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NEW ORLEANS EAST

Climate Vulnerability and Green Infrastructure Project

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Funding

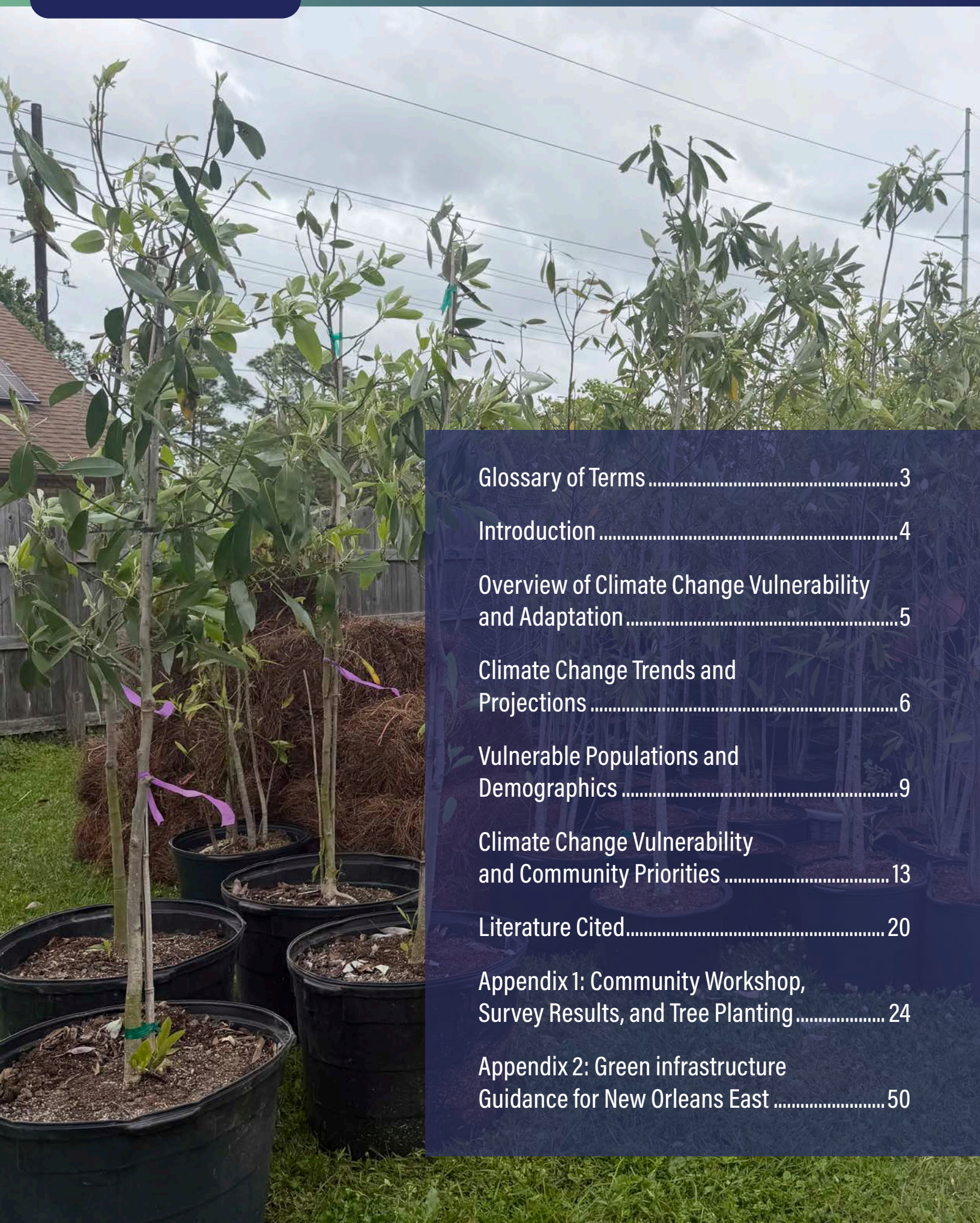
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Adaptation

the process of adjusting what we do or how we live in response to current or expected climate conditions in order to reduce risks and minimize harm (1).

Climate change

a long-term shift in Earth's climate that lasts for an extended period, typically decades or longer. Climate change can result from natural processes or human activities that alter the atmosphere, such as the burning of fossil fuels and changes in land use (2).

Climate change stressor

a change in climate (such as hotter days, extreme flooding, rising seas, or stronger storms) that puts pressure on people, nature, and the things we build, thus making problems more likely or more severe. Some stressors occur suddenly (for example, a heat wave or a hurricane), while others build up over time (such as sea level rise or long-term warming) (2,3).

Displacement

the involuntary or necessary movement of people from their homes or communities due to hazardous conditions or events, including natural or human-caused disasters. In a climate context, displacement can result from hazards such as flooding, severe storms, wildfires, and other climate-related events (4,5).

Extreme precipitation

an event in which a location receives much more rain or snow over a short period of time than is normal for that location and season (6).

Extreme heat

weather conditions that are much hotter than average for a particular location and time of year.

Frontline community

groups of people who are directly affected by climate change and societal inequity at disproportionately higher rates than other groups with greater access to power and resources (7).

Green infrastructure

a planned network of natural and built ecological systems, green spaces, and other landscape features that provide benefits such as cleaner air and water, cooler temperatures, improved flood management, and coastal protection, often supporting both people and nature (2).

Mitigation

human actions that help slow climate change by reducing greenhouse gases (gases in the atmosphere that trap heat, such as carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, and water vapor) or by increasing "sinks" (natural systems or processes that remove these gases from the air) (2).

Nature-based solutions

actions to protect, sustainably manage, and restore natural or modified ecosystems that address societal challenges effectively and adaptively, while simultaneously providing human well-being and biodiversity benefits (8).

Resilience

the capacity of a community, business, or natural environment to prevent, withstand, respond to, and recover from a disruption (1).

Vulnerability

how easily people, places, or systems (such as power, water, or transportation) can be harmed by climate change, based on their exposure to climate change impacts, the severity of those impacts, and their ability to recover from the impacts (3).

New Orleans East Climate Vulnerability and Green Infrastructure Project

The New Orleans East Climate Vulnerability & Green Infrastructure Project was developed to help create a greener, healthier, and more climate-resilient New Orleans East. The project brought together the New Orleans East Green Infrastructure Collective, EcoAdapt, Water Wise Gulf South, City of New Orleans Department of Parks and Parkways, and New Orleans East residents. **Its activities included research on climate projections, impacts, and vulnerabilities; community outreach and education; and neighborhood tree plantings.**

What is this Report?

This report synthesizes climate science, local data, and community experiences to better understand how climate change is affecting New Orleans East. It is designed to help the New Orleans East Green Infrastructure Collective, its partners, and the residents of New Orleans East plan future climate adaptation and green infrastructure projects, communicate with stakeholders and funders, and build on the climate change resilience work already underway across New Orleans East.



Why Community Input Matters

Data can tell us where temperatures are rising, where flooding occurs, or where tree canopy is limited. Residents can tell us what those conditions mean in everyday life. Community members know where streets feel hottest, where flooding causes problems, where services are difficult to reach, and where additional trees or green infrastructure could make a difference.

You see and experience things in your neighborhood that data and research alone can't show.

How to Use This Report

This report is intended to be both a record of the project and a resource for future action.

It can be used to:

- communicate climate risks and community priorities;
- support grant applications and funding requests;
- identify opportunities for future projects;
- inform conversations with residents, partners, and decision makers;
- guide tree planting and green infrastructure planning; and
- connect readers with additional data and tools.

New Orleans East

New Orleans East is a geographically distinct part of New Orleans. It is bordered to the north by Lake Pontchartrain and to the east by Lake Borgne. The southern and western perimeters are bounded by the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway and the Industrial Canal. New Orleans East is home to the Little Woods, Pines Village, Plum Orchard, Read Boulevard East and West, West Lake Forest, Village de L'Est, and Viavant-Venetian Isles neighborhoods.

Much of New Orleans East was developed in the latter half of the twentieth century, with new neighborhoods established primarily from the 1960s through the 1980s. Over time, the area became home to substantial Black and Vietnamese communities (9,10). The area has also experienced major social, environmental, and economic disruptions, including the 1980s oil downturn and Hurricane Katrina in 2005, as well as longer-term challenges associated with disinvestment and infrastructure needs (11,12).

Environmental, historical, social, and economic factors are essential to understanding the climate change vulnerability of New Orleans East. Climate impacts do not occur in isolation. Rather, climate stressors interact with existing community conditions, shaping who or what is exposed, the severity of impacts, and the resources available to prepare, respond, and recover.

Understanding those local conditions is essential to identifying useful and equitable approaches to climate adaptation.

Look for the Key Findings lists throughout the report!

These provide short, community-friendly summaries of the most important information from each section.

Climate Change Adaptation

Climate change adaptation is the process of preparing for and adjusting to climate changes that are already occurring or expected in the future. Adaptation seeks to reduce harm from climate-related stressors while strengthening a community's ability to cope with changing conditions.

Adaptation can take many forms, including changes to policies and planning, improvements to infrastructure, protection or restoration of natural systems, emergency preparedness, and programs that strengthen community resources and support networks.

Adaptation is not only about responding to climate impacts after they occur but also about anticipating future conditions and building communities and systems that are better able to withstand and recover from climate-related disruptions.

Understanding Climate Change Vulnerability

Climate change vulnerability is the degree to which people, communities, resources, or systems may be harmed by climate change. Vulnerability depends not only on the climate changes that occur but also on how sensitive communities are to those changes and on their ability to prepare for, respond to, and recover from the resulting impacts. **Several related concepts listed below can help explain climate vulnerability** (Figure 1):

- **Exposure** is the extent to which a person, community, resource, or system experiences climate-related changes or stressors, such as rising temperatures, flooding, drought, or severe storms.
- **Sensitivity** describes how strongly a person, community, resource, or system may be affected by a climate-related stressor.

- **Climate impacts** are the consequences of climate stressors, such as damage to homes from flooding, health effects from extreme heat, or disruptions to transportation and essential services.
- **Adaptive capacity** is the ability to prepare for, adjust to, cope with, and recover from climate impacts. It can be influenced by factors such as access to funding and other resources, governance and institutional capacity, infrastructure, information, community support, and social networks.

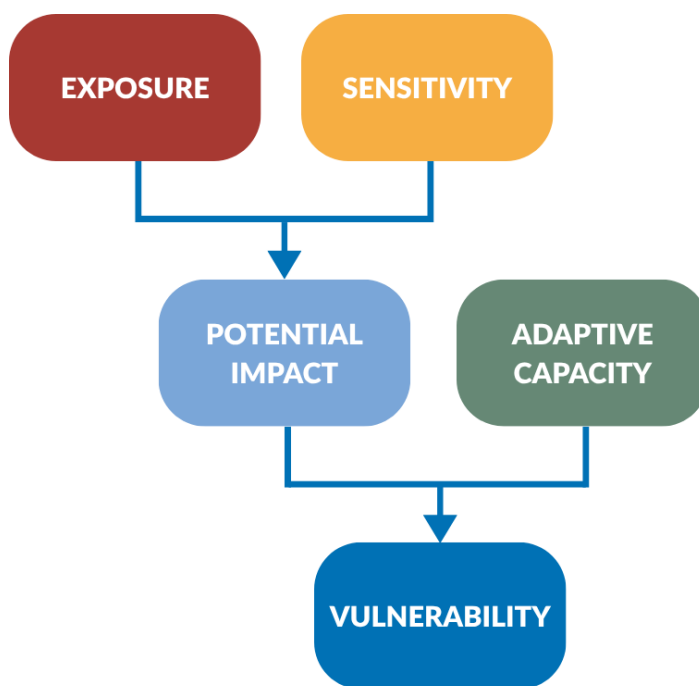
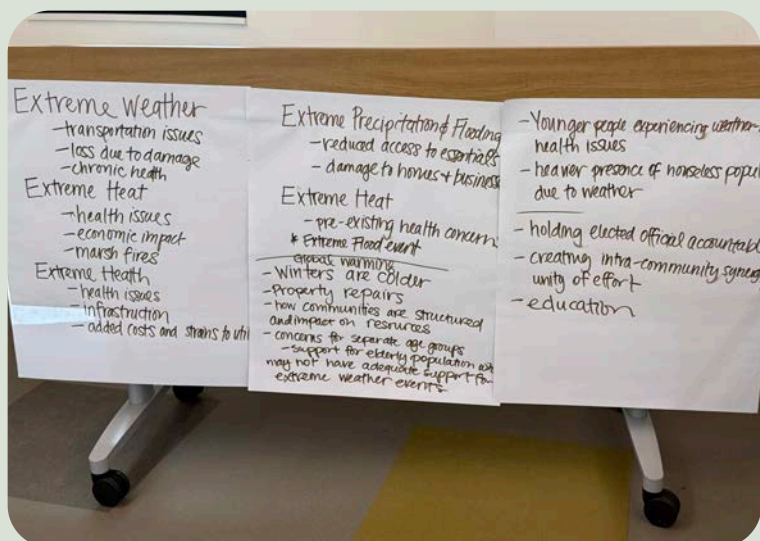


Figure 1: Factors that make up vulnerability. Adapted from Glick et al. 2011. (13).



Understanding vulnerability is a first step toward reducing climate risk. Adaptation strategies can address different components of vulnerability by reducing exposure, decreasing sensitivity, strengthening adaptive capacity, or addressing multiple factors simultaneously.

Because climate conditions, community needs, and available resources can change over time, adaptation is an ongoing process. **Assessing vulnerability, implementing actions, monitoring outcomes, and adjusting strategies as new information becomes available can help communities continue to build resilience as the climate changes.**

- **Average temperatures are projected to rise** about 5 degrees Fahrenheit (°F) by mid-century and nearly 8°F by the end of this century.
- **Extreme heat days above 95°F are projected to increase** to about 57 days per year in Orleans Parish by 2050 and 115 days per year by 2100.
- Annual rainfall may change relatively little overall, but **projections show summers will be drier and autumns will be wetter.**
- **The heaviest rainfall events are projected to become more intense**, which will increase the risk of flooding in the low-lying New Orleans East. The most extreme rainfall events in southern Louisiana could become about 20 to 30% heavier by the end of the century.
- **Hurricanes are expected to bring greater rainfall, storm surge, and flood risks as the climate warms.**
- **Sea level rise will increase coastal flood risk.** Gulf Coast sea levels are projected to rise about 14–18 inches by 2050, with up to 55 inches of sea level rise possible in the New Orleans area by 2100.

Air Temperature and Extreme Heat

Since 1970, the average annual temperature in New Orleans has increased by 4.4°F (14). By 2050, the annual average temperature (the average daily temperature averaged over the whole year) for Orleans Parish is projected to reach 74.25°F, approximately 5.2°F warmer than the 1981–2010 historical average of 69.09°F. Warming is projected across seasons, with average winter temperatures increasing to 59.89°F (about 5.2°F warmer than the historical winter average of 54.65°F) and average summer temperatures increasing to 87.25°F (about 5.0°F warmer than the historical summer average of 82.26°F) (15).

Warming is projected to intensify by the end of this century, with the annual average temperature in Orleans Parish reaching 76.82°F, approximately 7.7°F above the historical average. Average winter

temperatures are projected to rise to 62.02°F, about 7.4°F above the historical average, while average summer temperatures are projected to reach 89.93°F (15).

Extreme Heat

On average, someone in Louisiana will experience about 52 extremely hot days in 2050 (defined as days above ~95°F (16). Extreme heat events are likely to increase significantly in Orleans Parish (Figure 2). In Orleans Parish, the number of extreme heat days is projected to increase from the 1961–1990 historical average of 6.5 days per year to 57 by 2050. By 2100, the number of annual extreme heat days will increase to approximately 115 (17).

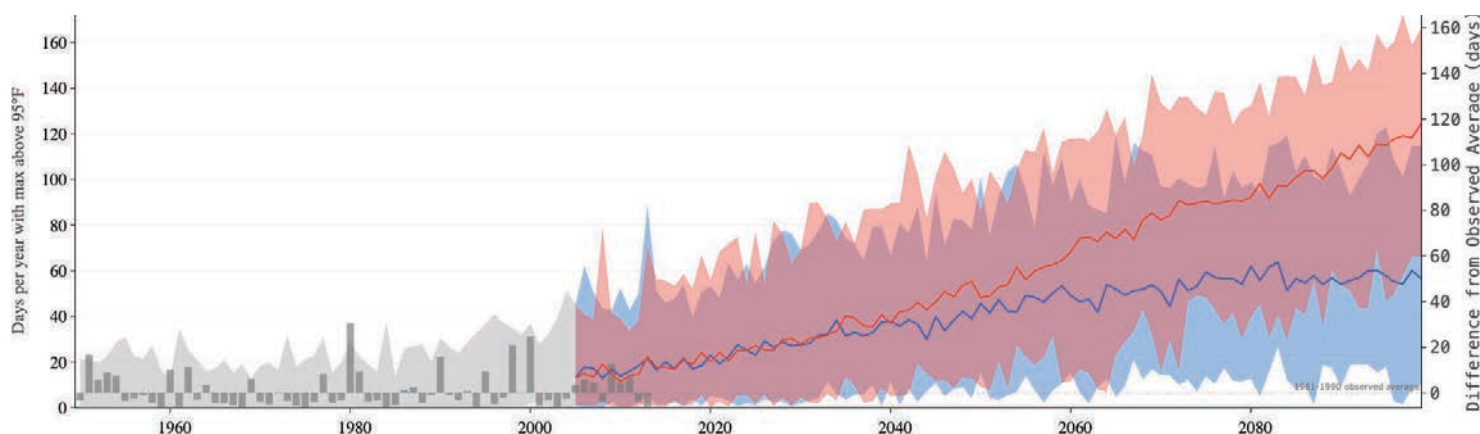


Figure 2: Number of days in Orleans Parish, Louisiana with a maximum temperature of >95°F. The grey band and bars represent modeled historical data and observations. The blue band shows projections for 2006–2100 based on lower emissions scenarios. The darker blue line shows the weighted mean of projections for lower emissions. The red band shows projections for 2006–2100 based on higher emissions scenarios. The darker red line shows the weighted mean of all projections for higher emissions (17).

¹ Unless otherwise noted, projections presented in this section reflect a higher-emissions scenario. Higher-emissions scenarios provide a precautionary basis for evaluating potential future climate risks and can help reduce the risk of underestimating changes relevant to long-term planning.

Precipitation

The annual average precipitation in Orleans Parish is projected to change little relative to historical conditions. By 2050, annual average precipitation is projected to increase to approximately 61.41 inches per year, about 3.3 inches above the 1961–1990 historical average of 58.12 inches per year. By 2100, annual average precipitation is projected to be 57.78 inches per year (17). Mid-century and end-of-century projections for average monthly precipitation indicate approximately 5 inches per month, close to the 1981–2010 historical average of 4.95 inches per month (15).

The seasonal distribution of precipitation in Orleans Parish is projected to shift. Historically (1981–2010), average monthly precipitation was approximately 4.86 inches in winter, 4.73 inches in spring, 5.96 inches in summer, and 4.24 inches in fall. By 2100, summer precipitation is projected to decline by about 0.5 inch per month (Figure 3), while fall precipitation is projected to increase by about 0.6 inch per month (Figure 4).

Extreme Precipitation and Flooding

Since the 1950s, the frequency of heavy precipitation events has increased across the contiguous United States (18,19). Since 1970, Louisiana's total annual precipitation has generally been above average, and the number of days with 4 inches or more of precipitation (indicating an extreme precipitation event) has also been above average since 1980. Between 2015 and 2020, extreme precipitation events of 4 inches or more in Louisiana trended above average (16,19).

In Orleans Parish, from 1961 to 1990, about 2.6 days annually had at least 2 inches of precipitation, and roughly 0.7 day each year saw at least 3 inches. The number of days with at least 2 inches of precipitation is projected to increase to approximately 2.8 days per year by mid-century, then return to approximately 2.6 days per year by the end of the century. Days with at least 3 inches of precipitation are projected to increase from approximately 0.7 day historically to 0.9 day per year by both mid- and end-of-century (17).

These projections for Orleans Parish suggest relatively little change in the overall frequency of days with at least 2 inches of rainfall, but a modest increase in the number of days with heavier rainfall totals. This pattern aligns with broader projections for Louisiana, which indicate that total annual precipitation may change little while heavy precipitation becomes more frequent or intense (20). By the end of the century, the most extreme 1% of rainfall events in southern Louisiana are projected to become approximately 20–30% more intense under a higher-emissions scenario (20). New Orleans East is low-lying, and increased heavy rainfall (especially short-duration heavy rain) raises the risk of urban flooding and water pooling where it shouldn't (21).

