

February 1, 2017



ARROWHEAD MALL

URBAN DESIGN STUDIO

The University of Oklahoma

Competition Brief
Spring 2017

PART I – PURPOSE

Create a range of scenarios for revitalizing Arrowhead Mall in Downtown Muskogee. Repurpose or revitalize Arrowhead Mall and its surroundings to attract people and make it a destination for locals as well as tourists. Visually connect the mall to the heart of downtown.

PART II – OBJECTIVES

- Create a range of solutions and scenarios.
- Feasibility - Participants are encouraged to plan their project so it can be constructed in phases that are economically realistic to develop over a five to ten year time frame. The demand for mall usage is modest and we project moderate growth.
- Resolve divergent perception/contrast between mall and downtown. Refer to the mapping analysis for a visual to see how the scale of the mall is out of proportion to historic downtown.
- Connect the mall to the downtown core.
- Connect the mall to the adjacent neighborhood.
- Add new development to the competition site.
- Be mindful of the negative reaction that the construction of Arrowhead Mall had on the black community and seek ways to make the project inclusive.

PART III – HISTORY

Muskogee is situated in eastern Oklahoma, fifty miles southeast of Tulsa on the Muskogee Turnpike and at the intersection of U.S. Highways 62, 64, and 69. Muskogee was formed in 1872 as a railroad station for the Missouri, Kansas and Texas (MKT) Railroad. The settlement was conveniently located near to the confluence of the Arkansas, Grand, and Verdigris Rivers. The town incorporated on March 19, 1898.

The population grew to 4,254 by 1900 and Muskogee was quickly soaring into the strongest phase of growth in its history. By 1910 the population reached 25,278. Spurred on by oil discoveries, new railroads, and increases in federal activity relating to the Five Civilized Tribes, the city's population surged. New buildings began to spring up all over the core central business district, and residential growth exploded onto the east and west sides of the city. The city was hailed as one of the fastest-growing communities in the southwestern United States. It was the second largest city in Oklahoma and was thought

to be on its way to becoming a major metropolitan city. Unfortunately, Muskogee never seemed to grow as anticipated. The population has remained relatively unchanged and has hovered around 38,000 for the last 65 years.

There are many factors that have contributed to the slow growth of Muskogee after the city experienced such a promising beginning. Muskogee's oil boom of the early 1900's was eclipsed by the Glen Pool discovery. Tulsa had a railroad to the field so they got the jump on Muskogee. The town continued to promote oil production in spite of the fact that the wells were all shallow. Eventually, the decline in oil prices finally proved to be the doom of oil activity around Muskogee. Another reason for slow growth was due to the fact that transportation changed after WW II and the rail stations were no longer useful. For a town that was first built as a railroad hub, this must have been especially disheartening. Additionally, manufacturing has declined in Muskogee and more residents are moving to larger cities for employment reasons.

In 1980, Muskogee officials announced a plan to revitalize the city's downtown by building a major shopping center in the area. Developer Ed Warmack of Fort Smith committed nearly \$30 million to the project, while the rest of the money came from federal urban development grants won by the city. After about eight years of planning, negotiating, arguing and, ultimately, building, the \$50 million, 440,000-square-foot downtown shopping center opened in September, 1987. Arrowhead Mall is enclosed and has 432,865 square feet of retail floor space. It sits on 43 acres of land and has 1,909 parking spaces. The mall currently has three anchor stores: Dillards, JCPenney and Stage. Sears was the fourth anchor store before it closed for business in 2014. Arrowhead Mall was built as part of an urban renewal initiative on land that had previously been a black neighborhood and the historic black business district. The destruction of an historic location with so much importance to the black community did not sit well with many of Muskogee's black citizens. They believed that the mall disrupted the black community and destroyed downtown Muskogee.



