

# Lower Ninth Ward Main Street 2024-2027 Strategic Plan

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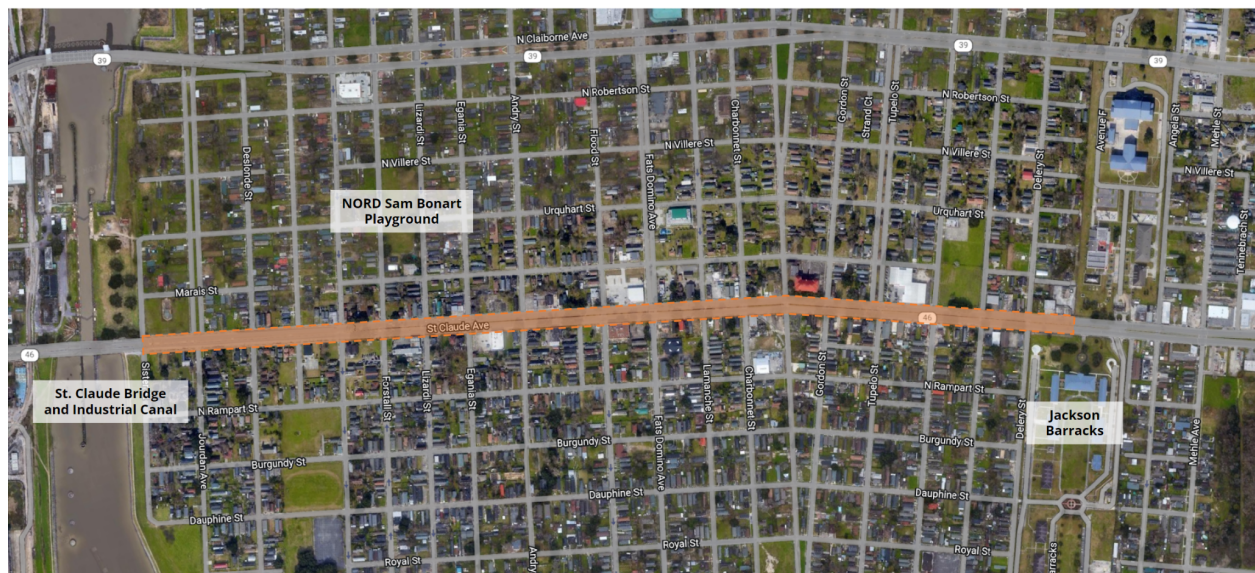
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## Executive Summary

The Lower Ninth Ward Main Street (L9W Main Street) was formed during 2021 in partnership with the Louisiana Main Street- the Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation, and Tourism. The development of the program is supported in part by State Senator Joseph Bouie, District 3 the City of New Orleans Mayor's Office of Economic Development, local NGOs, and Lower Ninth Ward community stakeholders. The L9W Main Street boundaries are on St. Claude Avenue from Sister to Government Streets.



*Figure 1: L9W Main Street Map*

As a partner of the Louisiana Main Street, the L9W Main Street joins the Main Street America™ program, which has supported the growth and revitalization of more than 1,600 commercial corridors across the United States. The Main Street program approach encompasses four strategic pillars: Economic Vitality, Design, Organization, and Promotion. Following these pillars, the L9W Main Street will support small business and entrepreneurship growth, historic preservation, sustainable and resilient design standards, community health, and innovation.

Sankofa Community Development Corporation (Sankofa CDC) serves as the 501c3 organization lead and administrator of the L9W Main Street program. Sankofa CDC is a Black woman-led community-based organization. Founded in 2008, the mission of Sankofa CDC is to build healthier communities for generations to come. The organization is committed to sustainable, health-centered development to revitalize the historic, primarily

African American Lower Ninth Ward area of New Orleans, Louisiana using a model of equity and justice. Sankofa CDC's economic anchor projects developing on the Main Street Corridor include the fresh Stop Market and L9W Main Street Headquarters. The Sankofa Wetland Park and Nature Trail is the organization's lead sustainable infrastructure project that aims to work to mitigate flooding and storm damage, and restore environmental balance while supporting economic growth. Sankofa CDC's STEAM K-8 education, Green Infrastructure Workforce development, and Community Ambassador programs address the social determinants of health to combat systemic barriers that cause health disparities and follow the organization's commitment to environmental justice.

