

CITY OF MONROE DOWNTOWN STRATEGIC PLAN



PHASE 2
OCTOBER 7TH, 2022
MAYOR FRIDAY ELLIS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- i Introduction & Project Scope
- ii Team Introduction

7 Community Engagement

- 7.1 Community Goals & Objectives
- 7.2 Community Engagement Reports
- 7.3 Community Visioning Meetings - People
- 7.4 Community Visioning Meetings - Locations
- 7.5 Design Camp Overview
- 7.7 Block Party Overview
- 7.10 Steering Committee Meetings & Reports

8 Consultant Team Workshop

- 8.1 Design/Production Workshops
- 8.2 Opportunity & Constraints Analysis
- 8.3 Open House at The Garret House Overview
- 8.4 Topics of Discussion
- 8.5 Preliminary Catalyst Project List & Sketches

9 Districts & Building Uses

- 9.1 Districts & Gateways
- 9.3 Proposed Building Use Diagram
- 9.4 Program Recommendations for Catalyst Sites
 - 9.5 Catalyst Site #1: Medium-Density Townhouses
 - 9.6 Catalyst Site #2: Mixed-Use with Restaurant/Bar
 - 9.7 Catalyst Site #3: Mixed-Use with Grocery Store

10 Circulation

- 10.1 Green Space Network & Connectivity
- 10.2 Circulation Composite Plan
- 10.3 Bike Network
- 10.5 Pedestrian Networks
- 10.7 Greenspace & Parklets
- 10.9 Downtown Street Typology
- 10.13 Storm Water Management Toolkit
- 10.14 Urban Planting Matrix

11 Riverfront Character

- 11.1 Design Ideas/Mood Board
- 11.2 RiverMarket Activation
- 11.3 Connections to Water

12 Marketing Campaigns

- 12.1 Downtown Points of Interest
- 12.2 Entertainment Walking Tour
- 12.3 Get Cultured Walking Tour

13 Economics

- 13.1 Value Per Acre Analysis
- 13.2 Proposed Economic Incentives
- 13.3 Economic Incentive Downtown Districts

14 Strategic Plan Outline

- 14.1 1-year Strategic Plan
- 14.6 5-year Strategic Plan
- 14.10 10-year Strategic Plan
- 14.13 Vision Statement
- 14.14 What's Next
- 14.15 Acknowledgements

15 Appendix (Under Separate Cover)

- A2.1 Downtown Monroe Market Analysis 2022
- A2.39 Asphalt Art Safety Study
- A2.85 Asphalt Art Guide
- A2.19 Establishing a Dog Park in your Community

STAFF CONTACT

For questions or comments regarding the Monroe Strategic Plan, please contact:

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INTRODUCTION

Initialized by Mayor Friday Ellis, the Downtown Monroe Strategic Plan was developed with the goal to revitalize the downtown area and activate the connection to the riverfront. By capitalizing on Monroe's historic and cultural assets, this plan seeks to identify specific initiatives designed to increase downtown livability, encourage private sector investment, spur job creation, promote public interactions that contribute to a unified vision, and become a catalyst for continued prosperity for many years to come.

Phase 1 of the Strategic Plan was completed in January 2022. In partnership with the City of Monroe and many local stakeholders, this phase included Inventory & Analysis of existing conditions within Monroe's Downtown, identified by a specific catchment area.

The following document contains **Phase 2** of the Strategic Plan. This phase places a strong emphasis on community engagement for the identification of goals, priorities, and urban design initiatives.

Phase 3 of the Strategic Plan will outline a detailed implementation strategy for selected projects.

PHASE 2 SCOPE

- **Community Visioning Meetings** – Engage a wide range of community members to identify goals and priorities.
- **Consultant Team Workshop** – Gather a team of multi-disciplinary professionals to analyze existing conditions and identify key catalyst projects that support downtown revitalization.
- **Vision Statements** – Develop guiding principles and priorities using feedback from the community.
- **Proposed Building Use Study** – Inspire and inform potential development by identifying optimal uses for existing buildings and neighborhoods.
- **Proposed Circulation Study** – Develop recommendations for streetscape, sidewalk, and greenspace improvements.
- **Riverfront Character** – Identify a distinctive character for the riverfront in order increase activation and foster a strong sense of place.
- **Proposed Economic Incentives** – Recommend additional programs and incentives to stimulate development.
- **Strategic Plan Outline** – Outline a list of potential 1-year, 5-year, and 10-year projects for implementation.

Information and data collected in this document reflects current conditions. As a living document, this document may be updated as community needs evolve.



TEAM INTRODUCTION

CAMPO ARCHITECTURE & INTERIOR DESIGN



400 Poydras Street, Suite 1410
New Orleans, LA 70130
(504) 598-4440 | www.jtcampo.com

John T. Campo Jr., President | Founder
Miriam Salas, Partner | Studio Director
Mary Gilmore, Partner | Director of Interior Design
Janina Scalfano, Senior Architect, Project Lead
Isabella Zannier, Designer
Kareem Elsandouby, Designer
Midge Bishop, Designer

MAYOR, CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS & EXECUTIVE STAFF

Friday Ellis, City of Monroe Mayor
Lynda McMahan, Executive Assistant
Kelsea McCrary, Economic & Cultural
Development Officer
DJ Fortenberry, Community Relations Liaison
Jimmie Bryant, Chief Operations Officer
Meghan Risinger, Executive Grant Writer
Mitchelli Martin, Media Relations Director
Nirali Patel, Main Street Director
Councilman Douglas Harvey, Council District 1
Councilwoman Gretchen Ezernack, Council District 2
Councilwoman Juanita G. Woods, Council District 3
Councilman Carday Marshall, Sr., Council District 4
Councilwoman Kema Dawson, Council District 5

CSRS - ESTIMATOR/FUNDING/ECONOMIC INCENTIVES

Mark Goodson, Principal & Resilience Practice Lead

CSRS team worked as Estimator/Funding/Economic Incentive consultant for the Phase 2 of Monroe Downtown Strategic Plan.

Efforts by CSRS are listed as follows: identify site development opportunities, compare downtown's economic potential through estimates of regional market capture and related development scenarios, determine build-out estimates of redevelopment scenarios, highlight and detail areas within corridor that are suitable for catalytic projects, quantify potential return on investment on public infrastructure/investment, identify and recommend potential economic incentives for investment, and work with City of Monroe to design any necessary incentive programs to attract corporate investment.

CARBO - LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

Shannon Blakeman, PLA, ASLA, Partner
John-Taylor Corley, ASLA, Landscape Designer

CARBO Landscape Architecture provided professional Landscape Architectural services for Phase 2 of the Monroe Downtown Strategic Plan. The team contributed to research and data collection, site evaluation and identification of significant site features, potential opportunities, and constraints. In addition, CARBO collaborated with the design team, assessed the information gathered in Phase 1, attended stakeholder meetings, participated in design workshops for overall concept development, and advanced conceptual plans for specific amenities.

CARBO representatives focused on the development of civic amenities such as plazas, parks, pocket parks, squares, streetscapes, entry features, riverfront features, and riverfront development opportunities, as well as reintroducing naturalistic amenities such as constructed wetlands, bio-swales, and rain gardens into the downtown fabric. These elements work together with the overall strategic plan to create an integrated and cohesive collection of spaces and amenities.

HOLISTIC VIBES - COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Katrina L. Branson, MPA, BBA

Katrina Branson is a local entrepreneur and community advocate. Ms. Branson (Holistic Vibes) coordinated community meetings with each councilperson and each district within the City of Monroe.

Holistic Vibes was contracted to host town hall meetings, engage neighborhood associations and alumni associations, meet with the public during organized events, discuss downtown with local business owners, community leaders, stakeholders, clergy, residents, and other focus groups. Participation among diverse individuals and groups from social, cultural and socioeconomic statuses yielded a collective voice through collaboration and transparency. Conversations and brainstorming sessions led by the consultant sparked a sense of unity, inspired nostalgia, and encouraged exciting ideas in identifying solutions to current challenges and unique opportunities throughout the city. Holistic Vibes has been instrumental in opening the dialogue to continued community visioning sessions and district meetings to further the growth and connectivity of downtown.





COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT GOALS & OBJECTIVES

At the onset of Phase 2, specific goals were established for an extensive and inclusive community engagement effort. The engagement strategy followed the principles of Social, Economic, Environmental Design (SEED), which provides guidelines for pursuing a design process informed by inclusivity and participation. This process supports a balanced and informed research and data-collection process in order to reveal community voice through collaboration.

GOALS FOR COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

What did we want to learn?

- Identify the critical issues the community faces
- Identify specific priorities for the community
- Generate ideas that build local capacity
- Inform members of the community about current & proposed initiatives

STRATEGY FOR BROAD PARTICIPATION

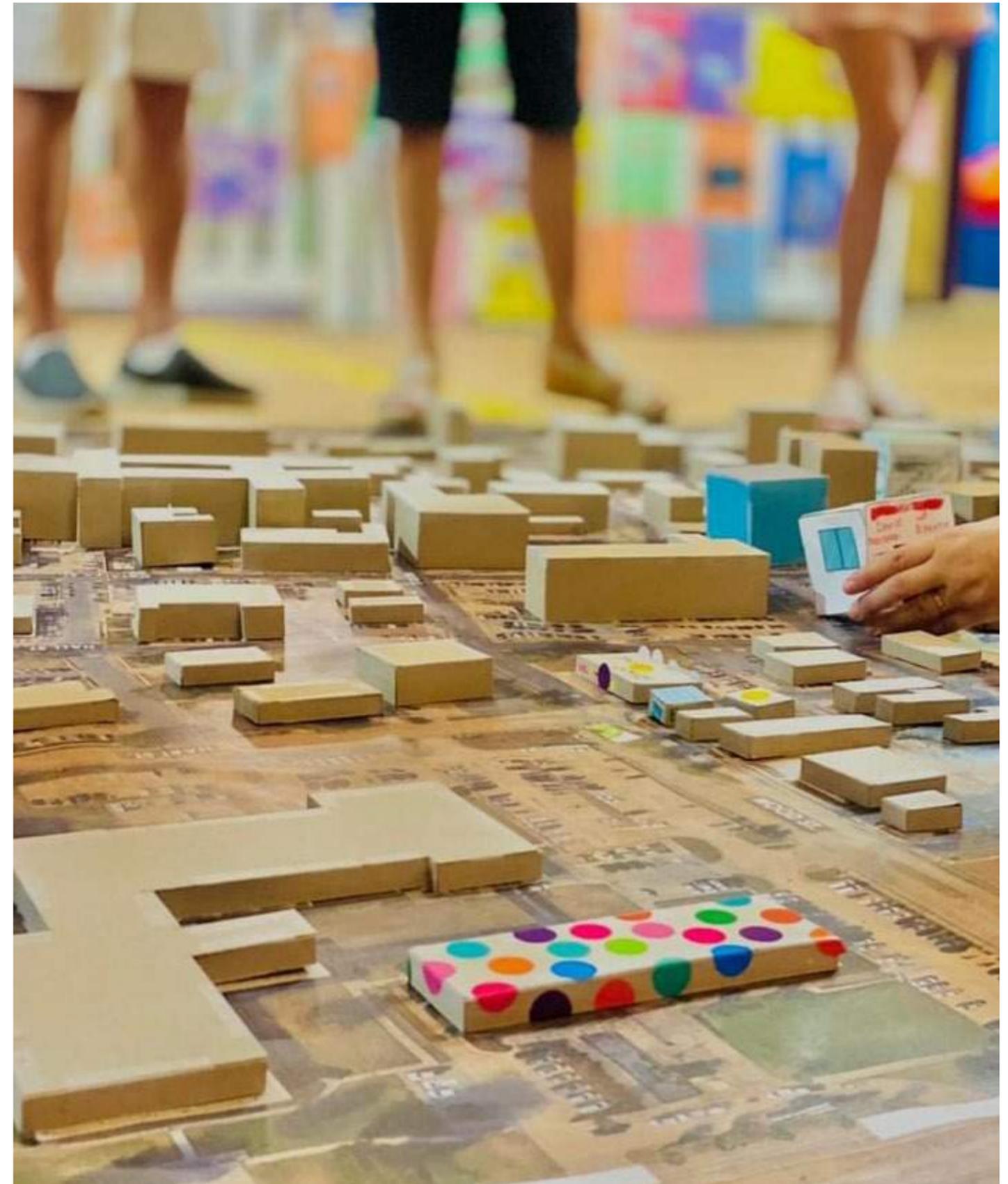
How do we promote a wide range of engagement?

- Individual interviews
- Group meetings
- Open Houses
- Town Hall meetings
- Design charrettes
- Placemaking events

MEASUREMENTS OF SUCCESS

How will results of the engagement process be measured?

- Participation across a broad range of social, cultural, and economic boundaries
- Diversity of age, race, gender, education, social position, & expertise
- Generate ideas that grow from place and build local capacity



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT

Community Engagement consultant, Katrina Branson, conducted and reported on numerous strategies for fostering participation from a broad range of community members. These efforts included one-on-one interviews with community leaders and business owners, engagement events for local high school alumni, meetings with focus groups, and publications of design progress in local press.



Examples of Focus Groups included:

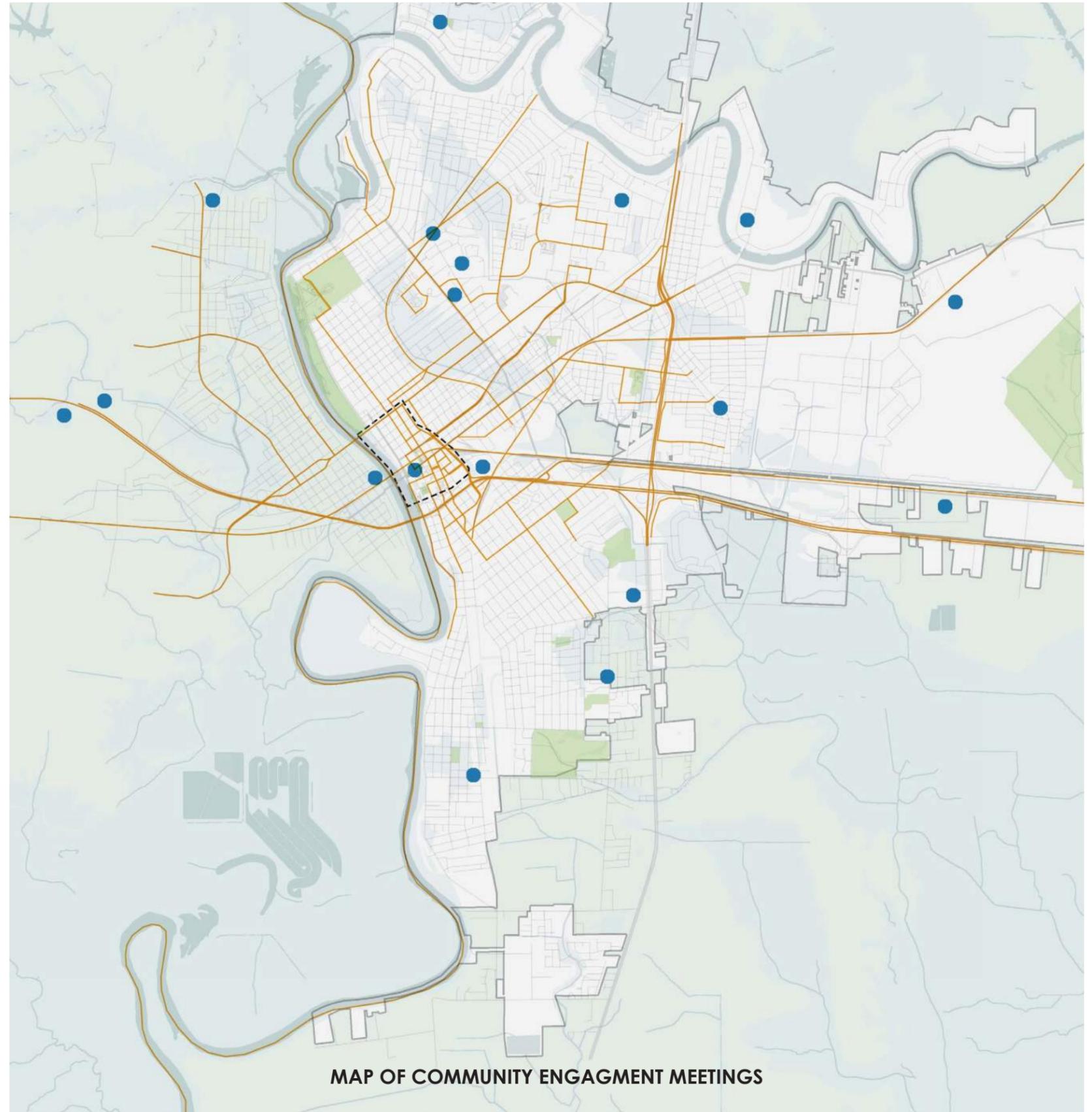
- Monroe Regional Black Chamber of Commerce
- Colleges & Universities
- Health Clubs
- Churches & Youth Pastors
- Musicians
- Neighborhood Associations
- Real Estate Agents

Examples of Personal Interviews included:

- Nutrition Shop Owner
- WM Business Owner
- Salon Owner
- Physical Therapist
- Educator
- Monroe Ex-Pat
- Millennial Business Owner
- Community Activist
- Musician
- ULM Alumni
- Dance Studio Owner
- Youth Pastors
- NLEP Chairman



COMMUNITY VISIONING MEETINGS



DESIGN CAMP OVERVIEW

Design Camp for Downtown Monroe was a creative and fun way to engage the community, specifically focused on youth engagement. Design and City teams encouraged community participation through marketing of the Design Camp event on social media and via newsletter. Artists, children, parents, business owners, and City officials participated in Design Camp. In addition, local press attended and reported on the event. The children of Monroe got to play a part in urban design development by engaging in Design Camp at the Northeast Louisiana Children's Museum. Attendees could participate in four different stations:

1. Start a Business 2. Renovate a Building 3. Design a New Building 4. Create Outdoor Spaces

At the first station, each student created a vision board for their new business. Students were then instructed to select a location downtown for their business to reside. They could either "renovate" an existing building from the model or construct a new building and place it on the model. Building renovations encompassed façade restorations, new and/or mixed-use programming, new building penetrations for windows and doors, and new landscaping for the site. Proposed new buildings were modeled and creatively decorated with exterior materials, doors, windows, and signage. Proposed outdoor spaces displayed gathering areas, bodies of water, sports and recreation facilities, bike trails, and trees additions.

With significant community participation, the team gained insight into the youngest of Monroe citizens' ideas and wishes for the future of Downtown Monroe. The produced outdoor spaces vision boards included sports and recreation amenities, new programming ideas were proposed as businesses, and art-filled renovations were added to the Downtown Monroe scale model.

The image shows four instructional cards for the Design Camp stations:

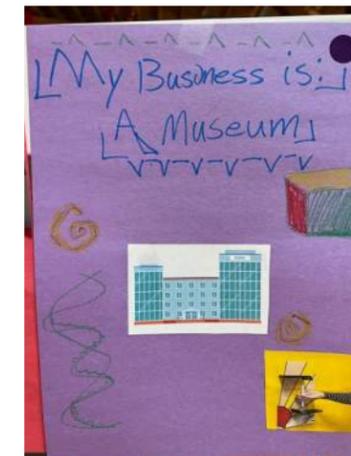
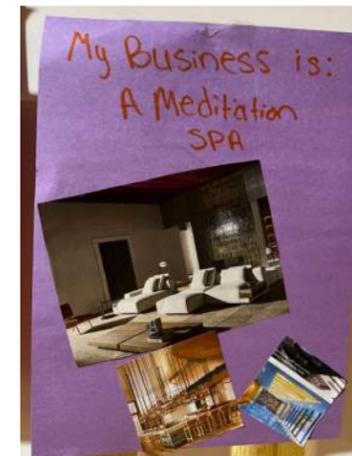
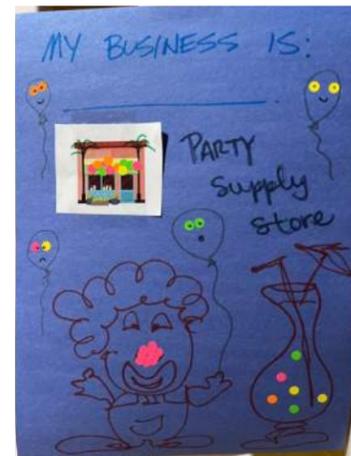
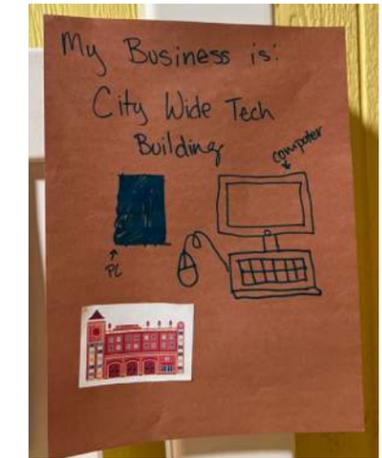
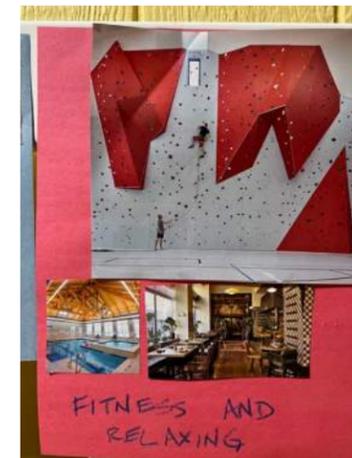
- START A BUSINESS (Entrepreneurs):**
 1. What type of business is it?
 2. Who will be your customers?
 3. What will make this business special?
 4. What will it look like? Create a vision board!
 5. Where will it be? Select a location on the model!
- RENOVATE A BUILDING (Preserving):**
 1. Choose a building on the model!
 2. Draw new doors, windows, and signs. Color the building!
 3. Place your building back on the model!
- DESIGN A NEW BUILDING (Creating):**
 1. Select a vacant site on the model.
 2. Choose a building template or combine them to make your own.
 3. What is your building made out of? Brick, Glass, Metal, Concrete or something else?
 4. How tall should it be? Does it have stairs or the roof?
 5. Complete your new building with doors, windows, signs, etc.
 6. Place your new building on the model!
- CREATE OUTDOOR SPACES (Growing):**
 1. Create a vision board for your outdoor space!
 2. Add features to your outdoor area, such as:
 - Park
 - Concert area
 - Playground
 - Bike Trail
 - Bike lane
 - Art installation
 - Other
 3. Draw it or label it on the model!



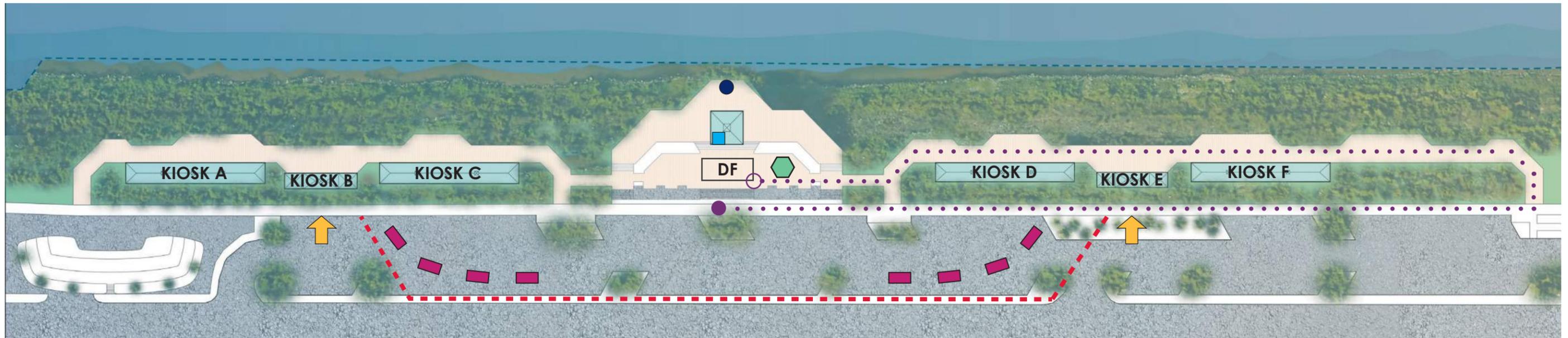
DESIGN CAMP OVERVIEW CONTINUED

The children in the city of Monroe spent time coming up with new programming ideas to be placed throughout the city. At the first station, they created vision boards with their business ideas and determine who their target customers would be, what would make the business special, and what the business would look like. At a later station, they selected scale buildings to renovate. The proposed businesses created included the following:

- Cat Cafe
- Fast Food Store
- Fashion Store
- Barber Shops
- Furniture Store
- Christmas Store
- Shoe Store
- Teen Center
- Design Shop
- Clothes Store
- Music Store
- Art Store
- Book Store
- Hotel
- Restaurant
- Toy Store
- Museum
- Nail Shop
- Barstucks, the Café
- Austin's, the Restaurant
- Party Supplies Store
- Fitness & Relaxing Center
- Candy & Ice Cream Store
- & many other creative entrepreneurial ventures!



