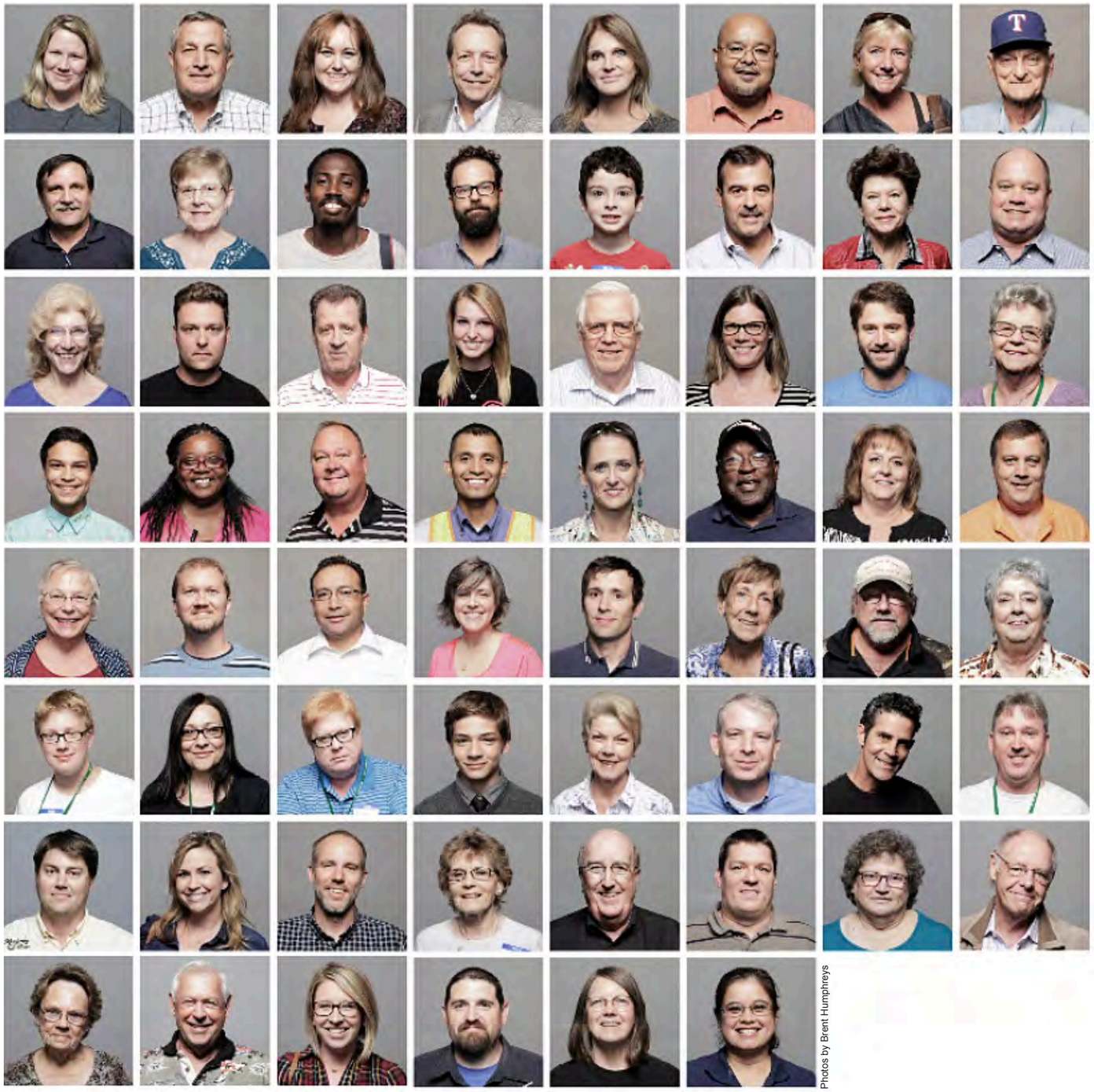
TAYLOR DOWNTOWN

MASTER PLAN

April 2015

DESIGNWORKSHOP



Photos by Brent Humphreys

The City of Taylor retained Design Workshop and their subconsultant, Cobb Fendley and Associates, to develop a master plan for downtown Taylor, Texas. The Downtown Taylor Master Plan summarizes the community engagement and master planning effort from September 2014 to January 2015. Recommendations and outcomes of this plan will be implemented by the City, members of City Council, members of the Planning and Zoning Commission, and other leaders who are committed to building on the unique character of Taylor and to creating a vibrant, enduring future for the community.

How to use this Document

The Taylor Downtown Master Plan is intended to be a flexible document that is used to evaluate short- and long-term policy decisions, capitol improvements, development and revitalization efforts. As planning is an ongoing effort, this document should be updated on a regular basis to ensure its goals and strategies reflect changing community, environmental and economic conditions. Design Workshop's Legacy Design process emphasizes a deliberate approach to sustainable solutions that is comprehensive of four Legacy categories: environment, community, art and economics. All aspects of the process and foundational thinking are captured in this document.

Critical Success Factors were defined at the outset of the scope of work. The planning team, client and community defined a project *Vision*, a problem statement called a *Dilemma,* and a solution called a *Thesis*. These steps are intended to build a strong foundational story for the project that aligns the planning team, client and community to the same *Principles* and *Legacy Goals*. DW Legacy Design® metrics are employed to ensure that the project is accountable to the comprehensive *Legacy Goals* set at the beginning of the process.
This document provides a visual and textual story of analysis, definitions and discoveries that led to solutions. It is intended for use in presenting the vision to municipal officials for approvals, to attract valuable, long-term investment to the community, and to serve as the foundation for the next phases of the implementation by the community.

Special Thanks To:

Citizens of Taylor
Mayor and City Council
Planning and Zoning Commission
Main Street Advisory Board
City Staff

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STRUCTURES
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INTRODUCTION

Project Background

Taylor is located in southeastern Williamson County, Texas. The county is one of the fastest growing areas of the United States. Historically named Taylor Station, the City originated in the late 1880s in a traditional street grid pattern around the intersection of two rail lines (the Missouri Pacific and the Missouri, Kansas and Texas railway) and state highways (US Highway 79 and State Highway 95). This advantageous location attracted settlers from around the globe including Czechoslovakia, Germany, Austria and England. By the 1900s, Taylor had established itself as a significant center of cattle, grain and cotton production.

Essential services, such as police and fire units, schools, utilities companies, newspapers and radio, hospitals, assisted care facilities, churches, banks and an array of commercial/ retail businesses established the area as a family-friendly destination. Taylor's Main Street and cultural icons such as Moody Museum, Howard Theater and Heritage Square Park continue to serve as the heart of the downtown today.

Study Area

The study area for the Taylor Downtown Master Plan, seen in **"Figure 1: Study Area" on page 3**, includes land between First Street, Seventh Street, Washburn Street, Vance Street, an extension along Second Street to Doak Street, and an extension on Main Street to Rio Grande Street.

This area is located within a specially designated reinvestment zone, known as a Tax Increment Financing District (TIF). A TIF district is a financing tool that pays for improvements on public property such as new sidewalks, streets and parks. It is paid for by the incremental tax gains that occur on private properties adjacent to the public improvements.

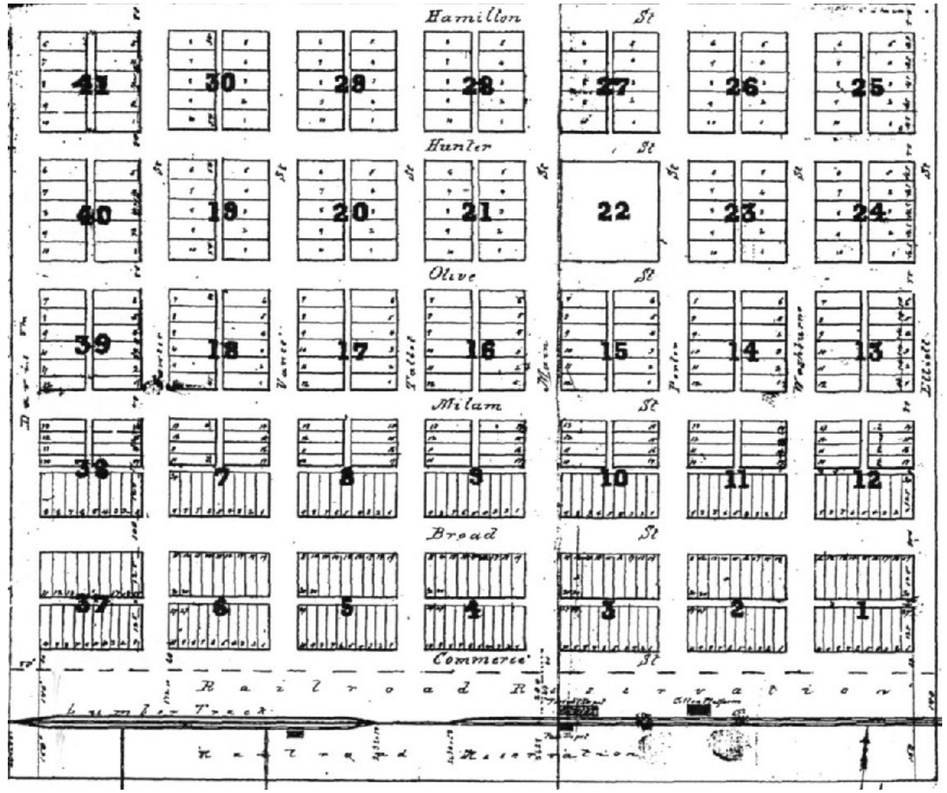
Demographics and Recent Trends

According to 2010 U.S. Census Bureau estimates, the population of Taylor is 15,191.[1] Its population is well-educated (70.6 percent of Taylor residents have achieved high school graduation or higher)[2] and diverse (71.7 percent White, 10.2 percent African American, 1.2 percent American Indian, 0.7 percent Asian, 0.1 percent Pacific Islander and 13.1 percent other race, and 3 percent reporting two or more races).[3]

More than 70 percent of all households in Taylor include children, and the average household size is 2.75 individuals.[4] Approximately 6,500 (or 42 percent) residents are located within a mile of the downtown core.

Despite a growing number of rooftops throughout the city and county in recent years, Taylor's downtown core has experienced a trend of disinvestment over the last few decades. According to the Taylor Economic Development Corporation, "in the last five years over $36 million of new capital investment was made in the city, of which only $2.2 was made in the downtown area."

Trends involving increased daily commuting to regional places of employment have affected many Texas downtowns. Recent studies indicate that workers living in Taylor commute out of Williamson County as far as 45 miles for work (up to 62% (5,861)) of the 9,496 employed.[5] Taylor is located within a reasonable commute to major employment centers such as Austin, Round Rock, and Georgetown; larger cities that currently have higher costs for housing. This positions Taylor to be able to produce housing opportunities for middle and upper-income households willing to commute from the area to larger employment centers.



Taylor originated in the late 1880s in a traditional street grid pattern around the intersection of two rail lines. Street names in the community have evolved over time. First Street was originally known as Commerce Street.

As early as 1906, banners and parades helped to create signature street experiences. The parade is on Main Street heading south. In this picture, one can see the east side of Main Street. Photography Credit: Michna, Irene K. Images of America: Taylor. Charleston, South Carolina: Arcadia Publishing, 2011.

1 U.S. Census Bureau. Profile of General Population and Housing Characteristics: 2010 . 2010. http://www.census.gov/2010census/ (accessed 2014).

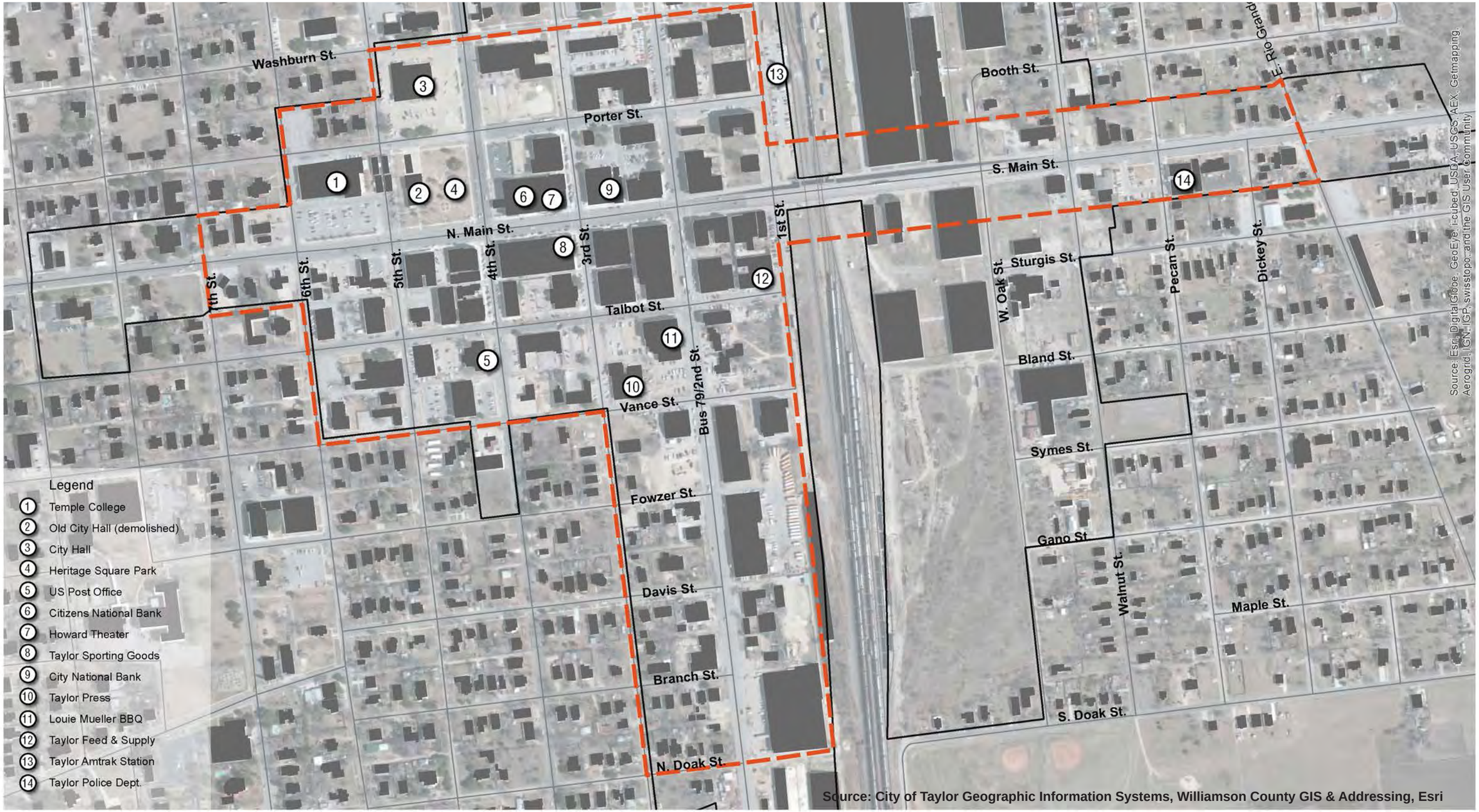
2 U.S. Census Bureau. American Fact Finder: Educational Attainment. n.d. http://factfinder2.census.gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en/ACS/13_5YR/S1501/1600000US4871948 (accessed 2014).

3 U.S. Census Bureau. Profile of General Population and Housing Characteristics: 2010 . 2010. http://www.census.gov/2010census/ (accessed 2014).

4 U.S. Census Bureau. Profile of General Population and Housing Characteristics: 2010 . 2010. http://www.census.gov/2010census/ (accessed 2014)

5 Taylor Economic Development Corporation. "Taylor Labor Pool Commuting Report." Business Climate. n.d. http://tayloredc.com/sites/default/files/files/Taylor_Labor_Pool_Commuting_Report.pdf (accessed 2014).

Figure 1: *Study Area*



Existing Plans

The Taylor Downtown Master Plan builds on a number of planning and design efforts completed by the City over the last few decades that address recent trends in the area. This section outlines some of the main points of several previous planning efforts as they relate to and impact the current Downtown Master Plan process.

Reinvestment Zone #1

Ordinance (No. 2005-9)

Costs of selected public improvements within the downtown reinvestment zone may be funded by current or future tax revenues in the zone. Tax dollars generated by growth of property values are referred to as the "tax increment." These dollars flow to a tax increment fund, which can be approved by the TIF Board and City Council to finance public improvements that enhance the environment and attract new investment in downtown.

The tax increment funds public improvements to encourage the redevelopment of downtown Taylor into a mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented environment consistent with the goals of the City's Comprehensive Plan.

Key takeaways:

- The Downtown Master Plan is completely within the boundary of the Reinvestment Zone.
- The tax increment fund will be one of the primary funding sources for the public improvement projects proposed in this plan.
- The TIF Board and City Council will use this plan as a guide to phase and fund projects recommended in this plan.
- Public improvements are anticipated to take place in phases over a number of years and timed in coordination with new development and redevelopment projects.

2014 Taylor Community and Economic Development Initiative

In 2014, the Taylor Economic Development Corporation, Chamber of Commerce, City and Independent School District partnered together to publish a community and economic development action plan for Taylor. The goal of the study assessment was to complete a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis to help shape Taylor's future. This SWOT analysis serves a baseline against which Taylor can measure its progress. The initiative identifies major industries in Taylor today as trade, transport, utilities, education and health services. There are opportunities to increase local accommodations/entertainment/activities, revitalize downtown, expand transit, farming/farmers markets, arts/culture, new housing and retail development, evening entertainment, youth leadership and focused efforts in the southern portions of town. Threats identified include perceived lack of trust and communication, reputation of Taylor ISD, expense of maintaining roads, racial tensions, lack of affordable housing and the appearance of downtown.

Key takeaways:

- Emphasize economic development opportunities available for business owners and developers to invest in downtown.
- Consider hotel/motel tax increases as an additional funding source for downtown improvements.
- Identify regional, national and state agencies to fund downtown improvements.
- Identify public/private partnerships.
- Invest in new businesses and incubator office within the downtown.

2013 West 2nd Street Corridor Plan

As a major thoroughfare in downtown Taylor, the West Second Street Corridor Plan explores road, utility and drainage improvements, beautification efforts, code enforcement and economic development including building rehabilitation and funding for improvements. The creation of an additional Tax Increment Financing District is explored that would enable funding mechanisms for public infrastructure and strategic redevelopment along the corridor.

Key takeaways:

- Allocate funds for corridor improvements, enforce code regulation efforts.
- Develop design standards for building appearance, landscape design, public art and wayfinding signs.

2011 Downtown Small Area Master Plan

From 2010-2011, the City of Taylor completed a small area plan for the nine block area around Heritage Square.

The plan included recommendations for public improvements, particularly for how the community could repurpose its 1935 City Hall. The final master plan included two options; one proposes that the historic city hall be demolished, the other proposes the reuse of the building. Both options included amenities, programming and water features to Heritage Square Park, enhancing storefronts and pedestrian-friendly streetscapes.

Key takeaways:

- This plan provides a structural analysis and cost estimates to assist the City in determining whether or not to demolish or renovate the 1935 City Hall formerly on Heritage Square.
- Ultimately, the City decided to demolish the city hall and invest in future recreational improvements to Heritage Square.
- Heritage Square serves an important role in the community's history and fabric. The Taylor Downtown Master Plan will work with citizens to establish a vision for the square.

2007 The Taylor Old Town Streetscape Project

The Taylor Old Town Streetscape Project was funded by a Statewide Transportation Enhancement (TEA 21) grant from the Texas Department of Transportation (TXDOT). The $1.8 million project included the reconstruction of sidewalks and curbs to provide easier and safer access, improved crosswalks, and bringing facilities up to the standards of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The plan for the streetscape improvements was presented to the public in March of 2007. The presentation included renderings and dimensions of the proposed streetscape improvements but contained limited information about the community vision and implementation steps to achieve a comprehensive vision for the downtown.

Key takeaways:

- 45 degree angled parking on side streets and parallel parking on Main Street and East 4th Street to accommodate traffic volumes.
- Bulb-outs and street trees on streets with low traffic volumes.
- Improved business facades, pedestrian lighting, signage, planting and artistic detailing.
- Allow businesses to utilize the walkway for dining, displays and sidewalk sales.

Taylor's Main Street Program encourages the revitalization of the downtown.

2004 Comprehensive Plan

In 2004, Taylor updated its Comprehensive Plan in an effort to balance land use, transportation, and economic development by addressing quality of life issues (such as housing, health and human services). The Comprehensive Plan establishes a vision for Taylor as "a proud, diverse, resourceful, enthusiastic, safe, healthy, family-friendly community that celebrates a rich cultural heritage and history in a small town atmosphere with opportunities to work, shop, do business locally, and that embraces economic growth and diversity".[6]

The plan prioritizes short, medium, and long-term actions to create a vibrant, safe and healthy Taylor today and in the future. The Comprehensive Plan also identifies a variety of funding programs that could benefit the City of Taylor are identified in the Comprehensive Plan that apply to the downtown study area.

Key takeaways:

The following actions are listed in order of priority and will be addressed directly in the recommendations of the Taylor Downtown Master Plan.

Transportation

1. **Action T2.3:** Work with CARTS to expand existing routes to provide service to major retail and service establishments within the City.
2. **Action T1.3:** Work with the City of Taylor and develop a program that allocates city funds to repair and/or replace streets that will benefit the community as a whole.
3. **Action T2.4:** Continue to work with Taylor's Main Street program, CARTS, TxDOT and the Union Pacific Railroad to assure the construction of an intermodal transportation facility to the City of Taylor.
4. **Action T3.2:** Require that major entry roads reflect the character of Taylor with landscaping, additional setbacks, preservation of existing trees and planting of additional trees.
5. **Action T4.2:** Improve appearance and function of streets so that they increase "walkability" and access.
6. **Action T3.1:** Develop a design for city entrance signs and landscaping that reflect the character of Taylor.
7. **Action T2.1:** Provide designated on- and off-street bike routes.

Land Use

8. **Action L1.1:** Identify appropriate residential development areas on Future Land Use Plan (site suitability, access, utilities)
9. **Action L1.3:** Establish open space easements, linear parks, and trails in and around residential areas for accessibility and "walkability."
10. **Action L1.8:** Ensure that streets, sidewalks, neighborhood parks, street lighting, drainage, and traffic control through design standard requirements.
11. **Action L4.1:** Amend appropriate codes to allow more mixed-use, live/work development opportunities Downtown and in Downtown Neighborhoods.
12. **Action L1.9:** Require and/or install appropriate landscaping along major arterials and local streets. Develop requirements and list of approved plants and materials.
13. **Action L1.11:** Permit, through the zoning ordinance, second story residential uses in the downtown area.
14. **Action L3.2:** Concentrate industrial activities along the railroad corridor.

2004 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan

In 2004, the City commissioned the creation of a comprehensive parks, recreation and open space master plan. The plan included a detailed inventory of Taylor's park system featuring seven park areas totaling 251.97 acres. Existing parks were analyzed to highlight specific challenges, opportunities and programming recommendations. An extensive community engagement and research effort compared existing facilities against national standards to determine acreage and facilities required to meet present and future needs of the community. Citizens were asked what they felt the single most important opportunities were.

Key takeaways:

Recommendations for outdoor facility improvements related to the Taylor Downtown Master Plan and Heritage Square Park include:

- Provide playground equipment for children by upgrading existing facilities and providing new playgrounds and equipment in areas not currently served in the community.
- Provide picnic areas/pavilions in existing and new neighborhood parks and community parks.
- Provide benches/seating areas in existing parks as well as in newly developed parks.
- Provide water recreation for the use and enjoyment of Taylor citizens.
- Extend the trail system throughout the community.
- Provide a skateboard park in Taylor for youth programming and special events.
- Provide an amphitheater/performing arts space for the use and enjoyment of Taylor residents.
- Provide for handicapped accessible facilities in all parks within the community.

Key improvements desired by the community were identified for Heritage Square in the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan.

6 Taylor, City of. "Comprehensive Plan Update: Chapter 2 - Vision." 2004, 2-1.

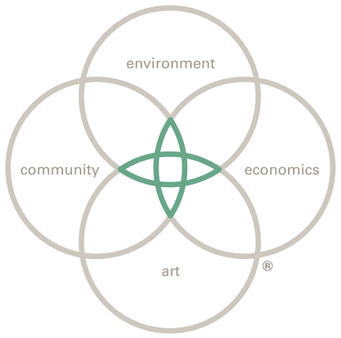
DW Legacy Design®

Design Workshop's Legacy Design® process emphasizes a deliberate approach to sustainable design solutions that is comprehensive of four categories: Environment, Community, Art, and Economics.

DW Legacy Design Method

The DW Legacy Design method builds a narrative foundation for a project and then sees the various components of that narrative (i.e. dilemma, thesis, narrative principles and goals) take shape in plans.

Design Workshop captures all aspects of the design process and the foundational thinking for a project as it completes assignments. At the outset, project teams define issues associated with a project and the Critical Success Factors, as defined by the client. In the initial stages of the Taylor Downtown Master Plan, the team worked with the client group to define a project Vision, a problem statement called "Dilemma" and a potential design solution, called a "Thesis". These steps help to build a strong foundational story for a project that aligns the consultant team and the client to the same principles and goals. Design Workshop employs Legacy Design metrics to ensure that a project is accountable to the principles and comprehensive Legacy Design goals articulated at the beginning of the process.



DW Legacy Design® Diagram.

Project Vision

The City of Taylor is located on the northeastern edge of the Austin-Round Rock Metro area, a regional area experiencing rapid population growth. Taylor recognizes the future growth and investment as an opportunity to create a vibrant downtown that will attract people to the city and preserve the qualities of Taylor that make it unique.

The City of Taylor desires a community-driven downtown plan that identifies opportunities for future investments, action steps for implementation, as well as educates and paints a vibrant future for Taylor. This should include timing and implementation of the identified catalyst projects that will come out of the study. The client wants to bring people back into downtown and make it a pedestrian-friendly and ADA friendly destination for the visitors and citizens of Taylor. The client wants to fill in the gaps between existing pockets of interest to create a cohesive downtown that serves the needs of visitors and residents. In order to achieve this vision, Taylor needs a plan that focuses on the downtown core and is rooted in implementable projects with action steps identified to make them realized.

Critical Success Factors

The Design Workshop consultant team identified and confirmed the following Critical Success Factors for the project with the City of Taylor. These factors reflect the results that absolutely must occur for the community to consider the planning project a success.

- Identify catalyst projects to stimulate economic development;
- Clarify how to move forward with catalyst projects;
- Address signage (gateways, parking, general wayfinding), streetscapes and parks;
- Consider the history of Taylor; and
- Capture the vision of a broad range of stakeholders.

The Texas Brazos Trail is a scenic driving route that runs through 18 counties in central Texas and includes a stop in Taylor. The trail celebrates central Texas' history, guiding visitors through the region with suggested stops at sites of historic significance. Currently the only suggested stop in Taylor is the Moody Museum. There is minimal signage throughout downtown Taylor alerting visitors that they are on the Brazos Trail. Taylor has the opportunity increase its tourism draw with its inclusion in this historic trail by increasing signage and determining additional sites to highlight such as Heritage Square or the many historic Victorian homes in Taylor.

Project Dilemma

A dilemma is a storytelling device that describes the predicament facing a given project. It sums up the major challenges that must be overcome to achieve an outcome that meets the clients' expectations. It answers the question: "What is standing in the way of a project's potential for success?" A dilemma highlights the complexities of a project and the need to create a comprehensive solution.

The City of Taylor is located on the northeastern edge of the Austin-Round Rock Metro area approximately 29 miles from downtown Austin. For many years, Taylor has been able to maintain its unique small-town character and rural landscape, but population projections estimate Taylor's population will increase by 13.28% in the next five years (TEEX). Residents of Taylor take pride in its unique history, architectural character, abundance of water, and rural landscape that has not yet been affected by suburban sprawl. However, its prime location near the I-35 corridor and the SH130 toll road, coupled with its location in the second fastest growing County in Texas – make it susceptible to the rapid growth and suburban sprawl taking place elsewhere in Williamson County. How can this plan leverage the anticipated investment and growth that will happen, while also ensuring that the unique character of Taylor –particularly its downtown core - will survive, thrive and mature in the future? How can this plan leverage the capacity and ideas of the community to ensure that the future growth matches the values, visions, and needs of current residents?

Project Thesis

A thesis is an assertion about how to achieve the desired outcomes from a planning project. The consultant team tested and resolved the project thesis during the course of the project through its design and planning investigations. The project thesis is a proposed solution to the central problem or issue articulated in the project dilemma. Collectively communicating the big ideas of a project in the dilemma and thesis helps to align the community to a common goal.

In order to achieve a cohesive and vibrant vision, a plan must look at the downtown core comprehensively and outline a series of action steps toward implementation. An inclusive and transparent public engagement process combined with a market assessment will help identify catalyst projects that are in line with the local culture and economy. This master plan will provide the City of Taylor with the necessary information to move forward with actionable, implementable steps, in order to secure funding, stimulate investment, preserve the downtown core, and create more opportunities for residents to shop, work, and play. The resulting downtown will be a district that benefits current and future residents, employees, and business owners in Taylor in a meaningful way.

Legacy Goals

At the beginning of the project, a list of goals was created for the future of downtown Taylor derived from the previous planning efforts and input from the City of Taylor client team. The goals were voted on by the citizens of Taylor at the Values Workshop. The results of this voting effort is illustrated in **"Figure 2: Community Goals Ranking".** Following the workshop, existing conditions of Downtown Taylor were analyzed against the goals in order to obtain a better understanding of the existing conditions and needs of the community.

The goals of the Taylor Downtown Master Plan include:

Economic

- EC1 Stimulate economic development.
- EC2 Provide entertainment, recreation, programming and events.
- EC3 Direct visitors to key locations with signage,parking and streetscapes.

Community

- C1 Be a pedestrian-friendly destination.
- C2 Meet the vision of a broad range of stakeholders.
- C3 Serve the needs of visitors and residents alike.

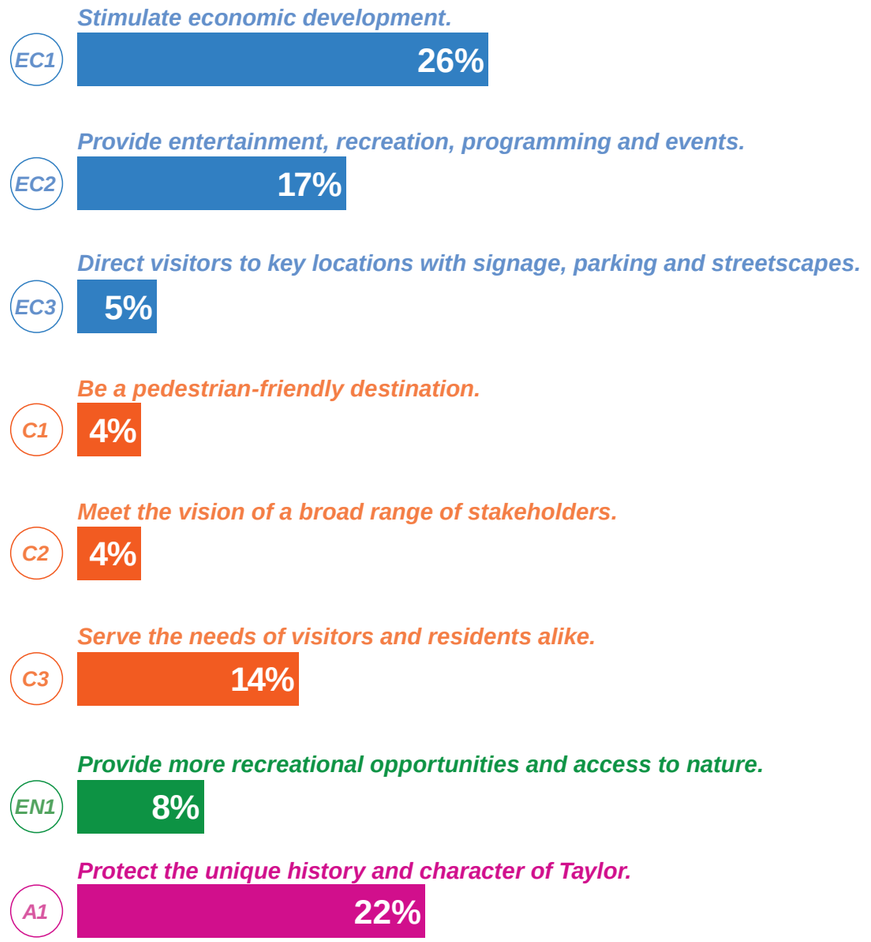
Environment

- EN1 Provide more recreational opportunities and access to nature.

Art

- A1 Protect the unique history and character of Taylor.

Figure 2: *Community Goals Ranking*




JCT
BUSINESS
79
POST OFFICE
OPEN
FIND YOUR
TREASURE

2

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Methodology

A site analysis explored existing conditions in the study area as they are today. Key takeaways from the site analysis were shared with the community at workshops to inform dialogue about the envisioned future for Taylor. These provided a foundation for crafting recommendations for the final master plan and focus on how residents and visitors arrive in downtown, and once there, how they experience downtown.

Getting to Downtown

- Gateway Corridors
- Gateway Features
- Viewsheds
- Average daily traffic volume
- Parking

Experiencing Downtown

- Human comfort
- Noise
- Accessibility
- Shade
- Land use
- Building vacancy
- Appraised value
- Building age
- Historic architecture
- Nature and recreation
- Access to parks
- Tree coverage

Goal Assessment

To understand the strengths and weaknesses of the current conditions in Taylor, we looked at how each condition compares to the stated goals for the project.

E1 Stimulate economic development.

E2 Provide entertainment, recreation, programming and events.

E2 Direct visitors to key locations with signage,parking and streetscapes.

C1 Be a pedestrian-friendly destination.

C2 Meet the vision of a broad range of stakeholders.

C3 Serve the needs of visitors and residents alike.

N1 Provide more recreational opportunities and access to nature.

A1 Protect the unique history and character of Taylor.

Views upon entering Taylor along Main Street, Second Street and Fourth Street contribute to the identity of the study area and entice visitors to stop and explore various destinations.

Benchmark Communities

A number of communities were analyzed as benchmarks to provide an understanding of baselines by which to measure the success of Taylor's planning and implementation efforts. Each example was selected for similarities to Taylor, such as size, location, development patterns, roadway configuration, parking and traffic. Comparable downtowns explored included Denton, Texas (US-377 N and E. Hickory Street), Georgetown, Texas (South Austin Avenue and Eighth Street) and Bastrop, Texas (Chestnut Street).

Denton is the largest of the benchmark communities studied, with population of 113,383 and a downtown of approximately 45 acres, with ten blocks defining its downtown. Like Taylor, there is a central square that acts as the downtown anchor, located directly in the center of town. The main road that provides access to Denton, highway 35, is quite removed from downtown, nearly a mile and a half away. The low-traffic route 77 cuts right through downtown bordering both sides of the main square, bringing visitors into the heart of downtown Denton. Tree coverage in the downtown area is sparse, but increases as you move further from the city center.

With a population of 7,218, Bastrop is the smallest benchmark community studied. Its downtown is 22 acres, with of 4 city blocks defining its core and no central square. A major highway, State 71, forms the southernmost boundary of Bastrop's central downtown. Loop 150, a high-traffic arterial feeder to 71, bisects downtown and is a feeder to Bastrop's Main Street and central shopping district. Bastrop's downtown has a moderate amount of tree cover, but like Taylor, storefront awnings provide the majority of street shade.

Georgetown is most similar in scale to Taylor. Its population is 47,400 and its downtown is 27 acres, with the central historic and shopping district occupying 8 city blocks. A historic square surrounding a courthouse is at the very center of downtown and the anchor of the downtown area. The highway leading to Georgetown, Highway 29, is on the outer border the city and is removed from downtown. An arterial road lined with , S. Austin Avenue, forms the western border of the core downtown area. Tree coverage in Georgetown is the most generous of the benchmark communities examined.

Getting to Downtown

Gateways, Viewsheds and Corridors

Several roadways through Taylor are regional routes connecting to major cities including Dallas, TX, Shreveport, LA, Houston, TX, San Antonio, TX, Round Rock, TX and Austin, TX. **"Figure 3: Existing Gateways and Viewsheds"**identifies the existing gateways, corridors and viewsheds along these regional routes. For Taylor visitors commuting by car, there are four major gateways experiences into downtown: 79E, 79W, 95S, and 95N. These gateway experiences present an opportunity to attract visitors into the city and direct them to key destinations in Taylor.