Through community engagement of residents and businesses; a SWOT analysis, and property conditions surveying, Sankofa CDC has developed a L9W Main Street 2024-2027 Strategic Plan. The purpose of the Strategic Plan is to provide a framework for the development of the L9W Main Street program with a clear roadmap following its goals and objectives, also outlined in the [Lower Ninth Ward Main Street Strategic Approach](#) section of this document.

### **Lower Ninth Ward Main Street Vision**

The L9W Main Street Vision is for the St Claude Ave corridor to operate as a thriving economic and environmental ecosystem that uplifts future generations through sustainable investments, education, and equitable systems. The revitalization of the St Claude Ave corridor fosters opportunities for innovation, the development of a healthy and sustainable circular economy, and design elements that reflect the beauty and culture of the Lower Ninth Ward area.

### **Goals and Objectives**

Goal 1: Economic Vitality - The L9W Main Street will facilitate economic growth of the St. Claude Avenue corridor by 2025.

- Objective 1.1: Facilitate business creation and growth along the St. Claude Ave corridor.
- Objective 1.2: Establish the L9W Main Street Headquarters as a technological and resilience hub on the St. Claude Ave corridor
- Objective 1.3: Return blighted and vacant properties to commerce through property acquisition, remediation, investment, and redevelopment.
- Objective 1.4: Support the creation of an innovation corridor with a thriving workforce on St Claude Avenue.



Goal 2: Design - Improve public perception of the St. Claude Ave corridor through projects and programs designed to elevate the built environment.

- Objective 2.1: Establish and enforce basic maintenance standards for public and private property through governmental engagement.
- Objective 2.2: Support restoration of public spaces within the corridor and enhance its reflection of Lower Ninth Ward culture and history through beautification initiatives.

Goal 3: Organization - Support community engagement, leadership, and thought partnership on L9W Main Street priorities.

- Objective 3.1: Engage residents and businesses in creating a vibrant and revitalized corridor through community outreach, collaboration, and integration.
- Objective 3.2: Maintain partnerships with Louisiana Main Street and Main Street America™ through communication, engagement, program participation, and consultation.
- Objective 3.3: Work with Lower Ninth Ward community stakeholders to advocate for resources that support economic investment in St. Claude Ave corridor and the overall neighborhood.

Goal 4: Promotion - Utilize diverse marketing and outreach approaches to communicate L9W Main Street programs and priorities.

- Objective 4.1: Communicate the priorities, resources and efforts of the L9W Main Street program along the St. Claude Ave corridor to local, regional and national audiences through an integrated marketing and communications strategy.

## What is Main Street?

Main Street America™ is a network of more than 1,600 neighborhoods and communities, rural and urban, who share a commitment to place and to building stronger communities through preservation-based economic development. It is a subsidiary of the National Trust for Historic Preservation and has been helping to revitalize older and historic commercial districts for more than 40 years.

The Main Street Approach™ offers community-based revitalization initiatives to help communities get started with revitalization, and grows with them over time with a practical, adaptable framework of transformational strategies implemented through comprehensive work in four broad areas, known as the **Four Points**: Economic Vitality, Design, Organization, and Promotion.

ECONOMIC VITALITY	DESIGN
<b>Economic vitality</b> focuses on building a strong and thriving commercial district. This can include supporting existing businesses, attracting new businesses, creating new homes in the area, and revitalizing vacant and blighted properties.	<b>Design</b> focuses on creating a great place for people to spend time by improving visual and physical aspects of the district. This can include signage, art, public space and infrastructure improvements, renovating historic properties, and ensuring maintenance of the area.
ORGANIZATION	PROMOTION
<b>Organization</b> involves working with community, local businesses, volunteers, cities and public agencies, foundations and funders, and others to advance the Main Street vision.	<b>Promotion</b> of the Main Street involves efforts like marketing, social media, festivals, and other special events that bring people to the Main Street and create a positive image of the area.

