

DOWNTOWN CLEVELAND, TX

Embracing Incrementalism

BRINGING BACK MAIN STREET

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WHAT WE‘LL COVER



- **Past**
  - Downtown over the Decades
- **Present**
  - Activation, Incentives, & Redevelopment
- **Future**
  - Projects & Improvements

PAST



A burgeoning rail depot supporting bustling timber mills, deep in the thickett, North of Houston - Cleveland was incorporated in 1935.

1935 2025

A VIBRANT CENTER FOR COMMERCE

As timber and logging became the dominant industries, merchants and service businesses began to crop up around the downtown depot, lining the City's main streets with grocers, dry good shops, cafes, and other retailers.







ALWAYS A COMMUNITY GATHERING SPACE

Downtown has always been a critical community gathering space, either as the service center (CBD) of the City or as the epicenter of civic pride and community-building (home to many parades)







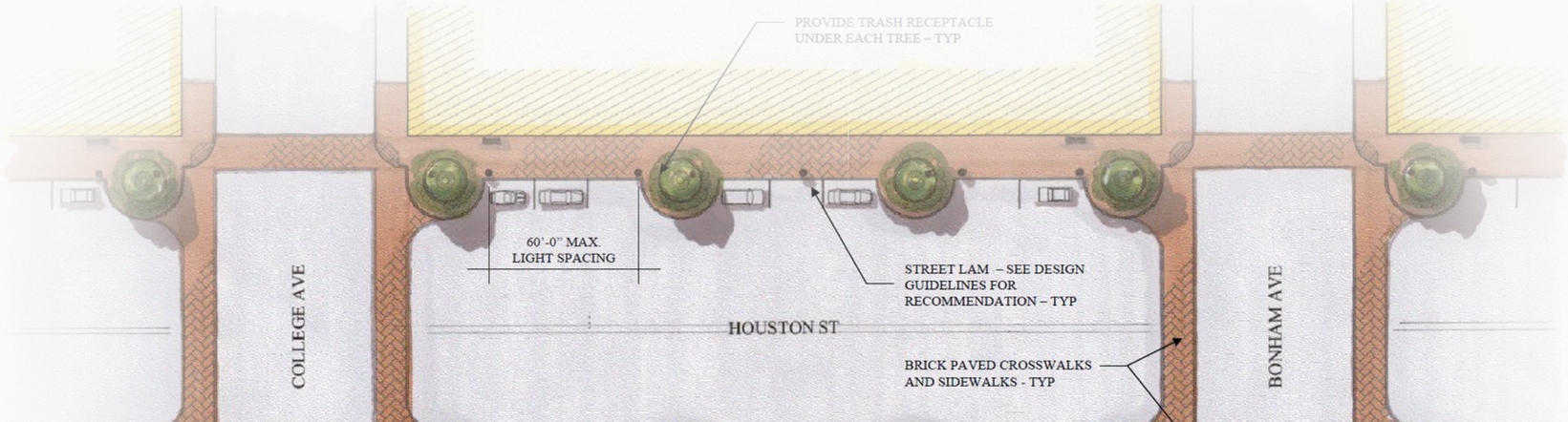


2004 DOWNTOWN PLAN



Relevant Take-aways/Recommendations

- Pedestrian Mobility Improvements
- Streetscaping Enhancements
- Need for Public/Civic Spaces
- Increase Entertainment & Restaurant Uses DT
- Increase DT Programming/Events





PRESENT

COFFEE WITH THE MAYOR

Low risk. No barriers to Entry. No cost. **High Reward.**

- Drives foot-traffic and sales for a local businesses
- Provides a casual forum for community engagement
- Generates important community dialogues







COLLABORATION IS KEY

Originated with a discussion over holiday decor around the downtown area...













CAPITALIZE ON YOUR MOMENTUM

Seizing the opportunity to mobilize and organize

- Cocoa Crawl demonstrated the demand for more downtown events/activity.
- Served as catalyst to organize a Downtown Stakeholder Committee .

Programming Ideas to be discussed:

- Sip & Stroll Event (Monthly or Seasonal)
- Farmer's Market (Monthly or Seasonal)
- Salsa Fest (to engage latino community)
- Logtober Fest (homage to logging past)

FACADE IMPROVEMENT GRANT PROGRAM

Conventional, matching facade improvement grant; upto 50% improvement costs **OR** certain maximums.

- ***Facades:*** Storefronts, exterior painting and reconstruction/remodeling.
- ***Signs:*** New signs and/or renovation or removal of existing signs.
- ***Property Improvement:*** landscaping, parking lot resurfacing, striping, driveway improvement, and lighting.



