

City of New Orleans

Nighttime Economy Strategic Plan

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Executive Summary

New Orleans doesn't shut down after dark. Neither should the policies that support it.

Nightlife is one of our city's greatest assets: it fuels our economy, sustains our culture, and provides jobs, opportunity, and joy for thousands of people every day. This strategy is a first-of-its-kind effort to coordinate programs, partnerships, and policies that strengthen the nighttime economy as a vital part of New Orleans' cultural and economic future.

Developed internally by the staff of the Mayor's Office of Nighttime Economy, this plan represents a foundational roadmap built from real data, field experience, and community input. It draws on insights from the New Orleans Music Census, stakeholder outreach, mediations, and collaboration with nightlife operators, musicians, hospitality workers, residents, and City agencies. The goal is not to chase lofty ambitions, but to stabilize the systems that keep our after-dark economy running including clear permitting, reliable coordination, safe environments, and sustainable support for the people and places that make nightlife thrive.

The challenges are real. Seasonal slowdowns, rising operational costs, workforce instability, and shifting neighborhood dynamics all shape the landscape of nightlife today. But there are huge opportunities. With coordinated action, we can reduce business closures, increase visibility for independent operators, expand access to workforce support, and improve quality of life across our nighttime spaces.

This strategy outlines a clear vision: a safe, vibrant, and inclusive nighttime economy that supports culture, commerce, and community. Through focused investments, innovative programs, and strong partnerships, we can build a future where New Orleans leads the way in what it means to support nightlife as infrastructure.

Priority Action Areas:

- Build year-round stability through Summer Sustainability efforts
- Expand support and visibility for independent nightlife businesses
- Invest in music industry workforce and infrastructure
- Improve safety, communication, and enforcement systems
- Strengthen transportation, access, and affordability

What Success Looks Like:

- Nightlife businesses that remain open, resilient, and profitable year-round
- Strong investments made in our ecosystem of independent venues, artists, and cultural spaces
- Safer, more connected nighttime corridors where workers and patrons feel supported
- Balanced, data-driven systems that reduce conflict between residents and businesses
- A coordinated citywide network that treats nightlife as essential public infrastructure

**Nightlife isn't just entertainment - it's employment, it's identity, and it's infrastructure.
A city without a plan for nightlife is a city without a plan for its future.**

About the Mayor's Office of Nighttime Economy

Mission Statement

The Mayor's Office of Nighttime Economy (O.N.E.) strengthens New Orleans' after-dark economy through coordination, policy, and partnership. As the City's liaison to the nightlife industry, community, and public agencies, O.N.E. works to make nightlife safer, more sustainable, and more inclusive, advocating for the people and places that power our nighttime economy and ensuring the systems that support them operate around the clock.



How Our Office Works

The Office of Nighttime Economy is a small, strategic team in the Mayor's Office that supports nightlife businesses, workers, and cultural spaces through coordination, outreach, and policy development. O.N.E. was formed in 2022. When this plan was written, our office consisted of a Director, a Policy & Outreach Manager, and a Community Liaison & Projects Manager.

We work directly with stakeholders including business owners, musicians, residents, and City agencies to identify challenges, design practical solutions, and strengthen after-dark infrastructure. Our approach is community-informed and action-oriented, with much of our work happening on the ground and in real time. O.N.E. regularly meets with community members one-on-one, in small groups through mediations, in large groups including business coalitions, and organically during events and business and corridor check-ins.

Through partnerships, pilot programs, and public resources, we make nightlife in New Orleans safer, more sustainable, and more connected. At its core, our office exists to build bridges between sectors, systems, and the people who make this city thrive after dark.

Since its formation, O.N.E. has focused on building a strong foundation for the city's nighttime economy. This has meant solidifying our mediation program to resolve conflicts, producing actionable resources that help businesses and workers navigate complex systems, and launching programs that deliver direct and immediate impact to the nightlife industry.



Current Programs

The following table provides a summary of the Office of Nighttime Economy’s current programs and initiatives. Most of these efforts have been created and launched between late 2024 and Summer of 2025, reflecting the rapid progress our office has made in building new tools, partnerships, and resources to support New Orleans’ nighttime economy.

Initiative	Description
Library of Nightlife Business Resources	Online hub with guides, checklists, and best practices for starting and operating nightlife businesses. • Nightlife Business Best Practice Guide (pub. 2025) • Business Permitting How-To Guide series (pub. 2025) • Music Business Plan guides & templates (pub. 2025) • Business Hurricane Preparedness Checklist (pub. 2025) • Nightlife Safety Resource Guide (pub. 2025) • Good Parking Practices Guide (pub. 2024) • Sound Management Best Practices Guide (pub. 2024) • Street Performer Guidelines (pub. 2024)
Mediate NOLA	Free mediation to help resolve neighborhood disputes, including resident–business conflicts, and business-to-business issues.
Downtown Discount	Parking discounts for hospitality workers through partnerships with downtown operators.
Frenchmen Rides	Pilot program with Uber and Lyft to redirect rideshare pick-ups and drop-offs to safer, less congested zones.
Tune-Up Grant	Grants for music venues to improve sound management and acoustics, paired with workforce training for engineers.
New Orleans Music Census	Research initiative surveying musicians, venues, and workers to inform policy and program design.
Music Census Sessions	Free workshops on contracts, funding, branding, and other career topics, offered with The Ella Project.
Drink Test Strip Distribution	Distribution of test strips and education to help detect certain drugs in drinks.
Narcan Distribution	Free Narcan and training provided to nightlife venues and staff through health agency partnerships.
Service Industry Harm Reduction Workshops	Trainings in partnership with the New Orleans Health Department covering overdose prevention, substance safety, and mental health resources.
SAFE Bar Network Partnership	Training for nightlife staff on bystander intervention, de-escalation, and creating safer environments.

