

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST PARISH, LOUISIANA

Community Recovery Strategy

May 2013

One Parish, One Future: Building Back Better and Stronger





One Parish, One Future: Building Back Better and Stronger

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The St. John the Baptist Parish Community Recovery Strategy chronicles the community-driven planning process to provide a blueprint for the future of St. John Parish as it recovers from Hurricane Isaac. The process included numerous committee meetings, workshops and public open house input sessions, as well as consultations with local, state and federal partners. Hundreds of parish residents from impacted neighborhoods, as well as stakeholders and nonprofit/faith-based organization representatives, worked together and shared their ideas on the most important issues facing their community. They formulated these ideas into projects to help the parish rebound from the impacts of the storm, while building resiliency and sustainability.

Community-wide participation resulted in the refinement and prioritization of the scores of projects that make up the heart of this strategy. The enthusiasm and cooperation of St. John's citizens underscore their strong resolve to restore their community, and are embodied in their slogan: "One Parish, One Future: Building Back Better and Stronger." Central to this strategy is an effort to preserve the parish's unique culture while continuing to build upon its strengths, ensuring that St. John will remain a great place to live, work, do business and raise a family.

The Recovery Strategy is a living document that can be amended to fit the community's needs as they develop or change. It should be regarded as a guide for short-term and long-term initiatives to revitalize St. John Parish. The strategy offers a collection of action-oriented projects, on which the entire community can focus, to move St. John forward in the recovery process effectively and expeditiously. Projects that can be completed quickly, have significant public support, and have available funding or other resources for implementation are crucial for early success.

COMMUNITY BACKGROUND

St. John the Baptist Parish, the second permanent settlement in Louisiana, was established by a group of Germans in the early 1720s in a region that became known as "Côte des Allemands," or the "German Coast." Under the leadership of Karl Frederic D'Arensbourg, a settlement named Karlstein, the present-day community of Lucy, was created on the west bank of the Mississippi River. On the east bank, families began farming land in the area now known as Garyville and Reserve. In later years, the grandson of D'Arensbourg, Jacques Villere, was born in Lucy. Villere went on to become the second governor of the state of Louisiana, the first Creole (Louisiana-born) person of pure European descent to hold the office.

The area was under French control until 1766, when France turned over Louisiana to Spain. During this period, the Acadians, or "Cajuns," began arriving in southern Louisiana following their exile from Nova Scotia. The first Acadian settlement was in the area of St. John Parish known today as Wallace. Although the French and German cultures mixed, French became the dominant language and German names were given French translations. For instance, Heidel became Haydel, Ruber became Oubre, and Treagor became Tregre.

Because few roads existed in the early years, transportation often occurred by boat, either on the many bayous and lakes or on the sometimes treacherous Mississippi River. Observation posts, staffed by women, were built along the river in order to keep watch for the few Native Americans who lived in the area. The area's fertile land, at approximately 9 feet above sea level, proved excellent for farming. German farmers planted crops that often fed New Orleans

settlers, who constantly faced famine because European supply ships often failed to arrive. The early St. John settlers paddled their small boats filled with produce to sell at what has now become the famous French Market along the New Orleans riverfront.

In 1807, the territory of Orleans was divided into 12 counties. One of these was the German Coast, which was later divided into 19 parishes. St. John, which received its name from the Catholic parish of St. John the Baptist, was among the 19. The parish seat was established in the village of Lucy, which is still home to the building that served as the first courthouse. In 1848, Edgard became the parish seat.

St. John contains eight communities. On the west bank of the Mississippi stand the towns of Lucy, Edgard and Wallace, as well as much of the parish's abundant agricultural land, the majority of which is sugar cane fields. The east bank is home to LaPlace, Reserve, Lions, Garyville and Mount Airy, each a thriving, bustling community. The parish's industries line the river bank, including a chemical plant, sugar refinery, grain elevators and an oil refinery.

St. John Parish is located between Baton Rouge and New Orleans along the Mississippi River. Lake Maurepas and Pass Manchac form the watery northern border with Livingston and Tangipahoa parishes. Lake Pontchartrain forms the eastern border with St. Charles Parish. Lac Des Allemands forms the southern border with Lafourche Parish. To the west lies St. James Parish.

The Mississippi River divides St. John Parish into two sections, with 70 percent of the land on the east side of the river and the balance on the west bank. The





parish, which comprises 219 square miles of land and 129 square miles of water, is located in the terrace and Mississippi flood plain region of southeast Louisiana.

The southernmost tip of the parish is about 30 miles from the Gulf of Mexico. The parish's average elevation is 15 feet above sea level. In the parish's southern end, wetlands dominate the terrain, which starts at 10 to 15 feet above sea level along the riverbanks and descends to 5 feet as it approaches Lac Des Allemands. On the east bank of the river, the land is comprised of forested wetlands and drains into Lake Pontchartrain.

St. John Parish had a population of 45,924 in 2010, according to U.S. Census data. In 2000, that figure was 43,044, and in 1990, the parish had 39,996 residents.

LAPLACE

Of the eight established communities within St. John Parish, none are incorporated towns or cities; thus, leadership falls under the parish government structure. LaPlace, on the Mississippi River's east bank, is closest to New Orleans and stands between the river and Interstate 10. The community's proximity to the junction of I-10 and I-55, which heads to towns and cities north of Lake Pontchartrain, makes it very attractive to residential and commercial development. According to 2010 U.S. Census data, LaPlace had the largest population of the parish's eight communities, at 29,872.

LIONS AND RESERVE

Also on the east bank of the Mississippi River and close to I-10 sits Reserve/Lions. The Marathon Oil refinery is located there, as is the River Parishes Campus of South Central Louisiana Technical College. According

to 2010 Census data, Reserve/Lions has the parish's second highest population with just under 10,000 residents.

GARYVILLE AND MOUNT AIRY

West of Reserve/Lions is the Garyville/Mount Airy community. The community is close to I-10 and like other communities on the east bank, is developed along Airline Highway (U.S. Highway 61), which runs through its center. Gary/Mount Airy's population is 2,811, according to 2010 Census data.

EDGARD, LUCY, PLEASURE BEND, AND WALLACE

The remaining communities in St. John Parish, Edgard, Wallace, Lucy and Pleasure Bend, stand on the river's west bank. These communities are more remote and rural in nature. However, the Mississippi River Bridge (Gramercy Bridge) links them to the east bank, as does a ferry that runs Monday through Friday between Edgard and Reserve.

These four communities round out the population of St. John Parish, with Edgard's 2,441 residents, Wallace's 671 and Pleasure Bend's 250. Lucy's population was not listed separately.



HURRICANE ISAAC'S IMPACT

On August 29, 2012, Hurricane Isaac's 80-mph maximum sustained winds and 8.4-foot storm surge in Lake Pontchartrain and Lake Maurepas caused record flooding in several subdivisions of LaPlace, the largest city in St. John the Baptist Parish. Floodwaters rising to more than 6 feet forced the closure of Interstates 10 and 55. In addition, U.S. Highway 641 leading to I-10 at Airline Highway was closed to the west, Airline Highway at the border of St. John and St. Charles parishes was closed to the east and portions of River Road were blocked.

Parish authorities had declared a state of emergency well ahead of the storm, on Sunday, Aug. 26, and the following day announced a voluntary evacuation of residents in low-lying areas. The decision to make the evacuation voluntary, rather than mandatory, was based on modeling and historical data as well as daily communications with the National Weather Service, the Louisiana Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (GOHSEP), other state agencies and surrounding parishes. All the available data failed to accurately predict the level of flooding that eventually inundated the parish.

With rising floodwaters, the St. John Sheriff's Office, the Fire Department, Louisiana National Guard, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, U.S. Coast Guard and volunteers assisted in search-and-rescue efforts. The Army National Guard 61st Troop Command brought in 15 National Guard boats, along with high-water vehicles and specially trained soldiers to conduct the rescues. Four-person teams searched for survivors, rescuing more than 2,400 people from the flooding on the first night alone.

During the worst of the storm and its aftermath, 95 percent of parish households were without power, while LaPlace residents went without water and sewer





functionality for four days due to a decision made early on to protect an important well from serious damage. Because of the storm and consequential power surges, the Emergency Operations Center lost the use of critical equipment, including the security alarm panel and the telephone system's uninterrupted power supply.

When Exit 206 at Belle Terre and Exit 209 at U.S. Highway 51 were reopened several days after the storm, nearly 4,000 people were evacuated and brought safely to a temporary shelter. Hundreds of people were transported by bus to state-run shelters in Alexandria and Shreveport, while many others were collected by family and friends from the New Wine Christian Fellowship complex in LaPlace. In all, nearly 6,000 residents and 200 pets were evacuated from their homes over several days.

The hurricane inundated more than 7,000 homes, many of them located outside of a flood zone. Dozens of streets submerged for an extended period of time sustained potential underlying damage, even though

their surfaces appear solid today. Additionally, brackish floodwaters totaled thousands of residents' personal vehicles, five Regional Transit Authority buses and eight Sheriff's Office cars.

St. John Parish suffered considerably more damage as a result of Isaac than from any other recent disaster to hit the state, including hurricanes Katrina, Rita, Gustav, Ike and Tropical Storm Lee. The parish's worst-hit sectors include housing (48% of homes affected), businesses (more than 400 sustaining physical or financial losses), many historic sites, and community infrastructure such as municipal water and sanitary systems.

Low staffing numbers and high workload strain the parish's planning capacity under normal conditions, and it is experiencing difficulty keeping up with the increased post-disaster workload. To expedite the recovery process, the parish has appointed a local disaster recovery manager and identified staff from existing departments to assist.



THE PLANNING PROCESS



The joint decision to activate the National Disaster Recovery Framework (NDRF) in Louisiana was made by the State and Federal Coordinating Officers in September 2012. The Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Region VI Administrator appointed a Federal Disaster Recovery Coordinator (FDRC) and work immediately began to assign federal partner agencies, such as the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

The first full deployment of recovery planning assistance under the Framework began with a request for assistance to the State of Louisiana from Natalie Robottom, St. John Parish President. A FEMA National Disaster Recovery Support (NDRS) reservist was assigned as the parish's liaison on Sept. 24 to assess the parish's recovery planning needs. Over the next several weeks, FEMA staff, with assistance from the parish, the Louisiana Disaster Housing Task Force, and a HUD Recovery Support Function (RSF) Field Coordinator, determined that full engagement for community recovery planning was warranted in the parish. During the assessment process, parish officials noted they were developing a master plan, prompting meetings with parish planning staff, the State Office of Community Development – Disaster Recovery Unit (OCD-DRU) and the University of New Orleans (UNO) Planning Department. It was decided that while all

would participate in and track the planning effort, UNO staff would coordinate the efforts to avoid duplicative or conflicting work since OCD-DRU was already funding the master plan.

As the NDRF mission assignments were being finalized in October 2012, field coordinators for the Natural and Cultural Resources, Health and Social Services, Housing, Economics, and Infrastructure sectors arrived in Baton Rouge. The five were briefed on the situation and the potential issues in the parish relative to their sectors. They soon began observing, researching, and reporting on the damages to develop a Mission Scoping Assessment as pertaining to their areas. Robottom appointed Raymond Goodman, the parish's utility billing manager, as the Local Disaster Recovery Manager. The next month, Robottom invited key resident stakeholders to participate on a Citizens Advisory Committee. On Dec. 5, the committee held its first meeting and created five subcommittees to reflect the NDRF sectors. Parish staff, along with Robottom and Goodman, welcomed the field coordinators and NDRF staff, establishing points of contact and kicking off the community recovery planning process.

Soon afterward, residents, local officials, and public and private sector entities were ready to begin their task of recovery planning. Community members knew they

had a unique opportunity to rebuild and revitalize St. John Parish, making it a better, more sustainable place.

Under the NDRF, the Recovery Strategy is developed by utilizing the energy, resources and ideas of committee members and the community. The NDRF also enhances the potential for a successful recovery by including in the process federal partners that can provide a structure to facilitate problem-solving and improve access to resources. Additionally, the NDRF helps to foster coordination among stakeholders such as state and federal agencies and nongovernmental partners like nonprofit organizations, business groups and civic associations.

This strategy was developed by following long-established principles that emphasize community ownership of a long-term vision for rebuilding. Understandably, communities devastated by disasters will first focus on short-term, response-level issues such as food, water and shelter. However, envisioning, adopting and proceeding with a plan for recovery gives residents a sense of renewal and hope. Forming a vision of their community years, or even decades, in the future, and a goal of "Building Back Better and Stronger" can be a therapeutic element of the community recovery planning process for residents.



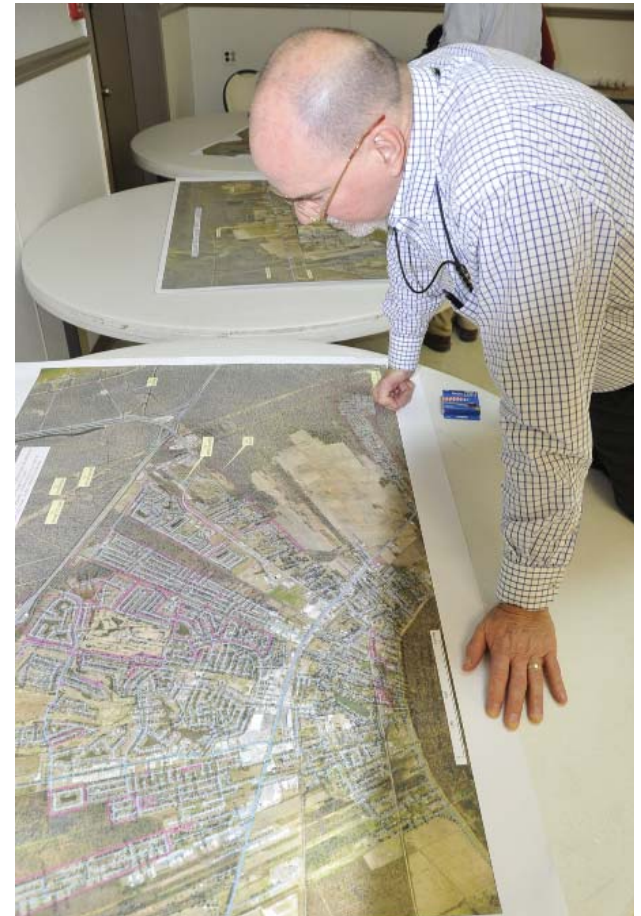
PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

A key component of the recovery planning process is community involvement to ensure that development of the Recovery Strategy includes input from citizens while it builds local ownership. The projects in this Recovery Strategy have been developed as a direct result of the input and ideas received from the St. John community.

More than 330 residents participated in a series of seven open houses and an online survey. During these sessions, residents shared ideas on the recovery issues they faced. Attendees had the opportunity to write their comments on boards representing the five sectors. Each sector had multiple boards displaying questions and topics developed to help facilitate discussion and participation. The Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC), with technical assistance from the National Disaster Recovery Support (NDRS) group and state partners, transformed these comments into definitive projects to help resolve identified issues. The tremendous amount of input received from residents initially developed into more than 80 potential projects. These were consolidated into more than 50 projects, which the community prioritized through a vote. At a second series of community open houses and online balloting held in March, approximately 420 residents cast ballots to indicate their top five priority projects in each sector.

The community's efforts to include and capture the thoughts and ideas of residents in less accessible populations led to special sessions held with senior citizens, high school students and in the remote neighborhood of Pleasure Bend. Special outreach was also made to residents with disabilities.

The projects outlined in this plan are the result of this cooperative endeavor during the public planning process.





BELOW ARE EXAMPLES OF QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS:

ECONOMIC

Question: What additional businesses are needed?
Suggestion: *A Farmer’s Market, mall, or an outlet mall*

Question: How can we better train our workforce?
Suggestion: *Trade school funding and access for vocational training*

HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

Question: What are the health issues in the community?
Suggestion: *Mental health needs are not being met*

Question: What challenges/opportunities are our schools facing?
Suggestion: *Need for more technical and trade school access*

HOUSING

Question: What are your community needs for housing and recovery?
Suggestion: *Need for affordable housing including public housing*

Question: What information would be helpful in your decisions to rebuild?
Suggestion: *Information and education for homeowners on rebuilding, permitting, first-time homebuyers, etc.*

INFRASTRUCTURE

Question: How can we improve the drainage system?
Suggestion: *System needs improvement – overall lack of capacity, improve and repair ditches*

Question: What do you think of our community’s water supply capabilities, especially in light of Isaac’s impact
Suggestion: *Better and more reliable source of water*

NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Question: In what way can we take advantage of the Mississippi River?
Suggestion: *Take advantage of the river as a resource with bike and hiking paths, etc.*

Question: How can we cultivate the importance of the Creole and Cajun cultures?
Suggestion: *Promote cultural/historical nature of the area, especially ethnic origins*

COMMUNITY RESILIENCY



St. John the Baptist Parish sits at the spot where southeast Louisiana transitions to the lower delta region just north of the Gulf of Mexico. Because of its low-lying land, Mississippi River levees and proximity to the Gulf, the parish is vulnerable to tropical storm systems and large rain events. Situated southeast of Baton Rouge and slightly northwest of New Orleans, St. John plays an important role in national and state commerce and serves as a vital evacuation and re-entry thoroughfare during and after disasters.

Parish residents enjoy easy access to a variety of cultural and natural venues and unique entertainment offered in both New Orleans and Baton Rouge. Interstate 10, an important east-west corridor connecting Florida and California, bisects the parish. The interstate is essential for efficient state-to-state travel and the transportation of commodities, in addition to serving as a vital evacuation and re-entry thoroughfare for state residents before, during and after disasters.

As St. John Parish and their recovery partners begin to implement the projects contained in this Recovery Strategy, mitigating future risks will be an important

and sometimes critical element to the effectiveness of those projects. Mitigation is an essential tool for any community that has the potential for damage or destruction from natural disasters such as Hurricane Isaac. Consequently, when a community is struggling to recover from a disaster's devastating effects with projects such as building new structures or rebuilding existing structures and infrastructure, the incorporation of mitigation into those projects is paramount to their success and sustainability.

Like the state of Louisiana, St. John the Baptist Parish is known for its abundance of natural beauty, wildlife and water resources. Along with the benefits of natural resources lies the challenge to ensure these important natural systems do not threaten residents' livelihoods. The parish recognizes it has opportunities to increase resilience through the adoption of several key guiding principles to reduce risk. Parish ordinances — such as floodplain management, building codes, and the hazard mitigation plan — can also help to guide growth and future development while incorporating a respect to risk.

St. John the Baptist Parish adopted the Federal Emergency Management Agency Flood Insurance Rate Maps that became effective Nov. 4, 2010. As a result, the parish participates in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and has a Community Rating System (CRS) score of eight of a possible 10. The CRS is a voluntary incentive program that rewards communities that engage in floodplain management activities that exceed NFIP requirements. As the community pursues more floodplain management activities to reduce risk, flood insurance premiums are discounted to reflect the reduced flood risk.

Hurricane Isaac caused unprecedented damage to St. John Parish. The challenges of rebuilding bring the parish opportunities to incorporate strategic initiatives and activities for a safer, stronger, more sustainable community.

HOW TO USE THIS PLAN

Unlike traditional planning documents that present a broad and general guidance to a community, this Community Recovery Strategy is an action-oriented outline of key projects intended to be used for making critical decisions about next steps, funding sources and resource allocation during the implementation phase of the rebuilding process.

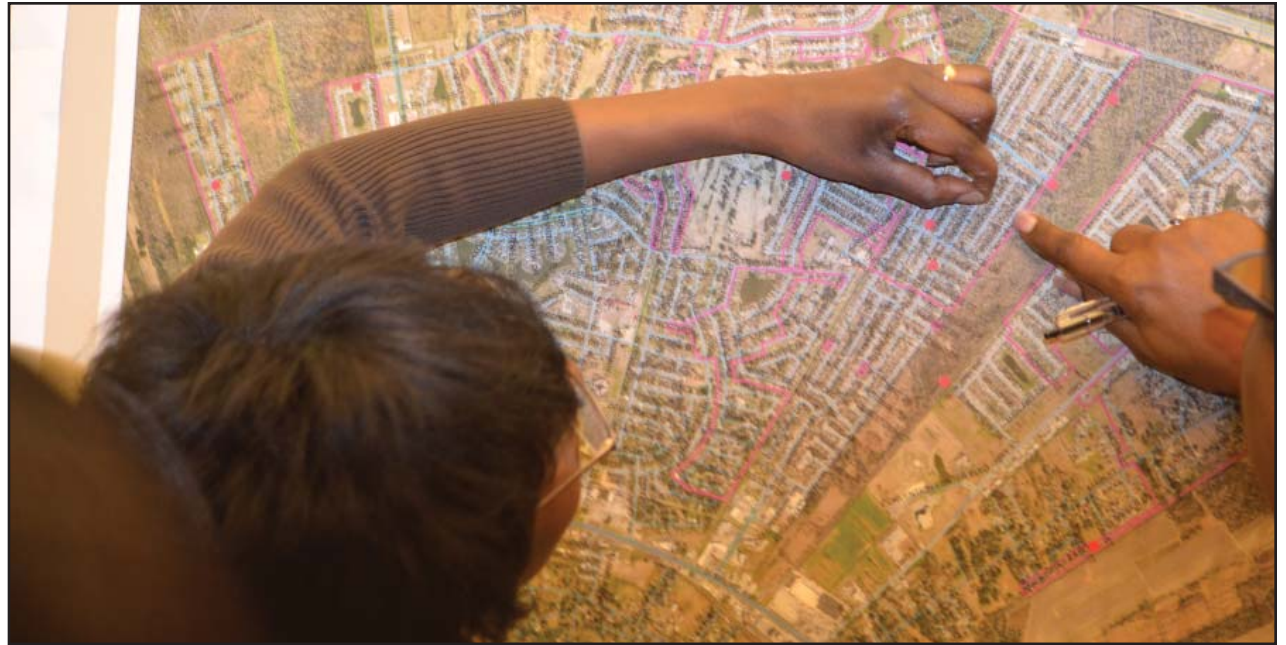
This Recovery Strategy should be used as a guideline rather than a set of instructions because specifics of the projects will evolve considerably as more details become known and circumstances change. While it is important to remain flexible, it is equally important to remain consistent with the community's vision and the overall principles that are reflected in this Recovery Strategy.

The projects described include "action steps" that can be taken in order to implement the projects, as well as suggestions for potential funding sources applicable to the project type. Ultimately, it is up to the community to decide which projects to implement and how to proceed with the implementation. The projects are tailored to the conditions and aspirations of the community and are based on the community's input and vision.

The feasibility of each project depends on several factors, including ongoing commitment, project champions, funding, collaboration, measuring progress, taking next steps, and action planning.

ONGOING COMMITMENT

Many state and federal agencies will provide support through the National Disaster Recovery Framework (NDRF), but ultimately a community's recovery depends on the will of those who live and work in the community. Many of the projects and processes necessary for full recovery take time, sometimes many years, and it is imperative that the community remain resolute in its commitment to recovery.



PROJECT CHAMPIONS

Project Champions are people or entities who agree to take ownership of a project to ensure that it moves through the process. These volunteers, critical to the success of every Recovery Strategy, usually have a passionate interest and the energy needed to keep the momentum going in order to drive projects through implementation.

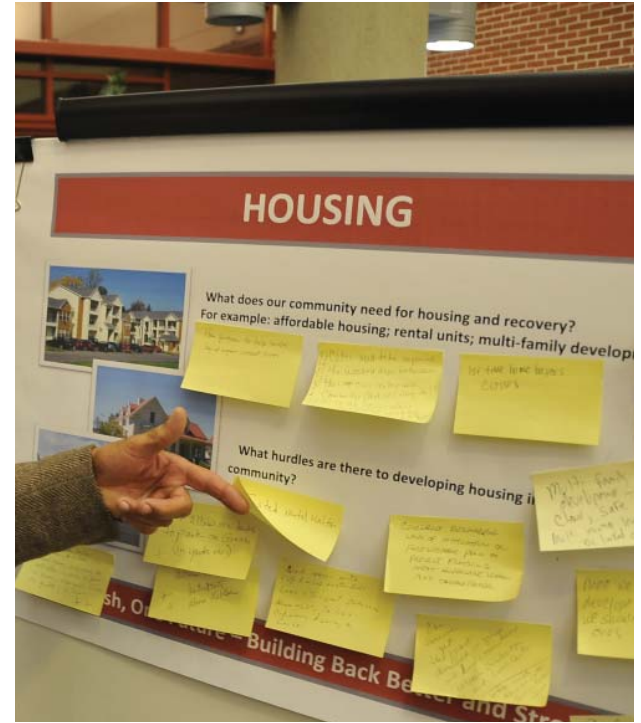
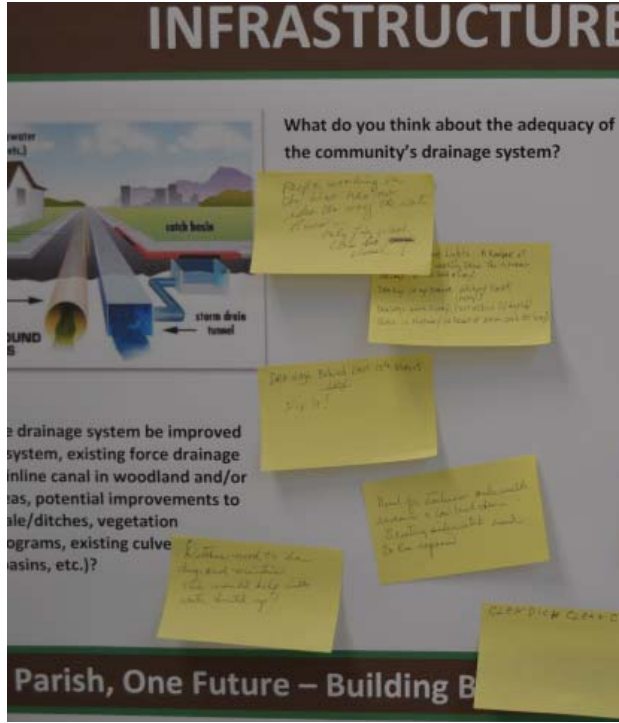
FUNDING

Local officials and residents will be the primary users of this Recovery Strategy. However, it is also helpful to state and federal agencies, private foundations and companies whose financial support will be central to making these projects a reality. Many funding sources require that applicants go through an inclusive planning

process and demonstrate a comprehensive, coherent and coordinated approach to the identification of problems and solutions for which the funds are being sought. This Recovery Strategy serves that purpose as well by demonstrating stakeholder buy-in and community support.

COLLABORATION

A community's recovery from a disaster is a complex process involving a multitude of local, state and federal agencies, non-profits and the private sector. Each decision that is made will have repercussions on future decisions, and each action will change the overall landscape and the assumptions for still other decisions. Because of this, it is vital that all interested parties remain informed of all ongoing activities through communication and collaboration.



MEASURING PROGRESS

Recovery usually occurs very slowly because of the complexity and standardization of funding cycles, planning, design, and building procedures. Over long periods of time it can become very easy to lose sight of community goals, especially for those involved in the recovery on a daily basis. Therefore, as recovery goals are set, and strategies and tactics are defined to meet them, each step must be defined in terms of measurable results. These measures, or “metrics,” are necessary to monitor the progress and, if needed, to make adjustment to the process. If carefully defined metrics are not in place then progress can be vague and inconclusive. For instance, a community attempting to restore affordable housing would have an advantage for success if they tracked the number of households still in need of permanent housing as opposed to looking at the number of housing starts. Realistic goals coupled with appropriate metrics will help to track progress and measure success.

NEXT STEPS AND ACTION PLANNING

Each project description in this Recovery Strategy has a list of action steps and potential resources that can help bring projects to reality. However, when considered as an integrated comprehensive recovery program, a key set of decisions must be made first. Many projects will need to be implemented in phases, coordinated with other projects, and implemented according to funding processes. Another important thing to remember is that the projects in the Recovery Strategy are listed in order of priority based on residents’ votes. Some of the lower priority projects may be easier to implement and have more readily available funding.

For example, the number one priority project, according to residents, is pursuit of levee protection for the St. John the Baptist Parish. The levee project requires studies and approvals through the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and funds appropriated through Congress, both of which are processes that could take years to complete. In comparison, the lower priority and more approachable project is, “Rebuild Public Housing,” which has a short timeline and includes applying for a Planning Grant from the Department of Housing and Urban Development and other available resources.

Possibly the most important next step in the recovery process is to create a detailed plan for implementation of specific projects, such as the Housing Authority funding application. All partners at the local, state and federal levels will need to agree on who will be responsible for a given aspect of a project. Specific timeframes will need to be set for the projects and ongoing, regular coordination meetings must be established to ensure that all the stakeholders will remain aware of progress as well as changing circumstances.

LETTERS OF SUPPORT

MARY L. LANDRIEU
LOUISIANA

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1804

May 6, 2013

St. John the Baptist Parish Administration
1801 West Airline Hwy
LaPlace, LA 70068

Dear Citizens of St. John the Baptist Parish:

I commend the citizens of St. John the Baptist Parish and the Citizen's Advisory Committee for their dedication and willingness to cooperatively plan and seek sound solutions to rebuilding following Hurricane Isaac. As one of the first parishes to fully embrace FEMA's National Disaster Recovery Framework (NDRF), you have proven that local, state and federal partners can work cooperatively for a common purpose and produce meaningful outcomes. FEMA's Long Term Community Recovery (LTCR) process provided decision makers the tools to gather information and develop ideas for building back better and stronger. Although not every project recommended in the plan will be implemented, a framework is necessary to document progress, both short- and long-term, and to assist with securing essential funding.

I was pleased to learn of FEMA's support for this grassroots effort which was critical to moving this plan forward. I applaud the community's efforts in developing strategies for rebuilding and will continue to support project implementation that leads to long-term recovery in our state. I am confident that the committee's determination and hard work will prevail.

I am ready to assist in any way possible and will continue to work with FEMA and our state and local governments to ensure effective disaster recovery and mitigation efforts throughout Louisiana. Your dedication and patience are greatly appreciated.

With warm regards, I am

Sincerely,


Mary L. Landrieu
United States Senator

LOUISIANA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

9 Apple Street
P.O. Box 190
Natchez, LA 70079
millerg@legis.la.gov
Phone: 985-764-9991
Fax: 985-764-9993

Civil Law and Procedure
Judiciary
House and Governmental Affairs


GREGORY A. MILLER
State Representative ~ District 56

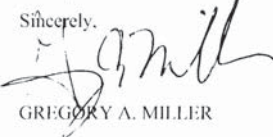
May 7, 2013

Dear Committee Members and Citizens of St. John the Baptist Parish:

I want to personally commend you and the citizens of St. John the Baptist Parish for their dedication and willingness to cooperatively plan and seek sound solutions to rebuilding following Hurricane Isaac. As one of the first parishes to fully embrace the National Disaster Recovery Framework (NDRF), you have proven that local, state and federal partners can work together for a common purpose and produce meaningful results. Use of FEMA's Long Term Community Recovery (LTCR) process has provided decision makers important tools to gather information and develop ideas for rebuilding St. John better and stronger. Although not every recommended project will be implemented, a framework is essential to document progress over the short and long term recovery process and to assist with soliciting funding.

