

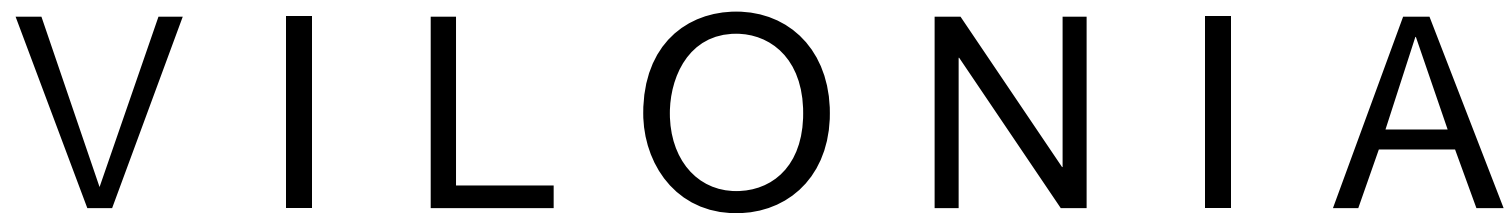
2000

2010 2014

2020

2030

2040



A blue silhouette of a city skyline. It features a variety of building shapes, including a tall church spire, several houses with gabled roofs, and modern rectangular buildings. There are also stylized trees, a bicycle, and streetlights. The entire graphic is rendered in a solid blue color against a white background.

REBUILD VILONIA

2030

Planning for a More Resilient City

LETTER FROM...

MARTY KNIGHT



RebuildVilonia.Org

OFFICE OF COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

To the Members of the Vilonia City Council:

Vilonia is a very different community than it was prior to the spring of 2011. The tornadoes of April 25, 2011 and April 27, 2014 left an indelible mark on the community we call home.

What has not changed is the indomitable spirit of our city. That spirit existed prior to 2011 and is stronger than ever today. We've witnessed neighbors helping neighbors; strangers becoming friends; and those from outside our community lifting our hearts in countless ways.

The severity of the 2014 tornado altered our landscape forever and challenged us to look ahead and move forward unlike any event in our 136-year history. The voices we heard during the recovery planning process are united by the belief that this tragedy offers us an unprecedented opportunity to become greater than we were before. We owe it to those who lost their lives to build a safer and more vibrant city.

This plan was developed by a broad cross-section of city residents and represents a summary of what they envision for Vilonia. We are grateful for their time and hard work. We are thankful for the assistance that we have received from those outside our community during the development of these concepts and plans.

This report concludes with a list of projects that we believe can serve as a catalyst for development and recovery. We submit these for your consideration and stand ready to assist you in making them a reality.

We are deeply appreciative of the opportunity to serve Vilonia.

With warm regards on behalf of the Rebuild Vilonia Committee,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marty Knight". The signature is stylized with a large, looped "M" and a cursive "Knight".

Marty Knight

RebuildVilonia.org

LETTER FROM...

CONGRESSMAN FRENCH HILL



French Hill
2nd District, Arkansas
COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL SERVICES
Subcommittee on Capital Markets and
Government Sponsored Enterprises
Subcommittee on Oversight and
Investigations



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515
April 7, 2015

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Washington, DC 20515
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Little Rock, AR 72207
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The Honorable James Firestone
Mayor
City of Vilonia
PO Box 188
Vilonia, AR 72173-0188

Dear Mayor Firestone:

I applaud the city's leaders and residents on the creation of a tornado recovery plan for Vilonia, "Vilonia 2030: Planning for a More Resilient City." I know that this plan is a result of countless hours of hard work and thoughtful planning that began at the first Rebuild Vilonia Committee meeting in July 2014.

Vilonia has my unwavering support and respect as the city works to overcome the ravages of the EF-4 tornado in 2014. I admire the strength and determination of the citizens of Vilonia in their recovery and rebuilding efforts. Arkansas's Second Congressional District is fortunate to have an abundance of citizens who are committed to their city and their state, and I will continue to provide any assistance needed to ensure the continuation of these efforts.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if I may ever be of assistance to you. I may be contacted at my Little Rock office at (501) 324-5941, my Conway office at (501) 358-3481, or my Washington, D.C. office at (202) 225-2506.

Sincerely,

French Hill
Member of Congress

hill.house.gov

Facebook: k.co/m/r epFrench hill

Twitter: t Witte r.co/m/r epFrench hill

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SECTION 1 BACKGROUND

Vision Statement

The City of Vilonia balances a rich heritage with thoughtful planning towards a sense of place, progress, and beauty. Vilonia embodies resilience through individuals empowering one another to restore our community – spiritually, socially, and economically.

The preceding Vision Statement was developed on August 8, 2014 by a cross-section of Vilonia citizens with assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Economic Development Administration. This Vision Statement is used broadly to communicate our vision and mission as a community.

Executive Summary

This plan is the product of many hours of volunteer work by Vilonia citizens and was completed with assistance of partners at the local, county, state, and federal levels of government. We are also profoundly grateful to several of our institutions of higher learning who continue to provide support and to those individuals from similarly stricken communities who graciously shared their experience and advice.

Since our goal was to provide the city a list of specific projects based on input from city residents, every effort was made to ensure that the recommendations reflect the voice of the community as a whole. A systematic approach was used to confirm that this plan is reflective of the strength and diversity of our community. This document provides background on the organizations involved in planning, as well as a timeline of events extending from April 27, 2014 to the present.

The projects outlined in the report have been developed and ranked in order of priority.

History of the Rebuild Vilonia Committee

The Rebuild Vilonia Committee was formed in July 2014 as a grass-roots response to the need for recovery. Over 200 attended the first meeting at the Vilonia Seniors Citizens Center on July 17, 2014 and the organization of the Committee took place over the next several weeks. Regular meetings were held between and July and November 2014 with a total of sixty-two citizens participating.

The following community members serve on the Steering Committee for Rebuild Vilonia:

Marty Knight, CHAIRMAN

James Firestone, MAYOR

Melanie Gentry

Stanley Gordon

Jill Bonnema

Jim King, CITY COUNCIL



From Impact to Plan: The Process and Timeline

On the evening of April 27, 2014, a tornado touched down in Pulaski County, west of the city of Little Rock. The tornado continued through Faulkner County before ending a 41-mile track in eastern White County. It struck Vilonia at approximately 7:50 PM, producing 166-200 mph winds (EF-4 strength) as it proceeded through the city.