Along the major gateways, there are several natural vistas, bridges, and view corridors that add to the beauty of Taylor and create memorable experiences for visitors. The point at which Main Street meets Murphy Park, the Union Pacific Railroad and bridge in the southern portion of the study area serve as important viewsheds. Viewsheds can add to the experience of entering the city and should be celebrated and highlighted. Viewsheds should be considered as key locations for gateway features because of their existing beauty and significance.

Successful gateways, corridors and viewsheds contribute positively to the three highest ranked community goals:

E1 **Stimulate economic development.** Gateways can pull in people who may not have otherwise stopped in Taylor. The attention paid to aesthetics improves the first impression that Taylor makes to visitors which may impact a visitor's decision to return for a second visit. Improved visual appearance may also increase land values along the gateway.

E2 **Direct visitors to key locations with signage, parking and streetscapes**. For visitors who know they are traveling to Taylor, the gateway signs alert them they have arrived and can generate excitement about what there is to see and do.

A1 **Protect the unique history and character of Taylor.** The design of the gateway presents an opportunity for Taylor to express its culture and identity of with visitors.

The strengths and weaknesses of each gateway, gateway corridor and viewshed is analyzed against the goals on pages 14 and 15.

The drive over the bridge and down onto Main Street is a dramatic view that provides a sense of arrival for visitors.

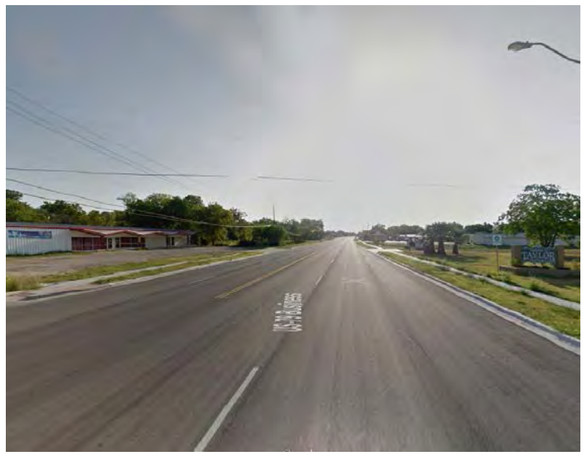
Figure 3: *Existing Gateways and Viewsheds*

Source: City of Taylor Geographic Information Systems, Williamson County GIS & Addressing, Esri

I-79 West

This interchange acts as an arrival point into Taylor. At this juncture visitors must decide whether they are going to use the loop road to bypass downtown Taylor, or if they are going to go through the town. It is also a significant structural feature that visitors must drive under in order to enter the city – and therefore acts as a threshold. Once visitors have cleared the interchange, development occurs on both sides of the road – but the existing gateway sign does not appear for another 900 feet. In fact, the Taylor Meat Factory sign occurs about 250 feet before the existing gateway sign and currently bears the burden of notifying visitors that they have arrived in Taylor, Texas.

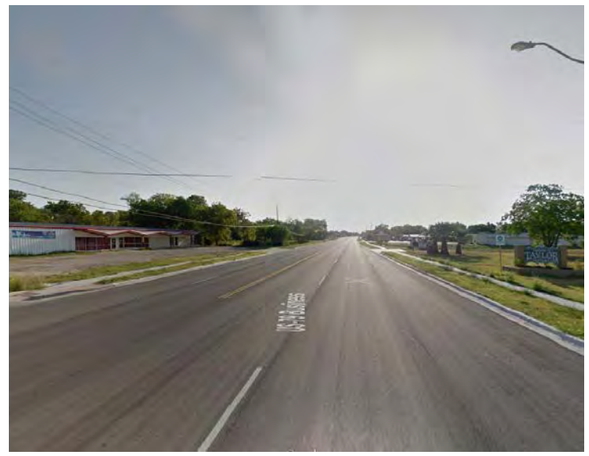
The existing gateway sign is about 15 feet wide and six feet tall with a brick planter base, brick columns and a wood panel that reads “Welcome to Taylor.” The current sign is easy to miss from the roadway. This is primarily because the letters are not at eye level for drivers and they are hard to read from a distance because the white letters do not contrast strongly enough against the greyish-brown wood. The sign faces west so the sun is behind it for the morning hours of the day, which means large shadows are cast on the sign and it makes it even more difficult to read. The existing sign does not serve as an anchor signaling arrival.



I-79 East

East Taylor is much less developed than West Taylor. Farm fields span for miles all the way up to the Loop 79 interchange. There is a small amount of development that starts to occur just past the interchange, but the development is primarily rural or industrial and set back from the roadway. The existing gateway sign appears just before the town cemetery on a small berm. The sign is very similar in size and scale to the gateway sign on 79W. While this sign is much easier to notice because there is less development around it, the sign itself does not signify arrival into Taylor because there are no significant viewsheds around the sign to add interest or signify a threshold into town.

A more prominent viewshed exists just past the cemetery where the road bends slightly, crosses over the greenbelt and looks onto the historic rail bridge that crosses over 4th Street. Improvements to the existing rail bridge could create dramatic effect to the gateway entrance. The existing bridge has unique art deco pre-cast concrete posts and unique railing design that could be restored and enhanced to create a dramatic effect. The City of Taylor should investigate whether the bridge qualifies for the national register of historic places. If possible, this designation could open up opportunities to apply for national rehabilitation grants.



95 South Main

The Main Street entrance from south of town is another prominent entry into the city of Taylor. This entrance is primarily rural farmland until the 79 loop road and bridge. The traffic coming from 973 and 95 come together before going under the 79 bridge. This bridge is a threshold into the city and an opportunity for Taylor to express its culture and identity. The existing gateway sign is located just north of the bridge. If the entry sign were moved south of the bridge it would be visible for those coming from 973 turning left onto Main. A large entry sign would confirm to visitors that they are in the right place. It is recommended that the entry features be directed towards drivers turning left onto main at this three-way intersection.

Another opportunity for an entry feature is the bridge over the greenbelt just north of Mississippi St. This is a beautiful viewshed that looks out over the tops of lush green landscape. This area is also visible to drivers on the 79 loop road who may not have intended to stop in Taylor. Banners and lighting features could add vertical interest and color that could be seen from afar and create a powerful entry experience on the ground.

Once over the bridge, development begins to occur. There are some houses, vacant lots, incomplete sidewalks and a mix of industrial, strip development and single-family homes. A large bridge over the railroad separates south and north Main Street. The lots directly south of the rail are large industrial sites with monotonous, uninteresting warehouse developments and little to no green space. The grade change for the bridge starts at Walnut Street and splits off into a main road over the bridge with east and west wing streets that carry local traffic. A district entry feature at Walnut Street just south of the bridge – coupled with improvements to the local streets on the east and west of the bridge and banners on the existing light poles over the bridge would create visual interest and connect north and south Taylor.

95 North Main

Of all the entrances into downtown Taylor, Main Street North is the longest gateway into downtown. This gateway has strip and big box development along the corridor. While the south of Taylor is restricted by infrastructure and geographic conditions, the north and northwest of Taylor are the areas that are growing the most. The growth has primarily been in the form of single-family subdivisions and big box development along north Main Street. Due to the location of the rail that runs along the east side of Main, development along Main Street is very one sided and extends to the west. Main Street remains the retail corridor all the way through town, but the development style changes rapidly.

Effort should be made to unify some of the development style so that it is cohesive and pedestrian friendly. This will coincide with the city's $1.3 million TXDOT Transportation Enhancement Program grant to pay for a ten-foot-wide hike and bike trail that will go from Bull Branch in south Taylor to Wal-Mart in north Taylor by creating sidewalks on Main Street. We recommend tree planting in addition to sidewalks. Currently there is no tree planting and the corridor will get very hot and unattractive for residents to use.

Getting to Downtown

Traffic and Parking

Average daily traffic volume

"Figure 4: Existing Traffic Counts" explores Taylor's estimated daily traffic. The overall average daily vehicle trips per day peak at about 12,900 near Heritage Square at Main Street and Fourth Street. This is slightly less than similar comparable cities of Bastrop, Georgetown, and Denton which had between 14,600 to 15,200 vehicles per day on average. The area characterized by the highest level of traffic activity is near the intersection of Main Street and Fourth Street.

Parking

"Figure 5: Existing Parking Opportunities" explores existing opportunities for both on-street and off-street (public and private) within a five-minute (quarter mile) walking distance of Main Street and Fourth Street. Downtown Taylor has an abundance of parking opportunities, with nearly 1,300 on-street, off-street, public and private parking spaces within the area analyzed. Measured against benchmarks, this is the equivalent of the downtown having nearly enough parking to handle approximately 325,000 square feet of retail downtown – or two big box shopping centers worth of parking facilities. While the need assessment revealed that there are plenty of parking spaces, current challenges for Taylor are that parking spaces are dispersed and not well marked, and it is unclear to visitors where to go on foot once they have found a spot. Furthermore, areas of existing bicycle parking in the downtown were unidentifiable.

Key Metrics:
Vehicles per Day

15,200 Vehicles Per Day (2 travel lanes)
Denton, Texas
US-377 Hickory Street

14,800 Vehicles Per Day (2-4 travel lanes)
Georgetown, Texas
S. Austin Avenue and Eighth Street

14,600 Vehicles Per Day (2 travel lanes)
Bastrop, Texas
Main Street and Chestnut Street

12,900 Vehicles Per Day (4 travel lanes)
Taylor, Texas
Main Street And Fourth Street

Key Metrics:
Parking Spaces
within a 0.25 mile
of Downtown

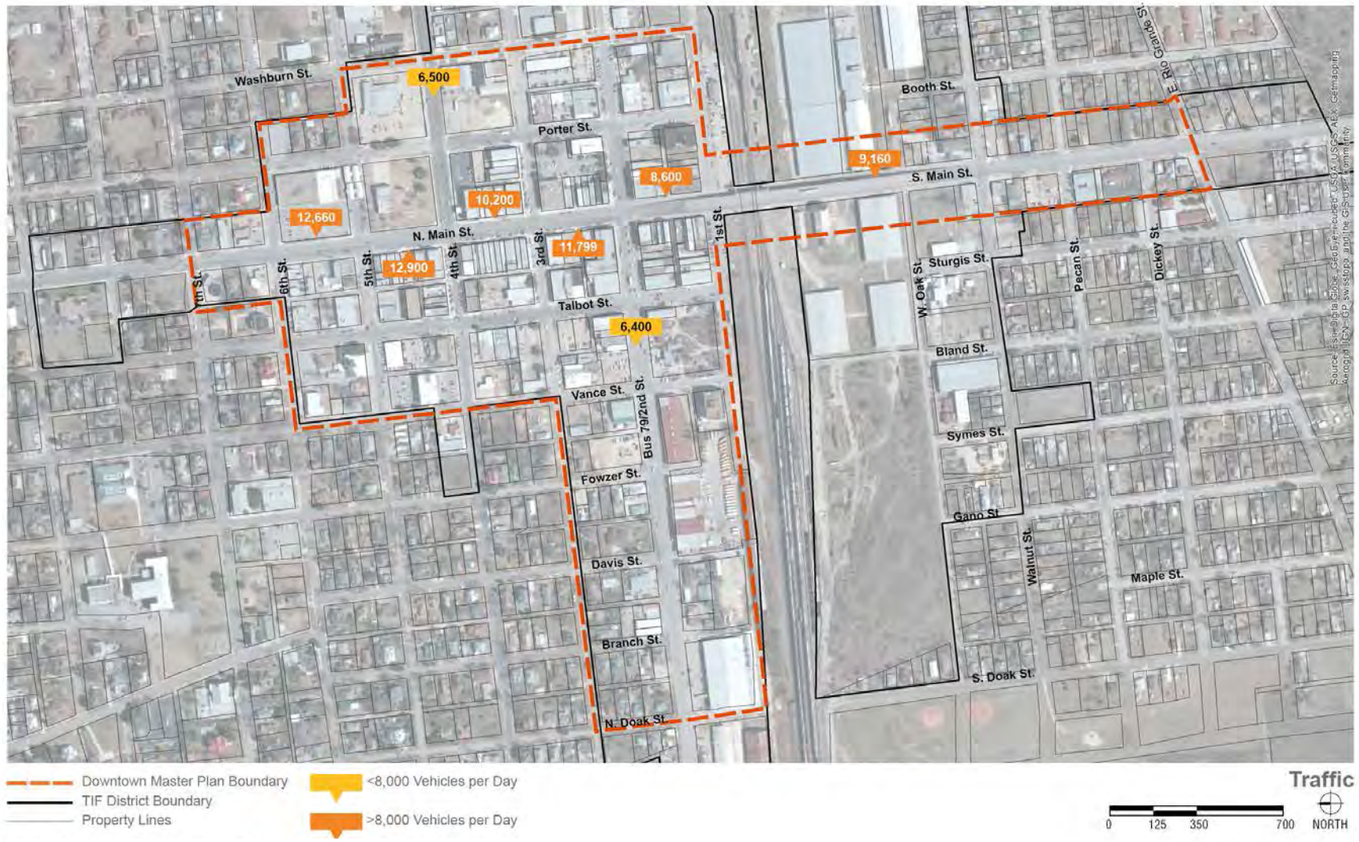
1,228 Surface Lot Spaces
488 On-Street
Denton, Texas
US-377 N And E. Hickory Street

963 Surface Lot Spaces
658 On-Street
Georgetown, Texas
S. Austin Avenue And 8th Street

764 Surface Lot Spaces
570 On-Street
Taylor, Texas
Main Street And 4th Street

598 Surface Lot Spaces
286 On-Street
Bastrop, Texas
Main Street and Chestnut Street

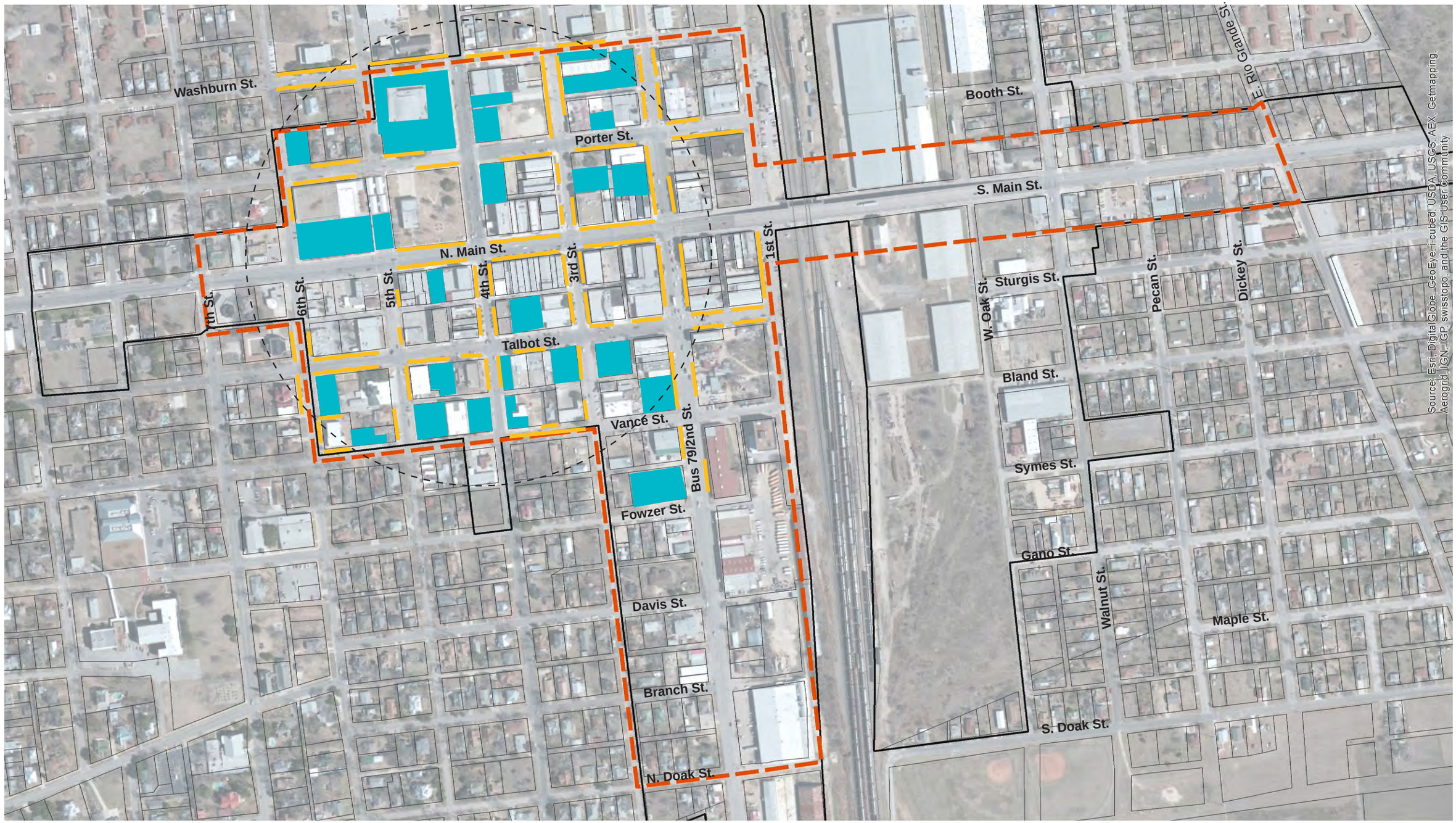
Figure 4: *Existing Traffic Counts*



Source: City of Taylor Geographic Information Systems, Williamson County GIS & Addressing, Esri

Downtown Taylor has an abundance of parking opportunities, with nearly 1,300 parking spaces within a five minute walking distance of Main Street and Fourth Street.

Figure 5: *Existing Parking Opportunities*



Surface Parking Lots
On-Street Parking
Five minute walking distance
Downtown Master Plan Boundary
TIF District Boundary
Roadways

Parking Downtown

0 125 350 700 NORTH

Source: City of Taylor Geographic Information Systems, Williamson County GIS & Addressing, Esri

Experiencing Downtown

Human Comfort

Noise

“Figure 7: Existing Accessibility” explores noise levels in downtown. The current noise levels of normal traffic range from 55-70 decibels, but increase to above 80 decibels with trucks and heavy traffic. As trains sound horns while passing through downtown Taylor, decibel levels may be well above 80 decibels. As a point of measure, the level at which hearing damage occurs is at 90-95 decibels. Further, the federal highways administration requires sound walls around roadways when noise levels reach 67 decibels or more. Following implementation of the master plan, targeted noise levels on Main Street and Second Street should aim for a target of 60 decibels, which allows for a more comfortable shopping and dining experience.

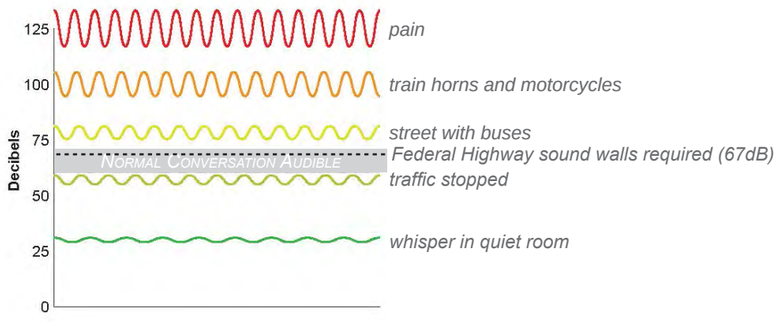


Figure 6: *Examples of noise levels*

Accessibility

“Figure 7: Existing Accessibility” examines several features relating to pedestrian accessibility in the study area. While wheelchair ramps exist at intersections, there are many areas where steep inclines and stairs inhibit movement by disabled individuals. Sidewalks are provided along both sides of most streets in the study area, ranging from 4 feet to 16 feet in width. The driveways of parking and loading areas create disruptions to these sidewalks in many locations today.

Crosswalks are striped at most intersections, and traffic signals are paired with pedestrian signal indicators that allow pedestrians to cross major roadways such as Main Street at Fifth Street, Fourth Street and Second Street. The average crosswalk distance (measured as the number feet from curb to curb at a pedestrian crossing) in downtown Taylor is 53 feet. Measured against the benchmark communities of Denton (45 foot average crosswalk distance) and Bastrop (33 foot crosswalk distance), Taylor is characterized as having wider than normal crosswalk distances for pedestrians.

The greatest challenge to the pedestrian environments occurs at Main Street and Second Street. These streets carry the most traffic volume compared to other streets in the downtown core. As a result, pedestrians must cross a total of four travel lanes on each street.

Temperatures in Shade versus Sun

With the hot Texas summer sun, it is no surprise that Taylor’s founders realized the importance of shade with large awnings on buildings, especially on the north side of east/west oriented streets. Many buildings, both historic and newer structures, feature awnings that provide respite from the summer sun. The site analysis revealed that the average temperature of materials in the sun was 105 degrees, whereas average temperature in the shade was 84 degrees. This 21 degree difference of temperature between materials contributes to the “heat island” effect of Taylor.

As downtown Taylor develops over time, buildings, roads, and infrastructure will replace vegetation. This change causes the downtown to become warmer than its surroundings, creating an “island” of higher temperatures. Street trees and buildings featuring shade awnings help to minimize exposed surfaces that absorb heat from the sun during the daytime and raise temperatures.

Key Metrics:
Temperatures

21 degree difference in average temperature in the sun versus the shade

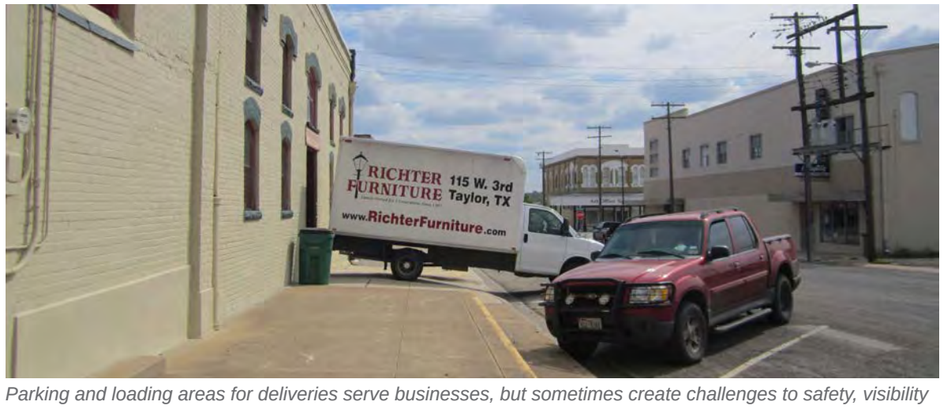
105 degrees
Average temperature in the sun
(Measurements recorded September 2014 on a sunny afternoon between 1-5pm)

84 degrees
Average temperature in the shade
(Measurements recorded September 2014 on a sunny afternoon between 1-5pm)

Several alleyways in the study area exist that could be enhanced with lighting or signage to improve pedestrian safety.

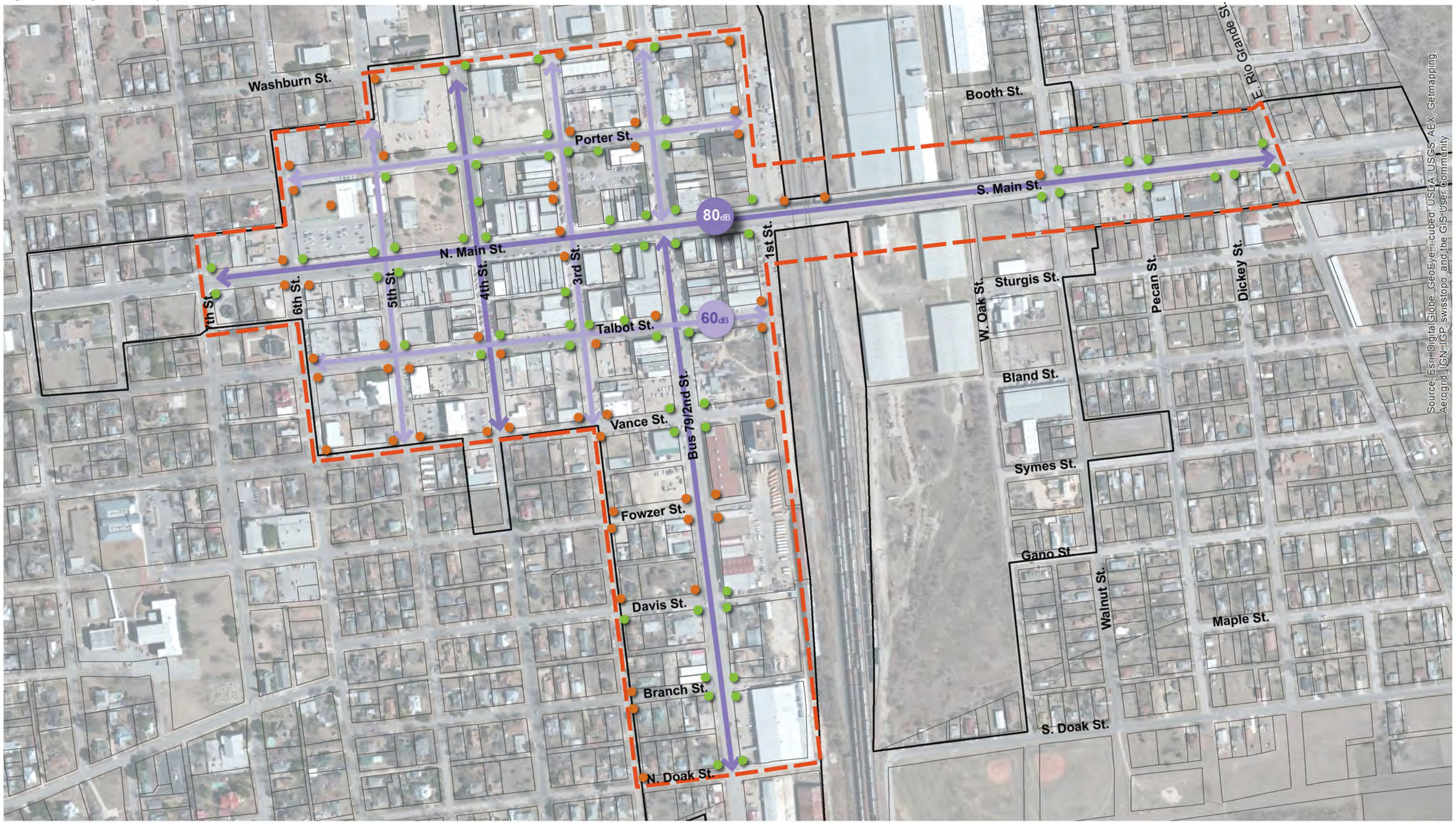
The wide curb cuts associated with parking areas can lead to disjointed sidewalks for pedestrians.

Many buildings, both historic and newer structures, feature awnings that provide respite from the summer sun.



Parking and loading areas for deliveries serve businesses, but sometimes create challenges to safety, visibility and connectivity in the public right of way.

Figure 7: *Existing Accessibility*



Source: City of Taylor Geographic Information Systems, Williamson County GIS & Addressing, Esri

Experiencing Downtown

Land Use and Vacancy

Existing land uses in downtown Taylor are mixed and include residential, commercial, civic spaces (public buildings and parks), industrial uses as well as vacant (undeveloped) areas. As illustrated in **"Figure 11: Existing Land Use"**, Heritage Square is the only park space in the study area. Governmental buildings providing important community services, such as City Hall, the US Post Office and the Taylor Police Department, anchor both the northern and southern portion of the study area. The majority of uses along Main Street and Second Street are commercial businesses, while residential single-family homes surround the exterior perimeter of the district.

Building Activation

An on-site survey of ground floor activity was performed to gain an understanding of active and inactive areas in downtown Taylor. **"Figure 8: Existing Building Activation"** illustrates that the majority of the study area features active uses along the ground floor street level. There are areas in which vacancies do occur, particularly at the intersection of Main Street and First Street. Other parcels are developing with infill amenities that will provide additional services or entertainment opportunities for the community.

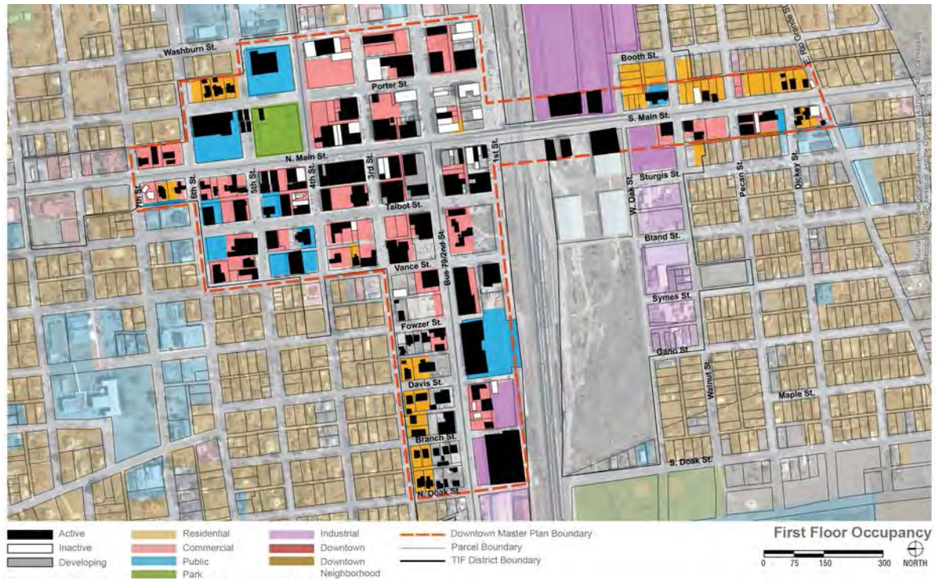
Appraised Value

"Figure 9: Existing Property Values" illustrates tax assessment data for the downtown area. Today assessed values range from approximately $75 thousand dollars to $3 million dollars. The highest values cluster near the Union Pacific Railroad and the central portion of Main Street. Lower assessed values are currently located along South Main Street and West Second Street. As downtown continues to strengthen, property values are likely to increase. This helps to finance the capital improvements needed within the tax increment finance district.

Building Age and Historic Architecture

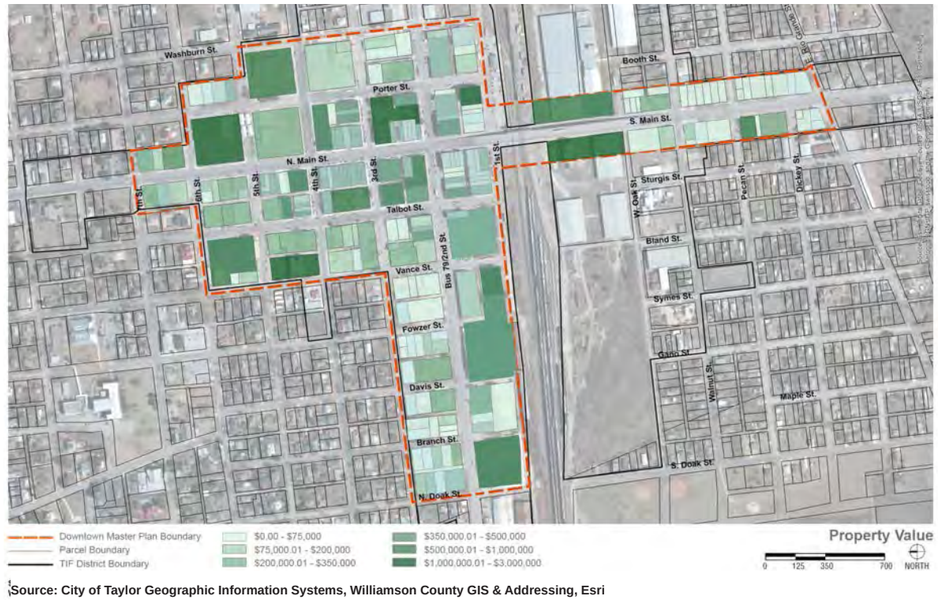
"Figure 9: Existing Property Values" explores the presence of historical architecture in Taylor. There are many historic buildings that will need to be preserved and protected as the downtown grows and changes throughout the future. Today, older building ages range from the late 1880s to the 1940s.

Figure 8: *Existing Building Activation*



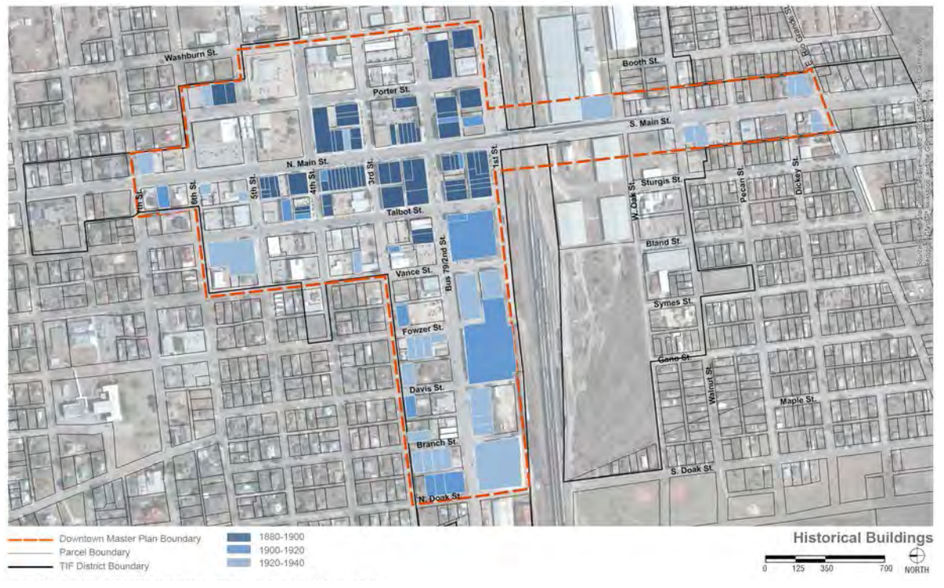
Source: City of Taylor Geographic Information Systems, Williamson County GIS & Addressing, Esri

Figure 9: *Existing Property Values*



Source: City of Taylor Geographic Information Systems, Williamson County GIS & Addressing, Esri

Figure 10: *Existing Historic Buildings*



Source: City of Taylor Geographic Information Systems, Williamson County GIS & Addressing, Esri

Figure 11: *Existing Land Use*

Source: City of Taylor Geographic Information Systems, Williamson County GIS & Addressing, Esri

Experiencing Downtown

Nature and Recreation

Access to Parks

Increased parks, recreation, and open space networks are essential to the success of the downtown. As more redevelopment occurs in the area, the demand for parks and open spaces will grow. Studies indicate that Americans are most likely to walk to destinations if they are reachable in five minutes or less – otherwise most individuals are likely to drive. **"Figure 13: Existing Parks and Open Spaces"** shows that with the right programming and improvements in place, Heritage Square could serve the entire downtown with park space that residents and visitors are likely to walk to enjoy improved amenities in this space. The site analysis also included a park inventory that helped explore available assets included in each park. It revealed that in its current condition, Heritage Square Park is characterized by little programming – only including a few pedestrian benches and a gazebo.

Tree Coverage

"Figure 12: Existing Landscape" illustrates existing areas featuring significant tree canopy and open space. Overall, there is an absence of trees along key pedestrian corridors – most notably Main and Second Streets. Vance Street, Porter Street and Washburn Street also lack the presence of street trees. Shade trees contribute to making a more walkable downtown by providing shade, creating a separation between automobile and pedestrian traffic as well as reducing heat island effect.

