

CHOCTAW 23RD STREET CORRIDOR PLAN

acog
ASSOCIATION OF
CENTRAL OKLAHOMA
GOVERNMENTS



CHOCTAW
A Great Place to Live!



CHRISTOPHER C. GIBBS COLLEGE OF ARCHITECTURE
INSTITUTE FOR QUALITY COMMUNITIES
The UNIVERSITY of OKLAHOMA



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01

PROJECT
INTRODUCTION

CERI: COMMUNITY ECONOMIC RESILIENCY INITIATIVE

In 2021, the Association of Central Oklahoma Governments (ACOG) initiated the Community Economic Resiliency Initiative (CERI) to offer municipalities the opportunity to develop plans that model strategic investment, sustainable economic recovery, and long-term resiliency in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

ACOG partnered with the University of Oklahoma (OU) Institute for Quality Communities (IQC) to collaborate in shaping the program and providing services to communities selected to participate in CERI. Through a competitive application process, the City of Choctaw and City of Noble were selected.

This document compiles recommendations based on research and engagement carried out by the OU Institute for Quality Communities in response to these community-driven proposals.

Choctaw: The City of Choctaw sought a corridor study of 23rd Street, Choctaw’s primary commercial corridor. The IQC team conducted regular steering committee meetings, composed a community survey for citizens and high school students, along with additional research about the local area. The process resulted in four pillars for NE 23rd Street including pedestrian prioritization, economic development, housing, and placemaking. These goals were explored through conceptual designs, case studies, and a sidewalk gap analysis.

Noble: The City of Noble sought a plan for its historic downtown district. The IQC team conducted regular steering committee meetings and attended two local festivals to engage with residents on participation for a community survey and design preference activities. Research and data collection/analysis were also key components of this project to gauge a sense of the community’s needs and preferences. The process resulted in four big themes: pedestrian safety, placemaking, beautification, and economic development.



COLLABORATORS

STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

JULIE FARMER
CALVIN MOORE
WADE MOORE
KENNETH SMITH
SAM CURTIS
DR. JIM COLLARD
TAWNY SHELBY
SARAH HUFFINE

OU IQC

VANESSA MORRISON
RON FRANTZ
REBECCA BLAINE
EMILY PENDERGRAST
NATALIE YOUNG
MAHATHI AKELLA
ANAHITA NIKNEJAD
LOGAN GRAY
BRIANNA HALEY

ACOG

MARK W. SWEENEY, AICP
CHRISTOPHER BLUTH
SHARON ASTRIN

PROFESSIONAL MENTOR

JOSH KUNKEL

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The aim of the project is to establish a framework and offer recommendations to aid the city of Choctaw in focusing on four major themes that will contribute to revitalizing and rejuvenating the 23rd Street corridor in Choctaw. This corridor has experienced swift growth and advancement during the past decade, a trend that is likely to continue. The project's success hinges on prioritizing the preservation and celebration of historical landmarks, promoting community gathering spaces, and creating a pedestrian-friendly and connected area.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Four Steering Committee Meetings
- Two in-person community engagement events
- 877 survey responses

FOUR FOCUS THEMES

- Walkability
- Housing
- Economic Development
- Placemaking

FUNDING AND IMPLEMENTATION

- ACOG grant
- Recommendations for additional funding



FIRST CHARTERED CITY



OKLAHOMA

StudyHub
ELEVATE
STUDIO OF PERFORMING ARTS

StudyHub
ELEVATE
STUDIO OF PERFORMING ARTS

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The City of Choctaw applied to the ACOG CERI Program with the goal of revitalizing their 23rd Street corridor. Choctaw does not have a typical, historic downtown like many Oklahoma communities, which presents some challenges when it comes to creating a walkable space.

Although Choctaw houses an impressive amount of successful small businesses, many big box stores have also come to the city, which has created a denser fabric.

The intention of the project is to create a design for the corridor that would foster a sense of community by allowing people to walk, bike, or use other forms of micromobility to get from place to place and to have gathering spaces. There is a focus on economic growth, through not only keeping the small businesses the city has, but also providing resources for new businesses to start up. Honoring the historical and cultural roots of the community have been identified as key components of the mission of this project. The tribal territory of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation intersects with the city limits of Choctaw, spanning from Indian

Meridian Road to Triple X Road. Although there exists some level of collaboration between the city and the tribe, fostering a stronger working relationship would prove mutually advantageous. This is particularly significant considering the tribe's intentions to establish a substantial healthcare complex within the area.

With the development of the Kickapoo Turnpike east of Choctaw, 23rd Street is seeing an increase in vehicular traffic, presenting an opportunity to incentivize people to stop and explore the town. The creation and direction of a corridor plan is crucial to making these efforts. Additionally, the citizens would like to see the corridor entrance points, located at Hiawasse Road and Triple X Road along 23rd Street, present a warm welcome with community-branded signage and landscaping, physically delineating the entrance to the town of Choctaw.

The IQC team engaged with the community of Choctaw to understand what is working, what isn't working, and what is desired for the future. The community survey results helped inform the recommendations and design for the corridor.



FOCUS AREA

HENNEY STREET

23RD STREET





CHOCCAM ROAD

TIMELINE

PROJECT APPLICATION
RECEIVED

MAY 2023

SURVEY OPENED
OCTOBER 2023



PROJECT INTRODUCTION

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

SEPTEMBER 2023

STEERING COMMITTEE
MEETING #1

NOVEMBER 2023

STEERING COMMITTEE
MEETING #2



OCTOBER 2023

HIGHLAND FESTIVAL

STEERING COMMITTEE
MEETING #3

JANUARY 2024

PROJECT COMPLETION
PRESENT TO COMMUNITY

APRIL 2024

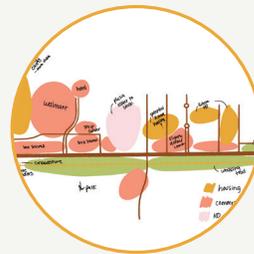
STEERING COMMITTEE
MEETING #4

MARCH 2024

DESIGN PHASE

DECEMBER 2023

CHRISTMAS IN THE
PARK



JANUARY 2024 - APRIL 2024

DESIGN

02

RESEARCH

HISTORY OF THE CITY OF CHOCTAW

Four years after the 1889 Land Run in Oklahoma's Unassigned Lands, the City of Choctaw was founded on a claim made by John Scott Muzzy. He claimed a quarter section of the 7C Ranch's grazing range, known as a camping spot and early trading post near a drainage corridor for the Canadian River.

In 1890, a zip code was designated for the city which was originally made of 80 acres of land. When



Muzzy relinquished the title in 1892, the city had around 110 residents and 20 businesses. Around this time, the Choctaw, Oklahoma, and Gulf Railroad (CO&G) was constructed through the city, along with a train station and depot, and was completed in 1895. The line was how the community adopted the name Choctaw City, from the Choctaw Coal and Railway Company that built it. This addition kick-started growth, and by 1907, the city had 230 residents and numerous businesses, a school, a bank, a newspaper, and four churches.

The railway runs adjacent to the area of study for this project, Highway 62, better known now as 23rd Street. This area is considered Choctaw's main downtown corridor and contains the majority of the

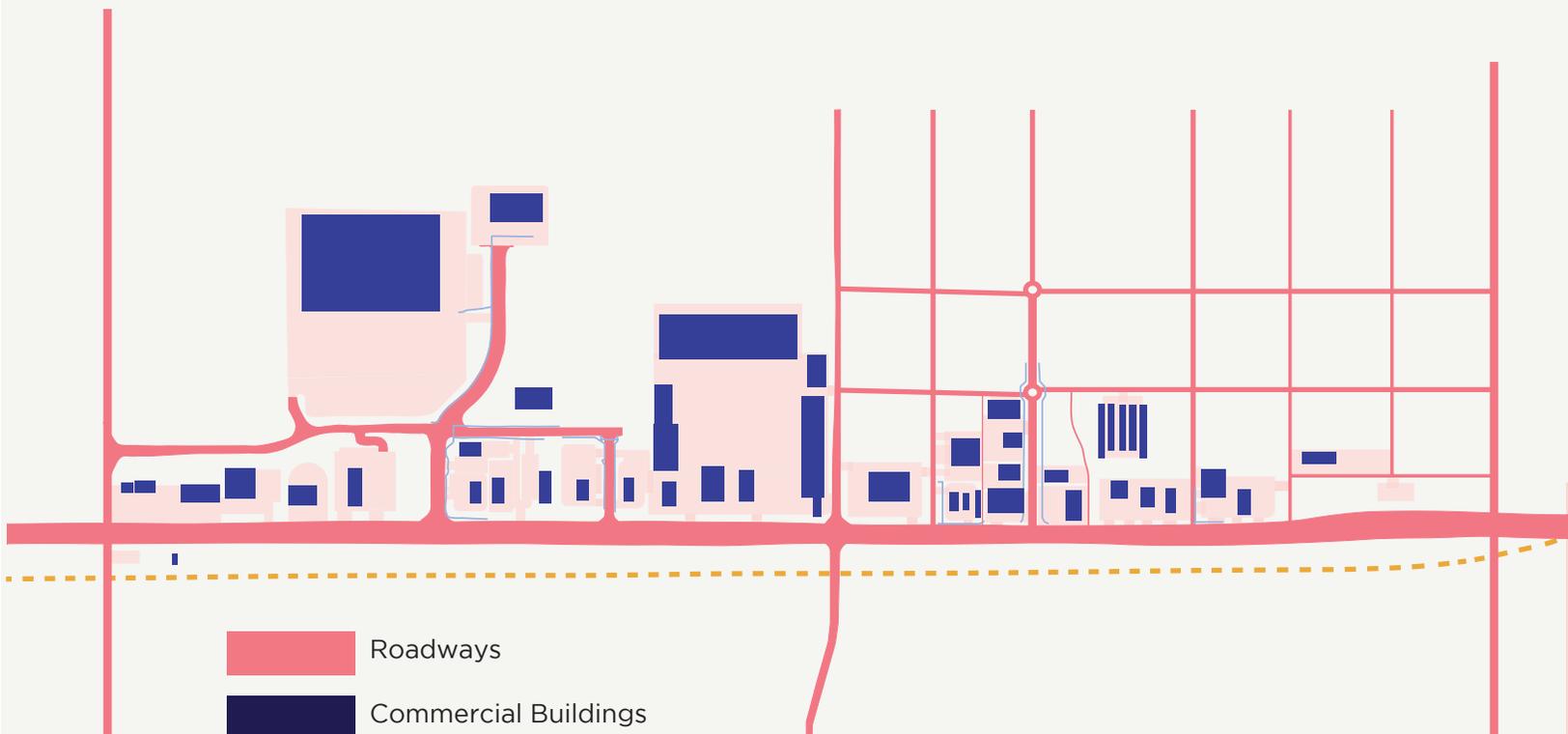


commercial development.

In the last century, Choctaw's historical commercial district has been impacted by two tornadoes and a fire, which has impacted growth and damaged historical buildings. Another issue with the corridor is the location of Line Creek, today known as Choctaw Creek. This creek runs parallel to the corridor and rail line, causing floodplain deterrents that only allow for development along the North side of the corridor.



EXISTING CONDITIONS



-  Roadways
-  Commercial Buildings
-  Existing Sidewalks
-  Rail Line
-  Parking Lots

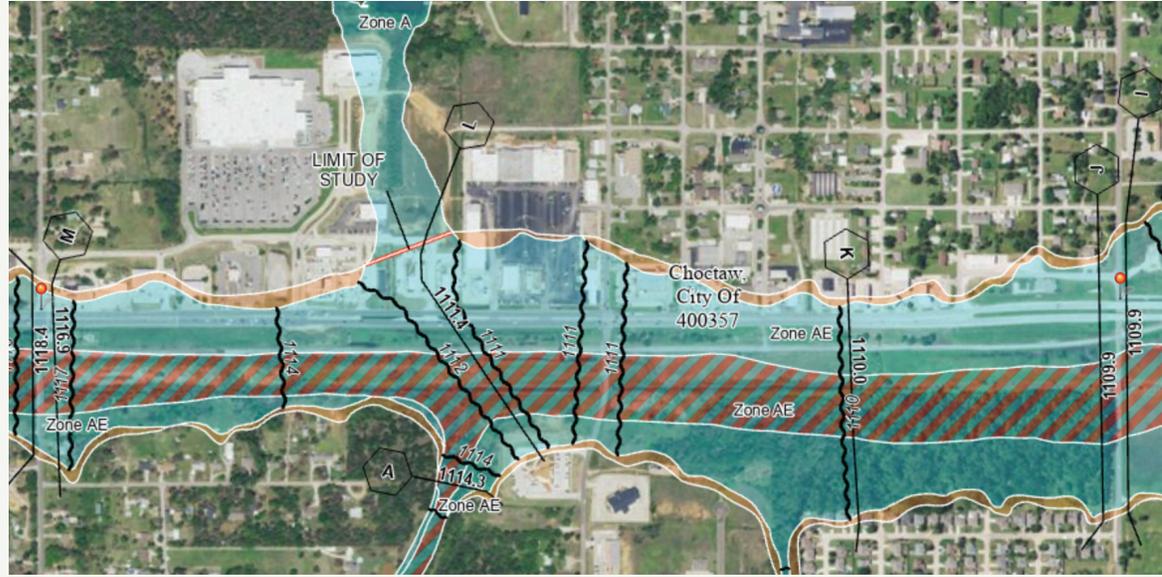
Pg. 17 Floodplain

Pg. 18 Land Use

Pg. 19 Business Types

Pg. 20 Current Conditions

Pg. 21 Housing Charter



FLOOD AREAS

- Flood Hazard Zones
- 1% Annual Chance Flood Hazard
 - Regulatory Floodway
 - 0.2% Annual Chance Flood Hazard
 - Area of Undetermined Flood Hazard
 - Special Floodway

FLOODPLAIN

The floodplain should be taken into consideration for any future development within the corridor. The city is currently working on a master drainage plan for the area. The map above displays the floodway in diagonal stripes. The floodway is the active water channel itself, which is located primarily south of NE 23rd Street. The turquoise area delineates the 100-year floodplain, the area adjacent to the waterway that is predicted to flood during a 100-year storm, which has a 1% chance of occurring in any given year.



