



COMMUNITY PLANNING WORKSHOP

Clairborne Corridor

New Orleans
Summary Report | August 2018



The American Planning Association's
Professional Institute
**American Institute
of Certified Planners**

Making Great Communities Happen

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More information on the Community Assistance Program:
Community Planning Workshops | planning.org/communityassistance
Community Planning Assistance Teams | planning.org/cpat

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Cover image: People celebrating the Cultural Innovation District, a newly activated space under the Interstate 10 bridge that opened on April 20, 2018—the day before the Community Planning Workshop. Photo by Ryan Scherzinger, AICP

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Acknowledgments

The American Planning Association's (APA) professional institute, the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP), in coordination with HousingNOLA and the New Orleans City Planning Commission, organized the 2018 Community Planning Workshop, which took place during the 2018 APA National Planning Conference in New Orleans.

Many thanks to Andreanecia Morris, executive director of HousingNOLA, and Kelly G. Butler, principal city planner for the New Orleans City Planning Commission, who worked with APA programs manager Ryan Scherzinger, AICP, as the primary organizers of the workshop. Thanks to APA program associate William French and Florida State University graduate planning student volunteer, Jacqueline Porter, for serving as the official scribes and assisting during the workshop. Thanks to Timothy Jackson, FAICP, planning administrator for the New Orleans City Planning Commission, for his help in identifying the community for the workshop. Many thanks to the Sojourner Truth Neighborhood Center and their staff for hosting the workshop. Special thanks to all the residents and other stakeholders who participated and the planning volunteers who offered their time, shared their experiences, and contributed their skills and knowledge to the day's efforts.



The Purpose of the Community Assistance Program

The purpose of the Community Assistance Program is to serve communities facing limited resources by helping them address planning issues such as social equity and affordability, economic development, sustainability, consensus building, and urban design, among others. By pairing expert urban planning professionals from around the country with residents and other stakeholders from local communities, the program seeks to foster education, engagement, and empowerment.

Guiding Values

APA's professional institute, the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP), is responsible for the Community Assistance Program. Addressing issues of social equity in planning and development is a priority of APA and AICP. The Community Assistance Program was created to express the value of social equity through service to communities in need across the United States.

Community assistance is built into the professional role of a planner. One principle of the AICP Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct states that certified planners shall aspire to "seek social justice by working to expand choice and opportunity for all persons, recognizing a special responsibility to plan for the needs of the disadvantaged and to promote racial and economic integration." Another principle is that certified planners should aspire to "contribute time and effort to groups lacking in adequate planning resources and to voluntary professional activities."

Program Background

In recognition of the key role urban and regional planners play in shaping vibrant, sustainable, and equitable communities, the APA Board of Directors established the Community Planning Team initiative in 1995. This initiative resulted in a pro bono effort to assist an economically struggling African American community in Greensboro, North Carolina. APA has continued to develop a pro bono planning program that provides assistance to communities in need, including the annual Community Planning Workshop in the host city of the APA National Planning Conference.

In 2005, program efforts were increased after Hurricane Katrina in the Gulf Coast region to include a number of initiatives, including planning assistance team projects in the affected cities of Henderson Point, Mississippi, and Mandeville, Slidell, and New Orleans in Louisiana. Another Gulf Coast recovery project included the Dutch Dialogues, which brought American planners together with Dutch experts to transform the way that Louisiana relates to and manages its water resources.

AICP broadened the scope of what is now called the Community Planning Assistance Teams (CPAT) program with its 2009 project in Buzzard Point, a neighborhood in Southwest Washington, D.C. Completed projects since the CPAT program's official relaunch in 2011, including Matthews, North Carolina; Story County, Iowa; Unalaska, Alaska; La Feria, Texas; Pine Hills, Florida; Lyons, Colorado; and others, including the first international project in the Yarborough neighborhood of Belize City, Belize (June 2016), are all important landmarks in the development of the CPAT program as an ongoing effort. The CPAT program and the annual Community Planning Workshop are now an integrated part of APA's service, outreach, and professional development activities.

