

VISION 20/20

WICHITA FALLS, TEXAS



THE GATEWAY TO TEXAS

City of Wichita Falls
Vision 20/20 Plan

July 2008



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DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN





Introduction

In July 2007, the City of Wichita Falls contracted with Freese and Nichols, Inc. to produce a Downtown Plan for its Central Business District (CBD). The plan focuses on the downtown area and suggests innovative possibilities to enhance the downtown image and create an environment that encourages investment.

The plan lists a wide variety of recommendations grouped into chapters focusing on urban design, business and residential development, transportation, and economic development. The plan is intended to be an “action plan” and is outlined with broad objectives, an explanation of reason for the objectives, and specific strategies for implementation.

Downtown Plan Process

The planning team employed a proven planning methodology which included five phases of work: Mobilization, Data Gathering, Analysis, Review and Recommendations.

Mobilization

During the Mobilization Phase, a steering committee was appointed by the Mayor to help guide the plan. The planning team met with stakeholders, City staff, and the Mayor’s Steering Committee to kick-off the downtown planning process. At that time, the schedule and public involvement process was established.

Data Gathering

During the Data Gathering Phase, the planning team compiled a large amount of data to provide essential background information. The planning team collected site data, photographs, maps, plans, reports, and surveys.

A series of public meetings and city council presentations were conducted throughout the planning process. These meetings were well attended and gave stakeholders the opportunity to present their collective vision for Downtown as well as offer a tremendous amount of input that helped shaped the final recommendations. Following are a list of the stakeholder/ council meetings held:



- August 14, 2007 - Mayor’s Steering Committee Kick-off Meeting
- September 5, 2007 - Downtown Plan Public Kick-off Meeting
- October 9, 2007 - Downtown Wichita Falls Development, Inc. Meeting
- October 10, 2007 - City Planning Commission Downtown Plan Presentation
- November 12, 2007 - Downtown Wichita Falls Public Meeting
- January 23, 2008 - City Council Workshop
- February 15, 2008 - Downtown Wichita Falls Development, Inc. Luncheon
- April 22, 2008 - Final Downtown Plan Presentation to City Council and Community



Downtown Plan public kick-off meeting at downtown library September 5, 2007

Analysis

During the Analysis Phase, the planning team gave thorough consideration of existing conditions. Issues were summarized and potential recommendations were explored. The team received continual feedback from various stakeholders; City staff; the Mayor’s Steering Committee; and affected agencies, which brought consensus to recommendations and future improvements.

Review

During the Review Phase, the planning team drafted concepts and preliminary recommendations. These recommendations were presented to staff, City Council, and the Mayor’s Steering Committee.

Recommendations

During the Recommendation Phase, draft reports were written and presented summarizing the process, objectives, and strategies of the planning effort.

This report concludes the recommendations of a nine month planning effort adopted by the City Council to serve as a guide for future development in downtown Wichita Falls.



Background

Geographic Location and Size

Wichita Falls is located in North Central Texas and has a population of approximately 100,000. The city limits encompass 71.29 square miles and is situated midway between Oklahoma City and the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex. Downtown Wichita Falls is bounded by the Wichita River on the northwest, Highway 287 on the southwest, the Union Pacific and Burlington Northern Santa Fe railroads on the northeast, and Kell Boulevard on the southeast.

City Facts

In November 2001, Wichita Falls was named “America’s Most Average City” according to an analysis of the 2000 U.S. Census by Advertising Age. Wichita Falls was considered to be representative of the national average for ethnicity, household size, and median age. The area’s largest employer is Sheppard Air Force Base. Furthermore, Midwestern State University is located in Wichita Falls and has a student population of approximately 6,000.

Downtown Wichita Falls

Downtown Wichita Falls served as the center of the community from the city’s founding in 1882 through the oil boom until the 1970s. The advent of the Sikes Senter Mall and surrounding commercial development in 1974 drew large retailers, including JC Penney and Sears, out of downtown. This change in commercial development patterns, in conjunction with a weakening of Wichita Fall’s oil sector, hastened the decline of downtown as the commercial center.

“Location, location, location.”

As the commercial draw of the mall area grew, residential development followed, moving growth in a southwesterly direction. This pattern has continued to the present. Consequently, downtown is no longer the geographic center of the city and is “out of the way” relative to the newer commercial centers around the mall. Downtown now competes with newer commercial centers for tenants and visitors.



Wichita Falls, Scott Street - 1950s
Source: Texas Postcards, TxGenWeb



Downtown Today

While downtown is not the busy center that it once was in the 1950s, it still has the largest concentration of public sector and office workers in the city. The Wichita County Administrative offices are located downtown, which attracts county-related businesses and people conducting business with the county. The City, a number of financial institutions, the Times Record News, and multiple professional services firms are housed in downtown office space. In addition, the area's oil and gas industry is still concentrated downtown. The majority of these uses draw people downtown from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on weekdays.

In addition to the uses described above, the public library, a number of arts organizations and museums, restaurants, various specialty retailers, and three new residential projects are scattered throughout downtown. These uses do draw residents and visitors downtown on nights and weekends, but downtown is not a primary destination for residents of Wichita Falls. It is still not a place residents would take visitors to showcase Wichita Falls or a place they would choose to stroll around on weekends.

Downtown Tomorrow

The potential for downtown to become a primary destination for Wichita Falls is evident. The historic buildings, walkable street grid, existing businesses and cultural amenities create a strong base for revitalization efforts.

With 6,000 students at Midwestern State University and a daily average of almost 6,000 students at Sheppard AFB, Wichita Falls has a sizeable population of young adults that would likely embrace downtown retail and entertainment options. In addition to attracting young adults, a revitalized downtown with a diverse range of entertainment, retail, residential, and employment options could draw from over 100,000 residents in Wichita Falls and over 350,000 residents in the region. The implementation of effective strategies as part of a well-coordinated revitalization effort can make a significant difference in restoring Downtown Wichita Falls as a prime destination in the region.

Existing Linkages and Gateways





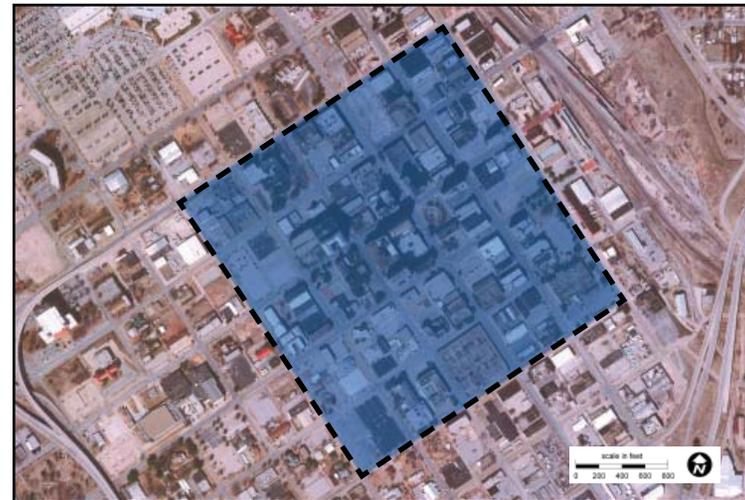
Downtown Comparisons

An example of a similar sized downtown which has overcome significant loss of urban vitality is Fort Worth. Downtown Fort Worth's early successes were attributed to good urban design strategies. Fort Worth carefully envisioned and planned specific events to bring attention to the downtown area. For instance, their first major redevelopment project began with the streetscape and tree lighting of Main Street. An arts festival soon followed as an invitation to the public to see the renaissance taking place. The creation of a public improvement district (PID) helped to provide an additional level of maintenance to streets and public rights of way, along with providing additional street furnishings and amenities. Downtown Fort Worth is now a destination and a vibrant urban area that is continuing to develop as one of the country's premier downtowns.

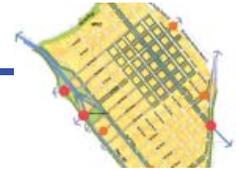
Downtown Wichita Falls' core area is very similar in size to the core area of downtown Fort Worth (see same-scaled comparisons). The two downtowns also have some other features in common as well. Both downtowns are bound by a river to the northwest and by railroads to the northeast. The core of Downtown Fort Worth, which is outlined in the graphic on the top right, is approximately 103 acres, while Downtown Wichita Falls is approximately 80 acres. Wichita Falls has a very large downtown core area considering the city's population which is approximately 100,000.



Downtown Core - Fort Worth, TX



Downtown Core - Wichita Falls, TX



Conceptual Linkage and Gateway Enhancements



The Downtown Vision

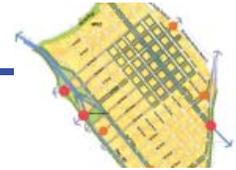
The focus of the downtown plan is to provide recommendations for redevelopment of the downtown Wichita Falls area by implementation of strategic physical and economic improvements. The goal or 'vision' of the plan is a renewed, expanded, vibrant downtown—a downtown the whole city takes pride in and wants to be a part of and one that attracts continued commercial and residential growth. Downtown Wichita Falls vision includes the following:

- Renewed, vibrant downtown
- Gateways
- Streetscapes
- Building and parking edges
- Residential development
- Urban design guidelines
- Special events
- Public spaces and art
- Urban features
- Code amendments

A successful vision for downtown must include the greater downtown area. Geographically, the greater downtown area is defined by Central Freeway (I-44/U.S. Hwy. 287) to the west, the Wichita River to the north, the railroads to the east, and Kell Boulevard to the south.

Gateways

While the current and likely future downtown 'core' lies well within these boundaries, the key entry points or gateways into downtown for most visitors occur along these outer edges. Visitors also travel through outer downtown districts and zones before arriving at centrally-located destinations. Arrival experiences shape visitors' impressions about downtown as they travel to and from the area. These experiences are critically important as they will influence visitors' attitudes about wanting to return to downtown and about supporting necessary revitalization efforts.



The experience of arriving at a destination begins with preparing to take a highway exit, cross an intersection, pass through an area, or enter a driveway. The degree to which that experience can be managed often determines whether or not the arrival experience is a pleasant one. The most successful shaping of the arrival experience begins early by reinforcing the visitor’s image of their destination and by guiding the visitor to the destination. Arrival points or gateways need not be and, in the case of successful downtowns, rarely are grand monuments or gates. However, theme wayfinding signage placed along well-maintained and landscaped gateway streets is important. Smaller monuments and landscaped areas along these routes can also benefit the arrival experience. These identifying and guiding features should have a consistent design theme in all locations.

Gateway signage should begin with directional information on boundary highway and roadway signs. Additionally, preferred routes to downtown destinations should be reinforced. For example, downtown core area visitors arriving via southbound I-44/U.S. Hwy. 287 should be directed by highway signage to take the 8th Street exit and directed at the 8th Street intersection to turn left. Improvements along the north edge of Harold Jones Park and along both sides of 8th Street should recognize that pathway’s function as a gateway to downtown. The same principle applies to the other gateways including northbound I-44/U.S. Hwy. 287, north and southbound Scott Avenue (Business 287), eastbound 6th Street, eastbound 10th Street, eastbound Kell Boulevard (Spur 447), northbound Broad, westbound Spur 447, and westbound 7th Street.

Locations with special opportunities for gateway enhancements include: 8th Street parkland frontage along Harold Jones Park and Kell Boulevard broad median and parkway edge between the freeway and Scott Avenue.



8th and Broad St.



Kell Blvd. and Broad St.

Streetscapes

In their most basic form, streets are corridors for vehicular movement and access to parking. In a successful and vibrant urban area, they must provide these basic functions and much more. They must provide a zone which attracts and provides comfort to pedestrians, both in daytime and nighttime. In essence, such streetscapes become like linear parks for the pedestrian, attracting them to spend time there and return in the future. The ‘streetscape’ includes all of the physical elements from one edge of the street-right-of-way to the other. Examples of these elements are street pavement (travel lanes and on-street parking spaces), curbs and gutters, surface drainage inlets, sidewalks, planting areas (for trees, shrubs, groundcover, flowers, or grasses), pots or raised planters, cross walks, ramps, roadway light poles and fixtures, pedestrian light poles and fixtures, signs, pole-mounted banners, benches, trash receptacles, bollards, tree grates, parking meters, utility boxes, above-ground utility lines, and specialty items such as water features or public art.

Well placed street trees provide a shade canopy from sunlight and its glare from building windows. They also provide a buffer between pedestrians and vehicles, offering an enclosure or comfort zone for those walking along commercial office and retail storefronts or areas with outdoor dining. Parallel and angled on-street parking further extends the buffer between pedestrians and traffic and provides additional parking spaces with close proximity to destinations.

Streetscape elements used in the downtown area should be a consistent type or design. One possible exception to this is providing variation in some streetscape elements from



Downtown streets banners



one downtown district to another. For example, the Depot Square Historic Zone and the Northwest Convention District (described later in this section) might utilize different models of light poles and fixtures whose color and style are compatible. However, care should be exercised in determining such allowed differences. Consistency of design theme throughout the entire downtown area may appropriately outweigh desire for design differences between districts.

Downtown streetscapes should include modification of existing curb and gutter locations to provide bulb-outs at intersections. Bulb-outs (shifting curbs out to edge of travel lanes where no parking is allowed) provide protection and enhancement of pedestrian spaces at intersections and alleys. Additionally, they provide for a significantly reduced crosswalk distance resulting in a more pedestrian-friendly environment.

Pole-mounted banners should be incorporated on key downtown streets to provide a festive atmosphere and communicate upcoming special events.

Unsightly streetscape elements such as overhead utility lines, especially along gateway streets, should be removed.

Building and Parking Edges

Preservation of building edges at the street’s edge creates the ‘urban fabric’ of downtown areas. When this pattern is interrupted, there is a noticeable loss of continuity. Unless the interruption is intentional for special effect, such as an urban park or plaza, the continuity should be maintained. Buildings should face the street with their face at the street right-of-way edge. Parking lots abutting the street right-of-way edge should generally be discouraged. When they do occur in this location, a continuity of building edge should be provided in the form of a decorative fence and/or line of shrubs.

Building uses at ground level should be those that promote daytime and nighttime as well as weekday and weekend activities at street level. Examples of these include commercial shopping, dining, entertainment, other retail/customer services, and residential entries.

Districts

Within an area the size of greater downtown Wichita Falls, it is helpful to identify zones or districts which have a unifying feature such as historic identity, sense of place, consistent

Proposed Downtown Districts





land use, association with a particular destination, etc. The recognition of a series of smaller planning areas or zones is helpful in formulating thoughts about land use preferences, urban design criteria, and redevelopment objectives. Recognition of such zones also helps keep redevelopment activities going by encouraging community involvement through a distinctive sense of neighborhood and a common purpose for each district or zone.

The districts within Downtown Wichita Falls include the following:

- The Central Office / Retail / Entertainment Core
- The Depot Square Historic Zone
- The Westside Institutional District
- The Northeast Commercial / Industrial Zone
- The Northwest Convention District
- The Southeast Commercial / Industrial Zone
- The Westside Commercial District
- The Southwest Neighborhood District
- The Wichita River Greenbelt

Linkages between downtown districts and adjoining districts should be encouraged and maintained.

Residential Development

Downtown residents are very important to the success of urban redevelopment. In addition to providing economic support for retail and entertainment businesses, they provide 'life' to downtown when visitors are not present. The 'live/work/play' theme and goal present in today's successful urban environments is dependent upon the presence of downtown residents. A significant increase in downtown core area residential development



Downtown Residential - City of Hayward, CA
Population 140, 600

should be encouraged. Downtown residential development should attract individuals and families from a range of income levels. In addition, to encourage residential development in the 'core,' revitalization of the Southwest Neighborhood District can and should play an important role in the revitalization of the greater downtown area.

Urban Design Guidelines

Guidelines and standards related to all aspects of physical development within the downtown area should be conceived and implemented to insure cohesive design and a consistent level of quality of the built environment. These guidelines should provide standards for streets, sidewalks, parking, building facades, roadway and pedestrian lighting, building exterior lighting, signs and banners, utilities, landscaping, building canopies, historic preservation, and public art.

Special Events

Special recurring or one-time events held on public streets or in public plazas downtown should be encouraged. A year-round calendar of events including art festivals, music events, parades, cook-offs, auto/motorcycle displays should be developed and promoted to encourage participation by city residents and out-of-town visitors. Wichita Falls is already host to several events including the Hotter-'n Hell Hundred. Associated events and the cycling ride route should be designed to encourage maximum exposure to downtown.

Temporary street closures should occur where appropriate for size of event and need for increased pedestrian space and protection. An example of this is a temporary closing of a few blocks of 8th Street for an outdoor art/music festival with artist and food vendor tents at mid-block locations and live music stages at intersection locations.



Hotter'n Hell - Wichita Falls, TX



Enhancement of Public Space with Water Features and Public Art

Existing parks should be upgraded providing features consistent with those of successful urban parks. Full utilization of the parks should be promoted. The most successful downtown parks provide for a variety of uses including special events such as weekend and evening concerts, lunch outings for area employees, respites for tourist pedestrians, and outdoor space for apartment dwellers.



Plaza Fountain - Dallas, TX

A significant water feature and public art should be incorporated in these spaces to enhance the multiple users' experience and encourage repeated visits. Public art may also be promoted in streetscape locations where space and art size allow and such special location is desired.



Downtown public art - Grapevine, TX



Interactive water feature

Special Urban Enhancements

Special features unique to the Wichita Falls downtown area should be enhanced to promote a festive downtown image and increase the downtown 'sense of place'. Two examples of this are special color-changing uplighting of the attractive support columns under the Central Freeway (I-44/U.S. Hwy. 287) and enhanced exterior lighting of the taller downtown

buildings. Additionally, lighting of street trees, particularly along key streets, would further promote evening activities.

Code Enforcement

The zoning, application, and building code process must address the unique complications that exist with developing higher density urban residential and mixed-uses for both adaptive re-use and new projects. Often jurisdictions have adopted specific state amendments to the standard building code to allow substitutions for rehabilitation of older structures and urban, non-conventional projects. This should not mean jeopardizing the health, safety, or welfare of potential tenants. It is apparent that redevelopment of downtown buildings, particularly historic buildings, are challenging. It is recommended Wichita Falls adopt amendments intended to facilitate the application of building code requirements to older structures and develop a task force specifically charged with finding creative ways to support, encourage, and reward urban solutions in the downtown environment.



Broad and 11th St.
Ideal location for freeway uplighting



Example of older structures in downtown Wichita Falls that have potential for redevelopment





URBAN DESIGN



Urban Design

Urban Design involves the arrangement of buildings, streets, sidewalks, landscaping, and outdoor spaces that make up towns and cities and the way people use them. Implementation of good urban design can sometimes cost more up-front, but it also offers significant benefits to the community. Urban areas which implement sound urban design principles encourage sustained economic vitality, deliver improved quality of life, and are highly valued by the community.

Wichita Falls has a great opportunity to strengthen the urban fabric that defines the heart of the City. Currently, downtown has lost some of its appeal as a destination area. While there is an active group of stakeholders investing in downtown, it is incumbent upon the City and this planning effort to suggest ways to create a vibrant center and destination place for the greater community to enjoy.

Through the enhancement of existing pedestrian linkages, open spaces, streetscapes, landscaping, and gateway features, Wichita Falls can achieve a more inviting, attractive, and walkable downtown. A walkable downtown makes pedestrian mobility easier and more enjoyable, and it helps to attract foot-traffic needed to sustain downtown retail and restaurant establishments.

Open space provides areas for people to enjoy the outdoor environment in urban settings, but they also provide areas for public gatherings and events. Open spaces provide a breath of fresh air in a “hustle and bustle” society and become necessary in attracting residential developments, especially in urban areas.

The purpose of districts is to identify areas that are unique and possibly suited for special types of development and conservation. Districts also allow for the location of similar developments, businesses, activities, and services to exist within close proximity. This creates opportunities for pedestrian linkages that enhance a downtown’s urban environment. Design standards in certain districts will give that particular area a unique look and feel while still maintaining consistency with the general downtown area.

The following are urban design related recommendations. Detailed strategies for each objective are outlined in the following chapter.

Summary of Urban Design Objectives

- **Integrate new and innovative features into the existing downtown park in order to maximize its appeal and utilization.**
This park serves at the “focal point” for downtown and should be redesigned to serve as a focal point for public and private events.
- **Promote walkability and an overall pedestrian-friendly environment on designated city streets through streetscape enhancement.** Particularly, Scott St. and 8th St. should be a priority to serve as the two “main streets”.
- **Organize the museum experience.** Explore the creation of a cycling museum.
- **Improve the downtown experience through the enhancement of gateways and linkages.**
- **Ensure a cohesive and integrated redevelopment of downtown through the recognition of distinct districts.**
- **Improve visual and physical connections between downtown and the Wichita River corridor.** Create open space/pocket parks to serve residential developments.
- **Increase the presence of public art throughout the downtown area.**



Objective 1: Integrate new and innovative features into the existing downtown park in order to maximize its appeal and utilization.

Explanation:

Downtown parks are great amenities for employees working downtown, residents of the area, and visitors. Parks in general provide spaces for relaxation, leisure and physical activities. Because of the urban environment and hardscape of most downtown areas, parks become necessary to provide areas where people can enjoy nature in the midst of built environments. Downtown parks are also assets to developers in search of urban areas in which to place their developments.

It is important for parks to be aesthetically and functionally attractive in order for them to be used frequently by the public.



The Grove at Southpark Meadows - Austin, TX
Interactive Fountain

On the southeast corner of 8th Street and Scott Avenue, the City of Wichita Falls owns a park that is approximately 0.62 acres. Although this is considered a small park, its central location makes it very valuable to downtown.

