

Southside Corridor Development

VISIONING PLAN

The Albert & Tina Small Center for Collaborative Design
in partnership with
The City of Monroe, Louisiana

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CONTEXT

ABOUT MONROE

Monroe (pop. 47,702) is a vibrant city focused on building a more cohesive metro region through cooperation with West Monroe across the Ouachita River, support for small businesses, revitalization of its downtown, and equitable access to municipal amenities for all residents, including parks and affordable housing.

The City has recently promoted, planned, and secured funding for initiatives in each of the above categories, spurring downtown development through municipal investment and local business incubation, implementing multi-modal infrastructure improvements, addressing sustainability through both economic development and water management, and conducting comprehensive community-engaged planning processes around parks and urban development.

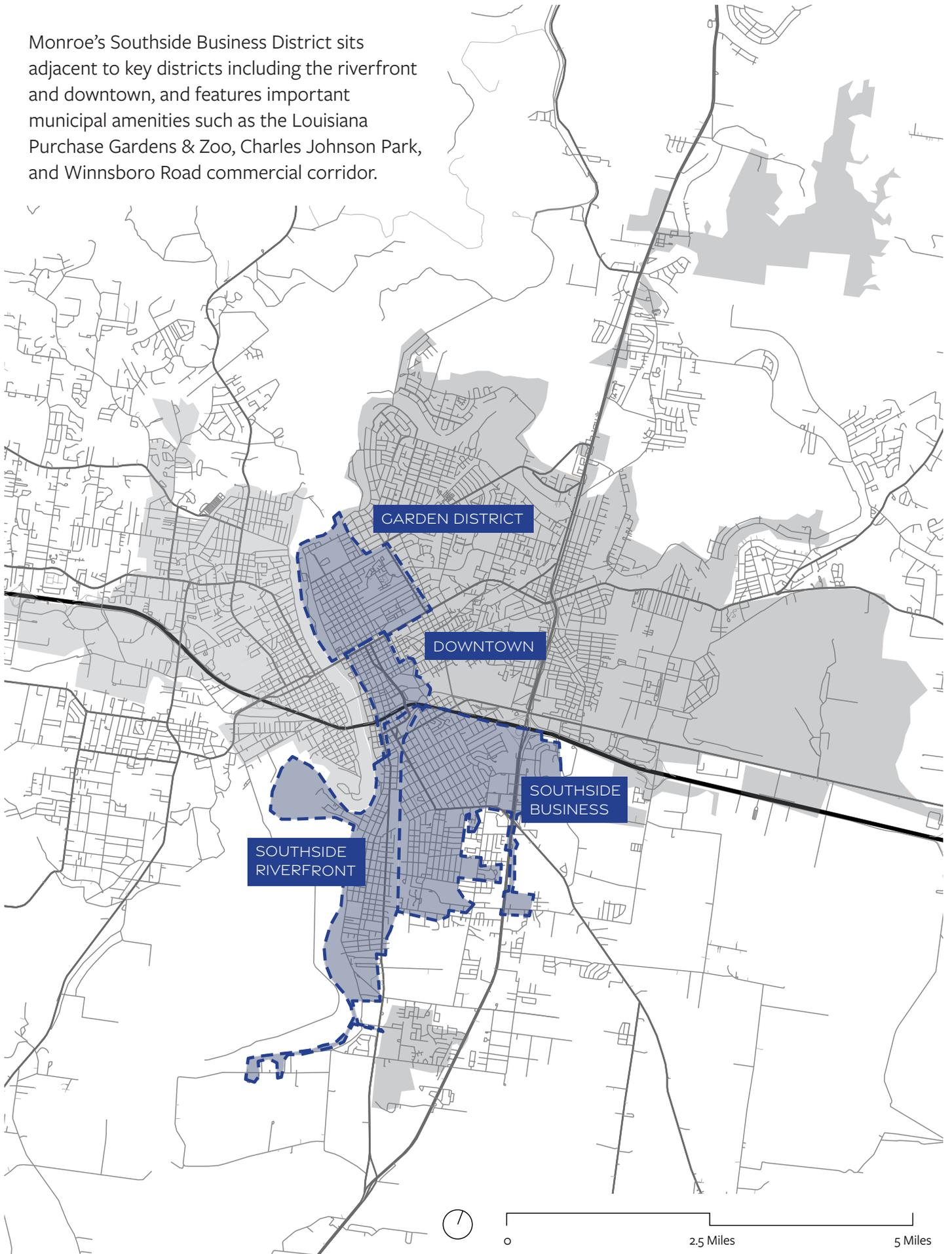
The City is also focused on improving quality of life for all residents through cooperation and collaboration with its cross-river counterpart West Monroe.