More information about the CPAT program, including community proposal forms, an online volunteer form, and full downloadable reports from past projects, is available at planning.org/cpat.

INTRODUCTION

Planners from around the country and abroad attended the American Planning Association's 2018 National Planning Conference (NPC) in New Orleans, April 21 to 24. APA offers a wide range of education sessions, mobile workshops, orientation tours, and many other professional networking and development opportunities throughout the conference. Since 2001, APA's professional institute, the AICP, has organized the Community Planning Workshop in the host city of the conference. The workshop allows planners attending the conference the chance to assist and work with a community on a focused planning issue.

In 2018, APA partnered with the New Orleans City Planning Commission and HousingNOLA to identify an area where the Community Planning Workshop could help advance efforts toward a citywide neighborhood planning initiative. APA, the planning commission, and HousingNOLA worked with area stakeholders, civic groups, and others to organize a workshop to focus on specific issues and goals related to preserving community identity and affordable housing. The workshop put planners and other experts from around the country together with residents and Claiborne Corridor stakeholders to identify problems and collaborate to find policy, planning, and design-related solutions.

Workshop Schedule

10:45 a.m.

Meet at the Mobile Workshop sign-in area at the Convention Center

10:50 a.m.

Board charter bus

11:15 a.m.

Arrive at Sojourner Truth Neighborhood Center | Welcome and introductions

11:30 a.m.

Lunch and presentations

Andreanecia M. Morris | Executive Director, HousingNOLA

Royce Duplessis | Louisiana State Representative, District 93

Justin G. Moore, AICP | Chair, APA Community Assistance Planning Services Committee

12:30 p.m.

Walking tour

1:30 p.m.

Return to Center and divide into breakout groups

1:30 p.m.

Breakout group discussion #1: Tiny houses/accessory dwelling units (building and zoning regulations, quality and safety, affordable housing, intergenerational housing, vulnerable populations, neighborhood character, property values, etc.)

Breakout group discussion #2: Parking requirements and impacts on development

3:45 p.m.

Breakout group report outs and group discussion

4:15 p.m.

Group discussion on major takeaways and next steps

4:45 p.m.

Adjourn and board bus back to convention center

Study Area

The workshop focused on the Claiborne corridor, which includes nine neighborhoods as identified in the Livable Claiborne Communities (LCC) Study from 2014 (see map below). The Claiborne Avenue corridor is 3.9 miles long. The neighborhoods lie between Napoleon Avenue to Elysian Fields Avenue and between Broad Street on the lake side to Daneel Street, Oretha Castle Haley Boulevard, Rampart Street, and St. Claude Avenue at the riverside. The Claiborne Corridor covers the entire width of New Orleans and has citywide and regional importance. It includes a part of the Pontchartrain Expressway and elevated I-10, a key central artery that connects many parts of the city and neighboring parishes. What happens in the communities adjoining Claiborne Avenue will be of interest to people in many parts of the city and region.



Source: Livable Claiborne Communities Study (2014)

