

Revitalizing Urban Main Streets

Practicum: St. Bernard Avenue

MIT Department of Urban Studies + Planning
February 2019



Agenda



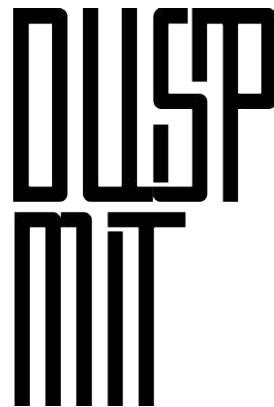
1. Introductions
 2. Timeline & Process
 3. Buildings & Lots
 4. Businesses
 5. Transportation & Public Infrastructure
 6. People & History
 7. Next Steps
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Class Mission

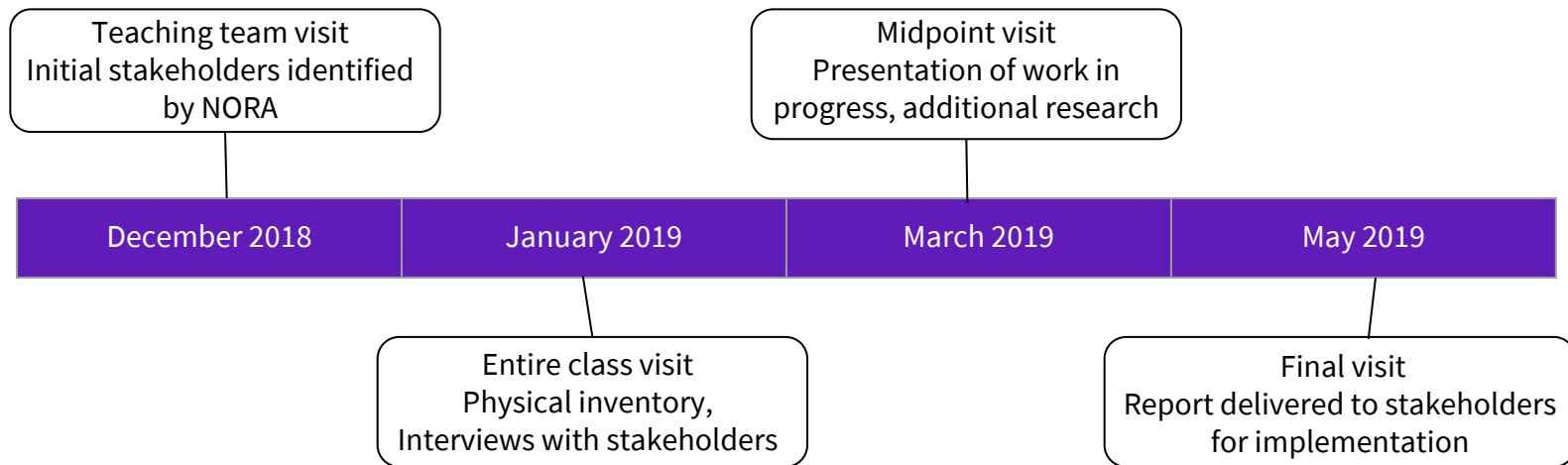
Graduate urban planning course within the MIT Department of Urban Studies & Planning

Goals

- Develop a plan to further strengthen physical and economic elements along St. Bernard Avenue
- Build partnership with a committee of local stakeholders, including businesses, property owners, residents, nonprofit organizations, and the New Orleans Redevelopment Authority (NORA)
- Strengthen capacity of community champions for future planning and implementation



Process & Timeline



Study Area

St. Bernard Ave

Rampart St to N Broad St



Local Stakeholder Interviews

Small Business Owners

Residents & Community Associations

(Seventh Ward, A.P. Tureaud, Fairgrounds Triangle, Black Men of Labor)

Local Institutions

(Corpus Christi, Saint Augustine)

Public Officials

(NORA, Sewerage & Water Board, City Planning Commission, NOLABA)

Business Support Groups

(NewCorp, Propeller, Fund 17)

Local Developers

(Providence Community Housing, Crescent City Community Land Trust, Pretty Blue House)

...thank you for sharing your time and expertise!