WEST MONROE

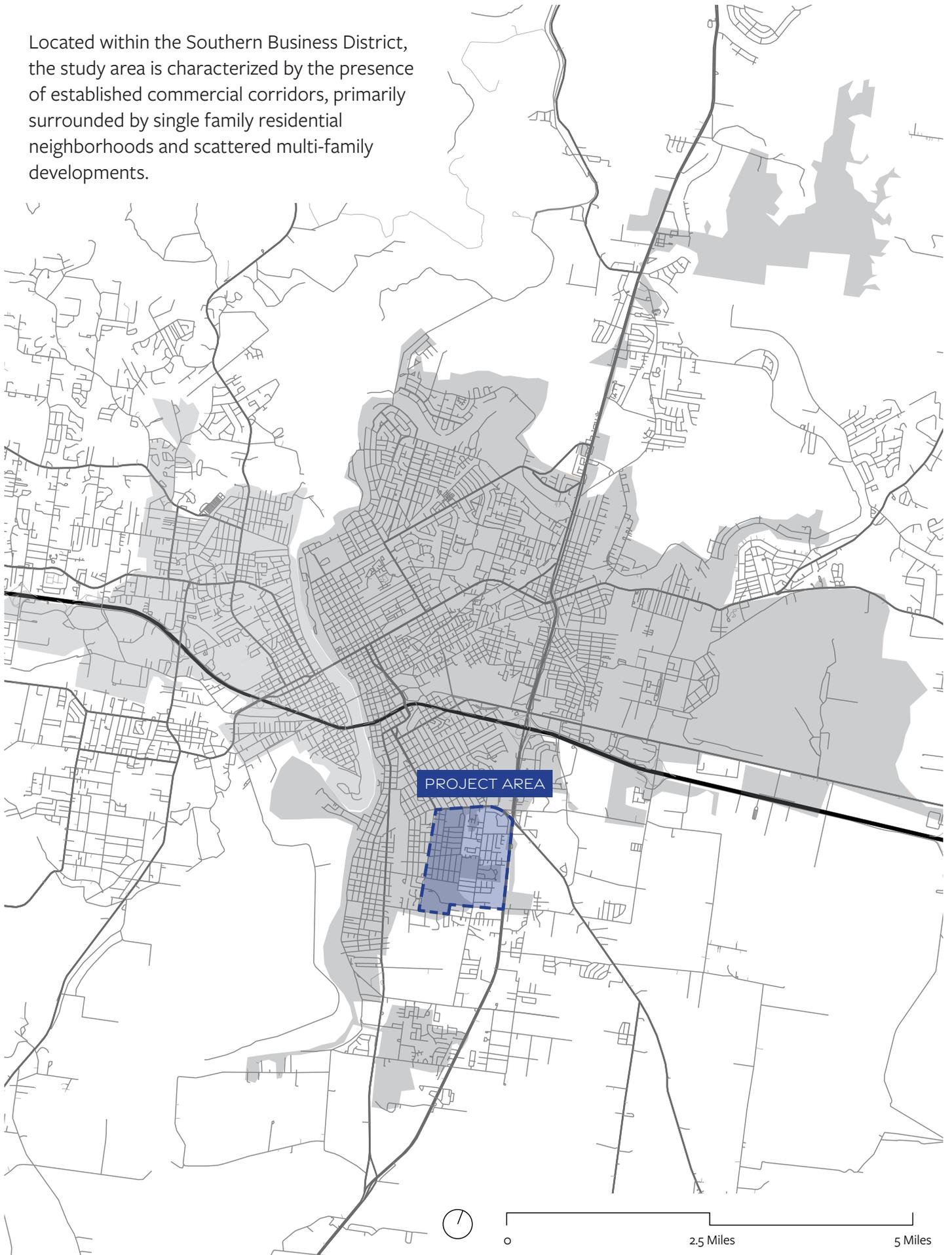
MONROE



Monroe's Southside Business District sits adjacent to key districts including the riverfront and downtown, and features important municipal amenities such as the Louisiana Purchase Gardens & Zoo, Charles Johnson Park, and Winnsboro Road commercial corridor.



Located within the Southern Business District, the study area is characterized by the presence of established commercial corridors, primarily surrounded by single family residential neighborhoods and scattered multi-family developments.



STUDY AREA & CONTEXT

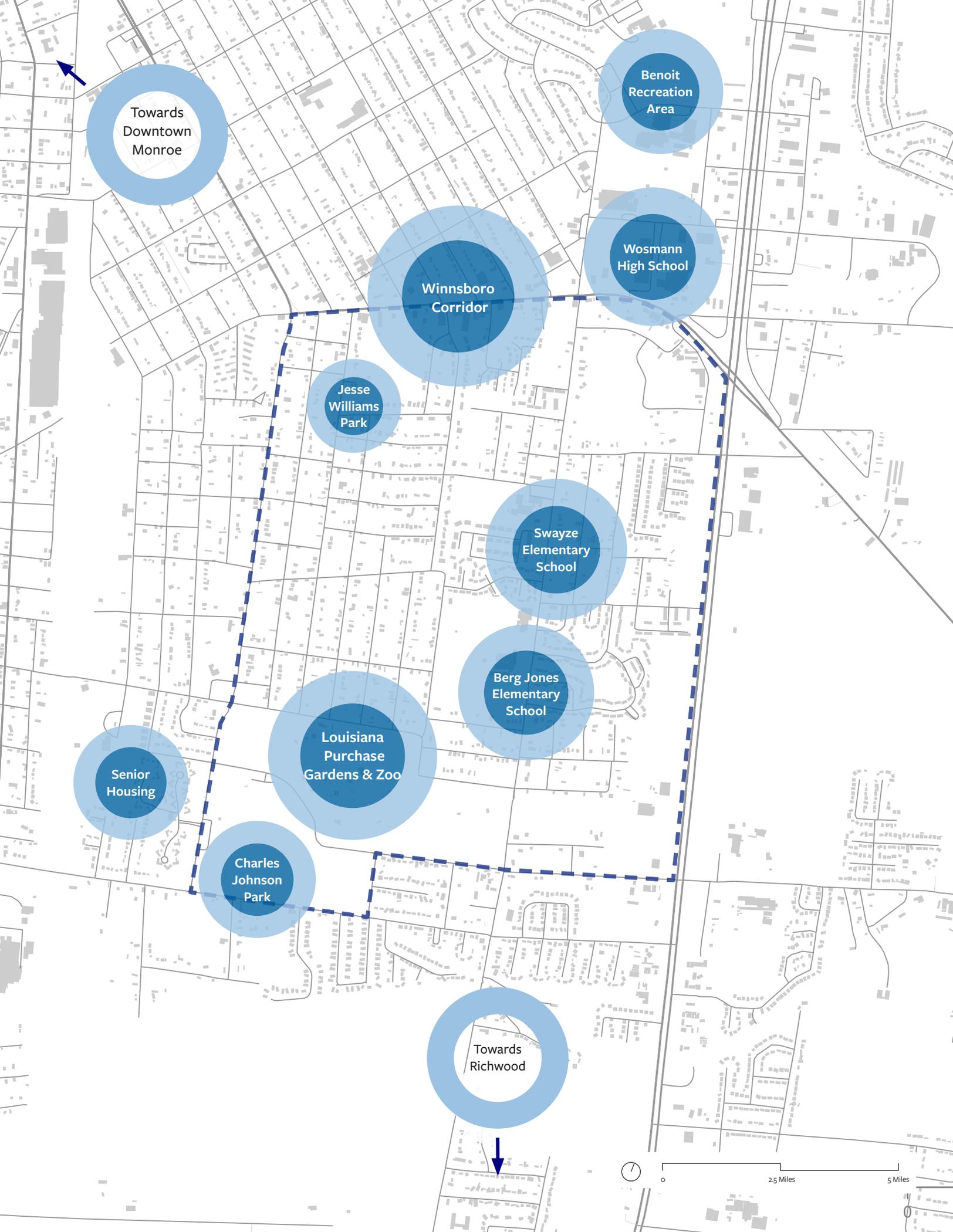
The neighborhoods outlined at right were identified as key areas of focus during the 2022 Mayors' Institute on City Design held in New Orleans and hosted by the Tulane School of Architecture. Mayor Friday Ellis presented on the City and a range of current initiatives, then received input from a panel of planners, architects, and development experts on issues ranging from zoo access and signage, affordable housing, water management, branding, and planning for Charles Johnson Park.

The Mayors' Institute session sought to build upon existing assets and planned investments in the area, including community engagement around an ongoing city parks master plan, and planned infrastructure improvements to nearby corridors, including Winnsboro Road.

This report features additional design ideas, infrastructure improvements, pedestrian and bike amenities, signage, and other corridor improvements crafted by students and faculty of the Albert & Tina Small Center for Collaborative Design at Tulane School of Architecture. These schematic ideas were created for consideration by The City of Monroe Mayor's Office, Council Members, Business Owners, and Community Members.

Design ideas herein focus on the main traffic corridors within the study area, but aim to provide improvements for all local residents and visitors alike. Bike, pedestrian, lighting, and landscape improvements are intended to improve residents' quality of life and connectivity, and encourage low-carbon transport options. Suggested architectural and visual improvements aim to increase business visibility and patronage, and provide access for all modes of transit.

