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NEW ORLEANS SQUARE REPORT

Introduction and Purpose

In August 2017, the Broken Arrow City Council approved an economic development feasibility study for the Elm Place and New Orleans shopping area. This initiative is in response to increased vacancies, aging infrastructure, and citizen concerns. The Catalyst Team of consultants was hired to analyze market trends and present solutions for a public-private partnership to revitalize the area and create a model for future revitalization across the city.

In August 2019, the Broken Arrow City Council established the Elm Place and New Orleans Advisory Committee whose goal is to study and make recommendations that would lead to “the revitalization of this intersection as a viable corridor for retail, commercial and residential development.” The City Council asked the committee to “think big,” review the Catalyst feasibility study, engage current business owners and property owners, conduct walking tours of the area, and generally perform due diligence before coming to City Council with recommendations.

In March 2020, City Council approved the Committee’s first recommendation to name the study area “New Orleans Square.” This name emerged from a city-wide citizen survey, recognized the unique Broken Arrow name for 101st Street, and provided a broad opportunity for branding and marketing with a New Orleans theme. The study area will be referred to throughout this report as New Orleans Square.

The Catalyst feasibility study served as a foundational touchstone for this report, providing much of the background, data, and analysis for the committee’s work. Where appropriate, charts, maps, and insights from that study are included in this report. The Catalyst study is included as an attachment to this report.

Rationale for the study

The New Orleans Square area was once central to development in Broken Arrow. As the community expanded outward and new roadways diverted traffic away from the intersection, interest in New Orleans Square diminished. In addition, these conditions, coupled with changing demographics and aging infrastructure have created a cycle that requires intervention to resolve.

Nevertheless, according to the Catalyst Report the Elm and New Orleans intersection Primary Trade Area (PTA) is expected to grow by 10,000 people by 2028, creating the need for over 3,946 additional housing units. New housing could serve as a good transition between existing neighborhoods and commercial activity in the district and support high quality in-fill development at New Orleans Square.

The market projections also show unmet demand for over 582,258 square feet of quality retail development. With improvements, New Orleans Square will be positioned to harness a portion of this future retail demand.

Long-term health of New Orleans Square will require ongoing commitment and active participation from both the private and public sectors. Building and façade improvements and beautification efforts will create a more enticing environment for upscale businesses. Improvements in zoning and creation of an overlay district will help attract and guide revitalization and new development. Roadway, sidewalk, and infrastructure projects will improve aesthetics, safety, walkability, and sense of community.

As with the Rose District effort, New Orleans Square revitalization will include multi-year projects that requires commitment, perseverance, and a willingness to invest in the future. This area will once again become an important and sustainable hub for retail, commercial, and residential development in South Broken Arrow.

Background

History

The first plat of Broken Arrow was filed on October 16, 1902 and subsequently approved as a township on May 4, 1903. The next several decades saw the community thrive as an agricultural center for the area with banks, cotton gins, grocery stores, and cosmopolitan features such as hotels and movie theaters. Like many communities in the U.S., Broken Arrow experienced its first significant population boom in the 1940s due to returning GI's that created post-war expansion of new industries and associated impacts from the auto industry.

In the early 1950s, planning had already begun to create the Broken Arrow Expressway (Oklahoma State Highway 51) to allow for easier commuting between Tulsa and Broken Arrow. This was the catalyst for continued growth of the city, and the roadway still provides development potential to serve Broken Arrow and the greater region. The Broken Arrow Expressway was constructed in the early 1960s and opened in 1964, allowing for greater transportation of goods, access to services, and greater regional mobility.

By 1970, the population had reached 11,787 with a large majority of housing centered near New Orleans Square. Employers, families, and regional consolidation led to continued growth for Broken Arrow. In the 1980s, approximately 40% of the city's sales tax was generated from New Orleans Square and the surrounding area. In 2002, the Creek Turnpike opened and helped redefine development patterns for Broken Arrow. The Creek Turnpike is located in the southern sector of Broken Arrow. This new roadway increased mobility for residents but diverted customer flow away from the Elm and New Orleans intersection leading to the conditions of today.

Despite this, New Orleans Square is still located at the center point of an award-winning, livable

community that continues to attract residents and has the potential to be reinvented to an iconic place to live, work, and shop.

Study Area Description

The Study Area is centered on the intersection of South Elm Place and West New Orleans Street in Broken Arrow. This area includes commercial development, adjacent residential neighborhoods, the Broken Arrow Freshman Academy in the southeast quadrant, the Warren Clinic in the northwest quadrant, and vacant land in the southwest quadrant. Most of the commercial development is the typical 1970s and 1980s strip mall with large setbacks and vast parking lots in front of the shopping centers. These parking "deserts" are far larger than necessary to accommodate today's customers and leave the impression that shops and restaurants are not well frequented.

The large size of the commercial buildings limits the ability to divide the properties into something that is more pedestrian friendly. This effectively cuts off the land behind the shopping centers from both pedestrian and automobile access and creates buffers rather than transitions.

The general lack of trees in older shopping centers can contribute to a sense of vacancy and a lack of vibrancy. Landscaping within the parking lots and along the streets will beautify the area and increase its attractiveness to businesses, customers, and residents.

There is a surprising amount of vacant land surrounding the commercial development, both within the Study Area and directly to the east. Use of this land for new housing and commercial development could help energize the area. Using the additional property for housing and improving the walkability of the area could encourage increased pedestrian and bicycle traffic.



Utility Infrastructure

The study area is adequately served by existing utility infrastructure. Public water, sewer, and storm runoff facilities are appropriately sized and located along the street corridors. Utilities extend under the parking lots to connect with the commercial buildings. Power, telecommunication, and other overhead utilities are likewise concentrated along the street corridors but are unsightly and are obstructions to trees and other landscaping that might be desirable to the area.

