

December 31, 2019

Ayana Elon
Catalyst for Renewal Shreveport

Reference: Blue Goose Blues Development

Dear Ms. Elon,

As with many cities across the country, Shreveport is not unique in facing challenges such as urban sprawl, a shrinking population, shrinking tax base, limited financial resources, escalating unemployment, antiquated and failing infrastructure and inner city disinvestment. While greenfield development continues to be the first choice with most developers in our region, the Shreveport-Caddo Great Expectations 2030 Master recommends that at least fifty percent of all new development be within our inner city neighborhoods. Although we have some moderate success with our Choice Neighborhoods initiative, this goal has been one of the most difficult challenges we face in implementing our master plan.

The following is an excerpt from the Master Plan: *“Many of the revitalization neighborhoods—plagued by poor infrastructure, substandard housing stock, public health problems, and very limited public amenities—that reappear time after time in the city’s planning documents are the historically African-American areas of the city. In the 1950s, these neighborhoods were described as overcrowded. ... Streets were unpaved, water and sewer infrastructure nonexistent, and the housing stock often in poor condition. Unlike the 19th-century shotgun houses of New Orleans, with their attractive architectural details, many of the shotguns and bungalows in these neighborhoods were simple boxes, often poorly maintained by absentee landlords.”* These neighborhoods are especially challenging and there has been very little interest from the development community to attempt any coordinated redevelopment in these areas.

Recently the MPC staff has been introduced to the Catalyst for Renewal Shreveport (CFRS). Their mission to improve the quality of life for Shreveport citizens by creating a safe, mixed-income, sustainable community that supports economic opportunities for business is in line with the following Master Plan Goal:

“Focus redevelopment activities strategically in locations that build on existing assets and provide critical mass, ... and target coordinated housing, infrastructure, transportation, park, and service investments to create a successful mixed income neighborhood”

CFRS hopes to cultivate the return of economic and cultural vibrancy to this historic Shreveport neighborhood – a neighborhood that was an important and inspirational destination during the African American Blues Music movement.

The Blue Goose Neighborhood is near downtown Shreveport, Louisiana. It is a contained area with the boundaries of Baker Street and Princess Park to the East, the Kansas City Southern Railroad track to the North, Fairfield Avenue to the South, and Sam Fertitta Drive to the West.

This development (the Blue Goose Blues District Plan) was one of the inspirational developments for a recently created zoning district that was added to our Unified Development Code. The Redevelopment Mixed Use Village District is intended to permit a variety of residential uses and limited non-residential uses within the same development creating a coordinated mixed use environment. It is intended that the development will blend residential commercial, cultural institutional or entertainment uses into one space where those functions are to some degree physically and functionally integrated so that a pedestrian friendly environment is created. It is hoped that this new district can be utilized as a tool to assist in the revitalization of this valuable historical asset in our community.

CFRS has requested a letter of support in order to assist in obtaining funding for this much needed development. We are very pleased to support this initiative since it is very much in line with the goals and objectives of the Shreveport-Caddo Great Expectations Master Plan.

Please let us know if we can be of further assistance to you.



Alan Clarke
Executive Director