The tornado resulted in 91 injuries and 16 fatalities, making it one of the deadliest tornadoes in Arkansas history. Nine of the sixteen lives lost were residents of the Vilonia community.

The city's commercial business district (Photo 1 on the morning of April 28, 2014) was devastated. Fifty-five of the 78 businesses operating in Vilonia were either destroyed or damaged.

The Vilonia School District's new \$13 million Intermediate School facility (Photo 2), scheduled to open in August 2014, had to be razed and rebuilt.

Hundreds of homes in Vilonia were damaged or destroyed. A small neighborhood along Cemetery Street was demolished and several residents killed. Four fatalities occurred in Parkwood Meadows (Photo 3) and 50 of the subdivisions' 57-homes were obliterated. Only one home remains today.

Formal recovery began with a Presidential Disaster Declaration on April 29, 2014. In the following weeks a number of support functions from the National Disaster Recovery Framework were activated including the Community Planning and Capacity Building (CPCB) of FEMA. The Economic Recovery Support Function (RSF) was triggered under declaration DR-4174-AR and mobilized on June 30, 2014.

On a concurrent timeline, the Rebuild Vilonia Committee was formed in July 2014 as a grass-roots response to the need for recovery (see section titled History of the Rebuild Vilonia Committee.) Regular meetings of the committee have continued to the present day.



Photo 1 Courtesy of Marty Knight



Photo 2 Courtesy of National Weather Service



Photo 3 Courtesy of National Weather Service



Photo 4 Courtesy of WER Architects + Planners



Photo 5 Courtesy of WER Architects + Planners



Photo 6 Courtesy of WER Architects + Planners



ARCHITECTS/PLANNERS

The Little Rock firm of WER Architects + Planners was engaged by Rebuild Vilonia in late July 2014 to provide initial concepts for rebuilding. These initial concepts (see Photos 4– 6) were presented at public meetings held during the months of August and September 2014.



WER Architects + Planners

David Sargent

Organizations Providing Support During this Phase of the Planning Process Include:

Local and County Government:

City of Vilonia
Faulkner County

State Government:

Arkansas Department of Emergency Management
Arkansas Economic Development Commission
Department of Arkansas Heritage/ Main Street Arkansas
Department of Rural Services

Higher Education / Outreach:

UALR Institute for Economic Advancement
UA Community Design Center
UCA Center for Community and Economic Development
Small Business and Technology Development Center

Regional Planning Organizations:

Central Arkansas Planning and Development District
Metroplan

Non-Profits and Associations: Private Enterprise:

Arkansas Capital Corporation Group WER Architects + Planners

National Association of Development Organizations

Arkansas Municipal League

Arkansas Community Foundation
of Arkansas Counties

Conway Chamber of Commerce
Little Rock Chamber of Commerce

New York Says Thank You Foundation
Kaboom

Local Organizations:

Rebuild Vilonia Committee
Vilonia Area Chamber of Commerce

Knight Business Solutions

Gateway Planning

Horsley Witten Group

ICF International Association

Federal Government:

Federal Emergency Management Agency
Economic Development Administration
Small Business Administration
Housing and Urban Development

Peer Cities and Groups:

City of Joplin, Missouri
Joplin Area CART

Vilonia Disaster Recovery Alliance City of Arkadelphia,
Arkansas

Representatives from the city of Joplin, Missouri and the Joplin Area Citizens Advisory Recovery Team (CART) met with a broad group of representatives from across Faulkner County on August 13–14, 2014 in Conway, Arkansas. With assistance from the UCA Center for Community and Economic Development, representatives from the city of Vilonia and Rebuild Vilonia also met with city and community leaders from Arkadelphia, Arkansas on January 9, 2015.

The planning done by Rebuild Vilonia reflects and will continue to reflect the powerful lessons learned from these two cities that have undergone similarly devastating events.

A grant by Economic Development Administration, awarded in September 2014, provided the following assistance to the recovery effort:

- Funding for a Long-Term Disaster Recovery Manager for the city.
- A contract with the Community Design Center (UA CDC), an outreach program of the Fay Jones School of Architecture at the University of Arkansas, to provide detailed design concepts and architectural renderings for the development of Vilonia.
- Money for the construction of an extension of Industrial Drive.



Requirements for the design concepts were provided to UA CDC during November and December 2014 and a full-day planning session was held on November 6, 2014. Design requirements were derived from feedback received from:

- Visioning sessions conducted by FEMA during July and August 2014.
- Public reaction during presentations of the WER concepts in August and September 2014.

An extension of the Jump Start Initiative was granted to Vilonia in January 2015. This initiative, led by Metroplan with contract assistance from Gateway Planning, provides recommendations for the form-based code needed to support the designs being considered.

Town hall meetings were held on February 19 and February 21 to:

- Present the design concepts developed by the UA Community Design Center to the public.
- Review economic data supporting the recovery and development of Vilonia.

- Examine successful examples of economic development presented by Gateway Planning.

On Tuesday, February 17, 2015, two days prior to the town hall meetings, the Vilonia City Council passed a resolution authorizing the Rebuild Vilonia Committee to:

- Facilitate the February town hall meetings.
- Gather input from the public regarding the four FEMA sectors:
 1. Infrastructure and Environment;
 2. Schools and Community Facilities;
 3. Housing; and 4. Economic Development.
- Facilitate a meeting in March to gather additional public reaction regarding the response to

the information disseminated at the February town halls.

- Develop and prioritize a list of specific projects based on all of the above.

A total of over 90 citizens participated in the February town halls. Eighty-six attended the February 19 meeting at Vilonia High School and six went to the February 21 forum at Vilonia City Hall. Information was also gathered using online surveys and written forms distributed at both meetings.