Arrowhead Mall Looking NW



Arrowhead Mall from the South

PART IV - FINDINGS

As a result of detailed studies conducted by graduate students at The University of Oklahoma's Urban Design Studio and Institute for Quality Communities, five primary areas of focus for revitalizing downtown Muskogee have been identified:



Increase Downtown Activity

- Increase Nightlife: restaurants, clubs, music, hotels.
- Increase Daytime Activity: employment. I
- Increase Residency: housing and residential services such as grocery stores.
- Decrease Parking.
- Develop activities for Youth.



Make Better Connections

- Implement a road diet.
- Make sidewalk improvements.
- Create bike lanes for cyclists.
- Make crossings safer.
- Design streetscaping.
- Create north/south connections.
- Enhance trail access.
- Improve bus transit system.

Save Historic Buildings and Stabilization

- Reinforce buildings to make them structurally sound.
- Make buildings weather resistant.
- Refine or create building systems.
- Bring buildings up to code.
- Enhance façades to maintain historic charm.
- Buildout interior for client occupation.

Introduce Green Space

- Design green spaces similar to Guthrie Green in Tulsa.
- Create pocket parks.
- Create a space near the Depot District for a public park, festivals and food trucks.
- Create green space near the library.
- Make connections to surrounding parks and trails.

Revitalize Arrowhead Mall

Arrowhead Mall

501 N. Main St., Muskogee, OK 74401



PART V - PROGRAM

All design teams must address the following elements while exploring their operative design scenario:

A. Revitalize the Mall

Design teams should come up with creative ways to revitalize Arrowhead Mall. Designers should look for alternative configurations and new uses to lease empty space and increase profitability. Finding a new anchor, perhaps a grocery store, is especially important to fill the large space at the end of the mall. Civic uses, such as a post office, new library, children's museum, or public space may also be appropriate. There are also many additional neighboring assets within this district. Some are in need of redesign and repurposing while some are doing well on their own by virtue of their service to the community (Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Community Center, several banks, etc.). The large parking area surrounding the mall is excessive and should be addressed in the revitalization design.

Possible Operative Design Scenarios:



Addition

Addition is often best defined as a component that is added to something to improve it or simply adding to what you already have. In the design competition, the team might feel that an addition to the current structure will make the best use of the space and provide the best argument for the revitalization of the existing structure.



Subtraction

Subtraction is defined as simply eliminating a portion of something that is not needed or wanted. For the design competition, this team may opt to subtract some of the useable square footage to make room for other design considerations.



Inversion

The term inversion in a basic sense means to turn something inside out. The mall has all of its shops facing towards the inside of the structure and the design teams may wish to explore the possibility of moving shop access to the outside of the building for an "open air" mall effect.



Wrapping

Wrapping is defined as the enclosing of something to cover the original surfaces. This design scenario is often the most feasible because it allows quicker results and will still provide the impression of having a new structure.



Framing

Framing differs from wrapping as the enclosing element is set apart from the original surfaces to hide or obscure the original.

B. Introduce Infill Development and Connections to Downtown

Many open spaces exist around the Arrowhead Mall, including excessive parking lots and undeveloped out-parcels. Each competition group should propose infill buildings or other new development in these areas to attract employers, residents, and visitors. Infill projects should propose new uses at the discretion of the design team, including retail, office, housing or temporary structures. All of these programs are deeply important to the citizens of Muskogee and have been mentioned multiple times at public engagement events. However, market demand is weak and proposals should be modest and capable of being phased in over time. The new development should connect the mall to downtown with an emphasis on the southwest side. It should also connect the mall to the adjacent neighborhood.

