



THE BULLETIN

A DAILY NEWS UPDATE ON THE MISSISSIPPI RENEWAL FORUM IN BILOXI • OCTOBER 14, 2005

Forum participants get to work

Public officials, planners, and other participants rolled up their sleeves and began to draft a vision to guide redevelopment of the Mississippi coast on Thursday. Working groups drafted a list of priorities in transportation, zoning, affordable housing, building codes, and environmental issues (see page 4).

Among local officials who participated in Thursday's day-long interchange with the visiting design team back at the Isle of Capri was Harrison County supervisor Connie Rockco. She remembers touring the area just after Katrina passed, seeing the destruction and discovering three fatalities. "From that day until today," said Rockco, "I have renewed hope from the experts I've met [at the Forum]," she said. She admits, "That's not the way I felt at the beginning. But that's all changed. I'm so glad to be part of this ... I see the light at the end of the tunnel. All I can say is thank you."

Mark Lishen, Long Beach alderman and an architect in private life, echoed Rockco's hopes. "We're not Gulfport. We're not Biloxi. We're more laid back," says Lishen. "And that's the heritage we want to maintain." After spending Thursday focusing on community challenges with

A Biloxi girl sits Thursday on a massive tree that fell on the remnants of her destroyed home.



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Forum participants tour Bayview Place, a HOPE VI project in Biloxi that suffered significant but repairable damage.



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local colleagues and national design specialists, "I think they feel our pain," said Lishen. "They feel what we're going through. . . We're going to come out fine – and better."

While many of the participants worked indoors, about 75 went on tours of all 11 communities. Highlights of the days field trips are included in the following reports:

Waveland residents share memories

About 20 Waveland residents filled the folding chairs in a fabric Quonset hut on Coleman Street, the center of the town's small commercial district, to share the memories that inform their dreams of revival. The town of about 6,000 was all but leveled by the massive storm surge and winds of Katrina. Mayor Tom Longo told the visiting planners and architects about Waveland's origins as a getaway for

wealthy New Orleans residents, many of whose grand homes were lost in Hurricane Camille, to be replaced in many cases by more unassuming houses. More recently, Waveland had been establishing a new identity as a place not just to vacation, but for year-round "living, working and playing, in that order" Longo said.

Gwen Impson, a Waveland resident who heads Arts Hancock County, shared her vision of a renewal focused on the arts, an expansion of the scene that had developed in adjacent Bay St. Louis. Laid-back and affordable Waveland had become a home to many of the artists whose work was shown in the nearby galleries, she said. If the Coleman Street district were to rebuilt, she and other residents said they could imagine some artists, performers and craftspersons living above studios and galleries, adding life to what had been a modest set of 29 shops.

Ricky Peters, the outspoken and self-described "crazy" chef of the popular Ricky's Restaurant, said he wanted to see the town's commercial district grow, with better-managed parking and some condominiums that could accommodate more potential shoppers. "This is a quiet town, but we need some more places for people to stay, and we need the infrastructure to handle it." He and others agreed, however, that they would like to continue

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Waveland's unique asset, a stretch of publicly accessible beachfront unspoiled by commercial development or busy multi-lane highway.

For Tommy Kidd, the most pressing question was reviving the strip commercial development along Highway 90, the region's shopping corridor. "That's an instant tax base," that must be brought back soon. He and others said they were unsure whether the corridor could be reconfigured as the walkable, less pavement-heavy zone that some others imagined.

Counting on casinos

How to reconstitute the casino, hotel, and tourism industry in sound urbanistic fashion is one of the biggest challenges facing Biloxi. A number of the participants in the Biloxi design team's Thursday tour agreed that when the casinos return, it would be good to design them so that they —and their hotels and parking facilities —fit better into the city's urban fabric, rather than forming massive, self-contained complexes that block off parts of the waterfront.

