

BASE REALIGNMENT AND CLOSURE

Community Profile

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Naval Support Activity New Orleans, Louisiana

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Closure at a Glance

Local Redevelopment Authority (LRA):

City of New Orleans

Geographic area affected by closing:

Orleans Parish, New Orleans, LA

Population of affected area (before closure): 485,000

Total Acres to be Disposed: 25 acres

Estimated Job Loss Impact:

Jobs Lost	
Military Personnel	1,310
Civilian Personnel	603
Contractors	63

Source: Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Report, Appendix O

Economic Adjustment Challenges

- Hurricane Katrina's impact on the City of New Orleans and metropolitan region
- Incorporation of the post-Katrina planning efforts into the Reuse Plan to accurately reflect the needs of the community
- Historic neighborhoods surround the site
- Land mass to be redeveloped is small (25 acres), but improvements (three buildings with 500,000 square feet in each) provide significant obstacles
- Site, which is triangular in shape, is surrounded on two sides by water with no ingress/egress; third side is a public railroad spur

Key Reuse Planning & Property Disposal Milestones

5/10/06	Federal Surplus Determination
11/30/07	LRA Homeless Outreach Completed
9/30/09	Reuse Plan Received by Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)/Military Service
Pending	HUD Determination on Submission
Pending	National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) Record of Decision
Pending	Base Closure

Organization

The City of New Orleans (City) is the sole political jurisdiction comprising the Local Redevelopment Authority (LRA) for NSA East Bank and is federally recognized as the LRA by the Office of Economic Adjustment (OEA). The Mayor of the City established the New Orleans Area Task Force (NOATF) by Executive Ordinance to carry out LRA's responsibilities.

The NSA NOATF Advisory Committee includes:

- City of New Orleans, Chief Development Officer
- University of New Orleans, Chancellor
- Regional Planning Commission, Chairman
- Industrial Development Board
- Port of New Orleans, Chairman
- Algiers Economic Development Foundation, President
- Bywater Neighborhood Association, President
- New Orleans Chamber of Commerce, Chairman
- New Orleans Federal Alliance, Chairman

Building on the strengths of the City of New Orleans and the NSA site, the NOATF has created a forward thinking, business-minded redevelopment plan that will make use of all available resources; create opportunities for the city as a whole and the immediate neighborhoods in particular; and involve businesses, civic and residential communities. To accomplish this goal required teamwork, trust, leadership, and vision. The result is a financially feasible, economically viable development that epitomizes the city's resilience, strength and progression into the 21st Century and beyond.

Reuse Plan/Other Studies

The decision to close NSA East Bank was part of the 2005 BRAC round. In May 2006, the Navy published in the Federal Register a Notice of Availability of Surplus Property for NSA East Bank and the Office of Economic Adjustment (OEA) published in the Federal Register its formal recognition of the City of New Orleans as the LRA for NSA East Bank.

The City of New Orleans (City), through the New Orleans Area Task Force (NOATF), has prepared a comprehensive reuse plan (Reuse Plan) for the redevelopment of NSA East Bank. The vision of the NOATF is to provide the framework for the creation of a unique community asset. Its goals are to:

- Develop and implement a plan that will:
 - Enhance the local economy and increase local tax revenues
 - Replace and/or increase civilian jobs and payroll
 - Preserve and protect the unique character of the City of New Orleans
 - Embrace the guiding principles of the Unified New Orleans Plan and other recovery planning efforts
- Build community support and excitement through an open planning process
- Strive to be responsive to the social needs of the local community
- Carry out the planning process in a timely manner
- Incorporate economic feasibility, financial feasibility, and appropriate environmental standards
- Capitalize on opportunities and remain flexible throughout the process

Project Study Area

NSA New Orleans consists of two separate properties geographically divided by the Mississippi River. The property on the north side is known as the East Bank and the property on the south side is known as the West Bank. The subject property is the East Bank property. NSA East Bank consists of approximately 25.33 acres near river mile 93 on the east bank of the Mississippi River, and is located entirely within the City of New Orleans, LA. As shown in Figure 1, it is bounded primarily by residential land uses on the west and north, the Inner Harbor Navigation Canal on the east, and the Mississippi River to the south.