Ownership

New Orleans Square has multiple property owners which creates a challenge to cohesive development. Communication between various property owners has become fragmented over time.

Development Pattern

The building orientations create large setbacks from the street with vast parking lots and underutilized parcels. The large size of the commercial buildings also limits the ability to further divide the properties into something that is more pedestrian friendly. These conditions effectively cut off the land behind the shopping centers from both pedestrian and automotive access and result in barriers rather than transitions between uses. Additional break points, either through the modification of portions of the shopping centers and/or the addition of new connectivity could begin to open entirely new development opportunities, both for the adjoining land and the parking lots themselves.

Vacant/Low-Density Development

Given the age of the commercial development, there is a surprising amount of vacant land still surrounding

it, both within the study area and directly to the east. The impact of these orphaned parcels on the overall health of the shopping centers is often overlooked. Redevelopment of this land into new places of housing and commercial uses will significantly help activate the area and serve as better transitions between existing uses.

New development should incrementally increase the overall density of this intersection. In addition to increasing the number of trips by bicycle and by foot, increased density in this area also strengthens long-term community goals of connecting this area to other areas (e.g. Rose District, proposed Innovation District) by bus or other transit modes.

Corridor Assessment

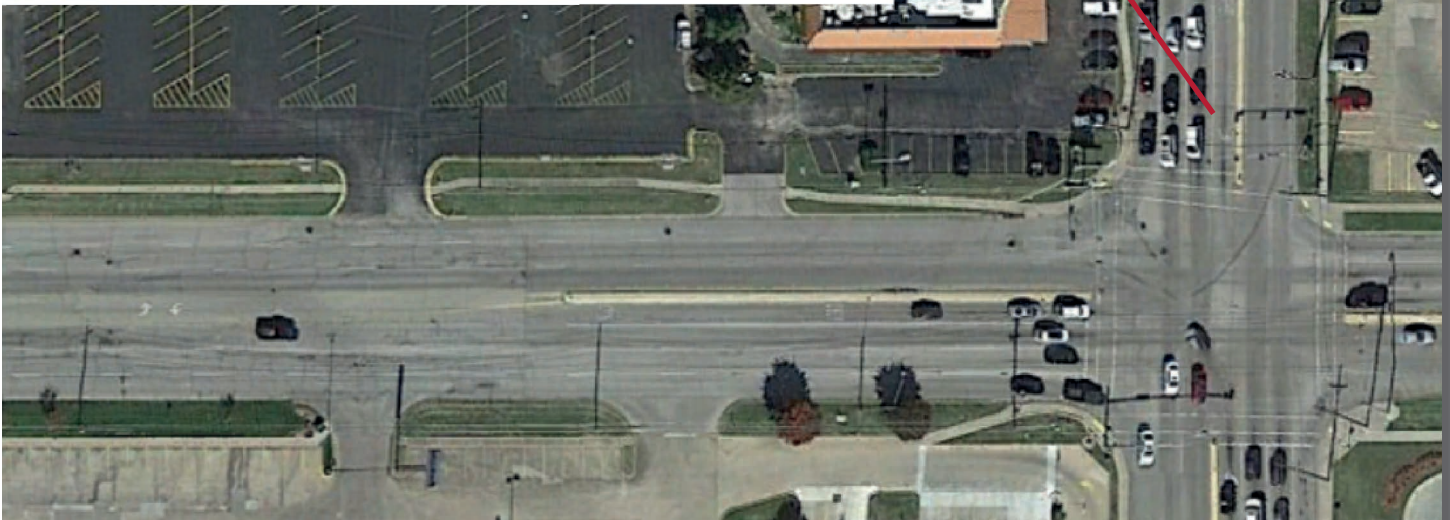
Many of the retail buildings at New Orleans Square have dated facades, poorly maintained landscaping, large and underutilized parking lots, and increased vacancy.



Expansive Parking Lots



Narrow Medians
No Pedestrian Refuge
No Landscaping



Lack of maintenance and aging is one of the most visible issues. Landscaping is minimal and inconsistent from property to property. A majority of building facades need to be updated, and there is not a consistent set of materials or themes from building to building. The signage also lacks uniformity. Many of the parking lots are in disrepair and have an excessive number of parking spaces. This creates greater retail vacancy and contributes to lower retail and restaurant quality.

The housing stock in adjacent neighborhoods is generally well-maintained and in good condition. There are opportunities to create greater connectivity between existing neighborhoods and commercial areas and add additional housing in the vacant tracts between the two areas.

Another issue affecting the area is lack of walkability and bicycle-friendly trails. New Orleans Square has a number of discontinuous and obstructed sidewalks that are under-sized and poorly maintained. Roadways are wide and crosswalks long. There are no mid-block crosswalks, making it inconvenient and difficult for pedestrians to walk from quarter to quarter.

The area also lacks general quality of life elements. The commercial areas lack any quality open spaces and few amenities such as fountains, benches, or shade structures. A cohesive and coordinated approach could create space for future amenities that could enhance the commercial areas and also serve the neighborhoods better.

Market Potential

Commercial and retail developments are shifting away from big box development towards more flexible options centered around service-based industries and walkable commercial districts. Newer retail complexes

are more entertainment-oriented and focused on attracting crowds and events.

To be effective, New Orleans Square should include mixed-use formats such as destination uses, neighborhood amenities, and retail options that can serve the local population. This will serve to improve the area while complementing existing retail locations within the city.