I was pleased to learn of FEMA's support for this grassroots efforts which was critical to moving this plan forward. I strongly endorse the community's efforts in developing strategies for rebuilding and commit to supporting project implementation that leads to long-term recovery. I am confident that the committee's determination and hard work will prevail.

Your dedication and patience is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

GREGORY A. MILLER

GAM/dil

LOUISIANA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

301 W. Airline Highway
Suite 210
LaPlace, LA 70068
E-mail: gainesr@legis.la.gov
Phone: (985) 652-1228
Fax: (985) 652-1229



RANDAL L. GAINES
State Representative ~ District 57

Civil Law and Procedure
House Committee on
Homeland Security
Joint Committee on
Homeland Security
Special Committee on Military
and Veterans Affairs
House and Governmental Affairs
Judiciary

May 3, 2013

To: Committee Members and the Citizens of St. John the Baptist Parish

I recognize and commend the efforts of St. John the Baptist Parish for their hard work and dedicated hours of planning and seeking solutions to rebuild the Parish due to Hurricane Isaac. You have been a strong pillar to the community and to Parish Government. You have set an example that local, state and federal partners can work together for a common purpose and be productive. I personally know the hard work and time you have given to these projects, as my Assistant, Peggy Joseph is a part of the CAC committee. She is very informative as to the work you all are doing to bring the Parish back better and stronger.

I am also thankful to FEMA for their support which is critical to production of these projects. I strongly encourage the support and efforts of the community in developing strategies for rebuilding project implementation that leads to long term recovery.

Your dedication and commitment is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Randal Gaines
L.a. State Representative
District 57

Sheriff Mike Tregre
St. John The Baptist Parish



(985) 652-9513 - Office
(985) 359-8651 - Fax

May 9, 2013

Citizens of St. John the Baptist Parish and
The Citizens Advisory Committee
1801 West Airline Highway
Laplace, La 70068

Dear Committee Members and Citizens of St. John the Baptist Parish:

I commend the citizens of St. John the Baptist Parish for their dedication and willingness to cooperatively plan and seek sound solutions to rebuilding following Hurricane Isaac. As one of the first parishes to fully embrace the National Disaster Recovery Framework (NDRF), you have proven that local, state and federal partners can work cooperatively for a common purpose and produce meaningful outcomes. Use of FEMA's Long Term Community Recovery (LTCR) process provided decision makers the tools to gather information and develop ideas for building back better and stronger.

Although not every project recommended in the plan will be implemented, a framework is necessary to document progress over the short- and long-term recovery process and to assist with soliciting funding. I was pleased to learn of FEMA's support for these grassroots efforts which was critical to moving this plan forward.

I strongly endorse the community's efforts in developing strategies for rebuilding and commit to supporting project implementation that leads to long-term recovery. I am confident that the committee's determination and hard work will prevail. Your dedication and patience is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Sheriff Mike Tregre

1801 Airline Hwy • P.O. Box 1600 • LaPlace, LA 70069 • www.stjohnsheriff.org



299 Belle Terre Blvd., Suite AA
LaPlace, LA 70068
P.O. Box 2019
Reserve, LA 70084

May 2, 2013

Dear Committee Members and Citizens of St. John the Baptist Parish:

As an organization dedicated to uniting people and resources to create lasting changes in St. John the Baptist Parish, St. John United Way commends the citizens of St. John for their dedication and willingness to cooperatively plan and seek sound solutions to rebuilding our community following Hurricane Isaac.

As one of the first parishes to fully embrace the National Disaster Recovery Framework (NDRF), you have proven that local, state and federal partners can work cooperatively for a common purpose and produce meaningful outcomes. Use of FEMA's Long Term Community Recovery (LTCR) process provided decision makers the tools to gather information and develop ideas for building back better and stronger. Although not every project recommended in the plan will be implemented, a framework is necessary to document progress over the short- and long-term recovery process and to assist with soliciting funding.

St. John United Way is pleased to learn of FEMA's support for this grassroots effort, which was critical to moving this plan forward. We strongly endorse the community's efforts in developing strategies for rebuilding and commit to supporting project implementation that leads to long-term recovery. We are confident that the committee's determination and hard work will prevail.

Your dedication and patience is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Trista Brazan
Executive Director

985-651-9118 (P) 985-651-9110 (F)
www.stjohnunitedway.org

One Parish, One Future: Building Back Better and Stronger

Community Recovery Projects



I nfrastructure Projects



St. John the Baptist Parish lies in the heart of Louisiana's River Parishes, on the Mississippi River about 130 miles upriver from the Gulf of Mexico and just 30 miles upriver from New Orleans. On the Mississippi's west bank lie the towns of Lucy, Edgard and Wallace, and the community of Pleasure Bend. This area is primarily agricultural, with rows of sugar cane covering the fields. The east bank has LaPlace, Reserve, Lions, Garyville, and Mt. Airy, each a thriving, bustling community where industries, including a chemical plant, sugar refinery, grain elevators, an oil refinery, and the Port of South Louisiana, follow the river. LaPlace is the parish's largest town, where the southern terminus of Interstate 55 from Chicago joins with Interstate 10; and U.S. 51, which ends at the junction with U.S. 61 (Airline Highway). The Port of South Louisiana, the nation's largest port district in terms of tonnage, maintains its headquarters in LaPlace.

Airline Highway is a divided highway built in stages between 1925 and 1953 to bypass the older Jefferson Highway. It travels northwest through St. John Parish from New Orleans to Baton Rouge. Airline Highway was the main artery through St. John Parish until the construction of I-10. Today, it travels from the Pacific Ocean in Santa Monica, Calif., to Jacksonville, Fla.

St. John Parish covers about 239 square miles, much of which consists of open water or wetlands. The wetlands are currently protected by federal law and development must adhere to what is permitted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and/or the Federal Wildlife and Fisheries Department. According to 2010 U.S. Census data, 45,924 people live in the parish, mostly on the Mississippi River's east bank, an area outside the federal hurricane protection levee system. The parish lacks large pumping stations and relies on the natural effects of gravity to drain water to Lake Pontchartrain. Bordering the east banks of St. John Parish and New Orleans, Lake Pontchartrain connects to the Gulf of Mexico and therefore experiences tidal changes. At 24 miles long and 40 miles wide, it is among the largest wetlands in

the world, covering 630 square miles at an average depth of 12 to 14 feet. According to the Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation, the lake began forming about 5,000 years ago when North American glacier melts caused the Mississippi River to swell and shift to the east. The river began depositing sediment in the Gulf of Mexico, creating a broad delta which would later become Orleans, St. Bernard, and Plaquemines parishes. The delta grew slowly eastward and eventually separated a large body of water from the Gulf. During a hurricane, storm surges can build up in Lake Pontchartrain. If the hurricane approaches from the south, as Isaac did, wind pushes water into the lake from the Gulf of Mexico.

On Aug. 29, 2012, Hurricane Isaac's high winds and 8.4-foot storm surge in Lake Pontchartrain and Lake Maurepas swamped all exits at I-10 and I-55 with 6 feet of water, rendering them impassable. Exit 206 at Belle Terre and Exit 209 at U.S. Highway 51 did not re-open for several days. U.S. Highway 641 leading to I-10 at Airline Highway was also closed, as was Airline Highway at the St. John/St. Charles parish line. With all major routes closed during and after the hurricane, the most important evacuation routes were effectively eliminated. Not only did this make it impossible for many residents to leave, floodwaters remained for several days after the storm, impeding rescue efforts.

During the storm, power surges caused the Emergency Operations Center to lose critical equipment, including the security alarm panel and the uninterrupted power supply (UPS) for the telephone system. The parish's utilities department was



forced to shut off water service to LaPlace to avoid contamination of the system due to flooding and wind damage to the water well system located 10 miles away in Ruddock. Residents had no drinking water for four days because water towers were isolated to provide adequate fire protection to residents in LaPlace and high water levels along U.S. Highway 51 prevented utility crews from reaching and repairing the wells. The hurricane affected more than 7,000 homes, many of which were not in a flood zone. Floodwater destroyed residents' personal vehicles, along with all five Regional Transit Authority buses. Many streets were submerged for an extended period of time, and although some roads may not show cosmetic damage, flooding may have damaged the road base underneath.

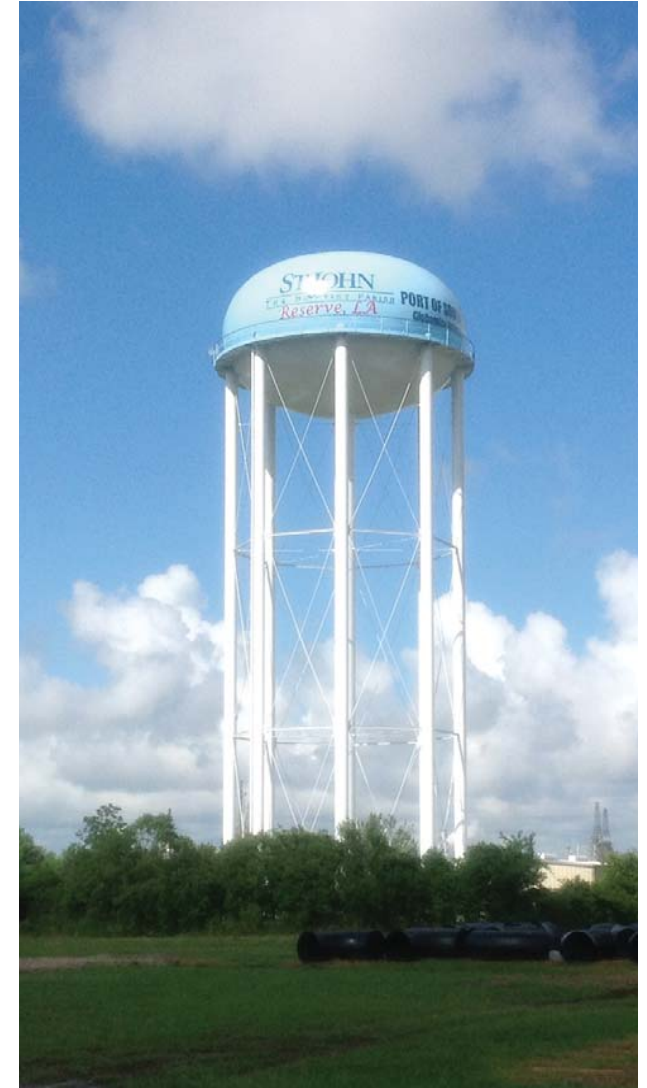
Located nearby on the west bank of neighboring St. Charles Parish, Entergy's nuclear power plant, Waterford 3, provides critical power to petroleum plants and refineries in the river parishes. Serving about 2.8 million utility customers in four states, it provides 12 percent of Louisiana's electrical needs. When floodwaters close the major evacuation routes for the 85,000 St. Charles and St. John parish residents who live within 10 miles of the plant, as happened in Hurricane Isaac, Waterford 3 cannot restart until evacuation routes are cleared and passable. Delays in restarting the plant present a significant problem for our nation's supply of petroleum and chemicals, in addition to problems faced by river parish residents.

As Parish President Natalie Robottom testified before the U.S. Senate's Homeland Security



Subcommittee, Hurricane Isaac underscored the need for levee protection for St. John Parish residents. For more than 40 years, levee protection for the residents has been discussed, but never completed. In 1971, a resolution authorizing the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to include St. John Parish in Louisiana's West Shore-Lake Pontchartrain Hurricane Protection Project was offered in the House of Representatives. Despite the impacts to the parish by hurricanes Katrina, Rita, Gustav and Ike and Tropical Storm Lee, this project has not received federal funding since Fiscal Year 2010, and it is not in the Fiscal Year 2013 budget. Completion of this project depends on Corps approval and federal and non-federal funding. The state, the Pontchartrain Levee District and St. John Parish are prepared to move this project forward, but need help expediting the approval and permitting process, as well as securing federal funding. About 120,000 people live in St. John, St. James and St. Charles parishes, supporting billions of dollars of investments in the river region, with more than \$30 billion in potential investments in this industrial corridor. The parish awaits a feasibility study on the West Shore Lake Pontchartrain project evaluating various levee alignments to reduce the risk from future storm damage.

Recovery will require projects that address the wide range of damage to parish infrastructure. In the interest of efficiency and effectiveness, the various jurisdictions are encouraged to coordinate repairs and improvements to the system. The Emergency Operations Center needs many upgrades to increase capacity for handling



intensive search and rescue operations. The water supply and the transit systems need to be expanded to handle long-term sustainability. Damaged roads and bridges need repairs. Ditches and drainage systems need to be restored or improved. Critical routes that can be used for safe evacuation of the parish need to be identified and protected against future flooding.

REDUCE THE RISK OF FLOODING

PROJECT AREA

West Shore – Lake Pontchartrain
East bank of St. John Parish

WORKING GROUPS INVOLVED

St. John Parish Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)
St. John Parish CAC Infrastructure Subcommittee
St. John Parish Council
Pontchartrain Levee District
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)
Louisiana Department of Transportation and
Development (LADOTD)

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This project reduces the risk of flooding to homes, businesses, and infrastructure; and identifies a path for implementing a strategy to protect Interstate 10 for future hurricane events.

RECOVERY GOAL

Provide hurricane protection along Lake Pontchartrain and reduce the storm damage risks associated with hurricane-induced flooding for more than 7,000 homes and businesses in St. John Parish.

Build levees to reduce the risk of flooding in St. John Parish

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) is currently working on a study that investigates the feasibility of measures to reduce storm damage risks associated with hurricane-induced flooding for more than 7,000 homes and businesses located within portions of St. John Parish and to evaluate cost-effective alternatives. The Corps is analyzing costs and benefits for the alternatives to identify the plan with the greatest net benefits, and will submit a recommendation along with an environmental impact statement (EIS) to Congress for approval.



RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITIES

These identified projects, and any future projects, should not be considered as isolated or unrelated responses to specific problems or issues. Rather, they should be examined in the context of the entire region. When possible, jurisdictions should explore opportunities to increase efficiency by coordinating and combining geographically related projects.

CHALLENGES

This project could easily cost \$540 million or more. It could take 10 to 20 years, or more, to implement.

ACTION STEPS

Ask for a mechanism to fund a hurricane protection system for this area because that is critical to St. John's recovery.

Hold Colonel Fleming of USACE to his commitment to find the funding to complete the study to move the project forward and also to have St. John's delegation work every angle possible to get funding for this levee in the near future.

POTENTIAL RESOURCES

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Louisiana Department of Transportation and
Development

PROJECT CHAMPIONS

Every property owner within St. John Parish

IMPROVE DRAINAGE IN ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST PARISH

PROJECT AREA

East and west banks of the Mississippi River in St. John the Baptist Parish

WORKING GROUPS INVOLVED

St. John Parish Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)
St. John Parish CAC Infrastructure Subcommittee
St. John Parish Public Works Department
Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (LADOTD)

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This project seeks to improve drainage capacity at critical points throughout the parish by replacing or refurbishing drainage pumps, adding bar screen cleaners and cleaning ditches and culverts.

RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITIES

These identified projects, and any future projects, should not be considered as isolated or unrelated responses to specific problems or issues. Rather, they should be examined in the context of the entire region. When possible, jurisdictions should explore opportunities to increase efficiency by coordinating and combining geographically related projects.

CHALLENGES

The current recession and the slower pace of offshore permitting have left local communities with limited resources to repair or replace aging infrastructure and to implement projects critical to reducing coastal erosion and improving flood protection. Therefore, any efforts to improve the transportation infrastructure in St. John Parish should include protection from flooding of major highways, arterial roads, etc.

ACTION STEPS

Help develop a new master drainage plan. The parish has a master plan dating to 2002, three years before Hurricane Katrina. Its foundation is a hydraulic and hydrology study that identifies every drainage pathway in the parish, as well as inflow from and outflow to neighboring parishes. It illustrates how much water the existing drainage system can move in any given volume or inundation and identifies choke points and backup impacts. The study identifies areas for improvements through capacity and flow recommendations.

The study allows the parish to identify and prioritize recommended projects and funding from internal and/or a combination of internal and external sources. Because many drainage projects are large and expensive, a master drainage plan affords the parish an opportunity to link the design concepts with long-term land use and development projections; synchronize with the parish's flood management ordinance for compliance with building elevations; be included in the parish's comprehensive plan; and work in collaboration with the hazard mitigation plan, which entitles the parish to seek funding from FEMA to complete the projects.



RECOVERY GOAL

Improve the drainage system at several critical locations throughout the parish to reduce risk of flooding.

- Install a dam and pump station at LaPlace Plantation Canal to solve flooding in Foxwood.
- Clean Ridgefield Canal and install culverts to solve flooding in the St. Andrews neighborhood.
- Install drainage pumps at River Forest Canal North.
- Add automatic bar screen cleaners – Airport and Homewood pump stations. When operating, both pump stations tend to pull in large amounts of debris. At the airport station, the debris gets caught in the bar screens and blocks flow to the pumps. Homewood has no bar screen in place so the debris goes directly to the pump intakes. This not only impedes flow but also poses the potential for damaging the pumps themselves. Providing a bar screen cleaner at the airport and a bar screen and cleaner at Homewood would protect the pumps and allow for storm water to properly flow to the pumps, protecting these residential and commercial areas.
- Replace/refurbish pumps at airport: The three vertical pumps at the airport station are old and need repairs. During Hurricane Isaac, only one of the three was in working condition. Since then, a second pump was brought back to operating status while the third pump remains in a state of disrepair. The system of pumps needs a major overhaul to ensure that they will be in operating condition should the parish experience another major storm. A lack of pumping capability poses a threat to many businesses in the area and jeopardizes the aircraft located there.
- Clean Lasseigne Canal and install larger culverts with flap valves at Woodland Drive.
- Clean Montz Canal and install culverts to solve flooding problems along Main Street.
- Install a permanent pump at Red Bud, a low-lying area between the railroad and the levee on the east bank. This area historically holds water but during the recent hurricane it became inundated and

flooded all of the local streets and houses. Storm water does not have a way to flow out quickly. Installing a small but permanent pump in the area could greatly reduce the flooding potential. During Hurricane Isaac, a temporary pump was installed in this area, which successfully helped the area drain. However, that pump was on loan from a distributor. A permanent pump would greatly benefit area residents.

- Install a booster pump in Crevasse area: Crevasse is another low-lying area that tends to hold water. While a pump that can handle the runoff does exist, it is located north of Airline Highway. Storm water must travel a long way to the pump station, which takes a long time. During that time, the water backs up in streets and homes. By installing a booster pump, the area can quickly force the water out of the residential area toward the main pump station, thereby reducing residents' flooding potential.
- Install submersible pumps in Belle Pointe. The subdivision took on a lot of water during the recent hurricane. Because no pumping system serves the area, floodwater sat in streets and houses for days after the storm. A submersible pump station would force storm water out of the area and eliminate the house flooding that occurred. The project should also consider surrounding the subdivision with a berm to prevent recirculation of the pumped-out storm water.
- Install culverts and generators as a permanent power source at LaPlace Park.
- Need ditch work and culverts on the east bank. In many areas, specifically Reserve, the storm water drainage system consists of a haphazard collection of aging culverts, improperly sized and laid at incorrect grades/inverts. As a result, storm water runoff is restricted in many locations and the system tends to back up, leading to street flooding and, in some cases, home flooding. Removing the existing culverts and replacing them with a properly designed system would promote proper drainage and eliminate the flooding potential.

POTENTIAL RESOURCES

Economic Development Administration (EDA)
U.S. Department of Commerce
Community Development Block Grants/Section 108
Loan Guarantee Program
Community Facilities Direct and Guaranteed
Loan and Grant Programs (USDA)
Community Services Block Grant Discretionary Awards
FEMA Flood Mitigation Assistance Program
FEMA Pre-Disaster Mitigation Competitive
Grant Program
FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program
Office of Natural Resources Revenue Flood
Control Act Lands
Louisiana Department of Transportation and
Development: Statewide Flood Control Program
Louisiana Community Development Authority
Louisiana Municipal Association
Louisiana Public Facilities Authority
Louisiana Office of Community Development
(LA-OCD): Community Development Block
Grant Public Facilities Program
LA-OCD: Community Water Enrichment Fund
LA-OCD: Local Government Assistance Program
LA-OCD: Louisiana Community Development
Block Grant
Local Initiatives Support Corporation
Water Environment Research Foundation
Center for Planning Excellence
Community Development Capital
Delta Regional Authority
Hope Community Credit Union

PROJECT CHAMPIONS

Harold Flynn Jr.

IMPROVE AND/OR INCREASE THE WATER SUPPLY

PROJECT AREA

East bank of St. John Parish

WORKING GROUPS INVOLVED

St. John Parish Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)
St. John Parish CAC Infrastructure Subcommittee
St. John Parish Utilities Department

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Implement improvements to develop long-term sustainability for the water system.

Redundancy and reliability were the focus of discussions in the Water Infrastructure Committee meetings on long-term sustainability. As a result of these discussions, long-term sustainability improvement projects were identified. One of these projects is already in the preliminary design phase of implementation. It is the 12-inch diameter waterline connection between the Reserve and Edgard water systems. This project will allow water to be supplied from the other side of the Mississippi River if there is a failure in either system.

The second long-term sustainability improvement identified is to provide Mississippi River water as a source of water for the LaPlace water system. Historically, the other two Mississippi River water supplies for St. John Parish (Reserve and Edgard) have remained operable during emergency situations and provided water to St. John Parish. Providing a Mississippi River water source for the LaPlace system will provide reliability of water service that Reserve and Edgard have experienced in the past. The study is expected to cost between \$100,000 and \$300,000, depending on the level of detail regarding the cost of the proposed river intake system.

Another option identified is to improve LaPlace's water supply by developing an additional (third) well at Ruddock. Using existing water lines to LaPlace, this

project would seek to increase the water supply to LaPlace. A fourth option is to increase the Lions Water Plant to a 9 MGD system by adding a third set of filters, a new clarifier, a new clear well, and additional storage along with a proposed 18-inch line from the Lions Plant to LaPlace. This would supplement the existing LaPlace well system with that of the Lions river system and be capable of providing a sufficient supply should the Ruddock well system become inoperable during a storm event.

RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITIES

The goal of the evaluation is to develop a detailed conceptual plan and budgetary cost for design and construction of an additional well at Ruddock, and/or to provide Mississippi River water to the LaPlace distribution system. This will allow St. John Parish to determine how much it will cost to improve the reliability of the LaPlace system and investigate ways to fund these improvements once a budgetary number is developed.

CHALLENGES

The costs for these projects can range from \$1.5 million for a new well at Ruddock to \$10 million for a pump station from the Mississippi River to the LaPlace reverse osmosis treatment plant.

ACTION STEPS

The parish has requested a feasibility study to determine the level of detail and costs for these projects, which would contribute to identifying funding sources available. The parish is currently awaiting the results of the feasibility study.

POTENTIAL RESOURCES

Economic Development Administration (EDA)
U.S. Department of Commerce
Community Development Block Grants/Section 108 Loan Guarantee Program
Community Facilities Direct and Guaranteed Loan and Grant Programs (USDA)
Community Services Block Grant Discretionary Awards
FEMA Flood Mitigation Assistance Program
Office of Natural Resources Revenue Flood Control Act Lands
FEMA Pre-Disaster Mitigation Program Competitive Grant Program
Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development: Statewide Flood Control Program
Louisiana Community Development Authority
Louisiana Municipal Association
Louisiana Public Facilities Authority
Louisiana Office of Community Development (LA-OCD): Community Development Block Grant Public Facilities Program
LA-OCD: Community Water Enrichment Fund
LA-OCD: Local Government Assistance Program
LA-OCD: Louisiana Community Development Block Grant
Local Initiatives Support Corporation
Water Environment Research Foundation
Center for Planning Excellence
Community Development Capital
Delta Regional Authority
Hope Community Credit Union
FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program



RECOVERY GOAL

Improving and/or increasing the water supply will give the parish more reliable access to safe water for residential and commercial use.

Several interim actions are planned for completion by the second quarter of 2014 to provide more reliability for the parish's water system. These interim actions will allow the water system to continue to operate during emergency situations, and will help sustain the system temporarily until long-term sustainability measures can be implemented.

The proposed interim actions for the water system are as follows:

- Install new pump at well #2 in Ruddock. (A recent inspection indicates well casing is in good condition.) This will provide the well with a more reliable pump. (Projected for August 2013.)
- Rehabilitate existing pump at well #1 in Ruddock. This will provide a redundant back-up source for well #2 in case the newly installed pump fails. (Projected for December 2013.)
- Install 12-inch connection on River Road to the St. Charles Parish water system. This will provide an alternate emergency partial water supply for the east bank of St. John Parish should the Ruddock or Lions water source supplies fail. (Permit expected soon.)
- Reconnect Lions and LaPlace water system on River Road. This will provide additional water capacity that can be distributed from the Reserve system to the LaPlace system.
- Altitude valve replacements at four elevated storage tanks (Courthouse, Belle Terre, Walnut, Reserve.) This will allow the altitude valves at these elevated storage tanks to operate properly so the tanks can drain and fill on a regular basis. (Projected to finish August 2013.)
- New filters at Lions Water Treatment Plant will add redundancy at the Lions Plant and provide an additional 3 MGD (millions of gallons per day) capacity that can be distributed to the St. John water system. (Projected by end of 2014.)
- Lions intake lines at raw water pump station upgrade. This will extend the intake lines further into the river and allow the old intake pump station for the Lions Plant to operate at its designed capacity during periods of low flow in the Mississippi River.



IMPROVE EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER

PROJECT AREA

Parish-wide

WORKING GROUPS INVOLVED

St. John Parish Citizens Advisory Committee
St. John Parish CAC Infrastructure Subcommittee
St. John Parish Office of Emergency Preparedness
Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (GOHSEP)

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This project would improve and enhance the overall emergency response system during catastrophic events. This would be accomplished, in part, by improving and expanding emergency communications systems parish-wide so residents can be informed of emergencies.

RECOVERY GOAL

Having a facility and the means to carry out government functions is vital to the entire community. Having no government, law enforcement, fire or rescue services could lead to community chaos.

The 140-foot freestanding radio antenna tower located behind the EOC/911 Center is at load capacity and reaching the end of its life cycle. The current structure cannot have any additional antennas attached to it to accommodate new technology. In 2011, a split in the leg of this aging tower was repaired, but engineers have recommended replacement of the tower. This project would also encompass temporary relocation of all the antenna cables and redesign of the electrical services to EOC, parish government and sheriff's administrative and operations offices. Including installation, cable replacements, grounding, environmental studies and the redesign and relocation of electrical services, replacing the tower would cost approximately \$1.2 million.

The original 11 x 20 divided room designed for sleeping quarters is now being utilized as a storage room and temporary office space. During emergencies, personnel must take their required rest time under their desks, in offices or in halls due to the lack of space. The restroom facilities adjacent to the sleeping quarters are cramped with only a small single shower. The dining area and the kitchen facility are inadequate to support emergency personnel.

The EOC would like to add a multipurpose room that during normal hours could be used by Communications Department personnel for trainings, meetings, radio programming and the like. During emergency activations, this room would be utilized as the new sleeping quarters. Adjacent to this room would be new dining and restroom facilities to accommodate increased staffing during emergency activations. The old dining area could then be utilized for much-needed storage space. It is clear the EOC has outgrown the current facility, which was built in 1989. With an estimate of \$325/square foot for similar-type building construction, the EOC is proposing to add to the existing building approximately 4,000 square feet that can withstand winds of 150 mph. In addition, the EOC estimates using another \$700,000 for engineering, design, environmental impact studies and the relocation of materials and equipment into the new space.

A consistent and adequate potable water supply is a necessity. The parish's current system is filling 32-gallon trash containers with water prior to an emergency. The parish would like to purchase and install a 10,000-gallon water tank and pumping system. The system would be tied into the parish's current supply line with the ability to be isolated during disruption of the parish's water supply. Estimated costs are \$300,000, which should include purchase, installation, design and Environmental Impact Studies (EIS).

The Hemlock fire station serves as the department's main station and houses the department's administrative staff. During an emergency such as a tropical storm, the station houses emergency responders from other agencies and additional manpower from the fire department. The station is currently unusable and will need immediate work to make it usable. The age of the current station and the amount of renovation needed to make it able to house the newest equipment and apparatus have caused the department to consider tearing the station down and rebuilding on the existing site. This station is the only one south of Airline Highway that is large enough to house additional manpower and resources during an emergency. The plan calls for the station to be torn down and rebuilt large enough to house additional equipment, with room to accommodate additional manpower in the event of an emergency.

The Westside station in Edgard is in operation 24 hours a day, seven days a week. During an emergency event, it houses the department's called-in manpower, along with extra equipment and resources.

RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITIES

These identified projects, and any future projects, should not be considered as isolated or unrelated responses to specific problems or issues. Rather, they should be examined in the context of the entire region. Jurisdictions should explore efficiency opportunities to coordinate and combine geographically related projects when possible.

CHALLENGES

Maintaining emergency services during construction of expanded facilities and equipment upgrades is vital.

ACTION STEPS

Environmental Impact Studies (EIS) may identify best practices for reducing future losses.

POTENTIAL RESOURCES

Community Development Block Grants / Disaster Recovery Program

Community Development Block Grants / States Program

Hazard Mitigation Grant Program

Flood Mitigation Assistance Program

Pre-Disaster Mitigation Program Competitive Grants

Repetitive Flood Claims

Louisiana Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness: Mitigation Grant Programs



CONNECT INTERSTATE 10 TO RESERVE

PROJECT AREAS

Reserve and LaPlace

WORKING GROUPS INVOLVED

St. John Parish Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)
St. John Parish CAC Infrastructure Subcommittee
Louisiana Department of Transportation and
Development
Federal Highway Administration
N-Y Associates

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The parish seeks to enhance access to I-10 from Reserve by one of two projects:

Construct an access road from Airline Highway at West 10th Street north to I-10; OR

Construct a loop road from Airline Highway at Louisiana Highway 3179 to curve northeast to Belle Terre Boulevard near I-10, Exit 206.

RECOVERY GOAL

The intent is to provide reliable access for residents to employment, shopping, businesses and medical services. Additionally, better access routes are desired in order to reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and to provide travel time savings, benefits which will accrue to those living, working and/or traveling to and from the developed areas of the parish. Finally, enhanced and improved interstate access is needed to assist in hurricane evacuation.

By enhancing or improving access to the interstates in this area, vehicular traffic will be more directly routed to the interstate system, helping to prevent congestion on the local lower-capacity roadways.

RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITIES

These identified projects, and any future projects, should not be considered as isolated or unrelated

responses to specific problems or issues. Rather, they should be examined in the context of the entire region. Jurisdictions should explore efficiency opportunities to coordinate and combine geographically related projects when possible.

CHALLENGES

Project costs are estimated to be in the \$90 million-\$100 million range. Depending on the Environmental Impact Study, the findings may support the “No Build” alternative, which is also currently undergoing impact analysis. This means no roadways would be built. Also, low-cost Transportation System Management (TSM) alternatives may be considered, which include adding acceleration lanes for trucks to get up to speed without slowing down traffic.

ACTION STEPS

- A public hearing on the projects will be set for summer 2013.
- Refinement of Engineering – Fine-tune the alternatives’ geometry and design features and prepare cost estimates for construction.
- Impact Analysis – Examine what may be impacted if we were to build each alternative (both natural environment and human environment).
- Public Participation – hold public meeting and public hearing to obtain input on project.
- Mitigation Measures – Examine ways to mitigate any negative impacts that may result from construction of project (noise walls, wetlands mitigation, etc.)
- Report Preparation – Document all work, including public participation, in a draft EIS (DEIS), a final EIS (FEIS), a Record of Decision (ROD), an Implementation Plan and a Scope and Budget Report.



POTENTIAL RESOURCES

Louisiana Department of Transportation and
Development (LADOTD)
Federal Highway Administration
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

PROJECT CHAMPIONS

Port of South Louisiana
South Central Planning & Development Commission
Regional Planning Commission

IMPROVE ROADWAYS AND ROAD MAINTENANCE

PROJECT AREA

Parish-wide

WORKING GROUPS INVOLVED

St. John Parish Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)
St. John Parish CAC Infrastructure Subcommittee
St. John Parish Public Works Department
Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (LADOTD)

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Hurricane Isaac's winds and storm surge caused damage to the parish's infrastructure. In particular, many roads, including I-10, were submerged for an extended period of time. Although some roads may not show cosmetic damage, there is the potential for the base to be damaged due to the flooding. Many roads were also damaged due to large trucks being called out to assist with debris removal.

Some of the roads that were identified to be damaged from the storm include, but are not limited to:

Woodland Drive	East 19th Street
Peavine Road	Jack Street
Indigo Road	Lilac Street
Bamboo Drive	Anthony Monica Street
LaPlace Park	Magnolia Street
Cambridge	West 9th Street
River Forest	Villa Street
Belle Pointe	Falcon Street
Camelia Street	Swan Street
East 3rd Street	West 8th Street
Captain Bourgeois Street	Timbermill Loop
Historic Main Street	East 12th Street
Cornland Street	West 13th Street

RECOVERY GOAL

Safe roads will lead to economic recovery and development, and enable citizens to return to normal mobility, get to their jobs, etc.

The St. John Parish Public Works Department is responsible for maintaining roadways and roadsides on more than 441 miles of roads throughout the parish. The department has an operating budget which includes funding for maintenance, equipment, and roads and bridges.

The parish allots approximately \$1 million per year for roadway maintenance. The Public Works Department is responsible for managing the roadway repairs. Small repairs, such as potholes, are handled with department crews. Major reconstruction and overlays are handled through an annual contract. Public Works has records of all previous repairs as well as this year's pending repairs.

RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITIES

These identified projects, and any future projects, should not be considered as isolated or unrelated responses to specific problems or issues. Rather, they should be examined in the context of the entire region. Jurisdictions should explore efficiency opportunities to coordinate and combine geographically related projects when possible. A comprehensive approach is also needed to ensure a unified system, in which the various transportation components recognize and contribute to each other.

CHALLENGES

The parish does not control any electronic traffic control systems. The Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (LADOTD) is responsible for construction of roadways, operating and improving traffic control systems, and conducting studies for traffic signs and stoplights, crossovers, synchronization of traffic signals, and cost-benefit analyses along all state highways within St. John Parish.

ACTION STEPS

- Have the Infrastructure Subcommittee submit the project to the Citizens Advisory Committee for consideration as a project.
- Continue to monitor plans for repairs and improvements with the DOTD.

POTENTIAL RESOURCES

Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development
Federal Highway Administration
St. John Parish

PROJECT CHAMPIONS

Tim Jackson







Housing Projects

Almost one million Louisiana residents lived without adequate housing because of damages caused by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, according to the 2007-2016 Strategic Plan of the Louisiana Housing Finance Agency (LHFA). The agency specializes in forming partnerships with federal, state and local governmental units, banks and other lending institutions and non-profit and for-profit developers to make housing affordable for Louisiana's families. One of its primary purposes has been to rebuild homes in order to help communities recover from the effects of hurricanes Katrina, Rita, Gustav and Ike, while simultaneously addressing the state's pressing housing issues, according to the State of Louisiana's 2010 Housing Needs Assessment. Some of these issues include: high foreclosure rates during periods of high unemployment; limited access to credit for buyers; community opposition to subsidized development; high rental housing costs; market degradation in neighborhoods due to blighted, abandoned properties; and limited availability of quality rental housing in rural areas targeted for economic development.

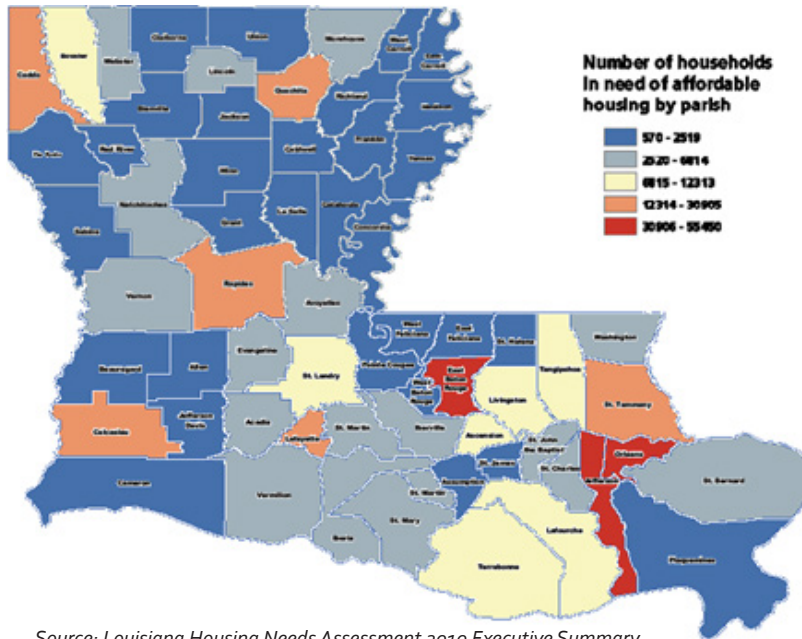
In its 2009 Phase III Housing Report for St. John the Baptist Parish, the University of New Orleans (UNO) cites U.S. Census data showing the parish grew by almost 30,000 residents between 1950 and 1990, averaging 27 percent per year. In contrast, between 1990 and 2000, population growth for the same parish dropped to 7.6 percent. According to the most recent census data available, from 2000 to 2010, the parish's population growth rate slowed further, to 6.7 percent. In 2010, 45,924 people lived in the parish.

UNO also reported that St. John Parish had 14,283 households in 2000, an increase of nearly 1,600 households, or about 12.4 percent, from 1990. The data showed the number of smaller households, with one, two, or three residents, increased from 1990, with a decline in larger households. These smaller households grew by almost 1,700, eclipsing the total number of new households added. Losses among larger households offset the gains. This likely resulted in the decrease in the number of occupants per residence for all households in St. John Parish.

UNO noted that St. John's population is aging. The increase in smaller households could be the result of "empty nesters," as well as new households whose young occupants have not yet had children. This is consistent with community input received during the parish's recovery planning process, which indicated a need for senior housing.

In 2000, the parish had 15,532 housing units, 14,283 of which were occupied, according to the UNO report. This represents an increase of 1,277 — nearly 9 percent — in the number of occupied housing units during the decade beginning in 1990. Almost 75 percent of all housing units were owner-occupied in 2000, the highest rate among south shore metro New Orleans parishes. Renter-occupied units accounted for about 17.4 percent of total units. Between 1990 and 2000, the percentage of owner-occupied units increased in St. John while the percentage of renters declined slightly.

Single detached units make up nearly 72 percent of the units in St. John Parish. The next largest percentage



Source: Louisiana Housing Needs Assessment 2010 Executive Summary

of units, classified as mobile homes, comes in at 11.66 percent. During the community planning process, residents noted the lack of adequate, affordable rental properties within the parish. Zoning laws state that in areas not zoned as rural or agricultural, 50.9 percent of the land is allowed for residential, with only 1.5 percent for multifamily residential housing.

In 2009, the average single family home in St. John Parish sold for \$157,875, about \$93 per square foot, according to the UNO report. In 2006, the year after Katrina, housing prices peaked, averaging \$168,472. They declined to an average of \$157,425 two years later. This indicates prices have generally held in St. John even as real estate prices during the same time period declined by more than 20 to 40 percent in other parishes and around the country. Although the population of St. John Parish did not increase significantly between 1990 and 2000, housing values did, statistics show. Housing values for owner-occupied housing units have risen sharply over the last few years, as have rental costs. However, incomes have not kept pace with the increased cost of housing.

According to the LHFA Louisiana Housing Needs Assessment for 2010, an estimated 386,000 low-income households in Louisiana need “affordable, decent” housing. The study further states “while the greatest need is among renters earning less than 50 percent Average Median Income (AMI), all categories of households and income groups faced increased cost burdens in the past decade.”

The ongoing effects of the recession on Louisiana’s economy and housing production remain a significant challenge. Between 2008 and 2010, unemployment rates rose from 5.1 percent to 8.2 percent statewide, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor statistics. Access to credit remains tight and an estimated 1,400 tax credit units remained at risk of not being developed due to lack of funding and deadlines as of November 2010, when the Housing Needs Assessment was published. The British Petroleum (BP) oil spill in early 2010 and the slow recovery from the recession continue to have negative impacts on the Louisiana economy.

In October 2012, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) conducted a pre-

damage assessment of the areas most affected by Hurricane Isaac, including St. John Parish. HUD reported rental vacancy rates had declined from 12 percent to 10 percent between April 2010 and August 2012, representing an increase in rental demand. There were no new multifamily unit permits in the 24-month period ending in July 2012. The parish had sustained a 2 percent annual decline in population since the 2010 Census, with an estimated 44,600 residents and 15,600 households as of August 2012. Furthermore, HUD characterized housing market conditions as “soft,” and estimated the single-family home vacancy rate to be 1.5 percent.

HUD’s pre-damage assessment coupled with 2010 census data suggest evolving demographic conditions in St. John, even without considering Hurricane Isaac’s impact. The parish’s low single-family home vacancy rate, combined with declining existing home sales, new housing starts and overall population, suggests an owner-occupied housing market at or near equilibrium, especially considering the parish’s population loss. Moreover, a decline in the rental vacancy rate with no additional rental stock further reinforces a shift in the parish’s overall housing market.

Demographic trends and changing economic conditions have converged to create new and different demand for housing in a market which has had limited growth in years prior. This was the situation in St. John Parish prior to the flooding damage from Hurricane Isaac.

Hurricane Isaac first hit Louisiana at Plaquemines Parish on Aug. 28, 2012, as a Category 1 hurricane before wobbling back to sea, then making a second landfall the next day just west of Port Fourchon. The storm lashed many parishes with strong winds and rain through Aug. 30.

On Aug. 29, Hurricane Isaac inundated St. John with storm surge and heavy rainfall. Historic flooding destroyed not only homes and businesses in LaPlace, Reserve and other areas, but also reached many buildings in areas that had never seen floodwaters. Both Interstate 10 and Airline Highway (U.S. Highway 61) were flooded, leaving no major way to enter or exit the parish during and immediately after the storm.



Tropical storm-force winds damaged many buildings throughout the parish. Because of the storm, parish residents and officials are analyzing St. John's unmet needs and creating plans for the future. This process will allow them to better understand the parish's ability to function as well as identify projects to build back better and stronger and fill unmet needs.

Damage was extensive and widespread along both the Mississippi River's banks in St. John Parish. Nearly half the parish's households reported some damage, including 46 percent of homeowners and 56 percent of renters. In LaPlace, which has St. John's largest population and had the highest concentration of reported damages, 53 percent of homeowners and 72 percent of renters showed verified damages. Outside of LaPlace, highest concentrations of damage were in Edgard, where 37 percent of households reported damage, and Reserve, where 32 percent of households reported damage.

Overall, St. John Parish experienced comparatively low rates of damage to mobile homes and similar dwellings, with most occurring outside of LaPlace. Fifty percent of damaged housing units in Edgard, 35 percent

of units in Mount Airy and 33 percent of units in Garyville were mobile homes. Across the parish, damaged mobile home units had an average FEMA Verified Loss (FVL) of \$2,415.

A high number — 2,223 — of low- to moderate-income owner-occupied households in LaPlace reported damage. The vast majority were single family households, with an average FVL of \$13,127. Parish-wide, the income of about 54 percent of the 5,795 damaged owner-occupied households was considered low to moderate. The average FVL for single-family homes was \$11,956.

Of greater concern is the large population of those households with verified losses greater than \$3,000. In total, 3,301 owner-occupied households had extensive damage, with about 44 percent also categorized as Low-Moderate Income (LMI). At the time of the storm, 930 of the households with extensive damage lacked flood insurance; 619 of those are LMI. While the majority of flood-damaged homes without flood insurance are in LaPlace, it had the lowest proportion (23 percent) of uninsured flooded households. Communities with higher proportions of households lacking flood insurance

include Reserve with 93 households (78 percent); Garyville with 14 households (78 percent); and Pleasure Bend with 5 households (56 percent).

In rural, less-affluent areas of the parish, it is likely a lower proportion of households applied for FEMA Individual Assistance (IA); thus, the number of both flooded households and uninsured flooded households may be understated, specifically in small communities outside of LaPlace and on the river's west bank.

Twenty-one percent, or 3,328 of St. John's 15,965 households, are renters. Hurricane Isaac damaged 1,473 of those households. Like the single-family population, damage to renters' property was concentrated in LaPlace, as 1,117 of the 1,473 (76 percent) damaged rental households are located there. Of this total, 1,049 households are LMI, comprising 85 percent of the damaged rental population. Parish-wide, 1,235 of 1,473 (84 percent) of damaged rental households are LMI.

The Citizens Advisory Committee's (CAC) Housing Subcommittee used residents' input to develop strategies focused on locating and leveraging the best possible funding sources and development tools to provide a variety of housing options. During the parish's open houses, residents sent a loud, clear message that housing was one of their highest priorities. Therefore, the CAC has concentrated a good portion of its efforts on housing recovery.

The strategies presented in this section address new construction, rehabilitation, home-buyer assistance, and rental assistance options and opportunities, all of which have the goal of achieving affordably priced homes and rental housing.

A cadre of recovery partners will be key components for the implementation of these housing strategies, including the: U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development; U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development; U.S. Environmental Protection Agency; U.S. Small Business Administration; Louisiana Housing Finance Agency; Louisiana Office of Community Development; Louisiana Disaster Housing Task Force; and St. John Parish Housing Authority.

SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS INITIATIVE

PROJECT AREA

St. John the Baptist Parish

WORKING GROUPS INVOLVED

St. John Parish Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)

St. John Parish CAC Housing Subcommittee

St. John Parish Government: Administration, Parish Council, Sheriff's Office, Department of Health and Human Services, etc.

Neighborhood associations in St. John Parish

Local nonprofit organizations

Louisiana Office of Community Development

Federal agencies: U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), U.S.

Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), U.S.

Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Beginning Aug. 28, 2012, Hurricane Isaac inundated St. John Parish with storm surge and heavy rainfall. Historic flooding destroyed not only homes and businesses in LaPlace, Reserve and other areas in the parish, but also reached numerous buildings in areas that had never seen floodwaters. Both Interstate 10 and Airline Highway were flooded leaving no major means of entrance or exit for the parish during and immediately following the storm. As a result of Hurricane Isaac, the parish is now analyzing areas of unmet needs that came to light in the aftermath of the disaster, as well as planning for the parish's future. This process has resulted in the identification of projects that will assist in achieving these needs. During the community input phase of the recovery strategy planning process, many residents identified the need to feel safe again within their neighborhoods as being of paramount importance to regaining any sense of normalcy. The development of a crime prevention program is one effort that would strengthen St. John Parish's appeal as a desirable community in which to live.

The Safe Neighborhoods project consists of two elements: a technical assistance component to develop a program and the process of acquiring the resources to implement it

RECOVERY GOAL

During the open houses, citizens indicated that they had experienced anxiety about crime in their neighborhoods, especially fear of looting and theft during and immediately after the storm. Crime-reduction programs help to build safe, secure communities that attract and retain families and increase the overall quality of life. Economic impact is derived by enhancing community life to provide a solid living environment for potential residents. In addition, crime is one of the key indicators linked to new business development or existing business relocation. Therefore, any successful crime prevention efforts would make those communities more enticing for economic development. The recovery of St. John Parish is dependent upon providing a quality life for its residents. Residents need to feel that their community is whole and is a safe place to rebuild, thus assisting in their overall recovery toward normalcy.

RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITIES

As a component of the Housing RSF Subcommittee recommendations, a "Safe Neighborhoods" program is one element of a multi-faceted approach to facilitate responsible redevelopment within the affected areas of the parish. This program is also directly associated with the parish's mental health needs, which are addressed by the Health and Social Services section and the project for directly addressing them. Any program that helps to reduce anxiety of residents by creating safer neighborhoods assists in reaching the goal of improving mental health in the parish.

Crime prevention programs also contribute to a community's quality of life by offering a range of activities that will help to retain and attract families. The effect can be self-reinforcing as more families will create increased demand for the programs, and as word spreads that such programs are available and are effective in reducing crime in St. John Parish. The post-disaster community vision is "One Parish, One Future: Building Back Better and Stronger." In order to achieve this vision, everyone in the parish must be helped. This strategy helps to identify the need for and resources to achieve the development of programs to improve the safety and well-being of all St. John residents, thus improving their quality of life. Transforming neighborhoods into safe places gives a psychological lift to the residents, raising their spirits and adding to the feeling of the parish building back better and stronger.

The technical assistance provided through this program and the implementation of it will assist the parish in being better prepared for future events by increasing its ability to not only respond to and recover from disasters, but also to build long-term capacity to maintain strong, safe, functioning neighborhoods. This project also exhibited great community support. Numerous town hall meetings have been held to assist in the determination of recovery goals and projects. An online survey was conducted to gather additional input and how it relates to the future of the parish. As it received the highest total in the community voting process among all housing projects, the Safe Neighborhoods initiative is a high-priority project.

CHALLENGES

The first challenge or objective will be gaining the cooperation of the St. John Parish government and Sherriff's Office to proceed with the project as a collaborative initiative. Once this collaboration has been secured, the community will need to obtain resources for the necessary technical assistance to begin implementation of the desired programs.

Second, the Safe Neighborhoods Initiative would require recruiting interested residents to sign up for the Neighborhood Watch Program. It will also require working with nonprofit housing providers to identify and obtain properties for the Police Officer and Teacher Next Door programs and recruiting officers and teachers as home buyers.

ACTION STEPS

- Obtain collaborative agreement with Parish Government and Sherriff's Department
- Determine the technical assistance and resource needs for the programs
- Apply for grants and solicit financial support from area employers
- Coordinate with local law enforcement entities
- Advertise for volunteers to participate in Neighborhood Watch programs
- Recruit police officers and teachers to participate in the "Police Officer Next Door" and "Teacher Next Door" programs

PROJECT CHAMPIONS

Lucien Gauff

POTENTIAL RESOURCES

St. John Parish Government including Parish Council, Sheriff's Office and the Department of Health and Human Services

DOJ Project Safe Neighborhoods

HHS Center for Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships

HUD Community Development Block Grant Program and Good Neighbor Next Door Program

Partnership for Sustainable Communities

Interagency partnership of HUD, DOT, and EPA

HHS - Community Service Block Grant program

Louisiana Office of Community Development, HUD Program Manager for Louisiana

Greater New Orleans Foundation

Dore' Family Foundation

Woldenberg Foundation and Helis Foundation

Edna Wardlaw Charitable Trust

Farmers Insurance Group Safety Foundation

Reconnecting America and Shell Foundation

St. John Parish neighborhood associations

St. John United Way



ESTABLISH PERMANENT DISASTER RECOVERY OFFICE

PROJECT AREA

St. John the Baptist Parish

WORKING GROUPS INVOLVED

St. John Parish Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)

St. John Parish CAC Housing Subcommittee

St. John Parish Government: Administration and Parish Council

Local nonprofit organizations

Louisiana Office of Community Development

Federal agencies: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)

University of New Orleans

Louisiana State University

South Central Planning & Development Commission

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Hurricane Isaac first hit Louisiana's coast on Aug. 28, 2012 as a Category 1 hurricane and the storm proceeded to impact multiple Louisiana parishes with strong winds and rain through the next day.

Damage was extensive and widespread along both the Mississippi River's east and west banks in St. John Parish. In total, more than 48 percent of the parish's households reported some level of damage, including 46 percent of the parish's owner-occupied household population and 56 percent of the parish's renter household population. The majority of owner-occupied and renter household damage was centralized in LaPlace because it is by far the largest population center in the parish and experienced extensive flooding. There, 4,408 owner-occupied households and 1,502 renter households reported some level of verified damage. Additionally, LaPlace also had the highest concentration of reported damages, with 53 percent of the owner-occupied population and 72 percent of the renter household population with verified damages. Outside of LaPlace, the highest concentrations of damage were

located in Edgard, where 37 percent of households reported damage, and in Reserve, where 32 percent of households reported damage.

Of greater concern is the large population of households with extensive damage (FEMA Verified Loss (FVL) of greater than \$3,000). In total, 3,301 owner-occupied households had extensive damage with 1,467 of those households (44 percent) also categorized as low- or moderate-income individuals (LMI). There were 930 households with extensive damage that lacked flood insurance at the time of the storm, with 619 of the 930 households classified as LMI. The majority of flooded homes without flood insurance are located in LaPlace (688 of the 930.) But as LaPlace is more affluent than the parish as a whole, it had the lowest proportion of uninsured flooded households (23 percent). Reserve (93 households, 78 percent), Garyville (14 households, 78 percent) and Pleasure Bend (5 households, 56 percent) all had higher proportions of flooded households lacking insurance. Furthermore, in rural, less affluent areas of the parish, it is likely a lower proportion of households applied for Federal Emergency Management Agency Individual Assistance. Therefore, the number of both flooded households and uninsured flooded households may be understated, specifically in communities outside of LaPlace and on the river's west bank.

A permanent Disaster Recovery Management Office would be responsible for professional-level planning and implementation support of St. John Parish's Community Recovery Strategy. The Disaster Recovery Management Office would be a "one-stop shop" for residents, business owners and other citizens to obtain information regarding disaster recovery. The Disaster Recovery Manager would be the lead coordinator between the public and all local, state and federal agencies involved in disaster recovery and support functions.

This project consists of leveraging technical assistance to employ a permanent Disaster Recovery Manager, one administrative staff person and the necessary support materials to establish databases and maintain records of the work of the office.

RECOVERY GOAL

The Disaster Recovery Management Office will collaborate with state, federal and other stakeholders and supporters such as the CAC, business and nonprofit communities to raise financial support (including long-term capital investment in local businesses) for the community's recovery. The office would leverage resources where possible and reduce potential duplication of assistance.

CHALLENGES

The community will need to obtain resources for the necessary technical assistance to begin implementation of the desired programs. Reliance upon the parish's current government agencies to fill the role proposed would not be an alternative since there is currently a lack of capacity at the parish level necessary to accomplish this initiative.

ACTION STEPS

- Obtain Parish concurrence with the need to establish this permanent office
- Determine the technical assistance and resource needs for the program
- Develop a budget for the operation of the office
- Apply for grants and/or solicit other financial support
- Develop job descriptions for the local disaster recovery manager and administrative assistant positions
- Implement search process to fill the positions
- Establish the office and set up the recovery database

RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITIES

The Disaster Recovery Management Office will be the key point of contact linking all of the proposed activities and support functions described in the parish's Community Recovery Strategy and will be responsible for the plan's implementation and management.

The Disaster Recovery Management Office will assist in the parish's recovery efforts in many ways including but not limited to:

- Leading the creation and coordination of the activities of local recovery-dedicated organizations and initiatives.
- Serving as a "one-stop shop" where residents, business owners and other citizens may obtain information regarding disaster recovery, mitigation and available resources
- Working with the local Disaster Recovery Centers to develop a unified and accessible communication strategy
- Participating in damage and impact assessments with other recovery partners
- Organizing recovery planning processes including consideration for individuals with disabilities and others with access and functional needs, seniors and members of underserved communities
- Engaging constituents and collecting their input, and leading the development of the community's recovery visions, priorities, resources, capability and capacity
- Ensuring inclusiveness in the community recovery process, including persons with disabilities and limited English proficiency.
- Communicating recovery priorities to state and federal governments and other recovery stakeholders and supporters
- Incorporating critical mitigation, resilience, sustainability and accessibility-building measures into the recovery plans and efforts
- Support the CAC in leading the development of the community's recovery plans and ensuring that they are publicly supported, actionable and feasible based on available funding and capacity
- Working closely with the recovery leadership at all levels to ensure a well-coordinated, timely and well-executed recovery
- Developing and implementing recovery progress measures and communicating adjustments and improvements to applicable stakeholders and authorities

PROJECT CHAMPIONS

R.J. Ory

POTENTIAL RESOURCES

St. John Parish Government
St. John Parish Council
USDA Rural Development
HUD Community Development Block Grants and Community Development Block Grants Disaster Recovery program
U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Emergency Management Performance Grants
Louisiana Office of Community Development – HUD Program Manager for Louisiana
Louisiana Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness
Emergency Management Performance Grants
Greater New Orleans Foundation
St. John United Way
Louisiana Municipal Association
University of New Orleans for technical assistance and data
Louisiana State University for technical assistance and data
South Central Planning & Development Commission for grant searches and technical assistance
Local Initiative Support Corporation
Seedco
Smart Growth America
Community Development Capital
National Emergency Management Association



IDENTIFY/REMEDiate BLIGHTED PROPERTIES

PROJECT AREA

St. John the Baptist Parish

WORKING GROUPS INVOLVED

St. John Parish Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)
St. John Parish CAC Housing Subcommittee
St. John Parish Government: Administration, Parish Council, Planning & Zoning Code Enforcement Department, etc.
Neighborhood associations
Local nonprofit organizations
Louisiana Office of Community Development
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)
U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)
University of New Orleans
South Central Planning & Development Commission

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Hurricane Isaac impacted multiple Louisiana parishes beginning Aug. 28, 2012. Damage was extensive and widespread in St. John Parish. In total, more than 48 percent of the parish's households reported some level of damage, including 46 percent of the parish's owner-occupied household population and 56 percent of the parish's renter household population. The majority of owner-occupied and renter household damage was centralized in LaPlace because it is by far the largest population center in the parish and experienced extensive flooding. There, 4,408 owner-occupied households and 1,502 renter households reported some level of verified damage.

A high concentration of low-to-moderate income owner-occupied households (2,233) reported damage in LaPlace. The vast majority of those reporting damage were single-family homes, which had an average Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

Verified Loss of \$13,127. Parish-wide, 54 percent (3,136 of 5,795) of damaged owner-occupied households were low-to-moderate income and the average FEMA Verified Loss for single-family homes was \$11,956.

The goal of establishing a blight remediation program is to rid the parish of dilapidated properties that existed prior to Hurricane Isaac and to prevent blight in properties damaged by or abandoned after the storm. An in-depth assessment of existing ordinances, code enforcement resources, procedures and staffing, along with an analysis of national best practices and case studies for successful blight remediation programs in other areas, would occur before designing a program. The blight remediation program would serve to both monitor and address blight through enforcement and penalties, and also work to find resources to help owners bring their property back into compliance.

This initiative would establish a parish-wide blight remediation program and would likely modify existing blight policies and procedures.

RECOVERY GOAL

St. John Parish's recovery efforts and long-term vitality are dependent on safe and secure neighborhoods that are free of blight. A blight remediation program is the mechanism to ensure that owners who have repaired properties are able to maintain their livability and value. Additionally, blight remediation is one of the most visible indicators of post-disaster recovery, aiding the community's overall sense of well-being.

RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITIES

This project is a component of the housing subcommittee recommendations. A blight remediation program is one element of a multi-faceted approach to facilitate responsible redevelopment within the affected

areas of the parish. As such, this program will be implemented in concert with other programs designed to revitalize the parish's communities such as but not limited to a "Safe Neighborhood" program, a first-time homebuyer program and a homeowner repair program.

This program embodies the intent of the entire Community Recovery Strategy by working to rid the parish of dilapidated properties that existed prior to Hurricane Isaac and preventing blight in properties damaged by or abandoned after the storm. Vibrant communities free of blight have a direct correlation to a reduction in crime and are a key indicator for potential economic development.

A blight remediation program may stimulate the community's economy in three key ways:

1. Protect or enhance property values in the most-affected communities
2. Foster a higher quality of life that may entice future parish residents
3. Clear land that may be used for redevelopment

CHALLENGES

The first challenge or objective will be cooperating with the St. John Parish Government in order to evaluate current blight remediation policies and procedures. Once this cooperation has been secured, the community will need to obtain resources for the necessary technical assistance to get the desired programs implemented.

ACTION STEPS

- Determine the technical assistance and resource needs for the program
- Apply for grants and/or solicit other financial support
- Establish a blight remediation task force that would include relevant parish staff, parish council staff, community leaders
- Assess extent and locations of blight
- Assess current strategies and procedures in place to address blight
- Analyze best practices and case studies of local governments who have been/are in the process of successfully eradicating blight
- Determine methods to bring a blight remediation program to fruition such as a parish council resolution
- Establish a common definition of blight
- Create goals for blight reduction
- Develop a system to track blight and the progress toward eradicating it
- Prioritize the areas and neighborhoods on which to focus
- Utilize tools to identify blight
- Ensure that zoning requirements and local ordinances adequately reflect blight remediation goals
- Institute penalties for owners of blighted properties
- Establish processes to seize blighted properties and return them to productive use
- Establish procedures for demolition of non-historical and non-salvageable properties
- Identify available local, state, federal and nonprofit resources to address blight

PROJECT CHAMPIONS

B. Carey Gauff

POTENTIAL RESOURCES

St. John Parish Government: Administration, Parish Council, Planning & Zoning
Technical Assistance from City of New Orleans
Louisiana Office of Community Development-Disaster Recovery Unit (OCD-DRU)
University of New Orleans
Louisiana State University
HUD Community Development Block Grants Disaster Recovery and Section 108 programs
U.S. Department of the Interior – Conservation Activities by Youth Services Organizations
FEMA – Mitigation programs, Pre-Disaster Mitigation, Severe Repetitive Loss

Louisiana Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness Mitigation Grants (FEMA Program Manager)
Louisiana Housing Corporation
South Central Planning & Development Commission
Catholic Charities - Disaster Case Management
Eight Days of Hope
United Way
Habitat for Humanity
St. John the Baptist Parish Long-Term Recovery Group
Local Initiative Support Corporation
Seedco
Smart Growth America
Community Development Capital



GRANT AND/OR FORGIVABLE LOAN HOMEOWNER REHABILITATION PROGRAM

PROJECT AREA

St. John the Baptist Parish – damage-impacted areas

WORKING GROUPS INVOLVED

St. John Parish Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)
St. John Parish CAC Housing Subcommittee
St. John Parish Government: Administration, Parish Council, etc.
Local nonprofit organizations
Louisiana Office of Community Development
Federal agencies such as U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)
University of New Orleans, Louisiana State University
South Central Planning & Development Commission
Financial institutions

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Damage inflicted by Hurricane Isaac in St. John Parish from Aug. 28 through Aug. 30, 2012, was extensive including more than 46 percent of the parish's owner-occupied household population. The majority of owner-occupied household damage was centralized in LaPlace because it is by far the largest population center in the parish and experienced extensive flooding. There, 4,408 owner-occupied households reported some level of verified damage. Additionally, LaPlace also had the highest concentration of reported damages, with 53 percent of the owner-occupied population with verified damages.