Figure 1: NSA East Bank Boundaries

Description of the Property

According to the U.S. Navy, there are 51 structures at NSA East Bank. The U.S. government, via the Department of Transportation Maritime Administration (MARAD), owns and operates the Poland Street Wharf on the east bank of the river adjacent to the station. The Poland Street Wharf has a 2,193-foot face and is used primarily by the Military Sealift Command/Ready Reserve Fleet, but is also partially leased to a private steamship corporation. The station is dominated by three six story buildings, each of which has over 500,000 square feet of floor space. The land and the three buildings were originally developed in 1919 for use by the Army Quartermaster Corps as a general depot during World War I. In 1966, the New Orleans Army Base was conveyed to the Navy and the property was designated NSA New Orleans to reflect the changing mission of the station.



Figure 2: Recent aerial photograph of NSA East Bank

In order to develop a reuse plan that both fit the context of the study area and had community consensus, it was important to understand what planning efforts had been conducted previously, which of those efforts had been adopted, and how the community in the study area felt about those plans.

The Project Team conducted research among various agencies to determine what previous planning efforts had been conducted. Coordination was conducted with several agencies including the Regional Planning Commission, The City of New Orleans, the New Orleans Regional Transit Authority, and others.

Public involvement is critical to the success of any project. The Public Involvement Plan (PIP) for the NSA East Bank Redevelopment Project was designed to keep agencies and the public fully involved in the study and to elicit feedback.

Throughout the duration of the study effort, the NSA East Bank Team performed extensive public involvement activities in order to create a climate for the open exchange of ideas and views. A variety of outreach and communications strategies were undertaken to facilitate discussions with citizens, interested communities, neighborhood associations, local agencies, and elected and appointed officials.

The PIP was structured to collect information from many different audiences, in both formal and informal formats. Opportunities for comment and input were available by way of correspondence, e-mail, a project website (www.nsaeb.com), four public meetings, seven Board meetings noticed and open to the public, and a facility tour. Visual materials and public presentations were also used to convey information. A listing of Public Involvement activities is outlined below.

NOATF coordinated with the following agencies and community organizations:

- Regional Planning Commission
- Regional Transit Authority
- City of New Orleans Planning and Development
- Port of New Orleans
- New Orleans Public Belt Railroad
- MARAD
- Homeland Security Administration
- St. Claude Main Street Coalition
- Bywater Neighborhood Association
- Marigny Neighborhood Association
- Holy Cross Neighborhood Association
- Lower 9th Ward Neighborhood Association
- Upper 9th Ward Neighborhood Association
- Riverfront Alliance
- Federal City
- UNITY of Greater New Orleans (UNITY is a collaborative of 60 agencies working to end homelessness in the New Orleans region)

Studies Performed

An environmental conditions assessment, personal property inventory, and utilities analysis was conducted for the NSA East Bank site to determine what, if any, deficiencies existed in current service and what the possible disposition of certain items available to be conveyed to LRA might be. Several environmental studies were conducted and a detailed description of the findings was published by the BRAC Program Management Office. The environmental conditions analysis found that Asbestos Containing Materials and Lead Based Paint were present, and that remediation would be necessary for any redevelopment or renovation. The utilities analysis found that current services would satisfy the needs of the proposed conceptual land uses examined as part of this study.

A Regional Economic Profile and Market Trend Analysis was performed to assess the socioeconomic conditions and characteristics with the New Orleans Metropolitan Area. Based on the analysis performed, the City faces an enormous

challenge in rebuilding its damaged housing stock. Nearly 65,000 units in the City are either deteriorated or dilapidated. Once these units are rebuilt, it is likely that the units will re-absorb the population returning to the area. In terms of labor and employment, the entire region faces labor shortages in key knowledge-based sectors such as engineering and installation and in the construction, maintenance, production, and extraction sectors.

