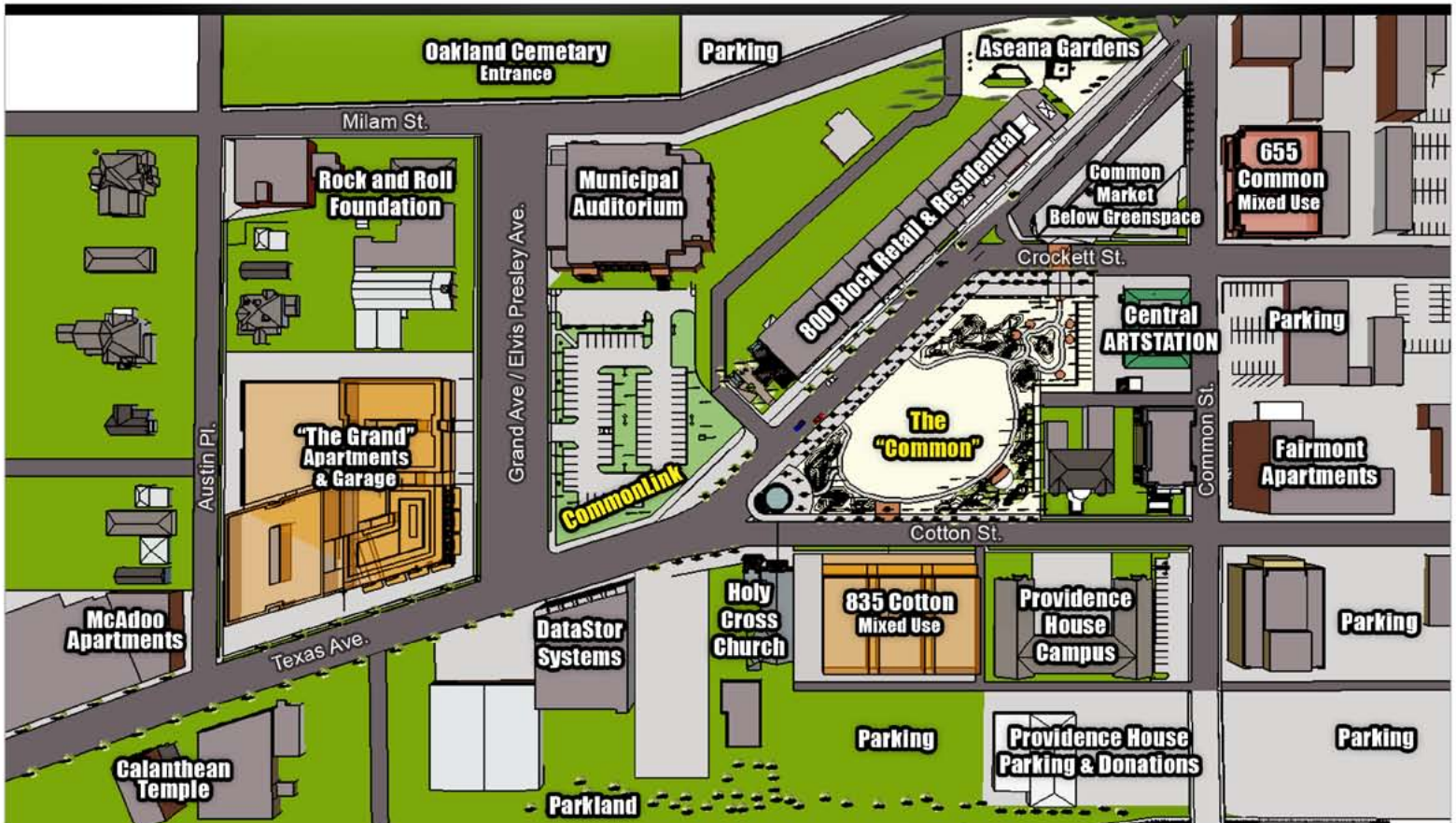


Shreveport Common

A Vision for an Uncommon Cultural District



SHREVEPORT COMMON was conceived after a devastating fire engulfed the Shreveport Regional Arts Council's (SRAC) headquarters on August 25, 2009. Few would have thought that the senseless act of an arsonist would have spurred the rebuilding of a once-great urban neighborhood; one that could directly and positively affect the physical and cultural landscape of the City.

