



Shreveport Common

A VISION FOR AN UNCOMMON CULTURAL DISTRICT



Foreward

When will we get there, I ain't saying; how will we get there, I don't know...all I know is I am on my way! Got a dream boy, Got a song, Paint your wagon and come along!

This stanza from “Paint Your Wagon” served as the introduction to the first – 1992 - Community Cultural Plan developed by the Shreveport Regional Arts Council (SRAC), subsequently funded by the National Endowment for the Arts and the City of Shreveport, and implemented... step by step over the next 10 years. At that time, the planning process was a 100% Grass Roots Planning effort by a “green” (as in novice) team that had a lot of passion, tons of energy, and a sense that the Arts community had not maximized its full potential to partner with other agencies to improve life in Shreveport. As a planning team, we really didn't know where we were going, or when we would arrive. We did know that if we stayed on the path, our journey would catapult the Artists and Arts Organizations in the Shreveport metropolitan area to a distinguished role that would produce measurable results to benefit the citizens of and visitors to Northwest Louisiana.

Almost 20 years later, with a demonstrated \$90 million in annual Economic Impact and the production and presentation of more than 500 Art activities every year, the Arts community has received the ultimate “charge” from the City of Shreveport through Mayor Cedric Glover: Create a Cultural Community; propel a Cultural Economy. Mayor Glover's “edict” was forged in the throes of a devastating fire, set by an arsonist, which destroyed the offices, artists' rehearsal space, and storage area of the Shreveport Regional Arts Council. Mayor Glover did not seem to see the flames' destruction; he saw the phoenix...the renaissance...for a true Cultural Economy instigated by the rebirth of SRAC and the strengthening - and stabilization - of the Arts Community.

It was during this critical time...just days after the fire, that the designer for the expansion of SRAC's arts center, artspace, Gregory Free, gathered friends and comrades to find a new home for Shreveport Regional Arts Council. He didn't want the mourners to let the Mayor's challenge go

unnoticed. Gregory Free is a Historic Preservation Design Consultant with a master's degree in architecture from Columbia University. Two years prior to the fire, Gregory brought his deep southern heritage, his Austin, Texas sensibility, his historic passion...or his passion for all things historic, along with his love for Strawn's Pies to the artspace Advisory Board and began working with Richard LeBlanc, LeBlanc & Young Architects, on the design for artspace. Late one evening, Gregory saw the treasure that Shreveport residents call the Central Fire Station; he called then-Fire Chief, Brian Crawford, to ask about a tour and within minutes both had agreed that there could be no better “calling” than to move SRAC from the Fire to the Fire Station.

Mayor Glover saw the immediate and long-term benefits: SRAC would have enough space for Public Programming and expanding its mission to provide training for the entrepreneurial development of Artists and Arts Organizations; plus, SRAC would become a catalyst to transform a nine-block island of urban decay - with a handful of home owners and a plethora of cracked sidewalks and brick-laden empty lots - from blight to a vibrant community thriving with people who will live, work, recreate, make art, and make life in what is called Shreveport Common. Mayor Glover and Gregory Free were among the first to “see” the opportunity to transform a little over an acre of weathered, weed and brick filled vacant lots into an open green space that could become the heart – the Common – of Shreveport Common. Finally, Mayor Glover saw the opportunity to activate the Common Street exit/entry at Interstate 20 to become a primary entry to a revitalized downtown for visitors and residents alike.

In February 2010, Mayor Glover directed the Shreveport Regional Arts Council and City of Shreveport to submit a grant to the Mayors' Institute on City Design, a program of the National Endowment for the Arts, to fund the Planning Process.

In July 2010, Shreveport was announced as one of 17 cities selected to receive matching funds to engage the community in a grass roots planning process to create a Vision Plan for Shreveport Common, spearheaded by Gregory Free. Within a few months, Gregory had assembled a local planning team to include Mischa Farrell, Architect; Landscape Architects Jerome Nicholas and Katie Martin of Nicholas Landscape; and Project Manager, Wendy Bencoter of Bencoter Consultants, LLC.

The team hit the ground running, committing to do “door to door” interviews with all residents, property owners, organizations, and stakeholders in the Shreveport Common area. To ensure that these “Listening Sessions” were comprehensive, inclusive, and addressed by the Shreveport Common Vision Plan, Mayor Glover appointed a 50 person Shreveport Common Advisory Committee, which met every three weeks from January through July.

Early in the “Listening Process” the Texas Avenue Community Association (TACA) hosted the first community “Listening Session” - by the end of the formal listening process, the team had interviewed more than 65 groups and heard more than 1,000 ideas of which 300 were “unique.” Along the way, there have been many community activities to engage current and would-be neighbors. Planning “kicked-off” with an August 2010 announcement of the Central Fire Station's upcoming metamorphosis to the CENTRAL ARTSTATION; a spring, Great American Clean Up with Shreveport Green, TACA and the Aseana Gardens Foundation brought hundreds out to clean up the area; narrated trolley tours; a combined TACA Maker's Fair and Aseana Gardens Festival followed; as did a Thursday Night Trolley and History of Shreveport Common Tour; four walking tours; podcasts; a Tax Incentives Workshop for potential Developers; and a June 18th “upside down Design Charrette” where more than 600 people drew, wrote, talked, touched, painted, rhymed, sculpted, and dictated their reactions to the first draft of the Shreveport Common Vision Plan.

These ideas and suggestions were translated into a final virtual Vision Plan that forms the foundation of our communication about how we envision Shreveport Common. This written document supports the virtual presentation. Together, with you, we are on the way to making Shreveport Common a true cultural community – built on the authentic history and heritage of the area; the key building block is creativity, which stems from the professional artists and arts organizations; and the foundation of the building process is sustainability – it doesn't have to built in one day or all at one time...this is an area that will grow!

Our new tune: When will we get there? (Within three years there will be a noticeable change); How will we get there? (The Vision Plan, Strategies for “Next Steps” and the Planning Document illumine the way – the teams and partnerships that have been forged will guide our course); We're on our way...Paint YOUR Wagon, and come along!

Pam Atchison
Executive Director
Shreveport Regional Arts Council
September 2011

THE
Shreveport Common
CULTURAL DISTRICT
VISION PLAN

To begin the presentation of the *Shreveport Common* Vision Plan, a reprise of the goals established by Mayor Cedric Glover for the Shreveport Regional Arts Council is appropriate:

- To restore the historic Central Fire Station as the headquarters of the Shreveport Regional Arts Council
- To provide the facility with expanded public spaces for performance, display, and artistic development
- To leverage this public private partnership into a revitalization of the neighboring blocks as an urban cultural district
- To create a new entrance gateway into downtown Shreveport via Common Street

Acknowledgements:

The Vision Plan would like to acknowledge the leadership, ideas, and commitment of those who served so faithfully during many months of the process. There is no way to fully express our gratitude. It is our hope that all of them share in the joy and wonder of the Shreveport Common Cultural District.

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“Louisiana Division of the Arts, Office of Cultural Development,
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Shreveport Common:

A VISION FOR AN UNCOMMON CULTURAL DISTRICT

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INTRODUCTION

Shreveport Common was conceived after a devastating fire engulfed the Shreveport Regional Arts Council's (SRAC) headquarters on August 25, 2009. Few would have thought that the senseless act of a homeless person would have spurred the rebuilding of a once-great commercial and institutional neighborhood. The comparisons to similar narratives in Chicago and San Francisco are obvious – in both cities, tragedy resulted in trajectory.

Historians and cultural geographers have identified a typically American urban phenomenon: a cycle of *build-neglect-decay-renew*, but a disaster seems to miraculously speed up the process. In fortunate circumstances, such a crisis brings with it an opportunity for the creative best to come out from all those involved.

In Shreveport's case it began with Mayor Cedric B. Glover, City Council members, and department leaders who pledged a "new day" in the glow of the still-raging fire. This was followed closely by parish and state leaders, who independently affirmed the importance of the Arts to the region and committed to their future. Within days, the historic Central Fire Station was identified as a recently surplus building and a potential new headquarters. A much-beloved landmark since its construction in 1922, the Italian Renaissance-style building is a functional work of art itself, and quickly proved it could supply all the needed administrative requirements, while serving the individual artists and arts organizations in dramatically new ways. And it must be noted, the building is totally fireproof.

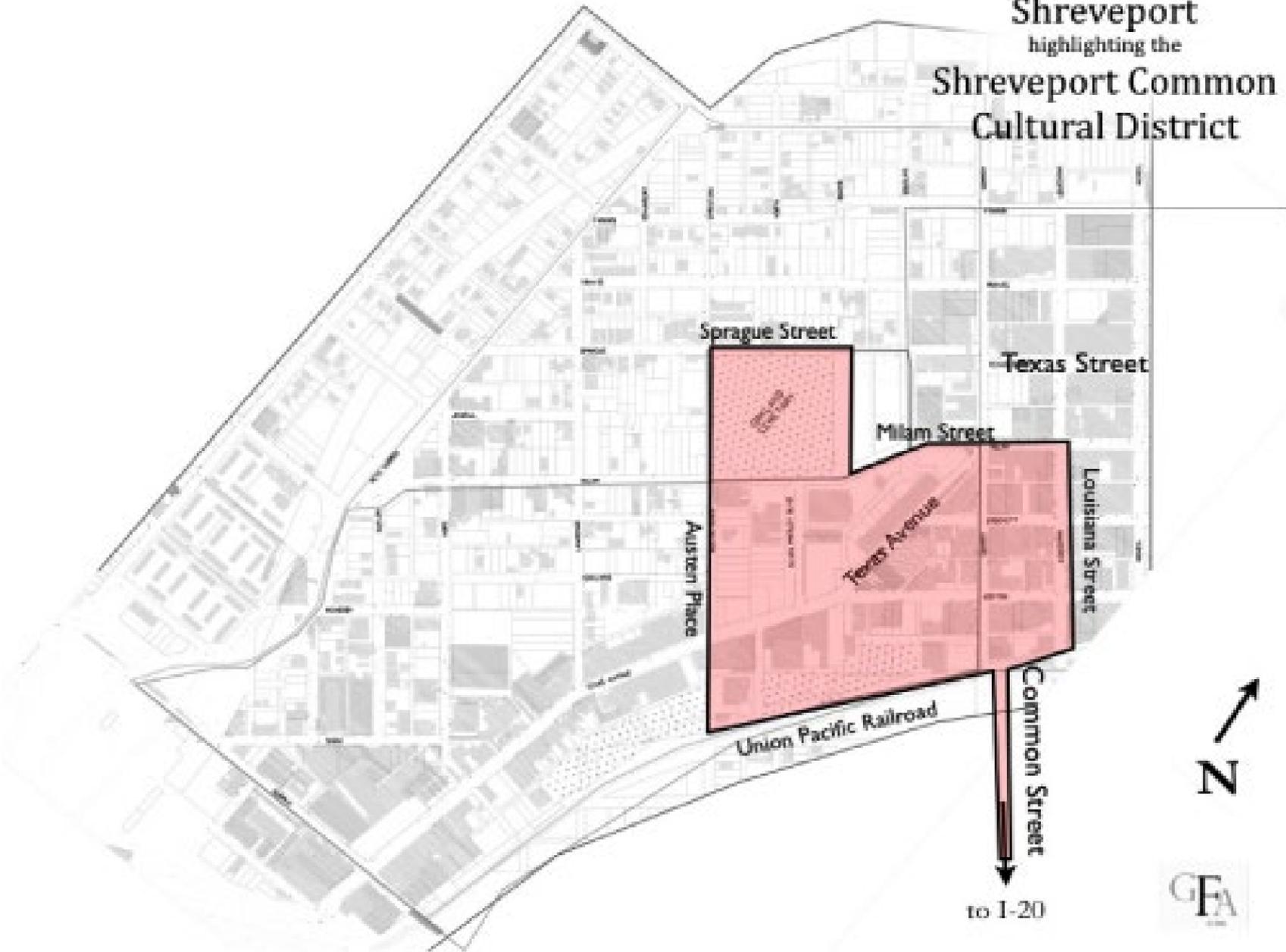
Of greatest importance is the Central Fire Station's strategic location: sited pivotally on a principal artery and entrance into downtown, the Station is surrounded by a blighted neighborhood filled with architectural treasures. In spite of a concentration of grass roots arts activities nearby, the area has a poor public persona and no shared identity. However, it possesses an amazingly rich history of diversity, tolerance, and creativity.

The decision to relocate this dynamic arts powerhouse into a strategically positioned new headquarters has the potential, in Mayor Glover's words, "to change the landscape of downtown Shreveport." He challenged SRAC, its board, and other supporters to raise the funds necessary to make this dream a reality and the community immediately took up his challenge. For most contributors, this was viewed not only as an arts vision, but a broader heritage preservation and urban revitalization cause.

Then, as if a playwright had been hired to draft a script, the National Endowment for the Arts announced its 25th Anniversary, Mayor's Institute for City Design grants, and SRAC was asked by Mayor Glover to apply for this prestigious funding. Officially, *Shreveport Common* was borne out of the interdisciplinary efforts of SRAC's Visioning and grant writing for the 9-block area surrounding the Central Fire Station. SRAC conceived an urban cultural district powered by the forces of the Arts and Humanities – one that would stimulate the physical and economic renewal of this neglected area and identify it as a place where artists and others can live, work, and play. After a four-month selection process, Shreveport and *Shreveport Common* was awarded one of 17 grants nationally, in the amount of \$100,000, to match funds for the Visioning and public arts components for the district.

(Opposite Page) Central Fire Station c. 1924

Partial Map of Downtown
Shreveport
highlighting the
Shreveport Common
Cultural District



DEFINING THE DISTRICT

One of the strengths of the *Shreveport Common* concept was the recognition and acknowledgement of a large-scaled troubled urban area, but also the deliberate focus on the blocks immediately surrounding the Central Fire Station as they contain the most intact and significant architectural fabric and the longest-term stakeholders and institutions. The “paths” of the study area respond to the precepts set forth by urbanist Kevin Lynch and focus on the major arteries of Common Street, the original west boundary of the City of Shreveport, and Texas Avenue, the early 19th century trail route to and from Texas. The “edges,” in Lynch’s terminology, are clearer on the north and south and are defined by Oakland Cemetery and the Union Pacific Railroad respectively, both strong and historic physical boundaries.

On the other hand, the east and west boundaries are somewhat more calculated for a number of reasons: first, to limit the project scope to a workable size; second, to provide sufficient protection to the major paths; to include the principal landmarks and nodes within a reasonable distance from the Central Fire Station; and finally, to “key” the district into both renewed and pre-renewal neighboring areas.

At the request of Mayor Glover, who especially appreciated the “gateway” opportunities presented by *Shreveport Common*, the 1930s viaduct over the railroad lines was included in the district as part of a well-defined entranceway. After discussions with an important public/private organization, Friends of Oakland Cemetery, the northern boundary was extended to embrace the entirety of Oakland Cemetery instead of ending at the original entrance gates on Milam Street. The inclusion of Oakland Cemetery underscores the importance of its historic 1912 entry gates as the portal into the city’s first public park, and solidly links this community preservation effort and its future programming to the life of the *Shreveport Common* cultural district.

(Opposite) The boundaries of the Shreveport Common cultural district are delineated in the map.

“The Shreveport Regional Arts Council and the City of Shreveport are making Arts Work. We are using Creative Placemaking to drive a Cultural Economy by starting with a Vision Plan – one that puts the Arts and Artists at the center of energizing a blighted area.”

-- Shreveport Mayor Cedric Glover

A PHYSICAL HISTORY OF *Shreveport Common*

BEGINNINGS

The City of Shreveport was founded in 1836 by the Shreve Town Company, a corporation established to develop a town at the juncture of the newly navigable Red River and the Texas Trail, an overland route into a recently independent Republic of Texas and, prior to that time, into Mexico. Newly named for the westernmost street in the original city survey, Common Street, the area now known as *Shreveport Common* was for many years unimproved farmland with few formal streets or roads. One of the clearest early representations of the area appears in the 1872 Bird's Eye View Map of Shreveport, but unfortunately, few maps have been found that depict the area before 1890.

The area is easily recognized as the original city grid ended and the roads meandered among small farms to the west and eventually Texas, just twenty miles away. Since the street now known as Texas Avenue was the actual trail between the now independent Republic of Texas and Shreveport, and was also the most reliable means of transport to and from markets, this trailhead became an important node for immigrants, planters, livestock and land speculators. The open triangle just outside the grid, now framed by Texas Avenue, Common, and Crockett Streets became an important staging area—almost a market place unto itself—as large collections of wagons and herds could prepare either to enter or leave the city from this open, bare expanse of land. It is not surprising that up to and beyond the advent of the railroads in the region and the subsequent reduced emphasis on the riverfront port, this triangle remained undeveloped. It was not until 1900 that a two-story hotel with attached commercial buildings was constructed on this central site.

Westward beyond this site were some few scattered wooden buildings that served as private homes and small entrepreneurial businesses, often all on the same property in the tradition of an earlier America. These small business owners, who supplied services and goods to the trade route, included recently emancipated African-Americans who lived off the land and their agri-industry labors.

For many years the most important land use in the immediate area was the city cemetery, now known as Oakland Cemetery. It was informally used since the 1830s, but was made official by the moving and re-interment of burials from an earlier site in 1847. In addition to its role as the community's burial ground, away from the noise, smells, and dangers of the riverfront, this 10-acre hillock served as the City's principal community's park, in the 19th century tradition.

“It is the heritage of opportunity, creativity and tolerance that make Shreveport Common a historically and spiritually dynamic place. That spirit lives today, embodied in the stories, landmarks, and people that endure.”



The 1872 Bird's Eye View Map of Shreveport; detail of the *Shreveport Common* area (inset).



This triangular wood frame Italianate style building was built between c. 1900 at 801 Texas Avenue. It was an early mixed-use facility with two hotel floors above its commercial storefront.

It was in the late 19th century that Shreveport's growth as the distribution center of the Ark-La-Tex region took hold. With its combination of river and rail connections to markets—particularly to New Orleans, one of the nation's largest ports – and via railroad connection from Vicksburg to Dallas, the city attracted more than its share of both domestic and foreign immigration. Merchants and industrialists flocked to the Red River and soon the original city grid overflowed its 64-block footprint.

(Opposite Page) The index page from the 1885 Sandborn Fire Insurance Maps, the first for Shreveport, indicate the compact size of the City at that time. The area we now call *Shreveport Common* is show outside the city limits on the the left (west).

Governor's Residence, Shreveport, La



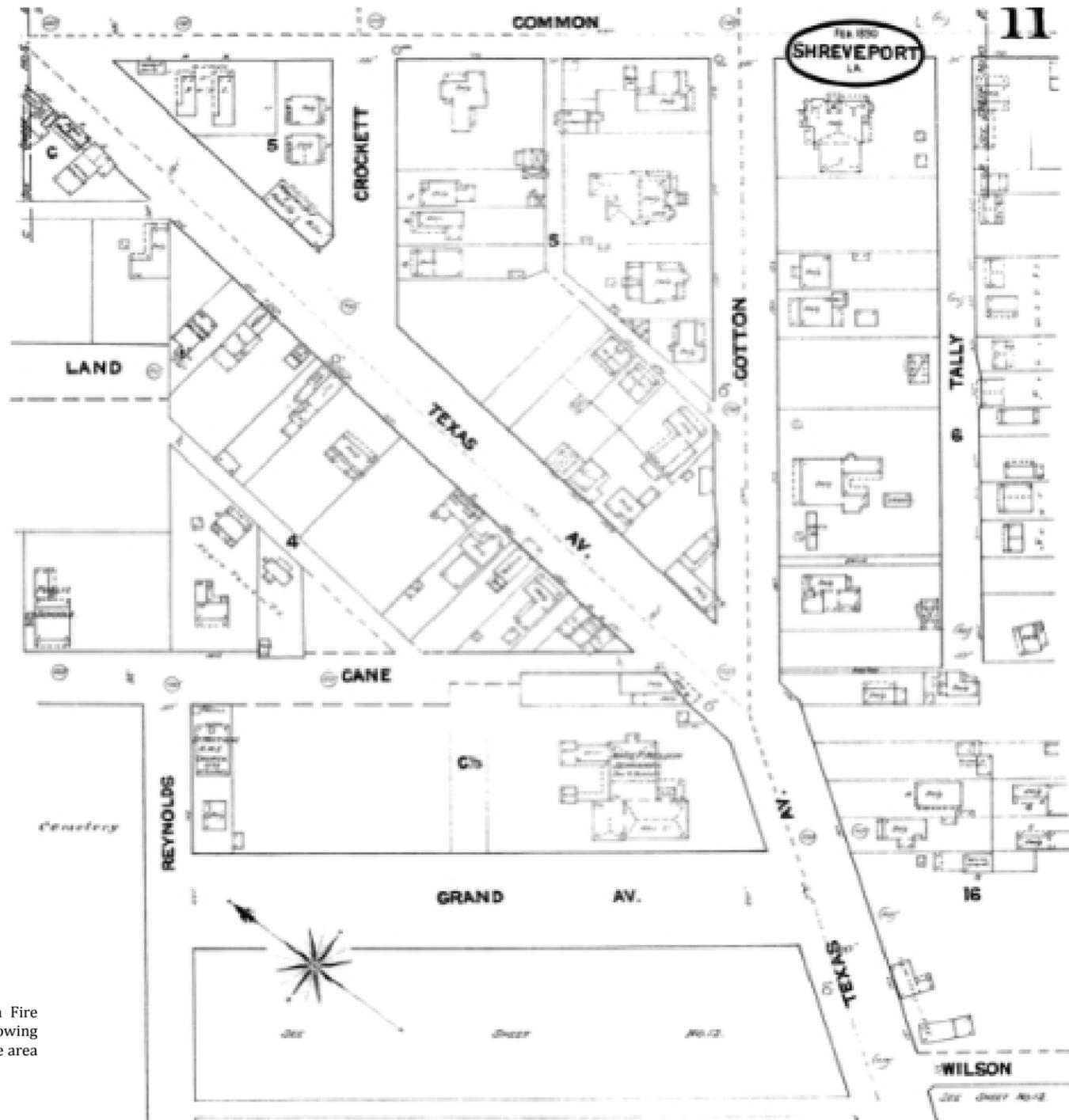
"ON THE TWENTIETH CENTURY"

Since much of this area was still widely used as residential, sites along the rail lines were the first to transition to commerce, inspiring citizens of all economic levels to venture out from the original city and begin the first suburban neighborhoods. One of these neighborhoods was immediately west of town beyond Common Street, where, in the 1890s some of the largest and finest houses were arranged on newly established streets: Grand Avenue, Christian Street, and the extension of Cotton Street, to name a few. These were the addresses of choice for wealthy merchants, industrialists, and socialites, as well as famous politicians such as former Governor and U.S. Senator Newton Crain Blanchard. Blanchard's house at the southwest corner of Common and Cotton Streets was perhaps the city's largest and most extravagant home built up to that time. The African-American community lived on unpaved lanes called REO Quarters, Jones Alley and Gable Court on the outskirts of this district, primarily in rental properties along the railroad. Another African-American neighborhood began along the blocks north and east of the cemetery in areas later known as St. Paul's Bottoms and Ledbetter Heights, extending further west to near the current line of Interstate 20.



(Above Top) A small neighborhood establishment, c. 1910.
(Above Bottom) An early 20th century postcard of traffic on Common Street.
(Opposite Page) Governor Blanchard's Victorian mansion at 801 Cotton was demolished in 1935.

A sheet from the Sanborn Fire insurance map of 1899 showing the development of the core area of Shreveport Common.

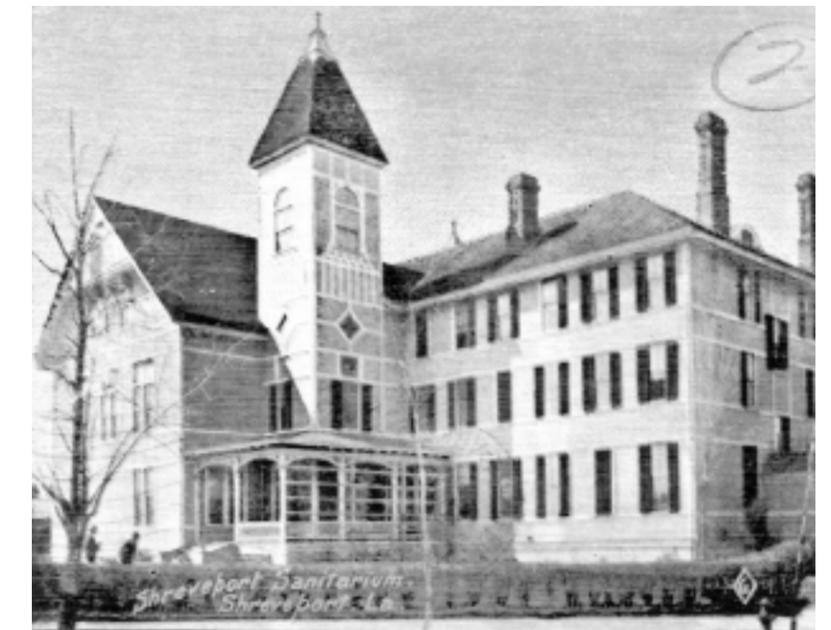


This outward growth paved the way for other construction in the area, notably fine places of worship with a new building for St. Matthew’s AME Church on Grand Avenue, (1896-1899), a new St. Mark’s Episcopal Church (1904), and the B’nai Zion Temple (1914). Social clubs and other institutions chose the area for their homes as well with the BPOE, Elks, and other lodges ultimately joined by the magnificent Scottish Rite Cathedral in 1917. The Kate P. Nelson Seminary, a girls’ school in an imposing three-story turreted wood frame structure, appeared in the late 1880s and might have been a draw for other institutions. This complex, located in the 900 Block of Texas Avenue where a new parking lot is located today, was later converted to a hospital known as the Shreveport Sanitarium.

The new residents created a market for the middle class white, black, and ethnic citizens who could afford the small commercial lots strung along Texas Avenue and Crockett Streets. There they built service-oriented businesses from which they could ply trades and goods with a remarkable breadth and depth. Initially, commerce began to creep across Common Street from the “City” on Texas and Milam Streets to Texas Avenue. The first blocks that began to develop in the 1890s showed a mix of labor services and tenement houses for African-Americans; positioned side-by-side were painters, wheelwrights, woodworking and tin shops, blacksmiths, notions stores, small groceries and a bakery. The many small wood frame dwellings (some we would today describe as sheds or shacks) served double duty as live/work spaces, a trend that would continue as buildings grew in size and quality.

As the decade progressed, more and more substantial buildings were constructed directly on the sidewalk frontage with a decidedly commercial form. But by 1899, only one substantial two-story masonry building had been erected on lower Texas Avenue, still surrounded by one-story frame buildings. However, City directories and the Sanborn Maps document that the area had begun its transition from labor- to service-oriented businesses, and

now included restaurants, lunch counters, a dressmaker’s shop, a confectioner, and a wallpaper shop. Also by 1899, Texas Avenue was brick-paved, at least for the first few blocks west of Common Street, and was the only paved street in this part of town.



The Kate P. Nelson Seminary, c. 1880s, converted later to the Shreveport Sanitarium. It became the first home for Shumpert Hospital.



Looking west up Texas Avenue from Common Street, c. 1910.



Looking north up Common Street from Texas Street, c. 1910.

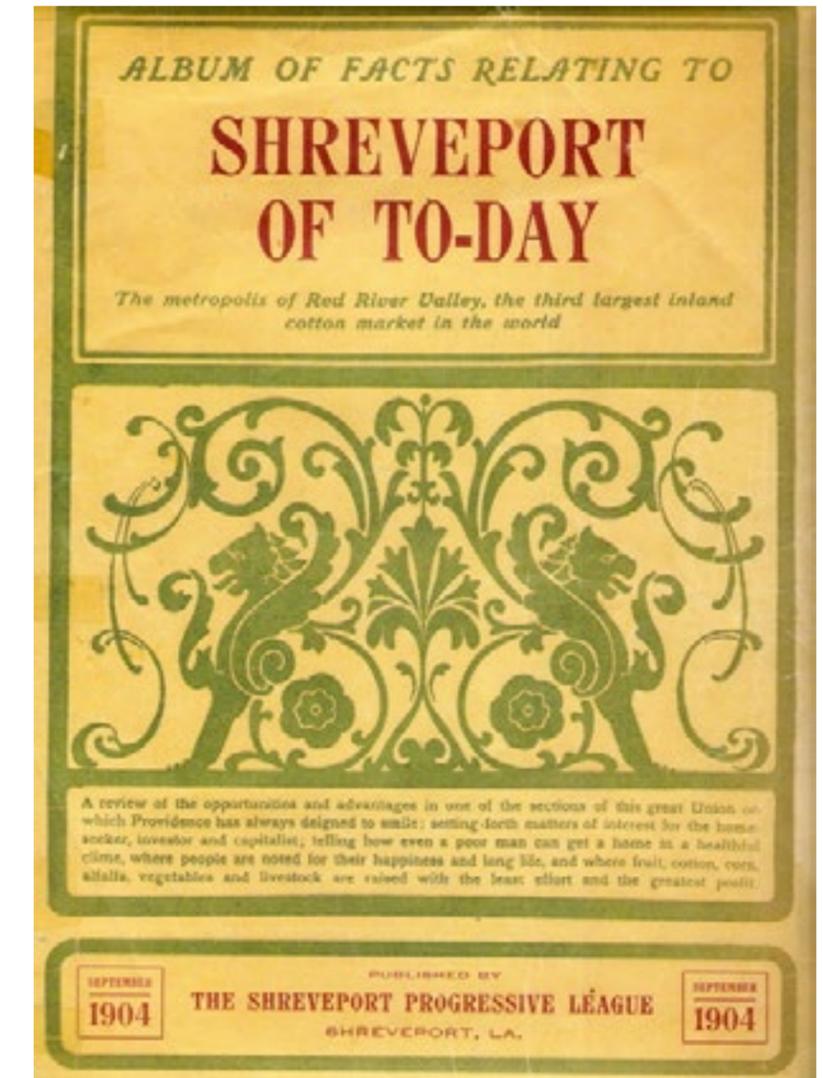


The streetcar lines quickly brought the Shreveport Common area into “the loop”, shown in this c. 1910 postcard, looking east down Texas Avenue as it traveled toward Oakland Cemetery and later the Municipal Auditorium and the early suburbs.



Construction on one of the City’s most noted landmarks, the splendid Gothic Revival Church of the Holy Cross, formerly St. Mark’s Episcopal, was begun in 1904 as the neighborhood continued to grow in prominence.