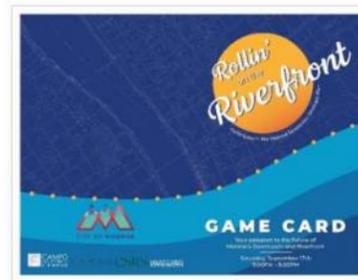
BLOCK PARTY OVERVIEW



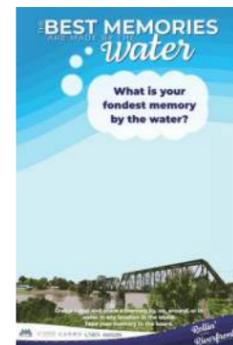
KIOSK A & F: VENDORS

- 5 Star Nutrition
- AG Studios, Ashley Greer
- Bella Flor
- Black Creatives Circle of North Louisiana
- Chic N Shyne Emporium, LLC
- Drip Therapy Health Beauty Wellness
- Em's Earrings
- Fleet Feet
- Genni's Gems LLC
- H2GO Paddle & Provisions
- Honeysuckle & Thread
- Jerelyn Smith Young Living Brand Partner
- Jewelz by JMarie, LLC
- M3 Physio
- Miss Nebula Jones
- Perk it up Fitness LLC
- Poetry at Best
- PureDrip Wellness
- ScentWorthy
- Smiths Custom Creations LLC
- The Creative Wildflower: Art by LK
- Tribe31 Training

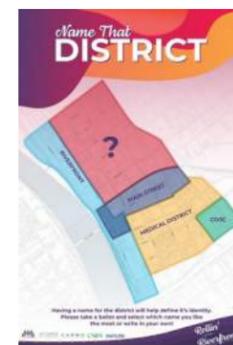
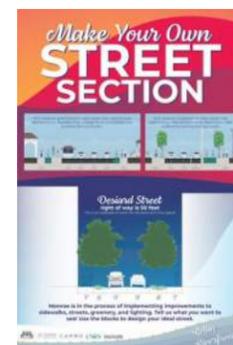
KIOSK B & E: Game card and introduction.



KIOSK C:



KIOSK D:



DF Dance Floor



● Selfie Station



■ Food Trucks



- - - Barricades

➔ Entry Gateway

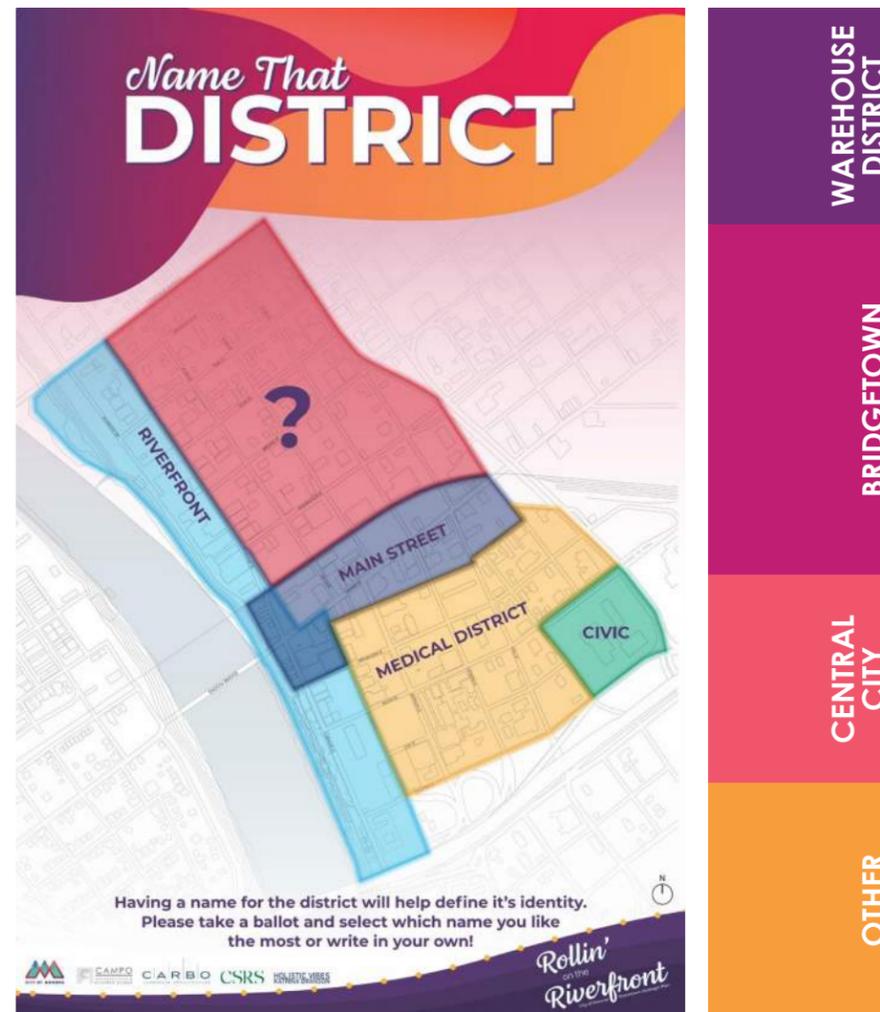
⬡ Main Street Prints

○ Second Line Start

● Second Line Finale

■ DJ Booth and Video Wall

BLOCK PARTY OVERVIEW CONTINUED

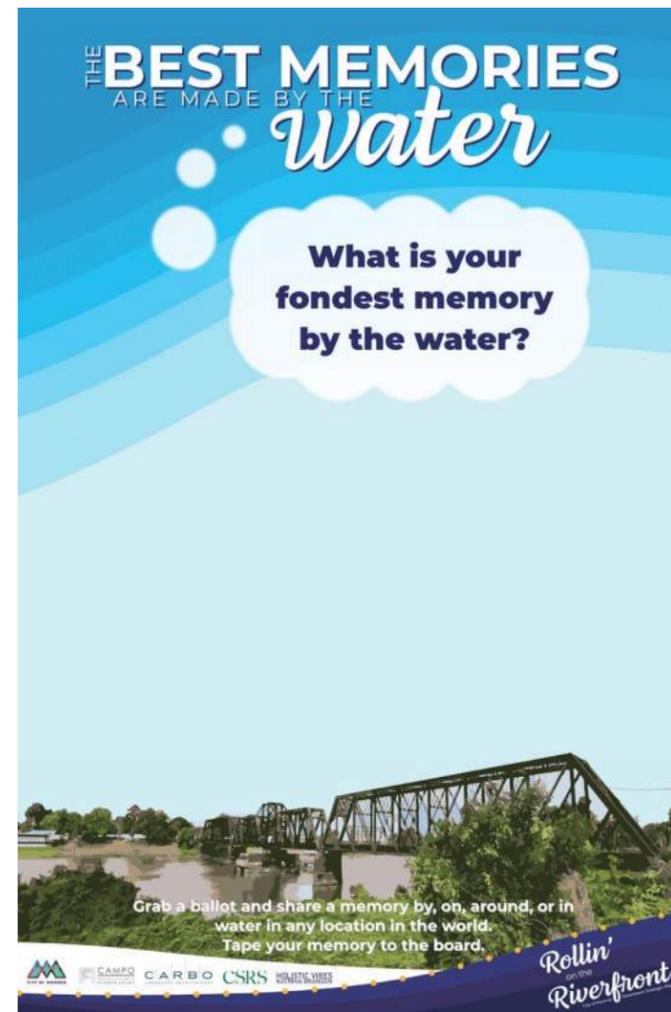


NAME THAT DISTRICT

Block Party activity, "Name that District," showed "Bridgetown" as the most popular name choice for the area North of railroad tracks in Downtown Monroe.

While considering suggested names in the "Other" category, "Bridge Roe" emerged as a combination of the popular suggestions of #Oneroe and #Funroe as well as the idea of bridging the two communities divided by the railroad together.

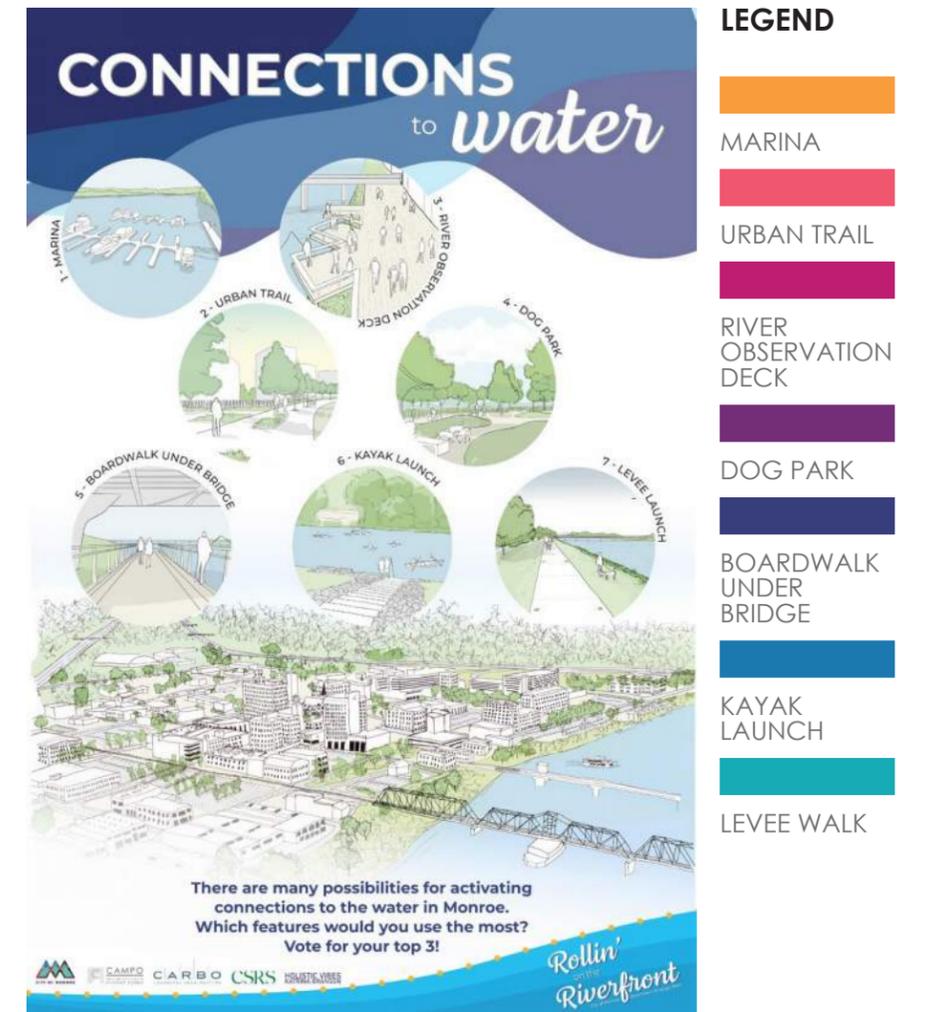
LEGEND



WHAT IS YOUR FONDEST MEMORY BY THE WATER?

This board inquired about participants' fondest memory by water and provided a ballot for written responses that would be attached to the board and/or collected by volunteers. This board received a total of 81 responses. Those were collected, recorded, and categorized into the categories shown in the legend below. The data shows that people have enjoyed their time either playing sports by the water or enjoying the view.

LEGEND

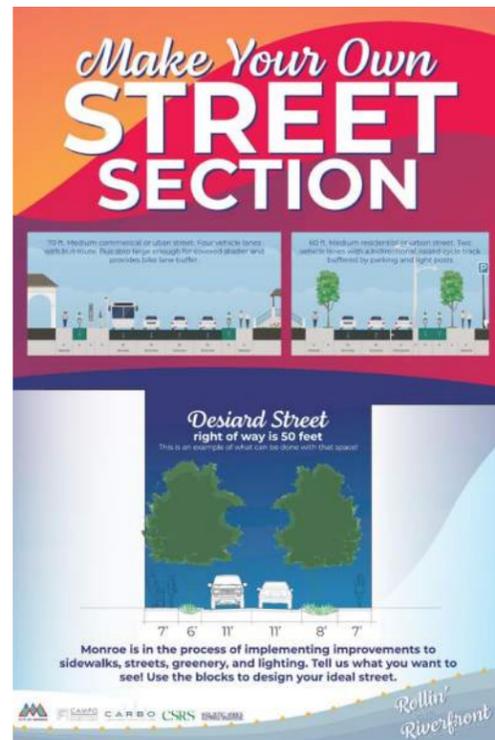


CONNECTIONS TO WATER

This board asked participants to vote for the connection to water feature they would use the most. The board presented 7 options: Marina, Urban Trail, River Observation Deck, Dog Park, Boardwalk Under Bridge, Kayak Launch, and Levee Trail.



BLOCK PARTY OVERVIEW CONTINUED



MAKE YOUR OWN STREET SECTION

The "Make your own Street Section" activity board, originally designed by Carbo, presented participants with the opportunity to select components and arrange layouts for a successful street design. Some examples are shown below:



WHAT'S YOUR VISION

The "What's Your Vision?" board provided prompts with fill-in-the-blank sentences for attendees to complete and submit their answers. Filled ballots were collected and the responses were recorded. Some examples are shown below.

In the past, I've described the Monroe Riverfront as *"beautiful, but underused"* and in the future, I'd like to describe it as *"the place for events, live music, and food!"*

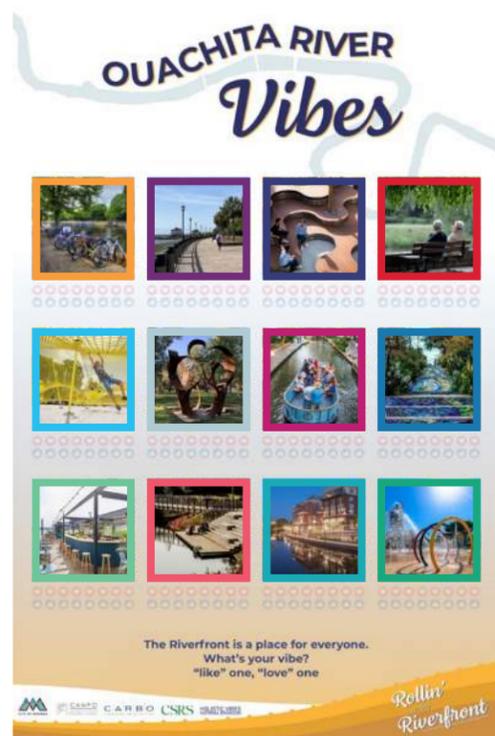
I enjoy public parks when they have *"adequate lighting, benches, and trails."*

I enjoy outdoor spaces when I am *"eating, drinking, and relaxing."*

I think *"the community"* is Monroe's biggest strength and I think the Riverfront can exemplify that by *"bringing people together with activities"*

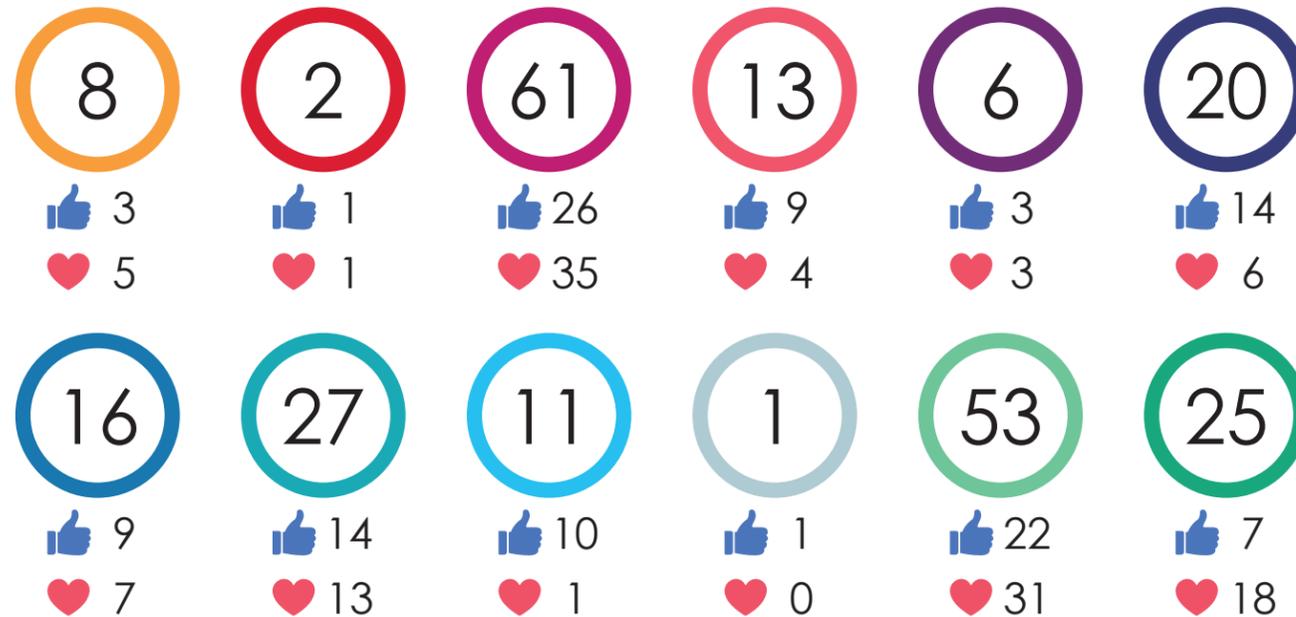
I enjoy visiting other Riverfronts when they have *"a variety of things to do!"*

I'm passionate about the Riverfront's development because *"Monroe is my home"*



OUACHITA RIVER VIBES

This board presented an image mood board for people to "like" and "love" their favorite photos that represent what they would want a riverfront to be like.



STEERING COMMITTEE MEETINGS & REPORTS

In addition to the design and City teams, as means of community involvement, Phase 2 engaged a steering committee to gauge the Strategic Plan progress and provide feedback during realization. The steering committee members are Monroe residents that actively participate in community preservation, development, and growth. Selection process for the committee consisted of nomination-based method by City of Monroe officials and Council members. The design team provided progress reports to committee members followed by virtual meetings for discussion and idea brainstorming.

ROLES OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE

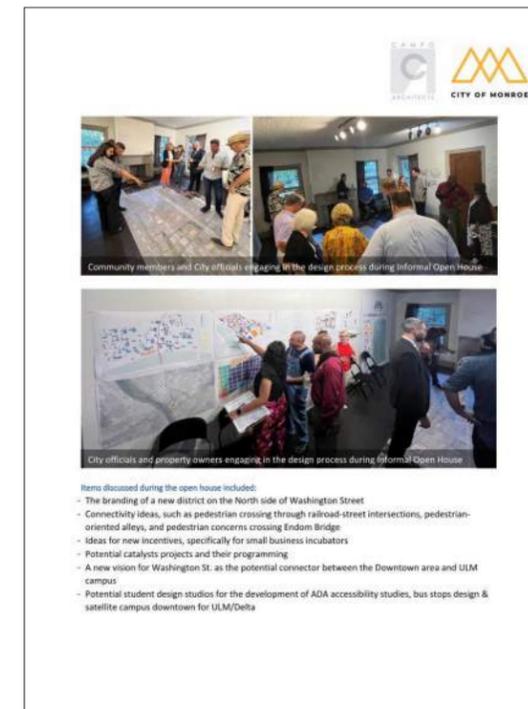
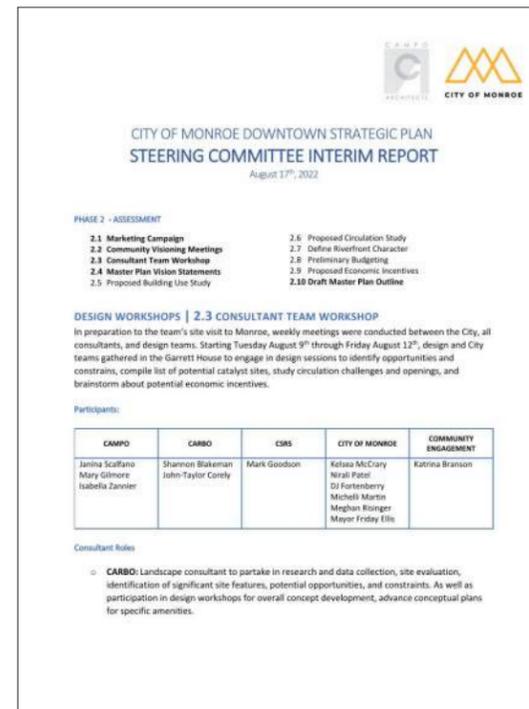
- Identifying priorities and specific initiatives for inclusion in the Strategic Plan
- Promoting project transparency and monitoring the quality of the project as it develops
- Disseminating information and updates about the project to stakeholders
- Encouraging participation in community engagement events

TIMELINE – 14 weeks

- Nomination of Steering Committee Members – Concluded by July 27
- Kickoff Meeting – July 27
- Interim Progress Report Distributed – August 17
- Check-In Meeting – August 19
- Interim Progress Report Distributed – September 28
- Final Meeting – September 30

MEMBERS	ALLIED ORGANIZATION
Aimee Kane	St. Francis Medical Center
Alana Cooper	Monroe-West Monroe Convention and Visitors Bureau
Beverly Lewis	Ochsner LSU Health – Monroe Medical Center
Jamie Hanks	University of Louisiana at Monroe
Joe Farr	Thomas & Farr Agency
John Jones	Technology for Rural America
Karen Gant	LSU & Southern University School of Nursing Professor
Kendall Bennett	District 5 Appointee
Kenya Roberson	Monroe Regional Black Chamber of Commerce
Melissa Mann	Lumen Technologies, Inc.
Roy Heatherly	Monroe Chamber of Commerce
Simran Dhaliwal Emaus	Downtown Economic Development District

STEERING COMMITTEE REPORTS EXAMPLE PAGES



Steering committee members feedback included: importance of covered/shaded outdoor and circulation areas; a desire for pet parks, fitness centers and food options, increased signage/wayfinding; and more lighting for increased sense of safety. In addition, members proposed the idea of an annual riverfront festival.



CONSULTANT TEAM WORKSHOP

DESIGN/PRODUCTION WORKSHOP

Campo Architecture & Interior Design team led the planning team of consultants alongside the City of Monroe executive staff in a weeklong workshop on site at the historic Garrett House in Downtown Monroe. The talented planning team including CARBO, CSRS and Holistic Vibes, collaborated on identifying opportunities and constraints then discussing solutions and enhancements. Afterwards, the team developed a list of projects that were then analyzed by benefit, complexity, partnerships, and timeline. Following, a prioritized list of projects was made set in 1, 5 and 10-year stages.

Garrett House 602 S. Grand St	Tuesday August 9, 2022	Wednesday August 10, 2022	Thursday August 11, 2022	Friday August 12, 2022	
8:00	Travel Time / Self guided exploration / Studio Setup	(Breakfast on your own before) Downtown tour	Campo Team Briefing	Campo Team Briefing	
9:00			Potential Catalyst Site Visits	Long term project selection / discussion	
10:00			Design Session - Riverfront Focused	Workshop summation Studio Cleanup	
11:00		Consultant team setup	Working Lunch	Working Lunch	
12:00		Working Lunch	Working Lunch	Working Lunch	
1:00		Identifying opportunities & constraints	Design Session - Desiard Focused	Design Camp	
2:00		Design Session - Compile list of potential catalyst sites and set up tours/visits	Design Session - Circulation Study / Development		
3:00			Design Session - Circulation Study / Development		
4:00		Campo+City set up studio	Design / Production	Working Dinner	Travel home
5:00		Phase 1 Booklet Overview			
6:00	City Council Meeting Monroe City Hall	Dinner	Informal Open House		
7:00		Dinner			
8:00	Dinner	Design / Production			
9:00					

CITY OF MONROE	CAMPO	CARBO	CSRS	COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
Mayor Friday Ellis Kelsea McCrary DJ Fortenberry Meghan Risinger Nirali Patel	Janina Scalfano Mary Gilmore Isabella Zannier	Shannon Blakeman John-Taylor Corely	Mark Goodson	Katrina Branson



OPPORTUNITY & CONSTRAINT ANALYSIS

Recognizing the existing opportunities and constraints of Downtown Monroe is the first step for the consultant team to devise and prioritize a comprehensive plan for growth and improvements.

