

Panel – Transforming Brownfields and Greenfields

Moderator:

Con Howe, Director

Center for Balanced Development in the West

Urban Land Institute

Thank you.

First of all, I appreciate all of you staying and coming back after lunch. It's always a challenge to have a panel right after lunch. And I was trying to figure out what could keep you here. And I suspect that if you've noticed after every panel, Ali gives some other thing. First was a dinner. Then was a book. So I'm sure you're all waiting with bated breath to find out what your reward is for staying for our panel. One reward you have is this will be an informal discussion. While I think there are going to be some slides showing some of the projects that we talked about, there aren't really formal presentations by our panelists, so we are instead going to be able to talk amongst ourselves. And if we can see your hands, we will certainly want to bring you into the conversations.

First, I would like to start off by really congratulating the University of California at Riverside and the Blakely Center for the leadership it's shown in these issues of suburban development and sustainability.

I am really pleased to have spent the whole day here and hearing the interesting presentations

that this conference has attracted. Really good presenters. Certainly you've attracted some of the nationally known speakers in terms of Robert Lang and Joel Kotkin. And I think the leadership that UC Riverside and the Blakely Center is bringing is really important. It really means more attention to the issues, greater credibility to those issues.

And I just got back from Washington where the Urban Land Institute was talking about its next year's work program, and I know that given the character of development in the United States, both the current and future growth patterns, and especially in the American West, you simply cannot deal with issues of community or land use without addressing the issues of suburban development and redevelopment.

And so that's why I think the leadership that UC Riverside and Blakely Center are providing is terrific. Seems to me for decades the academic community and the nonprofit world focused very much on either inner city redevelopment or the natural landscape and the environmental issues of the natural landscape. And suburbia and the issues there were kind of lost on the agenda.

Now, as you all heard, Ozzie and Harriet have gotten the big beating today, and so maybe Ozzie and Harriet and their life situation is not worth studying, but as we've heard from the presentations before, the suburbs are far more complex and far more diverse than the out-of-date attitudes that people have from decades ago.

I also mentioned that ULI itself is ramping up its work in terms of suburban issues, and one of

the publications it will release this year is a book by Rick Pizer on suburban issues and suburban development. Rick was a colleague of Ed Blakely's at USC. And I know there's a big USC contingent here including, I guess, two members of our panel.

Well, now that we have had such an interesting day already, what can this panel contribute? I guess I was struck with something Joel had said about the need to solve the problem of sprawl within the sprawl itself. And I think in some ways even though that wasn't the title we had come up with, that is what these panelists, all of their work is addressing. This panel will look at three different contexts, three different projects, all of which are sites in some way that were leftover pieces in the fabric of the development of their area. Some cases, they were damaged or troubled sides. Sometimes, in the case of Sheila Danzey, it's damaged by a natural disaster. And so we will let her describe to you what's happening in New Orleans.

But probably one part we ought to start off with is the issue of definitions. You could probably have a whole panel just discussing what is the definition of "suburban" that we're using. And we are not going to try to do that on this panel, but suffice it to say that each of these is a different context. I myself always view "suburban" as being a much broader definition. Some people think it refers to a political jurisdiction, but I have worked in the two largest cities in the country, and I assure you large portions of both Los Angeles and New York City are, in my view, suburban in nature and character. So it's not the political jurisdiction you're in. Probably, given the diversity of scale of the suburbs, it's not

necessarily scale. But as I say, we won't try to answer what is suburban right now.

I've asked each of the three panelists to, first of all, describe the project that they are working on currently, to also let you know the status of it, the progress it's made, how far along it is, and then to identify one challenge they have had to address in terms of bringing it to the status that it's at so far.

Then given the diversity of the areas, we are going to work hard to find the common themes, the common threads that go through these examples.

Panelists:

Randall W. Lewis
Executive Vice President
Lewis Group of Companies

Ali Sahabi
President
SE Corporation

Sheila Danzey
SHEDO LLC
New Orleans, LA.

By luck of whose hat and what seat, I think we will start with Randall Lewis, who is going to describe one of the many projects of the Lewis Companies. I won't go into an introduction, because I realize you all have our introductions in the brochure

in front of you, but Randall is going to talk about a project that's origins -- is referred to as a greenfield, but I guess it had its own brownfield qualities, which he'll describe.

Then Ali Sahabi is going to talk about his project, Dos Lagos, and which I am anxious to see. I can't believe I've been out in the area and I've heard a lot about it, but haven't had a chance to see it. So maybe his gift to me will be a tour of the project.

And he will certainly talk about it from its history as being a site for sand and -- no gravel? Just sand?

And then Sheila Danzey, who is our representative to keep tabs on Ed Blakely in New Orleans. She has been very kind to come all the way at Ed's invitation to speak about the redevelopment challenges and revitalization challenges of New Orleans.

And the one comment -- she and I had a chance to talk last night, and I think given the extent of the damage, the extent of the rebuilding effort, I know she will be talking about areas that are suburban in nature. We are going to leave Bourbon Street to its own future, not worry so much about it. And so she will have her own experiences to bring to bear about really good coming back to life of important neighborhoods in what Ed Blakely, I think, pointed out is really in many ways the soul of this country.

So without further introduction, I am going to turn it over to Randall and let him describe his project.

MR. LEWIS: Thank you. Thank you all for sticking around.

I am going to talk about a community we are working on called The Preserve. It's in the City of Chino, which is on the edge of San Bernardino County, and it's close to Orange County and close to Los Angeles County. The Preserve is primarily made up of old dairies, and so there are a lot of current dairies still there. And buildout of The Preserve, our part of it will have a little over 7,300 homes and town centers, schools, parks, trails, some offices.

We tried to do a real different pattern of development on The Preserve. If you go just to the east of it, Riverside County area called Eastvale, there were thousands of houses that had been built or are being built on 7,200-foot lots, big boxes, and really not enough parks, trails, no social infrastructure whatsoever.

So we said, "Let's try to do something different." So our motto was to save a significant amount of open space. Working with the environmental community and working with the City of Chino, we have saved almost half the property as open space.

We then tried to do different types of housing. Out of all the projects we'll have, Ozzie and Harriet will probably be happy at two or three, and they'd be very unhappy at others. Our typical densities will average almost 10 per acre on the buildable units, so we have a lot of small detached homes at 7, 8, 9, 10 per acre, a large number of townhouses that will be built. We opened about two

years ago and we've sold 6- or 700 houses in the last two years. And really we could have sold more, but it's just we didn't have the inventory built.

We are acting as master developer. We don't build houses. We sell the lots to what are called guest home builders. Then we will do the infrastructure, we will work on the schools, and then we will also build any apartments or offices or shopping centers that are within it.

We tried to look at this in terms of building more than just shelter for people, more than housing. There were enough opportunities if someone only wanted that to the east. So we put a lot of emphasis on what we call social infrastructure. We put in a 15,000-foot club that's the heart and soul of the community where there's very active programming going on. There's a strong homeowners association.

We are working on a partnership with the City of Chino on a K-through-8 school that will be a joint use school within the school district. It will have a park next to the school. It will be shared. It's going to have a gymnasium that's joint use between the school district and the cities. And the gym will be used during the day by the school, nights and weekends by the community. It will have community rooms that will be shared, and it's going to have a library that's a partnership between the County of San Bernardino and the school district.

