

# Killeen Downtown Plan

*A Supplement to the Comprehensive Plan*

**Downtowns** play an important role in supporting **economic innovation** and talent attraction/retention. They provide a visible **connection to a city's history**; infuse it with a sense of permanence and authenticity; and present a **stage for ethnic and cultural celebrations.**



Adopted November 9, 2010





City of Killeen  
 Community Development Division  
 207-A W. Avenue D  
 Killeen, TX 76541  
 (254) 502-7847

**NATIONAL  
 TRUST  
 FOR  
 HISTORIC  
 PRESERVATION®**

The architectural renderings were made possible with a grant from the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

# Acknowledgements

## City Council

Timothy L. Hancock, Mayor  
 Scott Cosper, Mayor Pro-Tem  
 Larry K. Cole  
 JoAnn Purser  
 Juan Rivera  
 Kenny Wells  
 Ernest L. Wilkerson  
 Billy C. Workman

## Planning and Zoning Commission

Johnny Frederick, Chairman  
 Craig Langford, Vice Chairman  
 Robert Hicks, Sr.  
 Joel Steine  
 Bobby Lee Hoover  
 Austin Pickett  
 Eugene Kim  
 Terry Traina  
 Miguel Diaz, Jr.

## Downtown Partnership Committee

Patton Kaufman, Chairman  
 Levi Balfour  
 Sis Beck

Larry Cole  
 John Crutchfield  
 Ann Farris  
 John Fisher  
 Kathy Gilmore  
 Connie Green  
 Timothy Hancock  
 Paul Jo  
 Craig Langford  
 Fred Latham  
 Billy Mills  
 Robert Muller  
 Judy Parker  
 JoAnn Purser  
 Carl Settles  
 Thomas Sinkey

## City Staff

Dr. Ray Shanaa, Executive Director  
 Planning and Development Services  
 Beverly Zendt, Senior Planner/Downtown  
 Project Manager

## Consulting Firm

Kendig Keast Collaborative

Section 1: Foreword

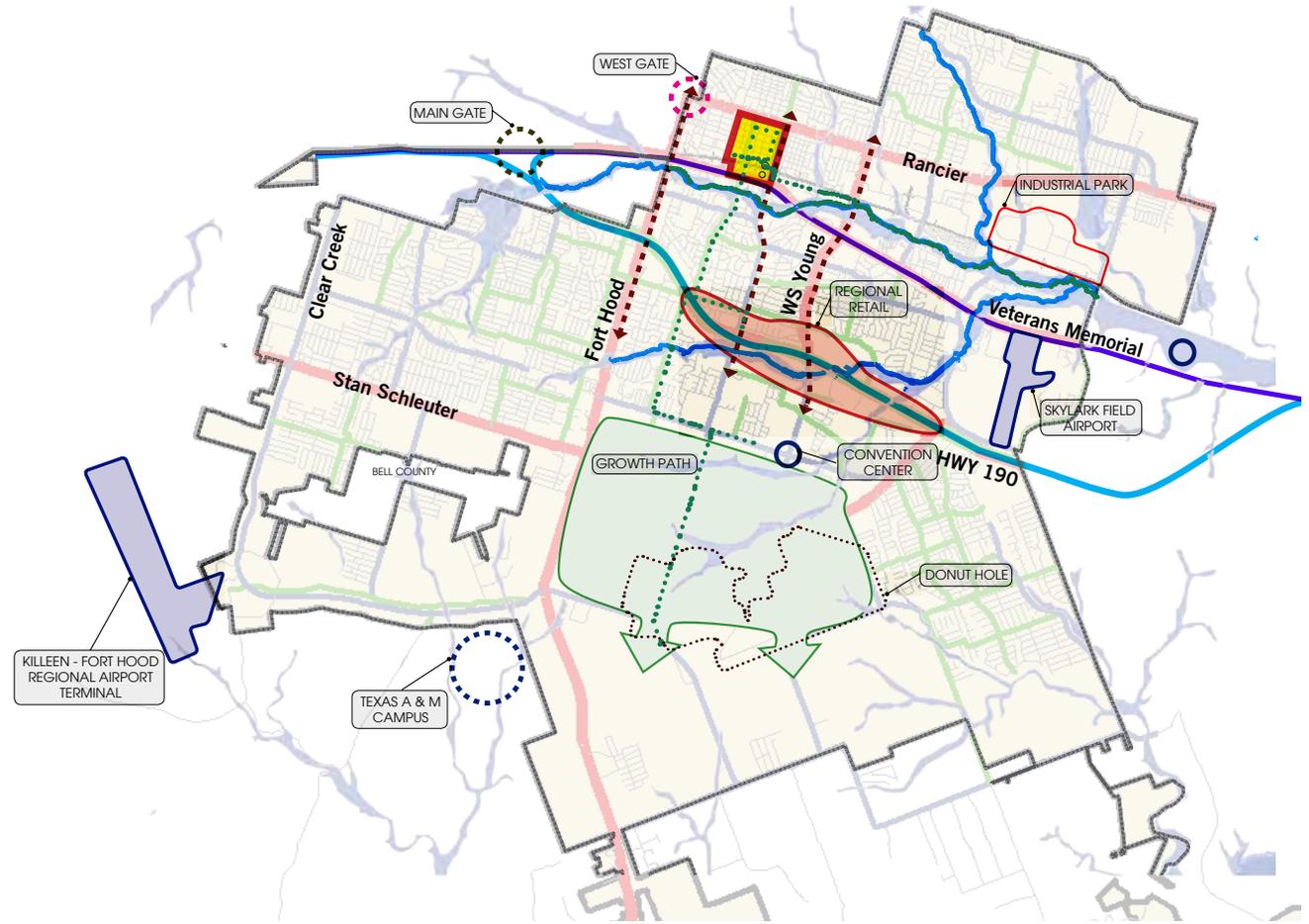
Section 2: Current Context

Section 3: Picturing the Future

Section 4: Implementation Schedule

Section 5: Who Does What

Section 6: The Bigger Picture



Regional Context Map



Adopted November 9, 2010



Unique sites in downtown Killeen

Foreword



5

# Foreword

## Section One

This document is a component of the Killeen Comprehensive Plan and therefore should be viewed in the larger context of that plan. It also builds on several sources of previous work including among others, the Downtown Killeen Action Agenda (HyettPalma 2007) and Talent 2030: How Central Texas Can Retain and Attract Its Future Workforce (Next Generation Consulting 2009). This plan attempts to augment and put into clearer view many of the recommendations contained in these earlier documents and, perhaps more importantly, get down to the nuts and bolts of implementation. In this light it should be seen more as a how-to strategy than a “plan” in the conventional sense.

### So Why is Downtown Important Anyway?

Downtowns have often been described as the “living rooms” of cities. More than any other place, they represent a city’s collective history, identity and place-quality. Downtown is a community’s image-setter and is a barometer of a community’s overall life-quality. Most curious visitors to the city will want to visit downtown and they will make inferences about the whole community based upon what they see or experience there. A shabby downtown may imply that the city lacks sociability and verve and doesn’t much value civic or public life. A lively downtown, on the other hand, says that the community is convivial and open, has depth and variety, and values its history.



More importantly, downtowns can either help drive, or act as a drag on, regional economic development. Today, almost no region with a struggling downtown can point to strong economic growth elsewhere in their metro region and few thriving regions are home to a failing downtown. As is often said, as goes downtown so goes the rest of the community.

Downtowns play an important role in supporting economic innovation and talent attraction/retention. They are centers of creativity and serve as incubators of locally grown businesses. Solid downtowns enrich a community by providing an eclectic alternative to suburban life and providing a magnet for creative types and entrepreneurs. They provide a visible connection to a city’s history; infuse it with a sense of permanence and authenticity; and present a stage for ethnic and cultural celebrations.

A revitalized downtown was cited in the recently released *Talent 2030: How Central Texas Can Retain and Attract Its Future Workforce* as a priority for retaining and attracting knowledge workers and the companies that employ them (Next Generation Consulting 2009). Many of these same talent workers have a strong entrepreneurial bent and represent a potential new guard of downtown employers, merchants and patrons.

Most cities have learned that simply letting downtown slide isn’t a sustainable community development strategy in the long run. Benign neglect fuels the outward push of development resulting in the loss of open space and increased taxpayer expense to extend public services. A failing downtown is a failing fiscal strategy. It represents major losses in “sunken” public investment in buildings and infrastructure along with a corresponding loss in tax base. And attempts to build new downtowns from scratch have rarely proved successful.

Without prudent and strategic public interventions to turn things around, troubled downtowns tend to continue to spiral downward acting as a further drag on community image and economic vitality.

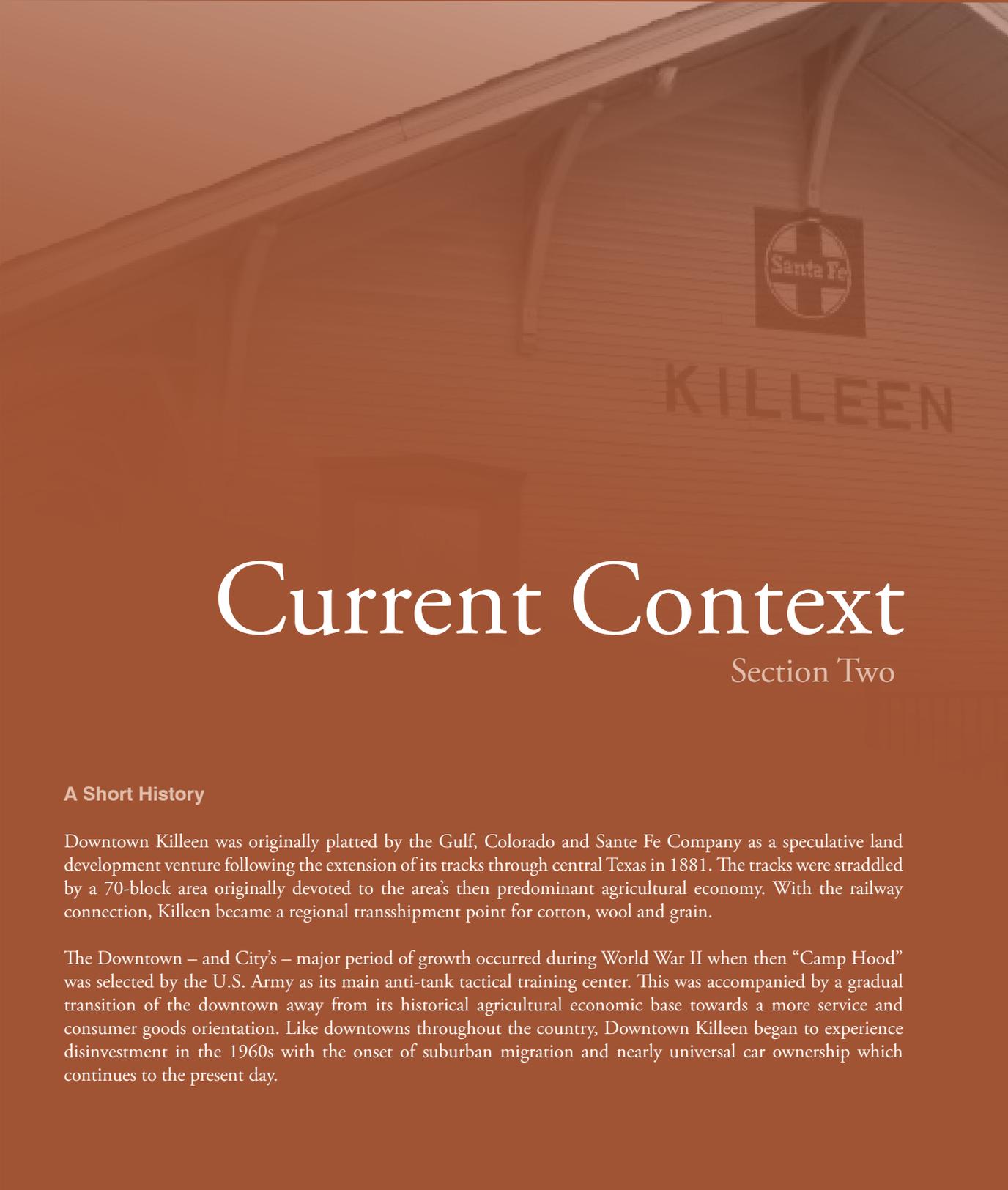
### Downtown as Urban Neighborhood

This plan avoids glossy “silver bullet” projects such as new sports stadiums and entertainment districts in favor of the basic building blocks of sustainable urban neighborhoods: quality housing, basic public amenities, solid infrastructure, public spaces, a range of everyday commercial services, and a balance of basic neighborhood institutions such as schools and churches. This approach is driven by the notion that downtown needs to be a place for residents and businesses first, since it is they who will assume the greatest stewardship of it and keep it alive long after the visitors have left.





