

Section 3 - Citywide Recovery Framework

3.1 Recovery Needs and Priority Issues

The UNOP recovery assessment identified three overarching issues that frame the future recovery outcomes: the pace of repopulation, future flood risk and funding. These issues are described in greater detail in Section 2, and briefly summarized here.

3.1.1 Rates of Repopulation

As discussed in Section 2, at the end of 2006, about 210,000 to 230,000 of New Orleans' pre-Katrina population (460,000) are back. The levels of repopulation vary dramatically across the City. The population in undamaged neighborhoods has recovered and even grown, in some cases. Not surprisingly, those areas with less flooding rebounded more quickly than the more heavily-damaged areas. Construction progresses in areas that were moderately or slightly damaged, while some of the mostly heavily damaged neighborhoods have little activity. The scarcity of post-Katrina housing has been a major impediment to neighborhood-level recovery and, therefore, short-term population forecasts assume that areas with higher-levels of home ownership and flood insurance and relatively high median incomes will recover more quickly than other neighborhoods.

Population growth is likely to proceed slowly over the first half of 2007, and then accelerate later in 2007 and early 2008. From 2008 onward, higher rates of rebuilding activity are likely for many years. By January 2017, the City's population may finally approach its pre-Katrina level, with estimates ranging from about 389,000 to 461,000 residents. The exact rate at which population growth occurs in New Orleans is highly variable and hinges on a variety of issues affecting the pace of recovery. Irrespective of the exact population tally, in 2017, the density and geographical distribution of New Orleans' residents will be substantially different than today. The areas that had minimal to no flooding are likely to have more residents than today, while even the most optimistic population forecasts do not assume a full recovery of severely flood damaged neighborhoods by 2017.

3.1.2 Risk of Future Flooding

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), New Orleans District, will be releasing its Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Project report (LACPR) (discussed in Section 2 of the Citywide Plan) later in 2007. The State of Louisiana's Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA) is developing a Comprehensive Master Plan that will also be presented in April 2007. In the absence of definitive data from the USACE and CPRA regarding future flood risk management, the UNOP process considered the risk of future flooding across five basins in

which the City of New Orleans resides (previously described in Section 2, and shown in Figure 2.2). All areas of the City continue to be vulnerable to flooding from one source or another through the year 2010 and, in some cases, significantly beyond that. Inadequacies in the primary defense system will persist in parts of the City until the USACE and CPRA’s long-term plans are fully implemented, which may take 10 or more years.

3.1.3 Recovery Funding

Already, during the first eighteen months of recovery, over 450 billion has been expended or allocated for recovery and rebuilding in New Orleans, as shown in Figure 3.1 (and discussed further in Section 6 of the Citywide Plan). For public agencies, funding has gone towards emergency response, debris removal and clean-up, and basic repairs and restoration of utilities and services. Only partial funding has been processed and yet in place to rebuild public facilities (e.g. criminal justice buildings, schools, hospitals) and overhaul of City’s infrastructure (e.g. roads, water, sewers). The full costs of these repairs cannot be adequately achieved with the current funds for repairs that have been allocated by FEMA Public Assistance and insurance claims. Over the next years, thousands of individual decisions will be made by homeowners and business owners on how to use the nearly \$30 billion that is available from insurance proceeds, Small Business Administration (SBA) loans and the Louisiana Recovery Authority (LRA) Road Home grants to repair, reconstruct, or sell their homes. The UNOP process worked to identify both the gaps, and also provide a framework for the individual decision-making that lies ahead.

3.2 Recovery Scenarios

As part of the UNOP process, three scenarios were developed based on the three overarching issues - population growth, flood protection, and funding - and their divergent possible outcomes. The scenarios represent three distinct potential futures for the recovery of the City of New Orleans. These scenarios were presented and discussed at the second round of District Meetings and at Community Congress II (see section 3.2.4 for more details on community feedback on scenarios).

Scenarios are different from “visioning” which asks “what do you want to happen?” or “what would like to see?” Instead, scenarios recognize external influences, uncertainties, strategic opportunities, conflicts, and challenges. We need to understand the possibilities - both good and bad - of how our City might look around the year 2017. Since this plan is about recovery and rebuilding, all scenarios consider likely outcomes on a 5- to 10-year time frame.

All three scenarios have at their core the same fundamental vision that City leaders have maintained throughout the first year of recovery: *that every citizen, regardless of current residence, has the right to return to New Orleans. They also further envision that all citizens, businesses and investors in our Great City have a right to a Safer, Smarter, Stronger City that*

enables a substantially higher quality of life, greater economic opportunity, and greater security against hurricanes than New Orleans had prior to Katrina.

The main purpose of the scenarios was to illustrate how different levels of recovery resources and management strategies can produce different recovery outcomes, and to elicit feedback from citizens on their recovery preferences and priorities under varying degrees of management commitment and budget constraints. In all the districts and for the city as a whole, preferences were pragmatic, supporting a more blended approach of Scenarios 2 and 3, steering away from a more market-based approach and preferring that different resource levels and strategies be applied by need, issue and geography. Therefore, the ultimate scenario for New Orleans' recovery is not a choice of one of these three scenarios, but rather a combination and integration of the scenarios (as described in the strategic recovery framework in section 3.3). It also blends together the professional judgment of the District and Citywide Planning Teams with the feedback from citizens at both the district and citywide-levels.

3.2.1 Scenario 1 – *Re-pair*

The first recovery scenario, which is termed “*Re-pair*,” represents the market approach to recovery underway in most of New Orleans in 2006. This scenario relies primarily on the current suite of disaster funding provided by the FEMA Public Assistance Program (PA), Small Business Administration (SBA) loans, private insurance, and federal grants to the Louisiana Recovery Authority (LRA) to fund repairs to damaged public and private properties. In this scenario, the existing programs (such as the Road Home program) are fully implemented to current funding levels, but New Orleans does not receive any large addition of federal or state funds. There are no substantial improvements in flood protection beyond the 2010 conditions of the region's levees, pumps and canals. The City will be safer from future flooding because new building codes and mitigation funds are used as part of repair. Public services and facilities, including utilities, schools and health care facilities, will be repaired but not substantially improved beyond their pre-Katrina levels even after 10 years or more. Population growth will be incremental and slow and will not reach pre-Katrina levels. In this scenario, the City will not yet have a tax/consumer base sufficient to realize the higher quality of life and service delivery standards that is hoped for New Orleans' recovery.

