

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

INTRODUCTION

Project Need

Economic Development

The western area of downtown New Orleans has long been a center of medical service and learning. The confluence of hospitals, medical schools (not only for physicians, but also for nursing and medical technicians) and ancillary facilities goes back almost 100 years. Over that time, the area devoted to medical uses has expanded not only geographically, but also in an economic sense, providing the New Orleans metro area with a medical district that has been very important to the local economy.

However, in the post-Katrina environment, damage to several key components of the district (most notably, the Medical Center of Louisiana in New Orleans, formerly known as Charity Hospital, and the Veterans Administration Hospital) have resulted in unique opportunities for infrastructure reinvestment. Since Hurricane Katrina, postsecondary and higher education facilities have been closed or significantly curtailed. The Medical District's schools and associated research organizations continue to suffer from disinvestment. The hurricane's immediate aftermath displaced a large percentage of Tulane University, Louisiana State University (LSU), Delgado School of Nursing and Xavier University students, staff and academics, including researchers. Local universities, health science centers and clinical facilities suffered significant infrastructure damage and loss of operating revenue which continues to strain their clinical, research and bioscience activities. The loss of research and staff has also significantly deterred the district's ability to capitalize on intellectual property; loss of intellectual capital, and physical damage to the district, has significantly affected the region's competitive advantage.

Regaining a competitive advantage is a must. The health care and biosciences industry have an enormous existing economic impact, and one which could be even greater if we allow it to. Bioscience firms and the cluster of activities and related interests they anchor have become prime targets for state and local economic developers and with good reason. For state and local economic development interests, the biosciences represent an economic triple windfall. It is a rapidly growing and diversifying field; it represents clean

industry that everyone can embrace; and it offers high paying jobs. It is also a sector that attracts a very large share of entrepreneurial and venture capital interest and is the source of multiple spin-offs of related enterprises. New Orleans already has a base of competency in research, despite Katrina, but it is not as dense with science and scientists as many other areas with which it competes. There is a modest existing bioscience company presence, and it is threatened with post-Katrina stresses.

Investment in the physical environment is needed to more competitively position the district on the national and global stage. The enclosed strategic integration plan visually depicts a well-arranged live/work physical environment that complements the existing and planned urban fabric. The plan provides the physical vision for a first-rate health-care community that will move New Orleans into a more prosperous, post-Katrina recovery.

Physical Environment

The New Orleans Medical District suffers from extreme physical neglect. The District lacks cohesion and uniformity in design and landscaping standards, resulting in a highly disjointed district. The district is characterized by pothole-marred streets, limited pedestrian accessibility, and limited site improvements (such as landscaping, signalization, signage, lighting, benches, trash receptacles, etc.). The Medical District has the potential to evolve into a leading, national example of an informal idea forum that directly feeds into an adjacent downtown offering one of the world's greatest live/work environments. However, the current configuration of the Medical District poses significant challenges to attracting outside investment and in retaining its graduate student and professional workforce.

The Strategic Integration Plan envisions the area as a highly functioning clinical, research, housing, transportation and infrastructure hub supporting the activities and projects related to health and biosciences research and commercialization. The new vision would provide the physical foundation for this economic center, providing 24-hour workforce opportunities in a manner that expands and supports city life and business opportunities within the downtown area. This land use/transportation infrastructure master plan would provide the structure needed to retrofit the Medical District as the state-of-the-art foundation by which the District can evolve into a national high tech hub that seamlessly integrates with a dynamic metropolitan environment

Planning Process

The strategic integration plan seeks to physically plan an environment that complements surrounding neighborhoods and the CBD, but that also caters to the specific infrastructure needs of the medical community. Improvements in sewerage, water, drainage, transit, roadways, pedestrian and bike access, signalization, electrical, natural gas and the entire telecommunication network are to be examined, as well as site aesthetics such as landscaping, lighting, seating and trash receptacles. The specifics and extent and location of these improvements are to be of the highest priority in conjunction with the effects of stated improvements on the neighboring communities.

