

City of Burleson

# Old Town Plan Update

February 2016



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City Council on February 15, 2016.

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- Texas Historical Commission

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# Burleson

T E X A S ★

# Executive Summary

## Purpose of the Old Town Plan Update

The following document represents an update to the City of Burleson's Old Town Development and Preservation Plan originally drafted in 1995. Like the original 1995 Old Town Plan, this plan update provides continued vision and guidance for future change and growth in Old Town Burleson. This small area plan process included a community engagement process, research of existing conditions, and the identification of action steps as recommended by citizens of Burleson, applicable city departments and stakeholders.

Although many elements of the original 1995 Old Town Development and Preservation Plan have been addressed, the City saw the need for the plan to be updated due to ongoing growth, changes in the community, and development issues challenging the city and Old Town. The City of Burleson has seen significant population growth since the plan was originally prepared. In 1995, the population was 19,045. Today the population is nearer 40,714, almost double what it was twenty years ago. Twenty years later, significant progress has occurred including: nine new destination restaurants, construction of 60,000 sf of Class A Office Space; creation of a tax increment financing district; location of two higher education partners in a city owned building; creation of design standards for private investment and; multi-millions of dollars of public investments in streets, utilities, and sidewalk improvements.

Today there is an even greater appreciation of the historic character of Old Town. A new generation is attracted to the authentic and distinct charm of places that have withstood the test of time. This new generation likes the architectural character and are attracted to the livable, walkable atmosphere of Old Town. There is also an ever increasing desire for more diverse housing options as the baby boomer generation ages. Smaller, more dense living is desired by both the young and the old. This plan updates attempts to balance these considerations by respecting the existing character of Old Town, creating new pedestrian oriented destinations, such as a public plaza, and providing a concept development plan to help guide future public and private investments.

# Executive Summary, cont'd.

## Using this Plan

This plan proposes to identify capital improvements and public/private investments that will promote positive growth and draw attention to Old Town's many attractions. A goal of this plan is to ensure that Old Town Burleson becomes known as a bustling mixed use, walkable district, which attracts young and old alike as an attractive place to live, work and invest.

As part of the Old Town Plan update, a concept development plan was created, identifying eleven (11) plan elements that are recommended to occur within Old Town in the future. These elements are identified in Figure 3.1, illustrated on page 29 of this document. Additionally, this plan provides action steps for future development classified within three (3) broader categories: Urban Design, Economic Strategies and Historic Preservation.

Following research into each of the categories, and based on input received from the community and stakeholders, a concept development plan and a series of action steps were developed. Both the concept plan and action steps identify regulatory changes, capital improvements and public/private investments that will guide Old Town into the future.

## Vision

The following list of priorities was identified by residents, stakeholders and civic leaders during the Congress of New Urbanism's Legacy Charrette and reinforced throughout the Old Town Plan process:

- A Plaza on the west side of the tracks;
- Reinforcing or establishing an Old Town identity;
- Safe crossings and improved walkability on Renfro;
- Student/multi-family housing;
- Expanded higher education facilities;
- Parking; and
- Sidewalks and walkability

# Section 1 - Introduction and Plan Process



## Background: History of the Old Town Plan

In 1995 the City of Burleson adopted the original Old Town Plan. The Plan was an outgrowth of the 20/20 Goals and Objectives of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan, which had included a section on Old Town. Recognizing that this unique area required more study than the Comprehensive Land Use Plan could allocate, the Old Town Study Committee embarked on the Old Town Preservation Plan.

The committee recognized the unique character of the area and saw the potential for the oldest part of Burleson to become a distinctive and attractive destination for the region. The committee sought the input of many citizens in the creation of the Old Town Plan including: Dan C. Boutwell as primary author; historic information and contributions by Jim and Betty Bailey; James Caswell and Paul Stevens from City staff; and many others.

Having witnessed the negative effects of demolitions in the 1970's and 80's, the Study Committee provided an eloquent basis for retaining historic buildings. They created a concept plan for the preservation and redevelopment of the original town plat. They systematically laid out a vision of what this area could become.

