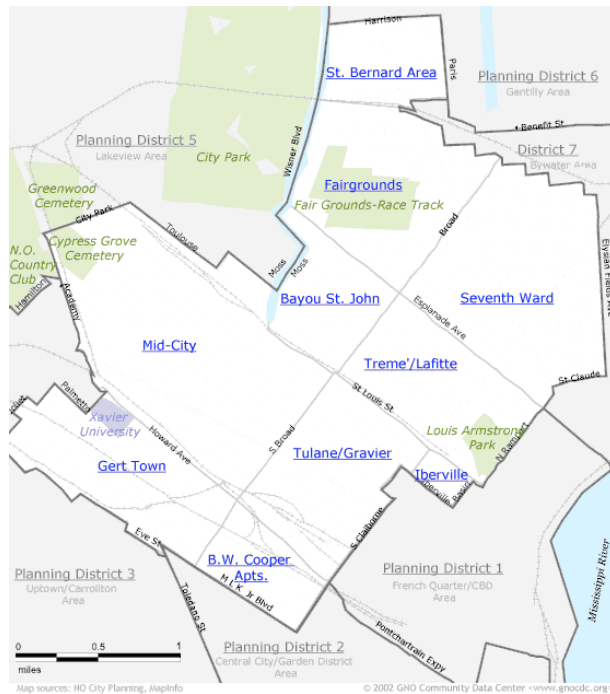


Project Title:
New Orleans, Louisiana:
**Eco-Design and Industry Park for Sustainable Rebuilding and
Neighborhood Revitalization**

Contact Persons:
Steering Committee Chair
Forest Bradley-Wright, Sustainable Rebuild Coordinator
Alliance for Affordable Energy

Steering Committee Co-Chair
Prisca Weems, Principal
FutureProof, LLC, Sustainable Development Consultants and the New Orleans Green
Building Resource Center

Community Description:
The proposed Eco-Design and Industry Park resides between Central City, Mid-City,
Gert Town and the B.W. Cooper Housing Complex. Throughout its history, the location
has been home to the McCarty Plantation,



the New Orleans Canal and Banking Company railroad lines, residential plots, the Thompson-Hayward Industrial site, and multiple unit housing complexes. The area is currently comprised of residential units, light industrial complexes, and Xavier University.

Culturally, Gert Town laid the backdrop for the emergence of Jazz at Johnson and Lincoln Park. These historic jazz hotspots witnessed musical contests in the early 1900's between local bands and musicians. Various local musical legends hail from this area of Mid-City. Aspiring musicians continue to be provided opportunities via local competitions and Gert Town Records. Similarly, the Golden Star

Hunters Mardi Gras Indians and many other African-American cultural icons hail from this locale.

Resources available to residents include the Daughters of Charity Health Center, Tulane and Xavier University Urban outreach programs, the Rosenwald Recreation Complex, and a recently developed urban farm cooperative. The B.W. Cooper Resident Management Corporation Management Plan led to development of the Resident Management Corporation (RMC) and the ability of the board to assume full management



of the Cooper Properties in 1998 making it the largest tenant managed housing development in the country. The RMC offers business/job opportunities, job training, day care, and teen pregnancy prevention programs to its residents. The Rosenwald Complex offers year round basketball and arts/crafts programs providing supervision and positive role models to area youth. In 2000, the NFL donated the Youth Education Town which offers year round services to the community in the areas of academic enhancement, computer education, life skills, social services, out of school suspension and sports/recreation. Both complexes offer support to the Gert Town and B.W. Cooper youth (ages 0-19) which, prior to Hurricane Katrina comprises 22.5 percent of the total population.

A review of the pre-Katrina statistics reveals a predominantly male community (53.9 percent). 84.3 percent of those 15 and above report to be single. 25.2 percent of individuals 25 and over report to have attended high school with an equal percentage having graduated (27.3%) and a large percent with K-8 education (13.2%). Per Capita income of \$9,914.00 for this area is roughly half that of areas within a five mile radius. The number of employees available (41,408) in the area dwarfs the number of establishments offering employment (1,965) in the area, thus individuals were forced to commute out of the area, while unemployment and underemployment rates were high.

Prior to Hurricanes Katrina/Rita, the immediate area has been home to 29,865 individuals 80.6 percent of whom were black, residing within a population density of 9,506.4 individuals per square mile. 56.5 percent of the available 10,592 housing units were rental properties, and 19.9 percent remained vacant. Current conditions of the housing units remain in hazardous conditions due to substantial area flooding.