Why this Strategy? Why Now?

New Orleans' nightlife is one of the city's most powerful cultural and economic assets. But right now, that after-dark economy is facing challenges that threaten its future.

From rising costs and seasonal instability to outdated enforcement practices and a lack of coordinated support, many nighttime businesses, workers, and culture bearers are struggling to stay afloat. Longstanding venues are closing. Workers are burning out. Residents are frustrated. And yet there is no comprehensive citywide plan to support or grow this vital sector.

That's why the Office of Nighttime Economy is launching this strategy: to build a stronger, safer, and more resilient nighttime economy that works for everyone.

This document outlines the key priorities, partnerships, and policy changes needed to support nightlife across five pillars: 1) Nightlife Business Support & Visibility, 2) Summer Sustainability, 3) Access, Mobility & Space, 4) Public Safety & Quality of Life, and 5) Music Industry Development. It combines best practices from other cities with ideas rooted in the specific needs of New Orleans' unique after-dark culture.

But more than that, this strategy is a commitment:

1. To prioritize New Orleans nightlife at City Hall.
2. To fight to protect our culture.
3. And to show the rest of the country that New Orleans can lead by example.

Where are we now?

After three years in operation, the Office of Nighttime Economy has developed a clear understanding of the challenges facing New Orleans' nightlife industry and its workforce. Through direct outreach, organized data collection, and initiatives like the New Orleans Music Census, our office has identified key issues including **limited nighttime parking enforcement, recurring sound complaints, gaps in hospitality worker transportation options, and the ongoing need for balanced quality-of-life management in mixed-use neighborhoods.**

Our focus remains on advancing data-driven, collaborative solutions that improve safety, reduce neighborhood disruptions, and strengthen the long-term sustainability of local nightlife businesses and workers. We have a dedicated commitment to public safety and harm reduction to providing our nightlife establishments with the best possible resources to provide a welcoming and safe environment for their patrons and staff. Our intent is to expand existing programming that focuses on data driven solutions that reduces quality of life disruptions while supporting existing businesses.

To ground this strategy in real-world conditions, our office conducted a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (S.W.O.T.) analysis of New Orleans' nighttime economy. This framework summarizes the assets we can build on, the challenges that must be addressed, and the external factors shaping the future of nightlife in the city.

S.W.O.T. Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
• Deep Cultural Identity: New Orleans is globally recognized for its music, food, and nightlife traditions. Nightlife is part of the city's core identity. • Live Music Legacy: Strong foundation of local musicians, venues, and informal networks rooted in community and creativity. • Tourism Infrastructure: Major festivals, conventions, and visitor flow sustain after-dark economic activity year-round. • Existing Policy Office: The Office of Nighttime Economy provides a unique platform for coordination, strategy, and advocacy. • Creative Workforce: A high concentration of musicians, culture bearers, and hospitality workers provides both talent and entrepreneurial energy to the sector. • National Visibility: New Orleans nightlife holds strong brand recognition, attracting visitors and industry attention from across the globe.	• Seasonal Instability: Summers are economically devastating for many nightlife businesses; some close permanently due to low revenue and constant overhead. • Inconsistent Enforcement and Policy: Permitting, parking and sound enforcement, and quality-of-life responses often lack clarity, fairness, or coordination. • Rising Costs and Limited Support: Small venues and independent operators face insurance hikes, real estate pressure, and limited access to financial support or technical assistance. • Underinvestment in Night Workers: Nightlife workers often lack access to public transportation, child care, safety resources, and career pathways. • Undervalued Music Economy: Structural investment and policy attention often prioritize large-scale or tourist-driven events, while original music and industry infrastructure remain under-recognized as essential economic drivers.
Opportunities	Threats
• Policy Innovation: New Orleans can become a national leader in nighttime economy policy, modeling support for workers, businesses, and culture. • Slow Season Recovery: Intentional investments in summer nightlife programming and policy reform can reduce closures and improve business stability. • Transportation Improvements: Collaborating with transit agencies to enhance nighttime mobility can support economic activity and safety. • Improved Multi-Agency Coordination: Strengthening partnerships between departments can improve outcomes in safety, permitting, enforcement, and business support.	• Gentrification and Displacement: Real estate pressure, rising rents, and noise complaints threaten the survival of longstanding venues, especially in cultural districts. • Corporate Consolidation: Independent venues and promoters face steep competition from large national entities that dominate talent and ticketing markets. • Loss of Cultural Relevance: Over-commercialization and economic inaccessibility could erode the authenticity and diversity of New Orleans nightlife. • Complaint-Driven/Reactive Regulation: Systems that disproportionately respond to frequent complainers can stifle innovation and threaten cultural expression.