Fast forward twenty years and it is evident that many objectives identified under the original plan have been realized. However, the significant growth and development that has occurred in the past twenty years have created a new set of challenges and opportunities that did not exist in 1995. For example, the City now owns property with excellent redevelopment potential; Hill Community College is expanding; large parcels of land have been acquired for private development; the City has acquired Renfro Street from TxDOT; a new magnet academy replaced an elementary school; there is still a need for more walkable streets and safe pedestrian crossings; and there are ever increasing parking demands. More and more families are seeking safe, attractive neighborhoods and the small town atmosphere that Old Town Burleson can offer. As Fort Worth expands outward, Burleson has become an easily accessible, desirable commuter community. Old Town serves as an anchor of attraction for the changing area.

## Imagine Burleson 2030: Comprehensive Plan

In 2010, the City of Burleson adopted the Imagine Burleson 2030 Comprehensive Plan, which reflects the communities values, vision and goals. A desired outcome for Old Town as stated in the Comprehensive Plan, is "Burleson's Old Town becomes a thriving area and a regional draw". The Imagine Burleson 2030 Comprehensive Plan identified Old Town as a focus area, which is an area deemed of increase importance due to location and/or development opportunities. Although a set of broad goals were established for Old Town through the comprehensive planning process, specific action steps were deferred to future planning initiatives for the area.





The primary goals established from the Comprehensive Plan as it relates to Old Town are:

- Initiate review of existing Area Plans (**Old Town**, Transit Oriented Development, IH-35 Overlay) and development of new Area Plans (SH-174 and SH-121, expansion of business park, etc.) to evaluate land use opportunities for appropriate and compatible development and to coordinate public investment and land use regulations with development activity. Include area stakeholders in the development of area plans;
- Evaluate opportunities to stimulate economic development in the focus areas (**Old Town**, TOD and HighPoint Business Park) by using focus area land use plans for guidance to evaluate economic development opportunities and establish priorities and develop action plans around key opportunities; and
- Develop a campaign to establish a unique character for the City of Burleson, and establish separate and distinctive character for each focus area (TOD, Business Park, **Old Town**) as a part of developing focus area plans.

## Plan Process / Community Participation

The process utilized in the Old Town Plan Update was lead by Urban Development Services and City Staff and encouraged community input through multiple community workshops, in which ideas and information were shared and opportunities for public input during the workshops was emphasized. City of Burleson residents and stakeholders were invited to participate in the plan update in several events.

Citizen input was an important part of both the original Plan and the Old Town Plan Update. These community workshops formed the basis for the identification of the attributes of the district. As part of the Old Town Plan Update three community meetings were held early in the process. The first was led by a team of volunteers from the Congress for New Urbanism in March 2015, and the other two were led by Urban Development Services. The following attributes and challenges were identified during the public involvement process:

### Attributes of Old Town - 1995

- A community unto its own, blending older homes, churches, and community businesses.
- A “greenness” of the area, Town Creek, large residential lots and period architecture.
- Lack of franchise fast food restaurants, small town character and atmosphere

### Additional Attributes - 2015

- Unique and successful restaurants and shops that attract a regional audience
- Large vacant lots for development
- Planned expansion and growth of Hill Community College
- Locally owned and operated Grocery Store.
- Building owners who are involved in the community. Local residents willing to invest.
- Engaged citizens, Mayor and Council who want to see the area succeed.



Hill College



Historic Buildings



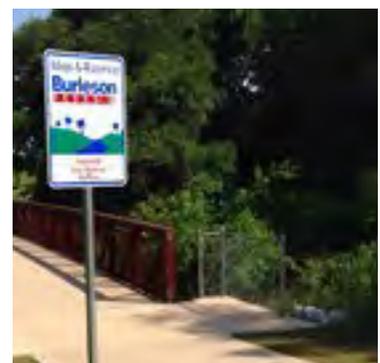
Period Houses



Locally Owned Businesses



Lack of Franchises



Plenty of green

## Challenges of Old Town - 1995

The only remaining liability listed in the original plan is the perception of inadequate parking both in location and amount of spaces. Access to public parking spaces still remains a difficulty in Old Town on the evenings and weekends. As a result, City Administration faces a challenge of managing parking assets to the betterment of Old Town. It has been noted by numerous experts however, that the perception of a parking problem is indeed a good problem to have!