## Lower Ninth Ward Neighborhood and Main Street Context

The Lower Ninth Ward is located on the eastern side of the City of New Orleans' East Bank. The New Orleans City Planning Commission refers to the area as Planning District 8. The City of New Orleans and Orleans Parish are interchangeable terms referring to the same geographical boundary; for the purposes of this report, terminology referring to the City of New Orleans will be used.



*Figure 2: Lower Ninth Ward Context Map*

### **St. Claude Avenue Corridor: The Lower Ninth Ward Main Street**

St. Claude Avenue is a major thoroughfare linking the L9W to the rest of New Orleans via the Industrial Canal to the area's west, and to St. Bernard Parish to the area's east. During 2021, Sankofa CDC worked with community stakeholders to initiate the L9W Main Street in partnership with the Louisiana Main Street program.

For the purposes of this report, the "St. Claude Ave corridor" will be defined as each complete city block with properties along St Claude Avenue.



Figure 3: The St. Claude Ave Corridor

Vacant and blighted properties are prevalent along sections of St. Claude Avenue, which may create a perception of underinvestment and discourage potential growth. The potential for future development of the St Claude Ave corridor can be examined through opportunities for public investment, recognition of existing community assets, and incentive leveraging.

### Zoning and Future Land Use

The majority of the St. Claude Ave corridor is zoned as Historic Urban Neighborhood Mixed-Use District (HU-MU) to include higher density developments within a pedestrian oriented environment. The zoning allows residential and commercial uses, including grocery stores, medical and dental clinics, day care centers, and most types of restaurants, with conditional permitting for fast food outlets.

HU-MU creates a multitude of opportunities for revitalization that allows for growth of commercial and residential uses. The Historic Urban Corridor Use Restriction Overlay District is also included in the St Claude Ave corridor HU-MU zoning district, with additional standards to the base district to restrict commercial uses that do not conform to the historical character of the corridor.



St Claude Avenue's future land use is designated as Mixed-Use Medium Density (MUM) by the New Orleans master plan. The goal of the MUM classification is to create medium density neighborhood centers to enhance walkability and serve as focal points within neighborhoods.

### **Historic and Cultural Assets on the St Claude Ave Corridor**

St. Claude Avenue in the L9W is a hub of commercial, cultural, religious, and civic activity. There are presently 20 operating small businesses, NGOs, and faith-based institutions on the St Claude Ave corridor.



*Figure 4: Historic Home of Fats Domino - 1208 Fats Domino Avenue*

Born in the Lower Ninth Ward in 1928, Fats Domino was a pioneer in the development of early rock'n'roll. Domino was a resident of the Lower Ninth Ward for much of his life, and his historic home has been a landmark in the neighborhood since 1960. The property, located on Fats Domino Avenue and Marais Street, consists of a split-level pink and white

mansion and a yellow and black shotgun home. Formerly Caffin Avenue, Fats Domino Avenue was renamed in 2022 to honor the musician.



*Figure 5: St. David Catholic Church - 5617 St. Claude Ave*

St David Catholic Church is a historic Black catholic congregation on the St. Claude corridor, St. David Church has been in existence since 1937 with a mission to remain spiritually committed to its parishioners and community for many years to come.



*Figure 6: New Israel Baptist Church - 6322 St. Claude Ave*



New Israel Baptist Church was founded by a group of former members of Greater Mt. Carmel Baptist Church in January of 1985. First located at 1437 Lizardi St., the historically black church has been a fixture within the Lower Ninth Ward for four decades. In July of 2002, under the leadership of Rev. Douglas Haywood, the congregation moved to their current edifice at 6322 St. Claude St.



*Figure 7: Jackson Barracks*

Jackson Barracks, located at the boundary of Orleans Parish and St. Bernard Parish along St. Claude Avenue, is the headquarters of the Louisiana National Guard. Jackson Barracks is listed on the National Register of Historic Places as a historic district of national significance (“History of Jackson Barracks | New Orleans Museums”). Built in the 1830s to house the Federal military garrison defending the city of New Orleans, Jackson Barracks has a rich history of national and state support for its operations.