GROWTH

State and federal historic tax credits provide an opportunity for growth through financial incentives that apply toward the rehabilitation of income-producing properties that are determined to be certified historic structures or contributing to a designated historic district by agencies such as State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPO) and National Park Service (NPS). Refer to "Historic Tax Credits & District Expansion" in Chapter 13 for more information.

Alternatively, vacant parcels offer an avenue to explore new construction and urban infill projects while planning for view corridors. The active node areas denote heavier trafficked buildings for which investors could target support spaces and functions tailored to the needs of dwellers. Improved access and programming in existing riverfront infrastructure will attract visitors and investment, revitalizing Downtown Monroe.

CIRCULATION

Understanding the physical and environmental constraints, along with traffic patterns and roadway conditions, guided the consultant team in identifying key instances in Downtown Monroe in the need for improved circulation. The disconnect of paths at the railroad, the flood wall, and higher trafficked roads are noted in the diagram for the team to assess and prioritize ways to shape a more efficient circulation grid. In addition, identifying the greenspace network and its limitations, shown in Chapter 10, will help prioritize maintenance and increase their public use.

LEGEND

- | | |
|--|--|
|  PLANNED STREET SCAPE IMPROVEMENTS |  50 + YEAR BUILDINGS |
|  RIVERFRONT ACTIVATION |  VACANT PARCELS / POTENTIAL NEW DEVELOPMENT |
|  VACANT BUILDINGS / POTENTIAL NEW PROGRAM |  ACTIVE NODES / HIGHER DENSITY LOCATIONS |
|  FLOOD WALL |  COLLECTOR STREETS (MEDIUM TRAFFICKED) |
|  CIRCULATION DISCONNECT |  INTERSTATE (HIGHEST TRAFFICKED) |
|  POTENTIAL VIEWS / PEDESTRIAN CORRIDORS | |



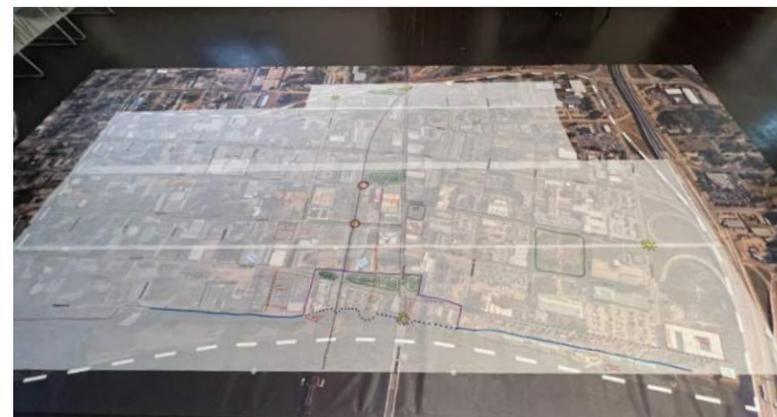
OPEN HOUSE AT THE GARRETT HOUSE OVERVIEW

The planning team compiled the information and designs discussed during consultant workshops into clear diagrams for the public to react to during an informal open house. City and design teams encouraged community participation through marketing of the Open House event on social media.

Dozens of people attended The Garrett House for the occasion, including public City officials, current downtown investors, business owners, and several Monroe's community members. However, the design team identified a lack of participants from stakeholders that might be outside Downtown Monroe. In general, community participation in the Informal Open House expressed great excitement towards City of Monroe Downtown development. Among the items for display in the Open House, the team included diagrammatic sketches of urban planning strategies, boards with questions about people's interests and ideas, and a Visioning Wishlist depicting different projects that could take place in either a 1, 5, or 10-year plan.

ITEMS DISCUSSED DURING THE OPEN HOUSE INCLUDE:

- The branding of a new district on the North side of Washington Street
- Increasing circulation, connectivity, and comfort
- Ideas for new incentives
- Potential catalysts projects
- Focused identity for Washington Street
- Downtown programming and alliances that would regularly engage community members
- Riverfront easements, activation and activities



TOPICS OF DISCUSSION

SENSE OF PLACE

NOUN

a sense of place is the emotions someone attaches to an area based on their experiences.

CULTURE

NOUN

the customs, arts, social institutions, and achievements of a particular nation, people, or other social group

UNITY

NOUN

the state of being united or joined as a whole. a totality of related parts : an entity that is a complex or systematic whole

COMMUNITY

NOUN

a group of people with a common characteristic or interest living together within a larger society

ACCESSIBILITY

NOUN

the quality of being able to be reached or entered. The quality of being easily reached, entered, or used by people who have a disability

URBAN PLANNING

NOUN

urban planning designs and regulates of the uses of space that focus on the physical form, economic functions, and social impacts of the urban environment

HISTORY

NOUN

a chronological record of significant events (such as those affecting a nation or institution) often including an explanation of their causes

ACTIVITY

NOUN

actions taken by a group in order to achieve their aims

CIRCULATION

NOUN

the movement of people around an area

GROWTH

NOUN

progressive development

PERMANENCE

NOUN

the state or quality of lasting or remaining unchanged indefinitely

INCLUSIVITY

NOUN

the practice or policy of providing equal access to opportunities and resources for people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalized, such as those having physical or intellectual disabilities or belonging to other minority groups

RETENTION

NOUN

an organization or municipal corporation's ability to hold on to its community members, employees, and students

EQUITY

NOUN

the quality of being fair and impartial. The monetary value of a property or of an interest in a property in excess of claims or liens against

PRESERVATION

NOUN

the activity or process of keeping something valued alive, intact, or free from damage or decay

PARTNERSHIPS

NOUN

a relationship resembling a legal partnership and usually involving close cooperation between parties having specified and joint rights and responsibilities

ALLIANCES

NOUN

an association of persons, parties, or states for mutual assistance and protection



PRELIMINARY CATALYST PROJECT LIST & SKETCHES

ADAPTIVE REUSE / PRESERVATION

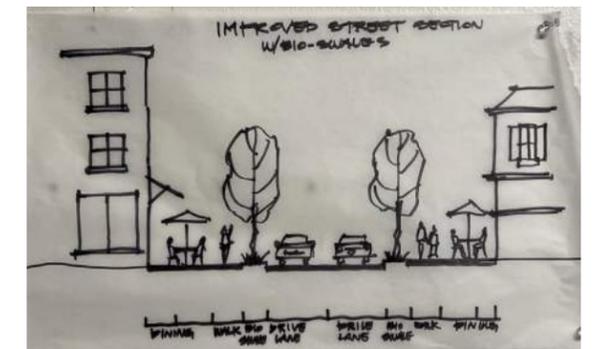
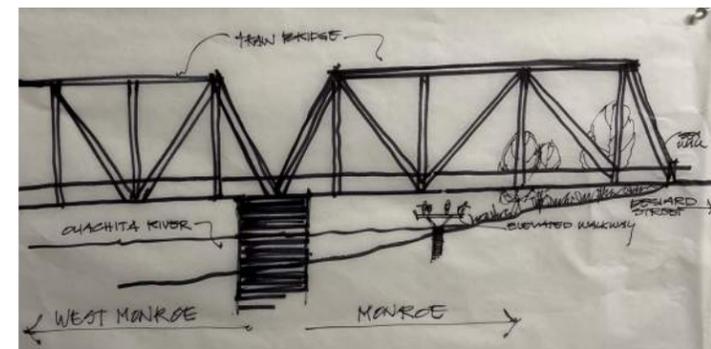
- Ouachita Candy Company Building
- Austin's by the River
- Palace Building
- Delta Theater historic renovation

CIRCULATION IMPROVEMENTS

- Pedestrian Alley
- Riverwalk
- Pedestrianize Art Alley
- Railroad Pedestrian crossing at 2nd Street
- Railroad Vehicular Crossing at 5th Street
- 2nd Street
- Walnut Street
- DeSiard Street
- Levee Path

ACTIVATION / PROGRAMMING / MARKETING

- 121 Washington St.
- News Star Parcel
- Dog Park
- Grand Plaza Auditorium programming
- Branding of new district





DISTRICTS & BUILDING USES

DISTRICTS & GATEWAYS

Gateways and wayfinding signs are essential for multiple reasons and should work in unison. They act as directional and orientation tools for pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists as they make their way through downtown. A series of 'Gateways' are proposed to denote the limits of the catchment area, alerting residents and visitors that they are entering the downtown area. The diagram identifies suitable locations for the gateways to occur and breaks them down into two categories, Primary and Secondary gateways.

PRIMARY GATEWAY

Primary gateways are located at the main entrances of the downtown catchment area and should be visible from a distance. These structures can cross over the roadway or emerge from mass plantings as vertical structures. Consider working with local artists to generate ideas and encourage community buy-in.

Proposed locations for the Primary Gateways are the intersections of Walnut St. & Louisville Ave, N. 4th St. & Louisville Ave, S. Grand St. & DeSiard St., Catalpa St. & Calypso St., and Wood St. & Winnsboro Rd.

SECONDARY GATEWAY

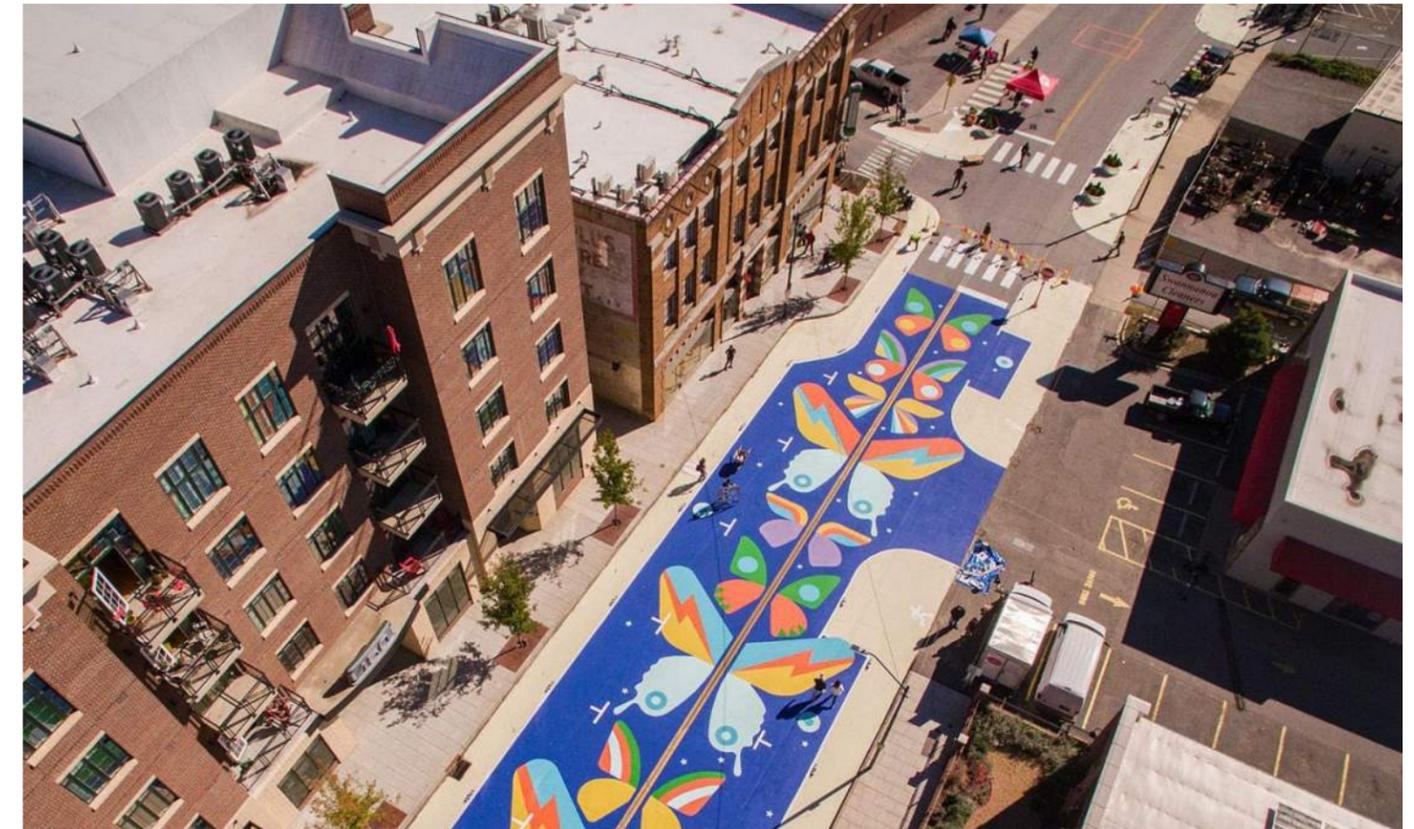
Secondary gateways should reinforce the Primary Gateways and be located along less traveled entrances to give visual cues that one is entering the downtown area. The secondary gateways are located closer to the ground plane, visible only as you approach the threshold. Examples include curb extensions, planting beds, smaller wayfinding signage, painted asphalt, or existing structures retrofitted with lighting.

Proposed locations for the Primary Gateways are the intersections of Washington St. & 6th St., DeSiard St. & 6th St., and S. Grand St. at the I-20.

LEGEND

- 'BRIDGETOWN' DISTRICT
- ARTS DISTRICT
- DOWNTOWN CORE DISTRICT
- RIVER DISTRICT
- MEDICAL DISTRICT
- CITY HALL / MUNICIPAL DISTRICT
- ↑ PRIMARY GATEWAY
- ↓ SECONDARY GATEWAY





PRIMARY GATEWAY - GREER STATION, SC

PRIMARY GATEWAY - GREER STATION, SC



PRIMARY GATEWAY - OVERTON PARK / MEMPHIS, TN



SECONDARY GATEWAY - BIRMINGHAM, AL



SECONDARY GATEWAY - BALTIMORE, MD

PROPOSED BUILDING USE DIAGRAM

Bridgetown District

The vision for this area of downtown is to create a unified identity for this district to help guide growth and development. Market analysis shows a need for medium density housing, such as townhouses, which are suitable for first time homeowners; student housing; mixed-use development with restaurants, grocery stores, entertainment, and night life.

Riverfront District

The Ouachita River is currently an untapped resource for attracting people to the downtown area. Therefore, the intent for this district is to create spaces that connect and engage with the river. Targeted building uses for this area are river facing retail, restaurants, cultural centers, community entertainment, outdoor venues, hospitality, and mixed-use spaces.



Main Street / Arts District

With the most urban density and historic structures in one area, the Main Street/Arts District is suited to be the heart of revitalization efforts and preservation of Monroe's unique character. Therefore, the building uses for this district require cultural activity and variety of program. For example, mixed-use buildings with public spaces, such as retail, restaurants, cultural centers, museums, and galleries on the ground floor while hosting offices or residential space on the upper floors.

Civic District

With City Hall and the Civic Center (extending outside the catchment area), the Civic District inherently attracts more civic and support spaces, such as libraries, hotels, and daytime restaurants.

Medical District:

Considering existing medical businesses in the area, the strategic proposed building uses consist of retail geared to support employees, patients, and visitors of such institutions. These can include 24-hour services such as, fitness centers and pharmacies along with daytime quick turnaround time food services, such as food halls, coffee shops, and buffet style restaurants.

PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CATALYST SITES

PROGRAMMING FOR A LIVE-WORK-PLAY DOWNTOWN MONROE

Live-Work-Play neighborhood, as the name suggests, is a neighborhood that provides places for people to LIVE (townhouse/multi-family apartments), WORK (offices, light manufacturing hubs, services) and PLAY (open spaces, bars/restaurants, retail, etc.); largely within close proximity to each other.

By providing these essential uses close to each other, such a neighborhood enables a more walkable and transit-rich development with improved streetscapes, catered towards providing a safe and vibrant pedestrian experience.

1. MEDIUM DENSITY TOWNHOUSES

With the vision of creating a vibrant live-work-play neighborhood, these medium-density townhouses would enable people working within or near Downtown Monroe, to live near their place of work while having access to several amenities that downtown has to offer. By providing more owner-occupied housing units through these townhouses, it would encourage more long-term residents to move into the area, anchoring the future for a thriving Downtown Monroe and allowing homeowners to build wealth as downtown is revitalized.

2. MIXED-USE WITH RESTAURANTS/BARS

This type of development allows for residential uses, such as multi-family apartments, to be mixed with ground-floor commercial uses, such as restaurants or bars. This creates a more lively entertainment district for the residents to enjoy, with a more active street-life and attractive urban design elements, such as outdoor seating, hanging planters, cozy lighting, etc.

3. MIXED-USE WITH GROCERY STORES

This type of development also allows for residential uses, such as multi-family apartment units, to be mixed with commercial uses, such as a grocery or a convenience store, located in the ground floor of the building. This allows for easy access to fresh-food stores within walking distance of where people live, creating a healthier community and a sustainable urban environment.

LEGEND

- CATALYST SITES
- PROGRAM AREAS FOR CATALYST SITES
- PEDESTRIAN CORRIDORS
- PROPOSED STREETScape IMPROVEMENTS



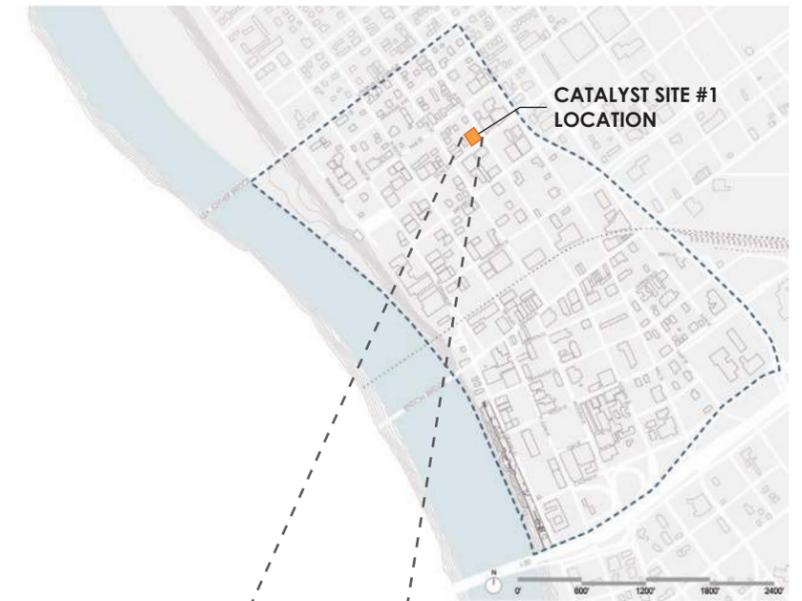
CATALYST SITE #1: MEDIUM-DENSITY TOWNHOUSES

LOCATION: Vacant Lot at northwest corner of Olive and N. 4th Streets

USES: Residential (Single-Family for sale housing)

SINGLE-FAMILY (for sale housing) | 4-10 units

- Market study identifies a strong opportunity for higher-end residential development downtown.
- Over **6,000 people** work downtown, but fewer than 1% of those workers live there.
- Market study shows there are very few housing options for average/above-average wage earners.
- Based on average annual income, the average worker would look to spend about **\$1,200/month** on housing.
- Of the approximately **400 housing units** in the area, only approximately 10 are currently owner-occupied.
- Residents with these incomes may be willing to pay a premium for downtown's proximity, amenities, and walkability.
- Owner-occupied housing use starts to transition between the Garden District neighborhood and downtown.



MEDIUM-DENSITY TOWNHOUSES DEVELOPMENT PROTOTYPE



CATALYST SITE #2: MIXED-USE WITH RESTAURANT/BAR

LOCATION: Former News Star block between N. 3rd, Breard, N. 4th, and Olive Streets

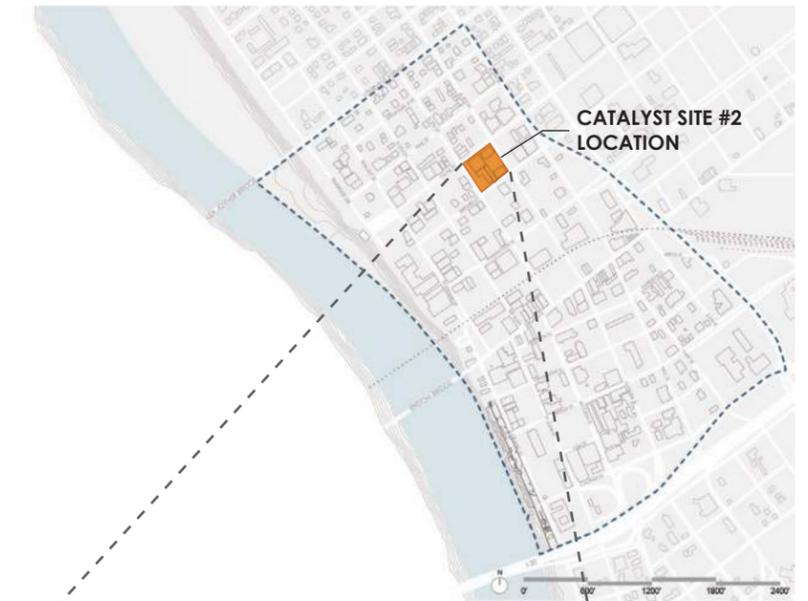
USES: Residential (Multi-family rental housing market), Commercial (Restaurant/Bar)

MULTI-FAMILY RENTAL HOUSING (market rate) | 20-40 units

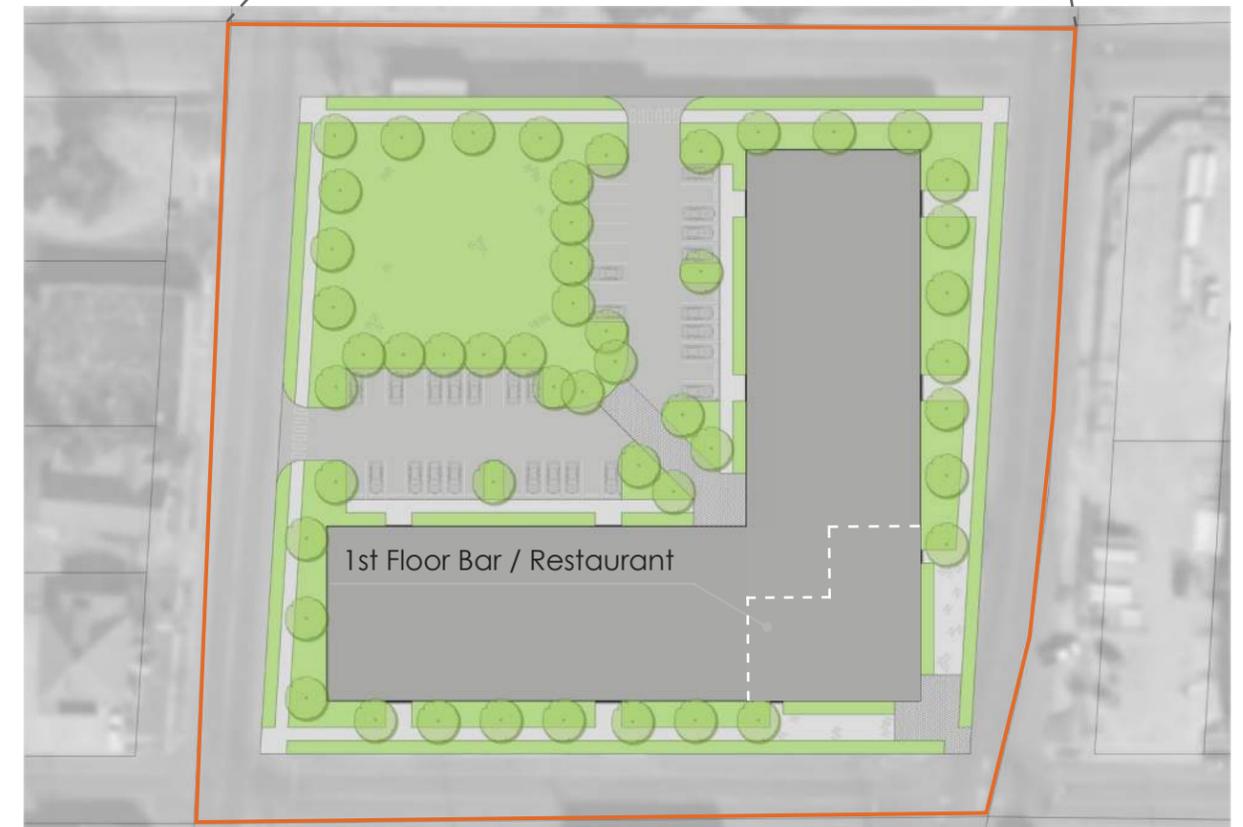
- Market study identifies a strong opportunity for higher-end residential development downtown.
- Over **6,000 people** work downtown, but fewer than **1%** of those workers live there.
- Market study shows there are very few housing options for average/above-average wage earners.
- Based on average annual income, the average worker would look to spend about **\$1,200/month** on housing.
- Residents with these incomes may be willing to pay a premium for downtown's proximity, amenities, and walkability.