That same year a major promotional piece was created and published by the Shreveport Progressive League. The purpose of *Shreveport of To-Day* was to “[set] forth the opportunities offered the homeseeker, investor and capitalist because of the agricultural, stock-raising, manufacturing, mineral, climatic, educational and other resources.” This impressive work documents the entire city exceptionally well, and includes a number of listings and views of the *Shreveport Common* area prior to the boom years that would soon follow.



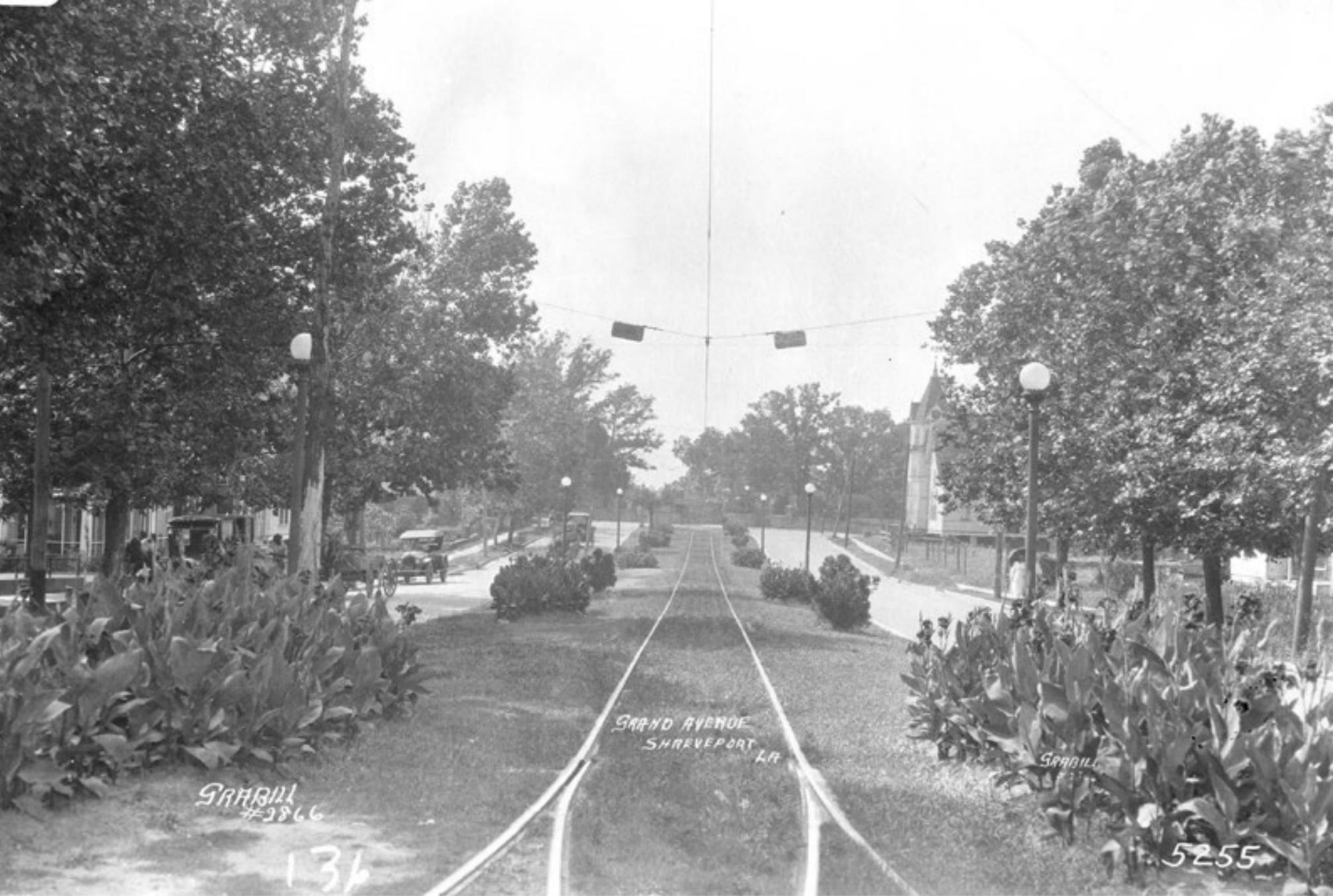


Within the short span of five years, both sides of the 800 block of Texas Avenue were filled with commercial buildings. Houses were concentrated at the lots near the intersection of Cotton Street. The north side of the block was comprised of a mixture of nearly half two-story masonry buildings and half one-story frame buildings, while the south side featured predominantly one-story frame structures. With the exception of the tiny frame hotel, on “The Triangle” (bounded by Common, Crockett, and Texas Avenue) held a random collection of dwellings fronting Common and Crockett Streets and small frame offices along Texas Avenue. This cohesive commercial fabric paused for institutional and residential blocks—St. Mark’s Episcopal was completed in 1905—before resuming in a continuous commercial streetscape on the north side of the 1000 block.

The streets intersecting Texas Avenue were all predominantly residential, but it appears the era of the grandest houses had passed. While many large frame houses occupied the surrounding blocks, none were as large as those from the 1890s, even on Grand Avenue. Predictably, corner lots (highly desirable for their visibility, prestige and superior ventilation) attracted the wealthy and their larger houses. In this area, where houses could be situated facing away from the hot western sun, those lots were most desirable. Many of the earliest and largest houses occupied those prime locations. From analysis of maps and city directories, it appears that few large houses were built west of Christian Street (now Austen Place). As a choice residential neighborhood, it is evident that the area had peaked and newer developments had begun to draw the wealthy to the suburbs south of downtown. Even with the planting of important religious and social institutions in the immediate area, the heyday of *Shreveport Common* as a wealthy residential district was over; almost every lot was filled, and a cohesive, mixed upper-and middle-class neighborhood thrived, sandwiched between what would now be termed “neighborhood business districts.”

Part of the technology that encouraged the growth of the city south and west was the expansion of the trolley, or electric streetcar system. Inaugurated in 1890 and serving the immediate central business district, the lines grew to encompass the new suburbs of Park Place and Holmesville, now better known as Fairfield and Highland.

(Opposite Page) A map of Shreveport, circa 1920.



This photograph of Grand Avenue was taken by Burch Grabill in the early 1920s. Note the original 1896-1899 St. Matthew's AME Church on the right. This was the congregation's second building, and was later veneered in masonry before its demolition around 1928 as the site of the Municipal Auditorium.

THE 1920's

Shreveport literally boomed in the 1920s with the sounds of commerce, industry, jazz and blues “filling” the streets day and night. Remarkably, the Sanborn Fire Insurance Map Company, which had previously recorded the City's physical condition every five years or so, did not return to Shreveport until 1935, thus neglecting the greatest building boom the city was ever to experience. Most American cities experienced the building boom of the 1920s even without the economic infusion that the oil industry brought to Shreveport. Here, in the second largest city in Louisiana, no maps were made to inform insurance underwriters on conditions of fire safety, combustible buildings, and water and fire-fighting capacity. Why one of the fastest growing communities in the nation was omitted in this manner will always be a mystery.

Fortunately, most of the important buildings from this era still exist and allow one to glean important historical data from both their stylistic details and other extant archival materials (including aerial photographs which came into being with the advent of air travel). Further, one may look to the maps from 1935 to extrapolate physical and other information still pertinent in the decades following. Due to the Great Depression and in spite of great public works projects, the City shared a period of reduced development with much of the nation.

According to the Sanborn Map information, one the earliest significant changes to the areas began with the clearing of the triangle bounded by Texas Avenue, Common and Crockett Streets, and the construction of a two-story brick and concrete hotel on that property in 1918. Trapezoidal in shape, the Southern Hotel featured a rectangular open space on its rear (east) side facing Crockett Street, presumably a terrace. The sloping topography of the site allowed for a lower basement level to be accessed from Common Street, while the hotel lobby opened at sidewalk level on Texas Avenue. Incorporated into this medium-sized hotel were flanking commercial buildings, the facades of which were chamfered at each end to create shorter east and west end elevations.

Across the street, the even-number side of the 800 Block of Texas Avenue was fully constructed after 1909, much as it remains today. The National Register of Historic Places nomination for this block employs the date 1907 as the earliest of the extant buildings and states that all of the buildings were completed by c. 1917, but more research is warranted on individual properties. This was the first of two transformational decades for the district, changing the north side of Texas Avenue and parts of the south into a two-story commercial row. Only one new residence seems to have been built during this era, probably in the late 1910s; a plain four-square house at 878 Texas Avenue.

As the economy continued to prosper, Shreveport continued to grow and people of all socio-economic levels started businesses and built buildings in the *Shreveport Common* vicinity, but important public works projects were the stars of the area. After a destructive fire of its earlier station at 715 Milam Street in 1920, the City commissioned the new Italian Renaissance-styled Central Fire Station at the southwest corner of Common and Crockett Streets completed in 1922. This site selection heralded the shift of the city to the south and west and the continued prestige of the area as a progressive part of town. The selection of a historical revival style was typical of the early 1920s and was still popular over a decade later, in spite of the influx of the new “modern” styles.

The lots immediately to the west of the new fire station remained in residential use with four earlier frame houses remaining through the post-war period. At the intersection of Cotton Street and Texas Avenue, the two-story commercial buildings noted above remained intact, flanked by lower-scaled commercial buildings and enterprises that apparently changed forms and uses often, but did not produce any large-scale constructions.

Around 1923, the Yorke Hotel, now known as the McAdoo, was constructed on the northwest corner of Texas Avenue and Christian Street, (now Austen Place). This plain red brick three-story building most likely served traveling salesman and other businessmen in the white community going to and from the west.



OPENING DANCE
ON THE ROOF
Easter Monday, April 13
 (In case of rain or cold weather, dance to be given in Savoy Ballroom)
MUSIC—
 (Give the home boys a break)
BERT BENTON
AND HIS ORIGINAL
Night Hawks
 Admission 40c 8:30 until—
IKE McKINNEY
HARRY WALKER—APR. 20.

(Left) A photo from: *On the Black Side of Shreveport, A History*, by Willie Burton, 1983.

(Above, top) Celestin's Original Tuxedo Band often played for promoter Ike McKinney at the Calanthean. Photo c. 1932.

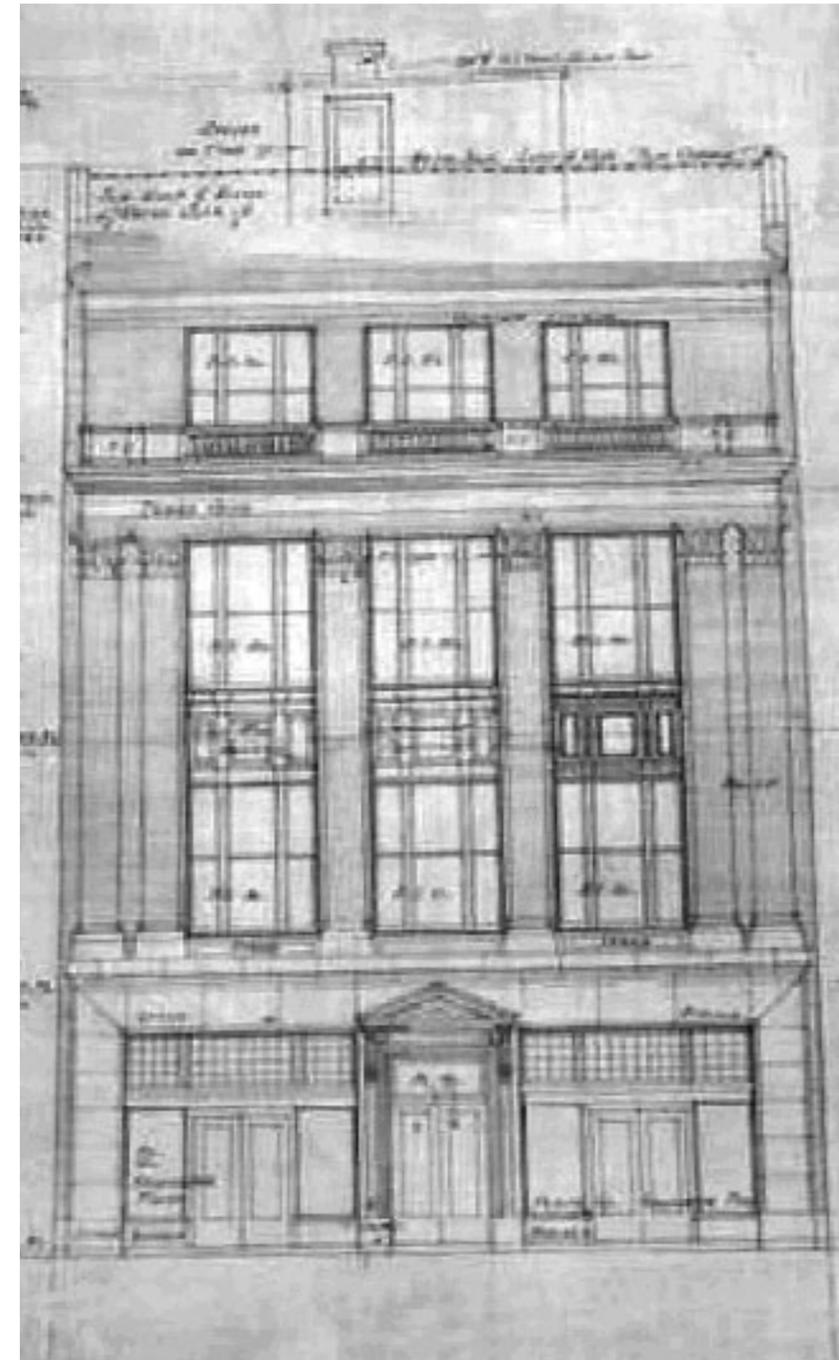
(Above, bottom) An advertisement for a dance on the Calanthean "Roof", 1936.

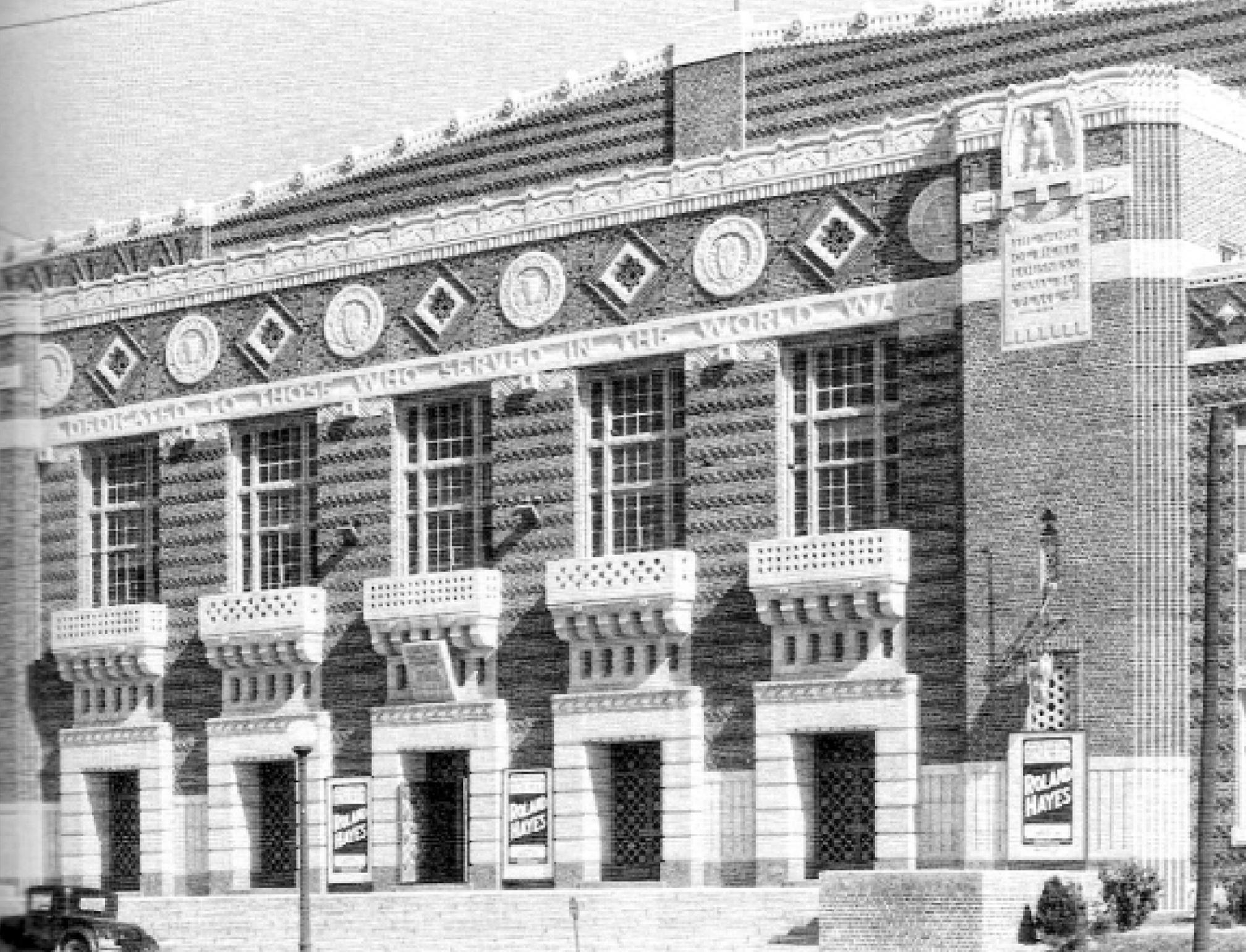


By contrast, that same year across the Avenue, an elite group of African-American local men developed a handsome professional building at the behest of the Court of Calanthe, a black women's organization which located its district headquarters here. Designed by the local architectural firm of Somdal Associates, the Calanthean Temple is a four-story, well-detailed Colonial Revival office building in red brick with limestone detailing. Its façade features a stone veneered first floor with a pedimented entrance accessing the café, cigar store and other retail spaces within listed in the City directories of the period. Other architectural features like the colossal pilasters, entablature, balustrade and cornice provide details as richly designed and executed as contemporary buildings in the central business district, including the Strand Theatre. At the top of the Temple was the Roof Garden where important African-American musicians from around the country frequently performed. This, the finest building built on upper Texas Avenue, was both a physical and social landmark from its inception and denotes that economic growth of the era had extended well into the minority community.

(Above) Bert Benton's Night Hawks were frequent performers on the Calanthean's "Cool Roof". Shreveport Sun, April 16, 1932.

(Right) The original architectural drawing for the front elevation of the Calanthean, Somdal Associates, 1922.





THE TWENTIES GO MODERN

The most significant public building investment in the area during this time was the construction of the Municipal Memorial Auditorium on the Grand Avenue site of St. Matthew’s AME Church, in whose shadow famed evangelist Billy Sunday preached in 1924. Since Sunday most often drew large crowds to tent revivals, it is not known if St. Matthew’s Church still existed at the time or if the site was vacant in anticipation of the auditorium’s construction, but it is evident that Grand Avenue leading to the city’s historic cemetery was still considered a prestigious address for this magnificent memorial building.

The “Modernist” Municipal Memorial Auditorium building was designed by the architecture firm of Jones, Roessle, Olschner & Wiener, with hometown architect Samuel Wiener the principal designer. Wiener had grown up on Christian in the former Olgivie Mansion. His new building dwarfed and outshone all its neighbors, and gave the entire area a new visual focus. The old Shreveport Sanitarium had long since been demolished on the south end of the block, and much of that site had been left as open space.

An important aspect of Modernistic architecture was the achievement of a modern look through the application of stylized decorative details to a traditional building form. The decorative motifs used were often derived from historical periods, but they were stylized beyond easy recognition. The point was to create an up-to-date, lively, and geometrically rich composition, which could be applied to the requirements of a particular building design.

There are probably about fifty or so noteworthy Modernistic buildings in Louisiana. Of these, the Shreveport Municipal Memorial Auditorium is one of five or six examples which stand as landmarks of the style. It is one of the very largest, and, more importantly, it is one of the most intensively styled. While most examples feature ornamentation applied here and there, the

exterior of the Shreveport Auditorium is almost all ornamentation, with hardly a square yard not treated in some way or other, on all elevations. From decorative brick bands and spandrel panels, to multiple chevrons, to limestone arabesque panels, to brick fluting, Modernistic ornamentation reaches a crescendo at the Shreveport Auditorium. It makes all but a very few examples in the state pallid by comparison.

Roland Hayes (1887-1977)

Tenor and composer Roland Hayes was born in Curryville, Georgia, on June 1887. His parents were ex-slaves who worked as tenant farmers. He left home in 1905 to study at Fisk University in Nashville. Hayes later relocated to Boston, believing he had a better chance as a professional musician in the north. In April 1920, Hayes sailed for London, where he performed regularly, but found little financial success. Finally, he gave a critically successful recital at Wigmore Hall and was commanded to perform before British royalty, which led to engagements across Europe. He returned to the United States in 1924 and began touring. Southern venues would not engage him initially, but he soon sang to integrated audiences in Atlanta and other southern cities. Hayes spent most of the next two decades giving vocal recitals and performing with orchestras throughout the United States and Europe. He was grandly welcomed in the Soviet Union in 1928, but stopped touring Europe in the 1930’s due to changes in the political and racial climate. At the peak of his career, he was one of the first international singers to perform at the new Shreveport Municipal Memorial Auditorium. From the 1940’s until his retirement in 1973, Hayes performed sparingly, including annual recitals at Carnegie Hall. He purchased and retired on the Georgia farm where his parents had been tenant farmers. Hayes’ life reveals a remarkable story of a man who went from the plantation to the palace, performing before kings and queens, with the finest international and American orchestras, in segregated communities before blacks and whites alike.

(Opposite) An early photo of the Municipal Auditorium advertising a performance by Roland Hayes. (See box)



Early views of the Andress Motors and Hemenway-Johnson Furniture buildings.

AND ON...

Another significant addition to the area was made in the 1920s. The Art Deco-styled Hemenway-Johnson Furniture Store and Warehouse was completed in 1927 on Texas Avenue facing west toward the auditorium. This six-story structure, the second largest building built in the 1920s, is the tallest commercial building ever built in *Shreveport Common*. Appliqués of Art Deco ornament and strong vertical ribs with stone caps dress up the building's boxy urban warehouse form.

For the most part, the 1920s were stable years for *Shreveport Common's* physical appearance, but the changes brought by city sprawl and the automobile were to have a marked effect on the population and urban fabric in the area. Notably, two buildings were constructed for the sole purpose of auto storage: the elegant terra cotta façade at 723 Milam and the simple brick building behind it at 718 Crockett. The finest of the extant automotive buildings is the former Andress Motor Company at 717 Crockett, (1929) with its dazzling Art Deco imagery of speed, sophistication and progress that would soon attract buyers to the latest automobile models.

This two-story brick and concrete structure was essentially a parking garage over a showroom with open lots to the east and across the street. Its façade is simply organized, but effectively employs stained glass transoms, stucco spandrels and cast terra cotta ornament to enrich an otherwise functional building.

Elsewhere in the neighborhood, residential blocks began to see the addition of domestic garages in single and double sizes, usually located at the rear of each lot. But a change to the pivotal property at the corner of Christian Street (Austen Place) and Milam was to sound the first warning of decline for the neighborhood. After the 1927 construction of an industrial building, an auto body shop and later a bottling plant, the once prestigious block would never be the same again.

THE 1930's

Nationwide, general construction dropped significantly after the stock market crash of 1929, but Shreveport's strong economy prevailed better than most parts of the country, especially with the discovery of large local oil and gas fields in 1930. This otherwise lean decade saw the completion of several projects in the *Shreveport Common* area, in both traditional and modern styles. Around 1929-30, the corner of Louisiana and Cotton Streets was an important node on the route from downtown to the Union Depot. Those years saw the completion of the three-story red brick and terra cotta Arlington Hotel on the northwest corner, which incorporated several small retail bays on its east side along Louisiana Street. Across Cotton, a one-story ornamental brick and stone Art Deco commercial row was completed and soon housed the city's oldest extant bar, along with restaurants, offices, and small businesses leading down to the train station.

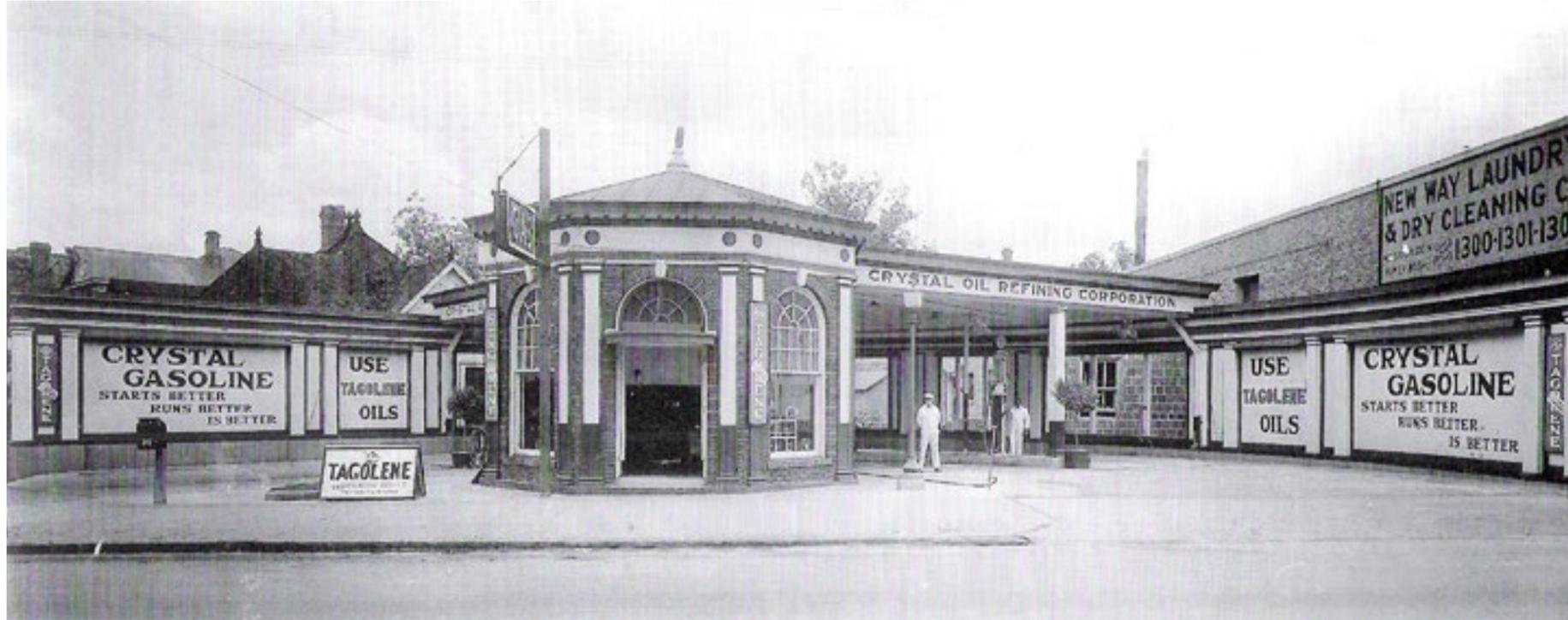
Even with the growth of private businesses in the vicinity, it is significant that an important social services organization located in the area and built one of the city's most endearing buildings. East of Common Street on Crockett Street in the original city grid, stands the Salvation Army Building, completed in 1932 and for its small size, one of the best detailed Art Deco buildings in the community. Its composition emphasizes the verticality of the early Art Deco movement with its dynamic facade divided into five bays by brick piers capped in stone. The building combines the popular ziggurat and stylized floral motifs with neo-classical fluting and exceptional brickwork. Perhaps this small *tour-de-force* was inspired by the local Mercury dealership across Crockett Street a few years before.

Another building in the Shreveport Common area that speaks to the changing nature of the City is the large private home at 814 Cotton Street, now the headquarters of Providence House. Built before 1890, this Victorian house was completely remodeled in the 1930s in the Colonial Revival style and was converted into a handsome rooming house, another indication of the transition the neighborhood was undergoing.

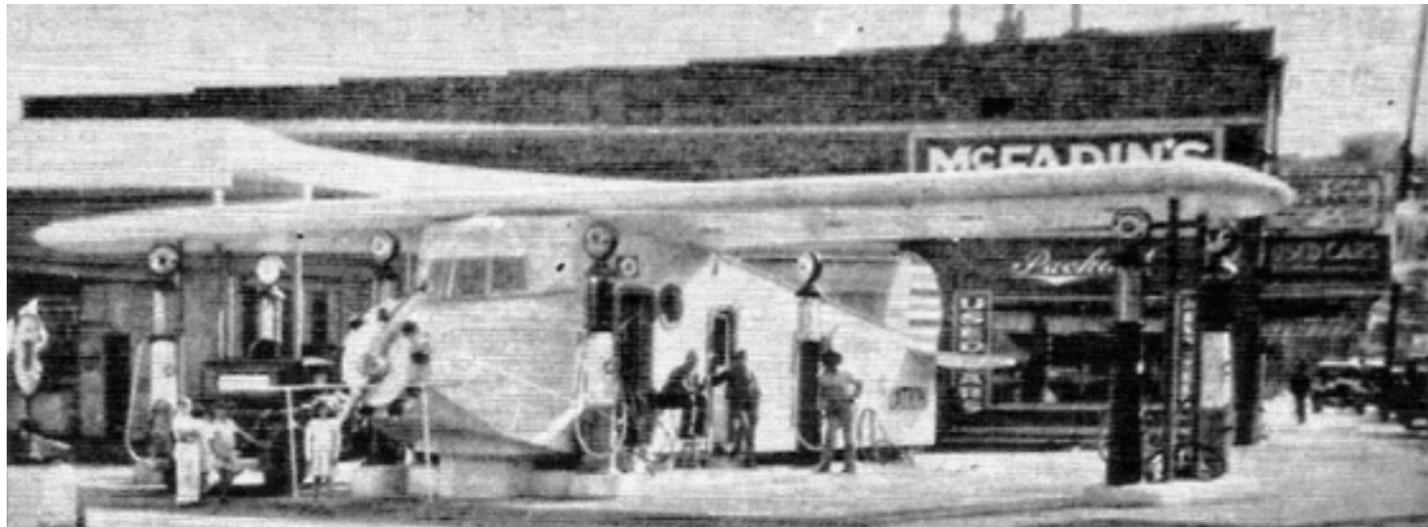
It was not long after this remodeling that city directories list the building as a boarding house for young business-women, responding to the need to properly house the new class of single working women coming into the city.



The urbane Art Deco-styled Salvation Army Building built in 1932



(Above) The Crystal Gasoline Company's pavilion-like main building was located on Texas Avenue, and one of two polygonal station designs in the neighborhood.



(Left) The McFaddin Service Station, at the intersection of Crockett Street and Texas Avenue, was built in the 1930s using a surplus airplane as its office and canopy.



