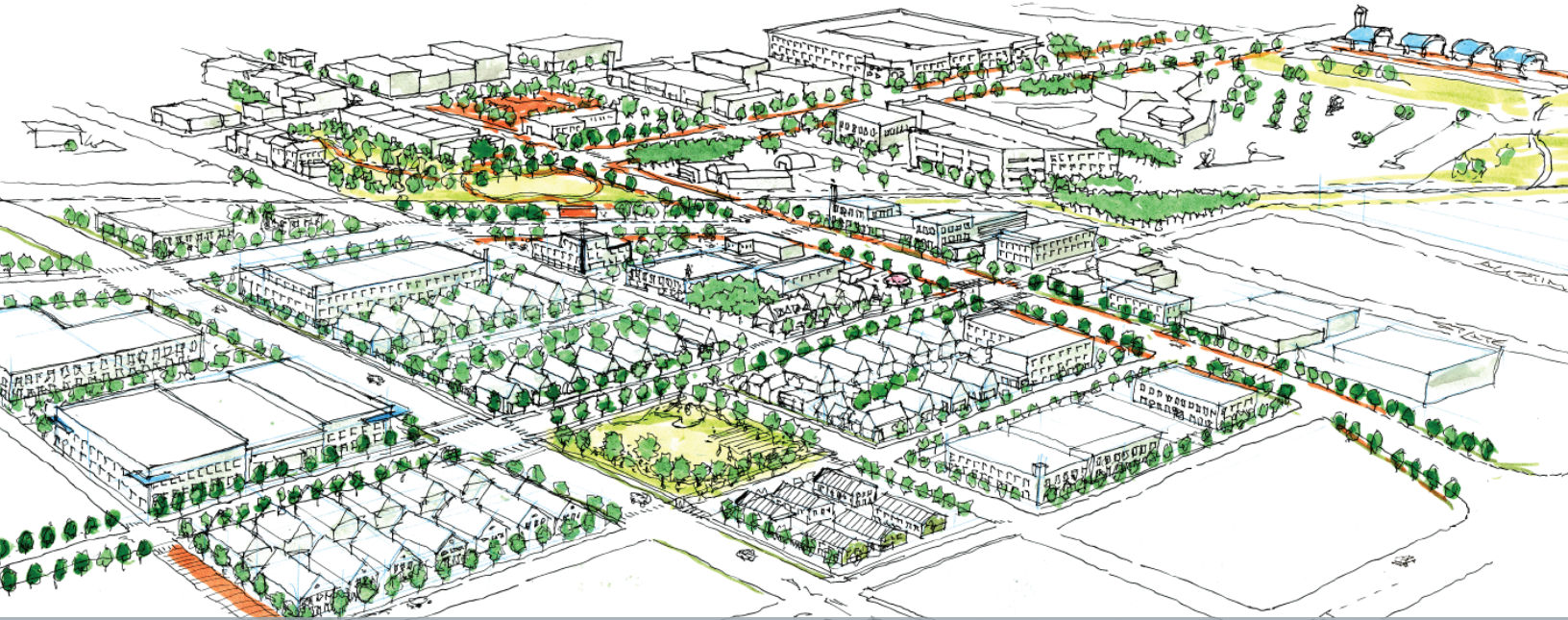




GARLAND

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OLD EMBREE | GARLAND, TEXAS

CNU 23 LEGACY CHARRETTE 2015

CNU



**VAN METER
WILLIAMS
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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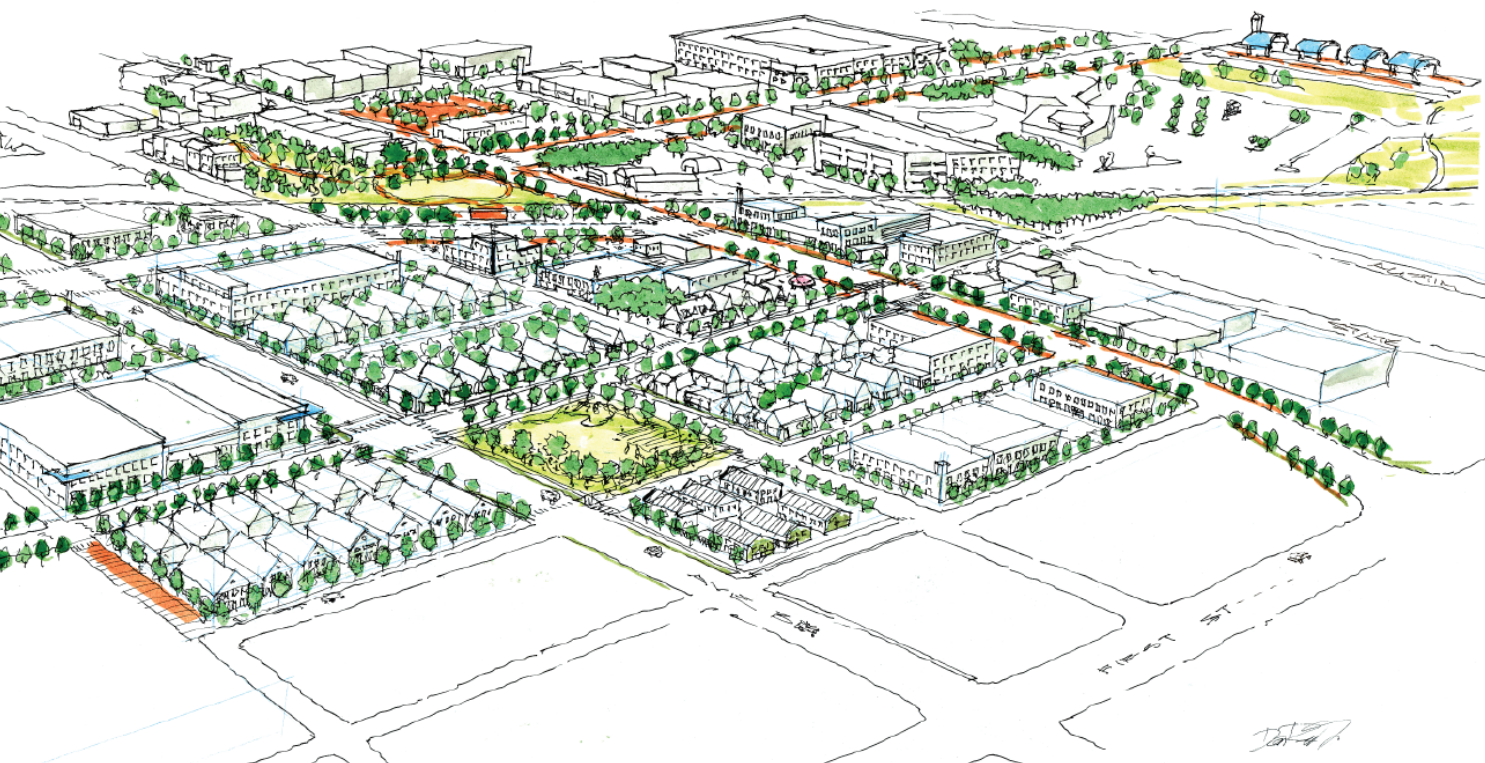
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CNU LEGACY CHARRETTE - GARLAND, TEXAS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Congress for the New Urbanism has always prided itself on making communities better, more walkable places. Our membership has been building places people love for decades. This year, CNU23 will take place in Dallas in order to highlight how to meet the demand for walkable places. In addition to hosting sessions, tours, and networking events, CNU has piloted the Legacy Charrettes Program for the first time in 2015. Through volunteer work from visiting and local professionals, city staff, and countless hours from neighborhood stakeholders, Van Meter Williams Pollack has teamed with the City of Garland, Verdunity and Ash+Lime to create a vision and implementation plan for the East End of Downtown Garland. Downtown Garland has seen some redevelopment and streetscaping in the western portion of downtown, however none of this success has reached across the railroad tracks. This portion is characterized by aging, generally declining commercial and residential development on small lots. The Team looked at incorporating East End, also known as “Old Embree,” into downtown through public investments and activities.

