



Canal Street **Vision** and **Development Strategy**



DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT



CANAL STREET DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
CITY OF NEW ORLEANS

May 2004



A Vision for Canal Street

Canal Street is once again the 'Main Street' of New Orleans and the Deep South, and the anchor for the city's booming hospitality industry. It is a source of great civic pride and the meeting ground for those who live, work, and play in downtown New Orleans and its neighborhoods. The street is attractive, active, and safe

at all hours of the day and throughout the year. It is a magnet for those who stroll, window shop, and move between various destinations--from the riverfront to the Medical Center, from the French Quarter to the Warehouse District and the Convention Center, and from the office towers of Poydras Street to the amenities of Jackson Square. While not accommodating major residential or office uses, Canal Street serves and is served by adjacent and nearby residential neighborhoods of the French Quarter, Lafayette Square, and the Warehouse District and offices in the adjacent Central Business District. Canal

Street is a place of great diversity with superior entertainment, dining and specialty shopping with few rivals in urban America.



Acknowledgements

Prepared for the:

Downtown Development District of New Orleans

1010 Common Street, Suite 100
New Orleans, LA 70118
(504) 561-8927

Canal Street Development Corporation

1515 Poydras Street, Suite 1150
New Orleans, LA 70112
(504) 565-6960

Prepared by:

Development Strategies, Inc.

Real Estate & Economic Development
St. Louis (Lead Consultant)

Chan Krieger & Associates

Urban Design & Planning
Cambridge

Billes Manning Architects

Architecture
New Orleans

Gorove Slade Associates

Transportation
Washington, D.C.

Canal Street Revitalization Partners:

The Honorable C. Ray Nagin

Mayor of New Orleans

Downtown Development District of New Orleans

Board of Commissioners

Virgil Robinson, Jr., Chairman
Ann Duplessis, Vice Chair
Zennette Austin, Secretary - Treasurer
Judy Y. Barrasso
Elaine Coleman
Arthur Q. Davis
Jonathan Ferrara
Byron R. Harrell
Zella V. May
Barbara Motley
Robbie Vitrano

Staff

Kurt Weigle, Executive Director
Warren Richard, Economic Development Coordinator

Canal Street Development Corporation

Board of Directors

Randall A. Smith, President
David Rubenstein, Vice President
Jose Canseco, Secretary
Allen Frederic, Treasurer
Cynthia Argo
Councilmember Oliver Thomas
Councilmember Jacquelyn Clarkson

Staff

Neil Kohlman, Executive Director

Mayor's Office of Economic Development

Beth James, Executive Assistant to the Mayor
Cindy Fromherz, Policy Planning Administrator

City Planning Commission of New Orleans

Yolanda W. Rodriguez, Interim Executive Director

Table of Contents

	INTRODUCTION	06
	THE CHALLENGE AND OPPORTUNITY	08
I.	VISION FOR CANAL STREET	14
Corridor-wide Issues	1. Security and Maintenance	16
	2. Public Transportation	18
	3. Traffic and Parking	20
	4. Streetscape	22
Uses & Activities	5. Medical Center Relation to Canal Street	28
	6. The Future of Iberville	30
	7. Upgrading the Retail Mix	32
	8. Entertainment Concentration at Rampart & Basin	34
	9. Reusing Vacant Upper Floors	38
	10. Better Connections to the Riverfront	40
II.	DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR CANAL STREET	43
Corridor-wide Strategies	1. Redevelopment Opportunity Areas	44
	2. Streetscape	50
	3. Refining and Targeting Investment Incentives	56
	4. Land Use and Building Regulations	62
	5. Development Management and Facilitation	65
	6. Residential Development	67
	7. Tourism and Hotels	69
	8. Transportation Management	71
	9. Parking Management	73
	10. Expanding and Upgrading the Retail Structure	76
Demonstration Action Areas	11. Rampart/Basin Entertainment District	79
	12. Upper Level Development Case Study	84
	13. Iberville Revitalization and Transformation with Medical Center Expansion	88
	CONCLUSION	92

INTRODUCTION

The City of New Orleans selected a team of consultants in July, 2003, to assist in accomplishing two objectives. The first was to prepare a new “vision” for the future of Canal Street. The second was to recommend a strategy for implementing development activities necessary to realize that vision. Mayor Ray Nagin charged the Downtown Development District (DDD) to manage the process of creating this vision and development strategy for Canal Street while engaging the resources and insights

of the Canal Street Development Corporation (CSDC) and other public and private agencies and interests.

At the time this process was initiated, the DDD and CSDC were poised to launch an extensive effort to upgrade and replace the streetscape improvements on Canal Street. Some \$15 million in public bonds had been issued, supported by the resources and revenues of these two organizations, to pay for new pavers, street trees, lighting, curbs and gutters. Given the generally poor conditions of these elements of the current public domain on Canal Street, there was little question that significant improvements were needed, and soon.

It is no secret, however, that Mayor Nagin desired a careful reassessment of the architectural, landscape architectural, engineering plans for the streetscape in relation to a broader vision for Canal Street before construction of the planned improvements began. The Mayor wanted to be certain that the full effect of this substantial public investment in Canal Street will be realized. This investment by the city should leverage a far greater, sustained pattern of private investment in the buildings and properties fronting on and served by the street.

The area targeted for this effort defines the edges of the French Quarter (Vieux Carre) and the central business district within greater downtown New Orleans – a corridor that extends



approximately one mile in length from the Mississippi riverfront to the elevated Interstate Highway 10 at Claiborne Avenue, two blocks in width from Iberville Street on the French Quarter side to Common Street and Tulane Avenue on the business district side.

The consultant team was led by Development Strategies of St. Louis, consultants in real estate, community and economic development. Chan Krieger & Associates of Boston provided the urban design and planning skills. Billes/Manning Architects of New Orleans provided essential architectural skills along with critical insights into development trends and practices in the New Orleans region. Gorove Slade Associates of Washington, D. C., brought the transportation planning skills, particularly with regard to traffic, parking and public transit. This team of consultants is referenced hereinafter as the Canal Street Consultant Team.

The first phase of the assignment for Canal Street was to create a Vision that could be adopted by the city and used as a guide for public and private investment, as well as for city regulatory actions affecting the shape and content of the future Canal Street. That Vision is described here in Chapter I. The second phase of the assignment was to define the means of realizing that vision - a Development Strategy for implementation. Chapter II provides that strategy in terms of recommended tools, tasks, incentives and procedures.



THE CHALLENGE AND OPPORTUNITY



WHERE WE ARE TODAY

Canal Street has experienced the best of times, yet has known its share of lesser fortunes as well. Once the grand shopping street for all New Orleans and its vast trade area, it has clearly lost this edge to scattered suburban centers better situated to capture automobile dependent shoppers from sprawling suburban markets. At the same time, newer, enclosed urban retail malls adjacent to Canal Street have been able to address the specialty and high value shopping market of tourists, conventioners and the region's most affluent patrons.

This has left traditional Canal Street in the position of providing for the less prestigious shopping needs of its visitors; stores on lower Canal offer the ubiquitous beads, tee shirts, trinkets, souvenirs, film, batteries, cameras, and luggage. Meanwhile, stores on middle to upper Canal focus on the needs and interests of nearby residents--athletic shoes, affordable clothing, personal care items and services, and other items such as those provided by today's drug

and convenience stores.

Retail shopping occupies some 324,000 square feet of ground floor space on Canal Street, or some 23% of all occupied ground floor space, but just over 4% percent of the total occupied inventory in the corridor.¹

One of the great strengths of Canal Street has been its ability to evolve to meet changing market conditions. Perhaps the most dramatic demonstration of this today is the expansion of hotel development and the role that hotels are playing in the corridor's overall use and function. In total, there are almost 7,500 hotel rooms with the vast majority built in the past 20 years (excluding the Wyndham). These range from the giant Marriott (over 1,300 rooms) that occupies a contemporary facility on lower Canal to the 60-room LaSalle on upper Canal. The newest entries include the Ritz Carlton, with 450 rooms in the upper stories of the former Maison Blanche department store, and the Renaissance Pere Marquette that resulted from renovation of the former Pere Marquette office building on

¹ All references of floor area on Canal Street are derived from a comprehensive field inventory conducted by the Canal Street Consultant Team in August, 2003. This includes space on the full city blocks that front on Canal Street between Tchoupitoulis/ N. Peters Street on lower Canal to Claiborne Avenue on upper Canal Street. Hence the quantities of floor space cited include space that orients to the rear and sides of these blocks on Common and Tulane Avenue, on Iberville, and on the intersecting cross streets. This inventory does not include the Canal Place mixed-use complex with its Wyndham Hotel (438 rooms), office tower (780,000 sq. ft.), and fashion shopping mall (300,000 sq. ft.). It should also be noted that all references to the size and occupancy of space on the Canal Street corridor are only estimates based on field observations correlated with diverse reference materials, and are not precise measurements.

Common Street.

The recent Alexa/Astor hotel development has demonstrated the potential of combining and converting smaller historic commercial structures along with a new tower building set behind restored historic facades.

Hotels occupy 5 million square feet of floor space on Canal Street, or some 65% of all occupied space in the corridor. Ground floor space utilized by hotels for purposes other than restaurants and shops catering to the general public, comprises about ½ million square feet, or 10% of total hotel space.

When the other ground floor uses (including restaurants, bars, and lounges--many associated with hotels--as well as theaters, offices, medical and institutional uses, and additional hotel-related facilities) are added to the mix of retail shopping discussed above, ground floor occupancy on Canal Street reaches 1.4 million square feet. Total ground floor space on the Canal Street corridor comprises 1.8 million square feet, with 400,000 or 23% vacant.

The upper stories of the once grand nineteenth and early twentieth century commercial structures that line Canal Street are often little more than facades hiding vast amounts of vacant space. The few exceptions are several key hotels (e.g.

Renaissance Pere Marquette, Ritz Carlton, Alexa/Astor, and Chateau Sonesta), a few office buildings, mostly facing Common and Tulane Streets, and a few noteworthy retailers that remain from Canal Street's shopping heyday (e.g. Rubensteins' and Adlers'). Notably, only a very small amount of this space is used as apartments

or residential lofts. This is most likely due to the daunting costs and complexities involved in preparing this space for any reuse.

Vacant upper story space represents almost 25%, or 2 million square feet of the entire upper story inventory of 8.2 million square feet on

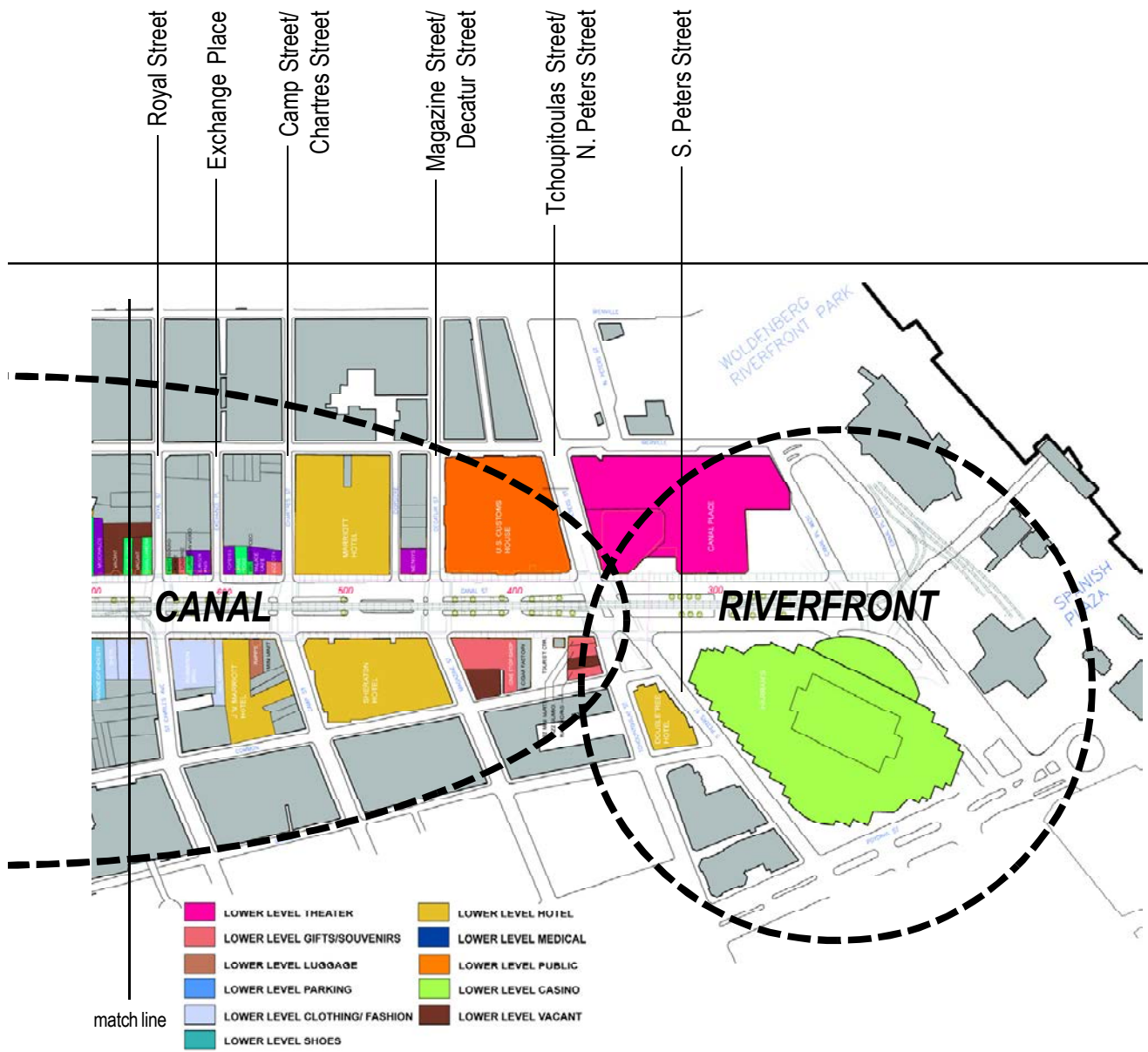
Land Uses on Canal Street (square feet in thousands)

	Ground Floor	Upper Floor	Total
Retail Shopping	324	89	413
Restaurants & Bars	246	16	262
Total Retail	570	105	675
Hotels	493	4,515	5,008
Theaters	62	119	181
Office/Finance	66	463	529
Medical	107	646	753
Other Institutional	94	321	415
Residential	2	42	44
Total Non-Retail	824	6,106	6,930
Total Occupied	1,394	6,211	7,605
Total Vacant	417	2,037	2,454
Total Inventory	1,811	8,248	10,059

Note: All inventory numbers are estimates based on field inspection and reference to available maps, plats, data, and photographs. Excluded are the areas between Tchoupitoulis/N. Peters and the Mississippi River.



A map of the four sub-districts of Canal Street



Canal Street. When combined with ground floor vacancies, almost a quarter of the total inventory comprising the Canal Street corridor is vacant – 2.5 million of 10.06 million square feet. In addition to the opportunity presented by this inventory of vacant and reusable building space on Canal Street, there is the potential to redeploy substantial areas of vacant and underutilized land, particularly on upper Canal in the vicinity of the medical center and the Iberville residential community.

While the entirety of Canal Street from the river to I-10 is the subject of this study, four distinct segments—or subdistricts—can be identified along the corridor:

- **Riverfront** - Riverfront to N. Peters / Tchoupitoulis Streets
- **Lower Canal** - N. Peters / Tchoupitoulis Streets to N. Burgundy / University Place
- **Rampart / Basin** - N. Burgundy / University Place to S. Sarasota / Crozat Streets
- **Upper Canal** - S. Sarasota / Crozat Streets to Claiborne Street

These areas are identified on the accompanying map.

A quick scan of lower Canal Street presents a set of interesting, if sometimes conflicting contrasts. It contains the largest hotels, the Marriott and

Sheraton, which are close to the Canal Place complex with its Wyndham Hotel, office tower, and enclosed fashion shopping mall. Unfortunately, accommodation of these two newer facilities resulted in the removal of a large portion of the historic fabric of lower Canal Street.

Adding to the mix of uses is a variety of other disparate elements: the large electric substation adjacent to Canal Place; the large, new but well scaled and landscaped Harrah's casino; the unattractive (most would agree) Sanlin block of historic buildings, with largely vacant upper stories jarringly wrapped with a variegated, colored façade; and the architecturally important but long vacant, imposing and unwelcoming Custom House.

All of these elements are joined by a complex web of pedestrian, vehicular and streetcar transit facilities, and large areas of surface parking toward the French Quarter. At about the intersection of N. Peters / Tchoupitoulis, Canal Street transitions to the gateway to the riverfront with its ferry terminal, Spanish Plaza, Woldenberg Park and the Aquarium of the Americas.

As the lower Canal transitions to the Basin / Rampart area and upper Canal, the street offers different impressions. Here, the presence of the Iberville Housing Development has had a

profound effect. A high concentration of households with low to very low incomes, high unemployment, and welfare dependence has proven a formula for community instability throughout urban America, and New Orleans with Iberville is no exception. Fear of crime, generated either by those who live there or those who prey on its residents, has had negative impacts in all directions.

The New Orleans Regional Medical Center and its member institutions have studiously turned their backs to Canal Street and built various types of defenses to the real or perceived threats of Iberville. The former entertainment focus of Rampart and Basin Streets is long gone with few remnants apparent. Patrons have become more fearful of the neighborhood and many of the area's historic structures have been lost to accommodate growth of the office and civic center uses of the nearby Central Business District as well. While four prominent theater structures do remain on or near Canal Street, just two of these continue to operate regularly, though without connection to the historic roots of jazz and blues that once characterized the area.

The stores occupying the Canal Street frontage are patronized today primarily by residents of Iberville and other nearby lower income neighborhoods. This is largely due to a lack of choices for contemporary retailing that cost-

conscious shoppers have elsewhere in the region. Likewise, the withdrawal of higher quality retail offerings along with their middle to higher income patrons to the "safer" confines of the Rouse Riverwalk and Canal Place and to a variety of other malls in the suburbs left a void to be filled by merchants addressing the needs of nearby residents.

Along with the manner in which the corridor is used today, a variety of other factors contribute to how Canal Street feels to its users and observers. It projects an old grandeur--albeit a somewhat tattered one--but evinces a diminished sense of security. And to some, there is an overall feeling of discomfort.

The grandeur comes from Canal Street's heritage of handsome and historic architecture along with the scale of the street -- some 170 feet from building front to building front, 20-foot wide sidewalks, and an impressive, if somewhat unattractive, "neutral ground", or median. While the insecurity and discomfort may often be just "in the eye of the beholder", their impacts are nevertheless quite real and a deterrent for a significant portion of users. This derives first from the meeting of different races, classes, ages and life-styles--a diversity that, through careful management, targeted investments and environmental enhancements, can become a positive--and celebrated--characteristic.

Still, for many visitors, encounters with hip teenagers, street people and scruffy street vendors definitely do not contribute to a welcoming experience. Likewise, the condition of many storefronts with chaotic advertising and signage, broken pavement, and empty tree pits adds to an overall feeling of unease.

Unfortunately, the nature of the experience sought by some of the city's visitors also contributes to the negative feelings of Canal Street users--drinking heavily in public, littering at will, being noisy and raucous--all behaviors saved up for their visit to "The Big Easy". For those who have these negative feelings, Canal Street becomes

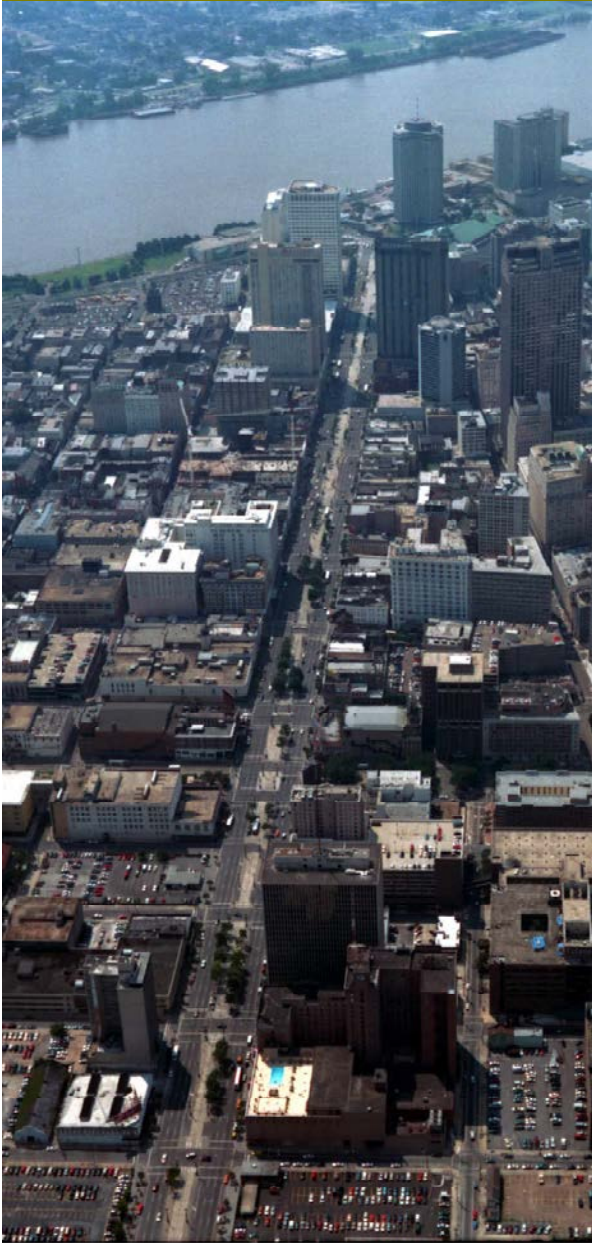
then a place to avoid, or at least to pass by as quickly as possible on the way to and from other destinations – pedestrians moving to and from their hotels, the French Quarter, the casino, the aquarium, riverfront or convention center.



The Canal Street Study Area, from the Mississippi River to I-10

I.

VISION FOR CANAL STREET



Canal Street is one of the great urban corridors of the world. Its history and evolution is colorful and captivating, but also representative of the socioeconomic forces that persistently affect great cities.

This evolution has left Canal Street today without a discernible vision for its future. It emanates historic grandeur, but with tattered edges. Massive new investments in hotels and transit coexist with prominent examples of disinvestment. Sidewalks deteriorate while a few building lobbies gleam. Shopping seems plentiful but lacks any consistent themes.

This Vision for the future of Canal Street that follows reflects the uniqueness of New Orleans. Based on numerous interviews, detailed observation, quantitative analyses, and public

input, the Vision addresses ten key factors that, left unattended, can continue to leave Canal Street in an uncertain state, but carefully managed, will initiate sustained improvements.

The “corridor” of this vision extends about a mile in length, from the Mississippi River to Claiborne Street, between Iberville Street on the French Quarter side to Common and Tulane Streets on the downtown side. The corridor also embraces the Iberville housing development because of its strong influence on Canal Street.

Canal Street ties together the entire New Orleans region and it is near the center of almost every tourists’ visit. While its current condition leaves much to be desired, its future has immense possibilities already taking shape.



Canal Street 1890



Canal Street 1910

The future of Canal Street will be shaped by a variety of interrelated forces:

- First among these will be the real estate market in the region and more particularly in greater downtown. These market forces will be derived primarily from demographic, employment and tourism trends.
- The second major influence will be the manner in which the city and other major public investors set about guiding and responding to market forces, especially with regard to the quality of the public domain and its maintenance and management – streetscape, security, and cleanliness.
- The third will be the commitment that is made by all of those who have a stake in Canal Street to invest, not just money, but time, creativity, and leadership to achieving a clear and more positive vision for its future.

Key Factors to a More Successful Canal Street:

Corridor-wide Issues

1. Security and Maintenance
2. Public Transportation
3. Traffic and Parking
4. Streetscape

Uses and Activities

5. Medical Center Relation to Canal Street
6. The Future of Iberville
7. Upgrading the Retail Mix
8. Entertainment Concentration at Rampart & Basin
9. Reusing Vacant Upper Floors
10. Better Connections to the Riverfront

I. Key Factor 1 Security and Maintenance

The Vision:

- *Canal Street is active and feels safe for residents, tourists, and visitors who return to Canal Street from other parts of the metropolitan region to see the changes to this important corridor.*
- *Street vendors add to the vitality of the sidewalks and support the image of New Orleans by offering unique goods that appeal to visitors and residents.*
- *Sidewalk cafes operate along Canal Street and patrons are secure from interference by panhandlers and aggressive vendors.*
- *The sidewalks are clean and safe to walk on without fear of tripping.*
- *Street trees and flowers are attractive and well maintained.*

How secure is Canal Street?

