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The Social Impacts of Condominium Conversion in the Vieux Carré Neighborhood, New Orleans, La

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THE SOCIAL IMPACTS OF CONDOMINIUM CONVERSION IN THE VIEUX CARRÉ NEIGHBORHOOD, NEW ORLEANS, LA

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

ABSTRACT

In order to better understand the effects of condominium conversions, this study explores the nature and extent of the conversion trend, and its social impacts on the Vieux Carré neighborhood. The increasing number of conversions in the Vieux Carré, also known as the French Quarter, has been the focus of recent controversy and has been perceived by many residents as a threat to the viability of the historic district as a neighborhood. Long-term Vieux Carré residents and neighborhood organizations have expressed fears that the converted rental units are being used as short-term rentals to tourists or second homes, which may be contributing to the decline of the neighborhood's residential base.

As a framework for understanding the social impacts of condominium conversions in the Vieux Carré neighborhood, this study includes a review of the literature on neighborhood change, neighborhood health, and neighborhood attachment. Since the issue of condominiums is intertwined with the ongoing research on tourism in this historic district, a review of the literature on condominium conversion, tourism impacts and the Vieux Carré also is included.

In addition, this study contains the results of a mail survey of occupants of converted condominium units in the Vieux Carré. While survey respondents report formal and informal participation in the neighborhood, only half of the occupants (53%) of the converted units consider the Vieux Carré as their primary residence or are registered to vote in New Orleans. Although many condominium residents do exhibit a sense of neighborhood attachment, half are not present in the neighborhood on a full-time basis;

therefore, they have limited opportunities to participate politically on behalf of the neighborhood. The findings of the survey suggest the social impacts of the condominium conversion in the Vieux Carré are likely to contribute to the decline of the neighborhood.

> This place is such an irreplaceable jewel that to cry out for the preservation of its architecture and soul is a must. The only way to ensure this, I believe, is to ensure the Quarter remains a residential area.
>
> Victorio Colangelo

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

During the past five years, residential buildings in the Vieux Carré, the oldest neighborhood in New Orleans, have been converted into condominiums at a rapid rate. Many Vieux Carré residents express fear that this trend is contributing to an unwelcome change: the Vieux Carré becoming less of a neighborhood and more of a tourist attraction. Residents' concerns stem from the perception that many of the converted units are being used illegally as short-term rentals to tourists, and not as primary residences. Because of this concern, the issue of condominium conversion is a point of convergence for several larger issues: affordable housing, tourism impacts, and historic preservation.

The issues being explored in this study are relevant to other cities facing both condominium conversion and tourism impacts. It is especially important to those cites which, like New Orleans, must contend with the effects of residential rentals being used as transient rentals to tourists. This issue is one faced by many older residential cities which struggle to balance the need for income generated by tourism with needs of its residents in order to maintain and foster long-term viability.

Since the city's founding in 1718, the Vieux Carré, also known as the French Quarter, has been home to a diverse population and maintained a variety of housing options. The recent controversy over the social changes associated with the increasing number of condominium conversions in the oldest residential neighborhood in New Orleans, the Vieux Carré, is perceived by many as a threat to the diversity. Long-term Vieux Carré residents and neighborhood organizations suspect that the condominiums are taking units out of the rental housing stock, and that condominiums are not being used as long-term housing. Their concerns are part of larger issue that has been become the subject of much recent research.

Most recent studies on the Vieux Carré have focused on the impacts of tourism on the neighborhood, and the conflicting agendas of those who live, work or have a financial interest in this historic district. Other studies have explored the changing land use patterns in the Vieux Carré with an emphasis on the declining residential base. This paper will endeavor to contribute to this research through the analysis of the nature and extent of the condominium conversion trend, and its social impacts on the Vieux Carré neighborhood.

The Vieux Carré Property Owners, Residents and Associates (VCPORA), a Vieux Carré-based neighborhood association with a long history of advocacy on behalf of the historic structures and residents of the Vieux Carré, initiated research on condominium conversion at the urging of its board and membership. While the board members of VCPORA were uncertain what the research would show, they had seen the acceleration of the conversion trend, and wanted to get an idea of the scope of the phenomenon.

This study seeks to answer several questions raised by VCPORA and others, and will emphasize questions related to the social impact of the conversions. The main research question this study will attempt to answer is: What are the social impacts of condominium conversion in the Vieux Carré neighborhood? It will do so by trying to answer several smaller questions: What is the effect of condominium conversions on the size of the residential base? How are the condominiums being used? What are residents' perceptions of the impact of the condominium conversion phenomenon? How does the issue of condominium conversion fit into the previous debate on tourism impacts in the Vieux Carré neighborhood?

In order to better understand the social impact of condominium conversions in the Vieux Carré neighborhood, this study will review the determinants of neighborhood change, neighborhood change, and neighborhood attachment. This review will serve as a framework for understanding the relationship among these concepts.

Through an examination of previous research, the study will review the history of the Vieux Carré neighborhood, and relevant literature on issues which are related to the research questions including neighborhood change, neighborhood health, and tourism impacts on host communities. The study also will include research on condominium conversion with an emphasis on the goals and the social impacts of the conversions.

In an attempt to contribute to the research on the social impacts of condominium conversions, as well as the issue of residential change in the Vieux Carré, this study includes original research on current condominium owners and users. The purpose of this research is to discover the social impact of the condominium conversions on the Vieux

Carré as an historic neighborhood and provide documentation of the concerns of full-time Vieux Carré residents.

CHAPTER 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This study will begin with a review of previous research which is relevant the understanding of the social impacts of condominium conversion in the Vieux Carré. The main topics covered are neighborhood health, neighborhood change models, and neighborhood attachment. Two other topics which are relevant to the research question of this study, condominium conversion and tourism impacts on historic cities, also are included.

Neighborhood Change

Neighborhoods are like rivers; while they can exist for very long periods of time as institutions, the elements of which they are composed are changing continuously. Water constantly flows through a river, never stopping. Fish and other creatures live within the river; sometimes lingering with a purpose, and sometimes passing through. As a river changes course or becomes deeper or more shallow, its boundaries move. A river is influenced by internal and external forces such as disease and pollution which can affect its health. And its health can influence the health of an entire ecosystem.

Similarly, neighborhoods change over time in many ways including demographically, and physically. People move in and out, and its boundaries, layouts, structures and predominate uses change. Like a river, a neighborhood's health also is affected by internal and external forces such as neighborhood social ties, the economy, and politics. And like a river, the health of a neighborhood affects the health of a larger ecosystem–the city.

A neighborhood can either remain stable, change for the better, or change for the worse. Temkin and Rohe (1996) term these three potential outcomes for a neighborhood "stability, decline, or upgrading"(p. 159), and identify three categories of models that have been used to explain neighborhood change. The categories represent three major perspectives: ecological, subcultural, and political economy.

Ecological Perspective

Ecological models focus on the idea that neighborhood change is determined by external environmental (social, political, and economic) forces which are out of the control of individuals. Therefore, the type and timing of neighborhood change are predetermined by a neighborhood's "relative position in the urban hierarchy"(Temkin & Rohe, 1996, p. 160). This perspective was advanced by a group of economists and sociologists known as the Chicago School (Schiwirian, 1983, p. 84) who based their perspective on the idea that there is an urban ecology similar to biological ecology that consists of set relationships between individuals and institutions.

Several models can be classified under the ecological perspective: invasion/succession, filtering, bid rent and border models (Temkin & Rohe, 1996, pp. 160-162). The invasion/succession model, first proposed by Burgess in 1925, views change as the result of an invasion of predominant land uses, and subsequently replacement of the previous use. This early model of neighborhood change had a large influence on later models which, while rejecting its roots in plant ecology, accepted its basic assumption that "neighborhood change is inevitable"(Temkin & Rohe, 1996, p. 160).

The filtering model suggests that the urban housing market functions as series of sub-markets through which housing units pass (Galster, 1991, p. 37). As housing stock ages and becomes more costly to maintain, the quality of the housing units decreases and they become less desirable. The units are abandoned by the current residents who move to better units, often new construction on the edge of the city. The abandoned units then become available to serve a different sub-market of people of a lower socioeconomic status. The newly available units may be more desirable than the units previously available to the sub-market. The model is based on the idea that "social mobility and spacial mobility are inherently intertwined"(Temkin & Rohe, 1996, p. 160), and are forces which shape a neighborhood's life-cycle (Schiwirian, 1983, p. 91). Although the concepts of housing sub-markets and filtering are important to understanding housing issues and formulating housing policy (Galster, 1996, p. 1804), a 1991 study by Galster and Rothenberg found that filtering was an "inefficient vehicle" for providing affordable housing, and resulted in the deterioration of neighborhoods (p. 49).

The bid rent model suggests that neighborhood change is a function of the decisions of individual consumers who choose to move to a particular neighborhood because of income, family structure, and the available housing services. Decisions are based on the consumer's economic analysis of a neighborhood. Border and tipping models add the status of neighbors to the consumer's analysis of particular neighborhoods.

Since ecological neighborhood change models assume that change is determined by forces outside the neighborhood, it implies that intervention to influence the outcome

of neighborhood change will not succeed. Ecological models also imply that the change is part of a natural cycle and for the better (Temkin & Rohe, 1996, 160).

Subcultural Perspective

The subcultural perspective grew out of a response to the deterministic, economically-based ecological neighborhood change models. Subcultural theorists thought sociocultural factors influenced the desirability of neighborhoods and the sense of neighborhood attachment of residents. These factors lead to sense of community attachment which promotes neighborhood stability. Since the subcultural perspective suggests that neighborhood change is determined by socio-cultural factors, it implies that neighborhood change may be influenced by internal forces. Neighborhood associations and historic preservationists have based their efforts on this approach (Temkin & Rohe, 1996, 163).

Political Economy

Like the ecological perspective, political economy assumes that neighborhood change is the result of external forces. To political economists, the external forces which control neighborhood change are political and economic elites in the urban area in which the neighborhood is located. These "powerful elites" such as land owners and developers, are part of Molotch's "growth machine"(cited in Schwirian,1983, p. 94) which is not concerned with the best interests of the public or the city. Instead, the elites influence the city policies so they will be able to maximize their wealth. Since decisions are in the hands of external forces which place their own interests above the interests of the public or communities, the ability of a neighborhood to control its own growth is limited

(Schiwirian, 1983, p. 94). In order for neighborhoods to be able influence change, they must be part of larger, coordinated movements which oppose urban growth machines (Temkin & Rohe, 1996, p. 163).

Synthetic Models

Synthetic models, such as those proposed by Grigsby and Galster, take into account the strengths and weakness of previous models, and synthesize the work of geographers, sociologists, and economists. The main thesis of these types of models is that "a neighborhood's trajectory results from its ability to position itself favorably with external sources of financial, political, and social resources, and that this ability is largely dependent on the physical, social, and locational characteristics of the community" (Temkin & Rohe, 1996, 159). Changes in the social and economic characteristics and conditions of a neighborhood will set off changes in the neighborhood causing landlords, developers and others key players to make decisions which ultimately lead to neighborhood change. Since the social institutions which may respond to changes vary from neighborhood to neighborhood, so do the ways in which neighborhoods change in response to external and internal threats.

Temkin and Rohe criticize earlier synthetic models for lacking the specific degree and nature of the interaction between social and economic factors, and offer a synthetic model which assumes that two factors lead to neighborhood change: 1) changes in national economic and social conditions and policies; and 2) metropolitan area maturation (1996, p.168). They believe these two variables along with the metropolitan and neighborhood characteristics lead to short-term change. The perceptions and responses of

both residents and institutional actors to the short-term change then determine the type and extent of the long-term neighborhood change (p. 165).

In his study of gentrification and neighborhood change, Beauregard (1990) also sees the sources of neighborhood change as a combination of social and economic factors from inside and outside a neighborhood. In addition, he finds that the perception of the potential of a neighborhood plays a significant role in the outcome of neighborhood change. Beauregard suggests that behavior and perception of residents are "significantly shaped by particular social and physical conditions that had been historically established" (p. 870).

Neighborhood Health

In order to understand the impact of the condominium conversions on the Vieux Carré neighborhood, it is important to understand the concept of a healthy neighborhood, as well as the determinants of neighborhood health.

Definition

According to Connerly and Marans (1988), a neighborhood is "an aggregation of dwellings and the physical, social, political, and economic systems that bind these dwellings together"(p. 37). A healthy neighborhood is more than the buildings and streets; it is a place where various systems interact in a way which allows the neighborhood to sustain or improve its health.