Of greater concern is the large population of households with extensive damage (FEMA Verified Loss of greater than \$3,000). In total 3,301 owner-occupied households had extensive damage, with 1,467 of those households (44 percent) also categorized as Low-Moderate Income (LMI). There were 930 households with extensive damage that lacked flood insurance at the time of the storm, with 619 of the 930 households classified as LMI.

The majority of flooded homes without flood insurance are located in LaPlace (688 of the 930.) But as LaPlace is more affluent than the parish as a whole, it had the lowest proportion of uninsured flooded households (23 percent). Reserve (93 households, 78 percent), Garyville (14 households, 78 percent) and Pleasure Bend (5 households, 56 percent) all had higher proportions of flooded households lacking insurance. Furthermore, in rural, less affluent areas of the parish, it is likely a lower proportion of households applied for Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Individual Assistance. Therefore, the number of both flooded households and uninsured flooded households may be understated, specifically in communities outside LaPlace and on the river's west bank.

The overarching purpose of a homeowner repair/rebuild program is to revitalize St. John Parish's impacted communities. Devastated communities will be blighted by abandoned homes, clouded land titles and disinvestments if a large portion of the financial assistance is not directly invested in rebuilding homes or buying replacement homes in the affected areas. Therefore, the most comprehensive financial and technical assistance packages will be made available to those pre-Hurricane Isaac homeowners who make the effort and take the risks to move back to play a part in rebuilding the parish.

Financial incentives and advisory services will be available for homeowners who wish to:

- Repair, with incentives to promote rehabilitation
- Rebuild, with financial incentives to reconstruct on the same site if repair is neither feasible nor economically viable

This program is designed to provide direct assistance to homeowners most heavily impacted by Hurricane Isaac.

RECOVERY GOAL

St. John Parish's recovery efforts and long-term vitality are dependent on safe and secure neighborhoods that are free of blighted, dilapidated properties. A homeowner repair program provides a direct mechanism to prevent blight and repair homes to enhance livability, property values and thereby the tax base.

RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITIES

A homeowner repair program is one element of a multi-faceted approach to facilitate responsible redevelopment within the affected areas of the parish.

In order to achieve this vision, everyone in the parish must be helped. This program embodies the post-disaster community vision is "One Parish, One Future: Building Back Better and Stronger" by providing direct assistance to homeowners with unmet needs as a result of damage from Hurricane Isaac.

This project takes a holistic approach to the recovery of the impacted neighborhoods responding to the overall needs within the community through the following steps:

1. Rehabilitating damaged housing, preventing blight and contributing to overall neighborhood recovery.
2. Supporting positive outcomes for families who live in the area and making communities more attractive to prospective residents.
3. Enhancing property values of those rehabilitated properties and protecting the values of adjacent, non-damaged residences.

This project reduces future loss by incorporating mitigation techniques into the redevelopment of all selected residences. Additionally, funds will be

targeted toward those areas where safe, sustainable development is most feasible.

Specifically, any rehabilitation program would likely include an elevation and other mitigation component. This could be designed in a manner similar to mitigation components of past rehab programs, which included:

- Elevation Grants up to a maximum of \$30,000 for those homeowners whose replacement homes require elevation to meet the latest available FEMA guidance for base flood elevations when mandated to be elevated by the local parish or governing local jurisdiction. This program will be a traditional rehabilitation program and is subject to environmental and other federal regulations and documentation of receipts.
- Mitigation Grants of up to \$7,500 may be available to complete other mitigation measures, dependent on available funding.
- The Parish may also choose to initiate an elevation assistance program with FEMA HMGP funds or other available grant dollars.

CHALLENGES

The first challenge or objective will be gaining the concurrence of the St. John Parish Government to proceed with the program. The community will then need to obtain resources for the necessary technical assistance to get the program implemented. In lieu of a homeowner repair program, affected residents would be reliant upon hazard and/or flood insurance claims, which likely would not cover remaining unmet needs. This program will require close coordination between St. John Parish, the Disaster Recovery Management Office, the St. John Parish Long-Term Recovery Group and Catholic Charities case managers.

ACTION STEPS

- Elicit Parish Government concurrence with this project
- Determine the technical assistance and resource needs for the program
- Apply for grants and/or solicit other financial support
- Identify homeowner population with outstanding unmet needs
 - Work with the St. John Parish Long-Term Recovery Group and Catholic Charities
 - Refer eligible applicants to appropriate case management resources
 - Coordinate with the local disaster recovery manager
- Design the program to include specified construction and eligibility requirements pursuant to identified funding sources
- Identify any technical assistance needed to craft appropriate legal documentation as well as any program monitoring and compliance, where appropriate



POTENTIAL RESOURCES

St. John Parish Government
St. John Parish Council
USDA Rural Development
HUD – Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)
CDBG-D, Section 108
USDA – Community Facilities Direct Loan & Grant Program, Section 504 loan program
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Community Services Block Grant
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs – Direct Loans to Disabled Veterans
Federal Emergency Management Agency – Mitigation Programs
Louisiana Office of Community Development, HUD
Program Manager for Louisiana
Louisiana Housing Corporation
Greater New Orleans Foundation
St. John United Way
Technical assistance from University of New Orleans and Louisiana State University
South Central Planning & Development Commission
Private financial institutions
Local Initiative Support Corporation
Seedco
Smart Growth America
Community Development Capital
Hope Credit Union
Habitat for Humanity
Home Depot Foundation

SENIOR RENTAL HOUSING INITIATIVE

PROJECT AREA

St. John the Baptist Parish

WORKING GROUPS INVOLVED

St. John Parish Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)

St. John Parish CAC Housing Subcommittee

St. John Parish Government: Administration, Parish Council, Department of Health and Human Services, Council on Aging, etc.

Local nonprofit organizations

Louisiana Office of Aging and Adult Services

Louisiana Office of Community Development

Louisiana Housing Corporation

Federal agencies: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

St. John's rental housing represents 21 percent of all households (3,328 of 15,965). Proportionally, 20 percent of Isaac damaged households in the parish (1,473 of 7,190) were rental households. Like the single-family population, rental damage was concentrated in LaPlace, as 76 percent (1,117 of 1,473) of damaged rental households were located in this community. Of this total in LaPlace, 1,049 households were Low-Moderate Income (LMI), or 85 percent of the damaged rental population. Parish-wide, 1,235 of 1,473 (84 percent) of damaged rental households are LMI.

In October 2012, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) conducted a pre-damage assessment of the areas most affected by Hurricane Isaac, including St. John Parish. HUD reported rental vacancy rates had declined from 12 percent to 10 percent between April 2010 and August 2012, representing a real increase in rental demand, as three were no new multifamily unit permits in the 24-month period ending in July 2012. As a result of Hurricane Isaac,

the parish is now analyzing areas of unmet need that came to light in the aftermath of the disaster, as well as planning for the parish's future to better understand the parish's functionality and identify the projects that will assist in meeting these needs. During the community input phase of the recovery strategy planning process, many residents identified the apparent need for senior rental housing in St. John Parish. The senior rental housing project is a feasibility study to determine the need for senior rental housing and to identify the resources available to meet those needs.

RECOVERY GOAL

The recovery of the parish is dependent upon providing a quality life for all of its residents. There is an impression within the community, especially among the existing senior population that there is a need for more senior rental housing. By providing safe, decent and affordable places for seniors to live, they receive not only better housing opportunities but rather places where they can congregate with fellow senior residents and participate in communal activities they enjoy. In addition, by providing facilities and activities that fill voids in their current lifestyles, senior housing facilities will enhance the daily life of senior residents, thus assisting in their overall recovery to normalcy.

RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITIES

As stated in the background data for housing, HUD has determined that there was greater demand for rental housing in general in St. John Parish before Hurricane Isaac. The storm's impact highlighted the insufficiency of the rental housing supply for the growing demand in the community. The senior demographic is one of the fastest growing segments of the population. Therefore, this project is directly related to the housing needs within the community and would directly affect the construction sector of the economy.

The entire community will benefit from this project in two ways. First, the accumulation of accurate data regarding the senior population and their housing needs within the community will allow the parish the opportunity for better planning and implementation of programs to meet those needs. Accurate data are necessary for appropriate state implementation of federal programs for these groups in areas such as housing assistance, energy cost assistance, community development and social services.

Secondly, once the determination has been made that there is a need for more senior rental housing, then the community as a whole will benefit economically from the jobs created and building materials purchased during construction of senior rental housing, and from the ongoing operational and maintenance needs as well. These facilities do serve just one age group but the benefits of having them accrue to the entire community. Seniors are an important component of the community: they shop, use services and pay taxes. They also volunteer and make generous charitable contributions. They are an important familial asset as well as it is often the grandparents who offer the first source of child care to working parents.

Seniors offer much to the community because:

- Seniors make significant contributions to their families, communities and the economy.

- Seniors benefit from a strong voluntary sector as both contributors and beneficiaries.

- Seniors volunteer and promote volunteerism among other generations.

- Seniors engage in the community through mentoring of others (and should be encouraged to do so).

- Just the historical and institutional knowledge that seniors maintain within the community makes an invaluable contribution to the quality of life.

CHALLENGES

The only alternative to this project/program would be to do nothing and let the market take care of meeting demand. However, data show the market is not meeting demand for rental housing in general within the parish, and seniors make up one of the fastest growing demographics in the population. Furthermore, zoning and current zoning restrictions within the parish have reduced the amount of usable land for multifamily development and thereby have increased the cost of the small amount of land that is available, making it prohibitively expensive to develop affordable rental housing.

This project is important because of an identified apparent need for senior rental housing in the parish. The project will determine the extent of that need and identify potential funding to assist in development of senior housing to meet that need.

ACTION STEPS

- Determine the technical assistance and resource needs for the programs
- Identify potential funding and apply for grants and/or other funding for this research/feasibility study
- Identify locations and number of senior, single-family-home owners, mobile homeowners and renters in the parish
- Research the population growth trends for seniors in the parish
- Determine the current and projected demand for senior rental housing within the parish
- Identify locations where senior rental housing is needed and might be located; identify obstacles to development of senior rental complexes
- Identify and apply for grants and other financial sources for senior housing projects as need arises
- Identify nonprofit or for-profit developers to implement senior housing projects

POTENTIAL RESOURCES

St. John Parish Government: Administration,
Parish Council, Department of Health and
Human Services, Council On Aging
HHS – Community Services Block Grant
HUD – Community Development Block Grant,
202 Grants, Section 231 Multifamily Mortgage
Insurance Program, ALCP Grants
Louisiana Office of Community Development – HUD
Program Manager for Louisiana
Louisiana Housing Corporation
Greater New Orleans Foundation
St. John United Way
Catholic Charities
Local Initiative Support Corporation
Seedco
Smart Growth America
Community Development Capital

PROJECT CHAMPIONS

B. Carey Gauff



FIRST-TIME HOME BUYER PROGRAM

PROJECT AREA

St. John the Baptist Parish

WORKING GROUPS INVOLVED

St. John Parish Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)

St. John Parish CAC Housing Subcommittee

St. John Parish Government: Administration,
Parish Council, etc.

Local nonprofit organizations

Louisiana Office of Community Development

Federal agencies: U.S. Department of Housing
and Urban Development (HUD) and U.S.

Department of Agriculture (USDA)

University of New Orleans

Louisiana State University

South Central Planning & Development Commission

Financial institutions

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

In October 2012, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) conducted a pre-damage assessment of the areas most affected by Hurricane Isaac, including St. John Parish. Per its assessment, HUD determined the parish had sustained a 2 percent annual decline in population since the 2010 Census, estimating 44,600 residents and 15,600 households as of August 2012. Furthermore, HUD characterized housing market conditions as "soft," estimating single-family home vacancy at 1.5 percent. Additionally, HUD reported a 9 percent decline in home sales in the 12-month period prior to Hurricane Isaac in comparison to the year prior. In the same period, new housing starts declined 21 percent while the proportion of distressed mortgages increased from 11 to 12 percent.

This program is to provide financing to eligible first-time homebuyers to purchase a single- or two-family property. Eligible first-time homebuyers are typically those at 80 percent or less of the Area Median Income

(AMI). This program is designed to fill the gap between the sale price of the property and what an applicant can afford.

HUD defines a first-time homebuyer as an individual who meets any one of the following criteria:

An individual who does not have an ownership interest in a principal residence during a 3-year period prior to the date of purchase. For spouses, if either meets the above test, they will be considered first-time homebuyers.

A single person who has only owned a property with a former spouse.

An individual who has only owned a principal residence that was not permanently affixed to a permanent foundation in accordance with applicable regulations.

An individual who has only owned a property that was not in compliance with applicable codes and cannot be made compliant for less than the cost of constructing a permanent structure.

This program is designed to provide an affordable path to homeownership for mobile home and renter households affected by Hurricane Isaac.

RECOVERY GOAL

St. John Parish's recovery efforts are dependent on fostering vibrant communities composed of residents with financial and cultural ties to the community. Homeownership is a key mechanism to enhance buy-in for a particular community. Studies show that increased rates of homeownership creates stability within neighborhoods and communities overall with increased property maintenance, increased property values and community involvement. Thus, transitioning mobile home and renter households into homeownership would strengthen those residents' bonds to the community.

RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITIES

A first-time home buyer program is one element of a multi-faceted approach to facilitate responsible redevelopment within the parish and foster more stable neighborhoods.

This strategy helps to identify the need for and the resources necessary to achieve the development of a program to assist low- and moderate-income working families with the purchase of affordable housing. There is an identified need for more housing choices and more affordable properties within the parish, and this project helps to make more housing opportunities for low- and moderate-income first-time home buyers. HUD's definition of first-time buyers includes owners of mobile homes; moving families from these types of properties to reduced risk properties makes the parish better and stronger.

This project will encourage green building techniques. This project also intends to utilize existing properties, since those are usually more affordable. Moving families from more vulnerable mobile homes into more stable and risk-reduced properties helps to increase recovery benefits. It also improves the quality of life by assisting low- to moderate-income families achieve home ownership. The recovery of the parish is dependent upon providing a quality life for all of its residents. There is an impression within the community that there is a need for more affordable housing. By helping to provide safe, decent and affordable housing in which low- to moderate-income families can live, this project is offering better housing opportunities for first-time buyers. Home ownership is a stabilizing force in the lives of families and the communities they live in. It is one of the best capacity building mechanisms there is for low- to moderate-income families.

CHALLENGES

Without a first-time homebuyer program, households would remain housed in rental or mobile home units and would likely be more apt to uproot from the community over time.

ACTION STEPS

- Determine the technical assistance and resource needs for the program
- Apply for grants and/or solicit other financial support
- Identify affected mobile home and renter populations interested in homeownership
- Design the program to include specified construction and eligibility requirements pursuant to identified funding sources
- Select appropriate financial vendors to identify program participants and originate/service loans
- Design a mechanism to collect and manage program income
- Identify any technical assistance needed to craft appropriate legal documentation as well as any program monitoring and compliance, where appropriate
- Identify appropriate case management resources to guide eligible applicants through the application process

POTENTIAL RESOURCES

St. John Parish Government: Administration, Parish Council, Department Health and Human Services

USDA – Rural Development

HUD – Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), CDBG-D, HOME Program

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs – Direct Housing Loan Program to Disabled Veterans

USDA – Section 502 Direct & Guaranteed Loan Program

Louisiana Office of Community Development – HUD Program Manager for Louisiana

Louisiana Housing Corporation – First Time Homebuyer Program

Greater New Orleans Foundation

St. John United Way

Technical Assistance from University of New Orleans and Louisiana State University

South Central Planning & Development Commission, grant searches and technical assistance

Private financial institutions

National foundations and financial institutions

Local Initiative Support Corporation

Seedco

Smart Growth America

Community Development Capital



SPECIAL NEEDS PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SHELTERS

PROJECT AREA

St. John the Baptist Parish

WORKING GROUPS INVOLVED

St. John Parish Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)
St. John Parish CAC Housing Subcommittee
St. John Parish Government: Administration, Parish Council, Department of Health and Human Services, Council on Aging, etc.
Local nonprofit organizations
Louisiana Office of Aging & Adult Services
Louisiana Office of Community Development
Louisiana Housing Corporation
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS),
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)
U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

On Aug. 29, 2012, Hurricane Isaac inundated St. John Parish with storm surge and heavy rainfall. Historic flooding destroyed not only homes and businesses in LaPlace, Reserve, and other areas in the parish, but also reached numerous buildings in areas that had never seen floodwaters.

As a result of Hurricane Isaac, the parish is now analyzing areas of unmet need that came to light in the aftermath of the disaster, as well as planning for the parish's future to better understand the parish's functionality and identify the projects that will assist in overcoming these needs. During the community input phase of the recovery strategy planning process, many residents identified the apparent need for special needs facilities/housing in the parish.

This project is multi-faceted and attempts to assess and address identifiable insufficiencies among public

facilities/shelters for special needs populations within the parish. First, this project works with local nonprofit groups to provide capital funds to repair any existing hurricane-damaged facilities serving special needs populations within the parish. Secondly, this project would assess the demand for and capacity to serve the needs of the homeless, seniors and other special needs populations throughout the parish with current resources, especially in light of the impacts from Hurricane Isaac.

The Special Needs Facility Assessment project is a feasibility study to determine any unmet needs for a variety of special needs populations within the parish and to identify the resources to meet the deficiencies identified.

RECOVERY GOAL

The recovery of the parish is dependent upon providing a high quality life for all of its residents. There is an impression within the community, especially among the existing special needs population and the organizations that serve them, that there is a need for more facilities and shelters, particularly during a catastrophic event. By providing safe and decent places where the special needs population can receive services and/or live temporarily as needs arise, peace of mind is better ensured and the essential services to assist the population in attaining a degree of normalcy are better retained.

RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITIES

A special facilities program is one element of a multi-faceted approach to facilitate responsible redevelopment within the parish. As stated in the background data for housing, HUD has determined in their Metropolitan Statistical Area that there may be

greater demand for homeless shelters as a result of Hurricane Isaac. The impacts of the storm highlighted the insufficiency of rental housing for the growing demand in St. John Parish.

This strategy helps to identify the need for and resources to achieve the development of facilities to serve special needs populations. These facilities could possibly shelter them in times of need, including during a catastrophic event. This project also reduces future loss by incorporating mitigation techniques into the development and location of the facilities and identifying/planning for the sheltering needs of these populations during major storms.

The entire community will benefit from this project in two ways. First, the accumulation of accurate data regarding the special needs population and their housing needs within the community will allow the parish to better plan and implement programs to meet those needs. Accurate data are necessary for appropriate state implementation of federal programs for these groups in areas such as housing assistance, energy cost assistance, community development and social services.

Secondly, once the determination has been made that the parish needs more special needs facilities, then the community as a whole will benefit economically from the jobs created and materials purchased during construction of the facilities and from the ongoing operational/maintenance as well. These facilities do not serve just one age group and therefore benefit the entire community.

CHALLENGES

The community will need to obtain resources for the necessary technical assistance to get the desired programs implemented. Reliance upon the current system to take care of meeting demand is an alternative. However, data show the demand for services for the special needs population may be increasing beyond the existing capacity, especially during a catastrophic event. This project meets an identified apparent need for special needs facilities and shelters in the parish. The project will determine the extent of that need and identify potential funding to assist in development of services to meet that need.

ACTION STEPS

- Determine the technical assistance and resource needs for the program
- Apply for grants for this research/feasibility study
- Identify locations and number of existing facilities/shelters serving the special needs populations in the parish
- Research the impacts of Hurricane Isaac on those populations in the parish and whether there was increased demand resulting from the storm, for example, whether the homeless population increased post-Hurricane Isaac
- Determine the current and projected demand for services, facilities and/or shelters within the parish
- Identify and apply for grants and other financial sources to meet the identified needs

POTENTIAL RESOURCES

St. John Parish Government: Administration, Parish Council, Department of Health and Human Services, Council On Aging
HHS – Community Services Block Grants
HUD – Community Development Block Grants, 202 and 811 Grants, Section 231 Multifamily Mortgage Insurance Program, ALCP Grants
Louisiana Office of Community Development – HUD Program Manager for Louisiana
Louisiana Housing Corporation
Louisiana Continuum of Care
Greater New Orleans Foundation
St. John United Way
Catholic Charities



VOLUNTARY AND/OR TARGETED BUYOUTS

PROJECT AREA

St. John the Baptist Parish

WORKING GROUPS INVOLVED

St. John Parish Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)
St. John Parish CAC Housing Subcommittee
St. John Parish Government: Administration, Council, Planning & Zoning Department
Louisiana Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness, Mitigation Division
Neighborhood associations
Local nonprofit organizations
Louisiana Office of Community Development
Federal agencies: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Mitigation
University of New Orleans
South Central Planning & Development Commission

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Hurricane Isaac impacted St. John Parish extensively. The majority of owner-occupied and renter household damage was centralized in LaPlace, the parish's largest population center, which experienced extensive flooding. There, 4,408 owner-occupied households and 1,502 renter households reported some level of verified damage.

Additionally, LaPlace also had the highest concentration of reported damages, with 53 percent of the owner-occupied population and 72 percent of the renter household population with verified damages. Outside of LaPlace, the highest concentrations of damage were located in Edgard, where 37 percent of households reported damage, and Reserve, where 32 percent of households reported damage. Of greater concern is the large population of those households with extensive damage (FEMA Verified Loss greater than \$3,000). In total, 3,301 owner-occupied households had extensive

damage, with 1,467 of those households – or 44 percent – also categorized as Low-Moderate Income (LMI). There were 930 households with extensive damage that lacked flood insurance at the time of the storm, with 619 of those 930 households classified as LMI. The majority of flooded homes without flood insurance are located in LaPlace (688 of the 930), Reserve (93 households, 78 percent), Garyville (14 households, 78 percent) and Pleasure Bend (5 households, 56 percent) all had higher proportions of flooded households lacking insurance.

The relocation/buyout program is designed to assist owners of property located in areas prone to dangerous flooding to relocate to safer areas. This program also outlines how the parish may purchase damaged or destroyed homes from homeowners. These projects may include:

- Buyout payments for owners of property living in high-risk areas

- Relocation payments to renters to move to safer locations

- Eminent domain could be used by the parish with non-federal funds in cases where properties pose a threat to public health and safety

Property acquisitions work the same way as any other real estate transaction. Property owners who want to sell their properties will be given fair market prices for them. In a property acquisition project, the parish would buy private property, acquire title to it, and then clear it. The project consists of technical assistance to develop a program. The parish will outline the parameters of the program and seek funds to implement it.

RECOVERY GOAL

St. John Parish's recovery efforts and long-term vitality are dependent on safe and secure neighborhoods that are free of blight. A buyout program provides the

parish the opportunity to acquire lands that would not otherwise be redeveloped and allows the parish to remove any blight that may exist. Moreover, upon disposition, the lands may be repurposed more quickly and efficiently than they would have been otherwise. The parish may want to remove structures from flood-prone areas to minimize future flood losses by acquiring and demolishing or relocating structures from voluntary property owners and preserving lands as open space that are subject to repetitive flooding.

RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITIES

Blight reduction and land redevelopment contribute to the community's quality of life through enhanced land use opportunities that may provide economic or social benefit, especially if the parish decides to convert such lands into public space. Passive recreational uses and open space are permissible on FEMA-funded buyout properties, and such land use contributes to the quality of life for the entire community.

This program embodies the intent of the entire Community Recovery Strategy by reducing the risk from future floods by removing structures that experienced repetitive losses due to their location in harm's way. Repurposing these properties to more appropriate and allowable uses is important to the future readiness of the community.

The community as a whole would benefit from a reduction of blight, as well as the new economic opportunities for those acquired lands. Mitigating flood impacts through buyouts of repetitive loss properties can benefit the community through lessening the impacts of future storms.

This project reduces future loss by fully incorporating mitigation techniques into the Housing Recovery

Support Function of the Community Recovery Strategy. Determining acceptable land uses can alleviate the risk of damage by limiting exposure in flood hazard areas and including floodplain management as an element of this community recovery plan.

Buyouts stimulate the community's economy in two key ways:

1. Fair compensation to program participants provides a direct stimulus to the local economy, especially if those participants are relocated within the parish.
2. Through land acquisition, the parish can strategically assemble parcels and decide the most economically-advantageous use for those lands (for parcels not acquired with FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program funds.)

CHALLENGES

The community will need to obtain resources for the necessary technical assistance to get the desired programs implemented. The ultimate challenge will be to get homeowners to participate in the program. Other methods for blight remediation utilize homeowner repair programs to facilitate development without acquisition. However, in areas most prone to future flood events, a buyout program is preferable to ensure public safety and facilitate non-residential land uses.

ACTION STEPS

- Determine the technical assistance and resource needs for the program
- Apply for grants and/or solicit other financial support
- Establish appropriate participant guidelines and additional program structure guidelines related to fair compensation, land title work and disposition
- Determine and enforce acceptable land uses to alleviate the risk of damage by limiting exposure in flood hazard areas
- Review and compare flood plain maps with land uses selecting most appropriate site locations to target for acquisition
- Advertise to attract potential program applicants

POTENTIAL RESOURCES

St. John Parish Government
St. John Parish Council
Louisiana Office of Community Development-Disaster Recovery Unit
University of New Orleans
Louisiana State University
Louisiana Housing Corporation
South Central Planning & Development Commission
Louisiana Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness, Mitigation Division
Neighborhood associations

Local nonprofit organizations
HUD – Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) and the CDBG Disaster Recovery program
Disaster CDBG funding, CDBG funding/states program, Section 108 Loan Guarantee program
FEMA – Mitigation Grants
Local Initiative Support Corporation
Seedco
Smart Growth America
Community Development Capital
Hope Community Credit Union



RENTAL ASSISTANCE TO HOMELESS/AT-RISK PEOPLE

PROJECT AREAS

LaPlace, Garyville, Reserve and Edgard

WORKING GROUPS INVOLVED

St. John Parish Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)

St. John Parish CAC Housing Subcommittee

St. John Parish Government: Parish Council,
Department of Health and Human Services,
Council on Aging, etc.

Local nonprofit organizations

Louisiana Office of Aging & Adult Services

Louisiana Office of Community Development

Louisiana Housing Corporation

Federal agencies: U.S. Department of Health and
Human Services (HHS), U.S. Department of Housing and
Urban Development (HUD), U.S. Department of
Agriculture (USDA)

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

In October 2012, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) conducted a pre-damage assessment of the areas most affected by Hurricane Isaac, including St. John Parish. HUD reported rental vacancy rates had declined from 12 percent to 10 percent between April 2010 and August 2012, representing a real increase in rental demand, as there were no new multifamily unit permits in a 24-month period ending July 2012. As a result of Hurricane Isaac, the parish is now analyzing areas of unmet need that came to light in the aftermath of the disaster, as well as plans for the parish's future to better understand the parish's functionality and identify the projects that will assist in achieving these needs. During the community input phase of the Recovery Strategy planning process, many residents identified the identified apparent need for affordable rental housing in the parish.

The HOME Tenant-Based Rental Assistance (TBRA) Program utilizes HUD grants to provide direct assistance

to low-income households who need help paying rent. HOME-TBRA is a rental subsidy that helps make up the difference between what a renter can afford to pay and the actual rent for a home. A Participating Jurisdiction (PJ) has the ability to tailor its TBRA program to meet the needs of its own community. For example, a PJ can choose the population served by focusing on a special purpose or specific housing need, such as elderly tenants, or a special needs population.

This program is designed to provide rental assistance to homeless and those at-risk of becoming homeless.

RECOVERY GOAL

Disasters disproportionately affect lower-income populations. Hurricane Isaac affected a significant portion of the parish's public housing stock and highlighted an increased need for diverse housing choices. The HOME-TBRA program would provide housing stock options that are of better quality than current options for very low-income individuals that are elderly, have mental or physical disabilities and are at risk of homelessness.

RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITIES

This option would supplement other programs that address this vulnerable population, such as the multifamily rental development program, the permanent supportive housing program and the mixed-income approach to public housing, which were proposed by the housing subcommittee. The other programs would require the development and rehabilitation of units, whereas this program can provide assistance immediately.

This program embodies the intent of the entire Community Recovery Strategy by ensuring that all segments of the community have adequate housing resources.

The HOME-TBRA program can supplement other program funds to enhance the services provided by other programs. For example, a Participating Jurisdiction can:

1. Form a partnership with the local housing authority to use HOME-TBRA to assist those on the Section 8 waiting list.
2. Use TBRA to assist tenants identified as potential homebuyers under a lease-purchase program until the purchase is complete.
3. Require TBRA recipients to participate in a self-sufficiency program in order to receive assistance
4. Use TBRA to support housing development activities.

PJs can also undertake the rehabilitation of occupied or partially occupied properties by providing TBRA assistance to households displaced by the housing projects. As a component of the housing subcommittee recommendations for the recovery strategy, the HOME-TBRA program is one element of a multi-faceted approach to facilitate responsible redevelopment within the affected areas of the parish.

CHALLENGES

The first challenge or objective will be to develop a consortium of organizations that can gather adequate resources to proceed with the program. This option would supplement other programs proposed by the housing subcommittee that address this vulnerable population, such as the multifamily rental development program, the permanent supportive housing program and the mixed-income approach to public housing. The other programs would require development and rehabilitation of units whereas this program can provide assistance immediately.