Charles Johnson Park and the Louisiana Purchase Gardens & Zoo are well-visited anchors; Winnsboro Road represents the highest trafficked roadway in the study area.



Towards
Downtown
Monroe

Benoit
Recreation
Area

Winnsboro
Corridor

Wosmann
High School

Jesse
Williams
Park

Swayze
Elementary
School

Berg Jones
Elementary
School

Louisiana
Purchase
Gardens & Zoo

Senior
Housing

Charles
Johnson
Park

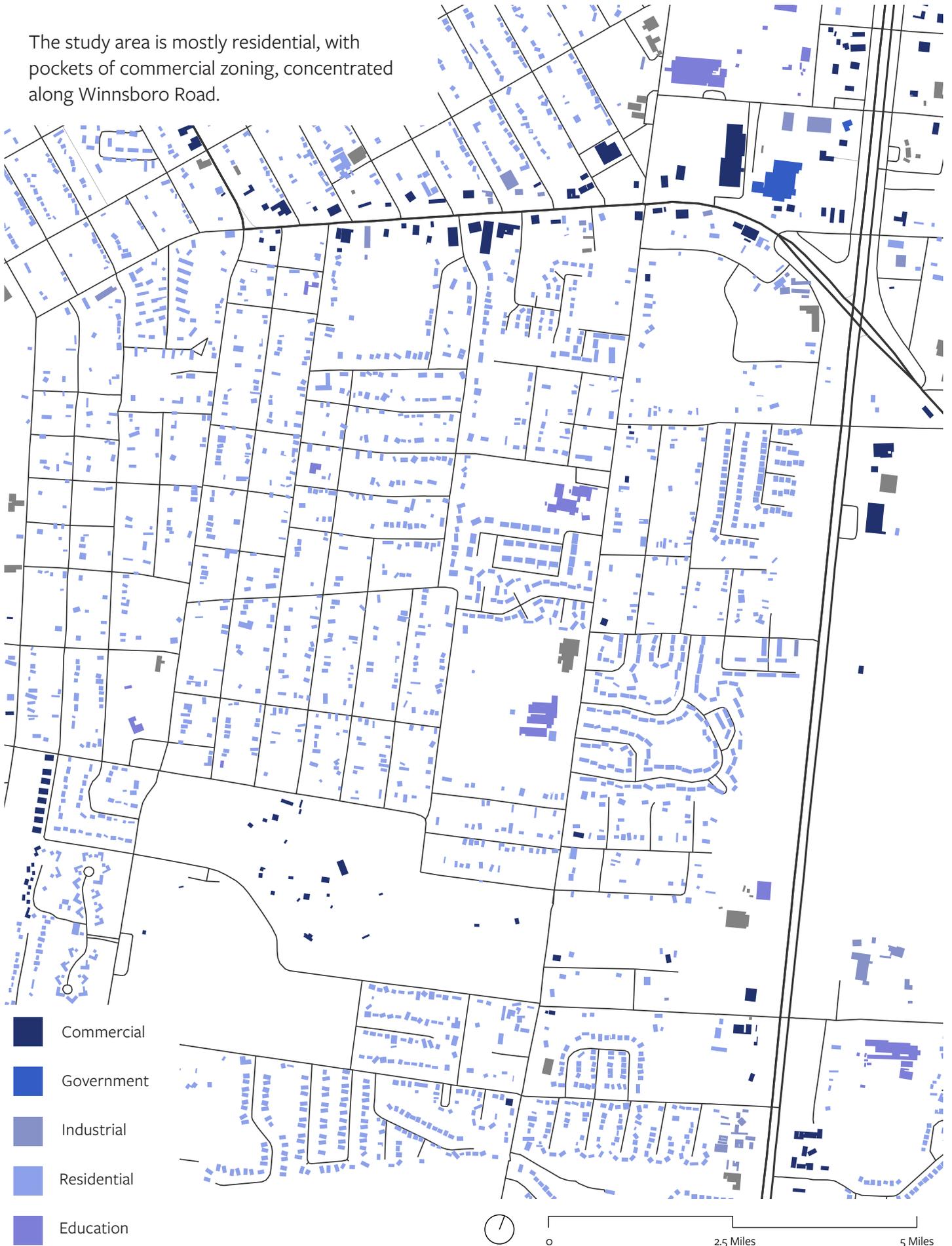
Towards
Richwood



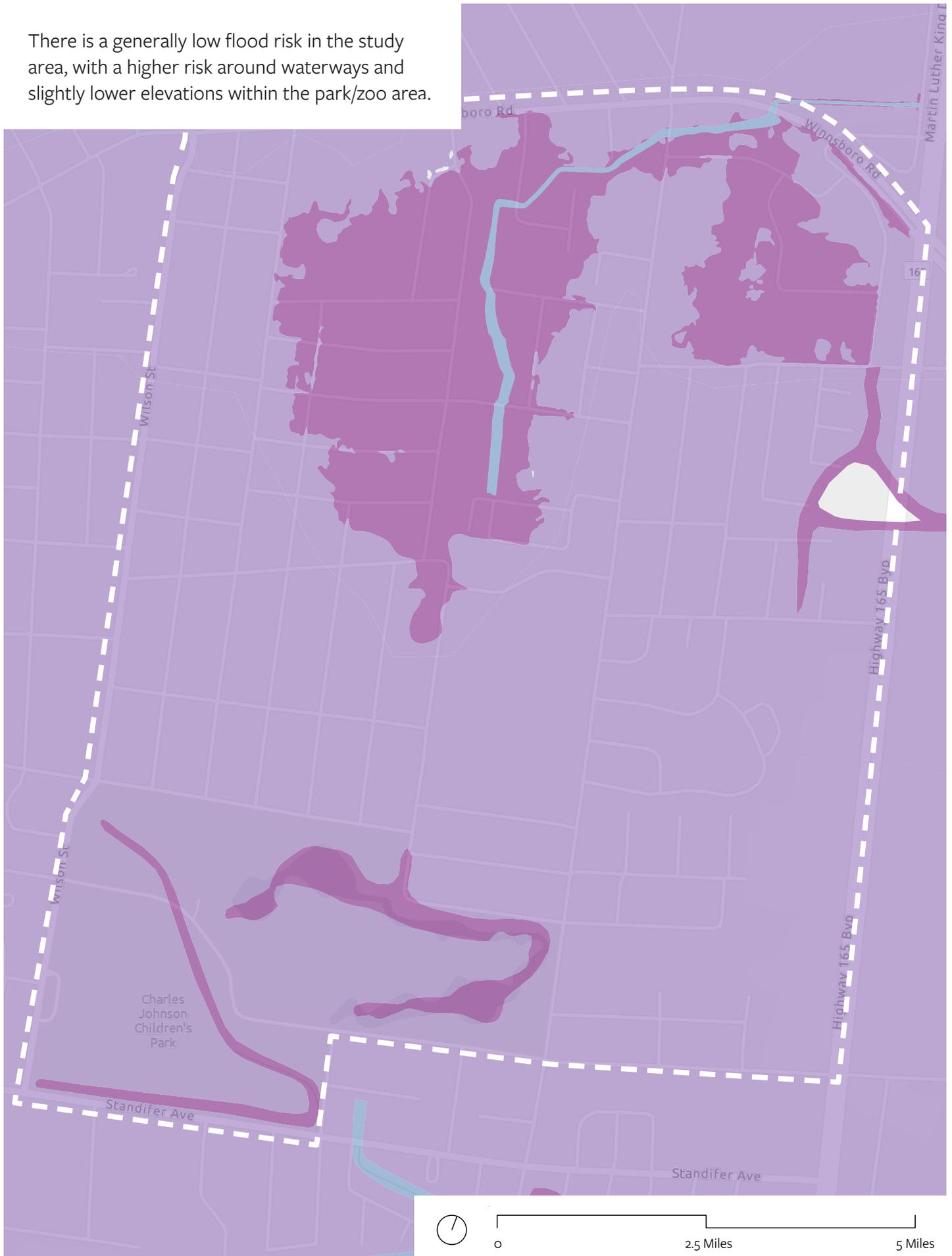
The study area is bounded by two major traffic arteries, and two primarily residential roads that serve as important connectors.