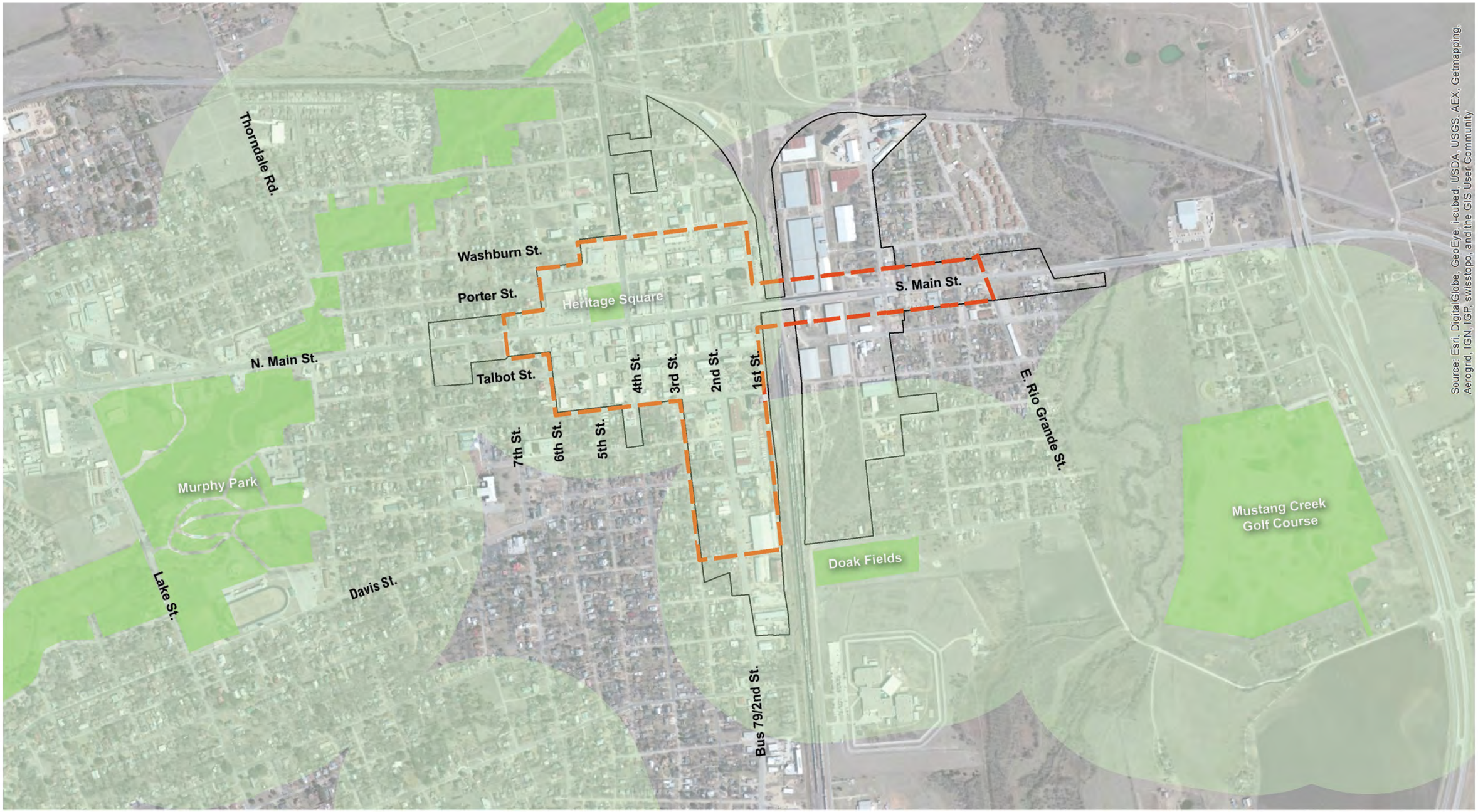
Figure 12: *Existing Landscape*

Source: City of Taylor Geographic Information Systems, Williamson County GIS & Addressing, Esri



Existing streetscapes feature a limited selection of native and drought tolerant plants that provide seasonal color and interest.

Figure 13: *Existing Parks and Open Spaces*



Source: City of Taylor Geographic Information Systems, Williamson County GIS & Addressing, Esri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VISION FOR DOWNTOWN

Community Engagement

Two community workshops were held to gather input regarding the envisioned future of downtown Taylor. This public outreach and input process was an integral part of formulating the Taylor Downtown Master Plan and provided residents and business owners the opportunity to influence the final product. In addition to soliciting input, each workshop included presentations on the project's findings and progress.

The first community workshop (Taylor Values Workshop) was held on October 15, 2014. The second workshop (Taylor Vision and Implementation Workshop) was held on November 17, 2014. To accommodate a wide range of stakeholder interests and availability to participate in the planning effort, the format and location for each workshop was very similar.

Each workshop featured focus groups during the daytime followed by a public meeting in the evening at City Hall. Each meeting presented the progress the team had made to date, gathered critical feedback to inform the next stage, and addressed the next steps in the planning process. Each meeting included a formal presentation to the public, instant-feedback keypad polling sessions in which participants provided answers to a variety of questions concerning the Downtown plan, and small group activities that encouraged in-depth discussion, prioritizing and brainstorming.

Outreach efforts for Taylor Downtown Master Plan community workshops included public notifications through the City's website, printed flyer advertisements posted throughout the study area, and reminders on the City's social media websites (such as Twitter and Facebook).

Attendees at each workshop included:

Values Workshop

- Developers, Land Owners, and Realtors Focus Group - 17 attendees
- Business Owners Focus Group - 17 attendees
- City Officials Focus Group - 12 attendees
- Public Evening Workshop - 31 attendees

Vision and Implementation Workshop

- Developers, Land Owners, and Realtors Focus Group - 15 attendees
- Business Owners Focus Group - 7 attendees
- City Officials Focus Group - 16 attendees
- Public Evening Workshop - 25 attendees

Values Workshop: Key Findings

Narrowing Goals through Keypad Polling

The first community workshop included a series of questions that audience members answered using keypad polling devices. Each question helped identify what the community ideas and goals were and allowed the group to view and discuss challenges and opportunities in real time as topics arose. The overall top goals for the Taylor Downtown Master Plan identified by the community are summarized below.

- Direct visitors to key locations with signage, parking and streetscapes.
- Be a pedestrian-friendly destination.
- Provide more recreational opportunities and access to nature.
- Protect the unique history and character of Taylor.
- Stimulate economic development.

Project Prioritization Exercise

A prioritization exercise helped community workshop participants narrow down possibilities by achieving consensus on future priorities for achieving their vision for downtown. Participants prioritized "flip cards" that included information about a project, policy, or program from existing planning documents. Blank cards were provided for meeting attendees to share additional ideas that may not have been identified in previous community planning efforts.

Each table consisting of between five and ten citizens was asked to rank their top projects in order from favorite to least favorite and then share their discussion highlights with the larger group. The goal of the exercise was for all participants to explore areas of common ground to narrow priorities and possibilities for future improvements in Taylor.

In total, 152 community members contributed to the prioritization exercise, which considered numerous potential improvement projects. The top five projects identified by the community are in bold:

- **Streetscape improvements;**
- **Plan for Heritage Square;**
- **Gateway features on key entry corridors;**
- **Pedestrian and vehicle wayfinding;**
- **Downtown infill development;**
- Development regulations update;
- Storefront improvements;
- Youth-oriented programming for downtown;
- Cultural arts venue;
- Shared parking strategy;
- City Hall facade improvements;
- Public market near Heritage Square;
- Historic building preservation;
- Public art program;
- Transit oriented development; and
- 1st Street underpass improvements.

Streetscape improvements were favored by 104 community participants; 89 indicated a plan for Heritage Square was critical; 88 people ranked gateway features on key entry corridors highly; pedestrian and vehicle wayfinding drew support from 87 citizens; and downtown infill development was prioritized by 66 participants.

These top five projects serve as the foundation of the recommendations in the Taylor Downtown Master Plan.

A prioritization exercise helped community workshop participants narrow down possible projects for downtown.

Each table pinned up their top projects and shared key thoughts with the group. This helped to identify themes and areas of common ground for the master plan.

Vision Workshop: Key Findings

Visual Preference Survey

A visual preference survey is a tool used to help citizens establish a common vision of what their community should look like in the future. Typically administered at in-person meetings (or through an online survey), visual preference surveys ask citizens to rate their preferences for a series of selected images.

For the Downtown Taylor Master Plan, a sampling of photographs featuring different levels and types of improvements were presented. Participants were asked to rate images based on preference (1 = Would not like to see in Taylor and 5 = Must have in Taylor). Images were presented in the categories according to community-vetted goals for the project.

At the conclusion of the workshop, results for each photograph were compiled to assess strengths and weaknesses. Samplings of the photographs analyzed presented at the workshop are shown.

Most and Least Popular Images

Accent lighting along streetscapes featuring banners and directional signage.

Preservation of history and character.

Attractive and functional details such as waste baskets and water fountains.

Directory signage.

Placemaking details, such as special paving patterns, bulbouts, custom benches and planters.

Infill development (residential, commercial or other).

Seasonal signage such as banners.

Shaded outdoor dining areas along sidewalks.

Modern, movable furniture.

Dedicated passenger loading lanes for buses.

Modern-style lighting fixtures.

Medical facility.

Envisioning Heritage Square

At the first community workshop, meeting participants were given sticky dots and asked to place a dot by elements they would like to see in Heritage Square Park. Categories such as freeplay recreation, informal recreation, nature exploration, arts/culture, garden elements and structures were explored. Participants were also encouraged to brainstorm other potential improvements for the park and add their own ideas. The overall top 15 elements identified at the workshop were:

- Restrooms;
- Amphitheater;
- Interactive Water Feature;
- Farmers Market;
- Tree Groves;
- Music Dance Festival;
- Native Plant Garden;
- Washer (Game Courts);
- Movies in the Square;
- Fall Fling;
- Skate Park;
- Food Trucks;
- Open Air Pavilion; and
- Food/Beverage Festival.

Following up after prioritizing the programs listed above, the second community workshop included participants being asked to help design Heritage Park by playing a “chip game”.

A “chip game” is a group activity that gives participants the ability to plan out a space and help to determine what goes where. The objective of this exercise is to help participants understand scale and the compatibility of adjacent site elements, while critically thinking about how to best achieve goals. The exercise gives participants ownership over the design process.

Top ranked programming elements for Heritage Park (as listed above) were represented by accurately-sized “chips”. Participants were asked to explore, layout and design Heritage Square by determining where the different programming chips should be located.

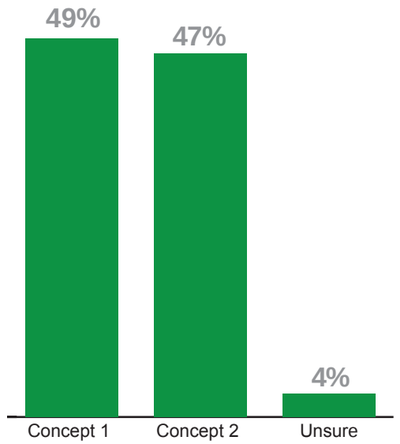
At the first community workshop, meeting participants were given sticky dots and asked to place a dot by elements they would like to see in Heritage Square Park.

At the second community workshop, meeting participants were asked to help the planning team design Heritage Park by playing a “chip game”.

Towards a Preferred Vision for Downtown

Using the findings from detailed site analyses, market research, and community feedback, two framework plans were crafted to help the community envision different land use and urban design character areas for downtown. The intent of the framework planning effort was to explore potential land uses, street improvement opportunities for gateways and connectivity, and to verify desired “catalyst” sites that support the community’s long term identity. The goal for both concepts is to support (not reduce) the activity that is already occurring in Downtown Taylor.

At the Vision and Implementation Workshop, the planning team, alongside City staff and officials, discussed each option in detail with the participants in order to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the plans as they relate to the overall goals and vision of the master plan. Doing this allowed for consensus toward a community-based approach for development in the area. The following is a description of each of these draft framework plans, and the key features of each that the community weighed in on. Combined keypad polling results indicated that the community preferred elements of both concepts, with 49 percent of individuals voting for Concept 1 and 47 percent of individuals in support of Concept 2.



Improvements to Heritage Square and the transformation of First Street near the Amtrak rail station as a flexible, pedestrian-friendly market area serve as catalyst development opportunities in Framework Concept 1.

Source: City of Taylor Geographic Information Systems, Williamson County GIS & Addressing, Esri

Improvements to Heritage Square and the transformation of First Street near the Amtrak rail station as a flexible pedestrian-friendly plaza is more centralized from Porter Street to Talbot Street in Framework Concept 2.“Wing” streets alongside the rail overpass convert into pedestrian experiences that connect to Main Street.

Source: City of Taylor Geographic Information Systems, Williamson County GIS & Addressing, Esri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RECOMMENDATIONS

The following pages outline specific improvements the City could complete to achieve the community's vision for downtown Taylor. These recommendations are presented in the following order:

- **Regional Framework**
- **Downtown Framework**
- **Signature Street Opportunities**
- **Catalyst Development Opportunities: First Street Market Plaza**
- **Catalyst Development Opportunities: Heritage Square**

Each section of this chapter contains a map that identifies specific projects, a detailed description of each project with illustrations to explain intent, and a list of action steps towards implementation.

The chapter concludes with an implementation matrix that organizes the phasing of improvements based on the values expressed by community workshop participants as well as the level of impact versus the level of effort of each project.

Regional Framework

The regional framework map outlines opportunities for Taylor's future growth and development throughout the region. As a developing city in Texas' second fastest growing county, Taylor has the opportunity to position itself as a regional destination. The Amtrak station in the heart of downtown has the potential to bring thousands of traveler directly into the downtown core. For rail travelers visiting Central Texas, Taylor could be an ideal place to stop, get off the train, explore the town and connect to other destinations in the region through transit opportunities provided by the Amtrak station.

In the coming years, it will be important for Taylor to invest in projects that improve the quality of life for residents of Taylor and create connections to destinations throughout the region. Taylor should invest in expanding public transportation, trails and walking routes to provide more transportation options. Taylor should also invest in gateway signage that directs visitors to parking and destinations as well as celebrates the colorful history and culture of the city.

Key projects to implement:

1. Gateway Features
2. Gateway Corridor Improvements
3. Downtown Trail and Bike Connections
4. CARTS Fixed Route Service
5. Regional Transit Opportunities
6. Brazos Trail Scenic Byway

"Figure 14: Regional Framework Diagram" illustrates where these key catalysts projects occur in the study area.

Figure 14: *Regional Framework Diagram*

Source: City of Taylor Geographic Information Systems, Williamson County GIS & Addressing, Esri

1 Gateway Features

For Taylor visitors commuting by car, there are four major gateway experiences into downtown: 79/West 2nd Street, South Main Street, 79/East 4th Street and North Main Street. Each gateway provides a unique experience into the city, but currently lacks major welcoming and wayfinding elements. These gateways present an opportunity to attract visitors into the city and direct them to key destinations. Each should have its own look and feel. Furthermore, TxDOT governs specific requirements for any signage in the TxDOT Right-of-Way.

In the Values Workshop, participants prioritized "Gateway Features on Key Entry Corridors" as the third most important project to implement in the project prioritization exercise. In addition, successful gateway features can contribute positively to the three highest ranked community goals: stimulate economic development, direct people to key destinations throughout town, and protect the unique history and character of Taylor.

Based on the existing conditions analysis, the current gateway features could be improved to attract more residents and visitors by improving legibility, relocating the signage to highly visible locations, working with TxDOT to get more signage installed, and creating gateway features that are reflective of Taylor's unique history and character.

Recommendation 1: Improve legibility of Gateway Signage.

Recommendation 2: Create signage reflective of Taylor's history and character.

Recommendation 3: Locate signage in highly visible locations.

Plan

"Figure 14: Regional Framework Diagram" illustrates where the gateway features should be placed in the study area. The gateway features on South Main and 2nd Street should be relocated to the other side of the highway interchange because these are key entry points where visitors must decide whether to bypass or enter downtown Taylor. The gateway signs on 79/East 4th Street and North Main Street are in reasonable locations but currently blend into the streetscape and do not make a visual impact. In addition to a signage feature on these gateways, there are a few key viewsheds that should be enhanced with elements such as lighting and banners to create a grand entrance into the city.

Coordination with TxDOT

A current Municipal Maintenance Agreement between the City and TxDOT needs to exist. Per the agreement, with written approval from TxDOT the City can install and maintain signs within TxDOT right-of-way along conventional roadways provided the sign and sign structure meet TxDOT requirements. To implement a Wayfinding Program, the City must submit a Wayfinding Guide Sign System Plan to the local TxDOT district for approval. On the state highway system, a Wayfinding Guide Sign System Plan may only be applied to conventional roads and only with written approval from TxDOT. Refer to Texas Wayfinding Guidelines and the TMUTCD (Texas Manual of Uniform Traffic Control) for more information.

Landscaping

Plants provide texture, visual interest, and appeal to the senses in pedestrian and vehicular environments. They also have the ability to frame important views, screen negative visual impacts, and accentuate the design character of an area. Plantings shall not interfere with sight lines to traffic, intersections, and signs when placed near roadways. Plantings are recommended to occur in masses for maximum visual impact, to frame gateways and views. Layered plantings are encouraged to be created with a hierarchy of ground cover, understory, and canopy.

Healthy plant communities that require minimal or no fertilizers and herbicides are encouraged. When fertilizers and herbicides are necessary, least-toxic methods are recommended.

More mature and/or large specimen plantings should be considered to the extent possible. It is best to avoid plantings that create hazards such as thorns, messy fruit, attract undesirable insects or pests, and litter and that require excessive maintenance in pedestrian areas.

The use of native, hardy, and drought tolerant plant materials is encouraged.

On TxDOT Roadways, Vehicular Directional signs shall be located so as not to interfere with, obstruct or divert roadway user's attention from official traffic control devices.

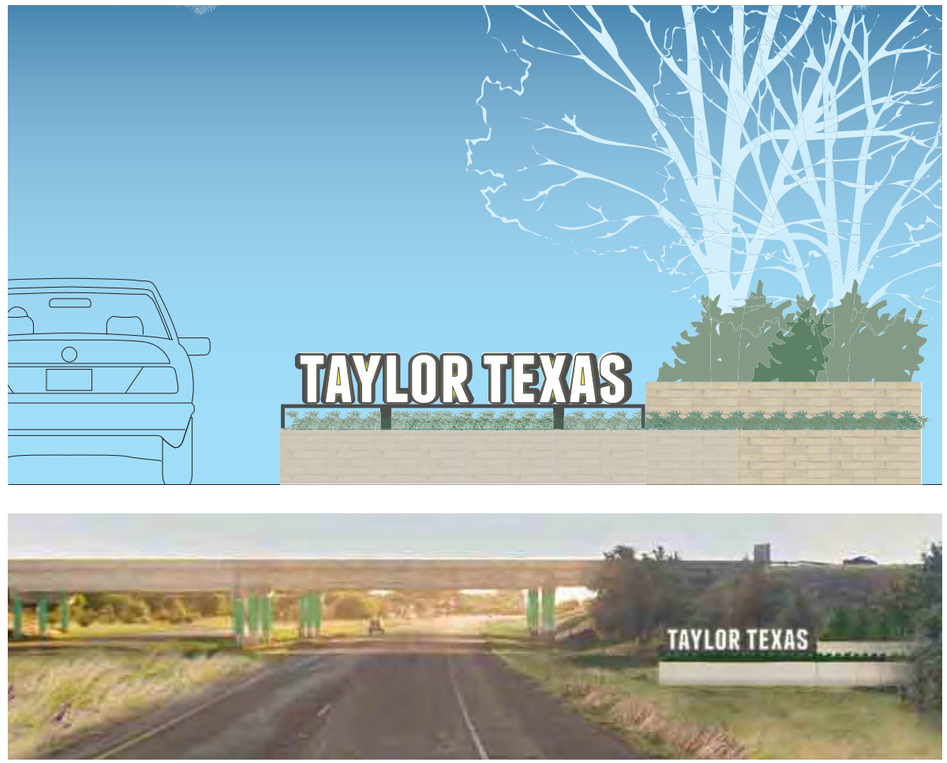
Materials

The unique architecture in Downtown Taylor is a significant cultural asset. The signage should be an extension of this unique characteristic. The materials in the architecture are primarily wood, brick, cut stone, and steel. The style of architecture ranges from Victorian to Art-Deco with unique store signage. Pictures of Taylor in the 1940's and 50's indicate the popularity of large bold business signage. The historic signage is an inspiration for the gateway.

Taylor Texas
TAYLOR MADE TEXAS

Figure 15: *Gateway Feature Option A*

Figure 16: *Gateway Feature Option B*



Typeface and Colors

Taylor should consider coordinating the typefaces and colors of the signage with the recent branding effort undertaken by the City of Taylor in 2015. The "Taylor, Texas" custom lettering is a modern twist on Taylor's retro-traditional style. The green color used in the logo holds significant meaning to the community because it also the color of the Taylor High School.

Lighting

The existing gateway signage has small spotlights that do not provide adequate lighting to view the sign at night. The sign should either be illuminated internally or the spotlights should be angled so that they shine directly on the letters. In **"Figure 15: Gateway Feature Option A"** the sign is lit with unobstructed spotlights from below. In **"Figure 16: Gateway Feature Option B"**, the letters are internally lit.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION	POSSIBLE IMPLEMENTATION AGENCY
R1: Confirm desired location for gateways.	City Council, Planning Department, Main Street Board, Citizens of Taylor
R2: Acquire land/agreements needed for gateway improvements.	City Council, Planning Department
R2: Allocate budget for each gateway and prioritize the order of installation.	City Council
R3: Coordinate with TxDOT and Williamson County on corridors owned and maintained by applicable jurisdictions. Confirm approval and maintenance agreement.	Planning Department, Main Street, TxDOT, Williamson County
R4: Hire a landscape architecture firm to create detailed design and construction drawings for the landscaping and signage.	Planning Department, City Council
R6. Hire a contractor to construct the gateway design.	Planning Department, Public Works, City Council, Main Street
R7. Ensure agency, department or organization is responsible for maintenance.	Planning Department

2 Gateway Corridor Standards

The Gateway Corridor is the extension of the road from the signature gateway feature to the entry into downtown. It is the gateway and the location of features such as street trees, sidewalks/trails, streetscape enhancements and building design standards. Design standards are the standards to which development should be held. These standards protect and enhance the overall appearance and 'brand' of a community.

They also set the expectations for developers as to how new buildings should look and interact with their surroundings. The purpose is to enhance the visual appearance of these areas, create gateway corridors to introduce visitors to Taylor, and support the unique identity and character of the community.

Gateway corridor standards for Taylor should include the following;

- Five foot wide sidewalks installed along both sides of a roadway;
- Street trees planted every 30 feet on center along both sides of a roadway;
- The placement of buildings so that they are close to the public right of way;
- Parking located to the side or rear of buildings;
- Entryways to businesses should be oriented towards the street;
- Buildings on corner lots should be sited and designed so that they present attractive elevations to both streets;
- Consistent street lighting that reflects the character of the community;
- The removal of unnecessary curb cuts interrupting the pedestrian realm; and
- Directional signage should be installed at major roadway intersections, trails and all locations identified in **"Figure 20: Downtown Signage and Wayfinding" on page 42**.

Gateway corridor design standards help with implementing the location of features such as street trees, sidewalks/trails and streetscape enhancements.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION	POSSIBLE IMPLEMENTATION AGENCY
R1: Improve relationships with business and land owners along the major gateway corridors and explain the importance of establishing gateway corridors.	City of Taylor
R2: Partner with a landscape architecture/design consulting firm to create standards for the corridors that address design elements in both the private and public domain. Adopt design standards for major gateway corridors.	City of Taylor
R3: Develop a capital improvement budget for implementing streetscape and corridor improvements in the public realm.	City of Taylor
R4: Coordinate with the Texas Department of Transportation regarding the desire for corridor and streetscape improvements.	City of Taylor Texas Department of Transportation
R5: Apply for various grants/funding resources to assist in implementing the gateway corridor improvements.	City of Taylor
R6: Hire a design firm to create detailed design and construction drawings for future corridor streetscapes.	City of Taylor
R7: Hire a contractor to implement corridor streetscapes.	City of Taylor
R8: Consider providing incentives to property and business owners who follow the standards when implementing improvements in the private realm.	City of Taylor, Texas Economic Development Committee, TIF Board Main Street Program

3 Downtown Trail and Bike Connections

The crosstown trail spans just over three miles through Taylor along a natural greenway. The pathway connects neighborhoods, schools, and several parks, including Robinson Park, Murphy Park and Bull Branch Park. However, this town asset does not currently connect to the heart of downtown. Implementing consistent bicycle and pedestrian paths along Talbot Street from Twelfth Street to First Street, and Fifth Street from Vance to Murphy Street will allow visitors to connect directly with other destinations throughout the city.

Expanding downtown trail and bike connectivity provides increased alternate transportation opportunities to destinations such as Heritage Park, City Hall, as well as dining, educational, civic, cultural and entertainment. It also provides improved access to the Amtrak station.

The following design standards are recommended for downtown trails and bike connections.

- Clear directional signage in both residential and commercial areas that help guide residents and visitors to trail and bike lanes.
- Signage that directs residents and visitors to important destinations downtown.
- Pavement markings or signage indicating “sharrows” or dedicated bike route designations.
- Five foot wide bike lanes in high traffic areas and/or areas near key destinations.
- A minimum of 10 foot wide off-road trails.
- Placement of amenities such as bicycle racks, drinking fountains and trash bins at key locations.

Adding bike and walking paths along Talbot Street from Twelfth Street to First Street, and Fifth Street from Vance to Murphy Street will allow locals and visitors to connect directly with other destinations throughout the city.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION	POSSIBLE IMPLEMENTATION AGENCY
R1: Incorporate bicycle and trail routes as part of the City Transportation Plan.	City of Taylor TxDOT
R2: Works with the Texas Department of Transportation, other agencies and property owners to establish a confirmed alignment for downtown trails.	City of Taylor TxDOT Property owners
R3: Establish a capital improvement budget and phasing plan to complement the trail and bikeway connectivity plan.	City of Taylor TIF
R4: Ensure that bike and trail improvements are a part of other applicable construction projects along corridors such as streetscape and utility improvements.	City of Taylor
R5: Apply for grants applicable to bicycle and trail improvements.	City of Taylor
R6: Hire a design firm to create detailed design and construction drawings for bike and trail improvements.	City of Taylor
R7: Hire a contractor to implement bike and trail improvements.	City of Taylor

4 CARTS Fixed Route

The Capital Area Transit Service (CARTS) currently services Taylor through its Interurban Coach – a regional intercity route providing connections three times a day between Taylor (population of 15,191[1]), Hutto (19,728 population) and Round Rock (109,821 population). Taylor is also serviced with a curb-to-curb on call transit service, however there are no fixed transit routes. By comparison, Bastrop (population of 7,554[2]) currently has a circulator route that provides services for connecting residents throughout the entire city.

“Figure 17: Regional Transit Connectivity” on page 37 illustrates recommendations for better linking modes of transportation in downtown Taylor. The creation of a fixed route that connects the Amtrak station downtown to the CARTS Taylor Station will provide a link between local transportation and regional rail opportunities planned through the Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority Project Connect initiative[3]. This will link destinations downtown, such as the Amtrak station area to City Hall, Heritage Square, dining and retail opportunities along Second Street.

1 U.S. Census Bureau. Profile of General Population and Housing Characteristics: 2010. n.d. http://www.census.gov/2010census/ (accessed 2014).

2 U.S. Census Bureau. Profile of General Population and Housing Characteristics: 2010. n.d. http://www.census.gov/2010census/ (accessed 2014).

3 Project Connect is a partnership between Central Texas transportation agencies aimed at implementing the high-capacity transit component of the CAMPO 2035 Plan. The CAMPO plan was adopted by regional government representatives in 2010, after a nine-month public outreach process involving policy makers and community stake-holders. The initial Project Connect partnership includes the City of Austin, Capital Metro, the Lone Star Rail District and CAMPO.

Taylor should partner with CARTS to provide fixed transit routes in the community.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION	POSSIBLE IMPLEMENTATION AGENCY
R1: Investigate the possibility of transit service in Taylor.	City of Taylor Capital Metro
R2: Conduct a resident survey to determine the interest of a public transit service in Taylor.	City of Taylor
R3: Write a letter of interest to Lyle Nelson, Chief of Staff, expressing interest in the possibility of a CARTS circulator route or a fixed transit route in Taylor.	City of Taylor
R4: Apply for TxDOT transit planning grant to refine transit route and stop locations.	City of Taylor

5 Regional Transit Opportunities

Regional rail service connects different cities and regions, generally using existing railroad lines and FRA-compliant rail vehicles. FRA-compliant vehicles meet the safety standards of FRA to run on the same tracks at the same time as freight trains. It is typically used to travel longer distances between cities.

The Lone Star Rail District (LSRD) is an independent public agency focused on the mission of providing regional passenger rail service to Central and South Texas. LSRD and the regional transportation authorities in Central Texas envision Taylor to be the terminating north station for a future regional rail line and service, titled LSTAR, that would connect Austin to San Antonio[1]. The railroad that LSRD plans to use for its commuter LSTAR rail service is currently a Union Pacific freight rail corridor. Part of the LSTAR project is to relocate the pass through Union Pacific freight rail trips to a new corridor to be located east of Interstate 35. LSRD and Union Pacific have executed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to continue to work together on this project, and LSRD is currently conducting engineering, environmental, and economic studies for the new freight rail line from Taylor to Seguin.

Taylor should begin to prepare itself for a future regional rail connection to Austin and San Antonio. This may include downtown mixed-use development, improvements to the existing Amtrak Station, as well as increased connectivity to existing neighborhoods. As part of these preparations, the following recommendations are also proposed to increase regional transit opportunities in Taylor's downtown.

- Improvements to Amtrak station facilities.
- Enhance Taylor's downtown as a destination on Amtrak regional routes through marketing literature.
- Create a multi-modal hub near the downtown Amtrak station that accommodate CARTS, Amtrak and LSTAR activities.

1 Lone Star Rail District. LSTAR. 2013. http://lonestarrail.com/index.php/lstar/ (accessed 2014).

Figure 17: *Regional Transit Connectivity*

Taylor should prepare for a future regional rail connection to Austin and San Antonio.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION	POSSIBLE IMPLEMENTATION AGENCY
R1: Support Project Connect and LSRD to encourage commuter rail into downtown Taylor.	City of Taylor Capital Metro
R2: Partner with CARTS to expand bus route services through downtown Taylor.	City of Taylor CARTS
R3: Lead an effort to create a multi-modal hub near Porter Street and First Street, near the Amtrak station.	City of Taylor CARTS Amtrak
R4: Work with Amtrak, the Williamson County tourism office and Capital Metro to promote downtown Taylor in marketing literature.	City of Taylor Amtrak Williamson County

Downtown Framework

Based on the input from the community workshops, City Staff and a market analysis, a preferred downtown framework was created that blends the strengths of each alternative from the Vision Workshop. Drawings were produced to examine how to best combine the elements of land uses, open-space relationships, architectural character, street improvements, circulation, transportation and parking. The overall land use strategy and catalyst areas resulting from this effort are illustrated in **"Figure 18: Downtown Framework Diagram"**. To implement this framework plan, the following projects have been identified for helping the community achieve its vision.

Key projects to implement:

1. Land Use Strategy
2. Parking Strategy
3. Signage and Wayfinding
4. Streetscape Improvements

Figure 18: *Downtown Framework Diagram*

Source: City of Taylor Geographic Information Systems, Williamson County GIS & Addressing, Esri

1 Land Use Strategy

The Land Use Strategy is meant to guide future downtown development. **"Figure 18: Downtown Framework Diagram"** illustrates the location of the following recommended land uses: Commercial/Mixed Use, Residential/Mixed Use, Craft Industrial/Mixed Use and Gateway Commercial/Residential. The area also includes Civic uses such as City Hall, the County Commissioner's Office, Temple College and the Amtrak Station. There are additional civic buildings downtown such as the Post-Office, Water-Utility and the City Hall Annex, however these are customer-oriented uses that are compatible with other land use categories. The area also includes Heritage Square, which is the primary park for surrounding residents as well as a community asset.

The following definitions describe the scale, type and character for each land use category. These land use categories are general and should focus more on the qualities of proposed development rather than establishing minimum standards and dimensions that become the default standard.

Commercial/Mixed-Use

Key Direction

- Two and three story buildings that feature retail, restaurants and commercial services on the lower levels with supporting office. Parking is located on the street or in shared parking lots oriented on side streets off of the main pedestrian retail corridor.
-

What will this do for downtown Taylor?

- Ground floor retail will create an active streetscape and provide alternative shopping and dining opportunities for residents and visitors. Upper floor residential and office bring in population mass and activity levels needed to energize the other land uses.

Craft Industrial/Mixed-Use

Key Direction

- The market assessment indicates a potential demand for light industrial manufacturing such as arts and crafts and metal working, as well as food production industries such as craft breweries and butcher shops. The ideal location for this use is on the east blocks of Porter Street and the south side of Second Street. These locations will provide a "front door" that faces onto a vibrant pedestrian oriented streetscape, and a less active back door for service and production.
-

What will this do for downtown Taylor?

- Craft/Industrial may provide additional jobs downtown and support a vibrant streetscape where displays spill out onto the street and become an attraction for pedestrians passing by. Many of the industrial uses may have a small ground floor retail component such as a shop, tasting room or gallery.

Residential Mixed-Use

Key Direction

- Residential mixed-use provides a variety of housing choices and infill opportunities that can help revitalize areas in downtown Taylor and provide around-the-clock activities and demand for retail, entertainment and services.
-

What will this do for downtown Taylor?

- The popular phrase "retail follows rooftops" means that business owners want to know where they can find a sufficient amount of consumer spending and demand potential to meet the level of sales they deem necessary for their businesses to be successful. By locating more residences in or near the downtown core, the downtown will be able to support more retail opportunities with a reliable stream of customers.

Gateway Commercial/Residential

Key Direction

- Ground floor commercial retail is located closer to the street to create more vibrant activities, and walkable spaces with sidewalks. Residential uses are integrated throughout.
-

What will this do for downtown Taylor?

- The Gateway Corridor is the extension of the road from the signature gateway feature to the entry into downtown. It is the gateway and the location of features such as street trees, sidewalks/trails, streetscape enhancements and building design standards.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION	POSSIBLE IMPLEMENTATION AGENCY
R1: Explain the importance of establishing downtown design standards to landowners and businesses.	City of Taylor
R2: Partner with a design consulting firm to create standards for the corridors that address design elements in both the private and public domain. Use the Land Use Strategy as a guide for where standards vary based on character of development.	City of Taylor
R3: Provide incentives for the placement and quality of parking, and allow lower required parking ratios in the downtown area. Emphasis should be placed on public on-street parking rather than off-street parking areas.	City of Taylor
R4: Adopt design standards for downtown with an expedited review process for developments that comply with the design standards.	City of Taylor

2 Parking Strategy

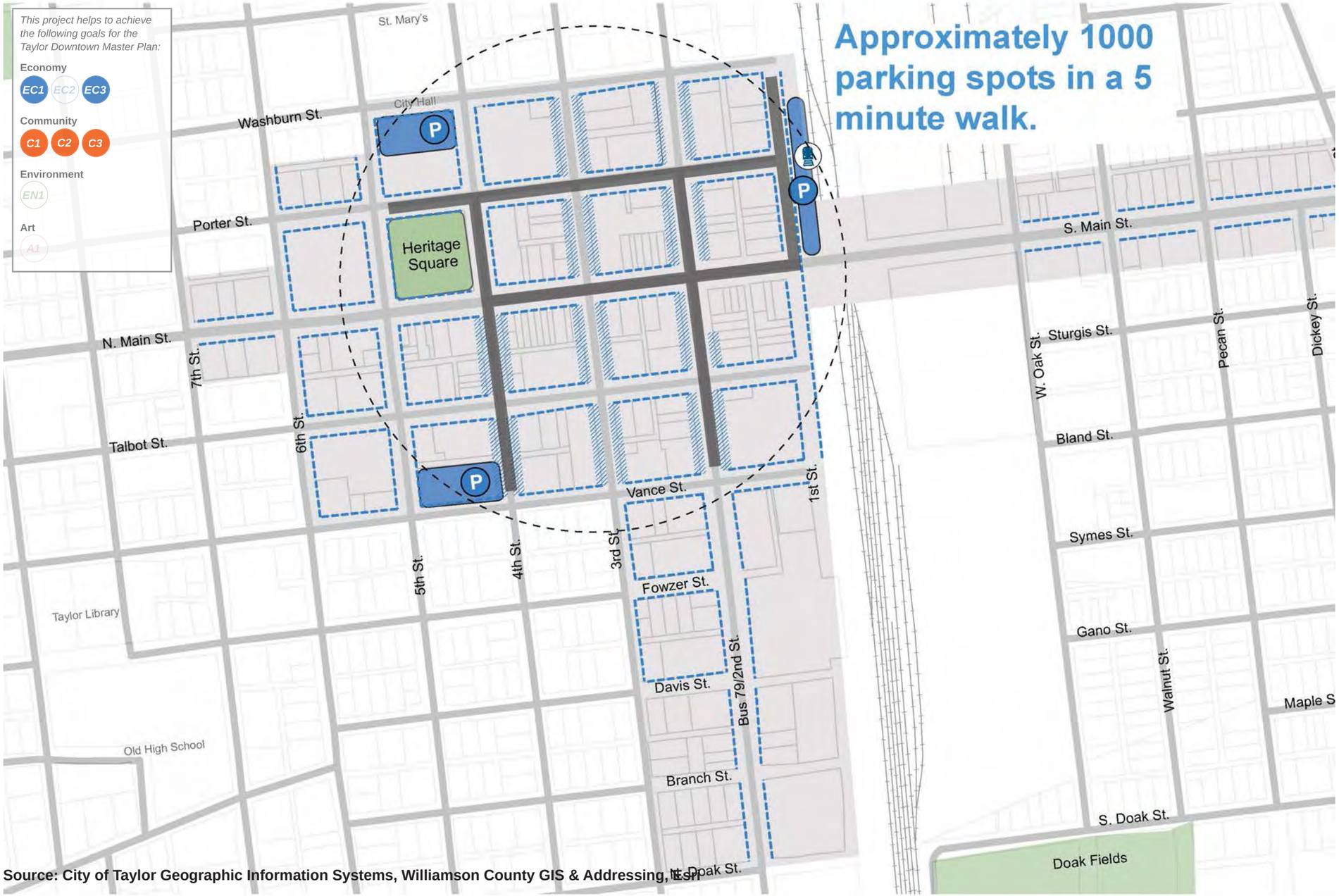
Providing parking capacity within the downtown helps residents and visitors easily reach their destinations. Today, Taylor has an abundant amount of parking spaces in public and private lots, as well as enough on-street parking to meet current demand. As the community and county continue to grow in the future, parking spaces should continue to be provided along signature streets. This will ensure that mixed-use activities and civic destinations are served by public parking opportunities. **"Figure 19: Parking Strategy"** illustrates where parking is today and where it is recommended to be focused throughout the future.

