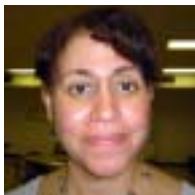**10.20.04**

CENTRAL CITY RENAISSANCE ALLIANCE

WORKING TOWARD SOLUTIONS

COMMUNITY PLAN

Central City Renaissance Alliance
"Working Toward Solutions"
A Community Plan

Sponsored by:

City of New Orleans Mayor's Office

The City's Division of Housing and Neighborhood Development

The Ford Foundation

The Annie E. Casey Foundation

The Reily Foundation

Robert & Eustis Reily

Harrah's New Orleans Casino

The Lamarr Family Foundation

Prepared by Concordia LLC
Fall 2004

Central City Renaissance Alliance
"Working Toward Solutions"
A Community Plan

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I. Executive Summary

The Central City Renaissance Alliance (CCRA) is a community planning initiative commissioned by the City of New Orleans to create a plan that would guide the City in delivering services and providing resources to address the community's needs. This initiative also created an opportunity to coordinate on-going initiatives while strengthening the leadership base in the community. The City, with support from national and local foundations, contracted Concordia LLC to initiate the community planning process. This process engaged Central City's residents and stakeholders in an authentic dialogue that involved sharing ideas, concerns and strategies to develop a comprehensive community plan for the neighborhood's future.

To successfully develop quality of life recommendations for the Central City community, a Steering Committee of participants was asked to commit three hours per month for nine meetings to complete the CCRA Community Plan. The process began in January 2004 and finished in September 2004. Participants included residents, nonprofit organization staff, artists, merchants, religious leaders, municipal employees, students and educators.

The CCRA Community Plan calls for greater communication, coordination and cooperation between elected officials, governing bodies, public agencies, private organizations and regional entities. The CCRA Steering Committee recommendations presented in this report are organized within the following themes: Strengthen Community Connections; Telling the Community Story; Housing in the Community; Community Beautification; Employing the Community and Community Wealth Building; An Educated Community; and A Healthy and Safe Community.

The CCRA Community Plan will guide the community, in partnership with the City of New Orleans, the New Orleans Public Schools and local governing entities in leveraging existing resources and assets. These activities will allow Central City to meet ongoing and emerging community needs and concerns to improve the quality of life for its residents. The CCRA Community Plan proposes ways in which all Central City residents can benefit from programs that promote community connectivity, address social issues, celebrate the neighborhood's culture and heritage, and prioritize the maintenance, development and use of the community's physical resources.

Finally, the process has also brought together a cohesive and diverse group of Central City citizens who are motivated and committed to continuing to work for the neighborhood's prosperity and success. This group operating as an Action Team will sustain the project's momentum by overseeing the implementation of the recommendations and communicating their progress to the broader community.

II. Introduction

The Steering Committee defined the boundaries of Central City's as Toledano Street/Louisiana Avenue to the Pontchartrain Expressway, and North Broad Street to Saint Charles Avenue. This area is contained within Planning District Two (Central City/Garden District) in the New Orleans City Planning Commission's 1999 Land Use Plan. A vibrant and economically, racially, and ethnically mixed neighborhood as late as the 1950s, Central City – which borders the Central Business District – became a textbook case for inner-city woes, an area of concentrated poverty plagued by crime and blight.
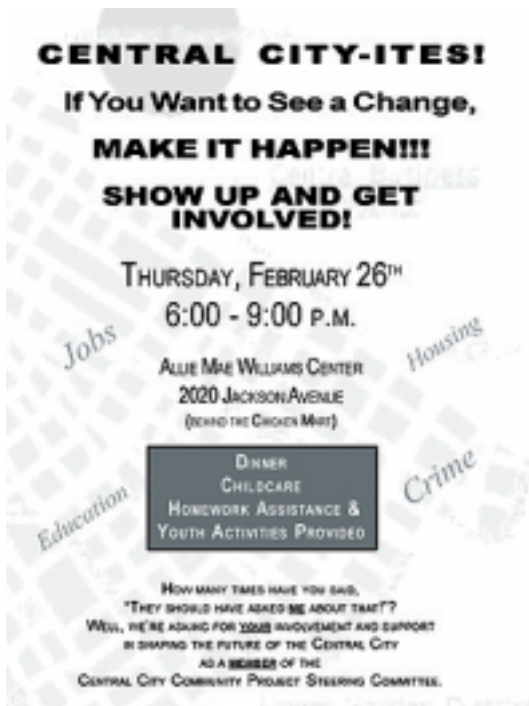
An historic New Orleans neighborhood with roots that go back to the 19th Century, Central City began to be developed in the 1830s to accommodate workers and servants for the businesses and mansions of the 19th century American Sector of New Orleans, which stretched as far up-river as Felicity St. The City of Lafayette extended farther up-river to Toledano Street. Incorporated in 1832, it became a part of the City of New Orleans in 1852.

Beginning with the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, the American Sector gradually developed as the commercial center of New Orleans, attracting working-class residents, including Irish, German, Italian, and other immigrants, as well as African Americans. Large numbers of domestics – cooks, laundresses, seamstresses, house servants, gardeners, and chauffeurs – lived near their employers, the bankers, industrialists, and others of the wealthier classes who lived in the elegant homes of the Garden District. Originally, Carondelet and Baronne streets were also sites for mansions and their parterre gardens and orchards. The influx of workers employed at the New Basin Canal, train yards, and the gasworks (one of the first in the nation), however, created demands for worker housing and boarding houses that inevitably encroached on the larger homes. Eventually, by the 1920s, many were carved up into boarding houses and apartments. The majority of residential structures in Central City were one-story shotgun houses, either singles or doubles.

New Orleans was very much a working-class city, with powerful bi-racial unions, a vibrant and relatively wealthy black population, and a labor-based immigrant political machine. A British Board of Trade report published in 1911 noted that New Orleans was home to "a larger number of white and Negro people in very much the same economic position than in any other American city, or anywhere else in the world…" Census records indicate that Central City was a racially-mixed working class neighborhood. Through the 1950s, Central City remained a mixed neighborhood of Eastern European immigrants and blacks who were generally employed as small business owners or in the nearby industries.

During the first two thirds of the 20th century, Central City supported a strong black community, especially during the Civil Rights movement. Institutions such as the Dryades Street YMCA, founded in 1905, and the Free Southern Theater of the 1960s maintained the neighborhood's vitality. In addition to sports and

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CHILDCARE
HOMEWORK ASSISTANCE &
YOUTH ACTIVITIES PROVIDED

HOW MANY TIMES HAVE YOU SAID,
"THEY SHOULD HAVE ASKED ME ABOUT THAT?"
WELL, WE'RE ASKING FOR YOUR INVOLVEMENT AND SUPPORT
IN SHAPING THE FUTURE OF THE CENTRAL CITY
AS A MEMBER OF THE
CENTRAL CITY COMMUNITY PROJECT STEERING COMMITTEE.

Sunday afternoon "inspirational speeches," for decades the Y provided cultural enrichment and professional development for young men such as Andrew Young, Tom Dent, and Jim Singleton. Melpomene Street became Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard in 1977 and Dryades Street became Oretha Castle Haley Boulevard in April 1989, honoring national and local Civil Rights leaders and memorializing the neighborhood's Civil Rights past, which stretches back into the 1940s. Central City's commercial corridor, Oretha Castle Haley Boulevard, operated as a racially mixed and thriving business district that began in the 1830s. At its height in the 1940s and 1950s, there were more than 200 commercial establishments in business.

During the 1960s, the corridor was recognized as one of the few areas in New Orleans where African Americans could shop without harassment. Shopping here was so plentiful that people of all races and ethnicities came from all over the city to frequent these stores. Businesses along Dryades Street/Oretha Castle Haley Boulevard declined after the 1960s for many reasons including the integration of the other commercial areas around New Orleans prompted by the Civil Rights movement, white flight to the suburbs, and the decline of industrial activity nearby which had provided living wage employment to Central City residents.

Over the years, Central City has been severely affected by the plague of concentrated poverty, crime, and blight that has infected so many of our inner cities. Geographically, Central City is located between the Garden District, home to some of the south's most celebrated antebellum real estate, and the city's Central Business District. It has the potential to be one of Louisiana's prime growth and development districts. The neighborhood has a rich tradition of community-based activism that is evidenced by the large number of social, political, and cultural organizations that are still active and operating within its boundaries.

With its prime location, the revitalization and redevelopment of Central City is important to both its residents and to the well-being of New Orleans. At the same time, the historic fabric and the interests of the current residents must be balanced with redevelopment plans. After steadily declining through the 1970s and '80s, the neighborhood began its renaissance in the 1990s as local businesses, city government, and other entities began reinvesting, and the Central City Partnership was born. The arts institutions such as Ashe, Barrister's, and Zeitgeist occupy the old Kaufman's department store. Café Reconcile, Parkway Partners, and Kids' Café, among others, aim to address the needs of the area's youth, while a number of faith-based organizations seek to counter the ravages of drugs and crime. To effect lasting change, all segments of the community must commit to work together to articulate strategies for redevelopment, prioritize them, define action steps, and achieve them.

