



Executive Summary

September 11, 2009

Neighborhoods Partnership Network hosted two roundtable discussions moderated by Executive Director Timolynn Sams and facilitated with board members LaToya Cantrell (Broadmoor) and Tillman Hardy (Leonidas/Pension Town) at noon and 6:00 PM. The purpose of the meeting was to voice neighborhood concerns and experiences about what was and was not successful during the Gustav evacuation and return as well as posit solutions for future hurricane preparedness.

Residents from all parts of the New Orleans area were represented at both discussions. A total of 83 sign-ins with 50 of the persons present being representatives from neighborhood organizations, and 32 city, state, and non-profit agencies were present for the conversation.

The discussion for the meeting included broad topics such as *Travel, City Transportations, Shelters/Hotels, Expenses, Crime/ Safety, and Retuning Home*. Citizens were asked to provide the good, the bad, and the ugly about their personal experiences during and after Gustav. As will be indicated in the attached documents some citizens shared very similar experiences and some were able to exhibit their lessons learned from previous evacuations and how preparations led to low level of stress. However many are still concerned with the flow of communication, dissemination of information, and collaboration between LA delegations and branches of government. Also included on page two (2) of the attached draft summary are suggested solutions to how citizens feel future evacuations can better be handled.

Timolynn Sams – Executive Director, NPN



Neighborhoods Represented – 16

Broadmoor
Indian Village
Real Timbers
Pensiontown
Gentilly Terrace and Gardens
Lake Vista
Central City
Rosedale
Gentilly Sugar Hill
Holy Cross
Melia Subdivision
Carrollton Riverbend
9th Ward Florida Desire
Mid-City
Lower Garden District
Bunny Friends

Agencies Represented - 36

Cafe Abstract / Last Hope
Louisiana Public Health Institute
CBNO/MAC
City Council
Make It Right
ORDA
PNOLA
NOLA YURP
IWES

AVODAH
Desire Street Ministries
Red Cross
Hands On New Orleans
GNOFHAC
ARC
Service Employees International Union
Second Harvest Food Bank
LRA
SEMAJ / FOF / ROC
Mayor's Office
311/ Office of Public Advocacy
LA Justice Institute
Entergy
City Works
Congressman Jefferson's Office
New Orleans Women's Shelter
Worker Resource Center
Global Green
INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence
Tulane MSW Program
Consumer Credit Counseling Service
Common Ground
HANO
Survivor Villages
Rebuild Green
Neighborhood Housing Service



New Orleans Neighborhoods Partnership Network: Neighborhood Debriefing on Gustav Evacuation & Return with Recommendations

Draft Summary

September 10, 2008 - Notes from noon and 6pm sessions

NPN hosted roundtable discussions moderated by its Executive Director Timolynn Sams at noon with board member and Broadmoor Improvement Association President LaToya Cantrell at noon, and Tillman Hardy at 6:00 PM in order to receive input from neighborhood organizations and leaders, and service providers on their concerns and experiences about what succeeded or didn't during the Gustav evacuation and return as well as develop recommendations for solutions for hurricane preparedness. Each discussion was divided into two main sections: the first focusing on problems, issues, concerns encountered by residents upon leaving and returning to the city, the second centering around suggestions for addressing them.

The following concerns and comments were voiced about evacuation from New Orleans:

- ✦ **Travel:** drastically extended travel times; unevenness of contra-flow; the closing of I-10 East towards MS; inability to exit off of I-59 North, overcrowding of rest areas; lack of information about alternative routes; poor conditions of LA roads compared to other states; financial strain of emergency travel
- ✦ **Gas:** inability to use credit cards; discrimination; being turned away; congestion at stations; lack of generators at stations that had no power; price gouging and inconsistency; some evacuees filling cans with extra gas; lack of receipts at some stations making it difficult to get FEMA reimbursements
- ✦ **City Transportation:** lack of preparedness for people with special needs; confusion about pets; lack of recording information about evacuees; problems of getting through to 311; lack of regular RTA routes once evacuees return
- ✦ **Shelters/Hotels:** people were pleased with AL comm. coll. shelters; being turned away from full shelters; price gouging and inconsistency; no showers; inadequate facilities; unattended children; lack of background checks at shelters; immigration status and eligibility for shelters; wrongful arrests; lack of shelters for people whose homes were damaged after the storm; lack of recourse to rectify problems in shelters
- ✦ **Crime/Safety:** keeping track of domestic violence and providing shelter for battered and abused women and children; military intimidation; misplacing and misuse of National Guard; lack of sensitivity among NOPD and National Guard members; racial profiling; confusion about proper channels to address crime in other areas of jurisdiction (other cities, parishes, counties, and states)
- ✦ **Food/Electricity:** problems with Entergy website; inaccurate information about who did and who did not have power; lack of understanding about the "grid" system; problems with city lights and tree removal services



The following concerns and comments were expressed about returning to New Orleans:

- ✦ There was an abundance of medical professionals
- ✦ Confusion over curfews: which zips? How is it determined?
- ✦ Congestion and confusion at re-entry points
- ✦ Lack of communication between shelters and the city regarding re-entry
- ✦ Problems with National Guard and NOPD: coverage seemed oppressive at times
- ✦ Difficulties for renters or residents who do not have credentials in their names at re-entry points
- ✦ Lack of regular public transportation or information about when regular RTA services would resume