3.2.2 Scenario 2 – *Re-habilitate*

The second scenario is called *Re-habilitate*. It builds on the *Re-pair* scenario by assuming that a moderate level of additional federal, state and private funds will flow into New Orleans, in addition to all the existing programs and funds that are fully implemented, and that they will be used to improve some of the systemic infrastructure problems (e.g. utilities, streets and services) and provide the economic incentives for other investments and projects. In this scenario, there will be some secondary flood protection defenses created by many individual and businesses

decisions in rebuilding and resettlement, and the City's population will be nearing pre-Katrina levels. Thus, individuals, businesses and investors will have a greater measure of security and confidence in the City, but the City's ability to attract investment will evolve more slowly and will be more dependent upon external and unpredictable factors, such as being hit by another hurricane. Quality of life and delivery of goods and public services is moderately improved, even in the face of reductions in population, consumer spending and tax base.

3.2.3 Scenario 3 – *Re-vision*

The third scenario is termed "*Re-vision*" because it is the most optimistic view of our collective future. In this scenario, significant and multiple sources of additional federal, state and private funding will be received and all existing programs and funds will be fully implemented. In this scenario, additional funds are strategically reinvested in the community and there are many quality of life enhancements, including state-of-the-art schools and health care facilities. New Orleans will be doing more than relying on external flood protection, by funding and implementing the elevation or relocation of thousands of structures and community assets out of harm's way. The City's population will be fully returned or will exceed pre-Katrina levels, and there will be vastly improved business and investor confidence for the City to realize some of its greatest economic and social/cultural aspirations.

3.2.4 Community Feedback on Scenarios

Scenario discussions were first held at the second round of District Meetings, during the weekend of November 11 and 12, 2006. Based on the community input received, a menu of recommendations was developed for each district's recovery. These recommendations ultimately translated into a priority list of recovery projects as part of each District Plan.

The three scenarios were then presented to over 2,500 New Orleanians attending Community Congress II on December 2, 2006. The scenarios formed the basis for citywide conversations about priorities for flood protection and the recovery and reconstruction of the City's infrastructure, health care and education facilities, and other essential services. The following emerged as the strongest messages from the public at Community Congress II:

- ♦ **Reduce Flood Risk:** New Orleans must do everything possible to advocate for Category 5 flood protection¹³ and wetland restoration¹⁴ in order to protect the city from future storms. At the same time, New Orleans should set voluntary standards for individuals to

¹³ Across all rebuilding priorities, category 5 flood protection received the strongest support. Within all flood protection options, 58% of CCII participants said category 5 flood protection was an important option to pursue.

¹⁴ Across all rebuilding priorities, taking a more holistic approach to flood protection, which includes wetlands restoration, received the third highest vote count. Within the area of flood protection, 39% of CCII participants said this was an important option to pursue.

reduce their flood risk by making decisions to rebuild stronger or relocate safer. Financial incentives and support must be available to help residents reach those standards.¹⁵

- ◆ **Empower Neighborhoods to Rebuild Safer and Stronger:** Empower residents to rebuild stable and safe neighborhoods by providing financial incentives and the best possible information, rather than through government mandates and enforced standards.¹⁶
- ◆ **Build Affordable, Rental and Low-Income Housing:** Build housing for renters, low-income families and public housing residents, so that everyone can come home to New Orleans who wants to do so.¹⁷ Funding is needed to build low- and moderate-income public housing.¹⁸
- ◆ **Reopen and Rebuild Public Facilities:** Public facilities, like schools and healthcare centers, should be reopened and rebuilt based on repopulation and recovery rates.¹⁹ Temporary, satellite or mobile facilities should be used in less populated areas. The city should develop a plan to expand services as neighborhood populations grow.²⁰ Where possible, public facilities should be combined under one roof to increase efficiency and lower costs.²¹
- ◆ **Rebuild Communities around High Quality Schools:** Neighborhoods should be rebuilt around schools as 24/7 community centers.²² Improving school quality is essential to New Orleans' recovery.²³

¹⁵ 63% of CCII participants supported financial incentives to reduce flood risk while only 23% opposed this option. Participants were also very supportive of standards for reducing risk and an option that provided standards while giving people choices received the third highest support across flood protection options.

¹⁶ The option receiving the strongest support to create more stable neighborhoods was offering incentives for neighbors to purchase blighted properties. CCII participants expressed strong opposition to enforcing where residents can live with 58% opposing vs. 31% in support. 65% of participants supported offering financial incentives for rebuilding near one another vs. 22% in opposition. 63% supported financial incentives for reducing flood risks vs. 23% in opposition.

¹⁷ Creating homeownership opportunities for lower-income housing residents without concentrating poverty received the most support of affordable housing options. Making housing available for evacuees received the second most support.

¹⁸ 53% of CCII participants supported funding for low and moderate-income housing with 36% opposed.

¹⁹ 72% of CCII participants supported opening and rebuilding health and education facilities based on repopulation and recovery rates vs. 19% opposed. Participants expressed mild opposition to locating and staffing health and education facilities evenly throughout the city (41% in support vs. 51% opposed).

²⁰ The two options receiving the greatest public support in the area of “other public services” were to place main stations where people are and satellite/mobile stations in low population areas, and to develop a plan to increase services as population grows.

²¹ Combining public facilities received strong support at CCII for education and health (68% vs. 23% in opposition) and “other services” (65% vs. 25% in opposition).

²² Making schools 24/7 community centers received the greatest support from CCII participants in the area of education and health services, and was one of the top options across all recovery options. Improving school quality received the second highest support in the area of education and health services.

²³ Improving school quality received the second highest support across all recovery priorities.

This input is also consistent with the top five priorities of participants in Community Congress I, held on October 28, 2006:

- ◆ Flood Protection and Risk of Flooding
- ◆ Affordable Housing for Lower and Middle-Income people
- ◆ Quality of Public Schools
- ◆ Response-Time of Police, Fire, and EMS
- ◆ Accessibility to Hospitals, Clinics, and Medical Services

All the feedback was analyzed in depth by the Citywide Team and shared with all the District Teams for use in the plan development efforts of the next phase of the planning process.