Today, downtown Taylor has nearly 1,000 on-street, off-street, public and private parking spaces. While there are plenty of parking spaces, current parking spaces are dispersed and not well marked, and it is unclear to visitors where to go on foot once they have found a spot. Many sidewalks are uncomfortable for pedestrians due to lack of shade from trees or awnings. This further discourages walking to destinations downtown.

Each space should feature clear striping and directional signage that guides locals and visitors to parking while they are driving. It is recommended that a two-hour time limit for on-street parking spaces be established for parking along Main Street, Second Street, Third Street and Fourth Street (between Porter and Talbot). Once parked, clear wayfinding signage should direct pedestrians to destinations within a short walking distance. Revenue generated from metered parking can be invested into the downtown for improvements to parks and public spaces.

As Taylor continues to develop and grow, the provision of timed, on-street angled parking shaded by street trees will provide the best possible shared parking system. This allows locals and visitors the maximum opportunity for arriving safely and conveniently finding a space to park downtown so that they may shop, dine and socialize.

Figure 19: *Parking Strategy*

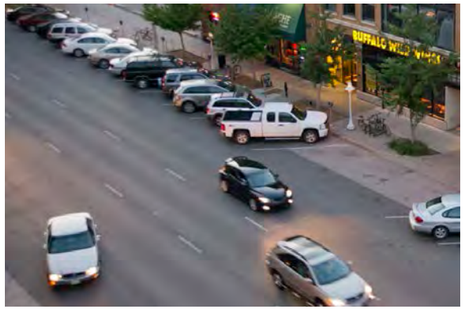


Source: City of Taylor Geographic Information Systems, Williamson County GIS & Addressing, Esri

Parallel parking should be added along key streets.

Parallel Parking

The Taylor Downtown Master Plan recommends parallel parking spaces to be added where gaps exist along north/south streets in the downtown core. These streets would include Washburn Street, Porter Street, Main Street, Talbot Street and Vance Street. It is also recommended along West Second Street, Fifth Street and Sixth Street. Near the Amtrak Station, parallel parking is recommended along both sides of East First Street.



Angled parking is recommended for Taylor.

Angled Parking

The Taylor Downtown Master Plan creates several areas of angled parking along key east/west streets closest to the heart of downtown. These include angled parking areas along Second Street, Third Street and Fourth Street.

Signage should direct visitors to public parking areas.

Public Parking

Three surface parking lots downtown are recommended as key public parking opportunities. The first is the parking area located at City Hall on Fourth Street. This parking area is close to Heritage Square and retail along Main Street, making it a convenient place to park, walk and visit destinations. During the day, this lot could primarily serve the needs of City Hall. In the evening or during special events at Heritage Square, this public parking lot could accommodate approximately 94 cars.

The second public parking area recommended is at the Williamson County Annex Building. Located next to the Post Office and in close proximity to many destinations to the west of Main Street, this provides approximately 40 parking spaces that could be used by visitors during the day or evening.

A third public parking area occurs at the Amtrak Station. This area could accommodate approximately 52 parking spaces. As future infill and revitalization along First Street and Porter Street occurs, this will provide important connectivity opportunities to shopping, dining and recreational destinations downtown. Refer to **“Figure 39: First Street Market Plaza Illustrative Plan” on page 63**, that further describes this opportunity.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION	POSSIBLE IMPLEMENTATION AGENCY
R1: Stripe streets to allow for on-street parking. Provide clear parking signage to communicate the availability of parking opportunities downtown.	City of Taylor TIF TxDOT
R2: Hire a design consultant to create a parking signage package for downtown. Implement the signage package. Ensure that the signage package directs traffic to City Hall as a key public parking opportunity.	City of Taylor
R3: Develop an agreement with Williamson County for their parking lot on Vance Street to be used after hours for public parking.	City of Taylor Williamson County
R4: Develop a two-hour time limit for on-street parking.	City of Taylor TIF TxDOT
R5: During the wayfinding signage design process, work to ensure that key destinations (such as City Hall public parking, Heritage Square and the First Street Market Place near the Amtrak station) are listed. Walking distance times to each destination should be provided on each sign.	City of Taylor Amtrak

3 Downtown Signage and Wayfinding

Participants ranked economic development as high priority goals for the Taylor Downtown Master Plan. In order to achieve this goal, visitors need to know how to get to key destinations in downtown. This starts with welcoming people into town and pointing them in the right direction with attractive and informative signage that embodies the historic character of the community.

Every path leading to downtown should have legible signage displaying a consistent brand. In addition, it is critical that the wayfinding signage direct visitors to key parking areas. Many local business owners in Taylor expressed frustration with the perceived lack of parking in downtown. Analysis of downtown parking capacity revealed that there is actually a surplus of parking downtown, but due to the lack of signage directing drivers to parking locations and pedestrians from parking to destinations, visitors have difficulty confidently parking in downtown Taylor.

In order to direct all visitors to key destinations, and promote the character of Taylor, the following signage types are recommended:

- Downtown District Entry Features;
- District Banners;
- Parking Identification;
- Vehicle Wayfinding; and
- Pedestrian Wayfinding.

Figure 20: *Downtown Signage and Wayfinding*

Downtown District Entry Features

The Downtown District Entry Features are intended to provide a sense of arrival when vehicles approach downtown. They act as a gateway and are an opportunity to create a truly unique experience for visitors to remember for years to come.

The inspiration for the design is an oil rig that was inspired by historical pictures of the area which indicated an oil field just outside of Taylor in the nearby town of Thrall, Texas.

The structure and the letters are painted steel. The height is currently shown at 25 feet tall. The appropriate height and location should be further refined and coordinated with applicable jurisdictions such as TxDOT. District entry features should feature lighting that clearly illuminates lettering on the signage at night.

This project helps to achieve the following goals for the Taylor Downtown Master Plan:

Economy

EC1 EC2 EC3

Community

C1 C2 C3

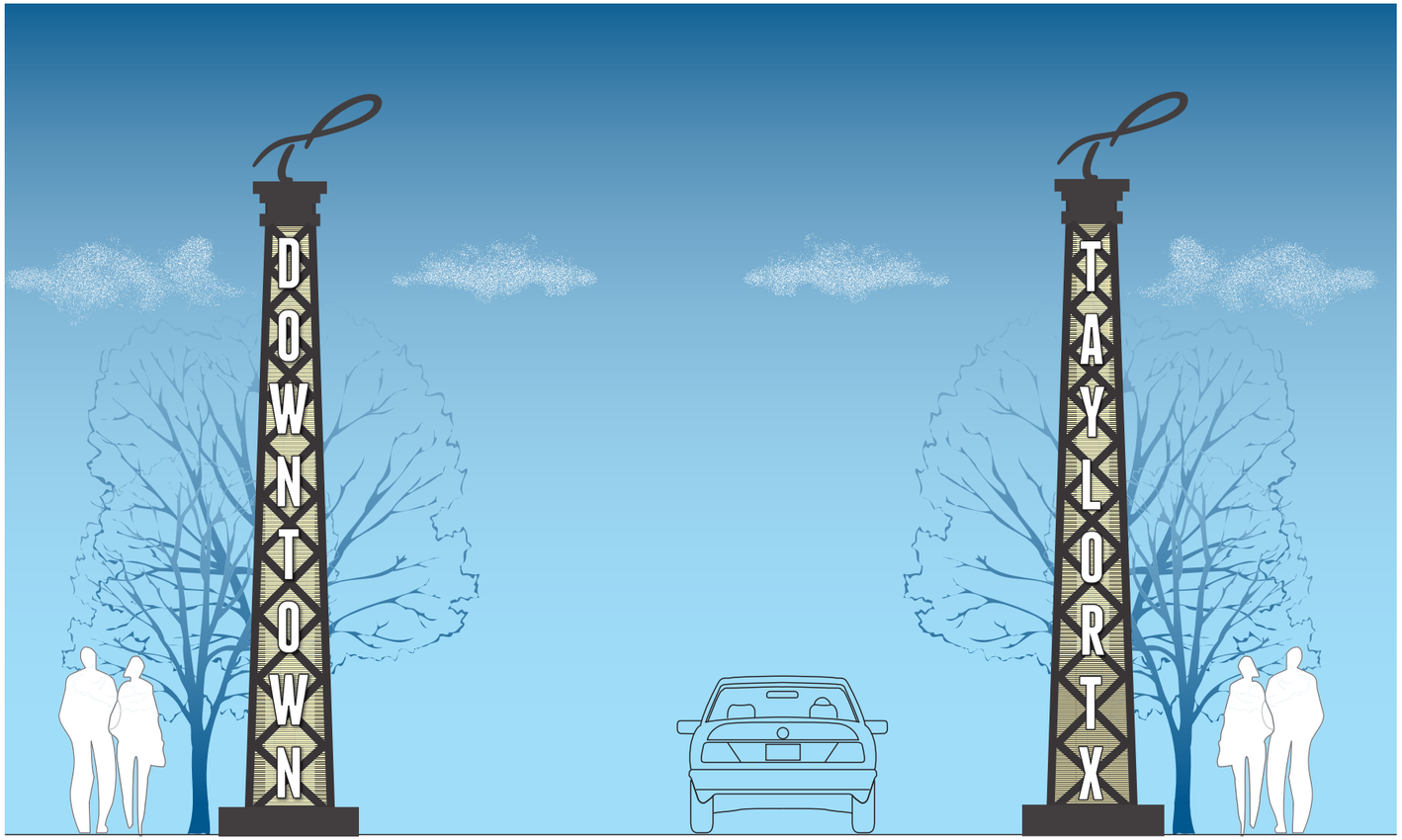
Environment

EN1

Art

A1

Figure 21: *Downtown District Entry Feature Concept*



Example photographs illustrating inspiration for Taylor downtown district entry features.

District Banners

District Banners are a quick and cost-effective way to identify the downtown area, activate the public space, add color and vitality to the downtown streetscapes, and publicize a diverse range of events, activities and attractions that draw people into downtown Taylor.

Taylor should develop a banner program and install banners on available street light poles year round. The banner poles can be made available for non-profit organizations to promote cultural, entertainment, artistic and sporting events or other special events and area attractions of public interest. The Taylor Main Street Program should coordinate the program and use the banners to display events held by the City of Taylor.

A recommended banner size is 60 inches high and 28 inches wide, mounted onto street light poles on First, Second, Main, Porter and Fourth Streets.

This project helps to achieve the following goals for the Taylor Downtown Master Plan:

Economy

EC1 EC2 EC3

Community

C1 C2 C3

Environment

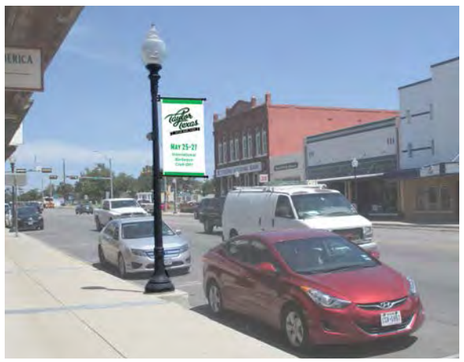
EN1

Art

A1

Figure 22: *District Banners Concept*

BANNERS
Scale: 3/8"=1'-0"



Example photographs illustrating inspiration for Taylor district banners.

Parking Identification

Parking identification signs can be used to identify public parking lots and on-street parking opportunities. The off-street public parking facilities include: an expansion to the existing Amtrak parking lot, the City Hall parking lot, and the Williamson County Commissioner building parking lot. To maintain available parking for visitors throughout the day, off-street parking spaces should be limited to two hours.

This project helps to achieve the following goals for the Taylor Downtown Master Plan:

Economy

EC1 EC2 EC3

Community

C1 C2 C3

Environment

EN1

Art

A1

Figure 23: *Parking Identification Concept*

Example photographs illustrating inspiration for parking identification signage.

Vehicle Wayfinding

A vehicular directional sign is recommended to provide vehicular directional guidance to destinations and parking. Vehicle Directional signs should be limited to five destinations per sign and shall not contain commercial advertising. Arrowheads should also be the same design as the Texas Standard Highway Sign Designs. The post, armature, messages and silhouette finial are painted steel. The signs are 13 feet tall, with 5 inch letters that can be seen by drivers from about 60 feet away. It is important to locate signage in between street intersections in order for drivers have enough time to change lanes if necessary. Downtown wayfinding signs are not governed by TxDOT if not located on a TxDOT right-of-way.

This project helps to achieve the following goals for the Taylor Downtown Master Plan:

Economy

EC1 EC2 EC3

Community

C1 C2 C3

Environment

EN1

Art

A1

Figure 24: *Vehicle Wayfinding Concept*

Option A *Option B* *Back of Sign Option A*

Example photographs illustrating inspiration for Taylor vehicular wayfinding.

Pedestrian Wayfinding

Pedestrian Wayfinding signage helps pedestrians determine where they are and where they need to go to reach a destination. It is critical to locate pedestrian signs near visitor parking so that people can easily identify their desired destination on the map and determine the fastest way to get there. The signs could include walking times to destinations in order to inform visitors of how long they need to travel to reach their destination.

The post, armature, messages and silhouette finial are painted steel. Where applicable, the signage could include a lockable directory "case" to display a map that could include downtown businesses updated by the Taylor Main Street Program. This could be achieved by allowing local businesses to apply for inclusion on the directories for a monthly fee. Directory signs are not governed by TxDOT if not located on a TxDOT Right-of-Way but must be placed out of sight visibility triangles.

This project helps to achieve the following goals for the Taylor Downtown Master Plan:

Economy

EC1 EC2 EC3

Community

C1 C2 C3

Environment

EN1

Art

A1

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION	POSSIBLE IMPLEMENTATION AGENCY
R1. Confirm agreements to install banners and signs on TxDOT rights of way.	City of Taylor, TxDOT
R2. Send out a request for qualifications and select a professional design firm to develop a comprehensive wayfinding and signage design package. Deliverable for this phase of the project would be a detailed manual of the signage and wayfinding system; which will include locations, dimensions, and materials in addition to designs and content.	City of Taylor
R3. Coordinate signage efforts with overall streetscape improvements; agreements with Williamson County and other applicable improvements.	Williamson County, City of Taylor, Union Pacific, Amtrak
R4. Coordinate with TxDOT as a partner in this effort, in order to ensure that the signage standards meet TxDOT requirements.	City of Taylor, TxDOT
R5. Design, fabricate and install signage throughout downtown.	City of Taylor, Consultants

Figure 25: *Pedestrian Wayfinding Concept*

Example photographs illustrating inspiration for Taylor pedestrian wayfinding.

4 Streetscape Improvement Opportunities

Currently, a wide range of elements and styles pose challenges to the visual connectivity and cohesiveness of downtown spaces and districts. To create a cohesive streetscape setting in Taylor, it is important to provide elements and patterns that reoccur to establish an overall aesthetic quality.

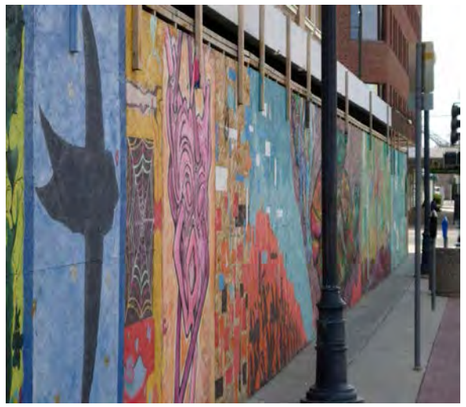
Because community resources are limited and it is not feasible to improve every street, the streetscape improvement opportunities seen in **"Table 1: Street Improvement Opportunity Summary"** are recommended. These are intended to supplement existing efforts to create a safe, environmentally friendly and aesthetically pleasing streetscape experience downtown.

Table 1: *Street Improvement Opportunity Summary*

Amenity	Main Street	First Street	Talbot Street	Second Street	Porter Street
Parking (parallel)	●	●	●		●
Parking (angled)				●	
Civic art	●	●		●	
Signage	●	●	●	●	●
Street trees	●	●	●	●	●
Landscaping	●	●	●	●	●
Lighting	●	●	●	●	●
Furniture	●	●		●	●
Bike infrastructure		●	●		
Shade awnings	●				●

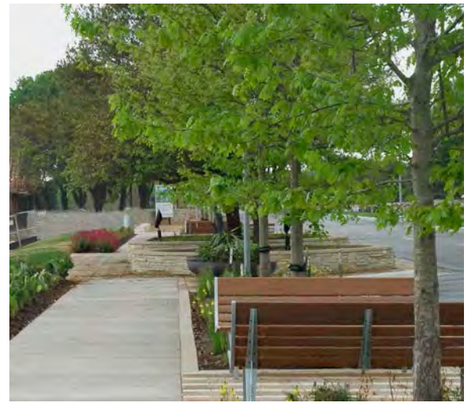
"Figure 26: Signature Street Opportunities" on page 50 illustrates how focusing amenities along the following streets can help stitch together destinations, improvements and parking opportunities in the community. For example, streetscape improvements ensure that parking areas become better connected through vehicular and pedestrian wayfinding signage. Providing tree-shaded sidewalks and awnings along Main Street contributes to a comfortable downtown experience during the daytime, while improved lighting improves safety and visibility for pedestrians traveling to destinations at night.

Custom interpretive art helps to create a living story line of a community's history.



Civic art along streetscapes educate residents and visitors about Taylor's unique heritage and culture.

Mature street trees and buildings closer to the sidewalk create a more human scale environment.



Native and adaptive plant species are recommended for all landscaping.

Civic Art

Civic art works can define public spaces. Art provides a rich language that expresses the values of a society and it may engage the public in an emotional, intellectual, or even physical way. Art can increase our sense of belonging by associating us with a place imprinted with a specific image or feeling. Civic art can provide visitors as well as residents with multiple and layered expressions of a history and culture that is unique to that place. Art can express local history and identity through reference to local geography, landmarks, industry, craft, tourism, recreation, significant events and people, and other cultural attributes.

Art that articulates and draws attention to these natural processes can help reconnect us with nature. By focusing our attention on the way we impact nature, it can teach us sustainability.

As Taylor experiences a revitalization of its downtown and undergoes redevelopment, new public spaces, private projects, and infrastructure improvements should have a significant and visible component of public art. Art is also good design; meaning a street, vehicular bridge, new building or sidewalk can be artful. Developing incentives for the creation of on-site civic art (art and artisan-created architectural enhancements), can create a robust expression of identity and unique character in Taylor.

Civic art shall be incorporated into public infrastructure projects such as gateways, signature streets, bridges, transit hubs, highways and parks. Artful design is encouraged within every aspect of the built environment. Signature streets provide an excellent opportunity to achieve this. It is recommended that infrastructure improvements incorporate artists into the design team from the inception of planning in order to integrate works of art into streetscapes and public spaces. Civic art can be both traditional artwork created for public spaces as well as artisan-crafted architectural details and take the form of plaques mounted on buildings, information on transit shelters, murals, commemorative sculpture, elements in the sidewalk and walking tour brochures.

Civic art should provide visual value during all seasons, weather, and light conditions. It is urged that the aggregate civic art throughout the entire community of Taylor and be considerate of the diversity of residents and visitors. Some civic art may be most appropriate for the interaction of children while other art may express the culture of a particular group within the community. A comprehensive downtown civic art plan promotes pieces that art not be stand-alone unrelated objects. Utilities and mechanical equipment should not detract from civic art.

Landscaping

Street Trees

There is currently a variety of street trees in the downtown. Along Second Street, Texas Live Oaks (Quercus fusiformis) shade walkways while along Fourth Street, the Bald Cypress (Taxodium distichum) dominates planting areas. They are well suited to these conditions and should continue to be used in future streetscape plantings.

Native and Adaptive Plant Landscaping

A selection of native and adaptive plants have been chosen to enhance the planters and planting beds of Taylor. Native and adaptive plants have several benefits in a streetscape setting. First, they are adapted to the regional conditions. These hardy plants generally require less maintenance and less irrigation than non-native species. Second, they can help to convey a sense of place and regional character. For Taylor, using plants that are indigenous to Texas will help to give the city a stronger connection with its surroundings.

On-site storm-water can be collected through rain gardens and bioswales along streets. Rain gardens and bioswales improve water quality by infiltration of stormwater runoff through dense plant materials. For best results, rain gardens and bioswales should be planted with deep rooted, native and adaptive plant species to increase infiltration and reduce ongoing maintenance costs. These landscaped areas filter out more contaminants when planted with thicker and heavier grasses.

Using the native plant and adaptive plant species of Texas also means that the plants will already be adapted to local rainfall patterns, thus creating a more successful and efficient landscaping. Native species also resist local pests and disease. Once established, these planted areas require less and less maintenance as they do not need irrigation and fertilizers.

Along with reducing infrastructure costs, rain gardens create a less expensive alternative to turf grass and amenitize the community. Interpretive signage can be installed at each rain garden to educate locals and visitors in the community about the amount of water treated during storm events or habitats for wildlife (such as birds, insects or butterflies) created by the landscape. These signs can contribute to the artistic nature of signature streets and be inspired by the unique colors, materials and custom elements featured downtown.

Additional lighting provides safety and should be well maintained.

Benches create spaces for social gathering.

Tables and chairs add vitality and visual interest to streetscapes and alleyways.

Provide adequate trash and recycling receptacles in key areas of the pedestrian realm.

Bike racks should be easily accessible and placed in areas that do not block pedestrian activity.

Lighting

Lighting

Acorn globes have a shape similar to the lamps used along Taylor's Main Street today. Many lighting companies also provide reflectors for their globe replacements that will comply with lighting standards that decrease upward light pollution while increasing the amount of light directed downward to the ground level. The connection size of the existing posts should be verified when ordering new globes. The globes should be cleaned three to four times per year to ensure long lasting quality and appearance. The street light poles should be free of stickers, graffiti, and other non-city permanent signs. Occasional painting is recommended to maintain a clean appearance. Likewise, existing poles, traffic light poles, and fixtures can be painted for a clean, well-maintained appearance. Along Main Street, TxDOT should contribute to the budget to repaint the traffic light poles. Estimated cost: $700 per light.

Furniture

Permanent Benches

Street furniture should be installed only at key places, such as important roadway intersections. It should also be installed where there is a long walk for pedestrians between destinations, such as providing furniture along Porter Street between City Hall and First Street. Installing wood/iron benches will add a historic feel with a contemporary flare along streets in Taylor. Benches should be placed in areas that do not inhibit pedestrian accessibility. The upkeep of furniture in the public right of way is key to maintaining beautiful streetscapes. Each bench should be painted and repaired on a regular basis as per manufacturer's recommendations. Estimated cost: $1,600-$2,000 per bench.

Moveable Tables and Chairs

The placement of moveable tables and chairs helps to encourage pedestrians to spend more time downtown by providing a place to rest, converse, watch people and dine. The addition of people using tables and chairs adds vitality and visual interest to the streetscape, creating constantly changing environments and bringing life to otherwise dull spaces. While tables and chairs should be secured against possible theft, they should also be allowed to be moved freely and spontaneously to suit the needs of the user. Likewise, tables and chairs should be carefully located in areas that will not restrict pedestrian flow and/or ADA accessibility. It is recommended that a minimum of five feet of clear space along the sidewalk be maintained at all times. Estimated cost: $300 to $700 per piece.

Trash Receptacles and Ash Urns

Abundant trash receptacles and ash urns provide people with a place to put their trash and help to keep the street clean. Trash receptacles should be emptied frequently to help maintain the long lasting value of the receptacle and to improve downtown appearance. Ash urns should be placed under an awning or building overhang to prevent the tray from filling with water. A coarse sand or light gravel should be used in the ash tray. Light silicon sand will blow away. Trash receptacles and ash urns should be placed in areas that will not restrict pedestrian flow and/or ADA accessibility. Resealing and painting should be performed per manufacturer's recommendations as needed. Estimated cost: $850-$1,200 per receptacle.

Bike Infrastructure

Bike racks help to prevent theft, prevent bikes from blocking sidewalks, and encourage bikers to come downtown. They also provide a small barrier to the street and help enclose the sidewalk. Bike racks should be free of graffiti, stickers, and locks to allow for continued use and streetscape appeal. They should be sited such that when bicycles are parked in the rack there is a minimum of five feet sidewalk clearance. Bike racks should be placed in areas that will not restrict pedestrian flow and/or ADA accessibility. Reseal and paint per manufacturer's recommendations when needed. Estimated cost: $350-$500 per rack.

Signature Street Opportunities

The Taylor Downtown Master Plan recommends that signature streets be established through the use of streetscape furnishings, roadway improvements and custom elements that will emphasize the unique character of each key corridor. Within downtown, each signature street features priority connections that link parking to destinations. This system of streets, once completed, will create the necessary hierarchy for locals and visitors to safely move throughout downtown.

Each signature street also features elements of fun for the community. Main Street improvements emphasize the long-standing history, timeline and heritage of Taylor. First Street features historic wood paving and a "woonerf" design and a flexible market space. Talbot Street serves as an active bicycle route to and from downtown. Second Street incorporates abundant parking opportunities to encourage parking once and walking to many destinations. Porter Street features lights and sidewalks that will transform the space into a festival street.

On the following pages, each street is described in further detail.

Key projects to implement:

1. Main Street
2. First Street
3. Talbot Street
4. Second Street
5. Porter Street

Figure 26: *Signature Street Opportunities*

Source: City of Taylor Geographic Information Systems, Williamson County GIS & Addressing, Esri

Downtown Master Plan Boundary
Parcels
Historic Main Street
Main Street Slip Roads
1st Street East Market/Woonerf
1st Street West Connector
Talbot Street Connector
2nd and 4th Street Pedestrian Connectors
Porter Street - Mixed Use

0 125 350 700 NORTH

1 Main Street

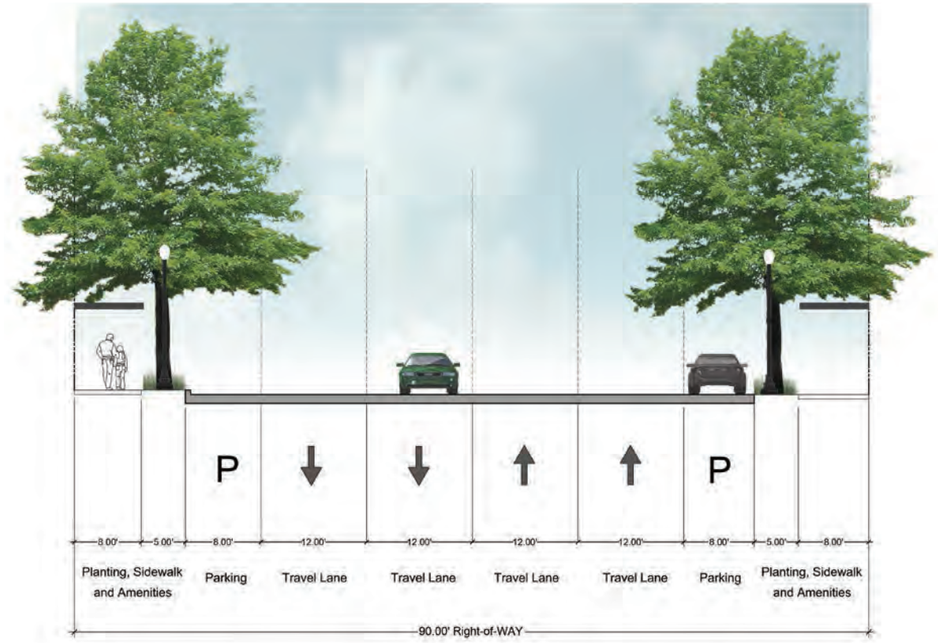
Main Street is the cultural and historic core of Taylor. It offers the most significant collection of historic buildings and is the primary connection moving north and south through the community. As a TxDOT roadway, improvements will need to be coordinated and approved by the agency.

Future streetscape improvements should strengthen the existing character, amenities and historic landmarks located along Main Street. Building upon existing amenities with strategic interventions such as public art, street trees and additional areas for outdoor dining, socializing and gathering is recommended.

Historically, awnings have been provided along Main Street to create a comfortable and memorable shopping experience for pedestrians. Awnings help to provide protection from the natural elements. These architectural features also form an overhead plane that helps to define the pedestrian realm. Today, awnings are seen intermittently along Main Street. Returning awnings to buildings along this corridor would help reconnect downtown to its historic roots and add an attractive and functional design element to the streetscape. Awnings should be a minimum of eight to ten feet above the sidewalk grade. They should extend five to eight feet over the sidewalk and be a solid, matte color that is compatible with the building façade. Property owners should be encouraged to review historic photos of their property and use awning designs in fitting with the long-term character of the site.

Public art can help to establish a unique identity. Examples of public art can include murals, decorative signs and sculptures. Many local artists reside in Taylor and should be engaged in the public art creation process. Historically, festive banners have also been used along Main Street. These can feature elements of public art that benefit residents and visitors.

Figure 27: *Main Street Illustrative*



Returning awnings to buildings along this corridor would help reconnect downtown to its historic roots and add an attractive element to the streetscape.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION	POSSIBLE IMPLEMENTATION AGENCY
R1: Plant drought tolerant street trees every 25 to 35 feet on center. Trees should be located between the curb and shade awnings. Large tree wells (80 square feet minimum) will help to ensure the survival of trees along Main Street. Provide electricity near trees for seasonality.	City of Taylor TxDOT
R2: Partner with property owners to implement shade awnings on buildings along Main Street. Shade awnings should be designed in ways that provide the maximum amount of shade to pedestrians. Awnings should be in keeping with the historic vernacular and architecture of downtown.	City of Taylor TxDOT Property owners
R3: Encourage infill development that fits the historic building patters and facade rhythms of adjacent buildings.	City of Taylor Property owners
R4: Add lighting along Main Street to achieve appropriate footcandles necessary for pedestrian safety and visibility at night.	City of Taylor TxDOT
R5: Create a banner program to hang on lights along Main Street. To provide seasonal interest, change out banners four times per year.	City of Taylor TxDOT
R6: Reinstate holiday lights that span the width of Main Street.	City of Taylor TxDOT
R7: Provide street furniture, such as permanent benches, moveable tables and chairs for outdoor dining and bollards to accentuate social gathering spaces along Main Street.	City of Taylor TxDOT
R8: Install bulbouts at key intersections to help control parking and protect pedestrians at busy crossings.	City of Taylor TxDOT
R9: Install signage that communicates to residents and visitors a “historic walking tour”. The map would feature historic buildings, uses and events that have occurred on Main Street and that contribute to the heritage of the downtown.	City of Taylor TxDOT
R10: Coordinate with TxDOT to appropriately size Main Street. Current traffic counts indicate that the roadway could be reduced from four travel lanes to three (two travel lanes with a center turn lane).	City of Taylor TxDOT
R11: Encourage outdoor dining and retail activities that contribute to a vibrant downtown economy.	City of Taylor Property owners
R12: Create a public art program that celebrates growing art museum and gallery activities downtown. Place art at key intersections. Seasonal art installations, or rotating art, are recommended.	City of Taylor

2 First Street

First Street is envisioned as a flexible, highly connected corridor that will need to accommodate a variety of activities and connectivity elements radiating out from the Amtrak Station and slip roads lining the Main Street bridge. It is envisioned as a restaurant- and entertainment-friendly destination for downtown residents and visitors. For additional information regarding the overall vision for First Street, please refer to the **"Downtown Framework Diagram" on page 38.**

The street segment nearest to the Amtrak station should be redesigned as a "woonerf," which is a European type of shared road that can also serve as a flexible plaza space for market activities or events. The intent is to use materials, such as bollards and pavers, to define automobile areas for driving, loading/unloading goods, or parking from environments dedicated to bicyclist and pedestrian activities. Wayfinding signage at key locations along First Street should direct vehicles and bicycles to parking. An informational kiosk near the Amtrak station should direct pedestrians to destinations. This unique built environment will create an unforgettable first impression, as well as easily navigable experience, for visitors and residents arriving/departing using Amtrak services, CARTS services and future commuter rail services.

"Figure 28: First Street (East) Illustrative - Typical Non-Market Day" depicts how the "woonerf" approach provides shaded spaces for pedestrians along both sides of the street, flexible opportunities for parking and signature elements such as banners that create a unique feel to the district. Wide sidewalks and on-street parallel parking should be installed on both sides of the street. Two automobile travel lanes accommodate automobile movement during both non-market and market events. Between First Street and the Amtrak Station parking lot, an allée of street trees with a shaded sidewalk provides a comfortable walking space for pedestrians traveling from the station to other destinations downtown.

"Figure 29: First Street (East) Illustrative - Market Events" depicts how these flexible spaces could be used to accommodate community market events on the weekends or evenings. This segment of First Street could be temporarily converted to a pedestrian-only plaza space with tents being located in between the street trees and down the middle of the travel lanes. This will allow pedestrians to circulate and access vendors on both sides of the street.

All of the elements together provide a crescendo of activity as the eastern portion of First Street terminates into the rail line.

This project helps to achieve the following goals for the Taylor Downtown Master Plan:

Economy

EC1 EC2 EC3

Community

C1 C2 C3

Environment

EN1

Art

A1

Between First Street and the Amtrak Station, an allée of street trees provides shade for pedestrians and buffers sounds from trains passing nearby.