Ideally, visitors would be able to walk comfortably from casinos and hotels to nearby attractions. One area that might benefit is the downtown core, where Mayor A.J. Holloway is considering converting a narrow, one-way commercial street —Vieux Marche — to two-way traffic. Vieux Marche, containing many buildings from the late 19th and early 20th centuries, currently has only one lane of traffic. Mayor Holloway also encouraged the design team to focus on specific sections of the city, such as East Biloxi, where there is a lack of grocery stores.

The design team listened to varied opinions on what kinds of new housing — possibly including townhouses and low-rise condominiums — should be encouraged. "I think you'll see a lot of developments like Seaside," said Chevis Swetman, president of People's

Bank. A traditional-style HOPE VI project, Bayview Place, suffered wind and flood damage but came through much better than some of the city's old bungalow areas.

The team is looking at how to maximize the economic and social benefits generated by Keesler Air Force Base, where thousands of people work. Other issues include neighborhood reconstruction; placement of museums and cultural attractions such as a seafood industry museum; beachfront development; and improvements to the road system. Bill Raymond, historical administrator for the city, said it's important to save as many salvageable historic buildings as possible.

D'Iberville ready for change

In the first meeting between the local officials of D'Iberville and the Mississippi Renewal Forum team, led by Colombian-born, Miami-based urban designer Jaime Correa, it was clear that they had a lot in common. Like so many of the local residents, Correa's home was destroyed in 1992 during Hurricane Andrew, and he has worked on multiple post-disaster reconstructions since.

The two parties also shared a similar vision for D'Iberville, a small city incorporated only 17 years ago. Despite being protected by the Biloxi/Gulfport peninsula, the neighborhoods bordering the bay were essentially leveled by Hurricane Katrina. Both for these heavily damaged neighborhoods and the other relatively unscathed areas of the city, Correa and mayor Rusty Quave envision the creation of lively, walkable, attractive town centers with similar architectural styles and mixed retail/residential areas. The two most fertile locations for redevelopment, the city's coastline and the area adjacent to the intersections of I-10 and I-110, a hot crossroads now home to a Lowe's home improvement center and Super Wal-Mart store.

Early Working Group Recommendations 10.13.05

Forum participants formed working groups on key issues Thursday, coming up with lists of recommendations.

Transportation

Goals: Improve regional and local connectivity. Reduce vehicular dependence.

- Complete and fund the implementation of CSX railroad relocation.
- Implement east/west corridor on CSX right of way with lightrail and boulevard.
- Ferry at bays for pedestrians and vehicles. Coordinate with public transportation at landings.
- Calm Highway 90 traffic; convert to parkway boulevard section.
- Enable trolley transit along coastal route/parkway.
- Explore radical concepts, such as abandoning bay bridges.
- Explore development of additional east/west and north/south connections, considering evacuation routes, transit and multimodal connections.
- Provide a vehicular connection from airport to Highway 90, and transit connection to airport.
- Provide cruise ship port accessibility.
- Create inland seafood port.
- Plan and write ordinances to implement continuous waterfront walkway extending boardwalk in front of the casinos and other private waterfront properties.

Affordable Housing

Goals: Increase supply of affordable housing. Facilitate rebuilding of existing stock.

- Change zoning to allow outbuildings and temporary trailers on a single family site.
- Allow live/work and residence over professional office and retail.
- Allow for adaptive reuse of existing buildings.

- Encourage modular/prefabricated structures with individual identity.
- Design housing with simplified economical shapes.
- Reopen mobile home plants to build modular housing.
- Create legislation for transfer of development so homeowners can swap land for higher ground.
- Engage Habitat for Humanity and other volunteer groups.
- Convince FEMA to allow residents to choose to accept risk and not require flood insurance or higher foundation requirements.
- Keep vernacular architecture.
- Create a levee system to eliminate requirements to raise structures.
- Adopt policies such as inclusive zoning for medium and high density housing development.