This area has been the focus of numerous previous studies with similar problem areas consistently identified. The City of New Orleans 1999 Land Use Plan community meetings noted them as:

·   Disinvestment, represented by blighted, vacant, and abandoned properties;

·   Concentrations of poverty and crime in and around public housing developments;

·   Proliferation of certain types of problematic uses (bars, package liquor stores) while there is an absence of needed stores and services (quality grocery stores, repair and personal services);

·   Increase in nonconforming uses due to the lack of enforcement of the existing regulations;

·   Lack of recreation and green space and bike paths;

·   Inadequate after-school and mentoring programs for youth.

The city's 1999 Land Use Plan proposed the development of a detailed neighborhood plan/study for the Central City neighborhood to recommend comprehensive strategies for addressing these complex problems of decay, vacancies and disinvestment.

In 2003, Concordia offered an innovative planning process to the recently elected mayor as a tool to help in the building of his vision for the city. It featured community involvement in developing a long-term revitalization strategy that considered not only the physical aspects of the Central City neighborhood, but also the interaction of its cultural, economic, educational, organizational, and social facets through long term strategic planning. Mayor Nagin identified Central City as a strategic improvement zone and pledged to support the effort if it was clearly evident that there was a broad based support for developing a plan using this process.

We began by demonstrating that the residents and stakeholders would be willing to "put in the work" in order for the City to commit its financial support. We also had to put together funding for the remaining cost of the project. Thanks to the generous support of The Ford Foundation, The Annie E. Casey Foundation, the Reily Foundation, Harrah's New Orleans Casino, and several local grantmakers, the Central City project was initiated. An innovative element, the Concordia Fellow, was developed for this project. This was a completely new dynamic for the process that offered a long-term investment for building leadership capacity not only in the Central City community but in the city at large. Community members were trained to assist in leading the planning process that would bring full voice to the table in mapping the direction for a neighborhood's future.

Over the past ten months, well over 200 people have taken this planning journey together for Central City. The final recommendations here may not seem earth shattering. In many cases they may be ideas people have heard before from city officials, school administration, planning bodies or social service agencies. The significance of these recommendations is that an unprecedented number of people who

are very invested in their community have come together to discuss, debate and agree on a direction for the neighborhood. Also, every participant understands that the implementation of these recommendations is not the sole responsibility of City government. There will need to be public and private cooperation as well as holistic thinking that maximizes all of the community's resources. There is also opportunity for philanthropic support, especially if genuine community participation is ongoing. This kind of collaboration is just what many foundations are seeking and rewarding. It just makes good sense.

The recommendations in this report will be shared with the Mayor, the City Council, city administration, and the City Planning Commission, as well as with the School Board and the Superintendent. They will also be shared with leadership organizations throughout the city. These recommendations fall under seven major themes. The citizens that have participated in this planning process will be the nucleus of the community's action team for implementing the action steps. It will be the community's responsibility to see that they are implemented and revised as appropriate over the coming years.

We gratefully acknowledge the source for much of the historical information are from Dorian Hastings, "Early Neighborhood Development in New Orleans: Neither New South Nor Old" Ph.D. dissertatioon, University of New Orleans, 2004 (see especially chapter 1, "Old South or Old City?"); and Kelly Weldon Medley, "Dryades Street/Oretha Castle Haley Boulevard; Remembrance and Reclamation," *New Orleans Tribune*, April 2001, pp.19-25.

III. Process

The Concordia Model is a highly organized community-based planning process that helps communities integrate a broad range of existing community assets to optimize activities and resources for community-wide learning, enrichment and development. Over the past 12 years, Concordia has been developing tools to promote comprehensive planning and design of facilities, school systems and neighborhoods in the context of the total community. These tools comprise the Concordia Model, which combines a democratic and participatory grassroots planning and engagement process with an integrated analysis of the community's *physical, cultural, social, economic, organizational* and *educational* assets and needs.

The Concordia Model emphasizes the tools and techniques of community organizing to engage groups of 100 or more community stakeholders in a planning and design process based on consensus and agreement. The Model also is facilitated by professionals and community leaders skilled in consensus building around sustainable solutions.

Work in Central City began with a research and organizing phase. This phase involved the creation of a community profile which included data, reports, studies and demographic information about the neighborhood. To assist in organizing the community, a Recruitment Team of community leaders was formed to help guide Concordia in recruiting local individuals to help lead the process as community facilitators (Concordia Fellows) and candidates for the Steering Committee. The Recruitment Team members are listed in the appendix.

With the Recruitment Team's assistance, Concordia selected seven community facilitators to be trained as Concordia Fellows and identified over 500 residents and community stakeholders to invite to participate on the Steering Committee. The Concordia Fellows came with a broad range of knowledge and expertise about community organizing, facilitation and more importantly an intimate knowledge about the Central City neighborhood. As they trained and learned the Concordia Model process for community planning, the Fellows made contributions to the planning initiative that helped to make this effort more tailored to the community's needs.

In Central City, over 200 residents and community stakeholders participated on the Steering Committee which met once a month over a nine month period. This group involved many residents, seniors, parents, merchants and youth as well as individuals who worked or worshipped in the neighborhood. While some individuals were recruited to ensure a diversity and balance of views, all citizens could attend the meetings and elect to join the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee members were responsible for attending as many meetings as possible and sharing their work and progress with those who are not able to participate.

Steering Committee members were led through a series of work sessions, learning, discussing and exploring ideas about building community. Working in six subcommittees each representing a community sector: social, cultural, educational, physical, organizational, and economic, community members identified, catalogued, and mapped community needs, assets and opportunities. Throughout the course of the nine Steering Committee meetings, individuals had the opportunity to assume additional responsibilities and leadership roles through participation as a Subcommittee Co-facilitator and on the Communications Tasks Force (CTF).

Each subcommittee selected two Co-facilitators that met with Concordia's staff prior to each Steering Committee meeting to become familiar with the meeting's agendas in preparation for moderating their group's discussions. Likewise, the CTF was comprised of two representatives from each subcommittee who met monthly to create a communication strategy for the project, a project name and logo. The project name selected by the CTF was the Central City Renaissance Alliance. For the logo, the group organized a contest to encourage more youth involvement in the process. The winning entry was designed by Monyea Washington.

A separate youth initiative was organized and managed by one of the Concordia Fellows that enabled the young participants to learn about neighborhood planning and contribute their thoughts and ideas in an environment among their peers. Approximately 60 young people attended sessions where they voiced their opinions and shared their concerns and hopes for Central City. The issues raised and solutions discussed were later given to the appropriate subcommittee of the Steering Committee for inclusion in the general discussion.

Prior to the Steering Committee making its final recommendations, each subcommittee member had several opportunities during the process to interact with the other subcommittees to learn about their work and provide any insights or ideas about the information being shared. The subcommittees then developed potential scenarios for Central City and reached consensus on a final set of recommendations. These recommendations were organized into seven themes with prioritized action plans for implementation. To monitor these plans and sustain the community's work, the Steering Committee formed an Action Team, consisting of Steering Committee participants and Concordia Fellows. The spirit of their commitment and principles that will guide their work is outlined in the Central City Community Manifesto created by the Steering Committee.

IV. Recommendations

Steering Committee Recommendations

The next sections in this report describe the final recommendations approved by the Central City Renaissance Alliance. These ideas are organized into seven themes that emerged during the planning process. These themes encompass a breadth of issues and ideas generated from the subcommittees studying the cultural, organizational, physical, economic, educational and social concerns of Central City.

7 Themes

- Strengthening Community Connections

- Telling the Community Story

- Housing in the Community

- Community Beautification

- Employing the Community and Community Wealth Building

- An Educated Community

- A Healthy and Safe Community

1. Strengthening Community Connections

- Create A Central City Community Directory
- Designate/Create Information Hubs
- Build Organizational Capacity

1. STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

"A chain is as strong as its links."

Everyone hopes for a strong and thriving community. Community connections are at the core of this desire. Organizations such as the Central City Partnership, Making Connections New Orleans and the Oretha Castle Haley Merchants Association have established communication channels that have enabled individuals and groups to gather, share information and work together. The Central City Renaissance Alliance recognized the importance of these connections and identified several important goals as a means of building and improving community connections. These include: a Community Directory, Information Hubs and Organizational Capacity.

A. Create Central City Community Directory

Central City has a wealth of resources from which to draw upon for services, education, activities, etc. Residents and visitors are not taking full advantage of these resources and access to the information is not readily available. Numerous participants in the planning process expressed the need for a particular list or directory. Upon review of all of the notes, it is apparent that a full service Community Directory would be a great tool for Central City.

The Central City Renaissance Alliance Steering Committee/Action Team should suggest which organization(s) would be best suited to take on this project. Systematic revisions on a regular basis should be included in the planning for creating such a directory.

This directory should be created with multiple means of cross-referencing and accessing information. Numerous organizations may have multiple listings as they provide many services. (See preliminary outline to the right.)

