



St. Claude Avenue
New Orleans Urban Main Street Application
18 AUGUST 2006

St. Claude Avenue Main Street



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Partner Organizations:

Saint Claude Avenue Merchants Association
Faubourg Marigny Improvement Association
Faubourg St. Roch Improvement Association



Section A: Organizational Capacity

The Renaissance Project, a Louisiana nonprofit 501(c)(3) corporation, was organized in 2001 for the purpose of improving the quality of life in New Orleans' Lower Ninth Ward neighborhood. We support community building through our four approved nonprofit activities: economic development, farmers markets, arts and cultural programming and youth leadership development.

Renaissance undertakes economic development initiatives through the Saint Claude Avenue Merchants Association, which serves the neighborhoods adjacent to and surrounding St. Claude Ave. from Elysian Fields to Delery. Formed in response to mitigation of the Inner Harbor Navigational Lock Replacement Project of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Merchants Association has been under-funded historically. We have identified financial service providers who believe in the potential of our commercial corridor. They provide limited support to sustain our activities as we rebuild our member base. The Merchants Association has coordinated a 2005 St. Claude Ave. clean up campaign and food distribution, facilitated financial literacy workshops for residents and SBA supported technical assistance workshops for small businesses. We hold a year-end open house and public meetings throughout the year to promote information sharing among residents, business owners, programs and service providers serving our communities.

From its inception, Renaissance has been a volunteer-run organization. Our founding director worked as a consultant to earn her living while donating time and funds to establish the organization. While we donate countless hours drafting funding proposals and attending meetings, our board of directors receives no compensation. We enjoy access to the faculties and students of several universities and, consequently, over the course of five years, we have grown beyond a home-based entrepreneurial startup organization with a \$1500 annual budget to a 501c3 with an office and annual budget in excess of \$300,000. Volunteers and inkind contributions remain critical to our livelihood. We actively recruit volunteer support through our social and professional networks and our Main Street District will enjoy the immediate support of stakeholders who participated in the proposal planning process and have expressed the desire to continue serving on one or more committees once St. Claude Avenue receives an Urban Main Street designation. Others are always welcome to join us in our work.

Student interns from Tulane University Office of Service learning have worked through Renaissance to provide technical assistance to individual merchants along St. Claude including back office support and marketing. Our Main Street planning process illustrates how we engage citizens, volunteers, in community building activities. We begin with informal conversations among friends, and colleagues about community challenges and opportunities. One person raises an issue and we decide how to either participate or provide support. This leads to broader engagement and more conversations and planning as we share information with others and people gravitate in the direction of their passions. We make our work visible to stakeholders through our formal and informal networks and leave the choice to individuals and organizations to determine their appropriate level of involvement; how much time and energy to devote to our community projects. And our experience is that people give what they can afford, enthusiastically, because of our transparent process, and willingness to receive the gifts people bring and accept many forms of currency.



Section B: District Geography and Management

The boundaries for our St. Claude Avenue Main Street District are Elysian Fields Avenue and Press Street. (See attached map.) Our Main Street office will be at McDonogh 16 School and we plan to establish a permanent office at or near St. Roch Market. We have selected this nine-block stretch because Elysian Fields and Press St. are major intersections east and west of St. Roch Market; we have well-established relationships with businesses, neighborhood associations, schools, faith-based institutions, projects and programs operating in this area; there is a dense concentration of commercial structures, including historic buildings; and we are confident that we can impact this area within the first 36 months of our Main Street project.

St. Roch Market is an important anchor for both St. Claude Avenue and the surrounding neighborhoods. Both Faubourg Marigny Improvement Association and Faubourg St. Roch Improvement Association have partnered and participated with us in Main Street proposal planning and committed long-term to both our Main Street project and the revitalization of St. Roch Market as a viable public space. Our Councilmember for District C recently endorsed Renaissance's application to Getty Foundation for planning funds for St. Roch. See attached letter of support.

Saint Claude Avenue Merchants Association serves businesses from Elysian Fields to Delery St. in the Lower Ninth Ward. Renaissance operates the Merchants Association. Our active members within the District include Henry's Bakery, Royal Furniture, and Mystic. Urban Organics, Green Project and Harold's Plants have expressed interest in a St. Claude Ave. Main Street District and pledge their support as well. We hope to have them join our Main Street committees in the near future.