Providence House was originally a Victorian mansion, but was remodeled in the 1930s into the Colonial Revival style.

Sadly, the decade of the 1930s signaled the beginning of the end for some of the early mansions, particularly the Blanchard House across Cotton Street. Following the former Governor's death, it was rented for use as a funeral home and then demolished in 1935. Loss of the city's grandest mansion signaled the slow demise of this once elegant neighborhood.

The automotive movement was to have a profound and lasting effect on the physical appearance of the Shreveport Common area. As the market for automobiles steadily grew, dealerships sought locations near the central business district and accessible to the suburbs to sell their products. At first new autos were sold in storefront buildings as noted above, but by 1935 the first of the used auto lots appeared in the neighborhood on the large site vacated by the Shreveport Sanitarium and the former residential sites.

Other physical examples of the growing automobile culture were "filling" stations and auto repair businesses, which seem to flock to less densely built areas outside the central business district.

By the mid-1930s, auto body, tire and repair shops dotted the neighborhood, especially the properties across from St. Mark's Church between Texas Avenue and Cotton Street. There were also two architecturally distinct "filling" stations in that block, one of which was an inspired creation using a recycled airplane fuselage, and the other a Colonial Revival pavilion. At least four other "filling" stations appeared at various corners in the area, replacing earlier residential and commercial buildings with this important new use. None of the stations have survived and their sites are used today as parking lots.



THE 1940s

Little if any construction is known to have taken place in the district during the war years, but afterwards the trends continued as in the previous decade with an increase in auto sales and service facilities replacing earlier retail and residential sites. The most significant building constructed was a large auto dealership complex built on the site once occupied by the Shreveport Sanitarium. Occupying the entire property between Grand Avenue and Baker Street, the concrete Moderne-style showroom fronted on Texas Avenue with a very large roofed service building attached at the north; the remainder of the site was an open auto sales lot with assorted service buildings.

During this decade, the city extended Milam Street across Common to relieve some of the traffic congestion on Texas Avenue. While this decision made access to the Municipal Auditorium much easier, it necessitated the demolition of several important buildings on Common Street and significantly changed the approach to Texas Avenue. At this point in time, the Sanborn fire Insurance maps ceased their routine mapping of most cities and relied on other data gathering for underwriting purposes. As a result, Shreveport's final map collections cover the years from 1935-1963, making it difficult to use them to document the physical change to the area with the same accuracy of earlier eras.

The post-war decade saw the beginning of residential demolition and replacement with commercial and institutional uses, now into the streets intersecting Texas Avenue, like Christian Street (by this time re-named Austen Place for a local family) and Grand Avenue. In 1948 the Municipal Auditorium began its most famous period as it started hosting the popular radio show, the *Louisiana Hayride*. It is assumed that during those years, the newly vacant properties in the area were used for parking lots as the weekly show attracted large live audiences from far and wide. Around 1948 the most significant change to the neighborhood occurred with the demolition of the upper portion of the Southern Hotel complex in the 800 block of Texas Avenue, leaving the elevated concrete platform

of the furniture store basement in place. Further deterioration and demolition along the south side of the Avenue continued until only two buildings remained.



(Above)

The community spirit of the war years resulted in public awareness activities and volunteerism in the late 1940s. Clean-up campaigns as we experience today were a vital part of keeping Shreveport beautiful and a source of pride. Note the hexagonal brick "filling" station across Common Street from the Central Fire Station.

(Opposite Page)

An aerial view of the district, c. 1940, with Texas Avenue prominently at its center.



The Town House Apartments, built in 1952, was later renamed the Fairmont.

THE 1950s-1960s

As documented in the Sanborn Fire Insurance maps of 1963, few new structures filled the sites vacated by residential flight to the suburbs. On Grand Avenue, a new church was constructed facing the Municipal Auditorium, which still exists as the Lakeside Baptist Church. Auto sales lots had finally encompassed the remaining residential properties on Grand Avenue. In fact, most of the beautiful residential block on Cotton Street as well as all the residential properties up through the 1000 block of Texas Avenue had become auto sales lots. It was only a matter of time before the B'nai Zion congregation would both outgrow their 1914 site as well as desire a more convenient and modern location nearer the residential areas of town. They relocated in 1953 and the building was sold to the Knights of Columbus.

The beautiful St. Mark's Episcopal Church, now surrounded by auto sales lots, repair shops and "filling" stations, was an island in a commercial sea. Its congregation felt it could no longer sustain itself in such an environment and voted to move to a new site in the southern suburbs, taking a majority of the congregation to their new location. Those who stayed reestablished themselves as The Church of the Holy Cross and have maintained a strong presence in their landmark building ever since.

On Austen Place, the 1890s Wiener Mansion was converted in 1951 into the *Florentine*, a private club and restaurant for many years. The neighboring Logan Mansion became a boarding house for teachers, a youth center and later a radio station, while the balance of Austen Place remained in residential use, mostly rental properties.

The most significant private investment in the Shreveport Common area during this era was the construction of the 15-story Town House Apartment tower, (1952-1954) on the northeast corner of Cotton and Common Streets, now known as the Fairmont. This fully air-conditioned modern tower featured elevators, a restaurant and two shops on the first floor, convenient parking and

wonderful views of the city and the Red River valley. By the 1950s and '60s, the historic 800 Block of Texas Avenue had lost much of its diverse retail and service businesses and much of its upper-level residential nature, with stores having become almost entirely devoted to new and used furniture sales.

One of the most dramatic changes to the Shreveport Common area and the entire downtown was the construction of the Common Street Viaduct in 1955-56. This massive concrete and steel overpass was designed to ease traffic into downtown from the major growth areas to the south. All of the daily major inter-city vehicular traffic from the city's principal resident suburbs would have had to navigate several dangerous railroad tracks at some point along the south edge of the central business district, many of which terminated at the nearby Union and Central railroad stations. Railroad traffic in the region peaked in the early post-war years prior to highway improvements and the growth of national trucking. These tracks would have been constantly busy and a daily hindrance to traveling across town. The viaduct not only eased this congestion and frustration, it also made the area much safer for citizens and the neighborhood. One adverse consequence of the new overpass was the isolation of the two large railroad stations from the principal traffic patterns in the city, so much so that stairways were incorporated into landings atop the viaduct for pedestrian access to the railroad stations.

The greatest change in this era was the introduction of the national interstate highway network. The resulting Spring/Market/Common Street entrance and exit ramps from 1-20 destroyed the entire connective neighborhood between downtown and the suburbs, creating a barren valley of ramps and elevated roadways. These changes furthered the perception that the Shreveport Common district had evolved from a vital center to a marginal and neglected edge of downtown.



THE 1970s-2000s

As the area became more and more sparse, the city initiated some community development programs to heighten the appeal of the area. The largest and most successful of these was the construction of the Municipal Plaza in 1982 at the intersection of Milam and Common Streets, and Texas Avenue. Having been neglected for a number of years, this plaza was adopted by a small group of citizens and is now known as Aseana Gardens.

During this long period there have been some significant positive events in the physical life of the Shreveport Common area. They include the arrival of Providence House on Cotton Street in the 1990s, the acquisition of a major portion of the 800 block of Texas Avenue, and the purchase of the Logan Mansion by local preservationists. However, this period also saw the abandonment of the B'nai Zion Temple, the loss or partial collapse of a number of historic buildings, and the introduction of several social services organizations such as halfway houses and homeless shelters that further contributed to the perception of the area as blighted and dangerous. In the 1990s the Fairmont Apartment tower was sold and repurposed as a Section 8 housing project which has had limited success as a wholesome inner city residential location. As businesses and residents continued to leave the areas, incidences of crime and homelessness rose. Finally, the stalwart and secure presence of the Fire Department was lost when it built and relocated to a new Central Fire Station on North Common Street.

(Opposite Page)
This aerial photo of the intersection of Texas Avenue and Crockett Street was taken from the roof of the Town House Apartment Tower (now the Fairmont) in the 1970s. Note the Central Fire Station, the "Triangle" property, and the 800 Block of Texas Avenue.



HERE AND NOW

In summary, the area now known as Shreveport Common has been perhaps the most dynamic section of downtown during the course of the city's history, with dramatic evolutions in functional, social, economic and political status occurring over its first 175 years. No one place in the city can claim to have been such a crucible of change: from the cotton and cattle days, through wars and depressions, from social and technological advances, to railroads and automobiles all the way into the digital age. This area was historically the district within the city and, for the most part, in Northwest Louisiana where hard-working Anglo-Americans, disenfranchised African-Americans and newly arrived immigrants could realize the American dream. The microcosm that is the Shreveport Common is truly pivotal to the story of Shreveport.

History proves from its earliest days that the area nurtured new faith communities and organizations of social service from the early 1900s Community Relief Center to the 1932 Salvation Army headquarters to Providence House and Philadelphia Center. Beginning in the early 20th century music teachers, theatrical and choral groups convened at the Scottish Rite Cathedral, B'Nai Zion Temple and St. Mark's (Holy Cross) Church, later to be joined by the grand 1929 Municipal Auditorium and its unique cultural contributions like the *Louisiana Hayride*. This transitional district between economic and ethnic communities provided a safe, creative haven for those artists emerging or on the edge, like Huddie Ledbetter, Kitty Wells, Hank Williams Sr., Johnny Cash, Elvis Presley and James Burton. In addition to the creative service industries like dressmakers and milliners, there were "Art Parlors", forerunners of galleries, photographic studios and stone carvers located throughout these blocks. The birthplace of local public art associations occurred on Cotton Street in the Louisiana Art Gallery in the 1940s. From before 1900 through the 1930s, the district attracted investors who commissioned notable architects to produce monuments of lasting beauty that - despite economic and social change which have isolated them - remain today as permanent and functional works of art, invaluable assets of which any city would be proud.

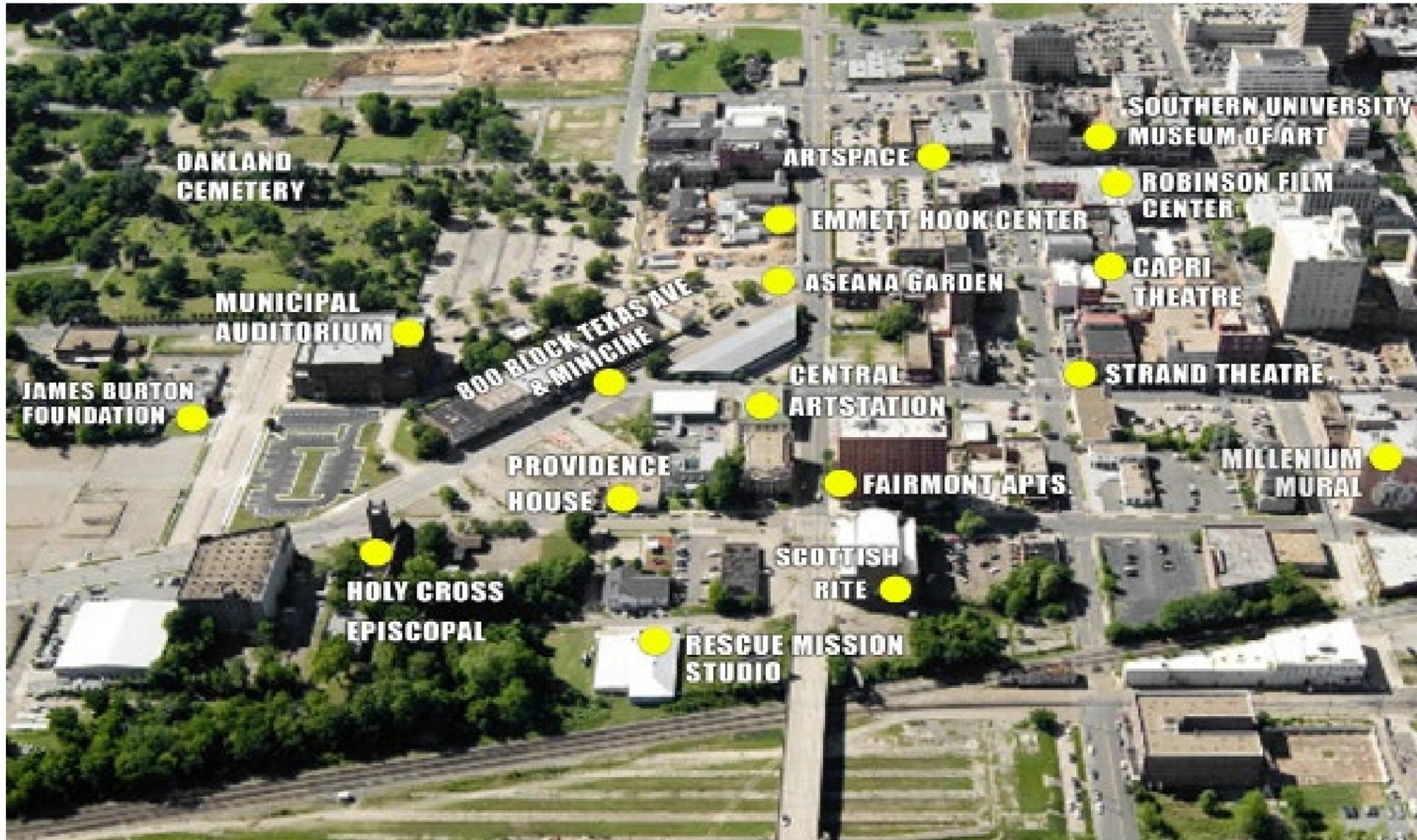
It is this heritage of opportunity, creativity and tolerance that make Shreveport Common a historically and spiritually dynamic place. That spirit lives today, embodied in the stories, landmarks, and people that endure. Without any improvements, investments, or plans, this area is naturally a cultural district. Now, with the imminent location of the Shreveport Regional Arts Council at its center, in the handsome 1922 landmark Central Fire Station, this 2011 neighborhood renewal effort will truly reshape the landscape of downtown Shreveport. By attracting investors, residents and the creative community to this gateway district, Shreveport invites the world to enter its newest/old place for an authentic uncommon experience.

When we talk about Creative Placemaking... the way that the Arts can transform communities, can be an engine for economic development and urban renewal... we're talking about Shreveport.

--**Rocco Landesman**,
Chairman National for the Arts, Chairman
Strand Theatre - March, 2011

Shreveport Common:

A SUMMARY OF EXISTING CONDITIONS AND INFRASTRUCTURE



Shreveport Common Vision Plan

“As Found” Bird’s Eye View from the South



The above “as found” map, excerpted from the 3D modeling of the proposed district, indicates the large amounts of under-used land in gray. Over 50% of the individual lots and 46% of the extant buildings are currently vacant.

SUMMARY OF EXISTING CONDITIONS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

The conditions of the buildings and properties in the study area have been addressed in the inventory accompanying this Vision Plan, but the remaining physical and social infrastructure must be identified and discussed to fully understand the present state of the Shreveport Common district. This will be provided in the following summaries.

VACANT PROPERTY

As noted in the inventory, and obvious upon touring the area, there is a disproportionate percentage of vacant land giving much of the district an abandoned and desolate appearance. Few blocks have a sense of coherence or continuous built fabric, be it residential, commercial or institutional. The great exception is the integrity of the 800 Block of Texas Avenue. However, even in this architecturally and historically significant block, one principal building has collapsed entirely and another large building is roofless, with only the façade and perimeter walls remaining. These losses constitute a major interruption in the streetscape. Fortunately, plans have been made to restore these buildings to this most important context. A secondary area of integrity is Austen Place, where seven residential structures valiantly preserve the authentic character of that street, in spite of the vast empty four-acre concrete lots across the street.

Many empty lots on Texas and Grand Avenues, Cotton, Crockett and Louisiana Streets were vacated due to the demolition of structures to create auto dealership lots beginning in the 1920s. Other sites became rental properties, later were abandoned, then decayed, and demolished. Very few became adjunct parking or service lots for new development, most notably lots around Fairmont Tower. With few exceptions--most of which were wood frame buildings--the finest landmarks have prevailed and still remain, but the connective fabric that once produced an urban ensemble has been lost. The result is a district of disparate, but important parts floating in a sea of concrete and asphalt.

Historic photographs indicate that the maintenance of these vacant properties has seriously declined in the last five years, with more litter, weeds, and general debris than ever before. This suggests further owner disconnection to the area, and/or reflects the general economic downturn’s reduced property management trends.

Oddly, the isolation of these landmarks has produced a new experience of resulting angles and vistas that were never possible before. As open as the blocks are, they do provide a perverse visual pleasure in the surrounding wasteland. Many who have become accustomed to this openness would like it to be maintained, even in the light of the calls for increased density and services. Striking a balance between these wide-open spaces and new infill development poses a creative challenge to the renewal process.

The isolation of these landmarks has produced a new experience of resulting angles and vistas that were never possible before.”

TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION

The district’s two primary arteries, Common Street and Texas Avenue are both very different in nature today. Over time, their relative importance to the City has changed, due in part to the creation of new destinations, and new connections to the greater metropolitan highway network. Common Street, originally the western boundary of town, ended at the railroad lines and did not lead south to the new suburbs. Until the completion of the railroad viaduct in 1956, the main connection southward to Line Avenue and the adjacent residential neighborhoods was Louisiana Street. This was to be even more enhanced with the advent of the interstate highway system, which capitalized on Common Street’s direct route to downtown. With the creation of this primary link to Interstate I-20, the former sleepy Common Street was to permanently become the dominant artery in the district. As a result, this now major thoroughfare is highly improved and heavily trafficked, with periodic signals to control the fast moving flow in and out of downtown. Its fast pace and constant use almost make it an edge in the district; crossing must be carefully timed and considered. Healing this divide is another creative challenge to the Visioning Process.

As Common Street grew in importance as a new north/south route to and from downtown, Texas Avenue shifted more to “perimeter-city” commercial uses, such as auto dealerships, motels, restaurants, local retail, and service industries that would benefit from the extra-city highway traffic. Perhaps most important, since the 1910s, Texas Avenue had been the “Mainstreet” of the African-American business community. In the 1940s, Texas Avenue was still an important east/west artery, as the main highway connection west toward Texas, but with the construction of the viaduct (1956), and the City’s growth south, Common Street became the inner city route of choice for a large part of the population. The changing uses in the area, the movement to the suburbs, and the addition of I-20, lead to the decline of Texas Avenue (state highway) as an artery.

Yet, it still played an important urban role. Just two years after the new viaduct was completed, the City of Shreveport constructed a “new” City Hall building on Texas Avenue, once again attracting urban traffic in great numbers. This back and forth of importance shifted again when the City Hall was re-located to a new government center downtown, and its former building became the Police headquarters.

Today, Texas Avenue is moderately traveled, but not enough to necessitate regular traffic signals within the study area. It is maintained for two-way traffic, with the exception of a short section of the 800 Block at Common Street. This frequently results in some fast “straight-a-way” driving, and can make crossing the venue a challenge. Side streets can also present tentative ingress onto Texas Avenue since signage, parking lines, corner setback standards, and other precautionary measures are either below City standards or are not enforced.

“With the creation of this primary link to Interstate 20, the former sleepy Common Street was to permanently become the dominant artery in the district.

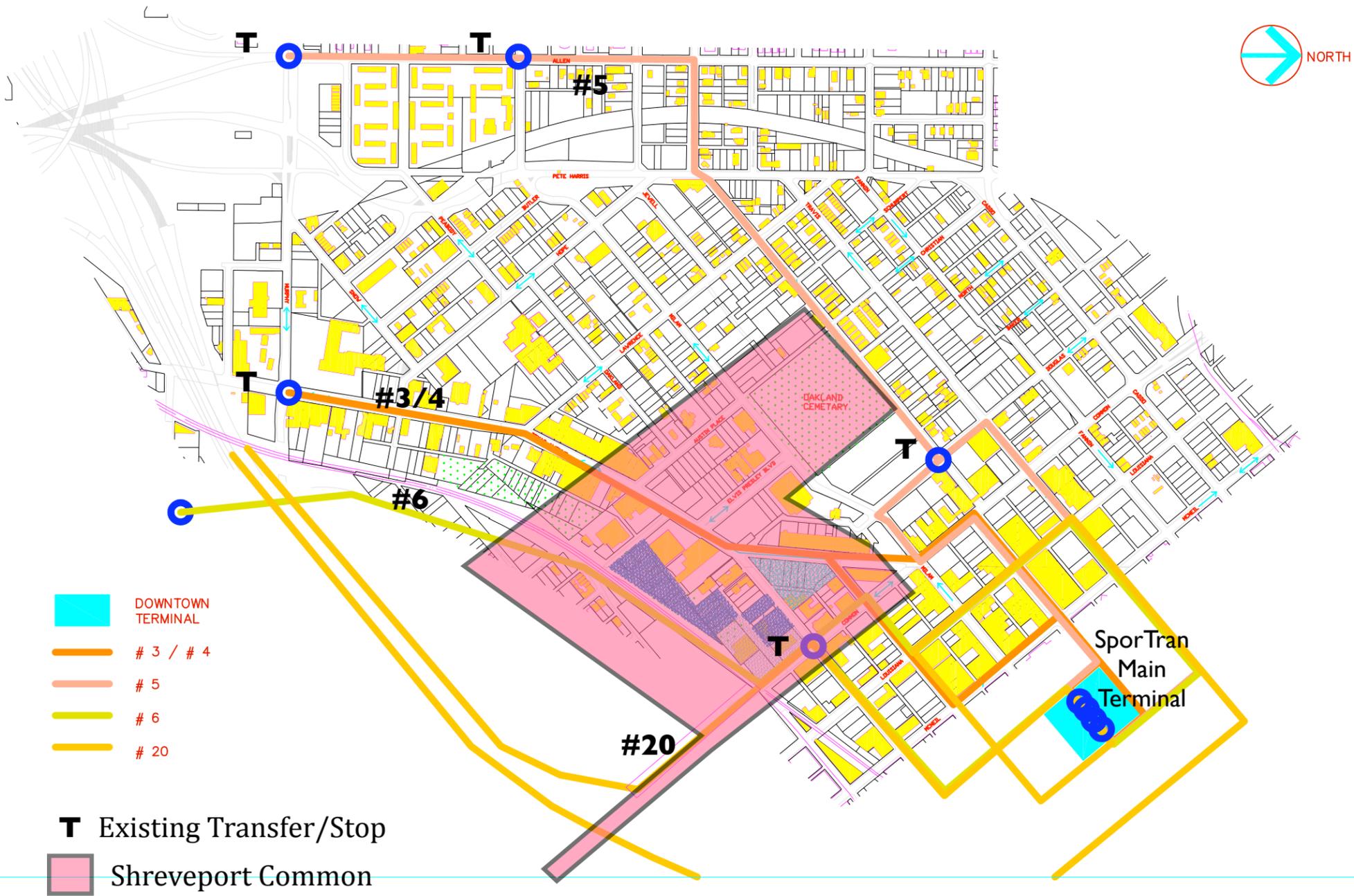


PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION EXISTING CONDITIONS

Currently, Texas Avenue serves four different bus routes to and from the central terminal downtown, crossing Common Street multiple times in the course of a day. The following illustration, prepared with the assistance of SporTran (the transit system for Shreveport-Bossier City), diagrams all public transportation lines and active bus stops related to the district. While signs on the streets indicate more stops than are shown, ridership and funding have reduced the actual stops. Only one bus line, #20, has an active stop in the district (per the current website information), on Common Street at the NE corner of Cotton Street at the Fairmont Tower Apartments. This line serves the southern suburbs on a long and circuitous route. Multiple routes but no active stops currently serve the core of the district. Thus, as is indicated, buses pass through and around the district, but with few opportunities to engage potential riders. There are no bus routes and times to serve patrons for Municipal Auditorium and Oakland Cemetery, two of Shreveport's principal cultural and tourist attractions.

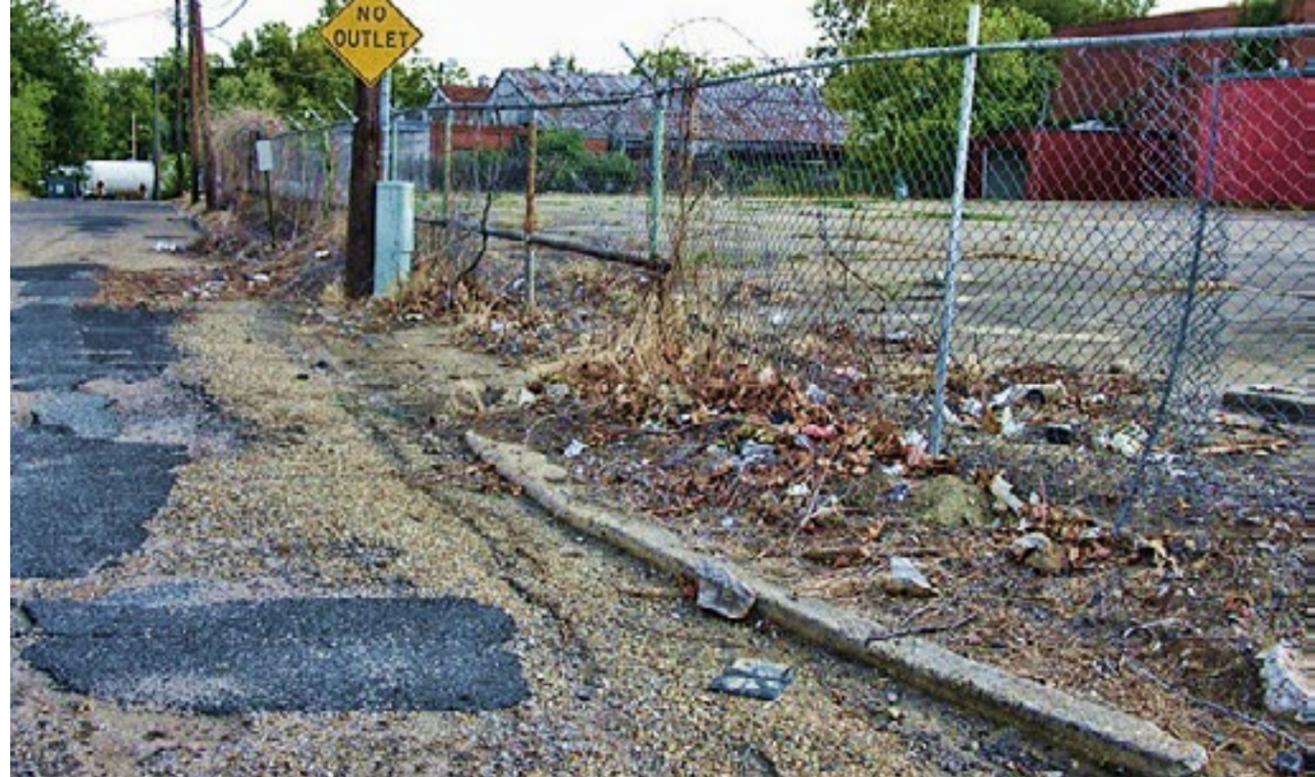
“ In Listening Sessions, the stakeholders noted the current conditions, needs, and potential impact of enhanced public transportation on the area, especially as it becomes a cultural district.”

As a part of this Vision Plan, the Design Team extended the dialogue on transportation issues to the public in the context of the vision for revitalization. In Listening Sessions, the stakeholders noted the current conditions, needs, and potential impact of enhanced public transportation on the area, especially as it becomes a cultural district. The planners at SportTran and the Northwest Louisiana Council of Governments (NLCOG) have confirmed the need for a new transportation study of the City and it is exciting that they foresee such a plan including the *Shreveport Common* Cultural District as an important destination within the near future.



Map of Existing SporTran bus routes that enter Shreveport Common.

Source: SporTran website



STREETS AND SIDEWALKS

On the whole, the principal arteries of the area are maintained in much the same standard as other areas in urban Shreveport, with curbs and gutters, asphalt, and other surfaces in relatively good condition. Exceptions are the secondary roads, including dead-end streets, and shorter blocks, which are often treated as alleys with few improvements or maintenance. These latter examples have intermittent curbs, if any, and the right-of-way is ragged, crumbling, and overgrown, contributing to the marginal, underserved appearance of the area. There are few traffic lights within the district, but generally adequate street signage to indicate directions and other traffic information.

Almost every street in the district is provided with a public sidewalk of varying width, elevation, and surface. In general, the sidewalks of the district are all sub-standard, certainly in comparison to the improvement elsewhere in the central business district, but also in contrast with other commercial areas throughout the City. The exception is the 700 block of Milam Street, which benefited from the City's streetscape redevelopment program over the last decade. Some sidewalks are actually original to the 1910s-20s, and with improvements and adaptation could remain in part. But there are far more cracks, level changes, deteriorated surfaces, exposed edges, and totally missing sections than any urban area should suffer. These conditions add greatly to the bleak, neglected appearance of the district, and certainly signal to citizens, residents and investors that this is not an area of importance to the community. Further, the walking surfaces create a serious risk of injury and liability, and compliance with the Standards of the Americans With Disabilities Act is uneven at best.



PARKING & OTHER INFRASTRUCTURE

Currently there is one improved off-street public parking lot in the Shreveport Common district proper, the relatively new Municipal Auditorium lot at Texas and Grand Avenues. A small off-street lot was created in the 1980s on the south side of the 800 Block of Texas Avenue. The balance of the extant public parking is along the streets, some free and others metered. Private lots, both improved or unpaved, exist in relation to business and institutional use. To best represent the existing parking statistics, an inventory of all parking spaces was conducted as a part of this plan. The inventory, attached, followed established methodology and models, with counsel from regional parking consultants with whom the Design Team has experience. This inventory is part of a brief study included herein, but does not assume to preclude a formal commissioned parking study for the district and or the entire downtown area.

EVENT PARKING: A CASE STUDY “DISCOVER SHREVEPORT COMMON”

Parking during the June 18, 2011 “Discover Shreveport Common” event held primarily at “The Triangle” in the 800 Block of Texas Avenue was observed from that vantage point for a period of over seven hours. Prior to the event everyone present for preparations were able to park either within the Triangle’s lot outside the covered area, on Texas Avenue, or at the Central Fire Station. Those who parked in these areas, and some who parked on the street moved their vehicles, to the Municipal Auditorium lot or the lot at 800 Milam Street to allow for guest parking and Trolley tour access. The event attracted an estimated 600 people to this concentrated area. It was observed that neither of the above lots held more than 15 vehicles each throughout the five-hour event. The majority of the attendees parked on Texas Avenue or chose to park in the vacant lots at Crockett and Common. Each of those lots also held about 15 vehicles at a time as people came and left the event throughout the day. A large number of people road the Trolley from Festival Plaza to “The Triangle”, but this figure was difficult to calculate due to the touring nature of the trolley for that day.



