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11.439 Revitalizing Urban Main Streets
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MIT Department of Urban Studies and Planning Spring 2009
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Reflection #5

Looking Backward and Forward

As we approach the final stages of our work, it is important to both reflect on important aspects of our work to date and consider what can be done to broaden the impact our final plan. Consequently, this reflection asks you to look back at the work during the first half of the course while also looking forward at your goals for the final plan and how to shape the last phases of our work. For this exercise, please consider and write down your responses to the following questions:

Looking Backward: During the first half of the class, our emphasis was on collecting, analyzing and integrating information from different sources and in different modes to deepen our understanding of the St. Claude Avenue corridor and to propose an agenda to improve the corridor. This included specific modes of observation, different types of economic, physical and design analysis, outreach and conversations with a range of stakeholders, review and deliberation within teams and as a class, and different types of local meetings.

What did you find most valuable in this process to deepen your understanding of the district and help arrive at an appropriate agenda for improving it?

What aspect of integrating these different types of analysis has been most challenging and how have you worked through it? Was working in a team helpful to this process? Why or why not?

How did your experience of this phase of the project affect your thinking about what a good planning process should include?

Looking Forward: We face many challenges in preparing a plan for St Claude Avenue with real potential to be implemented and to shape the future of the area given both the difficult environment for getting things done in New Orleans and the weak capacity and lack of leadership of our client.

Given this context, what do you think the class can do and accomplish in the next month to increase the likelihood that our plan will have an impact and to create greater capacity to improve St Claude Avenue ? How does this shape what our final “deliverables” should be?