VISION AND PRIORITIES

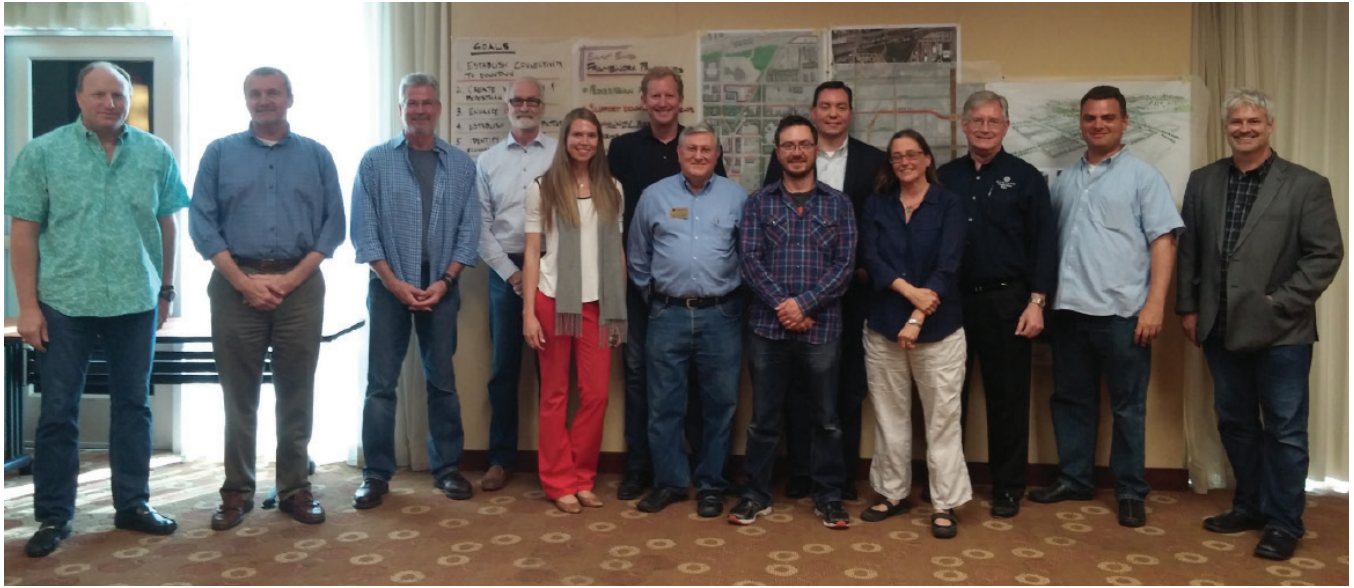
By listening to residents, business owners, and civic leaders, and understanding the strengths and challenges of the area, the consultant teams defined five framework principles to guide the charrette:

- Pedestrian Focus
- Support downtown investments
- Community resilience (fiscal, environmental, family)
- Incremental activation
- Livable infrastructure

CNU LEGACY CHARRETTE - GARLAND TEXAS



Project Area



EAST END - GARLAND, TX

DESIRED PRODUCT/OUTCOME:

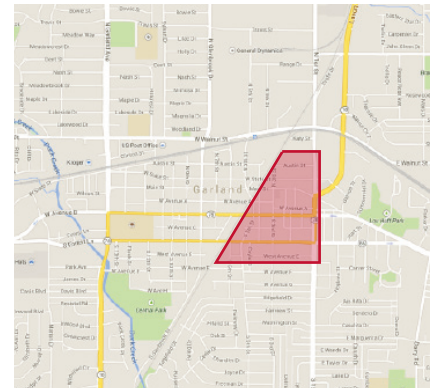
A vision and redevelopment implementation plan for the East End of Downtown Garland.