A Target Sector Analysis indicated that a research/technology park would be the best option to anchor the existing site, and in turn, promote overall economic development in the region by providing opportunities for workforce training and job creation. A recommended mixed-use development concept would include retail, residential, and commercial uses and make the site an attractive location to live, work, and learn.

An analysis was performed to assess the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats for the NSA East Bank and the immediate Marigny/Bywater Area. The analysis was based on economic, market, and environmental conditions, and previous plans undertaken in the area. Additionally, a workshop was held with the NOATF, which included representatives from the City and community leaders.

Alternative Reuse/Redevelopment Options

After consultation and coordination with the public and several agencies, three potential land use alternatives (options) were developed, along with conceptual site plans for illustrative purposes.

Alternative 1: Maintain All Three Main Structures

- Building 603 – Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and temporary hurricane shelter, for special needs, research, and training technology center, neighborhood level retail, and restricted non-cruise terminal parking
- Building 602 – 1,100 to 1,200 parking spaces to support cruise terminal
- Building 601 – Above market-rate residential and market-rate, affordable, and subsidized housing, restricted non-cruise terminal parking, and associated green space of 10 to 12 acres.

Alternative 2: Maintain Two Main Structures

- Building 603 – Demolition; new development to include neighborhood-scale mixed-use buildings, retail, office/commercial (research and training technology center)
- Building 602 – 1,100 to 1,200 parking spaces to support cruise terminal, EOC, and temporary hurricane shelter for special needs
- Building 601 – Maintain residential use or partial demolition, add floors for above-market-rate residential, market-rate residential, supportive retail, restricted non-cruise terminal parking, Supportive Housing (northeast corner of site) separate building – 80 units per the UNITY of Greater New Orleans, associated green space of 11 to 13 acres

Alternative 3: Demolition of All Three Main Structures

- New residential (southeast corner of site) six and eight stories, research and training technology center (neighborhood scale)
- Supportive Housing (northeast corner of site) separate building – 80 units per UNITY proposal, parking, no cruise terminal support)
- Mixed-Use Buildings (west side of site) - neighborhood-scale retail, office/commercial use to support research and training technology center, residential, associated green space of 10 to 12 acres

Recommended Reuse/Redevelopment Plan

After presentation of the three potential redevelopment options to the public and various agencies, reasonable consensus was reached that either Alternative 1 or Alternative 2 made the most sense and had the most support. The resulting conceptual land use plan for the NSA East Bank designates the property for use in economic development, job creation, an EOC/temporary hurricane shelter, and other supportive uses. This new “Mixed Use District” supports the recommendations from the community and various agencies. However, understanding the dynamic nature of the economy and ongoing post-Katrina planning efforts, the Study Team endeavored to keep the recommended plan as flexible as possible while still adhering to and meeting the goals and desires of the public and stakeholder agencies. Figure 3 outlines the proposed plan.

Homeless Submission

Hurricanes Katrina and Rita have had long-lasting effects on the population of New Orleans, its unemployment rate, the availability of affordable housing, and the needs of the homeless. These and many similar factors were the center of the City's consideration as it developed the City of New Orleans 2006-2010 Consolidated Plan ("Consolidated Plan"). Prior to Hurricane Katrina, the population of New Orleans was over 460,000. As of December 2005 (after the hurricane), the population was estimated at 200,000 during the day and slightly over 100,000 at night. The City's unemployment rate of 5.8 percent prior to the hurricane was estimated at 17.5 percent in November 2005 after the storm.

Table 1, taken from the Consolidated Plan, represents pre-Hurricane Katrina numbers based on the 2004 Census Bureau estimate and post-Hurricane Katrina figures based on estimates of local parish officials.