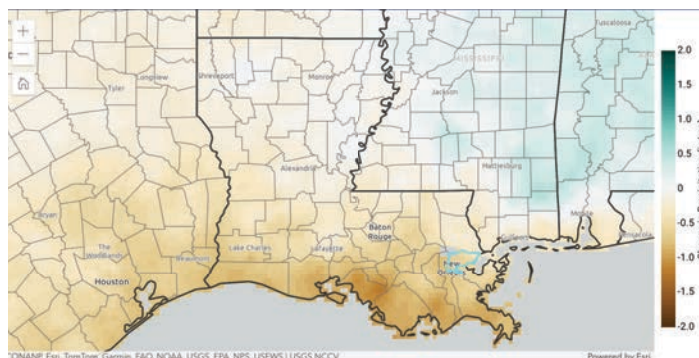


Figure 3: Projected change in summer precipitation for Orleans Parish, Louisiana and the surrounding region for 2075–2099 relative to 1981–2010 under the SSP5-8.5 emission scenario. Values show the multi-model mean change in precipitation (inches per month) (15). Data sources: CONANP, Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, EPA, NPS, USFWS, USGS NCCV.²



Figure 4: Projected change in fall precipitation for Orleans Parish, Louisiana and the surrounding region for 2075–2099 relative to 1981–2010 under the SSP5-8.5 emission scenario. Values show the multi-model mean change in precipitation (inches per month) (15). Data sources: CONANP, Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, EPA, NPS, USFWS, USGS NCCV.²

Extreme Weather Events and Storms

Warming temperatures are expected to increase rainfall within tropical storms and storm surge potential. Extreme precipitation events will occur during hurricanes, and a warmer, moister atmosphere is projected to affect both hurricane intensity and speed (22). Between 1979 and 2017, hurricane surface wind speed increased globally by 8% per decade, a pattern likely to continue (translating to more intense, higher-category storms) (23). Hurricanes tend to lose energy as they move away from the ocean, but the rate of this decay has slowed since the 1960s, thus allowing storms to extend somewhat farther inland (24,25). In the Atlantic Ocean, in particular, hurricane movement slowed by 16% between 1949 and 2016, a trend associated with significant increases in the amount of rain falling in a given area (26). Slower-moving storms can result in heavier rainfall, wind damage, storm surge, and coastal flooding (25).

Hurricane Katrina provides historical context for understanding future climate risks in New Orleans East. The storm showed the area's susceptibility to storm surge, levee overtopping and failure, widespread flooding, and overwhelmed drainage systems. Hurricane Katrina made landfall along the Gulf Coast in August 2005 as a Category 3 hurricane, causing catastrophic damage across New Orleans and the broader region. In eastern New Orleans, storm surge reached approximately 15–19 feet. Within about 24 hours of landfall, roughly 80 percent of New Orleans was flooded, with water depths reaching up to about 20 feet in some areas. The surge overtopped and breached multiple levees and floodwalls, allowing large volumes of water to enter the city through waterways and drainage canals. Flooding overwhelmed major pump stations and inundated an estimated 147,000 residential properties (27). Additionally, between 1980 and 2025, Louisiana experienced 27 billion-dollar hurricanes (28).

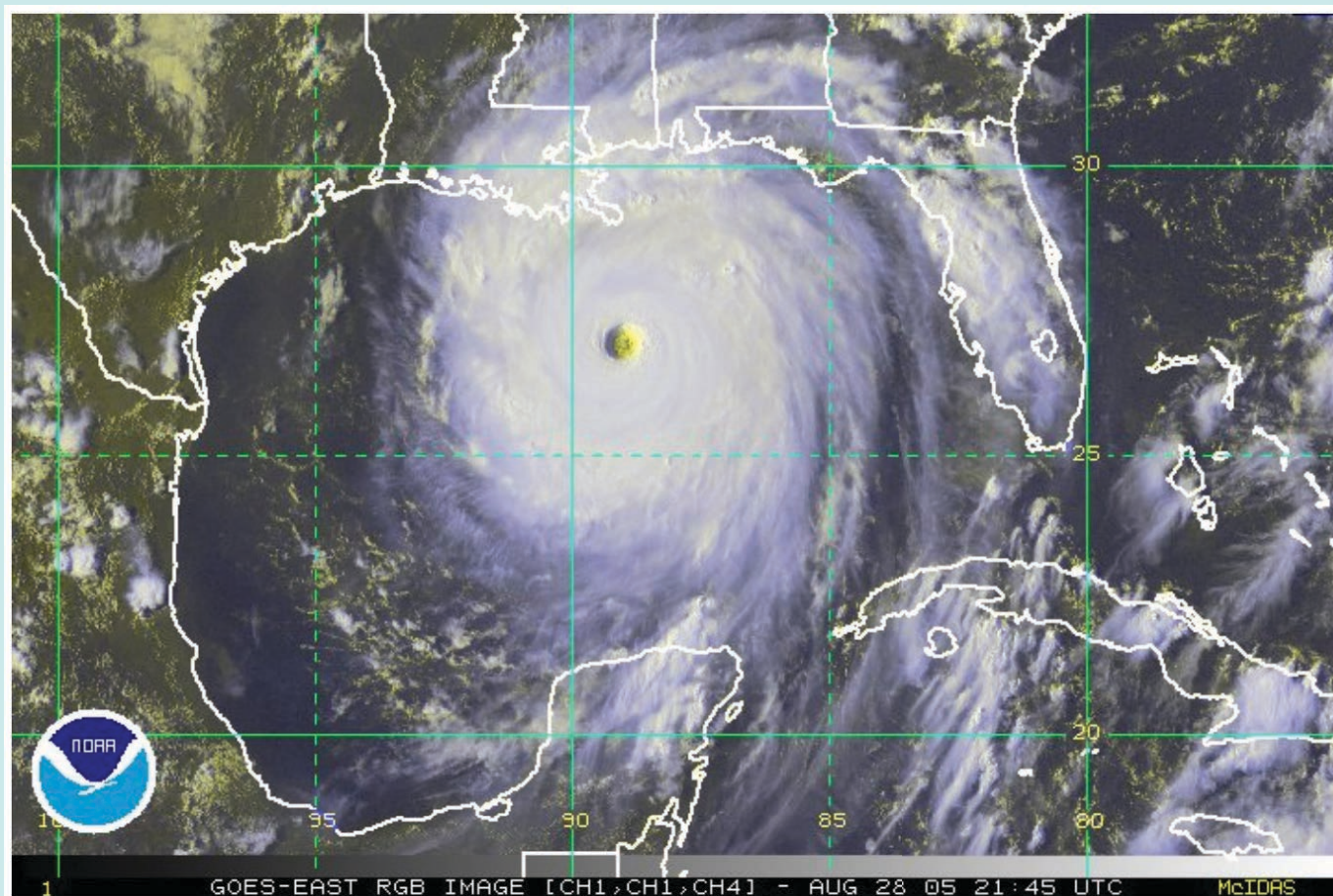


Image: Hurricane Katrina Landfall along central U.S. Gulf Coast at 21:45 UTC on August 28, 2005. Public Domain, U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=297281

New Orleans faces significant coastal land loss, which, along with projected climate change impacts, heightens the city's vulnerability to storm surge flooding (28). Vulnerability is particularly high in areas outside the levee protection system (28).

On average, Louisiana has the second-highest annual number of thunderstorms in the contiguous United States (after Florida), with a typical location in the state averaging more than 60 thunderstorms per year (21).

Sea Level Rise

Since 1900, global average sea level has risen by about 7–8 inches. It is projected to rise another 1–8 feet (12–96 inches), with a likely range

of 12–55 inches, by 2100 (21). Sea level on the Gulf Coast is projected to rise by 14–18 inches by 2050, which will exceed the amount observed over the last 100 years (29). Based on current emissions, 2 feet (24 inches) of sea level rise is expected along the U.S. coast between 2020 and 2100 (29). Without reducing emissions, 3.5–7 feet (42–84 inches) of sea level rise might occur by 2100. The western Gulf Coast has experienced high rates of sea level rise due to subsidence, which has caused the loss of nearly 2,000 square miles of land since the 1930s (21). Subsidence may have contributed to Louisiana's sea level rise rate being four times the global average (21). Much of Louisiana is at extreme risk of sea level rise due to its low elevation, which averages only 3 feet in the southeastern part of the state (21,28).

This section outlines the demographics of New Orleans East and identifies populations that may be more vulnerable to climate-related impacts. Although all residents may be affected, vulnerability is not evenly distributed. Existing inequities and disparities in access to resources can heighten exposure to climate hazards, increase sensitivity to their effects, or limit the ability to prepare, respond, and recover. As a result, people of color, lower-income residents, people with disabilities, residents who lack access to information or services in their preferred language, young children, older adults, and other populations may face greater risks and barriers (30).

KEY FINDINGS

- **Vulnerability is not evenly distributed across New Orleans East.** Income, age, disability, transportation, language access, occupation, and access to essential services can affect residents' ability to prepare for, respond to, and recover from climate impacts.
- **Income restrictions may limit resources available for adaptation and recovery.** New Orleans East has a lower median household income than the rest of the city.
- **Age and disability can increase sensitivity to climate hazards.** Citywide, 5.4% of residents are under age 5, 17.2% are age 65 or older, and approximately 14.2% have a disability.
- **Language access is an important consideration for preparedness and outreach.** The majority of residents in New Orleans East speak English; however, a portion of residents speak Spanish and Vietnamese.
- **Transportation, occupation, and access to services can create additional vulnerability.** Some residents work in occupations with greater exposure to heat, storms, flooding, and infrastructure disruptions, while limited vehicle or transit access can make evacuation and access to essential services more difficult.

Race and Ethnicity

Black, Brown, Latino, and Indigenous communities have long faced discriminatory zoning and urban planning policies, disinvestment in their communities, elevated risk of chronic health conditions, and other effects of systemic racism, all of which could exacerbate the effects of climate change (31). People of color are more likely to live in areas at higher risk of flooding and have greater exposure to the urban heat island effect, air pollution, and other environmental contaminants (32). In New Orleans East, these patterns are important to consider, as climate impacts may be more difficult to cope with and recover from, particularly for residents who also face challenges with transportation, healthcare access, and food security (31–33).

New Orleans East is predominantly Black, with Black residents comprising approximately 84% of the population (Figure 5), compared with about 54% citywide. Asian residents make up just over 6% of the population, with a notable concentration in the Read Boulevard East neighborhood (Figure 6), compared with about 3% citywide. Hispanic and Latino residents are concentrated in Viavant-Venetian Isles, where they account for nearly one-quarter of the neighborhood population (Figure 7), compared with roughly 8% across New Orleans (34).

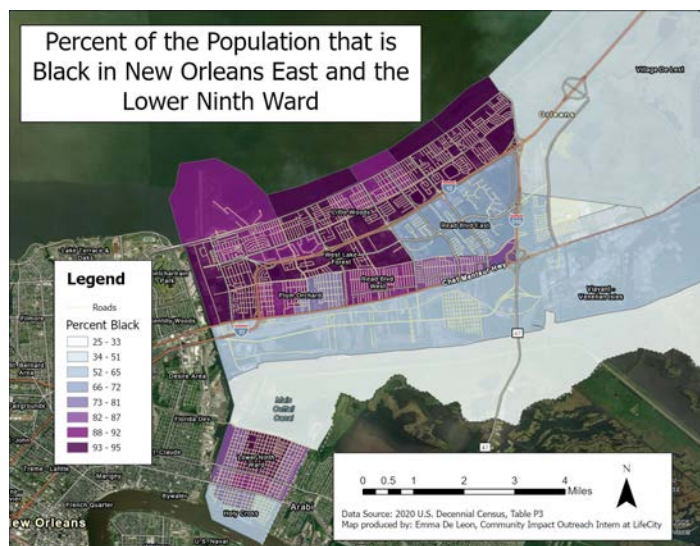


Figure 5: Map showing the percentage of the population in New Orleans East who are Black. Source: Map images were produced by Emma De Leon, and the images were taken from the Thriving Communities Louisiana website (thrivingcommunitiesla.org), a Project of LifeCity (mylifecity.com)

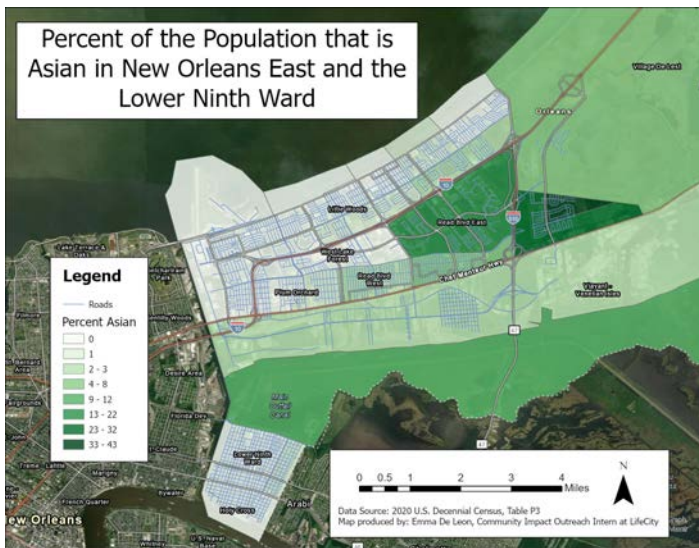


Figure 6: Map showing the percentage of the population in New Orleans East who are Asian. Source: Map images were produced by Emma De Leon, and the images were taken from the Thriving Communities Louisiana website (thrivingcommunitiesla.org), a Project of LifeCity (mylifecity.com)

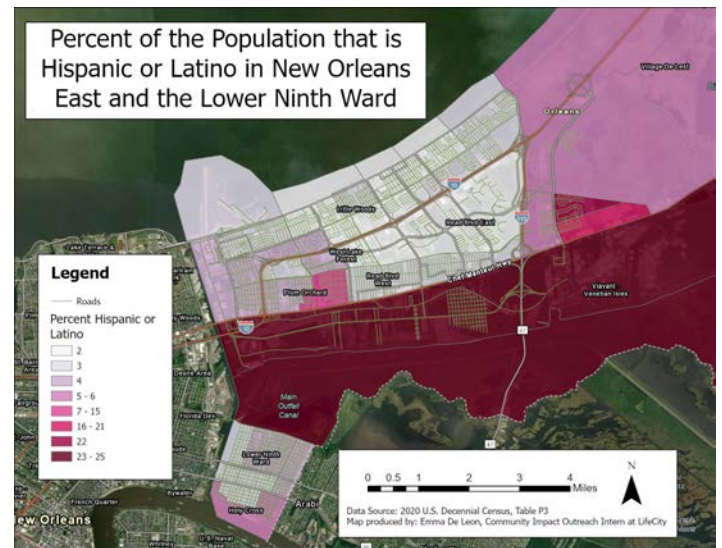


Figure 7: Map showing the percentage of the population in New Orleans East who are Hispanic or Latino. Source: Map images were produced by Emma De Leon, and the images were taken from the Thriving Communities Louisiana website (thrivingcommunitiesla.org), a Project of LifeCity (mylifecity.com)

Income and Poverty

Low-income residents are more likely to rely on public transportation, experience food insecurity, and have fewer financial resources to prepare for or recover from extreme events (33, 35). Financial constraints can also limit the ability to manage rising energy costs, make protective home improvements or repairs, evacuate or secure temporary housing, replace damaged belongings, and absorb lost income when work is disrupted. These factors can increase vulnerability before, during, and after climate-related events (32).

New Orleans East has lower household incomes and higher poverty rates than New Orleans overall. Based on 2022 American Community Survey data, the median household income in New Orleans East was approximately \$40,088, compared with \$55,580 citywide. Income also varies considerably within New Orleans East, with lower median household incomes in Viavant-Venetian Isles, West Lake Forest, and Pines Village, and higher incomes in Read Boulevard East and Village de L'Est (Figure 8). Approximately 29.5% of households in New Orleans East live below the federal poverty line, with the highest poverty rates in Viavant-Venetian Isles, which also has the area's lowest median household income (Figure 9) (34).

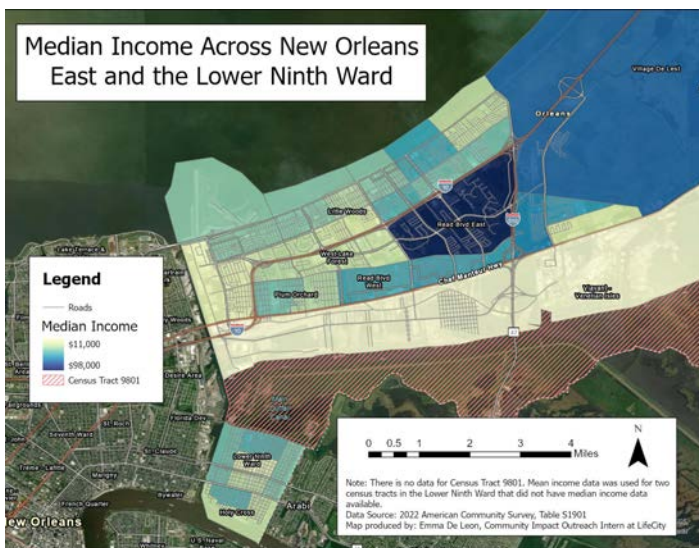


Figure 8: Map showing the median income in New Orleans East. Source: Map images were produced by Emma De Leon, and the images were taken from the Thriving Communities Louisiana website (thrivingcommunitiesla.org), a Project of LifeCity (mylifecity.com)

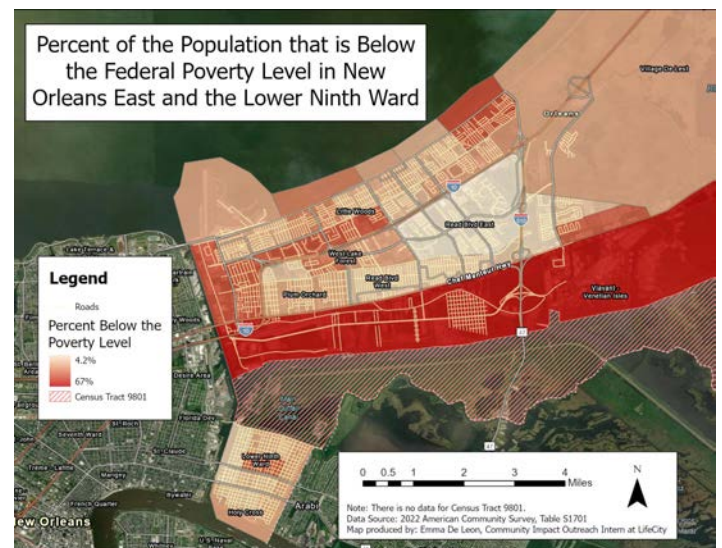


Figure 9: Map showing the percentage of the population in New Orleans East that is below the federal poverty line. Source: Map images were produced by Emma De Leon, and the images were taken from the Thriving Communities Louisiana website (thrivingcommunitiesla.org), a Project of LifeCity (mylifecity.com)

Children 5 and Under

Infants and young children are particularly susceptible to dehydration and heat-related illness and rely on caregivers to keep them cool and hydrated during extreme heat events (36,37). Climate-related changes in air quality can also worsen respiratory conditions such as asthma, while flooding and infectious diseases can create additional health risks for children (30,31,38). During severe weather or other emergencies, young children may have limited ability to recognize hazards, communicate symptoms, or evacuate independently, making them especially dependent on caregivers and on functioning transportation, healthcare, food, water, and other essential services. In New Orleans, 5.4% of residents are under age 5 and 19.7% are under age 18 (39).

Seniors 65 and Over

Older adults may be particularly vulnerable to climate-related health impacts, including poor air quality, severe flooding, and associated risks (e.g., waterborne illness, mold) (30,32). The body's ability to adjust to sudden temperature changes can decline with age, and chronic health conditions and certain medications can further heighten sensitivity to extreme heat. Climate-related disruptions may pose challenges for older adults with limited

mobility, those who live alone, and those who depend on medications, medical equipment, or caregivers. Power outages and transportation disruptions can reduce access to essential services, thus potentially increasing health and safety risks during and after extreme events. In New Orleans, approximately 17.2% of residents are 65 or older (39).

Individuals with Disabilities

People with disabilities may face greater climate-related risks when stressors interact with mobility, sensory, cognitive, or health-related needs. Existing barriers to accessible services and accommodations, as well as financial constraints experienced by some people with disabilities, can further affect their ability to cope with extreme events and increase vulnerability to impacts such as poor air quality, infectious diseases, food insecurity, and power outages (31,40–43). Based on the 2024 American Community Survey 1-year estimates, approximately 14.2% of residents have a disability in New Orleans. The American Community Survey considers six types of functional difficulty: hearing, vision, cognitive, ambulatory, self-care, and independent living difficulties (44).