Downtown Killeen's major period of growth occurred during World War II when then "Camp Hood" was selected by the U.S. Army as its main anti-tank tactical training center.



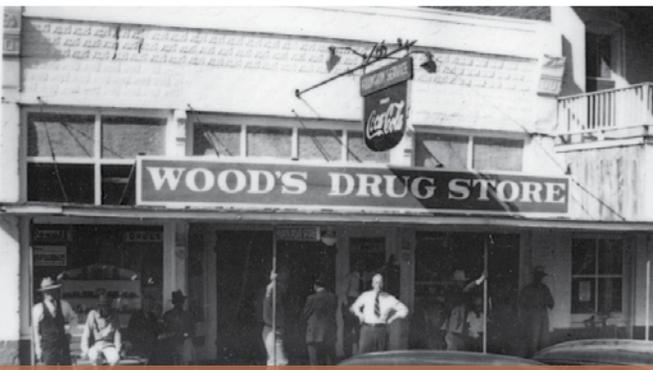
# Current Context

## Section Two

### A Short History

Downtown Killeen was originally platted by the Gulf, Colorado and Santa Fe Company as a speculative land development venture following the extension of its tracks through central Texas in 1881. The tracks were straddled by a 70-block area originally devoted to the area's then predominant agricultural economy. With the railway connection, Killeen became a regional transshipment point for cotton, wool and grain.

The Downtown – and City's – major period of growth occurred during World War II when then "Camp Hood" was selected by the U.S. Army as its main anti-tank tactical training center. This was accompanied by a gradual transition of the downtown away from its historical agricultural economic base towards a more service and consumer goods orientation. Like downtowns throughout the country, Downtown Killeen began to experience disinvestment in the 1960s with the onset of suburban migration and nearly universal car ownership which continues to the present day.



Downtown's key assets include its easy access; its intact collection of historic buildings; and some important infrastructure. Downtown's main "building blocks" are shown in the graphic at right.





Adopted November 9, 2010



Current Context



Outside of the historic district, the development pattern is somewhat hollowed out with single-use buildings occupying whole blocks and surrounded by large parking lots. Total building coverage downtown is only about 20%.

9

Avenue D at Gray Street

Source: L.S. Johnston Architects



Potential future street scene looking west at Avenue D and Gray Street

### The Physical Place

Downtown encompasses a 60+-square block area bracketed on the north and south by two major east-west commercial corridors, Rancier and Business 190 respectively; and a mixed-use corridor, 10<sup>th</sup> Street, which runs north to south on the east end of downtown and serves as Downtown’s main bypass. The six-square block historic core is generally intact but the level of property maintenance is uneven from block to block. A handful of well renovated buildings are grouped near the intersections of Avenue “D” and Gray Street and Avenue “C” and 8<sup>th</sup> Street. The dimensions of the downtown street grid are different than those of the neighborhoods to the east and west, resulting in an offsetting street pattern.



Typical Downtown street scene



Avenue “D” represents downtown’s “civic spine” connecting the post office, Military Plaza, City Hall and City Hall Annex, while Gray Street serves as the main north-south street connecting Business 190 to Rancier Avenue via a handful of important institutions including the Baptist Church, library, and the downtown’s main cluster of financial services companies.

Outside of the historic district, the development pattern is somewhat hollowed out with single-use buildings occupying whole blocks and surrounded by large parking lots. Remarkably, overall building coverage downtown is only about 20% with a large amount of the buildable land area consisting of surface parking. This, and a lack of new development or renovation projects gives the downtown a barren feel. There is a lack of visible activity on the streets resulting from the thin pattern of development; the large number of limited-use buildings; and the overall lack of attractions in downtown particularly entertainment.

Generally speaking the downtown lacks distinctive focal points and a sense of physical organization in addition to a general lack of landscaping/streetscaping and public green space.

### Building Blocks

Currently downtown Killeen presents as a largely hidden and untapped asset. It isn’t very easy to find and currently lacks the kinds of major attractions that drive consistent activity. Aside from a handful of utilitarian directional signs, there are no landmarks or entry monuments (except for Santa Fe Plaza) to mark the arrival.

Despite all of this, downtown does contain the largest collection of historic buildings in the City. The historic core is mostly intact and several landmark-quality structures exist elsewhere in the downtown area including several churches and City Hall. Most of the buildings appear to be in reasonable shape; the streets are in good repair. Residential neighborhoods exist on all sides providing a potentially ready market for new businesses. Downtown is also strategically located between the main gates of Fort Hood and the city’s other business centers. There is also a handful of specialty (legacy) businesses and core institutions such as the post office and city government that anchor downtown and continuously draw activity to it.

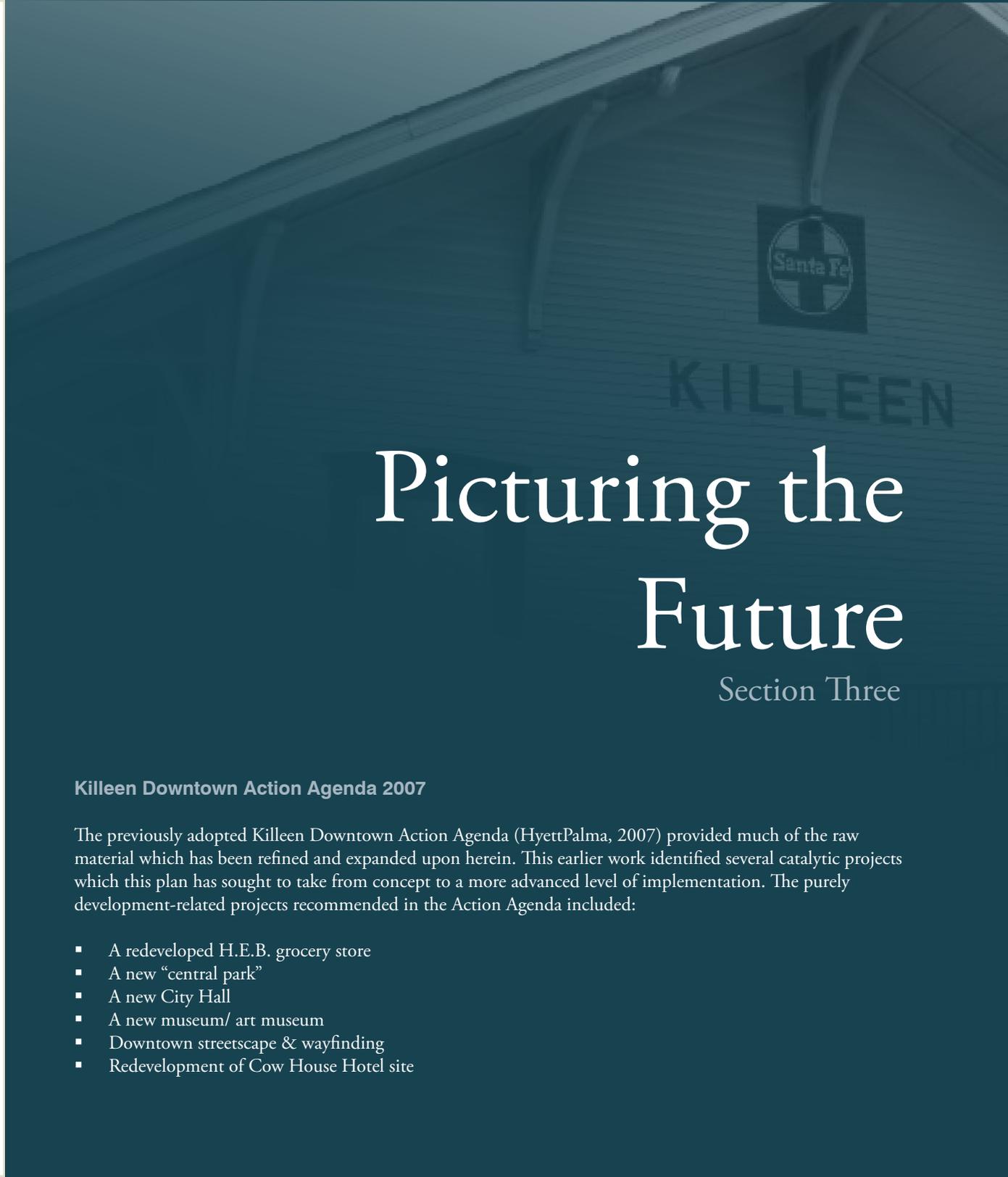


Adopted November 9, 2010

A new H.E.B. grocery store could serve as an important catalyst for Downtown redevelopment.