LIGHTING

Mercury and/or sodium vapor on +/-40’ poles are distributed throughout the district per City standards, with the exception of Milam Street which benefited from the City’s streetscape redevelopment program in the last decade. A mixture of lighting standards, even within the same block, bear witness to numerous attempts and dates of streetscape improvements; few with adequate funding or oversight to comprise a continuous effect.

The district is only adequately illuminated at night, especially with the near absence of residency, retail, nightlife or other activities to animate and brighten the streets. At night the district has a slightly daunting appearance, particularly relative to the street life on nearby Texas Street. In several instances, the few residential and retail property owners have installed their own lighting at great expense to preserve their business investments and protect their patrons, members, or residents. These provide pools of light that act as magnets and “safe” zones, but the intermittent stretches are too shadowy and easily viewed as threatening.

UTILITIES

Throughout the district utilities are above ground. Fortunately, with no major sub-stations, transformer groupings, or other unsightly utility nodes, the district is free of any large utility structures. In its renovation work on the Municipal Auditorium, the City of Shreveport has successfully screened all utilities in well-designed facilities and discreet locations, establishing an excellent precedent for the future.

SOCIAL CONCERNS

Chief among the social concerns for the district is the perception, unfortunately somewhat accurate, of general crime, vagrancy, and drug use. The district began attracting social service organizations and subsidized housing in the 1990s due to the proximity of downtown- and casino-related jobs, the availability of inexpensive properties, and the location of transient housing along the railroad corridor. This trend began in the 19th century, as the district formed an early “edge” of town where small less expensive hotels, tenements, and later, single room occupancy residences sprang up. Historical research in maps and city directories substantiate these land uses, but many of the buildings have long since been torn down.

Most prominent of the historic buildings used for residential purposes is the McAdoo Hotel on Texas Avenue at Austen Place. It is now beginning a complete renovation as a subsidized housing facility. Most prominent of the social changes in the neighborhood was the acquisition of the Fairmont Apartment tower, and its conversion to a Section 8 housing facility accepting HUD vouchers. Changes in management have resulted in absentee oversight and neglect in spite of staff efforts. The facility has gained a reputation for crime, including rampant drug use and dealing, even to the present day.

Conditions are so unsavory, that important local social service organizations, such as Rescue Mission and Providence House, will not allow their patrons to rent apartments there. Review of detailed data from the Shreveport Police Department (2010-11) indicates, that in spite of current management’s attempts at improving tenants compliance with laws and ordinances, the block on which the building stands receives a greatly disproportionate number of incident calls. This block also ranked much higher than any adjacent block or other downtown areas, even in nightclubs and other late-night entertainment blocks. Recent anecdotal reports further document the active and blatant drug dealing within the premises, with accounts

“Due to past problems of vagrancy, crime and prostitution, local perception is that the area is unsafe, when in reality the broader area is much safer and stable than many would believe.”

of strangers and prospective tenants approached at the entry. Besides the obvious problems created by these conditions, the effect on potential revitalization and investment in the immediate surroundings is one of the district’s greatest challenges. Of serious concern; of the 500-plus residents of the Fairmont Tower at any given time almost 200 of them are children.

Due to past problems of vagrancy, crime, and prostitution, local perception is that the area is unsafe, when in reality the broader area is much safer and stable than many would believe. Crime statistics provided by the Shreveport Police Department (2010-11) do not indicate crime levels higher in a selected subject block—Texas Avenue to Milam, Elvis Presley to Austin Place—to be substantially higher than that of other downtown areas. The area is so sparsely populated that reportage of incidents by resident citizens is very low. Frequent break-ins target copper wiring and other small disposable/re-saleable goods. Understandably, these crimes occur most where residential uses are few. Other crimes such as vandalism and property destruction still occur, but are directly proportionate in areas where there are more full-time residents.

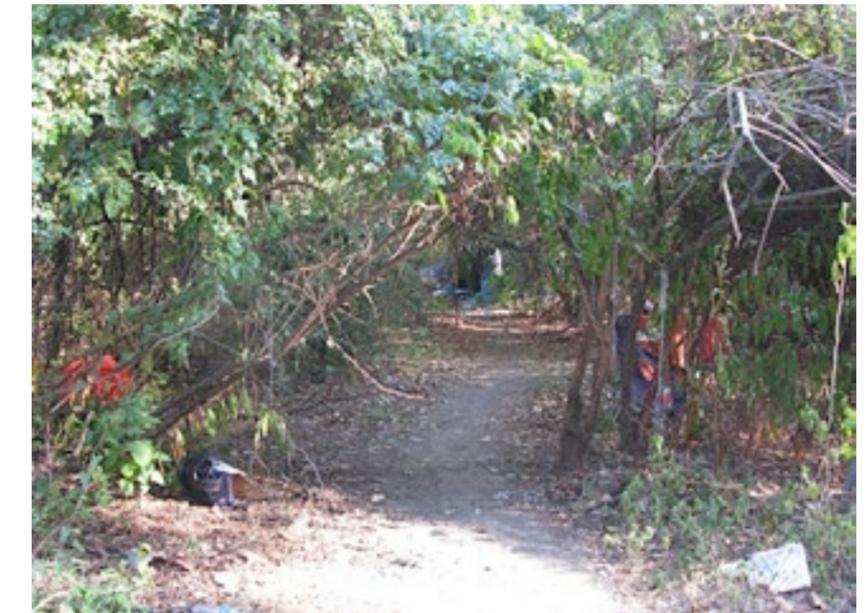


HOMELESSNESS

Next in the line of social concerns is the problematic presence of inordinate numbers of homeless people living within and on the outskirts of the district, just blocks from several exceptional social service agencies that provide live-in programs. For example, on one small plot of overgrown railroad frontage at Talley and Lake Streets, approximately 35 men and women can be found during the year, living in settlements constructed of borrowed and recycled materials, and in plain sight of auto traffic arriving in the City via 1-20 and Common Street. Many others live in the rear of buildings within 50 feet of the Municipal Auditorium, and spend their days on the streets, in the alleys, in Oakland Cemetery, and in abandoned or accessible buildings. Their activity is seldom criminal or dangerous, and many of these individuals are unknown in the area by name and personality. Studies suggest a high percentage of mental illness in homeless communities, but no such negative incidents have come to light locally.

These individuals' plight is serious, and desperately in need of attention, a great deal of which has already been shown by the ministry of local faith groups, including day service centers like Hope House sponsored by Church of the Holy Cross and other faith groups. Other highly successful homeless- to-home programs like those provided by Providence House and Rescue Mission only receive patrons who are substance free. Unfortunately, the generous and valuable gifts of so many participating organizations cannot be a solution to a potentially life-long and dangerous pattern, as many in the social services fields have come to realize and initiate new strategies.

The scope and purpose of this Vision Plan is not to presume to address or solve the problems of drug use, homelessness, or crime in urban Shreveport. It can only call attention to their impact on the perception, vitality, and potential revitalization of this area as a cultural district, and encourage concerned citizens and officials to take action on these serious urban issues in a comprehensive, inclusive, and decisive manner. Recently the City and experts in homelessness have formed a coalition to discuss better strategies



A view of one of the homeless camps along the railroad right-of-way (2011).

Shreveport Common Vision Plan

Proposed Bird's Eye view from the South



THE *Shreveport Common* CULTURAL DISTRICT VISION PLAN

To begin the presentation of the *Shreveport Common* Vision Plan, a reprise of the goals established by Mayor Cedric Glover for the Shreveport Regional Arts Council is appropriate:

- To restore the historic Central Fire Station as the headquarters of the Shreveport Regional Arts Council
- To provide the facility with expanded public spaces for performance, display, and artistic development
- To leverage this public private partnership into a revitalization of the neighboring blocks as an urban cultural district
- To create a new entrance gateway into downtown Shreveport via Common Street

THE PROCESS

Employing a standard acceptable format for planning processes, the Shreveport Common team proposed a basic five-step approach. Modifications were made considering that, in preservation planning, we are dealing with a proportionately large body of existing fabric, each with its own unique history, and thus an individual relationship to the context of the City. To bridge the gap between the different disciplines required for this effort, we chose the model created by William Peña in 1973 and still widely and successfully used today by planners, architects, and public bodies alike. We have used this approach in previous projects ranging from small design projects to master planning for campuses, complexes, and neighborhoods. The published work, Problem Seeking, in its fourth edition is an easily available and accessible reference for participants from all disciplines and levels of interest. For successful public participation, understanding, and support, it was vital that the “mystery” be totally removed from the process. Our approach is best stated in this [abridged] excerpt:

- 1. Establish Goals—
What do we want to achieve and Why?**
- 2. Collect and Analyze Facts—
What do we know? What is given?**
- 3. Uncover and Test Concepts—
How do we want to achieve the goals?**
- 4. Determine Needs—
How much money and space? What level of quality?**
- 5. State the Problem—
What significant conditions affect the plan? What general directions should the plan take?**

The first four steps were taken in different order and/or simultaneously, cross-checking constantly as Peña suggests, “for integrity, usefulness, relevance, and congruence of information.” The last step came only after the previous ones were completed.

STEP 1. GOALS

Since this project was funded by a grant, which required a very early stating of goals, it is important to summarize them. This did not preclude expansion or refinement of the goals as the process moved forward. Our primary project goals are as follows:

- 1) Create a blueprint for revitalization of the multi-block district around Central Fire Station**
- 2) Provide concept and schematic designs for a new gateway into downtown from I-20**
- 3) Reflect the ideas/needs/concerns of local artists for the future of the area**
- 4) Create virtual models of the district to increase awareness/understanding of the vision**
- 5) Produce a “VISION” document consolidating research, recommendations, and resources**

STEP 2. FACTS

The fact-finding and analysis was the most time-consuming portion of the work, but one that the entire planning team participated in as much as possible, instead of solely relying on information provided by other studies, researchers, or databases, and without individual analysis at the time of the particular planning process. The intent was to give each team member a direct and very personal insight to the research.

Some of the specific tasks from the Research, Reconnaissance, and Record step were as follows:

- Perform a survey of sites to identify/record the physical and artistic history of the district
- Develop a historical context and character-defining narrative for the area as a foundation document to guide the process
- Provide overlays to indicate significant infrastructure, topographic, physical and institutional features that might limit or impact plans
- Identify property ownership, condition, land use, potential partners, and stakeholders
- Refine the limits district and broader study area
- Review all previous planning efforts from consultants, agencies, and other groups
- Provide overlays of current and proposed vehicular, transit, and pedestrian improvements; review for impact on the target area
- Provide an overview of existing/proposed zoning that might impose restrictions or opportunities
- Research changes, variances, or possible overlay zones to address specific needs
- Provide maps consolidating the current economic incentive zones
- Interview interested property owners to determine their future plans or interests
- Assist in organizing and briefing a *Shreveport Common* Advisory Committee to ensure broad-based Visioning Process for the district
- Facilitate a public Design Charrette to include a broad spectrum of arts and community organizations, design professionals, property owners, interested citizens, stakeholders, and supporters
- Engage area residents in the Visioning Process
- Recruit architectural, landscape, and other design assistance for key elements
- Interface on the commission and installation of public artworks
- Prepare schematic design studies with diverse approaches; including plans, elevations, site/ landscape plans, as required to interpret and test the design concepts
- Create virtual models of district to increase understanding of the vision
- Propose the major elements of a new gateway into Shreveport from I-20

Step 3. Concepts

Here we more strictly followed Peña’s advice and used his “Four Considerations” to guide each step: Function, Form, Economy, and Time. This recommendation ensured a comprehensive approach, and its application was most valuable in this particular step. By establishing an information grid, we could systematize what is very diverse and varied research, and identify any holes/openings in the process for more opportunities.

Step 4. Needs

This step engaged the community in a sustained series of what we called “Listening Sessions” to record what existing and potential stakeholders in the district wanted to see in the revitalized area. Over 60 such 1-2 hour sessions took place in the course of 9 months, involving over 50 stakeholder entities, 200 individuals, and producing over 1000 suggestions including more than 300 unique ideas or needs.

The focus of the this Step was to specifically involve those already in the area and those who would most readily contribute to the economic sustainability of the final Vision Plan, and identify those features that would draw new stakeholders to the district. To that end the Vision Plan required the engagement of potential investors to assess their needs as well as inform them of the upcoming opportunities in the district.

Step 5. The Problem

The problem statements served as premises for design and criteria with which to evaluate the various design solutions, and are specific to conditions within the study area. However, these statements did not lock the Vision into one solution, and instead, encouraged alternative ideas and forms. The solutions are drafted in a way as to anticipate a comprehensive solution to the entirety of the problem.



The City of Shreveport’s Great Expectations Plan recommended detailed neighborhood plans such as the Shreveport Common Vision Plan as an important strategy for the future. This particular neighborhood was specifically identified and discussed in detail during The Great Expectations planning process, and the Vision Plan fulfills the goals in many ways, including:

- Maintains or improves existing infrastructure to support inner-city redevelopment rather than additional suburban growth.
- Promotes the re-purposing and/or increasing the use of existing public facilities.
- Addresses the recommendations for mixed-use inner city redevelopment, quality housing options and new development patterns, particularly those that do not exclude affordable units that have convenient transit access.
- Enhances connectivity of functional green spaces
- Increases the number of locations of public parks and green spaces
- Increases the urban forest tree canopy and alternate transportation options, particularly transit and pedestrian.
- Markets downtown as a place for artists to live and work
- Increases the quantity and/or visibility of public art.
- Consistently promotes the recommendations regarding historic preservation and maintaining the unique local cultural heritage.
-

- Includes specific strategies concerning both the Texas Avenue Corridor and recommended programming to enhance the success of such
- Initiates the dialogue identified as a desperate need for investment in additional downtown housing, mixed-use facilities and activity programming, as well as the improvements to the land use regulations needed to support or protect it.
- Promotes both a “complete street” approach and improves transit access to a potentially significant group of destinations, contributing towards a reduction in vehicle miles traveled, an environmentally positive result

Roy Jambor, Shreveport Metropolitan Planning Commission, September, 2011

THE PROCESS IN ACTION

The second part of the process involved the production of the deliverables, or products, gleaned from Part I of the process. The Design Team departed from Peña’s guidance and began putting the concepts and needs into a more tangible form. For example, creative case study scenarios were developed for selected buildings and sites within the focus area to demonstrate the overall concept, to provide new partnerships and collaborations, and to demonstrate the economic feasibility of such investments in concrete terms and figures. The team produced a series of schematic maps and other graphic materials as required to represent proposed land uses, including open spaces, parklands, new infill constructions, parking areas, pedestrian ways, traffic patterns, and landscaping. In some instances stakeholders were presented with concepts that encouraged and allowed for their stability and growth in the district. We determined a series of on-going priorities and necessary sequences of events that must occur in the interest solving the problem. Further, we identified specific individuals, agencies, and organizations with steps and opportunities within the solution process. Graphic materials in the form of maps, streetscapes, facades, open spaces, and even general building types and details were developed by the team architect and landscape architects to flesh out the plan and give it more a concrete form.

Finally, we have produced this master Vision Plan document that summarizes and consolidates the research, investigations, historical context, photographs, graphics, models, preliminary concepts, and recommendations into one conceptual design. The Vision Plan was organized around the planning process as outlined above, so that future amendments, additions, or other planning efforts can follow the process in the future.

THE LISTENING SESSIONS

Building upon SRAC’s nationally recognized and awarded Community Cultural Plan, *THE CITY AND THE ARTS: Making Connections*, a grass-roots planning effort comprised of a Mayor’s Appointed Advisory Council and focus sessions held throughout the community, SRAC and the Design Team initiated a listening period that dedicated nine months to meeting with neighbors and stakeholders in the area.

Over 60 individual sessions were held with over 50 Shreveport Common stakeholders including neighboring property owners, developers, community leaders, department-heads and neighboring service organizations, as well as a 50-member Advisory Committee board assigned by the mayor, made up of neighboring property owners, community leaders, city department-heads, and neighborhood service organizations. The Listening Sessions involved an overview of how we “envisioned” the area as Shreveport Common, and how that melded with what they wanted for their property, organization, or for the area. Most of the organizations, businesses and the few resident property owners had been operating as an island. Few had connected with other neighbors in the area. All were excited about the opportunity to revitalize the area, and although some had conflicting concerns, most shared common wants and needs for the area.

The Listening Sessions allowed the neighbors and stakeholders to see themselves as a part of a greater project, and to experience the momentum of the possibility for transformation of the area. After the 9 month Listening process, and with over 1,000 ideas, wants and needs for the area, over 300 of them unique in some way or another, the design team has been able to create new opportunities and ideas for most of the neighboring organizations and property owners, making additions and adaptations where needed. In other cases, the team worked one-on-one with property owners on how their plans would fit within the overall framework of the envisioned cultural community.

SHREVEPORT COMMON LISTENING SESSIONS: THE PARTICIPANTS

*Some groups and individuals had more than one meeting

Texas Avenue Community Association (TACA)-hosted Community Meeting TACA Board A Better Shreveport* Holy Cross Episcopal Church* Providence House* James Burton Foundation* The Fairmont Apartments Logan Mansion Korner Lounge The Florentine/Ogilvie-Wiener House Allen Interiors Credit Bureau of the South* Union Pacific Railroad Blue Goose Foundation SporTran* Aseana Gardens* Gary Joiner, Historian David Nelson property owner* Maggie and Alton Warwick / Louisiana Hayride* Shreveport Metropolitan Ballet Volunteers of America Lighthouse Downtown Development Authority* Shreveport Bossier Rescue Mission Mercy Center	Shreveport Chamber of Commerce Shreveport Symphony Shreveport Developers group* Community Foundation of Shreveport Bossier Little Realty – Creswell Hotel Kathryn Usher for area Artists Friends of Oakland Cemetery Shreveport Opera Scottish Rite Temple Caddo Parish Administration Carolyn Manning downtown realtor Shreveport Public Assembly and Recreation board North Louisiana Council of Governments (NLCOG) Electric Supply Shreve Memorial Library Lakeside Baptist Church SMG Municipal Auditorium* Val Clary, property owner Ms. Cochran, property owner Calanthean Temple owner Jason Brown Shreveport Green Metropolitan Planning Commission IATSA 478 Stage Hands Union Data Storage Shreveport Common Advisory Committee* (9 meetings)
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The Vision Plan was also reviewed by 90 property owners, and at several community meetings including an Artists Review on July 7, 2011. In addition, the concepts were tested with the Advisory Council on four different occasions. A *Shreveport Common* facebook page has been active since early June 2011.

RE-INVEST!: A TAX CREDIT SEMINAR

So many questions concerning tax incentives arose during the Listening Sessions and other community meetings that the team proposed a half-day Tax Incentive Seminar featuring State and regional tax professionals. The presenters identified existing programs of tax incentives, grants, and other financial programs that could assist in the redevelopment of properties within the district. Market data was also gathered from consulting professionals within the community. Over 80 property owners, investors, developers, attorneys, and CPAs attended the Seminar. A list of speakers and an outline of the different tax credits available within the district are included in the Appendix to this plan.

Tax Credits for Inner City Revitalization A Workshop for Investors, Developers, Tax Professionals and Property Owners

Introduction To Cultural Districts And Tax Credits

State And Federal Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits, Procedures And Specifics

Digital Media/Film/Sound Recording/Live Performance Tax Credit Programs

Cost Report Guideline Basics For CPA's

Tax Increment Financing (Tifs), Community Development Districts And Property Tax Abatement As Development Tools

Additional Development Support Programs: Facade Improvement And Brownfield Incentives

Panel Discussion: New Market Tax Credits, Stacking Tax Credits

Housing Component And Tax Credits

How The City Of Shreveport Can Help: Tax Abatement And Accelerated Permit Process

SAVE THE DATE!
re-Invest!
a tax credit seminar for
urban redevelopment

Sponsored by the
Shreveport Regional Arts Council
National Endowment for the Arts
MICD Grant supporting the
Cultural District - Shreveport Common

In partnership with
Shreveport Downtown
Development Authority
Society of Louisiana Certified
Public Accountants

Friday, June 17, 2011
11:30 am - 5:00 pm
COMPLIMENTARY LUNCH
FEDERAL, STATE & LOCAL TAX CREDIT EXPERTS
This seminar is complimentary
but reservations are required.

Please call or e-mail SRAC
to make your reservations
(318) 673-6500 or RSVP@shrevearts.org
@
artspace
710 Texas Ave., Downtown Shreveport



“A CHARRETTE TURNED INSIDE OUT”

In lieu of a traditional design charrette, the Shreveport Common Vision Plan was presented to the community in an interactive public forum on June 18, 2011. A six-hour “*Discover Shreveport Common*” event was attended by an estimated 600 people in the 104-degree heat. A 3-D Digital “fly through” of the area was presented on two TV screens to 10 – 20 viewers, every half hour. Each presentation of the Vision Plan was a personal tour of the district, followed by question and answers.

Following the presentations, the community had a chance to “weigh-in” on the Vision Plan for *Shreveport Common* in 7 ways:

- Roundtable discussions facilitated by community leaders
- A manned “Big Ear” for recorded responses
- An artists’ drawing area for artist renderings
- Professional poets on hand for assisted literary reviews
- Review “comment” cards
- Computer for on-line reviews – still active
- Shreveport Common facebook page – still active
- Narrated Trolley tours

Of over 300 review responses, nearly all were extremely favorable, and most included suggestions for living space, retail shops and restaurants, artists work spaces and programming ideas.

AN OVERVIEW OF RESPONSES:

REVIEW CARDS

Of the 54 who completed Review Cards on June 18, 2011 (9% of the estimated attendance) the answer to, “Do you... Like The Plan You See Today?” = 1.35 Avg. response, (with 1 = Strongly Agree, and 5 = Strongly Disagree). Mode = 1, with 81% answering “1.”

Eighteen artists completed the Review Cards by July 7, 2011 after reviewing the plan, representing just fewer than 50% of those in attendance. Of those who completed the card, the answer to, “Do you... Like the Plan You See Today?” 15 answered with an average response of 2.4 (with 1 = strongly agree, 2 = agree, 3 = agree, 4 = disagree, and 5 = strongly disagree). Three did not answer. The Mode = 1, with half of the respondents answering “1.” Combined the groups average response was 1.7 with 74% answering “1.”

Comments were positive, and none of those who ranked a response as disagreeing or strongly disagreeing explained their reason. One respondent felt the plan was “overly ambitious” but gave it a “1” strongly agree.”

AUDIO REVIEWS

Fifty-one people participated in the audio interviews (Big Ear). Of those, 47 made positive comments about Shreveport Common and made suggestions for retail, restaurant, living and work space and programming. Three responses did not relate in any way to the Common, and only 1 had a negative response to the project citing a desire for density instead of green space central to The Common. One of those who responded positively expressed a concern about ample parking.

ROUND TABLE DISCUSSIONS

Of the 23 adults who participated in Round Table discussions, including the responses from children 17 and under, all responded favorably to the plan and to components of the plan. The respondents listed various answers to all of the questions, which were open ended to allow dialogue. No single answer was predominant, although the answers were similar to what was heard from the Advisory Committee. Yes, they would like to visit the area; and Yes, services such as grocery, restaurant, and drugstore would be required for those who would move into the area. When asked “What would prevent you from visiting or living in the area?” crime and vagrancy were mentioned most frequently. The dog park was positively supported by 16 of the respondents, whether or not they owned a dog. Nine said they would ride a bike (some said if there were paths, one suggested a bike rental or loan). A variety of housing price and scale were suggested by those who said they would live in the area, ranging from \$600 a month to \$250,000 - \$350,000 to purchase. There would have to be businesses like restaurants and retail for them to move in the area. Business rental suggested at “reasonable” \$1200/month.

I'm really looking forward to seeing Shreveport taking advantage of this opportunity to create a space for young families, people with children, entertainment in the early evening, and on the weekends instead of only having night-time entertainment which Shreveport has a lot of. But, we need a place for families to go. I could sell my house and move down here. It would be quite a place to live; you actually wake up in the morning, walk outside and be in this kind of space.

I'm really glad that Shreveport is branching out and utilizing wasted space...there are a lot of projects going that will include more green spaces and more opportunities for artists

I'm really excited for the future, and everybody is excited about building together, about different people coming together, different interests, age groups, and everything. I am very glad to see the arts promoted and everyone getting involved in different ways.

This is the next step in Shreveport moving forward... If we had something more central where a lot of activities were taking place, people would say "hey, let's go down to the Arts District and see what we want to do when we get there."

This is very exciting for the future to have an opportunity to come down to a city like Shreveport (from Chicago) and live, actually in the city, and enjoy the city life and the community of neighbors... It would be a fun to live that way.

I returned after 10 years ago in California, came back, saw the deterioration downtown...I've been so excited to see what's going on down here. What I'm seeing is so motivating, and wonderful and I'm behind it.

Oh, I think is so exciting because we have the visionaries and the can-doers, all coming together to make this possible. I'd move down here. I love it. I'd love to have a whole food store here, a wonderful coffee shop;

I was born and raised in Common Street when it was St Paul's Bottoms and to see life coming back into this area is just amazing, and especially when it is on the creative side.

This event is really exciting, there are a lot of people down town Shreveport, and the whole area looks really involved

There are ways that we can work together... and make sure that this development happens, and we get the creative community we are looking for.

VISION STATEMENT SHREVEPORT COMMON
 Downtown's newest oldest uncommon place designed as Shreveport's first Cultural Community: an intimate, 9-block, urban arts community built... and rebuilt... on its history of Authenticity, Community, Creativity And Sustainability!

GET INVOLVED!
 Sign up for email updates and get the latest news on developments in SHREVEPORT COMMON at www.shrevearts.org

DISCOVER SHREVEPORT COMMON
 The Oldest Newest "Uncommon" Community in Downtown Shreveport

Artist Design Team & Installations
 Gregory Free, Jerome Nicholas, Katie Martin & Mischa Farrell - 1a-1c
 Daniel Mark Cassidy - 5, 10a-f, 18
 Jerry Davenport - 12, 21
 Marjorie Kouns - 8, 11, 13, 20
 Ryan McCutcheon - 4, 13, 14, 20
 Tama Rippa Nathan - 7, 9a, 22
 Jason Pfler - 9a, 12a-b, 15a-b
 Rebecca Thomas - 1d, 16, 19, 24
 Robert Trudeau - 1d, 17, 23

"When we talk about Creative Placemaking... the way that the Arts can transform neighborhoods and communities, can be an engine for economic development and urban renewal... we're talking about Shreveport."
 - Ezzaco Landerman, Chairman National Endowment for the Arts Chairman Strand Theatre - March, 2011

It encourages me that downtown Shreveport can come back to being the cultural heart of this city.

Well, I just moved back to the area (from New Orleans) and what I've seen is fantastic and as far as what can be added, I don't know, but what I'm seeing, the layout of the Commons, the residential living, the bicycles, the artists, people on the streets it's got a good feel...individuality and creativity are being expressed in unique ways.

It's absolutely exciting to be out here today. It's a wonderful blend of our community: citizens from, it seems every part of town, adults, children, different entities that represent Shreveport here.

I'd love to see a market like Baton Rouge has; a monthly (outdoor) art market that changes, that is not ever static, and all artists are invited to participate. They have huge crowds that come constantly because they've come to expect to see great art.

DISCOVER SHREVEPORT COMMON

Artist Design Team & Installations
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 Rebecca Thomas - 1d, 16, 19, 24
 Robert Trudeau - 1d, 17, 23

Installations & Locations
VISION PLAN
 1a. "See It" - Design Photo Murals
 1b. "Experience It" - Gregory Free, Historic Preservation Designer
 1c. "Share It" - Tell Us What You Think! at round table discussions
 1d. "Shout It" - Say Ideas into the Giant Ear
 1e. "Rhyme It" - POETIC X or Sister Shay will turn your ideas into Poetry
 2. "Hear It" - Live Music by area musicians
 3. "Make It" - Children's Hands-On Art
 4. Scenes of SHREVEPORT COMMON
 5. "An Active Community" Mural
 6. "Taste It" - Food Vendors
 7. "Aim for It" - Fire Hydrant's Kids
 8. "Foggy Hour" Sidewalk Café Experience
"PARK IT" - THE COMMON GREEN SPACE
 9a. Bubble Wrap Bushes
 9b. Fountain
 9c. Shreve Memorial Library Cart - FREE Books!
 9d. Arty Umbrellas
 9e. Amphitheatre
COMMON "QUIPS"
 10a. Temple of the Performing Arts
 10b. Hall Ye Queen Anne
 10c. Municipal Auditorium
 10d. Louisiana Hayride
 10e. History & Heritage
 10f. Shreveport-ers
ARTISTS' "CREATE IT"
 11a&b. Shades of Shreveport
 12a&b. Painted Crosswalks
 13. Common Street Gateway
 14. Louisiana Cotton Exchange
 15a. Historic Photo - Mercury Dealership
 15b. Historic Photo - Data Storage Building
 16. Pagodas - Aseana Gardens
 17. Sounds of SHREVEPORT COMMON
 18. "See behind the curtain"
 19. "Before I die, I want to..." - Oakland Cemetery
 20. James Burton Tribute
 21. "Greenhouse" Mural
 22. Mercy Gardens
 23. "Artish Wanted Here" Mural
 24. Common Link
Trolley Stops HERE!

This is the one of the most historic and interesting parts of our entire city.

It's nice to have a place like that with, you know, coffee shops, and cafes, and stuff down here where you feel safe and you can walk around and visit and do arts.

It was very interesting. I had no idea there was so much history in this small area. It was amazing. I just moved here, so I don't know anything about Shreveport, and so coming here was very encouraging and exciting to be here in such a developing stage. It's really, really neat.

I love it; I think it's very nice. I'm visiting from Alabama, so I love the culture and the arts and the opportunity here.

This is what Shreveport has been needing for a long time. It's just a matter of making it happen.

I really like the bicycles down there, and the murals are amazingly put up so quickly, and they are wonderful. I just love the spirit. Everybody is out here enjoying today, it is just gorgeous. There are so many artists today that you don't really know that they are here and then you are out and you are like WOW! We have very talented people in Shreveport.

I would like it to have the feeling and not just activity, but some kind of real substance, that people; young and older folks might feel that this is the place they want to be, where they can make a living, this is the place where they can be comfortable, this is the place they can buy groceries and take their kids to school, and not be, you know, necessarily looking at decay. I mean some of decay has its charm but you want it to be a vibrant thing that you can come in, be entertained and grow at the same time.



THE VISION PLAN IN A FEW WORDS:

Community
inclusive—hospitable—tolerant

Creative
stimulating—vibrant—diverse

Authentic
true to history—place—character

Sustainable
environmentally—socially—economically

LAND USES—PAST AND FUTURE

Ultimately, the key factor in the success of all urban space revitalization depends upon the diversity, flexibility, scale, and balance of land usage. This is perhaps an extreme simplification, but any redevelopment that creates a monoculture of one or two dominant uses is highly subject to changes in the market and demographics of the area. Beyond mere academic study, this has been proven in development efforts even within the City of Shreveport. In order to create a truly sustainable neighborhood, the *Shreveport Common* cultural district must strive to provide for all the needs of the residents, businesses, and institutions within, including all ages and economic levels.