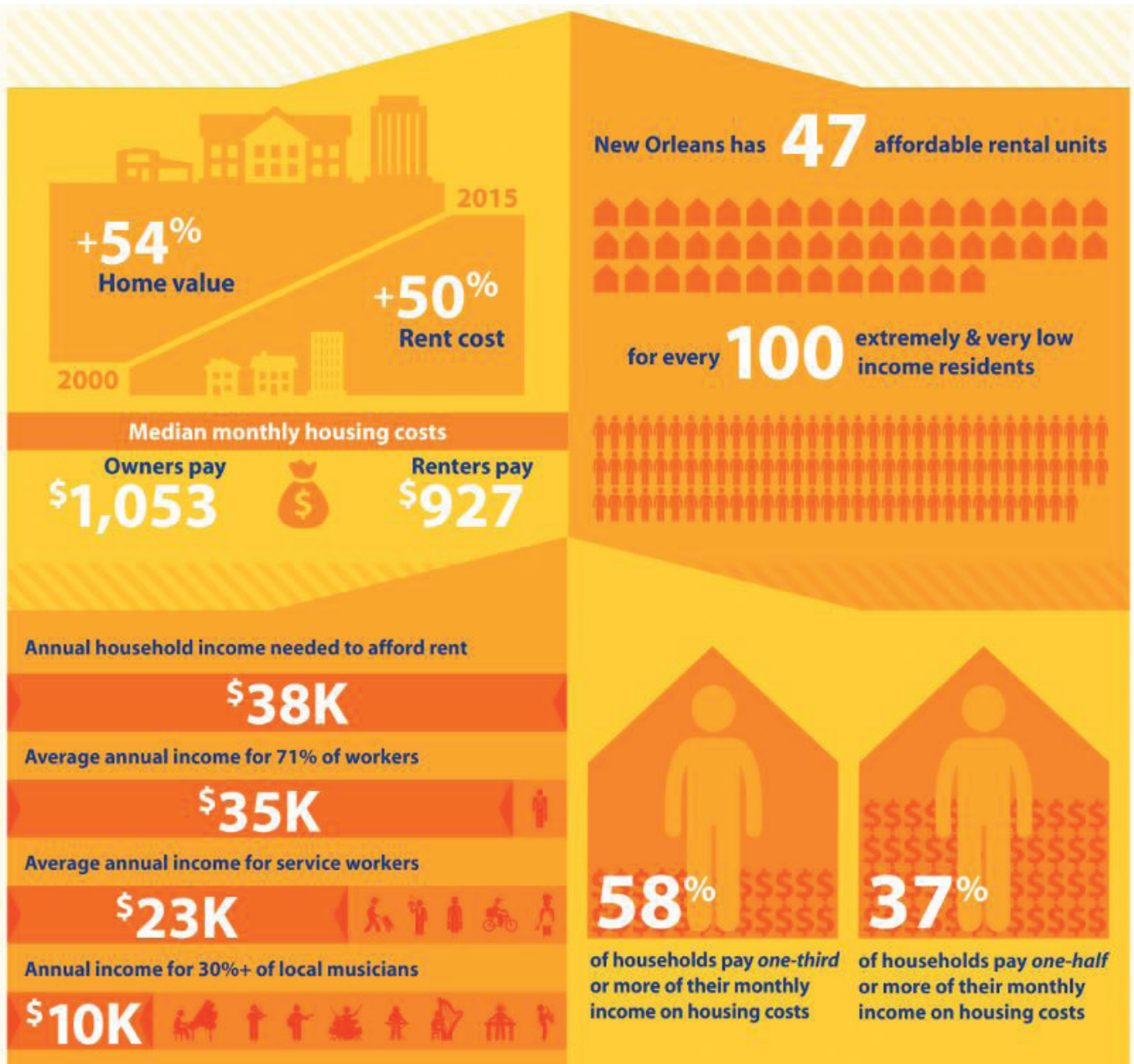
Housing and equity are major issues in New Orleans as are preserving the traditions that make the city unique. The city is still rebuilding after Katrina. It lost population, including many who were deeply rooted in the area. Housing supply is inadequate. Newcomers, many young professionals, are migrating to the city. The demographic change is generating both economic and cultural effects. How can New Orleans evolve to meet the housing needs for a broad range of lifestyles, ages, and incomes while also retaining its traditions and distinctive way of life? Those were some of the broader questions discussed during the workshop.

Movement on the Ground

Following Katrina in 2005, a collaborative of nonprofit housing builders and community development corporations worked to rebuild the housing stock in the city. They formed the Greater New Orleans Housing Alliance (GNOHA) in 2007 and have since advocated for the preservation and production of affordable housing with a special emphasis on the needs of the most vulnerable in society —seniors, people with disabilities, veterans, low-wage workers, and low-income families.