Residents with Limited English Proficiency

Residents who have limited English proficiency may face additional challenges when climate-related information, emergency warnings, evacuation instructions, or assistance programs are not available in their preferred language. Language barriers can make it difficult to access timely information before, during, and after an extreme event, particularly when residents must quickly make decisions about evacuation, shelter, transportation, or other emergency needs (31,45).

English accounts for 91.7% of languages spoken, while Asian/Pacific Island languages account for 4.6% (Figure 10), and Spanish for 3.1% (Figure 11). Among Asian/Pacific Islander languages, Vietnamese is widely spoken in the community (34).

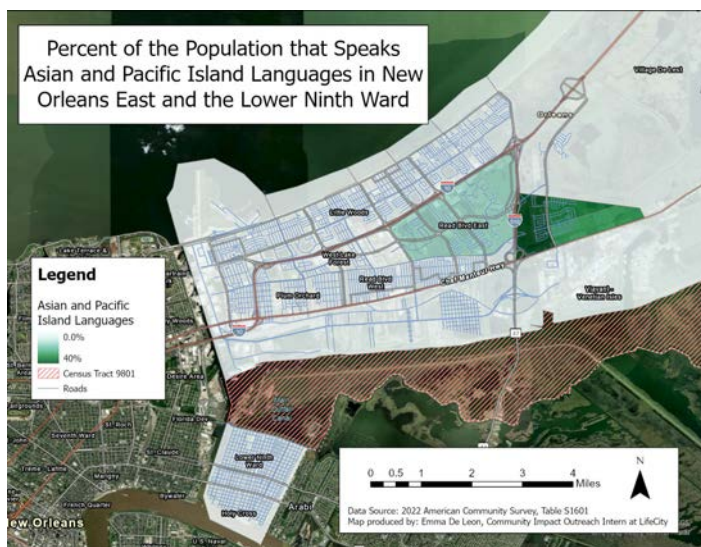


Figure 10: Map showing the percentage of the population in New Orleans East who speak Asian/Pacific Island languages. Source: Map images were produced by Emma De Leon, and the images were taken from the Thriving Communities Louisiana website (thrivingcommunitiesla.org), a Project of LifeCity (mylifecity.com)

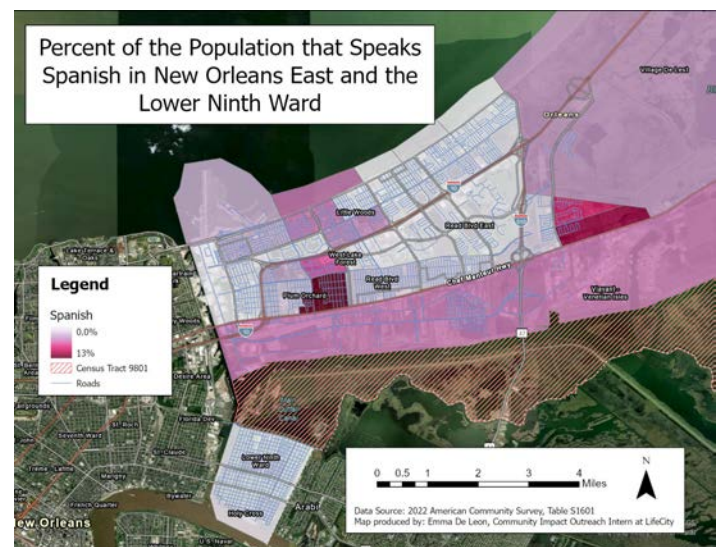


Figure 11: Map showing the percentage of the population in New Orleans East who speak Spanish. Source: Map images were produced by Emma De Leon, and the images were taken from the Thriving Communities Louisiana website (thrivingcommunitiesla.org), a Project of LifeCity (mylifecity.com)



At-Risk Workers

Some occupations can increase workers' exposure to climate-related hazards because they involve outdoor work, strenuous activity, hot indoor environments, or responsibilities that continue during extreme weather events (46). Workers in construction, transportation, emergency services, food service, utilities, and similar fields may face greater exposure to climate impacts, including extreme heat, poor air quality, contaminants, and service disruptions (47,48). The City of New Orleans identifies outdoor workers as a population that requires additional caution during extreme heat (49). These risks may be heightened for lower-wage, at-risk workers with limited access to paid leave or workplace protections (47,48).

Transportation and Vehicle Access

Limited access to a personal vehicle or reliable transportation can increase vulnerability by making it more difficult to evacuate, reach cooling centers, access health care, or obtain other essential services (35). In New Orleans, approximately 44,000 households lack a private vehicle (50). The Data Center's neighborhood maps provide additional spatial context on households without vehicles and residents commuting by public transit (view the map here: datacenterresearch.org/maps/poverty/2020-edition).

Access to Social Services and Community Resources

Access to social services and community resources can influence residents' ability to meet everyday needs. Libraries, schools, grocery stores, health care facilities, and other community institutions provide access to information, food, medical care, technology, and other essential support during emergencies. Challenges can be greater for households with limited transportation, mobility, or financial resources, as they may have less ability to travel farther to access services or to use alternative options when usual services are disrupted (Figure 12) (51).

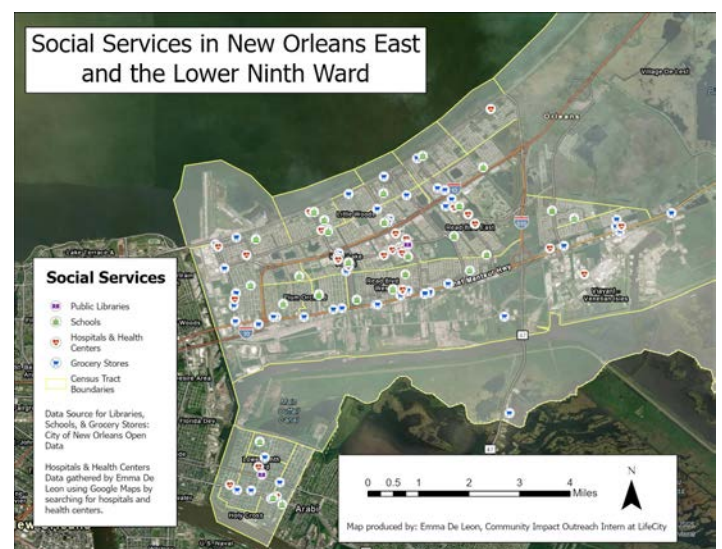


Figure 12: Map showing the distribution of social services in New Orleans East. "Grocery store" includes traditional and major grocery stores, convenience stores, local markets, budget or discount grocery stores, and liquor stores. "Schools" include public and private schools (universities, high schools, middle schools, elementary schools), aftercare programs, and learning labs/early childhood learning centers. Source: Map images were produced by Emma De Leon, and the images were taken from the Thriving Communities Louisiana website (thrivingcommunitiesla.org), a Project of LifeCity (mylifecity.com).

The assessment conducted to prepare this report combines community input with a review of scientific literature and city planning documents to better understand the concerns and priorities of New Orleans East residents. Community input was collected through an in-person workshop and companion survey, as well as a follow-up feedback form distributed during a second community engagement event. Together, these activities provide insight into the climate stressors and impacts residents are most concerned about, priorities for adaptation interventions, existing community resources and capacity, and areas where additional support might be needed.

This section begins with a high-level overview of the workshop findings, followed by a more detailed summary of community input on impacts across the sectors participants identified as relevant to New Orleans East.

Each sector summarizes climate stressors and related impacts identified through community engagement and supported by additional research. The sections below also consider how climate impacts may interact with existing non-climate stressors. Because many impacts affect multiple aspects of community life, some may be relevant to more than one sector.

Community-wide Findings

- **Extreme heat, flooding, and severe storms are among the climate concerns residents most often identified.** Community members linked these hazards to higher household costs, health and safety risks, damage to homes and businesses, transportation problems, and disruptions to essential services such as power, water, healthcare, and food access.
- **New Orleans East has important strengths to build on.** Residents identified neighborhood networks, churches, community organizations, public services, assistance programs, and local environmental groups as resources that can support preparedness and recovery.
- **Residents strongly support solutions that can address more than one climate challenge.** Increasing tree cover and shade was a leading priority, along with rain gardens, bioswales, drainage improvements, and other projects that can help reduce both heat and flooding.

Findings by Sector

- **Buildings and Energy:** Hotter temperatures are expected to increase cooling needs and energy costs, while storms and flooding can damage buildings and cause power outages.
- **Water and Wastewater:** Heavy rainfall can overwhelm drainage and sewer systems, contributing to street flooding, backups, and water-quality concerns. New Orleans East has an extensive network of pumps and canals, but drainage capacity can still be exceeded during intense rainfall.
- **Transportation and Mobility:** Heat, flooding, and severe storms can damage roads and bridges, which would make walking, biking, public transit, and evacuation more difficult.
- **Greenspace and Tree Canopy:** New Orleans East has less tree canopy than other parts of the city. Heat, storms, erosion, and sea level rise can further damage trees, wetlands, and other natural areas.
- **Public Health and Safety:** Extreme heat can worsen existing health conditions, while flooding and storms can interfere with access to healthcare, medications, and emergency services.
- **Housing:** Heat, flooding, and storms can damage homes, increase cooling and repair costs, and make it harder for residents to maintain safe and stable housing. These impacts can be especially difficult for households with limited financial resources.
- **Economy:** Climate impacts can raise business operating costs, reduce worker productivity, interrupt transportation and customer access, damage property, and cause lost income.
- **Community, Culture, and Historical Resources:** Climate impacts can disrupt community gatherings, damage culturally significant places, and contribute to displacement, thus weakening neighborhood relationships.
- **Local Food and Agriculture:** Extreme heat can reduce the productivity of community and household gardens, while flooding and severe weather can interrupt food deliveries and make grocery stores and food assistance harder to access.

Community Perspectives on Climate Vulnerability and Adaptation Priorities

Community input from the November 2025 workshop, the companion survey, and the July 2026 follow-up feedback form provides insight into residents' perceptions of climate vulnerability in New Orleans East. Across these activities, participants identified the climate impacts of greatest concern, populations and locations that may be more vulnerable, existing community strengths and needs, and priorities for future adaptation.

A detailed summary of **community input** is provided in **Appendix 1** and additional information on **green infrastructure** is provided in **Appendix 2**.



Impacts of Greatest Concern

The community input collected offers insights into how New Orleans East residents experience and perceive climate vulnerability.

Across these activities, participants consistently linked climate impacts to health and safety, infrastructure and essential services, mobility, housing, and access to community resources. Extreme heat was most often associated with rising energy costs and strain on utilities, while damage to homes, businesses, infrastructure, and transportation access was a leading concern related to flooding and severe weather. Survey respondents were especially concerned about interruptions to power and water, transportation and communication, medical and emergency services, and food access.

Who and Where May Be Most Vulnerable

Community input indicated that climate impacts may be particularly challenging for senior citizens, youth, low-income residents, unhoused residents, outdoor workers, people with existing health conditions, people living alone, and residents who depend on others or on vehicles for transportation. Participants identified limited tree cover and shade, extensive pavement, poor drainage, and fragile or aging infrastructure as conditions that may increase vulnerability. Workshop mapping and survey responses identified several recurring areas of concern. **Plum Orchard and portions of the Chef Menteur Highway corridor were repeatedly identified as experiencing significant heat, while Crowder Boulevard, the I-10 Service Road, Plum Orchard, and areas east of Read Boulevard were repeatedly associated with flooding.**

Community Strengths and Needs

Participants identified a range of existing community resources to support climate preparedness and response, including neighborhood networks, churches, public services, assistance programs, and local environmental and community organizations. Water Wise Gulf South and the New Orleans East Green Infrastructure Collective were specifically identified as important resources, along with neighborhood associations, transportation services, and utility and food assistance programs. Most survey respondents generally viewed New Orleans East as somewhat prepared for climate impacts. **Participants consistently identified a lack of funding for locally led adaptation projects and infrastructure improvements as unmet needs in New Orleans East.**

Workshop discussions highlighted the importance of increasing neighborhood communication, community education, and coordination and accountability between residents and government agencies.



Green Infrastructure Priorities

Workshop participants identified 134 locations where they would like to see future tree plantings, with concentrations along Chef Menteur Highway, Wilson Avenue, the I-10 Service Road, Crowder Boulevard, Hayne Boulevard, and Downman Road. In the follow-up feedback form, respondents showed the strongest preference for increasing tree cover and shade, with substantial support also expressed for flood-reduction projects, rain gardens, and bioswales or drainage improvements. The findings from the community engagement activities indicate a preference for strategies that combine tree canopy expansion with flood and stormwater management.

Climate Impacts, Vulnerability, and Adaptation Priorities by Sector

Climate impacts are shaped by existing conditions within the community. Considering how climate stressors interact with pre-existing non-climate stressors helps identify where impacts might be more severe and where additional support is needed. The information featured in this section was developed by first prioritizing community feedback and perspectives gathered through project engagement activities, then supplementing those findings with additional research. The impacts presented reflect the concerns most identified by participating New Orleans East residents and are not intended to represent all possible impacts associated with each climate stressor.



Buildings and Energy includes both publicly and privately owned buildings, as well as the systems that generate, distribute, and maintain energy. This sector includes essential service facilities and electricity, natural gas, and renewable energy systems.

IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE STRESSORS	INTERACTIONS WITH NON-CLIMATE STRESSORS
Warming Temperatures and Extreme Heat - Increased cooling demand raises energy costs for homes, businesses, and public facilities. - Strains the electrical grid. - Increases the risk of essential services disruptions. - Heat-related roadway deterioration can limit access to critical access to critical facilities and community services (e.g., hospitals, emergency response, and schools).	Strained and/or poorly functioning cooling and electrical systems in homes and businesses - Increased cooling demand can raise energy costs for households already experiencing high energy burdens. - Increased electricity demand can place additional strain on energy systems where reliability challenges already exist. - Power disruptions during extreme heat can limit access to cooling. Areas with extensive pavement or impervious surfaces and little shade - Extensive pavement can increase runoff and contribute to flooding around buildings and infrastructure as well as increase heat exposure and cooling demand. Aging energy and building infrastructure - There is an increased damage or structural failure because of extreme events in buildings that are older and/or newer but poorly designed. - There is a greater cost of retrofitting older buildings with modern, energy-efficient heating and cooling systems or other measures that reduce the impacts of extreme heat and flooding (compared to incorporating those systems into new construction). - There is an increased risk of damage or structural failure in deteriorating infrastructure and homes during severe flood events. - Damage to already stressed energy systems can contribute to longer service disruptions. - Older buildings could be more costly or difficult to repair or retrofit following repeated damage.
Extreme Precipitation and Flooding - Damage to buildings and critical facilities, including electrical, heating and cooling systems. This can lead to increasing repair costs and service disruptions. - Increased damage or loss of buildings due to flooding or related impacts (e.g., mold).	
Extreme Weather Events - Damage to energy infrastructure that can cause power outages. - Levee overtopping or failure that leads to inundation of homes, businesses, and utilities infrastructure. - Extensive, long-term damage to buildings, requiring more frequent or extensive repairs, replacements, or retrofits. - Prolonged service (e.g., electrical, heating, and cooling systems) disruptions.	



Water and Wastewater includes the systems and natural water resources that support drinking water supply, wastewater collection and treatment, and stormwater management. This sector considers water quality, quantity, and timing of supply, as well as municipal wastewater and stormwater runoff.

IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE STRESSORS	INTERACTIONS WITH NON-CLIMATE STRESSORS
Warming Temperatures and Extreme Heat Reduced water quality due to high water temperatures.	Existing sewer line defects, blockages, and sanitary sewer overflow concerns - Heavy rainfall can increase the amount of water entering damaged sewer systems, adding stress to systems already experiencing infiltration and overflow problems. - Existing sewer defects can increase the potential for sewage to enter stormwater systems during high water conditions.
Extreme Precipitation and Flooding - Overwhelm drainage systems, pumps, and sewer lines, which increases street flooding, backups, contamination risks, and disruptions to services. - Reduced water quality due to stormwater inundation or increased leakage and runoff, potentially disrupting drinking water.	Existing limitations in stormwater drainage capacity - Intense rainfall can exceed drainage capacity, increasing the likelihood and duration of street flooding. - More frequent or intense rainfall can place additional demand on pumps, canals, and other drainage infrastructure.
Extreme Weather Events - Damage to treatment facilities, pumping stations, and stormwater infrastructure while restricting access needed for system operation and repairs. - Increased maintenance costs to address and mitigate damage.	Dependence of drainage pumps on electricity Loss of power or backup systems can contribute to longer periods of reduced drainage capacity and flooding.
Sea Level Rise Reduction in drainage capacity that can contribute to elevated groundwater and intensified flooding.	Aging sewer infrastructure Existing deterioration can make sewer systems more susceptible to infiltration, leakage, and overflow, adding to existing maintenance and rehabilitation needs.



Transportation and Mobility consists of the systems and infrastructure that support the safe, reliable, and accessible movement of people and goods. This includes motorized and non-motorized transportation, such as vehicles, public transit, bicycles, and walking, as well as associated infrastructure including roads, highways, bridges, rail, ports, and airports.

IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE STRESSORS	INTERACTIONS WITH NON-CLIMATE STRESSORS
Warming Temperatures and Extreme Heat - Pavement deterioration and damage to bridges, transit equipment, and other transportation infrastructure, particularly along heavily used corridors such as I-10, Chef Menteur Highway, and Read Boulevard. - Walking, biking, and waiting for public transit becomes unsafe, this can increase heat stress and heat-related health risks for transit workers, maintenance crews, and emergency responders.	Existing roadway, bridge, and transportation infrastructure repair needs - There is an increased need to retrofit and/or replace transportation infrastructure that is unable to cope with stormwater volume (and associated costs). - Higher temperatures can add stress to transportation infrastructure that already requires maintenance or upgrades.
Extreme Precipitation and Flooding - Disruption to public transit and evacuation routes due to flooding that prevents residents from reaching or leaving their homes and delay access to jobs, essential services, and emergency assistance. - Flooding of and damage to transportation routes during heavy rain events, particularly in low-lying areas.	Limited pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure along some major corridors - Extreme heat can make already limited walking and biking conditions less safe and comfortable. - Limited shade can increase heat exposure for people walking, biking, or waiting for transit.
Extreme Weather Events - Damage roads, bridges, transit facilities, traffic controls, and pedestrian and bicycle routes that can limit mobility. - Roadblocks and disruption of traffic due to debris, which may also delay construction needed to repair damage to roadways.	Low elevation and existing roadway flood exposure Heavy rainfall can make low-lying roads temporarily impassable and disrupt access to homes, work, and essential services.
	The location and limited number of evacuation routes Existing transportation routes can leave some areas of the city isolated, increasing the risk of traffic disruptions and loss of access during extreme events.



Greenspace and Tree Canopy includes natural and managed areas such as parks, conservation lands, wetlands, forests, and the urban tree canopy. It also considers the condition, maintenance, and management needs of these areas.

IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE STRESSORS		INTERACTIONS WITH NON-CLIMATE STRESSORS	
Warming Temperatures and Extreme Heat • Drying of soils, increased stress on vegetation, and increased tree decline or mortality, resulting in reduced shade by reducing the tree canopy. • Changes in use of parks and recreational areas with more warm days.		Limited tree canopy and uneven access to greenspace • Loss of greenspace and tree cover exacerbates already existing heat islands and increases heat exposure in areas that already have fewer trees.	
Extreme Weather Events • Damage to trees and uprooting, as well as inundated vegetation, can degrade parks, wetlands, and other greenspaces, resulting in canopy and habitat loss.		Existing coastal wetland erosion and degradation • Higher water levels and saltwater exposure can place additional stress on already vulnerable wetland vegetation. • Continued vegetation and wetland loss can reduce natural flood and storm buffering capacity.	
Sea Level Rise • Recurrent inundation, higher groundwater, and saltwater intrusion can stress vegetation and contribute to the loss or conversion of low-lying parks and other natural areas.			



Public Health and Safety encompasses hazards that can directly or indirectly affect community health and well-being, as well as the systems and services that support community health and safety, including healthcare facilities, emergency medical services, and social services.

IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE STRESSORS		INTERACTIONS WITH NON-CLIMATE STRESSORS	
Warming Temperatures and Extreme Heat • Heat exhaustion, heat stroke, and death can worsen chronic cardiovascular, respiratory, and kidney conditions. • Increase demand for health care, emergency services, and public shelter.		Chronic disease burden and mental health concerns • Residents with cardiovascular, respiratory, kidney, or other chronic conditions may be more sensitive to heat exposure and existing health needs can reduce the ability of some residents to cope with prolonged heat. • Residents who depend on medications, medical equipment, regular treatment, or caregiving may be more vulnerable to prolonged disruptions. • Previous disaster experiences can contribute to heightened stress during future extreme weather events and evacuations. • Repeated disruption or displacement can add to existing emotional and psychological burdens.	
Extreme Precipitation and Flooding • Flooded roads can prevent residents from reaching hospitals, pharmacies, grocery stores, and shelters. • Impede police, fire rescue, emergency medical, and social service providers from reaching residents. • Flooding can trap residents in their homes, impede evacuation, disrupt communication, and limit access to community support networks and safety information. • Flooding may trigger anxiety, trauma, and other health effects associated with past disasters.		High heat exposure and limited greenspace • Fewer opportunities for shade and cooling can increase residents' exposure to high temperatures • Higher heat exposure can compound existing health disparities.	
Extreme Weather Events • High winds, floodwaters, debris, and structural damage can increase the risk of personal injuries and create unsafe environments. • Evacuation, displacement, and communication disruptions can separate family members and caregivers.		Limitations to transportation and access constraints • Residents who already have barriers to reaching healthcare, food, pharmacies, or other services (e.g., older or disabled residents) may have fewer alternatives when usual routes are disrupted. • Limited transportation options can make recovery and access to assistance more difficult after flooding.	
Sea Level Rise • Standing water might expand mosquito and pest habitat and increase disease concerns			



Housing includes residential buildings; the availability and affordability of housing; the quality and condition of residential units; access to residential areas; and the reliable access to utilities and other conditions necessary to maintain safe and comfortable homes.

IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE STRESSORS	INTERACTIONS WITH NON-CLIMATE STRESSORS
Warming Temperatures and Extreme Heat Accelerated deterioration of roofing, sealants, and cooling systems that will increase maintenance costs and reduce indoor comfort.	Existing financial constraints and housing instability - Households with fewer financial resources may have less ability to absorb higher cooling costs or invest in energy-efficiency improvements. - Limited resources may make it more difficult to repair or replace inadequate cooling systems, make flooding-related repairs, or acquire temporary housing.
Extreme Precipitation and Flooding Damage home foundations, electrical and cooling systems, and personal property and promote mold growth and costly repairs.	Low-lying location and existing flood exposure - Homes already located in flood-prone areas may experience repeated damage, increasing cumulative repair, and recovery needs. - Repeated flooding can make it more difficult for households to maintain safe and stable housing over time.
Extreme Weather Events Damage roofs and residential structures, flood homes, interrupt utilities, and block access needed for evacuation.	Existing vacant or underutilized properties and housing redevelopment needs - Additional storm damage can add to existing redevelopment and property-maintenance needs. - Repeated damage can slow efforts to return vacant or damaged properties to residential use or invest in green infrastructure in these locations.
Sea Level Rise Rising housing, insurance, and recovery costs	



Economy includes the businesses, industries, workforce, and economic systems that support community livelihoods, economic stability, and employment and economic opportunities.

IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE STRESSORS	INTERACTIONS WITH NON-CLIMATE STRESSORS
Warming Temperatures and Extreme Heat - Can raise energy and operating costs, increase heat-related absences from work, and disrupt business operations. - Unsafe or uncomfortable outdoor conditions can impact customer activity and productivity in outdoor occupations, impacting revenue for local businesses.	Lower household incomes and existing financial constraints - Lost work hours or heat-related absences may have greater financial consequences for workers with limited financial resources or reserves. - Property damage and missed work can be harder for households with limited incomes to absorb. - Higher insurance or property-related costs may be more difficult to absorb where financial resources are already limited.
Extreme Precipitation and Flooding - Prevent residents from reaching workplaces and businesses, which disrupts employee commutes and customer access. - Damage to homes, vehicles, businesses, and other personal property can create significant replacement and repair costs, particularly when insurance or disaster assistance is limited or unavailable.	Existing transportation and transit access constraints - Workers with fewer transportation alternatives may have more difficulty adjusting when extreme heat affects walking or public transit use. - Businesses that depend on a limited number of major transportation routes may have fewer alternatives when access is disrupted. Existing infrastructure and redevelopment needs - Damages can divert resources from planned infrastructure improvements and economic development. - Repeated disruptions can make business retention, expansion, and new investment more difficult, particularly in areas where businesses may already be struggling or have a limited customer base.
Extreme Weather Events Substantial costs for repairing or rebuilding homes and businesses, replacing property, and managing displacement and lost income.	
Sea Level Rise Increased insurance costs and recovery expenses may displace residents and businesses and reduce access to affordable housing.	



Community, Culture, and Historical Resources include the people, places, traditions, institutions, and cultural assets that contribute to community identity, connection, and sense of place. It considers historic sites and buildings, cultural landmarks, community organizations, and local traditions.

IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE STRESSORS	INTERACTIONS WITH NON-CLIMATE STRESSORS
Warming Temperatures and Extreme Heat • Can limit outdoor gatherings, recreation, cultural activities, and community events to reduce social interaction and use of shared public spaces. • Heat-stressed or dying lawns and landscaping can diminish neighborhood aesthetics.	Limited access or deterioration of community gathering and recreational spaces • Loss of comfortable or accessible gathering spaces can leave residents with fewer alternatives when heat limits outdoor activities.
Extreme Precipitation and Flooding • Restrict access to schools, churches, community centers, cultural sites, neighborhood businesses, and other institutions that support community life. • Temporary or permanent displacement of residents that can disrupt community connections.	Existing housing and financial instability • Households with fewer resources may have more difficulty remaining in the community following repeated damage or disruption. • Households with limited resources may have fewer options to return or rebuild following displacement. Permanent relocation can disrupt social networks and reduce continuity of neighborhood traditions and institutions.
Extreme Weather Events • Interruption of daily routines, cultural activities, and access to community resources. • Loss of homes, belongings, family records, cultural resources, and familiar places.	Existing access and transportation constraints • Residents with fewer transportation options may have greater difficulty maintaining connections to community institutions when usual routes are disrupted. • Institutions that serve geographically dispersed residents may have more difficulty maintaining participation during extended disruptions.
Sea Level Rise • Recurrent flooding and rising housing, insurance, and recovery costs could force residents to relocate and impact longstanding community relationships.	Existing maintenance and restoration needs at cultural and historic resources • Damage can add to existing repair and restoration needs and make preservation more difficult or costly. • Resources already in poor condition may have less capacity to withstand additional damage.



Local Food and Agriculture includes the systems that support food production and access within the community. It considers gardens, food availability, and community food security, with a focus on safe, reliable, and affordable access to food.

IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE STRESSORS	INTERACTIONS WITH NON-CLIMATE STRESSORS
Warming Temperatures and Extreme Heat • Stress on crops, reduction in community garden productivity, and increased food storage and cooling needs. • Depleted rainwater collection limits water availability for community and household gardens.	Access to major supermarkets, grocery stores, and fresh food • Reduced productivity of community and household gardens can remove an existing source of fresh food in areas where grocery options are limited. • Residents without reliable transportation may have greater difficulty reaching more distant food sources when nearby options are disrupted.
Extreme Precipitation and Flooding • Prevent residents from reaching grocery stores, food pantries, and community gardens, and disrupt deliveries and distribution networks, which impacts food security and supply.	Household financial constraints • Households with limited financial resources may have less ability to absorb higher food costs or replace food lost because of storage or cooling problems. • Financial constraints can limit the ability to invest in irrigation, shade, or other measures that help household gardens cope with heat. • Households with limited resources may have less flexibility to travel farther for food, stock up before events, or replace food following disruptions.

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- **The results are grounded in long-term local experience.** Two-thirds of survey respondents had lived or worked in New Orleans East for more than 10 years, and workshop participants came from across the community.
- **New Orleans East must prepare for both climate stressors that will affect everyday life and major disasters.** The workshop's focus on heat and the survey's focus on extreme weather show that residents are concerned about recurring extreme conditions as well as hurricanes and severe storms.
- **Climate change can create increased financial pressures.** Participants raised concerns about energy bills, insurance costs, home and vehicle repairs, and the possibility of displacement when residents cannot afford to recover from impacts.
- **Some locations face several overlapping concerns.** Crowder Boulevard, Plum Orchard, Chef Menteur Highway, Read Boulevard, Morrison Road, and Hayne Boulevard were identified as hotspots for flooding, extreme heat, and tree plantings. These areas may offer opportunities for projects that address multiple concerns.
- **Climate risks and impacts are not experienced equally.** Older adults, children, lower-income residents, those with health conditions, individuals living alone, and residents without reliable transportation or air conditioning could be disproportionately impacted and need additional support.
- **Participants identified priority local actions.** Suggested actions included maintaining drains and catch basins, adding trees and shade, creating rain gardens and other stormwater projects, expanding cooling options, improving emergency communication, and helping residents prepare their homes and businesses.
- **New Orleans East has resources to support capacity to mitigate climate impacts.** Neighborhood associations, environmental groups, public agencies, and assistance programs were identified as resources that could provide a foundation for action. However, additional funding, coordination, and infrastructure investments are needed.

The community workshop and survey findings show that **New Orleans East residents are already facing climate-related challenges** that affect their homes, health, finances, mobility, and access to essential services. Survey respondents generally described these impacts as serious and recurring: 82% indicated that New Orleans East is very or extremely affected by their priority climate stressor, and 78% reported experiencing that stressor at least several times each year.

The two community input activities differed in which **climate stressors** participants ranked highest. Extreme heat received the most selections during the workshop, while 61% of survey respondents who identified a primary stressor of concern selected extreme weather events, such as hurricanes and severe thunderstorms. Despite this difference, the workshop and survey identified many of the same **impacts**. Both emphasized higher energy costs, increased cooling demand, strain on power and water utilities, overwhelmed drainage systems, and damage to homes, roads, and other infrastructure. Survey respondents were especially concerned about disruptions to power and water, transportation, communication, emergency and medical services, and food access.

The workshop and survey results identified similar **priority locations for adaptation interventions** based on the climate stressors residents experience. Locations for flooding concerns included Crowder Boulevard, the I-10 Service Road, Plum Orchard, Morrison Road, and areas near Chef Menteur Highway and Read

Boulevard. Areas identified as experiencing extreme heat included Plum Orchard, Chef Menteur Highway, Read Boulevard, Crowder Boulevard, Morrison Road, Bullard Avenue, and the Hayne Boulevard/Seabrook area.

Workshop participants emphasized that older adults, children, outdoor workers, people with existing health conditions, lower-income residents, and those without reliable transportation or air conditioning may face greater challenges that limit their **adaptive capacity** (the ability to prepare for and respond to climate change impacts).

Both the workshop and survey identified **resources that can support community resilience**. These include more funding for locally led climate change adaptation projects, infrastructure improvements, and increased community engagement. Additionally, community networks, environmental organizations, public agencies, emergency preparedness programs, and food and utility assistance were identified as needed resources in New Orleans East.

Trees, shade, and green infrastructure emerged as priorities. Workshop participants placed 134 markers on a map of New Orleans East identifying desired tree planting areas, and survey respondents identified major corridors, parks, and neighborhoods where trees could provide benefits. Many proposed planting locations overlap with areas identified as especially hot, including Chef Menteur Highway, Crowder Boulevard, Morrison Road, Read Boulevard, Bullard Avenue, Hayne Boulevard, and Plum Orchard.

These findings reflect the perspectives of the people who participated in the workshop and survey. They provide valuable community input but are not intended to represent every New Orleans East resident or every location experiencing climate impacts.

Community Workshop

KEY FINDINGS

- **Extreme heat emerged as the leading climate concern**, accounting for 37% of all stressor selections, followed closely by extreme precipitation and flooding at 31%.
- **Rising energy costs and strain on utilities were the most frequently identified impacts of extreme heat.** Participants also emphasized heat-related illness, inadequate access to cooling, and unsafe conditions in areas with extensive pavement and limited shade.
- **Flooding is associated with impacts on property, infrastructure, and mobility.** Participants described damage to homes, businesses, vehicles, roads, drainage systems, and utilities, as well as reduced access to employment, essential services, evacuation routes, and emergency assistance.
- **Participants emphasized a combination of physical improvements and community capacity building actions to address climate impacts in New Orleans East.** Frequently proposed actions included expanding tree canopy and green infrastructure, maintaining drainage systems, improving access to cooling and backup power, strengthening neighborhood communication, pursuing grants, and increasing government accountability.
- **Participants identified 134 priority locations for future tree planting.** Proposed planting locations were concentrated along Chef Menteur Highway, Wilson Avenue, the I-10 Service Road, Crowder Boulevard, Hayne Boulevard, and Downman Road.
- **The mapping activity identified distinct heat and flooding hotspots.** Plum Orchard and portions of Chef Menteur Highway in Read Boulevard West were highlighted for extreme heat, while flooding locations clustered along Crowder Boulevard, within Plum Orchard, along Lake Forest Boulevard, and east of Read Boulevard.

About the Workshop

To better understand the New Orleans East community's perspective on climate-related stressors, impacts, and vulnerabilities, EcoAdapt, the New Orleans East Green Infrastructure Collective, and Water Wise Gulf South partnered to convene a climate vulnerability and community priorities workshop in November 2025 at the Audubon Louisiana Nature Center. During the four-hour workshop, New Orleans East community members explored local climate risks and shared their experiences and neighborhood priorities. The workshop was organized around three activities that built on one another: identifying the climate stressors and impacts of greatest concern; examining who and what are most affected; and identifying priority locations for future green infrastructure interventions in New Orleans East.



Activity One: Climate Change Stressors and Community Concerns

Activity One used a guided worksheet and breakout-group discussions to identify participants' priority climate concerns. Participants selected the stressors they considered most concerning from a list of common climate stressors for New Orleans, Louisiana (i.e., extreme heat, extreme precipitation and flooding, extreme weather events, and sea level rise). They then documented why they were concerned about these stressors and how they could affect New Orleans East. Participants were not asked to evaluate every stressor, allowing the discussion to focus on their most pressing concerns.

Results

Climate Change Stressors

Participants identified their top climate-related stressor. Some participants selected more than one concern and assigned equal importance to multiple concerns. Of the 62 total selections, extreme heat ranked highest (n=23; 37%), followed by extreme precipitation and flooding (n=19; 31%), extreme weather events, including hurricanes and severe thunderstorms (n=11; 18%), and sea-level rise (n=9; 14%) (Figure 13).

Climate Change Impacts

After identifying their priority climate stressors, participants discussed the associated impacts of greatest concern. During the subsequent analysis of the workshop Activity One results, these responses were reviewed and organized into nine sectors: buildings and energy; water and wastewater; transportation and mobility; greenspace and tree canopy; public health and safety; housing; economy; community, culture, and historical resources; and local food and agriculture. A more detailed breakdown of this information is available in the **Climate Vulnerability and Community Priorities** chapter, which includes community input supplemented with additional research.

The most frequently identified extreme heat impact was rising energy costs and strain on utilities (selected 19 times across all participants). For extreme precipitation and flooding, impacts related to damage to homes, businesses, and other infrastructure ranked highest (selected 15 times across all groups). Flooding and damage to homes, roads, and utilities, including resulting access disruptions, was the leading impact associated with extreme weather events (selected 8 times across all groups). For sea level

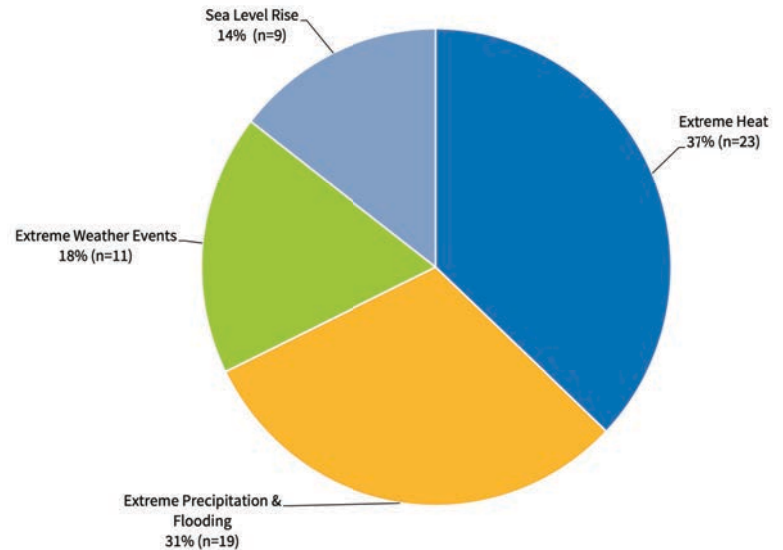


Figure 13. The distribution of top climate change stressors selected by workshop participants for extreme heat, extreme precipitation and flooding, extreme weather events, and sea level rise. A total of 62 selections were made as some participants selected more than one top concern.

rise, participants most frequently identified the loss of green space and impacts on vegetation as top concerns.

Table 1 organizes the impacts identified during Activity One discussions by climate stressor and sector. Some impacts affect multiple aspects of the community and therefore may be relevant to more than one sector. The impacts listed were derived from workshop activity notes, and because participants focused on their highest-priority concerns, not every sector includes impacts for all four stressors. The table therefore reflects the issues raised during the workshop rather than a comprehensive assessment of all potential climate impacts for New Orleans East.

Table 1: Climate change impacts identified through breakout group discussions during the community vulnerability and risk assessment workshop for New Orleans East, organized by climate stressor and sector

STRESSOR		IMPACTS	
 Buildings and Energy			
Extreme Heat		Increased cooling demand raises energy costs for homes, businesses, and public facilities, strains the electrical grid, and increases the risk of service disruptions.	
		Heat-related roadway deterioration can limit access to critical facilities and community services (e.g., hospitals, emergency response, and schools).	
Extreme Precipitation and Flooding		Damage to buildings and critical facilities, including electrical, heating, and cooling systems. This can lead to increasing repair costs and service disruptions.	
Extreme Weather Events		Damage to energy infrastructure that can cause power outages.	
		Levee overtopping or failure that leads to inundation of homes, businesses, and utilities infrastructure. This can result in extensive, long-term damage and prolonged service disruptions.	

STRESSOR		IMPACTS	
 Water and Wastewater			
Extreme Precipitation and Flooding		Overwhelm drainage systems, pumps, and sewer lines, increasing street flooding, wastewater backups, contamination risks, and disruptions to water and wastewater services.	
Extreme Weather Events		Damage water and wastewater treatment facilities, pumping stations, pipelines, and stormwater infrastructure while restricting access needed for system operation and repairs.	
Sea Level Rise		Reduction in drainage capacity that can contribute to elevated groundwater and intensified flooding.	

STRESSOR		IMPACTS	
 Transportation and Mobility			
Extreme Heat		Pavement deterioration and damage to bridges, transit equipment, and other transportation infrastructure, particularly along heavily used corridors such as I-10, Chef Menteur Highway, and Read Boulevard.	
		Walking, biking, and waiting for public transit becomes unsafe, this can increase heat-related health risks for transit workers, maintenance crews, and emergency responders.	
Extreme Precipitation and Flooding		Disruption to public transit and evacuation routes prevent residents from reaching or leaving their homes, and delay access to jobs, essential services, and emergency assistance.	
Extreme Weather Events		Damage roads, bridges, transit facilities, traffic controls, and pedestrian and bicycle routes that can limit mobility.	

STRESSOR		IMPACTS	
 Greenspace and Tree Canopy			
Extreme Heat		Drying of soils, increased stress on vegetation, and increased tree decline or mortality, resulting in reduced shade and recreation areas.	
Extreme Weather Events		Damage to trees and uprooting, as well as inundated vegetation, can degrade parks, wetlands, and other greenspaces, resulting in canopy and habitat loss.	
Sea Level Rise		Recurrent inundation, higher groundwater, and saltwater intrusion can stress vegetation and contribute to the loss or conversion of low-lying parks, wetlands, and other natural areas.	
		Accelerated erosion, destabilized tree roots and soils, and reduced capacity of wetlands and greenspaces to buffer flooding.	

STRESSOR		IMPACTS
 Public Health and Safety		
Extreme Heat	Heat exhaustion, heat stroke, and death, worsened chronic cardiovascular, respiratory, and kidney conditions, and increased demand for health care and emergency services.	
Extreme Precipitation and Flooding	Flooded roads can prevent residents from reaching hospitals, pharmacies, grocery stores, and shelters.	
	Impeding police, fire rescue, emergency medical, and social service providers from reaching residents.	
	Flooding can trap residents in their homes, impede evacuation, disrupt communication, and limit access to community support networks and safety information.	
	Flooding may trigger anxiety, trauma, and other health effects associated with past disasters.	
Extreme Weather Events	High winds, floodwaters, debris, and structural damage can increase the risk of personal injuries and create unsafe environments but also limit response capacity and access.	
	Damage to homes, possessions, livelihoods, and community resources.	
	Evacuation, displacement, and communication disruptions can separate family members and caregivers.	
Sea Level Rise	Standing water may expand mosquito and pest habitat and increase disease concerns and demand for public health monitoring and pest management.	