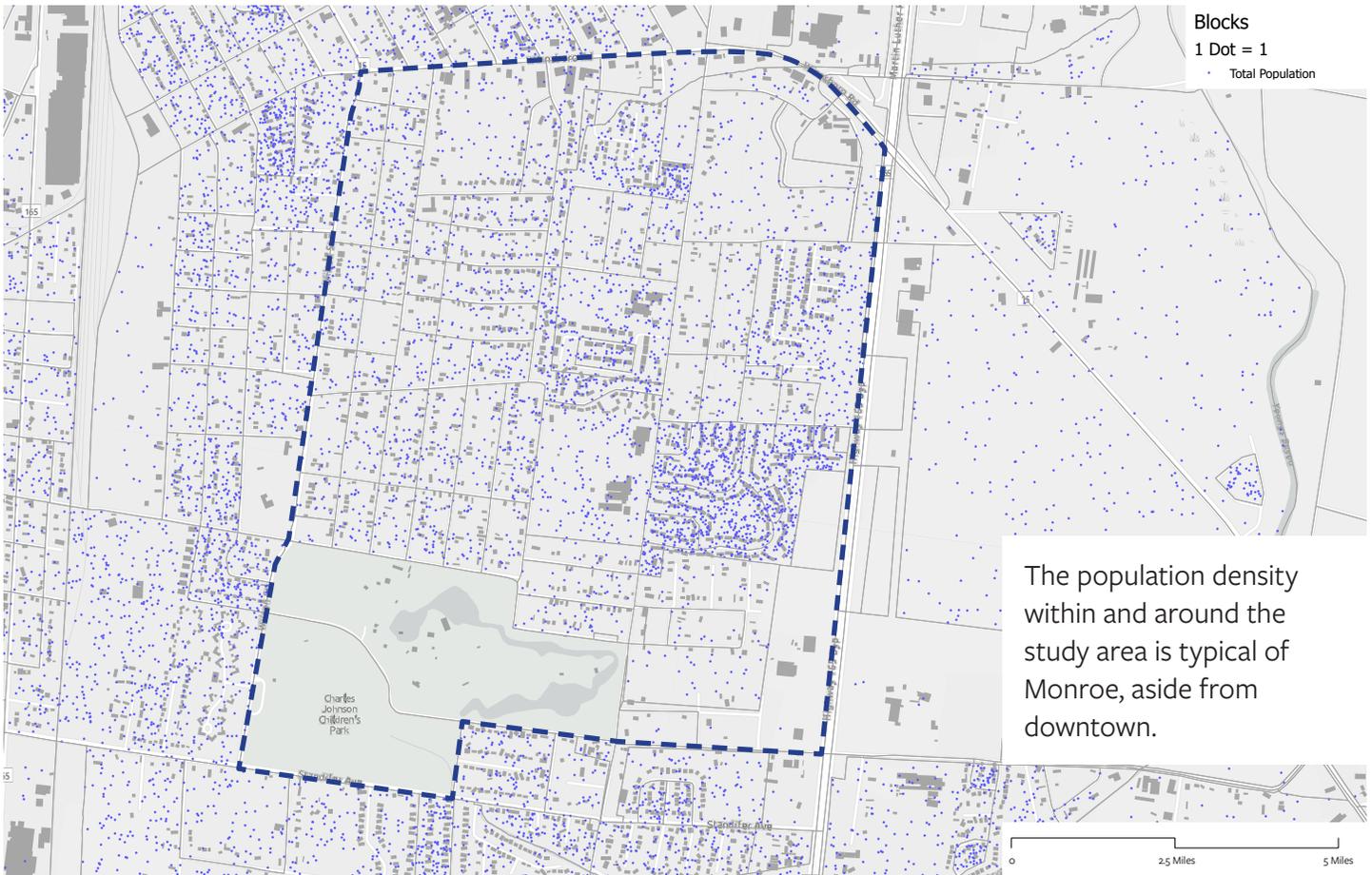


The study area is mostly residential, with pockets of commercial zoning, concentrated along Winnsboro Road.