PROJECT LOCATION:

The initial study area proposed was an approximate 50 acre area bound by State Street (north), First Street (east), Avenue D (south) and the railroad tracks (west). After the site tour, the study area was expanded northward toward the DART station to include the existing creek and buildings along Austin Street.

PROJECT AREA DESCRIPTION:

The project area is characterized by aging, generally declining commercial and residential development located on small, individually-owned substandard lots. Most of the neighborhood is zoned for heavy commercial uses and is developed with a mixture of single family homes, automotive uses, contractor storage yards and small office and retail uses, with vacant lots scattered throughout the area. With the exception of some small-scale redevelopment and site improvement efforts along Main Street and First Street, very little investment has occurred in recent years. The area was initially referred to as the East End, but after further discussions, we are recommending branding the area as the “Old Embree Neighborhood”.



Context Map



Charrette Team digging in to the project

CNU LEGACY CHARRETTE - GARLAND TEXAS



Main Street Corridor Looking East Toward First Street



Main Street Corridor Looking West At Railroad Crossing Into Downtown Core



Haskell Street Looking North Toward Main Street

ADVANTAGES AND OPPORTUNITIES:

1. Gateway to Downtown Garland at Main/First/Lavon/SH 78 intersection from the east (Rowlett/Rockwall via SH 66), north (SH 190/Firewheel Corridor via SH 78) and south (First/Broadway)
2. Transected or bound by heavily traveled thoroughfare corridors including First Street, Main Street, Avenue B and Avenue D
3. Proximity to DART rail (Downtown Garland Station) and bus routes
4. Proximity to Downtown core featuring historic Square, entertainment venues, restaurants, retail, government employment center, Fifth Street Crossing and City Center multi-family Transit Oriented Developments, recent streetscape and infrastructure improvements
5. Included in first phase of Garland's Wayfinding program to be implemented in Spring of 2015
6. Part of City's commitment to, and focus on, Downtown redevelopment as set forth in the Downtown Redevelopment Implementation Plan (2005, prepared by RTKL)
7. Some Capital Improvement Program (CIP) funding available for corridor revitalization and gateway enhancement
8. Potential realignment of SH 78
9. Within proposed Downtown Form-Based Code currently under review by Plan Commission and City Council

CHALLENGES:

1. Separated from Downtown core by active railroad tracks
2. Small, substandard lots under individual ownership
3. Mixture of marginal, incompatible uses, many of which are nonconforming with respect to zoning and development standards
4. Street pattern is somewhat incongruous
5. Lack of sidewalks and pedestrian improvements
6. Presents unattractive entry to Downtown core
7. Lack of organized, engaged ownership
8. Lack of a vision for redevelopment
9. Desire to bring through State Highway 78 through Main Street

GOALS FOR PROJECT:

1. Establish connectivity to Downtown core
2. Create walkability/pedestrian amenities
3. Enhance gateways and major thoroughfare corridors
4. Establish logical street patterns
5. Identify compatible and economically feasible land use pattern
6. Develop marketing and redevelopment strategy
7. Evaluate potential impacts of SH 78 realignment



Site Analysis and Opportunities



Initial Framework Concept



Initial Development Concepts



FRAMEWORK PRINCIPLES

After understanding the opportunities and constraints of the project area, the design team put together a set of framework principles to guide the charrette

The planning team focused its efforts around five principles:

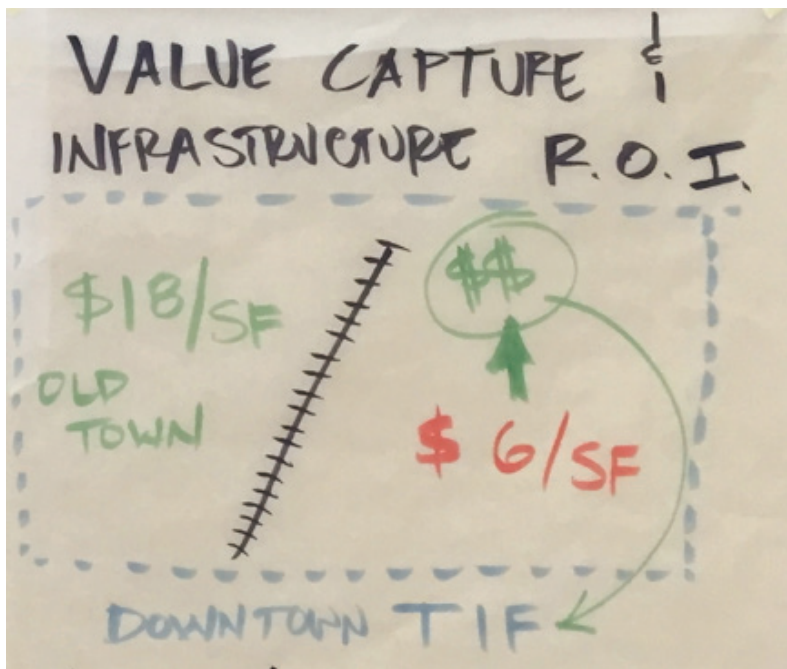
- Pedestrian Focus
- Support Downtown Investments
- Community Resilience (Fiscal * Environmental * Family)
- Incremental Activation
- Livable Infrastructure

1. PEDESTRIAN FOCUS

The prosperity of older neighborhoods in Garland is dependent upon high-quality pedestrian amenities. Currently, the Old Embree Neighborhood is unfriendly to pedestrians, with spotty pedestrian infrastructure, several high-speed, difficult-to-cross roads, and sidewalk-adjacent surface parking lots. Making the area safer and more accessible for pedestrians was the highest priority for the team.

