ISAIAH
Institute of New Orleans

COMMUNITIES OF HOPE
STRONGER, SAFER & PEACEFUL COMMUNITIES

ORLEANS PARISH DISTRICT ATTORNEY
JASON ROGERS WILLIAMS
STATE OF LOUISIANA

Ongoing Work

Communities of Hope is a project of the Isaiah Institute of New Orleans and the Orleans Parish District Attorney's Office N.O.D.I.C.E. Initiative

Rooted in Faith, United in Action, and Building a Hopeful Future

COMMUNITIES OF HOPE

STRONGER, SAFER & PEACEFUL COMMUNITIES

LETTER FROM LEADERSHIP



Communities of Hope Co-Chairs:
Dr. J.C. Profit Dyson- Tha Treme Church Holy Faith Temple Baptist Church
Fr. Pat Williams, Vicar General Archdiocese of New Orleans



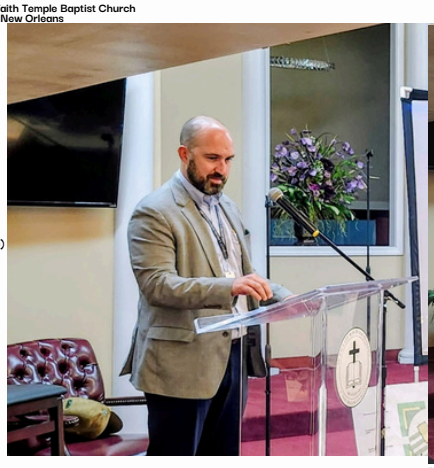


Jessica Strange
District Attorny's Office





Joe Givens (far left) , Communities of Hope
Orleans Parish District Jason Williams (middle)



Andre Gaudin
N.O.D.I.C.E Founder, Chief Screener District Attorney's Office



Deacon Roy Lewis
Communities of Hope



Deacon Allen Stevens
Communities of Hope



Keith Lampkin- (left) Former Chief of Staff
District Attorney's Office
Daniel Shanks (right) - Special Projects
Office of Homeland Security &
Emergency Preparedness

"If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, forgive their sin, and heal their land." – 2 Chronicles 7:14

Dear Partners and Friends,

This scripture reminds us that the work of healing our communities is both a calling and a responsibility. Communities of Hope is an inspiring initiative featuring government and the faith community working side by side for meaningful change. We are deeply grateful for the partnership of the Orleans Parish District Attorney's Office, our principal partner, and for the many supporters who have joined us in this work.
Together, we are building a movement that unites faith communities in action. We believe it is our calling not only to engage, but to build—building relationships, trust, and solutions that address the deeper systems impacting our neighborhoods.

Through this partnership, we have worked alongside residents to close abandoned houses and lots, address mental and physical health needs, confront public safety challenges, and bring awareness to the conditions and actions that cause communities to turn away from one another rather than toward each other.

This report highlights some of that work across Central City, Tremé, the Upper and Lower Ninth Ward, and New Orleans East. While we are proud of what has been accomplished, we know this is only the beginning.

Our goal is simple but powerful: to help make our beloved city of New Orleans safer, stronger, and better for everyone. We are grateful for every partner and supporter who has helped make this work possible. We invite you to continue walking with us as we deepen this movement and expand the impact of Communities of Hope across our city.

With faith, gratitude, and commitment,
Leadership of Communities of Hope

Executive Summary

A Pathway to Peace and Prosperity

Communities of Hope (COH) is a faithrooted, residentled initiative that has emerged as one of the most effective forces for public safety, community stability, and civic partnership in New Orleans. Over the past year, COH has demonstrated a simple but transformative truth: **faith communities are the city's first responders**, uniquely positioned to surface imminent threats, mobilize residents, and partner with government to create safer, healthier, and more prosperous neighborhoods.

A Proven Model Rooted in Community

COH's placebased strategy begins with residents, families, and congregations who live daily with the realities of violence, blight, hunger, and instability. Through listening campaigns and public accountability meetings, COH helped more than **50 congregations** identify and act on the issues most affecting their communities.