Picturing the Future



# Picturing the Future

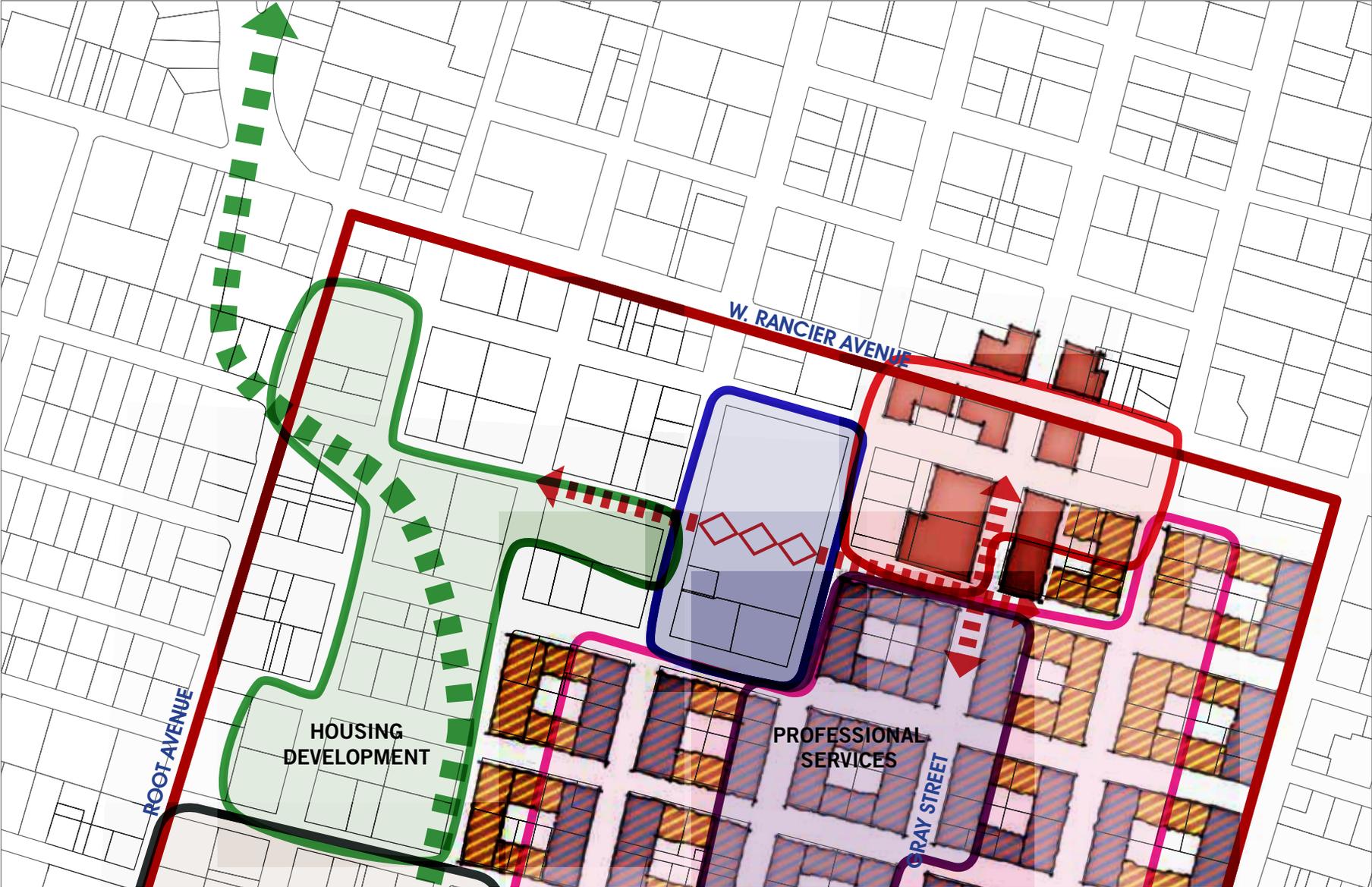
## Section Three

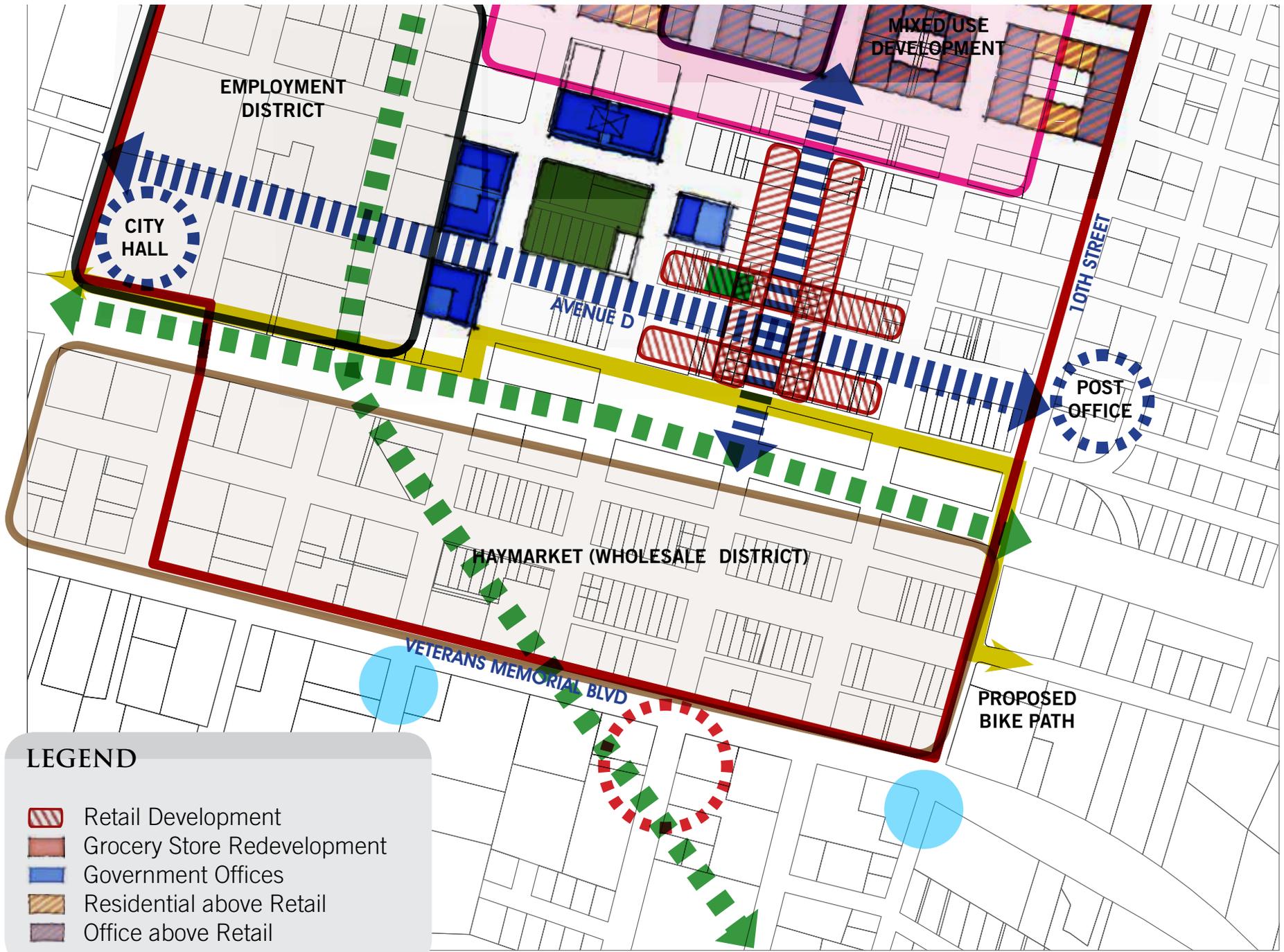
### Killeen Downtown Action Agenda 2007

The previously adopted Killeen Downtown Action Agenda (HyettPalma, 2007) provided much of the raw material which has been refined and expanded upon herein. This earlier work identified several catalytic projects which this plan has sought to take from concept to a more advanced level of implementation. The purely development-related projects recommended in the Action Agenda included:

- A redeveloped H.E.B. grocery store
- A new “central park”
- A new City Hall
- A new museum/ art museum
- Downtown streetscape & wayfinding
- Redevelopment of Cow House Hotel site

# General Land Use Plan





**LEGEND**

-  Retail Development
-  Grocery Store Redevelopment
-  Government Offices
-  Residential above Retail
-  Office above Retail

## 2007 Market Study Highlights

- Downtown's market trade area encompasses more than the entire city and has an estimated population of nearly 200,000 people.
- There is over 420,000 square-feet of retail space and 800,000 square-feet of office space currently in downtown Killeen.
- Downtown businesses generate about \$175 per square foot of sales annually.
- There are currently only 148 total housing units downtown.
- The largest retail demand within the trade area is for unprepared food products at approximately \$280 million annually.
- Average household income within the trade area is approximately \$54,000.
- Downtown is the most convenient commercial center to Fort Hood in the entire city.

Source: Killeen Downtown Action Agenda 2007. ESRI Biz

10th Street and Avenue D

Source: L.S. Johnston Architects



Ideal view looking east on Avenue D. Any potential future renovation or redevelopment of the Post Office should create a focal point for the east end of Avenue D.

The Action Agenda also includes a range of other important community development initiatives which aren't repeated here. What deserves to be repeated however is the axiom about *keeping Downtown the center of the city's public and civic life by retaining its important public institutions* such City Hall and by adding new ones that will strengthen its vitality over time. More importantly, these investments shouldn't be conceived in isolation, but instead *be planned as a suite of projects that, together, create the biggest possible market impact downtown.*

Recommendations of the Action Agenda that have already been carried out include: the certification of the Downtown Historic District and the adoption of Historic Preservation standards; the creation of a façade improvement program; the formation of the Downtown Partnership Committee; and the creation of the Downtown TIRZ. The latter has a spending capacity of approximately \$53 million over 20 years. Preliminary planning has yet to start on any of the bulleted items (listed on page 11) except for streetscaping and wayfinding.

The Action Agenda also noted that Downtown should be able to support an additional 50,000 – 75,000 s.f. of office space, and 40,000 – 50,000 s.f. of additional retail space by 2012.



A new City Hall should be centrally located Downtown and serve as the flagship building for a new 'civic quad.'

# Incentives In Place

## Enterprise/Reinvestment Zone

Downtown Killeen is a designated state Enterprise Zone allowing for refund or reduction of certain sales, use and franchise taxes for qualified investments. The amount of tax rebate is based on the amount of capital investment and the number of jobs created for residents in the zone. Investors in the Enterprise Zone may also qualify for State Smart Jobs Funds ([www.window.state.tx.us/taxinfo/enterprise\\_zone/ez\\_program.html](http://www.window.state.tx.us/taxinfo/enterprise_zone/ez_program.html))

## TIRZ

The City recently created a Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone for downtown with an estimated revenue-generating capacity of approximately \$53 million. The district is scheduled to be in place for 20 years.

## Facade Improvement Grants

Buildings in the downtown historic district are eligible for up to \$10,000 in façade improvement grants for historically sensitive rehabs.

## Downtown Tax Abatement Policy

This program expands upon the general citywide policy and is geared toward reinvestment activities that support commercial revitalization downtown.



# Priority Focus Areas

The selection of priority focus areas discussed on the following pages was based on visibly apparent redevelopment opportunities and/or the need to address blighted conditions inhibiting reinvestment. Somewhat different strategies will be required for each area.