Crime statistics suggest that Canal Street is actually safer than the French Quarter. Nevertheless, hotel concierges frequently redirect guests to Bourbon Street and discourage patrons from venturing up Canal Street, partly because of a sense that there is more likely to be “safety in numbers”. Shopkeepers and hoteliers have closed entrances to lobbies from Canal Street due to incidents of petty larceny. Building owners and shop keepers report

incidents on Canal Street that are often instigated by groups of young adults waiting for city buses.

What is needed to make visitors feel safe?

The most effective means for achieving a safer feeling environment for out-of-town visitors is the presence of other visitors and people enjoying their surroundings.

A critical mass of entertainment uses on upper Canal, providing year-round events, would



While sections of Canal Street appear active, inviting and safe . . .

populate the district with a more diverse crowd. Entertainment uses, particularly jazz or blues, are particularly good at this, as they tend to appeal to large audiences of mixed ages and incomes.

Other strategies include the use of more visible police or authority figures such as rangers (in a National Park scenario) or hotel doormen. Hiring well-trained hospitality “ambassadors” to walk the beat at key hours of the day or evening has proven effective in locations such as 42nd Street in New York.

Additional lighting will also make Canal Street feel more secure. The placement of wayfinding signs, and lighted windows would add to both the ambient light level and the vitality of an entertainment district. Lighting and reconstruction of the theater marquees and facades of buildings along with concentrated sidewalk lighting will create an enhanced pedestrian realm and perception of safety.

Perceptions of safety usually come from cues

within the environment. Even minor vandalism, vacant storefronts, and graffiti will tend to instigate fear of crime in the absence of any other cues. Well maintained sidewalks and well tended plantings can help to alleviate visitors’ fears.



... insufficiently regulated street vendors on Canal Street ... damaged slate paving ... and a general clutter ...

... all add to the impression of an environment not well-cared for and therefore not hospitable or safe.

2 Public Transportation

The Vision:

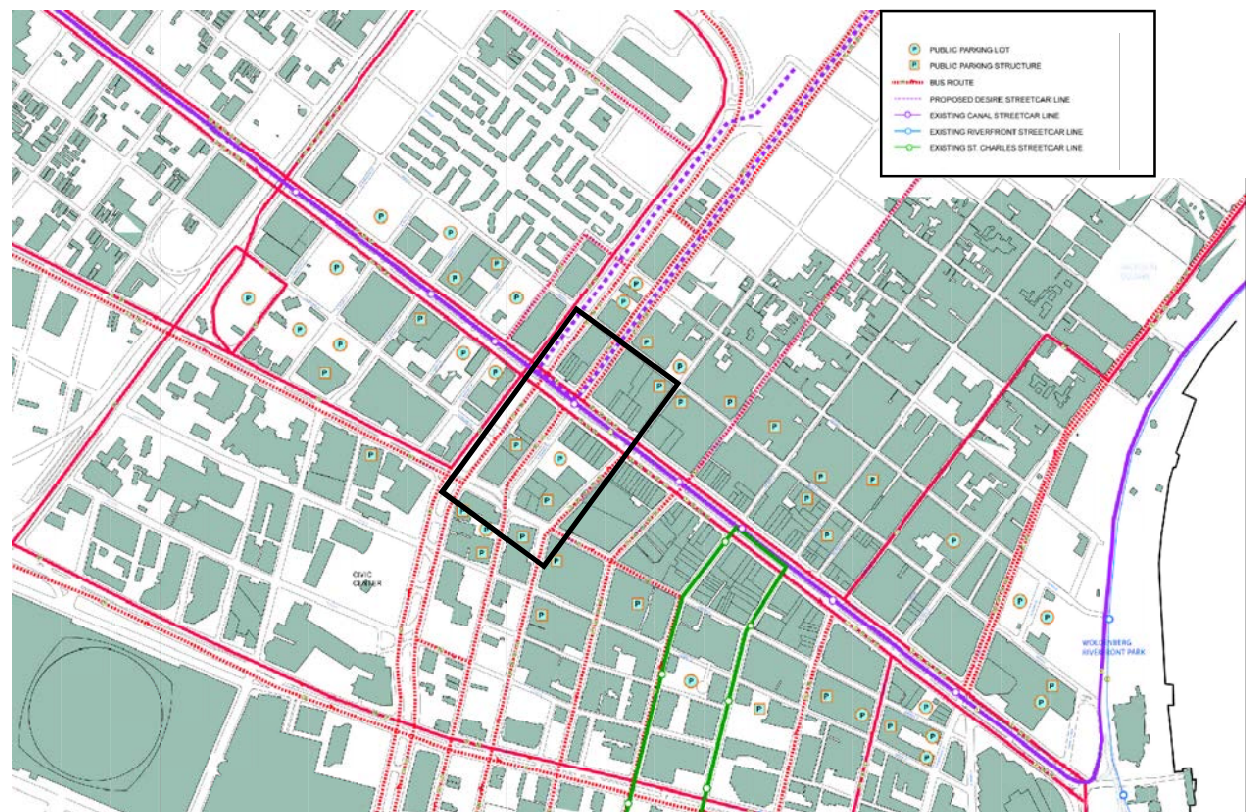
- *As Canal Street re-emerges as the 'Main Street' in New Orleans, the streetcar re-emerges as the primary form of public transportation on Canal Street.*
- *Routing and scheduling of buses is secondary to streetcar service.*
- *The bus-to-bus transfers are eliminated and replaced with routes that cross Canal Street.*
- *Transit riders will have shelters and weather protection at transfer locations and buses will not idle in front of businesses on Canal Street.*
- *Tourists will use the streetcar and will have better access to the entire corridor.*
- *School-age children will no longer have to transfer between bus routes.*

What are the system effects of opening the Canal Street streetcar line?

With the streetcar line opening, Canal Street becomes the 'crossroads' of public transportation service for New Orleans. Crosstown bus service, the free river ferry, existing and future streetcar lines and light rail service to/from the airport will all interconnect here. The Canal Street corridor

will rate as having the highest transit accessibility within the city.

The streetcar line will operate along Canal Street from north of I-10 to the riverfront streetcar and ferry services. Transit riders wishing to traverse Canal Street, whether for work or pleasure, will find that streetcar service will connect them via public transportation to all major downtown attractions.



A high concentration of bus transfers occur at the intersections of Basin, Rampart and Canal

How can this benefit Canal Street transit operations?

The downtown public transportation system concentrates bus-to-bus transfers along Canal Street. The current bus routings place a heavy burden on Canal Street with pedestrians attempting to walk through transfer locations of waiting transit customers and bus passengers that are boarding and alighting. Bus service to the downtown and operations on Canal Street can



A substandard bus stop at Rampart and Canal

be better served by reconfiguring bus routes and stops to use Canal Street as an intersecting line rather than a destination. Bus routes should stop at intersecting streets with Canal but continue across Canal rather than stopping and looping back.

How can conditions be improved for transit riders?

The existing bus transfer operations and waiting passengers block pedestrian travel along Canal Street and intersecting cross-streets. In combination with distributing bus-to-bus transfers in the downtown, the simple provision of more gathering areas, with shelter from the sun and weather, would relieve the sidewalks of unnecessary congestion. Providing streetcar and bus riders with seating, shelter, and services would improve the experience of patrons. Bus-to-bus transfer areas could be located close to Canal Street but on side streets such as Basin and Rampart Streets.

How will public transportation changes benefit retail on Canal Street?

Relocating high concentrations of bus transferees and idling buses from Canal Street can dramatically improve the environment for retail uses on Canal. Sidewalk restaurants and new entertainment and retailers will have clearer sidewalks and less problems with safety and the perception of safety for patrons. Evening uses

will also be enhanced as theater patrons and transit riders are both accommodated by sidewalk design that enables comfortable waiting areas as well as easy through-traffic. Tourists will venture to locations they currently do not and retail stores will become more accessible for both tourists and local residents.



Example of an attractive and well-maintained bus shelter in Toronto, Canada

3 Traffic and Parking

The Vision:

- *Canal Street will continue to serve as the primary address for hotels and retailers in the downtown.*
- *Pedestrian amenities will be enhanced to improve the visitor experience.*
- *Traffic lanes will be better managed to allow for a variety of uses that include bus queuing, taxi loading and retail parking uses.*
- *Existing traffic lanes will be dedicated to through-traffic, loading and unloading, with on-street parking with the potential for more on-street parking than exists today.*
- *Convenient, available, and affordable structured parking will be provided by means of a public parking authority.*

How can traffic management be improved on Canal Street?

The character of traffic volumes along Canal Street are dictated in part by the land activity along its frontage but is also greatly affected by the one-way operations of the grid roadway network, the inability to make left-turns at intersections, the preponderance of bus transfers and the raised concrete neutral ground. Canal Street generally exhibits one curbside lane and three travel lanes in each direction. The curbside lanes serve multiple functions, including on-street parking, loading zones, taxi stands, bus stops and turn lanes. During major traffic periods near major lodging/hotels, the second adjacent lane frequently becomes a drop-off for charter/tour buses and taxis. Traffic congestion is exacerbated with the heavy pedestrian traffic along the sidewalks and crossing at intersections.

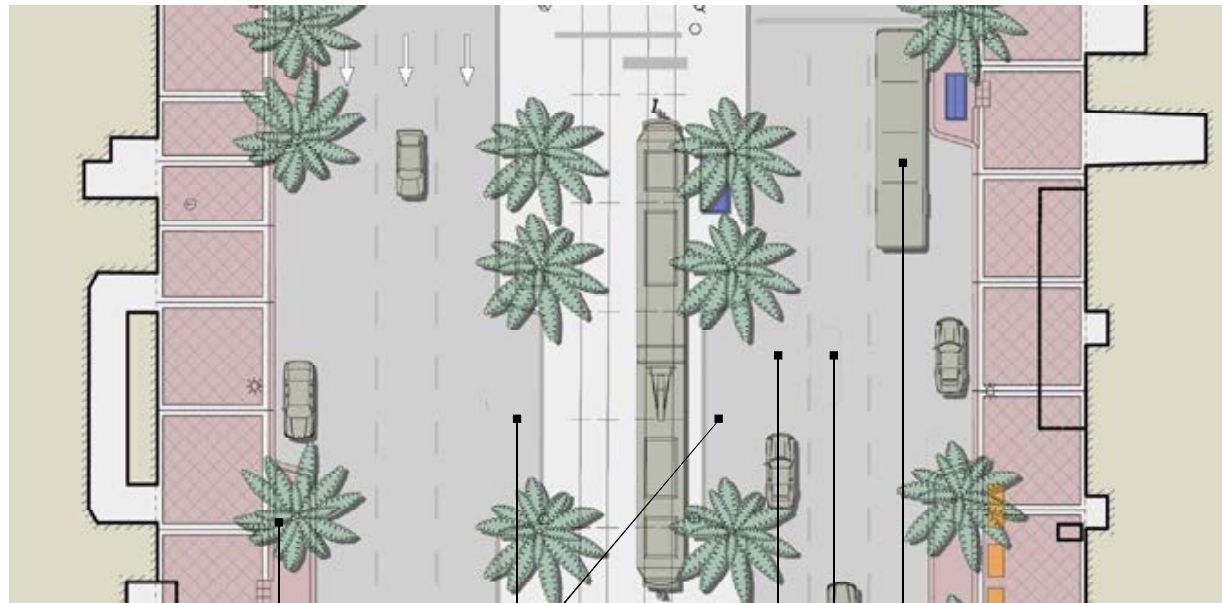
Daily traffic volumes drop significantly from a high of 30,000 vehicles per day between Claiborne Avenue and Dauphine Street and 13,000 vehicles per day between Decatur Street and N. Peters Street. In the Decatur-N. Peters blocks, roadway lanes can be redesignated for other purposes, including curbside operations, landscaping, parking, additional pedestrian staging (using sidewalk extensions) and street art. Depending upon further examination of peak period traffic, several optional roadway cross-sections can be examined relative to the ability to reuse travel lanes for other functions. These options can

include various configurations directed toward preserving a minimum of two travel lanes, shortening pedestrian crosswalk lengths, enhancing landscape features and providing improved curbside frontage.

Is more parking necessary?

Significant public parking is available within one-block of Canal Street in garage and surface lots and at metered on-street spaces. Nearly 14,000 pay parking spaces at varying rates are run by private interests within and adjacent to Canal Street. There are approximately 50 lots run by 15 separate companies, institutions, hotels and retail establishments. Rates show no consistency in structure. Another 470 metered on-street spaces are operated by the city. Metered spaces do not require payment on weekends and do not encourage turnover of use, especially as they relate to nearby retail/restaurant activity during weekends. The city is currently surveying the utilization of public spaces and is expected to report on this effort soon. Hotels along Canal Street maintain their own private parking lots for their customers and others through shared arrangements and contracts. It is expected that some of the privately held parking can be utilized for the parking needs of upper story reuses.

There are numerous surface lots behind Canal Place near the French Quarter and the waterfront. The demand for these spaces appears to be high. At the other end of the corridor, surface lots near the Iberville Residential Development exhibit



Street trees located within sidewalk extensions

Occasional parking in neutral ground

Two through-traffic lanes

Dedicated drop-off and pick-up lane

seasonal parking demands and employees/students will park on the street apparently to avoid the costs of parking. Drivers will park under I-10 and walk long distances to avoid the costs of parking along the Canal Street corridor.

How can more affordable parking be created?

The availability, distribution and pricing of parking to serve Canal Street should be greatly improved through the efforts of a new city parking authority. This will expand the inventory of publicly available spaces that serve multiple users all hours of the day, a far more efficient and cost-effective use of parking resources than when they are dedicated to single or limited users.

Parking along the Corridor is affected by the availability of affordable and convenient parking throughout the downtown. The city has identified major parking problem areas in the Lower French Quarter and along the Riverfront, around the Convention Center, in the CBD Core and along Canal Street. Parking availability and affordability are interrelated in each of these areas. Canal Street parking cannot be simply viewed as having to address on each block just its own parking needs. City Planning Commission staff are currently working on a plan which tentatively identifies locations for future public and private parking lots around the Downtown. This effort is emphasizing close ties to improved public transportation and fringe parking lots (including a possible visitor center near Armstrong Park).

Suggested Curbside Needs by Land Use

Land Use	Taxi Stands	Charter & Tour Buses	Public Buses	Pedestrian Treatments	On-street Parking	Loading Zones
Entertainment	■	■	■	■		■
Lodging	■	■	■	■		■
Restaurants	■		■	■	■	■
Retail			■	■	■	■
Office and Institutional			■	■		■

The Vision:

- *Canal Street, from the river to Basin Street, will become more pedestrian-oriented with fewer traffic lanes and more generous sidewalks.*
- *Plentiful street trees will play a primary role in the aesthetics of the streetscape, both in the Neutral Ground and the sidewalks, to provide an identity for Canal Street and shade for pedestrians.*
- *New paving will provide a distinctive walking surface that is durable and easily maintained.*
- *Art will play an increasingly large role in the landscape, occupying both the sidewalks and the Neutral Ground.*

Why is major public investment necessary in the streetscape?

Attractive, well used and well cared for streets are at the heart of what makes urban experience special. Canal Street has been – and can become again – one of the great international urban boulevards; on par with Chicago's Michigan Avenue, New York's Broadway, Barcelona's Las Ramblas and Paris' Champs Elysees. This will not happen without substantial investment, however. In addition to continually seeking to enhancing the uses along their famous streets, the above mentioned municipalities invest dramatically on an annual basis in physical appearance and upkeep. Major streetscape improvements are not a panacea for Canal Street, but a necessary component of an overall development strategy.

Much public discussion has focused on whether the planned expenditure of \$15 million on streetscape improvements is excessive; critics have pointed to the use of granite pavers and large palm trees as evidence of this extravagance. **However, an examination of the proposed design, together with the conviction that whatever is done must be beautiful, durable, easily cleaned and maintained, leads to the conclusion that what is currently proposed is basically reasonable and appropriate. The scope of improvements may, in fact, need to be expanded somewhat.** Modest refinements are suggested below.

What changes should be made to the current streetscape plans?

Alternative sidewalk pavement materials have been discussed at length during the last few years. It is clear that any material used must resist stains and should be easy to clean, especially chewing gum stains. The pavers should also be strong and well bedded to prevent cracking under constant usage and occasional heavy loading. The current pavers on Canal Street, unfortunately, are none of these things and as a result are badly stained and cracked. Additionally city maintenance budgets have been cut resulting in poor condition of many sidewalks. In select locations, where thicker pavers have been well installed and maintained they are holding up satisfactorily. It may be possible, and cost effective, to retain that paving while replacing worn or cracked pavers where



Planting beds on Michigan Avenue, Chicago

necessary.

Species of street trees for use on Canal Street have also been extensively debated. Street trees are necessary for shade and aesthetics, yet should minimally obscure historic facades, and accommodate overhead cables for streetcars in the neutral ground. Likewise, the species selected should deter, or at least not encourage, tree climbing as is occasionally witnessed during Mardi Gras and other events and celebrations. Nevertheless, significantly scaled street trees should be provided in the sidewalks of Canal Street.

Widening sidewalks at key locations can be achieved by 'neck-downs' into the parking lanes at intersections and at special mid-block locations. This will allow street trees to be added, not in the right-of-way of the present sidewalk but within these areas where the sidewalks are widened. Such an adjustment to the curbline of the parking lanes will still allow for areas devoted to parallel parking, city buses, tour buses, taxis, and drop off areas for hotel patrons at necessary locations.

Locating street trees in such extensions to the sidewalk also avoids most conflicts with utilities under the sidewalks, a primary reason for eliminating street trees under the current plan. Also, locating trees in this manner will move them further away from building facades, thus allowing



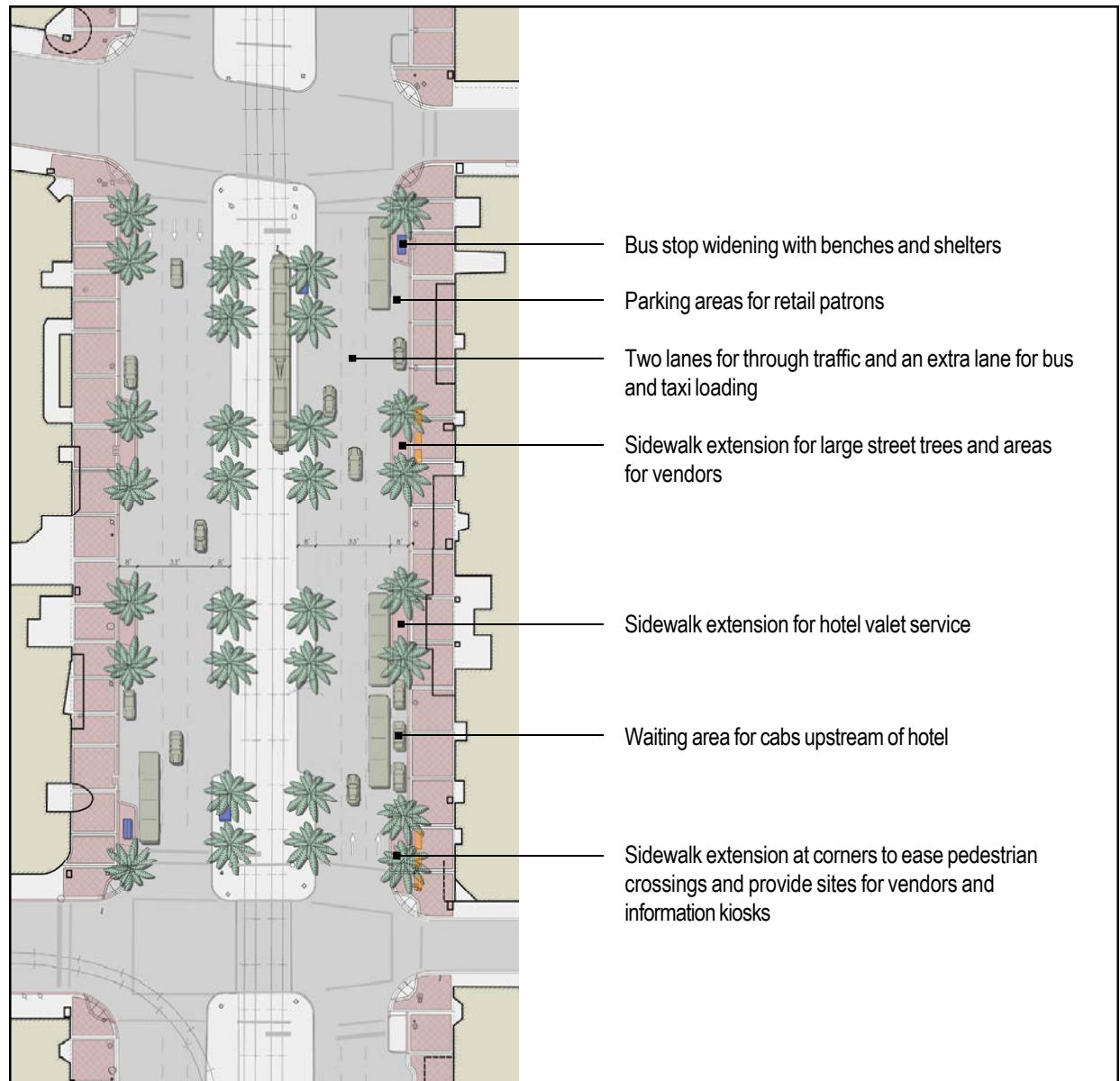
Attractive, well used and well cared for streets are at the heart of what makes urban experience special

larger trees to be planted without obscuring either shop fronts or the historic facades above them. If the Medjool Palms, proposed for the Neutral Ground, were used throughout the street, it would help provide a unified appearance to the street. Particularly as numerous gaps interrupt the Neutral Ground planting plan due to turning lanes and bus shelters.

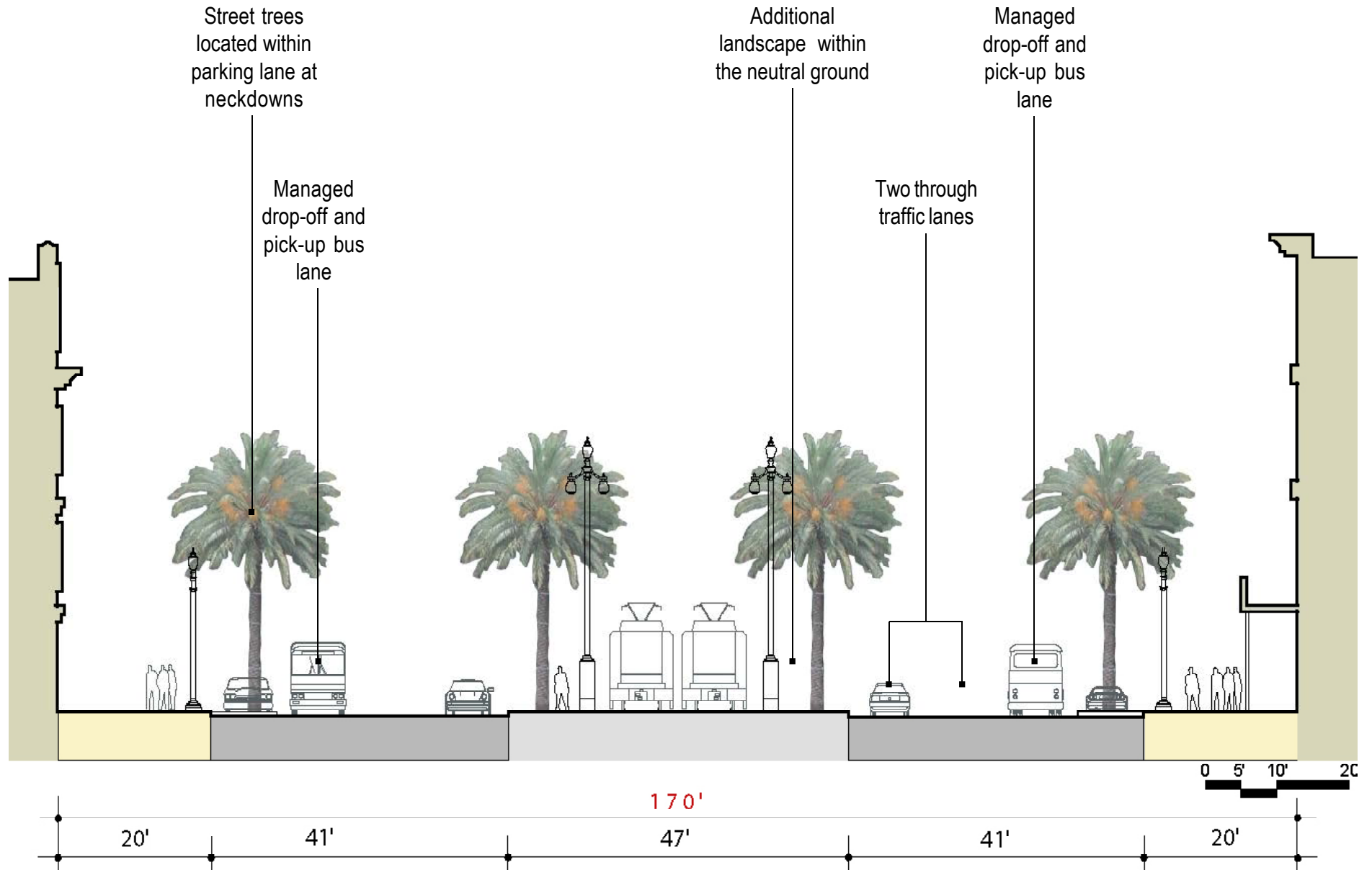
A greater role for public art

Public art installations and programs are critical to the success of great urban streets. Each component of a streetscape—from manhole covers to wayfinding signage to benches and bus shelters—can be important components of a public art initiative. The recently installed bus shelters, in particular, are unattractive and detract from Canal Streets image. We strongly support the use of artists to enhance individual bus shelters in the neutral ground. Artists could also be engaged to improve the remainder of the Neutral Ground, which is currently barren and uninviting.