FEMA FLOODWAY

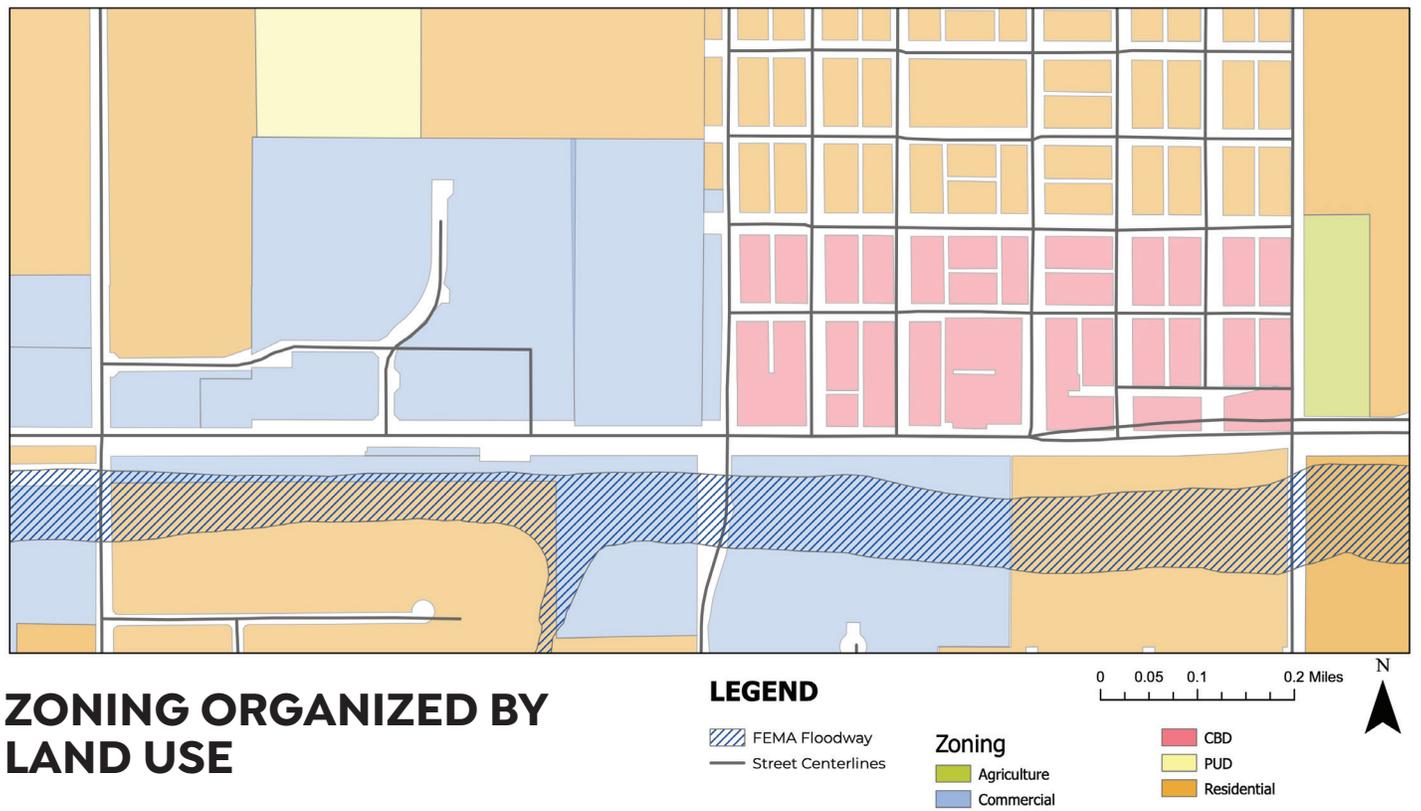
LEGEND

- FEMA Floodway
- Street Centerlines

0 0.05 0.1 0.2 Miles



EXISTING ZONING AND LAND USE



ZONING AND LAND USE

There are two primary land uses within the 23rd Street Corridor: commercial and residential. The north side of the corridor is primarily for commercial use, with residential uses north of 23rd Street. The commercial land is shown in the map above in blue, with the pink areas showing the Central Business District (CBD). There is also a Planned Unit Development (PUD) north of Walmart that is currently being developed as single-family housing.

Near the Choctaw soccer fields to the northwest of 23rd Street and Choctaw Road is an area of agricultural land. On the south side of 23rd Street, most of the land is zoned commercial, but there are no commercial uses currently. South of the rail line and floodplain on Harper Road are more commercial developments.





TYPES OF BUSINESSES

- Big/Small Box Retail
- Local/Small Business
- Dining (Mostly Fast Food)
- Office (Medical and Professional)
- Auto Shops

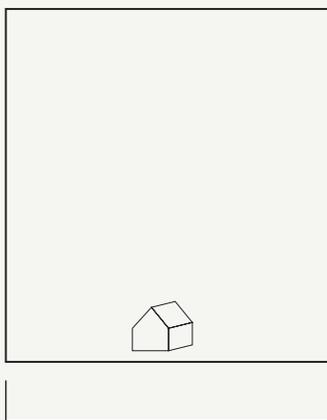


HOUSING CHARTER

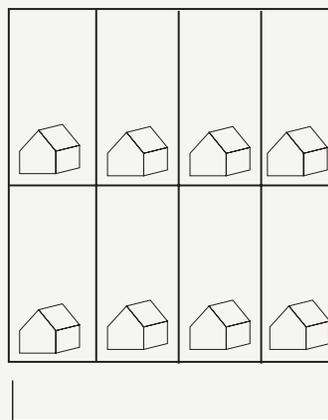
Construction (whether by original construction, alteration, or other manner), location, operation, use, or occupancy of any dwelling unit or units of a greater density than **eight (8) single-family units per acre** of the lot or parcel of land on which constructed or located, is hereby prohibited within the City of Choctaw.

- Excerpt from the Charter of the City of Choctaw
(as of April 2024)

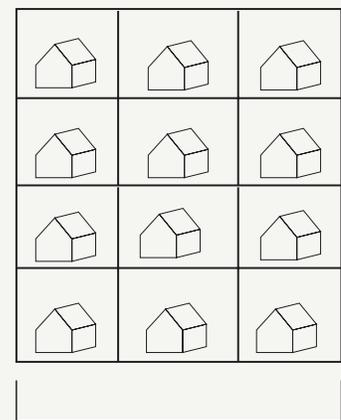
In the world of economic development, retailers conduct market analysis studies, which field many metrics, including the number of rooftops within a half-mile, one-mile, and five-mile radii of a potential site location. Modifying the city's zoning code to allow for more than the current 8 DU/AC (dwelling units per acre) would be advantageous in fulfilling some of the retail and dining gaps along the 23rd Street Corridor. People living within the corridor would also help to activate the space with pedestrians and cyclists and provide increased safety with increased activity.



1 UNIT PER ACRE



8 UNITS PER ACRE



12 UNITS PER ACRE

CURRENT CONDITIONS

BYPASS ST. FACING WEST



MAIN ST. FACING SOUTH



23RD ST. FACING WEST



23RD ST FACING EAST



03

COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT

STEERING COMMITTEE MEETINGS

MEETING #1 9/27/2023

The first steering committee meeting took place at Eastern Oklahoma County Technology Center (EOC) in Choctaw. This meeting was intended to introduce the project, discuss the scope of the project, and to identify the best ways to engage with the community. The committee consisted of eight people comprised of business owners, long-time residents, and active members of the community. Tawny Shelby, the Economic Development and Grant Specialist of Choctaw, and Sarah Huffine, the Planning Director, walked through the 23rd St Corridor to identify strengths, weaknesses, and overall ideas for the project. Members of the committee also pitched in with ideas and discussion about the area. The committee also discussed various events happening throughout the year that the IQC could attend to promote the survey.

MEETING #2 11/1/2023

The second steering committee meeting took place online over Zoom, and was intended to recap the first engagement event and give an update on survey responses. Feedback was received on what worked and what did not at the first engagement event, and details were finalized for the second event.

MEETING #3 1/24/2024

The third steering committee meeting took place at the EOC Technology Center. This meeting was held after the community engagement events, and was intended to recap the events, discuss survey findings and feedback, and discuss the primary project themes. Using survey responses, the committee identified four distinct key themes for the project that the IQC team could focus on for the final design. A timeline was also created and finalized for the remainder of the project.

MEETING #4 3/27/2024

The fourth and final steering committee took place in March over Zoom and was a presentation of the 80% complete report to the committee. After presenting the work that has been done thus far, the floor was opened up for committee members to give comments and feedback before the report was completed, a copy was sent to all members, and a window of five days was given for members to further review and send over comments. Insightful suggestions and requests to expand on areas of the report were provided, informing the final report.

PROJECT TEAM MEETINGS



Mentor meetings were conducted bi-weekly in the Spring of 2024 with Josh Kunkel, a licensed architect in Oklahoma. Josh provided his vast project experience with walkable developments to help guide and inform the design process with the IQC team.

A meeting was held with the firm that is currently working on Choctaw's drainage plan. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss options for development around the floodplain that runs adjacent to the corridor. During the discussion, the firm provided preliminary thoughts on where development could potentially take place.



COMMUNITY OUTREACH EVENTS

The IQC team wanted to engage the community by tapping into events that were already taking place in Choctaw, in an effort to reach people where they would already be without asking them to attend a public meeting, which can be intimidating for some residents. At these events, the IQC team hosted a booth promoting the 23rd St Corridor Survey.

HIGHLAND GATHERING OCTOBER 2023

The Highland Gathering is a new event to Choctaw and was hosted at Choctaw Creek Park. This event is a celebration of Scottish and Celtic culture and featured live performances, sport events, highland dancing, falconry, and food trucks. This organization has hosted over 20 Scottish festivals, but due to the success of the one in Choctaw they will continue to host in Choctaw in the Fall of 2024. On the final day of the festival, the team hosted a booth at the entrance promoting and handing out the 23rd St Corridor Survey. The survey was offered in hard copy, digital, and QR code formats.



CHRISTMAS IN THE PARK DECEMBER 2023

Christmas in the Park is Choctaw's most attended annual event hosted in Choctaw Creek Park every holiday season. This event had activities and games, vendor booths, and photos with Santa.

The IQC team hosted a booth among the vendors promoting the survey through hard copy, digital, and QR code formats. This event was well attended, despite the cold, and allowed for great discussion on ideas for the corridor.



SURVEY

Choctaw's 23rd St. Corridor Survey

The City of Choctaw is collaborating with ACOG (Association of Central Oklahoma Governments) and The University of Oklahoma's Institute for Quality Communities (OU IQC) to study and plan for the future of Choctaw's NE 23rd Street Corridor.

As a valued member of the Choctaw community, we would love to hear your thoughts about the corridor. This survey will only take approximately 5-7 minutes to complete. Please feel free to share with your family, friends, and neighbors. We appreciate your time and participation in this project survey as we build a better tomorrow.



Q1: Our corridor focus is on NE 23rd Street from Hiwassee Road to Triple X Road. What activities do you currently do inside this corridor?

- A. Shopping
- B. Socializing
- C. Dining
- D. Recreating
- E. Physical Activity/Exercise
- F. Other (please describe)

Q2: What activities would you like to be able to do inside this corridor in the future?

- A. Shopping
- B. Socializing
- C. Dining
- D. Recreating
- E. Physical Activity/Exercise
- F. Other (Please describe.)

Q3: What 'beautification' or aesthetic elements would you like to see in the corridor? Rank in order of most to least desired (1-4).

- ___ Public Art
- ___ Tree canopy
- ___ Landscaping
- ___ Flower Beds

Q4: What physical elements would you like to see in the corridor? Rank in order of most to least desired (1-7).

- ___ Sidewalks
- ___ Bike Paths
- ___ Walking Trails
- ___ Benches/seating
- ___ Shopping opportunities
- ___ 3rd place (a place to hang out)
- ___ Playgrounds

Q5: What do you feel is missing from the corridor?

Q6: What are your biggest concerns about the corridor?

Q7: What one word comes to mind when you think about this corridor?

Q8: What one word comes to mind as you think about things you dislike about the corridor?

The 23rd St Corridor Survey was created to receive community feedback on how people feel about the corridor, what they currently do in the corridor, and what they would like to see there. Multiple formats were offered to be accessible to the most amount of people, including paper copies, an online survey, and a tailored version for high school students. The separate high school survey was created and distributed to increase participation from a younger demographic. Surveys were distributed at community engagement events, via email lists, and through social media platforms for a two-month period, from October through December.