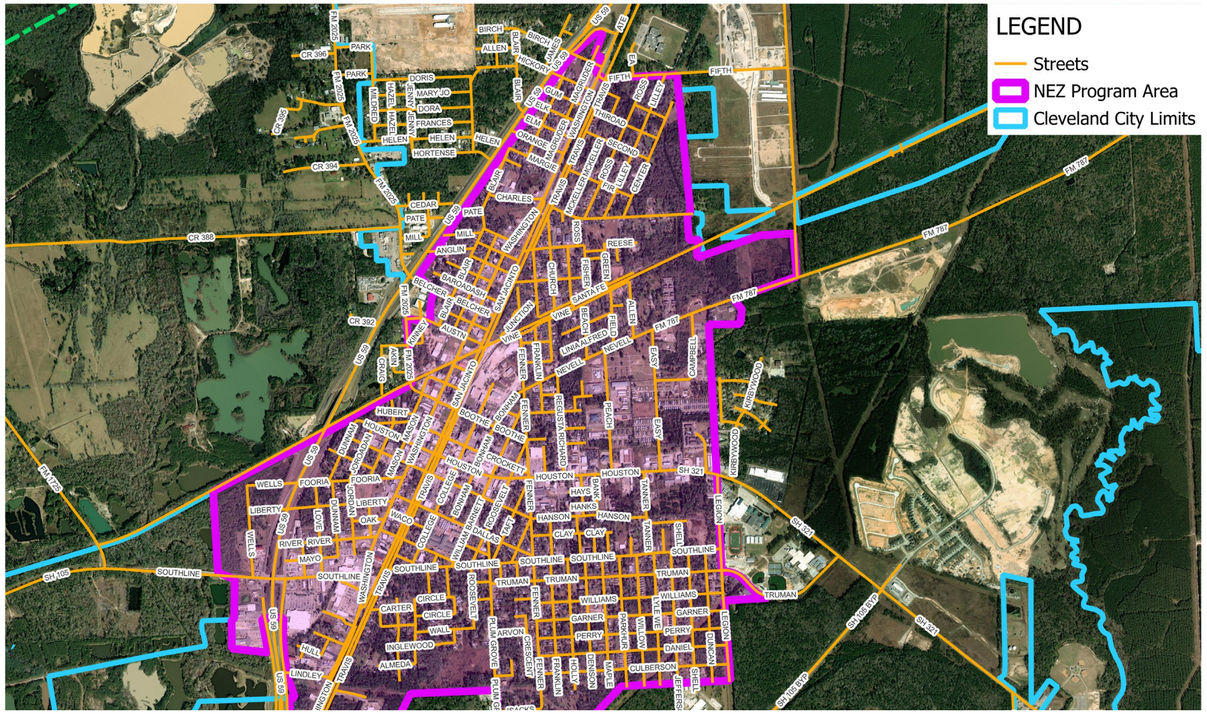
BEFORE



AFTER

EXPLORING N.E.Z. IMPLEMENTATION

Neighborhood Empowerment Zone (NEZ) Program Area - DRAFT Map



A redevelopment tool under State statutes that allows Cities to:

- **Waive Permit, Inspection, and Impact Fees;** and
- **Facilitate Tax Reimbursements** (Property Tax most common, on improvements)

The creation of the zone must promote:

1. the creation of affordable housing, including manufactured housing, in the zone;
2. an increase in economic development in the zone;
3. an increase in the quality of social services, education, or public safety provided to residents of the zone; **or**
4. the rehabilitation of affordable housing in the zone.

IMPROVE WHAT YOU CAN

The Old Fire Station Property

An empty, eye-sore of a lot in the heart of the CBD.



BEFORE



IMPROVE WHAT YOU CAN

New Downtown Pavilion

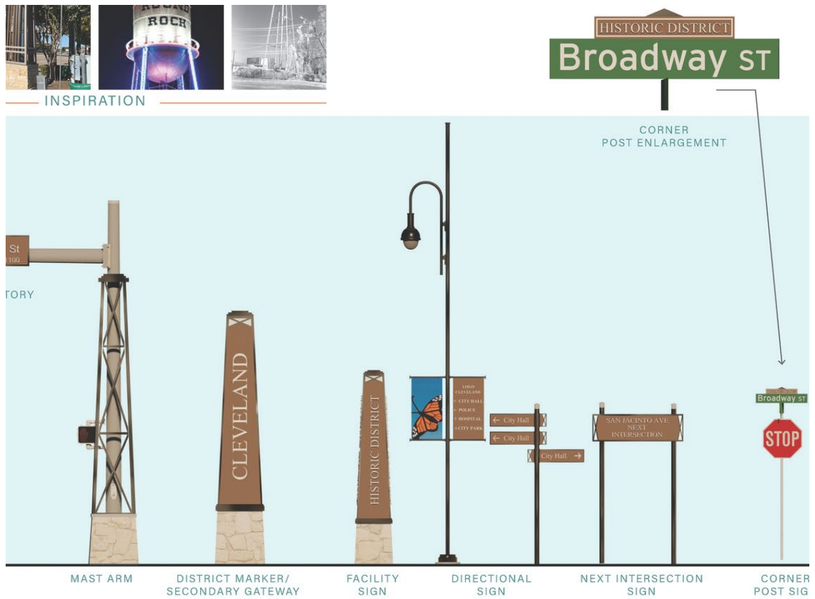
Now a quaint, beautified pocket park in the downtown area.





