

**CREATED BY:  
SAFE ON OUR STREETS NOLA**

**NEIGHBORHOOD GUIDE FOR CRIME PREVENTION**

# **SOOS TOOLKIT**



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# 1

# MESSAGE FROM SAFE ON OUR STREETS

More than a decade after Katrina, our recovery has been inspiring, but imperfect. While we can be proud of our resilience and hopeful for our future, there is much work to be done. No matter the challenges ahead, we remain united in our commitment to rebuilding a city of justice, equity and prosperity for all.

Today, we are faced with an epidemic of crime that threatens to undermine a decade of recovery and the very future of our city. This rising tide of violence not only dishonors those who struggled to rebuild, it diminishes opportunities for our children and the city they deserve to live, learn, work and play.

In many ways, the public safety problems we are faced with today are a result of missed opportunities in the recovery. With large segments of our community unable to access economic opportunity, quality education, or mental health and drug treatment programs, widespread crime comes as little surprise. While our police force works to gain capacity, many residents feel as if they have been left on their own to handle an urgent crisis.

As community-members, we may not have the resources to solve each of these deep-seeded problems. However, there is much we can do at the local level to make progress. Just as we rose to the challenges of Katrina—rebuilding homes, schools, business and neighborhoods against all odds—we can and will rise to the challenge of reducing crime and improving our communities.

Safe on Our Streets (SOS NOLA) was formed by a partnership between the St. Charles Avenue Association and St. Claude Main Street. Today, it now boasts more than 50 neighborhood associations, all committed to finding solutions to public safety and community improvement. The Toolkit serves as one of those solutions.

This Toolkit is designed “for the people, by the people” to provide neighborhood-level programs that can both improve communities and reduce crime. Each of the sections was authored by a community group that has implemented a program with success right here in New Orleans. These tools for public safety were selected because each requires little or no government assistance. In other words, they can be implemented by the community quickly and at low cost.

A digital version of the Toolkit is available on our website at [www.sosnola.com](http://www.sosnola.com) and all are encouraged to download it for distribution. A small number of printed copies are available for those who do not have computer access.

Every community is different—each neighborhood faces slightly different issues and has different resources for addressing public safety problems. The Toolkit was designed to provide a menu of options. A community might like to implement any number of these programs, in any order. We hope you will find something useful to take from the Toolkit for your community, and that you will contribute your own solutions as tools in our next draft. Together, we can build a city where every resident is Safe on Our Streets.

Yours in service,

SOS NOLA





# 2

## SECURITY AND IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS





# BROADMOOR IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

## CRIME PREVENTION AND ALLEVIATION STRATEGY

### THE BROADMOOR IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

In 2010, Broadmoor community leaders worked with their state representatives to introduce a bill that would designate Broadmoor as a “Neighborhood Improvement District.” The legislation formally established Broadmoor’s boundaries, created an elected governing board, and allowed for a parcel-fee vote. On November 2, 2010, Broadmoor voters approved funding the improvement district for five years through an annual \$100 parcel fee. This was reapproved in 2015 for another five years. The City of New Orleans collects the fee through property-tax collection and, after taking out a one-percent collection fee, turns the money over to the Broadmoor Improvement Association’s Board of Commissioners. Through public meetings, residents’ suggestions and other proposals, the board decides how the money will be spent.

As opposed to a security district, which uses parcel funding for neighborhood security patrols, BIA’s parcel fee funds programs and services as well as neighborhood improvements that directly impact residents’ quality of life. Services include a community food pantry, primary care, mental health support, educational opportunities, recreational programs and neighborhood social events. Additionally, parcel fee dollars support tree plantings, strategic crime camera installations, blight clean-ups and small infrastructure improvements.

### CRIME CAMERA INITIATIVE

The BIA leverages improvement district and grant dollars to a crime camera initiative. The BIA crime committee works with NOPD and residents to identify crime hot spots and strategically place cameras in neighborhood entry points in order to capture activity.

### BIA LEADERSHIP TEAM & PARTNERSHIPS

The BIA employs four full-time employees as well as various other contract workers, interns and volunteers in order to carry out the work of the organization. The BIA maintains strong partnerships with various entities throughout the community including faith-based partners, Keller Library and Community Center, Wilson School, South Broad Community Health and the business community.

# SECURITY & IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS

## S.O.S. NEW ORLEANS

### WHAT IS A SECURITY DISTRICT?

Security Taxing Districts or “Security Districts” are zones in the New Orleans metropolitan area that employ private security companies or off-duty New Orleans police to supplement the work of the New Orleans Police Department in providing for public safety.

### HOW IS A SECURITY DISTRICT CREATED?

The process of creating a Security District involves multiple steps and can take months or years to complete. First, the state legislature must pass enabling legislation to establish the security district as a political subdivision of the state. Second, a referendum is held for residents of the proposed district to approve or reject the creation of a Security District. If voters approve, the third step is to establish a board, begin assessing fees and initiate the proposed services.

### ARE THERE OTHER SECURITY DISTRICTS?

New Orleans currently has about 25 security districts, with most of them being in New Orleans East, Mid City and Uptown.

### HOW IS A SECURITY DISTRICT FUNDED?

As political subdivisions of the state, Security Districts have the right to impose property taxes. Most assess flat per-parcel fees, although some assess a millage-based fee that varies with property values. These funds are collected annually by the City of New Orleans and distributed to the appropriate Security District.

### HOW DO SECURITY DISTRICTS OPERATE?

A board of community members is established to oversee services, hire patrols, administer the program and comply with auditing requirements. Many Security Districts employ a paid staff person to manage the funds and services. Typically, a Security District employs either private security services (such as N.O.P.P.), off-duty NOPD officers, or a combination of the two. The type and number security officers on patrol, the number hours per day and of days per week is set by each individual Security District.

### HOW MUCH DOES A SECURITY DISTRICT PATROL COST?

The cost of a Security District depends on the number of officers, hours and days. Generally, each security officer costs about \$25 - \$35 per hour. Security District annual budgets range from \$75,000 per year to \$600,000 per year depending on the scope of services.