It's also got a park initiative that we are working on with the City of Chino called Helping Chino. Part of the premise on The Preserve is that the built environment can shape people's lives in

terms of health, so we tried to have a plan that was healthy with walking trails. The school is the center of the community. Tried to have a plan with a lot of physical elements, basketball courts, tennis courts, swimming pools. The idea is it's hard to swim if there's not a swimming pool, it's hard to play tennis if there's not a tennis court. So we actually allocated a lot of dollars for those physical elements. There's been a lot of time working on programming, partnering with the school district, we partner with the city, we partner with the Department of Public Health, we partner with the Red Cross, the YMCA, and a number of wellness programs within the community.

And then lastly is the policy side. Actually, we are working with the City of Chino and people within the city, not just our community, to focus on nothing but health issues. Chino is interesting in that they are doing their new general plan, and I believe it's going to be the first city in the state, if not the country, where one element of the general plan will be a health component. How are the projects going to be handled to health?

I think there were two challenges that we had. You asked for one, but I will give you two. The first challenge was just doing some of these partnerships. We had a lot of willing players in them, but there's a lot of rules that come up. I think lessons we've learned is if you are going to do any joint use partnerships or any partnerships whatsoever, they take a lot more time, and we probably need to study the theory of organizational change, behavioral change. It was pretty hard.

The other change that we will be facing, we are going to have a town center, but it's a town center that's not on a busy street. There are some busy streets all over the country of models of suburban town centers and a lot of new ones have been built, a lot of good ones have been built that have not been successful, so we have been working with the City of Chino. And people have said, "What's your town center going to be like?" And I tell them, "We don't even know yet." So that will be one of the biggest challenges we face.

Thank you.

MR. HOWE: Thank you. Ali?

MR. SAHABI: Yes.

Good afternoon, everyone. Just to make sure there's no misunderstanding, I don't have any more gifts to give.

MR. HOWE: And the room is not empty.

MR. SAHABI: I am very happy to be here presenting with some of the very distinguished individuals in our profession.

Our project, Dos Lagos, is 543 acres of a master planned community, a mixed-use master planned community. It consists of 1,049 units of residential, what we refer to as mixed residential. We have six different types of residential. We have senior condos, townhomes, the traditional single-family homes. We have cluster homes. And we have one of the first live-work projects that we know of in Western

Riverside County.

And in addition to our residential component, we also have a retail lifestyle center which is a pedestrian promenade center that will eventually be four blocks of retail type, of an old Main Street type, a '50s Main Street, with parking in front of the storefronts and also parking in the back of the buildings.

And in addition to that, we have a hotel. We have a golf course. We also have about half a million square feet of Class A offices. All of these land uses primarily come together with a quite central area of our project which is a very much community oriented part of the project which we refer to as the heart of our project. And actually our architect, Norberto Nardi, named it "The Heart." And I would like to describe it as like the heart of a human being. It connects all the different uses together. So all of the uses have pedestrian promenades that end to the heart.

And this project has been in the works for about ten years. We are about 70 percent completed. I would imagine within the next two or three years we will be 100 percent built out.

And when we started the project, we followed three guiding principles. The first was working with nature, not against nature. We are located -- although this was a silicate sand quarry for almost 75 years, we have Temescal Wash that runs on our property, and we had areas where we had occupied endangered species, such as California gnatcatcher. And so we had a lot of issues. And so as a rule, as a

guiding principle, we used those environmental natural resources as a benefit to the project by setting aside 135 acres of open space for California gnatcatcher and also establishing a conservation easement over the Temescal Wash with the appropriate funding to maintain the wash forever. And we incorporated the wash. We rebuilt the wash. And I am really happy to inform that within the last couple of months, for the first time in 15 years, one of the other endangered species that used to be in the wash has come back. That's the bell vireo. It's another bird, another endangered bird.

And so that's our number one guiding principle, working with nature, not against nature.

The second one is working with the community. And that is a very important principle to us. We believe that early on, in order for our project to succeed, we need to have the input from the community, the community not only discussing plans and so on and so forth, but learning about the culture and the history of the community is a big part of that, and incorporating what we found about the history and culture into our project.

For example, in our Dos Lagos project, within the heart, there's a circle, circular walkway. And this circular walkway references Corona as the Circle City.

Those of you who know the area, Corona, you know Grand Boulevard. That's a perfect circle. So we planted the same palm trees, the same pepper trees in a perfect circle around the lakes. Or a small lemon grove area. Corona used to be the lemon capital of

the world, so we incorporated a small lemon grove adjacent to the lakes. And that's No. 2.

And No. 3, we work within the policies and the rules and so on and so forth. It's really important that we try to understand what exactly the objective of a particular jurisdiction is, and we work very closely with them in accomplishing that.

Now, as far as the challenges for our project, it's really hard to identify one challenge because we kind of had the –

MR. HOWE: There were so many.

MR. SAHABI: Yes. It's most difficult. Primarily, I think the physical condition of our property. For those of you who don't know Dos Lagos, this used to be a silicate sand quarry where about a third of the site was excavated, so there were these huge pits created. Some areas, 130 feet deep. And on the other side of the property, we had a lot of material, the material that basically was dumped along this Temescal Wash. Some areas, they were 40 or 50 feet deep, so they were unbuildable areas.

So the physical challenge, along with the environmental challenge. So we had the worst of both worlds in a way. And all the process that we had to go through and obtain, I think the only thing that we didn't have to do was the Coastal Commission on this project. Everything else on a federal level, on the state level, on the local level. And that's all for now.

MR. HOWE: Your colleague wanted to make a

comment.

MR. LEWIS: For those of you that haven't seen Dos Lagos, there are two things, just to give you a quick tour to look at them, the walkway that he described is one of the prettiest and most interesting walkways in all of the Inland Empire. And if you go daytime or nighttime, they are very different experiences, so make sure you take that walk.

The second is the housing products that are there are among the most sophisticated in the Inland Empire, the target market. And I think some, it's because of the guidelines the developers put in. Some, it's because of the builder, as Ali chose. But the housing products there are very, very sophisticated and they are executed beautifully.

MR. HOWE: It's great to get a compliment from a competitor.

MR. SAHABI: Especially this man.

MR. HOWE: Sheila, turn our attentions to another part of the country.

MS. DANZEY: Well, Dr. Blakely asked me in September to speak at the conference. I didn't know a topic and then we discovered it's brownfield, so I think maybe he saw me after two glasses of wine and figured I was toxic.

But let me just say, I am by education a social scientist. I have a master's in social work from Tulane, but my concentration is in community planning and organizing. Tulane, conservative as it

is, for three years had a curriculum that dealt with most of the things during the Solinski period, so I'm aging myself. Yes, I am 60.

They had a curriculum for three years, and then they decided to go back to clinical. But I really do not regret going to that curriculum, because I think it has helped me in a number of ways.

I primarily have been working in housing, affordable housing, worked for HUD for a number of years, the community development director for the City of New Orleans. I now have my own company. I am doing some small development. But the most significant thing I have been doing is the community recovery planning for the City of New Orleans.

And sometimes I get very emotional. I am a native New Orleanian. I am probably the prototypical New Orleanian. In New Orleans, we are natives who never move out of town. We have the highest degree of natives who have remained in New Orleans. The middle class in New Orleans is shrinking. It is over 50 years old. Eighty percent of the students who graduate from Tulane, Loyola, Dillet University and Xavier leave town. We do not have an economy that captures young people to stay in the City of New Orleans. New Orleans is a very compact city. The City of New Orleans is a parish. We are the only state of the union where we do not have counties, we have parishes. And that's because of the Catholic influence, the French and Spanish.

