

# CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

TO: HONORABLE CITY COUNCIL  
FROM: CITY PLANNING COMMISSION  
DATE: MARCH 22, 2021  
SUBJECT: REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION OF THE CITY PLANNING  
COMMISSION

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Attached hereto are: 1) Report and recommendation of the City Planning Commission from its meeting of Tuesday, March 9, 2021 and 2) Documents filed in relation to the zoning petition. The recommendation of the Commission is described briefly below:

**Zoning Docket #** 023/21

**Applicant:** City Council Motion M-21-19

**Request:** Text amendment to establish the French Market Overlay District, the purpose of which is to recognize the unique geographic configuration of the French Market District, as opposed to the remainder of the French Quarter, through use and design restrictions that (1) allow for expanded hours of operation in the Public Market, and (2) permit a unified package of pedestrian scaled signage to guide visitors through the linear market.

**Location:** The area generally bounded by the riverside of Decatur Street, the downriver side of St. Peter Street (and its direct extension to the Mississippi River), the Mississippi River, and the upriver side of Barracks Street (and its direct extension to the Mississippi River).

**CPC Deadline:** May 8, 2021  
**CC Deadline:** 60 days from receipt by Council  
**Councilmember:** Gisleson Palmer

**Recommendation:** **MODIFIED APPROVAL**

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION  
CITY OF NEW ORLEANS

LATOYA CANTRELL  
MAYOR

ROBERT D. RIVERS  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

LARRY MASSEY  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

**City Planning Commission Staff Report  
Executive Summary**

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The proposed French Market Overlay District permits the following variations from the existing use and sign standards:

1. The hours of operation of the existing Public Market (commonly known as the French Market Flea and Farmers Market) shall be expanded to permit a morning seafood and/or produce market beginning at 4:00 a.m., and to permit evening market closing hours at 10:00 p.m. on Sundays through Thursdays and at 11:00 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays.
2. Freestanding Multi-Tenant Monument signs shall be permitted, subject to the following standards:
  - a. One (1) Freestanding Multi-Tenant Monument Sign shall be permitted per building, to be located within breezeways between existing commercial structures
  - b. No portion of the sign shall project beyond the front building wall of any existing commercial structure, where the structure's front wall is adjacent to the public right-of-way, except at the Governor Nicholls Street breezeway between the farmers and flea markets, where no portion of the sign shall project beyond the roof line of the existing market shed structures.
  - c. These signs shall be limited to a maximum of 6 feet in height. The area of each sign shall be limited to 24 square feet.
  - d. A map of the area described above (the boundaries of the French Market Overlay District) may be included on the sign.

- e. Tenant listing shall be limited to the name of the business and address. All listings shall be the same size.
  - f. The design and location of the signs shall be subject to the review and approval of the Design Advisory Committee and the staff of the Vieux Carré Commission (VCC).
3. In lieu of the permitted Freestanding Multi-Tenant Monument Sign, where applicable, multi-tenant signs identifying individual tenant space shall be permitted to be co-located on an approved communications antennae installations, located within breezeways between buildings at St. Ann, Dumaine, St. Philip, and Governor Nicholls Streets, subject to the following standards:
    - a. One grouping of multi-tenant signs on a singular communications antennae shall be permitted per breezeway.
    - b. The design of the signs shall be subject to the review and approval of the Design Advisory Committee and the staff for the Vieux Carré Commission.
  4. Attached Permanent Directory Signs shall be permitted, subject to the following standards:
    - a. Attached Permanent Directory Signage shall be only be permitted at the Public Market in the area generally bounded by Decatur, Barracks, N. Peters and Ursulines Streets.
    - b. One Attached Permanent Directory Sign shall be permitted per street frontage.
    - c. The sign area of each sign shall be limited to 12 square feet.

**Location:** The area generally bounded by the riverside of Decatur Street, the downriver side of St. Peter Street (and its direct extension to the Mississippi River), the Mississippi River, and the upriver side of Barracks Street (and its direct extension to the Mississippi River).

**Master Plan:** The proposal supports the goals of Chapter 13 of the Master Plan.

**Recommendation:**

Staff recommends **MODIFIED APPROVAL** of Zoning Docket 023/21.

**Reasons for Recommendation:**

1. The proposed text amendment would support greater use of the French Market space and could support improved wayfinding throughout the long linear area of the French Market District.
2. The VCC is in agreement with the components of the recommended overlay, which includes a review and approval of any proposed signs by VCC staff prior to their installation

3. The proposed text amendment is in line with the Master Plan

**City Planning Commission Meeting**  
**Tuesday, March 9, 2021**

**CPC Deadline:** May 8, 2021  
**CC Deadline:** 60 days from receipt  
**City Council District:** Citywide

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**STAFF REPORT**

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**Zoning Docket: 023-21**

**To:** City Planning Commission

**From:** Robert Rivers, Executive Director  
Paul Cramer, Planning Administrator

**Prepared by:** Joanna Farley

**Date:** March 9, 2021

**II. GENERAL INFORMATION**

**Applicant:** City Council Motion M-21-19

**Request:** Text amendment to establish the French Market Overlay District, the purpose of which is to recognize the unique geographic configuration of the French Market District, as opposed to the remainder of the French Quarter, though use and design restrictions that (1) allow for expanded hours of operation in the Public Market, and (2) permit a unified package of pedestrian scaled signage to guide visitors through the linear market.

The proposed French Market Overlay District permits the following variations from the existing use and sign standards:

1. The hours of operation of the existing Public Market (commonly known as the French Market Flea and Farmers Market) shall be expanded to permit a morning seafood and/or produce market beginning at 4:00 a.m., and to permit evening market closing hours at 10:00 p.m. on Sundays through Thursdays at 11:00 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays.
2. Freestanding Multi-Tenant Monument signs shall be permitted, subject to the following standards:
  - a. One (1) Freestanding Multi-Tenant Monument Sign shall be permitted per building, to be located within breezeways between existing commercial structures
  - b. No portion of the sign shall project beyond the front building wall of any existing commercial structure, where the structure's front wall is adjacent to the public right-of-way, except at the Governor Nicholls Street breezeway between the farmers and flea markets, where no

- portion of the sign shall project beyond the roof line of the existing market shed structures.
  - c. These signs shall be limited to a maximum of 6 feet in height. The area of each sign shall be limited to 24 square feet.
  - d. A map of the area described above (the boundaries of the French Market Overlay District) may be included on the sign.
  - e. Tenant listing shall be limited to the name of the business and address. All listings shall be the same size.
  - f. The design and location of the signs shall be subject to the review and approval of the Design Advisory Committee and the staff of the Vieux Carré Commission.
3. In lieu of the permitted Freestanding Multi-Tenant Monument Sign, where applicable, multi-tenant signs identifying individual tenant space shall be permitted to be co-located on an approved communications antennae installation, located within breezeways between buildings at St. Ann, Dumaine, St. Philip, and Governor Nicholls Streets, subject to the following standards:
    - a. One grouping of multi-tenant signs on a singular communications antennae shall be permitted per breezeway.
    - b. The design of the signs shall be subject to the review and approval of the Design Advisory Committee and the staff for the Vieux Carré Commission.
  4. Attached Permanent Directory Signs shall be permitted, subject to the following standards:
    - a. Attached Permanent Directory Signage shall be only be permitted at the Public Market in the area generally bounded by Decatur, Barracks, N. Peters and Ursulines Streets.
    - b. One Attached Permanent Directory Sign shall be permitted per street frontage.
    - c. The sign area of each sign shall be limited to 12 square feet.

**Location:** The area generally bounded by the riverside of Decatur Street, the downriver side of St. Peter Street (and its direct extension to the Mississippi River), the Mississippi River, and the upriver side of Barracks Street (and its direct extension to the Mississippi River).

### **Summary of Proposal**

Zoning Docket 023-21 is a request by City Council Motion to establish a French Market Overlay District. The proposed overlay would apply to a part of the French Market-managed area of the French Quarter, running from St. Peter Street to Barracks Street between Decatur Street and the Mississippi River. The overlay would result in extended operating hours of the Public Market portion of the French Market District and more permissive sign regulations within the area. The stated purpose of the overlay is to recognize the unique geographic configuration of the French Market District, as opposed to the remainder of the French Quarter through

the extended hours and a unified package of pedestrian scaled signage to guide visitors through the linear market area.

The Motion proposes to change the operational hours of the Public Market from the current 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. to extended hours with opening at 4:00 a.m. and evening closing at 10:00 p.m. on Sundays through Thursdays and 11:00 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays.