### WHAT SERVICES DOES A SECURITY DISTRICT PROVIDE?

The scope of services is determined by each Security District. Typical services include regular patrol cars, bike patrols, foot patrols as well as additional services such as escorting somebody home from work late at night or meeting a resident as a taxi brings them home or at their car as they load or unload groceries.

### DO SECURITY DISTRICTS IMPROVE PUBLIC SAFETY?

The office of the New Orleans Inspector General found that the presence of a Security District was a significant predictor of lower property crime rates, but not a significant predictor of reduction in violent crime or murder rates. The OIG found that the public's feeling of safety increased and fear decreased.

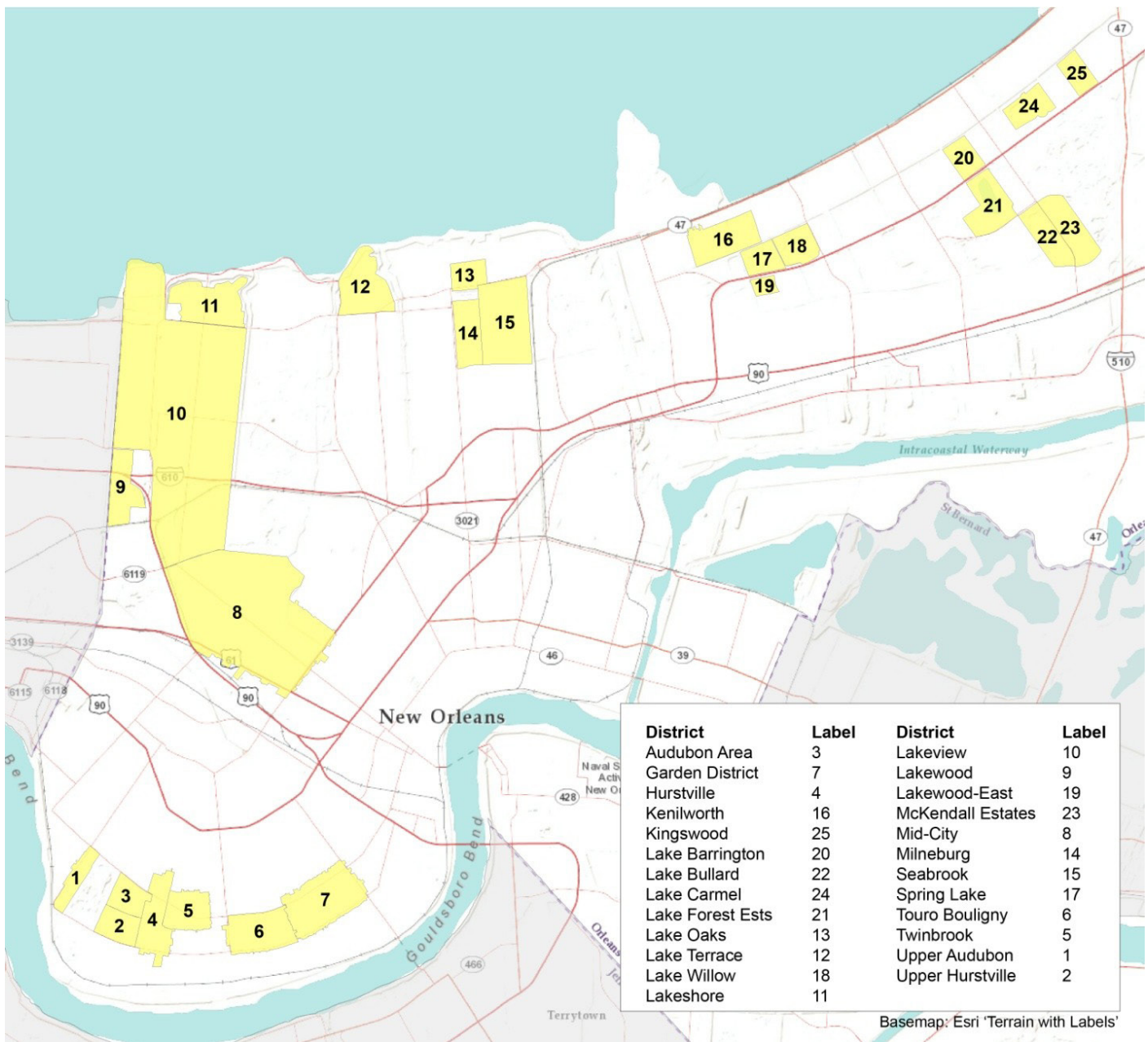
### WHAT ABOUT A “COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT”?

An innovative approach may make it possible for us to utilize funds for both security services and community development needs such as youth programming, park maintenance and other improvements.

### WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE?

Please discuss public safety concerns with your neighbors, community leaders, police department and elected officials. You can read the Office of Inspector General “Review of New Orleans Security Taxing District” report from September 23, 2013 on the inspector general website at [nolaoig.gov](http://nolaoig.gov).

## NEW ORLEANS SECURITY DISTRICTS AS OF 2012



# 3 BLIGHTED PROPERTY



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# THE ZION CITY STORY

The first portion of this section was designed by Alexander Miller and Keith Twitchell to help neighborhood leaders fight blight in their communities in order to improve the quality of life for residents. In 2012, Zion City organized their neighborhood residents to look at how to improve their community. Below are the 6 steps used from start to finish.

## STEP 1

The Zion Preservation Association worked with Beacon of Hope to map their community and they found the following:

- Over 50% vacant properties
- 30% blighted properties

Community mapping assesses the number and type of blighted properties, and monitor progress towards improvement.