The attendees proposed solutions to these issues:

- ✦ Assign a media information person to each shelter
- ✦ Recognize neighborhood leaders as 1st responders and incorporate them into hurricane preparedness protocol (e.g. assign 2-3 groups per planning district to be boots on ground prior to hurricane).
- ✦ Increase number of distribution centers
- ✦ Embed non-profit and neighborhood leaders into evacuation process
- ✦ Encourage people to register with 311 earlier
- ✦ Utilize faith-based initiatives for more effective preparation
- ✦ Increase information about the capacities of each designated shelter
- ✦ Use June and July to focus on city-wide Hurricane Preparedness
- ✦ MDOT (MS Dept of Trans) provided excellent information for evacuation assistance...LADOT should emulate
- ✦ Pass legislation to strengthen penalties for loose barges in canal
- ✦ Increase partnership between City of NO and smaller LA towns
- ✦ Inform people about better dealing with the stress of evacuation
- ✦ Better compensate for hourly and low wage workers
- ✦ Collect complaints about price-gouging at gas stations and hotels and report to the BBB
- ✦ Propose to Entergy that bills be deferred or extended
- ✦ Encourage homeowners to build or rebuild hurricane-resistant homes
- ✦ Adapt several rather than a single "one-size fits all" evacuation plan to respond to the specificities of each storm
- ✦ Encourage early evacuation for those for whom it is feasible
- ✦ Dispatch mobile trucks with loudspeakers and pamphlets to areas of need during Hurricane Season and hurricane activity.
- ✦ Debit or gas cards should be issued to evacuees sometime before evacuation
- ✦ More focus on coastal restoration and stronger levees
- ✦ Lobby congress for more funding to coastal restoration and proper levee rebuilding
- ✦ Educating citizens about saving ahead for evacuations



9-10-2008

NPN Post-Gustav Discussion, 12:00 P.M.

Part 1: Concerns

Discussion Facilitator, Broadmoor Improvement Association, NPN Board member: "Good afternoon, it's a pleasure to be with you. I'd like to recognize the agencies in the room and salute you for your work in getting people out of the city during this last evacuation period. Red Cross, Louisiana Public Health, City Council, Entergy, Harrison Recovery and Development, the LRA . . . I'm not an expert at facilitating these events, but I'll do my best. Everyone has an agenda, we'll get started: In thinking about these components, we want to focus on the good, bad and ugly.

TRAVEL

Good:

Central City Renaissance Alliance, NPN Board member: "Contra-flow, I didn't experience it, but it does get people out of town in these situations."

Bad:

ORDA, CPP member: "On one side of the Contra-flow, a lot of cars were backed up, but on the other side, things were more free . . . why was there no evening out the different sides?"

CPP member, Mid-City Resident: "We left early, but heard that I-10 was closed. Does anyone know why they did that in Mississippi?" (*Hurricane concerns forced authorities to close the area by Sunday night*).

Ugly:

City Council, District B: "We experienced [contra-flow] in East Slidell, we heard that everyone had to go on 59. It took us 18 hours to make a six hour destination. This was because we had to go all the way through Mississippi. We were forced to go somewhere we didn't really have to."

"Make It Right": "I didn't have any problems getting out, but getting back in . . . the price of gas was ridiculous and they only had unleaded and some people didn't have any."

"There was a lack of coordination between the cities. We need better interstate coordination."

"We went up 55, but rest areas were so full that people weren't even getting out at them, but near them. People had to coordinate on the side of the interstate and talk with families, this was very dangerous. We need to consider accessibility."



GAS AVAILABILITY:

Good:

CCRA and NPN Board Member: “We drove through and, in Mississippi, there were people you could call ahead to with advice or help. You could have people who were stuck in traffic telling you why/why not to move along.

Hands on New Orleans: “I’m with the people who were running the Governor’s Office, the Homeland Security Preparation – I understand what you’re saying about electronic information, but a lot of our work is about changing information and updating information . . . a lot of cell phones can’t receive information but do receive texts. We will find new ways to update the system in the future.

“I used a map of open gas stations and other resources on Nola.com. People should have checked there.”

Bad:

Workers’ Resource Center: “Some friends left for Texas, and explained that they could not find stations where they could get what they needed, or use credit cards. A lot of places weren’t accepting plastic.”

“Macon, Mississippi, turning people away at the front and keeping them from getting into the city”

Ugly:

NPN board member: “I spent several hours in Baton Rouge – it’s frustrating that all this information is going out and people who are trying for it can’t get it. As soon as circumstances got difficult in Baton Rouge, the radio went to WWOL – we should try to get them to do bulletins, instead of just talk.

“There was a Shell Station, with a tanker outside refilling it, but no electricity. There was a Chevron station down the road with power that ran out of gas.”

“There was a man at a Chevron in Covington and, if he didn’t recognize you as one of his regulars, he wouldn’t let you pump there.”

CITY TRANSPORTATION:

Good:

Facilitator: “For the most part, I thought it went very well. The feedback that I got said it was effective. Any thoughts?”

CCRA: “People were unhappy about the long bus rides they had to take, but were all right with the shelters.”



Bad:

“I knew an elderly couple who were supposed to be picked up and taken to Warren Easton – they needed their neighbors to take them, and then younger people cut them on the busses.”

“We need signs and staffers letting people know that shelters are sites. We have people showing up with animals and no designated place to put them. We need more than just police officers.”