As formerly a vital neighborhood, *Shreveport Common* is fortunate to retain many vestiges of the past. Already in the district there are examples of the following land uses with some current examples:

- public space--Aseana Gardens, Oakland Cemetery
- residential--high-rise, institutional, apartment, single family
- commercial/office--Allen Interiors, Korner Lounge, Logan Mansion, DataStor, Malone Law Firm, Burton Foundation, Little Realtors
- religious—Holy Cross Episcopal, Lakeside Baptist
- institutional: arts organizations, venues, fraternal and social services —
- Municipal Auditorium, *minicine?*, Scottish Rite Cathedral, Providence House, Hope House, Mercy House, Rescue Mission
- vacant land/buildings

“ In order to create a truly sustainable neighborhood, the Shreveport Common cultural district must strive to provide for all the needs of the residents, businesses, and institutions within, including all ages and economic levels.”

By far all of these uses are extremely limited in this blighted district, with the exception of the last category, vacant land and buildings. The residential population, according to a census performed by the Design Team, is surprisingly high at 850 permanent residents, most of whom reside in the Fairmont Apartments.

Without question a primary goal of the Vision is to preserve and increase this diversity of land usage. The emphasis on or preference of any one use over another would be detrimental to the success of creating a functioning, balanced community. Mixed-use facilities and buildings have become a standard concept for successful urban districts throughout the country, and text will not be devoted herein for this widely accepted point of view.

It should be recognized that while the Visioning Process can program and attempt to specify particular land uses and locations, the ultimate determinations will be made by the investors who respond to the opportunities presented and the properties they develop; hopefully in response to the Vision Plan, City of Shreveport leadership, and financial incentives available. Even then, much is left to the management companies who seek and negotiate tenants for the buildings’ many uses. The Vision Plan can most realistically strive to program areas for specific infrastructure and public uses, such as open spaces, streets and sidewalks, parking, and transportation facilities, and activities of other City agencies. Further recommendations result from analysis of the physical resources and responses to wants and needs expressed in the Listening Sessions.

PUBLIC ART IN THE VISION PLAN: PART I

In the creation of a community cultural district, the overriding goal is to produce an environment in which all forms of artistic expression and the artists themselves can live and flourish. We can learn from the wide range of cultural districts with which many are familiar. For example, some are completely new, as in the case of Dallas, Texas where a long-term vision, a large cluster of vacant, characterless sites, one billion dollars, and two decades were required to produce something amazing and new--a cultural district where the mega venues are located—museums, sculpture gardens and collections, the opera, the symphony. It is a splendid place, but hardly a neighborhood. There are few sites where artists can afford to live and show their work, so they live elsewhere and visit the cultural district.

By contrast, the Chelsea community in New York City, took hundreds of old buildings—few architectural landmarks, and even fewer museum-style venues —and created an Arts mecca through the individual efforts of artists, gallery owners, dance studios, developers, and friends who flocked to this area to make it their home and place of work. Even without a central focal point, Chelsea feels like a neighborhood-- pedestrian, varied in scale and texture, raw, and even a little funky. The Public Art here often comes in the form of surprises, interactions with people places, programmed activities, in all a full range of Arts experiences.

The *Shreveport Common* cultural district requires Visioning at both ends of the spectrum. This is an existing neighborhood with significant landmarks, not empty acreage along a freeway. There are important cultural, religious, and social institutions, landmarks of another sort at every turn. Now some of those are being restored and given new life, significantly—the Municipal Auditorium – and soon the Central Fire Station, which will introduce the dynamic Shreveport Regional Arts Council into the neighborhood. The goal of this Vision Plan is a custom cultural district, with its own special Shreveport scale, and flavor, a place for emerging arts and artists.

These letters are used as symbols for nine general, but inclusive and encompassing popular art media practiced today. The Key to these media follows. These symbols are positioned at the beginning of each new design or programming initiative where Public Art might find its *Voice*, its *Canvas*, its *Muse*—or as we might say today--its *Buzz*, its *Thang*, or its *Mojo*.

Does Public Art make a Place or does Place make Public Art? Do We shape our buildings or do they shape Us?

The reality is, when these lasting creative efforts succeed, it is almost always because they were thoughtfully and jointly conceived for the good of the community at large. In that light, it would be more than presumptuous for anyone in any position of design, planning, or politics, or any individual artists, architects, administrators, or financiers to establish at this point what Public Art is and where it belongs.

It is first and foremost incumbent upon the community leadership--at all levels--to ensure that there will be a PLACE in which Public Art can be created, enjoyed, and preserved. Today this is the most important example of Public Art--to fulfill the goals of place-making that brought this year-long study and planning effort to life, near completion, and will soon bring it to implementation; and Public Art should be a part of every step taken from this point forward.

As the reader proceeds through the following recommendations, note the symbols at the beginning of each section and use them as a starting point--to agree or disagree--to begin the dialogue about the role of Public Art, and the Arts in general, in all the aspects of what is deemed a great life in urban Shreveport.

KEY TO PUBLIC ART POTENTIAL

At the end of this Vision Plan, the Design Team has planted colored dots around a map of the *Shreveport Common* cultural district, to indicate some general first thoughts about the potential of Public Art throughout this district. At first glance, it might be either frightening or overwhelming, but should be neither; it is only a representation of a few of the countless possibilities.

Throughout the recommendations section of this Vision Plan you will see colorful letters like these:

WE CALL THESE NOTATIONS THE "PUBLIC ART POTENTIAL"

P	painting/drawing/mural
S	sculpture/collage/assemblage
M	music
T	theatre/spoken word
D	dance/movement
A	architecture/design
L	landscape design
V	video/film/media
E	lighting/electric media

Shreveport Common Vision Plan

Public Art Potential

- P--painting/drawing/mural
- S--sculpture/collage/assemblage
- M--music
- T--theatre/spoken word
- D--dance/movement
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- L--landscape design
- V--video/film
- E--lighting/electric media

Please note that the Vision Plan views every building and site as a potential Art Education opportunity.





“The Common” at a glance

PUBLIC SPACES

“THE COMMON”

The literal and figurative centerpiece of the Shreveport Common Vision Plan is the *Common*, a one-acre public green space located within the triangle of land bounded by Texas Avenue, Common, and Cotton Streets; land that had historically served as a depot lot for incoming and outgoing commerce beginning in the mid-19th century. Much like the Common of traditional Anglo-American village design, this was shared community space and then as now, linked important civic and religious buildings, as well as business and social functions, much like the plazas in continental Europe and the New World colonies. These public grazing, commerce, protests, and celebration spaces go by many names in the United States alone, ranging from “Square” (not always square), “Ellipse”, “Lawn”, “Piazza”, “Garden”, “Grove”, “Quadrangle”, and even the linear “Mall”.

Besides starting out as an open space, this land had been open for most of its history. With the exception of the period from 1918 -1948 when a single large two story building was located at 815 Texas Avenue, much of the area was populated with sparsely wood frame structures—both houses and commercial buildings—and a short section of two-story masonry structures. Beginning in the 1920s, many of these properties became open lots for auto sales and service stations with few buildings of substance or mass. But it was the existing conditions of this parcel—covered only by concrete slabs, asphalt, and a few trees—that inspired the initial concept for the Common. Bearing on the American landscape and urban design traditions of the both Picturesque and City Beautiful movements, we looked to capitalize on the location and relationship of principal landmarks, most prominent of which was the tower of Holy Cross Episcopal Church.

On a slight elevation looking west from the original City grid at Milam and Common Streets, the site for Holy Cross, the oldest public building in the district, was carefully selected to be the focal point of the area. Its Gothic Revival silhouette had always drawn focus long before the build up of the surrounding area, and its visual power is still very strong. The completed “wall” on the north side of the 800 Block of Texas Avenue angles westward, and produces an arrow that directs the eye to the Church.

The Central Fire Station’s substantial front elevation counters the 800 Block on the south, and frames Holy Cross in the composition. Later building intrusions notwithstanding, open spaced in the foreground is more than suggested. From this first response, the location, shape, and details of the central Common have undergone numerous schematic designs and locations utilizing professional expertise and community input, to arrive at the present proposals.

Public Art Potential: P S M T D A L V E



A view looking west on Texas Avenue from the intersection of Milam and Common Streets. Holy Cross Church is at the center, the visual focus of the Avenue from this perspective. The diagonal “walls” of historic fabric to the left and right frame the view and direct the eye to this important urban landmark.



“I’m really looking forward to seeing Shreveport taking advantage of this opportunity to create a space for young families, people with children, entertainment in the early evening, and on the weekends instead of only having night-time entertainment which Shreveport has a lot of. But, we need a place for families to go. I could sell my house and move down here. It would be quite a place to live; you actually wake up in the morning, walk outside and be in this kind of space.”

The following is a description for the proposed central Common by Nicholas & Associates, Landscape Architects:

The 1.3-acre park, known as the “Common”, is located at the heart of *Shreveport Common* and will be the central, iconic feature of the development. It is located at the intersections of Texas Avenue with Cotton and Crockett Streets and is easily accessible from the commercial and residential developments envisioned for the project.

The central feature of the park is a two-third acre “Lawn”. This is a multi-use space, which, for non-programmed periods, is the front yard or Common for the area’s residents. On weekends, weekday evenings and days off, this is the space to take a breath of fresh air, have a picnic, fly a kite, take a stroll, or play a pick up ball game with neighbors. During weekdays it serves the commercial sites by providing open space relief for taking a break, having lunch, etc. It can also serve to accommodate vendor tent areas for small fairs, festivals, and similar events. The lawn space is surrounded by a continuous walk for jogging and strolling.

Adjacent to the central lawn is performance “band shell” structure. One function of this structure is, of course, a stage for small to medium sized musical performances. However, this roofed structure should be designed for multiple purposes, for instance, neighborhood group meetings, family reunions, small parties, etc. This is a key opportunity for a major work of Public Art.

The perimeter edge of the green space is visually porous so that views into the park are available at all times for security as well as to simply enjoy viewing the green space from the surrounding urban streets and buildings. The Cotton Street edge is lined with street trees, Texas Avenue and Crockett Street with a double row of trees, which will form a shaded canopy for strolling and seating on the provided benches. Use of native trees and hardy species that are well adapted to our climate will be the preferred plant palette. Lighting will be low key and, for the most part, provided by up-lighting of the trees and other subtle lighting effects.

Masonry walls at the east end of the park separate parking areas for the Central Arts Station and Providence House from the green space. These walls are penetrated periodically to allow entry into the park and during programmed events, to allow vendors to set up on the parking areas and face the green space.

At the eastern end of the park adjacent to the Central ArtStation, a more defined entry is formed to create a smaller scale space, which is envisioned to accommodate temporary sculpture displays, street musicians and performers, etc. Also located here is a children’s participatory fountain. This space formalizes the entry into the larger Common area and serves as a link between the Common, Central ArtStation, and the triangular block formed by Common Street, Crockett Street, and Texas Ave. Because of the topography of the Common, this end of the green space will receive all the surface drainage from the adjacent green space. It is envisioned that rain harvesting for reuse as irrigation or retention in bio-swales would occur at the juncture of this space and the Common.

At the west end of the Common, at the intersection of Cotton and Texas Avenue, a sculptural fountain is envisioned. This will be a visual symbol for *Shreveport Common* as well as a welcoming entrance into downtown Shreveport for those entering from the west down Texas Avenue. The fountain and surrounding plaza area will also function for Holy Cross Church as spill out space for before and after- mass greeting and socializing. Here again the Vision Plan provides another magnificent opportunity for a lasting work of Public Art. The Common will serve as a sustainable park and green space that will in turn help the residential and business occupants of the area create a lively, sustainable neighborhood.



OAKLAND CEMETERY

The City of Shreveport’s oldest public green space, and one of the ArkLaTex’s most significant historical treasures, Oakland Cemetery is now in a Renaissance due to the hard work, planning and partnership of the Friends of Oakland Cemetery and SPAR. In the course of this Visioning Process, these partners have presented their plans, budgets and timetables, which are wholeheartedly supported. Oakland Cemetery will soon be returned to its pre-eminent position as a beautiful and safe public park, with the added attractions of displays, tours, and special events to educate the visitor about the City’s past.

One of the most important developments related to Oakland Cemetery in the *Shreveport Common* Visioning Process was dialogue that led to the incorporation of their proposed Visitor Center on Grand Avenue (Elvis Presley Boulevard), south of the 1912 main entrance gates. The last survivor of the Victorian “Sprague Street Cottages” (c. 1890) was previously donated to the Friends for this specific use. Its suggested placement on City-owned property places it near the heart of the *Shreveport Common* district in a place of prominence that was a residential site for almost a century. This placement also maintains the scale of the 1940s Lakeside Baptist Church and further preserves the visual connection through the block to the Florentine (Olgivie-Wiener Mansion) on its elevated site to the west.

The Visioning Process also recommends the future addition of a columbarium to the Cemetery, on non-historic lands adjacent to and NW of the main cemetery, where a seldom-used sunken park from the 1980s now exists. The columbarium could be an active memorial site, and a place of quiet meditation, restoring an important part of the Cemetery’s role for Shreveport’s future.

Public Art Potential: P S M T D A L V E



The last of six identical “Sprague Street Cottages”, c. 1890, was saved from demolition by the Friends of Oakland Cemetery and SPAR to be relocated and restored for a visitor center for the cemetery. It’s proposed location is on City-owned property on Elvis Presley Blvd.

(Opposite Page)
Visitors are often surprised at the close proximity of Oakland Cemetery to downtown; its rolling 10-acres have provided an important urban green space for over 150 years.



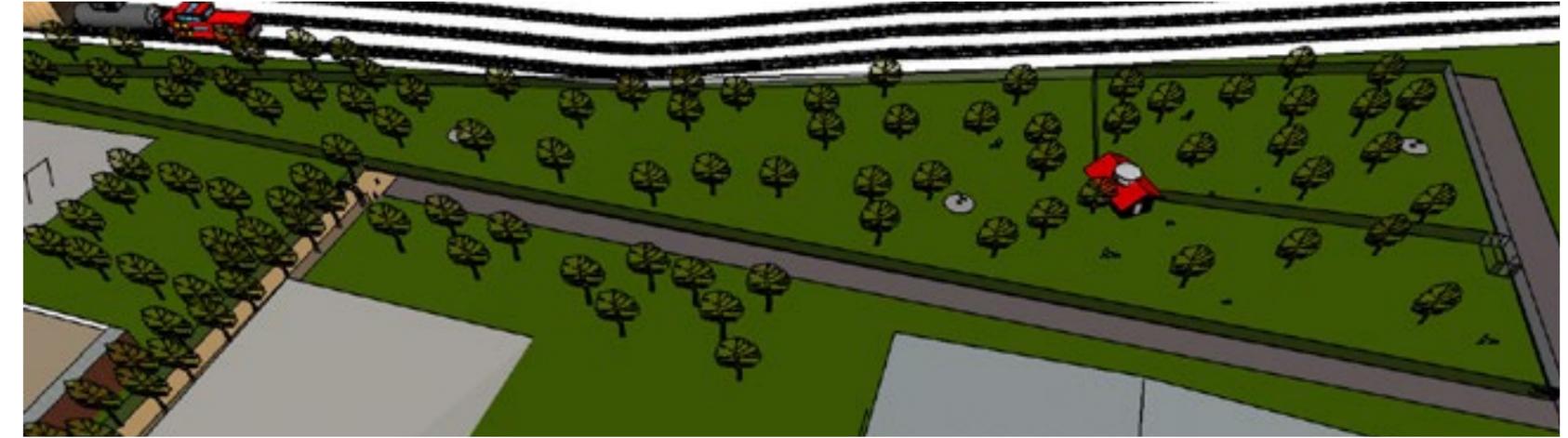
ASEANA GARDENS

In 1982 the City of Shreveport funded the design and construction of the “Municipal Plaza” a blighted triangle at the corner of Texas Avenue, Common, and Milam Streets. The site was difficult, sloping dramatically from the level of Common Street westward along Milam a distance of approximately 10 feet. The architect responded to the topography with modernist concrete forms popular at the time, and produced a plaza that successfully satisfied the site challenges and provided area for controlled planting beds, trees, small stage, and an amphitheater-like corner stair. In 2007, a small group of Asian citizens requested permission to care for the site, which was under-used and showing sign of age.

The Aseana Gardens organization, through several Listening Sessions and other meetings, provided many ideas and responded to suggestions that would enhance the plaza as a child- and program- friendly area. The Vision Plan has processed these in the context of the overall cultural district and recommends a master plan to enhance programming and appearance to include:

Public Art Potential: P S M T D A L V E

- **Relocate existing modern period sculpture and pedestal for installation of large-scale flat map of Asia and other child-friendly public art (representing unique animals of the Asian continent)**
- **Add discreet handrails at top and edges of monumental stair to frame small plaza/offset pre -ADA dangerous conditions**
- **Commission new artworks that would partially screen the Aseana Gardens from Milam Street providing sound control, enhance performances potential, and better define it as a public space**
- **Provide small didactic panels that celebrate the past, present, and future diversity of the district, emphasizing this eastern-influenced gateway from downtown into *Shreveport Common* and contrasting the corner’s role as the historic gateway to the southwest.**
- **Emphasize the Garden’s connection to the complimentary open green space of the central Common with painted crosswalks**



GREEN BUFFER/“POOCH” PARK

The south edge of the *Shreveport Common* cultural district is well defined by the still-active lines of the Union Pacific Railroad. Railroads were first introduced in this right-of-way beginning the 1860s, and by the late 19th century there were multiple tracks that led to the Red River bridge and the Union Depot on Louisiana Street. As in most urban settings, the railroad owned extensive right-of-ways flanking their lines, for potential growth, safety, and for offices and maintenance facilities.

Street crossings were less formal in those early years, and vehicular traffic most likely traversed the tracks at Wilson Street, making this edge of the district more permeable. Oral accounts from early residents of the neighborhood describe walking across the tracks to watch baseball games at Princess Park, but there were no official crossings from Louisiana Street to west of Hope Street. This was, for the most part, an unimproved industrial zone.

In decades past, the railroad-owned lands between Louisiana and Wilson Streets were used for assorted wooden buildings. The rapid decline of the railroad resulted in the demolition and removal of these structures, and ultimately the grand Union Depot by 1970. Since that time the lands have been largely abandoned to overgrowth, trash dumping, and campsites for the homeless. Wilson Street, though officially a dead end, still encourages a dangerous pedestrian crossing and the block has become a

location for unsavory activities that negatively affect the safety, perceptions, ministries, and other renewal efforts in the district. The Vision Plan proposes that the City of Shreveport approach Union Pacific Railroad for a donation, lease, or use agreement of these properties so that they might be cleared of undergrowth, and converted into a green buffer for the district. With the acquisition of adjacent small parcels of land along the unimproved west extension of Lake Street, this plot would constitute a 1.6 acre elongated triangle well suited to use as a fenced urban canine park. Mature trees would remain, and required improvements would be minimal to create this much-requested urban amenity. Fencing would provide dual safety for pets and citizens alike. A high foot traffic count would ensure the public “policing” of the area and quickly improve the perception of safety in the district. Primary access to the entrance would be via Wilson Street, with secondary access points to be provided to the east, as will be discussed later in this plan.

Following a national urban trend in this manner serves many purposes, answers many requests and begins the resolution of many other problems facing inner city revitalization, particularly the *Shreveport Common* Cultural District.

Public Art Potential: P S A L E

Shreveport Common Vision Plan

Green Spaces & Niche Parks

1. The “Common”
2. Aseana Gardens
3. Oakland Cemetery
4. Green Buffer/”Pooch Park”
5. “Nue” Park
6. Providence House Courtyard



NICHE PARKS

In addition to the large public green spaces proposed by this vision plan, the focus on small, nooks, crannies, and niche spaces should not be neglected. These can be both public and private efforts, and could be led by the example of Church of the Holy Cross’s intimate side garden, on the site of their early *choir* house. One category of such spaces would be more public in nature and strive to be integral parts of upcoming redevelopment projects, and when possible, relate physically or visually to the greater whole. These would likely have owners, sponsors, or related tenants whose support systems would ensure their sustainability. A second approach would be the more hidden spaces, which tend to be private and personal in nature, ranging from specialty gardens, urban produce plots, courtyards, and walks. Since this latter style tends to be higher maintenance spaces, and their special character conceals them from public view, they are often most appropriate as private or semi-private spaces. An exception is the linear, connective spaces, which also could be categorized as a pedestrian way. Where through traffic and destination points anchor the ends of niche parks, safety and security issues are greatly reduced, making intimate settings more practical in urban environments. Examples of this hybrid niche parks will be discussed later in this report.

“NUE PARK”

One niche existing park-like space that should be discussed is the small plot of land at the west end of the 800 Block of Texas Avenue. This parcel was created from a former house site and the original right-of-way of Bailey Street. For unknown reasons, the c. 1910 frame house was demolished and Bailey Street re-routed and graded by the City to intersect Texas Avenue perpendicularly, leaving this odd-shaped remnant.

Later, in the 1980s-1990s, the lot was planted with several oaks, 3-4 of which survive and provide the only public green space currently in the district. This plot was once considered a potential site for the proposed transportation link, but local stakeholders encouraged the Design Team to re-evaluate it as a niche park. In the course of the Visioning Process, four adjacent historic buildings were acquired for preservation, and the City has offered the Bailey Street was re-routed and the developers a long-term right of use agreement as an incentive. Now, with this public-private partnership, the site promises to soon be developed as a park and outdoor venue, enhancing the revitalized mixed-use buildings and the entire district. This site exemplifies how the synthesis of existing conditions, public input, private investment, and City leaders can produce outstanding solutions to the needs of the district.

Public Art Potential: P S M T D A L V E



The historic McAdoo Hotel built in the early 1920's, is an excellent example of an existing residential structure being renovated in the district.

RESIDENTIAL/MIXED USES

A successful mix of residential styles, densities, and range of purchase and rental prices is necessary to satisfy the needs of the interested stakeholders and create a sustainable, balanced community, particularly for artists and culture seekers.

Inevitably, there will be those who desire high end loft style urban living, and require large residential units with amenities such as high ceilings, large windows, historic materials, open interior spaces, balconies, and terraces, storage and garage facilities. According to the local development and construction advisors to the Visioning Process, and past experience, historic preservation of existing built fabric is higher in cost than conventional new construction. Without significant incentives, and larger-scaled projects, adaptive reuse of historic buildings is normally not able to compete economically with new construction. In the *Shreveport Common* Cultural district, most of the underused historic buildings are small, and there are few opportunities to acquire them *en mass* for a single large development. This, plus their distinctive appeal and location, make them best suited for higher income residential development. Like the fine adaptive reuse of the Salvation Army building at 710 Crockett Street, other select area have already begun to transition to new uses. The 700 Block of Milam Street and the 800 Block of Texas Avenue, are the most significant examples. Another visionary example is the recent acquisition of the Calanthean Temple and its neighbor in the 1000 Block of Texas Avenue, for renovations, which will include private residences and artist's studios.

Other properties that lend themselves to residential redevelopment are the Creswell Hotel, available for sale at this writing. The Hemenway Furniture/DataStor warehouse, is currently in long-term private business use, however, the design team has suggested the opportunities for future preservation and mixed-use.

EXISTING RESIDENTIAL

The higher costs or adaptive reuse of historic buildings is offset somewhat by significant tax incentives, including Federal tax credits for certified historic preservation projects, and cultural district and housing credits that can be stacked as applicable. An existing facility in the district that has taken advantage of these credits is the historic McAdoo Hotel (1002 Texas Avenue). In this case, however, the rare scale and original use of the structure made lower income housing feasible. The McAdoo is in the first phase of a \$3.4 million dollar renovation to be completed in 2012.

The most significant existing residential facility is the Fairmont Apartment Tower (917 Common Street), where 254 units house an average of 600 people via a Section 8 subsidized housing voucher program. Even though the Section 8 regulations allow for 25% of this facility to be leased at market rates, the physical and social environment had lessened the appeal of this important residential property. With physical upgrades, maintenance, and management attention to the social issues discussed previously in this plan, the Fairmont could once again regain its status as a desirable address.

Public Art Potential: S M T D A L V E

NEW CONSTRUCTION

One of the most significant problems within the study area is the vast amount of vacant and underused land, giving the area a bleak and abandoned character, and appearing as wastelands between the historic landmarks in the district. In order to provide the uses and functional requirements of the many elements necessary and specifically requested within the redeveloped district, a great deal of new construction is required. The Vision Plan proposes three distinct sites for new mixed use constructions that would raise the residential density, supply a variety of residential sizes, styles, and price points, and allow for the retail, convenience, and personal services necessary to support a vital residential community.

In general, these buildings were developed along similar design programs emphasizing scale, rhythm, and substantial materials compatible with the quality of the historic architecture in the district. These are intended to be contextual buildings, “friendly” to their older neighbors, but by no means historical revivals or facsimiles. However, the intent is to discourage buildings that overwhelm or draw too much focus from the landmarks. To that end, proposed buildings have been limited to 4-5 stories, or generally, the heights of the tallest buildings in the district, Municipal Auditorium and Hemenway Furniture. Based upon the input from the local developers on the Advisory Committee, and the City Planners, this scale is practical for costs of construction, and can attract a larger pool of investment for the district. These smaller buildings fit the “*boutique*” scale for new developments, be they residential, offices, or hotels. Elsewhere in downtown there are several large buildings to reuse, and large tracts of vacant land to program for high-density developments. The lower-rise, more intimate scale of the *Shreveport Common* Cultural District should always be preserved as part of its unique character and appeal.

In response to the analysis of needs in the district, a mixed-use model is imposed, requiring commercial/ institutional spaces at the street levels, and easily perceived and accessible parking. Wherever possible, a major portion of the parking is proposed as covered. To these basic design and functional parameters was added the importance of sustainability, both from an environmental and economic point of view; requiring consideration of progressive green solutions and future flexibility to ensure the development’s long-term viability.

Public Art Potential: P S M T D A L V E

(Opposite Top)
The following sections describe three proposed solutions to vacant sites as a means of demonstrating mass, scale, and other relevant elements to stakeholders and potential investors.

655 Common



Located on a site at the NE corner of Common and Crockett Streets, this site originally featured a two-story house, became a “filling” station in the 1930s, and has been a vacant for approximately 25 years. The site drops gently from the corner street towards the alley on the NW. The restrictive size of the site demands an innovative parking solution, and this change in elevation services the site well.

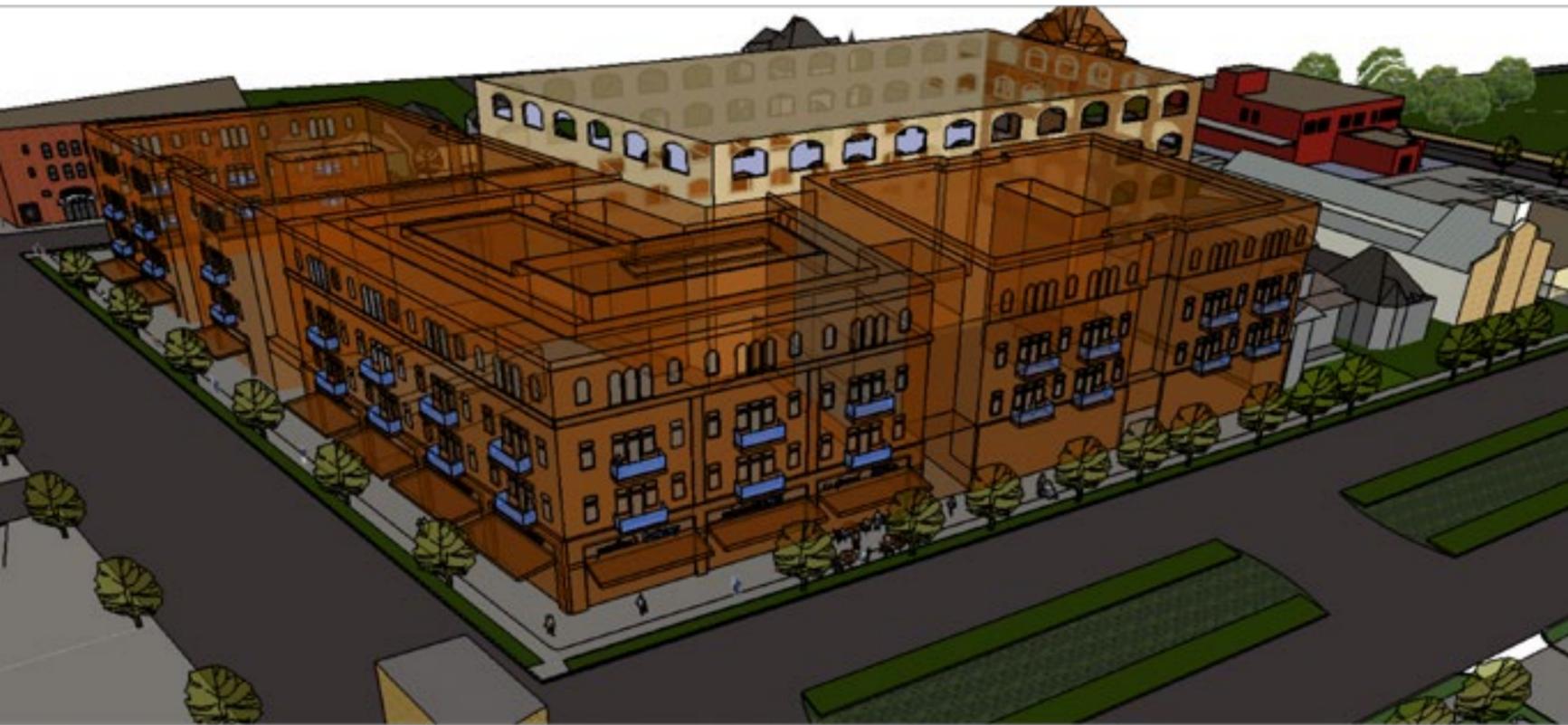
As indicated in the proposed schematic drawing, by Design Team architect Mischa Farrell, a first floor parking garage could be accessed off the less-traveled Crockett Street frontage, and still provide room for an elevator lobby, and any building mechanical requirements. This garage could provide 35 spaces to serve daily in/out needs for office or residential uses. With the change in topography, excavation to a lower level is not without its prospects. This strong base should be broken up into bays to reduce the impact of its mass on the corner. Open bays filled with metal grilles and trellises could create a rare open and light-filled parking area screened from view, but easily accessible from streets and sidewalks on both sides, possibly commissioned artworks that would enhance both the interior and the pedestrian experience at sidewalk level. Additional parking for this site will be addressed later in this plan.