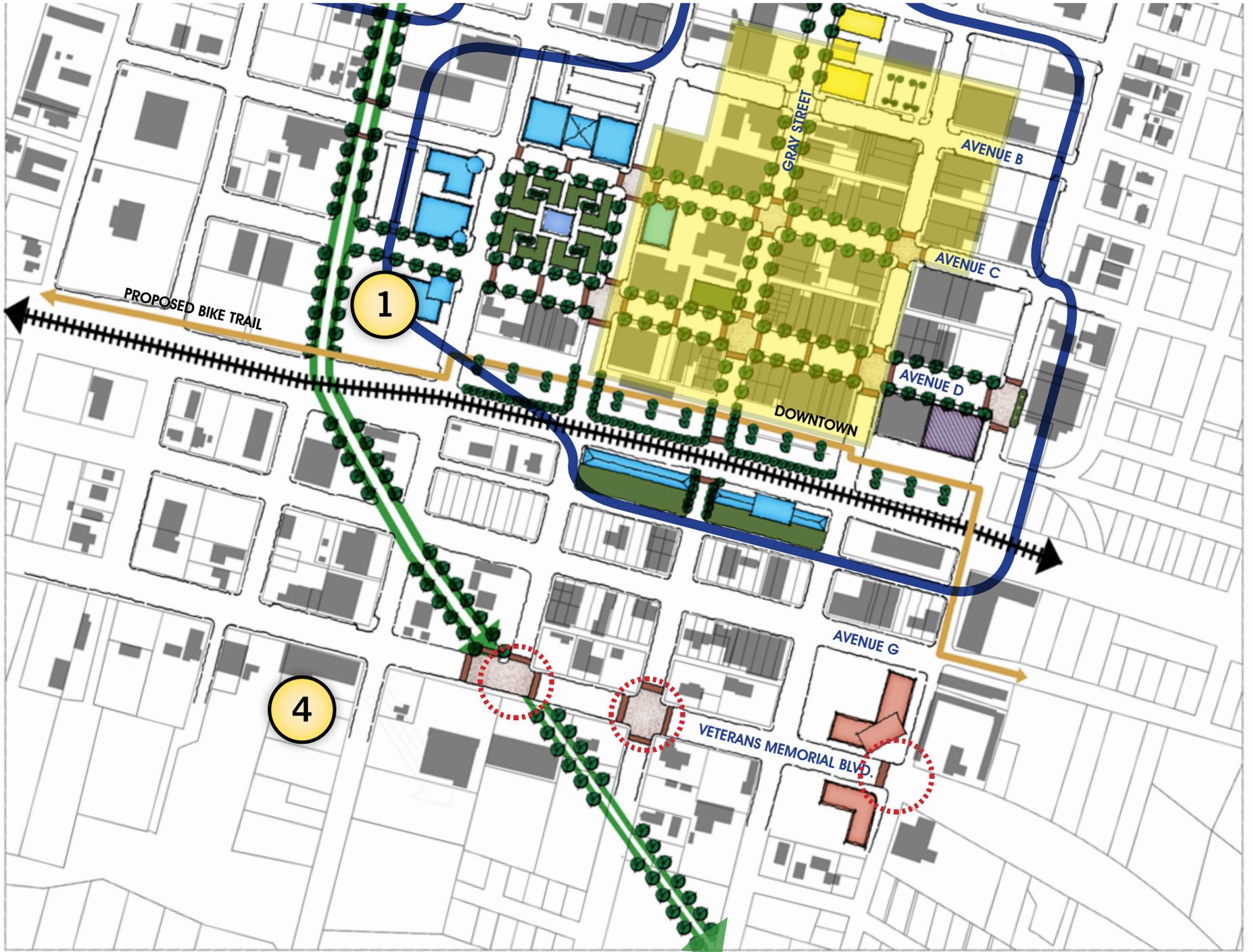
The areas are nominally ranked in order of priority, however it is very possible for special opportunities to arise that could cause one or more project areas to rise up the list (i.e. key property suddenly comes on the market or a major new infrastructure project is planned, etc.). The redevelopment scenarios shown are conceptual in nature and it is expected that any needed property acquisitions would occur on a private, voluntary and arms-length basis only.

The work on these special areas must be implemented concurrently with a number of downtown-wide measures including: an overall zoning audit to phase out inconsistent uses; general urban design guidelines that would apply throughout downtown; a consistent code enforcement regime; and more focused efforts to concentrate the city's economic development resources and programs downtown.

# Conceptual Sub-Area Plans

- 1 Focus Area 1: Historic Core (Entertainment Zone)
- 2 Focus Area 2: North Gray Street Commercial
- 3 Focus Area 3: Greenway Housing
- 4 Focus Area 4: Haymarket District

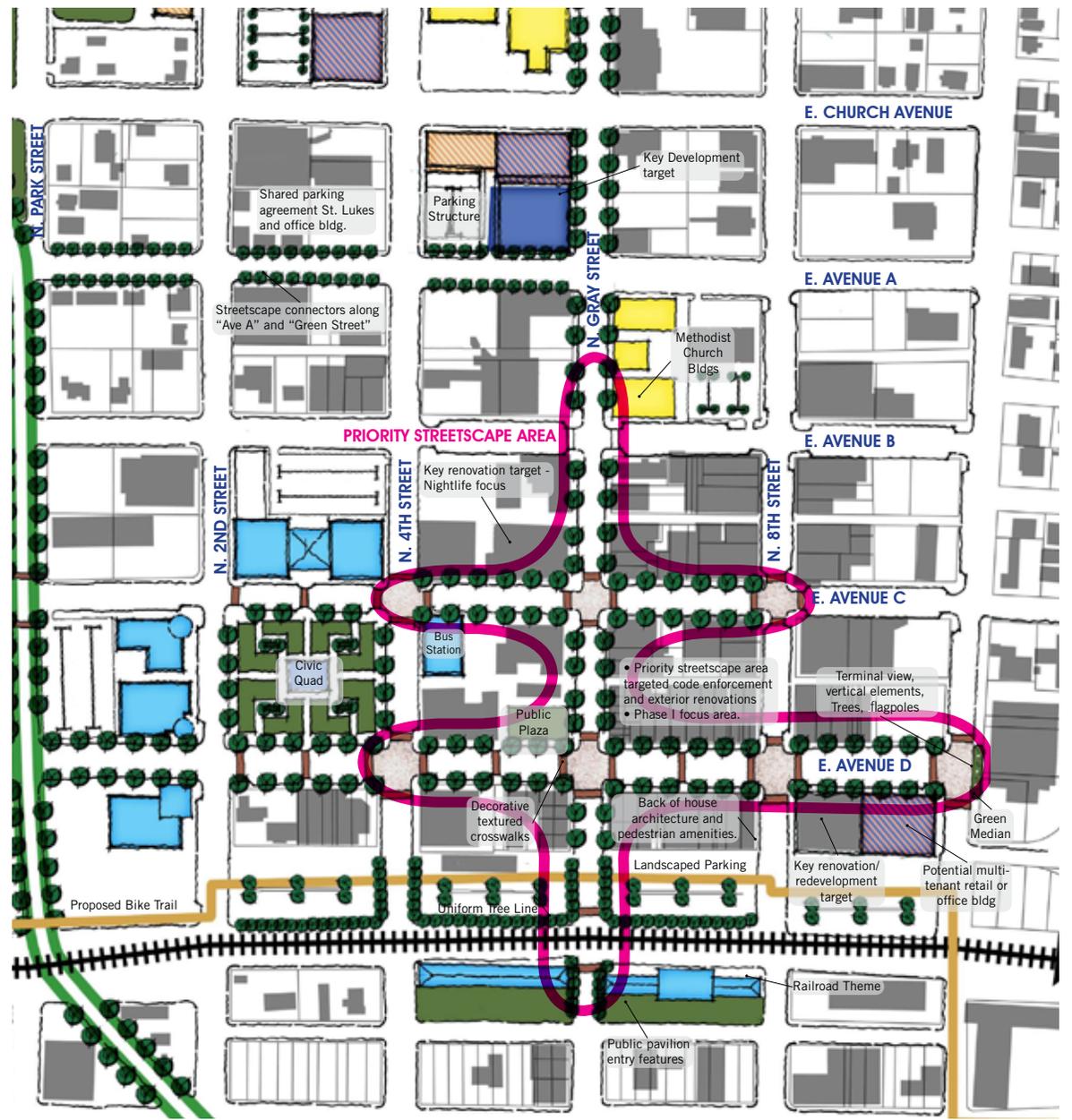






# Priority Focus Area # 1

Re-Storing the Historic District



Contemporary infill buildings can blend with historic architecture through the use of common materials, colors, exposed structural elements, setbacks, the location and size of window/door openings, and overall building scale.



Adopted November 9, 2010

A new Civic Quad in Downtown will help stimulate the Downtown office market and help drive retail reinvestment.



Picturing the Future



Ne  
in  
arc  
Pla  
po  
the  
me  
if they are spread out, and allow  
for greater parking efficiencies.

The initial priority focus for the city should be on the continued renovation and reinvestment in the historic downtown core bounded roughly by 8<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Streets, Sante Fe Plaza and Avenue “B”. The City’s main efforts should be on major public investment in streetscape, public space, and public buildings coupled with aggressive outreach to property and business owners to both improve the appearance of their properties and to support business investment and entrepreneurship.

Aggressive promotion of the City’s façade improvement program and building code enforcement should be augmented with targeted business development loans from a new, TIRZ-capitalized, revolving loan fund to help



Downtown redevelopment should encourage higher density, mixed-use buildings. Parking should be accessed along side streets and located in interior lots or structures.



with new business start-ups and expansions. A major outreach and enforcement regimen should be implemented along both sides of Gray Street and the east end of Avenue “D”. The earliest and heaviest streetscaping should occur along Avenue “D” and on Gray Street between Sante Fe Plaza to Avenue “B” with later and simpler streetscaping along 6<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and Avenue “B”. Ultimately the streetscaping along Gray Street would extend all the way to Rancier (see graphic p. 18). The vacant lot at the northwest corner of Gray and Avenue “D” should be acquired for a new public plaza potentially with a small pavilion and public art.

A secondary focus should be on finding new tenants or developers for a handful of key downtown properties including the vacant Embarq building which could be potentially reused as a single or multi-tenant office building or retail center, arts incubator, medical clinic, community center, small business development center, or as extension classroom space. (There is also potential for a new infill building immediately east of this building.) Another important reinvestment target is the vacant storefront and converted theater at the northwest corner of Gray and Avenue “C” which would ideally be redeveloped with an entertainment focus. The most important redevelopment target however is the blighted former Cow House Hotel. This site should be redeveloped into a new mid-rise office building and/or hotel with ground level retail and structured parking.

Over the longer term, the City should begin preliminary planning for a new City Hall fronting onto a new central square bordered by 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Streets and Avenues “D” and “C”. The new city hall building could potentially anchor a new civic quad perhaps consisting of a performance art venue, museum, bus station, new school district headquarters and private law offices.

### Implementation Actions

The lead implementation strategy in this area is on major public investment in buildings and public space including streetscape. This involves direct public outlays for public space acquisition and enhancement, gateways, and preliminary facilities planning for the development of a new city hall. At the same time, the City should focus on an aggressive outreach strategy designed to promote its façade improvement programs, enterprise zone incentives, and potential revolving loan program, and to understand property owners’ plans for their properties.

The outreach should also address outstanding building and zoning rules violations and to measure attitudes toward merchants association membership and/or a future potential Public Improvement District (PID). These later topics may be discussed in a series of multi-lingual roundtable discussions in order to help overcome any language or cultural barriers.

Streetscape design and budgeting should occur concurrently with the outreach campaign. The city should step-up its efforts to

Cultural leaders should be identified throughout the process to help communicate and promote these programs to different ethnic groups.



Adopted November 9, 2010



Picturing the Future



acquire the vacant lot at the corner of Avenue “D” and Gray Street and prepare design plans and work to dress up the vacant lots straddling Gray Street south of the railroad tracks.

A detailed property database with contact information should be compiled to get a complete picture of ownership structure. This should be followed up with discussions with targeted property owners on potential buy out, lease-back, co-investment or other potential deal structures. The City should inquire with prospective developers on their interests in certain key properties and begin to put together tentative financing packages to draw them in. Finally, this area should serve as the pilot zone for a potential virtual incubator program (see discussion on page 42).