A very compact city. The city itself, however, is the surviving piece for the whole Metropolitan area. Around the parish of New Orleans

is Jefferson Parish and St. Tammany, where a lot of people have moved out.

Eighty percent of the City of New Orleans was under water. And virtually 100 percent of St. Tammany Parish was under water. Unfortunately, the levy protection system failed the citizens of New Orleans, not necessarily the storm, but the federal government failed the people of New Orleans by not building a levy protection system that we were guaranteed to have.

New Orleans before the storm had about 400,000 people. Right now today, it's about 200,000. The 200,000 people who are back in New Orleans were those of us who were able to leave the city on their own steam. We had a place to go. We left in our cars, we left in planes, and we left. The other 200,000, we evacuated out of the city. And they are the ones who cannot get back into the city.

The State has not provided any financial resources to the City of New Orleans at this point. There was a program called Road Home, and people jokingly called it "The Road Away From Home" because it has not been helpful at all. What has been done, the neighborhoods that are coming back are neighborhoods who have their own resources. They were neighborhoods that either, (1), had flood insurance or they had insurance; and, (2), used their own money to come back into the city because that's where their investment was.

It is a very -- it is a very -- I worked for six months with the citizens of New Orleans where they felt they needed to come back and see. "For me to

come back, this is what I need for the government to do for me. If you're asking me to make my reinvestment back into the city, this is what I need." And the things they asked for were not really outlandish. They asked for infrastructure, they asked for parks, they asked for school systems, and they asked for a reinvestment in neighborhoods to that extent.

When we add up the numbers -- and let me go back a little bit. The City Council and City Planning Commission have identified neighborhoods. There were 67 neighborhoods that were identified -- I am sorry -- 61 neighborhoods that were identified in New Orleans. Of those 61, 42 of them received more than three feet of water in their homes. So we worked only with those neighborhoods that had flooded, because this was recovery planning. This city was, just before the storm, preparing to deal with comprehensive zoning and planning, a master plan. But this was recovery planning. This is what it would take for people to be able to come back to be made whole.

Before the storm, we had a number of problems. We have three school systems in the City of New Orleans. We have one that's run by the parish, which is only six schools. The rest is run by the State. And then we have charter schools. And all of them are miserably failing. New Orleans had the second highest poverty rate after Detroit, Michigan. So we had a number of problems before the storm, and what Katrina did was exacerbate those issues. But there are a number of people who still want to come home. We had a large population of elderly people in New Orleans, and they want to come home. And they virtually said, "I want to come home to die." And

they are dying not being able to get home.

So excuse me if it gets to be a little -- because I've gotten a greater respect -- the worst I had -- I lived in an area of New Orleans that had no flooding. It was near the river. The worst I had was a stinky refrigerator when I got home. And so many of us did. When I met with people who attend -- we met with over 10,000 people who came in on the weekends to meet, who came after work to meet, came in from Baton Rouge, came in from other areas to talk about what they wanted to see done.

Dr. Blakely is so correct in his assessment. There needs to be a healing period. When we started meeting with people, they were so angry. They were angry. They were traumatized. They were angry with government. Just angry with anybody. They lost family members because of direct drowning of the storm or because they had to be transferred to other medical facilities and they just didn't make it to that facility. There were a number of people like that. We all know people that that affected.

But still they came. And we realized that we had to give them something. People were missing housing, jobs, and information, accurate information. And so as we gave them that information, we said, "Well, we are going to have about three or four" -- we didn't call them sharettes. We didn't have three or four sharettes in the neighborhoods. We found we had to have a minimum of seven, because the first three were therapy, was their therapy session. And you know, as you go into that, we said, "Okay. Maybe they may be real and we'll talk about what they need."

New Orleans has suffered. Back in the 17-, 1800s, the core of the city was the French quarter. And you will see signs posted all over the city that is the center now of the city that was a Fauburgh as we used to call them, the French version of Fauburgh neighborhood that is now part of the city. So we had suburbs long before. And the history of such is that most of the people up the river from the Mississippi River and the plantation owners would come down the river to sell their wears, cotton, whatever. And they had second families which lived on the other side of the French quarter, which was called Trepay. It's a very interesting history of New Orleans that if you have the opportunity, you should read.

And it's recreating a city. We knew that water was always our problem. It's a saucer. The city is an extension of the saucer. We are below sea level. We knew that. Just like the people in the Netherlands knew that. And we thought we were protected. But we had 17 breaches in the levy. And that's what came in and just destroyed a lot of dreams and hopes for people. But the people in New Orleans are very strong.

Now, this is my suck-up comment. Thank goodness for Ed Blakely coming to New Orleans.

(Applause.)

People have been waiting a long time for this. This is 15 months. And he's 15 months too late.

And I will say this. And I am a political watcher, very involved in politics, you know. It is

the best appointment that Mayor Ray Nagin has made in his whole administration.

The community is there to support him. As a result of us meeting with the community and the community leadership, they have established, as someone said earlier, a people network. And so there's a network that is going to be there for him who want him to succeed, because if he succeeds they succeed.

I think his biggest challenge is going to be -- and I can give you a whole list of them, but one of them will be federal government recognizing that a billion dollars to New Orleans rather than to Iraq to save an American city might be more better spent, much better expenditure of money.

(Applause.)

And second of all, I think the other challenge he's going to have is diversifying our economy, because as my son comes home and he says to me, "Oh, I'm homesick. I would like to stay," and I have to say to him, "No. You are not. I am not going to get my investment back from your education if you stay in New Orleans, so stay in Atlanta."

So I'm hoping that those are the challenges that -- because people want government -- they will reinvest in their own property, but what they'd like you to do is invest in that -- the public money invest in their community so that their private investment can be appreciated and they can enjoy all the amenities that they deserve as taxpayers.

(Applause.)

MR. HOWE: I appreciate your giving us a picture. Ed was very modest in not talking about the challenges he personally faced. So I appreciate hearing a little bit about it from you all.

MS. DANZEY: Well, we know he's up to the challenge.

MR. HOWE: Let me start off our -- this is a conversation that we are going to have among ourselves.

Let me start off by saying one of things that seemed like a contrast is both Ali and Randall talked about creating community and social infrastructure in a new community. And I thought it was interesting how you were taking the keys for the history of the area and trying to use that, bring that onto the site.

And here, Sheila, what you are trying to do is recreate -- or not recreate, but to revitalize a very deep and rich culture and social infrastructure that already existed. Maybe it had its troubles and its flaws, but you are trying to reestablish.

Maybe you all could talk about which is harder. Is it to start with a blank slate and try to add that social infrastructure? Or is it harder to come back from the kind of devastation that New Orleans has seen and recreate what was there?

MR. LEWIS: I would think your job is a lot harder in New Orleans. We have a blank slate of paper. It's a lot easier to say where should the

school go or what should the gymnasium look like. And I think it's a lot easier on new housing communities or apartment communities. You just have more of a budget. Whether a house is 400,000, 402,000 doesn't matter that much, but that extra 2,000 can pay for a whole lot of things if you have 7,000 houses. So my guess is that our job is a lot easier than your job.

MR. HOWE: From your point of view, does it give you an opportunity, though, since so much of that neighborhood infrastructure was wiped away, is it an opportunity now to reestablish it in a better way?