Preliminary Outline

**Central City Renaissance Alliance
Community Directory
Sample Table of Contents**

I. **Central City History
(Physical, Cultural, Social,
Organizational, Education,
Economic)**

II. **Organizations**
   A. Business
   B. Cultural Organizations
   C. Economic Development
   D. Educational
      i. Schools
         (public, private,
         parochial, preschool,
         higher education)
      ii. Adult Education
      iii. Literacy
         (reading, math,
         financial)
      iv. Vocational/Trades/
         Career
   E. Faith Organizations
   F. Financial Institutions
   G. Healthcare
   H. Housing
   I. Social Services

III. **Programs/Services**
   A. Business
   B. Cultural
   C. Economic Development
   D. Educational
   E. Faith Based
   F. Financial
   G. Healthcare
   H. Housing
   I. Social Services

IV. **Volunteers
(Individuals and
Organizations)**

V. **Community Calendar**

VI. **Central City Map**

Example: San Francisco's Community Services Directory (SFCSD) is a comprehensive listing of community organizations and the services they provide to people in San Francisco. It is a database which contains information about government agencies, health and human service providers, community-based organizations, neighborhood-oriented groups, merchants' associations, occupational associations, and organizations that offer arts and educational opportunities. It is designed to provide the most complete and up-to-date information that is accessible and easy to use.

Each organization and the programs it offers is given an information profile record; the profile includes, at a minimum:

• service provided

• location, hours of operation and phone numbers

• potential cost

• eligibility requirements for service

• public transportation to the site

Records are kept current by San Francisco Public Library staff, who contact each organization at least once each year to ensure that information about the organization is up-to-date and correct.

The SFCSD is available 24 hours/day on the Library's Web site. More information can found on the Library's Homepage at www.sfpl.org.

B. Designate/Create Information Hubs

The Central City Renaissance Alliance Committee can make recommendations as part of the community planning on potential sites that would serve as information hubs in the community. These sites can be located within existing facilities or information can be provided in kiosks/stands located throughout Central City. These information hubs should be designated on community maps as well. See Map 1 for locations suggested by the community.

Example: City Repair is an organization that began in Portland, Oregon. It assists citizens in creating public gathering places and creatively transforming their neighborhoods. Reclaiming urban spaces to create community-oriented places improves neighborhood communication, empowers communities and nurtures local culture. They encourage "Intersection Repair," the citizen-led conversion of an urban street intersection into a public square. This creates a focal point for the neighborhood, a place for community interaction and communication, and seasonal celebrations. Located in an area with high levels of pedestrian traffic, these spaces are ideal for a bulletin board where neighbors can post information about community events and news. More information can be found at www.cityrepairs.org.

C. Build Organizational Capacity

Churches, non-profits and other community-based organizations should be surveyed to catalogue general information about the various programs and services available to the community. This information would be beneficial for coordinating efforts, creating collaborative opportunities between organizations and allowing institutions to provide specific programs, avoiding unnecessary duplication; therefore, reducing competition for funding. See Map 2 for locations of churches in the community. Also see lists of churches and organizations in Central City.

Example: The Humboldt Park Empowerment Partnership (HPEP) in Chicago was formed to protect residents from displacement through gentrification and to improve the economic wellbeing of the disadvantaged community. Partnership members realized that both poverty and gentrification reflect conditions of powerlessness. Their focus became creating and channeling economic opportunities that would benefit community residents. To do this, the partnership built community capacity, leadership, and empowerment; this resulted in gaining a voice in the community's governance and accountability to the community itself.

HPEP practices "the politics of multiplication." In a given year, about 20 percent of the neighborhood residents actively participate in partnership activities, individually or through the 110 neighborhood organizations (block clubs, social service agencies, churches, schools, and others) that form HPEP.

HPEP is governed by a democratically elected Steering Committee, which is accountable to the community. All major policy decisions are made by democratic vote and smaller Action Teams are formed to tackle specific issues (such as education, economic development, housing, and youth development). The Partnership's members see themselves as matchmakers, creating ways to match the community's many assets with areas of need and/or potential leverage points. More information can be found at www.nnnn.org.

Central City List of Churches

Beulah Baptist Church
Buenavista Missionary Baptist Church
Castle Rock Community Church
Central City Christian Fellowship
Christian Love Baptist Church
Corinthian Baptist Church
First African Baptist Church
Greater Full Gospel Church III
Greater Macedonia Baptist Church
Greater Mt Rose Baptist Church
Greater St Stephen Baptist Church
Guiding Light Baptist Church
Holy Ghost Church Of God
Israel Baptist Church II
Jesus Christ-Rock Evangelistic Church
Louisiana Freedmen Missionary Church
Loving Four Baptist Church
Mars Hill Missionary Baptist Church
Miracle Faith Temple Pentecostal Church
Mount Everest Baptist Church
Mt Ararat Missionary Baptist Church
Mt Zion Lutheran Church
My Redeemer Missionary Baptist Church
New Zion Baptist Church
Outreach Of Truth Ministries
Phillippian Baptist Church
Second Bright Morning Star Church
Second Evangelist Missionary Church
Second Mount Calvary Baptist Church
Second Mt Everest Baptist Church
Second Nazareth Baptist Church
Second New Light Missionary Church
Second True Love Baptist Church
St John Institutional Baptist Church
St Paul Community Baptist Church
St. John Catholic Church
Star Hope Baptist Church
Third Rose Of Sharon Baptist Church
True Light Baptist Church
True Love Missionary Baptist Church
Urban Impact
Wesley United Methodist Church
Willing Workers Baptist Church
Back To The Bible Christian Fellowship
Berean Presbyterian Church
Bethlehem Lutheran Church
Community Church-God In Christ
Crescent Straight Light Missionary Baptist Church
Ebenezer Missionary Baptist Church
Evangelist Church
Fifth African Baptist Church
First Agape Baptist Church
First Church Of God In Christ
First Emanuel Baptist Church
First Street United Methodist
Greater Bright Morning Star Baptist Church
Greater Full Gospel Church
Greater Moses Missionary Baptist Church

Greater Mt. Sinai Baptist Church
Greater New Orleans Gospel Temple
Greater Salvation Missionary
Greater St. Matthews Baptist Church
Holy Ghost Church
Little St. John Baptist Church
Little Zion Baptist Church
Living Witness Community Social Services
Living Witness Ministries
Macedonia Baptist Church
Mt Bethel Baptist Church
Mt. Zion United Methodist Church
New Home Full Gospel Ministries
New Hope Baptist Church
New Saint Mark Baptist Church
Ora Vista Baptist Church
Payne Memorial A.M.E. Church
Peck United Methodist Church
Peoples United Methodist Church
Pilgrim Baptist Church
Pilgrim Rest Baptist Church #2
Pressing Onward Baptist Church
Progressive Baptist Church
Second Macedonia Baptist Church
Second Mt. Bethel Baptist Church
Second Mt. Carmel Baptist Church
St Matthews Baptist Church
St Philip Baptist Church
St. Mark Missionary Baptist Church
St. Monica's Catholic Church
St. Paul Spirit Divine
St. Thomas Missionary Baptist Church
Star Of Bethel Baptist Church
Star Of Bethel Mbc
Stronger Hope Baptist Church
Union Bethel A.M.E. Church
Walking In Victory Ministries
Ephesian Baptist Church
Gloryland Mt. Gillion Baptist Church
Holy Faith Temple Baptist Church
House Of The Eternal
Israelites Baptist Church
Jehovah's Witnesses
Kid Share Young Christian
Little Solid Rock Baptist Church
Living Witness Church
Providence Missionary Baptist Church
Pure Light Baptist Church
Second Morning Star Baptist
Second Mt. Triumph
Second New Pleasant Zion
Second Zion Baptist Church
St Francis De Sales Church
St John the Baptist Catholic Church
The Way Christian Center
United Most Worshipful Lodge
Watson Memorial Teaching Ministries

Organization List

A.L. Davis "Shakespeare" Park
Andrew H. Wilson Elementary
Ashe Cultural Arts Center
Associated Neighborhood Development
B.W. Cooper Resident Management
Barrister's Gallery 1/24
Booker T. Washington High School
Brown's Dairy
Café Reconcile
Carter G. Woodson Middle
Cement Masons & Plasters
Central City Child Dev Program
Central City Econ. Opportunity Corporation
Central City EOC Head Start Center
Central City Excellence in Elderly Care Senior Center
Central City Housing Development Corporation
Central City Multi Media Center
Central City Neighborhood Health
Central City Partnership
Central City Public Library
Central City Social Services
City Wide Day Care Center
Comprehensive Central City Initiative
Core South
Daughters of Universal Eastern
Delgado (job) Training Program
Diamond Security & Training
Dr. MW Mc Caleb Education Fund
Dryades Head Start
Dryades Street YMCA
Dryades YMCA School of Commerce
Dynasty Alternative School
Edna Pilsbury Clinic
Educate the Children Foundation
Emma B. Bromon Liberty House
Faith Cottage
Felicity Street Redevelopment Project, Inc.
Fields International Full Svc
First Bank & Trust CDC
First Evangelist Housing and Community Development Corporation
Gators
General Practice Clinic
Great Expectations Foundation
GUSTE Homes Resident Mgmt Corp.
GUSTE Resident Council
Holy Ghost School
Hope Credit Union
James M Singleton Charter Middle School
Job 1 Adult Career Center
Johnson Barnes Community Center

Juvenile Justice Project of LA
Kaliope, LLC
Kid smART
Kids Café
Living Witness Commun. Soc. Se
Living Witness Ministries
M W St Andre Grand Lodge
Magnolia Food Co-op
Mahalia Jackson Elementary
Making Connections New Orleans
Martin Luther King Community Outreach
Multi Service Center for the Homeless
Murphy Macaleb Educ. Foundation
Myrtle Banks Elementary School
National Council of Negro Women
Neighborhood Development Foundation
Neighborhood Gallery
Neighborhood Housing Services
New Hope Community Based Tutorial
New Orleans Health Corporation
New Orleans Jobs Initiative
New Orleans Mission
New Orleans Neighborhood Development Collaborative - Central City Neighborhood Demonstration Project
New Orleans Public Library, Central City Outreach Center
New Vision CDC
Parkway Partners
Rosenwald Community Center
Shepherd's Flock Shelter
Sixth District Police Station
Sophie B. Wright Middle
St. John the Baptist Church & Soc. Servi
St. John the Baptist Community Center
TCA Dryades Head Start
The New Orleans Mission/Refuge Women's Shelter
Thomy Lafon Elementary
Total Community Action
Tulane/Xavier National Center for the Urban Community
Turning Point Partners
Urban Impact
Van McMurray Park
Wiliam J. Guste Elementary
William J Guste Sr Home
Young Leadership Council
Zeitgeist/Barrister's Arts Center

2. Telling the Community Story

- Develop Cultural Tourism Based on Central City′s Story
- Create an Appreciation for Central City′s Heritage Among its Residents

2. TELLING THE COMMUNITY STORY

"Let the story be told."