Activities This Week



Introduction
to NORA

Photo
Survey
(Public Spaces,
Vacant Lots,
Facades)

Walking
Tour

Stakeholder
Interviews

Inventory
(Businesses,
Buildings,
Parking,
Transit)

Buildings and Lots



What We Saw



What We Saw: Building Use

Total: 149

33% Commercial



4% Institutional



61% Residential



2% Mixed



What We Saw: Building Conditions



- Four** - New construction/rehab
- Three** - Good condition, not new
- Two** - Needs minor repair
- One** - Needs major repair

25 unused buildings
10 unused lots



* Sites fronting St Bernard Ave only.

What We Heard

Concerns about affordability and displacement

- Rising costs
- Short-term rentals

Challenges to development

- Funding
- Ownership



What We Think

Build upon current community development initiatives

Preserve affordability for both residential and commercial properties

- Potential partners: NORA, Crescent City Community Land Trust, Providence Community Housing

Protect historic building character

Promote ownership by long-term residents and business owners and opportunities for appropriate development

What prominent places did we miss?



Former Vaucredson's Sausage



Former Liberty Bank



Former Car Wash at Henriette



Circle Food Store



Intersection with Claiborne



Former Gertrude Geddes Willis

Businesses



What We Saw

57 total businesses
on St. Bernard

25 food and beverage
establishments

5 auto shops

3 art studios

8 beauty salons/barber
shops

33+ black/PoC owned

Most businesses on St.
Bernard are small and
employ few people

7 longstanding (15 yrs +)

6 social/religious
institutions

Some business
operating hours are
inconsistent



What We Heard

Strengths

- High black/PoC ownership levels
- Legacy of commercial activity
- Strong nightlife
- Options for affordable food
- Community gathering spaces are well-used



Aspirations

- Increase businesses that serve the daily needs of residents (Eg. bank, grocery, etc)
- Streamline business certification process
- Better leverage zoning and historic designations
- Create more opportunities for local employment



What We Think

Ownership

Preserve and increase the number of black/PoC/family owned businesses

Community

Leverage gathering spaces to increase commercial activity for surrounding businesses

Local

Bring new businesses to help support the daily needs of local residents

Wealth

Create opportunities for residents to increase income



Questions

How well do existing businesses meet your needs?

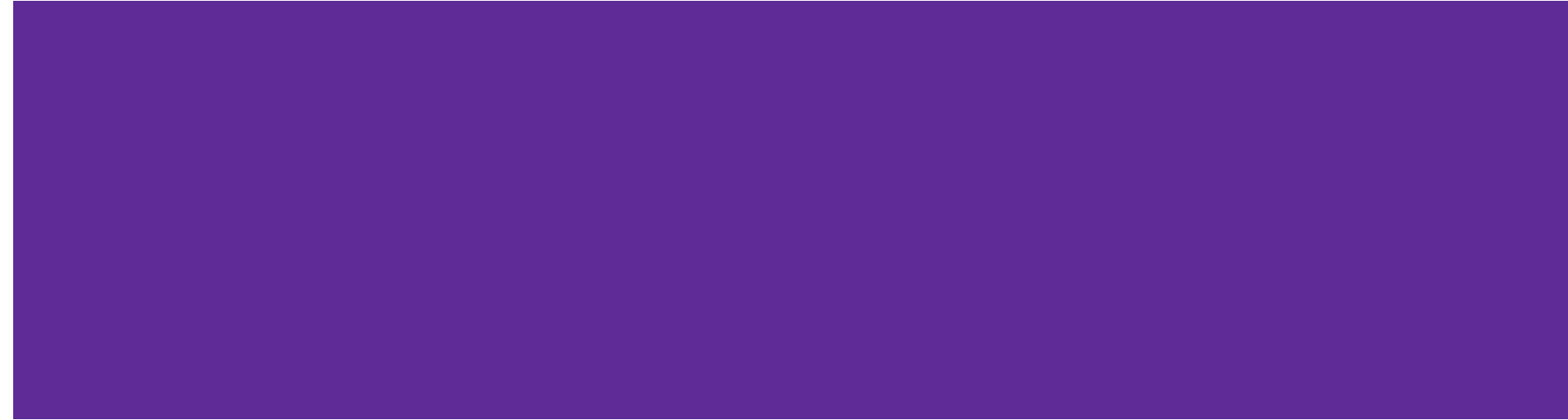
What types of new business would you want to see on St. Bernard?

