



BRENHAM DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN

CITY OF BRENHAM, TEXAS

MESA

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CIRCULATION & PARKING



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INTRODUCTION

THE PURPOSE OF THE BRENHAM DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN

Downtown Brenham today is the legacy of city-wide events and changing conditions that have largely separated this historic urban center from the community it once anchored. There is an unavoidable relationship between place and economy that associates economic vibrancy with the prominence of location within a city fabric.

Historically, downtowns have held this status as the most prominent location because downtown is the predominant driver of community identity. It is also the commercial, social, economic, and logistical hub of the City, directing all other patterns and therefore driving overall urban form.

Over time, growth in many cities has moved away from the downtown area to new commercial opportunities associated with peripheral regional highways and cheaper land for suburban forms of residential, commercial, and public facility development.

Cities like Brenham, Corsicana, and Waxahachie have become regionalized, meaning that the economic drivers of development have shifted from a nuclear economy (centered on the hub of value within the downtown core) to being a component of a larger regional economy (centered on expanding urban centers like Dallas, Austin, and Houston). For this reason, the economic vitality of the City, once located within the downtown area, now strings along regional roadways which, for purposes of operational convenience, avoid any engagement with the older core zones. This shift is repeated over and over again throughout Texas and is the central planning problem that any effort to revitalize a Downtown area must address. Therefore, the revitalization plan presented in this report seeks to address this issue in two ways:

1. Reconfiguring regional movement and reconnecting the Downtown area with regional flow, thereby increasing the Downtown share of market activity within Brenham.
2. Creating a new economic purpose for the Downtown area that is built upon destination, thereby attracting new sources of spending that have not heretofore been available to the revitalization effort.



This Master Plan is an important tool that identifies a strategy by which the economic vibrancy of Downtown can be restored and continued in the future. In the absence of such a plan to direct and promote desirable development, Downtown will either be in constant competition with development along peripheral movement systems or will lose its economic relevance for the City (and the region) through continued erosion of its economic purpose.

In order to define needed change, the Master Plan was designed to be:

- Vision-oriented
- An expression of the goals of the community at large
- An integrated plan that addresses multiple components of Downtown and its system
- Used as a decision making-tool in matters of economic development

A key feature of the Brenham Downtown Master Plan is the Framework Plan, which provides a clear record of the community's goals and visions. Therefore, the specific physical and programmatic recommendations that flow from this Framework can supply guidance for future decisions regarding growth and development. The Plan is grounded in assessments of the existing conditions of the Downtown area. Public workshops were held to gather feedback, educate the public, and foster local leadership. Plan Components reflect these inputs and are well synchronized to create coordinated directives for desired development in the future. Finally, a strategy was defined for implementation of the plan and accompanying vision. In this way, the Plan provides a publicly derived vision that directs decision-making and actions by elected officials and City staff in matters pertaining to the future of Downtown Brenham.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE PLAN

The Brenham Downtown Master Plan is divided into four main sections: Contextual Assessments and Public Visioning, Area-Wide Plan Components, District-Specific Plan Components, and lastly, Plan Implementation and Summary. Each of these sections is described in greater detail below.

- **Contextual Assessments.** This section provides the context for the Plan by describing existing conditions Downtown and evaluating how these conditions will impact future growth and development. Included are assessments of Downtown form, economic performance, traffic and circulation patterns, parking availability and contextual integrity of the Downtown area.
- **Public Visioning.** The Visioning process provides three core elements that serve as the driver of plan articulation: the Planning Framework, Goals and Objectives and District definition. The Planning Framework illustrates the consultant observations and is organized according to Planning Priorities. In Public Workshop #1 this framework was presented and comments were gathered from workshop participants via break-out sessions. These inputs provided the substance from which Plan Objectives were derived. Once the Plan Objectives were verified, Goal Statements were developed for the Downtown Master Plan. These Goal Statements are the policy drivers for future activity Downtown.
- **Area-Wide & District-Specific Plan Components.** The Plan Elements identified for the Brenham Downtown Master Plan direct and facilitate future development, in keeping with the vision manifested in the Planning Framework. The Plan Elements include: Land Use, Circulation and Parking, Urban Design and Economic Development. The Objectives derived through the process of public participation provide the structure for each of the Plan Elements. The objectives were organized according to plan element, and particular solutions were grouped by Objective. A summary table was included in this Chapter that indicates how the particular objectives promote desirable development activity Downtown.

- **Plan Implementation and Summary.** This section makes recommendations and details strategies that will foster realization of the individual Plan Components. The Plan Summary ties all components together, laying out the comprehensive development strategy for Downtown. A diagram showing how the components correlate is also provided to illustrate the principles that were addressed.
- **Appendices.** Appendices are included that provide a quick reference to some of the main components of the Downtown Master Plan.



THE FUTURE OF THE DOWNTOWN PLAN

This Plan is an important step in an overall trajectory of revitalization. As the first step, the plan makes recommendations that work together to gather sufficient spending potential in the core area of Brenham and through this spending potential make the value of the city center attractive to many forms of investment (adaptive reuse, infill development, redevelopment, and new development). In addition to the plan and its articulated strategy is the Steering Committee that worked with the consultants from the outset of this effort. Their leadership in this plan is as important as the plan itself because such leadership is the future of the plan.

Documents only live to the extent that there are people who want and need its content. Therefore, the future of the Brenham Downtown Master Plan is the leadership that this process nurtured and the relevance of the plan is found in its value to their implementation of the trajectory the plan initiates.



CONTEXTUAL ASSESSMENT OF DOWNTOWN BRENHAM

CHAPTER 1

1.1 - CIRCULATION

In the most general sense, Location is the essence of value and Connection is the fundamental aspect of Location. Therefore, Location = Connection; an assessment of current connections to (and from) Downtown is essential to revealing the places where location can be established. Other assessments presented in this report reveal that Destination will be a necessary attribute of Downtown as the financial underpinnings of a revitalization strategy will necessitate the capture of visitor driven spending. Certainly, it will be difficult (perhaps impossible) to have a Destination without a clear determination of location.

At present, Downtown has no location in terms of one's perception of value (as defined by location). All locational advantage is viewed as belonging to Hwy 290 and for this reason there is new development and investment in that area. Without location, Downtown cannot find its real value, and without value, Downtown cannot put forth a revitalization / reinvestment strategy seeking to motivate the capture of that value. It has not been demonstrated in the many Downtown revitalization plans produced throughout Texas that amenity will overcome a lack of location. Preferred locations can, and will, divert any initiatives to create destination out of amenity. Consider what continually happens with Fair Park in Dallas. Every effort to establish a destination that is not the Fair has been co-opted by other venues whether it is an Arts venue, Science venue, Entertainment venue or other. In each case, better locations prevail (such as the Downtown Arts District) because they occupy desirable pathways/connections.

"Connections" are only truly connections to the extent that they serve destinations. Therefore, the destination importance of Downtown is critical. Hwy 290 serves destinations (Houston and Austin), therefore, traffic driven retail can harvest the destination bound traffic. The same is true for Downtown and the reason why the future of Downtown cannot be to simply redirect 290 retail activities to the Downtown core. Yet, if there is a destination created then some measure of such diversion can be accomplished to supplement other strategies.

Connections are also elements of a system and therefore need to collectively articulate a system. At present, connections to Downtown do not create a comprehensible system. Unless there is a system to movement, legibility (for the motorist) is impossible to achieve without elaborate signage and the use of such signage is more an indicator of how unclear the system is than anything else. Systems create orderly distribution of value (this is discussed in more detail in the economic analysis). When value gradients become chaotic, all value collapses. The remnant of this is illustrated by development along Market St. (south of Downtown) as it progresses to Downtown. Here is archeological evidence of a once orderly value distribution which has eroded as the once clear system became more unclear. At one time, Downtown was the apogee of the value sequence and we see a crescendo of density (in building only) as one approaches Downtown. However, the shell of that densification now lies largely vacant/underutilized; instead of value ascent as one moves toward Downtown, there is now a condition of value descent as one moves away from 290.

The diagram presented below (Figure 1) identifies 12 connection problems that collectively isolate Downtown Brenham and essentially take it off the regional path of travel. These connection problems are:

- ① The connection of Park to Austin which takes Park away from its former association with the core of Downtown and makes it a bypass.
- ② The north/south movement along Austin and the need to enter Downtown via a hard left/right hand turn onto Alamo. This establishes a relationship of Downtown to movement along Austin that is not unlike that of a strip center to a roadway.
- ③ The dog-leg jog required for the Austin/Day connection which occurs in a historic residential district and there is no clear indication that it is part of any system.
- ④ The lack of connection between important system elements such as Austin and Market.
- ⑤ The north/south movement along Market and the need to enter Downtown via a hard left/ right hand turn onto Main. This establishes a relationship of Downtown to movement along Market that is not unlike that of a strip center to a roadway. However, Market has more building frontage and the image is not suburban.
- ⑥ The termination of Market at a non-destination.
- ⑦ The multiple options for continuation of traffic along 105 and the uncertainty of which option leads to the Downtown area.
- ⑧ Options for traffic along Hwy 105 that allow access to Hwy 290 without passing through Downtown. This is essentially a bypass.
- ⑨ Lack of signage or any clear demarcation at Main and Hwy 290 that this street connection leads to Downtown.
- ⑩ This off ramp at Market is being reconfigured in the new construction but it is not certain that this connection with Market or Blue Bell Rd. will be any more recognizable.
- ⑪ This is becoming the most often used off-ramp connection to enter Brenham but Day St. makes it difficult to access Downtown.
- ⑫ The only purpose for this connection is to facilitate bypass which does not reinforce Downtown.

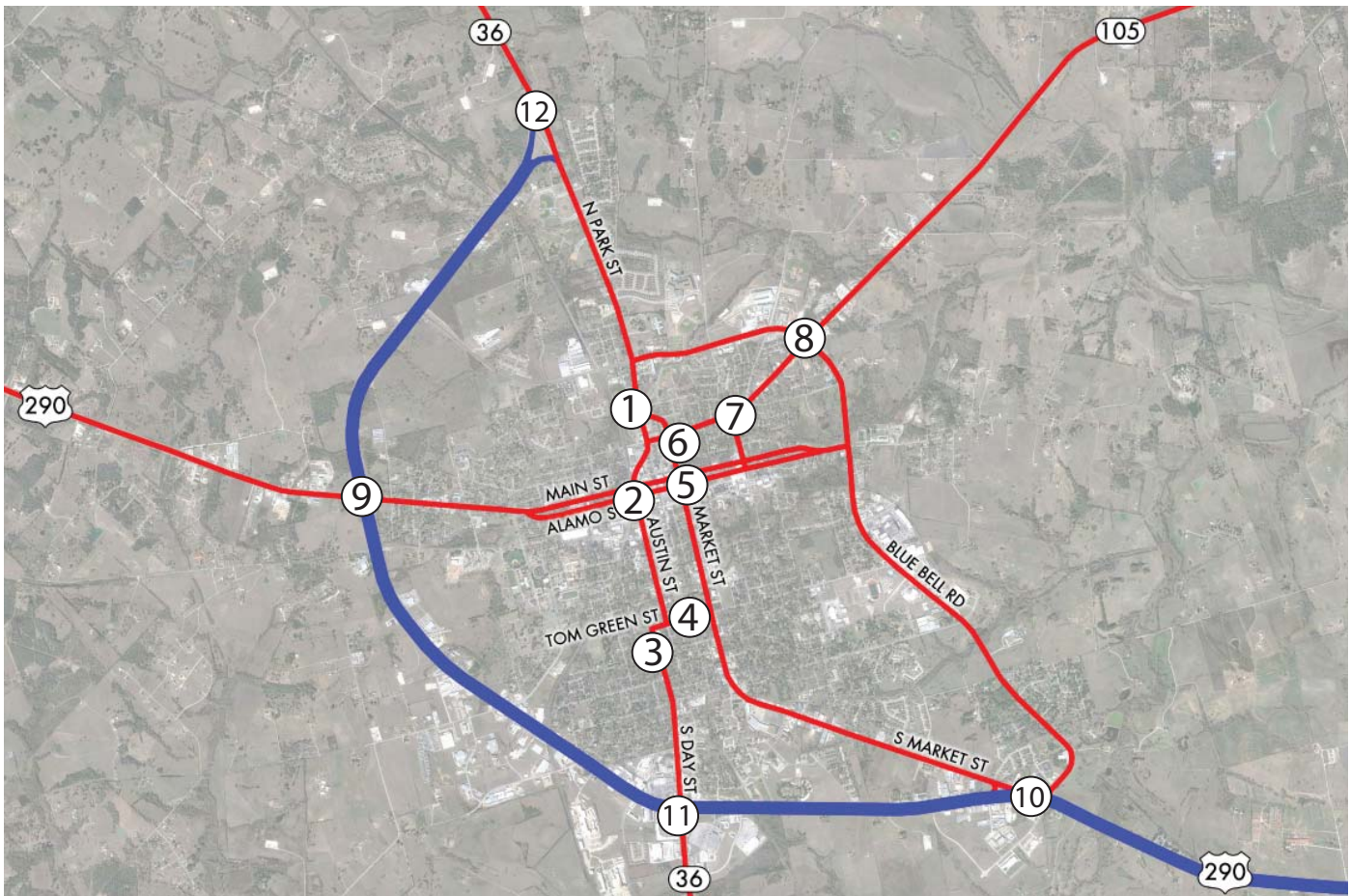


Figure 1: Brenham Downtown Connection Problems

A new system (Figure 2) is needed that places Hwy 290 within the network so that it is more than a bypass. Key system elements include:

- ① The connection between Hwy 290/Day St. and Hwy 290/Blue Bell Rd. (to the south) along Market St. and Stone St. (already areas of greatest non-Hwy retail development). Such an element would gather traffic from both off ramp locations and make both Market St. and Austin St. available to any portion of that traffic capture seeking to move northward toward (and into) Downtown.
- ② The connection between Hwys 290/105, Hwy 290/Park St., and 290/FM577 along the northern extension of Blue Bell Rd. As described above, the thoughtful gathering of northerly traffic in a system element would avail such traffic to Austin or Market and thereby Downtown.
- ③ The connection of Austin and Market to those two elements (using a redesign of Austin/Park/Market convergence at Henderson Park) and the retail area fronting the west side of Austin.
- ④ The connection of Main and Alamo to Hwy 290 to the west and Blue Bell Rd. on the east.

The design question is whether this system (or another like it) can be articulated through clearly expressed road hierarchy (a clearer recommendation is presented in the plan recommendation portion of this report). The resulting redistribution of traffic within such a system would help balance out the value gradients of Downtown and help restore some sense of location to the Downtown area. The north/south flow of traffic along Austin St. versus the required east/west entrance into Downtown (Alamo St. and Main St.) makes Downtown a secondary place. The need to “turn off” of the main circulation route into the Downtown reveals the extent to which Downtown is not part of the system and marginalizes its importance. There are two ways to address this:

- Improve the intersection of Park St. and Austin St. to be more clear and operational.
- Increase use of Market St. (addressed earlier in the discussion of connections)
- Extend the definition of Downtown over Austin St. and include the Depot, the Brookshire Brothers shopping center, and other places of opportunity and try to make Austin St. a Downtown street in this section of its alignment.

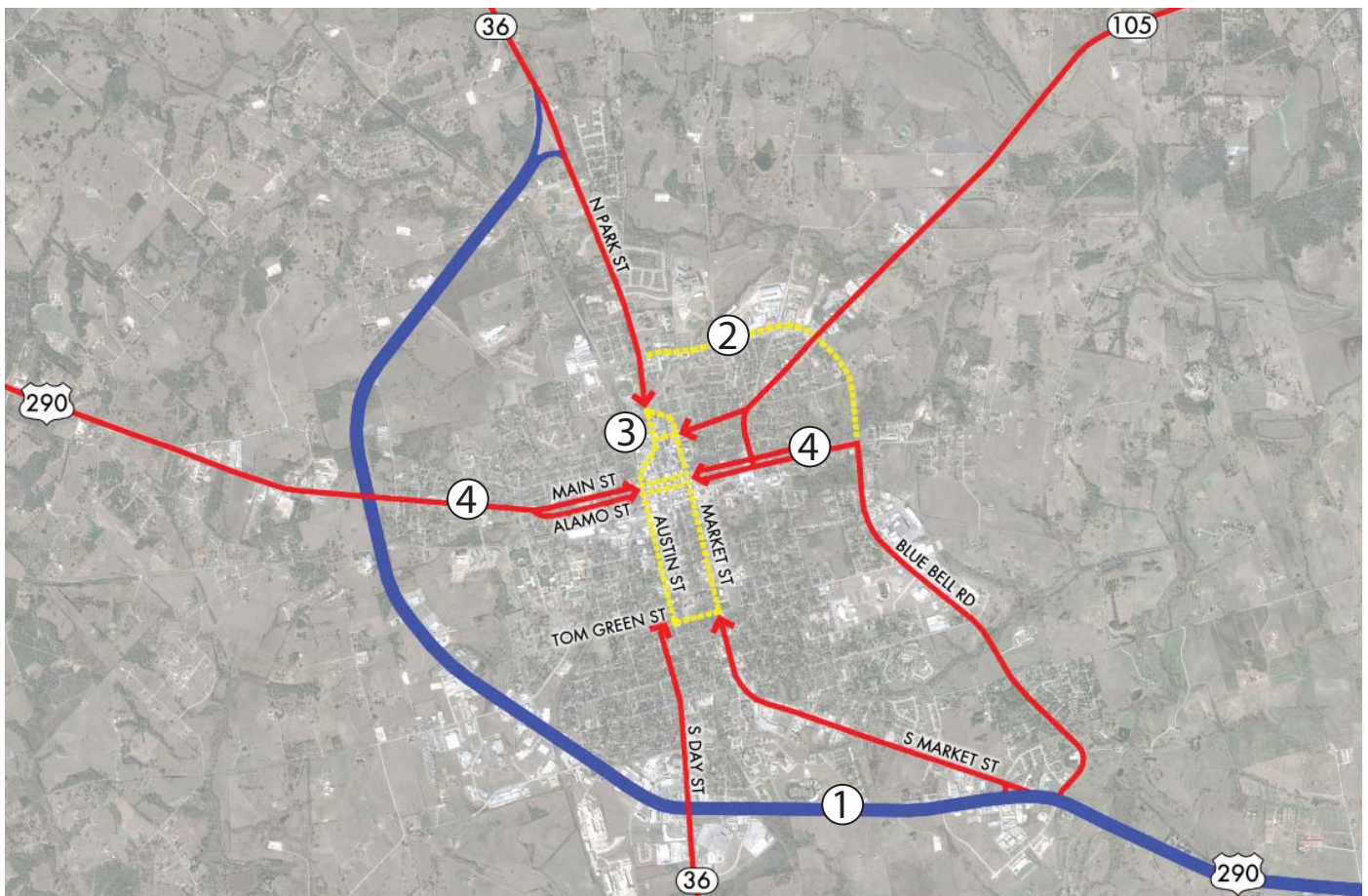


Figure 2: Brenham Traffic System Elements

If properly conceived, desirable pathways should emerge within the system because of the ease and clarity of movement (facilitated by flow and legibility). An influence on Value Distribution will result as desirable pathways emerge. There can be no value created in an off-system location that is not served by desirable pathways. Downtown's significance as a destination is ultimately enhanced.

Destination is the economic cornerstone for revitalization of Downtown because it is not realistic to rest the future of Downtown on competition with Hwy 290. Therefore, the ability of Downtown to capture some of the imported spending that now flows to Hwy 290 and the ability of Downtown to capture a portion of the ordinary spending by local residents rests in its ability to first distinguish itself as a destination. Destination has some key attributes:

- Attraction through meaningful activity and ambiance of the environment offered is what the market seeks to be successful. Downtown cannot be weakly offered, it must fulfill the market's expectations to the fullest.
- Purpose Significance in terms that the Downtown has a legitimacy (core activity) that shapes it. In this case the significance as a County Seat, Civic Center, and Cultural Center cannot be underplayed. However, these roles need to be more structurally influential.
- Structure of the relationships within Downtown. At present, Downtown is in competition with itself and there is no differentiation of one place from another. The result is to deny the needed sense of place that comes from coherent relationships.
- Diversity of activity and land uses which result in many layers of activity; activity supports both purpose and attraction.
- Time Significance, meaning that there is usually something going on in the Downtown area at any point in time. Its importance as a center allows it some independence from the workday cycle which dictates operation of places less significant.

Destination will give meaning to the system because there is something for the system to serve. Therefore, an orderly array of system elements from the Downtown core will inform legibility of the system itself.

Destination is more than just a place where streets converge because Downtown is not a shopping center, it is a pedestrian environment with opportunity to get out of the car and participate as a pedestrian. Although this is the intent of various visions, Downtown lacks a real, enhanced people-movement system. Everything about the type of destination a revitalization plan seeks engages the individual as a pedestrian and as an out-of-car participant in periodic activities. Therefore, the creation of pedestrian spaces within Downtown is essential to the creation of destination which is the cornerstone of a multi-tiered revitalization strategy aimed at Traffic Driven Spending, Destination Spending, and Local Spending.

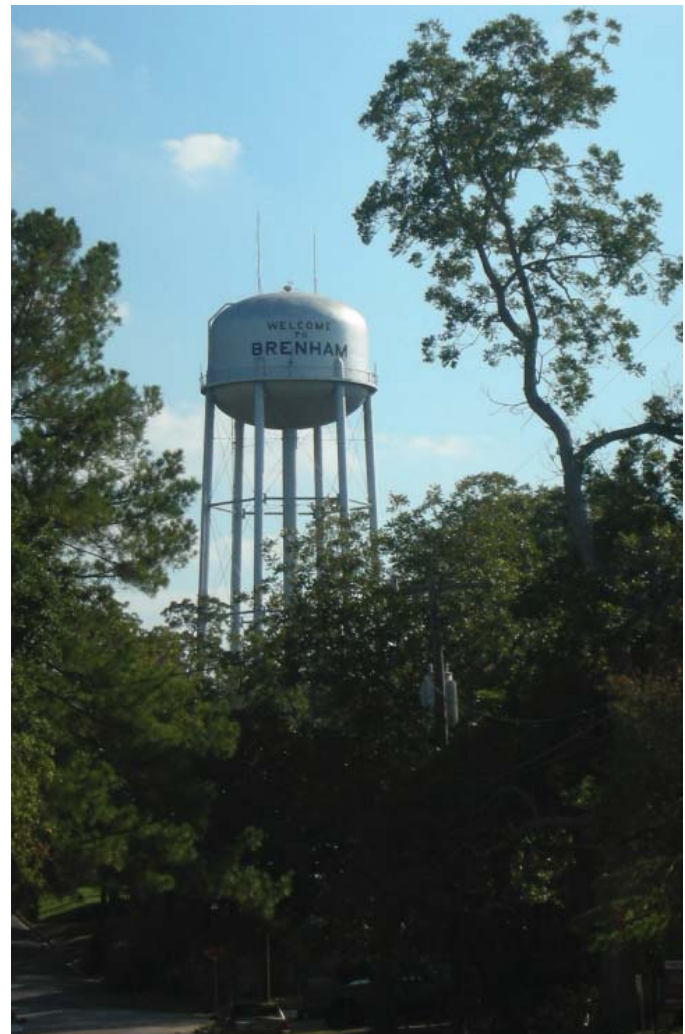




Image: Existing Brenham Pedestrian Corridor

Pedestrian movement, then, becomes an essential aspect of connection that is important to Downtown Brenham. Downtown is not a single district yet it has no clear land use differentiations within its separate areas (with the exception of the Courthouse). There is no existing or successful retail or commercial design/strategy seeking to move retail in the direction of specialty that does not also seek to aggregate specialization. When uses are dispersed they must compete. When uses are aggregated, they can have complimentary relationships because they function as activity anchors. A successful Downtown area will be clusters of aggregations (typical of a destination).

This type of destination aggregation will increase the “Duration of Stay” which is necessary to precipitate a set of transactions that investors can identify. Increasing retail sales by increasing the length a shopper stays is a goal of most retail strategies. There are four kinds of stays that will be important to bring into Downtown and all are enhanced by vehicular and pedestrian connections:

- 1. Events / 3 to 4 hour stay.** Through the creation of destination and the hosting of venues and events (discussed in detail in the economic assessment), Downtown stays can be significantly increased. It is important to attain a 3 to 4 hour duration because of the types of spending it will precipitate. A 3 to 4 hour duration means that people are shopping between other retail activities and will broaden their range of retail interest (moving in the direction of greater specialization). Specialty stores do much better as milieu stores rather than destination stores and sales can be greatly enhanced. Also, the 4 hour duration is more likely to involve a meal and purchases related to personal activities (begin to concentrate the shopping activity in this location to make the longer duration possible) such as pharmacy items. Notice how WalMart mixes pharmacy and food with clothes, sports, crafts, etc., all aimed at permitting concentration of activity and lengthening of stay. For Downtown, the duration will be triggered by the experience (activities other than shopping and ambiance) such as events, festivals, etc.
- 2. Lodging / overnight.** Once there are events that bring people from further distances, lodging becomes a real strategy component. For every hotel room rented 365 days a year, annual visitor spending can be as high as \$80,000. Therefore a 100 room hotel with 60% occupancy can create \$4.8 million in spending (or support of 22,857 sq. ft. of retail space). Therefore, overnight stays become very beneficial and can support retail activities that make the stays of others longer.

3. Residential. Downtown residential units create a tremendous opportunity for Downtown retail, especially food related. People living Downtown would rather walk to a dependable restaurant, get more coffee, grocery shop, visit a pharmacy, and buy other dry goods that are part of ordinary life. Support of these kinds of retail transactions supports the strength of Downtown to allow concentration of shopping.

Finally, there is a significant amount of wasted space in the current Downtown streets resulting from oversized lanes. For example, the Market St. connection has sufficient right-of-way width for more efficiently sized lanes. The creation of an extra turn lane could relieve current traffic backups at the Main St./ Austin St. intersection when a train closes the cross street connection. While it is always recommended that the City work with TxDOT where possible and appropriate, there are occasions where it is in the City's best interest to take certain present-day TxDOT streets off-system if it gives the City greater dimensional control of the right-of-way use. Allowing greater lane and parking capacity will create a more enhanced pedestrian experience.

1.2 - PARKING

Parking is a central issue for all Downtown merchants, businesses, and visitors, and has been a topic of detailed discussion for a long time. Many people believe that better parking would present opportunity for greater financial success in the Downtown core zone. In response to such characterizations, it should be noted that parking is a multidimensional problem and that parking viewed only as a capacity problem (where capacity is provided in close proximity to the desired use) has ultimately led to strip centers and malls and other forms of retail which are not urban and certainly not Downtown. Therefore, a parking solution needs to be proposed in the Downtown Brenham Master Plan which reconciles the tension between ample supply, close proximity, and the higher density/vertically-mixed urban setting where parking is provided largely in the public domain.

In order to envision a solution which resolves the above mentioned tension; the issue of parking in light of allocation, comprehension, connection, management, and change of need over time must be understood as it applies to Downtown Brenham. The following text presents an assessment of the parking issue today and how future changes might modify this issue.

In order to provide background that will set the stage for this assessment, one must keep in mind that the first floor area of Downtown Brenham (between Market St. and Austin St. from Vulcan to the railroad tracks) is approximately 348,385 sq. ft. of which around 95% is, or is likely to be retail/restaurant (discounting public buildings, theaters, and allowing for some non-commercial space), 330,965 sq. ft. Assuming a demand parking rate of 4 spaces per thousand sq. ft. (based on typical commercial standards) the total parking requirement for existing retail/ restaurant space is 1,323 spaces.

At present, the available parking within the Downtown core area is 459 spaces (including 355 on-street parking spaces and 104 spaces in public lots). Therefore, a shortfall of 867 spaces exists. Later in this document, as the vision plan is presented, this shortfall will be addressed.



Figure 3: Brenham Existing Land Use Plan

In light of the previously specified overarching need there are seven other issues to consider that further complicate the parking issue as follows:

- 1. Distribution.** The accompanying map is a land use map prepared by the Brenham Main St. office. This map clearly shows that the land uses requiring greater parking availability (the land uses shown as red or Retail) are located in the southwestern portion of the image (bottom left). Such a concentration presents a distribution problem because virtually all parking not in direct proximity to this cluster is more remote and is also the bigger share of available spaces. The concentration of uses, which gathers people in a specific zone for specific periods of stay in Downtown, is not served well by parking dispersion.

The problem is as much a function of concentration as it is dispersion and both issues must be considered when taking the parking challenge into consideration. If desired land uses were more generally distributed, then movement between them over the time span of one's visit to Downtown would not be driven so much by parking in relation to one land use cluster but parking available to Downtown as a retail venue.

At present, Downtown is not a retail venue, only parts of it are (in significant concentration), thereby making parking seem more distant than it is.

Distribution becomes more of a problem in a setting filled with barriers to the movement of people between parking locations and the specific concentration of activities. These barriers include:

- Streets that are not conducive to pedestrian use.
- Streetscapes that present an image that the location of the parking is not in the core of Downtown activity.

Therefore, distribution is a spatial and a perceptual problem that results from the concentration of destination land uses and the barriers to movement between areas of available parking and such destinations.

2. Type (parallel, angled, 90 degree). Another challenge to parking is the basic inefficiencies of angled and parallel parking versus 90 degree (head-in) parking. The width of an average head-in space is 8.5 feet (with handicapped being 10 ft.). This means that in a typical 200 foot east-to-west block, head-in parking would yield 23 spaces. Angled parking, measured parallel to the curb is 12.5 feet per space. Therefore, a 200 ft. block will yield 16 spaces instead of the aforementioned 23. That is a 7 space per block loss where there is angled parking. To make this distinction clearer, there are approximately 22 block fronts or 154 spaces lost to the inefficient configuration. Similarly, parallel parking requires approximately 20 feet per space, yielding only 10 spaces in a 200 ft. block.

The ability to exploit parking configurations other than angled or parallel parking is controlled by the right-of-way availability within the old block matrix of Downtown. Many of these streets preserve two lanes of traffic and wider lane widths on some streets that could be reconsidered as narrower lane (10 ft.) and one lane so that reconfiguration of the parking might be possible. Vulcan St. is an example of a street which is not connected east-to-west, yet carries two way traffic with wide lanes and spotty repositories of

angled parking. This street is underutilized relative to the parking issue.

Angled parking prevails in the parking lots as well where such configuration may not be the only option. Careful design can make better use of these valuable areas. For example, the parking lot along Commerce St. has 10 ft. pedestrian medians between spaces and shows 5 rows of angled parking. Properly reconfigured by making use of the median space these 200 ft. long parking lanes could yield 6 extra spaces per aisle or 30 more parking spaces than the present capacity. This is a significant increase. Therefore, each individual parking situation should be considered in light of design optimization and a capacity optimization initiative should be started.

3. Relationship of land use to parking type. As one considers the total trajectory of a revitalization plan for Downtown Brenham, one must also consider the sequence of land use evolution. At present, the retail base of Downtown is built up around a traffic driven notion of retail. To fully explain the significance of this, it is important to make the distinction between traffic driven retail and destination driven retail as follows:

Traffic driven retail. This retail type is associated with high volume traffic situations and is manifest as strip centers, power centers, and “box” retail settings. As a result, these types of retail venues are located at intersections and along busy traffic corridors (such as Hwy 290). The characteristics of such retail activities are:



- **Ubiquitous in nature.** These establishments tend to generally be the same and offer similar inventories, in their category (hardware, linens, antiques, etc.)
- **Plate dominated.** Because of the in-and-out nature of traffic shopping, these retail establishments generally require larger square footage.
- **Volume sales.** Because of the inventory maintained, selling higher volumes of goods is essential.
- **Price sensitive.** Because of competition within the category sales are price sensitive.
- **Urgent inventory.** Because of a high volume of price sensitive goods, inventories are focused on urgent needs or popular mass market preferences.
- **Parking.** Because the locational advantage of these retail establishments is often defined by their convenience, parking must be conveniently located (typically on a parking apron along the street side of the establishment).
- **Smaller plate.** Because of the more specialized nature of inventory, there is not much of it and the square footage of the establishment tends to be smaller.
- **Targeted sales.** Because of the higher price of inventory and its specialized nature not such a high volume of sale activity is required.
- **High dollar.** Because of the nature of shopper, seeking a specialized product, prices for materials offered can usually be higher.
- **Inventory for shopping.** Because the retail establishment is serving a shopper instead of a quick buyer, inventory needs to be such that the shoppers' desire to be entertained by the shopping experience is served.
- **Parking.** Because people in such shopping environments tend to move from establishment to establishment (much as one does in a mall), the relationship of parking to a particular establishment is not as critical as its relationship to the overall shopping environment.



Image: Southlake Town Square Southlake, Texas

Destination driven retail. This type of retail is associated with a shopping environment where shoppers move from store to store over longer periods of time. As a result destination retail venues are located in places where the environmental attributes of destination can be provided. Aspects of these retail settings include:

- **Unique in nature.** These establishments tend to be generally one of a kind or somehow specialized and offer unique, often hard to find inventories.

As retail activities in the Downtown core move from a general approach which views retail in a traffic driven association to more of a shopping environment association, the reliance upon highly convenient parking will shift to parking which serves the aggregated whole of this shopping experience. In such an environment, alternative approaches to parking can be considered which include perimeter lots, parking management, parking circulators, parking restrictions and other options discussed later in this report.

4. **Isolation of remote lots.** This issue has been touched upon in the above descriptions to some extent but deserves some further development. There is presently a core zone to Downtown which exists primarily along Main and Alamo Streets and is dramatically underserved in terms of parking. At the same time most of the available extra parking is outside this clearly defined zone and is therefore peripheral. Some establishments within the core also have double frontage along Vulcan and Commerce Streets, establishing a barrier to the core that visually communicates an image that parking in these areas is outside otherwise normal patterns of activity and

thereby isolating these parking areas. Such isolation is typically rejected as part of any shopping experience. As a result, these lots are often only partially filled while all available parking in the core area is occupied.

Any parking solution for the future of Brenham must envision making full use of these now isolated parking areas by improving the image of their location and making stronger connections between them and the core area.

5. The effect of one-way streets on parking. The main entry ways into Downtown tend to carry people through the Downtown core without affording much opportunity to understand where parking is and the mixture of one-way and two-way streets makes it difficult to understand how one gets off the primary east-to-west streets to search for parking or how one makes “loops” in search of parking. This lack of legibility in terms of parking location further isolates the parking reserves. As a result, any parking solution for the future of Brenham must consider way-finding to parking locations and a more systemized mixture of one-way versus two-way streets.

6. Uncertainty as to designation, public versus private. This is perhaps one of the more confusing aspects of parking in Downtown Brenham today. The visitor is unable to easily identify whether the parking offered (off-street) is a public lot or a private lot and fear of being towed (if in a private lot) discourages people from stopping to enjoy the experiential offerings of the Downtown core.

Along with the way-finding discussed above, a clear system of demarcation must be devised. It would be best if such demarcation was not accomplished only through signs but included the design of the parking ground plane as well. In this way, recognition of publicly available parking is easy. Recognition will help ease the earlier discussed problem of isolation. As a result, any parking solution for the future of Brenham must consider ways to make the distinction between private parking and publicly available parking easier to comprehend.

7. Long term user (employees and Courthouse). There has been much discussion regarding the extent to which long term parking required by employees and courthouse activities consumes parking spaces needed for shopping patrons. Walking around Downtown, one can see the extent to which this is true with spaces around the courthouse being most often appropriated by long term parking needs.

This is a regulation problem more than a supply problem because even with long term parking utilizing spaces convenient to retail activities, the peripheral lots are only partially filled. Therefore, increasing the supply in remote locations will not modify the behavior of consuming the available convenient parking. This is a situation best addressed by regulation. Regulatory and management alternatives are discussed later in this report.

CONCLUSION

In light of the many aspects of parking discussed above, it is clear that parking is a multifaceted issue which needs to be addressed in three ways: physical, regulatory, and programmatic solutions. In addition, these solutions must be such that they can change with the maturation of retail from an autonomous traffic driven view of retail activities to an aggregated, specialized, destination view of a shopping environment. Based on this assessment, various solutions to the parking issue will be presented in this plan for Downtown Brenham.

1.3 - HISTORICAL CONTEXT

MAIN STREET PROGRAM

Brenham is one of 85 official Texas Main Street cities. Main Street is administered by the Texas Historical Commission (THC) in cooperation with the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The program provides a vehicle through which building owners may work in cooperation to increase the economic and social health of Downtown and better compete with developers and big box retailers. This is accomplished through what the program calls the Four Point Approach:

- 1. Organization.** Builds an effective coalition of public and private sector stakeholders, working in partnership with organizations who share an interest in the health of Downtown and the community. Local activities in this area might include grant writing and/or enhancing public awareness of sound preservation practices.
- 2. Promotions.** Markets a unified, quality image of the business district as the center of activities, goods and services to retailers, shoppers, investors and tourists. Local activities in this area might include heritage festivals, retail promotions or image development.
- 3. Design.** Creates an attractive, coordinated and quality image of the Downtown by capitalizing on unique physical assets and heritage. Local activities in this area might include building rehabilitations, property inventories and/or preservation ordinances.
- 4. Economic restructuring.** Identifies new market opportunities for the commercial district, finds new uses for historic commercial buildings, and stimulates investment in property. Works to strengthen existing businesses; identify new business opportunities; find new, higher, more appropriate uses for vacant buildings; and/or intensify the uses of buildings. Local activities in this area might include business retention/recruitment or establishing local incentive programs.

It is recommended that Brenham maintain active membership in the Texas Main Street Program and work to educate building owners regarding the benefits of participation.



HISTORIC DISTRICTS

A Historic District can be defined as a group of properties that have been officially-designated as historically or architecturally significant, and which are physically and historically related. The properties within a historic district are normally divided into two categories, contributing and non-contributing. In most cases, to be considered a viable district at least 50% of the properties within it must be contributing and be at least 50 years of age. Historic districts:

- Provide distinctive and unique environments with a healthy mix of civic, retail, residential and entertainment uses;
- Attract visitors interested in heritage tourism who, in turn, spend money at local businesses;
- Particularly benefit specific business types such as boutiques, antique retailers, and restaurants;
- Provide an attractive venue for festivals and other special events.

The Brenham Downtown Historic District was designated in 2004 as National Register Historic District. The National Register is the United States government's official list of historic resources which it deems worthy of preservation. The Brenham Downtown Historic District provides the following benefits to building owners:



- Access to Federal Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits which provide 20% reimbursement for hard and soft costs incurred in the rehabilitation of historic properties;
- Eligibility for variances from certain provisions of building and accessibility codes. These variances provide owners of historic buildings with a higher degree of flexibility in meeting the intent of these codes while preserving character-defining features.
- Avenues for obtaining grant funding through foundations and other organizations with historic preservation, interpretation and education as part of their mission.
- Contrary to popular perception, there are no regulatory requirements related to listings on the Register; however, insensitive building modification could result in a building losing its contributing status to a district or listing as a property on the register.

The City of Brenham should:

- Continuously educate owners within the existing historic district about benefits available to them, and work to dispel the common myth that listing on the Register threatens an owner's property rights. This in turn benefits the district by ensuring the buildings within it contribute to the historic setting, and maintain a cohesive environment and the district's historical integrity.

- Conduct periodic updates of the historic district to list additional buildings. Districts typically include buildings that are at least 50 years old. The Brenham Downtown Historic District, established in 2004, currently lists buildings constructed before 1954 as contributing.
- Explore opportunities to expand the district, or establish districts in adjoining neighborhoods.
- Encourage the nomination of physically-disconnected stand alone resources within the Downtown district and in surrounding areas.

LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICTS

Local Historic Districts are critical for the preservation of property values in downtown areas. This is because the protection of the building stock equates to a protection of area-wide value distribution. As individual properties are restored, preserved and rehabilitated, the investment environment is stabilized, promoting transfer of improved value to surrounding properties.

Because Local Historic Districts protect the architectural and historic integrity of the district, this designation will also ensure consistent implementation of the principles of this plan, as it relates to private building stock.

Local Historic Districts with associated regulations can, in some communities, be difficult to establish because they are seen by many owners as an infringement on property rights. These concerns are often counteracted by offering incentives in the form of property tax abatements, loans or grants. In exchange for redeveloping properties according to certain standards, owners can be rewarded with these incentives. Incentives encourage redevelopment by offsetting costs. Combined with other programs such as Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credits, incentives encourage the redevelopment of properties that would otherwise be considered by their owners to be infeasible.

If district regulations are put in place, they must be carefully crafted. Improperly established or applied, regulations can be counterproductive by stifling creative change within historic districts. They must be established with the understanding that they require the creation of paid or volunteer governing bodies to vet proposed work.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

Design guidelines may be promulgated by local authorities as part of local historic districts, or may be provided to property owners on a non-binding basis as a service to the community.