New regulations have addressed many liabilities listed previously including administrative controls, surface water drainage, and vacant and dilapidated buildings. New City investments have addressed most of the maintenance issues.

## Challenges - 2015

- Too many bars, not enough retail diversity
- Lack of clear boundaries or entrances, especially on the north
- No adjacent exit onto Renfro for northbound I-35
- Lack of public gathering space except for streets
- Difficult for pedestrians to cross Renfro at Main safely
- A few recalcitrant land owners
- Lack of Historic Preservation Master Plan



Perceived lack of parking.



No pedestrian paths to downtown



Difficult pedestrian crossings at railroad intersections.



No Historic Preservation Plan

## Section 2 – Existing Conditions & Opportunities



### Existing Land Use

Currently, The Old Town District is composed primarily of single-family residences, two and multi-family residential, office and retail buildings and restaurants. The First Baptist Church of Burleson occupies on a large block located at the corner of SW Johnson Avenue and Ellison Street. The Academy at Nola Dunn, a much desired magnet school, is located along S. Dobson Street and Hill College is located off of Renfro Street.

Single family residential occupies the approximately 80 acres of the Old Town District or 35% of the land area. Religious Institutions have expanded from a 1995 - 5% land area to 11% and now occupy approximately 26 acres within the Old Town District. Office and retail uses comprise approximately 9% of the land area respectively. Figure 2.1 on the following page further depicts the current allocation of land uses within Old Town.

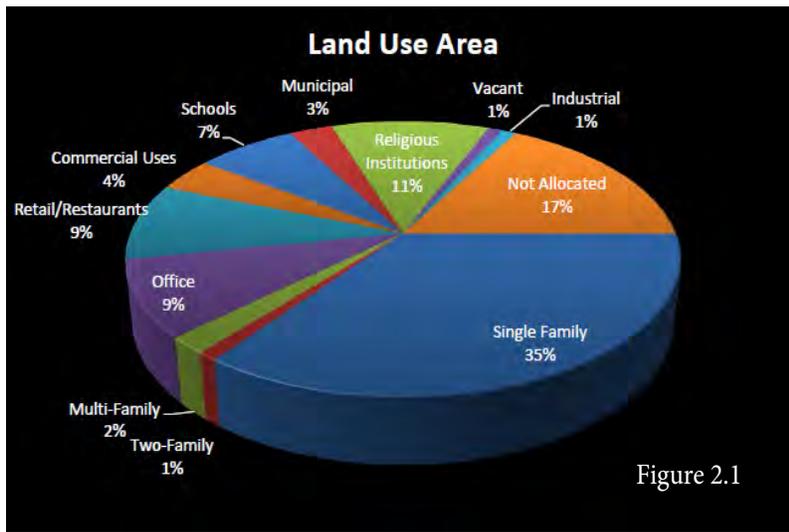
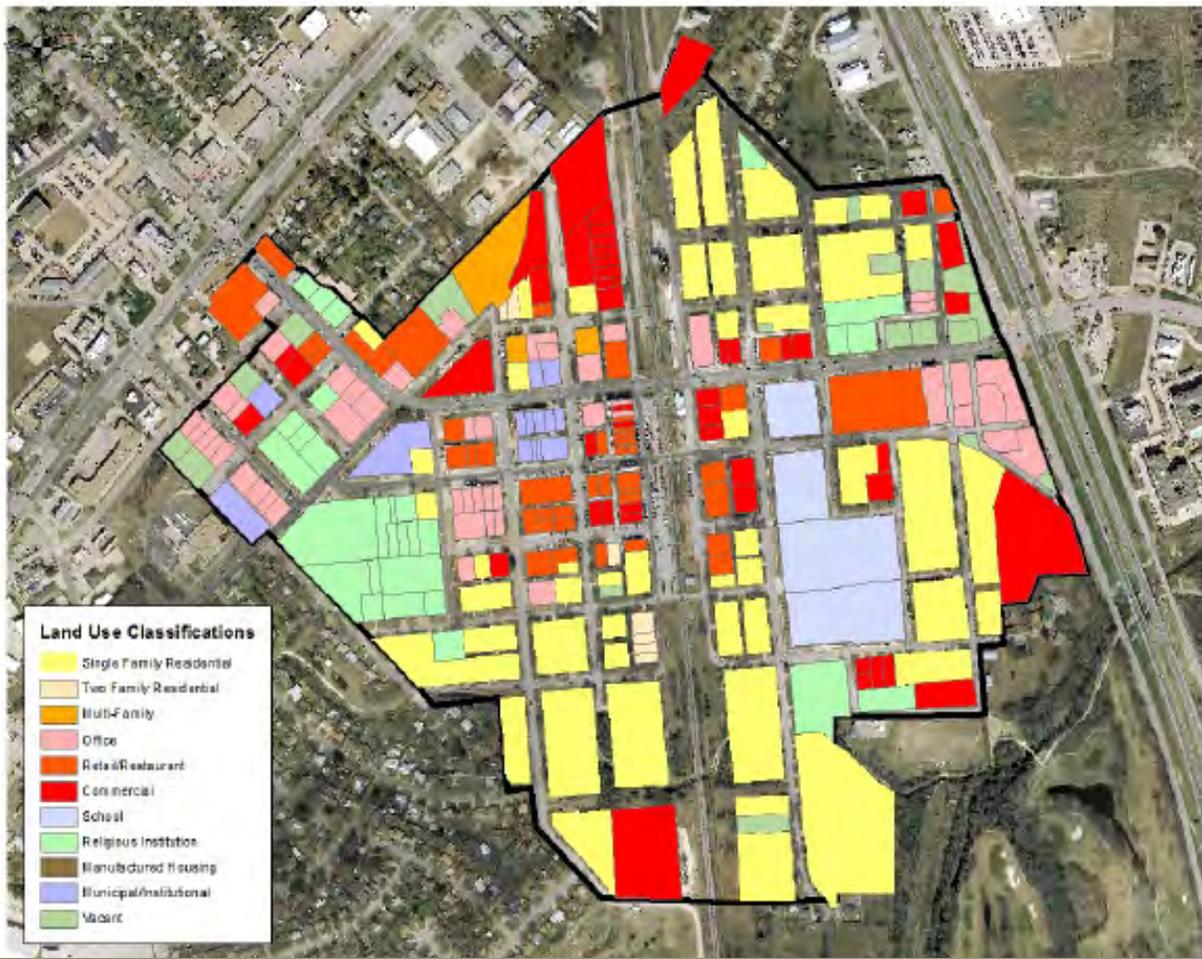