In terms of design, future development should be oriented to enhance connectivity, walkability, and encourage multi-modal alternatives. Introduction of new green spaces will create new gathering places and differentiate the intersection from other areas while also creating a more modern design that would cater to place-making oriented development. Restaurants and retailers could situate along these new green spaces to encourage their use.

Housing Demand

Broken Arrow can absorb approximately 261 units of multi-family housing annually. A large portion of this demand is able to support high quality in-fill development. The growing population of young families is creating demand for residential units in affordable, suburban markets. Higher density development will need to cater to a range of diverse and multi-generational households. Mixed-use developments that provide access to quality housing, restaurants, retail, and entertainment are on the rise as trends shift toward living closer to the workplace. Urban lifestyles are becoming increasingly popular but also more expensive. Developers are moving to leverage these trends to cater to diverse suburban desires through more walkable, high-density communities.

There is annual demand for 3,429 new single-family units in Broken Arrow. The substantial population aged over 65 years will create a need for affordable housing options fit for aging in place. These buyers will desire small homes with less maintenance,

including smaller yards and easy access to amenities and healthcare. Young families early in their careers will prefer town center lifestyles with affordable suburban residential patterns.

Proposed Land Use

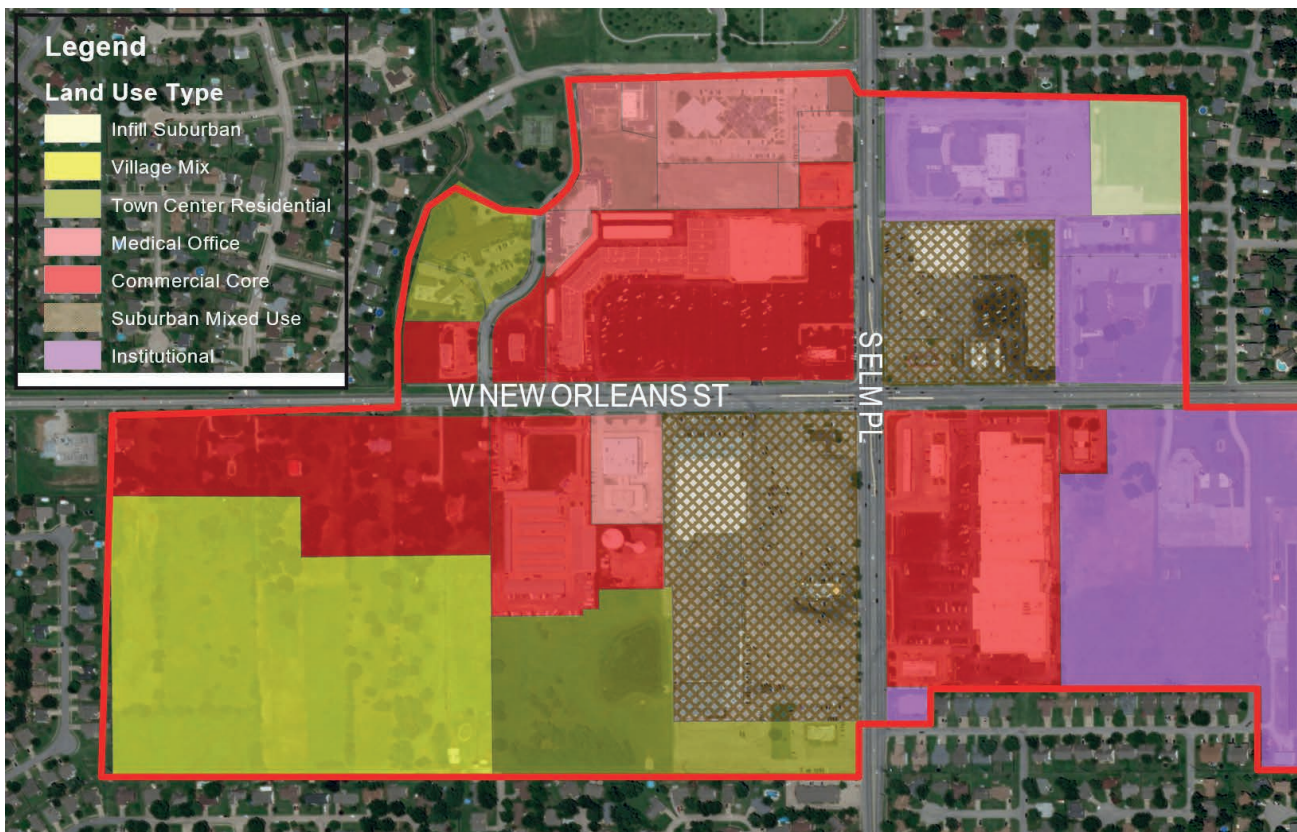
Increased density and better mix of land uses will create sustainability, vibrancy, and economic growth. Clustering retail, dining, entertainment, office, and residential uses will foster greater utilization of multi-modal transportation and can create greater economic output. In addition, mixed-use creates greater operational efficiency for the city.

A dynamic and energetic mixed-use community requires connectivity to encourage people to walk to local shopping, restaurants, and services. Parking should be accessible and located near shops, restaurants, and living, working, and entertainment venues to attract people into the district. A comfortable, safe, and inviting design and environment connecting

all the destinations in the project to one another is essential.

Public spaces including pocket parks, plazas, and small green spaces of varying sizes and purposes will create places to gather, play games, dine, listen to music, and create pet-friendly environments.

The Catalyst Concept Plan suggested a variety of land uses that should be taken into consideration as a potential starting point in creating an overlay and zoning for the area.