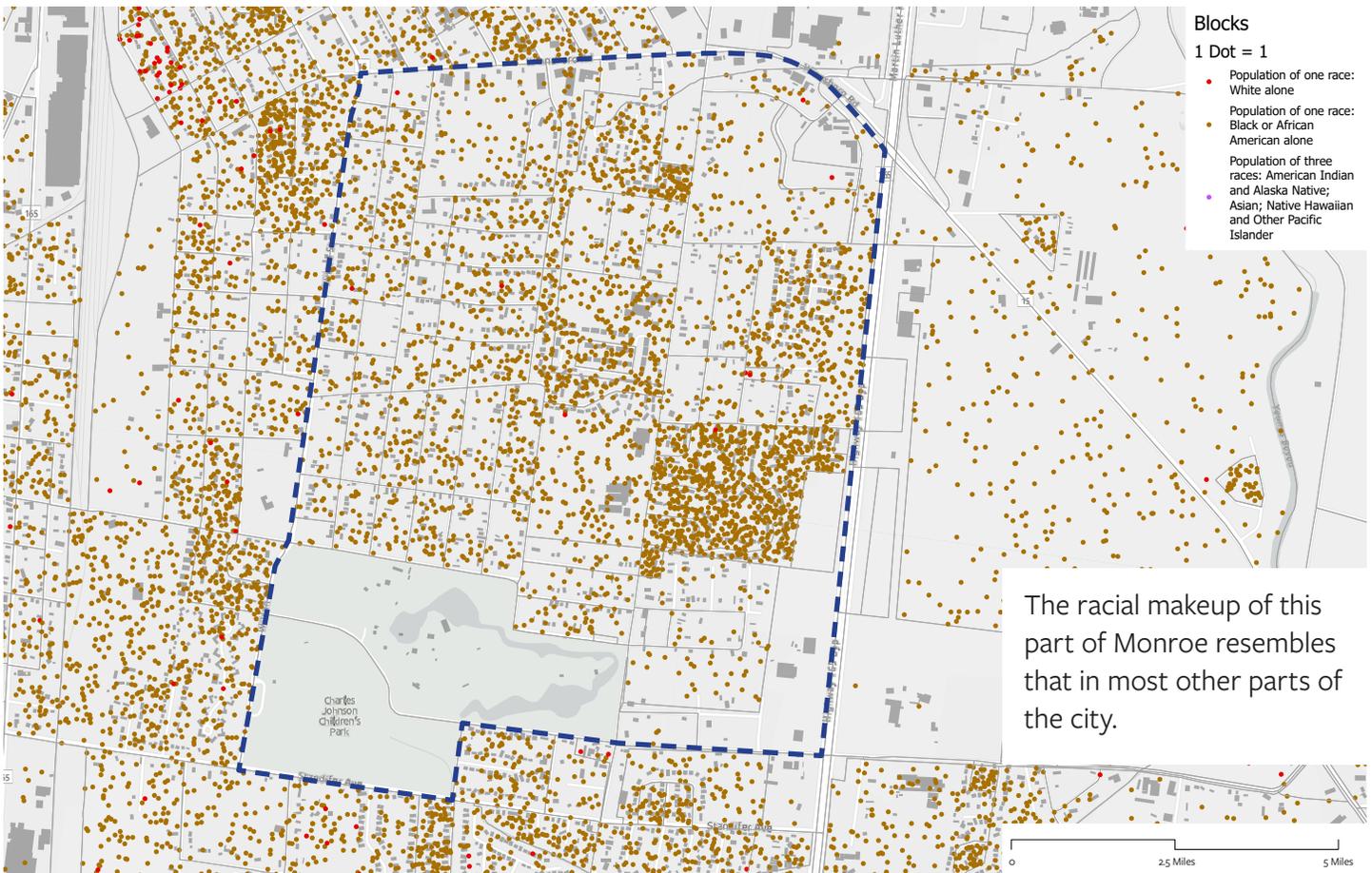


There is a generally low flood risk in the study area, with a higher risk around waterways and slightly lower elevations within the park/zoo area.



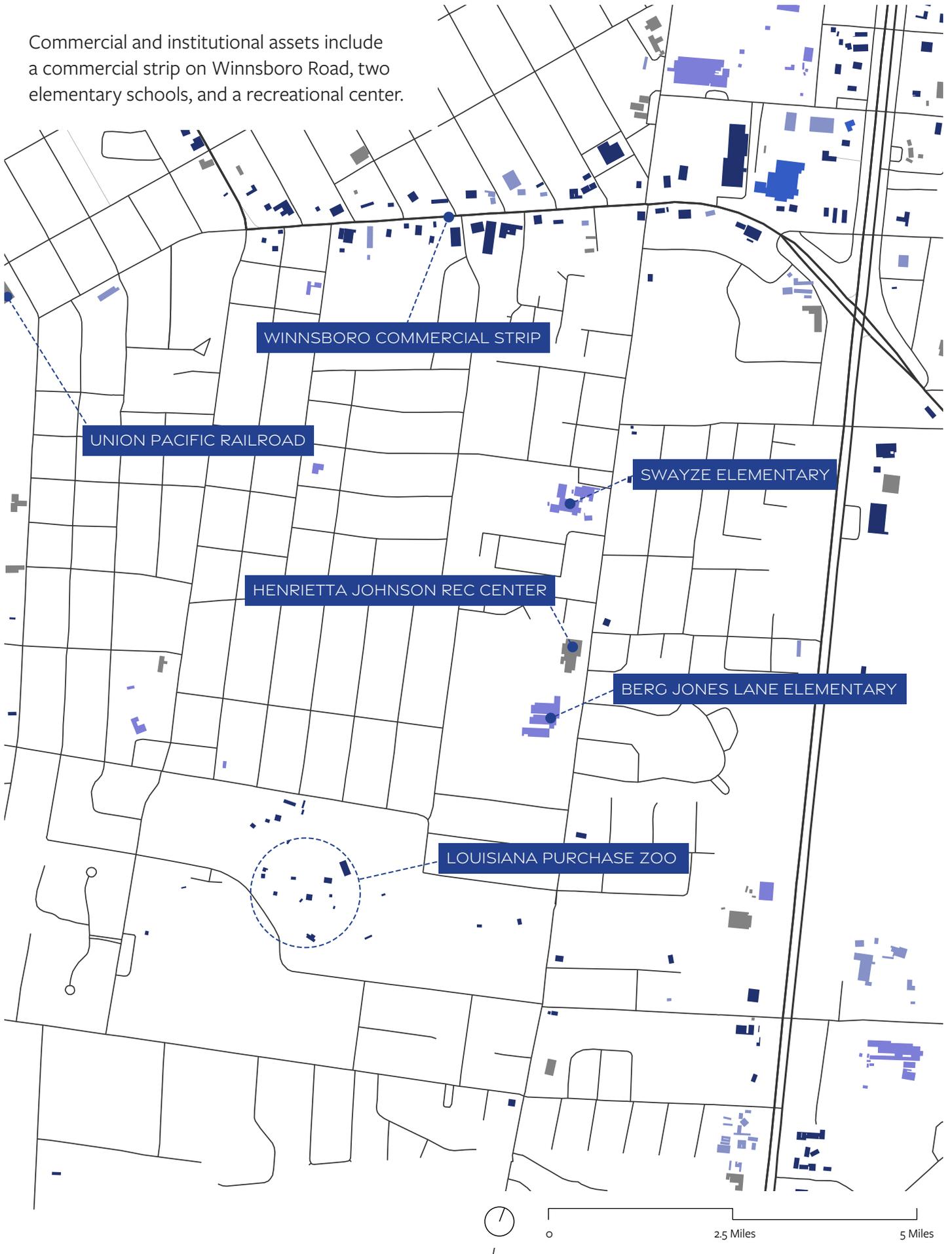


The population density within and around the study area is typical of Monroe, aside from downtown.



The racial makeup of this part of Monroe resembles that in most other parts of the city.

Commercial and institutional assets include a commercial strip on Winnsboro Road, two elementary schools, and a recreational center.



Public housing and senior housing are also located in the study area, some of which enjoy close access to Charles Johnson Park.