On Thursday, March 12 at Vilonia City Hall, the public was asked to provide a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) Analysis of the four specific components of the UACDC design:

1. Vilonia as Future-Oriented
2. Vilonia as a Place of Commerce

3. Vilonia as a Safe Town
4. Vilonia as a Place of Residence for All

The balance of this document is based on the feedback received from this succession of public meetings.

SECTION 2 RE-IMAGINING VILONIA

Re-Imagining Vilonia: FEMA Visioning Sessions

The Visioning Process applied by FEMA involved interviews with numerous individuals and groups within the city of

Vilonia. These interviews took place during late July and early August 2014, culminating in a half-day meeting on Friday, August 8 organized around breakout sessions designed to collect public feedback on the four FEMA sectors.

Infrastructure and

Beautification (8)

Environment

Key Issues and Challenges

Numbers in parentheses indicate multiple responses

Downtown initiative to revitalize area (2)

Water Fountain Memorial

Green space and medians

Replanting of trees, tree-gifting

Sewer and water infrastructure (2)

Improved business infrastructure (5)

Sidewalks (6)

Decorative street lighting and lampposts (3)

Establish a Business Square

neighborhoods

Timely rebuilding of neighborhoods (2)

Neighborhoods

Required safe rooms in future-built homes

Key Issues and Challenges

Numbers in parentheses indicate multiple responses

- and planting celebration (3)
- Road connectivity / improved ingress-egress (6)
- Street paving
- Opportunity to do something unique now
- Neighborhood safe room (2)
- Affordable rental space
- Emergency housing
- Community Festival
- Community Pool
- Metal life station that needs to be moved
- Underground utility lines (2)
- Clean up

Housing and



Proposed multiway boulevard that accommodates through traffic as well as local or slow traffic for shopping.

Schools and Community Facilities

Key Issues and Challenges

Numbers in parentheses indicate multiple responses

Economic

Development

Key Issues and Challenges

status for Rebuild Vilonia

Numbers in parentheses indicate multiple responses

High-end park (5)

Reconstruction of baseball fields (7)

Community Center (11)

Community Safe Rooms (13)

Community Wise Program/
Preparedness Program (3)

Reconstruction of Veterans Museum Rebuild
shopping center with rent control to help
businesses come back or start

Debris cleanup (2)

More engaged Chamber – active in

existing business owners (2) bringing new businesses and engage

Private Investments encourage businesses
to move to Vilonia

Emergency Operations Facility (3)

Farmers Market

New Fire Substation

School Safe Room (Intermediate School)

Town Center (3)

Town clock

CDL Loan for Schools to assist
in keeping staff in place

Industrial Development Area
Encourage local shopping and
support of local businesses (4)

Variety of businesses

501(C)3 New restaurants, retail shops, and businesses

Safe rooms – Bathrooms should be built as
safe rooms on future developments

Re-Imagining Vilonia: Feedback On Initial Concepts

The initial design concepts, developed by WER Architects + Planners, were presented to the public at a meeting held on September 2, 2014 at the cafeteria of Vilonia High School. A total of forty-eight citizens participated in the meeting.

Attendees were asked to provide suggestions for projects based upon the designs presented.

Infrastructure and Environment

Numbers in parentheses indicate multiple responses

Better roads, wider streets, and road improvements (3)

Schools and Community

Facilities

Numbers in parentheses indicate multiple responses

City of Vilonia signs and nice landscaping

Decorative lighting in downtown (3)

Fewer metal buildings

Community Center (7) Farmers

Market (2)

Community Pool

Events Center

Increasing mitigation standards

Manufacturing business

Businesses that provide employment opportunity to youth

Attract and rebuild businesses

Elevated bridge for students to walk over at Main Street/107 intersection

Sidewalks (3)

Secondary streets parallel to

and south of Main Street Clean

up the remaining debris Better

planning for growth

Public gym, basketball courts, swimming pool

Attractive and functional ballparks and playgrounds

Get rid of the trailer houses used for

Vilonia Schools

New drop off/pick up plan for Junior

High and Senior High Schools

Parking at facilities, such as ball fields

Improved drainage

Basketball courts for tournaments and volleyball

Safe rooms to house all children and family

Fine Arts Building

Town Center

Economic Development Center

Keep businesses in town instead out on the bypass

Tax incentives to draw business (3)

More support between all city groups

Modern technology

Wider roads on 107 Continue to subdivide school buildings

into 2-3 grades

When building new, build for the future not something that is already too small

Consider a small school for people who are deaf/blind or both

Housing and Neighborhoods

Numbers in parentheses indicate multiple responses No housing subdivisions near schools, parks, or daycares



More established zoning and ordinances, with stricter application Organization of multi-family housing

Senior housing area in downtown More available housing, such as apartments and duplexes (3) Growth of housing opportunities for low/moderate and upper income residents Different price ranges

Neighborhood parks in larger subdivisions (2)

Economic Development

Numbers in parentheses indicate multiple responses

Multi-income housing

Rebuild of

Restaurants (7)

Affordable gyms

More businesses to help sustain the city

Strip malls

Bigger businesses

Auto part store

Small business

Movie theater

Dry Cleaners

Bowling alley

Truck stop and motel on bypass

Varied housing types

businesses destroyed

Concurrent to the town hall meetings held during February 2015, surveys of residents were conducted in a variety of formats (paper responses and online). A total of nineteen Questions were asked, categorized by the four FEMA sectors.

Question 1: What would you most like to see improved in the city of Vilonia as it relates to infrastructure and environment?

Better planning

It is a beautiful area with a small town feel –
I want the trees back
That Vilonia now has potential for a downtown area
since the bypass was opened

I think the city is laid out well – just needs
wider, better streets
I like the small town atmosphere and
basic retail facilities

Clean up activities need to be restarted **Question**

Having a green space for community events
and a walkable downtown
That Vilonia now has potential for a downtown
area since the bypass was opened



Beautiful landscape – love the land
Friendly people and a close community
Family-oriented community with high
median income, but we travel out of the
city to spend our money

Simplicity
Still somewhat compact - not too spread out
Vilonia has a lot of green space and although it
is much opened, you can easily still locate
parks, businesses, and housing

2: What do you like most about Vilonia as it
relates to infrastructure and environment?