ACTION STEPS

- Determine the technical assistance and resource needs for the program
- Apply for grants and/or solicit other financial support
- Participate or become a partner in an existing Continuum of Care that would service the parish
- Identify and apply for grants and other financial sources
- Design the program to include specified eligibility requirements for prospective owners, landlords and tenants
- Identify any technical assistance needed to craft appropriate legal documentation as well as any program monitoring and compliance, where appropriate

POTENTIAL RESOURCES

St. John Parish Government: Administration,
Parish Council, Department of Health and
Human Services Department, Council On Aging
HHS – Community Services Block Grant
HUD – Community Development Block Grants, TBRA,
Supportive Housing Program, Shelter Plus Care
Program, Single Room Occupancy
Louisiana Office of Community Development – HUD
Program Manager for Louisiana
Louisiana Housing Corporation
Louisiana Continuum of Care
Greater New Orleans Foundation
St. John United Way
Catholic Charities
Technical assistance from University of New Orleans or
Louisiana State University
South Central Planning & Development Commission
Private financial institutions
Local Initiative Support Corporation
Seedco
Smart Growth America
Community Development Capital



MULTI-FAMILY ZONING ISSUES

ESTABLISH QUALITY STANDARDS FOR MULTI-FAMILY DEVELOPMENT ALLOW MULTIFAMILY HOUSING IN COMMERCIAL ZONES

PROJECT AREA

St. John the Baptist Parish

WORKING GROUPS INVOLVED

St. John Parish Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)
St. John Parish CAC Housing Subcommittee
St. John Parish Government: Administration, Parish Council, Planning & Zoning Department, Neighborhood associations
Local nonprofit organizations
Louisiana Office of Community Development
Federal agencies: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)
University of New Orleans
South Central Planning & Development Commission

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Hurricane Isaac first hit Louisiana's coast as a Category 1 hurricane on Aug. 28, 2012. The storm impacted multiple Louisiana parishes with strong winds and rain through the next few days.

St. John's rental population represents 21 percent of all households (3,328 of 15,965). Proportionally, 20 percent of damaged households in the parish (1,473 of 7,190) were rental households. Like the single-family population, rental damage was concentrated in LaPlace, as 76 percent (1,117 of 1,473) of damaged rental households were located in this community. Of this total in LaPlace, 1,049 households were Low-Moderate Income (LMI), or 85 percent of the damaged rental population. Parish-wide, 1,235 of 1,473 – or 84 percent – of damaged rental households are LMI.

In October 2012, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) conducted a pre-damage

assessment of the areas most affected by Hurricane Isaac, including St. John Parish. HUD reported rental vacancy rates had declined from 12 percent to 10 percent between April 2010 and August 2012, representing a real increase in rental demand, as there were no new multifamily unit permits in a 24-month period ending July 2012.

This Multi-family Zoning Changes program has two separate projects recommended by the Housing Subcommittee. The first recommendation would lead to the creation and adoption of development standards for multifamily projects as part of the Parish Site Development Approval Process, which would require a minimum level of compliance by the developers for building materials, exterior design, landscaping, parking and setbacks. This project is designed to assist with increasing the supply of affordable housing within the community by making multifamily development more aesthetic and compatible with other development in the parish.

This zoning program also includes a project designed to assist with increasing the supply of affordable housing by allowing multifamily development in commercial areas rather than in areas close to single-family developments where it would be less compatible. This would act as a buffer between single-family and commercial development.

In order to increase the amount of land available for multifamily housing, the parish council would be asked to change the current zoning policy to allow the development of such housing anywhere commercial property is allowed. Such a policy change could also result in a reduction in the cost of land for such use.

Current conditions are as follows:

As a result of current zoning laws, in areas of St. John Parish not zoned as rural or agricultural, 51 percent is residential, 10 percent is commercial, and 36 percent is industrial.

Multifamily residential housing is allowed in only 1.5 percent of the residential zoned areas.

Only 43 percent of the parish's 936 Federal Emergency Management Agency Rental Assistance recipients were able to locate housing within St. John Parish post-Hurricane Isaac because of this shortage of rental units.

These projects were identified during the planning process for the Community Recovery Strategy by residents as potentially having a very positive impact in terms of increasing the availability of affordable dwelling units in the parish while helping to maintain property values by improving the aesthetics of multifamily development and buffering single family housing developments from commercial developments.

RECOVERY GOAL

Multifamily dwelling units help increase a community's housing supply and help meet the substantial need for more affordable housing options throughout impacted communities. Once the development standard regulations are adopted, so that multifamily housing can be built according to them, this project will offer an infusion of new, attractive and affordable housing.

Once the zoning regulations are adopted and multifamily housing development can be built in commercial zones, there will be more land for housing development and a reduction in the relatively high price of the now limited amount of real estate available. If planned properly, multifamily developments are an attractive and positive addition to neighborhoods and can assist with keeping low- and moderate-income working families (who fill critical positions in the local labor market) from moving out of impacted communities, thus directly assisting with recovery.

RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITIES

HUD has determined there was greater demand for rental housing in general within the parish before Hurricane Isaac. The impacts of this storm highlighted that there is insufficient rental housing for the growing demand here. Therefore, this project is directly related to the housing needs within the community and would directly affect the construction sector of the economy.

This strategy helps improve the physical image of multifamily affordable rental housing and makes it more compatible with existing housing stock and more acceptable to residents. There is an identified need for more housing choices and rental properties within the parish. It also helps make more housing opportunities for low- to moderate-income residents a reality.

Once the development standards and the change to allow multi-family in commercial zones are adopted, more rental housing development will more than likely be initiated.

This would stimulate the community's economy in four key ways:

1. Providing a direct economic stimulus to the affected area through construction activities.
2. Enhancing local businesses through jobs created and/or increased economic activity related to materials purchased locally both initially for construction and ongoing for operation/maintenance of facilities.
3. Keeping the renter population housed within the parish rather than moving out to find affordable rental units elsewhere, while also attracting residents to move here.
4. Accruing higher property taxes from rental property development brings more revenue into the parish.

ACTION STEPS

PROJECT 1

Quality Standards

- Determine the technical assistance and resource needs for the program
- Apply for grants and/or solicit other financial support
- Investigate existing support for implementing a program of incentives for enhanced multifamily developments within impacted communities
- Work with local officials on developing a regulatory framework for implementing the use of minimum development standards for multifamily properties
- Educate local officials about the benefits and steps needed to implement the necessary regulations
- Investigate model ordinances across the state and country
- Investigate resources/capacity necessary and available to assist with program implementation
- Research the possibility of partnerships with a local university's architecture program for assisting with minimum design standards for multifamily developments

PROJECT 2

Allowing Multi-family in Commercial Zones

- Determine the technical assistance and resource needs for the program
- Investigate existing support for implementing a program of incentives for enhanced multifamily developments within the Commercial Zones in the impacted communities
- Work with local officials on developing a regulatory framework for implementing the development of multifamily properties in commercial zones
- Education of local officials about the benefits and steps is needed to implement the necessary regulations

CHALLENGES:

The alternative to this project/program would be to do nothing and let the market take care of meeting demand. However, data show the market is not meeting demand for rental housing in general within the parish. Furthermore, analysis of zoning and current zoning restrictions within the parish indicates a reduced amount of usable land for multifamily development. That has led to increased costs for the small amount of available land, which make it prohibitively expensive to develop affordable rental housing.

POTENTIAL RESOURCES

St. John Parish Government: Administration, Council, Planning & Zoning Department,
Louisiana Office of Community Development-Disaster Recovery Unit (OCD-DRU)
University of New Orleans
Louisiana State University
HUD
Louisiana OCD – HUD Program Manager for Louisiana
Louisiana Housing Corporation
South Central Planning & Development Commission
Catholic Charities – Disaster Case Management
Builders association
Realtors association
Chamber of commerce
Local Initiative Support Corporation
Seedco
Smart Growth America
Community Development Capital
Enterprise Community Partners, Inc.

PROJECT CHAMPIONS

R.J. Ory
Wendel Dufour

PROVIDE FINANCIAL INCENTIVES FOR SMALL RENTAL PROPERTIES

PROJECT AREA

St. John the Baptist Parish, with a focus on the most heavily storm-impacted areas

WORKING GROUPS INVOLVED

St. John Parish Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)

St. John Parish CAC Housing Subcommittee

St. John Parish Government: Administration, Parish Council, etc.

Local nonprofit organizations

Louisiana Office of Community Development (OCD)

Louisiana Housing Corporation

Federal agencies: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)

University of New Orleans, Louisiana State University

South Central Planning & Development Commission

Financial institutions

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Beginning Aug. 29, 2012, Hurricane Isaac inundated St. John Parish with storm surge and heavy rainfall. Historic flooding destroyed not only homes and businesses in LaPlace, Reserve and other areas in the parish, but also reached numerous buildings in areas that had never seen floodwaters. St. John's rental population represents 21 percent of all households (3,328 of 15,965). Proportionally, 20 percent of damaged households in the parish (1,473 of 7,190) were rental households. As with the single-family population, rental damage was concentrated in LaPlace: 76 percent (1,117 of 1,473) of damaged rental households were located in this community. Of this total in LaPlace, 1,049 households were Low-Moderate Income (LMI), or 85 percent of the damaged rental population. Parish-wide, 1,235 of 1,473 (84 percent) of damaged rental households are LMI.

In October 2012, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) conducted a pre-damage

assessment of the areas most affected by Hurricane Isaac, including St. John Parish. HUD reported rental vacancy rates had declined from 12 percent to 10 percent between April 2010 and August 2012, representing a real increase in rental demand, as there were no new multifamily unit permits in a 24-month period ending July 2012. The parish is now analyzing areas of unmet need that came to light in the aftermath of the disaster, as well as planning for the parish's future and working to better understand the parish's functionality and identify the projects that will assist in achieving these needs. During the community input phase of the Community Recovery Strategy planning process, many residents identified the apparent need for rental housing in the parish.

The Small Rental Property Program will, on a competitive basis, offer incentives in the form of forgivable loans to qualified owners who agree to offer apartments at affordable rents for occupation by lower-income households. Subsidies will be provided on a sliding scale, with the minimum subsidy provided for units made available at affordable market rents (rents affordable to households with incomes at or below 80 percent of median) and the maximum amount of subsidy going to units affordable to families with incomes at or below 50 percent of Average Median Income. In addition to funding incentives for providing affordable units in small rental properties, the program encourages owners to provide their tenants with units that are less susceptible to damage from natural events.

The project consists of technical assistance to develop a program.

RECOVERY GOAL

Typically disaster events disproportionately affect lower-income populations, and Hurricane Isaac was no exception. The storm affected a significant portion

of the public housing stock and highlighted a need for increased diversity in housing choices. A small rental property program would incentivize owners to make rental options available for a wide diversity of households.

RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITIES

HUD has determined that there was greater demand for rental housing in general within the parish before Hurricane Isaac. The impacts of the storm highlighted that there is insufficient rental housing for the growing demand here. Therefore, this project is directly related to the housing needs within the community and would directly affect the construction sector of the economy.

This project takes a holistic approach to the recovery of the impacted neighborhoods responding to the overall needs within the community through the following steps:

1. Rehabilitating damaged housing, preventing blight and contributing to overall neighborhood recovery
2. Supporting positive outcomes for families who live in the area and making their communities more attractive to perspective residents
3. Enhancing property values of those rehabilitated properties and protecting the values of adjacent, non-damaged residences
4. Contributing to the expansion and retention of affordable rental stock

The entire community will benefit from this project. Income diversity is one of the key factors in an economically and culturally vibrant community. However, this goal is only possible with a diverse housing stock capable of meeting the needs of a diverse population.

This program embodies the intent of the entire Community Recovery Strategy by providing direct rehabilitation assistance while preserving and expanding the availability and affordability of rental stock in the parish. This project reduces future loss by incorporating mitigation techniques into the redevelopment of all selected residences. Additionally, funds will be targeted toward those areas where safe, sustainable development is most feasible.

Specifically, any rehab program would likely include an elevation and other mitigation component. This could be designed in a manner similar to mitigation components of past rehab programs, which entailed:

- Elevation Grants up to a maximum of \$30,000 for those homeowners whose replacement homes require elevation to meet the latest available FEMA guidance for base flood elevations (when mandated to be elevated by the local parish or governing local jurisdiction). This program will be a traditional rehabilitation program and is subject to environmental and other federal regulations and documentation of receipts.
- Mitigation grants of up to \$7,500 may be available to complete other mitigation measures, depending on available funding.
- The Parish may also choose to initiate an elevation assistance program with FEMA HMGP funds or other available grant dollars.

CHALLENGES

The first challenge is that the community will need to obtain resources for the necessary technical assistance to get the desired programs implemented.

Secondly, the only alternative to this project/program would be to do nothing and let the market take care of meeting demand. However, data show the market is not meeting demand for rental housing in general within the parish.

ACTION STEPS

- Determine the technical assistance and resource needs for the programs
- Identify funding and apply for grants and/or other funding for this program
- Identify appropriate properties and owners for a small rental program
- Design the program to include specified eligibility requirements for prospective owners and tenants
- Identify any technical assistance needed to craft appropriate legal documentation as well as any program monitoring and compliance, where appropriate

POTENTIAL RESOURCES

St. John Parish Government: Administration, Council
HUD – Community Development Block Grants, Section 108, HOME
Louisiana OCD – HUD Program Manager for Louisiana
Louisiana Housing Corporation – Small Rental Properties Program
Greater New Orleans Foundation
St. John Parish
United Way, Catholic Charities, etc.
Local Initiative Support Corporation
Seedco
Smart Growth America
Community Development Capital



INCREASE PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING (PSH)

PROJECT AREAS

LaPlace, Garyville, Reserve and Edgard

WORKING GROUPS INVOLVED

St. John Parish Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)
St. John Parish CAC Housing Subcommittee
St. John Parish Government: Administration, Parish Council, Department of Health and Human Services, Council on Aging, etc.
Local nonprofit organizations
Louisiana Office of Aging & Adult Services
Louisiana Continuum of Care
Louisiana Office of Community Development
Louisiana Housing Corporation
Federal agencies: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Beginning on Aug. 29, 2012, Hurricane Isaac inundated St. John Parish with storm surge and heavy rainfall. Historic flooding destroyed not only homes and businesses in LaPlace, Reserve and other areas in the parish, but also reached numerous buildings in areas that had never seen floodwaters.

As a result of Hurricane Isaac, the parish is now analyzing areas of unmet need that came to light, as well as identifying and planning for future projects that will assist in meeting these needs. During the community input phase of the Recovery Strategy planning process, many residents identified the apparent need for special needs facilities/housing in the parish.

The Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) Program combines deeply affordable rental housing with voluntary, flexible and individualized community-based services to assist people with the most severe disabilities

to live in the community. This program can work in conjunction with a multifamily rental housing program, in which a certain number of units are designated for PSH. The project consists of technical assistance to develop a program.

RECOVERY GOAL

Typically disaster events disproportionately affect lower-income populations, and Hurricane Isaac was no exception. Specifically, the storm affected a significant portion of the public housing stock and highlighted a need for increased diversity in housing choices. A PSH program, in conjunction with a multifamily rental development property program, would incentivize new rental construction for a wide diversity of households.

RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN

A permanent supportive housing program is one element of a multi-faceted approach to facilitate responsible redevelopment within the parish. The state of Louisiana has a PSH Initiative to provide 3,000 units of such housing. By partnering with the existing Continuum of Care program within the area, the community could avail itself of an existing resource.

This program embodies the intent of the entire Community Recovery Strategy by providing more housing options for residents living in the community, thereby decreasing both the need for residents to leave the community during a disaster and the potential that these residents might not return. The PSH program achieves three significant goals that benefit the community:

1. Preventing and reducing homelessness
2. Reducing the unnecessary confinement of people with serious disabilities in nursing homes and other high-cost restrictive settings, and
3. Improving the region's fragile behavioral health system through the implementation of evidence-based models of housing and services.

Secondly, a PSH program, in conjunction with a multifamily rental development program, will aid in blight remediation and will provide a stock of housing that may be of better quality than current housing options for elderly individuals, individuals with disabilities and individuals at risk of homelessness.

CHALLENGES

The first challenge is educating the public and governing body that successful efforts to create PSH units in numerous states have been well documented over the years. A significant body of research shows successful outcomes for people and cost-savings to government are achieved through the PSH approach. The alternatives include more elderly individuals living in nursing homes, more individuals not receiving adequate care for their disabilities, and a higher rate of homelessness.

ACTION STEPS

- If not already a member, become a member of an existing Continuum of Care Program that will service the parish
- Identify and apply for grants and other financial sources
- Identify appropriate multifamily housing developers, landlords and owners to provide PSH units
- Identify entities to provide supportive services
- Design the program to include specified eligibility requirements for prospective owners, landlords and tenants
- Identify any technical assistance needed to craft appropriate legal documentation as well as any program monitoring and compliance, where appropriate

REBUILD PUBLIC HOUSING TO INCLUDE MIXED-INCOME

POTENTIAL RESOURCES

St. John Government: Administration, Parish Council,
HHS Dept., Council On Aging
HHS – Community Services Block Grant
HUD – CDBG
Mortgage Insurance Program
ALCP Grants
Louisiana Office of Community Development
Program Manager for Louisiana
Louisiana Housing Corporation
Louisiana Continuum of Care
Greater New Orleans Foundation
United Way
Catholic Charities
Local Initiative Support Corporation
Seedco
Smart Growth America
Community Development Capital
Hope Community Credit Union
Habitat for humanity
Home Depot Foundation



PROJECT AREAS

St. John the Baptist Parish damaged areas

WORKING GROUPS INVOLVED

St. John Parish Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)
St. John Parish CAC Housing Subcommittee
St. John Parish Government: Administration, Parish
Council
Louisiana Office of Community Development
HUD
USDA
Technical assistance from University of New Orleans
and Louisiana State University
South Central Planning & Development Commission
Local nonprofit organizations
Financial institutions

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Damage inflicted by Hurricane Isaac in St. John Parish from Aug. 28 through Aug. 30, 2012, was extensive and widespread along both banks of the Mississippi River. The impact of Hurricane Isaac was especially severe on the Saint John Parish Housing Authority properties. Data show:

- Among Reserve's 92 units, 44 were damaged by Hurricane Isaac, 26 are vacant and 13 are cited for repairs;
- Among Garyville's 54 units, 32 were damaged by Hurricane Isaac, 18 are vacant and one is cited for repairs;
- Among LaPlace's 116 public housing units, 34 were damaged by Hurricane Isaac, 30 are vacant and 10 are cited for repairs;
- Among Edgard's 34 public housing units, 16 were damaged by Hurricane Isaac, eight are vacant and seven are cited for repairs;
- Of the parish's 296 public housing units, 214 (72 percent) are occupied, and 82 currently are not livable;
- Repairing 31 of the 82 unlivable units would cost an estimated \$500,000. It is questionable if the remaining 51 are economically feasible to repair.

In collaboration with local, regional and national U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) officials assigned to assist with housing recovery, this project would create mixed-income housing with a dedicated number of public housing units. This project also would assist with revitalization of the neighborhoods that surround existing public housing sites.

This project is designed to provide planning, technical assistance and capital construction for the purpose of transforming distressed HUD housing and addressing the challenges in the surrounding neighborhood.

RECOVERY GOAL

This program is a true recovery activity that will be accomplished through achieving the following goals:

1. Transforming distressed public housing into energy-efficient, mixed-income housing that is physically and financially viable over the long term while leveraging private investment in the surrounding neighborhoods.
2. Supporting positive outcomes for families who live in the area, particularly those related to residents' health, safety, employment and education.
3. Transforming blighted neighborhoods into viable, mixed-income communities by improving local services and access to better educational opportunities, transit services, social services and other infrastructure improvements, including reduced risk from hazards.

RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITIES

HUD has determined through its Mission Scoping Assessment work during Hurricane Isaac that there was greater demand for rental and other affordable housing in general within the parish before the hurricane. The impacts of the storm highlighted the insufficiency of housing stock in a variety of price ranges for the growing demand here. Public input for this process also indicated dilapidated properties have a blighting influence on neighborhoods.

In order to achieve the community recovery vision of "One Parish, One Future: Building Back Better and Stronger", everyone in the parish must be helped. This program embodies the intent of the entire Community Recovery Strategy by transforming the impacted neighborhoods into diverse, connected, safe and sustainable communities of choice for people of all backgrounds and incomes for the benefit of the entire parish.

This project takes a holistic approach to the recovery of the impacted neighborhoods responding to the overall needs within the community by transforming distressed public housing, supporting positive outcomes for families who live in the area, and revitalizing blighted neighborhoods. This project reduces future loss by incorporating mitigation techniques into the development for all single-family, multifamily rental housing developed as a result.

CHALLENGES:

The first challenge or objective will be gaining cooperation and collaboration among the myriad agencies and organizations, both public and private, needed to garner all the necessary resources for the project to be successful.

In lieu of a Choice Neighborhoods Redevelopment, the alternative to this project would be to rehabilitate the older public housing units where they stand and to do nothing to the surrounding neighborhoods. This

plan, however, would perpetuate the existing blighted conditions within that community. This program will require close coordination between the parish, the local and state housing authorities, HUD, the proposed local Disaster Recovery Management Office, the Citizens Advisory Committee, private financial institutions, nonprofit and for-profit developers and the community as a whole.

ACTION STEPS

- Identify the specific Public Housing Authority (PHA) properties and surrounding neighborhoods to be targeted for this program
- Identify and apply for grants and other financial sources for the Planning portion, i.e., HUD Choice Neighborhoods Initiative Planning Grant
- Work with local, regional and national HUD officials, parish government, LHC, Louisiana Office of Community Development, LHA and local partners as well as other federal government agencies (U.S. Department of Education, U.S. Department of Justice and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services [HHS]) to develop a comprehensive Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy (NRS), or Transformation Plan
- Include in the planning process local leaders, residents, and stakeholders including public housing authorities, schools, police, business owners, nonprofits and private developers
- Identify appropriate resources to implement the NRS, i.e., Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grant, private financing, foundation grants, other federal/state grants or loans
- Work with public and private agencies, organizations (including philanthropic organizations) and individuals to gather and leverage resources needed to support the financial sustainability of the plan

Implement Plan:

- Housing: Replace distressed public and assisted housing with high-quality mixed-income housing that is well-managed and responsive to the needs of the surrounding neighborhood
- People: Improve educational outcomes and intergenerational mobility for youth with services and supports delivered directly to youth and their families
- Neighborhood: Create the conditions necessary for public and private reinvestment in distressed neighborhoods to offer the kinds of amenities and assets, including safety, good schools, and commercial activity, that are important to families' choices about their community

POTENTIAL RESOURCES

St. John Parish Government
USDA – Rural Development
HUD – Choice Neighborhoods Grant Program
HHS – Community Services Block Grant
FEMA – Public Assistance & 406 Mitigation Grant Programs
Louisiana Office of Community Development (OCD),
HUD Program Manager for Louisiana
Louisiana Housing Corporation – LHA
Greater New Orleans Foundation
St. John United Way
Catholic Charities
Habitat for Humanity
Technical Assistance from University of New Orleans
and Louisiana State University
South Central Planning & Development Commission
Private financial institutions
Enterprise Community Partners, Inc.
Local Initiative Support Corporation
Seedco
Smart Growth America
Community Development Capital
Hope Community Credit Union
Habitat for Humanity
Home Depot Foundation

DEVELOP INCENTIVES TO PROMOTE MULTI-FAMILY RENTAL HOUSING

PROJECT AREA

St. John the Baptist Parish

WORKING GROUPS INVOLVED

St. John Parish Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) and
CAC Housing Subcommittee

St. John Parish Government

Neighborhood associations

Local nonprofit organizations

Local builders association, realtors association, Chamber
of Commerce

Louisiana Office of Community Development

Louisiana Housing Corporation

HUD

USDA

University of New Orleans

South Central Planning & Development Commission

Private financial institutions

Private nonprofit and for-profit developers

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

St. John's rental housing represents 21 percent of all households (3,328 of 15,965). Proportionally, 20 percent of damaged households in the parish (1,473 of 7,190) were rental households. Like the single-family population, rental damage was concentrated in LaPlace, as 76 percent (1,117 of 1,473) of damaged rental households were located in this community. Of this total in LaPlace, 1,049 households were Low-Moderate Income (LMI), or 85 percent of the damaged rental population. Parish-wide, 1,235 of 1,473 – or 84 percent – of damaged rental households are LMI.

In October 2012, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) conducted a pre-damage assessment of the areas most affected by Hurricane Isaac, including St. John Parish. HUD reported rental vacancy rates had declined from 12 percent to 10 percent between April 2010 and August 2012, representing a real increase in rental demand, as there

were no new multifamily unit permits in a 24-month period ending July 2012. Incentives to promote multifamily rental housing may take multiple forms, including zoning bonuses or direct subsidies, but the most common and effective program used in Louisiana after Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, Gustav and Ike has been the Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC)-Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) "Piggyback" program. The Piggyback program supports affordability for low-income Louisianans in properties receiving LIHTC, which are allocated by the Louisiana Housing Corporation (LHC). Through this program, the state has facilitated the following types of rental housing units:

- Workforce Housing Units Including market-rate units, units initially affordable to households with incomes below 80 percent of Average Median Income (AMI) and units affordable to (and restricted to occupancy by) households with incomes below 60 percent of AMI
- Additional Affordability Units Including units affordable to (and restricted to occupancy by) households with incomes at or below 20 percent of AMI, 30 percent of AMI, or 40 percent of AMI
- Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) Including permanent supportive housing for a variety of households including extremely low income people (30 percent of AMI and below) with serious and long-term disabilities, and/or who are homeless and/or who are most at-risk of homelessness

RECOVERY GOAL

Typically, disaster events disproportionately affect lower-income populations, and Hurricane Isaac was no exception. Specifically, the storm affected a significant portion of the public housing stock and highlighted a need for increased diversity in housing choices. A multifamily rental development property program would incentivize new rental construction for a wide diversity of households.

RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITIES

HUD has determined that there was greater demand for rental housing in general within the parish before Hurricane Isaac. The impacts of the storm highlighted the insufficient rental housing for the growing demand here. Therefore, this project is directly related to the housing needs within the community and would directly affect the construction sector of the economy.

In order to achieve full community recovery, everyone in the parish must be helped. This includes providing diverse housing choices benefiting populations of all socioeconomic categories. This project takes a holistic approach to the recovery of the impacted neighborhoods, responding to the overall needs within the community through the following steps:

1. Building density in areas less prone to weather events.
2. Supporting positive outcomes for families who live in the area, and making their communities more attractive to prospective residents.
3. Providing an opportunity for creating a sense of place within a given community.
4. Transforming blighted neighborhoods into viable, mixed-income communities.

CHALLENGES

The alternative to this project/program would be to do nothing and let the market take care of meeting demand. However, data show the market is not meeting demand for rental housing in general within the parish. Furthermore, analysis of parish zoning and current zoning restrictions have reduced the amount of usable land for multifamily development and have increased the cost of the small amount of land that is available, making it prohibitively expensive to develop affordable rental housing.

ACTION STEPS

- Determine the technical assistance and resource needs for the program
- Apply for grants and/or solicit other financial support
- Investigate existing support for implementing a program of incentives for enhanced multifamily developments within the impacted communities
- Coordinate with the LHC to set aside LIHTC for the parish and packaging that with additional funding sources Solicit and coordinate with developers to package and close financial deals for new developments
- Establish appropriate participant guidelines and additional program structure guidelines to comply with all legal, regulatory and monitoring requirements

POTENTIAL RESOURCES

St. John Parish Government: Administration, Council, Planning & Zoning Department, etc.
Louisiana Office of Community Development-Disaster Recovery Unit
University of New Orleans
Louisiana State University
HUD – Community Development Block Grant funding
Mortgage Insurance Program
Louisiana Office of Community Development – HUD Program Manager for Louisiana
LHC – LIHTC Program
South Central Planning & Development Commission
TA, Grant Application Assistance
Catholic Charities
Habitat for Humanity
Local organizations: builders association, realtors association, Chamber of Commerce, etc.
Local Initiative Support Corporation
Seedco
Smart Growth America
Community Development Capital
Enterprise Community Partners, Inc.

PROJECT CHAMPIONS

R.J. Ory

ESTABLISH A COMMUNITY LAND TRUST

PROJECT AREA

St. John the Baptist Parish

WORKING GROUPS INVOLVED

St. John Parish Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)
St. John Parish CAC Housing Subcommittee
St. John Parish Government: Administration, Council, Planning & Zoning Department, etc.
Neighborhood associations
Local nonprofit organizations
Louisiana Office of Community Development
Louisiana Housing Corporation
Federal agencies: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)
University of New Orleans
South Central Planning & Development Commission
Private financial institutions
Private nonprofit and for-profit developers

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Hurricane Isaac impacted multiple Louisiana parishes with strong winds and rain over several days.

Overall, St. John Parish experienced comparatively low rates of damage to mobile homes and other dwelling types. However, concentrations of mobile home damages increase in communities outside of LaPlace. Specifically, 50 percent of damaged housing units in Edgard, 35 percent of units in Mount Airy and 33 percent of units in Garyville were of the mobile home variety. Across the parish, damaged mobile home units had an average FEMA Verified Loss of \$2,415.

St. John's rental population represents 21 percent of all households (3,328 of 15,965). Proportionally, 20 percent of damaged households in the parish (1,473 of 7,190) were rental households. Like the single-family population, rental damage was concentrated in

LaPlace, as 76 percent (1,117 of 1,473) of damaged rental households were located in this community. Of this total in LaPlace, 1,049 households were Low-Moderate Income (LMI), or 85 percent of the damaged rental population. Parish-wide, 1,235 of 1,473 (84 percent) of damaged rental households are LMI.

In October 2012, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) conducted a pre-damage assessment of the areas most affected by Hurricane Isaac, including St. John Parish. HUD reported rental vacancy rates had declined from 12 percent to 10 percent between April 2010 and August 2012, representing a real increase in rental demand, as there were no new multifamily unit permits in a 24-month period ending July 2012.

A Community Land Trust (CLT) is a nonprofit corporation, usually a 501(c)(3), that acquires and manages land on behalf of the residents of a community while preserving affordability and preventing foreclosures for any housing located on its land. A CLT is legally chartered in the state in which it is located. The trust acquires multiple parcels of land with the intention of retaining ownership of these parcels over time. Any building already located on the land or later constructed on the land is sold off to an individual homeowner, a cooperative housing corporation, a nonprofit developer of rental housing, or some other nonprofit, governmental or for-profit entity.

CLTs do not intend to resell their land, and they provide for the exclusive use of their land by the owners of any buildings located there. Parcels of land are conveyed to individual homeowners (or to the owners of other types of residential or commercial structures) through long-term ground leases. A CLT retains an option to repurchase any residential (or commercial) structures located on its land, should their owners ever choose

to sell. The resale price is set by a formula contained in a ground lease designed to give present homeowners a fair return on their investments, while giving future homebuyers fair access to housing at an affordable price. The CLT retains an interest in what happens to these structures and the people who occupy them (perpetual upkeep).