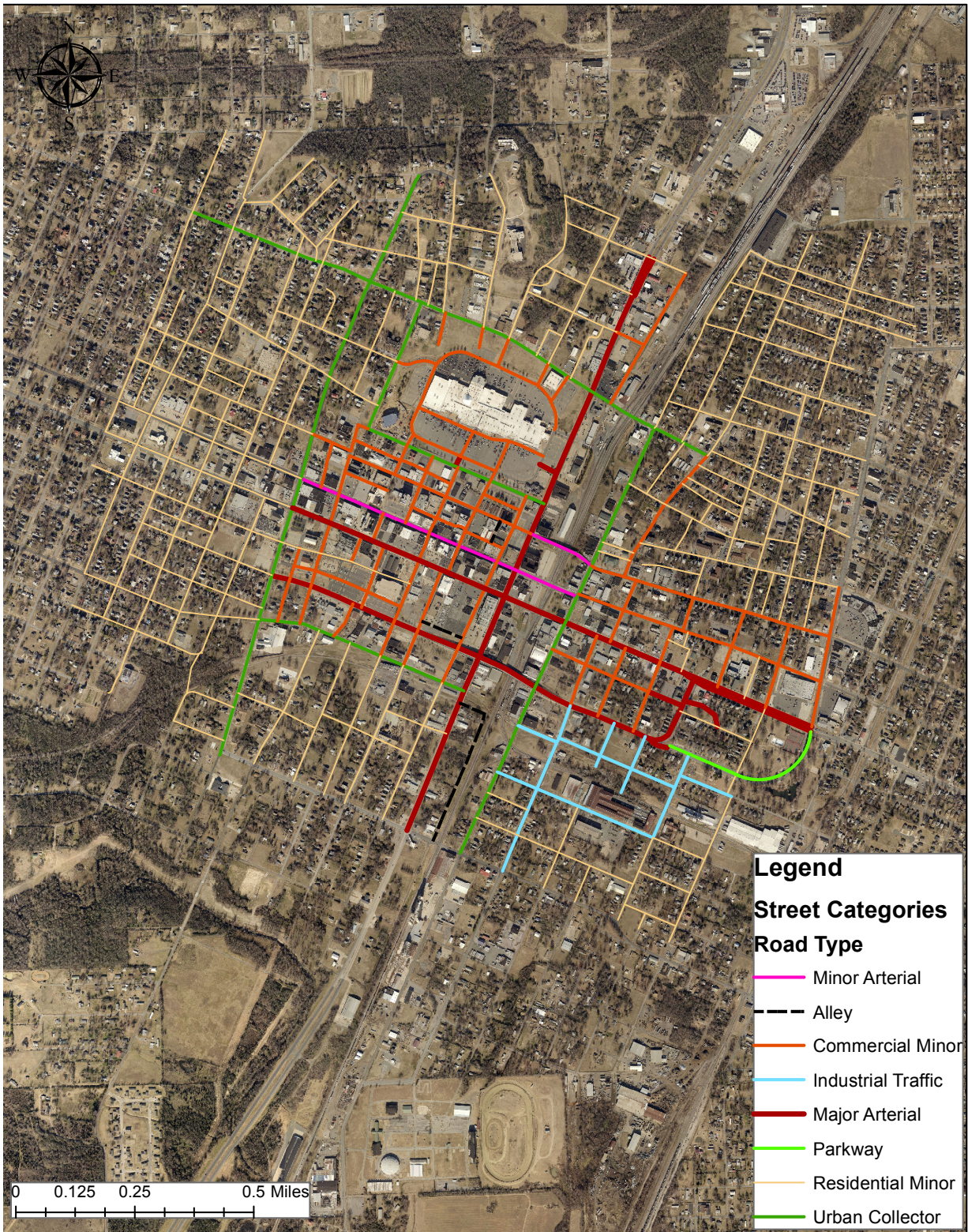
Transform the Image of the Property

Designers should transform the image of the site and the mall building. They should take steps to engage the contrast of scale between the mall and the adjacent downtown blocks and buildings, perhaps by breaking down the mass of the megastructure or introducing architectural or landscaping interventions in the large parking lots.

Consider the Streetscape

As it appears now, the streetscape around the Arrowhead Mall is vast and uninspiring. Spatial definition and visual appeal is needed in conjunction with considerations for traffic, pedestrian, lighting, and parking issues.