### **Business Development Challenges and Opportunities**

Perceptions of disinvestment and blight shape and reinforce the current physical conditions along St Claude Avenue. The blighted properties have led to a decrease in demand for commercial development along the corridor, stunted growth, and deterred community use of the corridor. There are a variety of small businesses presently operating on the St Claude Ave corridor (Table 1). The small business presence on the St. Claude Ave corridor has the potential for growth by activating vacant and underutilized properties. Furthermore, businesses led by residents of the area help stimulate commercial revitalization through local stewardship.

Development of the St Claude Ave corridor may expand more service-focused businesses, job-training and skills-building businesses, and food-oriented businesses, and may incorporate light manufacturing and food production businesses that directly offer more employment opportunities for residents. Residents emphasized a history of local operation of small businesses by people who live in the area. Cultivating local businesses that will be accessible for residents will be a key factor in creating a vibrant corridor, which in turn, will attract visitors from outside the neighborhood.

Business development challenges may be addressed through government-supported economic development initiatives, along with improved corridor design and maintenance standards. Public investment in the area will be a key signal of City interest in the area, and incentives to rehabilitate and develop commercial properties may be necessary for both external developers and local small business owners.

*Table 1: Businesses on the Lower Ninth Ward Main Street*

<b>Business / Organization</b>	<b>Economic Sector</b>	<b>Address</b>
Baptist Community Health Services	Health Care (Clinic)	4960 St. Claude
Pugh's Body Shop	Auto Services	4961 St. Claude
Blucid Floral	Florist / Plants	5113 St. Claude
Instant Tax Service	Tax Preparation	5125 St. Claude
LaXPress Gas Station	Gas Station	5104 St. Claude
Metro by T-Mobile	Communications	5104 St. Claude Ste C
Tire Services Shop	Auto Services	5229 St. Claude
Cherie's Tender Care	Health Care	5620 St. Claude
Seafood and Chicken Market	Convenience store	5601 St. Claude
Eric Personal Touch Barber Shop	Personal Care	5920 St. Claude
Canopy Plant Co.	Florist / Plants	6030 St. Claude
NOLA Village Market	Convenience Store	6100 St. Claude
St. Cyr Sales & Service	Auto Services	6122 St. Claude



A&T Nails	Personal Care	6304 St. Claude
The Hair Fairy	Personal Care	6304 St. Claude
Kiddie Kids Daycare	Child Care	6142 St. Claude
Aby African Hair Braiding	Personal Care	6306 St. Claude
Florence Health Care	Health Care	6306 St. Claude
Paper Machine	Creative Economy	6330 St. Claude

### Main Street Capital Projects

Sankofa CDC is undertaking two capital projects that will help catalyze economic development, innovation, and community health on the L9W Main Street. These projects are the Sankofa Fresh Stop Market, and the future L9W Main Street headquarters.



PERSPECTIVE VIEW FROM ST. CLAUDE AVE.



COOKING CLASSES



FRESH PRODUCE

*Figure 8: Sankofa Fresh Stop Market Rendering*

Sankofa CDC is developing the Fresh Stop Market and Teaching Kitchen, a fresh food and wellness hub, on the northwest corner of St. Claude Ave and Lizardi St. The hub is expected to open during February 2024, and will offer residents access to fresh produce, prepared foods, and wellness programming from the Xavier University Health and Wellness Center, College of Pharmacy, Center from Minority Health and Health Disparities Research and Education. Currently, residents of the Lower Ninth Ward have limited access to fresh produce within the neighborhood, with no major grocery store in the area. The Fresh Stop will meet a significant community need and will bring additional foot and car traffic to the St. Claude Ave corridor.



*Figure 9: Main Street Headquarters Concept Renderings*

An additional L9W Main Street anchor development from Sankofa CDC is the future L9W Main Street headquarters at 5200 St. Claude Ave (corner of Lizardi Street). The

headquarters facility will serve as an incubator and innovation hub for entrepreneurs, small business owners and residents interested in refining their workforce skills. The headquarters space will also host a mini-branch of a local credit union to increase banking access in the L9W, and will have a cafe space that will house a local business tenant. The L9W Main Street headquarters will also serve as the future home of the Sankofa CDC-Lower Nine Food Pantry, operated in partnership with Second Harvest Food Bank.