GNOHA's efforts in the community led to the first-ever 10-year affordable housing plan in New Orleans, *HousingNOLA: 10-Year Strategy and Implementation Plan for a More Equitable New Orleans* (2015). HousingNOLA is now an independent organization that continues to coordinate community conversations and GNOHA plays a watchdog role to make sure local policy makers help put the plan into action.

Building on the community-based work of HousingNOLA, the city released a new report in 2016, *Housing for a Resilient New Orleans: A Five-Year Strategy*. The overall stated goal in the report is building or preserving 7,500 affordable housing units by 2021. To accomplish this goal, the report expands upon four complementary goals: (1) support development of new affordable rental and home ownership opportunities; (2) preserve affordability and improve quality of existing rental and home ownership opportunities; (3) expand access to opportunity and promote mobility by leveraging the Assessment of Fair Housing (AFH) process and other fair housing principles; and (4) increase accessibility for vulnerable populations.



Housing for a Resilient New Orleans: A Five-Year Strategy (2016)

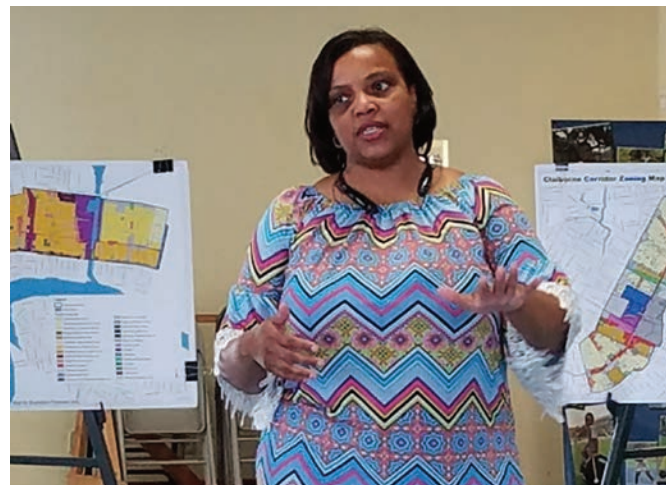
THE WORKSHOP

The workshop included 20 visiting planners from around the country along with neighborhood residents, developers, business owners, government officials, and other local stakeholders all who brought a variety of perspectives to the day's conversations.

HousingNOLA executive director Andreanecia M. Morris welcomed the group to the Sojourner Truth Neighborhood Center in the Tremé neighborhood of New Orleans. She introduced State Rep. Royce Duplessis (House District 93), an attorney and former chairman of the New Orleans City Planning Commission who represents a portion of the city in the Louisiana legislature.

Rep. Duplessis described some of the affordable housing issues facing the city. He discussed a bill coming to a vote in the state legislature that would ban inclusionary zoning, an important tool for increasing affordable housing in the city. Unfortunately, following the workshop, on May 8, 2018, the Louisiana State House of Representatives voted 61–29 to approve the statewide ban.

Rep. Duplessis also spoke about the current issue of short-term rentals in the city. Over time, the issue has become more serious, he said. He is aware of entire blocks of short-term rentals. Many are located in his district, in areas desirable to visitors, including neighborhoods along the Claiborne Corridor. "Who do you talk to about neighborhood issues" when no one actually lives there? he asked. With the supply of housing already limited, short-term rentals contribute to a growing problem. New Orleans welcomes visitors from around the world, but solutions are needed to keep the residents that preserve the cultural and economic vitality of the city. Many are priced out of living in the city.



State Rep. Royce Duplessis kicked off the workshop and provided background information on the affordable housing issues, as did NOLA Housing executive director Andreanecia Morris. Photos by Ryan Scherzinger, AICP

Andreanecia Morris provided additional background on the city's affordable housing issues. There's too often a disconnect between residents and the city's efforts, she said. Morris explained the difficulties in engaging the community effectively. Lessons learned over the years have transformed strategies to enable more and better input and feedback from residents. Public education efforts on issues of density, parking, and the stigma over and myths about affordable housing are ongoing. HousingNOLA has worked to ensure that equity is at the center of discussions with the community and reflected in the language of planning documents.