Parish	2004	Post-Katrina (Jan 2006)	% Change
Orleans	462,269	134,400	-71%
Jefferson	453,590	375,000	-17%
St. Tammany	213,553	280,000	+31%
St. Bernard	65,554	8,000	-88%
St. Charles	50,073	69,073	+38%
St. John the Baptist	45,581	48,581	+7%
Plaquemines	28,969	14,500	-50%
Total	1,319,589	929,554	-30%

Table 1: Population Change in New Orleans

Hurricane Katrina affected 80 percent of the City's neighborhoods and infrastructure, destroying or significantly damaging hundreds of thousands of housing units and subjecting structures within the City to wind and flood damage. The priorities for redevelopment post-Katrina include the provision of housing with social services and community services, as well as opportunities for youth and people with disabilities.

The Consolidated Plan lists increasing the number of homeless people moving into permanent supportive housing and ending chronic homelessness as high priorities for the City. In addition, the City's Continuum of Care approach to addressing homelessness encourages a community-based process that provides a comprehensive response to homeless populations' different needs.

The City's 2009 Action Plan, issued as a supplement to the Consolidated Plan, lists the following as ways for the Continuum of Care collaborative to address the problems of homelessness:

- To maintain and strengthen existing programs for the homeless, including emergency shelters, transitional housing programs, permanent supportive housing programs, and homeless service programs
- To expand and improve street outreach and housing search initiatives to end street homelessness and chronic homelessness
- To assist nonprofit and faith-based organizations and other housing developers to develop new permanent supportive housing buildings, including safe havens for people with disabilities who are chronically homeless
- To fund the evidence-based practice of tenant-based permanent supportive housing rental assistance programs providing rental assistance in the private rental market coupled with case management for the chronically homeless
- To fund emergency or transitional rental assistance programs and other homeless prevention programs, with a special emphasis on providing rental assistance to families with children experiencing or at risk of homelessness
- To strengthen the jurisdiction's data about homelessness by a) helping to ensure that all homeless persons are entered into the UNITY Homeless Management Information System in order to track the jurisdiction's progress at reducing and preventing homelessness and b) ensuring a thorough annual Point in Time survey of

the number of people who are homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness. (Under the Consolidated Plan, UNITY currently coordinates the process for assisting persons moving out of homelessness. UNITY was one of two entities to submit an NOI to the NOATF for reuse of NSA East Bank.)

The City's vision is for New Orleans to become a national model for ending homelessness by making sure that all disabled displaced New Orleanians have a home, and this vision requires the construction of 10,000 units of mixed-income supportive housing to serve individuals with special needs who would typically face homelessness. In addition, the City has a strategy, in partnership with UNITY, to address chronic homelessness. Chronic homeless are unaccompanied individuals with disabilities, including mental illness, substance use disorders, developmental disabilities, and physical disorders. The Continuum of Care strategy is based on the "Housing First" principle, which assists those people on streets and in emergency shelters to move into permanent housing, together with the provision of services that help them maintain their housing. The strategy is also based upon provision of Permanent Supportive Housing units for those who are chronically homeless.

Post-Hurricane Katrina, UNITY estimates that there are approximately 12,000 homeless people on any given day in the greater New Orleans area who are in need of housing and supportive services. Over 80,000 rental units were damaged or destroyed during Hurricane Katrina and rents have increased 200 percent in most damaged areas. Moreover, rents are increasingly unaffordable post-Hurricane Katrina. HUD's Fair Market Rents have increased by more than 46 percent since Hurricane Katrina.

EBSHI is tailored to address the high-priority issues of the Consolidated Plan, including permanent supportive housing, housing the chronic homeless, increasing the economic opportunities for low income residents, and achieving housing opportunities for homeless and people with HIV/AIDS. Further, emergency shelter services, transitional housing, and permanent supportive housing are all gaps in the City's Continuum of Care.

