



2022 ANNUAL REPORT

Allendale Strong’s primary purpose is renewing the Allendale Neighborhood relationally, economically, and environmentally.

To accomplish this purpose, Allendale Strong grows community relational capacities by engaging citizens in learning-doing pathfinding projects and initiatives to improve sectors of the community as a whole system, described by CRI as a village framework: *safety, education, meaningful work, health, housing, culture of caring, leadership, and relational foundation*. We meet on the 2nd Thursday of each month to review our progress and consider new ideas/initiatives.

CURRENT INITIATIVES INCLUDE:

- A. Loop-it 49
- B. Save Allendale’s SWEPCO Park
- C. Corner Store Food Co-Op formation

[4000FriendsOfAllendaleStrong](#)

[LoopIt49](#)

[CornerStoreCOOP](#)

[friends_of_allendalestrong](#)

[loop_it_49](#)

[allendale-strong-podcast](#)

[www AllendaleStrong.org](#)

[www Allendale.coop](#)

The year started with a February [Allendale Strong website](#) launch and our first annual report describing 2021 activities. Also in February, Strong Towns released its 2021 annual report with a cover photo of **Chuck Marohn** surrounded by Allendale Strong members on the Allendale Friendship House front steps. We are thankful for a full and productive 2022 thanks to many volunteer members sharing their gifts to grow our learning-doing initiatives and collaborating networks. The following are a few highlights of progress during 2022...

Loop-it 49

is a learning-doing initiative for a reasonable alternative to the proposed inner-city cut-through freeway expansion: separate local and through traffic – build a business boulevard for local traffic and use the existing loop for through traffic.

Ongoing research (currently over 600 articles, papers, and videos) supporting the A-S position is shared through [Friends of Allendale](#) and [Loop-it 49](#) Facebook pages. This A-S initiative has persisted for 11 years, growing in knowledge about: (1) harms inflicted on cities by transportation planning, (2) needed reforms to transportation planning and (3) new emerging strategies to heal and equitably prosper cities. Over the past year, NLCOG (North La. Council of Governments, the regional MPO – Metropolitan Planning Organization) engaged civic and business leader organizations in sponsoring a \$100,000 propaganda campaign promoting I-49 ICC misinformation to decision makers and citizens. Wasting time and money continuing to avoid and ignore A-S reasonable requests. *Loop-It 49* activities from 2022 include:

Exposing Transportation Planning as a Growth Ponzi Scheme undermining the City Master Plan...

After 8 months of delays and a Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) initiated Title VI Civil Rights investigation, NLCOG finally released Travel Demand Modeling (TDM) technical data files to Allendale Strong’s consultant, Smart Mobility (SM). The TDM is used to inform transportation planning decisions and justify public investment priorities in transportation infrastructure. Hard to believe, but it appears this is the first time since it formed in 1968 that any independent group outside of government control bothered to check NLCOG’s work. Smart Mobility exposed serious technical problems and outdated aspirational values (some systemically racists) in the TDM. To date SM issued 2 memos to NLCOG describing serious technical issues producing flawed analysis. SM recommended fixes. No NLCOG response to the memos. Most concerning is that NLCOG’s transportation plan works against Shreveport’s master plan. We now understand that for decades transportation planning is responsible for hollowing out Shreveport and for infrastructure expansion beyond the city’s capacity

to keep up with maintenance. Transportation planning facilitated growth patterns have created economic, social, and environmental harms that stress Shreveport operations at all levels. A few prosper from this growth, but at unsustainable public costs subsidized by the poor. The Allendale Strong findings deserve more honest open public discussion. Citizens need a more truthfully informed path to a better Shreveport future. This work continues into 2023. Help us grow the conversation.

Growing civic leadership through open learning-doing networks...

Allendale Strong continues to grow capacities through citizens that show up to share their gifts of time, talents, values, and other resources. Our networks have grown across Louisiana ([4-Corners Coalition](#) – New Orleans, Lafayette, Baton Rouge, Monroe and Shreveport) and the nation ([Freeway Fighters](#) – 300 and growing). During the month of March Allendale Strong President **Dorothy Wiley** was a featured panelist at a national conference of the Congress for New Urbanism and at a state conference of the National Urban League. **Dorothy** was also featured as a freeway fighter on a July CNU live webinar, *On the Park Bench*. These networks have connected A-S to collaboration with Transportation for America, meeting with assistant Secretary of Transportation, and Environmental Justice guidance from representatives of EPA.

Persistently seeking Equity of Voice...

If you are not welcome at the table, you are probably on the menu. For over 11 years the Shreveport power structure has denied Allendale Strong a voice by disrespectfully underestimating a small group of informed citizens that gather each month in the poor black neighborhood of Allendale. During 2022 A-S, led by member **John Perkins**, continued to show up for NLCOG meetings. During October A-S members voiced our positions to Legislative Transportation Committee “Road Show” meeting in Shreveport. Six A-S members presented in an informed and dignified manner with well-designed handouts. Quite a contrast to the ranting indignance of Shreveport power elite representatives demanding their freeway while belittling A-S. Committee member Representative **Cedric Glover** and Councilwoman **Tabatha Taylor** confronted the power players’ misinformed opinions and poor behavior. Other 4-Corners Coalition members attended Road Show meetings across the state.

Mayoral Candidate Forum...

During September Allendale Strong successfully co-hosted and moderated a Mayoral Candidate

Forum at JS Clarke Elementary School in Allendale. Approximately 100 attended to hear 7 candidates answer thoughtful questions focused on *Planning, Infrastructure* and *Neighborhoods*. Although each candidate was confident in their abilities to lead the city, their responses did not embrace the potential of a future Shreveport shaped through citizen learning-doing groups like Allendale Strong. This successful event was a great collaboration chaired by Allendale Strong member **Bill Robertson**.