Perhaps the best-known writer on the topic of healthy neighborhoods is Jane Jacobs. The publication of her book, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* in 1961, marked the beginning of trend in research on the importance of neighborhoods in

sustainable cities. According to Jacobs, a healthy neighborhood is one which is able to maintain stability and vibrancy. It is a place with a diversity of people, housing options, building types and uses where people of different backgrounds and at different stages in the life cycle can live, work and play. She describes a successful city neighborhood as a place of sentimental attachment that "keeps sufficiently abreast of its problems so it not destroyed by them"(p. 112). After examining many neighborhoods, Jacobs offers what she considers to be the four essentials for a healthy neighborhood: 1) "The need for mixed primary uses" (p. 152); 2) "The need for small blocks"(p. 178); 3) "The need for aged buildings"(p. 187); and 4) "The need for concentration of people" including residents (p. 200).

Lansing and Marans (1969) define a healthy neighborhood as "one that conveys a sense of well-being and satisfaction to its population through characteristics that may be physical (housing style and condition, landscaping, available facilities), social (friendliness of neighbors, ethnic, racial or economic composition), or symbolic (sense of identity, prestige values)"(p.195). Since each neighborhood will derive a sense of well-being from a unique set of characteristics, it is impossible to create a formula of social, physical and symbolic factors that will create a healthy neighborhood. The many conflicts among neighborhood residents, developers and government officials demonstrate the divergent viewpoints on what defines neighborhood health (p. 195).

Connerly and Marans describe neighborhood quality as "the degree of excellence or goodness" in the built environment, natural and social environment. They define it as a function of the following: "1) The quality of the physical environment; 2) Proximity and

convenience to various activity nodes, such as shopping or work; 3) The quality of local services and facilities; and 4) The quality of the neighborhood's sociocultural environment" (pp. 37-38).

Neighborhood Health Indicators

Recent research has focused on ways to define and evaluate the health of communities. Early planners thought that the best indicator of a neighborhood's health was the condition of its physical structures. As planners began to view health as a function of social and symbolic factors in addition to the physical characters of a neighborhood, the indicators of neighborhood health also changed (Lansing & Marans, 1969, p. 195). Many planners now advocate the use of a neighborhood-specific set of social and economic indicators (Connerly & Marans, 1988; Besleme & Mullin, 1997; Sawicki & Flynn, 1996). The indicators and their levels are determined through a planning process in which neighborhood residents participate. Since each neighborhood is unique, each neighborhood's health indicators also are unique and are a reflection of the residents' vision for their neighborhood.

The use of indicators is not new. Since the 1970s, public officials, residents and civic leaders have looked at what has been termed urban indicators to assess the health of cities and regions. Urban indicators include economic indicators such gross regional product and median household income, and social indicators such as crime and literacy rates (Sawicki & Flynn, 1996, p.166; Besleme & Mullin, 1997, pp. 44-45). Neighborhood health indicators also may include similar economic and social statistics, however, they are provided for a smaller geographic unit and the acceptable levels are determined through a

community planning process. Indicators also may measure the performance of local government institutions in a neighborhood.

In projects that cut across different departments of government to include such areas as planning, public health, and education, they are often referred to as community indicators and part of a healthy cities movement. The focus of these projects is usually "sustainability, quality of life, and performance evaluation" (Besleme & Mullin, 1997, p. 43). By including a variety of participants in the development of indicators, these projects attempt to achieve a shared vision among citizens, community organizations, government and private industry.

Neighborhood indicators are developed through a participatory process which is often initiated as part of neighborhood revitalization efforts. The indicators are developed and used by a variety of actors: public officials, neighborhood associations, nonprofit and private community organizations, and residents (Sawicki & Flynn, 1996, p. 170). The development of indicators must begin with process through which participants define their shared vision of their community, including the prioritization of goals. Next, they must decide on appropriate indicators for their goals. Finally, quantifiable, reliable measures of the indicators must be developed (Connerly & Marans, 1988; Besleme & Mullin, 1997).

In their review of the literature on neighborhood indicators, Sawicki and Flynn (1996) identify five lessons that can be learned from the history of the use of indicators. 1) The indicators must be used for a "specific policy purpose"(p. 179), and "incorporate the values of the community"(Besleme & Mullin, 1997, p. 51). 2) The geographic indicators, which "measure characteristics of the area itself without reference to its

population"(Sawicki & Flynn, 1997, p. 173), may be most important because geographic boundaries often are the same as governmental administrative units. 3) There must be clarity on what is being measured: the well-being of the neighborhood or the well-being of the its residents. 4) Indicators are most useful when they are not tied to a larger index. 5) Neighborhood health indicators are a fairly new concept, and have been used mostly to understand neighborhood change. Their potential for use in determining and evaluating public policy is just beginning to be explored.

Neighborhood Attachment

Neighborhood attachment is an important indicator of neighborhood health. Researchers have found a positive relationship between neighborhood attachment and the ability of a neighborhood to respond to neighborhood threats. Previous studies have demonstrated that residents' neighborhood attachment is associated with individuals' "willingness to defend neighborhood interests"(Crenshaw & St. John, 1989) or to take actions to resolve neighborhood problems (Guest & Lee, 1983). Neighborhood attachment also is impacted by attitudes about perceived safety (Baba & Austin, 1989), and future migration (Guest & Lee, 1983).

Although neighborhood attachment has been found to be related to the length of residency in a neighborhood, the reason for moving to a neighborhood, the stage in the life cycle, and the quality and number of neighborhood social ties, there is one inescapable fact: if there are few people living in a neighborhood and even fewer people with a sense of attachment, the neighborhood will not be able to respond effectively to aggression or deterioration, and overall decline may ensue.

There are several theories which contribute to an understanding of the variables associated with neighborhood attachment. Janowitz'(1952) community of limited liability approach suggests attachment "is a function of residents' economic and social investments in a community"(Bolan, 1997, p. 225). Therefore, certain economic and social activities contribute to the evolution of residents' neighborhood attachment. Variables which are used to measure neighborhood attachment include home ownership, and the life cycle stage of residents.

Another theory on neighborhood attachment is what Bolan refers to as "the Chicago School." This theory is based on previous studies (Sampson, 1988; Kasarda & Janowitz, 1974) that have established a positive relationship between the number of years a resident has lived in a neighborhood and the resident's "community sentiment and involvement"(Bolan, 1997, p. 225). This approach suggests that sense of neighborhood attachment grows with the length of time a resident spends in a community.

Bolan adds mobility to the list of determinants of neighborhood attachment. In his 1997 study of 20 areas in and around Seattle, he found that attachment is higher among those who move into a neighborhood from a shorter distance. He also found that neighborhood attachment is highest among those who move into an area based on housing and neighborhood preferences.

Other theories suggest that a set of demographic variables are related to residents' sense of neighborhood attachment have found that there is a set of variables, such as age and education, which are significant determinants of neighborhood attachment (Sampson, 1988). Other studies suggest that "micro-level"(Bolan, 1997, p. 225) influences such as

type of place, population density, level of heterogeneity, and topography can impact neighborhood attachment.

Bolan's own model of neighborhood attachment identifies two types of attachment: attitudinal attachment and behavioral attachment. Attitudinal attachment is a measure of residents' "attitudes about the neighborhood"(p. 226), and has two components: evaluation, a resident's satisfaction with a neighborhood as a place to live; and sentiment, a resident's "emotional attachment to a community." Behavioral attachment refers a resident's actions within the neighborhood, and also can be divided into two components: interaction (informal participation), a resident's ties to his or her neighbors; and involvement, which is more formal participation in neighborhood institutions.

Neighborhood Associations

Neighborhood associations, like VCPORA, are voluntary organizations that serve a defined geographic area and are formed in order to allow members to pursue collective goals. They are important formalized mechanisms through which local residents work together to maintain or improve their neighborhoods (Austin, 1991, p. 516). Their goals often focus on issues related to safety, collective consumption, life style, and development, such as public service delivery, schools, crime prevention, traffic and parking regulation, land use, and historic preservation (Logan & Rabrenovic, 1990; Lee, Oropresa, Metch, & Guest, 1984). In addition, neighborhood associations serve a social function by providing residents with opportunities to get to know each other at meetings, service projects, parties, and local festivals.

Neighborhood associations often are formed by loose-knit groups in response to an external threat, such a threat posed by local government or developers. They recruit residents to participate in efforts to keep up the neighborhood or "to keep it from deteriorating"(Crenson, 1978, p. 586). After they address their initial concern, they often will become formal organizations, and begin dealing with other neighborhood issues (Lee, Oropresa, Metch, & Guest, 1984).

According to Guest and Lee (1983), "neighborhood organizations may be especially suited to dealing with problems that are poorly regulated by other institutions, but have important implications for the local quality of life." Effective neighborhood associations may serve as government watch dogs, and create new and stronger demands on local governments. By focusing on previously unaddressed problems, they can become forces for positive change. For example, neighborhood associations in many cities have called for slower, more deliberate growth, and a thorough examination of the impact of previous and future unplanned growth (Logan & Rabrenovic, 1990).

Although neighborhood associations can create challenges for local governments, governments can use effective neighborhood associations to their advantage as a means of communication, legitimation, and social control. Governments can employ neighborhood associations as mechanisms for addressing problems for which no current mechanisms exist. They can use neighborhood associations as tools through which they can disseminate information and access community involvement and support. By encouraging groups to do voluntary activities that they lack the resources or infrastructure to

undertake, governments can accomplish more (Logan & Rabrenovic, 1990; Haeberle, 1986).

Citizens tend to rely on either a combination of neighbors and local government, or neighborhood associations to solve local problems (Guest & Ororpresa, 1984). When a neighborhood's social network is "tight-knit"(Crenson, 1978), residents will address issues with the help of neighbors and local institutions such as the police, or city government. In instances when residents' social networks extend beyond their neighborhoods, or when government's response to their problems is weak due to corruption, incompetence, or limited resources, people will choose to work through neighborhood associations (Crenson, 1978; Guest & Ororpresa, 1984).

In 1991, Austin conducted a study of neighborhood associations in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma which explored the relationship between the community context in which a neighborhood association exists, and the complexity of its organizational structure. Complexity was found to be important because it allowed a neighborhood organization to be effective when its membership base changed frequently. It provided a wide base across which responsibilities and activities could be stretched, and allowed the organization to serve a variety of functions. Austin found that the age of an organization, neighborhood status, and the age of the neighborhood association were positively related to the complexity of an organization. According to his study, neighborhood associations in areas with higher residential stability had less complex organizational structures. The positive association of organizational complexity to effectiveness was confirmed by Haeberle's 1986 study of neighborhood associations in Birmingham, Alabama. The study results also

indicated that a neighborhood association needed to be many things to many people in order to be successful over an extended period of time." Mesch and Schiwirian (1996) also concurred that organizational complexity was positively associated with effectiveness.

Crenson (1978) completed a study of the relationship between the effectiveness of neighborhood associations and the social ties of residents in six urban neighborhoods. His research revealed that residents with "looser-knit" social ties were more likely to join a neighborhood organization, and were more likely to receive information from multiple and external sources. However, Crenson's study also found that neighborhood associations in which members has looser social ties, had more internal conflicts. These conflicts could be paralyzing, and lower the organization's level of effectiveness.

In contrast to Crenson's finding, Guest and Oropresa (1986) found that people with a balance of local and extra-local ties were the most politically active, and that "life-cycle variables such as home ownership and being a parent were related slightly more strongly to the dependant variables than the friendship variables"(p. 563). While people with extra-local ties received more news from outside the neighborhood and were more connected to other decision-making or powerful groups or people (Guest & Ororpresa, 1986; Haeberle, 1986), those with more local ties participated more frequently in neighborhood activities. Local ties indicated concern, but it appeared that information and stimulation from external sources was needed to spur people to action. Like Crenson, Guest and Oropresa (1986) found that local friendship ties also are important to working well together and overall effectiveness.

This study was conducted in follow up to a previous study (1984) in which Guest and Oropresa found that "effectiveness is related to wealth of the area and the types of issues faced by the community." Haeberle (1986) also found a relationship between socioeconomic status and effectiveness. He found that people of higher socioeconomic status tended to make use of more channels. In Mesch and Schiwirian's 1996 study of the effectiveness of 105 neighborhood associations in Columbus, Ohio, they also found that neighborhood associations with members of higher socioeconomic status were more effective. In addition, they found that neighborhood investments, environmental threats, organizational resources, and coalitional embeddedness also were positively associated with effectiveness. These factors were more strongly associated with level of effectiveness than the level of activity engaged in by the neighborhood association (pp. 480-481).

Several studies found that neighborhood associations with clearly defined and agreed upon boundaries were more effective (Guest & Oropresa, 1984; Haeberle, 1986). "Participation is lost in an area that becomes so large that it is no longer well-defined"(Haeberle, 1986, p. 111). "Poorly defined territories must rely on alternatives to the community club or do without representation at all"(Guest & Oropresa, 1984).