2. SUPPORT DOWNTOWN INVESTMENTS

Both the city and the private market have made large investments in Downtown Garland. While these investments have successfully added taxable value to the core of the downtown, there has been little corresponding investment on peripheral neighborhoods including the project study area. The Old Embree Neighborhood needs to develop in a manner that revitalizes the existing area and drives additional people into Downtown.



Concept of building on downtown investments

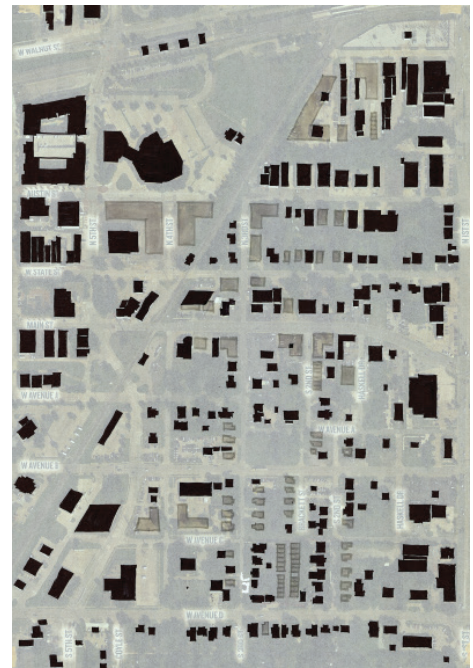


Figure-ground Diagram

3. COMMUNITY RESILIENCE (FISCAL/ENVIRONMENTAL/FAMILY)

Many communities are struggling to maintain existing infrastructure, address emerging environmental issues such as deteriorating water and air quality, and provide housing, jobs and retail that multiple generations are seeking. Garland is no different. The Old Embree Neighborhood is a location where some coordinated investment on the city's behalf can address all three of these areas by boosting revenues and property values, demonstrating best practices in storm water management, and providing a new type of housing that is in high demand in the DFW market (single family in a walkable, mixed use neighborhood with access to transit).

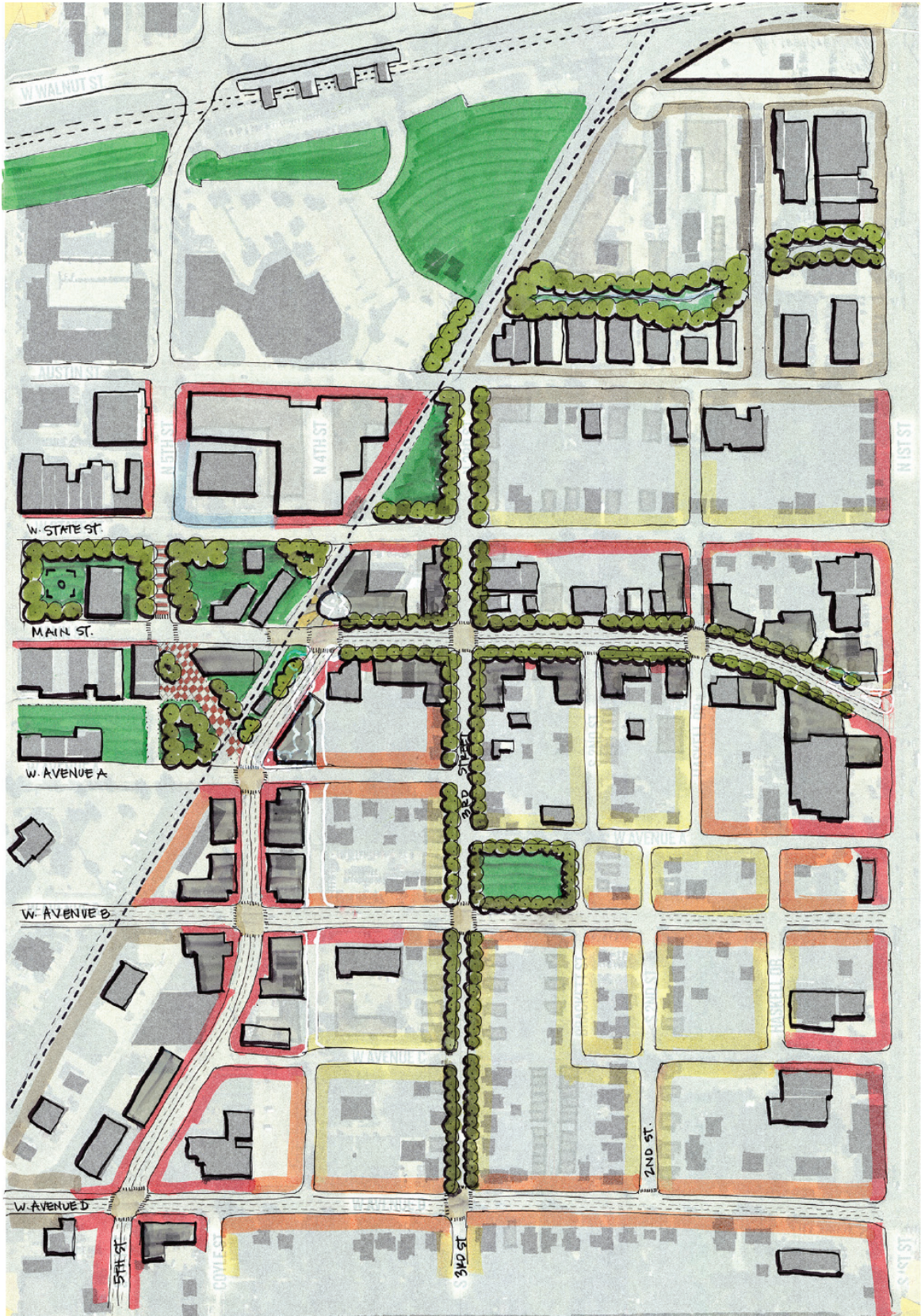
4. INCREMENTAL ACTIVATION

While significant infrastructure investments will be required to fully transform the Main and Third corridors, there are some low-cost activities that can be done immediately to bring the neighbors together, connect activities with downtown, and improve wayfinding and safety. Downtown Garland has made a variety of small, community-based investments in recent months which have helped to spur substantial revitalization. This same approach can be applied in the Old Embree Neighborhood, allowing the area to evolve over time and enable existing property owners to “cash out, not be pushed out.” Potential techniques and strategies are described in the Appendix