Zoning Codes

Goals: Encourage rebuilding and infill in existing coastal urban centers. Establish SmartGrowth parameters for outlying areas. Rebuild and create transit-oriented pedestrian-friendly mixed-use communities.

- Establish form-based codes to accommodate transitions between densities and building types.
- Define community identity.
- Encourage walkable mixed-use development, consider single-use as a variance.
- Implement new form-based code as temporary alternative to current zoning to transition to permanent code.
- Map transect zones for each town and county.
- Develop a system of land value transfers, for instance, purchase of development rights (pdr), transfer of development rights (tdr), easements, tax abatements, etc.
- Train local planners, architects, developers in form-based coding, and educate the public.
- Establish special design guidelines for properties along scenic Highway 90.
- Establish design guidelines for properties adjacent to wetlands.

- Establish parameters for special districts such as the harbor, new seafood park, etc.

Building Codes

Goals: Establish state-wide building code (international building code, standard code etc). Uniform and consistent building codes across jurisdictions to facilitate rebuilding.

- Prioritize regulations for six coastal county codes responding to need for wind loads.

- Educate legislators, public, elected local officials, media.

- Establish Governor's Commission to implement uniform code.

- Enlist support from construction coalition, insurance commission, financial institutions, fire marshals, supervisors.

- Address improvements for existing structures.

- Address exemptions for historic structures.

Regional Environmental

Goals: Improve environmental quality in community development. Appropriate locations for building. Improved accommodation and management of solid waste. Restoration of natural resources. Improved waste-water treatment.

Location issues

- Identify sites of destruction that should not be rebuilt.

- Establish a system of land value transfers: purchase of development rights (pdr), transfer of development rights (tdr), easements, tax abatements, etc.

- Identify sensitive open space that should be protected.

- Identify preferred places for development.

- Encourage compact development to enable open space preservation.

- Establish land-use plans to reflect above.

Management of solid waste

- Reduce waste volume by sorting by type.

- Use existing landfill sites for tem-

porary staging and sorting.

- Remove concrete for recycling.

- Identify other opportunities for reuse of debris.

- Encourage new industry to salvage architectural elements.

- Identify and secure land for future waste needs, including future catastrophic events.

- Consider a facility to integrate water and solid-waste treatment.

- Create eco-industrial park.

- Create incentives to conserve capacity.

- Promote solid-waste education and eco-tourism.

Natural Resources

- Promote water conservation and building codes.

- Protect and renew barrier islands for use of dredged storm material.

- Create wetland habitats with dredged material.

- Use recycled concrete to protect sensitive shores and create fishing reefs.

- Develop management plans for invasive species.

- Promote transportation choices to reduce vehicular dependence and improve air quality.

- Restore select recovered areas to natural state.

- Promote storm-water management through county-wide district.

- Require erosion control during construction.

- Adopt dark sky and noise regulations.

- Promote beauty.

Wastewater

- Upgrade and relocate waste-water plants to sites deeper inland.

- Upgrade waste-water collection system and outfalls.

- Establish county-wide waste-water management.

- Adopt state legislation to allow counties and municipalities to have higher septic standards.

- Identify funding source to support enforcement.

What they're saying

From the New York Times, Thursday, Oct. 13, By Robin Pogrebin:

To residents, such conferences often seem like pie in the sky - a bunch of fancy outsiders who gather to brainstorm and then leave impossible building plans behind. But this particular group has been empowered by the governor, Haley Barbour, himself, and includes many local architects and planners.

"The commission's role is advisory; it has no authority to impose any decision on any subject on anybody," Governor Barbour said in a speech yesterday. He called the forum an "inclusive, collaborative, participatory effort that arms the ultimate decision makers."

... For some architects and planners, talk of new urbanism can raise apprehension that a rigidly prescribed mix of housing, stores and open squares will snuff out the individuality of various communities.

But participants interviewed on Wednesday said they had no interest in obliterating the indigenous aesthetic of the Gulf Coast.