STRESSOR		IMPACTS
 Housing		
Extreme Heat	Accelerated deterioration of roofing, sealants, and cooling systems that will increase maintenance costs and reduce indoor comfort and habitability.	
Extreme Precipitation and Flooding	Damage foundations, electrical and cooling systems, and personal property, and promote mold growth and costly repairs.	
Extreme Weather Events	Damage to roofs and residential structures, flood homes, interrupt utilities, and block access for needed evacuation.	
Sea Level Rise	Rising housing costs	

STRESSOR		IMPACTS
 Economy		
Extreme Heat		Raise energy and operating costs, increase heat-related absences, and disrupt business operations.
		Unsafe or uncomfortable outdoor conditions can reduce customer activity, community events, and productivity in outdoor occupations, impacting revenue for local businesses and workers.
Extreme Precipitation and Flooding		Prevent residents from reaching workplaces and businesses, which disrupts employee commutes and customer access.
		Damage to homes, vehicles, businesses, and other personal property can create significant replacement and repair costs, particularly when insurance or disaster assistance is limited or unavailable.
Extreme Weather Events		Substantial costs for repairing or rebuilding homes and businesses, replacing property, and managing displacement and lost income.
Sea Level Rise		Increased insurance costs and recovery expenses may displace residents and businesses and reduce access to affordable housing.

STRESSOR		IMPACTS
 Community, Culture, and Historical Resources		
Extreme Heat		Limit outdoor gatherings, recreation, cultural activities, and community events to reduce social interaction and use of shared public spaces.
		Heat-stressed or dying lawns and landscaping can diminish neighborhood aesthetics.
Extreme Precipitation and Flooding		Restrict access to schools, churches, community centers, cultural sites, neighborhood businesses, and other institutions that support community life.
		Temporary or permanent displacement of residents that can disrupt community connections.
Extreme Weather Events		Interruption of daily routines, cultural activities, and access to community resources.
		Loss of homes, belongings, family records, cultural resources, and familiar places.
Sea Level Rise		Recurrent flooding and rising housing, insurance, and recovery costs may force residents to relocate and impact long-standing community relationships.

STRESSOR		IMPACTS
 Local Food and Agriculture		
Extreme Heat		Stress on crops, reduction in community garden productivity, increased food storage and cooling needs.
		Depleted rainwater collection limits water availability for community and household gardens.
Extreme Precipitation and Flooding		Prevent residents from reaching grocery stores, food pantries, and community gardens, and disrupt deliveries and distribution networks, impacting food security and supply.

Activity Two: Details about the Identified Top Climate Change Impacts

Building on Activity One, participants reviewed the climate-related impacts they had identified and selected the two or three of greatest concern. The activity was designed to deepen understanding of community risk, vulnerability, and capacity to respond. For each selected impact, participants considered who is most affected and which areas of New Orleans East are most affected, whether the impact is already occurring, and how the community could address it. Their responses provided insight into current conditions, areas of heightened concern, existing community strengths and resources, and potential actions to reduce risk.



Results

Activity Two responses were reviewed and synthesized using the same approach as Activity One. Table 2 summarizes selected priority impacts discussed in the workshop, including participants' perspectives on affected populations and locations, as well as potential community responses and resources. Breakout-group discussions reflected the priorities and perspectives raised within each group, resulting in varying levels of detail across stressors and impacts.

Table 2. High-level summary of priority climate impacts identified by workshop participants as well as related affected populations and locations and potential community responses to the impacts.

IMPACT	AFFECTED GROUPS AND AREAS	POSSIBLE ACTIONS
Extreme Heat		
Rising energy costs and strain on utilities	People • Senior citizens • Unhoused community members • Youth participating in sports Places • Areas with extensive pavement and little shade • Homes or businesses with overused A/C units and damaged electrical circuits	• Improve or seal attics • Plant trees (increase urban tree canopy) • Make generators more accessible • Create more cooling stations • Vote and advocate for stronger representation and investment for climate adaptation initiatives. Potential partners: • Elected officials • Organizations that can implement tree plantings
Heat-related health concerns	People • Senior citizens • Youth and athletes • Outdoor workers • Health care workers • Unhoused community members • People with respiratory or other existing health conditions • Residents who depend on others for assistance Places • Homes and businesses without adequate A/C • Senior living facilities • Areas with extensive concrete and little vegetation • Specific locations — Portions of Chef Menteur Highway with limited tree cover	• Establish cooling stations • Improve access to A/C • Provide generators to at-risk residents • Increase urban tree canopy (native and climate-ready species) • Add shade to parks and trails • Increase community education and outreach • Encourage residents to become active in local decision making processes (encourage people to speak out about their needs and experiences) Potential partners: • Schools and youth • Neighborhood associations • Existing local environmental programs or events • Elected officials

IMPACT	AFFECTED GROUPS AND AREAS	POSSIBLE ACTIONS
Extreme Precipitation and Flooding		
Damage to homes and businesses	People • Residents of flood-prone areas • People who rely on vehicles to get to work • Residents whose homes or vehicles are damaged Places • Poorly maintained canals, catch basins, and drains • Areas with limited tree cover • Neighborhoods already affected by runoff from nearby businesses • Specific locations — Downman Road and Chef Menteur Highway — Dwyer Road — Academy Park — Crowder Boulevard — Plum Orchard — Read Boulevard to Bullard Avenue near Chef Menteur Highway	• Clean catch basins and drains • Report clogged or broken drains • Address runoff from commercial properties • Increase permeable surfaces • Install rain or water gardens • Install French drains • Expand green infrastructure • Use vacant lots for stormwater projects Potential partners: • Neighborhood associations • City of New Orleans • Sewerage and Water Board • FEMA and grant programs • Local engineers
Reduced access to essentials	People • Senior citizens • People living alone/single-member households without family nearby • Lower income residents • People who depend on vehicles Places (specific locations) • Academy Park • Parts of Plum Orchard • Downman Road • Crowder Boulevard between Dwyer Road and Chef Menteur Highway • Read Boulevard to Bullard Avenue near Chef Menteur Highway • Nursing facility near Wilson Avenue/Crowder Boulevard	• Support household-level adaptation • Improve communication among neighbors • Organize community meetings • Educate and mobilize residents • Support people living alone or with limited resources Potential partners: • City of New Orleans • Sewerage and Water Board • Elected officials • Neighborhood associations
Extreme Weather Events		
Flooding and damage to homes, roads, and utilities	People • Senior citizens • Youth • Low-income residents • Those living near waterbodies or areas already prone to flooding Places • Areas with fragile and aging infrastructure • Near canals • Utility facilities • Highly used transportation corridors	• Create new and expand existing green infrastructure (e.g., bioswales, rain gardens, tree canopy) • Pursue funding and partnerships to implement strategies to mitigate flooding impacts
Increased risk of injuries and pressure on emergency services	People • Senior citizens • Youth • People living alone/single-member households without family nearby Places • Areas with fragile and aging infrastructure • Utility facilities • Areas with restricted access due to damage caused by extreme weather events	• Increase the presence of green infrastructure • Maintain and expand community communication pathways

IMPACT	AFFECTED GROUPS AND AREAS	POSSIBLE ACTIONS
Sea Level Rise		
Green space loss	People • Senior citizens • Youth • Outdoor workers Places • Areas that have been neglected for maintenance • Historically disinvested areas of the city	• Educate and mobilize neighborhoods • Apply for project grants • Increase green infrastructure efforts • Expand urban tree canopy and vegetation Potential partners: • City Hall • Elected officials • Neighborhood associations • Local media (getting media attention)
Displacement and rising housing costs	People • Households facing increased likelihood of needed repair and maintenance • Low-income residents Places • Homes and properties already affected by flooding	• Seek grants for adaptation and repair projects • Contact elected representatives • Work with City Hall to find solutions

Activity Three: Mapping Impacts and Tree Planting Opportunities

Activity Three used a participatory mapping exercise to identify where climate impacts are most pronounced and where additional trees could provide community benefits in New Orleans East. Participants placed color-coded dots on a neighborhood map to indicate their approximate place of residence, locations experiencing significant climate impacts, and areas they considered priorities for future tree plantings (Table 3; Figure 14).

Table 3. Color-coded dot convention used to identify locations during the workshop participatory mapping activity.

DOT COLOR	MEANING
 Orange	Approximate participant residence
 Blue	Areas that frequently flood during heavy rain or storms
 Red	Areas perceived as especially hot, often with limited shade or extensive pavement
 Green	Priority areas for additional trees and future planting

Results

A total of 134 green dots were added to the map identifying locations where workshop participants would most like to see trees planted in New Orleans East (Figure 14). The highest concentrations occurred along Chef Menteur Highway, Wilson Avenue, the I-10 Service Road, Crowder Boulevard, Hayne Boulevard, and Downman Road. Most proposed planting locations were concentrated north of Chef Menteur Highway between Downman and Wright roads.

Based on participants' placement of red dots, Plum Orchard emerged as a prominent heat hotspot. A notable concentration of red dots was also recorded along Chef Menteur Highway in the Read Boulevard West neighborhood.

Participant-identified flooding locations clustered along Crowder Boulevard; within Plum Orchard, particularly near Wilson Avenue and Lafon Drive; and along Lake Forest Boulevard. Additional flooding locations were dispersed throughout areas east of Read Boulevard.

Orange dots marking participants' approximate residences were broadly distributed across the New Orleans East map.



Figure 14. Map of New Orleans East showing participants' approximate residences (orange), priority locations for future tree planting (green), areas that frequently flood (blue), and areas perceived as especially hot or highly affected by extreme heat (red).



Community Survey

KEY FINDINGS

- **Extreme weather events were the leading climate concern** (61%, n=14 of 23), differing from the workshop, where extreme heat ranked highest.
- **Climate impacts were viewed as substantial and recurring:** 82% rated New Orleans East as very or extremely affected, and 78% reported experiencing their priority stressor at least several times annually.
- **Essential services were considered particularly vulnerable**, especially power and water supplies, transportation and communication, medical and emergency services, and food access.
- **Overwhelmed stormwater systems and higher energy costs and cooling demand were the most frequently selected impacts**, consistent with workshop concerns about drainage, utilities, and energy costs.
- **Most respondents considered New Orleans East somewhat prepared to respond to climate change impacts** (68%), while funding for locally led adaptation projects and infrastructure improvements were the most frequently identified additional needs.
- **Flood-prone locations included Crowder Boulevard, the I-10 Service Road, Morrison Road, and Kenilworth**, among others.
- **Heat-affected areas included Chef Menteur Highway, Seabrook, and Plum Orchard**, among others.
- **Existing resilience assets included community and environmental organizations, neighborhood networks, churches, public services, and assistance programs.**
- **Forty-one percent of respondents indicated that New Orleans East has somewhat fewer trees, shade, and green spaces than needed.** Planting priorities included Read Boulevard, Morrison Road, Chef Menteur Highway, Crowder Boulevard, Bullard Avenue, Downman Road, Hayne Boulevard, the I-10 Service Road, the Paris Road median, Joe W. Brown and other NORD parks, North Kenilworth, and Plum Orchard.

About the Survey

The survey was designed to gather community perspectives on climate-related stressors, impacts, vulnerabilities, strengths, and priorities. It was developed as a companion to the community workshop, offering an additional opportunity for individuals who could not attend to participate in the project. Because the survey relied on voluntary participation and community distribution channels, the findings are not intended to be representative of the entire population of New Orleans East. Instead, they aim to capture a range of respondent experiences and priorities to inform future climate adaptation and resilience planning and decision-making. The survey included five sections covering respondent and neighborhood context; climate-related stressors and impacts; community vulnerabilities and strengths; priorities for trees, shade, and green infrastructure; and respondents' experiences, reflections, and hopes for the future.

Administered through SurveyMonkey, the survey remained open from November 2025 through July 2026 and received 29 responses.

Results

About You and Your Community

Survey respondents self-reported which neighborhood or area in New Orleans East they live in or know the best. Of those who responded (n=29), the most reported area was Kenilworth (n=5, 17%). The next highest reported areas were Barrington/Lake Barrington (n=4, 14%), Plum Orchard (n=3, 10%), and Idlewood/Parkwood (n=3, 10%). The other areas listed by 2 or fewer respondents included Little Woods, Seabrook, Fairway Estates, Read Boulevard, Eastover, Warwick, and areas along Chef Menteur Highway. A few respondents (n=3, 10%) reported living outside the New Orleans East area but having knowledge of the area.

The majority of respondents have lived or worked in New Orleans East for more than 10 years (n=19, 66%). Five respondents (17%) have lived or worked in New Orleans East for 6-10 years, and four (14%) for 1-5 years. Only 1 respondent has lived in New Orleans East for less than 1 year.

What is one thing you appreciate or love most about living in New Orleans East?

"Great homes with landscaping and spacious parks and walking trails."

"The community and culture."

"The natural ecosystem, the beautiful community and the family atmosphere."

"The library, great parks and playgrounds, Bayou Sauvage, Audubon Nature Center, our churches and schools. And some of the lovely neighborhoods and community space."

"My neighborhood! It is so friendly and clean."

"The people who love and fight to create a healthier, cleaner environment."

"The vast amount of land and the possibilities of what could be. Also, within neighborhoods, most people have resided here for decades."

Climate Change and Community Impacts

Of the 23 respondents who answered this question, 61% (n=14) identified extreme weather events as their greatest concern (Figure 15). This contrasts with the workshop findings, in which extreme heat was the most selected, and extreme weather events ranked third. The two respondents who selected "Other" identified extreme cold and drought as their primary concerns.

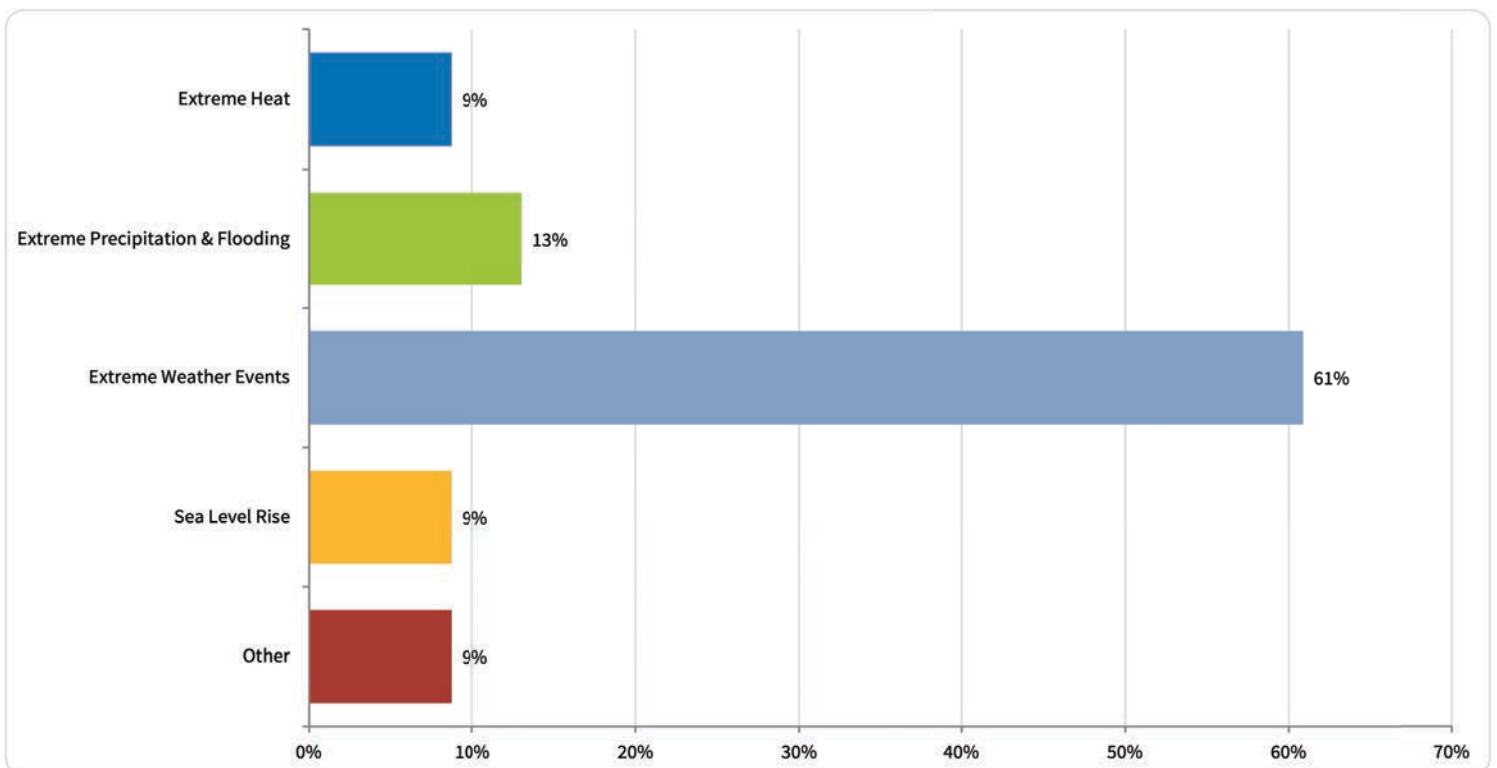


Figure 15. Distribution of the climate-related stressors identified by survey respondents as their greatest concern (n=23).

Among the 28 respondents who rated how strongly their selected climate stressor currently affects New Orleans East, 46% (n=13) indicated that the community is very affected, while 36% (n=10) indicated that it is extremely affected (Figure 16). The remaining 18% (n=5) selected “moderately affected”; no respondents selected “slightly affected” or “not at all affected”. Because respondents evaluated different priority stressors, these results reflect the overall perceived severity of climate impacts. More respondents completed this rating than identified a single priority stressor in the preceding survey question (n=23). Five respondents rated the severity of their primary climate concern without identifying a single priority stressor in the preceding item. These responses were retained because they contribute to the overall assessment of perceived climate impacts, although they cannot be linked to a specific stressor.

- Of the respondents who selected **extreme heat** as their top concern (n=2), 1 respondent said the community is very affected, and the other said the community is extremely affected.
- Of the respondents who selected **extreme precipitation and flooding** as their top concern (n=3), all said the community is extremely affected by this stressor.
- Of the respondents who selected **extreme weather events** as their top concern (n=14), 57% (n=8) said the community is very affected, 29% (n=4) said extremely affected, and 14% (n=2) said moderately affected.

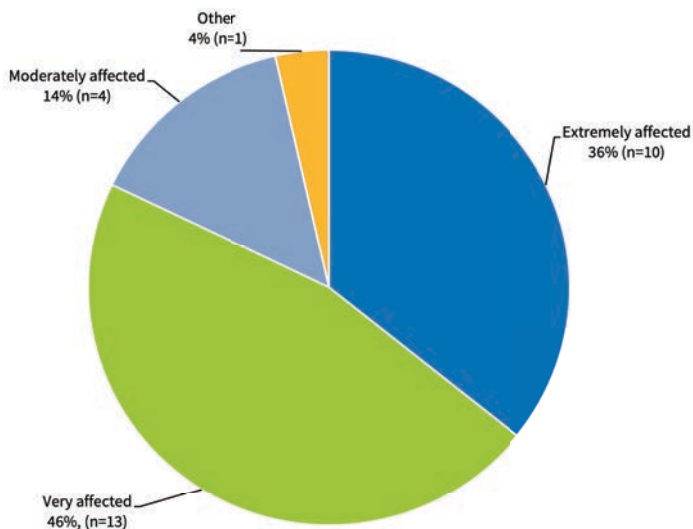


Figure 16. Distribution of respondents' ratings of how strongly their priority climate stressor currently affects New Orleans East, aggregated across all stressors (n=28).

- Of the respondents who selected **sea level rise** as their top concern (n=2), 1 respondent said the community was moderately affected, and the other said it was extremely affected.

Respondents generally characterized their priority climate stressors as recurring concerns. Of the 23 respondents, 43% (n=10) indicated that their selected stressor affects New Orleans East often (several times per year), while 35% (n=8) selected very often (monthly or more). Together, 78% reported impacts occurring at least several times a year; no respondents selected “never” (Figure 17).

- Of the respondents who selected **extreme heat** as their top concern (n=2), both said “very often.”
- Of the respondents who selected **extreme precipitation and flooding** as their top concern (n=3), all said, “very often.”
- Of the respondents who selected **extreme weather events** as their top concern (n=14), 57% (n=8) reported that this stressor occurs “often.” Twenty-nine percent (n=4) said it happens sometimes. One respondent selected “rarely,” and one respondent selected “very often.”
- Of the respondents who selected **sea level rise** as their top concern (n=2), one respondent said often, and the other said very often.