Figure 28: *First Street (East) Illustrative - Typical Non-Market Day*

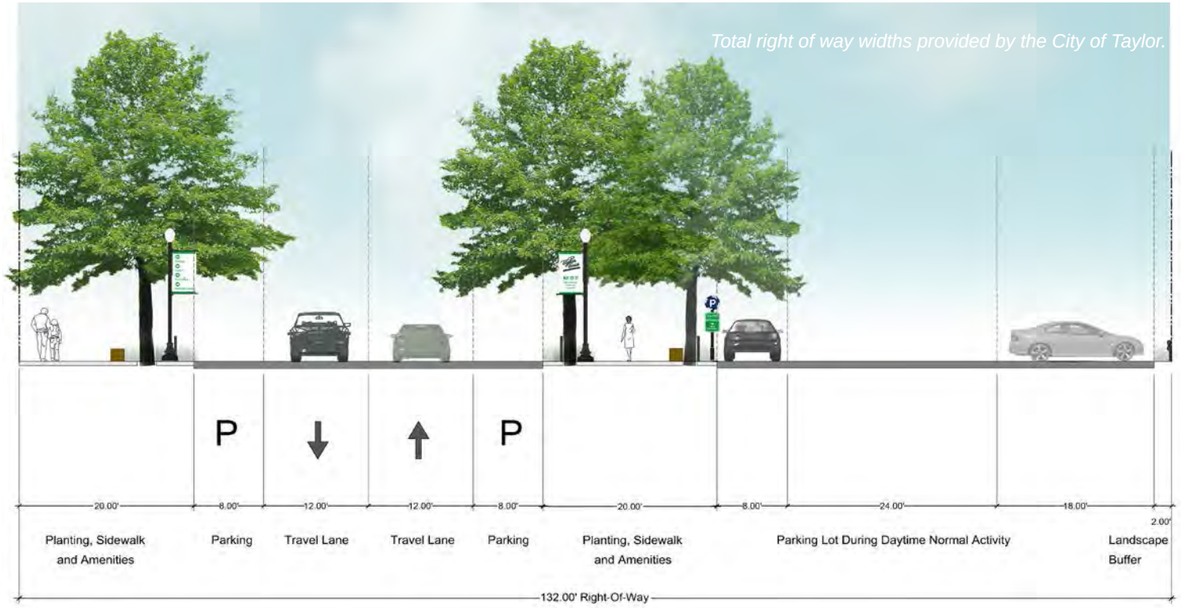


Figure 29: *First Street (East) Illustrative - Market Events*

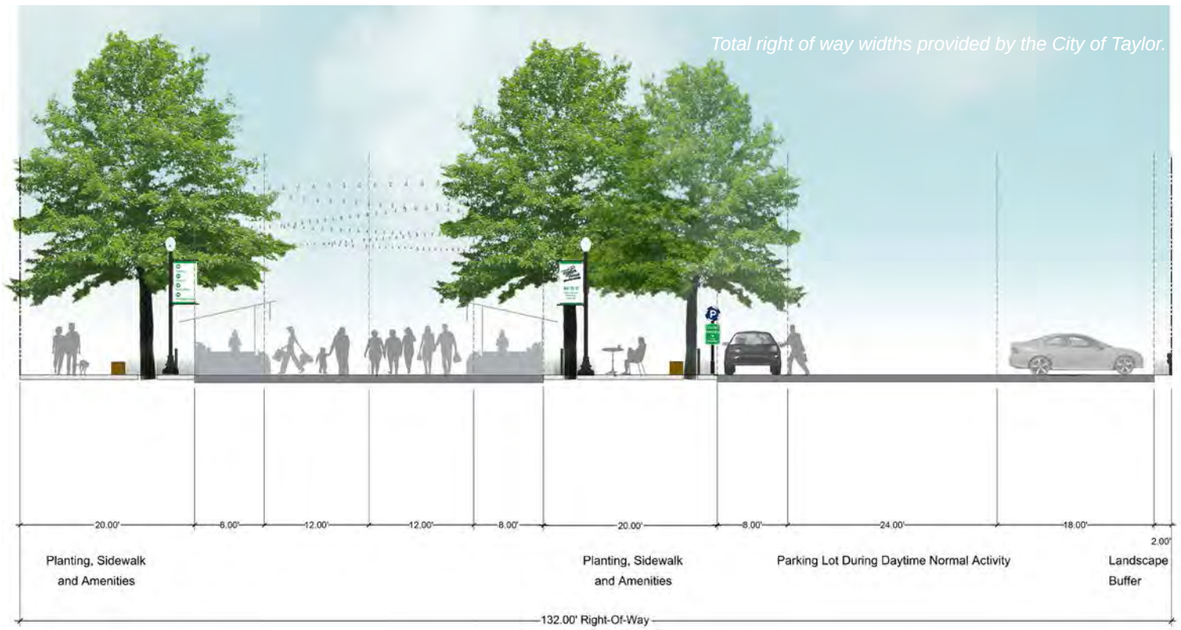


Figure 30: *First Street (East) "Woonerf" Concept*

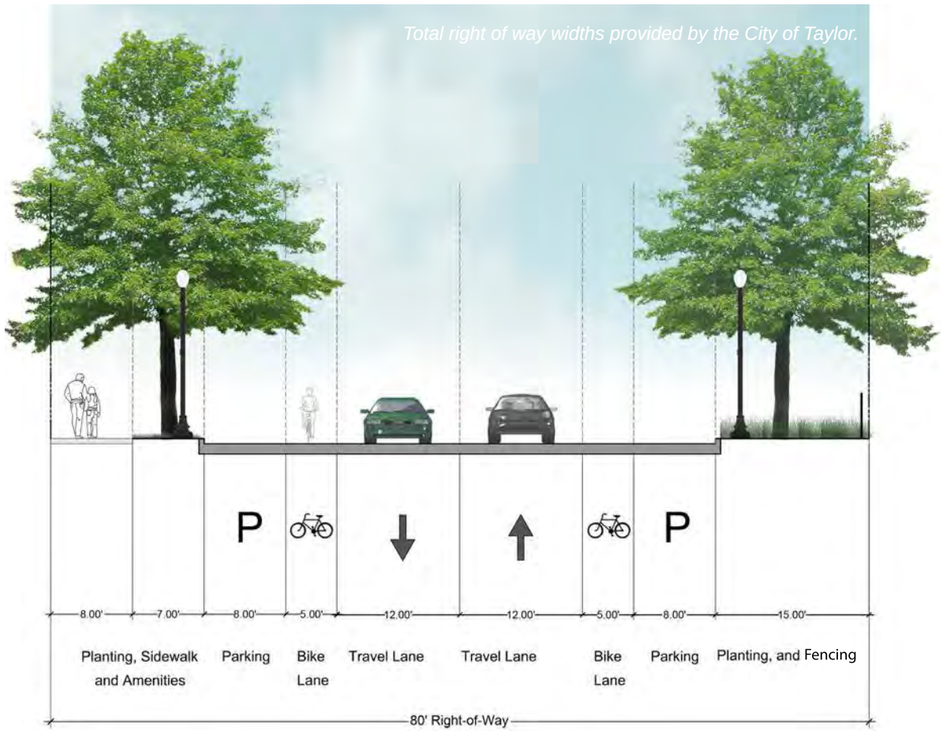
The western portion of First Street is envisioned as providing comfortable sidewalks, parking, bike lanes and two travel lanes.

Best Practices for Coordinating Construction Activities in Downtown Areas

Downtown improvement efforts should strive to coordinate construction activities with adjacent property owners and residents to minimize potential noise, vibration□related, safety and visual quality effects. Examples of best practices that can be implemented to minimize the effects of construction on nearby property owners and residences are provided below.

- Coordinating with business owners to mitigate parking losses and to ensure maintained access to businesses during business hours throughout the construction period
- Posting appropriate signs that communicate revised access information to potential customers
- Coordinating with neighborhood associations and service providers to inform them of temporary changes in circulation or access
- Coordinating with utility service providers to minimize disruption in service during utility relocation
- Minimizing site disturbance to protect native plants and trees and restoring (revegetating) areas as construction is completed (in stages)
- Limiting the noisiest construction activities to between 7 a.m. and 10 p.m. to reduce construction noise levels during sensitive nighttime hours
- Turning off equipment during prolonged periods of nonuse to eliminate noise

Figure 31: *First Street (West) Illustrative*



This project helps to achieve the following goals for the Taylor Downtown Master Plan:

Economy

EC1 EC2 EC3

Community

C1 C2 C3

Environment

EN1

Art

A1

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION	POSSIBLE IMPLEMENTATION AGENCY
R1: Partner with a consultant firm to redesign First Street (East) as a pedestrian, bicycle, and auto friendly shared “woonerf”.	City of Taylor
R2: Utilize wood block pavers (historic to downtown Taylor) in pedestrian areas.	City of Taylor
R3: Add lighting along First Street to achieve appropriate footcandles necessary for pedestrian safety and visibility at night.	City of Taylor
R4: Create a banner program to hang on lights along First Street. To provide seasonal interest, change out banners two times per year.	City of Taylor
R5: Partner with property owners to implement shade awnings on buildings along First Street. Shade awnings should be designed in ways that provide the maximum amount of shade to pedestrians. Awnings should be in keeping with the historic vernacular and architecture of downtown.	City of Taylor Property owners
R6: Install on-street parking along both sides of First Street. For detailed information on where angled and parallel parking should be located, please refer to “Parking Strategy” on page 40.	City of Taylor
R7: Preserve existing woodblock pavers that are historic to Taylor where possible. Where preserving existing woodblocks is not possible, it is recommended that woodblock elements be integrated into designs for future streetscape and pedestrian realm improvements.	City of Taylor
R8: Install signage that communicates to residents and visitors how to get to parking, the market area, the skate park, City Hall and Heritage Square.	City of Taylor
R9: Plant drought tolerant street trees every 25 to 35 feet on center. Trees should be located between the curb and shade awnings. Large tree wells (80 square feet minimum) will help to ensure the survival of trees along First Street.	City of Taylor
R10: Partner with community organizations and businesses to host market events on the eastern, “woonerf” portion of First Street.	City of Taylor
R11: Provide street furniture, such as permanent benches, moveable tables and chairs for outdoor dining and bollards to accentuate social gathering spaces along First Street. Trash receptacles should be provided near outdoor dining and seating areas, the skate park and the Amtrak station.	City of Taylor
R12: Install bike racks at key destinations, such as the Amtrak station, the skate park and western First Street.	City of Taylor

3 Talbot Street

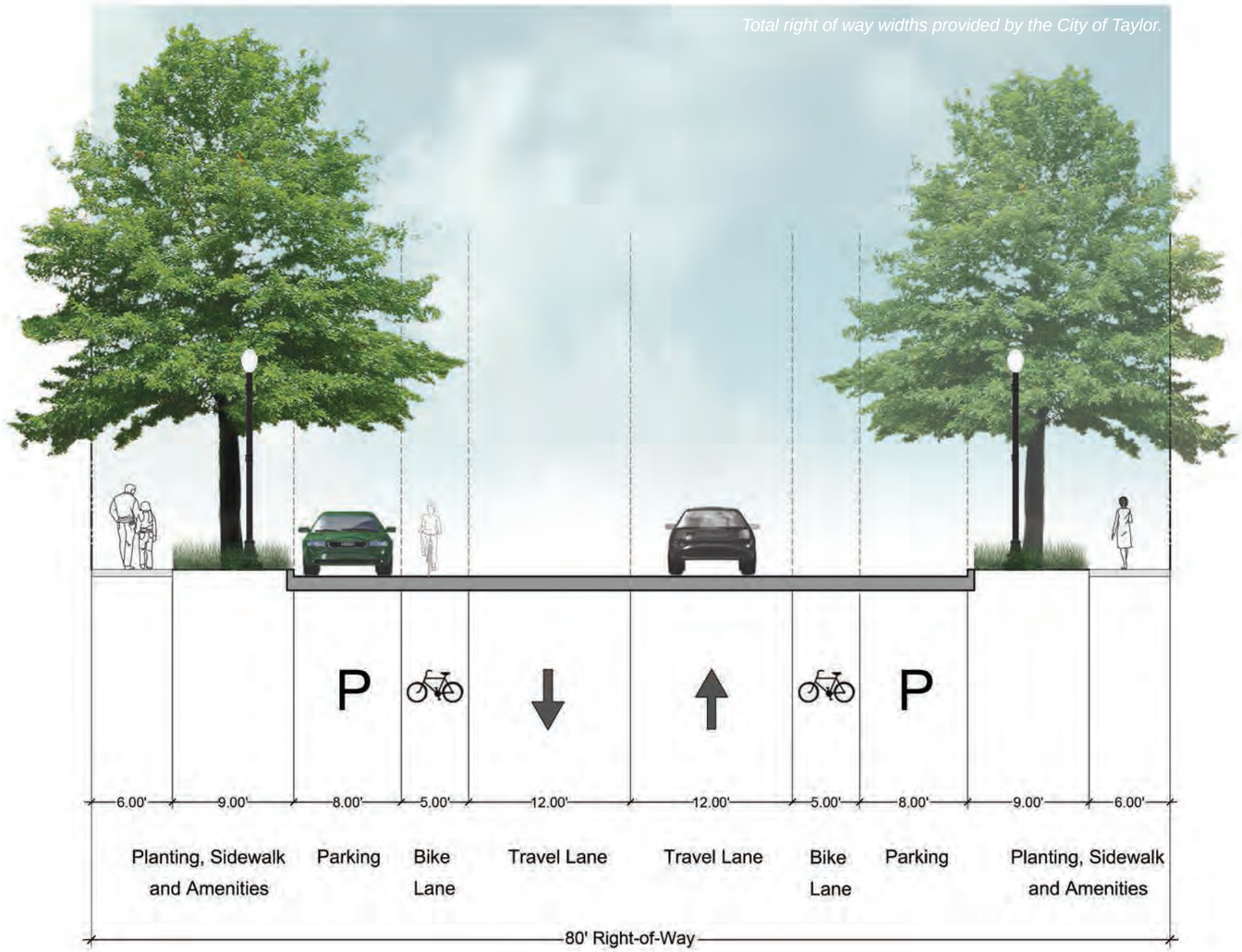
Today, Taylor has a bike plan, but it does not yet connect all parts of the City to downtown. Residential areas, parks, schools and the downtown need to be connected by bicycle infrastructure. The installation of bike lanes along Talbot Street, as seen illustrated in **"Figure 32: Talbot Street Illustrative",** shows how bike lanes and automobile lanes would coexist in the proposed cross section. Clear bicycle lane signage is important to protecting the safety of residents and visitors using bike lanes adjacent to vehicular traffic.

Key improvements for Talbot Street include the creation of bike lanes, consistent street trees, lighting and sidewalks. Parallel on-street parking provides the opportunity for spaces to be added along Talbot Street. Two-way travel lanes for automobiles carries traffic along the corridor.

Both sides of Talbot Street will feature five foot wide sidewalks with planting areas of nine feet in width that buffer pedestrians from automobile traffic to promote walkability and safety. Large street trees, such as the Live Oak tree, should be planted every thirty feet on center along Talbot Street. Large tree wells (80 square feet minimum) will help to ensure the survival of trees along Talbot Street. Large tree wells also allow tree species to grow to their maximum size, providing more shade for pedestrians, bicyclists and visitors parking downtown.

Providing tree shaded sidewalks and parking areas along Talbot Street contributes to a comfortable downtown experience during the daytime, while improved lighting increases safety and visibility for pedestrians traveling to destinations at night.

Figure 32: *Talbot Street Illustrative*



KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION	POSSIBLE IMPLEMENTATION AGENCY
R1: Provide bike lanes along both sides of Talbot Street. Bike lanes should be emphasized with clear signage and pavement striping.	City of Taylor
R2: Plant drought tolerant street trees every 25 to 35 feet on center. Trees should be located between the curb and buildings in the public right of way. Large tree wells (80 square feet minimum) will help to ensure the survival of trees along Talbot Street.	City of Taylor
R3: Add lighting along Talbot Street to achieve appropriate footcandles necessary for pedestrian safety and visibility at night.	City of Taylor
R4: Install parallel on-street parking along both sides of Talbot Street. For detailed information on where angled and parallel parking should be located, please refer to "Parking Strategy" on page 40.	City of Taylor

This project helps to achieve the following goals for the Taylor Downtown Master Plan:

Economy
EC1 EC2 EC3

Community
C1 C2 C3

Environment
EN1

Art
A1

4 Second Street

Second Street is an important signature street opportunity because it is a visitor's first experience as they enter the community from Round Rock or the interstate. Historically, awnings have been provided in areas along Second Street (similar to the historic architectural character of Main Street). Reviving efforts to provide awnings along Second Street will create a comfortable arrival experience for both residents and visitors that encourages them to park, shop, dine and enjoy destinations downtown. Awnings should be a solid, matte color that is compatible with the building façade. Property owners should be encouraged to review historic photos of their property and use awning designs in fitting with the long-term character of the site.

"Figure 33: Second Street Illustrative - Short-Term Improvements to the West of Main Street" shows how simple restriping of the pavement could be completed to create improvements along Second Street to the west of Main Street. Second Street currently carries approximately 6,400 trips per day (measured at Vance and Second). This low-travel demand suggests that Second Street (West) could be reduced to a three-lane road with two travel lanes and a center turn lane. **"Figure 34: Second Street Illustrative - Long-Term Full Reconstruction to the East of Main Street"** shows how removing one travel lane would provide improvements along the segment of Second Street to the east of Main Street.

Both portions of Second Street (East and West) would feature wide sidewalks and shade trees that buffer pedestrians from automobile traffic to promote walkability and safety. New street trees should be planted every 25 to 35 feet on center. Spacing between street trees may vary to promote the use of shade awnings and the preservation of existing, established trees. Large tree wells are recommended to ensure the survival of trees. Providing shaded sidewalks contributes to a comfortable experience during the daytime. Improved lighting promotes safety and visibility for pedestrians traveling to destinations at night. Wayfinding signage at key locations should direct visitors to parking.

Figure 33: *Second Street Illustrative - Short-Term Improvements to the West of Main Street*

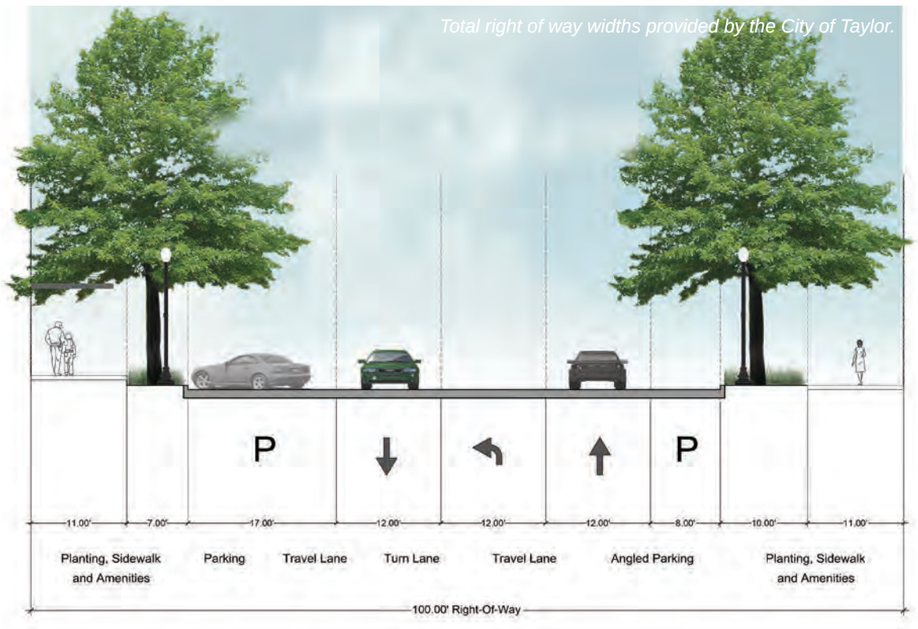
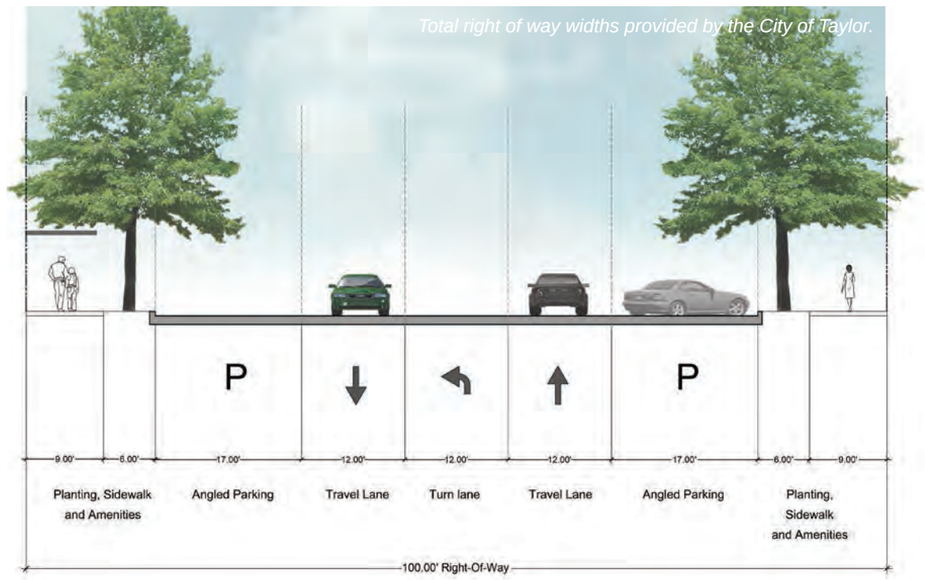


Figure 34: *Second Street Illustrative - Long-Term Full Reconstruction to the East of Main Street*



KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION	POSSIBLE IMPLEMENTATION AGENCY
R1: Partner with property owners to implement shade awnings on buildings along Second Street. Shade awnings should be designed in ways that provide the maximum amount of shade to pedestrians. Awnings should be in keeping with the historic vernacular and architecture of downtown.	City of Taylor Property owners
R2: Add lighting along Second Street to achieve appropriate footcandles necessary for pedestrian safety and visibility at night.	City of Taylor
R3: Plant drought tolerant street trees every 25 to 35 feet on center. Work with property owners to place street trees sensitively between building shade awnings. Trees should be located between the curb and shade awnings.	City of Taylor Property owners
R4: Appropriately size Second Street. Current traffic counts indicate that the roadway could be reduced from four travel lanes to three (two travel lanes with a center turn lane).	City of Taylor
R5: Install signage that communicates to residents and visitors key destinations, parking, bicycle lane and transit connectivity opportunities.	City of Taylor
R6: Encourage outdoor dining and retail activities that contribute to a vibrant downtown economy.	City of Taylor

This project helps to achieve the following goals for the Taylor Downtown Master Plan:

Economy
EC1 EC2 EC3

Community
C1 C2 C3

Environment
EN1

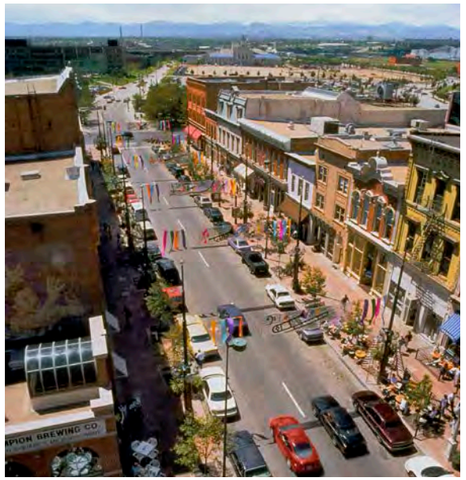
Art
A1

5 Porter Street

An improved streetscape design is recommended for Porter Street that provides distinct experiences along each side of the road. Following the community's preferences for the preferred framework plan for downtown, the east side of Porter Street is envisioned to include craft industrial/mixed uses. For more detail regarding the preferred vision, please see **"Downtown Framework Diagram" on page 38**. Uses along Porter Street are intended to encourage businesses and retail with open doors and activity that spills out onto the sidewalk, such as outdoor seating for dining, craft art sales or other goods.

Similar to Main Street and Second Street, the use of shade awnings in keeping with the historic character of Taylor is recommended for Porter Street. Shade awnings along Porter Street will create comfortable outdoor experiences for both residents and visitors as they travel towards City Hall and Heritage Square from the Amtrak station. Coupled with festival lighting that spans the width of the street, awnings and active outdoor gathering spaces will ensure Porter Street is a signature experience during both the day and night.

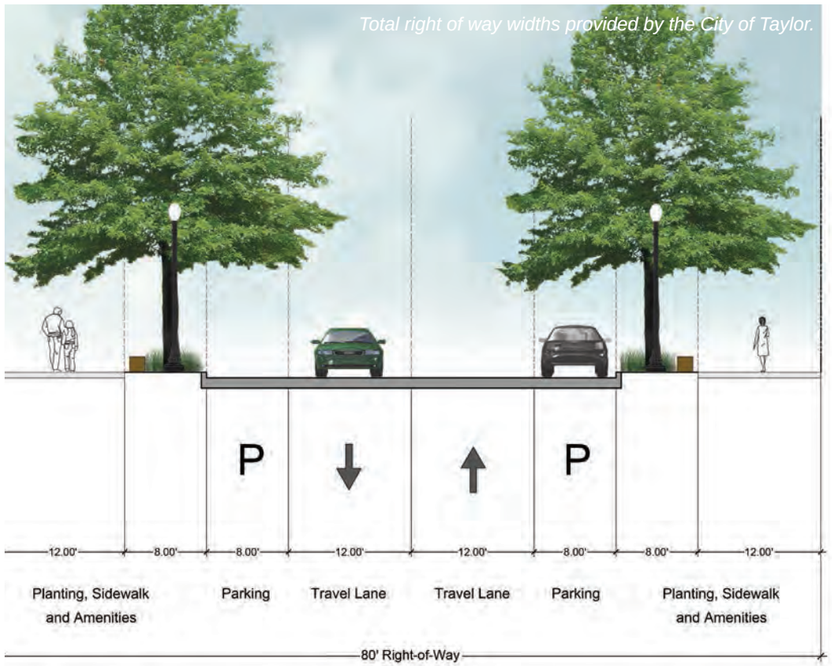
Wide sidewalks with planting areas buffer pedestrians from automobile traffic. Planting areas provide plenty of room for street trees to be planted every 20 to 30 feet on center. Both sides of Porter Street would offer parallel parking. Additional enhancements could include sidewalk paving, crosswalk paving, signage and lighting.



Unique design features create a memorable experience along Porter Street.

Twinkle lights transform a space at night, while creating a more pedestrian level scale. These lights could be used in a similar fashion throughout Taylor for festivities or in alleys that could become pedestrian corridors.

Figure 35: *Porter Street Illustrative*



This project helps to achieve the following goals for the Taylor Downtown Master Plan:

Economy
EC1 EC2 EC3

Community
C1 C2 C3

Environment
EN1

Art
A1

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION	POSSIBLE IMPLEMENTATION AGENCY
R1: Partner with property owners to implement shade awnings on buildings on Porter Street. Shade awnings should be designed in ways that provide the maximum amount of shade to pedestrians. Awnings should be in keeping with the historic vernacular and architecture of downtown.	City of Taylor Property Owners
R2: Install on-street parking along both sides of Porter Street. For detailed information on where angled and parallel parking should be located, please refer to **"Parking Strategy" on page 40.**	City of Taylor
R3: String permanent festival decorative overhead lights across Porter Street to create a festival ambiance and increase visibility for nighttime shopping and dining.	City of Taylor
R4: Add lighting along Porter Street to achieve appropriate footcandles necessary for pedestrian safety and visibility at night.	City of Taylor
R5: Provide street furniture, such as permanent benches, moveable tables and chairs for outdoor dining and bollards to accentuate social gathering spaces along Porter Street.	City of Taylor TxDOT
R6: Create a banner program to hang on lights along Porter Street. To provide seasonal interest, change out banners four times per year.	City of Taylor TxDOT
R7: Install signage that communicates to residents and visitors how to get to parking, the market area, the skate park, City Hall and Heritage Square.	City of Taylor

Catalyst Site Selection

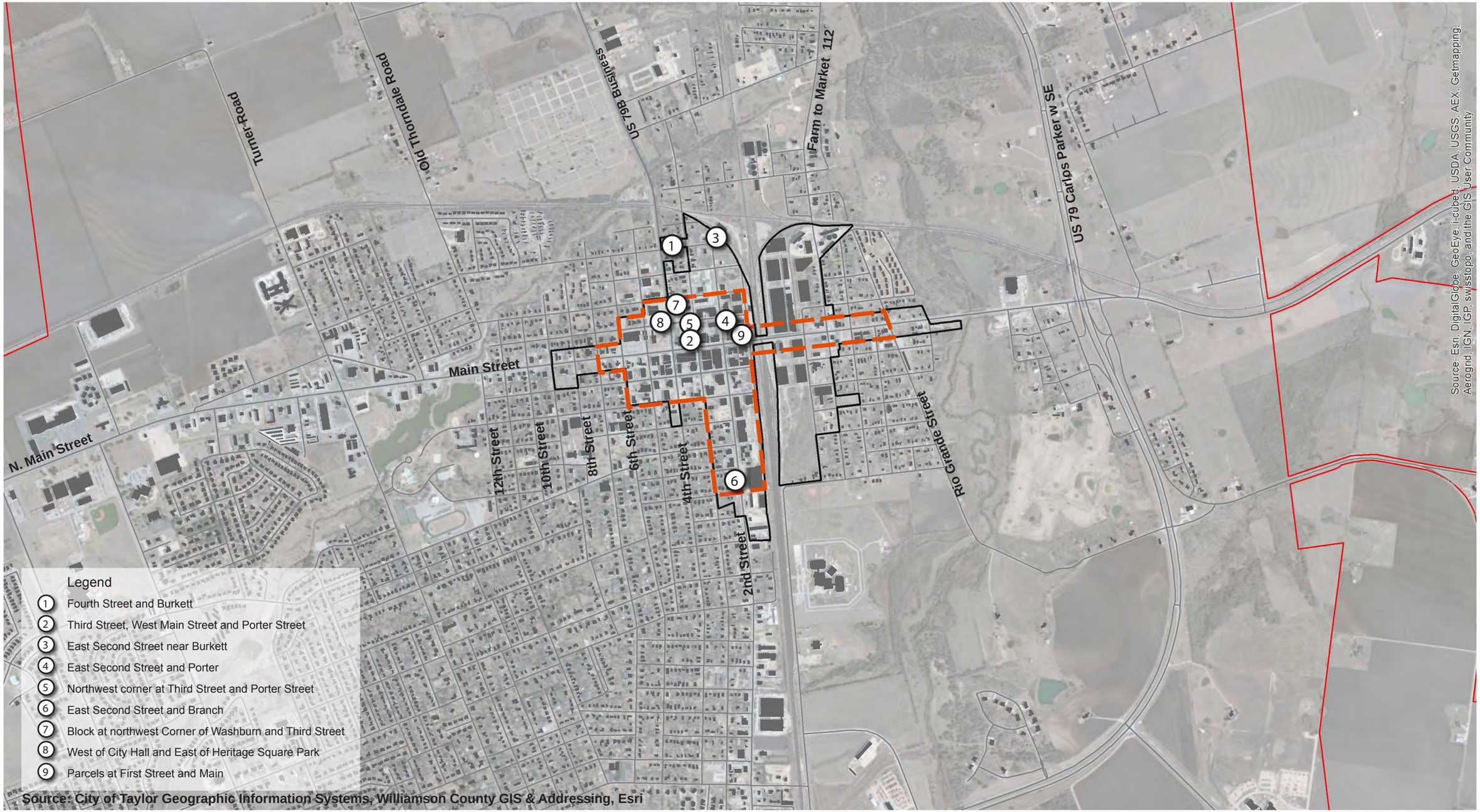
Potential catalyst sites for infill redevelopment were analyzed by considering sites that are currently available or that may be in the near future. Factors that were considered included the size of the tract of land and opportunities for development across multiple parcels to create a site large enough to accommodate market demand for square footages. The analysis showed that several blocks in the downtown area had many owners, or were segmented by roadways or other features, which would pose challenges to development or redevelopment.

"Table 2: Potential Catalyst Site Matrix" provides examples of how nine potential parcels for catalyst development opportunities were identified. **"Figure 36: Potential Catalyst Sites"** on page 59 illustrates the locations of each of these sites. These sites were then further refined by looking at access (regional and local transportation), visibility from roadways, developability, proximity to other key sites in downtown, and the framework plan options voted on by the community at the Vision and Implementation Workshop.

Table 2: *Potential Catalyst Site Matrix*

Number	Potential Site Location	Availability	Number of Property Owners	Approximate Size of Tract (AC)	Visibility	Proximity to Key Sites	Proximity to Framework Plan	Ease of Development	Existing Buildings	Conclusion
1	Fourth Street and Burkett	Yes - For Sale	1	0.4	High	Far	Far	Easy	No	Too far from framework plan and too close to residential
2	Third Street, West Main Street and Porter Street	Yes - For Sale	1	0.1	High	Moderately Close to City Hall/Park	Moderately Close	Medium	Yes - Italian Restaurant	Tract is too small
3	East Second Street near Burkett	Yes - For Sale	1	0.2	Low	Far	Far	Easy	No	Too far from framework plan
4	East Second Street and Porter	Yes - For Sale	1	0.4	High	Far	Far	Medium	Yes	Too small of building - possible historical
5	Northwest corner at Third Street and Porter Street	Yes - For Sale	1	0.2	High	Moderately Close to City Hall/Park	Moderately Close	Medium	Yes - Latin Grill	Tract is too small
6	East Second Street and Branch	Yes - For Sale	1	0.3	Medium	Far	Far	Medium	Yes - Chiropractic Office	Too far from framework plan and too close to residential
7	Block at northwest Corner of Washburn and Third Street	3/4 of Property is for sale	2	1.5	High	"Near City Hall/Park"	Close	Medium	Buildings - Auto shop	Potential catalyst site
8	West of City Hall and East of Heritage Square Park	Yes - For Sale	1 (City)	0.4	High	"Near City Hall/Park"	Close	Easy	No	Potential catalyst site
9	Parcels at First Street and Main	Unknown	Unknown	0.4	High	Across from Amtrak Station	Close	Easy	Yes -recently demolished	Potential catalyst site

Figure 36: *Potential Catalyst Sites*



Development Proforma Assumptions

Development proformas are used to test how various conditions affected both the financial returns of the project, as well as the physical layout of buildings or other features on site. Because pro formas are models that show us what may happen in the future, they are often based on assumptions which are unknown at the start. As each catalyst project develops, assumptions get more refined.

Market-rate assumptions, seen in "Figure 37: Parcels West of City Hall and East of Heritage Square Park Return on Cost Example" and "Figure 38: Parcels at First Street and Main Return on Cost Example," were determined based on reports from CobbFendley and what could feasibly be built under today's market conditions. All costs and anticipated returns are based on the market expertise of Cobb Fendley and Associates, as well as limited comparable projects available in surrounding markets for analysis during the time of proforma publication and the catalyst site selection process.

Catalyst Site West of City Hall and East of Heritage Square Park

Timeline:

These are the key stages of the project. For the City Hall Redevelopment site near Heritage Square, the following phases for project start and end (including analysis, design, construction, lease-up and stabilization) are recommended.

- 2014-2015: Analysis
- 2015-2016: Design
- 2016-2017: Construction
- 2017-2020: Lease up/stabilization

General Inputs:

These are basic assumptions regarding the physical characteristics of the project that drive development potential such as the number of units, lot size or land use constraints. For the City Hall Redevelopment site near Heritage Square, the total lot acreage is 0.40 acres and current use is civic.

Costs:

Development and redevelopment projects include typical hard and soft costs associated with land acquisition, construction, design and financing.

For the City Hall Redevelopment site near Heritage Square, the total land acquisition, site and parking costs anticipated are $162,392. Assumptions included in these costs are that surface parking spaces typically cost $1,500 per space. Because there are no pre-existing buildings on site where this redevelopment would be proposed, no significant site demo costs were included. Total building hard cost assumptions for commercial/retail include $70 per square foot of commercial/retail/office. Assumptions for tenant improvements and contingency include $15 per square foot of retail and $20 per square foot of office with a 10.0 percent contingency.
Soft and indirect costs include numerous assumptions for title insurance, closing, legal costs, architecture/engineering/consulting costs, permits and impact fees, taxes, leasing expenses, marketing/FFE, financing costs, interest charges, construction management fees, development fee and overhead costs, as well as an additional soft cost contingency. Details regarding each of these assumptions can be found in the proforma.

Cash Flow @ Stabilization:

The annual cash flow section of the pro forma illustrates the annual income produced by each component less typical expenses at the time that the development has stabilized. Some of these expense items include vacancies, collection losses, taxes, operating expenses and reserves kept for future maintenance and unforeseen costs. The result is a net operating income (NOI) which is used to calculate the project returns and value the property. In this project example, the starting gross potential income is $141,589 and the NOI (after the expenses were removed) is $107,353.

Returns

Every development or redevelopment project is analyzed with respect to its estimated return on investment over time. Returns allow the developer and community to understand the relative risk of a project and compare that risk to other investment alternatives.