"Our office is deeply interested in architecture that makes places unique," said Michael G. Imber, an architect from San Antonio. "How can we capture that and carry forward into the future?"

From NPR's Talk of the Nation, Monday, October 10

Host Neal Conan: Are you worried, though? A lot of these people coming for this meeting are from away, as they might say there, far outside influences on your community.

Gulfport Mayor Brent Warr: No, sir. I'm not worried about it at all. They will engage us. They have agreed to do that. And, of course, they're not passing down a mandate or any ordinance that we have to do, that we have to follow, but we'd be crazy not to lis-

ten to them. These are the most accomplished people in this industry, and I look at it as, you know, when you're ill and you need help, you don't care where the physician comes from. You just want to know that they're the best. So I look at it as we're bringing in a team of the best that are gonna give us some incredible guidance, and I'm grateful to have them.

New Urbanist Architect Steve Mouzon, in response to question about respect for local traditions: The good news is, though, what we know is because the New Urbanists have been studying what we call the most-loved places, the places that the average people in an area love the most, value the highest and so forth, because we've been studying those places for years or decades and are using them as our inspiration and our patterns, we know the deck is actually stacked in our favor in the sense that what we're trying to design is what the average people love the most anyway.

From USA TODAY, Wednesday, Oct. 12, by Haya el Nasser:

"The architectural heritage of Mississippi is fabulous, ... really, really marvelous," (Andres) Duany says, referring to antebellum mansions in Greek Revival and Federal styles that have imposing entrances, balconies and columns and smaller Creole cottages for the less wealthy. "However, what they have been building the last 30 years is the standard, tawdry strip developments. The government's vision is to start again and do it right."

"Whatever rebuilding vision emerges will have "to include plans on how you actually implement this," Barksdale says. "The governor's idea of renaissance is what this place is going to look like 20 years from now. What could we do to make it dramatically better? Get ideas on the table. ... Because we have such devastation, we have the ability to plan long term in ways that most communities wouldn't have the opportunity to do."

The Mississippi Renewal Forum: what is it?

The Mississippi Renewal Forum is a seven-day planning effort, unprecedented in its scope and intensity, in response to the devastation wrought by Hurricane Katrina. A partnership of Gov. Haley Barbour's Commission on Recovery, Rebuilding, and Renewal and the Chicago-based Congress for the New Urbanism, the forum will produce planning and architectural tools that can guide local and state officials in rebuilding 11 cities in three counties along the entire length of the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

The CNU team, headed by world-renowned Miami architect-planner Andres Duany, consists of 100 architects, planners, development experts, and other professionals from across the US. They will join with local experts and public officials in a high-energy series of workshops and design sessions.

Unprecedented effort

Never before have so many resources been assembled so quickly to aid rebuilding across a broad area. But the process behind the forum is familiar to new urbanists, who use collaborative meetings, called charrettes, to achieve community consensus in complex planning efforts. Among the participants in the forum are experts in environmental protection, road and transit planning, social issues, economic development, and the design of residences, neighborhoods, and town centers. The group also will include urban designers and town planners who have devoted years to studying the architecture and layout of traditional Southern towns.

In addition to sessions examining multi-jurisdictional issues in South Mississippi, individual workshops will focus on the communities of Waveland, Bay St. Louis, Pass Christian, Long

Beach, Gulfport, Biloxi, D'Iberville, Ocean Springs, Gautier, Moss Point and Pascagoula.

From a base of operations at the Isle of Capri Hotel, the teams will work to create the planning building blocks for great neighborhoods. Tools include neighborhood-based plans, simplified codes and approval procedures for buildings, and the design of low-cost buildings of character. Other design concepts will look to integrate gracefully the formerly water-based casinos, now likely to be built on land, into the fabric of towns.

While the logistics and some expenses of the forum will be covered in part by a grant from the Knight Foundation, the CNU professionals are donating much of their time at greatly reduced rates, or for free in many cases.