Martin Luther King Charter Elementary School will be housed at Colton School fall 2006. We have an established relationship with the King faculty and staff through one of our community partners, UrbanHeart. See attached letter from program director Malcolm Suber. The faculty and staff at King have also pledged their participation and support of our Main Street district.

The Prevention Research Center at the Tulane University School of Public Health operates a project in our target area called PACE (Partnership for an Active Community Environment). See attached letter of support from Paul Whelton, Dean, Tulane University Medical School. PACE has matching funds for development of a public space within the target area.

Richard Thomas' Visual Jazz Art Gallery will house a media center supported by a partnership between Students at the Center, Visual Jazz Art Gallery and Relief International. This space will be open to the public providing computer access, social services and technical assistance. See attached letters from Relief International, Students at the Center and Listen to the People.

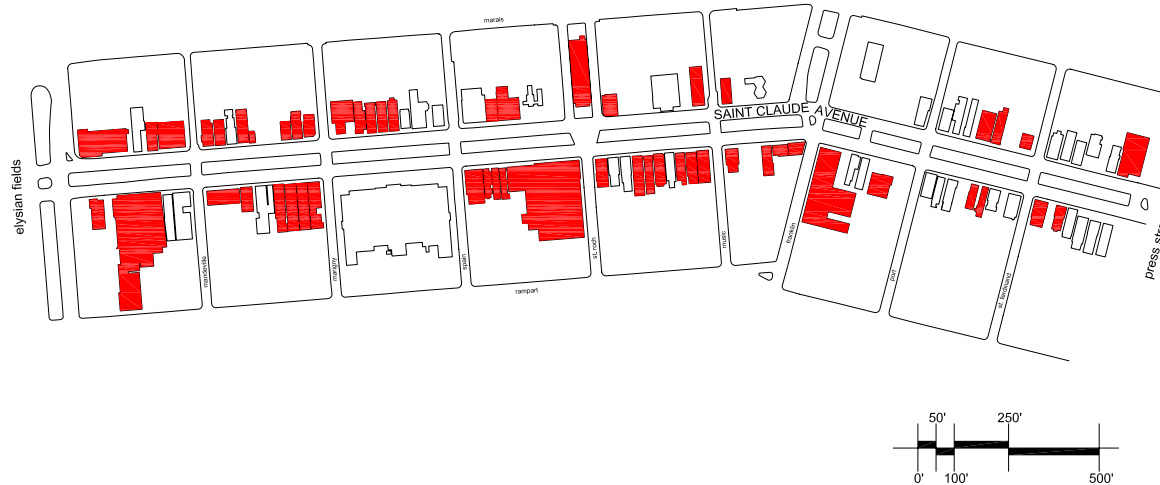


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Section B: St. Claude Avenue Main Street District Boundary Map



Section B: St. Claude Avenue Main Street Retail Uses Highlighted



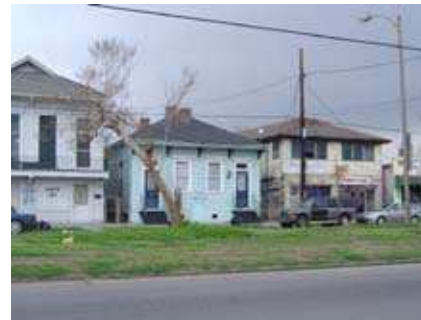
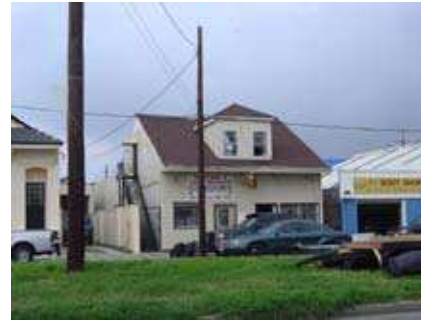
Number of buildings	62
Number of first floor retail uses	52
Number of vacancies	40 not apparently occupied or open for business
Number of abandoned buildings	To be determined
Estimated square footage for each retail use	See table at left and in appendices
Estimated average monthly rent and sale price	
Does one landowner own the majority of all buildings in the district?	No