Tourism

There are finite social and physical limits to how much the tourism industry can develop in a single place. When these limits are exceeded, the ability of a place to remain an attractive tourist destination, and provide a good quality of life for its residents is compromised (Inskeep, 1991, p. xi). In addition, it is unwise for a small city to be dependant on one industry. When the sole industry declines, the city will also decline

(Kotler, Haider & Rein, 1993, p. 7). The experiences of oil industry-dependant cities such as Lake Charles, Louisiana, during the 1980s are examples of how failing to promote other interests and plan for the future can lead to economic problems. Having tourism in particular as the mainstay of the local economy is dangerous because "travel markets are less secure than local markets" (Gunn, 1994, p. 18).

Since the tourism industry is currently booming in many US cities, it is tempting for cities to put all their eggs in tourism's basket. It is the second largest industry in the US, and may be the world's leading industry by the turn of the century (Roddewig, 1998b, p. 2). However, if tourism is left to develop without an overall plan, it can become the sole economic support for a city, as well as limit the growth of other industries. Controlling tourism growth also is important because many of the jobs associated with tourism are low-paying services jobs (Kotler, Haider & Rein, 1993, p. 26).

"A place must develop a set of objectives and strategies toward visitors rather than promoting (tourism) haphazardly" (Kotler, Haider & Rein, 1993, p. 26). Unplanned tourism growth has many social costs, and must not be allowed to be solely market-driven (Inskeep, 1991, p. 30). If not controlled, tourism can change the character of a city and make it less livable for residents, as well as less attractive to some types of visitors. Tourists can cause damage to the local environment, whether it be urban or natural. Also, tourism can attract types of visitors that locals find objectionable. Sometimes the sheer number of tourists may make residents feel overwhelmed, and crowded out of their city (Kotler, Haider & Rein, 1993, p. 26).

Other issues related to the types and character of tourism can affect the quality of life in a city and its future development opportunities. Currently, there is much discussion about whether urban entertainment centers (UECs) are good for cities which rely on tourism. While they do have a short- term record of attracting many tourists and spending, UECs tend to include large national chains which compete with local businesses. This means that tourists are being lured by popular culture, not the local culture (Grogan, 1998). Since heritage tourism based on local historic and cultural attractions has been the mainstay of the tourism industry, many planners are concerned that the current emphasis on UECs and leisure destinations will cause long-term damage to the unique characters of cities and their abilities to sustain tourism (Roddewig, 1999a).

In many places, neighborhood associations and other citizens groups are pushing to make the tourism industry more socially responsible. Communities are asking local government officials to address tourism issues, and for opportunities for input on tourism growth and development. They are looking for pro-active responses to emerging issues and long standing conflicts that are associated with tourism (Inskeep, 1991, p. xii). Roddewig believes that is important that the government know that "effective tourism development requires more than public relations and advertising. It requires development, coordination, and planning" (Roddewig, 1999b, p. 5).

Tourism management planning has been highlighted as a way to bring all interested parties to the table and address tourism issues. The process is similar to other types of planning. Those involved should recognize that a "comprehensive and integrated approach" (Inskeep, 1991, p. 27) is necessary. The first step in creating a comprehensive

tourism management plan is to form a planning group that represents private and public interests, and needed expertise. The group should include members from the public and private sectors: preservation commissions; park boards; departments of planning, roads and highways, and business development; citizens groups; the local departments responsible for arts, humanities and cultural issues; private and public sector tourism-related organizations; and local and regional government officials (Roddewig, 1999b, p. 5). Group members must work together to assess the current situation; they must be able to undercover the roots of the successes and problems associated with tourism in their city (Kotler, Haider & Rein, 1993, p. 18).

In order to get a clear picture of the current situation and create a vision for the future, the tourism management planning committee must identify their city's resources, strengths, and weaknesses through surveys, analysis, and public comment (Inskeep, 1991, p. 28). They must also review major trends and developments, and make certain that all relevant issues are included. They must examine the types of tourism that are present, as well as the types they want to attract in the future. In addition, they must understand their place's main competitors, and how their city fits into regional tourism. The committee must identity and anticipate future opportunities and threats to their local tourism industry (Kotler, Haider & Rein, 1993, pp. 85-87). All the above must be done with the intention of setting goals and objectives for tourism in their community (Inskeep, 1991, p. 28).

Next, they must develop solutions for problems and plans for maintaining and promoting what is good about the local tourism industry. While doing this, the planning group must keep their recommendations realistic, and make certain that they are attainable

given their city's current "values, resources, and opportunities"(Kotler, Haider & Rein, 1993, pp. 18-20). The plan's long-term goals must be broken down into several attainable phases. Also, there must be sufficient time and opportunities for public input, and thorough exploration of all relevant interests and issues.

Most importantly, the planning group must develop a tourism management plan that can be used to justify the implementation of their proposals, as well as serve as a guide for controlling the growth of tourism. According to Inskeep(1991), planning should focus on the following elements:

> Regional and local policy; regional access, and internal transportation network; type and location of tourist attractions; location of tourism development areas; amount, type, and location of tourist accommodations and other tourist facilities and services; environmental, socio-cultural, and economic considerations and impact analysis; education and training programs; marketing strategies and training programs; organizational structures, legislation, regulations, and investment policies; and implementation techniques including staging of development, project programming, and zoning regulations (pp. 35-36).

Roddewig's comments enhance the list of essential elements to tourism management planning. He advises:

> Creation of a multi-agency task force of department heads or deputies meeting on a regular basis to promote and develop tourism; identification and enhancement of tourism resources; improvement of publicly-owned

> facilities; marketing; incentives and technical assistance to the private tourism industry; and protection of key private resources (1998b, p. 5).

Ideally, the tourism management plan should become part of the comprehensive or master plan which is adopted by a city. In this way, it is more likely to be consulted in future development decisions, as well provide support for any proposed regulation of the tourism industry. In addition, by including tourism management planning in comprehensive planning, the plan will likely be better integrated with the other sections of the comprehensive or master plan, such as transportation and overall city policy (Inskeep, 1991, p. 237).

Several types of legislation may be developed as a result of tourism management planning. Basic tourism laws that define the local policy and establish the organizational structure of tourism may be adopted. These laws can also establish specific fees and regulations, such as licencing requirements and procedures for tourism industry businesses like hotels, tour agencies and tour guiding. Zoning regulations may also be established or revised in order to reflect the goals and objectives of the tourism management plan. Other possible forms of tourism-related legislation may involve environmental regulations, labor practices, consumer protection, parks and conservation, and liability relating to guests (Inskeep, 1991, pp. 419-420).

Many places have neglected to undertake tourism management planning and are now trying to correct the problems associated with unregulated tourism growth. Ironically, many of these places spend substantial amounts of effort and funds to lure

tourists and development, only to find that their lack of planning has led to social and economic difficulties (Inskeep, 1991, p. 15).

Short-Term Rentals to Tourists

A search for literature on the impact of short-term rentals of residential property to tourists yielded no published studies on this topic. News reports from several US cities and an unpublished study on short-term rentals in Key West suggest that many residents consider them to have a destabilizing effect on their neighborhoods. Several common themes can be found in the news reports: 1) Short-term rentals to tourists take units out of the available housing stock; 2) Many neighborhood residents see the rentals to tourists in their neighborhoods as leading to over-commercialization which decreases their quality of life; 3) The commercialization and depletion of rental stock may lead to rising rental and real estate prices which residents feel cause further destabilization; 4) Illegal short-term rentals often occur in cities that do not enforce existing ordinances which prohibit short-term rental of residential property; 5) Proponents of short-term rentals see them as a necessary response to pressure from the marketplace; and 6) Governments lose tax revenue from this underground economy (Cronk, 2000; Ebbert, 2000; Stallings,1988; Walker, 1995).

An unpublished study by sociologist Virginia Cronk (2000) examines the impact of transient rentals on social control within neighborhoods in the popular tourist destination of Key West, Florida. Her study reveals that Key West has experienced a loss of rental housing stock to the tourism industry, and has yet to address "the immediate and long-

term changes which occur in a neighborhood where transient rentals replace long-term rentals" (Cronk, 2000, p. 2).

Cronk found that the conversion of residential rentals to transient rentals led to a "loss of community identity, resulting in: lack of social control, communication breakdown, insufficient common experiences, anti-community attitudes, decline in community spirit, widespread community factionalism, argumentative community meetings, and social isolation." (p. 2). She finds that "with loss of community identity comes a failure of informal social control, resulting in: an increase in crime, and increase in the making of and enforcing of laws in order to control everyday behavior; and an increase in adolescent risk activities (substance abuse, teen pregnancy, school failure)" (p.2).

News reports indicate that while the phenomenon of short-term rentals has not been the subject of many studies, it has been the an issue in many US cities. In Boston, the short-term rental to tourists has created an underground economy in housing units that have not been zoned to operate as hotels. Critics argue that this practice is "weakening neighborhood stability and costing the city and state at least $7 million a year in lost tax revenues "(Walker, 1995). The loss of tax revenue comes from two sources: the property owners paying residential instead of a commercial tax rate, and the *de facto* hotels not paying hotel excise taxes (Walker, 1995).

Residents of the neighborhoods where this is occurring say that it is happening predominately in condominium units, and they are concerned that the short-term rentals are reducing the available housing stock (Walker, 1995). They fear that their neighborhoods are becoming overly commercialized which is leading to a loss of rental

units in the housing market, and the displacement of long-term renters due to rising rental prices (Ebbert, 2000).

Short-term rental to tourists has become an issue of conflict between citizens, government officials and those who rent their residential property in The Tampa/St. Petersburg area in Florida. In 1987, Hernando County amended its zoning ordinance to include a category called residential resort to define where the short-term rentals are permitted, and to be able to collect related tax revenue (Stallings, 1988). Residents in neighborhoods which were not zoned resort residential continued to report illegal short-term rentals and felt their neighborhoods were no longer "family-type neighborhoods" Bellandi,1995). After repeatedly filing complaints with the county's Office of Code Enforcement, the residents of one neighborhood filed a lawsuit in their county against twelve absentee homeowners who had been renting their homes to tourists. The judge found the homeowners in violation of the county's zoning ordinance and ordered them to stop the short-term rentals or face fines (Bellandi, 1997).

The case did not put an end to the practice of illegal short-term rentals in the Tampa/St. Petersburg area. In 1997, an article in *The St. Petersburg Times* reported that residents of one waterfront community had been filing complaints against homeowners who used their units as hotels. This led to a public meeting during which residents complained about transients in their neighborhood who did not care how their activities impacted those who lived there. Even though residents expressed concern about the rentals, they did not want to harm the real estate of tourism industries (Becker, 1997).

Short-term rentals are still generating controversy in Florida and other tourism-dependent cities. The two commonly proposed approaches to resolving the issue are to enact more ordinances to ban the rentals, or to better regulate the short-term rental industry. Among residents and business people, there are proponents and opponents to both approaches (Rodgers, 1999).

Condominium Conversion

A condominium is defined as "a housing unit in a multi-family building or complex owned by an individual who also owns a partial interest in common areas of the building or complex" (HUD, 1980, p. I-6). The process of condominium conversions refers to "a change in the legal form of multi-family rental property from single ownership by a landlord to multiple ownership"(HUD, 1980, p. I-6). A conversion takes place when the owner of a property sells his or her building to a developer who then sells the property's individual units to single owners. The regulations regarding the conversion process vary from state to state.

Condominium conversion activity first attracted the attention of researchers in the late 1970s and early 1980s as the popularity of conversions increased. A 1975 US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) found that several factors were often present in areas with significant condominium conversions activity: 1) The cost of maintaining and operating apartment buildings was rising at faster rate than rents; 2) New construction costs were so costly that conversion was more competitive; 3) There was little land available for new construction; 4) Existing and proposed tax laws were causing the purchase and operation of existing rental properties to be less profitable; and 5) Local

governments were encouraging conversions in anticipation of greater tax revenue from higher property values (HUD, 1975, p. I-11).

The 1975 HUD study also addressed the issue of displacement of long-term renters. It found that since most conversions occur where there were low rental vacancy rates, it was often difficult for displaced renters to locate new housing in the same area at the same price. Those most likely to experience the negative effects of displacement were: 1) Those who preferred to live in rental units; 2) Older people who had attachment to their neighborhoods, but did not want to or were financially unable to buy a converted unit; 3) Those with below average income with few assets; and 4) New or young households who had been planning on moving when their family became larger (p. I-11).

According to the1975 HUD study, one-quarter of the units were purchased as second or vacation homes. In the case of vacation home condominiums, the buyer's discretionary income was a more significant variable in the decision to purchase a unit than household income. The primary economic factor of demand for this type of unit appeared to be appreciation, and the vacation home units were regarded by buyers, explicitly or implicitly, as investments (p. IV-16). This was consistent with the rapid rise in prices that was seen in early stages of activity for both condominium conversion residential areas, and vacation home areas. In vacation homes areas, the dramatic appreciation which occurs often leads to an oversupply of units (p. IV-16).