Like the previous example at 835 Cotton, the upper mass is broken into two pavilions, creating a U-shaped plan. Once again this reduces the boxy mass, and provides increased exposures for the tenants. In this preliminary scheme, a deep open terrace extends the full height of the upper floors, framing a view up historic Texas Avenue, across the central Common, to Holy Cross Church and beyond. The terrace and many suites inside will be protected from the harsh western sun. Substantial materials like stone and brick are recommended. The building’s fenestration is regular, and spans multiple levels to better proportion the building visually. For the purpose of this Plan, the proposed mixed-use building includes one floor of parking, one floor of

commercial/office space, and two floors of apartments. An exciting addition is the inclusion of two roof gardens--one with a pool—that would add a distinction to downtown urban living.

The scheme works equally well with five stories, due to the recessed site. The backdrop of taller buildings along Milam Street and the central business district could allow a taller structure without intruding on the scale of the district. This would address the concerns for higher density expressed in some of the Listening Sessions. It should be noted, however, that the suggested size of this schematic design was guided by input from local real estate developers.

Public Art Potential: P S A L V E



“THE GRAND”

The largest empty property in the district is a 2.4 acre plot in the 900 block of Texas Avenue, between Grand Avenue (Elvis Presley Blvd. and Austen Place), once residential, then a used auto lot, and now vacant for many years. This is perhaps the most pivotal building site in the district, terminating the western visual axis of the central Common, fronting on three important streets and with a strong connection to key landmarks and institutions.

The core of the schematic design for this site, also by Design Team architect Mischa Farrell, is a central multi-level parking structure wrapped on the south and east by a high density mixed use building, or buildings. Proposed at four stories in height, the scheme presents a multitude of combinations for first floor retail with full loading/delivery facilities concealed at the rear.

Requests for restaurants, coffee shops, a pharmacy, and grocery stores consistently topped the more than 60 Listening Sessions in the course of this Visioning Process, and their desires are more than mere desires, they are essential elements of any successful neighborhood. Thus conceiving appropriate space to accommodate such needs was a priority for the Vision Plan from the beginning. Professional operational facilities must be provided if the district ever hopes to attract investors and tenants to supply these important needs. At the same time, no one appreciates the rear end view of trash dumpsters and loading docks in plain sight. Further, the potentially larger footprint for the retail floor holds more opportunities for retail uses of various sizes, increasing the attractiveness of the site to developers.

Public Art Potential: P S M T D A L V E



“THE AUSTEN PLACE HOUSES”

In order to preserve the scale of the remaining Austen Place residential block, the Vision Plan proposes a row of detached 2-3 story multi-family structures as infill for the vacant properties. This concept best preserves the rhythm of the historic streetscape and compliments the existing landmarks from the 1870s-1900 preserved across the street. The recommendation is not to replicate or mock the historic fabric, but to encourage the commission and design of new, contemporary infill buildings that would enhance the district’s historic character and increase the variety of styles and housing options available to the area. It is conceivable that these could include single-family and 2-4 unit buildings. Further, these sites might be useful as locations for rescued endangered historic buildings elsewhere in the metropolitan area.

It is suggested that these buildings might constitute a significant national or regional architectural design competition in collaboration for a significant public art commission. State and national organizations and/ or regional universities might participate and fund these designs in conjunction with local developers, investors, and even Federal funds such as HUD grants to complete the projects. Further, it is recommended that these new houses might become part of a non-profit habitat construction effort, and/or involve local construction associations.

Public Art Potential: P S M T D A L V E

Shreveport Common Vision Plan

Infill Construction

- 1. 655 Common Street
- 2. "The Grand"
- 3. 835 Cotton
- 4. Austen Place/Grand Avenue

Relocated/Restored Houses

- 5. Arlington Hotel
- 6. Louisiana/Cotton Exchange



COMMERCIAL/MIXED USE

NEW CONSTRUCTION

For discussion of the new mixed-use construction recommendations, please see the previous section.

Public Art Potential: P S M T D A L V E

ADAPTIVE REUSE

Most of the extant historic structures in the district were originally built for mixed commercial use below and often single or multi-family residential above. These would include most of the late 19th and early 20th century buildings along Milam Street and Texas Avenue. Plans are proposed for mixed commercial/residential uses for many these buildings, or these buildings are already in some combination of uses. Other proposed projects considering commercial use are 1001 Texas Avenue.

Other adaptive reuse for sites studies and proposed for commercial purposes are described briefly on the following pages.

Public Art Potential: P S M T D A L V E



LOUISIANA/COTTON EXCHANGE

These five Art Deco shops at the corner of Cotton and Louisiana Streets are currently owned by two parties. This proposal, developed through multiple meetings with the property owners, transforms the short block into an entertainment and food service *cul de sac* that could serve as a pedestrian mall for special occasions. New infill construction and parking lots are proposed for vacant lots, while the east right-of-way is suggested as a site for small sidewalk pavilions. A stage and backdrop at the south end terminates the street visually, and screens the frequent trains parked on the tracks, creating a better defined "Place".

Public Art Potential: PSMTDALVE



RESCUE MISSION WAREHOUSE

This 1950s industrial building at 824 Wilson Street is proposed for acquisition and reuse as the *Wilson Street Studios*, an artists' work studio collective with 30+ individual interior studio spaces, plus outdoor open and covered work spaces, kilns, welding shop, and a foundry.

Public Art Potential: PSMTDALVE

HEMENWAY FURNITURE

Currently a successful multi-media storage facility, this building at 919 Texas Avenue totals over 100,000 square feet. Its large site and pivotal location has interested developers as a location for a number of commercial and mixed uses, including small manufacturing, light industrial, academic, and residential. However the current owner has just now been made aware of new tax incentives and other possibilities.

Public Art Potential: PSMTDALVE



ARLINGTON HOTEL

Located at 700 Cotton Street, this proposed development includes restoration and contextual additions to create a boutique hotel with event spaces and retail shops along the first floor at Louisiana Street. The image (opposite) shows schematically how the Arlington could be expanded with a large complimentary ell-shaped addition on the south side. This addition would create a courtyard space, and allow for future growth for hotel rooms, event center space, and required facilities such as a commercial kitchen as well as administrative functions. In this manner, the historic hotel building could be preserved intact, without an excess of modern intrusions.

Public Art Potential: P S M T D A L V E



THE "TRIANGLE"

This site at Common, Crockett and Texas Avenue is currently serving a number of successful business ventures. The Vision Plan does not presume to affect the current owner's many uses, but only to conceive of ways in which the building and property might serve the greater vision as part of an urban cultural district.

The upper portion of the site, vacant since the demolition of the hotel in 1958, served as an open parking lot for 50 years until the present metal canopy was added in recent years. This covering provides parking for the tenants in the basement building below. Before it was covered, the vista westward on Texas Avenue, along with the historic buildings to the north and south, created a powerful, large-scaled urban space for many years. A less obstructive feature in this block would re-open this grand "Place", and have a tremendous impact when viewed from Common and Milam Streets. The proposed "Common" and its ring of historic architecture would then draw the observer into the district, making the vital connection between Shreveport Common Cultural District and downtown Shreveport.

The re-development of the lower level proposes that this unique concrete-columned space might become the "Common Market", a covered/open/conditioned public marketplace to serve arts, crafts, local specialty foods, antiques, flea markets, flower markets, and special events on a scheduled rotating basis.

Imagine a sheltered but open space that could provide for fairs and festivals, and allow it to serve as a year-round marketplace, meeting place, and "uncommon attraction" to Shreveport. Public restrooms, lighting, overhead glass doors, and other amenities would make it highly desirable for private rentals. The "Common Market" would immediately become a well-known and beloved public landmark. This use is not in any way intended to duplicate the City's successful Farmer's Market, but to compliment it with smaller cultural-oriented commercial and non-profit events year round.

Public Art Potential: P S M T D A L V E



Above, a representation of how the "Triangle" building is constructed, and a 3D view of the Market facade below.



INSTITUTIONAL USES: THE ARTS

CENTRAL ARTSTATION

Currently, the most important arts institution in the district is the Municipal Auditorium, serving the cultural life of the city since 1929. It is soon to undergo a multi-million dollar renovation to upgrade in performance infrastructure and other requirements to make it a world-class venue once again.

The newest arts institution in the neighborhood and the impetus to this Vision Plan is the creation of the Central ArtStation, to be the headquarters of the Shreveport Regional Arts Council (SRAC) which will devote 65% of its interior space for public use and programming, including an emerging artist gallery, an artists' business center, and a multi-purpose black box theatre performance space. The five story fire tower at the rear is to be repurposed as the guest house for SRAC's artist-in-residence program.

It is hoped that existing and new local arts institutions will be drawn to the cultural district, with both an administrative and programming presence. In the course of this Visioning Process, most of the major non-profit arts organizations have been engaged in direct dialogue about future plans for growth, reorganization, consolidation, and other topics to ensure their awareness and understanding of the proposed cultural district concepts, all with enthusiastic response.

Public Art Potential: P S M T D A L V E

Two sites have been specifically studied for their increased use or participation in the administrative and programming for the arts, which will be discussed in the following pages:



B'NAI ZION

One of the most important landmarks in the *Shreveport Common* district, the City of Shreveport, and the State of Louisiana, is the 1914 B'nai Zion Temple, a masterpiece of Beaux Arts architecture. With its full street level first floor, banks of potential office suites at the north and south ends, and an exquisite 60' square former worship space, the building is well-suited to be repurposed for use by multiple arts organizations who share common needs. To that end, the Vision Plan proposed the reuse of this fine structure as the "*Temple of Performing Arts*", housing a minimum of four performing arts groups who, with their own distinct offices suites share a common box office, elevator, conference rooms, kitchen/break room, storage, administrative work center, and most notably the monumental performance, rehearsal, and special event space on the main floor.

In the greater cultural arena, the cooperative use of this building for related groups would omit costly duplication of many services and spatial needs, and reduce overhead that would ultimately be converted to increased, sustained programming in the region.

Public Art Potential: P S M T D A L V E

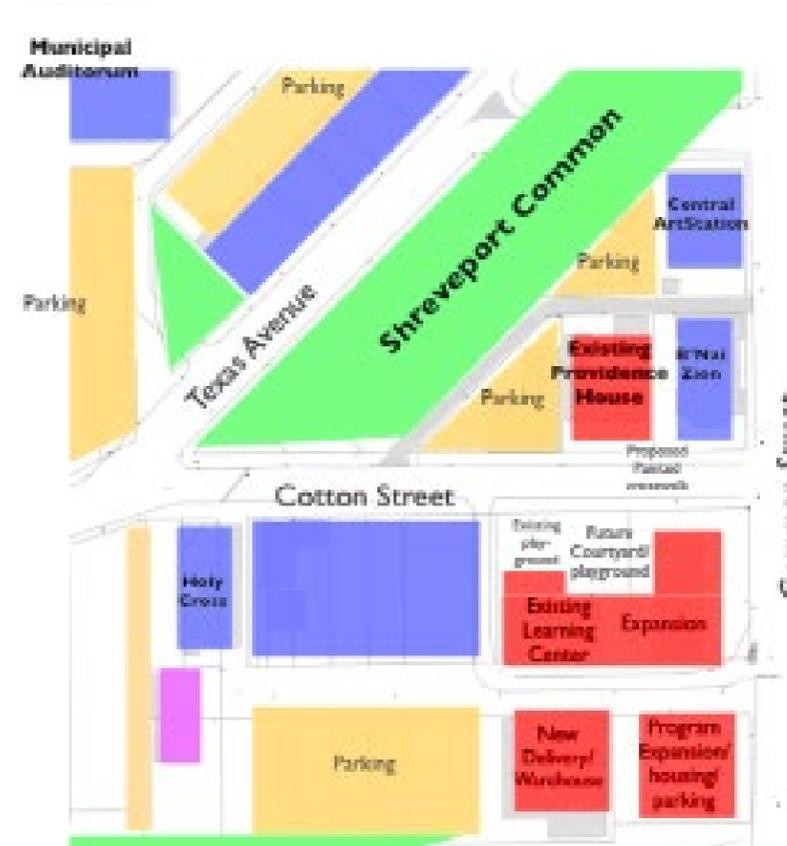


SCOTTISH RITE CATHEDRAL

Another outstanding Beaux Arts landmark, the 1917 Scottish Rite Cathedral, across the corner from the B'nai Zion Temple contains within its walls some of the most splendid meeting rooms and spaces in all of Louisiana, including a large theatre with a proscenium stage and over 300 seats. Since its construction, the Scottish Rite Cathedral has been used for civic entertainments, arts and music classes, theatre, recitals, and other performances. Unfortunately, the building has not kept pace with the technological and code compliance requirements for performance facilities today. As a part of the Visioning Process, the Design Team engaged the administration of the Cathedral and reviewed their plans to address ADA compliance and other issues within the next year.

The organization cannot accept and government funding, only private funds. The owners were briefed on the prospects and advantages of Federal, state and local tax credits that could be a source of funding for improvements to electrical capacity, air-conditioning, and other upgrades that would allow the theatre to be used again to its fullest value. It is hoped that the Scottish Rite Cathedral can soon return to its role as an important venue for arts activities with technical and financial assistance offered through the planning and development of the *Shreveport Common* Cultural District.

Public Art Potential: P S M T D A L V E



Providence House: a concept for a generous campus



INSTITUTIONAL USES: EXISTING, NEW, & PROSPECTIVE

Social services entities, like Providence House, Mercy House, Hope House, and Rescue Mission have important roles in the diversity of services and population in the district. The Vision Plan seeks to preserve and support those institutions that plan to remain in the area, and assist them in growing in ways that address comprehensive neighborhood redevelopment.

Providence House

One group that particularly welcomed the Vision Plan's offers for study and engaged with the Design Team in planning discussions, was Providence House, an extremely respected and successful homeless-to-home mainstream assistance program on Cotton Street. This visionary institution offers both residential and education facilities to their patrons in their two buildings within the district. Over 30 families reside in the historic home turned business hotel at 814 Cotton, Street, with administrative programmatic and educational facilities across the street in a modern facility. A large donations warehouse was constructed in the 2000s on Crockett Street next to the Central Fire Station in the area of the proposed central "Common".

In order to assist with this important neighbor's growth and continued presence in the district, the Design Team developed a concept for an enlarged campus, which would relocate the donation warehouse to a discreet, practical location, allow for new land acquisition, potential doubling of program space, removal of decrepit or inappropriate buildings, and provision of much needed long-term and in/out parking for staff, patrons and visitors. The result was the conception of an integrated new "campus" with both functional and symbolic design appeal providing for many years of growth. With the preliminary endorsement of the concept, the Visioning Process was able to move forward in a concrete fashion with other recommendations for the cultural district, with the confidence that one of its most important residents was an active partner for the future.

Public Art Potential: P S M T D A L V E

RELIGIOUS USES--CHURCHES AND RELATED MINISTRIES

CHURCH OF THE HOLY CROSS

Truly one the most important historic, architectural, cultural, and social service institutions within the proposed district is the Church of the Holy Cross. The first of the institutional landmarks in the area, the Church has been a constant source of identity and pride in the neighborhood, and has contributed people, funds, and opportunities to all aspects of local civic life for over 100 years. The church has recently announced another capital improvement program for further preservation and enhancement of their facilities. There is little the Visioning Process can offer to this important institution but appreciation, support, and a respected voice in all planning efforts that affect the district. It is assured that the church and its leadership will be active stakeholders, partners, and witnesses to the next phase of history in the neighborhood.

The Church of the Holy Cross owns and is the principal force behind Hope House, a day center for the homeless, with showers, laundry, meals, referral and guidance services. This successful ministry has in just a few years developed effective delivery systems for their services, which continue to be refined on an ongoing basis. During the time of this Visioning Process, Hope House completed a major renovation of their backyard into a handsome garden to serve as a sitting, gathering, dining and services area. This successful project provided a shady, secure, and amenity-filled area for their patrons, and shifted the daily gathering activity from the street and sidewalks in front of the property, where it contributed to negative perceptions of the district and the ministry of Hope House itself. The nature of Hope House's relationship to its neighbors and its image has shifted dramatically with this change. This important leader in social service has demonstrated how the ministry to their patrons can grow gracefully with thoughtful planning and consideration.

Public Art Potential: P S M T D A L V E



MERCY CENTER

Another institution committed to the district and growing in its historic Austen Place location, is Mercy House, a long term residential, medication, education, and counseling facility for persons with HIV/AIDS. Part of the Philadelphia Center network of social services, the facility has just been enlarged with the acquisition of the historic Italianate townhouse across Oakland Street. Exceptional property management and maintenance make the Center an attractive, quiet asset to the neighborhood.

Engagement in Listening Sessions has resulted in unique opportunities to bind the Center's people and services more to the district and its other residents. The Center lacks funds to make available regular arts programming such as drawing, painting, sculpture, concerts, theatre and other cultural activities, all of which will be provided in the nearby Central ArtStation beginning in 2012. The Shreveport Regional Arts Council's proposed "Pay It Forward" program for the Central ArtStation will exchange free use of that facility for equal time in community service, opening up exciting opportunities for the residents of Mercy Center. It was discovered that the Center has its own drumming group, which has already been integrated into the local arts network as a direct result of the listening and Visioning Process.

Finally, the Visioning Process suggests that Mercy House take advantage of their generous site to initiate a program that could uniquely benefit the district and further connect their ministry to the neighborhood and greater community. A series of herb gardens, "Victory Gardens", has been proposed for their grounds as a pilot project to supply local produce for restaurants and create interaction and volunteerism between the residents and the neighborhood. Encouraged by Shreveport Green, this concept promises to build community from the "ground up", and increase awareness of the environmental art

Public Art Potential: P S M T D L V E



LAKESIDE BAPTIST CHURCH

The future of this 40,000 square foot religious facility is in a transitional state at the time of this Visioning Process. With a steady decline in attendance due to demographic changes in the district and surrounding neighborhoods, this congregation has called a new pastor and has begun an informal process of long-range planning. During the course of the Visioning Process, the pastor and deacons shared some of their thoughts and prospects in a lengthy Listening Session. In general, the congregation is considering building, but would also entertain the sale of this property and a move to another site. Size, location, and maintenance of the existing building is being weighed against a fresh start in a newer building with higher visibility and better chance of congregational outreach and growth. In the ensuing dialogue it was made it clear that Lakeside’s presence was important to the diverse uses and population of the district.

The building could house classroom, practice, and performance space for local musicians and other performing arts groups, perhaps satisfying some of the needs of an Academy for the Fine Arts, proposed in several of the Listening Sessions, and reportedly a topic of local arts leaders for over a decade. If the congregation decides to remain, the potential leasing of the 250-seat auditorium space for local and traveling cultural programming was proposed, with a distinct focus on African-American music. This and any more specific proposals await the planning and decisions of the congregation. To the left of the church, the Vision recommends the relocation and preservation of two endangered historic houses in the area, one for the Oakland Cemetery Visitor Center, and the other, a small early shotgun house abandoned nearby that might serve as a gallery or other neighborhood function.

Public Art Potential: P S M T D A L V E



ROCK ‘N ROLL CAR & GUITAR MUSEUM

In the course of the Visioning Process, one of the region’s most important private cultural institutions, the James Burton Foundation, located within the district, acquired the large 1920s industrial building at the SE corner of Milam Street and Austen Place. Currently the Foundation serves students by providing guitars and lessons to area schools and the opportunity to work and record in their new state-of-the-art studio located in *Shreveport Common*. The Burtons have recently purchased the former bottling company and plan to create a private “Rock ‘n Roll Car & Guitar Museum”, adding a unique dimension to the community’s cultural offerings and tying the site thematically to the Foundation’s work and the musical legacy of Mr. Burton to the district. The new Museum will be front and center to the Municipal Auditorium, complimenting that building’s museum exhibits and adding another cultural and tourist destination to the district.

Public Art Potential: P S M T D V E

Shreveport Common Vision Plan

Parking

1. Surface Lots
2. Shared Lots
3. Parking Garages



PARKING: “LET’S MOVE PARKING LOTS AND PUT UP A PARADISE.”

This Vision Plan will re-order the recommendations sequence at this juncture to address the pressing question: “Where are all these people going to park?” We begin with our proposed concept for Parking, which can be summarized as follows:

- **Preserve existing on-street parallel parking**
- **Enhance the few improved parking lots within the district**
- **Negotiate shared parking arrangements with existing private lots**
- **Program new parking structures and uncovered lots away from the center of the district to the perimeter, within close proximity of open spaces, arts venues, shopping, and other commercial uses**
- **Actively promote public and pedestrian transportation**

Locations and Descriptions

The corresponding overview map and accompanying text will describe the locations of the current and proposed parking facilities.

Street Parking

The current free parallel street parking provides an abundance of traditional, perceivable parking resource for all business and commercial centers during business hours. While free parking is vitally important to the initial revitalization in this cultural district, the Vision Plan does not presume authority over the City’s parking policies in the long term. However, even free parking must be administered to a certain degree to avoid abuse, including time limitations, which may require patrolling. In order to prevent the forest of signs, which suddenly appear for this purpose and become visual eyesores, bike racks, and/or obstacle courses, the Vision Plan proposes painted curbs to denote parking, fire lanes, and other necessary information.

Perimeter Lots

The proposed perimeter lots on the south half of the district utilize less desirable properties behind major streetscape sites, at lower elevations, abandoned industrial sites along the railroad right-of-way. These properties are less valuable as development sites, but close enough to be connected via pedestrian ways to the central “Common”, Holy Cross Church, Providence House, the Scottish Rite Cathedral, the proposed Louisiana/Cotton Exchange, the Canine Park, and serve residential, and business/institutional uses. The lots meet the acceptable distance standards for valet parking for the southern portion of the cultural district. Lighting on taller standard with greater wattage would ensure safety while maintaining the lower scale pedestrian lighting within the district proper. Detention/retention ponds on lower elevations would also control surface runoff to allow water features, water harvesting, and irrigation supply for the area’s green spaces. With appropriate landscaping, the perimeter lots would define and enhance the south edges of the district, particularly the view from the City’s new gateway at the Common Street viaduct.

One such perimeter lot is south of the 800 Block of Talley Street, along the railroad right-of-way. This lot, on land currently overgrown, used as a dumping site, and inhabited by homeless camps, could provide as many as 100 parking spaces. Another, just east of this site and adjacent to the Common Street viaduct, is informally used at present. Improved, it could yield approximately 50 spaces. Finally, a large lot is also proposed on abandoned property along the railroad right-of-way at Louisiana Street. This last site would specifically serve the new development at the Louisiana/Cotton Exchange, and expands the supply for the members and patrons of the Scottish Rite Cathedral and its special event patrons. The Cathedral is in dire need additional parking on the east side of Common Street, so patrons will not have to cross the major artery. Improved, these combined lots could yield approximately 75 spaces.

Public Art Potential:PSMTDALVE

SHARED PARKING

There are five private parking lots located within the proposed district. In the course of the Visioning Process, the owners of four sites were engaged in Listening Sessions. In every case, when asked about shared after-hours use of these paved sites, the owners responded positively. In general, special event managers would be required to provide necessary liability coverage, cleanup, and security, all of which could be codified in a uniform format.

In some cases, owners would work cooperatively with developers or the City of Shreveport to expand and/or upgrade lots for increased use. Others have offered to fund landscaping their lots according to the concepts of the Vision Plan. In some instances this would include removal of fences, gates, and piano wire, and increased lighting and better maintenance. At the very least, this cooperative venture promotes neighborhood pride and a sense of community. Practically speaking, this effort could supply over 200 additional parking spaces to the *Shreveport Common* Cultural District at little or no cost to the community.

Public Art Potential: P S M T D A L V E

PARKING GARAGES

Multi-level parking structures are an inevitable part of high-density urban life in the United States. In spite of their convenient locations, and weather-shielding abilities, they are among the most despised aspect of contemporary cities. They are often massive, brutal concrete towers with little or no human scale and few amenities. In even the best situations they often confuse and frustrate the user, which makes their fees even more untenable. Parking garages very often are the only answer to parking supply, but they are expensive, site demanding, and empty shells half of each day.

To this reality, the Vision Plan offers three unique opportunities for parking structures involving historic preservation, expansion of existing facilities, and new site consideration.

Public Art Potential: P S M T D A L V E

MILAM STREET

The existing perimeter lot at the NE corner of Milam Street must be included in this Vision Plan as a parking resource, even though it is adjacent to, but officially out of the district. This open lot was part of the 1980s City improvements in the area and replaced rows of wood frame shotgun housing and a large masonry commercial building. Currently, it is the primary parking for attendees of Municipal Auditorium events and provides 264 free off-street spaces. Even then, when added to the 89 new spaces in its Texas Avenue lot, the supply hardly meets the +/- 1,500 space parking demand for the 3,500 seat Auditorium. Concert-goers are required to use street parking, unauthorized private lots, unlit, debris-filled vacant lots, alleys and driveways. Well-landscaped and maintained, the Milam Street lot is virtually empty every day except during performances and local special events.

The Vision Plan proposes the exploration of a two-three level parking structure on this lot that would preserve the scale of the district, which could yield up to 400 spaces. Special design considerations should be given to measure the visual impact on the neighboring Oakland Cemetery, Aseana Gardens, and first United Methodist Church. Besides meeting the needs of the Auditorium and of the proposed programming for the *Shreveport Common* Cultural District, this site is tangent to the first phase of the Millennium Studios development. The forecasted growth of related film industry developments in this eastern portion of the Ledbetter Heights neighborhood will require frugal use of land and finances to provide amenities. Commercial day use of such a parking facility would offset the costs of providing a specific facility for the night events. A public-private partnership might be the answer to solving the areas' needs without costly duplication of effort for land acquisition, construction and management.

Public Art Potential: P S M T D A L V E

717 CROCKETT

This two-story building was constructed for Andress Motors on a sloping site with its principal floor and auto showroom fronting on Crockett Street with upper auto storage accessible from the rear alley. A spiral concrete ramp connects the two floors. Originally used for the back stock of autos, the second floor is structured as a garage. The two floors and side lot combined would provide a handsome "historic" parking facility for as many as 85 cars. It is currently in sound structural condition, but in desperate need of preservation.

This landmark building, a product of the early automobile era could prove to serve a valuable modern use in the *Shreveport Common* Cultural District. During the course of this Visioning Process, potential re-developers interested in a public private partnership have stepped forward, moving forward the possibility of lease proposals, and engineering feasibility studies.

Public Art Potential: P S M T D A L V E

"THE GRAND"

As noted in the discussion of proposed infill construction earlier, "The Grand" is programmed as a large mixed-use structure with first floor retail and upper floor residential units. Both uses require adequate, accessible parking in order to succeed as lucrative investments. Hidden at the core of the proposed building is a large rectangular parking garage wrapped on two full sides by the nicely scaled mixed-use building. Conceived in the Vision Plan as a maximum six-story structure, the garage could hold as many as 600 autos, and would be virtually screened for pedestrian level for blocks. Entrances would be discreetly located Austen Place on the west, and/or Elvis Presley Boulevard on the east. Multiple pedestrian connections to and from the garage would allow it to be easily accessed.

At the east and north elevations, the exposed garage walls could be landscaped and enriched with public art to begin stepping down their scale to the neighborhood. The proposed new two-story multi-family residential structures along Austen Place would secure the preservation of the scale along that historic street.

Public Art Potential: P S M T D A L V E

PARKING SUPPLY AND PROJECTIONS

The results of these proposed new facilities would increase the available public parking 330% from current spaces available for special event and programming in the district.*

*The above information was gleaned through previous studies with Walker Parking Consultants, Houston, Texas.

The proposed general parking recommendations would increase the current supply as follows:

Location	Existing Spaces	Proposed Spaces
Street parking	270	270
Off-Street parking	36	14
Perimeter Lots:		
Tally 1	0	100
Tally 2	0	50
Louisiana Street	0	75
Shared Lots	0	200
Parking Garages:		
Andress Motors	0	85
Milam Street	264	400
"The Grand"	0	600
Totals	540	1,794

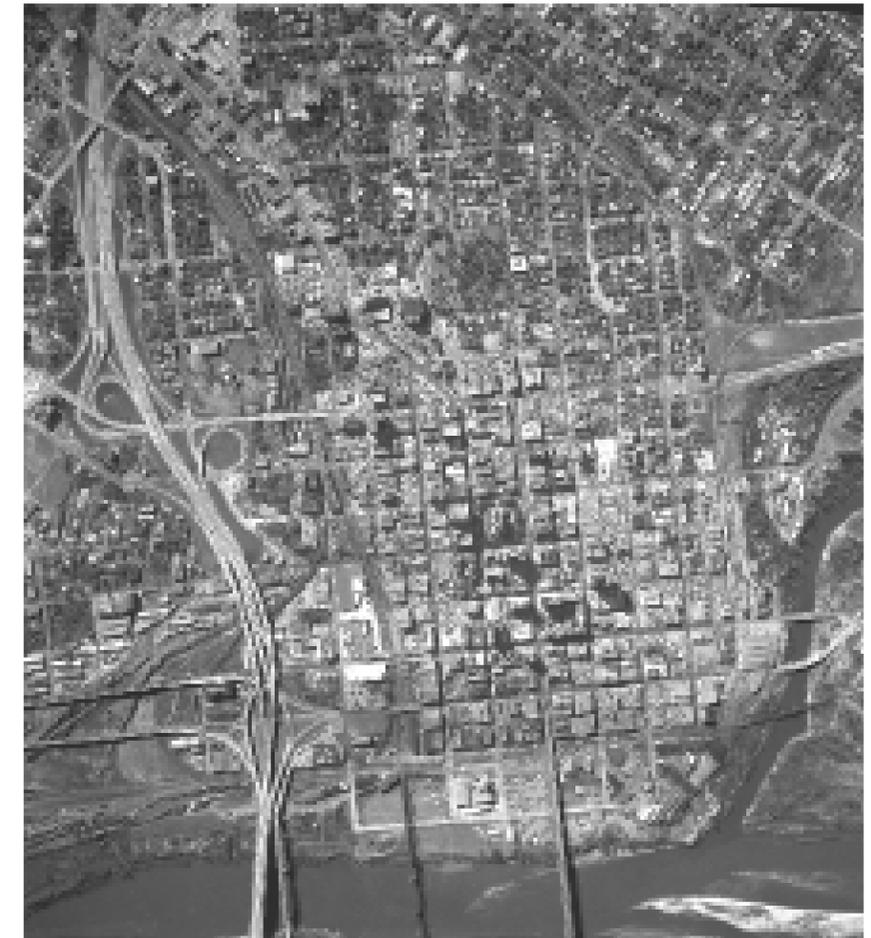
TRAFFIC AND PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

STREET AND TRAFFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

It is necessary to address how the proposed increased density will affect traffic. The *Shreveport Common* Vision Plan does not presume to propose overall changes to street and traffic patterns, but seeks to address the related concerns of the stakeholders in our Listening Sessions, and recommend changes that are consistent with the history, character, and intended redevelopment of the district, and in response to the City's *Great Expectations* Master Plan. It should be noted that no comprehensive traffic study exists for the area, and findings herein are based on the Design Team's observations at various intervals of the day and week. A community-wide Multi-Modal transportation study is being pursued by the Northwest Louisiana Council of Governments (NLCOG) that will include the revitalized *Shreveport Common* Cultural District as an important destination

Currently, traffic in the district does not present serious problems, with the exception of Common Street, which can become a fast-moving raceway as drivers hurry to reach the on-ramps to I-20. Despite three signals in the section between the viaduct and Milam Street, Common Street can prove to be a daunting roadway during many hours of the day, and the site of pedestrian accidents during the course of this Visioning Process. It has been observed and noted during the Visioning Process that the arc of the Common Street viaduct span creates a blind spot that does not prepare traffic for the signal at Cotton Street. Further, drivers are given no indication of the pedestrian nature of the area, a problem that also plagues the Spring Street exit to the east. While more study is necessary to assess the problems, inexpensive short-term solutions should be considered before more accidents occur, particularly with the upcoming construction for Central ArtStation and other developments. The Vision Plan recommends

a small number of cautionary signs to slow traffic including the international "Pedestrian Crossing" signs, and perhaps other traffic calming measures.



