

# *Rebuilding the Gulf Coast*

Answering the Governor's Call for Recovery,  
Rebuilding and Renewal on the Mississippi Gulf Coast



October 12-17, 2005  
Biloxi, Mississippi



**Governor's Commission  
on Recovery, Rebuilding  
and Renewal**

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## The Rebuilding Begins ...

Dear Fellow Mississippians,

Just over six weeks ago, Hurricane Katrina, the worst natural disaster in American history, struck our Gulf Coast and South Mississippi a grievous blow. Our state and our citizens bore the brunt of a hurricane more devastating than Camille, and the miles upon miles of utter destruction is unimaginable, except to those who have witnessed it with their own eyes, on the ground.

In her wake, Katrina left literally tens of thousands of uninhabitable, often obliterated homes; thousands of small businesses in shambles; dozens of schools and public buildings ruined and unusable; highways and ports and railroads, water and sewer systems, all destroyed.

But in the last month I've learned that an awful disaster, with its myriad of tragedies for individuals and families, also brings out the best in most people. And that has surely been the case in our state. I am so proud of all of you - it is an honor to serve as your governor.

Out of this terrible tragedy, beyond all imagination, comes our opportunity, and I beg you not to let Mississippi miss it. All of us are responsible. I'm determined we will not fail to seize this opportunity.

I've appointed a Commission on Recovery, Rebuilding and Renewal. Jim Barksdale chairs it. It is composed of capable people who love Mississippi.

The Commission will lead, but local governments and the private sector will decide. The Coast and South Mississippi will decide their own destiny, but with strong support from the Commission, our Congressional delegation, state officials and many others.

The Commission has organized an important weeklong workshop we are calling the "Mississippi Renewal Forum" that will be held in Biloxi on Oct. 12-17. Teams of highly qualified local and out-of-state professionals will work with community leaders to design and plan for the Gulf Coast.

These teams will work with county officials, municipal officials and others with the intention to create a bigger and better Mississippi Gulf Coast that we all love so dearly. It is important to emphasize that these tools and designs will be made available to the citizens of the Coast, but not forced upon you. The people of the Coast will make the decisions - we only want to provide good ideas and resources that can help us move together beyond the rubble to a bright new future that's in our grasp.

In the coming weeks the Commission will address the needs of the entire affected area with a series of public, town hall-type meetings to encourage broad participation in our planning efforts. These meetings will begin in late October and help set the tone of our renewal plans.

All of these meetings are a critical piece in our effort to assist you in planning the rebuilding of a better Gulf Coast and South Mississippi. The Commission will present this plan to me by the end of 2005, and I hope that people of the Coast will feel that it is their plan because they were so thoroughly involved in crafting it.

This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to rebuild the right way and make the Coast bigger and better than ever. What we do now will decide what the Coast will look like in 10 years, 20 years and beyond. We are committed to doing everything we can to support you in this most important effort. You have my full commitment and dedication.



Governor Haley Barbour

*For more information about rebuilding efforts on the Mississippi Gulf Coast, contact:*

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### THE TOWN PAPER

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# One Step Toward Recovery

ANDRÉS DUANY  
AND JOHN NORQUIST

It is important that the residents of the Gulf Coast fully understand the prospects as well as the limitations of the new urbanist workshop, or charrette, which will be taking place this week. This can begin by placing it in the context of Governor Haley Barbour's post-hurricane plan of Recovery, Rebuilding and Renewal.



ANDRÉS DUANY



JOHN NORQUIST

The recovery phase is the most immediate and involves the collection of debris, restoration of the infrastructure, provision of temporary housing, and the reconstitution of businesses and the tax-base. It will be very heavily orchestrated by government, particularly through its federal funding.

The third phase, renewal, is the longest term. It will consist of a thorough and ongoing analysis of the socioeconomic and cultural future of the state. This effort, led by a dozen committees broadly inclusive of the citizens and interests of Mississippi, will be the most visionary as it is to be the blueprint for a healthier society.

The middle phase, rebuilding – which is the one involved in this workshop – connects to the other two, both informing and being informed by their action. It involves the physical rebuilding of the communities and creation of their future permanent form. The goal for the rebuilding phase is to achieve a reconstruction in Hancock, Harrison and Jackson counties that will lead to an outcome even better than that which was destroyed. This is essential to the positive psychology of the state of Mississippi, for how else could such a tragedy be justified if it had no silver lining? It is therefore the task of the national professionals of the Congress for the New Urbanism, working together with an equal number of local professionals, to come up with detailed regional, municipal, building and civic space plans that are of the highest quality. The only way to achieve this goal is by working with elected officials, municipal authorities, community leaders and the citizens of these three counties.

This phase will only tangentially involve government subsidy

**ONE STEP** Continues on page 9

## WHAT IS A CHARRETTE?

*Charrette* (shä-rēt') n.

A planning session that usually takes anywhere from several days to a week and incorporates the expertise of a variety of individuals. Some planners use this method when designing traditional neighborhood developments (TNDs). It is thought that by including as many community members as possible in the process, a better product is arrived at more efficiently. The term is derived from the French term for "little cart" and refers to the final intense work effort expended by architects to meet a project deadline. In Paris, during the 19th century, professors at the Ecole de Beaux Arts circulated with little carts to collect final drawings from their students. Students would jump on the "charrette" to put finishing touches on their presentation minutes before the deadline.