Transportation is another related and critical issue for New Orleans. The New Orleans Regional Transit Authority (RTA) had 372 buses pre-Katrina. Many were wiped out by floodwaters. As of April 2018, the RTA fleet stood at 132, just 35 per cent of previous levels, which has a significant effect on the level of service. A high number of bicyclist fatalities demonstrates a need for improved bicycle infrastructure, especially along key routes. Ridership is on the rise and the city's new bike-share program, Blue Bikes, is experiencing early success—suggesting even further the need to keep residents and visitors safe on city streets. Access to public transportation is an important element to affordable housing that's in need of further discussions and improvements in New Orleans.

Addressing affordable housing requires a holistic approach. It will take political will to fix the problem, not only from elected representatives, but from residents and advocate groups. Success will take regular community involvement, public education on the issues, and a collaborative spirit to work together toward solutions.

Walking Tour

Workshop participants embarked on a walking tour that followed part of the Lafitte Greenway, a 2.6-mile bicycle and pedestrian trail and green corridor that opened in late 2015. The greenway was once a canal, then a railroad right-of-way that fell out of use that sat vacant since the mid-20th century. It now serves as a multiuse transportation corridor and linear park.



Workshop participants walked part of the Lafitte Greenway and saw the variety of design features along the way, including recreation fields, basketball courts, fitness parks, shade trees, native meadow plants, bioswales, and stormwater retention features. Photos by Ryan Scherzinger, AICP

The group then toured the brand new Cultural Innovation District (CID) in a 19-block space under the I-10 bridge along Claiborne Avenue. The newly activated space opened the day before, and many residents were out exploring the various vendors and celebrating with live music.

According to a local workshop participant, the original idea to activate the space under the expressway dates back to 1976, when a group of civil rights activists and an architect introduced the concept. The mayor at the time reportedly supported the idea but provided no resources to implement the vision. The idea sat dormant until now.



The new Cultural Innovation District under I-10 launched the same weekend as the workshop and participants toured the activated space amid the celebrations. Photos by Ryan Scherzinger, AICP



The master plan for the Cultural Innovation District was displayed for visitors to learn more about the overall vision for the space. Photos by Ryan Scherzinger, AICP

Breakout Group Discussions

Given the time constraints of the half-day workshop, APA, HousingNOLA, and New Orleans City Planning Commission staff sought to focus the conversation to allow more detailed conversations and ideas to emerge. With affordable housing as the goal, the two chosen topics for the workshop were parking and tiny houses and accessory dwelling units (ADUs).

The workshop participants split into two groups and discussed each of the topics. Then the full group reconvened and reported important elements from each conversation. Below is a record of the day's discussions, organized by topic and within each topic by the categories: (a) issues and statements; (b) ideas; and (c) data requests and questions.



Two breakout groups discussed topics together, then reported out summaries to the full group for additional discussion. Photos by Ryan Scherzinger, AICP

Parking

Issues and Statements

Developers want to build with less than one space per unit due to costs.

Developers like parking waivers because it saves them money by not building parking structures.

Parking requirements have been used as a method to oppose affordable housing projects.

Parking requirements are already quite low, with lots of exceptions.

Getting a waiver through the neighborhood planning process is difficult.

Height restrictions limit options.

Street parking is not as much of an issue in this area like downtown and French Quarter.

Single people live in houses with multiple roommates and multiple cars.

Focus on neighborhoods most impacted by parking.

Community residents want to be able to park in front of their houses. There is a historical and cultural mindset about the ability to park.

Many areas do not currently have parking issues, but a new development may change that.

The parking issue is more of a mobility choice issue.

There are no plans to build new transit infrastructure until at least 2025.

Bike paths not connected to the community or to people who traditionally bike. Many cyclist deaths. Blue Bikes have taken off well.

Parking is an equity issue.

Lower income residents do not have the money to buy cars and rely on public transit.

Neighborhoods have ownership.

Address the needs first, then looking into the policies.

