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11.439 Revitalizing Urban Main Streets  
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### **Additional Background about the St. Claude area and the project**

Most of the small businesses along the St. Claude corridor did not return after the levee failure, even though flooding along the street was not devastating. The presence of a reasonably upscale populace with disposable income (French Quarter/Marigny/Bywater) is an oft overlooked asset to redevelopment of the St. Claude area. To take advantage of the City's investment in St. Roch Market and assist local merchants in developing a sustainable economy for the area, St. Claude Ave. Main Street is proposing the redevelopment of the area as a Food Market district. Their vision is to cluster food suppliers, ranging from restaurant/industrial supplies to artisan food products and locally grown produce/seafood to revitalize the St. Claude Main Street corridor, provide local residents with access to food and generate a new tourism attraction adjacent to the French Quarter. This change is expected to open opportunities for artists, small and micro-businesses and professional services. Clustering food supply resources in one area also have potential to create a flood resistant center for post-disaster marshalling and distribution of food provisions by rail, truck or water. The commercial/industrial nature of parts of the neighborhood is favorable for this type of focus. St. Claude Main Street also believes that it offers the advantages of access by highway (I-10, 610), wharf and rail, as well as a stock of warehouses and storefronts to make a Food Market center feasible. In addition, the area has been designated The St. Claude Corridor Cultural District by the City.

The class will assist the St. Claude Avenue Main Streets organization in the creation of a plan to develop the district into a Regional Food Distribution Market that balances the needs of regional and local customers within a walkable urban fabric that supports local businesses, cultural activity and tourism. The project will explore and propose strategies to establish the St. Claude Main Street area as a greatly expanded market center for distribution, sale, and production of food products serving local residents, regional customers and tourist that may include business recruitment, new development, marketing of the district to exploit the growing slow food and local food demand, and value-added services Urban design recommendations will be made to enhance the area's identity as a food center, address physical needs related to these uses and attempt to resolve possible conflicts between the transportation and distribution needs of a regional food market and the needs of local residents and tourists and local businesses. Another challenge and focus will be balancing proposed food center development with maintaining the St. Claude Avenue corridor's role as a neighborhood serving commercial corridor.