Avenue B at 8th Street

Source: L.S. Johnston Architects



Potential future street scene looking south on 8th Street

Downtown should feature the broadest possible range of commercial and human activities of any where in the City.

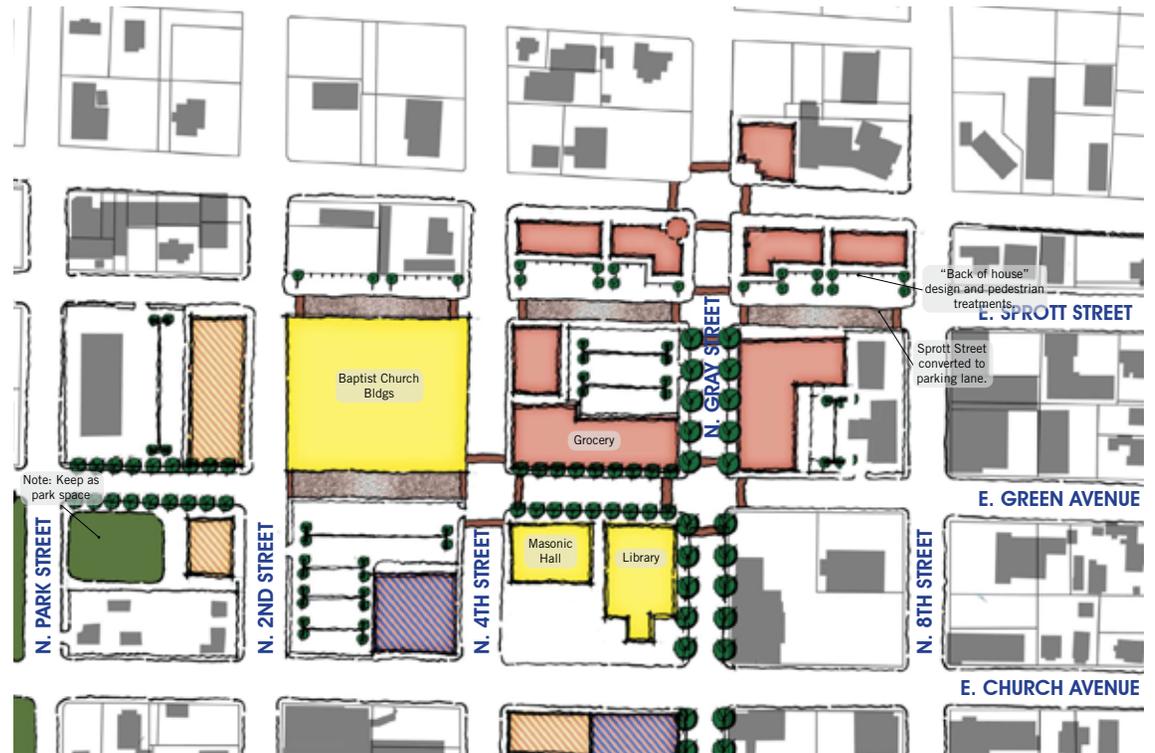


New master-planned redevelopment on the north end of downtown should comprise multiple sites near the intersection of Gray and Rancier/Sprott. New development should have a similar design motif and scale.



# Priority Focus Area # 2

Create a New Northern Gateway at Gray Street and Rancier



Efforts here should be focused on creating a new commercial node centered at Gray and Sprott Streets and anchored by a new HEB grocery store. Redevelopment objectives are to eliminate blight and to organize new development around several important neighborhood anchors such as the Baptist Church and Downtown Library. In the development scenario shown, Sprott Street is converted from a public street to a service lane providing access to an



Adopted November 9, 2010

New development in Downtown should emphasize traditional, zero-setback patterns and more on-site landscaping including parking lots.



Picturing the Future



internalized parking area that serves the entire redevelopment area. The backs of the buildings fronting Rancier have basic pedestrian appointments and rear-door customer access. All back-of-house functions are screened.

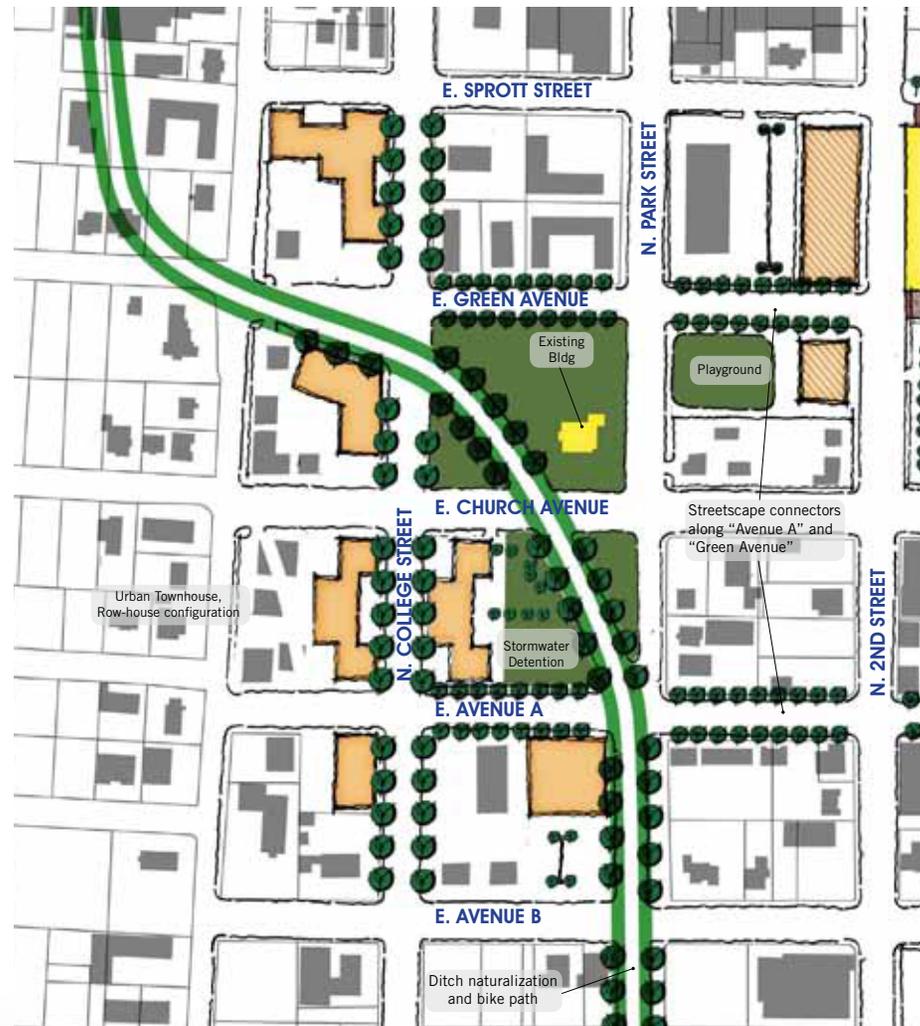
**Implementation Actions**

The main implementation strategy in this area is on pushing public-private redevelopment. Implementation activities include discussions with HEB regarding their interest in possibly developing, owning or leasing some or all of the project, as well as other property-owner outreach to see which of the many vacant, for lease/sale properties are actually in-play. These inquiries should seek to determine the owner's long-term interests in the property, possible sale or option terms, and/or their interest in potentially taking an equity position in a new development in lieu of sale.

This work is best done under the aegis of a new non-profit public-private downtown development entity whose board represents a cross-section of the city's political and business leadership (the latter including people with hands on experience in business development, real estate development and fund-raising). TIRZ funds could be used to gain control over property (preferably through purchase options that can be transferred to private developers as opposed to outright purchase) and to defray predevelopment costs such as title searches, environmental investigations and preliminary design. Developer selection would be based on a host of factors including purchase offer amount, creditworthiness, experience with similar projects, proposed tenant mix, and completion timeframe. Conditions pertaining to the terms of public financing (if any); the coordination of public infrastructure; and project design would be negotiated via development agreement.

Additional implementation measures include: major code enforcement efforts; preliminary environmental assessments on targeted properties; and the possible procurement of New Markets Tax Credits to help raise equity capital. Other city actions would involve amending the zoning ordinance as necessary to allow for a master development scenario whereby development standards are applied over the "total project" and parking is shared by multiple users. The City should also begin to compile a call list of preferred developers and attempt to discern developer interest as the pieces fall into place. Brownfield remediation grants should be sought if potentially hazardous environmental conditions are suspected on key properties.

If a significant number of properties can be pieced together, a Request For Proposals (RFP) should be issued statewide to solicit potential developers.



Proposed new housing in Downtown should consist mostly of a combination of attached single-family townhouses and high-quality garden apartments. Upper-floor units in commercial “storefront” (mixed-use) buildings are also encouraged.

Adopted November 9, 2010

The main strategy in this quadrant is on gradual land assembly and land-banking with a view to spurring the development of an urban, mixed-housing neighborhood at some point in the future. The land-banking activity would be led by the City or by an agent of the City such as a redevelopment corporation.

This neighborhood would be organized around a proposed re-naturalized drainageway and preserved wooded lots. The redevelopment strategy stresses longer-term land acquisition and land banking to eventually lure a developer



The drainage ditch slicing through Downtown could potentially be reengineered as a green feature with bridge and trail accents as in these examples.



or developers to construct high-quality multi-family “infill” housing (possibly leveraging affordable housing tax credits). The initial focus should be on tying-up some of the larger vacant parcels along College Avenue, and then acquiring smaller parcels as purchase opportunities arise. This process is anticipated to occur gradually over a period of years with all or most of the property acquisitions occurring on a voluntary, arms length basis.

The city’s main approach would be to assist with clearing up title and helping to consolidate and transfer ownership to a credible private developer. The timing and extent of new development will depend entirely on how soon the city or a private developer can acquire and assemble available property and obtain financing.

