CULTURAL CORRIDOR
ON LASALLE STREET

Central City, New Orleans

BOOKLET MADE POSSIBLE BY:
FOUNDATION FOR LOUISIANA
NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS
CULTURAL CORRIDOR
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

6-7 INTRODUCTION
   Brief & Goals

8-21 SITE ANALYSIS
   Historic Central City
   Current Character
   Property Types
   Neighborhood Analysis
   Street Presence

22-33 PROJECTS & PARTNERS
   Dew Drop Inn
   Mardi Gras Indian Campus
   SCLC Interpretive Center
   Market on LaSalle
   Ya-Ya Arts Center

34-35 ACKNOWLEDGMENTS
SITE ANALYSIS
ON LASALLE STREET
Central City, New Orleans
FEATURED INFORMATION

Historic Central City

Current Character

Property Types

Neighborhood Analysis

Street Presence
BRINGING BACK LASALLE STREET

Redevelopment of this corridor is an on-going process combining grassroots and top-down efforts to revitalize a unique street that features historic, cultural, and economic sites intermixed with residential lots. At its high point in the 1940s and ’50s LaSalle street was a locus for African-American entrepreneurs, musicians, and political and social activists. We envision a renaissance on LaSalle, a revitalized corridor in a vibrant neighborhood, driven by arts and culture and rooted in equity and deep community engagement.
LASALLE STREET NOW AND THEN: CIVIL RIGHTS AND CULTURAL PRESERVATION
HISTORIC
CENTRAL CITY

- 1830s: Construction of Magnolia Projects begins.
- 1911: Ray Charles resides at Foster Hotel on LaSalle Avenue.
- 1911: Central City, "back of town," drained & African-Americans move into the area.
- 1939: Southern Christian Leadership Conference established at New Zion Baptist Church.
- 1941: Infamous race raid on the Dew Drop Inn.
- 1952-78: Dryades St. is a major commercial corridor with over 200 businesses, mostly Black and Jewish-owned.
- 1950’s: Cleveland J. Peete manages Magnolia Projects (later renamed for him).
- 1952: Frank Painia opens the Dew Drop Inn on LaSalle St.
- 1953: Dryades St. commercial corridor established by immigrant & minority entrepreneurs.
- St. Charles Avenue streetcar est.
HISTORIC CENTRAL CITY

The Lasalle Corridor is richly layered with historic places and events, from the Antebellum to the Civil Rights Era, it has reflected and helped to define the African American experience in New Orleans. The narratives of LaSalle are those of reconstruction and Jim Crow, the challenges of the civil rights movement in the Deep South, the promise and the limitations of public housing and the Great Society.

Central City, through which LaSalle winds, was settled in the 1830’s, back of town from the Garden District, bounded by the St. Charles street car line and undrained swamp. In the last decades of the 19th and first decades of the 20th centuries, Central City became home to New Orleans first Black hospital, first Black library and in Shakespeare Park, the first Black public park. These landmarks served to stretch the horizons of segregation, while simultaneously demarcating its boundaries. In a location and for a people that could have been defined by those limitations, there was instead a flowering of entrepreneurial activity, community activism, and culture.
A thriving Jewish and Black business district on Dryades Street offered small shops and large department stores. Home for a decade to Zulu’s parade, Shakspeare park provided a rallying point for Mardi Gras Indians and the staging ground for the 1963 civil rights march to City Hall.

The Dew Drop Inn, opening on LaSalle in 1945 as a music venue and later grew to be considered the “symbol of New Orleans Jazz, with some of the greatest Blues, Jazz and R&B artists in the country gracing its stage. Despite social norms and citywide segregation ordinances, The Dew Drop Inn welcomed integrated audiences and became an institution for both Black and Gay social rights movements.

Central City would emerge as a center of activism throughout the 1950s and '60s, with protests on Dryades Street (later renamed Oretha Castle Haley in honor of the CORE co-founder), and the founding of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. at the New Zion Baptist Church (LaSalle and Third Streets).
HISTORIC CENTRAL CITY

Comparing the building footprints within the LaSalle Cultural Corridor in 1933 with those in 1960 and 2014 allows us to determine the historical intactness of blocks and streets. Beginning in 1941 and expanded in 1955, the Magnolia Public Housing projects replaced dense blocks of older residences and reshaped much of the LaSalle Corridor and surrounding neighborhood. Policy and economic shifts, along with White flight and the development of Black suburbs led to decline and disinvestment in the 1980s and 1990s.

