

City of New Braunfels



Downtown Implementation Plan

2010



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Executive Summary

Plan Purpose

The 2009 Downtown Implementation Plan is a comprehensive planning document intended to provide a road map for the City, development community, and stakeholders to spur economic development and direct public revitalization projects in Downtown New Braunfels. **The report provides a set of catalytic design and development actions and policies to strengthen market opportunities and enhance the look and feel of the Downtown core to be an attractive, vibrant, walkable, community-oriented district.** The 2009 Downtown Implementation Plan is supported by the **Downtown Design Guide** (Appendix B), a set of design guidelines to improve the aesthetic quality of Downtown in keeping with the goals of the Plan.

Report Content and Organization

- **Chapter 1, Setting the Plan Context**, discusses the Downtown Implementation Plan Process.
- **Chapter 2** outlines **Critical Success Factors**, discussing recommended actions and policies and their related pros and cons for implementation.
- **Chapter 3** presents the **Implementation Strategy** to fulfill the Plan's goals.
- **Appendix A: Background Analysis**, presents analysis diagrams, maps, and photos prepared and gathered during the early stages of the planning process.
- **Appendix B: Downtown Design Guide**, presents design guidelines to facilitate aesthetically-pleasing and pedestrian-friendly development for a vibrant, economically robust Downtown New Braunfels.
- **Appendix C: Downtown Traffic, Circulation, and Parking Study.**
- **Appendix D: Market Study.**

Summary of Strengths and Challenges in Downtown

Based on the background analysis and community outreach, the Consultant Team developed a list of strengths and challenges that the Downtown Implementation Plan should address. The following **challenges** in Downtown New Braunfels **act as barriers to revitalization**:

- Poor wayfinding signage
- Unfriendly pedestrian infrastructure
- Through traffic
- Auto-oriented buildings and development
- Lack of public parking lots, abundance of private parking lots
- Some vacant storefronts in retail corridors
- Some vacant lots along retail streets
- Lack of select service or boutique hotel in Downtown
- Limited green space in Downtown
- Limited connectivity to parks, trails, new developments in and around Downtown
- Large industrial lots in Downtown, generating truck traffic

The following **strengths** should be **capitalized on during revitalization efforts**. Downtown's strengths include:

- Historic street grid with short walkable blocks
- Historic Main Plaza and bandstand
- Historic buildings along retail corridors
- Proximity to major tourist destinations: Schlitterbahn and Gruene
- Proximity to Comal River and major parks (Landa, Prince Solms)
- Community, cultural and heritage festivals and events (Wurstfest, Wassailfest, Wein & Saengerfest, etc)
- Civic employment centers (Comal County Courthouse, City Hall, Civic Center)
- Museums and cultural centers
- Nearby planned community with mixed-use/residential development
- Existing railroad with proposed commuter rail stop

Executive Summary, Continued

Critical Success Factors for Downtown

Based on a public workshop, background research, and ongoing communication between the Consultant Team, the City, and the Downtown Steering Committee (a citizen advisory group), the Consultant Team and stakeholders established a set of five **Critical Success Factors**. The Critical Success Factors **are considered essential to future economic success in Downtown New Braunfels**. Recommended actions and policies included as part of the Critical Success Factors are broken into the following five categories: **Market Opportunities, Wayfinding, Circulation & Walkability, Parking Reform, and Aesthetics & Pedestrian Infrastructure**. The recommended actions and policies are outlined below.

1. Critical Success Factor: Market Opportunities

- Establish a funding source dedicated to Downtown Improvements.
- Pursue Cultural Heritage Tourism Campaign, programs, and historic designation for Central Business District.
- Solicit a “Select Service” Hotel to locate in Downtown New Braunfels.
- Incentivize “infill occupancy” for vacant space along San Antonio Street.
- Incentivize “infill development” for vacant lots along San Antonio Street with pedestrian-oriented businesses.
- Increase the number of residents in Downtown.
 - Expand Multi-family housing options in Downtown.
 - Increase 2nd floor residential occupancy through building renovations.
 - Construct a pedestrian/bike bridge to Town Creek Development to connect hundreds of new residential units to Downtown New Braunfels Center and improve bike/hike connectivity.
- Identify locations for commuter rail stop and encourage transit-oriented development.

2. Critical Success Factor: Wayfinding

- Install Highway signage to direct travelers to Downtown on Interstate Highway 35, State Highway 46, Loop 337, and Walnut Ave.
- Increase font size and place logo on Wayfinding signage.
- Install full family of signs recommended in 2007 Wayfinding Study to include Downtown map kiosk and directional signage.

3. Critical Success Factor: Circulation & Walkability

- Gather traffic count data to enable planning for additional traffic calming strategy and other traffic calming incentives.
- Improve accessibility to and safety around Main Plaza.
 - Enforce slower speeds 15 miles per hour (mph) around Main Plaza and 25 mph in Downtown area.
 - Reduce travel lanes around Main Plaza from two (2) to one (1).
 - Consider a “no through traffic” policy for truck traffic in Downtown.
- Create and delineate crosswalks around Main Plaza and to and from bandstand.
- Repair broken, incomplete sidewalk network and build new sidewalks where absent along retail and commercial streets.
- Break up mega-blocks with new pedestrian pathways.
- Implement pilot (and potentially permanent) traffic calming/connectivity strategy on West San Antonio to increase amount of on-street parking.
- Implement pilot (and potentially permanent) traffic calming/connectivity strategy on Seguin Ave/Business 46 to increase amount of parking and/or add a new bike lane for improved connectivity.
- Implement pilot traffic calming/connectivity strategy on East San Antonio to add new bike lane for improved connectivity.
- Perform bike mobility study to develop comprehensive bike network to address range of bike riders.
- Restrict and enforce no parking in bike lanes.

Executive Summary, Continued

4. Critical Success Factor: Parking Reform

- Establish 2-hour time limits for on-street parking with enforcement.
- Adopt Downtown parking design ordinance based on recommendations in Downtown Design Guide.
- Create “park once” district with legal development rights for shared parking and pricing plan as part of Parking Benefits District.
- Perform Parking Management Study to Consider Additional Parking Management Policies.
 - Expand current shared parking allowance district in Downtown.
 - Implement a limited parking pricing plan, with all funds raised going to Downtown Improvements.
 - Reduce or eliminate parking requirements for new development in Downtown.
 - Use remote parking for employees and special events.
 - Install real time user information systems to inform drivers where parking is available (such systems may be electronic in a garage, or in person from a greeter connected by radio to others monitoring available spaces).
 - Encourage valet parking to efficiently utilize existing surface lots and on-street spaces that are otherwise inconvenient for visitors.
- Build a central public parking garage.
 - Option A, Preferred: Construct a “park-once” parking garage on or near the current Chase Bank parking lot.
 - Option B, Not Preferred: Construct a “park-once” parking garage with Comal County at proposed Tax Assessor’s lot.
- Establish on-street parking flex program/permits along key retail streets where restaurants and cafes can rent on-street parking to extend street dining with temporary seating, shade, and planters.

5. Critical Success Factor: Aesthetics & Pedestrian Infrastructure

- Improve aesthetic quality and accessibility of Main Plaza in Downtown.
- Increase open space in Downtown through incentives, subsidies, and public engagement.
 - Enhance Marketplatz with pedestrian amenities and program with community events.
 - Create pilot pocket park in Crosswalk Cafe parking lot with temporary street furniture, planters, and umbrellas (with possibility to become permanent park).
 - Create linear park along railroad tracks.
- Perform enhancement projects (landscaping, lighting, public art) and maintenance on existing bridges and underpasses to preserve historic structures and announce entry to Downtown.
- Perform feasibility study to construct pedestrian bridge across the Comal River, creating greater access to river. If feasible, design and construct.
- Invest public funds in recreational trails along river and to surrounding parks to improve conditions, expand hike/bike system, provide greater maintenance and amenities.
- Fill in pedestrian amenities “gaps” in Downtown, which may include pedestrian lighting, street furniture, landscaping, trees and shading devices.
- Provide Public Restrooms.
 - Option A: Consider leasing or buying an existing building to use as restrooms and an informational center/Main Street Office.
 - Option B: Acquire land and build new bathrooms as part of new informational center.
- Adopt set of Design Guidelines to improve overall aesthetics in Downtown for public improvements and private development. Consider an overlay zone to help administer Design Guidelines and potential Downtown historic district.

Executive Summary, Continued

Implementation Strategy

The Implementation Strategy is broken into four (4) components to help move the 2009 Downtown Implementation Plan from vision to action.

1. The first component provides more information on the **Critical Success Factors** and places the proposed actions and policies into an **Implementation Matrix**, which does the following:

- Organizes actions and policies described in Chapter 2 through a matrix.
- Provides a list of related tasks for completion.
- Assigns responsibility to applicable departments and agencies to encourage accountability.
- Proposes a timeline for completion (short, medium, long-term).
- Estimates the magnitude of cost.
- Outlines potential funding sources.

2. **“Development Incentives and Engagement,”** the second component, presents a **set of financial and regulatory incentives intended to attract new development and redevelopment in Downtown** New Braunfels that responds to the needs and opportunities outlined in the report. Recommendations include:

1. Provide development information so it is readily available and accessible.
2. Reduce/offset costs of development through incentives.
3. Remove regulatory barriers.
4. Provide predictability and minimize risk.

3. **Operations, Governance, and Advocacy**, section three, provides the necessary link between City-led efforts and development incentives to ensure that regulatory barriers are removed, policies and incentive packages are streamlined, and support remains strong from project conception to completion. The recommendations are outlined below.

1. **Vet roles and responsibilities** for all actions and policies stated in the Downtown Implementation Plan.
2. **Establish Downtown Steering Committee as advocacy entity** to “champion” implementation of the Downtown Implementation Plan over the long-term.
3. **Establish Design Review Board** (potentially a sub-committee of the Downtown Steering Committee) to ensure that new development, renovations, and additions are consistent with vision and goals outlined in Downtown Implementation Plan. This advisory group could be composed of City staff from various departments, members from Downtown advisory groups (Downtown Steering Committee, Main Street Advisory Board, Downtown Association, Planning and Zoning Commission, and Historic Landmark Commission), and local practitioners working in urban design, architecture, and development.
4. **Establish a Maintenance Fund and Review Committee** to ensure upkeep of existing and new infrastructure and public amenities.
5. **Decide upon responsible party or entity** (recommend Downtown Development Coordinator) to act as the clearinghouse for all Downtown market information and data.

4. **“Summary of Funding Sources,”** section four of the Implementation Strategy, presents a table of general municipal, private, and federal funding sources that may be used, as appropriate, to fund revitalization efforts in Downtown New Braunfels. Next, the section four offers is a list of Texas specific funding sources, followed by a list of national programs that may help fund open space/park- related projects.

Chapter I

Setting the Plan Context

I. Setting the Plan Context

Purpose

The 2009 Downtown Implementation Plan is a comprehensive planning document intended to provide a road map for the City, development community, and Downtown stakeholders to spur economic development and direct public revitalization projects in Downtown New Braunfels. **The report provides a set of catalytic design and development actions and policies to improve the look and feel of the City, improve economic conditions, and enhance the Downtown core as a vibrant, walkable, community-oriented district.** The 2009 Downtown Implementation Plan is supported by the **Downtown Design Guide**, a set of design guidelines to improve the aesthetic quality of Downtown in keeping with the goals of the Plan.

Report Content and Organization

Chapter 1, **Setting the Plan Context**, discusses the Downtown Implementation Plan Process. **Chapter 2** outlines **Critical Success Factors**, discussing recommended actions and policies and the related pros and cons for implementation. **Chapter 3** presents an **Implementation Strategy** outlining responsible departments and agencies, a time frame for implementation, estimated magnitude of cost and potential funding sources, as well as incentives to the development community, actions to streamline operations and governance, and lastly, a summary of potential funding sources. Four appendices provide background information for the Downtown Implementation Plan. The appendices include:

- **Appendix A: Background Analysis**, presents analysis through diagrams, maps and photos prepared and gathered during the early stages of the Downtown Implementation Plan planning process.
- **Appendix B: Downtown Design Guide**, presents design guidelines to facilitate aesthetically-pleasing and pedestrian-friendly development for a vibrant, economically robust Downtown New Braunfels.
- **Appendix C: Downtown Traffic, Circulation, and Parking Study.**
- **Appendix D: Downtown Market Study.**

Link Between Design and Economic Development

The 2009 Downtown Implementation Plan places emphasis on the design of the public realm to attract economic development and create an attractive, pedestrian-friendly built environment. The Downtown Implementation Plan's support for pedestrian-friendly revitalization projects fits within a larger movement among leading cities around the nation who are rethinking the design of their public right-of-way (streets, sidewalks, alleys, and residual street space), as a valuable and often under-utilized category of public land.



Map of historic city grid.



Image of historic, art deco Brauntex Theater.



Image of designated historic structure.

Plan Context

For the past century, street design has been geared towards the automobile with design regulations that prioritized maximum traffic flow and high automobile speeds. Pedestrian and bicycle safety and access has been largely ignored, resulting in ugly and unsafe streetscapes. **Cities that have invested in their public realm and encouraged more walkable urban redevelopment are seeing improved property values and increased retail sales.** For instance, typical suburban property values are \$5-15 per square foot while mixed-use urban values are \$25-30 per square foot. A recent article in Planetizen reports,

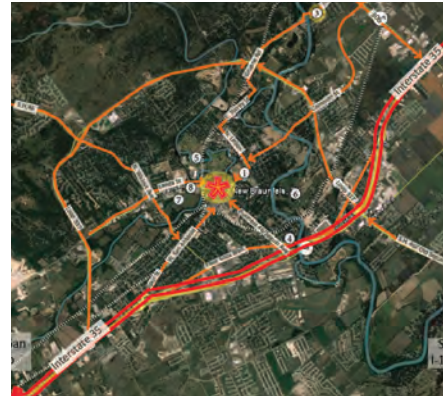
Appropriately-placed pedestrian zones in city centers boosted foot traffic by 20-40% and retail sales by 10-25% in the U.K. A nationwide study in the U.S. reported a property value increase of 30% after new traffic calming measures were installed. Since the City of Mountain View, California widened and enhanced its main Downtown street by improving sidewalks, removing parking spaces, and planting trees, the street has drawn \$150 million in private investment in residential and office units and has become a regional attraction (Hawkes & Sheridan, Why Street Design Matters).

Fortunately, the **City of New Braunfels** has the “bones” to become a **walkable city** with a historic street grid composed of short blocks that extend from a central Main Plaza and a plethora of historic buildings that line major retail streets. The 2009 Downtown Implementation Plan prioritizes the pedestrian experience in Downtown to create an inviting, attractive public realm, understanding that **good urban design adds economic value to neighborhoods and districts.**

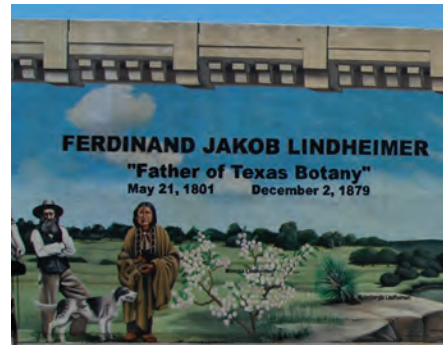
New Braunfels, The City and Its History

New Braunfels is located in the heart of Central Texas, nestled between the fast growing cities of Austin, 45 miles to the northeast and San Antonio, 30 miles to the southwest, both major employment/entertainment centers. The area has a rich history that is celebrated today through many cultural heritage events, parades, and programs.

Originally inhabited by several Indian tribes that located in the area for its access to fresh water, the area was later traversed by the Spanish and French during expeditions in the late 1600s. In 1756, Comal Springs became the site of the short-lived Nuestra Senora de Guadalupe Mission, which was closed in 1758 rather than fortified as a permanent settlement. The Spanish called the river area “Comal,” which is Spanish for “flat dish.” In 1825, a Mexican land grant gave title of the area to Juan M. Veramendi, part of which was sold to pay off war debts following bloody years of fighting to form the Republic of Texas, established in 1836. The Republic of Texas decided to grant land to American and Europeans to weaken their ties with Mexico. The offer for land combined with the presence of political strife in Germany inspired a group of German nobleman to form an immigration company



Aerial map of New Braunfels, showing Downtown located in the center of the “loop” just north of Interstate 35. The City is 44 square miles.



Mural celebrating New Braunfels' heritage.



Postcard of Downtown hotel in New Braunfels.



Photo of ADM Mill along Comal River.

called Adelsverein. In 1844, German immigrants arrived in Indianola, Texas. A year later, the Prince Carl of Solms-Braunfels, Germany, purchased 1,265 acres of the Veramendi land grant, bringing wagons of German settlers to a scenic bluff overlooking the Comal River. The area is now the site of Saints Peter and Paul Catholic Church. Prince Solms and his engineer, Nicholas Zink, selected the town's site, creating a central open square with streets radiating out at right angles. The original town included 342 lots, each with a narrow street frontage so that the town could remain compact and defensible, while providing street frontage to as many lots as possible. This urban plan was popular in German scholarship of the 19th Century and sets New Braunfels apart from other Texas towns. The central town plan remains largely intact today. The City also retains about a dozen "fachwerk" houses, architectural remnants of the Germanic building traditions and methods. This Ferdinand Lindheimer house on Comal Avenue is one such example.

In 1847, Native Tennessean and plantation owner William Merriwether purchased a 480-acre tract of land, also from the original Veramendi land grant, to start a water-powered grist and saw mill. This area eventually became today's Landa Park. In 1880, the arrival of the International and Great Northern Railroad brought dramatic changes to the area. Primarily a farming town, the railroad brought industrial, commercial and economic growth to New Braunfels. The original railroad passenger station, built circa 1886, stands in its original location and now operates as a museum.

New Braunfels, Today

Like many American cities, New Braunfels grew beyond its original street grid and housing plats, developing auto-oriented shopping malls, office parks, and housing subdivisions along and around the Interstate. Big box developments, strip malls, and super centers steadily replaced Downtown as the center of commerce. **Over the last decade, New Braunfels experienced particularly dynamic growth.** Between year 2000 and 2007, the City's population grew from 36,494 to 51,804 residents.

The 2008 Benchmark Survey, produced by Buildnb.org reported,

Since 2003, New Braunfels population has increased by 35.1%, outpacing the Texas average, which only had a 9.5% increase in the last six years. While the nation has begun to experience an economic down turn, New Braunfels expects to continue positive growth at slightly under 5% and is projected to reach 70,000 population by 2015.

Today, the City has a population of over 58,520 citizens who enjoy the City's peaceful setting along the Comal and Guadalupe Rivers, where Texas Hill Country meets prairie land. Within an estimated 400,000 person workforce within a 30-minute commute in a fast growing region, transportation and



The Main Plaza bandstand dates back to 1905, originally hosting evening concerts.



Downtown has several murals celebrating the history of the town and its early settlers.



Photo of historic Railroad station, now a museum.



Photo of historic Joseph Klein house.

Plan Context

regional connectivity have become priorities for Central Texas. A new commuter rail is proposed to run through Downtown New Braunfels as part of the San Antonio-Austin Commuter Rail line (called the “Lone Star Line”).

Downtown New Braunfels

Downtown New Braunfels, located in the center of “the loop” (Loop 337), attracts residents, workers, and visitors. Annual festivals like Wurstfest, a “Ten Day Salute to Sausage” in the fall, Wassailfest in the winter, and Wein and Saengerfest in the spring, bring visitors and residents to the historic Downtown to celebrate the City’s heritage. In the summer, hundreds of thousands of visitors flock the Comal River, which wraps around the northeast boundary of Downtown for river recreation activities. Two major tourist destinations are adjacent to Downtown: Schlitterbahn, the largest water park in the U.S. is a 10-minute walk from Downtown, and Gruene, a rustic retail/entertainment center, is only a 10-minute drive. **Between cultural tourists and river enthusiasts, the City receives approximately two million visitors a year.**

Downtown is also the heart of civic life for the City, and to a lesser degree, Comal County. The Downtown Study Area is centered around the Main Plaza, a small green space with a historic bandstand, enclosed by a traffic circle. San Antonio Street and Seguin Ave (also known as Business 46) are the two main arterials in the Downtown area. The historic Landa Street bridge and underpass marks the northwest entrance to the City on N. Seguin Ave/Business 46 and the historic Comal River Bridge marks the northeast entrance on E. San Antonio, while railroad tracks crossing W. San Antonio Street at Hill Avenue act as the southwest gateway to Downtown. The Comal County Courthouse, situated on the northeast corner of the Main Plaza, and nearby County office buildings are major employment centers in the area. City Hall and the New Braunfels Civic Center, which bring many employees and business visitors to Downtown, act as the southeast gateway anchor to Downtown.



Map of Downtown Implementation Plan Study Area.



County Courthouse is located off Main Plaza in Downtown.



The Downtown Association sponsors beautification projects.



Photo of historic Comal County Courthouse.



Photo of Comal County Courthouse dressed with lights during holiday season.



Photo of Downtown along San Antonio Street.

Despite a relatively strong base of tourism and employment, rents in Downtown are lower than the rest of the City. Some storefronts are unoccupied; ample surface parking lots create an irregular urban fabric with gaps along the streetscape; industrial businesses occupy desirable Downtown land, and traffic moves quickly through Downtown making it unfriendly to pedestrians. Investment and development tend to locate along Interstate 35, outside of Downtown. In many ways, Downtown New Braunfels has become a place to go “through” not “to.”