## STEP 2

Zion City residents used data to identify owners and monitor legal progress on blighted properties including the following:

- New Orleans Assessor's website to investigate ownership and tax issues [nolaassessor.com](http://nolaassessor.com)
- Blight status to monitor enforcement progress [Blightstatus.nola.gov](http://Blightstatus.nola.gov)

## STEP 3

Residents wanted to know why blighted properties in Zion City were so hard to bring back to commerce. One reason was low property values that made it hard to build houses or businesses in the area. They found that certain policies and strategies would work better for their real estate market type.

## STEP 4

Zion City looked at policies and tools that could help community members access or purchase blighted properties cheaply if the owners wouldn't maintain them.

## STEP 5

Zion City residents worked to create an action plan for their community based on the following:

- Vision
- Property research and data
- Policy knowledge
- Property value knowledge
- Partners
- Community Assets

This action plan was specific to their community and was to improve blighted properties and their quality of life.

## Step 6

Zion City worked to acquire 2 lots from cooperative owners/ partners and create a park, in partnership with Land Trust for Louisiana. Considerations for any project of this kind include the following:

- Liability insurance
- Maintenance costs
- Upfront costs
- Design and features
- Partners

Strong partnerships were established, funds raised, and property owners were found who wanted to work with the group to execute the project.

More information about the Zion City project can be found at <http://www.nolabligh toolkit.com/>

# REPORTING AND DEALING WITH BLIGHTED PROPERTY

The second section of the blighted property section of this toolkit is the city of New Orleans process for reporting and dealing with blighted property as found on [nola.gov.com](http://nola.gov.com).

## INTAKE

Call 311 to report blighted property. Begin collecting pictures and documents to illustrate the blight.

## INPUT

A case is created. You can follow the status of the case on <http://www.blightstatus.com/>

## INSPECTION

Code Enforcement Inspectors perform detailed inspections of buildings exteriors and the lot conditions. The target date is 30 days from the complaint to the inspection.

## RESEARCH

The code violations are documented then extensive field research is done to identify the owners or legal interest. As a citizen you may look at <http://www.nolaassessor.com/> to find owners of properties in New Orleans.

## NOTICE

Hearing dates are set and notification sent to all interested parties. It is also posted in the Times Picayune and on the online calendar <https://data.nola.gov/>

## DAY OF HEARING

Owners are commanded by law to appear at the Code Enforcement Hearings. The owner or legal representative must show work in progress to bring the property into compliance with city code. Concerned citizens may attend hearings and provide recent information that indicates the property continues to be a public nuisance and blight.

## JUDGMENT

Three things can happen at this point. The case can be reset as a work in progress. It can be dismissed as the work has been completed to address the blight or a judgment may be issued. Notice of Judgment will be issued to

the owner and if not appealed, remediated and/or paid in full will be filed with the recorder of mortgages 30 days after the hearing. This filing will constitute a lien on the property and will give the City the authority to remediate the violations and/or seize the property for Sheriff Sale.

## POST JUDGMENT ACTIONS

If a guilty judgment is recorded and a lien is placed on the property, Code Enforcement evaluates the property through an administrative review process to determine the best approach to remove the hazardous conditions of public nuisance and blight. The city has 3 paths for abatement.

### 1. Lot Clearing and Abatement:

In coordination with NORA <http://www.noraworks.org/>, the City has launched a city-wide lot clearing program that can perform multiple cuts of identified lots with high grass and weeds and other unsafe conditions. The City cutting the grass will not remove fines against the owner.

2. Sheriff's Sale: Properties approved for lien foreclosure will have writs filed with Civil District court to be turned over for the Sheriff's sale. To view upcoming sales, <http://www.civilsheriff.com>

3. Demolition: Blighted properties may be selected by Code Enforcement for demolition. Once a building is demolished, if the remaining lot remains in a blighted condition it may be sold at sheriff's sale and/or could be maintained through the lot clearing program. Individuals interested in abating or acquiring blighted property may do one or more of the following:



## **MAINTENANCE**

The new Lot Maintenance program under Chapter 66 is a strategic, place-based response to concentrated blight. The Fight the Blight program allows the City to cut overgrowth, remove debris and perform routine maintenance on a private lot and record costs on the property owner's tax bill if

- The grass/growth is over 18 inches; or
  - There is trash, debris or other refuse; or
  - There is noxious (poison ivy, etc) growth
- This program also provides jobs and wrap-around services such as GED prep, parenting classes, and job training to youth ages 18-24 through our vendor partnership with Covenant House.

<http://www.chapter66@nola.gov>

## **ACQUIRING/BUYING BLIGHTED PROPERTY**

You'll need to do your own research on the property and/or contact the property owner to see if it is for sale. Email [chapter66@nola.gov](mailto:chapter66@nola.gov) and we'll make note that you are interested in purchasing. You can also look at the following websites for property information:

- <http://www.nolaassessor.com/>
- <http://nola.gov/onestop/>
- <http://blightstatus.nola.gov/>
- <http://www.noraworks.org/>
- <http://www.civilsheriff.com/RealEstateSales.asp>

## **NEW ORLEANS REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY NORA**

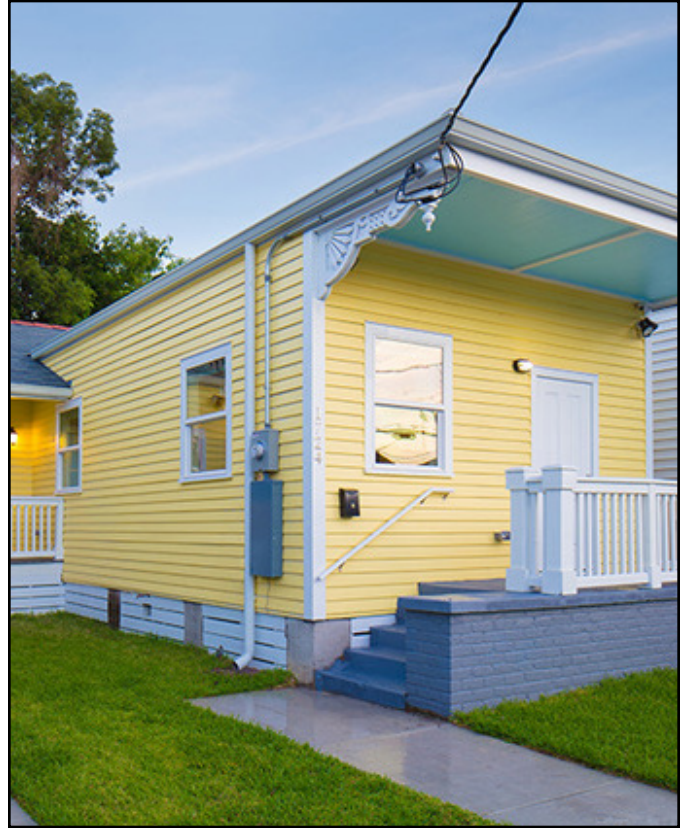
The Lot Next Door 3.0 Program provides an opportunity to owners of property that share a common boundary with a NORA owned property to purchase that property. Go to <http://redevelop.nola.gov/> or call 504.658.4422 to complete LND 3.0 expression of interest forms. It is a first come first served process.