CPP: “I understand that they did not have enough people at the Mater Dolorosa pick up site volunteering to help the elderly.”

Facilitator: “Maybe communities can help write the signs. Where do we, as residents, help?”

“You had 17,000 people leave, but what special information do we have about them, especially for the future? How can we properly record the information?”

Hands on New Orleans: “We need to encourage people to get involved with Citizens’ Emergency Response – they wanted a number of people trained before August 31 and I don’t know how well that went. They used armbands to keep people together, help them keep track of their pets, and that seemed to work well.”

“On Friday, we wanted to offer assistance but how we could was not very clear. I met some people, before they left, who had absolutely no clue what they were going to do. Perhaps there are ways to use community materials, especially for the people who do not have television. 311 was jammed for most of the day. We need new ways to keep people in touch.”

“The Lower 9th Ward Coalition got together and actually knocked on doors. People who did not have a way to evacuate, we gave them 311 information and made sure that they could get on busses.”

“211 is a social service referral line, 311 is the evacuation hot line. Outside of Orleans Parish, you can and should call 211.”

SHELTER HOUSING:

Good:

NPN staffer: “NPN Board Member Ben Diggins evacuated to Alabama, and he said there were several community colleges out there to help people.”

Abstract Clinic, Garden District: “Our residents were evacuated to Alabama and were very happy with their community college, were kept together.”



Bad:

Hands-on New Orleans: “By the time we came back, shelters were full but parishes were not open for any number of reasons.”

“I had a lot of comments from people about hotel gauging, about prices going up when people found out they were evacuating.”

City Council: “We made and had to pay an advance of three days.”

CPP: “I was told that some shelters would not run background checks on people, but ended up arresting them on non-existent warrants. This was outside of Louisiana.”

Ugly:

Women’s’ Shelter: “We took our residents to a shelter in Alexandria and were told that a person died, children were molested. In terms of communication on existing shelters, there was no news on where people could go – our shelter had no power. We ended up finding a shelter at the Burnham Gym, which was useful but had no showers (*but does now*).”

Katie, GNOFHAC: “People who weren’t clear about the shelters and their immigration statuses chose to stay rather than risk evacuation.”

RETURNING HOME:

Good

“There were more doctors, nurses and EMTs than were needed. Where did they need other medical services and information? What other primary needs were not addressed?”

Bad:

“I really think that we need to work on a better mechanism as far as where you start checking. They wait until you get on the bridge to come down from the spillway – you shouldn’t wait until people are on the bridge to let them know that if they don’t have passes, they have to go. Bumper-to-bumper parking lots – what right does it really give the city to . . . what are the rights the city has here?”

NOLAYURP: “Certain zip codes seem to have curfews and others did not, how was that chosen? It seemed arbitrary.

New Orleans Council: “In New Orleans, the communication between the city and figures outside of the city were able to serve as messengers – each shelter needs an electronic media person to let the people in the shelters know what we know here and what the people need to know.”



City Council: “We left 5 am; we got back to the house at 11:30 am. Better coming back than getting out – that was Wednesday morning.”

Common Ground: “We decided to have some people stay behind to be able to access the city to help people, but we needed to be in touch with neighborhood leaders and figures.”

Facilitator: “Do neighborhood leaders need to be recognized as emergency figures?”

Ugly:

CPP: “We were getting people threatened by the National Guard about being on other peoples’ property . . . but people, renters, who don’t have their homes in their names, could get into lots of trouble if the bills are in the property owners’ names.”

NPN Board: “NOPD told me that couldn’t sit on my front porch and that I needed to stay inside.”

NPN Board: “I’m not a first responder, but I am a homeowner and I feel like I’m on the bottom of the list. I feel that I was the last to be left back in, after I did everything that I was supposed to. I sense that I’m not unusual, I’m typical. I don’t want to leave next time; my house has stood up through all of these storms.

Facilitator: “I’m hearing, often, that people don’t think they should leave the next time there’s a threat. But people need to be careful, be prepared. Self-responsibility! Katrina caused people to rethink their homes.”

“When do we hold citizens accountable for their own actions? Every year, we notice that it’s Hurricane season, but how willing are people to use their own money? What lap of luxury are we supposed to accommodate?”

“I work with clergy, and I want to ensure that we talk with people, help people communicate what they really want, what they really need.”

City Council: “They said they want people to have proof from their landowners to show they belong there. They said, as a safety issue, that people should stay in their homes if they want to be safe. Have some credentials and be aware of your own home, your own safety.”

Good:

NPN Staffer: “It was comforting and also informative to know how well people were keeping track of the post-storm situation.”

Ugly:

NPN Staffer: “Proper levee building is important.”



CPP Staffer: “I don’t want us to speak about people who are not here to speak for themselves. It’s easy to assume what other people are doing, especially when they cannot defend themselves. On the re-entry, on Wednesday and Thursday, I saw vehicles that were not properly distributed to help people . . . I went around my community hustling ice for elders in my community on Thursday and Friday when the power went out. Before the storm, I created a very simple community vulnerability assessment survey, to make sure I knew who was in the neighborhood and who needed help. If we’re not empowering people to implement this disaster management, we can’t talk about them.”

SOLUTIONS:

NPN Executive Director: “Citizenship in New Orleans is not a spectator sport. The Times-Picayune is here – does anyone want to open the floor to a solution?”