Strategic Plan

This Strategic Integration Plan, which covers the physical environment of the medical district, is one of the key recommended implementation actions stemming from Eva Klein and Associates' 2006 *New Orleans Regional Biosciences Initiative Strategic Plan*. That plan, which was completed in April 2007, included:

- Vision, Goals, And Plan Elements
- Innovation System Strategy
- Market Strategy And Marketing Plan Outline
- Leadership And Management Strategy, and most notably, a
- Physical Development Strategy

The Physical Development Strategy ties in naturally to the Eva Klein study which highlights the significance of undertaking urban place redevelopment.

The Eva Klein *Strategic Plan* has been reconfigured to follow the format of this Master Plan and is presented in the Appendices at the end of this document.

Planning Team

The study was completed for the Regional Planning Commission of New Orleans by a consulting team led by N-Y Associates, Inc. They were assisted by the firms of Mathes-Brierre (who assisted in

EXISTING CONDITIONS

matters of architecture, landscape architecture, and rendering) and Essential Environmental Engineering, (who assisted in matters of utilities and other infrastructure).

The Study Area

The overall study area is contiguous with that of the recently created Greater New Orleans Biosciences Economic Development District (GNOBEDD). That area is bounded by Earhart Boulevard, Carrollton Avenue, Iberville Street, and Loyola Avenue/Elks Place. The GNOBEDD boundaries cover not only the traditional medical district near the foot of Tulane Avenue, but also includes Xavier University—which has some definite ties to the medical community in New Orleans-- and the remainder of Tulane Avenue, along which most medical expansion is planned and which is envisioned to evolve into a more competitive biomedical corridor over time.

However, the primary focus of this physical improvement plan remains the heart of the medical district, roughly bounded by Poydras Street, Galvez Street/S. Rocheblave Street, Canal Street, and Loyola Avenue/Elks Place. It is in this area that most new development and redevelopment is centered.

It should be noted that this core district can be easily broken into four sub-areas or ‘quadrants’ for analysis by the bisecting streets of Tulane Avenue and Claiborne Avenue/I-10. The northeast quadrant has traditionally been centered on the Tulane University Medical Center. The southeast quadrant is best known as the previous location of Charity Hospital and the VA Medical Center. The southwest quadrant is almost entirely made up of facilities from the LSU Schools of Medicine. And the northwest quadrant, while traditionally not associated with any medical uses, has been envisioned as a home for replacement facilities for both the Medical Center of Louisiana at New Orleans (replacing Charity) and a new VA complex.

Report Format

The plan document is presented in a multi-chapter tabloid format. Following this *Introduction* section of the first chapter, a *Background* section explores the Medical District History, and reviews past planning efforts. The document continues with an *Existing Conditions* chapter, describing via text and graphics the current physical state of the district. A *Vision and Recommendations* chapter follows, which describes the vision for the district as put forth by the medical district stakeholders and numerous recommendations for the physical improvement of the district (presented via text, maps,

photograph examples and other graphics. The final chapter of the plan document is a *Conclusion* chapter, which summarizes the recommendations and includes an estimate of capital costs.

BACKGROUND

Medical District History

The New Orleans medical district has a long history of collaboration. The spirit of cooperation extends back to 1835, when Charity Hospital established a teaching affiliation with Tulane School of Medicine; Charity Hospital was founded forty years before the signing of the Declaration of Independence. The development of a physical “medical district” began in earnest in the 1930s with the construction of the Charity Hospital and Louisiana State University School of Medicine complex along Tulane Avenue.

Over time, more facilities were added in this area, including the Veterans Administration Medical Center, Delgado School of Nursing, and expansion of both the LSU and Tulane medical campuses. In the 1980s the boundaries began to expand considerably with new LSU facilities being developed on the western side of Claiborne Avenue.