New urban professionals use the charrette process when planning TNDs. The charrette is held on or near the project site and in the presence of those affecting and affected by the outcome. Architects, engineers, environmental consultants, local public officials and interested citizens are invited to join the planners for a series of intensive work sessions. Formal and informal meetings are held throughout the week



with various approving agencies and interest groups. Periodically, updates to the plan are presented affording the public an opportunity to ask questions and give immediate feedback to the planners. Ultimately, the purpose of the charrette is to give those concerned enough information to make rational decisions.

In the past 20 year, literally thousands of charrettes have been held worldwide with great success.

### What they're saying ...

*"There is not a doubt in my mind that out of the rubble ... a better Mississippi will emerge."*

— President George W. Bush, before reporters on September 27

*"This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity right now to rebuild the Coast the right way and make it bigger and better than ever."*

— Invitation to local officials to participate in the Mississippi Renewal Forum, Oct. 12-17, from Governor Haley Barbour and Jim Barksdale, chairman of the Governor's Commission on Recovery, Rebuilding and Renewal

*"We've got the cleanest slate we're ever going to have. The money, the time, the resources are pouring into this area; it will never happen again."*

— James Barksdale, former Netscape CEO and chairman of the Governor's Commission on Recovery, Rebuilding and Renewal, before reporters on September 27

*"The tenderness of others has helped us cope with this catastrophe. Now we need the tools to enable us to recover from it."*

— Front page editorial in the Gulfport Sun Herald, September 30





## Charrette Schedule

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 12

Morning - Organization Session  
1:00 - 7:00 p.m.  
Reports: Specialists and  
Elected and Municipal Officials.  
8:00 p.m. - end  
Discussion

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 13

9:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.  
Tour Municipalities  
9:00 p.m. - end  
Discussion

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 14

9:00 a.m. - noon  
Design  
1:00 - 3:00 p.m.  
Design  
3:00 - 5:00 p.m.  
Meet with Local Architects  
8:00 p.m. - end  
Design

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 15

9:00 a.m. - noon  
Design  
1:00 - 3:00 p.m.  
Design  
3:00 - 5:00 p.m.  
Concurrent Sessions with Mayors, Elected Officials, Local Leaders and Planners  
8:00 p.m. - end  
Design

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 16

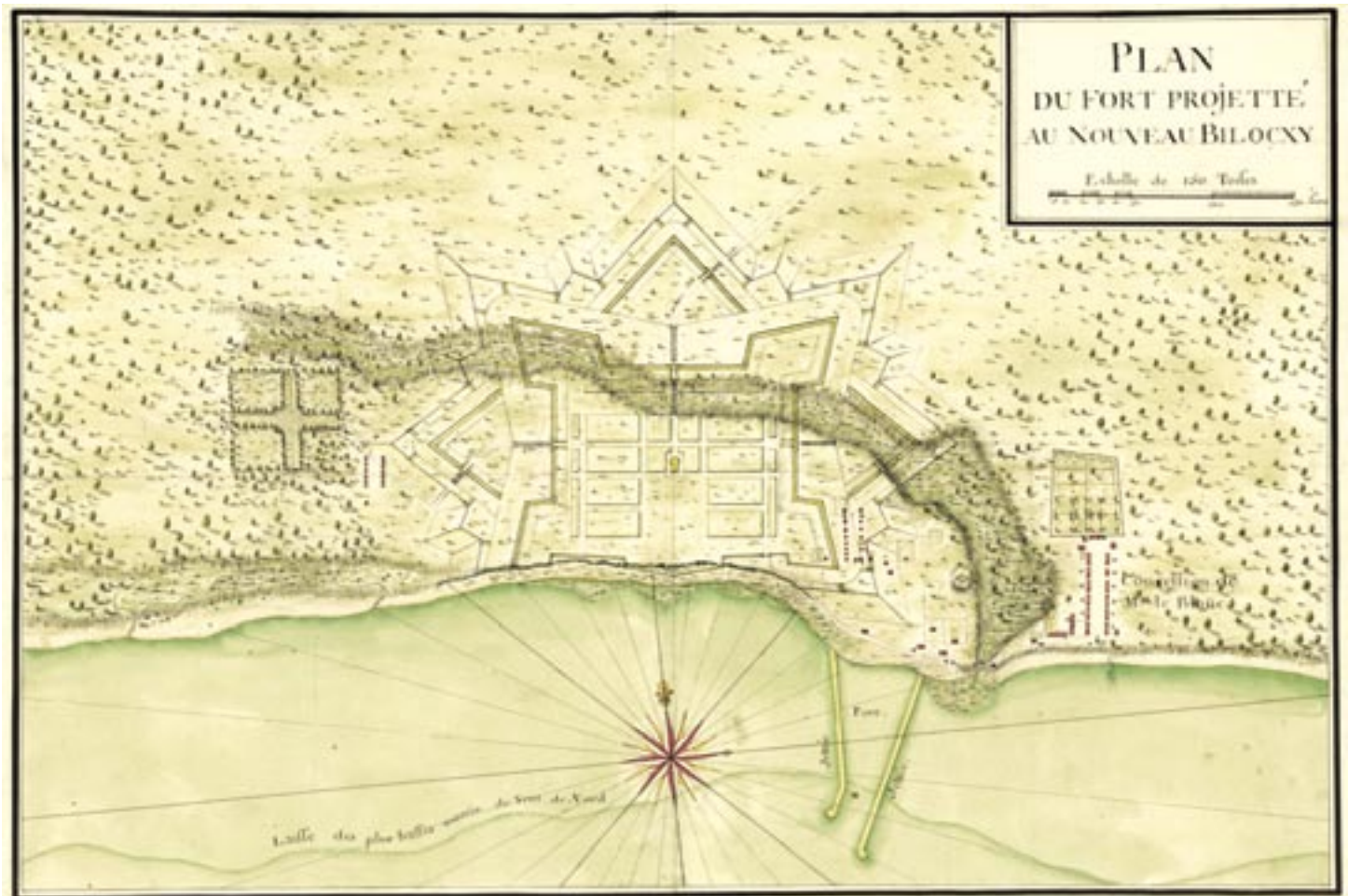
9:00 a.m. - noon  
Design  
1:00 - 7:00 p.m.  
Design and Production  
8:00 p.m. - end  
Design and Production