Homeowners' Summit changes a community conversation...

When attempting solutions that make “wicked” problems worse, look for and learn from positive deviance. Positive deviance is a term for something that manages to thrive in an overwhelming environment of decline. On May 7 Allendale Strong hosted a Homeowners' Summit at the Clay Street Friendship House. Forty attended the event co-hosted by Our Lady of Blessed Sacrament Church and Community Renewal. Attendees expressed frustration with big government subsidized rental housing projects that work against true neighborhood renewal. A-S event chairperson, **Roosevelt Bryant**, called attention to the new homeowners' development around Allendale Friendship Houses: “This is a thriving community in a declining neighborhood.” As moderator, **Roosevelt** engaged a panel who all played a role in creating the Allendale miracle on the hill: homeowners (**Rosie Chaffold, Terri Thrash, Dorothy Wiley**), Fuller Center CEO **David Snell** and CRI representatives (**Pam Morgan, Mike Leonard, Kim Mitchell**). A new direction for community conversation is framed: *How do we do more of this type of homeowner development? How do we do it better?* Join us in a new learning-doing group co-creating answers to those questions.

February 2012: Allendale Strong (A-S) began when a small group of Shreveport homeowners living in Allendale, a concentrated disadvantage Black inner-city neighborhood, gathered in a Community Renewal (CRI) Friendship House at 320 North Allen. All in the group were part of the CRI trained volunteer block leader network (Haven House Leaders). All were among residents that partnered with CRI and Fuller Center for Housing to co-create a miracle of renewal, transforming the most dangerous part of Shreveport into the safest place to live in the city (started in 2005 after Hurricane Katrina). The group agreed to form a learning-doing community as a response to local leaders reviving from the dead a “Zombie” Freeway Project, I-49 ICC, to run over the miracle residents had co-created. The learning-doing community has grown and continues growing relational capacities as a diverse loosely joined open network. Members are Allendale residents. All others (local and national) engage as Friends or Advisory Members. On June 24, 2019, A-S formalized as an organization with official designation by the IRS as a 501(c)3 tax exempt public charity 509(a)2 (a copy of the IRS determination letter can be provided upon request). (EIN 84-2210223)



Corner Store Co-op, strengthening citizen power through local healthy food, local creations, and local community ownership...

The co-op learning-doing group began in 2018 with support from a Food Co-Op Initiative (FCI) seed grant. *Corner Store Co-op* (CSC) is envisioned as a network of corner stores, each named for its inner-city neighborhood locations. In October 2022 a co-op feasibility consultant presented a preliminary screening analysis of 14 target neighborhoods. The first, [Allendale Corner Store Co-op](#) ([ACS Facebook Page](#)) focuses on enhancing the homeowner development around the Allendale Friendship Houses. We continue to learn through participation in Food Co-op Initiative's (FCI) national network of over 400 food cooperatives. One ongoing activity is participation in monthly Zoom meetings with a national peer group of startup cooperatives. Three board members attended the May 2022 4-day FCI “Up & Coming” national conference in Wisconsin. Ten of our members have attended since 2019. During 2022 our [co-op launched a website](#) and continue to organize a volunteer initiative to generate excitement and understanding about the benefits of citizens creating a cooperatively owned business together. The co-op learning-doing group, currently 32 equity members plus friends, are invited to meet monthly on the 4th Saturday. Board member **Tena Hines** is our only member to experience being a member of a co-op while living in DC.

SWEPCO Park, catalyst for continued Allendale Neighborhood Renewal...

With guidance from Councilwoman **Tabatha Taylor**, Allendale Strong negotiated a January 2022 Cooperative Agreement with the City of Shreveport Parks and Recreation concerning improvements and maintenance of SWEPCO Park. Allendale Strong will lead the collaboration in capital fundraising, community engagement and design with the City leading in park maintenance and contracting. **Dorothy** has recruited a SWEPCO Park Advisory that is working with an A-S park committee, chaired by **Roosevelt Bryant**. We are engaging community imagination about SWEPCO park as a catalyst for neighborhood renewal. See the [SWEPCO Park webpage](#).

Allendale History Project...

[During June LSUS Archivist Laura McLemore](#) recorded several Allendale Strong member interviews for inclusion in the Allendale Neighborhood History Project. LSUS Archives will also produce a documentary video for the project. **Laura**, an A-S member, conducted a summer 2022 Archives History Camp engaging youth in the Allendale project. Two Friendship House youth (one from Allendale) received scholarships to participate in this camp.

Organizational activities...

During 2022 monthly gatherings transitioned from Zoom to in-person at Clay Street Friendship House, 6:30 PM on the second Thursday of each month. A [New logo and website](#) launched in early 2022. A great lineup of [Allendale Strong Video Podcasts Series](#) continued during 2022 thanks to Roosevelt. A series of three interviews of Fuller Center CEO David Snell with Dorothy and Kim provides great insights into stories of developing the *Allendale Miracle on the Hill* after Hurricane Katrina.

Looking to the future...

Allendale Strong will continue its local, state, and national efforts to reform transportation planning to prioritize citizen values (quality connected places) over transportation engineering values (unmaintained sprawling infrastructure). We seek to collaborate in solutions that heal harms caused by decades of transportation planning. We seek new learning-doing opportunities to grow local citizen shared leadership and ownership in co-creating new pathways to the future of Shreveport. A future where citizen values of common good are prioritized.



Join us!

Please join us for our monthly meetings on the 2nd Thursday of each month, 6:30 - 8 PM at 1515 Clay Street.