This work produced measurable results across Tremé, Central City, and the Upper & Lower 9th Ward, and New Orleans East including:

- **Crime decreased across the city and particularly in neighborhoods where COH was active.In Tremé, for example, overall crime fell by 47 percent, and shooting casualties dropped from 27 the previous year to just 1 following COH's engagement.**
- Closure of violent hotspots and nuisance businesses
- Indictment of slum property owners
- Antidumping campaigns with enhanced enforcement
- Lighting, blight removal, and environmental improvements
- Proposals to convert vacant land into community food gardens

These outcomes demonstrate both the effectiveness of resident-led organizing and the essential role of faith communities in stabilizing neighborhoods and restoring hope.

A Historic Covenant with City Leadership

On February 28, 2026, COH convened clergy, resident leaders, the District Attorney, NODICE, **the Mayor, Deputy Mayors, City Council members, and public safety officials** at Loyola University to formalize a **citywide covenant.** This agreement established a shared commitment to:

- Residentled issue identification
- Coordinated action across city departments
- Ongoing communication and accountability
- A unified strategy for peace and prosperity

This covenant now serves as the structural backbone for COH's work in 2026–27.

Building the Civic Infrastructure for Long Term Change

To operationalize the covenant, COH has established **faithbased standing committees** that mirror city

government:

- Public Safety
- Health & Human Services
- Infrastructure & Quality of Life
- Economic Development

These committees have begun meaningful work with Deputy Mayors and department heads. The Mayor has committed to **quarterly meetings** with COH to assess progress and strengthen coordination.

Goals & Objectives for 2026–2027

1. Expand the Place Based Strategy

- Launch new listening campaigns in additional neighborhoods
- Strengthen resident leadership and congregational capacity

2. Deepen Faith–Government Collaboration

- Fully operationalize the February 28 covenant
- Maintain quarterly meetings with the Mayor
- Ensure coordinated action across public safety, infrastructure, sanitation, and human services

3. Address Human Needs at Scale

- Expand partnerships addressing food insecurity, homelessness, and mental and behavioral health
- Mobilize congregations to fill service gaps the city cannot meet

4. Advance Economic Development

- Engage the business community as key partners
- Support small business growth and corridor revitalization
- Convert vacant land into productive community assets
- Encourage business investment in neighborhoods long left behind

5. Build a Culture of Shared Responsibility

- Residents lead
- Faith communities organize
- Government responds
- Business invests
- Neighborhoods thrive

The Moment Before Us

COH has given hope, voice, and agency to more than fifty congregations across New Orleans. To step back now would not simply pause the work — it would risk undoing the trust that has been built and weakening the emerging partnership between faith communities and government at a moment when the city needs it most.

The work is proven.

The need is urgent.
The opportunity is real.

A Pathway to Peace and Prosperity is not a slogan — it is a strategy. With continued support, it can become the foundation for lasting transformation in New Orleans.

Foreword

Communities of Hope (COH) is strengthening the moral, social, and civic fabric of New Orleans by equipping congregations to respond to violence, addiction, blight, youth vulnerability, and economic instability. Over the past year, COH has expanded interfaith collaboration, deepened partnerships with civic and government leaders, and mobilized congregations to meet urgent community needs with compassion and coordination.

Our work continues to demonstrate a powerful truth: when faith communities are equipped, aligned, and mobilized, they become engines of healing and transformation. Across the city, congregations have stepped forward to support families in crisis, mentor vulnerable youth, and stabilize neighborhoods facing persistent challenges.

These past 15 months, COH strengthened bridges between faith communities and city leadership, ensuring that the moral voice of the faith community is present in policy conversations and service planning. We also expanded youth engagement efforts, offering mentorship, safe spaces, and leadership development rooted in compassion, accountability, and hope.

These accomplishments reflect not only COH's commitment but also the trust and collaboration of our partners. With continued support, we can deepen this work and meet the growing needs of our communities.

A Place Based Strategy Rooted in Community Leadership

At the heart of COH's work is a simple but powerful place-based strategy: beginning in targeted neighborhoods with the people themselves—the residents, families, and congregations who live every day with the challenges that government and civil society seek to address.

Rather than imposing solutions from the outside, COH organizes from the inside out. Residents and congregations serve as the tip of the spear, identifying the issues that matter most, initiating the work, and partnering with the appropriate agencies to close service gaps. This approach ensures that:

- Solutions are grounded in lived experience
- Residents become cocreators of safety, stability, and opportunity
- Government and civic institutions respond more effectively to real community needs
- Neighborhoods build their own capacity for longterm peace and prosperity

By elevating the voices of those closest to the challenges, COH transforms congregations into hubs of civic leadership—places where residents can surface concerns, mobilize resources, and collaborate with public agencies to create lasting change.