MS. DANZEY: Well, 40 years ago, we had another storm, Betsy, that destroyed a very important part of the city called the Lower Ninth Ward. Probably on CNN you hear about that more than you hear about anything else. That is an area that took a great deal of devastation. They had to take people out of their houses. So they took again 40 years ago. But the infrastructure was never replaced after the first storm, after 1965. There was no federal system whatsoever. Those folks had to go out and borrow money. And 57 percent of the people in that community were homeowners. Low-income homeowners, but homeowners nevertheless. But they never received any kind of assistance to make themselves whole in 1965.

And also there was no money to fix the infrastructure, which means you actually -- it's in the middle of the city, but it actually looks like country roads in this area, and that's where most of the devastation has taken place. A lot of those houses, a land storm came over. And that brings up an issue about construction. Construction problems.

I think it's probably harder because there are a lot of attitudes and some issues in New Orleans and some history in New Orleans that makes it a little bit difficult. I think the planning process has allowed people to believe that they are empowered to a certain extent.

Let me be very candid with you about New Orleans. New Orleans is a very charming city. It is a very wonderful city. It's home for me. Those of us who are native, we have a lovely relationship, but we have a lot of undercurrent racial problems in New Orleans. Please don't think that we don't.

I mean, the problem is as soon as the storm hit, there were a group of people who said, "Oh, now is a time" -- and this was reported in The Wall Street Journal -- "we can cleanse the city." And so the issue came up of shrinking the footprint. And I heard my neighbors uptown who said, "Well, they need to shrink the footprint because that means that if they don't, how am I going to get my trash picked up twice a week rather than once a week?" You know. And that's not the issue. The issue is if you bring people back and they're taxpayers, you will have the money to provide those services, but more the issue was, "Well, we really need to not bring that element back."

And when you start thinking about shrinking the footprint -- and ULI -- and, again, it's perception -- talked about the fact that people need to build where it's safer. Well, if they don't fix the levies in 2010, those of us who did not have flooding will probably have the same thing happen to them.

So the reality is there's a lot of perception in parts of the city of shrinking the footprint. Shrinking the footprint meant in an area which was east of New Orleans. That is where the African-Americans really was. And so those people quite frankly had taken the lead in coming back faster. It was almost like a challenge, that, "I am going to come back whether you want me back or not."

And then we also have big swaths of land that have public housing. We had one of the largest housing in the country and one of the most poorly run housing in the country. There is now discussion that they are going to now tear down or redevelop three of the largest sites. And, of course, the community sees that as an opportunity to cleanse the city of poverty, so to speak.

So I guess to answer your question, it is harder, because there are attitudes and practices there that are difficult to overcome. It is not like you have a clean slate. So it is very difficult. It is a historic city. And we have not learned yet how to balance economic development and historic preservation.

MR. HOWE: You do have that advantage, though, of a real strong indigenous character. You know, so much of the criticism of new development is it's faux this or faux that. And New Orleans, one thing it's not, it's not faux. Maybe that's a French word.

MS. DANZEY: You are absolutely right. Most of the houses in New Orleans are over 100 years old.

And you will find in the traditionally middle-class African-American neighborhoods 100 years ago, you will find that the families are still living in those houses. Their kids have prospered and grown up and moved out to the east or to the suburbs -- in New Orleans, it's not the suburbs because there's nowhere in New Orleans you can't get to in 20 minutes. Nowhere. So, you know, it's hard to call it the suburbs. And the surrounding parishes is where all the retail is. We have very little retail in New Orleans. And I think Dr. Blakely has mentioned that. And he's recognized that. We are going to work on that.

But all the retail -- the mayor of Kenner -- Kenner is a municipality. As I said to you before, New Orleans has parishes. You go to other parishes, there are small municipalities there. The Mayor was telling me the other day that he's got so much retail -- retail tax -- sales tax revenue that they're just booming in his area. And, of course, some of the things that helped that is that you have a lot of these home improvement companies like Home Depot and Lowe's who are making a killing because people are rebuilding.

So they are prospering out in the outlying parishes. And we have not been able to appreciate that yet.

MR. HOWE: There's an issue that -- you are mentioning about the sea level and the elevation. And it makes me think of an issue that's actually a parallel between the habitat issues that you are dealing with, Ali, and the issues that you are talking about in terms of the water level.

People often say, "Well, planning decisions, land use decisions ought to be based on good scientific information." And yet when I think about it, if one simply took none of the history, none of the racial issues, but just drew lines around New Orleans and said, "Well, everything above a certain elevation will be rebuilt, and everything below a certain elevation will not be rebuilt," or in your case, Ali, this is a -- I will make enemies among the environmental community in saying this, but -- the habitat for certain species may not be the only criteria. For instance, what if, from a site planning design, the point of view, the very best location, maybe by topography or by location to the road system or whatever happens to be the habitat. And, again, which is more important? The scientific view? Here is where the habitat is? Or here is where the water levels are? Or do you let in other factors of site planning and design and the social issues?

So how much should we rely on science?

MR. SAHABI: I think if I may comment on this subject, the whole definition of sustainability to me is balancing the impacts of our decisions on the environment, on society, and on economy. If we can find the balance between these, to me, the areas of impact, I think we have made it.

MR. HOWE: So what you're saying is, "Sure, it's a factor, but it shouldn't be the only factor"?

MR. SAHABI: It shouldn't be. It should be a balance. Because just like life, we don't get everything we want all the time, you know. And so you

have to give and you have to take. You have to compromise. You have to negotiate. But there needs to be a balance, I think. And I think it's possible to find those balanced solutions.

What needs to happen, in my opinion, we need to build bridges. We need to build bridges between the political leaders, between the community leaders, between the business leaders, between the community activists, between the environmentalists.

By building bridges, what I mean is bringing them together on a real level platform. Let them communicate and build trust among each other, because I think that's what's missing in most cases.

MR. HOWE: I am reminded that Randall just pointed out one of the challenges of the partnerships, that everyone believes in the word "partnership," but how do you really make it happen?

When you were referring to partnerships, were you talking more of institutional partnerships or referring to partnerships –

MR. LEWIS: Well, it's more institutional. Our Chino project, though we worked very closely with Dan Silver and it was a very strong partnership, I mean, he came up with some very good ideas for us, not just on our habitat in the Rand Conservation, but also on how we did our plan. There was a fellow named Dr. Jack Bath and we had a very strong partnership with him. So if anything, partnerships within a community with the environmental groups were a lot better than the partnerships with some of the other groups.

MR. HOWE: Some of the governmental?

MS. DANZEY: I would like to comment on that. They dredged a canal through the Mississippi River, and it's called the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet. And we found -- we called it Mr. Go. It was built as a shortcut down to the Gulf of Mexico. It was done for the shipping industry.

Environmentalists in the City of New Orleans said it was very dangerous, it shouldn't be done that way. The shipping industry got their way and it was dredged. And it wasn't used frequently.

When the storm hit, New Orleans East, which had the best updated computers, also the best pumping system in the city and also -- I lived down there for a while, and when I applied for flood insurance, they said, "You really don't need it because you are high off the berm, but I did it anyway because it was so cheap." But because of Mr. Go -- and the environmentalists said they dredged it for business interest -- and it flooded Eastern New Orleans.

So those are some issues. And the other thing -- if the government did not want to -- if the government really felt that -- the federal government really felt that the footprint should be shrunk and did not perhaps admit that they were at fault for the flood protection system, they could have easily changed the base flood elevations. In 1985, base flood elevations were issued. And when they issued them several months ago, they were made the same basically, so --

MR. HOWE: From '85?