Strategic Framework

Our Five Pillars connect the strengths, challenges, and opportunities identified in our SWOT analysis to clear, actionable priorities.

Together, they form the foundation for a thriving nighttime economy - one that supports local businesses, fosters cultural vibrancy, protects public safety, and expands access for all. Each pillar contains targeted programs, policy initiatives, and partnerships designed to address the unique needs of New Orleans nightlife while advancing our cross-cutting commitments to sustainability, equity, and accessibility. The pages that follow detail the strategies and initiatives within each pillar, with a timeline of these priorities at the end of this document.

Nightlife Business Support & Visibility

Independent nightlife operators are cultural and economic anchors, but they often lack resources. Our goal is to provide visibility campaigns, workforce training, financial incentives, technical assistance, and sustainability tools to help them grow and endure.

Summer Sustainability

We aim to reduce the impact of the summer slowdown through targeted programming and policy changes that help nightlife businesses and workers weather seasonal downturns. The goal is year-round stability for the people and places that make New Orleans nightlife thrive.

Access, Mobility, & Space

We work to remove barriers to nightlife by improving late-night transportation, creative space access, affordability, and ADA accessibility in venues, events, and public spaces—ensuring participation for people of all abilities.

Public Safety & Quality of Life

Through harm reduction, coordinated enforcement, clear communication, and public education, our goal is to make nightlife safer, more accountable, and more enjoyable for residents, workers, and visitors alike.

Music Industry Development

We strengthen New Orleans' music ecosystem from the ground up through workforce programs, space access, economic support, and stronger industry infrastructure, ensuring independent artists and venues can create, collaborate, and thrive.

Nightlife Business Support & Visibility

The Why: Nightlife operators are economic drivers and cultural stewards, yet often lack the resources available to other industries. This pillar builds year-round stability through visibility campaigns, workforce training, financial incentives, and technical assistance, while advancing sustainability through recycling, waste reduction, and energy efficiency to make nightlife more resilient and future-ready.

	Tool	Impact
Strengthening the Bottom Line	1. Financial Incentives for Nightlife Businesses	Provides grants, rebates, and other funding programs to help nightlife operators invest in improvements and growth.
	2. Cultural Property Tax Rebate	A policy tool that incentivizes the preservation and activation of cultural spaces through targeted tax relief.
Building Skills & Community	3. Serving Hospitality Annual Summit	Connects hospitality workers with resources, training, and networking through an annual gathering.
	4. Serving Hospitality: Industry Fundamentals Training Series (SHIFTS)	Offers ongoing video-based workforce training on core business skills and city permitting processes.
Celebrating & Promoting Nightlife	5. City-hosted & promoted interactive nightlife map	Promotes local nightlife businesses to residents and visitors through a city-hosted, publicly accessible map.
	6. Cultural designation & preservation tools	Recognizes and protects culturally significant nightlife spaces through new programs.
Making Operations Easier & Greener	7. Dedicated Nightlife Business Liaison position	Establishes a permanent position within O.N.E. dedicated to assisting with new and renewal nightlife permit requests.
	8. Permit Process Audit & Clarification	Empowers O.N.E. to lead on nightlife permit governance and ensures accurate, accessible, and consistent information across OneStop and departmental websites.
	9. Recycling Access for Nightlife Businesses	Expands recycling availability and ease of use to reduce costs and environmental impact.

Summertime Sustainability

The Why: New Orleans nightlife faces a harsh reality: the summer slowdown. Businesses close, workers lose hours, and too many find it hard to make enough money to get by. This pillar focuses on turning the slow season into an opportunity, through creative programming, flexible policies, and strategic activations that support businesses, workers, and our entire community year-round.

	Tool	Impact
Filling Empty Nights	1. “One Summer Night” Grant	Incentive for businesses, individuals, and cultural organizations to propose and execute large-scale summer activations.
	2. Off the Clock Expansion	Scales O.N.E.’s year-round happy hour series up in the summer months to drive more revenue and activity for businesses.
Re-Energizing Public Spaces	3. French Market Nighttime Activations	Hosts regular live music, food, and general activation at night at the historic French Market to attract locals and boost public safety after dark.
	4. Summer Nighttime Activations Campaign	Promotes summer nightlife through citywide campaigns and targeted activations.
Making it Easier to Create	5. Support for Summer Block Parties & Events	Streamlining permits, fees, and compliance processes to make summer block parties easier and less expensive to host.

Access, Mobility, & Space

The Why: The success of New Orleans' nighttime economy depends on who can get to it, who can stay in it, and who can afford to create in it. This pillar tackles transportation, affordability, and access to physical space, with a focus on ADA accessibility, worker needs, and long-term equity in where nightlife can happen.