This place based strategy is not only effective; it is essential. It ensures that the people most affected by violence, addiction, blight, and instability are also the ones shaping the solutions. In doing so, COH helps build a city where every neighborhood has the power to heal itself from within.

Our Impact This Year

In a little over one year, COH has made measurable progress across the city through initiatives that uplift families, empower youth, and strengthen community resilience. This year, we:

- **Expanded interfaith collaboration** across New Orleans East, the Westbank, and the city center
- **Launched coordinated responses to community crises**, including support for families affected by violence, addiction, and displacement
- **Strengthened partnerships with city leadership**, ensuring the moral voice of the faith community informs policy and service delivery
- **Built new pathways for youth engagement** through mentorship, safe spaces, and leadership development
- **Mobilized volunteers and congregational teams** to address blight, food insecurity, and neighborhood instability

These efforts reflect a growing movement of congregations committed to working together for the common good.

The Path Ahead

COH is poised to deepen and expand this work in the coming year by:

- **Scaling our interfaith organizing model** to engage more congregations and neighborhoods
- **Strengthening government faith partnerships** to close service gaps and improve coordination
- **Expanding trauma informed youth initiatives** that offer consistent mentorship and pathways to opportunity
- **Increasing community based outreach** to families facing crisis
- **Building sustainable civic engagement structures** within congregations to support longterm transformation

This next phase of work will allow COH to reach more families, strengthen more congregations, and build a more resilient New Orleans.

II. History of Actions Taken: A Citywide, Faith and Neighborhood Led Movement for Safety and Renewal

Over the past eighteen months, Communities of Hope (COH), in partnership with the District Attorney's NODICE team, has implemented a disciplined, place based strategy across four major communities in New Orleans. Each campaign began with the people themselves — residents, congregations, and neighborhood leaders — surfacing the issues that posed the greatest threats to peace, safety, and prosperity.

This section documents the actions taken, the issues identified, and the measurable results achieved in**Tremé**, **Central City**, and the **Upper & Lower 9th Ward**, culminating in a **citywide partnership milestone on February 28, 2026**.

A. Tremé Community Action Campaign

A Resident-Led Strategy Producing Measurable Crime Reduction

"Because of our strong partnership with the faith-based community, crime in the First District dropped by 42%, and we saw 27 fewer shootings—real lives impacted and safer neighborhoods for our families."
Captain Kendrick Allen, First District Commander

Narrative Overview

In summer 2024, COH launched its inaugural place-based campaign in Tremé. A 2.5 month listening effort across congregations surfaced urgent concerns: violent hotspots, unsafe businesses, reckless vehicle activity, and environmental hazards.

A major public meeting at Holy Faith Temple Baptist Church brought these issues directly to the District Attorney, NOPD, city agencies, City Council members, and state legislators.

Residents identified two violent hotspots along Claiborne Avenue — a tire shop and a hookah lounge— both later shut down as a direct result of coordinated action. The City also installed new lighting under the I10 overpass, and NOPD increased enforcement in identified hotspots.

At a followup meeting at St. Peter Claver Catholic Church, First District Police reported **a 60% reduction in crime** in Tremé.

Issues Identified

- Violent hotspots along Claiborne Ave
- Unsafe nightlife establishments
- Reckless ATV and vehicle activity
- Insufficient lighting under I-10
- Blighted properties and unmanaged gathering points

Actions Taken

- Listening campaign across Tremé congregations
- Public accountability meeting with DA, NOPD, and city officials
- Closure of two violent hotspots
- Installation of new lighting under I-10
- Increased police presence and enforcement
- Formation of resident-led issue committees

Results

- **60% reduction in crime (**First District Police)
- Removal of violent hotspots
- Improved lighting and safety infrastructure
- Strengthened resident government collaboration





Listening sessions, Holy Faith convening, Claiborne hotspots, lighting improvements, St. Peter Claver followup

*A Community Blessing

Following the tragic shooting at Dooky Chase Restaurant, a cherished community landmark and sacred space, clergy and residents of Tremé gathered for a community blessing. They offered intercessory prayers for peace, reconciliation, healing, and guidance, honoring every victim and family affected by recent violence in the city. The event drew local residents and featured Orleans Parish District Attorney Jason Williams, who shared words of comfort and strength, reinforcing the community's resilience in the face of tragedy. (Pictured below)





B. Central City Community Action Campaign

A Unified Response to Blight, Prostitution, and Public Safety Threats

Narrative Overview

Following Tremé's success, COH and NODICE launched a two month listening campaign across **20 congregations** in Central City. Residents surfaced urgent concerns: blighted properties used for criminal activity, prostitution and drug sales along Jackson Avenue, and dangerous nuisance businesses—including the Five Star Car Wash, reported as a 24 hour hub for drug trafficking and prostitution.