MS. DANZEY: Exactly. They did not change them drastically. It would impact two areas of the city, Lakeview and Gentily, and that's a very elderly population. And those who have to demolish and rebuild, they have to build a second floor which presents some challenges for the elderly. And we are trying to get them to look at another kind of product in the area, because there's a golf course in that area, public golf course. It's a very nice area, and elderly would like to stay there. So we recommended a condo product so that they can remain in that neighborhood. But if the government had changed the base flood elevation, that would have been saved.

MR. HOWE: And you're saying they didn't do that?

MS. DANZEY: They did not do that.

MR. HOWE: Yes?

MR. LEWIS: Just a word on the City of Chino, the school district, and the County. These are partnerships that were very difficult, but were very good people. I don't want to leave the impression the Chino people were stubborn or not good people. They have been wonderful to work with. The school district has been wonderful to work with. But they each have rules.

Some quick examples. If you are doing a gymnasium for state use, the school district may say it has to have a rubber floor. Both have rules for good reasons, but if you want to do it, you have to

say it's going to be one or the other. If you are going to have a softball field, some say you have to have red dirt in the infield. Great reasons. But it was those kinds of things. We have very well-meaning people trapped where they couldn't bend their rules, and it was just -- it was very difficult.

And we finally got there, but it made us think twice about the organization. What you really need is leaders at the top to see -- this is probably what Ed Blakely is doing -- and say, "Guys, we are going to figure this out. I don't care" --

MR. HOWE: Did you have similar kinds of issues with either the school district or --

MR. SAHABI: Good communication, yes. And generally with the other agencies, our interaction with the school district is very recent where we are actually building the first high school currently in our memorandum of understanding with the school district. There's going to be a magnet school for environmental sciences and technologies. So we are very proud of that. We have an ongoing relationship with the school district.

MR. HOWE: But that's a situation where your responsibility is to build the physical plant, turn it over to them, and they will -- it was their decision to make it a magnet school?

MR. SAHABI: The detail is being worked out on how the actual agreement is going to -- who is going to build this school and how it's going to get built. But it was part of our negotiations, and they made a decision to agree to that.

But generally speaking, you know, I think the more communication, the better, up front. I remember in our project we had an open door policy, where anybody could just walk in and find out what we were doing. So the more we did that -- at one point, our tours were called the 25-cent tour, until the energy crisis and inflation and gas prices. It went up to a dollar.

So the point is that we worked very hard. It's not very easy to keep everybody informed. Sometimes there are perceptions, there are misunderstandings that come about. But what worked for us was new information.

Our project, with all of the approval process that we had to go through on the federal level, on the local level, and the state level, we never had one opposition to our project.

MR. LEWIS: From the day you started thinking, "I'd like to do this high school," till the day it opens, how many years will that be? I don't know when you started talking and I don't know when it opened. What is that time frame?

MR. SAHABI: This is within the past 12 months, and I think it will be another four years or five years before it's actually --

MR. LEWIS: So talking about reinventing the suburbs, suburban growth is organization. They only have room for so many institutional initiatives. You can only try so many tricks. And one of the challenges, if you say, "Well, I want to do something

with schools," is the way the system works at the district level, but also in Sacramento and then how you build them, it's very difficult to go from, "Let's do something neat to an opening in less than four years." It's often five or six years. But unless you have a community that's going to be 3,000 houses or 5,000 houses, when you are in that situation, you say, "Maybe I'll spend the money and energy on something else to get a better payback." But that's one of the things companies like ours have to figure out, is which initiatives do you try to do to give back to the community and which ones can you say, "This is great. We get an immediate pay-back for our residents," and which ones do you say, "I am going to get a pay-back in six years"?

MR. HOWE: All of you have talked about working with community, but one interesting parallel is on these very large sites you are referring to a community that sometimes lives on the perimeter and sometimes even further away from the perimeter.

And, Sheila, in your instance, it must have been a real challenge to have community meetings when half the neighborhood was living in Houston or Atlanta or Lafayette or Baton Rouge. It's interesting that we talk about working with the community when we are not always sure what the community will be. And particularly in new master-planned communities, once people start moving in, they have strong opinions.

MR. LEWIS: One of our challenges, too, when we bought all these dairies, luckily cows don't go to many city council meetings, but it was hard to get community input other than from the dairymen who were primarily interested, "What's this going to do to the

value of my property?" or, "Can I continue and stay and run the dairies I have done for the last 40 or 50 years?"

So we tried to reach out. We had very few residents within three miles of us. It was really 100,000 cows.

MR. HOWE: Ali, did you have more –

MR. SAHABI: We had residents and –

MR. HOWE: Cities were well established or -- these were well-established communities?

MR. SAHABI: Yes. What we did, we went and formed organized groups within the community, service organizations, the business organizations, the churches and other spiritual institutions, and we brought everyone to the table, we offered to them. Sometimes we didn't cover everything, but –

MR. HOWE: Can I ask you, they see the fact that this has historically been a sand pit and that you were proposing to, in effect, bring it back to a new life, did they see that as kind of the motivation? Is that why you had so little opposition? It couldn't have been just because you're so charming.

MR. SAHABI: No. I think we had to communicate that, but when you talk about development or redevelopment, people usually look at the negative, the downsides. How is this –

MR. HOWE: The fear.

MR. SAHABI: The fear. The traffic issues. They fear the service issues. "How is it going to impact the level of service that we are currently receiving?"

So that's the reality of our lives. When -- as developers, you know, that's what -- when actually things develop and they turn out good, some -- like, some of Randall's projects that have been so thoughtful from a quality-of-life point of view, providing the services that people need, like the child care, like the wellness centers and --

MR. HOWE: Don't you think a lot of that is living up to whatever you promise?

And I'm sure that's going to be true in New Orleans. If they are always measuring did you live up to the promise rather than --

MS. DANZEY: That's why we try not to promise people anything. You know, in all fairness, the councilwoman -- there were two councilwomen who started this neighborhood revitalization effort. One, her district was completely decimated. She had no constituents. They were all gone.

And another councilperson who is no longer on the council now was in an area that was partially damaged, but not to any degree as the rest of the city was. It was an uptown area.

But they tasked us to do a couple of things. One is to respect all the planning that had been done before the storm. We did a number of plans for different neighborhoods in the city of New Orleans.

New Orleans East had a renaissance plan. There was a plan in the central city. There were plans that were on the books, as I said, before. The city's Planning Commission, the city was working on a master planning and zoning ordinance before the storm.

So there were plans out there already, so we were told to respect those plans, number one. There was a plan for an area that was really next to David, it was really devastated, Gurtown, who had a plan done by Columbia University. So we started that as a business, and we met with the community and said to them very clearly -- and our team -- let me just say our team was made up of -- 75 percent of the team were local architects and planners. And there was a reason for that. Because they had made a commitment to come back to New Orleans. Most of them had lost their businesses and their homes. They had made a commitment to come back to New Orleans to work. And I think they started out with an advantage, because New Orleans is a clubbish sort of town. We say we're 500,000 people and we all know each other. And that also talks to whether or not people trust you.

I read the city's housing programs. And a lot of the people I saw in those rooms were people I had seen over the years who knew that I unfortunately, to my detriment, sometimes am very candid and honest with people, and I would not lie to you because you needed to know my answer so you could move on to Plan B. If Plan A doesn't work for you, you've got to move to Plan B.