Downtown Implementation Plan Process

In 2009, the City of New Braunfels engaged the services of Torti Gallas, Capitol Market Research, BWM Landscape Architects and TND Engineering (“the Torti Gallas Consultant Team”) to create a comprehensive, market-based Implementation Plan for Downtown. The last Downtown Master Plan was completed in 1990 and no longer responded to the needs of Downtown New Braunfels. The Consultant Team first visited the City in the spring of 2009 to meet with the City and Downtown Steering Committee (a community advisory group made up of Downtown residents, business owners, and stakeholders) and to perform preliminary site analysis. Following the visit, the Consultant Team began a thorough analysis of all planning documents, reports and studies performed over the last 19 years for Downtown to determine what level of implementation was achieved.

Over 40 City plans, reports and studies were reviewed to understand past goals, strategies, and policies for Downtown improvements. Based on these studies, the Consultant Team created a policy matrix of all past plans to discuss during the community workshop. Together, the City, Consultant Team, and stakeholders reviewed the matrix to establish what type of:

- 1) policy goals have been accomplished,
- 2) goals remain,
- 3) goals are applicable today, and
- 3) policy strategies would best accomplish today’s goal to revitalize Downtown New Braunfels.

Community Outreach

During a two and half day community workshop held at the New Braunfels Civic Center in May 2009, the Consultant Team presented its research and findings on existing conditions, opportunities, and challenges through a series of public meetings, focus group sessions, and one-on-one interviews.

Summary Chart of Plans and Policies reviewed during background analysis stage	
action plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One Year Action Plan 2009 Five Year Action Plan 2005-2009 2007 Annual Report on Comprehensive Plan 2006 Comprehensive Plan 2009-2018 Capital Improvements Budget Draft Plan 1990 New Braunfels Downtown Master Plan
land use + zoning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing Land Use Future Land Use Open Space Master Plan Strategic Parks and Recreation Master Plan (Draft 2008) Restricted Zone Changes Signage Ordinance Development Standards Design Standards Zoning Districts Map Zoning Ordinance List of Ordinances “applicable to new development” Subdivision/Platting Ordinance Sign Ordinance Floodplain Maps & GIS
economic development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economic Development Marketing Strategy for 2008-10 Retail Community Profile New Braunfels Civic Center Info Chamber of Commerce Business Directory Tourism Statistics List of Bed and Breakfast Benchmark Survey Comal Tourism Study Town Creek Market Strategy The Impact of Tourism in Comal County Master Plan for Wursthof Chamber of Commerce Marketing Materials
traffic/parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bikeway and Trail Master Plan County Thoroughfare Plan (2005) City Thoroughfare Plan (2005) TxDOT Plan Road Impact Fee Requirements Austin-San Antonio Commuter Rail Project (2004 Feasibility Update) Comal River Water Recreation Area Parking & Circulation Study Walnut Avenue Reconstruction Project Segments 1, 2, 3
heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New Braunfels Historic Resources Survey (January 2009) TX Historical Commission “Preserving Our Heritage” – A Statewide Plan for Texas

The 1990 Downtown Implementation Plan outlined four primary issues for revitalization, which were:

1. **Fragmented Downtown core:** parking lots, curb cuts, vacant lots break up visual form, no thoughtful infill strategies.
2. **Urban clutter:** signage, power lines, utilities.
3. **Confused circulation:** traffic and parking don’t correlate, bad signage.
4. **Lack of cohesive historic core** and design guidelines for historic structures.

Nineteen years later, many of the issues for Downtown have yet to be resolved.

Plan Context

The Consultant Team's research focused on four areas:

1. Urban Design and Planning Policies
2. Market Analysis and Development Opportunities
3. Traffic, Circulation and Parking
4. Streetscape, Public Space, and Linkages to Parks and Trails.

During the community workshop, the Consultant Team was able to present preliminary recommendations and receive feedback from a range of stakeholders including the City, County officials, Downtown Steering Committee, local business owners, developers, residents, and community members. This process demonstrated that the **community lacked neither ideas nor vision for Downtown, but a practical implementation strategy.** As such, the 2009 Downtown *Master Plan* transformed into the Downtown *Implementation Plan* to provide strategic actions, prioritized in a timeline for dynamic growth.

Summary of Strengths and Challenges

Based on the background analysis and community outreach, the Consultant Team developed a list of strengths and challenges that the Downtown Implementation Plan should address. The following **challenges** in Downtown New Braunfels **act as barriers to revitalization**:

- Poor wayfinding signage
- Unfriendly pedestrian infrastructure
- Through traffic
- Auto-oriented buildings and development
- Lack of public parking lots, abundance of private parking lots
- Some vacant storefronts in retail corridors
- Some vacant lots along retail streets
- Lack of select service or boutique hotel in Downtown
- Limited green space in Downtown
- Limited connectivity to parks, trails, and new developments in and around Downtown
- Large industrial lots in Downtown, generating truck traffic



Photo of May community workshop.



Photo of BWM working on conceptual sketch of beautified Main Plaza.



Conceptual sketch of Main Plaza in New Braunfels with extended green that opens to County Courthouse - an idea explored during community workshop brainstorming sessions.



Photo (below) of community workshop in May.

The **following strengths** should be **capitalized on during revitalization efforts**. Downtown's strengths include:

- Historic street grid with short walkable blocks
- Historic Main Plaza and bandstand
- Historic buildings along retail corridors
- Proximity to major tourist destinations Schillterbahn and Gruene
- Proximity to Comal River and major parks (Landa, Prince Solms)
- Major community and heritage festivals and events
- Civic employment centers (Comal County Courthouse, City Hall, Civic Center)
- Museums and cultural centers
- Nearby Planned mixed-use/residential development
- Railroad and potential commuter rail stop
- Some vacant storefronts in retail corridors
- Some vacant lots along retail streets

Crafting the Plan

From the community workshop emerged a set of eight (8) priority issues areas for Downtown's revitalization. The eight issue areas included:

1. Wayfinding/Branding (Signage Improvements)
2. Catalytic Hotel Development
3. Downtown Parking Strategies
4. City-Owned Parking Garage
5. Traffic calming strategy
6. Main Plaza Revitalization
7. Streetscape & Public Space Improvements
8. Bike/Hike Trails and Connectivity

The eight (8) issues formed the basis for preliminary recommendations proposed to the City and Downtown Steering Committee. The initial recommendations addressed the following three goals:

1. Help brand and identify Downtown to attract primary employers and investment.
2. Improve the tourism infrastructure, deemed to be "under-utilized and under-leveraged."
3. Realize the full potential of Downtown as an attractive, historic, walkable district to live, work, and play.

Defining Critical Success Factors

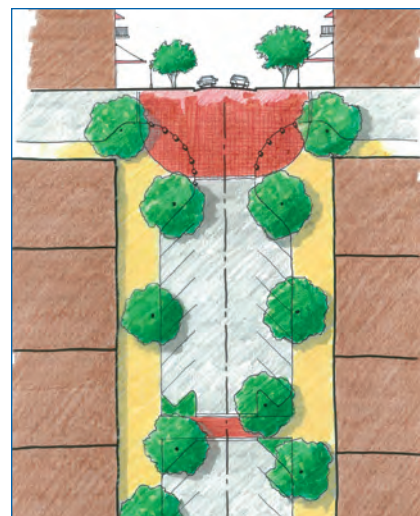
The Downtown Steering Committee and City reviewed and refined the eight issue areas to form a set of five **Critical Success Factors**. All of the Critical Success Factors are **considered essential to future economic success** in Downtown New Braunfels.



Conceptual sketch of Main Plaza with streetscaping and traffic calming measures.



Photo of historic landmark plaque.



Conceptual image of street section with streetscaping.

Plan Context

The recommended actions and policies included as part of the Critical Success Factors are broken into the following five categories:

- 1 Market Opportunities
- 2 Wayfinding
- 3 Circulation & Walkability
- 4 Parking Reform
- 5 Aesthetics & Pedestrian Infrastructure

Inter-City Visit

In an attempt to better understand how small towns in Texas are approaching revitalization efforts in their respective Downtown districts, the City of New Braunfels and several stakeholders, including the Chamber of Commerce, 4B Board, Economic Development Foundation, and Downtown Steering Committee participated in an “Inter-city Visit.” The stakeholders selected four (4) Texas cities including: Georgetown, McKinney, Denton, and Grapevine, which they visited in late September, 2009. The stakeholders used the Inter-City visit to observe how other cities are addressing physical improvements, (such as parking, streetscaping, pedestrian lighting), as well as economic development strategies (such as cultural branding and hotel recruitment) to improve and maintain vibrant Downtown districts.

Plan Approval

In mid-October, 2009, the Consultant Team submitted a draft of the Downtown Implementation Plan along with background studies (Traffic, Circulation and Parking Study and Market Study see Appendix C and D). The City, Downtown Steering Committee, Consultant Team and community stakeholders helped to **review and refine recommendations to ensure that the policies, actions, and guidelines included in the Plan are responsive to the needs of Downtown and feasible for implementation.** Feedback was gathered and returned to the Consultant Team to formulate the Final Downtown Implementation Plan, which was submitted to City Council in January 2010 for approval.



Downtown Georgetown, TX with buildings lit at night to enhance pedestrian experience.



Downtown Denton, TX with historic buildings and angled parking.



Downtown Grapevine, TX with pedestrian scale lighting, awnings, human-scale signage and pedestrian-oriented buildings with street facing entrances and windows.

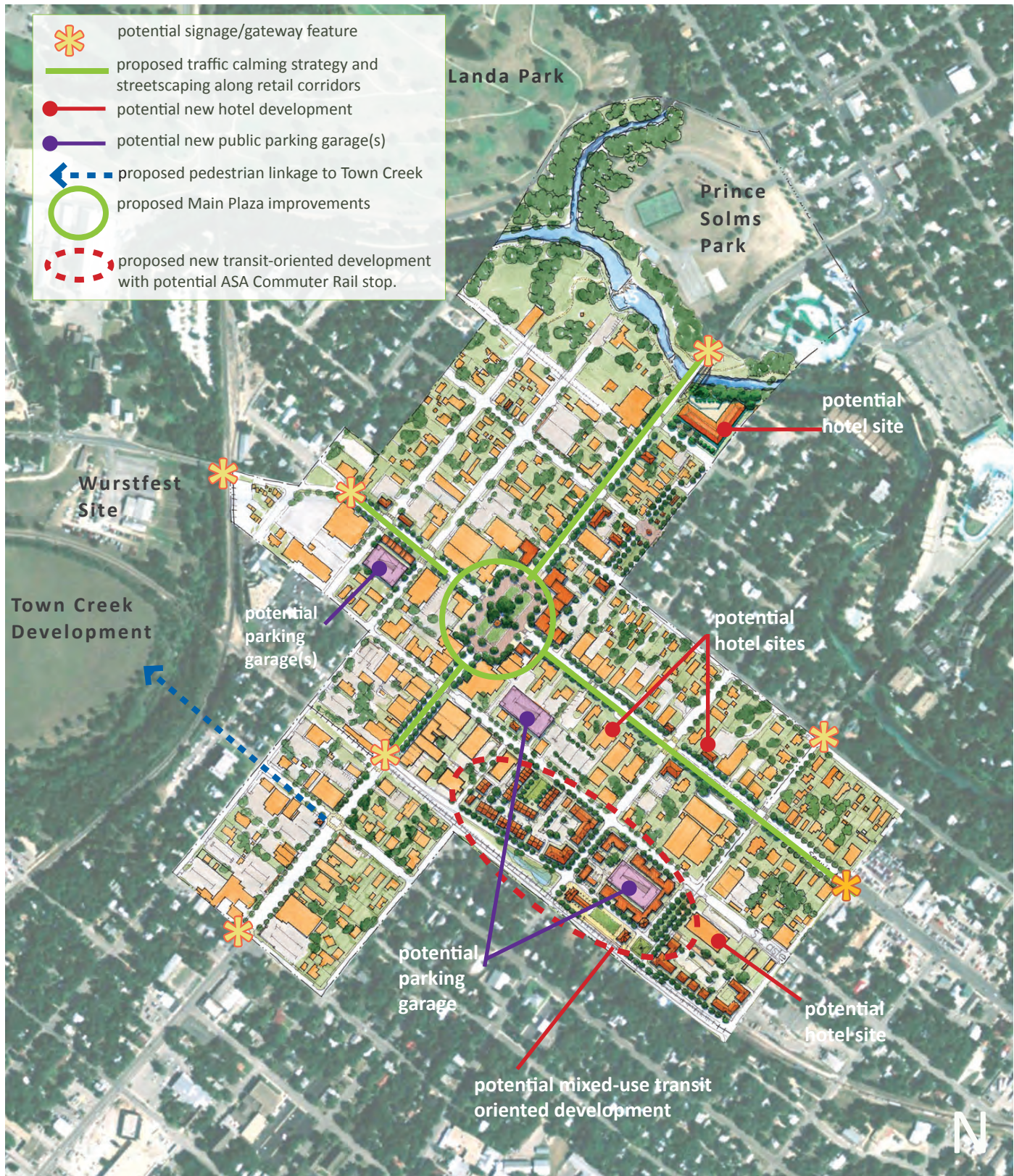


Downtown McKinney, TX with pedestrian-oriented streetscape features including: bulbouts, landscaping, brick crosswalks, pedestrian-oriented lamps and angled parking.

Chapter II

Illustrative Plan & Critical Success Factors

Downtown Implementation Plan Illustrative



II. Critical Success Factors

Downtown Implementation Plan Components

The City, Downtown Steering Committee, Consultant Team and Stakeholders for the Downtown Implementation Plan identified a set of five **Critical Success Factors for the revitalization of Downtown**. The priority actions and/or policies proposed in Chapter 2 directly relate to the strengths and challenges discussed in Chapter 1. The Critical Success Factors include:

- 1 Market Opportunities
- 2 Wayfinding
- 3 Circulation & Walkability
- 4 Parking Reform
- 5 Aesthetics & Pedestrian Infrastructure

While there are several policies that could potentially improve the quality of Downtown New Braunfels, this Chapter outlines the actions that are **most urgent and most likely to achieve the City's vision and goals** for Downtown. For each Critical Success Factor, this Chapter presents:

- Existing conditions
- Policy or design recommendation(s)
- Related benefits (pros) and costs (cons)
- Phasing Timeline
 - Short-term:** to occur within one (1) to two (2) years of plan adoption
 - Medium-term:** to occur within three (3) to five (5) years of plan adoption
 - Long-term:** to occur within six (6) to fifteen (15) years of plan adoption.
- Responsible Department and/or Agencies
- Implementation Status (TBD = to be determined)
- Precedent images and/or descriptive diagrams to help explain the concept.

Fulfilling the City's goal for improved aesthetic quality is addressed by a two-prong approach: (1) City-led actions and policies included in Section 5 of Critical Success Factors, "Aesthetics & Pedestrian Infrastructure," and (2) design guidelines. The Downtown Design Guide, Appendix B, presents a set of design guidelines and best practices for development in Downtown to facilitate a high quality, aesthetically-pleasing, walkable district.

The Plan Illustrative (see facing page) is conceptual in nature. It presents a vision for a walkable Downtown, showing proposed changes to the built environment through public improvements and private development to revitalize the area. The design and development recommendations shown in the Plan Illustrative are discussed herein. The Implementation Strategy is discussed in Chapter 3.



1.0

Market Opportunities

Comal County is one of the fastest growing regions in the country, and New Braunfels is growing at a faster rate than the County at 4.4%. The success of Downtown is largely dependent on how well it can capitalize on the City's growth and direct investment into Downtown. **The Market Study** (see Appendix D) **shows that there is unrealized demand in New Braunfels for new development (hotel, office, retail, apartment, and transit-oriented). Investing in Downtown will not only improve the outlook for the Downtown area, but will boost the City's economy.** This section presents actions and policies to boost the Downtown economy.

The Urban Land Institute projects that mixed-use/infill development and neighborhood retail centers will be favored in the next round of retail development. This bodes well for Downtown businesses and the City at large. Studies show that cities that invest in Downtown redevelopment projects typically achieve higher returns in the long-term due to higher quality construction and investment in the early years when compared to suburban development projects (which typically perform well in the short-term as development costs are less with anticipated peak performance in the first five to 10 years.)

The findings below from the Market Study are important to consider:

- Many visitors know New Braunfels only as the location of the Schlitterbahn Water Park, tubing down at the Comal River, and Gruene with the famous Gruene Hall and highly patronized shops and restaurants, such as the Gristmill.
- Downtown office occupancy is lower than the rest of the market.
- Residents venture out of Downtown to make shopping trips for weekly staples and specialty items causing "retail leakage."
- Downtown has not yet defined itself as a retail destination in the region.
- The historic character of Downtown and its cultural vitality give it an advantage in the competition for consumers who are seeking a unique shopping experience.
- The new Civic Center could support more hotel rooms in Downtown.

M1 Market Opportunities

Existing Condition: Needed Downtown improvements for revitalization lack dedicated funding source.

Recommendation: Establish a funding source dedicated to Downtown Improvements.

Pros:

- Provides a source of funds which are specifically dedicated for Downtown improvements.
- Gives a “voice” to Downtown property owners as a collective body rather than as individuals.
- Fosters additional development and increased property values in district.

Cons:

- Requires political capital and community support.
- Takes time to fund.

Phasing:

- Short to Medium.

Dept/Agency Responsible: City

Implementation Status:

- TBD



Potential Benefits of a Public Improvements District (PID)

- *Within the 108 acre Downtown Implementation Plan study area, the estimated “taxable” property value for 2009 is \$54 million.*
- *If a \$0.10 voluntary PID tax was implemented, the development corporation would receive \$54,000 in 2009.*
- *If the increase in taxable value between 2008 and 2009 within the study area was 6%, the tax “increment” generated by the city tax rate (\$0.409862) would yield approximately \$12,600.*
- *Taken together, the \$66,600 first year revenue could (for example) be used to fund a portion of the two hour parking limit signs and repainting on-street parking.*

- Market Study, Appendix D

Other funding sources include:

- *An allocation of funds from the City’s Economic Development Funds (administered by the Chamber) to help stimulate downtown development or,*
- *The issuance of City GO Bonds to support the redevelopment efforts. These mechanisms could also be used as additional sources of funding to further leverage the PID revenues.*

- See Implementation Strategy, Chapter 3 for information on potential funding sources

M2 Market Opportunities

Existing Conditions: Historic/Cultural Heritage

- 66 designated historic landmarks with identifying plaques in the City; 42 historic landmarks are concentrated in Downtown.
 - A number of historic buildings, including County Courthouse, are in need of renovation and restoration.
- Became a nationally-recognized “Main Street City” in 1991.
- Recognized as one of America’s “Dozen Distinctive Destinations” by the National Trust for Historic Preservation in 2005.
- Designated by the White House as a “Preserve America City” in 2006.
- Designated the Sophienburg Hill District as historic in 2009.
- Proximate to major parks: Landa Park (picnic areas, golf course, trail, pool and active recreation amenities, miniature train, fishing, outdoor concerts), Hinman Island (scuba, snorkeling, swimming, tubing and fishing, playground, picnic), and Prince Solms Park.
- Home to five (5) museums: Lindheimer Haus, Railroad, Fire, Buckhorn Barbershop, and Sophienburg.
- Hosts a series of cultural festivals that celebrate German heritage including: Wurstfest, Wein and Saengerfest, and Kindermasken Parade.
- Host popular non-ethnic celebrations including Wassailfest, 4th of July, and Pony Express Christmas Greetings.
- Offers a façade improvement grant for groups who are attempting to save historic sites and buildings (program is initiated through the Community Development Block Grant office).
- Has Outdoor Mural Program that depicts New Braunfels history through large murals in Downtown area.
- Has received close to \$50 million in Downtown reinvestment since 1991.
- Has potential to become “Original Town Lots” historic district.



Original railroad station is preserved today as a Railroad museum.



Murals in Downtown depict the history of the City.



Gothic County Courthouse and Art Deco Brauntex Theater are both historical structures in Downtown that add to the unique character of the built environment.

M2 Market Opportunities

Recommendation: Pursue Cultural /Heritage Tourism Campaign, programs, and historic designation for Central Business District.

Pros:

- Generates tax revenues through entertainment and tourism-related services. (Travel and tourism is one of America's largest employers, directly employing more than 8 million people and creating a payroll income of \$178 billion. Source: U.S. Travel Association, December 2006)
- Creates new jobs, new businesses.
- Creates stakeholders and potential funding source to restore historic structures and promote cultural events.
- Builds community pride.
- Promotes City to potential future visitors.
- Improves property values when designated as historic.
- Potential historic sites could use Federal Tax Credit Program and local tax incentives.

Cons:

- Places an added demand on Downtown infrastructure — including roads, water supplies, and public services like police and fire protection.
- Cost of campaign and programs.
- Designated and potential historic buildings require coordination with City or potentially Texas Historical Commission (THC).

Phasing: Medium.

Dept/Agency Responsible: City, Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB), Main Street Advisory Board, Downtown Association, or Historic Landmark Commission (HLC).

Implementation

- TBD, see right box for Cultural Heritage Campaign program ideas.



Official Historical Medallion of Texas Historical Commission, explaining history of Main Plaza bandstand, first built in 1905.

Cultural Heritage Tourism Campaign could pursue the following designations, events and actions:

Designations:

- Pursue historic designation of Central Business District.
- Designated all German *fachwerk* buildings
- Create a recognition plaque and brochure for German *fachwerk* buildings.
- Create design standards and more incentives to remove non-historic and incompatible materials from buildings.

Events:

- Join El Camino Real Association and create an event which celebrates the historic trail and incorporates the newly NRHP designated Faust Street Bridge.
- Create a Cinco de Mayo parade Downtown or event in Landa Park.
- Create a Juneteenth Parade or Martin Luther King celebration Downtown or in Landa Park.

Marketing Actions:

- Coordinate operating hours among Downtown museums during tourist seasons.
- Create brochures with information on Downtown museums, walking mural tour, and unique entertainment opportunities, such as 9-pin bowling or Saenger group.