Common Ground: “Who here used the city evacuation method? Who here kept up on his people? Bring fresh fruit and vegetables back into the city – kids need to eat properly in an evacuation!”

311: “The call center was jammed because people waited until the absolute last moment to register – I was telling people to long before that.”

WRC: “I did not see enough of an expansion to churches, to utilize that outreach from the pulpit. A list of what websites people use, how people communicate and how people can communicate would be good. Some criteria in the shelters about the reality of what is in them – so people know that they’re going to areas without showers. You can keep citizens informed. Preparation!”

CCRA: “There are several things that can help people prepare. We dedicate one meeting to preparedness, one economy – keeping track of where we want to go. A citywide push in May and June to emphasize preparedness would be essential. When I heard about the shelter in Shreveport. There was nothing on the city website to help me, but I found some good information on WWUL-TV. M-DOT also told people how to get to shelters. As a non-profit organization, we prepared a continuity of operations plan, and I wonder what other groups did that.”

CPP: “I don’t know whose responsibility this was, but why did they have barges in the industrial canal? They need to remove boats from that area, it needs to be mandated that levees cannot be there.”

City Council: “There will be a hearing at the City Council tomorrow to address the long-term effects and I believe that everyone involved understands the potential for damages.”

City Council: “We will make sure this is addressed in the future.”



NOLAYurp: “I know some places were more accommodating, with discounts at places like museums. But New Orleans should look at opportunities to partner with cities to create incentives for people to come to these areas.”

City Council: “I want to thank NPN. I came here to listen to what people have to say and I’m looking forward to seeing what materials come out of this to help us in the future, help me as a councilperson and the City Council.”

“Have we studied the Best Practices of other cities? A lot of our problems, post-Katrina, have truly stereotyped New Orleans. How can we break the barriers and send individuals out so that they don’t feel discriminated against?”

ORDA: “We can do a lot more to prepare people for evacuation, for the stress of evacuation, and normalizing these feelings.”

“I think this was mentioned earlier on in the conversation. In terms of what can be done to compensate workers who need funds after evacuation – what can be done, that is something that is key.”

“In terms of the injustices of price-gouging, we should start collecting complaints and file them with the better business bureau.”

Facilitator: “I want to encourage people to attend the council meeting tomorrow to address the proposal to create a constituency group of neighborhood groups, such as NPN and other congregations.”

Council: “Come by at noon tomorrow. I would love to have some of the people here speak to this.”

SEIU: “I want to bring up the fact that part of the work that is being done is city employees’ work. These are the people making sure that these evacuations are going well, figures like fire fighters and park workers are helping now, but they are neglected the rest of the year. There is more to this evacuation than just what the communities do.”

WRC: “A call this morning mentioned that Entergy is in the room – people were told that they would get extensions on their utility bills and then had to come back to their power shut off. I think that’s important to handle, and the thing from FEMA about people getting money.”

Entergy: “We have not disconnected anyone since the storm. We have not done anything to anybody, and if they don’t have lights than that’s another issue. We will give people extensions. Visit Entergy.com or call us.”

President of NPN Board: “Glad to see everyone out and voicing their concerns. Let me add one other solution that may be helpful to solutions. We need to educate citizens a little bit more. Some people don’t know how to put money aside. Maybe a neighborhood



needs a disaster fund, or money set aside to help. Maybe they need to talk to funders like Capital One to make sure they have funds for the evacuation.”

Global Green: “I want to make sure that sustainable buildings are on the table, that people realize that we are a resource center able to talk about how to make your house stronger and safer. I also know that LRA had some funding for mitigation grants, to pay people for installing shutters. We’re going to get some information. We will push the community and will get them some education and financial assistance. We’ll keep people in better shape; we’re at 841 Carondelet Street. We want to identify solutions.”

Rand Consultant: “I suggest to RAND that they do a best practices binder for evacuation in other parts of the country and other times – RAND has the ability to do that kind of analysis – and we would like to present alternatives to evacuation.”

Timolynn: Closing remarks. “Please e-mail thoughts and follow up.”



Meeting Minutes | 9-10-2008

6:00 p.m. meeting

Moderator 1: "IN the earlier meeting, we had about thirty-two agencies represented. Jefferson's office, FEMA representatives, the Office of Communications for the City, Red Cross, a lot of people are getting involved. About fifty-one people signed in, and fifty percent or so were members of NPN. We want to continue encouraging people to get involved. Please join NPN. You can talk to Timolynn, or send an e-mail to Gill or Mario . . . if you'll refer to the sheet of paper that was sent out, we're going to try and stay with the earlier meeting's format. We want to discuss a number of topics, including what it was like for people who stayed. We're gonna talk about crime and safety, and electricity, we want to discuss solutions. Please keep that in mind while we're speaking. Representatives, elected officials and different organizations will see these notes and consider the best way to take further action. This will be utilized to ensure solutions are made. That said, we'll begin with . . ."

TRAVEL:

Citizen (City Park): "Louisiana and Mississippi need to better coordinate. At 4:00 in the morning, contraflow was supposed to start, but at 3:00 AM, they cut off I-10. People had to go up I-59."

Citizen: "It started at the stateline and ended at Mile 19. That wasn't Hattiesburg and it wasn't contraflow."