Public art should become one of the reasons for future visitors to stroll the length of Canal Street. In addition to smaller works, a monumental piece of public art could visually announce and draw people to the important intersections of Rampart, Basin and Canal. An interpretation of this is described in the *Entertainment Concentration at Rampart & Basin* section of this report.



A plan for a typical block on Canal Street

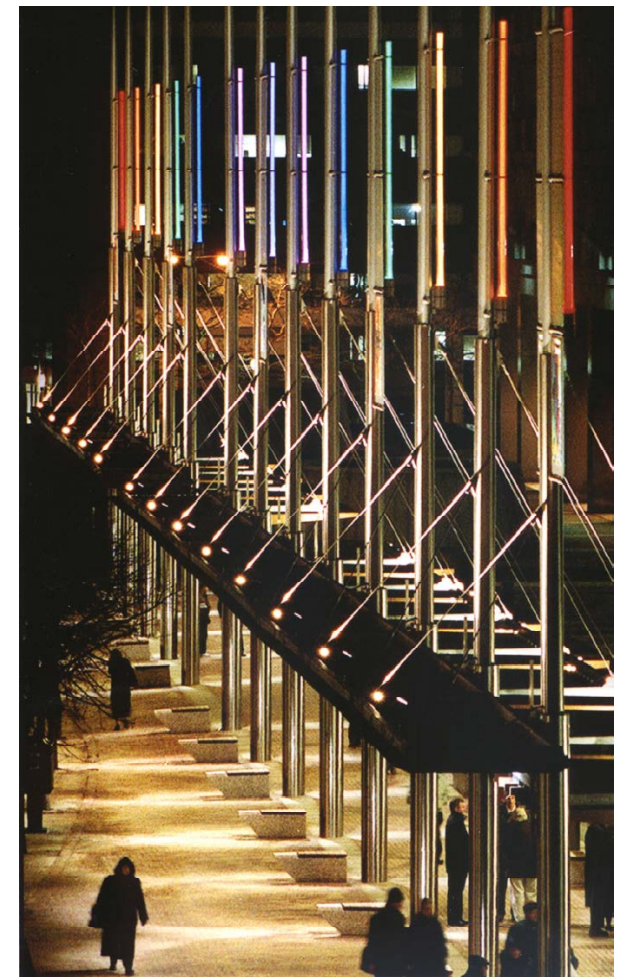


A cross section of the proposed Canal Street

A Gateway to Bourbon Street:

Bourbon Street is commonly understood to be the most important street within the French Quarter. Yet Bourbon Street is neither highly visible or specifically “marked” at Canal Street. Many visitors would benefit from readily accessible information at this important crossroads, either because they have yet to visit the French Quarter or because after a visit they wish to know more or extend a trip to the other destinations. This confluence could provide information, comfort (such as a shade structure) and a sense of arrival for those first encountering the district. The use of theatrical lighting effects on a structure--such as that shown to the right--would assist in announcing the spirit of Bourbon Street to those first approaching the French Quarter from Canal Street.

An effective design solution would capitalize on the St. Charles Streetcar that fortuitously loops onto Canal Street from Bourbon Street (Carondelet) to Royal Street (St. Charles). Within this block, a change in paving, shade structures, and street furniture could help to define a gateway to the French Quarter. Information kiosks here could orient visitors at this midpoint between the riverfront and the entertainment district and colored lighting would announce Bourbon Street on Canal.



The confluence of Bourbon/Carondelet and Canal should be a point of orientation for visitors

Visual Treatment of Claiborne and Canal, I-10 Viaduct:

Historically, Claiborne Street was a wide divided boulevard similar to Basin or Rampart Streets. The construction of I-10 in 19xx, covered this boulevard and replaced the landscaped median with a dark, unused wasteland. While suitable for automobile parking, the passage under the structure for pedestrians is unpleasant and, without retail or other active uses along it, is perceived to be dangerous.

One solution to improve the environment would be to locate a needed regional bus transfer facility at this location. As a facility would need to be secure, well lit and active for many hours of the day, this would improve the perception of safety for pedestrians. Such facilities have been built around the country providing safe, convenient and comfortable environments for transit riders.

Without a transportation facility, new lighting would improve the look—at least in the evening—of the area and provide a symbolic gateway to the downtown section of Canal Street. Lighting technologies are available that can offer a multitude of effects that change over time and can be programmed for special events.



The underbridge environment at Claiborne could be improved with a transit facility (above left), lighting (above), or both

5 Medical Center Relation to Canal Street

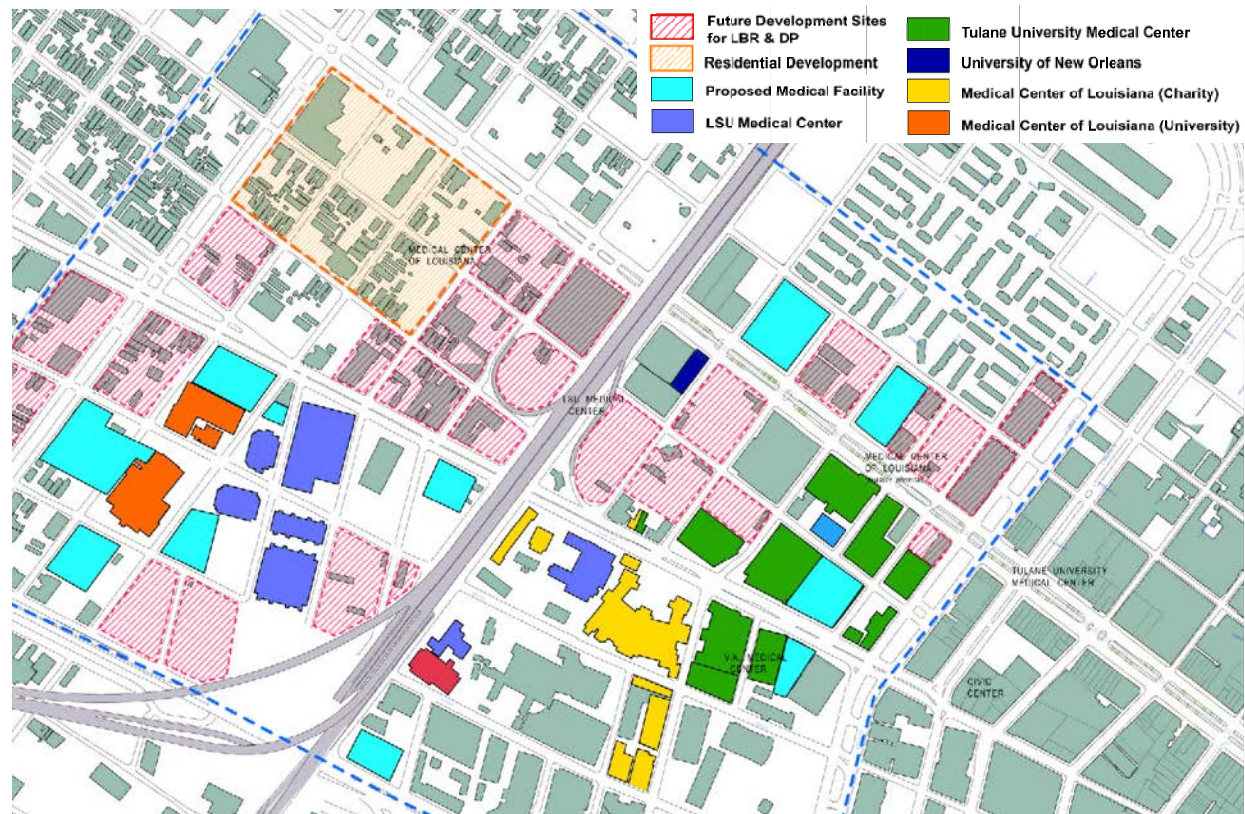
The Vision:

- *The institutions comprising the New Orleans Medical Center will generate a variety of types of new investment that will provide activity and vitality to upper Canal Street.*
- *New uses will have active street fronts on Canal and new workers will use Canal Street—and the streetcar—to access the waterfront, downtown, and the French Quarter.*
- *The Medical Center will partner with Iberville residents in the creation of job training and affordable housing programs.*

The Medical Center's growth and presence on Canal Street is crucial to the success of Canal's revitalization. The number and quality of employees, the number of visitors generated, and the prominent image created by the Center will contribute mightily to the diverse range of housing and commercial opportunities that will spin-off and benefit from its economic and political strengths.

What are current plans for medical center expansion?

The Medical Center needs space to grow, with current plans for facility expansion combined with a biomedical incubator already under construction on Canal Street. The successful establishment of the incubator should foster new firms that cluster and grow in the area in order to



Expansion plans for the New Orleans Regional Medical Center

maintain close associations with the research base of the Tulane University and Louisiana State University medical schools. This pattern of development will fulfill the region's long term strategy for creation of a Louisiana Biomedical Research Park in this location. At the same time, Tulane University is planning to create new teaching, research, and administrative functions on both sides of upper Canal Street.

What safeguards need to be established to assure the right way for the medical area to address Canal Street?

Every effort should be made to assure that the Medical Center considers Canal Street both for major expansion opportunities and as a significant "front door" to the Medical Center itself. Canal Street can benefit from a diverse range of Medical Center functions (offices, research and development, clinics, training, etc.) in structures that contribute positively to the architectural and historic stature of Canal Street while linking to an improved and expanded mixed-income community at the Iberville Residential Development. Thus, Canal Street should not be used to site parking structures or "dead" uses that have few windows or low staffing needs.

How can the Medical Center and the Iberville Housing Development work together?

The new biotech business incubator facility, sponsored jointly by Tulane and LSU, on the east (French Quarter) side of upper Canal can become a catalyst for an array of medical center related and high tech businesses and uses. The Medical Center can participate in the creation of a range of housing opportunities that would serve current and future medical employees, some of whom should be local residents. The establishment of a mixed-income development at Iberville would stabilize the neighborhood and provide affordable housing for entry level employees of the medical center.



Medical workers should use Canal Street for daily needs as in the Longwood Medical Area in Boston

6 The Future of Iberville

The Vision:

- *The Iberville Housing Development will be transformed and expanded to become a mixed-income residential community that extends to Canal Street.*
- *Residents of market rate and moderate income apartments will enjoy attractive outdoor areas and larger units with modern conveniences. Existing residents will receive job training and homeownership assistance to become more self-sufficient as well as improved housing.*

Why is Iberville transformation desirable?

Despite an attractive location and well constructed buildings, Iberville lacks the qualities and amenities that its residents and neighboring districts deserve. Security remains an ongoing concern both internally and externally. The perception of Iberville also has a deleterious effect on the viability of Canal Street.

Although there is acknowledged need for obvious physical improvements, Iberville is low in priority for commitment of substantial new resources from the Housing Authority of New

Orleans (HANO) and the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for improvements and upgrades. Increasingly scarce resources are being focused elsewhere, at least for the time being, given more critical problems in other public housing areas. Consequently, changes to the Iberville's community will have to rely heavily on greater proportions of private and civic resources rather than federal assistance. Transformation of Iberville can stabilize the surrounding residential and commercial districts and allow current residents to remain in a far more desirable district with improved housing and services.



Iberville and adjacent vacant Krauss Department Store

What should Iberville look like?

Transformation should include improvements to the physical quality of the shared areas, more parking for residents, and larger units more in keeping with current market-driven trends. Restoring some of the street grid to facilitate better connections to adjacent neighborhoods should also be considered. Only with these transformations can Iberville become attractive to a mix of residents, including those who can afford to live elsewhere but would prefer a central location and an urban environment.

In order to avoid relocation of residents in advance of renovation, adding housing to adjacent parcels would allow for a phased approach. New mixed-income apartments should be built next to Iberville, toward both



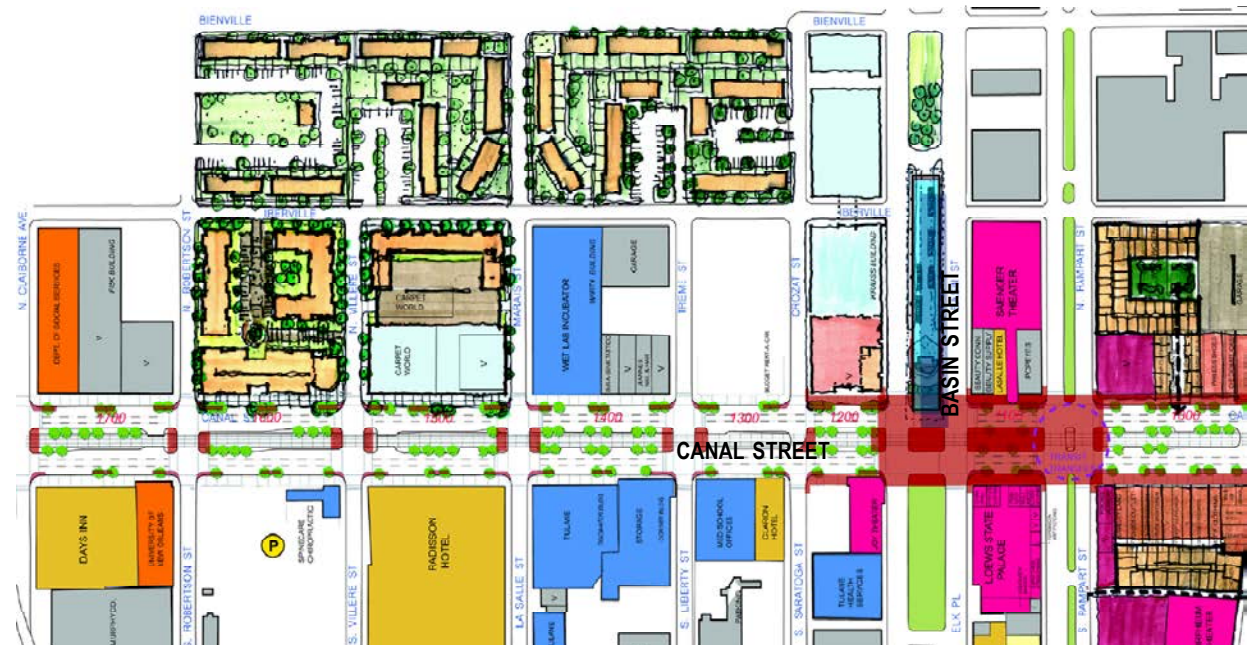
Public housing, redeveloped as mixed income housing

Basin Street and Canal Street, to allow residents a “new” home while renovations take place within Iberville. Extending the Iberville neighborhood to Canal Street and Basin Street frontage should improve the attractiveness of Iberville and should physically integrate it with the new facilities of the Louisiana Biomedical Research and Development Park.

How will this affect current residents?

The present residents of Iberville should be given the option to remain in units for low- to moderate-income households that will be mixed

with market rate units or be relocated to other appropriate housing within the same general area. In the process, all residents should be afforded opportunities to become less dependent on public housing and improve their lives through a variety of support programs, including job training and job placement. New management should be established that will improve responsiveness, security, and maintenance levels to standards necessary for a mixed-income residential community tied directly to the diverse range of employment, shopping, and recreation uses of the entire Canal Street corridor.



Mixed income housing development would expand to Canal and Basin Streets

I. Key Factor 7 Upgrading the Retail Mix

The Vision:

- *High quality retail shopping will be successful on Canal Street, extending from the river to Basin Street, filling currently vacant storefronts and entry and lobby spaces of hotels.*
- *More restaurant and outdoor seating will spill onto Canal Street and add to the street life and vitality of the district.*
- *New entertainment-oriented retail anchors concentrated at the intersections of Basin and Rampart Streets will complement the music and entertainment theme.*

Why will this be desirable?

The current mix of retail tenants and uses serves a fairly narrow set of tourist-oriented purposes along lower Canal Street. This retail mix transitions to one that is mostly oriented to the needs of nearby residents as you move toward upper Canal.

In order to regain prominence as New Orleans' Main Street, Canal must again appeal to a much

wider range of visitors and residents. High end, specialty retail uses should return to Canal Street in response to improved conditions brought about by the new streetscape, a mixed-income residential community in place of Iberville, continued growth of tourism and convention business, additional hotels on Canal, and shoppers' quest for additional, higher quality choices - beyond those now available at Canal Place and Riverwalk.

How will this be achieved?

The arrival of major retailers in "big box" configurations in locations outside of the greater downtown area should, over time, better satisfy the shopping needs of cost-conscious residents of surrounding neighborhoods. The types of stores catering to local residents should see



Examples of some of the less attractive (though popular) tourist-oriented retail on Canal Street

more competition for the lower end of their business, and they will likely respond by improving the types of products offered to differentiate themselves from big box competition while catering to the remaining market segments on Canal Street.

The quality and attractiveness of businesses on Canal Street should also steadily improve in response to the increase in visitors, residents, and employees of the nearby central business

district and French Quarter. Conversion of upper floors to residential, office, and hospitality uses can also improve the underlying demographic balance on the street. Improvements to the quality of the streetscape and security concerns should also increase the visitorship of tourists to areas further from hotels. The introduction of the Canal Streetcar will also increase the numbers of tourists and medical area employees on middle Canal Street, which is now dominated by local residents and bus transferees.

A highly interactive museum reflecting New Orleans' history and culture can draw retail patronage up and along the full length of Canal Street. The long-planned New Orleans visitors' center nearby in the Louis Armstrong Park can also contribute to retail patronage on Canal Street.



Ground level uses on Canal Street by category

8 Entertainment Concentration at

The Vision:

- The intersections of Canal Street with Basin and Rampart Streets will become a specialized hub of entertainment, dining, and tourism attractions that incorporates the components of the National Park Service Jazz Historical Park but concentrates them at Canal Street.
- Restaurants, live entertainment and specialty retail that supports the arts will extend from lower Canal Street to Basin Street.
- A new museum or cultural facility would anchor the district as a tourist destination.

Why has the Jazz Corridor idea not developed?

While a lengthy corridor has long been envisioned for jazz/blues venues in historic music halls and clubs in the Rampart corridor, from Esplanade on the far side of the French Quarter to Poydras in the downtown area, this vision is probably unrealistic. Concentration of these activities at or near Canal Street can result in a workable and satisfying version of this



A future center for Entertainment at the Crossroads of New Orleans

Rampart & Basin

concept. This is where the scale of patronage anticipated can be accommodated most effectively in terms of the renovation of larger facilities along with other infill and the provision of sufficient circulation and parking.

Two projects currently under consideration will further this vision. Conversion of the Joy Theater into a multi-media performance venue will restore that facility into a contributing element on upper Canal. The Woolworth Building is also being planned for renovation into retail, parking, and housing uses that will anchor the French Quarter corner of N. Rampart and Canal with an active street level use.

A highly interactive museum reflecting New Orleans' history and culture in the Rampart/Basin area can further provide a primary point of contact with visitors and conventioners. Themes of such a museum might include jazz and blues or the culinary arts celebrating New Orleans' heritage of great and diverse foods. It should join the French Quarter, the D Day Museum, Jackson Square, and the Aquarium of the Americas as a "must see" tourist destination and a source of great civic pride. The long-planned New Orleans visitors' center nearby in the Louis Armstrong Park can complement the museum and entertainment district without creating a conflict on Canal Street, given the parking, standing, and circulation needs of associated tour buses.

The success of the D-Day museum in the warehouse district along with the emergence of other specialty museums in other strong tourist markets (e.g. the International Spy Museum in downtown Washington, D. C.), provide some key benchmarks for a new specialty museum on Canal Street. These venues can contribute to the collective attraction of the community to the tourist and conventioner. They are different from traditional entertainment and dining (restaurants, bars, theaters and night clubs) but can have broad appeal by providing new and different destinations for many visitors.



Joy Theater



Loews State Palace Theater



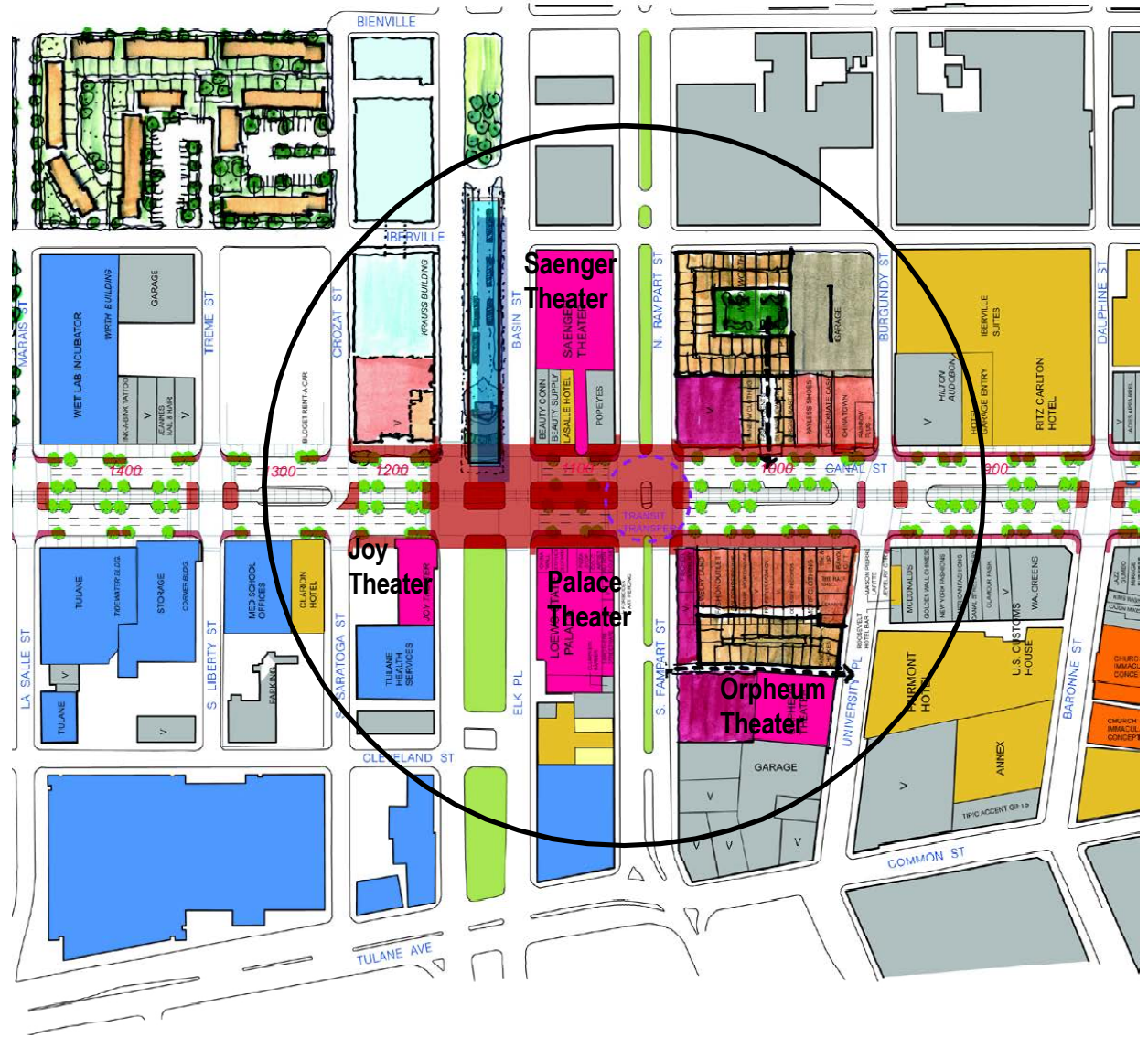
Example of a special attraction along an historic street: The Spy Museum in Washington DC

How can the vision be realized?