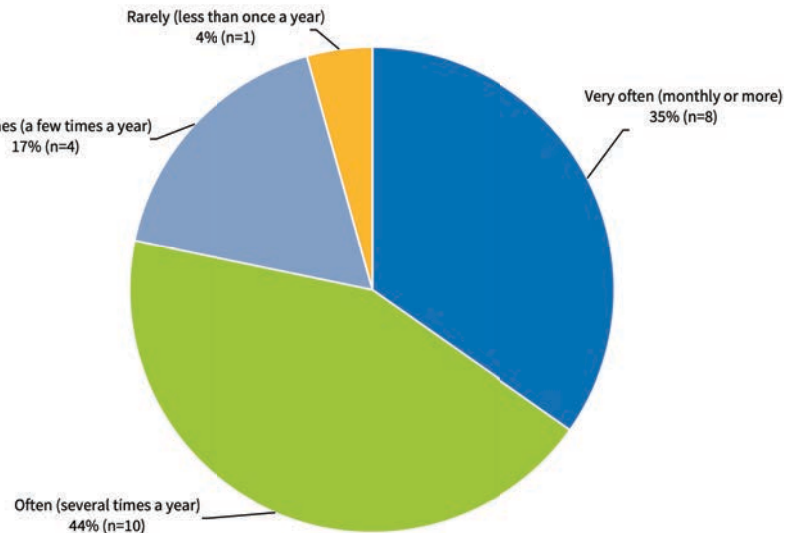


Figure 17. Distribution of the reported frequency with which respondents' priority climate stressors affect New Orleans East, aggregated across all stressors (n=23).

Disruptions to essential infrastructure and services emerged as respondents' primary concern.

Of the 28 respondents, 79% (n=22) identified power or water supply as likely to be disrupted by their priority climate stressor. Transportation and communication were each selected by 54% (n=15), followed by medical or emergency services (46%, n=13) and food access and supply (43%, n=12). Respondents also identified housing (36%, n=10); parks and green spaces and work or income (25%, n=7 each); and schools or childcare (14%, n=4) (Figure 18). The results align with workshop discussions emphasizing strain on utilities and transportation as well as reduced access to essential and emergency services during climate-related events.

- Of the respondents who selected **extreme heat** as their top concern (n=2), parks and green spaces, as well as work and income, were also selected.
- Of the respondents who selected **extreme precipitation and flooding** as their top concern (n=3), access to or function of transportation was the most selected (n=3), followed by Access

to or function of medical or emergency services (n=1), power or water supply (n=1), and food access and supply (n=1).

- Of all of the selections made by the respondents that selected **extreme weather events** as their top concern (n=14), the most selected areas where the community will be affected by this stressor are power and water supply (17% of all selections made by this group) and access to or function of medical or emergency services (16% of all selections made by this group). This group selected every option listed in the question at varying degrees.
- Of the respondents who selected **sea level rise** as their top concern (n=2), both selected power and water supply as areas of the community that this climate stressor will impact. One respondent also selected access to or function of transportation and communication.

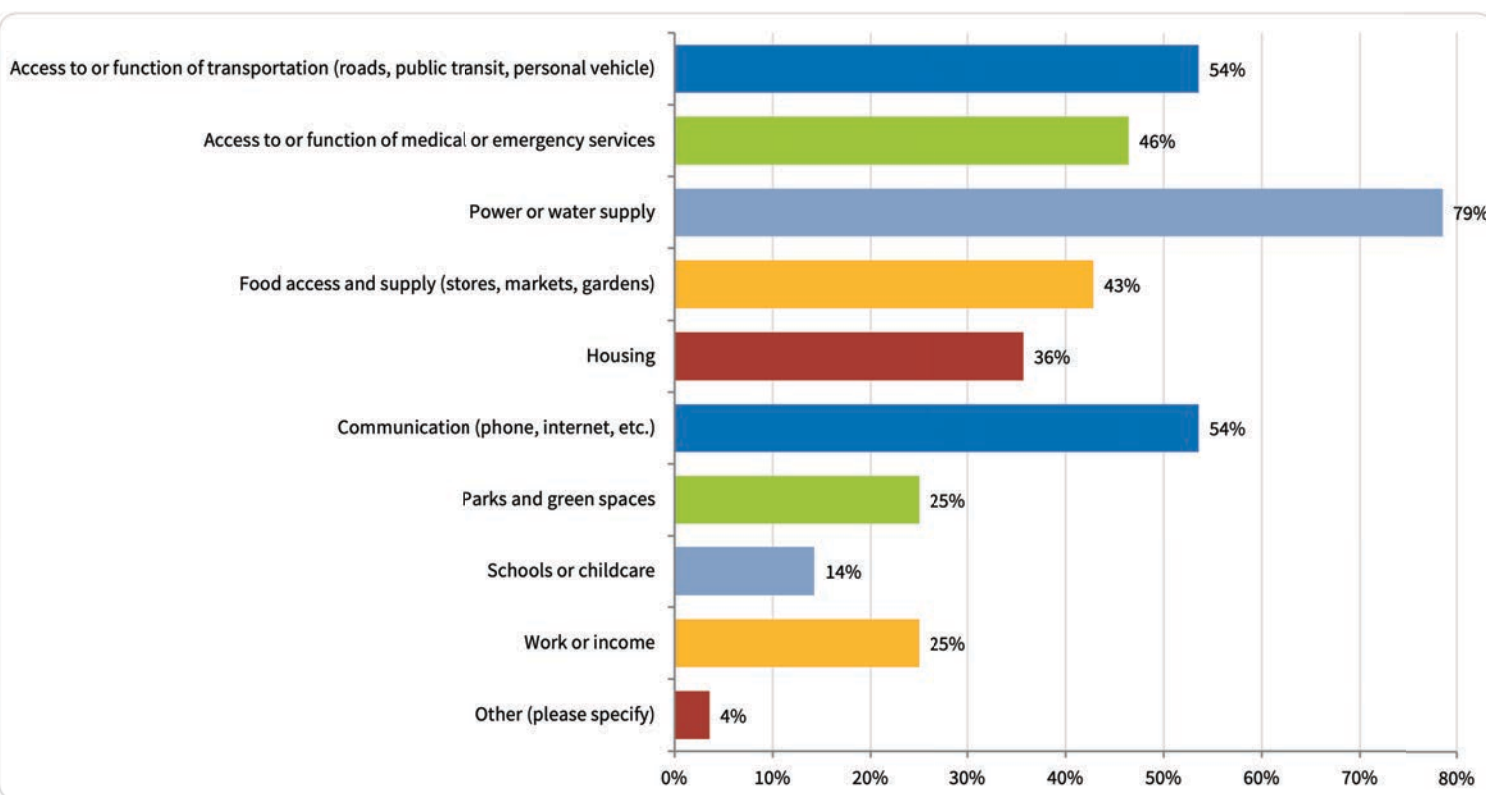


Figure 18. Respondents indicated which parts of community life would be most disrupted when their priority climate stressor occurs (n=28). Respondents could select multiple options; therefore, percentages do not sum to 100%.

Perceptions of community preparedness were generally moderate.

Of the 28 respondents, 68% (n=19) indicated that New Orleans East is somewhat prepared to address their priority climate stressor (Figure 19).

- Of the respondents who selected **extreme heat** as their top concern (n=2), both respondents think their community is somewhat prepared to address that climate stressor.
- Of the respondents who selected **extreme precipitation and flooding** as their top concern (n=3), two respondents think the community is not very prepared, and one thinks it is somewhat prepared.
- Of the respondents who selected **extreme weather events** as their top concern (n=14), 79% (n=11) think the community is somewhat prepared. The remaining three respondents selected extremely prepared, very prepared, and not very prepared.
- Of the respondents that selected **sea level rise** as their top concern (n=2), one respondent thinks the community is somewhat prepared, and the other thinks the community is very prepared.

Concern about climate-related issues was widespread among respondents.

Of the 28 respondents, 39% (n=11) reported being extremely concerned, and 21% (n=6) reported being very concerned.

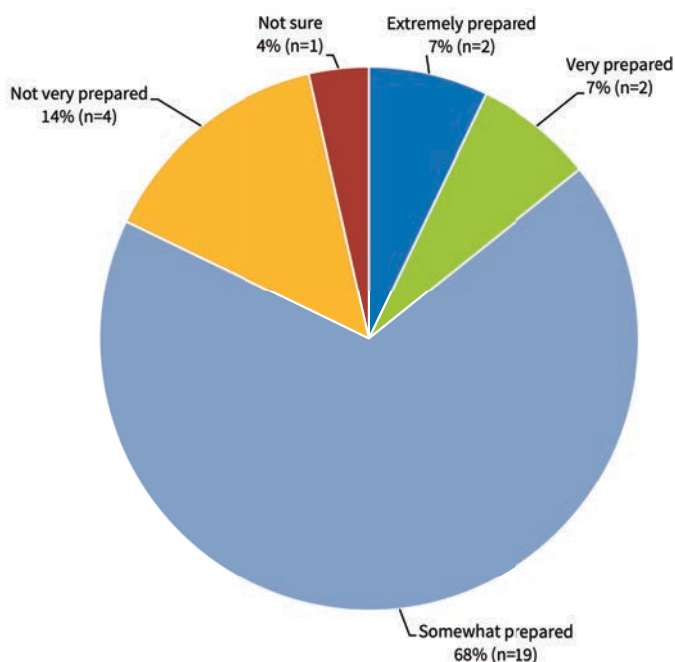


Figure 19. Distribution of respondents' perceptions of how well New Orleans East is prepared for their priority climate stressor, aggregated across all stressors (n=28).

An additional 29% (n=8) were somewhat concerned, while 11% (n=3) were slightly concerned. Overall, 60% expressed a high level of concern (very or extremely concerned), and all respondents reported at least some concern (Figure 20).

Community Vulnerabilities and Strengths

Survey respondents identified a range of major corridors and residential streets where **flooding was perceived to occur more frequently or severely**. Reported locations included:

- Crowder Boulevard
- I-10 Service Road
- Downman Road near Chef Menteur Highway
- Wilson Avenue, including near Dwyer Road
- Dreux Avenue near Lonely Oak Drive and Read Boulevard
- Old Gentilly Road/Almonaster Avenue area
- Hayne Boulevard underpass
- Portions of Morrison Road
- Kenilworth
- Chantilly Drive
- Lafon Drive
- Camelia, Pecan, Tulip, Lonely Oak, Rhodes, and Rosemont drives or streets

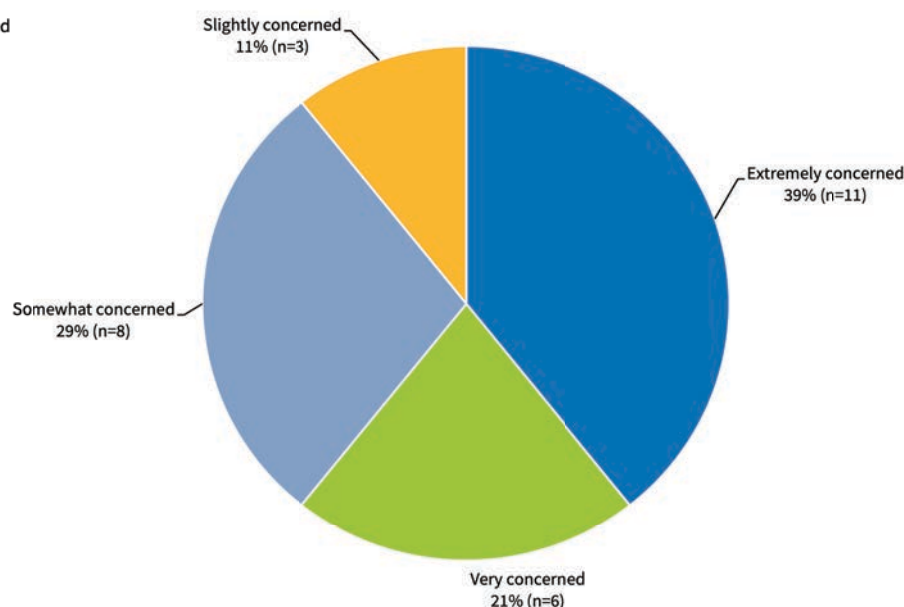


Figure 20. Distribution of respondents' overall level of concern about climate-related issues affecting New Orleans East, including impacts beyond their selected priority stressor (n=28).

Because locations were collected through an open-ended survey question, responses varied in geographic specificity. They should be interpreted as respondent-identified areas of concern rather than a comprehensive inventory of flood-prone locations.

These findings closely align with the workshop mapping results, which also identified flooding along Crowder Boulevard and within the Plum Orchard area. Workshop participants additionally marked flood-prone locations east of Read Boulevard.

Survey respondents also identified areas within New Orleans East that they perceived to **experience more intense extreme heat** than others. Reported locations included:

- Chef Menteur Highway
- Hayne Boulevard/Seabrook area
- Former Plaza site
- Crowder Boulevard
- Morrison Road
- Read Boulevard
- Bullard Avenue
- Plum Orchard
- Village de L'Est

These findings align with the workshop mapping results. Workshop participants identified Plum Orchard as an area where extreme heat is particularly intense, along with the Chef Menteur Highway corridor in Read Boulevard West.

When considering impacts of greatest concern across all climate stressors, respondents most frequently selected overwhelmed stormwater systems and higher energy costs and cooling demand (53% each, n=8) (Figure 21).

The results closely align with the workshop findings, in which participants identified rising energy costs and strain on utilities as top impacts of extreme heat. Workshop participants also raised concerns about drainage-system capacity and damage to water and utility infrastructure during heavy precipitation and flooding.

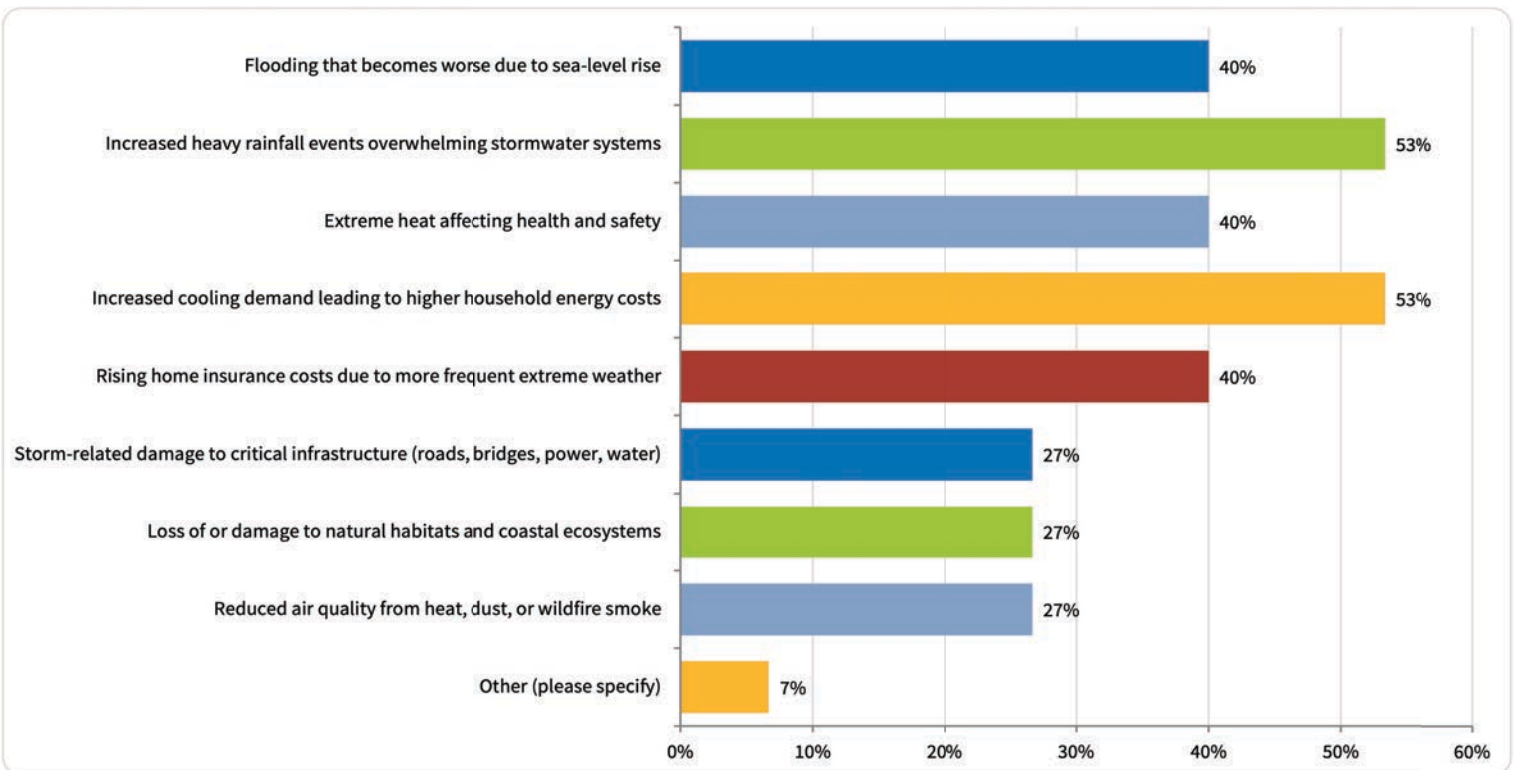


Figure 21. Distribution of the climate impacts identified by respondents as their greatest community concerns, aggregated across all climate stressors (n=15). Respondents could select multiple impacts; therefore, percentages do not sum to 100%.

In an open response question, survey participants were asked what existing strengths, resources, individuals, or organizations currently help (or could help) New Orleans East respond to climate impacts. Responses highlight several community strengths: community-based organizations, social networks, public services, and assistance programs. Water Wise Gulf South and the New Orleans East Green Infrastructure Collective were specifically identified as important environmental and green infrastructure resources. These findings align with workshop discussions emphasizing community partnerships, neighborhood communication, green infrastructure initiatives, and collaboration among residents, local organizations, government agencies, and community leaders.

The survey and workshop findings indicate that New Orleans East has an existing foundation of organizational knowledge, social connections, and public resources that could support future resilience efforts.



What worries you most about how climate change could affect your community?

"Aging water and sewage pipes under pressure. Power outages due to cooling and heating events from severe weather events."

"Loss of power during the crisis"

"The fragility of the current water infrastructure"

"The lack of sufficient air quality that is causing cracked sidewalks and streets, plumbing issues because we are already below sea level. I'm also concerned about the amount of mosquitoes, utility bills, energy, and the amount of cars that are still traveling during the middle of the day that's causing a lot of pollution."

"Not being able to afford to live in the community I choose to live in."

"Energy costs. More trees and drainage structures installed to help in gathering water."

"Loss of marsh land which helps dissipate storms quicker. Frequent weather changes within days, it appears to be a signal from nature that there's an imbalance."

"Roads are in much need of repair, and our homes are maintaining heat, more electricity is used to cool homes. Afraid of hard rains which cause flooding in yards and streets."

"Flooding that becomes worse due to sea-level rise. Loss of or damage to natural habitats and coastal ecosystems"

"It could destroy or severely disrupt people's lives."

"Improper drainage can cause excessive flooding, foundation shifting with water having nowhere to go."

"The impact affects everyday life. Heat-related illnesses, flooding damage to homes (foundations, structures), roads, insurance costs getting higher"

What existing strengths, resources, people, or organizations in your community already help or could help New Orleans East respond to the climate impacts you are most concerned about?

"We have a Neighborhood Association and other groups to discuss and address concerns. Must get to proper agencies to get issues resolved correctly."

"Planting trees. Water barrels installed for more homes."

"Climate Safe Task Force, established by Groundwork NOLA"

"Centralized locations for neighborhoods to get preparedness information once we're aware that a storm is present and likely headed our way. An emergency system text with a link to a site/s that can provide the same information and other emergency contact information. Lastly, where leadership will be located during the emergency, communities need to feel like our leaders are in this with us and not just delegating as if they're separate from us."

"Our city transportation system provides bus services to pick up disabled elderly people who need transportation to healthcare facilities and for children who attend schools and do not have a school ride from a family member...School bus services are free to school children, there are utility services by Total Community Action and also payment arrangements through Energy to keep people with power. There are public agencies that have grants to help people with paying their utility bills, agencies that locate homeless people and provide shelters on really extremely hot days and many nonprofits and agencies that serve food and have food pantries and food drives for families during very hot and inclement weather days for people cannot get out and also cannot pay for our groceries to have food on their tables because they have high utility bills. New Orleans recreational programs have swimming pools and parks for children to play near water and/or swim to help families with young children who do not get enough exercise due to staying inside because it is too hot to go outside. Hospitals that have programs for adults experiencing illnesses due to depression, with elderly and people of all ages that are causing health issues."