## SWOT Analysis

A SWOT analysis examines the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) inherent to a particular place, program, or organization. Sankofa CDC conducted a SWOT analysis using input from the Sankofa CAAB, 23 local business owners, and the Urban Land Institute Resilient Land Use Cohort (RLUC) program. The SWOT analysis focused on the St. Claude Ave corridor within the Lower Ninth Ward to inform the vision, goals, and next steps for the L9W Main Street program. Within the analysis, strengths and weaknesses are considered to be *internal* issues of the St. Claude Ave corridor, meaning that they relate to its physical, economic, and social environment. Opportunities and threats are considered to be *external* issues affecting the St. Claude Ave corridor. These could include citywide or regional issues of policy, transportation, or economic conditions that enhance or detract from the St. Claude Ave corridor's ability to thrive.



Source: *Xhienne-SWOT pt.svg* on Wikipedia

The following types of research were critical to the creation of this SWOT analysis.

- Property Condition and Business Surveys:** Sankofa CDC collected qualitative and quantitative data via surveys with local businesses along the St. Claude Ave corridor. The survey questions focused on the sentiments of business owners with regard to present conditions of the St. Claude Ave corridor, in addition to their desired outcomes/actions and willingness to be part of the growth of its growth. Sankofa CDC also collected quantitative data including the number of businesses within the

St Claude Ave corridor, lot availability, blight progression, and conditions of streets and sidewalks.

- **Best Practice and Organizational Research:** Sankofa CDC reviewed demographic data and investment practices, and trends in local, regional and national shopping preferences around the St Claude Ave corridor.
- **Community Discussions:** Sankofa CDC coordinated discussions with the Sankofa Community Advisory Action Board (CAAB) to gain insight on historical perspectives on past businesses and neighborhood amenities, as well as current community needs around the St Claude Ave corridor.
- **Expert Assessments:** The Urban Land Institute - Technical Assistance Program (ULI-TAP) offered recommendations on community and economic development strategies in the Lower Ninth Ward. A cohort of local and national panelists from ULI- TAP's Resilient Land Use Cohort (RLUC) program provided diverse areas of expertise in real estate, economic development, housing, and environmental restoration to strategize on community and economic development and potential investment opportunities for the area.

These approaches have collectively contributed to the development of a clear analysis of the St Claude Ave corridor's current conditions and helped to shape the vision, goals and objectives of the L9W Main Street Strategic Plan. The following sections offer a SWOT analysis of St Claude Ave through the four Main Street America™ pillars of Economic Vitality, Design, Organization, and Promotion.

### **Economic Vitality**

Sankofa CDC is developing a system to support business growth and workforce development programs that would increase revenue and visitors to the Lower Ninth Ward. During focus group sessions, residents expressed a desire to return essential service businesses (i.e. groceries, pharmacies, cleaners, etc.) to the St. Claude Ave corridor. Brick-and-mortar businesses may support community engagement, serve this population of enthused residents, and also invite new shoppers traveling from Orleans to St Bernard Parish on the St Claude Ave corridor. In 2020, the annual average daily traffic count at the parish line was more than 20,000 vehicles per day (LA DOTD, 2023).

There are still challenges with brick-and-mortar business development, with an increasing trend in online shopping (Ivey, 2023), as well as market data from two big box corporate retail stores that have recently opened and closed within a few years of operations.



Additional commercial revitalization challenges may be presented with the status of over 70 vacant lots and blighted properties along the St. Claude Ave corridor (click [here](#) for map), along with the significant decrease in resident population density since the Hurricane Katrina disaster from 19,515 in 2000 to 8,475 in 2020.

The L9W Main Street program has additional opportunities to support local businesses through local, state and federal business resources, linking them to business development programs led by NOLABA, NORA, Urban League, SBA and others.