### Implementation Actions

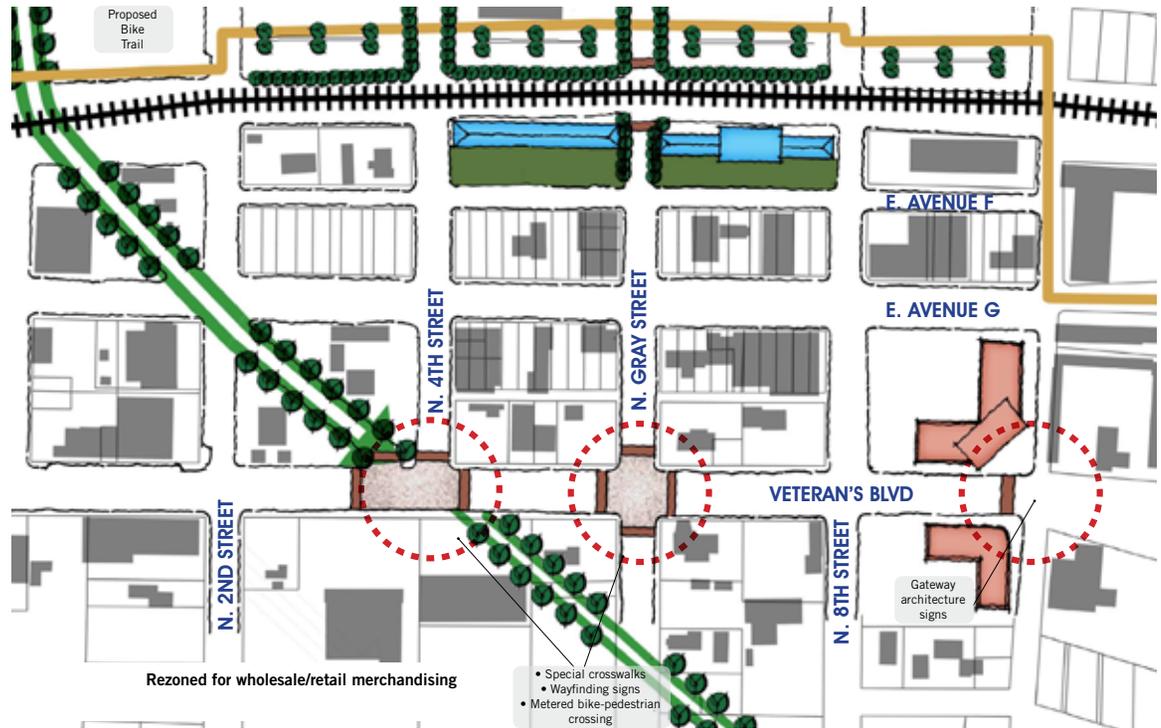
Early stage implementation would involve the creation of a detailed property database and initial inquiries with property owners. These inquiries (and any other city inquiries concerning the potential purchase or optioning of private property) may be conducted with the help of a proxy buyer or a private developer’s representative to avoid the inflated expectations that often accompany a potential public purchase.

Other city activities would involve the rigorous enforcement of property maintenance codes and persistently looking for opportunities to acquire property via the tax foreclosure process. Other city actions would include enticing private developers with assistance with securing affordable housing tax credits and incorporating public improvements such as streetscape and lighting into pending capital improvement plans. Ultimately, a simplified streetscape scheme consisting of stylized lighting, street trees and marked crosswalks would visually tie this area to the central parts of downtown via Avenue “A” and Green Avenue.

The City’s zoning ordinance should be amended as necessary to allow for urban-format multi-family housing with minimal setbacks potentially under a flexible planned development scenario.

# Priority Focus Area # 4

Create a "Front Door" at Business 190



The current state of Business 190 presents a challenge to creating an inviting entry to downtown from the south. Still, there are things that the city can begin to do to improve its curb appeal short of a large-scale redevelopment effort. Simple wayfinding signs, entry monuments, banners, and pedestrian improvements along the corridor in the vicinity of downtown would signal to drivers that this is the edge of downtown and would help steer them into it. Specifically, wayfinding signs at the main corners of 4<sup>th</sup> Street, Gray Street, and 8<sup>th</sup> Street along with marked pedestrian crosswalks would help “announce” downtown and provide visual “hooks” to passers-by.

An immediate redevelopment opportunity exists on the west side of 10<sup>th</sup> Street at Business 190 where two corner parcels (one vacant and one with a dilapidated restaurant) straddle the highway. Redevelopment of this corner would provide a new gateway to downtown at its most heavily traveled intersection.

New development along Veterans should strive for a higher design quality and demarcate and define the edge of downtown. Wholesaling businesses should be encouraged in the area between Veterans and the railroad tracks.



Adopted November 9, 2010



Picturing the Future



### Implementation Actions

Although opportunistic land acquisition and selective public improvements are both a part of the “plan” for this area, the main implementation strategy here is regulatory in nature. In addition to the actions described above, the city should change the zoning in the area between the railroad tracks and Business 190 to phase out auto-based businesses and outdoor storage. New zoning should encourage the transition of this area to a mixed-use zone consisting mostly of wholesaling and retailing with attached (live-work) housing as an accessory use. The intent would be to transform the area into a “Haymarket District” utilizing many of the utilitarian, but still functional, structures that exist there. A major code enforcement campaign should also be pushed here.

Other actions should be to do detailed corridor planning efforts for Business 190 and Rancier Avenue as has been recommended earlier. These plans would set forth major recommendations on new zoning, sign and building standards, pedestrian and drainage improvements, access controls, traffic and parking management and redevelopment targets. In the meantime, the city should aggressively push its sign grant and façade improvements programs; enforce building and property codes; and take aggressive actions to remove blighted buildings.

The City should inquire about the purchase terms of each property and consider gaining site control with the intent of transferring ownership to a developer of the city’s choosing. City control of the site (such as through an option) would give the city greater marketing and design control than would otherwise be possible under current ownership and zoning.

Killeen exhibits many “retro” design motifs of the mid 20th Century that can provide inspiration for new buildings and streetscape elements.

# Landscape and Wayfinding





**LEGEND**

-  5 Year Streetscaping Plan
-  Lighter Treatment
-  Rail Road Corridor Enhancement
-  Wayfinding Signs



Traditional elements of a lively and interesting Downtown: mixed-use, multi-story buildings that define the street edge, a myriad of sidewalk activities, and a pleasant pedestrian environment that encourages such activities.

## Best Practices and Guiding Principles

### 1. Density and Infill

The term “density” evokes a range of reactions both positive and negative. Whatever the connotation, it is a necessary ingredient in creating a vibrant downtown in that it maximizes the overall usage and activity that occurs there. It also optimizes the utility of infrastructure and helps make public transit supportable.

### 2. Mixed Use

Related to density is the combining of various land uses within a neighborhood and even in the same building. Mixed use helps enliven urban neighborhoods at various times of day or week and helps balance traffic and parking loads.

### 3. Shared Parking

Only about 20% of the buildable land in Downtown Killeen consists of actual buildings. This is a remarkably low figure. A good portion of the balance is made up of large expanses of surface parking which creates a deadening effect on major parts of downtown. By mixing daytime (i.e. retail) and evening uses (residential) as well as weekday (offices) and weekend uses (churches) in close proximity, opportunities exist for parking to be shared by multiple users. Restricted use parking leases can be negotiated into public-private development agreements and can provide a valuable source of revenue for lessors.

### 4. Two-Way Streets

Cities throughout the U.S. are returning to two-way streets as a way to calm and disperse downtown traffic and reduce the frequent danger and confusion associated with one-way streets. One-way streets are also believed to harm certain downtown businesses - especially ones that require convenient curbside access and maximum visibility, and those that do most of their business at certain peak times of the day. They also tend to inhibit pedestrians since they are designed to collect and move large volumes of traffic at higher speeds.

### 5. Hedge With Housing

Having a dense mixture of attached and multifamily housing has been a key factor in the revival of most healthy downtown neighborhoods. Housing provides a built-in market for many downtown businesses and helps keep the neighborhood alive at night and on weekends. Housing also helps keep downtown’s “lights on” after dark and can discourage the opportunity crime that often occurs when nobody is around.

### 6. Green Design

Among their many benefits, green buildings such as those that employ passive daylighting and energy efficient components can drastically reduce utility costs and help reduce stormwater and heat build-up. (Planted or “white-painted” roofs are both particularly effective in this regard.) Anecdotal evidence also suggests that they may be more healthful to live or work in and can contribute to worker productivity. The restoration and retrofitting of existing buildings in most cases is inherently greener and more economical than complete



demolition and reconstruction and should be encouraged whenever practical. Well landscaped streets also help with cooling and drainage and add color and visual relief.

## 7. Design Guidelines

Having a common set of design standards helps assure that basic aesthetic principles are adhered to, and can reduce arbitrariness in the development review process. Design guidelines can strengthen developer confidence by assuring that there are barriers to low quality development that could dampen property values. Where market conditions are poor however, the imposition of design standards may provide another reason for developers to stay away unless financial incentives are in place to offset them.

## 8. Context-Sensitive Design

New development, especially in or near the historic part of Downtown, should relate to surrounding buildings in terms of size, materials and repeating elements. They should attempt to mitigate off-site impacts that may affect surrounding properties such as stormwater runoff and light blockage, and avoid major departures from local architectural traditions. Unique, contrasting buildings, on the other hand, are okay where no clear building type or style is present or where the design distinction in the surrounding area is otherwise lacking. Climate-appropriate elements such as arcades, overhangs, rooftop solar systems, ample street trees and indigenous, drought-tolerant landscaping are examples of context sensitive environmental design appropriate for southwestern climates.

## 9. Concentrated Civic Functions

Having most of a city's core administrative and cultural facilities grouped in downtown provides functional advantages and helps reinforce downtown's role as the center of civic life. These facilities can also help stabilize or spur the downtown real estate market and provide important synergies with private development. Dispersal of these facilities can lead to a cycle of disinvestment as the businesses that rely on these facilities also decamp or go out of business.

## 10. Transit & Transferring

Maintaining transit services to downtown and hubbing services is key to maintaining downtown as the "central place" where all things come together. Bus stations and transfer points create concentrated customer flow opportunities for businesses and fuel downtown's pedestrian environment.

## 11. Brand Management

People need to know what downtown is all "about" and what unique businesses and experiences can be found there. This needs to be communicated through general marketing efforts, design motifs, and other messages that reinforce a consistent message. Control of the message should come under purview of a privately organized downtown management group made up of, and funded by, local businesses and property owners. This group would also help collectively "manage" downtown by promoting co-marketing efforts, special events, and maintaining consistent hours among other things.



One of several retro design elements Downtown.





Adopted November 9, 2010

Implementation Schedule



Downtown revitalization will require a dedicated commitment of public leadership and resources.



# Implementation Schedule

## Section Four

The implementation schedule is tentative only. Public-private development projects will be opportunity (not schedule) driven. The legend below identifies community stakeholders with a leadership position.

