

## Key Principles and Processes

The diversity of people and interests that the Cultural Innovation District will welcome, and support, demands that a wide range of activities be included. This place of spirited cultural exchange and equity-based placemaking will be designed to accommodate a range of activities from shopping and dining to demonstrations, trainings and performances. People of all ages and demographics will be welcomed to this space. By revitalizing the space under the bridge, all partners are committed to doing so in a way that includes the work and the workers who are committed to changing the landscape with best practices in mind. The following summarizes the key principles and processes that guide this work:

*The CID addresses a myriad of environmental and community concerns by intentionally including experts and “citizen experts” throughout the process.*

**Sustainable Infrastructure** – By integrating function with ecological balance, the space will be recreated in a way that benefits community growth, public health, environment and transportation. Using renewable energy, storm-water management and ecologically-friendly construction, this stretch of I-10, will become a “green highway.”

**Neighborhood Advisory Committee (NAC)** – The NAC is made up of residents and business owners who provide advice about the programming and policies of the CID to ensure they meet the specialized economic, cultural and educational needs of the communities served by the CID.

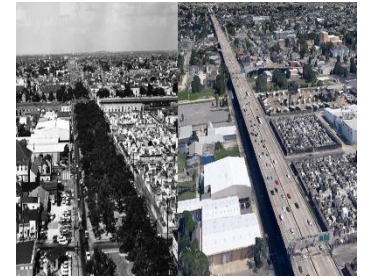
**Operator Selection & Capacity Building** – An operator joint venture, led by Foundation for Louisiana and Ashé Cultural Arts Center, is being established to provide specialized experience, technical competence and the demonstrated ability to collaborate with community residents, organizations and businesses in community-led processes for the design, construction and staffing of the CID, along with the delivery of services.

**Resident Staff Selection & Training** – The CID staff provides an excellent opportunity to invest in the development of human capital by training residents to fill the jobs located in their community. Each carefully vetted position will involve a personalized training program to include a series of supportive mentorships by expert local and professionals in the marketplace, event production and tourism industries.

**Neighborhood-based Businesses** – Residents will find that the CID does more than just pay homage to their cultural products, but supports them by providing economic opportunities for artists, vendors, farmers, fishermen, food artists and performers. The benefits of entrepreneurship have not been fully realized in New Orleans, with only 2% of the share of all receipts accruing to minority-owned businesses. The Claiborne Corridor is home to a critical mass of the city’s traditional culture bearers, most of whom live at or below the poverty line. With the capacity to support development of up to 160 micro-enterprises in three years, the Vendor Training and Incentive Program will be a defining component of the CID’s success.

**Cross-Sector Partnerships** – The City of New Orleans, with offices and departments convened by The Network for Economic Opportunity, will work with Foundation for Louisiana, Ashé Cultural Arts Center, Tambourine & Fan, RE.invest Initiative, New Corp, Inc. CDFI, New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival, N. O. Multicultural Tourism Network, Clark High School, Tremé/7th Ward Cultural District, Housing Authority of New Orleans, Basin Street Station, and National Park Service, amongst others, with an ultimate goal of creating a professional, profitable, educational, sustainable and celebratory community-based project.

## **Executive Summary of the *Community Design Charrette Report* Claiborne Corridor Cultural Innovation District An Endeavor in Equitable Development May-November 2017**



### Introduction

The Cultural Innovation District (CID) is a 19-block transformation of space beneath the elevated Interstate-10 expressway along Claiborne Avenue, from Canal Street to St. Bernard Avenue. Built with green infrastructure, the CID will include a world-class market with arts, crafts, produce and seafood vendors, classrooms and exhibit space, interactive technology and education demonstrations and will be a site for youth programming, health, environmental and social services, community projects, workshops and special events for the residents of the Claiborne Corridor. As a culture-based economic driver, the CID will support indigenous entrepreneurs and culture bearers in achieving their goals for equitable and sustainable community development.

### History + Purpose

The desire to develop and use the space beneath the elevated I-10 expressway as a means of advancing economic opportunities and cultural preservation for residents of the Claiborne Corridor has been repeatedly advocated for decades, beginning with the Claiborne Avenue Design Team in 1976. Stemming from this advocacy, combined with philanthropic investments in equitable development and the City’s desire to reduce disparities in New Orleans neighborhoods, the plan for co-creating and delivering a resident-led economic development project is underway, led by the Network for Economic Opportunity.

The CID is a pathway for addressing the protracted history of neglect, exclusionary practices, economic disinvestment and misguided legislative decisions which have disproportionately impacted life for Claiborne Corridor residents. The consequences of this history are manifest in the great economic, social, and health disparities experienced by citizens residing in the Corridor. The entire process will culminate in broader systems change to create lasting differences, particularly for the residents of Tremé and the 7<sup>th</sup> Ward and more broadly of the whole Claiborne Corridor.



While the Claiborne Corridor is at the heart of the city’s most celebrated cultural traditions and is home to the nation’s oldest African American commercial districts and neighborhoods, it also remains the site of the city’s most glaring socio-economic disparities, where a disproportionate number of residents live in poverty amidst blight and violence and are faced with limited access to quality jobs, transportation and safe housing.