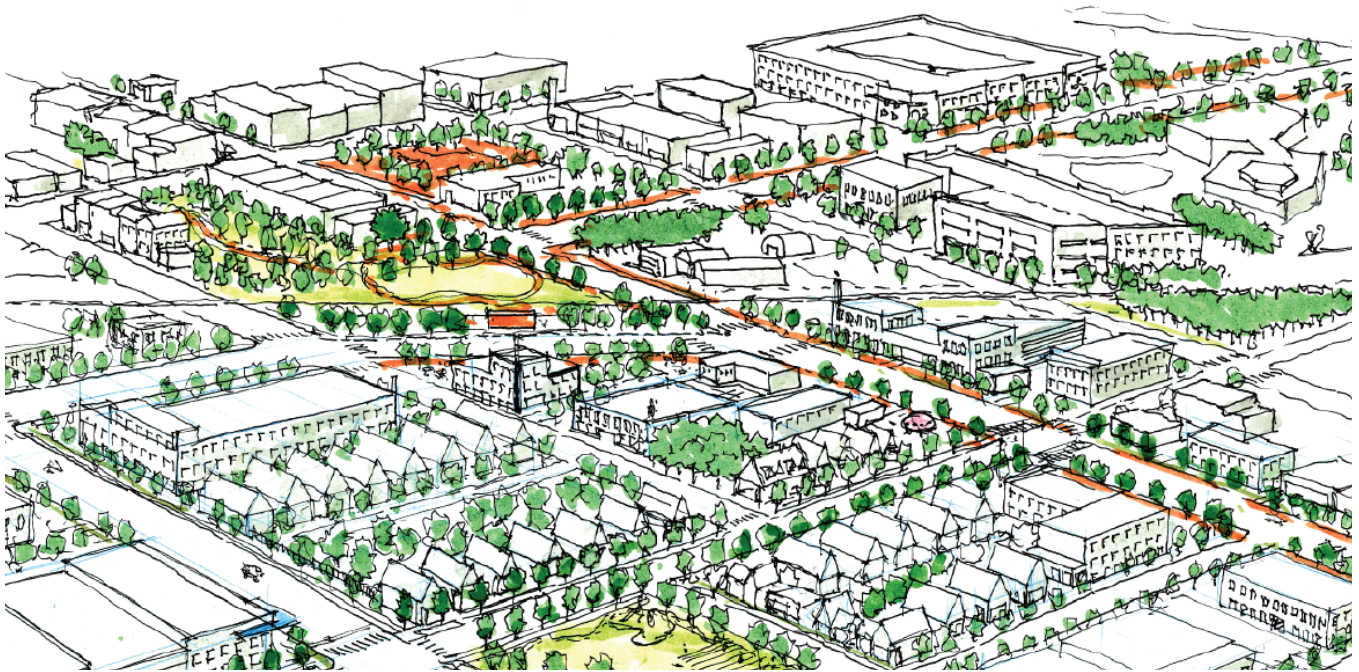
5. LIVABLE INFRASTRUCTURE

Walkable, resilient places depend on a balance of built (hard) and natural (soft) infrastructure. Communities are beginning to understand the importance of designing roads, drainage and other infrastructure in a manner that allows the land use to change over time without having to go back in and make additional infrastructure investments. The proposed plan includes an infrastructure and development approach that will maximize use of public right-of-way and infrastructure investment.