699 ONLINE RESPONSES

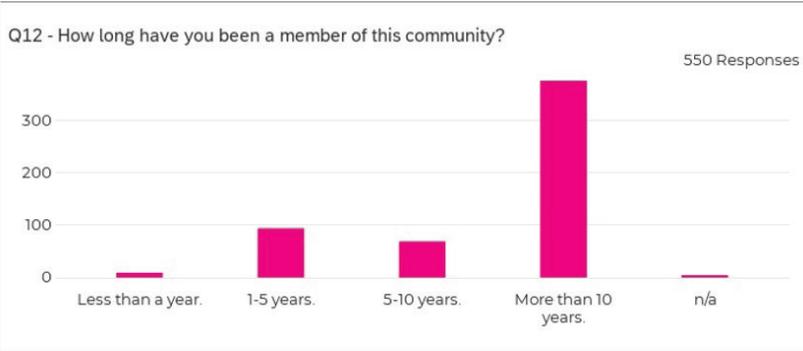
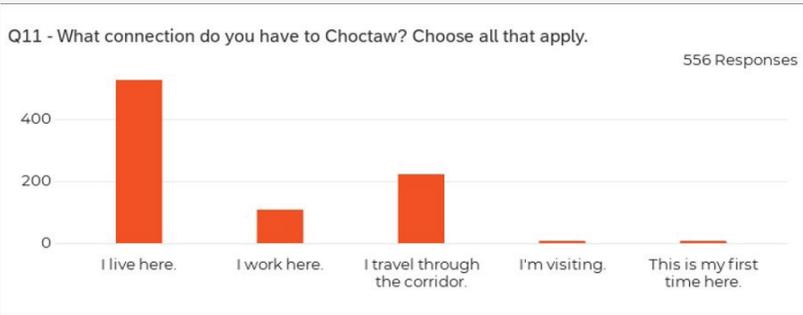
171 HIGH SCHOOL ONLINE RESPONSES

7 PAPER SURVEYS

= 877 TOTAL RESPONSES

SURVEY RESULTS

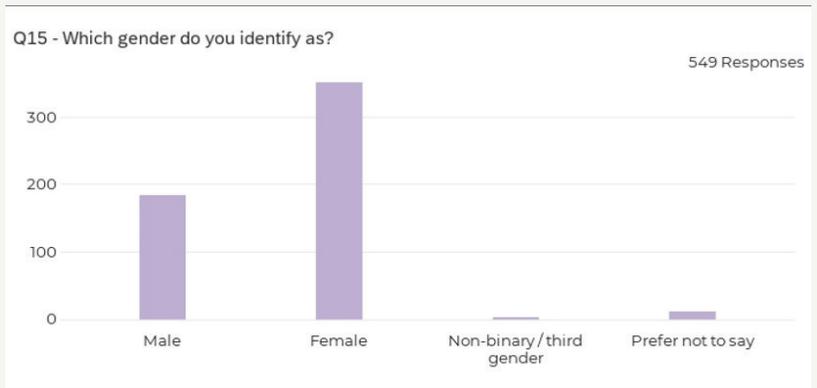
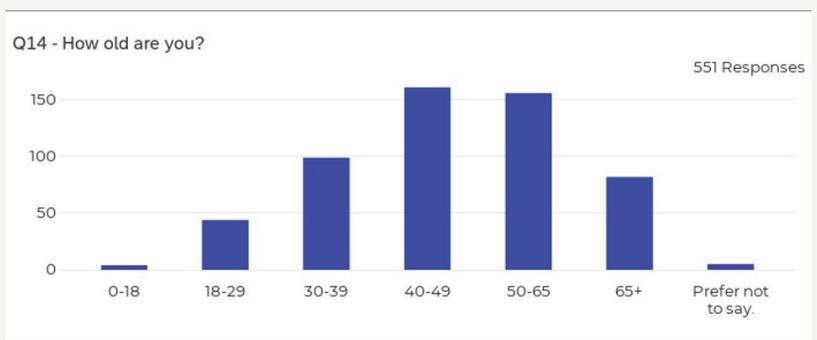
This survey was designed to capture current perceptions of the 23rd Street Corridor and give community members a voice in what elements of the built environment and types of activities they would like to see in the future. A total of 15 questions were asked in the format of multiple choice questions, ranking questions, and fill-in-the blank questions.



DEMOGRAPHICS

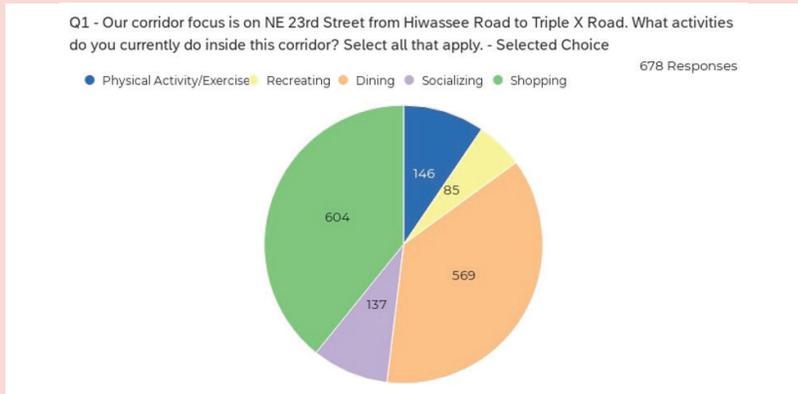
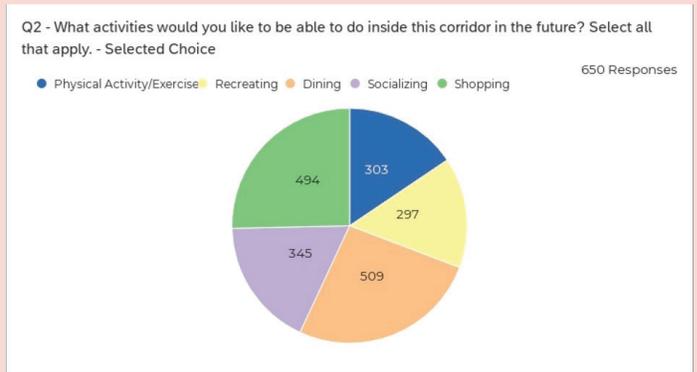
The last five questions on the survey were demographic questions, to further understand who took the survey. This was used to identify gaps in the survey participants, and midway through the survey process it was found that there were not enough young people taking the survey, so efforts were made to create a high school version and distribute it to the school.

The survey reflected that most participants visit the corridor on either a daily or weekly basis. Most of the participants have lived in Choctaw for over 10 years. In the main survey, most people were between the ages of 40-65, and the high school captured in the opinions of around 180 people aged 14-18. Double the amount of women took the survey than men.



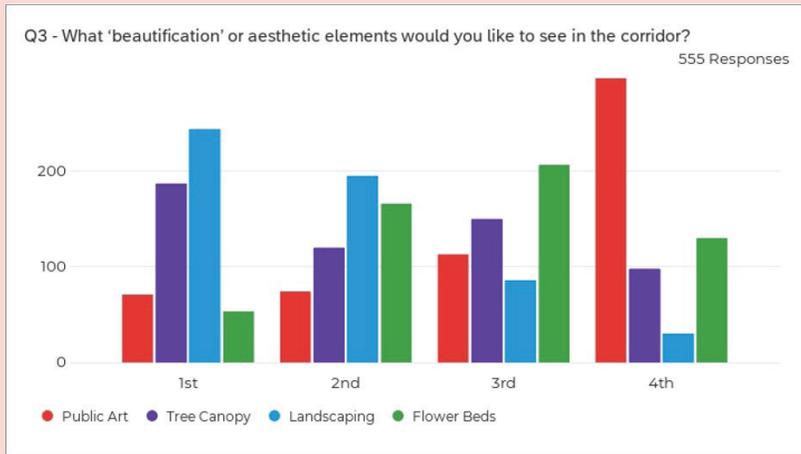
WHAT DO YOU DO IN THE CORRIDOR?

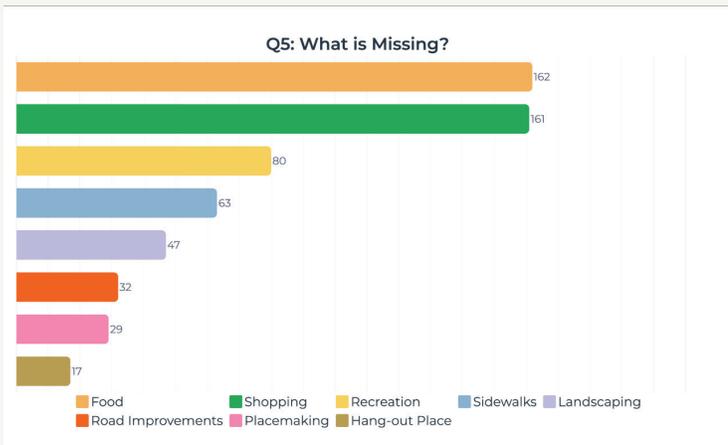
Currently, community members visit the 23rd Street Corridor for **shopping** and **dining**. However, when asked which activities they would like to do in the corridor in the future, the categories of **shopping, socializing, dining, recreating,** and **exercising** were much more evenly distributed.



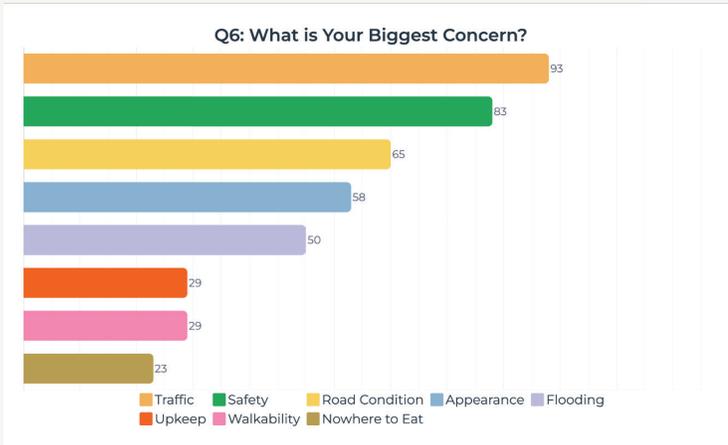
WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE IN THE CORRIDOR?

Questions 3 and 4 asked participants to rank in order of least to greatest the elements they would like to see in the corridor. Question 3 asked which beautification elements people preferred, where **landscaping** and a **tree canopy** were often ranked first. Question 4 asked participants which physical element they would like to see. Here **shopping opportunities** and **sidewalks** were most often ranked first.



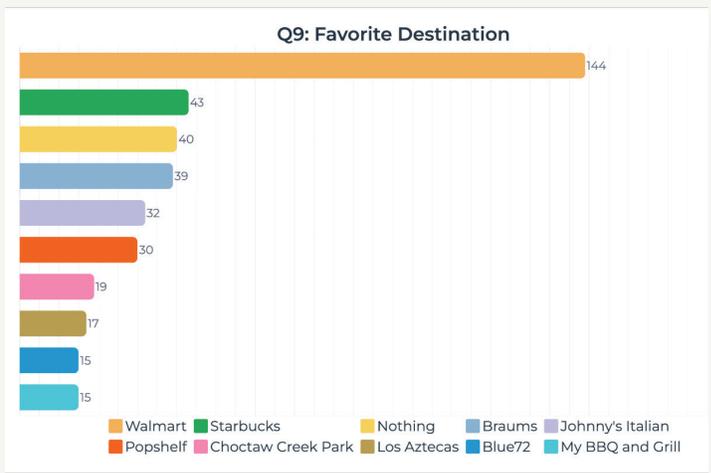


Questions 5 and 6 asked “What is missing or concerning?” about the 23rd Street Corridor. Many people expressed that there are limited opportunities to go to sit-down restaurants, but there are plenty of fast food options. Similarly, a lack of retail options are mentioned. People also said that there are a lack of sidewalks, landscaping, and places to hang out.

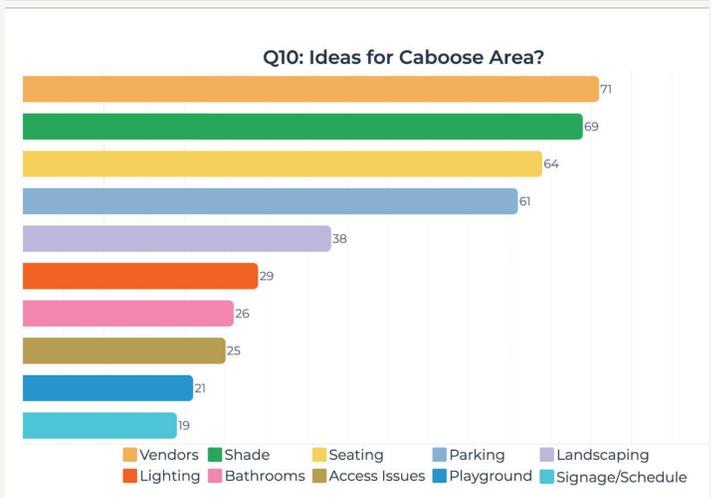


As for concerns about the corridor, the main issues brought up were traffic and pedestrian safety concerns. The road conditions, flooding, and upkeep of the corridor were also mentioned. Several people also expressed concern about the lack of walkability.

Questions 9 and 10 asked about participants favorite destinations in the corridor and for any ideas for improvements at the Rock Island Caboose area (SE corner of 23rd St and Henney Road). The vast majority of survey participants said Walmart was their favorite destination, but places like Starbucks, Braum’s, Johnny’s Italian, and Popshelf were also mentioned.



There were a lot of great ideas for improvements around the caboose area. The majority of people expressed a desire for more food trucks, as well as programming and knowing when certain vendors would be present. Shaded seating, landscaping, parking, lighting, and signage were other design aspects that were mentioned as well.