"Water Wise is doing an excellent job at helping us to be informed and create solutions."

When asked what additional support or resources New Orleans East could use to be better prepared for climate change impacts, the results were close across all options. Funding for locally led climate adaptation projects and infrastructure improvements was selected most frequently (Figure 22).

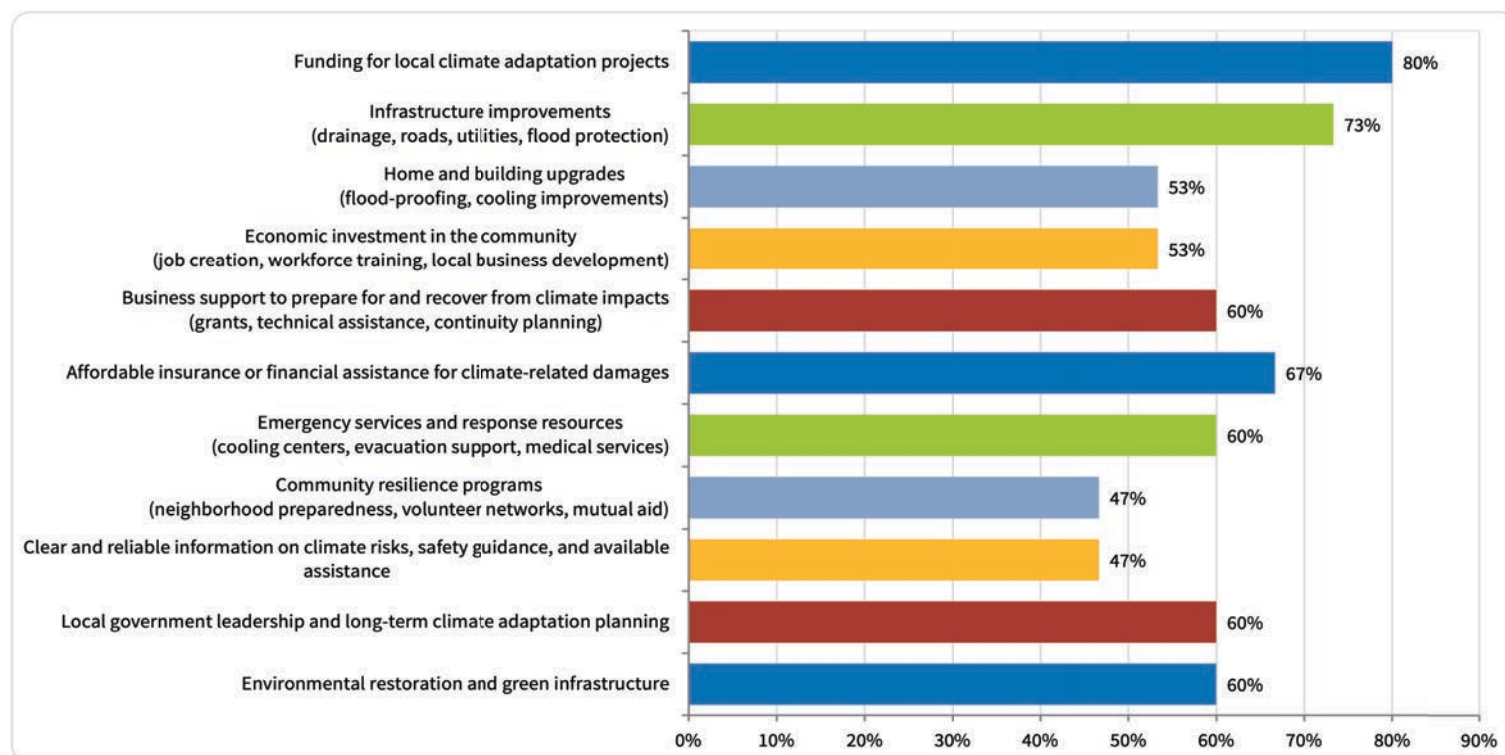


Figure 22. Additional support and resources identified by respondents as necessary to improve New Orleans East's preparedness for climate impacts (n=15). Respondents could select multiple options; therefore, percentages do not sum to 100%.

Opportunities for Green Infrastructure in New Orleans East

Survey respondents were asked if they thought their community had enough trees and shade. Forty-one percent (n=7) said that there is somewhat less than needed (Figure 23).

An open-ended survey question asked respondents to identify locations **where new trees could provide the greatest community benefit** or where they would personally like to see trees planted. Respondents identified the following locations:

- **Major corridors and roadways:** Read Boulevard, Morrison Road, Chef Menteur Highway, Crowder Boulevard, Bullard Avenue, Downman Road, Hayne Boulevard, I-10 Service Road, and Paris Road median
- **Parks and recreational areas:** the walking trail in Joe W. Brown Park and New Orleans Recreation Development Commission parks
- **Neighborhoods and local streets:** North Kenilworth, Plum Orchard, Malvern Drive, and Diamond Road

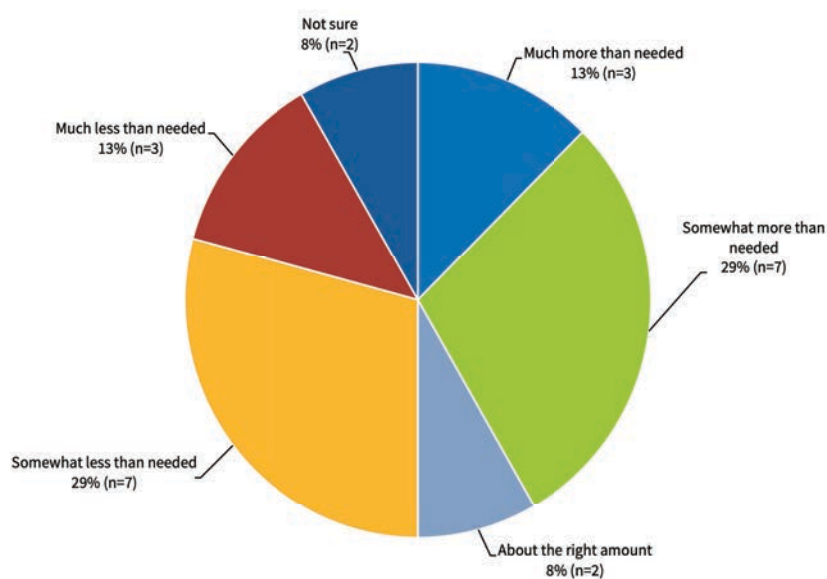


Figure 23. Distribution of respondents' perceptions of whether their community has adequate trees, shade, and green space (n=17).

These priorities closely align with the workshop mapping results. Workshop participants also identified Chef Menteur Highway, the I-10 Service Road, Crowder Boulevard, Hayne Boulevard, and Downman Road as priority areas for tree planting. Several proposed planting locations (including Chef Menteur Highway, Crowder Boulevard, Morrison Road, Read Boulevard, Bullard Avenue, Hayne Boulevard, and Plum Orchard) were also identified by survey respondents as areas experiencing more intense heat.

Final Thoughts

Respondents were asked to share their hopes for the future of New Orleans East as it adapts to climate change. Respondents expressed hopes for a more resilient and equitable community as it adapts to climate change. **Many emphasized the need for improved infrastructure, flood prevention, increased urban greenspace, better climate education, greater government accountability, and support for vulnerable residents.**

What is your hope for the future of your community as it adapts to climate change?

"Authorities must believe in our climate changes to address our concerns. All damaged roads must be repaired and have less concrete and more trees."

"That any updates made are soon enough to slow down the rapid change."

"That there be more funding, infrastructure improvements, services, government support, community programs, or information."

"My hope is that the local, federal, and state officials do their job and not just focus on the French Quarter and allocate funds fairly by distributing funds and resources to the East as well as other popular areas in Orleans Parish"

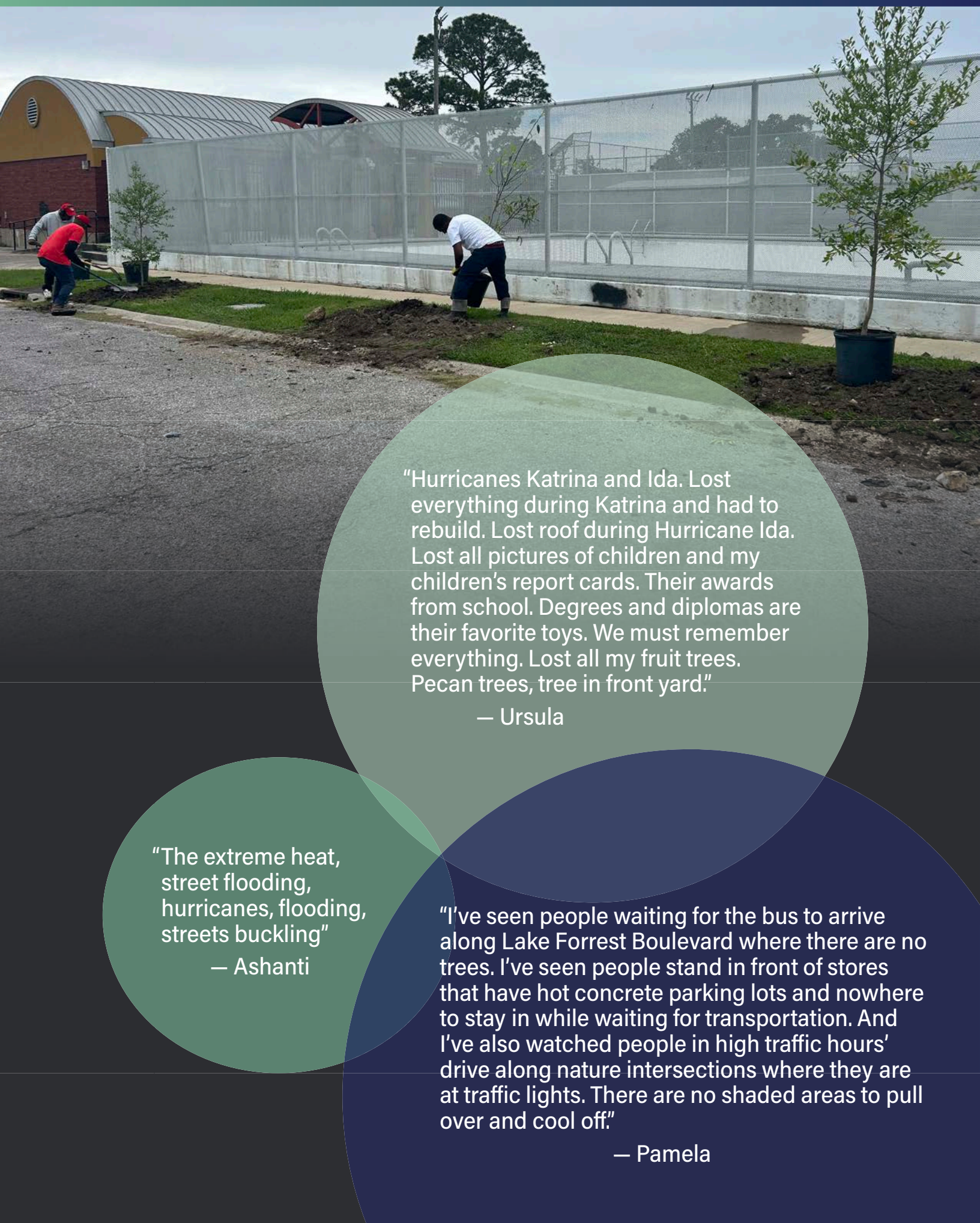
"My hope is that those who are most vulnerable will get the help and accommodation needed."

"I hope that we continue advocating for more funds to educate people about climate change. Heat vulnerability is the number one cause that people are not staying hydrated. And to also put up billboards to remind people of the importance of drinking water and how to qualify for some type of water system or water cooler in their homes so that they would drink filtered water. And to also help provide more trees to be planted in underserved neighborhoods in playgrounds and schools so that people can enjoy being outdoors but staying cool at the same time. I would like to see more water fountains, and more signage to direct people on how to stay cool."

"My hope for the future of this community is for there to be a sufficient reduction of excessive heat and flooding through the implementation of several stormwater management projects throughout the area"

"My hope is for the future of our community is to experience fewer to no climate issues such as flooding, extreme heat, Coastal issues, health-related issues, reduced energy costs, and reduced insurance costs."

"When we finally begin to rebuild businesses and homes, use net zero materials to save consumer \$'s. Build structures that can withstand 200mph winds. Install solar on business, commercial, and industrial buildings to support the grid."



"Hurricanes Katrina and Ida. Lost everything during Katrina and had to rebuild. Lost roof during Hurricane Ida. Lost all pictures of children and my children's report cards. Their awards from school. Degrees and diplomas are their favorite toys. We must remember everything. Lost all my fruit trees. Pecan trees, tree in front yard."

— Ursula

"The extreme heat, street flooding, hurricanes, flooding, streets buckling"

— Ashanti

"I've seen people waiting for the bus to arrive along Lake Forrest Boulevard where there are no trees. I've seen people stand in front of stores that have hot concrete parking lots and nowhere to stay in while waiting for transportation. And I've also watched people in high traffic hours' drive along nature intersections where they are at traffic lights. There are no shaded areas to pull over and cool off."

— Pamela



New Orleans East Spring 2026 Tree Planting

In spring 2026, the New Orleans East Green Infrastructure Collective, Water Wise Gulf South, the New Orleans Recreation Development Commission (NORDC), and the City of New Orleans Department of Parks and Parkways collaborated on a tree planting initiative in New Orleans East.

The trees were planted at three New Orleans Recreation Development Commission NORDC sites, Peace Park, Pradat Park, and Werner Park, all located in the Plum Orchard neighborhood of New Orleans East. The locations were identified by the New Orleans East Green Infrastructure Collective using community input gathered through pre-planting canvassing. The chosen locations closely mirror those identified by workshop participants as priority locations for green infrastructure interventions (see Activity Three results). New Orleans East residents also helped select the tree species planted.

In July 2026, the New Orleans East Green Infrastructure Collective hosted a **tree planting celebration event** at Werner Park. The event introduced residents of New Orleans East, including participants from the November 2025 workshop, to the locations where trees were planted through this project and discussed the project's purpose and goals. A total of 40 people attended the celebration.

Event participants were invited to complete a **feedback form** covering the November 2025 workshop, climate change concerns in New Orleans East, the spring 2026 tree plantings, and priorities

LOCATION	TREES PLANTED	SPECIES SELECTED
Peace Park	10 trees	5 sweet bay magnolia 5 American holly
Pradat Park	5 trees	3 sweet bay magnolia 2 American holly
Werner Park	29 trees	17 sweet bay magnolia 7 American holly 5 red oak





for future green infrastructure projects and community events. A total of 26 feedback forms were completed.

Feedback on the November 2025 Community Workshop

Thirty-one percent of feedback form respondents (n=8) reported attending the November 2025 community workshop. Those who attended the workshop were asked to **describe a meaningful takeaway, conversation, or contribution they experienced during the workshop**. They provided the following responses:

- The engagement throughout the workshop
- Great idea about trees, makes the park look better
- That trees really help the environment around us, and also benefit us.

- The valuable information about what is actually going on in New Orleans East
- Understanding the correlation between heat and the lack of trees in our areas
- The New Orleans East community needs the intervention of the Water Wise organization in additional planting of trees and water management activities
- Planning can never be avoided for a good result. It enhances longevity, sustainability, and cost-saving results

Those who indicated that they attended the November 2025 workshop were also asked **what could be improved in similar workshops and community engagement events**. They provided the following responses:

- More people to attend
- Put out more environmental information
- Continue involving the community and neighborhood associations
- To add more green infrastructure and help with flooding and also precipitation, which will benefit us a lot
- Spreading the word more to get more participation
- Make the recommendations a reality. I have been requesting trees for years
- It would be advantageous to have workshops of this nature at various intervals
- Attendance was good, but more input is needed. Reaching out is never easy.

KEY FINDINGS

- **Extreme heat remains a clear priority.** Nearly all respondents to the feedback form selected it as a concern, consistent with the workshop results.
- **Funding and infrastructure are consistent needs.** These ranked highest in both the tree celebration event feedback form and community survey.
- **Residents strongly support more trees and shade**, and many of the same planting locations were identified across the community workshop, survey, and tree celebration event feedback form.
- **Green infrastructure should address both heat and flooding.** Respondents identified tree plantings, rain gardens, drainage improvements, and other flood-reduction projects as green infrastructure projects they would like to see in New Orleans East.
- **Respondents want continued community outreach and engagement.** Feedback emphasized hands-on events, recurring workshops, and follow-through on community-identified priorities.

Climate Change Concerns in New Orleans East

All respondents to the feedback form, regardless of whether they attended the November 2025 workshop, were asked **which climate stressors concerned them most in New Orleans East**. Extreme heat was selected as a top concern by 25 of the 26 respondents (Figure 24). This aligns with the community workshop results, where extreme heat also received the most selections (Figure 13).

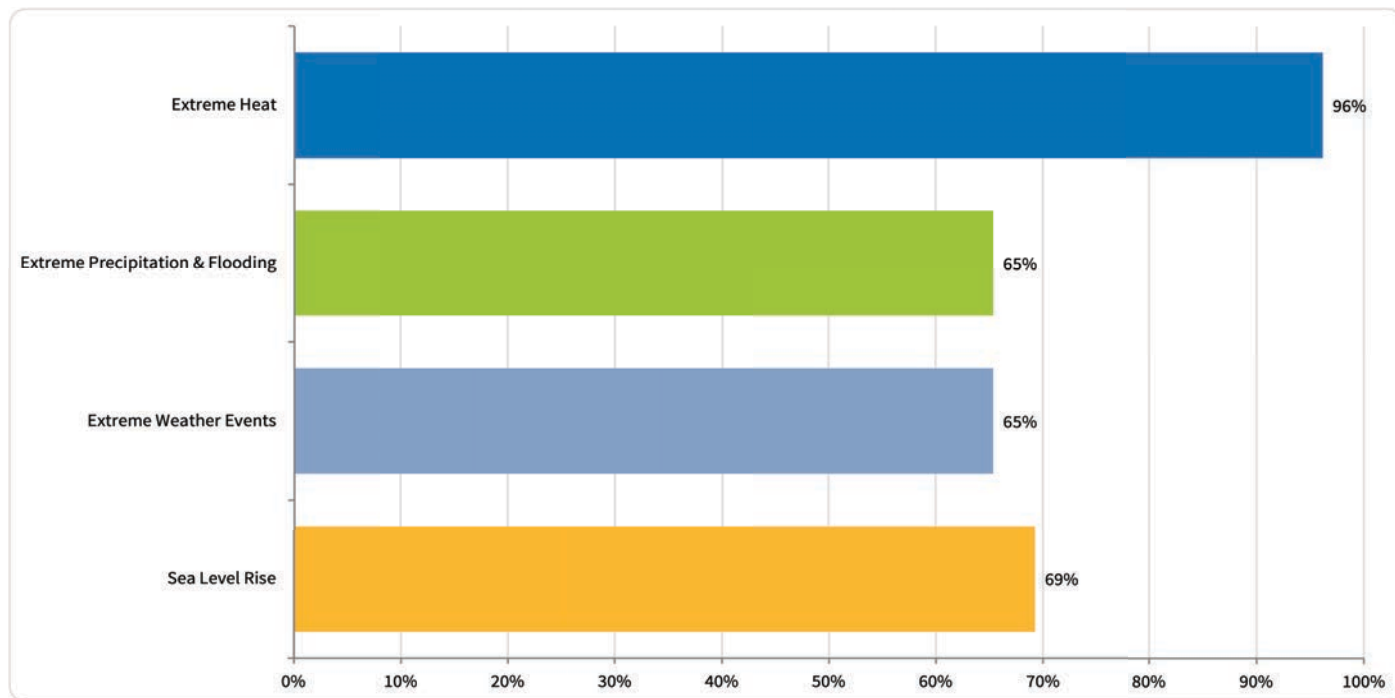


Figure 24. Climate-related stressors identified by tree celebration event feedback form respondents as concerns for New Orleans East (n=26). Respondents could select multiple stressors, resulting in 77 total selections. Percentages represent the proportion of respondents who selected each option and therefore do not sum to 100%.

Respondents were also asked **what additional support or resources New Orleans East needs to address climate impacts**. Funding for locally led climate adaptation projects and infrastructure improvements were the two most frequently selected options (Figure 25). Open-ended responses also identified local forums, general support across all listed areas, and infrastructure maintenance. These results align with the community survey, in which funding for locally led adaptation projects and infrastructure improvements was also the most frequently selected need (Figure 22).