This project is designed to assist with increasing the supply of affordable housing within the community by the purchase of multiple parcels of land with the intention of retaining ownership of these parcels and making them available for affordable development through long-term, low-cost ground leases.

RECOVERY GOAL

Multifamily dwelling units help increase a community's housing supply and help meet the substantial need for more affordable housing options throughout impacted communities. Once the CLT is operating and multifamily housing development can be built on their parcels, this program will offer more land for housing development, reducing the high price of the now limited amount of real estate available. If planned properly, multifamily developments are an attractive and positive addition to a neighborhood, which can assist with keeping low- and moderate-income working families (who fill critical positions in the local labor market) from moving out of impacted communities, thus directly assisting with the recovery.

RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITIES

HUD has determined that there was greater demand for rental housing in general within the parish before Hurricane Isaac. The impacts of Hurricane Isaac highlighted that there is insufficient rental housing for the growing demand here. Therefore, this project is directly related to the housing needs within the community and would directly affect the construction sector of the economy.

This strategy helps to improve the availability of multifamily affordable rental housing. There is an identified need for more housing choices and more rental properties within the parish, and this project helps to make more housing opportunities available for low- to moderate-income residents.

Once the CLT is operating and more rental housing development is initiated, then the community as a whole will benefit economically from the jobs created and product demand during construction of the rental housing and from the ongoing operational/maintenance needs as well. CLTs also develop affordable single family housing for a variety of income levels, thus benefiting of the entire community.

CHALLENGES

The alternative to this project/program would be to do nothing and let the market take care of meeting demand. However, data show the market is not meeting demand for rental housing in general within the parish. Furthermore, analysis of the current housing market shows that values and prices have outpaced incomes within the community, making it prohibitively expensive and difficult to find affordable housing.

ACTION STEPS

- Determine the technical assistance and resource needs for the program
- Apply for grants and/or solicit other financial support
- Investigate/reinforce the need for maintaining property values that benefit the development of affordable housing and research CLT programs available to model locally
- Determine regulatory changes necessary to implement the program
- Work with local officials to gauge the level of interest and educate them on this program
- Educate local officials about the benefits and steps needed to implement any necessary regulations

POTENTIAL RESOURCES

St. John Parish Government
The Louisiana Office of Community Development-
Disaster Recovery Unit (OCD-DRU)
University of New Orleans
Louisiana State University
HUD – Community Development Block Grants
Louisiana OCD – HUD Program Manager for Louisiana
Louisiana Housing Corporation – Low Income Housing
Tax Credit Program
South Central Planning & Development Commission
Catholic Charities
Habitat for Humanit
Local Initiative Support Corporation
Seedco
Smart Growth America
Community Development Capital
Enterprise Community Partners, Inc.



Natural & Cultural Resources



St. John the Baptist Parish contains three major lake systems; Lake Pontchartrain, Lake Maurepas and Lake Des Allemands, as well as thousands of acres of inland swamp and marshland. The second permanent settlement in Louisiana, it was established in the 1720s by a group of Germans while the territory was under French rule. In the 1750s and 1760s, the Acadians or “Cajuns” arrived from Nova Scotia and Louisiana came under Spanish ownership. The influences of those diverse cultures are evident in the cultural heritage of the parish and reflected by its architecture, local customs, cuisine and family names.

The Mississippi River proved a valuable natural resource as well as a conduit to drive the local economy. Rich soil in the Mississippi Delta gave the German settlers an ideal setting to grow crops. Paddling across the swamps, bayous and river to sell their produce, those settlers became some of the first merchants to use the French Market in New Orleans.

Early settlers were devout Catholics, and the Jesuit Fathers became the first religious order to settle into the area. To this day, the parish contains numerous historic Catholic cemeteries. In 1807, the New Orleans Territory was divided into 12 counties, which included that of the German Coast. This area was then divided into 19 parishes and St. John the Baptist Parish received its name.

Tropical Storm Isaac approached the Gulf Coast on August 26, 2012, making landfall as a Category 1 hurricane two days later in southeastern Louisiana,

about 40 miles west of the mouth of the Mississippi River. The resulting flooding in St. John Parish caused erosion, aquatic habitat alterations and physical destruction to the shorelines of both Lake Maurepas and Lake Pontchartrain. Over 20 inches of precipitation and runoff from upstream watersheds joined a storm surge that prohibited the water from draining back into the Gulf of Mexico. As a result, the municipal water and sewer systems sustained damage, as did rural wells and historic sites.

Historic sites in the parish include the privately owned Evergreen and San Francisco plantations. The Garyville Historic District and Whitney Plantation Historic District contain a collection of mostly privately owned structures, some of which are in the National Register of Historic Places.

The parish ecotourism industry was forced to close for more than a month because of the debris clogging the channels and damage to the businesses in the area. One ecotourism operator, Cajun Pride Swamp Tours in the LaPlace vicinity, was inundated with many feet of water for more than two weeks and could not begin the cleanup processes for almost a month. St. John residents realize the community depends on natural resources for both recreational and business needs.

After the storm, parish officials, along with their state and federal agency partners, began the recovery process by identifying and assessing the impact of Hurricane Isaac and designating a Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) to spearhead the parish’s planning



efforts. The ensuing months would bring together the entire community to address issues in five main areas: Health and Human Services, Natural and Cultural Resources, Housing, Infrastructure, and Economic Development.

As discussions and planning progressed, members of the Natural and Cultural Resources Subcommittee of the CAC considered such issues as protecting the Lake Pontchartrain shoreline from future damage while developing lakefront recreational programs for citizens and visitors. As a result, the community recommended a project to develop a Lake Pontchartrain Park complex that would include hiking/biking trails, fishing piers and pavilions for outdoor gatherings, plus an Interpretive Center to give visitors and residents the chance to learn about Frenier and Ruddock, two communities destroyed by a hurricane in 1915. This project's goal is to better the lives of today's St. John residents while honoring those who lost their lives during the 1915 hurricane. The Lake Pontchartrain Park would also help to remind residents of the importance of resiliency and mitigation against future events.

Residents also want less litter and pollution in the parish. They specifically expressed a desire to increase the frequency of the current administration's parish-wide "clean sweeps" and to educate parish residents and youth about the value of having a community free of litter and debris. Two other significant issues that developed during the community meetings were ensuring the survival of local history and expanding access to all of the parish's natural resources.

Throughout the entire process, residents were engaged and voiced their individual and collective thoughts about what was important to achieve through the recovery and rebuilding process. The community expressed a desire to preserve and celebrate St. John's unique character and its treasured history in order to help it recover and rebound from the devastating effects of Hurricane Isaac. In addition, expanding access to natural and cultural resources in St. John may help attract tourists, inspire residents to remain, and ensure that future generations will prosper.

LAKE PONTCHARTRAIN PARK

PROJECT AREA

Lake Pontchartrain lakefront within St. John Parish

POTENTIAL WORKING GROUPS

St. John Parish Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)

St. John Parish CAC Natural and Cultural Resources Subcommittee

St. John Parish Government

University of New Orleans Division of Planning /

Department of Planning and Urban Studies

Louisiana State University Coastal Sustainability Studio

River Parishes Convention and Visitors Bureau

Lake Pontchartrain Trace Commission

Louisiana Coastal and Restoration Authority

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

As a result of the Hurricane Isaac storm event in August 2012, St. John Parish incurred major impacts, including extensive flooding and wind damage to public and private property parish-wide. Also affected were natural and cultural resources, which residents rely on to enrich their daily lives. According to early assessments, shoreline structures on both Lake Pontchartrain and Lake Maurepas incurred major damage. Both lakes felt the impact of shoreline erosion and habitat alterations.

Also, due to the amount of debris in channels and waterways, ecotourism was shut down for as many as 30 days, elevating the economic impact on the parish. During this period, it became clear to citizens just how important natural resources such as the beautiful Lake Pontchartrain shoreline are to the quality of life in the parish. Therefore, as the long-term recovery planning process began, citizens expressed explicitly that they wanted to ensure that in the future all citizens of St. John Parish would have a place to enjoy the Lake Pontchartrain shoreline. To that end, citizens have indicated that with regard to natural and cultural resources, developing a lakeshore park facility is one of their top priorities.

The Lake Pontchartrain Park development could include improvements to allow for nature-based recreation, such as bike/hiking nature trails, a boat launch, gathering pavilions, an interpretive center, playground, amphitheater and other recreational opportunities, which could center on day-use activities. The project would require acquisition of a site for development. The next step would include a feasibility phase to determine the sort of overall program that the site could support. This public effort could have a positive impact on the citizens of St. John Parish for generations.

RECOVERY GOAL

Recreation for citizens is an important part of the recovery process. When residents have the opportunity to look forward toward the realization of an expanded selection of nature-based activity opportunities, they gain another reason to be positive about a future in the parish and the recovery process in general. During the open house forums, recreation, and especially outdoor recreation, was mentioned repeatedly as a major part of their vision for a resilient and sustainable recovery in St. John Parish. The recovery process also provides an opportunity for the parish to address encroaching shoreline erosion through efforts to mitigate against future storms and restore shoreline stability.

Furthermore, with the interest in restoring the Frenier community site along the lakeshore as a recreational, interpretive, and entertainment area, the Lake Pontchartrain Park concept could meet other initiatives desired by the public while also allowing for integration with other planned recreational improvements already in development, such as the Lake Pontchartrain Trace Bike and Pedestrian Trail System.

RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITIES

This lakefront park could provide facilities which do not now exist there while also providing a higher quality of life for citizens of St. John Parish. The park could also contribute to the potential for future economic development efforts through tourism, which was also highly advocated by citizens during recent public forums. Currently, Louisiana's economic impact from tourism is approximately \$9 billion annually, so an investment in this type of development could benefit the parish economy for many decades.

According to the University of New Orleans (UNO) Comprehensive Master Plan, St. John Parish will need to increase its parks and recreation land inventory by as much as 130 acres by 2025 to satisfy the minimum recommendations by the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA). UNO projects the population of the parish to increase by as many as 10,000 people in the next 10 to 15 years. Note: It has become apparent that the population has had a negative growth pattern to some degree since the above numbers were included in the 2009 master plan. However, it is expected that as long-term recovery occurs, the population will stabilize and eventually shift back into a positive growth pattern.

To accommodate this growth and address existing deficiencies, additional acres will be needed for arts, entertainment and recreation by 2025 to comply with the minimum NRPA recommendations of 6.25 acres per 1,000 citizens. According to the master plan, the parish should be looking for additional property now to meet these future needs, primarily in the most likely areas for population growth such as LaPlace, Reserve, Garyville and the west bank of the parish.

CHALLENGES

The Lake Pontchartrain Park development should include recreational opportunities requested by citizens. Lake Pontchartrain and Lake Maurepas areas sustained structural damages from wind and shoreline erosion, as well as damage to wildlife habitat from Hurricane Isaac. Because shoreline erosion is a growing challenge in all of southern Louisiana, shoreline stabilization should be a primary objective for ecologically sensitive areas to withstand future high winds and storm surge. Therefore, it would be highly prudent for the project team to carefully evaluate recommendations by engineering and architectural professional design concepts, in concert with the St. John Parish Flood Management Ordinance, Base Flood Elevations per the 2010 Federal Emergency Management Agency Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM), and current wind impact standards.

ACTION STEPS

- Initiate contact with parish and state officials to open a dialogue regarding partnerships and potential regulatory issues that may develop at the site
- Investigate the ownership of property along the Lake Pontchartrain Lake Front in immediate proximity to the desired site near Frenier to learn whether the site may be a potential donation or what purchasing the property may require
- Addressing funding needs for a feasibility phase of the project as a first effort
- Conduct the Feasibility Phase of the project
- Procure the Design Phase
- Construction of Phase I
- Construction of Phase II
- Construction of Phase III

POTENTIAL RESOURCES

U.S. Department of Interior/National Park Service – Land and Water Conservation Grant
U.S. Department of Wildlife and Fisheries – Wallop-Breaux Grant
U.S. Department of Transportation – Transportation Enhancement Grant
Louisiana State Parks - Recreational Trails Grant
Corporation for National and Community Service
Defense Logistics Agency Disposition Services
Disposal of Federal Surplus Real Property for Parks and Recreation
Donation of Federal Surplus Personal Property
National Trails System
Partnership for Sustainable Communities
Dr. Scholl Foundation
FedEx Global Community Relations and Corporate Contributions
Foundation Source
Good 360
Gustaf Westfeldt McIlhenny Family Foundation
Home Depot, Inc.
Kentucky Fried Chicken Foundation, Inc.
Lowe's Charitable and Education Foundation
National Association of the Exchange of Industrial Resources
National Association of State Agencies for Surplus Property
National Urban and Community Forestry Advisory Council Challenge Cost-Share Program
NFL Charities
Rails to Trails Conservancy
RGK Foundation
FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program

PROJECT CHAMPIONS

Pastor Donald August & Mr. Jim Toler



LITTER AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECT

PROJECT AREA

Parish-wide

WORKING GROUPS INVOLVED

St. John Parish Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)
St. John Parish CAC Natural and Cultural Resources Subcommittee
St. John Parish Government
St. John Parish Sheriff's Office
Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality
Louisiana Office of Culture, Recreation and Tourism/Litter Task Force Program

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The St. John Parish Litter and Environmental Project would consist of an expanded litter sweep effort parish-wide with a litter education element. This would allow St. John to make a strong case for its collective expression of environmental sensitivity to potential citizens and business interests.

The project is viewed as a technical assistance program, which could evolve into a potential capital project if the parish engages in the development of a landfill as requested by citizens. Depending on how the project evolves, it could also have a policy element with regard to litter enforcement. The overall goal would be to stimulate awareness by citizens regarding the numerous values of having a clean parish.

RECOVERY GOAL

During the open house public forums, citizens of St. John Parish indicated that making a push to clean up the parish and initiating a litter education campaign centered on the benefits of a clean environment would improve their quality of life. It is of paramount importance to all parish residents. Therefore, the recovery value or activity associated with the project could prove to be of great worth with regard to

increasing the citizen's level of ownership when it comes to making a commitment toward less parish litter in the future.

Through the development of a clear and concise educational program that will convince citizens of the need for individual responsibility regarding litter in the parish, the overall health and safety of all citizens will increase dramatically. Another benefit, citizens said, will be providing a landfill where people can deposit larger items, such as appliances, rather than dumping them into secluded natural areas, which impacts the environment and aesthetic value of the community.

RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITIES

A project to create a parish-wide ongoing litter education campaign and environmental initiative to give the community more opportunity to improve the quality of life for citizens and attract more businesses would be of great benefit to economic development efforts. Businesses, including large and small corporations, typically will be more inclined to locate in communities that have a high sense of ownership with regard to a clean environment and civic pride. A program such as the St. John Litter and Environmental Project would be another tool for the parish to use in recruiting new business and industry.



It is important to note that St. John currently has a recycling center in immediate proximity to the parish government headquarters in LaPlace. It is capable of handling larger items, such as appliances. Therefore, efforts to address the concerns by citizens regarding this major issue may need to be redirected toward helping them become more aware of how this program works rather than emphasizing the need for a landfill.

It has become clear that a program component needs to be developed for use in the home to reinforce to children the need and value of changing their perspective on the effects of litter in the parish. This would be in addition to having an educational component within the school system and through internal communication within larger employers.

CHALLENGES

Although the St. John Litter and Environmental Project has a high likelihood of becoming a reality, it will require support from the parish government and the general citizenry and technical support from partners such as the Louisiana Office of Culture, Recreation and Tourism/Litter Task Force and Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality among other such agencies and organizations, which are generally tasked with addressing litter and pollution abatement.

Other than these levels of support mentioned above, another critical component to the project's success will be establishing cooperation from the St. John Parish School District with regard to the educational element for students.

Finally, with regard to establishing litter abatement education programs at major employers in the parish, much effort will be needed to convince them of the importance of motivating their employees to value a clean parish environment and take action to achieve it.

ACTION STEPS

- Have the Natural and Cultural Resources Subcommittee submit the project to the Citizens Advisory Committee for consideration as a project
- Contact the Louisiana Litter Task Force within the Louisiana Office of Culture Recreation and Tourism to tap technical assistance for initiating a full-blown litter abatement campaign
- Engage the St. John Parish School Board to begin a program for students to encourage long-term change of perspective regarding litter
- Partner with some of the larger employers in the parish to assist in implementing a litter campaign, using an internal dialogue with employees
- Open a dialogue with the St. John Parish Housing Authority to begin a program targeted to residents, particularly youth, in public housing developments encouraging them to appreciate the value of a clean parish environment
- Ask parish government to consider addressing the need for greater community awareness regarding the existing recycling unit and program in LaPlace

POTENTIAL RESOURCES

Louisiana Office of Culture, Recreation and Tourism – Litter Task Force Technical Assistance
Department of Environmental Quality
St. John Parish Council
St. John Parish Sheriff – Education and Enforcement Partnership

PROJECT CHAMPION

Mr. John Swafford



MISSISSIPPI RIVER LEVEE BIKE PATH

PROJECT AREA

Parish-wide

WORKING GROUPS INVOLVED

St. John Parish Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)
St. John Parish CAC Natural and Cultural Resources Subcommittee
St. John Parish Government
Louisiana Office of Culture, Recreation and Tourism
Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (LA DOTD)
Louisiana Coastal Sustainability Studio
University of New Orleans Department of Urban Planning

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Cycling is a major tourist activity throughout the United States. Thus, the Mississippi River Levee Bike Path Trailhead Project could help economic development in St. John Parish by attracting cyclists to the parish. Simultaneously, the project could expand the recreational opportunities for citizens without a significant investment. Furthermore, the project could be the catalyst for a new local business centered on bicycle rentals and outfitters, which could contribute to the parish's recovery and long-term economic health.

By developing a trailhead and connection in St. John Parish for cyclists to access the existing Mississippi River Levee Bike Path to New Orleans and other connecting trails north of Lake Pontchartrain, the Trailhead Project could have a substantial positive impact on recreational opportunities for residents as well.

RECOVERY GOAL

The project has the potential to connect visitors to other cultural activities throughout the parish, as it would promote exploration via cycling. It would encourage visitors to meet at a central point, then venture into

all areas of St. John Parish. The project also allows for connection to the Lake Pontchartrain Trace cycling and hiking trail, on which cyclists could reach the northern parts of Lake Pontchartrain.

During the open house forums, citizens indicated interest in creating access to the existing paved bike path on the Mississippi River Levee between the Audubon Zoo in New Orleans and St. John Parish. The parish would benefit from taking advantage of the cycling market as a means of developing more nature-based tourism activity for the parish and increasing the level of recreational opportunities for citizens.

The project could also help the parish achieve its post-disaster community vision by allowing promotion of one of its most unique recreational assets. This could also impact the remaining parts of the parish economically as cyclists and hikers venture into other areas for scenic and cultural offerings.

Additionally, while the project would contribute to residents' overall quality of life, an immediate and direct benefit is their opportunity to gain health benefits through increased cycling and hiking activities.

RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITIES

The existing Mississippi River Levee Bike Path is being extended by the parish, as indicated in the University of New Orleans Comprehensive Master Plan. The St. John Parish Comprehensive Planning Project Phase III states: "The Parish, in cooperation with LA DOTD and the Regional Planning Commission, will begin construction of the first phase of the Levee Path on the Mississippi River levee from the St. Charles line to LaPlace, with future phases not only continuing up river on the levee but also branching north toward Manchac and providing the link to future phases in Tangipahoa and St.

Tammany Parishes to eventually provide a continuous multi-purpose bicycle and pedestrian path around Lake Pontchartrain, in accordance with the RPC's Pontchartrain Trace Master Plan."

Therefore, since the extension of the existing levee path has been in the planning and development stage for some time and is being constructed in advance of the recovery effort, it makes sense to consider the benefit of having a trailhead facility in one of St. John's communities. Such a facility could increase the level of recreational enjoyment and health benefits to residents of the parish while offering a potential positive economic impact from visitors.

The project offers citizens the opportunity to make the most of natural resources through recreating along these scenic paths. Promoting the parish's architectural, historical and scenic values could attract a larger number of visiting cyclists who have disposable income to spend on adventure travel in the region.

Finally, using these historical structures and places to draw people to the parish could help raise the level of appreciation for the cultural heritage, while also preserving the sensitive ecosystem in St. John Parish. This could result in a multifaceted recreational package to promote at regional and national adventure-based tourism trade shows.

CHALLENGES

The first challenge will be to gain the approval of the St. John Parish government to include this recovery strategy as a viable project in its overall plan. Once approval is granted, the project could seek funding for design and construction. The next objective for the project would be identifying and securing funding sources. The project would likely require multiple resource partners.

As the project moves forward, technical assistance from state and other agencies or foundations would be required to secure the needed funding for design and construction of elements of the project through program grants within those agencies. Therefore, careful articulation by the project team would be required to clearly convey the need and potential benefits of the trailhead facility.

ACTION STEPS

- Initiate conversations with parish officials regarding support for the project as well as consult with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers regarding levee improvements to allow access to the levee path
- Begin addressing the funding needs for a planning and implementation of the project
- Conduct a field visit to the top of the levee to identify potential sites for the trailhead and access points and verify the site's potential for meeting the needs of cyclists and pedestrians who use the existing levee path
- Begin identifying the funding needs for planning, design and implementation of the project
- Secure funding for the project
- Implement design phase of the project
- Implement construction phase of the project
- Finalize construction and open to the public



POTENTIAL RESOURCES

Louisiana Department of Transportation – Transportation Enhancement Grant

Louisiana State Parks – Recreational Trails Program For Louisiana

USACE – Planning Assistance to States Grant

Corporation for National and Community Service

Defense Logistics Agency Disposition Services

Disposal of Federal Surplus Real Property for Parks and Recreation

Donation of Federal Surplus Personal Property

National Trails System Projects

PROJECT CHAMPION

Mr. Jim Toler



ST. JOHN CULTURAL HISTORY PROJECT

PROJECT AREAS

LaPlace and West Bank

WORKING GROUPS INVOLVED

St. John Parish Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)
St. John Parish CAC Natural and Cultural Resources Subcommittee
St. John Parish Government
River Road Historical Society
Louisiana Office of Culture, Recreation and Tourism / Division of Historic Preservation

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project would identify historical structures in danger of being lost due to neglect or abandonment to be moved to a central location, restored and included as part of a historical museum cluster indicative on all cultures of St. John Parish. This facility could serve as not only a new attraction for St. John Parish, but as an office and meeting space for a reinvigorated historical society, which could work with schools to further preserve parish history by educating students and conducting oral history projects with seniors. This historical society could also work with property owners who own historic homes and commercial structures around the parish to assist them in getting some of these homes and properties on the National Register of Historic Places, obtaining tax credits for historical restoration projects and obtaining historic restoration grants.

The project's selected location could also serve as a site for cultural events and festivals. The development of a museum site and the reinvigoration of a historical society and its mission could lead to more attractions that could be developed. Along the west bank and in Garyville and other areas, there are many such historical structures that need to be saved for restoration. For example, Louisiana's second governor was born in the Lucy area, which would be of great interest to both citizens and visitors.

RECOVERY GOAL

During the open house forums, many comments were submitted by citizens regarding their desire to keep the history of St. John Parish alive and to sustain the stories that document the parish's past. Appreciation of history is another sign of a healthy recovery, signaling that citizens want to rebound culturally and that they plan to stay the course in St. John Parish for the long term. Therefore, the St. John Cultural History Project is important – residents need and want to celebrate and preserve their collective cultural histories, regardless of which segment of the population they are part of.

Furthermore, although the parish does contain historic properties, which are either privately owned or share a particular history such as the story of San Francisco Plantation, a new cultural museum, which would have the role of interpreting the collective cultural history of the diverse populations, industries and folkways of St. John Parish, would be of great value to citizens and also of substantial interest to visitors.

RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITIES

A new cultural museum in the parish could have the role of interpreting the collective cultural history of the diverse populations of St. John Parish. It would be of great value to citizens and also of substantial interest to visitors. It would allow citizens to celebrate their own historical contributions to the parish and also give the River Parishes Tourism Commission a new attraction to sell at regional and national tourism trade shows.

The St. John Cultural History Project could allow citizens to increase their level of awareness and appreciation for their collective history. This could create a sense of place for many citizens who have never really considered the value of their individual family heritages and the contributions their ancestors made toward St. John Parish. Furthermore, through interpreting the various architectural periods within the scope and design of the museum, citizens may develop an increased



appreciation for the diversity of architectural styles within the parish; and the incorporation of an event space to stage cultural festivals at the project site could allow for another layer of awareness of the parish's multiple cultures by citizens and visitors alike.

CHALLENGES

As with any project meant to celebrate the collective cultural history of many different populations, the first challenge will be to identify the best possible site to undertake such a project. The prudent approach may be to establish the museum in an area with a rich historical architectural environment, which would offer a central theme on which to build. One example would be the Garyville Historic District. It contains many structures on the National Register of Historic Places which are part of a central story regarding the timber industry that was once a major staple of the St. John Parish economy.

Nevertheless, the most crucial factor to move the St. John Cultural History Project forward, at least initially, will be support from local government and legislative assistance to endorse the project; and eventually, on cooperation from agencies such as the Louisiana Office of Culture, Recreation and Tourism / Divisions of Historic Preservation and Cultural Development, the U.S. Department of the Interior and private foundations.



ACTION STEPS

- Have the Natural and Cultural Resources Subcommittee submit the project to the CAC for consideration
- Begin discussions with owners of potential sites to learn the degree of cooperation that might exist for acquisition of such sites and structures through donation or purchase
- Conduct a preliminary field inventory of available historic structures and enlist the assistance of a university architectural department for technical assistance to further verify the architectural integrity of structures under consideration
- Explore funding opportunities for the initial phases of the acquisition and restoration of such facilities
- Finalize acquisition of site and selection of structures to be used as part of the project program.
- Implement design phase of the project to fully structure the program and identify functions of all assets and features
- Implement construction phase of site plan and programing elements
- Begin an open dialogue with interested citizens about the reinvigoration of a historical society to enlist support for the museum project, plus the student programs and senior citizen oral history projects mentioned during the open house forums
- Implement cultural programs, such as oral history projects and parish history curriculum for schools.
- Complete miscellaneous objectives needed to finish the project in preparation for opening to the public

POTENTIAL RESOURCES

Louisiana Office of Historic Preservation Technical Assistance / National Register Designation
Louisiana Office of Cultural Development, Restoration / Tax Abatement Program
American Battlefield Protection Program Planning Grants
Civil War Battlefield Land Acquisition Grant
Conservation Activities by Youth Service Organizations
Disposal of Federal Surplus Real Property
Disposal of Federal Surplus Real Property for Historic Monument Purposes
Economic Development Support for Planning Organizations
Historic Preservation Fund Grants-in-Aid
TechSoup
Center for Planning Excellence
Greater New Orleans Foundation
Lupin Foudation
Mary Freeman Wisdom Foundation
Peltier Foundation
Woldenberg Foudation

PROJECT CHAMPION

Pastor Donald August



AIRLINE HIGHWAY SCENIC BYWAY

PROJECT AREAS

Garyville, Reserve, LaPlace, and west bank

WORKING GROUPS INVOLVED

St. John Parish Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)
St. John Parish CAC Natural and Cultural Resources Subcommittee

St. John Parish Government

Louisiana Office of Culture, Recreation and Tourism / Scenic Byway Program

Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development

River Parishes Convention and Visitors Bureau

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Airline Highway has always been an important transportation route within St. John Parish and adjacent parishes. Known as Airline Highway between Baton Rouge and New Orleans, the route is actually a section of U.S. Highway 61, which ranges from the Canadian border to New Orleans. It is an important route not only for transportation, but from a historical perspective.

Between Baton Rouge and New Orleans, Airline Highway was built starting in the late 1920s. It was intended to upgrade transportation from the unimproved, dirt road that wound along the banks of the Mississippi River. At that time, the “river road” became a bog after heavy rains, and took all day to traverse between Baton Rouge and New Orleans. It was of special interest to the Louisiana Legislature and a remedy was in order. Under Governor Huey Long, construction on the highway was started, with completion years later.

Long said he wanted a road that “was a straight line” from New Orleans to Baton Rouge, while others called for it to be “as straight as an airstrip.” It thus became known regionally as Airline Highway. This route between the state capital and New Orleans maintains a prominent role in Louisiana’s transportation infrastructure, despite the competition from Interstate 10.

U.S. Highway 61 has different names in its more northern sections; for example, around the Memphis region it is known as the “Blues Highway.” Nevertheless, in its entirety it is known as the “Great River Road” as it generally follows the Mississippi River. It is one of only a select number of National Scenic Byways identified by the Federal Highway Administration. The National Scenic Byways (NSB) recognizes certain roads as National Scenic Byways or All-American Roads based on their archaeological, cultural, historic, natural, recreational, and scenic qualities.

The Airline Highway Scenic Byway Project is intended to obtain a state-designated Louisiana Scenic Byway status for the route within St. John Parish. At that point, it could be eligible to tap federal scenic byway funds for developing a corridor plan, erecting special signage, creating scenic rest stops and installing interpretive kiosks.

RECOVERY GOAL

During the open house forums, citizens indicated an interest in emphasizing the significance of Airline Highway and designating it as a scenic byway, including signage, beautification efforts, kiosks and rest stops. This positive activity could attract volunteer participation from a cross section of the community and instill civic pride.

RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITIES

With emphasis on its historic and scenic values and promotion as a National Scenic Byway, Airline Highway could bring visitors to the St. John communities along the route as well as those on the west bank. This initiative could serve the recovery strategy well as it would increase the opportunities in the communities of Garyville, Reserve, LaPlace and other parish communities to take advantage of the increase in visitors.

The section of Airline Highway in St. John Parish is not designated as part of the “Louisiana Scenic Bayou Byway,” which includes sections of the highway north of St. John. However, it is included in the National Scenic Byway designation within the Great River Road Scenic Byway. It is eligible to apply for National Scenic Byway funds through the National Scenic Byway Grant Fund. These competitive grants provide funding specifically for national scenic byways. To expedite the process, a team should begin a grant application, for submission in January 2014, to develop a corridor plan. In subsequent years applications can be submitted to develop various elements of the corridor plan until the project is complete.

Although this section of Airline Highway is not a state-designated scenic byway, many other such scenic byways crisscross St. John. One includes the Mississippi River Road Scenic Byway (both east bank and west bank), which follows the contour of the Mississippi River and offers travelers plenty of opportunities to visit historic plantations, as well as enjoy agricultural landscapes and other cultural offerings.

CHALLENGES

The first challenge will be gaining the approval of the St. John Parish government so it may proceed as a parish-supported initiative. Once this approval has been secured, the ultimate agency approval will need to come from the Louisiana Office of Culture, Recreation and Tourism / Scenic Byways Program. The contact there is Doug Bourgeois, senior advisor to the secretary of the DCRT and director of the Division of Louisiana Scenic Byways.

Secondly, it would require appointing a volunteer parish scenic byway commission to act as local sponsor to direct the development and activities relative to the program.