The authors of a 1980 HUD study of 37 metropolitan areas were unable to find a consistent relationship between rental vacancy rates and the proportion of rental stock that had been converted into condominiums in the areas they studied (p. v-11). Although they

were unable to draw conclusions on the effects of condominium conversion on the rental housing market, the authors did offer some interesting findings. In 1980, condominium conversions were prevalent in areas with distressed rental markets which exhibited a strong demand for ownership (HUD, 1980, p. v-1). The short-term gain associated with conversion was attractive for rental property owners because "no projected amount of rental income, allowable tax depreciation, property appreciation, or tax sheltering can equal the return received on the sale of their properties for conversions." (HUD, 1980, p. iii). Another interesting finding of the study was that "conversion tended to lag behind rather than serve as a catalyst for revitalizing neighborhoods" (HUD, 1980, p. vii).

According to Eilbott (1985), who bases his findings on data from HUD's 1980 study, the impact of condominiums on the supply of rental housing depends on two factors: the percent of condominium units which remain rental units, and the source of the demand for the condominium units. Eilbott suggests that if the demand for converted units stems from an increase in the demand for ownership with a corresponding decrease in the demand for rental housing, then the adequacy of the supply of rental stock will remain unchanged. After reviewing the available data, Eilbott concurs with the HUD (1980) study, and finds the impact of condominium conversion on the rental housing stock varies greatly from area to area.

Hamnett and Randolph's (1988) study of the conversion of rental apartments or flats to individually-owned units in London found that the phenomena "played a major role in the transformation of the private housing market in London since the 1960s" (p. 1).

The authors believe that the cause of the change can be explained primarily by a "supply-side theory" because individuals' decisions about where and in what they would like and can afford to live are made in the context of a structure shaped by profitability." (p. 2). Although, the maximization of profits is the main force in determining the housing market, the authors recognize that it is also influenced by "current circumstances and opportunities" (p. 5).

The authors suggest that the role the rental flats played in meeting housing needs was not appreciated until they were broken up into individually-owned units. They write that the breaking up of flats "has had a number of major–if less directly visible–social consequences. The rental sector "has been destroyed" and the "traditional residential investment companies which had owned the blocks for many years have been replaced by speculative breakup companies whose principal interest is not long-term rental income but the short term capital gains to be derived from flat sales" (Hamnett & Randolph, 1988).

The London study found significant social change following the flat break-ups. Between 1971 and 1981, the number of units being used as primary residences dropped by almost twenty-nine percent. This is attributed to vacant units being readied for and waiting for sale, owners who use the units as second homes and have primary residences elsewhere, and units which are being used as corporate apartments (Hamnett & Randolph, 1988, p. 218). The characteristics of residents also have changed over the ten year period. The age and income of residents of the converted units increased at a higher rate than the overall rate for residents. The number of residents in professional occupations also increased (pp. 222-224).

A 1981 study of condominium conversion in Brookline, MA by Dinkelspiel, Uchenick and Selesnick examined the effects of conversion on renters and on the "disruption of the status quo large-scale conversion can bring" (p. 141). As a result of the study, the city of Brookline declared a six month moratorium on conversion-related evictions and instituted policies to promote and assist the purchasing of converted units by tenants. The authors found that at the local-level conflicts related to condominium conversion arise between three sets of interests: 1) Between those who want to buy condominiums and renters who will be displaced; 2) Between developers who want to convert and those who want to remain as renters; and 3) Between the attractiveness of increased property tax revenues and the socioeconomic changes which large-scale conversion may cause (Dinkelspiel, Uchenick & Selesnick, 1981, p.141).

Condominium Controls

There are many forms of condominium controls which have been used throughout the US. Many cities like Brookline have controlled the condominium market through ordinances and policies. The main goals of the controls are regulation of the pace of conversions, consumer protection, and protection of tenants' rights (Longhini & Lauber, 1979). Control strategies include:

- *Pace of Conversions*: Temporary moratoria on conversions to provide a 'cooling-off' period of an exploding market or to allow time to study the situation; tying the rental vacancy rate to authorization of conversion projects; temporary bans on tenant evictions; and specific protections for lower- and moderate-income housing (Silver & Shreve, 1979, pp. 42-45).

- *Consumer Protections*: Disclosure requirements, minimum standards, warranties, condominium association guidelines, and penalties for developers (Silver & Shreve, 1979, pp. 31-36).
- *Tenants' Rights*: Notice of intent to convert, 90 day to 3 year notice to vacate, first right of refusal, the honoring of existing leases, relocation assistance, prohibition of coercion and harassment, protection of against displacement in tight rental market, tenant consent of conversions, and temporary bans on evictions (Silver & Shreve, 1979, pp. 36-42).

All the studies on condominium conversions and controls included in this review were published in the1970s and early 1980s, the time period in which condominium conversions first became prevalent in many cities. No recent studies on the impacts of conversions in the US or the effectiveness of condominium controls were located.

CHAPTER 3. THE VIEUX CARRÉ NEIGHBORHOOD

History

The Vieux Carré, the oldest section of New Orleans, and was laid out shortly after the city's founding in 1718. Its boundaries, which have changed little since its founding, are the Mississippi River, Canal Street, Rampart Street, and Esplanade Avenue. At the heart of the Vieux Carré is Jackson Square, a park plaza, and the city's original *place d'armes*. The Vieux Carré contains a variety of building types and styles which reflect the area's history, the origins of its residents, and the many types of activities that have left their mark on the neighborhood.

Figure 1. Map of New Orleans, 1718-1803 (*Virtually New Orleans*)

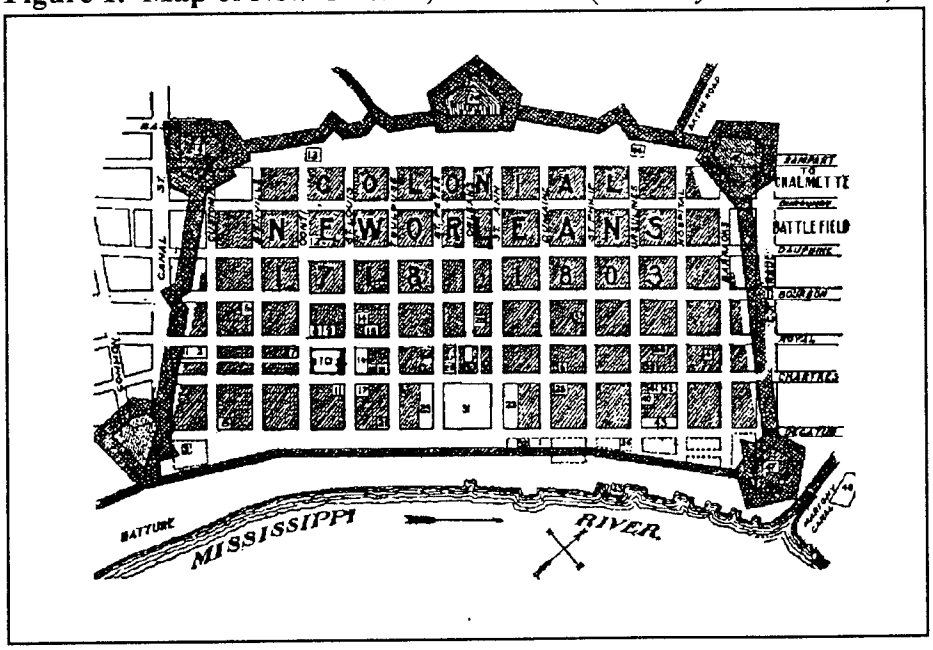
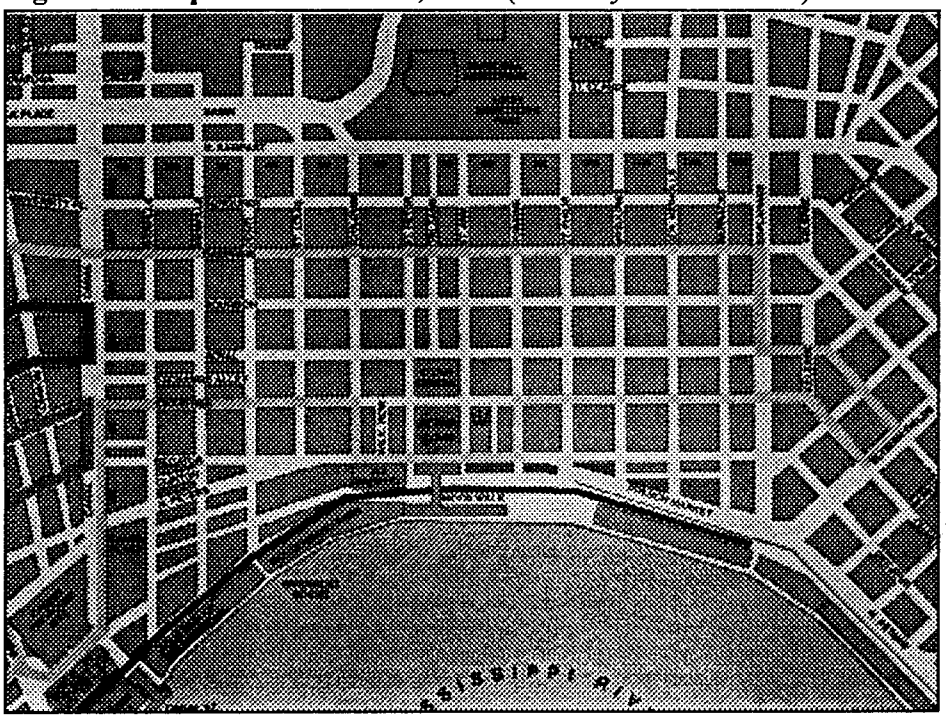


Figure 2. Map of Vieux Carré, 2000 (*Virtually New Orleans*)



While the predominate groups living in the Vieux Carré have changed over time, it always has been an heterogeneous neighborhood. During the city's early years, the main groups in residence were French colonists, slaves, free people of color, and German immigrants. The area gained a reputation as place defined by "the French perspective of 'live and let live'"(Vesey, 1999, p. 6), an attitude and image which still is associated with the Vieux Carré. After the Spanish gained control over Louisiana in 1763, Spanish colonists were prevalent, and the number of Afro-Caribbeans increased. Into the 19th century, the population of the Vieux Carré "represented a blend of European, Indian and African bloods"(Vesey, 1999, p. 4). In the 1800s, other immigrant groups moved into the Vieux Carré, including a substantial number of Italian and Irish immigrants through the turn of the century (Vesey, 1999, p. 7). The neighborhood went into a period of physical

decline as immigrants moved out of the Vieux Carré and into other expanding parts of the city. Though the Vieux Carré came to be considered a slum by many, artists and others who were considered outside the mainstream moved into the area. They were "looking for a place to live outside of social norms "(Vesey, 1999, p. 6), and also were attracted to the Vieux Carré's low rent and unique beauty.

During this period many felt that the Vieux Carré was hopelessly deteriorated, and its buildings should be cleared. This threat to the neighborhood was one of the reasons citizens came together in the 1920s to begin what was to become an historic preservation movement in the Vieux Carré. The preservationists began by documenting its history and buildings, and organizing to protect the historic buildings and the unique character of the district. The preservationists of the Vieux Carré marked a great success with the passage of an 1936 amendment to the Louisiana State Constitution. The amendment designated the Vieux Carré a local historic district, as well as created the Vieux Carré Commission (VCC) to provide institutional oversight of the historic structures. After many decades of deterioration and neglect, the Vieux Carré was now the subject of interest of artists, writers, and preservationists who began restoring neglected buildings (Foley, 1999, p.64).

Neighborhood associations such as the Louisiana Landmarks Society and the Vieux Carré Property Owners Association, founded in 1938 (Foley, 1999, p.66), took up the cause, and along with the VCC were at the forefront of neighborhood and historic preservation efforts. Through the efforts of VCC, neighborhood associations and certain key individuals the cause of the preservation of the historic neighborhood gained credibility, though there were still many challenges to face. One of the best known was

the battle to prevent the building of a river front expressway in the 1960s. There were many who supported this project and still felt that the Vieux Carré was in such poor condition that is was not important enough to stand in the way of transportation progress.

Erosion of the Residential Base

Throughout the years, even when many of the Vieux Carré's buildings were in terrible condition, it remained a neighborhood which inspired loyalty and passion among its residents and supporters (Foley,1999). During the past twenty years, there has been a great deal of activity in the Vieux Carré on two fronts: the restoration of historic structures and the growth of the tourist industry. At the same time as the neighborhood has been gentrifying, it also has been undergoing pressure from those inside and outside the neighborhood who wish to maximize tourist dollars. Although the neighborhood still is home to a diverse residential base, the residential base has been shrinking, and the number of buildings and businesses devoted to the tourism industry has been growing.