Citizen (mid-city): "They give you a map, and they show you how to leave the state on the innerstate. They show you alternate routes, but people need to know about Airline Hwy and I-90 to Slidell. People didn't know about it."

Moderator: "The FEMA evacuation route . . ."

Citizen (NO East): "Only gave you the interstate." "It took my company 14 hours to get to Jackson, when it should take four. Back roads were closed, people need to get their routes together."

Citizen 1 (central city): "The Media sometimes give you alternate routes. I needed to get to Monroe, LA, and the media told me that that would be a huge problem. WWUL."

Citizen 2 (central city): "We headed out on HWY 51, which was a Two lane road. If there was an accident, we got backed up. The Mississippi Dept. of Transporattion was fantastic, they were running public radio with alternate routes and information about these routes, we were on four lane highways with very few cars. They mentioned the accidents. . . . there was also an 800 number that you could follow for information. I see on this sheet that that's a resource for those in Mississippi, but I think that all of the states should look at that. Very good for people in the cars."



Citizen (7th ward, DNIA): “I found that the public radio in Mississippi was amazing. I left for Mississippi Saturday morning, trying to get out ahead of contraflow. I think it is important to get out before contraflow, before the evacuation order comes. It may be worth something recommending . . . no matter what the issue is, if you want to avoid 15 hours . . .”

Citizen (9th ward): “I agree, but people just don’t have money. If Ike hit this week, people would have to stay, they’re too maxed out on their credit cards. **I want the conditions of our roads addressed. This isn’t a hurricane issue until hurricane season – you could close your eyes and know when you’ve crossed the stateline. That is something that would not require . . . we get our federal share of dollars, this is something that each of our organizations could petition the state to do something about.**”

Citizen: “I’m a bartender, I purposefully work on Fridays, without knowing about Saturday or if it is safe to leave. With Katrina, it was the end of the month, and most people didn’t get paid until a week after – I just got paid, so if it is possible to give people funds as they get out, for gas, hotels, food. Gas card, debit card . . .”

Moderator: “A lot of these issues will tie into larger themes, like financial accountability, as the night proceeds.”

Citizen: “Like the lady was saying, even the people that were evacuating . . . some people are not going to be able leave this next time – even if they were staying in a shelter, some people needed to buy food. Some people just can’t leave early.”

Citizen (upper 9th): “A lot of residents have to work Saturdays, and won’t be able to leave until Sunday. They need to wait for money to travel, utilities . . . just to get out of here. How can the city expect us to leave, knowing that we won’t have these funds in our pockets. People didn’t know where exactly Ike was gonna hit, so they may still be headed away from safety and away from the city.”

GAS –

“inability to use credit cards, discrimination, congestion at stations, gas stations need generators, inconsistencies in prices and price-gouging. Anything else?”

Member, of New Orleans Katrina Foundation: “Public Radio in Louisiana, 89.9, NPR was broadcasting Gustav coverage. All of the Clear Channel stations began broadcasting Rush Radio, together, and I thought New Orleans was decimated – half of the stations were playing Rush, which I wasn’t listening to.”

“FEMA is looking to reimburse for gas, but how can people prove they spent money without receipts? Even people who had power weren’t giving us receipts!”

Staff from Consumer Credit Counselling Services: “A relative of mine had this situation coming back. They left Mississippi, where there were no curfews, but once they made it back to Louisiana, they needed gas post-curfew. A woman had to leave her car at the gas



station, ride away with a relative and come back the next day to get gas and get her car. The station was not closed, a police officer was getting gas in the car.

Citizen: “We traveled late, as we thought fewer people would be. But at 4:00 in the morning, when we needed gas, no stations were open. We’re all traveling late – is there some way that we can make people change their schedules for hurricane season. I accept that most gas stations are gonna be crazy, unprepared for 100 people to get supplies, but they need to change how they treat people. 59 going to Atlanta was stressful and people need to respect peoples’ needs/have clearer signs about being closed.”

City Transportation:

“People were more pleasantly surprised with this, this time around. We consider this to be a success, an improvement. Pick-up points, public assisted –“

Citizen: “Yes, but people still need to be transported to their jobs after the evacuation and could not get to busses.

Moderator: “We suggested a system of accountability, putting people in busses but making sure they get back.”

“That didn’t work at all – signing people in, getting badges. The state cannot tell you where people were. They cannot account for all the people in Orleans Parish, or Texas, there was a breakdown, a flaw in that.

Moderator #2: “We need better coordination and communication between cities and parishes.?”

“No. If you weren’t pre-registered, it was so backed up that if you hadn’t registered, they’d just put you on the bus. They had enough staff, but they didn’t do what they were supposed to be doing. All of the RTA busses were lined up at the terminal, without a way to get to work or getting home.”

Tulane Social Work Student: “No one was giving me a straight answer for days about what was happening. It was up until Monday, Tuesday . . . if you don’t have a car, this is a terrible situation to be in, if you need groceries, supplies.”

Moderator: “It seems to e like there was no system in place for the people who came back in before we were told we could come back in.”

-Some felt this didn’t refer to components of the system that were in place.

Moderator: “Everybody here has a comment. Let’s not comment on each others’ comments. If we have a breakdown in communication, we’ll talk to people about it.”

Citizen, Holy Cross: “There was nothing in place for those people who did not evacuate, and for how they were to function in the city.”



