ENGAGED URBAN DESIGN
THE BROAD STREET
COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR
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INTRODUCTION
The Albert & Tina Small Center for Collaborative Design has long worked with cities and towns both globally and here in New Orleans, engaging with mayors, neighborhood groups, and businesses to help envision the future of their cities. In the Gulf South, Small Center has aided cities in reimagining their public spaces after disaster, preserving cultural landmarks, engaging residents around public art, and many more projects.

This class seminar worked collaboratively with Broad Community Connections to develop design proposals for the Broad Street commercial corridor. These designs were based on field studies, in-class workshops, and community engagement with business owners during the Fall 2023 semester.
BROAD COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Mission
Serving to catalyze revitalization along New Orleans’ Broad Street, to center the values of the residents in decision making, and to build community power and wealth.

120 Small Businesses
organized, attracted, or supported on Broad street

$445,000
in direct and indirect grants for disaster relief and business owners for disaster relief and building renovations

300 Jobs
created via the ReFresh Project
CONTEXT
SURVEYING & EXISTING CONDITIONS

During the beginning of this class, we took the time to get on ground and analyze the existing site conditions on Broad street. Through this survey we looked at economic enterprises, community and public enterprises, community and public spaces, cultural resources, infrastructure, and vacant spaces.
DESIGN
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Throughout this course, we made sure to engage with the city committee members as well as business owners to ensure our work fit the needs and quality standards for Broad street and the city of New Orleans. First we met with city committee members and leaders to discuss our individual proposals for Broad street. During this seminar, the class was categorized into groups based on interest and received feedback from reviewers in a rotational style. Towards the end of the semester, the class met with the business owners of Broad to talk about how to bring more traffic to the businesses in the area. The class also shared their final proposal ideas with the Broad business owners as well.
FINAL PROPOSALS
Along the Broad street corridor, there are many vacant lots, abandoned buildings, and unused parking lots that are potential sites for future development that could act as catalysts for the communities. Looking at the Boston Ujima Project as an example of a democratic investment fund that allows community members to invest and be involved in redevelopment and revitalization in their communities, the intention of this plan is to identify potential sites for combating commercial displacement and promoting equitable economic development along Broad street. The first step of this plan will be to create a system by which sites on or adjacent to Broad street are identified as ideal locations for these new development nodes. Along with the redevelopment of existing structures, this plan also looks to introduce public green spaces that support climate sustainability, provide space for the community to gather, and consider good usable space by which new development can happen around. By engaging with the community owned real estate initiative and working through a few examples of how sites are identified, this plan hopes to provide a framework by which continuing redevelopment occurs. In doing so, we will consider federal, state, and local resources that might be leveraged when redeveloping historic buildings, creating new green spaces, and revitalizing buildings.
MAP OF POSSIBLE SITES: VACANCIES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- **Exxon Gas Station**
  2701 Canal St. New Orleans, LA

- **Ruth's Chris Steak House (1896-1908)**
  Nominated as Historic Landmark, 1100 N Broad St. New Orleans

- **Empty Lot**
  223 N Broad St.
  New Orleans

- **Empty Lot**
  123 S Broad St.
  New Orleans

- **Big Easy Food Mart**
  2701 Toulouse Ave.
  New Orleans

- **Final Destination Barber**
  266 N Broad St. New Orleans, LA
  (Looks abandoned from exterior)

- **Empty Lot**
  650 N Broad St.
  New Orleans

- **Empty Lot**
  265 Orleans Ave.
  New Orleans

- **Empty Parking Lot**
  422 S Broad St.
  New Orleans

- **Kambrur Building**
  1256 N Broad St.
  New Orleans

- **Empty Lot**
  1220 N Broad St.
  New Orleans

**LEGENDS**

- RTA Bus & Streetcar Stops
- For Sale Sites
- Abandoned Sites
- Vacant Lots
The Boston Ujima Project is a community-led organization with a mission of growing a people’s economy in Greater Boston, one that is controlled by the community with neighbors, workers, business owners, and investors all working together on a shared vision of collective work and responsibility.