	Riverside		Lakeside		
	address	area	address	area	
2200 blocks	2200	2,900	2215	9,000	
	2222	31,000	2221	3,500	
	2230	3,185	2227	2,200	
	2240	5,600	2231	5,200	
	2254	3,500	2239	2,100	
	2258	2,100	2245	1,900	
	2262	5,300	2249	2,300	
	2268	3,500	2251	2,700	
	2270	4,000	2255	500	
	2274	3,700	2263	-	
	2282	3,800	2267	1,300	
			2273	2,000	
			2279	1,800	
total	68,585	total	34,500		
TOTAL				103,085	
2300 blocks	2300	52,000	2301	4,300	
	2348	4,300	2311	2,300	
	2350	1,500	2315	2,100	
	2352	1,600	2319	2,100	
	2360	1,500	2321	2,300	
	2372	35,000	2325	1,300	
			2331	3,800	
			2337	1,700	
			2345	5,800	
			2353	1,800	
			2359	4,500	
			2367	1,600	
			2371	-	
			2377	-	
	total	95,900	total	42,600	
TOTAL				138,500	
2400 blocks	2400	2,400	2401	2,300	
	2404	2,100	2405	7,000	
	2410	2,500	2421	5,000	
	2414	3,000	2429	1,900	
	2418	2,300	2433	1,900	
	2420	2,500			
	2424	2,200			
	2430	2,000			
	2436	2,300			
	2438	2,800			
total	24,100	total	18,100		
TOTAL				42,200	
2500 block	2500	2,000			
	2510	2,200			
	2512	1,200			
	2518	1,400			
	total	6,800	total	-	
TOTAL				6,800	
2600 block	2600	18,800	2609	4,500	
	2612	1,800	2633	2,300	
	2614	1,900			
	2634	3,400			
	total	25,900	total	6,800	
TOTAL				32,700	
2700 block	2700	2,000	2709	1,700	
	2706	1,700	2713	2,400	
	2708	1,400	2721	1,800	
	2712	-	2725	3,100	
	2716	1,500	2729	2,400	
	2720	1,500			
	2724	1,700			
	2730	2,300			
total	12,100	total	11,400		
TOTAL				23,500	
2800 block	2800	2,500	2801	2,200	
	2808	1,800	2805	2,100	
	2814	2,200	2809	1,800	
	2816	2,600	2815	2,200	
	2820	2,500	2823	-	
	2824	2,400	2827	1,800	
	2830	-	2831	7,000	
	total	14,000	total	17,100	
TOTAL				31,100	

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Section B: St. Claude Avenue Main Street Proposed District Photos

St. Claude Avenue
LAKESIDE:
2200 Block



St. Claude Avenue
LAKESIDE:
2300 Block



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Section B: St. Claude Avenue Main Street Proposed District Photos

St. Claude Avenue
LAKESIDE:
2300 Block
cont'd.



St. Claude Avenue
LAKESIDE:
2300 Block
cont'd.



St. Claude Avenue
LAKESIDE:
2400 Block



St. Claude Avenue
LAKESIDE:
2400 Block
cont'd.



St. Claude Avenue
LAKESIDE:
2500 Block



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Section B: St. Claude Avenue Main Street Proposed District Photos

St. Claude
Avenue
LAKESIDE:
2600 Block



St. Claude
Avenue
LAKESIDE:
2700 Block



St. Claude
Avenue
LAKESIDE:
2800 Block



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Section B: St. Claude Avenue Main Street Proposed District Photos

St. Claude Avenue
RIVERSIDE
2200 Block



St. Claude Avenue
RIVERSIDE:
2300 Block



St. Claude Avenue
RIVERSIDE:
2300 Block
cont'd.



St. Claude Avenue
RIVERSIDE:
2400 Block



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Section B: St. Claude Avenue Main Street Proposed District Photos

St. Claude Avenue
RIVERSIDE
2400 Block
cont'd.



St. Claude Avenue
RIVERSIDE
2400 Block
cont'd.



St. Claude Avenue
RIVERSIDE
2500 Block



St. Claude Avenue
RIVERSIDE
2500 Block
cont'd.