What kinds of support do neighborhood businesses need to thrive?

Is there a desire to bring businesses to St. Bernard that can employ larger numbers of people?



Transportation and Public Infrastructure



Infrastructure

What we saw and what we heard:

- Charming neighborhood and oak trees
- Dangerous intersections; no crosswalk signals
- Varied sidewalk and road quality, limiting accessibility
- Missing green infrastructure creating drainage needs; puddles in roads and parking, and clogged drainage areas

What we think:

- Room for improving crosswalk safety
- Road and sidewalk maintenance
- Using vacant lots for stormwater management and improved stormwater drainage cleanup



Traffic and Transportation

What we saw and what we heard:

- Frequent bus stops (11) north of Claiborne Ave.; varying amenities at stops and infrequent bus service
- Higher traffic volume around rush hour
- Ample daytime street parking and 22 private parking lots; less parking at night (particularly near Rampart St.)
- Parking and bus stops obstructed by standing water
- Bike lanes and 4 Blue Bike stations, but limited public bike parking
- St. Bernard viewed as a thoroughfare, not walkable

What we think:

- Calm down traffic
- Increase bus service

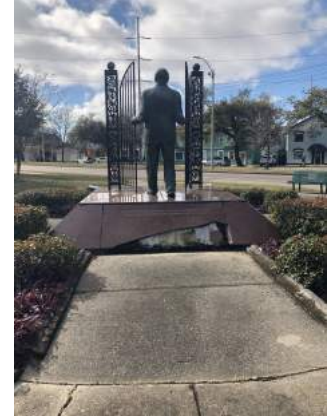


Public Spaces and Art



What we saw and heard

- 11 visible instances of public art along St. Bernard Avenue
- AP Tureaud Park around a lot of commercial activity
- Popular businesses are gathering spaces
- Hunter's Field Community Center only formal public space
- Need more children's play areas
- General need for more types of public gathering space



What we think

- Opportunities for more public green space
- Creating ways to imagine stories behind public art and commemoration of rich cultural and historical legacy that lives on in St. Bernard Ave. Corridor
- Potential of improving AP Tureaud Park as a public gathering space



What Do You Think?

How can transportation be improved along the St. Bernard corridor (*walking, biking, cars, parking, buses, or other*)?

How can infrastructure be improved along the St. Bernard corridor (*street lights, crosswalk signals, drainage, sidewalk quality, road quality, bike lanes, or other*)?

What do you think about the art and public spaces in the neighborhood? Are there other public spaces or types of public art would you like to see along the St. Bernard corridor (*murals, community center, parks, monuments, or other*)?