Figure 2.1



Figure 2.2 below illustrates the current land use patterns within Old Town. There is approximately 242 acres of land contained within the Old Town District. As terminologies and use classifications have changed since the drafting of the original Old Town Plan, a direct assesment is challenging.

Figure 2.2 Existing Land Use (2015)



## Zoning Overlay Districts

Old Town is supported by two overlay districts. The geographic extent of these overlay districts is depicted in Figure 2.3 below. The first, the Old Town Overlay District (OTOD), is adopted in Appendix B of the Zoning Code, Article IV, Section 100. This overlay governs both use and design to encourage the preservation and development with architecture and uses that have been determined as being historically and culturally significant to the city. The overlay allows flexibility in land uses and regulations that will encourage the continuance of the historic character.

For example, the overlay strives to be more flexible, with uses and physical elements, such as parking and signage requirements, to accommodate many of the independent businesses found in this district. All residential structures located within the underlying GR, C, and CC districts, within the OTOD, may be used as commercial or residential with certain stipulations such that kitchens and baths remain intact, parking is placed to the rear and signs are reduced in size (*See Overlay Zoning Districts in Appendix B, Article IV, Section 100-135, Code of Ordinances for more details*).

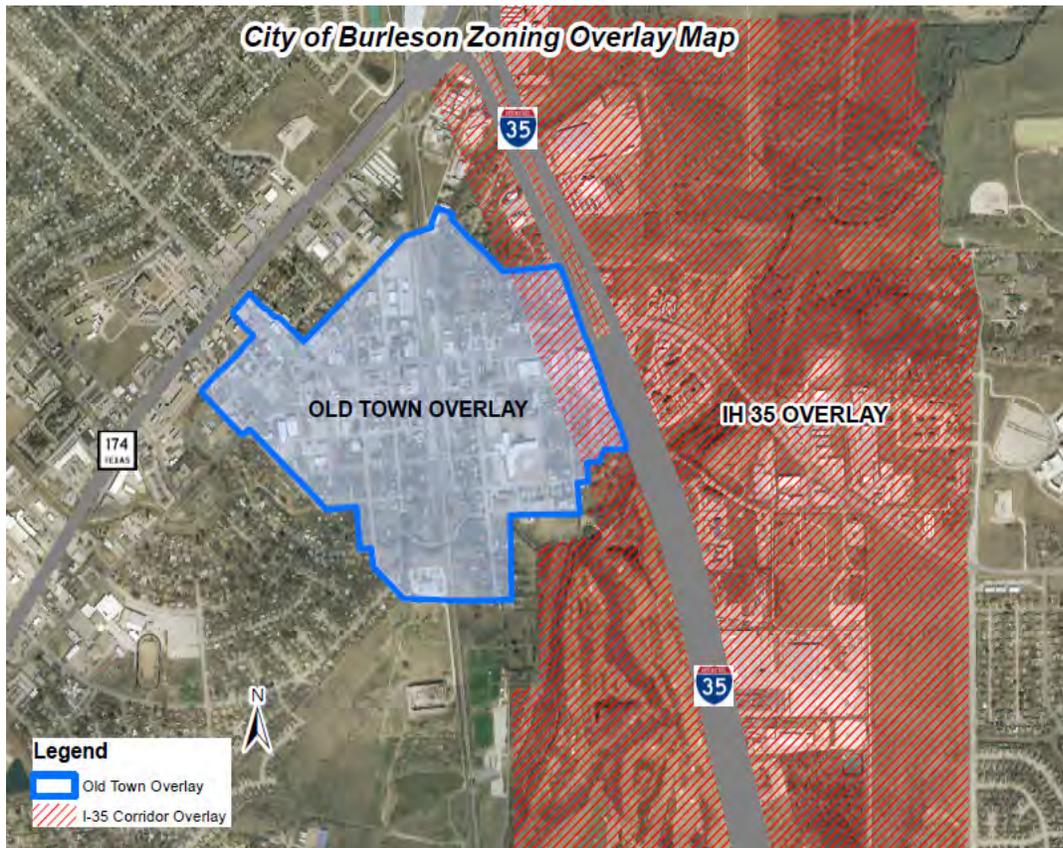


Figure 2.3 Zoning Overlay Districts

## Zoning Overlay Districts, cont'd

The second overlay is the IH 35 Overlay, and these requirements can be found in ARTICLE IV, Section 101 of the Burleson Code or Ordinances. This overlay guides development components in a manner that implants well defined goals for the corridor.

Figure 2.4 identifies an area where there is overlap of the Old Town Overlay District and the IH 35 Overlay District. The overlap in overlay districts creates procedural issues in the administration of development applications within the overlapping districts. The vision for these overlays are typically differ in terms of design and use; therefore, the overlap creates competing land use considerations. This plan acknowledges the City's desire for cohesive design standards and recommends creating definitive overlay boundaries to remove areas of overlap. This plan identifies an immediate action step to remedy the overlap in Section 4 of this document. This is a short term step that can be implemented through the adoption of new district boundaries.

