

CREATIVE COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE FOR OLD ALGIERS



OCTOBER 4, 2013

OLD ALGIERS MAIN STREET CORPORATION

MISSION STATEMENT

Old Algiers Main Street Corporation is dedicated to the preservation and restoration of the historically commercial corridors of Old Algiers.

HISTORY

The organization was established under the auspices of the National Trust for Historic Preservation in 1996. It became an official Louisiana Main Street program in 2007.



COMMUNITY HISTORY

Old Algiers is the second oldest settled area of New Orleans, founded in 1719. It was part of the original land grant by King Louis XVI to Jean Baptiste Sieur de Bienville, the city's founder. Once sprawling plantations, by the early 1800s the area had begun to attract industry including maritime and railroads. For the next century, most residents worked within those industries, and a variety of entrepreneurs opened businesses to serve the population, which was separated from the rest of the city by the Mississippi River.



ALGIERS – BROOKLYN OF THE SOUTH

In the early part of the 20th century, a new musical genre was developing along the banks of the river. Jazz musicians came to Old Algiers to live in modest homes as they plied their trade on the riverboats and in dance halls and saloons on both sides of the river. They raised their families in the small-town atmosphere, and they performed in many clubs and dance halls, now long closed, throughout Old Algiers, adding another layer to the area's already-rich history and culture.



THE CHANGING TIMES

By the 1960s, the area was definitely “down at the heels” after many years of disinvestment as families moved to new, modern housing in the suburbs after World War II. By the late 1970s, much of the area had been designated as an historic district, which spurred some restoration.

As is often common, the first wave of new residents included those involved in the arts and other cultural endeavors who were looking for real estate bargains in the historic neighborhoods. Writers, actors, painters, potters, dancers, chefs, singers, songwriters, instrumentalists and those who work in the music and film industries continue to make their homes in the area.



OLD ALGIERS TODAY

Because of this heritage and its many cultural assets, Old Algiers is poised for a renaissance, much like other New Orleans neighborhoods have recently experienced, often due to the vast amount of public investment and support in the political arena.