RESTAURANT/BAR | 2,000-4,000 sf

- Market study shows a surplus of restaurants and bars downtown, meaning people go downtown to visit food and drink establishments.
- There is a notable shortage of both restaurants and bars at the parish and metro level, so more bar and restaurant options downtown will continue to attract residents from across the region.
- These uses could complement the existing bars, breweries, restaurants, and entertainment venues in or near "Bridgetown."
- Market study estimates that workers spend an estimated **\$3,871 annually** on coffee/lunch near their place of work.



MIXED-USE WITH RESTAURANT/BAR DEVELOPMENT PROTOTYPE



CATALYST SITE #3: MIXED-USE WITH GROCERY STORE

LOCATION: Northwest corner of Washington & N. 2nd Streets

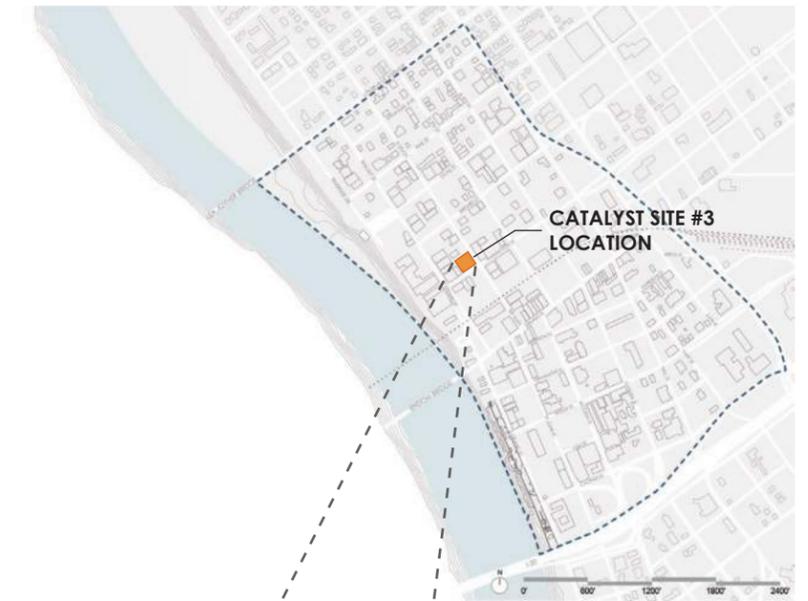
USES: Residential (multi-family rental housing), Commercial (small neighborhood grocery store)

MULTI-FAMILY RENTAL HOUSING (market rate) | 10-25 units

- Market study identifies a strong opportunity for higher-end residential development downtown.
- Over **6,000 people** work downtown, and less than **1%** of people live and work there.
- Market study shows there are very few housing options for average/above-average wage earners.
- Based on average annual income, the average worker would look to spend about **\$1,200/month** on housing.
- Residents with these incomes may be willing to pay a premium for downtown's proximity, amenities, and walkability.

SMALL NEIGHBORHOOD GROCERY STORE | 2,000-4,000 sf

- According to the market study, grocery stores have the highest dollar value of what downtown residents leave the boundaries of downtown to purchase.
- Grocery stores have nearly **\$500,000** in annual consumer spending potential.
- Providing this amenity could help develop downtown as the optimal spot in the region to live, work, play, and provide fresh food in an area with few options.



MIXED-USE WITH GROCERY STORE DEVELOPMENT PROTOTYPES





CIRCULATION

GREEN SPACE NETWORK AND CONNECTIVITY

Public spaces bring a wide range of benefits to cities. They contribute to community health, build a sense of place, provide a stage for public life, and anchor community activity. Given the variety of sub-districts and land uses within Monroe, it follows that the character of public spaces within the district will vary, responding to the context and needs of the surrounding community.

While larger civic spaces are more appropriate in the downtown core, where there is a concentration of government and institutional uses. Elements such as neighborhood parks, pocket parks, and greenways are better suited for other parts of the city. These public spaces should be distributed throughout the city, allowing convenient access for all residents and visitors. They should also be developed as a network that fosters safe pedestrian and cycling travel between these spaces.

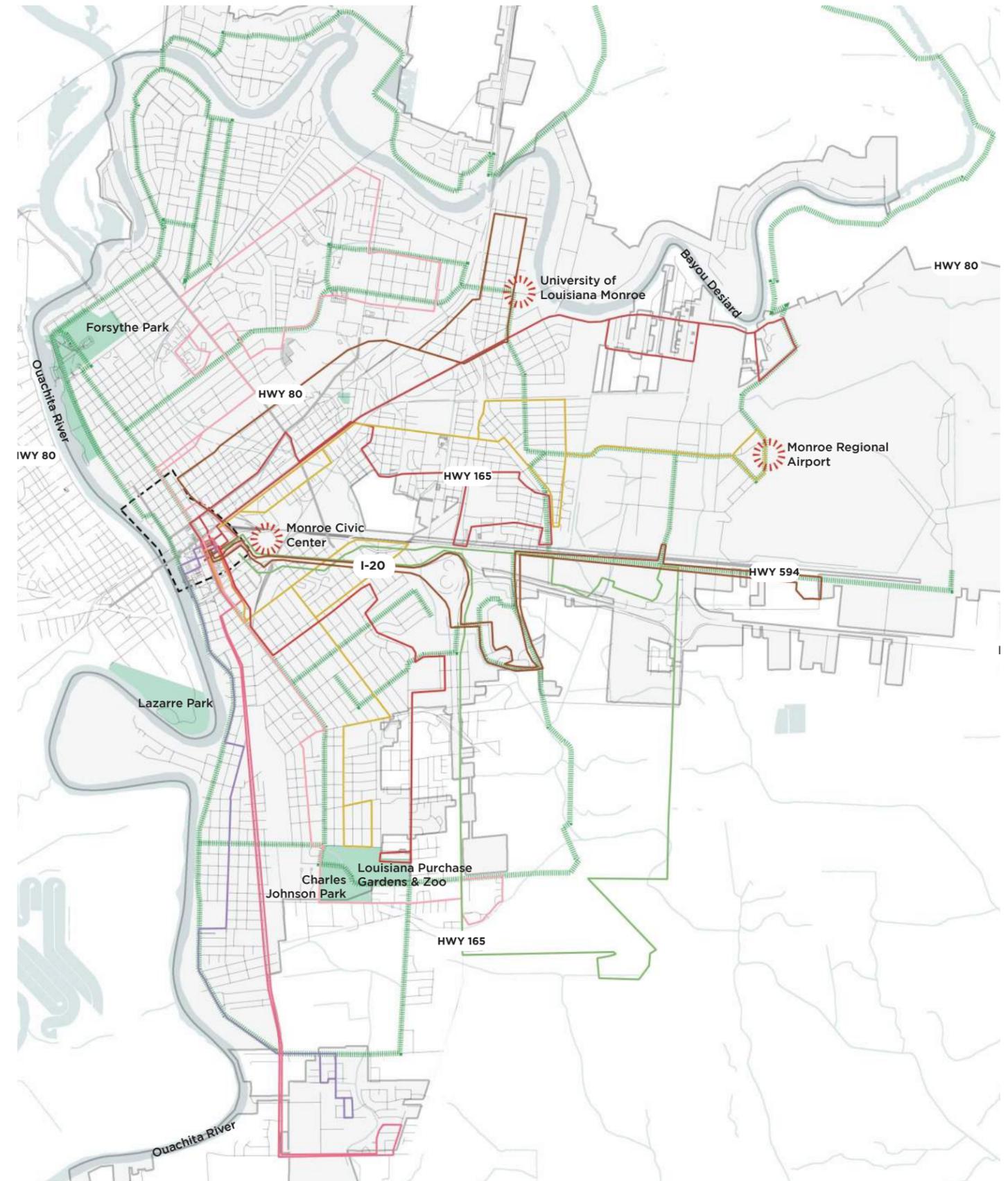
IMPROVING CONNECTIVITY TO DOWNTOWN

Implementation of these connections can begin with public spaces in the downtown core, particularly along highly visible corridors like DeSiard Street, Washington Street, and Walnut Street. Investing in flexible public spaces like plazas and pocket parks in the downtown area, along mixed-use streets, and adjacent to higher-intensity residential uses and community facilities should be a priority.

Connect public spaces to neighborhoods, schools, and social services by using safe sidewalks and street crossings, linear parks, and trails. Invest in the maintenance and diversification of existing public spaces to ensure that they accommodate the recreational needs of all city residents and visitors.

LEGEND

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
|  CITY PARKS AND OPEN SPACE |  #4 MARX |  #8 POWELL |
|  BIKE LANE |  #5 UNIVERSITY |  #9 JACKSON |
|  #1 DESIARD |  #6 BURG JONES |  #11 BERNSTEIN |
|  #3 TWIN CITY |  #7 CONWAY |  #12 WHITE |



CIRCULATION COMPOSITE PLAN

During the Phase 1 process, a circulation study was conducted that analyzed people's movement through downtown and their experience along their journey. Phase 2 builds upon that study, identifying key corridors and connections primed for improvement and focuses on incorporating pedestrian and bike networks.

The ease with which people move from one place to another, access services, and their comfort along the way all contribute to community character. The goal for downtown is to create multi-modal connections, utilizing elements such as improved bus shelters, accessible walkways, and dedicated bike routes. Comprehensive stormwater management practices can be incorporated into those elements promoting a more resilient approach to stormwater management, ultimately making its way into the surrounding communities.

STREET TYPOLOGIES

Four street typologies have been identified within the downtown catchment area. Isometric diagrams illustrate how streetscape elements can fit within the existing street right-of-way to promote sustainability, outdoor gathering, transit shelters, bike lane treatments, and parking. The typologies begin with a fifty-foot right-of-way width in two variations and build up to a right-of-way width large enough to incorporate bike lanes and transit stops. Several typical isometric diagrams demonstrate how bicycle paths fit within the profile in various ways, from shared lanes to protected lanes.

PRIORITIZING MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS

A complete network of streets and sidewalks should encourage pedestrian access, safety, and comfort by ensuring that sidewalks are maintained and connected by safe crosswalks and have pedestrian amenities such as trees, shade structures, lighting, and benches. A well-connected and designated bicycle network with low-speed bike-priority streets marked, and off-street bicycle or shared-use trails to connect amenities and nearby neighborhoods. See the following diagrams that illustrate the different experiences.

LEGEND

- PUBLIC OPEN SPACE
- IMPROVED CORRIDORS
- PEDESTRIAN RAILROAD CROSSINGS
- URBAN TRAIL
- LEVEE TRAIL
- PEDESTRIAN LINKS



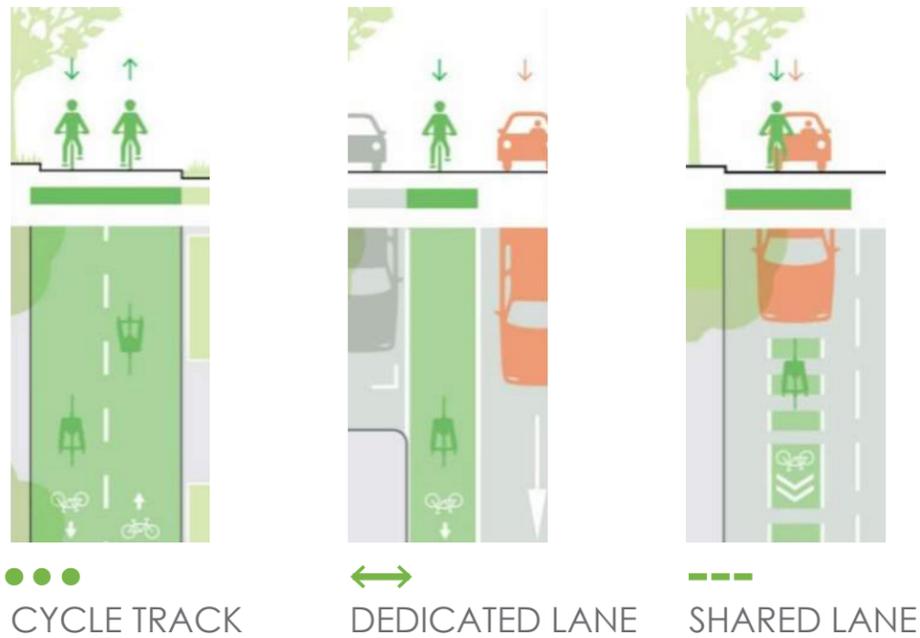
BIKE NETWORK

For biking to be a viable transportation option in Monroe, a comprehensive network of bike-friendly routes is needed. The diagram illustrates a hierarchy of bike routes based on the existing street network, key destinations, and future destinations. The three main components of a complete network are safety, comfort, and connectivity. The improvements should not stop at the catchment area but spread throughout the surrounding neighborhoods, allowing multiple ways to get downtown.

BIKE NETWORK HIERARCHY

The proposed network contains a hierarchy of routes that range from the highest level of protection to the minimum requirements for safe biking. The cycle track is physically separated from motor traffic, providing the highest level of safety. Streets with a 'dedicated lane' provide a separate lane in the street, marked by striping or a built buffer. 'Shared Lanes' are shared spaces where both motorists and cyclists occupy the same space. Clear signage and marked symbols are needed to inform motorists that cyclists are present.

LEGEND





BUFFERED BI-DIRECTIONAL CYCLE TRACK



DEDICATED BIKE LANE



DEDICATED BUFFERED BIKE LANE @ PARALLEL PARKING



CLEARLY MARKED SHARED LANE



BUFFERED BI-DIRECTIONAL CYCLE TRACK

PEDESTRIAN NETWORKS

Considering the different types of pathways, destinations, and conflict intersections within the existing urban fabric, the proposed pedestrian network diagram aims to connect the various downtown districts. Sidewalks and pedestrian crossings must offer a continuous, clear path for all users. The accessibility of sidewalks and intersections needs to be addressed. The diagram illustrates a hierarchy of pedestrian-priority conditions.

SHARED STREETS / PEDESTRIAN LINKS

Creating a network of shared streets (limited vehicular access), and pedestrian links (pedestrian alley) allows the downtown spine to become a permeable, active space that is enjoyable for both residents and visitors. Limiting vehicular access to Walnut St. and Art Alley allows room for outdoor art markets and events while giving pedestrians a place to feel safe throughout different times of the day.

RAILROAD CROSSINGS

The railway acts as a physical barrier, dividing downtown in half. Adding pedestrian crossings at Walnut, 2nd, and 5th Street will allow safe crossings at multiple points throughout the rail corridor. There is a range of crossing types available, ranging from mechanical barriers that close when a train approaches, to the minimum treatment consisting of a simple ADA-accessible walking surface over the tracks.

PEDESTRIAN ORIENTED STREETS

Pedestrian-oriented streets aim to be relevant to their context. Bringing the human scale into consideration, either with the facades of the buildings or the materials used, these streets need to make pedestrians feel safe and comfortable. Improve the connection between Downtown and West Monroe over the Endom Bridge. Enhance the sidewalks along DeSiard St. to encourage outdoor dining and walking while shopping. Improve the connection to ULM along the Washington St corridor.

LEGEND

- SHARED STREETS / PEDESTRIAN LINKS
- ↔ PEDESTRIAN ORIENTED STREETS
- - - IMPROVED SIDEWALKS
- PEDESTRIAN RAILROAD CROSSING





SHARED STREET WITH UNIT PAVING



SHARED STREET WITH BOLLARDS AND STREET MURAL



ADA PEDESTRIAN RAILROAD CROSSING



ADA PEDESTRIAN RAILROAD CROSSING WITH BARRIER



CURB BUMP-OUT FOR PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS

GREENSPACE AND PARKLETS

Open public spaces bring a wide range of benefits to cities. They contribute to community health, build a sense of place, provide a stage for public life, and anchor community activity. Given the variety of districts within the downtown catchment area, the character of public spaces within downtown will vary, responding to the context and needs of its surroundings. Underutilized areas can be suitable for parks, pocket parks, and greenways, to enhance the environment and biodiversity of the downtown area.

ACTIVATING EXISTING PARKLETS

Activating existing parklets can begin with providing site lighting and benches. The River Market has the infrastructure in place to be a thriving outdoor parklet. With the addition of the marina in the future, this space can be an amenity for residents and visitors. The following pages provide precedents from other cities of similar size to showcase how these areas can be activated and contribute to the character of downtown.

TURNING UNDERUTILIZED AREAS INTO AMENITIES

Taking advantage of underutilized spaces throughout downtown for needed amenities, such as dog parks, farmers markets, linear parks, walking trails, and central gathering spaces are improvements the city can begin implementing to create a complete urban fabric. Street improvements will help organize and distribute public parking throughout the downtown area, allowing the city to reclaim large parking lots in prime real estate zones. Areas such as the parking lot across from Bry Park can be re-envisioned to create a central gathering space for a social and economic center in the heart of the city. Bry Park improvements should be considered at the same time, increasing the capacity for the proposed gathering space.

LEGEND

- | | |
|--|--|
|  EXISTING GREEN SPACE |  RIVER MARKET |
|  PROPOSED GREEN SPACE |  KAYAK LAUNCH |
|  SKATE PARK |  WALNUT STREET PARK |
|  DOG PARK |  UNDERPASS PARK |



GREENSPACE & PARKLETS

PRECEDENT PARKS APPROPRIATE FOR DOWNTOWN

The following pages provide precedents to showcase how these areas can be activated to contribute to the character of downtown. While the context of some of these projects might be out of scale for Downtown Monroe, they address similar challenges the city faces, such as reconnecting people to the waterfront, utilizing the open areas under transportation infrastructure, central gathering spaces, dog parks and urban trails that provide pedestrians with safe passage through an urban area.

PROXIMATE PRINCIPLE AND THE ECONOMY

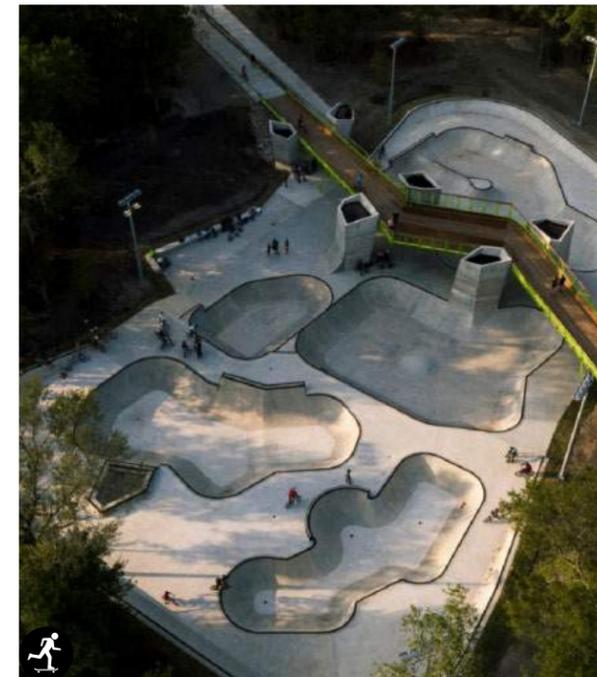
The "Proximate Principle" dates to the design of Central Park in Manhattan and refers to a phenomenon that occurs when property values increase as their location gets closer to parks, open spaces, and green spaces. More recently, modern studies using more sophisticated techniques have confirmed this phenomenon, reinforcing the case for investing in green space. Doing so can help pay for itself by increasing surrounding property values and, consequently, property tax revenues. According to the National Recreation and Parks Association, over 20 studies found that trails can increase surrounding property values by three to fifteen percent. Similar research has also shown that, conservatively, properties within 500 feet of a park can expect a five percent increase in property values.



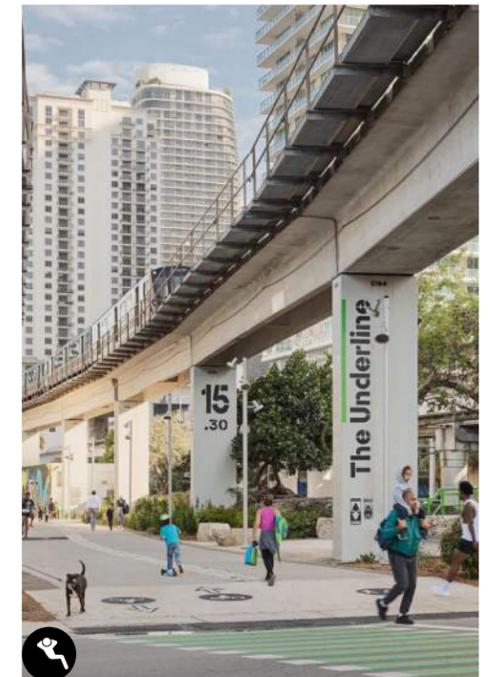
LEVY DOG PARK - HOUSTON, TX



CHICAGO RIVER WALK - CHICAGO, IL



ROCKSTAR ENERGY BIKE PARK -



UNDERLINE LINEAR PARK - MIAMI, FL



DOWNTOWN ROANOKE, VA KAYAK LAUNCH



WAYNE FERGUSON PLAZA - LEWISVILLE, TX

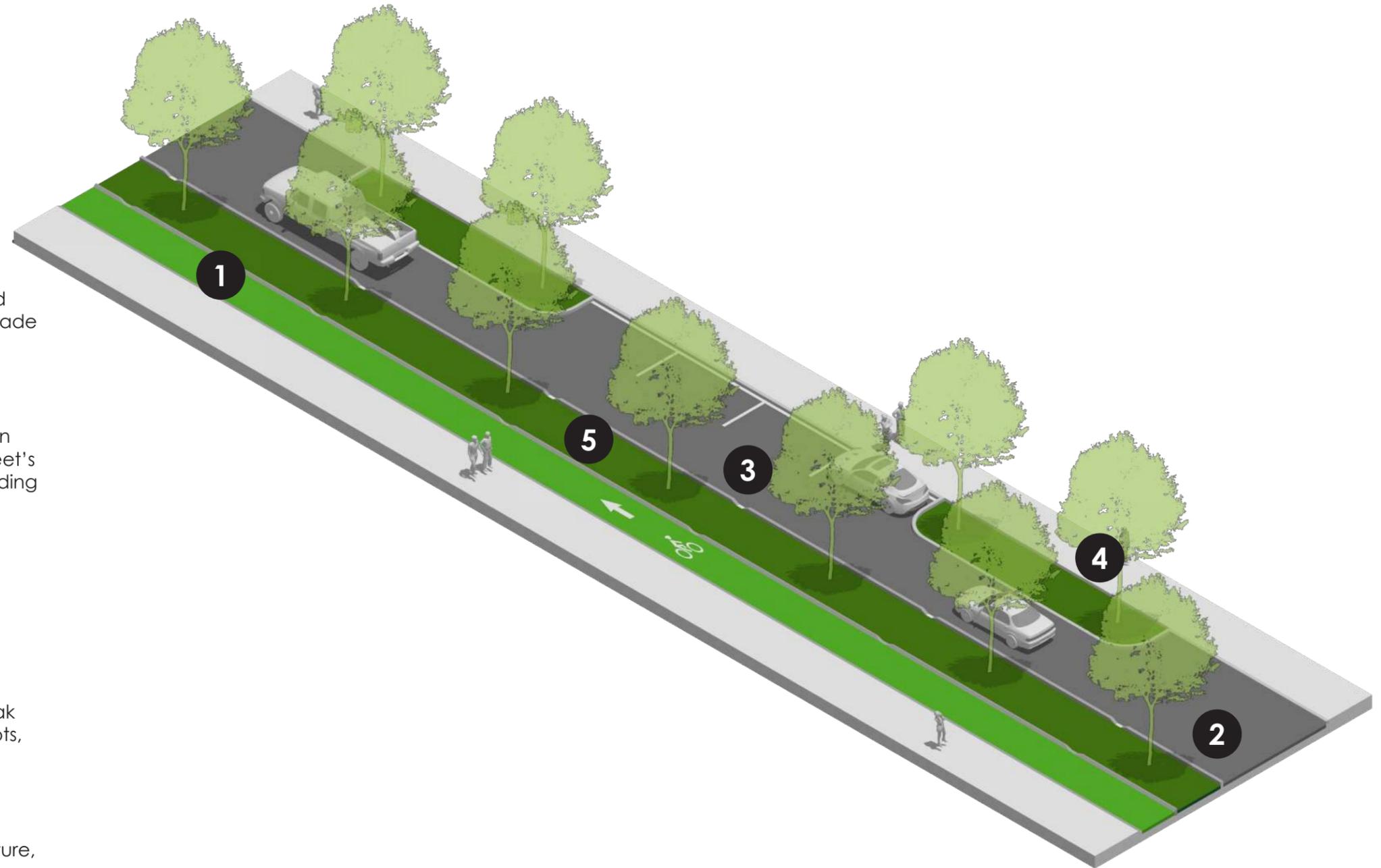


NORTH BOULEVARD TOWN SQUARE - BATON ROUGE, LA

50' ROW - DOWNTOWN 1-WAY STREET TYPOLOGY

A typical one-way downtown street with fifty feet of right-of-way can be converted into an active street for bikes, cars, and stormwater. This isometric example would be appropriate along Wood Street and 5th Street, along with other 1-Way Downtown Streets.