This 1939 photo documents the official end of the electric trolley era in Shreveport, and the shift to gasoline-powered bus service. This new public transportation mode would still be in place 70 years later.



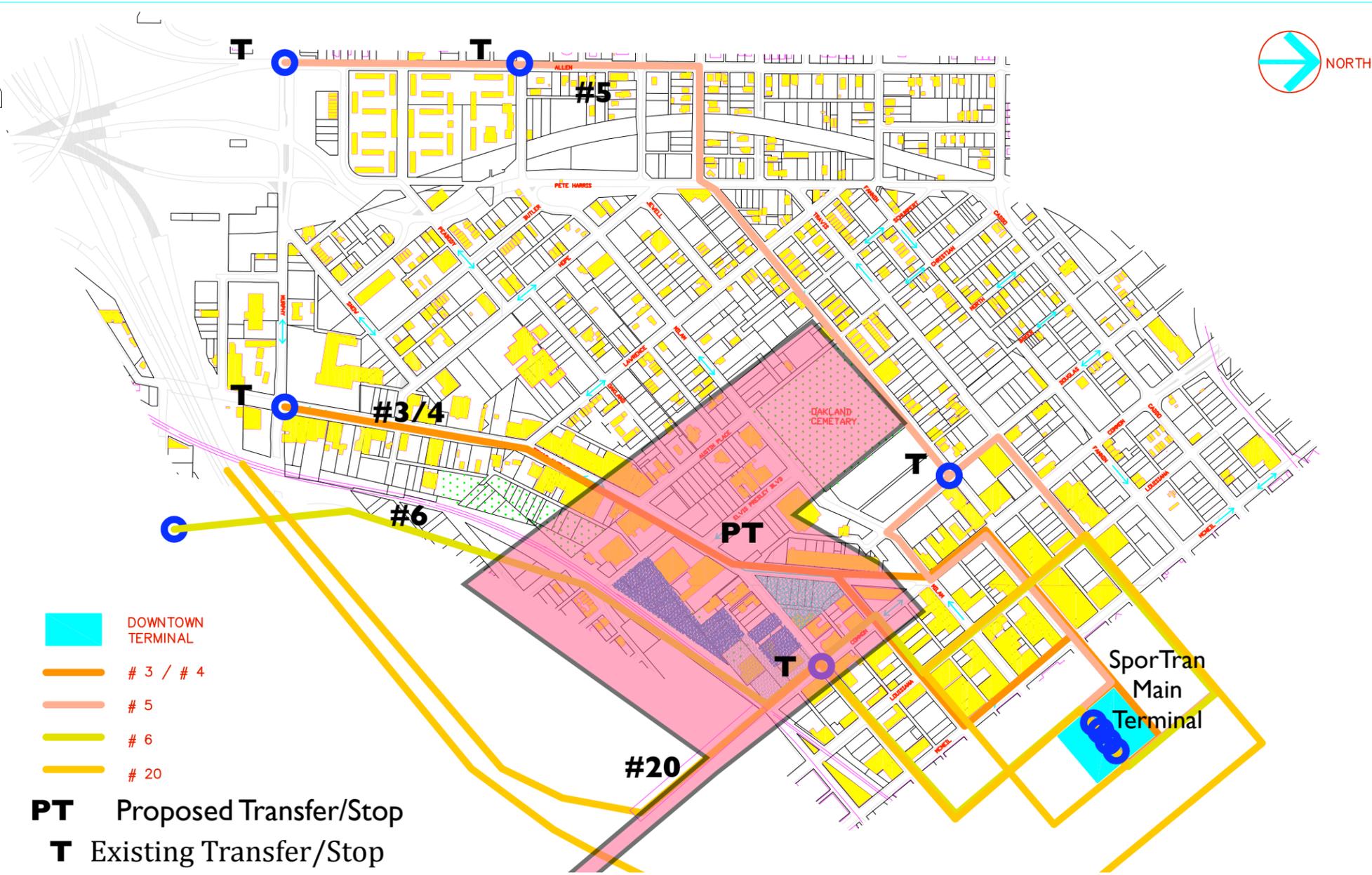
Circa 1960 aerial photograph of the *Shreveport Common* area, indicating the width and prominence of Texas Avenue relative to other downtown streets. Common Street runs north to south at center; Texas Avenue is the wide diagonal street to the west.

TEXAS AVENUE

From its very beginning as a trail, Texas Avenue has always been a wide expanse of dirt, then brick pavers, and finally the present asphalt road. For the last 30 years, the mouth of Texas Avenue has been reduced in a manner that negates its importance as an important artery in the City. Around 1980, when plans were undertaken to create the Municipal Plaza (now Aseana Gardens), the first block of the Avenue was narrowed from four dual direction lanes to two west bound lanes, and the remnant road bed in-filled with medians and an off-street angle parking bay for 22 cars.

The c. 1960 aerial photo (opposite) makes an indelible visual statement as to the importance of Texas Avenue relative to the other streets in central Shreveport; in fact, Texas Avenue appears to be as wide as Texas Street for much of its path. For over a century the dominant traffic progression was westbound from the so-called “Great White Way” of Milam Street, to Texas Avenue and out of town. The grandeur of this broad public way was seriously diminished by a well-intended, but ill-conceived concrete island that de-emphasized Texas Avenue in deference to the Common Street route to I-20. This barrier further isolates Shreveport Common area from the Downtown Shreveport grid.

The Vision Plan recommends the re-design of the Texas Avenue/ Common/ Milam intersection to restore the breadth and original vista westward up Texas Avenue to Holy Cross Church and beyond. By re-opening this valuable intersection—the original “trailhead”—to its earlier form, Texas Avenue is visually re-connected to the City’s central business district. The two parts of downtown can again be more easily perceived as one.



Map of Existing SporTran bus routes that enter Shreveport Common showing proposed location of new Transfer/Stop “The CommonLink”.
Source: SporTran website

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

As discussed in the analysis of existing public transportation conditions, there is only one active transfer bus stop in the district, though signs for infrequently used stops still remain in a few places. According to archival and physical research, none of these sites, existing or unused ever featured a covered bus stop. Today there are few places to go and reasons to stop in the district, but with the introduction of the Central ArtStation and creation of a cultural district, public transportation will become a vital part of successful revitalization of the area. To that end, the Vision Plan proposes the creation of a Multi-Modal transportation node located centrally in the district. The proposed site is on the City-owned land at the corner Texas and Grand Avenues, on the frontage of a new parking lot, and adjacent to the Municipal Auditorium. This node is envisioned as more than merely a bus stop, but would also serve as the district’s “Transportation Substation” as described by SporTran, to serve pedestrian, cycling, taxi, and security functions in a unified facility. Taking the opportunities further, the Vision Plan proposes that this site also serve as an “Information Station” with kiosks, maps, historical background, and Wi-Fi computer access. With the artistic origins and administration of this Vision Plan, the creative resources available have elevated this proposal to an even higher level. By merging this opportunity with long-term goals for artist-commissioned transit stops, a functional Public Art installation was born. Christened the “CommonLink”, this transportation/information, or “transformation” node, as we have termed it, promises to be a highly visible Public Art commission that integrates several important neighborhood functions into one whole. Through value-added relationships with artists, arts organizations and local government agencies, potential funding for the concept was identified through the National Endowment for the Arts “OUR TOWN” grant program.

Public Art Potential: P S M A L V E

Note: Prior to the final draft of this Vision Plan, The City of Shreveport and the Shreveport Regional Arts Council was awarded a \$100,000 NEA “OUR TOWN” matching grant for the fulfillment of this proposal.



During the course of the Visioning Process a great deal of renewed interest and enthusiasm in local history and historic preservation has resulted from the many public presentations and Listening Sessions. One such instance informed the Design Team that one of Shreveport's last surviving electric streetcars (de-commissioned in 1939) was left to deteriorate behind a local park. This public transportation vehicle is identical to those known historically to have traveled the tracks in the area we call *Shreveport Common*, and in fact, it could be one of the very cars. Informally offered for restoration and display, the streetcar was incorporated into the proposed "*CommonLink*" design as a suggested business, functional, or artistic feature, seeking to bind the past and future of transportation together, and ensure the creative restoration and reuse of this important artifact; perhaps it could be a "sculptural" canvas for an artist or team to transform.

PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE WAYS

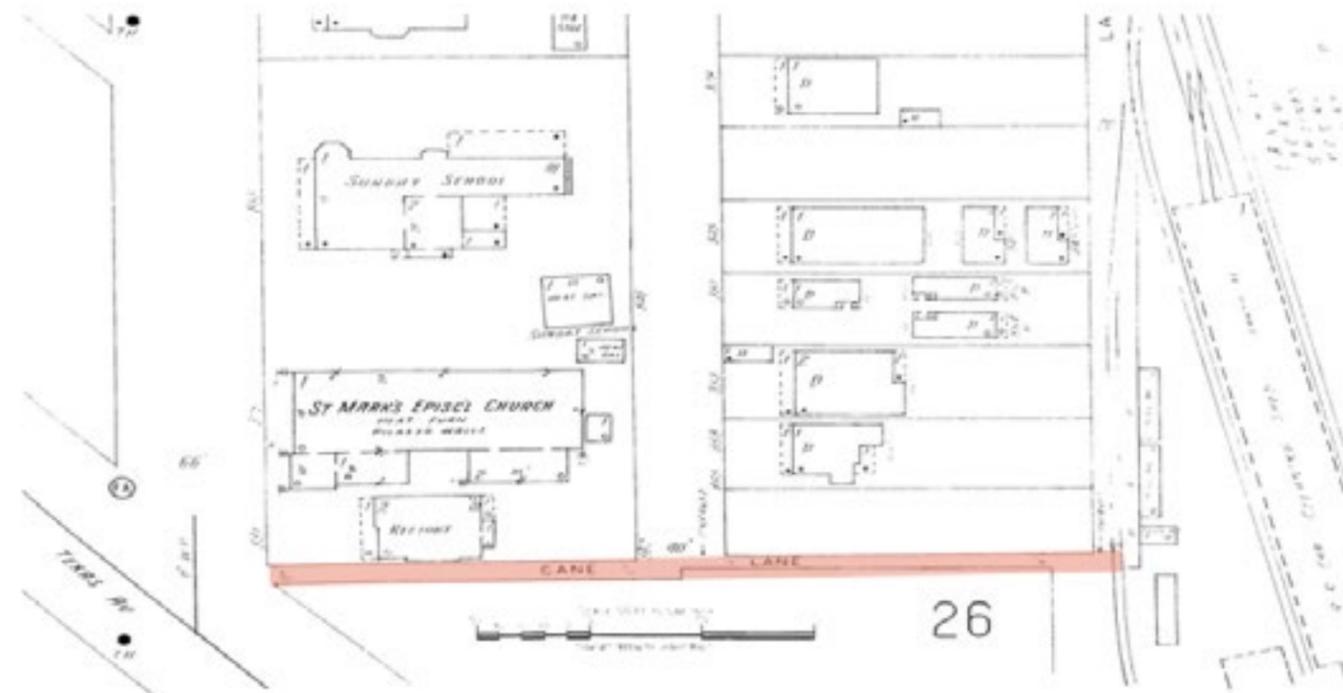
Important parts of any neighborhood are the well-traveled daily routes and shortcuts to work, shopping, and social activities that residents traverse almost subconsciously. These formal and informal "worn paths" are both intra-connections within a given area, and inter-connections between other areas.

For the purposes of this Vision Plan only those intra-connections can be addressed, with an acknowledgement that the greater planning and discussion of pedestrian ways is the role of local government at the city and parish level. In line with the recommendations herein for public transportation, the Plan proposes only pedestrian routes contained within the *Shreveport Common* Cultural District boundaries, with the understanding that these might inspire master pedestrian planning for a larger geographic area. The concepts provided allow for adaption and connection to such a master system upon its completed design. It is the intent of this Vision Plan to address the numerous requests for a deliberate and thoughtful pedestrian neighborhood.

The concept for the central "Common" green space is flexible enough to provide for both pedestrian and bicycle access to and from a master pedestrian plan and along its perimeter on major arteries. It should be noted that the "Common's" interior walks are to be considered secondary leisure ways and not primary transportation paths in order to preserve the integrity of the core space. It is assumed a master bicycle plan would integrate cycle lanes into the traffic planning of the neighboring streets, as a master system of walking paths would integrate public sidewalks and crosswalks.

More detailed recommendations such as sidewalks, crosswalks, lighting and other related pedestrian amenities will be discussed later in this Plan.

Public Art Potential: P S M A L E



A sheet from the 1935 Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Map showing Cane Lane (bottom center) connecting Texas Avenue, Talley, and Lake Streets.

Cane Lane: Reclaiming A Pedestrian Way

It can be said that the State of Louisiana was built on Cotton and Cane. Interestingly enough, one of the earliest landmarks in the district, the Church of the Holy Cross, was also built on Cotton and Cane; in this case it describes the historic street corner from the early 20th century. Cane Lane, in this instance actually named for an important local family, once ran north-south along the west side of the church property connecting Texas Avenue to Talley and Lake Streets near the railroad lines. The Lane shrunk over the years before it was finally abandoned and absorbed into the neighboring Hemenway Furniture Store property sometime after 1963. The original route is still somewhat discernable on site.

Cane Lane presents a special opportunity to create one of the intimate nooks and crannies oft noted in the various Listening Sessions from the Visioning Process. In this instance one with

a specific purpose and destination. The Vision Plan proposes that Cane Lane be re-opened as a gently sloping pedestrian walk skirting the lovely garden at Church of the Holy Cross and leading directly to Lake Street and the proposed urban buffer and dog park to be discussed later.

An artist-designed entrance way could announce the Cane Lane walk, and attractive landscaping and lighting would make for a memorable pedestrian experience and important new pedestrian and vehicular traffic (bicycle) connection between disparate parts of the district. The Cane Lane pedestrian way offers a funding/naming opportunity that could provide a lasting memorial in the district.

Public Art Potential: PSM^ALE

GRAND AVENUE PROMENADE

At some point after the 1939 demise of the electric trolleys, the elegant landscaped median on Grand Avenue was removed, and the short street repaved, with a narrow concrete median supporting light posts. It is assumed this modernization was part of the changes brought to the block when the large auto dealership was constructed at the corner of Texas Avenue in the 1940s. The street was re-named Elvis Presley Boulevard in recent years to honor the legendary singer whose first radio performance occurred at the Municipal Auditorium in 1954.

Today, all semblances of Grand Avenue's grandeur are gone, and the magnificent Municipal Auditorium fronts a sea of concrete barren of any landscaping or other amenities worthy of its place in Shreveport's architectural, social, and cultural history. Again, history provides inspiration and guidance for revitalization of this important street. The Vision Plan proposes the re-instatement of the Grand Avenue central median as a multi-use public space celebrating the musical heritage of the Auditorium, the district, and the City. The concept is the creation of a wide-paved promenade down the center of Grand Avenue, flanked by trees, planting beds and lighting, but still allowing for vehicular and particularly emergency traffic to flow one way on either side. The promenade could include artist-commissioned inset markers and memorials to the famous musicians related to the community, a natural extension of both the cemetery and the Auditorium and a new destination for tourists and citizens to learn and appreciate the regions' musical heritage. As a plant- and tree-lined space, street furniture and shade would afford the public an appealing outdoor waiting room for events at the Auditorium, including organized food and souvenir sales. The unobstructed the promenade is proposed to have re-moveable bollards at the ends and critical crossings so the central paved lane would allow for ceremonial processions and additional emergency access.

Public Art Potential: P S M T D A L E



As the 1920s photograph indicates, the original Grand Avenue was aptly named, with its wide swath of green turf, street trees, flowering plants and shrubs producing a distinctive linear park and formal axis leading to the entrance gates of Oakland Cemetery. This urban improvement contributed to the prestige of the street as demonstrated by the large houses and other institutions that were located there. On the distant right in the photo is the handsome St. Matthews AME Church in its neighborhood context. Few historical facts can better suggest the tolerant character and sense of community in the early *Shreveport Common* district more than this prominent African-American congregation and its location on one of the City's most prestigious Anglo-American streets. It is plausible that this ceremonial location near the cemetery and elegant boulevard were important factors in the City's site selection for the new Municipal Auditorium in the late 1920s.v





“CROCKETT STREET PEDESTRIAN MALL”

The principal façade of the historic Central Fire Station, soon to become the Central ArtStation, is on the north facing Crockett Street. Five pairs of large double doors will be restored to open into the original engine room, to be re-purposed as a black box theatre and multi-use arts space. Beyond the concrete apron and sidewalk, Crockett Street is the literal front yard of the buildings across which lies “The Triangle” with its many potential public and private prospects in the district’s revitalization.

To provide additional programming space, connection to “The Triangle” and The Common, and ensure better safety for events and activities at the Central ArtStation, the Vision Plan proposes a system of retractable bollards that could be unlocked and raised to temporarily cordon off Crockett Street between Common Street and Texas Avenue. This temporary street closing would convert

the street bed into a pedestrian way, as well as creating additional outdoor space for exhibitions, demonstrations, and performances to spill out into the street from the Central ArtStation. Some bollards are equipped with sensors that allow police, fire and other emergency personnel to disengage from their vehicles. Traffic during these times could be effectively re-routed east on Cotton Street, where the signal at Common would facilitate traffic crossing and turning. This concept should be tested with permits, informal barricades, and further study before any action is taken.

Public Art Potential: P S M T D A L V E

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INFRASTRUCTURE

UTILITIES

It is a foregone conclusion that underground utilities –while not “authentic”--do clean up our cities visually, and provide greater longevity, safety, and fewer maintenance problems. To the contemporary citizens, the tangle of poles and overhead wires meant progress, but after 125 years of upgrades, layering, and new technology, many of our cities appear to be caught in a spider web of services. We truly have to struggle to see the forest for the trees, that is, the City for the wires.

Underground utilities was one of the most mentioned desires of the general Listening Sessions, with equal emphasis from local stakeholders, prospective investors, and City Department administrators, indicating a remarkable consensus and sensitivity among the broad spectrum of the citizenry.

The upgrading and burying of utilities is the single most important infrastructural project necessary to the successful revitalization of this district. It is also the most expensive, time-consuming, and disruptive project that will ever take place in the area. Funding, design, and construction can take years, and if not planned and coordinated, can work against the perception of progress, or the ease with which new developments are completed and put into use. Examples abound of business failures, empty housing, and lawsuits, when “Progress” is interrupted by “*Progress*”. The long-term scheduling of this important step is essential.

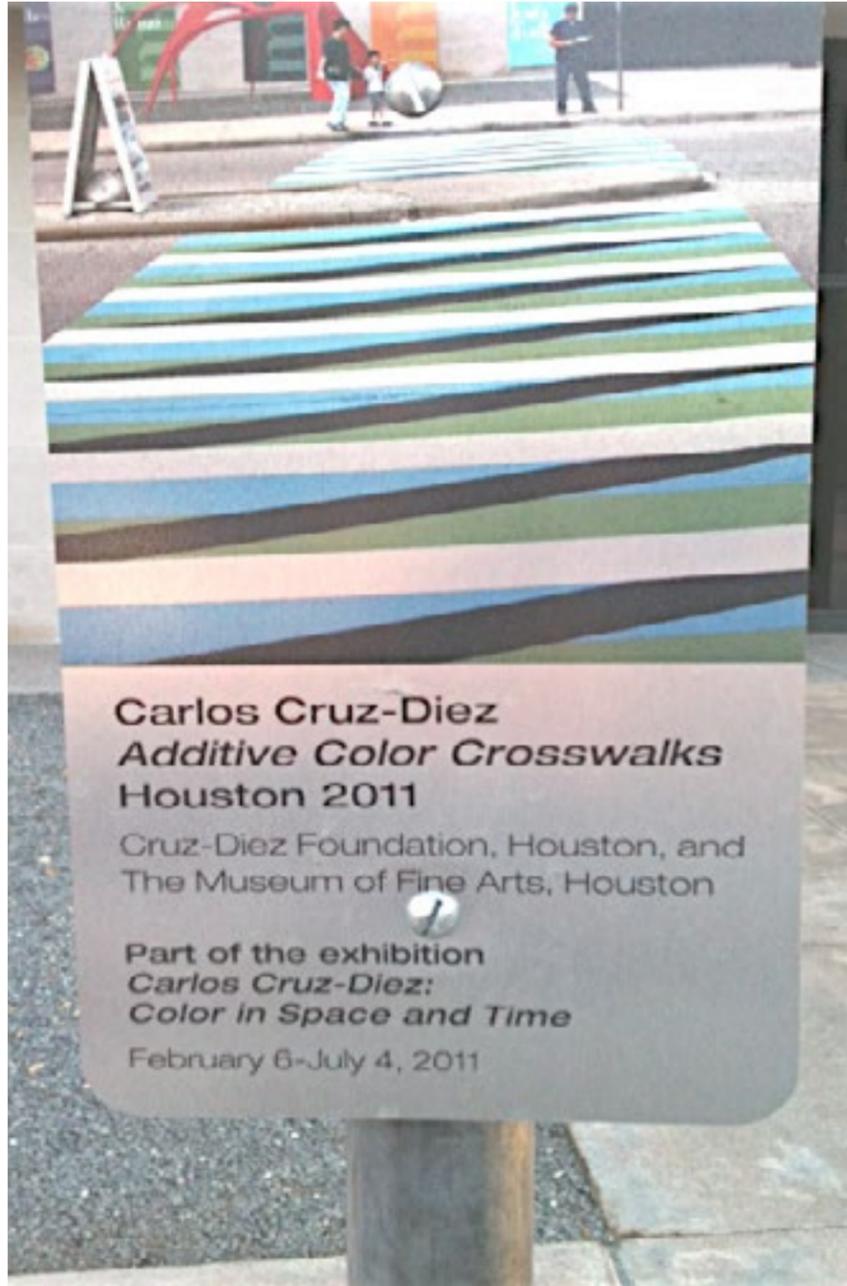
One of the prime considerations of the Vision Plan was the location of the central “Common” in regard to future infrastructure construction. Since the land proposed for the Common is currently abandoned, the central site makes an excellent location for Phase I of an infrastructure design. While the entire site is excavated and graded, it is envisioned that major elements of the new utility

network can be installed with provisions to link to surrounding blocks as funds and development permit. This approach would also allow for the coordination of other elements such as future Water Harvesting and Solar Energy Collectors into the overall concept of the “Common”.

SIDEWALKS

It is recommended that whenever possible the public sidewalks be simple concrete surfaces without excessive decorative borders, designs, or inserts, and providing a canvas for cafés, book carts, and vendors, as well as the yet-to-be-commissioned Public Art. With the possible placement of utilities underground within the district, many sidewalks will inevitably be cut, patched, and/or replaced. It is recommended that the planners at that time resist the temptation to over-design and keep the proposed improvements simple, and affordable. As seen in other historic places, the patina of old sidewalks with their stamped names, incised addresses, and imperfections are an important ingredient of an authentic place.

Public Art Potential: P S M T D A L V E



(Left) A painted crosswalk at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, 2011. The crosswalk project at MFAH has been source of delight, safety, and both a public relations and fundraising success.

(Above) A temporary crosswalk at the intersection of Common and Cotton Streets, one of the first public art commissions in Shreveport Common! June 2011

STREETSCAPES

Many mainstream inner city revitalization plans tend to focus on streetscape improvements, usually with some recurring themes--brick walks, banners, and an assortment of standardized planters, lampposts, and street furniture. The area called *Shreveport Common* requires no imported narrative or style, only the authentic reading and interpretation of its rich heritage. There is a vast difference between “creative place-making” and the “invention of place”.

This Vision Plan does not focus on applied visual improvements, but on long-term sustainable solutions for revitalization. The district is not a mall or a shopping center, but a living neighborhood within a dynamic, organic place. In order for the revitalization to succeed, the general concept must reject the overlay of a single “look” in order to preserve the unique variety, wrinkles, and surprises of a real place. If an authentic, character-based district is the overriding goal, property owners, developers, and other new stakeholders should strive for less rather than more, allowing the neighborhood’s story to speak for itself in an evolving dialogue with the changing times.

Rather than step beyond the scope of this Vision Plan with actual streetscape designs and selections, the following section addresses some basic design elements for the district.

Public Art Potential: P S M T D A L V E

CROSSWALKS

A creative way of connecting these disparate blocks into a cohesive district and reinforcing the pedestrian goals of the Vision Plan is to commission painted crosswalks by regional artists. The example shown below from Houston, Texas, connects the City’s world-class art museum to its parking lot, initiating the art experience even before entering the building. In a very simple manner, the mundane has been made art, and served many other purposes. For example, pedestrians and drivers alike have an increased awareness of the museum and its surrounding arts district--the busy intersection is safer than ever due to its enhancement. Local neighborhoods have taken up the charge, even in temporary chalk fashion to provide their plain streets with local art. These popular and accessible “road murals” represent outstanding public art and public service value.

Public Art Potential: P E

Potentially 8-10 intersections in the cultural district could be crosswalk sites, totaling over 30 sites. It is recommended that these be employed carefully and sparingly for greater impact and meaning as pedestrian enhancements. As commissioned works, artists could propose individual team designs for selected paths or intersections. Since these crosswalks by nature require maintenance, such a program could be distributed throughout the arts community for many years.

LANDSCAPE

In the same manner as Streetscape improvements, the general landscape concept for the district should be kept simple, functional, and sustainable in addition to its decorative value. Once again, landscape designers should resist the temptation to establish a dominant overlaying “theme” in form, texture, palette, and seasonal emphasis. Landscape should be the principal thread to tie the various blocks of the district together, but it should be acknowledged that each block offers different scale, uses, and styles to be enhanced. Certain City-owned properties, like the Common, the Grand Avenue Promenade, Oakland Cemetery, and the Central ArtStation can act as set pieces to establish the district standards on all public right-of ways. By setting examples, the early installations can inspire complimentary designs on private land.

Since most of the general landscaping will be on public property, it is advised that the City commission a Master Plan for street trees, planting beds, and other greenscapes to ensure the network of varied, balanced, and sustainable landscape. Such a plan should take into consideration the infrastructure section above, and concerns for future traffic, pedestrian, environmental, public art and programming initiatives. As already described in the central Common overview, emphasis should be on native species, with allowance for specialty plantings, specimens, and related hardscape.

Public Art Potential: P S M T D A L V E



Shreveport abounds in examples of old hand-painted signs, an excellent starting place to renew this creative and sustainable advertising medium



SIGNAGE



Another critical, complex element of any revitalization plan is the role of signage, from the individual shop signs, to locational street signs, to large advertising signs. The City of Shreveport sign ordinances are found in a number of sections of the Municipal Code, particularly in Section 106-1122-1123. Review of the full Municipal Code indicates that the City of Shreveport has already set in place an appropriate model for the regulation of new signs in Division 4, Sec. 106-951-961, which established the Highland Urban Conservation District. Upon the endorsement of the *Shreveport Common* Vision Plan by the City Council, the next logical step is the establishment of a complimentary district by ordinance for the area, wherein all applications for signs larger than one square foot would be subject to planning commission approval. Existing signs are not specifically addressed and are usually grandfathered within the definitions of the code.

The Vision Plan encourages a broad definition and size consideration in the signage for the *Shreveport Common* Cultural District, where the tradition of large, painted signs on walls, canopies, and other building surfaces are part of the documented historic character of the neighborhood. Other historic sign types and technology include front-illuminated, sandwich boards, banners, awnings, and neon, all of which are allowed in some form in the current code.

Public Art Potential: P S A L E

LIGHTING

One of the most decorative and functional design elements for revitalized urban districts is the installation of new street lighting. Depending on the area's history, age, and the stylistic preference and influence of architects, landscape architects, planners, and civic leaders, this important decision is not always a successful one. The readily available choices range from "ye olde towne" styles--with gas lights, weak lamps, or anachronistic, high-wattage sodium or mercury vapor lamps—to ultra-modern fixtures reminiscent of science fiction imagery. Further, there is often a "one lamp fits all" mentality that results in miles of relentless conformity, no matter how the actual character of the streetscape changes.