It began when Mayor Cedric Glover, City Council members, and department leaders pledged a "new day" in the glow of the still-raging fire. This sentiment was followed closely by Parish and state leaders who independently affirmed the importance of the Arts to the region and committed to a strong future for the Arts. Within days, the historic Central Fire Station was identified as the new SRAC headquarters. The 1922 Italian Renaissance building, a functional work of art itself, quickly proved it could supply the needed administrative requirements and serve individual artists and arts organizations in dramatic new ways. Pivotaly positioned in a historically significant but now blighted 9-block area west of downtown, this landmark is surrounded by a once thriving neighborhood that still preserves important chapters of the City's history and a wealth of historic architecture.

Tragedy to Trajectory

CENTRAL ARTSTATION: Dramatic Change for Community Arts and Arts Programming

The new home for the Shreveport Regional Arts Council, now Central ArtStation, devotes 65% of its space to public use for community art and arts programming, including a 4,000 s.f. multi-purpose "Engine Room" performance/exhibition space, an emerging artist gallery, and artists' business center. This giant step will plant the region's most dynamic Arts "Engine" in the center of SHREVEPORT COMMON, with non-stop activities, conferences, artist entrepreneurial opportunities, performances and programming that will energize the community's core, attracting artists, citizens, and visitors. Central ArtStation is now a reality--funded, under construction, and opening Fall 2012.



The restored front elevation of the Central Fire Station.

SHREVEPORT COMMON was borne out of an artistic, interdisciplinary Vision

The drive to create the "Central ArtStation" became the seed from which the comprehensive cultural district we call "SHREVEPORT COMMON" grows. Over Shreveport's first 175 years dramatic evolutions occurred in social, economic and political status. Yet no single place in the City can claim to have been such a crucible of change: from the cotton and cattle days, through wars and depressions, from social and technological advances, to railroads, automobiles and now into the digital age. This area was historically the district within the City where hard-working Anglo-Americans, disenfranchised African-Americans and newly arrived immigrants alike could realize the American dream. The microcosm that is SHREVEPORT COMMON is truly pivotal to the story of Shreveport.

It is this heritage of opportunity, creativity and tolerance that makes SHREVEPORT COMMON a historically, culturally and spiritually dynamic place. That spirit lives today, embodied in the stories, landmarks, and people that endure.

Fueled by imagination, seed money, planning grants, year-long community engagement, and active assistance and endorsement from City, Parish, State, and Federal agencies, the Arts led an inclusive process to complete a Vision Plan. This plan for an "Uncommon" Cultural Community begins the revitalization for a dramatically vibrant social and cultural life, driving increased jobs through new business, investment and entrepreneurial opportunities, and sustainable initiatives, based on Community, Creativity, Authenticity, and Sustainability.

Creating the "Uncommon" Cultural District

Encouraged by Mayor Cedric Glover, the SHREVEPORT REGIONAL ARTS COUNCIL sought and received unprecedented funding from the National Endowment for the Arts for planning and community engagement to create an Arts-Led Vision Planning Process. The **SHREVEPORT COMMON Vision Plan**, completed in 2011, has been approved as a community redevelopment plan by the Metropolitan Planning Commission, the City Council and Parish Commission. The Vision Plan identifies specific opportunities for new development, preservation, parks, roads, and infrastructure construction, as well as art entrepreneurial opportunities within this mixed-use urban community.

The Vision for the SHREVEPORT COMMON Cultural District

Community: Inclusive, Hospitable, Tolerant
Creative: Stimulating, Vibrant, Diverse
Authentic: True to its History, Place, Character
Sustainable: Environmentally, Socially, Economically

SHREVEPORT COMMON differs from traditional planning efforts through unique public-private partnerships and a community engagement process

This engagement process included community listening sessions with over 60 neighboring businesses and property owners, as well as meetings every three weeks with a 50-member, mayor-appointed Advisory Committee of stakeholders, and community get-togethers such as *Discover SHREVEPORT COMMON Day*. Through the Visioning process a coalition of Arts and civic organizations, City, Parish, and State government leaders and agencies successfully mobilized talent, funds, technical resources and professional expertise to coordinate financial incentives, seek planning and infrastructure funding, hold events for public input, reduce obstacles, gain approvals, and advocate together for the benefit of the overall project Vision.