The idea is to challenge poverty and develop local neighborhoods by organizing individual savings, businesses, and customers to grow their own wealth and meet their own needs. The word ujima is a Swahili word that refers to the Kwanzaa principle of collective wealth and responsibility. The Boston Ujima Project demonstrates new ways to invest, work, buy, own, and advocate to create greater economic equity and autonomy in areas where there is very little, particularly Boston’s working-class communities of color.
Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is used to support local government economic development projects. It can attract or help businesses expand without using general funds or raising taxes. TIFs subsidize businesses by refunding or diverting a portion of their taxes to help finance development, especially in areas where land values are rapidly rising.

Local governments designate an area as a TIF district. The criteria for creating a TIF district are determined by state law. Financial assistance is given to projects by using new property tax revenues that result from new investments. In a TIF district, once property values rise, revenues are split in two. The first is set at the original property value before redevelopment, called the “base rate.” For a set number of years, this amount generates revenue through the local property tax process. Any funds generated over the base rate goes towards a separate fund that the district can use to incentivize investment and commercial projects, often called the increment value.

TIFs help local governments attract development and new businesses while assisting established businesses. They create new revenues that can be used to fund projects or programs that help small businesses, such as funds for development assistance and signage. They are often used to preserve historical places, demolish and rehab buildings, clean contaminated sites, or facilitate redevelopment.
BUSINESS OR COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

A business improvement district (BID) is a special self-taxing district that collects revenue within its boundaries to pay for special public facilities, improvements, or services such as beautification, security, hospitality, marketing, public space management, and social services. A community improvement district (CID) is a form of BID that also provides infrastructure, planning, and management services. Another organization that similarly manages a geographical area is a Community Development Corporation (CDC). CDCs support small businesses in a neighborhood commercial corridor and often facilitate physical improvements, create connections among small businesses, provide access to local resources and programs, initiate marketing efforts, and engage the surrounding community.

Commercial property owners typically vote to establish a BID or CID within a proposed boundary, then petition a local municipality. State or municipal legislatures generally grant the authority to create a BID, with the approval of most businesses. BIDs and CIDs are run as quasi-governmental entities, nonprofits, or mixed public-private entities. They vary in their purpose, organization, and other characteristics. A CID, although approved by the local municipality, sometimes acts as a separate political subdivision with the power to govern itself and collect special assessments and property and sales taxes. CIDs can generate funds by fees, rents, or charges for district property or services and through grants, gifts, and donations.

BIDs and CIDs have similar benefits. They can provide facilities and services for businesses, such as façade improvements, and issue tax-exempt special assessment bonds for public infrastructure improvements. Since CIDs act as pseudo-governmental bodies, they can leverage government funds for construction and improvements. They can also help to attract customers to the district, create jobs, and facilitate non-traditional retail opportunities through markets and festivals that promote business growth.
BUSINESS OR COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS

Community investment trusts and cooperatives allow neighborhood residents or other stakeholders to pool resources to purchase community-owned real estate. Community investment trusts and cooperatives are for-profit entities that help communities invest in themselves and secure space for small businesses and other cooperatively controlled uses. Investment trusts and cooperatives can help residents build equity and wealth while also providing small business owners with affordable space and opportunities to remain in place.

To set up an investment trust or cooperative, community members or other stakeholders must purchase shares in a given commercial real estate property. A board often determines member rates and other terms, and works with attorneys and real estate brokers to purchase the property. Initially, a nonprofit may create and manage the trust. Eventually, the trust can become a corporation owned entirely by shareholders, with a board of directors that includes community members and management by a property management firm.