WORD MAPPING

One question in the survey asked participants to give one word that best describes the corridor. These words are used to create a graphic showing the most popular words increasing in size. The top photo is the word map was created from the main survey, while the bottom is the word map created from the high school survey. The most common word given in the main survey was **'TRAFFIC'**, while the high school participants used the word **'BORING'** the most often.



Main Survey

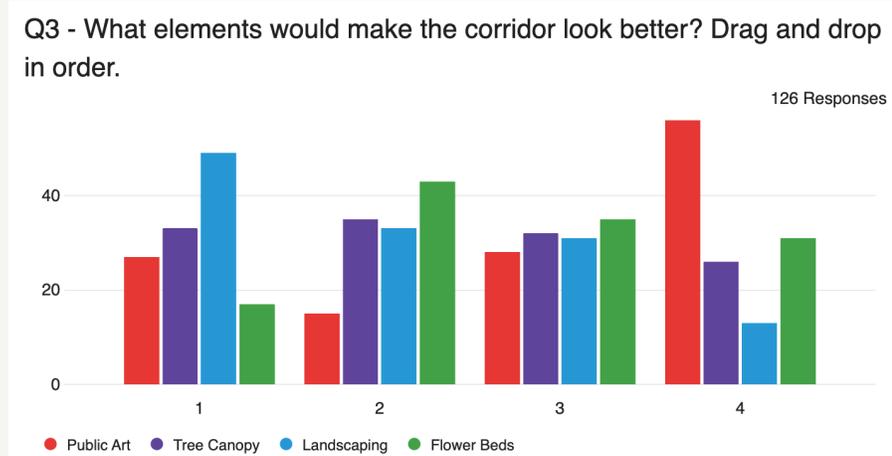
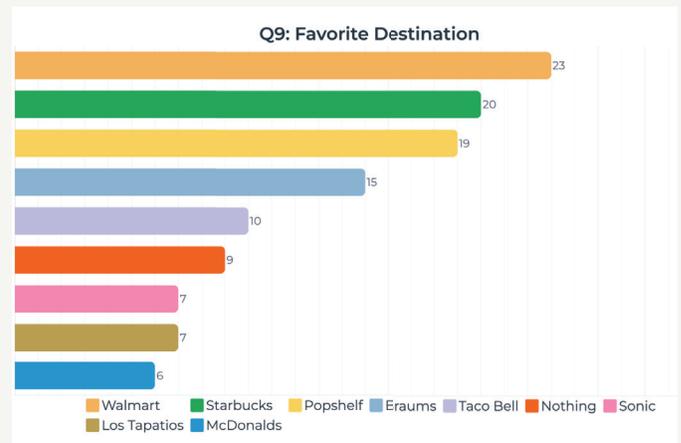


High School Survey

HIGH SCHOOL SURVEY

In an effort to capture the thoughts and opinions of young people in the community, a high school version of the survey was created. The demographics of this survey were similar to the main one, in that most participants have lived in Choctaw for a long time and often visit the 23rd Street Corridor.

When asked about the elements that would improve the look of the corridor, landscaping, and a tree canopy were the answers most prioritized. When asked what is missing in the corridor, the most common answer was a Chick-fil-A, as well as clothing retailers, hangout places, drink places, and landscaping. When asked about their biggest concern within the corridor, safety concerns were mentioned most often. Issues such as speeding, poor road conditions, and lack of pedestrian safety were frequently mentioned.



Identified current favorite destinations included Walmart and Starbucks, as well as various fast-food establishments. Finally, in the questions asking for future ideas for the caboose area, many participants would like to see more food trucks, additional seating, shade, and pedestrian access.



IN HONOR OF
EUGENE FIRESTONE
S 1ST USN WWII

DOLORES WHESENHART
TINKER AFB
1972-1993

JOHN E. SHADON
USAF VIETNAM
363 PHOTO RECON

VPW AND AUX
POST 7192
MIDWEST CITY, OK

IN MEMORY OF
JOHN GOVERMAN
U.S.A.F. VIETNAM

E.M. MILLER USN
USS LEX SURV
AM IC 1941-45

IN HONOR OF
J. WALTON CLETON
SEAMAN 2 USN WWII

HUGHIE WHESENHART
U.S.A.F. KOREA
1947-1951

R.M. BURTON
PURCELL OK
WWII

WILLIAM WOODS
1ST KENTUCKY INF.
CIVIL WAR

MILTON TAYLOR
USAF US ARMY
WWII

JOHN D. BULL
77TH AIRBORNE
DIVISION WWII

W.L. WHESENHART JR
USAF VIETNAM
MSGT. 1964-1986

JOHN R. WILSON
U.S. NAVY WWII
1946-1947

BILLY R. SPARKS
B-1-43 88A ARMY
SITE SUMMIT AK

IN MEMORY OF
EUGENE TILMAN SR
U.S. ARMY WWII

CHARLES LAMBERT
SPEC 4
U.S. ARMY 1972-1975

ARTHUR P. SPES
U.S. ARMY
VIETNAM 68-80

IN MEMORY OF
ELUCETE WRIGHT
U.S. ARMY

IN MEMORY OF
ROBERT L. MILLS
OSAF KOREA

BILLY C. SPARKS
B-27D AIRBORNE
FT BRAGG NC

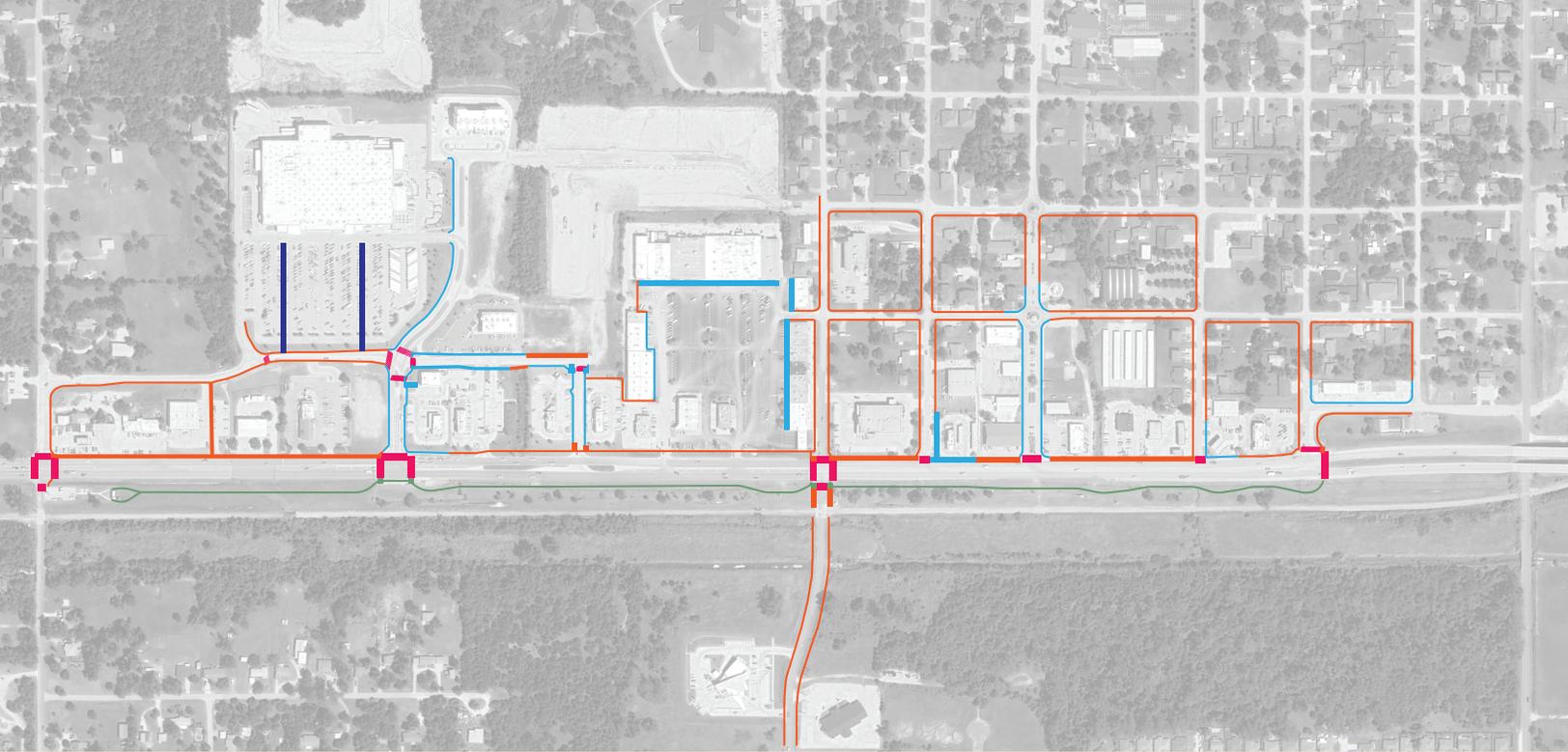
04

DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS

WALKABILITY



- Pg. 37 Sidewalk Plan
- Pg. 40 Park Connectivity
- Pg. 41 Trail Details
- Pg. 42 Crosswalks



SIDEWALK GAP ANALYSIS & PLAN

Key themes that resulted from community engagement in this project were walkability and connectivity in the 23rd Street Corridor. The City of Choctaw has been able to bring in many great retail and food businesses, but it has created a sprawled development that is not safe or accommodating for pedestrians. Many businesses are set far back from the road and situated in the middle of a parking lot. This car-oriented design makes it difficult to get from one business to another, and people will often get back into their car to go to the next stop, even if it's adjacent. Establishing a sidewalk plan that feels safe, comfortable, and enjoyable will not only encourage people to park once and walk to multiple destinations, but will also spur economic growth.

In Choctaw's subdivision ordinances, sidewalks are required for all new development, unless a 'fee in lieu' is paid.

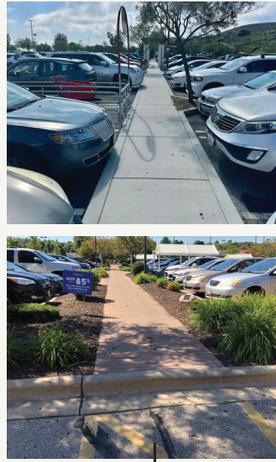
Legend

- Proposed Sidewalks
- Existing Sidewalks
- Pedestrian Crossings
- Trails
- Parking Lot Sidewalks

Many of the newer developments have included sidewalks (such as Starbucks), but there are still gaps, creating "sidewalks to nowhere." Connecting these pedestrian paths is the first step to creating walkable infrastructure. Continuing sidewalks north to the residential areas is very important as well. Having a home that is within walking distance of businesses is very desirable, and helps encourage economic growth.

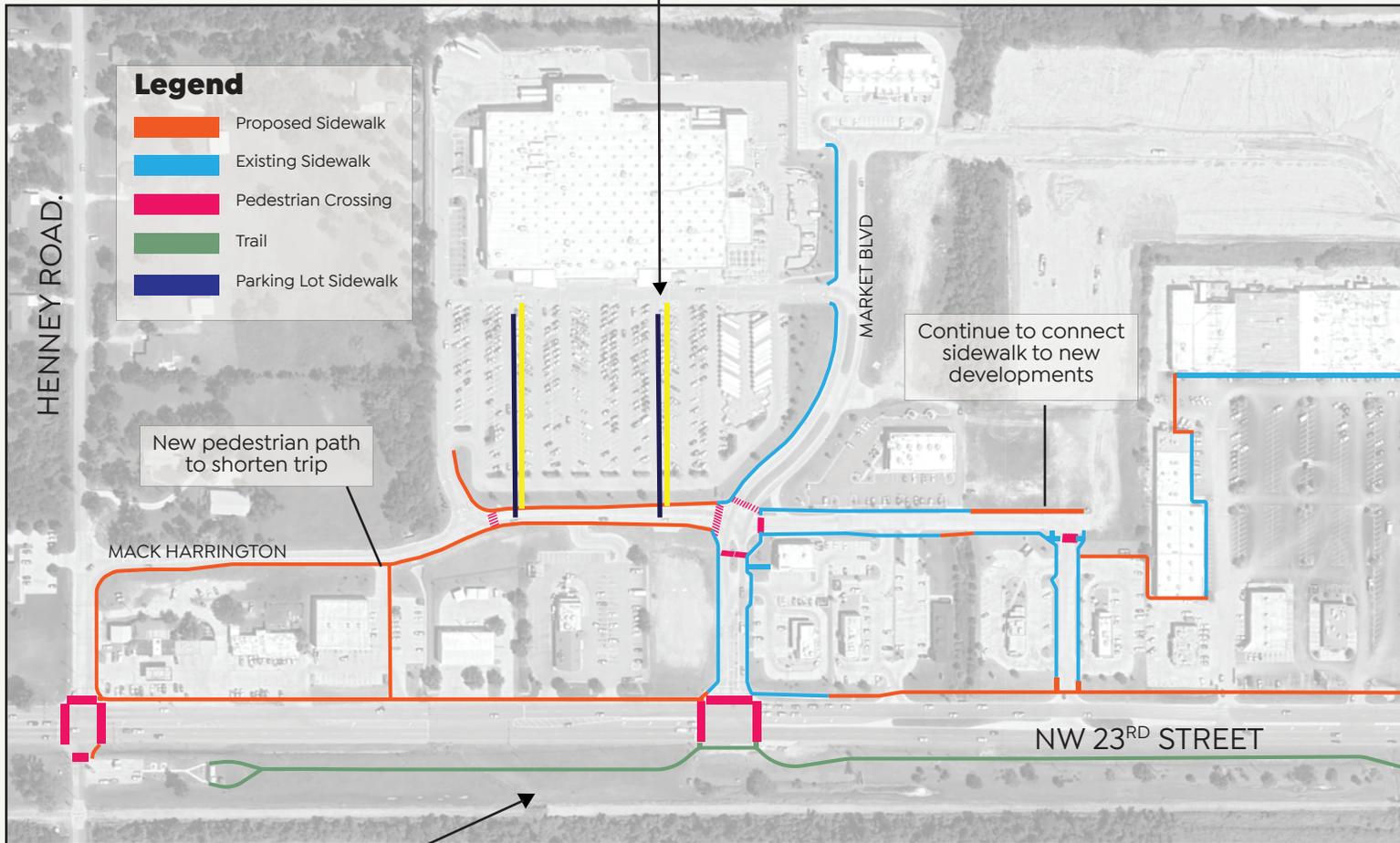
Due to floodplain constraints deterring development south of 23rd Street, a walking and biking trail is proposed to make use of this space. This trail would be connected to the greater sidewalk plan and allow people to enjoy Choctaw's sculpture park.