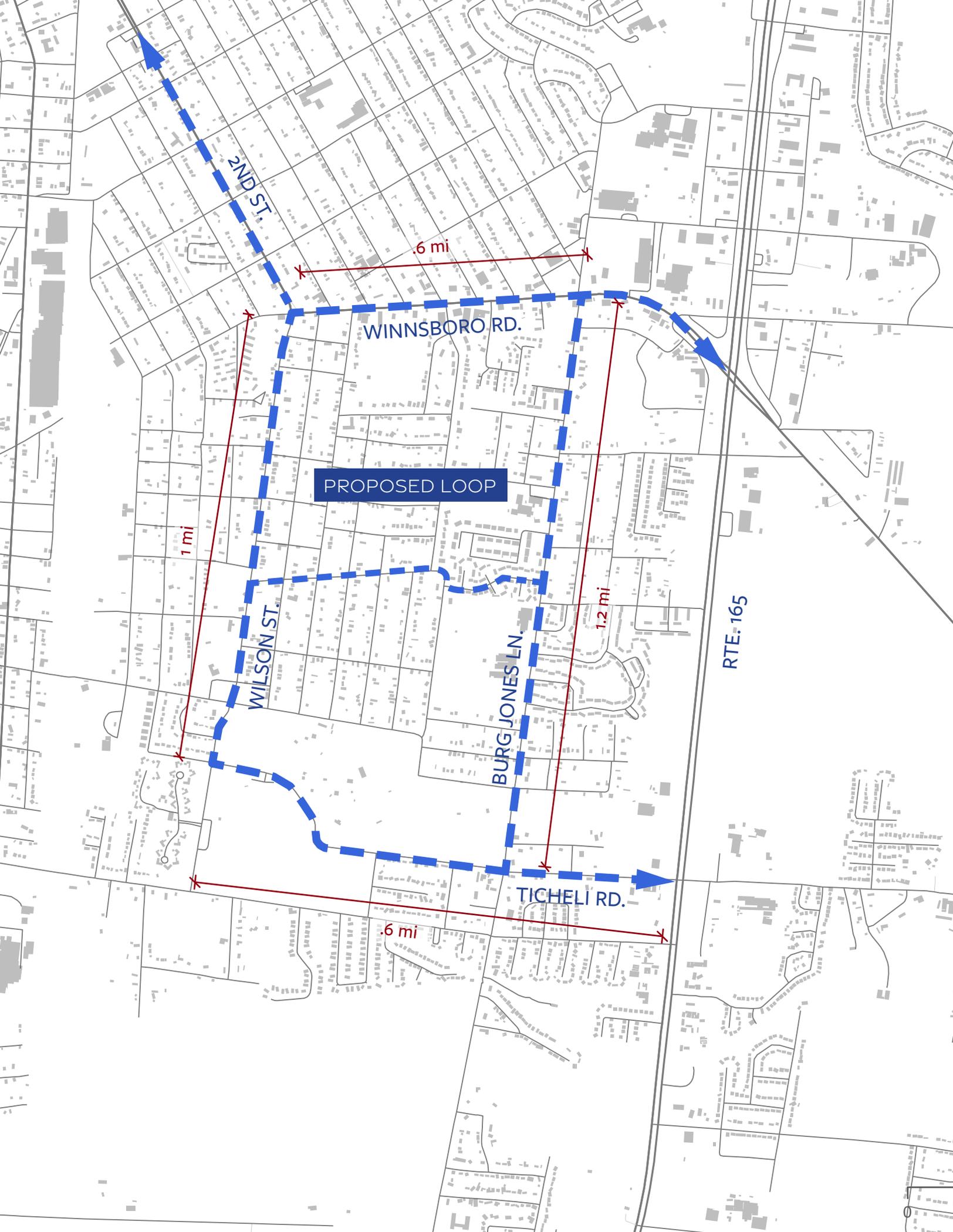
SCHEMATIC DESIGNS

LOOP PROPOSAL

In this proposal, a bike lane and improved walking path (in conjunction with intermittently existing sidewalks) form a continuous loop along Winnsboro Road, Wilson Street, Bernstein Park Drive, and Burg Jones Lane. The loop will total 3.6 miles with a cut-through connection of .7 miles from Wilson to Burg Jones on Peters Street and Bonner Drive. The pathways will provide exercise and safe travel to and from school for children that walk or bike, as well as providing a safe pedestrian path to the Winnsboro Corridor, Charles Johnson Park, and the Zoo.

The Loop's goal is to encourage residents to be active outdoors while providing safe means of exercise and foot traffic within the neighborhood, connecting schools, parks, businesses, and more.

Accommodations or route adjustments may be needed to clarify funding sources and implementation along Burg Jones Lane where it comes into and out of the City limits.





Improvements Along Wilson Street

This rendering recommends improvements for Wilson Street, which runs along the western edge of Charles Johnson Park. The existing sidewalk can be extended by adding a 5'-8" bike and pedestrian path, encouraging foot and bike traffic along the park. A narrow strip of native perennials can also be added just behind the curb, enhancing the visual appeal of the corridor.





Improvements Along Winnsboro Road

The City of Monroe has already commissioned designs for infrastructure improvements along the Winnsboro Corridor, including adding bike and pedestrian lanes on both sides of the street, planted areas, and middle turning lanes. This report includes additional guidelines concerning parking, commercial signage, architectural consistency, and lighting (see appendix). Above is a rendering of how these recommendations could transform the Winnsboro Corridor.

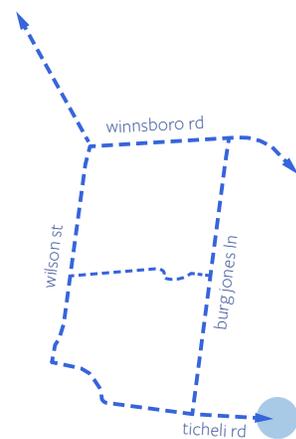




SIGNAGE

Gateway to the Louisiana Purchase Zoo

Many visitors approach the Zoo from LA-165. This image reflects how signage can improve the Ticheli Corridor that leads to the zoo. Large signage paired with mature landscaping would beautify the intersection and mark a “gateway” to the zoo and park. Pedestrian improvements and lighting would further indicate the City’s commitment to active recreation, pedestrian safety, and improving the visual character of the gateway.



Signage Near Charles Johnson Park & the Zoo

Once a visual gateway to the zoo and park area is established from LA-165, additional signage could help visitors find the zoo, and to create a welcoming entrance to the park.

Signage locations are sketched at right; directional signage would help visitors navigate along Ticheli where it jogs and becomes Bernstein Park Drive, while a marker at Wilson and Winnsboro would clarify that Wilson is the correct road to take to the zoo even though it appears residential.

Signage designs should be consistent with existing branding. If a new campaign becomes feasible, all park and zoo signage could be upgraded and possibly co-branded using the new designs.





Intersection of Ticheli Road, Burg Jones Lane, and Bernstein Park Drive



Looking down Wilson Street from Winnsboro Road

PLANT LIFE

The City of Monroe commissioned a series of recommendations on landscape improvements across the city, including along the Winnsboro Corridor. Some of these improvements are listed here.

Such improvements are important because they can enhance the visual character of a highly trafficked corridor, encourage new business, and improve the quality of life for residents by making pedestrian and bike access to businesses as convenient, safe, and comfortable as vehicle traffic.

Utilizing similar landscape improvements along the entire proposed pedestrian/bike Loop would help identify the project, improve the biker and pedestrian experience, enhance the character of the residential areas, and assist in wayfinding. Such improvements can still be very effective in residential areas even if infrastructure budgets do not allow the same density of planting possible along larger commercial corridors.