- 1 One-way Bicycle Path**
Separated from the roadway with a small planted bio-swale provides separation and a space for shade trees.
- 2 Modified Travel Lane**
Reducing lane widths to 10 feet are appropriate in urban areas and have a positive impact on a street's safety without impacting traffic operations according to NACTO.
- 3 Curb Cuts**
Provide for rainwater to enter bio-swale and rain garden.
- 4 Rain Gardens**
Depressions designed to temporarily hold and soak in rainwater runoff that flows from roofs, parking lots, roads, or other impervious surfaces.
- 5 Bio-Swale**
Shallow, vegetated depressions intended to capture, treat, and infiltrate stormwater runoff. Provides a buffer for sidewalks and motor vehicles.



50' ROW - DOWNTOWN 2-WAY STREET TYPOLOGY

A typical downtown street with fifty feet of right-of-way can be converted into an active street for pedestrians, cars, and stormwater. This isometric example would be appropriate along DeSiard and S. Grand Street.

1 Curb Extension

Opportunity to extend sidewalks and provide cafe seating or movable street furniture.

2 Stormwater Bump-Outs

Physically narrow the roadway, increasing the available space for street elements such as rain gardens and impervious surface to treat stormwater.

3 Bio-Swale

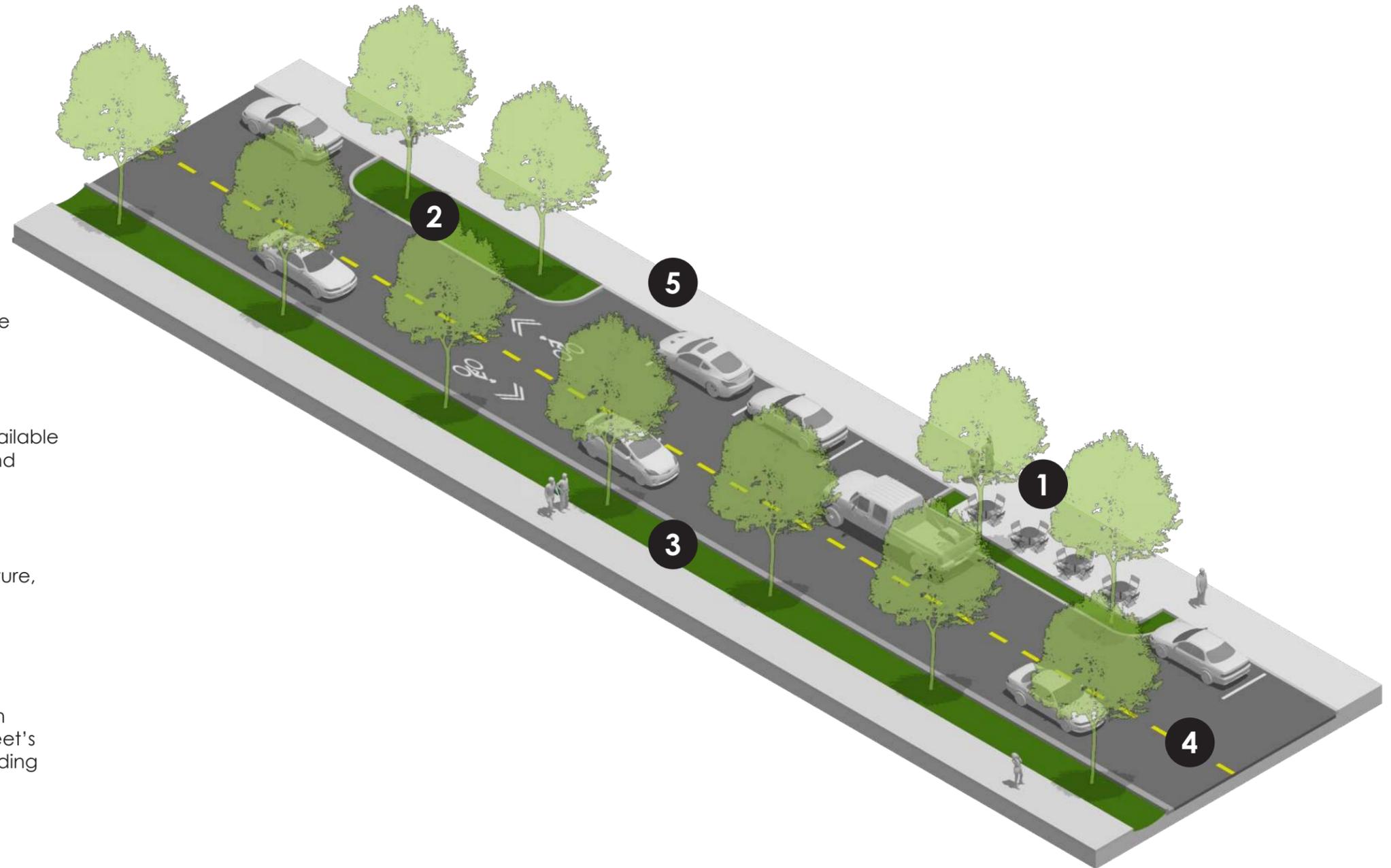
Shallow, vegetated depressions intended to capture, treat, and infiltrate stormwater runoff. Provides a buffer for sidewalks and motor vehicles.

4 Modified Travel Lane

Reducing lane widths to 10 feet are appropriate in urban areas and have a positive impact on a street's safety without impacting traffic operations according to NACTO.

5 Sidewalk

At least six feet wide made in concrete. Allocate space for building entrances and commercial activity.



50' ROW - DOWNTOWN SHARED STREET TYPOLOGY

A typical dead-end street with fifty feet of right-of-way can be converted into a permeable, active space that is enjoyable for both residents and visitors. Limiting vehicular access to Walnut St. and Art Alley allow room for outdoor art markets, and events while giving pedestrians a place to feel safe throughout different times of the day.

1 Street Furniture

Opportunity to extend sidewalks and provide large, movable street furniture.

2 Permeable Paving

Effectively treats, detains, and infiltrates stormwater runoff where landscape-based strategies are not feasible. Pervious pavements have multiple applications, including sidewalks, street furniture zones, entire roadways, or parking lanes.

3 Parallel Parking

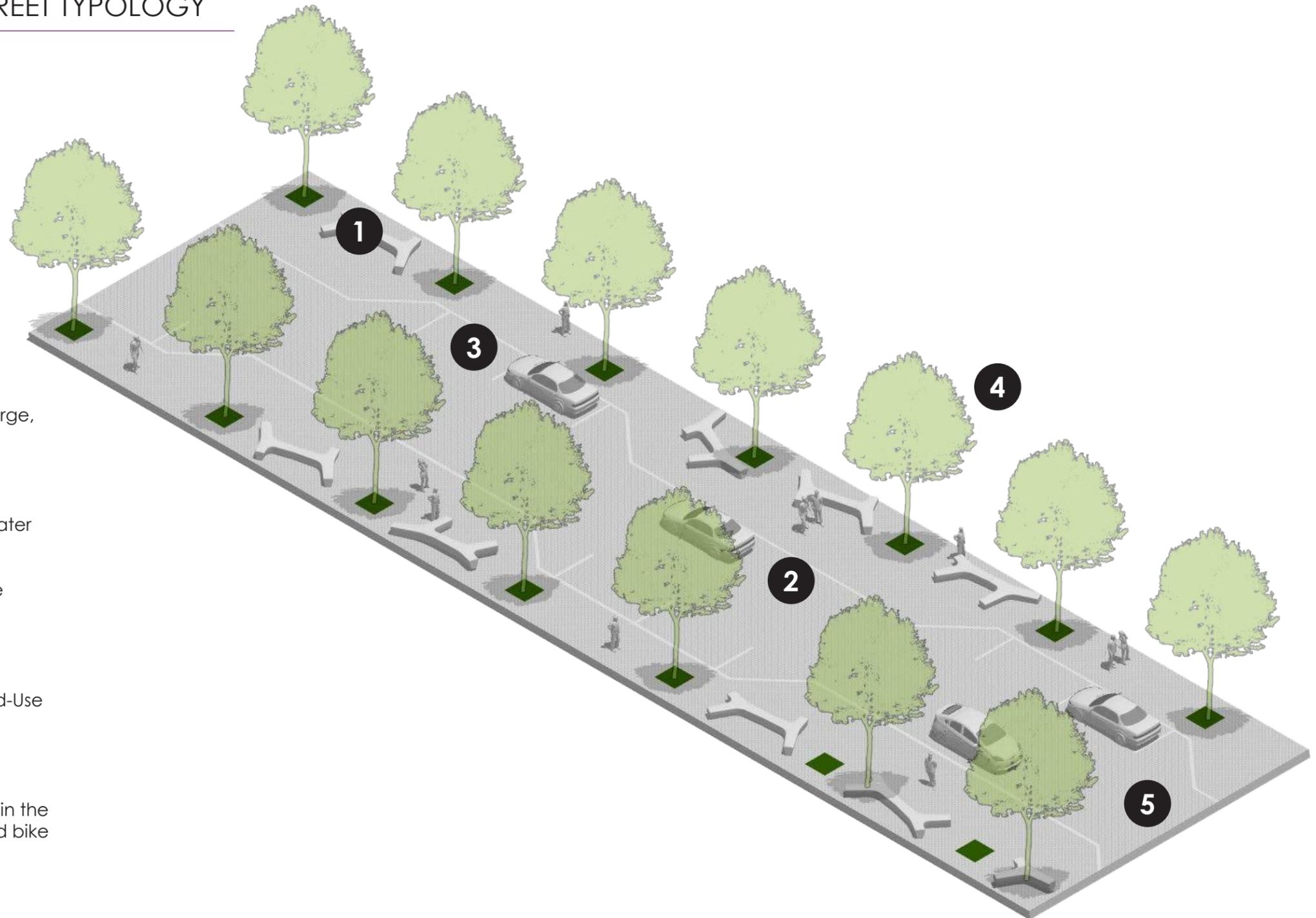
Provide where needed, such as in front of Mixed-Use areas or Commercial-Mixed areas.

4 Shade Trees

Trees can reduce temperatures by 2-9 degrees in the summer months. This adds to the pedestrian and bike experience.

5 Limited Vehicular Access

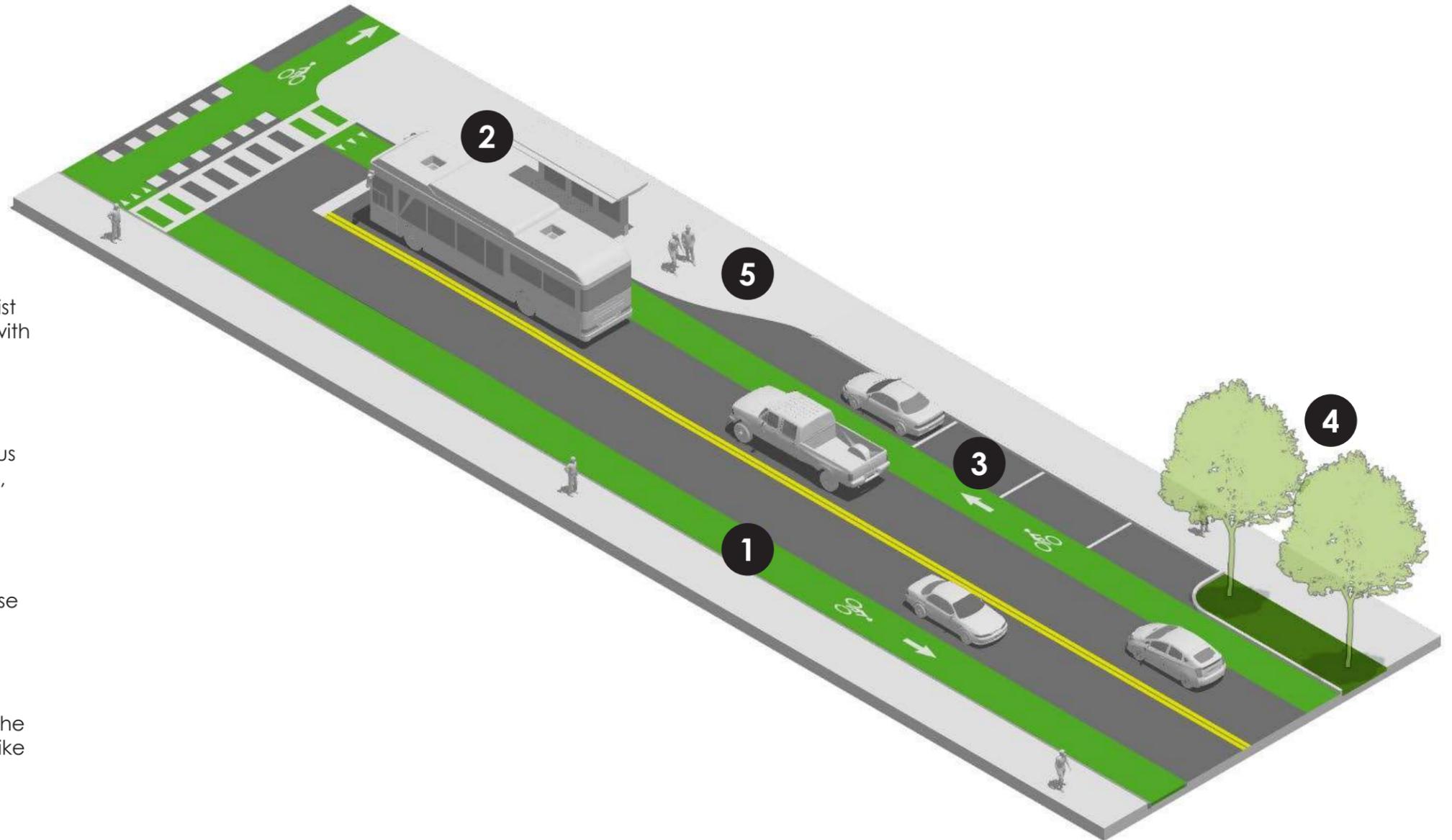
Limit vehicle access to these streets for either loading and unloading or residents only. Pedestrians should have priority in the street.



60' ROW - DOWNTOWN 2-WAY STREET TYPOLOGY

A typical street with sixty feet of right-of-way can be converted into two travel lanes for automobiles to provide room on the street for other modes of transportation and rainwater detention opportunities. This isometric example would be appropriate along N. Walnut, Pine, and 4th Street.

- 1 One-Way Bicycle Path**
Separated by a dedicated lane, this provides cyclist with enough space to safely coexist on the street with motor vehicles.
- 2 Bus Stop and Shelter**
Curb extensions can provide enough room for a bus shelter to protect riders from environmental factors, such as heavy rains or extreme heat.
- 3 Parallel Parking**
Provide where needed, such as in front of Mixed-Use areas or Commercial-Mixed areas.
- 4 Shade Trees**
Trees can reduce temperatures by 2-9 degrees in the summer months. This adds to the pedestrian and bike experience.
- 5 Sidewalks**
At least six feet wide made in concrete. Allocate space for building entrances and commercial activity.



TYPE	PICTURE	OVERVIEW	ACCEPTABLE USES
Flow-Through Planters		Hard-edged stormwater management facilities with a waterproof base. Flow-Through planters are appropriate for high-density urban areas, or where water infiltration is not favorable. Flow-through planters treat water by allowing runoff to filter through its soil base and filter into an underdrain system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More costly than other stormwater tools • Appropriate for streets and areas where space is limited.
Curb Cuts		Evenly redistribute runoff from streets to adjacent treatment facilities retaining as much stormwater on site as possible. These are inexpensive techniques to divert water out of the roadway by modifying existing infrastructure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Divert stormwater to a stormwater treatment facility such as a bio-swale, cistern, or raingarden. • Curb cuts are a highly recommended tool for the city to utilize.
Permeable Paving		Effectively treats, detains, and infiltrates stormwater runoff where landscape-based strategies are not feasible. Pervious pavements have multiple applications, including sidewalks, street furniture zones, entire roadways, or parking lanes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A wide variety of material applications are available, from loose gravel to pre-made porous pavers, permeable paving can be customized to multiple uses and situations. • Use in the R.O.W, it is recommended that pre-made porous pavers be used, to meet ADA requirements. • Effective, but costly to install and maintain.
Bio-Swales		Shallow, vegetated depressions intended to capture, treat, and infiltrate stormwater runoff as it moves downstream. Bio-swales are highly effective at slowing runoff velocity and cleansing water while recharging the underlying groundwater table.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be scaled up or down in size while still functioning properly, depending on available space. • One of the most effective and cost-efficient tools in the toolkit for managing stormwater in the R.O.W due to their versatility. • Can easily be added to existing ditches or medians in a roadway with slight modifications and planting enhancements.
Stormwater Bump-Outs		Physically narrow the roadway, creating safer and shorter crossings for pedestrians while increasing the available space for street elements such as plantings, street trees, and furnishings. Curb extensions have multiple applications.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suitable for higher density areas and residential areas where more pedestrians are present due to their traffic calming properties. • Minimal infrastructure required, curb extensions are suitable for the city to begin implementing within the downtown / mixed use core.
Raingardens		A depression filled with native shrubs, perennials, and flowers. It is designed to temporarily hold and soak in rainwater runoff that flows from roofs, parking lots, roads, or other impervious surfaces. Rain gardens are effective in removing up to 90% of nutrients and chemicals and up to 80% of sediments from the rainwater runoff. Like bio-swales, raingardens can be scaled up or down depending on available space, and still have perform properly.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little infrastructure required. • Can easily be implemented throughout the city in vacant lots, parking lots, or parks.

URBAN PLANTING MATRIX

This matrix includes a selection of plants suited for Monroe's environmental conditions. Once needs and site conditions are determined, use the information listed for each plant to determine the best fit for trees, shrubs, perennials, and groundcovers. This is not an exhaustive list and there are other species that may be appropriate. This chart shows plant characteristics that should be considered when looking for plants that meet specific needs.

Sun/Shade
 FULL SUN
 PARTIAL SUN
 SHADE

Suitable Conditions
 WIND TOLERANT
 DROUGHT TOLERANT
 WET SOIL TOLERANT
 EROSION CONTROL
 INUNDATION TOLERANT

Growth Rate
 FAST
 MODERATE
 SLOW

Foliage/Perennial
 EVERGREEN
 DECIDUOUS
 PERENNIAL

GRASSES AND PERENNIALS



SUN/SHADE	SUITABLE CONDITIONS	EVERGREEN/DECIDUOUS/ PERENNIAL	GROWTH RATE (SLOW, MODERATE, FAST)	APPROPRIATE USES	MATURE SIZE (H' X W')	COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	NATIVE	REFERENCE NUMBER
				Tolerant of multiple soil types	2' x 1'	Black-eyed Susan	<i>Rudbeckia fulgida</i> var. <i>sullivantii</i> 'Gold-sturm'		1
				Attractive pink color in fall	3' x 3'	Gulf Coast Muhly	<i>Muhlenbergia capillaris</i>		2
				Wet areas	2' x 2'	Soft Rush	<i>Juncus inflexus</i> 'Blue arrows'		3
				Good for mass plantings on slopes	3' - 4'	Northern Sea Oats	<i>Chasmanthium latifolium</i>		4
				Adaptable and forms dense clumps	5' x 2'	Royal Fern	<i>Osmunda regalis</i>		5
				Good ground-cover foliage for shade in the hot Southeast	3' x 3'	Southern Wood Fern	<i>Dryopteris</i>		6
				Bayous, ditches, continually wet spot	2' x 2'	Spider Lily	<i>Hymenocallis liriosome</i>		7
				Groundcover or low maintenance bed filler	1.5' x 1'	Cherokee Sedge	<i>Carex cherokeensis</i>		8
				Urban tolerant	4' x 1'	Giant Blue Iris	<i>Iris giganteaerulea</i>		9
				Wet, clay soils	3' x 1'	Copper Iris	<i>Iris fulva</i>		10

URBAN PLANTING MATRIX

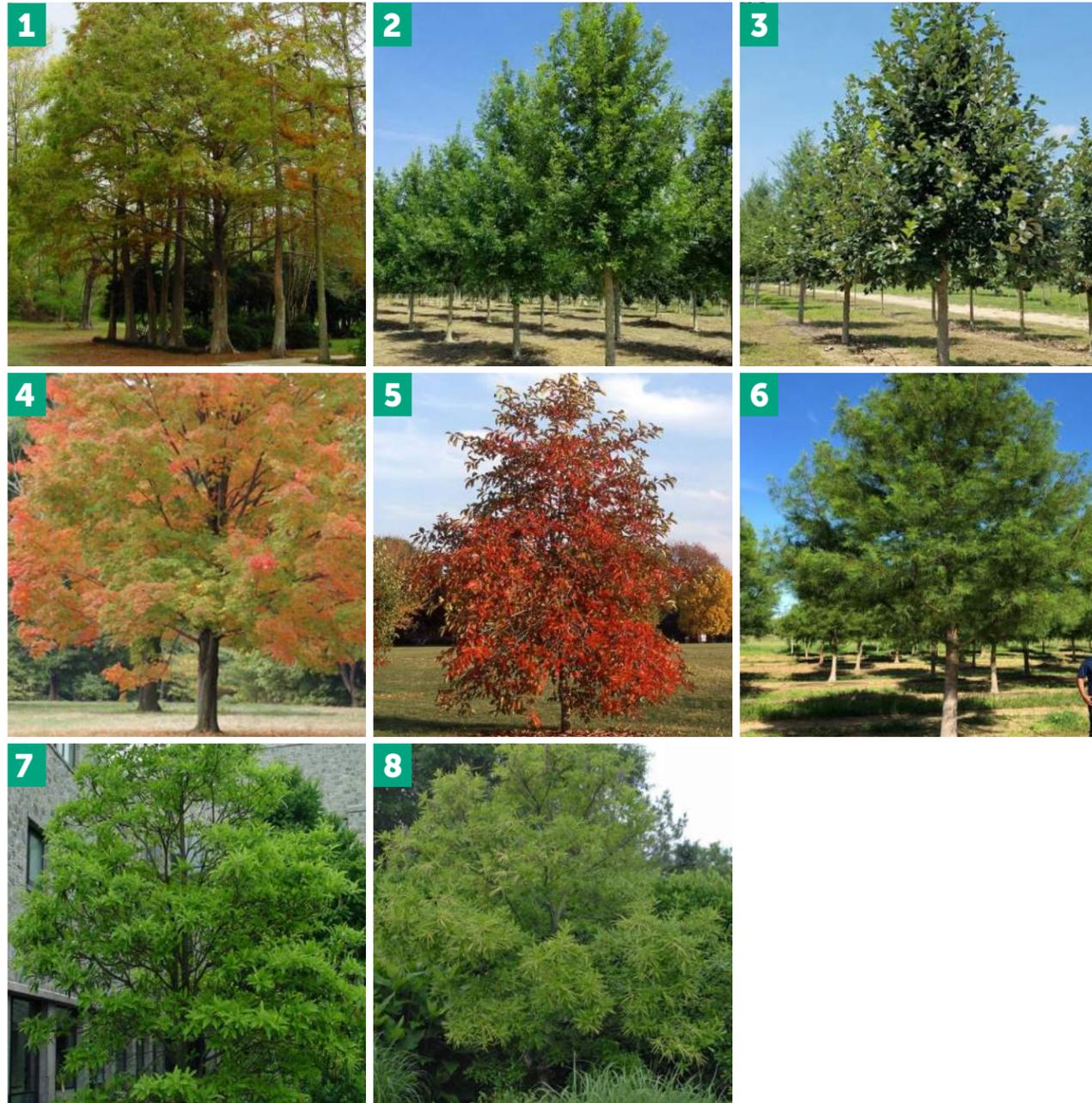
SHRUBS



SUN/SHADE	SUITABLE CONDITIONS	EVERGREEN/DECIDUOUS/ PERENNIAL	GROWTH RATE (SLOW, MODERATE, FAST)	APPROPRIATE USES	MATURE SIZE (H' X W')	COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	NATIVE	REFERENCE NUMBER
				Rounded form with berries and seeds	6' x 6'	Beauty-berry	<i>Callicarpa americana</i>		1
				Bright green foliage & flowers 3/4 seasons	5' x 5'	Native red Hibiscus	<i>Hibiscus coccineus</i>		2
				Drought, tolerant	6' x 4'	Inkberry	<i>Ilex glabra</i>		3
				Open, spreading form with spring flowers	8' x 10'	Buttonbush	<i>Cephalanthus occidentalis</i>		4
				Spreading small shrub, showy in spring, fall leaf color	5' x 4'	Virginia sweetspire	<i>Itea Virginica</i>		5
				Dense cluster of fronds	8' x 6'	Dwarf Palmetto	<i>Sabal minor</i>		6
				Compact, hardy, drought tolerant	3'x6'	Carissa Holly	<i>Ilex cornuta 'Carissa'</i>		7

URBAN PLANTING MATRIX

TREES



SUN/SHADE	SUITABLE CONDITIONS	EVERGREEN/DECIDUOUS/ PERENNIAL	GROWTH RATE (SLOW, MODERATE, FAST)	APPROPRIATE USES	MATURE SIZE (H' X W')	COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	NATIVE	REFERENCE NUMBER
				Long lived and good wind barrier, seasonal color	50' x 25'	Bald Cypress	<i>Taxodium distichum</i>		1
				Extremely tough and urban tolerant, poorly drained areas	50' x 45'	Green Spring Overcup	<i>Quercus lyrata</i> 'dahlongea'		2
				Prefers acidic soils, thrives with wet feet	40' x 30'	Swamp White Oak	<i>Quercus bicolor</i> 'Green Nova'		3
				Well-drained soil, messy and not to be placed near pavement	75' x 40'	Sycamore	<i>Plantanus occidentalis</i>		4
				Long-lived swamp tree	60' x 40'	Water Tupelo	<i>Nyssa sylvatica</i>		5
				Smaller cypress tree without knees	40' x 25'	Pond Cypress	<i>Taxodium ascendens</i>		6
				Highly adaptive, fragrant flowers in spring	40' x 30'	Sweetbay magnolia	<i>Magnolia virginiana</i>		7
				Highly adaptive, flowers in spring	20' x 12'	Titi tree	<i>Cyrilla racemiflora</i>		8



RIVERFRONT CHARACTER

DESIGN IDEAS/MOOD BOARD

The "Rollin' on the Riverfront" Block Party incorporated games that were meant to collect data about the community members and their hopes for the riverfront area. This game encouraged community members to select two inspiration images and to rank them by putting a sticker signifying "love" and "like," for their top ranked choices.