3.3 Strategic Recovery Framework

Due to the sheer scale of the destruction caused by Hurricane Katrina, the recovery of New Orleans requires a response that goes well beyond traditional disaster recovery planning. More than simply providing a prioritized list of projects, the Citywide Strategic Recovery and Rebuilding Plan must address the city's recovery as a comprehensive whole. The Citywide recovery framework incorporates the professional judgment of both the District and Citywide Planning Teams, the community input received in the Community Congresses and district meetings, key insights from the district and citywide recovery assessments, and elements of all three recovery scenarios - *Re-pair*, *Re-build* and *Re-vision* – into a comprehensive vision, goals, and strategic policy framework to guide the City's recovery and rebuilding.

3.3.1 New Orleans' Recovery Vision

All citizens, regardless of current residence, have the right to return to New Orleans. In addition, *all citizens, businesses and investors in our Great City have not only a right to return but also a right to return to a Safer, Stronger, Smarter City that enables a substantially higher quality of life, greater economic opportunity, and greater security against hurricanes than New Orleans had prior to Katrina.*

Over the next 5 to 10 years, all of New Orleans diverse neighborhoods will come back: the French Quarter, the Central Business District, the Garden District, the Irish Channel, the Warehouse District, Uptown, Downtown, the Lakefront, Lakeview, Gentilly, New Orleans East and the Lower Ninth Ward. The future City will be familiar, but different, it will be a New Orleans that is Safer, Stronger, and Smarter.

The future New Orleans, like the old one, will be noted for its architecture, its accessible public spaces, and its lush greenery in public and private spaces. It will be noted for its cleanliness, its walkability, and its lack of crime. The City will diversify its economy and provide state-of-the-art health care, education, and public services to all its residents. The City will have a financially sustainable government and government agencies that are able to maintain and improve facilities and services. The City will honor its history and will become at once the most European of American cities as well as a great Caribbean city.

Envision a New Orleans that is prosperous, progressive and populated by an engaged citizenry steeped in the culture and traditions of New Orleans and active in the governance of the City. They will be supported through a collaborative effort of the local, state and federal governments, assisted by the generosity of non-governmental organizations, working together with a unified vision. Our people are resilient; a population that had to struggle to stay here, or had to struggle to get back here.

3.3.2 Recovery Goals

Based upon the analyses and feedback gained during the recovery assessment and scenario phases of the UNOP process, seven major planning priorities were developed to help frame the necessary breadth and depth of the City's recovery and rebuilding focus.

Promote the integration of multi-level flood protection systems into rebuilding plans.

Lessening the risk of future catastrophic loss is critical to the City's recovery. New Orleans' flood protection system of levees, pumping stations, surge gates and floodwalls is insufficient to protect the people and property of New Orleans against the most serious flood risks. A substantially upgraded levee protection system will ultimately protect the entire City from even a Category 5 hurricane. However, self-directed flood mitigation measures must be also be implemented. The mix of measures include: helping residents/businesses relocate from the most vulnerable areas, elevating structures, hardening infrastructure, and accommodating additional population in less vulnerable areas.

A multi-level approach to flood risk management will reduce future interruptions of the recovery and foster confidence among residents, businesses and the financial community (including public and private financing sources and insurers). This added confidence will help spur development in all of the key sectors of the recovery, including, housing, infrastructure, public services and economic development.

Renew the City's roads, utilities, public transit, and infrastructure in a sustainable and strategic fashion.

Renewal of the City's infrastructure is critical to the support of basic living conditions and essential economic activity. Since practical and financial limitations will likely prevent the comprehensive repair and improvement that is necessary to bring the City's infrastructure to full strength, infrastructure recovery must proceed efficiently and while making effective use of limited funds. Coordination with housing, public services and economic development initiatives will be vitally important in planning the renewal of the City's infrastructure.

As infrastructure is rebuilt, it must be designed and constructed in a sustainable manner that will protect key structures and facilities in the event of another significant flood and reduce unnecessary future costs. Strategic investments must also be made to stimulate neighborhood revitalization and to modify infrastructure to accommodate additional population moving into some areas. Long-term capital improvement plans and investments in infrastructures must be instituted and followed. Residents and businesses must have confidence in the City's ability to rebound rapidly from a major disaster and to quickly restore the services that are essential to a high quality of life.

Ensure an adequate supply of affordable, rental and public housing in an equitable manner.

Two main principles guide this priority: (1) basic equity among residents of the City, and (2) economic equilibrium and growth. First, providing for sufficient affordable and low-income housing supports the core value of this planning process: that everyone has a right to return to New Orleans. Secondly, an adequate housing supply facilitates the development of an adequate workforce to carry out the recovery and future growth of the City.

Critical to the long-term health of New Orleans' neighborhoods is an understanding of the location, design, and overall quality of affordable, subsidized, and public housing. Efforts to rebuild and expand the affordable housing stock should provide interim housing solutions here in New Orleans for public housing residents who want to return. The new developments must respect the character, the architecture, and the socio-economic health of neighborhoods.

Foster remedies to address blighted neighborhood conditions throughout the City.

Current programs and policies are causing an uneven resettlement pattern which is negatively affecting the safety and sustainability of some neighborhoods. Many of these neighborhoods sustained some of the deepest flooding in Katrina, and are at low elevations that are vulnerable to future flooding. The blighted condition of many neighborhoods potentially fosters crime, creates inefficiencies in delivering vital city services, and weighs heavily upon the minds of returning residents. Market forces will drive the recovery of the City in many ways, but market anxiety could also impede recovery in the absence of clear direction and concerns about neighborhood-level safety and sustainability. A more rationale pattern of resettlement can be encouraged by concentrating community services and commercial activity in areas of higher elevation, offering incentives to residents/business owners and developers to relocate into a more clustered development.

Promote the strengthening and diversification of the economy by retaining key facilities, making strategic investments in workforce development and new infrastructure, and improving the overall quality of life.