I love that it's so open
Spirit of volunteerism and forward thinking (finally)

Question 3: What would make Vilonia a more vibrant, enjoyable and successful community as it relates to infrastructure
and environment?

Parks, walking trails, track, basketball courts,
and a better grocery store.
A place to meet in the evenings to socialize,
exercise or both

City park that can accommodate baseball and
basketball tournaments
More connectedness through sidewalks and trails, better
quality community park and ball fields

More things to do in town and not
have to go another city
Community Center, Farmers Market, something to
attract others to our town to spend money

Being able to walk and bike around town
More professional, permanent looking businesses
Cleaner, neater environment; more family-friendly

A space for kids (older teens) to hang out
More businesses with more variety
Keep it cleaner

Improved internet services
More lighting, better drainage, and trees.
More landscaping, trash and debris clean up

A community pool or waterpark to help keep our people here instead of going other places for entertainment

Utilities poles to be pushed behind Main Street with decorative lighting poles, sidewalks and greenery lining the streets in town

Question 4: Optional comments on Infrastructure and Environment

I think we are making one man in Vilonia rich – We will need to expand the why not move and share with other land owners? school as people move in

Elevated walkway for children at the school crossing (Main and Eagle)

Housing and Neighborhoods

Question 5: What would you most like to see improved in the Vilonia area as it relates to housing and neighborhoods?

Would like to see neighborhoods more structurally laid-out and more restrictions to streets, buildings, and yard maintenance (more uniform)

Mixed income housing with safe rooms and shelters

More options for young couples, college age, and seniors

A lot of neighborhoods are multi-zoned meaning a neighborhood has mobile home, duplexes, and houses

Affordable housing for college aged and young couples

Loft apartments / find those who are displaced / walking trails / more safe buildings

Multi-dwelling properties and single family homes in more uniform settings; some areas in town have absolutely no forethought
Patio homes with minimal upkeep for seniors who want to retire to Vilonia

More affordable housing available; more apartments

Safe homes in each neighborhood More parks and more affordable housing Gated communities More housing options, varied housing types

We need moderate- to low-income elderly housing Garden homes

Multi housing options, with price point conducive to the desired environment

Smaller pockets of housing with quaint feel, parks, walking trails, and safe room for neighborhoods

Neighborhoods that still have trees; more diversity (townhomes/apartments)

Houses not so close together

More sidewalks, lighting for streets.

Sidewalks

Loft apartments in downtown

Better drainage of water run off

Safe rooms

Question 6: What do you like most about Vilonia as it relates to housing and neighborhoods?

Variety of sites and locations	Hometown feel	Homes are spread out and quiet neighborhoods
Like the mix of subdivisions with average to good condition	Most homes are occupied and the majority job – they need more reasons to keep building	Private contractors and builders have done a good houses that have land are in
	Small neighborhoods	
Nice homes / clean / doesn't look generic	Very family-oriented	
Not a lot of restrictions		

Question 7: What would make Vilonia a more vibrant, enjoyable and successful community as it relates to housing and neighborhoods?

	Sidewalks, parks	More lawns, less yards
Offer gated hosing communities, especially for housing around schools	Having more landscaping, trees, and sidewalk paths	Parks in neighborhoods, but don't crowd the neighborhoods
More rentals		
Safe rooms, parks, and walking trail	Walking paths, sidewalks, landscaping, and trees	Keeping families in town
		Emergency phones in parks and

walking trails Centralized parks and activity center **Question 8:** Optional comments regarding housing and neighborhoods

I want something nice and I like part of the plan, but we are putting too much in such a small space

Schools and Community Facilities

Question 9: What would you most like to see improved in the Vilonia area as it relates to schools and community facilities?

Community center	Community room for people of all ages	Better traffic flow	New ball
Community center – a place for kids to go and have activities without having to go elsewhere	Community center, things to keep our students spending time and money in our town	Community center, small to start and expand as we grow	park and
Community center; better traffic flow through the schools	School and city working together on plans for growth	Coming in and out of elementary school drive needs a light or something	
community center	Public event center with auditorium	More walkability to and from schools	

More ways to get to schools

Safe rooms, technology, “satellite colleges,”
“adult education” with GED program and
computer classes

Park with movies

Movies in the Park / Hendrix Village type
development / Farmers Market

Annual local car show in downtown

The parking lot at Jr High and High
School has only one way in and out –
parking too close together

Bandstand for local concerts

Baseball, softball and soccer fields
to draw tournaments

Updated facilities

City and schools should work more
closely together to create programs and
activities to engage youth

I am very pleased with the facilities

I think the school leaders have a great
vision and have this covered

Movies in
the Park /
Hendrix
Village /



Farmers Market / Shopping / Restaurants

/ Walking and biking path School traffic could be better

We need a fine arts building

Small theatre for movies and school plays **Question 10:** What do you like most about Vilonia as it relates to

Large building with auditorium to host events

schools and community facilities?

Ease of access, great school system, facilities
are maintained well

Convenient locations, addition of Small community feel
ever

How closely most of the schools are located

Vilonia School District is one of the
top schools in the state

Best schools in Arkansas, friendly people safe rooms, great people Close in proximity Best school

Small town feel

Many teachers profess to be
Christians and kids are a priority

Teachers, morality

Question 11: What would make Vilonia a more vibrant, enjoyable and successful community as it relates to schools and community facilities?

Community center with weekly or monthly activities or programs would be beneficial

Options for community event venues

To have more businesses in town that offer different things

Small hometown; pocket city to Conway, Cabot, and Little Rock

Events that appeal to different age groups

Community center is a must; charge fees or use volunteers to help some in running the

A community center and a main park with jogging trail

Enhanced support for the school

More community/school involvement to promote youth engagement



Hold sports tournaments and place, such as kids that need community citizens More things to do as a family

More eating options charge entry fee at gate service hours and senior

Question 12: Optional comments regarding schools and community facilities

Need better driveway at
High School for car riders

We need 107 to be wider between stop light and
bypass; too much school traffic in a small space

Economic Development

Question 13: What would you most like to see improved in the Vilonia area as it relates to economic development?