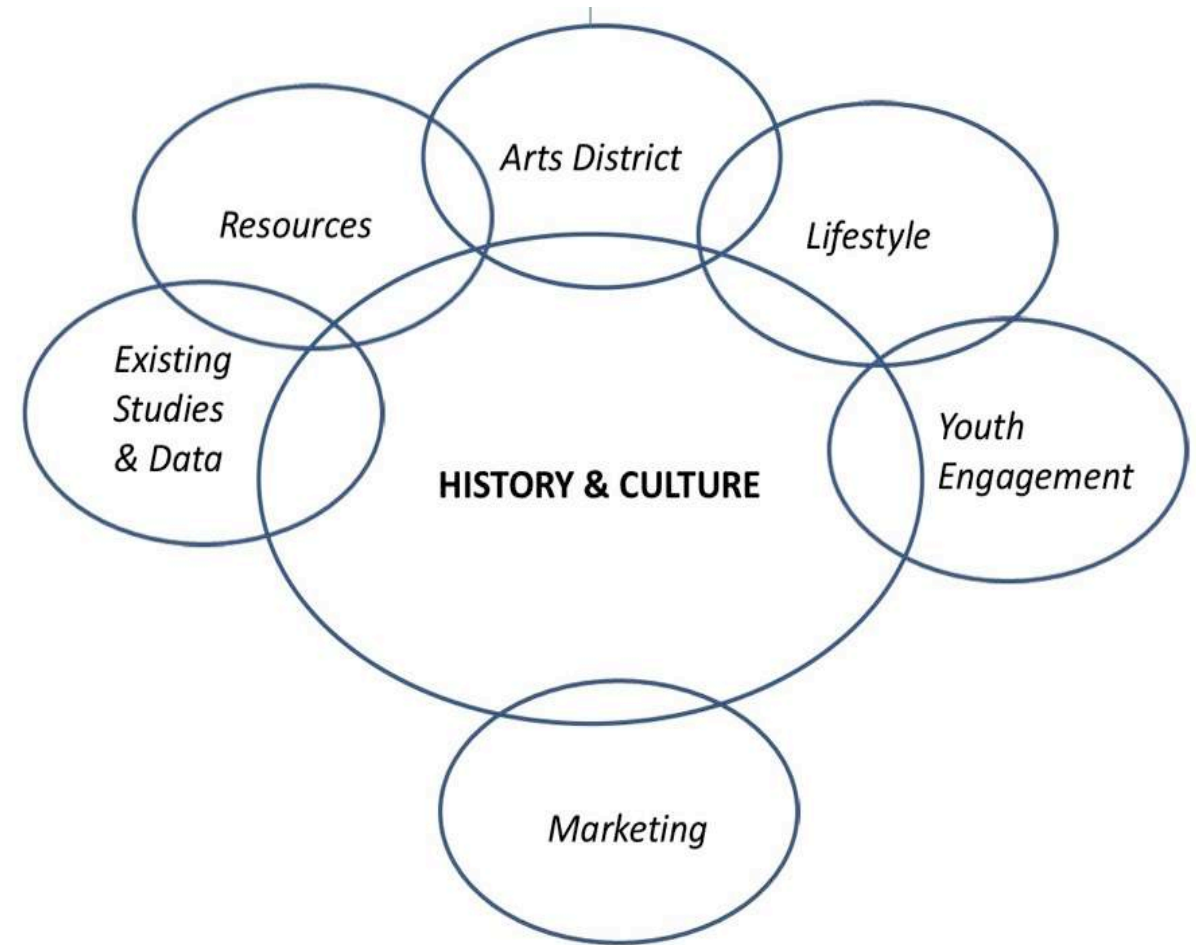
THE PROCESS FOR DEVELOPING THE CREATIVE COMMUNITIES PLAN

Old Algiers Main Street Corporation gathered a group of community leaders, artists, an elected official representative and other in the community.

Meetings took place from March to May 2013

Small groups focused on pieces of the “mind map.”

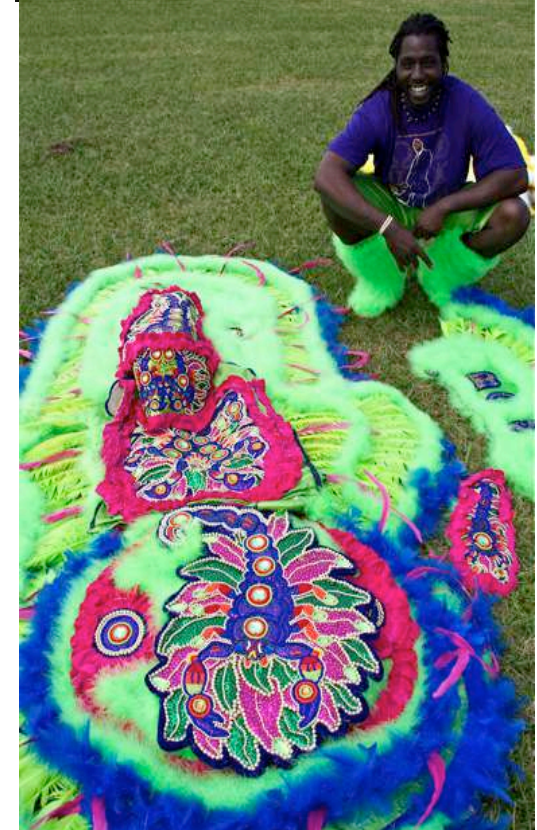
The groups compiled their findings to create the report.



History and Culture

The history and Culture underpin all the other spheres:

- An historic Carnegie library
- Ferry service since 1827
- Jazz Walk of Fame along the river
- Mardi Gras Indians
- Music, music, music

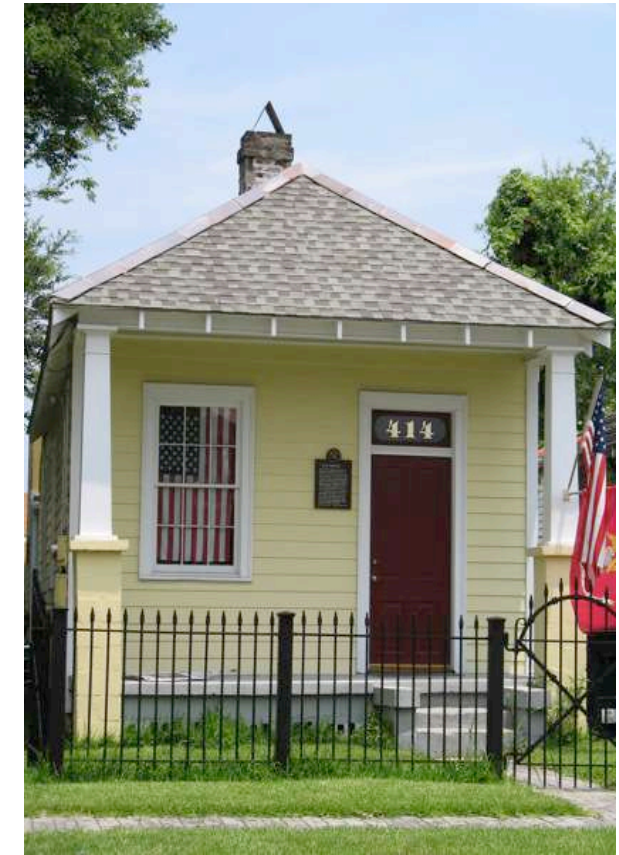


Arts District

The Old Algiers Cultural District is designated along Newton & Teche streets as well as some other areas of the larger program area. There are many redevelopment opportunities along these corridors