The National Resource Defense Council has posted its environmental impact data for the area revealing outdoor mold particulate at 102,000 spores/m³ on October 19, 2005 and indoor quality counts at 11,000 spores/m³ on November 15, 2005 indicating levels far exceeding the National Allergy Bureau's Very High rates of 50,000 spores/m³ and 5,000 spores/m³, respectively. Particulate levels acquired during a calm day in Gert Town were found to be within normal range, but when dust was disturbed, peaked to 50 mu/m³. During similar conditions, Mid-City particulate revealed normal ranges, but spiked well above maximum (89 mu/m³) to 129 mu/m³ when dust was disturbed. Prolonged exposure at the aforementioned rates poses a threat to lung capacity and development.

Over the past decade, the location formerly known as Thompson-Hayward Industrial Site was undergoing a cleanup as a Superfund Site due to contamination of pesticides and contaminants in the sewage, drainage, and soil systems. Woefully, over 2600 tons of contaminated soil could not be removed due to toxicity levels too high to remove or dispose of in any state.

Central City, Mid-City, Gert Town and the B.W. Cooper complex have been active communities striving for equal access to resources, education and a healthy living environment. However, the post-hurricane rebuilding effort in these communities will be severely hampered by the level of flood damage and the historically limited number of economic opportunities in the area.



Problem Statement:

Hurricane Katrina upended the lives of New Orleans residents, fundamentally altered our economic landscape, and transformed our entire city into a massive redevelopment zone. The tragedy embodied in this event has forced us to find new solutions to immediate and long-standing problems alike. Nevertheless, the reality is that our situation demands more than redressing of past issues and current reconstruction needs, we must look to the future as we proceed to ensure that we invest wisely now, thereby reducing our vulnerability to economic and social deterioration as well as catastrophic events in the future. The following project was inspired by this holistic objective and provides the foundation for sustainability in all of the important areas. Timeliness is perhaps the most important consideration in our request to you for assistance. Whether or not the necessary services and opportunities are available to displaced residents will significantly influence their decision to return to New Orleans, a matter so fundamental to the continuity of our community, our culture, and our city that an unprecedented mobilization is presently ongoing by those of us who are still here. But we need help.

The aspiration to rebuild smarter, safer, more equitably, and environmentally responsibly is the driving objective behind our plan to develop an Eco-Design and Industry Park. This project was initiated around programs for education and training on the use of energy efficiency, alternative energy, and green building materials as homeowners and businesses rebuild in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. While efforts are presently underway to offer these services and others in a centralized location, a building called the Creative Enterprise Center, it is our collective objective to leverage considerable additional value from these programs. By engaging related private sector, non-profit, governmental, and community stakeholders we aim to establish a synergistic destination on the border between the Central City and Gert Town neighborhoods. Located along the

intersection of Broad Street and Earhardt Drive the project area will house complimentary product retailers, contractors, job training, and demonstration buildings all related to responsible building practices. Additionally, the inclusion of cafes and restaurants, art studios and workshops, and innovative green spaces are intended to make the destination aesthetically pleasing. In full, the project is designed to raise the profile of intelligent rebuilding options thereby making a substantial impact on the reconstruction decisions of homeowners and businesses while improving the economic climate of the surrounding neighborhoods.

We recognize the fundamental importance of affordable housing availability in New Orleans, which has historically ranked as the city with the highest poverty rate in the South, and are committed to finding appropriate and affordable application methods for the home reconstruction methods above. There is an inherent link between ongoing affordability and the incorporation of energy efficient construction. By providing access to education, training, products and services associated with energy efficiency, we are consciously targeting the need for affordable housing today while providing the benefits of substantial cost saving over time. These saving may be understood functionally as a commensurate real increase in available income for every resident whose home has energy efficiency improvements. It is our specific intention to serve the energy efficiency and rebuilding needs of Central City and Gert Town, as well as residents from the rest of the city. To this end, SDAT assistance will focus on the interface between the Eco-Design and Industry Park and local community needs, including affordability, to ensure that appropriate implementation strategies maximize participation by area residents.

Job creation is another primary goal of this project. Through direct employment opportunities and by providing high value job training for in-demand construction services we expect to make a substantial impact on the economic prospects of the surrounding neighborhoods. On the merits of the project alone, we have ample reason for optimism in this regard, but locating within a designated HUD Renewal Community greatly incentivizes incoming businesses to hire the majority of their employees from within the designated renewal zone. The Mayor's Office of Economic Development has given their support to this project and indicated a strong interest in working collaboratively to maximize the benefits to businesses that locate in the Eco-Design and Industry Park and hire their employees from the surrounding neighborhood. Interest on the part of city government officials in this project is partly in response to the limited success of the HUD Renewal Community program in this area to date. Despite the array of available incentives, the area has in fact attracted few new businesses. We believe that the combination of elements making up the Eco-Design and Industry Park offer a high probability of success where few others have even tried. Given the complexity of the undertaking, there are important opportunities for the SDAT participants to assist in working with city government officials and community stakeholders to achieve maximum impact in the targeted neighborhoods.