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

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> 'Goldsturm'		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

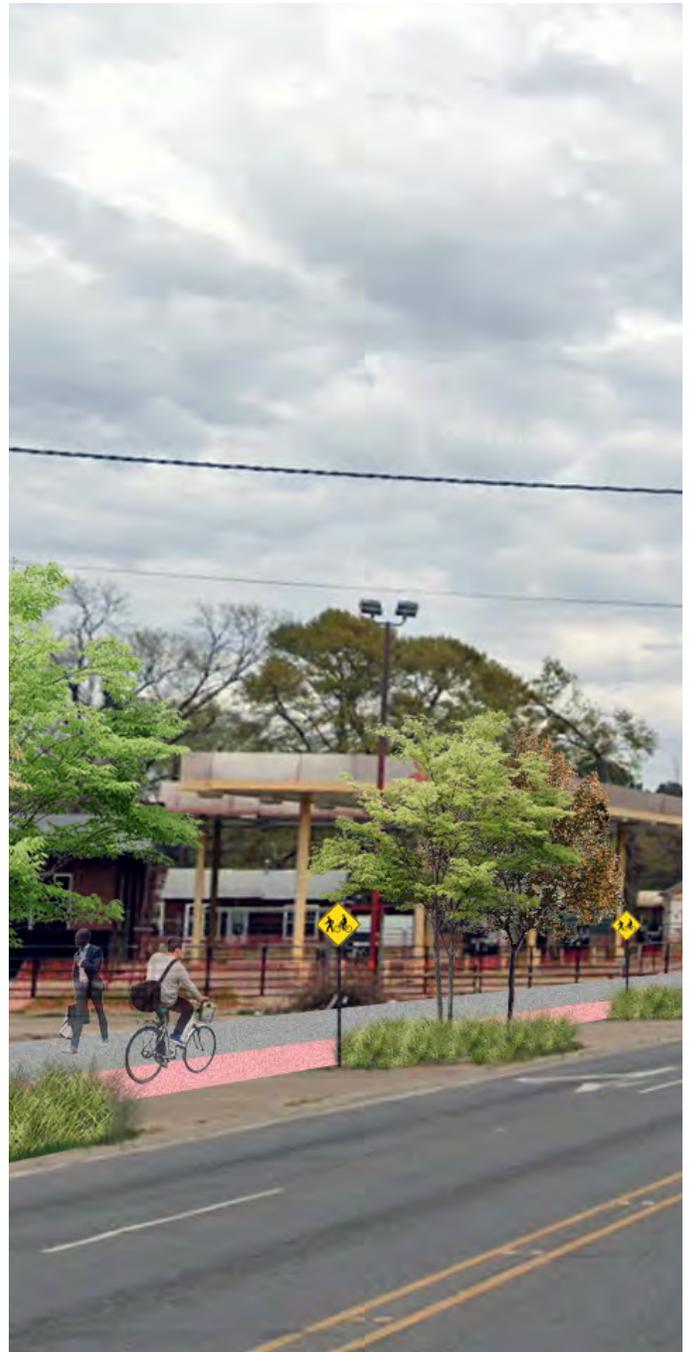


APPENDIX

DESIGN GUIDELINES

Design guidelines establish visual consistency on traffic corridors. They boost business, traffic, and encourage new business activity.

The below standards are intended to encourage high quality design through architecture, landscaping, signage, infrastructure, and traffic for the commercial corridor on Winnsboro Road to improve the identity of the city.



Vegetated zones are a helpful strategy in making sidewalks more inviting.

GUIDELINES FOR WINNSBORO ROAD

Circulation and Parking

- Joint driveways & parking shall provide pedestrian and bicycle connections of at least 6' in width that includes a sidewalk.
- Clearly defined pedestrian and bicycle connections shall be provided between the right-of-way and building entrance, parking, and building entrance, from residential and commercial developments.
- 3' of landscape on at least one side of the pedestrian connection except for at vehicle intersections.
- Pedestrian crossing within parking areas shall be clearly defined by lighting.
- Concrete sidewalks shall be constructed along all streets and public rights-of-way that are a minimum of 4' in width.

Architecture

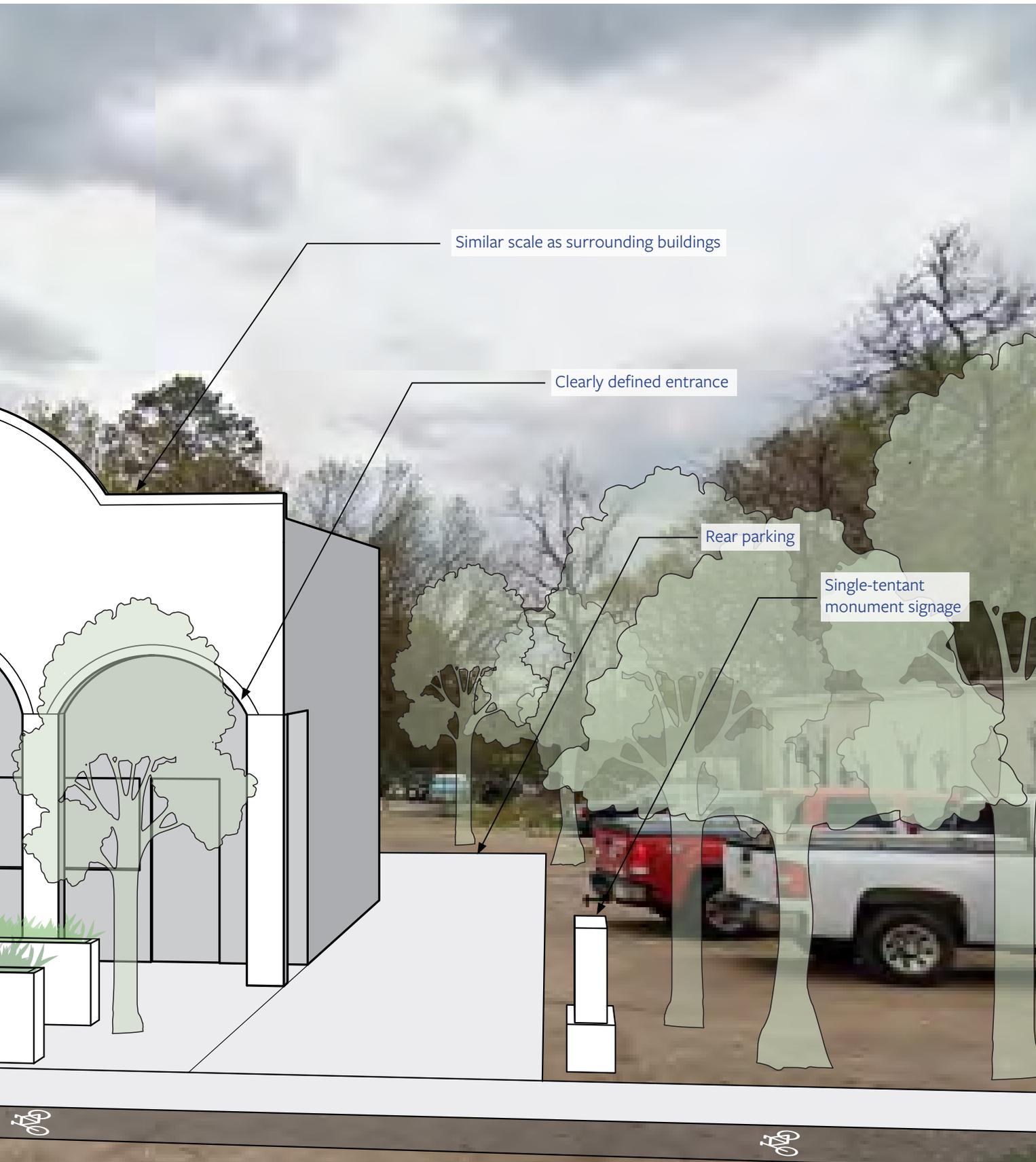
- Make the architecture consistent along the corridor in terms of scale, proportion, material, and colors. Using simple materials, including brick, concrete, metal panels, and wood, is recommended.
- Entrances should be clearly defined by architectural features such as canopies, porticos, or material and plane changes.
- The building's architecture should provide design elements to protect it from the sun, rain, and humidity.
- Design to human scale.
- Have entrances be pronounced and obvious.
- Reduce front setbacks to make buildings more inviting.
- Parking be designated in the rear of the property.