Public and Private Commitments Bolstered by Dedication to Infrastructure

The Vision’s success is ensured by public and private commitments. The district’s principal public amenity, the 1.3-acre central Common green space, will be built and maintained by the Parish and City. Because SHREVEPORT COMMON is a comprehensive civic improvement project, other amenities such as additional pocket parks and green spaces, streetscape, and infrastructure improvements, and programming to attract tenants, businesses, and customers, are the entire community’s responsibility. Private funding can be focused entirely on producing and maintaining a quality project.

SHREVEPORT COMMON addresses all the needs of a sustainable development: An uncommon place to live, work and play, it is destined to spread into neighboring blocks to repopulate and reinvigorate the City’s core. This development model is the beginning of an urban renaissance in Shreveport, re-colonizing first the historic business and cultural fabric, then moving outward to the surrounding empty blocks for inner-city residential developments and serving the growing multi-generational creative population drawn to the City by the Arts, film and digital media industries.



Shreveport is ready for a vibrant urban neighborhood that reflects the City’s unique character, talent, and values

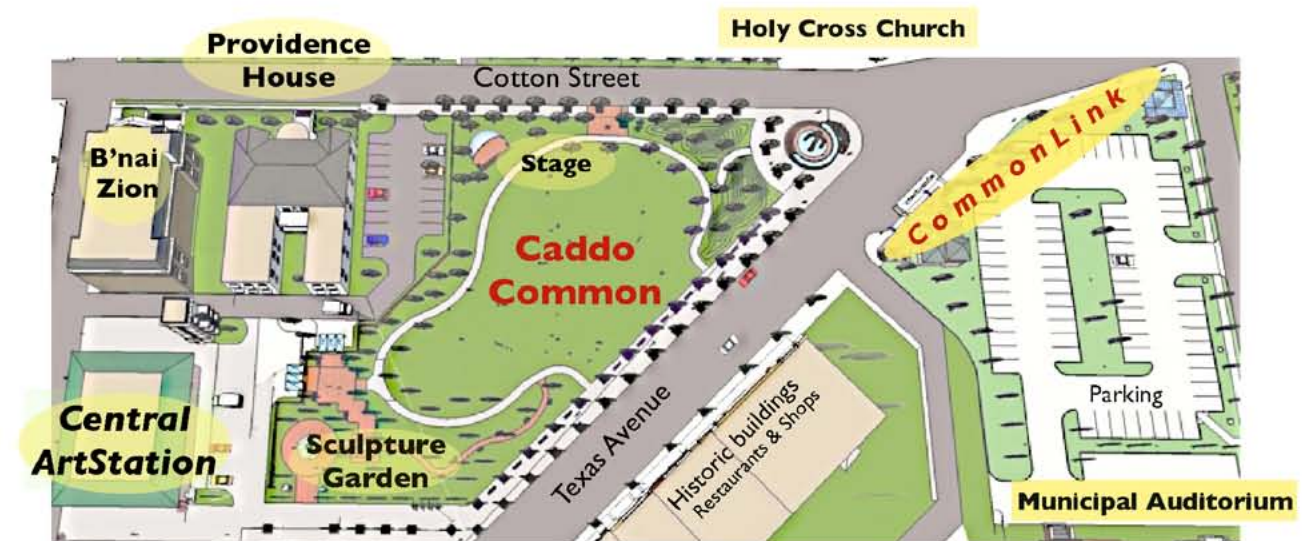
Core community projects, are scaled to a manageable size, for investment at all levels, where one success is everyone’s success. The approved Vision Plan, with powerful advocates in the public and private realm, and public commitment, is now being offered to the business community to discover the prospects of investment. What happens within this cultural core will lead to a new business paradigm: open to a diverse marketplace, unaffected by trends, and sustained by civic and cultural institutions, historic landmarks, public parks, neighborhood retail, and a residential community broad in age, background, and tradition.

The SHREVEPORT COMMON Vision Plan has already empowered, imagined and created exciting new cultural development projects

In addition to **Central ArtStation**, 30 public and private projects have begun or are committed in the 9-block area. To date, these projects leverage over \$100 million by private and public individuals and organizations to ensure the revitalization of the area. These projects range from adaptive reuse of historic houses as offices, to commercial buildings transformed as residential lofts and retail, to social service facilities expansion, to new public works projects and transportation enhancements.