MONDAY, OCTOBER 17

9:00 a.m. - noon  
Design and Production  
1:00 - 7:00 p.m.  
Presentations  
7:00 p.m.  
Dinner and Informal Meetings

STUDIO LOCATION

Isle of Capri Casino  
1641 Popps Ferry Road  
Biloxi, MS 39532



A 1721 PLAN FOR FORT BILOXI WAS DESIGNED BY CHEVALIER LE BLOND DE LA TOUR, CHIEF ENGINEER OF THE TERRITORY. DE LA TOUR ALSO DESIGNED THE PLAN OF NEW ORLEANS.

COURTESY LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

## Rebuilding Great Places

BY DAVID BRAIN AND EMILY TALEN

Nobody is ever prepared for the effect of seeing their home and community suddenly transformed by the destructive force of a major storm. Recovery is not just a matter of repairing damage and building new buildings, but also a matter of restoring an emotional sense of safety and security without which it is hard to imagine undertaking the hard work of rebuilding. This kind of recovery depends on restoring the connections between people at the same time as the community restores its buildings and infrastructure.

Experience and research on communities recovering from natural disasters -- everything from storms to earthquakes -- has shown that the most successfully rebuilt communities have been the ones that have faced the challenges with plenty of participation by citizens. An open planning process is essential, empowering citizens to envision and build the future they want. Stronger and more resilient communities often emerge out of this work. The rebuilding of a neighborhood or a town can also build citizens' ability to recognize their commitment to their community, to find a common vision for its future, and to work together to realize that vision in spite of any past differences or disagreements.

For this reason, it is important to ensure that the conversations in the next week are as open and inclusive as they can be, and that the emerging plans reflect the goal of providing opportunities for everyone to return to their community with the hope of building even better lives than they had before the storm. Because there are some things that require urgent and immediate response, and because it is necessary to get the process of recovery started as soon as possible, it may be difficult to consult everyone right away. The charrette teams will be working very hard to listen as

much as they can and to ensure the tools they leave behind will facilitate discussions that will need to continue after the charrette, with the help of local leaders and local experts.

Recovery is not just a matter of building or restoring each individual home. Buildings need to be reconstructed in a way that helps to restore the sense of place, the sense of community, and the sense of a community's history as well as its hopes for the future. It is the reconnecting of people with one another that is the key to rebuilding successfully and restoring both confidence and hope. Such reconnection happens in the restoration of neighborhoods as well as homes, in the restoration of civic pride as well as private comfort, in the restoration of social and economic networks as well as businesses. Good planning should help ensure quick and appropriate response to immediate needs while also ensuring that each little effort adds up in the longer term to a safe and livable community.

During the week of the Mississippi Renewal Forum, it is the charrette team's hope that community residents will focus on the strength and resilience of their communities and on the opportunities now presented to them as they think about rebuilding. It is important for the team to hear from as many residents as possible. The team will listen as carefully as it can and do its best to communicate what team members hear. The work will not always be straightforward, and there will be many challenging questions that only the residents of south Mississippi will be able to answer. There will be a need to find a balance between rebuilding things as they were and imagining a future that accommodates some changes while carrying forward the best of a treasured past. The professionals and experts have gathered with the hope of helping these communities envision such a future, and to begin building that future one step at a time.



# The New Urbanism on the Coast

BY DIANE DORNEY

While new urbanism may be an unfamiliar term to many, this planning method has been used by a growing list of planning firms and municipalities for a quarter of a century. Spawning over 900 neighborhood and town plans, there are currently more than 400 under construction and others breaking ground every month. Many fine examples exist throughout the country. Some – such as Seaside, Fla., Celebration, Fla., and Kentlands, Md. – have long-standing national reputations, while thousands of residents in scores of other communities can attest to their success.

New urban communities located near the Gulf Coast (see sidebar) have garnered attention in the press and are selling lots and homes at rapid pace. Lost Rabbit in Ridgeland, Miss.; Provenance in Shreveport, Ala.; and River Ranch in Lafayette, Ala., are just a few of the many new urban plans that have been adopted by municipalities in the Gulf Coast region.