A physical governing body was created in 1978 with the creation of the New Orleans Regional Medical Center (NORMC), which had among its board members the Medical Center of Louisiana (formerly Charity Hospital), the Louisiana State University Medical Center, Hotel Dieu Hospital, Tulane University School of Medicine and University Hospital, the VA Medical Center, and the Downtown Development District. NORMC eventually evolved into the creation of the Louisiana Biomedical Research and Development Park, which ultimately served as the impetus for the gradual development of GNOBEDD.

Under NORMC, several plans were undertaken to improve the district. However, little was done to further those plans. In 2004 Greater New Orleans, Inc. and the City of New Orleans Mayor’s Office of Economic Development began working with representatives from LSU, Tulane, UNO, the Downtown Development District (DDD) and Xavier to form a larger, more broad-reaching Regional New Orleans Bioscience Economic Development District. The district would encompass the area between Iberville, Earhart, Carrollton, and Loyola Avenue and include the area within the existing Louisiana Biomedical and Research Park that contains LSU Health Sciences Center, the Tulane Health Sciences Center, the Louisiana Cancer Consortium, the New Orleans Bioinnovation

Center (NOBIC), the Louisiana Gene Therapy Consortium, Delgado College School of Nursing, the VA Hospital and Charity Hospital. The district would also include Xavier University which was not (originally) part of the Louisiana Biomedical and Research Park area. GNOBEDD was to have the authority to incur debt by selling general revenue bonds and the ability to collect and levy a tax, and develop multi-party bioscience development projects. The District would also introduce a stronger commitment to real estate development with an expanded board and participation from area business leaders through their involvement. In order not to duplicate efforts, the Board of Directors of NORMC voted in late 2004 to place that organization in a “dormant” state. The Louisiana legislature enacted GNOBEDD in 2005, creating the new District.

Shortly afterwards, in August 2005, Hurricane Katrina devastated the city, resulting in the closure of the Charity Hospital complex and the VA Medical Center. The damage to these institutions accelerated the plans to develop a new, state-of-the-art facility for both the VA and LSU, in such proximity that certain services could be shared, resulting in cost savings for both entities.

Past and Ongoing Planning Efforts

Economic Development Plans and Medical District Plans:

Since the founding of the Louisiana Biomedical Research and Development Park in the early 1990s, there have been several Plans developed to address progress in the area’s medical industry, often particularly within the district. These are listed chronologically as follows:

- The *Louisiana Biomedical Research and Development Park Comprehensive Plan* (1992). As required by the Act of the Legislature creating the park, a comprehensive plan for the Park needed to be submitted by the end of 1992. This plan fulfilled those requirements. The plan was completed by Dr. Tim Ryan of the University of New Orleans, and addressed the park’s organizational and governing structure, the economic impact of the park, capital improvement needs, clinical education needs, and other issues affecting the park’s development.
- *Master Plan for the New Orleans Regional Medical Center* (1993). This Master Plan for what is now known as the “core” area of the district, was completed by a team of architects and planners led by the firm of Arthur Q. Davis & John C. Williams. The plan is very similar in nature to this Master Plan, including such elements as recommendations on urban design and transportation, signage/graphics concept and design, landscape

alternatives and cost estimates. The plan is noteworthy in that it was the first true effort to unify the district and was very forward thinking in that it envisioned the quadrant bordered by Galvez, Canal, Tulane and Claiborne as a site for future medical-related uses. Some improvements suggested in this study were implemented including signage, banners and some larger capital improvements (such as the expansion of the skywalk system)