According to US Census figures, the Vieux Carré has lost two-thirds of its residents in the fifty year period from 1940 to 1990 with the number of residents decreasing from 11,053 to 3,991 (CUPA, 1992). According to a 1992 study conducted by CUPA, the possible reasons for the decline include out-migration due to local economic conditions and the increasing commercialization of the Vieux Carré. The main form of commercial enterprise in Vieux Carré is tourism which has been promoted by political and business leaders since the early 1970s (Vesey, 1999, p. 21). The success of tourism promotion can been seen in the Vieux Carré's real estate prices which, despite the drop in residents, have been increasing at a rate higher than the rest of New Orleans.

Explanations for the continuing rise of housing prices in the Vieux Carré include "its strong historic character...proximity to the Central Business District...an increased market speculation due to the tourist industry" (CUPA, 1992, p. 2-10).

In the 1960s, the pressure from tourism led to legislation intended to address the expansion of the industry into residential space in the Vieux Carré. In 1968, ordinances were passed which prohibited the conversion of existing buildings to hotel space, the construction of new hotel rooms, and the rental of residential property for a period of less 60 days. Although the creation of new hotel space and short-term rentals were banned, a lack of enforcement of the ordinances resulted in the illegal expansion of hotels and the rental of residential property as hotel and bed and breakfast rooms to tourists (CUPA, 1992, p. 3-2; Gallas, 1995; Moody, 1997). Property owners advertize illegal short-term rentals on Internet sites, and local newspapers and magazines.

Tourism Impacts

The negative impacts of the growth of the tourism industry have been the subject of discussion among residents and the business community for many years. Tour buses have caused damage to structures in the French Quarter. Every year, throngs of tourists send many locals packing for out-of-town vacations during Mardi Gras. There is never-ending discussion over how much commercialism of Carnival should be allowed. T-shirt and souvenir shops exist over the objections of residents of the French Quarter. The National Trust for Historic Preservation has named the French Quarter one "America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places "(Warner, 1997). There is a growing Urban Entertainment Center along Decatur Street around the Jax Brewery. Gaming and the

Harrah's casino located on the perimeter of the Vieux Carré are the subject of ongoing debate. At the center of all these issues is to find balance between the needs of New Orleanians and the city's neighborhoods and the size and nature of tourism in the city.

The French Quarter is the main tourist attraction in New Orleans; ninety-eight percent of visitors include a trip to the French Quarter on their itineraries. However, this historic district has become such a large tourist attraction that locals consistently voice concern that it is in danger of losing the special character that has made it so popular in the first place. The prevalent tourism-related concerns apply not only to the preservation of the historic buildings in the French Quarter, but also to the preservation of this old neighborhood's identity and culture. Businesses that cater to people who live in this historic neighborhood and other locals, are being replaced by large national chains such as the Virgin Megastore, Tower Records and many other stores that can be found in other major cities (Warner, 1997). There are fewer and fewer locally-owned restaurants that feature New Orleans-style cuisine, and more theme restaurants like the Hard Rock Café and Planet Hollywood which have no connection to the French Quarter or the city (Yerton, 1997).

The real estate market in the French Quarter also shows evidence of the changing character of the neighborhood. In 1995, the Upper Pontalba apartments located in Jackson Square were renovated and long-time tenants were displaced. Many of the apartments are now weekend residences or reserved as guest accommodations for political and corporate bigwigs (Cooper, 1997). Many other residences in the French Quarter have been sold to people from other cities at high prices. While it is good that many newly-

renovated buildings are bought by people who have the means to take care of them (Masson, 1998), many of these new owners maintain residences in more than one city, and do not spend the majority of their time in New Orleans. Many residents feel the sense of neighborhood in the French Quarter is eroding, and their neighborhood's warmth and security along with it (Matassa, 1998). This feeling is exacerbated by the "rowdy drunks, T-shirt shops, crowded sidewalks, loud bar music and pervasive loss of privacy that Quarter residents have been complaining about for years "(Warner, 1997).

Over the past ten years, there have been many discussions about the growth of tourism, but no consensus on whether New Orleans needs a tourism management plan, who should be involved, or what the process and result should look like. Moreover, no funds have been secured or set aside to fund a planning effort. Approximately nine years ago, a group of local citizens, with the help of Gallier House and the Tulane business school, applied for funding to begin a structured community dialogue on tourism management planning (Masson, 1998). Though they did not receive funding, they continued to search for a forum to address tourism issues. Urban planners at the University of New Orleans' College of Urban and Public Affairs also advised the city to begin tourism management planning many years ago (Warner, 1997).

In an interview conducted in 1998, Ann Masson, a local preservationist, called the situation in New Orleans extremely complicated, and felt that it required careful and thorough planning. In contrast to a city like Charleston, where tourism management issues are limited mostly to a small historic district, the size of the areas in New Orleans affected by tourism, as well as local economic and social factors, make tourism planning

more difficult. In addition to her fear that tourism management might be left out of master planning efforts, Masson expressed concerned that the quality of the resulting master plan may suffer because the local master planning process was being rushed.

Masson thinks that local tourism management efforts have not gotten very far because many fear it will lead to controls that will harm tourism-dependent businesses. However, the failure to examine the negative impacts of the growth of tourism is affecting the quality of life and uniqueness of the main tourist attraction in New Orleans--the French Quarter.

Roddewig (1998b) agrees with Masson's assessment of why local officials are reluctant to undertake tourism management planning. Officials fear that the controls which may grow out of planning may limit growth, and do not want to take risks. He believes that officials tend to want one of every kind of attraction and service. If they see that river boat gambling is succeeding in another place, they want to copy their neighbor and have a river boat. They often make such decisions without conducting the necessary impact analysis, and without considering whether the new attraction compliments the local culture. They also tend to overlook the value of preserving non-tourism related businesses (Roddewig, 1999a). Gunn (1994) adds that officials often do not want to undertake the tourism management planning process because it seems too difficult and demanding, even though citizens may demand it (p.17).

In the absence of tourism management planning there has been no mechanism for addressing the impact of tourism on the French Quarter, or spreading tourism into other historic neighborhoods so they will also benefit from the industry (Masson, 1998). Lolis

Eric Elie, columnist for *The Times-Picayune*, also wrote about the need to spread tourism out from downtown, and the need to have a master plan for tourism in order to accomplish this (1997). His viewpoint is similar to Masson's, and other local groups.

VCPORA Study

In 1999, VCPORA turned its attention to the trend of the conversion of rental property to condominiums in the Vieux Carré. The group commissioned Dorian Hastings, a doctoral student in urban studies at the University of New Orleans, to gather information on the conversion trend and write a report of her findings. The neighborhood association was not certain what the actual impact of the condominium conversions was, but knew that the conversions had been an issue of concern among its members and other Vieux Carré residents. Residents concerns centered around one common observation: the condominium units where not being used as primary residences. Instead, it appeared that the condominiums were used as vacation homes, or as illegal short-term rentals to tourists.

Hastings and a subcommittee of VCPORA board members began their research by examining the recent comments of other VCPORA members and Vieux Carré residents. The main theme which ran through the comments of Vieux Carré residents, as well as research on tourism impacts in the Vieux Carré and elsewhere was the lack of social controls and not knowing or caring about one's neighbors. Residents of the Vieux Carré including full-time condominium residents reported that people coming and going from the condominium units kept changing, and they did not know who actually lived in the units. There were complaints of tourists who stay in the condominiums behaving in disruptive

and inconsiderate ways. Many commented that they believed this was because the tourists felt free to behave in ways that would not be tolerated by their neighbors at home.

Residents also feared that absentee condominium owners did not care about the community and did not know their neighbors. They feared that owners of single units used as vacation homes did not have the same investment in the Vieux Carré as did owners of whole buildings. And most of all they feared that condominium units were becoming another method of illegally skirting the moratorium on hotel rooms since the units were being rented to tourists.

While residents feared that fewer full-time residents would mean that fewer people would taking care of and fighting for the neighborhood, they also had other concerns about impact of conversions historic buildings. Many including Marc Cooper, the Director of the Vieux Carré, expressed concern about the quality of the conversion-related renovations. Since the Vieux Carré cannot regulate the interiors of buildings, there is no oversight over much of the renovation process. Some of the renovation issues raised include:

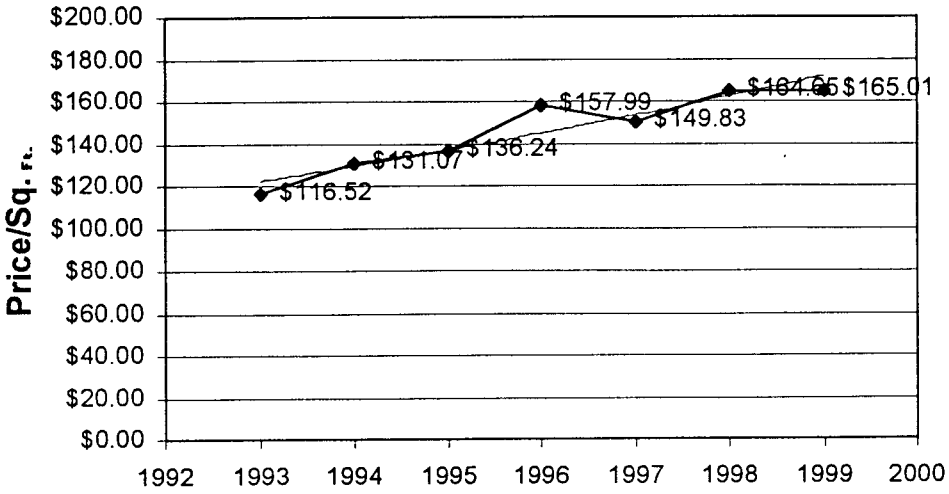
- Quality of renovations–some of the renovations appear to be minimal and cosmetic only.
- Overuse–buildings being divided into more units than old structures can support.
- Maintenance–the difficulty of coordinating repairs and improvements among condominium unit owners.

These concerns are supported by the findings of several studies, including a 1975 HUD study on condominiums which found problems with low estimates of common expenses, poor quality construction, and management difficulties.

Hastings also reviewed real estate records and the city of New Orleans Notarial Archives for quantitative information on the extent and nature of the condominium conversions in the Vieux Carré. Her findings supported another major concern of VCPORA and Vieux Carré residents: the extent and the accelerating pace of the condominium conversions. As of November 1999, the study committee identified 78 rental buildings that had been converted to condominiums. Among the buildings for which they had detailed information, they found one hundred units were converted from 1980 to 1995. In the recent three year period from 1996 to 1999, there were at least eighty-one units converted.

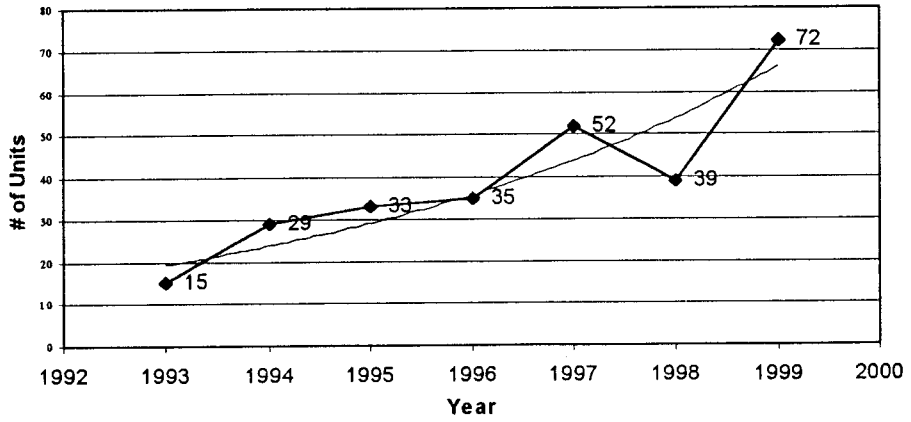
Secondary analysis of Hasting's data also found that the average selling price for condominium units had increased from $116.52 per square foot in 1993 to $162.01 per square foot in 1999 (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Average Condominium Unit Selling Price, 1993-1999



However, units sold per year increased at even greater rate (Figure 4).

