



New developments could revitalize upper Canal Street

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New Orleans, La. - Construction circles the upper end of Canal Street, but sections of the street itself haven't been getting too much attention. Developers say that's about to change.

"It's the connecting link to the entire city," said the founder of HBI Properties, Pres Kabacoff.

If you hop off the streetcar and walk around upper Canal, there isn't much to see. If you listen, however, you'll hear construction coming from every direction.

"You want to create a sense of place," said Kabacoff, "an exciting vibrant companion to Jackson Square."

Downtown Development District CEO Kurt Weigle refers to it as the future Iberville neighborhood.

"New Orleans for a long time has been about creating truly integrated neighborhoods where you've got everything you need in a walkable space," said Weigle. "We think we've got the same opportunity up there."

Weigle is so dedicated to the idea, he's already moved into one of the new 1201 Canal apartments.

"I know my fellow neighbors would love to have more retail that they could walk to," Weigle said, "especially the kind of retail that's hard to find in the city today."

Now, the grocery and bigger retail stores are missing from the area. The hope is that they will to the area, as soon as the big projects are completed.

Projects in the works include constructing the biomedical facility, reopening theaters, revitalizing the Texaco Building, reworking the Iberville complex and planning for the possibility of City Hall moving into the Charity Hospital building.

"It's all relative," said Kabacoff. "This is the hole in the donut."

Filling in that hole, and making the street look beautiful again, is what developer Pres Kabacoff says will make all the difference. Artist renderings of the street portray a much greener space.

"What separates Canal Street from the great streets of the world is that, it's not rocket science, it's trees," said Kabacoff.

Trees and businesses should make a comfortable walking experience for everyone to enjoy as they explore the entire city.

"The goal is to fix the center and tie the healthy riverfront to the healthy lakefront, so you could walk through the city like you would in Paris," said Kabacoff.

Revitalizing upper Canal is expected to be that final missing link.

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