By focusing an entertainment district in a smaller area, a series of interrelated development initiatives focused at these intersections can make a substantial difference: the four existing theater buildings (Orpheum, Saenger, Joy, and Palace) will be effectively deployed in specialized roles catering to a range of patrons seeking different types of entertainment – symphony, jazz, blues, Broadway plays and musicals, big name entertainers, opera, etc.

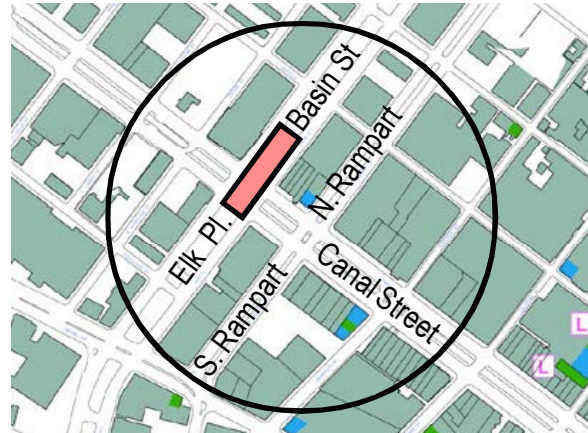
The possibility of a new museum appropriately themed to New Orleans and Canal Street will add to this mix, borrowing from other such successful ventures elsewhere in New Orleans and the nation. A wide variety of other restaurants and jazz and blues clubs will fill in the other sites focused on these intersections.

New parking facilities should be strategically positioned to serve the active uses of the district without interfering with the continuity of business linkages and pedestrian flow. Relocating major bus transfers one block away from this corner can further assist in reducing the pedestrian conflicts on key sidewalks.



A future center for entertainment at the Crossroads of New Orleans

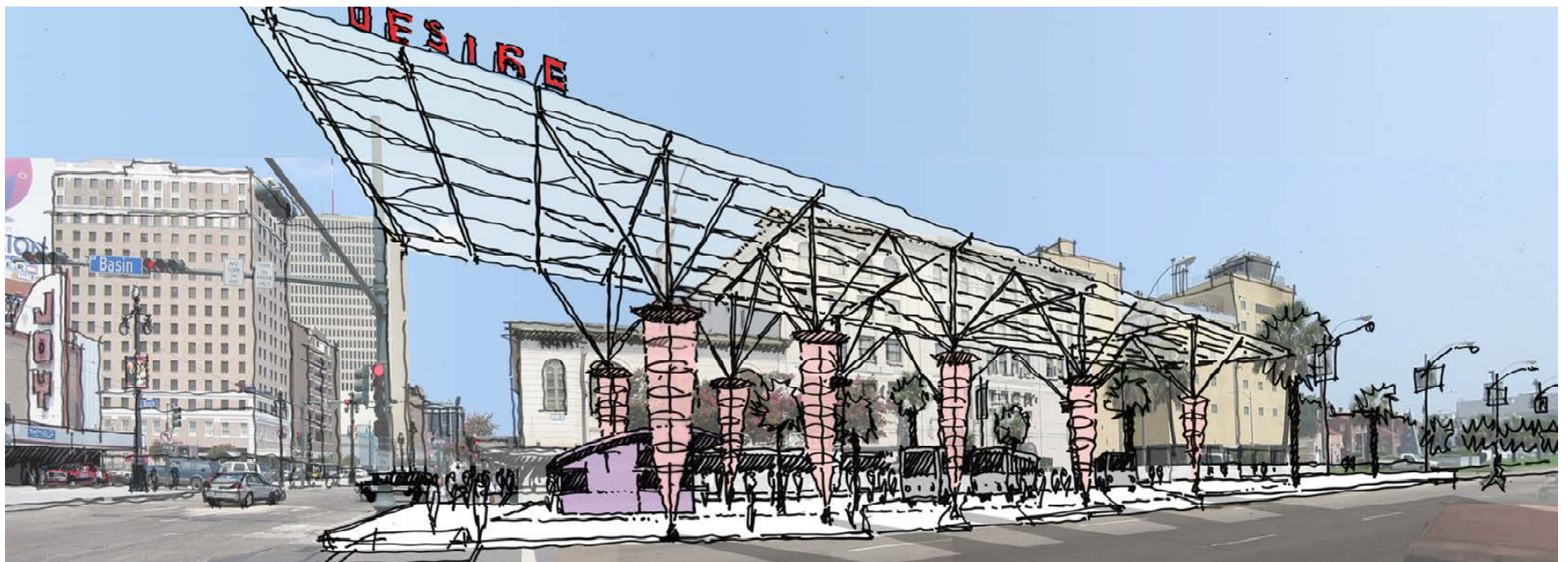
Construction of an iconic structure for the intersection of Rampart, Basin and Canal, would also help to establish the identity of this crossroads. A bold, vertical structure would bring a visual focus to the area from a distance; provide opportunities for innovative light and image projection; and even offer some weather protection.



Location of the iconic structure that would come to symbolize the Entertainment District



A source of inspiration from Barcelona, Spain



A great urban artifact - a distinct piece of public art - located on Canal Street between Rampart and Basin Streets

9 Reusing Vacant Upper Floors

The Vision:

- *Most upper story space in historic properties on Canal Street will be converted to various types of housing and hospitality lodging.*
- *These will include standard hotels, loft apartments, both condominium and rental, and other specialized housing opportunities.*
- *Historic buildings will be consolidated to allow inter-connection of abutting floors in contiguous buildings as well as taller towers behind historic building fronts.*
- *Dilapidated facades will be renovated through the redevelopment of upper floors to productive uses.*

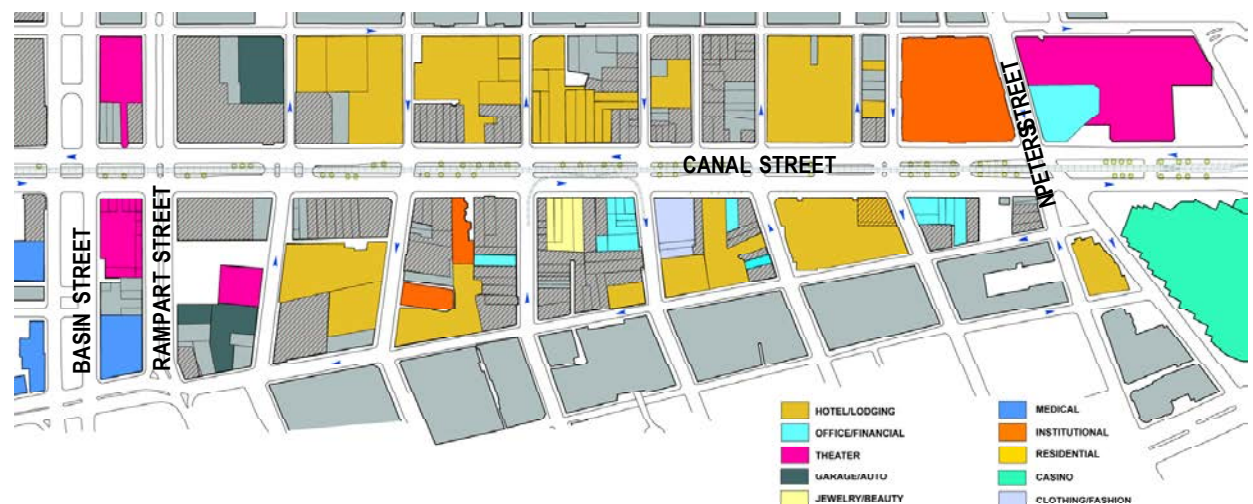
Why will this be desirable?

Conversion of upper floors along Canal Street to economically viable uses should add vitality to Canal Street, support retail uses, and help to fund the renovation of severely dilapidated buildings and facades. Together with programs such as donated easements, adaptive re-use of buildings will be necessary to save facades that are at risk for demolition by neglect.

In addition to more hotel and hospitality uses, mixing additional full-time residents into the district should support retail uses geared towards middle and upper income residents, such as restaurants and entertainment. Having lighted windows along Canal Street will be an important symbol of a more active and safer Canal Street.

Why has this not occurred yet?

Nearly every block of Canal Street from the River to Rampart has been partially converted to hotel use. It is likely that this trend will continue. But several factors have inhibited a broader pattern of other conversions on Canal, including the 1) physical complexities involved with differing floor levels and connecting buildings to create more viable spaces, 2) ownership intransigence in relinquishing development rights at reasonable prices, 3) the costs of adaptive reuse of the upper stories of historic commercial row buildings, and 4) Building codes that require significant improvements to buildings and 5) the noise, traffic, and general disrepair of Canal Street itself.



Inventory of upper level uses along Canal Street

How can this vision be achieved?

Strong demand for living in the downtown area has driven loft apartment/condo residential development primarily where it is more easily accommodated - in the warehouse district and French Quarter. Since the remaining capacity of these areas to absorb additional residential units is limited, demand should be encouraged to push into adjacent areas, including Canal Street. Indeed, there have already been spillover effects east of Esplanade Avenue from the French Quarter.

The upper stories of historic commercial buildings fronting on Canal Street should, in most instances, be consolidated with those of adjacent properties to allow for comprehensive and effective adaptive reuse for various combinations of hotel, residential, and office occupancy.

Lacking any major intervention in the market, the most likely scenario to succeed will be additional hotel or related hospitality lodging done on a one-by-one basis to slowly consolidate adjacent properties.

Residential reuse may be successful in selected situations, especially with larger corner buildings such as the former Gus Mayer department store. Likewise, office reuse may occur when implemented as a “build to suit” space for a particular user, say a company choosing a headquarters location that meets its special needs and interests - not as general office or speculative space on the rental market.

Facade renovation should proceed even without redevelopment. Incentives for facade renovation may be needed to preserve historic facades until future adaptive reuse of the building.



Interior lightwell at the Alexa Hotel



The Astor Crown Plaza and Alexa Hotel



The Gus Mayer Building exterior



Interior of the Gus Mayer building

10 Better Connections to the Riverfront

The Vision:

- *Canal Street will be an inviting destination for those strolling along the waterfront with a clear route from the Aquarium and Spanish Plaza.*
- *From Canal Street, the attractions along the river will be clearly accessible, restoring the historic visual connection to ships along the river.*
- *Overhead structures will be removed and pedestrians will be able to walk directly from Woldenberg Park and the Aquarium of the Americas to Spanish Plaza without conflict with the Canal Street Wharf.*
- *Retail uses will extend from Canal Place to the Riverfront Streetcar station platform.*

Why are connections to the river important?

After the French Quarter, the Mississippi River is New Orleans' most precious tourist asset. Connections to the river are currently less than ideal. Pedestrians must traverse nearly a block of Canal Street without benefit of pedestrian amenities. Clearly, most visitors traverse this zone in order to gain access to the river, the aquarium, and Spanish Plaza. Yet, in the same way that the Moonwalk connects Jackson Square to the River, so too should Canal Street be connected to the river in a way that is clear and memorable.

What Changes are needed?

Several vacant parcels separate the riverfront from Canal Place. Development of these parcels should help to reconnect the riverfront to Canal Street with an active street life.

The electrical substation between the Aquarium and Canal Place is also a visual obstacle that could be overcome with redevelopment of the site or effective screening.

The pedestrian overpass structure constructed in the 1970s to cross over the railway is no longer



Extending development to the river, opening views, and improving pedestrian connections is essential

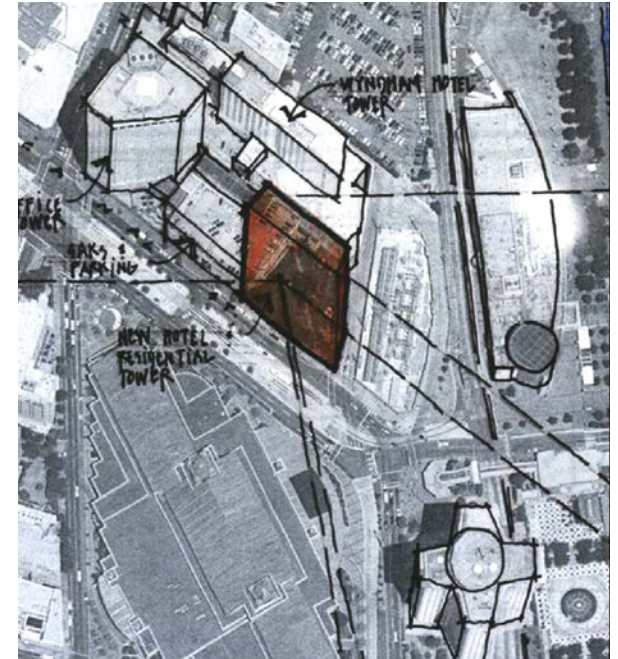
necessary, as there is no more high-speed freight traffic on this line. Relocating all pedestrian activity to the ground plane would then allow for demolition of this structure. Views to the river would be opened up to Canal Street.

What should be done with the Canal Street Wharf?

It would be desirable to keep the wharf and ferry service at the foot of Canal Street. A simple reconfiguration of the vehicle entrance ramp to the ferry would allow pedestrians to cross the path of vehicles before the ramp begins. Visitors

could still watch the ferry operations from the safety of pedestrian areas and vehicles would still queue for the ferry. Most importantly, however, pedestrians could walk more directly along the river between Spanish Plaza, the Aquarium, and Woldenberg Park.

As 2 Canal Street (formerly the World Trade Center), the ferry facility and other riverfront properties are improved, consideration can be given to constructing a direct rail connection for streetcar operations between the Convention Center and Canal Street.



Potential redevelopment at Canal Place
(Image courtesy of Eskew+Dumez+Ripple)



Historic view of Canal Street landing



Two key parcels in need of improvement



Views to the river are obscured by a no longer needed structure



II.

DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR CANAL STREET

A variety of tools, tasks, incentives and procedures are required to implement the Vision for Canal Street. Most of these exist or are accessible to the City of New Orleans in one form or another. Others require that new steps be taken at the state or local level by means of legislation or administrative procedures.

The development strategy for Canal Street proposes to deploy an array of resources at two different levels. The first level is the overall corridor. This relates to findings and recommendations that apply to the length of the street within the study area. The second level of focus is at a target or action area level. Three interrelated Demonstration Action Areas have been defined, evaluated and discussed relative to the application of a variety of tools and techniques to their implementation.

Development Strategy for a More Successful Canal Street:

Corridor-wide Strategies

1. Redevelopment Opportunity Areas
2. Streetscape
3. Refining and Targeting Investment Incentives
4. Land Use and Building Regulations
5. Development Management and Facilitation
6. Residential Development
7. Tourism and Hotels
8. Transportation Management
9. Parking Management
10. Expanding and Upgrading the Retail Structure

Demonstration Action Areas

11. Rampart/Basin Entertainment District
12. Upper Level Development Case Study - Block 267
13. Iberville Revitalization and Transformation
with Medical Center Expansion - Blocks 158 & 187

II. The Corridor

1 Redevelopment Opportunity Areas

Implementation of the Vision for Canal Street will require a sustained process of private investment in the buildings and sites in the defined corridor. In many instances, effective private action will require a partnership with the City of New Orleans, and even with the state or federal governments, in order to overcome the substantial economic or physical hurdles associated with the successful adaptive reuse of these properties.

With few exceptions, structures located between Basin Street and the riverfront in the corridor are historic and architecturally significant, thereby requiring more costly measures than other city real estate in order to capture future economic opportunities while meeting civic standards for preservation. Thus, public-private partnerships to

plan and finance these improvements are anticipated as critical implementation tools. A far lower proportion of properties between Basin Street and the I-10 overpass at Claiborne Avenue are subject to the concerns of historic preservation or require retention if other options prove more responsive to current needs.

After six months of review and examination by the Consultant Team, several key parts of the corridor have been identified as either likely to be redeveloped, or as high priorities for targeting substantial reinvestment in rehabilitation or new construction within approximately the next five years. The designation of these sites as priorities should not, however, preclude or discourage action to improve other properties.



Redevelopment Opportunity Areas

Rather, it is hoped that by calling attention to these key opportunities, the owners of all properties on Canal Street will gain interest and confidence in making the investments necessary to ensure the sustainability and economic success of their individual properties and the corridor as a whole.

A. Pedestrian connection between Riverwalk and the Spanish Plaza to the Aquarium and Woldenberg Riverfront Park

It is important that pedestrian movement from the Riverwalk to Jackson Square, and points in between, and from Canal Street and Poydras Street to the riverfront, be made more comfortable and convenient. At the same time, cars will still need to continue to queue up to await the Canal Street ferry and move off of



A. Pedestrian connection

arriving ferries without endangering pedestrians.

Emerging plans should be encouraged that call for opening up the ground floor area of the Canal Street Ferry Terminal building to provide a clear path between the Spanish Plaza and the Aquarium. The owners of the Riverwalk plan to add a 5,000 sq. ft. restaurant adjacent to this passage. Meanwhile, the present overhead walkway will be removed and replaced by



B. Canal Place

another walkway over the transit track closer to the World Trade Center. This will allow a stronger visual connection between the Spanish Plaza and Canal Street. Engagement of the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development will be a prerequisite to the successful reconfiguration of the Ferry Terminal Building to achieve a better pedestrian circulation pattern.

B. Infill and expansion of Canal Place and the Entergy Substation

Plans have long been under consideration for expansion of the Canal Place mixed-use complex to include condominium apartments and additional retail uses, or possibly a second hotel. This should be encouraged along with improvements to the adjacent Entergy electric substation. The substation should be either more



C. Custom House

completely enclosed or relocated. If enclosed, great care will need to be given to the appearance of the enclosure to avoid an even more offensive presence for passing pedestrians.

C. Redeployment of Custom House space, beyond the Insectarium

Construction of the new Insectarium is underway in a portion of the Custom House. However, there will remain significant portions of this imposing landmark structure still unused and awaiting similar transformation. The process of full reuse will need to be monitored to ensure compatibility with other buildings and uses surrounding this key gateway to the French Quarter.



D. Sanlin Block

D. Sanlin Block (400 block, business district side)

A large portion of this block is comprised of hidden and likely severely compromised but historic structures that pose one of the more difficult development challenges on Canal Street. Clearly, priority should be given to full restoration by means of ownership consolidation, removal of the harsh, offensive “modern” façade, and



E. Cigali Building

restoration and preservation of the historic façades underneath. Clearance of the back of the original structures to allow a contemporary infill development for office, residential or hotel use should be considered in lieu of requiring full restoration and reuse of the original structures.

E. Cigali Building at Camp Street with adjacent property (MiniMart on ground floor, 600 block, business district side)

Consolidation of ownership and reuse of the properties defining this corner (one of which is vacant, fronting on Camp Street) would allow a comprehensive upgrade of ground floor retail occupancy along with preservation of important historic properties. An integrated development of the upper stories could accommodate a boutique hotel, loft apartments, or professional



F. Gus Mayer Building

offices.

F. Gus Mayer Building and adjacent property, at Carondelet Street extending to the Boston Club (800 block, business district side)

Consolidation of the ownership and use of the four properties (one vacant on Carondelet) would provide a similar opportunity to E above.

G. Corner consolidation and revitalization, adjacent to Boston Club at Baronne (old Godchaux Clothing store, 800 Block, business district side)

The opportunity for this site is much the same as described for E & F above; it includes one vacant building on Baronne Street.



G. Old Godchaux Clothing Store

H. Audubon Building (900 block, French Quarter side)

Plans for conversion of this former office building (ground floor formerly the Kress & Co. 5 & 10) to a 200-room Hilton hotel and related uses should be encouraged currently as the highest and best use of this key property. If this fails to occur, however, in the near term, it could be that rising values for condominium loft properties would justify that use instead.

I. “1000 Block” of Canal, Business District side

This block has been carefully evaluated to demonstrate strategies for adaptive reuse of the upper story space of abutting commercial structures fronting on Canal Street.



H. Audubon Building

Demonstration Action Area 2 case study (detailed later in this report) provides for either a) ground level retail on the Canal Street frontage, together with upper story loft apartments, or b) first and second floor adaptive reuse for a new themed or specialty museum along with apartments above.

The surface parking areas to the rear that abut the Orpheum Theater would then accommodate an infill hotel “tower” above a modest parking garage. The development of this block would provide a primary anchor to the Basin/Rampart Entertainment District.

J. “1000 Block” of Common Street, downriver side

The portion of block 267 behind the portion described in I above should see ownership



I. 1000 Block of Canal, Business District side

consolidation and expansion of the existing garage along with ground level retail uses on Common Street. This will support office uses on Common as well as the variety of uses anticipated for the Rampart/Basin Entertainment District.

K. 1000 Block of Canal, French Quarter side

An active proposal for a mixed-use development of the former Woolworth Building should be encouraged, including ground level retail and entertainment, upper level apartments and a limited amount of enclosed parking. In addition, the balance of the properties fronting on Canal should be consolidated and restored as a unit with ground floor retail and upper story loft apartments or a hotel.



J. 1000 Block of Common, downriver side

L. 1000 Block of Iberville, downriver side

This site presents one of a few key opportunities to increase the parking supply to support the creation of the Rampart/Basin Entertainment District. The existing garage should be replaced and expanded to address this need along with the needs of French Quarter.

M. Loews State Palace, Saenger and Joy Theater blocks

Coordinated revitalization and program management of the Loews State Palace, the Saenger, the Joy and the Orpheum theaters should be a vital part of the Rampart/Basin entertainment district. Plans to utilize the upper level of the Palace for a nightclub should be carefully considered and efforts to increase



K. 1000 Block of Canal, French Quarter side

bookings of the main floor encouraged. Perimeter spaces on the Rampart and Canal frontage should be improved for restaurants, bars and other entertainment uses. Successful redeployment of the Joy Theater building may have to await success with the Palace and the strengthening operations at the Saenger and Orpheum Theaters. Overall, the entertainment district should have a distinct character and orientation that is different from that of Bourbon Street. Instead, it should be a more comfortable place for families with children and be active in the daytime as well as the evening.

N. Tulane/Medical Center Facilities Expansion (1200, 1300 & 1400 blocks, French Quarter side)



L. 1000 Block of Iberville, downriver side

Consolidation and redeployment of the former Krauss Department Store properties, Budget Auto Rental property and the Wirth Building block will allow for the creation of a new medical center-oriented, mixed-use complex. This could include administrative offices, research spaces, a biotech business incubator, student services, ground level retail uses appealing to the needs of students and others (bookstore, coffee shop, restaurants), and a supporting parking garage.

O. Mixed Use, Mixed Income Residential and Medical Center uses (1500 & 1600 blocks, French Quarter side)

Coordinated development is recommended to include mixed-income housing as part of a larger revitalization of the Iberville residential community. In addition, a variety of medical

center uses on block 158 could include health care services and employment opportunities for nearby residents as well as for those living and working in the greater downtown area (French Quarter, Canal Street, Warehouse/Arts District, Business District, plus the Iberville community, etc.).



M. Loews State Palace



N. Krauss Department Store



O. 1500 Block of Canal, French Quarter side

II.