A major convening at Stronger Hope Baptist Church brought these issues to the District Attorney, NODICE, NOPD, and city officials. Residents also identified a cluster of blighted properties behind Stronger Hope — one confirmed as the hideout for recent violent escapees from Orleans Parish Prison.

Coordinated action led to the **indictment of the slum property owner,** the **closure of the Five Star Car Wash,** and heightened enforcement along Jackson Avenue.

Issues Identified

- Blighted properties used for prostitution and drug activity
- Prostitution and drug sales along Jackson Ave
- High risk intersections (Derbigny, Claiborne, MLK)
- Unsafe nuisance businesses
- Post-Katrina blight behind Stronger Hope

Actions Taken

- Listening campaign across 20 congregations
- Public accountability meeting at Stronger Hope
- Indictment of slum property owner
- Closure of Five Star Car Wash
- Increased enforcement along Jackson Ave
- Resident committees formed for ongoing accountability

Results

- Removal of major drug and prostitution hubs
- Disruption of criminal networks
- Increased safety around Stronger Hope
- Strengthened collaboration between residents and law enforcement






C. Upper & Lower 9th Ward Community Action Campaign

Confronting Environmental Neglect, Illegal Dumping, and Quality of Life Threats

Narrative Overview

COH and NODICE next turned to the Upper and Lower 9th Ward, where residents launched a listening campaign across more than 20 congregations. They surfaced widespread illegal dumping, extensive blight, prostitution, homelessness, nuisance businesses, and environmental hazards — many rooted in land left vacant since Hurricane Katrina.

At an October 2025 action meeting at St. Paul's Church of God in Christ, residents presented these issues to the District Attorney, NODICE, NOPD, city officials, and elected leaders. Their testimony highlighted not only the human impact of these conditions but also how they obstruct economic development and prosperity.

The engagement produced several major outcomes: a resident-led antidumping campaign, enhanced fines and camera enforcement, community education initiatives, a proposal to convert vacant land into food gardens, and aggressive enforcement against abandoned housing used for criminal activity.

Issues Identified

- Illegal dumping in vacant lots
- Blighted properties used for criminal activity
- Post-Katrina land left unmanaged
- Prostitution, homelessness, and hunger
- Nuisance gas stations and convenience stores

Actions Taken

- Listening campaign across 20+ congregations
- Public accountability meeting at St. Paul's
- Antidumping campaign with enhanced fines and cameras
- Community education in schools, churches, and neighborhoods
- Proposal for community food gardens
- Enforcement against abandoned housing and nuisance businesses

Results

- Increased enforcement of illegal dumping
- Community led cleanup and maintenance efforts
- Advancing food garden initiatives to address hunger
- Crackdown on abandoned housing used for criminal activity
- Strengthened resident leadership and civic engagement








Pictured above: **Action,** St. Paul Church of God in Christ

D. Citywide Partnership Milestone: February 28, 2026

A New Level of Collaboration Between Residents and City Leadership

Narrative Overview

On February 28, 2026, COH, the District Attorney's Office, NODICE leadership, clergy from across the city, resident leaders, the Mayor, Deputy Mayors, City Council members, and key public safety officials gathered to formalize a deeper, sustained partnership.

This event marked a turning point: a recognition that eliminating imminent threats, addressing blight, meeting human needs, and enabling economic development requires ongoing, coordinated partnership between vigilant communities and responsive government.
The District Attorney's Office published an article documenting COH's impact — the first public recognition of the effectiveness of this residentled, faith rooted strategy.