M3 Market Opportunities

Existing Conditions: Hotel Accommodations

Within Greater City

- 28 existing hotels; 1,751 hotel rooms.
- 543 new rooms under construction.
- Six (6) new hotels under construction.
- Two of six (1/3) are “select service” hotels (Courtyard by Marriott and Hilton Garden Inn), and will add higher quality accommodations to the market mix.
- Lacks a nationally known hotel operator; the inferior quality of the accommodations coupled with the lack of easily developable sites has impeded the growth of the hotel business in Downtown.
- Almost 83% of overnight visitors stay two or more days and have time to shop and dine in the evenings.
- Average occupancy rate for 2008 was 61.4%.
- Average daily rate (ADR) of \$78.99.
- Between 2003-2008, the average daily rate increased 27.8% from \$61.48 to \$78.59.
- From 2004-2008, hotel occupancy in the area remained fairly stable at an average of 61.9%.

Within Downtown District

- Two hotels (Prince Solms Inn and the Faust Hotel).
- 75 hotel rooms.
- No new hotels planned, despite the recent introduction of the Civic Center on Seguin Avenue.
- The new Civic Center could support more hotel rooms.

“There appears to be a market opportunity for a mid-size, select service hotel in Downtown New Braunfels with approximately 150 rooms.”
- Market Study 2009



Bed & Breakfast & Boutique Hotels in Downtown.



Limited Service Hotels off Interstate 35.



Economy Hotels found off Interstate 35.

M3 Market Opportunities

Recommendation: Solicit a “Select Service” Hotel to locate in Downtown by providing financial incentives and subsidies to developers; use this document as a marketing tool.

Pros:

- Would bring more visitors to stay in Downtown - increasing potential patrons to shops, restaurants, cafes, etc.
- Increases City’s revenue from hotel tax.
- Increases sales tax revenue from increased amount of visitors.
- The market is dominated by economy and extended stay hotels.

Cons:

- May require monetary incentive (e.g. tax break, land grant, parking reduction, etc) on behalf of City.
- May take business from other hotels and motels in the larger New Braunfels area.
- Finding 3-5 contiguous acres will be a challenge in Downtown and a smaller site will require an expensive parking garage.

Phasing: Short-term to Long-term.

Dept/Agency Responsible: City, Chamber of Commerce.

Implementation

- TBD

Potential Select Service/3 Diamond Hotel Brands



The NYLO Hotel Brand



aloft “W” Hotel Brand

“Select Service” Hotel:

- Mid-scale hotel
- Typically 100-150 rooms
- Common amenities: lobby, workout center, limited food and beverage service
- Requires 2-3 acre site to build hotel with structured parking, or
- Requires 3-5 acre site to build hotel with surface parking

M3 Market Opportunities

Potential Hotel Sites

Six sites have been identified as potential “opportunity sites” for a select service hotel or mixed-use hotel development. These six (6) sites are distributed throughout Downtown and are currently occupied by a less “intense” land use. A brief description of the sites is provided below. A diagram on facing page shows their location in Downtown.

(Site 1) 444 Bar and Grill

This 2.53 acre site is located on the northeast corner of Downtown on the Comal River at 444 E. San Antonio. While the site is small for a hotel site and provides topographic challenges, a mixed-use development with a signature high turnover restaurant would have significant appeal.

(Site 2) ADM Mill

This 3.78 acre site is the current location of an operating grain and flour mill. While the mill location on the Comal River is historically appropriate, the site’s size, river frontage and proximity to Schlitterbahn make it a prime redevelopment site for hotel or mixed use development. This is a potential historic structure.

(Site 3) Producer’s CO-OP

This 2.5 acre site is located southeast of the Main Plaza on South Castell at 210 S. Castell. Although this is not located on the major shopping street, a select service hotel at this site would encourage retail growth along South Castell and would broaden the area of Downtown retail development and support the Civic Center down the street. If the CO-OP site is combined with one or more adjacent properties, a significant hotel or mixed-use development opportunity could be realized. This is a potential historic structure.



444 Site photo and sketch of proposed hotel site plan.



Photo of ADM Mill Site.



Photo of ADM Mill Site.



Photo of Elk's Lodge.

M3 Market Opportunities

(Site 4) Elk's Lodge

Located at 353 S. Seguin Ave/Business 46, this site is just outside of the Downtown study area but across the street from the New Braunfels Civic Center. While the Elk's Lodge is of historical significance, the remaining structures on the block could be replaced by a hotel and residential cottages. This is a designated historic building.

(Site 5) Faust Hotel Parking Lot

Located at 240 S. Seguin Ave/Business 46, this is the site of the Faust Hotel which currently has 61 rooms. The existing surface parking lot behind the building could allow for a possible expansion of the Faust Hotel and an adjacent parking structure. This is a designated historic building.

(Site 6) City Hall Redevelopment Site

Currently occupied by New Braunfels City Hall, this site is located across from the new Civic Center on South Castell Street at the south end of Downtown. The fact that the City owns this land and it is in close proximity to the Civic Center make this an attractive site of a Civic Center-serving hotel. However, its distance from the core retail district on San Antonio Street and relative isolation from other pedestrian-oriented land uses make it less appealing as a catalyst for tourism-related economic development. A mixed-use development built on the Producer's CO-OP Site could help mitigate the isolation issue, making it a more attractive site to investors.

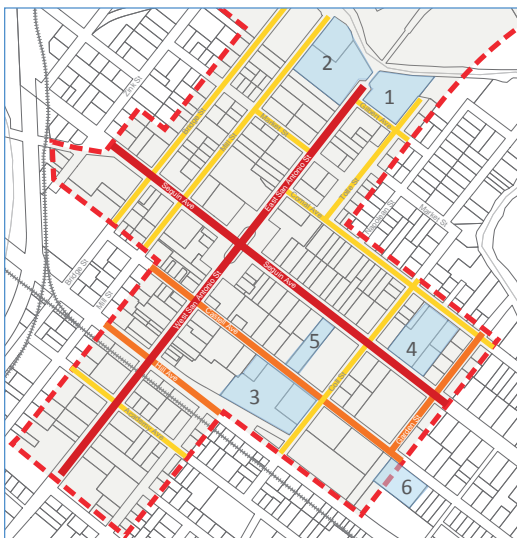


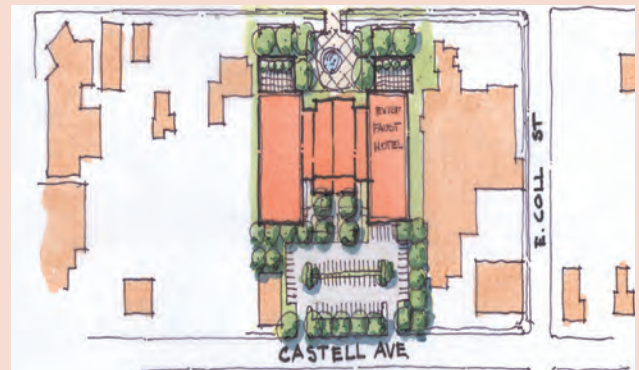
Diagram shows potential locations of new hotel.



Conceptual sketch of proposed Elk's Lodge Hotel site plan.



Photo of Faust Hotel.



Conceptual sketch of Faust Hotel Renovation site plan.



Photo of Civic Center across from City Hall.

M4 Market Opportunities

Existing Conditions: Office Space

Overview

- Downtown office occupancy is lower than the rest of the market.
- There is a strong base of government office uses and supportive professional services.
- Rent levels are relatively low.
- There have been no new office building developed in Downtown since First State Bank was completed in 1986.
- No new space under construction.
- There are several large vacant or under-utilized development sites in the study area.
- Recent advances in multiple office network connectivity make “back office” uses a potential market niche, and small technology oriented businesses could also be attracted by the historic character.

Rents, Size & Occupancy

- The Downtown study has a total of 292,978 square feet (SF) of office space.
- A large portion of the office space, 100,000 SF is located in government buildings.
- 12,022 SF of “unfinished” second floor space, which could be renovated to increase Downtown office space.
- Occupancy rates are relatively low at 80.9%. If unfinished second floor space (12,022 SF) is excluded the occupancy is 84.6%.
- Only one new office building in planning stages (45,000 SF).

County Office Growth

- Comal County employment is expected to grow at a rate of 55.1% between 2008 and 2020.
- Office absorption will increase as the County employment increases and household demand for services expands.

The vacant second floor space in several Downtown buildings seems ripe for conversion to office use.
- Market Study, 2009



Second floors can be designed for future occupancy with building renovations. While historic building renovations have occurred, there has been little new office development since 1986.



Vacant second floors could be retrofitted for future occupancy. Fire codes and outdated wiring make it difficult to occupy second floor office spaces.

M4 Market Opportunities

Recommendation: Incentivize “infill occupancy” for vacant space along San Antonio Street.

1. Initiate review of building and zoning codes to allow retrofits to Downtown buildings for use of second floor space.
2. Gather building owners to establish common store hours and list of preferred tenants.
3. Consider renting upper levels of building to artists to attract creative industries.

Pros:

- Increases pedestrian traffic in Downtown for more active public realm.
- Increased the number of patrons for Downtown businesses, restaurants, shops, etc.
- Creates a larger group of stakeholders who are investing in the quality of Downtown’s economic market and built environment.
- Creates a new class of artists in Downtown area that could attract more creative industries.

Cons:

- Requires variances or relief to building code and fire code.
- Electrical and telecommunication wiring for technology-driven businesses exceeds the early 20th Century service available in most second floor spaces.
- Requirement for a second means of egress is a physical and financial obstacle for office uses on the second floor.
- Requires financial assistance or tax breaks, in some cases, to make the necessary upgrades economically viable.

Phasing: Short-term/Medium.

Dept/Agency Responsible: City, Business Owners.

Implementation:

- TBD



Second floors can be designed for second-story occupancy with building renovations.



Vacant second floors could be retrofitted for future occupancy. Fire codes and outdated wiring make it difficult to occupy second floor office spaces.

M5 Market Opportunities

Existing Conditions: Retail Space

Overview

- Downtown has not yet defined itself as a retail destination in the region.
- Visitors to New Braunfels are generally unaware of the shopping and dining opportunities in Downtown.
- Residents travel out of Downtown to make shopping trips for weekly staples and specialty items causing “retail leakage.”
- Specialty retail is evident but lacks a “critical mass.”
- Store hours of operation lack consistency and are not in synch with potential shopper demand (evenings and weekends).
- Rents are substantially lower than for shopping centers in New Braunfels.
- Downtown New Braunfels is expanding its retail base particularly in food service and liquor sales.
- Historic character and cultural vitality give Downtown an advantage in the competition for consumers seeking a unique shopping experience.

Rents, Size, & Occupancy

- Downtown has a total of 300,554 SF of retail space
- A significant portion of the retail space, 97,063 SF, is located in restaurants and bars.
- Occupancy rates are relatively strong at 92.5%.
- Rental rates range from \$8.00 to \$12.00/SF, which is substantially lower than the \$16.07/SF average annual rate quoted in shopping centers in New Braunfels.
- There is market potential for “specialty retail.”

The strong nucleus of restaurants, bars and new retail establishments should be expanded to make the Downtown area a “specialty retail” destination.



Photos above show examples of specialty dining and entertainment uses in Downtown.

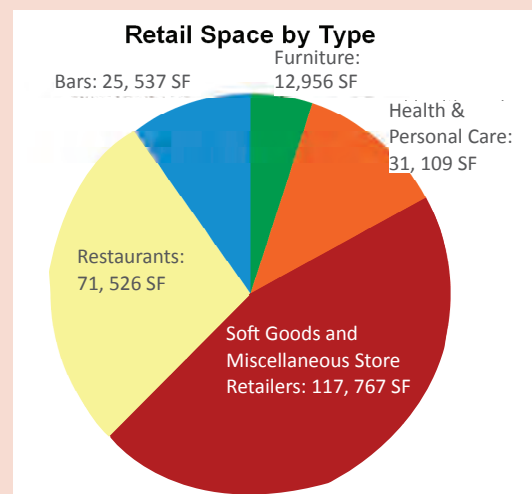


Chart created by Capitol Market Research, included in Market Study, Appendix D.

M5 Market Opportunities

Recommendation: Incentivize “infill development” for vacant lots along San Antonio Street with pedestrian-oriented businesses by -

1. Identifying owners of vacant and for sale parcels.
2. Offering development incentives (up-zoning, code changes) to developers.
3. Organizing banks to create shared debt pool.
4. Providing tax abatements.
5. Using this document as a marketing tool.

Pros:

- Increases the amount of pedestrian traffic in Downtown for more active public realm.
- Provides a greater number of potential patrons of Downtown businesses, restaurants, shops, etc.
- Creates a larger community of Downtown stakeholders invested in the Downtown market and quality of the built environment.

Cons:

- Generates more vehicular traffic and parking needs.
- Increases City’s infrastructure needs.
- Requires City subsidies or finance incentives.

Phasing: Medium.

Dept/Agency Responsible: City, Private Developer.

Implementation:

- TBD

The current estimated “retail leakage of \$110 million would support 377,000 SF of new retail space. The potential increase in retail space would almost double the existing inventory of space in Downtown.
- Market Study, 2009



Example of large vacant or under-utilized development sites in the study area.



Example under-utilized development sites in the study area.

M6 Market Opportunities

Existing Conditions: Multi-family Housing

Overview

- Most new apartment development will be along the Loop 337 corridor.
- Within the study area there are no large apartment complexes.
- The success of the Landmark properties on Landa St. Indicate an opportunity for Downtown rental housing.
- Smaller scale (infill) residential or mixed use development could provide a transition from retail and office to single family residential.

Rents

- Near Downtown rental units show potential demand for Downtown living.
- Average rents are \$0.92 per month which is 10.8% higher than the San Antonio average.
- Potential demand will average 20 units a year through 2023, a total of 302 units.

Average rents in New Braunfels are 10.8% higher than the San Antonio average. - Market Study, 2009



Historic mill was renovated for re-adaptive use, creating new Landmark lofts with new apartments adjacent to Downtown.

Landmark Lofts & Gardens Profile:

- Just west of Downtown is the Landmark Gardens (178 units) and Landmark Lofts (110 units).
- The average rental rate for 288 units is \$1.21 SF, 31.5% higher than the market average.
- The average occupancy rate is 85.4%.
- The tenant profile at the Landmark properties is very diverse and most are "lifestyle" renters.

M6 Market Opportunities

Recommendation: Increase number of residents in Downtown.

1. **Expand Multi-family housing options.**
 - Encourage building renovations to increase 2nd floor residential occupancy.
 - Identify owners of vacant and for sale parcels.
 - Offer incentives (up-zoning, code changes) to developers.
 - Organize banks to create shared debt pool.
 - Provide tax abatements
2. **Construct a bridge (pedestrian/bike) to Town Creek to connect hundreds of new residential units to Downtown.**

Pros:

- Generates tax revenues in Downtown.
- Increases the number of Downtown residents in walkable area to patronize Downtown businesses and services.
- Increases the amount of pedestrian traffic in Downtown for more active public realm.
- Fulfills un-met demand (CMR forecast for 2009 is a potential absorption of 268 units).

Cons:

- Increase City's infrastructure needs.
- Requires economic incentives, business recruitment, and parking reform.

Phasing: Medium.

Dept/Agency Responsible: City, Private Developers.

Implementation:

- TBD



Multi-family housing options for Downtown include: mixed-use infill (top photo), townhouses, and live/work units (middle photo).



Diagram shows potential linkages (blue arrows) that extend street grid to Town Creek for greater connectivity, bringing more residents to Downtown to shop, eat, and work at local establishments.

M7 Market Opportunities

Recommendation: Identify locations for proposed commuter rail stop and encourage transit-oriented development.

Pros:

- Generates tax revenue.
- Connects City to large employment centers and airports.
- Brings greater number of potential patrons to Downtown.
- Increases value of land around transit station.
- Allows for sustainable travel.

Cons:

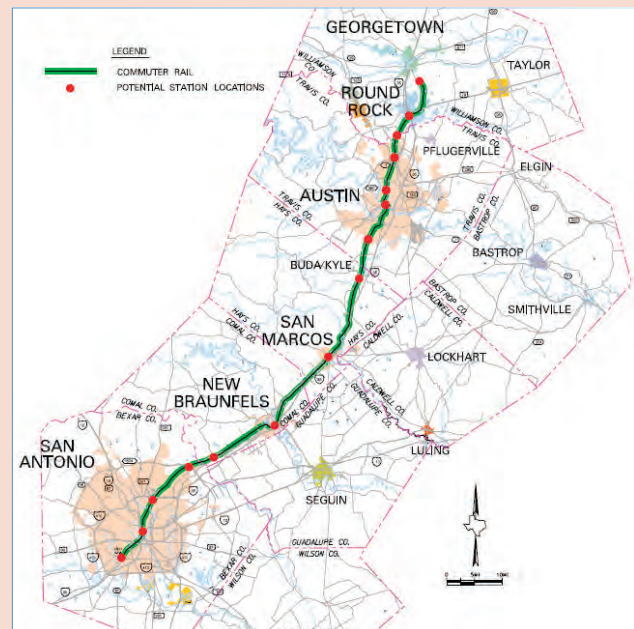
- May place demands on the infrastructure — on roads, water supplies and public services like police and fire protection.
- Requires staff time to meet and establish relationship with ASA Rail.

Phasing: Medium/Long-term.

Dept/Agency Responsible: City

Implementation:

- Encourage Economic Development Department, Chamber of Commerce, and Mayor to meet with ASA Rail Board and Staff.
- Continue existing relationship between Director of Planning & Community Development, City Council Members and ASA Board.
- Continue City of New Braunfels membership in commuter rail district and use City's existing state and federal lobbyists. Enlist support of Downtown businesses.
- Offer incentives to develop around transit station.



Map of proposed San Antonio- Austin Commuter Rail, which has a proposed stop in Downtown New Braunfels.



Conceptual drawing of potential mixed-use, transit-oriented development surrounding new rail station with added green space, "park once" garage, new retail, housing, and office space; located along Hill Ave between Coll and Garden, transforming under-utilized industrial lot in Downtown for economic development opportunities.

2.0

OLD TOWN

Importance of Wayfinding

Wayfinding is an often overlooked, but critical component of economic development for cities, particularly for historic Downtowns that are not immediately visible from the highway. If visitors cannot easily see signage for Downtown, chances are they will not try very hard to find it. Shopping malls, chain restaurants, and major hotel brands locate along highways for one reason: to maximize the number of patrons by offering travelers convenient and immediate access to amenities off the highway.

Historic Downtown districts cannot compete with this locational advantage. They can, however, compete in another area - by offering visitors a unique cultural experience with historic architecture, fine dining, and one-of-kind shopping. **The goal for Downtown New Braunfels is to advertise its unique assets and identify its location to travelers through visible, readable, and strategically-placed signage.**

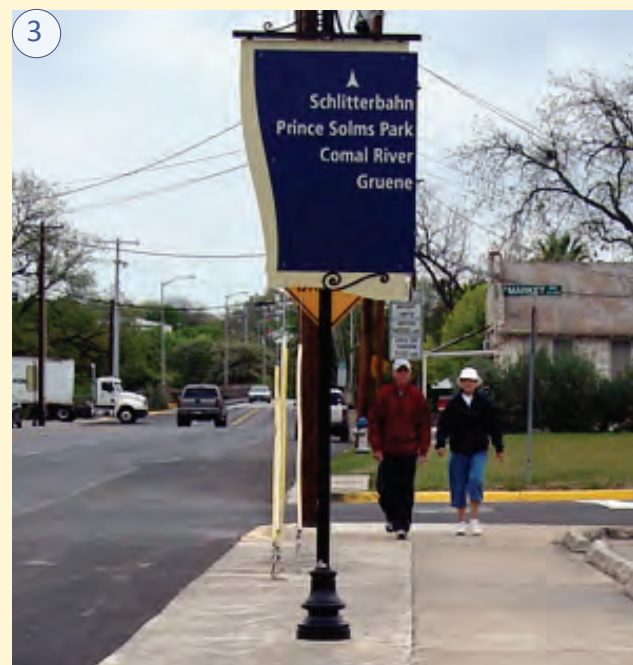
In 2007, the City completed a Wayfinding Study that offered many good recommendations, only a few of which have been implemented. The following recommendations are based on the 2007 study and attempt to do three essential things:

- Identify Downtown to travelers at key access points off highway and major thoroughfares
- Direct travelers to the Downtown core and key cultural destinations
- Inform travelers on what type of destinations exist within Downtown and why they are of cultural and/or historic interest.

W0 Wayfinding

Existing Conditions: Downtown Wayfinding Signage

- 1 Highway signage is confusing, and does not give clear direction(s) on how to get to Downtown, nor does it brand the area as a historical area.
- 2 Signage does not have any City graphics, or defining logo to inform visitors that they are entering historic Downtown New Braunfels.
- 3 Font size of text on signage is too small for passing vehicles to read.



W1 Wayfinding

Recommendation: Install Highway signage for historic Downtown New Braunfels on Interstate Highway 35, State Highway 46, Loop 337 and Walnut Ave.

Pros:

- Informs and advertises historic Downtown to travelers, who may not know that New Braunfels has a historic Downtown.
- Helps direct travelers on how to quickly and easily navigate to the Downtown center.

Cons:

- Requires coordination with TxDOT.
- Cost of design and installation.

Phasing:

- Short-term/Immediate.

Responsible Dept/Agency:

- City, TxDOT, County

Implementation Status:

- Completed Winter 2009; additional signage is being discussed with TxDOT.



Photo of new Downtown Santa Paula signs on Highway 126. Sign was put up at the Redevelopment Agency's expense after many years of work by the City and the Downtown Merchants Association.



Interstate Highway billboard for Schlitterbahn announces destination to visitors - a good model for Downtown.