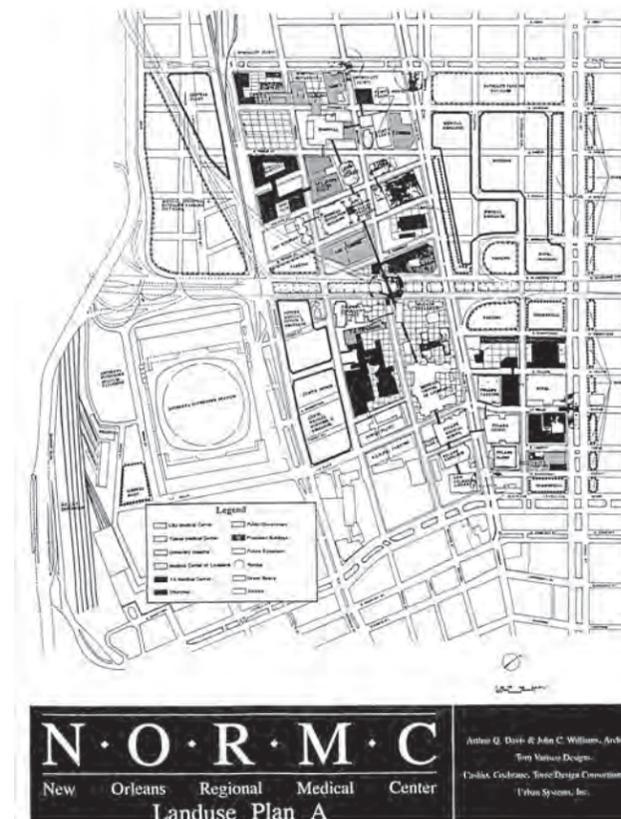
- *Louisiana Vision 2020 - State of Louisiana Master Plan for Economic Development* (1999). Louisiana: Vision 2020 was developed by the Governor of the state as a challenge to create a newer and better Louisiana and as a guide to economic renewal and diversification. The Medical and Biomedical Industry was seen as key in this document; it was identified as one of the state's strong economic base industries that could also provide economic opportunities and was one of six technology 'clusters' that was identified as providing the basis for diversifying the state's economy. As an example, the study noted that the substantial medical client base in state's hospital system gives Louisiana the opportunity to build a lucrative clinical studies capability.
- *2002 Feasibility Characteristics and Probable Impact - Louisiana Wet-Lab Sciences Business Incubator Program* (January 2002) In this study prepared by Hammer, Siler George and Associates for the State of Louisiana, the state evaluated the feasibility of establishing a network of three wet laboratory science business incubators in Shreveport, Baton Rouge and in the medical district of New Orleans to support development in several Vision 2020 technology clusters, specifically: biomedical/biotechnology, environmental technology and food technology. This study evaluated (1) the capacity of these three Louisiana metro areas to support wet lab sciences incubation, (2) the national context and best practices of wet lab incubators, and (3) program, design, cost and operating requirements for wet lab incubators. The most important findings for the New Orleans medical district were that the area had a clear incubator need, that the area had a strong biomedical, environmental and food technologies research base, and that a 60,000 square foot (gross) wet-lab incubator should be developed in New Orleans with a tenant focus on life science, environmental and food science companies.
- *Comprehensive Plan for the New Orleans Biomedical Research and Development Park* (March 2002 update). The BRDP's first Comprehensive Plan outlined its proposed governance structure, roles and responsibilities of each member institution, and capital and operational funding needs and sources for the Park, as well as return on investment measures in the form of economic, employment, and tax revenue impact estimates. In

the ten years since the BRDP was created, much had changed in Louisiana and it is was felt that it was now time to update the original plan.