There are many still living who were directly involved in the evolution of jazz in the first half of the 20th century, and there are others who have archives that need to be preserved.

Recording oral histories and preservation of documents and photographs are of major importance before these records are lost forever.



COMMUNITY RESOURCES / LIFESTYLE

Beyond its history and culture, there are many physical assets that are part of the resources in the community. In determining those that can be used to build a more vibrant community

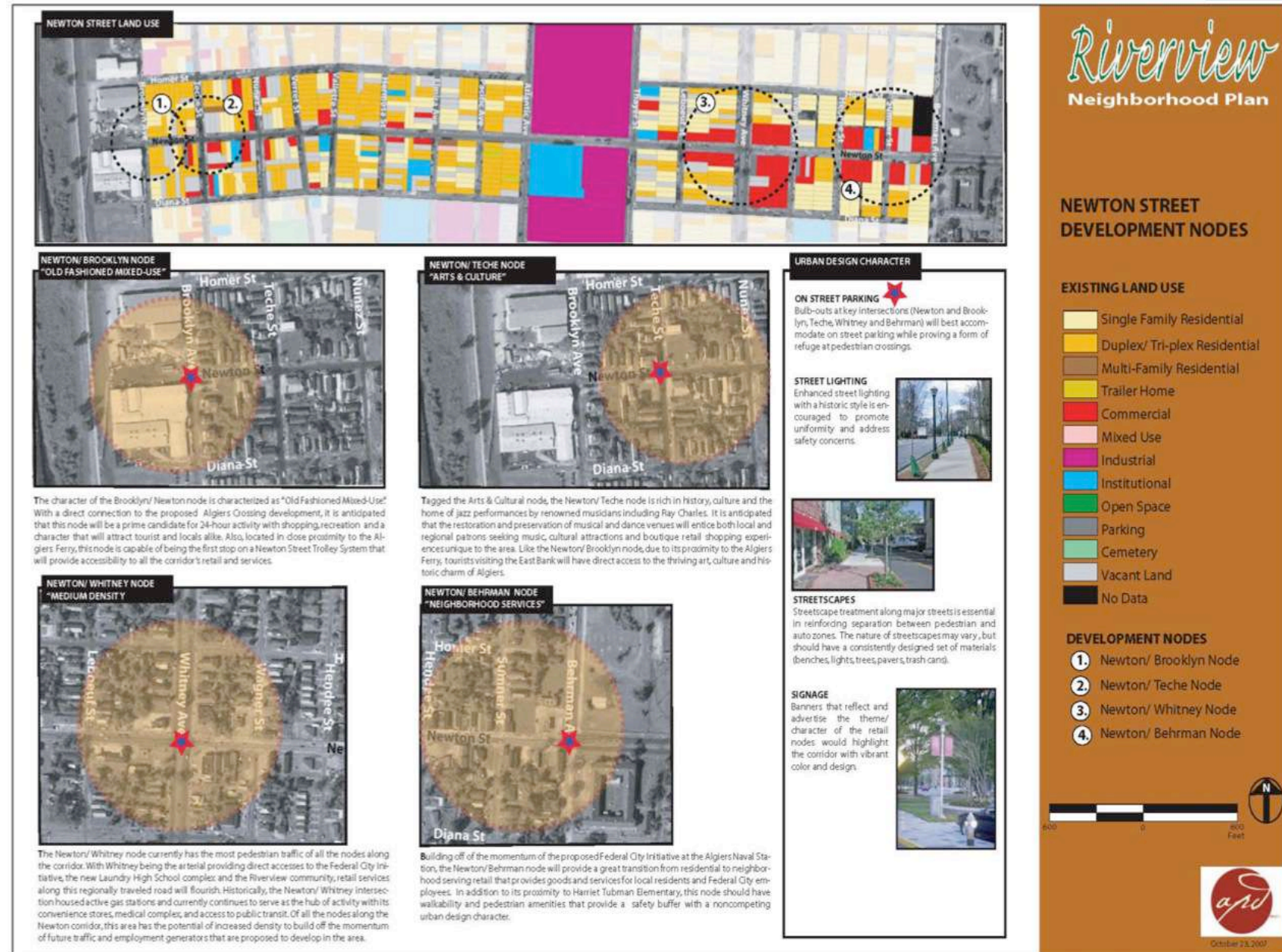
- A wide variety of schools serve the area, from an International School to a military academy to an arts-based charter school
- An inventory of historic buildings.
- Live music venues, casual eateries
- Parks and recreational activities for children
- An historic library, an original Carnegie building
- Many denominations of churches
- Access to the riverfront/bike path
- Ferry service to and from Downtown New Orleans.
- A fresh produce market
- New Orleans Film Studio opened on the site of the former Mardi Gras World.
- Federal City, a redevelopment of a Navy Base at the edge of Old Algiers community.