Key Outcomes

- Formal recognition of COH's place-based model
- Strengthened commitment from city leadership
- Public affirmation of COH/NODICE impact
- Agreement to expand coordinated action citywide
- Establishment of ongoing communication channels






Clergy, residents, Mayor, Deputy Mayors, City Council, DA/NODICE leadership, partnership moments






E. New Orleans East Convening

Advancing Public Safety, Community Voice, and Data-Driven Solutions

Narrative Overview

Communities of Hope and the Orleans Parish District Attorney's Office, through the NODICE initiative, expanded their work into New Orleans East that culminated in a powerful convening on **April 13, 2026** at Franklin Avenue Baptist Church. The gathering brought together District Attorney Jason Williams, leadership from NOPD, including representatives from the 7th District, Deputy Mayors, the City Attorney's Office, public health officials, Louisiana State Police (Troop NOLA), and a wide network of grassroots and faith-based organizations, including the Eastern New Orleans Neighborhood Advisory Commission (ENONAC), New Orleans East Matters, the Greater New Orleans East Business Alliance, the Melia Subdivision Association, and the Sisters of the Holy Family, along with faith leaders across more than 25 congregations.

What unfolded was more than a convening, it was a moment of truth-telling and collective reckoning. Residents spoke with honesty, courage, and deep love for their community about what they **experience every day:** unsafe corridors, illegal dumping that continues to scar neighborhoods, concerns about exploitation and human trafficking, reckless driving that endangers families, and infrastructure challenges that have persisted for far too long. Their voices carried both urgency and hope, rooted in a shared belief that New Orleans East deserves better and can be better.

The engagement produced **concrete next steps**, including the launch of an Illegal Dumping Task Force, strengthened interagency coordination, targeted enforcement in high-need areas, and the embedding of a dedicated prosecutor within NOPD's 7th District. Partners also advanced a coordinated approach to addressing trafficking through both enforcement and victim support, while continuing efforts to improve infrastructure and neighborhood stability. The convening reflected a shared commitment to accountability, unity, and lasting hope for New Orleans East.

Issues Identified

- Illegal dumping and environmental blight
- Human trafficking indicators and exploitation
- Reckless driving and roadway safety concerns
- Insufficient lighting and infrastructure gaps
- Nuisance businesses impacting neighborhood stability







F. Second Quarterly Meeting with Mayor Helena Moreno & New Orleans City Administration

June 27, 2026

Narrative Overview

Communities of Hope convened its Second Quarterly Meeting with Mayor Helena Moreno and the New Orleans City Administration on June 27, 2026, at the Chapel of St. Ignatius and the Gayle and Tom Benson Jesuit Center on the campus of Loyola University New Orleans.

The gathering welcomed clergy, faith leaders, and community advocates from across Louisiana for an inspiring morning of collaboration with Mayor Moreno, members of the City Administration, and partners from the Orleans Parish District Attorney's Office. Attendees heard directly from Mayor Helena Moreno, Deputy Mayor Stephen Nelson, who serves as Deputy Chief Administrative Officer for Infrastructure and Director of the City's Department of Public Works, and Deputy Mayor Jeffrey Schwartz, who oversees Economic Development and Community Development. City leaders provided updates on the city's infrastructure needs, ongoing improvements, and economic and community development efforts, while faith leaders were given an opportunity to ask questions, share the realities facing their communities, and bring thoughtful ideas to the table.

The meeting underscored the importance of continued collaboration between faith communities, local government, and community partners to build safer, healthier, and more connected neighborhoods throughout New Orleans.









G. OPDA and Communities of HOPE Partner to Strengthen New Orleans Neighborhoods through newly signed Memorandum of Understanding





August 13, 2026- ***Press Release from the Orleans Parish District Attorney's Office***

OPDA and Communities of HOPE Partner to Strengthen New Orleans Neighborhoods

Up to $116,667 in private bridge funding will sustain six months of community organizing and public safety collaboration

NEW ORLEANS – Wednesday, August 5, 2026, the Orleans Parish District Attorney's Office (OPDA), the Isaiah Institute of New Orleans, and Communities of Hope (COH) announced a six-month memorandum of understanding making up to $116,667 in private bridge funding available to sustain COH's community engagement while it works toward becoming an independent nonprofit.

Orleans Parish District Attorney Jason Rogers Williams said, "Public safety is built block by block, relationship by relationship. This bridge funding helps Communities of Hope stay present in neighborhoods, elevate resident voices and connect community insight to coordinated action across New Orleans."

The funds are expected to be allocated from IMTT's fund with the Greater New Orleans Foundation (GNOF). COH supports the Orleans Parish District Attorney's Office New Orleans Data-Informed Community Engagement (NODICE) Initiative by organizing faith communities, neighborhood groups and residents around public safety and community health.