The Motion proposes to allow the use of three different kinds of signs within the area, none of which are currently allowed in the overlay area. These are:

1. Freestanding Multi-Tenant Signs, subject to restrictions on number, size, location, content and review by the VCC and Design Advisory Commission.
2. Multi-Tenant Signs co-located on approved communications antennae installations in specific locations, subject to review and approval by the VCC and Design Advisory Committee.
3. Attached Permanent Directory Signs in the Public Market area, with limitations on number and size of the signs.

Staff finds that the proposed overlay is consistent with the Master Plan in both areas of its proposed changes. The extended hours of the Public Market can offer greater flexibility in the use of the French Market space, a historic landmark and significant anchor of the downriver portion of the French Quarter. With longer opening hours, a greater diversity of market types – from early seafood and produce markets serving the restaurant industry to night art markets - can activate the French Market area for a larger portion of the day. The proposed sign permitting in the overlay can support better wayfinding for visitors to the area. These signs can encourage pedestrian circulation throughout the area, supporting a range of commercial and cultural activity within the overlay. Such signs could also facilitate greater use of multi-modal transportation options serving the area, including Regional Transit Authority routes, bike lanes and bike parking, as well as private automobile parking. Staff has consulted VCC on the aspects of the overlay and they have indicated they have no objection to the proposed overlay district. Staff recommends minor modifications to the overlay language regarding sign design, approval processes and boundaries.

### **Why is City Planning action required?**

The City Planning Commission is required to make a recommendation on all amendments to the text of the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance prior to City Council action, in accordance with **Article 4, Section 4.2.D.3.**, and *Action by City Planning Commission* of the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance.

### **III. ANALYSIS**

#### **A. What is the reason for the text amendment? What area would be affected by the text amendment?**

##### ***Background & Reason for text amendment***

This text amendment requesting the establishment of the French Market Overlay District is meant to offer more visible definition of this landmark area, enable a wider variety of activity to fill the French Market space and to improve wayfinding within the area. The French Market District, as defined in the boundaries of the text amendment, has a uniquely linear character and is currently devoid of any wayfinding signage offering orientation within the district. The French Market operates a public market with limited operational hours, leaving a large part of this district unused for much of the evening. The text amendment would provide opportunities for the establishment of a coordinated set of signs to guide people through the area and would enable greater use of the French Market space.

##### ***Area affected by the text amendment***

The proposed French Market Overlay District would affect the area generally bounded by the riverside of Decatur Street, the downriver side of St. Peter Street (and its direct extension to the Mississippi River), the Mississippi River, and the upriver side of Barracks Street (and its direct extension to the Mississippi River). Within this area, there are three zoning districts – VCS Vieux Carré Service District, VCP – Vieux Carré Park District and VCC-1 Vieux Carré Commercial District. A description of each of the districts is provided below:

##### **VCS - Vieux Carré Service District**

The VCS District in this area covers the area between Barrack Street and Ursulines Street and between North Peters and Decatur. This area is where the French Market Flea and Farmer's market operates daily from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. between French Market Place and North Peters. On the other side of French Market Place are a mixture of restaurants, retail and bars.

The VCS Vieux Carré Service District is intended to provide for the redevelopment of areas near the Mississippi River that were historically developed with industrial and commercial uses as a mixed-use area, with ground-floor retail and commercial uses and residential uses above. This district also promotes the improvement, beautification and redevelopment of existing surface parking lots and their redevelopment with structured parking and a mixture of commercial and residential uses. Existing commercial uses that do not adversely affect residential uses or the overall character of the Vieux Carré are also intended to be accommodated in the VCS District.



### **VCP – Vieux Carré Park District**

A small triangular section within the overlay between St. Philip Street and Dumaine Street, Washington Artillery Park between St. Ann and St. Peter Street, and all along the riverfront between the back of the lots along Decatur Street and the Mississippi River are zoned VCP – Vieux Carré Park District. These areas host the Joan of Arc statue, the Washington Artillery Monument, and a walking path along the river behind the flood wall. Parking lots and the Riverfront Streetcar line are also located the VCP district.

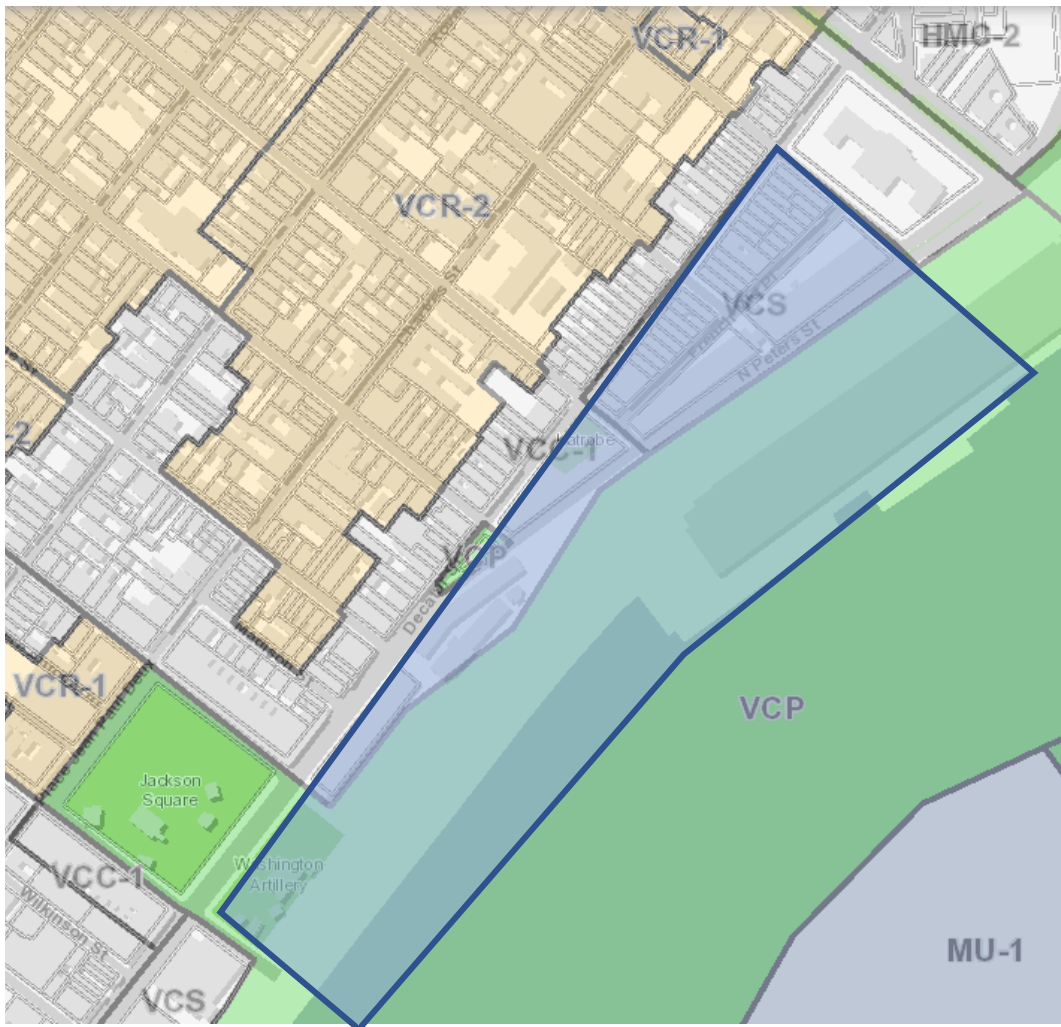
The VCP Vieux Carré Park District is intended to provide for parks, public facilities, and associated uses in the Vieux Carré and along the Vieux Carré riverfront. Parks and open space are encouraged and are permitted uses. Conditional use review is required for all other uses to ensure compatibility of the character of the Vieux Carré with the maritime use and scale of the waterfront.

### **VCC-1 Vieux Carré Commercial District**

The areas supporting shops and restaurants outside of the French Market flea and farmers market within the overlay are zoned VCC-1 Vieux Carré Commercial District. These areas have a range of commercial spaces, including retail stores and restaurants. This area also supports the New Orleans Jazz National Historical Park, the Dutch Alley Artist's Co-op, WWOZ radio station and the French Market District's offices.

The VCC-1 Vieux Carré Commercial District is intended to provide for restricted retail stores and service establishments that will attract and service local residents and tourists, and that will not adversely affect the character of nearby residences or detract from the overall character of the Vieux Carré.