OUACHITA RIVER *Vibes*

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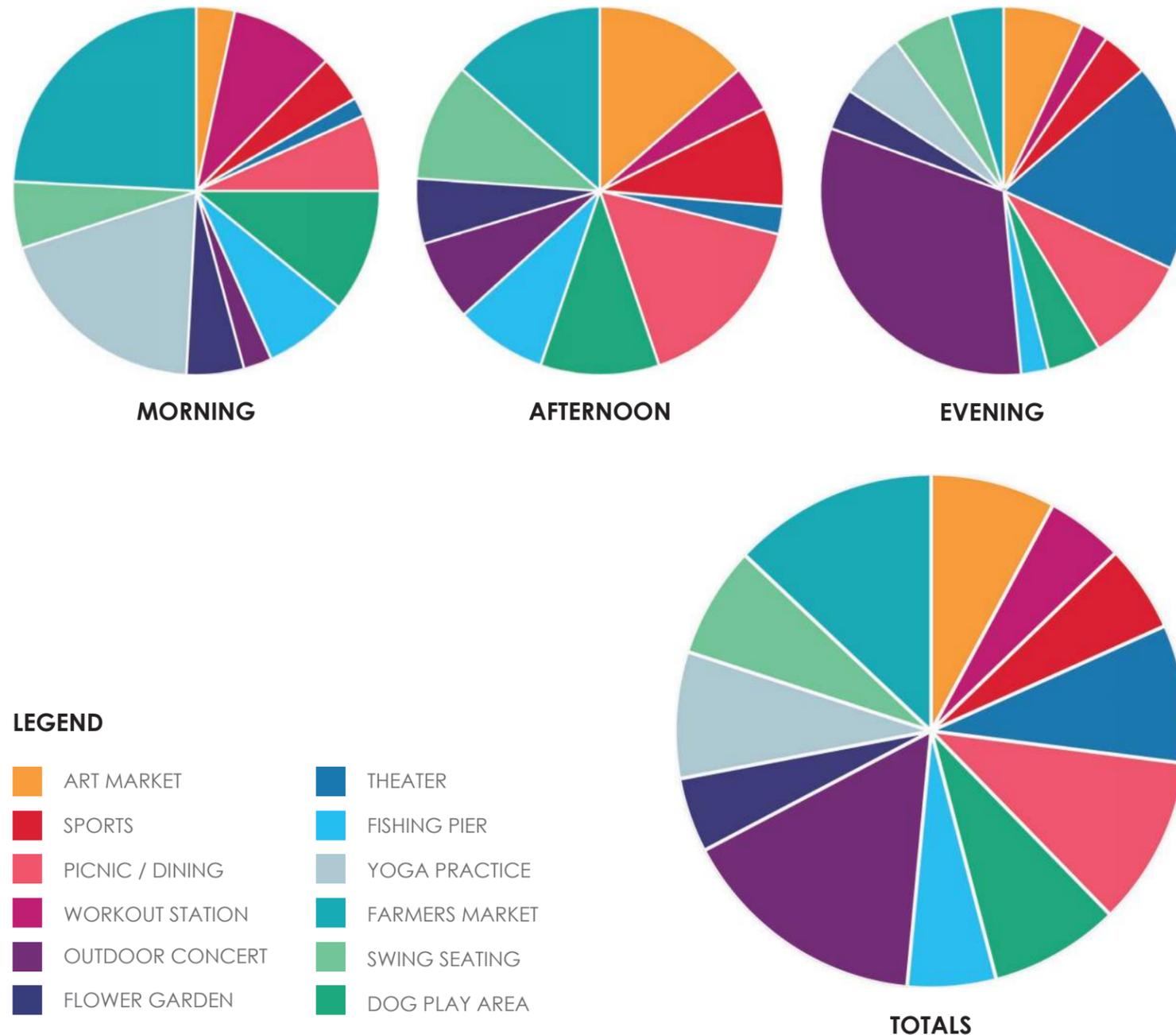
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**The Riverfront is a place for everyone.
What's your vibe?
"like" one, "love" one**

Rollin' on the Riverfront

RIVERMARKET ACTIVATION

The "RiverMarket Activities" board allowed attendees to showcase activation of the existing infrastructure by the Ouachita River. Participants chose their favorite activity among the options provided and located its sticker in the desired location at one of either morning, afternoon, or evening time plans provided. Results revealed a high interest of Farmer's Market and Yoga/Fitness activities in the morning time, Farmer's and Art Markets in the afternoon, and Concert/Performances in the evening. Overall, this exercise highlights the community's excitement about activation of the RiverMarket with variety in time of day and programmatic activities.



Rivermarket activities

MORNING

AFTERNOON

EVENING

How can the existing Rivermarket be more activated?

- ART MARKET
- WORKOUT STATION
- SPORTS
- THEATER
- PICNIC / DINING
- DOG PLAY AREA
- FISHING PIER
- OUTDOOR CONCERT
- FLOWER GARDEN
- YOGA PRACTICE
- SWING SEATING
- FARMER'S MARKET

Choose your favorite activity. Place it where and when you would do it.

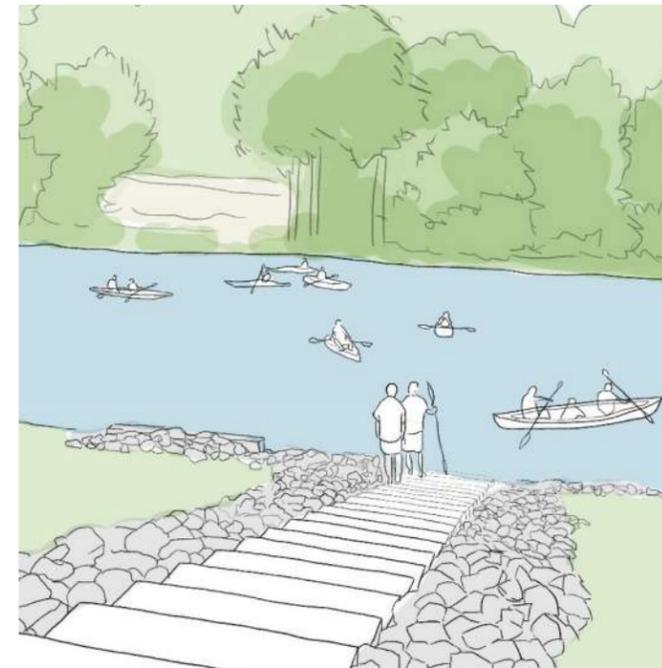
Rollin' on the Riverfront
City of Monroe

CONNECTIONS TO WATER

Designers at Carbo Landscape Architecture produced original sketches as part of the Block Party game "Connections to Water." Attendees were asked to select the sketch depicting an area they would use the most often. All sketches were based on ideas for potential development of the riverfront area.



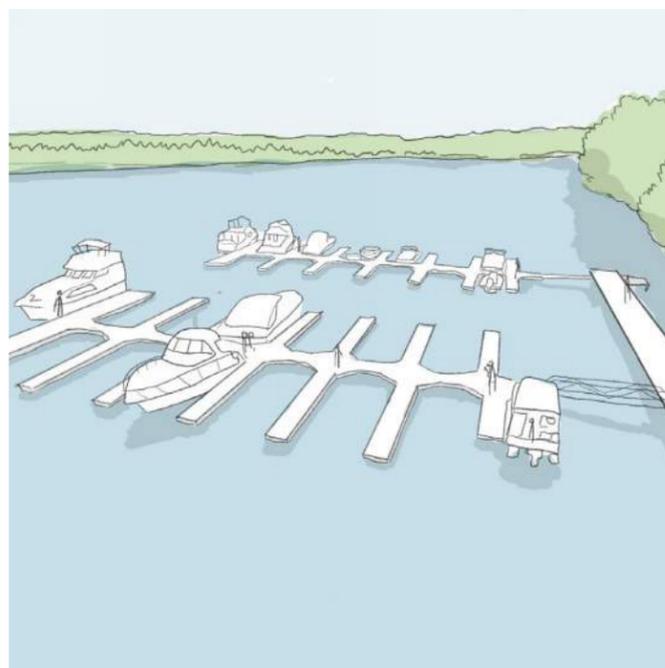
DOG PARK



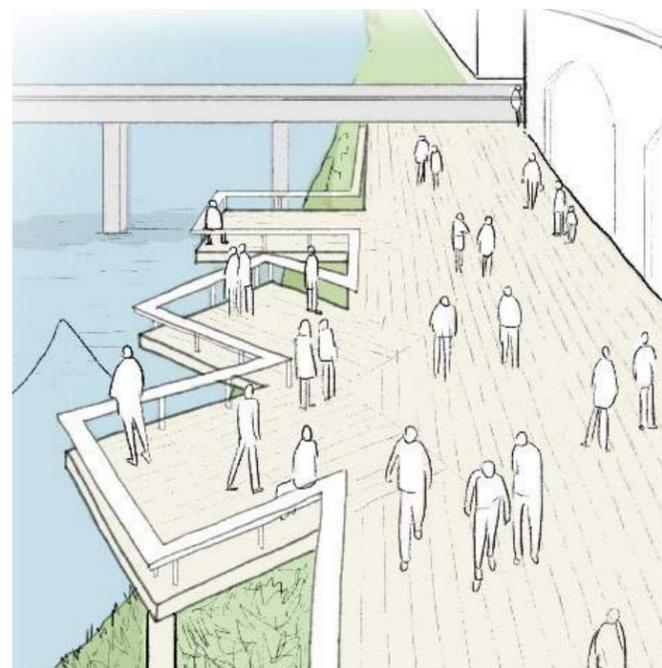
KAYAK LAUNCH



LEVEE WALK



MARINA



RIVER OBSERVATION DECK



URBAN TRAIL



WALKWAY UNDER BRIDGE



MARKETING CAMPAIGNS

POINTS OF INTEREST

With the abundance of interesting places in the downtown area, the creation of self-guided walking tours would attract more people to the area by enhancing people's knowledge of the history and culture that exists downtown. The intent for these tours are to curate:

1. Collect knowledge and information in one place (whether that be the history of a structure or mural or even the suggestion of an appetizer or drink at a restaurant)
2. A suggested route
3. And for the information and locations to be continually updated and evolving as the area grows

The platform could be as simple as a document that can be downloaded onto a phone so as people walk around they can have easy access to the route and can read the information, or as complex as a phone application that has location services that has prerecorded history lessons that can be listened to when they are in proximity of the point of interest.

HISTORY & CULTURE

- CANDY COMPANY BUILDING
- DELTA THEATER
- SAENGER THEATER (NOW PARK)
- NORTHEAST LOUISIANA CHILDREN'S MUSEUM
- AUSTIN'S BY THE RIVER
- RIVERMARKET
- RAILROAD BRIDGE
- HOTEL MONROE BUILDING
- HARVEY'S DANCE HALL
- NEWS STAR BUILDING

ARCHITECTURE

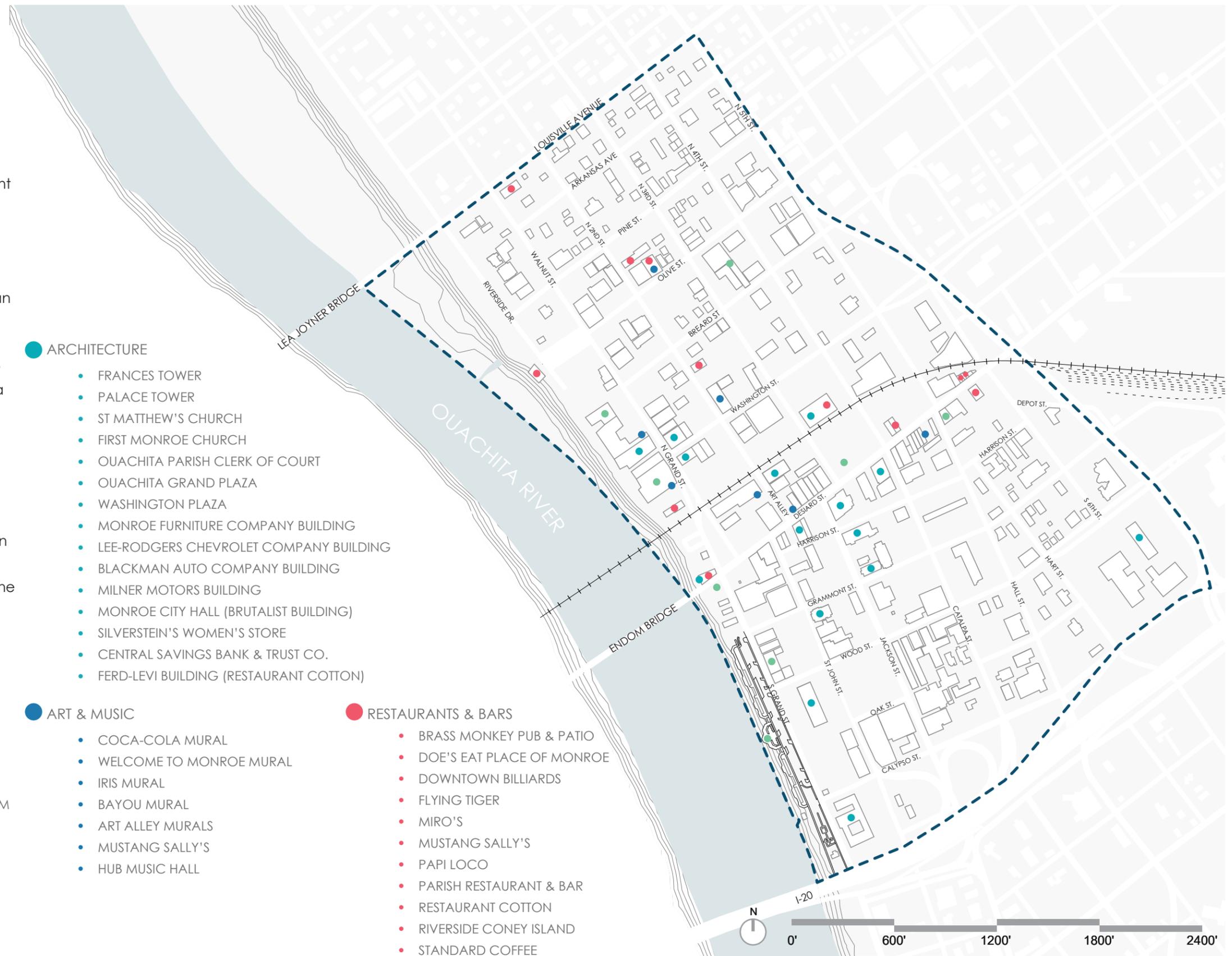
- FRANCES TOWER
- PALACE TOWER
- ST MATTHEW'S CHURCH
- FIRST MONROE CHURCH
- OUACHITA PARISH CLERK OF COURT
- OUACHITA GRAND PLAZA
- WASHINGTON PLAZA
- MONROE FURNITURE COMPANY BUILDING
- LEE-RODGERS CHEVROLET COMPANY BUILDING
- BLACKMAN AUTO COMPANY BUILDING
- MILNER MOTORS BUILDING
- MONROE CITY HALL (BRUTALIST BUILDING)
- SILVERSTEIN'S WOMEN'S STORE
- CENTRAL SAVINGS BANK & TRUST CO.
- FERD-LEVI BUILDING (RESTAURANT COTTON)

ART & MUSIC

- COCA-COLA MURAL
- WELCOME TO MONROE MURAL
- IRIS MURAL
- BAYOU MURAL
- ART ALLEY MURALS
- MUSTANG SALLY'S
- HUB MUSIC HALL

RESTAURANTS & BARS

- BRASS MONKEY PUB & PATIO
- DOE'S EAT PLACE OF MONROE
- DOWNTOWN BILLIARDS
- FLYING TIGER
- MIRO'S
- MUSTANG SALLY'S
- PAPI LOCO
- PARISH RESTAURANT & BAR
- RESTAURANT COTTON
- RIVERSIDE CONEY ISLAND
- STANDARD COFFEE
- WAREHOUSE NO 1 RESTAURANT



ENTERTAINMENT WALKING TOUR

This tour targets food, drink, and nightlife lovers alike. The tour is meant to be done in one day and with eleven stops. Each stop should include a single drink or shared snack so participants can have a taste of all eleven places. The tour can be developed to have curated food or drink suggestions at each stop.

Tour participants can start the day with free parking and the purchase of a coffee at Standard Coffee. Stops 1 through 9 are for trying a featured drink or snack, while stops 10 & 11 are night caps for billiards and music entertainment. As they meander around downtown, they have suggested selfie stops at the murals to commemorate the day. Including a suggested start and end time with an overall time can help prepare participants for a day of fun.

- WALKING TOUR
 - # RESTAURANTS, BARS & MUSIC
 - MURAL SELFIE STOP
 - START + FREE PARKING
1. STANDARD COFFEE
 - BAYOU MURAL
 - IRIS MURAL
 2. RESTAURANT COTTON
 - COCA-COLA MURAL
 3. MIRO'S
 - WELCOME TO MONROE MURAL
 4. WAREHOUSE NO 1 RESTAURANT
 5. RIVERSIDE CONEY ISLAND
 6. FLYING TIGER
 7. PARISH RESTAURANT & BAR
 8. DOE'S EAT PLACE OF MONROE
 9. BRASS MONKEY & PAPI LOCO
 10. DOWNTOWN BILLIARDS
 11. MUSTANG SALLY'S



"GET CULTURED" WALKING TOUR

This tour was created for the history and architecture enthusiasts. The tour is meant to be done in one day and with twenty-eight stops, each stop should include a brief history of the structure or programming that occurred at each stop.

Again, tour participants can start the day with free parking and the purchase of a coffee at Standard Coffee. As they stroll around downtown, they have suggested snack stops to encourage supporting local businesses. Including a suggested start and end time with an overall tour duration can help curate the timing of overlap with the farmer's market while aligning snack stops with meal times.

- - - - WALKING TOUR
- # HISTORY & CULTURE
- # ARCHITECTURE
- # ART
- RESTAURANTS / BARS PIT STOP
- START + FREE PARKING

- FREE PARKING
- STANDARD COFFEE
- 1. SAENGER THEATER (NOW PARK)
- 2. DELTA THEATER
- 3. MONROE FURNITURE COMPANY BUILDING
- 4. ART ALLEY MURALS
- 5. IRIS MURAL
- 6. PALACE TOWER
- 7. CENTRAL SAVINGS BANK & TRUST CO.
- 8. FRANCES TOWER
- 9. ST. MATTHEW'S CHURCH
- 10. FIRST MONROE CHURCH
- 11. OUACHITA GRAND PLAZA

- 12. RIVERMARKET
- 13. OUACHITA PARISH CLERK OF COURT
- 14. HOTEL MONROE BUILDING
- 15. AUSTIN'S BY THE RIVER
- 16. FERD-LEVI BUILDING (RESTAURANT COTTON)
- 17. RAILROAD BRIDGE
- MIRO'S
- 18. COCA-COLA MURAL
- 19. OUACHITA CANDY COMPANY BUILDING
- 20. MILNER MOTORS BUILDING
- 21. BLACKMAN AUTO COMPANY BUILDING
- 22. LEE-RODGERS CHEVROLET COMPANY BUILDING

- 23. WELCOME TO MONROE MURAL
- 24. NORTHEAST LOUISIANA CHILDREN'S MUSEUM
- GROW THE ROE FARMER'S MARKET 2ND & 4TH THURSDAYS EACH MONTH
- 25. NEWS STAR BUILDING
- 26. WASHINGTON PLAZA
- DOE'S EAT PLACE / WINE MARKET
- 27. HARVEY'S DANCE HALL
- 28. BAYOU MURAL
- 29. SILVERSTEIN'S WOMEN'S STORE
- 30. MONROE CITY HALL





ECONOMICS

VALUE PER ACRE ANALYSIS

WHAT IS MEANT BY VALUE PER ACRE ANALYSIS?

Value per acre is a measure of a city's land use efficiency. Because of the opportunities for density and mixing uses, along with existing infrastructure, healthy downtowns often show a higher land use efficiency than suburban areas. That is, the real estate downtown is producing enough value and revenue to support the infrastructure and services it needs to thrive. For property owners and developers, this means that projects will generate more value per acre for an investment. This analysis compares commercial (restaurant) uses, one downtown and another approximately 2.8 miles away, along the same corridor. It also includes a mixed-use property located downtown.

AZTECA GRILL

3610 DeSiard Street

0.69 acres

\$1,089,000 Value per Acre



RESTAURANT COTTON

101 N. Grand Street

0.26 acres

\$1,350,360 Value per Acre



WASHINGTON PLAZA (MIXED-USE)

300 Washington Street

1.02 acres

\$2,090,880 Value per Acre



THE CASE FOR DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT

- Investing in downtown real estate development generally yields projects that are more productive per acre than suburban real estate, due to existing infrastructure and greater densities.
 - » The return on investment for incentives and public infrastructure is better in areas with a higher value per acre.
- Mixing uses and increasing densities further compounds value and tax revenue per acre.
- Analysis does not include any additional property tax levied by the Downtown Economic Development District (DEDD).

PROPOSED ECONOMIC INCENTIVES

The economic incentives below include existing incentives and proposed new incentives aimed at attracting investment in Downtown Monroe. Economic incentives can be an important tool for revitalizing communities, as they can make those communities more attractive to investors, residents, and patrons. The incentives outlined below can make investments in downtown – from homeownership to building rehabilitation to new development – more accessible and feasible for a wider range of investors. The investments spurred by economic incentives like these will play a crucial role in making downtown an exciting place to live, work, and play.