Design guidelines assist the owners of existing historic buildings by providing them with a basic understanding of the architectural vocabulary of an historic district. They help to prevent the loss of character-defining features, and the creation of a false sense of place that can be created by the over-interpretation of architectural styles.

For owners of buildings considered to be non-contributing or non-historic, design guidelines provide information in how such structures can be made to blend with surrounding historic resources. Such guidelines are intended to make buildings compatible without creating the false impression that they are historic.

Guidance regarding compatible infill assists owners in constructing new buildings within historic districts. While in some cases these guidelines can be very prescriptive, the most effective guidelines are those which simply seek to ensure that new construction is compatible in scale and material and does not degrade the continuity of the district.

THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR'S STANDARDS FOR THE TREATMENT OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES

The United States Department of the Interior is tasked on a national level with establishing standards for the interpretation, preservation, and rehabilitation of historic properties. These are published as The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.

Many state and local governments adopt these standards as the basis for their own historic preservation programs and ordinances. This allows for more consistent interpretation of projects across all levels of government. The Standards provide specific guidance in four areas: Preservation, Rehabilitation, Restoration, and Reconstruction.

HISTORIC WASHINGTON COUNTY COURTHOUSE

The Washington County Courthouse is the focal point of the Brenham Historic Downtown. Completed in 1940 and designed in the Art Deco style, the building was constructed with assistance from the Public Works Administration. The building is not only the centerpiece of Brenham, but of the entire Washington County community.

Historically, land owners on the Texas frontier coveted the economic benefits brought by the establishment of a county seat on their land and the construction of a county courthouse on their town square. A symbol of stability and civility, this status dramatically increased property values and attracted commerce. The most desirable tracts were those immediately surrounding the courthouse. This is exemplified by the fact that most historic county courthouses have entrances on all four sides, ensuring that no business owner surrounding it was relegated to the back side or a lower status.



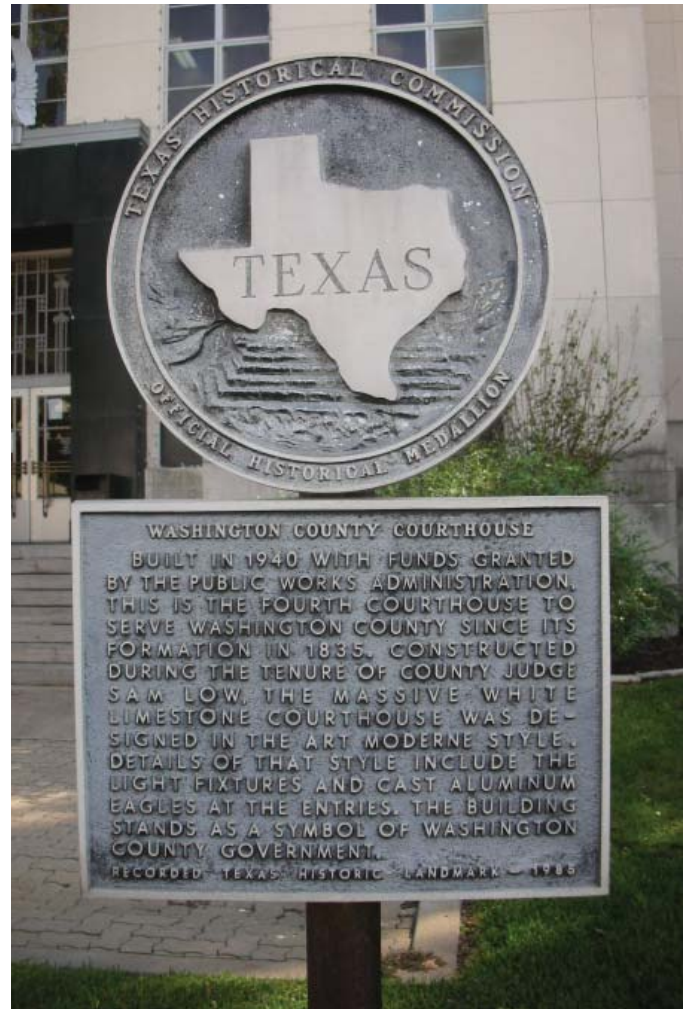
This relationship of the county courthouse to the health of Brenham's central business district is just as relevant today. The courthouse is not just an institutional and cultural symbol of the community, it is an economic engine. Daily activity at the building ensures traffic on the Downtown square and a corresponding benefit to surrounding businesses. The building also generates heritage tourism income from outside the city by attracting visitors interested in architecture and Texas history.

It has often been said that a community may be judged by the conditions of its institutions and public buildings. However, the maintenance and continued use of a monumental historic building is particularly difficult in rural communities with tight public budgets. County courthouses present a unique set of difficulties in that historic designs no longer meet contemporary expectations of security, life safety, and accessibility.

The historic status of the courthouse brings many of the same benefits it brings to private owners. For example, the building is eligible for variances from certain provisions of building and accessibility codes providing a higher degree of flexibility in meeting the intent of these codes while preserving character-defining features.

In Texas, the most important benefit of the courthouse's historic status is that it opens avenues for obtaining grant funding through foundations and government organizations with historic preservation as part of their mission. The most significant of these is the Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program (THCPP). Administered by the Texas Historical Commission, the program provides grants specifically-designed to assist counties in rehabilitating their historic seats of justice.

Rehabilitation typically includes the restoration of the building's architectural grandeur accompanied by the sensitive integration of modern technologies. While they appear much as they did on the day they were dedicated, rehabilitated courthouses include the latest technologies and comply with life-safety and accessibility codes, allowing them to remain the symbolic and functional center of county government.



THCPP grants cover up to 85% of hard and soft costs for a courthouse rehabilitation. With as much as six million dollars available to each county, the grants facilitate projects that would otherwise be impossible in small counties with tight budgets. The economic benefits of the program are being realized by counties across Texas, both in the revitalization of an important part the central business district, and in the tax dollars and jobs created by the construction projects themselves.

In order to participate in the THCPP, Washington County must first complete a courthouse master plan. Generally these documents are completed for the county by an architect specializing in historic courthouse rehabilitation. The plans are reviewed and approved by the Texas Historical Commission and used as the basis for future grant applications and funding.

1.4 - URBAN FORM ANALYSIS

Brenham is a city built upon both the importance of its location and particular historic events that flowed from national/international conditions which found particular manifestation in Washington County. This makes the form giving influences that shaped Brenham more dynamic than most and explains why its history (when compared to the more mundane histories of other locations) is so colorful. This form analysis seeks to explain present conditions in the Brenham Downtown core in terms of the larger historic setting, the location, the landscape and the relationship of development within that context.

Understanding the form of Brenham starts with understanding the importance of a rail destination. Although the Galveston and Red River Railway Company came to Brenham in anticipation of continuing their track north to the Red River it lingered in Brenham for a while, making Brenham the “end of the line”. Such destination status had two important impacts on the young city:

- 1. Inflowing.** Brenham became the place to get to by rail in order to get any place else by horse, wagon or foot. It was thereby a center for modal interchange and consequently people gathered as they made their layover. Such people included those setting out by wagon train for places further west and those going to other destinations within central Texas. This important location at the end of the rail line brought merchandise and supplies making transshipment from train to other modes en-route to multiple markets like Austin and San Antonio.

This constant inflow of people and goods nurtured local businesses such as hotels, saloons and restaurants. The street life of Brenham during this time was decidedly urban, filled with bustling activity.

- 2. Outflowing.** Just as activities gathered at the end of the line before making their way to the markets of central Texas, people and goods gathered at the point of linkage between products, goods and services of central Texas and markets of the world (now available through connection between Brenham and the port of Galveston). Therefore, trains leaving Brenham for Houston and Galveston were “loaded with cotton,

corn, cattle, and locally made manufactured goods” (The Burning of Brenham, Sharon Brass, Published by Main Street Brenham).

Under the economically beneficial conditions presented above, Brenham prospered and the distinctly urban qualities of its Downtown emerged. This early urbanism is seen in the buildings and spaces along St. Charles Street stretching north from the Freight Depot. The relationship between St. Charles Street and the rail track is a common relationship seen in many other railroad cities of that era. For example, the Main Street of Prosper, Texas extends east from its north-to-south rail track, 3rd Avenue of Corsicana extends west of its north-to-south rail line, Rodgers Street of Waxahachie extends north of its east-to-west rail track and Main Street of Frisco extends east of its north-to-south rail line. This is the pattern seen in the early days of Brenham as defined by the relationship between St Charles St. and rail movement.

Sanborn Maps (dated 1885) of Brenham illustrate the above described relationship very well. In these maps, St Charles St. is the most densely developed corridor of the city with continuous building frontage all the way from the freight Depot (south end) to Vulcan St. (north end). Other blocks (including Market St.) are far less developed. The only other well developed portion of the city is the courthouse square. Along St. Charles, buildings hosted uses that served the out-going and in-coming bustle of the Depot. Such land uses included Saloons, Restaurants, Billiards, Beer Vault, Carriage Parts, The Exchange Hotel, Bakery, Grocery, and Wagon Shed.

By contrast, land uses around the Courthouse Square were staples of local community life and included Drug Store, Bank, Jewelry, Harness and Saddlery, Hardware, Clothing, Ice Cream, and Offices. Clearly, the two aspects of Brenham’s identity are manifest in its early distribution of land uses. The Square was the center of town for permanent residents of the community while St. Charles St. was the center of activity for the more transient members of the community (including soldiers). Descriptions of social life of the day as presented in “the Burning of Brenham” affirm this distinction with reference to open conflict between soldiers (and other transients)

and the local community, leading to the burning of the courthouse square block (west of the courthouse) by Federal Troops stationed here.



The tensions between permanent residents and transient residents was part of the Brenham landscape for many years during and after the Civil War and contributed to an early city form that is still evident today. One noteworthy legacy is the clear difference in the architectural character of buildings along St. Charles Street, close to the Depot (such as the Longhorn Steakhouse) and buildings around the Courthouse Square. The distinctions between these structures include:

1. **Style.** Along lower St. Charles St., buildings gravitate to an almost Victorian character with lighter vertical supports capped with decorative tracery (rather than capitals) and railings with spooling. The generally vertical gesturing of decorative elements and strongly vertical proportion of openings suggests a lighter and more decorative architectural skin. By contrast, buildings around the Courthouse Square are traditionally Commercial Romanesque with heavier supports, wider spacing between windows, some monumental entries and suspended street canopies.
2. **Appropriation of the street.** The different aspects of style discussed above are accompanied a different dialogue between building and street. The relationship between building and street most common to the

Courthouse Square was a traditional mercantile relationship where first floor retail opened to the street under a street canopy suspended from a point between the first floor and upper floors. Above that open engagement was a more private and protected space usually for offices. This relationship is the more standard relationship common to buildings around most courthouses in Texas. By contrast, the street relationship suggested by building qualities along St. Charles is socially interactive, more like other places where street activity is embraced by and supported by building activity (such as Bourbon St. in new Orleans). This would be the expected relationship given the transient nature of the population served and the function of the street as a type of lobby space for all that opened to it.

3. **Void to solid ratio.** Given the qualities and distinctions suggested above, one would expect that the void to solid ratio (meaning the proportion of window and door to wall) would trend toward more solid in the areas of the Courthouse Square and less solid in the areas of St. Charles St.. The pictures presented here support this expectation and the increased openness of buildings along St. Charles made them more interactive with the street.



Perhaps most interesting in the early images of Brenham (such as the bird's eye map of 1873 - Figure 4) is that the Courthouse Square, while fully developed around its edge is not the center of development within the city. The greater density of development is along St. Charles and Market Streets and is decided north-to-south instead of the present day east-to-west. The 1877 view presented below clearly shows a city laid out in the open landscape of central Texas in a mostly north-to-south manner. Along the way between 1877 and the present day, the general grain of the city changed. This most likely explanation of this transition is the advancing influence of the automobile and the dwindling influence of the train.



Figure 4: Brenham Historic Birdseye Map

In the days of the train, value from a commercial perspective was greatest where proximity to traffic generators was greatest and that was the train depot and the courthouse square (thereby explaining the building patterns of the early Sanborn Map). However, as early as 1922, a "Hwy Map of the State of Texas" shows a proliferation of hub and spoke roadways webbing across Texas from city center to city center. Very prominent in this image are the connections between Houston, Austin and San Antonio which cut through Washington County (taking up Brenham in the process) in a clearly east-to-west direction. In this pattern of movement, Market St., Alamo St., and Main St. become the major conduits of value creating activity. Hwy 290 was the primary arterial from Houston and traffic entered the city via Market St. before turning west on Main/Alamo St., heading west toward Austin. In addition, traffic came into town on Hwy

90 (now 105), flowed into Downtown to become part of the movement along 290. As vehicle usage increased and traffic volumes grew along Market, Main and Alamo, the commercial grain of the city shifted to an east-to-west alignment. This is evident today by several factors:

1. **The greater amount of commercial development along Market St.** Present day aerial photographs reveal the established pattern of commercial development along Market St. all the way from Chappell Hill St. (on the South) to East Germania St. (on the North). Clearly traffic along this corridor (which predates the current Hwy 290 bypass) was of sufficient magnitude to support significant retail/commercial development.
2. **The greater number of taller structures on the east end of Downtown.** As Market St. passes before Downtown one sees that building height is generally taller than most Downtown buildings (e.g. the 3 story building at the southwest corner of Main and Market). Other taller, more significant commercial structures include the bank building on the north east corner of Main and Market as well as structures in the block between Main and Vulcan (siding up to Market).
3. **The dramatic reorientation of block axis on the west side of Downtown (compared to the Army map of 1866).** Most interesting about the shift in commercial axis from north-to-south to east-to-west is the change in block configuration. The Army map of 1866 shows a 200' X 200' town grid expanding many blocks north, south, east and west of the courthouse. In compliance with this image blocks from Douglas St. east to Market conform to the block dimension. However blocks west of Douglas St. are 200 X 400- 500 feet with an east-to-west axis. In the 1877 Sanborn Maps these blocks are shown largely undeveloped due to the lack of significant value influence to justify commercial development in a manner so inconsistent with primary activities of the day. However, as vehicular movement changed that pattern, the east-to-west frontage became more desirable and commercial development flourished.

Other aspects of Brenham's early form that were powerful

influences included the location of the military outpost just east of the Downtown core. The concentration population in this location in combination with the early railroad concentrated commercial development to the east side of the core. The 1866 US Army map (presented in the Burning of Brenham) clearly shows the military Post of Brenham in relation to Downtown with map references to the Distillery, the Brewery, and other landmarks of interest to the map makers. Continued dominance of Market St. as a vehicular route reinforced the commercial success of eastern portions of the Downtown area. However, as street patterns changed, the commercial viability of Market St. and ultimately the commercial viability of the Downtown area changed as well. Key shifts in movement patterns that precipitated such change include:

- 1. The Park St. and Austin St. connection.** The 1936 Hwy Map of Washington County shows Park St. coming into the Downtown core of Brenham and intersecting with Vulcan about half way between Market and Austin. This convergence of traffic in the core area reinforced the centrality of Downtown in the general movement patterns of the City and maintained commercial viability for the core business area. However, a series of incremental disengagements of flow connections to the core area quickly eroded that viability. The first of these was the realignment of Park St. to make a direct connection with Austin St. without having to flow into Downtown. This simple realignment had dramatic effect on Downtown and began to shift the important places of value from Market to Austin (the historically undeveloped area of the core). In addition, this realignment collapsed values in areas directly north of Downtown (areas between Vulcan and the Clinic). Any plan for the revitalization of Downtown must address the restoration of value in this area to a level of sufficient magnitude to support development once again.
- 2. The Hwy 290 bypass.** With parts of this Hwy still under construction, the power of its effect is already visible. Aerial photographs reveal the magnitude of commercial development gathered along this corridor and more will continue to flow to this location as a result of its strategic importance in the pattern of regional movement. Opening of the 290 Bypass had



Image: Hwy 290 Bypass Development Patterns

two important effects on Downtown. First it made Austin St. a more powerful corridor because of the shorter trip to 290, thereby amplifying Austin Street's effect on Downtown. Traffic volumes along Austin are far greater than traffic volumes along Market. Second, it took Downtown Brenham completely "off-system" from a regional movement perspective. This latter effect is the most devastating to Downtown and ultimately to Brenham.

The Downtown core areas of a city are always its place of greatest valuation and other areas within the city tend to stand in some relationship to Downtown that is of lesser value. Such relationship is known in Planning Terms as a "rent/ bid function" and the highpoint of this function is historically a city's core. Land values in the core can reach heights that other locations cannot attain and do not attain because the land values related to development are set by normative relationships for various development types. For example box retail generally locates on land that tops out in the \$4.00 to \$5.00/ sq. ft. range (therefore, there is no box retail in the urban core) and warehouse industrial development generally tops out in the \$3.00/ sq. ft. range (therefore there is no warehouse development in the center of the core).

However, when the core as a center of value collapses, locations with box retail become the upper value levels and they are capped at the aforementioned \$4.00 to \$5.00 range. As a result, the high value point reference for the city's rent/ bid function is significantly lower than it should be. Ultimately this is reflected in underperformance of the city's ad valorem base and is the greatest justification for taking dramatic measures to re-establish the Downtown area.

- 3. The re-routing of Hwy 105.** Perhaps with the realignment of Park St. and the construction of the Hwy 290 Bypass, the continued relationship between Hwy 105 (formerly Hwy 90) and Downtown could continue to support the core. However, in an effort to make connections to Hwy 290 more convenient the incoming route of Hwy 105 has been presented with the convenience of Martin Luther King Parkway, making the engagement with Downtown unnecessary and less desirable. This denies the eastern portion of Downtown (once the place of economic dominance) any value reinforcement. The high number of building vacancies in the area reveals the impact of such decisions.

This sequence of decisions that have modified the regional movement patterns which once supported the core area explain much of what exists today. It explains:

- The concentration of retail development in those blocks with frontage on Austin St.
- The concentration of vacancies and lack of retail development on Market St.
- The loss of commercial activity along Park St.
- The increasing vacancies south of Commerce St. and including blocks south of the railroad track.

At present, Downtown Brenham is in a period of redefinition, just as many other Downtown areas throughout Texas. This is a very vulnerable time for the Downtown core because in a setting of diminished value, opportunistic development can take place and thereby establish a basis of value reference that will take many years to overcome. Opportunism takes the form of "Rent Sensitive Commercial Uses" and includes such things as thrift stores, used clothing stores, certain types of financial services, pawn shops, discount stores, etc. Some Downtown areas in Texas have seen a proliferation of such uses and find it very difficult to attract higher value use as a result of the stigma created. On the other hand, there are "Rent Sensitive Specialty Uses" that are beneficial and part of the metamorphosis from the present state to a more value mature state. Such uses include Antique Malls and Antique Shops as well as most uses related to the arts or artists. Engagement of this transition in a more prescriptive way will be discussed in the course of the plan. It should be noted in this Form Assessment that Rent Sensitive Commercial Uses are a threat that should be acknowledged during this time.

Just as the loss of centrality within the patterns of local and regional movement contributed to the shifts and changes of Downtown, restoration of those same things (to some degree) will be critical to the revitalization of Downtown.

Ultimately, Downtown must establish itself as both a place of some central importance to movement (although not as important as it once was) and a destination for specialty activities, venues, and events.

1.5 - ECONOMIC PRODUCTIVITY

The intent of any revitalization strategy is to create value of sufficient magnitude that it can/ will be captured by private investment/ development. Where value exists in terms that the market comprehends, such value will be captured and through this capture transformed into a return to investment through sale or rent. Therefore, the economic focus of a plan for Downtown Brenham is to create value and through the design of the plan, make it available to investment and development.

Value is a relative assessment, meaning that high value is differentiated from low value and the places in between become appropriate for various levels of capture seeking to position themselves in those intervening places likely to see appreciation (increase in value) over time. Therefore, it can be said that value is always viewed in terms of degree or rather viewed as a gradient. As an example of this, one can view the relationships of value in a residential block that sides to a busy thoroughfare. In this setting, the lots closest to the busy street are of lesser value than those farther from the street. Therefore, a value gradient exists across the block from lowest value at the busy street to higher value farther from the street.

Value gradients are essential in the understanding of value and it can be said that where a value gradient is absent, value is not discernible and therefore does not precipitate an investment response. It is a standard practice in the real estate appraisal business to seek comparable sales as a determination of value. This means that sales of properties in similar relationships to value creating conditions serve to substantiate the value of a subject property, suggesting that properties in different conditions are valued at a greater or lesser amount.

Based on the value substantiated, likely development or uses of the property are considered. For example, property at \$500 to \$1000 per acre is well suited for farming while Downtown property at \$200 per square foot is best suited for high rise office buildings. Therefore, there exists a relationship of values, forming a gradient from high to low. Based on the value of a parcel, there is a best use ranging from high to low density and from commercial to residential land use.



Figure 5: Brenham Existing Land Use Plan

THE EXISTING GRADIENT DISTRIBUTION IN DOWNTOWN BRENHAM

Looking at Downtown Brenham, it is important to understand how the current value gradient is positioned and how investment has responded. Most retail land uses within the Downtown area (shown as red building blocks in the adjacent map) are clustered on the Austin St. side of the central business area. On the Market St. side of Downtown are partially vacant buildings and buildings hosting semi-public land uses (such as museum). In between is the courthouse square which contains a number of court house related land uses such as attorney, court house annex, etc. with a small number of retail uses.

An existing Land Use Plan (Figure 5) prepared by the City affirms this distribution and clearly illustrates how the value gradient is positioned. The higher end of the value gradient (highest value) resides at the Austin St. side of the Downtown core with the lower end of the value gradient (lowest value) residing at the Market St. side of Downtown. When the value gradient is skewed in this manner (as illustrated below in Figure 6), it is very difficult to see uniform revitalization.

Further, in this picture, the retail land uses gathering on the Austin St. end of Downtown are not really those which typically benefit from street exposure (primarily antique malls and small private restaurants). These land uses usually benefit from context (such as an historic place like Downtown McKinney). However, in this setting, such uses are forced to perform as traffic driven retail uses with drive-in/ drive-out patronage, making the availability of adjacent parking vital to commercial success. This value

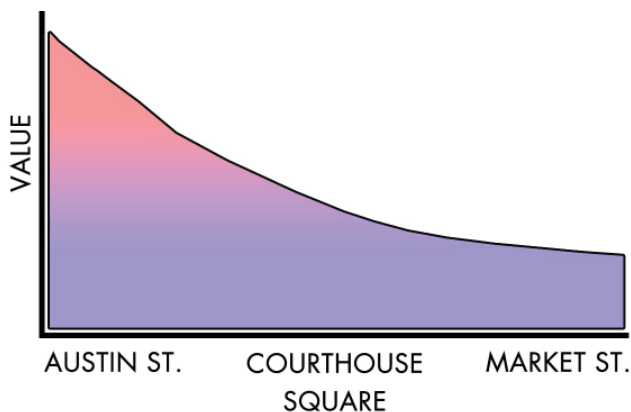


Figure 6: Existing Gradient Distribution

picture, illustrated by Figure 6, is really anti-place because it leans so heavily on roadway frontage.

THE PREFERRED DISTRIBUTION

The preferred distribution described below seeks to expand value opportunities throughout the Downtown area. It is preferred that the value picture is more distributed with more than one place of higher valuation. In this picture (illustrated in Figure 7 below) there is greater investment opportunity with the frontage on both Market St. and Austin St. being places of highest valuation. This value distribution is much more supportive of place than the pattern shown in Figure 6 because it balances out value distribution across the whole of the Downtown district.

The higher valued edges create a tension between them in which there is opportunity for many forms of capture investment. This is the same relationship of values one sees in an anchor driven retail setting with the higher end/ anchor value attracting a patronage that benefits the stores/ activities in between. This picture can be further enriched if there are particular experiences in the central area that amplify the center's draw potential and hold people for longer periods of time.

If activities in the center (between Austin and Market) are of a type that establishes destination, then the Figure 7 graph can be modified as illustrated by the dashed line (with highest value set in the core). In this relationship, Downtown is a true destination and can therefore attract a portion of the traffic driven retail demand now held by Hwy 290. Unless there is a destination to which people will flow, it will not be likely that Hwy 290 retail demand can be brought into the core area.

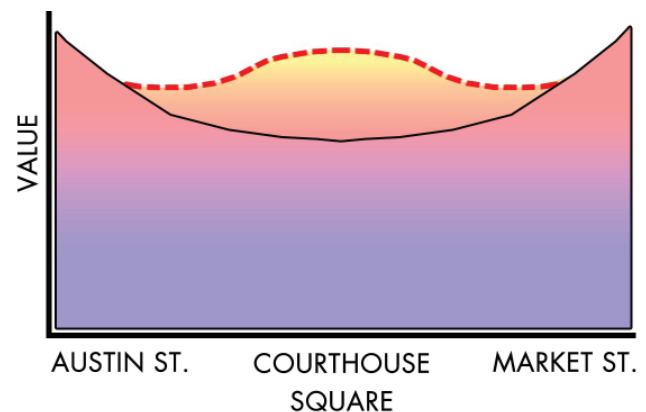


Figure 7: Preferred Distribution

HOW TO CHANGE FROM THE EXISTING TO THE PREFERRED

The key to moving from the value gradient illustrated in Figure 6 and toward the value gradient illustrated in Figure 7 is:

1. **The relationship between Downtown and City-wide movement (connection).** As people from Houston, Dallas, Austin, etc. flow into Brenham, they quickly become caught up in a relative maze of streets which do not (in all cases) flow to the central business area. For example, exiting Hwy 290 at Day St. and accessing Downtown. As one seeks Downtown thorough this path, it is impossible to get to the Downtown area without making a “dog leg” connection to Austin St., through an historic residential area. Equal confusion confronts the Downtown approach from other directions.

At present, the easiest route to Downtown is connecting with Austin St., making Austin St. the primary internal roadway and thereby conferring greater value on the Austin St. side of the Downtown area.

In order to modify this Austin St. bound distribution of value (Figure 6), it will be necessary to balance out the distribution of traffic within the core area, making better connection with, and use of, Market St..

2. **The extent to which Downtown asserts itself as a destination.** Destination is a combination of experience and purpose which precipitates aggregation of venues that, in their coming together, create a critical mass of activity.

The Downtown plan presented in this report seeks to accomplish the above described objectives through external connections and internal design, land use, and public improvement recommendations.

AN ANALYSIS OF AVAILABLE SPENDING

Brenham’s 2015 population could easily exceed 16,930 people (at the current growth rate) with a projected median household income of \$47,859. By comparison, the State of Texas average Household Income is \$47,143. Therefore Brenham trends right with state averages in areas of household income. Assuming an average household occupancy of 2.6 people per household, the projected 16,930 population would reside in 6,512 households and generate approximately \$77,000,000 in total sales. Such sales would support approximately 289,473 sq. ft. of retail land use. That is an amount of square footage only slightly in excess of one WalMart and one Target Supercenter. Therefore, the future of any revitalization plan rests squarely upon finding externally generated spending to support the nearly 500,000 sq. ft., in Brenham’s Downtown core.

IMPORTED / SURPLUS SPENDING

At present, there is significantly more retail square footage in the City of Brenham than 262,343 sq. ft. This supply of retail space in significant excess to local demand suggests that there is other demand being imported into the Brenham market and such importation greatly benefits the city. The 2010 census information (summarized by ESRI) reveals that current retail sales (sales to consumers by an establishment) exceed local retail demand (expected amount to be spent by local consumers) by significant margins. For example, local demand for food beverage is \$20,511,107 and the amount spent on food and beverage is \$50,049,893; indicating that there is significant importation of demand at the present time.

Therefore, Brenham’s location (midway between Houston and Austin) is making it possible for Brenham to import a significant amount of demand. This conclusion of the US Census does not support recent conclusions of a recent Business retention survey that identifies one of the biggest retail problems being “poor demand”. On Page 12 of the Opportunity for Business Growth Survey, 80% of respondents stated that more customer sales were required to expand retail operations in Brenham.

Considering all surplus spending, there is presently \$83,965,447 of retail sales in excess of local demand in those areas of spending that are like the areas of spending one would expect in Downtown. However, most of this spending is going to retail establishments along the Hwy 290 bypass. Therefore, the problem for Downtown is not that there is no demand BUT that the surplus demand now enjoyed by other retail establishments is not going to the Downtown area. Therefore, one key strategy of the Downtown Brenham Plan must be to improve connectivity to the Hwy 290 bypass and in so doing attract 25% of the aforementioned surplus spending to the Downtown area. This strategy would equal \$20,991,361 and such spending would support 104,957 sq. ft. of retail space.

Strategy #1: Imported spending: Attract 25% of surplus imported spending to the Downtown area (\$20,991,361) which would support 104,957 Sq. ft.

DESTINATION DRIVEN SPENDING

State of Texas Tourism Impact Studies (by Dean Runyan Associates) suggests that direct spending in Washington County related to tourism is \$89,240,000 in 2010 (of which \$84,640,000 is visitor spending). Brenham captures the greatest portion of Washington County spending or \$57,900,000. This is likely included in the above described figures for imported spending and it is clear that most of this spending is flowing to establishments along Hwy 290. However, if 20% of the visitor spending in Brenham could be captured within the Downtown area (\$28,950,000), such spending would support 144,750 sq. ft. More spending in Washington County is possible as Washington County ranks only 54th out of all Texas Counties in terms of visitor spending. Other counties, such as Hunt County, which has a relationship to a major metropolitan area similar to Brenham, rank higher. Hunt County attracts \$98,200,000. In addition, Brenham sits between Travis County, which attracted \$3,329,000,000 in visitor spending in 2010, and Harris County which attracted \$8,736,900,000.

This magnitude of spending in areas abutting Brenham suggests that Washington County and Brenham City spending could be significantly increased if the right kind

of destination significance was developed in Brenham. Creating significant destination potential in Brenham can also attract a greater share of visitor spending from the Prairie and Lakes Tourism Region. In 2010, visitor spending in the Prairie and Lakes Tourism Region was \$20,700,000,000. The key to attracting any portion of adjacent county or Tourism Region visitor spending lies in offering both “venues” and “events” in addition to activities. Activities (such as going to the Antique shop) will attract people from around town with an occasional out of town visitor but not have much spatial reach in terms of market penetration. However, if there are several antique shops gathered in close proximity and they can coordinate their business, they could create a venue.

Venues have greater spatial reach than activities and can bring in people from across several counties (perhaps extending to Travis and/or Harris). Where venues can cooperate (such as a set of primitive era antique furniture stores working with purveyors of other antiques) events can be created (such as a monthly antique swap). Events have the greatest spatial reach and can bring in visitors from out of state. The monthly Trade Days in Canton, Texas (an event) brings 300 thousand people to Canton from as far away as New England. Therefore, a movement from activities to venues to events is the key to creation of a destination that will, in turn, bring a greater share of visitor spending to Washington County and the City of Brenham.

Strategy #2: If county spending in Brenham can be increased by 10% and that 10% can be brought to Downtown, such an increase would equate to an additional \$8,460,000 in annual spending for the core business area (this is in addition to the imported spending that already exists). Also, if Brenham can capture ½ of 1% of the average visitor related spending in Harris and Travis Counties, such capture (in Downtown) is an additional \$30,164,750 in visitor spending. Finally, if Downtown Brenham can capture 1/8th of 1% of Prairie and Lakes Tourism Region spending, that is an additional \$25,875,000 in visitor spending. The sum of all potential visitor related spending is \$64,499,750. This much additional spending would support 317,732 sq. ft. of Downtown commercial activity.

RESIDENT SPENDING

The number of households within a 5 minute drive time window around Downtown Brenham is approximately 1900 households. According to census information, the average disposable income for these households is \$34,813. Out of that disposable income, the average dollars spent per year on consumer items that one would normally expect to find in a specialized Downtown core (such as proposed for Brenham) is \$8,000 per household (23% of the disposable income total). For all households, this amounts to a total spending of \$15,200,000. This much local resident spending in Downtown would support

84,445 sq. ft. of commercial space within the Downtown area (using a slightly lesser sales threshold per sq. ft. due to the nature of local items sold). The breakdown of resident spending on local goods likely to be found Downtown is as follows:

Strategy #3: Capture 23% of household disposable income for households within a 5 minute drive time of Downtown, in the Downtown area, which would support 84,445 sq. ft.

LOCAL SPENDING FOR SELECTED ITEMS	
AREA OF SPENDING	AVERAGE AMOUNT SPENT (IN MILLIONS)
Apparel and Services	\$6,199,988.00
Computer Hardware	\$716,043.00
Entertainment and Recreation	\$12,203,884.00
TV / Video / Audio	\$4,777,516.00
Pets	\$2,031,482.00
Toys and Games	\$559,764.00
Recreational Vehicles Fees	\$1,171,712.00
Sports / Recreation / Exercise	\$538,327.00
Photo Equipment and Supplies	\$379,446.00
Bakery	\$2,329,393.00
Dairy	\$1,948,213.00
Fruit and Vegetables	\$2,959,407.00
Snacks	\$6,099,462.00
Restaurant Food Away from Home	\$12,113,874.00
Investments	\$6,453,329.00
Drug Store Health	\$2,856,564.00
Household Furnishings	\$4,605,784.00
TOTAL	\$67,944,188.00*

* To translate total spending into an amount of household spending, assume that 40% of all categorical spending is attributable to surplus spending (imported demand) and that 60% is local spending, then divide the total local portion of total spending by the total households located within the city of Brenham (6,441) for an average spending per household for the items selected.

Figure 8: Local Spending for Selected Items

THE COMBINED EFFECT OF MULTIPLE SPENDING OPTIONS

Each of the previous described areas of potential spending increase (Imported Surplus Spending, Destination Driven Spending, and Resident Spending) should be considered as an essential element in the Downtown Brenham Revitalization strategy. The first floor area of Downtown Brenham (as shown in Figure 9) is 438,885 sq. ft. (that is all of the one story space plus one half of the two story space and one third of the three story space).



Figure 9: First Floor Area of Downtown Brenham

It is projected that about 87% of this total is likely to be retail use or 381,830 sq. ft. Considering all square footage in Downtown (including second and third floors), the total square footage is 653,520 sq. ft. (438,885 sq. ft. first floor and 214,635 upper floor) and it is possible that some portion of the upper floor space (say 20%) could be used for retail commercial activities or 43,000 sq. ft.

Finally, a reasonable plan for the revitalization of Downtown Brenham would add some retail commercial sq. ft. to the Downtown area in the form of infill development and could add an additional 75,000 sq. ft. to the total picture. Therefore, the total amount of Downtown retail commercial square footage that must be supported by spending is 499,830 sq. ft.

If the three strategies (described earlier) were successful in attaining all of the above described spending options, the total amount of spending in Downtown and the total square footage supported by that spending would be as follows:

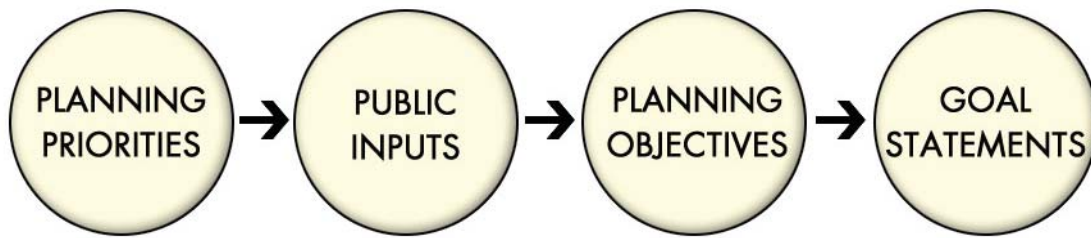
- Attracting 25% of surplus imported spending to the Downtown area (\$20,991,361) would support 104,957 Sq. ft.
- Attracting potential visitor related spending of \$64,499,750, would support 317,732 sq. ft. of Downtown commercial activity.
- Attracting households spending of \$15,200,000 would support 84,445 sq. ft. of commercial activity.

Combining the above square footage targets, the total Downtown retail commercial space that could be supported by the spending strategies discussed above is 507,402 sq. ft. in addition to the amount of square footage already supported (over 150,000 sq. ft.) which is more than all present square footage in Downtown plus additional new development.



PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND THE PLANNING PROCESS

CHAPTER 2



THE PLANNING PROCESS: FROM INPUTS TO VISION

2.1 - PROPERTY OWNERS MEETING

On November 1, 2011, the MESA Planning Team conducted a Downtown Property Owners Meeting for the purpose of identifying key goals and objectives that will guide the formulation of plan recommendations and development of the Planning Framework. This was a general discussion starting with a presentation of the eight proposed Sub-Districts that comprise Downtown and particular discussion topics for each district. Topics discussed included the Primary Function of the District, Traffic, Parking, Pedestrian Activity, Occupancy, Public Spaces, and Building Stock.

As meeting attendees deliberated on each topic, key goals and objectives were documented for each sub-district. In addition, a general discussion of Downtown issues was facilitated. Issues discussed included Circulation, Parking, Land Use Urban Design and Economic Development. Finally, the Steering Committee introduced the credentials of the consultant team and explained the overall planning process that would follow this session. All goal and objective statements generated in the meeting were documented on flip charts by members of the steering committee as the dialogue progressed from topic-to-topic and issue-to-issue.

2.2 - STEERING COMMITTEE WORK SESSION:

On December 12, 2011, the MESA Planning Team conducted a Steering Committee work session with two primary purposes. The first purpose was to review and comment upon goals and objectives harvested in the Downtown Property Owners Meeting. The second purpose was to graphically explore the planning implications of goals and objectives in a charrette process that produced a Framework Plan. The Framework Plan was comprised of symbols indicating linkages, districts, portals, landmarks, edges, focal points, pathways, sequences, hierarchies, and features that portrayed the intent of public input.

The Framework Plan produced in this Work Session gives the consultant team a template to infill with particular physical (design) and programmatic recommendations that moves the Downtown area in the direction of economic revitalization and environmental enrichment. This Framework Plan becomes a feature element for presentation at subsequent public meetings.

DOWNTOWN DESIGN FRAMEWORK

The Planning Framework is a diagrammatic portrayal of the goals and objectives, upon which the physical and programmatic recommendations of this plan will be built. The graphic language of the framework includes linkages, pathways, focal points, portals, districts, zones nodes, edges, sequences, and hierarchies. As a graphic expression of goals and objectives, the Framework Plan is a template for the plan itself that keeps the plan developed through this planning process rooted in public input. The following series of map images is a sequential build-up of the Planning Framework and concludes with a composite image which is the Framework Plan itself.

ARRIVAL:

Key to establishment of any destination is the sense of arrival. Arrival has three components: the beginning (established by way finding and monumentation), the sequence of the approach (indicated by the tapering of the red arrows), and destination (indicated by the arrow head). The fact that arrows flow directly to the Downtown core, rather than through or by it (as is the present condition), identifies a key outcome of the plan that must be addressed through design. The intent here is to transform Downtown from the present pass-through/ pass-by condition to one of destination and arrival.

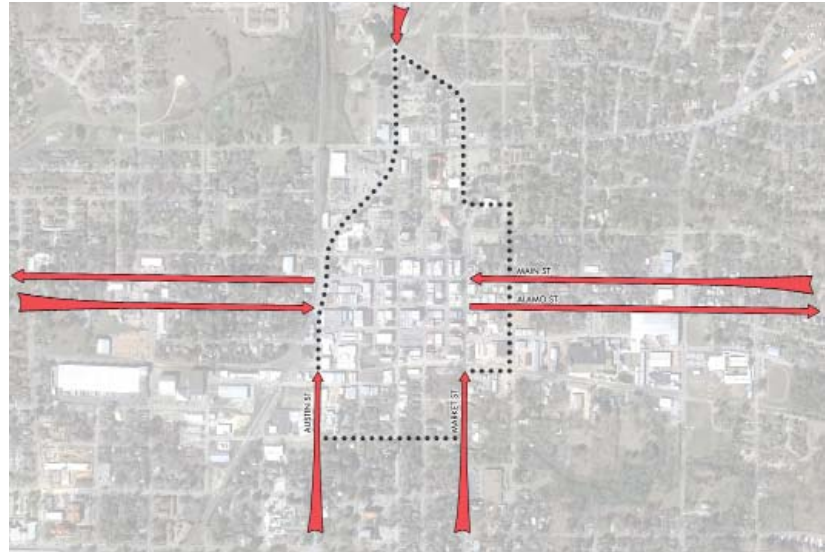


Figure 10: Downtown Arrival

DEFINITION:

Destinations are places and as such, they have a comprehensible physical definition. Consequently, for Downtown to receive inflow as a destination, it must be defined as a place. The blue indicates two important aspects of definition. Segments of Market and Austin must be given a level of visual expression which associates them with Downtown as edges (boundaries) to a specific geographic area. In performing this function, the identity of Austin as a boundary will be different than the identity of other parts of Austin as an approach (the same is true for Market). The points of identity change are actually entries into the core zone. Main and Alamo within the core of Downtown must be recognizably different than Main and Alamo approaching Downtown so the present pass through becomes an arrival. The intent is to further establish Downtown as a destination by reinforcing it as a place to which traffic flows.