Trees provide shade

Seating area with planters

An example of a storefront along Winnsboro Road.



Similar scale as surrounding buildings

Clearly defined entrance

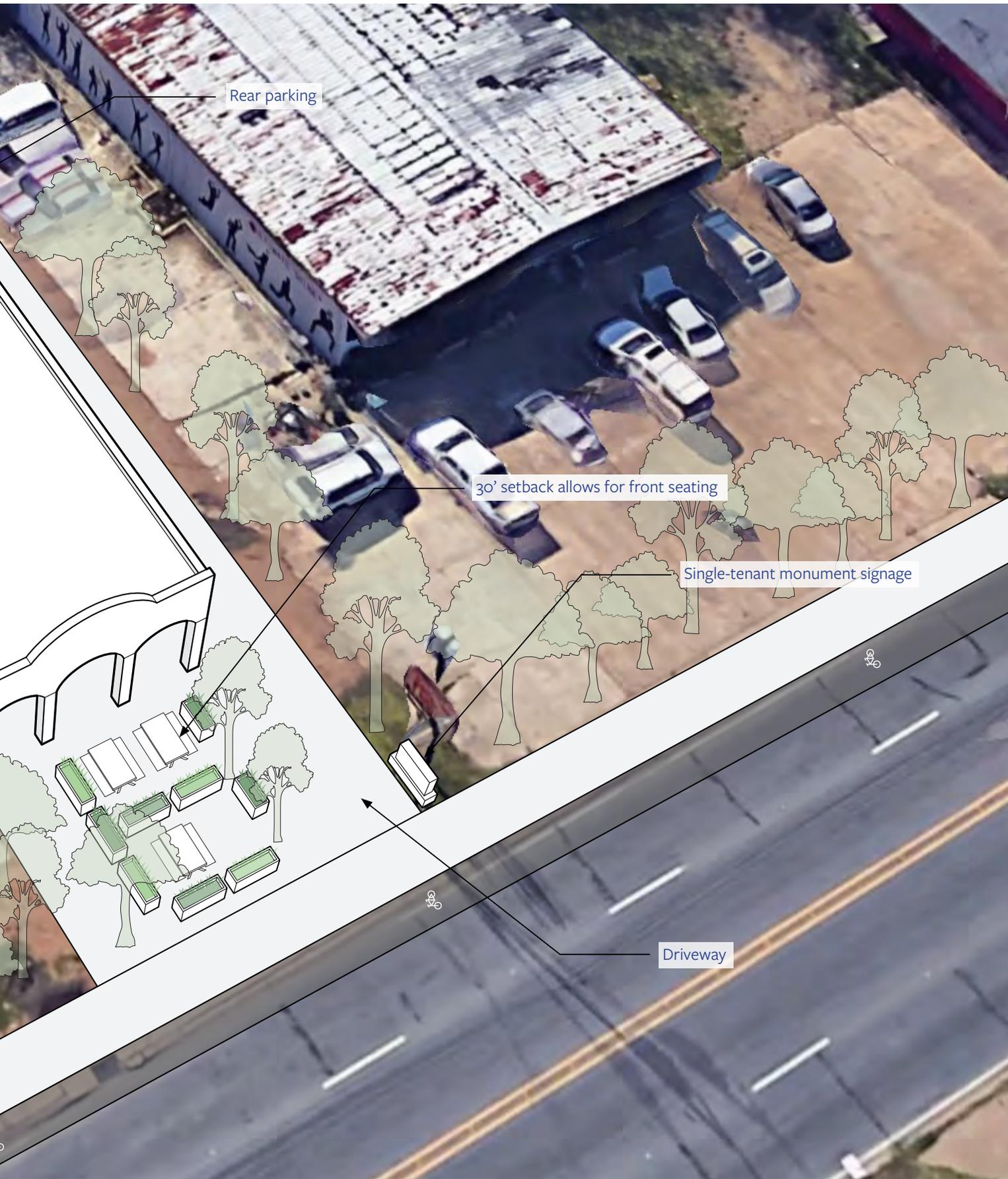
Rear parking

Single-tenant monument signage





An example of a storefront along Winnsboro Road, showing rear parking.



Rear parking

30' setback allows for front seating

Single-tenant monument signage

Driveway

Landscape/Open Space

- Parking lots over 50 spaces shall include landscape islands covering at least 10% of the square footage. For existing parking in the front of the building, we require 20% of the business's parking lot to be landscaped. See Carbo Landscape Architect's suggested perennials, shrubs, and trees that will perform well in the environment.
- Parking lots shall contain at least 1 shade tree minimum of 6' tall and max 35' feet tall for every 200 SQFT of landscaping.
- Landscape islands and other pervious surfaces on the site shall treat and store stormwater.
- Businesses along the corridor must provide a bike rack near the front façade of the building.

Lighting

- Parking lot lighting fixtures shall direct light towards the development and prevent light spillage to other users and adjacent streets.
- Lighting must define the pedestrian scale and used to light crosswalks, connections, bicycle and parking, and other pedestrian areas within the development.
- Pedestrian-scale lighting shall be a max of 14' in height.

Signage

- Commercial corridors must be consistent with the location and appearance of signage on the property and neighboring properties.
- Cannot be in the right-of-way of traffic or pedestrians.
- Multi-tenant signs are discouraged.
- Modulate monument business signage- all to be the same font, scale, color scheme, and location on each site. 5' tall by 4' wide with the signage 4' x 2'-6".