EXISTING DATA AND STUDIES

More than 20 years of plans

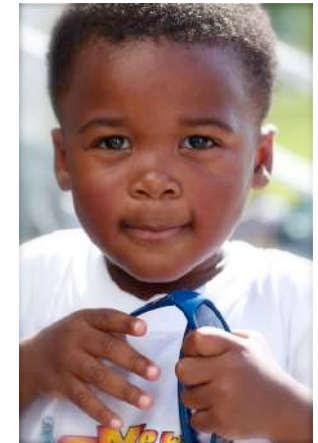
- New Orleans Riverfront: Strategic Policy Plan 1991
- Old Algiers Main Street Program: University of New Orleans/CUPA's Historic Preservation Planning Program 1998
- Riverfront Development Plan 2005
- Newton Street Now! 2006
- Development Strategy and Land Plan for the West Bank, LA conducted in the early 2000s.
- Adoption of The Transportation Element of the Master Plan 2008
- **Riverview Neighborhood Plan: Created post-Katrina 2007**
- Federal City, New Orleans, Louisiana: Vision Plan. 2009



YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

Youth Engagement is vital to sustaining any creative developments. Our efforts include:

- Utilizing school groups for public performances
- Providing a turn-key lesson plan and resources to teach youth about the history and culture to help them understand the need for preservation and revitalization
- Through the city's Job 1 program, students helped the weekly Old Algiers Harvest Fresh Market and have remained engaged
- Cultural programs for children via partnerships with others churches, cultural institutions such as our own Mardi Gras Indians and the YMCA (on the Federal City site).



GOALS AND STRATEGIES

The overarching goal is to provide a welcoming place for the creative industries.

1. Develop properties around the Newton/Teche intersection to serve as a catalyst for continued cultural development.

- Identify properties/property owners
- Work with property owners to identify resources (tax credits, etc.) that could help in redevelopment
- Work in concert with New Orleans Redevelopment Authority on residential redevelopment in the area
- Work with Arts Council of New Orleans and other groups to identify potential residents, tenants, small business owners to locate in the corridor
- Work with the City and other potential funders to offer incentives for redevelopment



GOALS AND STRATEGIES

2. Enhance the overall conditions along the Newton/Teche corridors

- Continue to work with DOTD on enhancements to funded projects with landscaping, upgraded crossings, bike lanes and public art
- Create programming that can be carried out in various locations along the corridor
- Re-launch the pre-Katrina anti-litter campaign



GOALS AND STRATEGIES

3. Market the area to potential real estate investors and developers

- Work with existing First-Time Homebuyer programs and NORA redevelopment initiatives to reach out to potential investors, developers and potential homeowners and business owners
- Develop and maintain a database for email communication
- Create a Web presence for the initiative within the OAMSC Web site
- Work with Stay Local!, Preservation Resource Center/Rebuilding Together, Neighborhood Partnership Network and other initiatives that focus on community development to access their network.
- Develop a long-term marketing plan and funding sources.



FOCUS AREA

The area near the river along Newton & Teche streets is in a sense a “crossroads” of culture, where jazz music was often heard and people gathered for social occasions in churches and halls.

Because the Old Algiers Harvest Fresh Market is already established at the Newton/Teche intersection, which is also the site of one of the oldest remaining African American Masonic Lodges, it was determined that this should be the initial area of focus.

LONG TERM PLAN

- Initiate cultural opportunities within the properties and incentivize entrepreneurial behavior through subsidized rents for businesses and façade improvements grants for property owners.
- This would allow the money to be multiplied many times over and benefit the community through redevelopment initiatives that are welcoming to the creative industries.