Investment trusts or cooperatives are locally owned and operated. They can provide long-term stability for commercial tenants and build assets for low-wealth investors, who also benefit from development in their neighborhood. Community residents can sit on the board that oversees the investment. Investment trusts or cooperatives help shareholders become more financially stable. They also increase neighborhood economic development as investors are also more likely to shop in businesses in which they have invested.
DEVELOPMENT SITE - EMPTY LOT AT 223 NORTH BROAD
PROPOSED PROGRAM - PUBLIC GREEN SPACE AND FOOD TRUCK SPOT
Our proposal acts as a glimpse into how our proposal will work throughout broad street from Tulane down to Bayou Road. This proposal encapsulates the idea of giving space back to the pedestrian and the cyclist. By relocating the cycling lane to the center of the road next to the neutral ground we are separating the dangers of parking and bus stops from crossing over through the bike path. This protected path also separates heavy traffic from the next proposal which is a pedestrian path inn the neutral ground. This will serve as a protected path for those to safely use as they walk up and down the broad street community. We are also proposing areas of parking to be formalized as well as designated pull in/out for bus stops to remove traffic stoppage in one lane. Ou final addition is the symbiotic relationship between the broad street bike path, lafitte greenway and a new proposed pedestrian bike lane on Dorgenois.
The neutral ground is an area unique to broad as it acts as the primary green space for the street and joins the roads together as well as acts as a stormwater management addition. This is a pathway in which people can utilize while on broad informally. Our proposal adds a pathway for the community members to use freely and safely giving the opportunity to travel up and down the street in a shaded green path. At each intersection the path will be heavily notated with pavement changes and stop signs enacting public safety and a continuous travel path that can take you to all parts of the community.
The bus lanes on South Broad Street are some of the busiest in the city. As one of the major transportation routes in New Orleans, Broad Street offers access to almost anywhere in the city. Many of the smaller bus stops are overcrowded and run down, by providing new larger shelters that can accommodate more people and protect from the harsh New Orleans sun, it is possible to take some of the individual automobile traffic from Broad and encourage public transportation.

One of the overwhelming issues Broad Street has faced throughout the years is the flooding that occurs during storms. Very often this flooding not only brings traffic to a halt, but it complicates the use of public transportation as well. When proposing larger bus stops with more people, it also opens the door for greater automobile/pedestrian accidents. The use of a bioswale as barrier protection from the main road and as a stormwater management intervention helps to address both the flooding and safety issues.

During our visits to Broad Street and the surrounding area, we noted that the buses stopped very often. This created unsafe scenarios where drivers attempted to get around a parked bus by swerving into the other lane of traffic and/or cutting other drivers off. In the short amount of time we spent observing this scenario nearly caused several accidents involving buses, automobiles, bikers, and pedestrians. To help alleviate this problem, we propose designated bus pull off areas in what was formerly scarcely used street parking areas. This allows the bus to pull to the side without impeding the flow of traffic or impeding drivers views of pedestrians or bikers ahead.
DORGENOIS BIKE ROUTES

Dorgenois is an east-west road directly south of Broad street. By developing dorgenois to formalize existing parking strategies and providing a bike lane we suspect that we can alleviate parking and cycling on broad street. Therefore, amplifying the social and commercial qualities of the street. Dedicated bike lanes off of broad give cyclist a shadier, lower traffic alternative for moving east-west on the site.
The proposed intervention is to develop multifunctional zones along the corridor that engages the neutral ground as well as increase pedestrian circulation/accessibility to the surrounding institutions.

As you move along the corridor, the zones begin to transition as the level of engagement begins to shift from residential to commercial. The idea is to have these zones serve as a buffer between the current ideology of Broad St. being just a busy throughway for cars just getting to work, or quick stop errands. Engaging in urban development, and not allowing pedestrian throughway and accessibility, takes away from the authenticity of what a community and dismantles any sense of culture.

Ecologically, these zones provide stormwater management, mitigating flood crisis, as well as canopies that challenges the "urban heat island" effect that has a hold of the city of New Orleans. To mitigate the effect of carbon emissions exposure, facades of CO₂ tolerant vegetation will inhabit the zones of engagement.