ANNOTATED SIDEWALK PLAN



PARKING LOT SIDEWALKS

In order to connect pedestrians to a store at the end of a large parking lot, sidewalks in between spots is a great solution. This is also beneficial for people exiting their cars who feel unsafe walking down the traffic lanes.

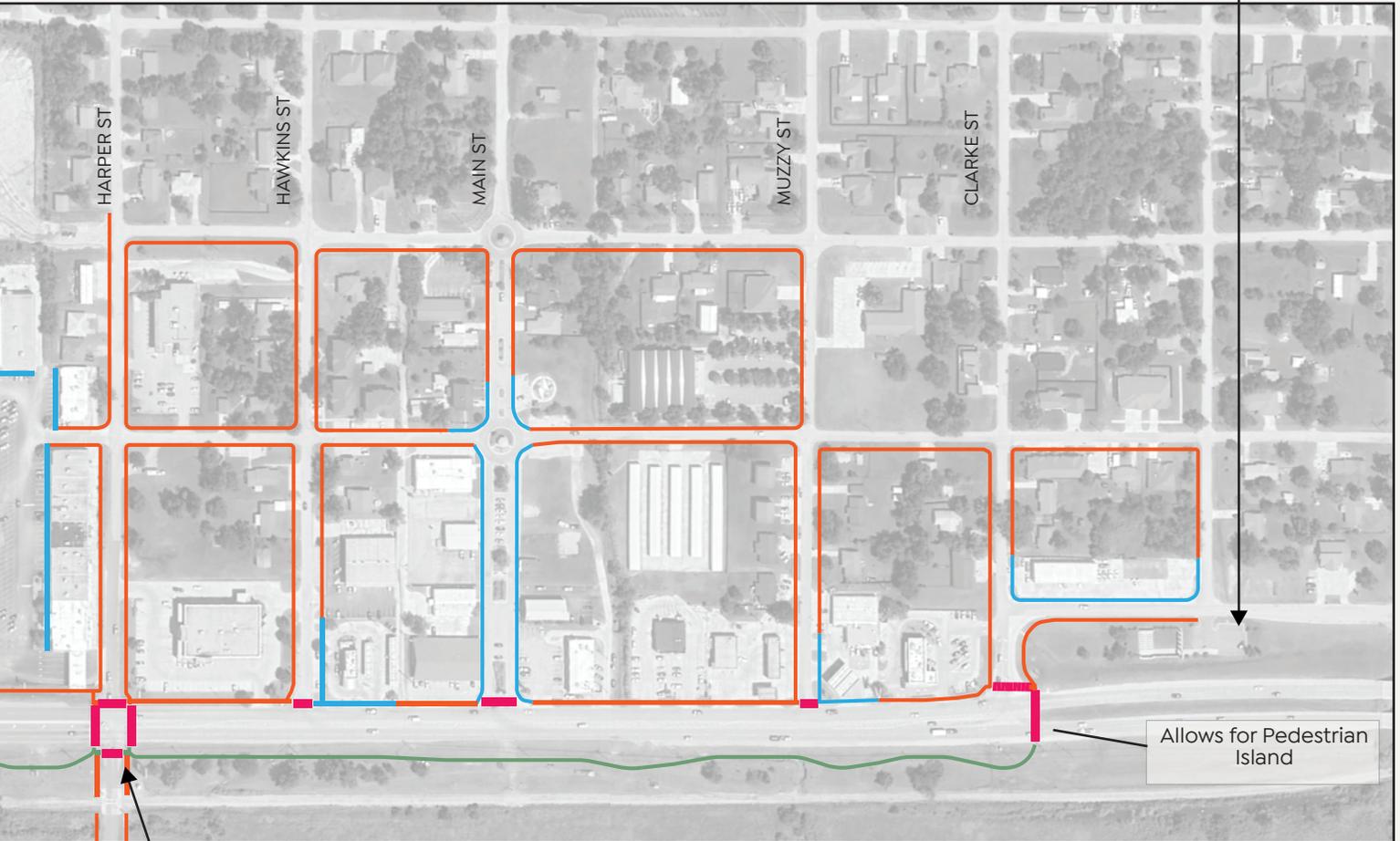


WALKING AND BIKING TRAIL

Since commercial development is unlikely to occur due to floodplain and right-of-way constraints, one solution is to put in a walking trail. With connections to Choctaw Creek Park, the Veterans Memorial, the Rock Island Caboose, and commercial developments north of the corridor, there would be a lot to visit and see using the trail. Utilizing existing assets, such as the sculpture park, would make it a more visually exciting experience. A simple trail with light landscaping would be all that is necessary to make it a popular destination.

THE STARTING POINT

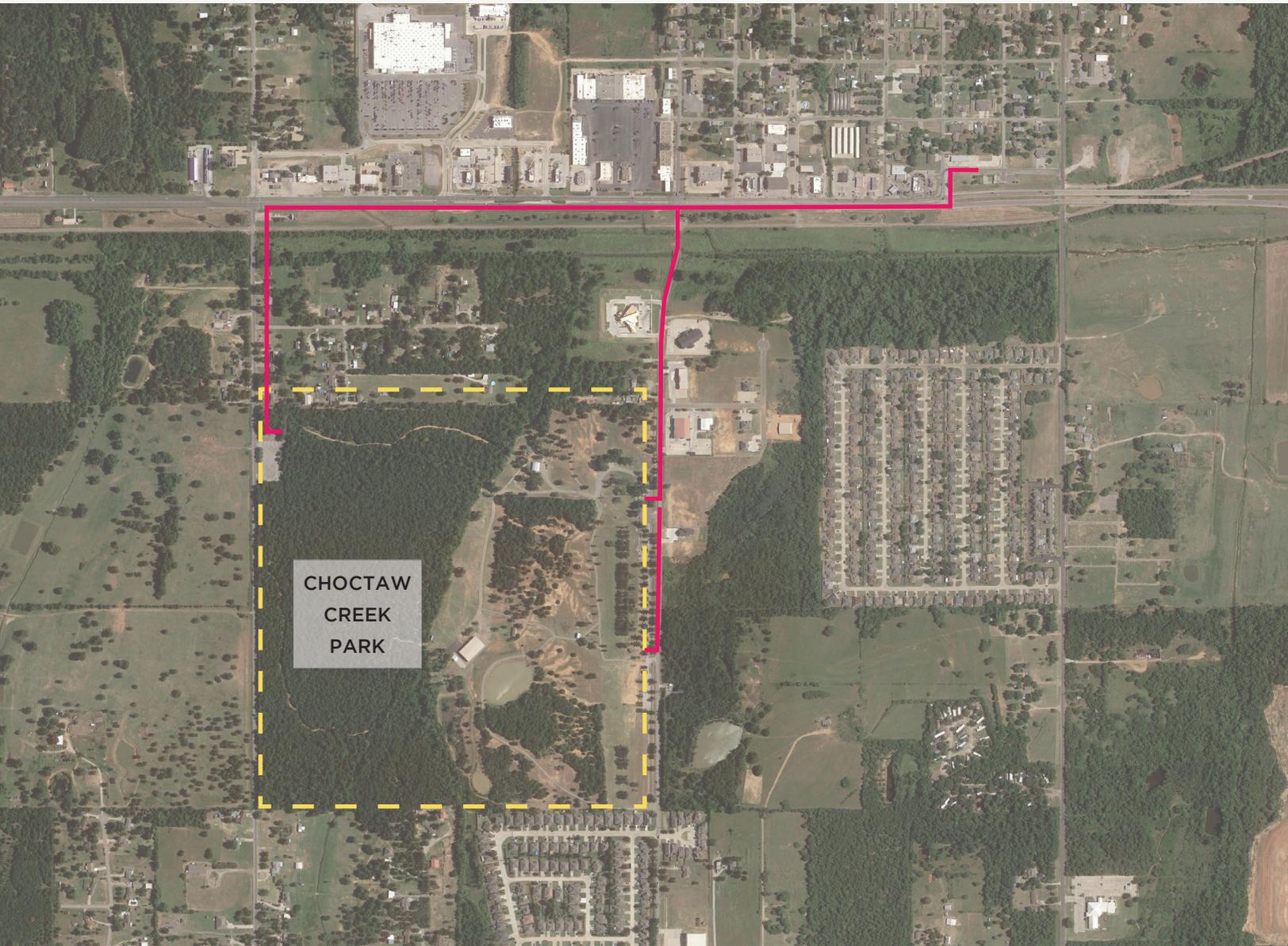
There could be many possible starting locations for people to enter the trail, including Choctaw Creek Park or any of the businesses, but one proposed starting point would be the Veterans Memorial. With a sizable and easily accessible parking lot, people could park their cars, and walk to various destinations within the corridor.



PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS

One of the most important factors that go into the decision of whether or not to walk somewhere is the feeling of safety. By designing crosswalks that feel safe and comfortable, pedestrians are significantly more likely to utilize the infrastructure. This can be done by incorporating appropriate signage, lighting, or even through painted crosswalks, which will be further discussed on page 49.

CONNECTING TO CHOCTAW CREEK PARK



The connectivity of spaces is an important priority for any walkable community. Choctaw Creek Park, located just south of the 23rd Street Corridor, is a valuable asset to the city, often hosting festivals and community events. The proposed trail system that will run along the south side of the corridor is a perfect way to connect these two important spaces. Having the proposed trail connect to sidewalks that lead to both entrances to the park gives people the opportunity to safely visit both spaces without having to get in a car and re-park.

THE TRAILS



CRUSHED GRANITE TRAILS

Crushed granite is a great option for an accessible, functional, and inexpensive trail material. This material is permeable, providing good drainage, meets ADA requirements, holds up well over heavy use, and fits the aesthetic of a natural landscape. Crushed granite is soft enough to be comfortable for runners, but firm enough to be accessible for all. Due to the ease of collecting the material, it is less expensive than concrete or asphalt.

FENCING

A simple wooden fence separating the trail and the rail line would encourage users to remain away from the track. Keeping the fence simple and rustic would not detract from the natural aesthetic.

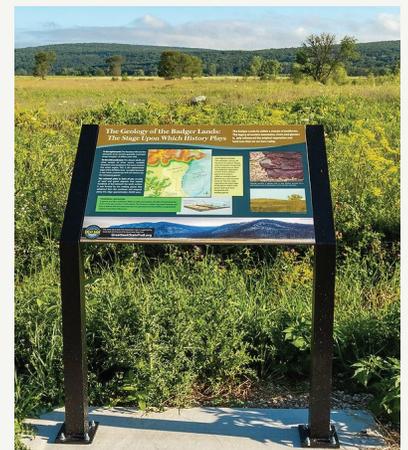


POLLINATOR GARDENS

Pollinator gardens are a great way to beautify a space, encourage wildlife such as butterflies and other pollinators, and create an outdoor educational opportunity. These gardens are easy to maintain and do not require constant upkeep.

INFORMATIONAL SIGNAGE

Incorporating informational signage along the trail would create an engaging aspect to a user's walk. These signs could contain information about native flora and fauna or provide cultural and historical learning opportunities.