All of these new urban communities (also called traditional neighborhood developments) have some basic design principles in common: They are designed to create places where people can live near shops, offices, recreation facilities and civic institutions. In addition, these places are connected by attractive streets, public

## NEARBY NEW URBAN PROJECTS UNDER CONSTRUCTION

### Alabama

Bon Secour Village, Gulf Shores  
Gorham's Bluff, Pisgah  
Metropolitan Gardens, Birmingham  
Mt Laurel, Birmingham  
Tannin, Orange Beach  
Providence, Huntsville  
The Preserve, Hoover  
The Waters, Pike Road

### Florida Coastal

Alys Beach, Walton County  
Rosemary Beach, Walton County

Seacrest Beach, Walton County  
Seaside, Walton County  
Watercolor, Walton/Bay Counties

### Mississippi

Cotton District, Starkville  
The Township at Colony Park, Ridgeland  
Lost Rabbit, Ridgeland

### Louisiana

Provenance, Shreveport  
River Ranch, Lafayette  
Baton Rouge (downtown), Baton Rouge  
Belle Chasse redevelopment plan, New Orleans.

spaces and protected natural areas.

Some will ask why the conventional way of building isn't good enough and will question whether the rebuilding of the Gulf Coast shouldn't be exactly the way it used to be. The answer, say new urban experts, is that our country has changed since the communities along the Gulf Coast were built. Many people have lived in conventional suburbs and discovered they prefer traditional towns and main streets. When it comes to providing essential services, municipalities are discovering that traditional towns and neighborhoods are more efficient and less costly. And everyone is seeing the effects of more traffic

congestion and higher fuel costs these days. Consequently, the current supply of housing in new urban communities doesn't come close to the demand.

A new urbanist neighborhood is created at the human scale. Buildings are placed closer together and exteriors are designed to be safe and attractive for pedestrians. Streets are constructed for slower speeds and traffic is dispersed through many different connections.

Neighborhoods like these have survived and prospered for centuries and they are coming back in a big way.



A NEW URBAN PLAN DESIGNED FOR BAY ST. LOUIS PRE-KATRINA INCLUDES A WIDE RANGE OF HOUSING TYPES, A TOWN CENTER WITHIN WALKING DISTANCE FROM HOMES AND PEDESTRIAN-FRIENDLY STREETS.

DOVER KOHL & PARTNERS

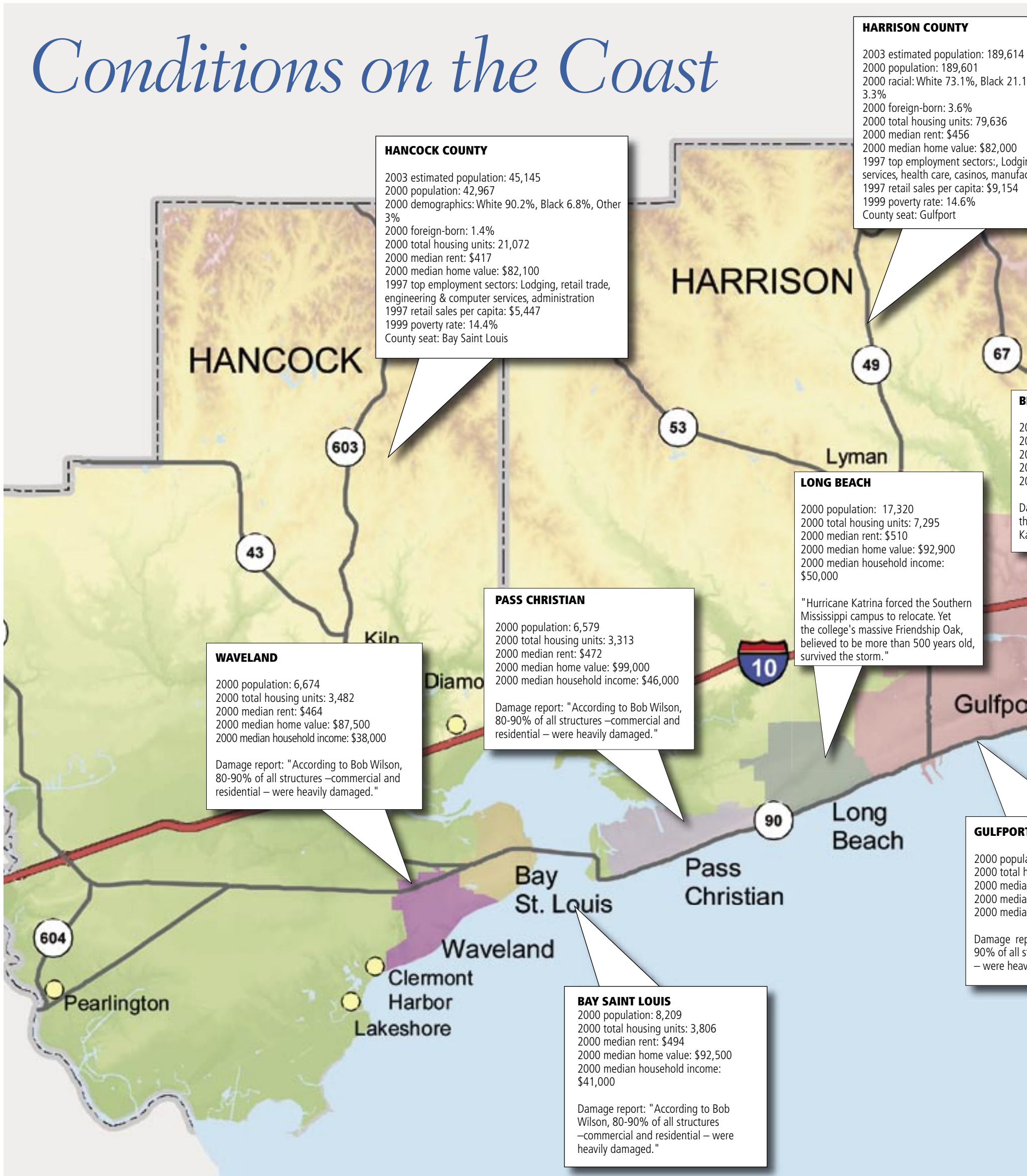
## THE 13 DESIGN PRINCIPLES OF TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT

The social and environmental benefits of a traditional neighborhood development (TND) result from certain physical and organizational characteristics. An authentic neighborhood includes most of the following:

- 1. The neighborhood has a discernible center.** This is often a square or green, and sometimes a busy or memorable street intersection. A transit stop would be located at this center.
- 2. Most of the dwellings are within a five-minute walk of the center.** This distance averages 1/4 of a mile.
- 3. There are a variety of dwelling types within the neighborhood.** These usually take the form of houses, rowhouses and apartments such that younger and older people, singles and families, the poor and the wealthy, may find places to live.
- 4. There are shops and offices at the edge of the neighborhood.** The shops should be sufficiently varied to supply the weekly needs of a household. A convenience store is the most important among them.
- 5. A small ancillary building is permitted within the backyard of each house.** It may be used as a rental unit or as a place to work.
- 6. There is an elementary school close enough that most children can walk from their dwelling.** This distance should not be more than 1/8 of a mile.
- 7. There are small playgrounds quite near every dwelling.** This distance should not be more than 1/8 of a mile.
- 8. The streets within the neighborhood are a connected network.** This provides a variety of itineraries and disperses traffic congestion.
- 9. The streets are relatively narrow and shaded by rows of trees.** This slows down the traffic, creating an environment for the pedestrian and the bicycle.
- 10. Buildings at the neighborhood center are placed close to the street.** This creates a strong sense of place.
- 11. Parking lots and garage doors rarely confront the streets.** Parking is relegated to the rear of buildings, usually accessed by alleys.
- 12. Certain prominent sites are reserved for civic buildings.** Buildings for meeting, education, religion or culture are located at the termination of street vistas or at the neighborhood center.
- 13. The neighborhood is organized to be self-governing.** A formal association debates and decides on matters of maintenance, security and physical change.



# Conditions on the Coast



## HANCOCK COUNTY

2003 estimated population: 45,145  
 2000 population: 42,967  
 2000 demographics: White 90.2%, Black 6.8%, Other 3%  
 2000 foreign-born: 1.4%  
 2000 total housing units: 21,072  
 2000 median rent: \$417  
 2000 median home value: \$82,100  
 1997 top employment sectors: Lodging, retail trade, engineering & computer services, administration  
 1997 retail sales per capita: \$5,447  
 1999 poverty rate: 14.4%  
 County seat: Bay Saint Louis

## HARRISON COUNTY

2003 estimated population: 189,614  
 2000 population: 189,601  
 2000 racial: White 73.1%, Black 21.1%, 3.3%  
 2000 foreign-born: 3.6%  
 2000 total housing units: 79,636  
 2000 median rent: \$456  
 2000 median home value: \$82,000  
 1997 top employment sectors: Lodging, services, health care, casinos, manufacturing  
 1997 retail sales per capita: \$9,154  
 1999 poverty rate: 14.6%  
 County seat: Gulfport

## WAVELAND

2000 population: 6,674  
 2000 total housing units: 3,482  
 2000 median rent: \$464  
 2000 median home value: \$87,500  
 2000 median household income: \$38,000  
 Damage report: "According to Bob Wilson, 80-90% of all structures –commercial and residential – were heavily damaged."

## PASS CHRISTIAN

2000 population: 6,579  
 2000 total housing units: 3,313  
 2000 median rent: \$472  
 2000 median home value: \$99,000  
 2000 median household income: \$46,000  
 Damage report: "According to Bob Wilson, 80-90% of all structures –commercial and residential – were heavily damaged."

## LONG BEACH

2000 population: 17,320  
 2000 total housing units: 7,295  
 2000 median rent: \$510  
 2000 median home value: \$92,900  
 2000 median household income: \$50,000  
 "Hurricane Katrina forced the Southern Mississippi campus to relocate. Yet the college's massive Friendship Oak, believed to be more than 500 years old, survived the storm."

## BAY SAINT LOUIS

2000 population: 8,209  
 2000 total housing units: 3,806  
 2000 median rent: \$494  
 2000 median home value: \$92,500  
 2000 median household income: \$41,000  
 Damage report: "According to Bob Wilson, 80-90% of all structures –commercial and residential – were heavily damaged."

## GULFPORT

2000 population: 19,000  
 2000 total housing units: 10,000  
 2000 median rent: \$450  
 2000 median home value: \$80,000  
 2000 median household income: \$35,000  
 Damage report: "90% of all structures – were heavily damaged."