An economic boom in construction and related industries is possible as the City's recovery gains momentum. The economic gains will be short lived, though, unless New Orleans retains key facilities such as the LSU/VA Medical Complex, allows for their expansion, and seeks out new growth industries whose lifespan will exceed the recovery and rebuilding period. Small businesses are the economic backbones of our neighborhoods and they must also be supported to ride out the recovery. Support must be provided to our businesses that have returned and our workforce must be trained to implement the recovery and lead the city's economy into its next generation.

Sustained economic growth is the result of many factors; one that is occasionally overlooked is providing an overall high quality of life for businesses and residents. Improving the safety of the City, the quality of public education, the efficiency of public service delivery, and the overall appeal of the built environment must be recognized as critical to long-term economic prosperity.

Make significant, strategic investments in community facilities that will result in substantially enhanced community infrastructure and improved service delivery.

Prior to Katrina, many of the City’s schools, health care facilities, playgrounds, community centers, and criminal justice facilities needed repairs and reinvestment. Furthermore, by virtue of their location and construction, many of these facilities were severely impacted by Katrina’s floodwaters, thereby retarding the restoration of services that are essential to civic life.

The restoration of community-serving buildings and services must be planned in such a way as to maximize limited resources, provide quality services to the current and near-term population as effectively as possible, follow a long-term strategy for sustainability, and allow for an expeditious recovery in the event of a future flood. The City must also aim to create state-of-the-art community services.

Preserve New Orleans’ culture, historic architecture and overall aesthetic character to the maximum extent possible while facilitating new development.

New Orleans would not be celebrated and beloved, nor would it be a major destination City, if not for its culture and historic architecture. The amount of damage caused by Katrina has placed unprecedented pressure on the building stock of both officially designated historic districts as well as those areas that are not formally protected as local historic districts. Existing preservation laws must be rigorously enforced, but they must also be administered in a way that makes the historic review process more expeditious, transparent, and predictable. New methods of protecting historic buildings while facilitating rapid redevelopment must be explored, particularly in those neighborhoods that do not have historic district status but whose architecture should be treasured.

3.3.3 Strategic Recovery Framework

Rebuilding the systemic and catastrophic damage that New Orleans’ neighborhoods, infrastructure and facilities sustained in Katrina, requires that we do more than simply select a project here or there within a neighborhood. Catastrophic urban recovery requires a strategic and coordinated framework that first stabilizes the recovery and then builds a foundation that can both sustain and progress the recovery over time. This framework must balance the recovery vision and goals with the realities of recovery. It must be fair and equitable to bring back the entire City and enable all citizens to return. It also must optimize existing resources as there is insufficient funding and manpower to undertake the entire reconstruction all at once.

The Citywide strategic recovery framework defines the resources and strategies that are needed in different parts of the City over different phases of time, in the next 5 to 10 years of the City's recovery. Three policy areas of the City are defined by the overarching issues affecting the City's recovery:

- ◆ Varying rates of repopulation across the City, and
- ◆ Differing levels of flood risk.

The policy areas are based on reliable, and publicly available, evidence. But, the data will be dynamic (ever-changing) and must be monitored as flood protection improvements are made and the rates of returning population accelerate over time. Therefore, the framework provides a way of thinking about the City over the course of the recovery, as rates of repopulation and risk of future flooding change, and therefore the area designation of certain neighborhoods change and a different suite of policies, projects, and programs may need to be applied.

Rates of Population Return

The differing rates of population return are a major risk factor that must be considered before public investments are made. Figure 3.1 shows groupings of City blocks according to the current rates of repopulation across the City. The rates of utility usage for both commercial and residential customers were used as a proxy of population return. November 2006 rates of usage were compared with November 2004 rates. Areas with 15% or less of its pre-Katrina utility usage are more vulnerable in recovery and careful attention must be paid to developing appropriate policies and strategies to match residents' needs in order to return. Areas with 15% to 60% of pre-Katrina utility usage are showing strong promise of recovery and residents may need strategies and policies that help them return and rebuild safely. Areas with more 60% of its pre-Katrina utility usage are well on their way to recovering their former populations and need policies and strategies that help them to accommodate additional population.