After the two initial objectives were met and a project team put in place, the project could move along with relative ease. The Natural and Cultural Resources Subcommittee has identified a list of tasks for early achievement. This should lead to a successful endeavor for St. John Parish and all support groups who are interested in playing a part in the long-term success of the Airline Highway Scenic Route Project.

ACTION STEPS

- Enlist the technical assistance from the Louisiana Office of Culture, Recreation and Tourism / Scenic Byways Program staff to apply for a scenic byway status.
- Conduct a field visit to identify potential resources to emphasize and celebrate as part of interpretive aspects of the byway, as well as potential sites to include one or more new rest stops, viewing areas and beautification projects.
- Develop a partnership with LA DOTD to gain support to establish landscaped entrance signs at the west and east entrances into St. John Parish.
- Educate public and private interests in the parish about the benefits of helping to promote the byway in the parish as a means of attracting new visitors that may not currently be stopping in St. John.
- Begin an aggressive program to fund and construct new elements along the scenic byway, such as interpretive kiosks and possible scenic stops.

POTENTIAL RESOURCES

Department of Wildlife and Fisheries – Wallop-Breaux Grant
Louisiana State Parks – Water and Conservation Grant
Louisiana Legislature – Capital Outlay Project
St. John Parish Council – Recreation Grant
Conservation Activities by Youth Service Organizations
Corporation for National and Community Service
Economic Development Support for Planning Organizations
Department of Transportation and Development, Transportation Enhancement Program
Louisiana Municipal Association
National Scenic Byways Program
Arbor Day Foundation
Brinker International Foundation
Greater New Orleans Foundation
Popeyes Louisiana Kitchen
Tulane Empowers
Woldenberg Foundation

PROJECT CHAMPIONS

Ms. Iona Holloway



WEST BANK NATURAL RESOURCE ACCESS

PROJECT AREAS

Edgard, Wallace, Pleasure Bend

WORKING GROUPS INVOLVED

St. John Parish Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)
and Cultural Resources Subcommittee

St. John Parish Government

Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission

Louisiana Department of Transportation and
Development

Louisiana Office of Culture, Recreation and
Tourism / State Parks

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The West Bank Natural Resource Access Project is meant to improve recreational access to natural resources in the west bank communities of St. John Parish. By doing so, it could make the west bank communities more able to retain current residents and also give the communities a higher level of marketability with potential new residents in the future. Referencing those statements, specific projects were mentioned by citizens during open house forums:

Objective 1

Develop a boat launch in Edgard on Louisiana Highway 3127 with lighting and other amenities

Objective 2

Build a fishing pier on the west bank along the Mississippi River

Objective 3

Build a boat launch at Lake Des Allemands

RECOVERY GOAL

During the open house forums, citizens indicated a need to increase access to the natural resources of St. John Parish on the west bank, including boat launches in particular, but also raising the possibility of building a fishing pier and park area on the Mississippi River for family gatherings.

While the project may not stimulate the community's economy directly, it could impact the long-term economic conditions by increasing the level of interest by citizens to remain in the west bank communities due to enhanced recreational opportunities, especially in the natural environment. It could also play a role in attracting new residents because of the same enhanced recreational value. The end result could be such that retention of existing residents and recruitment of new residents would increase the population. This would generate more interest in potential new business development on the west bank by entrepreneurs.

The project could also provide an important connection to other recreational and cultural activities in the parish as a whole if implemented. The Mississippi River Fishing Pier/Park project could offer a new attraction on the west bank so visitors could enjoy a loop of natural and cultural attractions between east bank and west bank communities, using the Reserve/Edgard Ferry and the Veterans Memorial Bridge. The loop would allow them to experience the communities of the west bank and then return to the east bank to enjoy attractions in Garyville, Reserve and other communities there. This concept could work with vehicular traffic as well as the cycling market. The project could benefit not only citizens in the west bank communities, but also increase the volume of visitors who would travel the entire parish to enjoy the different cultures and landscapes of St. John Parish. Finally, with improved amenities at the two boat launches in question, the west bank would become more attractive to both potential residents and visitors.

RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITIES

Boat launches already exist at Lake Des Allemands in the Pleasure Bend community, a privately owned launch allows for access to the lake. The Moll Canal boat launch in the Edgard area along Louisiana Highway 3127 also

leads to the lake. This project would entail bringing new amenities to those facilities, such as lighting and parking improvements, and also consider development of a Mississippi River park site.

The parish has already engaged an engineering and architectural firm to assess needed improvements for the Edgard facility. This facility will likely be slated for improvements before the efforts initiated through the recovery process. Nevertheless, there could be potential to assist in funding the project as part of the recovery process if the need arises.

The Pleasure Bend boat launch project could require negotiations with owner of the site to learn whether a surface donation or surface easement purchase would allow for utilizing public dollars to improve the existing facilities and bring new amenities to the site. Otherwise, a purchase of property in the Pleasure Bend community, as well as the design and construction of a new boat launch facility, would be the other option.

The west bank fishing pier and park area project could consist of exploring the development of a recreational pier and gathering area along the Mississippi River in a park setting, which could allow for fishing and viewing the river activity. This project would require improvements, including construction of a riverside pier, parking, lighting, pavilions, restroom facilities and other complimentary features to complete a Mississippi Riverside Park setting for family gatherings and recreational bank fishing activities.

Therefore, the project could benefit the entire St. John community by offering residents and visitors the opportunity to enjoy easy access to the Lake Des Allemands area and the scenic Mississippi River Park,

as well as the opportunity to spend time enjoying recreational fishing at the fishing pier on the river. If the new river attraction and improved boat launches drew an increased volume of visitors to the west bank, it could be an opportunity for local gas stations, grocery stores and other businesses to cater to these new customers.

CHALLENGES

If no public land is available, the projects may require land acquisition and site selection objectives. However, since St. John residents have expressed great interest in all three projects, it may be possible to identify funding through partnerships with state and federal agencies that seek projects of this nature to fund during a specific funding cycle. Success depends on good planning and a strong project champion to guide the process and offer a level of leadership that will allow the initiative to develop in phases, perhaps beginning with addressing the short-term needs at the existing boat launches and addressing the feasibility phase of the Mississippi River Fishing Pier and Park project within a reasonable timeframe.

ACTION STEPS

- Initiate communication with the engineering and architectural firm which is assessing the needed improvements at Moll Canal Boat Launch on behalf of St. John Parish Government
- Coordinate with parish administrators to learn whether they have funded the new amenities at the boat launch and whether they need funding assistance
- Research potential funding to assist the parish government with the implementation of the design and construction phases of the ongoing project
- Bring improved amenities to the Pleasure Bend boat launch facility, such as improved parking and lighting
- Meet with owner of existing facility to discuss a potential surface donation to make the facility available for public funding (i.e. grants, parish, state and federal funds)
- Develop a conceptual site plan featuring improved amenities
- Implement surface donation or negotiate a surface easement in perpetuity for the existing site
- Research funding for the site improvements to include design and construction of new amenities.
- Implement the design phase
- Implement the construction phase
- Finalize construction and re-open the site for public use
- Identifying the most desirable and feasible site to construct a Mississippi Riverside park development on the west bank for recreational fishing and family gatherings
- Develop a conceptual site plan for the project to assist in building momentum for agency support and funding of design
- Apply for grant funding to design, and construct the project
- Initiate the construction phase
- Finalize construction of the project



POTENTIAL RESOURCES

Department of Wildlife and Fisheries ,
Wallop-Breaux Grant
Louisiana State Parks – Water and Conservation Grant
USACE – Planning Assistance to States Grant
Louisiana Legislature – Capital Outlay Project
St. John Parish Council – Recreation Grant
Beach Erosion Control Projects
Emergency Watershed Protection Program
Conservation Activities by Youth Organizations
Corporation for National and Community Service
Economic Development Support for Planning
Organizations
Louisiana Department of Transportation and
Development , Transportation Enhancement
Program
State of Louisiana Community Development Authority
Boh Foundation
Center for Planning Excellence
Community Development Capital
Gil and Dody Weaver Foundation
Hope Community Credit Union
Tulane Empowers

PROJECT CHAMPION

Mr. Mike Bourgeois



When Hurricane Isaac hit St. John the Baptist Parish on Aug. 28, 2012, the resulting floodwaters caused extensive damage to two schools, Lake Pontchartrain Elementary School and East St. John High School. These facilities remained closed for repairs as of May 2013.

The closures forced the district to divide Lake Pontchartrain Elementary students among five other elementary school campuses. Meanwhile, high school students attend classes on a temporary campus and use the high school's ninth-grade building, which escaped flooding. Because the temporary campus cannot contain all 1,400 high school students, they must attend classes in morning and afternoon shifts. This has resulted in shortened time spans in school, causing psychological hardships and mental anxiety for many. The school board also estimates that flooding displaced about one-third of its students from their homes. Nearly 300 have enrolled in other districts.

Healthcare services are critical to St. John's economic stability and quality of life, yet the parish lacks mental health service providers and programs, which became more apparent as a result of the impacts of Isaac. With an annual payroll of \$20,736,892 for its 347 employees, River Parishes Hospital is one of the largest employers in the region, yet does not provide mental health services to its patients. And while a state mental health unit is located in St. John Parish, it provides limited services to low- and moderate-income residents and the medically uninsured. The same limitations hold true for the Teche Action Clinics in Edgard and Reserve.

According to the Louisiana Health Report's St. John the Baptist Parish Profile, one-third of Americans between the ages of 15 and 54 will develop a mental illness. Data from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration shows that 1 in 5 people experience a diagnosable mental disorder in any given year. For Louisiana, this equates to an estimated 650,000 adults and 245,000 children. More common than any other major public health concern, mental illness occurs among people in all walks of life. Despite its prevalence, only about one-third of those affected receive appropriate mental health treatment in any given year. Stress levels are elevated during times of crisis such as devastating natural disasters. Displacement of families, disruption of life cycles, and other negative impacts increase the levels of stress and mental anxiety within the affected population. Such impacts were observed and identified in St. John Parish as a result of Isaac.

Medical transportation services within the parish are limited, especially those providing service to doctors' offices, rehabilitation facilities and the hospital for non-urgent medical care visits. The River Parishes Transit Authority (RPTA) covers St. John, St. Charles, St. James and parts of Jefferson parish, providing transit services to the general public, plus some services to the elderly and people with physical and mental disabilities as well. The RPTA operates a modified-demand response, curb-to-curb, rural public transit system with no fixed routes. The fare is \$2 per one-way trip for service anywhere

Health & Social Services

within the area, with elderly and people with disabilities paying half-price fares during off-peak times. The system complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and provides accommodations and special assistance for people with disabilities.

Community members in St. John Parish have worked diligently since Hurricane Isaac to develop projects that will help them recover and return to normal. During the Open Houses, residents asked for an awareness campaign that promotes recreational activities and creates venues to promote physical health and wellness, as well as improvements and upgrades to existing recreational amenities. It was also suggested that recreational programs and physical health activities make better use of venues such as the Civic Center and existing park facilities.

The Recreation Department is now funded by video poker revenue and transfers from other departments. In April 2012, parish residents approved a recreation funding plan to dedicate 2.25 mills in property tax, coming from a combination of the road lighting district tax and debt service. The rededicated tax is expected to generate around \$830,000 a year to maintain, operate and improve recreational facilities. If fully utilized, these recreational facilities can play an important role in residents' overall physical health and well-being.

Residents also felt a Farmers Market in LaPlace would give them a similar boost while helping the local economy and neighborhoods thrive. In 2011, the U.S. Department of Agriculture counted 7,173 farmers markets nationwide, a 17 percent increase from 2010. The availability of locally grown and healthy produce is another benefit of this project that could have a positive impact on the health of parish residents.

IMPROVE MENTAL HEALTH ACCESS AND SERVICES

PROJECT AREA

Parish-wide

WORKING GROUPS INVOLVED

St. John Parish Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) and
CAC Health and Social Services Subcommittee
River Parishes Hospital
St. John Parish Economic Development Department
St. John Parish Health and Human Services Department
Mental Health and Medical Providers

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The goal of this project is for St. John Parish to provide a larger presence of mental health services within the parish or tri-parish areas. Private mental health services are provided in two of the adjacent parishes, St. Charles and St. James. The state provides a mental health unit within St. John Parish, but the health unit has been criticized by residents for not providing sufficient coverage and services. This project will recruit additional clinics and practices to expand their current operations into St. John Parish offering a spectrum of expanded coverage for insured, underinsured, Medicaid and Medicare patients.

RECOVERY GOAL

The recovery of the parish is dependent upon making a quality life available for its residents. Without better and improved mental health services, the parish will lose money to adjacent parishes because patients will go elsewhere for quality mental health and medical services. Additionally, because of a lack of mental health services, many patients may not receive the proper care needed to live a quality life. Research shows that many people become stressed after a major storm such as Hurricane Isaac and should seek proper medical attention. Without adequate services and programs nearby, residents may not seek treatment simply because they have to travel too far or they may not understand the treatment options available.

RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN

The River Region has several mental health facilities, such as the St. James Parish Psychiatric Hospital and the River Parishes Mental Health Clinic. However, the goal of this project is for St. John Parish to create new mental health clinics and practices by partnering with neighboring parishes and medical institutions. The facilities would be encouraged to expand their current operations into St. John Parish, offering a full spectrum of services to insured patients, including Medicaid and Medicare patients.

ACTION STEPS

- Target available properties and secure financial incentives for clinic operations. Recruit (partner with) neighboring parish mental health facilities to consider expansion of their services into St. John the Baptist Parish
- Partner with medical schools, departments of psychiatry, clinical psychology, nursing, social work and other licensed medical facilities (hospitals). Encourage them to locate within the parish and offer the following services as part of their overall training/internship programs:
 - Psychiatric assessments and treatment plans
 - Medication evaluation, assessment and management
 - Cognitive behavioral therapy
 - Family support and education
 - Counseling and referrals to community resources (physicians, anger management groups, parenting education, social service groups, domestic violence groups)
 - Database of community resources maintained through a community liaison consultant appointed by the parish
- Fund a long-term mental health consultant team to create a sustainable mental health program consisting of:
 - Two community liaison consultants (MBA and Public Health interns)



- Three psychiatrists (one licensed, one resident and one intern from a university medical school)
- Two social workers (licensed social worker and an intern from a university)
- Two nurses (registered nurse and an intern from a university)
- Two family support workers (appointed by the parish)
- Address the needs of the working poor and underinsured by funding medical services and increasing access to the Teche Action Centers in Reserve and Edgard. This may be achieved by helping medical establishments obtain grants from Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). These grants may be used to expand their network of sites assisting the underserved population through its Health Center Program New Access Point program.
- Under this program applicants must propose to establish a new access point that provides:
 - Comprehensive primary medical care as its primary purpose;
 - Services, either directly onsite or through established arrangements, without regard to ability to pay;
 - Access to services for all individuals in the service area/population, and;
 - Services at one or more permanent service delivery sites.



EXPAND PUBLIC & MEDICAL TRANSPORTATION

PROJECT AREA

Parish-wide

WORKING GROUPS INVOLVED

St. John Parish Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) and
CAC Health and Social Services Subcommittee
River Parishes Transit Authority
River Parishes Hospital

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This project would expand the River Parishes Transit Authority (RPTA) and improve access to medical services in St. John Parish. By using additional transportation funds, the project would increase transportation options for the elderly and medical patients.

RECOVERY GOAL

Expand the transit system and improve access to medical services

Objective 1: Increase medical transportation services for the elderly and handicapped.

- During the community input process, a need was identified for increased transportation access to medical facilities, particularly for seniors and west bank residents.

Objective 2: Fund the purchase of additional transit vehicles.

- The fleet of buses serving the parish were inundated during the hurricane and had to be replaced. Enough new vehicles were obtained only to continue the existing level of service. More vehicles as well as specialized vehicles will be needed to increase transportation.

Objective 3: Increase the River Parishes Transit Authority's advertising to increase awareness of services offered and ridership.

- During the community input process, it was noted that in some areas of the community a general

lack of knowledge existed about the current transit services. This needs to be remedied.

Objective 4: Create a "Transport Team" to coordinate appropriate transportation options for medical patients and the elderly.

- Data gathering on patient transportation needs and resources should be initiated. A joint effort among medical and transportation providers needs to be coordinated.

Objective 5: Work with the Federal Transit Administration and Congress to waive the local match requirement and to allow the use of preventive maintenance funds for operations.

- Match waivers were initiated during previous disaster declarations. These greatly aided the delivery of much-needed transit services. Such waivers are needed and could greatly extend the resources available for expanding and operating the system in this rural environment.

Objective 6: Provide a fixed route transit system.

- A fixed-route, regularly scheduled transit service would greatly simplify and enhance transit services for the community.

Objective 7: Procure a radio system for the transit system.

- Communications with vehicles is an important element of providing improved service, especially for medical transportation and non-critical emergencies.

Objective 8: Establish a "Pass" program for the transit system.

- Exact change fares create delays and collection issues for transit operators. A pre-issued pass solves many of these problems and can be distributed by nonprofits, medical providers, employers and parish government for indigent residents.

Objective 9: Secure funds to build a regional maintenance system.

- The transportation providers, i.e., RPTA, school district and the Council on the Aging all have

CHALLENGES

Cuts in state funds to Medicaid/Medicare may prove challenging for parts of this project, such as obtaining critical grant funds and technical assistance.

POTENTIAL RESOURCES

Community Services Block Grant
Comprehensive Mental Health Services for Children with Serious Emotional Disturbances
HHS Consolidated Health Centers New Access Point Grant
HHs Rural Hospital Improvement Grant Program
Louisiana Development Authority
American Psychiatric Association
Louisiana Municipal Association
Foundation Source
Huston Foundation
Liatus Foundation
RGK Foundation
Vanguard Group Foundation
CVS Caremark Foundation
Delta Healthcare Initiative

PROJECT CHAMPIONS

Dr. Walter Robichaux
Andrea Lowe

maintenance needs but not the budgets to have their own maintenance facilities. If they could collaborate and pool resources, a joint maintenance and storage facility could be developed.

Objective 10: Improve transit amenities for riders transferring to or from RPTA.

- Improved transit amenities at stops where transfers occur are needed. A sign indicating a bus stop. No shelters or benches are available for passengers awaiting the arrival of the next vehicle.

RECOVERY GOAL

By upgrading and expanding services and establishing fixed routes, the transit system will be able to attract more riders. It will also make transportation options available for segments of the population who lack access to private vehicles. One phase of this project is to provide RPTA funds to purchase property to house its operations and equipment. As a result of Hurricane Isaac floodwaters, the RPTA lost all buses in its fleet. This project will provide help to purchase property outside the floodplain to reduce future losses.

RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITIES

The recovery of St. John Parish is dependent upon providing a quality life for its residents. By providing additional vehicles, medical patients and the elderly will have a reliable transportation option that fills voids in their current lifestyle. This project will enhance the daily life of residents, thus assisting in their overall recovery. Additional revenue provided to the system and an advertising campaign will allow the transit system to purchase more vehicles, thus having more seats to accommodate the additional ridership. These added vehicles will reduce trip time, thus encouraging more riders to use the transit system to go not only to medical facilities but also to and from job sites.

CHALLENGES

There are several challenges inherent with “rural-based” transit systems. A few include a lack of adequate population and demand, distances between population centers and economies of scale to allow efficient service

and facilities. Many of these can be overcome through collaboration and cooperation among the current service providers and the community. The key to making many of these transportation improvements for the parish will be getting the providers and the community to work together to aggregate demand and seek resources to assist with service provision.

ACTION STEPS

- Create a “Transport Team” to coordinate appropriate transportation options for medical patients and the elderly
- Work with the Federal Transit Administration and Congress to waive the local match requirement and to allow the use of preventive maintenance funds for operations.
- Identify needs within the community for expanded services
- Identify resources to accomplish goals
- Fund the purchase of additional transit vehicles
- Increase the River Parishes Transit Authority’s advertising to increase awareness of services offered and ridership
- Provide a fixed route transit system
- Procure a radio system for the transit system
- Improve transit amenities for riders transferring from or to RPTA from different systems.
- Establish a “Pass” program for the transit system
- Establish a coalition among transportation providers to have a joint maintenance facility.
- Secure funds to develop a regional maintenance system

POTENTIAL RESOURCES

River Parishes Transit Authority
River Parishes Hospital
USDA – Office of Rural Development
Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development
Federal Transportation Administration
Office of Community Development –OCD
Community Services Block Grant
Louisiana Community Development Authority
Lee Kahn Foundation
Good 360
Office of Surplus Property for Public Health and Homeless Purposes
Blowitz–Ridgeway Foundation
HHS Rural Healthcare Services
HSS Consolidated Health Centers New Access Point Grants
Delta Health Care Initiative

PROJECT CHAMPIONS

Ivy Mathieu
Leo Marretta

INCREASE PHYSICAL HEALTH AWARENESS

PROJECT AREA

Parish-wide

WORKING GROUPS INVOLVED

St. John Parish Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) and
CAC Health and Social Services Subcommittee
River Parishes Hospital
St. John Parish Council/Department of Recreation

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This project is designed to improve physical health awareness by:

- Forging a link between medical providers and the parish to disseminate health awareness information to the community
- Promoting physical health activities such as biking/walking/nature trails as part of a parish-wide health awareness campaign.
- Promoting the use of existing recreational facilities

RECOVERY GOAL

After Hurricane Isaac, community members came together to develop a vision for recovery as a better, stronger community. In addition, Health and Social Services Subcommittee members recognized that parish residents must be healthy and pursue healthy activities to truly have a better, stronger community. This health awareness campaign is one of the tools that will help to promote healthy lives and a healthy parish.

RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITIES

This physical health awareness campaign will help the community recover and improve. St. John Parish's residents and its sense of community is what make it a great place to live. Increasing physical awareness is critical to St. John's long-term recovery.

CHALLENGES

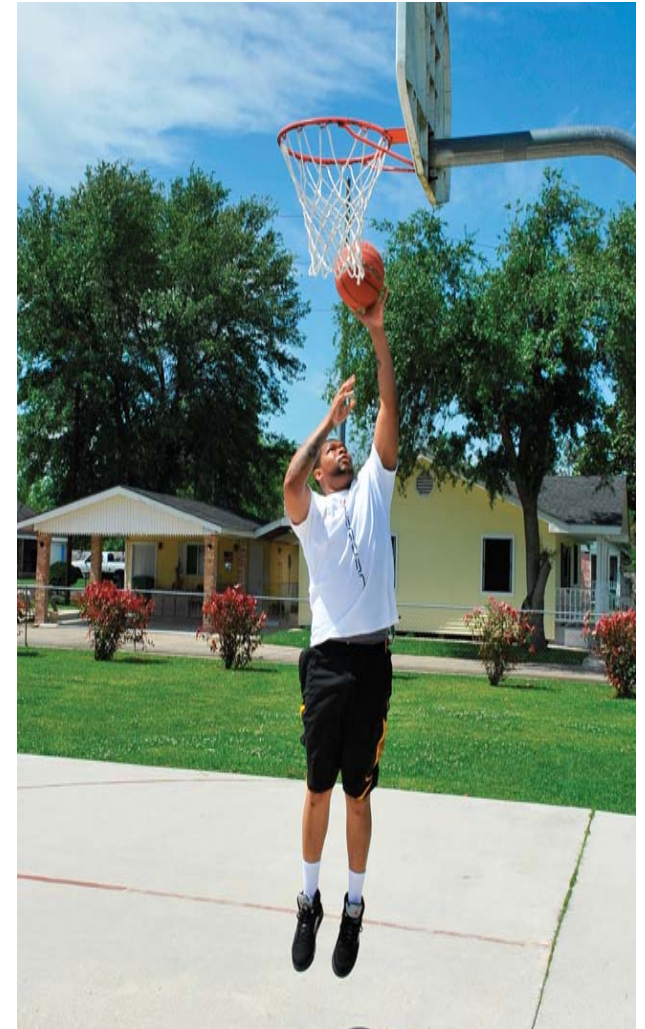
The challenge is pursuing grant funds to implement this project in a timely manner.

ACTION STEPS

- Create a coalition among medical providers, parish government, Citizens Advisory Committee and nonprofit agencies to identify needs and design a program to meet those needs
- A parish-wide physical health awareness campaign needs to be designed to promote:
 - Health Fairs
 - Biking/walking/nature trails events
 - The use of existing recreational facilities
 - Medical screenings
 - Public gatherings such as festivals and car shows
 - Channel 15 public airing of health news
 - Public access forums
 - A parish-wide emphasis on vaccinations and flu shots
 - Increased River Parishes Hospital's visibility
- Identify resources to meet needs
- Apply for grants and/or seek other financial resources

POTENTIAL RESOURCES

Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals
Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana
Cardinal Health Foundation
Greater New Orleans Foundation
Dr. Scholl Foundation
CVS Caremark Community Grants
Dr. Robert C. and Veronica Atkins Foundation
Foundation Source
Mary Family Foundation
Lupin Foundation
Foundation for the National Institutes of Health
General Motors Foundation



PROJECT CHAMPIONS

Dahlia Tate-Rainey
Dr. Walter Robichaux
Andrea Lowe

EXPAND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

PROJECT AREA

Parish-wide

WORKING GROUPS INVOLVED

St. John Parish Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) and CAC Health and Social Services Subcommittee
St. John Parish School Board
Louisiana Central Louisiana Technical College Board of Supervisors

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This project aims to increase vocational education opportunities within parish high schools. Not everyone is suited for or intends to go to college. St. John Parish is situated in the wetlands with several industries nearby. The youth of the parish can benefit from vocational training and fill a growing need within the parish. This project serves the parish industries by supplying them with a well-educated workforce.

RECOVERY GOAL

St. John Parish's recovery is dependent upon providing a good quality of life for its residents. Because of greater employment opportunities, current residents will choose to live within the parish. Graduating seniors will choose to stay in the parish rather than move to another area. The recovery cannot happen without people, but people must have a vested interest in their community to remain after a storm like Hurricane Isaac. These vocational courses will strengthen the school systems which in turn will strengthen the workforce. This provides a more knowledgeable workforce with the potential to earn higher wages from local industries.

RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN

This project will enable the parish to maintain growth in its industrial sector by improving the quality of its local workforce. This project connects the health and social services sector (HSS) with the industrial sector by providing a knowledgeable workforce, connects HSS with the economic sector by promoting the parish's industrial health through hiring locally, and connects HSS with the natural resources sector by promoting courses and stewardship of the natural environment.

CHALLENGES

There has been no direct involvement by the school district in the development of this project. The first challenge will be getting the necessary facts and background data from the school district. The next challenge will be obtaining cooperation and collaboration to implement any new programs.

ACTION STEPS

- Meetings with the St. John Parish School Board, Louisiana Community and Technical College System Board of Supervisors and local industry to set up a collaborative group effort
- Research the current system and identify gaps
- Identify courses helpful to local industries
- Design courses needed, e.g., Environmental Justice, Emergency Preparedness and Green Technology
- Identify resources to meet needs
- Apply for grants and/or seek assistance from local employers

POTENTIAL RESOURCES

Louisiana Incumbent Worker Training Program
Louisiana Department of Education
Alfred P. Sloan Foundation
AT&T Foundation
Ford Foundation
Home Depot Foundation
Community Services Block Grant
Rural Business Enterprise Grant
Youth Conservation Program
Computers for Learning
Local Large Employers, e.g., Shell, Marathon, Port of South Louisiana, Nalco, and Dupont

PROJECT CHAMPIONS

Charlotte Hooker
Ivy Mathieu



CREATE AND DEVELOP A FARMERS MARKET

PROJECT AREA

LaPlace, Louisiana

WORKING GROUPS INVOLVED

St. John Parish Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) AND
CAC Health and Social Services Subcommittee
St John Parish Economic Development Department

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This project will create a local farmers market in St. John Parish. Farmers markets are an integral part of the urban/farm linkage. These markets continue to gain popularity due to the growing consumer interest in fresh products directly from the farm. Farmers markets allow consumers to have access to locally grown, farm-fresh produce. The markets provide farmers the opportunity to develop a personal relationship with their customers and cultivate consumer loyalty. Direct marketing of farm products through farmers markets continues to be an important sales outlet for agricultural producers nationwide.



RECOVERY GOAL

Farmers markets often serve as an integral part of creating robust local economies and thriving neighborhoods. They provide access to fresh, healthy food in communities where access to fresh, nutritious food may be otherwise limited. This project will stimulate the parish's economy by bringing produce growers together in one location. This location will be advertised to the general public to increase traffic and buyers.

Relationship to Strategic Plan Priorities:

This project will highlight the parish's commitment to bring people together to buy, sell and build community relationships. This project connects with another Health and Social Services project, "Improve Physical Health Awareness." Community support for this project was documented by numerous residents' comments provided during the community open houses.



CHALLENGES

The parish has already obtained a Farmers Market Promotion Program grant from the USDA and is currently developing a farmers market to be located in Wallace on the west bank, but has not proceeded with construction of the facility.

ACTION STEPS

- Follow-up with the parish regarding the USDA Farmers Market Promotion Program grant and insure that they provide market space (building/stand) as intended
- Insure that adequate promotion of the market is planned
- Identify any additional resources to fill gaps for the farmers market and assist with obtaining resources needed

POTENTIAL RESOURCES

USDA Farmers Market Promotion Program Grant
Louisiana Community Development Authority
Louisiana Municipal association
Citi Foundation
Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant program
Cooperative Development Foundation
Foundation Source
Smart Growth America
Foundation for Louisiana
Greater New Orleans Foundation

PROJECT CHAMPIONS

Andrea Lowe
Dahlia Tate Rainey





Southeast Louisiana developed historically as a maritime economy with a strong agricultural component. St. John the Baptist Parish's economy reflects this. The vast, fertile land of its west bank proved perfect for producing sugarcane after settlers introduced it there in 1751. Even now, fishing and farming continue to play a major role in the parish's economy, along with modern industries such as refineries. Across the river, the parish's east bank is home to a chemical plant, sugar refinery, oil refinery and grain elevators.

St. John Parish has many large industries, including petrochemical plants, a petroleum refinery, recycled steel plant and maritime industries at the Port of South Louisiana. Manufacturing accounted for almost 20 percent of parish employment in 2010, twice the national average. Employment in the construction and transportation sectors was also higher than the national average, while employment in retail and the accommodation/food services sectors was slightly below the U.S. average.

Sugarcane is the parish's major agricultural crop. Raw sugar and molasses production generated a Gross Farm Value (GFV) of \$9.5 million in 2011. Vegetable producers generated a total value of \$621,478 while the total value of cattle and calf production was \$371,127.

In late August 2012, Isaac made landfall as a Category 1 storm just southwest of the mouth of the Mississippi River. During and after the storm, fisheries closed, with vessel damage, dock damage, power outages, and the inability to get fuel and ice into the areas negatively affecting those businesses' bottom lines. Additionally, significant storm

Economic

surge and flood conditions created by the hurricane's heavy, steady rainfall moved seafood species out of their normal environments, and in some instances, destroyed them.