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Concept Plan



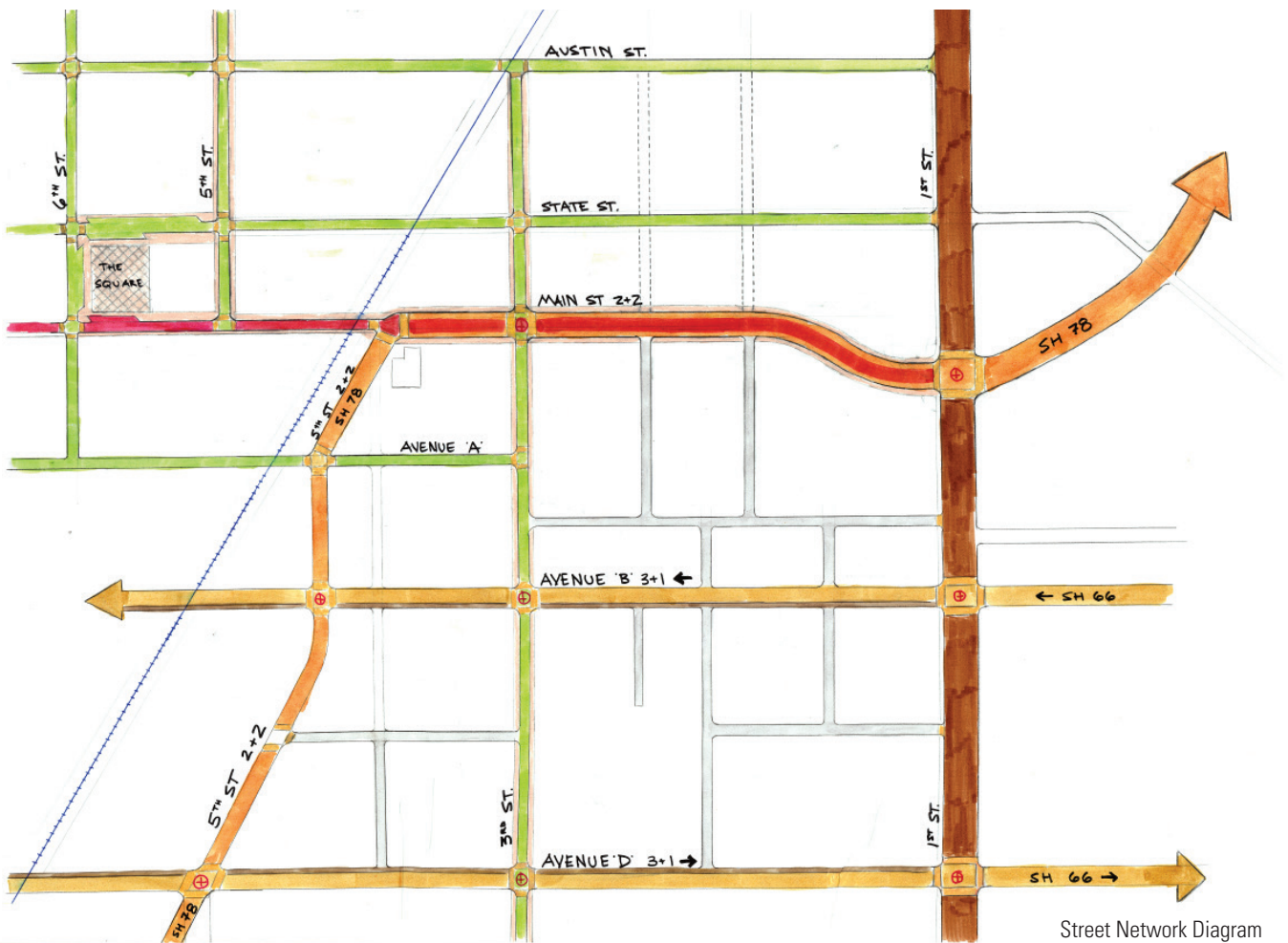
OPPORTUNITIES

Through the course of the charrette, the following opportunities were identified and integrated into the concept plan and implementation strategies:

- Capture and enhance value of properties in the Old Embree Neighborhood and Downtown
- Establish Main Street as a gateway into Downtown and the primary corridor for multi-story development
- Make pedestrians the priority on Third Street
- Integrate open space and green infrastructure in a manner that enhances surrounding property values but also helps manage storm water and improve water quality
- Create a “Makerspace” that complements Garland’s “Texas Made Here” brand and provides space and programming to help develop local entrepreneurs and artists
- Provide a branding approach and implementation strategy that encourages incremental redevelopment and allows existing buildings to change uses over time

I. CAPTURE AND ENHANCE THE VALUE OF THE DOWNTOWN TIF

A quick assessment of property values showed the value of property in the downtown area at just over \$18/SF versus an average value of around \$6/SF in the study area east of the railroad tracks. This project represents an incredible opportunity for the city to take a historically underperforming area and transform it to be three to four times more fiscally productive than it is today. As the Old Embree neighborhood transforms, it will also drive additional traffic to the core downtown, improving the value and fiscal productivity of those properties and businesses even more. This additional revenue will be captured in the Downtown TIF, and can be used to fund future projects to continue to improve the area over time. It is also important to note that the location and design of the potential SH78 realignment will likely have a significant impact on the ultimate value potential of this area.

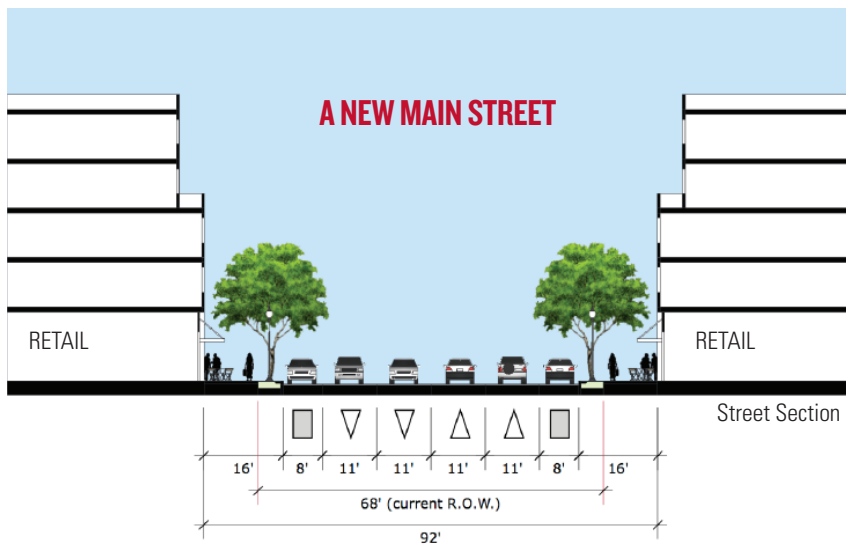


2. ESTABLISH MAIN STREET AS A GATEWAY

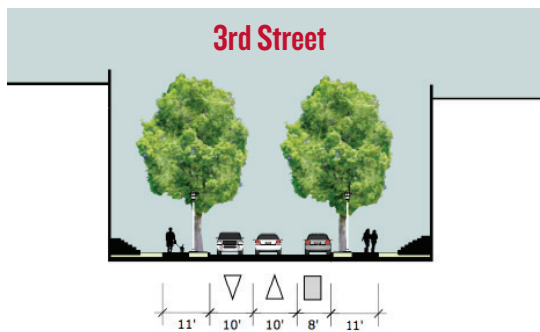
Main Street is the logical corridor to be designed as the main gateway into Downtown from the east. Early in the charrette process, the team was informed of the city's ongoing Thoroughfare Plan Update, which included an option to re-route SH78 through the study area as a potential six-lane divided section. The team met with city representatives to express concerns about how this would impact the walkability and redevelopment potential of the neighborhood, understand the reasons driving the potential realignment and widening, and discuss options that would still meet the team's design principles and goals.