St. Claude Avenue
RIVERSIDE
2600 Block



St. Claude Avenue
RIVERSIDE
2700 Block



Section B: Target Area Economic Assets and Liabilities

Assets	Liabilities
St. Roch Market is historic landmark and anchor for Avenue and adjacent neighborhoods	Need more parking, and safe crosswalks
Mixed-use Commercial/Residential and presence of a potential 'anchor' property on each block	Some blocks currently have only 1 business open
Most buildings structurally sound and basically need a coat of paint	A corner building in danger of collapse (Frankie and Johnny's)
Diversity of services/functions among existing businesses	Business entrances on side streets
St. Claude is shared boundary along 8 neighborhoods	Broken sections of sidewalk, no curb cut-outs,
High elevation – minimal flooding on St. Claude	Vacant lots, no trash receptacles, dumping
Both long-standing businesses and new business opportunities	Traffic/speed along Avenue makes stopping difficult
New K-6 public school introduces new population and public access to space	Poor signage; poor street lighting
Neutral ground presents landscaping and public space opportunity	Unattractive, underutilized neutral ground



Section B cont'd. Successes and Failures

Prior to Hurricane Katrina our success in providing technical assistance to businesses was limited to a handful of individual businesses along St. Claude Avenue. We paired individual merchants with interns from Tulane University Office of Service Learning based on individual needs and student areas of proficiency. Henry's Bakery received accounting support whereas Good Children received marketing consultation. Several business owners and entrepreneurs attended Community Express Loan workshops while others received counseling on a case by case basis through Good Work Network and NewCorp Business Assistance Center. While these efforts were helpful to individual business owners, the effort was scattered with an impact indiscernable to passersby.

St. Claude Merchants completed beta testing of a Guidebook to Commercial Revitalization in partnership with the New Orleans chapter of Commercial Real Estate for Women (CREW). Our study included the Lower Ninth Ward span of St. Claude Ave. between the Industrial Canal and Delery St. This was a first step in strategic planning for revitalization of St. Claude Avenue with an eye towards identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to commercial redevelopment along the corridor.

Renaissance responded to economic development opportunities and food access challenges in our target area by partnering with Crescent City Peace Alliance and the Merchants Association via memorandum of understanding to form Downtown Neighborhood Market Consortium. Downtown Markets overarching objectives include: 1) Establishing collaborative agreements with stakeholders towards planning and implementation of markets; 2) Increasing produce access in order to affect nutrition and preventative healthcare; 3) Encouraging social integration across six diverse New Orleans neighborhoods adjacent to St. Claude Avenue through creation of livable public spaces; 4) Creating economic development opportunities through cottage industry and microenterprise support to market vendors. We have received funding from Joe and Dorothy Brown Foundation and Rockefeller Foundation towards the development of our first farmers market at Holy Angels parking lot on St. Claude Ave. at Gallier St. and await response from Frost Foundation and Baptist Community Ministries regarding additional programmatic support.

We see community building as a comprehensive process of which commercial development is only one component. Our letters of support indicate successful collaboration with school-based programs including long-term work with Students at the Center and Crescent City Peace Alliance to develop a civil rights park at the site where Homer Plessy was arrested at the intersection of Press and Royal Streets. We have worked with offices of elected officials to provide arts and cultural programming and coordinated community meetings with the Frederick Douglass Coalition, Algebra Project, Crossroads, Junebug and Artspot Productions to bring arts and educational programming to Frederick Douglass High School on St. Claude.

St. Claude Avenue Main Street will operate as an imbedded program of The Renaissance Project following the timelines on the next page through the end of the year using the process model on page 15 throughout the project.