There has been considerable discussion in the post-Katrina planning process on the merits of smart growth design. The vision for this project recognizes the relevance of co-locating the above-mentioned commercial production, retail, and non-profit services with

recreational and residential uses. We believe that the project area should be seamlessly integrated with residential activities in the immediate vicinity and surrounding areas. To this end, addressing transportation and access issues that have historically challenged the area will be an important task for SDAT participants. Recent construction to repave Earhart Drive have temporarily complicated transportation access, though there is reason to believe the road improvements will be a significant asset to the project and surrounding areas upon completion.

In addition to the social and economic objectives, the development concept for this project includes substantial environmental benefits as well. In this respect the project contrasts significantly from the traditional concept of an industrial park. The Eco-Design and Industry Park will aggressively remediate the environmentally destructive legacy of former industrial practices by redeveloping existing brownfields, creating new and innovative green spaces through permaculture and living roofs, improving storm water management, and most importantly, building capacity within the city to incorporate green building, energy efficiency, and alternative energy as we undergo the largest concentrated construction boom of our city's history. SDAT participants shall analyze the project site and nearby neighborhoods to identify key opportunities and obstacles for the creation of green spaces, brownfield redevelopment, and storm water management, as well as identifying opportunities for synergies between manufacturers, retailers, and non-profit services.

While issues related to the impacts of Hurricane Katrina are addressed throughout each of the topics discussed above, it is worth special mention that we recognize the necessity of planning for the possibility of future disasters. While there are innumerable passive benefits for disaster preparedness embodied in green building, energy efficiency, renewable energy, as well as economically and socially stable communities, we also recognize the need to reduce vulnerability in the event of future disasters. This is an area that we must work together with the SDAT participants so as to learn the lessons of our recent catastrophe. Thinking toward the future and recognizing the inevitability of future hurricanes in our region, if not our city, we strongly believe that the services of the Eco-Design and Industry Park will be a tremendous asset towards the post-hurricane reconstruction needs of any community along the Gulf Coast. It is with this in mind that we request your involvement to take this visionary project and rigorously evaluate the implementation strategies that will ensure success for the immediate benefit of our city, the long-term health of our neighborhoods, and the overall benefit to the Gulf Coast region.

Objective of SDAT Process

The objective of the SDAT process is to stimulate new industry growth and a sustainable recovery for the economically depressed Gert Town and Central City neighborhoods by developing an Eco-Design and Industry Park. The development project shall offer energy efficiency, green building, and alternative energy products and services to New Orleans residents as they rebuild their homes and businesses in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, thereby ensuring that short-term reconstruction investments yield long-term economic, social, and environmental returns for our city. We are asking that

the SDAT team provide guidance about improving the physical and community-based integration of this largely industrial zoned site with the surrounding neighborhoods of Gert Town and Central City according to the principles of smart growth. In conjunction with a team of local professionals and community leaders, the SDAT panel will organize public outreach and education programs, to help neighboring communities visualize the potential benefits of the Eco-Design and Industry Park. Special attention will be directed at the need for affordable and regionally appropriate energy efficiency and green building applications. Additionally, analysis of available HUD Renewal Community incentives will be developed into marketing materials for business prospect that we would seek to attract to the industry park. Policy recommendation will be given to city government participants on ways to improve the climate for desirable businesses to locate to the area and suggestions made on ways to improve transportation access between the industry park, local neighborhoods and the city at-large. SDAT participants shall analyze the project site and nearby neighborhoods to identify key opportunities and obstacles for the creation of green spaces, brownfield redevelopment, and storm water management, as well as identifying opportunities for synergies between manufacturers, retailers, and non-profit services. The report generated through the SDAT process will serve as a roadmap for implementation that will be carried forward by the steering committee with assistance from community stakeholders, government officials, and local academic institutions of higher learning.

Budget and Funding Sources

The CEC will be applying for funding for this venture through the Heritage Foundation for Arts and Culture, a non-profit registered and functioning at the Creative Enterprise Center. In addition, we will be submitting a grant application to the Bush Clinton Foundation for the development of the Eco Design and Industry Park. Along with these potential sources, the Alliance for Affordable Energy will be presenting the venture to their existing funding sources, and asking for donations towards the SDAT process and the project at large. We will also be seeking federal funds through the City of New Orleans and the Renewal Communities Program, as well as from various programs set up to aid reconstruction of the Gulf Coast region affected by hurricanes Katrina and Rita. We do not foresee any difficulty in raising the funding necessary to facilitate the SDAT process.