**Figure 1. Zoning within proposed French Market Overlay District**



**B. What is the existing language in the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance?**

The Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance (CZO) addresses Public Market hours in the use standards for Public Markets found in **Article 20, Section 20.3.TT**. The Public Market use is defined in Article 26. The CZO discusses sign standards in Article 24, and defines the different sign types in Article 26. The definition of communications antennae is also included, as this is mentioned in the motion. The relevant existing language in the CZO for these two components of the proposed French Market Overlay district are provided below.

**1. Public Markets**

**Article 26 Definition - Public Market**

**Public Market.** A recurring assembly of multiple vendors selling art, crafts, edible items, packaged food or beverages, produce, and/or other similar merchandise directly to retail customers in a covered or uncovered open-air setting.

Public Market also appears in the definition of Live Entertainment – Secondary Use, included below:

**Live Entertainment – Secondary Use.** Any one (1) or more of any of the following live performances, performed live by one (1) or more persons, whether or not done for compensation and whether or not admission is charged: musical act, theatrical play or act, including stand-up comedy, magic, dance clubs, and disc jockey performances using vinyl records, compact discs, computers, or digital music players when the disc jockey is in verbal communication with the clientele of the establishment. Live entertainment - secondary use shall be part of a standard restaurant, specialty restaurant, indoor amusement facility, bar, or brewery, and shall be approved separately. A standard restaurant, specialty restaurant, indoor amusement facility, or bar may be open to the public when no live performances are scheduled. Live entertainment - secondary use does not include:

...

E. Outdoor musical accompaniment accessory to a public market during its hours of operation.

## **Article 20 Use Standards**

### **Section 20.3.TT Public Market**

1. Hours of operation are limited to 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., unless otherwise extended by the provisions of an overlay zoning district.
2. All size restrictions shall be consistent with the retail sales size restrictions in the zoning district, if applicable.
3. No portion of a public market may encroach onto the public right-of-way or be placed in such a way that requires customers to occupy the sidewalk or the public right-of-way.
4. The sale of food for consumption on or off the premises requires licensing by the City and approval by the Department of Health.
5. The sale of firearms, adult retail goods, and sexually-oriented devices is prohibited.
6. The retail sale of packaged alcoholic beverages is only allowed where such use is allowed as a permitted use in the zoning district in which the public market is located, or when approved through the conditional use process where such use is a conditional use in the zoning district where the public market is located.
7. In all districts except the Historic Core and Open Space Districts, fencing and landscaping shall be provided along all interior side and rear property lines of a site on which a public market is located. A fencing and landscaping plan shall be submitted for the review and approval of the Executive Director of the City Planning Commission.

## **2. Signs**

### **Article 26 Definition – Signs**

**Sign, Freestanding – Monument.** Any sign, other than a freestanding pole sign, placed upon or supported by the ground independently of any other structure. The sign base of a

monument sign shall be a minimum of seventy-five percent (75%) of the width of the sign face situated upon the base. (See Figure 26-18: Monument Sign)

**Sign, Directory.** A sign that serves as common or collective classification for a group of businesses operating within a multi-tenant structure. The sign may name the businesses and location information for a business within the structure but no other advertising matter.

**Wireless Telecommunications Antenna.** A specific device, the surface of which is used to transmit and/or receive radio-frequency signals, microwave signals, or other signals transmitted to or from other antennas. Wireless communications antenna does not include satellite dish antenna.

### **Article 24 Signs**

Article 24 covers all aspects of sign regulation by the CZO, including size standards, location standards, information content on the signs. The parts of this article relevant to the current sign regulations for the VCS, VCP and VCC-1 Districts are provided below:

#### **Section 24.7.G Limitation on Items of Information for Permanent Signs**

1. All permanent signs shall limit the number of items of information on any single sign face to no more than eight (8) items to prevent traffic hazards for passing motorists and to minimize the cluttered appearance of signs.
2. Each piece of information on a permanent sign is considered an item of information. For example, each of the following would be defined as one (1) item of information, including multi-word items: a telephone number, the name of the business, rate information, or the business logo. The street number address of the business is not counted as an item of information unless the street address is used as the name of the business.
3. In the case of electronic message sign, the electronic portion of the sign counts as one (1) item of information. In the case of a changeable copy sign, the area where the items of information are changed manually is also counted as one (1) item of information.
4. For a sign that contains a time and temperature component, the time and temperature component is not counted as an item of information.
5. All signs on a lot shall be related to services offered on the premises.
6. Rate information is a permitted item of information for gas station and parking lot uses.
7. Signs for multi-tenant commercial buildings that advertise the tenants of the development are limited to one (1) item of information per tenant within the development, which may exceed the eight (8) item limitation, in addition to the name and address of the development.
8. Directory signs, A-frame signs, banners, and restaurant menu board signs are exempt from the items of information limitation.

## **Section 24.13 Permanent Signs – Historic Core Neighborhood**

### **24.13.D.1 Directory signs**

Directory signs are prohibited.

### **24.13.E Freestanding Signs**

Freestanding signs are prohibited.

### **24.13.G.3 Sign Area, Number and Location Regulations**

#### **24.13.G.3.a. General Requirement**

The sign area, number and location regulations for wall signs, window signs, and projecting signs for non-residential uses in the Historic Core Neighborhood Districts are subject to the following regulations. The location and size of all signs are subject to prior approval by the Vieux Carré Commission.

- i. Zoning Districts Group One includes the following districts: VCC-1, VCC-2, VCS, VCE-1, VCP, HMC-1, HMC-2, and HM-MU Districts.
- ii. Zoning Districts Group Two includes the following districts: VCE District.

#### **24.13.G.3.b. Zoning Districts Group One**

The following regulations apply to non-residential uses in the following districts: VCC-1, VCC-2, VCS, VCE-1, VCP, HMC-1, HMC-2, and HM-MU Districts.

- i. Only one (1) sign, whether wall, window, or projecting, is permitted for each business establishment.
- ii. No more than fifty percent (50%) of the area of any wall, window, or projecting sign may be used to advertise products or commodities sold on the premises.
- iii. Wall and window signs are permitted thirty (30) square inches of sign area for each one (1) foot of street frontage. Where there is more than one (1) business establishment on a lot with street frontage in excess of fifty (50) feet, the total sign area may be increased one (1) square foot for each ten (10) feet of street frontage. However, no one (1) sign may exceed eight (8) square feet in area.
- iv. Projecting signs are permitted sixty (60) square inches of sign area for each foot of lot frontage. The area of a projecting sign is the sum of the areas of both faces. No projecting sign may exceed a total for both sign faces of sixteen (16) square feet.
- v. Where two (2) or more businesses are conducted on the premises of single ownership having a street frontage of twenty-five (25) feet or less, the allowable sign area may be increased by fifty percent (50%). However, the increased sign area is the total maximum sign area permitted for the entire property and are not interpreted to be the permitted sign area for each sign.

#### **24.13.G.3.d. Retail Facilities in the VCS and VC-1 Districts**

The following regulations apply to signs in the VCS and VCS-1 Districts but only for a retail center owned or controlled by a single entity, not anchored by a major department

store, unified by specific architectural theme and consisting of a major public or private space, with more than 55,000 square feet of enclosed gross leasable area devoted primarily to diverse retail, food and entertainment facilities:

- i. Main building: One (1) sign identifying building's name not to exceed 150 square feet.
- ii. Tenants: One (1) square foot of signage per lineal foot of building with or tenant space width along the wall which faces the street on which the business has its main address. The signage is limited to those uses on the ground floor. In addition, tenants on interior and upper floor may utilize canopy hanging (blade) signs. These signs may not exceed (8) square feet.
- iii. Final locations on signs shall be determined by the Vieux Carré Commission.

Absent from the sign allowances in the Historic Core Districts are monument signs, indicating that these are prohibited in these districts.

### **C. What is the proposed language for the amendment?**

Council Motion M-21-19 proposes the following language for the amendment:

#### *Boundaries:*

The French Market Overlay District shall apply to the area generally bounded by the riverside of Decatur Street, the downriver side of St. Peter Street (and its direct extension to the Mississippi River), the Mississippi River, and the upriver side of Barracks Street (and its direct extension to the Mississippi River).

#### *Components:*

### **1. Market hours of operation:**

The hours of operation of the existing Public Market (commonly known as the French Market Flea and Farmers Markets shall be expanded to permit a morning seafood and/or produce market beginning at 4:00 a.m. and to permit evening market closing hours at 10:00 p.m. on Sundays through Thursday and 11:00 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays.