Future Risk of Flooding

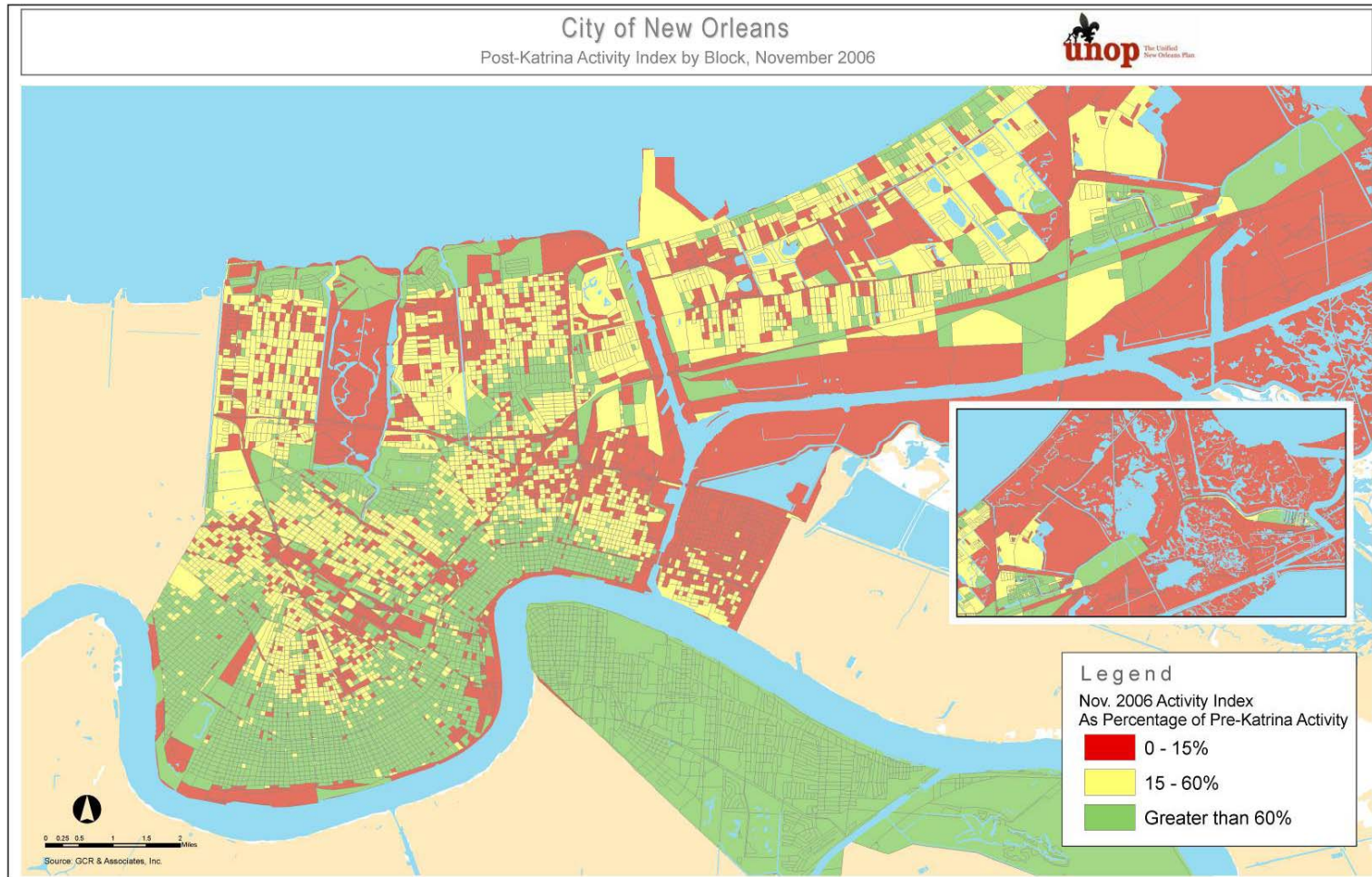
Hurricane Katrina taught us a very sobering lesson: that the hurricane protection system we had in place in August of 2005 was not able to protect the City from a near miss by a slow moving Category 3 hurricane. And even though the damaged levees and floodwalls have been repaired, we are still vulnerable to Category 3 and larger hurricanes until the USACE makes some key upgrades to the hurricane protection system, as it is planning to do, by 2010. Furthermore, it will take many more years for the USACE and the State of Louisiana to restore wetlands and help protect the entire Louisiana coast from Category 5, and larger, hurricanes. In the meantime, New Orleans can do more to protect itself by building stronger and more safely.

To depict the future risk of flooding, two key factors were identified: topographic elevations and potential storm surge. Figure 3.2 shows groupings of city blocks according to their natural

elevations and potential for storm surge. Average elevations by city block are grouped in three categories using United States Geological Survey (USGS) datum for areas that are three feet or more below sea level; between three feet below sea level to sea level; and areas at sea level or above.

To depict potential storm surge, computer modeling data from the USACE was used. Figure 3.3 shows the USACE's model of the likely flooding that would have occurred in New Orleans from Katrina *if* there had been no breaches of the floodwalls and all the drainage pumping stations were running continuously. This model shows that without the breaches, there are still many levees and floodwalls that would have been overtopped, causing widespread flooding throughout the City (though not as extensive or deep as occurred with the breaches). When combined, three areas of high, moderate, and low risk of future flooding can be identified.

Figure 3.1 Repopulation Rates across New Orleans (Using utility usage as a proxy for residential recovery)²⁴



Note: Index equals November, 2006 index divided by November, 2004 index

²⁴ Areas in red may also indicate parks, undeveloped land, or industrial areas where there were no utility accounts registered at those locations prior to Katrina.