%, Asian 2.6%, Other  
 ng, retail trade, food  
 cturing

**JACKSON COUNTY**  
 2003 estimated population: 133,928  
 2000 population: 131,420  
 2000 racial: White 75.4%, Black 20.9%, Asian 1.6%, Hispanic 2.1%  
 2000 foreign-born: 2.7%  
 2002 total housing units: 54,035  
 2000 median rent: \$456  
 2000 median home value: \$80,300  
 1997 top employment sectors: Retail trade, health care, food services, engineering and professional services, employment and temporary help services  
 1997 retail sales per capita: \$7,354  
 1999 poverty rate: 12.7%

**D'IBERVILLE**  
 D'Iberville is located on Back Bay.  
 2000 population: 7,608  
 2000 total housing units: 3,069  
 2000 median rent: \$541  
 2000 median home value: \$68,800  
 2000 median household income: \$40,000

**OCEAN SPRINGS**  
 2000 population: 17,225  
 2000 total housing units: 7,092  
 2000 median rent: \$523  
 2000 median home value: \$96,900  
 2000 median household income: \$56,000  
 Damage report: The downtown wasn't hurt too badly and many of the businesses are working hard to open again soon.

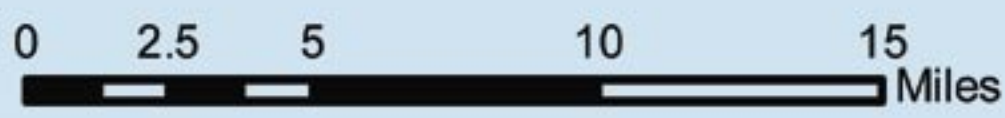
**MOSS POINT**  
 Moss Point is on the Escatawpa River.  
 2000 population: 15,851  
 2000 total housing units: 6,269  
 2000 median rent: \$337  
 2000 median home value: \$58,400  
 2000 median household income: \$37,000

**BILOXI**  
 2000 population: 50,644  
 2000 total housing units: 22,147  
 2000 median rent: \$453  
 2000 median home value: \$87,700  
 2000 median household income: \$40,000  
 Damage report: *The Biloxi Sun Herald* reports that Biloxi lost 20% of its buildings to Hurricane Katrina.

ation: 71,127  
 housing units: 29,593  
 n rent: \$446  
 n home value: \$77,900  
 n household income: \$49,000  
 port: "According to Bob Wilson, 80-structures – commercial and residential rily damaged."

**GAUTIER**  
 2000 population: 11,681  
 2000 total housing units: 4,645  
 2000 median rent: \$468  
 2000 median home value: \$78,700  
 2000 median household income: \$46,000  
 Gautier is one of the fastest growing incorporated communities in the State.

**PASCAGOULA**  
 2000 population: 26,200  
 2000 total housing units: 10,942  
 2000 median rent: \$400  
 2000 median home value: \$68,300  
 2000 median household income: \$39,000  
 Pascagoula may be affected by the latest proposed round of base closures made by the Department of Defense. The Pascagoula Naval Station is scheduled to close.  
 County seat: Pascagoula





## Lost Treasures



THE HISTORIC ROBINSON MALONEY DANTZLER HOUSE BEFORE KATRINA. ONLY THE FOUNDATION REMAINS ON BEACH BOULEVARD IN BILOXI.



THE 1856 TULLIS TOLEDANO HOUSE IS GONE. A THREE STORY CASINO BARGE NOW SITS ON TOP OF THE SITE.



BEACH BOULEVARD IN BAY SAINT LOUIS SHOWING SOME OF THE REMAINING BUILDINGS AND WHAT USED TO BE THE ROAD BED.



VIEW OF THE DAMAGE TO THE BUILDINGS ON MAIN STREET IN BAY ST. LOUIS

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE MISSISSIPPI HERITAGE TRUST.



## Restoring 'Home, Sweet Home' to the Gulf Coast

BY DIANE DORNEY

Prior to the Mississippi Renewal Forum charrette, the team's architects were given a charge by charrette organizer Andrés Duany: Design a series of simple cottages based on the Gulf Coast vernacular that can be efficiently built by manufactured or stick-built process.

According to Susan Henderson, Placemakers' director of design, the intent was to figure out ways to design and build permanent homes immediately instead of relying on temporary structures.

"After Hurricane Andrew hit Florida," Henderson said, "temporary structures were provided for immediate relief. The problem is they were never replaced with 'real' houses." Therefore, she says, whatever is provided immediately must be both "livable and loveable."

Henderson says the response to the call for plans has been amazing.