NEED	RECOMMENDATION	DESCRIPTION
Programmatic	Dedicated Website for Downtown Development	Standalone website or webpage dedicated to promoting Downtown Monroe development. Such a website should have resources for prospective developers, investors, and residents, including: available properties for sale/rent, building inventory, economic incentives, news and events.
	Downtown Development "Concierge"	Staff-person(s) who can serve as a single point of contact and resource for prospective developers and investors.
New Development	Gap Financing Program	Deploy program(s) to provide access to capital to promote real estate development in downtown. Specifically, funds intended to fill the potential void between financing, developer equity, and development costs. Such programs can be designed for residential and commercial development, new construction, and rehabilitation. Consider flexible and patient terms, up to 30% of total development costs.
	Vacant Property Tax	As a tool to encourage property owners to return underutilized properties to productive use, a system for identifying and documenting vacant properties, and taxing those vacant properties, could be implemented and administered through the DEDD. Washington, DC, has a similar program, based on \$5 of tax for every \$100 of assessed value.
	Homeownership Incentives	Home ownership is a crucial element to downtown development, as it helps stabilize the neighborhood(s), creates value, and supports the live-work-play lifestyle. In revitalizing communities, there is often a gap between the cost of homeownership units, and what potential buyers can afford or finance. The Louisiana Housing Corporation offers a number of programs aimed at making homeownership possible. LHC's products are income-based and range from homeownership counseling to low-interest mortgages. Downtown Monroe's location qualifies its properties for many of the products offered by LHC.
Building Rehabilitation/Reuse	Business Improvement Grants	Incentives to small business and building owners to improve facades, storefronts, signage, and curb appeal of sites located downtown. Consider matching grants of up to \$15,000.
	Restoration Tax Abatement	Existing program that provides a five-year abatement (with option for an additional five years) on ad valorem property taxes on renovations and improvements of existing commercial and owner-occupied residences located within EDDs, downtown development districts, historic districts, and opportunity zones.
	Conspicuous "Pardon our Progress" Displays	City-supplied screening for development projects with positive messaging.
	Main Street Façade Grants	To encourage the revitalization of historic downtown commercial properties, Louisiana Main Street offers grants to businesses in local Main Street districts in amounts of either \$2,500 or \$10,000.

HISTORIC & CULTURAL DISTRICTS

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Monroe's dynamic past is evident in its large stock of historic buildings. The preservation of historic structures is a vital part of maintaining Monroe's rich culture and identity. In order to breathe new life into these historic districts, there are incentives available to ease the financial commitment of rehabilitating properties deemed eligible by historic agencies at the local, state, and federal levels.

HISTORIC TAX CREDITS

The Federal Rehabilitation Historic Tax Credit and the Louisiana State Commercial Tax Credit Programs both equate to a 20% tax credit based on the project's total Qualified Rehabilitation Expenditures (QREs). The state and federal incentives may be "stacked" together if a property meets the eligibility requirements for each program. A building may be eligible for historic tax credits if:

- The property is a "certified historic structure" that is Individually Listed or contributes to a Historic District that is listed in the National Register of Historic Places
- The property is 50 years or older and retains historic integrity
- The property must be used for an income-producing purpose for at least 5 years after rehabilitation
- In Louisiana, a property must be at least 50 years old and located within the boundaries of Louisiana's Downtown Development Districts in order to be eligible for the 20% State Commercial Tax Credit Program

Currently, there are 3 State Historic Districts and 2 National Register Historic Districts that fall within Downtown Monroe. When this information is layered over a map of buildings greater than 50 years of age, it is possible to see the opportunities currently available for projects to pursue historic tax credits. Many of these structures are also currently vacant.

CULTURAL DISTRICTS

The Louisiana Cultural Districts Program:

- Allows a local government to designate a "Cultural District" for the purpose of revitalizing a community by creating a hub of cultural activity
- Allows income and corporate franchise tax credits for eligible expenses for rehabilitation of or revenue-generating historic structures in a Cultural District
- Provides exemptions on local sales tax for the sale of original, one-of-a-kind works of art from locations established within the Cultural District

EXPANSION OF HISTORIC & CULTURAL DISTRICTS

The map also shows many older buildings in the downtown area which do NOT currently fall within a qualified historic district. In order to expand the opportunities for revitalization of these structures, it is recommended to study the potential expansion of existing historic districts or identification of new historic districts in these underrepresented areas.

LEGEND

- BUILDINGS 50 YEARS +
- VACANT BUILDINGS
- VACANT BUILDINGS, 50 YEARS +

STATE REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICTS

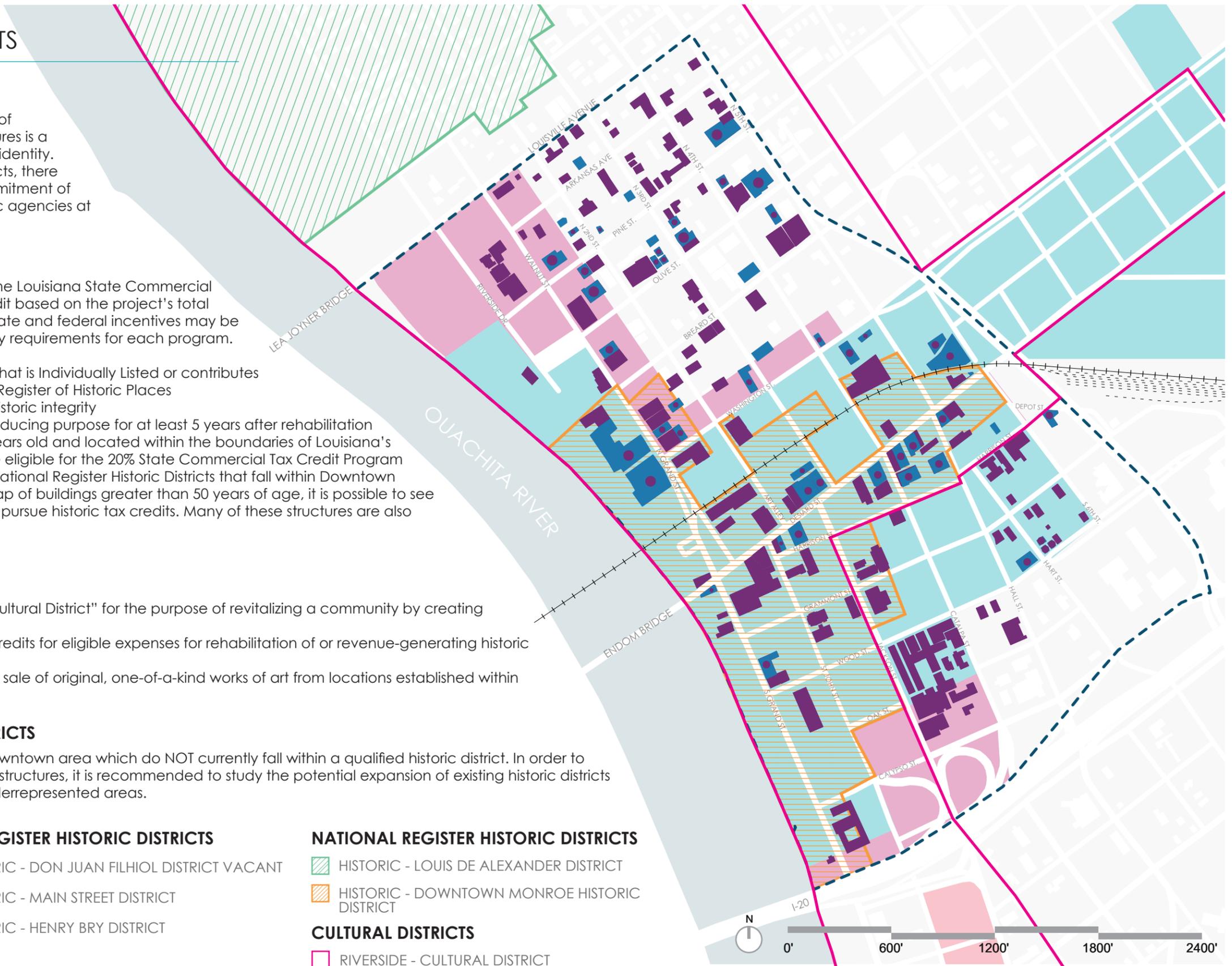
- HISTORIC - DON JUAN FILHIOL DISTRICT VACANT
- HISTORIC - MAIN STREET DISTRICT
- HISTORIC - HENRY BRY DISTRICT

NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICTS

- HISTORIC - LOUIS DE ALEXANDER DISTRICT
- HISTORIC - DOWNTOWN MONROE HISTORIC DISTRICT

CULTURAL DISTRICTS

- RIVERSIDE - CULTURAL DISTRICT





STRATEGIC PLAN OUTLINE

1-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

Review of Monroe's previous planning efforts in Phase 1 clearly showed a need for a more tangible project-based strategic plan for downtown revitalization efforts. With the community feedback and the consultant team, the information and ideas collected have been analyzed and prioritized downtown public and private projects into a 1, 5 and 10 year strategic plan outline. Some of these projects have multiple phases that build off the prior efforts. The intent is for this outline to be a point of discussion and a loose road map for revitalization of the downtown area. As feedback is received and implementation strategies are developed in Phase 3, components could change or be tweaked. Some of the projects identified are already in motion but are mapped to show the connection back to the overall strategic plan.

LEGEND

 RIVERFRONT - CITY OWNED PROPERTY

CIRCULATION IMPROVEMENTS

-  RIVERWALK PART I – PLANNING/COORDINATION
-  LEVEE PATH
-  RIVERFRONT EASEMENTS
-  PEDESTRIAN ALLEY PART 1
-  STRING LIGHTS & CLEAN UP (2ND TO 3RD ST.)
-  EASEMENT RIGHTS (WALNUT TO ART ALLEY)
-  ART ALLEY PART 1
-  RAILROAD PEDESTRIAN CROSSING
-  STREET IMPROVEMENTS (DESIARD, JACKSON, 5TH STREET)

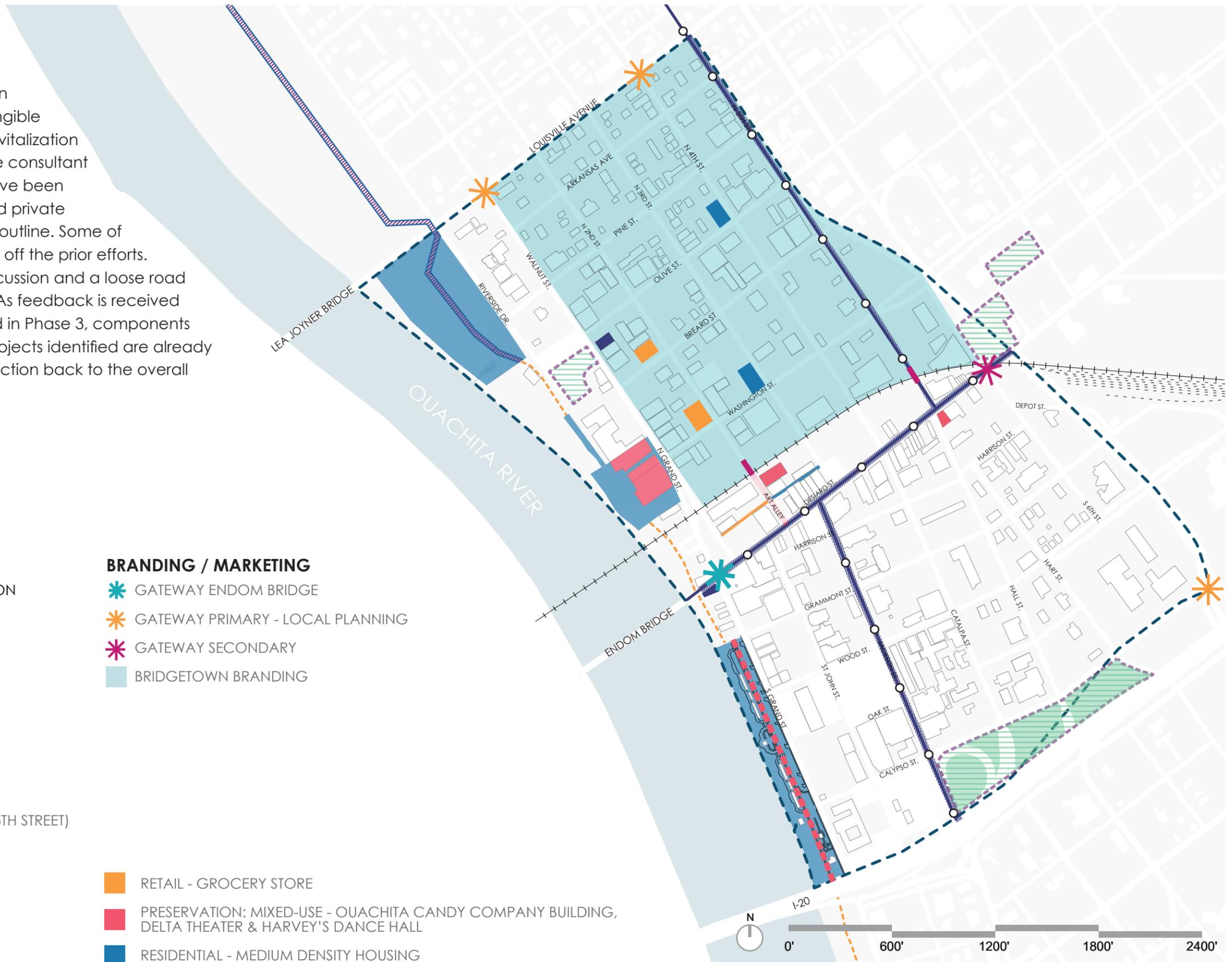
TARGET DEVELOPMENT

-  PRESERVATION: RESTAURANT - AUSTIN'S BY THE RIVER
-  POTENTIAL DOG PARK
-  RIVERMARKET PROGRAMMING

BRANDING / MARKETING

-  GATEWAY ENDOM BRIDGE
-  GATEWAY PRIMARY - LOCAL PLANNING
-  GATEWAY SECONDARY
-  BRIDGETOWN BRANDING

-  RETAIL - GROCERY STORE
-  PRESERVATION: MIXED-USE - OUACHITA CANDY COMPANY BUILDING, DELTA THEATER & HARVEY'S DANCE HALL
-  RESIDENTIAL - MEDIUM DENSITY HOUSING



1-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

RIVERWALK PART 1 - PLANNING

With the City of Monroe owning or having easements to the majority of the riverfront in the downtown catchment area, gaining easement rights to the rest of the downtown riverfront should be in the first year of implementation. The planning of a riverwalk will take coordination between the City of Monroe, property owners, the levee board and the Army Corps of Engineers. The City of Monroe is already in coordination with the levee board to create a levee path from Forsythe Park to the downtown area which would create roughly a 2 mile path. Creating a riverwalk would increase pedestrian traffic and overall number of visitors to the downtown area.



DOG PARK

Through the community engagement process there was a lot of feedback around the desire for a dog park. Multiple locations may be proposed around the downtown area to create another attraction for the community to come together and utilize downtown. With several grassy areas already existing in downtown, the cost for a dog park would be tangible with the right partnerships. See Appendix for AKC's guide to "Establishing a Dog Park in Your Community." With a passionate community member or special interest group in conjunction with a property owner, a downtown dog park can be an achievable goal for the first year strategic plan.



STREET IMPROVEMENTS

Street improvements can be the solution to multiple downtown dilemmas. A width reduction of vehicular lanes would allow for the addition of bio-swailes, outdoor seating, increased tree/shade and additional lights for the streetscapes of the downtown area creating a more inviting, safe and flood resistant area. Jackson Street improvements are already in the works by the City of Monroe to better connect southside Monroe to DeSiard Street. With DeSiard Street being the Main Street of Downtown Monroe, this makes it an obvious choice to receive street improvements next. Finally, 5th Street connects Forsythe Park to downtown and is therefore recommended to be the next street to receive improvements. Refer to Chapter 10 for an overall Street Improvement Plan.



LEGEND

-  STREET IMPROVEMENTS
-  POTENTIAL DOG PARK LOCATIONS
-  RIVER FRONT CITY OWNED PARCELS
-  RIVER FRONT EASEMENT



1-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

ART ALLEY PART 1

Art Alley is an existing hub of activity which supports local culture and businesses. Support should be considered for the growth and future expansion of this area. Changing Art Alley to pedestrian-only circulation would reduce traffic flow during events, and positively impact visitors' walking experience. Part 1 of this transition would involve painting the street to signal a change in function on this block. Refer to Asphalt Art Safety Study & Guide by Bloomberg Philanthropies in the Appendix. Since the ease and financial commitment to complete this project is low, it is suggested to implement this in the first year of this strategic plan.



PEDESTRIAN ALLEY PART 1

The existing alley between Art Alley and 3rd Street has a curious vibe and is underutilized during Art Crawl events. The alley is a public right-of-way and with the simple project (Part 1) of cleaning up the utilities/power lines and adding string lights to signal public use and safety, this alley could be a focal point for visitors and promote pedestrian circulation during events. The other portion of Part 1 would be to gain easement rights to the alley between Walnut & Art Alley with the intent of extending the pedestrian alley to this block in the next part of this strategic plan.



RAILROAD CROSSINGS

Even though the railroad currently does not allow vehicular or pedestrian crossing at 2nd, 3rd and 5th Street, people still do it. Since Art Alley at 2nd Street is a hub for monthly events it is essential to create a safe pedestrian crossing coordinated with the railroad company. A proposed vehicular crossing is suggested for 5th Street since this is a commuter road that connects through Forsythe Park to downtown. Safer crossing on these streets will alleviate dead ends and circulation disconnects.



LEGEND

-  STRING LIGHTS & CLEAN UP (ART ALLEY TO 3RD ST.)
-  EASEMENT RIGHTS (WALNUT TO ART ALLEY)
-  ART ALLEY PART 1
-  RAILROAD PEDESTRIAN CROSSING



1-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

GATEWAY - ENDOM BRIDGE

With Restaurant Cotton and the Austin's by the River Building creating a building "gateway" at the Endom Bridge and the obelisk lighting at the Lea Joyner Bridge, the treatment of these gateways can be a fairly feasible and tangible task to be implemented in the first year strategic plan. Whether it be string lights or a banner, the existing structures can be utilized for these gateways. Bridges could be first of many gateways that create a sense of place for Downtown Monroe. Refer to Chapter 9 for overall Proposed Districts and Gateways.



GATEWAY - PRIMARY - PLANNING

The creation of gateways for Downtown Monroe not only supports a sense of place but also signals vehicles to be more cautious, sets up the vibe of each district, and gives the City a chance for branding. For the primary gateway structures it is recommended to solicit local artists to design and help guide the vibe of each district through the structure of the gateways. For the first year of the strategic plan, the request for proposals (RFP) should be issued from the local artists. Allowing local businesses and schools to participate in the design process, financing, and construction of the gateways would create an opportunity for advertising as well as private sector investment in each district.



GATEWAY - SECONDARY

The secondary gateways are subtle changes in the road that can be done as part of the street improvements, as outlined in Chapter 9. For that reason, the secondary gateway at DeSiard Street is recommended to be part of the street improvements that are planned for year 1 implementation of the strategic plan.

BRIDGETOWN BRANDING

The area that is bordered by Walnut Street, Louisville Avenue, Lea Joyner Expressway and the railroad lacks identity. By creating a unified district and branding, this will help guide development efforts and the clustering of building uses as discussed in Chapter 9. Creating comprehensive branding for the downtown area as a whole will create a sense of place but focusing on this district first will help unify and create a framework for improvements. The name "Bridgetown" for this district was derived from community input, geographical features, and the desire to reflect a sense of connection to downtown. Full branding efforts for this district are recommended for the first year of the strategic plan.



LEGEND

-  GATEWAY ENDOM BRIDGE
-  GATEWAY PRIMARY LOCAL BUSINESS/SCHOOL/ARTIST RFP
-  GATEWAY SECONDARY
-  BRIDGETOWN BRANDING



5-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

LEGEND

TARGET DEVELOPMENT

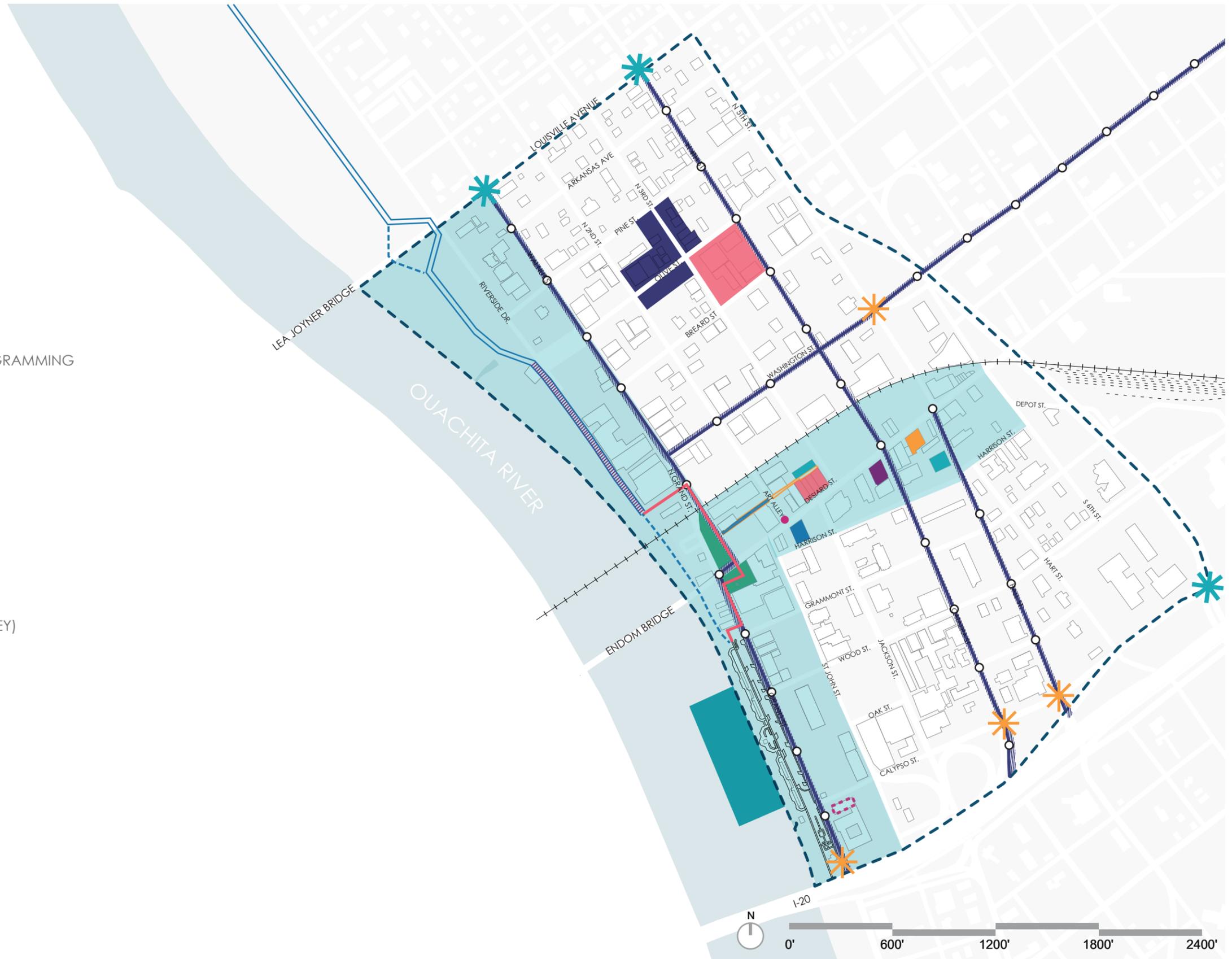
- TARGET RETAIL DEVELOPMENT
- TARGET MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT
- TARGET RESTAURANT DEVELOPMENT
- TARGET ENTERTAINMENT DEVELOPMENT
- TARGET RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT
- TARGET RECREATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
- OUACHITA GRAND PLAZA AUDITORIUM PROGRAMMING

CIRCULATION IMPROVEMENTS

- RIVERWALK PART 2 – URBAN PATH
- RIVERFRONT PATH EXPANSION
- URBAN PATH
- PLANNING / DESIGN AROUND BRIDGES
- PEDESTRIAN ALLEY PART 2
- DEVELOP ALLEY (ART ALLEY TO WALNUT ST.)
- EXTEND LIGHTS & ALLEY (WALNUT TO ARY ALLEY)
- ART ALLEY PART 2 - REMOVABLE BOLLARDS
- STREET IMPROVEMENTS
- NEW GREEN SPACE

BRANDING / MARKETING

- GATEWAY PRIMARY BUILD
- GATEWAY SECONDARY BUILD
- MAIN STREET / RIVERFRONT BRANDING



5-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

DESIARD STREET DEVELOPMENT

The next development focused efforts should be on DeSiard Street between the Ouachita River and Lea Joyner Expressway. The City of Monroe is already a member of the Louisiana Main Street Program, so development endeavors will have more support and economic incentive opportunities. Layering Main Street grants with historic tax credit incentives should make the existing structures on DeSiard Street an easy sell for private investment. The City's "Activation Coordinator" should be well versed in new or revised economic incentives, in order to help small businesses and other community members find the resources and funding to invest locally.