Figure 3.2 Natural Elevations across New Orleans

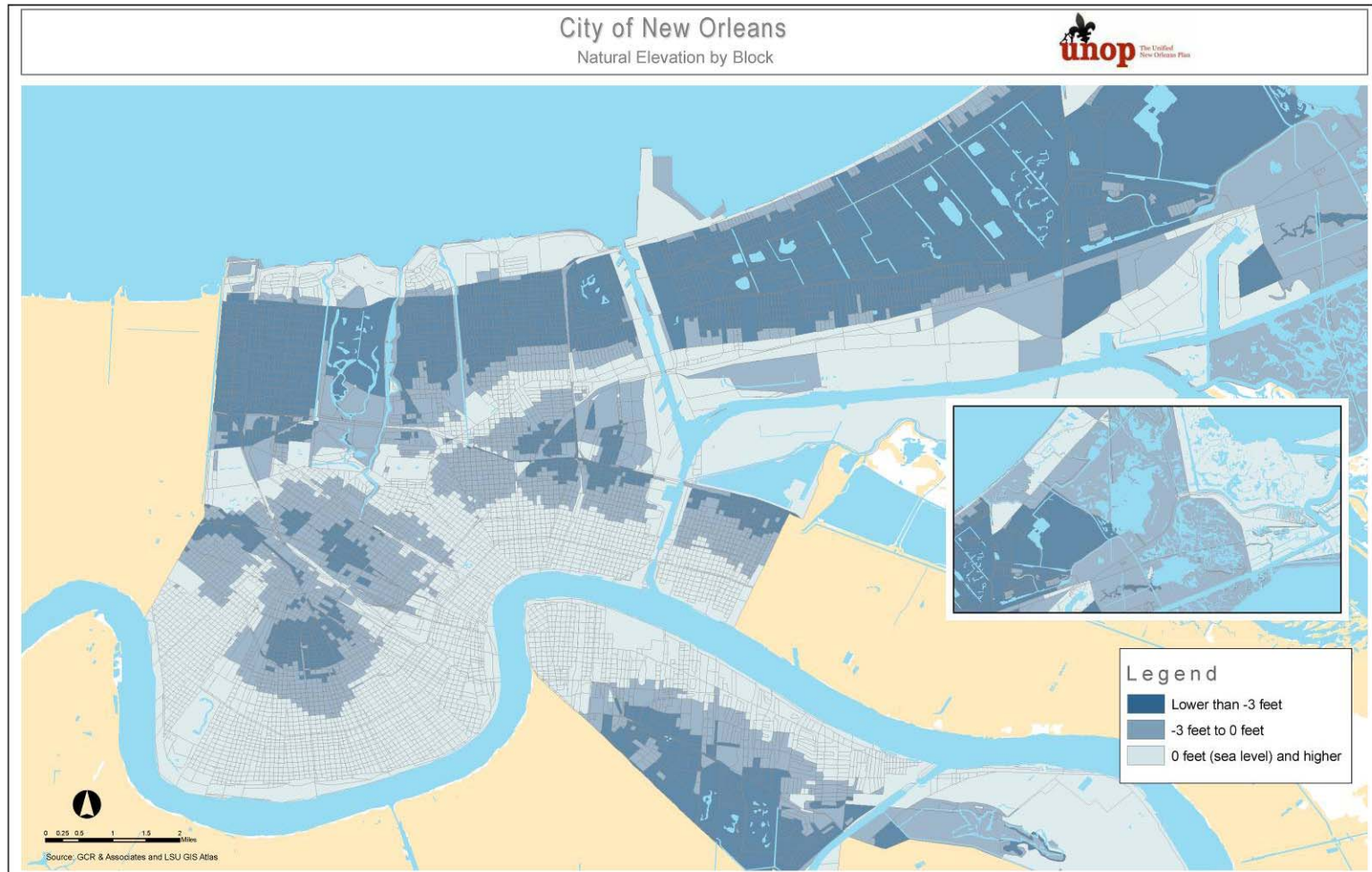
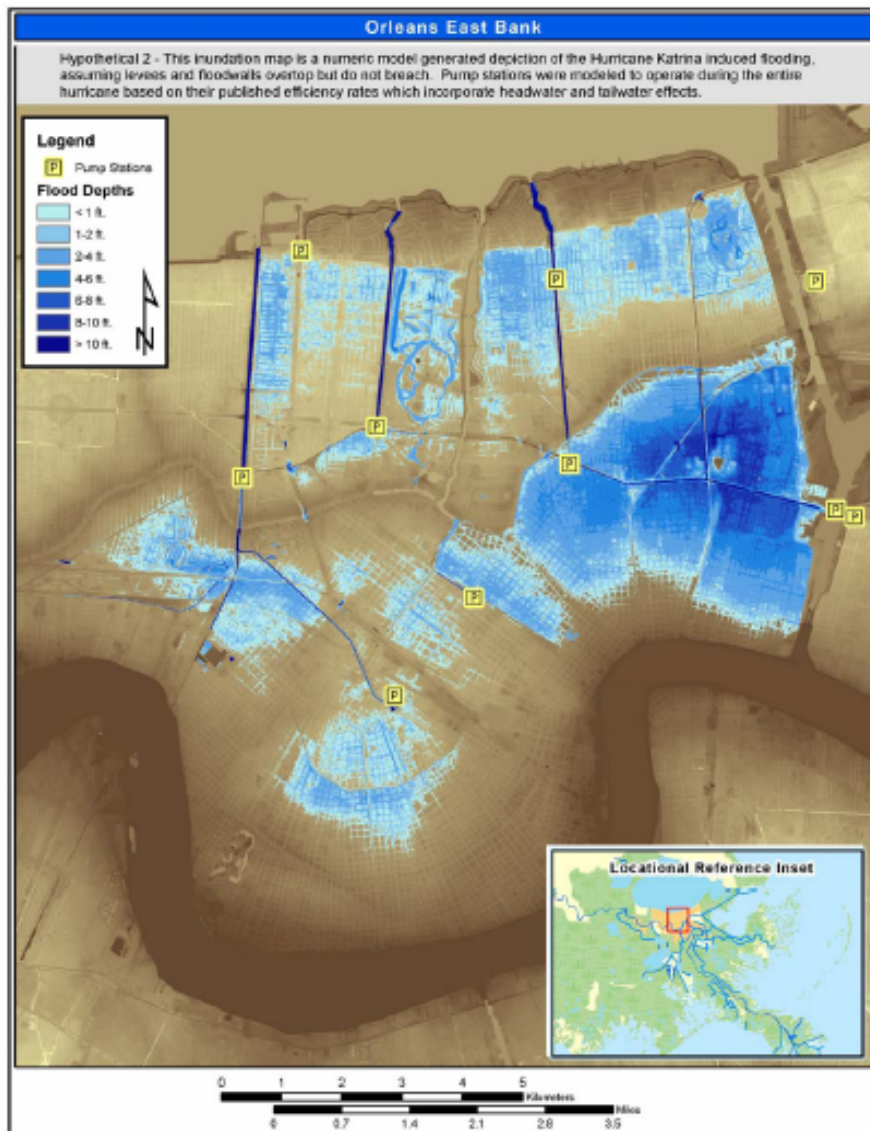


Figure 3.3 USACE’s Modeled Flood Depths – Assuming No Levee or Floodwall Breaches and Pumping Stations Operating Continuously at 100% Capacity



Recovery Policy Areas

Figure 3.4 illustrates the 9 possible combinations when the distinguishing criteria for future flood risk and rates of population return are merged. For the purposes of recovery planning, these combinations are not necessarily distinct. As an example, recovery priorities will be relatively similar in all areas that had little damage from Katrina, regardless of elevation. Likewise, the hardest hit areas with the slowest rates of repopulation will have some different priorities and needs when compared with other heavily flooded areas where repopulation rates are higher.

Figure 3.4 Illustration of the Potential Combinations of Future Flood Risk and Repopulation Rates