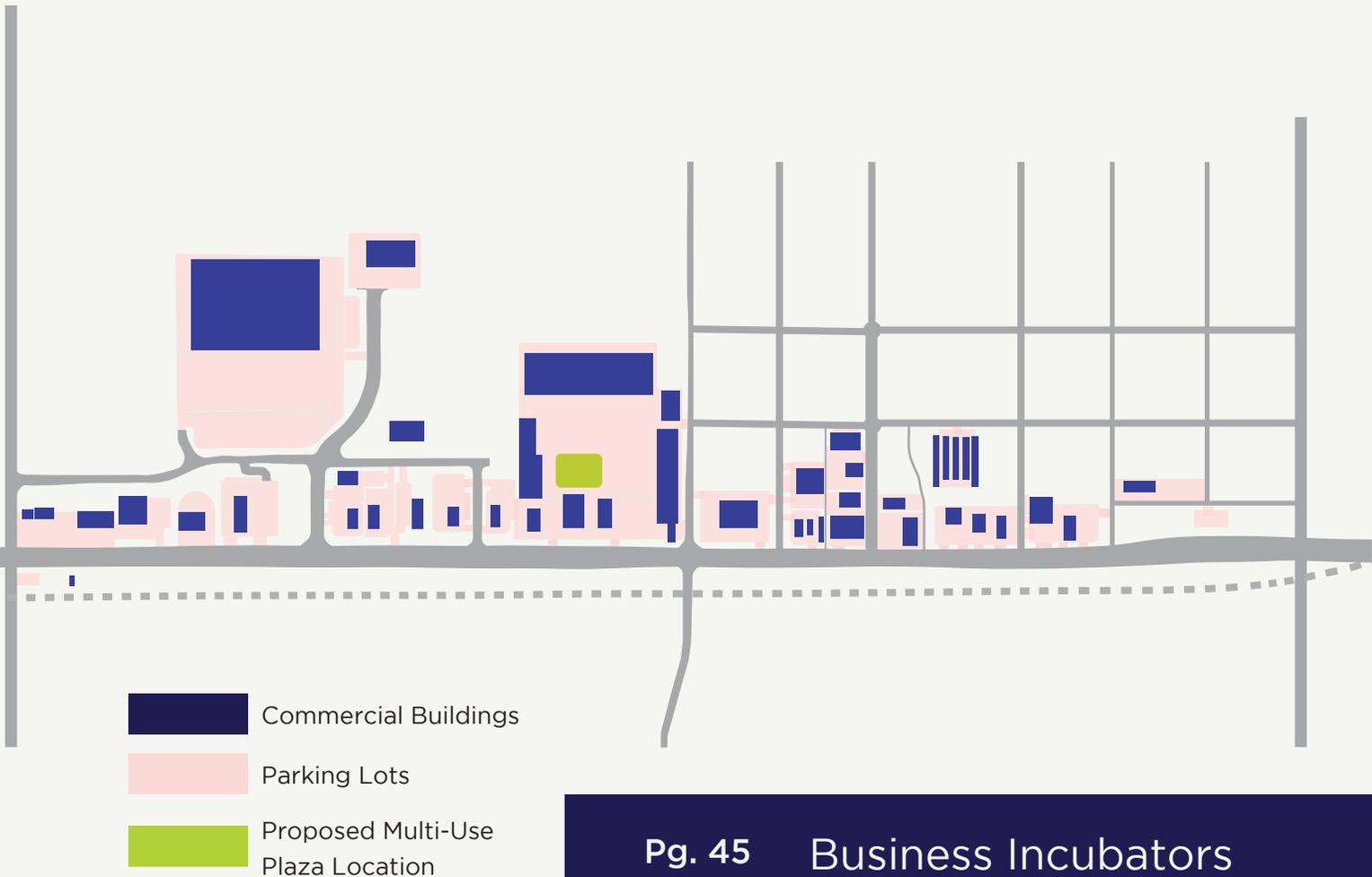


CROSSWALK RENDERING

The rendering above shows how the intersection at 23rd Street and Market Boulevard could have a pedestrian friendly crosswalk. In addition to the painted crosswalk, solar powered signage that lights up when a pedestrian is detected, could add visibility and encourage drivers to pay attention.

Research indicates that a pedestrian's perception of safety is one of the most important factors of deciding whether to walk or not walk somewhere. If a pedestrian feels there are adequate measures to protect their safety, such as additional signage, then they are more likely to use the infrastructure.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



- Pg. 45 Business Incubators
- Pg. 46 Precedents
- Pg. 48 Choctaw Plaza
- Pg. 50 Additional Development
- Pg. 51 Tourism

WHAT IS A BUSINESS INCUBATOR?

A retail/business incubator is a program that helps new businesses get off the ground. Through programming and workshops designed to help these new businesses and provide a shared location to help offset overhead costs such as rent and utilities, these programs see great success. Retail/business incubators create local jobs in their communities, help retain business, and assist in diversifying local economies.

WHY HERE IN CHOCTAW?

The City of Choctaw already has a large number of small/family-owned businesses in town that are successful and beloved. Having a good percentage of small businesses in a community is a major source of pride. Their role is invaluable, providing local jobs, support local charities, and sponsor community events. Being capable of sponsoring and supporting the creation of new small businesses is a major focus point for Choctaw.



CHOCTAW PLAZA

WHAT COULD THIS LOOK LIKE?

A potential location for a business incubator is in the Choctaw Plaza. This is a central location in the corridor and there is an abundance of free space in the parking lot. Some of these spots could be used in a temporary manner to host a retail incubator on the weekends. This could be a part of a separate retail incubator or be utilized as an extension of Eastern Oklahoma Technology Center's business incubator program.

This location would be another great placemaking opportunity, as this space could also be used to hold concerts and festivals or just be a hang-out space with seating and lawn games.

COMMUNITY ASSET

EASTERN OKLAHOMA COUNTY TECHNOLOGY CENTER

Having the EOC Technology Center in Choctaw is an invaluable asset. Their Business Development Center (BDC) is an incredible resource that can provide assistance and resources that can support new and upcoming local businesses in a variety of ways. The BDC's business incubator program would be a great connection for the city to help facilitate small business growth.



BUSINESS/RETAIL INCUBATOR PRECEDENTS



THE SHOPPES GUTHRIE, OK

The Shoppes in Guthrie is a retail incubator located within their historic downtown. It has created a sustainable way for start-up businesses to get established without the large overhead costs of permanent storefronts and other overhead costs. Shoppers have a singular stop to support new businesses, enjoy delicious food, and buy unique goods. Several permanent downtown storefronts have been established from this incubator program.



POP UP ON JACKSON HILL JERSEY CITY, NJ

Pop Up on Jackson Hill is a temporary pop-up venue that uses shipping containers to provide a place for entrepreneurs. This multi-agency placemaking project was possible thanks to a collaboration between the City of Jersey City and Jackson Hill Main Street Management Corporation and is a one-year program that also includes workshops and mentorship opportunities. Businesses have free rent and utilities, and each container can house 2-3 different businesses and comes with electricity, HVAC, and the opportunity to create branded storefronts.



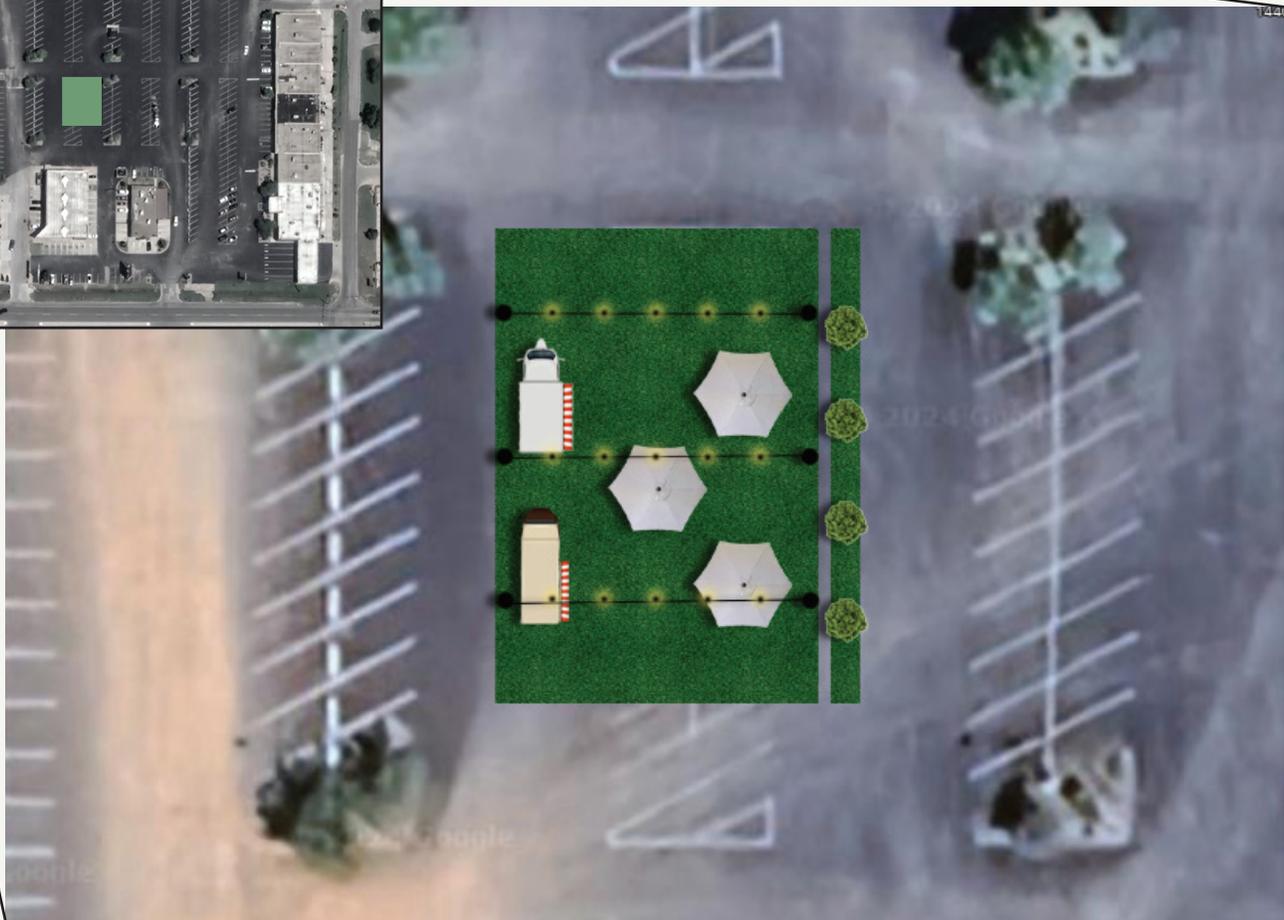
AIRSTREAM ROW SEASIDE, FL

Airstream Row is a street food experience in Seaside, Florida. Seaside is a New Urbanist community along the Emerald Coast that is fully walkable. One business in town that was at risk of closing down due to expensive real estate had the idea to move the business to an airstream. It was so successful that other business began to follow suit. The model of using airstreams as a portable and temporary venue for pop up shops is something that could be emulated in Choctaw.



CHOCTAW PLAZA

One great way to encourage walkability and economic development is to make use of some empty parking spaces in the Choctaw Plaza. Rolling out some turf, adding planters to help increase the perception of pedestrian safety, adding string lights, and pulling out seating are some ways to get people out walking, shopping, and socializing. This could be a temporary event space with multiple uses. In addition to the opportunity for a pop-up shop retail incubator space, it could also host concerts, events, or just be a gathering place with some lawn games. This would allow for the possibility of having a Thursday-Sunday event. Events such as these being in a centralized location would also benefit surrounding businesses and activate the space as a vibrant corridor.



PLAN VIEW

MULTI-USE PLAZA



Gathering Place

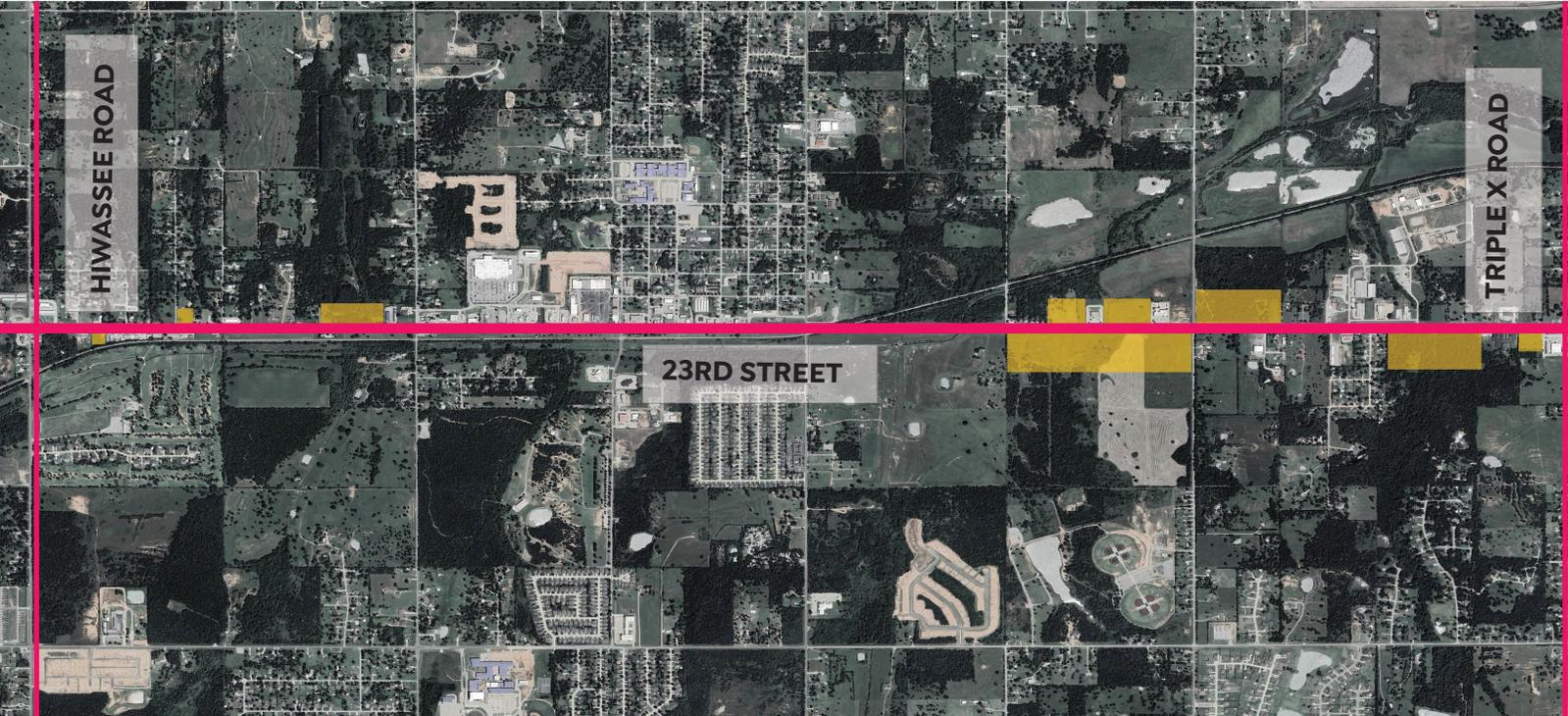


Retail Incubator



Concert/Festival Venue

DEVELOPMENT POCKETS THROUGHOUT CORRIDOR



OUTSIDE OF FOCUS AREA

While most of this plan is within the identified focus area (between Henney Road and Choctaw Road), the entirety of the corridor within Choctaw runs from Hiwassee Road to Triple X Road. Land uses outside of the focus area consist of a mix of residential, raw land, and some commercial uses (primarily focused at the entrance points).