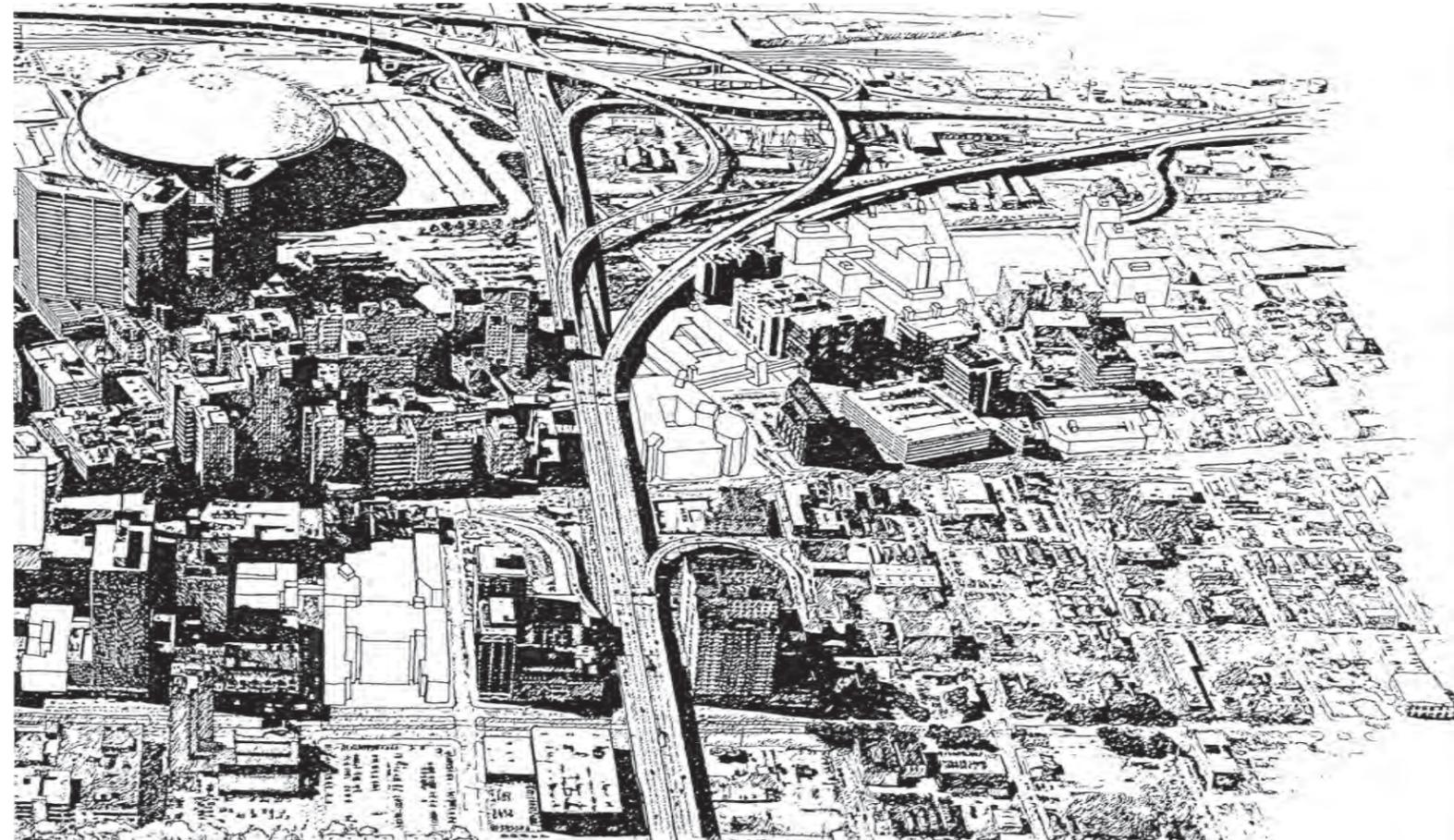
Several important changes between the 1992 and 2002 plans included:

- A new, more streamlined governance and operating structure for the BRDP Commission;
- Revised roles and responsibilities for the BRDP member institutions;
- Potential needs for and sources of funding for operations and capital projects;
- Plans for construction of a wet lab incubator to serve as a primary facility of the BRDP;
- Revised economic, employment, and tax revenue impact estimates.