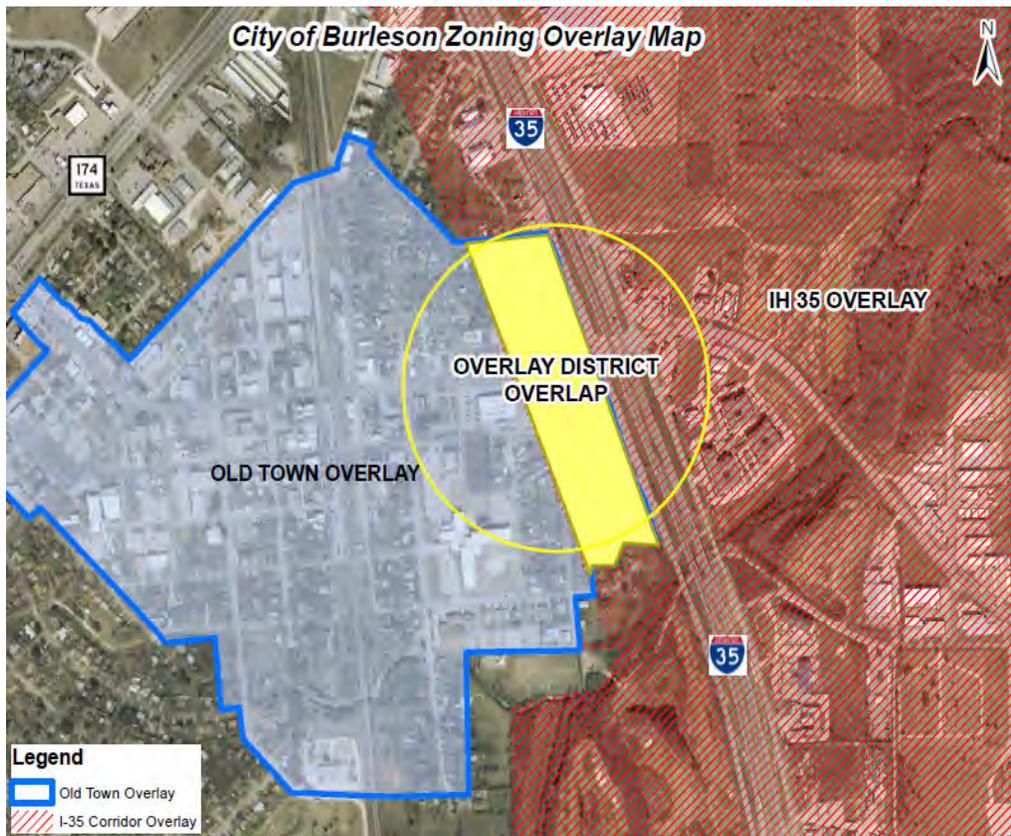