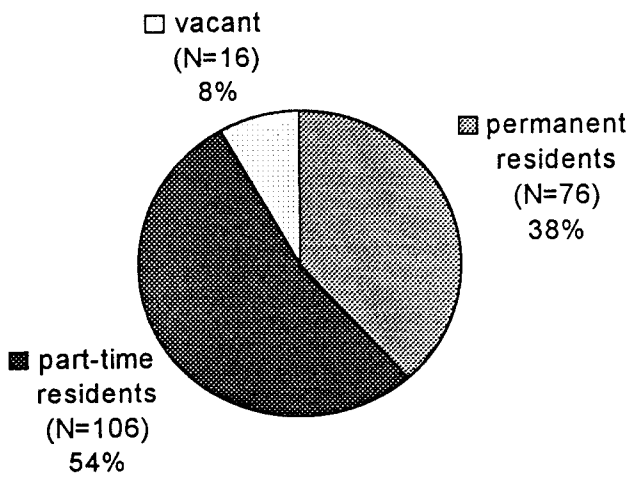
Figure 4. Condonimium Units Sold, 1993-1999



Perhaps the most interesting finding of the study was the result of a survey of 198 units conducted by realtors which categorized the way the condominiums were being occupied: 38% of the units were used as primary residents, 54% were used as part-time

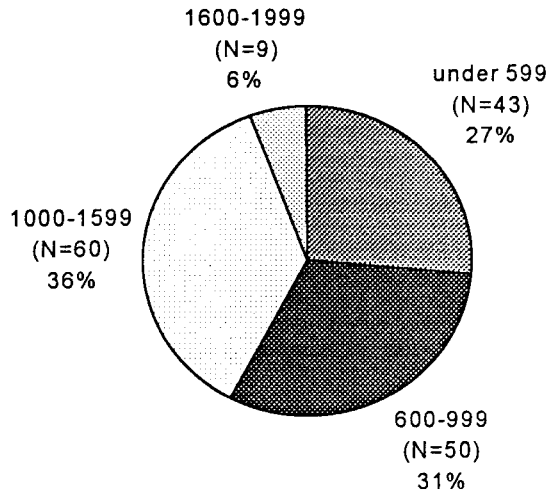
residents, and 8% were vacant (Figure 5). More than half of the units were not being used as primary residences which supported residents' perception that they rarely were occupied by the owners and perhaps were being used as illegal short-term rentals.

Figure 5. Type of Occupancy



The study also included the size of the condominium for 163 units (see Figure 6). Most of the units fell into two categories: 36% were 1000-1599 sq. ft. and 31% were 600-999 sq.ft. 31% . Twenty-seven percent of the units were of the smallest reported size, less than 600 sq.ft.

Figure 6. Size of Units in Square Feet



The findings of the condominium study findings were presented to the general membership of VCPORA at a meeting held on May 31, 2000 at the Omni Royal Orleans. The meeting featured a panel presentation. The first panelist was Jane Brooks, University of New Orleans' College of Urban and Public Affairs Professor and VCPORA board member. Brooks gave a slide presentation on the results of the VCPORA study with an emphasis on the decline in number of residents, tourism impacts, decreasing neighborhood diversity, the number of condominiums, real estate activity, the size of the units, and the type of occupancy.

Marc Cooper, Director of the VCC, discussed the impact of the condominium conversions on the Vieux Carré's buildings. He explained that while the VCC is the first stop in the permit process, it grants permits on exterior work only and has no control on the interiors of buildings. He also expressed the belief that the conversions were harmful

to buildings because maintenance and repair work would be easier with a single landlord; condominium ownership will make repairs more complicated because it will add another layer. Cooper agreed that maintenance on French Quarter buildings is expensive, but felt that condominiums were contributing to the inflation of real estate prices of the historic properties. He also pointed out that a great majority of the buildings in the Vieux Carré that were in a state of good repair were not under condominium rule.

Next, Harry Freeman discussed issues surrounding the rise in the number of conversions from the point of view of a condominium owner. He felt that condominiums were an economic necessity since they were the only way many people could afford to live in the Vieux Carré. He expressed doubt that the units would be filled if they were to remain as rentals. Freeman thought that unit size was an issue and that small units size was associated with non-resident owners. He also cautioned people not to make generalizations about condominium use and owners since many people who own their own homes and condominiums cared the more than other residents.

A developer, Sidney Torres, spoke briefly. Torres said that some of the buildings he bought were in terrible condition and were rehabilitated. He added that there was prohibition on short-term rentals in the condominium documents, and he will go back and fix units even after sale.

Gary Williams, real estate agent and homeowner, discussed the condominium market. From the 1980s through 1997, there were few conversions, then there was an explosion of conversions in 1998. Traditional Vieux Carré renters, those in the service industry, were displaced.

Williams explained that the conversion process is quite easy. An attorney prepares a document which includes a survey of the property, and submits it to the Louisiana Secretary of State's Office for a stamp of approval. The attorney can then use the document as template for further conversions.

Williams was concerned that the conversion process was not reversible; once a rental unit is converted it was likely to remain a condominium. He also was concerned about unit size; it appeared that the smaller units were more likely to be second homes. All of the 65 units for sale currently for sale were small. He felt that Safety and Permits at City Planning, the unit responsible for enforcing the city's ban on rentals of less than 60 days in residential buildings, was like a "third world country." He expressed a belief that the city and Safety and Permits seemed to feel there was no reason to stop illegal rentals.

The panel discussion was followed by a question and answer and comment period. The comments made by Vieux Carré residents centered on several issues.

- *Illegal Short-Term Rentals:* Condominium buildings with manager in residence had the most short term renters. The manager takes care of rentals for owners. People are coming in and out of buildings with suitcases day and night. People who are renting illegally are easy to spot because they put out trash on Sunday nights.
- *Enforcement of Ban on Short-Term Rentals:* Safety and Permits needs to better regulate short-term rental laws. The city has a law which allows illegal uses cited by the city to become legal after 5 years if the not prosecuted. People are not

comfortable reporting friends who run illegal B & B's. Need to get city hall to enforce noise laws.

- *Advantages of Condominiums:* Condominium buildings are better kept than rental buildings. Some condominium associations are stricter than the city about short term rentals. Some Vieux Carré blocks are so loud that only part-time residents or tourists can stand to stay in them. The historic buildings of the Vieux Carré are very expensive to maintain as rental buildings.
- *Declining Residential Base:* A loss of residents means fewer people to vote in district on local issues. If the Vieux Carré keeps losing residents then VCPORA can't be political effective. "The residential base is dwindling and we are being ignored."

The findings of the exploratory VCPORA study and subsequent general membership meeting demonstrated the need for further research on condominium conversions in the Vieux Carré. Members not only expressed concern about the impact of the conversions in their day-to-day lives, but also on their ability to function effectively as a neighborhood association. The majority of comments indicated that members favored some type of action in response to the conversions, however, there was no consensus on what action should be taken.

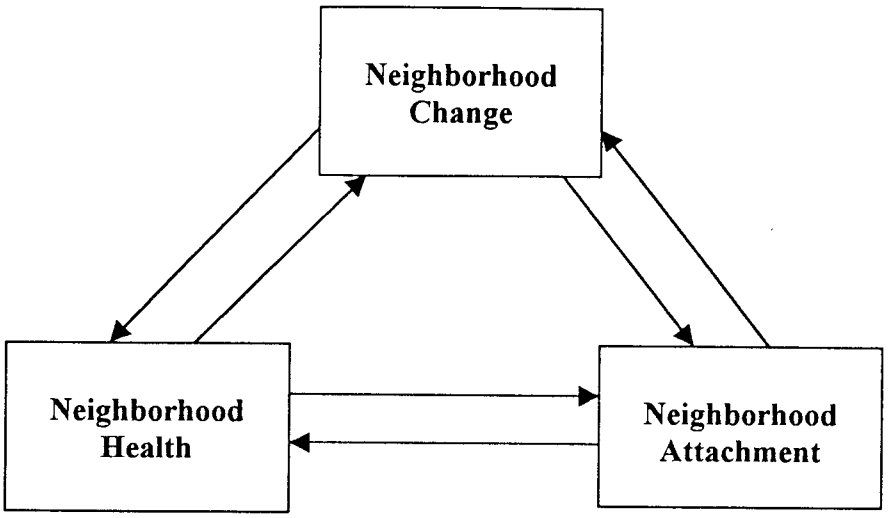
CHAPTER 4. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This purpose of this study is to explore the social impacts of condominium conversion on the Vieux Carré neighborhood. Several research questions will be addressed in this study: What is the level of neighborhood attachment of condominium owners? What neighborhood changes are associated with the conversions? What is the relationship between the change in the neighborhood and the overall viability of the neighborhood?

The unit of analysis for this study is the individual; that is persons occupying condominiums in the Vieux Carré. The population and sampling frame were people residing in buildings that were identified by the VCPORA exploratory study (1999) as converted to condominiums. The sample consisted of approximately half of the eighty-one buildings VCPORA identified as converted to condominiums. The list of buildings was put into an block number order and randomized with Excel. The final sample consisted of those occupying the units of the first forty addresses on the randomized list. The data collected are characterized as quantitative and primary in nature. These data were analyzed using descriptive statistics with the aid of SPSS.

The concepts and variables used in the study were chosen primarily based on a review of sociological literature on neighborhood attachment. The social impacts of condominium conversion are theorized to be the result of the interaction of three concepts: neighborhood attachment, neighborhood change, and neighborhood health. The relationship among these concepts is represented below (see Figure 7).

Figure 7. Conceptual Model



Neighborhood health is conceptualized as "the degree of excellence or goodness" in the built environment, natural and social environment (Connerly & Marans, 1988, pp. 37 -38). *Neighborhood change* is a neighborhood's trajectory of either stability, improvement, or decline. As defined by Temkin and Rohe, it "is largely dependent on the physical, social, and locational characteristics of the community" (Temkin & Rohe, 1996, p. 159). *Neighborhood attachment* is conceptualized as the sum of residents' emotional attachment to their community and attitudes about the neighborhood (Bolan, 1997).

The variables included in the research are as follows.

Table 1 . Variables in Study

Variable	Description
Unit Characteristics	
Type	Number of bedrooms as reported by respondent
Size	Square footage as reported by respondent
Price	Price in dollars as reported by respondent

Condo Association Fee	Monthly fee in dollars as reported by respondent.
Condition of unit	Response to questions "Did the developer put your condo unit in good condition? If no–What did he or she do poorly?"
Condition of Building	Response to questions "Did the developer put your building in good condition? If no–What did he or she do poorly?"
Home Ownership Ownership	Response to the question "Are you the owner of this unit?"
Previous tenancy	Response to question "Did you rent this unit before you bought it?
Characteristics of Non-Owners Type of resident	The response to the following questions: How would you describe yourself (tourist, convention-goer, family or friend of owner, renter)? Are you paying a fee to stay in this unit?
Length of Stay	How long do you plan to stay?
Motivation for Purchasing Unit Reasons	Response to questions "What were the main reasons you chose to buy in the French Quarter?" (10 categories. Multiple responses permitted).
Most important reason	Response to question "What was the most important reason you chose to buy in the French Quarter?" (10 categories)
Length of Residency Length of Residency in Vieux Carré	Number of years reported in the following categories by respondent: less than 1 year, 1 to 3 years, 4 to 6 years, 7 to 9 years, and more than 10 years.
Length of residency in New Orleans	Number of years reported in the following categories by respondent: less than 1 year, 1 to 3 years, 4 to 6 years, 7 to 9 years, and more than 10 years.

Unit Use Primary residency	Response to question "Is this unit your primary residence."
Short-term rentals	Response to question "Do you rent your unit to tourists or business travelers?"
Frequency of short-term rental	Response to question "Which best describes how often you rent your unit?" (6 categories)
Length of stay of renters	Response to the question "How long is the average stay? (5 categories)"
Formal Participation Vieux Carré neighborhood association	Response to question "Are you a member of a French Quarter neighborhood organization?"
New Orleans voluntary association	Response to question "Are you a member of any other type of voluntary association or organization in New Orleans (Carnival krewe, political organization, business association, etc.)?"
Religious Services	Response to question "Do you regularly attend religious services in New Orleans? If yes--are the religious services held in the French Quarter?"
Voter Registration	Response to question "Are you registered to vote in New Orleans?"
Informal Participation Frequency of interaction with neighbors	Response to the question "How often do you speak to your neighbors?" (8 categories)
Frequency of visiting neighbors	Response to the question "How often do you socialize with your neighbors, either in your home or theirs?" (9 categories)
Demographic Characteristics Unit population	Number of person living in unit as reported by respondent.
Children	Number of persons under 18 years of age as reported by respondent.

Age	Age in years of owner as reported by respondent
Gender	Category as reported by respondent
Race/Ethnicity	Category as reported by respondent
Employment Status	Category (employed, unemployed, retired) as reported by respondent.
Household Income	Income category as reported by respondent.
Education	Highest level of education as reported by respondent?
Comments on neighborhood	Response to open-ended question "What do you think is the most important thing that should be done to make the French Quarter a better neighborhood?'

Data collection was via mail survey (see Appendix A). This method was chosen because it required less time and expense than in-person or telephone interviewing. One of the disadvantages of mail surveys is that they tend to have lower response rates than in-person or telephone surveys (Babbie, 1998). In order to increase the response rate, the research design specified hand-delivery whenever possible. Hand-delivery also was because previous research indicated that the units might be occupied by short-term renters who would be unlikely to have access to mailboxes or less likely to open mail sent to a temporary address.