	Tool	Impact
Safe & Reliable Transportation	1. Enhanced Nighttime Parking Enforcement	Expands enforcement hours to curb dangerous parking behaviors and improve safety for neighbors, patrons, and workers.
	2. Protected Bikeway Network	Builds physically separated bike lanes connecting the downtown core to major nightlife areas, prioritizing unsafe crossings.
	3. Nighttime Circulator	Develops a high-frequency shuttle connecting RTA's hub and parking lots to the French Quarter, CBD, and Marigny.
Breaking Barriers for Workers & Businesses	4. Nighttime Childcare	Expands access to community-based childcare options for hospitality, health, and emergency workers.
	5. Commercial Lease Assistance	Provides targeted support to help small nightlife businesses secure and sustain affordable commercial spaces.
	6. Venue Accessibility & Inclusion	Creates an ADA best-practice guide with venue owners and advocates, while supporting implementation of accessibility improvements.
Protecting Culture, Preserving Space	7. Creative Placekeeping-Focused Grant Programs	Funds public art and corridor activations that reinforce community identity and drive patronage of neighborhood businesses.
	8. "Cultural Space Agency" Program	Pilots financial tools to reduce rent for creative nonprofits and entrepreneurs through partnerships with property owners.
	9. Nighttime Corridors Designation	Recognizes and supports key nightlife corridors (e.g., Frenchmen, St. Claude, Magazine, Oak) through targeted policy and investment.

Public Safety & Quality of Life

The Why: For New Orleans nightlife to thrive, people must feel safe and supported. This pillar focuses on proactive harm reduction, coordinated enforcement, and trusted on-the-ground presence. Together, these efforts aim to reduce risks, protect workers and patrons, and improve the lived experience for both residents and nightlife participants.

	Tool	Impact
Preventing Harm Before it Happens	1. Drink Test Strip Distribution	Provides nightlife venues with free test strips and signage to prevent drink tampering, reinforcing a culture of safety and consent.
	2. Enhanced Harm Reduction Training Access	Connects venues with free trainings like de-escalation, Narcan use, and Stop the Bleed trainings tailored to the needs of nightlife workers.
	3. Hearing Protection Campaign	Promotes hearing safety through signage, free earplug distribution, and public education about the risks of prolonged exposure to loud music.
Making Rules & Systems Work Better	4. Multi-Agency Support Group	Guides new and existing businesses toward compliance through coordinated inter-city case management.
	5. Create LAMA Tracking System	Uses 311 complaint data to prioritize enforcement in nightlife hotspots while also protecting venues from unfounded complaints.
Building Trust & Accountability	6. Expand the Tune-Up Grant Program	Grows funding and eligibility for sound management and other venue improvement grants, strengthening venue infrastructure and neighborhood relations.
	7. Nightlife Safety Ambassadors	Launches a pilot ambassador program in key nightlife corridors to provide on-the-ground, non-police support for safety, way finding, and low-level disturbances.
	8. Nightlife Advisory Board	Brings together nightlife stakeholders to provide input, strengthen communication, and advise on policy and program priorities while maintaining accountability and transparency.

Music Industry Development

The Why: Music is New Orleans’ greatest global export and one of its most important local industries, yet the systems that support it have not kept pace with its cultural and economic impact. Independent musicians, venues, and small businesses often lack stable access to funding, infrastructure, and career pathways. This pillar builds a stronger foundation for the music ecosystem while keeping its economic benefits rooted in the local community.

	Tool	Impact
Music Business Development and Sustainability	1. Music Industry Fund	Provides sustainable funding from large events to support venues, artists, and workforce programs, reinvesting in the local ecosystem.
	2. Musician Loading & Parking	Reduces logistical barriers for performers by improving access and designated loading areas, supporting safer, more efficient shows.
	3. Reactivated Music and Entertainment Commission	Establishes a central body to coordinate advocacy, policy, and citywide music initiatives, ensuring accountability and progress.
	4. Music Licensing Initiative	Expands revenue opportunities for musicians through rights management, enabling broader monetization and professionalization.
	5. Regional Export/Touring Initiative	Builds touring and showcase opportunities in nearby cities, expanding audiences, elevating musician careers and New Orleans’ regional profile.
	6. Music Business Incubators	Offers mentorship, capital, and education to entrepreneurs, fostering new music businesses and local job creation.
Cultural Preservation	7. Genre Development	Supports diverse local music styles like bounce, hip-hop, and indie, positioning New Orleans as a hub for innovation and modern music.
	8. Venue Cultural Land Trust	Secures affordable, long-term tenure for small, independent venues, protecting against displacement.
	9. National/International Showcases	Showcases New Orleans music at major industry events, boosting careers and attracting outside investment.

Music Industry Development (cont.)

	Tool	Impact
Infrastructure and Venue Support	10. Music Hubs (Virtual & Physical)	Creates shared spaces and online platforms for resources, collaboration, and community, strengthening local music infrastructure.
	11. Regulatory Updates	Streamlines permitting and compliance processes, reducing burdens on venues and musicians while encouraging growth.
	12. Legislative Definition of “Live Music Venue”	Provides legal clarity to distinguish dedicated venues, ensuring policies and incentives reach the right businesses.
	13. Music-Related Incentives & Rebates	Offers financial relief like property tax or rebates to preserve spaces that are a catalyst for culture and music business.
	14. Venue & Music Business Upgrade Grants	Funds upgrades for accessibility, safety, sound mitigation, and critical capital improvements improving user experiences and reducing financial burdens.
Education and Professional Development	15. Business Skills Workshops	Delivers practical training in music business, equipping musicians with tools for sustainable careers.
	16. Mentorship Programs	Connects legacy artists with emerging talent, preserving traditions and providing career guidance.
	17. Annual Resource Summit	Brings together musicians, local and national industry professionals, and city leaders to share opportunities and showcase resources.
	18. University Partnerships	Creates pipelines from local universities into the music industry, retaining talent and supporting entrepreneurship.
	19. Music Ecosystem Study Every 3-5 Years	Similarly to the Music Census, a recurring study will ensure that we are on track and show the impact of this plan.