The result of the charrette process was a proposed section for Main that can accommodate the required traffic volumes, but will do so at a more controlled speed. The section will require approximately 12' of right-of-way acquisition on each side, which will be used to construct wider sidewalks with planters and streetscape amenities. Wayfinding improvements should be installed at the existing 78 intersection to direct people toward the Old Embree neighborhood and Downtown, and then again at the east side of the railroad crossing to let people know they are about to enter Downtown and to be aware of pedestrians.

The diversion of SH78 through Main Street and onto 5th Street will open an opportunity to transform the Avenue B and Avenue D couplet into two way streets with one counter flow lane and two to three lanes in their current direction. It is highly recommended that crosswalks and a signalized intersection is located at the 3rd Street intersections.



The redesign of Main Street is the most critical infrastructure project required to transform the neighborhood. Additional coordination will be required related to the realignment of SH78, and the City will need to secure funding to complete the ultimate construction. In the meantime, we are proposing some tactical efforts be undertaken to engage and educate local stakeholders about various options and inform the design for what is ultimately built.



3. MAKE PEDESTRIANS THE PRIORITY ON THIRD STREET

While Main Street will be the primary vehicular corridor through the site, Third Street will be the main corridor for pedestrians north-south through the area. It became apparent during the site walk and first meeting with citizens that it was extremely important to provide a safe street for people to walk and bike from the area south of Avenue D through the Old Embree Neighborhood to Downtown. The team is recommending Third Street be improved with clear signage and striping for sharrows (shared between cars and bikes) and on street parking, as well as adding street trees and sidewalks to make pedestrians comfortable. Signalized intersections with prominent crosswalks are recommended at Avenue B and D. Third Street is also a good corridor to incorporate green infrastructure as a way to collect and convey storm water through the site.



Environmental Finance Center, University of Maryland; water.epa.gov



Portland, OR Greet Street



Techshop DC-Arlington, VA



Techshop, San Francisco, CA

4. INTEGRATE OPEN SPACE AND GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE FOR FUNCTION AND VALUE

Open space, trees and other natural features are critical to making a neighborhood walkable, and having quality open space nearby can boost property values as much as thirty or forty percent. As the neighborhood develops, portions of existing vacant lots will likely be converted to impervious surfaces where rainwater becomes runoff. Rain gardens, bioswales and other green infrastructure can be integrated throughout the neighborhood to mitigate pollution of downstream water bodies and reduce the amount of storm water infrastructure required to accommodate future development in the neighborhood.

In addition, well-designed public spaces serve as important neighborhood anchors, creating key hubs for community members to meet and collaborate. Numerous underutilized open spaces in the neighborhood could, at relatively modest cost, be converted into engaging spaces for people.

5. CREATE A “MAKERSPACE”

A Makerspace is a community-directed facility where people share knowledge and resources to prototype industrial and technological projects. Depending on local interest, makerspaces can cross-pollinate between industries or be focused on a specific niche such as metal working or electronics technology. The creation of a makerspace as a strategic incubator space commonly are designed to facilitate, encourage, and support local creatives/talents. The makerspace will leverage the enthusiasm of the Garland community to serve as a point of convergence and landmark for the emerging creative district. The makerspace will support, enhance, and celebrate Garland’s character as a multifaceted city with a prominent industrial character.

More broadly, the northern part of the study area (e.g. Katy and Austin Streets) combines an industrial character with a close proximity to the downtown and DART station. There could be an opportunity to rebrand this neighborhood as a “Makers District,” which supports a wide variety of creative light industrial enterprises, high tech incubator spaces, or artistic enterprises such as sculpture.

6.DEVELOP A NEIGHBORHOOD BRANDING AND MARKETING STRATEGY

One of the first steps toward neighborhood revitalization is the creation of a distinct identity. Old Embree harkens back to the name of the original town in this location, before the town of Duck Creek and Embree combined and renamed themselves Garland. Strategies to brand the neighborhood may include:

- Collaborate with a professional designer and the community to develop the brand
- Sign toppers
- Pedestrian and cyclist-oriented wayfinding to downtown and to specific destinations. Include distances or minutes of travel by foot and by bike
- Gateway indicators such as signage, public art etc. at key locations (such as Main at First)
- Mural projects
- Media presence and social media campaign



Gateway Art (Gavin Gustavo, Local Garland Artist)

IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM

Below are suggested actions to help Garland achieve its goals for the Old Embree Neighborhood, broken out by short, medium and long-term timeframes. The specific timeframe for implementing the various strategies will depend on many variables, including available funding, staff resources and community priorities.

SHORT TERM (NEXT 3 MONTHS)

- Identify which City Staff will be responsible for taking the lead on overall implementation of the recommendations of this study
- Adopt Form Based Code (anticipated for May 2015)
- Conduct a follow-up discussion regarding the SH78 realignment and coordinate approach between the Thoroughfare Plan update and what is proposed in this study
- Conduct a follow-up neighborhood meeting to continue the process of engaging citizens and business owners
- Identify the key residents, business owners and other community stakeholders who could take leadership roles in the community
- Identify the vacant and underutilized spaces which could be used as parks, or for events (see appendix)



Oak Cliff Wayfinding, Dalla Morning News



MEDIUM TERM (3-12 MONTHS)

- Prepare more detailed assessment of the area to verify and expand on the initial findings of this study, including land ownership and property values, transportation needs, infrastructure condition and replacement costs, and stormwater management opportunities.
- Branding/logo contest
- Wayfinding oriented toward pedestrian and bicycle distances to key locations
- Events (see appendix)
- Beautification projects (see appendix)
- Infrastructure demonstration