*Table 2: Economic Vitality SWOT Analysis - Lower Ninth Ward Main Street*

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>St. Claude Ave is a critical <b>connective corridor</b> between Orleans Parish and St. Bernard Parish</li> <li>Support from <b>L9W residents</b></li> <li><b>Historic character</b> of the corridor can help leverage tax credits and other resources for redevelopment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Blighted</b> infrastructure and vacant properties</li> <li><b>Limited active businesses</b> on the St Claude Ave corridor</li> <li><b>Cyclic opening/closing</b> of commercial retail outlets</li> <li><b>Low population density</b> in L9W</li> </ul>
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National trend of consumers looking for more <b>local retail options</b></li> <li><b>State leadership</b> becoming more focused on small businesses</li> <li><b>Entrepreneurship/workforce development</b> partnerships</li> <li>Support for <b>Black family owned businesses</b></li> <li><b>Available land</b> for redevelopment</li> <li><b>Sankofa CDC and other non-profits</b></li> <li><b>Integration</b> of technology and resilience hubs w/ partners</li> <li>Availability of <b>Justice 40</b> federal aid</li> <li><b>Jackson Barracks</b> as potential significant center for employment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Changes in governmental leadership and priorities</b> on place-based investment</li> <li>Decline in <b>federal aid</b>, post COVID-19 influx</li> <li><b>Rise of online shopping</b> and declining in-store retail demand</li> <li><b>Permitting, licensing, and investment challenges</b> for new businesses to set-up, operate and sustain</li> <li><b>Historical negative branding and perceptions</b> of the LNW</li> <li><b>Historical disinvestment</b> in low socioeconomic Black neighborhoods</li> </ul>

## Design

The St. Claude Ave corridor can be envisioned as a vibrant space with maintained properties, preservation of neighborhood history, and strong design aesthetics. However, blighted lots, abandoned buildings, illegal dumping, and lack of street cleaning present challenges to neighborhood beautification efforts.

The L9W Main Street is developing a plan for opportunities to shape design and beautification efforts to improve the St. Claude corridor attractiveness to potential residents and businesses. To date, the L9W Main Street has led beautification efforts on the St Claude Ave corridor by restoring thoroughfare signage with painting and landscaping; conducting utility box painting to reflect neighborhood history and culture; and improving landscaping, and installing holiday lighting.



*Figure 10: Restored Thoroughfare Entryway Signage on St Claude Ave*





*Figure 11: Antoine Prince with members of Fats Domino's family at mural commemoration at Fats Domino and St Claude Avenues on December 12, 2023*



*Figure 12: Antoine Prince painting the mural of Fats Domino over utility box*

Table 3: Design SWOT Analysis - Lower Ninth Ward Main Street

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Historic character</b> of the Main Street</li> <li>• Large amounts of property potentially <b>available for redevelopment</b></li> <li>• Several <b>local businesses</b> on corridor could be potential partners for beautification efforts, hosting trash cans, etc</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No set system for <b>trash cans / litter removal / beautification</b> with City support</li> <li>• <b>Financial support</b> for continuous signage</li> <li>• Large numbers of <b>vacant and abandoned properties</b></li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential <b>partnerships</b> with City and other organizations to further design improvements</li> <li>• Funding for <b>beautification projects</b></li> <li>• <b>Architecture and urban planning</b> partnerships</li> <li>• <b>Innovation</b> business partnerships</li> <li>• <b>Green infrastructure</b> partnerships</li> <li>• <b>Workforce development</b> partnerships</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Threats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Lack of street cleaning</b></li> <li>• Consistent <b>illegal dumping</b></li> <li>• Historical <b>economic disinvestment</b></li> <li>• <b>Climate change</b></li> </ul>



## Organization

St. Claude Avenue is an integral part of the Lower Ninth Ward community. Participation of residents and stakeholders are vital to ensuring success of the Main Street program.

Table 4: Organization SWOT Analysis - Lower Ninth Ward Main Street

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Main Street Program nested within larger organizational structure of <b>Sankofa CDC</b></li><li>• Existing <b>relationships with community organizations</b>/faith-based institutions</li><li>• Leadership of Sankofa CDC's <b>Community Advisory Action Board (CAAB)</b></li><li>• Reputable relationship with <b>businesses along St. Claude</b></li><li>• Interest of <b>neighborhood residents</b> in ensuring a revitalized St. Claude Ave</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Need more consistent <b>interaction</b> with the community at large</li><li>• <b>Volunteer base</b> specifically for Main Street is lacking</li><li>• Businesses on St. Claude <b>need deeper engagement</b> with Main Street Program</li><li>• Main Street Program needs to <b>show businesses what it can offer</b> and secure resources</li><li>• Challenges with <b>aligning perspectives</b> among all community groups</li></ul>
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Resources</b> from Louisiana Main Street Program</li><li>• Increased <b>community awareness</b></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Declining community population</b></li><li>• Reconciling <b>priorities and visions</b> that may differ between organizations</li></ul>