The Corridor

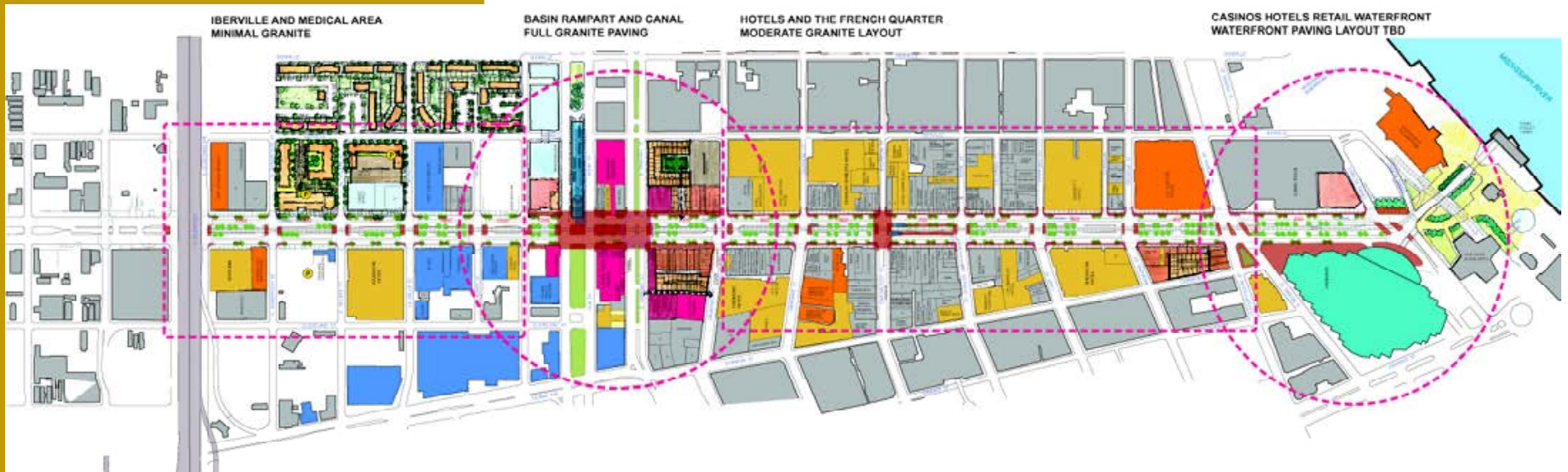
2 Streetscape



On December 18, 2003, a joint resolution of the Boards of Directors of the New Orleans Downtown Development District and the Canal Street Development Corporation was transmitted to Mayor Nagin stating their support for the revised concept plans for installation of new streetscape improvements on Canal Street. This statement of support makes reference to the incorporation of so-called “bumpouts” at the corners of street intersections and in selected mid-block locations. This modification, along with numerous other refinements, was recommended to the Mayor and the joint boards of the DDD and CSDC by the Canal Street Consultant Team in consultation with the original designers of the streetscape

proposals – John Williams of Williams Architects and Ace Torre of Torre Design Collaborative landscape architectural firm.

Overall, the revised scheme provides for greater street tree planting, shorter distances for pedestrians exposed to traffic, and wider turning radii at the street corners. Traffic on Canal will have two open through lanes; one lane for buses and other vehicles to queue, load and unload; and curbside parking in an intermittent lane bracketed by the “bumpouts”.



The Four Levels of Streetscape Enhancement

Highlights of the Final Streetscape Improvement Plan:

Treating Canal Street as sub-districts

The previous plan for streetscape improvements on Canal Street envisioned a monolithic treatment for the corridor from Claiborne Avenue to the River. However, at nearly a mile in length, Canal Street passes through several sub-districts that deserve and require special treatment to reflect unique conditions. For example, traffic levels vary tremendously from upper Canal, where vehicle trips are higher near the Interstate, to Lower Canal where demand is greater on bus drop-off zones and street parking than on through



Brick herringbone paving is common in the French Quarter



Typical sidewalk treatment of granite and brick inset panels

traffic lanes. Existing condition of the slate paving also varies from one sub-district to another, generally being in better condition north of Rampart Street. Land uses also differ from one end of Canal Street to the other, with Lower Canal having the highest concentration of retail and hotel uses and subsequently high levels of pedestrian activity.

Transit stops will, in the future, be located in fewer sites along the corridor than today: they will be concentrated closer to the River and with more transfers on side streets. Special intersections, such as at Rampart and Basin, have unique requirements associated with a potential entertainment and theater zone and the need to symbolically represent the importance of this emerging district. At the Riverfront, the collection of Spanish Plaza, the Aquarium of the Americas, Harrah's Casino and Canal Place establish the foot of Canal Street as a unique destination with it's own set of special roadway and sidewalk demands.

Based on the Vision plan, the following recommendations emerge for the modified paving and streetscape concept that is outlined below and illustrated in the attached drawings.

Three levels of streetscape enhancements

Streetscape improvements to Canal Street should be divided into four distinct sub-districts, or zones, corresponding to traffic demands, land uses, and the overall revitalization recommendations in the Preliminary Vision plan. As the granite paving represents a significant initial cost for the project, the alternatives explored below reflect different proportions of their use in the paving mix, from extensive coverage at Rampart and Basin Streets to minimal coverage where used, at least on an interim basis, only as a decorative edge treatment at street crossings. The existing slate paving will be preserved, repaired or replaced in the remaining area of these sidewalks, depending upon their current condition and level of deterioration.



An example of a large area of granite paving that defines a public gathering space (Embarcadero Plaza, San Francisco)

Full granite paving (at Basin and Rampart at Theater District)

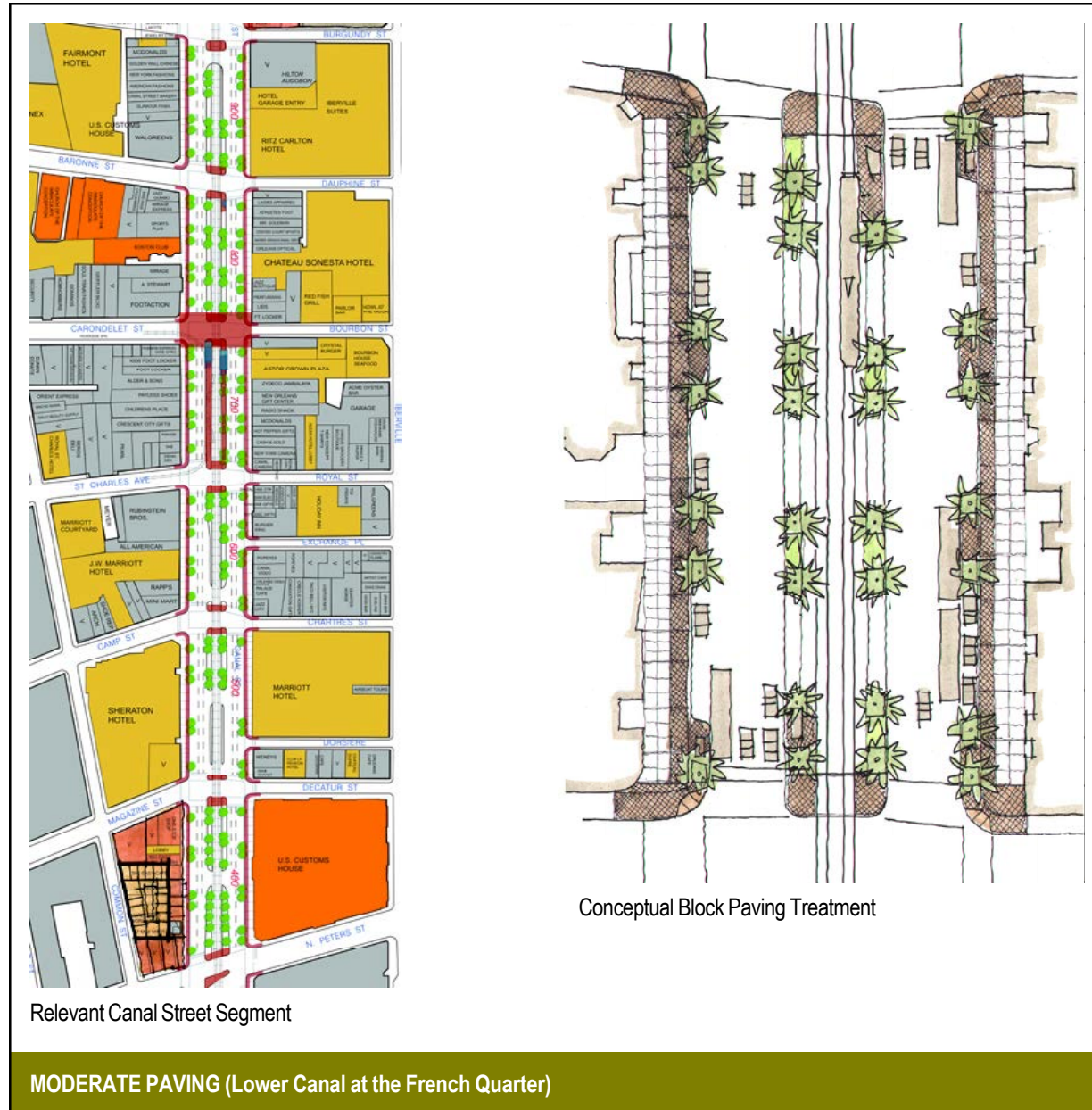
Granite pavers will be used extensively to define the special urban place that is being created at the confluence of Basin and Rampart Streets with Canal Street. These and other special pavers will be used not only in the sidewalks but should eventually extend into the crosswalks and streets to create the effect of a plaza that reinforces the pedestrian realm and marks the symbolic importance of the theater uses. A celebratory, iconic, structure should be constructed at the intersection to provide a visual focus for the district and provide shade and weather protection for special events. This site can gain importance, as the ceremonial turning of the Mardi Gras parade at this intersection.



An extensive use of granite will help to define the confluence of Basin, Rampart and Canal Streets

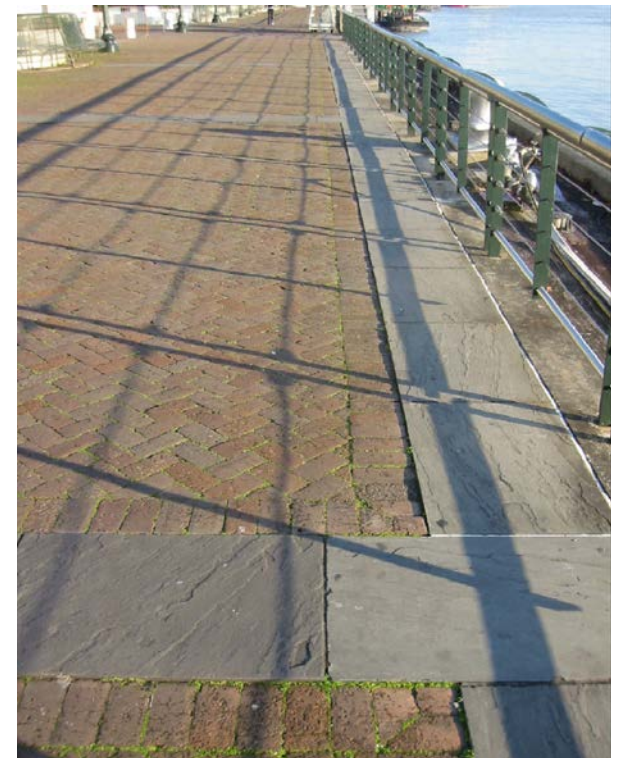


Full granite paving at Basin and Rampart



Moderate granite paving (Lower Canal at the French Quarter)

Between Burgundy and North Peters Street, a moderate amount of granite pavers will be used in combination with herringbone brick infill. Granite will be reserved for a decorative strip and other highlights in the sidewalks, within the sidewalk extensions and at cross streets. The deteriorated slate paving will be replaced at all locations within this area.



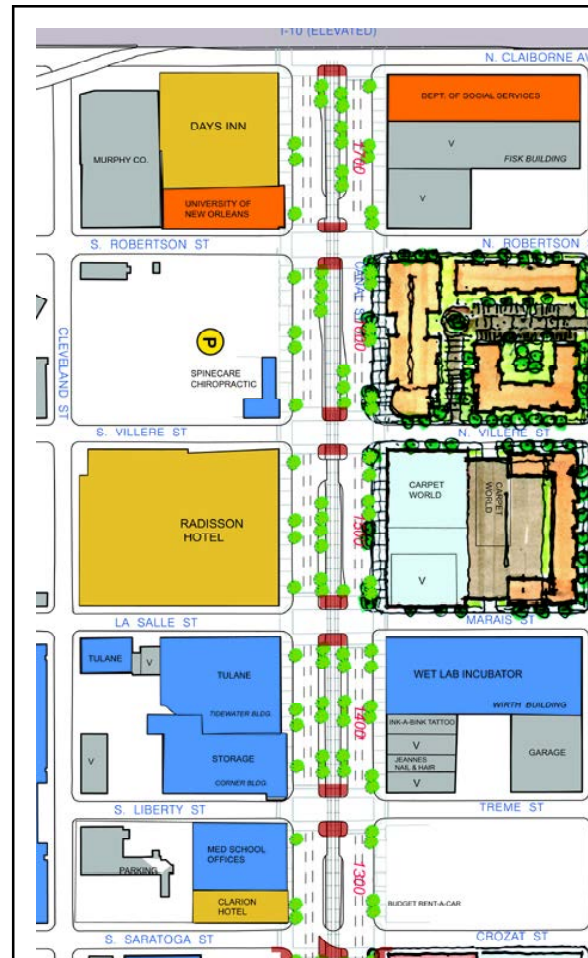
Brick and slate paving pattern at Woldenberg Riverfront Park

Minimal granite paving (Medical Area and Iberville)

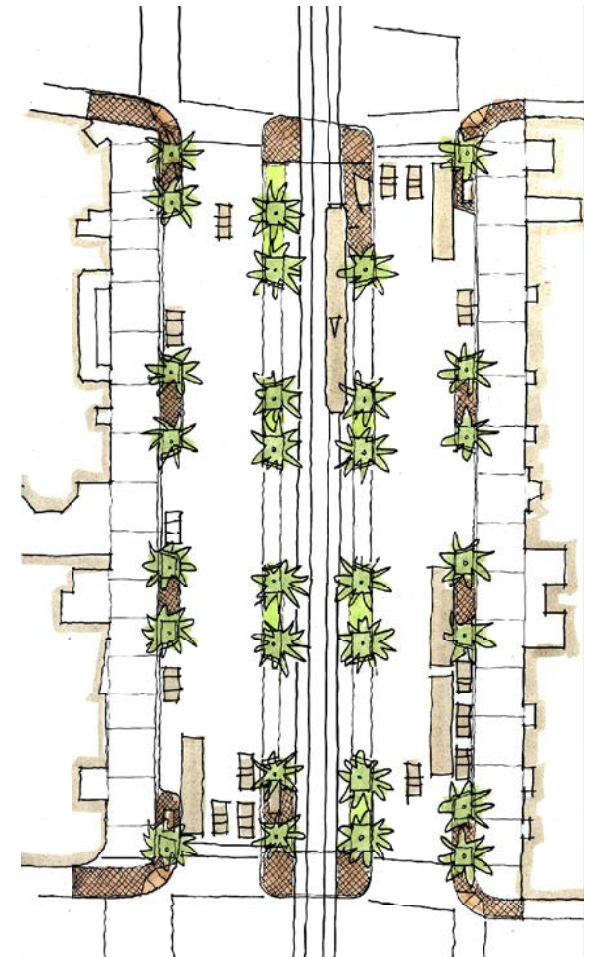
At Upper Canal, adjacent to the Medical Center and Iberville, granite pavers will be used mostly as a decorative feature in the sidewalks where they are extended (bump-outs) into the parking lanes and at street crossings. This special pavement treatment would also be used selectively in the Neutral Zone, especially at transit stops. Existing slate paving, which is in better condition in this area, will be repaired and replaced in the remaining areas. As significant redevelopment is anticipated for this area, the paving treatment can be modified during construction to avoid damage and to reflect a more intense level of pedestrian usage.



Slate pavers at the Medical Center are in good condition



Relevant Canal Street Segment



Conceptual Block Paving Treatment

MINIMAL PAVING (Medical Area and Iberville)

3 Refining and Targeting Investment Incentives



The City of New Orleans, and those representing private interests who might choose to invest in revitalizing and rebuilding the city, have a considerable array of legal and fiscal tools, procedures and incentives to call upon to “get the job done”. At the same time, there are considerable obstacles to be overcome. The development process can be both complex and time consuming. This “good news, bad news” story needs to be understood and managed in order for progress to be made in the revitalization of Canal Street.

The two largest hurdles to be overcome in urban redevelopment and reinvestment are:

- a) fragmented property ownership, and
- b) the high cost of the redevelopment process relative to the risk involved and the potential return on investment.

The discussion which follows begins with a focus on the first of these hurdles – Site Assembly. This involves purchasing adjacent properties to enable redevelopment or rehabilitation that responds to market demand and meets the requirements of contemporary usage. This includes attracting sufficient investment to secure, preserve and fully redeploy historic and architecturally significant buildings, such as those that line Canal Street but that are currently underutilized and deteriorating, or to remove and replace existing buildings with new investment

when appropriate.

The second major hurdle to urban redevelopment and reinvestment is addressed with regard to Fiscal Incentives and Project Debt and Equity Financing. Various combinations of these tools and techniques can be utilized to provide “gap” financing and reduce financial risk to make otherwise uneconomic and infeasible deals work.

Site Assembly

Without question the best way to achieve site assembly is by direct negotiation. The city should encourage this approach in every instance. However, the chances of success by this means go down directly in relation to the number of different owners involved and where perceptions of current value are unrealistic given the costs of rehabilitation or redevelopment.

When the process of negotiated purchase fails or is inadequate in meeting the challenge of site fragmentation, diverse ownership, and property owners’ unrealistic expectations of value, the city should give consideration to the use of the expropriation power. This can be accomplished through the New Orleans Redevelopment Authority (NORA) where the subject property can be shown to be “blighted” under state statutes and where it is located within a designated *Redevelopment Project Area* for which the Authority has a formal plan for redevelopment

action (approved by the Mayor and City Council).

This power, however, has been used most sparingly in New Orleans and in Louisiana in general. Concerns regarding the rights of property owners, coupled with the controversies related to the use of expropriation that go beyond facilitation of strictly public uses of property (that is, construction of public improvements and facilities or providing public parks and open space), have posed an effective deterrent to the use of this legal power.

Redevelopment, on the other hand, typically involves acquiring private property comprised of multiple lots, tracts or buildings with different owners in order to enable the removal of “blighted” conditions - a legitimate public purpose. If the succeeding use is not directly a public use, the property is then disposed of by sale or lease to other private interests with the capacity and commitment to rehabilitate or build new buildings that fulfill the publicly adopted plan for the redevelopment area and achieve broader public economic development objectives.

Current conditions on Canal Street pose a perfect example of where and when the expropriation power may be a necessary part of any successful strategy for revitalization and improvement. The older, historic properties that line each block face of Canal Street were built in rows of attached commercial buildings – much like residential row houses of the same era.

They were originally occupied by retail merchants on the first floor with the upper floors providing additional showrooms and inventory storage, and in some cases the merchant’s living quarters as well. Goods were moved up and down by primitive elevators as well as stairs. (It should be noted that most of the buildings built prior to about 1850 were large row-style residences. Subsequent buildings were primarily commercial in character and use.)

The problems these row-type commercial properties face today are acute in terms of their ability to be adaptively reused and economically redeployed in the context of 21st Century market demands. Without full economic utilization, most such structures continue to deteriorate and become increasingly obsolete. They are mostly narrow and deep (25 to 50 feet wide by 90 to 140 feet deep) with elegant windows on the front, but none on the sides with party walls, and with typically dreadful views from rear windows. Some corner buildings are, of course, better configured to allow windows on two sides overlooking intersecting streets. Further, the floor levels of abutting buildings do not match since they were separately built for different users at different times.

In order to retain but reuse anything more than the ground floors of these properties today, it is first necessary that either ownership be consolidated among several adjoining properties or long term cross easements be secured

between owners of abutting buildings. While still a challenge, this will allow the upper stories to be laid out for contemporary office, residential or hotel uses.

The best example of where such consolidation has already occurred is the portion of the recently completed Astor Crowne Plaza Hotel that fronts on Canal Street. This was accomplished without resorting to use of expropriation. However, while the outcome was positive, the process was long, arduous and costly and there was no certainty of success. With almost a dozen other blocks on Canal facing the same conditions, it is likely to be unrealistic to rely strictly on the process of private negotiation to induce the level of investment needed to improve and redeploy these properties. Such a process could literally take decades, during which time continued deterioration will likely serve to deflect market demand and perpetuate an uncompetitive economic environment. This somewhat grim prospect could be mitigated by a careful process of educating existing property owners regarding the city’s commitment to restoration and full adaptive reuse of these properties, backed by the threat of expropriation as a last resort.

It is noteworthy that most of the older historic buildings on Canal that have larger “floor plates” formerly served as office or department store buildings and have already been adaptively reused, whereas few of the row-type structures discussed above have received significant

reinvestment. The larger buildings that have been or are currently undergoing reinvestment to enable adaptive reuse include the Ritz Carlton Hotel in the former Maison Blanche department store building, the Chateau Sonesta Hotel in the former D. H. Holmes Department store, and the Astor Crowne Plaza, which incorporates the former Woolworth store at Bourbon Street. A Hilton Hotel is pending in the former Audubon office building, the Woolworth building at Rampart Street is part of a planned mixed-use project and



Historic facades in need of rehabilitation

the former Krauss department store building is to be converted to a variety of new uses by Tulane University and its medical school.

It is recommended that the New Orleans Redevelopment Authority become an active partner with the DDD and CSDC to participate as a necessary last resort in facilitating the assembly of priority sites for rehabilitation and redevelopment on Canal Street.

Fiscal Incentives

New Orleans can call on a fairly extensive set of fiscal incentives to assist in overcoming the inherent uneconomic costs and risks of redevelopment on Canal Street. These extraordinary costs and risks are typically associated with restoration and rehabilitation of historic buildings, environmental contamination, high land costs, multiple owners with unrealistic expectations of value, potential but unproven market opportunities, and site preparation costs.

The following tools and techniques can be overlaid in different combinations depending on the characteristics of the project. The principal fiscal incentives that are available include:

- *Federal and State Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits* - Most of the study area is within the Canal Street Historic District, thereby virtually ensuring the eligibility of most structures for receipt of historic rehabilitation tax credits - 20

percent federal credit with no cap and 25 percent state credit with a \$250,000 cap. **It is recommended that both the state's and the federal government's historic tax credits be fully utilized on Canal Street projects. It is further recommended that every effort be made to encourage the state legislature and governor to raise (or better yet, eliminate) the present cap on the state's credit if it is to be effective as an incentive for private investment.**

- *Façade Improvement Program* - The DDD currently operates a façade improvement loan program. However, the program is of limited effectiveness under current conditions of low interest rates (a 4% interest 'floor' when market rates are perhaps 6%, leaving just a 2% spread.) Also, the New Orleans Preservation Resource Center allows the owner of a building with a historically or architecturally significant façade to donate that façade in the form of an easement to the PRC, giving the PRC effective control over any future alterations. The value of the donation can then be declared as a charitable donation against the donor's federal income tax liability.

Relative to the total cost of full renovation, restoration and adaptive reuse of historic commercial structures on Canal Street, the economic value of a façade donation and tax deduction along with a loan from the DDD is

modest at best. Nevertheless, **these programs should continue as two of a number of incentives property owners can use to help close the inevitable financing gap associated with restoration projects.**

However, the mechanism of a tax deduction for a façade donation is insufficient in most instances to induce the level of investment required to ensure the improvement and preservation of the building facades on Canal Street. **It is therefore recommended that two steps be taken to increase the available fiscal benefits associated with major façade investments. The first was addressed earlier: to encourage the State of Louisiana to raise, or preferably remove, the cap on its Historic Preservation Tax Credit program. The second is for the city to institute a façade grant program to provide a direct cash contribution to the cost of restoring and improving the face of the buildings that frame the public realm of Canal Street.**

- *Restoration Tax Abatement Program* - This program provides for full abatement of real estate property taxes on the value of new or incremental investment in rehabilitation for five years, provided the property is in a historic, downtown development or economic development district. It is widely used and deemed an especially successful economic development incentive. **It is recommended**

that investments in rehabilitation made in fulfillment of the Vision for Canal Street be deemed eligible for tax abatement. However, it is also recommended that tax abatement be used selectively to stimulate projects that are clearly a challenge and catalytic in their effect and that can be shown to require such gap financing. Otherwise, the program will become regarded as an entitlement for those engaged in any and all investment in urban rehabilitation and restoration.

- *Tax Increment Financing* - Provides for the diversion of incremental property tax revenues from eligible projects located within an area defined as an “economic development project”, that is also located in an area determined to have the conditions of “slum and blight”, to pay the costs of debt service incurred to pay for investment in public infrastructure, housing, parking, and facilities of a commercial, retail, entertainment, industrial, or health care nature. However, it is necessary that the use of property taxes to support revenue bond financing receive approval of the voters in the affected local community. Retail sales taxes may be captured as well but without voter approval. **It is recommended that a new tax increment district be established coincident with the Canal Street Corridor study area boundaries, River to Claiborne, Iberville to Common/Tulane, plus the site**

of the current Iberville residential community.