BRIDGETOWN & MARINA DEVELOPMENT

Making Bridgetown a live-work-play neighborhood will take a focused planning effort. It is recommended over the next 5 years to target mixed-use developments in this district, with a trail of entertainment venues leading to the riverfront, creating a clustering of activities. Another attraction already in the works is a marina near the RiverMarket. The marina will be the first location downtown that physically connects the community with the Ouachita River. Having a place to park and store boats will increase pedestrian traffic for downtown businesses and provide the framework for potential riverboat tourism.



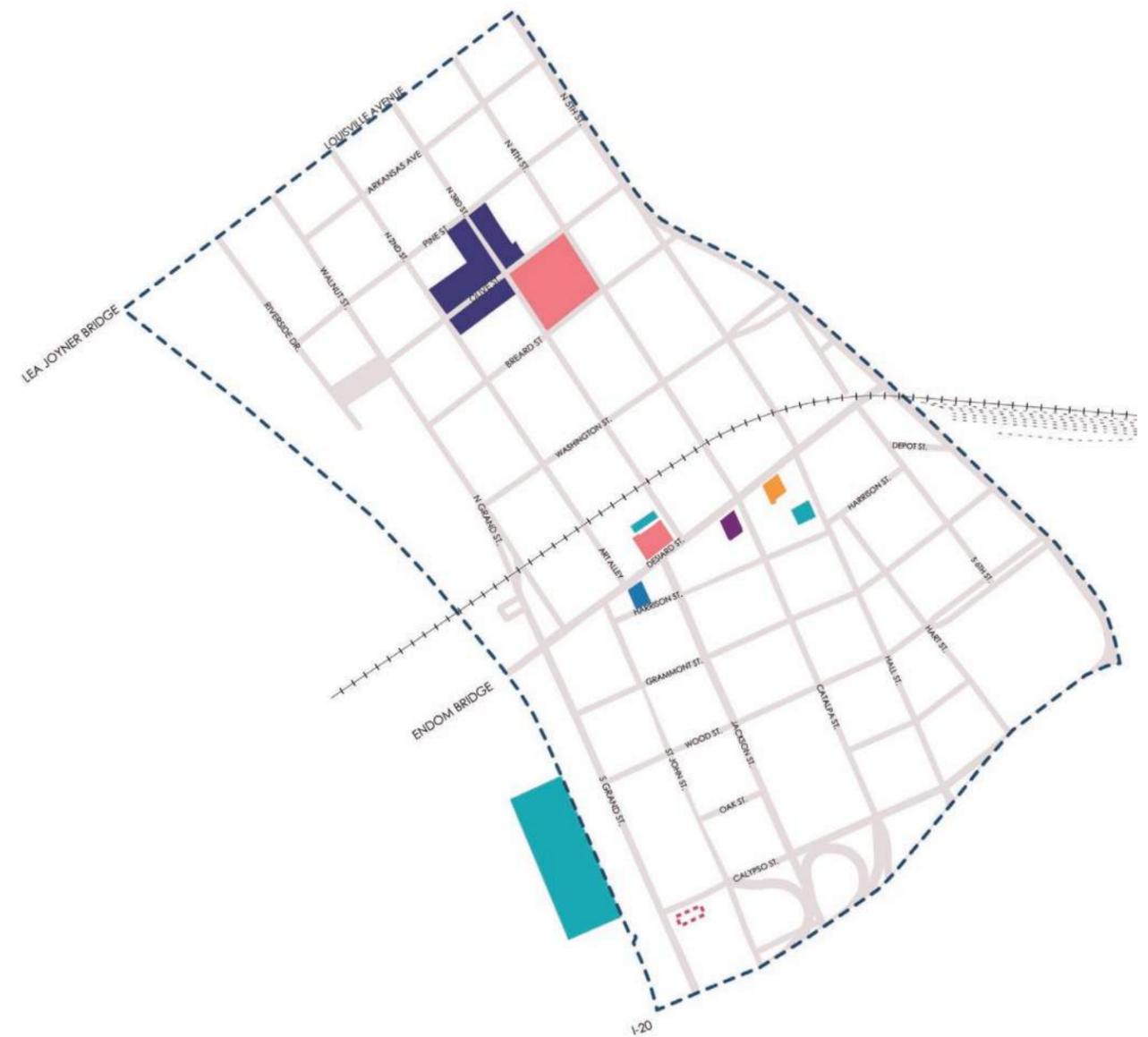
GRAND PLAZA AUDITORIUM PROGRAMMING

The Grand Plaza Auditorium is a stunning historic building that is underutilized and could potentially attract people to the riverfront. Coordination of events, concerts, plays, movies, and lectures could potentially begin in the first year of the strategic plan but we recommend the RiverMarket being the main focus of the City's Programmer in the first year. The flexibility of the space makes it prime real estate for even private events. At a minimum, in the first year it is recommended to create a website, social media page or contact information so community members can inquire about renting the space. In the future this website could advertise events and other programming that is hosted there.



LEGEND

- TARGET RETAIL DEVELOPMENT
- TARGET MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT
- TARGET RESTAURANT DEVELOPMENT
- TARGET ENTERTAINMENT DEVELOPMENT
- TARGET RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT
- TARGET RECREATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
- OUACHITA GRAND PLAZA AUDITORIUM PROGRAMMING



5-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

RIVERWALK PART 2 - URBAN PATH & NEW GREEN SPACES

Expanding the riverfront path from the levee path to the bridge side of the Candy Company Building is only part of Phase 2 for the riverwalk. Picking up the path expansion and routing it through the street as an urban path would be a temporary route for the riverwalk while easement, coordination and design around the bridges are in progress. Creating a green space between the existing triangular shaped parking lot on Walnut St. and DeSiard St. not only makes the urban path more enjoyable but also reduces the conflict of vehicular unloading between high trafficked roads. Creating triangle park and adding more green space and trees to Henry Bry Park creates a secondary gateway and a more inviting entrance to downtown from Endom Bridge.



PEDESTRIAN ALLEY PART 2

After securing easement rights and string lights for the extension of the pedestrian alley between Art Alley and Walnut Street, developing a theme for pedestrian alley would make this intimate alley a point of interest for visitors. For example, Hattiesburg, MS turned a pedestrian alley into a destination point by adding a display window and tiny figurines in action to the downspouts and utility boxes and branding it the Hattiesburg Pocket Park. It was created during COVID as a low budget way to bring art to the community in a safe way. Since Monroe has a strong art community, creating a theme specific to Monroe or its history could be another attraction for visitors downtown.



ART ALLEY PART 2

To slowly transition Art Alley into a pedestrian only alley, it is recommended to add removable bollards along DeSiard Street and making the parking lot entrance on the corner a two-way entrance and exit. The removable bollards create a physical barrier that can be removed as needed while further developing that portion of the street to be pedestrian oriented. Since currently 2nd Street does not cross over the railroad tracks, this portion of the street is not activated by much vehicular traffic.



LEGEND

-  RIVERFRONT PATH EXPANSION
-  URBAN PATH
-  PLANNING / DESIGN AROUND BRIDGES
-  DEVELOP ALLEY (ART ALLEY TO WALNUT ST.)
-  EXTEND LIGHTS & ALLEY (WALNUT TO ART ALLEY)
-  ART ALLEY PART 2 - REMOVABLE BOLLARDS
-  NEW GREEN SPACE



5-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

STREET IMPROVEMENT

For the next round of street improvements, it is recommended to focus efforts on Walnut and South Grand Street. With a safer and more inviting streetscape, these riverfront streets can become a destination for visitors and be more enticing for development. Next, improvements should be made to Hall Street since this corridor connects Forsythe Park to the southside of Monroe. Since 4th Street turns into Catalpa Street, which in turns changes to a major collector road for southside Monroe, it is recommended to focus improvements to these roads next. Finally for the 5 year strategic plan, upgrades to Washington Street are suggested, since it connects ULM to the downtown area. Refer to Chapter 10 for overall Street Improvement Plan.



PRIMARY & SECONDARY GATEWAYS

The construction of primary gateways in the 5 year plan allows time for design and development of the structures by local artists in conjunction with the City. The secondary gateways, as discussed in Chapter 9, can be simple indentations in the roadways to signal a change in neighborhoods and notify vehicles to be more aware of pedestrians. These secondary gateways can be designed and planned during the street improvement process.



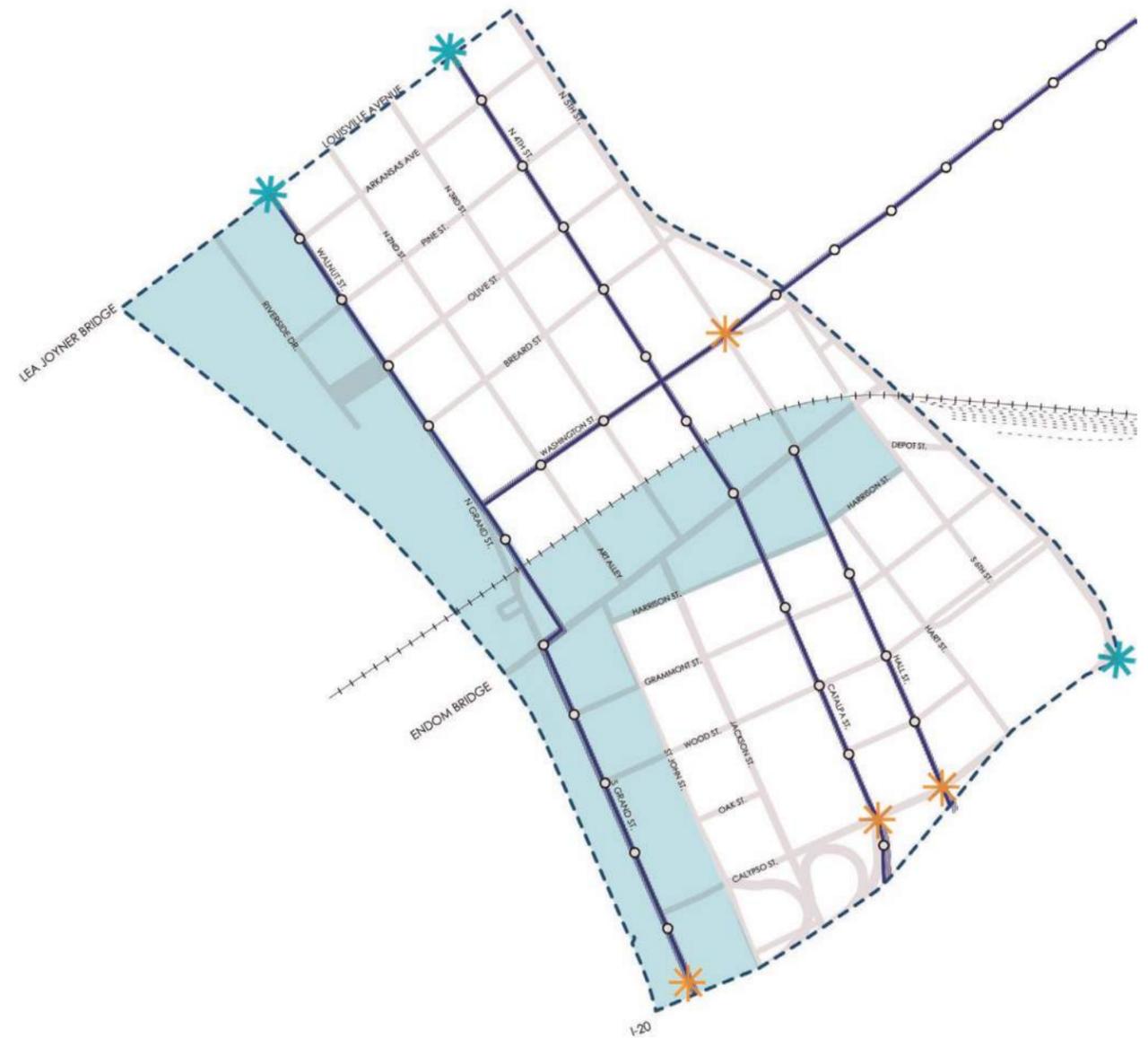
MAIN STREET & RIVERFRONT BRANDING

Main Street branding is already in the works by the City of Monroe but by extending this branding to the RiverFront District, it will create a cohesive identity for the main thoroughfares of downtown. Branding will guide development efforts and establish a unified sense of place.



LEGEND

-  GATEWAY PRIMARY BUILD
-  GATEWAY SECONDARY BUILD
-  MAIN STREET / RIVERFRONT BRANDING
-  STREET IMPROVEMENTS



10-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

LEGEND

TARGET DEVELOPMENT

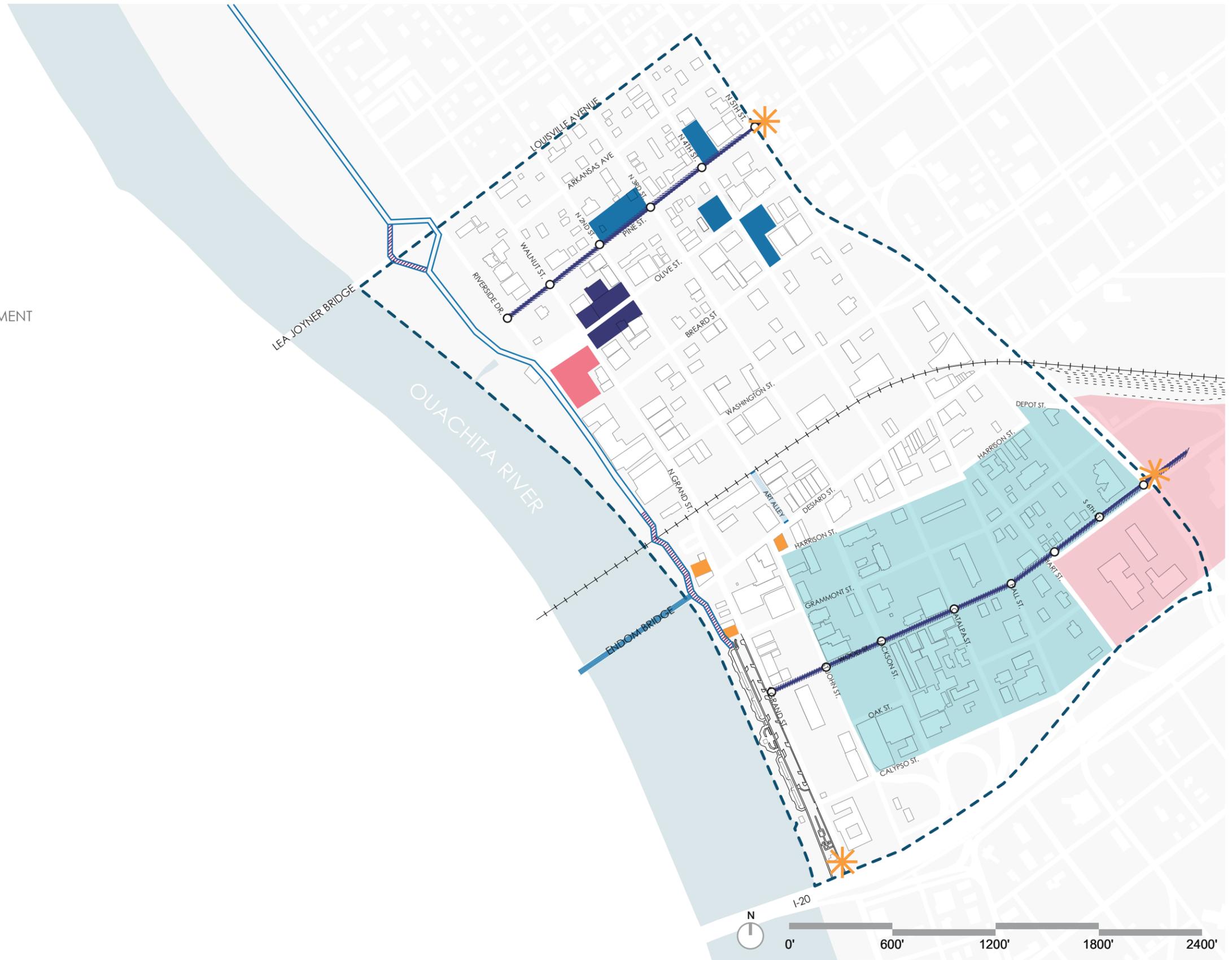
- TARGET RETAIL DEVELOPMENT
- TARGET MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT
- TARGET ENTERTAINMENT DEVELOPMENT
- TARGET MEDIUM DENSITY HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

CIRCULATION IMPROVEMENTS

- RIVERWALK PART 3 – BRIDGE CROSSINGS
- ▨ RIVERFRONT PATH EXPANSION
- ▬ PEDESTRIANIZE ENDOM BRIDGE
- PEDESTRIAN ALLEY PART 3
- ▨ PAVERS
- STREET IMPROVEMENTS

BRANDING / MARKETING

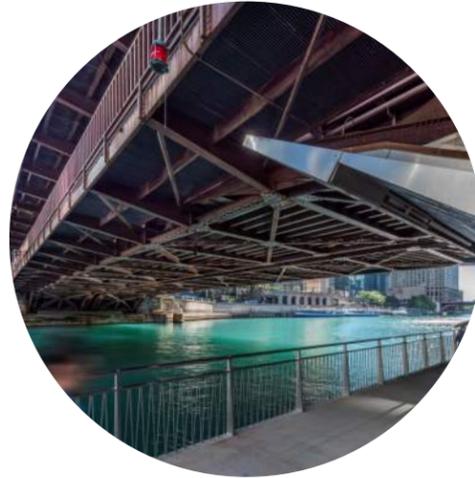
- ✱ GATEWAY SECONDARY BUILD
- MEDICAL DISTRICT BRANDING
- CIVIC DISTRICT BRANDING



10-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

RIVERWALK PART 3 - BRIDGE CROSSING

The final phase for the downtown riverwalk is to have uninterrupted crossings at the bridges so there is no conflict with pedestrian and vehicular traffic. The planning for this can take time, money and input from several entities as discussed in the 5 year strategic plan (Riverwalk Part 2). To moderate expectations for the construction of a continuous riverwalk, it is included in the 10 year strategic plan. There are many different solution to the riverwalk bridge crossings including floating, floodable, submarine and overhead which could be an opportunity for a unique stop or destination point with the right planning.



ALLEY PART 3

Part 3 of Art Alley is optional depending on the permanence of the painted street and the vibe of development. Changing the streetscape to pavers can bring the scale of the road down and create a more formal experience to the pedestrian oriented segment, as referenced in Chapter 10. The design for the layout of the pavers could be in conjunction with local artist so that its uniquely Monroe and becomes another desination point for visitors. Since pavers can be costly and construction can interupt adjacent businesses, Part 3 is allocated for the 10-Year Plan and is noted as optional.



PEDESTRIANIZE ENDOM BRIDGE

With the growth and attraction of DeSiard Street, the need for a pedestrian friendly connection to Antique Alley in West Monroe would entice even more visitors by combining destination points. The recommendation to pedestrianize Endom Bridge and connecting the two main streets would be done in conjunction with West Monroe and could be as simple as painting the concrete safety wall that creates a barrier between vehicles and pedestrians. Even 3D pavement art that visually ties into the river could be another attraction on the tourism trail celebrating the bridge and the connection to West Monroe.



LEGEND

RIVERWALK PART 3 – BRIDGE CROSSINGS

-  RIVERFRONT PATH EXPANSION
-  PEDESTRIANIZE ENDOM BRIDGE
-  PEDESTRIAN ALLEY PART 3
-  PAVERS



10-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

TARGETED DEVELOPMENT

After revitalization and urban infill has gained momentum along DeSiard Street, then growth and development of Bridgetown should be the next focus. With a vibrant main street (DeSiard Street), more people will be drawn to live in the downtown area therefore targeting medium-density housing in Bridgetown would provide residents a more urban lifestyle while still keeping the some of the benefits of a single family home. Having more entertainment and nightlife options clustered near one another creates a stronger attraction and reduces vehicular usage. Guiding more retail and mixed-use developments on South Grand & Walnut Street creates a nice blending of DeSiard Street and the entertainment area.



MEDICAL & CIVIC DISTRICT BRANDING

Since the development in these areas are naturally growing towards their respective building uses, it is recommended to develop district branding for the 10 year strategic plan. Branding and creating districts helps focus development efforts and identify specific needs for each area. For example, civic districts typically see daytime employees and transient visitors to civic centers. Support functions and spaces that would do well in that area tend to be daytime focused with late night/after event options. By branding an area the Civic District, it help informs investors that a coffee shop/lunch counter would fit the day to day needs of this district.



STREET IMPROVEMENT

With the development of the riverfront, the need to improve streetscapes in the east-west direction will also become a priority. Creating a more pedestrian friendly experience on Wood Street will cultivate more circulation around the medical district, allowing more employees and patients to have a better downtown experience and support local businesses. Lastly, since Riverside Drive ends in a parking lot, the use of Pine Street for the perpendicular connection is more likely for bikers and drivers, making this street another priority for improvements.



LEGEND

- TARGET RETAIL DEVELOPMENT
- TARGET MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT
- TARGET ENTERTAINMENT DEVELOPMENT
- TARGET MEDIUM DENSITY HOUSING DEVELOPMENT
- STREET IMPROVEMENTS
- MEDICAL DISTRICT BRANDING
- CIVIC DISTRICT BRANDING



VISION STATEMENT

Based on collective community feedback, the following Vision Statement describes where Monroe wants to be in the future.
It is aspirational, forward-thinking, and ambitious.

WE ARE *Oneroe*

INCLUSIVE

DIFFERENT TOGETHER | COMMUNITY | UNITY

Monroe is committed to cultivating and preserving a culture of inclusion and connectedness.

WE ARE *Funroe*

ACTIVE

VIBRANT | HEALTHY | SOCIAL

Monroe is a clean, green, and sustainable city. Monroe has an active connection to nature and the riverfront.

WE ARE *Monroe*

CULTURE

SENSE OF PRIDE | FOOD | MUSIC

Monroe embraces it's unique culture through historic preservation, food and music, cultivating a sense of pride in it's community.



WHAT'S NEXT

Downtown Monroe Strategic Plan Phase 1 addressed inventory and analysis efforts. Phase 2 consisted of assessment and community outreach. Phase 3 - Implementation will concentrate on the implementation strategy for selected projects and will engage consultants, partnerships, and sources of funding. With emphasis on progress accountability, the project will require committed, ongoing leadership and organization, as well as a communications agenda to share status and accomplishments with the community.

Successful implementation involves long-term investment and several ongoing essential components, including:

- Create a **great plan** that presents a strong vision to motivate people to take action. This combines the potential Monroe holds with the community's vision.
- Outline projects, **promote public-private partnerships** and find connection to available funds.
- **Stakeholder involvement** that is representative of businesses, community leaders, and individuals.
- Committed and ongoing **leadership** that desires success for the entire community.
- **Good organization** that provides support for the Strategic Plan with coordination, communication and unification of divergent interests.
- Clear and **consistent development standards** that communicate the vision and tools for encouraging desired development.
- **Communication and marketing** that makes continuous news of status and successes and acts as a liaison between stakeholders, projects, and the wider Monroe community.
- **Supportive government** that champions implementation and sets standards (consultation, code enforcement, and assistance) for achievement.
- **Ongoing review** and monitoring to respond to changing conditions, evaluate plan, projects, and communications, and a **success audit** to track positive incremental evolution.



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 Chris Williams
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 DJ Fortenberry
 DJ Kidd
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 Mitchelli Martin
 Mya Hatcher
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 Nirali Patel
 Northeast Louisiana Children's Museum

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 Shelby Whitney
 Shetereka Washington
 Sheteria Laye-Webb
 Simran Emaus
 Stacey Rowell
 Stacey Rowell
 Stefan Nodarse
 Terry Williams
 Vitus Shell
 Zaylen Daniels

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