Find out alternatives and then change the rules instead of proposing things upfront.

Ideas

If there are excess parking spaces in the new development, developers can rent the extra spaces to people in the neighborhood.

Use Community Development Financial Institutions Fund (CDFI) to finance smaller-scale parking structure (as part of a multifamily development project). A nonprofit could own the parking structure.

Create density bonus incentives.

Build some of the smaller houses that have partially sunk-in garages in the rear to keep the culture.

Parking on the first level (not visible to the street) that carries the same style of current housing and prevents flooding.

Introduce car ride share. Multifamily developments using car ride share or shared vehicles.

Podium parking

Shared parking

Resident parking permit system (e.g., zoning)

Use angled parking, back-in parking where there is angled parking on bus and bike routes.

Work with neighbors who will be impacted around the perimeter of new projects for solutions.

Reduce need for personal vehicles by improving existing transit options (e.g., circulator buses).

Communicating to residents how much more it costs for housing when you require parking/parking structures. Understanding the trade-off between parking and affordability.

Educate elected officials (constantly) about the issues and need "a backup of strength" from the community.

Educating neighborhoods so they don't vote for the wrong politicians.

Data Requests and Questions

Block by block count of parking spaces (mapped out)

Traffic counts (and other analyses)

Residential permits

Transit walkability audit

Investigate underutilized land in the neighborhood (for parking or other use)

How are perceptions of parking different for each neighborhood?

What city ordinances speak specifically to how we park?

Will car ride-share options work for low-income residents?

Tiny Houses/Accessory Dwelling Units

Issues and Statements

Retention of the community is the main goal.

People worry tiny houses will be expensive and won't work for them.

There is a lot of discussion about allowing tiny houses and accessory dwelling units in NOLA as one way to address affordable housing. In addition, there are many irregularly shaped lots that might be good candidate sites.

NOLA has many examples already of ADUs, doubles, and smaller dwelling units.

Small housing is not new, e.g., slave quarters. NOLA has the best parcels to accommodate small houses.

Tiny homes are between 120 and 600 square feet.

Increase rental opportunities even though Louisiana citizens like ownership; still large number of people that need rentals.

There have been educational efforts for prospective home buyers and those passing along property to their children, but not how to pay attention to the politicians who are making the decisions.

Renters do not have voting rights in neighborhood association and can be evicted in three days.

If there is no position of strength on what's on paper, then it's just paper. The people are missing the bullseye.

Housing first. Talk about the people that need to go into the buildings.

Community leaders need to make it simple for residents who can't attend meetings.

Not ready to start making recommendations; only larger conversations right now.

There is tension from ideas that were rooted in the community for decades, but some have gotten away from community.

This is one of the neighborhoods where you don't need tiny houses, but others would benefit.

People are afraid of the unknown. Have people build it. Pick your ugliest lot and get to work.

There's difficulty in navigating the stigma of using tiny homes for homeless populations.

RV parks in other areas of NOLA are converting into tiny homes.

We need a long-term strategy to capture more tourism money within the community.

Most Airbnbs are owned by the same 15 people.

The city planning commission manages a rental system.

Master plan has been amended that provides language to incorporate accessory units into the zoning code.

Building code does not allow anything on wheels.

Ideas

All structures should look like New Orleans (French, Spanish, African).

Work with community to develop design guidelines. Work with developers and other partners to keep community. Coherent design standards by geographical area gives developers predictability, so that they don't invest time up front that they can't make money from.

Put the driveway in the back, so it still looks like NOLA in the front, especially when putting multiple units on a lot.

Have a design competition for housing units on the irregularly shaped lots.

Investigate "Pocket Neighborhood" type developments. Cluster around a common clubhouse.

Build a cohousing model where you live in your own house but share the common outdoor spaces.

Consider the newer manufactured housing as replacements.

Consider artisan spaces (artists, small business owners, residents) for smaller units to live/create/sell.
Wrap container houses to look like the NOLA style, although it might not work in some of the wards.
Trailers (mobile) that you can wrap the bottoms to look like they are not on wheels.