After Hurricane Katrina the Magnolia Projects, officially renamed the C.J. Peete for their long-time manager, were demolished. Harmony Oaks, a mixed-income redevelopment of that site is the physical core of Harmony Neighborhood Development, a non-profit community development agency focused on the revitalization of Central City.
CURRENT CHARACTER

Today the historic LaSalle Street Corridor is on the verge of a renaissance. This once vital hub of commercial and cultural activity has suffered from decades of population loss and disinvestment. Recently, public, private, and philanthropic investments have poured into the area, and the population is growing.
LASALLE STREET CULTURAL ARTS DISTRICT

The LaSalle corridor has influence beyond its immediate location, and exists as part of a proposed Cultural Arts District. The map (far right) depicts the district boundary and core as defined by important entry points, intersections and cultural landmarks.

Included in the work of creating a successful cultural corridor and arts district are considerations of adjacent cultural amenities and enhancing the pedestrian experience through streetscape and wayfinding interventions. The map proposes a cultural landmark walking circuit that would help visitors to understand the area’s history and cultural significance.
MAP REFLECTS DATA FROM TCC, CENTRAL CITY STUDY CONDUCTED SUMMER 2014.
LASALLE CORRIDOR
STREET PRESENCE

Improving the pedestrian experience is often the first step in corridor revitalization. As larger projects begin to come to fruition along LaSalle, smaller landscaping and art initiatives can provide a positive experience for residents, draw visitors, and prioritize walking over fast vehicle traffic.

The examples shown here include landscaping and sidewalk planters in front of a traditional corner commercial location, and an art installation in front of a vacant lot indicating a larger renovation effort to come.

PRECEDENT:
DESIGNED OUTDOOR SPACE SHOWS ACTIVITY TO STREET’S PEDESTRIAN AND VEHICULAR TRAFFIC

6TH/LASALLE: PARKING LOT

PAGODA CAFE, NEW ORLEANS
PRECEDENT: REVITALIZED SHOTGUNS EDUCATE & CREATE A COMMUNITY PRESENCE

3RD/LASALLE: VACANT LOT W/SHTGUN DOUBLE AT LEFT

PROJECT ROW HOUSE, HOUSTON
COMMUNITY PARTNERS
ON LASALLE STREET
Central City, New Orleans
FEATURED PROJECTS

Dew Drop Inn

Mardi Gras Indian Campus

SCLC (Southern Christian Leadership Conference) Interpretive Center

Market on LaSalle

Ya-Ya Arts Center
DEW DROP INN
RENOVATION

The proposed renovation, investigated by the Painia family and Milne Inspiration Center in partnership with the Tulane City Center & Harmony Neighborhood Development will return the historic hotel, barbershop, and supper club to their original locations, serving once more as a premier music venue in New Orleans.

New programming for the Milne Inspiration Center will include classrooms, recording and mixing studios, a small auditorium, and flexible open space, as The MIC continues its successful youth programming and thrives in a venue all its own.

For more information:
Le’Kedra Robertson
985.215.2333
e: lekedra@themicamped.org
w: dewdropnola.squarespace.com
MARDI GRAS INDIAN CULTURAL CAMPUS

In collaboration with the Foundation for Louisiana, Louisiana State University's Robert Reich School of Landscape Architecture, and the Tulane City Center, The Mardi Gras Indian Council envisions a permanent location along the LaSalle Corridor, amplifying their customary presence on the streets during Mardi Gras, Super Sunday, and St. Joseph’s Night.

A future “campus” including renovated structures and landscape interventions will help the Mardi Gras Indians preserve their culture, increase awareness of their traditions, host classes and events, produce funding, and plan for future projects.

For more information:
Matt Williams
917.664.0890
e: matthewwilliams@gmail.com
w: themardigrasindiancouncil.com
MGI CULTURAL CAMPUS: EDUCATION & CULTURAL PRESERVATION

BIG CHIEF HOWARD MILLER TEACHING FAMILY HERITAGE & TRADITIONS
PHOTO BY ELSA HAHNE, OFFBEAT MAGAZINE
SOUTHERN CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE INTERPRETIVE SITE

On February 14, 1957, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., A.L. Davis, and other civil rights leaders met at the New Zion Baptist Church (3rd/LaSalle) to form the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), an organization that would coordinate nonviolent direct action campaigns, taking on issues of segregation nationwide.

An interpretive site along the LaSalle corridor will tell the story of this pivotal event, alongside those of other local civil rights leaders and actions. Felicity Redevelopment, Inc. is working with the Tulane Regional Urban Design Center and local churches to envision and execute this important project.