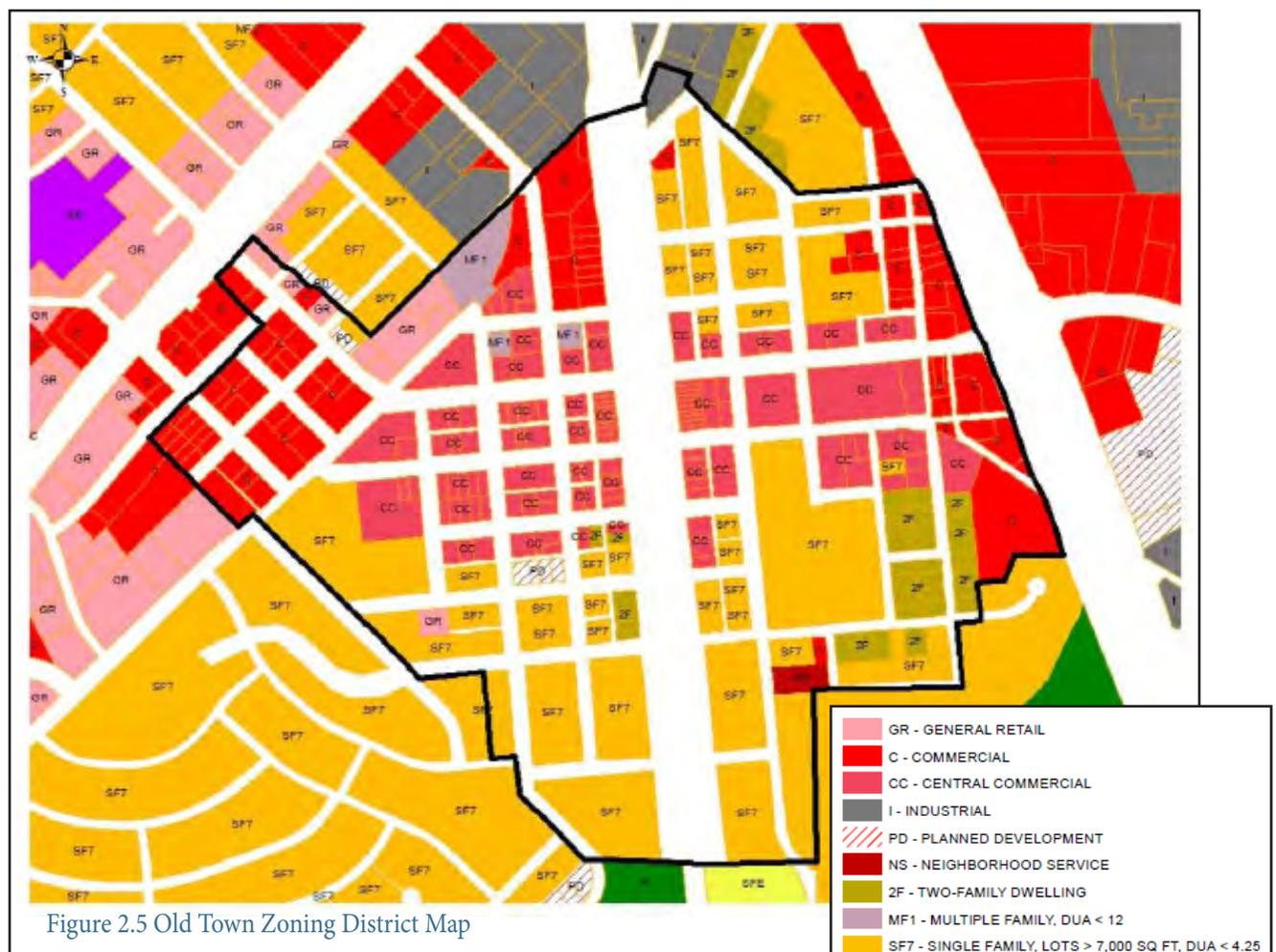