Clean up properties in town

Town square similar to Bentonville

Grocery Store

Finish rebuilding

Restaurants with outdoor seating

More small stores

More viable for small businesses

Photo shop

More eating options

More small town businesses, farmers market,
and more retail shop space

Grocery store so people would not
go elsewhere to shop

More places to eat, shop, and entertainment

A lot more business – we are big enough to
attract many new business

Retail for shopping, but also office space for supporting
professionals (CPA's, lawyers, DHS, etc.)

Donut/Coffee Shop – for meeting and conversation

Exposure to industries and a push
to make it happen

Continued business growth: pediatrician, sandwich
shop, coffee shop, dry cleaner

Wal-Mart store, bowling, restaurants, putt-putt golf

Question 14: What do you like most about Vilonia as it relates to economic development?

Strategically-located

Open to opportunities

Fast food options

Vilonia's prime location accessible for

A lot of open potential

Places for business growth and we have opportunity that we

Plenty of space to grow

Need more places to eat have not had before for developers

Increased number of restaurants

Nice restaurant that serves breakfast

Question 15: What would make Vilonia a more vibrant, enjoyable and successful community as it relates to economic development?

A lot more business. We are big enough to
attract many new business

More development would increase our tax base
community amenities

More accessibility, walkability, and greenery with
the development of new businesses

More options for date night,
teens, and family activities Infrastructure

A good mix of big and small businesses and would provide for more

Night time events, more things to do after
work hours, restaurants and entertainment

Question 16: Optional comments regarding economic development

An event center could be put in the community center for public rental

Resilience

Question 17: What does resilience mean to you?

Rebounding and learning from disasters; grow smart, not fast	Getting knocked down and always having the fight and drive to get up stronger and better	Always come back from the damage, destruction, and support one another
Strength, faith	Perseverance; not quitting or backing down	Being able to adjust to change
Strong	Never give up or quit trying;	Can't keep us down
Staying here and putting in the work	always comes back	Keith McCord and Family
Staying with the plan; community better future for tomorrow	Learning from past mistakes to help through good and bad create a	Building back bigger, better, and stronger than before
We remain strong	Hanging in there and not giving up	Keith McCord and Family
		Don't want to have to go

Question 18: What ideas do you have to make Vilonia more resilient?

Better structures for homes and businesses, improving streets, improving greenery, creating underground utilities, creating better infrastructure than what we had prior to the storms in 2011 and 2014	Generations staying here A chance to build something – seeing the more new building go up is providing hope and improved Bonded community; less division in our “unity”	Training for public safety; safe rooms Word of mouth promoting our city; positive press
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Community Vision (Post-Disaster)

Question 19: What do you want Vilonia to look like in 5 years? 10 years? 25 years?

25 years: a self-sustainable community concerntree-filled neighborhoods	Continued growth of pretty, where leakage is not a	Great baseball/softball/soccer/ football fields and parks
anywhere else to shop	Multiple safe areas that are not eyesores	Trails for jogging/biking
More restaurants and businesses	Growing, family-friendly, safe place	5 years: have trees planted; roads widened;

A close-knit community with options to
shop and eat
10 years: more businesses; more
established neighborhoods; parks; more
community-engaged activities

green space; sidewalks designed appropriately;

having codes and ordinances updated, in place, and enforced; make the flood
systematic growth

The plan we looked at tonight (UACDC plan)

A vibrant, booming town that our kids love, a
place where will want to raise their families

plain an attraction instead of a negative



VILONIA 2030 |

Publication Date: April 27, 2015
Planning for a
More Resilient City

Re-Imagining Vilonia: SWOT Analysis on Developed Concepts

The advanced design concepts, developed by UA CDC and presented in February, underwent a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis by the public at a meeting on March 12 at Vilonia City Hall. A series of Questions were used to facilitate responses to the four core concepts presented by the UA CDC in February.

Vilonia as Future-Oriented

Question 1:

What are the strengths of this concept?

Centralized square where it is easy to walk there

Not segregated by income

Walkable

Question 3: What opportunities are provided to Vilonia through this concept?

running and biking

Question 2:

How might this concept be improved?

Lots of lighting in the town square Elevated sidewalk/bridge for school crosswalk at Main Street/107

Security cameras

We want the town cleaned up and lots of trees and green space

Question 4: What might keep this concept from becoming a reality?

Remove roundabout at the 107/Main intersection

Drainage

Wider side streets

Pond or lake

Emergency call phones throughout Place for seniors

Sidewalks connecting neighborhoods

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Vilonia as a Place of Commerce

Question 5:

What are the strengths of this concept?

Businesses to Vilonia equals more money

Central area to draw in people

Apartments and townhomes bring new residents

Farmers Market – brings people out together

We can drop kids off at new park and

Community Center – music festivals

parents can shop

and we can walk everywhere

Farmers Market – opportunity to bring in revenue

Housing – mixed – “who wouldn’t want to live here?”

Town Square provides space for town functionsCommunity Events – enables us to stay forever Town Square

concept – really like this Community Center – place to keep kids involved idea; gives the town identity,

opportunity A good place to drop teens off to hang out for festivals, gatherings, place for people

to visit, and community events

Main Street parking allows for movement

Question 6: Room to grow; community center and business Parking only in back How might this concept be improved? Business to draw

community engagement Bowling

Street maintenance and beautification

Lighting

Outdoor eating areas; bistro – European-style

Playground

Underground utilities

Urgent Care Clinic

Bigger community center

Frisbee golf course

Community pool

Old Style Brick fire station that is included, so it’s always open to the community 1-2

Screen movie theater or outdoor movies and kids can be always be welcome

Question 7:

What opportunities are provided Revenue Opportunities for people to downsize once to Vilonia through this concept? New residents they don’t need as much room and can move

Employment

More business opportunities

Funding

Curb appeal

to a condo in downtown Vilonia so they don’t have to leave their community of family

Traditional thinking and fear of change

More input needed from citizens

Lack of spreading the vision

Money

Shopping areas

Retail growth – this concept from becoming a reality?

Economic growth

Sidewalks leading to ball fields Question 8: What

Jobs Growth

Community involvement

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Funding Resistance to change form residents
Community Involvement Utilities

Community awareness; make the plan available
Marquees; better awareness

Infrastructure

Vilonia as a Safe Town

Question 9:

What are the strengths of this concept?