Focus Areas and Recommendations

The Broken Arrow Elm and New Orleans Advisory Committee, city staff, and key stakeholders held public meetings to study the area and debate a wide variety of problems and potential solutions. To frame the recommendations, a number of foundational beliefs evolved through the discussions:

- An intervention is needed. The decline in the area clearly needs to be addressed
- Focus should be multi-faceted. Appearance and aesthetics are important, but underlying needs must also be addressed. Among these needs are examining and updating zoning for better land use; increasing housing availability and density; addressing walkability and access; creating a sense of community; and improving branding and marketing of the area.
- Initial funding from the GO Bond can be used for studies and small projects, but additional funding will be required for any significant implementation. Mechanisms for funding were explored and are presented in this report.
- Cooperation between owners, merchants, developers, and the city will be required for long-range revitalization success.

Key Recommendations:

- 1. Conduct near-term studies to improve infrastructure and public use and lay the groundwork for future implementation.**
- 2. Create an overlay district for New Orleans Square. As part of this process, create appropriate zoning and encourage revision to private restrictive covenants.**
- 3. Promote creation of both an Owners and Merchants Associations.**

- 4. Create branding and marketing materials for the promotion and identity of the area.**
- 5. Conduct a study for infill residential and mixed-use development.**
- 6. Utilize existing funding such as available GO Bond funds to begin studies and undertake enhancement projects for the district while exploring other funding opportunities.**
- 7. Create an Advisory Board to facilitate the implementation of the New Orleans Square Master Plan.**

The following are five areas that the city should focus on as development of the district moves forward:

- **Focus 1. Transportation, Landscaping & Infrastructure**
- **Focus 2. Placemaking**
- **Focus 3. Identity & Branding**
- **Focus 4. Retail & Development**
- **Focus 5. Funding Strategies & Future Committee Organization**

The following matrix identifies a set of recommended priority improvements/actions that are intended to guide the community's efforts and use of funding resources during the next one to six years. Recommended actions are organized around the five Focus Areas. The estimated total cost for each set of near-term studies is provided. Costs estimates for physical improvement projects will be estimated in the course of the studies.

Focus and Project Matrix

CATEGORY/TASK		ESTIMATED COST FUNDING SOURCE		RESPONSIBILITY		SHORT TERM 0 - 3 YEARS	MID-TERM 3 - 6 YEARS	LONGER TERM 6 + YEARS	ONGOING
Transportation, Landscaping & Infrastructure									
Transportation									
- Conduct Study for Roadway Diet & Roundabout			\$100,000.00		Engineering & Construction Department, City	X			
- Conduct a Walkability Study			\$50,000.00		Engineering & Construction Department, City	X			
- Explore shuttle partnerships with local colleges			N/A		Community Development Department, City			X	
- Explore feasibility of Rose District Trolley Connection								X	
- Monitor future opportunism for fixed route transit system service									X
- Implementation of Roadway Projects			TBD		Engineering & Construction Department, City		X		
- Widen Sidewalks & Install Trails			TBD		Engineering & Construction Department, City		X		
Landscaping									
- Design Landscaping Plan			\$75,000.00		Engineering & Construction Department, City	X			
- Install Landscaping at Intersection			\$1,250,000.00		Engineering & Construction Department, City		X		
- Install Landscaping along Arterial Streets			\$2,000,000.00		Engineering & Construction Department, City		X		
- Acquire land/agreements needed for gateways improvements			Will vary by locations		Engineering & Construction Department, City	X			
- Install Primary Gateways improvements			\$750,000.00		Engineering & Construction Department, City		X		
- Install Secondary Gateways improvements			\$250,000.00		Engineering & Construction Department, City	X			
- Establish District Signage Program			\$50,000.00		Engineering & Construction Department, City	X			
Infrastructure									
- Conduct Study for Relocation of Power Lines			\$50,000.00		Engineering & Construction Department, City	X			
- Develop concept plans for gateways/district signage			\$50,000.00		Engineering & Construction Department, City	X			
- Study to find out what type of public space should be established			\$20,000.00		Community Development Department, City		X		
- Implementation of Relocation of Power Lines			TBD		Engineering & Construction Department, City		X		
- Implementation of Public Space			\$2,000,000.00		Engineering & Construction Department, City		X		
Placemaking									
- Development of Overlay District			\$150,000.00		Community Development Department, City	X			
- Update Parking Provision			N/A		Community Development Department, City	X			
- Adoption of Overlay District			N/A		Community Development Department, City	X			
- Tactical Urbanism Events			\$15,000 each		Community Development Department, City	X			
- Seasonal Event			\$75,000 per event		TED Team, City		X		
- Negotiate business plan and budget with Chamber for programming and promotion & Staff			TBD by City/Chamber		Chamber of Commerce & City				X
- Coordinate and promote local business, culture, and dining			N/A		Chamber of Commerce & City				X
- Establishment of a Property Owner & Business Owner Association			N/A		Chamber of Commerce & City				X
Identity & Branding									
- Adopt Naming for the District			N/A		Community Development Department, City	X			
- Hiring of Consultant for Branding/Marketing of District			\$35,000.00		Community Development Department, City	X			
- Implementation of Branding/Marketing of District			N/A		TED Team, City	X			
Retail & Development									
- Promote higher quality development within the study area			N/A		Community Development Department, City	X			
- Study Housing In-Fill Development			\$20,000.00		Community Development Department, City	X			
Funding Strategies & Future Committee Organization									
- Study financing of projects (TIF, BIDS, & Other Sources)			N/A		Finance Department, City	X			

Focus 1. Transportation, Landscaping & Infrastructure

Transportation

New Orleans Street and Elm Place are important east-west and north-south thoroughfares through Broken Arrow. The intersection has been widened to two lanes of through traffic and left turn and right turn lanes. The speed limit through the intersection is 40 miles per hour. While these improvements make the intersection attractive to automobile traffic, it is not friendly for pedestrian and bicycle traffic.