- *Low-Income Housing Tax Credit* - Either 40 percent (non-competitive) or 90 percent (competitive) of eligible costs of low-income housing are subject to this federal income tax credit over 10 years. After discounting for present value and sale of credits to equity investors, the effective benefits of these two parallel programs are about 25 percent and 60 percent, respectively. With the lower credit program, tax exempt financing is also available through the state housing finance agency. **This credit will inevitably be crucial to any effort to transform Iberville into a competitive mixed-income community.**
- *New Markets Tax Credits (NMTC)* - Although passed by Congress in 2000, this program, administered through the U.S. Department of Treasury, is just now getting underway, in the sense of loans and equity investments flowing to qualifying businesses. This is not directly a property-related incentive. Rather, it is focused on the businesses that occupy property. The scale of the tax credit is modest in its effect compared to the federal government’s two other principal tax credit programs for urban investment – the Historic Preservation Tax Credit and the Low Income Housing Investment Tax Credit. It is, however, large enough to help capitalize a

business that otherwise would be insufficiently profitable to be sustainable and viable.

The funds are invested in local businesses through a qualified intermediary called a Certified Community Development Entity, or CDE. At present there are a dozen such entities in New Orleans that are certified to do business here by the Community Development Financial Institutions Fund, a unit of the Department of the Treasury. Two of these have expressed interest in projects within the DDD. In addition there are a number of CDEs that operate nationally and have as their core missions facilitating investments in locations similar to Canal Street. Of particular note is the National Trust for Historic Preservation which has received a credit allocation of \$127 million. The National Trust has established five separate lines of business intended to utilize the credits in differing circumstances. Included are the Inner City New Markets Fund, the Historic Tax Credit Fund, and the Main Street CDE Conduit Lending Fund.

The Canal Street corridor is located within two census tracts, both of which qualify as a locus for New Market Tax Credit investments. These tracts meet the threshold test for being a “low income community” by virtue of either having a median household income of less than 80 percent of the region’s median, or with over 20 percent of its households’ incomes

below the poverty line. Beyond meeting this location test, a substantial portion of the business’s operations and services delivered (40 percent) and a substantial portion of its tangible property, real estate and equipment (also 40 percent) must be located within the qualifying census tracts. However, this would appear not to require that any particular portion of the firm’s clients or customers be located in the qualifying census tract.

Provided the preceding criteria are met, 39 percent of an investment in a qualified business, either a loan or equity investment, can be credited against federal individual or corporate income taxes. The credit is then spread out over seven years, five percent in each of the first three years and six percent over each of the next four years. **It is recommended that steps be taken to identify one or more qualified CDEs with which to work to assist in capitalizing businesses located on Canal Street.**

- *Enterprise Zone Employment Credits* - This is a state jobs incentive program that offers state income and franchise tax credits to firms hiring at least 35 percent new employees from one of four targeted groups. This includes a one-time credit of \$2,500 per hire during a five-year period. Also available are refunds of state and local sales taxes on building materials and operating equipment.

Canal Street businesses need to be made aware of the availability of this incentive and assisted in its use.

Project Debt & Equity Financing

- *HUD CDBG Section 108 Guaranteed Loan Program* - The city can borrow against projected future Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) receipts to provide loan guarantees backing the financing of larger economic development and revitalization projects. These projects need to meet the basic guidelines for the use of CDBG funds, including benefiting low to moderate income families, preventing or eliminating slum and blight conditions, and meeting other urgent community development needs.
- *Urban Development Action Grant (UDAG) Repayment Funds Loan Program* - As funds become available from previously approved and implemented projects within the city, reimbursed UDAG funds can be made available as loans to new projects and for a wide array of related costs, including land and building acquisition, construction, machinery, equipment, furniture and fixtures, and professional and financing fees. Oversight is provided by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Major or signature development projects likely to have a catalytic market effect on

Canal Street should be seen as prime candidates for the UDAG Repayment Loan Program and Section 108 loan guarantees. Examples of such projects would be a theme or specialty museum or restoration of one of the four historic theaters as part of the Rampart/Basin Entertainment District.

- *New Orleans Industrial Development Board (IDB), bond, loan funds* - Can issue bonds from \$500,000 to \$10,000,000 to acquire, construct, purchase or renovate buildings as well as to acquire and install machinery and equipment. This program is business-specific in focus with a primary objective of assisting in business retention, expansion and attraction along with expansion of employment. **Use of IDB bonds on Canal would be particularly appropriate in the instance that a business chooses to relocate its office operations to renovated upper story space.**
- *Small Business Loan Program, SBA 7(A)* - This is the SBA's primary business loan program. It generally is used for business start-ups and to meet the varied short and long-term needs of existing small businesses. Loans to small businesses are guaranteed by SBA when financing cannot be otherwise obtained under reasonable terms. Loan proceeds can be used for most non-speculative business purposes,

including start-up, expansion, equipment, working capital, inventory or real estate acquisition. **Use of this program on Canal will be on a business-specific basis and could be particularly useful for many retail businesses.**

- *Specialty Business and Industrial Development Corporation (SBIDCO)* - A private for-profit community development

financial institution formed to provide mezzanine and near-equity capital to small and medium-sized businesses. SBIDCO also has been licensed by the federal Small Business Administration to do SBA-guaranteed loans. Bank participation is preferred. **Use of this program on Canal Street will be business-specific rather than in support of real estate financing for rehabilitation or redevelopment.**

SUMMARY OF INVESTMENT INCENTIVES	
Site Assembly	
The Challenges:	Fragmented ownership Blighted conditions Unrealistic expectations of value
The Solutions:	Designation of Redevelopment Project Areas by NORA Selected use of expropriation by NORA as a last resort
Fiscal Incentives	
The Challenge:	Reduce or offset portions of the extraordinary costs of redevelopment, historic preservation, and rehabilitation
The Solutions:	Tax credits (federal and state) for investors in historic preservation Tax deductions, loans, grants for historic façade restoration Investment of a portion of the "net new" or incremental property and sales taxes in qualified projects Tax credits (federal) for investors in the creation of new rental housing for low income households Tax credits (federal) for investors in businesses located in low income communities ("New Markets") Tax credits for businesses expanding employment (new hires) in low income communities (Enterprise Zones)
Project Debt & Equity Financing	
The Challenge:	Increase the availability of bank loan funds or revenue bond financing to developers and businesses
The Solutions:	Loans and guarantees to major projects - Urban Development Action Grant (UDAG) Repayment Loans HUD CDBG Section 108 Loans Loans to businesses locating or expanding on Canal Street - Industrial Development Board (IDB) Bonds Small Business Loans (SBA) Specialty Business and Industrial Development Corporation (SBIDC) investments, equity and loans

II. The Corridor

4 Land Use and Building Regulations



Canal Street is subject to two primary overlapping sets of city land use regulations - zoning and historic district regulations - plus the city's building code. The New Orleans Zoning Ordinance provides primary land use regulation, which, in turn, is intended to implement the city's Master Plan. The Canal Street Historic District, under the aegis of the Central Business District Historic District Landmarks Commission, imposes a second layer of control on properties with buildings relative to building demolition, restoration and maintenance.

- *New Orleans Master Plan* - The policy framework for land use regulations on Canal Street is provided by the land use element of the Master Plan that was revised in 1999. The city's planning staff and Planning Commission, however, have been engaged for several years in steps to prepare a comprehensive new land use element that would go further in providing greater direction for future development and redevelopment, while responding more effectively to the unique attributes of the city's historic neighborhoods and business districts.
- *New Orleans Zoning Ordinance* - The majority of Canal Street is presently zoned CBD-3, Central Business District. This district was created exclusively for Canal Street in the interest of preserving and enhancing existing development while providing guidelines for

new infill development. For instance, the ordinance requires that the ground level of buildings must be used for retail sales and services. The maximum height of buildings is 85 feet, except in certain designated locations where the limit is 70 feet. Building density is regulated by a floor area ratio (FAR) of 6.0 for commercial and mixed uses and 4.5 for residential uses. Multifamily residential use is permitted in the district along with most commercial uses, although some of these are subject to conditional use procedures and standards. Timeshare buildings, hotels, fast food restaurants (not fronting on Canal), theaters, and parking garages are regulated as conditional uses. Also, special regulations attempt to limit and disperse "retail stores which specialize in T-shirts or novelty products".

Above Saratoga/Crozat Streets, the CBD-2 and CBD-2B district regulations apply. These categories allow hotels as permitted uses and emphasizes higher density office (10.0 FAR) and residential (FAR 7.0) uses. Essentially the same ground level retail uses are permitted as in the CBD-3 district, but ground level retail use is not required.

The current CBD-3 district regulations are confusing, inflexible and make no reference to the historic district and its purposes and regulations. This and other portions of the

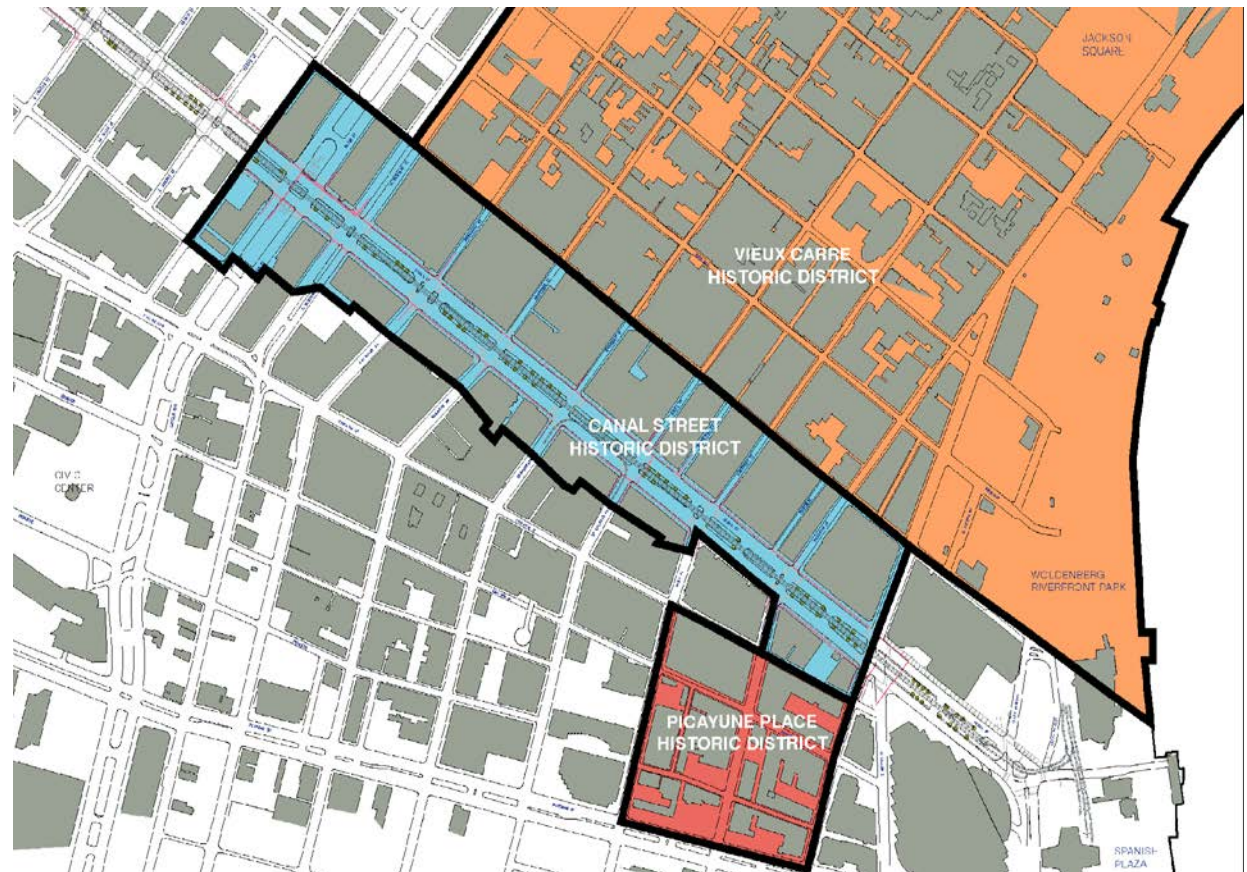
present zoning ordinance clearly need revision and redrafting to meet contemporary standards and approaches to urban land use control. Hence, it is recommended that the CBD-3 district regulations be revised accordingly and renamed the Canal Street Mixed-Use District as related to the portion of Canal Street that coincides with the Historic District.

The CBD-2 and 2B district regulations should likewise be revised to more clearly reflect the plans and objectives of the *Louisiana Biomedical Research and Development Park* and the expansion of the Medical Center within the general framework of the *Vision for Canal Street*. Particular attention will need to be given to integrating residential, research and development, health care and retail and entertainment uses in a mixed use district that will anchor and characterize the upper end of Canal Street. The Canal Street Corridor Urban Design Plan noted below would extend to include this area as well and be incorporated into the city's revised Master Plan as the adopted policy framework for application of zoning regulations.

These new and revised district regulations should have as their policy framework a specific Canal Street Corridor Urban Design Plan that would guide the application of

greater discretion in land use decisions through the use of design/site plan review procedures. The *Vision for Canal Street* should be the starting point for the creation of a Canal Street Corridor Urban Design Plan, which in turn should be incorporated as a sector plan within the city's new Master Plan.

- *Canal Street Historic District* - The Canal Street Historic District extends from N. Peters/ Tchoupitoulas Streets to Saratoga/Crozat Streets and from Iberville Street to mid-block between Canal and Common Street. The district is governed by the Central Business District Historic District Landmarks Commission. The Iberville Street boundary



Canal Street historic districts: Vieux Carre, Picayune Place and Canal Street

of the Canal Street Historic District is coterminous with the Vieux Carre Historic District, which governs building preservation and maintenance in the French Quarter. The smaller Picayune Place Historic District also abuts the Canal Street Historic District along Common Street between Magazine Street and St. Peters Street. The rules, policies and procedures of the Commission related primarily to ensuring compatibility of new construction, providing for the protection and preservation of the exterior of historic buildings, ensuring compatibility of signs, imposing limits and guidelines on demolition,

and requiring demolition of nonconforming, incompatible buildings should they be severely damaged by fire, hurricane, or other catastrophic events.

- *Building Code* - While an assessment of the city's building code is beyond the scope of this assignment, in the course of this study and planning process numerous parties noted the challenges of adaptively reusing 19th century and early 20th century buildings to contemporary uses. Of particular concern are the obstacles posed by the city's building code when attempting to introduce

residential as a use option for the otherwise vacant and deteriorating upper stories of row-type commercial structures found on most blocks of Canal Street. This is not an unusual situation since very few cities in the country have met this challenge by creating tailored building regulations for rehabilitation. One good example does exist, however, that bears consideration.

In 1998, the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (DCA) adopted a new Rehabilitation Subcode as part of its Uniform Construction Code. It became the first state to have a comprehensive building code designed specifically to facilitate rehabilitation projects, especially ones involving residential reuse – loft apartments, conversion of offices to residences, etc. Particular attention was given to the challenge of historic buildings subject to the U. S. Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*. Several other states and communities have taken advantage of the New Jersey model, including Maryland and Charlotte/Mecklenburg County, North Carolina.

The State of Louisiana and New Orleans should move forward to undertake the adoption of a new element or sub-code to its building code based on the successful model provided by the New Jersey Rehabilitation Sub-code.



CBD-2 Zoning on upper Canal Street does not require ground level retail



There are currently at least four public, or quasi-public, entities that have authority to exercise powers and apply resources to the task of effecting development activity within the Canal Street Corridor (potential public partners in public/private partnership arrangements rather than regulatory or planning authority):

- the Downtown Development District (DDD),
- the Canal Street Development Corporation (CSDC),
- the New Orleans Building Corporation, and
- the New Orleans Redevelopment Authority (NORA).

In addition, there are other administrative and regulatory agencies and commissions of city government that have important roles to play in the future of Canal Street, such as the Planning Commission and its staff, the Mayor's Office of Economic Development, and, of course, the Housing Authority of New Orleans (HANO) with regard to the future of the Iberville residential community.

This is a "good news, bad news" kind of story. This plethora of organizations, boards, and staffs offer an array of potential powers and resources and substantial good will and good intentions. However, there is no single organization responsible and no clear mechanism to provide focus and ensure continuity in the implementation of a Vision and Development Strategy for Canal

Street.

Given this need and the fact that the Canal Street Corridor is part of the Downtown Development District's oversight, it is recommended that the DDD be designated by the Office of the Mayor to be the lead organization to see that the Vision and Development Strategy for Canal Street are implemented. In doing so, the target area should be designated by the Mayor and City Council as the Canal Street Development District. There should be a corresponding set of directives for requisite administrative, legislative and operational steps to be taken to create an effective set of implementation tools and procedures. These would include:

- A. Downtown Development District** - The DDD should retain a qualified Canal Street Development Director reporting to the Executive Director to oversee the implementation of the Vision and Development Strategy on a daily basis. Extensive skills and experience with matters of real estate and public finance, real estate and land use law, and deal structuring and negotiation should be paramount. Important also will be familiarity with rules, regulations and procedures regarding the Historic District, the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development relative to conversion of public housing to mixed-income housing, the

city's building and zoning codes, including design/site plan review standards and procedures.

The DDD Canal Street Development Director should have as a primary responsibility the coordination and facilitation of fiscal and economic incentive programs. This should include providing assistance to those interested in improving or redeveloping properties on Canal Street to effectively access and apply the array of incentives and assistance tools and techniques available. Particular attention should be given to Federal and State Historic Preservation Tax Credits, the Restoration Tax Abatement Program, Tax Increment Financing, and the New Markets Tax Credits, along with the potential application on a case by case basis of the various loan programs outlined earlier.

- B. Downtown Parking Authority** - Although discussed further in a subsequent section, a key element of the implementation strategy should be the creation of a parking authority to oversee and manage the system of public and private parking with the downtown area, including the Canal Street corridor, as well as to develop and manage publicly owned parking facilities in key locations. **While there are a variety of locations within city government that could reasonably**

accommodate the parking authority function, it would most logically become part and a responsibility of the Downtown Development District.

- C. Canal Street Development Corporation and New Orleans Building Corporation** - Both organizations should be prepared to facilitate or partner with private entities where appropriate to execute specific projects.
- D. New Mixed-Use Zoning District Regulations and Canal Street Corridor Urban Design Plan** - The DDD should spearhead the drafting and adoption by the City Planning Commission and City Council of a Canal Street Corridor Urban Design Plan based on the Vision for Canal Street. The corridor plan should then be incorporated into the city's Master Plan. New, more flexible, mixed-use zoning regulations should be established that incorporate design/site plan review procedures and coordination with the application of Historic District regulations and procedures.
- E. Tax Increment Financing District** - The Canal Street Development District should be designated a Tax Increment Financing district. This would allow for the pooling of incremental revenues to fund infrastructure improvements that are common to more than one project and location and are critical to the

overall corridor. At the same time there should be a means to permit a portion of the incremental revenue from an individual project within the larger TIF district to be used as gap financing for that project.

- F. New Orleans Redevelopment Authority (NORA)** - For each of the Development Opportunity Areas cited earlier, NORA should undertake to determine its eligibility for application of redevelopment powers if such powers are required to ensure site assembly and consolidation.

6 Residential Development



Canal Street embraces a complex set of urban uses catering to a wide range of users - from tourists, to regional citizens, to local employees, to nearby residents - but it fails to offer housing opportunities consistent with its historic and urban appeal. An examination of the market for urban housing in New Orleans reveals a strong potential for an expanded inventory of market-rate residential products along with a need to better address the housing requirements of low to moderate income families. This creates tremendous challenges for implementation of the Vision, but complexity and diversity are what chiefly defines Canal Street.

Canal Street links three very important housing markets in the city of New Orleans:

- On one side is the long established French Quarter, which displays population and household stability with growing housing values and household purchasing power.
- On the other side is the rapidly emerging and expanding Warehouse and Arts District, where newly constructed, higher density housing is joining with the conversion of many old and dysfunctional buildings into urban dwelling units appealing to market segments that want a central city presence.
- The third market is represented by the Iberville community at the upper end of Canal

Street, a market notable for its lower income residents but occupying a location with strong potential to address residential demand vis-a-vis employment in the area (downtown, the French Quarter, the medical center) and access to public transportation.

During the 1990s, the French Quarter added 90 households, up 2.6 percent. The Warehouse/Downtown area added some 370 households, up almost 46 percent. Even the Iberville area added 10 households, up 1.2 percent, despite an essentially fixed housing supply. The gains in Iberville and the French Quarter are attributable to decreasing vacancy rates as the areas attracted more households. Thus, their growth since 2000 has likely been very small, since the available housing stock has not changed appreciably. On the other hand, an estimated 400 housing units have been added to the Warehouse/Downtown area since 2000. Clearly, demand for central city living is strong, but supply is limited. Even the Warehouse District will experience shortages of locations as more redevelopment occurs.

Canal Street offers an “expansion” opportunity. Vacant upper floors in the Canal corridor, for instance, could be converted to housing provided ownership of narrow historic commercial buildings can be consolidated to allow this adaptive reuse. These units, in turn, will help satisfy demand for central city living with an even more diverse set of residential options. The

strength of private market demand, moreover, suggests important opportunities for the Iberville community as an established residential center. By conversion to a mixed income community serving many of the existing residents, while also taking advantage of the growing desire for urban living among those better able to afford market values, Iberville can become an increasingly valuable community asset.



Potential housing opportunities off Canal Street

How widespread is the potential demand? A comparison of the demographic characteristics of households most able to afford market-rate housing, who now live in the three areas adjacent to Canal Street, to households living elsewhere in the New Orleans metropolitan area with the same characteristics and interests suggests that there are some 52,000 such households in the region. However, only 3,200 of these are now located downtown, mostly in the French Quarter and the Warehouse District.

The largest component of the target market, some 42 percent, could be termed “urban up and comers”. These are primarily singles living alone in rental property. They prefer an urban life-style, have high levels of education, medium to high incomes, and work in white collar occupations. The balance of the target market is comprised of mostly empty-nesters in the over 50 age category and young childless couples and singles. Their housing preferences lean toward home ownership by means of diverse condominium products at a wide range of price points.

Adding perhaps 500 new market rate units as a result of adaptive reuse of the upper stories of the historic commercial properties on Canal Street, and creating another 500 or so new units along upper Canal Street that are market rate quality and attractive, would bring the total such units in the greater downtown area to

4,200, an increase of over 30 percent. At the same time, this would raise downtown’s capture of households from the target market of 52,000 region-wide from 6.1 percent to 8.1 percent. This is deemed a reasonable and modest market objective for residential growth in downtown New Orleans.

Thus, the scale of the potential market is deemed substantial based on the assumption that many of the households with similar characteristics would welcome a chance to reside in the environment now shared by French Quarter, Warehouse District, and Iberville residents.



Metropolitan New Orleans contains 154 separate hotels and 33,460 hotel rooms, according to the Convention and Visitors Bureau. This is an average of 215 rooms per hotel.

The New Orleans area attracted 8,225,000 out-of-town visitors in 2002. This is about six visitors per year for every resident of the metro area. About three-quarters of the visitors come to New Orleans for leisure purposes. The rest are business and convention travelers.

The Canal Street corridor has 21 of the region's hotels and 7,762 rooms (including the Wyndham Hotel in Canal Place). The Canal Street corridor, therefore, encompasses 14 percent of all hotels but 24 percent of all hotel rooms in the region.

The average hotel in the Canal corridor has 370 rooms (compared to the regional average outside of the Canal corridor of 190) with a range between 12 and 1,300.

Almost 7.0 million visitors (85 percent) stayed overnight. 4.2 million stayed in hotels or motels, 2.4 million stayed with friends and relatives, and 371,000 stayed in other accommodations. First-time visitors to the New Orleans area represented 39 percent of all visitors.

Of New Orleans' visitors, 78 percent are married, 39 percent are between the ages of 50-64 years, 36 percent are professionals, and the majority have annual household incomes between \$25,000 and \$74,000.



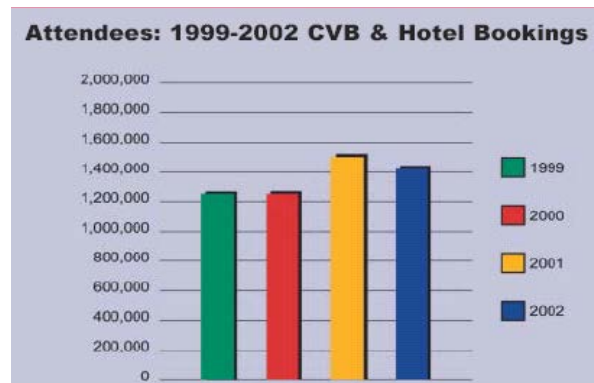
Canal Street Corridor	21 Hotels	7,762 rooms
Central Business District	32 Hotels	
French Quarter / Marigny	43 Hotels	
Garden District / Uptown	14 Hotels	
Jefferson Parish	21 Hotels	
Mid-City	1 Hotel	
New Orleans East / Chalmette	6 Hotels	
Warehouse Arts District	11 Hotels	
Westbank	5 Hotels	25,698 rooms
TOTAL	154 Hotels	33,460 rooms

New Orleans hotels by district

While total visitation was improved in 2002 over 2001, the lingering effects of terrorism-related travel reductions negatively affected Convention and Visitors' Bureau (CVB) and related hotel bookings (rooms booked by the Convention and Visitors' Bureau). CVB hotel bookings jumped from about 1.25 million in 2000 to 1.50 million in 2001 and would have been slightly higher but for the events of September 11, 2001.