Interstate Highway billboard for New Braunfels from the 1960s welcomes travelers to visit - a precedent for present Downtown.

W2 Wayfinding

Recommendation: Increase font size and place logo on all Downtown Wayfinding Signage.

Pros:

- Improves legibility of signage to better direct visitors with increased font size.
- Advertises and brands Downtown as a “place” with logo.

Cons:

- Cost of repairing signs.

Phasing:

- Short-term.

Responsible Dept/Agency:

- City

Implementation Status:

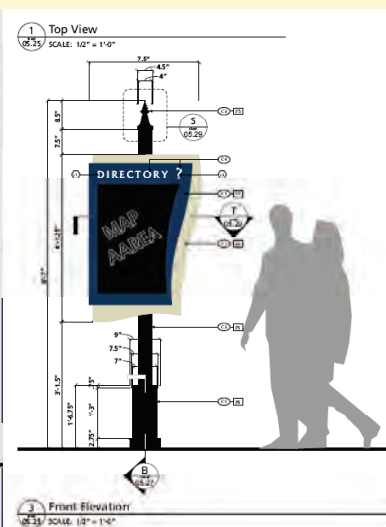
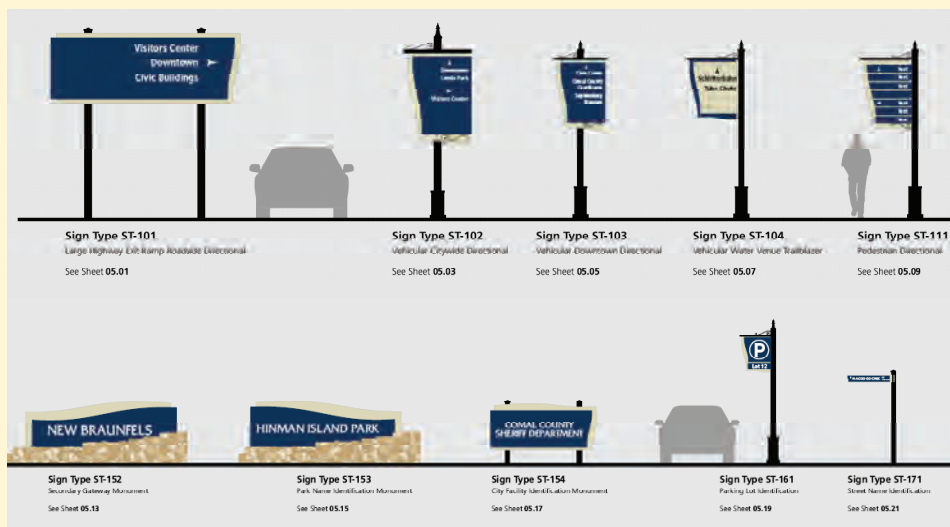
- TBD



Larger font size is more readable for drivers.



Adding the City's logo to signage creates a visible and clear brand.



Other examples of signage from the 2007 City Wayfinding Study, see Study for full images.

W3 Wayfinding

Recommendation: Install family of signs at recommended locations based on 2007 Wayfinding Study to include Downtown map kiosk and directional signage.

Pros:

- Advertises and brands Downtown as a “place” with recognizable and defining City logo.
- Addresses both vehicular and pedestrian travelers with different sized signage.
- Informs travelers of Downtown as unique destination.
- Provides central map for pedestrians.

Cons:

- Cost of producing and installing new signs.

Phasing:

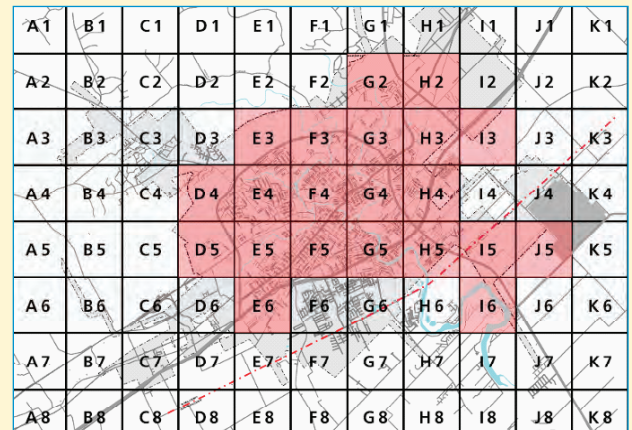
- Short-term/Medium.

Responsible Dept/Agency:

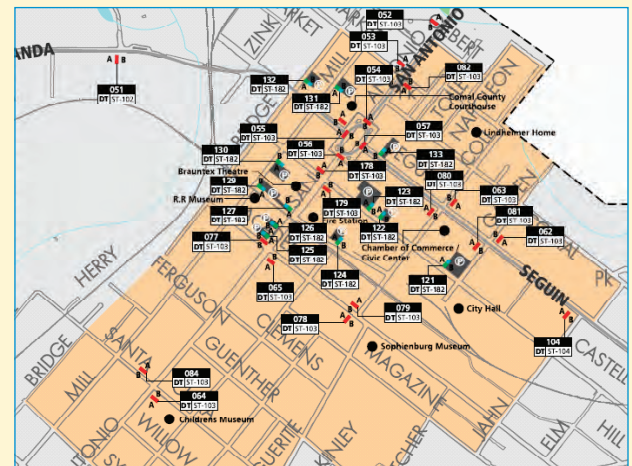
- City

Implementation Status:

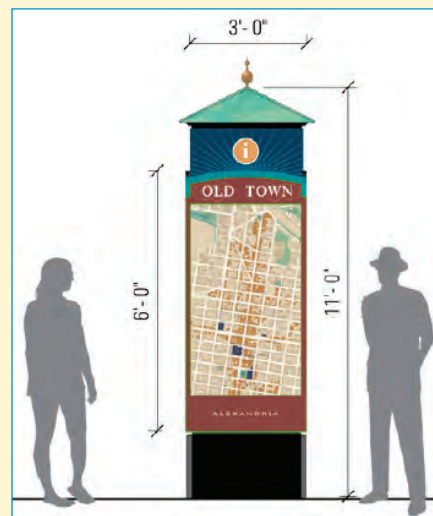
- TBD



2007 Wayfinding Study Area.



Map of recommended signage locations in 2007 Wayfinding Study.



Examples of map kiosk and directional signage in Old Town Alexandria, Virginia.

3.0

Improved Circulation & Walkability

Creating a walkable community has countless benefits for the long-term health of a city, its people, environment and economy. Studies show that property values are higher in walkable neighborhoods and districts. Residents often want to live in safe, attractive neighborhoods where they can walk for exercise, enjoyment, or to make short trips to work, school, and the store. Business owners place a high value on locating in walkable areas due to increased sales from higher volumes of foot traffic.

Downtown New Braunfels has an ideal street grid for a walkable community, supported by a centrally-located Main Plaza and short blocks connecting to major commercial corridors. Currently, Downtown lacks a pedestrian-friendly infrastructure. **Improvements such as repairing broken sidewalks, increasing the number of pedestrian-oriented amenities such as street furniture, shade, and public bathrooms, and screening parking lots from public view would make Downtown a more desirable place to spend time.**

The following recommendations offer the City the framework to make basic, needed improvements to Downtown's pedestrian infrastructure for a more economically viable place. Keeping Downtown as a place for cars rather than people will exacerbate existing retail leakage wherein residents and visitors fulfill their retail needs elsewhere.

c1 Improved Circulation & Walkability

Existing Condition: Traffic Data and Counts

- 1 Lack of traffic data to assess feasibility of traffic calming strategy and other pedestrian-friendly circulation plans and policies.

Recommendation: Gather traffic count data to enable planning for additional traffic calming strategy and other traffic calming efforts.

Pros:

- Allows for more thoughtful and informed transportation planning.
- Aids long-term traffic planning to boost economic development.

Cons:

- Cost of study.

Phasing:

- Short-term/Immediate.

Dept/Agency Responsible:

- City

Implementation Status:

- Completed Summer 2009.



Understanding the traffic flow patterns in and around Downtown will allow for informed traffic circulation planning.

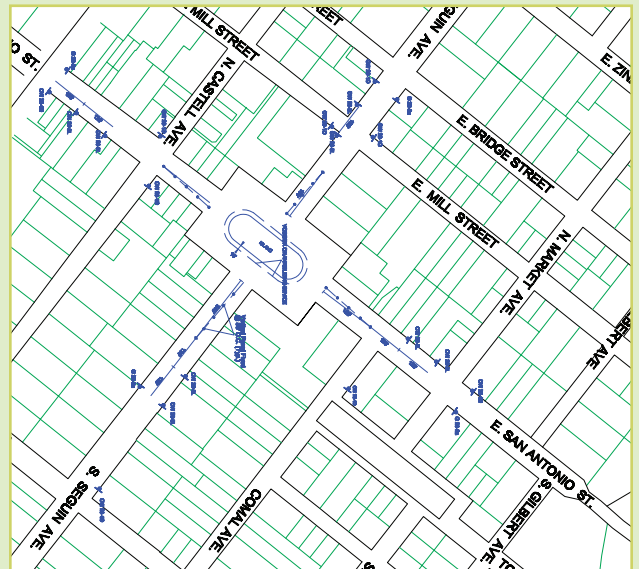


Diagram showing traffic count locations.

See Appendix C Traffic, Circulation, and Parking report performed by TND Engineering, which discusses the traffic conditions and proposed actions in greater detail.

c2 Improved Circulation & Walkability

Existing Conditions: Traffic Circulation around Main Plaza

- 1 Upon entering Main Plaza traffic circle, cars tend to line up, using only one of the two travel lanes.
- 2 Upon exiting traffic circle, cars tend to “swing wide” taking up two lanes of traffic to maintain high speeds, rather than slowing down to safely turn with a sharper turning radius. While traffic speed is 15mph around the Main Plaza, cars and trucks often speed through Downtown center.
- 3 Trucks use streets around Main Plaza as a through-route to the highway rather than going around Downtown.



Vehicles line up along San Antonio Street, using one lane to travel around Main Plaza, leaving second lane largely unused.



Vehicles drive quickly through Main Plaza, occupying more than one lane with a wide swing at turns to maintain high speeds.



Trucks use San Antonio as a transportation route through town, bringing large trucks through the Main Plaza.

C2 Improved Circulation & Walkability

Improve accessibility to and safety around Main Plaza.

Recommendation 1: Enforce designated speed: 15 miles per hour around Main Plaza and 25 miles per hour in Downtown area.

Recommendation 2: Reduce travel lanes around Main Plaza from two (2) to one (1) lane.

Recommendation 3: Consider “no through traffic” policy for truck traffic in Downtown on Seguin and San Antonio.

Pros:

- Improves walkability and pedestrian safety in Downtown.
- Allows for greater access to historic bandstand and Main Plaza.

Cons:

- Cost of enforcement (1 and 3)
- Cost of traffic calming strategy
- Cost of new signage for traffic calming strategy.
- Could create traffic queue around Main Plaza.

Phasing:

- Short-term.

Dept/Agency Responsible:

- City, TxDot

Implementation Status:

- Testing Concept: Main Plaza area will be renovated during the Spring 2010 for routine utility and irrigation purposes. During this period, the Plaza will lose a lane of traffic, narrowing from one to two lanes. This construction should slow traffic to more pedestrian-friendly speeds, acting as a trial traffic calming strategy* around the Main Plaza area. See Traffic Study for greater discussion of traffic calming strategy.

* A definition and description of traffic calming strategies is found on page 44.



While the posted speed limit is 15 mph, drivers speed around the Main Plaza at higher, more dangerous speeds.



Signage posting uncommon speed limits is more likely to attract driver attention than common signs, which are often ignored in Downtown.

What is a pedestrian-friendly speed limit?

In an environment where pedestrian travel is encouraged, such as the Main Plaza, vehicle speed is a very important matter. It takes about twice the distance to stop a moving vehicle at 40 mph as compared with 20 mph; moreover, in the event of an accident, pedestrians struck by vehicles moving 20 mph or less are not usually permanently injured. If the vehicle is traveling at about 37 mph or more, a struck pedestrian is usually fatally injured. Therefore, the advisory 15 mph sign at right is much more “pedestrian friendly” than typical driver speeds moving through Downtown.

- 2009 Traffic Study, see Appendix C.

C3 Improved Circulation & Walkability

Existing Conditions: Crosswalks (see A1)

- 1 There are no crosswalks to take pedestrians to bandstand and green space on Plaza.
- 2 Quality of crosswalks varies in Downtown; many are worn away and not visible to cars and pedestrians.
- 3 Roadway prioritizes vehicular mobility and rather than pedestrian and/or bicycle safety and movement.



C3 Improved Circulation & Walkability

Recommendation: Create and delineate crosswalks around Main Plaza and to and from bandstand. Consider “count-down” crosswalks, which provide pedestrians with information on how much time they have to safely cross an intersection.

Pros:

- Improves walkability and safety in Downtown.
- Allows for greater access to historic bandstand.
- Presents a visual indicator of positive change.

Cons:

- Cost of paint, labor, and maintenance.

Phasing:

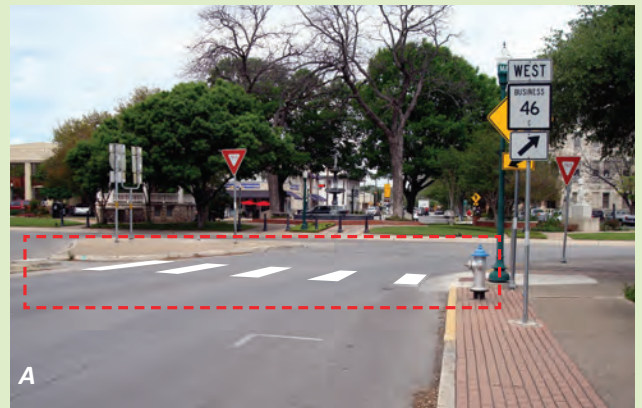
- Short-term.

Dept/Agency Responsible:

- City

Implementation Status:

- TBD



Repaint existing crosswalks and create visible crosswalks around and to Main Plaza, as seen in the “Before” and “After.”



Crosswalks help illuminate pedestrian passage at night to protect strollers from cars. Textured paving could be used to delineate Main Plaza as special pedestrian area.



C4 Improved Circulation & Walkability

Existing Conditions: Sidewalks

- ① Sidewalks in Downtown vary in width, use, landscaping, paving materials, and amenities.
- ② Level of maintenance is poor in some areas with deteriorating paving materials, which is a potential hazard to pedestrians.
- ③ Sidewalk network is inconsistent with gaps in system where sidewalk ends, leaving pedestrian in uncomfortable space with no buffer space from traffic.



Existing sidewalks need to be improved and maintained in Downtown to ensure an accessible, walkable district.



Gap in sidewalk network.

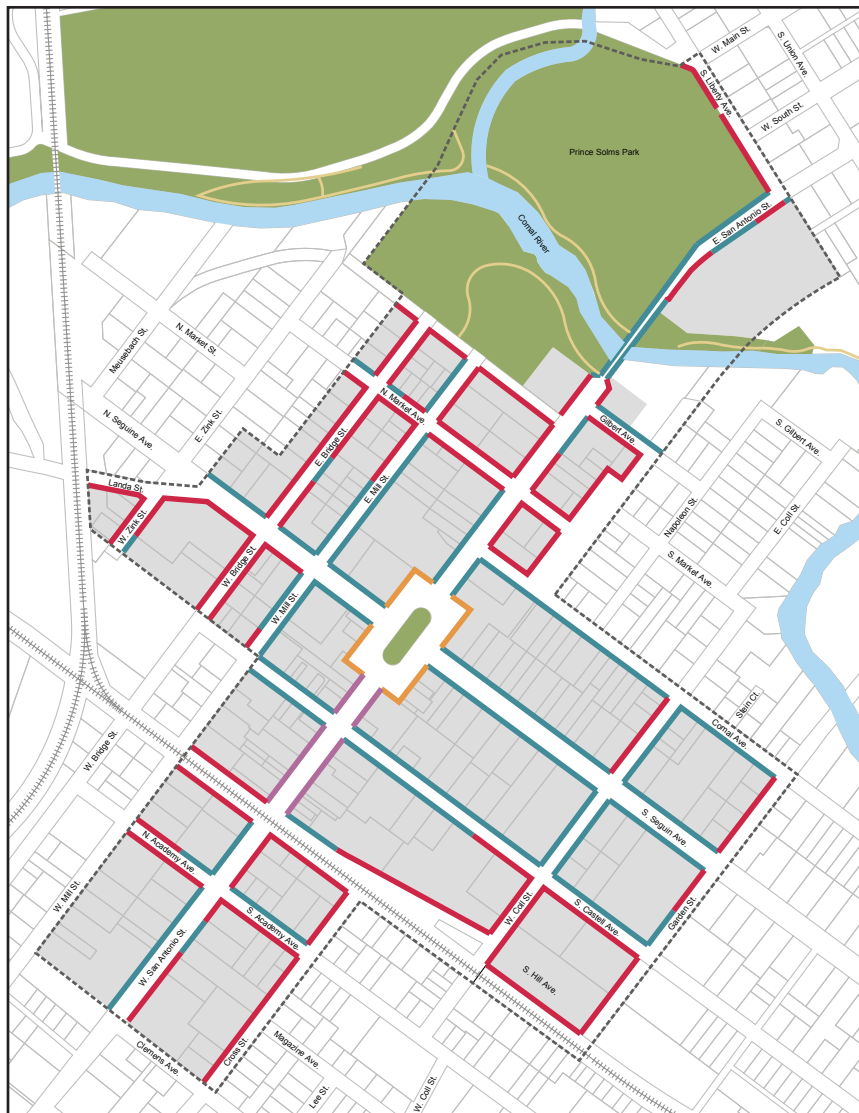


Sidewalk ends at bridge leaving pedestrian in dirt with little refuge from traffic.

C4 Improved Circulation & Walkability

Existing Conditions: Sidewalk Network

Illustrated below is a diagram of existing sidewalks in Downtown New Braunfels, which shows several areas in Downtown that lack sidewalks (highlighted in red). The sidewalk network is most developed on W. San Antonio Street and S. Seguin Ave/Business 46.



EXISTING SIDEWALKS

- Study Area Boundary
- Existing Open Space
- Sidewalk Gaps
- Existing Primary Sidewalks
- Existing Secondary Sidewalk
- Existing Tertiary Sidewalks
- Existing Trails

- Primary sidewalks along W. San Antonio Street from Main Plaza to Hill Ave.
- Secondary sidewalks around Main Plaza.
- Tertiary sidewalks on most Downtown streets.
- Trails along Comal River with no access on San Antonio Street near Mill site.
- Gaps in sidewalk system throughout Downtown, most notably:
 - * West side of N. Seguin Ave/ Business 46
 - * South side of W. San Antonio and west of Hill Ave.
 - * North side and south side of E. San Antonio, east of Main Plaza
 - * West side of S. Castell Ave
 - * Market Ave
 - * Bridge Street
 - * Gilbert Ave
 - * Mill Street

Sidewalk Hierarchy

- **Primary sidewalks:** Widest passage area, carry the greatest amount of pedestrian traffic, have the highest concentration of pedestrian amenities.
- **Secondary sidewalks:** Carry a moderate amount of pedestrian traffic, serve as a transition between primary and tertiary sidewalks, have a moderate concentration of pedestrian amenities.
- **Tertiary sidewalks:** narrowest passage area, located in residential neighborhoods, carry the least amount of pedestrian traffic, and have the lowest concentration of pedestrian amenities.

C4 Improved Circulation & Walkability

Recommendation: Repair broken, incomplete sidewalk network and build new sidewalks along retail and commercial streets.

1. Repair broken sidewalks.
2. Extend gaps in sidewalk system.
3. Minimize curb cuts along pedestrian priority streets and retrofit where politically feasible.
4. Retrofit sidewalks to adhere to ADA requirements to allow for access by all types of users.
5. Consider ordinance to review responsibility of City and property owners in constructing and maintaining sidewalk network.

Pros:

- Improves pedestrian safety.
- Improves walkability.
- Improves aesthetic quality of Downtown.

Cons:

- Requires City investment.
- Requires maintenance.

Phasing: Medium.

Dept/Agency Responsible:

- City, Property Owners

Implementation:

- TBD

How to sidewalks influence physical activity?

A new study by San Diego State University published in a recent issue of the American Journal of Preventative Medicine, shows that the presence of sidewalks can influence our health by encouraging people to exercise. The study reports that cross-culturally, people who live in a city neighborhood are twice as likely to be physically active than those living in the suburbs.