The questionnaire was accompanied by a cover letter (see Appendix B), and stamped, self-addressed envelope. It was placed in an envelope labeled "Whoever is Staying in this Unit: Please Open." All questionnaires were delivered by the researcher on Saturday, May 27, between 11:00 AM and 4:00 PM. Questionnaires that could not be hand-delivered were left in mailboxes and front halls with the unit number written on the

envelopes. A tally sheet was used to record activity at each unit in each building in the sample.

A total of 153 questionnaires were distributed among thirty-three addresses. Thirty-seven surveys were returned for a response rate of 24%. Of the forty buildings in the original sample, four of the addresses could not be located, a fifth address was a legal timeshare and should not have been included in the sampling frame, and a sixth address had no suitable place to leave surveys. Questionnaires were not delivered to a seventh building because the manager of the complex refused to accept them.

There were several limitations of the study. The overall response rate of 24% is low and impacts the representativeness of the results. There is no data on the type of occupancy. The response rate for short-term renters was zero due to the difficulty of locating and contacting this type of occupant. Also, many respondents wrote unsolicited comments on the returned surveys which indicated an interest in the subject of condominium conversions which may have biased the data.

CHAPTER 5. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

The occupants of the units surveyed were overwhelming college-educated, white males reporting an annual household income of at least $95,000. The age of respondents (N=34) ranged from 27 to 76 with a mean reported age of 48.5 years. The ratio of male to female respondents (N=36) was 67% to 33%. Among respondents reporting annual household income (N=33), 54.5% reported an annual household income of at least $95,000. The second highest income group was $30,000-59,000 at 24%, followed by $60,000 to 79,000 at 9%. The educational level of respondents (N=36) was 47.2% reporting a master's degree or higher, 44.4% reporting a four-year college degree, and 8.3% reporting a high school diploma or GED. Seventy-five percent of respondents (N=36) described their employment status as employed, 22% as retired, and one respondent described him/herself as unemployed. A majority of respondents were white, and identified their race/ethnicity (N=35) as follows: 88.6% white, 5.7% African-American, and 5.7% Latino/Hispanic.

Among the respondents, 81% self-identified as owners of condominium units. Among owners (N=30), 57% reported that they were not the first person to purchase the unit as a condominium, 40% reported that they were the first person to purchase the unit as a condominium, and one person reported he/she did not know. Only one of the respondents who was a unit owner (N=30) reported he/she rented her unit before buying it as a condominium.

Of the 19% of respondents who were not owners of units, six were renters, and one described his/herself as family or a friend of the owner. Seventy-one percent reported

an anticipated stay of more than 6 months, one reported a stay of 60 days to 6 months, and one reported a stay of less than 60 days. Six of the seven non-owners (86%) reported paying a fee to stay in the unit. The average age of non-owners was 35.4 years of age, 13 years younger than the mean age of all respondents. The gender ratio was 57% male to 43% female. All non-owners described their race/ethnicity as white, and described themselves as employed. Of the six non-owners who reported annual household income, the responses were fairly evenly distributed. Two respondents reported an income of $60,000-79,000, and one person reported an income in each of the following categories: less than $15,000, $30,000,-59,000, $80,000-94,000, and $95,000 or more.

The average number of occupants per unit was 1.53 persons per unit (N=30). Only one out of 29 units reported having a resident under 18 years old. The average unit was bought for $121,315 (N=27) and purchased in 1999. The average condominium association fee was $153 (N=29).

Among the thirty-seven units surveyed, 73% were one bedroom, 19% were two bedroom, and 8% were three or more bedrooms. The average size of all units was 957 square feet. The average size of units in square feet was similar for owners and long-term renters at 949 and 993 respectively. However, there appeared to be a relationship between the size of the units and how they were used by owners. The size of units used by owners as primary residences was 1075 sq. ft.;336 sq. ft. larger than the average size of units not used as primary residents by owners (see Table 2).

Table 2. Size of Units by Type of Occupant

Type of Occupant	Mean (Sq. Ft.)
All Units	957
Owner-Occupied (N=30) Primary Residence (N=15) Non-Primary Residence (N=13)	949 1075 739
Non-Owner Occupied (N=7)	993

The majority of owners were satisfied with the work the developer had done on their units and buildings. Of the 30 respondents reporting on unit condition, 73% reported the developer put the unit in good condition. Among the 27% who reported the developer did not put the unit in good condition, 75% reported poor workmanship, 62.5% reported poor quality materials such as carpet and wallpaper, 25% reported the unit was designed poorly, and 12.5% reported the developer used poor quality equipment such as appliances.

Of the 29 respondents who reported on the condition of the building, 79% reported that the developer put the building in good condition. Among the 21% of respondents reporting problems with the condition of the building, 100 % reported poor quality materials, 83% reported poor workmanship, 50% reported the problems with the utilities, 67% reported that common areas were poorly done, and 33% reported the building exterior was done poorly.

An overwhelming majority of owners reported choosing to buy in the French Quarter because of its unique atmosphere. Among those responding to questions regarding their motivation for buying a condominium (N=30), 71% cited the unique

French Quarter atmosphere as their most important reason for buying in the French Quarter (N=20). The motivation with the next highest frequency was good investment/rising real estate prices which was chosen by 14% of respondents. Convenience to the workplace and convenience to recreation/entertainment also were cited, each by two respondents. When given an opportunity to choose multiple reasons for choosing to purchase a condominium in the Vieux Carré, the unique French Quarter atmosphere was the most frequently selected reason. Other reasons were chosen as follows.

Table 3. Reasons for Buying Condominium in French Quarter

Motivation	Frequency	Percent
Unique French Quarter atmosphere	27	93%
Convenient to recreation/entertainment	21	72%
Good investment/rising real estate prices	16	55%
The way the neighborhood looks	14	48%
Convenient to job	8	28%
Convenient to shopping/services	7	24%
Family/friends nearby	5	17%
Easy to rent to tourists	1	3%
Easy to find long-term tenants	1	3%

Several respondents wrote in additional reasons for buying in the French Quarter. Half of those respondents mentioned they wanted second-home/space for guests (10% of all respondents), two cited that they had lived in the French Quarter for a long time and

wanted to stay (7%), one listed the French Quarters acceptance of alternative lifestyles (3%), and one mentioned the beautiful historic architecture (3%).

The majority of owners (N=29), 58%, reported living in the Vieux Carré for a period of 1 to 6 years, and 52% reported living in the New Orleans metro area for the same period of time. Thirty-eight percent reported living in the Metro New Orleans area for 10 years or longer.

Table 4. Length of Residency in French Quarter and New Orleans

# of Years	French Quarter	Metro New Orleans
Less than 1	17%	3%
1 to 3	28%	28%
4 to 6	31%	24%
7 to 9	7%	7%
10 or more	17%	38%

Approximately half of the units were occupied by owners who were not full-time residents, and two units used solely by visitors. When reporting on unit use, owners were almost equally divided on whether they used the condominium unit as a primary residence: 53% of respondents considered the units as their primary residence; 47% did not consider the unit as their primary residence. Two owners indicated that the units were used mainly by family, friends or business associates.

Only one of the respondents (N=29) reported renting his/her unit to tourists or business travelers. The respondent characterized the frequency of renting to tourists as a few times a year, and the average tourist stay as less than a week. Among non-owners

(N=6), no respondents reported an illegal short-term rental of less than 60 days. The low response rate and inability of the researcher to locate short-term rentals may account for the discrepancy between the findings of this study and the findings on rentals to tourists in VCPORA's 1999 study.

Anecdotal evidence collected during the delivery of surveys suggests the VCPORA study findings on the prevalence of short-term rentals are more accurate than the results of this study. While delivering surveys, several condominium owners mentioned that units in their buildings were being rented to tourists. One owner reported that of the seven units in his building, three were owner-occupied, three were used primarily for short-term rental to tourists, and one was vacant.

The respondents formal participation was high in neighborhood and voluntary associations, however, less than half were registered to vote in New Orleans. Among all respondents (N=30), 60% reported membership in a Vieux Carré neighborhood association, and 53% reported membership in another New Orleans area voluntary association. Twenty percent of respondents (N=29) reported attending religious services in New Orleans, with 75% of those attending services doing so in the Vieux Carré. Among owners (N=30), 53% were not registered to vote in New Orleans.

All owners (N=30) responded to questions regarding informal participation in the neighborhood and reported high levels of informal interaction with neighbors. Forty-three percent reported speaking to neighbors everyday, 30% reported speaking to neighbors every few days, and 20% reported speaking to neighbors once a week. One respondent reported speaking to neighbors every 2 to 3 weeks and one reported almost never. When

asked how often they socialized with neighbors in their homes or the homes of their neighbors, 45% reported once a week or more with 27% reporting more than once a week. Another 24% reported socializing every 2 weeks to once a month. Fourteen percent reported every few months to twice a year, and the remaining 17% reported socializing almost never or never.

As a group, the respondents were very interested in neighborhood quality and expressed many of the same concerns as VCPORA members. When asked the open-ended question "What do you think is the most important thing that should be done to make the French Quarter a better neighborhood," 73% of respondents wrote comments, many providing multiple suggestions (see Appendix C). The most frequent comments were related the following:

- Keeping the neighborhood residential (41%);
- Decreasing crime (33%);
- Improving streets, buildings and infrastructure (26%);
- Environmental concerns such as sanitation and noise (26%);
- Traffic including limiting the size of vehicles, vehicle access and speed (26%);
- Reducing the negative impacts of tourism (15%);
- Improving selection of stores and services (11%);
- Condominiums (11%); and
- Meter maids (7%).

Several of the comments were related to the absence of government policy on neighborhood issues, and a lack of regulation and enforcement of existing regulations. One respondent commented that "government should put needs and desires of residents above tourists." Another mentioned that the government should "enforce all laws regarding zoning, noise, litter, etc."

CHAPTER 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this research, as well as the findings of the VCPORA study (1999), suggest the social impacts of the condominium conversion in the Vieux Carré are likely to contribute to the decline of the neighborhood. This study has explored many factors associated with residents' sense of neighborhood attachment which may influence a person's desire to take action and resolve neighborhood problems and defend against neighborhood threats. In addition, it includes a review of the role residents play in neighborhood change, and possible ways they may impact the course of change, and, ultimately, the health of their neighborhoods.

The findings of this study include measures of factors related to neighborhood attachment: the demographic characteristics of the condominium owners; their motivations for moving to the Vieux Carré neighborhood; their levels of formal and informal participation in the neighborhood; and the way in which their units are occupied. While the occupants of the condominium units report formal and informal participation in the neighborhood, only half of the occupants (53%) of the converted units consider the Vieux Carré as their primary residences and are registered to vote in New Orleans. Although many condominium residents do exhibit a sense of neighborhood attachment, half are not present in the neighborhood on a full-time basis; therefore, they have limited opportunities to participate politically on behalf of the neighborhood. This finding coupled with the declining residential base indicated by US Census figures, suggests that the number of people who have a sense of neighborhood attachment and the overall level of neighborhood attachment within the Vieux Carré is decreasing at a rapid pace.

In order to better understand the social impacts of condominium conversion in the Vieux Carré, further study on a larger scale is needed. A particularly important research question that requires addressing is the relationship between condominium conversion and illegal short-term rentals to tourists. Previous studies and anecdotal evidence suggest that units which are not primary residences are being used for this purpose, however, there is little quantitative data available on this question. A related question for further research is the relationship between the size of the unit and the way it is used. The findings of this study indicate the units occupied as primary residences are larger than those which are occupied part-time. The findings of a study on size and use would be particularly helpful as a basis for possible condominium controls and tourism planning efforts.

The social and economics impacts of condominium conversion on displaced renters, as well as residents of other neighborhoods, are important topics for future studies. Many studies have been conducted on the impact of tourism in the Vieux Carré, however, little or no research has been done on other areas of the city. It would be interesting to explore the attitudes the rest of the city's residents have about the Vieux Carré, as well as what they do when they visit the Vieux Carré neighborhood. This information would be especially useful for policy-makers and neighborhood groups.

This study explored the social impacts of condominium conversion, however, further study of this phenomenon also should focus on its economic and political impacts. Research on the political impact of the condominium conversion might focus on the dwindling number of residents in the Vieux Carré, and what it means to have a neighborhood with few potential voters. A study on the economic impacts of conversion

might address the relationship between the presence of condominiums and the types of businesses in the Vieux Carré, or who is benefitting from the conversions.

A final recommendation for further study is related to possible condominium controls. Many cities and states have regulations designed to control condominiums and promote policies which are designed to influence the conversion process. A thorough study of the benefits and negative impacts of different controls as well as a better understanding of the legal issues surrounding condominium conversion in New Orleans are necessary before any decisions on long-term condominium controls in the Vieux Carré are made.