All Lot Next Door properties are sold for at least fair market value.

**BEFORE**



**AFTER**



**BEFORE**



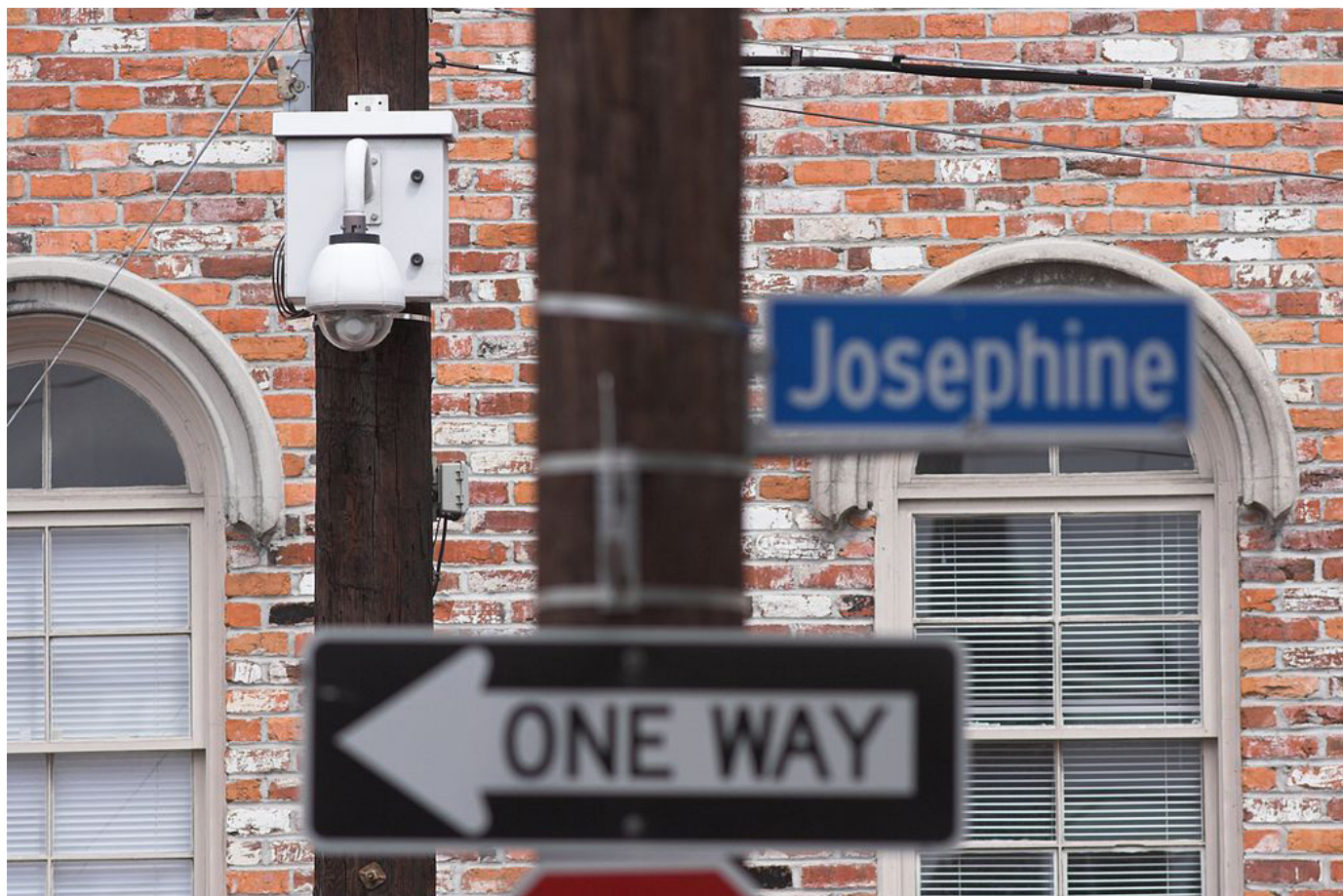
**AFTER**



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# 4 CRIME CAMERAS



# PROJECT NOLA

Developed by criminologist Bryan Lagarde, ProjectNOLA enhances public safety by dramatically increasing police efficiency and citizen awareness. Managing the largest HD city-wide networked crime camera system in America, ProjectNOLA's Incident Monitoring Center receives video from 1400 cameras placed on New Orleans homes and businesses. Routinely providing real-time supplemental information and video footage to officers, ProjectNOLA has assisted with over 500 criminal investigations, including 50 homicides, and may be the most successful crime camera system in the United States given the large number of major investigations that ProjectNOLA has helped closed via arrest and warrant.

A citizen-based crime abatement initiative, ProjectNOLA was created without the benefit of Federal grant money or city tax dollars and is the most cost efficient city-wide crime camera system in the United States. As a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, private donations and corporate sponsorships are greatly appreciated... and necessary for our continued success!