The Cultural Innovation District will be a place of civic infrastructure representing the tenacity of the community in the face of seemingly unbeatable odds. To heal what many view as a harmful structure, it must be truly transformed into a welcoming bridge to the world for the people who live, work and celebrate around it every day.

## Themes Emerging from Community Charrettes

### Summary

The first phase of design engagement for the Claiborne Corridor Cultural Innovation District project spanned several months and multiple charrettes. **A charrette is a meeting involving a group of community members focused on the design of a particular project in a planned and intensive manner.** The goal of the CID charrettes was to provide several entry points for community members to actively participate in the development of ideas and experiences for what is to become the CID. Over the course of nine charrettes and more than 80 hours of informational and working open dialogue, the community established a core set of considerations that directly address issues of inequity. These workshops, which included panel discussions, community conversations, and design sessions, allowed the participants to consider everything from environmental to economic issues resulting in a breadth of ideas that seek to counteract injustice in the built environment. A full report is available that outlines the community questions, concerns and design opportunities discussed during the charrettes.



### Charrette Dates, Themes and Number of Participants

- **Charrette 1: T7 Festival** — May 27-28, 2017 — 200 interactions with festival goers
- **Charrette 2: Cultural Preservation** — June 30 & July — 80 participants
- **Charrette 3: Sustainable + Green Infrastructure** — July 21 & 22 — 100 participants
- **Charrette 4: Health Disparities + Improved Health Outcomes** — Aug. 11 & 12 — 80 participants
- **Charrette 5: Business + Transformation** — Aug. 18 & 19 — 50 participants
- **Charrette 6: Community Artists + Transformation** — Aug. 20 & 21 — 45 participants
- **Charrette 7: Elders & Legacy** — Aug. 31 — 44 participants
- **Charrette 8: Transformation & Youth** — Sept. 1 & 2 — 30 participants
- **Charrette 9: Claiborne Corridor Master Plan** — Nov. 1-3 — 80 participants

### Common Emergent Issues and Themes

The following provides a summary of the issues that arose in one or more of the charrettes.

#### Equity

Equity is ultimately about an acknowledgement of past systemic discrimination in order to appropriately distribute resources, and opportunities, in relationship to the barriers faced by individuals and groups. The CID project considers multiple kinds of equity including: racial, cultural and social equity.

#### Cultural Space

- Cultural reverence — respecting the history and importance of culture
- Integration of visual arts — including murals and painted cross walks
- Artistic design elements — lighting, benches, foliage canopy and bollards
- Consideration of “design fit” into existing neighborhood
- Incorporating spiritual aspects i.e. altars
- Use of screens i.e. movie nights
- Creative public forum space

*The CID is particularly geared to the indigenous residents, business owners, and culture bearers of New Orleans' Claiborne Corridor neighborhoods. The extant community will have the strongest voice in the decisions directly impacting the experience of the space to be developed.*

### Important Design Considerations

- Flexibility — including the temporal quality of celebration
- Community use of space — allowing opportunities for unprogrammed use and social/cultural gatherings
- Maintenance and repair — of infrastructure and facilities
- Scale of design — how does it relate to the neighborhood
- Town hall meeting space (youth, community city hall)
- Access to a range of public transit options



### Environmental Issues

- Pollution and litter — how to reduce the impact of pollution from cars and prevent increased litter
- Sound/noise quality — how to address sound coming into and coming from the space
- Green infrastructure — how will it be developed and maintained
- Storm water runoff/storm water management

### Business

- A range of options for business typologies — small, beta and nomadic
- Creation of fresh food markets and commercial kitchens
- Capital/investment and other support to help grow businesses
- Cultural entrepreneur opportunities — to participate, sell and engage
- Interactions with existing/surrounding businesses in the area
- Access to employment — training and good paying jobs

*We intend this project to help close racial wealth gap experienced in our city by expanding economic opportunity for culture-bearers and indigenous entrepreneurs.*

### Safety

- Safe crossing of Claiborne throughout CID including speed limits, cross walks etc.
- Ensuring that crime reduction practices and activities are embedded
- Safe spaces for children and youth
- Ensure lighting and increased visibility, especially at night

### Health

- Social determinants of health i.e. the social gradient, stress, early life, social exclusion, work, unemployment, social support, addiction, food and transport.
- Health disparities i.e. lower life expectancy, increased health issues, low birthweight babies
- Access to healthcare — both Western and traditional/indigenous/Eastern methods
- Health education that is culturally relevant and accessible

In addition to a health-themed charrette a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) was also carried out. This report is available at the link below. It identified three main health concerns for residents of the 13 neighborhoods of the Claiborne Corridor related to the CID that mirror the charrette issues: **cultural loss, water drainage/sanitation and need for health care accessibility.**

### Additional Resources

- For more information about the CID including the full charrette report, the HIA and the Livable Claiborne Communities Study please see — <http://www.foundationforlouisiana.org/projects/19/cultural-innovation-district>