	Love the walking trail
	Playground beside ball fields (family-oriented)
to ball fields	Accessible safe rooms
Retail stores	Easily-identified safe rooms
Restaurants	Like the town square
Thriving community	Green space
Parking	
More safe rooms on the outer limits	Place for movies in the park
Drive-in movie theater	Drainage
Community safe rooms	
Multiple entries (street ingress/egress)	

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More business

More safety

Inviting to families

Things for families to do in town

Increase in revenue

Flooding to existing property owners

Too many restrictions on home

Population increase

Bring outsiders into town

Keeping community active

Retirees drawn to area

Water getting into safe rooms

Not enough safe rooms out of city

Question 10:

How might this concept be improved?

Question 11: What opportunities are provided to Vilonia through this concept?

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Question 12: What might keep this concept from becoming a reality?

owners; apartments
Drainage

limits or on the outskirts of town

People might not sell their house or land

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Vilonia as a Place of Commerce

Question 13:

What are the strengths of this concept?

Sports complex can possibly generate enough tax revenue to pay for and maintain the community center

Safety – the Town Center is off Main Street

Community center will bring in housing developers

Prefer the “visible safe rooms” to be located in the neighborhoods instead of the public open spaces
Planned community will grow faster

Question 14:

How might this concept be improved?

Indoor practice facility for baseball; batting cage and or field

Ensure playground equipment in park areas

Change our name back – Vilsonia

Question 15:

What opportunities are provided to Vilonia through this concept?

Main Street promotes traffic to local business

Community center will bring in houses

Family outings

Affordable housing

Growth due to planning

Question 16:

What might keep this concept from becoming a reality?

Zoning

Funding

Negative people

Resistance to change by community

Citizens Participating in 3/12 Meeting

Jennifer Barnhill, Bill Burnham, Greig Craswell, Susan Bates, Julie Rothacher, Stacy Harrell, Martha Martin, Keith Hillman, Laura McCoy, Dustin Hicks, Wednesday Hoover, Althea Ferren, Melissa Filley, Johnny Pierce, Clay Heslep, Ashley Duff, Marshall Smith, Phyllis Burnham, David Stephens, Sandy Towles, Angie Rios, Tabitha Morris, Matt Morris, Julie Wray, John Wimberly, Frank Mitchell, Nannette Ramsey, Chad Roller, Jennifer Stacy, Linda Hicks, Kira Livingston, James Firestone, Kelly Lawrence and Amanda Norwood

Rebuild Vilonia and Partner Resources in 3/12 Meeting

Curry Knight, Stanley Gordon Jr., Melanie Gentry, David Sargent, Devin Howland, Matt Black, Charles Cook and Daniel Holland

Safe rooms are easy to spot and can hold plenty of people
Don't make safe room center stage; we are more than a "tornado town"

Some of the housing appears very modern; should still maintain old, small hometown feel

Safe rooms

Ensure another outlet to connect to school

Paths for walking and biking

Town center – not spread out

Walkability

Meeting center

Parks

Parking space



SECTION 3 IDENTIFIED

Identified Projects: Summary List

In compliance with the February 17, 2015 City Council resolution, Rebuild Vilonia recommends a list of specific projects that address the dreams, concerns, and priorities of community residents reflected in the public feedback outlined in the earlier sections of this report. The Rebuild Vilonia Steering Committee met with a number other citizen volunteers on March 24, 2015 to develop this list.

Summary List of Recommended Projects in Order of Priority

Details of each project are listed on the following pages

1. Resiliency and Public Safety
2. Beautification and Green Spaces
3. Economic Development Program
4. Town Center Development – Phase 1
5. Town Center Development – Phase 2
6. Town Center Development – Community Center



PROJECTS

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Project #1: Resiliency and Public Safety

The following is a general description of the project recommended as the highest priority: the construction of community safe rooms. Citizen feedback offered early in the process indicated much interest in a single, large “safe” facility that could be used for multiple purposes. Based on conversations with Arkadelphia officials, we believe that this approach has serious drawbacks including the time required to travel to the building and the potential for parking and traffic congestion.

We recommend that the following steps be taken:

1. Locations

Construct numerous safe rooms throughout the city and surrounding area. Safe room locations should take into account population density, travel time, and ease of ingress and egress. Locations near parking (churches, shopping centers, and public spaces) and within large subdivisions are preferable.

2. Concept

The use of “underground shipping containers,” described by FEMA and included in the UA CDC plans, is recommended. This concept combines economically feasibility with ease and speed of

construction. Initial construction estimates, provided by UA CDC, range around \$90 per square foot, far less than the \$450 per square foot for traditional concrete-reinforced shelters.



3. Aesthetics

Requirements must be established to ensure that the facilities are aesthetically pleasing. We also recommend that the safe rooms be incorporated into green spaces (parks, walking trails, etc.) wherever possible.

4. Operation and Maintenance

Resources and processes must be established for maintenance and upkeep of each location and should include the operation of safe rooms in the event of tornado watches and warnings.

5. Requirements for Construction

Requirements for construction, essential to providing a budget and building schedule, must be established and include mandatory items such as FEMA-rated doors, rest rooms facilities, generators, and acquisition of property.

6. Zoning Considerations

The Planning Commission and City Council should give consideration to how safe rooms will be incorporated into current zoning ordinances.

The New York Says Thank You Foundation, a large volunteer organization, is considering making large numbers of volunteers available in September 2015 to assist with construction of the proposed safe rooms. We encourage the city to follow up on this possible offer of assistance.

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Project #2: Beautification and Green Space

Relative to the second priority, we recommend that the following steps be taken:

1. Debris Removal and Storm Cleanup

Establish and coordinate with identified property owners a systematic approach to cleaning up all areas of the city still littered with debris.

2. Memorial

Design and construct a public memorial to those who lost their lives in the recent tornadoes.

3. Flood Plain Beautification

Develop a comprehensive and sustained approach to removing all trash and debris from the flood plain and restoring these areas to a natural setting.

4. Walking Trails

Identify walking trails, particularly in the flood plain, which can be incorporated into the city's long range planning.