LONG TERM (1-3 YEARS, OR AS FUNDS BECOME AVAILABLE)

- Makerspace
- Design Studio
- SH78/Main Redesign
- Third Street Redesign

IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

PROJECT	3 Months	3-12 Months	1-3 Years
Adopt Form Based Code (anticipated for May 2015)	o		
Hold Follow-up Meetings RE SH78 Realignment and Section	o		
Hold Follow-up Meetings RE SH78 Realignment and Section			
Identify key stakeholders who could take leadership roles	o		
Identify City Staff responsible for taking the lead on future implementation	o		
Identify the vacant and underutilized spaces which could be used as parks or for events	o		
Complete detailed assessment to supplement CNU charrette findings			
Branding and Logo Design		o	
Wayfinding- Pedestrian and Bicycle		o	
Events		o	
Beautification		o	
Infrastructure Demonstration		o	
Makerspace			o
Design Studio			o
Third Street Redesign			o
SH78/Main Redesign			o

APPENDIX: POTENTIAL IMPLEMENTATION TECHNIQUES AND STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT INCREMENTAL REDEVELOPMENT

OVERVIEW

The incremental activation strategy advocated in this report is rooted in community stakeholders as the key drivers and primary beneficiaries of revitalization strategies. It is based upon helping empower local business owners and residents investing their time, money and creativity in their own neighborhoods. This encourages investments which are consistent with, and build upon, the neighborhood's existing character. The underlying idea is to gradually enhance the area by supporting evolutionary changes, rather than large scale developments which can overwhelm and uproot the community. In all cases, this strategy is intended to directly support the framework principles and to make use of the opportunities identified in this report.

OBJECTIVE:

The key activation goals are to strengthen the local community character and identity, to attract mechanical/technological creatives, to galvanize the existing community around a few key gathering spaces, to begin building/demonstrating important infrastructure enhancements, and to draw on the momentum of Garland's Downtown revitalization to support neighborhood investment.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROCESS:

It will be crucial to talk to residents, business owners, and other community stakeholders in order to find out their skills, engage them in projects, and empower them to invest social capital in the neighborhood. Community engagement and empowerment will determine what projects will be immediately implementable and what timeline will be feasible.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE:

To create a foundation for activating this area, stakeholders need to form partnerships to take on projects and activities. Stakeholders may include:

- Local residents
- Area business owners
- Property owners
- City Staff
- Local creatives

We recommend that local leaders consider forming a neighborhood association to help take initiative on these issues.





EVENTS:

Once the community is organized, it must be active to remain relevant. While some events can be catered towards the local community, others should attract people from the outside to discover and appreciate this area's unique character. The access to transit and proximity to the downtown core should be emphasized. In addition, it will be important to have temporary wayfinding to direct people to key locations and highlight the short distances between locations.

Ideally, events should support activation of underutilized spaces, thus serving a double function of:

- Develop community gathering spaces
- Hold events to attract and retain makers and creatives:

Potential events may include:

- Popup dog park
- Lectures, poetry readings, book clubs, other outdoor meetings
- Exploratory Scavenger Hunt
- Popup retail in underutilized spaces on Main Street
- Partnering with Breitling Youth Theatre to create family friendly events

Beautification Projects:

Aesthetic improvements are a sign of an engaged community which is benefitting from new investments. They indicate new life and can help change perceptions of an area. In addition, they can encourage citizens and visitors to feel comfortable exploring and engaging with the neighborhood.

Examples may include:

- Little free libraries
- Artist competitions for public artwork
- Seating areas for neighbors and visitors
- Tree plantings
- Playgrounds



INFRASTRUCTURE DEMONSTRATIONS:

Before making long-term, multi-million dollar investments, it is advisable to prototype projects which help engage citizens and inform subsequent steps. Demonstration projects on streets can help accomplish these goals; an example may include using cones to temporarily narrow the street and observe the impacts on traffic patterns and pedestrian mobility.



- Demonstrate and test the potential for redesign of key streets, as recommended in this plan. For example:
- Main Street – use paint or vinyl to delineate sidewalks, use bollards, bumpers, railroad ties or other temporary structures to separate pedestrians from cars along Main St
- Third Street – Demonstrate bike lanes and functional landscaping (such as bioswales)
- Avenues B and D – temporarily narrow streets or permit on-street parking to demonstrate that the narrowed streets are capable of handling current traffic values; demonstrate pedestrian crosswalks along Third where it intersects these avenues.
- Demonstrate activation potential of opening Austin St through from Third to Fourth Streets by creating a crushed-granite walkway for pedestrians
- Put compressed granite where sidewalks are lacking or in need of repair

DESIGN STUDIO:

A design studio is a neighborhood-based implementation hub that could be used to help develop community projects, foster collaboration, and support stakeholders' initiatives. Such a studio would be particularly well-suited to serve as a drop in center, which will allow individuals to share ideas, learn about neighborhood initiatives, and collaborate on issues of neighborhood concern. Located in Garland's downtown core, it could include staff, consultants, and volunteers who would empower neighborhood leaders to think creatively to solve problems.

Such a studio could serve as a “quarterback”—a central coordinator and local advocate—for Old Embree and other downtown neighborhoods. It can comprehensively analyze the area's important places, transportation and connectivity, and other social needs and opportunities. The focus could be on both a toolbox of short-term implementation projects and longer-term designs. In addition, it could be a go-to resource for support for entrepreneurs and small business owners, connecting them to business plan assistance, incubators and mentoring programs, etc.

Finally, this studio could help residents, small business owners, and property owners deal with the unique regulatory changes that face neighborhoods such as Old Embree.



CNU

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