Partnerships & Whole-Government Approach

The success of New Orleans' Nighttime Economy Strategy depends on deep, ongoing collaboration. No single office can address the complex challenges of nightlife alone, as it requires alignment across city departments, public agencies, businesses, nonprofits, and community partners who share responsibility for the city's nighttime ecosystem. A whole-government approach ensures that enforcement, safety, cultural preservation, and economic development efforts are coordinated rather than siloed.

The Office of Nighttime Economy works closely with a wide range of partners to implement effective, practical solutions. Internally, our collaborations span the Department of Safety and Permits, the Department of Public Works, Code Enforcement, Sanitation, Public Works, and the Health Department, as well as public safety partners including the New Orleans Police Department (NOPD), Homeland Security, and the Fire Department. These relationships have been essential to improving communication between nightlife businesses and the city, coordinating enforcement activities, and addressing recurring quality-of-life concerns such as parking, sound management, litter, and unpermitted vending.

Programs like harm reduction trainings, conducted in partnership with the Health Department and local nonprofits, demonstrate how collaboration can directly improve safety for nightlife workers and patrons. Similarly, coordinated initiatives such as Multi-Unit Task (MUT) Sweeps allow the City to approach enforcement through education and compliance rather than punishment, bringing together multiple departments to resolve issues efficiently and equitably.

Outside of City Hall, partnerships with academic institutions, advocacy organizations, and industry groups have been equally vital. Collaborations with Loyola University have connected students with hands-on learning opportunities through our Tune-Up Grant program, while partnerships with The Ella Project, NITECAP (the Nighttime Economy, Culture, & Policy Alliance), and local neighborhood associations have expanded our office's capacity to address sound complaints, strengthen workforce development, and encourage shared understanding between residents and businesses.

Moving forward, sustaining and expanding these relationships will be critical to success. Continued coordination with public safety agencies, transportation providers, and workforce development organizations will ensure that nighttime challenges are met with comprehensive, data-driven responses. By maintaining this whole-government and community-based approach, the City can build a nightlife ecosystem that is safer, more sustainable, and more inclusive—one that supports the people who make New Orleans' nights thrive.

Next Steps

This strategy is designed to be a living document that will evolve alongside New Orleans' nightlife. Its success will be measured by both the programs we deliver and the results they produce: safer nightlife corridors, stronger businesses, improved worker conditions, and a more sustainable cultural ecosystem.

The Office of Nighttime Economy will track progress through data collection, interagency coordination, and regular reporting. Success indicators will include reductions in seasonal business closures, improved sound complaint resolution rates, expanded participation in workforce and harm reduction programs, and measurable increases in accessibility and transportation options for night workers. Data will be gathered through tools such as enforcement and permitting tracking systems, program evaluations and attendance, and direct feedback from partners and community members.

Each of the five pillars of this strategy provides a framework for accountability:

- Efforts to strengthen nightlife businesses will be measured by growth in stability and visibility.
- Summer Sustainability initiatives will track activation attendance and reductions in seasonal closures.
- Access, Mobility, and Space goals will monitor improvements in transportation and affordability.
- Public Safety and Quality of Life outcomes will focus on harm reduction and neighborhood satisfaction.
- Music Industry Development will measure investments in local talent, venues, and workforce infrastructure.

Community participation will remain at the center of this process. The Office will continue hosting engagement sessions, neighborhood meetings, and advisory board discussions to gather input from residents, workers, and businesses. Feedback from these conversations will guide policy refinements, identify emerging challenges, and ensure that this strategy continues to reflect the needs of the people it serves.

In the years ahead, the Office of Nighttime Economy will use this data-driven and community-informed approach to adjust priorities, recommend policy updates, and develop new initiatives that keep New Orleans' nighttime economy safe, vibrant, and inclusive.

Timeline & Roadmap Forward

The strategies outlined across our five pillars - **Nightlife Business Support & Visibility**, **Summer Sustainability**, **Access, Mobility & Space**, **Public Safety & Quality of Life**, and **Music Industry Development** - establish the foundation for a thriving nighttime economy. This final section translates those priorities into a clear timeline for action.

By organizing initiatives into short-term, mid-term, and long-term goals, the roadmap provides a practical guide for implementation. It highlights why each tool is needed, how it can be achieved, and who will lead the work. Together, these tables show the path forward: immediate actions that deliver quick impact, medium-term investments that build capacity, and long-term commitments that reshape systems and preserve culture for generations to come.