### Community Stakeholders

- |             |                                     |                |  |
|-------------|-------------------------------------|----------------|--|
| <b>ACM</b>  | Assistant City Manager              | <b>IT</b>      | Information Technology                       |
| <b>BRC</b>  | Business Resource Center            | <b>KEDC</b>    | Killeen Economic Development Corporation     |
| <b>CC</b>   | City Council                        | <b>KPD</b>     | Killeen Police Department                    |
| <b>CMO</b>  | City Manager's Office               | <b>MA</b>      | Merchants Association                        |
| <b>CE</b>   | Code Enforcement Department         | <b>PI</b>      | Permits and Inspections Department           |
| <b>CD</b>   | Community Development Department    | <b>PD</b>      | Planning and Development Services Department |
| <b>DDC</b>  | Downtown Development Corporation    | <b>P&amp;Z</b> | Planning and Zoning Commission               |
| <b>DPC</b>  | Downtown Partnership Committee      | <b>PW</b>      | Public Works Department                      |
| <b>GKCC</b> | Greater Killeen Chamber of Commerce | <b>S</b>       | Streets Department                           |
| <b>HPB</b>  | Heritage Preservation Board         | <b>TIRZ</b>    | Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone Board        |

# Public Improvements

## Recommendations

Historic District Streetscape

Gateway Enhancements

Plaza Development

Wayfinding Signage

Ditch Naturalization

Wi-Fi District

Expanded Streetscape

New City Hall

Other Public Facilities  
(museum, central park, parking structure)

Farmer's Market

Pocket Parks / Public Spaces

Veteran's/Rancier Avenue Planning

## Sample Activities

# Programs & Initiatives

## Recommendations

Zoning Changes

Design Standards (Downtown-Wide)



### 1 Pre-Planning

- Initial facilities programming/ planning
- Preliminary design, feasibility, budgeting
- Identify funding options, grants
- Site selection
- Site negotiations

### 2 Intermediate Planning/ Implementation

- Site placement and acquisition
- Establish funding source
- Begin construction
- Relocation
- Second phase pre-planning

### 3 Advanced Implementation

- Complete construction
- Phase 2 scoping, budgeting, design



**Recommendations**

- Code Enforcement
- Historic District Design Standards Enforcement
- Heightened Police Presence
- One on Ones with Business Owners
- Continuation of Façade Grant Program
- Development/Implementation Sign Grant Program
- Mayor's Award for Best Rehab Project or Business
- Small Business Training Program (Fast Track)
- Continue/Expand Promotion of Available Properties on CC Site
- Research, Apply New Markets Tax Credits (NMTC)
- Business Property Owner Roundtables
- Revolving Load Fund (RLF)
- Continuation of Tax Abatements, Facade Grants, TIRZ
- Permit Fee Waiver Program
- Downtown Development Corporation
- Marketing, Special Events
- Support/Expand Services of Business Resource Center in Downtown
- Formation of Downtown Merchants Association
- Downtown Website
- Possible Formation of PID
- Update Downtown Plan

Implementation Schedule

Responsibility	2010 - 2012	2012 - 2015	2015 - 2020	2020+
CE	[Dark Teal Bar]			
HPB, CE	[Dark Teal Bar]			
KPD	[Dark Teal Bar]			
PD, CE, GKCC	[Dark Teal Bar]			
PD, CD	[Dark Teal Bar]			
PD, CD	[Dark Red Bar]	[Dark Teal Bar]	[Dark Teal Bar]	[Dark Teal Bar]
PD, ACM, HPB	[Dark Red Bar]	[Dark Teal Bar]	[Dark Teal Bar]	[Dark Teal Bar]
PD, GKCC	[Dark Red Bar]	[Dark Teal Bar]	[Dark Teal Bar]	[Dark Teal Bar]
PD, BRC	[Dark Teal Bar]	[Dark Teal Bar]	[Dark Teal Bar]	[Dark Teal Bar]
PD, CD	[Dark Red Bar]	[Dark Teal Bar]	[Dark Teal Bar]	[Dark Teal Bar]
PD, GKCC	[Dark Teal Bar]			
PD, TIRZ, CD, KEDC	[Dark Red Bar]	[Dark Teal Bar]	[Dark Teal Bar]	[Dark Teal Bar]
PD, CD, TIRZ	[Dark Teal Bar]			
PD, PI	[Dark Red Bar]	[Dark Teal Bar]	[Dark Teal Bar]	[Dark Teal Bar]
KEDC, PD, TIRZ	[Dark Red Bar]	[Dark Teal Bar]	[Dark Teal Bar]	[Dark Teal Bar]
PD, DPC	[Dark Red Bar]	[Dark Teal Bar]	[Dark Teal Bar]	[Dark Teal Bar]
PD, GKCC		[Dark Teal Bar]	[Dark Teal Bar]	[Dark Teal Bar]
GKCC		[Dark Red Bar]	[Dark Teal Bar]	[Dark Teal Bar]
MA, PD, GKCC		[Dark Red Bar]	[Dark Teal Bar]	[Dark Teal Bar]
PD, P&Z		[Dark Red Bar]	[Dark Teal Bar]	[Dark Teal Bar]
To Be Determined				[Dark Red Bar] [Dark Teal Bar]

# Programs & Initiatives

## Sample Activities

# Development

## Recommendations

### Focus Area 1

- Cow House Hotel
- Embarq Building

### Focus Area 2

- HEB and Environs

### Focus Area 3

- Land Assembly in NW Quad

### Focus Area 4

- Corner of Veteran's at 10th

## Sample Activities

### 1 Pre-Planning

- Program development
- Determine administrative lead, funding source
- Establish rules, requirements, criteria
- Committee formation
- Draft ordinance, position paper
- Team, partner enlistment/ public participation

### 2 Intermediate Planning/ Implementation

- Expand participation
- Program adoption
- Establish by-laws / articles of incorporation
- Staffing
- Establish permanent funding
- Promotion
- Enforcement

### 3 Advanced Implementation

- Enforcement
- Correction and refinement
- Program maintenance
- Program expansion
- Seek additional funding dollars



### 1 Pre-Planning

- Due diligence
- Owner outreach, negotiations
- Feasibility analysis
- Lead acquisition, assembly
- Conceptual planning

### 2 Intermediate Planning/ Implementation

- Financial structuring
- Developer /tenant recruitment and selection
- Final design
- Development agreement
- Phase 2 concept planning

### 3 Advanced Implementation

- Final development agreement
- Begin construction
- Phase 2 project structuring

The price of the option usually ranges from several hundred to a few thousand dollars. The developer or option holder is not obligated to buy the property, but has the exclusive right to invoke or ‘exercise’ the option (i.e. buy the property) within the option period if s/he thinks it will ultimately pan out to be a good investment.



## A Measured Public Acquisition Strategy

While it is expected that some public purchases of land will be needed to spur redevelopment, such acquisitions will be strategically selected and few in number. Public acquisition would generally only occur if there is a need to remove properties that are clearly blighted, or where one critical piece of property is needed in order for a larger redevelopment project to occur. The city would generally only pursue one small project at a time when a prospective developer or end-user has already been identified. In other words, not purely “spec” development.

Public acquisitions also may not require that the city actually buy property outright, but rather just control it through a transferable purchase option. This is a fairly standard redevelopment tactic used by both private developers as well as redevelopment authorities that allows them to market a property (or successfully recruit tenants) before – and as a condition of – actually taking title. Under an option, a developer (or city redevelopment agency) enters into a contract with the owner which allows the developer the exclusive right, or “option” to purchase a property for an established price within a given period of time (90-120 days, etc.) in exchange for a non-refundable fee (the option price). The property owner is generally precluded from selling the property to another buyer during the option period.

An option allows the holder to “lock down” the property while they do their homework or “due diligence” (i.e. seeking an end developer, lining up “pre-leases”, securing financing, getting zoning approvals, etc.) If the option holder experiences problems in one or more of these areas that clouds their plans, they can just let the option expire and walk away with only the loss of the option price (vs. having to resell the property, potentially at a loss). A city redevelopment agency could transfer its option to a private developer that it recruits or any other one that steps forward agreeing to carry out the city’s redevelopment vision. Options, as well as outright purchases, also allow the city to attach its own terms such as special design, performance considerations, or development completion deadlines to the project that it may not otherwise have the power to enforce through zoning alone.



Adopted November 9, 2010



Killeen Downtown Plan 38



Adopted November 9, 2010

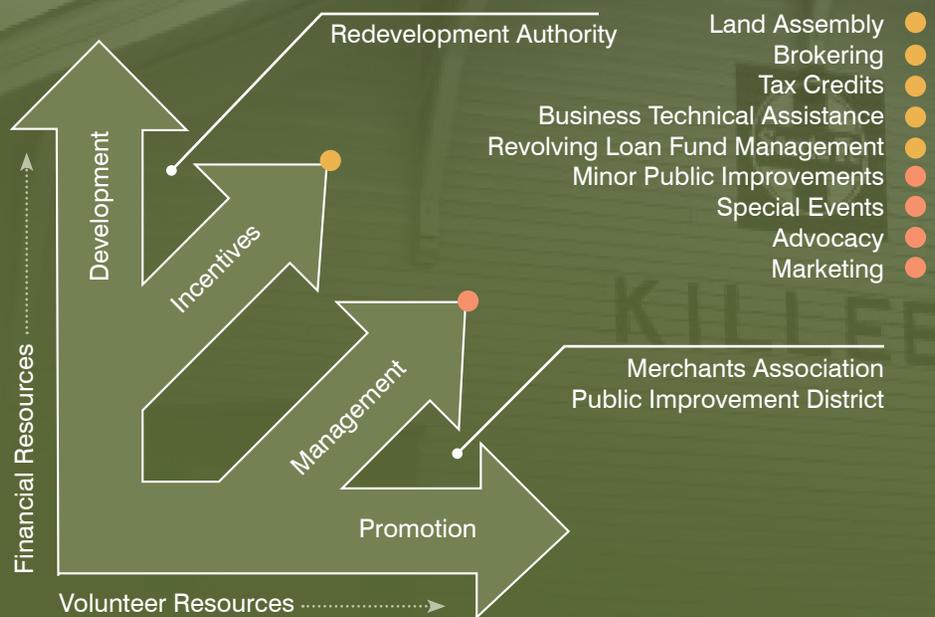
Entertainment should be a significant focus of Downtown reinvestment including this conceptual vision for the northwest corner of Gray and Avenue C.



Who Does What



FOUR PLANKS OF REDEVELOPMENT



# Who Does What

## Section Five

### Streetscaping as a First Step

Numerous case studies show that most successfully revitalized Downtowns didn't happen solely as a result of cosmetic public improvements and visionary private developers coming together. In "soft market" situations where the incidence of vacancy and blight are relatively high and the availability of "clean and clear" redevelopment sites low (such as in downtown Killeen), most cities have had to intercede in the real estate market to reduce the costs and risks associated with redevelopment versus new development. Proactive cities have had to assume the role of development manager to create and promote development opportunities when the private market has ceased to function in the desired way.



The addition of multi-story buildings and green elements would contribute more “scenery” to Downtown.



The methods by which cities involve themselves in the workings of the private development market can vary widely - and their organizational models can be structured very differently - from place to place. Conversely (and more commonly) these organizations are often named different things even though their range of activities and programs are quite similar. Whatever name they use, these organizations usually act as the public partner in the oft spoken phrase “public-private partnership”. Their usual role is that of facilitator as opposed to actual developer.

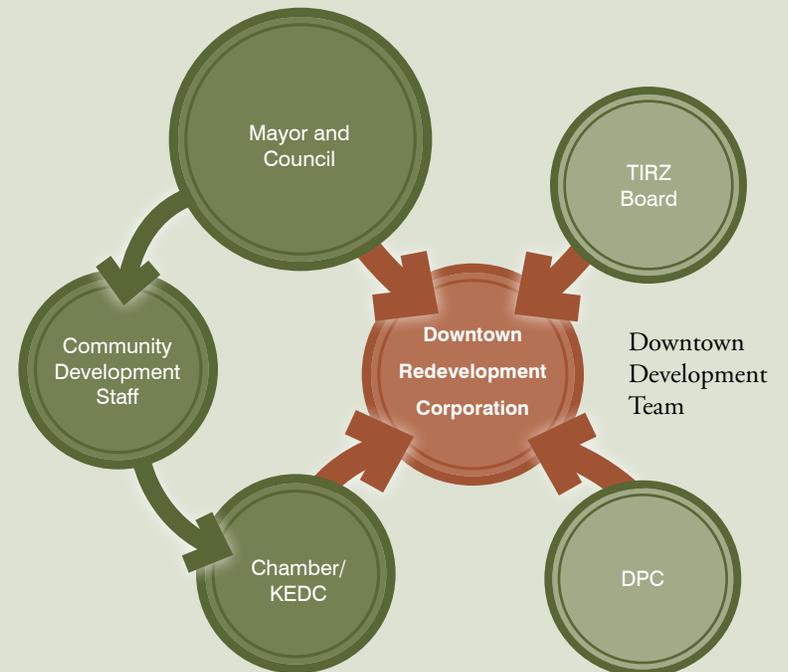
As for streetscaping, it can do much to improve the visual environment and send a strong message that the city is serious about improving downtown (it just can't be expected to do anything to change underlying market conditions). Streetscaping should be focused initially in the historic core and along much of Gray Street to help tie together downtown's major features. Beyond this, it should probably only be introduced when it can be coordinated with, and at least partially funded through, larger private development projects. Private funding could either be direct or through future tax increments created by the development.