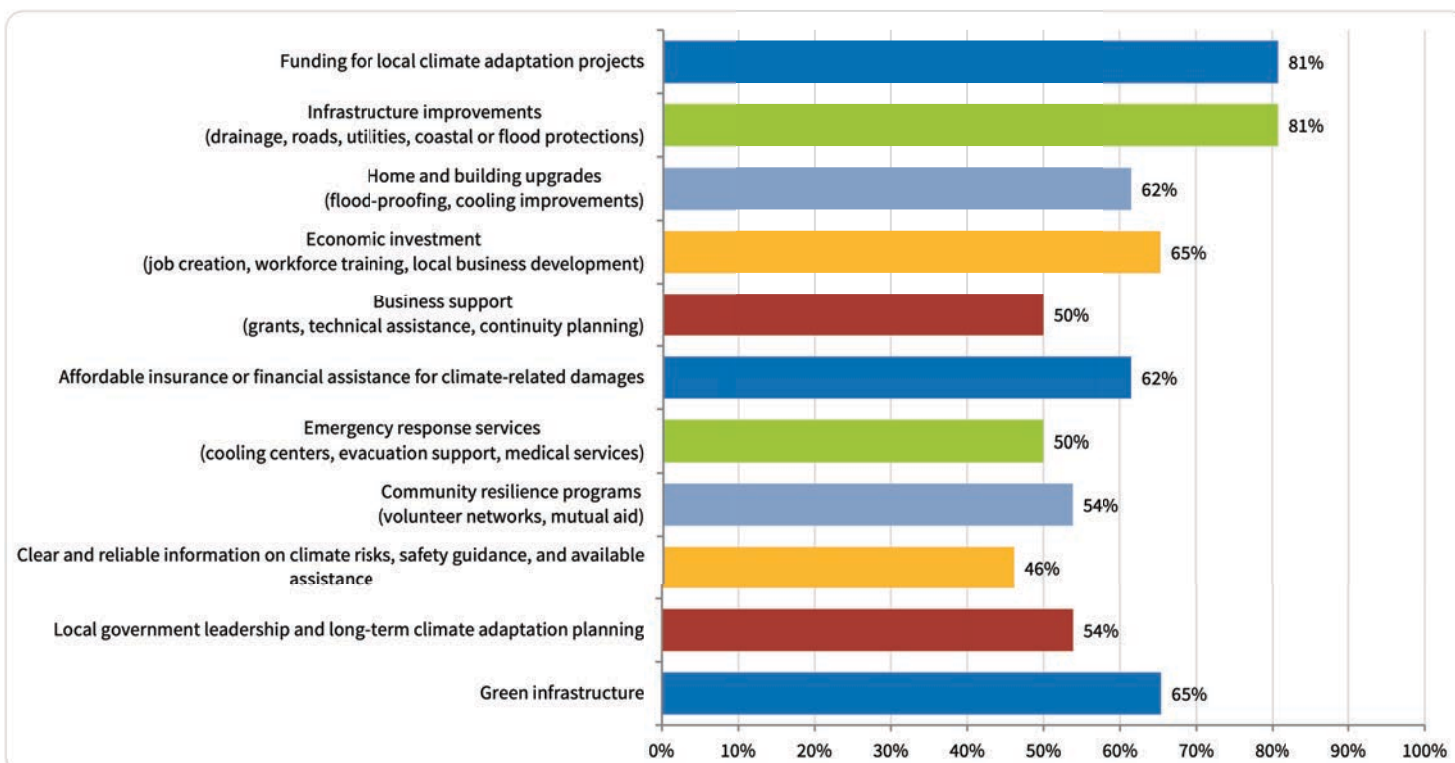


Figure 25. Additional support and resources identified by tree celebration event feedback form respondents as necessary to strengthen New Orleans East's preparedness for climate impacts (n=26). Respondents could select multiple options, resulting in 174 total selections. Percentages represent the proportion of respondents who selected each option and therefore do not sum to 100%.



Tree Planting Locations and Species Selection

The feedback form asked whether someone spoke with the respondents about the tree selection process for the spring 2026 plantings on Werner Drive and Bonita Drive, including why the planted species were selected. Sixty-nine percent of respondents (n=18) reported that they did not speak with a representative, and 31% (n=8) said they had. These results suggest an opportunity to expand direct communication with the community.

Similar to the community workshop and the community survey administered prior to the tree planting celebration event, respondents to the feedback form were asked to identify **where more trees would make the biggest difference in New Orleans East**. In the same question, they were also asked what they thought of the proposed species for future plantings: red oaks, sweet bay magnolias, and American holly. Respondents provided the following information:

- Bonita Drive, American Holly's
- Plum Orchard — I think the proposed selection of trees is a great choice.
- More magnolias around the parks
- Dwyer Rd. Love the tree species
- Areas along service roads. I love the red oaks, it has personality like New Orleans.
- More trees for shade in New Orleans East

- Pressburg area
- These trees are natural for this area
- More trees at Werner Park and Joe Brown Park
- Along our medians. As for trees, I would wish for more, the most hearty evergreens with the least amount of foliage.
- Along the I-10 Service Road corridor and alongside major street corridors like Read Blvd and Crowder Blvd, etc.
- (Academy Park) Chantilly Dr with intersection at Dwyer Road
- Boulevards - Residents need to be active participants for trees adjacent to their properties
- Chef Hwy, Service Roads, Dwyer Rd, Haynes Blvd could all use trees. I like the tree species chosen to plant.

Future Green Infrastructure Projects

Respondents were asked **which types of green infrastructure projects they would like to see in New Orleans East**.

Increasing tree cover and shade was selected most frequently (85%, n=22), followed by flood-reduction projects (65%, n=17), rain gardens (65%, n=17), and bioswales/drainage improvements (54%, n=14). Community gardens received the fewest selections but were still supported by nearly half of respondents (46%, n=12; Figure 26). One open-ended response also recommended additional floodwater-retention ponds.

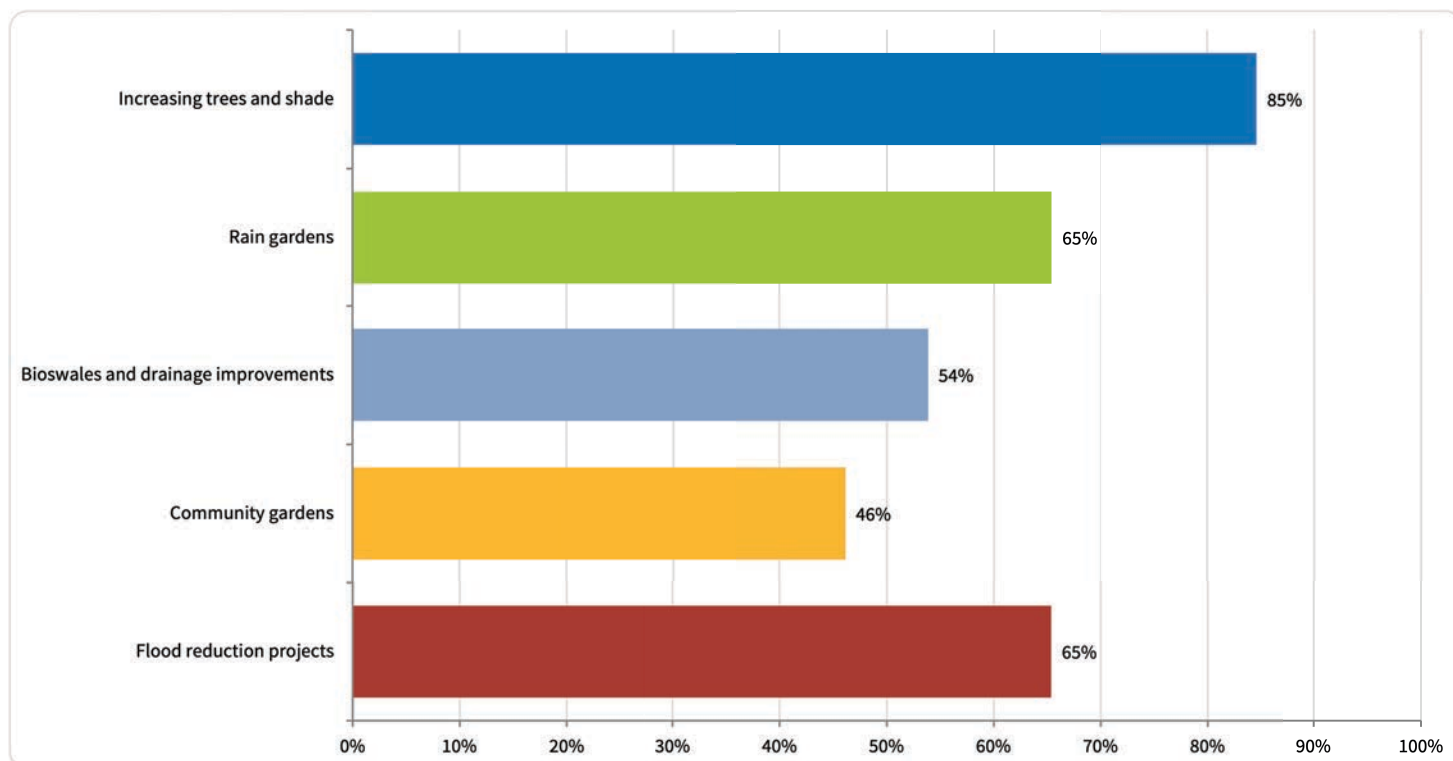


Figure 26. Green infrastructure projects that tree celebration event feedback form respondents would like to see in New Orleans East (n=26). Respondents could select multiple options, resulting in 82 selections across the listed project types. Percentages represent the proportion of respondents who selected each option and therefore do not sum to 100%.



Future Events and Community Involvement

Respondents were asked what events, activities, or projects they would be interested in participating in to support a greener, more climate-resilient New Orleans East. Respondents reported that they would like to participate in the following:

- Workshops on climate vulnerability. To go forth with ideas discussed and make changes.
- Open Park Day, neighborhood walks, food drives, tree giveaways for the community to plant in their yards.
- Tree plantings and other hands-on activities.
- Community events to get people used to seeing old and new faces.
- Community Gardens.
- More gatherings like today (referring to the tree celebration event).
- Tree Plantings, MRGO Tours, Tours of the pumping stations.
- Surveying of potential areas for tree planting. Discovering areas of New Orleans East as water retention sites. Discussion with District E representatives about community improvement projects.



This section provides a high-level overview of green infrastructure and urban tree canopy expansion as strategies to help reduce extreme heat in New Orleans East. While several types of green infrastructure are discussed, the primary focus is on expanding and maintaining the urban tree canopy.

The guidance builds on findings from project community engagement activities, including the workshop, survey, and feedback form. In particular, workshop participants identified locations in New Orleans East where they would like to see additional trees planted. This section synthesizes community input, relevant planning guidance, and supporting research to identify considerations for future tree planting and green-infrastructure projects. It also provides high-level recommendations for the New Orleans East Green Infrastructure Collective and its partners, and points to additional resources to support decisions on future site selection, project design, implementation, and maintenance.

KEY FINDINGS

- **Future projects should focus on places where multiple needs overlap.** Areas with high heat, low tree canopy, flooding concerns, and greater community vulnerability should be prioritized.
- **Residents identified clear priorities for more trees.** Chef Menteur Highway, Crowder Boulevard, Hayne Boulevard, the I-10 Service Road, Plum Orchard, Read Boulevard, Morrison Road, and Downman Road were repeatedly identified throughout project engagement activities as locations where more trees were desired.
- **Many community-identified planting locations also overlap with areas residents described as especially hot or flood-prone.** These locations may provide opportunities for projects that address both heat and stormwater concerns.
- **The right tree needs to be planted in the right place.** Soil, drainage, utilities, available space, mature tree size, and access for maintenance should all be considered before planting.
- **Consider future climate conditions when planting trees today.** Species selection should consider heat, drought, flooding, hurricanes, pests, disease, among other stressors and future climate conditions.

What is Green Infrastructure?

Green infrastructure generally uses vegetation, soils, and other natural or nature-based features to provide environmental benefits within developed areas. Examples include street trees, rain gardens, bioswales, vegetated stormwater areas, and other approaches that increase vegetation or reduce heat-absorbing impervious surface (52). Green infrastructure solutions can be used to support community resilience to climate stressors in various ways (52,53):

- Slowing floodwaters and storing stormwater
- Reducing urban temperatures and providing cooling benefits
- Buffering against wind and storm surge
- Mitigating coastal erosion
- Shading and cooling reduce energy demand
- Slowing and draining runoff and easing stress on drainage systems



Extreme Heat, Urban Heat Islands, and Trees

Buildings, pavement, parking lots, and other hard surfaces absorb and retain heat, contributing to the urban heat island effect, where developed areas are warmer than surrounding areas. Urban heat is a concern in New Orleans, where the average urban heat island effect has been estimated at nearly 9°F, with some areas experiencing even greater differences (54). The distribution of urban heat also varies across the city (Figure 27) (28,54).

Trees and other vegetation can help reduce urban heat by shading buildings and paved surfaces and cooling the surrounding air. Research consistently shows that urban green areas tend to be cooler than comparable areas with less vegetation (54–56). Tree planting efforts should focus not only on the number of trees planted, but also on creating shade where people experience the impacts of extreme heat most, such as around homes, sidewalks, and transit areas. Tree canopy can provide benefits beyond cooling by intercepting rainfall, supporting infiltration, reducing building cooling demand, and

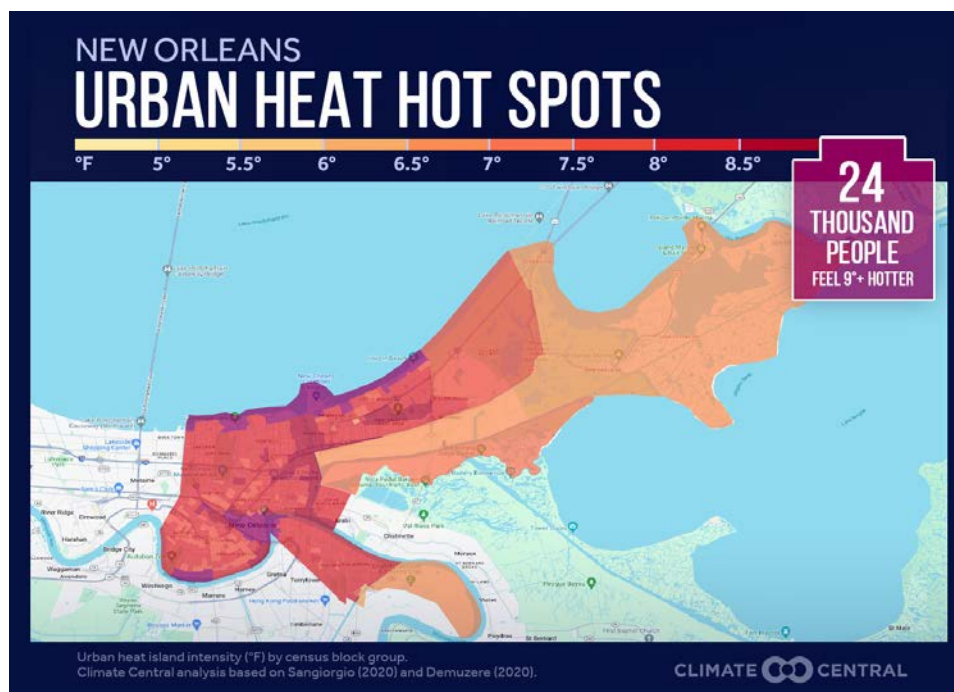


Figure 27. Urban Heat Island Index in New Orleans. The map shows estimated additional heat associated with characteristics of the built environment at the census block-group level. Higher values indicate areas where local land use and development characteristics contribute more strongly to urban heat. Source: Climate Central (2024), CC BY 4.0 (link).

contributing to public health and other community benefits (54,56). Increased tree cover may also help reduce heat-related illness and mortality (57). For New Orleans East, urban tree canopy expansion should be part of a broader approach to reduce extreme heat while also supporting stormwater management, public health, and neighborhood quality of life where possible (54,56).



Prioritizing Locations for Implementation

Community engagement conducted through this project provides an important starting point for identifying where green infrastructure interventions should be implemented in New Orleans East. During the community workshop, participants placed 134 markers identifying locations where they would most like to see trees planted. The greatest concentrations occurred along Chef Menteur Highway, Wilson Avenue, the I-10 Service Road, Crowder

Boulevard, Hayne Boulevard, and Downman Road (Figure 14). In the workshop, Plum Orchard emerged as a prominent heat hotspot, along with a concentration of heat-related concerns along Chef Menteur Highway in Read Boulevard West. Flooding concerns clustered along Crowder Boulevard, within Plum Orchard near Wilson Avenue and Lafon Drive, along Lake Forest Boulevard, and in areas east of Read Boulevard. The recurrence of locations across all three engagement activities identifies several **community-supported areas for green infrastructure implementation, particularly Chef Menteur Highway, Crowder Boulevard, Hayne Boulevard, the I-10 Service Road, Plum Orchard, Read Boulevard, Morrison Road, and Downman Road.**

Feedback collected after the tree-planting celebration showed that residents are interested in green infrastructure more generally, with tree cover and shade being their highest priority, followed by flood-reduction projects, rain gardens, and bioswales or drainage improvements.

See **Appendix 1** for a full breakdown of community engagement findings and their priority intervention locations.

Considerations for Prioritization

Existing canopy estimates vary across New Orleans East, including 28.3% in Viavant-Venetian Isles, 19.3% in Read Boulevard East, 8.1% in Pines Village, 6.4% in Little Woods, and 4.9% in Village de L'Est (54). **Comparing existing coverage with community-identified locations of need will help inform the selection of implementation sites.**

Once an area is identified, individual planting locations should be evaluated for their ability to support healthy trees over the long term. Common constraints include limited rooting space, compacted soils, pavement, utilities, driveways, and narrow rights-of-way. Trees should be planted where they have enough space and suitable growing conditions to survive and mature (54). This is especially important as tree canopy benefits develop over time. Newly planted trees provide relatively little shade and take years to establish, grow, and develop substantial canopy. As trees mature, their potential to provide cooling, stormwater management, and other benefits increases, making long-term survival, growth, and maintenance important measures of success rather than the number of trees planted alone (60,61).

Species selection should account for both the conditions of the planting site today and the conditions trees may experience during their lifespan. Evaluating future conditions can increase the likelihood that planted trees survive and continue to provide shade and other benefits over time (58). For New Orleans East, species selection should consider extreme heat, drought, flooding or

saturated soils, hurricanes and wind, pests and disease, rooting space, maintenance needs, and future climate suitability, among others. Using a diverse mix of species can also help reduce the risk that a single climate stressor results in widespread tree loss (58,62).

Future tree planting and urban forestry efforts should (54,58):

- Consider community-identified local stressors and implementation location priorities
- Prioritize areas where high heat, low canopy, and community vulnerability overlap
- Identify sites that have sufficient space and suitable conditions for trees to survive and mature
- Research potential conflicts with utilities, roads, sidewalks, and other infrastructure
- Plan and budget for watering and long-term maintenance before planting
- Engage residents and local partners in project planning and stewardship
- Research and select tree species that can remain healthy under current conditions and are considered "climate-ready"
- Monitor tree survival and performance to improve future projects

Additional Support Tools

The **Tree Equity Score tool**, developed by American Forests, measures how effectively the critical benefits of urban tree canopy reach those who need them most in a particular location. The tool highlights tree equity and provides details on tree canopy coverage. It also provides information on the estimated total annual benefits of existing and new tree canopy, links to additional planning tools, and an interactive map that allows users to compare neighborhood tree equity scores and the factors that influence them.

New Orleans has a tree equity composite score of 80 out of 100, which is considered moderate. In order to achieve a tree equity score of 100 in every neighborhood, the urban canopy in New Orleans would need to be expanded by 16.6 square miles (roughly 770,269 trees) while maintaining the existing canopy (American Forests; <https://www.treeequityscore.org/insights/place/new-orleans-la#11.63/30.039/-89.9477>).

This link provides access to information specific to New Orleans, Louisiana: <https://www.treeequityscore.org/insights/place/new-orleans-la#11.63/30.039/-89.9477>



Park Serve is a tool developed by the Trust for Public Land. It is a national mapping platform that uses a comprehensive database of local parks to assess access to close-to-home parks. Using a 10-minute walk (roughly half a mile) as a measure of park access, the platform helps identify disparities in access, explore relationships with community and environmental conditions, and pinpoint priority areas for new or improved parks (<https://www.tpl.org/parkserve/about>). This link provides information specific to New Orleans, Louisiana, including priority locations for new parks: <https://parkserve.tpl.org/mapping/#/?CityID=2255000>