The existing park is suburban in character, consisting of a centrally-located circular seating area, bisecting sidewalks, and extensive landscaping. Seating is provided by modular picnic tables with built-in seating. Light-weight structures provide overhead shade. The seating area is surrounded by dense planting of tall grasses and low-branched trees placed on berms. This arrangement greatly limits visibility of the seating area and park interior for pedestrians and vehicles along the two fronting streets, 8th Street and Scott Avenue. Open space in the park is divided into numerous small patches varying in shape. Vagrants are commonly seen in the seating area. The park is perceived to be uninviting and potentially

unsafe. Consequently, the park is greatly underutilized, both on a day-to-day basis and for special events.

Strategies:

- Redevelop the park with an urban character and a central plaza theme. The new design should provide good visibility through the park from the fronting streets, preserve the streetscape ‘edges’ of the fronting streets, provide open space for downtown residents and special event gatherings, incorporate a mix of softscape (planted) and hardscape (paved) areas, and provide seating oriented toward different areas of the park and the fronting streets. A conceptual design which includes all of these features is shown in plan and elevation views on the following page.
- Add interest to the park through the use of water features and public art. Water features can be designed to be passive, interactive, or to a degree both. Incorporation of one or more of these features in the park could become a downtown destination in and of itself, benefiting other downtown businesses and activities. The conceptual design shown above suggests locations for a combined fountain/sculpture feature and for an interactive water feature (splash pad).
- Encourage awareness of the park as the downtown central gathering place and promote special event use.



Park in Downtown Wichita Falls

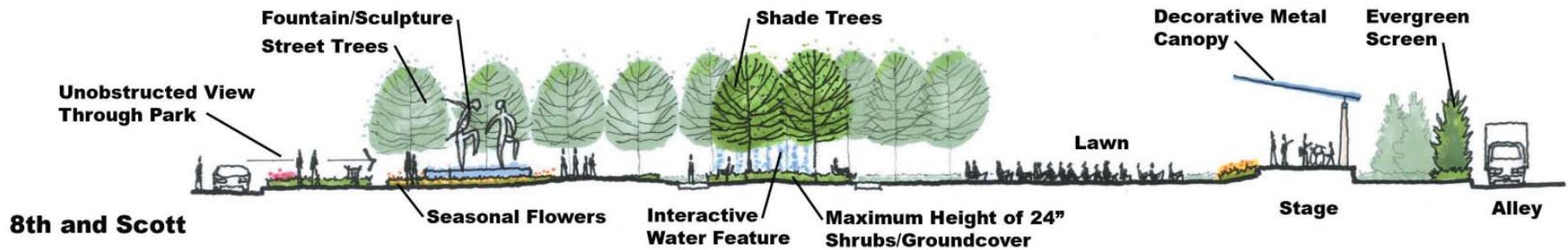


View from Alley of Downtown Park



Conceptual Redesign of Downtown Park
Plan View - Scott Ave. and 8th St.

Existing view of Downtown Park
Scott Ave. and 8th St.



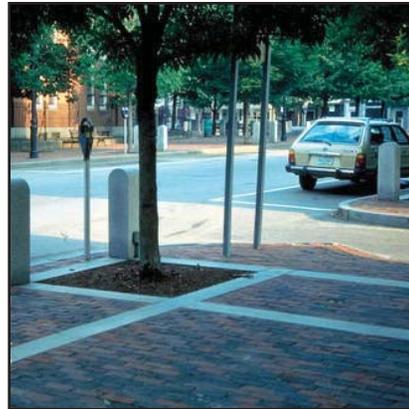
Conceptual Redesign of Downtown Park
Elevation/Section - Scott Ave. and 8th St.



Objective 2: Promote walkability and an overall pedestrian friendly environment on designated city streets through streetscape enhancement.

Explanation:

Successful downtowns have several characteristics in common and one of those characteristics is a pedestrian-friendly environment. Wichita Falls has an opportunity to make its downtown a more pedestrian-friendly environment through streetscape enhancements. The built environment can be improved in a way that is pleasurable for pedestrians and attractive for developers.



Streetscape: street trees and sidewalk elements

The existing downtown streetscapes are not very inviting for pedestrians, particularly from a strolling standpoint. Intersection crossings are long and not particularly well-identified.

Various street trees are present in several locations with inconsistent spacing and in many cases overgrown condition. Pedestrian lights, signs, benches and trash receptacles are not provided.

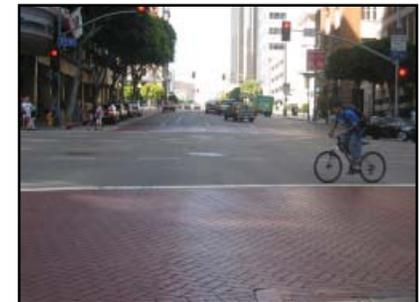
Strategies:

- Modify existing intersection and alley corners of streets with on-street parking to add 'bulb-outs' (shifting curbs out to the edge of travel lane) to define pedestrian vs. vehicular zones and shorten cross-walk distances. The bulb-outs should include ramps which provide an accessible path between sidewalks and crosswalks and which meet current accessibility criteria. Additionally, the bulb-outs may include special pedestrian paving, irrigated landscaping, and enhanced signal/sign/light poles. Intersection and alley corners within the downtown area should be ranked in importance for the timing of these improvements at key locations. An aerial perspective view of a conceptual design of this treatment for the 8th Street and Scott Avenue intersection is shown on the following page.

- Redevelop existing streetscapes (area from one edge of the street right-of-way to the other) to provide regularly-spaced street trees and landscaping, pedestrian lighting, benches, trash receptacles, and pole-mounted banners. Streetscapes within the downtown area should be ranked in importance for the timing of these improvements at key locations. Conceptual streetscape designs are outlined in the following pages both in plan and elevation views for 8th Street (typical east-west two lane), Scott Avenue (north-south four lane), and Indiana Avenue (typical north-south two lane).
- Enhance pedestrian crosswalk paving with color and texture. This enhancement provides traffic calming, is more inviting to pedestrians, and helps drivers better understand the pedestrian zone of the street. Crosswalk enhancement can be accomplished by use of a variety of methods such as brick pavers, color-stained saw-cut concrete, or stamped color-coated asphalt. The method used should be consistent at all selected downtown locations, if possible. If different methods are used, as much consistency as possible should be maintained.
- Unsightly streetscape elements such as overhead utility lines should be placed underground or removed.

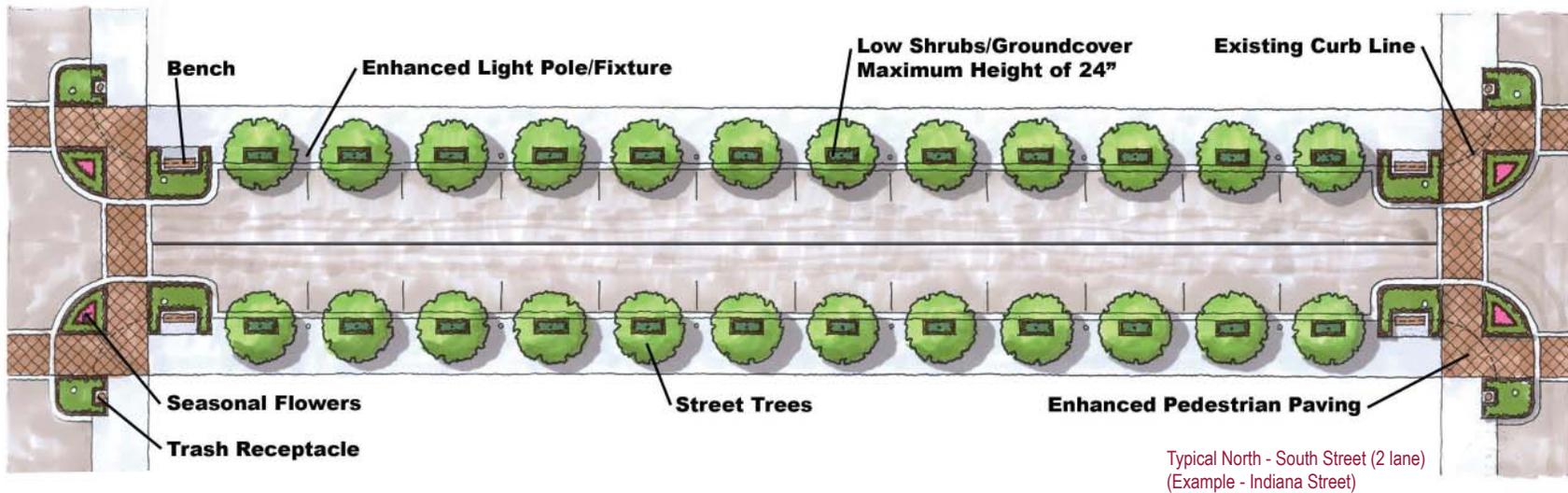
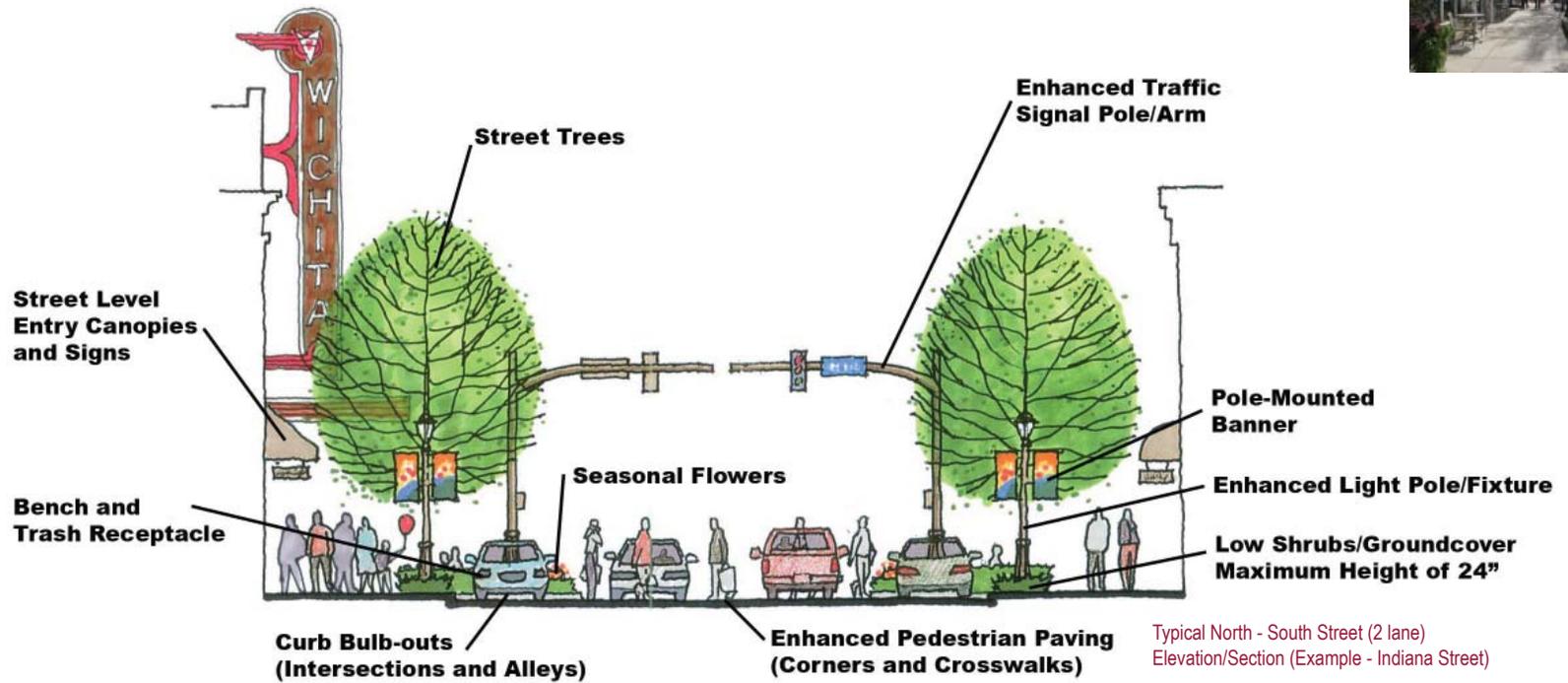


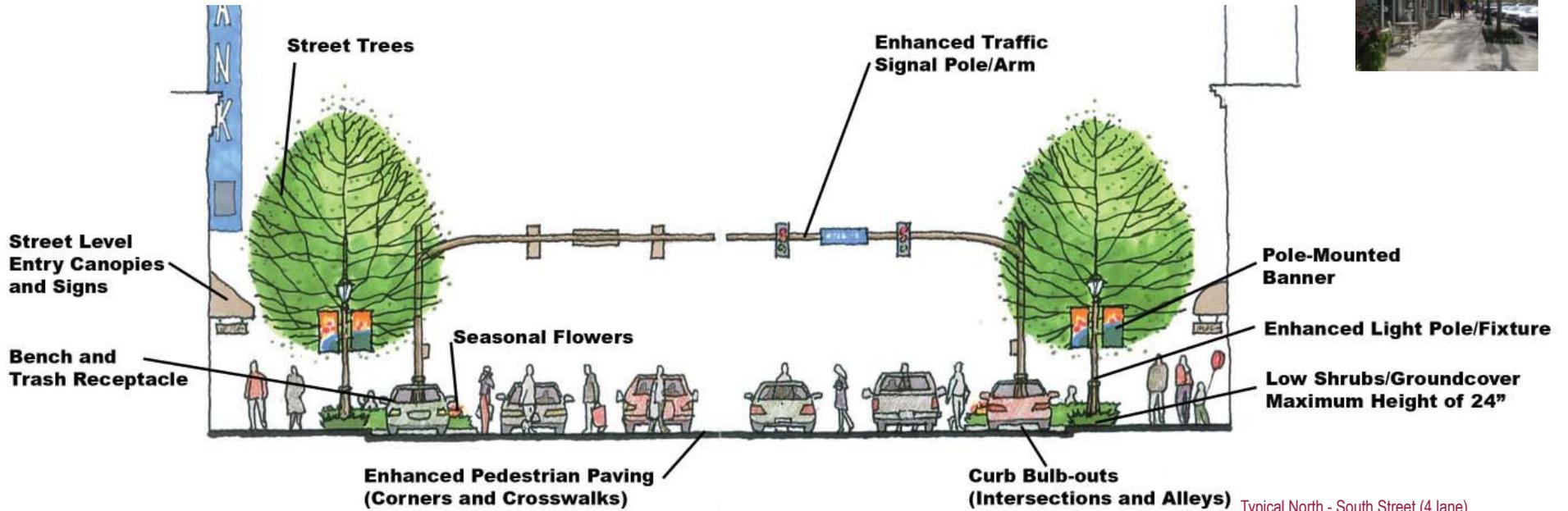
Enhanced crosswalks



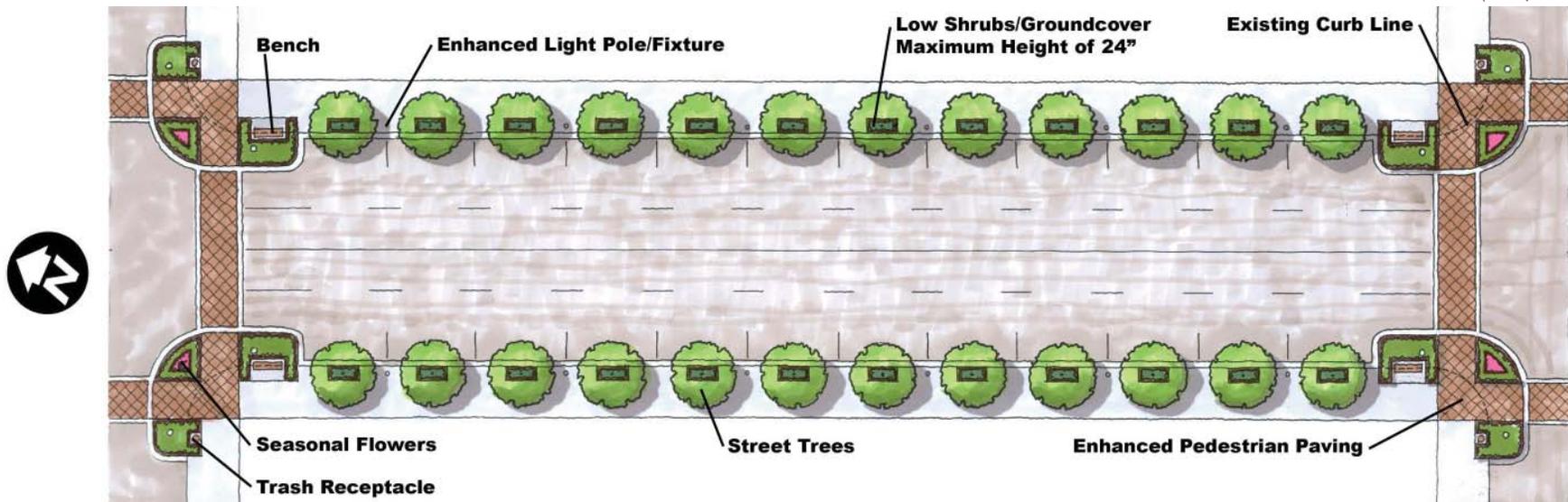


Conceptual Intersection with Enhanced Crosswalks
(Example - 8th Street and Scott Avenue)

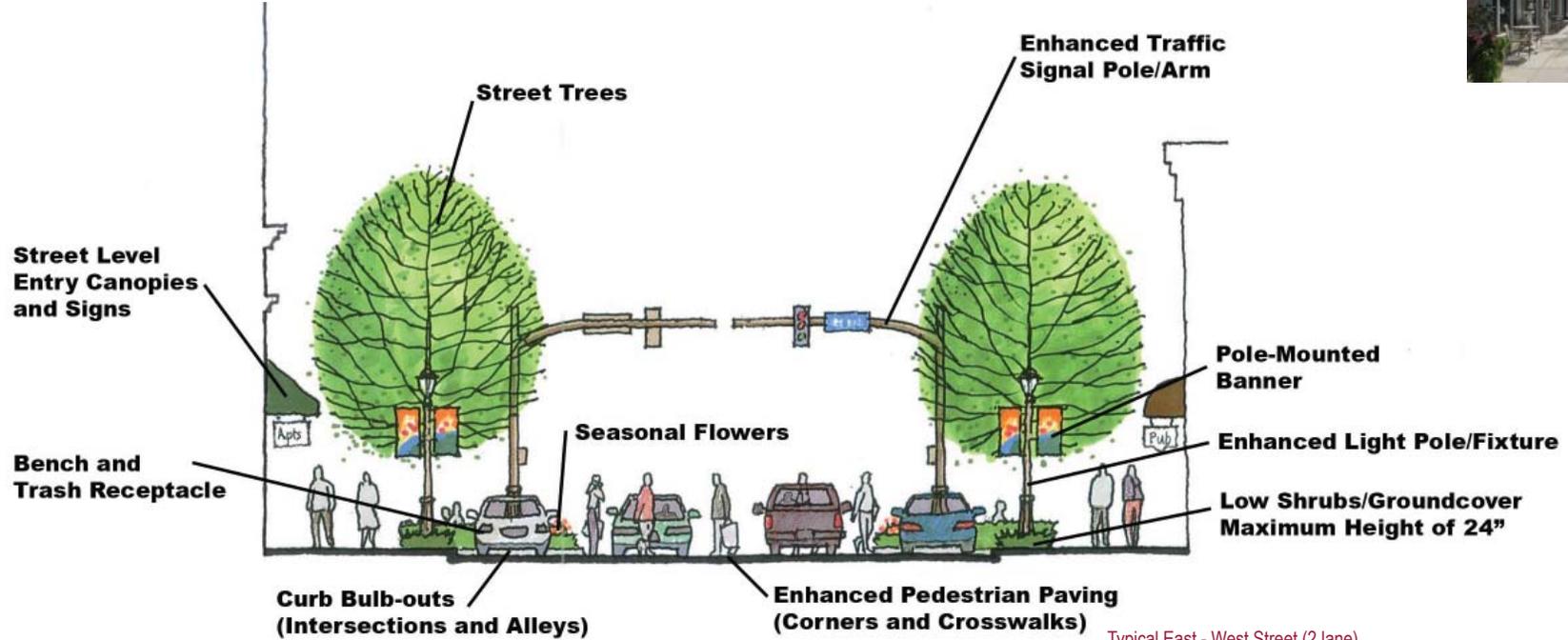




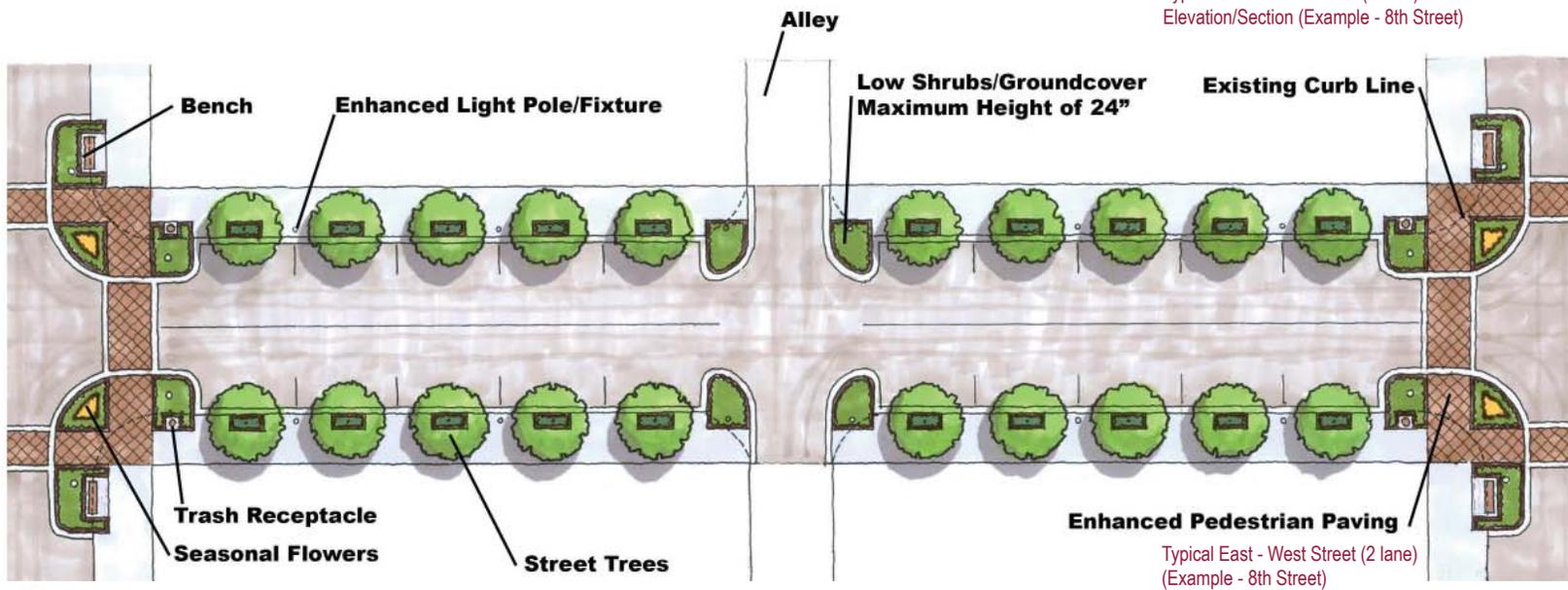
Typical North - South Street (4 lane)
Elevation/Section (Example - Scott Avenue)



Typical North - South Street (4 lane)
(Example - Scott Avenue)



Typical East - West Street (2 lane)
Elevation/Section (Example - 8th Street)



Typical East - West Street (2 lane)
(Example - 8th Street)





Objective 3: Organize the museum experience.