Citizen: “The plan that I keep hearing about, a plan for a Hurricane or disaster of the magnitude of Katrina. Gustav was a near miss. We almost did the same thing for Ike, which if it continues, will not be our problem. Full-Katrina plan is fine, but we need a larger plan. Most hurricanes don’t have rising water the way Katrina had. If you live near the River, with the rising water, there’s a corridor that does not have to evacuate, even in Katrina. Even when I was a kid, my father worked in Civil Defense and we’ve seen so many places, like schools, that are not going anyway. The Superdome during Katrina would have been fine, with generators. No one was going to worry about the place. If you haven’t got a safe place to go, then yes, you’ve got to get out. But we need to be realistic about who must evacuate.”

Moderator: “It seems that our administration has a ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach to disaster.”

Citizen, Rosedale Subdivision: “When it comes to hotels, a lot of them were booked. When a hurricane is coming, and people know it is, you need to make your places as open to people in emergencies as you can. We didn’t have to leave!”

Citizen, Melia Subdivision: “I see here that people were pleased with the Alabama Community Colleges . . . they had food there, families of ten staying together, with their dogs.”

Citizen, Central City: “Yeah, I wanted to reiterate that I think that our levees are in such a state that it probably is not safe to be below I-12. But, as I evacuated along highway 51, I saw a lot of schools. There are a lot of public buildings that are a lot closer to the city, and that could house people. Schools, high schools, with gymnasiums and showers.”

Citizen, Upper 9th: “Price-gouging on hotels. THIS is a disaster!”

Tulane Social Work Student: “Hotels should allow people to bring their pets. I’m not talking 4-5 star hotels, I’m talking motels that should better accommodate people.”

Staff, Neighborhood Housing Services: “The folks that we talked to had two things to say. The people who came back to houses that had sustained serious damage were troubled that there wasn’t a shelter here. What happened in Southern Louisiana is a testament to those who need shelters. There was real slow response, and not a lot of foresight, that people would come home and not have a place to go. The second thing is, we had a family keeping their possessions in trashbags, but a Red Cross worker through their stuff out. This family has had no luck, just trying to communicate with Red Cross about what had happened and . . . the shelter acknowledged what had happened, but it isn’t easy to address these problems as they come up.”

“There’s more to the 9th Ward than just the Lower 9th and Gentilly . . .”

“Jackson was very nice. They had big shelters, about twenty churches opened up . . . the hotels allowed people to bring their pets in, dogs and things were walking in the lobbies. They had little cages set up, the Mississippi Attorney General did prosecute two or three hotels that were gouging.”



Citizen: “I’m the co-founder of a Women’s Health Clinic, and there was a lack of information. Salvation Army could not act yet, people would tell us that ‘the city had to give us the go-ahead’ . . . my background is with a lot of shelters for abused women – we need to talk about the rates at which women are abused in evacuation situations. How are Head and Midura going to be addressing that. There aren’t a lot of shelters that people will be going to . . . it’s not clear where a lot of these shelters are, given the rates of violence in the city.”

Moderator 2: “Identifying shelters for special needs.”

Citizen, Central City : “There’s a lack of shelters.”

Citizen, Esplanade/7th Ward: “Hotels taking pets . . . if you have pets, that dictates where you go. I ended up at the Econolodge with two dogs in Mississippi. But there was a place charging 200 a night, and another 100 for the pets. There needs to be some solutions, some clarity about policy.”

Citizen, Central City: “I ended up in a red cross shelter post-Katrina for about two months. It was fine at first, but it deteriorated. People need to know that if they are mistreated, that they can have a recourse. We must have one in place.” People must feel empowered, so if something is wrong with the conditions they are experiencing, they can respond.”

Citizen: “The emphasis is on evacuees and returnees – and this is important, to getting this right. But we are concerned with the question: “Is this city worth being saved?” billions of dollars, walls that are not high enough to protect the 9th ward – if we want to protect this city, we need to take specific actions and force the political and economic leaders of this city to do the right thing. People are gonna go wherever, leave the city to fend for itself. I’m with Common Ground, we had a skeleton crew here – people said they were forced out at gunpoint and it took them two years to get home after Katrina. What are we gonna do about these levees? We need them higher, there are models of higher levees in worse places – our city leaders lack will. We need to do something, and do something quick.”

“I don’t know what folks experienced with this, but we have to do something about the National Guard presence. I understand if the cops are understaffed, but you don’t need to have people go into a bar at 2 am waving guns at people and telling them to go home. These people with guns stand around looking bored, and if you’re here with nothing to do, you don’t need to be here. Jindal ordered them in, and he can order them out. It’s not clear to me if they were helping people.”

Citizen, Rosedale Subdivision: “On the corner near my house, at a filling station near Chef Menteur, they had people standing there looking bored and threatening to kill you.”

Staff, NHS: “Entire platoons of National Guard do not need to walk around together waving guns. I’m not going to go to you for help if I have a problem and you have a gun. People have said ‘they pushed me out of the city but I’m not going to leave.’ The routes out of the



city were not clarified, that it was a two-way ticket. Vulnerable people who should evacuate need to be told that they might not be let back in.”

Tulane Social Work Student: “I asked a National Guardsman for help and he said, ‘this is the first time someone has asked me to do this.’ And I said, ‘This is the first time someone has asked you to help them, how long are you here?’ And he said, ‘It seems like forever.’

