



October 15, 2009

To Whom It May Concern:

The Friends of Lafitte Corridor (FOLC) is a citizen-based advocacy group that has worked since 2006 with neighborhood organizations, non-profits, and multiple stakeholders to develop the 3.2 mile corridor into a public greenway. Our vision is that this corridor offers unique opportunities for safe, non-motorized transportation, public recreation, economic recovery, community development, environmental remediation, and storm water management, and that the strategies developed for this corridor can serve as models for re-development elsewhere in the community. In addition, we see opportunities here to celebrate the history and cultural resources of adjacent neighborhoods and educate the public about urban environmental issues. To this end, we have participated with neighborhood groups, businesses and commercial interests, elected officials, local planning agencies and their consultants, national and local nonprofit organizations, and multiple constituencies to advance this unique project. A City Council Task Force has been established; it meets monthly to monitor progress and serves as the conduit through which commercial, neighborhood, and public interests can intersect with the Lafitte Greenway. FOLC facilitated the involvement of the Trust for Public Land in Greenway project, and this organization has begun the purchase of 17 additional acres which it will then sell to the City for this project, making the Lafitte Greenway one of the most important open space initiatives in the city's recent history. The City has recognized the wide-spread community support for the greenway concept and has dedicated significant financial resources to this project. A master planning consultant has been identified, and we expect work to commence in the very near future.

**We believe the redevelopment of the former Mercy Hospital site as proposed by the St. Margaret's project can serve a significant role in the success of the Lafitte Greenway and the recovery of adjacent neighborhoods.** Having been involved in every post-hurricane planning meeting, FOLC's members have actively supported the general planning concepts and land uses proposed by this re-development. **We welcome the St. Margaret's organization as a partner in the efforts many to revitalize this part of Mid-City through community-based projects.** One of FOLC's basic tenets has been to provide opportunities to increase public health and community recreational opportunities for all residents, regardless of age, economic status, or geographic location in the community. We feel the addition of senior living facilities in this site will add value to the corridor and provide opportunities to serve constituents that are sometimes left out of public open space and recreation projects. **We see the potential the St. Margaret's project has of making significant contributions to the range of activities offered in the critical area where Bayou St. John, the Lafitte Greenway and Jeff Davis Parkway intersect.**

We appreciate being brought into this project in its early planning stages and we look forward to working with St. Margaret's on common interests as this project moves forward.

Sincerely,

Bart Everson

President, Friends of Lafitte Corridor