For the City Hall Redevelopment site near Heritage Square, office and retail uses offer the best return on investment due to foot traffic and close proximity to Taylor's City Hall. The total building program for the City Hall Redevelopment catalyst site project is 17,181 square feet (including parking). This includes flex live/work spaces integrated into 2,500 square feet of retail and 5,500 square feet of office served by surface parking (9,181 square feet). Based on this total building program and the land, site and parking costs, building hard costs and soft/indirect costs, the anticipated return on cost is 8.53 percent (between 6-8 percent is an ideal return on cost). A full multifamily product was also explored for this site, but due to size constraints (full multifamily build out would yield less than 10 residential units with parking) the project return on cost would be greater for office and retail with live/work space.

Unlevered return on cost is the amount of annual benefit of a stabilized project income compared to the overall cost to develop the project. This is unlevered meaning that we are not taking into account equity or debt financing of the project. The assumption is that it is a cash deal. When levered properly the annual returns should increase. We target an unlevered return of cost on a conservative proforma of a minimum of 6%-8%.This is one metric that is looked at by developers, but it's shortcoming is that it does not take into account time to develop and lease-up. Most developers also look at internal rate of return (IRR) which addresses the time portion of the equation. Cobb Fendley's experience is that if a project can reach this target return on costs and reach project stabilization in 3-5 years, then typically it will exceed all IRR targets.

Figure 37: *Parcels West of City Hall and East of Heritage Square Park Return on Cost Example*

BUILDING PROGRAM COMPONENTS

Residential Square Footage:	**Units**	**Unit GSF**	**Building GSF**	**Parking Spaces**	**Parking GSF**	**Total GSF**
Multifamily Apartments	0	882	0	0	0	0
Condo	0	0	0	0	0	0
Townhomes	0	1,500	0	0	0	0
Totals / Averages	**0**	**#DIV/0!**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**

Residential Pricing:	**Efficiency**	**Unit GLA**	**Building GLA**	**Unit Pricing [1]**	**Annual GPI**	**Sell-Out Price**
Multifamily Apartments	85.0%	750	0	$0.75	$0	-
Condo	85.0%	0	0	$0	-	$0
Townhomes	100.0%	1,500	0	$195,000	-	$0
Totals / Averages	**90.0%**	**0**	**0**	**N/M**	**$0**	**$0**

Commercial Square Footage:	**Units**	**Unit GSF**	**Building GSF**	**Parking Spaces**	**Parking GSF**	**Total GSF**
Retail	-	-	2,500	6	2,031	4,531
Office	-	-	5,500	22	7,150	12,650
Community Center	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals / Averages	**0**	**0**	**8,000**	**28**	**9,181**	**17,181**

Commercial Pricing:	**Efficiency**	**Unit GLA**	**Building GLA**	**Pricing [2]**	**Pass-Through**	**Yrly. Gross Rev.**
Retail	95.0%	-	2,375	$17.00	$14,131	$54,506
Office	85.0%	-	4,675	$17.00	$21,739	$101,214
Community Center	85.0%	0	0	$0.00	-	$0
Totals / Averages	**88.3%**	**0**	**7,050**	**N/M**	**$35,870**	**$155,720**

Total Building Program GSF (Excl. Parking)	**8,000**	**Total Building Program GSF (Incl. Parking)**	**17,181**

ANNUAL CASH FLOW COMPONENTS @ STABILIZATION

	Residential Component		**Commercial Component**			**Total**
Income Components & Operating Expenses:	**Condos / T.H.**	**Apartments**	**Retail**	**Office**	**Civic**	**Cash Flow**
Sell-Out Price / Gross Potential Income (GPI)	$0	$0	$40,375	$101,214	$0	$141,589
Vacancy & Collection Loss	$0	$0	-$2,019	-$7,085	$0	-$9,104
Unit Closing Costs, Commissions, Warranty Reserve	$0	-	-	-	-	$0
Net Sale Proceeds / Net Rental Income	**$0**	**$0**	**$38,356**	**$94,129**	**$0**	**$132,485**
Other Income / Expense Pass-Through Income	-	$0	$12,012	$18,478	$0	$30,490
Net Revenue / Hotel Gross Dept. Profit	**-**	**$0**	**$50,368**	**$112,607**	**$0**	**$162,975**
Operating Expenses	-	$0	-$14,131	-$21,739	*$0*	-$35,870
Real Estate Property Taxes	-	$0	-$6,172	-$13,579	*$0*	-$19,751
NET OPERATING INCOME	**-**	**$0**	**$30,064**	**$77,289**	**$0**	**$107,353**
CapEx and Reserves (4.0% Res. | 3.0% Com.)	-	$0	-$902	-$2,319	$0	-$3,221
NET CASH FLOW BEFORE DEBT SERVICE	**-**	**$0**	**$29,162**	**$74,970**	**$0**	**$104,133**
NOI Contribution - %	*N/M*	*0.0%*	*28.0%*	*72.0%*	*0.0%*	*100.0%*

TOTAL DEVELOPMENT BUDGET

	Total	**Cost per GSF**	**Notes / Assumptions**
Land, Site & Parking Costs:			
Land Acquisition Cost	$0	$0.00	0.40 Acres @ $0.00/SF
Site Work / Infrastructure	-$120,017	-$15.00	
Surface Parking	-$42,375	-$5.30	28 Spaces @ $1,500 per Space, w/ 0.0% Shared Pkg. Reduction
Demo	$0	$0.00	
Total Land, Site & Parking Costs	**-$162,392**	**-$20.30**	***12.9% of TDB (Excl. Participation)***
Building Hard Costs:			
Residential Buildings	$0	$0.00	$80/SF Apts. | $0/SF Condos | $80/SF T.H.
Commercial Buildings	-$560,000	-$70.00	$70/SF Retail | $70/SF Office | $0/SF Civic
Tenant Improvements	-$147,500	-$18.44	$15/SF Retail | $20/SF Office | $0/SF Civic
Hard Cost Contingency	-$82,752	-$10.34	10.0% Residential Hard Structure Cost per SF
Total Building Hard Costs	**-$790,252**	**-$98.78**	***62.8% of TDB***
Soft & Indirect Costs:			
Title Insurance, Recording and Closing	-$3,951	-$0.49	0.5% Total Building Hard Costs
Legal	-$7,903	-$0.99	1.0% Total Building Hard Costs
Architecture, Engineering & Other Consulting	-$102,733	-$12.84	13.0% Total Building Hard Costs
Permits and Impact Fees	-$50,000	-$6.25	$50,000 of Permit Fees (Estimated)
RE Taxes During Const., Project Ins. & Pre-Opening	-$7,903	-$0.99	Taxes Waived, Ins. 0.5% / Pre-Opening 0.5% of Hard Costs
Leasing Expense	-$14,000	-$1.75	$1.75/SF on Retail and Office only
Marketing / FFE	-$5,927	-$0.74	0.75% of Total Hard Costs
Financing Costs	-$7,974	-$1.00	1.0% of Construction Loan, 70.0% LTC Ratio
Construction Period Interest	-$53,118	-$6.64	6.50%, 75.0% Avg. Bal., 30 Mo. on Dev. Cost, less Income
Construction Management Fee	-$15,805	-$1.98	2.0% Total Hard Costs
Development Fee	-$24,979	-$3.12	3.0% of Building Hard Costs & Structured Parking
Developer Overhead	-$1,249	-$0.16	5.0% of Development Fee
Soft Cost Contingency	-$10,019	-$1.25	5.0% of Soft Costs
Total Soft & Indirect Costs	**-$305,560**	**-$38.19**	***38.7% of Hard Costs & 24.3% of TDB***
Total Development Budget (TDB)	**-$1,258,203**	**-$157.28**	
For Sale Residential Net Sales Proceeds (NSP)	$0		
Net Total Development Budget	**-$1,258,203**		**Unlevered Project Return on Cost (ROC)** **8.53%**

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Catalyst Site Parcels at First Street and Main

Timeline:

These are the key stages of the project. For the First Street and Main Street catalyst site, the following phases for project start and end (including analysis, design, construction, lease-up and stabilization) are recommended.

- 2014-2015: Analysis
- 2015-2016: Design
- 2016-2018: Construction
- 2019-2021: Lease up/stabilization

General Inputs:

These are basic assumptions regarding the physical characteristics of the project that drive development potential such as the number of units, lot size or land use constraints. For the parcels at First Street and Main Street, the total lot acreage is 0.46 acres and current use is vacant/industrial.

Costs:

Development and redevelopment projects include typical hard and soft costs associated with land acquisition, construction, design and financing.

For the First Street and Main Street catalyst site, the total land acquisition, site and parking costs anticipated are $337,020. Assumptions included in these costs are that surface parking spaces typically cost $1,500 per space. There are pre-existing buildings or foundational structures on site that would require site demo costs. Total building hard cost assumptions for residential buildings include $80 per square foot for apartments or town homes, and $65 per square foot for commercial/retail/office. Assumptions for tenant improvements and contingency include $15 per square foot of retail, $20 per square foot of office, $0 per square foot of civic, and a 10.0 percent contingency.

Soft and indirect costs include numerous assumptions for title insurance, closing, legal costs, architecture/engineering/consulting costs, permits and impact fees, taxes, leasing expenses, marketing/FFE, financing costs, interest charges, construction management fees, development fee and overhead costs, as well as an additional soft cost contingency. Details regarding each of these assumptions can be found in the proforma.

Cash Flow @ Stabilization:

The annual cash flow section of the pro forma illustrates the annual income produced by each component less typical expenses at the time that the development has stabilized. Some of these expense items include vacancies, collection losses, taxes, operating expenses and reserves kept for future maintenance and unforeseen costs. The result is a net operating income (NOI) which is used to calculate the project returns and value the property. In this project example, the starting gross potential income is $428,285 and the NOI (after the expenses were removed) is $303,193.

Returns

Every development or redevelopment project is analyzed with respect to its estimated return on investment over time. Returns allow the developer and community to understand the relative risk of a project and compare that risk to other investment alternatives.

For parcels at First Street and Main Street near the Amtrak station, multifamily alongside office and retail provide a positive return on cost. The total building program for the First Street and Main Street catalyst site project is 55,085 square feet (including parking). This includes 3,500 square feet of retail and 15,800 square feet of office served by surface parking (21,385 square feet) alongside 10,500 square feet of multifamily served by 3,900 square feet of parking. Based on this total building program and the land, site and parking costs, building hard costs and soft/ indirect costs, the anticipated return on cost is 7.98 percent (between 6-8 percent is an ideal return on cost).

Unlevered return on cost is the amount of annual benefit of a stabilized project income compared to the overall cost to develop the project. This is unlevered meaning that we are not taking into account equity or debt financing of the project. The assumption is that it is a cash deal. When levered properly the annual returns should increase. We target an unlevered return of cost on a conservative proforma of a minimum of 6%-8%.This is one metric that is looked at by developers, but it's shortcoming is that it does not take into account time to develop and lease-up. Most developers also look at internal rate of return (IRR) which addresses the time portion of the equation. Cobb Fendley's experience is that if a project can reach this target return on costs and reach project stabilization in 3-5 years, then typically it will exceed all IRR targets.

Figure 38: *Parcels at First Street and Main Return on Cost Example*

BUILDING PROGRAM COMPONENTS

Residential Square Footage:	**Units**	**Unit GSF**	**Building GSF**	**Parking Spaces**	**Parking GSF**	**Total GSF**
Multifamily Apartments	12	875	10,500	12	3,900	14,400
Condo	0	0	0	0	0	0
Townhomes	0	1,500	0	0	0	0
Totals / Averages	**12**	**875**	**10,500**	**12**	**3,900**	**14,400**

Residential Pricing:	**Efficiency**	**Unit GLA**	**Building GLA**	**Unit Pricing [1]**	**Annual GPI**	**Sell-Out Price**
Multifamily Apartments	85.0%	750	9,000	$0.75	$81,000	-
Condo	85.0%	0	0	$0	-	$0
Townhomes	100.0%	1,500	0	$195,000	-	$0
Totals / Averages	**90.0%**	**750**	**9,000**	**N/M**	**$81,000**	**$0**

Commercial Square Footage:	**Units**	**Unit GSF**	**Building GSF**	**Parking Spaces**	**Parking GSF**	**Total GSF**
Retail	-	-	3,500	11	3,413	6,913
Office	-	-	15,800	55	17,973	33,773
Community Center	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals / Averages	**0**	**0**	**19,300**	**66**	**21,385**	**40,685**

Commercial Pricing:	**Efficiency**	**Unit GLA**	**Building GLA**	**Pricing [2]**	**Pass-Through**	**Yrly. Gross Rev.**
Retail	95.0%	-	3,325	$17.00	$19,784	$76,309
Office	85.0%	-	13,430	$17.00	$62,450	$290,760
Community Center	85.0%	0	0	$0.00	-	$0
Totals / Averages	**88.3%**	**0**	**16,755**	**N/M**	**$82,233**	**$367,068**

Total Building Program GSF (Excl. Parking)	**29,800**	**Total Building Program GSF (Incl. Parking)**	**55,085**

ANNUAL CASH FLOW COMPONENTS @ STABILIZATION

	Residential Component		**Commercial Component**			**Total**
Income Components & Operating Expenses:	**Condos / T.H.**	**Apartments**	**Retail**	**Office**	**Civic**	**Cash Flow**
Sell-Out Price / Gross Potential Income (GPI)	$0	$81,000	$56,525	$290,760	$0	$428,285
Vacancy & Collection Loss	$0	-$5,670	-$2,826	-$20,353	$0	-$28,849
Unit Closing Costs, Commissions, Warranty Reserve	$0	-	-	-	-	$0
Net Sale Proceeds / Net Rental Income	**$0**	**$75,330**	**$53,699**	**$270,406**	**$0**	**$399,435**
Other Income / Expense Pass-Through Income	-	$4,050	$16,816	$53,082	$0	$73,948
Net Revenue / Hotel Gross Dept. Profit	**-**	**$79,380**	**$70,515**	**$323,488**	**$0**	**$473,383**
Operating Expenses	-	-$28,350	-$19,784	-$62,450	*$0*	-$110,583
Real Estate Property Taxes	-	-$21,002	-$7,001	-$31,604	*$0*	-$59,607
NET OPERATING INCOME	**-**	**$30,028**	**$43,730**	**$229,435**	**$0**	**$303,193**
CapEx and Reserves (4.0% Res. | 3.0% Com.)	-	-$1,201	-$1,312	-$6,883	$0	-$9,396
NET CASH FLOW BEFORE DEBT SERVICE	**-**	**$28,826**	**$42,418**	**$222,552**	**$0**	**$293,797**
NOI Contribution - %	*N/M*	*9.9%*	*14.4%*	*75.7%*	*0.0%*	*100.0%*

TOTAL DEVELOPMENT BUDGET

	Total	**Cost per GSF**	**Notes / Assumptions**
Land, Site & Parking Costs:			
Land Acquisition Cost	-$50,094	-$1.68	0.46 Acres @ $2.50/SF
Site Work / Infrastructure	-$120,226	-$4.03	
Surface Parking	-$116,700	-$3.92	78 Spaces @ $1,500 per Space, w/ 0.0% Shared Pkg. Reduction
Demo	-$50,000	-$1.68	
Total Land, Site & Parking Costs	**-$337,020**	**-$11.31**	***7.6% of TDB (Excl. Participation)***
Building Hard Costs:			
Residential Buildings	-$840,000	-$28.19	$80/SF Apts. | $0/SF Condos | $80/SF T.H.
Commercial Buildings	-$1,254,500	-$42.10	$65/SF Retail | $65/SF Office | $0/SF Civic
Tenant Improvements	-$368,500	-$12.37	$15/SF Retail | $20/SF Office | $0/SF Civic
Hard Cost Contingency	-$258,323	-$8.67	10.0% Residential Hard Structure Cost per SF
Total Building Hard Costs	**-$2,721,323**	**-$91.32**	***71.7% of TDB***
Soft & Indirect Costs:			
Title Insurance, Recording and Closing	-$13,607	-$0.46	0.5% Total Building Hard Costs
Legal	-$27,213	-$0.91	1.0% Total Building Hard Costs
Architecture, Engineering & Other Consulting	-$217,706	-$7.31	8.0% Total Building Hard Costs
Permits and Impact Fees	-$50,000	-$1.68	$50,000 of Permit Fees (Estimated)
RE Taxes During Const., Project Ins. & Pre-Opening	-$27,213	-$0.91	Taxes Waived, Ins. 0.5% / Pre-Opening 0.5% of Hard Costs
Leasing Expense	-$33,775	-$1.13	$1.75/SF on Retail and Office only
Marketing / FFE	-$20,410	-$0.68	0.75% of Total Hard Costs
Financing Costs	-$23,995	-$0.81	1.0% of Construction Loan, 70.0% LTC Ratio
Construction Period Interest	-$160,302	-$5.38	6.50%, 75.0% Avg. Bal., 30 Mo. on Dev. Cost, less Income
Construction Management Fee	-$54,426	-$1.83	2.0% Total Hard Costs
Development Fee	-$85,141	-$2.86	3.0% of Building Hard Costs & Structured Parking
Developer Overhead	-$4,257	-$0.14	5.0% of Development Fee
Soft Cost Contingency	-$20,696	-$0.69	5.0% of Soft Costs
Total Soft & Indirect Costs	**-$738,741**	**-$24.79**	***27.1% of Hard Costs & 19.5% of TDB***
Total Development Budget (TDB)	**-$3,797,084**	**-$127.42**	
For Sale Residential Net Sales Proceeds (NSP)	$0		
Net Total Development Budget	**-$3,797,084**		**Unlevered Project Return on Cost (ROC)** **7.98%**

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First Street Market Plaza

Taylor lacks a downtown plaza where residents and visitors could gather for events. First Street should be redesigned as a “restaurant and entertainment” district. The street itself should be designed as a “woonerf,” which is a European type of shared road that can also serve as a flexible plaza space. The intent is to use materials, such as bollards and pavers, to define the automobile way, but the overall aesthetic is focused on the plaza and creating a welcoming environment for people, bicyclists and autos. This woonerf market plaza amenity on First Street could provide that much-needed gathering space and tie together spaces that currently feel disconnected.

Key projects to implement:

1. First Street Infill Development
2. Main Street Slip Road Plaza
3. Skate Park and Facilities
4. Union Pacific Quiet Zone
5. Amtrak Improvements
6. Multi-Modal Transit Hub

This project helps to achieve the following goals for the Taylor Downtown Master Plan:

Economy
EC1 EC2 EC3

Community
C1 C2 C3

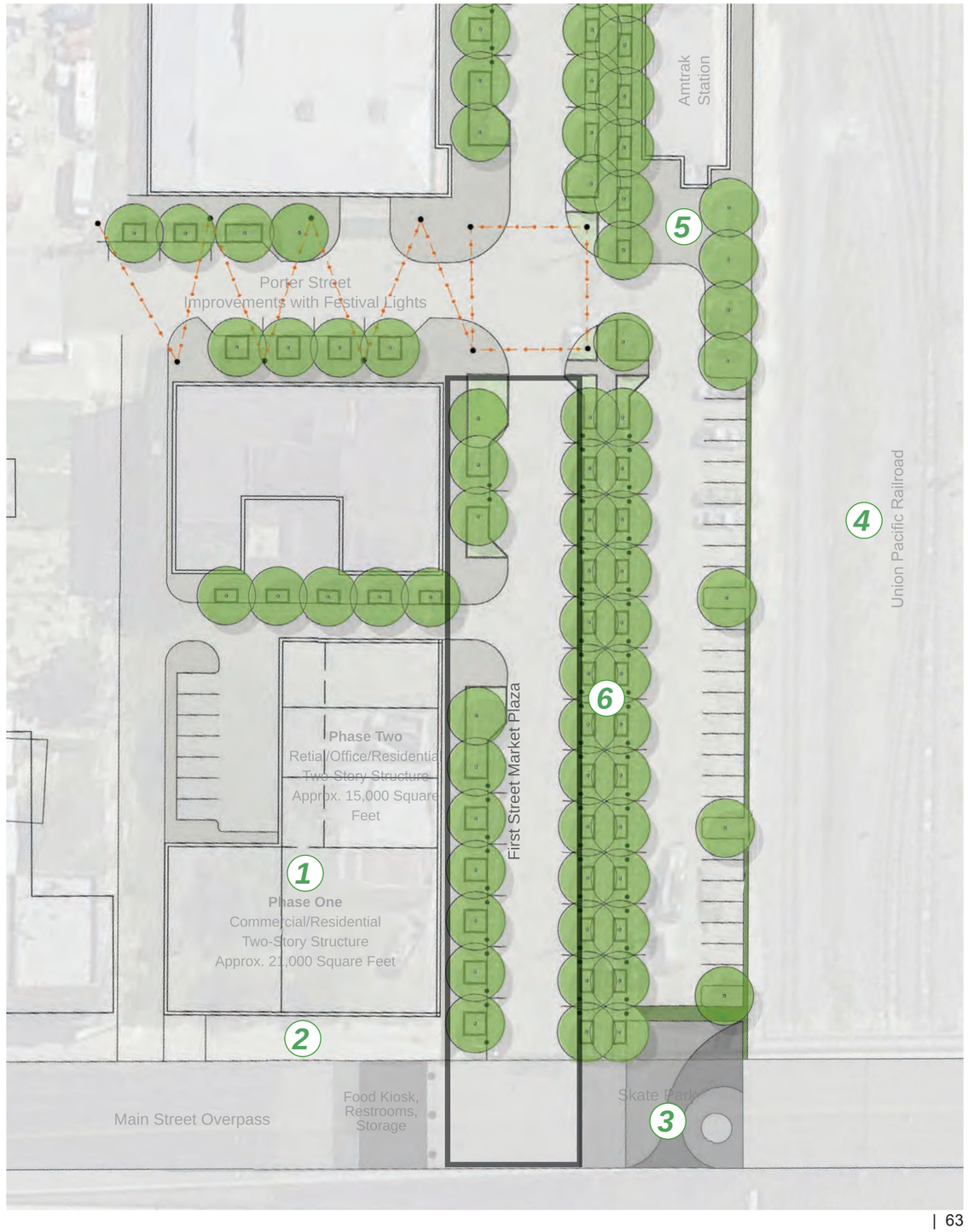
Environment
EN1

Art
A1

Photograph depicting how First Street could be transformed into a “woonerf”.

Market activities could be held along a new market plaza envisioned for First Street.

Figure 39: *First Street Market Plaza Illustrative Plan*



1 First Street Infill Development

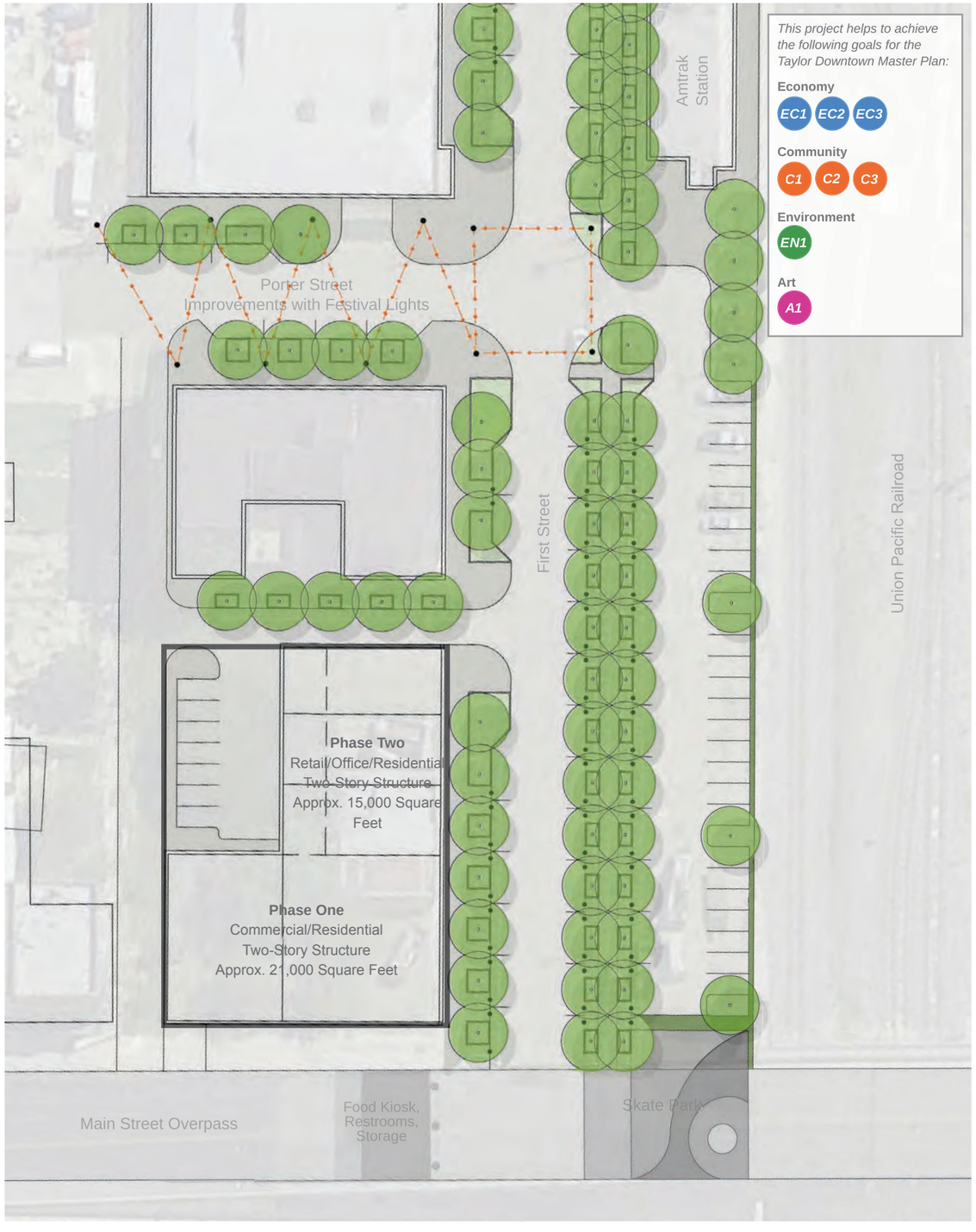
This catalyst site is located on the 100 block of First Street in between Main and Porter Street. The development could be conducted in two phases. The first phase of this catalyst development could focus on the half of the site that today is vacant. The second phase of development would focus on the other half.

"Figure 40: First Street Infill Development" illustrates how the first phase of development could feature a mix of commercial infill (such as a restaurant or nighttime entertainment venue), office or residential in a two-story structure of approximately 21,000 square feet in size. The second phase of infill development near First Street features a smaller, two-story office/retail mixed building of approximately 15,000 square feet.

Surface parking located to the rear of this infill development so that curb cuts and interruptions to the pedestrian environment are minimized along First Street and the wing street that runs parallel to the Main Street overpass. Surface parking is recommended primarily because structured parking would require higher density and a much longer absorption rate than the market in Taylor would currently allow.

Photograph depicting First Street as it exists today.

Figure 40: *First Street Infill Development*



KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION	POSSIBLE IMPLEMENTATION AGENCY
R1: Partner with local property owners to implement phase one of infill development. Phase one should feature a mix of commercial infill (such as a restaurant or nighttime entertainment venue), office or residential in a two-story structure of approximately 21,000 square feet in size.	City of Taylor Property owners
R2: Partner with local property owners to implement phase two of infill development. Phase one should feature a smaller, two-story office/retail mixed building of approximately 15,000 square feet.	City of Taylor Property owners
R3: Provide surface parking located to the rear of infill development so that curb cuts and interruptions to the pedestrian environment are minimized along First Street.	City of Taylor Property owners
R4: Partner with property owners to implement shade awnings on buildings during redevelopment efforts. Shade awnings should be designed in ways that provide the maximum amount of shade to pedestrians. Awnings should be in keeping with the historic vernacular and architecture of downtown.	City of Taylor Property owners
R5: Encourage outdoor dining and retail activities that contribute to a vibrant downtown economy.	City of Taylor Property owners
R6: Add lighting along wing streets to achieve appropriate footcandles necessary for pedestrian safety and visibility at night.	City of Taylor Property owners
Install signage that communicates to residents and visitors key destinations, parking, bicycle lane and transit connectivity opportunities.	City of Taylor

Future infill development should feature retail on the ground floor at the corner of First Street and Main Street. Residential or office could be located atop.

2 Main Street Pedestrian Mall and "Wing" Street

The existing wing streets directly east and west of the Main Street bridge could be transformed into vibrant pedestrian-oriented areas that complement the historic buildings on Main in between First and Second Street. Similar to First Street, the wing streets should be designed with materials, such as bollards and pavers, to define the automobile way, but the overall aesthetic feels more like a plaza than a roadway. The wing street on the east side of Main Street could be closed to vehicular traffic except for emergencies. The wing street on the western side could be one-way south-bound traffic.

Key recommendations for this space include the following:

- Multi-story, mixed use structures with retail/ commercial on first floor and residential/ office on the upper floors.
- Unique facades and store fronts (historic) that add interest to the streetscape.
- Awnings that help to create an enclosed, protected, more human scale streetscape.
- Clean window displays that engage the pedestrian.
- Lighting that reflects the history of downtown and promotes pedestrian safety.
- Outdoor cafe seating that allows for people watching and activities.
- Pedestrian space that is clearly defined or separated from automobiles and large enough to create a comfortable space.
- Distinction made with the use of a wooden or brick paving pattern at the pedestrian crosswalk of Second Street and the Main Street pedestrian mall. Distinctions are already made at major intersections of Main Street, but intersections nearest to the railroad and First Street Market area could be improved.

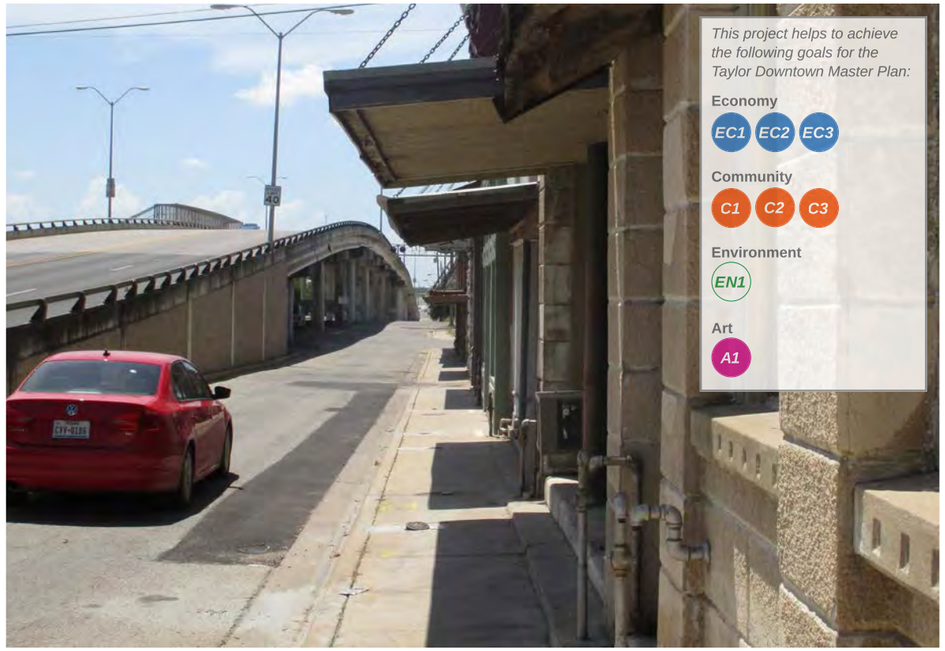


Image depicting the existing characteristics of a wing street in Taylor today.

Wing streets should be designed as woonerfs with materials, such as bollards and pavers, to define the automobile way, but the overall aesthetic is more like a plaza than a roadway.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION	POSSIBLE IMPLEMENTATION AGENCY
R1: Partner with property owners to promote multi-story, mixed use infill development with first floor commercial/retail and residential/office above.	City of Taylor
Encourage outdoor dining and retail activities that contribute to a vibrant downtown economy.	City of Taylor Property owners
Partner with property owners to implement shade awnings on buildings along Second Street. Shade awnings should be designed in ways that provide the maximum amount of shade to pedestrians. Awnings should be in keeping with the historic vernacular and architecture of downtown.	City of Taylor Property owners
Add lighting along wing streets to achieve appropriate footcandles necessary for pedestrian safety and visibility at night.	City of Taylor
Install signage that communicates to residents and visitors key destinations, parking, bicycle lane and transit connectivity opportunities.	City of Taylor
Hire a consultant to design and build wing street improvements in keeping with the character of **"Figure 30: First Street (East) "Woonerf" Concept" on page 53**.	City of Taylor

3 Skate Park and Main Street Overpass

As open-space resources are scarce in existing downtowns and densities increase over time, it is important to take advantage of whatever open spaces are available. Though often overlooked, the area beneath the Main Street bridge holds exceptional potential as a vital, interesting, shaded and dynamic community space. Combined with improvements along First Street, this entire area could become transformed from a dark, empty space into a lively, unique recreational experience. A skate park in close proximity to the First Street Market space, will foster active uses that will fuel restaurant, retail and entertainment opportunities. Lights projected onto the highway's concrete columns help animate the space, and can be designed to cycle through colored light to add visual interest and depth to the space. The following elements should be implemented in this area:

Key projects to implement:

- Flexible spaces that provide for skateboarding and events
- Seating space near the skate area from which onlookers can view the First Street Market and skate activities
- Bike racks
- Clear directional signage to multimodal transit opportunities, restrooms and First Street destinations
- Lighting, tables, seating and public art
- Wiring for music, events or food vendors
- Informational kiosks for visitors
- Enclosed bridge structure that prevents birds from nesting

The Skate Park area could also extend east to allow the existing stairwell from the overpass to serve as a viewing platform that is easily accessible and welcoming. Shade from the overpass will cool these recreational spaces during the day and early evening hours.

Figure 41: *Skate Park Illustrative*

This project helps to achieve the following goals for the Taylor Downtown Master Plan:

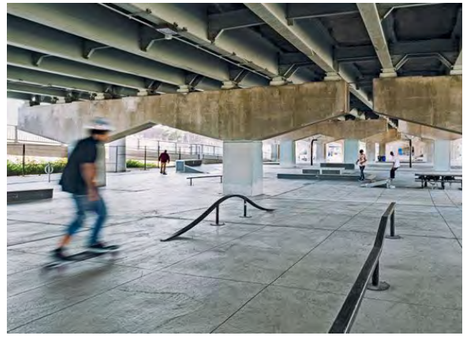
Economy
EC1 EC2 EC3

Community
C1 C2 C3

Environment
EN1

Art
A1

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION	POSSIBLE IMPLEMENTATION AGENCY
R1: Work with Project Loop to permit and build a skate park under the overpass.	City of Taylor
R2: Close the East Main Street railroad crossing to allow for a safe skate park to be created under the overpass.	City of Taylor
R3: Coordinate efforts with Union Pacific to as part of creating a quiet zone (described in further detail in the following section).	City of Taylor Union Pacific
R4: After the closure of the eastern portion of Main Street at the railroad crossing, partner with a design consultant to build the following elements of the new skate park: • A small building that houses 300 to 500 square feet for a food/coffee kiosk, restrooms and storage space for the First Street Market. • Amphitheater seating that faces towards First Street and the skate park.	City of Taylor
R5: Utilize revenues earned from renting the kiosk space to a food/coffee vendor to offset the operations and maintenance costs of the skate park.	City of Taylor Food/beverage vendor
R6: Provide bike racks close to the First Street Market under the overpass to encourage arrival by biking or walking.	City of Taylor
R7: Add lighting under the overpass at First Street to achieve appropriate footcandles necessary for safety and visibility at night for the skate park, restrooms, dining and entertainment areas.	City of Taylor
R8: Install signage that communicates to residents and visitors key destinations, parking, bicycle lane and transit connectivity opportunities.	City of Taylor



The overpass at Main Street and First Street could be transformed from a dark, empty space into a lively, unique recreational space for locals and visitors.

Adding lighting under the overpass at First Street provides safety and visibility at night for the skate park, restrooms, dining and entertainment areas.

A flexible space that provides for recreation and community events is recommended.

A small building under the overpass provides space for restrooms, First Street Market storage and a small food kiosk.