Many great storytellers in Central City bring the excitement of days gone by, of a Central City that has the richness of the Second Line, Mardi Gras, music and other gifts. Over the years, the community's main boulevard, Oretha Castle Haley, has become home to several stable and growing organizations whose programming and activities have created a strong sense of hope and possibility for the boulevard. These organizations include Living Witness COGIC, Ashe Cultural Art Center, Café Reconcile, Central City Economic Opportunity Corporation, the Neighborhood Gallery, Barristers Gallery, Zeitgeist Theater, Urban Impact, St. John the Baptist Community Center and the Dryades YMCA. The group seeks to celebrate and share its cultural heritage with all who reside and visit this vibrant neighborhood.

A. Develop Tourism Based on Central City's Story

Central City has contributed greatly to the culture of New Orleans. It has been the home of notable members of the city's jazz and blues traditions and Mardi Gras Indian tribes, the economic and healthcare center for the African-American community through the mid-20th century, and a place inspiring the creativity of its natives expressed through the visual and performance arts. This rich history can provide the basis for attracting cultural tourism.

Businesses and community development corporations should work cooperatively to develop neighborhood festivals, performance spaces for artists and storytellers, music showcases, workshops on traditions such as the Mardi Gras Indians, historic tours with guides dressed a significant historical characters, and destinations such as the Cultural Emporium and the Civil Rights Museum. This critical mass of cultural activities should be marketed locally, nationally, and internationally. See Map 3 for significant sites identified by the community.

A "heritage trail" honoring the accomplishments and struggles of African-Americans in the state is expected to be in place by the end of 2005. Louisiana has appropriated $150,000 for the development of the trail, which will include historic and cultural sites in the African-American community and be linked through state promotions and informational material for tourists. The project is being developed in conjunction with a proposed civil rights museum in New Orleans. The state currently has earmarked $500,000 for the planning of the museum and another $3.64 million for construction. The acting director for the civil rights museum has identified the Myrtle Banks School in Central City as the prospective site for the museum.

The Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism is the state agency that oversees tourism promotion, libraries, the arts and state parks. Its recently developed five year strategic plan focuses on better coordination of promotion efforts for tourism related business sectors. A cultural economic summit to emphasize the business of music, food and arts indigenous to the state will convene in New Orleans December 9 and 10, 2004. Attendance by representatives of Central City's Merchants Association, Ashe, and the Central City Partnership is important to ensure Central City's assets are included in the state's tourism plans.

B. Create an Appreciation for Central City's Heritage Among its Residents

Central City's rich heritage and traditions can instill pride in the accomplishments of African-Americans in our young and can provide the basis for teaching skills.

Organizations should sponsor after-school and weekend activities emphasizing local strengths such as the Mardi Gras Indians traditions and techniques, visual and performance arts, and African-American history.

Bonds across generations should be created by using the knowledge and talents of older residents to teach the area's heritage to the younger generation.

Example: Cultural Tourism DC (CT/DC) is a grassroots, nonprofit coalition of more than 125 arts, heritage, cultural, and community organizations throughout Washington, DC. In conjunction with the 14th and U Main Street program, they created a Heritage Window Display program for U Street, the center of the city's African American social, civic, and cultural life during the first half of the 20th century. Using U Street storefronts, historic photographs are displayed to spotlight the neighborhood's story. By taking U Street's history off the shelf and visually bringing it to the street, neighborhood residents and visitors experience the vitality associated with an important chapter in African American history. With the pilot stage complete, Cultural Tourism will initiate a youth apprenticeship program to create Heritage Window Displays at additional locations. More information on CT/DC is available at www.CulturalTourismDC.org.

3. Housing in the Community

- Manage Gentrification
- Improve the Quantity of Decent, Affordable Housing

3. HOUSING IN THE COMMUNITY

"Home is where the heart is."

The residents in Central City hold such a genuine commitment to saving their community, the group feels that by working with organizations such as First Evangelist Housing CDC, the Neighborhood Development Foundation, New Orleans Neighborhood Development Collaborative and other faith-based, private and public housing groups the community can assure safe, clean and affordable housing for all its residents.

A. Manage Gentrification

Renewed economic interest in New Orleans has led to more redevelopment in Central City. The heightened demand for property within the neighborhood lays the foundation for community revitalization. It creates demand for retail and commercial enterprises and improves the property tax base in the city. Neighborhood deterioration and abandonment is reversed. Longtime residents of Central City want to benefit from the revitalization of the area. However, the redevelopment of housing for middle and upper income families creates substantial price increases for housing. Blighted property is held in speculation of rising property values. Renters are at risk of being priced out by rising rents and homeowners are at risk of being unable to afford higher property taxes due to increased valuations. Additionally, new residents with no connection to the area may not preserve cultural landmarks and traditions.

Community development corporations should focus their efforts on improving home ownership and retention efforts for current residents. Innovative approaches to lowering the cost of home ownership should be researched. A program facilitating lease-to-own for current renters should be instituted. A directory should be created listing community development corporation owned properties and preference for their purchase should be given to current residents. Organizations in the community should increase outreach efforts for education on the home buying process. An organization should take responsibility for creating a program to walk potential homebuyers through the process from start of developing financial resources and credit through the finish of closing on the house and maintaining the property.

Example: One means of reducing the cost of home ownership and improving the sustainability of affordable housing is the establishment of a community land trust (CLT). A CLT is a non-profit organization that aids people in owning their own home. CLTs may develop housing themselves or may hold land beneath housing produced by other non-profit developers. Buildings are owned by those who use them but the land is held permanently by the land trust so that it will always benefit the community. When a CLT sells homes, it leases the underlying land to the homeowners through a long-term (usually 99-year) renewable lease. This allows the residents and

their descendants the right to use the land for as long as they wish to live there. The mortgage amount is only for the value of the house. When CLT homeowners decide to move out of their homes, they can sell them. However, the land lease requires that the home be sold either back to the CLT or to another lower income household, and for an affordable price. Each CLT designs its own resale formula - to give homeowners a fair return for their investment, while keeping the price affordable for other lower income people. The land lease requires that owners live in their homes as their primary residences. When homes are resold, the lease ensures that the new owners will also be residents and not absentee owners. More information can be found at www.iceclt.org/clt/index.html.

B. Improve the Quantity of Decent, Affordable Housing

Central City is a community of older housing stock. These exemplify traditional nineteenth and early twentieth century architecture and reflect the building trades in which many residents were skilled, but many buildings are suffering from neglect. Additionally, there are many vacant lots in the community which create an appearance of blight.

For residents who require maintenance, an organization should undertake the development of a directory of volunteers/local workers, their skills, and contact information. Youth Build should be invited into the community to provide maintenance while training residents in the building trades. An organization should also develop a donor warehouse, similar to the Green Project, where leftover building materials could be delivered for reuse by others in the community. The process of returning blighted and adjudicated property to economic use should be expedited.

Example: Southside Neighborhood Housing Services of Minneapolis has developed a service contract home-repair service for targeted neighborhoods with many low-income homeowners. Deferred maintenance in older homes was undermining the investment level in the neighborhoods. When repairs became overwhelming owners walked away, losing their investment and creating a problem for the neighborhood. The costs of early intervention are offset by the benefit of avoiding abandonment.

In order to break this cycle, Home Owners Prevention Service (HOPS) was developed. All homeowners in the target neighborhoods are eligible to participate in HOPS regardless of their income. Homeowners sign a service contract with NHS and pay a monthly fee based on their income. Enrollment in HOPS process includes a maintenance inspection. This complete assessment of the interior and exterior of the house lists the scope of work required to cure maintenance defects. HOPS covers a wide range of maintenance items and supplies the labor and repair materials, such as nails, screws, putty and spackle. Members pay for the cost of replacement materials, such as glass, drywall, shingles, hardware and lumber. NHS employs two full-time staff people who carry out these repairs. Recently, NHS partnered with Youth Build and Americorps to partner maintenance crews consisting of an adult trainer and two youth apprentices.