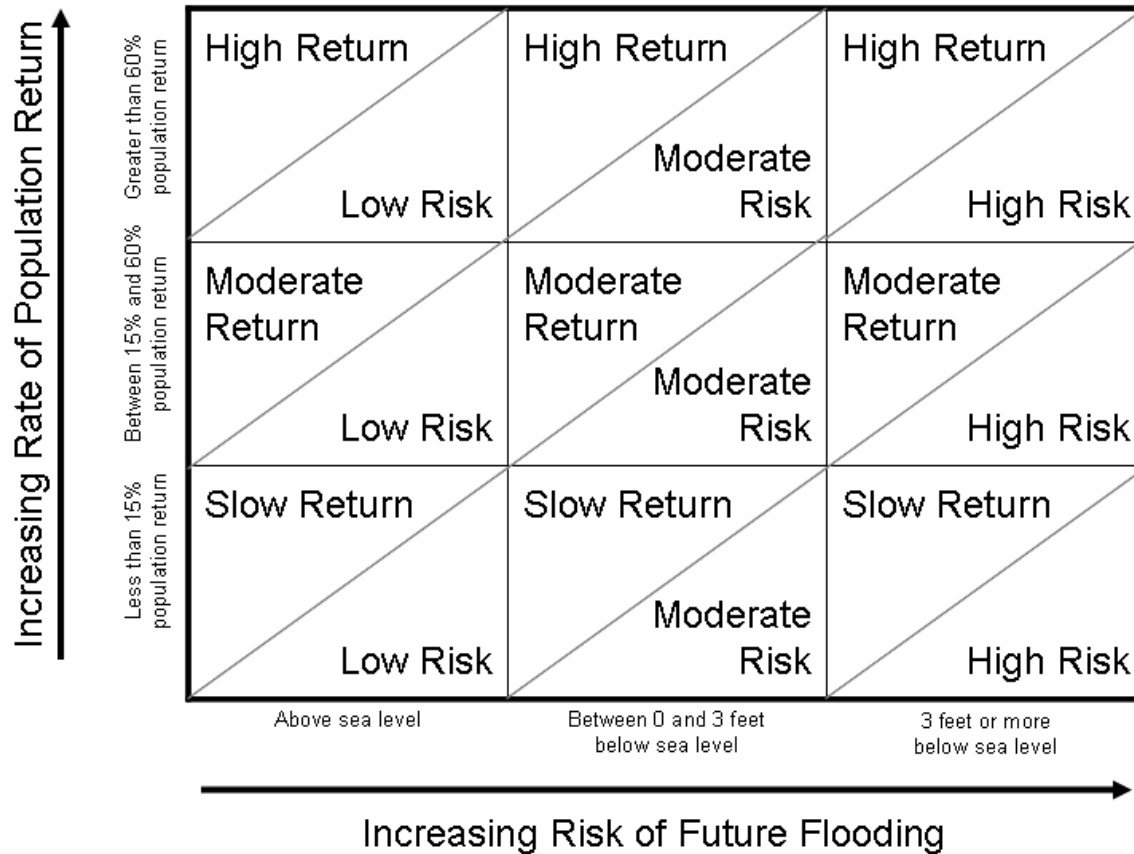


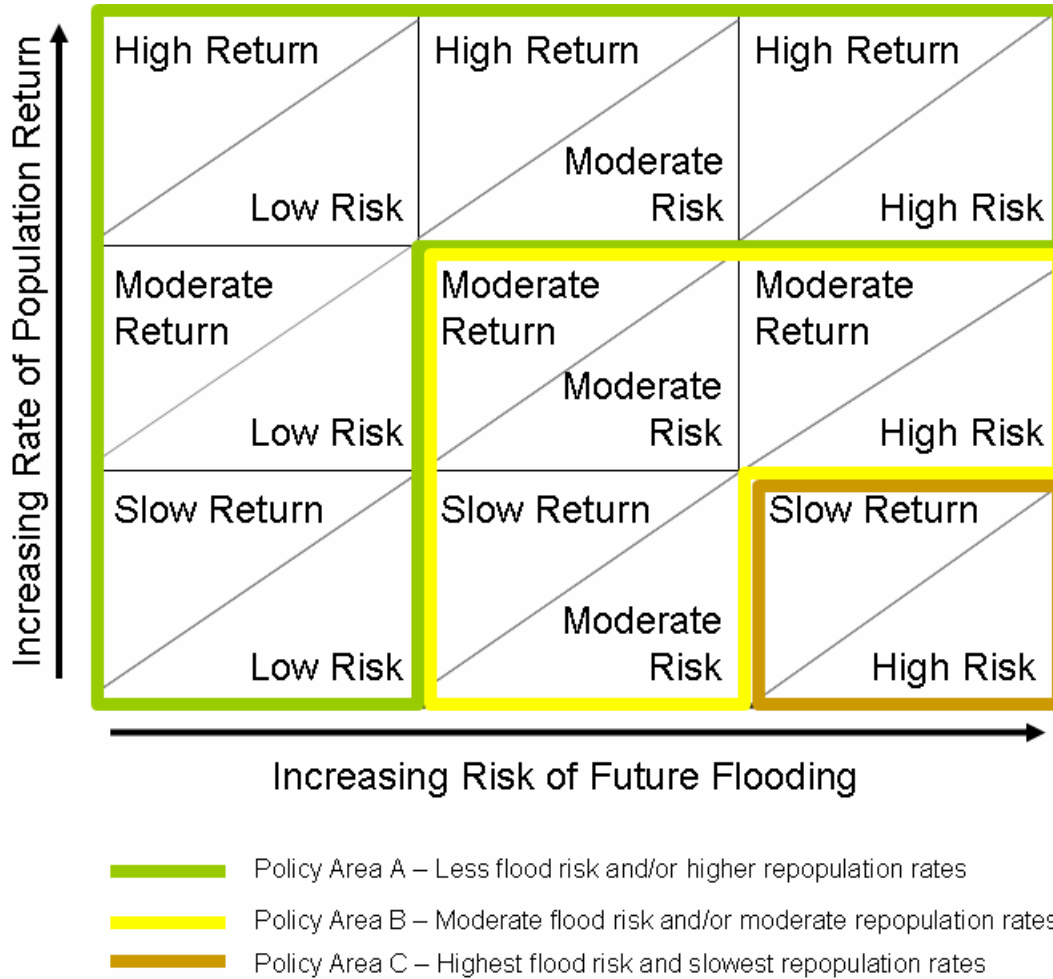
Figure 3.5 shows how these 9 combinations can then merged into 3 policy areas categorized as follows:

- ◆ Policy Area A – Less flood risk and/or higher repopulation rates
- ◆ Policy Area B – Moderate flood risk and/or moderate repopulation rates
- ◆ Policy Area C – Highest flood risk and slowest repopulation rates

Since a major goal of the Citywide Plan and preference of citizens participating in the UNOP process is to rebuild all neighborhoods of the City, it is important to note that none of these policies areas prohibit any neighborhood’s recovery. Rather, these designations offer a defensible and workable framework to establish strategies and policies, programs, and projects that are better tailored to the varying recovery and rebuilding needs of different parts of the City. As previously noted, neighborhood designations will change as people return and flood protection plans are implemented. But, for the purposes of this plan at this point in time, strategies and approaches are proposed by sector to address the specific needs and priorities of each policy area. For example, the Citywide Plan proposes that the neighborhood cluster program (described in section 4) specifically target Policy Area C – were future flood risk is highest and repopulation rate are slowest. The exact boundaries of these policy areas are less

important than the locations and boundaries of programs and projects that are eventually implemented. While this framework is a guide to estimate the level of funding needed, it is premature for this Plan to specify locations and boundaries until the necessary funding is secured.