Figure 2.4 Overlay District Overlap

## Current Zoning 2015

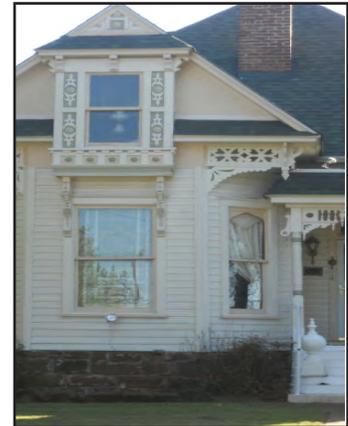
Zoning classifications are a regulatory tool for land use management on a parcel of land. Figure 2.5 below depicts the current zoning classifications within the Old Town Overlay District. A majority of the land area in the Old Town District is zoned Single Family Residential 7 (SF7) and Central Commercial (CC). The remaining parcels in Old Town are primarily a mix of Two-family Residential (2F), Multifamily Residential (MF1), and Commercial (C). Zoning classifications and uses are further defined in Article III, Appendix B of the Bureson Code of Ordinances.

The Central Commercial Zoning District, which occupies the core area of the Old Town District, currently supports a mix of uses including office, retail and restaurant. The Central Commercial Zoning District was established to accommodate dense development patterns with high building coverage and on street parking in keeping with the original downtown area of Bureson. No off-street parking for individual buildings is required in the CC district, on the basis that the existing conditions require a different approach to off-street parking than is used in newer outlying suburban styled and commercial areas. Although this approach does allow for more development and site investment, it also requires a more centralized approach to parking management, as well as more direct involvement by the City, to ensure parking is appropriately distributed to support a mix of uses, and to ensure that parking is managed in a way to efficiently support the variety of business activity, public events, and civic functions in Old Town.