### **2. Permitted Signs**

1. Permitted Multi-Tenant Monument Signs shall be permitted, subject to the following standards:
  - a. One (1) Freestanding Multi-Tenant Monument sign shall be permitted per building, to be located within breezeways between existing commercial structures.
  - b. No portion of the sign shall project beyond the front building wall of any existing commercial structure, where the structure's front wall is adjacent to the public right-of-way, except at the Governor Nichols Street breezeway between the farmers and flea markets, where no portion of the sign shall project beyond the roof line of the existing market shed structures.

- c. These signs shall be limited to a maximum of 6 feet in height. The area of each sign shall be limited to 24 square feet.
  - d. A map of the area described above (the boundaries of the French Market Overlay District) may be included on the sign.
  - e. Tenant listings shall be limited to the name of the business and address. All listings shall be the same size.
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- a. One grouping of multi-tenant signs on a singular communications antennae shall be permitted per breezeway
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- a. Attached Permanent Directory Signage shall only be permitted at the Public Market in the area generally bounded by Decatur, Barracks, N. Peters and Ursulines Streets.
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  - c. The sign area of each sign shall be limited to 12 square feet.

**D. Does the text amendment adequately answer the problem that is being addressed; if not, are other modifications necessary?**

***Problem Identified***

The French Market Overlay District is designed to support the success of the French Market area, a historic anchoring institution of the Vieux Carré historic district. The proposed overlay would lengthen the hours of operation of the French Market and would permit signage types that are currently not allowed to improve wayfinding in the area.

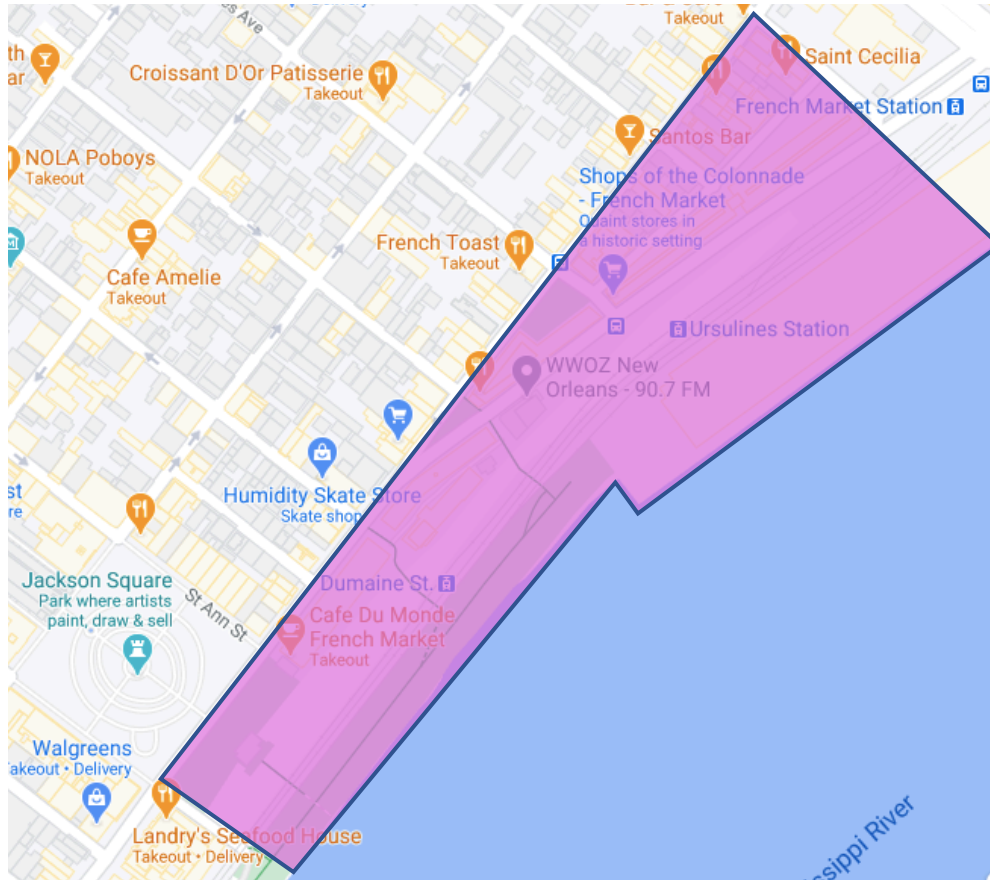
With regards to operating hours, the French Market currently operates from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The Public Market use standards require operating hours to remain between 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Vendors currently arrive at the market around 7:00 a.m. to set up and begin breaking between 4-5:00 p.m., with all vending activity at the market done by 6:00 p.m. This leaves long periods of time where the large market space between Barracks Street

and Ursulines Street and North Peters and Decatur is not activated. The proposed overlay would open up flexibility for use of this area for more of the day. By offering an early opening hour of 4:00 a.m., a morning produce or seafood market for the restaurant industry could make use of the market space prior to the regular day market. By extending the hours later into the evening, a night market would be able to be set up following the regular day market. As the use standards in Article 20 also described live music as permitted at public markets during hours of operation, the proposed changes from the overlay could also result in outdoor live music at the market in the evenings. Because the French Market is not adjacent to residential zoning districts, the lengthened operating hours are unlikely to have a significant negative impact in the area. These longer open hours would encourage active use of the French Market space throughout more times of the day and could attract a range of different visitors to the space, including more local residents.

Regarding the proposed changes to the sign allowances, the proposed overlay seeks to better guide visitors throughout the French Market District area. The area is an 8 block long linear stretch that connects the activity around Jackson Square and Café du Monde to the French Market and beyond to Crescent Park. Streetcar and bus lines converge in the area along with parking lots and newly created biking infrastructure. Signage present in the area is limited to hanging signs for individual retail spaces, which are hung with high clearance and meet the minimum purpose of identifying the tenants of the adjacent commercial space. Currently, there is little signage that supports wayfinding through the area, leading to some destinations in the area being overlooked, such as the New Orleans Jazz Historical Park Visitor's Center, which is tucked behind commercial store fronts closer to the flood wall. The lack of signage also fails to encourage visitors to the area to explore the French Market, the path along the river or venture more downriver to Crescent City Park. The proposed additions of permitted sign types in the French Market Overlay District would support better navigation through the area, helping visitors to the area locate shops, restaurants, restrooms, transportation services and other attractions in the area. The proposed additions to the signage allowances would also take advantage of the installation of new communications antennae, which could serve the dual purpose of providing wireless communications services and hosting tenant signs that guide visitors throughout the area.



**Figure 2. Area of the Proposed French Market Overlay District**



### ***Modifications***

Staff finds need for modifications to the proposed language of the overlay in order to more clearly describe the allowed signage and to streamline the approval processes for any new signage resulting from these new allowances. Staff also recommends a modification to the boundaries of the proposed overlay.

### ***Clarification on sign design and allowances***

The Motion includes an allowance of signs to be installed on approved communication antennae within the overlay district. Staff believes that the proposed language should be edited to add additional description and guideline on the nature of the signs to be installed on the communications antennae.

- a. One grouping of multi-tenant signs shall on a singular communications antennae shall be permitted per breezeway. The total square footage of signage on the antennae shall not exceed 8 square feet.**

### *Modified approval processes*

The proposed Overlay text requires review and approval of the multi-tenant directory signs by the Design Advisory Committee (DAC) and the Vieux Carré Commission (VCC). The review process for the signs should ensure that any proposed sign fits within a wholistic sign package for the French Market District and that the signs are pedestrian-oriented in size and design. The language in the Council Motion would require two separate application and hearing processes for this review; one each for DAC and VCC. Currently sign reviews go through the VCC's Architectural Review Committee (ARC), which makes a recommendation. Generally, signs in the public right-of-way are not reviewed by the Design Advisory Committee, which typically reviews only major projects.

After a consultation with the VCC, staff finds that the double level of review for this signage is unlikely to be needed for the French Market overlay district. Because the French Market Corporation manages all French Market properties within the overlay district with modified boundaries (see below), there would not be an occasion where an individual tenant or private entity would propose a sign on their own behalf without the involvement of the French Market Corporation. The French Market Corporation would always propose the sign design, information, size and location, which would help to retain consistency in design throughout the area.

In order to more appropriately process the review of any proposed sign and make clear that the French Market Corporation must approve of any sign proposed, staff recommends modifying the review and approval language to read:

**The design and location of the signs shall be proposed by the French Market Corporation and shall be subject to review and approval by the staff of the Vieux Carré Commission.**

Staff also recommends applying this standard consistently within the Overlay's permitted signs, adding this standard to the language for the Attached Permanent Directory Signs, as well.