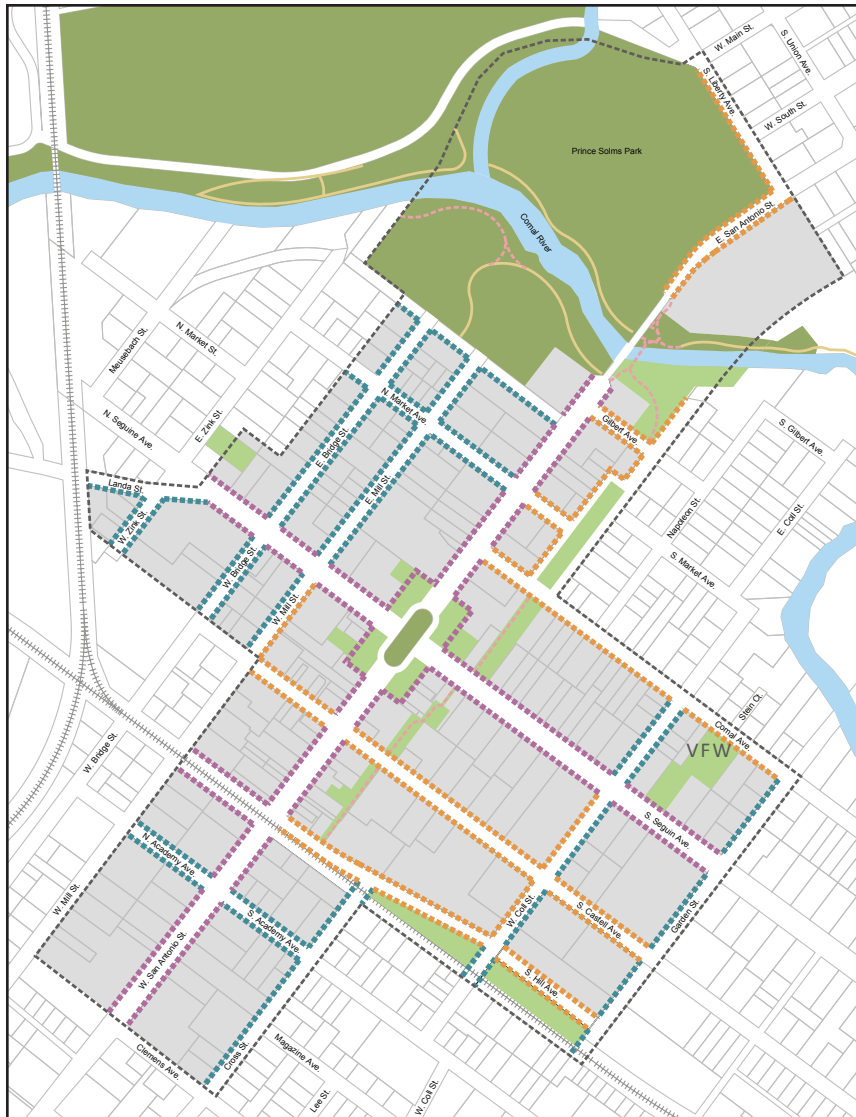
In fact, in looking at data from over 11,000 surveys in 11 countries, the main factor influencing physical activity is accessibility to sidewalks.

- Hawkes & Sheridan, "Why Street Design Matters": <http://www.planetizen.com/node/39815>

C4 Improved Circulation & Walkability

Proposed: Sidewalk Network.

Below is a diagram of the proposed sidewalk network, which offers pedestrians a complete network of pathways throughout Downtown. The proposed plan designates Seguin Ave/Business 46 and San Antonio (East and West) as primary corridors for pedestrians with primary sidewalks. Tertiary sidewalks are proposed on residential streets.



PROPOSED SIDEWALKS

- Study Area Boundary
- Existing Open Space
- Proposed Open Space
- Proposed Primary Sidewalks
- Proposed Secondary Sidewalks
- Proposed Tertiary Sidewalks
- Proposed Trails

- Primary sidewalks along Seguin and San Antonio one block from Main Plaza as primary pedestrian centers.
- Primary sidewalks around Main Plaza as primary pedestrian center.
- Secondary sidewalks along San Antonio and Seguin farther from Main Plaza.
- Secondary sidewalks along Castell and Hill.
- Tertiary sidewalks on surrounding residential streets.
- New trail connection at Gilbert and San Antonio on west side of Comal River.
- New pedestrian crossing mega blocks on S. Seguin/Business 46 and S. Castell.

Sidewalk Hierarchy

- *Primary sidewalks: carry the greatest amount of pedestrian traffic, have the widest passage area, host the highest concentration of pedestrian amenities.*
- *Secondary sidewalks: Carry a moderate amount of pedestrian traffic, serve as a transition between primary and tertiary sidewalks, host a moderate concentration of pedestrian amenities.*
- *Tertiary sidewalks: narrowest passage, located in residential neighborhoods, carry the least amount of pedestrian traffic, and host the lowest concentration of pedestrian amenities.*

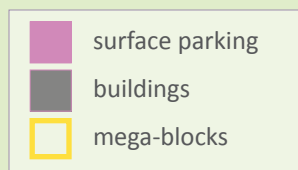
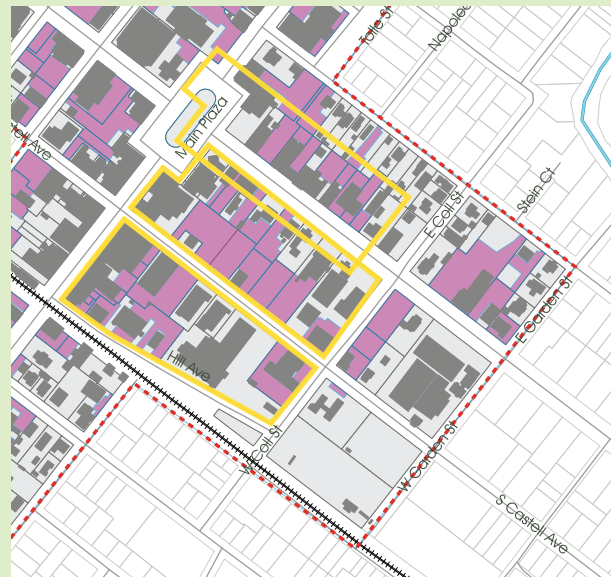
C5 Improved Circulation & Walkability

Existing Conditions: Mega-blocks

- 1 Current blocks south of Main Plaza along Seguin Ave/Business 46, Castell, and Hill Ave are almost double the length of other blocks in Downtown.
- 2 Undeveloped land currently occupied by parking lots would allow for new pedestrian pathways for a more walkable network.



Three blocks south of plaza are “mega-blocks” - almost twice the length of ordinary blocks Downtown, hindering pedestrian circulation moving northeast/southwest.



Purple shows existing parking lots in Downtown. There is ample parking between S. Seguin Ave and Castell southwest of the Main Plaza.

C5 Improved Circulation & Walkability

Recommendation: break up mega-blocks with new pedestrian pathways.

Pros:

- Improves walkability and connectivity.
- Improves aesthetic quality of Downtown.
- Improves property values for adjacent parcels.

Cons:

- Requires discussion with property owners to create public easement through parking lots and private alleys.
- Requires investment in signage, streetscaping, lighting and maintenance.

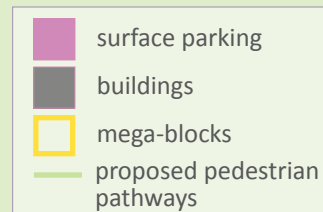
Phasing: Medium.

Dept/Agency Responsible:

- City, Property Owners

Implementation:

- TBD



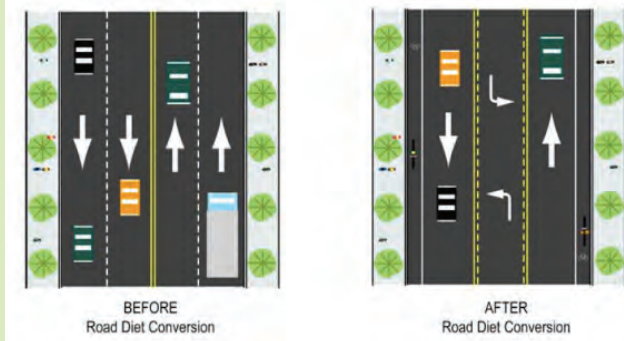
Proposed pedestrian pathways (in green) would divide mega-blocks into smaller, walkable components with greater northeast/southwest connectivity.

“Traffic Calming Strategies”: Background Information

How do traffic calming strategies work?

In recent years, many Transportation Departments and citizen’s groups around the U.S. have adopted a policy of narrowing roadway width **and expanding pedestrian and bicycling areas by reducing the number of travel lanes.** Most often, traffic calming strategies reduce roadway from four lanes to three and in some cases six lanes to five.

Concept - Travel Lane Removal



There are two general design thresholds that outline if traffic calming strategies are viable:

- Daily volumes are less than 20,000 (there are many exceptions to this threshold, but this is a general threshold).
- Peak hourly volumes are less than 1,000 vehicles approaching intersections.

Would traffic calming strategies work in Downtown New Braunfels?

The traffic counts and analysis performed as part of the Downtown Implementation Plan (see C1) shows that these thresholds are not met, or even closely approached, anywhere in the Downtown study area. In other words, there are not sufficient traffic volumes (cars and trucks) moving through Downtown to negate the possibility of a traffic calming strategy. In fact, **traffic calming strategies, due to their transformative effects in retail areas, should definitely be considered as part of revitalization for the Downtown.** Specifically and in general order, West San Antonio has the lowest traffic volumes and potentially the greatest opportunity to create a fun and vibrant new catalytic part of New Braunfels. Converting the existing roadway (which has four lanes of traffic) to a roadway with a third lane for turning, buffered by new diagonal parking will dramatically increase on-street parking, slow traffic and generally enhance the pedestrian realm.



Chart shows traffic counts “at Plaza” which are far below 20,000 vehicle volume threshold, demonstrating that traffic calming strategies are feasible with current traffic volumes.



Chart shows traffic counts “around Plaza” which are far below 20,000 vehicle volume threshold, demonstrating that traffic calming strategies are feasible with current traffic volumes.

Does Current Traffic Volume Require Four Lanes?

It should be noted that all three of the highest volume streets (E. San Antonio, W. San Antonio, N. Seguin/Business 46) leading into and out of the Main Plaza area are restricted by railroad underpasses and river bridges that “pinch” travel lanes from four to two lanes. A three lane traffic calming strategy in these areas would represent an **increase** in travel capacities. In fact, the presence of the two-lane entries to, and exits from Downtown, should provide logical assurance of what the traffic data shows: **travel needs do not necessitate four travel lanes in the roadway.** In conjunction with the traffic calming strategy enhancements, the City should work on improving the sidewalk network in the Downtown area, as discussed previously in this section. See Appendix C for greater discussion on traffic calming strategy and traffic circulation conditions.

C6 Improved Circulation & Walkability

Phase 1: Implement a pilot traffic calming/connectivity strategy on West San Antonio.

Re-stripe parking to create angled parking (reverse angles preferred, see page 47) and increase number of on-street parking spaces.

Pros:

- Increases on-street parking by approximately 60% on West San Antonio.
- Improves walkability and safety of pedestrians for more economic activity.
- Improves safety of drivers entering and exiting traffic.
- Low-cost method to assess viability of traffic calming strategy for other streets in Downtown.

Cons:

- Cost of re-striping.
- Requires community outreach to inform drivers, adjacent businesses, and patrons of new parking design.
- Could create queueing of cars entering traffic calming strategy area.

Phasing:

- Short-term.

Dept/Agency Responsible:

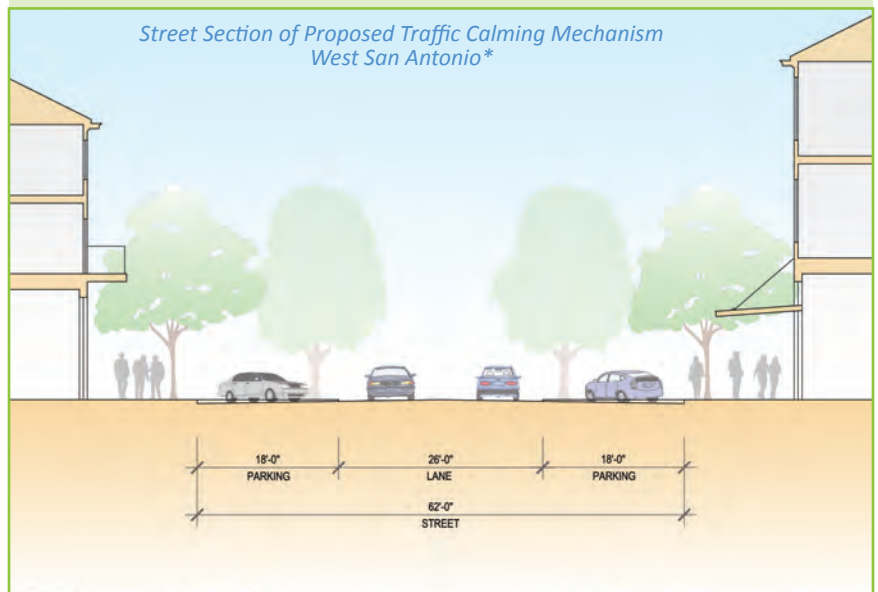
- City

Implementation Status:

- TBD



The proposed traffic calming strategy would increase on-street parking approximately 60% (from 42 to 70 spaces).



** See Appendix C for street sections with head-in, as well as reverse-angled parking.*

C6 Improved Circulation & Walkability

Phase 2: Implement a permanent traffic calming/connectivity strategy (if pilot is successful) on West San Antonio and perform streetscaping, add bulbouts and mid-block crossings.

Pros:

- Increases on-street parking by approximately 60% on West San Antonio.
- Improves walkability and safety of pedestrians for more economic activity.
- Improves safety of drivers entering and exiting traffic.
- Low-cost method to assess viability of traffic calming strategy for other streets in Downtown.

Cons:

- Cost of constructing and installing sidewalk extensions, bulbouts, street trees, street furniture, mid-block crossings, permeable parking paving textures.
- Could create queueing of cars entering traffic calming strategy area.

Phasing:

- Medium.

Dept/Agency Responsible:

- City

Implementation Status:

- TBD

Existing Conditions: West San Antonio Ave



C6 Improved Circulation & Walkability

Future: West San Antonio Ave with proposed traffic calming strategy and streetscaping.



Benefits of Reverse Angled Parking

- Allows drivers greater visibility when exiting a parking space, improving safety in an area for pedestrians and drivers alike.
- Allows the drivers and passengers to load and unload at the sidewalk, rather than being exposed to moving traffic along the street.
- Enables car door to act as a physical buffer to keep any young children from running into the street when exiting the car.
- Points headlights in the evening away from businesses and restaurants so as not to disturb patrons dining at outdoor cafe seating.

C7A Improved Circulation & Walkability

Option A

Phase 1: Implement a pilot traffic calming/connectivity strategy on Seguin Ave/Business 46 with added bike lane.

Phase 2: If pilot project is successful, implement a permanent traffic calming/connectivity strategy on Seguin Ave/Business 46.

Pros:

- Improves walkability and safety of pedestrians for more economic activity.
- Creates bike lane unlike Option B.
- Allows for flexible use of parking spaces for cafe dining programs.
- Improves safety of drivers entering and exiting traffic.
- Low-cost method to assess viability of traffic calming strategy for other streets in Downtown.

Cons:

- Offer less on-street parking than Option B.
- Cost of re-striping.
- Requires community outreach to inform drivers, adjacent businesses, and patrons of new parking design.
- Could create queue of cars entering traffic calming strategy area.

Phasing:

- Short-term/Medium.

Dept/Agency Responsible:

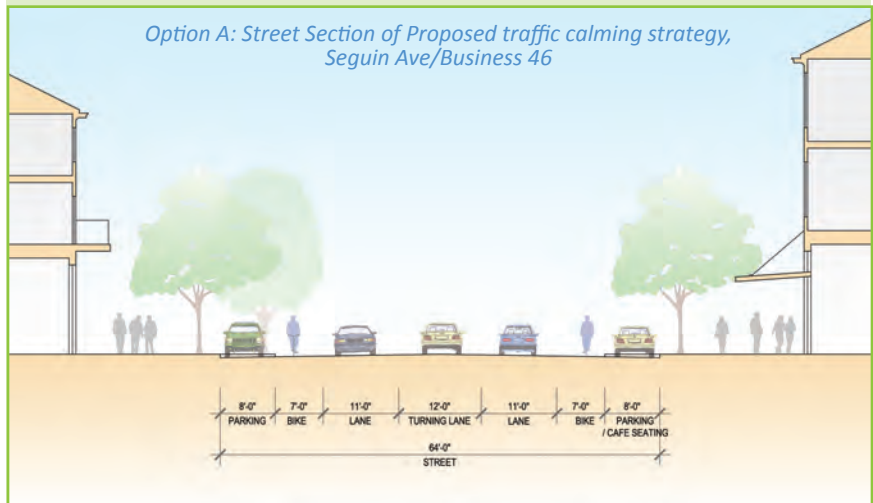
- City

Implementation Status:

- Implementation based on success of W. San Antonio pilot traffic calming strategy.



Proposed traffic calming strategy along Seguin Ave/Business 46 from Main Plaza northwest to bridge and southwest to Garden St.



C7A Improved Circulation & Walkability

Existing Conditions: S. Seguin Ave/Business 46



Future: Option A: Seguin Ave/Business 46 with proposed traffic calming strategy and streetscaping.



C7B Improved Circulation & Walkability

Option B

Phase 1: Implement a pilot traffic calming/connectivity strategy on Seguin Ave/Business 46 (option B) with reverse angled parking.

Phase 2: If pilot project is successful, implement a permanent traffic calming/connectivity strategy on Seguin Ave/Business 46.

Pros:

- Increases the amount of parking along Seguin Ave unlike Option A.
- Improves walkability and safety of pedestrians for more economic activity.
- Improves safety of drivers entering and exiting traffic.
- Low-cost method to assess viability of traffic calming strategy for other streets in Downtown.

Cons:

- Loses bike lane proposed in Option A.
- Cost of re-striping.
- Requires community outreach to inform drivers, adjacent businesses, and patrons of new parking design.
- Could create queueing of cars entering traffic calming strategy area.

Phasing:

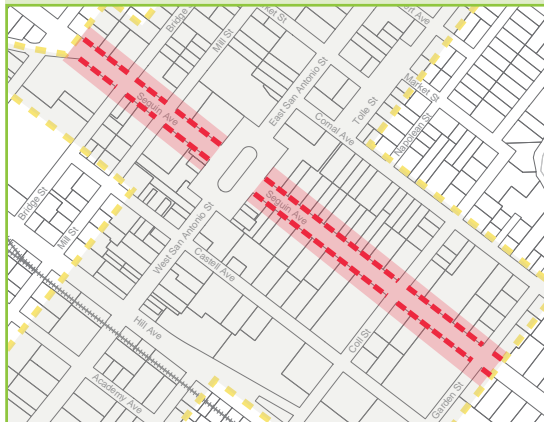
- Short-term/Medium

Dept/Agency Responsible:

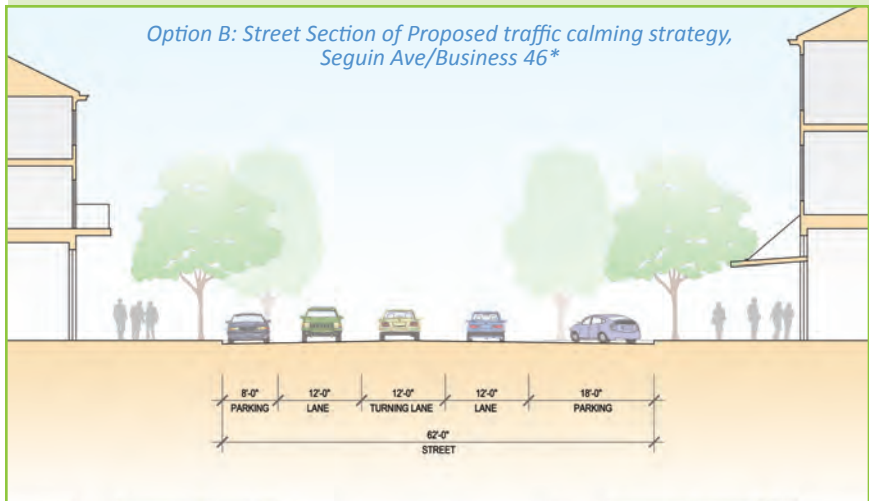
- City

Implementation Status:

- TBD; Implementation based on success of W. San Antonio pilot traffic calming strategy.



The proposed traffic calming strategy along Seguin Ave/Business 46 from Main Plaza northwest to bridge and southwest to City Hall.



** See Appendix C for street sections with head-in, as well as reverse-angled parking.*

C8 Improved Circulation & Walkability

Phase 1: Implement a pilot traffic calming/connectivity strategy on East San Antonio.

Phase 2: If pilot project is successful, implement a permanent traffic calming/connectivity strategy on East San Antonio.

Pros:

- Improves walkability and safety of pedestrians for more economic activity.
- Creates link to Schlitterbahn and Comal River.
- Allows for bike lane to connect to Prince Solms Park.
- Improves safety of drivers entering and exiting traffic.
- Low-cost method to assess viability of traffic calming strategy for other streets in Downtown.

Cons:

- Cost of re-striping.
- Requires community outreach to inform drivers, adjacent businesses, and patrons of new parking design.
- Could create queueing of cars entering traffic calming strategy area.

Phasing:

- Medium/Long-term.