AFTER

FUTURE





FINDING OUR WAY

Wayfinding & Gateway Signage Master Plan

The EDC is funding a master plan for wayfinding and gateway signage throughout the entire community. **The plan is exploring concepts for seperate signage style and typology for the downtown area (“Heritage District”).**

Wayfinding project caused us to think hard about our branding...

1935 2025

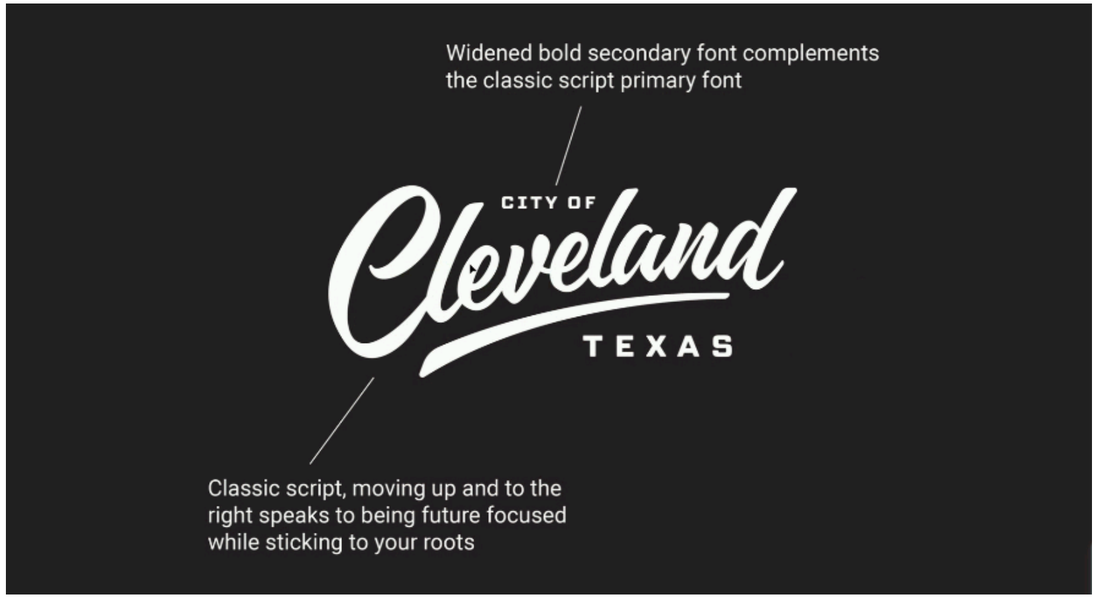
A BRAND NEW WAY

Rebranding the City

Simultaneously, EDC is also funding a Rebranding project for the community, which paused the Wayfinding project until the Branding is caught up.

CURRENT:

CITY OF CLEVELAND





SMALL -SCALE PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS

Improve Old Fire Station DT Pavilion



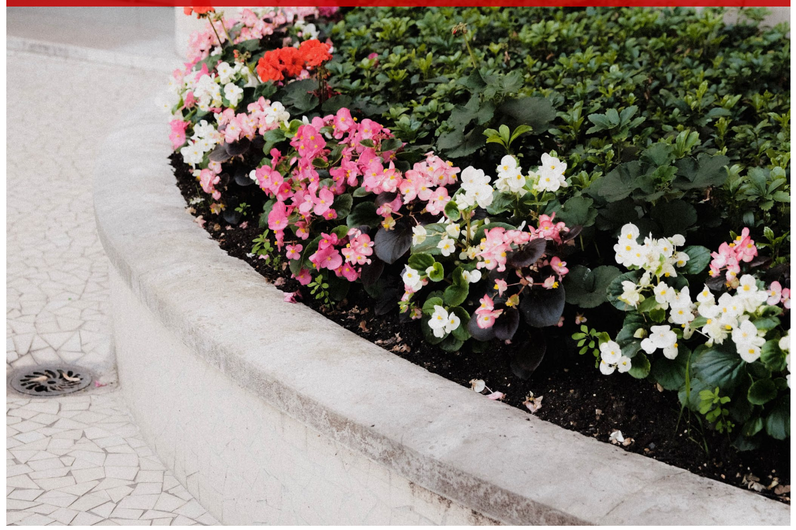
Upcycling decommissioned fire hydrants as a fence/buffer to the street, adding visual interest and paying homage the old fire station and fireman's hall.

Curate our Mural Collection



Steadily add to our collection of murals around the downtown. EDC budgets for one per year.

DT Planters and Landscaping



Improve the aesthetics of downtown intersections with planters to add greenery to a concrete mecca.
(explore road diets and landscape islands/bump-outs)

STREETSCAPE - ENHANCEMENTS

















A. LIGHTING













B. PAVING











C. LANDSCAPE

















D. FURNISHINGS



EMBRACE INCREMENTALISM

START SOMEWHERE

- Host a pop-up gathering at a local cafe and create community/initiate a dialogue.
- Make small improvements in public spaces, no matter the size - anything makes an impact.
- Find your collaborators and create an event that will meet your community's needs.
- Create an investment climate in your DT, either through incentives or by demonstrating your City's/EDC's commitment and ambition towards redevelopment.



THANK YOU!

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