## Promotion

Marketing and communication efforts for the Main Street Program will be critical as the program begins programming and outreach within the Lower Ninth Ward and, eventually, the Greater New Orleans Area. A marketing campaign will ensure the program is promoted. The L9W Main Street program is reaching the local population. Key audiences include Lower Ninth Ward residents and businesses. Additionally the program will reach citywide and regional partners to attract additional commerce and economic activity to the St. Claude Ave corridor.

*Table 5: Promotion SWOT Analysis - Lower Ninth Ward Main Street*

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sankofa CDC <b>advancement team and Marketing Specialist</b> will support promotion of L9W Main Street</li><li>• Ability to leverage existing community <b>events and activities</b></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Potential need for <b>Main Street specific social media</b> and digital footprint</li><li>• Need for additional</li><li>• Current lack of <b>public signage and wayfinding</b></li><li>• Need to further define <b>citywide and regional audiences</b></li></ul>
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Partnerships</b> that can be leveraged for Main Street program</li><li>• Increased <b>news and media presence</b></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Cost</b> of major promotions and media coverage</li></ul>

# Lower Ninth Ward Main Street Strategic Approach

Sankofa CDC used the SWOT analysis, and the overall review of local context and history, to create an overall L9W Main Street Vision. This vision is supported by SMART goals (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound) that will shape the L9W Main Street's next steps from 2024 - 2027.

## Lower Ninth Ward Main Street Vision

St. Claude Avenue is a thriving economic and environmental ecosystem of the Lower Ninth Ward area. The Lower Ninth Ward Main Street initiative provides opportunities for individuals and businesses to create intergenerational wealth; fosters innovation for a healthy and sustainable socio-economic development; and reflects the culture of the Lower Ninth Ward community.

## SMART Goals, Strategies, and Objectives

Goal 1: Economic Vitality - Facilitate economic growth of the St. Claude Ave corridor.

### ***Objective 1.1: Facilitate business creation and growth along the St. Claude Ave corridor.***

- 1) Tactic 1.1.1: Facilitate four (4) public lectures or programs focused on sharing information about business development resources, including entrepreneurship, business funding and incentives programs in 2024.
- 2) Tactic 1.1.2: Facilitate four (4) public lectures or programs focused on commercial property acquisition, redevelopment and design in 2024.

### ***Objective 1.2: Establish the Main Street Headquarters as the central technological and resilience hub for the LNW St. Claude corridor by 2025.***

- 1) Tactic 1.2.1: Finalize concept designs for the Headquarters in 2023.
- 2) Tactic 1.2.2: Investigate resilience hub models and solar installation opportunities for the Headquarters by 2024.
- 3) Tactic 1.2.3: Undertake a capital campaign to fund Headquarters construction in 2024.
- 4) Tactic 1.2.4: Finalize design and permitting for the Headquarters in early 2025.
- 5) Tactic 1.2.5: Construct and open the Headquarters property by 2026.

***Objective 1.3: Bring blighted and vacant properties back into commerce through property acquisition and remediation.***

- 1) Tactic 1.3.1: Identify all potential Brownsfield properties on the St. Claude Ave corridor by 2024.
- 2) Tactic 1.3.2: Facilitate the remediation of at least one (1) identified brownfield property on St. Claude Avenue by 2026.

***Objective 1.4: Create an innovation corridor with a thriving workforce.***

- 1) Tactic 1.4.1: Partner with up to three (3) workforce development providers to facilitate LNW-based training in high-demand industries within Southeast Louisiana by 2024.
- 2) Tactic 1.4.2: Graduate at least two to four cohorts of students from an entrepreneurship or business development program in a high-demand industry (run by a local partner) by 2025.
- 3) Tactic 1.4.3: Utilize the Main Street Headquarters as a central location for workforce training by 2026, with a goal of graduating four (4) cohorts of students per year from the Main Street HQ by 2027.