The Master Plan Update included a proposed facility plan which identified projects that were in varying stages of planning and development and were anticipated to be completed by 2010, as well as a future development plan, which identified areas targeted for future development (including residential development) within the boundaries of the BRDP. The Update also noted that a key component of the state's economic devel-

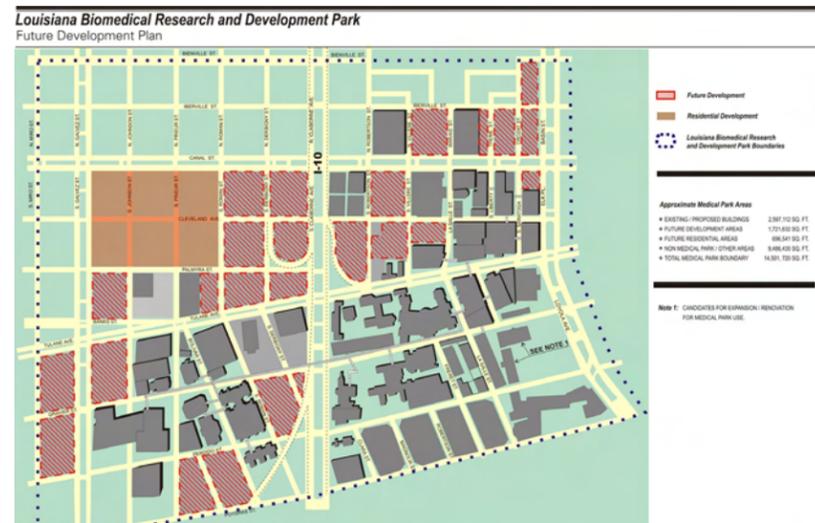
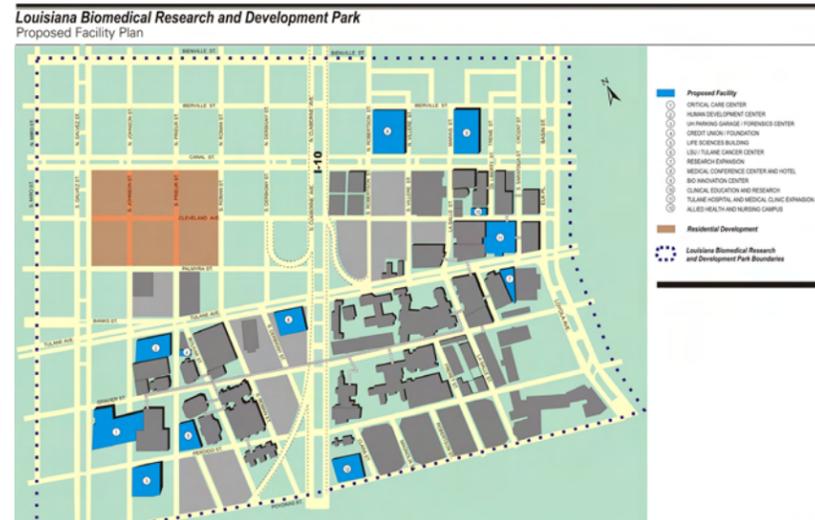


1993 Master Plan for New Orleans Regional Medical Center





Initial idea for Bioinnovation Center



2002 update, Louisiana Biomedical Research and Development Park Comprehensive Plan

opment program was the creation of a statewide network of wet lab incubators to provide vital infrastructure for clusters of biomedical and biotechnology development, and that the development of a wet lab facility in New Orleans is timely and consistent with Louisiana: Vision 2020. The Update foresaw the wet lab incubator, referred to as The BioInnovation Center, as the centerpiece of the BRDP.