Through public comment and committee reviews, it was determined that lowering the speed limit and constricting traffic lanes would contribute significantly to safety and walkability. Eliminating lanes would also provide needed rights-of-way for the center median and along the sides of the roadway for needed streetscaping, bicycle lanes/paths, and wider sidewalks.

Landscaped centerline medians approaching the intersection would also increase pedestrian safety. Raised medians with pedestrian refuges would give pedestrians a fortified layover spot to strengthen their sense of security mid-street. More readily identifiable crosswalks would also communicate to motorists that they have entered a pedestrian zone. These centerline medians could extend several hundred feet from the intersection to provide mid-block crossings, which would also improve walkability in the district. Crosswalks could be identified with brick or other materials and protected by signage and pedestrian-activated lights similar to those in the Rose District.

To accommodate traffic flow and a pedestrian-friendly intersection, the city should study all possible options, including a road diet, narrowing the intersection, and traffic circle or roundabout at the

Elm and New Orleans intersection.

Currently, the entire study area is not pedestrian or bicycle friendly. Building design/placement presents a barrier to approaching shops from the adjacent neighborhoods. Large, empty parking lots that are poorly lighted are uninviting, particularly to pedestrians.

Improving walkability and bicycle-friendly access should be an overarching consideration in redevelopment. As noted earlier, slowing traffic, narrowing lanes, and adding protected crosswalks will improve walkability. Sidewalks should be widened, and bicycle paths and trail connections should be included in any design.

Parking lots should be improved with landscaped islands and public use areas installed to break up the parking lots and better use the space. Excess parking should be designated as new pad sites and developed, where possible. The City should work with owners to ensure that parking lots are maintained.

Transportation Hub

Connecting New Orleans Square with other key locations in the city could be a significant boost to businesses and residents. Creating a transportation hub would make the area more attractive to residents who prefer not to drive, encourage greater walkability, and inspire a healthier lifestyle.

With appropriate connectivity to public transportation and bicycle trails, New Orleans Square could connect the Rose District and the proposed Innovation District in South BA. Elm Place is already one of the community's most important north-south corridors, linking the Bass Pro development on the north to the evolving Warren Theater development on the south. With appropriate planning, New Orleans Square could again become a key crossroad and could serve as a node linking all these key north and south destinations.

The city should explore the possibility of linking New Orleans Square with existing multi-modal transportation, exploring the feasibility of a shuttle or trolley connecting New Orleans Square with the Rose District, north and south BA destinations, and perhaps partnering to shuttle students between Tulsa Community College, Northeastern State University, and Tulsa Technology Center.

Landscaping

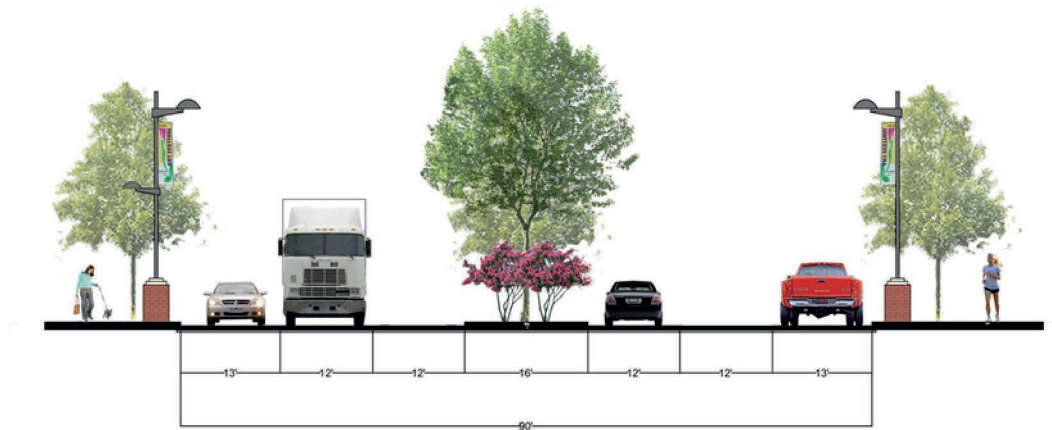
From an aesthetics and economic development standpoint, sustainable landscaping is a critical element that should be considered in the redesign of the Square. A unified design palate could enhance the image and identity of the district by using uniform plantings, paving, and signage. Some of the design elements could then become standard to other projects

within the community.

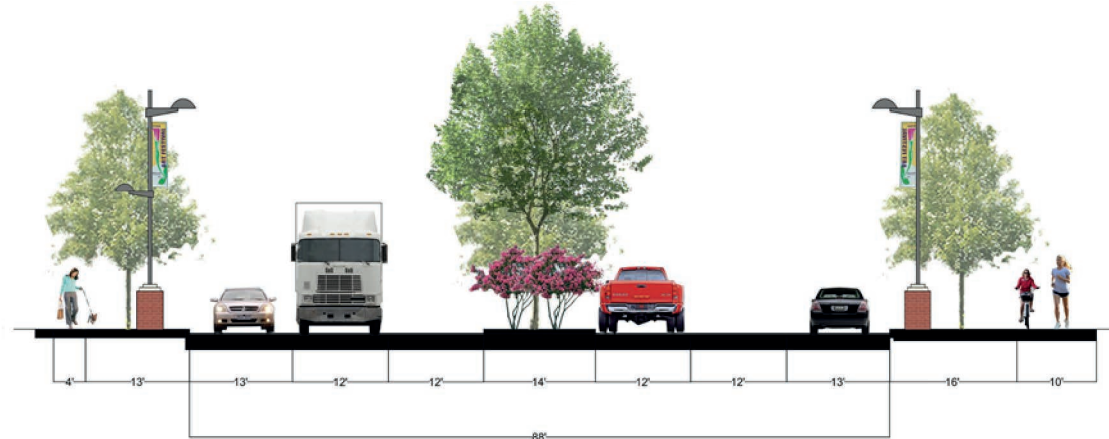
Rights of way should be landscaped with trees and shrubs, including centerline islands and roadway edges. Parking lots islands should be installed and landscaped to help break up the barren appearance of the large parking fields. Irrigation systems should be designed into the upgrades for sustainability and ease of maintaining the plantings.