Figure 11: Downtown Definition

IMPEDIMENT:

At present, the railroad tracks south of Commerce Street are a barrier to movement and extension of the Downtown fabric southward into the Iron Works area. However, the railroad track can be repositioned in two ways. First, the rail line can provide a link to both Blue Bell and Blinn College as a pedestrian circulator and trolley line. Second, the rail line can provide a seam between the areas north and south of it as a public space with meaningful pedestrian spaces at its edge (on both sides). The intent is to transform the barrier imposed by the railroad into a link and a seam that brings other parts of Brenham into the revitalization strategy for Downtown.

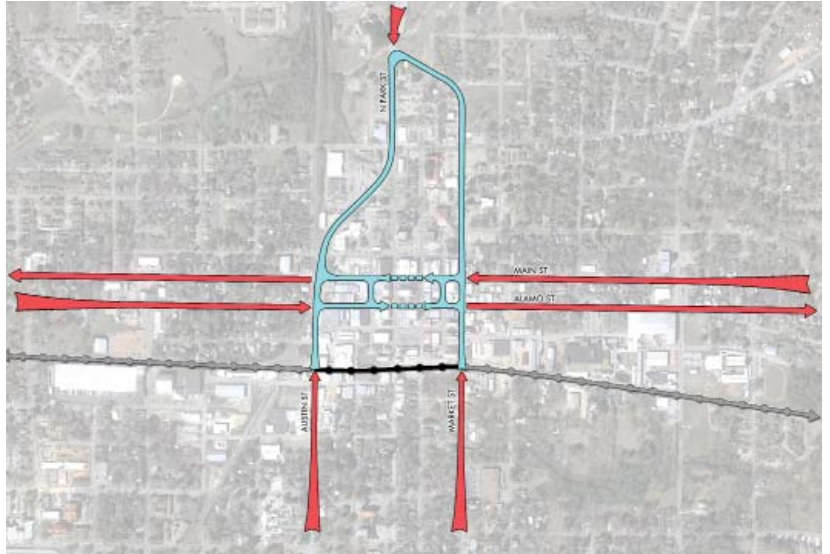


Figure 12: Downtown Impediment

ENTRY:

Recognition of entry is accomplished through the creation of portal. Therefore, to have entry into the area that is defined as Downtown, there must be portals at the key entry points. The diagram illustrates entry points on the north, south, east and west points of entry. Portals can be established by a variety of physical treatments of the ground plane and/ or vertical monumentation. The intent is to further define Downtown as a destination and place with a clear demarcation of arrival through the establishment of portals.

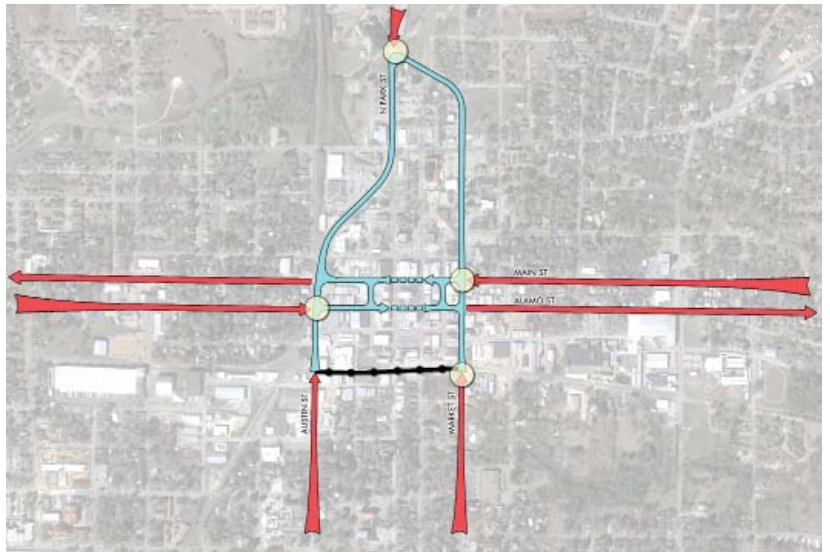


Figure 13: Downtown Entry

CENTER:

Place is defined by both edges and center. Therefore, the full articulation of destination requires a clear definition of center. The historic and functional center of Downtown is the courthouse square and the landmark courthouse that sits within it. Therefore, all external roads flow to the boundary and portal and all internal roads flow from the portal to the center (courthouse square). To further reinforce the notion of center, roads (such as Main and Alamo) do not simply flow through the center. Instead, they flow to it and then across it before setting one on the path to leave it (as indicated by the dashed lines within the area indicated as center). The center is an element of structure which informs and anchors one's cognitive map of Downtown. In this way, the center has influence over movement to it just as Downtown does. The intent is to create a stronger sense of place through the creation of a strong center within that place.

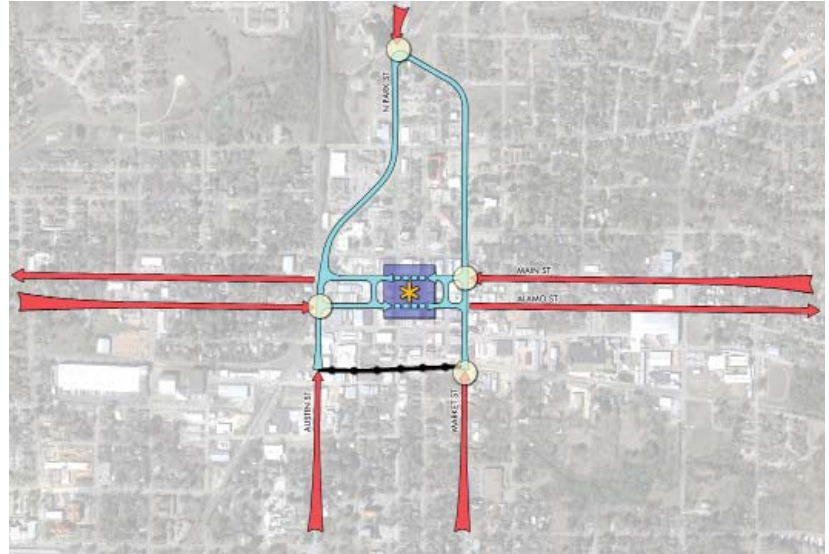


Figure 14: Downtown Center

BALANCE:

Centers are recognized as such because they equally anchor all that is around them. This diagram illustrates that the center receives reinforcement through roadways that flow to it from north, south, east and west; equally. Once center is so established, it can organize the Downtown experience and become a value reference within the mosaic of value opportunities that structure affords. In addition, the historic courthouse can fulfill its landmark function because it is a common point of arrival and thereby, reference in one's trip to and around Downtown. The intent is to strengthen the courthouse square as "center" by having roads flow to it from all directions, thereby creating a balance that is held together by a center function.



Figure 15: Downtown Balance

ANCHORS:

Anchors (indicated by the asterisk symbol) orbit the center like planets around the sun. This constellation of activity focal points (anchors) creates opportunity for the various parts of Downtown to find their niche instead of competing with each other. Gather around activity focal points, the various parts of Downtown can mutually reinforce each other and be stronger in their aggregate than they are separately. Also, activity focal points become another layer of structure that informs the cognitive map and identifies Downtown as a place. These activity focal points should be public or quasi-public and include a public space component so that the structure upon which the identity of Downtown is built is a public structure, a public domain. The intent is to further establish cognitive structure and reinforce specialization while energizing the public domain through the creation of anchors within the Downtown fabric.

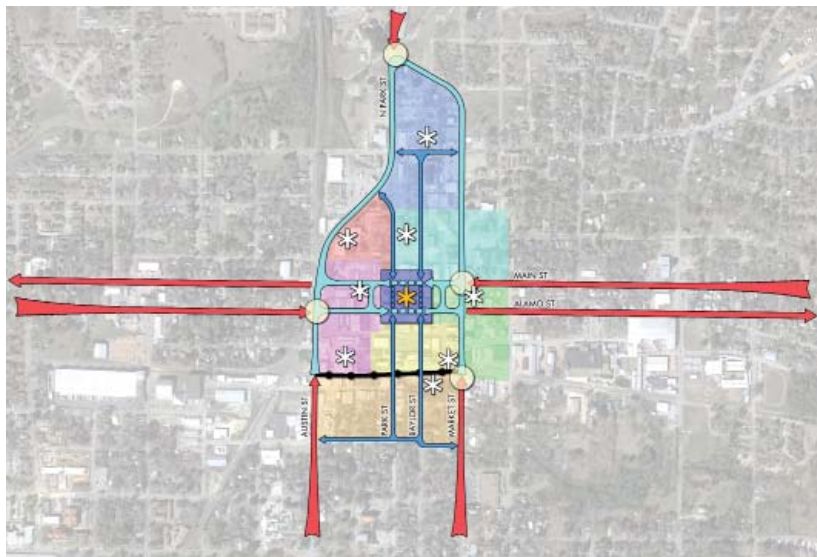


Figure 16: Downtown Anchors

CHARACTER:

Each of the earlier described anchors will have a domain of influence and such spatial domains will become sub-districts. For example, the civic area can have a civic space anchor and thereby define a civic district, just as the courthouse defines the square and claims the buildings fronting the square. This process of spatial association with anchors should be reinforced through land use and design so that Downtown becomes a fabric of sub-districts, each with a particular identity, public space component, and commercial opportunity. The large single revitalization effort becomes a series of smaller efforts that will be more effective, more focused, and yield greater return. The intent is to add the element of experience to the sense of place through the creation of sub-districts that are anchored by a public space and anchor activity, arrayed around the center and within the boundaries of the Downtown core.

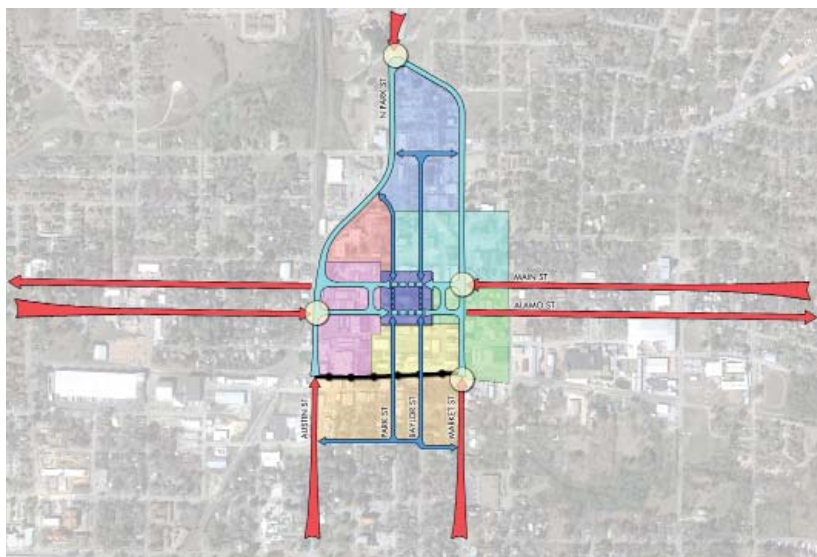


Figure 17: Downtown Character

PARKING:

Parking (indicated in grey) is one of those necessary services that allow people to change modes of transportation (moving from auto to foot) and experience Downtown as a pedestrian. In addition, it is a necessity of commercial success for many types of retail/entertainment land uses. Therefore, parking must be a key component of the Downtown plan. Parking must also be gathered into parking reserves so that a meaningful increase in parking availability is accomplished. These reserves will, of necessity, be located along and north of Vulcan Street and along and south of Commerce Street. The creation of parking reserves in these areas makes parking available to all sub-districts with equal convenience. The intent is to overcome the present parking shortage with the creation of parking reserves so located as to be equally convenient to all sub-districts.

CONNECTION:

Parking and anchors must be tied together by a pedestrian movement system (indicated in green) that enriches the pedestrian experience within Downtown. The green corridors suggest a pedestrian system that engages each of the anchors and provides a public space (larger green square) for each sub-district. Creation of a pedestrian system will allow Downtown to free itself from its association with traffic driven retail and attract more specialized retail activities. In addition, a pedestrian system with public spaces provides an infrastructure for events and public activities. Such events and activities are natural manifestations of a destination function. However, such manifestations cannot occur without the pedestrian space to host it. Therefore, the pedestrian system is a key aspect of the economic strategy for Downtown. The intent is to create a coherent, pleasurable, convenient, comfortable and safe pedestrian

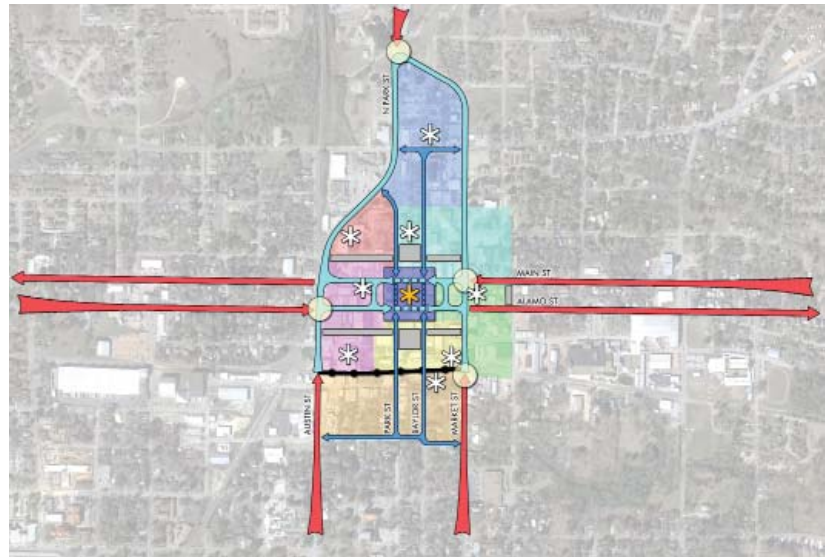


Figure 18: Downtown Parking

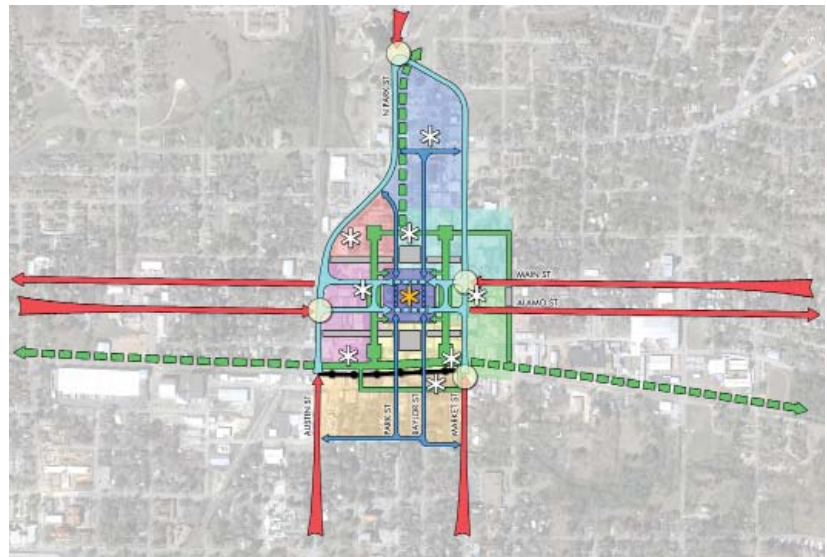


Figure 19: Downtown Connection

domain within Downtown Brenham that serves each district, links parking opportunity with personal destination, and spatially supports the hosting of events and pedestrian activities as well as outdoor commercial activities.

RE-ESTABLISHING BRENHAM'S HISTORIC RELATIONSHIP TO REGIONAL MOVEMENT

The planning framework is built upon the notion that Brenham is once again connected to regional movement patterns. Before the linkage of Park to Austin and before the construction of the Highway 290 bypass, Downtown Brenham was the point of confluence, the cross roads for traffic moving between Austin, Houston, Dallas, Bryan, etc. However, incremental thoroughfare decisions eroded this position as a hub, positioning present day Downtown Brenham off-system. Such peripheral locations struggle to find sufficient value to attract investment. As a result, strategies are needed which establish Downtown as a destination that can pull visitorship from the bypassing roadways and (at the same time) accomplish some level of re-connection between Downtown and the new patterns of regional movement. Reconnection today will be, at best, a partial modification of the now existing and established movement patterns (this is why reconnection and destination are both necessary components of a revitalization strategy). Knitting together a functional re-connection will start at Downtown and move outward. The framework below illustrates the four components of such re-connection (starting with Downtown and moving out to the regional flow arterials).

ARRIVAL



Figure 20: Regional Arrival

Building upon the Downtown framework described above, the boundaries of Downtown (Market, Austin/Park, and Second Streets) define a destination to which the re-connection pathways will arrive. As also stated

earlier, it is essential that arrival be experienced through the creation of portal and sequence. The incoming arrows in this diagram suggest that Austin Street, Market Street, Park Street (Highway 36), Main Street, and Alamo Street are the best and most comprehensible pathways into the Downtown core. Therefore, these pathways are the primary candidates for connection with regional movement and such connection will reinforce Downtown as a hub. The intent is to re-establish the main arterials of the Downtown core as the major connections with regional movement and in doing so re-establish Downtown as a hub of regional circulation.

DISTRIBUTION



Figure 21: Regional Distribution

Because Market and Austin Streets (south of Downtown) access two separate and competing off ramp locations, there is an imbalance between the traffic densities each carries. Austin tends to have higher traffic volumes than Market; this has resulted in an uneven distribution of value within the Downtown core. Therefore, it is essential that Austin and Market function equally as system components so that the distribution of traffic volumes between can then be optimized. One way to accomplish this is to have convenient cross links at several locations south of Downtown that affords traffic easier access to either street and allows incoming/ out-going vehicles to make a decision regarding which street to use without having to anticipate the ramp connection. The intent is to allow Austin and Market to be the primary service connections to the Hwy 290 bypass in such a configuration that use either street and connection to either ramp location is possible and a better balance between Austin and Market is achieved.

CONNECTIONS



Figure 22: Regional Connections

Once the system elements close to Downtown are set in place (arrival and distribution) it is necessary to complete the system with connection to regional movement. At present, the Hwy 290 bypass is the primary destination of regional movement and the interchange for inbound traffic seeking out-bound destinations. At present, the Hwy 290 bypass is the only true system component, but the system it serves is a regional system, not a local system. Once off the Hwy 290 bypass, local system components are beset by discontinuities and ambiguities and make the highway a more desirable path. This diagram illustrates an internal system which flows to and from major approach ways that connect with regional centers (such as Austin and Houston).

By extending these approachways across the Hwy 290 bypass and into the core of Brenham via a coherent, convenient, and pleasurable system, the approachways encourage through traffic to seek a greater number of interests, services, and experiences. Connections to the core of Brenham that comprise a local/ regional movement system give a structure to the fabric of the city that arrays its sub components around the historic city center. The intent is to establish a locally centered regional system that offers clarity and convenience to travelers as well as unique services and experiences that the bypass cannot accomplish. In doing so, the centered regional system will place Brenham's Downtown at the hub of local and regional movement.

WAYFINDING



Figure 23: Regional Wayfinding

Once a coherent system is established, it is necessary to visually and cognitively reinforce that system through monumentation and wayfinding. Just as the system has elements of hierarchy so does the monument and wayfinding system. The most monumental and significant landmarks are located at major highway portals and demark primary entries into the core of the city. Once people enter the local system, lesser monuments and signs continue to blaze the way to Downtown until another set of portals demarks entry into the Downtown core. There is a visual syntax that is clear and simple to comprehend and conveys sequence (an all important aspect of arrival). The intent is to visually reinforce the local system in a way that makes it an attractive and convenient alternative to highway travel.

THE CONCEPT PLAN

The Downtown Brenham Concept Plan is a graphic portrayal of the Planning Framework as a conceptual vision. There are numerous design alternatives that can be applied and still accomplish the intent and economic strategy of the Framework. Therefore, this plan is for the purpose of **illustration only** and is not meant to be viewed as, or used as, the final design. As the strategy of the plan is implemented over time, project proposals which will likely vary from the concepts shown here should be viewed in light of the Framework and the extent to which such projects will, in their collective association, create a coherent and integrated Downtown as illustrated in this example.



Figure 24: Conceptual Plan for Downtown Brenham

2.3 - PUBLIC WORKSHOP #1: VISIONING AND PLANNING OBJECTIVES

At Public Workshop #1, consultants presented observations of the opportunities and constraints to Downtown Brenham. A design framework was then proposed, in which planning priorities were sequentially presented. Following the consultant presentation, workshop participants attended breakout sessions organized by the proposed Downtown Districts. Each group discussed the various planning issues associated with the District in question. The Public Inputs listed here consist of the comments received during the breakout sessions, organized by District. They are illustrated here:

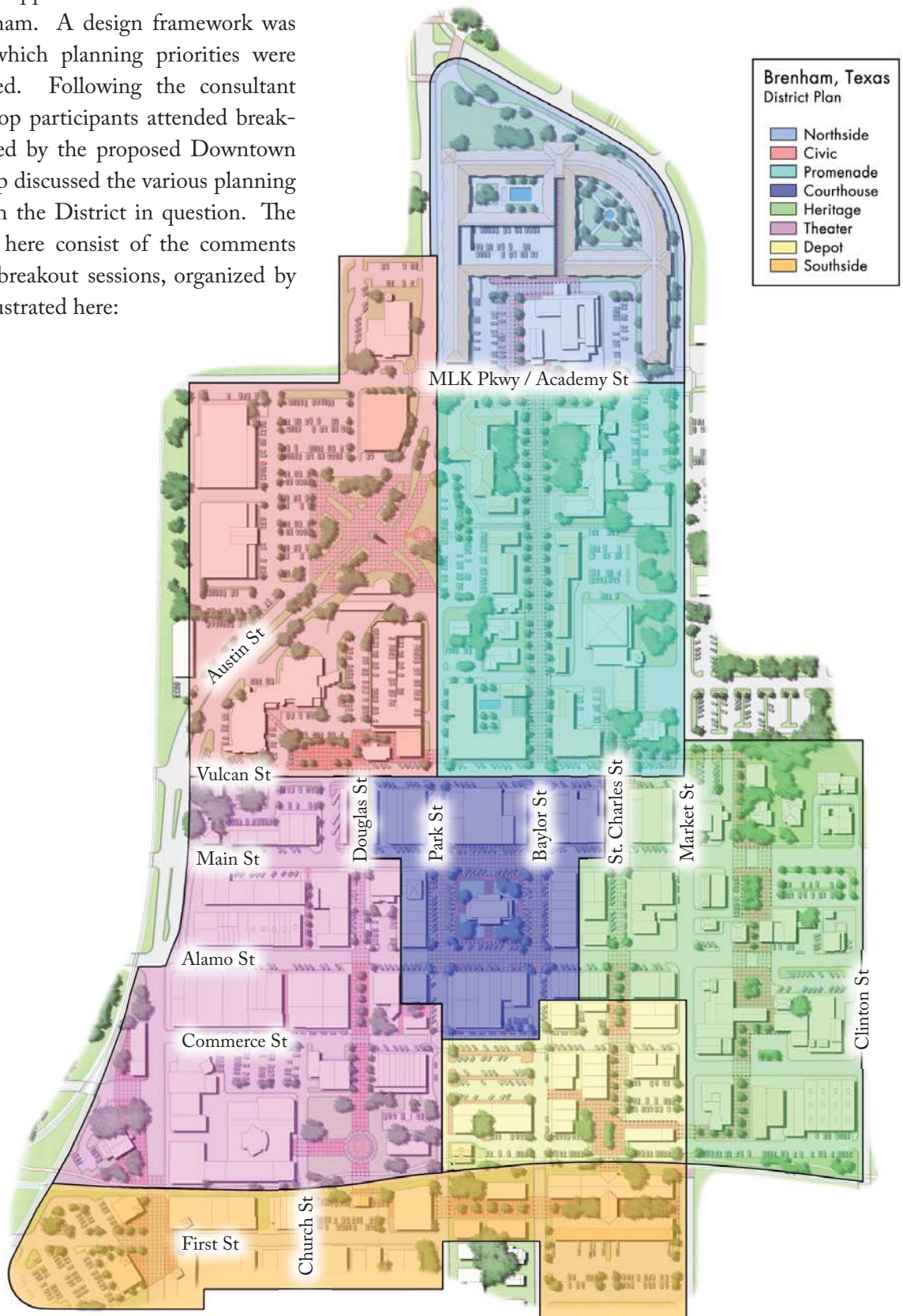


Figure 25: Downtown Brenham District Plan

THE COURTHOUSE SQUARE

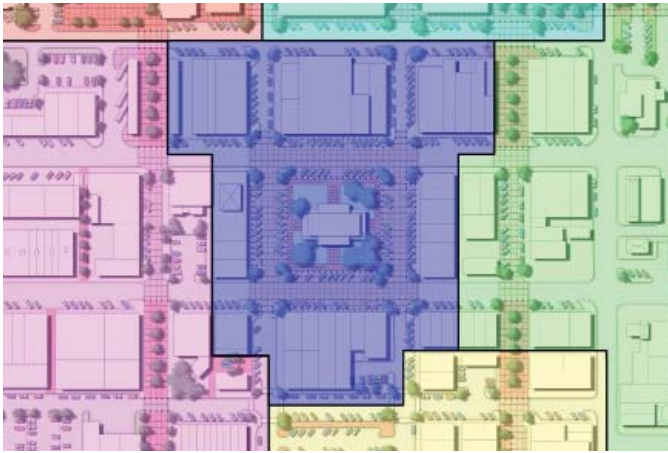


Figure 26: The Courthouse Square District

- The Courthouse Square is the center of town.
- Activities in the Courthouse Square = court, eat, shop, legal services
- The Courthouse Square primarily caters to local residents.
- Patrons stay in the Courthouse Square anywhere from 30 min. to all day.
- The courthouse traffic engages local restaurants. Attorneys and jurors will go eat in local establishments.
- The town square should contain a mix of uses, not all retail, not all office... but a mixture of uses.
- Parking is not sufficient in the Courthouse Square.
- Parking time limits have been tried in the past in the Courthouse Square, but were unsuccessful. A dedicated lot for court/county employees and for store/business employees is preferred.
- Circulation needs related to goods and services in the Courthouse Square could be improved.
- There are empty buildings available on the square.
- Empty buildings on Baylor would benefit from enhancements that reach out in a north-south direction from the Square.
- Don't think head in parking around the courthouse square would work...too narrow.
- Landscaping of courthouse square is an important issue. Find ways to complement courthouse. The stark courthouse needs to be warmed up.
- Courthouse grounds need help. Do not have a positive impact on businesses around the square.
- Lodging is more appropriate in other districts Downtown, rather than in the Courthouse Square.
- Upper floor lofts could work on Alamo in the Courthouse Square.

SOUTHSIDE DISTRICT



Figure 27: The Southside District

- Sidewalks, signage and lighting are needed in the Southside district.
- The Southside District should be considered for redevelopment.
- Improve quality of building stock in the Southside District
- Way-finding would help to tie the Southside District in to the rest of Downtown and give it a distinct identity.
- The Southside District needs public restrooms.
- Parking is not a critical issue in the Southside District right now because the area is underutilized. However, there is no capacity for parking should growth occur in this district. Therefore parking is anticipated as a need, and should be addressed in any development strategy for this district.
- Street Lighting needs to be improved in the Southside District.
- The Southside District is not pedestrian friendly.
- Architectural continuity is important but doesn't really exist right now in the Southside District. The predominant residential fabric to the south is the only element of continuity at present.
- On making the Southside District an Artisan district: upper east side is appropriate (clarify "upper east side" = of this district or of Downtown as a whole). More residential is needed south and west (south and west of this district, or south and west of Downtown as a whole).
- Lodging is desired for the Southside District
- For residential, garden homes/townhomes preferred for the Southside District.
- City owned property on west side of Austin has potential. Consider expanding Southside District to include property that fronts Austin on West side of street.
- Consider alternative development forms for the extension of the Southside District across Austin to include buildings on Western frontage of the Street).

DEPOT DISTRICT



Figure 28: The Depot District

- The concentration of historic buildings influences the character of the Depot District.
- Currently there is no major economic driver or activity anchor for the Depot District.
- The Depot District currently caters to local residents.
- The time patrons spend in the Depot District varies from 1 hour to overnight.
- Entertainment, open air cafes, social gatherings, small music venue would be beneficial uses/activities in the Depot District and would stimulate growth and activity in surrounding blocks/properties.
- Raised boardwalk connecting the Depot District to the theatre would be desirable
- Parking may be needed with infill development in the Depot District.
- Shaded walkways are desired for the Depot District.
- Pedestrian connection between market and Unity Theatre = top priority, and could eventually be expanded east/west.
- First Street could be linked to Downtown.

THEATER DISTRICT



Figure 29: The Theater District

- Retail in the Theater District should service local residents and visitors alike
- Retail buildings/establishments need to be interesting
- Quality of dining establishments is important
- Patrons usually stay in the Theater District anywhere from 1.5 – 5.0 hrs.
- It's hard to give directions on how to get places Downtown...wayfinding needs improvement
- Convenience, theater and retail is what attracts people to the Theater District
- There is not sufficient lodging in the Theater District. Ant Street is all...need more.
- Residential uses are appropriate for the Theater District, in any form indicated.
- A more distinctive north-south connection would encourage visitors to branch out Downtown... pedestrian enhancements attract attention and draw pedestrian traffic. This type of enhancement would also improve pedestrian mobility Downtown.
- More activities and things to see and do – morning and afternoon – would strengthen linkages in the Theater District.
- Toubin Park, Alamo Alley are important public spaces Downtown. The public space in the Theater district could host street performances and other activities. Regulations would need to be crafted to help manage such activity
- Events and programs in public spaces should involve local merchants – no outside vendors – in the Theater District.

- More parking is needed in The Theater District.
- Most of the group feels that parking time limits will not work in the Theater District. Short term business parking may be possible, but time limits have not historically worked here.
- The Theater District is not very pedestrian friendly. Clearer crossing and signage would be helpful.
- Improved wayfinding and pedestrian spaces will improve pedestrian safety.
- Tourist lodging and lofts are desirable residential forms for the Theater District.
- Restaurants need to be open in the evening and for longer hours on Sundays. Need to support entertainment and activities.
- More retail is needed in the Theater District. Drug store/ convenience store (like an old 5&10).

- Signage is needed in the Heritage District.
- Want more vibrancy and more active businesses in the Heritage District.
- The Heritage District needs a public restroom.
- The historical destinations in the Heritage District make a positive contribution to Downtown in general.
- Kids attractions are needed in the Heritage District.
- Slow down traffic speed on Market Street.
- Need more restaurants in this part of Downtown.
- Need road access by railroad tracks for stores fronting Market St. in the Heritage District.

HERITAGE DISTRICT



Figure 30: The Heritage District

- Tie cannery kitchen in to the overall form/purpose of the Heritage District.
- There are several empty lots in the Heritage District, providing available/underutilized land that the development plan should address.
- Cleaners building and Basset building need to be tied in to Heritage District in a more cohesive fashion.
- Cleaners building and Basset building need to be improved.
- Parking is needed (either structured or surface) near cannery and Market (Woodson property?) in the Heritage District.

CIVIC DISTRICT



Figure 31: The Civic District

- Allow Civic District to stretch across Austin to bring in retail activity (the grocery is helpful to residential development Downtown).
- Space is not efficiently used in Civic District. Maximize space use. Create public spaces and aggregate activity.
- Civic District = gateway to Downtown. Therefore needs signs/monuments.
- Park Street needs retail that extends to Downtown in the Civic District.
- Residential development opportunity east of Park north of Vulcan in the Civic District.
- The Synagogue is an unused resource (one of the originals in State of Texas).
- More lodging needed in and around the Civic District.

- Consider replacing Municipal Building with a hotel (this will attract retail to Park Street).
- Pedestrian connections are needed in the Civic District.
- Civic District should reach over to incorporate Municipal Building and old SW Bell building
- Structured parking is desired for the Civic District if possible.
- Whatever parking solution is defined, a pedestrian linkage is needed in the Civic District.
- An interface between a potential hotel and the Simon Theatre creates a parking opportunity.
- Let Park St. become hike and bike trail route.
- Explore connections to Downtown from Park/Austin: move statue to Wells Fargo and cut straight down Park into Downtown
- Pedestrian enhancements and green spaces would help to make the approach to Downtown more recognizable and would create a greater sense of arrival to the Downtown area.
- Higher density residential development would be a desirable use for The Promenade District. The district needs higher density/more people.
- Baylor provides a good opportunity to connect The Promenade District to the courthouse square.
- There is not sufficient lodging in The Promenade District. More lodging is needed.
- Residential uses would be appropriate in The Promenade District, including every type suggested except garden homes/townhomes.

THE PROMENADE



Figure 32: The Promenade District

- The predominant character of The Promenade District is driven by the clinic and is related to health services. People come here for prescriptions/ medications and for clinic service.
- Currently The Promenade District caters primarily to local residents.
- People don't stay for long when they come to The Promenade District...only a couple of hours.
- The clinic does not engage the other businesses and uses in The Promenade District.

NORTHSIDE DISTRICT



Figure 33: The Northside District

Uses that we'd like to see considered for Northside District:

- Residential
- Hotel
- Condos/housing
- Parking
- Library/multi-functional civic facility
- Restaurant/deli
- Necessity stores
- Small shops
- Bus parking (tourism)

- Upscale bar(s)
 - Senior housing (walk to Downtown and live close to clinic)
 - Things for people to do after church
- The Clinic's plans need to be considered in the planning process
 - Flow of traffic to Downtown from Houston (Market and Austin) after construction will impact Northside District and should be considered.
 - Predominant character of Northside District today = churches/religious
 - A hotel would be a desirable future use for the Municipal Building (this idea is more appealing than Bed and Breakfasts for this district)
 - A parking garage might work in Northside District.
 - There is not sufficient lodging in Northside District.
 - Northside District is not accessible to pedestrians.

PLANNING OBJECTIVES

The Planning Objectives translate public inputs into action statements to guide plan formulation.

Urban Design and Public Spaces

1. Implement a wayfinding and signage program to create an arrival sequence and help with Downtown navigation.
2. Define portals to Downtown via monumentation and/or signage at key points of entry.
3. Tie all districts together through system of public spaces and pedestrian connections.
4. Improve accessibility to public facilities from all districts.

Land Use

5. Increase lodging options and explore hotel feasibility.
6. Integrate a mixture of residential uses that are contextually appropriate for each district.
7. Increase density where appropriate to improve duration of stay Downtown.

Parking and Circulation

8. Explore areas of opportunity for cost of increasing parking capacity Downtown, including structured parking, surface lots and on-street alternatives (cost + areas of opportunity).
9. Integrate parking areas more effectively via wayfinding devices and parking lot/pedestrian enhancements.
10. Coordinate parking areas with defined user groups (ie: Courthouse parking, Downtown employees) where possible.

Economic Development

11. Promote contextually appropriate infill development and redevelopment.
12. Include public spaces in event programming for Downtown to increase visitorship, pedestrian traffic and hours of Downtown activity.
13. Maximize productivity of public buildings through incorporation of multi-use facilities.
14. Increase occupancy and activity levels through measures that will attract more businesses to Downtown Brenham.
15. Define uses and activities that adequately serve both residents and visitors to the City.
16. Promote specialty retail tenants in Downtown Brenham.
17. Increase duration of stay in Downtown Brenham.
18. Identify priority buildings for preservation, restoration and redevelopment.
19. Articulate improvements to courthouse square, particularly courthouse grounds.
20. Promote renovation, reuse, and/or redevelopment of city-owned properties Downtown.

2.4 - PUBLIC WORKSHOP #2: THE ELEMENTS OF THE MASTER PLAN

On April 9, 2012 The MESA Planning Team conducted the second of two scheduled workshops for the purpose of allowing public review of the Downtown Concept Plan and receiving comments regarding the document and its associated recommendations. This workshop was divided into four sub-segments as follows:

1. **Segment One.** A review of material presented in the first workshop, including any modifications thereof as a result of participant input.
2. **Segment Two.** A review of the draft Concept Plan and planning recommendations that the Concept Plan represents.
3. **Segment Three.** Gathering of participant input in the form of 8 planning stations (one for each of the planning districts recommended in this plan report). Each of the planning stations was located so that workshop participants could flow between stations, review the district specific material at the station and make written comments (which were deposited in a box also located at the station). This allowed casual investigation with the consultants roaming the floor as information resources when needed.
4. **Segment Four.** Gathering of participant input in the form of an open discussion. The workshop session closed with an open discussion between consultants and participants that all could engage in.

Through this workshop sequence, many questions were addressed and important issues identified. The Plan Images shown in this report reflect the consultant's response to input from Workshop #2. Below is a summary of the write-in comments provided at the work stations described above.

The Courthouse Square:

1. More lights on the buildings. Tourists are attracted to lights at night.
2. Don't remove parking without relocating it.

Southside District:

1. Are the presentation images available for distribution?
2. Please put street names on images for more clarification.

Theater District:

1. While we applaud a planning process, the details of the plan are inconsistent with calling it conceptual and it would be helpful to indicate a formulation of public / private land ownership w/ cost associated to implementation of the plan.
2. To accurately reflect our concurrence with the visual corridor that ends in the greenspace owned by the Ant Street Inn, we will appreciate your representation of an amphitheater and greenspace rather than parking on your final document.

Heritage District:

1. Make Downtown like a mini-Smithsonian. Not many museums, just more history.
2. In England, they have a badge program designed to be able to tell the history of England. Brenham should have something like that. A badge or logo that someone who has researched the history of Brenham. A plaque could have a similar logo. A unique way to learn the history of Brenham. An app could be invented to show the history, maps, and information on where shops are. Information plaques could show a video or say a recording.



AREA-WIDE PLAN COMPONENTS

CHAPTER 3

Some of the components of the Master Plan are systemic in nature and are not tied to particular districts. These Area-Wide plan components include Parking, Circulation, and the Pedestrian Network.

For each Area-Wide component, particular design solutions are provided to promote legibility, capacity, and traffic management.

3.1 - PARKING

Through the planning process a significant amount of input was received regarding the availability of parking for Downtown patrons. Because parking supports retail and commercial activity, it is important to define a strategy that will promote visitorship and encourage people to get out of their cars and spend more time in the Downtown area. The plan for parking addresses three key issues: accessibility, capacity, and management.

Issue #1: Accessibility

The Parking problem in Downtown Brenham is not one of separation for distance. Rather, it is the lack of intentional connection between parking areas and the establishments they serve. This is an issue of streetscape improvement, not one of capacity.

To meet the needs of patrons, commercial developers typically expect parking to be provided within a 1/4 mile radius of their particular establishment. The 1/4 mile radius has since become the distance of walkability defined for urban development. Downtown Brenham is an ideal shopping environment, since most of the Downtown area falls within a 1/4 mile radius from centerpoint.

This means that parking solutions can be addressed anywhere within the radius of walkability, provided that the connections to Downtown businesses promotes pedestrian activity. Because of the walkability of Downtown, parking solutions can be defined area-wide without negatively impacting visitorship.