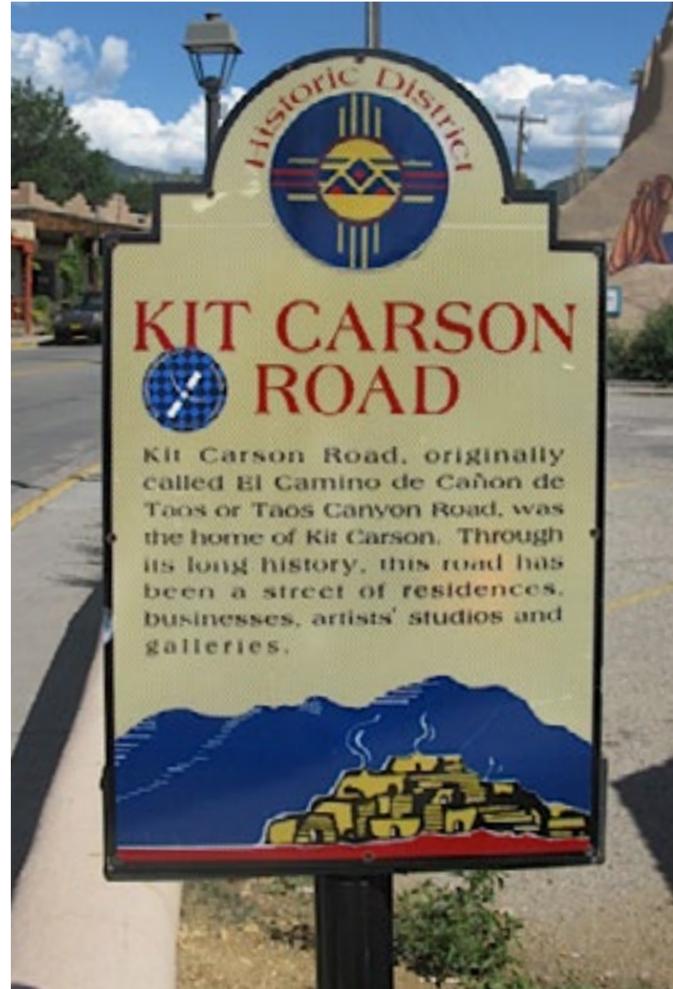
Besides the stylistic determination, there are also serious selections made on lighting source and direction in the interest of economy and/or through lack of information. Unless there are consistent pedestrian level lights mounted on facades, canopies or other surfaces, most urban areas require down lighting to illuminate, people, objects, and walking surfaces, as well as provide a comfortable level of security. Yet many new lighting selections send the greater wattage upward to wash over a wide area, with very little light specifically for the pedestrian. Studies indicate that pedestrian-friendly lighting reduces crime and encourages use of the public sidewalks as meeting or gathering places. Such lighting also emphasizes business uses like retail and restaurant storefronts, and residential entranceways.

It is possible to customize existing lighting or continue a style with new lamping and direction. However, it is impractical to foresee one lamp style that would be appropriate to the every block or zone within the district and beyond. Historic photos of the area offer guidance to specific areas, but the light they give might not be in the best interest of the district. The selection and specification of new urban lighting is a serious matter and should be accomplished with a great deal of study to ensure its appropriateness for each area within the proposed cultural district. This makes possible a marvelous opportunity for a Public Art or Design Team to employ their creative and technical talents toward a critically important aspect of the cultural district.

Public Art Potential: P S A L E

“WHAT STREET IS THIS PLACE?”

One signage category in which the Vision Plan provides recommendations is street identification. These signs are somewhat restricted nationwide by municipal and traffic standards for scale, continuity, readability, and information. While these are not places where elaborate designs are allowed, it is not suggested that the small details of urban life cannot impart a unique, creative spirit. Below are some admittedly conservative examples of approved street signs for special districts, which subtly reflect their own place and time. A custom-designed sign for the *Shreveport Common* Cultural District could be permitted a distinctive color, font (pursuant to the “icon” public art call funded by the NEA and juried by SRAC), district name, shape (within parameters) and inclusive block numbers. These signs are not intended to be art, but instead infrastructure, with adequate license to make them unique details recognizing this special place.



HISTORIC AND CULTURAL MARKERS: “A plaque on both your houses...”

Over the last two hundred years perhaps millions of commemorative markers have been installed and dedicated all over the United States, the staple of historians, lodges, politicians, professional and military organizations. In the course of honoring the past in these specific geographic locations, the markers have often cluttered the Nation’s streets and in many instances interfered with or prevented the enjoyment and photography of the cultural resource. Years ago, Shreveport preservationists worked with the City to produce a series of local historic markers. These markers have served well to educate the general public on the City’s historic sites, and could benefit from a much-deserved upgrade. Sadly, some of the markers cite properties that have disappeared; other have been vandalized or faded by the sun.

It is plausible that the *Shreveport Common* Cultural District might inspire a new public/private partnership to seek funding for the re-drafting and design of new markers to be integrated into the overall fabric of the neighborhood and its revitalization, even increasing the number of locations. With the advent and increase in digital technology, the “new” historic marker could be found and accessed via cell phone applications. In fact, part of the NEA funding for this Vision Plan included the creation of a pod cast tour of the area, completed in June 2011 by SRAC. The Vision Plan encourages new technology for the promotion of the arts, history, and tourism in Shreveport and the role it can play in the cultural economy.

Shreveport Common Vision Plan

Public Art Potential

- P--painting/drawing/mural
- S--sculpture/collage/assemblage
- M--music
- T--theatre/spoken word
- D--dance/movement
- A--architecture/design
- L--landscape design
- V--video/film
- E--lighting/electric media

Please note that the Vision Plan views every building and site as a potential Art Education opportunity.



PUBLIC ART PART II

It is fitting to end this section, and the Vision Plan as a whole, with a resounding call for Public Art to enhance the area, and brand the *Shreveport Common* Cultural District as a truly creative place. That note was sounded months before this Vision Plan began, when the original concept for *Shreveport Common* was borne out of tragedy and opportunities. A disastrous fire, astute City leadership, and generous private donors banded together to make the restoration of the Central Fire Station a reality for the Arts. The National Endowment for the Arts *Mayor's Institute for City Design* grant program funded the Visioning Process that began planning a cultural district surrounding the new Central ArtStation. From the beginning of the *Shreveport Common* dream, it was established that Public Art would play a leading role in every application, planning, design, fundraising, or implementation step. To the leadership in and around the Shreveport Regional Arts Council, this was a given. Little did anyone realize the path the Vision Plan would take, but all participants knew it would be guided by the priority of bringing great art into the public realm.

As a result, it is appropriate that the Public Art component has already comprised the first phases implemented in the transformed district. In late May 2011, the Shreveport Regional Arts Council issued three public Calls To Artists for projects within the *Shreveport Common* Cultural District. The first call was for temporary artworks to animate and celebrate the district for the June 18, 2011 "*Charrette Turned Inside Out*", where over 30 works of art graced the 10-block area. The next call was to design the icons and symbols that will brand the district graphically. A third call was issued for a permanent Public Art installation at the district's principal entrance—the Common Street viaduct—signifying the new Gateway into the area and downtown Shreveport. Even before new places have been identified, created, or restored, Public Art is leading the way toward revitalization. Along with the restored landmark Central ArtStation, these works will represent some of the first tangible improvements realized in the *Shreveport Common* Cultural District

Please use the Key included as a reference to the map. The many Public Art Potential locations proposed, discussed, and considered in the course of the Visioning Process are noted in their respective colors.

THE *SHREVEPORT COMMON* DESIGN TEAM

Gregory Free, Gregory Free & Associates Austin, TX

Gregory Free is a historic preservation specialist and designer in private practice in Austin, Texas. Prior to the establishment of his firm in 1983, he served as Executive Director of the Texas Historical Foundation. He served as Restoration-Preservation Specialist for the Mississippi Department of Archives and History directing the restoration of the Mississippi State Capitol and the Manship House, both of which were awarded national recognition, and coordinated for grants projects throughout the state. Since moving to Texas, he has continued to stay involved in projects in Mississippi, Louisiana, and Alabama. Recent projects include Long-Range Plans for the Mississippi Heritage Trust, and downtown revitalization for Temple, Texas. Mr. Free received his Bachelor of Arts Degree in American History from the University of Alabama, and his M.S. degree in Historic Preservation from the Graduate School of Architecture and Planning, Columbia University. He studied architectural history, preservation, and decorative arts at the Attingham School, Shropshire, England. He is a recipient of a grant from the Samuel Kress Foundation/James Marston Fitch Foundation for an upcoming book on the architecture of the American Gulf Coast

Mischa Farrell, AIA, Mischa Farrell Architect Shreveport, LA

Mischa Farrell is an architect with over 20 years of experience. She has worked or internationally acclaimed firms of Machado and Silvetti Associates and Antione Predock Architect. Ms. Farrell is a 1989 architecture graduate of the University of Texas at Austin. In 2000 she founded Mischa Farrell Architect in Shreveport, Louisiana and has focused on new commercial construction, renovations and historic preservation. She has successfully collaborated with Shreveport Regional Arts Council in the past to incorporate public art into public buildings. She is the Architect of record for the Shreveport Common Project and is guiding the team in the area of new architectural visions for the target area and sustainable practices for existing buildings.

Jerome Nicholas, ASLA, Nicholas and Associates Shreveport, LA

Jerome Nicholas has been active in all phases of landscape architectural work from design to construction. He is a 1974 graduate of Louisiana State University with a bachelor's degree in Landscape Architecture. He has been licensed to practice in the state of Louisiana since 1975 and has practiced in North Louisiana for 35 years. He has served as lead designer on numerous projects for private clients and public agencies. His responsibilities on these projects have been broad in scope including conceptual design through construction document preparation, cost estimation, specification writing, and construction observation. These projects have included extensive site development features such as roads and parking, recreation facilities, camping facilities, athletic facilities, water features, nature study areas and facilities, pedestrian and bicycle trails, administrative and maintenance facilities, commercial and public plazas, streetscapes, and residential subdivisions.

Katie Martin, ASLA, Nicholas and Associates Shreveport, LA

Katie Martin has been active in all phases of landscape architectural work from design to construction as well as warranty and maintenance follow up. She is a 2002 graduate of Louisiana State University with a bachelor's degree in Landscape Architecture. She has served as lead designer on numerous projects for private clients and public agencies. Her responsibilities have been broad in scope including conceptual design through construction document preparation, cost estimation, specification writing, and construction observation. These projects have included extensive site development such as roads and parking, water related recreation facilities, camping facilities, nature study areas and facilities, pedestrian and bicycle trails, administrative and maintenance facilities.

THE *SHREVEPORT COMMON* DESIGN TEAM

Wendy Benscoter, Project Manager Shreveport, LA

Wendy Benscoter is a 35-year veteran project manager and strategic planner with clients ranging from Fortune 500 (Exxon) and universities including Louisiana State University, Shreveport, and Southern University, Shreveport, to nationally recognized local nonprofits. She is a graduate of the University of Texas, Austin.

TMG Consultants, Urban Planning Consultants New Orleans, LA

Suzanne Perilloux Leckert, Senior Associate and Nilsa Duran, Associate

Ms. Leckert previously worked for The Innovation Group as the Director of Development Analysis, where she evaluated the practicality and feasibility of large and small scale developments around the globe. Prior to this, Ms. Leckert was a City Planner and Special Assistant to the Planning Director for the City of New Orleans. Her work experience also includes a staff position with U.S. Senator John Breaux and one in Tax and Estates law. She holds an undergraduate degree in History from Louisiana State University and a Masters of Urban and Regional Planning from the University of New Orleans, where she specialized in Historic Preservation, participating in studies and making recommendations for re-development of historic neighborhoods and commercial corridors.

Ms. Duran joined TMG Consulting in 2009. She is involved with capital development projects and privatization efforts at the New Orleans International Airport, feasibility studies for the gaming industry, neighborhood impact assessments, and GIS mapping. Ms. Duran holds Bachelor Degrees in Metropolitan Studies and Urban Design and Architecture Studies from New York University, and a Masters in Preservation Studies from the Tulane University School of Architecture. Her interests are mainly in adaptive re-use,

progressive urban planning and historic preservation. While at Tulane she was active in post-Katrina redevelopment efforts by documenting historic buildings at the Jackson Barracks National Guard facility and developing a preservation-based redevelopment plan for historic neighborhoods.



Shreveport Common Principal Artist: J Ryan

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Appendix A

Shreveport Common Tax Incentives and other Economic Development Programs

Federal Historic 20% Tax Credit

Available for properties certified as a historic building in the Downtown Shreveport Historic District or individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places. 20% credit is applicable to renovations and includes labor, materials and architects/engineers fees).

State Historic 25% Tax Credit

Available for properties in the Downtown Development District. The credit is calculated at up to 25% of the eligible renovation cost. Minimum eligible expenses must exceed \$10,000. The tax is capped at \$5 million per tax payer in a DDD. Tax credit can be carried forward for 5 years or sold to a third party.

Restoration Tax Abatement (RTA)

Freezes property taxes at the base level before improvements, renovations or additions are made for a period of five years with a renewal opportunity for an additional five years. The RTA can be used in combination with the Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credit and the State Historic Preservation Tax Credit. Can be used for both commercial structures and owner-occupied, private homes.

Enterprise Zone Program

Provides tax credits and sales and use tax refunds to businesses locating or expanding in designated enterprise zone areas. The business must create a minimum of five new permanent jobs and fulfill other criteria.

Motion Picture Industry Development Tax Credit

The incentive program involves the rebate of state sales and use taxes to qualified, approved motion picture productions spending in excess of \$1,000,000 in Louisiana.

Louisiana Music Tax Credit

Louisiana offers a Music Tax Credit of 25% on music performed, composed or recorded by a Louisiana musician and music released or published by a Louisiana company domiciled and headquartered in Louisiana.

Waiver of Construction Permit Fees

The City of Shreveport will waive all permit fees for the renovation and rehabilitation of buildings or structures constructed prior to 1960. This waiver applies only to the Downtown Development District and does not exempt the applicant from obtaining all required permits, approvals, plans review, and inspections as required by applicable provisions of the Shreveport City Code.

Pre-City Permit Inspection

The City of Shreveport Permits Department will perform inspections prior to purchasing and/or renovations. The inspections include zoning, plumbing, electrical, fire, and HVAC. The fee is \$100.00 and if the renovation takes place then the fee does not have to be paid.

DSDC Low-Interest Loan Program

This financial incentive is designed to provide rehabilitation funds to property owners and small businesses interested in renovating downtown's older buildings. The 3.5% loans are capped at a maximum of \$100,000 with terms up to ten years.

City of Shreveport Economic Development Initiative (EDI) Loan Program

The EDI Loan Program assists eligible businesses with funding up to \$300,000 for acquisition, new construction, equipment and/or working capital financing. The main goal of the EDI Loan Program is to increase access to capital and credit for businesses and entrepreneurs, and to provide employment and business opportunities for individuals from low-to-moderate income households.

Brownfields Revolving Loan Program

The City of Shreveport has received a Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund Grant from the United States Environmental Protection Agency. The Grant is to offer

low interest loans to help remediate contaminated properties in Shreveport.

Façade Rebate Program

Funded by DDA and administered by DSDC, this program matches your façade improvement dollar for dollar up to a maximum of \$5,000. Applications must be approved prior to work being initiated.

Cultural District

State program that waives sales taxes on original art created in the cultural district, including paintings, drawings, photographs, video productions and wearable art and gives income tax credits for businesses in renovated historic buildings in the district.

This and additional information on Tax Incentives in Downtown Shreveport can be found at the Downtown Development website

www.downtownshreveport.com

Appendix B

Map of Downtown Shreveport Zoning and *Shreveport Common*

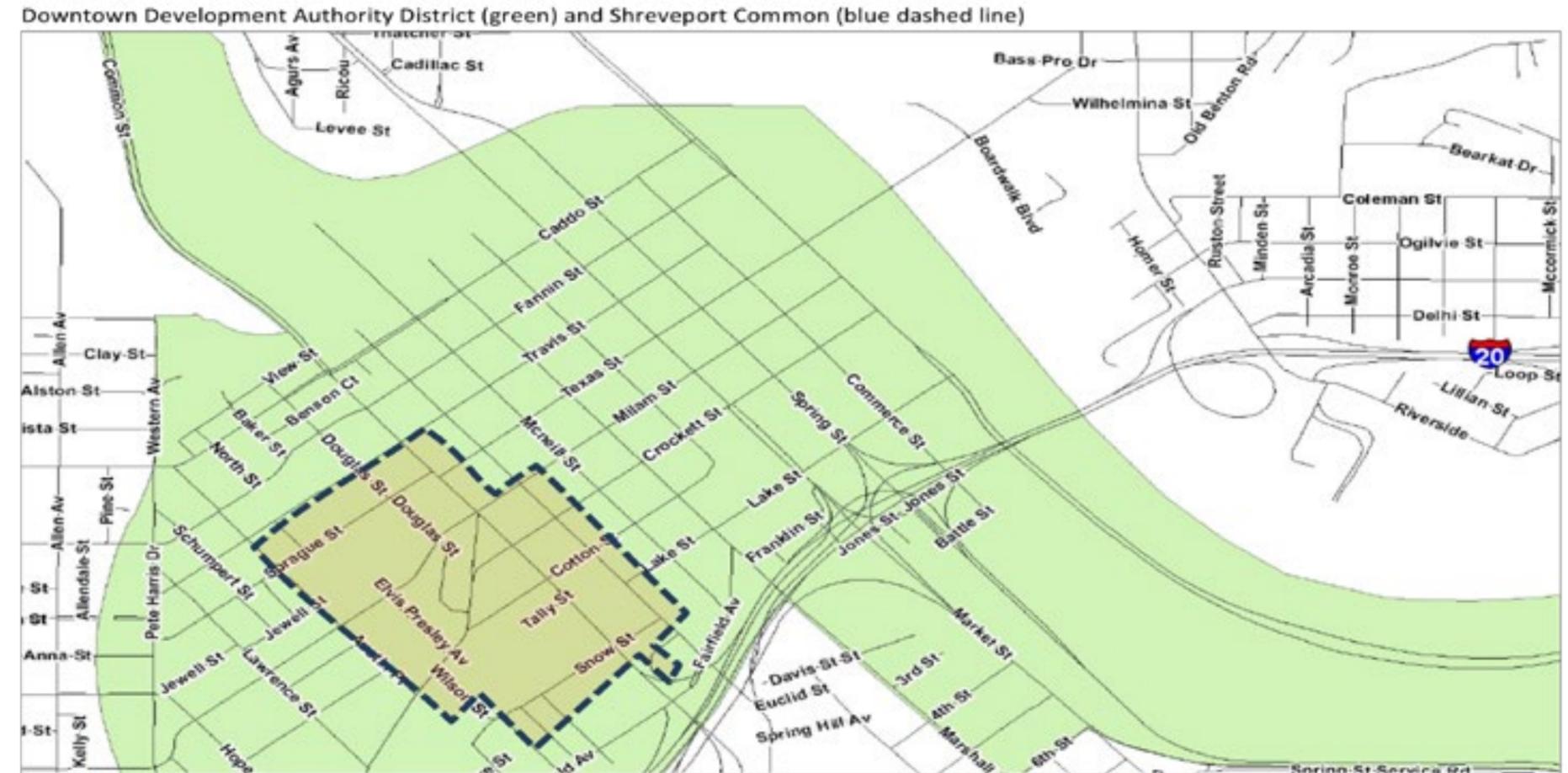
Area Zoning Map with Shreveport Common Overlay (dashed blue line) For reference only*



* THIS ZONING MAP IS FOR REFERENCE ONLY. OFFICIAL MAPS ARE LOCATED AT THE MPC OFFICE. THE ZONING ORDINANCE IS THE ONLY OFFICIAL DOCUMENT THAT DETERMINES THE LEGAL ZONING AND USES BY RIGHT ON ANY GIVEN SITE. PLEASE VERIFY ALL ZONING THROUGH THAT OFFICE. CONTACT THE MPC AT THE FOLLOWING LOCATION: 505 TRAVIS ST. - SUITE 440 - SHREVEPORT, LA 71101 PHONE - (318) 673-6480 FAX - (318) 673-647 * ZONING RIGHTS ON SPECIFIC PROPERTY MAY HAVE EXPIRED. THE ONLY VALID VERIFICATION OF ZONING IS A WRITTEN CONFIRMATION FROM THE MPC STAFF.

Appendix C

Map of the Downtown Development District and *Shreveport Common*



Appendix D

Map of Shreveport Cultural District and *Shreveport Common*

Downtown Shreveport Cultural District (orange) with overlay of *Shreveport Common* (blue dash outline)



Appendix E

Summary: Shreveport Common Listening Sessions as of June 15, 2011

Through the Vision Process, the Shreveport Common Design Team listened to - and processed -over 1,000 ideas, suggestions, concerns and strategies from over 65 “Listening Sessions” in nine months, with stakeholders; neighbors, area businesses, property owners and non-profit organizations. Over 300 unique ideas and suggestions were monitored, recorded, and tracked, and ultimately reviewed by the Design Team and a 50-member appointed Shreveport Common Mayor’s Advisory Committee. Every suggestion was respectfully considered by the team. The resulting Vision Plan was developed with full consideration for the community at large. In addition to garnering ideas from the community, this process created solid partners among members of the Shreveport Common neighborhood, who, in the past, admitted to feeling isolated and forgotten.

What do you have in Shreveport Common that you want to keep?

Character: older historic buildings*
Niches, nooks and crannies
Historic “sensibility”
Visibility
Preserve Areas within Shreveport Common*
Preserve Austen Place
Mixed use
Current residents - “Trains do not have to blow whistle due to “dead ends”
Double Level Use of the 800 Block (business below, residence upstairs),
Historic Value*
Visible sense of history
More Residential in similar “historic mansion style homes on Austen Place
Diverse Population - Age and Income*
Music Heritage*
Municipal Auditorium *
Use what’s here: older existing buildings
Urban Space (the area is not as dense as the rest of downtown)
Edgy and Bohemian
Historic Houses and Location

Double Level Use of the 800 Block (business below, residence upstairs)
Pedestrian experience
Skateboard friendly
Bus stop close by*
Authentic (real vs. imitation)*
Keep codes in place but add overlay
Include people that are already here*
Diverse Neighborhood
Tolerance for and Ministry to Homeless*
Good relationship between Residents and Businesses*
Preserve Oakland Cemetery*
Spirit of Entrepreneurialism
Keep Existing Businesses*
Interdependence and Independence
Independent Ownership*
Keep Father Paul’s purpose of expanding the H.E. Church and Ministry ()
Keep Talley Alley “ALLEY” open for Emergency Access
Providence House Campus Expansion Plans that adds Additional property for residential

What do you have in Shreveport Common that you want to lose?

Shreveport-itis*
Close-mindedness
Run-down Property*
Crime*
Perception of unsafe*
Litter*
Dirty sidewalks, gum on sidewalks
Empty Lots w Weeds*
Uneven Street Lighting*
Small sidewalks and large streets*

Dangerous (uneven) sidewalks*
Dangerous for biking
Cyclists at night
Current Zoning Restrictions
Blight, Empty Buildings*
Look of Abandonment*
Negative perception of Safety *
Vagrants*
Need to move Rescue Mission warehouse to better location
Help move homeless camp*
Churches that drive into area to serve homeless (exacerbate problem in area)

What do you NOT have yet that you want in Shreveport Common?

New buildings designed in keeping with historic ones
Potential Views
Sense of Community/Neighbors*
Honorable preservation*
Specific retail that is needed to serve the area
Food vending with tables
Fresh food, organic food grocer*
Restaurants without doors
Sidewalk Cafes*
Additional Bars/Pubs
Home-owned restaurants*
Real coffee shop*
Artists Coffee shop
Kindle & Koffee
Grocery with necessities*
Butcher shop
Dry cleaners
Hardware store
Full historic inventory*
Historic Information available (podcast, signs)
Review of building codes and other assistance for individual owners of historic buildings*
For everybody - empty nesters, young families, singles, with mixed income

Music Village
Public Art
Guitars as Landmarks in Shreveport Common
Rock ‘n Roll Car Museum
Courtyards, Villages, Parks*
Multi-Family Housing
Density
Sense of Security, Blue Light *
Maintenance
Self-maintaining
Environmentally responsible – recycling*
Solar lighting,
Low light
New and improved “Green” Buildings*
Pedestrian Friendly*
Multi-Functional Paths
Increase Pedestrian Foot Traffic
Bike and pedestrian plan for entire city
Bike Friendly
Bike racks*
Bike Trails*
Public Transportation for Clients/Residents
Covered Bus Stop *
Transportation Substation - Relaxed w/ shelter, incl. bikes, ATM, security, information*
History of area, kiosks, walking tours
Building Code and Sign code
Create historic signage*
Design Standards*
Help with crime and vagrants*
Create a “melting pot” of people
Generous / easy zoning requirements*
Create Overlays
Central Common Area
City Property for Open Space
Green Spaces/Creative Areas *
Soft grass
Not flat but designed green space (berms)
Repair Fence by Rescue Mission Warehouse and Union Pacific line*
Clean, neat, maintained right of ways along the Tracks*
Little Parks/Little White
Dog Park *
Help w/ Tax Incentives *

A Village
Property for Providence House Campus expansion
Animal Friendly Environment*
Restaurants that welcome dogs and offer a “Yappy Hour”
Public Art *
Murals
Artists’ affordable housing in area*
Artists’ Live/Work Studios *
Gateway on Common Street marking the neighborhood*
Organically formed Artists’ Co-op like Third Ward
Music everywhere*
LiveOpera and Classical Music in/around
Green Space Spontaneous Music8
Live music, performance venues*
Small Performing Space near restaurants*
Performing Areas
Affordable Venues*
Amphitheater
Activity board/lead activity committee
Art Gallery*
Gallery for Traveling Shows
Creative Content Center, Adult Creative Learning Center
Gifted Performing Arts School*
Access to after school activities for children of residents
Expansion Plans for Car Museum and one that adds additional property for residential and educational growth, Dorms for students
Clean, neat, maintained right of ways along the Union Pacific Tracks*
Green Space for children
Interactive Park for children and adults*
Arts programming for residents*
Work for homeless/transitional residents*
Shade Trees*
Donated Trees “in memory of” instead of plaques
Awnings*
Neighborhood Pool
Art related Vendors*

Street vending with incentives*
 Trolley from the Riverfront and Hilton Community Center
 Provide Variety at every corner
 Respect and Participation from Public
 Opportunity to develop Market Value Residential*
 Repair and Reinvigorate Parking Lot
 Create beautiful building with a small children’s play area
 Reopen restaurant and expand Grocery Store within Fairmont Apts.*
 Weekend Parking
 City/Parish/State funding incentives*
 Public Trashcans*
 Austen Place designated as a Historic Block with unique design concepts and maintenance
 Cooperation from out of town land owners that stymy development *
 Clearing Overgrowth around Union Pacific Tracks
 Railroad “dead ends” that make it difficult to turn around or “get through”
 Façade improvements*
 Common “backside” Parking for 800 block occupants*
 Young, urban, Hip, and DINK people*
 Promotional Brochure and Events Calendar for Shreveport Common
 Direct access from Wilson St. across Tracks to Blue Goose,
 Full development of Blue Goose Foundation mission/vision - “Princess Park” area
 Festivals and Activities within Shreveport Common *
 Public Restrooms*
 Excitement,
 Quality of Life
 More People
 Diverse Housing*
 Gas Station
 Boutiques (men and women)
 Place to sit, Street Furniture
 Sculpture seating

Beautification of streets and sidewalks
 MPC Special Project Initiative overlay
 wi-fi throughout
 Safe areas throughout
 Place to sit on grass and lounge
 In-depth history of area, Multi-media history*
 Directions, information about area*
 Density*
 New to area established local businesses
 Cemetery repaired
 Owners keep own storefronts nice
 Sidewalks as art
 Surprise gardens
 Wide sidewalks
 Buffer between types of use
 Inviting to shop,
 Putting Green
 Graffiti Artists
 Bike/Skateboard rental
 Close street at night with bollards
 Fairs
 Dog fair
 Art fair
 Bar Wine
 Cocktail Lounge
 Florist
 Cook, Cantina
 Dr. Office
 Health Food Store / Spa
 Bookstore with wi-fi
 Lawyers/Attorneys
 Pharmacy,
 Ice Cream Store
 Antique Store
 Tech shop
 Mortuary Design
 Shared Arts Offices
 Common “good” - lawyers for the arts
 Smokeless Environment
 Gardens/Courtyards
 Gazebo
 Flowers, Seasonal, Foliage*
 Focal Point, Sculpture
 Water Feature
 Security

Welcoming Atmosphere*
 Excitement in area*
 Car Care
 Strategies to Implement Master Plan
 Visitors Center to Oakland Cemetery
 Artist Markets with heavy (public) traffic
 Need to relocate, possibly want to relocate warehouse
 Possible help finding new location for church

What do you Not have that you don’t want in Shreveport Common?

Tall Buildings*
 Nothing taller than Municipal
 Chain Businesses*
 Mainstream Retail
 Gentrification*
 Satellite parking around Municipal that fills needed lots during concerts
 Don’t fill all empty spaces with buildings
 Over-population/ over- density
 Too much security
 Chain Businesses
 Mainstream Retail *
 No skateboards
 Hangout for vagrants (don’t let bus stop become hangout)
 Expensive bus stop that is underused
 Ugly Signs
 Adult Entertainment
 More Churches
 Don’t create for tourists
 Street Furniture that becomes beds for vagrants*
 Unplanned community spaces
 Someone trying to tell us what to do without property, Interference*
 Water and maintenance costs
 Vendors that take away from restaurants in area
 Fast Food *
 Do not put Oakland Visitor Center on Burton property

What types of Programming and Public Art would you like to see in Shreveport Common?

Mud Day, Mud Festival
 Doo Nanny Festival (Outsider Folk Art Festival)
 Art car parade and Festival
 Bark and Bagel (breakfast with other dog walkers)
 Resounding Wave - Dance through the park
 Mini Parades throughout the year like “Art up” your bike parade
 Elvis on parade
 Pets on parade
 Really alternative transportation on parade
 Congealed Salad as a unique to Shreveport festival
 Sidewalk art (serious and fun) show
 Plant sale/exchange
 Dedicated chess sets like the cement ones in NYC
 Live art lessons
 Water park (old SRAC site at Princess Park)
 Strolling musicians
 Shakespeare in the Park
 StarTrek in the Park
 Yoga in the Park
 “Drum Off” in the Park
 Urban Iditarod (like San Francisco)
 Night Time Bike Rides with lots of LED lights
 “Green” Art
 Public Art “to Scale”
 Solar Ivy
 Photovoltaic panels artfully installed on rooftops
 Solar Powering the lights, activating night time activities
 Water retainment systems as art
 NYC-style flea markets in empty lots (w mid-century modern furniture and antiques)
 Art Bark, morning or afternoon of “your pet as art”

Smaller version of Shakespeare in the Park
 Downtown Neon “Saturday” Nights
 Smaller Farmer’s Market, Herb Market (What is grown in SC)
 Openings at Central ARTSTATION Art Exhibition
 TACA Maker’s Fair more often (monthly?)
 Community BAZAAR (Garage Sale)
 minicine?
 Antiques Sales
 Bike “trail”
 Dog Show (Race, Costume, Promenade)
 Flash Mobs
 Storytelling
 Guerilla Theatre
 Street Musicians
 Mini-Parades
 Fashion/Hair
 Costumes
 Bouncy Festival (Maze) (Raleigh)
 Kids Toys
 Pogo Design
 Maze
 Roller Derby Race
 Turtle Race
 Elvis Festival, Parade
 LA Hayride Parade
 Johnny Horton Festival
 Blue Goose Festival
 Tulip Festival
 Dia de los Muertos
 Pool
 Tasting/Competition - “Cook-Off”
 Throw
 Food Cook-off
 Elvis Girls - Peanut Butter/Jelly Banana
 Southern Black Theatre Festival
 ARTCar Parade
 Sidewalk Chalk - 3D