4 Railroad Quiet Zone

One of the current obstacles in downtown Taylor is the constant blasting of train horns, which exceed 100 decibels. According to the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), approximately 60 total trains come through Taylor per day. The FRA requires that trains approaching an intersection from a quarter of a mile distant sound a horn when approaching a public street railroad crossing. However, FRA does allow for provisions to create a quiet zone. A quiet zone allows trains to pass through the railroad crossing without sounding their horns, except in emergencies, and results in less train noise for surrounding residents and commercial users.

Quiet zones are implemented by installing railroad control devices and roadway improvements to minimize the risk of vehicular traffic crossing in front of a moving train. These improvements include barriers in advance of the crossing and upgrading the railroad crossing controls and equipment. However, train engineers will continue to sound the horn if there is a danger on or near the tracks. Public authorities are responsible for the cost of preliminary engineering, construction, maintenance and replacement of active warning devices or their components, including wayside horn systems installed at crossings to meet quiet zone standards. More information can be found at http://www.up.com/real_estate/roadxing/industry/horn_quiet/index.htm.

Quiet zones are established on a case by case basis with conversations the FRA, Union Pacific Railroad, TxDOT and the City of Taylor. Many factors are considered such as pedestrian and vehicle counts, fiscal limitations, number of intersections, physical restrictions and cooperation of the railroad line. Taylor should consider investigating in a quiet zone for downtown Taylor as a whole, which may include Main Street, Walnut Street, 1st Street and Third Street intersections. **"Figure 42: Railroad Quiet Zone"** illustrates a one mile area in which Taylor could implement a quiet zone. Numerous ground level railroad crossings existing both in and near this one mile quiet zone are also indicated on the diagram.

Public authorities are required to guarantee reimbursement to the railroad for all actual costs associated with the installation and maintenance of the railroad improvements required for the quiet zone by means of a project agreement executed by the parties. This may include quiet zone warning devices, wayside horns or both.

Examples of costs as estimated by Union Pacific:[1]

- Four-Quadrant Gate Systems - $300,000 to $500,000
- Basic Active Warning System* - $185,000 to $400,000
- (*Includes Flashing Lights and Gates, Constant Warning Time, Power Out Indicator and Cabin.)
- Basic Inter-Connect - $5,000 to $15,000
- Annual Maintenance - $4,000 to $10,000

Another option for quiet zone improvements is the installation of wayside horns. Wayside horns are stationary horns located at railroad crossings. They are mounted on poles and direct sound towards vehicles when a train approaches an intersection so railroad locomotives don't have to sound their horns at the crossing. The wayside horns have the same cadence as regular train horns — two long, one short and one long whistle. The wayside horns cost about $125,000 per crossing, which is much less than other "quiet zone" options.

As recommended in **R3**, Taylor can minimize costs by closing East Main Street and therefore the upgrade improvements would only be necessary for West Main Street. The City of Taylor should use this closure as a way to show their commitment to Union Pacific in creating a mutually safe area for freight rail and ongoing pedestrian, bicycle and automobile traffic.

1 Pacific, Union. Federal Railroad Administration's Train Horn & Quiet Zone Rule. n.d. http://www.up.com/real_estate/roadxing/industry/horn_quiet/index.htm (accessed 2014).

This project helps to achieve the following goals for the Taylor Downtown Master Plan:

Economy
EC1 EC2 EC3

Community
C1 C2 C3

Environment
EN1

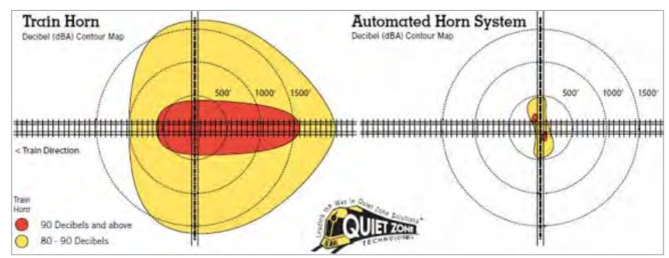
Art
A1

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION	POSSIBLE IMPLEMENTATION AGENCY
R1: Contact Union Pacific at (512) 450-1730 to enter into discussions about quiet zones and crossing closures.	City of Taylor, Union Pacific
R2: Begin discussions with the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and TxDOT to promote downtown quiet zone which may include reduced crossings and quiet zone safety improvements.	City of Taylor, Federal Railroad Administration, TxDOT
R3: Hire an engineering consultant to design crossing upgrades that meet the requirements for the quiet zone.	City of Taylor
R4: Apply for grants to assist in the cost of safety improvements such as the Railway-Highway Crossing Hazard Elimination Grant. More information available at https://www.fra.dot.gov/Page/P0513	City of Taylor
R4: Implement quiet zones as part of capital improvement.	City of Taylor

Figure 42: *Railroad Quiet Zone*

	Task/Subtasks	Timing Considerations
Engineering & Construction	Railroad Diagnostic Reviews	Long lead time
	Surveying	Typical effort
	Traffic Studies	Do while school is in session
	Preliminary Design of Improvements	Long lead time
	Testing Period for Temporary Devices	Part of community involvement
	70% Plans, Specifications & Estimates	Typical effort
	90% Plans, Specifications & Estimates	Typical effort
	100% Plans, Specifications & Estimates	Typical effort
	Bid & Construction	Typical effort
	As-built Documentation	Necessary for Notice of Establishment
Community Involvement	Strategy/Policy Development	Should a quiet zone be located here?
	Presentation of Project	Critical to success
	Presentation of Mitigation Concepts	Critical to success
	Feedback from Mitigation Concepts	Critical to success
Quiet Zone Application Process	Develop Notice of Intent	Requires at least 70% plans
	Notice of Intent & Comment Period	60 days minimum
	Develop Application	Tedious
	Application & Comment Period	60 days minimum
	FRA Review & Approval	No timeframe established
	Develop Notice of Establishment	Requires FRA approval of application and construction of all improvements
	Notice of Establishment	Certified by CEO of applying jurisdiction
	Quiet Zone Begins	At least 21 days after mailing of Notice of Establishment

A timeline of key considerations for completing a Federal Railroad Administration Quiet Zone application. Source: Engineering consultant Walter P. Moore http://www.walterpmoore.com/sites/default/files/pdfs/QuietZones.pdf



This diagram shows the difference in noise volume between Wayside Automated horn systems and Train horns. Train horns are over 90dB at 5,000 feet distance and 80dB at 1,500 feet distance.

5 Amtrak Improvements

The current Amtrak station is served by two daily trains and has an annual ridership of 4,797[1] and station revenue of $232,190. The station consists of an accessible platform, short- and long-term parking spaces, pay phones, and a brick structure that contains Union Pacific offices. The facility does not provide ticket service or a waiting area for passengers. Recommended Amtrak improvements include:

- A small, plaza space (could be indoor or outdoor);
- Improved pedestrian lighting;
- Trees for shade in parking areas and near the platform;
- Furniture for additional seating opportunities and trash receptacles; fencing to help buffer and contain pedestrian and visitor activities from railroad and vehicular traffic; and
- A safe and level platform for loading and unloading from the train service.

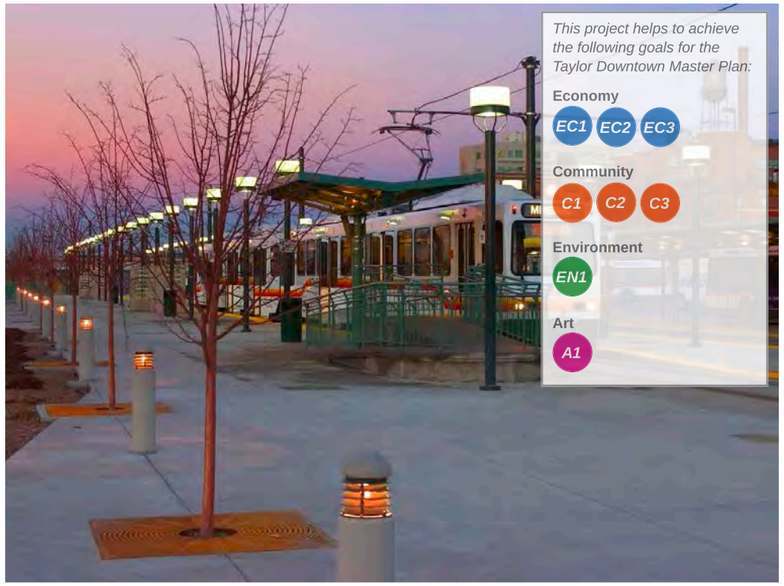
As part of the larger First Street Market improvement area, the City should collaborate with Amtrak and Union Pacific to create a safer, functional and more aesthetically pleasing station stop for locals and visitors. These improvements should be coordinated with the entire First Street Market to seamlessly blend the area together and to create a memorable destination downtown. Consistency in materials, furniture, lighting, landscaping, trees and signage is recommended.

As the Lone Star Rail Initiative continues to advance, alongside the Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority's Project Connect, additional partnership opportunities might be employed. The City of Taylor should consider coordinating improvement efforts with Amtrak, Union Pacific, and local investors to harness the following benefits from station area improvements:

- Tourism growth
- Economic development
- Civic pride enhancement
- Aesthetic improvements

The federal Passenger Rail Reform and Investment Act of 2014 (PRRIA 2014) creates station development opportunities for the private sector. Rail stations are often located in desirable downtown locations and can become focal points for significant residential, commercial, and retail development. PRRIA 2014 requires Amtrak to study the development opportunity of its stations, and then seek private sector partners to unlock their potential, thereby generating revenue to support passenger rail operations.

As an example, in 2012, Alpine, Texas recognized the potential economic opportunities of improving the Amtrak station located in the heart of downtown. Amtrak improved the platform and invested in new lighting while the city of Alpine invested in new tree plantings and streetscape enhancements. Ridership and revenue has increased[2], and city officials have noticed rail passengers are more eager to get off the trains and explore the town.



Providing fencing and trees along the First Street edge of the station area will help to buffer pedestrian and visitor activities from railroad, bus and vehicular traffic.

A small, plaza space (indoor or outdoor) provides a great gathering space for locals and visitors in the First Street Market area and waiting for trains or buses.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION	POSSIBLE IMPLEMENTATION AGENCY
R1: Notify state Department of Transportation (DOT) of station improvement projects to better understand how it may fit into the state's transportation plan.	City of Taylor Department of Transportation Amtrak
R2: Work with Amtrak Engineering and Stations Planning personnel, through the Amtrak Government Affairs representative (Todd Stennis, Regional Contact, governmentaffairsnol@amtrak.com), who can assess the feasibility of your project and provide guidance on platform length and height and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) matters.	City of Taylor Amtrak Union Pacific
R3: Direct the project architect to the Amtrak Standard Program and Planning Guidelines and Signage Guidelines at www.greatamericanstations.com.	City of Taylor
R4: Ensure station area improvement projects adhere to local building codes. Seek amendments if necessary.	City of Taylor Amtrak
R5: Contact the Great American Stations Project and your state DOT for information about possible state and federal funding.	City of Taylor Amtrak Union Pacific
R6: Work with the host railroad to determine how much liability insurance is needed since construction will take place near active tracks; be sure to factor the cost of a flagman into the project budget.	City of Taylor Amtrak Union Pacific
R7: Provide a small, plaza space (could be indoor or outdoor).	City of Taylor Amtrak
R8: Install improved pedestrian lighting at the station.	City of Taylor Amtrak
R9: Plant trees for shade in and along parking areas and near the platform.	City of Taylor Amtrak
R10: Provide furniture for additional seating opportunities and trash receptacles.	City of Taylor Amtrak
R11: Construct fencing along the First Street edge of the station area to help buffer and contain pedestrian and visitor activities from railroad and vehicular traffic.	City of Taylor Amtrak
R12: Provide a safe and level platform for loading and unloading from the train service.	City of Taylor Amtrak

1 Amtrak. Great American Stations Project. 2006. http://www.greatamericanstations.com/Stations/TAY (accessed 2014).

2 Big Bend Now Newspaper Top Stories. New traveler-friendly passenger train platform completed at Alpine depot. January 5, 2012. http://bigbendnow.com/2012/01/new-traveler-friendly-passenger-train-platform-completed-at-alpine-depot/ (accessed 2014).

6 Multimodal Hub

Outlying and suburban areas primarily depend on intercity bus services such as Greyhound or local or regional intercity bus providers to connect them with major cities and other regional destinations. In recent years, intercity bus service has declined due to lack of funding, competition from low-cost commercial airfares, and restructuring of bus transportation networks. Amtrak is generally the only rail service in communities with populations less than 50,000. As a result, rural residents are increasingly seeking alternatives to automobile travel.

A multimodal hub near Taylor's Amtrak station and the proposed First Street Market area, should feature the following key ingredients to promote multimodal transportation activity downtown.

- CARTS service connections
- Lone Star Rail service connections
- Future Project Connect service connections
- Amtrak station services and amenities
- Amtrak station park and ride areas for passenger pick up and drop off
- Improved pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

This synergy of creating a hub for multimodal accessibility will seamlessly allow locals and visitors alike the ease they need to safely and conveniently arrive in Taylor and transfer to other modes of transportation that will easily take them to their destinations in downtown. This multimodal hub will also fuel vibrancy and energy levels within the First Street Market area to boost economic and social activities.

Unique partnerships are sometimes required to link public transit, intercity buses, passenger rail, high-speed rail, commercial air, and bike/pedestrian facilities. For example, Trinidad, Colorado, a town of 9,077 people, is developing a transportation center that will have space for passengers to comfortably transfer between Amtrak, intercity buses, and local transit services. The project is being advanced through a unique inter-governmental partnership, where the center will be owned by the city and operated by the South Central Council of Governments.

Both the U.S. Department of Transportation's TIGER grant program and the FTA's Bus Livability program have supported a number of transit hub and intermodal facility projects in recent years. However, most multimodal hub improvements projects cannot rely solely on federal contributions. Significant effort and financial equity must exist on the local and regional level in order to bring these projects to completion.

This project helps to achieve the following goals for the Taylor Downtown Master Plan:

Economy
EC1 EC2 EC3

Community
C1 C2 C3

Environment
EN1

Art
A1

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION	POSSIBLE IMPLEMENTATION AGENCY
R1: Contact the Department of Transportation's Federal Transit Administration (FTA) regrading Bus and Bus Facilities Livability Initiative Program Grants. The regional contact for Taylor is Robert C. Patrick, FTA Regional Administrator, Region 6-Ft. Worth, 819 Taylor Street, Room 8A36 Ft. Worth, TX 76102, Tel. 817 978-0550 (states served: Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, New Mexico and Texas). Proposals may be submitted to FTA electronically at buslivability@dot.gov or through the GRANTS.GOV APPLY function. Those who apply via e-mail at buslivability@dot.gov should receive a confirmation e-mail within two business days. For general program information, contact Kimberly Sledge, Office of Transit Programs, 3 (202) 366-2053, e-mail: kimberly.sledge@dot.gov or Henrika Buchanan-Smith, (202)366-4020, e-mail: henrika.buchanan-smith@dot.gov.	City of Taylor
R2: Partner with CARTS to provide service connections in the multimodal hub. Reach out to Lyle Nelson, Chief of Staff of Taylor's CARTS program.	City of Taylor CARTS
R3: Partner with Amtrak and Lone Star Rail to complete improvements to the station area that promote the use of rail services.	City of Taylor Amtrak Union Pacific
R4: Provide clearly signed and accessible park and ride areas for passenger pick up and drop of at the Amtrak station.	City of Taylor Amtrak
R5: Improve pedestrian and bicycle facilities serving the multimodal and First Street Market area (see **"Figure 30: First Street (East) "Woonerf" Concept" on page 53** and **"Figure 29: First Street (East) Illustrative - Market Events" on page 52** for more detail.	City of Taylor

A multimodal hub will fuel vibrancy and energy levels in the First Street Market area to boost economic and social activities in downtown Taylor.

Heritage Square Park and City Hall Redevelopment

Heritage Square Park

Anchoring the northern end of priority improvements both on Main Street and Porter Street is the Heritage Square and City Hall Redevelopment project. Through the community engagement process, it was confirmed that park improvements and park programming is highly desired to help strengthen the vitality of downtown.

The edge conditions adjacent to a park are critical to creating a successful design. Allowing development to face onto the park promotes safety in that it increases “eyes on the park”. Parks have proven to create hedonic value if well-designed, programmed and maintained. Hedonic value is an increase in economic value that stems from being in close proximity to a popular destination or service. Property values can experience as high as a 20 percent impact for abutting or fronting properties. As an example in the nearby region, in the redevelopment of the Mueller airport in downtown Austin, residential values are worth approximately 10 to 20 percent more if adjacent to a park space. There is also an increase tax base associated with increased values that can be reinvested into the downtown for other improvements.

Aside from the direct fiscal impact on economic values in a community, parks and open space bring additional benefits. For example, the incorporation of a signature park offers a comparative advantage in attracting future businesses and desirable residential relocators to downtown. Creating a built edge around Heritage Square Park exhibits good urban design in that it helps to frame the open area with spaces that invite pedestrians and visitors.

Today, the City Hall downtown features a parking lot alongside the edge of Heritage Square Park. Redeveloping this edge, approximately 60 to 80 feet into the parking lot that exists today, in a long-term lease with a developer will provide the City revenue that can be invested into the operations and maintenance of Heritage Square Park.

The proposed concept for Heritage Square Park and City Hall include these important layers of influence, community, and design narrative. The layout of the park is envisioned as responsive to the programming needs and existing conditions of the community, while the narrative represents the physical appearance and feel of what locals and visitors experience. Signature spaces within the park are intended to further the following overall design principles and goals.

Key projects to implement:

1. Heritage Square Park
2. City Hall Redevelopment

This project helps to achieve the following goals for the Taylor Downtown Master Plan:

Economy
EC1 EC2 EC3

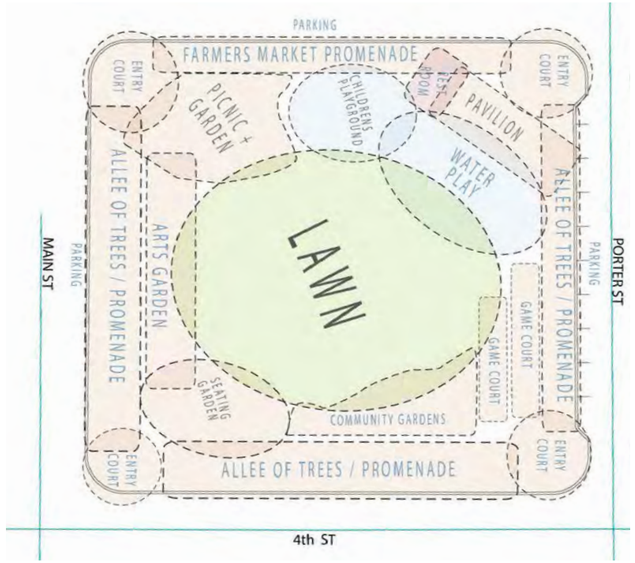
Community
C1 C2 C3

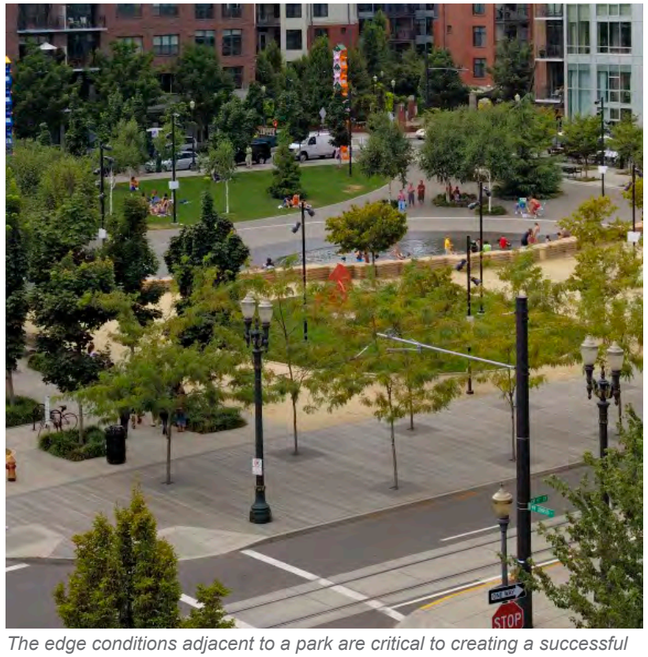
Environment
EN1

Art
A1

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION	POSSIBLE IMPLEMENTATION AGENCY
R1: Identify available funding for Heritage Square improvements.	City of Taylor
R2: Apply for grants to assist in the planning and construction costs.	Main Street Board City of Taylor
R3: Hire a professional design firm to develop a detailed design package for Heritage Square. Deliverable for this phase of the project would be a detailed document; which will include locations, dimensions, and materials in addition to designs and content.	City of Taylor Consultants
R4: Host a visioning session or online survey for community residents and stakeholders to help identify historic plaques and artwork to be featured in the park.	City of Taylor
R5: Partner with a professional artist or non-profit to create the custom artwork and plaques desired by the community.	City of Taylor Community artists Non-profits
R6: Hire a professional design firm to develop an interpretive signage package that reflects the history of Taylor and Heritage Square Park.	City of Taylor Consultants
R7: Coordinate with local non-profits, Taylor Independent School District, Main Street business owners and other community organizations to host and coordinate events on the Square.	City of Taylor Main Street Business Owners Non-Profits Community Organizations
R8: Partner with a consultant to write an operations and maintenance plan and ensure the long-term management Heritage Square	City of Taylor Consultants
R9: Establish pest management procedures as part of the operations and maintenance planning for Heritage Square Park.	City of Taylor Consultants

Figure 43: *Heritage Square Concept*





The edge conditions adjacent to a park are critical to creating a successful design. Allowing development to face onto the park promotes safety in that it increases “eyes on the park”.

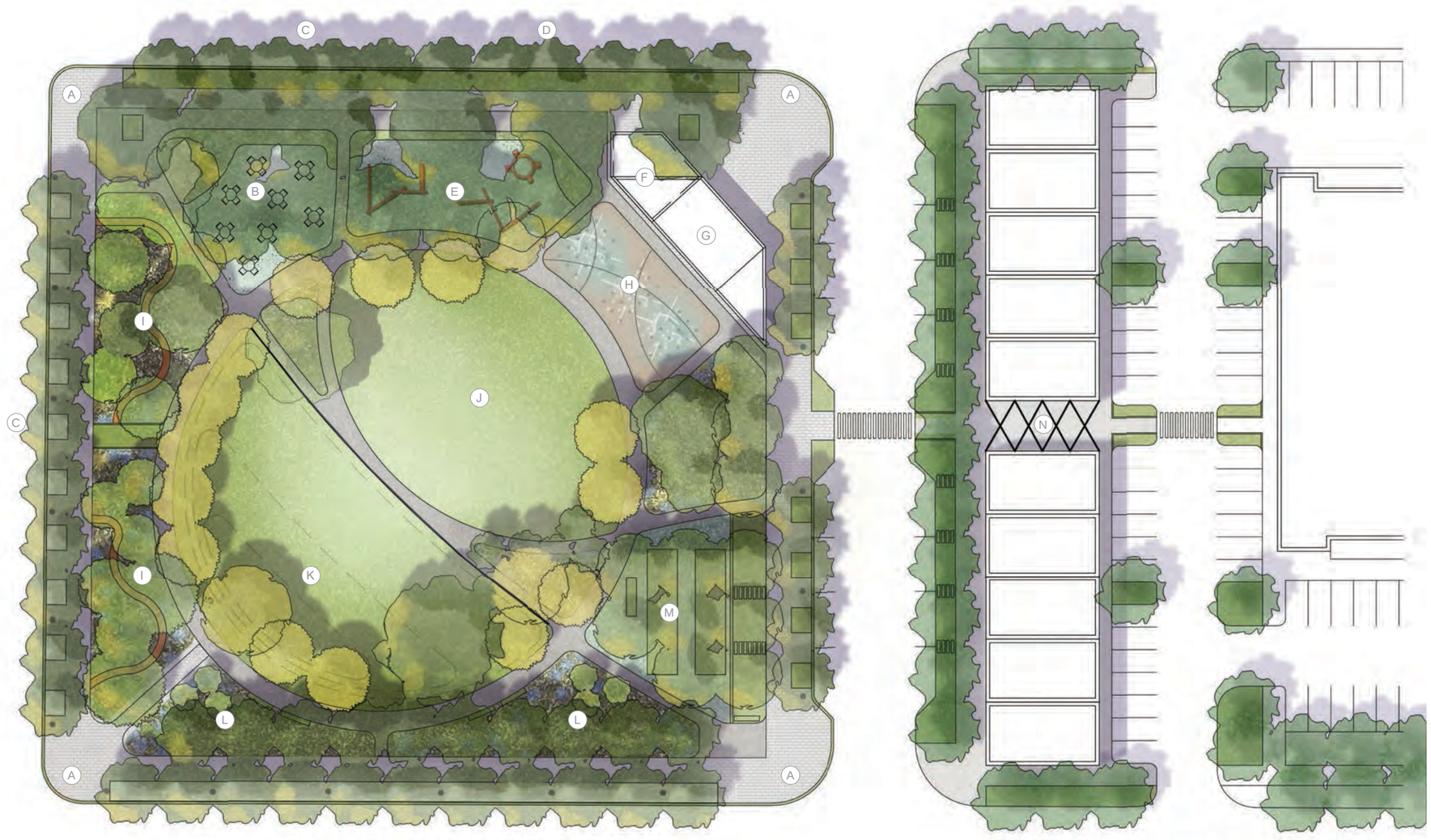
1 Heritage Square Improvements

The concept for the park builds off of the design principles, yet attempts to create a more flexible use of space for different soft programs. The major difference in this concept is that the interactive water feature and civic space is oriented towards the city hall parking lot, which is a hopeful private redevelopment site for the city. While still incorporating Main Street, this design shifts the more active programs along the edge of Porter Street. The farmers market remains along the north end of the square, along Fifth Street.

Overall Design Principles + Goals

- Respond to the desires and needs of the community and stakeholders
- Create a focal point for downtown Taylor
- Connect the park edge-experiences to the greater downtown framework plan, so they work together as a cohesive design
- Activate edges of the park
- Design the park with historic sensitivity, yet with innovative approaches/ideas
- Account for multiple hard and soft programming opportunities
- Maximize views and circulation opportunities within the park
- Create “outdoor rooms” within the park
- Design for users of all age groups
- Safety and buffering from vehicular traffic on edges of the park, while still engaging pedestrians from the exterior
- Accommodate a large central lawn space for flexibility and events
- The inspiration for materials should reference Taylor’s railroad history

Figure 44: *Heritage Square Illustrative Plan*



LEGEND

A. Entry Court
B. Picnic and Garden
C. Parking
D. Farmers Market Promenade
E. Children’s Play Area
F. Restrooms
G. Open Air Pavilion
H. Interactive Water Feature
I. Arts Garden
J. Event Lawn
K. Sloped Seating Lawn
L. Gardens
M. Game Courts
N. Connection to City Hall Catalyst

Figure 45: *Heritage Square Park and City Hall Example*

2 City Hall Redevelopment

As it is developed today, Taylor's existing City Hall has excess surface parking supply for its demand. To create a strong, active edge to the park, redevelopment of the first 60 to 80 feet of this parking lot is recommended. Development that faces onto the park promotes safety by providing "eyes on the park", increases the tax base in downtown that can help fund improvements and ensures that City Hall integrates into an overall design for promoting Heritage Square Park as a signature recreational space downtown.

A long-term lease with a developer to create infill development along this edge of the park will provide the City revenue that can be invested into the operations and maintenance of Heritage Square Park. A long-term lease is recommended because the parcel is a tax exempt City-owned parcel. The City should maintain ownership of this tax-exempt parcel because tax exemption is enticing to local developers. This tax exempt status is a tool that the City has in its toolbox for promoting development along the edge of the park.

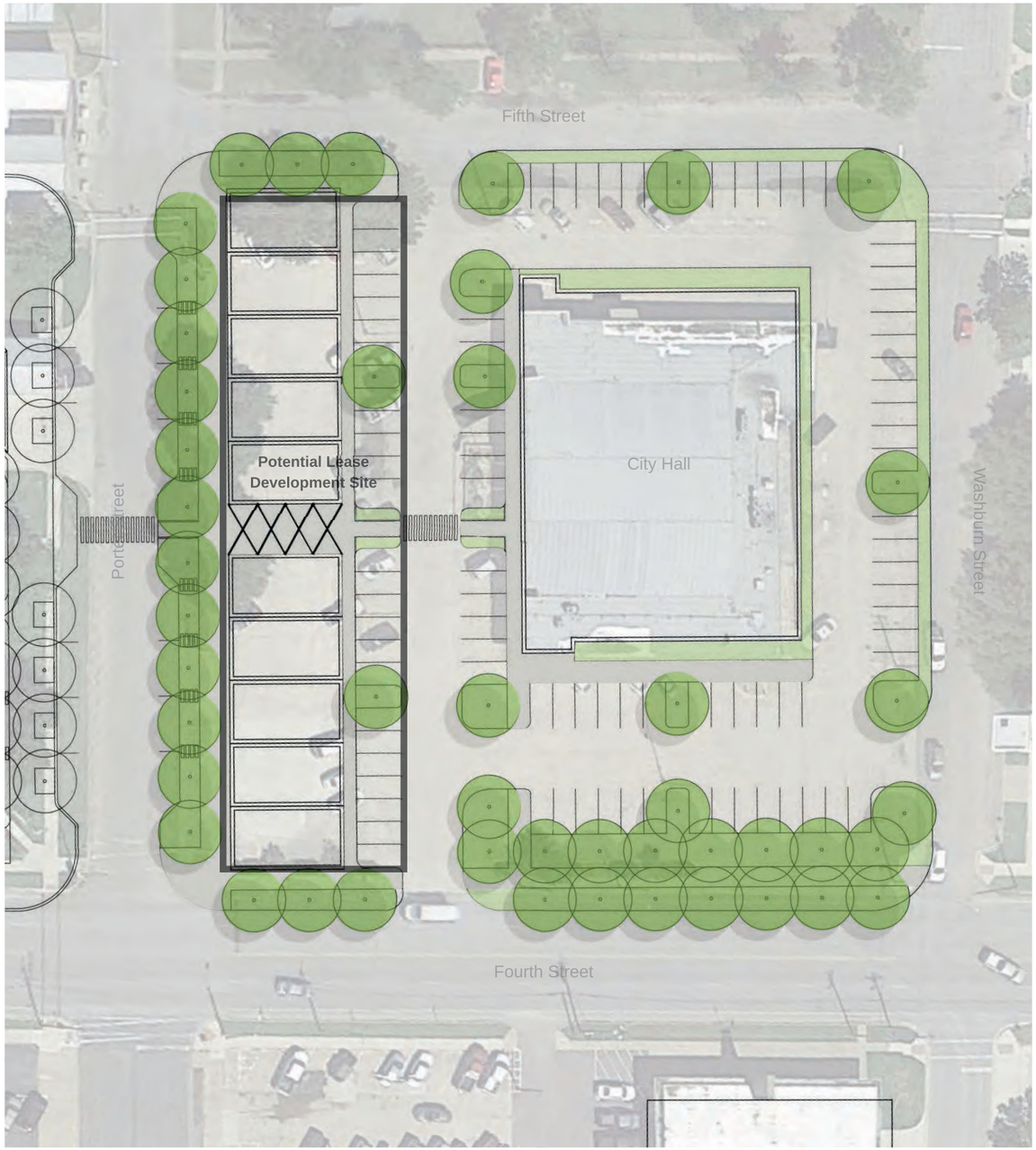
"Figure 45: Heritage Square Park and City Hall Example" on page 72 illustrates how development along the Porter Street edge of Heritage Square Park may look in the future. This catalyst site is envisioned as occurring in one phase of development and construction. Because of its advantageous location adjacent to the park, a mixed-use building featuring retail/commercial on the ground floor with live/work residential units above is recommended. The size of this redevelopment would be approximately 8,000 square feet, with a height of two to three stories.

Surface parking to serve this development should be placed on the City Hall side of the building (as seen in **"Figure 46: City Hall Redevelopment"**). A pedestrian pathway between buildings in the new development provides an attractive, safe connection from Heritage Square Park to the City Hall complex. This grand pathway should be well-lit, clearly signed and landscaped to encourage connectivity between spaces. A safe, clearly marked pedestrian crossing will guide locals and visitors across Porter Street to public parking opportunities at City Hall.