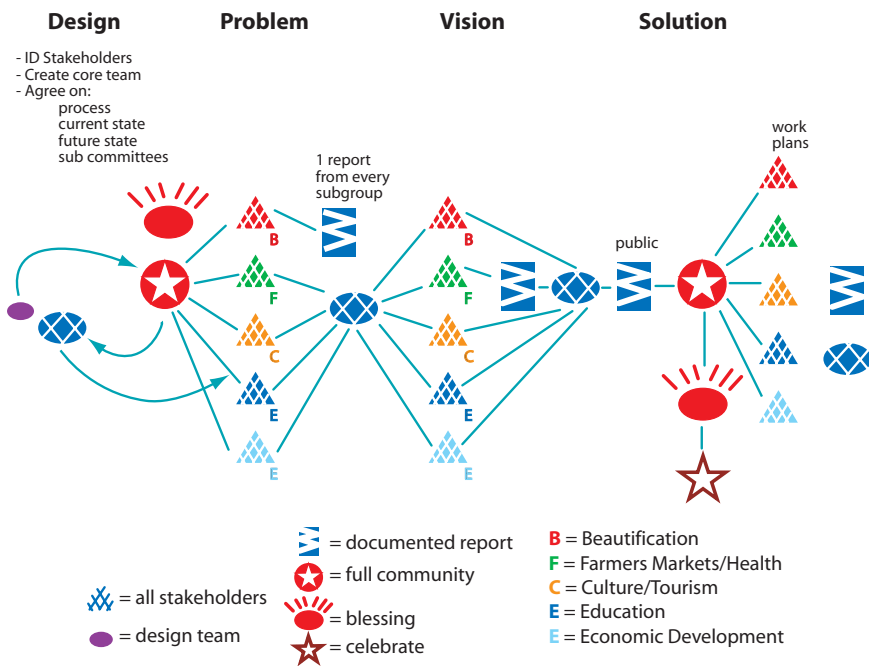


Section B cont'd.:
Main Street Program Operations

Timeline	Goals and Objectives	Outcome Indicators	Outcome Measures
August 2006	Submit Urban Main Streets application	Collaborative process leads to proposal completion	Proposal delivered prior to deadline, 4pm Aug. 18th
September 2006	Main Street designation Establish St. Claude office Getty Funding for St. Roch Market	Lt. Governor's announcement Partner designates office space Foundation requests full proposal	Receive designation letter Establish telephone service Receive commitment letter
Ongoing	Stakeholder Engagement and Committee Signup	Broad base of stakeholders participate at monthly committee-led meetings	Meeting attendance rosters and consensus-based decisions
October 2006	Hire Program Manager and Contract with Professional Fundraiser	Open job announcement, contracting and hiring process	Announcement to Public Fundraising plan presented to Design Team
November 2006	Participate in Basic Training	Program manager and team leaders attend training	Attendees report back on learnings to design team
December 2006	Holiday fundraiser	Successful event held at venue(s) within District	Dollars raised, # of attendees, # of organizations present



Section B: St. Claude Avenue Main Street Process Map and Main Street Planning Timeline



Main St. project Proposed timelines

7/6		Merchants/Main St. mtg design team stakeholder groups
7/8	Sat.	White Boot Brigade share info w/ full community community endorsement/blessing questionnaire/survey ⇒ subcommittee sign-up
7/10	Mon.	Design Team mtg. report on data from 7/8 set up subcommittees identification of issues
7/16	Sun.	Public mtg. design, Cambridge Public space exercise - block survey
7/17	Mon.	
7/31	Mon.	Design Team mtg.
8/7	Mon.	Design Team mtg.
8/9	Wed	Facilitated community mtg. First draft completed Public review of proposal
8/10		Stakeholder review & comments
8/12	Sat.	Revisions
8/17	Thurs.	FINAL SUBMISSION committees present workplans ⇒ CELEBRATE
8/18	Fri.	



Section C: District Need and Section D: Fundraising Capacity

Many of the buildings on St. Claude Avenue would benefit from facade improvements. In most cases, this would require minimal expenditure on paint, signage, and landscaping. The Green Project, one of our partners, donates paint and building materials to nonprofits and sells reclaimed materials at a discount to the general public. Harold's Plants, another partner, has agreed to work with our Main Street District to install flower boxes and potted plants to immediately and inexpensively improve storefront appearance.

Businesses reopening post-Katrina and relocating to St. Claude Avenue will require capital investment to support operations until there are visible signs of revitalization on the Avenue including marketing and promotional campaigns to increase traffic and sales to local businesses. We are in communication with Hope Credit Union, Seedco, and NewCorp Business Assistance Center regarding grants and loans to our merchants for operations and expansion.

Our proposed budget for Year 1 is attached. We have already raised in excess of the required \$12,500 in matching and in-kind donations as partially illustrated in our letters of support. We have been successful in writing grants to local, state and federal entities as well as local and national foundations for other programs including the UrbanHeart afterschool program which was recipient of U.S. Department of Education funding as well as 21st Century Community Learning Center funds. We also received funding from Joe and Dorothy Brown Foundation and Rockefeller Foundation to support a St. Claude Avenue farmers market. For our Main Street planning process alone, we raised \$3800 to support planning, facilitation and refreshments for public meetings. Tulane University School of Public Health has funding for environmental improvements in our impact area. We will continue to participate on their steering committee to exercise a voice in project selection. We have submitted a letter of intent to Getty Foundation to support planning for revitalization of St. Roch Market. These funds will leverage the state allocation to our Main Street district and provide partial funding to our program director and fundraiser. As we develop a comprehensive plan for street improvements including lighting, sidewalks, and landscaping we will continue to leverage inkind contributions from our university partners as well as apply to public and private investment sources.