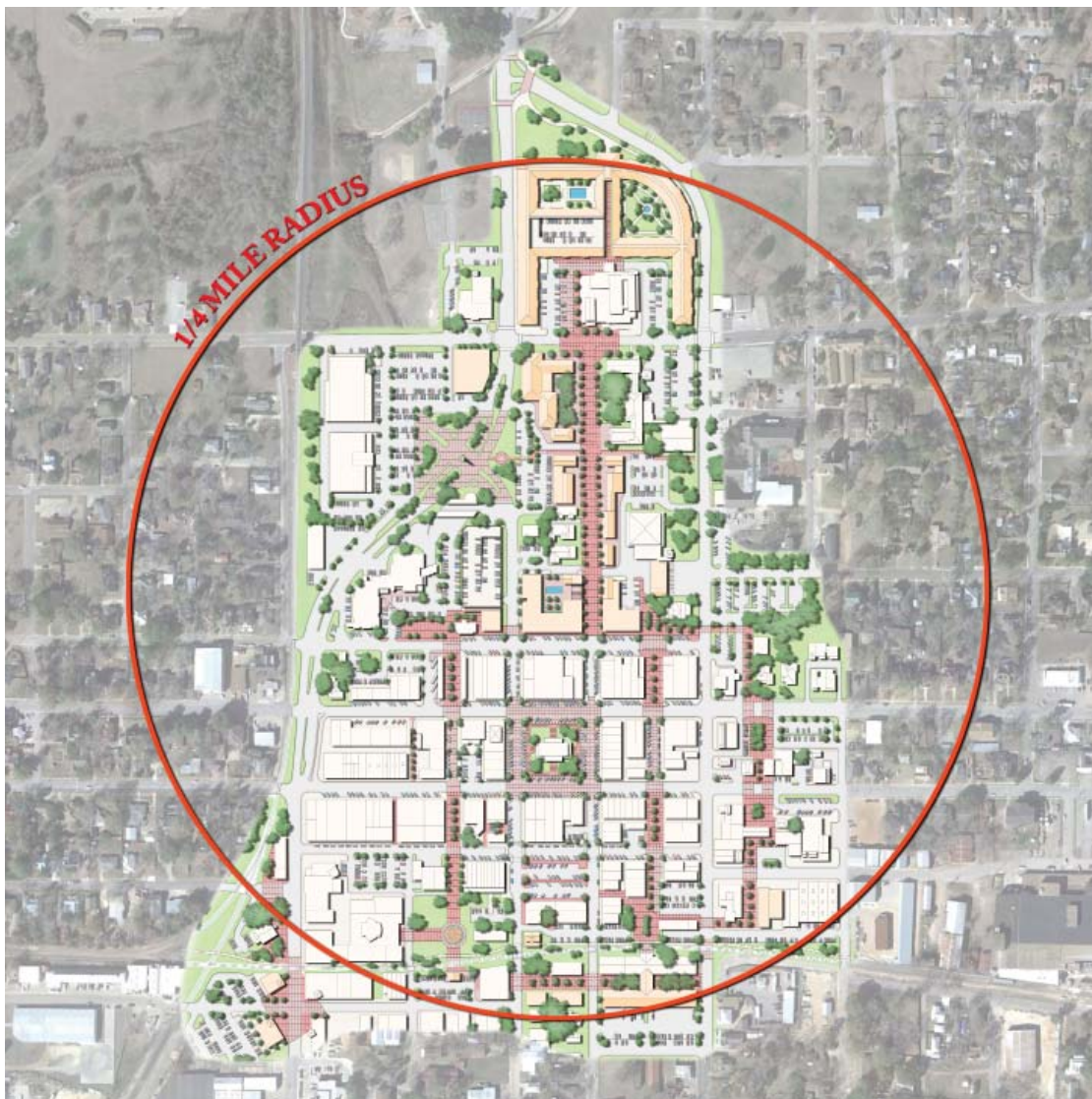


Figure 34: Brenham Downtown Plan - 1/4 Mile Radius

Issue #2: Capacity

As Downtown grows, it will be important to create sustainable patterns where infrastructure is developed in conjunction with private development. As the level of activity increases, parking availability must increase as well. Therefore the plan defines particular areas Downtown where public parking can be added. Because the concept plan illustrates a “build-out scenario,” it is implied that the indicated parking would be developed in phases, according to the uses and activities it is intended to support.

Square footage in the core of Downtown likely to be Retail / Restaurant use = 330,965 sf (1,323 spaces)

- Current parking within the Downtown Core = 459 spaces
- Parking shortfall if all existing Retail / Restaurant were developed = 864 spaces
- Square footage added to the plan, not counting Hotel = 75,000 sf (300 spaces)

Total parking required = 1,623

Total parking illustrated by plan = 1,647





	Existing Parking	524
	Modified Parking	323
	New Parking	800
	Total Core Area Parking	1,647

Figure 35 classifies three parking areas:

- Existing parking areas within Downtown Brenham
- Modified parking areas
- Additional areas strategically positioned for increasing parking capacity.

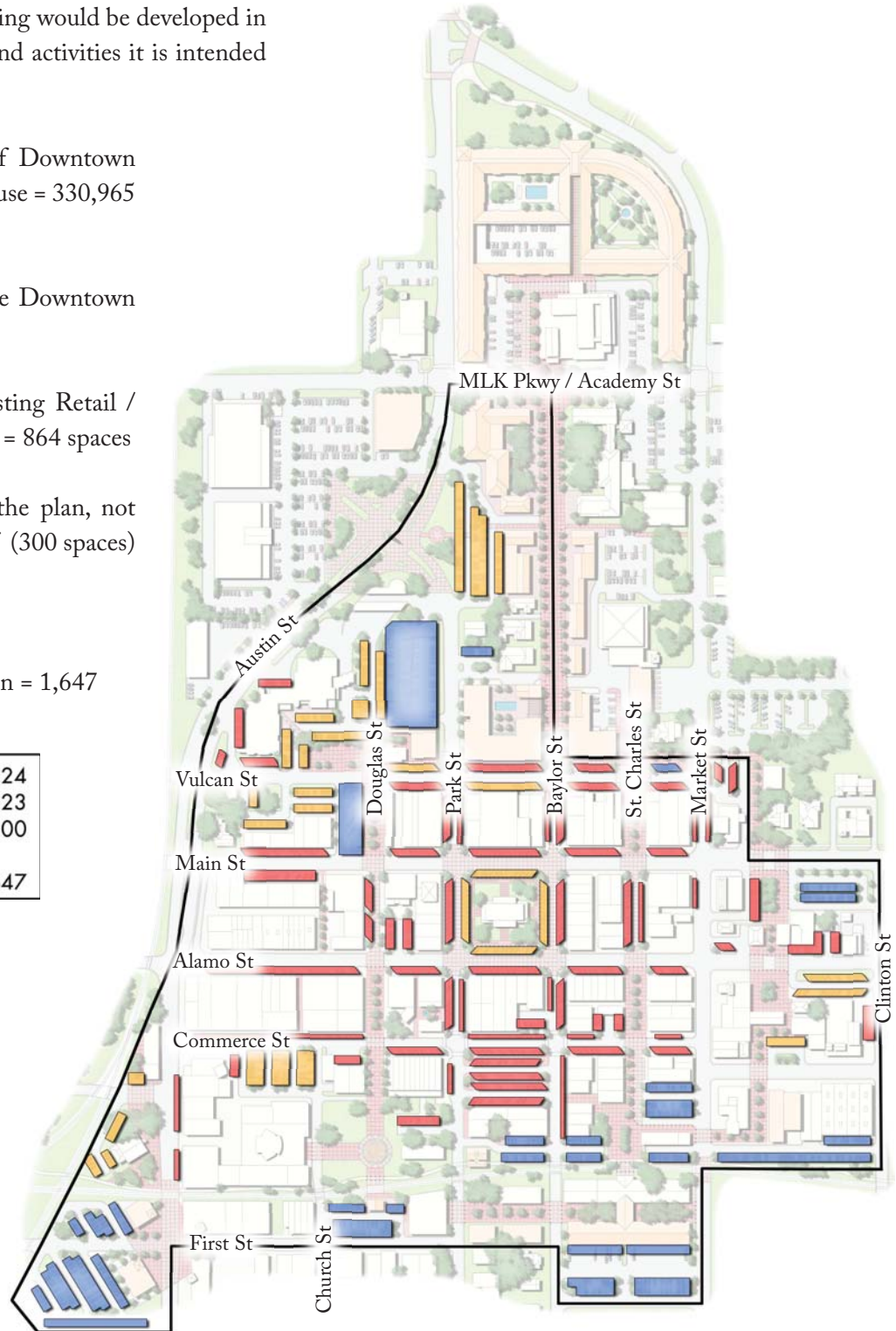


Figure 35: Increasing Parking Capacity

Issue #3: Management

One of the challenges of providing parking in a Downtown area is the management of available spaces to ensure that all business owners can provide adequate parking for their patrons and employees. This is why parking management is so important. Downtown contains a broad range of uses, and therefore a high level of variability in duration of stay by patrons. Employees will stay all day. Local patrons will sometimes stay less than 10 minutes.

- 1. Work with the County to create an overall parking system for Downtown.** Combining parking holdings to create a master shared system will maximize parking availability while minimizing conflicts.
- 2. Utilize space assignments for Downtown parking management.** The three most common parking management strategies are time restrictions, metered parking, and space assignment. Time restrictions have not been favorably received in the past, so there is a reluctance to employ them again. In each public meeting, metered parking has not been favorably received. Space assignment is therefore the recommended alternative for parking management Downtown. Space assignment would work well within the sub-district structure defined by the plan, as it would group parking opportunities according to a designated user group. Examples of Downtown space assignments include Visitor, Employee, Resident, County, City, and Bus.

- 3. Move Courthouse parking to the new parking garage in the Civic District.** Employee parking opportunities have been provided in the Civic District, approximately one block from the Courthouse. Parking for courthouse employees should be directed to this area.

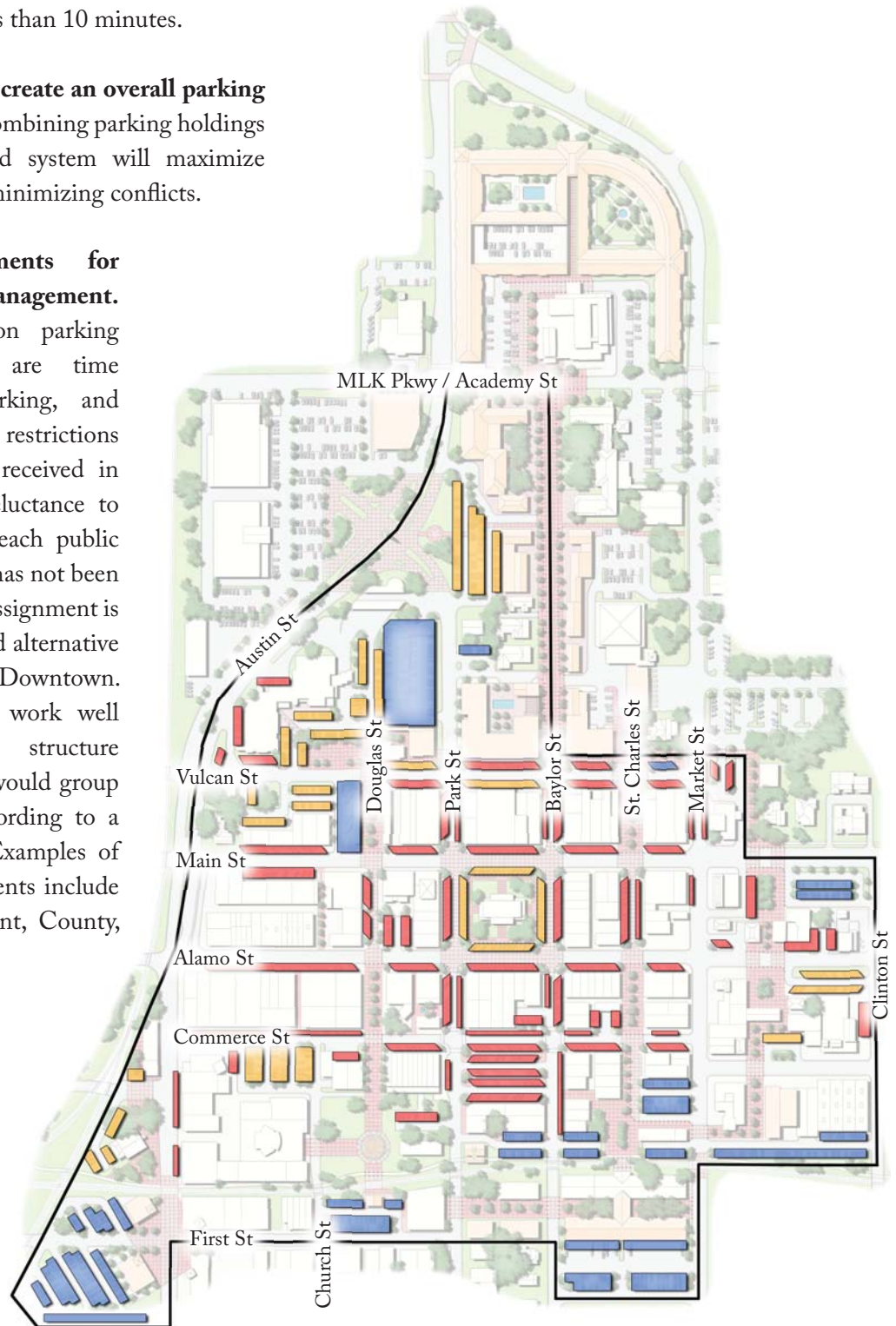


Figure 36: Management of Parking Capacity

3.2 - CIRCULATION

The existing directional orientation of the streets in Downtown Brenham promotes the focal role of Main and Alamo between Austin and Market. This has reinforced the strip nature of Downtown, making it difficult for development and commercial activity to penetrate to the north and south. To create greater north-south penetration, it will be important to articulate circulation patterns that are consistent with desirable development patterns.

Because of the constraints imposed by existing rights of way, changes have been kept to a minimum. There are three recommended improvements to the circulation system Downtown:

Improvement #1: Reconfiguration of one-way vs. two-way designations.

Certain street segments downtown do not promote efficient movement patterns. The head-on convergence of two-way and one-way streets at Vulcan, for example, will make it difficult to draw traffic away from Austin and Market, as travelers on Main and Alamo are given limited north-south alternatives.

Proposed changes from one-way to two-way are indicated in Figure 37, and include segments of St. Charles and Douglas between Main and Vulcan, and between Alamo and Commerce. By converting these segments to two-way streets, the east-west traffic along Main and Alamo will have greater accessibility to the greater Downtown area.

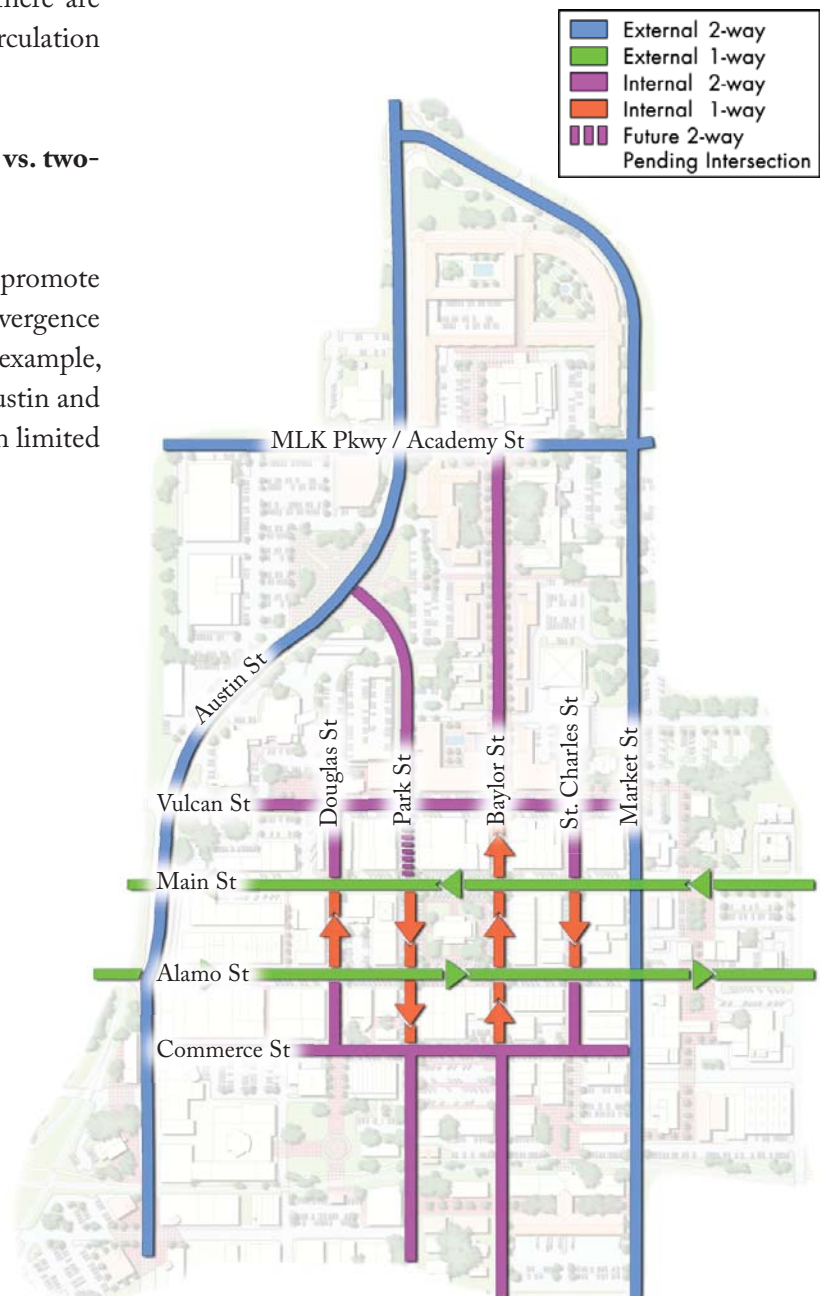


Figure 37: Directional Assignments of Downtown Streets

Improvement #2: Facilitating flow on Main at Austin

Because of the relationship between the railroad and Austin Street, westbound traffic on Main Street gets backed up due to train traffic. To mitigate congestion at this intersection, it is recommended that Main Street be converted from a two-lane to a three-lane street from Douglas to Austin.

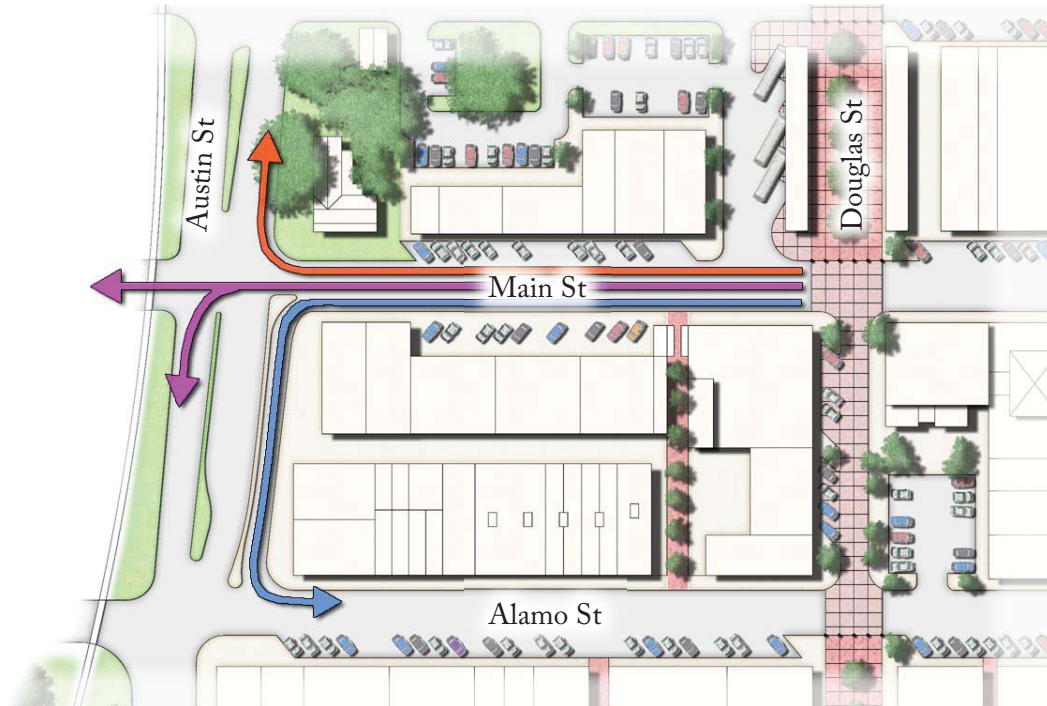


Figure 38: Facilitating flow on Main St at Austin St

Improvement #3: Connect Austin to Market South of the track.

There is no direct connection of Austin to Market in the Southside District. To facilitate movement between these two corridors and to create a definitive edge for Downtown, a connection between Austin and Market is recommended. This connection will require acquisition of an existing property (to be determined) and creation of a right-of-way between Park and Baylor.

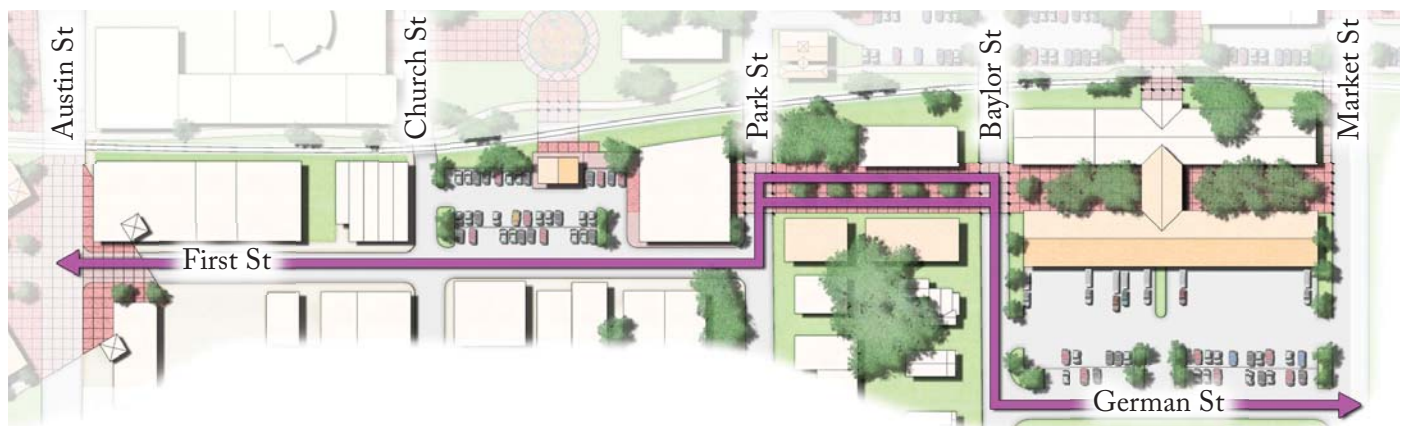


Figure 39: Southside District - Austin to Market Connection

3.3 - PEDESTRIAN NETWORK

Improvement #1: Transformation of north-south internal streets into convertible street spaces.

To give greater definition to this component of the Downtown circulation system, it is recommended that Douglas, St. Charles, and a segment of Baylor be transformed into convertible street spaces that can be closed off to vehicular traffic if and as desired.

To do this, the street and streetscape must be improved and enhanced. Decorative street paving will indicate the special use of this street. Amenities in the street space will invite pedestrian traffic, giving direction to pedestrian circulation Downtown. The street should be enhanced with various streetscape elements to attract pedestrians (landscaping, lighting, benches, kiosks, trash receptacles, etc.). Bollards should be used to direct traffic and close the street to vehicular traffic.

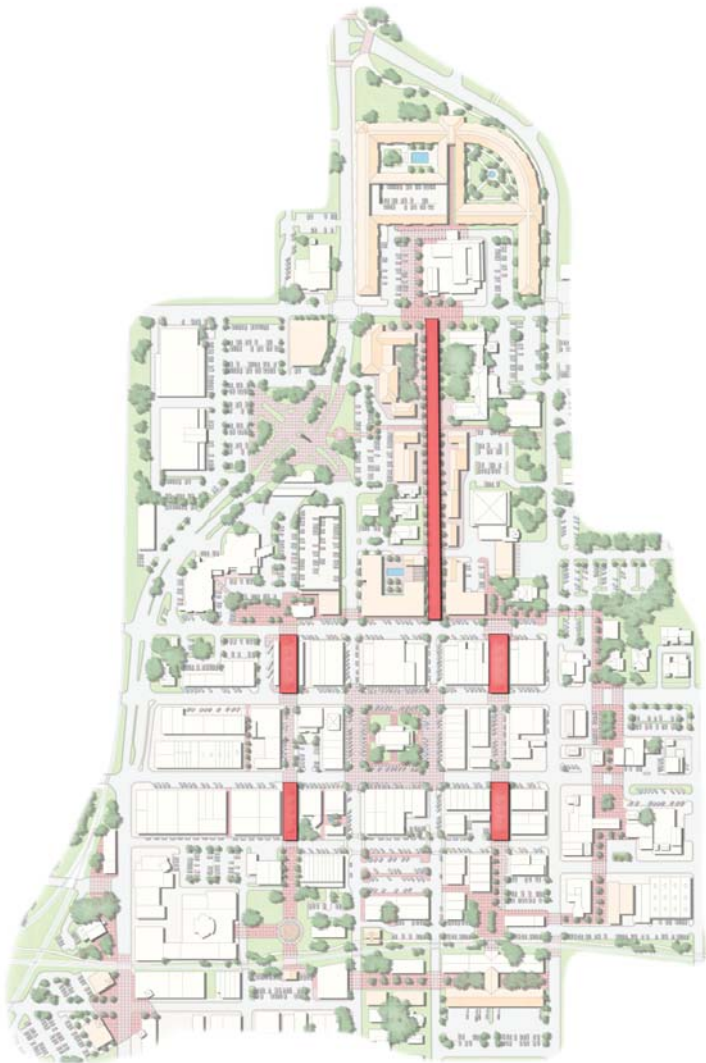


Figure 40: Proposed Convertible Street Spaces

Improvement #2: Creation of a mid-block pedestrian spine connecting Vulcan to the greenbelt.

The blocks between Vulcan and the rail spur that runs along the eastern side of Market Street contain internal spaces that could be connected to create a special type of pedestrian corridor similar to the punch-throughs and improved alleyways that Brenham has already completed. This will tie the eastern side of Market with the overall Downtown pedestrian system, and will encourage integration of properties held by the city, county, and private owners. This network should open to parking areas and should be expressed as enhanced crossings when it encounters cross streets, directing pedestrian movement in an intentional manner.



Figure 41: A mid-block Pedestrian Spine

Improvement #3: Coordinate pedestrian portals with parking opportunities.

It will be important to get visitors out of their cars when possible to promote longer durations of stay in Downtown Brenham. To do this, parking should be situated at key points of entry into the pedestrian network Downtown. The major portals with parking opportunities are indicated in Figure 42.

Covered walks, as shown by the blue areas in the adjacent graphic, signify any architecturally enclosed public space. Such spaces can be arcades or private courtyards open to public access or a publicly accessible building pass-through (which can have internal retail activities fronting it). Arcades are public spaces that occur under the upper story mass of the building. Private/public courtyards are building offsets or claimed lot space that interface with the public right-of-way and are open to it. A building pass-through is an internal corridor used by the public to pass through a block of buildings. All of these architectural enclosures of public connection will have a valuable role to play in the creation of a fully integrated pedestrian system within Downtown Brenham.

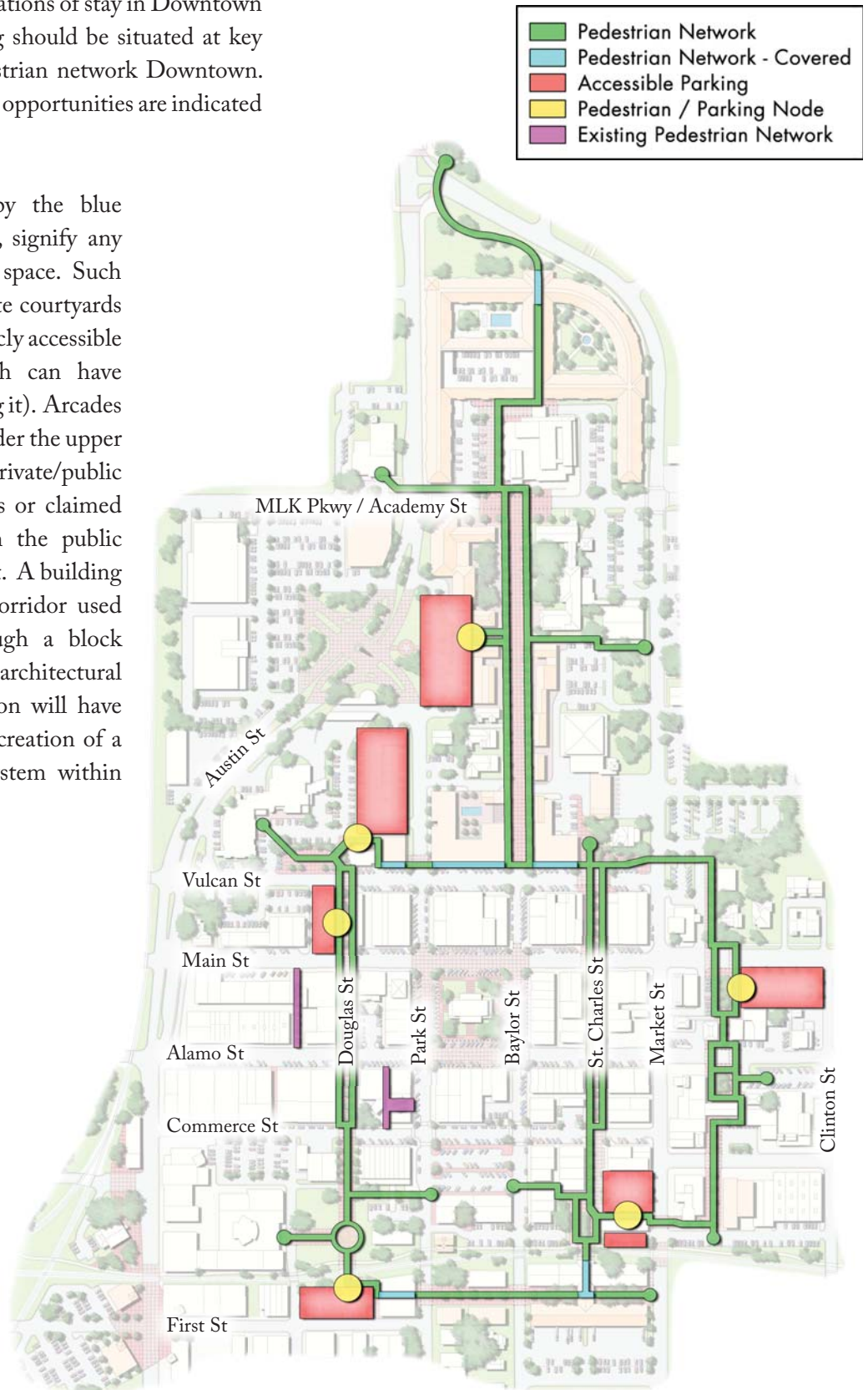


Figure 42: Downtown Brenham Pedestrian Network



DISTRICT-SPECIFIC PLAN COMPONENTS

CHAPTER 4

The Brenham Downtown Master Plan is organized around a system of sub-districts. Each sub-district is defined by an activity anchor that influences its overall character, as well as the types of activity and the future development forms found in the sub-district. For each district, two factors are addressed:

1. Placemaking projects. These are public improvements that will drive future development activity and enhance the character not only of that sub-district, but of Downtown as a whole.

2. Development activity. As future plans come forward for particular areas of Downtown, it is important for the city to clearly define appropriate types of development activity. The categories of development activity considered include:

- **Infill development:** Projects carried forth on vacant lots that are available for desired vertical improvement.
- **Redevelopment:** The removal of existing buildings and replacement by new development.
- **Adaptive reuse:** Reuse of an older or existing building for a purpose other than that for which it was originally designed.
- **Preservation or restoration:** Rehabilitation of existing buildings in a manner that preserves the historic integrity of the structure.



Figure 43: Conceptual Plan for Downtown Brenham

4.1 - THE COURTHOUSE SQUARE

The Courthouse Square has the most clearly defined character of all of the districts and is anchored by the Washington County Courthouse. Historically, this area was the hub of the City in terms of traffic and activity, generating economic energy that benefited the rest of Downtown.

The businesses that fronted the Courthouse were in the heart of Downtown Brenham. To restore balance to Downtown and maximize economic productivity, it is important to restore this district as the true city center.



Figure 44: The Courthouse Square

Placemaking Projects: The Courthouse Square

In this district, the pivotal placemaking project is the improvement of the Courthouse grounds. The Washington County Courthouse is physically constrained by limited setback from the street and little room for expansion of existing rights of way. Therefore the grounds serve as the only buffer for the structure. For this reason, the Courthouse grounds must be improved to minimize visual discontinuity and disruption of the impact the Courthouse should rightfully make on the square in which it sits.

① **Relocate valued landscape components.** To open up the Courthouse grounds, the Gazebo and other valued landscape components should be relocated to the other open spaces throughout Downtown. This preserves their significance and restores the Courthouse grounds as an inviting and usable public space.

② **Create head-in parking spaces on all sides of the Courthouse grounds.** Restoring the Courthouse lawn will open up the space surrounding the Courthouse for a higher level of pedestrian use. This will also open up opportunity for the creation of angled parking around the Courthouse. This will add 16 parking spaces to the Courthouse Square.

③ **Raise the street space to create a uniform ground plane.** Curbs create lines of demarcation that separate various activities in urban areas. Compartmentalizing spaces in the heart of the Downtown area promotes the dominance of auto traffic. Historically, the street space surrounding Courthouses was uniform, hosting a wide range of activity. It is recommended that Brenham restore such a space to the square by raising the street space in the block surrounding the Courthouse and using bollards and other devices to direct traffic, rather than curbs.

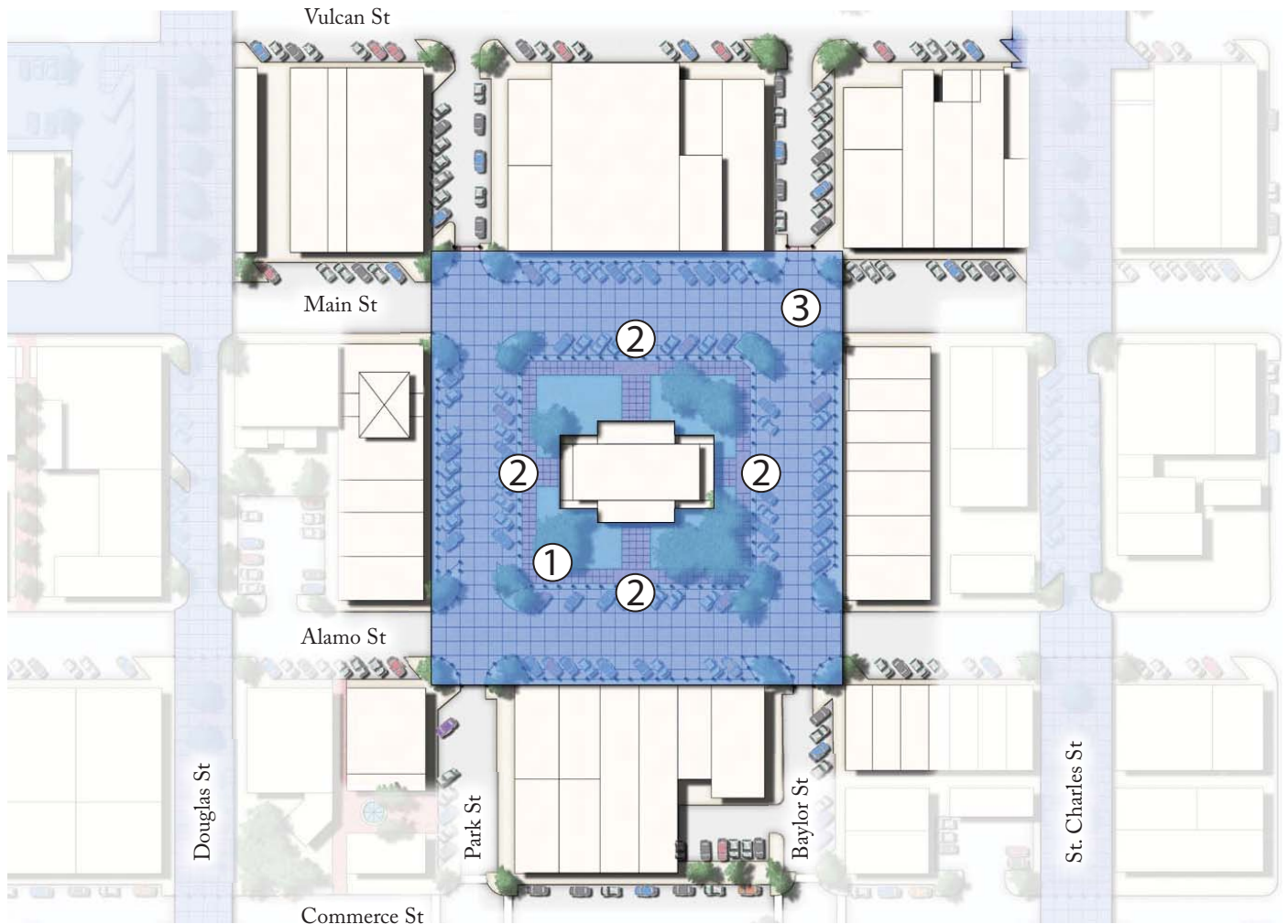


Figure 45: Placemaking Projects: The Courthouse Square

Development Activity: The Courthouse Square

Development activity around the Courthouse Square should preserve the integrity of the historical building forms and relationship to the Washington County Courthouse. These types of development activity that are appropriate for this district are preservation, adaptive reuse, and courthouse renovation.

- ① **Preservation and adaptive reuse of existing buildings.** The majority of the buildings on the Courthouse square are historic. Therefore development activity in this district should focus on historic preservation and adaptive reuse.
- ② **Improvements to the Washington County Courthouse.** Improvements to the County Courthouse could possibly be made through the Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program (THCPP). A grant application for Courthouse Restoration would be submitted, based on a master plan developed by the County.

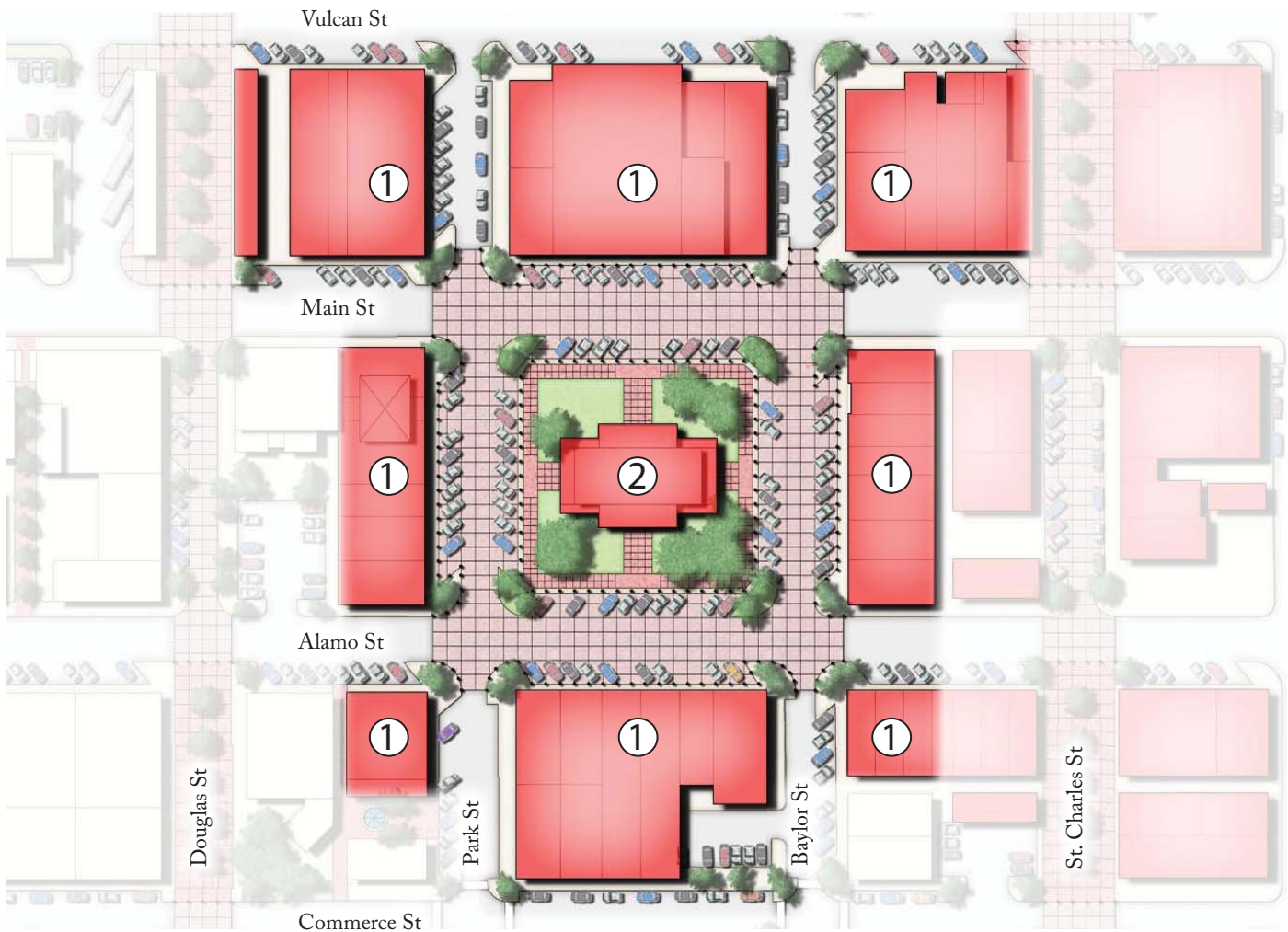


Figure 46: Development Activity: The Courthouse Square

THE COURTHOUSE SQUARE



Figure 47: A Perspective Rendering of The Courthouse Square

4.2 - SOUTHSIDE DISTRICT

The Southside District provides an opportunity to invigorate craftsmanship and trade related enterprises in Brenham. The building configuration, along First Street lends itself to aggregation of small shops with internal work spaces. The live/shop/work spatial potential of this block is very conducive to an Artisan cluster which supports the economic strategy of venues and events (as described earlier in this report). In addition, Artisan shops become an anchor activity within the plan that draw people over the railroad tracks into portions of Downtown now isolated by the track barrier. Once the anchor destination is identified, a cross track pedestrian link can be provided. The cross track link is further justified by the location of parking, essential to Unity Theatre use (as opposed to Simon), on the southern track right-of-way edge (a now vacant lot).