But lingering effects of terrorism among travelers reduced bookings to 1.41 million in 2002. Still, 2002 bookings by the CVB were well above 2000. So the trend in hotel bookings is clearly upward - barring major shocks like 9/11.

In New Orleans, visiting historic sites remains among tourists' favorite activities. 94.7% of tourists explored the French Quarter during 2002. Travelers also enjoyed visiting jazz and other music clubs, going to museums, touring the

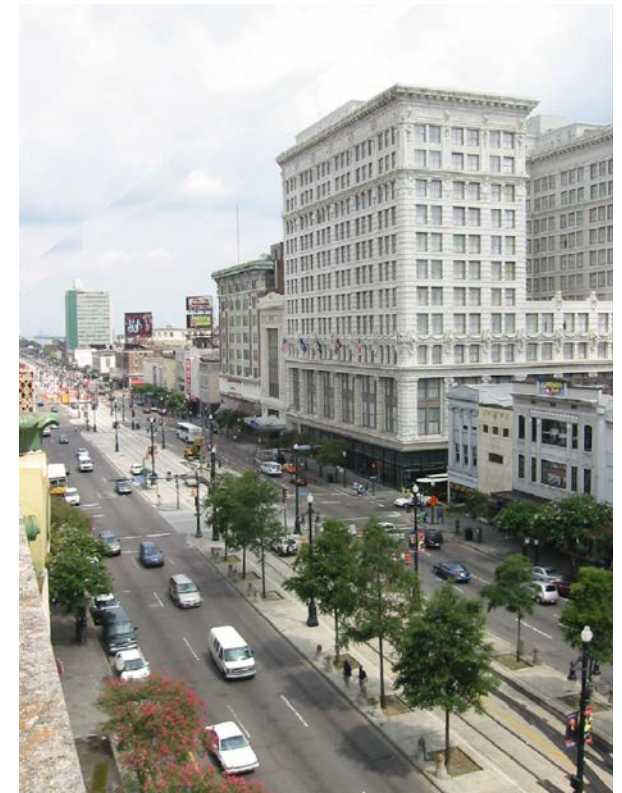


Garden District, plantations, and other notable sites.

Over one-quarter (26.6%) of visitors in 2002 went to Harrah's Casino while in the area. 14.3% reported in 2002 that gambling was either *very important* or *important* in their decision to come to New Orleans. This was up from 9.5% in 2001 and 8.1% in 2000.

Almost all visitors (99.6%) found the service people in the New Orleans area to be *friendly* or *very friendly*. Nineteen out of twenty (95.0%) indicated that they perceived New Orleans to be a safe destination. Visitors said that their 2002 visit to New Orleans was *very satisfactory* (96.2%). A large proportion of respondents (87.5%) indicated that they were very likely or likely to return to the New Orleans area in the next five years. The most popular reason to return is that it is a fun vacation place.

Given the long-term trend of a steadily expanding supply of hotels in the region and in downtown New Orleans, including Canal Street, and the corresponding growth in tourism, conventions, and visitors, it is reasonable to project a market need for the addition of between 500 and 1,000 new hotel rooms on Canal Street over the next five to ten years. This growth would likely result in two to three new hotels located in the proposed Rampart/Basin entertainment District.



900 Block of Canal

8 Transportation Management



Transportation system elements along the Canal Street corridor are part of the larger system elements of the City of New Orleans. Streetcar service, streets, sidewalks, signal systems, parking and for-hire bus and taxi services all fit into a larger picture that is part of the integrated transportation system of the city.

The following observations and suggestions focus on improving transportation management within the framework of the *Vision for Canal Street*. Some of these relate to policies and practices already underway, others are soon to be implemented, and others are proposed for consideration.

- *Public transportation* - Streetcar service will officially begin along Canal Street in the Spring of 2004. Canal Street service will be integrated with the existing St. Charles Avenue Streetcar and the Riverfront Streetcar service, as well as with revised bus routes. The RTA (Regional Transit Authority) is currently assessing bus service to Canal Street and is expected to implement changes to bus routes and transfer locations. The latter are deemed especially important to the revitalization of Canal Street. A frequent complaint from visitors and local patrons alike is sidewalk congestion currently caused by youthful loitering at bus stops.
- *Pedestrian safety and linkages* - The

pedestrian experience along Canal Street will be greatly improved with the implementation of the planned streetscape improvements. Crossing from one side of Canal to the other is difficult for pedestrians today. The 170 foot distance between “building-faces” is separated by two 40 foot paved street sections and the “neutral ground”. Traffic signal timings favor Canal Street rather than cross-streets.

Fortunately, the planned streetscape improvements will reduce the walking distance for pedestrians at intersections along Canal Street. Improvements are also underway on the signal system. **It is further recommended that signal re-timings be considered during peak pedestrian activity to provide additional green time for pedestrians. These changes should also consider the “pulsing” of charter buses and turning movements onto/off of Canal Street related to special events in the city.**

Plans are under consideration for improved pedestrian links and reduced pedestrian/vehicular conflicts as part of a redesigned riverfront connection of Canal Street, the Canal Street ferry terminal and pedestrian walks along the river. These plans should be supported and encouraged. Likewise, bike lanes/trail connections should be provided that parallel Canal Street on

Iberville and Common, since such routes on Canal would be inappropriate given the complexity and volume of vehicular and pedestrian movements there.

- *Coordination of curbside activity and traffic flows* - Traffic management along Canal Street is critical to the movement of people and vehicles along the street. Canal Street accommodates streetcars, public bus service, private bus service, for-hire vehicles, including taxis, and on-street parking/loading. Recommendations incorporated within the streetscape project lay out a traffic flow plan to separate traffic flows and curbside activity. The recommendations discussed earlier suggest that special provision be made to accommodate curbside activity while maintaining a minimum of two-lanes for through traffic. Widened sections of sidewalk (bump-outs or “bulb-outs”) at intersections and at selected mid-block locations are being identified on a case-by-case basis with property owners/tenants along Canal Street. Curb activity will be designated for small, maneuverable vehicles and the first travel lane will be designated for bus operations. These improvements will be tied to the implementation of the streetscape project and are projected to be completed by about the end of 2005.

9 Parking Management



Parking facilities in support of uses and activities on Canal Street, as well as elsewhere in the greater downtown New Orleans, are distributed apparently at random. Likewise, their management is left to the marketplace and the whim of owners/operators and there is clearly no overall system of management in operation and no plan to guide future parking development.

- *Public Parking Authority* - **The DDD should establish a Parking Authority that is self-sufficient, collects fees (and fines) and issues bonds to fund parking within the DDD, including the Canal Street Corridor and the business district.** The importance of an overarching management entity is reflected in the issues discussed below. Responsibilities of the Authority would include addressing the role of parking as a whole and its integration with the transportation system, wayfinding (already being addressed by the DDD), pay structures, zoning regulations, monitoring and enforcement, balancing supply and demand and financing of new facilities. The Authority's purpose would be to regulate, operate, monitor, fund and acquire or construct parking facilities. Such a centralized authority could be part of or a subsidiary of the DDD and would work with the business and medical community and coordinate with the RTA and City transportation agencies.

- *On-street parking* - Although most streets have some on-street parking, the supply is clearly inadequate and ineffectively deployed. Too often, spaces are taken by vehicles that do not turn over often, mostly residents' and local employees' vehicles. Visitors are forced to circulate around the blocks looking for spaces, forced to park in a public parking facility or even discouraged from visiting the area altogether. Circulating vehicles add to congestion, air pollution, and noise. Motorists choosing to park in a public parking facility will select one that is as close to their destination as possible and then avoid walking by stores and shops they might otherwise patronize.

Currently, there are no restrictions for on-street parking during the weekend. Motorists can park their vehicles and leave them parked for as long as they wish. **By implementing time restrictions (i.e. 2-hour maximum), the spaces turn over more quickly and there are more opportunities for visitors to find on-street parking.**

- *Public off-street parking*

Signing/Wayfinding - Many of the existing off-street parking facilities are difficult to find. There is no clear and obvious wayfinding system for motorists looking for locations to park. By not having such a system, the

effective parking supply around Canal Street is diminished because motorists are not finding and using the available capacity of vacant spaces.

A comprehensive signing system should be developed for the off-street parking facilities along and around Canal Street (may carry over to other areas of the city as well the rest of the CBD and the French



Existing garage on S. Rampart Street

Quarter). The City of Baltimore affords a good example where this has been successful. A comprehensive signing system was developed with universal logos, colors and wording directing motorists to all of the public parking facilities. Current zoning regulations allow owners of parking facilities that have some public parking to have one DDD parking directional sign (“P”). Instead of each garage getting one sign, it would be more efficient if signs directed motorists to “pockets” of parking facilities and then later to individual facilities. This task is made much simpler with a parking authority to oversee the wayfinding system.

Pay Structure - The existing pay structure for the off-street facilities along and near Canal Street differs from facility to facility. In addition, there is a different cost for each half hour to an hour (e.g. 0-0.5 hrs = \$2, 0.5-1.5 hrs = \$3, etc.) This creates confusion for the motorists and makes parking in facilities more intimidating for visitors and encourages them to spend as little time in the area as possible because every additional half hour spent in the district is increasingly expensive to the patron.

The pay structure for off-street parking facilities needs to be more consistent with fewer time increments. By creating more consistency, motorists are less likely to

“shop around” and will be less intimidated to use an off-street facility. By decreasing the number of time increments, visitors will be less likely to “watch the clock” and might spend more time browsing and patronizing local businesses. This is hard to accomplish since most of the facilities are privately owned. However, it is much easier with a parking authority providing coordination, standards, and guidance.

Location of Parking Facilities - Parking facilities are currently haphazardly located and do not relate to any overall transportation system which includes pedestrian paths and public transportation. With the opening of the Canal Street streetcar line, the view of transportation along Canal Street and a section of the CBD, is changing. The role of the private automobile diminishes because there are other means of getting to and from as well as moving within the greater downtown. As a result, the location of parking should complement the new transportation system, not compete with it. Consideration of new garages should be given on the Iberville, Bienville, Burgundy, Rampart block and on the land adjacent to and associated with the redeployment of the Krauss Building by Tulane University.

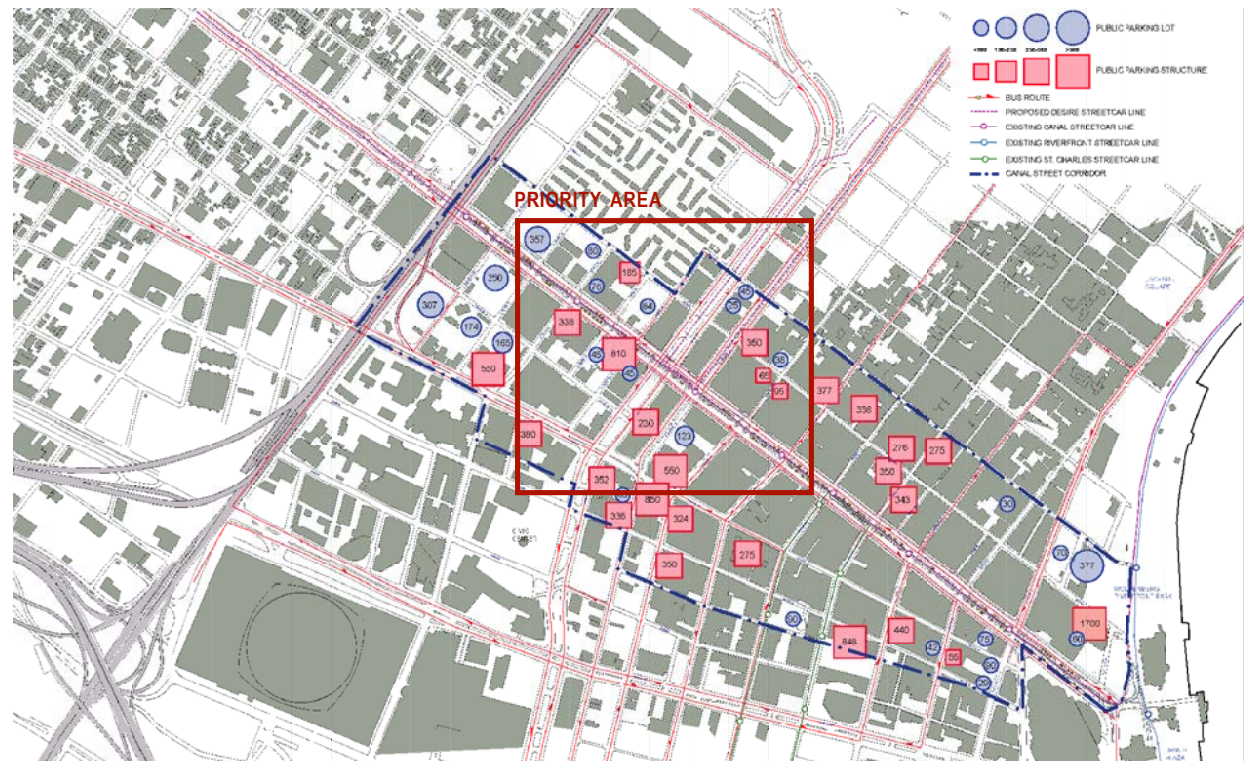
Parking facilities should be located where they will be used 18-hours a day and during

the weekend, rather than being oriented primarily to just 10 hours a day during the week. The objective should be to encourage motorists to park and then use public transportation to get around during the day. As a result, vehicles will also be parked for longer periods of time. When developing parking facilities, they should be located and built so they will realize an optimum return on investment.

Appearance - Many of the parking facilities appear run-down and unsafe. As a result, motorists are hesitant to use them. This also decreases the effective parking supply. **Every effort should be made to induce private owners of garages and parking lots to maintain and improve their facilities with oversight and management by a parking authority.**

Zoning regulations - Current zoning regulations result in an inconsistent process for review and approval of proposals for parking lots and garages. If the land use is changing, or if the facility is being remodeled, there is no trigger to require review of related parking facilities. In addition, according to the draft transportation plan, many of the new applications claim that they will use parking in an existing facility. But this only takes public parking away from visitors. **It is recommended that the wording in the**

zoning regulations be changed to raise the importance of parking and trigger a review of the parking supply/demand regardless of whether the square footage is changing.



Priority Area for new public parking supply

10 Expanding and Upgrading the Retail



Canal Street is the central meeting ground for many of the activities for which New Orleans is celebrated. At one end is the Mississippi River “crescent” that gives the city one of its nicknames. This waterfront has rightfully attracted tourist activities while continuing to be a functioning port. The other end of the Canal corridor is dominated by the New Orleans Medical Center, along with the emerging *Louisiana Biomedical Research & Development Park*, which together represent both a rapidly growing economic component of the city and region and a major opportunity for bringing street life back to upper Canal. In between, however, is a hodge-podge of ground floor businesses, mostly retail and restaurant merchants, with little to suggest a common theme or significant synergy.

Market Overview

A first impression of Canal Street is, indeed, as a retail center. The next impression, however, is an agglomeration of many uses that are not well integrated in their economic and social functions. Major, world-class hotels continue to be developed, but street businesses are dominated by a disparate set of retail shops catering mostly to lower-end tourist budgets and to lower income residents of the immediate environs. While these markets are important for Canal Street, higher-end customers, both tourist and resident, are generally ill-served on Canal, with the exception of Canal Place, an enclosed shopping

environment that contrasts sharply with the New Orleans “experience” of street front retail and dining throughout the French Quarter, the business district, and the warehouse district.

In other words, the large hotels are an indication that more affluent tourists and conventioners are frequenting Canal Street. This combines with ever increasing nearby household incomes and populations to create a sizeable market for higher-end retail goods and services. Market and demographic statistics, moreover, clearly demonstrate that retailing on Canal Street (including dining, music and other entertainment, and both shoppers and convenience goods) is behind the times in exploiting a more affluent shopper that seeks and enjoys the street life of New Orleans.

There are some 1.1 million square feet of ground floor space on Canal Street, extending from but not including Canal Place, either already in retail and restaurant uses or presently vacant and potentially suitable for such uses.

<u>Ground floor space:</u>	<u>square feet</u>
Retail uses (38%)	415,000
Restaurant uses (24%)	265,000
Vacant (38%)	420,000
TOTAL	1,100,000

The market analysis for retail-related revitalization and re-configuration of Canal Street focused on

Structure

the higher-end shopper and diner from a diverse range of market segments including tourists, nearby residents, regional residents, people employed in the area, local residents, and so on.

Based upon a careful assessment of market potential derived from diverse sources of retail patronage, approximately 875,000 square feet of ground floor retail/restaurant floor space are deemed supportable on Canal Street (above Canal Place) compared to total available inventory of some 1.1 million square feet (this includes about 105,000 square feet of upper level space currently occupied by restaurants and retail shopping). The remaining 225,000 square feet, however, will be needed for other

non-residential uses compatible with ground floor access, such as hotel entrance areas, residential access areas, museums, and the like. The supportable 875,000 square feet would add some 25 percent more occupied floor area than at present, a substantial occupancy increase in and of itself.

A detailed analysis of existing uses on the ground floors in the entire Canal Street corridor revealed many opportunities for replacement or relocation of those uses. Replacement should occur where higher value merchants can and should be located. Relocation should occur when an otherwise suitable business for Canal Street is simply in a poor location relative to a

fresher vision and strategy for exploitation of the market. Moreover, there are many opportunities for net additions to the retail inventory, as noted above without excluding merchants that continue to serve lower income residents from adjacent neighborhoods. The following table summarizes a scenario that reflects the current buying power of the market and the changes that could fittingly occur over a decade-long evolution from today's hodge-podge of businesses to a more functional and synergistic array of merchants.

Centralized Retail Management and Re-tenanting

Achieving an improved retail mix and expanding

Total Potential Square Feet (from the market analysis)	850,000
Total Existing Square Feet Occupied by Retail and Restaurant Uses	680,000
Existing Square Feet to Remain as Currently Occupied (with some minor relocations)	235,000
Existing Square Feet to be Redeployed as new retail and restaurant uses	445,000
Net Additional Square Feet to be Occupied	175,000
Projected Occupied Square Feet	850,000
Assumed Vacancy at 2.5% for Normal Turnover	25,000
Total Retail and Restaurant Square Feet	875,000
Total Assumed Inventory of Ground Floor Space for Other (non-retail) Occupancy	225,000
Total Existing Retail, Restaurant, and Vacant Ground Floor Space	1,100,000



A typical retail use on Canal Street

the scope and distribution of retail merchants on Canal Street will require more than relying on the operation of the “invisible hand” of the market place. For Canal Street to operate as a competitive retail environment it will need to emulate certain characteristics of a shopping mall. This can be achieved by instituting a Centralized Retail Management program, or CRM.

The principal elements of a CRM program for Canal Street would include:

- **On going market analysis and monitoring** - Providing an intelligence function to reveal what’s working and what’s not and to identify trends in sales and patronage that would suggest adjustments in marketing strategy.



Interior of Rubenstein Brothers on 600 Block of Canal Street

- **Cooperative advertising** - Pooling advertising dollars to market the broad offerings of the corridor much like is done by a shopping center’s management, especially in certain seasons and for area-wide sales.
- **Marketing and public relations** – Beyond advertising, pooling funds to pursue measures to enhance the image and competitiveness of the corridor.
- **Business support services** – Centralized and cost-effective accounting, legal, management and personnel advice, if not direct services, would replicate for independent merchants the support systems provided to merchants that are part of a national chain or franchise.
- **Common covenants** – Uniform standards and agreements regarding display windows, sidewalk or entry obstructions, signage, sales procedures and practices, and hours of operation.
- **Tenant recruitment** – Working with both landlords and retail real estate brokers to design a re-tenanting plan and strategy and gradually shaping an optimum mix of retail tenants to capitalize on the market potential that has been identified.

It is recommended that the Downtown Development District institute a CRM program incorporating the preceding elements. Designing the program and putting it into operation will require much collaboration with the key stakeholders – existing merchants, retail brokers, prospective merchants, national chains, property owners, and other agencies of the city. Input and assistance should be sought from other communities that have successful CRM programs. National professional organizations such as the International Downtown Association and the national Main Street Program should be consulted as well.

II.

Action Area

11 Rampart/Basin Entertainment District



The idea of restoring the unique entertainment center that once existed in the area surrounding the intersections of Rampart Street and Basin Street with Canal Street has long been discussed and part of the civic agenda in New Orleans. However, the time was never right to see it brought to fruition. Visitors were fearful of coming to the area due to the poor condition of building and the streetscape and perceptions of crime. The Medical Center and its various institutions had turned their back to Canal and sought to contain their operations and personnel on the uptown side of Canal. At the same time, retailers on upper Canal addressed the quality and scope of their merchandising exclusively to the needs of nearby lower income residents.

So what has changed that would suggest the time is now right to proceed with steps to realize the entertainment district? Some of these factors include:

- Quality hotels and restaurants have advanced up Canal Street to within just one block of the Rampart Street intersection. The Ritz Carlton is the newest entry on the French Quarter side that now aligns with the Fairmont on the business district side.
- The new street car line opens in the Spring, 2004, on upper Canal with connections planned along Rampart Street on the French Quarter side. At the same time, the RTA has



Demonstration Action Areas

committed to revising and improving the location and systems for bus transfers to avoid congestion on Canal.

- The Medical Center is about to have a new face on Canal Street with the development of a new biotech business incubator underway and plans for reusing the former Krauss department store properties being finalized.
- Continued operation of the Saenger and Orpheum Theaters has begun to inspire greater interest by others in the similar redeployment of the Loews State Palace and Joy Theater buildings.
- The city is about to embark upon a major replacement and upgrading of the public

realm of Canal Street with the new streetscape program.

- Finally, serious consideration is being given by various city interests and stakeholders to working with the residents of the Iberville residential community to transform Iberville into a mixed-income neighborhood. This is seen as promising a win-win outcome for the current residents, the Medical Center, the merchants on Canal, the city, and visitors seeking the entertainment opportunities that can then be attracted to the area.

At present the buildings surrounding and directly fronting on the intersection are largely underutilized and include a high proportion of vacancies. These conditions are summarized in the adjacent table.

The first challenge and the opportunity presented by the concept of an entertainment district will be to recruit developers and uses to redeploy the extensive amount of vacant and underutilized space at the key intersections of Canal Street with Rampart and Basin Streets. With some 110,000 sq. ft. of ground floor space available today for new restaurants, night clubs, museums, retail and other entertainment uses, new entrants in the market place can be accommodated without necessarily displacing existing occupants. Added to this are over 160,000 sq. ft. of upper level space that can be added to

ground floor uses, converted to supporting functions such as administrative offices, or adapted to residential or hotel occupancy.

At the same time, it should be recognized that the existing performance venues offer specialized development opportunities related to the entertainment district. Three of the four theater buildings are being utilized for various types of entertainment programming, albeit not always often enough. The Saenger is the region's premier location for touring companies and Broadway shows. The Orpheum is the home of the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra and the New Orleans Opera. Of those in operation, the Loews State Palace theater building is the least utilized with a fairly open and occasional schedule of specialized events. The Joy Theater has been closed for over a year.