### Redevelopment Authority

Unlike most TIRZ Boards which are mainly involved in the technical aspects of district management and periodically responding to funding requests, a Redevelopment Authority is typically charged with actually *leading* the implementation of a downtown master plan. Working as an arm of city government, and with the assistance of city staff, they are actively involved in such things as: land development strategy, property acquisitions, deal structuring, loan underwriting, developer recruitment and the negotiating of developer agreements. They're not building developers or property managers in the typical sense, but instead work on the land assembly and financing side of development. However in cases where public buildings are planned, they may act as project developer of record.

Most redevelopment authorities operate as an agent of the city and serve at the pleasure of the mayor and council. In some cases they have bonding and condemnation authority although this is usually the exception and not the rule.

Board members consist of council members and other motivated advocates for Downtown who can contribute valuable knowledge in areas such as business planning and development, financial

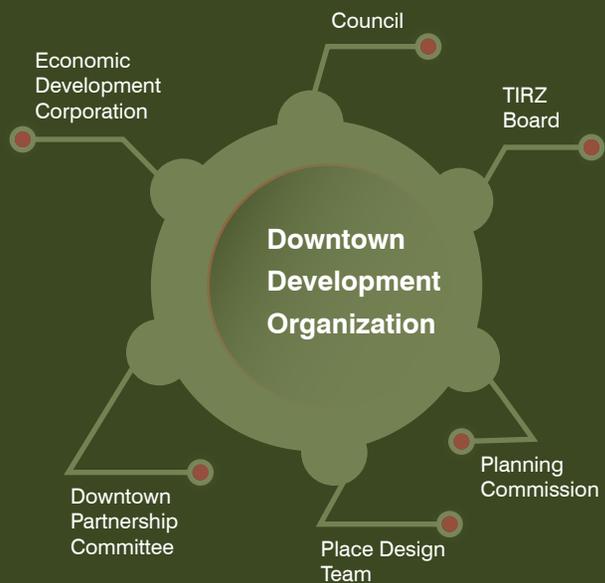




Adopted November 9, 2010

Cities sometimes have to act as development manager when the private market ceases to function in the desired way.

Who Does What



management, real estate development, construction management, legal matters, and marketing and promotions. Redevelopment Authority boards generally serve under the aegis of the City Council and are supported by dedicated community development staff. Their funding typically comes from TIRZ revenues, block grants and development fees.

Advantages of redevelopment authorities include their power to act on behalf of (and sometimes with the full faith and credit of) the city and its dedicated funding streams. Disadvantages include their beholdeness to public process which can prevent them from acting quickly or with confidentiality as opportunities arise, and can expose their dealings to city “politics”.

### Downtown Development Corporation

Development Corporations are sometimes structured the same way as redevelopment authorities and can be involved in the same types of activities. The term “development corporation” however usually connotes a higher degree of autonomy from city government and are often structured as private or public-private non-profit organizations. They sometimes operate with a board that is independent of city government and rely more heavily on creating and managing their own sources of operating capital. It is also somewhat more common for corporations to be involved in activities other than just real estate development to include the administration of low interest loans pools that support business and economic development.

Operating capital often derives from the ownership and management of real estate assets, private donations, development and financing fees, fees from tax exempt bonds, special taxes and/or annual stipends from the City. KEDC is an example of a development corporation already established in Killeen.

Advantages of development corporations generally include their ability to act with greater confidentiality and speed, especially when it comes to real estate deals where agility and privacy can be very important. When they are structured autonomously from city government, development corporations can also help take some of the politics out of public-private joint ventures and can operate more effectively in the tax credits markets where they can act as syndicators. They can also solicit tax deductible donations from foundations and other philanthropic entities whereas most purely public entities are prohibited from doing so. They are also frequently used as pass-through vehicles for tax-exempt government bonds.

Disadvantages of the typical development corporation structure include their self-supporting nature and frequent lack of dedicated public financing. This often means a precarious financial existence and sometimes a greater amount of time and energy spent raising money and managing overhead than actually doing deals. Finding solid leadership can also be a problem especially in communities with a weak culture of community involvement and leadership outside of regular government channels.

Some development corporations are offshoots of existing organizations such as special councils and chambers of commerce as is the case with KEDC.



A critical aspect of Downtown revitalization is to create conditions and incentives that support local entrepreneurship.

For downtown to be successful it is not enough to simply state where new development should be located, or what form it should take. Serious efforts also need to address where the *demand* for new space will come from.

### Merchants Association

These are typically private, self-organizing bodies that come together to promote their mutual interests in protecting, promoting and enhancing the downtown business environment. Usual activities include co-marketing efforts, special event planning, and occasionally applying pressure on city government to modify or enforce ordinances or perform special services. Their budgets are usually dues-based and they rely almost entirely on their own membership to perform volunteer services. They may or may not operate under a management board structure. Occasionally, their work will be assisted by city staff.

### Public Improvement (Management) District (PID)

This is a type of special financing mechanism whereby downtown businesses essentially agree to tax themselves extra in order to pay for special amenities or services within a designated area (i.e. the area comprised of the participating businesses). They operate much like a homeowners association in terms of how they are funded except that membership can sometimes be optional.

PIDs represent a somewhat advanced form of a merchants association in that they have a stronger funding structure and a functioning board of directors. They also often have paid staff. Typical things that PIDs finance include: additional streetscape features; special events; special maintenance and private security crews. There is virtually no limit however to what a PID can help pay for. A PID in downtown Killeen for instance could be used to run a free or discounted shuttle service between the Fort and downtown to better “capture” this large market.

### Incubator Without Walls

“Build it and they will come” is not a viable strategy in today’s economy, and simply trying to recruit outside businesses such as national chains into downtown is a dubious path to follow.

Downtown’s revival is more likely to occur by making it a hotbed of local entrepreneurial activity since it is local residents who are more likely to appreciate the opportunities and create the types of businesses that will make downtown distinctive. They will likely be more willing to make a go of it downtown provided that there are incentives and supports to assist them along the way.

A critical piece of the revitalization strategy therefore should be to create conditions that will attract and support local entrepreneurship. Besides the basics of affordable space, new entrepreneurs typically need access to low interest loans and a variety of free or discounted professional services in order to launch a new enterprise. These services range from helping put together a business plan, to legal, marketing and financial advice, to administrative support. Typically, these are the types of services available within a business incubator. However, whereas a conventional incubator is usually housed in a single building, the model for Killeen may be to conceive of the entire downtown as an incubator whereby any business in the downtown area would have on-call access to these services.



Adopted November 9, 2010

The City should commit the necessary resources to establish downtown as a special business incubation zone.



Who Does What



The city, perhaps through the Central Texas Business Resource Center, should commit the necessary resources to designate all of downtown a special business incubation zone. A range of free or nearly free services and low interest loan products should be available to qualified applicants who have (or can be helped to create) a viable business plan and can bring a minimum amount of their own equity to the table. These services should also be available to existing businesses within the zone who wish to expand or to improve their businesses. Local banks should be recruited to help shape the organizational structure and programs of the incubation program and provide customized loan products.

Funding for low interest loans can come from a revolving loan fund perhaps capitalized through a combination of TIRZ funding, CDBG funds, SBA grants, private donations and pooled private bank loans. A number of national non-profit organizations such as the Kaufman Foundation are also dedicated to encouraging entrepreneurship in disadvantaged areas and should be solicited. Counselors in various business disciplines should be recruited to the board and/or be contracted through such organizations as the SBA, SCORE, and Texas A&M University.

Finally, it is not enough just to have these programs and services available but they need to be *made known* through various media; among current and former military personnel; at the local Texas A&M campus; among the city's ethnic and cultural groups; and within the region's fledgling Young Professionals and economic development organizations. This information should be posted on the Newcomers Website being created by the Chamber of Commerce as well as the CTEC website.

## Virtual Incubator

KEDC Entrepreneurial  
Development Function



- Development Assistance
- Business Mentoring
- Technical Assistance
- Financial
- Legal
- Marketing
- Business Planning
- Merchandising
- Micro-Loans





Adopted November 9, 2010



The Bigger Picture

# The Bigger Picture

## Section Six

As the city works to improve the general physical and economic environment downtown, a number of economic positioning strategies should continue to drive its marketing and branding efforts and its incentives and recruitment targets.

### Arts, Culture & Entertainment

Downtown Killeen should be conceived as the hub of the arts scene in the city and region. The City should work with the local Arts Guild to find them a permanent and very visible home downtown. The city should work to create an arts co-op or arts incubator preferably in an empty downtown storefront to help build patronage and business opportunities for local artists and to encourage visitation. Also, any new museum, entertainment, performance venues, or recreational complexes planned for the city should be located downtown – preferably near the proposed Civic Quad.

4 Downtown should be rebirthed as the hub of the City's culture and arts scenes.



### Education and Technology

With the new A&M campus and new research hospital coming to Killeen, Downtown leaders should encourage any ancillary facilities or spin-off opportunities to locate downtown. This includes everything from student housing and university support services, to satellite classroom space and university-related business ventures. A downtown medical clinic for instance could help support clinical trials of the new bio-medical consortium.

### Fort Hood Playground & Marketplace

Downtown merchants should bond together to take better advantage of their proximity to the Fort through direct co-marketing and special promotions specifically targeted to military personnel. A free weekend shuttle service from the Fort to downtown (funded by a PID) for instance could help funnel customers directly into downtown.

### Haymarket District

Efforts should be stepped up to raise the profile of the farmers market and to give them quality permanent facilities. Many of the older warehouses and commercial buildings south of the railroad tracks could be adapted through zoning and business incentives into a wholesalers district where warehouses, studios, and production facilities are combined with a “front of house” retail or showroom operation. Such wholesale/retail businesses could include: custom metalworks; ceramic studios; carpet, fabric, and garment wholesalers; lighting, bathroom and kitchen showrooms; wholesale florists and specialty food producers; glassworks; art and kitchen supply houses; furniture and architectural antiques; printshops and other artisan type businesses. This is part of an overall focus on promoting local businesses and jobs downtown.

### Urban Business Park

Additional professional employment opportunities are key to a sustained downtown regeneration effort. Through a combination of zoning, incentives, land control efforts and special infrastructure such as fiber optic and ambient WI-FI service, the city should promote the evolution of an urban business center in the southwestern quadrant of downtown west of the proposed Civic Quad and north of the railroad tracks. A flagship multi-tenant office building and/or modern light production space should be incentivized, or perhaps speculatively developed by the KEDC or other economic development organization to stimulate additional private development. The business development services provided through the KEDC should be closely tied to these facilities and perhaps even housed there.

A downtown WI-FI district would help downtown lay claim to being the off-campus “smart scene.”