5. Drainage And Flood Control

Review current drainage and flood control capabilities and identify necessary improvement projects.

6. Trees

Examine the feasibility of planting mature trees in strategic locations. Mature trees can help "heal" the landscape and resources are available at the national level to assist with this effort.

7. Common Signage

Provide aesthetically-pleasing common signage at key intersections along Main Street. These signs will provide directions to businesses located on side streets and become a known part of the landscape.

4. Establish a Local Economic Development Organization

A local economic development organization that will work with the city



Project #3: Economic Development

As a third priority, we recommend that the following steps be taken:

1. Maturation of Chamber of Commerce

Make economic development the primary focus of the local Chamber of Commerce. Resources from the region (Conway and Little Rock) should be secured to conduct a gap analysis of the existing Chamber and a desired state. This should be done as soon as possible.

2. Resources for Chamber of Commerce

Any additional staffing and resources for the Chamber of Commerce identified in the review mentioned above should be provided.

3. Education

City and community leaders should be provided economic development training.

and the Chamber of Commerce should be established.

5. Marketing Campaign

An aggressive, sophisticated and well-funded marketing campaign that tells Vilonia's story of recovery and its prospects for future growth should be created. This campaign should incorporate branding, video and print materials, and outreach activities.

6. Target for Recruiting of Businesses

Target industries should be identified for recruitment to the Vilonia area.

7. Incentives

Incentives for industries and businesses should be researched, identified, and implemented as soon as feasible.

8. Festivals and Community Events

An ongoing number of community events, such as regional festivals, should be identified and planned.

We also encourage the city to aggressively pursue the two outreach programs associated with higher learning institutions that have offered to assist with Vilonia's economic development.

Projects #4-6: Development of the Town Center

The following is a summary list of the next three projects, all of which are part of the development of a "town center" or "town square" concept, as described by WER and UA CDC and included in the developed concepts by UA CDC and Gateway Planning. We strongly suggest that activities stay true to the spirit of the recommendations made by those organizations.

The three phases of town center development are:

Phase 1

Development of the Long Meadow and Farmers Market

Phase 2

Street Grid and Infrastructure for Town Center

Phase 3

Community Center

Project #4: Phase 1 of Town Center Development

This phase, our fourth priority, is described in the UA CDC plan as the Long Meadow and Farmers Market. Located at the intersection of Main Street and South College, the property will include a boulevard entrance to the Town Center, an adjacent structure that can serve as an outdoor public event center, and adequate parking to support the area.

We recommend that the following steps be taken:

1. Property Acquisition

Since the two parcels of land that comprise this area are both available for purchase the city should begin negotiations with property owners to secure this land as soon as possible.

2. Identify Funding for Project

Pursuit of funds for the project should begin immediately.

3. Preliminary Design of Infrastructure

This design should include the location of streets, utilities, landscaping details, beautification, and parking.

4. Design of Outdoor Events Center

A preliminary design for the Outdoor Events Center (previously referred to as the Farmers Market) is needed establish a budget for funding and should include multiple uses for the facility.

5. Operations, Management And Maintenance

A set of policies and processes should be defined for the ongoing operations, maintenance and management of the Outdoor Events Center.

1. Definition Of Street Grid / Update

Of Master Street Plan

The city, through the Planning Commission and City Council, should work with Metroplan to define a street grid and parking plan for the area. The Master Street Plan for the city should be updated accordingly.

2. Identify Interested Owners

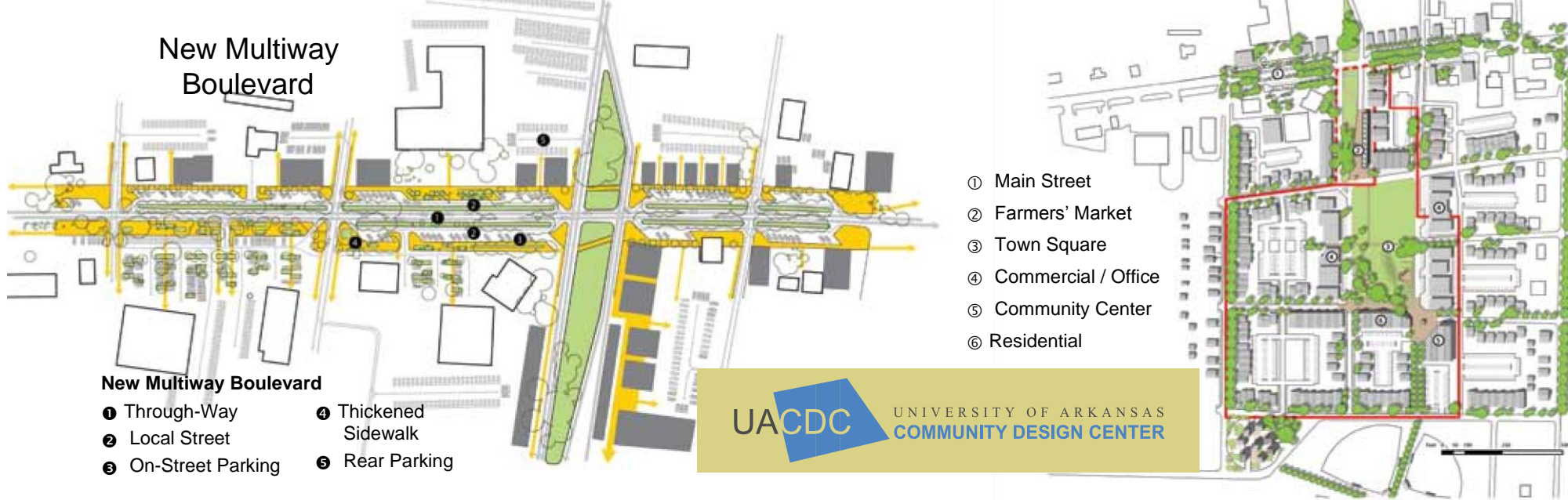
Property owners in the general area should be contacted to determine their support of the plan and gauge their interest in participating.