Andre Gaudin said, "When NODICE helps identify opportunities to better serve the public, trusted neighborhood partners like Communities of HOPE are essential to turning that insight into action. COH meets residents in congregations, at community gatherings and throughout their neighborhoods, connecting them to the work being done to improve public safety. When residents can see and experience the results of that collaboration, it builds trust and demonstrates the real impact of OPDA and COH working together."

What the Funding Supports
• Compensation for four contracted positions: three Community Organizers and one Communications Manager.

• Community engagement supplies, outreach materials and ordinary operational expenses.

• Planning and facilitation of stakeholder meetings, public presentations and neighborhood convenings.

Through the agreement, COH will focus on St. Roch, Uptown/Irish Channel and Central City while continuing its work on Sixth District public safety, fentanyl response, youth violence prevention and leadership development.

Joe Givens of The Isaiah Institute of New Orleans said, "I believe that this agreement has created the most significant opportunity for the faith community to contribute to safety and peace that I've seen in the over 40 years that I've worked with government and the faith community. To be able to participate substantively in improving the quality of life for the congregations and citizens is essential to creating an environment for peace and prosperity."

H. Faith Leaders, Students, and Community Partners Gather for Peace & Justice Weekend in New Orleans

September 12-13, 2026

Narrative Overview





Communities of Hope joined faith, civic, and community partners for the Peace & Justice Weekend, held September 12–13, 2026, in New Orleans, bringing together students, young people, faith leaders, and community members around the theme of Faith, Civic Participation, Justice & Hope.

The weekend began on Saturday at Dillard University's Georges Auditorium with a powerful Civic & Voter Engagement and Participation program centered on four pillars: Educate. Equip. Inspire. Activate. Students from universities across New Orleans, including Dillard University, Xavier University, and Loyola University, engaged in meaningful conversations about voting rights, civic responsibility, democratic participation, and the protections provided under the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Special guest B Mike addressed the gathering, while Deacon Terrell Broussard led a presentation focused on voting and civic engagement for faith leaders. Charles Phipps of the Urban League of Louisiana emphasized the critical importance of voting, provided guidance on checking voter registration status, and distributed resource packets with QR codes containing essential voting information. Students and participants actively engaged throughout the program, asking thoughtful questions and exploring concrete ways to participate in the democratic process.

The weekend continued Sunday at St. Peter Claver Catholic Church with a powerful interfaith prayer service focused on justice, peace, and prophetic witness.Faith leaders and participants from multiple denominations and religious backgrounds, alongside young people and the church choir, gathered in prayer and reflection around issues affecting communities across New Orleans and beyond, including poverty, displacement, discrimination, political conflict, immigrant families, homelessness, threatened democratic rights, and the healing of communities divided by fear and conflict.

The weekend was made possible through the partnership of the National Urban League, Dillard University's Center for Racial Justice, Communities of Hope NOLA, Louisiana Interchurch Conference, The St. Charles Center for Faith & Action, and the Isaiah Institute of New Orleans, bringing diverse communities together to strengthen civic participation, deepen faith-based engagement, and advance the work of peace, justice, and hope.







I. Third Quarterly Meeting with Mayor Helena Moreno & New Orleans City Administration

September 26, 2026

Narrative Overview

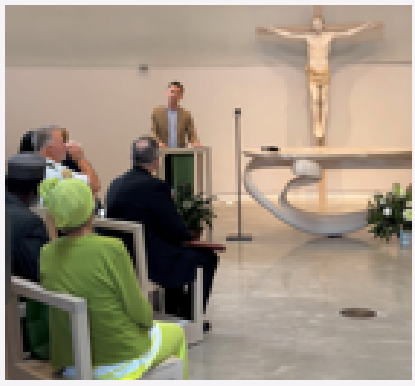
Communities of Hope gathered for its Third Quarterly Meeting with Mayor Helena Moreno, the New Orleans City Administration, and faith leaders on September 26, 2026, at the Chapel of St. Ignatius and the Gayle and Tom Benson Jesuit Center on the campus of Loyola University New Orleans.