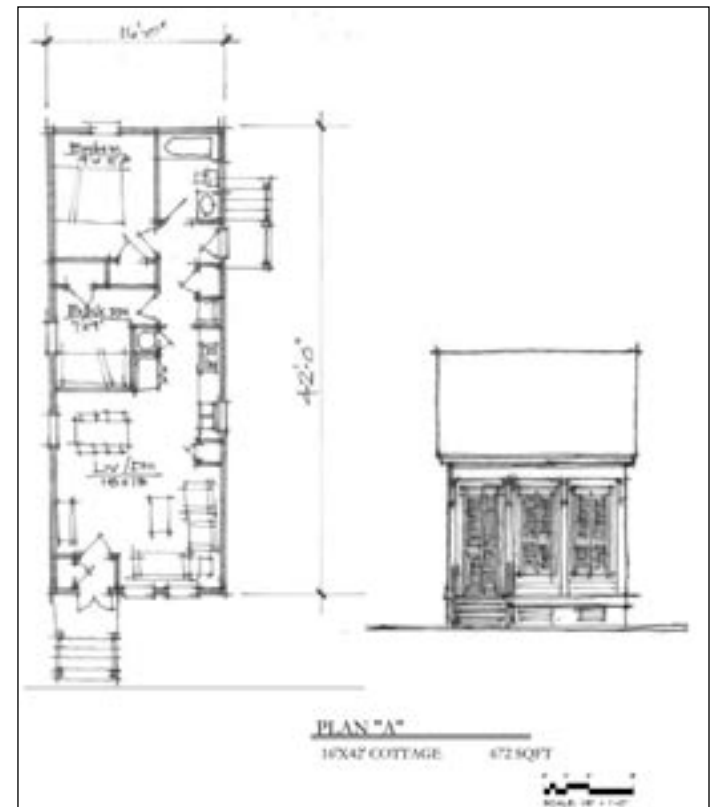
"We required that all of the plans address durability, transportability, regional character and aesthetics," Henderson said. "Bill Dennis, an architect from Providence, R.I., even addressed flooding with his design."

Alexander D. Latham III, an architect from Northport, N.Y., designed a series of cottages for the charrette. He said his approach was to provide someone a "home," not a trailer.

"We have always felt that there is power in simplicity," said Latham. "By utilizing simple materials and simple forms with the traditional detailing of trim, entry doors and double-hung windows, the result is a simple housing form that has a connection to the reality of home."

There is a sense of urgency in regards to housing for the Mississippi Renewal charrette team. More than 65,100 homes, or 38 percent, were destroyed by Katrina and 38,000 had major damage. Many residents want to return to their communities and get back to work.

The charrette team is working hard to make that happen. Some of



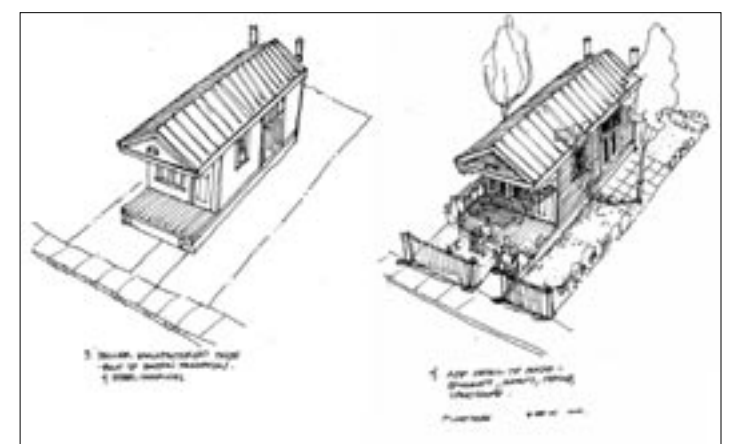
A NEW ORLEANS-INSPIRED SINGLE-WIDE COTTAGE BY MOSER DESIGN GROUP, INC.

the designs have already been taken to the level of construction documents. In addition, Henderson says, the manufactured housing industry has been approached by team members and has responded favorably to the idea of incorporating the architects' designs into their homes. And as far as design goes, she says they have only just begun.

"The samples we have received thus far will be developed further and many others will be designed at the charrette," she said. "We will be addressing smaller units that will be largely intended for emergency use and also standard replacement housing for all price points."



A ONE-BEDROOM "MODEL-T" COTTAGE DESIGN BY ADL III ARCHITECTURE.



ARCHITECT BILL DENNIS'S ILLUSTRATION SHOWS HOW A HOUSE CAN BE MADE FLOATABLE.



and it must be driven by the private sector: the casinos, national retailers, local merchants, development industry, and citizens who desire building and improving their lives in their former communities. This will require a specific vision so that all of these actors can cooperate toward a defined outcome. And what is this outcome to be? The proposal by the new urban professionals, who will be working for eight days from the Isle of Capri hotel in Biloxi, is that the communities be diverse in income and function; that they be walkable and suitable for transit; that the communities be harmonious and beautiful; that they be environmentally sensitive, both in terms of energy conservation and durability in the event of another hurricane disaster. This can involve creating a streamlined permitting processes and a lightening of bureaucracy and other burdens that do not lead to anything but higher cost.

The governor has been specific in his direction to us that the tools and plans created during this charrette be made available as options to the communities to adopt in the rebuilding process. Each municipality will ultimately select its own destiny.

It is important to note that no one should be excluded – not the mobile home industry, which may provide the bulk of the affordable housing; not the big box retailers, such as Wal-Mart and Home Depot; and not the casinos. These industries all provide jobs, taxes and daily needs. However, it is also just as important that everyone be held to a high standard of aesthetics and environmental compatibility and that we all cooperate toward the creation of pedestrian-friendly towns.

The Gulf Coast in Mississippi has changed. The entire economic scenario of the United States will be soon changing as well. There is evidence that the recent rising fuel prices will not only be permanent, but will continue to rise in the long run. Given the price of natural gas and petroleum, it is possible that by next spring we will be a different nation. To that end, it is imperative that the new communities of coastal Mississippi be envisioned as 21st century communities that can respond to these changes in our country. The Gulf Coast, with its marvelous architectural traditions and inherent natural beauty, can be transformed to a place that will not only be better but become a model for communities everywhere. This could be the great gift of Katrina.