Figure 3.5 Defining 3 Recovery Policy Areas



Policy Area A – Less flood risk and/or higher repopulation rates:

These areas of the City represent the safest and most fully recovered areas. In some cases, there are low-lying areas that were spared Katrina’s impact so their recovery needs are more limited and the policymaking is still focused on mitigation and reducing potential future losses. For the purposes of recovery planning, this Plan recommends that the immediate recovery investments focus on repairing any heavy infrastructure damage to insure no further damage occurs. All land parcels are valuable and strategies and approaches should aim to reverse some of the historic disinvestment and underutilization of some neighborhoods located in these areas. Strategic investments in public services and infrastructure should concentrate on identifying and

completing those recovery projects that encourage further population return and expand capacity to accommodate more residents and businesses wishing to voluntarily relocate into these parts of the City. Attention must be paid to preserving affordable housing in these areas. Full recovery will take 5 years or less, in some cases, much less.

Policy Area B - Moderate flood risk and/or moderate repopulation rates:

Most of the City's land area is within this policy area, as many residents have already made the financial commitment to return and rebuild their homes and we have long known that life in New Orleans carries a certain susceptibility to flooding. Strategies and approaches to these policy areas need to focus heavily on reinforcing the valuable investments already made by returning residents by providing incentives to help them better protect their property from future flood risk. Strategies and approaches also need to be structured to provide incentives that encourage other residents to return, so that the full public investments in rebuilding infrastructure and public services are maximized.

As an immediate next step in the recovery, all developed parcels in these areas should be repaired or rebuilt in order to maximize the return on recovery investments made in these areas. Thus, all blighted properties should be adjudicated or otherwise brought into compliance with city codes and efforts made to put them back to use. Public investment should first focus on repairing heavy damage to avoid additional losses, and next to improve and expand infrastructure and public services to accompany repopulation rates. Temporary, modular or mobile facilities *must only be used initially in the least populated parts* of these areas; but, because the full geographic extent of these areas may fully recover, major investments in public infrastructure and utilities should also proceed in the short- and medium-term as population returns. Investments in infrastructure and utilities need to be viewed as the incentives, the attractors, to get more people to return so that the entire area is fully restored.

Progress must be reviewed annually, and alternative strategies and approaches should be considered to help those parts of these areas that are still struggling to rebound after a few years. Likewise, major investment strategies will also need to be adjusted. For those areas where repopulation is still quite slow, Policy Area C approaches – such as neighborhood resettlement clusters - might need to be implemented over time. Any future redevelopment should reflect the goals and objectives of the City's Master Plan as well as the reductions in flood risk, anticipated as the USACE implements its next phases of work.

Policy Area C – Highest flood risk and slowest repopulation rates:

Only a small portion of the City is located in this policy area where the risk of future flooding is highest (natural land elevations are more than 3 feet below sea level) and the repopulation rates are slowest (less than 15% return). The immediate next steps in recovery of these areas must focus on stabilization. The heavy damage to infrastructure must be repaired and residents and businesses will be encouraged to return and rebuild in more sustainable clusters within their neighborhoods; or they may choose to relocate to another neighborhood in the City. Any programs or projects proposed for residents and businesses must be strictly voluntary and incentive-based; no mandatory relocation programs are proposed. But the technical and financial

resources must also be made available so that residents and businesses can work together to make collective decisions on where and how to rebuild more closely together with flood mitigation and sustainable/green building practices.

A more clustered pattern of resettlement will help the City and other agencies focus investments and upgrade public services and infrastructure to attract residents and businesses to reside near one another. A more clustered pattern of resettlement will reduce the guesswork among residents and businesses about their neighborhood's future viability, by restoring communities and reducing blight. It will also provide a guide to the City and other agencies to use in restoring infrastructure and services, and targeting investments to enhance infrastructure and services, and improve quality of life, which can stimulate additional investments.

Plans and designs of a more clustered resettlement pattern should be developed and work initiated in the first two years of recovery. Heavy damage must also be quickly repaired to stabilize these neighborhoods. Then, more focused investments that provide upgraded and state-of-the-art infrastructure and public services should be made to reinforce and support the clustered pattern of resettlement that emerges. Progress must be reviewed annually, as conditions in neighborhoods can change. Over time, the undeveloped areas will need to be re-envisioned into alternative, productive uses. These uses should reflect the goals and objectives of the City's Master Plan as well as the reductions in flood risk, anticipated as the USACE implements its next phases of work.

3.3.4 Recovery Strategies through Time

A comprehensive set of recovery strategies has been developed for each the City's major sectors – from housing to jobs to flood protection to utilities. The top recovery priorities are then defined for each sector (primarily those things that we must do in the next 2 years to stabilize and build the foundation for a sustainable recovery across all neighborhoods in the City). It also defines a course for planning and investing in the mid-term (2 to 5 years) and longer-term (beyond 5 years).

But, since we can't predict the future, the strategic recovery framework also provides a template for future plan implementers to monitor and evaluate progress, and adjust strategies and approaches based on actual resettlement patterns over time. The framework will guide investment in support of the City's recovery in each sector for each part of the City. It also provides a means of bundling together priority recovery programs and projects recommended by the Citywide and District Plans for implementation and financing.

As conditions change in given areas of the City, the framework also enables future planners and decision-makers to shift resources to meet the demands and also evaluate how these strategies should change. For example, a certain set of strategies may be appropriate for providing public services in certain parts of the City based on its level of flood risk and current population, but these conditions may change over time.