The creation of a pedestrian crossing and square at Austin further overcomes the track barrier and makes First Street a more integrated component of the overall vision. In addition, this improved space brings properties west of Austin into the Downtown plan and redevelopment strategy. Land availability in this area is well suited to creation of needed parking for all of Downtown.

At the eastern edge of the Southside District is a proposed reuse of the Beaumier Iron Works Building and site. The plan shows a conventional 50 to 60 foot building depth which can accommodate a farmers market, retail, museum, or other such use. The Beaumier Iron Works building itself is incorporated into a building cluster which hosts a landscaped pedestrian space that becomes a terminus for pedestrian traffic flowing from First Street. Artisan merchandise, produced in the small shops along First Street can be sold periodically in the Beaumier Iron Works cluster as an Artisan Event.

To complete the connection with Downtown's core areas, another cross-track pedestrian link is shown between the Depot District and Beaumier Iron Works cluster. With this second connection, a complete pedestrian loop is created that fully integrates with the overall pedestrian system.

Finally, the parking areas shown west of Austin, south of the track (and north of First Street) and south of the Beaumier Iron Works Cluster make this district well suited to event activities which are so essential to the overall economic success of the Downtown plan.



Figure 48: Southside District

Placemaking Projects: Southside District

The Southside District does not currently contain an Austin-Market connector. Furthermore, the current conditions of the north-south connector streets create a deterrent to circulation with the rest of Downtown. To bring economic energy back to the Southside District, the following placemaking projects are recommended.

- ① **First Street extension.** Create an extension of First Street that connects to the entrance to the Beaumier Iron Works building. This will connect the First Street merchants to the farmers market, opening this area up to create a corridor for specialty retail opportunity. The corridor should be a flexible space that can be closed for pedestrian traffic only during special events.
- ② **New mid-block track crossings for pedestrian traffic.** To promote pedestrian safety and create a more controlled crossing condition, two mid-block track crossings for pedestrian traffic are proposed. The first crossing would be a southward continuation of Douglas Street. The second would be a southward continuation of St. Charles Street. These connectors would service pedestrian traffic only. They will not carry cars.

- ③ **Improvements of north-south connector streets.** Today the north-south streets that connect the Southside District to the rest of Downtown are a deterrent to cross-track traffic. It is recommended that these streets be improved to encourage Downtown visitors to venture south of the tracks. Streetscape enhancements will be particularly important on Church, Baylor, and Park Streets.
- ④ **Create buffers to separate public spaces from the railroad track.** The Plan calls for the promotion of a high level of pedestrian traffic in areas around the railroad track. To mitigate the negative visual impact the track has on foot traffic, and to ensure the safety of visitors to Downtown Brenham, it is recommended that a physical boundary be constructed between the public spaces and the railroad right of way in the Southside District.
- ⑤ **Creation of an entry plaza square.** Decorative paving slows traffic and establishes existing entrance into Downtown Brenham.



Figure 49: Placemaking Projects: Southside District

Development Activity: Southside District

The major development project of the Southside District is the conversion of the Beaumier Iron Works building into a farmer's market, creating an activity anchor that will bring definition and economic energy back to the Southside of Downtown Brenham.

- ① **Adaptive Reuse: Conversion of Beaumier Iron Works into a farmers market.** Because of the contextual and historical relevance of the Beaumier Iron Works building, it is recommended that it be evaluated for feasibility of adaptive reuse, incorporating the existing structure into a larger market space, as illustrated in Figure 50. The proposed structure is a multi-shed building, with truck bays incorporated into the new addition.

- ② **Infill and Rehabilitation: Promote infill, restoration, and redevelopment projects along First Street.** The blocks that lie between Park and Baylor south of the rail spur should be opened up for development. Connecting First Street to Baylor will help make the parcels more accessible. Infill projects and redevelopment efforts in the Southside District should be in conformance with the overall character of the District as defined in a Southside Overlay District.

- ③ **Creation of an entry plaza square.** New structures help to anchor the existing Downtown entry portal. Additional parking at this location also serves the Southside District.

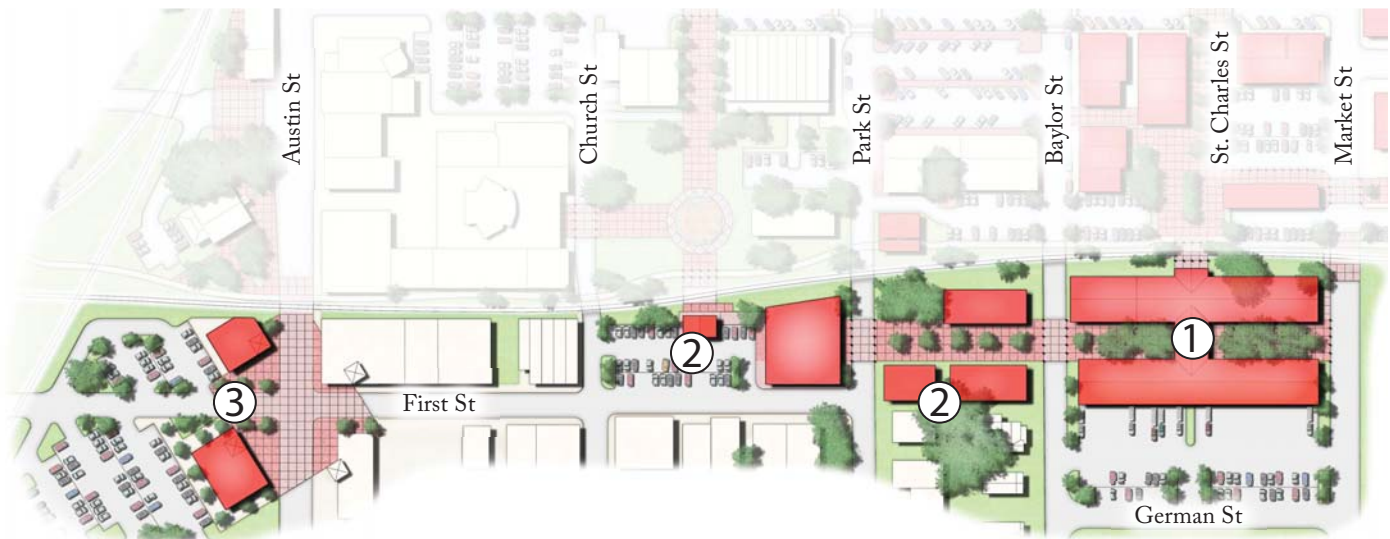


Figure 50: Development Activity: Southside District

4.3 - DEPOT DISTRICT

The Depot District is a portal to Downtown Brenham. When the new intersection of Market and Hwy 290 is completed, this will be the major gateway that connects Houston visitors to Downtown. The character is shaped by the unique buildings that fill this space, such as the historic depot on the northwest corner of Market Street, and the rail spur. This district is strongly connected to the adjacent railroad, and this connection should be accentuated in future development initiatives.



Figure 51: Depot District

Placemaking Projects: Depot District

There are two key placemaking projects in the Depot District. The first is the development of a visitor parking lot, and the second is a cross-track connection to the farmers market proposed for the Beaumier Iron Works building.

- ① **Visitor parking lot.** To increase duration of stay Downtown it is important to get visitors out of their cars and to promote pedestrian traffic Downtown. To facilitate this, the main placemaking project in the Depot District is the creation of a parking area just north and west of the intersection of Market Street and the rail spur. This would be similar in function to a trail head, serving as a point of entry for visitors that are engaging in the Downtown experience.
- ② **Public plaza adjacent to new mid-block track crossings.** To promote pedestrian safety and create a more controlled crossing condition, a mid-block track crossing for pedestrian traffic is proposed. This would be a southward continuation of St. Charles Street, and would service pedestrian traffic only. Such connectors

would not carry cars. In the Depot District, a public plaza occurs in the space adjacent to this connection. The plaza would allow for a direct connection of the Artisan shops and the farmers market.

- ③ **Improvements of north-south connector street.** Today, Baylor St. is a deterrent to north-south movement as it crosses the rail spur. It is recommended that this street be improved to encourage Downtown visitors to venture across the tracks. In the Depot District, streetscape enhancements will be particularly important on Baylor Street.
- ④ **Create buffers to separate public spaces from the railroad track.** The Plan calls for the promotion of a high level of pedestrian traffic in areas around the railroad track. To mitigate the negative visual impact the track has on foot traffic and to ensure the safety of visitors to Downtown Brenham, it is recommended that a physical boundary, such as a decorative railing, be constructed between the public spaces of the Depot District and the railroad right-of-way.



Figure 52: Placemaking Projects: Depot District

Development Activity: Depot District

The development activity in the Depot District will encourage the renovation of the old market area. Types of development activity in this district include adaptive reuse and rehabilitation of existing buildings.

- ① **Adaptive Reuse: Conversion of old market area into gallery space for visual arts.** As the number of resident artists grows in Brenham, it is important to define a space Downtown for the sale and display of artwork. The old market in the Depot District is an ideal location and configuration for such a space.
- ② **Rehabilitation of existing buildings fronting Market, St. Charles, and Baylor Streets.** To promote upper floor use, it is recommended that the buildings in the Depot District that front Market Street be rehabilitated to create residential lofts and studio spaces.

- ③ **Adaptive Reuse: Existing structures servicing Downtown trail system.** Conversion of existing structures along the rail spur will contribute to the pedestrian system and enhance overall character.

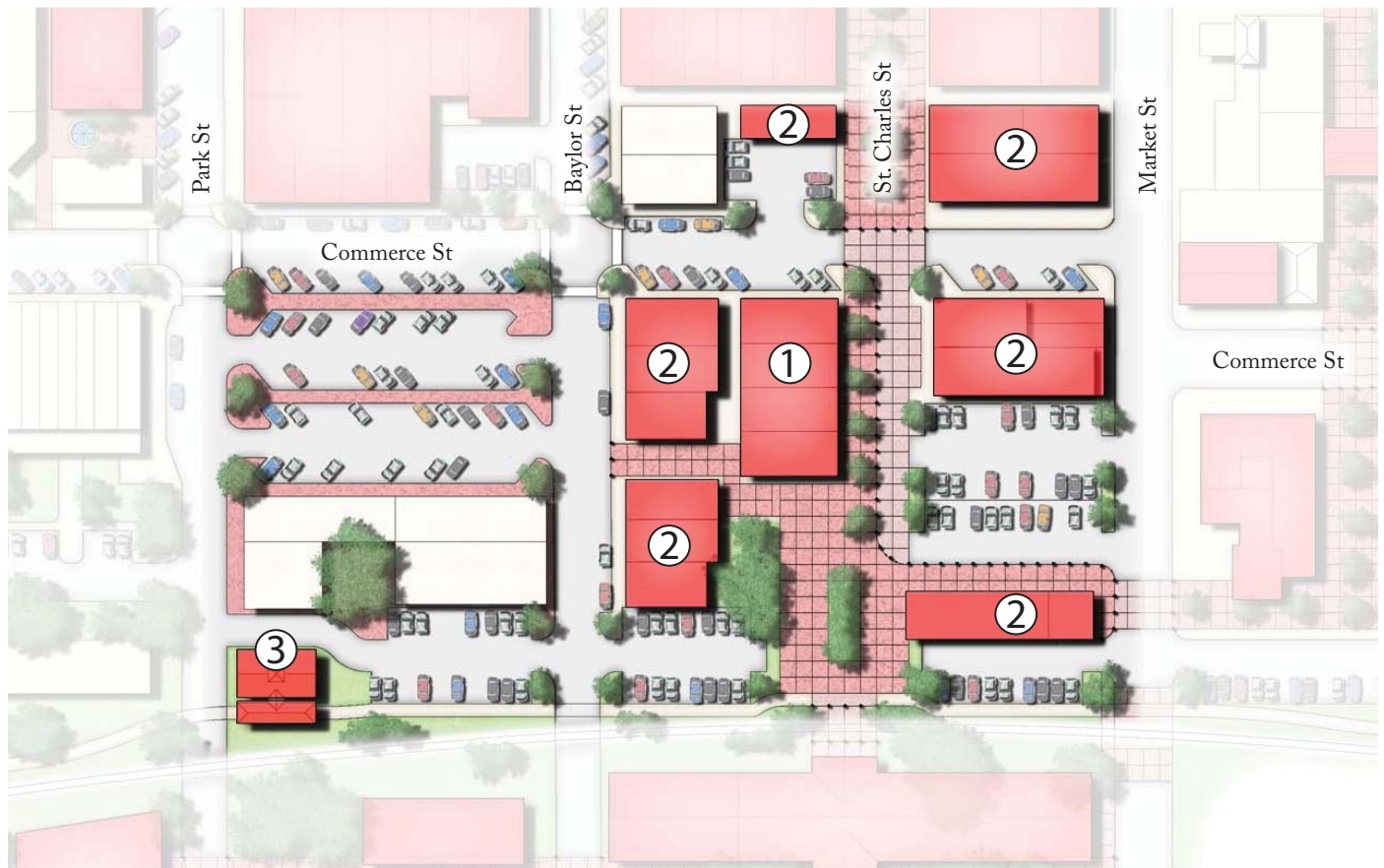


Figure 53: Development Activity: Depot District

4.4 - THEATER DISTRICT

The Theater District contains many thriving retail establishments in addition to the two major Downtown theaters. This mixture of cultural and commercial uses has stimulated a significant amount of visitorship for Brenham. In this district, it is important to preserve and enhance the activity generated by these attractions, while maintaining the integrity of the built fabric of this district.

As improvements are completed, the traffic intensity and hours of activity in this district will only grow. Therefore the plan for the Theater District will focus on enhancement of the experience of visitors, providing those core public components that support the events and activities that characterize this district.



Figure 54: Theater District

Placemaking Projects: Theater District

The following projects are intended to guide public improvements in the Theater District in a manner that would support desirable growth and development activity. The focus in this district is upon parking, circulation and infill development.

- ① **A loading area for tour buses.** To promote tourist operations Downtown and to more effectively manage traffic in the Theater District, a separate bus parking area is recommended. Tour buses can load and unload in the lot that is created between Vulcan and Main Street, west of Douglas. Currently, a portion this area is a county lot. County parking has been accommodated in the structured parking feature in the Civic District, north of Vulcan and west of Park.
- ② **Reconfiguration of westbound Main Street lanes leading up to intersection with Austin Street.** The railroad that runs adjacent to Austin Street creates a bottleneck for east-west movement Downtown. This will lead to a higher level of congestion as activity Downtown increases. Once the Simon Theatre is fully operational, this will also increase traffic in this area. The right of way of Main Street between Douglas and Austin is sufficient for three lanes. It is recommended that this segment be reconfigured according to Figure 38 (Chapter 3) to facilitate westbound traffic flow on to Austin.
- ③ **Create a public plaza at the southern terminus of Douglas Street.** The land that sits between Commerce and the railroad track, at the southern terminus of Douglas Street, should be designated for public use in the form of a plaza. This plaza should function as a hub for pedestrian activity, drawing traffic from the neighboring sub-districts, including the Southside District (there is a mid-block pedestrian crossing that connects this plaza to the Southside District). The plaza should be designed as a space that could host outdoor events and entertainment, with materials in keeping with those used for the improved pedestrian network. Public art and signage/wayfinding devices should also be incorporated into the plaza design

- ④ **Reorganization of parking in the Theater District.** The current configuration of parking in this district does not maximize space availability. The segmentation of private and public parking areas limits the ability to meet parking demand for merchants and business owners. As land becomes available, it is recommended that private parking areas be converted to shared parking areas, and that on-street opportunities be maximized. This will increase parking availability in this district making it more accessible to shoppers while preserving a dedicated lot for Theater patrons. This would also increase the parking availability for the Theaters and adjacent public uses.



Figure 55: Placemaking Projects: Theater District

Development Activity: Theater District

- ① **Infill development along Main Street.** To create a stronger block condition along Main Street, infill development should be promoted on the northern street frontage. As this block is reconfigured to

accommodate bus traffic, parking areas should face Vulcan, allowing buildings to face Main Street. This will create a more contiguous street wall across from the Simon Theatre.



Figure 56: Development Activity: Theater District

4.5 - HERITAGE DISTRICT

Market Street originally functioned as the predominant commercial spine of Brenham. This is evidenced by the vertical expression in the blocks between the Courthouse Square and Market Street. To the east of Market, however, the continuity of form and massing is not observed.

The plan for the Heritage District seeks to give greater definition and continuity to this part of Downtown, uniting the blocks with a coherent system of pedestrian movement, aggregating parking into strategically placed lots, and improving the interface of City, County, institutional, and private uses.

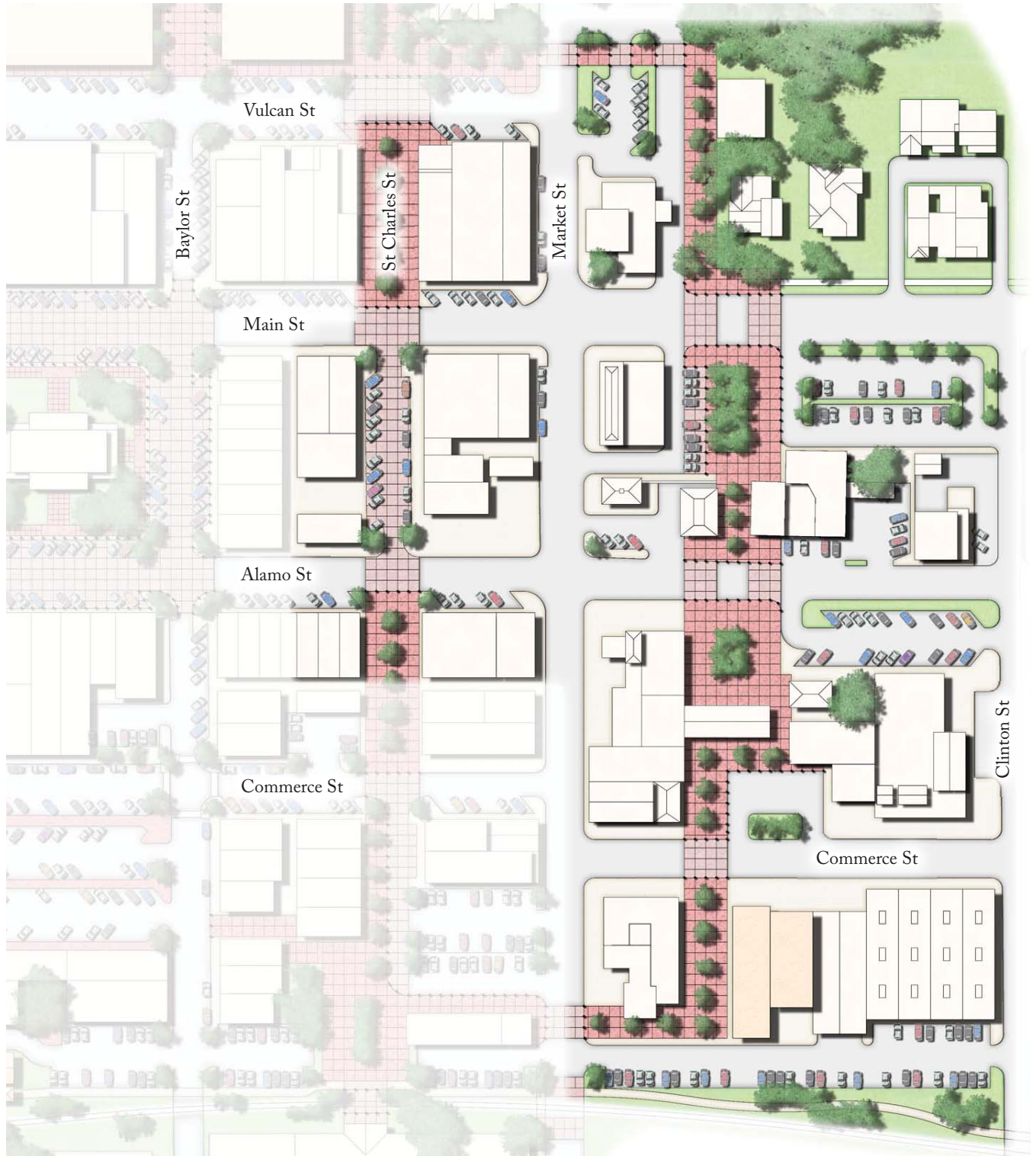


Figure 57: Heritage District

Placemaking Projects: Heritage District

Meaningful pedestrian connections and legibility of the overall circulation system will help to reinforce the form and identity of the Heritage District.

- ① **Creation of mid-block courtyards.** The perforation created by the mid-block pedestrian spine will be enhanced by creating opportunities for aggregation of pedestrian traffic. Therefore the spaces indicated in Figure 58 should be converted into public plazas.

- ② **Creation of a public parking lot at the southwest corner of Main Street and Clinton Street.** The Heritage District is not serviced by any existing public parking area. As activity in this area increases in the future, provision of parking must be considered. This proposed parking area should connect to the pedestrian system, so as to further tie this district to the rest of Downtown.

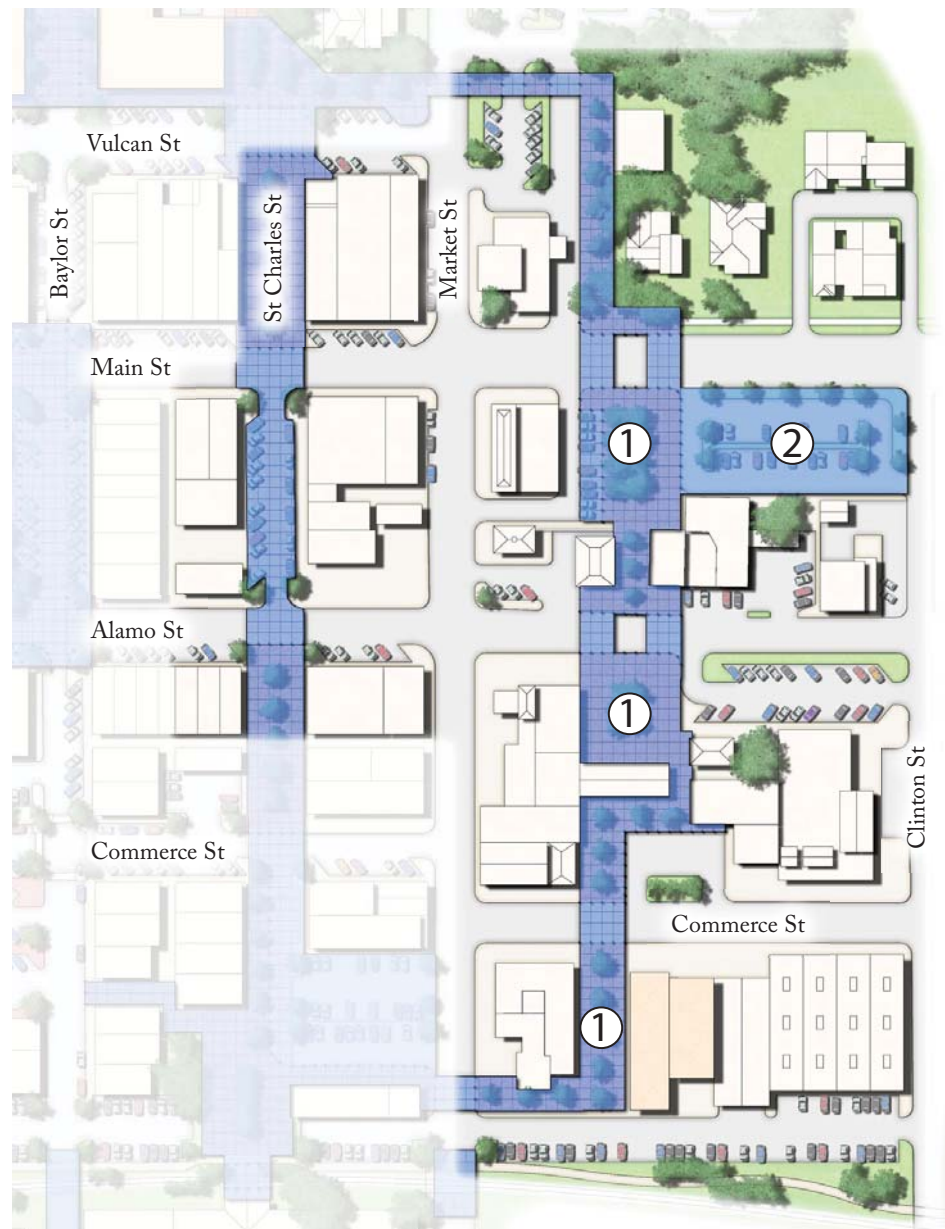


Figure 58: Placemaking Projects: Heritage District

Development Activity: Heritage District

Various forms of development activity will occur in the Heritage District in upcoming years, including preservation, rehabilitation, redevelopment, adaptive reuse, and infill opportunities. Each type of activity requires a different level of participation and oversight by the City.

① **Preservation / Rehabilitation.** Historic structures in this district are important for the preservation of district character and a rehabilitation plan will be important.

② **Redevelopment / Adaptive Reuse.** Those structures that are not historic but are structurally sound and commercially viable should be made available for adaptive reuse. An example of an area that should be targeted for this purpose is the collection of industrial buildings lying between Commerce and the rail spur. This is an ideal site for conversion into studios or industrial lofts.

③ **Infill opportunities.** This area of Downtown should maintain a high level of development density. Vacant land or derelict structures should be positioned for infill development in keeping with the character of the Heritage District.

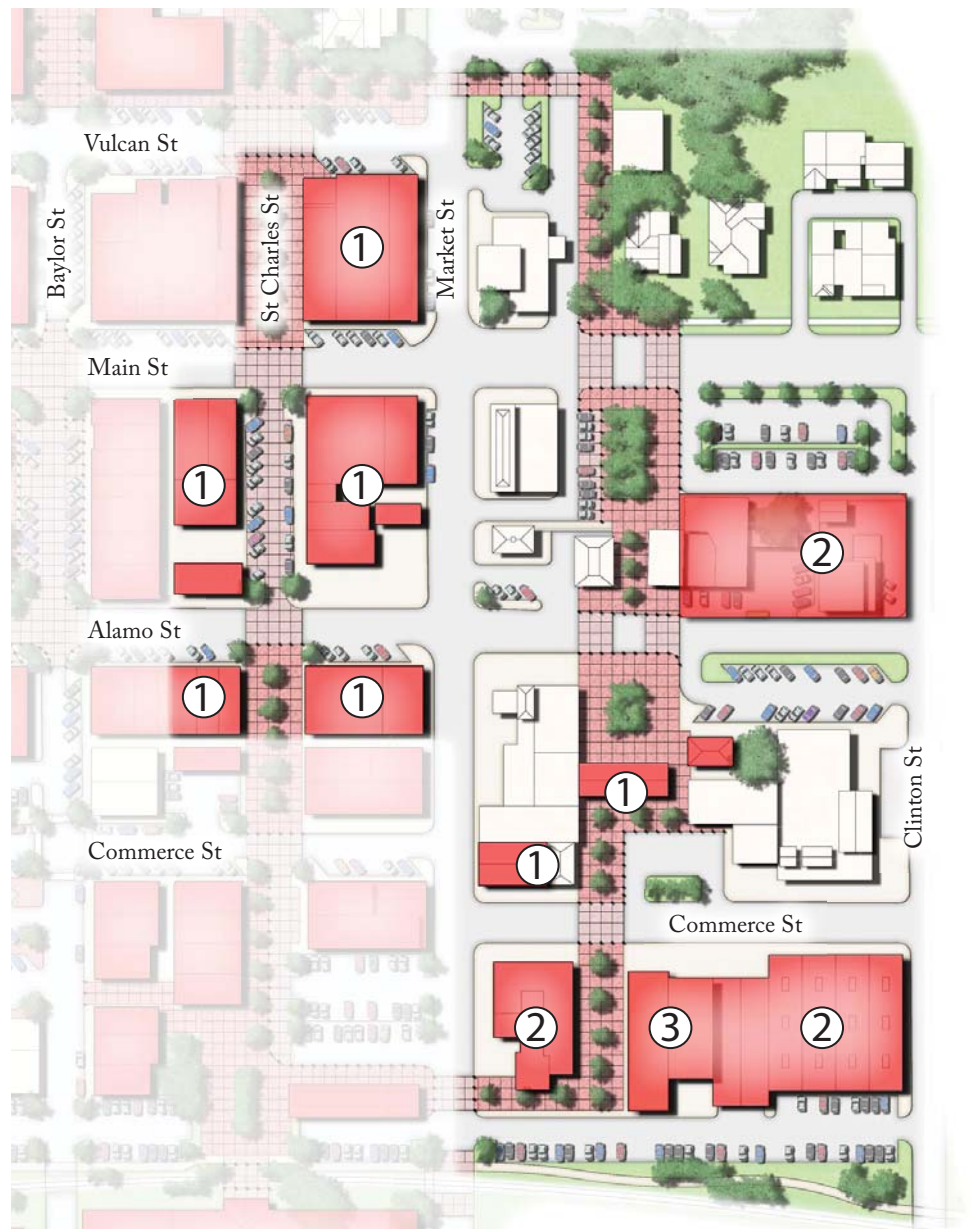


Figure 59: Development Activity: Heritage District

4.6 - CIVIC DISTRICT

The Civic District serves as one of the portals to Downtown Brenham. City Hall generates much of the traffic in this district, but is separated by undefined and underutilized spaces. The Plan calls for more clearly defined parking areas, enhanced public spaces, and integration of the Brookshire Brothers shopping center into the Downtown fabric. This district consists of a mixture of civic and commercial uses, and contains the recommended location for a future Downtown parking garage.



Figure 60: Civic District

Placemaking Projects: Civic District

- ① **Creation of an intersection of Austin and Park Streets at the Brookshire Brothers shopping center entrance.** The current configuration of Austin Parkway provides a split where Park and the Parkway segment converge. This configuration does not provide clear definition of entry into the Downtown area. It makes traffic management more challenging and does very little to integrate the shopping center with Downtown Brenham. The configuration proposed in the Plan will clearly define a public square at the four-way intersection of Park and Austin. The monument that is currently located at the split could be relocated to this new site.
- ② **This proposed configuration would call for significant landscape enhancements along Austin and Park Streets as they approach the intersection.** It would also call for participation of the shopping center owner, as some buildings and parking within this site would need to be reconfigured.
- ③ **Landscape improvements along Vulcan.** The space in front of City Hall along Vulcan should be improved to promote visibility and continuity with adjoining areas Downtown.

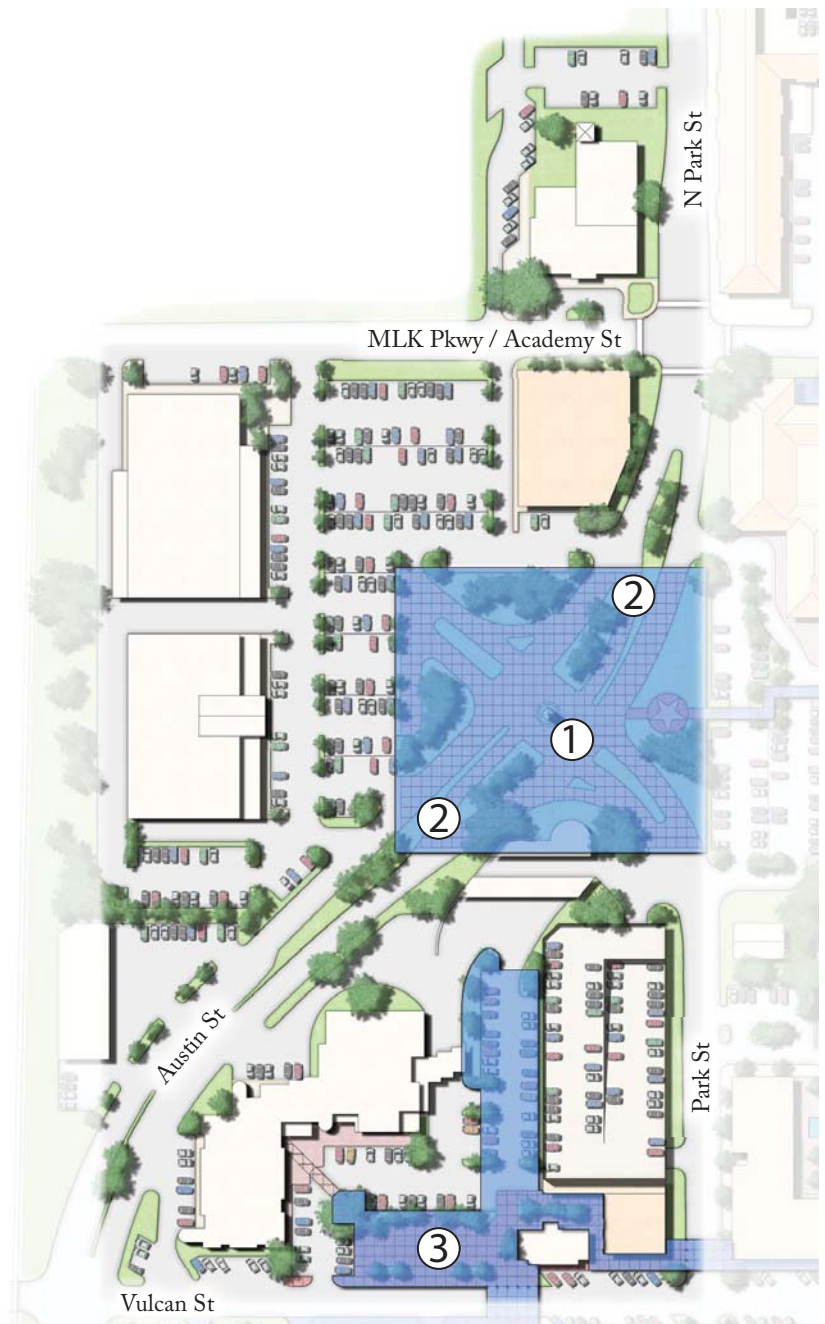


Figure 61: Placemaking Projects: Civic District

Development Activity: Civic District

- ① **Development of a parking garage at the northwest corner of Vulcan and Park Streets.** As activity Downtown increases, the demand for parking will justify a structured solution. The Plan calls for the parking garage to be placed at a point where it will have the greatest level of accessibility to areas of high traffic, while preserving the integrity of the core of Downtown. For this reason, it is recommended to locate this structure as illustrated in Figure 62. This location is adjacent to the proposed hotel complex, one block from the Courthouse Square, and two blocks from the Simon Theatre. Opportunities for retail development on the first floor of the garage should be explored, particularly along Park Street.
- ② **Improvement to existing retail space.** The Brookshire Brothers shopping center is a key retail establishment in the Downtown Area. Re-orientation of the parking apron will open up this property in two ways: it will create opportunity to add to existing retail square footage for the property owner, and it will open up site entry for landscape and streetscape enhancements. This will tie this shopping area into the greater Downtown area, allowing the Downtown experience to cross Austin, and strengthening the significance of the Austin-Park interface. To realize this, the City may serve as a partner to the developer providing appropriate incentives for desired improvements.
- ③ **Library improvements.** Although much of the Downtown plan focuses on opportunities for development and increasing visitorship, it is also important to improve public facilities and services that are offered to local residents. Public libraries are an important civic institution, providing a range of activities to a broad

cross-section of the community. The City has been exploring optional sites for an expansion/improvement of Public Library Facilities. The concept plan indicates how the existing library site could be reconstructed or renovated, preserving this center of community activity within the context of Downtown. Pedestrian crossing at MLK Pkwy and Park St. would be enhanced to visually and functionally tie the library in to the core of Downtown.



Figure 62: Development Activity: Civic District

4.7 - THE PROMENADE

The Promenade is an area of new development in Downtown. The concept for this District focuses on the creation of a promenade in Downtown. Baylor Street is shown as an improved street space that encourages a higher level of pedestrian traffic (Figure 63), connecting the northern reaches of Downtown to The Courthouse Square.

Another key conceptual component of this sub-district is the proposed hotel complex at the northern edge of Vulcan between Park and Baylor. In this concept, the Municipal Building has been replaced by a hotel complex, as illustrated in Figure 64. An enhanced public space is proposed to the north along Baylor to mirror the grounds of the First United Methodist Church. The northwest portion of this sub-district is a proposed redevelopment zone that would provide retail and commercial space, as well as additional parking.



Figure 63: The Promenade Aerial Perspective

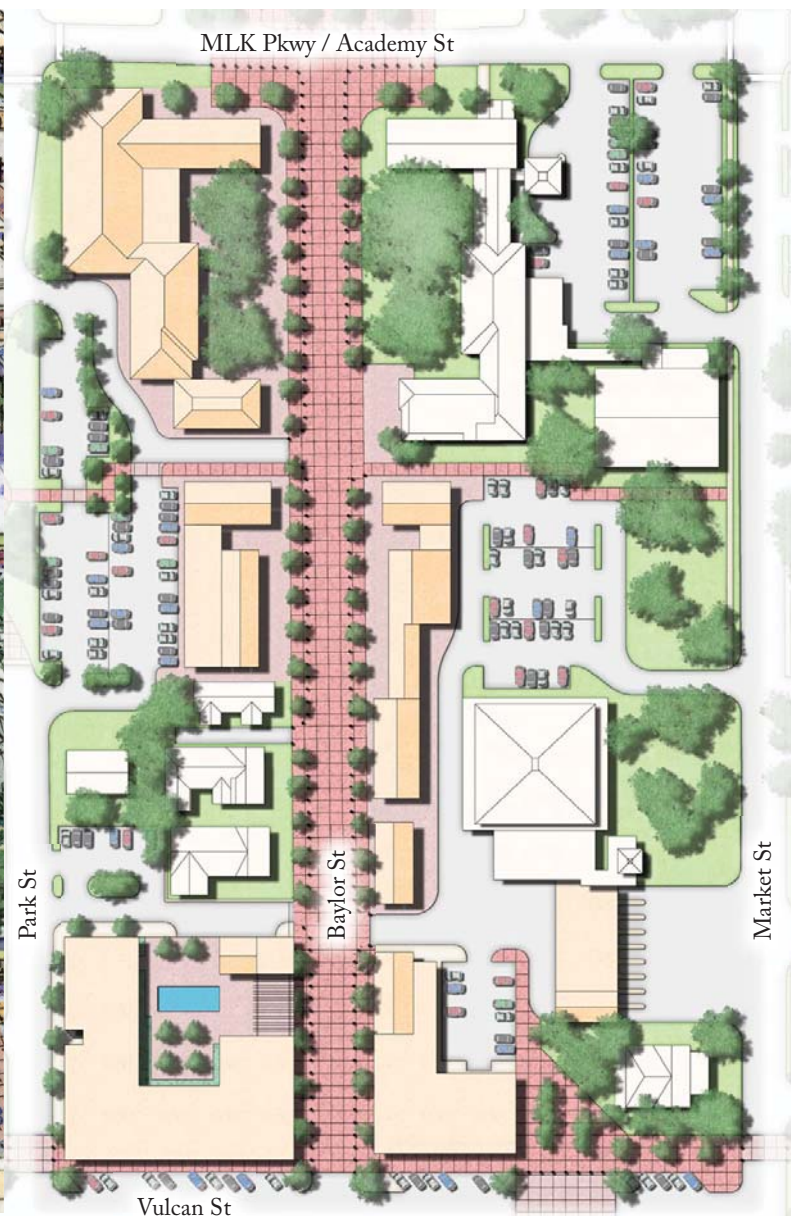


Figure 64: The Promenade

Placemaking Projects in The Promenade

- ① **Streetscape enhancements along Vulcan Street.** Vulcan serves as a major east-west pedestrian connector Downtown. The new development along the northern side of Vulcan should include adequate setbacks to accommodate an expanded pedestrian space in accordance with prescribed design directives (see Design Priorities that follow). This enhanced street space should serve as a connector of all of the north-south pedestrian corridors, from Clinton Street to City Hall.
- ② **Improved public space at the intersection of St. Charles and Vulcan Streets.** The intersection of St. Charles and Vulcan provides opportunity for creation of a public gathering space within this area of Downtown. This space should define a terminus for St. Charles Street and direct traffic eastward and westward.
- ③ **Enhancement of Baylor Street.** Creation of a convertible street thoroughfare designed for both pedestrian and vehicular use.