Originally, HOPS was expected to be self-supporting. However, the monthly service contract fee covers only a portion of costs. Additional support has been received from the McKnight Foundation ($50,000) and from the Emma B. Howe Foundation (two grants of $25,000 each). The 3M Corporation donated a van for the program's use. A home-maintenance program like HOPS, if it is going to serve a low-income population, has a very limited chance to become self-sufficient. The NHS is assessing those businesses which might have an interest in stemming deferred maintenance such as property and casualty insurers, and will be developing an approach to them. More information can be found at www.nw.org.

4. Community Beautification

- Reduce the Appearance of Blight in the Community and Involve the Community in Brownfield Redevelopment
- Make Parks More Usable for People in the Community
- Enhance Major Thoroughfares

4. COMMUNITY BEAUTIFICATION

"Trash your city, trash yourself."

Everyone wants to work, play and pray in a community that is free of litter, overgrown lots and blight. Central City residents and community members seek a clean beautiful area with community gardens, redeveloped brownfields, and more parks which will be adopted by organizations. In addition, they want enhanced major thoroughfares. A local group, Parkway Partners Program, Inc., has had city-wide success in assisting communities with neighborhood beautification endeavors.

A. Reduce the Appearance of Blight in the Community and Involve the Community in Brownfield Redevelopment

Trash and overgrown lots detract from the appearance of the community, discourage economic development, and detract from community pride. Businesses and organizations in the community should adopt a block to clean and beautify. Permission should be obtained from the owners of vacant lots to create community gardens, beautifying the area and improving its economic value. Additional community gardens may be established at the site of vacant/blighted properties if there are neighbors willing and able to maintain and care for the gardens once established. Where a community garden is not feasible, neighbors and businesses can be recruited to mow and pick up trash from the lots on a regular basis. Parkway Partners can provide guidance to organizations, businesses, and neighbors on adoptions, maintenance and community gardens.

Throughout New Orleans there are many brownfield sites where previous industrial or commercial properties have been abandoned or underused. In redeveloping these brownfield sites, the City should continue to create the opportunity for community input and involvement. In particular, the project participants request that the redevelopment of the Saratoga Street incinerator site include recreational opportunities other than basketball (e.g., tennis). See Map 4 for locations of existing and proposed community gardens, as well as the Saratoga site.

Example: In Long Beach, California, the city's Neighborhood Services Bureau has established a Neighborhood Clean-Up Assistance Program. This is a City program that provides materials and supplies to community organizations and volunteer groups to clean up their neighborhoods. Volunteer groups can improve the appearance of their neighborhoods by conducting activities such as a graffiti paintout, alley clean-up, or trash and weed removal from vacant lots. The city provides the paint, tools, brooms, shovels, rakes, gloves, and trash bags, and even a dumpster to help accomplish the clean-up. Two weeks notice is required for coordination of the supplies. The program is supported by Community Development Block Grant funds.

Long Beach also faces the challenge of redeveloping a brownfield into a recreational complex. Funding is provided through a voter-approved bond issue. Planned features include a skate park, soccer fields, playgrounds, multi-use covered pavilion, and a youth golf training facility, providing a demonstration of activities other than basketball which might be included in a redevelopment of the Saratoga Street incinerator site.More information on these programs can be found at: http://www.ci.long-beach.ca.us/cd/neighborhood_services/

The United States Tennis Association (USTA) Tennis and Education Foundation offers grants for programs that successfully combine tennis and education and help children grow to be productive citizens. More information on their community tennis programs can be found at www.usta.com/communitytennis/.

B. Make Parks More Usable for People in the Community

There are open spaces in the community which are currently underused because of a lack of facilities, or due to perceived safety issues. Organizations and businesses should adopt these spaces and work with residents to create attractive options for active and passive reaction. They should also survey lighting and view lines to develop recommendations for improvements to increase safety. City departments should enforce existing regulations for appropriate commercial uses near recreational and school facilities. The city should also consider neighborhood developed priorities in funding recreational improvements. See Map 5 for sites of existing parks and the site proposed by the community.

Example: The city of Lawrence, Massachusetts has instituted a park improvement plan. Survey forms were developed and distributed to neighborhood associations. The associations completed the surveys to document conditions in the nearby parks and to offer recommendations for improvements to each location. The city's Office of Planning and Development is tasked with collecting the surveys and using the data to develop the Park Improvement Plan. This plan creates a prioritized list of improvements and identifies a schedule for construction, funded by a Community Development Block Grant. More information can be found at www.cityoflawrence.com/Planning/NeighborhoodAssociations.

C. Enhance Major Thoroughfares

Corridors along major commercial and residential areas in the community provide the first impression that visitors and residents have of the community. Key corridors should be designated for street improvements and maintenance. A liaison should be created between a council of businesses and neighborhood organizations and the community's city council representative to ensure neighborhood priorities are acted upon. Local artists working with students should create more murals along key corridors to beautify the area and educate the viewers. See Map 6 for major thoroughfares identified by the community.

Example: The City of New Orleans' 1999 Land Use Plan allows for design overlay districts. An overlay district is an area within a larger zoned area where specific features of appearance outside of the existing zoning ordinance are to be addressed. These may include landscaping requirements, signage restrictions for businesses, and façade guidelines. When used along major transportation corridors, a design overlay can present a unified identity to visitors and strengthen residents' pride in the culture of the area. New Orleans has used design overlays in areas such as Bullard Avenue and use overlays in areas such as the recently designated Frenchmen Street Arts and Cultural Overlay District. More information can be obtained by contacting the City Planning Commission staff.

5. Employing the Community and Community Wealth Building

- Create a Job Resource Center
- Improve Access to Financial Services and Resources
- Create an Environment that Supports New, Small and Growing Businesses

5. EMPLOYING THE COMMUNITY AND COMMUNITY WEALTH BUILDING

"Give a person a fish and he eats for a day, but teach him how to fish and he eats for a lifetime."

Jobs make for independence and pride. Recognition of the high number of underemployed adults in Central City highlights the need to create sustainable jobs. A commitment to wealth building and job creation linked to the resources to support these goals will have positive impacts in many areas of the community including crime reduction, increased self-esteem, and reduced dependence on public assistance income. As noted in the Committee for a Better New Orleans' 2000 report, "A Blueprint for a Better New Orleans," essential economic development strategies for the city include a neighborhood approach to economic development and support for entrepreneurial development. The Central City Renaissance Alliance seeks to create a job co-operative that will complement ongoing efforts by organizations like the Dryades YMCA, Cafe Reconcile and New Orleans Job Initiative. Additionally, beyond the various wealth building initiatives and home buyer education programs, improved access to financial services and resources are needed for individuals, entrepreneurs and small businesses.

A. Create a Job Resource Center

Central City has a high number of underemployed adults and a significant number of residents in low-paying jobs. There is need to create a job resource center to provide greater access to training programs and local employment opportunities. The resource center would establish a network with local employers and community development projects to enable local laborers to be closely tied to jobs that will build skills and work in the community. Grassroot channels should be used to promote the resource center and other existing opportunities. The CCRA Action Team should work with existing training and job readiness programs to explore the opportunities for collaborating to create the resource center. For instance, the City's Job One program could meet this need by having a satellite location in the community.

The resource center should focus on jobs providing a livable wage to support one's ability to live and stay in Central City. For instance, the city's Job One program could meet this need by having a satellite location in the community. Total Community

Action also offers an Employment Development Center and a youth work experience program; opportunities to expand the activities of these programs at its Central City location should be investigated by the Action Team.

Example: The Cleveland Center for Employment Training (CET) is a nonprofit organization currently offering specialized open-entry and open-exit training programs for occupations in high demand by local business. Local governments provide over 90 percent of the program's budget, and area firms play a key role in course design and instruction. More information can be found at www.cetweb.org.

The Milwaukee Career Cooperative is a nonprofit, temporary-to-permanent employment agency working in five inner-city neighborhoods in Milwaukee. A job developer works to find temporary job openings that can lead to permanent employment after no longer than a 90-day period. Candidates from the five neighborhoods, who are screened and provided job retention training, apply for the openings. The cooperative receives a service fee from the employer as would a private employment agency. The fee accounts for approximately 75 percent of the program's costs; the remainder is covered by foundation and government sources. More information can be found at www.nfg.org.

B. Improve Access to Financial Services and Resources

Central City needs full service financial institutions in the community to conveniently meet the banking, savings, and finance needs of residents, businesses and faith-based organizations. With the support and encouragement of Making Connections New Orleans, national and local philanthropies, the Enterprise Corporation of the Delta will open a Hope Community Credit Union branch in Central City that will provide a range of financial products and services for individuals and businesses. Additionally, local banks and financial institutions should be approached to locate in Central City. The Action Team should identify financial institutions with products for small or disadvantaged business enterprises and entrepreneurs. Furthermore, as a part of improving the community's financial literacy, these institutions should demonstrate their support of Central City residents and community by implementing, sponsoring or promoting programs that partner with schools such as Junior Achievement.

Current banking institutions servicing Central City residents, businesses and organizations should be held accountable for ensuring that there is equal access to all banking products and services as well as assistance provided for training and educating the community on financial literacy.