While store-bought camera systems are often affordable, the quality of the image and the connectivity of the system may be less than more expensive professional camera systems. Project NOLA understands that the expense of professional camera systems could be a barrier to entry, and so now features LOANER crime cameras, which allow the camera host to view both live AND recorded video in HD, from their PC, smart phone/ device, etc. Now, crime camera hosts may very easily review their own video, for any reason and at any time.

For those wishing to get more than one or two ProjectNOLA crime cameras—free of charge—Project NOLA may help design a professional grade HD camera system for homes and businesses, point out where the system may be purchased from a reputable merchant for a great price, and suggest a local installation company that will install it for a special discounted price.

Already the most successful and cost efficient crime fighting program in New Orleans, Project NOLA is about to take another huge leap forward as UNO is providing us our own wing on campus. Once we have transitioned our Real Time Crime Information Center to UNO, select Graduate students will soon begin live monitoring our street-facing crime cameras, which will allow us the opportunity to proactively look for felony crimes in progress. This is unlike any other program in our area, including SafeCam, which is not actually a crime camera system that can be remotely monitored from a central location. Rather, SafeCam is a registry of available cameras that the NOPD can review in investigating a crime.

For additional information, contact:  
Bryan Lagarde  
Executive Director, Project NOLA  
1308 Dealers Ave, Harahan, LA 70123  
(504) 298-9117

# FRERET IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

Business and homeowners along the Freret corridor found that they could affordably install crime cameras on their own. By purchasing "DIY" systems through a wholesale company or online, many property owners have been able to quickly establish a monitoring system. The more properties with cameras, the larger the area that could be monitored. When the property owner purchases and installs the camera system, they have 24/7 access to footage no matter what the severity of the incident is, and no proof of police reports needed. Plus, they can easily connect their system to NOPD's SafeCam program.

One place to find wholesale systems is at:  
<http://www.shoppingcctv.com/>

Freret Corridor's  
Suggested systems:

Two Camera System:

Professional 4 Channel HDCVI  
DVR Security Camera System with  
4 x 1/2.8" 2.0 Mega pixels HDCVI  
SONY CMOS CCTV Security Camera,  
3.6mm/ M12 Fixed Lens, 24PCS Infrared LED,  
49 feet IR distance. 1080p real time preview,  
720P realtime recording. iPhone, Android  
Viewing. Network live, backup, playback,  
USB2.0 Backup, PTZ Control

Four Camera System:

Professional 4 Channel HD-CVI DVR  
with 2 x 1/2.8" 2.0 Mega pixels HDCVI  
SONY CMOS CCTV Security Camera, 3.6mm  
Lens, 24 LEDs, 49 feet IR distance. All channel  
with 1080p realtime live view. iPhone, Android  
Viewing. Network live, backup, playback,  
USB2.0 Backup

The following are "DIY" installers for these  
systems:

Louisiana Security, LLC  
78016 Highway 437  
Covington, LA 70433  
866-413-0936

Link Security & Smart Home  
1616 L & A Road,  
Suite 103  
Metairie, LA 70001  
866-529-3545

Advanced Custom Electronics  
4808 Cleveland Place  
Metairie, LA 70003  
866-523-2338

# 5 LITTER ABATEMENT PROGRAMS



# NEW ORLEANS TRASH MOB

## LITTER PICKUP ACTIVITY FOR NEIGHBORHOODS

Neighborhoods often feel helpless in the face of crime issues, but there are activities that promote social cohesion and sense of community. Picking up litter improves the appearance of the neighborhood and is an activity where neighbors connect with one another in a positive context. This is an activity that helps diminish the environmental factors that contribute to crime.

### HOW TO HOST A CLEAN-UP:

1. Identify an area in your neighborhood that needs to be cleaned up.
2. Find a few community members who you can count on to help clean the area up.
3. Figure out what equipment or resources you need to be successful.
4. Schedule the event & invite other neighbors to participate.
5. Host the clean-up event. Prioritize safety of participants!
6. Document the event & share your success!
7. Plan your next clean-up event.

The most important thing to remember is that many hands make light work. You will be amazed at what you can accomplish with just a few people in a short amount of time. With the right participants and equipment, you can host neighborhood clean ups with some regularity and they will become an activity members of the community look forward to.

### IDENTIFY AN AREA TO CLEAN-UP

Find an intersection or a park that has a litter problem and focus on just one area for each event. Picking an easy to remember location makes it very easy to tell people what is going on. The more neighbors remember what is going on, the more neighbors are likely to participate. Higher profile locations ensure the community can see clean ups taking place

and can easily see the result and impact of the clean up.

Things to think about when it comes to location:

- Don't go on private land without permission.
- There's plenty of litter to pick up in the public right-of-way between the sidewalk and the road or in the neutral ground.
- If someone's house has a lot of trash, report them to 311, don't go into their yard!
- Roads mean traffic.
- Lowest traffic is on Saturday and Sunday mornings, and that makes clean-ups safer.
- Highest traffic is after work on weekdays, making clean-ups more risky.
- Most volunteers will drive to the clean-up. Think about where they'll need to park.
- Pick locations where it is easy to pick up trash. Harder locations require special tools.
- Is there high grass & weeds? Litter is harder to pick up in overgrown areas.
- Is there water in an area, like from a busted pipe or recent rain? Wet trash is the worst trash, is harder to pick up, and may require special tools.

### COMMUNITY MEMBERS YOU CAN COUNT ON

Anyone can pick up trash on their block and improve their community, but this is about building community through shared activities. When you're organizing a clean-up, find some dedicated community members who you know are going to participate and encourage others to join in.

- Get a core group of neighbors who are physically able to do this work. Who will show



up and clean up even if everyone else forgets? These people are your core group.

- Partner with existing community groups and organizations. They already have a bunch of people who are willing to do activities together, give them an activity!

- Churches

- Schools & Alumni Groups

- Boy Scouts/Girl Scouts

- Nearby neighborhood organizations (you help us, we help you)

- Nearby community groups that aren't neighborhood specific

- Let the City know! Through the Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Engagement or through your City Councilmember, they may know other groups nearby trying to plan clean-ups too.