For more information:
Elizabeth Burger
504.581.3701
e: felicitystreet@gmail.com
JOIN THE PEACEFUL PROTEST MARCH
to City Hall for Freedom and Equal Job Opportunity

The Freedom March on the New Orleans City Hall scheduled for September 20, 1963 will not be a "demonstration" in the strict sense of the word, but a peaceful protest to develop greater public awareness of the grievances of non-white Orientals, for we have a permit to march. The march will be inter-racial and inter-faith.

The high point of the march will be the presenting of a petition to city officials asking immediate corrective action on the following:

1. A statement from the Mayor and the City Council to the effect that they support democratic practices in employment and public accommodation, and that merchants who desegregate their businesses will have the city government support.
2. Abolishment of the dual system of classification in the City Civil Service so that qualified Negroes can be considered for jobs in other than Negro institutions, as well as jobs in all levels of city government.
3. The appointment of Negroes to various boards and commissions particularly to the Housing Authority of New Orleans where Negroes constitute a majority of the tenancy.

ASSEMBLE SHAKESPEARE PARK, MONDAY, SEPT. 20, 1963, AT 6 P. M.

For further information call: Headquarters, 7TH 9:25 P.

ORGANIZATIONS SUPPORTING THE MARCH

1. Professor's Neighborhood House, Inc.
2. N.O. Branch NAACP
3. CORE
4. Consumers League of Greater N.O.
5. Community Federation of Greater N.O.
6. United Cigar Workers
7. Human Rights Council of Louisiana
8. United Cigar Workers
9. National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
10. National Organization for the Advancement of Colored People
11. New Orleans Metropolitan Area Council on Human Relations
12. Women's Council of Negro Women
13. National Council of Negro Women
14. Metropolitan Area Council on Human Rights
15. National Urban League
16. National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
17. National Urban League
18. National Council of Negro Women
19. National Organization for the Advancement of Colored People
20. National Urban League
21. National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
22. National Council of Negro Women
23. National Urban League
24. National Organization for the Advancement of Colored People
25. National Urban League
26. National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
27. National Urban League
28. National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
29. National Urban League
30. National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
31. National Urban League
32. National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
33. National Urban League
34. National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
35. National Urban League
36. National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
37. Christian Workers Industrial Aid Club
38. National Council of Negro Women
39. National Urban League
40. National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
41. National Urban League
42. National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
43. National Urban League
44. National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
45. National Urban League

As persons in a responsible position, we urge you to inform and urge your membership to participate in the MARCH for FREEDOM AND JOB OPPORTUNITIES.
MARKET AT LASALLE
BUSINESS INCUBATION

The Market at LaSalle is the product of a partnership between Harmony Neighborhood Development and Tulane University School of Architecture URBANbuild program. Each Saturday, local live music, multiple food and produce vendors and an eclectic mix of others enliven the market, vending balloon and flower arrangements, handmade jewelry, t-shirts, photographs, and more.

The Market creates an effective on-ramp to the formal economy for the Market’s micro-businesses by making available low-cost, innovative, high-traffic retail space and providing technical assistance through partner organizations.

For more information:

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504.123.4567
e: ???@gmail.com
MARKET ON LASALLE: THRIVING SMALL BUSINESSES
YAYA ARTS CENTER
NEW CONSTRUCTION

YAYA's mission is to empower creative young people to become successful adults. We provide educational experiences in arts and entrepreneurship to New Orleans-area children and youth, fostering and supporting their individual ambitions.

Founded in 1988 by Jana Napoli, YAYA Inc. has been educating, nurturing, and empowering creative young New Orleanians for a quarter century. Our signature program of youth development through entrepreneurship is now replicated around the U.S.

For more information:
Baty Landis
504.208.8376
e: baty@yayainc.com
w: yayainc.com

YAYA ARTS CENTER: STUDENTS ENGAGE IN THE CREATIVE ARTS, DEVELOPING SKILLS & ENGAGING WITH PROFESSIONALS
YAYA ARTS CENTER: NEW LOCATION ON LASALLE, OPENING FALL 2015
PARTNERS:
MILNE INSPIRATION CENTER
THE PAINIA FAMILY
RESTAURANT OPPORTUNITIES CENTER
BOUTIQUE HOTEL GROUP
KUTS UNLIMITED BARBERSHOP
YOUNG ASPIRATIONS YOUNG ARTISTS (YAYA)
FOUNDATION FOR LOUISIANA
MARDI GRAS INDIAN COUNCIL
OFFICE OF COUNCILWOMAN LATOYA CANTRELL
FELICITY REDEVELOPMENT, INC.
TULANE REGIONAL URBAN DESIGN CENTER

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http://www.harmonynola.org
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