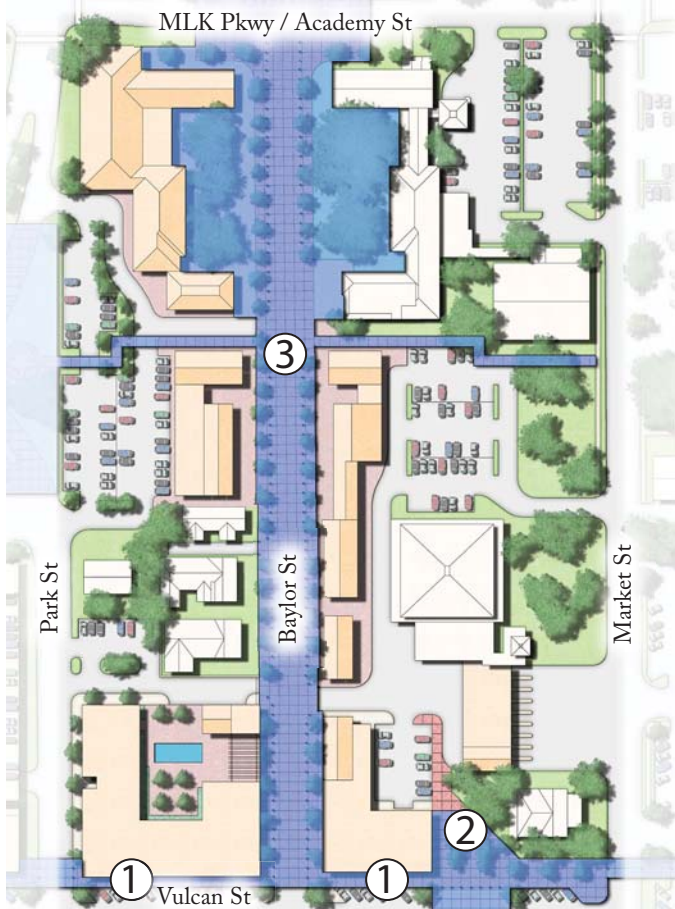


Figure 65: Placemaking Projects: The Promenade

Development Activity in The Promenade

- ① **Creation of dual building frontages for buildings along the southern side of Vulcan Street.** The buildings that are located along the southern side of Vulcan (between Market and Douglas) should be converted to a dual frontage orientation. Rear-side loading areas are no longer necessary for Downtown businesses, therefore these spaces should be converted to promote a higher level of activity along this major Downtown street.
- ② **A new hotel complex would be a significant contribution to Downtown visits, Downtown stays, and Downtown spending.** Placement of this project at this site provides an appropriate opportunity for redevelopment of the existing municipal building property. Renovation of the existing structure could potentially become very costly and complex; by demolishing the existing structure, the new facility could be designed appropriately to fit Downtown Brenham's historic character. It also puts this major development in a contextually appropriate location Downtown. The proximity to the Courthouse Square,

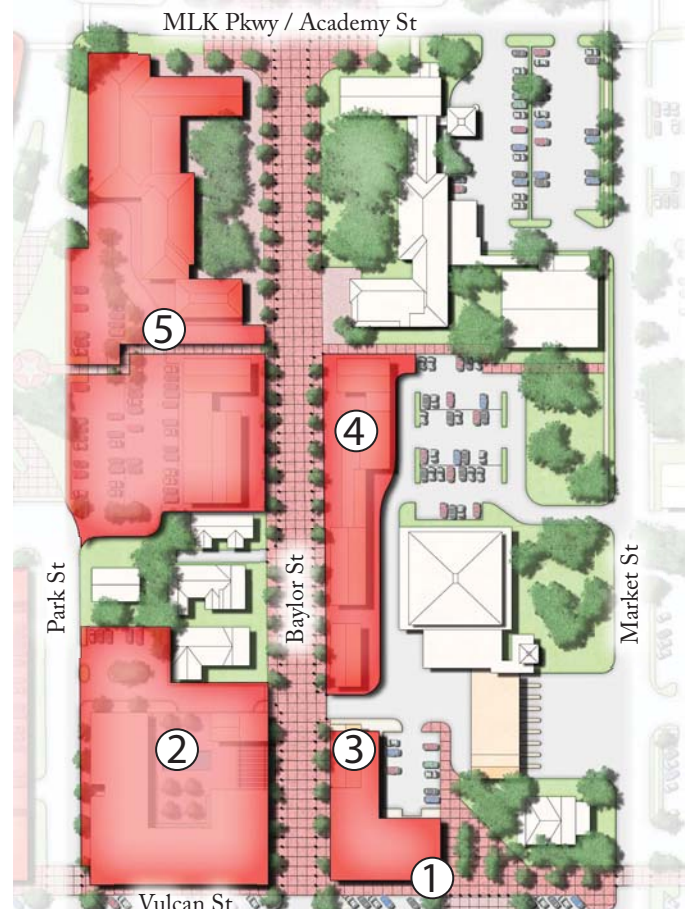


Figure 66: Development Activity: The Promenade



Figure 67: A Perspective of the Hotel Complex Development

the proposed parking garage, the Theater District, and the Heritage District ensures accessibility of Downtown attractions to lodgers. In addition, the major meeting and exhibit space will draw additional events to Downtown Brenham that would not normally be accommodated by the theaters or other venues. For example, the Hotel Complex could support many efforts within Downtown, such as the Simon Theatre. Partnerships will facilitate the redevelopment project, and could possibly be wrapped into the garage development as well. Figure 67 illustrates a perspective of a possible hotel complex project.

③ **Redevelopment of the call center.** The Call Center site, although a viable industry for Downtown, is not consistent with the long-term vision for this area in Downtown Brenham. As the surrounding blocks begin to redevelop, this site should be considered for a more compatible use and more contextually appropriate form.

④ **Redevelopment of the properties on the eastern side of Baylor Street, south of the First United Methodist Church.** The eastern edge of Baylor, just south of the First United Methodist Church should be redeveloped at an appropriate scale. The Post Office property should ultimately be converted into a surface parking area behind the Baylor-fronting retail/commercial establishments.

⑤ **Redevelopment of the western edge of The Promenade.** To meet the parking needs of this district and to promote building forms that are in keeping with the overall character of this district, the western edge of The Promenade should be redeveloped. Buildings should be oriented toward Baylor (The Promenade), which is the spine of the Northern part of Downtown Brenham. An enhanced public space should be provided that mirrors the landscaped grounds of the First United Methodist Church.

4.8 - NORTHSIDE DISTRICT

The Northside District is anchored by the Brenham Clinic. The configuration of land in this district creates a unique opportunity for a multifamily residential project, integrated with medical office space. The concept for this sub-district is therefore a mixed-use redevelopment area that builds upon the activity generated by the clinic and maximizes land availability and market potential for the northern reaches of Downtown Brenham.

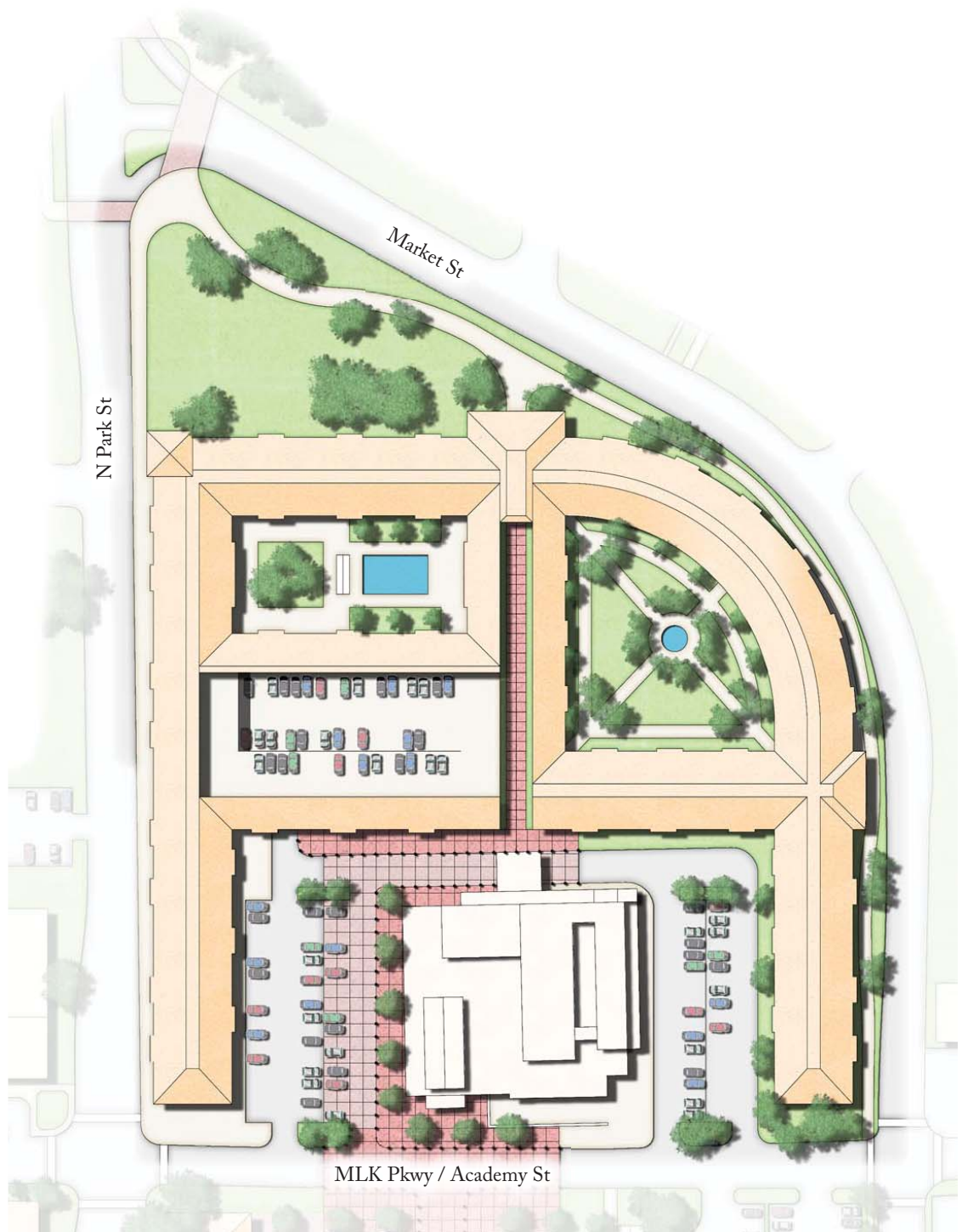


Figure 68: Northside District

Placemaking Projects

- ① **An enhanced public space at the terminus of Baylor Street.** Baylor Street serves as a core component of the circulation network of Downtown Brenham. It also ties the Clinic to the rest of Downtown. The public space, illustrated in Figure 69, more effectively integrates the Clinic with the Downtown fabric, and promotes desirable redevelopment in the surrounding area. This space would penetrate the interior of the District, connecting office, senior housing, healthcare services and retail opportunities within a common system of movement.
- ② **Mark the intersection of Park and Market Streets as a major point of entry into Downtown Brenham.** The intersection of Market and Park is not clearly marked today. As the northern point of entry into

the Downtown area, this intersection should be called out via monumentation, signage, and landscape enhancements.

- ③ **A connection to the regional trail system.** At the northern edge of the Northside District, a connection to the regional trail system should be clearly defined. Appropriate landscape enhancements and signage should be provided to connect Downtown to the surrounding areas of Brenham.
- ④ **An enhanced pedestrian crossing area where Baylor Street Intersects Academy Street / MLK Parkway.** Where Baylor and Academy / MLK meet, an enhanced pedestrian crossing is needed to provide safe and clear directional assistance for visitors, residents and other patrons of this sub-district.

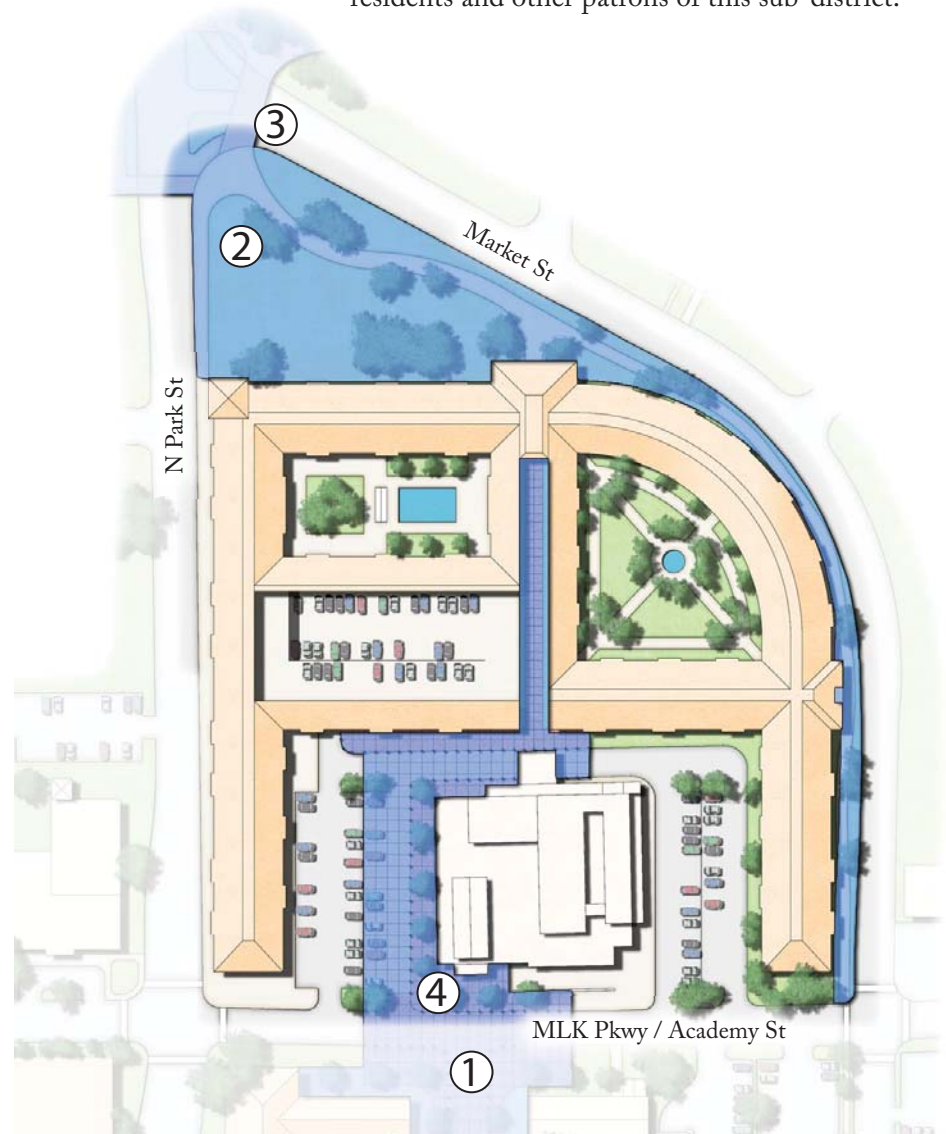


Figure 69: Placemaking Projects: Northside District

Development Activity

- ① A mixed-use development project which complements the Clinic activity and services. The land that surrounds the clinic is well-configured for a mixed-use development project, incorporating multifamily, first floor retail, office use, and structured parking. The type of residences should be complementary to clinic services and activity such as senior housing or assisted living. The commercial component should provide medical office space, and parking demand should be accommodated on-site. The project should provide a uniform building frontage along Market and Park Streets by pulling structures close to the curb to signify approach into an urbanized environment. Parking should be internal to the site.

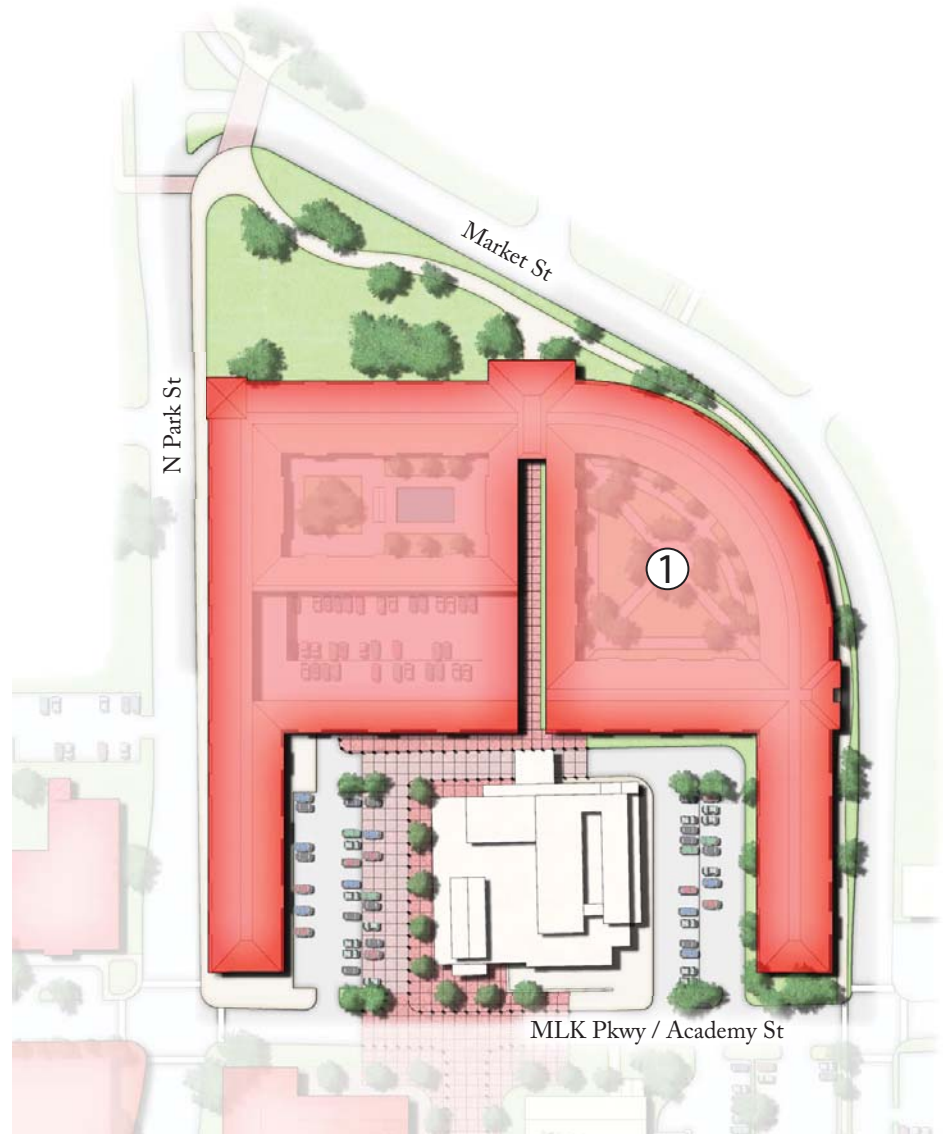


Figure 70: Development Activity: Northside District



Figure 71: Southward Perspective of Downtown Brenham



PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

CHAPTER 5

To implement the plan, two factors are considered: regulation and funding. This chapter therefore includes a section that addresses development regulation, particularly recommended zoning changes and creation of design guidelines for Downtown Brenham. The other section of the implementation chapter deals with funding mechanisms. This section lays out appropriate funding sources and then identifies their applicability within the Downtown districts.

- **Zoning Change #1: Amend the Brenham Zoning Map.** The B3 zoning designation should be applied to all properties within the boundaries of the Master Plan (Figure 73). Because of the addition of approved uses, this will be an upzoning for current property owners who are currently zoned B1, B2, or R2.
- **Zoning Change #2: Amend the list of approved uses and activities for B3.** As the list of approved and conditional uses are defined for each subdistrict, new uses should be incorporated to reinforce and support the activity anchors defined for each subdistrict of the plan.
- **Zoning Change #3: Amend the B3 Zoning Regulations, creating sub-districts in conformance with the Master Plan.** To promote the character and patterns defined by the subdistricts of the plan, it is recommended that lists of approved uses be designated by subdistrict.
- **Zoning Change #4: Establish a Historic Preservation Overlay Zone or amend the B3 Zoning District to conform to Design Guidelines.**

	B1 Local Business Mixed
	B2 Commercial Research and Technology
	B3 Historical & Central Business
	I Industrial
	R2 Mixed Residential

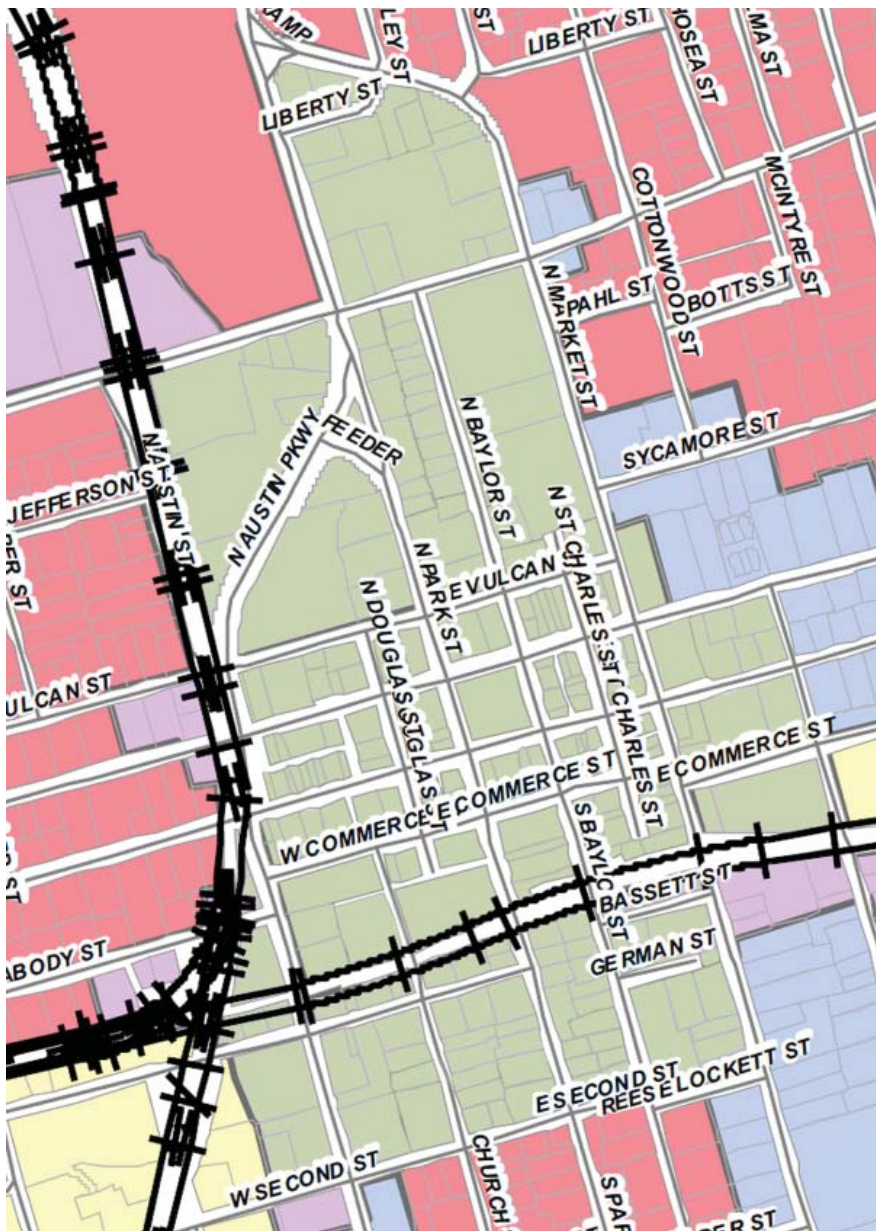


Figure 73: Downtown Brenham Proposed Zoning Amendments

AMENDMENTS TO APPROVED USES

District	Activity Anchor	Amendments to Approved Uses
The Courthouse Square	Courthouse	Vertical Mixed-use (Residential above Retail / Commercial)
Southside District	Farmer's Market	Produce Stands Mobile / Street Vendors Craftsman Merchandising Loading Dock Facilities Public Parking
Depot District	Artist's Market	Gallery Spaces Trolley Station Public Parking
Theater District	Theaters	Public Parking
Heritage District	Museums	Public Plazas Vertical Mixed-use (Residential above Retail / Commercial) Art Studios Multifamily (Industrial Lofts) Public Parking
Civic District	Local Government Center	Parking Garage (Permit Retail on First Floor) Grocery Store Multi-tenant Commercial Centers Public Parking
The Promenade	Hotel Complex	Lodging, 100+ Rooms Conference Center Multi-tenant Commercial Centers Public Parking
Northside District	Clinic	Medical Office Vertical Mixed-use (Residential above Retail / Commercial) Medium - High Density Multifamily (25- 50 units/acre) Pocket Park / Regional Trailhead Assisted Living Multifamily

Figure 74: Amendments to Approved Uses

DESIGN GUIDELINES AND DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

Draft design guidelines for Downtown, following the sub-district structure and the development directives defined by the Downtown Master Plan.

- **Component #1: Standards.** The guidelines need to address both public and private spaces. Standards for private spaces should address both sites and buildings. Standards for public spaces should address streetscape, parking areas, and parks/activity areas, as well as public facilities. The following is an outline of major factors to consider when constructing design guidelines for Downtown Brenham.

Private Buildings (Architectural Guidelines)

- Bullets listing what should be addressed in architectural design guidelines for private properties

Private Spaces (Site Design Guidelines)

- On-site Parking
- Landscaping
- Pedestrian Spaces
- Loading and Screening
- Access
- Lighting
- Signage
- Interface with Public Space (merchandise, dining, etc. in sidewalk space)

Public Buildings (Architectural Guidelines)

- Bullets listing what should be addressed in architectural design guidelines for public facilities

Streetscape and Parking Areas

- Street Design
- Parking Areas
- Intersections and Corners
- Pedestrian spaces
- Lighting
- Signage
- Landscape / Hardscape

Open Spaces

- Landscape / Hardscape
- Lighting
- Signage
- Accessibility
- Public Art

- **Component #2: Procedures and Provisions.** The design guidelines should also address procedures and provisions related to public and private improvements in the Downtown area. Clearly defining development procedures creates a stable environment for investment, as steps for approval and time constraints are spelled out, making the process more predictable for developers. The following are procedures and provisions that the Design Guidelines should define.

Procedures

- Zoning Amendment
- Major Improvement
- Minor Improvement
- Appeals and Variances
- Non-conforming Uses

Provisions

- Purpose and Intent
- Definitions
- Authority
- Enforcement
- Fees and Assessments
- Penalties

5.2 - REVENUE STREAMS AND DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVES:

FUNDING DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY

The realization of the Downtown Master Plan will depend upon the ability to access available programs to fund public improvements and incentivize private development. The following pages identify programs that could be utilized to fund the activities recommended in this plan.

The recommended tools have been organized as three groups: municipal revenue streams for public improvements, State and Federal loans and grants, and development incentives. For each tool, the applicability and source of funds is identified, as well as the unique advantages that it offers for Downtown Brenham.

Following the description of available funding mechanisms is a series of tables that indicates which mechanism is most applicable to each of the districts of downtown Brenham. The intent is to provide a guide to plan implementation that is built on capabilities to fund particular projects.

MUNICIPAL REVENUE STREAMS

Developer financing. The creation of a Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone (TIRZ) to capture Tax Increment Financing (TIF) will attract private investment to downtown Brenham, as the increment created through improvements will provide a mechanism for reimbursement of initial investments made by the developer. This method of project financing is advantageous for municipalities, in that it minimizes exposures associated with development costs. Since the funds for reimbursement are generated by the tax dollars generated by the improvement, the City does not sacrifice any existing revenue. Development agreements crafted under Chapter 380 of the Texas Local Government Code can be structured in a similar manner, and actually afford a greater level of flexibility with respect to terms and provisions that can be established for reimbursement.

General property assessments. Property taxes provide the base of Brenham's General Fund. These funds have defined restrictions as to use and applicability. With respect to development activity, general funds are most appropriately used for improvements that provide a benefit to the community at-large, or that facilitate realization of an adopted plan or initiative that grew out of a city-wide participation process.

District Specific Assessments. In addition to real property taxes, additional assessments can be created for designated districts within a municipality. These assessments fund improvements within the defined district. The two most common types of assessment districts in Texas include Public Improvement Districts (PIDs) and Business Improvement Districts (BIDs). The designation of these districts requires support and involvement of property owners within the district, as they must agree to the added assessment of real property. Funds generated through this assessment are tied to provisions defined when the district is created, and typically focus on improvements to public spaces, building facades, and economic development.

User-related fees. Revenue streams can also be generated by particular uses and activities downtown. Parking revenues are a common revenue generator in downtown areas. Although metered parking is not a desirable alternative for parking management downtown, fee-based parking is recommended for select areas downtown. As new lots/parking areas are created, these should be considered for designation as fee-based parking areas. Should a parking garage be developed downtown, this would be a fee-based parking area.

Sales tax revenues. The State of Texas provides several instruments for allocation of State Sales Tax for local use. The most common of these are the 4(A) and 4(B) sales tax revenues appropriated by municipal economic development corporations. In addition to the 4(A) and 4(B) designations, sales tax revenues can also be appropriated via venue project tax revenues, municipal management districts and municipal development districts. Regardless

of the instrument, no municipality can divert more than 2% of sales for economic development activity. Typically the EDC is the steward of sales tax dollars designed for economic development purposes.

Venue tax revenues. The Venue Tax is another source of revenues for economic development for municipalities, should the municipality meet requirements for imposing an additional local hotel occupancy tax. The tax is imposed on hotel room usage, and can be used in accordance with Chapter 351 of the Texas Tax Code. Funds generated by the venue tax can be used to promote tourism and the convention/hotel industry. Uses include those related to tourism industry, especially ones associated with a convention center or visitor information center. Examples of approved uses include: attracting tourists, promotion of the arts, historic restoration and preservation, promotion of historic sites, signage associated with tourism, construction of recreational venues, and other activities that directly enhance and promote tourism and the convention and hotel industry.

STATE AND FEDERAL GRANTS AND LOANS

The following state and federal departments offer assistance to economic development initiatives in local communities:

Department of Agriculture. The Department of Agriculture offers several granting programs for rural communities. These are available to municipalities with a population of less than 25,000 that meet certain programmatic criteria. Examples of applicable programs include Rural community Development Initiative Grants, Rural Community Facility Grants and Rural Business Enterprise Grants. In Texas, the Texas Capital Fund is a potential source of grants and loans for projects in Brenham. The USDA also offers assistance through its Community Facilities Loans (Direct and Indirect) and Grants. Another USDA program that would be useful in Downtown Brenham is the Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP). An example of a new program funded by FMPP is the Oregon Cheese Trail, a comprehensive agritourism and media outreach initiative.



Texas Historical Commission. The Texas Historical Commission provides grants through multiple programs for preservation projects in Texas towns. Although a few programs are currently suspended, the following are still active: Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program, Texas Heritage Tourism Partnership Grants, and Certified Local Government Grants for Historic Preservation.

National Endowment for the Arts. The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) is an independent federal agency supporting art organizations and artist alike. One of the existing programs that the NEA offers that would benefit Downtown Brenham is the Our Town Grant Program. This program seeks to promote creative placemaking by providing grants to assist in improving livability in communities in places with arts at their core. This program provides assistance for planning, design and arts engagement activities, such as industry cluster/hub development, creative entrepreneurship, design of rehearsal, studio or live/work spaces for artists, community engagement activities, festivals, and performances in non-traditional spaces and public art.

Texas Parks and Wildlife (TPW). Though funding has been tight with TPW over the past few years, the trails program is still active. TPW would be a viable candidate for partnership in the development of the greenbelt along the rail right of way.

Department of Transportation (TxDOT). Like TPW, the ability of TxDOT to fund community projects has been constricted over the past few years. However, certain funding mechanisms are still viable, and worth investigating for assistance for some of the recommended projects in Downtown Brenham. The Transportation Enhancement Program funds community projects related to pedestrian and bicycle facilities and programs, scenic easements, historic preservation, transportation museums and preservation of abandoned railway corridors.

DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVES

The following programs provide incentives to private developers that are in keeping with the priorities and recommendations defined by the Downtown Master Plan.

Tax abatement. Abatement of property tax can be conducted downtown as a provision of a development agreement. Tax abatement can also be defined as an approved incentive within a special district designated downtown, such as a TIRZ or a Municipal Management District. The terms for abatement typically address percentage and period of applicability.

Tax credits. Historic Preservation Tax Credits and New Markets Tax Credits can be provided to incentivize desirable development activity. New Markets Tax Credits are more common in low income areas, and therefore not a likely tool for downtown Brenham. Historic Preservation Tax Credits, however, could be promoted as an incentive to the preservation and rehabilitation of a number of buildings in Downtown Brenham.

Development cost recovery / reimbursement. Tax Increment Financing benefits municipalities, in that it defers the cost of public improvements and removes the

risk of public investment in private development. It is also an attractive tool for private developers, in that it provides a return on investment commensurate with project success, creating a revenue stream for compensation for investment in public components of a project. Public commitments to projects in these districts also aids in procurement of project financing.

In-Kind Investments / Incentives. There are several ways in which the City can create value for developers without a direct monetary contribution. Two common in-kind mechanisms of this nature include density bonuses and land swapping. Density bonuses are typically used to incentivize restrictions to development in certain areas. In such cases, the city awards the developer a higher permitted density than what the existing zoning allows, in return for compliance with a more restrictive development scenario elsewhere on his property. Land swaps allow the City to influence development patterns by exchanging city-owned property for privately owned property. This is especially helpful when parcels are constrained in some fashion, but would perform well if they were less encumbered. This also gives the City a measure of control over where development occurs, and therefore the overall form of a given sector of their community.

LOAN GUARANTEES

Cities and public entities can help developers overcome their capital constraints through loan guarantees. Conventional mechanisms for such guarantees include HUD's Section 108 Loan Guarantees, which provide communities with a source of financing for economic development, housing rehabilitation, public facilities, and large-scale physical development projects. CDBG allocations are typically pledged as a security. Another more innovative approach to loan guarantees is one in which the City and the property owner both contribute equity toward a loan. This allows the City to assume some of the developer's debt exposure, providing Gap Financing to make up the difference between owner equity and the necessary capital. This type of Loan Guarantee is discussed more fully in the Appendices.

COUNTY FUNDING

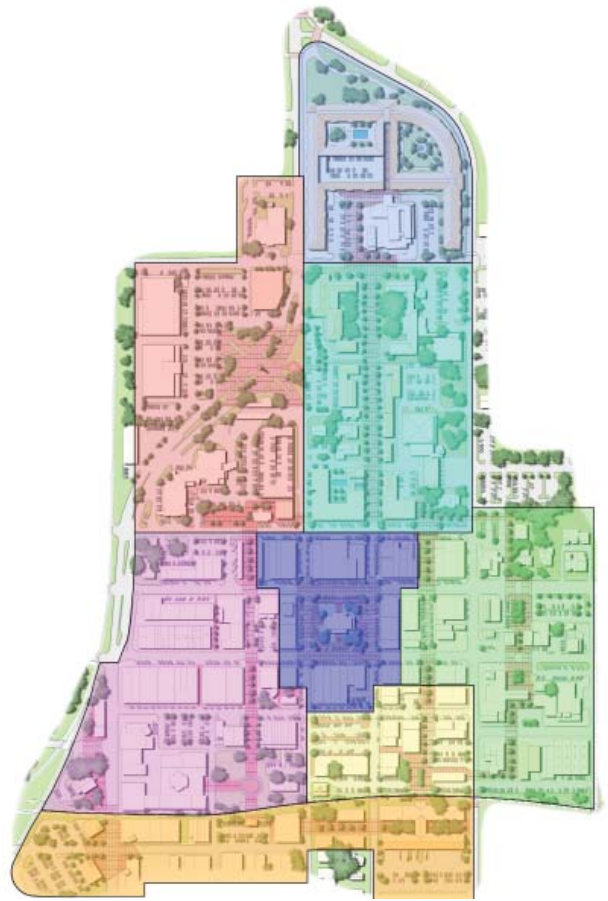
Washington County is a significant land owner in Downtown Brenham and therefore a significant partner in the area's revitalization. Like Cities, Counties are granted certain Economic Development enablements (by the Texas Local Government Code and acts of legislature) that can compliment and enhance a city's economic development initiatives. These enablements include:

1. The County Development District Act provides that counties with certain populations (this qualifying population maximum has changed several times in recent years and is subject to further revision but is currently less than 400,000) with a means to generate sales tax funds for economic development. However, the combined sales tax rate must not exceed the 2% statutory cap for local sales tax. Voters, through creation of a County Development District, may move sales tax appropriations from one activity to another but the aggregate must be no more than 2%. At least 6 counties have formed such a district and include: Cherokee, Denton, Erath, Hood, Jasper and Kaufmann. The County Development District must promote and develop tourism (see Chapter 383 of the Texas Local Government Code). County Development Districts can levee an additional assessment but such additional costs to property owners often meet with resistance.
2. Like Cities, Counties can levee a Venue Project Tax. House Bill 92 provides cities and counties with broad authority to fund a wide array of economic development projects. According to the 2008 Economic Development Laws for Texas Cities, "Venue project revenue sources that can be adopted include sale tax, hotel tax, short term motor vehicle rental tax, event parking tax, event admissions tax, and a venue facility use tax." A combination of city and county working together may create a "Sports and Community Venue District" (chapter 335 of the Texas Local Government Code).
3. Cities and counties can partner through Interlocal Agreements that allow them to contract with one another to accomplish mutual goals. The subject of the Interlocal Agreement must be to perform a "government function" which can include (under the topic of "other government functions") activities related to economic development. Required conditions of such agreements are specified in the Interlocal Cooperation Act.
4. Section 381.001 of the Local Government Code authorizes counties to promote economic development through County Industrial Commissions. In addition, the same section authorizes counties to create County Boards of Development and such board may administer expenditure of a development fund. The Commissioners Court may set aside a portion of the County Ad valorem tax (not to exceed \$.05/ \$100 valuation) for the development fund.
5. Like cities, counties have bonding authority and can fund capital projects with voter approved general obligation bonds or revenue bonds.

Because sales taxes are capped at 2% and ad valorem taxes are so politically sensitive, counties have little flexibility to manipulate such taxes to fund economic development projects. Therefore, the county's most effective economic development action is to participate with cities in creation of a TIRZ. The scale of potential incentive and reimbursement from a TIRZ is significantly greater if the county joins the city in relinquishing the increment of value increase (as a result of economic development) to the projects and/ or partnership obligations that facilitate such increase.

FUNDING STRATEGIES FOR AREA-WIDE COMPONENTS

The following graphs illustrate how the Revenue Streams, State and Federal Grants and Loans, and Development Incentives are applied to each of the Area-Wide Components (Parking, Circulation, & Pedestrian Network), Place-making Projects by sub-district, and Development Activity by sub-district.