In addition, the city should consider opportunities to develop public use spaces such as pocket parks, fountains, benches, and shade structures. Walking/ biking trails should connect neighborhoods to the commercial areas.

**ELM PLACE NORTH OF NEW ORLEANS &
ELM PLACE SOUTH OF NEW ORLEANS**



NEW ORLEANS STREET WEST OF ELM



Infrastructure

The city should look into enhancing the public infrastructure, particularly the overhead wires. Overhead utility lines on both sides of the arterials in this area significantly detract from its overall appearance and hinder future efforts to beautify the streetscape. It would be preferable to relocate these utilities below ground. This could potentially be achieved through appropriately coordinated implementation of the proposed streetscape. An alternative solution might involve concentrating the lines on one side of the street and/or relocating some, or all, of the lines behind the shopping centers. Any approach would require coordination and agreement with the utility companies.

Unless and until the overhead utilities can be relocated, initial streetscaping plans would need to focus the addition of taller tree species within the medians and shorter landscaping solutions along the arterials where power lines exist.

Gateway/District Signage

As part of the aesthetic improvement and branding effort, gateway signage, similar in concept to that in the Rose District, should be considered. Entry signs or monuments could be erected on the four ingress points along New Orleans Street and Elm Place.

Approach

Renewing the Elm and New Orleans intersection requires a number of public projects to improve both functionality and aesthetics. These projects will be interrelated and complex. Near-term studies should be conducted as soon as possible to create a comprehensive and detailed plan to address transportation, landscaping, and infrastructure improvements, including costs and time-phasing.

While the studies are outlined and estimated costs are provided separately, these studies will have to work in harmony to ensure a holistic design and take advantage of any cost savings in implementation. These studies should examine:

- Ways to improving pedestrian safety and walkability while maintaining acceptable traffic flow – intersection lane narrowing, speed reduction, roundabout; walkability between quadrants and from adjacent neighborhoods to commercial area.
- Public transportation routes to include the New Orleans Square area.
- Bicycle path connectivity with the Rose District and Liberty Trail.
- Opportunities to improve aesthetics through sustainable landscaping, streetscaping, and public green spaces.
- Area infrastructure, particularly feasibility of relocating unsightly overhead utility lines.
- Design for area gateways and signage.

Focus 1 Recommendation.

- **Conduct near-term studies to improve infrastructure and public use and lay the groundwork for future implementation.**

Focus 2. Placemaking

Placemaking is a multi-faceted approach to the planning, design and management of public spaces. Placemaking capitalizes on the city's assets, inspiration, and potential, with the intention of creating spaces that promote health, happiness, and well-being. It is political due to the nature of place identity. Placemaking is both a process and a philosophy that makes use of urban design principles.

To be successful, New Orleans Square must develop

a sense of place, rather than an ad hoc collection of neighborhoods and commercial strip malls. Both public and private commitment is needed to turn this placemaking into a reality. Most of the commercial buildings and residences in the area were built in the 1980s for that demographic and market, and under zoning and other regulations and restrictive covenants that existed at the time. As a result, there is too little consistency and cohesiveness in design, use, and identity. The city should create an Overlay District, similar in scope and form to the one developed for Downtown Broken Arrow. This will help guide property owners and developers to work together to achieve appropriate consistency in retail, residential, and institutional designs and upgrades.

Tactical Urbanism

Tactical urbanism can be either government-led or community-driven, grass-roots initiatives, such as creating temporary and illustrative features such as walking paths or green spaces using chalk, paint, and planters. It may also involve open street events such as carnivals, sidewalk sales, or food trucks to

bring the public back to the area. Good placemaking makes use of underutilized space to enhance the urban experience at the pedestrian scale to encourage new habits and improve quality of life.

For example, on the northwest corner of the intersection, the parking lot immediately east of HomeChurch has been largely unused but remains one of its most visible areas that could be re-activated with some green space improvements, combined with the introduction of food trucks or kiosks. Nearby, the creation of a green space on the northwest corner could create a stronger connection to Vandever Park and the existing trails at St. Francis Healthplex.

In the southwest corner of the intersection, there is the possibility of a temporary park focused on providing covered outdoor eating opportunities for two new restaurants. In the short term it will be difficult to get the public to imagine these empty parking lots as a place they will want to linger, so this space would initially act as a protected oasis for dining patrons.

Several strip retail centers in other areas have been successful introducing green spaces to achieve a more pedestrian-friendly town square feel. Town Centre Plaza in Midwest City, Oklahoma and The Village at Eldorado in Little Elm, Texas both have introduced green spaces to break up large swaths of parking. The improvements give their retail spaces a feeling of being located on a more traditional, pedestrian-friendly shopping street.

Over time, expanded green spaces and additional bicycle and pedestrian pathways through the larger development will create a pedestrian-friendly environment around which future development can be clustered. Through the use of tactical urbanism, the property owners and the City of Broken Arrow can begin to test desirable locations for creating more extensive green spaces and pathways throughout the project phases.