Due to the focus of our local AIA chapter on the Louisiana Recovery and Rebuilding Conference and process, we have only recently begun to discuss this project with their members. We will shortly be applying for funding and support for this program through the Baton Rouge Chapter.

Timetable for Team Visit(s)

We request the initial team visit in April, 2006. In order to facilitate and allow more time for the businesses and residents of Gert Town and Central City to return to their neighborhood, and to be able to set up the participation of neighbors who will still be displaced, we request that the team visit be scheduled for September or October 2006. Follow up would ideally happen in the Spring 2007, to allow us time to formulate

strategies and specific projects in conjunction with local government authorities, and to prepare federal grant applications which are due in the summer.

List of Steering Committee Members

Steering Committee Chair

Forest Bradley-Wright, Sustainable Rebuild Coordinator
Alliance for Affordable Energy

Steering Committee Co-Chair

Prisca Weems, Principal

FutureProof, LLC, Sustainable Development Consultants and the New Orleans Green
Building Resource Center

Charles Reith PhD, Principal

Naturally Green and Professor, Tulane University

Lavon Wright, Renewal Community Coordinator

Mayors Office of Economic Development

Wynecta Fisher, Director

Mayor's Office of Environmental Affairs

Yarrow Etheredge, Dir. of Public and Legal Affairs

Toxicological and Environmental Associates, Inc.

Jeffrey Thomas, Attorney at Law

Simon, Peragine, Smith & Redfearn, LLP

Mimi DiMassa, Founder
Lemonade, Green interiors and products

Stephanie Mezynski, Designer
S+K Architects

Student Resources

We work closely with local universities, including Xavier and Dillard, asking Xavier to facilitate the community discussions. These respected institutions are nearby and have traditionally served and educated the residents of Gert Town and Central City. In addition, we have discussed the project with Tulane School of Architecture, who has committed to shifting some of their curriculum towards sustainable development and green design-build, and will be working with them to use their student body as volunteers on some aspects of the project, including cataloguing the existing conditions, etc. Due to the fact that these institutions suffered severe damage after the storm, they have not been functioning until the last few weeks, and have been focused on getting their programs back up and running. We expect more formalized relationships with these institutions shortly, when they have had time to present our requests to their boards and student governments.

Media Plan

The Alliance for Affordable Energy is currently a high profile environmental organization with a history of attracting a wide array of media attention. We at the Alliance and our partners know the importance of using media contacts to notify relevant stakeholders of our Eco-Design and Industry Park in lead up to the SDAT teams arrival following completion of the project report and during implementation of the project plan.

WNOE Radio News:
504-679-7345

Times Picayune:
504-826-3300

Jim Amos: jamos@timespicayune.com

St Tammany Bureau: Karen Baker _____

Kadee Krieger

E. Jefferson Parrish Bureau: Drew Broach: _____

Kenner Bureau: StephanieDosier _____

Westbank Bureau: Andrea Shaw

Gambit:
504-486-5900
Michael Tisserand: _____

WVUE TV News:
504-483-1540
Mimi Strawn:

WWL TV News:
504-529-6298
Sandy Breeland: _____

WGNO TV (ABC Channel 26):
504-619-6363
Catherine Koppel: _____

National Public Radio WWNO:
504-280-7000
Fred Kasten:

WWOZ:
504-568-1239
David Freedman: _____

New Orleans City Business:
504-837-2258
Terry O'Connor:

WTIX News Dept:
504-885-4641

Louisiana Weekly News:
504-282-3705
Edmund Lewis: _____

New Orleans Tribune:
504-949-4129
Amitra Brown:

Associated Press:
504-586-0531

WWL:
David Cohen:

WBSN:
504-816-8580

WQUE:
504-679-7341
Pierre

Attachments (cont.)

Cover letter – Alliance for Affordable Energy

Letters of Support:

Mayor's Office of Economic Development

Mayor's Office of Environmental Affairs

Green Building Resource Center

Wisznia Associates

Lemonade, LLC

Naturally Green, LLC

Data:

Demographic Detail Comparison Report

Visuals:

Aerial photograph

Area Map

Labeled Birds Eye View

Supplementary Informational Brochures:

Creative Enterprise Center trifold

Renewal Community Initiative webpage

Green Building Resource Center Flier

Job 1 trifold

Small Business Assistance packet

Application PDF on CD