As we speak to your governor, to your elected officials, and to Jim Barksdale, who has been charged with this agenda, we feel the excitement that this vision will, in fact, have the support it needs. We encourage you to get excited with us, for the future of the Gulf Coast is in your hands.

*Andres Duany is a principal at Duany Plater-Zyberk & Company and a co-founder of the Congress for the New Urbanism.*

*John Norquist is executive director of the Congress for the New Urbanism.*

## Coding for the Future

BY SANDY SORLIEN

Anytime there is the necessity for rebuilding, there is the opportunity for planning. Many of the most-loved traditional towns of North America were deliberately and thoughtfully planned. Countless other cities, towns, and villages evolved as compact, walkable, mixed-use places, because of their geography and because of the limits of the economic and circumstances of their time. However, in our time, over the past 60 years, places have evolved in a completely different form. They have spread loosely along highways and haphazardly across once-open country, enabled by the widespread ownership of automobiles, cheap petroleum, and generalized wealth.

The corresponding codes have incorporated zoning practices that separate our homes from offices, shops, churches and schools. They include design standards that favor the automobile over the pedestrian. They respond to the homogenizing effects of globalization.

These practices, since World War II, have produced strip shopping, big box stores with enormous parking lots, and sadly gutted downtowns. They have produced tracts of banal housing that consume farmland and forests. They have produced the invention and proliferation of drive-by eateries and billboards. They have made walking or cycling beyond one's own cul-de-sac dangerous or even impossible. They have made children, the elderly, and the poor dependent on those who can drive. There has been simultaneous destruction of both towns and open space -- the 20th century phenomenon known as sprawl.

The form of our built environment needs a 21st century correction. But in most places, it is actually illegal to build a traditional town or neighborhood like those where our grandparents grew up. The existing codes prevent it. In most places, people do not have a choice between sprawl and traditional ur-

banism. Economics and politics favor sprawl and conventional suburban development (CSD). It is not a level playing field.

A new kind of code has been created to attack this problem at the point of decisive impact -- the intersection of law and design. It is a form-based code, meaning it envisions and encourages a certain physical outcome -- the form of the region, community, block, and/or building. Form-based codes are a different type from conventional codes that are based primarily on use, process, performance or statistics -- none of which envision or require any particular physical outcome.

A form-based code is a tool that guides the form of the built envi-

ronment to resemble that of traditional neighborhoods, towns and villages. This form is compact, walkable, and mixed-use, and it is meant to be comfortable, safe, and ecologically sustainable. It allows a mix of uses within the neighborhood, so its residents don't have to drive everywhere. It simultaneously preserves the form of urbanism and open lands.

True urbanism requires the sequential influence of many participants. A code is necessary to allow buildings to be designed by many hands over time. The single designer or committee leads to a lack of robustness, similar to a monoculture in nature. The result



will be a large architectural project rather than urbanism. Indeed, the principal difference between the architectural project and the urban one is not a factor of scale -- there are enormous architectural projects -- but of time and diversity. The fourth dimension of time allows built experience to feed back and become integrated. A code, once adopted as law, stays in place, allowing urbanism to evolve and mature without losing its sense of order. A code ensures that a community will not have to scrutinize all proposed projects, because, in the process that leads to the code, what the community intends has already been specified. The result is a comprehensive framework for that process.

Some form-based codes are also transect-based codes. That means they organize the natural, rural, suburban and urban landscape into categories of density, complexity and intensity in the same way the countryside relates to the traditional towns and villages we admire. The operating principle



# The Team

The Mississippi Renewal Forum - October 12-17, 2005  
 Biloxi, Mississippi

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# Habitat for Humanity Seeks House Designs for Gulf Coast Homes

BY RAY GINDROZ,  
URBAN DESIGN ASSOCIATES

Habitat for Humanity is working with the Institute for Classical Architecture (ICA) to develop site-specific house plans and a pattern book to be used nationwide. The pattern book will provide assistance to planners, builders and architects to create homes that will relate to the traditional architectural patterns of the local communities in which they are built. It will be based on a prototype project currently underway funded by the National Endowment for the Arts, Surdna and other Foundations.

With the urgent need for house designs for the Mississippi Gulf Coast, participants in the Habitat effort will work with the Mississippi Renewal Forum charrette architectural team to compile a Pattern Book for the 11 coastal communities.

A call for house plans has been initiated and will continue for the next few months. After compiling the plans, the goal is to work with local architects to use as new prototypes. This, most likely, will include a full range of production methods: pre-manufactured, panelized, locally built, and the more traditional volunteer-built Habitat house types.

The plans will be for simple, well-proportioned houses constructed of readily available materials and based on the Gulf Coast regional architecture.

*Plans should be forwarded to Greg Weimerskirch at Greg.Weimerskirch@urbandesignassociates.com or via mail to: Gregory A. Weimerskirch, AIA, ADG; Urban Design Associates; 707 Grant Street, 31st Floor; Pittsburgh, PA 15219. For more information, call 412.263.5200.*



A HABITAT HOME IN LOUISVILLE, KY.

COURTESY URBAN DESIGN ASSOCIATES



*“Out of this terrible disaster, beyond all imagination, comes our opportunity, and I beg you not to let Mississippi miss it. I’m determined we will not fail to seize this opportunity.”*

*– Mississippi Governor Haley Barbour  
in a speech before a special session of the state legislature, September 27*