### *Modification to the overlay boundaries*

The boundaries of the proposed overlay include lots that are not managed by the French Market Corporation. The area bounded by French Market Place, Decatur, Barracks, and Ursulines Streets is made up of privately owned lots. Because this is not a part of the French Market-managed area, staff recommend modifying the boundaries to remove this section of the overlay. The modified boundary language is recommended to read:

**The area generally bounded by the riverside of Decatur Street, the downriver side of St. Peter Street (and its direct extension to the Mississippi River), the Mississippi**

**River, the upriver side of Barracks Street (and its direct extension to the Mississippi River), French Market Place, and Ursulines Street.**

#### **E. Compliance with Approval Standards**

The City Planning Commission recommendation and the City Council decision on any zoning text amendment are matters of legislative discretion. In making their recommendation and decision, the City Planning Commission and the City Council are required to consider the standards in Table 4-1: Standards for Zoning Amendments of the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance. In this section, the staff evaluates the application using those standards.

#### **The proposed amendment is compatible with the Master Plan and Future Land Use Map.**

A land use action is consistent with the Plan for the 21st Century (commonly referred to as the Master Plan) if it furthers, or at least does not interfere with, the goals, policies, and guidelines, including design guidelines, in the Land Use Element of the Master Plan and is compatible with the proposed future land use. The Master Plan uses a Future Land Use Map to identify which land uses should fall in each area of the City. Those areas allow certain zones that conform to the future land use designation of the area.

The Future Land Use designations within the proposed overlay boundaries include Mixed-Use Historic Core and Parkland and Open Space. The Mixed-Use Historic Core is located in all areas of the overlay that are not designated as parks. The Parkland and Open Space portion of the overlay includes the Place de France park between St. Philip and Dumaine Street on Decatur and all land between the flood wall and the Mississippi River. The description of the Future Land Use categories and the range of uses are included below:

##### **MIXED-USE HISTORIC CORE**

**Goal:** Increase convenience and walkability for neighborhood residents and visitors within and along edges of historic core neighborhoods.

**Range of Uses:** A mixture of residential, neighborhood business, and visitor-oriented businesses. Uses may be combined horizontally or vertically, and some structures may require ground floor retail with residences or offices on upper floors. In some areas where current or former industrial use is verified, existing buildings may be appropriate for craft and value added industry. Agricultural, stormwater management, and supporting public recreational and community facilities are allowed. Transit and transportation facilities are allowed.

**Development Character:** The density, height, and mass of new development will be consistent with the character and tout ensemble of the surrounding historic neighborhood. Appropriate transitions will be provided to surrounding residential areas. Allow the adaptive reuse of historic non-residential structures with densities higher than the surrounding neighborhood through the planned development process. Allow higher residential densities when a project is providing significant public benefits such as long

term affordable housing. Incorporate risk reduction and adaptation strategies in the built environment.

#### **PARKLAND AND OPEN SPACE**

**Goal:** Provide areas for parks, recreational facilities and open space networks owned by public or semi-public entities while offering the opportunity to utilize such spaces for stormwater management measures.

**Range of Uses:** Parks, playgrounds, recreation facilities and athletic fields; neutral grounds and passive open spaces, agricultural uses, rain gardens, bioswales and other stormwater management measures. In large parks, a variety of passive and active recreation facilities, cultural facilities, and supportive commercial uses may be allowed.

**Development Character:** Ranges from programmatic parks and indoor and outdoor recreational areas to preserved open space, with the opportunity to provide for stormwater management measures. Incorporate risk reduction and adaptation strategies in the built environment.

No potential changes from the proposed overlay would conflict with these future land use descriptions of the Master Plan.

**The proposed amendment is compatible with the place designation of this ordinance.**

This condition is met. The proposed amendment is compatible with the place designation of the area as Historic Core Neighborhood Non-Residential Districts. The amendment supports the commercial and cultural activity permitted through the zoning and place designation of the properties within the overlay boundaries.

**The proposed amendment promotes the public health, safety and welfare of the City.**

This standard is met. The proposed amendment is not expected to negatively impact the public health, safety and welfare of the City. It would assist the public in finding their way, accessing restrooms and transportation services within the area.

**The proposed amendment is compatible with the intent and general regulations of this Ordinance.**

This standard is met. The Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance leaves open the possibility that an overlay may alter the operating hours of a public market through the use standards in Article 20, suggesting that this is an acceptable alteration to the CZO's described public market standards. While the CZO does not permit the signage types described in the proposed overlay in the VCC, staff believes that the special landmarks designation of the French Market flea and farmers market and the French Market District in general supports the permitting of additional sign types in the area. The sign types proposed for inclusion are permitted in the CZO for other zoning districts, and staff believes that the utility of supporting improved navigability of this part of the French Quarter is good reason to extend the allowances to this section of the French Quarter.

**The proposed amendment corrects an error or omission, adds clarification to existing requirements, or reflects a change in policy.**

This amendment reflects a change in policy. The French Market area of the French Quarter currently has no additional allowances through the CZO that delineate it from the rest of the French Quarter. The proposed overlay recognizes the area from Washington Artillery Park to Barracks Street from the River to Decatur Street as an area with a character that is unique within the French Quarter.

**The proposed amendment benefits the citizens of New Orleans as a whole.**

This standard is met. The proposed ordinance may result in supporting the local businesses and vendors within the French Market area, improving the pedestrian experience of visiting the area, and allowing greater uses of the French Market space, such as early morning seafood or produce markets and night markets.

**The proposed amendment does not create a significant number of nonconformities.**

This standard is met. The proposed overlay allows new sign types and extended hours and does not prohibit anything currently in place within the designated area.

#### **IV. SUMMARY**

Zoning Docket 023-21 is a request by City Council Motion to establish a French Market Overlay District. The proposed overlay would apply to a part of the French Market-managed area of the French Quarter, running from St. Peter Street to Barracks Street between Decatur Street and the Mississippi River. The overlay would result in extended operating hours of the Public Market portion of the French Market District and amended sign regulations within the area. The stated purpose of the overlay is to recognize the unique geographic configuration of the French Market District, as opposed to the remainder of the French Quarter through the extended hours and a unified package of pedestrian scaled signage to guide visitors through the linear market area.

Staff's analysis found that the proposed text amendment, with modifications, would achieve the intent of the overlay by allowing more opportunities for activating the French Market space and improving the wayfinding experience of moving throughout the area through a unified, pedestrian-scaled package of signs. Staff has consulted with the VCC staff, which found no objection to the proposed overlay and the modified language.

#### **V. PRELIMINARY STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

**Staff recommends MODIFIED APPROVAL of Zoning Docket 023-21, as below. New language is indicated in underlined, bold text.**

## **Section 18.29 French Market Overlay District**

### **18.29.A Area of Applicability**

**The area generally bounded by the riverside of Decatur Street, the downriver side of St. Peter Street (and its direct extension to the Mississippi River), the Mississippi River, the upriver side of Barracks Street (and its direct extension to the Mississippi River), French Market Place, and Ursulines Street.**

### **18.29.B Public Market Hours**

**The hours of operation of the existing Public Market (commonly known as the French Market Flea and Farmers Market) shall be expanded to permit a morning seafood and/or produce market beginning at 4:00 a.m., and to permit evening market closing hours at 10:00 p.m. on Sundays through Thursdays and 11:00 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays.**

### **18.29.C Permitted Signage**

**The following sign types are permitted within the French Market Overlay District:**

- 1. Freestanding Multi-Tenant Monument signs shall be permitted, subject to the following standards:**
  - a. One (1) Freestanding Multi-Tenant Monument Sign shall be permitted per building, to be located within breezeways between existing commercial structures**
  - b. No portion of the sign shall project beyond the front building wall of any existing commercial structure, where the structure's front wall is adjacent to the public right-of-way, except at the Governor Nicholls Street breezeway between the farmers and flea markets, where no portion of the sign shall project beyond the roof line of the existing market shed structures.**
  - c. These signs shall be limited to a maximum of 6 feet in height. The area of each sign shall be limited to 24 square feet.**
  - d. A map of the area described above (the boundaries of the French Market Overlay District) may be included on the sign.**
  - e. Tenant listing shall be limited to the name of the business and address. All listings shall be the same size.**
  - f. The design and location of the signs shall be subject to the review and approval of the French Market Corporation and the staff of the Vieux Carré Commission.**
  - g. The design and location of the signs shall be proposed by the French Market Corporation and shall be subject to the review and approval of the Vieux Carré Commission staff.**

2. In lieu of the permitted Freestanding Multi-Tenant Monument Sign, where applicable, multi-tenant signs identifying individual tenant space shall be permitted to be co-located on an approved communications antennae installation, located within breezeways between buildings at St. Ann, Dumaine, St. Philip, and Governor Nicholls Streets, subject to the following standards:
  - a. One grouping of multi-tenant signs shall on a singular communications antenna shall be permitted per breezeway. The total square footage of signage on the antennae shall not exceed 8 square feet.
  - b. The design and location of the signs shall be proposed by the French Market Corporation and shall be subject to the review and approval of the Vieux Carré Commission staff.
3. Attached Permanent Directory Signs shall be permitted, subject to the following standards:
  - a. Attached Permanent Directory Signage shall be only be permitted at the Public Market in the area generally bounded by Decatur, Barracks, N. Peters and Ursulines Streets.
  - b. One Attached Permanent Directory Sign shall be permitted per street frontage.
  - c. The sign area of each sign shall be limited to 12 square feet.
  - d. The design and location of the signs shall be proposed by the French Market Corporation and shall be subject to the review and approval of the Vieux Carré Commission staff.