- *LSU Health Sciences Center Advisory Plan (2007).* In 2007, Adams Management in conjunction with the firm of NBBJ developed a proposed site plan for the LSU Health Sciences Center main campus. The plan proposed expansion under two main areas: LSU HSC uses and housing. The plan called for new buildings at roughly the same scale as the existing campus along the east side of Galvez and the north side of Tulane Avenue, as well as a new building in the block bounded by S. Derbigny, Perdido, S. Roman and Gravier streets, and a new LSUHSC building along Bolivar Street between Poydras and Perdido Street. The plan called for converting Bolivar and S. Derbigny Streets into more of pedestrian mall configuration, as well as the construction of new parking garages along Poydras St. between Bertrand and S. Johnson Streets. In terms of housing, the plan called for the demolition of the existing LSUHSC dormitory adjacent to the I-10 ramps and replacing them with greenspace. The site envisioned the construction of 1,225,000 sq. ft. of residential space on multi-story buildings, to be located on the former site of the VA Hospital and the old LSU Medical School. The Advisory plan also envisioned the adaptive reuse of the Charity Hospital Building and the addition of much greenspace and landscaping.

Land Use Policies:

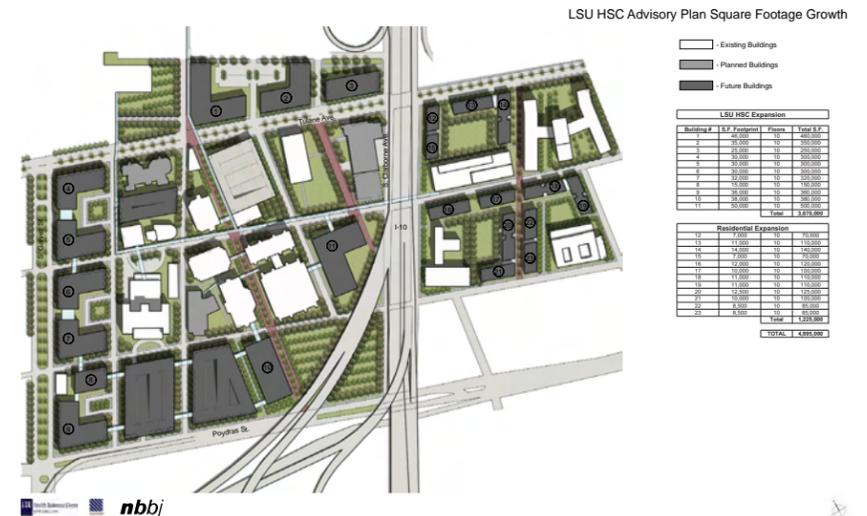
There have been a number of land use policies, which provide guidance for future development, that focus on the area around the New Orleans Medical District. These are summarized below.

- *City of New Orleans Master Plan:* The land use element of the City of New Orleans Master Plan was adopted in 1999. The plan recommended the continued existence of institutional and public/semi-public uses around the former Charity and VA Hospitals, the Tulane University Health Sciences Center and Hospital and the LSU Health Sciences Center. The area bounded by Claiborne Avenue, Galvez Street, Canal Street and Tulane Avenue was recommended as commercial and residential.
- *Lambert Advisory District 4 Plan:* Lambert Advisory, LLC was hired by the City of New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina to develop recovery plans for the most damaged neighborhoods. Portions of the Medical District, northwest of Claiborne Avenue, fall in District 4. Here, the plan recognized future medically-

related development around the LSU Health Sciences Center. Again, the area bounded by Claiborne Avenue, Galvez Street, Canal Street and Tulane Avenue was recommended as commercial and residential.

- *Unified New Orleans Plan, District 4 and District 1:* The Unified New Orleans Plan (UNOP) was another post-Katrina planning effort aimed at pulling together all of the neighborhood recovery plans. The plan for District 4, which covers the portion of the Medical District northwest of Claiborne Avenue, introduced the concept of a LSU/VA Regional Medical Center covering most of the area between Galvez Street, Claiborne Avenue, Poydras Street and Canal Street with the exception of the residential area between Palmyra and Cleveland. Southeast of Claiborne Avenue, the District 1 plan recommended the development of office/lab/medical research uses and associated parking structures on vacant and underdeveloped sites in the Medical District.

Collectively, these plans represent the evolution of the concept of the New Orleans Medical District from an area restricted to past medical uses and footprints to one of expanded size and economic potential.



2007 LSU Health Sciences Center Advisory Plan