Example: Operation HOPE, a national non-profit self-help organization, seeks to bring economic self-sufficiency and a sustained spirit of revitalization to America's inner city communities. The organization operates HOPE Banking Centers. These are separately incorporated, California for-profit corporations, operated as independently chartered subsidiaries of the non-profit parent organization. The centers are "one stop" model locations offering counseling, check-cashing, utility bill payment and limited access to traditional banking services for under-served communities. In September 2002, California National Bank and Hawthorne Savings Bank bought two of the centers and converted them to full-service bank branches. With their purchase by federally insured institutions, the two centers will be able to offer a standard menu of bank services - including checking accounts, loans and certificates of deposit-in areas where many residents' choices have been limited to costly check-cashing businesses. More information can be found at operationhope.org.

C. Create an Environment that Supports New, Small and Growing Businesses

Central City is a neighborhood with a large pool of gifted and talented individuals. Considering the neighborhood's proximity to City Hall, the Central Business District and major universities, Central City has an opportunity to attract and promote community economic development through developing an environment that supports new, small and growing businesses. This also provides an opportunity to address issues of underemployment through the creation of new jobs and support of entrepreneurial efforts. Establishing the appropriate structures and services for building an environment and culture of innovation and enterprise enables the community to send the message that it welcomes and supports entrepreneurs and small business owners. It is recommended that a system is created that connects small business owners and entrepreneurs to the wide range of public, private and nonprofit resources available. For instance a small business incubator or resource center can be located in the neighborhood to assist individuals in growing their business or creating new enterprises similar to City's Music Co-Op endeavor with the Tipitina Foundation.

Example: Community Express is a pilot program of the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA). It combines small business loan guarantees from the SBA, targeted lending by select banks, and technical assistance from community-based organizations. The intent is to help entrepreneurs in traditionally under-served areas receive needed financing and expert guidance. SBA encourages lenders to make loans they would otherwise be reluctant to make, providing guarantee levels of 85 percent on loans of $150,000 or less, and 75 percent on loans of more than $150,000. The maximum loan amount is $250,000. Technical assistance is a key element because of its potential to reduce default and increase the success rate of small businesses. The community-based organizations can also aid lenders with community outreach and identifying new borrowers; many have extensive experience assisting low-income and minority borrowers. As part of their contribution to this community development effort, lenders compensate technical assistance providers for their services. More information can be found at http://www.sba.gov/financing/lendinvest/comexpress.html.

6. An Educated Community

- Improve Educational Experience for the Community's Youth
- Provide Lifelong Learning Opportunities
- Enhance and Improve Educational Facilities

6. AN EDUCATED COMMUNITY

"Native ability without education is like a tree without fruit."

Central City's most important resources are in the children and to fully develop them there must be standards and guidelines to improve the educational experience for the community's youth. A more active role by the community is needed to support the public schools that would also supplement the various tutoring and educational enrichment programs that are provided by organizations such as Living Witness COGIC, St. John the Baptist Church and KIDsmART. The learning process does not stop with youth, however. Lifelong learning opportunities are necessary with adult education programs. One comprehensive strategy underway to address the community literacy needs includes the Literacy Alliance being coordinated by Making Connections New Orleans. Additionally, every effort should be made also to enhance and improve educational facilities. See Map 7 for locations of New Orleans Public Schools in Central City.

A. Improve Educational Experience for the Community's Youth

Support the implementation of educational standards and guidelines for Central City's public schools through participation, advocacy, volunteering and parental involvement. Improve utilization and promote access to school, after-school and tutoring programs. The school district should consider curricula that considers alternative learning styles and experiential learning methods. Obtain a commitment from the school district to ensure that all school teachers are well trained and qualified.

Example: The Wallace Foundation funds Learning in Communities. This program is a city-based strategy aimed at ensuring that children, particularly from low- and moderate-income families, have meaningful participation in high quality programs outside school. High quality learning opportunities beyond the school day can powerfully benefit academic success and beyond. To millions of children, the absence of meaningful non-school enrichment activities means missed opportunities, boredom, or actual danger when school is out. The learning opportunities provided at such disparate places as urban parks, family literacy programs, museums and after-school programs are isolated from each other. And too often, inadequate attention is paid to ensuring that program quality drives the way scarce public and private resources are allocated.

Building on more than a decade of experience in supporting such learning opportunities in urban parks, libraries, literacy programs and museums around the country, The Wallace Foundation will work in a select number of cities to ensure that resources are directed only at programs that deliver high quality learning opportunities, and that children attend often enough to get positive benefits. A distinctive hallmark of Learning in Communities is its emphasis on leadership: rallying a wide range of political, business and community leaders around the importance of providing high-quality programs to children who need them most. The long-term impact of this work will come from the creation of more effective local systems of out-of-school learning opportunities that can sustain these programs when our funding ends.

Providence, Rhode Island, was selected in 2003 as the first Learning in Communities site. To support this work and develop knowledge that can benefit the field nationally, The Wallace Foundation has provided support to RAND Corporation to conduct research on Effective Out-of-School Learning: Evidence and Practical Knowledge. More information can be found at www.wallacefoundation.org.

Price Charities is committed to allocating a substantial portion of its charitable dollars to revitalizing City Heights, a low-income community in San Diego. One of the mainstays of the City Heights Initiative is improving educational opportunity in City Heights. To this end, Price Charities is funding an educational initiative that partners the San Diego State University School of Education, three City Heights Public Schools and the local teachers union to create a learning laboratory to improve education. The three local schools, Rosa Parks Elementary School, Monroe Clark Middle School and Hoover High School, operate as "community schools" wherein the schools provide comprehensive health and social services to students and their families. Specifically, each of the schools has full-time on-site nurses as well as on-site social workers who provide assistance to the students and families.

This comprehensive approach to educational improvement has resulted in significant improvement in standardized test scores and other important indicators of success.

More information can be found at www.pricecharities.com.

B. Provide Lifelong Learning Opportunities

Increase awareness of family and workplace literacy training and adult education programs available in the community. Organizations sponsoring the various learning programs should consider locations throughout the community to enable greater access for all residents.

Example: As part of the City Heights Initiative, the Mid-City Continuing Education Center opened its doors to the City Heights community in October 2000. Located in the heart of the neighborhood, across the street from the Weingart Library, the campus is operated by the San Diego Community College District.

The facility offers courses tailored to fit the needs of City Heights residents, including programs in adult literacy, English, and job training. The school also offers technical and occupational training to help make City Heights residents more marketable in the job market. The 58,400 square foot facility houses primarily classroom space with some room for support administration. The entry lobby is two stories with the large main circular staircase opening into the lobby to encourage interaction between students.

More information can be found at www.pricecharities.com.

C. Enhance and Improve Educational Facilities

In working with the school district and the City, the Central City Renaissance Alliance needs to develop a position statement for improving the educational facilities in Central City that also considers the opportunities to better serve the community.

Example: In November 2002, the National Clearinghouse for Education Facilities published a review of current school facilities research commissioned by the 21st Century School Fund. This review concluded that the physical condition of the school has a statistically significant effect on students' and teachers' ability to perform in the classroom. The physical condition of most New Orleans schools reflects a backlog of facilities improvements resulting from a scarcity of financial resources. In its 2000 report, "Blueprint for a Better New Orleans," the Committee for a Better New Orleans stated a program to fully modernize school facilities for the Orleans Public School District could require up to a billion dollars. Financing this sum solely through bond issues backed by property taxes is unlikely.   Public-private partnerships to finance the renovation or construction of school facilities have been successfully used in the District of Columbia. Developing innovative methods for school financing is one of the objectives of the Building Educational Success Together (BEST) initiative of the 21st Century School Fund. Funded by a grant from the Ford Foundation, The BEST initiative will focus on involving local communities in facility planning, making schools useable by their surrounding neighborhoods, and funding and management of school construction, modernization, and maintenance. More information can be found at www.21csf.org.

7. A Healthy and Safe Community

- Improve Awareness of Health Issues and Improve Access to Health Services
- Create a Safe and Secure Community

7. A HEALTHY AND SAFE COMMUNITY

"He who has health has hope, and he who has hope has everything."

Health issues and safety have an impact on everyone in the City and region. There is a need to educate the community on on-going and emerging health issues as well as preventative measures which should include alternative and traditional medicine approches and to establish affordable health clinics. The efforts under way at Carter G.Woodson Middle School to make mental health and other health services available to students and families should be supported and replicated.

In addition to the existing youth programs such as the Dryades YMCA, Weed & Seed and Urban Impact to name a few, there is a dire need to create a safe and secure community with help to youth for alternatives to violent behavior. See Map 8 for community identified violent crime hotspots and Map 9 for community identified drug hotspots.

A. Improve awareness of health issues and improve access to health services.

There is a need to educate the community on on-going and emerging health issues to aggressively promote a community in action for wellness. There is a need to establish affordable health clinics throughout the community to enable more residents to access healthcare services, including alternative practices. In addition to the availability of preventative and alternative heath and healing treatment modalities, clinical trails are needed to begin to establish statistical data on the efficacy of said approaches to healing.

Example: Columbia Presbyterian Hospital in New York City is one of the few insititutions in the country which has in recent years engaged in conductiong research on alternative healing including meditiation techniques, resulting in promising outcomes. The Complimentary Care Center established in 1993 uses a holistic approach as well as complementary and alternative medicines to help patients maintain a healthy lifestyle. For more information, visit http://www.rosenthal.hs.columbia.edu/.