So they knew that whatever we said, we were not outsiders who were giving them the issues about, "Oh, I want to come in and help New Orleans and do

something for New Orleans." The co-manager, one of the co-managers called the -- I can't think of the name -- they named it after a councilman in that area. So he had experience in doing that as well.

So we had a very good, well-rounded team of people who connected and, you know, whenever we'd go to a meeting, we all knew each other or people would say, "Oh, I knew you were with the Office of Housing, you were in the Ninth Ward, and thank you." So that was important. Because you had to have people -- you had to have them trust you.

So we never promised anything that we couldn't do. What we said to them is, "We are technicians. We work for you. You tell us what you think you need to come back. Now, we'll tell you whether it makes sense. You are not going to be able to build a Super Dome in your neighborhood or whatever, but we will tell you what makes sense."

Well, at the end of the day when we added up all the projects for the 43 -- because that's what the city council defined it -- but what we found, there were other neighborhoods who sprung up and said, "Well, wait a minute. That's not my neighborhood." And we have a long list of contacts with some politicians who want to get their hands on that. However, if they said they were neighbors, we told them come on to the meeting. And there were people who were right across the street from each other who never spoke to each other, but we all in the same boat now.

So if people -- so people in Broadmoor had just as much empathy as the people who lived in the

Lower Ninth Ward. And, you know, they argued, "No. No shrinkage. If you start shrinking the Ninth Ward in New Orleans East, then I'm next." So there was appreciation of that. So people educated us. And we have a three-volume document which talks about -- and I'd like to use the DVD -- which talks about those projects. And when you added up all the numbers, people were very modest. When you added up all the numbers for those neighborhoods, what they said they wanted to improve their investment, we are talking about \$5,000,000,000. That's not a lot of money.

MR. HOWE: Was it heavily on schools or --

MS. DANZEY: It was heavily on infrastructure. And it's heavily on schools and parks and health care.

And Dr. Blakely is right. We have a great opportunity in health care. We had a large public hospital, which was a teaching hospital. But a large majority of the people in New Orleans work in the health care industry.

And the other industry was government. They worked in either federal, state, or local government.

And let me just say this to you, too. The state, the money that was sent down to the federal -- by the federal government, sent to the state and the governor, is -- or Louisiana's governor responsible for doling out the projects. They have not done a good job. They have not done a good job. I think the money would have been better spent and directed to the communities themselves, because they know what they want, they know what they need. And I think that you

will find that out at the ballot box. But at any rate, you know, I can't totally -- the government -- the federal government -- we will ask the question, "What have you done with the money we sent to you?" And the company that is administering the Road Home Program, which is supposed to help people that did not have insurance or whatever, their contract is almost \$800,000,000, and today they have not issued 100 checks.

So there is some responsibility that the local community has to take, but unfortunately -- and it makes Dr. Blakely's job a whole lot more important and when he has to go to Washington and other places, then we need to go to private institutions, we need to go to Washington and everywhere else to make the argument that we need to be made whole. And somebody needs to be made responsible for us not being made whole.

MR. HOWE: I have some more questions, but I want to make sure we get your questions. And it's a little hard for me to see raised hands, but I would love to again bring you into the conversation.

And I guess -- is that you, Les? I can't see that well. Please start with a question.

PASTOR JULIO: I am Pastor Julio, AME Temple Church here in Riverside. I want to thank the presenters.

One of things that's been going through my mind is I've heard Randall, Ali, Sheila, I have heard you all talk about all kinds of services, whether they are social, even political, when we built these

communities. What are the possibilities for having also, as we develop these areas, some kind of spiritual investment, whether it's a church, a synagogue, a mosque, or some kind of consideration? With respect to New Orleans, because I know there's a lot of people there, that drives their lives. And so if we are going to build in this community, we are going to have libraries, we are going to have social issues. What are the possibilities for having consideration for the spiritual lives of those who will come and live in the community?

MR. HOWE: That's particularly an interesting question given Joel Kotkin's definition about the sacred, the busy, and the safe.

So -- well, what's the plan?

MR. LEWIS: We are beginning to see a number of jurisdictions on big, big projects saying, "We'd like to get a couple of sites for churches or faith-based organizations."

In addition, I think there's going to need to be a new model as costs go up, as land goes up. We are probably going to need to come up with some model of sharing resources. I was talking to Jane Block about this last night. It's too expensive for a lot of not-for-profits or faith-based organizations to go at it alone. I don't know the solution for that, but it's something we are just beginning to think about, because if you can't come up with a solution, all you are going to have is the mega churches with 5,000 members buying this one great location and everyone else is shut out.

So it's an important topic. It's beginning to be looked at. We don't have solutions yet.

MR. HOWE: Would that include, for instance, joint use of facilities?

MR. LEWIS: I think. And people have talked about it. Some people have tried it. There aren't a lot of great examples. I know Irvine tried it 20-some years ago, but I think that's going to have to happen more and more.

And the good thing is the customers are going to demand it. That will make it happen faster than anything.

MS. DANZEY: Of the 150 meetings that we had in the process, all of them were in churches of different faiths. A number of them were in the Catholic churches. A number of them were in Episcopal churches. We had Baptist churches.

So the churches were -- and then a lot of the ministers set up congregations in Houston and Atlanta. And they were helpful to us when we went to those places to talk to the communities. They helped get the community there to hear what was going on back in New Orleans.

So we had really connected with them and a number of the plans they talk about. And then the people are very careful about that because of the separation of church and state, but there are a number of nonprofits that the churches have.

Probably the Catholic churches have been able

to get up faster, and some of the mega churches as well. The smaller ones are still trying to -- but it's given people in the community, in the neighborhood, and members of those churches something to strive for as well.

So they have been very important and that's -- we have had all of our meetings at churches. And no matter what condition. There were locations where we had to borrow generators. We had one congregation, we had to make a presentation, we had to put a white sheet outside under a tent with a generator, but it was the congregation who wanted us to talk about it.

MR. HOWE: Les?

MR. HAMASAKI: My name is Les Hamasaki.

How are you dealing with the issue of the climate change and the rising sea level, global warming trends?

MR. HOWE: That's another thing Ed Blakely has to solve.

MS. DANZEY: That's another thing. You're right. I mean, a lot of -- for example, coastal New Orleanians has been talking about that for years and years and years. And now there's a lot of drilling that goes off the coast of Louisiana, oil drilling that's affected -- that has been an issue with environmentalists. It has to do with the fact that we lost a lot of our wetlands. We used to be called -- the license plate for Louisiana used to say "Sportsman's Paradise." No longer, because there's

no -- I mean, the wetlands are slowly disappearing.

So those are issues that I'm sure that Dr. Blakely and others will certainly have to deal with, I mean, because the flood protection system is not just the levies. You know, it's the Barrier Islands, you know, and it all involves the issues. So it's a very complicated issue. And so I think it's an issue people who are -- people realize those issues, but they still want to come back to New Orleans.

MR. HOWE: I believe a gentleman back there.

MR. MUNFORD: Paul Munford, New Joy Baptist Church. With the rising costs of housing, how will you go about to have a variety of affordable housing to the poor and middle class?

MR. HOWE: That's a very good question.

How is that being handled in your two new developments?

