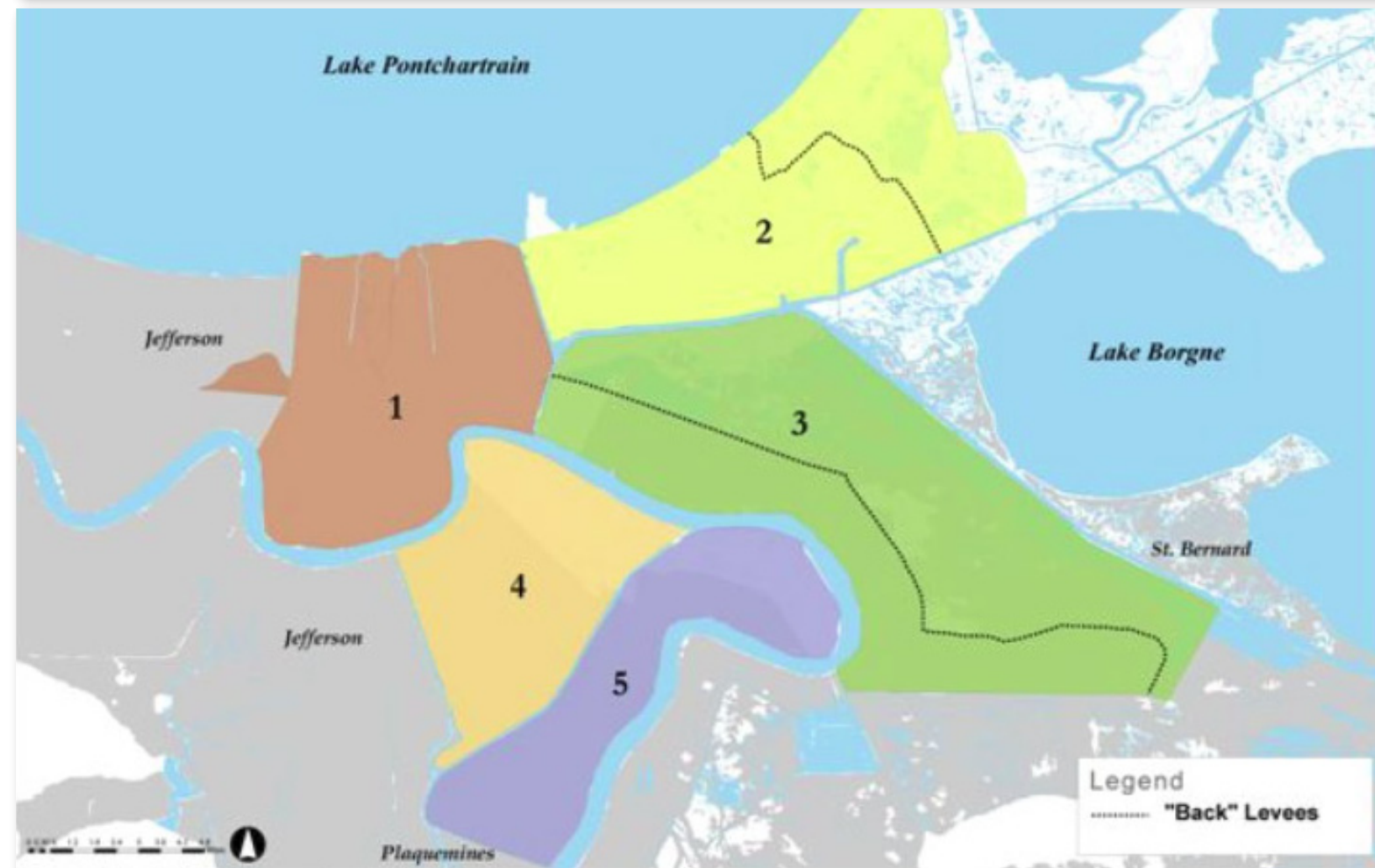


## Citywide scenario summary

### CHAPTER 5

# Scenarios



Five drainage basins identified by the U.S. Army Corp. of Engineers. District 1 is located within drainage basin 1. The three citywide scenarios impact each district distinctly from District 1, which was less impacted by flooding. Addressing significant issues will enable downtown to play a lead role in citywide recovery.

In advance of the second district meeting in November 2006, district and citywide planners convened to discuss potential recovery scenarios as New Orleans rebuilds. Scenario planning is distinct from community visioning exercises in that scenarios are grounded in the real constraints that communities face. Whereas visioning typically produces an idealized “wish list” of projects and programs, scenarios balance community desires with physical, economic, and environmental constraints.

Post-Katrina New Orleans faces many real constraints: its infrastructure needs are overwhelming; its population has dropped by half; its economy is in a state of flux; and Katrina’s flood waters have reinforced the precariousness of its physical setting. The UNOP planning team reviewed these issues in the context of rebuilding strategies and incorporated them into several scenarios based on the circumstances the team felt would be likeliest to prevail in the five- to ten-year timeframe of this recovery plan:

- A population that has reached 60-65% of pre-Katrina levels by 2009 and that in 10 years has reached 75%-90% of the pre-Katrina population.
- The Army Corps of Engineers’ long-term hurricane protection plan has not been implemented yet. The best-case scenario assumes that more ambitious hurricane protection plans have been approved and some work has begun.
- Additional federal funding has been made available but is not limitless.

Based on these circumstances, the citywide planning team outlined three scenarios:

- REpair—This scenario assumes a status-quo resettlement pattern (that is, scattered and haphazard) as a result of individual rebuilding and settlement choices independent of coordinated planning.
- RE-vision—This scenario reduces the risk from Katrina-like events to a minimal level. It envisions an ambitious public funding and implementation strategy that renders New Orleans largely immune to even the most devastating effects of future hurricanes. This scenario would require basing key decisions about where, when, and how to rebuild primarily on public-safety considerations with

limits on the ability of individuals to make these decisions independently.

- REhabilitate—This scenario represents a compromise between the REpair and RE-vision scenarios in which New Orleans does more than rely on external flood protection methods to reduce its risk, but more individual decision making is preserved than in the RE-vision scenario.

In devising these scenarios and in introducing them to residents across the city, UNOP planners intended to engage the public in a realistic, meaningful dialogue about the pros and cons of the various approaches to reducing flood risk and about the interrelationship among popu-

lation, flood risk, economic development, and quality of life. District planners sought community acceptance of and desire for each of the three conceptual rebuilding scenarios in their districts.

### District 1 discussion of scenarios

In steering committee and district meetings, discussion focused on a modified version of the REhabilitate and RE-vision scenarios. Across the board, residents, business people, civic leaders, and others emphasized the essential need to provide the highest possible degree of protection to the city and its people. Participants in the process noted that cities, like Atlanta and Houston, that had invested heavily in essential infrastructure had in turn benefited greatly from this investment; they also suggested that historically this infrastructure had been paid for through a combination of local, state, and federal financing. More fundamentally, participants noted that residents must feel safe to return to their homes and neighborhoods. Participants also noted that for many neighborhoods, even basic recovery required resolving deep problems that preceded the storm—particularly related to issues like public housing, economic development and job creation, racial tensions, crime, and similar issues that had a profound impact on livability for people of every income and background.



*Flood protection improvements such as armored floodwalls are key to recovery throughout all of New Orleans.*