

## Before the storm

District 6 extends from Bayou St John to the Industrial Canal and from Lake Pontchartrain to I-610. Largely developed following World War II, as the City of New Orleans expanded toward the lake, its 8.8 square miles are primarily occupied by single-family homes, interspersed with four major educational institutions, and supported by several commercial areas and small and larger open spaces. The 2000 census records the district's population at slightly more than 44,000, representing 9% of the city total of 484,674. Median household income in the district in 2000 was \$37,996, higher than the citywide median of \$31,207.

District 6 is a diverse community, closely matching the racial mix of the city as a whole. In 2000, African Americans represented 68.6% of residents, whites 26.9%, and other groups 4.5%. The city as a whole was 66.6% African American, 26.6% white, and 6.8% other. A higher percentage of the district's residents were over 65 in 2000 when compared with the city as a whole—16.2% compared with 11.7% citywide.

District 6 has a high level of homeownership, representing approximately 72% of the district's occupied building stock, substantially greater than the citywide level of 47%. The median home value in 2000 was \$94,202, lower than the citywide median of \$115,984. The district's median rent at \$296 was comparable to the citywide median of \$308.

The district's institutions of higher education include Dillard University, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, Southern University at New Orleans, and the University of New Orleans (UNO). Collectively, they are a significant economic engine: pre-Katrina, UNO alone had a staff of 1,150 employees.

Several retail areas served the district, including large newer centers and smaller clusters associated with individual neighborhoods and streets.

## CHAPTER 1

# *Introduction to the district*

District residents strongly identify with their home neighborhoods. These are broadly defined as Dil-lard, Filmore, Gentilly Terrace, Gentilly Woods, Lake Terrace/Lake Oaks, Milneburg, St. Anthony, and Pontchartrain Park—but many of these larger areas contain several smaller neighborhoods with their own identities.

Much of the district is located on low-lying ground with many residential areas more than four feet below mean sea level. Higher ground is situated along Gentilly Boulevard to the south and in the Lake Terrace/Lake Oaks neighborhoods along Lake Pontchartrain to the north. The district’s flood protection system before Katrina included levees along the Industrial Canal, Lake Pontchartrain and the London Avenue Canal.

Pontchartrain Park is the largest and most distinctive public open space within the district contain-ing both the Joseph M. Bartholomew Golf Course and the Wesley Barrow Stadium.

### The storm’s impact

Hurricane Katrina’s impact on District 6 was se-vere. Levee failures along the Industrial Canal and the London Avenue Canal admitted floodwaters to the district, resulting in more than 81% of the district’s housing stock experiencing flooding to a depth of more than four feet, compared to 51% of the housing stock citywide.

Variations within the district of four-feet-plus flooding ranged from 100% of the homes within the St. Anthony and Milneburg neighborhoods to approximately 71% within Gentilly Terrace to ap-proximately 16% within Lake Terrace/Lake Oaks.



*District 6 is approximately 3 miles from the city’s core.*



*The boundaries of planning District 6 were established by the New Orleans City Planning Commission. Residents from areas that are outside the district's boundary, such as Indian Village and Sugar Hill, participated in District 6 planning extensively.*

Approximately one year after the storms, the district's population is estimated at 37% of its pre-storm level, representing a loss of approximately 28,000 residents. Returning residents are mostly concentrated in the neighborhoods on higher ground that suffered less severe damage, including parts of Gently Terrace and Lake Terrace/Lake Oaks. Rates of return to the most severely flooded areas are currently limited to about 10% but much work is ongoing and many residents are awaiting release of Road Home funds to determine whether and when they may return to their homes.

The district's residents and institutions have participated vigorously in several planning activities and initiatives aimed at advancing recovery. Among these efforts are the Gently Charrette of April 2006 undertaken by DPZ and the Congress for the New Urbanism; the Neighborhoods Rebuilding Plan for District 6 undertaken on behalf of the City Council by Lambert Advisory between June and September 2006, with a final report delivered in November 2006; and the Gently Civic Improvement Association's (GCIA) infrastructure and environmental quality report, delivered June 2006, and its land use and zoning report, delivered October 2006.

Each of these prior planning efforts has provided valuable insights about the district and identified key planning goals, objectives and strategies. The UNOP process for District 6 has been able to build on the strong foundation provided by this work. A particular focus of the UNOP process has been an effort to determine how neighborhood-based groups, partnerships, and institutions can take direct action to spearhead the district's near and longer term recovery.