## **VI. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION**

1. The proposed text amendment would support greater use of the French Market space and could support improved wayfinding throughout the long linear area of the French Market District.
2. The VCC is in agreement with the components of the recommended overlay, which includes a review and approval of any proposed signs by VCC staff prior to their installation
3. The proposed text amendment is in line with the Master Plan

## **VII. CITY PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING (March 9, 2021)**

The City Planning Commission hosted a virtual meeting through Zoom. Staff explained their support of the motion and the suggested modifications for approval. There was one public comment in support by the French Market Corporation and one comment requesting additional information by VCPORA, who noted that there are some residences that do overlook the French Market area. Commissioner Witry expressed the concern that enforcement of the overlay may be difficult. Commissioner Lunn asked about who would be in charge of enforcement, to which staff replayed that with regards to sound, it could

be the Department of Health, the NOPD or Safety and Permits. The staff noted that the French Market Corporation is a public entity and is therefore responsive to city officials, additionally noting the French Market Corporation itself would take on the management of live entertainment on its property. Commissioner Mobley stated that the French Market was the named in a sound study completed eight years ago as a good place for expanded live entertainment, given its location with few residents nearby, the sound dampening created by the structure and its location near the river, as well as its management by the French Market Corporation. Commissioner Wedberg also said that because the primary inhabitant is a public entity, the issue of enforcement may not be as concerning for this proposal. He described some concern for private businesses' receipt of the overlay, but as there were no public comments from them in opposition, deemed this ok. Staff also noted the modification of the boundaries to remove private entities from the overlay. Commissioner Wedberg made a motion for approval, which was seconded by Commissioner Lunn and unanimously approved.

**MOTION:**

BE IT MOVED BY THE CITY PLANNING COMMISSION THAT ZONING DOCKET 023/21 IS HEREBY RECOMMENDED FOR MODIFIED APPROVAL. BE IT FURTHER MOVED THAT THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR IS HEREBY AUTHORIZED TO NOTIFY THE CITY COUNCIL OF SAID ACTION.

YEAS: Brown, Flick, Lunn, Marshall, Mobley, Steeg, Stewart, Wedberg, Witry

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

**VIII. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION**

1. The proposed text amendment would support greater use of the French Market space and could support improved wayfinding throughout the long linear area of the French Market District.
2. The VCC is in agreement with the components of the recommended overlay, which includes a review and approval of any proposed signs by VCC staff prior to their installation
3. The proposed text amendment is in line with the Master Plan

**IX. MODIFIED RECOMMENDATION**

Section 18.29 French Market Overlay District

18.29.A Area of Applicability



The area generally bounded by the riverside of Decatur Street, the downriver side of St. Peter Street (and its direct extension to the Mississippi River), the Mississippi River, the upriver side of Barracks Street (and its direct extension to the Mississippi River), French Market Place, and Ursulines Street.

#### 18.29.B Public Market Hours

The hours of operation of the existing Public Market (commonly known as the French Market Flea and Farmers Market) shall be expanded to permit a morning seafood and/or produce market beginning at 4:00 a.m., and to permit evening market closing hours at 10:00 p.m. on Sundays through Thursdays and 11:00 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays.

#### 18.29.C Permitted Signage

The following sign types are permitted within the French Market Overlay District:

4. Freestanding Multi-Tenant Monument signs shall be permitted, subject to the following standards:
  - a. One (1) Freestanding Multi-Tenant Monument Sign shall be permitted per building, to be located within breezeways between existing commercial structures
  - b. No portion of the sign shall project beyond the front building wall of any existing commercial structure, where the structure's front wall is adjacent to the public right-of-way, except at the Governor Nicholls Street breezeway between the farmers and flea markets, where no portion of the sign shall project beyond the roof line of the existing market shed structures.
  - c. These signs shall be limited to a maximum of 6 feet in height. The area of each sign shall be limited to 24 square feet.
  - d. A map of the area described above (the boundaries of the French Market Overlay District) may be included on the sign.
  - e. Tenant listing shall be limited to the name of the business and address. All listings shall be the same size.
  - f. The design and location of the signs shall be subject to the review and approval of the French Market Corporation and the staff of the Vieux Carré Commission.
  - g. The design and location of the signs shall be proposed by the French Market Corporation and shall be subject to the review and approval of the Vieux Carré Commission staff.
5. In lieu of the permitted Freestanding Multi-Tenant Monument Sign, where applicable, multi-tenant signs identifying individual tenant space shall be permitted to be co-located on an approved communications antennae installation, located within breezeways between buildings at St. Ann, Dumaine, St. Philip, and Governor Nicholls Streets, subject to the following standards:

- a. One grouping of multi-tenant signs shall on a singular communications antenna shall be permitted per breezeway. The total square footage of signage on the antennae shall not exceed 8 square feet.
  - b. The design and location of the signs shall be proposed by the French Market Corporation and shall be subject to the review and approval of the Vieux Carré Commission staff.
- 6. Attached Permanent Directory Signs shall be permitted, subject to the following standards:
  - e. Attached Permanent Directory Signage shall be only be permitted at the Public Market in the area generally bounded by Decatur, Barracks, N. Peters and Ursulines Streets.
  - f. One Attached Permanent Directory Sign shall be permitted per street frontage.
  - g. The sign area of each sign shall be limited to 12 square feet.
  - h. The design and location of the signs shall be proposed by the French Market Corporation and shall be subject to the review and approval of the Vieux Carré Commission staff.

**MOTION**

**NO. M-21-19**

**CITY HALL: January 14, 2021**

**BY: COUNCILMEMBER GISLESON PALMER**

**SECONDED BY: COUNCILMEMBER BANKS**

**BE IT MOVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NEW ORLEANS,**

That the City Planning Commission is hereby directed to conduct a public hearing to consider amending and reordaining Ordinance No. 4264 M.C.S., amended by Ordinance No. 26,413 M.C.S., as amended, the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance (CZO) of the City of New Orleans, to establish in Article 18, "Overlay Zoning Districts", the *French Market Overlay District*, the purpose of which is to recognize the unique geographic configuration of the French Market District, as opposed to the remainder of the French Quarter, through use and design restrictions that 1) allow for expanded hours of operation in the Public Market, and 2) permit a unified package of pedestrian scaled signage to guide visitors through the linear market. The *French Market Overlay District* shall apply to the area generally bounded by the riverside of Decatur Street, the downriver side of St. Peter Street (and its direct extension to the Mississippi River), the Mississippi River, and the upriver side of Barracks Street (and its direct extension to the Mississippi River).