Explanation:

Many cities locate their museums in one geographic area making it easier for visitors and tourists to move through each museum without much walking. Museums find the number of visitors will increase when located in a museum district. Fort Worth’s well known museum district has five museums located within a mile of each other. Visitors are most likely to visit at least two or three of the Fort Worth museums in one day.

Wichita Falls currently has four museums operating in downtown, but are located in various areas. These include the Kell House Museum located at 900 Bluff St., the Kemp Center for the Arts located at 1300 Lamar St., the Museum of North Texas History located at 720 Indiana Ave., and the Wichita Falls Railroad Museum located at 500 9th St.

Strategies:

- Coordinate marketing and operational efforts to maximize functionality and usage of the existing museums.
 - Build a website that features and gives information on all of the museums in the district.
- Establish a walking tour of museums which are located within a reasonable walking distance of each other.
- Explore the creation of a cycling museum that would celebrate the history and sport of cycling.
 - The “Hotter-’n Hell” cycling event brings thousands to the city every year and cycling could become one of the brands of the city with this type of museum. Locate the cycling museum in the museum district that will be established.



Wichita Falls Railroad Museum



Museum of North Texas History





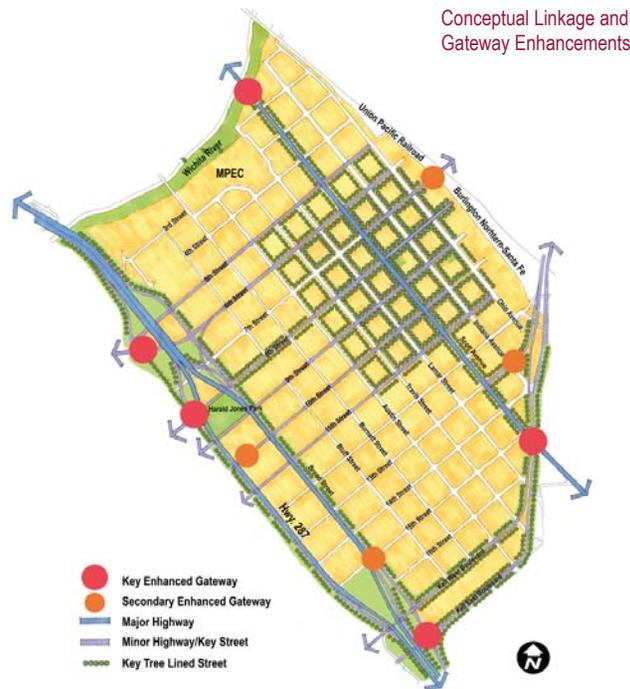
Objective 4: Improve the downtown experience through the enhancement of gateways and linkages.

Explanation:

The arrival experiences of visitors influence their attitude regarding future return visits to Downtown and their support of initiatives to revitalize the area. These experiences are shaped at the gateway arrival points and along the linkage routes as visitors approach the downtown area. Enhancement of the gateways and linkages helps visitors to have a positive experience and a desire to visit again. Gateway and linkage enhancements typically include theme wayfinding signage, landscape planting, and monuments. Enhancements may also include special effects such as public art, water features, and decorative lighting of buildings, bridges, and trees. The conceptual plan shown below highlights suggested locations of gateway and linkage enhancements.

Strategies:

- Identify and prioritize downtown gateway locations and linkage routes.
- Prepare theme designs for gateway and linkage enhancements.
- Determine enhancements to be implemented for each gateway location and linkage route.



Objective 5: Ensure a cohesive and integrated redevelopment of downtown through the recognition of distinct districts.

Explanation:

The establishment of districts within a large area is helpful in revitalization planning and implementation. The greater downtown Wichita Falls area measures over a square mile in area. Establishment of districts will be helpful in establishing revitalization objectives and determining redevelopment criteria. Districts also encourage community involvement which keep redevelopment activities in motion. Design guidelines can be implemented within districts to create identity and a common purpose for each district or zone. The map shown at the right indicates suggested districts for Downtown Wichita Falls.

Strategies:

- Establish districts or zones for the greater downtown area and determine boundaries for each district and zone.
- Identify and encourage stakeholders and property owners within each zone to form planning committees that will help guide redevelopment activities in that zone.



Proposed Downtown Districts



Objective 6: Improve visual and physical connections between Downtown and the Wichita River corridor.

Explanation:

The Wichita River, located five blocks north of 6th Street, is hidden from the Downtown core area. It isn't until you walk the trail system that you realize the river is a beautiful, existing amenity. There must be a visual and physical connection between Downtown and the Wichita River. There is great potential for future development along the river segment near Downtown. Development should not start here, but with a connection to Downtown, development will eventually make its way toward the Wichita River.

Strategies:

- 'Connect' downtown to the river through the use of signage. Create wayfinding signs to guide pedestrians from the downtown core to the river.
- Enhance vehicular and pedestrian linkages between downtown and the river, trail head areas and all connecting streets.



Wichita River and Trails behind MPEC

Objective 7: Increase the presence of public art throughout the Downtown area.

Explanation:

The objective has several purposes: beautify the community; celebrate the City's cultural and ethnic diversity; promote the work of local, regional, and national artists; and boost visitors and tourism. Public art can create distinctive and interactive urban places that might otherwise be just another pedestrian corridor. Wichita Falls has a rich history which could be illustrated through public art in downtown.



Public art - Escondido, CA

Public art can take on many forms and varied dimensions. Ideally, public art is incorporated into the overall design process of projects. Public art does not always consist of objects in the landscape. It can be incorporated into the design of pedestrian spaces, furniture, light displays, wall designs, interactive games and art, and many others.

Strategies:

- Coordinate and promote public art initiatives.
 - Coordinate with Leadership Wichita Falls to incorporate the "painted horses" project in selected Downtown areas. Leadership Wichita Falls is organizing a fundraiser where individuals or companies can purchase replica horses that are painted by local and national artists. The city should coordinate with Leadership Wichita Falls to select areas of downtown where the "painted horses" are appropriate.
- Encourage private developments to incorporate public art into private projects. Public art can greatly increase the distinction and marketability of private developments.
- Work with building and parking garage owners where appropriate, to address potential use of murals or three-dimensional artwork that could be attached to garage facades.
- Utilize public art at gateway/key arrival points and along key routes into downtown.



Public art - Grapevine, TX



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BUSINESS &
RESIDENTIAL
DEVELOPMENT



Business and Residential Development

One of the cornerstones of a thriving downtown lies in the success of its businesses and recruitment of new development. Wichita Falls must foster and direct new developments within the downtown area and specifically within the “core” as defined in earlier sections of this report.

Business development involves not only business-related objectives, but also retail and residential goals and the tools that help make projects happen. Tools such as marketing, incentive plans, public/ private partnerships, and funding strategies all encourage economic growth. Through redevelopment of existing structures and implementation of new development, Downtown Wichita Falls shouldn't be a place to visit occasionally, but it should become a destination. The ultimate goal of Downtown Wichita Falls is to become the center of the community's government, commercial, and cultural activities with ample demand of office, commercial, and residential uses.

One of the major goals of this plan is to encourage new residential units in the core of downtown. As it exists today, Downtown Wichita Falls is not a 24-hour destination. It primarily supports the 8AM-5PM business community. Successful and sustainable urban areas are those that bring people to live, work, play, and learn. Additionally, building codes and development procedures must be able to accommodate/redevelopment of older structures and facilitate residential rehabilitation.



Antique store in downtown

The following are business development related recommendations. Detailed strategies for each objective are outlined in the following chapter.

Summary of Business and Residential Development Objectives

- Consider constructing a new City Hall/Municipal Complex facility in the downtown core area.
- Implement code amendments and a development process that encourages and facilitates new development and redevelopment of downtown buildings.
- Attract new residential units in downtown. Encourage a mix of uses including redevelopment of older buildings, new developments, and renovation of surrounding housing stock.
- Develop a retail strategy that emphasizes “destination” retail. Highlight the unique amenities of retail, entertainment, residential, and cultural amenities.
- Develop a comprehensive strategy for building a Convention Center Hotel and upgrade existing hotel stock within the walkable core area.



Objective 1: Consider constructing a new City Hall/Municipal Complex facility in the downtown core area.

Explanation:

A City Hall building is the physical symbol of City government. It's the headquarters of a city or town's administration and usually houses the city or town council, its associated departments, and their employees. City Hall is where the business and decisions of the city take place.



Construction of new City Hall in Redmond, WA
Redmond has a population of 48,739

The current City Hall building was originally built as a theater and is still being used as one. Because the building in which City Hall is housed wasn't designed to function as City offices, over time it has become dysfunctional and inefficient for City operations. As City employees have grown over the years, City Hall has outgrown its current space and does not lend itself to expansion. The limited space and configuration affects the day-to-day operations.

If the City of Wichita Falls wants to continue to operate the city government effectively, then the existing City Hall building must be evaluated.

Strategies:

- Construct a new City Hall building to replace the existing building that has become dysfunctional and inefficient for current and future City operations. A new City Hall that can house all of the City's staff now and in the future will create a greater sense of identity and accessibility for employees and citizens.
- The City of Wichita Falls is in the process of conducting site studies on several locations that would be desirable for a new City Hall. One of the locations considered is outside of the central core of downtown. Another site is within the expanded downtown area, but outside the core area. The third site is the Patterson Auto location which is located near the intersection of 8th Street and Travis Street. This master plan recommends that the new City Hall be placed on this site or within the downtown core. There are several reasons why the downtown site is highly recommended:
 - The Downtown Master plan addresses what is called the "core area". This is an area of Downtown Wichita Falls that has the most activity and potential for a critical mass of activity. It is recommended that investment first be made in the in the core in order to spark economic growth and increase pedestrian activity both night and day. Currently, City Hall is located several blocks away from the core area and it doesn't allow for pedestrian connections to the core area. The Patterson Auto site is located within what is defined as the "core area" and building within this zone would increase pedestrian activity and contribute to the vitality within walkable core area.
 - A majority of governmental entities are located in downtown. The County building is located across the street from the Patterson Auto site and the courthouse is just a couple of blocks away. Creating a municipal complex near this area helps round out a governmental district and helps bring the critical city and county functions together within a walkable area.
 - This location also creates a view corridor and gateway into the center of downtown and to the MPEC. It would also be an ideal area for a new park and civic plaza.
- It is also recommended that a future transfer center be located in downtown, particularly



near the MPEC and potential municipal complex site. This would create a synergy of people and activity in this important node of downtown.

- It will take investment from both the public and private sector in order for downtown to be revitalized. A new City Hall will not only solve the physical limitations that exist in the current building, but it would show that the City itself is willing to make an investment in downtown's revitalization. This can serve as a catalyst project to leverage additional investment back into downtown.

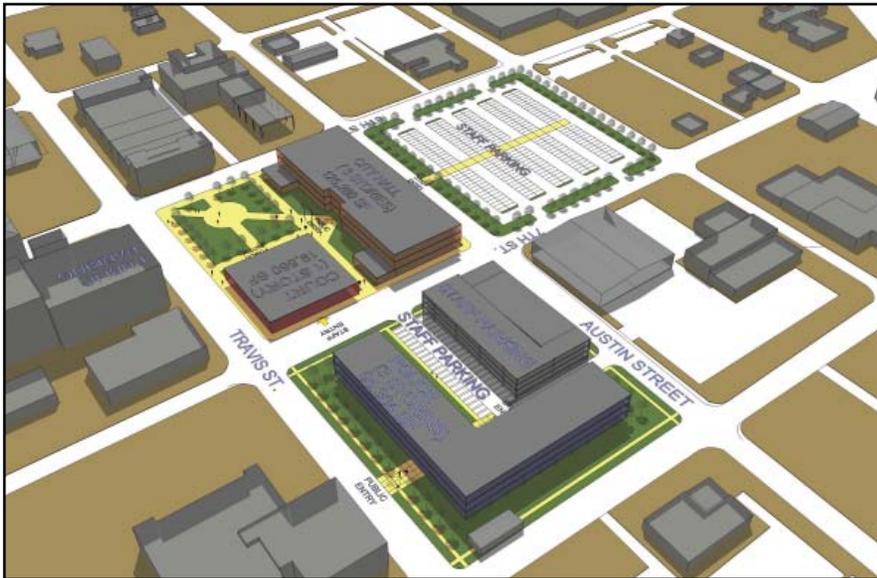


Image Courtesy of PSA-Dewberry Architects

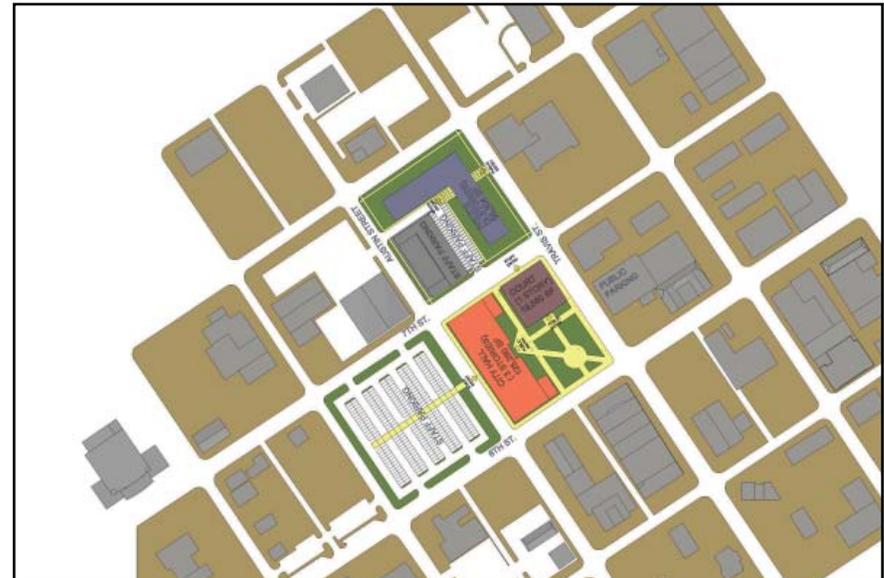
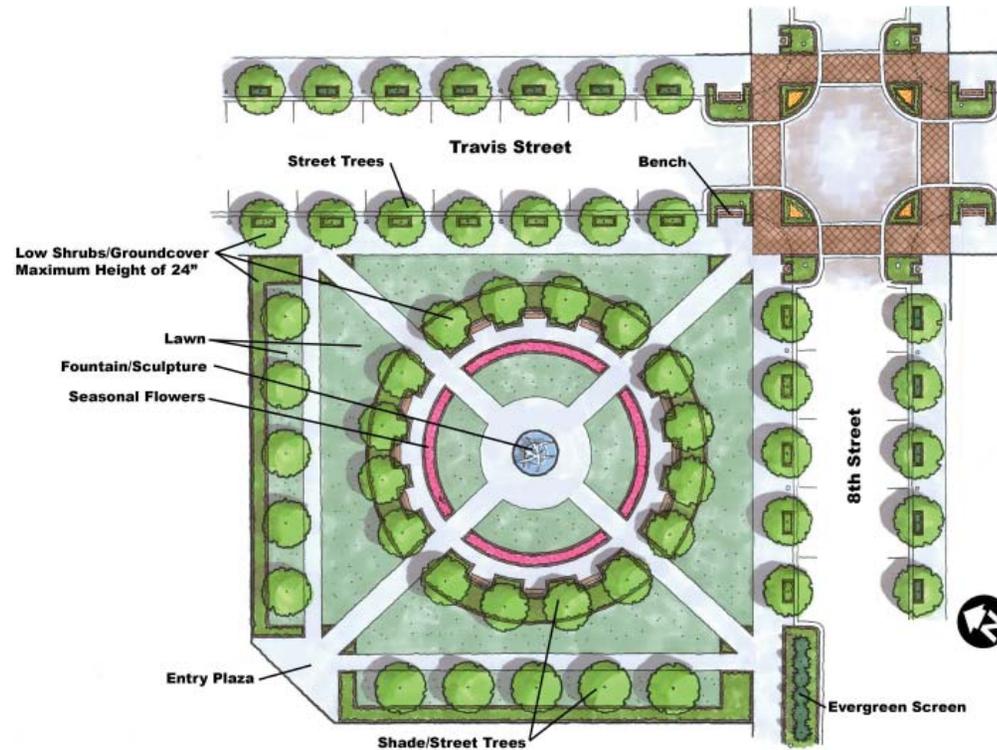
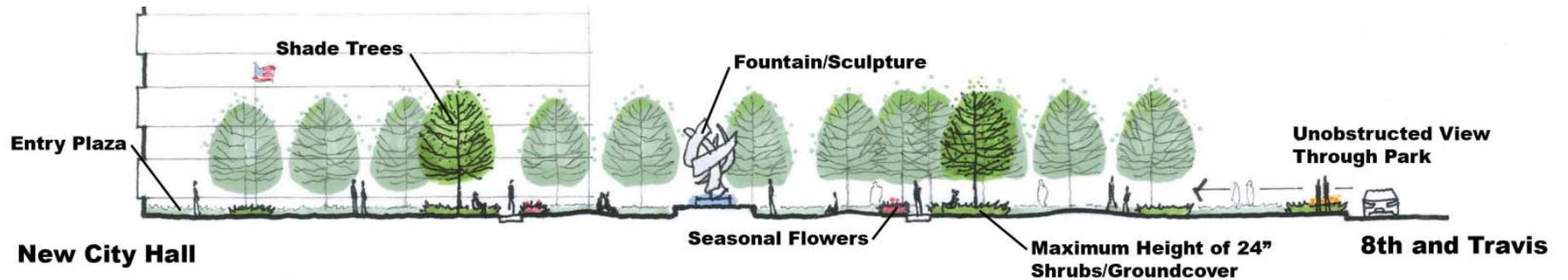


Image Courtesy of PSA-Dewberry Architects



Conceptual City Hall Plaza and Downtown Gateway





Objective 2: Implement code amendments and a development process that encourages and facilitates new development and redevelopment of downtown buildings.

Explanation:

Some jurisdictions have enacted requirements to bring certain types or uses of existing buildings into compliance with new requirements, such as the installation of smoke alarms in households or dwelling units, at the time of sale. Some safety advocates have suggested a similar approach to encourage remedial application of other requirements, but few jurisdictions have found it economical or equitable to discourage property transactions in this way.

Many jurisdictions have found the application of new requirements to old, particularly historic buildings, challenging. New Jersey, for example, has adopted specific state amendments (visit <http://www.state.nj.us/dca/codes/rehab/>) intended to facilitate the application of building code requirements to historic structures. California has also enacted a specific historic building code (visit <http://www.dsa.dgs.ca.gov/SHBSB/2001chbc.htm>). Other states require compliance with building and fire codes, subject to reservations, limitations, or jurisdictional discretion to protect historic building stock as a condition of nominating or listing a building for preservation or landmark status, especially where such status attracts tax credits, investment of public money, or other incentives. It should be noted that listing a building on the National Register of Historic Places does not exempt it from compliance with state or local building code requirements.

Strategies:

- Assemble a “development standards task force” that will further investigate the building code issues.
 - The committee should at least consist of the fire chief, building inspectors, various city staff, developers, and citizens.
 - The committee should be specifically charged with finding creative solutions for urban development/redevelopment. It should serve to assist developers to help guide and alleviate road blocks to the development process.

- Implement code amendments and a review process that is more supportive of urban housing and mixed-use developments.
- The code committee should investigate the feasibility of hiring the appropriate professional to advise the City on methods to improve the codes, ordinances, and development procedures for rehabilitation of buildings within the downtown area.