### **EQUIPMENT AND RESOURCES**

Clean-ups don't require a lot of equipment and resources, but better equipment sure does make the job easier! Basic Clean-Ups don't require a lot of equipment, and you can generally get by with just a few things.

- Closed-toed shoes
- Gardening gloves
- Trash bags – medium size yard & garden bags work the best. If you plan to separate plastic and aluminum for recycling, get some regular white kitchen bags.

If you're doing a little more than that, ask participants to bring some of the following household items:

- Outdoor broom & dustpan
- Rakes
- Flat faced shovels

If you're planning on doing this regularly, consider:

- Trash grabbers – not many folks have these on-hand, but it may be a good idea to buy some at a local hardware store if your neighborhood group has any sort of budget.
- Orange vests – for working near a street

A few things are always good to have on hand:

- Hand sanitizer
- First-Aid Kit
- Sunscreen
- Water!

Equipment to Avoid:

- Flip flops
- Latex gloves

### **SCHEDULE EVENT & INVITE NEIGHBORS TO PARTICIPATE**

Once you've got a location, have some people who are interested in showing up, and know what equipment you need, it is time to schedule your event. You know the folks in your community, so pick out the best time for the most people. Weekend mornings, especially Saturdays, seem to be a great time for a lot of people.

Important tips:

- Decide how many hours you plan to schedule the clean-up for. Some groups have success getting neighbors together for 1 or 2 hours, large groups with dedicated volunteers can take more time. If you've never done this, start off with short, 1 hour clean-ups.

- Seasons are important. It is easier to start at 10am in the Fall and Winter, but in Spring and Summer you may consider starting much earlier to beat the heat.

### **USE A VARIETY OF WAYS TO INVITE PARTICIPANTS**

- Tell them in person at community meetings, church services, or other gatherings.

- A clean-up may give you a reason to go door to door and hand out fliers about your neighborhood organization and get to know neighbors.

- Set up the Event through social media such as email, Facebook, or Nextdoor. Pro-tip: create Facebook event and use the link as your main event invitation across other formats.



## HOSTING A CLEAN-UP

Safety First! Picking up trash isn't any more dangerous than working in your yard, but you still have to make sure participants know what to expect. It is all basic, common sense stuff, but you never realize it until you do it.

- There's easy litter (quick to clean up) and hard garbage (mattresses, tires, busted furniture). Go after the easy stuff and call the city 311 to report the big stuff.
- Some garbage is sharp and will cut through the skin. This is the biggest thing to watch out for.
- Garbage usually collects in piles. Don't reach into a pile with your hands, even with gloves, unless you know there's nothing sharp.
- If you want to clean up broken glass (there's always broken glass), use a broom & dustpan. Picking it up with your hands (even with gloves) can cause cuts through the skin.
- If you've put anything sharp in a trash bag you're walking with, hold it away from your leg & don't sling it over your shoulder. Sharp stuff can cut through the skin even inside a bag!
- Use tools like a rake, broom, trash grabber, dust pan, shovel, etc. Your back will thank you!
- If you pick up bottles or cans that may have liquid in them, point them away from your face as you pick them up. This prevents gross liquid from splashing.
- If you find a bottle with an apple-juice colored liquid in it, it probably isn't apple juice.
- Watch out for rusty nails.
- Have hand sanitizer at the ready.
- Don't go too hard, especially when it is hot. You can get heatstroke very, very easily and you won't notice till you're sick later on.
- Drink lots of water.
- Watch out for ant beds, stinging insects, or other bugs underneath some trash.
- Don't eat or drink anything found on the ground at a litter clean-up

## START ON TIME & END ON TIME

Collect all the full trash bags in one place at the end of the event. Make sure they're in the public right of way and not in someone's yard. Near an intersection is good, but somewhere near the street so Sanitation can schedule to pick it up. Report to 311 or Sanitation that your neighborhood hosted a clean-up, and tell them where the pile of bags is located.

If you separate recycling (plastic bottles and aluminum cans) into white garbage bags, the city will not collect them. You'll have to take them to someone's house and put them in a recycle bin there.

The city does not recycle glass. Glass goes in the trash bags with the other trash.

Rain delays are inevitable. New Orleans is one of the rainiest cities in the USA. It isn't bad to pick up trash in a light rain, but it is awful if it is a cold rain or a hard rain. Stop the clean up immediately if you see lightning or hear thunder nearby!

Always stay in the public right of way and don't go onto private property. What you consider trash may be someone else's treasure.

You can clean debris from the grates of catch basins, but don't open them. Don't reach your hands or arms into the storm drains. The lids are very heavy & require special tools to open safely.

## DOCUMENT & SHARE YOUR SUCCESS!

The big payoff is that you'll be surprised how much you get done in a short amount of time, how much better the neighborhood looks. Take before and after pictures, they are great to share on social media and with other people in the neighborhood.

You can also email them to the City Office of Neighborhood Engagement, the Department of Sanitation, and your City Councilmember.

## PLAN YOUR NEXT EVENT!

Build off your success and get the neighbors together for this activity again and again.

**STAY IN TOUCH**

Community Links:

Safe on Our Streets (SOS)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/SOSNOLA/>

Keep New Orleans Beautiful Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/keepnolabeautiful/>

NOLA TrashMOB Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/NolaTrashMob/>

Government Links:

New Orleans Office of Sanitation: <http://www.nola.gov/sanitation/>

New Orleans Office of

Neighborhood Engagement: <http://www.nola.gov/neighborhood-engagement/>

# 6

## STREETLIGHTS



# ST. CHARLES AVENUE ASSOCIATION

After receiving numerous complaints from residents and businesses along St. Charles Avenue regarding the lack of streetlights, the St. Charles Avenue Association decided to take action. Initially, the group (perhaps naively) thought that a call to City Hall would fix the problem. After all, the Avenue is a main thoroughfare in the city and one of its iconic streets.