Dept/Agency Responsible:

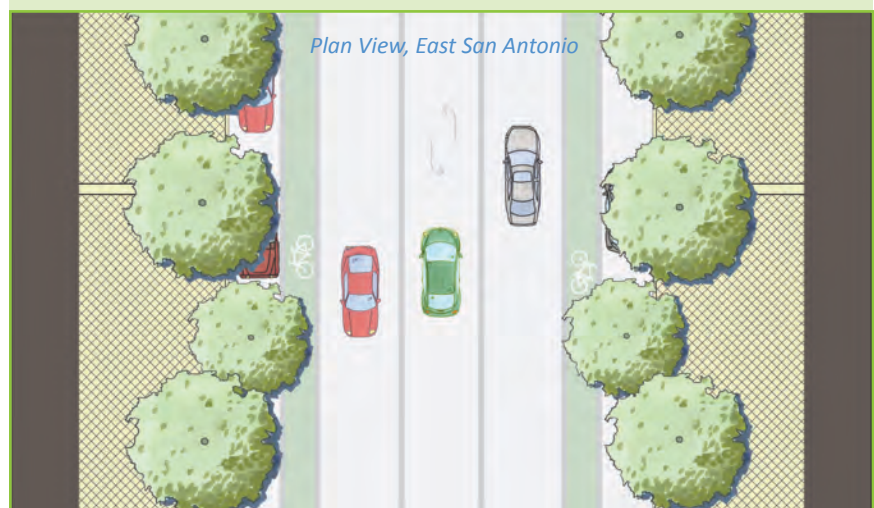
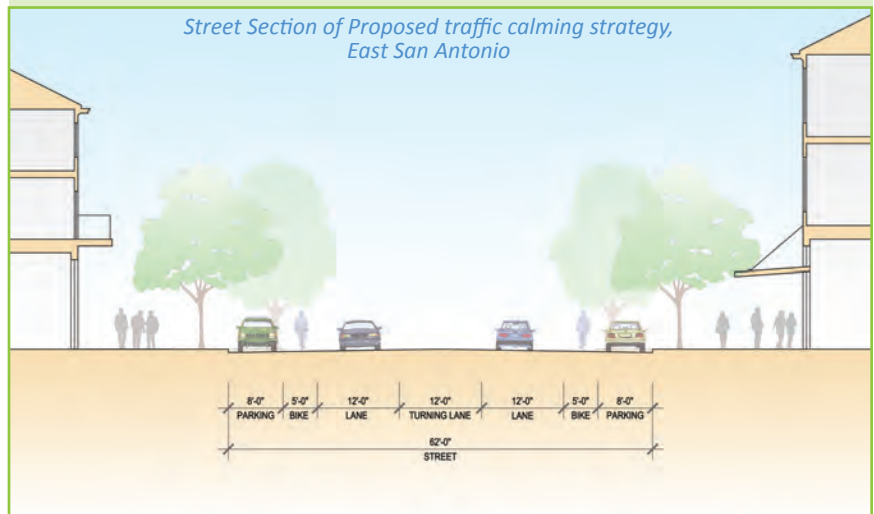
- City

Implementation Status:

- TBD; Implementation based on success of W. San Antonio pilot traffic calming strategy.



Two blocks for proposed pilot traffic calming strategy: East San Antonio, from Main Plaza to Gilbert.



C9 Improved Circulation & Walkability

Existing Conditions: Bike Connectivity

- 1 Bike network is patchy and does not link Downtown to surrounding parks and trails.
- 2 Bike routes are often blocked by parked cars.
- 3 Bike lanes end abruptly, placing bicyclists in danger, using sidewalk where traffic is heavy.



Cars often park in bike lanes.



Bicyclists use sidewalks, rather than biking in street to avoid narrow streets with speedy traffic.



Car is driving in designated bike lane.

c9 Improved Circulation & Walkability

Recommendation: 1) Perform bike mobility study to develop comprehensive bike network to address needs of all classes of riders, see Appendix C for more information.

2) Restrict and enforce no parking in bike lanes.

Pros:

- Provides bicyclists with safe, comfortable place to ride and recreate.
- Connects bike lanes to a greater recreation/transportation system, linking bike to trails, parks, river, recreation and open space.
- Creates a more sustainable transportation infrastructure.

Cons:

- Requires City investment.
- Requires maintenance and enforcement.

Dept/Agency Responsible:

- City

Phasing: Short-term (enforce bike lanes) / Medium (perform bike mobility study).

Implementation:

- TBD



"Class A" Advanced Bicyclists: These are experienced riders who can operate under most traffic conditions. These include professional bicyclists and serious sport cyclists who are comfortable biking in traffic and at speeds much higher than most other bicyclists.



"Class B" – Basic Bicyclists: These are casual or new adult and teenage riders who are less confident of their ability to operate in traffic without special provisions for bicycles. Some will develop greater skills and progress to the advanced level, but there will always be many basic bicyclists.



"Class C" – Children and very occasional bicycle riders: There are pre-teen riders as well as adults who may only rarely ride a bicycle.

4.0

Parking Reform

Building the “right amount of parking” is a challenge. Too much parking can result in unattractive, unwalkable districts in which shops, restaurants, and offices are too spread out to maintain synergy between businesses and attract pedestrian activity. Too little parking can inhibit economic development and investment opportunities. Poorly identified parking can create a perception of scarcity that frustrates residents and visitors and complicates parking reform.

Smart parking policies look to establish an appropriate balance between parking supply and parking demand. **Comprehensive parking policies go beyond balancing supply and demand; they also address parking location, signage, price, time limits, and design.** The following recommendations seek to address parking issues in Downtown New Braunfels and propose solutions so that parking:

- Is easy to find and accessible.
- Is located within a comfortable walking distance to Downtown destinations to reduce congestion.
- Prioritizes pedestrian mobility and safety.
- Accommodates varying demands (short-term and long-term, day and evening, weekday and weekend) through time limits, permits, planning policies, zoning codes, and pricing to maximize land use efficiency.
- Contributes to an attractive public realm through good design.

P1 Parking Reform

Existing conditions: On-Street Parking Usage.

- ① No time limits for on-street parking. Employees park in on-street parking space, leaving few spaces open for Downtown patrons.
- ② Visitors, employees, and jurors going to the County Courthouse often use on-street spaces, rather than parking in lot.



Parallel parking around the courthouse has no time limits to prevent drivers from using the street parking as their daily work parking.



Jury duty creates a strain on Downtown parking - as jurors take up street parking spaces, rather than parking in a County garage or lot.

P1 Parking Reform

Recommendation: Establish and enforce two-hour on-street parking limits.

Pros:

- Downtown employees and day visitors will park in parking lots, allowing short-term visitor to use on-street parking to patronize local businesses.
- Funds from tickets for parking violations can be used to pay for enforcement and streetscape maintenance and improvements.

Cons:

- Requires enforcement and signage to be successful.
- Cost of enforcement.
- Cost of installing parking signage.
- Frustration and confusion for visitors with lack of information and direction (if wayfinding signage to long-term parking lots is *not* included in first phase of implementation).

Phasing:

- Short-term/Immediate.

Dept/Agency Responsible:

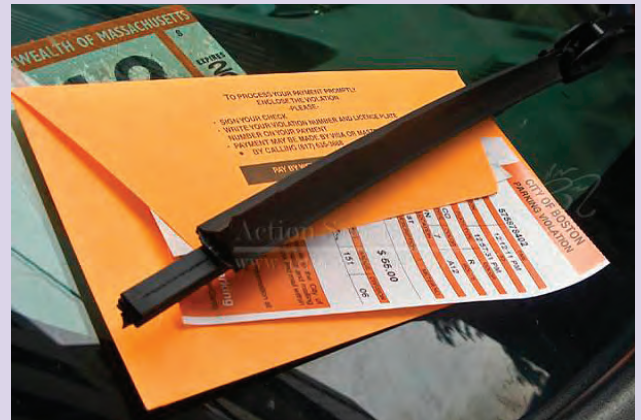
- City, Private Enforcement Company

Implementation Status:

- Completed: City Council passed on-street parking ordinance in July 2009 for two hour time limits in Downtown. Private company will enforce time limits.
- See P3 and P4 for additional street parking policies.



Install visible time limit signs for on-street parking.



Enforce distribution of tickets for parking violation to pay for streetscape improvements.

P2 Parking Reform

Existing Conditions: Parking Lot Design



- ① Lack of readable parking signage upon entering lot.
- ② Lack of landscaping or design buffer to minimize visual blight on pedestrian realm.
- ③ Asphalt absorbs sunlight raising area temperatures, known as the “urban heat island effect.”
- ④ Street facing parking lots occupy valuable land that could be used for more dynamic, active uses.
- ⑤ Driveways break up the street front and create gap-toothed streetscapes and interfere with pedestrian safety and circulation.
- ⑥ Impermeable surfaces divert rather the absorb rainwater, which can cause flooding and prevents ground water sources from being recharged and collect pollutants that enter river streams through stormwater runoff.

P2 Parking Reform

Recommendation: Adopt Downtown parking design ordinance per the recommendations in the Downtown Design Guide.

Pros:

- Creates more attractive streetscape and public realm.
- Prioritizes pedestrian safety and experience.
- Improves environmental quality of street with increased shade and vegetation.
- Leads to increased property values, pedestrian traffic and economic activity by helping to create a “sense of place.”
- No cost to City; Update Downtown parking design ordinance.

Cons:

- Requires more creative site and building design, in some cases.
- Requires drivers to park further from street.
- Reduces visibility of parking spaces from street.

Phasing:

- Short-term/Immediate.

Dept/Agency Responsible:

- City

Implementation:

- TBD

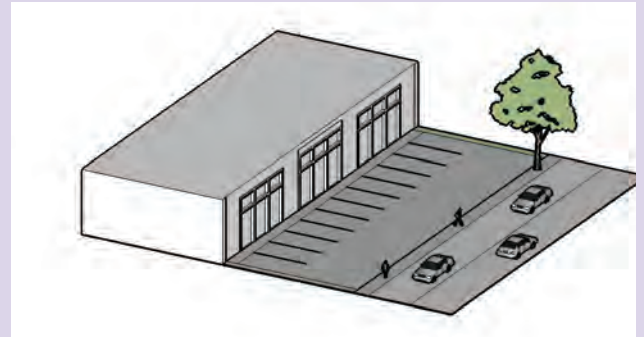


Diagram shows current conditions in some areas of Downtown with parking in front and long driveways extend through which pedestrians must walk.



Photo of existing parking lot in Downtown with parking lot in front, little vegetation, and no landscaping or buffering to provide safety and comfort for pedestrian.

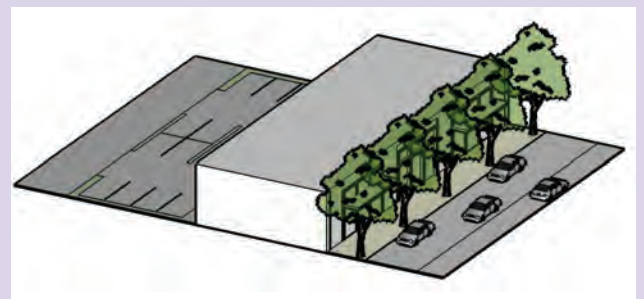


Diagram of recommended future parking conditions with placement of parking behind buildings to create consistent street front with building facades facing pedestrian and trees landscaping sidewalks for attractive, inviting business district.

P3 Parking Reform

Existing Conditions: Parking Lot Location

- 1 Ample Downtown parking is poorly signed, leaving visitors confused as where to park for Downtown business.
- 2 Parking lots serve individual businesses and parcels, rather than blocks and/or districts.
- 3 Private parking lots are used informally as “public parking” since Downtown has no designated public parking lots for retail, restaurants, and cultural events.



Photo of hidden and under-utilized parking lots behind buildings in Downtown.






-  surface parking
 buildings
 proposed permit parking

Diagram of existing surface parking lots (purple) in Downtown.



Map of private lots used for public parking during festivals.

USE	NAME
A	County Office
B	Tax Assessor Office
C	Tax Assessor Office
D	County Office
E	County Commissioners Court
F	New Braunfels Utility
G	Chase Bank
H	First State Bank
I	Private Lot
J	Henne Hardware
K	Producers Cooperative
L	Mornhinweg

P3 Parking Reform

Recommendation: Create “Park Once” district with legal development rights for shared parking and pricing plan as part of Parking Benefits District.

Pros:

- Reduces the number of car trips throughout Downtown, which reduces congestion, pollution, and wear and tear on roads.
- Improves experience of visiting Downtown with ease of finding parking.
- Creates flow of pedestrians walking to Downtown businesses, services, and events.
- Increases pedestrian activity, which is good for public health and community cohesion.
- Allows for new development without building separate parking on parcels - making new lease agreements and development more attractive to businesses and developers.

Cons:

- Requires political capital and support by business community to negotiate with City and other businesses on how to share and maintain lots.
- Requires effective maps and signage to direct visitors and customers to parking lots.
- Cost of installation of parking signage.
- Potential issues with ownership of lots.

Phasing:

- Medium.

Dept/Agency Responsible:

- City

Implementation Status:

- TBD

Discussion of a “Park Once” District



- surface parking
- buildings
- proposed permit parking
- potential park once areas

Map of Downtown parking lots, which could be grouped in parking districts to serve various parts of Downtown.

“Park-Once” through a Parking Benefits District:

Creating a Parking Benefits District, in essence, “pools” parking spaces into one pot. Typically businesses must satisfy parking requirements, individually on their lot. This creates excess parking in Downtown as the amount of parking needed varies at different times of the day and different days of the week.

A Parking Benefits District allows existing and new development to satisfy parking requirements within a given block or district, using both on-street parking and surfaces lots and garages. This ensures that there is enough parking for the district as a whole, rather than a sum of individual parking requirements. All revenues generated from priced meters and parking lots return to the parking district to pay for maintenance and public benefits.

By returning revenues to the district for public improvements, rather than seeing them disappear into a General Fund, merchants and property owners become natural advocates for the district as they can see parking monies collected being spent for the benefit of their immediate surroundings. This makes them more willing to support priced parking. See discussion on priced parking on page 62.

P4 Parking Reform

Recommendation: Perform Parking Management Study to consider additional parking management policies (see Menu of Options below).

Pros:

- Decreases the cost of new development with less parking required and needed.
- Allows for new development and infill development to be sited in a walkable, pedestrian-friendly manner.
- Allows for a more visitor friendly parking experience in Downtown with strategically placed parking.

Cons:

- Cost of parking consultant.
- Cost of staff time and resources.

Phasing:

Short-term to Long-term.

Dept/Agency Responsible:

- City

Implementation Status:

- TBD

X	Parking Management Policy Menu
	Increase on-street parking supply through traffic calming strategies.
	Expand current shared parking allowance district in Downtown.
	Implement a limited parking pricing plan, with all funds raised going to Downtown Improvements.
	Reduce or eliminate parking requirements for new development in Downtown.
	Implement remote parking for employees and special events.
	Use real-time user information systems to inform drivers where parking is available (such systems may be electronic in a garage, or in person from a greeter connected by radio to others monitoring available spaces).
	Encourage valet parking to more efficiently utilize existing surface lots and on-street spaces that are otherwise inconvenient for visitors.

Example "Menu" of Parking Management Policies that should be considered.

Discussion of Priced Parking Plan



How the Price of Parking Influences Behavior:

Available, convenient, on-street customer parking is essential to the success of "Main Street" retail shops. Cities have found that the best way to create vacancies and rapid turnover for convenient, front door parking spaces is to use economic incentives to persuade some drivers to park in the less convenient spaces (in off-street lots and/or garages or a block or two away). In other words, the City charges more for the best spots, and less or nothing at all (i.e. free parking) for less convenient, under-used lots and spaces.

Using smart parking systems with electronic meters, a City can vary the price of on-street parking so that there are always a convenient spaces available for drivers (15% occupancy is ideal for on-street parking). Short-term parkers will be willing to pay more for parking spaces that they are using for a shorter period of time, while drivers looking to stay in an area for a longer trip have the financial incentive to park in a garage, lot, or less expensive zone of on-street parking. Using smart parking systems for priced parking, a City can maximize the use of on-street parking spaces while still creating enough turnover to ensure there are always a couple spaces available in which to park.

New Braunfels should consider implementing parking fees in the center of Downtown in a three-tiered system, in which on-street parking is priced according to its proximity to the Main Plaza, as depicted above. The pink area around the Main Plaza could be the highest priced on-street parking zone. West Antonio would be mid-tier price zone and S. Seguin Ave/Business 46 would be the least expensive on-street parking zone. Parking revenues would go directly to streetscaping and pedestrian amenities improvements in the three parking zones. (See Appendix C for greater discussion).

P5 Parking Reform

Recommendation: Build central public parking garage.

Pros:

- Reduces the number of car trips throughout Downtown, which in turn, reduces congestion, pollution, and wear and tear on roads.
- Creates flow of pedestrians walking to Downtown businesses, services, and events.
- Increases pedestrian activity, which is good for public health and community cohesion.
- Improves experience of visiting Downtown with ease of finding centralized parking.

Cons:

- Requires capital to acquire and build.
- Requires funding for:
 - Traffic analysis to assess traffic and best route to direct cars and people to garage.
 - Design guidelines for pedestrian-friendly building design and pathways.
 - Parking wayfinding program to direct visitors from parking to shopping, cultural, and employment destinations.

Phasing:

- Medium/Long-term.

Dept/Agency Responsible:

- City, Private Developer (potential joint venture)

Implementation Status:

Ongoing:

- City in Discussion with County regarding shared garage.
- Proposed Location of County garage is on Seguin/Business 46 on Tax Assessor's lot.



Example of park once garage with pedestrian-friendly design: ground floor retail, awnings and shading devices, trees and landscaping, window openings, driveways relegated to alleys versus primary pedestrian street.



Large signage directs drivers to park once garage.

P5 Parking Reform

Garage Location Options:

Preferred Option A- Chase Bank Parking Lot

Pros:

- Closer to Civic Center and commercial/retail district along San Antonio Street.
- Requires County visitors to cross Main Plaza and walk past shops, creating more retail opportunities.
- Residents and visitors are familiar with location as Downtown place to park.
- Major retail corridors are within walking distance.

Cons:

- Requires land acquisition as City does not own property.
- Requires ample signage to direct County visitors to County complex and tourist to shopping, cultural destinations.
- Requires City funding as no County money is available.
- Requires joint venture.

Not Preferred Option B: Tax Assessor's Parcel (County Garage)

Pros:

- County owns property; no land acquisition.
- Close to County campus expansion.
- Located off Seguin Ave/Business 46, close to NE gateway to Downtown.
- Will address County parking needs that currently spillover into retail districts, leaving more on-street parking available for business patrons.
- County and City will develop jointly; County will contribute money.

Cons:

- Location is not within an easy walking distance to Civic Center and City Hall.
- Location is not tied to commercial/retail corridors.
- Fewer pedestrian-oriented uses and amenities in area.
- Poor connectivity to other parts of Downtown.

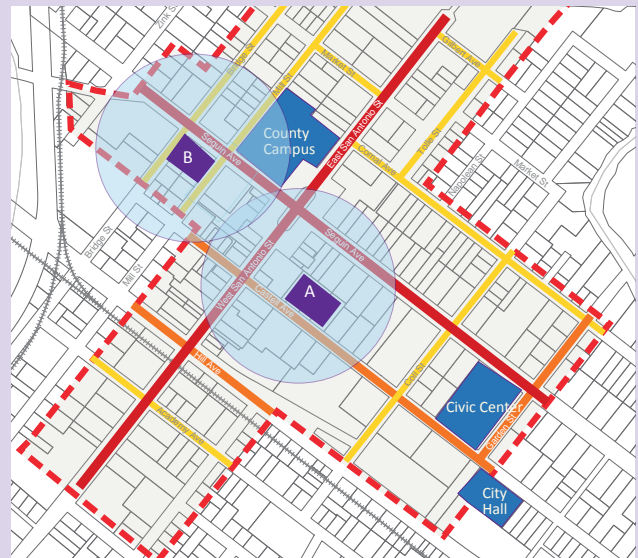


Diagram with proposed parking garage locations. Blue circles represent 500 feet "walk circles" to demonstrate what areas in Downtown would be within a reasonable walking distance from proposed parking garage.

What's a reasonable distance for shoppers to walk to park?

Retail business owners typically consider 500 feet to be the maximum distance an average shopper will walk from a parking garage/lot or space to a restaurant, shop, cafe, or business. The map above shows 500 feet "walk circles" from the proposed locations for a new parking garage to understand better what areas of Downtown would be best served by a new parking garage.

Option A at the Chase parking lot would serve shoppers who are patronizing businesses and services around the south side of the Main Plaza and along West Antonio, S. Castell and S. Seguin/Business 46 (areas with the highest concentration of shops, restaurants, bars, museums).

Option B at the Tax Assessor's Lot would serve employees, shoppers, and jurors who are visiting the County Courthouse or shops and businesses along N. Seguin/Business 46, N. Castell, Mill and Bridge Street, and the north side of the Main Plaza. This area has a higher concentration of civic uses for the County, several parking lots, residential homes, and a far less concentration of shops and businesses.

P6 Parking Reform

Recommendation: Establish an on-street parking flex program/permits along key retail streets where restaurants and cafes can rent on-street parking spaces to extend street dining area.

Pros:

- Creates more attractive streetscape and public realm.
- Provides room for cafe dining.
- Inexpensive way to activate the street and sidewalk.

Cons:

- Decreases supply of on-street parking spaces.
- Requires staff time to process permits.

Phasing:

- Short-term/Immediate.

Dept/Agency Responsible:

- City

Implementation:

- TBD



Site plan shows movable tables and planters in the parking space to extend cafe dining area. Planters create buffer to traffic and can easily be removed if parking space is needed for other use.



Photorendering shows Seguin Ave with cafe dining in parking space as part of the proposed flex parking program.

Where else do parking flex programs work?

The City of Mountain View, CA created a successful flexible parking zone in their Downtown area in which designated parking spaces in a “flexible zone” can be rented by restaurants to extend sidewalk cafes. Businesses must submit an application that outlines the proposed layout, location and design of the sidewalk café and state how it will:

- Be consistent with the character of the Downtown.
- Enhance Downtown and benefit the community.
- Pose no a danger to public health, safety or welfare.



Castro Street in Mountain View, CA with sidewalk cafe in flex zone.

5.0

Aesthetic & Pedestrian Infrastructure

Improving the aesthetic quality of Downtown New Braunfels is an important step to making the area a more desirable district for future investment and development. Studies show that **public beautification projects can reap rich rewards for cities by attracting more visitors, businesses, and residents.** This section presents a series of recommendations to improve the aesthetic quality of and pedestrian-infrastructure in Downtown, which include:

- Beautification of the Main Plaza
- Parks and open space
- Bridges and underpasses
- Trails and river pathway
- Pedestrian amenities
- Public restrooms

In addition to the actions and policies discussed in this section, the Downtown Design Guide helps achieve the community's goal to improve aesthetic quality by providing the City and development community with design guidelines for public and private development to achieve design excellence.