Existing buildings that were built to comply with an earlier building code or with no code are often still safe and sound. Most existing buildings throughout the United States, including those in New Jersey, are in this category. With a few exceptions, these buildings continue to be occupied, used, and maintained. New Jersey has strong retrofit codes that apply to all existing buildings to ensure their safety. It is no longer logical that a building which can remain unimproved must be upgraded in numerous respects, many of which provide very little safety improvement, simply because the owner elects to improve the building. This approach often deters any improvement.

Both in New Jersey and nationally, the building code, which is oriented towards new construction, can unnecessarily add to the time and expense of rehabilitating existing buildings because it was not written with existing buildings in mind. For new buildings, complying with the construction code is a straightforward process, but it is difficult to apply the code rationally and predictably to existing buildings. Because developers and building owners cannot predict with certainty what will be required to bring a deteriorated building back into use, projects that pose the greatest uncertainty in terms of time and resources are not attempted and the buildings remain unused.

Thus, the challenge facing New Jersey was to develop provisions for existing buildings that were rational, predictable, and delivered safe and sound rehabilitated structures.

New Jersey's Rehabilitation Subcode



Objective 3: Attract new residential units in downtown.

Explanation:

Successful and sustainable urban areas are those that bring people to live, work, play, and learn in the urban center. There are many practical and intrinsic advantages of attracting a critical mass of people back to downtown. Urban planners and strategists have known for years “rooftops” or resident populations become engines that drive a diversified economy including retail and neighborhood support. Urban dwellers tend to spend more, be more entrepreneurial, more involved in community leadership and committed to a sense of community.

People who live downtown do not require major new investments in expensive City infrastructure or services due to existing fire stations, police zones, and other basic services. People who live in the central city do not tend to congest roadways during peak hours, instead they tend to open and grow businesses in the same area.

Advantages of downtown housing are:

- *Support Overall Economic Development* - Downtown can become a much greater center of residential inner-city reinvestment. The presence of a substantial population living downtown makes it more attractive as a location for both business and cultural reinvestment and retail activities. Individuals and families are increasingly choosing places to live based on lifestyle opportunities and quality of life rather than following a job location. These same individuals create economic vitality through their creative and entrepreneurial activities.
- *Improved Safety and Security* - The best crime prevention is the presence of people. A stable residential population is the best way of achieving an around-the-clock presence in the urban core, increasing both the perception and reality of security. In the adjacent neighborhoods, both existing and potential, similar effects can be achieved through infill development and the progressive upgrading of substandard housing units.
- *Use of Historic Resources* - The use of specific historic resources, as well as proper-



The Holt was once a popular hotel in downtown Wichita Falls. It has recently been converted into residential with 41 units.



Resident parking is available and gated behind the Holt



ties within broader historic districts and areas, should be considered in the development of central city housing. While older core area office, warehouse, commercial, and hotel structures are difficult to reuse for their original purposes, they sometimes lend themselves to housing adaptation. Likewise, renovation of existing historic buildings can provide a base for strong, stable downtown residences; examples such as the Holt and La Salle Crossing illustrate how these can be anchors for general urban revitalization.

- *Services and Retail Will Follow Housing Development* - Residential support services can be phased in as critical mass of housing is realized.
- *Civic Image* - A growing and diverse residential population downtown creates a strong and attractive image for the City's tourists and businesses, as well as for residents of the greater metropolitan area.
- *Realize Greatest Value from Public Investments* - Downtown housing developments will maximize the return on existing public investment in capital and local government services. The concentration of uses results in the most efficient distribution of city services by utilizing existing infrastructure. Furthermore, people living closer to where they work will result in overall savings in energy and reduced travel (which contribute to improving air quality).
- *Growth in Sales and Ad Valorem Tax Base* - A stable and vigorous central city residential community will create a more lively and attractive retail environment for residents and non-residents alike, leading to greater sales tax revenues. In addition, this experience in other cities indicates new housing development and improvements to existing properties will enhance the long term, property values of all downtown properties, yielding increased as ad valorem tax receipts.

Residential development alone isn't going to sustain the economic growth of downtown Wichita Falls, but it can definitely help energize new development. In general, downtowns provide an ideal environment for mixed-income, walkable, vibrant neighborhoods and attract residents looking for a sense of place that can be difficult to find in a suburban setting.

Strategies:

- Rehabilitate older structures to residential uses.
- The best crime prevention is the presence of people. Attracting downtown residential will not only provide people a place to live, but when the number of people are increased in an area it helps to prevent a large percentage of crime.
- Promote a variety of housing options including high rise, condominiums, single/two family infill in greater downtown area, senior citizen/assisted living, and artist live/work lofts.
- Develop open space/pocket parks to support urban residential living.

Downtown Housing Units	
La Salle Crossing	15
The Holt	41
Travis Crossing	11
Franklin Place Apartments	17
The Plantation	27
Aztec Apartments	12
Austin School Lofts	25
Midtown Manor	150
Total	298
Housing Units within Downtown Core	67



Example of studio apartments in a downtown area



Existing Residential in Downtown





Objective 4: Develop a retail strategy that emphasizes “destination” retail.

Explanation:

Currently, downtown retailers are spread out across the core. In between, an assortment of vacant store fronts discourage shoppers from strolling from one store to the next. For downtown to become a retail destination, a strong mix of tenants filling storefronts within a core area will need to be present in order to draw customers from competing centers. Creating a strategy to promote retail downtown must start with an understanding of what kinds of retail are appropriate for the area. The primary customers for downtown retailers will be residents living in downtown and in the surrounding neighborhoods, employees working downtown, and visitors to downtown from other parts of Wichita Falls or other areas in the region.

The figures below provide insight into the different types of retail. While community, regional and super regional retailers will likely continue to locate in new commercial centers outside of downtown, convenience and neighborhood retail located downtown will serve the first two groups of customers. However, retail with the ability to draw customers from a larger trade area will be needed to attract the third group of customers. This type of retail is generally referred to as “destination” retail.

GENERAL RETAIL REQUIREMENTS						
Type of Center	Typical Gross Leasable Area (Sq. Ft)	Gross Leasable Range (Sq. Ft)	Minimum Site Area (Acres)	Primary Trade Area Radius (miles)	Primary Trade Area Drive Time (minutes)	Minimum Population Support Required
Convenience	20,000	15,000 - 30,000				
Neighborhood	50,000	30,000 - 100,000	3 - 10	1.5	5 - 10	3,000 - 40,000
Community	150,000	100,000 - 450,000	10 - 30	3 - 5	10 - 20	40,000 - 150,000
Regional	450,000	300,000 - 900,000	10 - 60	8.0	20	150,000+
Super Regional	900,000	500,000 - 2 mn	15 - 100+	12.0	30	300,000+

SOURCE: Urban Land Institute, Shopping Center Development Handbook

The Urban Land Institute describes destination retail in the following paragraph: *“Increasingly, entertainment and recreational trips (not just shopping trips) are generating retail sales. After a pleasant meal, people quite often look for opportuni-*

STANDARD RETAIL TYPES			
Convenience	Neighborhood	Community	Regional / Super Regional
Minimart	Supermarket	Junior Dept Store	Full-line Dept Store
Restaurant	Drugstore	Discount Dept Store	Fashion Dept Store
Beauty Parlor	Discount Dept Store	Supermarket	Megaplex
Dry Cleaner	Restaurant	Off-Price Superstore	Entertainment Ctr
Fast Food	Furniture Store	Variety Store	Food Court
Medical / Dental Office	Hardware Store	Family-wear Store	Large-Format
	Automotive Store	Furniture Store	Specialty Store
	Liquor Store	Sporting Goods	Large-Format Off-Price Store
	Video Rental	Drugstore	
	Bank	Office Supply Store	
		Cinema	

SOURCE: Urban Land Institute, Shopping Center Development Handbook

ties to extend the experience by browsing in a bookstore, shopping for a special piece of clothing or luxury item (like flowers, jewelry, or artwork), or taking in a movie or show. In this context, the downtown pedestrian routes, which are deliberately designed and mixed to provide views to the next leisure retail shopping opportunity, become vital. This form of retailing (known as destination retail) is not particularly suited to shopping centers; people rarely choose to spend a special night out at the mall.”

Downtown Wichita Falls was the primary commercial center for the region for over 50 years. It has the infrastructure and buildings to support a wide range of different retailers. However, concerted efforts must be made to actively promote downtown as a retail center. A careful assembly of a mix of convenience, neighborhood, and destination retailers can restore Downtown Wichita Falls as a premier retail destination in the region.

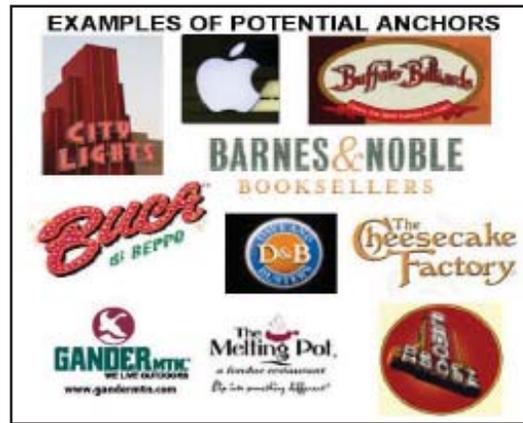
Strategies:

- Develop and implement a retail recruitment program. This program should be designed to attract and support desirable retailers in the downtown core area. Elements of this program should include:
 - A regularly updated retail trade area and corresponding demographic information
 - A current database of available properties accessible on-line
 - Clearly defined incentives and/or business resources
 - Descriptions of projects in the downtown trade area that will affect retail demand
 - As part of the program design, catalog downtown retailers to establish what exists and identify what goods and services are needed to attract visitors and serve downtown employees and residents in downtown and the surrounding neighborhoods.





- Examples of downtown retail recruitment strategies include Knoxville, TN; Lincoln, NB; and St. Charles, IL:
 - i. Knoxville: http://web.knoxnews.com/pdf/1017downtown_knoxville_retail.pdf
 - ii. Lincoln: <http://www.downtownlincoln.org/LincolnRetailFindings.pdf>
 - iii. St. Charles: <http://www.ci.st-charles.il.us/departments/cdd/downtown/1.html>
- Support the development of a catalyst project that promotes destination retail among its mix of uses. This project should be structured as a public/private partnership and should include a significant retail anchor.
 - The anchor should be a major, exciting draw that cannot necessarily be found in a shopping mall. It could be an entertainment venue, a “special-occasion” restaurant, or a niche retail store.
- Encourage the concentration of retail in a defined district to create a critical mass of retail activity. This district should become a core of continuous street-level retail that offers a diverse mix of interesting shopping options for downtown residents, employees, and visitors alike.



Objective 5: Develop a comprehensive strategy for building a Convention Center Hotel and upgrade existing hotel stock within the walkable core area.

Explanation:

Wichita Falls is fortunate to have a variety of amenities within downtown for visitors and tourists. The Multi-purpose Events Center (MPEC), Wichita River Corridor, along with numerous businesses, antique stores, museums, and cultural venues are key assets. Events such as the Hotter-n Hell Hundred bring thousands of visitors to Wichita Falls each year. Other local festivals take place downtown and have potential to be a large draw for visitors. However, the current supply of quality hotel rooms within the heart of downtown is woefully inadequate. Quality hotel rooms exist on the outskirts of downtown but are not within walking distance to these attractions. Data shows a displacement of older, less expensive establishments; however, higher end establishments are doing well. Data suggests that Wichita Falls could accommodate an additional high-end hotel (average \$100/ per night).

Currently, the only hotel near the MPEC is the Howard Johnson. It is located in the north-west corner of the expanded downtown area and is over four blocks from the core. While this is easily accessible to the MPEC, it is not within easy walking distance to the center of downtown. If such a hotel were to go downtown, it would be difficult to compete with comparable hotels in perceived better locations and might require an initial public subsidy. An additional hotel in downtown would be convenient for visitors to United Regional Healthcare, the MPEC, theater/cultural arts, and downtown businesses.

Strategies:

- It is recommended that a convention center hotel be considered. This would likely need to be a public/private partnership, but a strategy and feasibility study should be developed by the City and Convention and Visitors Bureau.
- Upgrade existing stock of hotel, specifically Crescent Plaza located on 8th Street.



Crescent Plaza Hotel
Downtown Wichita Falls



TRANSPORTATION



Transportation

Transportation is a vital component of a downtown area. This section addresses both the mode of transportation and how vehicular traffic circulates through the streets. The vision for Wichita Falls is to become a pedestrian-friendly downtown that encourages all walks of life at all times of the day. Currently, downtown serves the daytime business community and is very vehicular-friendly. The City has done a good job in respecting the original town grid and has preserved the urban fabric that makes an urban core successful.

Many streets currently act more as a thoroughfare than a walkable corridor. In order to promote a more pedestrian-friendly environment, streetscaping elements should be encouraged such as trees, landscaping, pedestrian lighting, street furnishings, banner poles, and crosswalk pavers. Other pedestrian-scaled features should be considered to help promote a sense of place and identify districts. Narrow streets and well-defined crosswalks can provide an easier crossing for a pedestrian and help to alleviate intimidation of vehicular traffic.

Several of the major streets have been identified and recommended for streetscape improvements. In addition, major intersections should be improved to include a traffic signal and bulb-out. A bulb-out is shown on page 36 and includes an inexpensive way to narrow a street at the intersection.

If transportation is to be effective, the maintenance and up-keep of streets and parking lots/structures must take place.

Furthermore, there is a new trend on the horizon that is changing the face of urban development known as Transit Oriented Development or Design (TOD). TOD is becoming a popular form



Transit Oriented Development

of mixed-use development. TOD's create compact, walkable communities centered around multi-modal transportation opportunities. Because of the location of downtown and its close proximity of major rail lines and future bus transfer center, higher density, mixed-use TOD's should be considered.

The following are transportation related recommendations. Detailed strategies for each objective are outlined in the following chapters.

Summary of Transportation Objectives

- Ensure high-quality maintenance and aesthetic upkeep of streets and right-of-ways is a top priority.
- Improve non-signalized intersections and vehicular circulation throughout the downtown core.
- Create a policy that addresses maintenance and operation of privately owned downtown surface parking lots. Enforce strict parking regulations for downtown parking lots and encourage shared use agreements that allow for free night and weekend parking. All parking areas should be screened to include a decorative fence and/or line of shrubs.



Objective 1: Ensure high-quality maintenance and aesthetic upkeep of streets and right-of-ways is a top priority.

Explanation:

Maintenance and aesthetic upkeep of roadways, right-of-ways, and sidewalks is very important to encourage revitalization. Well-maintained streets serve as silent marketing tools that have a great impact on pedestrians, vehicles, and developers, although its affect seems minor.

Pedestrians aren't likely to walk along overgrown sidewalks or hidden areas where the line of sight is obstructed or the perception of safety becomes an issue. Likewise, vehicular traffic will avoid poorly, if possible, maintained streets. In order to encourage new development and reinvestment in urban areas, maintenance of older streets and right-of-ways are particularly important.

One way of maintaining public infrastructure to a higher level of standard is by creating a special improvement district, often referred to as a "public improvement district" (PID). A PID is a special assessment district created to maintain certain public amenities and improvements, typically public space and infrastructure, within an established boundary. A PID is also referred to as a self-assessment district, because the property owners agree amongst themselves to pay into the district, in return for services they agree to fund.

There are many benefits of creating a PID. Some benefits include, but are not limited to, a means for improving the infrastructure, maintenance, landscaping, security, parking, contract services, marketing and special events. PID's require special legislation but have been proven successful to help promote economic growth in an area.

Strategies:

- Create a PID in downtown. Downtown Wichita Falls Development, Inc. and the City should work with property owners to determine a boundary that includes the core area at a minimum.



Streets in downtown Wichita Falls in need of repair





Objective 2: Improve non-signalized intersections and vehicular circulation through the downtown core.

Explanation:

The improvement in the safety of non-signalized and signalized intersections and their approaches is very important. Safety improvement measures include design modifications, changes to traffic control devices, enforcement, and education.

In urban and downtown areas, two-thirds of the pedestrian injuries occur at intersections.

The solution is to design intersections and improve vehicular circulation that:

- Encourage pedestrian use in lieu of mid-block crossing locations.
- Make pedestrians as visible as possible.
- Make pedestrians actions as predictable as possible.
- Slow vehicular traffic.

Downtown Wichita Falls has several intersections with high volumes of vehicular traffic that aren't signalized. Crosswalks are non-existent or not visible in some locations which makes it difficult for pedestrians to cross the street. One factor that increases pedestrian traffic is the safety feel while walking. Ensuring a pedestrian's safety could be done in a way that is low-cost, which will in turn increase pedestrian traffic.



Bulb-outs reduce crossing distances for pedestrians

Improving intersections and vehicular circulation involves the coordination and integration of a number of design elements, including crosswalks, curb ramps, curb bulbs, turning radii, and signalization.

Strategies:

- Signalizing intersections within the core. Currently, downtown promotes "in and out" traffic. Consider signalizing suggested intersections as illustrated on the following page. The non-signalized intersections that are proposed for signalization are most

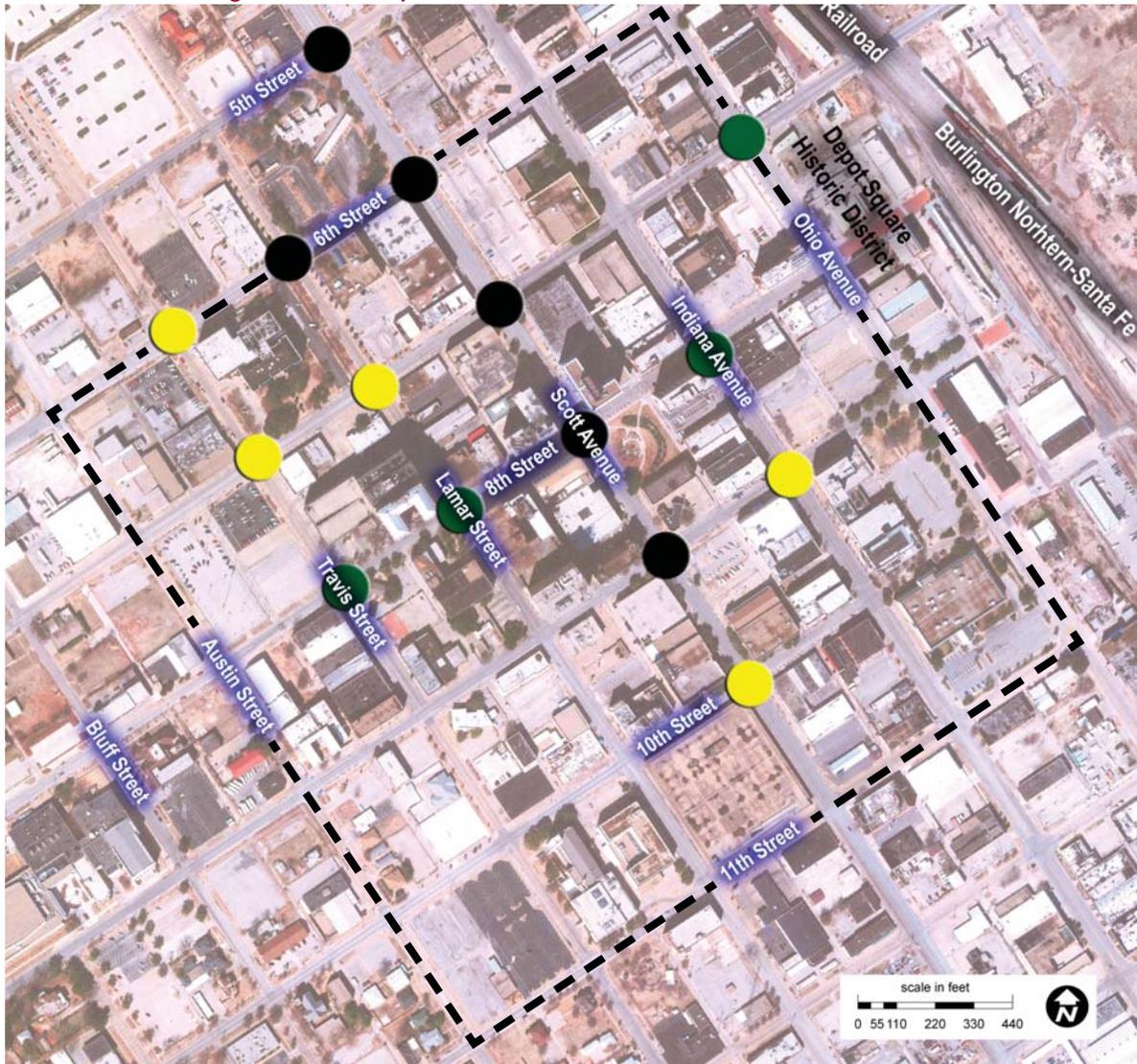
- important for pedestrian safety and vehicular circulation.
- Provide crosswalks at intersections with high-volume pedestrian traffic.
 - A crosswalk creates a visible indication for both motorist and pedestrians as to where pedestrians may be expected to cross a roadway.
 - Generally, marked crosswalks are located at all open legs of signalized intersections. When used with curb bulb-outs, signage, and illumination, the visibility of pedestrian crossings can be enhanced.
 - Most crosswalks are expected at intersections, the installation of crosswalks at mid-block locations may also be desirable under some conditions when medians or refuge islands are used.
- Reduce the speed of vehicular movement through traffic calming methods. Traffic calming is a traffic management approach that involves a full range of methods to slow cars through different environments. Some traffic-calming techniques include:
 - Street landscaping
 - Pedestrian amenities
 - Bulb-outs
 - Colored or textured crosswalks
- Powder coat masts and arms of intersections



Example of traffic calming method - raised crosswalk



Downtown Core Signalization Map



Legend

- Existing Signalized Intersections
- Proposed Signalized Intersections (Short-term)
- Proposed Signalized Intersections (Long-term)
- Downtown Core Area



Objective 3: Create a policy that addresses maintenance and operation of privately owned downtown surface parking lots.