Municipal Revenue Streams						State and Federal Grants and Loans					Development Incentives				
Developer Financing (PPP)	General Property Assessments	District Specific Assessments	Use-Related Fees	Sales Tax	Venue and Tourism Related Taxes	Department of Agriculture	Texas Historical Commission	National Endowment for the Arts	Texas Parks and Wildlife	Department of Transportation	Tax Abatement	Tax Credits	Development Cost Recovery/Reimbursement	In Kind Investments	Loan Guarantees

PARKING

- Parking Lots
- Parking Garage at NW Vulcan and Park
- On-Street Parking

	X	X	X	X											X	
X	X	X	X	X	X						X		X			
	X	X	X													

CIRCULATION

- Convert One Ways to Two Ways
- Main at Austin - Reconfiguration

	X		X							X						
	X		X							X						

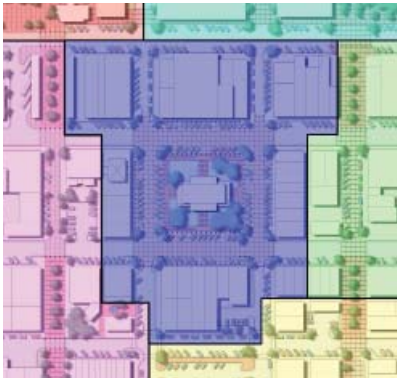
PEDESTRIAN NETWORK

- Convertible Street Spaces
- Mid-block Pedestrian Spine east of Market
- Coordinate Parking and Pedestrian Portals
- Greenbelt Along Rail Spur

	X	X		X												
X		X		X											X	
		X	X	X												
X				X				X	X	X				X		

Figure 75: Funding Strategies for Area-Wide Components

THE COURTHOUSE SQUARE



Municipal Revenue Streams						State and Federal Grants and Loans					Development Incentives				
Developer Financing (PPP)	General Property Assessments	District Specific Assessments	Use-Related Fees	Sales Tax	Venue and Tourism Related Taxes	Department of Agriculture	Texas Historical Commission	National Endowment for the Arts	Texas Parks and Wildlife	Department of Transportation	Tax Abatement	Tax Credits	Development Cost Recovery/Reimbursement	In Kind Investments	Loan Guarantees

PLACE-MAKING PROJECTS

- Relocate Valued Landscape Components
- Head-in Parking Around Courthouse
- Raise Street Space (Traffic Table)

				X			X							X	
	X													X	
	X	X		X						X					

DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY

- Preservation / Reuse of Existing Buildings
- Courthouse Improvements

		X		X			X				X	X			X
		X		X			X							X	

Figure 76: Funding Strategies for The Courthouse Square

SOUTHSIDE DISTRICT



Municipal Revenue Streams						State and Federal Grants and Loans					Development Incentives				
Developer Financing (PPP)	General Property Assessments	District Specific Assessments	Use-Related Fees	Sales Tax	Venue and Tourism Related Taxes	Department of Agriculture	Texas Historical Commission	National Endowment for the Arts	Texas Parks and Wildlife	Department of Transportation	Tax Abatement	Tax Credits	Development Cost Recovery/Reimbursement	In Kind Investments	Loan Guarantees

PLACE-MAKING PROJECTS

- First Street Extension
- Mid-block Pedestrian Track Crossing
- Improve Streets that Cross Tracks
- Buffers to Separate Public Space from RR track

	X	X		X				X							
	X	X		X		X									
	X			X											
X	X	X		X											

DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY

- Beaumier Iron Works Reuse
- 1st Street Rehabilitation

						X	X	X			X	X	X		
X	X	X		X			X	X			X	X			X

Figure 77: Funding Strategies for the Southside District

DEPOT DISTRICT



Municipal Revenue Streams						State and Federal Grants and Loans					Development Incentives				
Developer Financing (PPP)	General Property Assessments	District Specific Assessments	Use-Related Fees	Sales Tax	Venue and Tourism Related Taxes	Department of Agriculture	Texas Historical Commission	National Endowment for the Arts	Texas Parks and Wildlife	Department of Transportation	Tax Abatement	Tax Credits	Development Cost Recovery/Reimbursement	In Kind Investments	Loan Guarantees

PLACE-MAKING PROJECTS

- Visitor Parking Lot
- Mid-block Pedestrian Track Crossing
- Improve Streets that Cross Tracks
- Buffers to Separate Public Space from RR track

X	X	X	X	X				X			X		X		
X		X		X						X	X		X	X	
	X	X		X											
X				X							X	X	X	X	

DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY

- Convert Market Area to Gallery Space
- Rehabilitate Existing Buildings on Market

X		X		X			X	X			X		X		X
X		X		X			X				X		X		X

Figure 78: Funding Strategies for the Depot District

THEATER DISTRICT



Municipal Revenue Streams						State and Federal Grants and Loans					Development Incentives				
Developer Financing (PPP)	General Property Assessments	District Specific Assessments	Use-Related Fees	Sales Tax	Venue and Tourism Related Taxes	Department of Agriculture	Texas Historical Commission	National Endowment for the Arts	Texas Parks and Wildlife	Department of Transportation	Tax Abatement	Tax Credits	Development Cost Recovery/Reimbursement	In Kind Investments	Loan Guarantees

PLACE-MAKING PROJECTS

- Tour Bus Loading Area
- Public Plaza at Douglas Southern Terminus
- Reorganize Parking around Unity Theater

	X	X			X										
		X		X	X							X		X	
X	X	X		X	X			X			X			X	

DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY

- Infill along Main Street

											X		X		X
--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	---	--	---	--	---

Figure 79: Funding Strategies for the Theater District

HERITAGE DISTRICT



Municipal Revenue Streams						State and Federal Grants and Loans					Development Incentives				
Developer Financing (PPP)	General Property Assessments	District Specific Assessments	Use-Related Fees	Sales Tax	Venue and Tourism Related Taxes	Department of Agriculture	Texas Historical Commission	National Endowment for the Arts	Texas Parks and Wildlife	Department of Transportation	Tax Abatement	Tax Credits	Development Cost Recovery/ Reimbursement	In Kind Investments	Loan Guarantees

PLACE-MAKING PROJECTS

Mid-block Courtyards on Pedestrian Spine
Public Parking southwest of Main and Clinton

		X		X				X	X					X	
X	X	X		X								X		X	

DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY

Preserve / Rehabilitate Historic Buildings
Promote Historic Designations as Appropriate
Redevelop Appropriate Lots
Redevelop Appropriate Blocks
Infill Projects that Promote Density
Rehabilitation of the Cannery Site

X		X					X				X	X	X		X
							X					X			
X							X				X		X		X
X				X							X		X	X	
				X		X	X				X			X	

Figure 80: Funding Strategies for the Heritage District

CIVIC DISTRICT



Municipal Revenue Streams						State and Federal Grants and Loans					Development Incentives				
Developer Financing (PPP)	General Property Assessments	District Specific Assessments	Use-Related Fees	Sales Tax	Venue and Tourism Related Taxes	Department of Agriculture	Texas Historical Commission	National Endowment for the Arts	Texas Parks and Wildlife	Department of Transportation	Tax Abatement	Tax Credits	Development Cost Recovery/ Reimbursement	In Kind Investments	Loan Guarantees

PLACE-MAKING PROJECTS

Improve Austin-Park Intersection
Landscape Improvements along Vulcan
Pedestrian Crossing of Austin

	X			X	X								X	X	
	X			X	X						X		X		
	X			X	X					X					

DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY

Shopping Center Improvement
Library Improvement
Increase Parking Capacity with Garage

X				X							X		X	X	X
	X		X			X								X	
	X		X												

Figure 81: Funding Strategies for the Civic District

THE PROMENADE



Municipal Revenue Streams						State and Federal Grants and Loans					Development Incentives				
Developer Financing (PPP)	General Property Assessments	District Specific Assessments	Use-Related Fees	Sales Tax	Venue and Tourism Related Taxes	Department of Agriculture	Texas Historical Commission	National Endowment for the Arts	Texas Parks and Wildlife	Department of Transportation	Tax Abatement	Tax Credits	Development Cost Recovery/Reimbursement	In Kind Investments	Loan Guarantees

PLACE-MAKING PROJECTS

- Streetscape Enhancements along Vulcan
- Improved Public Space at St. Charles and Vulcan
- Public Parking NE of Austin-Park Interface

X	X	X		X	X						X		X		
X	X	X		X	X						X		X	X	
X					X								X	X	

DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY

- Hotel Complex
- Dual Frontages on Vulcan (Southern Side)
- Redevelop the Call Center Site
- Redevelop Baylor St (east), south of Church
- Redevelop western edge of Promenade

X				X	X						X		X		X
X				X							X		X		
X											X		X		
X											X		X		X
X											X		X		X

Figure 82: Funding Strategies for The Promenade

NORTHSIDE DISTRICT



Municipal Revenue Streams						State and Federal Grants and Loans					Development Incentives				
Developer Financing (PPP)	General Property Assessments	District Specific Assessments	Use-Related Fees	Sales Tax	Venue and Tourism Related Taxes	Department of Agriculture	Texas Historical Commission	National Endowment for the Arts	Texas Parks and Wildlife	Department of Transportation	Tax Abatement	Tax Credits	Development Cost Recovery/Reimbursement	In Kind Investments	Loan Guarantees

PLACE-MAKING PROJECTS

- Enhanced Public Space at Baylor Terminus
- Park-Market Intersection Enhancements
- Connect to Regional Trail System

	X			X	X										
	X				X										
	X								X	X					

DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY

- Mixed Use Redevelopment north of Clinic
- Commercial Development along Park St.

X											X		X		
X											X		X		X

Figure 83: Funding Strategies for the Northside District



SUMMARY

The Summary section lays out the overall development strategy for Downtown Brenham. It presents the overall project objectives, the core initiatives, physical design solutions, and the development priorities for plan realization.

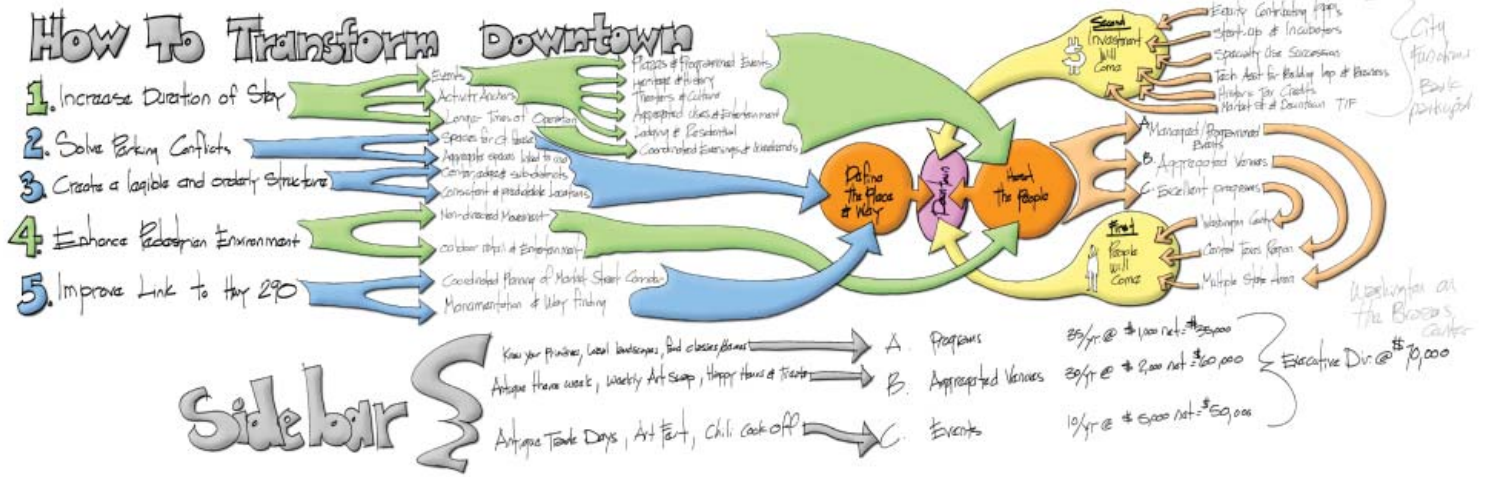


Figure 84: Implementation Strategy Diagram

The diagram presented above is a graphic summary of the proposed implementation strategy for downtown Brenham. It is built around two primary initiatives that will transform downtown. These initiatives are:

- 1. Define the place and way to it.** The key to the plan recommendations made in this study is the improvement of access to downtown and the improvement of movement (vehicular and pedestrian) within downtown. On a macro level connections will open a legible and desirable way to downtown as a place defined by the spaces and connections made within it.
- 2. Host the people and their shared activities.** Once place and way are available to host movement and other activity, the second key element of the strategy is the filling those spaces and connections with events, gatherings, trips and a host of things people do in a destination setting.

The strategy suggests that people will come to participate in activities they cannot enjoy in other locations and once people come for extended periods of time they will spend money and in an environment populated by people spending money, investment will occur. In this way, the strategy satisfies the three attributes of an investment environment:

- 1. The promise of return.** The likelihood that once one opens a business, they will find sufficient patronage. The believability of this outcome lies in the extent to which people come to downtown for other reasons and the amount of time they spend there (which translated into particular kinds of expenditures).
- 2. Stability.** Greater destination significance of downtown and greater location within the patterns of local movement will make downtown more valuable (appreciating) and such upward trending will establish greater stability.
- 3. Mitigation of risk.** Public investment in those initiatives required to accomplish both place, definition, way and people activities also serve to increasingly diminish the risk of unproven markets and uncertain outcomes. In its totality, mitigation of risk will require certain public/ private partnerships as well.

The following text explores the elements of strategy that go into accomplishing the outcomes described above.

THE FIVE CORE INITIATIVES

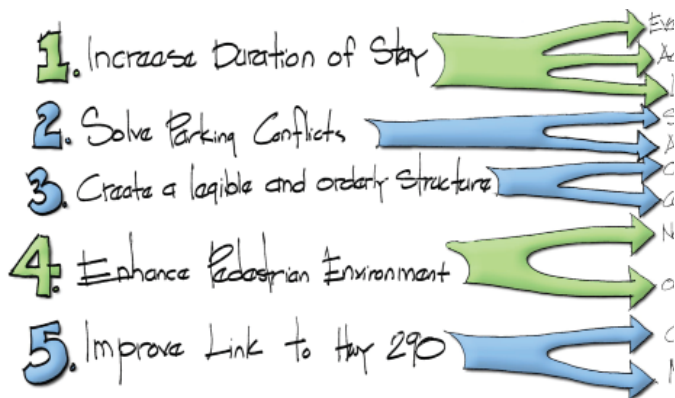


Figure 85: The Five Core Initiatives

In order to embark upon a plan for downtown Brenham that attracts new investment and development, the present downtown (in terms of constellation of land uses) must be transformed from a traffic driven retail environment to a destination driven retail environment. In this transformation certain physical changes to the present context will take place and some must be publically initiated. Therefore, the strategy for investment and development will be implemented both physically and programmatically. More specifically, there are 5 key areas of transformation that must lead the way to desired economic and environmental outcomes. These 5 transformations are:

1. **Increase the duration of stay.** How long people spend in a retail environment has a direct bearing on how much they are likely to spend. Longer stays precipitate greater expenditures. Also, longer stays are necessary to support increased specialization in the items sold. Therefore, a key initiative in the overall strategy is those actions that would increase the duration of stay.
2. **Solve current parking conflicts (and enhance parking capacity).** Retail and commercial land uses will always require an availability of parking because most people will arrive at the retail or commercial setting via automobile. At present downtown is under-parked relative to its retail potential and there is active conflict between long-term and short-term

use of the more convenient spaces. Therefore, creation of sufficient parking that is accessible to people/shoppers is another key initiative in the revitalization strategy.

3. **Create a legible and orderly value structure and physical organization.** Earlier in this plan, a description of the existing value structure was presented with the conclusion that an attractive investment environment offered a place for many levels of investment within a coherent value structure. Instead of places with high value adjacent to places with depreciating value, there needs to be a larger mosaic of general appreciation at all levels of value. This requires a clear value structure with strong centers/ nodes and places in between. Therefore, distribution of those things that bring value is a very important initiative of the implementation strategy.
4. **Enhance the pedestrian environment.** The environment envisioned for downtown and sought by shoppers hoping to get out of their car and spend time in a people friendly setting, requires paths and places for people that are not dominated by traffic. Consequently, initiatives which create enriched pedestrian environments are important as is the need to make movement between destinations within that pedestrian system clear and comprehensible.
5. **Improve the downtown linkage to Hwy 290 and other primary routes into the City.** Place is ultimately the greatest determinant of value. Place is defined by proximity and proximity is defined by connection or accessibility to primary value references. In this case the primary value reference is regional patterns of circulation. Therefore, the extent to which the operational distance between patterns of regional circulation and downtown exist (as a result of rerouting, bypassing and increasing confusion as to ways to get to downtown) the less proximity downtown will have and the less value it will realize.

THE ELEVEN MEANS OF IMPLEMENTING THE FIVE CORE INITIATIVES

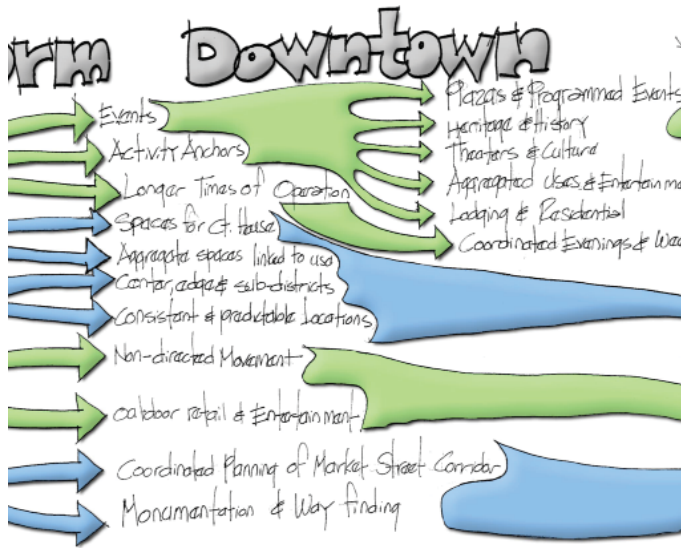


Figure 86: Means of Implementation

The previously described core initiatives will require a series of particular actions leading to outcomes that fulfill the intent of each. The relation between initiative and activity is the same as the relation between goal (initiative) and objective (action). Therefore, pursuit of the five initiatives would require the following activities:

1. Increase the duration of stay

- Events.** There is a range of aggregation that includes activities, venues and events. Activities are things we do, such as shop for antiques and it only takes one antique store to host that activity. Activities do not have much spatial reach in terms of market attraction and for this reason, most stand alone retail establishments (such as a fast food franchise) define their market areas in terms of a 5 minute drive time window. When several activities are brought together (such as a district of antique stores) they constitute a venue. This allows people to shop for longer periods of time in an environment where the offerings are significantly greater than a single store could put forward. Therefore, venues have a greater spatial reach than activities and can include multi-county areas. Events define a level of aggregation with the greatest spatial reach.

Where the scale of venues is significant, the activities within that venue can work together to host events (such as a monthly antique market) and such events can bring people from across the state and from distant places across the nation. Events can really extend the duration of stay and provide justification for hotel investment. The presence of hotels significantly extends stay and precipitates numerous transactions that support other commercial activities which support the venue (such as restaurants).

- Activity anchors.** “Activity anchors” is a broad term which includes publically driven activities, population driven activities and retail or commercial driven activities. Publically driven activities include such things as civic events, ceremonial events, celebratory events, seasonal events, etc. Population driven activities include political gatherings, demonstrations, etc. Retail or commercial driven events include street fairs, trade days, meets, cultural performances, etc. Typically these activities occur within the various forms of public domain including plazas, pedestrian ways, amphitheaters, etc. Every meaningful destination has an activity anchor component and it is for this reason that places like Disney and Six Flags program events in their central areas that are meant to look and feel like the Activity Anchor events discussed above. These are called activity anchors because they can gather people from distant areas to a place where those people are available to also participate in associated retail or commercial offerings; just as a commercial anchor in a retail center does.
- Longer times of operation.** As the duration of stay increases, businesses serving that market must adjust hours of operation in order to meet market expectations. At present, many businesses within downtown Brenham do not stay open late, open at mid-day, or only open certain days of the week. It is important that as more people are in downtown for longer periods of time that, stores begin to operate on a more consistent basis and remain in operation beyond the present time limitations.

2. Solve current parking conflicts (and enhance parking capacity):

- **Spaces for the Courthouse.** At present, there is a competition for use of parking spaces in the vicinity of the court house between long-term patrons (including courthouse employees, jurors and other long-term courthouse visitors and retail employees) and short-term patrons (including retail shoppers and short-term courthouse visitors). Long-term parking consumes available spaces around the courthouse and displaces short-term parking thereby leaving little parking availability to serve retail needs. Long-term parking needs must be accommodated apart from short-term parking needs so that both have ample supply and the current competition is eliminated.
- **Aggregate spaces linked to use.** In the present parking setting, there is no clear demarcation of what is public or what is private, what is long-term or what is short-term, or what is for theater, events, or shopping, etc. Therefore, all users of parking are currently in competition for spaces they view as most conveniently located relative to their destination. In order to address this problem, parking for certain users must be aggregated in specific areas that are well identified. In addition, the small inefficient parking areas should be combined where they can be transformed into larger, more efficient parking areas. An example of where increased efficiency is possible is in the City Hall area and in the Unity Theatre area.
- **More connectivity to spaces in general.** Once aggregations of parking spaces are created, it is essential that a system of connection from destination to parking reserve be created. Without such connections, parking reserves that are not adjacent to the destination will be viewed as far away and inconvenient. This is why spaces north of Vulcan Street or south of Commerce Street are not well used by most downtown shoppers. Connection is the essential aspect of convenience and therefore essential to making parking reserves created within a downtown plan a desirable choice as a place to park. Connectivity between

destination and parking space will, of necessity, be a pedestrian connection. At present, downtown has only a few true pedestrian connections.

3. Create a legible and orderly value structure and physical organization:

- **Center, edge, and sub-districts.** Legibility is a cognitive understanding of organization, definition, order, hierarchy, sequence, etc. Therefore, legibility requires structure that the mind can comprehend. A clear structure and physical organization also creates a clear definition or differentiation of relative values and such values are necessary in order to have a viable investment environment. Where there is no value differentiation, there will likely be no investment because the static nature of such a context provides no real opportunity for appreciation. At present, Downtown suffers from a lack of clear value structure. Active properties adjoin inactive properties with no clear trend to invest in. The creation of identifiable edges which define sub-districts will distribute values and reveal varied investment opportunities.
- **Consistent and predictable locations.** The incremental way downtown has developed in recent years has resulted in a situation where the same activity can be found in different parts of the urban core. As a result the retail establishments of the core are in competition with one another. Where two establishments of the same type are more than a block apart, they are in competition. However, when such establishments are adjacent or in close proximity, they can work together and in their aggregate attract more patrons than either by itself can attract. Therefore, it is important that within the constellation of recognizable districts, there is also predictability as to what one will typically find within that district. In addition, all services needed to support retail use in a location (such as parking) should also be placed in predictable locations so that patterns of activity can emerge. It is the establishment of patterns of activity that also establish market opportunity for investment.

4. Enhance the pedestrian environment:

- **Non-directed movement.** There are generally two kinds of movement patterns. The first is “directed movement,” meaning movement in a relatively straight path. Such movement is typical as one moves from point-to-point. Directed movement is subservient to destination and affords no real experience other than access. The second is “non-directed movement,” meaning patterns which are associated with gathering, recreating, socializing, etc. True enhancement of the pedestrian environment is more about hosting non-directed movement than it is about simply enriching the visual experience of directed movement. The activities associated with non-directed movement are those most often associated with historic, pedestrian friendly downtowns. Therefore, space within the public domain of Downtown Brenham must be created that will host both directed and non-directed movement.
- **Outdoor retail and entertainment.** Non-directed movement also includes sidewalk commercial and entertainment activities such as sidewalk cafes. However, these activities are more private than public and may occur within the public domain (under arrangement with a private user) or in a private domain that has been allowed to merge with the public domain. Outdoor cafes and retail uses bring to the public domain a richness of activity that energized the street with a commercial vitality much desired by the market place.
- **Pedestrian friendly connections.** At present pedestrians and vehicles share right-of-ways within Downtown Brenham. However, the narrow dimension of such right-of-ways affords little space for pedestrians apart from cars. As a result, there are no public connections that truly provide for pedestrian comfort and pleasure. It will be difficult to have a revitalized downtown that host pedestrians in a retail or entertainment environment without greater accommodation of pedestrian needs within the right-of-ways. To have public right-of-ways that give greater dimension to pedestrians than vehicles would make Downtown Brenham more pedestrian friendly.

5. Improve the downtown linkage to Hwy 290 and other primary routes into the City:

- **Coordinated planning of Market Street Corridor and creation of a regional movement system that engages Downtown.** All the routes into the downtown core must be considered as parts of a movement system that once again places downtown as a hub of regional flow. It is important that the system balances the relative importance of Market and Austin so that economic opportunity within the Downtown area (as defined by proximity to regional movement patterns) is evenly dispersed. All corridors flowing to Brenham from Houston, Dallas, Austin, and Bryan should provide a clear and convenient pathway to the core of downtown.
- **Monumentation and wayfinding.** Understanding how to navigate the system to Downtown will require attention to monumentation and wayfinding. Monumentation of various types in various locations demark the beginning of primary pathways and points of arrival at one’s destination. In between smaller monuments and signage serve as trail blazers and identify other desired destinations. Visual reinforcement of the movement system with monumentation and wayfinding makes the system more legible.

SIX KEY FEATURES TO SUPPORT EVENTS AND ACTIVITY ANCHORS

In order to have meaningful events and viable activity anchors, it is critical to have six basic and supporting features. These features include public spaces, culture and residential options as follows:



Figure 87: Key Plan Features

1. **Plazas / open spaces and programmed events.**

It is not only important to have spaces that can accommodate non-directed types of movement (such as various forms of plazas and open space) but also important to fill those plazas and open space with events that happen with sufficient frequency that the public domain of downtown is alive with activity. Therefore, the downtown merchants and building owners should have an events director who keeps the public spaces of downtown active.

2. Heritage and history. The dynamic history that built Brenham is visible in the legacy of rich architecture and public artifacts such as the cisterns. This history is an essential aspect of place that makes Brenham unique and desirable as the location where certain events and activities related to such a history would likely occur. Interpretation of heritage and history through design and activities allow the past to flow into the present in ways that fulfill our need for continuity. This particular need can only be satisfied in historic locations such as historic areas like Downtown Brenham. Therefore, built and programmatic manifestations of heritage and history are key to economic revitalization.

3. Theaters and culture. Historically, a city's downtown has been the center of its culture. Many downtown areas have old theaters, opera houses and other historic built facilities that tell of a time when the cultural importance of downtown was established. Brenham is no different with the Historic Simon Theatre. In addition, Brenham has the newer Unity Theatre. With such facilities, Brenham is poised to make culture an important destination asset for the downtown core. Such assets are important supporters of events and activities within public spaces.

4. Aggregated uses and entertainment. Events will naturally flow from, and be associated with, aggregated uses and entertainment. For example a district of restaurants and entertainment establishments also becomes a place where street events are likely to take place. An example of this is the West End District in Dallas. Similarly, clusters of certain land uses, such as art, antique, or craft uses, can support or precipitate use of the public right-of-way for event activity such as a street art fair.

5. Lodging and residential. The vibrancy of events within the downtown area will be largely influenced by the extent to which the downtown area holds people for extended periods of time. Lodging and residential uses bring people into the downtown area and establish a reliable demand for certain kinds of transactions. Each hotel room rented 365 days per year will precipitate \$81,000.00 in visitor related spending. Similarly, residential land uses can contribute in excess of \$12,000.00 per household in household related spending. Lodging is critical to serving the needs of event patrons from distant locations. Lodging and residential uses both generate spending and bring populations to participate in Downtown events and activity anchors.

6. Coordinated evenings and weekends. Events and activity anchors attract people who also seek other interests, services and shopping opportunities. Therefore, it is essential that events are supported by the coordination of merchants and businesses. Important coordinations include staying open in the evenings and on weekends, as well as hosting auxiliary events that extend the influence and economic impact of major event activity.

TRANSFORMING DOWNTOWN

Defining the Place and the Way:

1. **Solving the existing parking conflict, creating a legible and orderly value structure and physical organization, and improving the downtown linkage to Hwy 290 as well as other primary routes into the City.** These are all key initiatives to define downtown Brenham and clarify the way to it. As stated at the outset of this strategy, without a definition of the place and a clear understanding of the way to that place, revitalization of the downtown area will be very difficult.
2. **Hosting people.** Increasing the Duration of Stay and Enhancing the Pedestrian Environment are key initiatives to hosting people within the downtown core. Unless downtown is a place people want to be and once there, their expectations for a destination worthy experience are fulfilled, the definition of place and clarification of the way will have little economic impact. Hosting people will make it possible to attain three types of people gathering outcomes. These outcomes include:
 - **Managed / programmed events.** As stated earlier, events will have the greatest spatial reach in terms of market penetration and bring to

Brenham the increased share of visitor spending (Washington County spending, Adjacent County Spending, and Tourism Region Spending) discussed in other portions of this report.

- **Aggregated venues.** Venues (clusters of related land uses) increase the draw potential of retail offerings and thereby bring to downtown Brenham an increased share of Washington County and regional visitor spending, a greater share of surplus spending flowing to Highway 290 as well as a greater share of local spending.
- **Excellent programs and activities.** Excellence at the individual establishment and program level is the foundation of everything and maintenance of excellence is critical. This will bring to downtown Brenham a greater share of Washington County visitor spending, a greater share of surplus spending flowing to highway 290 and a greater share of local spending.

Therefore, the strategy diagram illustrates that definition of place and way and hosting people are two critical outcomes of the 5 Core Initiatives presented earlier which come together to make Downtown a place that people will want to visit.

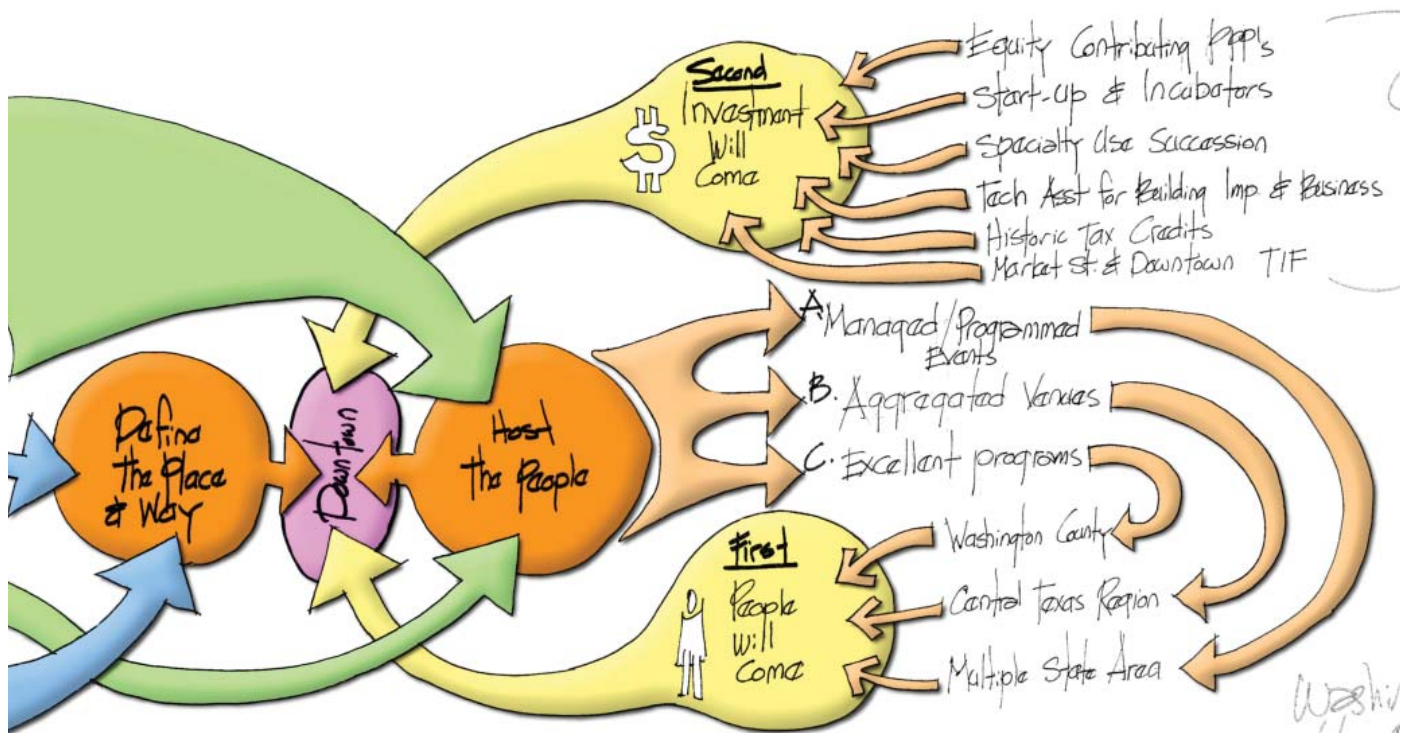


Figure 88: Defining the Place and the Way

Once investors understand that downtown Brenham can, and does, attract more people from a greater area and holds them for longer periods of time, the “promise of return” (discussed earlier) is tangible. However, investment in revitalization efforts requires certain programmatic support. Such support includes:

- 1. Equity contributing public.** Private/Public Partnerships: Here the City or other public agency facilitates investment by closing the gap between investment potential and capital need at various stages in the maturation of the revitalization effort. Public/Private Partnerships include grants, tax abatement, tax refund, capital project assistance, 380 agreements, etc.
- 2. Start-up and incubator businesses.** Sometimes, attaining a constellation of businesses that truly make a destination will require that the public sector support start up and incubator enterprises. This need is most often associated with arts and artisan enterprises. In such cases, the provision of reasonable rent space and facilities is critical.
- 3. Specialty use succession.** It is always the case that revitalization is a process and not a single outcome. At each stage of the process the nature of retail and commercial land uses will evolve until the potential level of commercial specialization has been attained. In this process there is a succession of land use that supports a positive trend. For example antique shops

and uses related to the arts are early successional, rent sensitive land uses that often lead to more mature and better capitalized land uses over time.

- 4. Technical assistance for building and business improvement.** Uniform quality and high level of preservation will require technical assistance for businesses and building owners.
- 5. Historic and investment tax credits.** Setting up the mechanisms for establishing and approving historic and investment tax credits is a critical means for bringing equity to the capital stack and/or capitalizing improvements.

The strategy diagram presented here is an illustration of the integrated nature of a revitalization effort. It shows that achievement of outcomes within the downtown core will require changes and clarifications to movement city wide. In the end, a robust downtown is a place that is clearly defined, sits at the hub of regional movement, is capable of hosting people and people activities and offers events, venues, and programs, all supported by retail, entertainment, and commercial opportunities. People will come to such a place and spend meaningful periods of time there. Where people are gathered and positioned to spend money, value will be defined and investment will seek to capture that value in the form of a return.

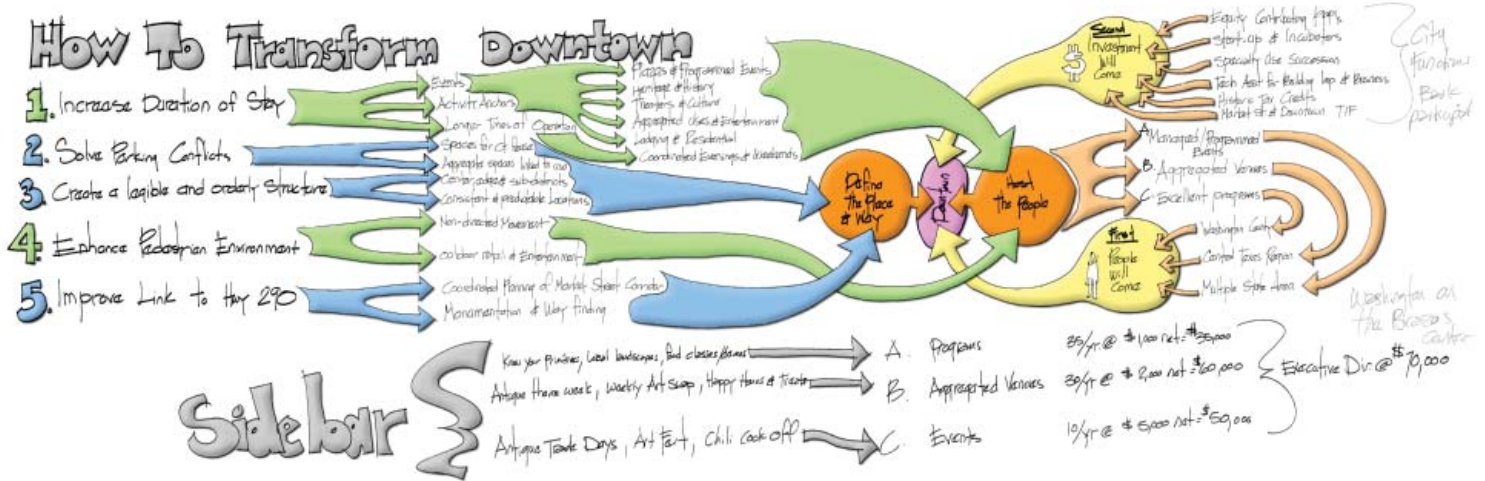


Figure 89: Implementation Strategy Diagram



APPENDICES

- Loan Guarantees
- Downtown Brenham Hotel Complex
- Plan References
 1. Regional Movement Plan
 2. Downtown Brenham Framework
 3. Downtown Brenham Concept Plan
 4. Downtown Brenham District Plan
 5. Downtown Brenham Pedestrian Network

LOAN GUARANTEES

In the present economic setting, financing is more difficult than it was prior to October 2008. Difficulties with financing arise largely from the equity contribution that most banks and investors are now requiring. Equity and debt are two aspects of what is termed as the “capital stack”.

The capital stack (Figure 90) is a description of capital invested in any project, including pure debt, hybrid debt, and equity. According to *The Complete Real Estate Encyclopedia, 2007*, “higher positions in the stack expect higher returns for their capital because of the higher risk. Lenders and equity stakeholders are highly sensitive to their positions in the stack”. Since 2008, the equity contributions to the Capital Stack have increased from the earlier 10% (in some cases 0%) to as much as 25%-35%.

Most commercial development projects are unable to bring that kind of equity to the loan, making it difficult to find financing in these financial times. As a result, new types of public and private partnerships are needed whereby the cities can enhance the equity contributions to the capital stack and make other capital commitments that constitute loan enhancement.



Figure 90: Capital Stack

Source: *The Complete Real Estate Encyclopedia, 2007*

There are three primary players who must interact in the development process. These players are:

1. The Property Owner who identifies value in the form of development, planned or intended, and ultimately delivers equity to the loan.
2. The Bank who verifies value through the loan and funds development.
3. The City who recognizes value through entitlement and grants incentives.

This is the most traditional relationship of parties with the property owner in the middle, working with the bank and the city simultaneously and separately and the project is executed solely by the property owner. However, this traditional interaction is challenged to find funding because of the equity requirements now imposed by most lending institutions. Therefore, a new role relationship is needed.

One model for a new relationship places the Bank in the middle. This is consistent with the current shift from a speculation driven real estate market to an investment driven one in which institutions (especially those holding large amounts of underperforming loans) play a larger than ever role. In the new relationship the players interact as follows:

1. The Bank verifies value through financing and thereby funds the project (just as it does in the above described relationship). However, the Bank is incentivized to make the loan because the portion of value that the bank funds is lessened by equity contributions from both the City and the Property Owner.
2. The City affirms value (through entitlements and capital commitments that can be defined as equity) and enhances the overall equity contribution under certain conditions of development which serve the public vision.
3. The property owner recognizes value through the nature of development that is consistent with target performance requirements of the city equity partner and delivers equity to the loan (including city contribution secured through public/ private partnership agreement).

The City and Bank working in partnership with the Owner is a model that can meet the financial challenges of our time as follows:

1. It can flourish in an Investment Environment because it positively supports the loan to value ratio.
2. It can be accomplished through existing regulatory mechanisms and enablement.
3. It will free up local lending by offloading risk and improving loan to value.
4. It will allow the City to take the lead in value determination through visionary growth policy.
5. It will promote project design that is more responsive to public vision without over burdening private interest with public purpose.
6. It preserves the relationship between lending and equity.

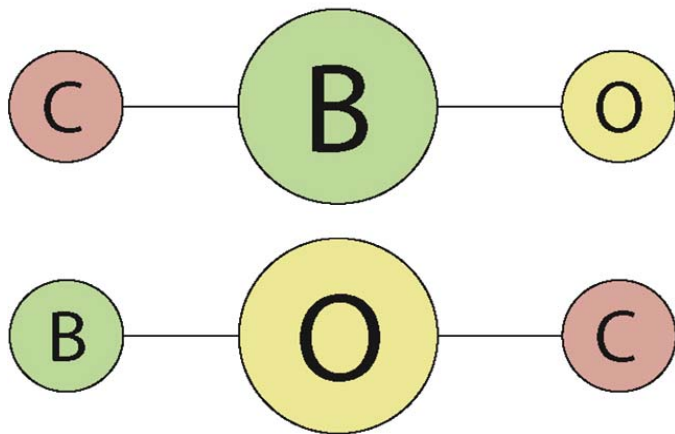


Figure 91: City / Bank / Owner Relationship

Figure 91 illustrates the two relationships described so far. The first is the recommended relationship for our present investment driven environment and shows the Bank (B) in the middle between City (C) and Property Owner (O) and thereby being a partner with both. The relationship on the bottom shown the Property Owner (O) in the middle and this is the traditional relationship, which works better in a more speculative environment. In the preferred relationship (C-B-O), both the City and the Property owner are contributing equity to the loan. The Property Owner, through the level of capitalization he/she is able to put together (or in some cases employment of tax credits). The City, through assumption of some of the owner's development exposure, which then becomes counted as equity.

By contributing equity to the Capital Stack, the City is essentially providing Gap Financing. Gap financing provides the difference between owner equity and bank loan (the Gap) to the Capital Stack and thereby provides the funds to make a deal work. Gap financing can be served through grants and/or rebates of sales or ad valorem tax revenues. The City's ability to serve this financial gap effectively underwrites the loan to value ratio and thereby constitutes a loan guarantee.