The question is where to start to breathe new life into the area and launch an exciting new entertainment district. The Consultant Team recommends that a project be sought that would have a catalytic effect in the real estate market. The ideal response to this objective would be a specialized or theme museum with national and international appeal and a New Orleans theme. The city has already realized such a success with the D-Day Museum based on the Higgins Boat story from World War II. The obvious theme that would resonate with New Orleans' heritage and contemporary assets would



Interior view of the renovated Saenger Theater

DESCRIPTION	GROUND LEVEL				UPPER LEVELS			TOTAL AREA	
	Floor Area		Retail Spaces		Floor Area		Levels	Total	Vacant, %
	Total	Vacant, %	Total	Vacant	Total	Vacant, %			
1000 Block of Canal, Business District Side									
“The Orpheum Black”, Canal Half	27,175 s.f.	5,675 s.f., 21%	12	3	51,075 s.f.	51,075 s.f., 100%	2, 3	78,250 s.f.	72.5%
1000 Block of Canal, French Quarter Side									
“The Woolworth Block”	99,575 s.f.	62,950 s.f., 63%	11	2	105,875 s.f.	96,425 s.f., 91%	0, 1, 2, 3	205,450 s.f.	78%
Former Woolworth’s	39,200 s.f.	39,200 s.f., 100%	1	1	-	-			
U-Park (essentially vacant)	23,750 s.f.	23,750 s.f., 100%	1	1	-	-			
Post Office	9,450 s.f.	-	1	-	-	-			
Store Fronts	27,175 s.f.	-	8	-	-	-			
1100 Block of Canal, Business District Side									
“Loews State Palace Theatre Block”, Canal Half	130,500 s.f.	2,000 s.f., 1.5%	10	2	-	-	-	130,500 s.f.	1.5%
Theater (3,000 seats), occasional use	120,000 s.f.	-	-	-	-	-			
Store Fronts	10,500 s.f.	2,000 s.f., 20%	10	2	-	-			
1100 Block of Canal, French Quarter Side									
“The Saenger Theatre Block”	121,440 s.f.	-	5	-	50,100 s.f.	14,400 s.f., 29%	2, 3	171,540 s.f.	8%
Saenger Theatre (2,735 seats)	109,440 s.f.	-	1	-	-	-			
Store Fronts	9,600 s.f.	-	3	-	-	-			
Hotel Lobby	2,400 s.f.	-	1	-	-	-			
Hotel (70 rooms)	-	-	-	-	35,700 s.f.	-			
Other	-	-	-	-	14,400 s.f.	14,400 s.f., 100%			
1200 Block of Canal, Business District Side									
Joy Theatre Building (1,000+ seats)	40,000 s.f.	40,000 s.f., 100%	-	-	-	-	-	40,000 s.f.	100%
TOTAL: Five Blocks as the Focus of the Entertainment District	418,690 s.f.	110, 625 s.f., 21%	-	-	207,150 s.f.	161,900 s.f., 78%	-	625,740 s.f.	44%

Current Space Inventory for Rampart/Basin Entertainment District

be one drawing either or both jazz and blues music and Cajun/Creole cuisine. The case of the International Spy Museum in downtown Washington, D. C., provides an excellent case study to be emulated. This was the first project in Washington to utilize its then new tax increment

financing program. After two years of operation, the museum has been a success in every sense from the perspective of both the city and the developer. Another example is the recently opened 70,000 s.f. Mill City Museum in Minneapolis. Rising amid the ruins of a historic

flour mill that was badly damaged in a fire in 1991, the museum honors a key element of the economic heritage of the community.

A review of possible sites within the properties outlined above suggests two alternative locations

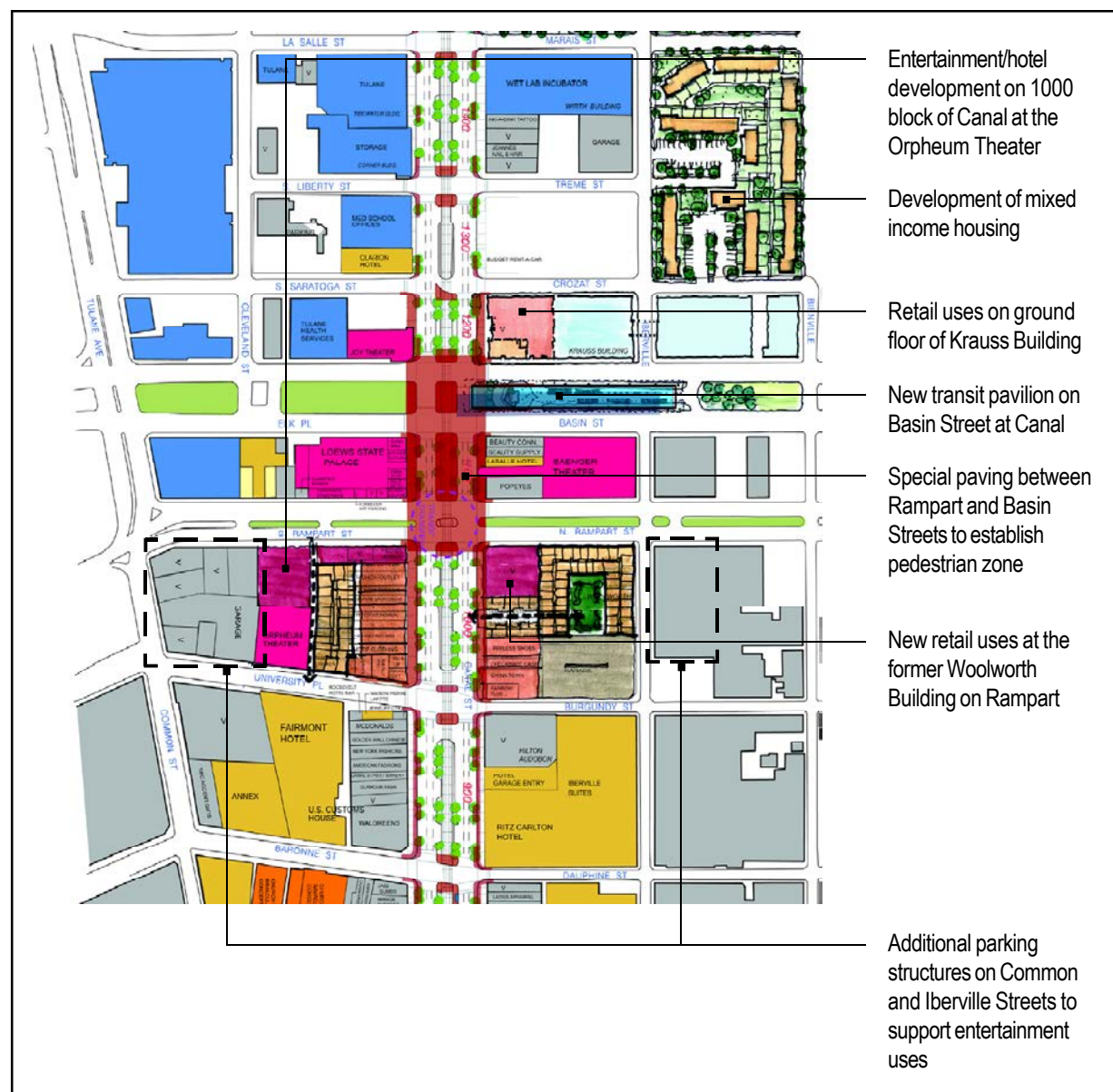


Existing view of Canal and Basin Street intersection



Proposal for full granite paving as part of an Entertainment District

In the judgment of the Consultant Team, either option as a location for a catalytic, new museum would be appropriate, with different pluses and minuses associated with each. A final resolution should be based upon discussions with prospective developers of such a facility and with affected current property owners and occupants. Provided the project is determined to be feasible from financial, market and physical perspectives and a deal can be struck that will result in the type and quality of venue and theme intended, it will be far easier to sustain an on-going process for redevelopment of the balance of the space comprising the entertainment district. This more positive atmosphere will be reinforced by the activation of the streetcar on Canal Street, by progress toward a new future for the Iberville community, by the emergence of new streetscape and by continued growth in the hospitality and tourism industry in the New Orleans region.



II.

Action Area

12 Upper Level Development



CASE STUDY

1000 block of Canal Street, Business District side

The Canal Street half of the so-called “Orpheum Block” was selected by the Consultant Team to demonstrate the potential for reuse of the upper

levels of the older row-style commercial buildings that front on Canal. At the same time the circumstances of the block allowed for the exploration of an infill strategy for a new hotel and supporting garage facility on a portion of the block now occupied by surface parking. The accompanying drawings and plans illustrate this strategy which is further summarized as follows:



Existing view of 1000 Block of Canal Street at S. Rampart Street

Frontage Commercial Row

Option A: Ground Floor Re-Tenancing, Upper Floor Residential

Business/Commercial Reuse: 39,900 s.f.
Residential Adaptive Reuse: 91, 600 s.f.
2 & 3 levels above ground
62 units with two light wells

Total Area of Renovation/New Construction:
128,500 s.f.

Residential Units

One bedroom: 52 units
Two bedrooms: 5 units
Three bedrooms: 5 units

Total: 62 units

Option B: Theme Museum, Ground and Second Levels, Residential Above

Commercial/Theme Museum
First Level: 34,200 s.f.
Second Level: 23,700 s.f.
Subtotal: 57,900 s.f.

Residential Adaptive Reuse
Part of Second Level
and Levels 3 & 4: 63,050 s.f.

Total Area of Renovation/Adaptive Reuse:
129,950 s.f.

Residential Units

One bedroom: 32 units
Two bedroom: 4 units
Three bedroom: 5 units

Total: 41 units

Infill Hotel above Parking Garage

With Both **Options A & B**

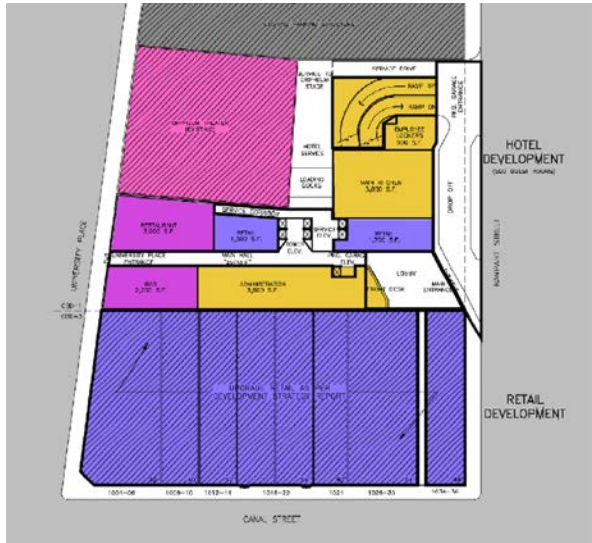
Hotel Guest/Public Areas: 55,600 s.f.
Hotel Services, Staff Areas: 29,800 s.f.
Hotel Guest Room Tower: 326, 200 s.f.
Parking Garage & Ramps: 46,900 s.f.

Total: 458,500 s.f.

Implementation of the program for Block 267 outlined here is estimated to require a total investment of approximately \$200 million. A preliminary financial feasibility analysis suggests that the gap financing requirement to make such a development feasible would be in the magnitude of 25 percent of this total. The use of available fiscal incentives, including tax increment financing and state and federal historic tax credits, appear to be sufficient to close that gap and make the project feasible. The net result of this project would be a dramatic new mixed use environment on a prominent intersection that would accelerate the revitalization of upper Canal Street and anchor the entertainment district.



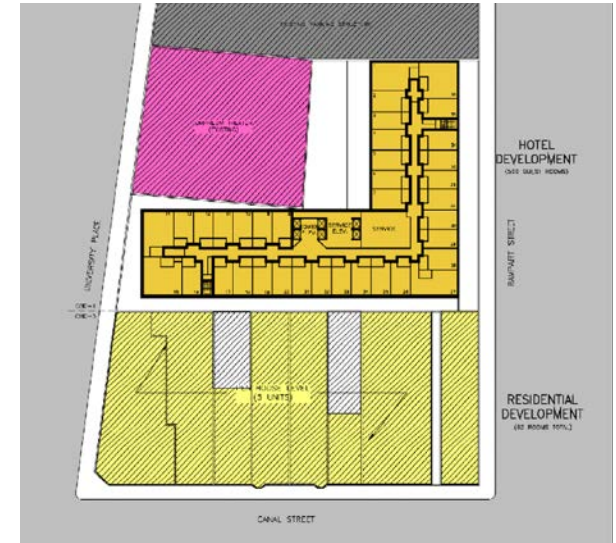
1000 Block of Canal Street between University Place and S. Rampart Street



Ground Floor



Second Floor



Penthouse and Typical Tower Level

OPTION A

 THEATER	 RESIDENTIAL
 RETAIL	 GARAGE
 RESTAURANT/LOUNGE	 STREET/DRIVEWAY
 HOTEL/LODGING	

Option A:

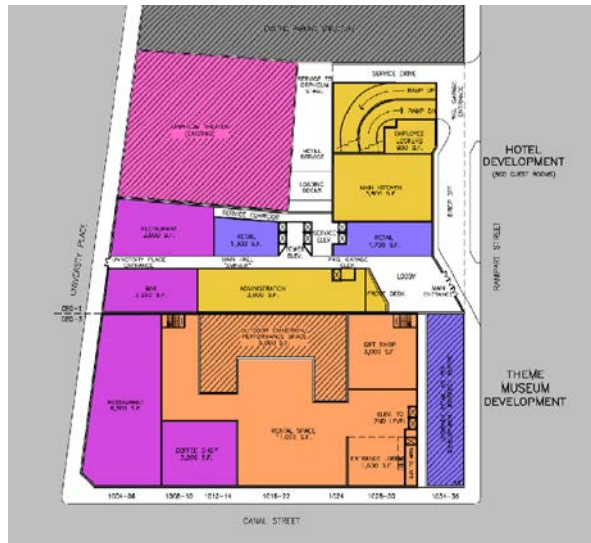
Option A provides for major restoration and upgrading along with retenancing of the ground floor of the historic commercial row fronting on Canal Street. The upper levels would be developed as 62 loft apartments with two light atriums.



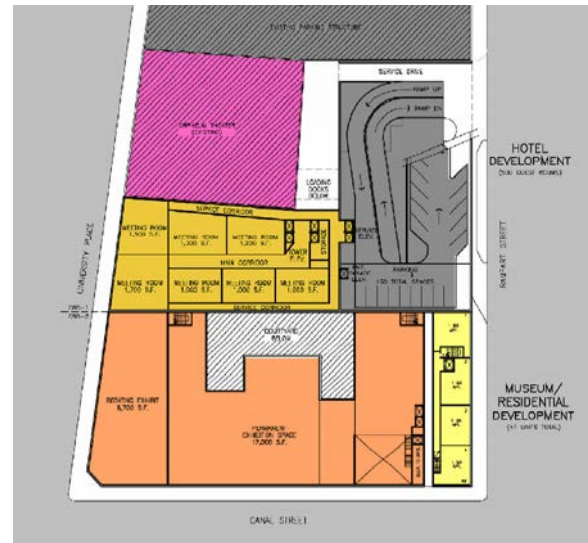
Example of courtyard scale spaces in the French Quarter



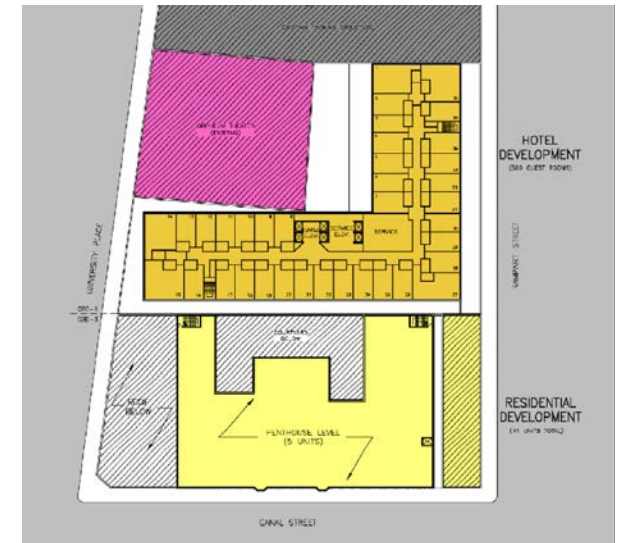
Lightwell inserted into commercial buildings at the Alexa Hotel



Ground Floor



Second Floor



Penthouse and Typical Tower Level

OPTION B

 THEATER	 RESIDENTIAL
 INSTITUTIONAL	 RETAIL
 RESTAURANT/LOUNGE	 GARAGE
 HOTEL/LODGING	 STREET/DRIVEWAY

Option B:

Option B provides for development of a theme museum occupying the first and second levels of the historic commercial row. Part of the second level and the third and fourth levels are developed as 41 apartments similar to Option A. Both options assume the ability to redevelop the commercial row comprehensively to allow for connection between first and second level spaces as well a configuration of apartments on the upper levels with appropriate circulation and natural light.



Sketch of Infill Hotel

13 Iberville Revitalization/Medical Center Expansion



1500 and 1600 Blocks of Canal Street

The Iberville residential community is a long established public housing project serving low income households in downtown New Orleans. Located one block beyond Canal Street on Iberville Street, the project is over 60 years old and accommodates nearly 800 households today. It is managed by the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) since its traditional landlord, the Housing Authority of New

Orleans (HANO), is currently in receivership.

The challenge of Iberville is three fold: First, it is important to secure for those who live there today a better living environment. This implies identifying and making available to a large portion of Iberville's current residents alternative and acceptable places to live, either as part of a transformed mixed-income Iberville community or in other appropriate locations. The latter would include standard homes and apartments



Iberville/Medical Center Action Area

preferably nearby or in other neighborhoods preferred by the residents, with support from HUD in the form of Section 8 vouchers. Second, successful revitalization of Canal Street will require transforming Iberville into a residential environment that is attractive to those who can and will pay “market rates” for quality homes and apartments, while at the same time providing apartments at affordable rents for a portion of the lower income households now living there. Third, a transformed Iberville should be linked with

increased opportunities for residents of the community to obtain job training and be employed in the adjacent Medical Center and Research Park or elsewhere in greater downtown.

There are numerous examples around the country that can demonstrate successful revitalization of former public housing projects as mixed-income communities. One example is the transformation of Techwood Homes in Atlanta into

Centennial Place. Two others in St. Louis are noteworthy: The former Murphy-Blair, Vaughn & Carr Square Village projects that have been transformed into Murphy Park, and the former Darst Webbe Homes that have become King Louis Square. These developments, like St. Thomas underway today in New Orleans, were all supported by the HOPE VI program under the auspices of HUD along with the federal government’s Low Income Housing Tax Credit program. To accomplish the desired outcomes in Iberville today will likely require proportionally greater local contributions and civic underwriting to be financially feasible. Two thoughts for accomplishing this include: First, the regional business community, foundations, the casino, and the medical center interests should join forces to pool resources for contributed or soft capital to underwrite a portion of project financing. Second, a tax increment financing district encompassing the Canal Street Corridor could be established to set aside a portion of new public property and sales tax revenues as a revenue stream to finance a portion of the new Iberville project costs.

The outcome of a successful public/private partnership to revitalize and transform Iberville into a new mixed-income community will pay handsome dividends for all stakeholders. A number of the key steps that will need to be taken to advance the concept of revitalization would include:



Iberville Expansion Area

- Explore and document the needs and preferences of the present occupants of Iberville. The Consultant Team has prepared and made available to the DDD and HUD a survey instrument that can be administered to obtain some, but not necessarily all, the facts and insights required.
- Work with the state's, region's and city's congressional and state legislative delegations to give priority to and obtain any and all federal and state assistance that can be earmarked to assist Iberville.
- Obtain and assign a block of Section 8 housing vouchers to be used to assist a portion of current residents to obtain acceptable alternative housing.
- Formulate a private sponsorship plan that includes participation from the major firms, foundations and institutions that have a major stake in increasing the vitality of downtown New Orleans.
- Prepare and issue a Request for Qualifications to be followed by a Request for Proposals (RFP) from qualified developers to partner with the city and spearhead the transformation by means of building new or rehabilitating portions of the existing Iberville apartments. There is a small handful of developers across the country and New

Orleans who have had extensive experience and the demonstrated skills necessary to execute and manage complex urban revitalization projects. The RFP should be issued to a carefully selected group of prospective development organizations. One or a small group of the most qualified firms should be selected and asked to respond to the RFP. If there are multiple responses, the best firm and proposal should be selected. Negotiations would then proceed toward a development agreement. The selected developer should be the best

available and be given responsibility for planning, designing, financing, building and managing the resulting mixed-income community.

- Finally, and perhaps most important, is that an alliance between the Housing Authority of New Orleans, the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the residents of Iberville be actively engaged in and committed to the transformation of Iberville in the mutual best interest of all stakeholders.



Proposal for mixed-use development along Canal Street at North Villere Street

The development of a full concept proposal for Iberville is beyond the charge of the Consultant Team. However, this third Demonstration Action Area was chosen to give consideration to the concept of revitalization of Iberville and what it can mean to the future of Canal Street. The target blocks 187 and 158 were selected as an optimum site to illustrate a development scenario that addresses two key objectives. The first is to provide new homes and apartments that will relate to Canal Street while being part of an expanded and revitalized Iberville community. The second, but equally important, objective of the team was to show how the new Iberville residential community could meet and be integrated with the future growth of the Medical Center on the French Quarter side of Canal Street. To accomplish these objectives, a development concept is presented with the following key elements:

Block 187 - Townhouses and Mixed-use Frontage Building

New Townhouses, Prototype of Revitalized Iberville:

18 two-story units w/ 2 BR, 1.5 baths
1,500 s.f. / unit, 27,000 s.f. total
Off-street parking at 2 spaces per unit

Mixed Use Building, facing Canal:

Ground level retail/commercial -
16,940 s.f. with 2,000 s.f. community center

Upper level apartments, 4 levels above ground -
12 - 1 BR units @ 980 s.f.
4 - 2 BR units @ 1,100 to 1,200 s.f.
67,760 s.f. total residential, 64 units

Block 158 - Townhouses and Medical Mixed-use Frontage Building

New Townhouses, Prototype of Revitalized Iberville:

12 two-story units w/ 2 BR, 1.5 baths
1,500 s.f. / unit, 18,000 s.f. total
Off-street parking at 2 spaces per unit

Mixed-use/Medical Building, facing Canal:

5 levels at 21,750 s.f. each, 108,750 s.f. total
Parking Garage, 3 levels, 170 spaces

This suggested development program for two abutting city blocks between Canal Street and Iberville seeks to build a land use “bridge” between the two worlds of the New Orleans Regional Medical Center across Canal and a revitalized Iberville community. The transition housing component includes thirty town homes

together with a 64 unit, mid-rise apartment building facing Canal Street, between N. Robertson and N. Villere Streets. The ground level of this 5 story building would be allocated to retail shopping and service uses targeted to serve the needs of residents, employees, and nearby businesses.

The mixed-use character of the target area development program is rounded out with a 5 story medical office and research building that would also front on Canal Street, between N. Villere Street and Marais Street. Behind this building and between it and townhouses facing Iberville Street is a 5 level, 170 space parking garage that addresses the parking needs of occupants of both blocks. The net result is a complex of new buildings and uses that capitalizes on this unique location on Canal Street by drawing on the resources and market demands created by surrounding residential, medical, research and development, and entertainment uses and businesses.

CONCLUSION



The overall benefit to be anticipated from implementation of the Vision is for Canal Street to become a major catalyst for increased prosperity and an enhanced quality of life for the residents of New Orleans. A key step toward this end will be to join the Medical Center's plans for growth with the opportunity to transform the Iberville residential development into a mixed income neighborhood to revitalize upper Canal Street. The combination of a desirable neighborhood and a source of high quality jobs focused on Canal Street will then provide a setting for high tech jobs and businesses to flourish.

The corridor's hospitality industry is burgeoning and projected to grow further as Canal Street

asserts its crucial location between the convention center, downtown business activity, and the unique international draw of the French Quarter. Combined with improvements to downtown area neighborhoods, hotel patronage and residential demand can drive a dramatically improved retail climate on the corridor. Likewise, an increased sense of comfort and security will allow the intersections of Basin and Rampart Streets to flourish with a concentration of entertainment venues, a major new theme museum, restaurants and clubs that draw patrons from the nation as well as the region.

The future, therefore, should see both expansion and upgrades in retail and entertainment offerings

on the ground floor of Canal Street's historic commercial buildings. A central retail management system can then facilitate the transformation which, in turn, will expedite hospitality and residential growth.

Market forces clearly point to the adaptive reuse of Canal Street's historic upper floors to loft residential and additional hospitality lodging. The challenge, of course, is to overcome important physical, ownership and economic impediments that make these spaces functionally obsolete today.

Streetscape improvements are of critical importance to fostering positive change

throughout the corridor. They will provide a quality setting that is shared by businesses, institutions, residents, employees and visitors alike. Part of this initiative should be a set of adjustments to the curb line of the street that will create effective opportunities for tree planting, pedestrian amenities, and more efficient provisions for short-term parking, taxi service and tour buses – while still preserving two through-lanes of traffic in each direction.

A great deal of private investment has and will continue to take place on Canal Street and a great deal more is pending. Fortunately, New Orleans has access to many of the tools and

incentives necessary to encourage and exploit these market forces. With appropriate coordination and selected additions and refinements, these tools can be readily and quickly brought to bear to enable desired investment.

The Vision for Canal Street and the recommended Development Strategy for its realization are designed to create a new atmosphere of certainty and resolve that will foster the changes necessary to realize that vision. Canal Street will then reclaim its position as New Orleans "Main Street" – beloved by its residents and admired by others.