Explanation:

Many of the lots in downtown are privately owned. Several of these are poorly maintained, have little to no screening, and are located along major corridors or at prominent intersections. While parking is necessary to serve the adjacent businesses, efforts can be made to screen the lots and maintain the concrete, asphalt, curb stops, and signage in a higher quality manner than what currently exist today.

In order to encourage night life, retail, and entertainment downtown, parking must be available, preferably free parking. Often successful urban areas will enact shared-use agreements to encourage multiple uses of parking lots. For example, business owners may restrict their lots from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. during the weekday for their tenants only, but allow public parking after 5:00 p.m. on weekdays and on weekends.

Strategies:

- Enforce strict parking regulations for downtown parking lots.
- Encourage shared-use agreements that allow for free night and weekend parking.
- Require screening of all parking lots along street and pedestrian ways, particularly along major pedestrian corridors and intersections.
 - Screening can include, but isn't limited to, landscaping and ornamental fence.

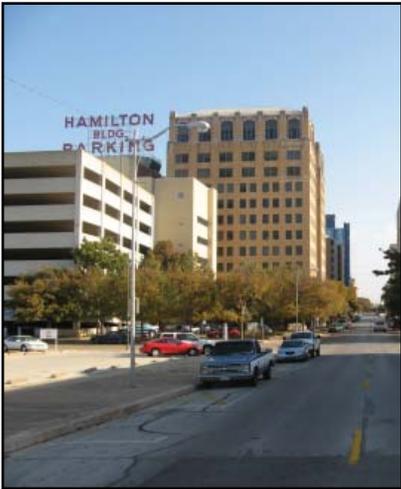


Example of poor landscape/screening, streetscape along sidewalks.

- Enforce quality maintenance of downtown parking lots.
 - Upkeep of concrete, asphalt, curb stops, and signage should be maintained by owners.



Example of poor edge treatment along major street corridor.



Avoid large surface parking lots at major intersections. Example: 8th St. and Travis St.



Example: 8th St. and Indiana Ave.



ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT



Economic Development

To better understand the economic conditions of downtown, Downtown Wichita Falls Development, Inc. administered a survey to downtown property owners and business owners. A copy of the survey can be found in the Appendix.

The survey does not provide a complete overview of downtown conditions due to the lack of participation from some property owners. However, it does provide insight into the real estate market downtown.

The 20 survey responses collected account for approximately 1.1 million square feet of space downtown. Of this space, 602,450 square feet is occupied, which is a 54% occupancy rate. Note this figure does not reflect usable space, only existing space. The occupancy rate for usable space should be considerably higher; however, the occupancy rate for existing space is an indicator of the true capacity of downtown.

Space is leased out from \$9 per square foot per year to \$12 per square foot per year. Buildings are listed for sale from \$13 per square foot to \$28 per square foot. In comparison, space in Downtown Fort Worth ranges from leases for \$16 per square foot per year for Class B office space to \$32 per square foot per year for prime retail space.

The impressive boom and subsequent decline of Wichita Falls' oil and gas sector left

downtown with excess office capacity, much of which has been vacant for many years and is in need of significant renovations. The resulting surplus of downtown office space has softened the office market across the city, depressing lease rates. Nevertheless, property assessment values and taxes are low enough to enable downtown property owners to operate profitably in spite of low occupancy rates.

The retail market downtown is also facing difficult conditions. With vacant retail space from relocated department stores, pharmacies, and various sized specialty retailers, the downtown retail market also faces an over-supply situation, which has put downward pressure on both sales and lease pricing in downtown. Demand for retail space remains much higher in other parts of the city, primarily in the area surrounding Sikes Center and the Lawrence Road commercial district. In addition, the population living in and around downtown has declined over the past 20 to 30 years as new residential development has moved southwest. As a result, the demographics surrounding downtown may not attract retailers other than niche retailers. These retailers are stores that sell unique items not sold anywhere else in Wichita Falls, such as antique stores, boutiques, and specialty stores.

The downtown residential market appears much stronger than the office and retail markets. Three residential projects - Travis Crossing, LaSalle Crossing, and the Holt Hotel Lofts - have added 67 units. The occupancy rate for these units is currently 100%. In fact, the Holt Hotel Lofts has a waiting list for some apartment floor plans.

In summary, the high commercial vacancy rate downtown creates challenging market conditions downtown, but creates ample redevelopment opportunities. With at least 500,000 square feet of space vacant downtown, market conditions are not likely to improve dramatically until a significant portion of this space is absorbed and the balance between supply and demand for office and retail space downtown is restored. The demand for downtown housing, however, is strong. Thus *a strategy that features downtown residential development as a means of stimulating demand for retail and office space should be pursued.*

Background

The economic development vision for Downtown Wichita Falls is to become the prime destination in the region for conducting business, shopping, and entertainment. To achieve

SUMMARY STATISTICS			
Downtown Wichita Falls			
Total Square Feet	1,117,700	Average Date	1935
Square Feet Occupied	602,450	Oldest	1888
% Occupied	54%	Newest	1987
Price (\$ / Sq. Ft. annually)	\$9 - \$12	Survey Respor	20

Downtown Wichita Falls			
Address	Sq. Ft	Price	Price/SF
<i>Listings:</i>			
1000 Scott (Office/Warehouse)	100,000	\$2,860,000	\$28.60
901 Lamar (Office)	10,518	\$275,000	\$26.15
600 7th (Retail)	2,500	\$42,500	\$17.00
1100 Lamar (Office/Residential)	41,360	\$595,000	\$14.39
609 7th (Retail)	4,416	\$59,000	\$13.36
<i>Recent Sales:</i>			
901 9th (Mar 2007)	14,024	\$173,823	\$12.39
<small>Source: Loopnet.</small>			



this goal, this chapter lays out strategies to encourage and support private investment in the core area of downtown through the strategic application of public resources, both financial and human.

The core area of downtown is defined as the area bound by Travis Street, 6th Street, Ohio Avenue, and 11th Street. Due to the size of downtown and the number of vacant, blighted buildings, the consulting team recommends focusing on the core in the short-term. Once private investment is flowing into the core area without public assistance, the focus can then move beyond the core. By narrowing the focus, the City will likely see the results of its efforts more rapidly.



The Economic Case for Downtown Revitalization

Lively downtowns play a central role in the economy of a community. Downtowns are composed of various sizes of buildings and spaces that accommodate the needs of a wide assortment of uses from a small business to a large department store. As a result, they can house an array of activities from professional services to fine dining to arts in a relatively concentrated area. These activities create jobs and draw visitors and residents downtown. In this way, revitalized downtowns help to create economic opportunity in communities.

In addition, downtowns create a sense of place helping to differentiate downtowns from other commercial districts and cities from

“A healthy and vibrant downtown boosts the economic health and quality of life in a community. Specifically, it creates jobs, incubates small businesses, reduces sprawl, protects property values, and increases the community’s options for goods and services. A healthy downtown is a symbol of community pride and history.”

- the Pew Partnership for Civic Change

other cities. The sense of place created by vibrant downtowns is authentic and difficult to reproduce because its infrastructure, buildings, and character have developed and evolved over time. This uniqueness cannot be replicated in a new development. This sense of place associated with a vibrant downtown can be a community’s primary asset that defines its identity and plays an active role in attracting talent and visitors.

Methodology and Approach

TIP Strategies, Inc. completed the economic development portion of the Downtown Master Plan for the City of Wichita Falls. To understand the area’s challenges and opportunities, we participated in and performed the following activities:

- A review of existing economic and demographic data, including population growth, educational attainment levels, occupational information, employment growth, major employers, and other relevant statistics for Wichita Falls.
- Tours of downtown Wichita Falls, which allow for a better understanding of the “downtown product” from a real estate standpoint.
- Interviews with area stakeholders, including face-to-face interviews with business and community leaders.
- Interviews with area brokers and realtors to understand the downtown real estate market and outlook.
- Meetings and workshops to establish priorities for appropriate development concepts.

Economic development is defined as *the application of public resources to stimulate private investment*. With this in mind, the role of the public sector gains a clarity that other definitions obscure. Public officials and local government employees do not create jobs or generate wealth. They do control significant resources. Directing these resources effectively and efficiently is their paramount duty. Effective programs should be judged by how well public resources can create a response from private investors. In this context, the City of Wichita Falls must be aware of how its policy decisions as well as its support of projects inside and outside of downtown will affect private investment in the downtown.

Figure 1 on the following page illustrates an economic development model which focuses on the factors that play important roles in stimulating economic vitality in a community. In contrast to traditional economic development models that employ mostly industrial



recruitment strategies, TIP's model acknowledges that employers are increasingly locating themselves where talent is found, and talent is moving to places they want to live. In other words, today's talent decides where they want to live first and finds work where they want to live. For this reason, employers are locating in communities that possess the quality of place necessary to attract the talent they need.

As a result, quality of place issues are central to a community's success in economic development.

A revitalized Downtown Wichita Falls can significantly enhance the city's quality of place. It will aid in the attraction and retention of talent which will, in turn, aid in the attraction and retention of employers. In each of the focus groups conducted as part of this project, participants commented that a revitalized downtown with entertainment and shopping options would greatly enhance Wichita Falls' ability to attract and retain workers and their spouses.

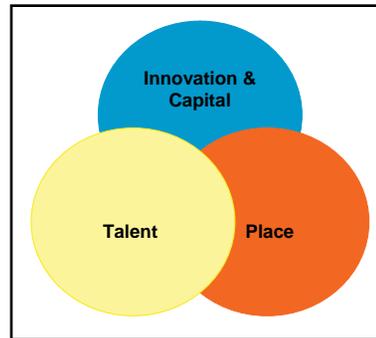


Figure 1

The key to the City's involvement in downtown revitalization is understanding what makes a vibrant downtown. Figure 2 depicts the downtown development model. Attracting businesses and new residents to locate downtown will support more retail and entertainment options. Likewise, specialty retail and entertainment options will serve to attract more residents, visitors and businesses downtown. Stimulating private investment in all four areas – entertainment, residential, employment, and retail – will help downtown achieve the critical mass it needs to perpetuate desirable growth and be self-sustaining.

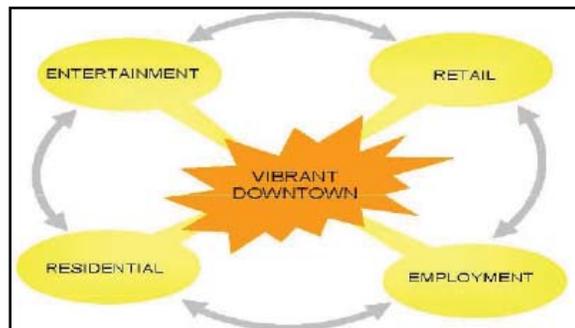


Figure 2

The following are economic development related recommendations. Detailed strategies for each objective are outlined in the following chapters.

Summary of Economic Development Objectives

- Support the establishment of “anchors” to build a critical mass of activity.
- Target professional services, company headquarters, and entrepreneurship to alleviate the surplus of office space downtown.
- Secure funding sources to finance downtown revitalization initiatives and projects. A new PID and renewal of Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone are recommended.
- Establish a formal incentives policy to encourage private investment.
- Design and launch an effective marketing campaign to promote downtown as the prime area of Wichita Falls to “live, work, and play.”
- Track growth and development in downtown to show progress toward established goals.



Objective 1: Support the establishment of “anchors” to build a critical mass of activity.

Explanation:

To be vibrant, a downtown needs a mass of residents and workers to support businesses during the day and after work. Downtown Wichita Falls currently serves as a hub for public sector employment, related professional services, financial institutions, and the oil and gas sector. However, these uses attract people downtown during normal business hours, leaving downtown after-hours a rather desolate place. Although retailers, arts organizations, restaurants, and bars are scattered throughout the central business district, they struggle to attract enough customers to their establishments – especially those establishments that depend on customers after 5:00 p.m.

To change this imbalance, a group of key institutions and establishments must be present to ensure more people are downtown during the day, after work, and on the weekends. In other words, the downtown needs anchors to strengthen its draw during the work day and extend its activities into after-hours and weekends.

Like anchors in a shopping center, anchors located in and adjacent to the core of downtown will serve to bring a stable volume of visitors to the area. In doing so, anchors will strengthen their respective sectors (employment, retail, residential, or entertainment) and support a higher level of economic activity in general. As the level of activity and choice of activities rises, downtown will become a more viable and self-sustaining destination.

Strategies:

- Identify anchors that will appeal to primary demographic segments in Wichita Falls: young adults (MSU students & SAFB trainees), downtown professionals, families, and retirees. Ideas may include:
 - The development of a flagship mixed-use project that will include entertainment options, fine dining, retail, and residential units. This project should be designed with the goal of promoting downtown as an after-hours destination. However, careful attention should be paid to attract tenants that complement, rather than compete with, existing downtown businesses.

- A new city hall located within or adjacent to the downtown core to serve as a primary employment anchor.
- A one-stop Entrepreneurship Center in the downtown core. (See Strategy 2 under following objective).
- Spread the anchors across the core of downtown such that pedestrian and vehicular traffic must pass other tenants when traveling between anchors. This location strategy will provide heightened visibility for other tenants located in the core.
- Ensure accessibility of anchors through the provision of adequate parking as well as public transportation connections.

an·chor (n)
 1. a reliable or principal support
 2. a large business (as a department store) that attracts customers and other businesses to a shopping center or mall

Source: the Random House Unabridged Dictionary



Objective 2: Target professional services, company headquarters, and entrepreneurship to alleviate the surplus of office space downtown.

Explanation:

Downtown Wichita Falls currently has an over-supply of office space which contributes to a soft office market city-wide. In addition, workers' wages in many office occupations, including business and finance, legal, architecture, engineering, computer, and management, fall below the state and national average. This wage differential is due to an over-supply of these types of workers.

Stimulating demand for office space and occupations will help alleviate these over-supply situations to strengthen both the office market and job market city-wide. This can be accomplished by recruiting and supporting the development of more businesses that require office workers and encouraging them to locate in downtown.

Furthermore, this strategy will have another important benefit. The types of jobs required by these businesses match more closely with the skills of MSU graduates as well as Wichita Falls ISD graduates who have gone off to college in other cities and wish to return. Thus, strengthening the job market for office jobs will also improve the city's ability to retain talent.

Strategies:

- Actively recruit professional services firms and company headquarters to downtown through a well-targeted campaign. (See Defense Diversification Plan – Strategy 5).
- Facilitate the creation of a one-stop Entrepreneurship Center to foster the growth of new businesses in Wichita Falls. This center should be a joint venture between Midwestern State University's Lalani Center for Entrepreneurship and Free Enterprise, the Small Business Development Center, Vernon College, the Board of Commerce and Industry, and the City of Wichita Falls. This will ensure coordination and continuity of services to minimize duplication of services. (See Defense Diversification Plan – Strategy and Appendix C: Entrepreneurship Assessment)

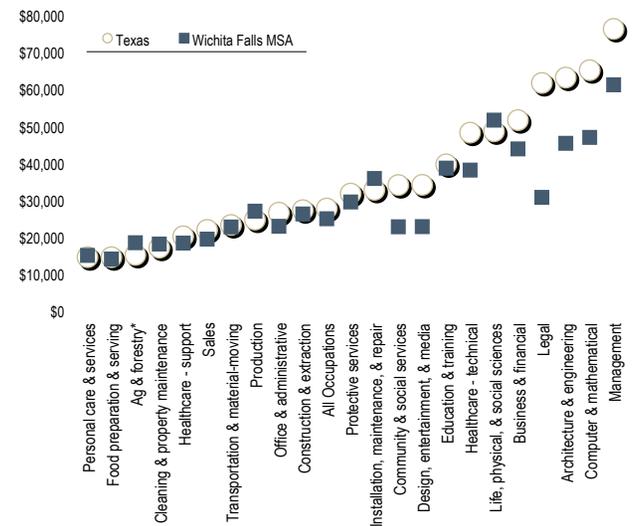
Objective 3: Secure funding sources to finance downtown revitalization initiatives and projects.

Explanation:

The City of Wichita Falls created its first Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone (TIRZ) in March 1986. The reasons cited for creating the zone include:

- “a need to preserve and expand the tax base;
- preservation of the City's historical and geographical center;
- elimination of urban decay;
- prevention of urban sprawl;
- creation of new jobs;
- capture of money from outside the local area; and
- improvement of the quality of life for city residents.”

Median Salaries for Primary Occupational Groups



SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2006 data released May 17, 2007
*nonfarm

Since that time, the district has committed over \$3.1 million to support 26 projects that contributed over \$74 million in investment within the area. However, the district is set to expire on December 31, 2008.



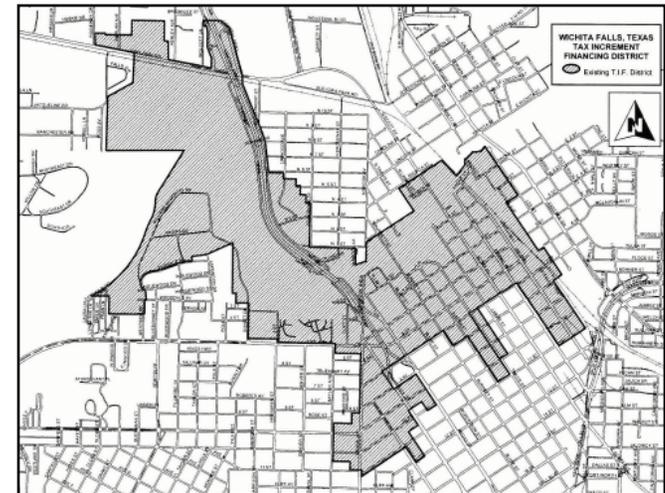
In addition to the funds available through Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district, the City of Wichita Falls has dedicated a quarter cent sales tax for Section 4A projects and a quarter cent sales tax for Section 4B projects. These 4A/4B funds may be used to fund certain types of economic development projects, as permitted by state law. However, these funds are presently not specifically dedicated to downtown.

Improving downtown's physical infrastructure and assets and supporting private re-development efforts will be an expensive undertaking. Cities across Texas and the nation have adopted creative strategies to provide financing for the revitalization of their downtowns and key districts. Aside from providing much-needed financing, dedicating specific funds to key districts is a way for cities to demonstrate their commitment to their urban cores. This will also inspire private sector confidence in the district.

The Appendix provides an overview of available financing tools.

Strategies:

- Create necessary financing district(s) that will provide adequate funds and flexibility in spending those funds for the projects and initiatives. In addition, the burden of financing should be shared among the different stakeholders.
 - Establish the organizational capacity to manage the financing district(s). Many cities have created non-profit organizations managed by district boards and have staff to handle the day-to-day operations of the programs. This organization can also spearhead the downtown revitalization efforts, manage and guide investment in downtown to promote the vision of this master plan, and organize and advocate for downtown business and property owners.
 - Set a goal to invest a set percentage of 4A and/or 4B funds in downtown projects. Attracting primary employers and supporting community development downtown can help to stimulate growth and counteract growth pressures in other areas of the city.
 - According to the Attorney General's Economic Development Handbook 2006, Section 4A and 4B funds "can be used to fund the provision of land, buildings, equipment, facilities, expenditures, targeted infrastructure and improvements that are for the creation or retention of primary jobs for projects such as manufacturing and industrial facilities, research and development facilities, military facilities, includ-
- ing closed or realigned military bases, recycling facilities, distribution centers, small warehouse facilities, primary job training facilities for use by institutions of higher education, and regional or national corporate headquarters facilities. [They] may also fund eligible job training classes, certain career centers and certain infrastructure improvements which promote or develop new or expanded business enterprises."
 - Section 4B funds "can additionally fund projects that are typically considered to be community development initiatives. For example, authorized categories under Section 4B include, among other items, land, buildings, equipment, facilities, expenditures, and improvements for professional and amateur sports facilities, park facilities and events, entertainment and tourist facilities, and affordable housing."
 - Secure any available federal and state funds that may facilitate revitalization efforts.
 - Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) and various programs of the National Historic Preservation Trust (<http://www.nationaltrust.org/funding/nonprofit.html>) could provide assistance for certain building renovations.
 - Join the Texas Downtown Association (www.texasdowntown.org) and the Texas Mainstreet Program (<http://www.thc.state.tx.us/mainstreet/msdefault.html>) to become better informed of funding opportunities as well as best practices.





- The consulting team was asked to review the potential for creating a Community Development Corporation (CDC) to stimulate reinvestment in the downtown. CDCs are non-profit, community-based organizations that aim to promote economic stability in their communities. Most commonly, CDCs operate in low-income areas and are involved in housing development, planning and organization, and homeownership programs. In addition, some are involved in commercial and business development, and workforce and youth programs (Urban Institute, 1999).

Currently, in Wichita Falls, the roles fulfilled by a CDC are provided by a strong network of non-profit organizations and public sector programs and are focused on East Wichita Falls. For example, Habitat for Humanity is involved in the construction of affordable homes for qualified families and the Housing Authority of Wichita Falls manages affordable rental units. The City of Wichita Falls, through its Neighborhood Resources Division, assists low-income families in the purchase of their first home through the first-time homebuyers program and infill housing program. The City also manages programs to assist low-income homeowners in the maintenance of their homes. The Small Business Development Center and ACCION Texas provide assistance, including the provision of access to credit, to low-income small business owners. Workforce Solutions North Texas, Interfaith Ministries, the local higher-education institutions, and a number of other non-profits provide necessary workforce training.