A Community Green Space

The centerpiece of *SHREVEPORT COMMON* is the Caddo Common, a 1.3 acre, open green space full of art and creative programming, will feature artist-designed seating, paths, water-feature, sculpture garden and amphitheater, forming the nexus to *SHREVEPORT COMMON* as a community, providing places to play, exercise, relax, mingle and meditate. ASEANA Gardens, historic Oakland Cemetery, pocket parks, a small dog park, and the Grand Avenue Promenade are among the smaller green spaces and common areas planned for construction and enhancement within the neighborhood.



Detail from the *Shreveport Common Vision Plan* showing the two key public initiatives: The *Common* and *CommonLink*.

“Line and Sky” at CommonLink

“*Line and Sky*”, an Artist-designed transportation and information hub, is the signature set-piece of *SHREVEPORT COMMON*, forming a unique transportation epicenter. A canopy of light and color arcs across the site, with 2000 linear feet of steel pipe forming a continuous line created through a hands-on community engagement project, providing opportunity for physical exploration, fitness and play. High-tech interactive stations become information points on what’s happening and how to get there, changing the way our community perceives and utilizes public transportation.

Preserving Historic Places and Spaces

A new City bond issue will provide for restoration of Municipal Auditorium and Oakland Cemetery, the two largest landmarks in the district, and private renovations have begun on the three other important buildings, the Scottish Rite Cathedral, Holy Cross Church and Calanthean Temple. Within the first year since the *Visioning* process, six neglected or abandoned properties have been purchased for redevelopment and four stakeholders are upgrading their properties.



Some of Shreveport's most valuable architectural landmarks are in Shreveport Common



New Opportunities for Development and Investment

A successful mix of residential styles, densities and range of purchase and rental prices is necessary to satisfy the needs of the interested stakeholders and create a sustainable, balanced community, particularly for artists and culture seekers. The eight potential new sites for residential redevelopment include historic high-end loft condominiums, high-density low-scale apartment buildings, detached live/work spaces and larger units for growing families, empty nesters and seniors. Each proposed project is conceived with the retail, convenience and personal services necessary to support a vital residential community, including a possible branch library and the promise of a school for Fine Arts. To the design and functional parameters were added the importance of sustainability, both from an environmental and economic point of view to ensure the development's long-term viability.

Public Art and Public Art Programming

SHREVEPORT COMMON envisions over 100 opportunities for Public Art and Art Programming, everywhere and every day. Shreveport Regional Arts Council will join forces with the numerous local Arts institutions and artists, to offer an array of cultural and quality of life programming—from planned and impromptu concerts, performances, exhibitions and markets, to educational and volunteer opportunities.

Initiated by tragedy, envisioned by artists, supported by public leaders and private generosity, SHREVEPORT COMMON is destined to change the landscape of our City, bringing with it new, unforeseen economic growth, a proud sense of place, and a lasting, sustainable community known the nation over.

ADDENDUM 1

The Team:

Mayor Cedric Glover
Shreveport Public Assembly and Recreation Department
Department of Community Development
Metropolitan Planning Commission
SPORTRAN
Downtown Development Authority
Caddo Parish Commission
Northwest Louisiana Council of Governments

Shreveport Regional Arts Council
SHREVEPORT COMMON Advisory Committee
SHREVEPORT COMMON Management Team
SHREVEPORT COMMON Task Forces
 Design & Conceive Parks & Green Spaces
 Artists Roles, Residences, Work Space Opportunities
 Public Art Committee
 Attracting Potential Developers
 Vendor Programs and Policies
 Coalition of Social Services
 Arts Programming
 Transportation
 Art School Initiative Advisory Committee

Professional Staff

Gregory Free, Design Team Leader
Mischa Farrell, AIA, Architect
Jerome Nicholas, ASLA, Landscape Architect
Katie Martin, ASLA, Landscape Architect
Wendy Benscoter, Project Manager
TMG Consultants

Continued Community Engagement:

A focus on engaging the community in the creating of SHREVEPORT COMMON will continue with one-on-one and group meetings that help neighbors, property owners and stakeholders remove obstacles and create sustainable partnerships and opportunities.