In the map above, a few locations suitable for development have been identified. These locations would be excellent candidates to fulfill missing needs in the community, such as a hardware store. Due to the lack of density in some of these areas, attracting restaurants or chain stores may be difficult, but some uses such as microbreweries thrive in these environments, and are able to attract customers as destination points.

 SUGGESTED POCKETS OF DEVELOPMENT



HARDWARE STORE



MICROBREWERY

CULTURAL HERITAGE TOURISM

Tourism is Oklahoma's 3rd largest industry, after agriculture and oil & gas. There are rich cultures in Oklahoma's rural communities, and if a community capitalizes on it, then people will want to visit. Choctaw is fortunate to have many cultural connections and stories, as well as a great space in Choctaw Creek Park that hosts festivals and events that brings people in from all over the world. Emphasizing and investing in elements that attracts tourists towards the 23rd Street corridor can generate profits and sales tax to allow the city to consistently grow and improve.



SOMETHING AUTHENTIC

When people visit more rural communities, they want to experience something they have never done before, and they want to feel like a local. They want to learn about local culture by directly participating in it. Whether it is learning a new skill, participating in local events, or joining in everyday activities, they want to have an authentic experience.



GOOD PICTURES

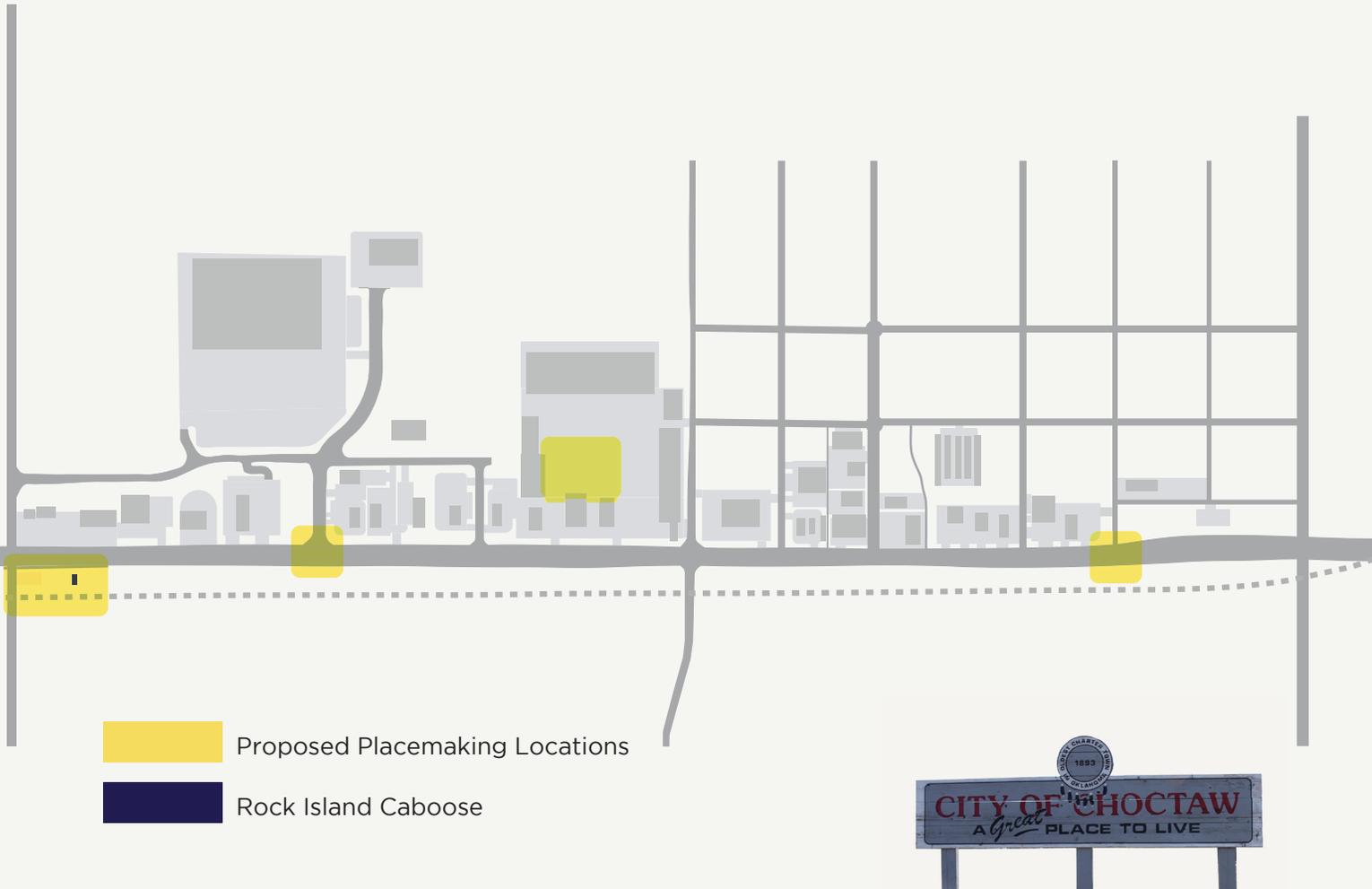
In the age of social media, people are always looking for that 'instagrammable' moment. Building in photo opportunities that are unique and memorable is a great way to attract tourists and put Choctaw on the map.



SOMETHING TASTY

Tourists want to eat something they could not eat back at home. Local diners, bars, and mom & pop shops are great assets to attracting rural tourists.

PLACEMAKING



Pg. 53

Welcome Signs

Pg. 54

Placemaking Elements

Pg. 56

Public Art

Pg. 58

Food Truck Court

WHAT IS PLACEMAKING?

The idea of placemaking means to reimagine or reinvent public spaces as the heart of a community. It creates a physical, social, and cultural identity that is easily recognized and defines the community as a whole. These projects and ideas come from the community itself and instill a sense of connectedness. Placemaking can look different in different

places and can range from a major permanent downtown project to something using tactical urbanism that is lighter, quicker, and cheaper.

This section will offer some recommendations for things Choctaw could do to create these spaces that the community can enjoy.

WELCOME TO CHOCTAW SIGN



Being many people's first impression of a city, the welcome sign is an incredibly important placemaking element. This sign informs people they have entered the city, as well as provides a valuable first impression on what the city is all about. Knowing the exact point that you have entered into the city of Choctaw creates a feeling of place and identity that is so important in placemaking.

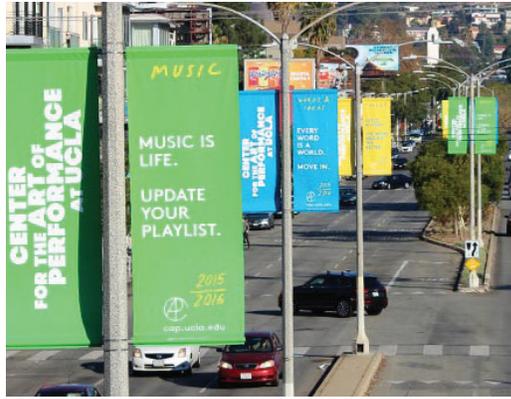
PLACEMAKING ELEMENTS



BENCHES



WASTE BINS



POLE SIGNS



BIKE RACKS

PUBLIC ART

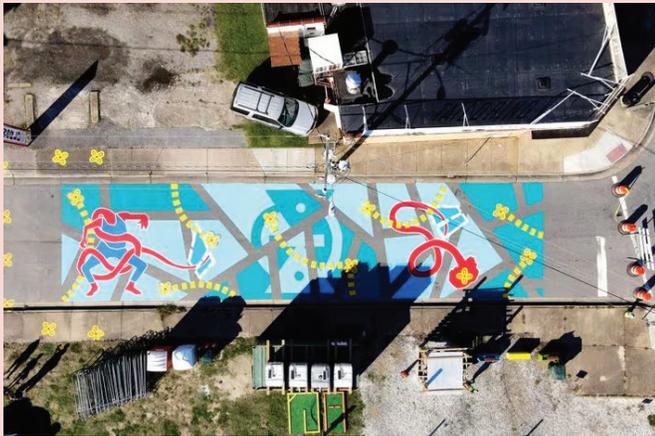
One popular form of placemaking is incorporating public art. This is done through artists who create and locate an art piece based on community input. Public art can improve communities in many ways, including fostering equitable community development, increasing public safety, and giving a community a way to participate in self-expression. Research suggests that public art can improve aesthetics, perception of safety, and quality of life, which in turn does wonders in attracting new residents, businesses, and visitors. Public art can also affect overall well-being, particularly for residents and community members who are involved or connected with the project. The content of the art itself can also be very important to the community. Whether it is highlighting

an important person or group of people, recognizing the town’s history, or investing in a local artist, the content and context around an art piece is something that a community will enjoy for many years.

MURALS

One popular form of public art is painted murals. They can make a space welcoming and walkable. A good mural can promote positive change within a community. Whether it’s a historical event from the town, a notable public figure, a highlight of the talent from the local public schools, or just a cool design, painted murals encourage people to walk, create an Instagrammable moment, and shop around.

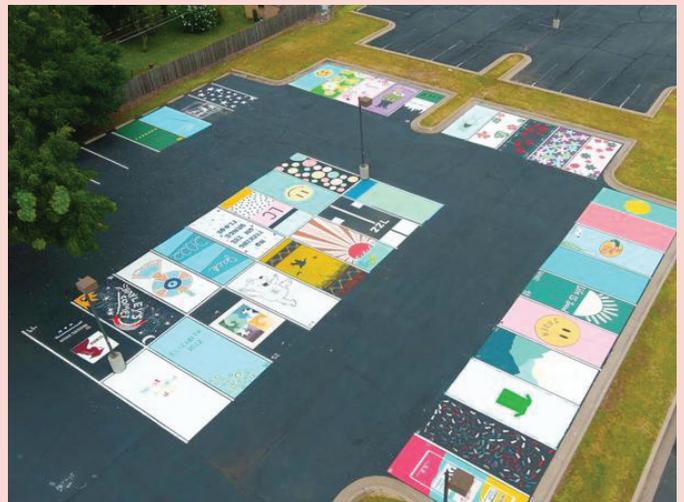
Since finding the location for a mural can sometimes be a challenge, one option for Choctaw is to create an asphalt art mural on the parking lot of the Rock Island Caboose. This could help to revitalize the space, create a photo-op, and potentially help organize the proposed food truck court (see pg. 45).



Norfolk, Virginia



Enid, Oklahoma



Jenks, Oklahoma



Madrid, Spain



Fairmont, West Virginia

PAINTED CROSSWALKS

Painted crosswalks are one form of public art that serves both a placemaking and practical purpose. Not only does this form of art create a sense of community identity, it can also make notable improvements in public safety for pedestrians. One study found that painted crosswalks led to a significant decrease in vehicular accidents involving pedestrians. These art pieces draw the attention of drivers and calm vehicular traffic. Painted crosswalks are a great way to make crossings safer in a 'lighter, quicker, cheaper' way.



Tampa, Florida

In the proposed sidewalk plan for the 23rd Street corridor, a trail is recommended for the south side of the street. In many instances, pedestrians will need to cross the street in order to access this trail, but people are only likely to do so if they feel safe. While signage and signals are a great way to do this, another solution could be to incorporate painted crosswalks. Any of the suggested crossing points would be a great place for it, but especially the starting point crosswalk at 23rd and Clarke, and/or the intersection at 23rd and Henney, to encourage pedestrian traffic to the Rock Island Caboose.



Beaver County, Pennsylvania

The content for the painted crosswalk will be up for community determination. Coordination with the Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT) would be required regarding permissions, as 23rd Street is also designated as State Highway 62.