Citizen, Central City : “A lot of people said they felt like they were being placed in prisons rather than shelters. There needs to be some training of these National Guard.”

Citizen: “They are trained. They are trained . . . and they follow orders. Who gives them the orders? Who tells them the right way to treat the city of New Orleans?”

Moderator: “I think that we need to talk about the separation of the different types of shelters. I know a single mother with three kids, all under the age of 12, and she went to a shelter in Shreveport. They had elderly in there, men and single women in these shelters and she had to her son into a bedroom. The kids were stuck in a gym for three days, the elderly were getting upset. We need to consider lifestyles and amenities.

Citizen, Central City: “There were sex offenders in the shelter. There needs to be a system to recognize that if these people are placed in areas near children.”

Citizen, Holy Cross: “The General got off the plane, with soldiers with guns. He told his men that this is not an act of war, and that these people should not have weapons up. NOPD pre-Katrina could not hold this place if you closed it in a bag and held it tight. Post-Katrina, the Guard and the NOPD have been able to control things. Are we intimidated by guns? Yes we are. Do you want to go back to pre-Katrina, or not?”

CRIME AND SAFETY

“They took the battery from out of our neighbor’s car, jacked our car and took off with it. We can’t find the car today, so we know they used the car to evacuate.”

Staff, NHS: “If they lived in housing, and they were renters . . . they were stopped by the police. The police were stopping people during curfew, and profiling them.”

“Why were the National Guard pointing guns at people who were drunk? This was stupid, they were asking for something to happen.

Citizen, Central City: “I felt very safe. Of course, I am near the Garden District area.”

Citizen 2, Central City: “One of the women in our office lives in New Orleans East. My Mother and I forgot about the curfew and went out and we saw young black men people pulled over and stopped.



Citizen, Survivors' Village: "I am a local and city government enemy – there were people protecting your homes, which wasn't happening during Katrina. I am the Mayor's enemy, but he did a good job. They were protecting you while you were gone. Sometimes we hate them when we don't need them but we love them when we do."

Citizen, Carrollton-Riverbend: "I think the person who came off worse in all of this was [redacted]."

Tulane : "They referred me to a website that told me my area had electricity, but when I got there, there was no power."

Citizen, Tulane Student: "Regarding food stamps, they were calling for volunteers at a food stamp site and I asked how long they thought they would need me for and they said at least seven to fourteen days."

Citizen, Melia Subdivision: "When you don't have lunch, you don't want to see city workers on their break, playing cards or eating."

Citizen, Central City: "I want to invite people to come live in Central City. I never lost electricity."

Citizen, Central City: "What have they done to protect us since Katrina? With Gustav, we see that they have not really learned their lesson."

Citizen, Central City: "When I was evacuated to Monroe, Louisiana, I saw a reporter from Channel 6 speaking near a puny tree . . . this was really going overboard, these people blew things out of proportion.

"If they would just put the walls back, the way that they should be – none of use would have to run, would have to worry about this ever again."

Citizen, Mid-City: "We need to talk about coastal restoration. We provide a lot of oil to the rest of the country but something is wrong."

Citizen, 7thWard, Espalande: "We need to understand that the city we live in today is not the same city that we lived in twenty years ago. Building the walls is important, but it is not going to make this a safer place to be. The reality of global warming is such that we need to be realistic about things being different from the way that they were. There are factors that are real and different. We should be able to live in this city and have things the way that we want . . . that is simply not true."

"I saw men come in at 5:30 at the morning and leaving at 9:30 at night. I have no excuse for how men were acting, if they were playing cards, but understand that they were working sixteen hour days. You cannot operate independently from the country – we are connected to the rest of the country. Also, tree limbs fall and damage the overhead system.



Underground systems cost a lot, it's a very costly effort and if it floods. The cable went bad in New Orleans East. Both have pros and cons."

Citizen, Esplanade: "The 'Texas Chainsaw Butchers' decimated trees . . . at the end of Katrina, y'all [Entergy] abandoned the streetlights. The light in front of my house and at the next corner, just on Esplanade . . . I understand that this is hard on the bottom line, but Entergy would get a lot of friends if they took back the streetlights."

"The city owns the streetlights. We had a contract to maintain them, but the City could not agree on price and cost in June, so they decided that they would take over the lights. These are city issues now and not on us. This was before Katrina, this was June of 05."

Solutions:

Moderator: "Entergy, since Katrina, has been a lot more proactive than in previous years, as far as touching the community. Our residential specialist, our Customer Service Manager, reached out to us at a community meeting, gave us e-mail addresses and said that they wanted to be involved. Reach out to Entergy, please, and bring their people into your community. That's what a lot of them are being hired to do."

Staff, NPN: "Mobil Trucks, loud speakers, passing out information about evacuation weeks before. These will be useful for people who do not have the technology access. Tap into the Church communities and neighborhood groups, make sure that they will be acting in the city."

Staff, Rebuild Green: "We came firstly to encourage people to attend a meeting about protection, planting trees and shrubs . . . there's a meeting next Tuesday, I hope y'all can attend. We should see about getting people cards with credit amounts, like 500 bucks, to make sure that people are provided for during the evacuation. We also need to use databases, no one should be lost in the evacuation."

Citizen, Gentilly Sugar Hill: "There is strength in numbers. NPN should work with the other organizations, like levees.org, Women of the Storm, to share what has surfaced."