UNITY notes that loss of affordable rental housing or rooming has increased the number of homeless since Hurricane Katrina, and that this is particularly true for disabled individuals in the area, who have also had to deal with disruption to mental and physical health care services. Thus, the EBSHI targets chronic homeless, which UNITY estimates at 1,380 in the Greater New Orleans Area. UNITY also sees the population of families still in trailers and on Federal Emergency Management Association housing assistance to be at risk for homelessness, as the assistance will soon expire. Permanent supportive housing offers a lower-cost, lasting solution to homelessness, and housing development can generate 10-25 new jobs per building (excluding construction) and buildings can include retail space, showcase public spaces, and community amenities. Thus, accommodation of UNITY's NOI will support the needs of the homeless in the New Orleans area, and also fit within NOATF's redevelopment plan for NSA East Bank. Moreover, the site is large enough to integrate EBSHI while still keeping the residential aspect of the Bywater neighborhood.

The process to determine the homeless assistance accommodation followed BRAC guidelines. In July 2007, the NOATF also sent notice to over 80 state and local eligible entities, including homeless service providers regarding the availability of surplus Federal property at NSA East Bank. NOATF also held a Public Outreach Workshop and NSA East Bank Tour in August 2007, and implemented a public involvement plan to develop a strategy for redevelopment of NSA East Bank. NOATF provided notice for and held a public meeting to receive comment on the draft Reuse Plan and Homeless Assistance Submission in October 2009.

In addition to hosting the Public Outreach Workshop and the public meetings, NOATF posts information related to the reuse of NSA East Bank on its Web site at www.cityofno.com/pg-130-1-noatf-home.aspx. The NOATF also maintains a separate Web site at www.nsaeb.com dedicated solely to the redevelopment of NSA East Bank that includes information on public meetings and NOATF meetings related to NSA East Bank redevelopment.

NOATF focused on the redevelopment goals previously described during its screening process for homeless assistance and public benefit conveyances. There was one request for a public benefit conveyance of NSA New Orleans East Bank property; however, the NOI for this request was withdrawn. NOATF received one NOI for homeless assistance from UNITY. NOATF voted to accommodate the NOI submitted by UNITY, which requested use of land at NSA East Bank to support a program for permanent housing with comprehensive support services. UNITY does not anticipate

utilizing any existing buildings on-site at NSA East Bank. Instead, UNITY requests sufficient raw land to address its need for 145 units of housing for individual, medical respite and youth housing, together with common areas, supportive service offices, a general office building and related parking space.

During its review of the UNITY NOI, the NOATF planning team held several informal meetings with UNITY to discuss its proposed EBSHI. In October 2008, UNITY presented its NOI to a meeting of the NOATF delegates. In March 2009, the full NOATF Board voted to approve the preferred reuse alternative for NSA East Bank, which included the accommodation of UNITY's NOI.

The City of New Orleans, through the New Orleans Advisory Task Force, submitted its Homeless Assistance Submission for NSA East Bank to HUD in September 2009. The decision to accommodate UNITY's request for land is documented in the Plan.

Implementation and Partnering Strategies

Challenge: Hurricane Katrina's impact on the City of New Orleans and metropolitan region.

Strategy: The devastation created by Hurricane Katrina has been well=chronicled. No other City in U.S. history has coped with the depth and breadth of destruction created by such an event. Hurricane Katrina affected every aspect of development of any kind. Along with any other project, recovery or otherwise, NOATF had to just dive in and sink or swim. There were no givens—no preconceptions—just a willingness on all sides to put forth the effort and make it happen. From the very beginning, NOATF reached out to our anticipated partners, including homeowners' associations in the surrounding area, City Council members, the Mayor's office and Executive Staff, Board members, and homeless service providers. The message was simple and direct. There is a job to be done. Here are the steps in the process. The City learned from the Katrina experience that it is better to collaborate than to work in isolation. To accomplish the goal would require teamwork, trust, leadership and vision. Anyone was welcomed into the process and it paid off with great dividends.