Section E: Community Support

After attending the National Main Street Conference in June 2006, I attended a neighborhood planning meeting for a St. Claude Avenue Main Street proposal. Six of the eight attendees at that initial meeting continued to participate in our Main Street proposal planning process. Our planning timelines and process map are illustrated on page 13. The Merchants Association coordinator presented Main Street information at each Merchants Association meeting beginning July 6th and from those initial meetings, our design team emerged. The design team is essentially a steering committee that is responsible for communications and moving the process forward.

We held several public meetings to educate our community about Main Street. At the White Boot Brigade event on July 8, 2006 at Holy Angels residents from the city at large expressed their support of a St. Claude Avenue Main Street District and the revitalization of St. Roch Market. The following week, design team members participated in a public space exercise walking the nine blocks of our proposed District to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. We enlisted Cambridge-based consultants at Interaction Institute for Social Change to help design our August 9, 2006 public meeting where we presented our work to date and stakeholders had an opportunity to 'vision' a new St. Claude Avenue. The public meeting attendees, 41 total, included 21 residents, 4 business owners, 12 community service program providers, and 4 neighborhood association members. While a full compilation appears in the attachments to this document, the attendees were in agreement that a revitalized St. Claude Avenue would provide residents with convenient access to a variety of fresh food options, financial services and healthcare, entertainment and leisure time activities. Stakeholder letters of support appear as attachments to this document.



Section F: Cohesive Vision

Our community envisions an area that will draw residents and visitors via a variety of retail, entertainment and food establishments. Everyone desires a safe, family-friendly, multicultural area that provides choices throughout the day and evening. We support a thriving area that meets the various service needs of the community. In the tradition of New Orleans, we support preserving visually appealing buildings with new construction and infrastructure serving to beautify and enliven the area. Last but not least there is broad support that the emerging commerce be anchored by, supportive of, and supported by the centralized, historic St. Roch's market.

The Renaissance Project's work in the areas of education, food access, arts and cultural programming, and business and economic development support our belief in individual self-determination and community interdependence. Through the Merchants Association, we work to develop new enterprises while supporting locally-owned and established businesses to build our local economy. We practice cooperation and collaboration across stakeholder groups in our community and others. Our process is open and accessible. We have welcomed other Main Street applicants to our planning meetings and allowed full access to all of our documents through our email list. With respect to Main Streets' four points, we have successfully organized stakeholders in our community to participate in the visioning process and will continue to make our process accessible to other communities as they engage in neighborhood planning.

St. Claude Avenue is of tremendous importance as a state highway and commercial transportation corridor through New Orleans as well as an artery connecting residents in eight adjacent neighborhoods. Residents want a safer, walkable community with slower traffic on the Avenue. Martin Luther King Charter Elementary School will be housed in the former Colton Middle School building. A younger student population, children on St. Claude near Elysian Fields, reinforces our sense of urgency to slow traffic within our proposed Main Street District.

In this application for St. Claude Avenue Main Street, St. Roch Market represents our opportunity for economic development within a context of historic preservation. Residents love this market and now more than ever, we long for connection to a kinder, gentler, simpler past. Redevelopment of this public space as well the remaining blocks in our proposed District provide a tangible opportunity for residents to see the impact of their time and efforts towards the rebuilding of New Orleans. At the end of the day, there is something to show for the hours and energy spent on this community development exercise.



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Attachments

Organizational Documents

- Certificate of Incorporation
- 501c3 Determination Letter
- 2006 Budget
- Current Board and Volunteer Members
- Main Street Annual Budget

Past Community Work

- St. Claude Avenue Directory of Businesses
- Map of Corner Grocery Stores and Proposed Farmers Markets
- Cleanup Campaign Flyer
- Community Breakfast Forum
- Financial Literacy Workshop

Planning Documents

- Compiled Meeting Agendas and Minutes
- Public Meeting: Visioning Exercise Summary Documents
- Faubourg Marigny Community Planning Summary
- DVD Photographic Summary of Buildings

Letters of Support

Reference Materials

- Planning District 7 Survey, Prevention Research Center, Tulane University School of Public Health
- St. Roch Market: Historic Structure Report and Rehabilitation Study, Cornell University
- A Study of the St. Claude Corridor, Tulane University School of Architecture