Short-Term Goals

(by Summer 2026)

Tool	Why It's a Priority	How to Achieve	Status (as of September 2025)
Nightlife Skills Training Series	Hospitality and nightlife workers often lack access to training resources tailored to their sector. A video series provides ongoing, free, and accessible professional development in categories like basic hospitality skills, navigating business processes, etc.	Identify priority topics (permitting, marketing, HR basics), script and film short videos featuring local leaders, launch on city channels, and track viewership.	Concept developed.
Serving Hospitality Annual Summit	Hospitality and nightlife workers often operate in silos without access to shared training or networking opportunities. An annual summit builds community, professional capacity, and visibility for the sector.	Host yearly event with workshops, panels, and resource fairs; secure sponsors and partners; highlight both frontline workers and owners; rotate themes each year to keep engagement high.	Ongoing.
Permit Process Audit & Clarification	Confusion around permitting and compliance creates unnecessary delays, costs, and inequities for nightlife businesses. Clearer processes level the playing field and reduce frustration.	Empower O.N.E. to lead on nightlife permit governance. Conduct audit of OneStop and departmental websites, identify inconsistencies, and publish updated guides.	Initial discussions underway.
Interactive Nightlife Map	Many nightlife businesses outside of the downtown/French Quarter area are invisible to residents and visitors. A public-facing, city-hosted map increases visibility, encourages patronage, and highlights cultural diversity.	Build online platform with categories (live music, dance, LGBTQ+, late-night food, etc.) with the City's GIS department, promote through tourism and city channels, and ensure ongoing updates.	Concept stage.

Short-Term Goals cont.

Tool	Why It's a Priority	How to Achieve	Status (as of September 2025)
Recycling Access for Nightlife Businesses	High waste costs and limited recycling access disproportionately impact small operators. Expanding recycling reduces expenses, aligns with sustainability goals, and improves community perception of nightlife.	Partner with sanitation providers, establish affordable recycling pickup options for businesses, provide education, and integrate into sustainability campaigns.	Concept stage.
"One Summer Night" Grant	Summer slowdowns threaten business survival, worker income, and cultural vibrancy. This grant incentivizes creative summer activations that draw patrons during a historically weak season.	Launch call for proposals targeting venues, artists, and nonprofits, select activations with high visibility, provide city support for marketing and permitting, evaluate outcomes to inform future summers.	Concept stage.
Off the Clock Expansion	Summer slowdown requires reliable, low-cost programs to keep venues active. Expanding Off the Clock into summer strengthens businesses, connects City staff with the public, and boosts morale.	Coordinate and plan with more venues for higher volume summer programming, market through social media and press, and track attendance for impact reporting.	Ongoing.
French Market Nighttime Activations	The French Market is underutilized at night and could serve as a safe, high-profile anchor for nighttime activation. Activating this historic space increases cultural programming and foot traffic.	Partner with French Market Corporation, host recurring live music and food nights, secure safety and infrastructure support, and measure impact on revenue and safety.	In discussion.
Summer Nighttime Activations Campaign	Summer in New Orleans should be sold as locals time to enjoy the city. We already accept the heat, now it's time to enjoy the city to ourselves and support our community.	Develop citywide branding, create media partnerships, spotlight independent operators, and align with One Summer Night and Off the Clock events.	Concept stage.

Short-Term Goals cont.

Tool	Why It's a Priority	How to Achieve	Status (as of September 2025)
Music Industry Fund	The local music economy lacks consistent, dedicated funding streams. A sustainable fund ensures independent venues, artists, and workforce programs have resources to survive rising costs and remain competitive.	Establish fee on large-scale events, allocate revenue into dedicated fund, administer through grants and incentives.	Concept stage.
Musician Loading & Parking	Musicians frequently face unsafe, expensive, or logistically challenging load-ins. Designated loading and parking zones reduce friction, improve safety, and show the City's tangible support for working musicians.	Pilot designated musician zones (starting with Frenchmen St.), update signage and permitting process.	Pilot in development.
Reactivated Music & Entertainment Commission	Establishes a central body to coordinate advocacy, policy, and citywide music initiatives. A reactivated commission ensures ongoing accountability, advocacy, and cross-sector coordination on music policy.	Recruit commissioners, establish scope and authority, integrate with Cultural Economy initiatives.	Concept developed.
University Partnerships	Local universities train the next generation of music professionals, but too often talent leaves the city. Partnerships create pipelines that retain students, grow entrepreneurship, and strengthen the local music workforce.	Develop music business curricula, career pipelines, and internships.	Ongoing via Tune-Up Grant.
Business Skills Workshops	Many musicians and small operators lack access to formal business training. Targeted workshops build financial literacy, marketing skills, and career sustainability, helping creative workers operate on stronger footing.	Partner with universities/industry, offer recurring workshops and resources.	Ongoing via Music Census Sessions.
Legislative Definition of "Live Music Venue"	The absence of a clear legal definition leads to inconsistent regulation and lost opportunities for incentives. Establishing a definition ensures that policies, funding, and protections reach true music venues.	Draft and pass ordinance, coordinate with State for legal alignment.	Concept stage.

Short-Term Goals cont.