In addition, Downtown Wichita Falls is adjacent to the city's lowest income areas but does not currently house many low-income residents. The type of programs normally administered by CDCs (community development-oriented programs) is not appropriate for downtown revitalization initiatives. A new CDC in Wichita Falls would be more appropriately focused on east and north Wichita Falls.

For these reasons, the consulting team does not recommend the creation of a separate CDC to focus on downtown revitalization. Instead, an organization that manages the day-to-day operations of the financing districts should function as a development corporation (See Strategy 2).

Objective 4: Establish a formal incentives policy to encourage private investment.

Explanation:

Wichita Falls is generally growing in a southwesterly direction. To overcome this trend, the City of Wichita Falls must commit to stimulating growth in downtown in order to achieve the critical mass it needs to sustain growth without public sector support. Using a portion of the funds dedicated to downtown (as discussed in the previous objective), the City should structure an incentives policy with the goal of directing private investment downtown.

The City currently offers the following incentives for projects in any part of the city:

- Direct assistance (grants) for eligible projects using TIF, 4A, and 4B funds, and
- Property tax abatement.

However, a formal incentives policy for downtown has yet to be established. Incentives policies should be carefully crafted in a manner to ensure they yield a net benefit to area taxpayers. An incentives policy will help to insulate the City from criticism and political pressure when making the decision of whether or not to support a prospect. The following principals are major factors that should be considered when establishing a policy: 1) the targeted investment would not occur without the incentive and 2) the investment should generate new economic activity in the area instead of displacing existing businesses.

Strategies:

- In cooperation with the 4A and 4B Board of Directors, create an incentives policy specific for downtown. The policy should include a statement demonstrating how the proposed incentive relates to the broader economic development strategies. The policy should incorporate a variety of tools, such as:
 - Chapter 380 agreements, property tax abatement, and possibly reimbursement of certain fees.
 - Special programs to help defray renovation costs resulting from asbestos/lead paint remediation, historic preservation, and modernizing buildings to adhere to the city's building code.



- The programs could include grants, a revolving loan fund offering low-interest loans, or both.
- Create a formal cost/benefit model weighing the estimated direct/indirect benefits (e.g., tax base enhancement, increase in retail sales, increase in wage rates) to the incentive costs (e.g., tax abatements, training subsidies, infrastructure improvements) associated with a particular deal.
 - The model should also incorporate the City's objectives for downtown development to ensure that projects promote these goals.
- Structure the programs to include a "claw-back" agreement that guarantees the recovery of incentives funds if the firm does not meet pre-established milestones.
- Establish an application process for prospects wishing to submit a project for consideration in the incentives program.
- Create Web site to publicize information regarding the incentives policy and application process. Post the application and descriptions of programs and process.

Objective 5: Design and launch an effective marketing campaign to promote downtown as the prime area of Wichita Falls to "live, work, and play."

Explanation:

Residents in Wichita Falls participated in interviews, workshops, and focus groups expressed an indifferent to negative impression of downtown. Some believe downtown to be dangerous. Others believe there is little reason to go to downtown. These perceptions demonstrate the need for an internal marketing campaign aimed to change residents' perceptions of downtown.

A negative or indifferent perception is extremely detrimental to downtown businesses and to downtown revitalization efforts. Because word-of-mouth is one of the most powerful marketing tools, a few residents' bad experiences downtown can perpetuate a negative impression in the community and can even travel to external audiences.

To counter the current perceptions of downtown, the City, in conjunction with the other downtown stakeholders, will need to actively promote a more positive image of downtown through a well-coordinated marketing campaign.

Strategies:

- Establish the image downtown stakeholders wish to portray. Build consensus for the image and a primary message to convey this image.
- Design a marketing plan for internal audiences to promote this image. This plan should set out goals based on measurable timelines – six months, one year, two years, and five years.
 - This marketing plan should identify target audiences, effective marketing tools to appropriate for each audience, and strategies for communicating the primary message.
 - It is imperative that actionable and attainable goals set the pace for future marketing inside the community. This will help the city build achievable plans where a Return on Investment (ROI) plays a key role.
- Continue to plan events to draw people downtown. Use annual events such as the St. Patrick's Day Festival, the Downtown Shrimp and Wine Festival, the Downtown City



Lights Parade, and the Hotter-'n Hell Hundred to showcase downtown.

- Make sure events are well-publicized and of high quality. A positive impression of downtown and downtown events must be conveyed at these events in order to keep people coming back.
- The media and public relations strategy should be designed to celebrate the successes of downtown revitalization in order to build momentum for the initiative.
 - Develop a community newsletter focused on downtown. This newsletter should reach out to the community at-large to communicate events, profile businesses, describe new projects, and discuss ideas for improving downtown. An e-newsletter could be distributed to mailing lists maintained by downtown businesses and organizations, BCI, MSU, and Sheppard.
 - Through traditional and non-traditional media sources, profile the catalyst projects and other important projects to raise awareness and generate interest.
- Coordinate the downtown marketing campaign with a city-wide campaign to reduce overlap and leverage co-marketing opportunities.

<p>Why market? To influence perception and cause people to act.</p> <p>What is the process? First, develop a message. Second, determine the appropriate marketing technique(s) to convey that message.</p>	<p>How to develop the message?</p> <p>Three elements to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Who is your target audience? □ What are you trying to tell them? □ What is the desired result? 	<p>What are my marketing tools?</p> <p>Many formats are available:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Web-based □ Print advertising □ Publicity □ Promotional materials □ Direct mail □ Word of mouth
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Objective 6: Track growth and development in downtown to show progress toward established goals.

Explanation:

Putting into place mechanisms for measuring results and outcomes allows organizations to evaluate the effectiveness of their initiatives and programs. Not only does this provide feedback for the organization to use to modify and strengthen their program, but it also can be used as a valuable marketing tool to foster support for successful programs.

For the downtown revitalization initiatives, the most important metrics to demonstrate growth and development are indicators of market conditions. To show measurable progress, the baseline market conditions of downtown must be established. In this way, variation from the baseline can be quantified. However, these metrics must be measured, analyzed, and reported regularly.

Elements of Successful Media & PR Campaigns

- Have clear and measurable goals
- Have extensive knowledge of your audience
- Develop compelling messages that connect with your target audience
- Specify what actions you want people to take, how to do it, and why
- Make the case for why action is needed now
- Match strategies to your target audience
- Research, plan, and pre-test
- Budget
- Evaluate, revise, and refocus on an ongoing basis

Strategies:

- Continue to collect survey responses to establish the baseline conditions of the downtown market. The key metrics that should be tracked are:
 - Housing units (total, rentable, occupied, average price per square foot)
 - Office space (total square feet, useable square feet, occupied square feet, average price per square foot)
 - Retail space (total square feet, useable square feet, occupied square feet, average price per square foot)
 - Arts & cultural establishments (number of establishments, visitors)
- This survey should be distributed at least annually to track growth in each of these areas.
- With the information obtained from the surveys, produce a report card summarizing the data and achievements in the revitalization efforts. Include any projects fully or partially funded with public funds.
- Publicize reports to local and regional realtors, brokers, and developers. Post the report card on the Downtown Wichita Falls Development, Inc. Web site with links from the City of Wichita Falls' website and BCI's website.



APPENDIX



Financing Strategies

Unlike the federally financed urban renewal projects of the 1960s and 70s, today's downtown revitalization efforts are much more likely to be financed with private funds or through innovative public-private partnerships. As a result, the creation of some form of taxing or special assessment district is a commonly used approach for financing and managing downtown development. Below is a list of the different types of financing districts that are commonly used in Texas.

- *Tax-increment financing (TIF) districts.* Tax increment financing districts, which allow taxing entities to repay the costs of improvements to a designated area with the future tax revenues generated by increasing property values, are among the most popular funding mechanisms.¹ These districts can be structured as a single, large tax-increment district (San Diego) or as a series of smaller tax-increment districts in targeted areas (Chicago).
- *Public improvement districts (PID).* PIDs, also known as Business Improvement Districts, offer cities a means for improving their infrastructure to promote economic growth in an area. The Public Improvement District Assessment Act allows cities to levy and collect special assessments on properties that are within the city or its extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ).

PIDs may be formed to create water, wastewater, health and sanitation, or drainage improvements; street and sidewalk improvements; mass transit improvements; parking improvements; library improvements; park, recreation and cultural improvements; landscaping and other aesthetic improvements; art installation; creation of pedestrian malls or similar improvements; supplemental safety services for the improvement of the district, including public safety and security services; or

¹ As described in the Texas Attorney General's Office Handbook on Economic Development Laws for Texas Cities: "Each taxing unit can choose to dedicate all, a portion of, or none of the tax revenue that is attributable to the increase in property values due to the improvements within the reinvestment zone. The additional tax revenue that is received from the affected properties is referred to as the tax increment. Each taxing unit determines what percentage of its tax increment, if any, it will commit to repayment of the "cost of financing the public improvements."

supplemental business-related services for the improvement of the district, including advertising and business recruitment and development.

- *Municipal management districts.* These districts, also called downtown management districts, are created within an existing commercial area to finance facilities, infrastructure and services beyond those already provided by individual property owners or the municipality. The improvements may be paid for by self-imposed property taxes, special assessments and impact fees, or by other charges against district property owners. The creation of the district does not relieve a city from providing basic services to the area. A district is created to supplement, not supplant, the municipal services available to the area.
- *Municipal development districts.* A municipality may create a Municipal Development District comprising all or part of its city limits, all or part of its extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ), or any combination of all or part of these areas. To create a district, a city must call an election through an order that defines the proposed boundaries of the district. These districts are financed through an additional sales tax approved by the city's voters, a tax which is similar to the economic development sales tax.
- *Special purpose district.* Another approach to downtown finance is the creation of a special purpose district. Unlike the TIF district, which collects the tax increment created by rising property values, a special purpose district represents an additional tax. Special purpose districts are legally recognized governments and operate independently from other taxing jurisdictions, such as a city or county. They can collect money from a variety of sources, including bond issues, user fees and grants, and are typically governed by a board.

The table on the next page compares the districts based on the funding source, who bears the burden of financing the district, how the funds can be used, and who initiates the creation of the district. In addition, examples of each type of district are provided.



Comparison of Financing Districts

Mechanism	Funding Source	Burden	Uses	Initiation	Examples
Tax Increment Financing	Allocation of incremental property tax revenues to the TIF	Property owners in district	Structural and infrastructure improvements	Petition of property owners in district or city council	Rowlett, TX Arlington, TX Houston, TX
Public Improvement District	Additional assessment	Property owners in district	Improvements of water, wastewater, health & sanitation, drainage, street & sidewalk, mass transit, parking, library, park, recreation & cultural facilities, landscaping & other aesthetics, art installation, creation of pedestrian malls, supplemental safety services, supplemental business-related services	City council or by petition of 50% or more of property owners in a given geographic area	Houston, TX Greensboro, NC Great Fall, MT Durango, CO
Municipal Management Districts	Self-imposed property taxes, special assessments, and impact fees	Property owners in district	Facilities, infrastructure, and services beyond those provided by property owners or by the municipality	Petition of 50% or more of property owners in a given geographic area	Houston, TX
Municipal Development Districts	Sales tax	Consumers in the district	Any project acceptable as a use of 4B sales tax revenues	Election	Aranas Pass, TX
Special Purpose District	Additional tax	Patrons / users of district	Depends on structure of SPD	Legislative action	The Woodlands, TX



In addition to using financing districts, economic development may be funded by a variety of other mechanisms. Examples and descriptions are listed below.

- *Bond issue for economic development.* As a home rule city, Wichita Falls' statutory ability to issue bonds for specific purposes must be outlined in its charter. Provided statutory authority exists, cities can issue bonds for economic development purposes, including bonds for certain commercial projects, provided that the building or facility will be leased to a private entity or to another political subdivision or the state. Economic development corporations also have the authority to issue bonds, payable solely from economic development sales tax proceeds.
- *Economic development sales tax.* The Development Corporation Act allows Section 4B tax proceeds to be used for a variety of business development purposes, including the promotion of manufacturing and industrial facilities, and facilities and infrastructure related to such projects. In addition, 4B funds can be used for projects that are not specifically related to job creation, including parks and related public space improvements, commercial facilities, and tourism and entertainment facilities.
- *Venue project tax.* Cities and counties may choose to propose a venue project tax if they are interested in diversifying the sources of revenue they have to promote a specific economic development project. The venue project revenue sources that can be adopted include a sales tax, a hotel occupancy tax, a short-term motor vehicle rental tax, an event parking tax, an event admissions tax and a venue facility use tax. Additionally, the venue sales tax can be proposed in certain limited cases even if the city is already at its maximum sales tax rate; in this circumstance, the legislation allows the voters to approve an automatic reduction of another existing sales tax to make room for the venue tax.
- *Local hotel occupancy tax.* The local hotel occupancy tax can provide an important source of funding for maintenance of a city's tourism program and can translate into economic development for the entire area. Both general law cities and home rule cities are authorized to adopt a hotel occupancy tax within the city boundaries. Unlike a local sales tax, the adoption of a local hotel occupancy tax does not require voter approval. Most cities are eligible to adopt a hotel occupancy tax rate of up to

seven percent of the consideration paid for the use of a hotel room. Local hotel occupancy tax revenues may only be spent to establish or enhance a convention center, cover the administrative expenses for registering convention delegates, pay for tourism-related advertising and promotions, fund programs that enhance the arts that will enhance tourism and hotel activity, pay for historic restoration or preservation projects that will enhance tourism and hotel activity, fund sporting events in which the majority of participants are tourists in cities located within a county with a population of one million or less, or enhance and upgrade certain cities' existing sports facilities or fields.

- *Matching funds/loans.* State and federal matching funds are often available for projects that meet specific criteria. For example, local funds for highway beautification and transportation demand management projects can often be highly leveraged with federal funds, such as those available under the Transportation Equity Act for the 21 Century, commonly known as TEA 21. Loan programs, such as the Texas Leverage Fund administered by the Texas Department of Economic Development, are another potential funding method.
- *Other funding strategies.* Downtown revitalization efforts can be funded by a wide range of non-tax mechanisms. One common approach is the creation of a merchants association funded by member dues and/or service fees (fees for the provision of services such as parking management, promotion, or design assistance). Other sources of funds include corporate donations or sponsorships, hotel-motel tax, product sales (T-shirts, bumper stickers, calendars, etc.) and special events (such as auctions, garage sales, farmers markets).

The Main Street program lists the following formula for an "ideal" funding strategy: 1/3 city funding; 1/3 downtown business and property owners; and 1/3 other contributors, including major businesses and industries in the community, citizens, etc. (Organizing a Successful Downtown Revitalization Program Using the Main Street Approach, Washington State Office of Trade & Development).

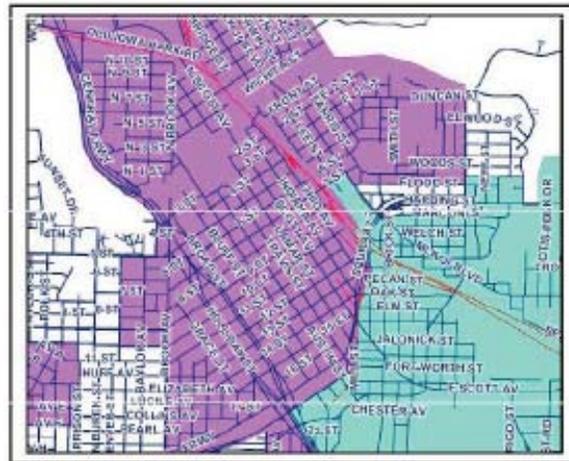
Aside from funding improvements in an area, cities and economic development organizations are offering incentives to encourage private investment in their downtown districts.



Various types of districts may be created to provide benefits to businesses or property owners in specific districts. In addition, other types of incentives may be offered to encourage the desired investment. Examples of districts and incentives are listed below.

- *Neighborhood empowerment zone.* A Neighborhood Empowerment Zone is a designated area within a municipality that is created to promote one or more of the following: affordable housing, an increase in economic development; an increase in the quality of social services, education or public safety; or the rehabilitation of affordable housing in the zone. In this zone, a municipality may waive impact fees, refund municipal sales taxes, and abate property taxes for the purposes of benefiting the zone.

- *Enterprise zone.* Enterprise zones are economically distressed areas designated as such by the State of Texas. Communities may nominate projects to participate in the Texas Enterprise Zone Program. This program is an economic development tool for local communities to partner with the State of Texas to promote job creation and capital investment in Enterprise Zones. For qualifying projects, the Comptroller's office administers Enterprise Zone refunds of state sales and use tax.



North Enterprise Zone
 East Enterprise Zone

- *Reinvestment zone.* A taxing unit may designate a reinvestment zone if an area meets one of the criteria listed in Chapter 312 of the Texas Tax Code. The criteria

most often cited is that the designation of the zone is reasonably likely to contribute to the retention or expansion of primary employment or attract major investment to the zone. Projects in the designated zone are eligible for tax abatement agreements and economic development refunds.

- *Defense economic readjustment zone.* A community may be nominated as a defense economic readjustment zone for a period of seven years if it can demonstrate that it is adversely affected and defense dependent. Once designated, a community may nominate two projects to be defense economic readjustment projects that are eligible to apply for franchise tax credits and state sales and use tax refunds on qualified expenditures. Local communities may also offer benefits to participants under the defense economic readjustment zone program as well. These may include tax abatement, tax increment financing, one-stop permitting and others.
- *Tax abatement agreements.* A tax abatement is an agreement between a taxpayer and a taxing unit that exempts all or part of the increase in the value of the real property and/or tangible personal property for a period not to exceed 10 years. Each taxing unit that wants to consider tax abatement proposals must adopt guidelines and criteria for the creation of a reinvestment zone and must hold a public hearing. After these steps are complete, the taxing unit may designate a zone.
- *Economic development refund.* Property owners that have established a new business in a reinvestment zone or expanded or modernized an existing business located in the zone may apply for a refund of sales and use tax equal to the school property taxes paid by the owner in that tax year. Since entering into a city or county abatement agreement, the property owner must have increased the businesses' payroll by at least \$3 million or increased the abated property's appraised value by at least \$4 million. The total for all refunds collectively may not exceed \$10 million.
- *4A / 4B sales and use funds.* City voters may approve 4A and 4B taxes, which are special designated taxes, to be used for economic development purposes. 4A tax funds can be used to fund the provision of land, buildings, equipment, facilities, expenditures, targeted infrastructure and improvements that are for the creation or retention of primary jobs. 4B tax funds may fund the same types of projects as 4A and also projects that are typically considered to be community development initia-



tives.

- *Chapter 380 agreement.* A city may establish and provide for the administration of one or more programs, including programs for making loans and grants of public money and providing personnel and services of the municipality, to promote state or local economic development and to stimulate business and commercial activity in the municipality. Funding from these programs is allocated from the city's general fund and has fewer restrictions than most of the other types of incentives. Many cities structure their Chapter 380 agreements to function as sales tax rebates to companies.



Public Meetings and Presentations

A series of public meetings and city council presentations were conducted. The meetings were well attended and the team received a tremendous amount of information and input that helped shape the final plan.

These meetings gave stakeholders the opportunity to present their collective vision and discuss in detail the issues in downtown Wichita Falls. The following meetings and council presentations were held:

August 14, 2007 - Mayor's Steering Committee Kick-off Meeting

Freese and Nichols and TIP Strategies met with the mayor's steering committee to give an overview of the project schedule and answer questions.

September 5, 2007 - Downtown Plan Public Kick-off Meeting

This was the first public meeting held where the public was informed that the City hired Freese and Nichols, Inc. to create a plan for the downtown area. FNI made a presentation on the planning process and allowed citizens to give their input of what was good and what needed improvement in downtown. About 50 people were in attendance for this afternoon meeting.



October 9, 2007 - Downtown Wichita Falls Development, Inc. Meeting

DWFD, Inc. helps to create a sense of place for citizens, businesses, and visitors. DWFD, Inc. was a big supporter of the downtown plan and kept its members informed about the planning process. Cynthia Laney, executive director, organized a meeting for DWFD members at the Kemp Center where Freese and Nichols presented their downtown presentation and received input on the existing conditions of downtown. Close to 50 DWFD members were present.

October 10, 2007 - City Planning Commission Downtown Plan Presentation

Freese and Nichols' presentation to the City Planning Commission outlined public comments about downtown's biggest challenges and opportunities. Other public comments received at the public meetings that were presented included: pedestrian walkways, lighting, security, housing, traffic/access, parking, themes and/or districts, gateway, plaza/ open space, vacant/underutilized buildings, and business types needed.

November 12, 2007 - Downtown Wichita Falls Public Meeting

TIP Strategies, Inc. led this meeting where close to 100 citizens were in attendance. The attendees were divided into three groups in which they had an opportunity to give input on Wichita Falls' economic development, downtown, and Sheppard AFB. The mayor made it known that the master plans the City would receive from the consultants would also be action plans as well.





"The BPW Page is a publication of the Business & Professional Women's Association that is responsible for its content."



Women Helping Women

Downtown's development is important to everyone!

By Martha Hall
Editor - BPW Page

Recently, it was my privilege to attend a very informative meeting featuring Andy Taft, executive director of Downtown Fort Worth, Inc. as the guest speaker. He presented a video and narrative titled "The 30-Year Overnight Success of Downtown Fort Worth." It was fascinating to see pictures of downtown Fort Worth with boarded up windows and grass growing through cracks in the sidewalks versus what you see now! If you haven't been to downtown Fort Worth, it is certainly worth a visit - Bass Hall, coffee at Barnes and Noble, shops and restaurants all with police officers on horse back and bicycles. You can walk out of a concert at 11:00 at night and be safe. Of course you are in the company of thousands of people enjoying the walk around Sundance Square!