A1 Aesthetics & Pedestrian Infrastructure

Existing Conditions: Main Plaza

- ① Difficult and dangerous for pedestrians to access.
- ② Hosts historic bandstand with shade, seating, and small, attractive green space.
- ③ Amenities, vendors, and programming of space are lacking.



Difficult to reach Main Plaza with no crosswalks.



Historic bandstand, plaza, and fountain are attractive elements of Main Plaza.



Shade and seating are available, though under-used by Downtown visitors and residents.

A1 Aesthetics & Pedestrian Infrastructure

Improve aesthetic quality and accessibility of Main Plaza in Downtown.

1. Narrow travel lanes around traffic circle to one lane to slow traffic to pedestrian-friendly speeds.
2. Create crosswalks (preferably with count-down timers and signage) *to* and *around* Main Plaza to allow for safe passage, see C3.
3. Expand green space.
4. Add pedestrian amenities (seating, lighting, shade, vendors, etc), see A6.
5. Program space with events, vendors, and/or entertainment uses such as farmer's markets, community concerts, arts and crafts fairs, etc.

Pros:

- Improves look and feel of Downtown.
- Creates an accessible, attractive community space in the heart of Downtown.
- Improves walkability and pedestrian safety.

Cons:

- Requires City investment.
- Requires maintenance.

Phasing: Short-term to Long-term.

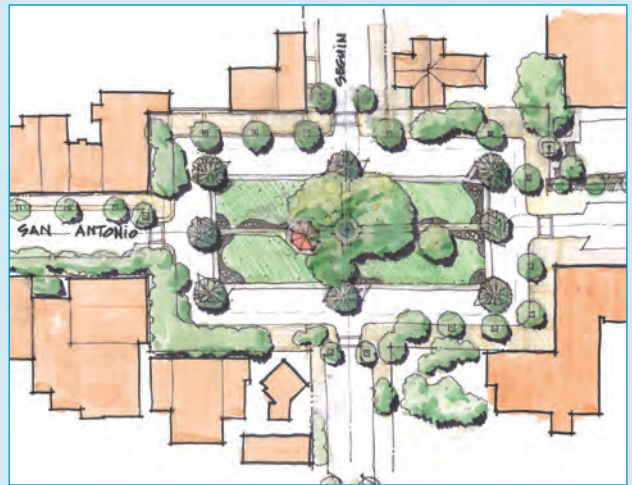
Dept/Agency Responsible: City

Implementation:

- TBD



Concept sketch of expanded Main Plaza with optional larger green.



Second option concept sketch of expanded Main Plaza with larger green.



Vendors allow pedestrian to enjoy parks and plazas while grabbing a snack to refuel before shopping, museum visits, and/or tourism activities.

A2 Aesthetics & Pedestrian Infrastructure

Existing Conditions: Downtown Parks and Open Space

- 1 Historic Marketplatz is an untapped gem for a community park. Currently, it is poorly maintained and lacking amenities - such as seating, lighting, vendors, shade.
- 2 Parking lot behind crosswalk cafe is under-utilized space proximate to Main Plaza retail and restaurants.
- 3 Industrial land along railroad from Hill to Garden Street is under-utilized land in terms of its ability to generate pedestrian-friendly economic activity.



The Marketplatz is a unused open space, perfect for a community park and small events such as a farmers market.



The parking lot behind Crosswalk Cafe is an ideal space for a plaza and serve as a pedestrian gateway into the Main Plaza.



A linear park along the side of the rail road tracks will provide a visual and noise buffer.



Diagram identifies open space/park opportunities in Downtown. Red lines indicate gaps in sidewalk network. Blue, orange, and purple lines identify streets with sidewalks in Downtown.

A2 Aesthetics & Pedestrian Infrastructure

Recommendation: Increase open space in Downtown through incentives, subsidies, and public engagement.

1) Enhance Marketplatz with pedestrian amenities and program with community events.

2) Convert Crosswalk Cafe parking lot into pilot plaza/pocket park with shade (umbrellas, planters) and movable cafe dining furniture that could later become permanent, if successful. Park could be used as lunch park for Downtown County employees, jurors, and businesses owners and patrons.

3) Create linear park along railroad tracks.

Pros:

- Increases open space in Downtown.
- Provides outdoor venues for community gathering and events.
- Improves aesthetic quality of Downtown.

Cons:

- Requires City investment.
- Requires financial incentives (linear park).
- Requires community programing incentives (Marketplatz and Crosswalk Cafe parking lot).
- Requires maintenance.

Phasing: Short-term to Long-term:

- 1) Marketplatz (Short).
- 2) Crosswalk Cafe parking lot (Short/Medium).
- 3) Linear Park (Long-term).

Dept/Agency Responsible: City, Downtown Businesses owners, Private Developer

Implementation:

- TBD



Marketplatz could host movie night, farmer's market, and other community festivals and events.



Using umbrellas and cheap, movable seating, the city can determine if the crosswalk cafe is a worth site in which to invest in Downtown open space.



Creating a linear park along the railroad tracks would create more open space in Downtown and could connect to nearby parks and river recreation.

A3 Aesthetics & Pedestrian Infrastructure

Existing Conditions: Bridges, underpasses, and river access.

- ① Seguin Ave/Business 46 narrows at historical Landa Street underpass and bridge upon entering and exiting Downtown New Braunfels. The narrow street allocates no room for comfortable bike and pedestrian pathways. The underpass lacks landscaping and lighting that would act as grand visual announcement to visitors who are entering Downtown.
- ② The Comal River Bridge across W. San Antonio from Downtown to Schlitterbahn is narrow and uncomfortable to cross for pedestrians with narrow sidewalks that end upon entering San Antonio Street at Mill Street.
- ③ Public access to public river areas is limited with no pedestrian bridge or pathway.



Public easement, near Schlitterbahn to river does not have pedestrian bridge to connect to south side of Comal River. ←

A3 Aesthetics & Pedestrian Infrastructure

Recommendation: Perform enhancement projects (lighting, landscaping, public art) and maintenance on existing bridges and underpasses to preserve historic structures and announce entry to Downtown.

Pros:

- Improves pedestrian safety and walkability.
- Improves aesthetic quality of Downtown.
- Acts as gateway points to Downtown.
- Supports the concept of Downtown as a unique, historic place.

Cons:

- Requires City investment.
- Requires maintenance.

Phasing: Medium-term.

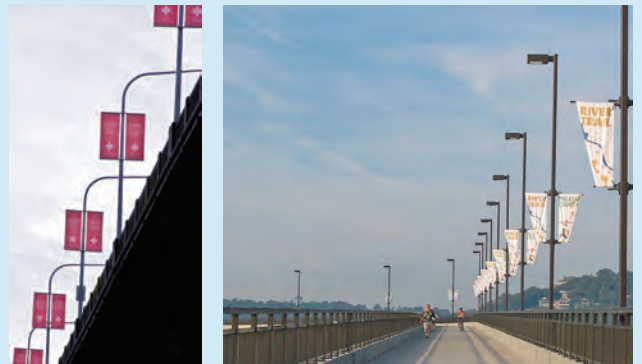
Dept/Agency Responsible: City

Implementation:

- TBD



Example of pedestrian bridge with lighting features and well maintained, clean stonework.



Banners can help “dress up” a bridge and advertise Downtown events and cultural resources.



Lighting helps transform a bridge or underpass into an icon.

A4 Aesthetics & Pedestrian Infrastructure

Existing Condition: Access to river is limited and connectivity between north and south sides of Comal River are poor without pedestrian bridge.

Recommendation: Perform feasibility study to construct pedestrian bridge across the Comal River, creating greater access. If feasible, design and construct.

Pros:

- Determines best location of bridge.
- Provides greater access to Comal River.
- Acts as a pedestrian gateway to Downtown.

Cons:

- Requires City investment.
- Requires maintenance.

Phasing: Short-term to Long-term.

Implementation:

- TBD



Photo rendering of potential pedestrian bridge in Downtown New Braunfels.



Example of a small pedestrian bridge as part of a trail, allows users to cross from one side to the other with minimal disturbance.



Example of trail signage, an important amenity along trails to inform visitors where they are and where they can go.

A5 Aesthetics & Pedestrian Infrastructure

Existing Condition: Trails and waterways are under-maintained. Open Space Master Plan shows that improved trails, open space, and river recreation opportunities are top priorities to public.

Recommendation: Invest public funds in trails along river and to surrounding parks to improve conditions, expand hike/bike system, and provide greater maintenance and amenities.

Pros:

- Provides better linkages to open space.
- Provides greater access to Comal River.
- Improves aesthetic look of City's public infrastructure.
- Improves recreation facilities, public health, and environmental protection.

Cons:

- Requires City investment.
- Requires maintenance.

Phasing: Short-term to Long-term.

Dept/Agency Responsible: City

Implementation:

- TBD



Example of a trail that allows visitors to experience the natural beauty of the space with minimal impact.



The Comal River can be used for a wide range of passive recreational activities, such as canoeing.



Example of community playgrounds that are small in scale and can be visually attractive to the surrounding community.

A6 Aesthetics & Pedestrian Infrastructure

Existing Conditions: Pedestrian Amenities

- ① Street furniture is poorly maintained in some public areas, and absent from others.
- ② Pedestrian-scale lamps in Downtown are attractive, but not consistently placed.
- ③ Pedestrian amenities are not always placed in key pedestrian areas.



Maintenance quality is poor for some street furniture.



Pedestrian lighting in Downtown is not consistent throughout.



Example of well-maintained pedestrian amenities in Downtown New Braunfels, lacking pedestrian-oriented uses.

A6 Aesthetics & Pedestrian Infrastructure

Recommendations: Fill in pedestrian amenities “gaps” in Downtown, which may include pedestrian lighting, street furniture, landscaping, trees and shading devices (see Downtown Design Guide, Appendix B). Pedestrian lighting is most needed along S. Seguin Ave/Business 46, Academy, and the Comal Street Bridge areas.

Pros:

- Improves pedestrian safety.
- Improves walkability.
- Improves aesthetic quality of Downtown.

Cons:

- Requires City investment.
- Requires maintenance.

Phasing: Short-term/Medium.

Dept/Agency Responsible: City

Implementation:

- TBD



STREETSCAPE AMENITIES

- Study Area Boundary
- Amenities Zone I
- Amenities Zone II
- Amenities Zone III
- Existing Open Space
- Proposed Open Space

To accommodate for various intensities of use, streetscape furnishings will vary throughout the Downtown district. The map above illustrates the intensity to which each street within the Downtown district should “dress up” the sidewalks. See Appendix B for Design Guidelines.

Zone 1: Primary retail corridors and most intense pedestrian area. Include greatest amount and variety of pedestrian amenities: street furniture, lighting, signage, planters, trash receptacles, street trees, flower boxes, etc.

Zone 2: Commercial corridor with civic and industrial uses. Less intensity of pedestrian traffic, but streets should still provide amenities.

Zone 3: Primarily residential streets. Amenities should include street trees and pedestrian lighting.

A7 Aesthetics & Pedestrian Infrastructure

Recommendation: Provide Public Restrooms.

Option A: Consider leasing or buying an existing building to use as restrooms and an informational center/Main Street Office.

Option B: Acquire land and build new restrooms as part of an informational center.

Pros:

- Provides needed service and facility for Downtown visitors.
- Reduces strain on local businesses providing service in absence of public restrooms.
- Creates the perception to the public of a welcoming Downtown.

Cons:

- Requires City investment.
- Requires maintenance.

Phasing: Medium/Long-term.

Dept/Agency Responsible: City

Implementation:

- TBD



Example of public restrooms incorporated into existing structure in public alley.



Example of public restrooms in Japan that is integrated into streetscape with high quality materials and openings.



Example of public restrooms in Santa Monica, CA that mimics the ocean theme of the area.

A8 Aesthetics & Pedestrian Infrastructure

Recommendation: Adopt a set of Design Guidelines to improve overall aesthetics in Downtown for public improvements and private development. Consider an overlay zone to help administer Design Guidelines and potential Downtown historic district.

Pros:

- Provides guidelines to achieve consistent level of quality throughout Downtown.
- Focuses attention on streets and public spaces as catalysts for private investment.

Cons:

- Requires coordination among various departments.
- Requires education and outreach to developers, property owners, and design professional working in Downtown.

Phasing: Short-term/Immediate.

Dept/Agency Responsible: City

Implementation:

- In process of completion: See Appendix B for Downtown Design Guide.



Chapter III

Implementation Strategy

III. Implementation Strategy

Overview

A successful revitalization plan consists of four essential components:

- **Critical Success Factors** to improve public infrastructure and market conditions for development.
- **Financial and regulatory incentives** to attract private revitalization projects.
- New **operations and governance policies** to streamline proposed actions, policies, and incentive packages proposed in the Downtown Implementation Plan, as well as ensure continued support and advocacy to see the Plan realized.
- Description of potential **funding sources**.

The Implementation Strategy is broken into four (4) components to help move the 2009 Downtown Implementation Plan from vision to action. The first component of the Implementation Strategy, “**Critical Success Factors Matrix**,” places the actions and policies proposed in Chapter 2 into an Implementation Matrix, which does the following -

- Organizes actions and policies into a chart with line items,
- Provides list of related tasks for completion,
- Assigns responsibilities to applicable departments and agencies to encourage accountability,
- Proposes a timeline for completion (short-term, medium-term, long-term),
- Estimates the magnitude of cost,
- Outlines potential funding sources.

“**Development Incentives and Engagement**,” the second component of the Implementation Strategy, presents a set of financial and regulatory incentives intended to attract new development and redevelopment in Downtown New Braunfels that responds to the needs and opportunities outlined in the report. The Market Study showed that Downtown can absorb new office, retail, and multi-family development, as well as a select service hotel. This section attempts to link developers to the type of needed development.

Operations, Governance, and Advocacy, section three of the Implementation Strategy, provides the necessary link between City-led efforts and development incentives to ensure that regulatory barriers are removed, policies and incentive packages are streamlined and support remains strong from project conception to completion.

The fourth and final component of Implementation Strategy, “**Summary of Funding Sources**” describes potential funding sources that may be appropriate for revitalization projects in Downtown.

Implementation

Critical Success Factors Matrix

This section provides a matrix of actions and policies discussed in Chapter 2. The charts that follow outline a phasing timeline for completion, assign responsibilities to applicable departments and agencies, present an estimated magnitude of costs, and propose potential funding sources.

Phasing Timeline

The Implementation Matrix prioritizes projects into three categories:

- **Short-term:** to occur within one (1) to two (2) years of plan adoption.
- **Medium-term:** to occur within three (3) to five (5) years of plan adoption.
- **Long-term:** to occur within six (6) to fifteen (15) years of plan adoption.

Responsible Parties

The Implementation **Matrix serves as a framework for understanding the decision-making process** in the City, as it assigns responsibility to various departments and agencies to champion the related recommendations made in this Plan. **Accountability and transparency are two important components for successful policy-making.** Roles are recommended rather than prescriptive, understanding that responsibilities may change over time with new leadership, political agendas, and funding opportunities. Responsible departments and agencies include:

- City = City of New Braunfels
- Chamber = Chamber of Commerce
- County = Comal County
- CVB = Convention & Visitors Bureau
- DTA = Downtown Association
- DB = Downtown Businesses
- HA = Heritage & Arts Association
- HLC = Heritage Landmark Commission
- IDC = New Braunfels Industrial Development Corporation
- MSA = Downtown Main Street Advisory Board
- PD = Private Developer
- PV = Public/Private Venture
- TxDOT = Texas Department of Transportation

Estimated Magnitude of Cost

The Implementation Strategy presents the City with an **estimated magnitude of costs** to better understand what degree of funding is needed to complete recommended actions and policies. The estimated magnitude of costs is broken into three categories:

- \$ = less than \$100,000
- \$\$ = between \$100,000 and \$500,000
- \$\$\$ = over \$500,000

Potential Funding Sources

As the recommendations take shape in the coming months and years, working their way into policies, ordinances, codes, and campaigns, the City will need to review funding sources on a case-by-case basis. Hence, the recommendations made here are general in nature, serving as a basis for program development. Potential funding sources for Downtown improvements include:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| • 4B = 4B "Quality of Life" Sales Tax | • PEQ = Private Equity |
| • CCF = Comal County Funds | • PID = Public Improvements District |
| • CIP = Capital Improvements Program | • PPV = Private/Public Venture |
| • CoC = Chamber of Commerce Funding | • MSP = Main Street Program |
| • DF = Debt Financing | • TAX = Tax Abatement |
| • GF = General Funds | • TIRZ/TIF = Tax Increment Funding |
| • GOBF = G.O. Bond Funds | • TX = State of Texas |
| • PBD = Parking Improvements District | |

I. Implementation Matrix

- The following charts provide the Implementation Strategy for the Critical Success Factors:
- Market Opportunities
 - Wayfinding
 - Circulation & Walkability
 - Parking Reform
 - Aesthetics & Pedestrian Infrastructure

M Implementation Matrix: Market Opportunities

<div>Phasing Timeline<ul style="list-style-type: none">• S = Short-term: to occur within 1-2 years of adoption.• M = Medium term: to occur within 3-5 years of plan adoption• L = Long-term: to occur within 6-15 years of plan adoption.</div> <div>Responsible Parties<ul style="list-style-type: none">• City = City of New Braunfels• Chamber = Chamber of Commerce• County = Comal County• CVB = Convention & Visitors Bureau• DTA = Downtown Association• DB = Downtown Businesses• HA = Heritage & Arts Association• HLC = Historic Landmark Commission• IDC = New Braunfels Industrial Development Corporation• MSA = Downtown Main Street Advisory Board• PD = Private Developer• PV = Public/Private Venture• TxDOT= Texas Department of Transportation</div> <div>Estimated Magnitude of Cost<ul style="list-style-type: none">\$ = less than \$100,000\$\$ = between \$100,000 -and \$500,000\$\$\$ = over \$500,000</div> <div>Potential Funding Sources<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 4B = 4B “Quality of Life” Sales Tax• CCF = Comal County Funds• CIP = Capital Improvements Program• CoC = Chamber of Commerce Funding• DF = Debt Financing• GF = General Funds• GOBF = G.O. Bond Funds• PBD = Parking Improvements District• PEQ = Private Equity• PID = Public Improvements District• PPV = Private/Public Venture• MSP = Main Street Program• TAX = Tax Abatement• TIRZ/TIF = Tax Increment Funding• TX = State of Texas</div>	#	Market Opportunities Policies and Actions	Timeline	Responsible Dept/Agency	Estimated Magnitude of Cost	Potential Funding Sources	Implementation Status
	M1	Establish a funding source dedicated to Downtown Improvements.	S/M	City	\$	GF	TBD
	M2	Pursue Cultural/Heritage Tourism Campaign, programs, and historic designation for Central Business District. <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Assign staff and/or committee to pursue campaign.- Perform marketing study to create heritage tourism campaign for City.- Create new parades and events in Downtown area.- Coordinate hours of museums during tourist season.	M	City, CVB, MSA, DTA, HLC	\$\$	GF, CoC, MSP	TBD
	M3	Solicit a “Select Service” Hotel to locate in Downtown New Braunfels. <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Offer finance incentives and/or subsidies.- Acquire site.- Reduce parking requirements.- Create partnerships with potential brands (Nylo, Aloft, Hilton Garden Inn).- Use document as marketing tool.	S-L	City, IDC , DB	\$\$\$	PPV, GOBF, TAX, CoC	TBD
	M4	Incentivize “infill occupancy” for vacant space along San Antonio Street. <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Initiate building and zoning code review to allow owners to retrofit building to occupy second floor space.- Gather building owners to establish a set of common retail hours in Downtown and outline preferred tenants to attract.- Consider renting second floor space to artists as studio space/galleries to attract creative industries and art scene in Downtown.	S/M	City, DB	\$	MSP, PID, TIF, TAX	TBD
	M5	Incentivize “infill development” for vacant lots along San Antonio Street with pedestrian-oriented businesses. <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Identify owners of vacant parcels and create public database.- Offer incentives, tax abatements and/or subsidies to developers.- Organize banks to create shared debt pool.- Use document as marketing tool.	S/M	City, PD	\$\$\$	CIP, PEQ, DF, TAX	TBD
	M6	Increase number of residents in Downtown. <ul style="list-style-type: none">- 1- Expand Multi-family housing options in Downtown.--- Encourage building renovations to increase 2nd floor occupancy.--- Identify owners of vacant and for sale parcels.--- Offer incentives, subsidies, tax abatements to developers.--- Organize banks to create shared debt pool.- 2- Construct a pedestrian/bike bridge to Town Creek Development to connect hundreds of new residential units to Downtown New Braunfels Center an improve connectivity.	M/L	City, PD	\$\$\$	PPV, PEQ, DF, TAX	TBD
	M7	Identify location for commuter rail stop and encourage transit-oriented development. <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Encourage Economic Development Department, Chamber of Commerce, and Mayor to meet with ASA Rail Board and Staff.- Continue existing relationship between Director of Planning & Community Development, City Council Members and ASA Board.- Continue City of New Braunfels membership in commuter rail district and use City’s existing state and federal lobbyists.- Enlist support of Downtown businesses.- Offer incentives to develop around transit station.	S-L	City	\$	GF	TBD

W Implementation Matrix: Wayfinding

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Responsible Parties

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- HLC = Historic Landmark Commission
- IDC = New Braunfels Industrial Development Corporation
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- PD = Private Developer
- PV = Public/Private Venture
- TxDOT= Texas Department of Transportation

Estimated Magnitude of Cost

- \$ = less than \$100,000
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Potential Funding Sources

- 4B = 4B “Quality of Life” Sales Tax
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- CoC = Chamber of Commerce Funding
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- GF = General Funds
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- TAX = Tax Abatement
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- TX = State of Texas