Goal 2: Design - Improve public perception of the St. Claude Ave. corridor through projects and programs designed to elevate the built environment.

***Objective 2.1: Establish and enforce basic maintenance standards for public and private property through governmental engagement.***

- 1) Tactic 1.2.1: Establish property maintenance and code enforcement protocols for private property in accordance with City guidelines, and communicate these protocols to all St. Claude Avenue property owners by 4th quarter of 2025.
- 2) Tactic 1.2.2: Work with the City of New Orleans to establish a regular code enforcement presence on St. Claude Avenue by 2024.
- 3) Tactic 1.2.3: Assist and facilitate City departments' installation of public sanitation services, including publicly accessible trash cans for public property, within the St. Claude Ave corridor by 2024.
- 4) Tactic 1.2.4: Consult with the CAAB to connect with community-affiliated non profit organizations for special trash pickup and maintenance needs within the St. Claude Ave corridor by 2025.



***Objective 2.2: Support restoration of public spaces within the corridor and enhance its reflection of Lower Ninth Ward culture and history through beautification initiatives.***

- 1) Tactic 2.2.1: Initiate and complete five (5) beautification projects within the St. Claude Ave corridor that enhances the area's image by 2025.
  - a) Art boxes
  - b) Signage, wayfinding, bulletin boards
  - c) Holiday street lights along the corridor
  - d) Maintenance of thoroughfare welcome sign
  - e) Usage of underutilized and vacant lots

Goal 3: Organization - Increase community engagement in Main Street priorities.

***Objective 3.1: Engage residents and businesses in creating a vibrant and revitalized corridor through community outreach, collaboration, and integration.***

- 1) Tactic 3.1.1: Conduct regular meetings with businesses on the St. Claude corridor once a month.
- 2) Tactic 3.1.2: Utilize the Sankofa Community Advisory Action Board to help develop and evaluate important proposals and initiatives.
- 3) Tactic 3.1.3: Foster relationships with non-profit, community groups, governmental entities, and for-profit organizations in the Lower Ninth Ward related to Main Street efforts.

***Objective 3.2: Maintain a strong and accountable relationship with Louisiana Main Street and national Main Street partners through continuous engagement with program leadership.***

- 1) Tactic 3.2.1: Submit regular progress reports to Louisiana Main Street as required by program participation.
- 2) Tactic 3.2.2: Attend at least one (1) national Main Street conference each year.
- 3) Tactic 3.2.3: Consult with Louisiana Main Street and national Main Street leaders on topics of interest.

***Objective 3.3: Advocate for the Lower Ninth Ward and St. Claude Ave to be centers of economic development and investment.***

- 1) Tactic 3.3.1: Coordinate with regional and citywide economic development partners such as the City of New Orleans Office of Economic Development, GNO Inc, NOLABA, NORA, the New Orleans Business Council, and others to ensure they are aware of opportunities to advance Main Street priorities. Seek meetings on a quarterly or biannual basis with these partners through 2027.

- 2) Tactic 3.3.2: Coordinate with Sankofa CDC's Advancement team to identify potential funding sources that can support Main Street priorities and establish necessary partnerships to secure these funds.

Goal 4: Promotion - Increase communication and media saturation of Main Street programs and priorities.

***Objective 4.1: Communicate the priorities, resources and efforts of the Main Street Program and along the St. Claude Ave corridor to local, regional and national audiences through an integrated marketing communications strategy.***

- 1) Tactic 4.1.1: Integrate Main Street communication efforts with the CAAB's advocacy efforts and Sankofa's overall communications strategy.
- 2) Tactic 4.1.2: Establish social media presence for the Main Street by 2024.
- 3) Tactic 4.1.3: Post social media content related to Main Street on a biweekly basis by the end of 2024. Content may include events, local business promotions, business resources, relevant news stories, best practice national examples, and other items.
- 4) Tactic 4.1.4: Facilitate at least four (4) media opportunities focused on Main Street businesses, programs, or developments every year between 2024 and 2027.
- 5) Tactic 4.1.5: Partner with at least five (5) established festivals, events, and institutions within the Greater New Orleans area to increase awareness of the Lower Ninth Ward Main Street program each year from 2024-2027.