Members of the association did, indeed, meet with city officials, and within six months not one light was repaired or replaced. We then decided that we needed to get active and public about the problem. It took 18 months of meetings with city officials, the media and posting yard signs and bumper stickers, but today the Avenue is filled with night time light, all LED lights that should last 7-10 years.

To get lights repaired or replaced in your neighborhood, the process should be easy. In most cities we contacted (as a comparison), streetlights can be repaired in 1-7 days. In New Orleans, it takes much longer. Here are some steps to simplify the process:

1. Find and record the broken light or lights. On each light pole there is a number. Write down the number and exact location.
2. Work with your Neighborhood Association and speak with one, unified voice if there are many streetlights that are broken or missing.
3. Call and/or email the Department of Public Works (658-8000 or [dpw@nola.gov](mailto:dpw@nola.gov)) and report the problem. Give the DPW the exact location and number of the broken light or lights. Keep a log of the time and date of your call and subsequent call or emails.
4. Contact your City Council Representative if the DPW does not repair the streetlights within a few weeks. Email your Council Member and keep a copy of your email in your file or journal. If you do not hear from your representative within a reasonable time, make a personal appointment to the Council Member.
5. When visiting your Council Member, be

organized. Bring photos of missing or broken streetlights, a record of phone calls and emails you have sent to the DPW and Council. Be respectful of your Council Member's time. Remind your Council Member that this is a public safety issue as well as an aesthetic issue.

6. If lights are not repaired in a reasonable length of time, get active. The St. Charles Avenue Association printed and distributed 250 yard signs and 500 bumper stickers with the slogan, "Real Lights, Real Fast." They were distributed over a period of weeks, beginning with one Sunday afternoon event in the parking lot of a prominent business on the Avenue.

7. Contact the Media. The St. Charles Avenue Association was featured on television, radio, print and social media. When meeting with the media, bring a journal of meetings your association has had with DPW, Council and any other city agencies. Also bring yard signs and bumper stickers. Include any website or social media interactions.

8. Have your facts. The board members of the St. Charles Avenue Association divided the Avenue into 10-block segments and recorded the number of streetlights in each segment that did not work. Example, from Carrollton to Broadway, more than 70% of the lights did not work. From Broadway to Napoleon, 80% did not work...and so it went. The numbers were astounding up and down the Avenue.

9. Once the streetlights are repaired, make sure you contact the DPW, your Council Member and all the media who covered the story and thank them. Gratitude is important at all levels.



# 7

## REVITALIZING VACANT LOTS



# FROM VACANT TO VIBRANT

## ST. CLAUDE MAIN ST.

In so many New Orleans communities, what would otherwise be tight-knit residential neighborhoods or bustling commercial corridors are dotted with vacant and blighted lots. At best, these empty lots sit as undeveloped spaces; at worst these unattended places become blighted, unsightly lots that are a nuisance for neighbors.

At the same time, these vacant spaces have an unrealized potential for vibrancy. Along the St. Claude Corridor, the community worked together to take three different vacant lots and turn them into sources of revitalization. With a little creativity and a lot of community support, these empty lots were turned into parks, markets and community hubs. We believe that each of these projects can be a model for utilizing vacant lots in communities across New Orleans. Here's what we did, and some ideas for how your community might turn vacant into vibrant.

## SHORT TERM PROJECTS

While it is ideal to develop vacant lots for the long term, with houses or commercial buildings, there are many ways to utilize the lot in the short term. The following projects require only minimal commitment from the property owner, and can quickly build the momentum of revitalization in the area.

### FOOD TRUCK PARK

For this project, we tried to solve two problems at one time. There are a number of food truck businesses that are looking for a location to set up shop. At the same time, there are a number of vacant lots that are ripe for commercial development. We paired the food truck operators with the owner of a vacant lot to create a Food Truck Park over four weeks. Each day, the food trucks would pull in and the park would open for customers, complete with picnic seating, family events and a music tent. The empty space became a place for the community to congregate and for small business entrepreneurs to connect with customers.

## NIGHT MARKET

Similar to the Food Truck Park, the Night Market was a way to revitalize a vacant lot quickly, without long-term infrastructure needs. With a twist on the Art Market or Farmer's Market, we decided to hold our "Night Market" in the evening, after the summer sun went down. Bringing in food vendors, artisans, furniture makers, jewelers and vintage wares, the Night Market was a way to bring vibrancy to the corridor at night time, leveraging the patrons of bars and restaurants and providing a test case for retail businesses to open along the corridor.

## SOME TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL SHORT - TERM PROJECTS

- Identify a group of businesses that might want to locate together, like a farmer's market
- Organize with the property owner, vendors and neighbors to develop an operating plan
- Identify any infrastructure needs, such as electricity, water, restrooms, accessibility
- Secure the necessary permits for vendors, entertainment, etc
- Market the event to the neighborhood and beyond, asking your vendors to help spread the word

## LONG TERM PROJECTS

Developing long term projects for vacant lots takes extra time and planning, but it helps to build more sustainable communities. Part of any truly livable community is a neighborhood with public green spaces. Here is what we did along St. Claude to bring parks to more people.

### POCKET PARK

The project is known as a "Pocket Park" because it fits into the block on a small, vacant lot between other buildings. For this project, we had permission of the property owner to turn his vacant lot into a small public park. We worked with an architecture firm to engage the community and learn how to design



a space to meet their needs. After multiple community meetings and design sessions, we settled on a design that provided green space, seating, bike parking and improved the sidewalks for neighborhood use. The owner committed to keeping the grass cut, and the community committed to keeping it clean and using it for community events. What was one a grass field covered in litter is now a modern park that beautifies the area and brings amenities to the neighborhood.