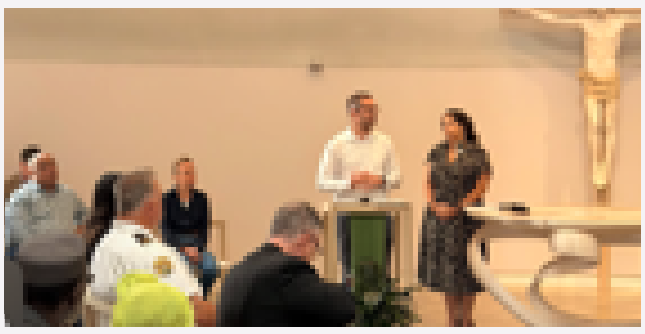
The meeting brought clergy and community leaders together at an important moment to engage in honest and meaningful conversations about the needs facing communities across New Orleans and the work ahead.

Mayor Helena Moreno provided updates and remarks on the current challenges facing the city, including ongoing budget constraints and the broader fiscal crisis, while Chief Michael Harrison led discussions on public safety and the city's efforts to address community concerns. Participants also heard from partners at UNITY for the Homeless and Daniel Shanks, Criminal Justice Coordinator for the City of New Orleans, highlighting opportunities for stronger collaboration around homelessness, public safety, and criminal justice. Throughout the gathering, clergy and faith leaders actively participated in an open dialogue, asking questions, raising concerns, and sharing perspectives from their congregations and communities. The meeting also focused on identifying immediate and imminent threats facing neighborhoods, identifying strategic ministries and programs already operating within congregations, and developing strategic alliances with agencies and community partners.

The gathering concluded with prayer and remarks that reinforced the importance of faith communities remaining engaged, organized, and committed to working alongside city leaders and community partners to address urgent needs and build safer, healthier, and more connected communities throughout New Orleans.







III. Pathway to Peace and Prosperity: Goals for 2026–2027

A Faith-Rooted Partnership for Public Safety, Human Well-Being, and Economic Renewal

Introduction

The past year has demonstrated a powerful truth: faith communities are the city's first responders. Through disciplined listening campaigns, resident-led organizing, and coordinated action with the District Attorney's Office, COH has helped communities identify imminent threats, eliminate violent hotspots, address blight, and strengthen the civic infrastructure necessary for long-term safety and prosperity.

But the work ahead requires deeper, broader, and more sustained partnership. The challenges facing New Orleans — violence, environmental degradation, hunger, homelessness, and barriers to economic development — cannot be solved by any single institution. They require ongoing collaboration between vigilant faith communities, engaged residents, and a responsive city government The goals for the remainder of 2026 and for 2027 build on the foundation laid over the past year and are anchored in the historic covenant established on February 28, 2026, at Loyola University.

A. Strengthening the Faith–Government Partnership

1. Expanding Beyond Public Safety to a Whole City Partnership

The previous year's work with the District Attorney's Office proved that when faith communities and public safety officials work together, the results are immediate and measurable. But imminent threats
do not exist in isolation. They are intertwined with:

- Infrastructure failures
- Environmental hazards
- Hunger and homelessness
- Mental and behavioral health needs
- Economic stagnation ack of opportunity for youth and families

For this reason, COH will expand its partnership to include the new city administration, including:

- The Mayor
- Deputy Mayors
- Department heads responsible for public safety, infrastructure, sanitation, health, human services, and economic development

This expansion is not optional — it is essential. The issues surfaced by residents in Tremé, Central City, and the 9th Ward require coordinated, cross-departmental action. Only a whole government partnership can address the full spectrum of threats to peace and prosperity.

B. Operationalizing the February 28, 2026 Covenant

2. Making the Covenant a Working Agreement

The February 28 covenant established at Loyola University created the formal structure for sustained collaboration between faith communities and city leadership. It affirmed:

- A shared commitment to resident-led problem identification
- A shared responsibility for addressing imminent threats
- A shared belief that peace and prosperity require coordinated action

The goals for 2026–2027 include operationalizing this covenant, ensuring it becomes a living, working agreement that guides daily practice, not just symbolic partnership.

This means:

- Regular communication between COH and city leadership .
- Clear lines of accountability
- Transparent reporting on progress
- Joint problem solving when new threats emerge

The covenant is the backbone of the city's emerging civic infrastructure — and COH will ensure it remains active, visible, and effective.