Small businesses have fewer resources than larger companies to cope with weather disruptions caused by disasters such as Hurricane Isaac. Of 207 small businesses surveyed in St. John Parish, 70 estimated their damages to be significant and 12 estimated their damages to be major. The combined estimate of damage totals more than \$2.2 million, averaging \$10,828 per business. The number of jobs suspended or lost because of the storm is estimated at 1,249 with a payroll estimate of \$659,837. As of March 8, 2013, the U.S. Small Business Administration had approved \$3.88 million in loans for 54 businesses in the parish.

Some residents may have left St. John Parish after Hurricane Isaac, despite increased industrial activity, including a recent refinery expansion and a reported \$19 million expansion at the Nalco plant in Garyville. Additionally, while local industries present job opportunities, the parish's untrained workforce remains a concern, especially as the aging workforce begins to retire.

Residents have expressed a desire for more shopping, dining, and recreation opportunities. Community members would like to see more retail establishments in the parish; however, abundant shopping opportunities in nearby New Orleans, Baton Rouge and Gonzales present real competition for retail dollars. Some commercial space is available although future flooding is a concern in some areas.

SUPPORT YOUTH PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

PROJECT AREA

Parish-wide

WORKING GROUPS INVOLVED

St. John Parish Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)
CAC Economic Subcommittee
River Region Chamber of Commerce (potential)
South Central Planning and Development Commission (potential)
St. John Parish Council
St. John Parish Economic Development Department

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This project encourages nonprofit organizations to seek funding through the parish to provide programs for youth. Depending on provider response, this project could include the development of more than one youth program. Some programs may focus more on the arts, both performing and visual, while other programs may emphasize educational assistance such as tutoring, GED classes, and basic job skills. Program development will entail identifying program providers, finding suitable physical facilities and establishing financial support.

RECOVERY GOAL

Youth programs will serve the community by offering activities that attract and retain families and increase the overall quality of life. Economic impact is derived by enhancing community life and providing a solid living environment for potential residents. In addition, business opportunities will be available for dance instructors, theater groups, artists and others looking to provide recreational and educational activities for youth.

Youth program development will provide a variety of interesting, safe, and engaging activities for youth to enjoy. Program elements include art, music, dance, computer training, job application assistance, tutoring, after-school programs, recreation activities, and other

activities designed for different age groups. Both parents and youth identified something for school-age youth to do as one of the top needs in the parish.

RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITIES

St. John Parish's recovery is dependent upon providing a quality life for its residents. Residents need to feel that their community is whole with safe and engaging activities for their children. These programs will enhance the daily life of resident youth by providing activities that fill a void in their current lifestyle, thus assisting in their overall recovery to normalcy.

CHALLENGES

Due to a lack of resources, this type of project is not a priority of the economic development committee, but should be advocated by the St. John Parish School District, the department of parks and recreation, and the department of health and human services.

ACTION STEPS

- Organize members and participants
- Research available funding sources
- Fundraising for operation - applying for grants and soliciting financial support from area employers
- Finding suitable facilities for a youth center

POTENTIAL RESOURCES

Computers for Learning
Defense Logistics Agency Disposition Services
Disposal of Federal Surplus Real Property
Donation of Federal Surplus Personal Property
Minority Business Opportunity Center
Native American Business Enterprise Centers
LA-DOE: Louisiana Center for Afterschool Learning
ABC Charities
Almar Foundation

Baseball Tomorrow Fund
Best Buy Children's Foundation
Bontrager Charitable Foundation, Inc.
Chatlos Foundation, Inc.
Dore Family Foundation
Edna McConnell Clark Foundation
Edna Wardlaw Charitable Trust
Edward and Helen Mardigian Foundation
Foundation Source
Giving Back Fund
Good 360
Graham Foundation
Gustaf Westfeldt McIlhenny Family Foundation
Hillsdale Fund, Inc.
Home Depot Foundation
Huston Foundation
James L. Stamps Foundation, Inc.
J.C. Penney Company Fund / J.C. Penney Afterschool Fund
Jim Henson Foundation
Kentucky Fried Chicken Foundation, Inc.
Marjorie Merriweather Post Foundation
Microsoft Company
Mustard Seed Foundation, Inc.
National Association for the Exchange of Industrial Resources
National Association of State Agencies for Surplus Property (NASASP)
National Environmental Education Foundation (NEEF)
NFL Charities
Npower
Office Depot Foundation
Oracle Education Foundation
RGK Foundation
Shell Oil Company
Sony USA Foundation, Inc. / Sony Corporate Giving Programs
Stephen and Mary Birch Foundation, Inc.
Stratford Foundation
TechSoup

ATTRACT A YOUTH ENTERTAINMENT BUSINESS

Timken Foundation of Canton
Tony Hawk Foundation
U.S. Soccer Foundation
Wadsworth Golf Charities Foundation
Wheless Foundation
Boh Foundation
Booth-Bricker Fund
Emerging Philanthropists of New Orleans
Finish Line Youth Foundation
Freeport-McMoRan Foundation
Gil and Dody Weaver Foundation
Goldring Family Foundation
Greater New Orleans Foundation
Helis Foundation
J. Edgar Monroe Foundation
Lupin Foundation
Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation, Inc.
New Orleans Louisiana Saints, L.L.C.
Tulane Empowers
Woldenberg Foundation

LOCAL CHAMPIONS

Renita Graber & Mary Henry



PROJECT AREA

St. John Parish (west bank)

WORKING GROUPS INVOLVED

St. John Parish Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)
CAC Economic Subcommittee
River Region Chamber of Commerce (potential)
South Central Planning and Development Commission (potential)
St. John Parish Council
St. John Parish Economic Development Department

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

A market analysis will be conducted to determine potential demand for a youth entertainment business in St. John Parish. This type of business would provide recreational activities for youth and adults including bowling, roller skating, arcades, go-carts, miniature golf, laser tag and other activities. Many residents, especially the high school students surveyed, cited the need for youth activities in the parish. The business could include a range of activities that may attract not only St. John Parish residents, but those of neighboring parishes.

RECOVERY GOAL

The recovery of St. John Parish is dependent upon a strong quality of life for its residents. The parish would be seen as offering a more fun environment for residents. It would help to provide an upbeat note to the post-disaster recovery process.

RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITIES

The youth entertainment business could be located at the proposed outlet mall to provide recreational opportunities for youth while their parents shop. The project is related to the social services sector as increased recreational activities are good for the mental and social health of the community.

CHALLENGES

Narrowly focused businesses have very specialized location criteria, which may be difficult to achieve in a more sparsely populated rural community.

ACTION STEPS

- Identify agency or organization to conduct market analysis
- Research chains and trade associations to determine interest/criteria for site location
- Investigate development incentives
- Identify entity/partnerships for the recruitment of a youth entertainment business
- Identify targeted areas of development

POTENTIAL RESOURCES

Minority Business Enterprise Center
LA-LED: Small Business Loan and Guaranty Program
Baseball Tomorrow Fund
Home Depot, Inc.
Lowe's Charitable and Educational Foundation
National Association of State Agencies for Surplus Property
NFL Charities
Tony Hawk Foundation
Boh Foundation
Finish Line Youth Foundation
Microsoft Company
Microsoft Unlimited Potential Grants
New Orleans Louisiana Saints, L.L.C.
Oracle Education Foundation
TechSoup
Hope Community Credit Union

PROJECT CHAMPIONS

Mary Henry & Renita Graber

ATTRACT AN OUTLET MALL TO THE PARISH

PROJECT AREA

Parish-wide

WORKING GROUPS INVOLVED

St. John Parish Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)
CAC Economic Subcommittee
River Region Chamber of Commerce (potential)
South Central Planning and Development Commission (potential)
St. John Parish Council
St. John Parish Economic Development Department

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

St. John Parish is ideally located for an outlet mall. Only two outlet malls exist in Louisiana—one in Shreveport and one in Gonzales. The Tanger Outlet Mall in Gonzales is 30 miles northwest of LaPlace. The parish's location off Interstates 10 and 55 makes it accessible and visible. Within a 30- to 40-mile radius to the north, south, and east of LaPlace lay the retail markets of New Orleans, Kenner, and Hammond. An outlet mall in LaPlace would be much closer to these retail markets and would not affect the Baton Rouge market served by the Tanger Outlet.

RECOVERY GOAL

St. John Parish's recovery is dependent upon a strong local economy and good quality of life for its residents. This project would provide existing and returning residents with more shopping opportunities. It would stimulate the local economy and help support the parish tax base.

An outlet mall would also offer job opportunities for residents. Because of the regional nature of an outlet mall, outside dollars would come into the community. Economic stimulus includes jobs created, construction spending, local spending, secondary jobs created at places such as gas stations and restaurants, and sales tax collected.

RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITIES

The community would have access to and benefit from an outlet shopping mall. Additionally, increased sales tax revenue would benefit the entire parish because there are no incorporated areas to divide the revenue. As the community's tax base is strengthened, public services can be maintained and possibly increased.

CHALLENGES

A full-fledged mall was considered as an option but it would probably not be supported by sufficient market demand. An outlet mall could be sustained more easily by regional demand because it is on a smaller scale.

ACTION STEPS

- Research the market feasibility from Outlet Mall Location Criteria
- Review the Market Profiles of existing Louisiana Outlet Malls
- Develop incentives, e.g. tax incentives, land acquisition assistance, infrastructure improvements, site prep
- Research Commercial Developers, local regional or national as potential partners
- Recruit developer for outlet stores to St. John

PROJECT CHAMPIONS

Peggy Joseph



POTENTIAL RESOURCES

Corporation for National and Community Service
Minority Business Enterprise Centers
Smart Growth: Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities
Smart Growth Implementation Assistance Program
Sustainable Communities Community Challenge Planning Grant Program
Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant Program
LA-Louisiana Community Development Authority
LA-Louisiana Municipal Association
Citi Foundation
Cooperative Development Foundation
Foundation Source
Smart Growth America
Capital One Foundation
Center for Planning Excellence
Foundation for Louisiana
Greater New Orleans Foundation
Woldenberg Foundation

ATTRACT UPSCALE RESTAURANTS

PROJECT AREA

Parish-wide

WORKING GROUPS INVOLVED

St. John Parish Citizens Advisory Committee
CAC Economic Subcommittee
River Region Chamber of Commerce (potential)
South Central Planning and Development Commission (potential)
St. John Parish Council
St. John Parish Economic Development Department

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Aiming to create a larger array of dining opportunities, this project would begin with market analysis and continue with research to determine the feasibility of having more upscale and Cajun restaurants in St. John Parish. Residents expressed a strong desire for fine dining and local heritage dining opportunities. New Orleans, Baton Rouge and other locations boast an assortment of quality restaurants and Cajun-style restaurants such as Mulatte's, Boutin's, and locally-owned restaurants.

RECOVERY GOAL

Recruiting upscale and Cajun restaurants to St. John Parish will promote economic development throughout the community by accomplishing the following:

- Providing job opportunities
- Attracting outside visitors
- Promoting spending within St. John Parish

RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITIES

A variety of restaurants will provide job opportunities for community members as well as a source of revenue. Upscale eateries have the potential to attract diners from areas outside of the parish, thus improving the economic intake of St. John Parish.

CHALLENGES

Based upon preliminary research, a market analysis completed upon the basis of area median income and disposable income shows the parish may not support upscale restaurant development at the present time. Other factors, such as heritage tourism, proximity to major metropolitan populations and economic incentives may be explored.

ACTION STEPS

- Conduct a Market Analysis of the Parish to determine support for additional Upscale/Cajun restaurants
- Research restaurants in New Orleans, Baton Rouge, and surrounding areas to determine the varieties needed and potential for expansion into SJB
- Research connection to and synergies with Heritage Tourism Industry, as expansion occurs in SJB



POTENTIAL RESOURCES

Corporation for National and Community Service
Minority Business Enterprise Centers
Smart Growth: Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities
Smart Growth Implementation Assistance Program
Sustainable Communities Community Challenge Planning Grant Program
Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant Program
LA-LED: Small Business Loan and Guaranty Program
LA-Louisiana Community Development Authority
LA-Louisiana Municipal Association
Citi Foundation
Cooperative Development Foundation
Foundation Source
Smart Growth America
Capital One Foundation
Center for Planning Excellence
Foundation for Louisiana
Greater New Orleans Foundation
Hope Community Credit Union
Woldenberg Foundation

PROJECT CHAMPIONS

Dale Hymel



ATTRACT A GAS STATION TO THE WEST BANK

PROJECT AREA

St. John Parish (west bank)

WORKING GROUPS INVOLVED

St. John Parish Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)
CAC Economic Subcommittee
River Region Chamber of Commerce (potential)
South Central Planning and Development Commission (potential)
St. John Parish Council
St. John Parish Economic Development Department

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This project includes researching the possibility of locating another gas station on the west bank of St. John Parish. Only two gas stations with limited hours are located on the west bank of the parish. The gas stations serve nearly 15 miles of River Road along the west bank, which is largely rural and somewhat poorly lit at night. After closing hours, no gas stations are available in that area of the parish. This is an inconvenience and potential safety hazard for motorists traveling through the area.

A convenience store at the proposed gas station would be an additional benefit. It would provide more shopping opportunities for the west bank. These stores usually carry food, household sundries, basic car supplies and other useful items. West bank residents would not need to drive 10-15 miles to go to stores on the other side of the river. A gas station and associated store would help to make the west bank less isolated from necessary services.

RECOVERY GOAL

A gas station and associated store would help stimulate the economy on the west bank. New jobs would be created and residents might be less likely to leave the area permanently. A reliable supply of gasoline is essential for running generators after storm-related

losses of power. This project would help the west bank become more able to recover from future disasters.

RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITIES

A convenient place to purchase gas and miscellaneous supplies would enhance the community's quality of life considering the current paucity of resources on the west bank.

CHALLENGES

Currently, two gas stations exist on the west bank. This may create competition for an additional gas station.



ACTION STEPS

- Identify agency or organization to conduct market analysis
- Investigate development incentives
- Identify entity/partnerships for the recruitment of a gas station
- Identify targeted areas of development

POTENTIAL RESOURCES

Business and Industry Guaranteed Loans
Community Services Block Grant Discretionary Awards
Disposal of Federal Surplus Real Property
Industrial Technologies Program
Intermediary Relending Program
Minority Business Enterprise Centers
Minority Business Opportunity Center
Rural Business Enterprise Grant
Rural Community Development Initiative Rural Microentrepreneur Assistance Program
Small Business Innovation Research Sustainable Communities Community Challenge Planning Grant Program
Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant Program
Workforce Investment Act, Adult Program
Workforce Investment Act, Dislocated Workers Program
LA-LED: Small Business Loan and Guaranty Program
LA-Louisiana Community Development Authority
LA-Louisiana Municipal Association
LA-Louisiana Public Facilities Authority
LA-LWC: Incumbent Worker Training Program
LA-OCD: Louisiana Community Development Block Grant
Citi Foundation
Foundation Source
Smart Growth America
Capital One Foundation
Center for Planning Excellence
Community Development Capital Foundation for Louisiana
Hope Community Credit Union

BUILD A WELCOME CENTER

PROJECT AREA

Parish-wide

WORKING GROUPS INVOLVED

St. John Parish Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)
CAC Economic Subcommittee
River Parishes Tourist Commission
River Region Chamber of Commerce (potential)
South Central Planning and Development Commission
(potential)
St. John Parish Council
St. John Parish Economic Development Department

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

A welcome center for St. John Parish will increase the parish's profile and help promote tourism. The proposed location is near one of the two LaPlace exits off of Interstate 10. A welcome center near one of the I-10 exits could offer brochures, maps and cultural history displays to help visitors learn about St. John Parish. The center would promote local restaurants and stores, supporting and enhancing economic activity in the parish.

RECOVERY GOAL

The welcome center would help to define the parish as a destination and promote economic development by increasing tourism. The neighboring parishes of St. James and St. Charles both operate successful welcome centers which could serve as models for St. John Parish.

RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITIES

The welcome center stimulates the local economy by directing visitors to destinations within the parish. Visitors spend money not only for tourist attractions, but often for lunch and other purchases. A few jobs may be created to operate and maintain the center.

CHALLENGES

A challenge for this project would be in determining which side of the parish, east or west bank, to place the welcome center. The west bank is a very rural area while the east bank is a bustling community of suburbs and business. Locating a welcome center on the east bank may take away from the potential development of the west bank.

ACTION STEPS

- Identify possible location sites
- Research other welcome centers for content and layout ideas
- Investigate operation and maintenance funding sources
- Investigate cooperative agreement with River Parishes Tourist Commission to operate and maintain center
- The River Region Tourist Commission has researched the feasibility of this initiative
- There is an agreement with the Tourist Commission to manage tourism initiatives for SJB, which may need to be amended to include this project

POTENTIAL RESOURCES

Minority Business Opportunity Center
LA-DOTD: Transportation Enhancement Program
(TEP)

PROJECT CHAMPIONS

Peggy Joseph



EXPAND THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

PROJECT AREA

Parish-wide

WORKING GROUPS INVOLVED

St. John Parish Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)

CAC Economic Subcommittee

River Region Chamber of Commerce (potential)

South Central Planning and Development Commission
(potential)

St. John Parish Council

St. John Parish Economic Development Department

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This project includes investigating ways to establish or increase dedicated revenue sources for the parish Economic Development Department (EDD) for use in recruiting businesses to St. John.

RECOVERY GOAL

Develop a strategic plan to determine parish economic development office priorities. This plan will establish the mission as well as set the priorities of the department. Based upon those priorities, both internal and external staff support would be identified. Note: per the 2013 budget, the department was approved to add one additional employee with administrative duties.

RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITIES

Expansion of the parish EDD would assist in promoting local businesses as well as recruiting new businesses to the parish. This department is central to the area's economic viability. The EDD being equipped with the necessary financial and human resources is pertinent to St. John's recovery and progression.

EDD expansion would be conducive to the promotion of small business ownership, increasing new business development, promotion of existing businesses, and



new job opportunities within St. John Parish. EDD would be able to provide resources to current and prospective local business owners such as:

- Business development training and workshops
- Tax incentives to local business owners
- Financial resources for business start-ups

CHALLENGES

The parish EDD currently does not have a strategic plan. This project would include the development of objectives and the prioritization of goals for the St. John EDD. This construction may take an extended length of time.

ACTION STEPS

- Identify areas of need for expanded economic development activities
- Identify the funding requirements for the expansion of services
- Investigate committing more tax revenue to the Economic Development Corporation (EDC)
- Pursue creation of additional positions in the EDC to work on promotion and recruitment

POTENTIAL RESOURCES

Corporation for National and Community Service
Economic Development Support for Planning
Organizations

Economic Development Technical Assistance
USDA Rural Development Intermediary Relending
Program

Minority Business Opportunity Center
USDA Rural Microentrepreneur Assistance Program

LA-Louisiana Community Development Authority
LA-Louisiana Municipal Association
Citi Foundation

Edward Lowe Foundation
Center for Planning Excellence
ChevronTexaco Foundation
Freeport-McMoRan Foundation

PROJECT CHAMPIONS

Peggy Joseph & Torri Buckles

CONVERT SECOND WARD HIGH SCHOOL TO MULTI-USE CENTER

PROJECT AREA

St. John Parish (west bank)

WORKING GROUPS INVOLVED

Second Ward High School Alumni

St. John Parish Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)

CAC Economic Subcommittee

River Region Chamber of Commerce (potential)

South Central Planning and Development Commission (potential)

St. John Parish Council

St. John Parish Economic Development Department

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

As part of this project, the Second Ward High School building in Edgard could be converted to a multi-use center to house rehabilitation counseling, a child development center, after-school programs, youth mentoring, skill training, a computer training center, GED preparation and other outreach programs. In addition, it would be reinforced to withstand storm events and thereby serve as a shelter-in-place for the West Bank community in time of need.

RECOVERY GOAL

Renovation of the former Second Ward High School building would allow it to serve as a multi-use center for a variety of programs geared toward improving the social, educational and economic framework of the local community. Emergency operations and community outreach programs will be designed to positively impact and enhance the lives of community members. The multi-use center will facilitate and house these programs.

Examples of the services and programs include:

- Alcohol, drug, and substance abuse rehabilitation counseling for women, men, youth groups and adult groups
- Child development center
- After-school programs
- Youth summer day camp program
- Weekly food distribution
- Youth mentoring
- Job skills training
- Educational tutoring
- Job placement services
- Computer training center
- GED preparation and adult literacy programs
- Recreation facility
- Shelter-in-place during storm events

RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITIES

The multi-use center functions will promote economic development throughout the community by accomplishing the following:

- Emergency operations within the center will serve as a resource for disaster preparedness
- Educational and job skills programs will serve community members by helping them prepare for job opportunities
- As a venue for concerts, performing arts and other cross cultural events, the center will offer economic development opportunities
- Community outreach programs will improve the lives of residents by providing parenting training workshops, summer programs, after-school tutoring and other outreach services

CHALLENGES

Members of the local community need to form a 501(c)3 non-profit organization and develop a business plan in order to take advantage of funding opportunities.

ACTION STEPS

Phase I:

- Develop a business plan
- Form a 501(c)3 non-profit organization
- Pursue grant funding to assist with the revitalization of the school
- Pursue a cooperative agreement with the local school board regarding needed repairs, future upkeep and leasing arrangements;
- Investigation of funding sources for facility operations and maintenance; and,
- Solicit proposals from architectural firms for renovations and design.

Phase II Renovations

- Refurbish restrooms to meet Board of Health Standards
- Roof repairs (as needed)
- Maintenance and repairs of heating/cooling systems
- Grounds maintenance
- Asbestos removal

Potential Resources

Community Development Block Grant Entitlement Program (HUD)

Community Services Block Grants (HHS)

Rural Business Opportunity Grants (USDA)

PROJECT CHAMPION

Bruno Burrell, Jr.

CREATE PUBLIC WATER FEATURES

PROJECT AREA

Parish-wide

WORKING GROUPS INVOLVED

St. John Parish Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)

CAC Economic Subcommittee

River Region Chamber of Commerce (potential)

South Central Planning and Development Commission
(potential)

St. John Parish Council

St. John Parish Economic Development Department

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Defined as fountains, splash pools, overhead sprays and interactive water installments, water features are relatively low cost and low maintenance. This project would begin with researching the feasibility of incorporating them into existing or proposed public parks.

RECOVERY GOAL

St. John Parish's recovery is dependent upon a strong quality of life for its residents. This project would provide existing and returning residents with more recreational opportunities.

RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITIES

The parish would be seen as offering a more fun environment. Projects like this will help provide an upbeat note to the post-disaster recovery process. The addition of public water features to the parish will increase the attractiveness of St. John Parish as a desirable place to live.

CHALLENGES

This is not a primary focus for under-staffed economic development departments, but quality of life issues directly impact business recruitment efforts, therefore this project should be pursued through the Department of Parks and Recreation.

ACTION STEPS

- Research feasibility of installing water features with parish parks and recreation department
- Identify operating and maintenance funding source
- Identify existing park or new location for water features
- Hire firm to design water features at park

PROJECT CHAMPION

Dale Hymel

POTENTIAL RESOURCES

Conservation Activities by Youth Service Organizations
Corporation for National and Community Service
Defense Logistics Agency Disposition Services
Disposal of Federal Surplus Real Personal Property for
Parks and Recreation

Donation of Federal Surplus Personal Property
Minority Business Opportunity Center
Partnership for Sustainable Communities
Smart Growth: Building Blocks for Sustainable
Communities

Youth Conservation Program
LA-Louisiana Municipal Association
Brinker International Foundation
Daniel K. Thorne Foundation, Inc.
Dore' Family Foundation
Dr. Scholl Foundation
FedEx Global Community Relations and Corporate
Contributions
Foundation Source
Good 360



Gustaf Westfeldt McIlhenny Family Foundation
Home Depot, Inc.
Kentucky Fried Chicken Foundation, Inc.
Lowe's Charitable and Educational Foundation
National Association of State Agencies for Surplus
Property
NFL Charities
RGK Foundation
State Farm Companies Foundation
Trust for Public Land
Apache Foundation
Boh Foundation
Center for Planning Excellence
Finish Line Youth Foundation
Gil and Dody Weaver Foundation
Greater New Orleans Foundation
New Orleans Louisiana Saints, L.L.C.
Tulane Empowers
Woldenberg Foundation

ATTRACT FAST FOOD RESTAURANTS

PROJECT AREA

St. John Parish (west bank)

WORKING GROUPS INVOLVED

St. John Parish Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)
CAC Economic Subcommittee
River Region Chamber of Commerce (potential)
South Central Planning and Development Commission (potential)
St. John Parish Council
St. John Parish Economic Development Department

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The aim of this project is to attract more fast food restaurant options to the parish. Residents including senior citizens and students expressed a desire for Chick-Fil-A, Dairy Queen and other restaurants on the west bank. A variety of restaurants will provide job opportunities for residents as well as a source of economic growth. More restaurants will increase dining opportunities for residents and commuters as well as expand the economic base. A market analysis would determine the demand and feasibility for locating these restaurants within the parish.

RECOVERY GOAL

The presence of a variety of restaurants will provide job opportunities for community members as well as a source of economic growth.

RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITIES

More restaurants will increase dining opportunities for residents and commuting employees while expanding the economic base.



CHALLENGES

Preliminary research indicates the market may be overly saturated with fast food retailers that are owned by national franchises. This practice may conflict with both tourism and community planning efforts. In addition, fresh food retailers are nearly extinct in the parish. This shortage must be addressed to meet the health requirements of a community.

ACTION STEPS

- Conduct a market analysis to determine the demand and feasibility,
- Research national restaurant and fast food chains which could be encouraged to locate a franchise in St. John Parish
- Encourage residents to establish restaurants which feature traditional cultural cuisine

POTENTIAL RESOURCES

Corporation for National and Community Service
Minority Business Enterprise Centers
Smart Growth: Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities
Smart Growth Implementation Assistance Program
Sustainable Communities Community Challenge Planning Grant Program
Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant Program
LA-LED: Small Business Loan and Guaranty Program
LA-Louisiana Community Development Authority
LA-Louisiana Municipal Association
Citi Foundation
Cooperative Development Foundation
Foundation Source
Smart Growth America
Capital One Foundation
Center for Planning Excellence
Foundation for Louisiana
Greater New Orleans Foundation
Hope Community Credit Union
Woldenberg Foundation



BEAUTIFY ENTRANCE SIGNAGE

PROJECT AREA

Parish-wide

WORKING GROUPS INVOLVED

St. John Parish Lion's Club
St. John Parish Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)
CAC Economic Subcommittee
River Region Chamber of Commerce (potential)
South Central Planning and Development Commission (potential)
St. John Parish Council
St. John Parish Economic Development Department

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Enhancing the landscaping and installing lighting at parish entrances could help control litter while making the parish more attractive to residents and visitors.

RECOVERY GOAL

The recovery of St. John Parish is dependent upon a strong local economy and a good quality of life for its residents. This project would provide existing and returning residents with direction to available resources in disaster recovery centers as well as the parish recovery center that is opening soon.

RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITIES

Beautifying the signage throughout the parish could attract tourists to stop at restaurants, gas stations, convenience stores and other stores. Other buildings, such as a welcome center, could be located near the improved signage to provide literature and guidance to local attractions. The community would have access to and benefit from beautifying the signage as this will attract tourists to the parish and will promote economic growth.



CHALLENGES

The St. John Parish Lions Club initially had taken the lead on completing this project, but due to lack of funding, they were unable to move forward with it.

ACTION STEPS

- Contact Lions Club about current efforts to maintain entrance signs
- Hire landscape architecture firm for improved landscaping design
- Contact the LSU design studio to assist with the design of signage
- Investigate operating and maintenance funding sources

POTENTIAL RESOURCES

Dedicated beautification line item in the economic development committee's \$50,000 budget.

\$30,000 has been dedicated to the Clean Sweep initiative which addresses littering.

The remaining \$20,000 has not been allocated for any specific project.

The parish council could use this money to identify priority projects within their respective districts.

LA-DOTD: Transportation Enhancement Program
FHWA Scenic Byways

PROJECT CHAMPION

Dale Hymel

CREATE A WEST BANK INDUSTRIAL PARK

PROJECT AREA

St. John Parish (west bank)

WORKING GROUPS INVOLVED

St. John Parish Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)

CAC Economic Subcommittee

River Region Chamber of Commerce (potential)

South Central Planning and Development Commission (potential)

St. John Parish Council

St. John Parish Economic Development Department

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The development of an industrial park on the west bank will begin with a feasibility study. This project could assist the St. John Parish Economic Development Committee's efforts for recruitment of industry.

RECOVERY GOAL

St. John Parish officials hope to attract global businesses on the west bank of the parish. This would promote economic growth in this area.

RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITIES

An industrial park on the west bank will promote job opportunities which in turn will stimulate economic growth in the smaller communities located on the west side of the parish.

CHALLENGES

The current limited capacity of the Economic Development Department (EDD) for the area and limited Parish resources make it difficult to the groundwork necessary to attract new businesses.

ACTION STEPS

- Identify possible location sites
- Discuss feasibility with St. John Business Association
- Investigate operation and maintenance funding sources
- Coordinate with Parish Economic Development Committee recruitment efforts

POTENTIAL RESOURCES

Business and Industry Guaranteed Loans
Community Services Block Grant Discretionary Awards
Disposal of Federal Surplus Real Property
Economic Development Support for Planning Organizations
Economic Development Technical Assistance
Industrial Technologies Program
Intermediary Relending Program
Minority Business Enterprise Centers
Minority Business Opportunity Center
Rural Business Enterprise Grant
Rural Community Development Initiative
Rural Microentrepreneur Assistance Program
Small Business Innovation Research
Sustainable Communities Community Challenge Planning Grant Program (CFDA No. 14.704)
Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant Program
Workforce Investment Act, Adult Program
Workforce Investment Act, Dislocated Workers Program
LA-LED: Angel Investor Tax Credit (AITC)
LA-LED: Digital Interactive Media and Software



Development Incentive
LA-LED: Enterprise Zone Program (EZ)
LA-LED: Industrial Ad Valorem Tax Exemption Program (ITEP)
LA-LED: Ports of Louisiana Investor Tax Credits Program
LA-LED: Quality Jobs Program
LA-LED: Research and Development Tax Credit
LA-LED: Restoration Tax Abatement (RTA)
LA-Louisiana Community Development Authority
LA-Louisiana Municipal Association
LA-Louisiana Public Facilities Authority
LA-LWC: Incumbent Worker Training Program
LA-OCD: Louisiana Community Development Block Grant
Citi Foundation
Foundation Source
Smart Growth America
Capital One Foundation
Center for Planning Excellence
Community Development Capital
Delta Regional Authority
Foundation for Louisiana
Hope Community Credit Union