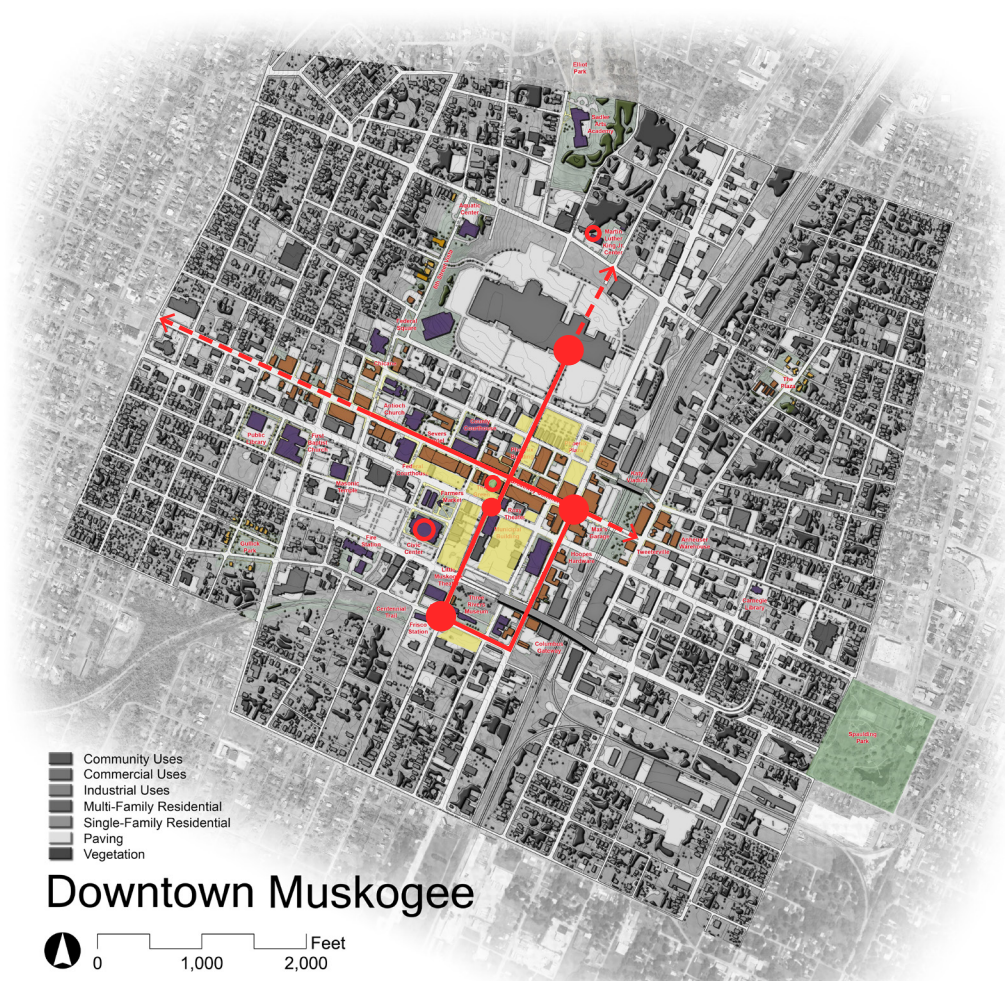
Downtown Muskogee Street Categories Map



Each design should explore ways to transform adjacent streets into Complete Streets with things such as shared space for three lanes of automobile traffic, enhanced sidewalks for pedestrians, a cycle track or bike lanes, street trees, traffic devices, and street furniture. Since many buildings surrounding the mall are built to the property line, competitors are not allowed to widen the right-of-way. The mall is also the transfer station for Muskogee’s four bus routes. Bus waiting and queuing should be accommodated.

Develop a Lighting Strategy

Designers should consider the illumination of existing and proposed architecture. Each team will also consider the lighting of the street and sidewalk. The street lighting strategy should promote responsible outdoor lighting for nighttime enjoyment, safety, and security while minimizing degradation of the night sky. Prevent light trespass and sky glow by incorporating full cut-off fixture design and reducing uplighting.





View of Arrowhead Mall looking South



View of Arrowhead Mall looking Northwest

PART VI – CONDITIONS OF THE COMPETITION

Groups of five or six students will be randomly selected by the team advisors and will remain on their selected team for the duration of the contest. Last minute team switching is not authorized.