Tool	Why It's a Priority	How to Achieve	Status (as of September 2025)
Support for Summer Block Parties & Events	Block parties are vital cultural activations but are often discouraged by high costs and complicated processes. Easing these barriers supports neighborhood-led summer activity.	Simplify permitting, reduce fees, provide safety guidance, and highlight successful models as case studies for other neighborhoods.	Concept stage.
Expand Drink Test Strip Distribution	Drink tampering is a major safety concern that deters participation in nightlife, especially among women and LGBTQ+ communities. Providing strips builds trust and promotes safety.	Continue to purchase and distribute strips to venues, provide signage, run awareness campaign, and partner with advocacy groups for outreach.	Ongoing.
Expand Harm Reduction Training Access	Nightlife workers are often first responders in crises but lack training. Providing free, relevant trainings empowers workers and reduces harm.	Partner with nonprofits and health providers, host quarterly sessions tailored to nightlife contexts, and incentivize participation through recognition or certification.	Ongoing.
Hearing Protection Campaign	Loud sound exposure is a public health issue for workers and patrons. Addressing it positions the city as proactive and helps safeguard long-term workforce health.	Distribute earplugs at venues, provide signage and educational materials, partner with hearing health orgs, and measure engagement.	Concept developed.
Tune-Up Grant Expansion	Many small and mid-sized venues lack resources for sound mitigation and infrastructure upgrades, leading to noise complaints and weaker neighborhood relations. Expanding this program strengthens venue sustainability and improves community trust.	Increase annual funding allocation, expand eligibility to more venue types, and consider other types of targeted grants to support venue capital improvements.	Pilot in progress; expansion planned.

Mid-Term Goals

(Fall 2026 – 2028)

Tool	Why It's a Priority	How to Achieve	Status (as of September 2025)
Cultural Property Tax Rebate	Rising real estate values threaten cultural venues and small operators, pushing them out of historic corridors. A rebate helps preserve cultural spaces by making them more affordable to sustain.	Draft policy language in collaboration with City Council and the Office of Economic Development, identify eligible properties, establish application and compliance system, and integrate into broader cultural preservation strategy.	Concept stage.
Cultural Designation & Preservation Tools	Important nightlife spaces lack formal protections, leaving them vulnerable to redevelopment and displacement. Cultural designations safeguard these spaces and acknowledge their civic value.	Create criteria for designation, align with planning commission processes, build a nomination system, and pilot with key venues or corridors.	Concept stage.
Nighttime Circulator	Transportation barriers limit access to nightlife for workers, residents, and visitors. A circulator shuttle improves safety, reduces drunk driving, and connects parking to nightlife corridors.	Conduct feasibility study with RTA, secure funding (possibly through sponsorships), pilot route between CBD, French Quarter, and Marigny, and evaluate ridership.	Concept stage.
Commercial Lease Assistance	Small nightlife businesses are vulnerable to rent spikes and predatory lease terms. Assistance programs help them remain stable and competitive.	Establish a fund or guarantee program, partner with landlords and nonprofits, provide technical assistance on lease negotiations, and prioritize businesses in cultural corridors.	Concept stage.
Venue Accessibility & Inclusion	ADA accessibility in nightlife venues is inconsistent, creating barriers for disabled patrons and performers. Improving access strengthens equity and compliance.	Develop ADA best-practices guide, provide grants or low-interest loans for improvements, and spotlight venues that lead by example.	Concept stage.

Mid-Term Goals cont.

Tool	Why It's a Priority	How to Achieve	Status (as of September 2025)
Creative Placekeeping Grant Programs	Public art and corridor activations reinforce community identity, attract foot traffic, and deter crime through placemaking.	Establish competitive grant process, partner with artists and nonprofits, and align with corridor strategies like Nighttime Corridors Designation.	Concept stage.
Nighttime Corridors Designation	Key nightlife corridors lack formal recognition and support, leaving them vulnerable to inconsistent policy and infrastructure investment. Designation enables targeted improvements and long-term planning.	Identify and designate priority corridors (such as Frenchmen, St. Claude, Magazine, Broad, Oak), create support packages (outreach plans, infrastructure upgrades, safety programs), and monitor impact on businesses and residents.	Concept developed.
Multi-Agency Support Group	Business compliance and enforcement is often confusing and punitive. A coordinated inter-departmental group provides case management and guidance, reducing friction and improving outcomes.	Formalize inter-agency working group (Safety & Permits, Sanitation, NOPD, etc.), create intake/referral process, and assign case managers to new or struggling businesses.	Concept developed.
LAMA Tracking System	Complaint-driven enforcement is inconsistent and sometimes biased. A transparent system ensures accountability while protecting venues from unfounded complaints.	Develop protocol for each department to input data about communications, enforcement, etc with each nightlife business. Refer to this system to tell complete story about each business' history with compliance.	Concept developed.
Nightlife Advisory Board	Nightlife operators and workers should have a formal voice in shaping policies that affect them. A board creates structured dialogue, accountability, and shared ownership of solutions.	Draft scope, recruit diverse representatives across music, hospitality, and neighborhoods, and convene quarterly meetings.	Concept developed.

Mid-Term Goals cont.