The *French Market Overlay District* shall permit the following variations from the existing use and sign standards:

1. The hours of operation of the existing Public Market (commonly known as the French Market Flea and Farmers Markets) shall be expanded to permit a morning seafood and/or produce market beginning at 4:00 a.m., and to permit evening market closing hours at 10:00 p.m. on Sundays through Thursdays and 11:00 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays;
2. Freestanding Multi-Tenant Monument Signs shall be permitted, subject to the following standards:

- a. One (1) Freestanding Multi-Tenant Monument Sign shall be permitted per building, to be located within in breezeways between existing commercial structures.
  - b. No portion of the sign shall project beyond the front building wall of any existing commercial structure, where the structure's front wall is adjacent to the public right-of-way, except at the Governor Nichols Street breezeway between the farmers and flea markets, where no portion of the sign shall project beyond the roof line of the existing market shed structures.
  - c. These signs shall be limited to a maximum of 6 feet in height. The area of each sign shall be limited to 24 square feet.
  - d. A map of the area described above (the boundaries of the *French Market Overlay District*) may be included on the sign.
  - e. Tenant listings shall be limited to the name of the business and the address. All listings shall be the same size.
  - f. The design and location of the signs shall be subject to the review and approval of the Design Advisory Committee and the staff of the Vieux Carré Commission.
3. In lieu of the permitted Freestanding Multi-Tenant Monument Sign, where applicable, multi-tenant signs identifying individual tenant spaces shall be permitted to be co-located on an approved communications antennae installation, located within breezeways between buildings at St. Ann, Dumaine, St. Philip, and Governor Nichols Streets, subject to the following standards:
  - a. One grouping of multi-tenant signs on a singular communications antennae shall be permitted per breezeway.
  - b. The design of the signs shall be subject to the review and approval of the Design Advisory Committee and the staff of the Vieux Carré Commission.
4. Attached Permanent Directory Signs shall be permitted, subject to the following standards:
  - a. Attached Permanent Directory Signage shall only be permitted at the Public Market in the area generally bounded by Decatur, Barracks, N. Peters and Ursulines Streets.
  - b. One Attached Permanent Directory Sign shall be permitted per street frontage.
  - c. The sign area of each sign shall be limited to 12 square feet.

**BE IT FURTHER MOVED,** That in the process of studying and reviewing this amendment, the City Planning Commission staff is directed to seek the advice of the Vieux Carré Commission staff.

**BE IT FURTHER MOVED,** That in the process of studying and reviewing this amendment, the City Planning Commission staff is directed and granted the flexibility to make all appropriate changes to the proposed regulations and any existing corresponding regulations in the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance, as amended, to establish consistency and continuity with the format of the existing zoning code; to add references wherever references are customary, needed, and/or appropriate; to make the appropriate adjustments to clarify any ambiguities or mistakes; and to make adjustments deemed necessary in light of public testimony resulting from this review.

**THE FOREGOING MOTION WAS READ IN FULL, THE ROLL WAS CALLED  
ON THE ADOPTION OF THEREOF, AND RESULTED AS FOLLOWS:**

**YEAS:** Banks, Brossett, Giarrusso, Gisleson Palmer, Moreno, Nguyen - 6

**NAYS:** 0

**ABSENT:** 0

**AND THE MOTION WAS ADOPTED.**

THE FOREGOING IS CERTIFIED  
TO BE A TRUE AND CORRECT COPY  
*Lera W. Johnson*  
CLERK OF COUNCIL

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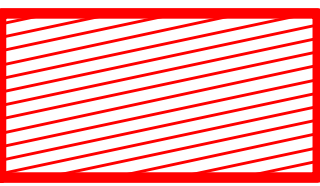




# ZD 023-21 - French Market District Overlay (Proposed)

## French Market Overlay District

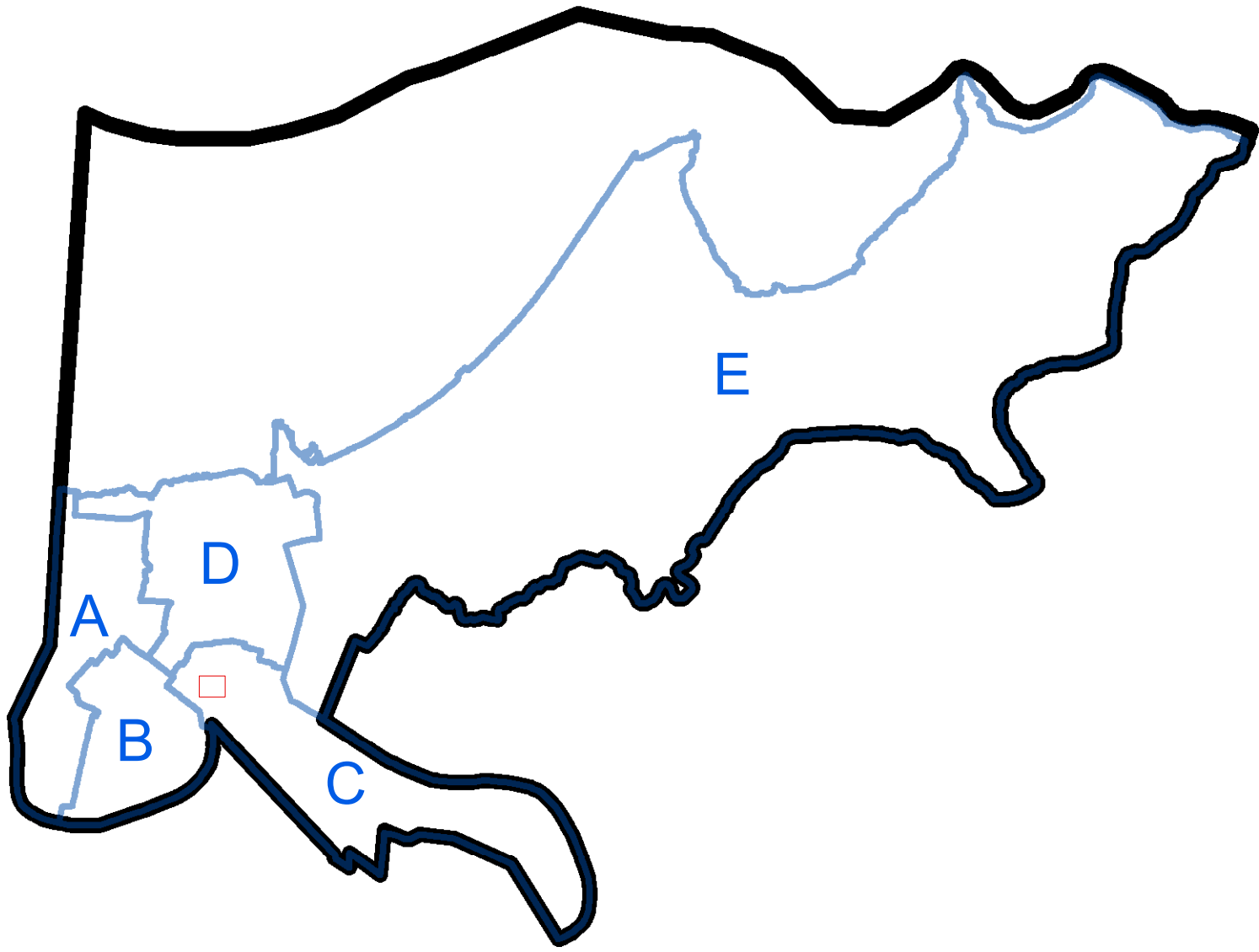
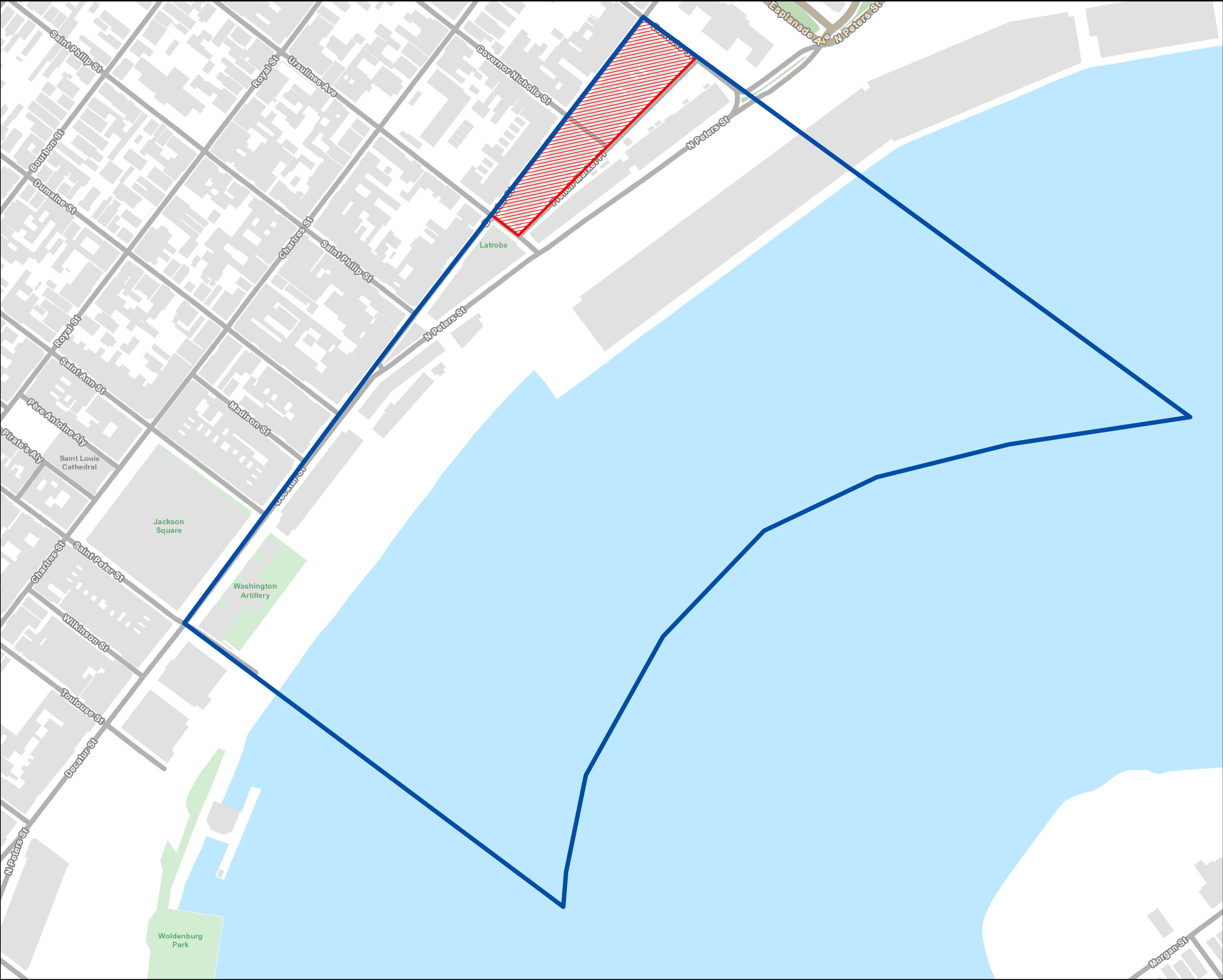
### Name