MR. SAHABI: I think one of the ways that we tackled the issue of affordability to the extent that we could within our economic environment was to introduce new projects, attached projects, or smaller lots, smaller home projects. Up until the time that our project was approved, City of Corona, if I'm not mistaken, for almost ten years did not approve one single attached-type project within the city boundaries.

So the idea that they had was that they wanted to build large homes on large lots. And so we had to have a conversation with the leaders and with

management of the city that the large lots and the large homes only satisfy 5 percent of the population, even if that.

MR. HOWE: Can I ask, on your detached product that's being built, what's the smallest lot size you offer?

MR. SAHABI: About 3,000 square feet.

MR. HOWE: And you, Randall? About –

MR. LEWIS: Those are the estate lots.

MR. HOWE: Which are a different price plan?

MR. LEWIS: When we are looking at a lot of models coming from out of Orange or Los Angeles County, we are looking at projects that will be 10 to 13-an-acre detached, and you really have to marry the architecture and the land plan. There's some very good examples.

The question of affordable housing, there's not an easy solution. Some of the new cities were working on them. The entry fee, if you take just the fees and the infrastructure, forgetting land profit, sticks and stones, 80 to 100,000. So when you start with that as an entry fee, it's very hard to get affordable housing. Certainly density is one key, both attached and detached.

I think a smarter approach is design guidelines. Nobody wants ugly housing, but there's some great examples -- and a lot of them came from your leadership in Los Angeles -- that you can do

affordable housing that's inexpensive to build, efficient to build, and still really be good-looking. A lot of times it's about color, it's about form, it's about function. And it's really difficult making statements to a Planning Commission. There's some great Planning Commissions, but there's some that aren't so great.

And then lastly I think as a society we are going to have to take a look at who should actually pay for that affordable housing. Certainly on behalf of young home buyers -- obviously, this is basically coming from a developer, but -- the policy would be if the city is going and bringing in apartments and industry and there's a need for affordable housing, should it be borne by the 10, 20, 30, 40,000 a house to subdivide those in affordable houses?

And I think we believe -- and a lot of people believe -- that they ought to be borne by the city or the county more as a whole than just the new homebuyers that are buying in an immediate neighborhood.

MR. HOWE: I know that the whole issue of a cost of producing housing is something that Urban Land Institute and other organizations are trying to tackle, but there's so many things that developers can affect. It's very hard to affect the cost of labor, the cost of materials. So you are left with issues like the land, the density as it relates to the land, the regulatory system, both its speed and its certainty. And those are all things that are heavily weighted toward the public sector and they are the role the public sector can play. We found in a number of instances where the biggest impediment to a less

expensive house that could be purchased by people -- you know, a work force housing, people who are teachers and other people who don't have large incomes, it's often the municipalities who insist on large minimum lots, and they are afraid that if they have a small lot they will have some bad housing or somehow change the image of the community.

So it's interesting that you yourself had to kind of, I guess, work with Corona to get them to come down on the lot size.

MR. SAHABI: We had to overcome that, yes.

MR. LEWIS: In this area, for sort of industry junkies or academics, if you want to watch a city that's going to be doing the most progressive work, it's going to be the city of Ontario in terms of affordable housing and density and new types of house.

Ontario is going to do some of the most progressive work in all of Southern California. So watch them closely over the next five years.

MR. HOWE: Great. Are there other -- I see a hand. I think you are getting a mic right now. Good.

MR. VASQUEZ: Thank you. My name is Miguel Vasquez. I would like to identify myself this time as a resident of Riverside County, and also I am a local artist.

One of the definitions of art is the conscious use of thought and scale to create something that is beautiful and out of the ordinary.

Through the manipulation of matter, shape, form, color and texture, Mr. Sahabi's architect, Mr. Noberto Nardi, created a unique example of the infrastructure, which is the bridge at Dos Lagos. This bridge demonstrates that sense of place, sense of community, sense of pride can be achieved through careful thought in the design of a suburban development.

This spark of creativity is becoming a landmark of original significance. It is also becoming a source of inspiration, at least for me. And, also, it is an example of the fact that public space is true of this type of infrastructure.

So I would like you to address in your view the importance of public art into reinventing suburbia. I view the bridge as a piece of public art.

MR. HOWE: So you said the role of public art in –

MR. VASQUEZ: In the efforts of revitalizing suburbia.

MR. HOWE: Sheila, in the community meetings you had, did people bring up the issue of public art and adding that to the character of the rebuilt neighborhoods?

MS. DANZEY: To be honest with you, that was not a big priority and issue. I think in another place and time it might be, but it's about basic -- getting the basic institutions back, education, the church, as you say, schools, those kinds of things.

So New Orleans -- you know, the history of New Orleans is we had the first opera house and all through the years all of the culture in New Orleans has somewhat changed to our own brand of music and art. I don't know if you've heard of this guy, George Rodriguez, who does stuff. Everybody doesn't appreciate it, but New Orleanians do.

But I'm just saying that when you are talking about recovery, I think it's much different from creating a community or -- it's a bit different. When people talk about their priorities, people are very meager in what they wanted.

You also had a situation where a large number of professional folks in New Orleans were just -- New Orleans Parish School System, they were shut down just before the storm, so those people got a double hit, you know.

And when you talk about affordability, it's relative to the area. In New Orleans, we have an issue of affordability of rent, of rental property, and there's also the issue of home ownership. We did not have a high concentration -- probably flip-flopped from the rest of the country in terms of home ownership. So it's a relative thing. Right now, they are building a lot of condos downtown and we are wondering whether or not -- they were on the board before the storm, and some of them have remained. Now it's going -- Trump is going to build a big 72-story one. And, you know, people are wondering whether or not the people in New Orleans can afford those kinds of rents or can afford to buy these kinds of condos. It took New Orleans years to get warmed up to the idea

of a condo. We always thought we had to have a separate yard and separate space, because we had the land, you know. We had the land. Now people are talking about going up only because of the flood waters, not because of anything else.

MR. HOWE: Ali, would you address about how you are going to use public art?

MR. SAHABI: Sure. I do appreciate this gentleman's comment about our bridge and Dos Lagos.

And what I have observed since we completed the project early in October, I think the bridge –

MR. HOWE: This was the bridge that you completed?

MR. SAHABI: It's the bridge. This is the bridge that separates the two lakes. And it's a walkway. And it's made of bamboo, 12,000 pieces of bamboo, imported from Vietnam.

MR. HOWE: I was going to ask if it was domestically grown.

MR. SAHABI: And –

MR. HOWE: Can I ask how long is the bridge?

MR. SAHABI: I haven't actually measured the bridge. I am sorry. I don't know the answer.

It's 700 feet? You may know that. I try to know as much detail as I can, but I can only remember so much.

But what I have observed, it's been incredible. I think -- because I talk to the visitors of our community. I walk out and informally talk to the visitors and ask them how do they feel. And it's unbelievable what level of enthusiasm, level of excitement, and level of pride it's giving our community. That --

MR. HOWE: Because it is a unique --

MR. SAHABI: Because -- you hit it right on the head. It is because it is unique. No one else -- nowhere else in Orange County or in L.A. County there is public space like that right now, something they can call their own.

MR. HOWE: Randall, how do you infuse the public spaces with art?

MR. LEWIS: It's a very difficult question. Art is very important for a lot of reasons. The challenge today is what art competes with. So if you say, "I'm going to spend X dollars on art," is that more important than the affordable housing component or putting in computers or doing nicer carpet? But that's what it competes with. All of those are important.

