

## **UNO Study Offers Strategies for Development**

*Excerpted from "Community Corridors, Bright Futures"*

As part of Old Algiers Main Street Corporation's mission to encourage economic development and commercial revitalization in Old Algiers, OAMSC has collaborated with students in the University of New Orleans Department of Planning and Urban Studies (UNO-PLUS) to provide recommendations for encouraging reinvestment in the Newton and Teche Street corridors that both reflect the cultural assets of the area and meets the needs of residents. Through study, observation, and collaboration with both OAMSC and Algiers residents, the UNO study provides a plan of action for the community and its advocates.

Due to Old Algiers' proximity to downtown, the area presents a unique opportunity to attract tourists, residents, and businesses. With average real estate values lower than the rest of New Orleans as a whole, there exists an untapped potential for businesses such as grocery stores and restaurants. While reinvestment in the business corridors is important, it is crucial to avoid activity that will change the culture and character of the neighborhood, especially in such a way that leads to displacement of the current population and/or gentrification. Many of the residents of Old Algiers, especially those in the McDonogh and Whitney neighborhoods, are cost-burdened, meaning more than 30% of their income is spent on housing expenses. Additionally, many of these residents must travel outside their neighborhoods to get certain basic goods and services, something that is often a further burden due to the lack of reliable public transportation options. This is a problem that UNO and OAMSC believe can be remedied through thoughtful, sustainable business presence in the area.

The UNO report outlines four basic strategic categories: community organizing, commercial development, residential development, and infrastructure needs. As comprehensive and refined as these strategies and plans may be, UNO and OAMSC's goals are community-based, and therefore their success is absolutely contingent on productive cooperation with the community itself.

The recommendations provided by UNO serve as a guide of action over the course of the next several years. The long-term nature of these plans require consistent and unrelenting work on part of OAMSC to build a vision with which the community and elected officials can be engaged, and to prioritize and advertise their mission as necessary to the future economic success of Old Algiers.