Area Recommended for  
Removal from Proposed  
French Market Overlay  
District

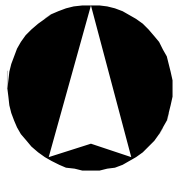


Proposed French Market  
Overlay District  
Boundaries



DISCLAIMER: This product is for informational purposes and may not have been prepared for, or be suitable for legal, engineering, or surveying purposes. The City is not responsible for any errors or omissions.

0 0.0325 0.065 0.13 0.195 0.26 Miles



Map Prepared on: Monday, March 1, 2021 for the City of New Orleans | City Planning Commission by CNO | IT Innovation | eGIS Division

Robert Gurtner	2046 Sumpter Street, New Orleans, LA 70122	French Market Corporation	Yes	Zoning Docket 023/21 - Request by City Council Motion No. M-21-19 for a text amendment to the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance to establish Article 18, "Overlay Zoning Districts", the French Market Overlay District, to recognize the unique geographic configuration of the French Market	In support of this application.	<p>Good afternoon Commission members:</p> <p>We appreciate your consideration this afternoon of the request to create the French Market Overlay District. By way of background, the French Market Corporation ("FMC") is a self-sustaining public benefit corporation whose mission is the preservation, restoration, maintenance, promotion and development of City of New Orleans' properties and historical assets assigned to its management. The FMC is charged with the management of the Upper Pontalba Building ("UPB"), Jackson Square Pedestrian Mall, the French Market Riverside and Elysian Fields parking facilities, Washington Artillery Park, five commercial buildings that comprise the Colonnade, Dutch Alley, Edison Park, Bienville Park, Joan of Arc Park, Latrobe Park and Crescent Park.</p> <p>The motion before you today addresses the portion of FMC managed property located along the Decatur and N. Peters Streets corridor comprising predominately retail, restaurant, public market and associated off-street parking uses. Much of this portion of the French Market, by virtue of its orientation adjacent to the Mississippi River, creates a linear superblock between St. Peter and Barrack Streets. The shopping area also includes two adjacent, irregularly-shaped, narrow linear blocks between St. Philip and Barracks Streets. Together, this area provides a pedestrian shopping experience that can be accessed at multiple points from the riverfront parking lots, and moonwalk or from the adjacent French Quarter neighborhood.</p>
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The proposed Overlay District is intend to provide minor changes to the existing sign regulations that apply within the Overlay District boundaries. Currently, these regulations are the same regulations that apply to all commercial and service districts in the French Quarter, which are predominately developed with a traditional block grid pattern. The proposed overlay would permit pedestrian scale multi-tenant signs in existing breezeways between buildings, where typically street rights-of-way would otherwise exist. These signs are intended to guide visitors thru the linear market area along the riverfront and connect and activate the market space with a unified package at a pedestrian scale.

Prior to developing this proposal, the French Market staff sought the advice of the Vieux Carré Commission staff. Together we walked the area and considered first whether additional signage was appropriate and then what standards would be best to achieve our goals. We appreciate the support of the VCC staff and the input they provided in guiding the proposed standards.

The Overlay District would also allow extended hours of operation in the French Market's Flea and Farmers Market public market space allowing for early morning seafood/produce markets or evening markets. The proposed evening hours were guided by the hours of operation recently recommended in the CPC's Live Entertainment Study. While live entertainment is not anticipated for this venue, we thought that those hours where a good source of guidance as they took into account potential impacts of evening activities in this portion of the French Quarter.

We appreciate the thoughtful recommendation of the CPC staff for modified approval. We agree that the recommended modifications are appropriate and refine the Overlay boundaries so that this legislation will not serve as a precedent for similar changes for other areas of the French Quarter.

Sincerely,

Robert Gurtner  
Interim Deputy Director  
French Market Corporation



**From:** Stephen K. Kroll <skroll@nola.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 9, 2021 2:47 PM  
**To:** Paul Cramer <pcramer@nola.gov>  
**Subject:**

Erin Holmes	816 N. Rampart St.	<a href="mailto:erinholmes@vcpora.org">erinholmes@vcpora.org</a>	VCPORA	Yes	Zoning Docket 023/21 - Request by City Council Motion No. M-21-19 for a text amendment to the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance to establish Article 18, "Overlay Zoning Districts", the French Market Overlay District, to recognize the unique geographic configuration of the French Market District, through use and design restrictions	Would like to provide or request information regarding this application.	<p>Dear Commissioners</p> <p>Regarding the French Market Overlay, we support the creation of additional signage and wayfinding elements provided that they will be approved by the VCC for appropriateness within their historic context. Additionally, residents have long desired for more functionality within the market through additional food offerings that could be incorporated into the markets' morning availabilities, and a night market would allow for a third layer of evening activation. Outdoor live entertainment, allowed by right in public markets, would now be expanded until 10pm and 11pm on the weekends.</p> <p>The staff report notes that because the French Market is not immediately adjacent to residential districts, extending operating hours will not have a significant impact on the area. However, it is adjacent to residents, for they do</p>
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live on the upper floors of the buildings that span French Market Place and Decatur.

The Outdoor Live Entertainment Study, which this body sent to the Council with approval, recommended issuing temporary special event permits for all businesses three times a week. We suggested taking the time to make sure the new expansion would be enforceable before moving onto to anything permanent. The Council has yet to take that Study up to codify any of it into ordinance though Safety & Permits has already moved forward with issuing the permits.

The French Quarter is facing a complete lack of enforcement for many issues that could be avoidable if everyone played by the same rules. We have parklets that spill dangerously into the streets, unmovable crowds on Bourbon Street, and there does not seem to be any capacity or will to enforce the regulations of any of these expanded intensities in the near future. We ask that you recommend an enforcement plan to incorporate manageability into this proposal, as with any in the future that look to expand commercial

intensities into mixed use neighborhoods.

**Stephen Kroll**

Planning Administrator | New Orleans City Planning Commission  
Office of Business and External Services

1300 Perdido Street, 7th Floor | New Orleans, LA 70112  
(504) 658-7010 (office) | [skroll@nola.gov](mailto:skroll@nola.gov)

**Please be advised that all email correspondence is subject to the state's public records laws.**

### RESOURCES:

## Frequently asked questions

## Application forms

[Property Viewer](#) (check the zoning of a property)

## Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance

One Stop App

## COVID-19:

In an effort to prevent the spread of COVID-19 to our employees and members of the public, our staff is working remotely and will not have any face to face contact with members of the public. Staff is available from 8am to 5pm to assist the public by phone or email. More information about our remote operations can be found at [nola.gov/cpc](https://nola.gov/cpc).