Challenge: Incorporation of the post-Katrina planning efforts into the Reuse Plan to accurately reflect the needs of the community.

Strategy: In addition to being the City with the most devastation from any event in U.S. history, the City of New Orleans has experienced the highest level of study and planning than any other U.S. city. These planning efforts were remarkably attended because everyone wanted a voice in the rebuilding of their neighborhoods and the City as a whole. Emotions were high and passion was deep in this process.

The idea of having yet another planning effort with the NSA East Bank project was not an easy thought to promote. Everyone had planning fatigue, lack of confidence in leadership, and there was a general notion that planning was a futile effort. "Everything will be decided behind closed doors, why go through the exercise?" was a common attitude.

The Response For Proposal advertised required prospective respondents to have a working knowledge of all the planning efforts to date—right down to the specific district plans. Amazingly, the NSA site had garnered little attention on the district plans, primarily because the neighborhoods had not envisioned the property being used for anything other than a military installation. However, the district plans did reveal concepts and ideas regarding what the residents wanted to have in their districts and what they would like their neighborhoods to be once rebuilt. Requiring the planning team to be cognizant of these concepts and ideas was critical to getting buy-in from the community.

Challenge: Historic neighborhoods surround the site.

Strategy: Historic neighborhoods run deep in New Orleans. The majority of the housing in New Orleans is over 70 years old. The neighborhood closest to the NSA site (Bywater) is a historic district. While it did not flood, it did

experience widespread wind damage. The neighborhoods across the Industrial Canal (Holy Cross and Lower 9th Ward) had widespread flooding with 100 percent of the properties damaged or destroyed.

The key to getting these neighborhoods engaged in the process was the continued communication with the neighborhood associations. Additionally, the Web site provided an easy way for individuals and groups to stay informed.

The ultimate reuse of the project had to balance the use of the facility with the infrastructure and existing uses outside the facility (mainly residential). These homeowners did not want heavy transport vehicles coming through their two-lane neighborhood streets and rattling the houses off their foundations. The planning team took great care in listening to resident concerns and tried to address them in the ultimate recommendation. This took a great deal of time and effort.

Challenge: The land mass to be redeveloped is small (25 acres), but the improvements (three buildings with 500,000 square feet in each) provide significant obstacles. The site, triangular in shape, is surrounded on two sides by water with no ingress/egress. The third side is a public railroad spur.

Many military redevelopment projects have massive land parcels and many buildings to redevelop. While this project only has 25 acres, its location and buildings make it quite complex. It is located on the Mississippi River just down river from the crescent of the River. It is on the corner of the Mississippi River and an Industrial Canal, so it has water on two borders. The Navy does not own the waterfront portions of the property. There is no ingress/egress. The property is triangular in shape and on the northwest diagonal is a public railroad spur that is used to transition and transfer railcars and engines. The residential areas surrounding the site are all historic.

To complicate the process more, prior to starting the NSA planning process, the City of New Orleans had undertaken a massive planning process to revitalize the riverfront called “Reinventing the Crescent.” The NSA site was included in that planning process. The preferred redevelopment option born from those efforts was to demolish all the structures and develop a park with high-end mid and high rise condominiums.

Strategy: Working with all stakeholders and considering the geographics of the location, we will determine the best and final use of the property.

Successes/Lessons Learned

For anyone who has ever been involved in a planning process, you know:

- Things rarely happen in the sequence and time estimated. Therefore, always have a plan and several backup options.
- Patience is a virtue. Some have it and some do not. Realize this from the very beginning and take deep breaths often.
- Some people are just naturally unhappy—nothing you will do will change that! Your plan will not please everyone. You and your team must keep your eye on the goal and do the right thing. Great leaders often times choose the road less traveled.