Martha Hall

This presentation made me think about downtown Wichita Falls. I love downtown, and it is easy for me to visualize what it could be. It will never be what it was when I moved here in 1961 as THE city of Wichita Falls, but it could certainly be a place you would come and bring your family to eat at neat restaurants, go to good theater and shop at niche stores. In fact, what would

it take? We are already farther along in our development than Fort Worth was when it began. We have a few restaurants, theaters and a few shops. Perhaps the most important thing we already have are condominiums! People live in downtown Wichita Falls at the Holt Hotel and LaSalle Crossing as examples. Any future development will use this to build upon as we look to the future.

Cynthia Laney is the Executive Director of Downtown Wichita Falls Development, Inc. If you haven't met her, you should. Her enthusiasm for what she does is infectious. She hasn't been in Wichita Falls a long time, but you sure wouldn't know it by talking with her. She came to Wichita Falls from Seymour with a stop along the way in the city of Pittsburgh, Texas. Her training includes the Main Street Management Program with the Texas Historical Commission and is a graduate of the Economic Development Institute. She and I sat down at lunch last week to talk about her vision and what she wants to do to make it happen.

The first question to her was, "What is your vision for downtown?" She quickly said, "For people to realize the opportunities and possibilities of downtown and to love it. We have the bones and basic infrastructure now to build on, and with a comprehensive plan in place, we can give the vision validity."

She said she once saw a sign in a vacant building somewhere that said "This building is not vacant, it is full of opportunities." When she said this, I mentally



The Wichita Theater hosts many plays and brings many residents and visitors to downtown Wichita Falls.

pictured several buildings that not only hold opportunities, but memories. Too often, people are quick to tear down the old and replace with shiny, glibly new buildings that literally have no substance.

Downtown is the heart of our city. So many have moved out of the downtown area but Cynthia believes everything should be centered where the energy is. To do this will take commitment from citizens: those who take the risks to develop their passion and those who will come. I love the line from the movie, *Field of Dreams*, "build it and they will come."

Part of the vision will be to help the community recognize downtown as the center of this community. The closest some people have been to this center

Once a definitive plan is in place, then the financial incentives and structures will come. A couple of years ago I was listening to a radio show that featured then Dallas mayor, Laura Miller. She made the statement that downtown Dallas would look as good as Fort Worth if only they had the Bass family! There is no doubt this family has been incredible for Fort Worth's revitalization, but this family was not the only source available to help Fort Worth become what it is today. We don't have the Bass family either, but there are other means out there, and we will find them if we have the determination to follow through with a comprehensive plan.

Downtown revitalization will help us all. It will help in economic development by showing prospective industries we care about our city and we will care about them if they locate their business here. It will help local owners when others join them in a common goal of working together by using Tax Increment Funding (TIF) and even at some future time, the development of Public Infrastructure Districts (PID) which would have busi-

nesses join together financially to enhance services within their district. One example might be to pay someone to come in the middle of the night to pick up trash and wash down the streets and sidewalks! Sound unbelievable? It's not, it is being done in other places right now!

There is no one who says this will be easy. Wichitans have a problem selling this city to themselves, much less to anyone else. There is so much going for us, we just need to stop and realize it, pull up our sleeves and ask how we can help, then get busy getting it done. It can start with Ohio, Indiana and Scott streets and move outward to MPEC, Berend's Landing and even a muddy river that has a beautiful waterfalls that might someday lead to something quite dramatic. Dreams don't cost anything, but dreams do lead to what can be accomplished if you want something badly enough.

When Cynthia and I finished our talk together, she said, "so many exciting things are happening, come see!" Think about it.

Teens' abusive relationships take many forms

By Lindsay Chandler
President, NIKE Club

Many teens today are in an abusive relationship. Most think that to be in an abusive relation-

ship is to be in an abusive relationship. This can include telling them they would be nothing without you and that they are worthless.

Some even physically abuse

Times Record News

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Extreme makeover: Wichita Falls

City officials may approve funding for downtown revitalization

Carmen Castro
Times Record News

The first step to give the heart of downtown a much-needed facelift is in the works.

City officials are expected to approve \$100,000 to partly fund a consulting firm to create a revitalization plan to further economic development.

"We're looking to improve from image development to economic development," said Wichita Falls Community Development Director David Clark. "The question is what do we want exactly?"

Clark said it is important to look at all possibilities with a consultant in order to identify a plan to make sure all downtown buildings are used to their full potential.

"Anything can be a possibility," Clark said.

One of the goals projects in the downtown development is the possible construction of a new city hall building.

Wichita County Judge Woody Gossett said the talk of maintaining city and county facilities is all preliminary to consider until the Multi-Purpose Events Center's bonds are paid off in about five years.

"We do know that both the citizens will stay downtown and are looking at renovations," Gossett said. But talk of a new city hall is just as preliminary as the future of the run-down farmers market.

Please see **PLANS** on Page 6A

PLANS

continued from Page 1A

at Eight and Ohio Street.

Clark and Jim Pettyjohn, with the Museum of North Texas History, recently toured the market to see if it can be the future location for displays of some of the city's artifacts.

"In time, circumstances as well as the consultants will review if that's the best way to use the building," Clark said.

Building codes and other infrastructure details are what will affect the final say on the downtown revitalization project, Clark said.

One of the downtown beautification projects set in stone awaits approval Tuesday.

The Tax Increment Financing board has recommended that the City Council allocate \$22,944 from the TIF fund to help with the renovation of the Cass Mahans Restaurant on Eighth Street.

Cass Mahans co-owner Vickie Kerr said she and her husband are excited to see the city's commitment to downtown.

"We're thrilled to be able to have the opportunity to help this place look as it did 60 years ago when we first

opened," Kerr said.

The restaurant owner said since the Holt Hotel renovations are completed, the couple felt the time to catch up with times and help attract more people to the area.

The Karr building renovations are expected to cost \$183,764, which includes a new kitchen facility, ductwork as well as facade rehabilitation and signage improvements. The owners also plan to reopen the shoe-shine parlor next door.

The city would reimburse the owner when the project is complete.

Downtown Wichita Falls Development Inc. Executive Director Cynthia Laney said a consultant will help give everyone a better direction on urban business development.

"It will all really help bring attention to downtown," Laney said. "There's already a lot of downtown traffic, a lot of downtown residents and hopefully a lot of business clients around the hotels to start to show that downtown is alive."

Laney said she is eager to have a consultant's expertise so that planned projects can go into effect, like the relocation of the Museum of North Texas History and the Railroad Museum to the heart of downtown. There has also been talk about the Wichita Theater bringing in a children's museum, Laney said.

"This could help for cultural enrichment trips for people looking for a single-day trip, like for folks out in the Dallas-Fort Worth area," Laney said. "In the end, it's all to help educate on the history of Wichita Falls and bring pride especially when we are all working together."

Clark said the downtown facelift money request is just one of three financing elements to secure a consultant for the city.

The city has another \$65,000 budgeted to help fund the consultant, and there is a \$200,000 grant filed with the Office of Economic Adjustment at the Department of Defense.

"We're trying to pursue further economic development for the entire city," Clark said. "To see if there's a way to become less dependent on the base (Sheppard Air Force Base), it will all be inclusive."



Downtown Business and Building Survey Form

DOWNTOWN WICHITA FALLS DEVELOPMENT, INC.
BUILDING AND BUSINESS SURVEY FORM

<u>BUILDING:</u>	<u>BUSINESS:</u>
Street Address _____	Business Name _____
Building Name _____	Owner/Manager's Address _____
Building Owner _____	Phone No. _____
Owner's Address _____	Business Type _____
Phone No. _____	No. of Employees _____
Total Sq. Ft. _____	Downtown Assoc. Member? _____
Occupied ____ Vacant ____	Number of Office Spaces _____
Date Built _____	Spaces Occupied _____
Date of Alterations _____	Price per Square Foot _____
Architectural Description (exterior and interior) _____	

Condition _____	

Brief History Including Location of Historic Photographs _____	

Owner and/or Manager Goals for the Business and the Building _____	

Date(s) of Meetings _____	
Survey Completed by _____	
Date _____	



LOCAL UPDATE





Parks and Recreation

Overview

As part of the local update plan, the consulting team conducted a review of the park system. This is an overall general review of Wichita Falls Parks system with comment and recommendation for new recreation opportunities in the City and at Lake Wichita. This process also includes a general review of the present Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan 2001-2011. The findings and recommendations of this work were presented to the Mayor, City Council, Park Board and Mayor's Steering Committee.

Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan

The purpose of the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan is to provide a comprehensive planning document related to parks, recreation and open space in Wichita Falls. The Plan identifies recreation needs within the community and provides for the orderly and financially responsible acquisition of park land, open space and the development or renovation of recreation facilities.

The Park Master Plan is a fluid document and should be able to adapt and change with recreation trends, land uses, demographics and the economy at any given time frame of the Plan. The existing Parks, Recreations and Open Space Master Plan 2001-2011 is a comprehensive and well prepared master plan. The plan addresses all of the items required for a complete planning document.

The identification of existing recreation facilities, park land classification, needs assessment and identification of future park needs were identified and addressed in the Plan. The Plan was adopted by Ordinance Number 54-2001 on June 5, 2001. The Plan should be reviewed by staff annually and revised every five (5) years. Changes which could impact the park system may include additional park land acquisition, new park development and park renovation.

The Wichita Falls Park, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan should be updated at this time and be adopted by a new ordinance. It has been seven years since the plan was prepared. The existing plan should review and update the following:

- Demographic changes and growth areas within the City.

- Document changes in the park system since 2001. This should include park land and recreation inventories.
- Review goals and objectives set forth in the Plan. Reaffirm the existing goals and objectives, remove accomplished goals and objectives and determine whether new goals are needed based on the needs assessment phase of the Plan.
- Prepare a new needs assessment using the standard, resource and demand based approach. It is recommended the City add a series of three town hall meetings to gather public input and comments to understand the recreational needs from Wichita Falls citizens.
- Create a park land acquisition map and future park plan that illustrates where new parks and open space should be acquired based on growth and development within Wichita Falls.
- Based on public input and the needs assessment phase, develop a new priority list for park land and recreation facility development for the next five years.

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department

In 2006, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department revised the criteria for the park master plan approval process of Texas Cities. Once the master plan has been completed, the City should submit the master plan to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department for their file.

Special Meeting of the City Council, Mayor's Steering Committee and Park Board

On March 11, 2008, a special meeting was held to review and discuss the findings of the parks and recreation system in Wichita Falls. The topics for discussion were as follows:

- Review of the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan 2001-2011
- Review of Wichita Falls Parks System
- State of Municipal Park Planning and Facilities
- Questions, Comments and Open Discussion



Wichita Falls Park System

- Landscape Medians

General observations were noted and discussed regarding the Wichita Falls Park System. The park department is responsible for the landscape design and maintenance of the medians and thoroughfare intersections throughout the City. It was noted these medians are well designed and maintained, and because of this effort they rank as some of the best examples in the State. These landscape features add to the visual quality of life for citizens and visitors alike.

- Lucy Park and Prairie Dog Town

Lucy Park is a unique park in Wichita Falls and would be in any municipal park system. The Wichita Rivers, in conjunction with the open space trail system, duck pond and other park amenities, make Lucy Park the cornerstone of the Wichita Falls Park System. Although a few west Texas cities may have a prairie dog town, this wildlife opportunity provides a unique opportunity for visitors to view the prairie dog in a native setting.

- Hike and Bike Trail

The City's strongest asset is the on-going development of its hike and bike trail system. Trails are the most utilized recreational element within a municipal park system. Trails accommodate all age groups and enable a variety of uses such as: biking, walking, and jogging and are used from dawn to dusk. The City is continuing to pursue the trail development to provide a continual loop throughout the City.

State of Municipal Park Planning and Facilities

The Consultant team prepared a list of recreational elements which other Texas cities are developing in order to provide recreational opportunities. The following list of discussion items were presented to members attending the special meeting.

- Water Parks and Splash Pads

The City currently does not own or operate a water park or splash pad. The City operates a pool in Lucy Park. Water Parks are typically large water-oriented play parks with slides and water play equipment. Most often a City will build a water park to provide recreational opportunities to all citizens for an economical entrance fee.

Water parks built on a large scale have a regional service area. Construction costs for these facilities can range from \$2,000,000.00 to \$10,000,000.00.

Splash pads are water play elements which can be installed in a large neighborhood park or community park. Water play apparatus provides water from the concrete pad surface spraying upward and in some cases water play equipment is installed. The pads do not hold water; therefore there is no need for life guards. Splash pads provide recreation opportunities to children generally under the age of twelve. They are economic to build and provide alternate play opportunities during summer months. Construction cost can range between \$150,000.00 to \$400,000.00.

- Dog Parks

Many municipalities are building dog parks to accommodate citizens and their pets. These parks are most successful in high density areas with limited or no space for dogs. The parks require between five to ten acres of space. Typically, the parks are divided into large dog sections and small dog sections. The parks also provide social interaction between pet owners. Cost varies on these facilities because of size and support facilities.

- Skateboard Parks

Cities are building skateboard parks in their park system to provide a place for skateboarders to gather. The City is currently building a skateboard facility to address this need.

- Open Space Acquisition

The City should evaluate undeveloped areas for open space acquisition. As mentioned in the existing Park, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan the City may need to acquire additional land as the City continues to develop in a westerly direction. The critical issue regarding open space is to acquire it before development or platting occurs. Once land is developed the opportunity to acquire the land is virtually gone. The City is fortunate to have the floodplains and open space of the Wichita River and Lake Wichita.



Development of Lake Wichita

The Consultant team was asked to evaluate Lake Wichita and explore the various recreational opportunities which the lake may provide. Several concepts were discussed at the special meeting including an amphitheater site which would serve as a regional attraction. The concept would have included a facility which would seat approximately 3,000 to 4,000 people.

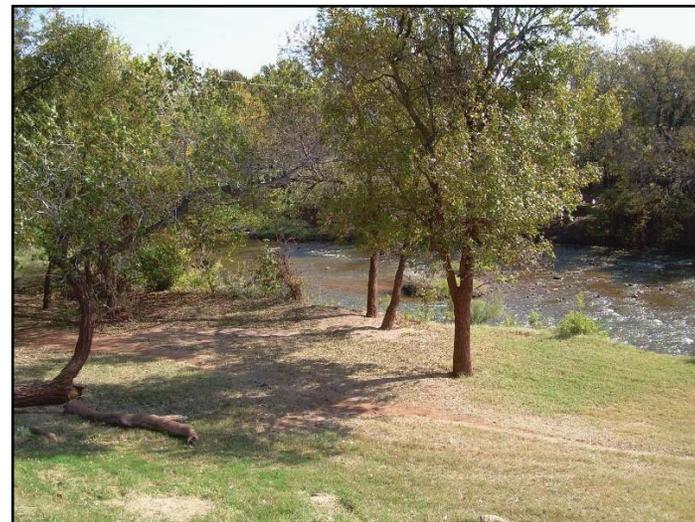
Developing the shoreline and expanding Lake Wichita Park into a historic settlement park was also discussed; settlements of a specific time period would be recreated for viewing and interactive purposes.

Sections of Lake Wichita could be converted to create a water fowl nature preserve and bird sanctuary. Creation of these wetlands would introduce flora and fauna species to provide passive, interactive and recreational opportunities to citizens of Wichita Falls and the possibility to serve as a regional nature facility. The development of this would also work in conjunction with River Bend Nature Center. Combining these two environmental attractions could increase potential visitor and tourism to the City of Wichita Falls.

A concept plan illustrating the potential use of Lake Wichita is depicted on the following page.



Existing Wichita River sculptures



Wichita River - Wichita Falls, TX



The Gateway to Texas
Wichita Falls
 TEXAS

Lake Wichita

Nature Preserve & Wetlands

City of Wichita Falls

Prepared by:
DUNKIN
SIMS
STOFFELS
 INC.

LEGEND

	observation deck / bridge
	park shelter
	neighborhood connection
	bike & hike trail
	nature trail
	viewing docks
	existing park connection
	picnic area



Lake Wichita

Aquatic Landscape Habitats



ZONING



Zoning

Purpose

The local update plan also investigated the zoning policies for North Kemp, between Kell (U.S. Rt. 82) and Seymour Highway (Business 277), Kell between U.S. 287 and McNiel, and the Wichita River corridor. The goal of this corridor analysis is to help improve the appearance and image of Wichita Falls along the key major corridors mentioned above.

Corridor Analysis

North Kemp between Kell Freeway and Seymour Highway (Business 277)

This corridor is presently zoned mostly limited and general commercial. Originally the frontage was primarily single family homes, but now this corridor is transforming to commercial, office, and retail uses. There are a few vacant lots that exist within this corridor. Recommendations for this corridor include:

- Consider ground signs and landscaping similar to the Brook Avenue District
- Maximum one story height (now 35 feet).
- Develop an overlay district that focuses more on design.
- Possibly require "Spanish Mediterranean" or other suitable architectural theme.
- At a minimum, design guidelines should be developed to depict brick façade, articulation and roof design.
- Part of Kemp is divided with median trees on the southern portion. This strategy should be considered in a similar fashion on the north side.
- Enhance the north side entry.



Appropriate scale and design example.

Kell Boulevard between Kemp and Brook Avenue

Kell is located on the old railroad right-of-way; it has many "triangular" parcels/lots which were created as a result. Recommendations for this corridor include:

- The south side of Kell, which is mostly developed, should generally remain as is and preserve present development character.
- The north side of Kell should develop a special "prototype" office site plan to assist in developing office space.
- Triangular lots are too small to develop, and should be converted to landscaped areas.
- Develop small-scale guidelines for office and retail buildings.



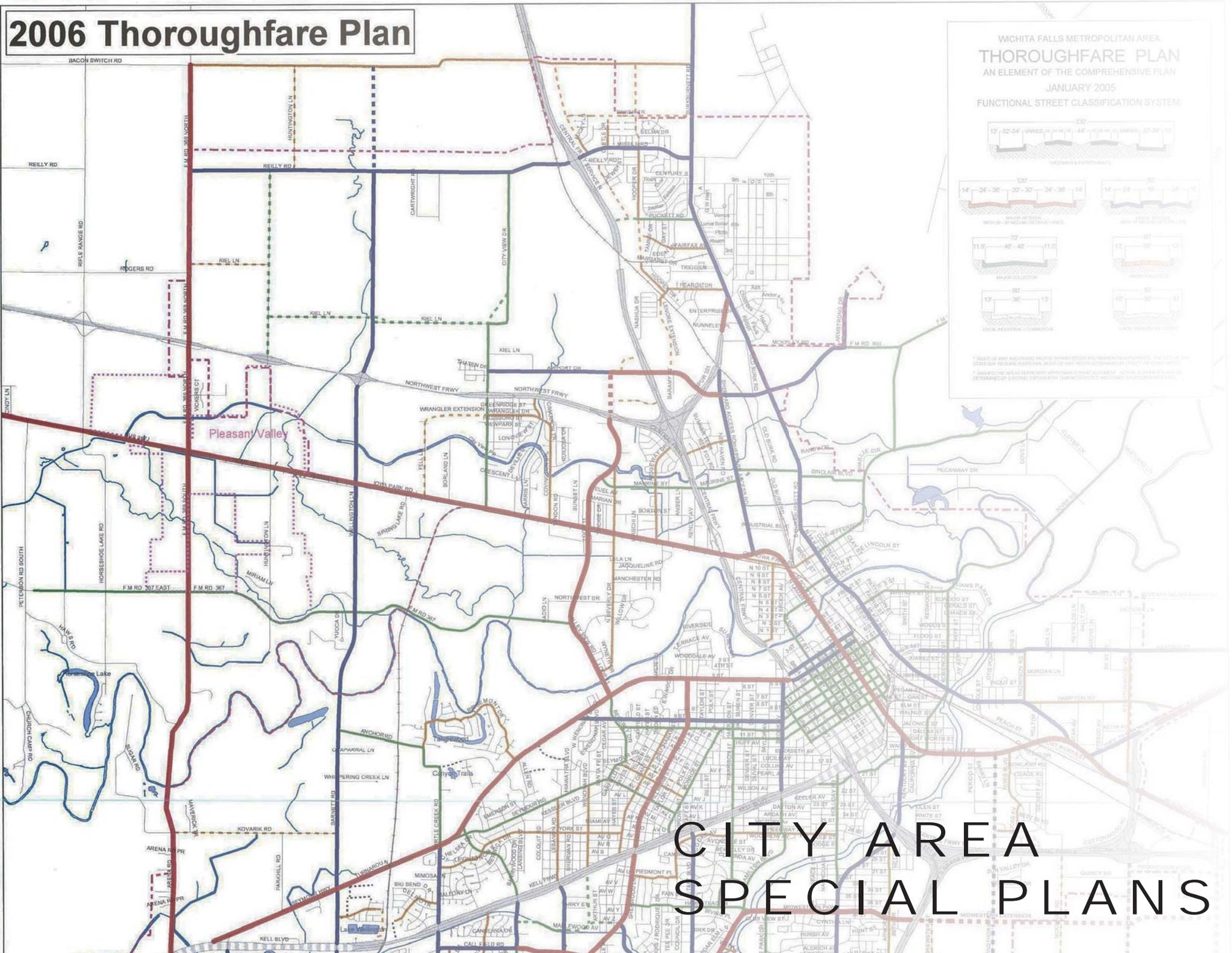
Appropriate development style example

Wichita River Corridor

This corridor is located between 1st Street and Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard. The River Development District (RDD) currently exist and the concept for this corridor should continue. Other recommendations for the Wichita River corridor include:

- Develop incentives to encourage another hotel that focuses on the river.
- Develop the trail on the north side which currently limited to the south side.
- Develop stronger connectivity and access standards.
- Develop more signage for bikes/pedestrians.
- Formalize connections to the Convention Center (MPEC).
- Improve advertisement of the Wee-Chi-Tah sculptures. Carry this same theme along other areas of the River.

