery needs.
- Preserve and promote neighborhood cultural histories and contributions.
- Attain Main Street initiative funding.
- Revitalize commercial corridors and light industrial development, attracting business interests that provide neighborhood services, jobs and regional amenities.
- Construct and appropriately locate mixed-use and mixed income developments with locally-owned businesses and residences.
- Preserve, restore and expand tree canopy.