#	Wayfinding Actions and Policies	Timeline	Responsible Dept/Agency	Estimated Magnitude of Cost	Potential Funding Sources	Implementation Status
W1	Install Highway signage for historic Downtown New Braunfels on Interstate Highway 35, State Highway 46, Loop 337 and Walnut Ave.	S	City, County and TxDOT	\$	CIP	Signage installed on Interstate 35, Winter 2009. Additional signage will be discussed with TxDOT.
W2	Increase font size and place logo on all wayfinding signage Downtown.	S	City	\$	CIP, CoC, DTA, TX	TBD
W3	Install full family of signs recommended in 2007 Wayfinding Study, to include Downtown map kiosk and directional signage.	S/M	City, TxDOT, CoC	\$\$	GF, CoC, DTA	TBD

C Implementation Matrix: Circulation & Walkability

Phasing Timeline

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Potential Funding Sources

- 4B = 4B “Quality of Life” Sales Tax
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- CIP = Capital Improvements Program
- CoC = Chamber of Commerce Funding
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See report page 44 for description of a “traffic calming strategies”

#	Circulation & Walkability Actions and Policies	Timeline	Responsible Dept/Agency	Estimated Magnitude of Cost	Potential Funding Sources	Implementation Status
C1	Gather traffic count data to enable planning for additional traffic calming strategy and other traffic calming incentives. - Hire consultant to perform traffic count and analyze data.	S	City	\$	GF	Completed: Summer 2009.
C2.1	Improve accessibility to and safety around Main Plaza. Enforce speed limits (15 miles per hour around Main Plaza and 25 mph in Downtown area). - Adopt new speeds limits in areas higher than 25 mph in Downtown. - Install signage. - Enforce speeds.	S	City, TxDOT	\$	GF	Main Plaza to be renovated in Spring, 2010. Travel will be reduced to one lane around Plaza.
C2.2	Reduce travel lanes around Main Plaza from two (2) to one (1).	S	City	\$	GF	See above.
C2.3	Consider a “no through traffic” policy for truck traffic in Downtown. -Perform feasibility study to determine origins and destinations of trucks passing around the Plaza. If a high percentage are unrelated to Downtown destinations, consider alternate routes away from Downtown.	S	City	\$	GF	See above.
C3	Create and delineate crosswalks around Main Plaza and to and from bandstand (see A1). - Paint new crosswalks or construct textured crosswalks with “count-down” lights for pedestrian crossings. Consider mid-block crossing with count-down lights.	S	City	\$\$	CIP, 4B, State	TBD
C4	Repair broken, incomplete sidewalk network and build new sidewalks where absent along retail and commercial streets (see A1). - Repair broken sidewalks. - Extend sidewalk network where absent. - Minimize curb cuts. - Retrofit to adhere to ADA regulations for accessibility.	S/M	City, Property Owners	\$\$\$	CIP, 4B, State	TBD
C5	Break up mega-blocks with new pedestrian pathways. - Work with property owners to create public easement and pathway. - Install pedestrian wayfinding signage and lighting. - Perform streetscaping treatment to alleys to improve aesthetics in area.	M	City, Property Owners	\$\$\$	CIP, PEQ,	TBD
C6.1	Implement pilot traffic calming/connectivity strategy on West San Antonio: re-stripe parking to create angled parking and increase number of spaces. - Reduce the number of lanes from 4 to 3 lanes. - Re-stripe parking lane to create angled parking (reverse or head-in) and increase number of parking spaces. - Present plan and benefits to Downtown business community.	S	City	\$	CIP	TBD
C6.2	Implement permanent traffic calming/connectivity strategy on West San Antonio. - Perform streetscaping with new pedestrian amenities, bulbouts, mid-block crossings, texture paving, etc.	S/M	City	\$\$\$	CIP, 4B, State	TBD
C7A	Option A: Implement pilot traffic calming/connectivity strategy on Seguin Ave/Business 46 (new bike lane). - Reduce number of lanes from 4 to 3 with new bike lane. - Restripe roadway to designate new lanes.	S	City	\$	CIP	TBD
C7A.2	Option B: Implement permanent traffic calming/connectivity strategy on Seguin Ave/Business 46 (new bike lane). - Perform streetscaping with new pedestrian amenities, bulbouts, mid-block crossings, etc.	S/M	City	\$\$\$	CIP, 4B, State	TBD
C7B	Option A: Implement pilot traffic calming/connectivity strategy on Seguin Ave/Business 46 (new diagonal parking). - Reduce number of lanes from 4 to 3 with angled parking (reverse or head in). - Restripe roadway to designate new lanes and new parking.	S	City	\$	CIP	TBD
C7B.2	Option B: Implement permanent traffic calming strategy on Seguin Ave/Business 46 (new diagonal parking). - Perform streetscaping with new pedestrian amenities, bulbouts, mid-block crossings, etc.	S	City	\$\$\$	CIP, 4B, State	TBD
C8	Implement pilot traffic calming/connectivity strategy on East San Antonio. - Reduce number of lanes from 4 to 3. - Re-stripe roadway to designate new bike lane.	M	City	\$	CIP	TBD
C8.2	Implement permanent traffic calming/connectivity strategy on East San Antonio. -Perform streetscaping with new pedestrian amenities, bulbouts, mid-block crossings, etc.	M/L	City	\$\$\$	CIP, 4B, State	TBD
C9	Perform bike mobility study to develop comprehensive bike network to address range of bike riders. See Appendix C (Traffic, Circulation, Parking Study) for more information. - Protect existing bike lanes by ticketing cars that park or drive in bike lane. - Restrict and enforce no parking in bike lanes.	M	City	\$	CIP, 4B, GF	TBD

P Implementation Matrix: Parking Reform

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Potential Funding Sources

- 4B = 4B “Quality of Life” Sales Tax
- CCF = Comal County Funds
- CIP = Capital Improvements Program
- CoC = Chamber of Commerce Funding
- DF = Debt Financing
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#	Parking Reform Actions and Policies	Timeline	Responsible Dept/Agency	Estimated Magnitude of Cost	Potential Funding Sources	Implementation Status
P1	Establish 2-hour time limits for on-street parking with enforcement. - Adopt ordinance. - Hire private enforcement company to issue tickets. - Consider parking meters if time limits are successful to generate revenue and maintain occupancy.	S	City, Private Company	\$-\$\$	GF, CIP,	Completed Summer, 2009. City Council passed on-street parking ordinance for 2-hour parking limits with enforcement from private firm.
P2	Adopt Downtown parking design ordinance based on recommendations in Downtown Design Guide. - Draft and adopt ordinance. - Present to business owners and development community during educational workshop. - Enforce standards.	S	City	\$	GF	Ongoing: see Downtown Design Guidelines.
P3	Create “Park Once” district with legal development rights for shared parking and pricing plan as part of Parking Benefits District. - Install smart meters. - Allow individual parking requirements to be fulfilled by on-street parking and private parking lots located in district. - Assign staff to manage district. - Assign variable parking prices to create 85% occupancy for on-street parking. - Pool parking revenues to go to public improvements within park once district.	M	City, DB	\$\$\$ (will generate revenues in future, costs are short-term investment).	CIP, PPV, PBD	TBD
P4	Perform Parking Management Study to consider additional parking management policies, see below.	S	City	\$	GF	TBD
P4.1	Increase on-street parking supply through traffic calming strategies, see C:6-C:8.	See C6-C8	See C6-C8	See C6-C8	See C6-C8	TBD
P4.2	Expand current shared parking allowance district in Downtown.	S	City	\$	GF, PBD	TBD
P4.3	Implement a limited parking pricing plan, with all funds raised going to Downtown Improvements.	S/M	City	\$\$\$ (will generate revenues in future, costs are short-term).	CIP, PBD	TBD
P4.4	Reduce or eliminate parking requirements in the Downtown for new development.	S/M	City	\$\$	GF, PBD	TBD
P4.5	Use remote parking for employees and special events.	S	City	\$	GF, PBD	TBD
P4.6	Install real time user information systems to inform drivers where parking is available (such systems may be electronic in a garage, or in person from a greeter connected by radio to others monitoring available spaces).	M/L	City	\$-\$\$\$	CIP, PBD	TBD
P4.7	Encourage valet parking to efficiently utilize existing surface lots and on-street spaces that are otherwise inconvenient for visitors.	S	City, DB	\$	PEQ	TBD
P5A	Preferred: Construct a “park-once” parking garage on or near the current Chase Bank parking lot.	M/L	City	\$\$\$	CIP, GOBF, PBD, PPV	TBD
P5B	Not Preferred: Construct a “park-once” parking garage with Comal County at proposed Tax Assessor’s lot.	M/L	City, County	\$\$\$	CIP, GOBF, CCF, PBD, PPV	City in discussion with County regarding proposed garage site.
P6	Establish on-street parking flex program/permits where restaurants and cafes can rent on-street parking to extend street dining area with temporary seating, shade, and planters. - Create parking flex permit with screening standards for aesthetics and safety. - Assign staff member to oversee program.	S	City	\$	GF	TBD

A Implementation Matrix: Aesthetics & Pedestrian Infrastructure

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#	Aesthetics & Pedestrian Infrastructure Actions and Policies	Timeline	Responsible Party	Estimated Magnitude of Costs	Potential Funding Sources	Status of Implementation
A1	Improve aesthetic quality and accessibility of Main Plaza in Downtown (see C2). - Narrow travel lanes around traffic circle to one lane to slow to pedestrian-friendly speeds. - Create crosswalks and mid-block crossings with count-down lights to allow for safe passage to bandstand. - Expand green space. - Install pedestrian amenities. - Program space with events, vendors, and/or entertainment uses.	S-L	City	\$\$\$	CIP, 4B, State	TBD
A2	Increase open space in Downtown through incentives, subsidies, and public engagement. - 1- Enhance Marketplatz with pedestrian amenities and program with community events. --- Provide new landscaping for shade and pedestrian amenities like lighting and seating. --- Work with community groups and business community to program space. --- Install directional and informational signage to and around park. - 2- Create pilot pocket park in Crosswalk Cafe parking lot with temporary street furniture, planters, and umbrellas (with potential to become permanent park). --- Create permit for temporary plaza. --- Work with owner of parking lot to try pilot project. --- Install temporary street furniture and pedestrian-oriented amenities. --- Program space with events or use as outdoor dining space for employees, visitors, or jurors eating lunch in Downtown. - 3- Create linear park along railroad tracks. --- Acquire land. --- Perform study and/or design competition for design. --- Design, construct, and maintain.	1- S 2- S 3- M/L	City City, DB City	GF GF, CIP PPV, PEQ, CIP, 4B, State	\$ \$ \$\$\$	TBD
A3	Perform enhancement projects (lighting, landscaping, public art) and maintenance on existing bridges, and underpasses to preserve historic structures and announce entry to Downtown.	M	City	CIP, State	\$\$/\$\$\$	TBD
A4	Perform feasibility study to construct pedestrian bridge across the Comal River, creating greater access. If feasible, design and construct.	S-L	City	GF, CIP, GOBF, PEQ, DF, 4B	\$-\$\$\$	TBD
A5	Invest public funds in recreational trails along river and to surrounding parks to improve conditions, expand hike/bike system, and provide greater maintenance.	S-L	City	CIP, 4B, State	\$\$/\$\$\$	TBD
A6	Fill in pedestrian amenities "gaps" in Downtown, which may include pedestrian lighting, street furniture, landscaping, trees and shading devices (see Downtown Design Guide, Appendix B). Pedestrian lighting is most needed along S. Seguin Ave, Academy, and the Comal Street Bridge areas, as well as alleys.	S/M	City	CIP, 4B	\$\$\$	TBD
A7	Provide Public Restrooms. - Option A: Consider leasing existing building to use as restrooms and a informational center/Main Street Office. - Option B: Acquire land and build new bathrooms as part of new informational center.	M-L	City	CIP	\$-\$\$\$	TBD
A8	Adopt a set of Design Guidelines to improve overall aesthetics in Downtown for public improvements and private development. Consider an overlay zone to help administer Design Guidelines and potential Downtown historic district.	S	City	GF	\$	Completed January 2010. See Appendix B.

II. Development Incentives and Engagement

This following policy actions and incentives supplement the Critical Success Factors Implementation Matrix. The recommendations in this section are geared to attract new development and redevelopment in Downtown New Braunfels.

1. Provide development information so it is readily available and accessible.

- Work with the local brokerage firms in community to create and maintain a database of available Downtown properties. Database would be open to public and outline the following information for available properties: current owner, market value, designated land use, and zoning.
- Database would also highlight which properties are vacant so that the City, public, and development community could track vacant parcels in Downtown, which can blight the community.

2. Reduce/offset cost of development through incentives.

- Provide (short-term financing, subsidies or tax benefits) to attract private investment and development and to offset additional costs incurred with property acquisition and development.
- Work with local and regional lenders to establish a variety of shared debt loan pools, each with a unique redevelopment purpose. Shared debt loan pools help diversify investment, spread risk, and increase the number of redevelopment partners, who become advocates for revitalization projects.
- Work with local lenders to help direct Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) funds, as well as various grants and revolving loan funds to strategic redevelopment projects in Downtown.
- Consider creating a revolving loan funds and grant dollars for façade improvements in Downtown. Monitor the progress of the program to see how it is used and to measure the City's return on investment based on increases to property values.
- Consider priority tax abatements or rebates.
- Consider land grants, and land swaps for important parcels and projects in Downtown.
- Explore grant programs as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), specifically Economic Development Administration (EDA) grants that administer funds for economic diversity and sustainability, see Summary of Funding Sources, page 90.

3. Remove regulatory barriers.

- Review current codes and regulations in relation to Downtown Implementation Plan and Design Guidelines to assess if codes could delay or thwart redevelopment efforts through unclear or conflicting language.
- Provide a “greentape” permit program for Downtown redevelopment projects only. A greentape permit program would help:
 - streamline the permit and entitlement process and move development projects to the front of the line,
 - provide greater predictability,
 - ensure fairness in fees and exactions.
- The components below work best together as a system, but can be implemented separately (if a greentape permitting program is not feasible), as they all help improve the development process for the private perspective. To create a successful greentape permit program, the City should consider:
 - 1) appointing a case manager
 - 2) consolidating the permit process
 - 3) waiving or reducing fees
 - 4) reducing the number of changes to previously approved plans
 - 5) streamlining the issuance of conflicting requirements by different City departments
 - 6) providing public hearings
 - 7) streamlining environmental review procedures.

4. Provide predictability and minimize risk.

- Diversify funding partners by “pooling” public, private and nonprofit funding. This increases the number of entities engaged in the success of Downtown revitalization projects, see Development Incentives # 2.
- Present clear design and development vision through use of Downtown Design Guidelines.

III. Improve Downtown / City Operations

This section provides recommendations for more fluid governance and operations to ensure that the Downtown Implementation Plan moves smoothly, and is supported from project conception to completion.

1. Vet roles and responsibilities.

- City staff should review all actions and policies presented in Implementation Matrix to ensure that assigned responsible parties and phasing timeline are appropriate.
- City should assign responsibility to staff/committee to look into funding opportunities and additional consulting services to see through actions and policies recommended in Downtown Implementation Plan that cannot be implemented immediately with current City staffing and monetary resources.

2. Establish Downtown Steering Committee as permanent advocacy entity to “champion” the Downtown Implementation Plan over the long-term. This group would help -

- Shepherd Downtown revitalization projects through the development approval process.
- Discuss and manage the use of development incentives.
- Monitor Downtown market and benchmark Downtown successes.
- Report to the City Council on a periodic basis regarding progress made related to the Downtown Implementation Plan.

3. **Establish a Design Review Board** (potentially a sub-committee of Downtown Steering Committee) to ensure that new development, renovations, and additions are consistent with vision and goals outlined in Downtown Implementation Plan. This advisory group could be composed of inter-disciplinary staff, members of the Planning and Zoning Commission, Downtown Association, Main Street Advisory Group, and Downtown Steering Committee, as well as local practitioners, such as architects, urban designers, developers, and planners involved in the design and development process.

4. **Establish a Maintenance Fund and Review Committee** to access quality of pedestrian infrastructure to improve aesthetic quality in Downtown and hold businesses, residents, and City accountable for the quality of built environment. Maintenance is an often overlooked but critical component of a successful implementation plan. The Maintenance Review Committee should be composed of an inter-disciplinary team to help discuss areas of public infrastructure in which the work of various agencies in departments may overlap, and thus cause tension.

5. **Decide upon responsible party or entity** (recommend City Downtown Development Coordinator) as the clearinghouse for all Downtown market information and data.

- Develop and distribute marketing materials to target prospective Downtown tenants, developers and investors.

IV. Summary of Funding Sources

This section presents a table of general municipal, private, and federal funding sources that may be used, as appropriate, to fund revitalization efforts in Downtown New Braunfels.

General Municipal, Federal, and Private Funding Sources

Funding Source	Description	Potential Uses for Funds
General Funds	Funds from various sources, property taxes, fees, etc.	Wide variety of public purposes.
General Obligation Bonds	May be issued with voter approval.	Major capital improvements include public buildings, streets, and parks.
TIRZ (Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone)	Diverts district funds from increases in regular tax revenues that arise from new development in the district; incremental increase in tax revenues over designated base year revenues is diverted to a special fund; diversion of regular tax revenues rather than additional fees to generate revenue for district investments.	Wide range of capital improvements.
Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Improvement District - similar to Public Improvements District (PID)	Allows the city to issue bonds which are paid for over a period of time through assessments on the benefiting properties. The assessments may cover all or a portion of the cost of the improvement.	Share the cost of major public improvements such as streets, lighting, parking, etc. Can help leverage bond or urban renewal funds.
Main Street Program	Financial and advisory affiliated with the National Trust for Historic Preservation.	Assistance to downtowns for preservation and economic development strategies.
PID- Property Owners District/BID -Business Improvement District	Consortium of property owners or business owners in a designated district with established boundaries tax themselves to pay into a pool that can be used in district improvements, marketing, maintenance, etc.	Improvements and maintenance in designated district.
Shared Debt Lending Pool	Several lending organizations contributing financing to a project or projects, thus sharing risk.	Private development.
Revolving Loan Funds	Flexible funding in the form of loans, guarantees and interest subsidies to firms which further local development goals. Components include: lower rates, longer terms; many capitalized by/with federal funds combined with private funds.	Capital for businesses, particularly small ones, or those located in distressed areas.
Sales Tax Sharing	Future sales from a development can be rebated to developer to pay for infrastructure- city/county agrees to split sales tax revenue with developer.	Infrastructure.
Tax Abatement or Rebate	Taxing entity (usually the city) abates or rebates a portion of tax burden: by individual property or in an abatement zone.	Private Development.
Tax Exempt Bond Financing	Method of financing long-term debt issued by government whereby bondholders need not include interest payments on taxable income.	Private Development.
Public Private Venture	Public and Private Developer partner to fund redevelopment project.	Private Development.
Private Development	Private developer finances private project.	Private Development.
Community Development Block Grant	Federal grants, administered through local or regional offices, designed to lower the overall cost of a project; projects must demonstrate the ability to improve the economic conditions of an area.	Rehabilitation loans, facade improvements, curb and sidewalk repairs, etc
Historic Preservation Investment Tax Credits (Federal)	Percent of rehabilitation costs of income-producing properties.	Can be used as a tax credit which can be sold on the market.
Historic Preservation Revolving Loan Fund	Low interest loans to property owners at any income level in historic districts for exterior rehabilitation projects.	Use to fund historic preservation efforts.
Public Works and Economic Development Facilities Program	Program funds support the construction or rehabilitation projects to generate or retain private sector jobs and investments, attract private sector capital, and promote regional competitiveness.	Construction or rehabilitation of public infrastructure and facilities.
Preserve America Grants	Supports preservation efforts	Heritage tourism, education, and historic preservation planning projects.

Texas Specific Funding Sources

The following list presents Texas specific funding sources that may be applicable to help fund Downtown improvement projects.

Texas Enterprise Fund

- Awarded by Governor.
- Provide grants for economic development projects for infrastructure development, community development, job training programs and business incentives.
- Grants are used to attract new businesses and expand existing businesses.

Economic Development Refund Program

- Administered by the Property Tax Division of the Comptroller's Office.
- Allocates state refunds for economic development.
- Applicable to property owners that have established a new business in a reinvestment zone or expanded or modernized an existing business located in the zone.

Texas Leverage Fund

- Tax levied by cities that have adopted the economic development sales tax.
- Leverages future tax revenue to finance community projects (such as purchasing land or equipment or building public parks and entertainment facilities) and industry expansion.

Texas Industry Development Program

- Administered by the Texas Small Business Industrial Development Corporation.
- Provides communities with funds for job creation and industry expansion to purchase land, facilities, construction, equipment and infrastructure improvements.

§4b Sales Tax

- Tax levied by cities for quality-of-life improvements.
- Revenues intended to attract or maintain businesses, such as streets and roads and related improvements. Funds may be used to improve infrastructure and build facilities including sports, entertainment and convention centers.
- §4a and §4b are collectively known as the Economic Development Sales Tax.

Texas EDGE (Economic Data for Growth and Expansion) at Comptroller's Office

- Provides analyses that identify occupational and industry trends and their effects on the regional economy.
- Provides local governments with information about tax-related programs and identifies opportunities to raise funds for economic development efforts through property, sales and franchise tax revenues, exemptions and credits. The agency also provides information on special assessments and other opportunities related to disaster relief.

Open Space Related Funding Sources

The following list summarizes national programs that may help fund open space/park improvements.

RTC's Trails Funding

The Rails-to-Trails Conservancy's (RTC's) Trails and Greenways Funding Guide is a searchable database containing information about a variety of federal, state and private funding sources for trails and greenways.

Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program

The U.S. National Parks Service's Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA) offers funding for projects that protect important natural resources or enhance outdoor recreation opportunities.



City of New Braunfels
Downtown Implementation Plan

424 South Castell Ave. • New Braunfels, TX 78130

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