I think the solution that was brought up from 10 years ago, 15 years ago which was a mandatory 1 percent fee art in public places, probably is not the right strategy going forward.

If you read a lot of books, now there's a buzz word where they say everything has got the double

bottom line or the triple bottom line. And I think with the art community, it will be how to make the art work harder, how to make it serve as an inspiration and a marketing tool for a shopping center, for healing or therapy if you are in a wellness program, or education in a school.

I think art for art's sake; as good as it is, it's going to be hurt competitively, but when art gets a double bottom line or a triple bottom line, then people will try to figure out a way to make it work.

MR. HOWE: Which means it's more infused with the purpose of the community or the environmental issues or whatever?

MR. LEWIS: Right.

MR. HOWE: I think we have time -- unless someone is going to give me a hook, we have time for some more questions. Is there another out there?

I have one that I wanted to ask, but I will -- okay. I am going to jump in.

Since we are here at the sponsorship of a great university, can I ask in each of your projects if there's one thing that a university -- we won't -- we won't have to identify which one, but if there's one thing that either the academic community or a university could do to have helped in the work that you are undertaking -- that's got to be an issue in New Orleans -- what is it that you would seek to have a university help on?

MR. LEWIS: Dozens of ideas. I think the

biggest one is very difficult in a university setting, would be to get the different disciplines of the university to talk to each other and then work with the development community or the planning community.

So if you are a large institution, you have a school of architecture and a school of gerontology and a school of architecture for schools, talk to each other so -- there's a school in Los Angeles that's a wonderful school, but it's still missing some opportunities for the different schools to talk to each other, to come up with a body of knowledge for people like us to say, "Let's combine these disciplines," and really do something fantastic, so that -- the universities are doing some very good work, but I think if they could -- if the different departments could talk to each other more, it would be even multiple times better.

MR. HOWE: Ali, what's on your wish list?

MR. SAHABI: I agree with Randall that that's important. We could always use an extension of the university in a project. It adds a lot to the quality of life for any community.

MR. HOWE: And the whole idea of life-long learning; that it doesn't just end with a degree?

MR. SAHABI: Yes.

MR. HOWE: Well, Sheila, New Orleans has famous academic institutions. What role do you see them playing in the rebuilding?

MS. DANZEY: Well, I don't want to hold

everybody up from that drink, but let me just say this to you. I have to say that right after the storm, we had a lot of students who took their Christmas breaks and summer breaks and they came down and helped some of the elderly people in New Orleans who needed their houses. For that we are very appreciative. I mean, students from all over the country who came down and actually got their hands dirty. I mean, went in. Because so many of our elderly people who -- so it was students who came to help us. I mean, it was just really gratifying. And they came from all over the country to the Tenth Ward.

The universities can be helpful to us. We did a survey when we were doing the planning process. And interesting enough, over 50 percent of the people who responded to the survey, men and women -- you usually don't get men to be so expressive -- who are saying they are having psychological trauma and dealing with trauma and long-term problems. They are mentally not able to handle what's going on. They are mentally not able to be disconnected. During Christmastime last year was very edgy because a lot of us had to go different places to be with our family, wherever you could be.

But universities, the schools, the hospitals assist the people in terms of -- when you forget -- we think about the bricks and mortar, but we forget about the level of trauma that people have gone through. Because I cannot imagine -- or none of you can imagine, looking at television and seeing what you saw, going home and seeing not only your personal belongings were destroyed but your memories were also gone.

So it is very traumatic for people. And I think that universities, schools, psychiatric departments or whatever, mental health, can certainly help in that area. And you all have given us a big bonus with Ed Blakely, as I'm putting my money on him.

(Applause.)

MR. HOWE: Randall had one more response for the university.

MR. LEWIS: You know, we are working on a large project about 20 minutes from here that will be 10- or 11,000 homes in Riverside County and it will be a healthy community and an environmentally sound community, but there we are trying to say what we'd do if we created a learning community. We had an education summit last year. We had about 25 people, mainly educators, say we are going to start from scratch in a hard-wired community where education was the key component. And not just K through 12, but college, life-long learning, neonatal, early childhood education, the whole thing. We are going to be working with the university, but we hope to get adopted in one of our schools as a teaching school. We hope in our community center to do some distance learning. We are looking at a lot of possibilities.

So certainly universities that are involved in education in the sense of teaching -- not just teaching their kids, but having taught, we and I'm sure all the other developers would like to partner in programs like -- cutting edge --

MR. HOWE: Lakeview?

MR. LEWIS: Lakeview. And we hope to make it in the country, I think, the first community where learning is hard-wired into everything we are doing.

MR. HOWE: Kind of getting away from the idea that -- the isolated campus or the ivory tower mentality?

MR. LEWIS: How to turn school buildings into teaching schools. We are going to have a number of schools both in our projects and some neighboring ones -- how to offer different classes in each junior high or each high school so that we will be able to partner with those school buses or the RTA to get schools -- schools to different, trying to look at the facilities and say, "Well, maybe they don't all need a football stadium, they don't all need a theater," trying to get a really large menu of things that will make a great community and put one in each school and let them share them.

So I am really excited -- we don't have all the answers yet, but it's going to be really cool --

MR. HOWE: Well, we were gutsy to try to keep you after lunch, and we would be even more gutsy to try to keep you from getting a drink. But I want to thank all of you for your interest in this.

Again, I want to repeat my congratulations to the university and the Blakely Center for putting on the entire day.

And I want to give specific appreciation to the three panelists. Sheila, you were very nice to come the furthest distance and to frankly give us a

picture onto something -- a problem and a challenge that is kind of getting off the national air waves. And I appreciate you giving us a personal picture window onto it.

And to Ali and Randall, your support for what's going on here and your history of involvement in the communities is a great example. So I thank our three panelists.

(Applause).

DR. BLAKELY: Thank you, guys. Great panel. I enjoyed every minute of it. And I was taking a lot of notes because I will need all those in New Orleans.

Well, what have we done today? What have we learned today? Well, we heard in the first panel about what suburbs are becoming, what they are, where they're going, the nature of the suburbs.

And then we know that they're changing places in every dimension. Jobs, race, everything about suburbs is changing. They are not static. They are not all white. They are not all gated. They are not all poor. They are not all rich. We learned that.

And we tried to add some transportation to the mix. What are you going to add to the system that's already there? How do you add? What's the right way to do it? Buses, trains, light rails, and so forth.

We talked about forcing the fit probably doesn't work, but finding a fit probably does. And Joel, I think, understands how these places

originated, where they are, and where they're going, and where we Americans see ourselves, 100,000,000 more of us. Rooted in single-family houses, most of us. Some of us are going to age a little bit, but we always want something we call our own, and hopefully we will want something that's better than the way our suburbs are going.

And there are challenges from these last three panelists. And it doesn't matter if we are making a learning community in Lakeside or a new community in Dos Lagos or rebuilding an old community in New Orleans. Each one of these places has its challenges. And those are the challenges of America.

The interesting thing about the United States is we don't really have a very interesting flag. Our name does not exactly just drip off the tongue because it's so exciting. We didn't have any institutions of our own to borrow from around the world. We only invented two institutions. That's the public park and the public school.

One thing we do have in common is a rendezvous with common destiny. All men are created equal, and they should live in towns and cities that are the best in the world. That's what we have in common today, and that's what we will have in common in the future.

So I applaud all of you for coming to this event, and I hope you will have the stamina to see New Orleans, the soul of America.

So thank you.

(Applause.)