Project #5: Phase 2 of Town Center Development

The fifth priority, this phase is described on the UA CDC plan as the Town Square. The location of this 20-acre parcel of property is between Main Street and the baseball complex. Ingress and egress to this parcel of land would be gained via the boulevard entrance described in Phase 1. Although the development will be conducted by private investors, the city will participate in the planned improvement of the area and provide streets and infrastructure. Rebuild Vilonia suggests that the city remain faithful to the spirit of the recommendations provided by UA CDC and Gateway Planning whenever possible, including mixed-use development, green spaces, safe rooms and types of housing.

We recommend that the following steps be taken:



Project #6: Phase 3 of Town Center Development

The sixth and final priority calls for the construction of a Community Center within the proposed Town Center. It should be located as closely as possible to the baseball complex so that parking can be shared.

3. Tie To Industrial Drive Extension

This street grid should tie into the planned extension of Industrial Drive funded by the September 2014 EDA

grant. 4. Infrastructure

Planning should include streets and the location of water, sewer, electric, and natural gas lines.

5. Identification Of Master Developer

It is recommended that a master developer work on behalf of the city and facilitate discussions between the city and affected property owners to address any issues involving projects and improvements undertaken through private investment.

6. Green Spaces

In accordance with the UA CDC plan, this area should include a large (2-3 acre) common green space to be owned by the city.

7. Operations, Management And Maintenance

A set of policies and processes should be defined for the ongoing operations, maintenance and management of the public areas. This includes the large common green space and adjacent areas such as medians and sidewalks.

We recommend that the following steps be taken:

1. Location and Acquisition Of Property

A specific location for the Community Center should be established in conjunction with the layout of streets as described in Project #4/Phase 2. Once the location is determined the property identified should be acquired.

2. Estimates for Cost of Operation

The potential costs of operating, maintaining, and managing a facility of this type should be determined, followed by a feasibility assessment.

3. Identify Funding for Project

The identification of possible funding sources should begin immediately.

4. Usage of Facility

A public effort to establish possible uses for the new facility should be undertaken. This process, referred to by design professionals as “programming,” will establish suggested uses for the facility. Such uses could include sports (basketball, racquetball, and a walking track); meeting rooms and conference space; equipment storage; and an auditorium.

5. Revenue Generation from Facility

Estimates for possible revenue streams (e.g. membership fees, rentals for specific events) generated by the facility should be calculated.

6. Design of Facility

A preliminary design, sufficient to establish budget and schedule, should be developed. The design process should involve a broad cross-section of the public.

7. Operations, Management and Maintenance

A set of policies and processes should be defined for the ongoing operations, event scheduling and planning, short and long-term maintenance and day-to-day management of the facility by the city.

SECTION 4 NEXT STEPS IN THE PROCESS

We hope that this plan serves as the foundation for two major activities critical to Vilonia's recovery process.

FIRST, it is our belief that the Vilonia 2030 Plan should serve as the blueprint for the future. The report tells the full story of how this plan was developed using the framework provided by FEMA, the involvement of hundreds of Vilonia residents, and assistance from our partners. It is respectfully submitted to the Vilonia City Council and Mayor James Firestone in that spirit.

SECOND, it is our intent that the Vilonia 2030 Plan will serve as the foundation for funding the projects described in the report.

We recommend that the following steps be taken regarding this plan.

1. Endorsement

We ask that the Vilonia 2030 Plan, or a revision of that plan, be endorsed by the City Council as soon as possible.

2. Public Distribution

Upon endorsement by the Council, the Vilonia 2030 Plan should be distributed broadly to the public.

3. Creation of Implementation Task Force

The City Council should then create an Implementation Task Force (ITF) authorized to proceed with planning for each endorsed project. Officers for the ITF should be named by the City Council as soon as possible.

4. Authorization of Projects

Sub-groups within the ITF should be assigned to the following activities:

A. Funding

Funding opportunities for all projects authorized by the Council should be explored. Each project should be funded independently, but within a coordinated program of activity.

B. Project Planning and Estimation

Separate project teams should be formed to assume implementation of each approved project. Specific roles should be defined for each project including a project chair, secretary, treasurer and project manager.

C. Implementation Plan

Each project should develop an Implementation Plan that includes include a budget, schedule, and scope of work. All Implementation Plans must be presented to the city before being carried out.

SECTION 5

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Rebuild Vilonia Steering Committee thanks the following organizations and individuals for their contributions to the Vilonia 2030 Plan.

Our most profound and sincere thanks to the
citizens of Vilonia .

You continue to remain resolute and strong
in the face of adversity.

Your indomitable spirit is an example to all.

The Rebuild Vilonia Committee also acknowledges the outstanding work done by the *Vilonia Disaster Relief Alliance (VDRA)*. This organization, formed as a response to the 2011 tornado, has provided leadership in the area of Housing. During formation the Rebuild Vilonia Committee made a conscious decision to defer to VDRA relative to the Housing and Neighborhoods sector. We thank them for their ongoing efforts.



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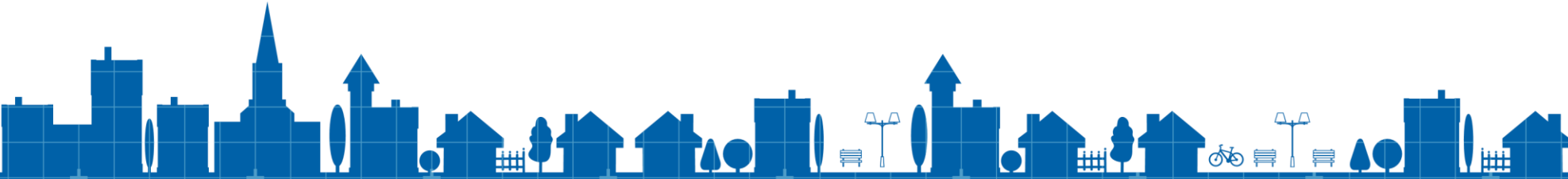
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***Dedicated to
those people
who lost
their lives in
the storm.***

- Paula Blakemore
- Jamye Collins
- Jeffrey Hunter
- Dennis Lavergne
- Glenna Lavergne
- David Mallory
- Cameron Smith
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- Daniel Wassom



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