FORUM SCHEDULE

October 14

Morning, noon and night: design
Lunch, noon to 1pm
Meet with Local Architects: 3 p.m.
Dinner at hotel, 7 p.m.

October 15

Morning and early afternoon: Design.
Lunch, noon to 1 p.m.
Concurrent Sessions with mayors, elected officials, local leaders and planners: 3 p.m.
dinner at 7pm.

October 16

Design morning, noon and night.
Lunch, noon to 1 p.m.
Dinner at hotel, 7 p.m.

October 17

Morning: Design and production.
Lunch, noon to 1 p.m.
Presentations: 1 p.m. - 7 p.m.
Dinner and informal meetings.

October 18

Teams departs

GOVERNOR'S COMMISSION ON RECOVERY, REBUILDING AND RENEWAL

Jim Barksdale, Chairman
Derrick Johnson, Vice Chairman
Ricky Matthews, Vice Chairman
Jerry St. Pe, Vice Chairman
Joe Sanderson, Vice Chairman
Anthony Topazi, Vice Chairman
William Winter, Outside Counsel

Commissioners - County

Chris Anderson - Jackson
Reuben Anderson - Hinds
Chuck Benvenuto - Hancock
James Black - Harrison
Gerald Blessey - Harrison
Hank Bounds - Jackson
Felicia Dunn Burke - Harrison
Fred Carl - Leflore
David Cole - Itawamba
Mark Cumbest - Jackson
Maurice Dantin - Marion
Tommy Dulaney - Lauderdale
Donald Evans - Harrison
Robbie Fisher - Hinds
Paul Franke - Harrison
Robert Gagne - Hancock
Richard Gollott - Harrison
Clark Griffith - Harrison
Brooks Holstein - Harrison
Jim Holleman - Stone
Warren Hood, Jr. - Forrest
James Huff - Smith
Robert Kane - Hancock
Kay Kell - Jackson
Suzy McDonald - Pearl River
Duncan McKenzie - Harrison
Pat Nichols - Harrison
John Palmer - Hinds
Bill Parsons - Hancock
Diane Payne - Jackson
Ron Peresich - Harrison
Charles Pickering - Jones
D'auby Schiel - Harrison
George Schloegel - Harrison
Robert St. John - Forrest
Chevis Swetman - Harrison
Reginald Sykes - Harrison
Phil Teel - Jackson
Shelby Thames - Forrest
Richard Thoms - Newton
Philip West - Adams
Dayton Whites - George
Glade Woods - Pearl River

Commission Staff

Henry Barbour - Executive Director
Brian Sanderson - General Counsel
Emily Fair - Staff Assistant

CNU TEAM LEADERS

Architecture: Susan Henderson
Coding: Sandy Sorlien
Communications: Ben Brown
Environment: Doug Farr
Management: Andres Duany,
John Norquist
Planning: Bill Dennis, Bay St. Louis;
Stefanos Polyzoides, Biloxi; Jaime Cor-
rea, D'Iberville; Neal Payton, Gautier;
James Moore, Gulfport; Dhiru Thadani,
Long Beach; Steve Schukraft, Moss Point;
Victor Dover, Ocean Springs; Dan Solo-
mon, Pascagoula; Laura Hall, Pass Chris-
tian; Robert Orr, Waveland
Traffic: Rick Chellman

COUNTIES AND CITIES OF THE MS COAST/2000 POPULATION

Hancock County/42,967
Bay St. Louis/8,209
Waveland/6,674

Harrison County/189,601
Biloxi/50,644
D'Iberville/7,608
Gulfport/71,127
Long Beach/17,320
Pass Christian/6,579

Jackson County/131,420
Gautier/11,681
Moss Point/15,851
Ocean Springs/17,225
Pascagoula/26,200

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CONGRESS FOR THE NEW URBANISM

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