### **SOME TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL LONG TERM PROJECTS:**

- Identify a property that might help meet a long term need for community green space or gardens
- Meet with the property owner to see if they would be willing to support a long term investment
- Ask the community how they would use the lot. As a park, a garden, a community meeting space?
- Raise money to improve the lot with amenities such as trees, benches, planters and bike parking
- Work with the community to develop a design that they will enjoy and actually utilize
- Develop an MOU between a community group responsible for the lot and the property owner
- Engage the community in the improvement of the lot, such as helping to plant trees or install benches. The community should stay engaged in continued maintenance through clean up events.

Use the new green space as a place for public events and community celebrations.

For more ideas and information, visit [www.stclaud.org](http://www.stclaud.org) as well as <http://www.communityprogress.net/>.





# GRAFFITI ABATEMENT





# OPERATION CLEAN SWEEP

Before Operation Clean Sweep: education & development was form, if you had a graffiti problem in the city of New Orleans, you would call city hall. Since city hall did not have a department for graffiti, the city transferred you to N.O.P.D. they would have to take the call, and send a unit out to the location. Since police would have to catch vandals in the act, nothing was done, except to fill out the paper work. And, the graffiti stayed on. But most important, it took law enforcement away from priority crimes, to go fill out paper work.

Since O.C.S. was created, it saved the New Orleans police dept. Over 9,000 phone calls, and eliminated over 25,000 graffiti tags, so law enforcement could respond quicker and concentrate on priority calls.

Operation Clean Sweep is the only non-profit agency that eliminates graffiti for a municipality. O.C.S. was the official graffiti remover for 2013 Super Bowl & Mardi Gras.

\*honored by president Bill Clinton

\*honored by Gov. Foster and Gov. Jindal

\*honored by Mayor Morial, Mayor Nagan

\*supported by the New Orleans police dept., New Orleans F.B.I. gang taskforce, Orleans parish sheriff's dept., LA. State police.

\*nationals awards, "keep america beautiful", people magazine, much more..

Contact the graffiti hotline at  
504-486-9694

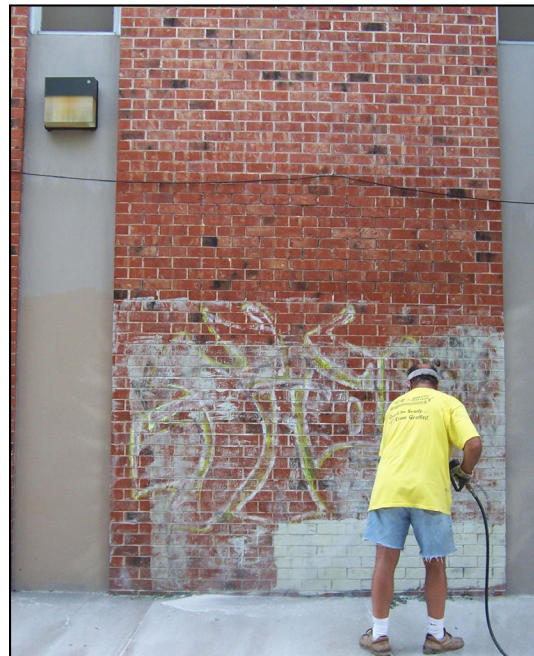
Or

[www.operationcleansweepnola.com](http://www.operationcleansweepnola.com)

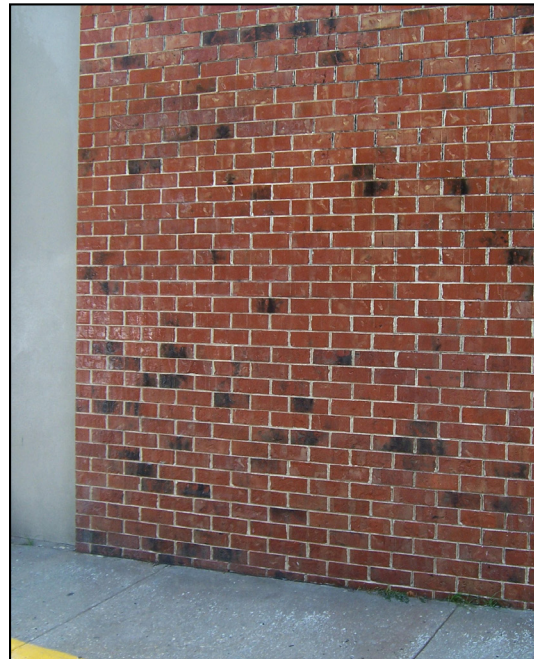
"If any organization would like to know more about graffiti, I am available for speaking engagements.

Warmest regards, Fred Radtke/president & founder vOperation clean sweep"

## BEFORE



## AFTER



# 9

# NUISANCE PROPERTIES OPERATORS





# NUISANCE PROPERTIES OPERATORS

Visiting with wonderful neighbors, or sharing a story out on the porch, is one of the things that makes New Orleans a great place to live. Unfortunately, too many communities are burdened by a nuisance neighbor. Whether it's blight, litter, noise or illegal activities, these nuisances bring down quality of life, foster crime, negatively impact the value of homes, and can even slow our recovery. Not only to these "bad apples" harm the good neighbors around them, property owners and operators can violate the law when they allow a nuisance to persist.

Handling nuisance properties is often a priority for neighborhoods looking to improve quality of life and reduce crime. This toolkit provides some step-by-step directions to help communities get started in dealing with the nuisance. The process can become lengthy and complicated given the various government agencies and laws involved. However, we are very thankful The Public Law Center at Tulane University School of Law for putting together an overview of the issues and an action plan for success.

The following was excerpted with permission from The Public Law Center's Memorandum on Nuisance Laws. The goal is to provide a brief overview of your rights to enjoy your property without nuisance, and some of the strategies for removing a nuisance in your neighborhood. Common to all of the nuisance abatement strategies is the need to (1) gather information, (2) contact the correct officials, (3) follow up and be persistent. While it can be difficult to live beside a nuisance, the most important element is patience. For more detailed information, visit The Public Law Center's Nuisance Memo and Action Plan at <file:///C:/Users/jrhodes/Downloads/>



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