FOOD TRUCK COURT AT THE ROCK ISLAND CABOOSE

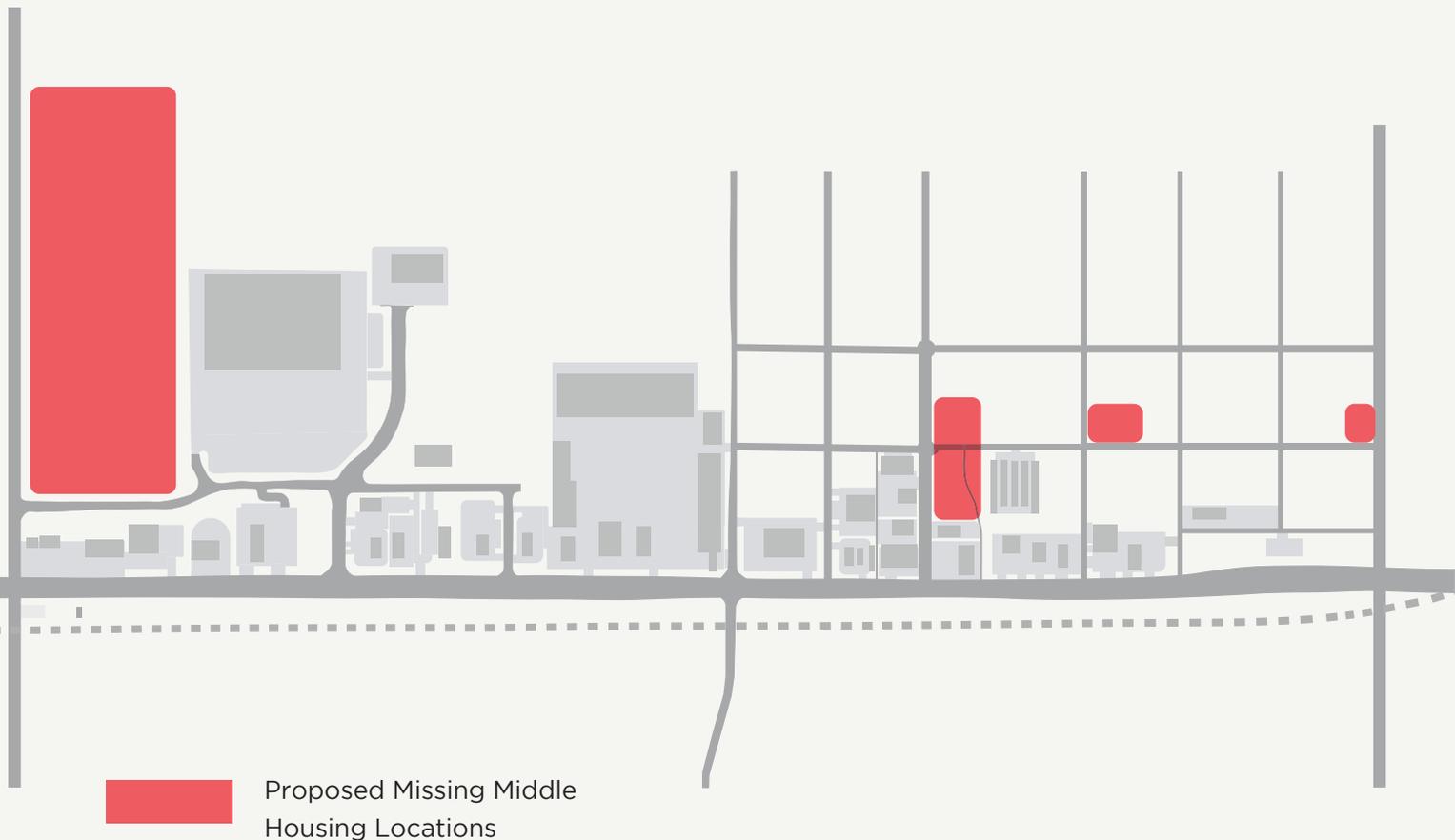
The Rock Island Caboose is a great asset to Choctaw and is already an informal space for vendors to set up shop. Further designing and programming this space to be more user-friendly, accessible, and inviting will encourage more community members (and visitors) to frequent this space.

The survey had a question about design ideas for this caboose area. The vast majority of participants responded that they would like to see more food trucks. Adding electrical hookups to this space will make it more accessible to vendors and more enjoyable for customers who will be able to have conversations without the presence of loud generators. Shaded seating was the next big suggestion in the survey, so this design uses shade sails as a solution. These are a

more permanent design solution that can handle the Oklahoma heat. A concern in this space was room for parking, and due to right-of-way constraints with the rail line, expansion is unlikely to occur. To make room for extra seating and take away confusion, customers can park at businesses across the corridor and walk across a pedestrian-friendly crosswalk to be able to enjoy the food trucks and vendors.

Another suggestion in the survey was for the city to have a programming calendar so people would know when they can support their favorite food trucks and vendors. Using an online schedule on social media as well as on-site signage would be a great way to advertise who will be present on what days and times at The Caboose.

HOUSING



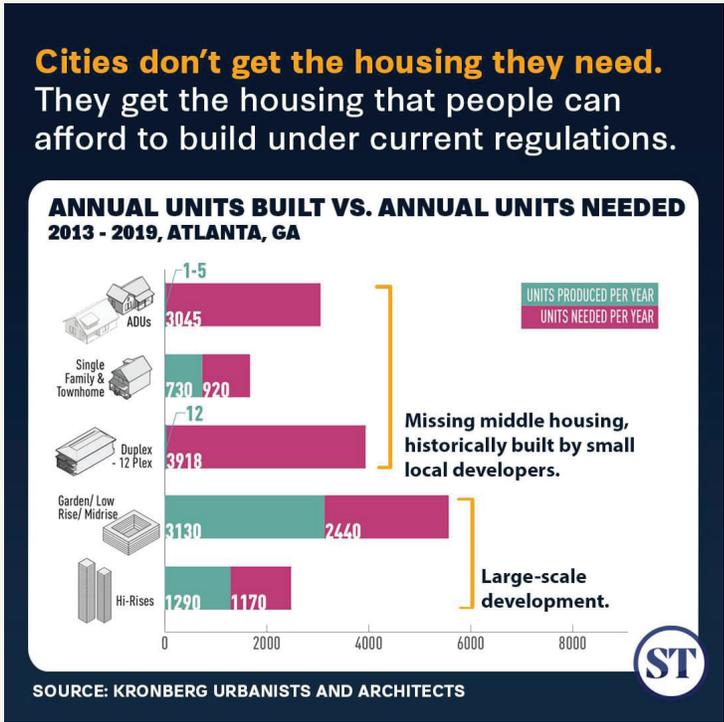
Pg. 61 The Missing Middle

Pg. 62 Cottage Courts

Pg. 63 Precedents

HOUSING IN CHOCTAW, OK

Choctaw is commonly referred to as a ‘bedroom community’ and offers a host of neighborhoods with new ones being developed at a steady rate. Incorporating “missing middle” housing can provide a healthy mix of housing typologies for individuals in various stages of life from recent college graduates looking to move back to their hometown and lay down roots to empty nesters looking to downsize and age in place.



WHAT IS MISSING MIDDLE HOUSING?

The term ‘missing middle’ housing is characterized by a typology of housing that is often found missing in the market and is defined as house-scale buildings with multiple units in walkable neighborhoods. These housing types can include anything that falls between single-family homes and multi-rise apartment complexes, such as duplexes, town-homes, and live-work units. These types

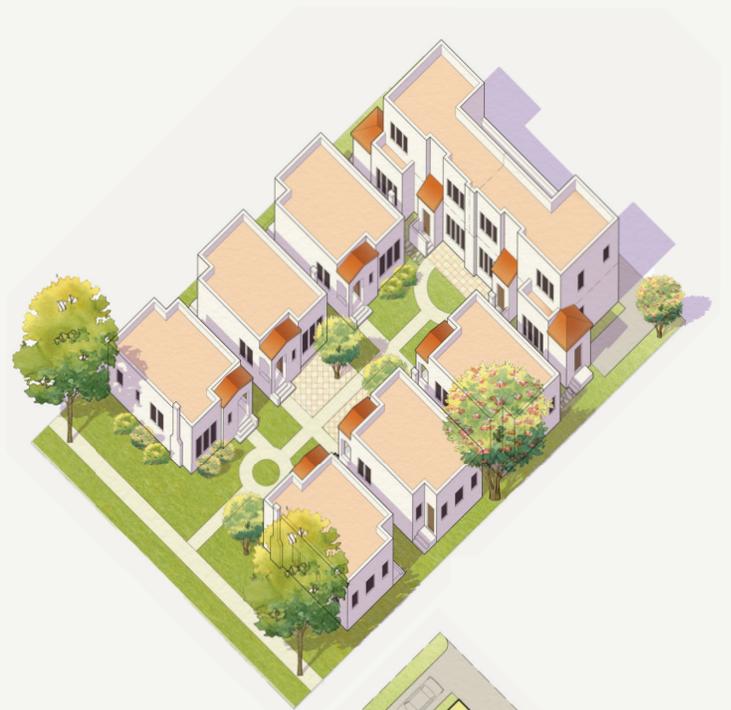
of housing fall in the middle of this spectrum not only in scale but also in affordability, making them a great option for people in various life stages. These options offer the choice to rent or buy and are especially desirable for young couples, new families, singles, teachers, empty nesters, and people wanting to live in a walkable community.



THE COTTAGE COURT

Cottage courts are a group of detached structures that share an inner courtyard. This type of housing is great for increasing density while still maintaining the feeling of an independent and separate home. The layout of these homes will enhance the feeling of community and help to promote socialization and walkability in a community.

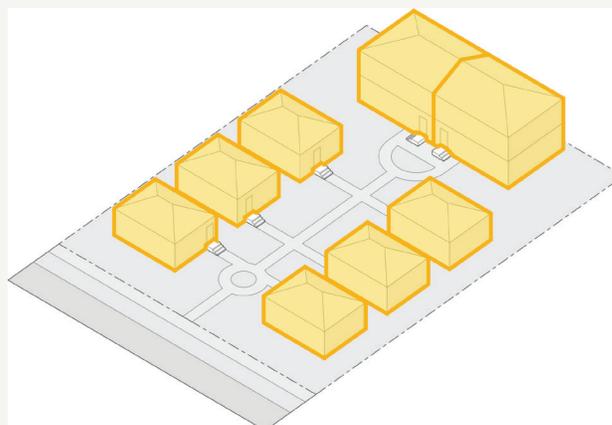
This type of missing middle housing will fit in nicely with the housing in the 23rd Street Corridor. The corridor already has duplex-style homes, so cottage courts will not be too far a leap in density.



Example Cottage Court Layout - Opticos Design

Ideal Specifications

Lot	
Width	110 feet
Depth	150 feet
Area	16,500 sq. ft.
	0.4 acres
Units	
Number of Units	8 units
Typical Unit Size	840 sq. ft.
Density	
Net Density	21 du/acre
Gross Density	16 du/acre
Parking	
Parking Ratio	1.625 per unit
On-street Spaces	5
Off-street Spaces	1 per unit max.
Setbacks	
Front	15 feet
Side	5 feet
Building	
Building Size	
Width	24 feet
Depth	35 feet
Height (to eave)	15 feet
Floors	1 story



PRECEDENTS



**CARLTON LANDING
CARLTON LANDING, OK**



**OAKCREEK COMMUNITY
STILLWATER, OK**



**WHEELER DISTRICT
OKLAHOMA CITY, OK**



**FLINTLOCK LAB DESIGNS
FAYETTEVILLE, AR**

RECOMMENDATIONS

	WALKABILITY	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	PLACEMAKING	HOUSING
Add Welcome to Choctaw signs at entrance points.			●	
Create a food truck court in the Rock Island Caboose area.		●	●	
Develop connected and expansive sidewalk infrastructure.	●			
Utilize painted crosswalks.	●		●	
Create a multi-use plaza space for a business incubator or community activities.		●	●	
Add banners on light poles.			●	
Encourage the development of missing middle housing.				●
Add pedestrian walkways across large parking lots.	●			
Develop a walking/biking trail on the south side of the corridor.	●			
Connect housing to the sidewalk network.	●			●
Add a public mural or asphalt art to food truck court space.	●	●		

COMPLEXITY SCALE

- SIMPLE
- MEDIUM
- COMPLEX

FUNDING & RESOURCE GUIDE

RECREATIONAL TRAILS

Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department (OTRD)

OTRD's Recreational Trails Program (RTP) provides a 80/20 match funding that supports public outdoor recreational trails and trail amenities. Grant funding is up to \$240,000, or \$300,000 total project cost after local match (\$60,000).

WATER AND GREENSPACE CONSERVATION

Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department (OTRD)

OTRD's Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) provides a 50/50 match funding for projects that aim to acquire and/or develop lands and waters for public outdoor recreation for existing parks, forests, wildlife areas, beaches, and other similar areas dedicated to outdoor recreation. There is no funding cap for this grant. Eligible sponsors may request funding based on their available match (50%).

American Association of Retired Persons (AARP)

AARP offers an array of grant types for quick-action projects including flagship grants, capacity-building micro-grants, and demonstration grants. All grant applications must align with the mission of AARP, to create equity and access in communities for persons 50 and over.

THE ARTS

Oklahoma Arts Council

Under the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), nonprofit organizations with arts programming that serves communities are eligible applicants.

Arts in Communities grants support programs that cultivate and strengthen Oklahoma's arts and cultural industry. This industry has a \$872.8M impact on our state's economy.

COMMUNITY BUILDING

T-Mobile

T-Mobile's Hometown Grants fund projects that foster local connections, like technology upgrades, outdoor spaces, the arts, historic preservation, and community centers. Awards are up to \$50,000 and available for towns with populations less than 50,000.

PLANNING, POLICY, AND CONSTRUCTION

Tobacco Settlement Endowment Trust (TSET)

TSET Built Environment Grants fund a variety of project types, including planning, design, and policy development, and construction implementation. Projects aligning with TSET's mission to improve Oklahoman's health and quality of life by achieving targeted improvements in the health of Oklahomans. Planning and policy grants are eligible for up to \$150,000 with no match required. Construction projects can receive up to \$500,000 for up to two years with a match based on population size.

TSET Healthy Incentive Program provides no-match funding opportunities for Oklahoma communities that have achieved Certified Healthy Community status through TSET. Population tier determines eligible funding. Medium-sized communities, such as Choctaw, fall in the 'medium' category for populations 10,000-29,999 with maximum funding of \$120,000.

PUBLIC SPACES

National Association of Realtors

Placemaking grant supports the creation of new, outdoor public spaces and destinations in a community or unused or underused sites. Awards range from \$3,000-\$7,500.