C. Establishing Faith Based Standing Committees

3. Building a Civic Infrastructure That Mirrors City Government

To make the covenant actionable, COH has established standing committees within the faith community that correspond directly to the city's core functional areas:

- Public Safety Committee
- Health & Human Services Committee
- Infrastructure & Quality of Life Committee
- Economic Development Committee

These committees are composed of clergy, lay leaders, and residents from congregations across the city.
Their purpose is to:

- Monitor issues surfaced by residents
- Maintain communication with city departments
- Track progress on commitments
- Provide ongoing feedback to city leadership
- Mobilize congregations for action when needed

Already, these committees have engaged Deputy Mayors and department heads in meaningful work, demonstrating the potential of this structure to create real, sustained change.

D. Institutionalizing Accountability and Progress Monitoring

4. Quarterly Meetings with the Mayor and Deputy Mayors

To ensure that the covenant remains active and that progress continues, the Mayor has agreed to quarterly meetings with COH leadership and committee representatives. These meetings will:

- Review progress on commitments
- Identify emerging threats
- Address barriers to implementation
- Strengthen coordination across departments
- Ensure that resident voices remain central to decision-making

This level of access and accountability is unprecedented — and it represents a major step toward institutionalizing the partnership.

E. Goals for the Remainder of 2026 and for 2027

5. Citywide Expansion of the Place Based Strategy

COH will continue expanding its place based model to additional neighborhoods, prioritizing areas with:

- High levels of violence
- Significant blight
- Environmental hazards
- Food insecurity
- Youth vulnerability

6. Strengthening Community Capacity

COH will train additional congregational leaders in:

- Listening and issue identification
- Organizing and facilitation
- Data collection and reporting
- Advocacy and partnership building

7. Advancing Economic Development

COH will work with city officials and economic development agencies to:

- Remove barriers to investment
- Support small business growth
- Promote redevelopment of blighted corridors
- Advance community driven land use proposals (e.g., food gardens)

8. Addressing Hunger, Homelessness, and Human Needs

COH will partner with health and human service agencies to:

- Expand access to food resources
- Support mental and behavioral health initiatives
- Strengthen homelessness prevention efforts
- Mobilize congregations for direct service and outreach

9. Building a Culture of Shared Responsibility

COH will continue fostering a culture in which:

- Residents lead
- Congregations organize
- Government responds
- Partnerships endure

This is the pathway to peace and prosperity — not a slogan, but a strategy.

Conclusion

The goals for 2026–2027 reflect a simple but powerful belief: New Orleans can only thrive when its people, its faith communities, and its government work together in sustained partnership. The covenant established on February 28, 2026, provides the structure. The standing committees provide the capacity. The quarterly meetings provide the accountability. And the faith community provides the moral leadership and civic energy that no other institution can match.
Together, these elements form a Pathway to Peace and Prosperity — a strategy rooted in the people, built through partnership, and sustained through shared responsibility.

A Pathway to Peace and Prosperity

“Peace is being in right relationship with God and each other.” Bishop A. Fabre

Our objective must be to reweave the pattern of relationships between ourselves, our congregations, community and government

PHASE 1 — COMMUNITY & FAITH (TOP LAYER)

• Begin with the people — residents, families, congregations
• Faith communities as first responders
• Surface lived experiences & imminent threats
• Address human needs:
– Food insecurity
– Homelessness &; housing instability
– Mental & physical healthcare
• Partnerships with United Way, UNITY, non- profits
• Build trust, dignity, and shared responsibility
• Guiding Principle:
“Peace is being in right relationship with God and each other.”

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Resident Identified Issues → Action Priorities

PHASE 2 — GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIP (MIDDLE LAYER)

February 28, 2026 Covenant formalizes collaboration between Communities of Hope and City of New Orleans
• Mayor, Deputy Mayors, City Council, Public Safety
• Infrastructure, Sanitation, Health & Human Services
• Faith-based standing committees mirror city departments:
– Public Safety
– Health & Human Services
– Infrastructure & Quality of Life
– Economic Development
• Quarterly meetings with the Mayor
• Joint action on blight, dumping, lighting, enforcement

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Stabilized, Safer, Cleaner Communities

PHASE 3 — ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (BOTTOM LAYER)

• Business investment in corridors & neighborhoods
• Small business growth & job creation
• Revitalization of long neglected commercial areas
• Vacant land → food gardens & productive community assets
• Business fills service gaps the city cannot due to $200M deficit:
– Mental health services
– Homelessness response
– Food insecurity
• Build pathways to entrepreneurship & generational wealth

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COMMUNITY OUTCOME — PEACE & PROSPERITY

• Residents lead
• Faith communities organize
• Government responds
• Business invests
• Neighborhoods thrive