Tactical urbanism strategies should be implemented in the near term to bring energy and excitement to the area. Local merchants could be encouraged to create smaller scale, grass roots events to test new features and promotions, bring in additional customer traffic, and create a sense of community in the square. Tactical urbanism will also remain valuable as the entire study area continues to evolve. Inexpensive and short-term projects can serve as a means of testing and piloting longer-term projects before substantial investments are made in permanent upgrades. As the New Orleans Square merchants, businesses, and restaurants become more popular, larger events such as car shows, festivals, and carnivals are likely to create a virtuous cycle of excitement, popularity, and growth.

Property & Business Owners Associations

Like the patchwork of zoning and regulation, property and business ownership are likewise fragmented.

The map below shows the ownership of properties in the study area. The multitude of stakeholders is a challenge to creating cohesive development. Communication between various property owners has historically been limited. The city should consider facilitating a commercial improvement district (CID) to help ensure that all stakeholders are working toward a common goal of revitalization, perhaps seeding the efforts with public funds.

Like the property owners, New Orleans Square business owners operate independently and without much communication. Property and business owners should be encouraged, with the support of the Chamber of Commerce and the City of Broken Arrow, to create Owners and Merchants Associations. These bodies would be beneficial and provide opportunities for discussions, negotiations, and cooperation in creating a shared vision of place for future development.

Focus 2 Recommendations

- **Create an overlay district for New Orleans Square. With this process, create appropriate zoning and encourage revision to private restrictive covenants.**
- **Promote creation of an Owners and Merchants Associations.**

Focus 3. Programming and Promotion

The Elm & New Orleans area has suffered from lack of a unique identity. In the early 1980s, it was known as Towne Centre, but that name was quickly forgotten. In 2020, the Broken Arrow Elm and New Orleans Advisory Committee was directed by the Broken Arrow City Council to suggest possible names for the area. Through public input over several months, the committee recommended, “New Orleans Square,” and this name was adopted by the City Council. While the area has been given a name, it will require time and effort before it becomes an identity. Branding will help with this process.

At the recommendation of the Committee, the City has selected an experienced marketing consultant to develop the New Orleans Square brand, including logos, taglines, color scheme, and promotional material. Once this branding is accomplished, merchants and property owners will be encouraged to use the theme and materials in their marketing and promoting efforts.

As a part of the branding process, the City of Broken Arrow should ensure that future infill and development in New Orleans Square is sensitive to the surrounding development context, exhibits a standard of high quality design and construction, and is consistent with the community’s overall vision and branding for the area.

Focus 3 Recommendations

- **Create branding and marketing materials for the promotion and identity of the area.**

Focus 4. Retail & Development

Creating a strong retail/mixed-use center within New Orleans Square will be an incremental process that relies heavily on the focuses of transportation, landscaping, infrastructure, and placemaking. Achieving this in the long-term will require a commitment by the city, Chamber of Commerce, and the merchants and property owners to cooperation and both public and private investment in the area. Guiding principles for collaboration should include: retaining existing businesses, attracting new and complementary business, enhancing private employment opportunities, incorporating a broader mix of public uses, and coordinating public and private investment.

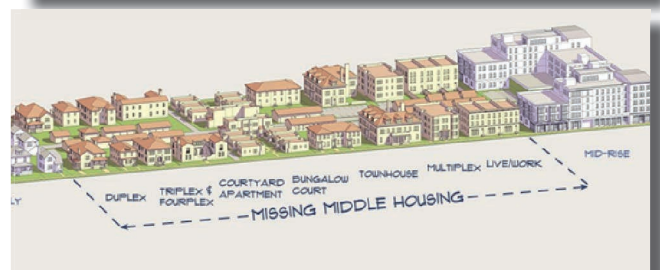
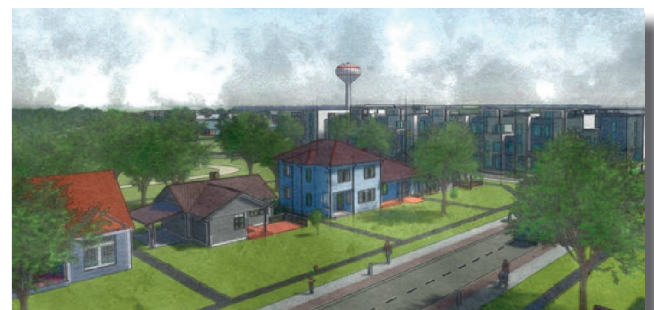
In addition to commercial development of the area, quality housing is also key to supporting sustainable retail development in the area. Nationwide, preferences of both older adults and millennials are shifting toward smaller, more affordable homes in walkable neighborhoods. Suburban single-family homes in many areas are giving way to a much larger spectrum of more desirable housing styles, such as duplexes, quadplexes, town homes, row houses, and bungalow courts located in or adjacent to shopping, dining, and other amenities.

In concert with the Overlay District development, the city should study residential infill housing options to create a transition between existing neighborhoods and the commercial areas in New Orleans Square and increase the area's residential density. Urban-style infill could provide opportunities for multi-story structures with retail and commercial on the

ground floor and upscale residences above. Green space, walking trails, and improved connectivity with existing commercial areas will be important aspects of this part of the placemaking plan.

The city should encourage a New Orleans Square that serves as a mixed-use town center with new housing types introduced as part of this revitalization effort. While the demand for these housing types is increasing, it can be difficult at first to find good development partners willing to try something new to this area. In these cases, many cities have instituted additional design standards to guide new development and incentives, such as Tax Increment Financing (TIF) to help offset some of the development costs.