B. Create a Safe and Secure Community

The 6th District Police Department should establish a more visible civilian presence in the community to build a closer and positive relationship with residents to foster community trust and cooperation. This could be achieved by having more officers patrolling the neighborhood on bikes and walking major intersections. Additionally, the City in collaboration with the community should promote and encourage homeownership by police officers in the neighborhood.

There is a need to provide the community's youth alternatives for violent behavior such as conflict resolution classes and more recreation opportunities. The youth should also be encouraged to participate in the various neighborhood watch groups.

Example: In 1998, a coalition of Milwaukee's business, government, education, and law enforcement leaders came together as the Youth Crime and Violence Task Force and set the goal of making streets safe places for kids and reducing crime by 20 percent. The task force, built on the Weed and Seed model, brought the police and community members together to identify crime problems in specific neighborhoods and ways to address them. Funded from private sources and government agencies, the Safe & Sound Initiative addresses crime and revitalization in 20 neighborhoods and consists of three major components: coordinated law enforcement; Community Partners, fulltime community organizers who bridge the gap between residents and government services; and Safe Places, sponsored by community-based and faith-based organizations, where children may go after school and on weekends to engage in various activities. In 2002, a Marquette University evaluation found that in the 20 Safe & Sound neighborhoods, violent crime had dropped from 1997 to 2001 by 43 percent, a greater decrease than experienced elsewhere in the city. More information can be found at www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ccdo.

V. Action Steps

Theme: Strengthen Community Connections

Recommendation * Prioritized Item	Action Steps	Time Frame (ideal)	Responsibility/ Partners
Create Central City Community Directory	• Form task committee; recruit members from local churches and community organizations	1 month	CCRA Action Team
	• Determine structure, categories, layout, etc.	1 month	CCRA Community Directory Task Committee for all following tasks
	• Determine quantities & competitive costs	1 month	NOTE: Suggested initial run of 10,000
	• Seek funding, grants	2 months	
	• Contact agencies, request info, cross reference services/listings	2 months	
	• Proof and prepare for printing	3 months	
	• Submit for reproduction/completion	4 months	
	• Solicit local businesses and organizations to provide distribution points for directory	4 months	
	• Develop system for directory	6 months	
	• Determine frequency of reprinting directory updates	6 months	
Create and Designate Information Hub	• Request businesses and organizations in central, accessible locations (identified in community charette) sponsor and maintain kiosk	2 weeks	CCRA Community Directory Task Committee for all tasks
	• Seek funding, grants	2 months	
	• Solicit local artists/craftsmen to design and build attractive kiosks	1 month	
	• Develop system for kiosk updates in collaboration with sponsoring organizations	1 month	

Theme: Telling the Community Story

Recommendation * Prioritized Item	Action Steps	Time Frame (ideal)	Responsibility/ Partners
Develop Tourism Based on Central City's Story	• Identify sites of cultural, architectural, and historic significance within Central City	2 months	Representatives of the Merchant's Association and the Central City Partnership
	• Identify sites for historical markers in Central City	4 months	Newly formed advisory committee for Central City's "cultural tourism district" designation for all tasks
	• Research requirements for placement of markers from LA Dept of Culture, Recreation, and Tourism	2 months	
	• Research funding opportunities (grants, sponsoring organizations) for historical markers	5 months	
	• Develop narratives that tie sites to each other to create themed historic walks	5 months	
	• Create materials promoting developed tourism themes	ongoing	
	• Collaborate with neighborhood entrepreneurs to develop services supporting tourism (i.e., restaurants, shops, performance spaces, etc)	2 months	
	• Contact Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation, and Tourism for grant opportunities and to publicize tourism initiatives	5 months	
Create an Appreciation for Central City's Heritage Among its Residents	• Utilize the Historic Dryades Street Tour to allow residents FREE tour for "in-training" tour guides (current plans underway for development)	10 tours over a 2 month period after tour is created	Central City Cultural Advisory Committee coordinate with Efforts of Grace and Living Witness to arrange tours; publicize through kiosks, churches, and neighborhood organizations
	• On a monthly basis, develop a narrative about a site, person, or cultural achievement to incorporate into school lesson plans	3 months and ongoing	Central City Cultural Advisory Committee in collaboration w/ School Superintendent's curriculum directors and principals/staff of Central City schools
	• Create awareness campaign and activities celebrating placement of historical markers	ongoing	Central City Cultural Advisory Committee
	• Create awareness among RESIDENTS of the impending Cultural Emporium and Civil Rights Museum, as well as existing Marcus Garvey Museum	2 months and ongoing	Central City Cultural Advisory Committee in collaboration w/ African American Heritage Preservation Council of Preservation Resource Ctr

Theme: Housing in the Community

Recommendation * Prioritized Item	Action Steps	Time Frame (ideal)	Responsibility/ Partners
* Manage Gentrification	• Ensure CDCs with the capacity to develop affordable housing are the beneficiaries of "quick take" process for acquisition of multiple blighted and adjudicated property (favored by shorter process for multiple parcels compared to a private developer or speculator)	1 year	Action Team work with NONDC and Department of Housing and Neighborhood Development to draft legislation Contact Mayor's Office and district representative to State Legislature to move toward enactment
	• Research requirements for tax abatement on increased property value of renovated housing	3 months	Action Team
	• Draft ordinance for abatement of increased property tax on renovated properties that provide affordable rental housing	6 months	Action Team, working with city departments, for presentation to Council by District representative
	• In considering zoning requests, give favorable consideration for variances for projects that are predominantly dedicated to affordable housing	12 months to research and draft proposed ordinance	NONDC solicit volunteers for task committee and coordinate committee City Planning Commission Staff be available as resource District representative on City Council present to council
	• Expand lease to own programs of CDCs through availability of CDBG funds	ongoing	NONDC act as clearinghouse for information on lease to own programs for CDCs; DNHD consider as priority for CDBG grants
	• Research new & creative modes of cooperative property ownership	6 months	Action Team collaborate with NONDC to develop information and act as clearinghouse for CDCs
* Improve the Quantity of Decent, Affordable Housing	• Mobilize resources for maintenance and repairs of owner-occupied property in Central City	6 months	Action Team work with NONDC to identify potential partners (Neighborhood Housing Services, Green Project, Youthbuild, etc)
	• Apply for designation as federal Renewal Community	1 year	Mayor's Department of Economic Development, prompted by District council member and district state representatives, with research conducted by Action Team and DHND
	• Neighborhood Housing Services of New Orleans (www.nhsnola.org) be contacted about coordinating a Home Owners Preventative Maintenance Service program in New Orleans.	4 months	Action Team NONDC

Theme: Community Beautification

Recommendation * Prioritized Item	Action Steps	Time Frame (ideal)	Responsibility/ Partners
* Involve the Community in Reducing Blight	• Solicit neighborhood volunteers from churches, schools, and other organizations for Property Survey Task Committee	2 months	Action Team
	• Provide training on standard property condition survey techniques	5 months	NONDC as provider or source of grant funds for trainer
	• Survey and plot blighted/abandoned/ substandard property with Central City block by block	6 months	Property Survey Task Committee
	• Develop prioritized recommendations of property to be demolished, redeveloped, or renovated	8 months	Action Team, in collaboration with NONDC and DHND
	• Allocate funds for prioritized properties	1 year	DHND
	• Promote the availability of Adjudicated property (signage on property)	6 months and ongoing	NORA
	• Promote City funded programs for minor repairs, roofing, and painting lotteries	ongoing	Action Team obtain information from DHND and publicize through churches, schools, and organizations
	• Solicit neighbors, businesses and organizations to adopt blocks or vacant lots for cleanup & maintenance	2 months	Action Team
Make Parks More Useable for People in the Community	• Develop a survey instrument to determine what park improvements would be used by community	6 months	Action Team in collaboration with Parkway Partners
	• Distribute surveys through schools, churches, and organizations and collect from these points	4 months	Action Team
	• Consolidate recommendations and forward to DHND and NORD	6 months	Action Team
Enhance Major Thoroughfares	• Identify key thoroughfares	1 months	Action Team, based on community charette
	• Create design guidelines for key thoroughfares (signage, landscaping, etc)	6 months	Action Team, working with Merchants Association, Cultural Advisory Team, volunteer landscape architects, and city planning commission staff
	• Enact design overlay zone for key thoroughfares	8 months	Action Team present to District representative to city council for endorsement and advocacy
	• Assist property owners in complying with design overlay guidance	ongoing	Action Team coordinate with Parkway Partners for landscaping
	• Prioritize road improvements in Central City for those thoroughfares	ongoing	Action Team coordinate with DHND for prioritization of infrastructure improvement funds

Theme: Employing the Community and Community Wealth

Recommendation * Prioritized Item	Action Steps	Time Frame (ideal)	Responsibility/ Partners
* Create Job Co-op	• Identify partners for Job Co-op	3 months	Action Team
	• Research planned development or business expansion projects	3 months	Chamber of Commerce Mayor's Office of Economic Development Central City EOC City Council Safety & Permits Dept.
	• Research job market growth and needs	3 months	
	• Research existing programs	3 months	
	• Work w/ the city office of workforce development to ensure training is provided to get employment	ongoing	Office of Workforce Development Goodwill Industries Department of (State & Federal) Existing community organizations
	• Establish a personal development program (i.e. job readiness and sustainability)	ongoing	
	• Research/Market (face-to-face) (flyers) resources to the Community for specific job related that relate to action step 1	ongoing	Action Team Existing community organizations Action Team
* Improve Access to Financial Services and Resources	• Apply for designation as federal Renewal Community	1 year	Mayor's Department of Economic Development, prompted by District council member and district state representatives, with research conducted by Action Team and DHND
	• Publicize credit rating counseling/ education services provided by CDCs through organizations, churches, and schools	ongoing	Action Team CDCs
	• Research and develop a micro-loan program for entrepreneurs	6 months	Action Team with assistance from Making Connections
	• Promote awareness of branch location of Hope Credit Union and its banking products	4 months and ongoing	Action Team Central City Partnership Making Connections CDCs