People & History

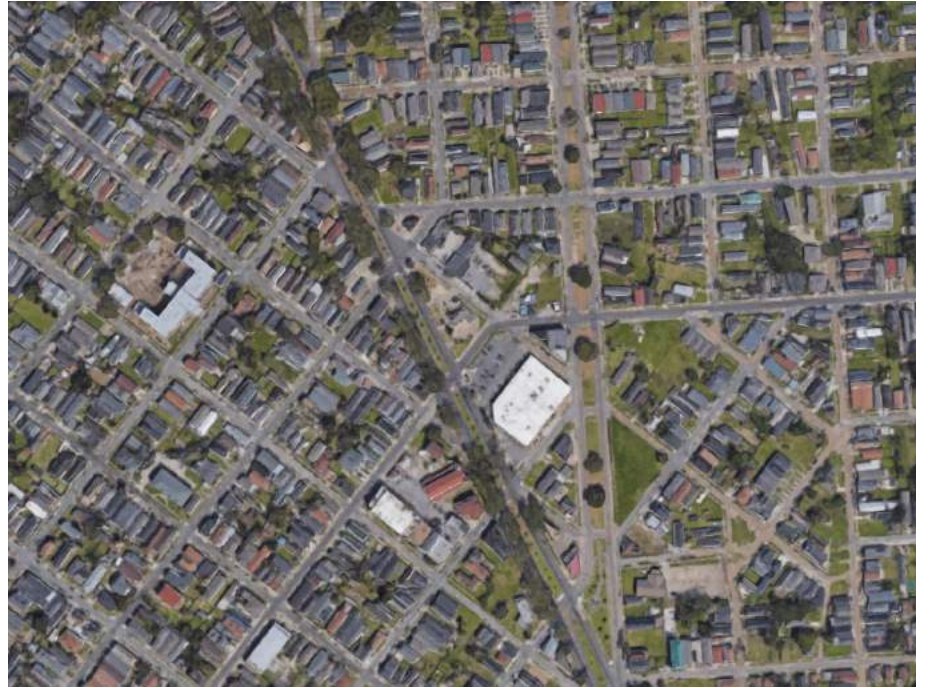


What We Saw

Commercial core

Surrounding residential fabric

Sizable senior population



What We Heard

Rich history

Cultural legacy & community assets

Constant change



What We Think

Ground work in neighborhood history

Preserve and support cultural
institutions

Explore ways to capture local stories
in public art

Reinforce continuity along the corridor

What do you think?

What are three words you would use to
describe St. Bernard?

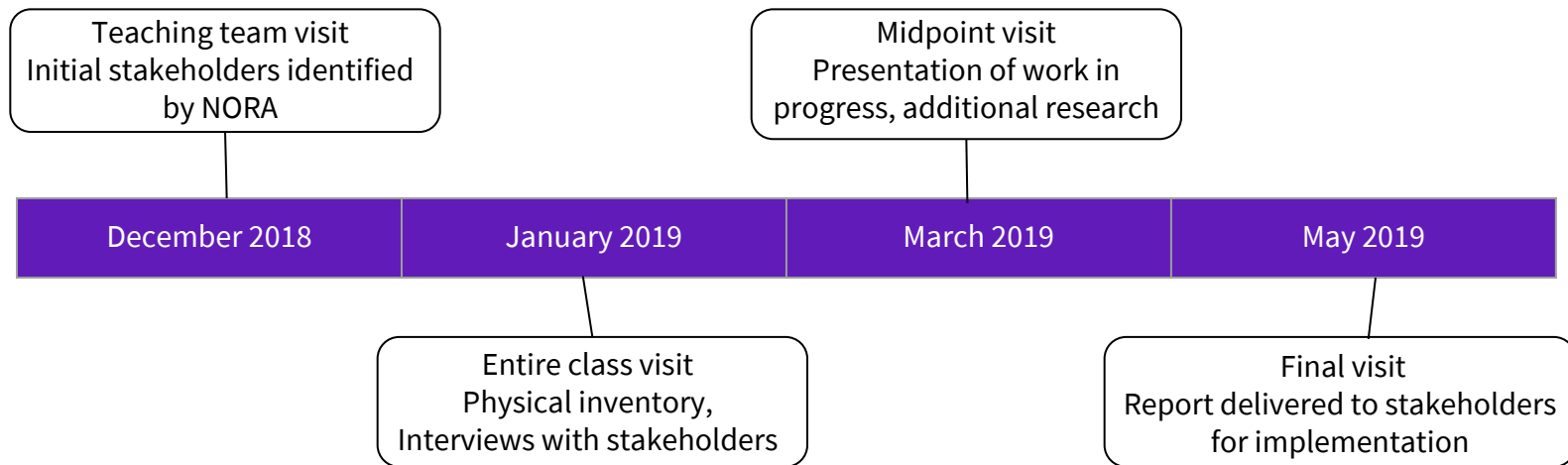
What have we gotten correct?

What have we missed?

Next Steps



Process & Timeline



We need your help...

Community Engagement

Who else should we interview? How can we ensure that the process represents the community fully?

Data and Local Knowledge

Is there existing data such as business inventories or previous planning efforts we can access?

Stakeholders

How would you like to stay engaged and support this effort?

Contact Us! mainstreetsnola@gmail.com

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