Tool	Why It's a Priority	How to Achieve	Status (as of September 2025)
Music Licensing Initiative	Musicians often lose revenue due to lack of rights management knowledge. Licensing support expands income streams and professionalizes careers while keeping royalties in local hands.	Develop education and assistance program, partner with rights orgs (ASCAP, BMI), create local licensing guide.	Concept stage.
Regional Export/Touring Initiative	New Orleans artists need stronger touring circuits beyond the city. Regional showcases and touring support expand audiences, boost careers, and raise the city's profile nationally.	Collaborate with regional music officers in cities in the South/Southeast. Provide small grants for travel, coordinate regional showcases at SXSW, Folk Alliance, etc.	Concept stage.
Music Business Incubators	Music entrepreneurs lack affordable space and tailored resources. Incubators create supportive environments for startups, generating jobs, new businesses, and long-term economic growth.	Secure space/partners, recruit cohort, provide mentorship, capital, and training.	Concept stage.
Genre Development	Bounce, hip-hop, indie, and other genres are vital to New Orleans' evolving identity. Targeted support ensures cultural innovation is recognized and prevents over-reliance on legacy genres alone.	Support genre-specific showcases, grants, and media campaigns.	Concept stage.
Venue Cultural Land Trust	Rising real estate costs threaten small, independent venues. A cultural land trust safeguards these spaces by securing long-term affordability and preventing displacement.	Develop public-private trust model, acquire properties, lease back to cultural operators.	Concept stage.
National/International Showcases	Representation at major industry events is critical for export. Showcasing New Orleans artists on global stages attracts investment, builds careers, and reinforces cultural leadership.	Organize official showcases at major festivals/conferences, provide export grants.	Concept stage.
Music Hubs (Virtual & Physical)	Musicians and businesses need shared infrastructure. Hubs provide space, resources, and connectivity — both online and in person — to strengthen collaboration and industry capacity.	Establish co-working/creative hub, build digital portal for resources and networking.	Concept stage.

Mid-Term Goals cont.

Tool	Why It's a Priority	How to Achieve	Status (as of September 2025)
Regulatory Updates	Outdated, inconsistent rules burden venues and musicians. Streamlining regulation reduces compliance costs, removes barriers to entry, and creates a fairer environment for small operators.	Propose legislative changes, simplify licensing processes, align with state/federal frameworks.	Concept stage.
Venue & Music Business Upgrade Grants	Many venues lack resources for basic improvements like accessibility, safety, or sound mitigation. Grants protect businesses, improve user experiences, and reduce community friction.	Establish application program, prioritize independent operators, track outcomes.	Concept stage.

Long-Term Goals

(2029 & beyond)

Tool	Why It's a Priority	How to Achieve	Status (as of September 2025)
Protected Bikeway Network	Many nightlife areas are unsafe or inaccessible for cyclists, limiting mobility options for workers and patrons. Building protected bikeways increases safety, reduces car dependency, and connects neighborhoods to nightlife hubs.	Conduct corridor studies to identify priority routes, secure federal/state infrastructure funding, design physically separated lanes, and phase construction in high-use nightlife corridors (e.g., CBD–Marigny).	Concept stage.
“Cultural Space Agency” Program	Rising rents and real estate speculation threaten creative spaces. A dedicated agency model can intervene in the property market to secure affordable space for cultural uses.	Develop public-private agency or trust, acquire/control cultural properties, offer subsidized rents to nonprofits and small businesses, and manage properties long-term.	Concept stage.
Nighttime Childcare	Nightlife and hospitality workers often lack childcare options outside standard hours, forcing many to leave the workforce or limit opportunities. Expanding childcare ensures equity and retention of night workers.	Partner with community childcare providers, create grants/subsidies for extended hours, train workers for overnight care, and launch pilot centers in nightlife-heavy neighborhoods.	Concept stage.
Nightlife Safety Ambassadors	Over-reliance on police creates tension and risk for residents and tourists in nightlife corridors. Ambassadors provide trusted, community-centered support for safety, wayfinding, and low-level issues.	Develop program framework with DDD, recruit and train staff, coordinate with NOPD for escalation protocols, and pilot in the French Quarter.	Concept stage.
Music-Related Incentives & Rebates	Independent venues and music businesses face unsustainable costs. Incentives and rebates provide relief while reinforcing the city's recognition of music as critical infrastructure.	Work with City Council/Economic Development to design and pass rebate policies.	Concept stage.

Long-Term Goals

(2029 & beyond)

Tool	Why It's a Priority	How to Achieve	Status (as of September 2025)
Annual Resource Summit	Musicians and industry professionals would benefit from more central gathering points. A recurring summit builds networks, shares opportunities, and strengthens collaboration across the sector.	Support existing summits and conferences such as NOLA MusiCon. Organize annual gathering, secure sponsors, showcase opportunities.	Concept stage.
Music Ecosystem Study (every 3–5 years)	The music industry evolves quickly, and outdated data weakens policy. Recurring studies track progress, evaluate impact, and keep the strategy responsive to real conditions.	Conduct recurring census-style studies, publish findings, adjust programs accordingly.	Ongoing

Developed by the Mayor's Office of Nighttime Economy

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