A pedestrian pathway between buildings in the new development could provide an attractive, safe connection to City Hall from Heritage Square Park.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION	POSSIBLE IMPLEMENTATION AGENCY
R1: Create feasibility study to determine the potential of the development and better understand the potential economic benefit of a long-term lease.	City of Taylor
R2: Create a simple but clear set of descriptive design guidelines that communicate a vision for what the development should look like and its purpose.	City of Taylor
R3: Create and release a media statement to local and regional news providers to spark interest in development of the site. Ensure that the press release clearly communicates the proximity of the infill site to the signature Heritage Square Park improvements, Main Street retail and the proposed First Street Market and Porter Street festival district.	City of Taylor News providers
R4: Release a developer Request for Qualification (RFQ) with financial terms and design guidelines.	City of Taylor
R5: Select a developer and enter into a development agreement.	City of Taylor
R6: Partner with the developer to implement the construction of the site.	City of Taylor

Figure 46: *City Hall Redevelopment*



Implementation Matrix

$	0 - 50,000 dollars
$$	50,000 - 250,000 dollars
$$$	250,000 - 1,000,000 dollars
$$$$	1,000,000+ dollars

PROJECT RECOMMENDATIONS	TIMELINE (SHORT, MID, LONG)	COSTS	POSSIBLE IMPLEMENTATION AGENCY
Regional Framework			
Gateway Features			
R1: Confirm desired location for gateways.	Short	$	City of Taylor, Main Street, Citizens of Taylor
R2: Acquire land/agreements needed for gateway improvements	Mid	$	City of Taylor
R2: Allocate budget for each gateway and prioritize the order of installation.	Mid	$	City of Taylor
R3: Coordinate with TxDOT and Williamson County on corridors owned and maintained by applicable jurisdictions. Confirm approval and maintenance agreement.	Long	$	City of Taylor, TxDOT, Williamson County
R4: Hire a landscape architecture firm to create detailed design and construction drawings for the landscaping and signage.	Mid	$$	City of Taylor
R5. Hire a contractor to construct the gateway design.	Mid	$$$	City of Taylor, Main Street
R6. Ensure agency, department or organization is responsible for maintenance.	Long	$	City of Taylor
Gateway Corridor Standards			
R1: Improve relationships with business and land owners along the major gateway corridors and explain the importance of establishing gateway corridors.	Long	$	City of Taylor, Property Owners
R2: Partner with a landscape architecture/design consulting firm to create standards for the corridors that address design elements in both the private and public domain. Adopt design standards for major gateway corridors.	Short	$$	City of Taylor
R3: Develop a capital improvement budget for implementing streetscape and corridor improvements in the public realm.	Mid	$	City of Taylor
R4: Coordinate with the Texas Department of Transportation regarding the desire for corridor and streetscape improvements.	Long	$	City of Taylor Texas Department of Transportation
R5: Apply for various grants/funding resources to assist in implementing the gateway corridor improvements.	Short	$	City of Taylor
Hire a design firm to create detailed design and construction drawings for future corridor streetscapes.	Mid	$$	City of Taylor
R7: Hire a contractor to implement corridor streetscapes.	Mid	$$$$	City of Taylor
R8: Consider providing incentives to property and business owners who follow the standards when implementing improvements in the private realm.	Mid	$	City of Taylor TIF Main Street Program
Downtown Trail and Bike Connections			
R1: Incorporate bicycle and trail routes as part of the City Transportation Plan.	Short	$	City of Taylor, TxDOT
R2: Works with the Texas Department of Transportation, other agencies and property owners to establish a confirmed alignment for downtown trails.	Mid	$	City of Taylor, TxDOT, Property Owners
R3: Establish a capital improvement budget and phasing plan to complement the trail and bikeway connectivity plan.	Mid	$	City of Taylor
R4: Ensure that bike and trail improvements are a part of other applicable construction projects along corridors such as streetscape and utility improvements.	Mid	$	City of Taylor, TIF Board
R5: Apply for grants applicable to bicycle and trail improvements.	Short	$	City of Taylor
R6: Hire a design firm to create detailed design and construction drawings for bike and trail improvements.	Mid	$$	City of Taylor
R7: Hire a contractor to implement bike and trail improvements.	Mid	$$$	City of Taylor
CARTS Fixed Route			
R1: Investigate the possibility of transit service in Taylor.	Short	$	City of Taylor Capital Metro
R2:Conduct a resident survey to determine the interest of a public transit service in Taylor.	Short	$	City of Taylor

Implementation Matrix

$	0 - 50,000 dollars
$$	50,000 - 250,000 dollars
$$$	250,000 - 1,000,000 dollars
$$$$	1,000,000+ dollars

PROJECT RECOMMENDATIONS	TIMELINE (SHORT, MID, LONG)	COSTS	POSSIBLE IMPLEMENTATION AGENCY
R3: Write a letter of interest to Lyle Nelson, Chief of Staff, expressing interest in the possibility of a CARTS circulator or a fixed transit route in Taylor.	Short	$	City of Taylor
R4: Apply for TxDOT transit planning grant to refine transit route and stop locations.	Short	$	City of Taylor
Regional Transit Opportunities			
R1: Support Project Connect and LSRD to encourage commuter rail into downtown Taylor.	Short	$	City of Taylor, Capital Metro
R2: Partner with CARTS to expand bus route services through downtown Taylor.	Mid	$$	City of Taylor, CARTS
R3: Lead an effort to create a multi-modal hub near Porter Street and First Street, near the Amtrak station.	Long	$	City of Taylor, CARTS, Amtrak
R4: Work with Amtrak, the Williamson County tourism office and Capital Metro to promote downtown Taylor in marketing literature.	Short	$	"City of Taylor Amtrak Williamson County"
Downtown Framework			
Land Use Strategy			
R1: Explain the importance of establishing downtown design standards to landowners and businesses.	Short	$	City of Taylor, Main Street, Property Owners
R2: Partner with a design consulting firm to create standards for the corridors that address design elements in both the private and public domain. Use the Land Use Strategy as a guide for where standards vary based on character of development.	Mid	$$	City of Taylor
R3: Provide incentives for the placement and quality of parking, and allow lower required parking ratios in the downtown area. Emphasis should be placed on public on-street parking rather than off-street parking areas.	Mid	$$	City of Taylor
R4: Adopt design standards for downtown with an expedited review process for developments that comply with the design standards.	Mid	$	City of Taylor
Parking Strategy			
R1: Stripe streets to allow for on-street parking. Provide clear parking signage to communicate the availability of parking opportunities downtown.	Mid	$$	City of Taylor, TIF Board, TxDOT
R2: Hire a design consultant to create a parking signage package for downtown. Implement the signage package. Ensure that the signage package directs traffic to City Hall as a key public parking opportunity.	Mid	$$	City of Taylor
R3: Develop an agreement with Williamson County for their parking lot on Vance Street to be used after hours for public parking.	Mid	$	City of Taylor, Williamson County
R4: Develop a two-hour time limit for on-street parking along the following signature streets: Second Street, Third Street, Fourth Street and Main Street.	Mid	$	City of Taylor, TIF Board, TxDOT
R5: During the wayfinding and signage design process, work to ensure that key destinations (such as City Hall public parking, Heritage Square and the First Street Market Place near the Amtrak station) are listed. Walking distance times to each destination should be provided on each sign.	Short	$	City of Taylor, Amtrak
Downtown Wayfinding and Signage			
R1. Confirm agreements to install banners and signs on TxDOT rights of way.	Short	$	City of Taylor, TxDOT
R2. Hire a professional design firm to develop a comprehensive wayfinding and signage design package. Deliverable for this phase of the project would be a detailed manual of the signage and wayfinding system; which will include locations, dimensions, and materials in addition to designs and content.	Mid	$$	City of Taylor
R3. Coordinate signage efforts with overall streetscape improvements; agreements with Williamson County and other applicable improvements.	Mid	$$	Williamson County, City of Taylor, Union Pacific, Amtrak
R4. Coordinate with TxDOT as a partner in this effort, in order to ensure that the signage standards meet TxDOT requirements.	Mid	$	City of Taylor, TxDOT
R5. Design, fabricate and install signage throughout downtown.	Mid	$$	City of Taylor, Consultants
Signature Streetscape Opportunities			
Main Street			
R1: Plant drought tolerant street trees every 25 to 35 feet on center. Trees should be located between the curb and shade awnings. Large tree wells (80 square feet minimum) will help to ensure the survival of trees along Main Street. Provide electricity near trees for seasonality.	Long	$$	City of Taylor, TxDOT

Implementation Matrix

$	0 - 50,000 dollars
$$	50,000 - 250,000 dollars
$$$	250,000 - 1,000,000 dollars
$$$$	1,000,000+ dollars

PROJECT RECOMMENDATIONS	TIMELINE (SHORT, MID, LONG)	COSTS	POSSIBLE IMPLEMENTATION AGENCY
R2: Partner with property owners to implement shade awnings on buildings along Main Street. Shade awnings should be designed in ways that provide the maximum amount of shade to pedestrians. Awnings should be in keeping with the historic vernacular and architecture of downtown.	Long	$$	City of Taylor, TxDOT, Property Owners
R3: Encourage infill development that fits the historic building patterns and façade rhythms of adjacent buildings (see Land Use Strategy)	Long	$$$	City of Taylor, TxDOT, Property Owners
R4: Add lighting along Main Street to achieve appropriate footcandles necessary for pedestrian safety and visibility at night.	Mid	$$	City of Taylor, TxDOT
R5: Create a banner program to hang on lights along Main Street. To provide seasonal interest, change out banners four times per year.	Short	$	City of Taylor, TxDOT
R6: Reinstate holiday lights that span the width of Main Street.	Short	$	City of Taylor, TxDOT
R7: Provide street furniture, such as permanent benches, moveable tables and chairs for outdoor dining and bollards to accentuate social gathering spaces along Main Street.	Mid	$$	City of Taylor, TxDOT
R8: Install bulbouts at key intersections to help control parking and protect pedestrians at busy crossings.	Long	$$$	City of Taylor, TxDOT
R9: Install signage that communicates to residents and visitors a “historic walking tour”. the map would feature historic buildings, uses and events that have occurred on Main Street and that contribute to the heritage of the downtown.	Mid	$$	City of Taylor, TxDOT
R10: Coordinate with TxDOT to appropriately size Main Street. Current traffic counts indicate that the roadway could be reduced from four travel lanes to three (two travel lanes with a center turn lane).	Long	$	City of Taylor, TxDOT
R11: Encourage outdoor dining and retail activities that contribute to a vibrant downtown economy.	Mid	$	City of Taylor, Property owners
R12: Create a public art program that celebrates growing art museum and gallery activities downtown. Place art at key intersections. Seasonal art installations, or rotating art, are recommended.	Mid	$	City of Taylor
First Street			
R1: Partner with a consultant firm to redesign First Street (East) as a pedestrian, bicycle, and auto friendly shared “woonerf”.	Short	$	City of Taylor
R2: Utilize wood block pavers (historic to downtown Taylor) in pedestrian areas.	Mid	$$	City of Taylor
R3: Add lighting along First Street to achieve appropriate footcandles necessary for pedestrian safety and visibility at night.	Mid	$$	City of Taylor
R4: Create a banner program to hang on lights along First Street. To provide seasonal interest, change out banners two times per year.	Short	$	City of Taylor
R5: Partner with property owners to implement shade awnings on buildings along First Street. Shade awnings should be designed in ways that provide the maximum amount of shade to pedestrians. Awnings should be in keeping with the historic vernacular and architecture of downtown.	Long	$$	City of Taylor, Property Owners
R6: Install on-street parking along both sides of First Street. For detailed information on where angled and parallel parking should be located, please refer to “Parking Strategy” on page 36.	Short	$	City of Taylor
R7: Preserve existing woodblock pavers that are historic to Taylor where possible. Where preserving existing woodblocks is not possible, it is recommended that woodblock elements be integrated into designs for future streetscape and pedestrian realm improvements.	Mid	$$	City of Taylor
R8: Install signage that communicates to residents and visitors how to get to parking, the market area, the skate park, City Hall and Heritage Square.	Short	$	City of Taylor
R9: Plant drought tolerant street trees every 25 to 35 feet on center. Trees should be located between the curb and shade awnings. Large tree wells (80 square feet minimum) will help to ensure the survival of trees along First Street.	Mid	$$	City of Taylor
R10: Partner with community organizations and businesses to host market events on the eastern, “woonerf” portion of First Street.	Mid	$	City of Taylor
R11: Provide street furniture, such as permanent benches, moveable tables and chairs for outdoor dining and bollards to accentuate social gathering spaces along First Street. Trash receptacles should be provided near outdoor dining and seating areas, the skate park and the Amtrak station.	Mid	$$	City of Taylor
R12: Install bike racks at key destinations, such as the Amtrak station, the skate park and western First Street.	Mid	$	City of Taylor

Implementation Matrix

$	0 - 50,000 dollars
$$	50,000 - 250,000 dollars
$$$	250,000 - 1,000,000 dollars
$$$$	1,000,000+ dollars

PROJECT RECOMMENDATIONS	TIMELINE (SHORT, MID, LONG)	COSTS	POSSIBLE IMPLEMENTATION AGENCY
Talbot Street			
R1: Provide bike lanes along both sides of Talbot Street. Bike lanes should be emphasized with clear signage and pavement striping.	Mid	$	City of Taylor
R2: Plant drought tolerant street trees every 25 to 35 feet on center. Trees should be located between the curb and buildings in the public right of way. Large tree wells (80 square feet minimum) will help to ensure the survival of trees along Talbot Street.	Mid	$$	City of Taylor
R3: Add lighting along Talbot Street to achieve appropriate footcandles necessary for pedestrian safety and visibility at night.	Mid	$$	City of Taylor
R4: Install parallel on-street parking along both sides of Talbot Street. For detailed information on where angled and parallel parking should be located, please refer to “Parking Strategy” on page 36.	Short	$	City of Taylor
Second Street			
R1: Partner with property owners to implement shade awnings on buildings along Second Street. Shade awnings should be designed in ways that provide the maximum amount of shade to pedestrians. Awnings should be in keeping with the historic vernacular and architecture of downtown.	Long	$$	City of Taylor, Property Owners
R2: Add lighting along Second Street to achieve appropriate footcandles necessary for pedestrian safety and visibility at night.	Mid	$$	City of Taylor
R3: Plant drought tolerant street trees every 25 to 35 feet on center. Work with property owners to place street trees sensitively between building shade awnings. Trees should be located between the curb and shade awnings.	Mid	$$	City of Taylor, Property Owners
R4: Appropriately size Second Street. Current traffic counts indicate that the roadway could be reduced from four travel lanes to three (two travel lanes with a center turn lane).	Long	$$	City of Taylor
R5: Install signage that communicates to residents and visitors key destinations, parking, bicycle lane and transit connectivity opportunities.	Short	$	City of Taylor
R6: Encourage outdoor dining and retail activities that contribute to a vibrant downtown economy.	Mid	$	City of Taylor
Porter Street			
R1: Partner with property owners to implement shade awnings on buildings on Porter Street. Shade awnings should be designed in ways that provide the maximum amount of shade to pedestrians. Awnings should be in keeping with the historic vernacular and architecture of downtown.	Long	$$	City of Taylor, Property Owners
R2: Install on-street parking along both sides of Porter Street. For detailed information on where angled and parallel parking should be located, please refer to “Parking Strategy” on page 36.	Short	$	City of Taylor
R3: String permanent Tivoli decorative overhead lights across the right of way on Porter Street to create a festival ambiance and increase visibility for nighttime shopping and dining.	Short	$	City of Taylor
R4: Add lighting along Porter Street to achieve appropriate footcandles necessary for pedestrian safety and visibility at night.	Mid	$$	City of Taylor
R5: Provide street furniture, such as permanent benches, moveable tables and chairs for outdoor dining and bollards to accentuate social gathering spaces along Porter Street.	Mid	$$	City of Taylor, TxDOT
R5: Create a banner program to hang on lights along Porter Street. To provide seasonal interest, change out banners four times per year.	Short	$	City of Taylor, TxDOT
R8: Install signage that communicates to residents and visitors how to get to parking, the market area, the skate park, City Hall and Heritage Square.	Short	$	City of Taylor
First Street Market Plaza			
First Street Infill Development			
R1: Partner with local property owners to implement phase one of infill development. Phase one should feature a mix of commercial infill (such as a restaurant or nighttime entertainment venue), office or residential in a two-story structure of approximately 21,000 square feet in size.	Mid	$$$	City of Taylor, Property owners

Implementation Matrix

$	0 - 50,000 dollars
$$	50,000 - 250,000 dollars
$$$	250,000 - 1,000,000 dollars
$$$$	1,000,000+ dollars

PROJECT RECOMMENDATIONS	TIMELINE (SHORT, MID, LONG)	COSTS	POSSIBLE IMPLEMENTATION AGENCY
R2: Partner with local property owners to implement phase two of infill development. Phase one should feature a smaller, two-story office/retail mixed building of approximately 15,000 square feet.	Long	$$$	City of Taylor, Property owners
R3: Provide surface parking located to the rear of infill development so that curb cuts and interruptions to the pedestrian environment are minimized along First Street.	Long	$$	City of Taylor, Property owners
R4: Partner with property owners to implement shade awnings on buildings during redevelopment efforts. Shade awnings should be designed in ways that provide the maximum amount of shade to pedestrians. Awnings should be in keeping with the historic vernacular and architecture of downtown.	Long	$$	City of Taylor, Property owners
R5: Encourage outdoor dining and retail activities that contribute to a vibrant downtown economy.	Mid	$	City of Taylor, Property owners
R6: Add lighting along wing streets to achieve appropriate footcandles necessary for pedestrian safety and visibility at night.	Mid	$$	City of Taylor, Property owners
R7: Install signage that communicates to residents and visitors key destinations, parking, bicycle lane and transit connectivity opportunities.	Short	$	City of Taylor
Main Street Pedestrian Mall and "Wing" Street			
R1: Partner with property owners to promote multi-story, mixed use infill development with first floor commercial/retail and residential/office above.	Mid	$$$	City of Taylor
R2: Encourage outdoor dining and retail activities that contribute to a vibrant downtown economy.	Mid	$	City of Taylor, Property owners
R3: Partner with property owners to implement shade awnings on buildings along Second Street. Shade awnings should be designed in ways that provide the maximum amount of shade to pedestrians. Awnings should be in keeping with the historic vernacular and architecture of downtown.	Long	$$	City of Taylor, Property owners
R4: Add lighting along wing streets to achieve appropriate footcandles necessary for pedestrian safety and visibility at night.	Mid	$$	City of Taylor
R5: Install signage that communicates to residents and visitors key destinations, parking, bicycle lane and transit connectivity opportunities.	Short	$	City of Taylor
R6: Hire a consultant to design and build wing street improvements in keeping with the character of “Figure 30: First Street (East) “Woonerf” Concept” on page 49.	Mid	$$$	City of Taylor
Skate Park and Main Street Overpass			
R1: Work with Project Loop to permit and build a skate park under the overpass.	Mid	$$	City of Taylor, Project Loop, TxDOT
R2: Close the East Main Street railroad crossing to allow for a safe, skate park to be created under the overpass.	Long	$$	City of Taylor
R3: Coordinate efforts with Union Pacific to as part of creating a quiet zone (described in further detail in the following section).	Long	$$$	City of Taylor, Union Pacific
R4: After the closure of the eastern portion of Main Street at the railroad crossing, partner with a design consultant to build the following elements of the new skate park:	Long	$$	City of Taylor
R5: Utilize revenues earned from renting the kiosk space to a food/coffee vendor to offset the operations and maintenance costs of the skate park.	Long	$	City of Taylor, Food/beverage vendor
R6: Provide bike racks close to the First Street Market under the overpass to encourage arrival by biking or walking.	Mid	$	City of Taylor
R7: Add lighting under the overpass at First Street to achieve appropriate footcandles necessary for safety and visibility at night for the skate park, restrooms, dining and entertainment areas.	Mid	$$	City of Taylor
R8: Install signage that communicates to residents and visitors key destinations, parking, bicycle lane and transit connectivity opportunities.	Short	$	City of Taylor
Federal Railroad Quiet Zone			
R1: Contact Union Pacific at (512) 450-1730 to enter into discussions about quiet zones and crossing closures.	Short	$	City of Taylor, Union Pacific
R2: Begin discussions with the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and TxDOT to promote downtown quiet zone which may include reduced crossings and quiet zone safety improvements.	Long	$$	City of Taylor, Federal Railroad Administration, TxDOT

Implementation Matrix

$	0 - 50,000 dollars
$$	50,000 - 250,000 dollars
$$$	250,000 - 1,000,000 dollars
$$$$	1,000,000+ dollars

PROJECT RECOMMENDATIONS	TIMELINE (SHORT, MID, LONG)	COSTS	POSSIBLE IMPLEMENTATION AGENCY
R3: Hire an engineering consultant to design crossing upgrades that meet the requirements for the quiet zone.	Long	$$	City of Taylor
R4: Apply for grants to assist in the cost of safety improvements such as the Railway-Highway Crossing Hazard Elimination Grant. More information available at https://www.fra.dot.gov/Page/P0513	Short	$	City of Taylor
R5: Implement quiet zones as part of capital improvement.	Long	$$$	City of Taylor
Amtrak Improvements			
R1: Notify state Department of Transportation (DOT) of station improvement projects to better understand how it may fit into the state's transportation plan.	Short	$	City of Taylor, Department of Transportation, Amtrak, DOT
R2: Work with Amtrak Engineering and Stations Planning personnel, through the Amtrak Government Affairs representative (Todd Stennis, Regional Contact, governmentaffairsnol@amtrak.com), who can assess the feasibility of your project and provide guidance on platform length and height and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) matters.	Mid	$	"City of Taylor, Amtrak, Union Pacific"
R3: Direct the project architect to the Amtrak Standard Program and Planning Guidelines and Signage Guidelines at www.greatamericanstations.com	Short	$	City of Taylor, Amtrak
R4: Ensure station area improvement projects adhere to local building codes. Seek amendments if necessary.	Mid	$	City of Taylor, Amtrak
R5: Contact the Great American Stations Project and your state DOT for information about possible state and federal funding.	Short	$	City of Taylor, Amtrak, Union Pacific, DOT
R6: Work with the host railroad to determine how much liability insurance is needed since construction will take place near active tracks; be sure to factor the cost of a flagman into the project budget.	Mid	$	City of Taylor, Amtrak, Union Pacific
R7: Provide a small, plaza space (could be indoor or outdoor).	Long	$$$	City of Taylor, Amtrak
R8: Install improved pedestrian lighting at the station.	Long	$$	City of Taylor, Amtrak
R9: Plant trees for shade in and along parking areas and near the platform.	Long	$$	City of Taylor, Amtrak
R10: Provide furniture for additional seating opportunities and trash receptacles.	Mid	$$	City of Taylor, Amtrak
R11: Construct fencing along the First Street edge of the station area to help buffer and contain pedestrian and visitor activities from railroad and vehicular traffic.	Mid	$$	City of Taylor, Amtrak
R12: Provide a safe and level platform for loading and unloading from the train service.	Long	$$$	City of Taylor, Amtrak
Multimodal Hub			
R1: Contact the Department of Transportation's Federal Transit Administration (FTA) regrading Bus and Bus Facilities Livability Initiative Program Grants. The regional contact for Taylor is Robert C. Patrick, FTA Regional Administrator, Region 6-Ft. Worth, 819 Taylor Street, Room 8A36 Ft. Worth, TX 76102, Tel. 817 978-0550 (states served: Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, New Mexico and Texas). Proposals may be submitted to FTA electronically at buslivability@dot.gov or through the GRANTS.GOV APPLY function. Those who apply via e-mail at buslivability@dot.gov should receive a confirmation e-mail within two business days. For general program information, contact Kimberly Sledge, Office of Transit Programs, 3 (202) 366- 2053, e-mail: kimberly.sledge@dot.gov or Henrika Buchanan-Smith, (202)366-4020, e-mail: henrika.buchanan-smith@dot.gov.	Short	$	City of Taylor
R2: Partner with CARTS to provide service connections in the multimodal hub. Reach out to Lyle Nelson, Chief of Staff of Taylor's CARTS program.	Mid	$$	City of Taylor CARTS
R3: Partner with Amtrak and Lone Star Rail to complete improvements to the station area that promote the use of rail services.	Long	$$$	City of Taylor Amtrak Union Pacific
R4: Provide clearly signed and accessible park and ride areas for passenger pick up and drop of at the Amtrak station.	Mid	$$	City of Taylor Amtrak
R5: Improve pedestrian and bicycle facilities serving the multimodal and First Street Market area (see "Figure 30: First Street (East) "Woonerf" Concept" on page 49 and "Figure 29: First Street (East) Illustrative - Market Events" on page 48 for more detail.	Mid	$$	City of Taylor

Implementation Matrix

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PROJECT RECOMMENDATIONS	TIMELINE (SHORT, MID, LONG)	COSTS	POSSIBLE IMPLEMENTATION AGENCY
Heritage Square and City Hall Redevelopment			
Heritage Square Improvements			
R1: Identify available funding for Heritage Square improvements.	Mid	$	City of Taylor
R2: Apply for grants to assist in the planning and construction costs.	Mid	$$	Main Street Board, City of Taylor
R2: Hire a professional design firm to develop a detailed design package for Heritage Square. Deliverable for this phase of the project would be a detailed document; which will include locations, dimensions, and materials in addition to designs and content.	Mid	$$	City of Taylor, Consultants
R4: Host a visioning session or online survey for community residents and stakeholders to help identify historic plaques and artwork to be featured in the park.	Mid	$	City of Taylor
R5: Partner with a professional artist or non-profit to create the custom artwork and plaques desired by the community.	Mid	$	City of Taylor Community artists Non-profits
R6: Hire a professional design firm to develop an interpretive signage package that reflects the history of Taylor and Heritage Square Park.	Mid	$	City of Taylor Consultants
R6: Hire a contractor to oversee construction of improvements.	Long	$$$	City of Taylor
R7: Coordinate with local non-profits, Taylor Independent School District, Main Street business owners and other community organizations to host and coordinate events on the Square.	Long	$	City of Taylor, Main Street Business Owners, Non-Profits, Community Organizations
R8: Partner with a consultant to write an operations and maintenance plan and ensure the long-term management Heritage Square.	Long	$	City of Taylor.
R9: Establish pest management procedures as part of the operations and maintenance planning for Heritage Square Park.	Mid	$	City of Taylor Consultants
City Hall Redevelopment			
R1: Create feasibility study to determine the potential of the development and better understand the potential economic benefit of a long-term lease.	Mid	$$	City of Taylor
R2: Create a simple but clear set of descriptive design guidelines that communicate a vision for what the development should like and its purpose.	Mid	$	City of Taylor
R3: Create and release a media statement to local and regional news providers to spark interest in development the site. Ensure that the press release clearly communicates the proximity of the infill site to the signature Heritage Square Park improvements, Main Street retail and the proposed First Street Market and Porter Street festival district.	Mid	$	City of Taylor News providers
R4: Release a developer Request for Qualification (RFQ) with financial terms and design guidelines.	Mid		City of Taylor
R5: Select a developer and enter into a development agreement.	Long	$$	City of Taylor
R6: Partner with the developer to implement the construction of the site.	Long	$$$	City of Taylor

General Funding Tools

FUNDING MECHANISM	AWARDING AGENCY (IF APPLICABLE)	ELIGIBILITY	CATEGORY/AREA	GENERAL INFORMATION
Municipal Tools – Direct Revenue				
Municipal Management District	City	Texas municipalities	Tax Revenue/Special Assessment District/ Funding for Infrastructure Improvements	A Municipal Management District is a tool cities may use to publicly finance improvements. These districts, also called downtown management districts, are created within an existing commercial area to finance facilities, infrastructure and services beyond those already provided by individual property owners or the municipality. The improvements may be paid for by self-imposed property taxes, special assessments and impact fees, or by other charges on district property owners. The creation of the district does not relieve a city from providing basic services to the area. A district is created to supplement, not supplant, the municipal services available to the area. For more information visit: http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/LG/htm/LG.375.htm.
Hotel/Motel Occupancy Tax	City	Texas municipalities	Tax Revenue/General Revenue	Per City Ordinance No. 2010-8 (see http://www.ci.taylor.tx.us/618/HotelMotel-Occupancy-Tax), the City of Taylor is authorized to collect hotel and motel taxes within the City and the City Extraterritorial Jurisdiction. The tax shall be equal to 7% of the total price of a guest room or sleeping facility. A Hotel/Motel Occupancy Tax could help generate revenue to fund improvements with little burden on current residents. Communities can utilize hotel occupancy tax as a way to encourage tourism and economic development. Hotel occupancy tax is a tax imposed on a person who pays for a room or space in a hotel costing $15 or more each day. The tax applies not only to hotels and motels, but also to bed and breakfasts, condominiums, apartments and houses. Persons leasing houses, or rooms must collect the tax from customers in the same way a hotel or motel collects the tax from its guests. Property management companies, online travel companies and other third-party rental companies may also be responsible for collecting the tax. For more information visit: http://www.window.state.tx.us/taxinfo/hotel/.
Downtown Parking District or Parking Strategy	City	Texas municipalities	Fees/Funding for Infrastructure and/ or Transportation Improvements	Texas municipalities may lease parking to tenants on a city owned lot or charge for parking in currently owned city lots for special events. This generates a revenue stream for improvements or the operations/maintenance of public spaces. A parking district is a tool which supports the development of parking and transportation improvements within a given area. Property owners, businesses, and residents may be supportive of programs designed to return revenues from parking back to the district in which they were collected as a means of making desired improvements to the area.
Municipal Tools – Value Capture				
Sales Tax Rebate	City	Texas municipalities	Economic Development	A sales tax rebate is a tool that Texas municipalities may use to facilitate improvements such as façade enhancements, landscaping, and other site, building, and infrastructure improvements. A sales tax rebate is a potential mechanism for stimulating redevelopment and reinvestment along strategic roadways or within districts. It can be used to incentivize the development of vacant buildings and to leverage new projects on vacant commercial property. Sales tax rebates allow a municipality to rebate a portion of the sales tax to private property owners for specific costs such as façade enhancements, landscaping, and other site, building, and infrastructure improvements. The rebate amount may be capped both annually and for a defined period of time. Some cities, through the creation of development authorities, also have architectural review of projects applying for the incentive to ensure that building facades are enhanced.
Tax Increment Financing	City	Texas municipalities	Economic Development	Per City Ordinance No. 2005-9 (see http://www.ci.taylor.tx.us/documentcenter/view/1457), the City of Taylor currently has a tax increment financing reinvestment zone in place. Tax dollars generated by growth of property values are referred to as the “tax increment.” These dollars flow to a tax increment fund, which can be approved by the TIF Board and City Council to finance public improvements that enhance the environment and attract new investment in downtown. Tax Increment Finance (TIF) is a popular public financing tool used by municipalities across the country. It allows local governments to make infrastructure improvements and subsidize redevelopment within an officially designated area or district. Increases in sales or property tax revenue above a specified base amount are allocated to pay for the costs. Typically, these revenues, or increment, are used to back bonds issued to pay for the up front expenditures. A benefit of TIF is that the increment is created without raising taxes and without reducing the tax value present at the time of implementation. The State of Texas does have enabling legislation authorizing TIF districts (Tax Code Chapter 311: Tax Increment Financing Act).
Tax Abatement	City	Texas municipalities	Economic Development	Per Ordinance No. 2006-24 (see http://www.ci.taylor.tx.us/ArchiveCenter/ViewFile/Item/245), the City of Taylor may provide tax abatements to attract new industry and commercial enterprises and to encourage the retention and development of existing businesses. Tax abatement is an agreement between a taxpayer and a taxing unit that exempts all or part of the taxable value of the real property and/or tangible personal property from taxation. All tax abatement projects must be located within a reinvestment zone or meet criteria established for a historic preservation project.

General Funding Tools

FUNDING MECHANISM	AWARDING AGENCY (IF APPLICABLE)	ELIGIBILITY	CATEGORY/AREA	GENERAL INFORMATION
Municipal Tools – Loans				
State Infrastructure Bank (SIB)	Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) Innovative Financing/ Debt Management Office State Infrastructure Bank (SIB)	Any public or private entity authorized to construct, maintain or finance an eligible transportation project.	Transportation Infrastructure	This program could potentially help fund planning and improvements along major roadways as long as the Master Plan adheres to the vision of the statewide Transportation Improvement Plan. In Texas, SIB financial assistance can be granted to any public or private entity authorized to construct, maintain or finance an eligible transportation project. Projects must be eligible for funding under the existing federal highway rules (Title 23) to comply with SIB requirements. This usually requires a project to be on a state's highway system and included in the statewide Transportation Improvement Plan. Work eligible for the program's funding in Texas includes planning and preliminary studies; feasibility, economic and environmental studies; right of way acquisition; surveying; appraisal and testing; utility relocation; engineering and design; construction; inspection and construction engineering. The overall goal of the SIB program is to provide innovative financing methods to communities to assist them in meeting infrastructure needs. The benefit of the SIB program is that it allows borrowers to access capital funds at or lower-than-market interest rates. Contact: TxDOT Innovative Financing/Debt Management Office State Infrastructure Bank (SIB) 125 East 11th St. Austin, TX 78701-2483 (512) 463-5885 Website: http://www.txdot.gov/inside-txdot/office/innovative-finance/sib.html
Water Infrastructure Fund (WIF)	Texas Water Development Board	Municipalities, counties, river authorities, special law districts, water improvement districts, water control and improvement districts, irrigation districts, water supply corporations, and groundwater districts	Water Infrastructure	This program could potentially help fund stormwater management and water conservation efforts. Special financial assistance for planning, design, and construction of State Water Plan and regional water plan projects may be obtained from the Water Infrastructure Fund. The 2012 State Water Plan estimated that $53 billion will need to be spent by regional and local water supply entities between 2010 and 2060 to meet the additional water supply needs of the state. Of that amount, regional water planning groups have estimated that more than $26 billion in financing will need to come from the state. Projects must be recommended water management strategies in the most recent TWDB-approved regional water plan and approved State Water Plan. Funds may not be used to maintain a system or to develop a retail distribution system. Contact: (512) 463-0991 Website: http://www.twdb.texas.gov/financial/programs
Municipal Tools – Grants				
Federal Government Grants				
Planning Program and Local Technical Assistance Program	U.S. Economic Development Administration	Local government eligible	Economic Development	This program supports planning with technical expertise to carry out community plans. The U.S. Economic Development Administration policies and application procedures for grant-based investments under the Planning and Local Technical Assistance Programs. These programs help communities develop the planning and technical expertise to support regions in comprehensive, entrepreneurial, and innovation-based economic development efforts. Resulting in increased private investment and higher-skill, higher-wage jobs, these programs are designed to enhance the competitiveness of regions. Applications are accepted on a continuing basis and processed as received. Contact: Larry McGraw, P.O. Box 15288, Rio Rancho, New Mexico 87174, (505) 892-0353 Website: http://www.eda.gov/PDF/EDAP-FFO-Planning_Tech%20Assistance-FINAL.pdf or http://www.grants.gov/view-opportunity.html?oppId=189193

General Funding Tools

FUNDING MECHANISM	AWARDING AGENCY (IF APPLICABLE)	ELIGIBILITY	CATEGORY/AREA	GENERAL INFORMATION
Our Town Grant for the Arts	National Endowment for the Arts	Local governments must be primary partners	Art and Design, Culture	The program works to enhance existing communities and helps towns retain a unique character. Grant funds are typically awarded to the following project types: Arts engagement: These include community-focused festivals and multidisciplinary exhibitions of visual, media, dance, music, film, and tribal art; as well as public art investments – including exhibitions of temporary work, new permanent pieces, and job training around the conservation of existing works. Other engagement projects have focused on education, including development of entrepreneurship activities for artists, and a project which engaged the public around the innovation potential of designers. Cultural planning: These projects are an essential first step in comprehensive cultural plans and investments and may include the mapping of local cultural assets, pre-development planning for cultural facilities and artist spaces, public art planning, creative district planning, as well as creative industry development planning. Design: These projects lower operating costs and increase longevity of physical structures. Recommended design projects have enabled talented designers to work on public infrastructure for arts use – including public spaces, gateways, flood water basins, corridors, and transportation hubs – and to design cultural facilities and artist spaces. Contact: OT@arts.gov, (202) 682.5400 Website: http://arts.gov/grants-organizations/our-town/introduction
Community Challenge Planning Grants	HUD's Sustainable Communities Initiative	Local government eligible	Economic Development	This grant supports local efforts to update policies, codes, and capital investment plans to integrate transportation, housing, and economic development; support local real estate markets; and stimulate private investment. Projects can include amending or replacing local master plans, zoning codes, and building codes, either on a jurisdiction-wide basis or in a specific neighborhood, district, or corridor to promote mixed use development, affordable housing, the reuse of older buildings and structures for new purposes, and main street and corridor revitalization. Website: http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD/program_offices/economic_resilience/HUD-DOT_Community_Challenge_Grants
Conservation Innovation Grants	US Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service	Local government eligible	Open Space Conservation	Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) is a voluntary program intended to stimulate the development and adoption of innovative conservation approaches and technologies while leveraging Federal investment in environmental enhancement and protection, in conjunction with agricultural production. Under CIG, Environmental Quality Incentives Program funds are used to award competitive grants to non-Federal governmental or nongovernmental organizations, tribes, or individuals. Contact: Karen Minor, 202-720-2929 Website: http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=250998
Community Connect Grant Program	US Department of Agriculture	Local government eligible	Telecommunications and Broadcast Services	This grant program relates to improving the utility infrastructure in growing communities. Through the Community Connect Grant Program, USDA plans to provide up to $13 million to fund broadband in unserved areas to support economic growth and deliver enhanced educational, health care and public safety services. Awardees must serve an area where broadband does not exist, provide a community center with broadband access, and offer broadband service to all residential and business customers. Website: http://www.texasagriculture.gov/GrantsServices/RuralEconomicDevelopment/TexasCapitalFund/MainStreetImprovementProgram.aspx

General Funding Tools

FUNDING MECHANISM	AWARDING AGENCY (IF APPLICABLE)	ELIGIBILITY	CATEGORY/AREA	GENERAL INFORMATION
Texas State Grants				
Downtown Revitalization Program	Texas Department of Agriculture	Non-entitlement cities under 50,000 in population	Economic Development	This program awards matching grant funds for public infrastructure to stimulate economic development in downtown areas and eliminate blight. Up to $15,000 of the funds may be used for administrative purposes. Matching funds must be provided. Website: http://texasagriculture.gov/GrantsServices/RuralEconomicDevelopment/TexasCapitalFund/
Main Street Improvements Program	Texas Department of Agriculture	Non-entitlement cities under 50,000 in population	Economic Development	The program funds public infrastructure and downtown improvements in the applicant's Main Street area. This funding source may serve as a revenue stream for the City of Taylor's Main Street Facade Reimbursement Grant Program, Main Street Sign Reimbursement Grant Program, Sign Reimbursement Application, Main Street Paint Reimbursement Grant Program, Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives Program and Rental Purchase Assistance Program. Website: http://texasagriculture.gov/GrantsServices/RuralEconomicDevelopment/TexasCapitalFund/MainStreetImprovementProgram.aspx
Infrastructure Development Program	Texas Dept. of Agriculture	Non-entitlement cities under 50,000 in population	Economic Development	The program funds public infrastructure improvements to support projects that create new jobs for low-to-moderate income people. Grants range from $25,000 - $60,000. The award may be used for administrative purposes, depending on the amount of the award. Website: http://texasagriculture.gov/GrantsServices/RuralEconomicDevelopment/TexasCapitalFund/InfrastructureDevelopment.aspx
Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program	Texas Dept. of Agriculture	Non-entitlement cities under 50,000 in population	Community Development	This program helps Texas cities and counties fund basic infrastructure projects such as water/wastewater facilities, street improvements and drainage. Grants range from $75,000 to $800,000. Website: http://texasagriculture.gov/GrantsServices/RuralEconomicDevelopment/RuralCommunityDevelopmentBlockGrant(CDBG)/CommunityDevelopment.aspx

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