PART VII – READINGS AND REFERENCES

- **City of Muskogee Comprehensive Plan and Future Land Use Map** (http://www.muskogeeonline.org/document_center/Planning/ComprehensivePlan_AdoptedJune4_2012.pdf)
- **City of Muskogee Code of Ordinance for the Historic Preservation Commission** (http://www.muskogeeonline.org/document_center/Planning/5_HISTORICPRESERVATIONORDINANCEFORWEBSITE1.pdf)
- **City of Muskogee Building Design Standards Ordinance** (http://www.muskogeeonline.org/document_center/Planning/PROPOSED_BuildingDesignStandardsOrdinance.pdf)
- **NACTO Street Design Guide** – National Association of City Transportation Officials
- **Retrofitting Suburbia** – Ellen Dunham-Jones and June Williamson
- **Flip this Town** – Ron Drake and Cary Tyson
- **Images of America: Muskogee** – Roger Bell
- **Postcard History Series: Muskogee** – Roger Bell and Jerry Hoffman

PART VIII – SCHEDULE

- **February 1st, 2017** – Design Competition Kickoff
- **February 1st, 2017** – Norman students visit Muskogee
- **February 17th, 2017** – Last Day to submit questions to Design Committee
- **February 27th, 2017** – Final deadline for all submission materials
- **March 1st, 2017**– Jury/Public Exhibit Event
- **March 1st, 2017** – Design Competition Winners Selected and Notified

PART IX – SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Each group will be required to submit the following items. All submissions must be anonymous without the name of the design team or the competitors on any portion of the submission.

Models

- One 1"=60' scale model of the development area:

Fit the model on the base model provided by the IQC

Differentiate between proposed and existing structures, though the use of materials. Use museum board for proposed elements and chipboard for existing elements. Alternately, acrylic may be supplemented for proposed elements as appropriate. All streets and site features should be labeled using 16 pt or

24 pt Nexa Bold font

- One 1"=20'-0" scale model of a selected architectural or landscape feature:

32"x40" base

All streets and site features should be labeled using 16 pt or 24 pt Nexa Bold font

Differentiate between proposed and existing structures, though the use of materials. Use museum board for proposed elements and chipboard for existing elements. Alternately, acrylic may be supplemented for proposed elements as appropriate.

Illustrations

- One overall illustrative plan of entire project area:

Scale: 1"=100'

Include an aerial photograph to show existing conditions

Size ARCH D 24"x36"

Include a North Arrow and a graphic scale for reference

Mount on foam board (Use of a vacuum press or other adhesive method is acceptable. Under no circumstances, should the illustration be clipped to the foamboard.

- A minimum of two eye-level perspective drawings/renderings:

Two Boards- Size Arch D 24"x36"

300dpi resolution

One showing daytime view
One showing nighttime view
One should be looking from the mall towards Downtown or vice versa
Orientation (landscape or portrait at the discretion of the team)

- Birdseye View Flythrough:

Choose a daytime or nighttime view for this requirement

The flythrough will be an all-encompassing submission that catches all infill development, design programs, street connections, and other highlighted aspects of the site design.

SketchUp, Rhino, or another software may be used, but the final product needs to be in .wav or .mp4 format for easy viewing.

- General Requirements for All Illustrations:

All Illustrations should have Streets Labeled

All plan Illustrations should have a Scale and North Arrow

All Illustrations mounted on foam board (Use of a vacuum press or other adhesive method is acceptable. Under no circumstances, should the illustration be clipped to the foam board.)

All Illustrations also submitted as PDF with a maximum size of 32MB total (Submitted via Dropbox). No other file formats or sizes will be permitted.

Illustrations are defined to include line drawings, renderings, axonometric diagrams, photomontages, and other forms of design media.



View of Downtown Muskogee looking North








Part X - QUESTIONS

Any questions about this brief or the competition should be submitted through the contact box provided on the website (<http://iqc.ou.edu/muskogee/>) no later than 11:59 pm on February 17, 2017. All questions will be answered and emailed out through the OU email server on Mondays after the kickoff event on February 1st until deadline for question submission (February 17, 2017).