Theme: An Educated Community

Recommendation * Prioritized Item	Action Steps	Time Frame (ideal)	Responsibility/ Partners
* Improve Educational Experience for the Community's Youth	• Solicit volunteers through churches and neighborhood organizations to develop a Neighborhood Education Association	3 months	Action Team
	• Arrange at least quarterly meetings between Neighborhood Education Association and District School Board member Phyllis Landrieu to present neighborhood concerns and be informed of proposed board initiatives	4 months	Neighborhood Education Association
	• Research best practices in Internship/ Mentorship program with local businesses	6 months	Neighborhood Education Association, using JobOne and School Superintendent's staff as resources
	• Research "hands on" and "school in the community" best practices, to integrate school and community life	9 months	Neighborhood Education Association, with assistance from School Superintendent's staff
	• Emphasize certified, highly qualified teachers in neighborhood schools	4 months	Neighborhood Education Association coordinate with Phyllis Landrieu and School Superintendent's staff
	• Solicit local organizations to partner with schools to develop events and programs to increase parental presence and involvement with schools	9 months	Neighborhood Education Association

Theme: A Healthy and Safe Community

Recommendation * Prioritized Item	Action Steps	Time Frame (ideal)	Responsibility/ Parnters
	• Block Clean-up	4 months	Action Team
✱	• Solicit churches, schools, and organizations to adopt a block or blocks	4 months	Action Team
Create a Safe and Secure Community	• Coordinate supplies (garbage bags, gloves, tools, soft drinks, t-shirts)	4 months	Action Team
	• Coordinate mowing of overgrown areas	4 months	Action Team with assistance from City
	• Establish and publicize date for Central City wide cleanup and celebration	5 months	Action Team
	• Arrange for additional trash pickup	5 months	Action Team coordinate with the Dept of Sanitation and DHND
	• Work with block sponsors to ensure maintenance of cleanup	Ongoing	Action Team
	• Reduce Crime	Ongoing	Action Team
	• Solicit churches and organizations for representatives for a crime task force	1 month	Action Team
	• Meet with Community Liaison officers from 6th District to review crime statistics (including type, location, and time of day/date)	2 months and monthly ongoing	CCRA Crime Task Force and 6th district
	• Analyze crime data for patterns	2 months and monthly ongoing	CCRA Crime Task Force
	• Research and implement best practices tailored to preventing crime in the community	2 months and monthly ongoing	CCRA Crime Task Force
	• Coordinate with faith-based groups doing crime outreach activities on the street	2 months and monthly ongoing	CCRA Crime Task Force
	• Encourage organizations to sponsor monthly nights out against crime (block parties) and other "eyes on the street " activities	4 months	CCRA Crime Task Force

VI. A New Beginning

The Central City Renaissance Alliance's (CCRA) work presented in this report illustrates an outstanding level of commitment to and passion for Central City. The recommendations and ideas presented here will allow the neighborhood to preserve the best of the past while simultaneously fostering a direction for a brighter future for the Central City community. Another outcome of this nine month process is a manifesto created by the participants that describes the spirit and commitment for working to provide a better quality of life for all. This manifesto is presented in Section VII.

The support from Mayor Nagin, the Department of Housing and Neighborhood Development, city officials, and other local and regional governing organizations for the CCRA has allowed the public to become a greater part of many conversations about Central City's growth and development. In addition to the specific recommendations of the Steering Committee, the governing entities now have the invaluable resource of more engaged and trained citizens in community affairs that can support their work. Throughout this planning effort, participants have committed over 2,000 hours of their time in meetings, researching, discussing and sharing. During the planning process, participants contributed time in many different ways: organizing the project on the Recruitment Team, serving on the Steering Committee, leading as a Co-Facilitator, working on the Communication Task Force, further planning on the Action Team and trained as Concordia Fellows.

Through these roles, Central City has grown the base of informed and dedicated community leaders to assist in bringing these recommendations to fruition. As time passes, the civic leaders and elected officials can look to this group for support and guidance on emerging issues and concerns. This project is only the beginning of a community-wide dialogue, with the opportunity of expanding beyond the neighborhood to include the whole city; thus strengthening the ties between Central City and greater New Orleans.

To keep the conversation going, there are a number of ways to sustain the work of the CCRA. We have seen several communities use different options that take advantage of the strengths and opportunities in their community to continue this work.

In other communities, the Action Team found it beneficial to form an independent nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization to support the implementation of the recommendations. In other cases, the Action Team chose to act as a governing body that will work with preexisting organizations who would adopt portions of the recommendations that apply to their organization's mission and activities. In other instances, there have been umbrella organizations who have adopted the plan and recommendations for implementation.

In Central City there is an opportunity to pursue a combination of these options where the Central City Renaissance Alliance, represented by the Action Team and the Concordia Fellows, becomes a member organization of the Central City Partnership.   This will allow the CCRA to report on the status of its work and to continue to build support with a wide number of community partners. The CCRA can also collaborate with other local non-profits for administrating implementation of the recommendations.

VII. Central City Manifesto

Preamble

Culture and quality of life are central features to healthy communities. The connections of human life to history, folkways and rituals help a community to develop a sense of roots, safety and belonging. Central City is a unique creative community possessing a vibrant culture that has provided generations of New Orleanians with unique cultural and human experiences that have helped to make New Orleans the city that it is today. The Central City Renaissance Alliance is committed to the growth, prosperity and excellence of Central City and all who live and work here.

This manifesto is the call to action of the Central City Renaissance Alliance to 1) nurture and cultivate the unique culture and creativity of Central City; 2) support members of the community toward empowerment and the ability to express and use the genius of their own creativity as responsible citizens; 3) overcome the barriers of the neglect and injustice of the past that have prevented Central City from realizing its full potential; and 4) to develop economic vitality and economic opportunity that can support the families and businesses of Central City.

Principles

The Central City Renaissance Alliance, through a process of study, collaboration, inclusion, unity and community action is dedicated, to the realization of Central City's full potential by encouraging these principles:

1) The Central City Renaissance Alliance will ensure that every person, children and youth to adults and elders, has access to a high quality of life that includes safety, opportunity, support, and fair and just recognition and compensation for their efforts.

2) The Central City Renaissance Alliance will recognize the unique and creative quality of each individual and the influence that culture and creativity plays in the development of healthy community life.

3) The Central City Renaissance Alliance is dedicated to locating and developing resources and investments for the cultural, social, economic and creative systems of Central City. These resources will be used to improve the quality of neighborhoods, schools and family life, increase the presence of culture and arts, a vibrant and thriving music and theater

scene, restaurants, artists and innovators, entrepreneurs, affordable housing, lively neighborhoods, spirituality, public and green spaces.

4) The Central City Renaissance Alliance is dedicated to Central City's longstanding tradition of embracing diversity. People of different backgrounds and experiences contribute a diversity of ideas, expressions, talents and perspectives that will help Central City to grow, flourish and realize its full potential as a vital community with vigorous economic development and opportunities.

5) The Central City Renaissance Alliance is dedicated to inclusion, unity and community action. We are committed to collaboration and the practice of fairness and reciprocity. We will actively and diligently resist prejudice and racism in all forms.

6) The Central City Renaissance Alliance commits to the ethics of compassion and respect. We promote dialog and mediation as the processes for resolving differences. We agree to listen to each other and to presume that communication can and will have the power to resolve differences.

7) The Central City Renaissance Alliance is dedicated to opportunity-making, not just problem-solving, through identifying, recognizing, encouraging and then tapping into the creative talent, technology and energy present within the Central City community of people.

8) The vast and growing network of The Central City Renaissance Alliance is dedicated to finding the ways and means to invest in and build on the unique quality of place that Central City offers, while recognizing that inherited features such as climate, natural resources and population are important, other critical features such as culture and art, open and green spaces, mixed-income neighborhoods, maximum housing stock in commerce, can contribute to the strengthening of a vibrant Central City.

9) The Central City Renaissance Alliance is dedicated to removing barriers to the quality of life such as mediocrity, intolerance, sprawl, disconnectedness, poverty, bad schools, exclusivity, social and environmental deterioration.

10) The members of The Central City Renaissance Alliance, individually and collectively take responsibility for change in our community. We promise to improvise and to work together to make positive and hopeful changes in Central City.

We, the undersigned commit to Central City and each other that we will work to infuse the ideas of this Manifesto into our social lives and public policies. We will share the accomplishments with each other so that we all can move forward and succeed together in a more creative existence and a more inclusive, unified, committed and proactive community that will provide a higher quality of life for all.

Name Printed: _____

Address: _____

Affiliation: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Signature: _____