2006 Thoroughfare Plan





City Special Area Plans

In the recent years, Wichita Falls has made an effort to make sure that they're planning for the future. Below are previous plans and documents that have addressed transportation, parks and recreation, planning, and engineering in the city. These plans and documents can also be used in coordination with this plan for guidance in the City of Wichita Falls regarding future growth and development.

Transportation Planning Documents

Metropolitan Transportation Plan 2005 - 2030

Prepared by Lockwood, Andrews and Newnam (LAN)

Adopted by: Transportation Policy Committee (TPC) January 20, 2005

The Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) is a comprehensive, multimodal "blueprint" for transportation systems and services aimed at meeting the mobility needs of the Wichita Falls Metropolitan Area through the next 25 years. The Plan includes detailed research covering vehicular/roadway, transit and bicycle/pedestrian related forms of transportation. Plans, projects, programs, and policies are proposed as transportation recommendations that reflect solutions to improve the overall quality of life for residents in the Wichita Falls area. The Plan provides a comprehensive overview of the MPO area (history, demographics, climate and communities) and its regional setting, specific goals and objectives along with transportation issues relating to maintenance, movement of goods and people, safety, environmental concerns, congestion management, a financial overview regarding funding availability and options to pursue ranked transportation projects in addition to performance measures. For additional information or to review the Metropolitan Transportation Plan in its entirety, consult the City's website (www.cwftx.net) or contact the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO).

Bicycle Master Plan 2005-2030

Prepared by Lockwood, Andrews and Newnam, Inc. (LAN) and Knudson & Assoc.

Adopted by: Transportation Policy Committee (TPC) January 20, 2005

The Metropolitan Transportation Plan developed a Bicycle Master Plan to address options for alternative transportation, recreational development along with supporting the annual Hotter'n Hell Hundred community event – the largest sanctioned non-competitive cycling ride in the United States. The Plan is composed of seven sections that address facility inventory, best practices, bicycle facility design guidelines, wayfinding strategies, education/

encouragement and enforcement, conclusions and recommendations and a reference component that outlines resources and safety information.

The Plan recognizes that as Wichita Falls' population increases and generates more traffic conditions for cyclists, the system will continue to deteriorate. Through developing a 25-year, long-range Bicycle Master Plan it will help ensure as growth continues roadways will also continue to be friendly to bicyclists. The Bicycle Plan is phased and its mission is two-fold: 1) to visibly increase use and 2) diversify the current use of the Wichita Falls bicycle system. The defining objective of the Bicycle Master Plan is getting people to view bicycling as more than an economic engine and a recreational or leisure experience.

Wichita Falls has become a successful example of using bicycling as a way to provide leisure opportunities and stir economic development. The Plan's vision holds firm to this philosophy, but also considers other influences. For example, the Plan could evolve bicycling into a plausible form of personal transportation through an expanded network of route types. These would support the current economic elements of bicycling in Wichita Falls.



Hotter'n Hell - Wichita Falls, TX

Long-Range Plan Objectives and Goals:

- A Wichita Falls MPO Bicycle Network – organize a bicycle route network that meets the needs of multiple users and enables efficient cross-town and cross-MPO travel.
- Support Features – provide bicyclists with the amenities that encourage use; improve connectivity and eliminate gaps in the existing trail system.
- Intermodal Integration – create a seamless network of bicycle and other types of public transportation.
- Outreach – establish a public education program that reaches a wide spectrum of



real and potential users and focuses on safety and benefits of bicycling.

- Financial Planning – stimulate partnerships and locate funding sources that enable network development
- Ongoing Expansion – start on a development program that will steadily expand the network and provide for evolving and emerging needs in a proactive manner

Overall benefits of maintaining a Bicycle Master Plan for residents of Wichita Falls include improved quality of life, reduced congestion, environmental improvements, economic conservation through less auto dependency and improved health of residents.

Final conclusions and recommendations:

- Proceeding with implementing a bicycle plan;
- the MPO and City should proceed to complete the existing trail around the City and, when possible it should accelerate completion;
- the trail link from Hamilton Park to Lake Wichita is the most heavily used section the MPO and City should hasten completion around Wichita Falls Country Club by either creating a route to detour the country club or securing the land through the country club;
- Establish an advocacy committee that can develop an implementation plan for a bicycle network and promote use;
- MPO and City staff should begin defining routes that can be designated as links in its bicycle network. Initial routes should provide cross-town movement at least north-south and possibly east-west with subsequent routes connecting to these spines;
- Signage needs to be developed for maximum use and to unify the existing trail and future network, promote participation, improve safety and security;
- Consider taking steps to provide safe, efficient, and secure end-of-route facilities such as bicycle parking and storage, and, where possible, drinking fountains, change rooms and showers;
- Beginning an active program that teaches bicyclists and motorists how to safely handle each other's legal rights to share the road;
- Looking to other successful examples in finding innovative ways to encourage

increased use of the trail and bicycle network;

- Ensuring law enforcement is impartial and universally applied and there should be innovation ways to involve community and policing in the bicycle network

For additional information or to review the Bicycle Master Plan in its entirety it is available on the City's website (www.cwftx.net) or by contacting the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO).

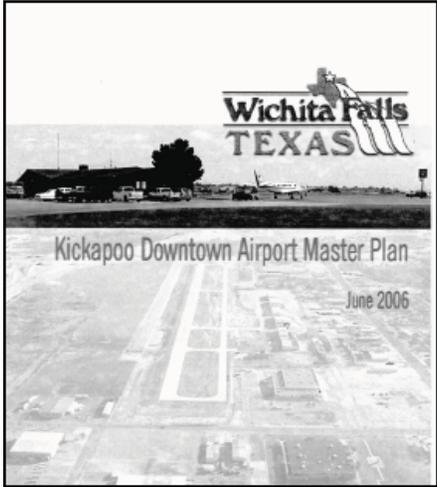
Kickapoo Downtown Airport Master Plan

Prepared by: URS; Leslie Sagar & Associates, LLC; Leibowitz & Horton AMC

Adopted by: City Council – August 15, 2006 (Resolution 106-2006)

The Kickapoo Downtown Airport Master Plan Study was prepared by URS in association with Leslie Sagar & Associates, LLC and Leibowitz & Horton AMC in 2006. The Airpark Master Plan provides a long-range, comprehensive overview for future development – it incorporates a financially feasible plan for rehabilitation of the airport, assesses existing and forecasted aviation demand and includes a description of facilities required to meet that demand; alternative development schemes, estimated costs, and a schedule for the implementation of capital improvements. An initial feasibility study was conducted and concluded the following for Kickapoo Airpark:

- it was financially feasible for the City to purchase and upgrade the facility;
- if Kickapoo were to close, area airports lacked adequate facilities to accommodate general aviation aircraft;
- if facility closed there would be a significant economic loss to the City;
- building a new airport would be more costly than acquiring Kickapoo; and





- general aviation already well established and stable in Wichita Falls, in large part due to the Airpark.

The Plan also addresses drainage analysis, reviews the facility inventory & evaluation of airfield pavement, aviation demand capacity, design criteria, rates and charges; storm water pollution and prevention plan, minimum standards and requirements for airport operations (e.g. runways, taxiways, terminal area, airspace) along with a detailed implementation plan. Additional information about the Kickapoo Downtown Airport Master Plan is available by contacting the City of Wichita Falls Airports Administrator.

Wichita Falls Municipal Airport (SPS) Master Plan Proposal
Prepared by: Wichita Falls Aviation, Traffic & Transportation Dept.
Proposed Master Plan Project & Objectives 2007

A Master Plan is proposed for the Wichita Falls Municipal Airport and is anticipated to be a priority after signing a new 50-year lease agreement in 2008 with the Secretary of the Air Force for commercial airport lands in addition to joint-use of the airfield with Sheppard Air Force Base. Aviation and Transportation Department employees anticipate submitting a grant to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to assist in funding the Master Plan. Items for potential consideration and long-term objectives for a future Master Plan include but may be subject to revision:

- Rehabilitation of Runway 17/35 – runway nearing end of useful life span and upon signing of 2008 lease it will be exclusively used for civilian aircraft operations. Plan will explore options for removal and upgrade of the 7,000 ft asphalt runway along with outlining options for funding assistance.
- New Passenger Terminal – originally constructed in 1959 after various renovations and additions no longer meets demands of commercial travel. Plan would research viable options and ideas for a new passenger terminal, parking facilities and potential funding sources.
- General Aviation Ramp Rehabilitation – aircraft parking areas in need of removal and replacement.
- Small Miscellaneous Projects – e.g. hangar area improvements, fuel farm improvements, perimeter fencing and access control improvements, aircraft wash rack.

Parks and Recreation Documents

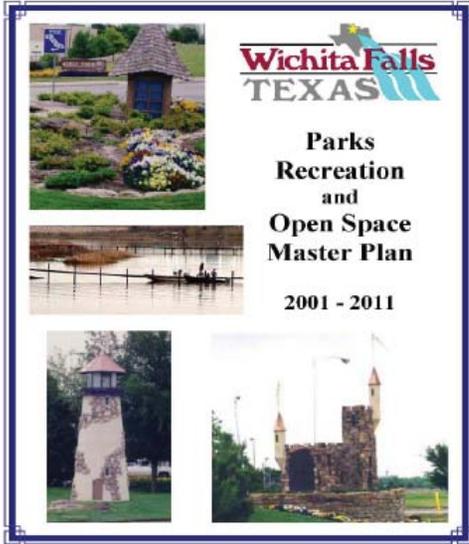
Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan 2001-2011

Prepared by: Wichita Falls Parks & Recreation Staff

Adopted by: Parks Board and City Council – June 5, 2001 (Ord. 54-2001)

The City's Master Plan for Parks, Recreation and Open Space 2001-2011 Plan incorporates various goals and objectives previously established by City Council in 1998, 1999 and those identified by the Park Board in their 5-year Plan through 2006. The Parks Department Master Plan goals include the following:

- Wichita Falls should provide for a wide range of (parks & recreation) opportunities for all citizens and visitors.
- Wichita Falls should distribute parks, recreation facilities, and trails equitably throughout the City.
- Wichita Falls should develop an adequate level of financing for trails, parks, and recreation facilities.
- Wichita Falls should continue to enhance its system of parks, recreation facilities, recreational services and open space.
- Wichita Falls should provide a high quality of parks and recreation facilities and services.
- Wichita Falls should continue to develop a greenbelt/trail system to connect parks and residential areas, in an environmentally sensitive manner.
- Continue to develop and enhance water resource facilities and programs.





When the Master Plan was prepared (2001) the City had 1,083 acres of developed parkland, 650.5 acres of undeveloped parkland and 970.4 acres of undeveloped open space at Lake Arrowhead. In addition, the City is also responsible for and maintains a sports complex (45.8 acres), 4 cemeteries (78.4 acres), landscaped boulevard medians (52.4 acres), turf triangles & turf highway corridors (105.6 acres), concrete and asphalt trails (11 miles), greenway turf (81 acres) and various facility grounds (27.5 acres). Additional information about the City's Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan and priority projects can be obtained by contacting the Director of Parks & Recreation.

Engineering Documents

Wastewater Master Plan 2000-2050

Prepared by: Biggs & Mathews Consulting Engineers, Inc.

Adopted by: City Council – June 1999 (study authorized on August 18, 1998)

The Master Wastewater Plan provides a strategic planning document covering a 50-year time frame for the orderly development and installation of adequate sanitary sewer collection and wastewater treatment facilities within the Wichita Falls metropolitan area. Two primary goals of the Plan include:

- Provide wastewater services to undeveloped areas contiguous to the City of Wichita Falls; and
- Identify methods to reduce surcharging and overloading of the existing collection system while minimizing the number of lift stations within the City's system.

The Plan considers the coverage area and limits for regional wastewater services considering potential population growth, delineates drainage basins (Quincy, Mid-western, Deer Creek, Rathgeber, Kickapoo, State Hospital, Sisk Road, Kovarik, Wichita



Valley, Prison and Plum Creek drainage basins), future land use considerations, flow rates from a Sanitary Sewer Evaluation Study (SSES – 1995) and an analysis of existing facilities (wastewater treatment plants and collection systems). The Plan outlines general long-range conclusions and recommendations but included a detailed planning schedule through 2005. Additional information about the City's Wastewater Plan through 2050 can be obtained by contacting the Director of Public Works.

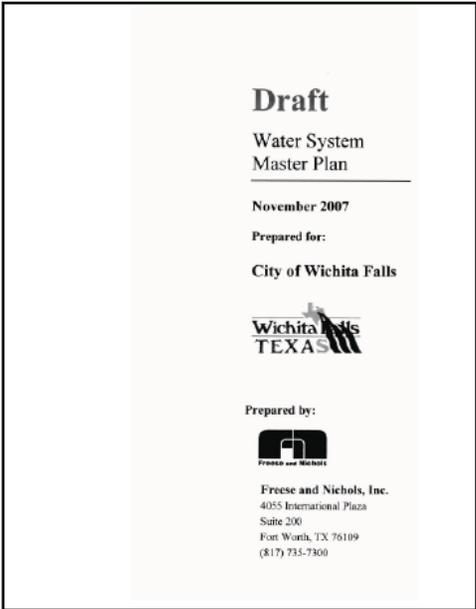
Water System Master Plan 2007-2031 Draft Version

Prepared by: Freese and Nichols, Inc.

Adopted by: Pending Director of Public Works & City Council consideration

At the time of preparing the Defense Diversification Plan, the City's Water System Master Plan was in draft plan format pending final adoption by City Council. The Plan's purpose was to evaluate the City's existing water distribution system and develop a long-range Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) through 2031. It has anticipated the areas of study and proposed Plan recommendations will be recognized and adopted as presented. Focus areas, research and recommendations incorporated into the Plan include:

- Population and water demand projections (5yr; 10yr and 25yr conditions),
- Water model development,
- Field testing and water model calibration,
- Existing water distribution system water quality assessment (central pressure, north





pressure and east pressure plane),

- Condition assessment and hydraulic capacity analysis (average day, max day, and peak hour demand runs along with existing system modeling summary); and
- Development of proposed water system improvement alternatives with cost estimates for three Capital Improvement Plan phasing periods

Phase I - 2007-2011

Recommendations include creating a new west pressure plane, expanding the east pressure plane, connecting 287 west elevated storage tank to Beverly ground storage tank, upgrade the 287 west pump station, and extend service south of City to Extra Territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) area.

Phase II - 2012-2016

Recommendations include a new central elevated storage tank along southern ETJ and supply line, new north Beverly ground storage tank and supply line, extend service to new developments on southwest side of City (Sisk/Allendale Rd), extend service to new developments in east pressure plane, and extend service to northern ETJ.

Phase III - 2017-2031

Recommendation for the third phase focused on improving the reliability and operation of the entire water system and included water line expansion along Lake Park Drive from Midwestern Pkwy to Southwest Pkwy., expand facilities to meet growth in the east pressure plane, expand water line along Hines Blvd., incorporate a new water line from 287 west elevated storage tank to the proposed water line from the North Beverly ground storage tank, expand service in the north side of the central pressure plane, and a new supply line to the north pressure plane.

Additional information about the Draft Wichita Falls Water System Master Plan can be obtained by contacting the City's Director of Public Works.

Storm Water Drainage Utility System – Capital Improvement Plan

Prepared by: Wichita Falls Public Works Department

Adopted by: City Council Annually

During fall 2000, City Council authorized the establishment of a Storm Water Drainage Utility System. This system, which took effect on May 1, 2001, provides a funding mechanism for

drainage improvements in the City as allowed under Chapter 402, Subchapter C of the Texas Local Government Code. The system is designed to assign a fair and equitable charge to the public for storm water drainage management services including capital improvements. The fee is based upon the impervious area of all real property, whereby each residential water customer is assessed for one Single Family Living Unit Equivalent (SFLUE) at \$1.50 each month, and each commercial customer pays a multiplier of the SFLUE based upon the impervious area of their property. The charges are included with monthly bill collection and proceeds are deposited into an enterprise fund to be used exclusively for drainage improvement projects. Anticipated storm water revenue funds are projected over a 20-year horizon along with the list of ranked project priorities to develop a timeframe for long-term storm water improvements throughout the City. Approximately \$1 million annually is deposited into the Storm Water Drainage Utility System Fund and project priorities are reviewed annually based on the long-range plan and need. In 2007 City Council authorized a \$6 million bond to assist in expediting the completion of the 55 pending storm water drainage utility projects identified in the Plan. Additional information about the Storm Water Drainage Utility System is available by contacting the City's Public Works Director.

Planning Documents Thoroughfare Plan

Prepared by: Wichita Falls Planning Division staff

Adopted by: Planning & Zoning Commission & City Council update as necessary

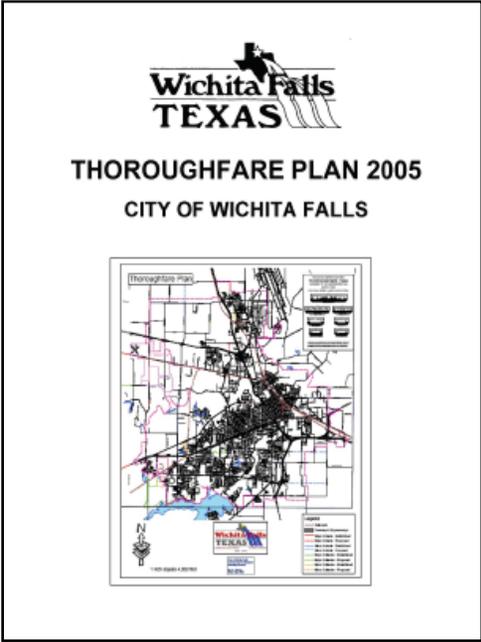
The Wichita Falls Thoroughfare Plan was developed in 1984 with a detailed 20-year focus outlining the City's existing and proposed future street network along with anticipated, minimum right-of-way widths that would be necessary to meet demand. This Plan provides both a short and long-range street focus. In 1996, 1999 and most recently in 2005 the Plan was



updated and revised by City Council on an 'as required' basis to keep pace with development needs. The Wichita Falls Thoroughfare Plan serves two concurrent roles:

- it outlines the functional classification of existing streets/roadways within the City – classified hierarchy of roadways – from cul-de-sacs through freeways based on levels of mobility and access; and
- it delineates proposed logical, long-range street connections and reserves anticipated right-of-way widths to meet future demand.

The Plan serves to improve and enhance commercial and industrial development, promote logical land use patterns, and for streets be utilized for their designed purpose and capacities. The basic functions of the City's street and highway system are to move traffic between dispersed points and provide street access to individual properties. In conjunction, a primary criterion for maintaining an adequate street system is the requirement that any new subdivision take into consideration street layout, arrangement, character, width, grade and location. Additional information regarding the City's Thor-



oughfare Plan is available by contacting the Community Development Department.

Land Use Plan

Prepared by: Wichita Falls Planning Division staff

Adopted by: Planning & Zoning Commission & City Council updated as necessary

The Land Use Plan provides overall guidance for the compatible development of land within the City limits, delivery of municipal services and is a base for determining future capital improvements (utilities, transportation and spatial dispersion and function of public safety facilities). The Plan created numerous land use classifications to address: low density and high density residential; manufactured housing/mobile home parks; light commercial; commercial, light industrial; industrial; institutional; parks & open space; and downtown uses. The current Land Use Plan was updated in 1998 and provides a dual purpose of guiding development decisions on a short and long-range focus. Additional information regarding the City's Land Use Plan is available by contacting the Community Development Department.

Historic Preservation Plan

Prepared by: Wichita Falls Planning Division staff

Adopted by: Landmark Commission & City Council updated as necessary

The Historic Preservation Plan was updated in 2003 and addresses the purpose for the City's recognition of historic resources. The Plan identifies, provides protection for and perpetuates historic landmarks which represent distinctive and important elements of the City's, state's and nation's past. It also provides a mechanism for protecting and enhancing the quality of neighborhoods, reinforces community identity and fosters civic pride in the appearance of the City and in the accomplishments of the past. In conjunction, the Plan outlines the method for nominating a historic resource, the appeal process and requirements for protecting designated historic resources from inappropriate alterations and role and function of the City's Landmark Commission. Additional information regarding the City's Historic Preservation Plan is available by contacting the Community Development



Department.

Consolidated Plan for Housing & Community Development 2006-2009

Prepared by: BBC Research & Consulting

Adopted by: City Council July 5, 2005 (Resolution 96-2005)

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development in 1995 began requiring entitlement communities to prepare long-range plans in order to receive federal housing and community development funding assistance. The purpose of the Wichita Falls Consolidated Plan is to:

- Identify the City's housing and community development needs, priorities, goals and strategies; and
- stipulate how funds will be allocated to housing and community development activities.

The Consolidated Plan specifically establishes long-range goals and priorities for the utilization of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Emergency Shelter Grants (ESG), Housing Opportunities for People with AIDS (HOPWA), Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS); and HOME Investment Partnerships Program for the City of Wichita Falls. The current Plan addresses program years 2005 through 2009.

Additional information regarding the City's Consolidated Housing Plan is available by contacting the Community Development Department.



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