Build more housing for one-bedroom units. Maybe not tiny houses, but smaller housing with a new term that will help community ownership.

Build multiple-unit structures, three stories tall that would be higher density without going into the “high-rise” style.

Target the elderly (a community, social services), formerly incarcerated, former foster home children, and students.

CPC could own tiny houses and use the houses for Airbnb and revenues.

Change zoning to not allow multiple Airbnbs (by the same owner) in the same city.

Data Requests and Questions

What are the larger goals instead of just tiny houses on tiny lots?

Should we use the term “tiny house?”

How can we incorporate native NOLA culture into tiny houses?

If you build tiny houses and a bunch of people come in and pay a bunch of money, that won’t benefit the neighborhood.

How can we do this so that we can honestly say to people that it will benefit them?

How do we creatively look at this? What types of requirements are there?

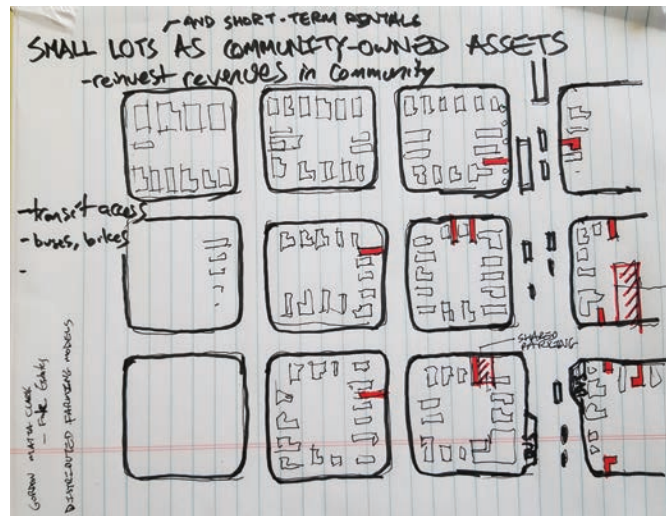
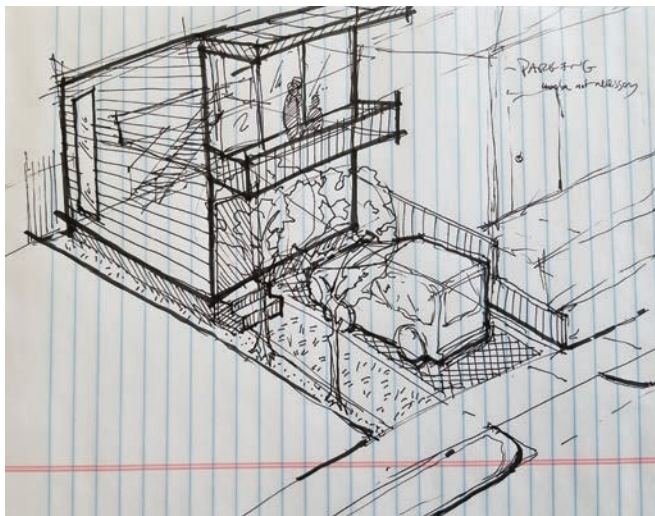
What is the city’s approach on tiny houses?

How do we increase density within our laws to accommodate tiny homes?

What is the best way to manage the space of tiny houses: (a) is it rental for a social cause; (b) for ownership; (c) building tiny houses with a courtyard; and/or (d) part of a church?

Are there partnerships with Habitat for Humanity?

During the breakout discussions on tiny houses and accessory dwelling units, a local planner participant, Aron Chang, sketched the following drawings based on the ideas of the group.



Workshop participant Aron Chang sketched a concept for a tiny house and ideas for scattered small vacant lots. Photo by Ryan Scherzinger, AICP

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Resources

APA Planning Advisory Service. 2009. *PAS QuickNotes* 19: "Accessory Dwelling Units." April. APA membership required to access: www.planning.org/publications/document/9007616.

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