Citizen, Carrollton-Riverbend: "I just want to go back to the big picture issues. The plan to evacuate for any storm that comes into the Gulf is excessive. We really need to get off of this one-size-fits-all evacuation. There are areas that don't need to be evacuated, there are areas that can recover faster from floods. They are spending millions and millions on generators. We need to have a conversation, as neighborhoods, about why we evacuate. Are we afraid of the floods, of the winds? Are we afraid of not having power for a week? I'm an environmental lawyer by profession, I spend a lot of time fighting the Corps of Engineers, but let me tell you that they have done some great things since Katrina. They have raised all the levees, pretty impressively since Katrina. I'm not saying that they're perfect or that we couldn't do it better, I don't believe that MRGO and the Coastal Water Way . . . they're supposed to be fixed in the next few years and that's a big job. The city is not going to flood



from a Katrina-type storm again, we need another way to deal with them than to worry about a similar storm.”

Moderator: “I used to work at the Corps of Engineers from 1999 to 2002, and even then, they were developing a million dollar feasibility study to figure out what was needed to strength the levees. They put some top dogs down there for the Coastal Twenty-Fifty pla, which was shot down by Congress. Trash your Congress, a lot of very educated, very New Orleanian-hearted people. The Corps cannot ask people to blame Congress, their leader cannot stand up and say, ‘Congress won’t give us money, we’re doing the best we can.’

Staff, NHS: “For solutions, I second the idea of a registry card for the beginning of Hurricane season, we could have a magnetic strip . . . why are we still talking about barges in the Industrial Canal? I was very impressed with our people, during this go-around. Both anecdotally and seeing that people had plans, that people were more organized.”

Moderator #2: “This goes back to what all of us are saying . . . stop badgering the people who are working for us, and start working for us. Write our congressmen, stay informed with our representatives . . . citizens post-Gustav need to understand that it is not just city government.”

Staff, NHS: “Contra-flow is a waste of time and we need to get rid of it.”

Tulane Social Work Student: “I would like more accurate information about how these levees are not working I needed to see the information on Discovery Channel, I’m not even kidding.”

Citizen, Central City: “We need to think in terms of policy and legislation, and how we’re going to capture these ideas and not trust the politicians to brainstorm policy. We need to work with them.”

Moderator: “NPN has an advocacy committee, of which I am the chair. This committee will handle newly-formed things.”

Moderator 2: “The Government said you should not have disaster funding.

“I told them that my Daddy helped build this city. We need to educate ourselves. We just have to come together, in number, like we been saying. We have to march and come together. All of us voicing our opinions here isn’t getting us anywhere.”

Citizen: “The wetlands are gone, but New Orleans was built the way it was built for a reason. The French Quarter is important, the Bywater is important . . . it’s not floodprone, and many places are not. You should not force people to stay if you cant.”

Citizen, 7thWard/esplanade: “We need to develop a more innovative way of figuring out how to build, when to build and when to evacuate. I’ve learned a lot about how to build a house. We need to think outside of the box and make out public officials do their homework and



never accept simple solutions. I opposed the Public Housing demolitions and we didn't talk about the bigger, longer-term issues but maybe we need to.

Citizen, Central City: "I would like to see these ideas go somewhere, and not sit on the shelf. You say you're going to present it to City officials and, you've had people mention gaps, so let's see where we can fill in the gaps. There are many great organizations in this group, and we need to step up to bat. Public officials are not going to do what we ask them to do, that's a given."

Citizen, Holy Cross: "Coastal restoration. Our parents and grandparents did not flee New Orleans when they were here because of the Barrier Islands. But they have eroded. Has the Corps done good work? Yes, they have. Coastal restoration, our Public Officials' worst nightmares involve well-organized plans of what WE want them to get done. They do not want . . . they want to be in front. Any organization – we are our brothers' keepers. What we need to do is come together, as one, with a solid plan, of where we want to go and what we want to do. Money talks, and b.s. walks. What we want, where we want to go, and how to hold our public officials accountable. We want positive change, this used to be the Queen City of the South, and it's not even recognizable. We need to recapture what she once was."

Staff, Counsumer Credit Counselling Services: "Everything we did here is wonderful. But what I want to implore to you, your friends, your clients, is that you need to look at yourself. You need to look at yourselves and ask, "how can you save a dollar a day?" That's thirty dollars in a month. If Katrina didn't teach you one thing, it should have taught you that the Government is only going to go so far. As long as you live here, you're going to deal with hurricanes. You're always going to need to prepare for hurricanes. People are just maxing everything out on credit . . . If you don't have a written budget plan, get one, get something together."

Moderator: "Do you teach classes after hours?"

Staff, CCCS: "The office is open Monday to Friday. You can come in, there's Internet and mail. You can do face-to-face, those things, or telephone. We have fairs, we have ads and radio spots. We're dealing with personal attitudes. We don't do after hours. First appointment at 8:30, last at 3."

Moderator: "Have you approached businesses about time during which you can teach?"

Staff, CCCS: "We get turned away."

Citizen, Green Building: "We have a great window of opportunity to implement a plan, but we need to come together really quickly to put pressure on the city council to take this further."

Staff, NPN: "IT's volunteers at 311. Volunteers are needed, and we need to get people to volunteer!"



Tulane Social Work Student: We need an accurate image of whats happening here for the rest of the country. Touris and the economy have suffered. It's not hell here. People care about what is happening.