The city should also consider creating a public use innovation center at New Orleans Square. This could be a makerspace, similar to Tulsa's FabLab, but owned by the city and operated as a non-profit venture. The makerspace could include a computer lab, CAD/CAM software, CNC machinery, power and hand tools, 3-D printers, laser cutters/engravers, electronic circuit fabrication & testing equipment, etc. This lab would be a linkage between the centers proposed in the Rose District and South Broken Arrow. It would bring in additional traffic by inventors, developers, and hobbyists, and students. Its location near the Freshman Academy and NSU would make the space



ideal for hands-on classes.

Focus 4 Recommendation

- **Conduct a study for infill residential and mixed-use development.**

Focus 5. Financing & Organization

Financing

Achieving the vision of a successful New Orleans Square area will require funding over a sustained period of time, in excess of that which is likely available through sales tax and general obligation bonds. The city should consider the adoption of a project plan pursuant to the Local Development Act as an enhancement strategy for funding these important revitalization efforts. By doing so, the city may increase its ability to fund the restoration of existing buildings through a rebate or loan program. The city may seek financing for further development of the Elm & New Orleans area, use public funding to leverage private investment, identify specific projects and initiatives appropriate for enhanced funding sources, general obligation bond initiatives, and partnerships with other government agencies. In addition to the above actions, the city should explore the possible of creating a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district.

The long-term implementation of the New Orleans Square Master Plan may involve the following elements:

- The Priority Improvements/Actions as outlined in this plan;
- City Lodging and General Fund revenues;
- Ongoing private improvements;
- Community Development Corporation (public or private);

- A New Orleans Square tax increment financing (TIF) district to capitalize on the potential ongoing revenues from the area and use those revenues to further implement the vision;
- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding if the area becomes eligible;
- Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT) transportation enhancement grants;
- Additional city capital fund and/ or bond commitments for specific projects;
- Dedicated, limited time, sales tax increase;
- Other grants; and
- Potential future Metropolitan Area bond issues and/or programs (such as the recently proposed library district bond issue).

Near-term funds available through the General Obligation Bond should be used to start the near-term studies outlined in this plan.

Organization

To help the City Council manage the funding and development of the area, a new advisory board should be created. While the Broken Arrow Elm & New Orleans Advisory Committee was created to provide recommendations to the City Council for development of the plan, the city should establish a five-member New Orleans Square Advisory Board to advise and assist the City Council as it implements these plans. The advisory board would help provide oversight to carry out the recommendations of the New Orleans Square Master Plan over time. The New Orleans Square Advisory Board (NOSAB) would work with city staff, Chamber staff, property owners, and merchants to help coordinate activity and investment.

Key responsibilities for the New Orleans Square Advisory Board and, especially, the staff Design and Development Coordinator will be to:

- Monitor the expenditure of the Lodging Tax and General Fund expenditures;
- Identify opportunities to attract and leverage future private investment and improvements; and
- Identify, evaluate, and promote use of additional public funding sources, including:
- Allocation of New Orleans Square/ TIF funds, and
- Additional potential public funding based on a cost/benefit evaluation of potential public funding opportunities relative to the downtown plan and Vision.

Focus 5 Recommendations

- **Utilize existing funding to begin studies and undertake enhancement projects for the district while exploring other funding opportunities.**
- **Create an implementation Board to oversee the New Orleans Square Master Plan.**

Implementation

The critical near-term studies proposed will enable the city to determine the best ways to improve the function and appearance of New Orleans Square. Creating an overlay district will help unify future improvements and ensure new development contributes to the long-term vision for the area. City improvements to functionality and aesthetics will undoubtedly spur private investment and create a virtuous cycle of use and improvement. Creating a small Board to assist the City Council with implementation will be particularly useful as study reports become available with options for implementation.

The following summarize the recommended priorities moving forward, a set of proposed values to guide implementation, and a select list of anticipated outcomes from the implementation.

PRIORITIES

- Conduct near-term studies to redesign the intersection, improve walkability, install landscaping, re-route overhead utilities, etc.
- Create an overlay district for the area to guide improvements and development.
- Establish a New Orleans Square Advisory Board to assist the City Council in oversight and leadership in implementing this plan. The Advisory Board should monitor changing and dynamic market needs to guide long-term sustainable development.
- Realign land uses through redevelopment (in accordance with overlay district provisions)
- Attract private investment to create high-quality economic development activity in commercial, residential, and retail.
- Promote the vision of New Orleans Square as a choice location to live, work, and play.

VALUES

- High-quality future development
- Family-friendly
- Destination uses and activities
- Walkable public space, gathering places, and pocket parks
- Broader housing choices
- Connected to adjoining neighborhoods (transitions versus buffers)

OUTCOMES

- Infill development is used to reduce infrastructure costs.
- Parcels along primary roads are used for active restaurants and destination retail.
- New residential development in New Orleans Square incorporates a diverse and complementary mix of lot sizes and housing types, including senior housing, cottages, town homes, and urban residential.
- Residential development in area supports mixed-uses with a well-connected pedestrian sidewalk/trail network to improve walkability.
- Redevelopment of urban residential use where appropriate.
- A compact, highly connected street network that accommodates urban development and multi-modal options.
- Parking deserts are reduced by implementing new standards that promote shared parking, pad site development in underutilized lot areas, improved lighting and landscaping.
- Branding for New Orleans Square includes eye-catching and uniform gateways, signage, and wayfinding.
- Property owners make investments to modernize or replace older buildings and to improve older commercial facades to higher quality standards.
- Amenities such as brick sidewalks, benches, and fountains are provided to encourage walkability and public enjoyment of open spaces.
- Visual appeal is substantially improved by burying or relocating overhead utility lines.
- Streetscapes and parking lots are outfitted with additional sustainable plantings, lighting, and markings to improve aesthetics and safety.
- An innovation makerspace to spur learning and entrepreneurship is created as a city-owned, non-profit, public-use center.