While these contributions are often done today, they are typically brought to the table after a project is established and financing secured. As a result, the city's contributions are incentives for the property owner but not enhancements to the financing. In the C-B-O relationship, the City's contributions are brought to the financing and thereby styled as equity contributions which can make financing possible because it closes the gap between owner equity and debt.

Other forms of Loan guarantee include Section 108 by HUD. Section 108 loan guarantee program provides communities with a source of financing for economic development, housing rehabilitation, public facilities, and large-scale physical development projects. It can be a useful tool in attracting private developers to distressed areas. Under this program, there is risk to local government and it must pledge its current and future CDBG allocations as security

Loan guarantees can become a powerful development incentive tool for areas where the return on investment is likely. It is the strong potential for return that establishes the underlying value against which the financial exposure of all parties (property owner, bank and city) is viewed. Where the value opportunities are real, then cities should wade into the capital stake issue with initiatives that take former capital contributions to the developer and redefine them as equity contributions that close the current gap between owner equity and debt.

A DOWNTOWN HOTEL

Hotel Strategy

A key feature of the Downtown Brenham Plan is the provision of a full service hotel. In any revitalization effort, lodging always plays an important role because of the large amounts of potential spending associated with overnight stays. According to Texas office of Tourism data, one hotel room rented 365 days will generate \$81,000 in room related spending over that year. Also, tourism statistics reveal that the average hotel occupancy in Texas is 65%. In addition, the hotel project proposed for Downtown Brenham can accommodate between 100 and 145 rooms.

Therefore, a 145 room hotel at 65% occupancy will rent 94 rooms and generate a total of \$7,614,000 in room related spending. This amount of annual spending can support approximately 36,000 sf. of retail space in the Downtown area. Consequently, hotels are among the most powerful economic development tools available to a revitalization effort and provide options for enhanced tax revenues not available to other uses such as:

- **Hotel tax.** The maximum tax rate is two percent of the price paid for a hotel room, except for certain counties with large populations. There are certain limits on eligible uses of the Hotel Occupancy Tax, so be sure to consult your legal advisor. [Refer to Secs. 334.2515-.258, Local Government Code and Sec 351.101(a6-7), Tax Code.]
- **Event tax.** This tax can be levied up to a maximum tax rate of 10 percent of the price of admission. [Refer Secs. 334.151-.153, Local Government Code.]
- **Event parking tax.** This tax may be levied as a flat tax per parked motor vehicle at an approved venue project or a percentage of the parking fee. The tax may not exceed \$3 per vehicle. [Refer to Secs. 334.201-.203, Local Government Code.]

- **Short term motor vehicle tax.** This tax can be adopted in increments of one-eighth of one percent, not to exceed five percent, on motor vehicle rentals of 30 days or fewer. [Refer to Secs. 334.101-.108, Local Government Code.]
- **Venue tax.** The Development Corporation Act of 1979 allows Type A and Type B corporations with voter approval to use sales tax revenue for various projects including sports venues and related infrastructure. Voters may approve or reject any reduction of an existing local sales tax to make room for a venue tax. As defined by Section 334.001, Local Government Code, the term “venue” can apply to a wide variety of facilities, such as a sports arena, coliseum, stadium and any other facility built to accommodate professional and amateur sports events. A venue also can be a convention center or related improvements in its vicinity such as civic centers, museums, aquariums, auditoriums, exhibition halls, theaters, music halls and plazas. “Related infrastructure” may include stores, on-site hotels, restaurants, parking facilities, water and sewer facilities, streets, roads, and other improvements which enhance the venue’s use, value or appeal. [Refer to Secs. 334.001, 334.007, Local Government Code.]

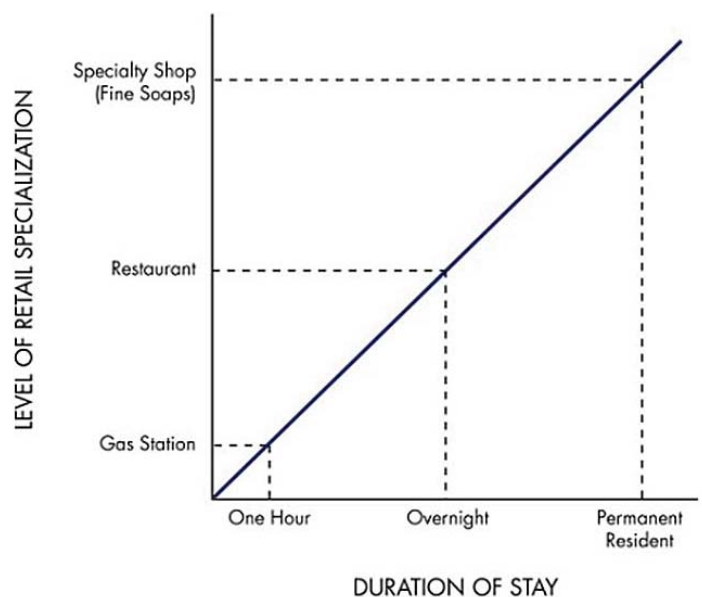


Figure 92: Specialization vs. Duration of Stay

Spending related to hotel rooms is prolific because of the duration of stay that hotels support. The diagram in figure 92 illustrates the relationship between duration of stay and type of spending. Note that as the duration of stay increases, the level of specialization in merchandise purchased also increases. Therefore, hotels not only increase spending overall but also move that spending toward more specialized purchases. Such purchases tend to reinforce destination as well as command a higher commodity price.

Other forms of stay are also important such as residential land use but the total sales dollars per residential unit tend to be lower than hotels because of the nature of goods purchased and the general mobility of a residential population.

There is an interesting relationship between “destination and lodging” and “lodging and destination”. Hotels which precipitate the greatest magnitude of spending are hotels which host destination seekers. This is a different patronage than the typical freeway hotel, offering a continental breakfast so people can get back on the road quicker and generally just serving that “need to rest up before moving on” market. The destination related hotel serves those people who see the hotel setting and its offerings as part of the destination experience. For this reason, many small, historic downtowns where people might come to enjoy the historic ambiance have a number of bed and breakfast establishments, usually in an historic structure.

It is interesting to note that destinations without destination related lodging facilities do not offer much as a true destination. Therefore, the two are interrelated, each needing the other to fulfill the market’s expectations. Having a true destination in Downtown Brenham (and thereby capturing a hoped for amount of visitor related spending will be difficult without a destination hotel.

Just as the patronage of a destination hotel is different than the typical patronage of the freeway hotel, the nature of, and services provided by, a destination hotel are different than the freeway hotel. A destination hotel has the following attributes:

1. **Contextually consistent.** This means that the architecture and interior of the facility are an extension of the larger visual identity of the setting. For this reason, hotels in Las Vegas are what they are and in their aggregate comprise the “Las Vegas experience”. It is common that historic hotels thrive in historic settings (such as the French Quarter of New Orleans). Therefore, a destination hotel in historic Downtown Brenham must compliment/ enrich the historic fabric that surrounds it.
2. **Offers highly differentiated basic services.** This means that the coffee shop, the bar, and the lobby are all presented as common places for hotel guests and others in the setting. In Downtown San Antonio, hotels such as the Menger or the St. Francis are gathering places in their own right. The coffee shop at the Millennium Biltmore in Los Angeles is as much for local businessmen to meet as it is for guests to have their necessary breakfast. Likewise, the lobby is more of a crossroads of local activity than it is just a place to check in.
3. **Provides potential for group access to destination offerings.** Often people visit a destination in groups (family groups, interest groups, or business associated groups, etc.) so that they can conduct mutual communications (such as a retreat or a conference) and enrich that communication with pleasant experiences of a particular destination. For this reason, the most successful conference cities have tremendous contextual depth (variety of and quality of area experiences). Such cities include New Orleans and San Antonio. The ability of a destination to attract groups who will use meeting or other facilities that attract groups must have a destination hotel to service that group which is conveniently located relevant to the facility and destination experiences.
4. **Functions as a center for experiences.** The convenient relationship between hotel and experience (mentioned above) allows the hotel to function as center for that experience. One can dress one way for a certain experience, then go back to their room and dress another for another experience or meet up with group members to reassemble for a joint experience. In these and many other ways, the capability of

an individual to fully access the constellation of experiences that comprise a destination are connected with the services of a destination hotel.

As a result of these, and other, important connections between the viability of destination and the nature of lodging, a true destination hotel is needed in Downtown Brenham to support the essence of the Downtown revitalization plan. The more that Downtown Brenham is able to extend its spatial marketing reach through the execution of meaningful events (as opposed to activities and venues), the more the destination hotel will be critical to the success of this strategy.

Hotel Location

The location of a destination hotel with the Downtown area is very important to its success. Therefore several location considerations are important:

- 1. Adjacent to, but not within, the truly historic fabric.** Because a proper destination hotel Downtown will be a larger, new building requiring space for certain site amenities, it could be spatially disruptive to the well established block and building mass fabric of the Downtown core. Therefore, while the architecture of a destination can be comfortably consistent with the architectural character of the Downtown area, general space requirements of such a facility are better suited to a close but peripheral location.
- 2. Connected to the pedestrian network.** It will be necessary that all of the experiential offerings of the destination be accessible by foot. For this reason, the Downtown revitalization plan has been very careful to articulate a coherent pedestrian system that serves all parts of the Downtown planning area. Therefore, it is important that the hotel be located along that system (connected to it, part of it), for hotel residents to have access as well as allow the facility to be a part of the pedestrian experience overall.
- 3. Associated with parking that is not in conflict with other Downtown parking.** A destination hotel will require a considerable amount of available parking for guests and other users of hotel offerings. For

this reason, the hotel must have an ample supply of available and reliable parking. Because guests will be at this hotel for extended periods of time, it is likely that all guests will arrive by car.

- 4. Close to the point of entry into the Downtown District.** Every hotel seeks to establish itself as a landmark and attainment of such status is part of the facility's identity as a destination. Therefore, a location in relation to the point of Downtown entry allows the proposed destination hotel to be the landmark it aspires to be.
- 5. Availability of land which to build a destination hotel.** In a built out setting (such as Downtown Brenham) land availability for the destination hotel is critical. Therefore, the location is highly dependent upon land availability.
- 6. Proximity to the Simon Theatre.** The Simon Theatre restoration effort envisions the historic property as conference center for Downtown. Therefore, the success of that vision is greatly served by the presence of a destination hotel with capability to serve the many ancillary needs that a conference center presents (including eating facilities, smaller break out rooms, lodging, catering, etc.)



Figure 93: Hotel Complex Plan

In light of the previous location requirements, the Downtown Master Plan shows a destination hotel facility located at on the northeast corner of Vulcan and Park Streets. This is where the vacant former municipal building is now located. This site is large enough and so located as to accomplish all of the above described locational criteria. The vacant structure that now sits on this property should be razed so that a new, architecturally consistent, well designed and planned, efficient, and cost effective destination hotel can be constructed.

Hotel Design

The development of a full service hotel is recommended on Vulcan Street between N. Baylor Street (planned as a new Promenade) and N. Park Street (planned to be the primary entrance into Downtown from the north). The site is centrally located Downtown with good vehicular and pedestrian access. The hotel is within easy walking distance to the Historic Simon Theatre and should be conceived as a full service hotel that would compliment the planned functions of conference and event space at the Simon Theatre. The current city-owned building on this site is outdated and not a contributing building to the Downtown history or character and should be demolished for the new hotel.

The north side of the proposed hotel site should accommodate guest vehicular arrival to an entry court and should also accommodate service off North Park Street which will create a pedestrian character on the planned Promenade on N. Baylor Street. Parking for the hotel can be accommodated directly across N. Park Street in the proposed new parking garage or in another type of shared scenario.

The hotel should be designed to contribute to the historic setting of Downtown in scale, material and character. The large site area allows the building to maintain a complimentary height and massing to the Downtown context. The building design should fill the site building to the property lines adjacent the streets with no set backs. The character of the design should have a historical reference that fits within a historic context of commercial buildings constructed in Downtown between 1880 and 1925. Historic materials could include brick masonry with limestone accents, corbelled brick or metal cornices and cast iron columns storefront design.

Hotel lobby function and retail space on the street level should be planned which engages the street and sidewalk on N. Park, Vulcan and N. Baylor with continuous balcony or loggia covering the pedestrian sidewalk. A roof plaza with pool can be planned that overlooks the Promenade on N. Baylor and engage this pedestrian space.



Figure 94: A Perspective of the Hotel Complex Development

THE HOTEL COMPLEX FLOOR PLANS

Figure 95: Brenham Hotel Complex: Floor One

- Lobby / Reception
- Pre-Function
- Banquet Room
- Restaurant / Kitchen
- Bar
- Retail
- Restrooms
- Office
- Receiving

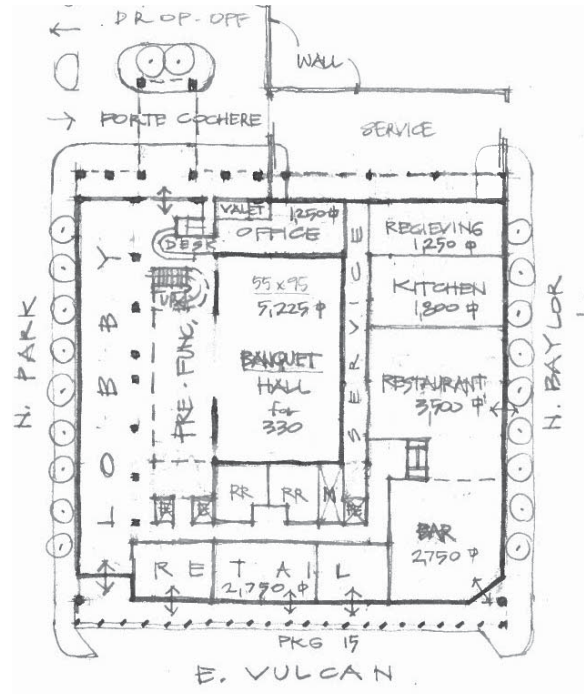


Figure 96: Brenham Hotel Complex: Floor Two

- Hotel Rooms
- Spa
- Gym
- Breakout Areas
- Restrooms

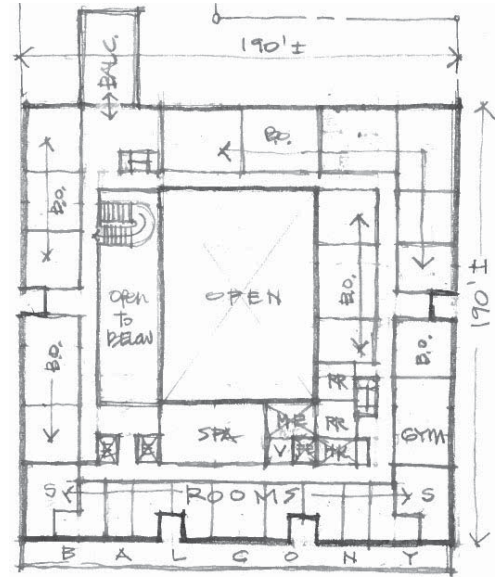
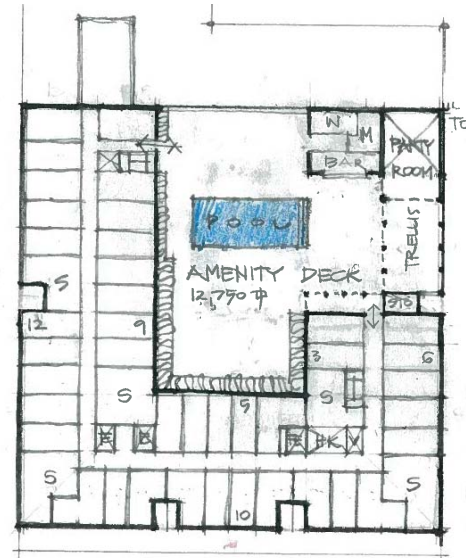


Figure 97: Brenham Hotel Complex: Floors Three and Four

- Rooms
- Restrooms
- Amenity Pool & Deck (3rd Floor)
- Party Room (3rd Floor)
- Bar (3rd Floor)



REGIONAL MOVEMENT PLAN

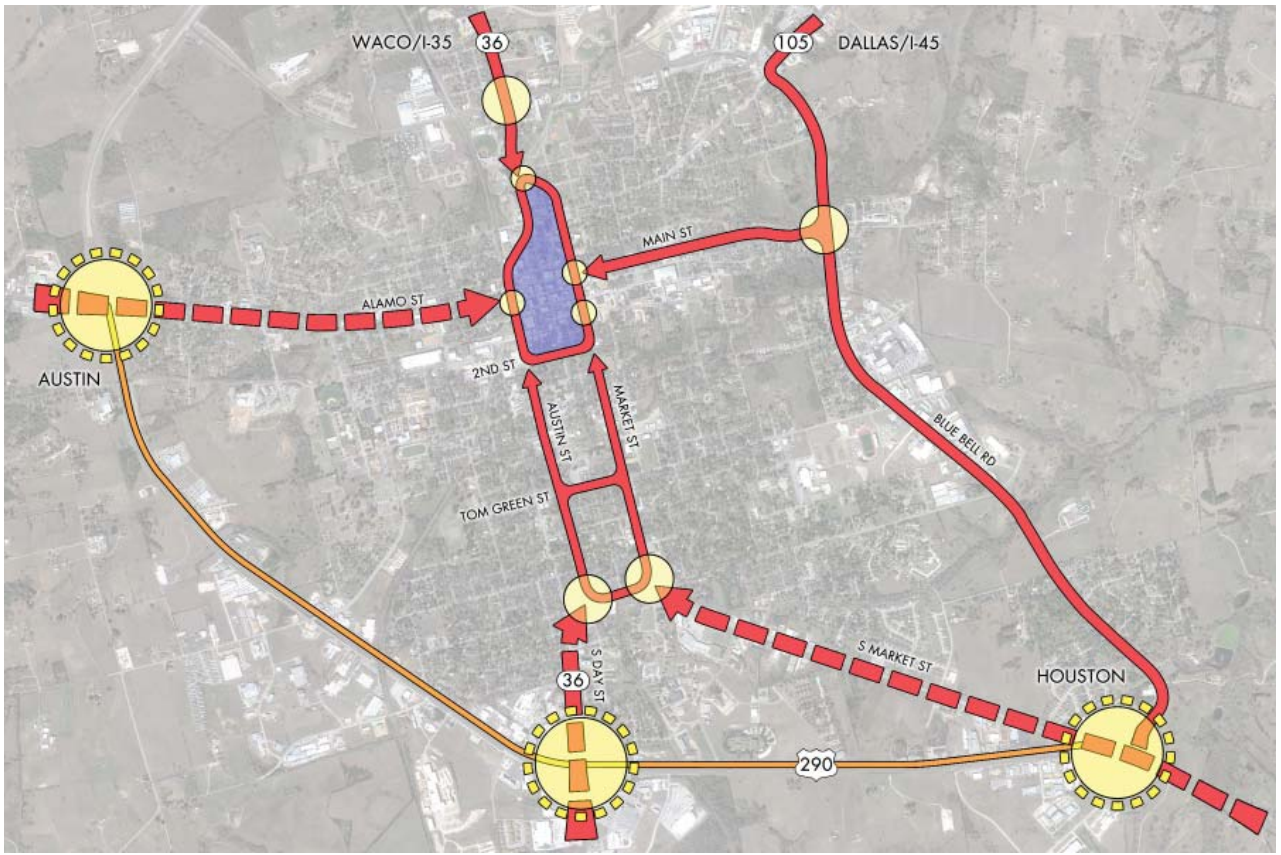


Figure 98: Regional Movement Plan

DOWNTOWN BRENHAM FRAMEWORK

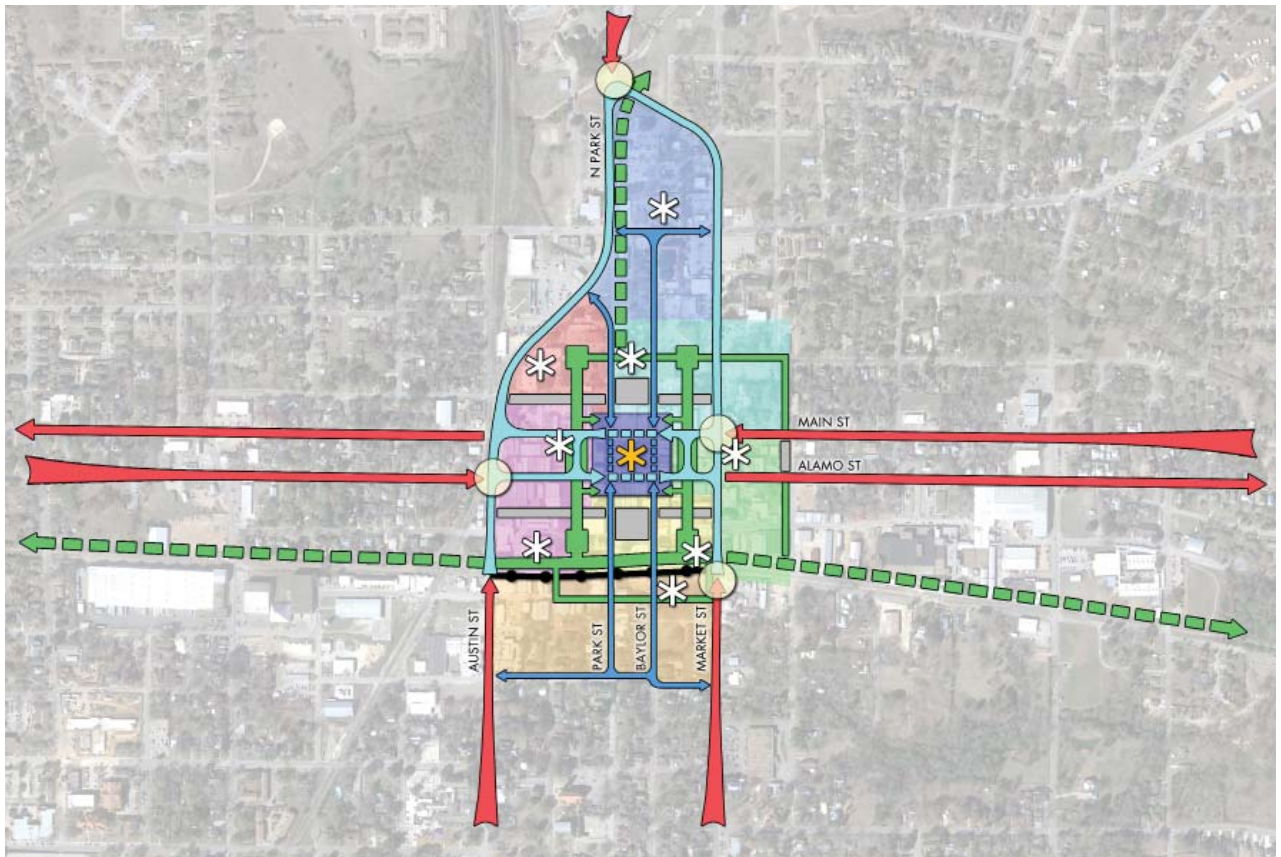


Figure 99: Regional Movement Plan

DOWNTOWN BRENHAM CONCEPT PLAN



Figure 100: Conceptual Plan for Downtown Brenham

DOWNTOWN BRENHAM DISTRICT PLAN

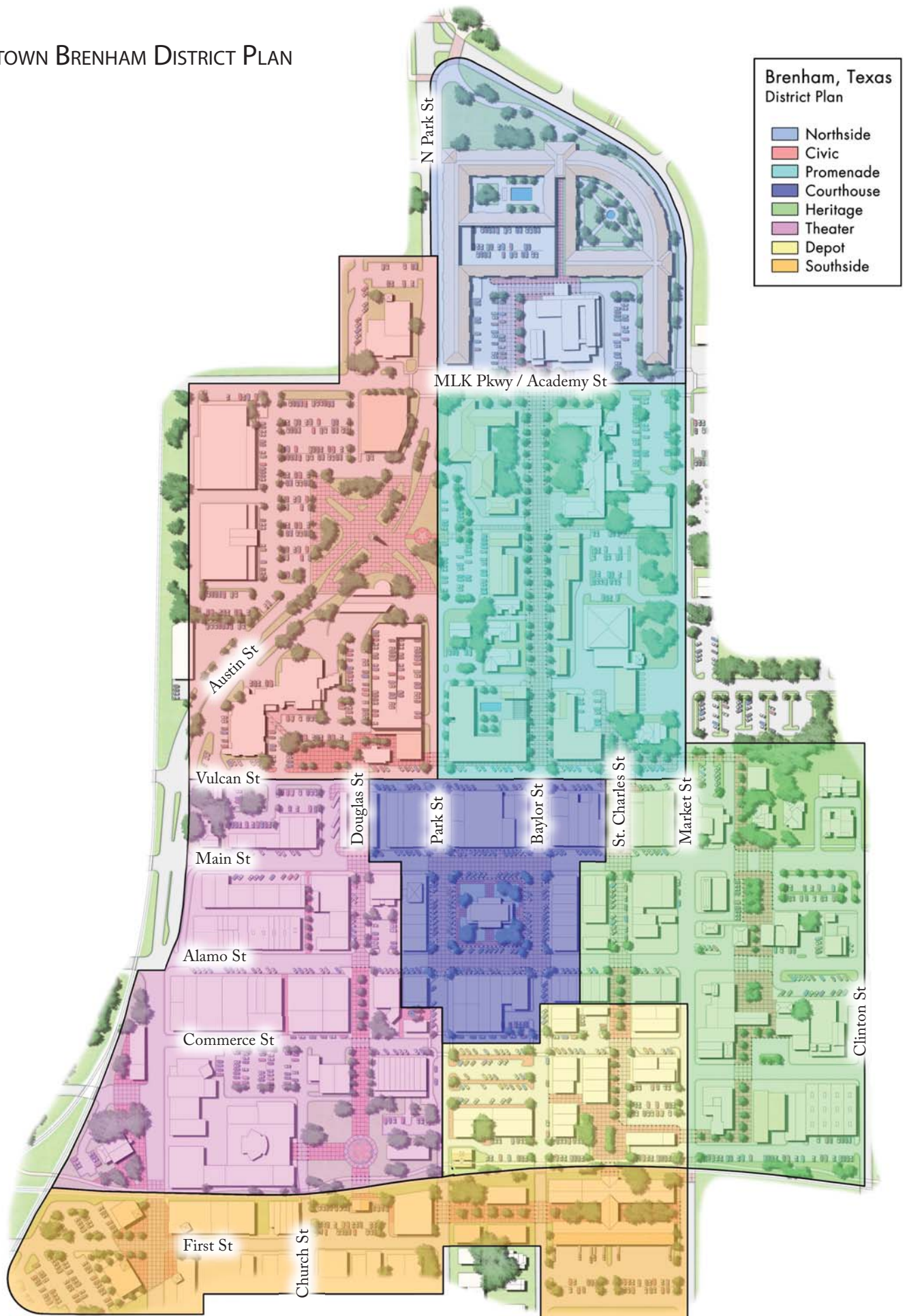


Figure 101: District Plan for Downtown Brenham

DOWNTOWN BRENHAM PEDESTRIAN NETWORK

- Pedestrian Network
- Pedestrian Network - Covered
- Accessible Parking
- Pedestrian / Parking Node
- Existing Pedestrian Network

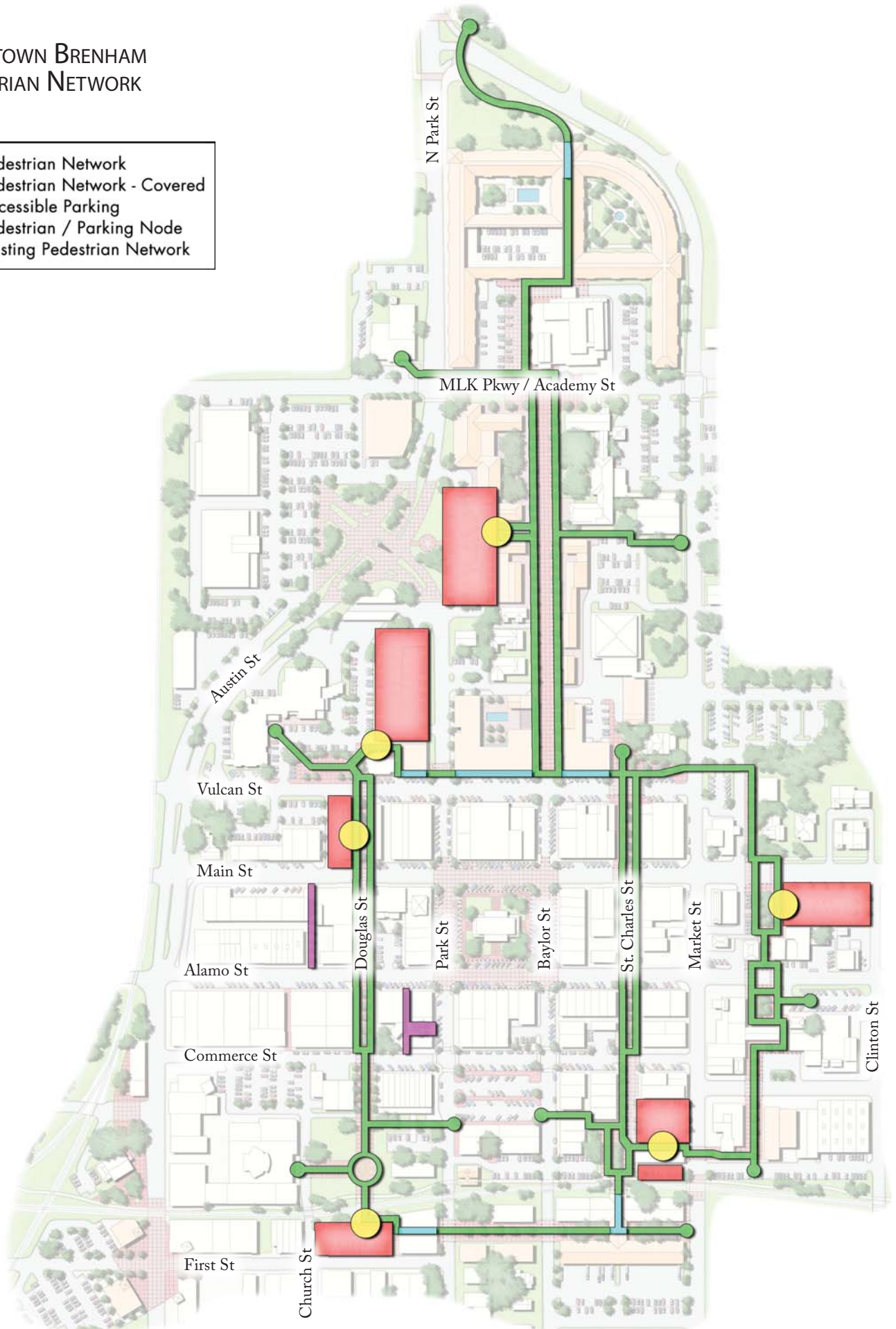
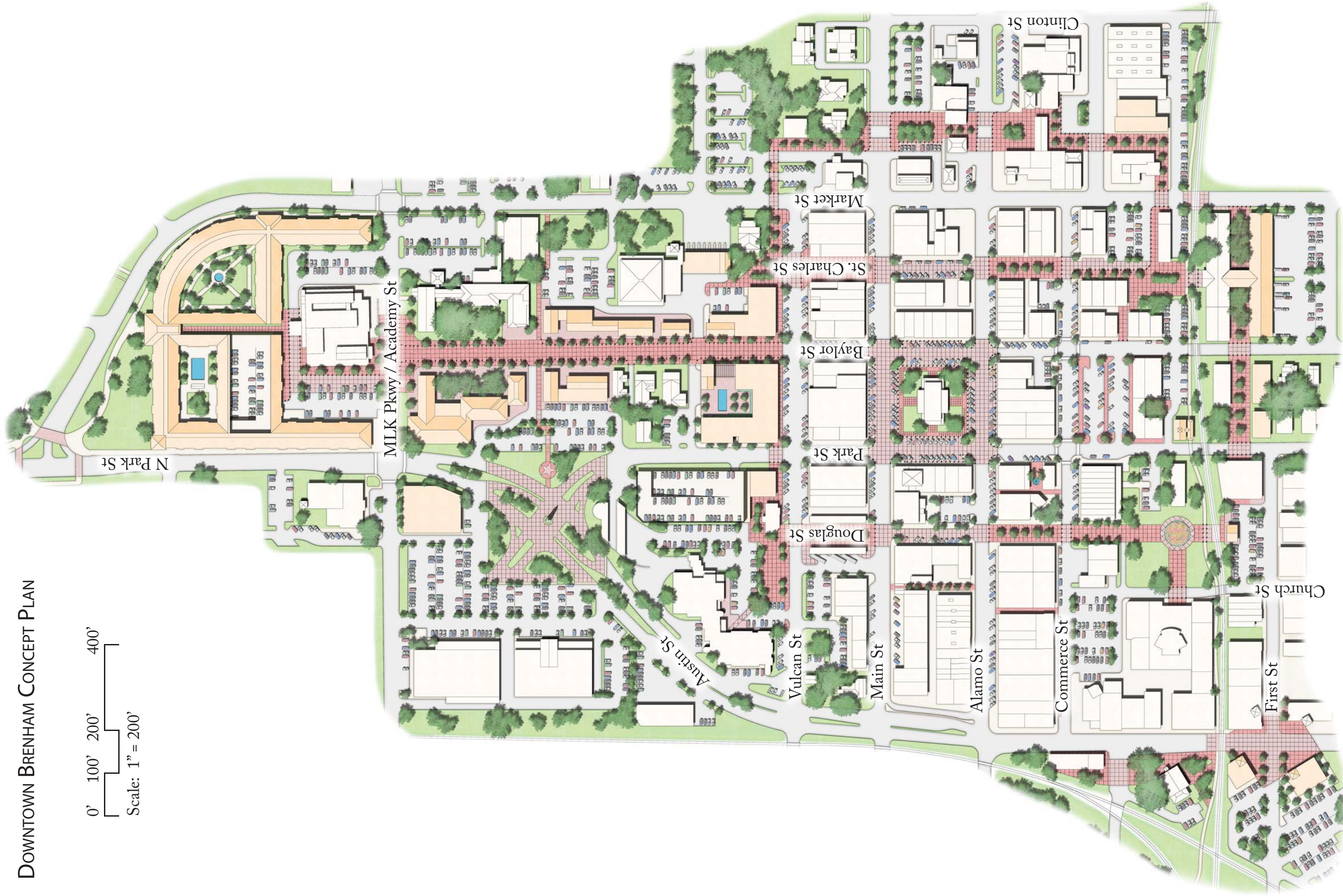


Figure 102: Downtown Brenham Pedestrian Network

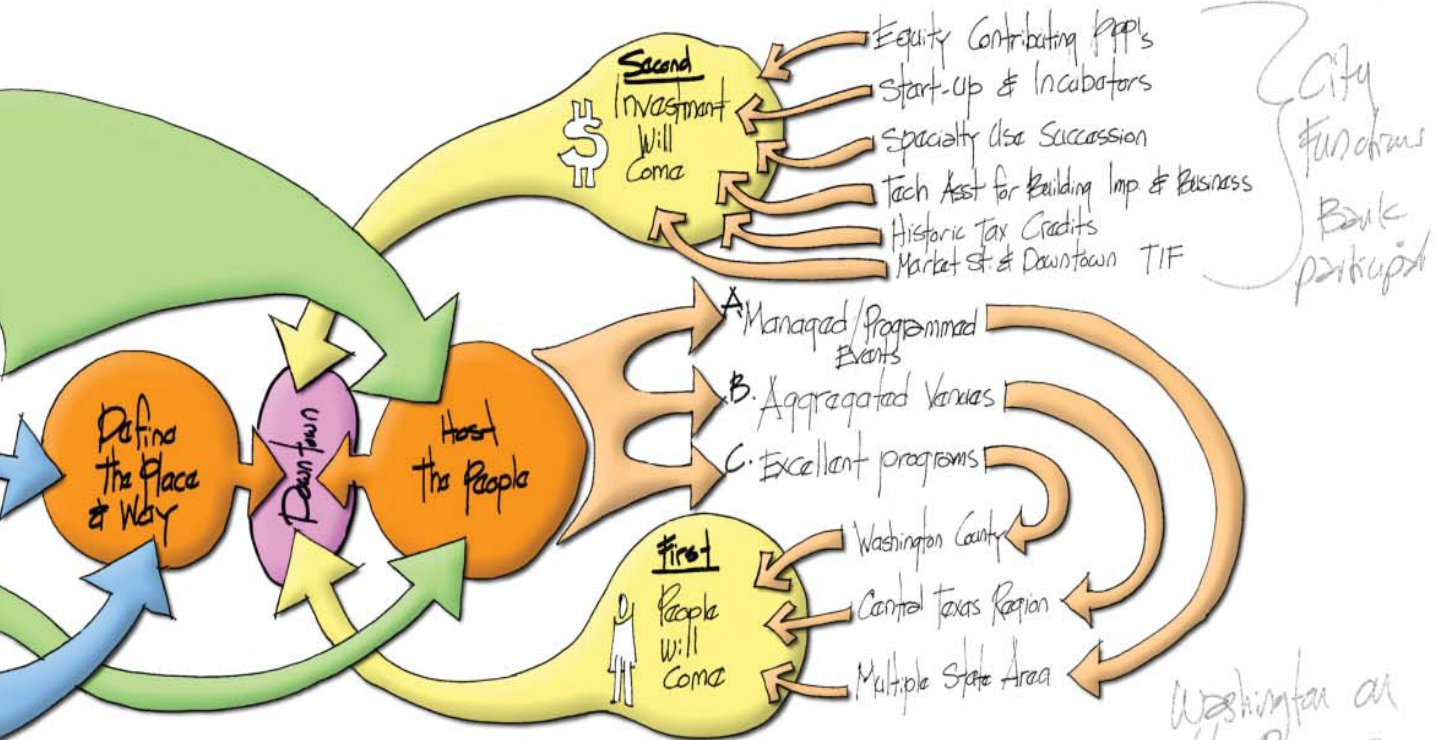
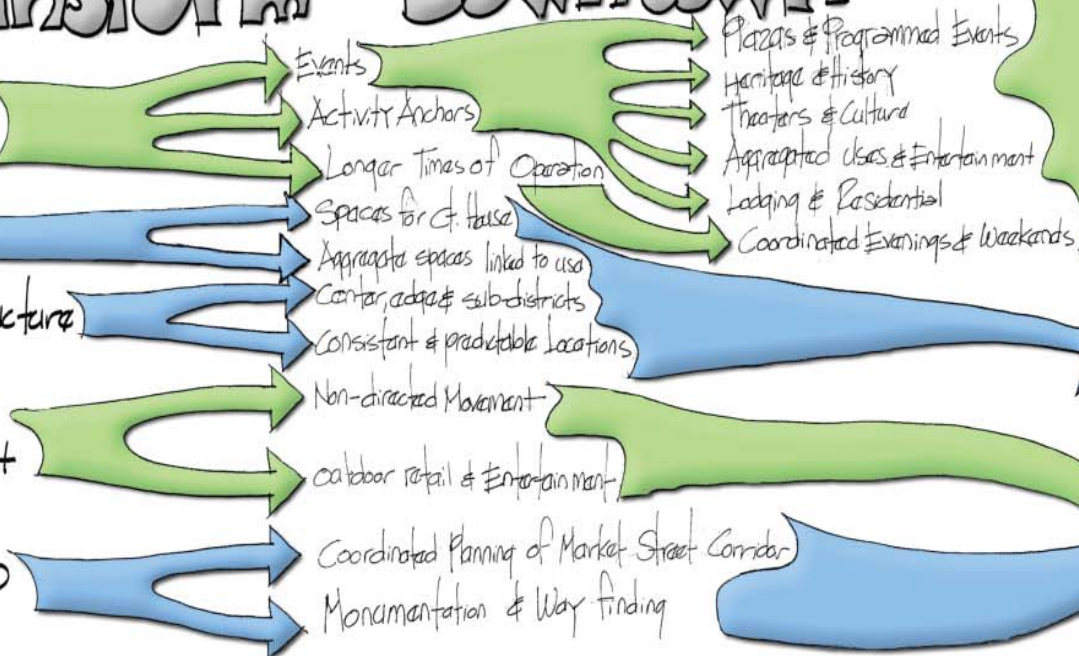
DOWNTOWN BRENHAM CONCEPT PLAN

0' 100' 200' 400'
Scale: 1" = 200'



How To Transform Downtown

1. Increase Duration of Stay
2. Solve Parking Conflicts
3. Create a legible and orderly structure
4. Enhance Pedestrian Environment
5. Improve Link to Hwy 290



Side bar