An initial policy recommendation is to declare a temporary moratorium on conversions in order to allow for further study. Other cities, such as Brookline, MA, have called for a six-month moratorium on conversions in order to explore the impacts of rapid rates of condominium conversion and formulate policies to address their findings. Given the rapid rise in conversions in the Vieux Carré and the declining residential base, a temporary moratorium might be an appropriate initial step to address the conversion issue.

Since existing laws which have been enacted to control tourism impacts and protect the quality of life of Vieux Carré residents are not being enforced, it may be more effective for VCPORA and others interested in mitigating the impacts of condominium conversions to focus initially on calling for the enforcement of existing laws rather than to lobby for new controls. The lack of enforcement of the ban on short-term rentals in particular is closely tied to the condominium conversions and the way the units are being used.

Other policy and regulatory controls might be best if they were adopted at the state-level. This recommendation is based on current realities; the only extant regulation of conversions takes place at the state-level, and the city of New Orleans has not been enforcing other types of controls in the Vieux Carré. Preservationists who fought to designate the Vieux Carré an historic district and create the Vieux Carré Commission through a state constitutional amendment in 1936 were likely to have been influenced by a similar political environment.

The importance of the power of neighborhood attachment can be seen in the actions of the Vieux Carré Property Owners, Residents and Associates (VCPORA). As touched upon earlier, the members of VCPORA have pushed to address neighborhood threats such as crime, noise, and other tourism impacts. Since the residential base of the Vieux Carré is shrinking, neighborhood groups such as VCPORA may benefit from widening their base of support. Perhaps by joining forces with other Vieux Carré-based organizations as well as groups outside of the Vieux Carré, they may be able to increase their visibility and influence. This broader-based group might be able to push for attention to larger-scale tourism and neighborhood health issues. Ultimately, the goal of this group might be the development of comprehensive tourism planning which includes neighborhood health indicators for the Vieux Carré neighborhood.

If New Orleans does not begin a formal community dialogue on tourism management, and develop a tourism management plan with a sense of vision that controls and directs the growth of the tourism industry, the unique character of the Vieux Carré will continue to erode. Subsequently, visitors may turn away from the Vieux Carré

because it seems too crowded, tacky, or inauthentic. The findings of this study reinforce the importance of the unique character of the Vieux Carré; the unique Vieux Carré atmosphere has been cited by 71% of respondents as their main motivation for buying a condominium.

Since this study has focused on the impacts of condominium conversion on the Vieux Carré, not as an historic district but as a neighborhood, it concludes by returning to Jane Jacob's four essentials of a healthy neighborhood: mixed uses, small blocks, aged buildings, and concentration of residents. The existence of legal protections which safeguard the Vieux Carré's historic structures supports the survival of the district's small blocks and aged buildings. However, as the tourism industry grows and the number of residents declines, the Vieux Carré is losing its grip on two of Jacob's essentials: the need for mixed primary uses and the need for concentration of people including residents. By Jacob's definition, the Vieux Carré is a neighborhood which is experiencing health problems and is in need of care.

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APPENDIX A. Questionnaire

CONDOMINIUM STUDY

1. What size is your unit? ❒ Studio/Efficiency ❒ 1 bedroom ❒ 2 bedroom ❒ 3 + bedrooms

2. What is the square footage of the unit? *Please estimate.* _____ Sq. Ft.

3. Are you the owner of this unit? ❒Yes ❒ No

   If you answered yes, please skip to question # 7

4. How would you describe yourself?
   ❒ Tourist ❒ Convention-goer ❒ Family or friend of owner ❒ Renter

5. How long do you plan to stay?
   ❒ Less than 60 days ❒ 60 days to 6 months ❒ More than 6 months

6. Are you paying a fee to stay in this unit? ❒Yes ❒ No

   Please skip to question # 33

7. Are you the first person to purchase this unit as a condo? ❒Yes ❒ No ❒ Don't know

8. Did you rent this unit before you bought it? ❒Yes ❒ No

9. What year did you purchase this unit? _____

10. What was the price? $_____

11. What is the monthly condo association fee? $_____

12. Did the developer put your condo unit in good condition? ❒Yes ❒ No

13. If NO, what did he or she do poorly? *Please check all that apply.*
    ❒ Poor workmanship
    ❒ Poor quality materials (carpet, paint, etc.)
    ❒ Poor quality equipment (dishwasher, disposal, etc.)
    ❒ Poor design
    ❒ Other *(Please specify)* _____

14. Did the developer put the building in good condition? ❒Yes ❒ No

15. If NO, what did he or she do poorly? *Please check all that apply.*
    ❒ Poor workmanship
    ❒ Poor quality materials (rugs, paint, etc.)
    ❒ Common areas poorly done
    ❒ Utilities bad
    ❒ Building exterior poorly done
    ❒ Other *(Please specify)*_____

16. What were the main reasons you chose to buy in the French Quarter?
Please check all that apply.
- ❒ Good investment/rising real estate prices
- ❒ Family or friends nearby
- ❒ Convenient to my job
- ❒ Convenient to shopping and other services
- ❒ Convenient to recreation and entertainment
- ❒ The way the neighborhood looks
- ❒ The unique French Quarter atmosphere
- ❒ Easy to rent your unit to tourists
- ❒ Easy to find long-term tenants
- ❒ Other *(Please specify)*_____

17. What was the MOST important reason you choose to buy in the French Quarter?
Check one only.
- ❒ Good investment/rising real estate prices
- ❒ Family or friends nearby
- ❒ Convenient to my job
- ❒ Convenient to shopping and other services
- ❒ Convenient to recreation and entertainment
- ❒ The way the neighborhood looks
- ❒ The unique French Quarter atmosphere
- ❒ Easy to rent your unit to tourists
- ❒ Easy to find long-term tenants
- ❒ Other *(Please specify)*_____

18. Is this unit your primary residence? ❒Yes ❒ No

19. How long have you had a home in the French Quarter?
- ❒ Less than 1 year
- ❒ 1 to 3 years
- ❒ 4 to 6 years
- ❒ 7 to 9 years
- ❒ More than 10 years

20. How long have you had a home in the metro New Orleans area?
- ❒ Less than 1 year
- ❒ 1 to 3 years
- ❒ 4 to 6 years
- ❒ 7 to 9 years
- ❒ More than 10 years

21. Do you rent your unit to tourists or business travelers? ❒Yes ❒ No

If you answered NO, please skip to question # 24

22. Which best describes how often you rent your unit?
- ❒ Every week
- ❒ Twice a month
- ❒ Every month
- ❒ Every 2 to 3 months
- ❒ A few times a year
- ❒ Once or twice a year

23. How long is the average stay?
- ❒ Less than a week
- ❒ 1 to 2 weeks
- ❒ 3 to 4 weeks
- ❒ 5 to 7 weeks
- ❒ 2 months or more

24. Are you a member of a French Quarter neighborhood organization? ❒Yes ❒ No

25. Are you a member of any other type of voluntary association or organization in New Orleans (Carnival krewe, political organization, business association, etc.)? ❒ Yes ❒ No

26. Do you regularly attend religious services in New Orleans? ❒ Yes ❒ No

27. If YES, are the religious services held in the French Quarter? ❒ Yes ❒ No

28. Are you registered to vote in New Orleans? ❒ Yes ❒ No

29. How often do you speak to your neighbors?
- ❒ Every day
- ❒ Every few days
- ❒ Once a week
- ❒ Every 2-3 weeks
- ❒ Once a month
- ❒ Once a year
- ❒ Almost never
- ❒ Never

30. How often do you socialize with your neighbors, either in your home or theirs?
- ❒ More than once a week
- ❒ Once a week
- ❒ Every 2-3 weeks
- ❒ Once a month
- ❒ Every few months
- ❒ Twice a year
- ❒ Once a year
- ❒ Almost never
- ❒ Never

31. How many people live in your unit ? _____

32. How many of the people living in your unit are under 18? _____

33. What is your age? _____

34. What is your gender? ❒ Male ❒ Female ❒ Trans-gender

35. What best describes your racial/ethnic background?
- ❒ African-American
- ❒ White
- ❒ Asian/Pacific Islander
- ❒ Hispanic/Latino
- ❒ Native American
- ❒ Other *(Please specify)*_____

36. Which best describes your employment status?
- ❒ Employed
- ❒ Unemployed
- ❒ Retired

37. What is your annual household income?
- ❒ Less than $15,000
- ❒ $15,000 - 29,999
- ❒ $30,000 - $59,000
- ❒ $60,000 - $79,999
- ❒ $80,000 - $94,999
- ❒ $95,000 or more

38. Which of the following best describes your highest level of formal education?
- ❒ No formal degree
- ❒ High school diploma or GED
- ❒ Four-year college degree
- ❒ Master's degree or higher

39. What is the address of your condo? _____, Unit # _____

40. Finally, what do you think is the MOST important thing that should be done to make the French Quarter a better neighborhood?

_____

_____

_____

Today's Date: _____

Thank you for your time and participation!

APPENDIX B. Survey Cover Letter

College of Urban and Public Affairs

University of New Orleans

May 26, 2000

Dear Sir or Madam:

Nearly everyone is enchanted with New Orleans' historic French Quarter. As a result, the desirability of living in and visiting this special neighborhood has fueled a recent boom in condominium conversions and sales. Unlike other U.S. cities, there currently are no regulations in place to protect condominium buyers or renters, or those who live in buildings slated for conversion. The lack of regulation could possibly affect the quality of life of French Quarter residents, as well as the quality of experience for visitors.

As a person staying in a condominium unit, you have been chosen as a participant in a study of condominiums in the French Quarter. Please complete the enclosed survey and return it in the stamped envelope that has been provided. Since the questions on the survey are mostly "yes or no" and multiple choice, it will take no more than five minutes to complete. **Your responses will be completely confidential, and used solely for the purposes of this study**

If you have any questions about the study, or would like a summary of the results of the study, please call me at 280-5473, or e-mail me at rkaufman@uno.edu. Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Randi Kaufman

APPENDIX C. Respondents' Comments on Questionnaire

CONDOMINIUM STUDY
SURVEY COMMENTS

Survey Question #40: What do you think is the most important thing that should be done to make the French Quarter a better neighborhood?

Residential Quality (11)
encourage more full-time residents
keep residential w/ full-time residents
keep it from becoming 2nd home owners & too expensive, boring like suburbs
government should put needs and desires of residents above tourists
Vieux Carré must maintain its neighborhoods
home lifestyles will always prevail
keep it affordable for those who work in Vieux Carré
keep off-street parking for owners
increase number of full-time residents
government should put needs and desires of residents above tourists
enforce all laws regarding zoning, noise, litter, etc.

Crime (9)
more police patrols
decrease crime
crime control (2)
more police, safer to live
decrease personal crime
more police on foot
more police in border of Vieux Carré and housing project; possible curfew for 18 and under--out by 8 PM
improve police visibility

Physical Improvements (7)
complete road renovation
rehab neighborhood
improve sewerage system
upgrade existing buildings and homes
more action against Formosans in lower Vieux Carré
revitalize dwellings instead of facades
some areas are not well lit

Environmental Health (7)
it smells
better clean up
additional sanitation services
cleaner
eliminate litter and dog waste
more trash cans
noise

Traffic (7)
carriages, trucks, motorcycles
do away with all traffic
keep all vehicles out of Vieux Carré; have lot with shuttle service
speed of vehicles
prohibit large vehicles
parking for owners only
control traffic

Tourism (4)
put T-shirts shops in certain areas; enforce and strengthen vehicle size laws
prevention of massive commodification
fewer large tourist walking tours & touristy businesses
eliminate night tours

Stores/Services (3)
keep chain stores out
bring back department/convenience stores
stop spread of junky, non-unique, chain stores

Condominiums (3)
need condo owners assoc/clearing house for common problems and procedures
owners live in other unit in building. keep this one for family and friends
limit condo conversions

Meter Maids (2)
politer meter maids
return to city employee meter maids-operate on quota

Miscellaneous
leave us alone with surveys
raise abatement

VITA

Randi Kaufman was born in Wayne, NJ, and graduated from the University of Virginia in Charlottesville in 1986 with a B.A. in Anthropology and a minor in Chinese Language. She continued her language studies at Taiwan National Normal University in Taipei, Taiwan, where she lived for several years. During her studies, she taught English as a second language, and later worked as the assistant manager of an US trading company. In addition, she began consulting as a translator and interpreter.

Upon returning to the US, Ms. Kaufman settled in New Orleans. She has worked primarily in the social service field including transitional housing for the homeless, and disease prevention and community planning for the Louisiana Office of Public Health. She entered the Master of Science in Urban Studies program at the University of New Orleans in 1997. Currently, she is the academic counselor at the College of Urban and Public Affairs at the University of New Orleans.