Engaging with the various zones and inhabitants along the corridor, creates an interlacing connection with the residents and the businesses of the neighborhood.
CLOSE-UP SECTION AND PLAN - PROTECTED BIKE PATH AND WALK WAY + PERMEABLE SPACE
PRECEDENTS
1. Upside Down bridge Connector, New Yorks Queensway
2. Bybee Kelly Point North Portland Bike Path
3. Queen Plaza North
COMMERCIAL BLOCK
EX: BANK STREET & BROAD

PARKING BLOCK
EX: ORLEANS & BROAD @ ZULU

RESIDENTIAL BLOCK
EX: URSULINE AND BROAD

PROTECTED BIKE LANE
LARGER SEATING AREA ON COMMERCIAL BLOCKS

PARKING SPOT IN CASE OF FLOODING OR PARADES

LARGER SEATING AREA ON COMMERCIAL BLOCKS

PERMEABLE PAVEMENT RETAINS WATER AND REDUCES LOAD ON CITY INFRASTRUCTURE THROUGHOUT ENTIRE CORRIDOR

SMALLER SEATING AREAS ON RESIDENTIAL BLOCKS

SECTION MODULES
concrete pavers
aggregate in openings
curb edge
bedding
geotextile
stone subbase
geotextile
soil subgrade

examples of permeable pavement systems
PERSPECTIVE VIEW - DESIGNATED SEATING AREA
Through observation and assessment of the Broad Street corridor, issues surrounding pedestrian and biking safety stood out and were found to be improved through three distinct strategies that could also serve to highlight Broad’s unique history and culture. Overall analysis found a lack of pedestrian lighting, friction between vehicular traffic and bicyclists, and a lack of a unifying thread to tie the corridor together. This proposal addresses these issues through the placement of lighting, signage, and art throughout the corridor. Signage along the corridor will as an unifying element throughout the diverse areas of Broad, while acknowledging the distinction between the range of neighborhoods within it. The addition of new lighting through the corridor will provide a sense of safety for pedestrians traveling along Broad at night, but also coordinate with the proposed signage family to highlight the culture of Broad Street. Lastly, the proposal will continue to highlight the diverse histories that are present on Broad with art installations along the neutral ground. These art installations will follow the same language of the signage - a neon style that is inspired by the 2012 Iconic Signage Project that highlighted small businesses on Broad.
When developing the proposed signage of Broad Street, it was important to create a family of signage types that increase the cohesion and visual identity of the corridor. The families are inspired by the 2012 Iconic Signage Project that employed local artists to create designs that promote small businesses and evoke some of the jazz-age and automobile-era heyday Broad Street enjoyed in the first half of the 20th century. The proposed signage could also be applied to bus stop signs, biking signage, and pedestrian signage. The same language will be repeated throughout the corridor to ensure a consistent and cohesive glowing visual identity for Broad Street.
The lighting that will be featured throughout the corridor will enhance the overall pedestrian walking experience. The first type of lighting proposed are light posts along the sidewalks that will feature the icons of the signage families. This will primarily be featured as supplemental light in areas that only have lighting in neutral grounds and do not extend to pedestrian walkways and sidewalks. The secondary lighting type proposed is additional floodlighting featured on the façade of buildings. This will make businesses on Broad Street more inviting for walking pedestrians and increase business visibility for vehicles.
The neutral ground provides a great opportunity to showcase artwork that highlights the cultures of Broad Street. The example that we show in these drawings are the Mardi Gras Indians which takes part in the culture of Zulu. Zulu Social Aid & Pleasure Club is found on Broad Street and is one of the many groups of cultures that make up the melting pot. The art installations should match the language of the signage and should be an indication of what section of Broad Street it is representing.
MASTER PLAN OF THE BROAD CORRIDOR SHOWING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE THREE STRATEGIES AND 5 PRELIMINARY DESIGNS FOR POSSIBLE NODES