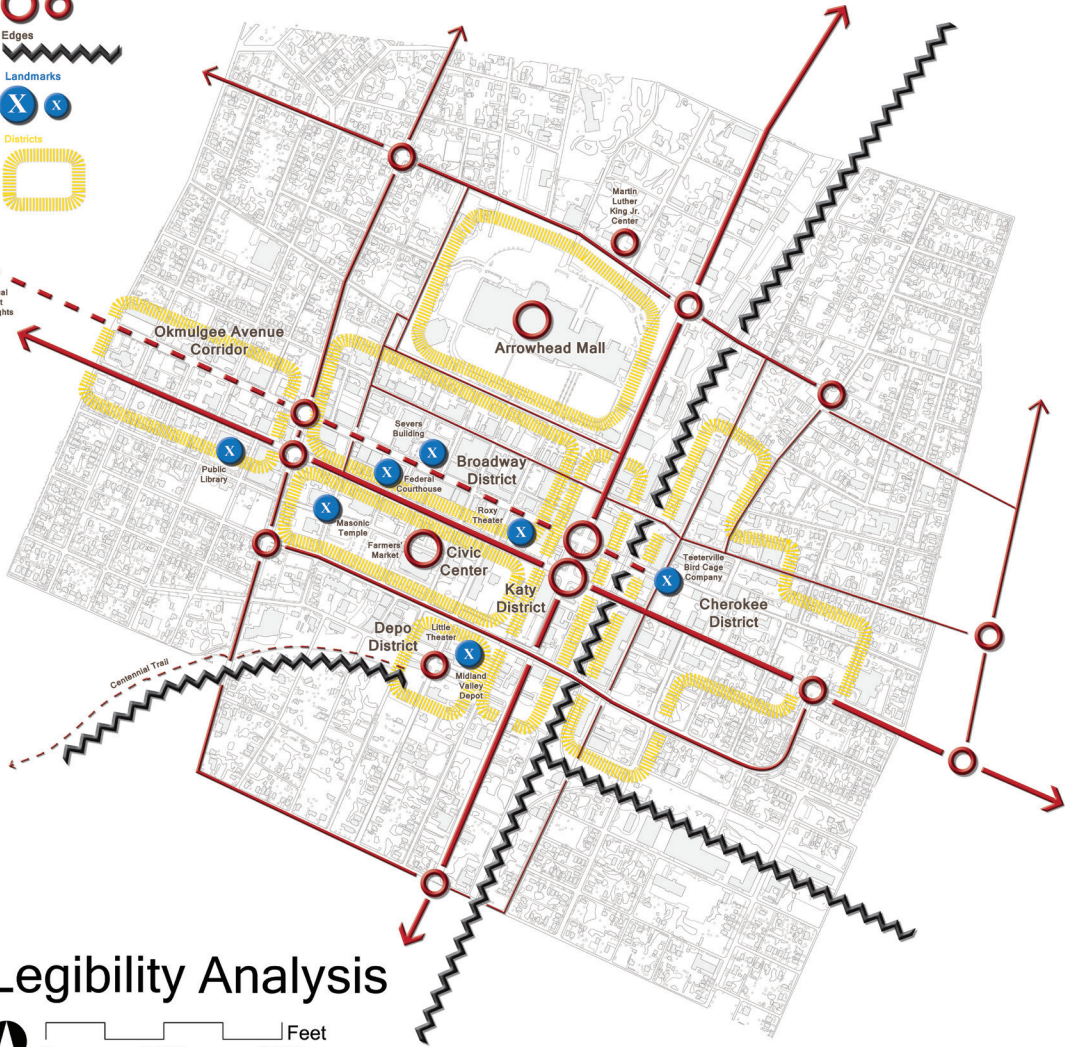
PART XI - AWARD

Each member of the winning team will receive a cash award.

LEGEND

- Paths 
- Nodes 
- Edges 
- Landmarks 
- Districts 

 VA Medical Center at Honor Heights



Legibility Analysis