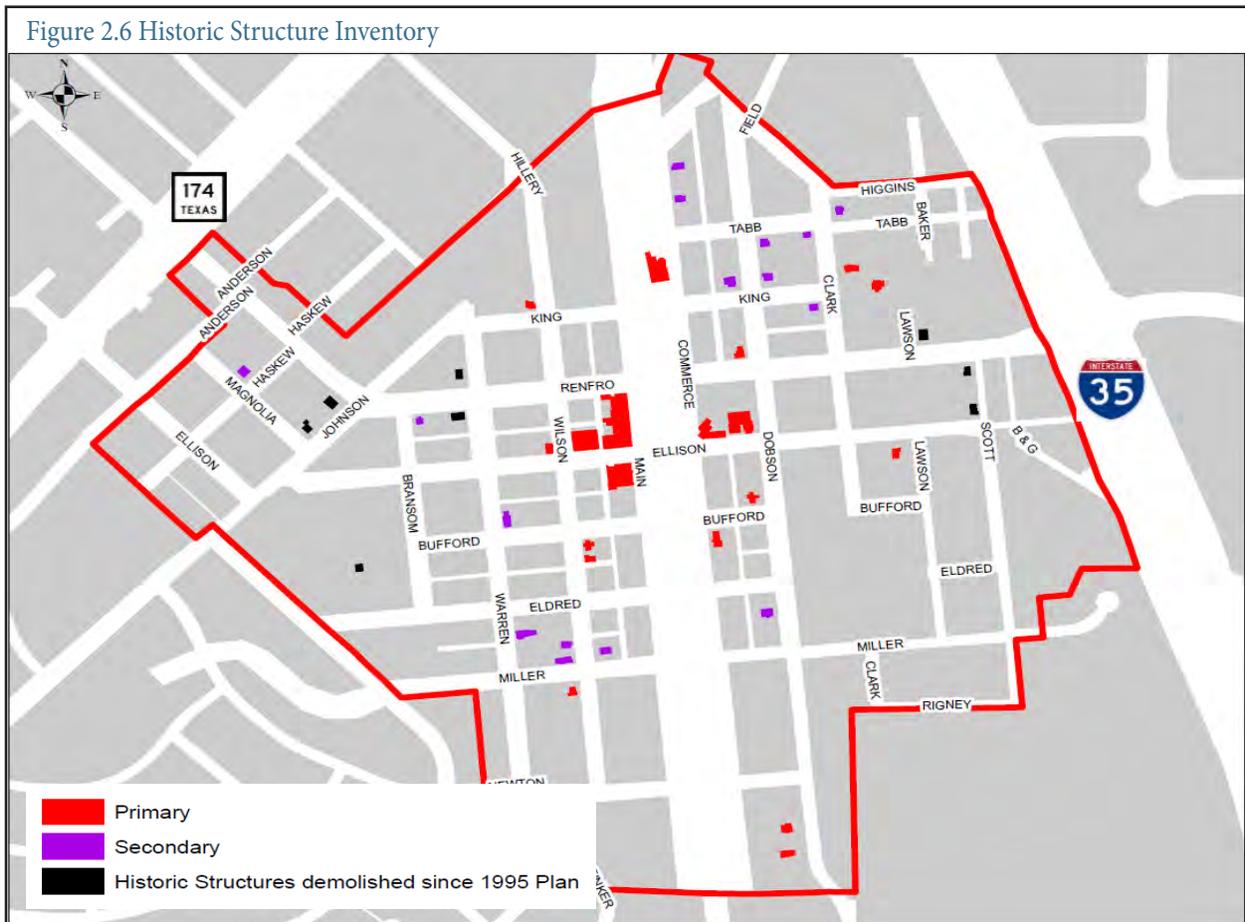
# Historic Resource Inventory Survey

As part of the Old Town Plan Update an architectural survey was conducted with certain structures being identified as having architectural integrity. The results of this survey can be seen in the map, following on page 18 (see *Figure 2.6*). It is important to note that this was a visual survey to gauge the integrity of each structure. Integrity can be explained as having enough original authenticity of its various elements so as to be recognizable to the person who built it. In other, words if a porch has been removed or enclosed, windows replaced, an addition made to the front, original wood columns replaced with ornamental metal, it can begin to affect the integrity of the structure. If too many changes have occurred then the structure is said to have a “loss of integrity” and is not eligible for listing.



# Primary and Secondary

The survey presented two categories of historic structures: Primary and Secondary. The Primary designation is the highest standard. On these structures most of the original materials remain, and the structure remains much as it was when originally constructed. The Secondary structures might have lost one or two of their original features or materials, but for the most part are quite similar to when they were built. A disclaimer is appropriate here, as this was a visual survey based on the experience and expertise of the survey team, no research was conducted to verify the changes observed.



- Primary**
- 100 S Commerce
  - 102-114 S Main
  - 109 E Ellison
  - 111-113 S Wilson
  - 112-114 W Ellison
  - 113 E Ellison
  - 117 N Dobson
  - 117 S Wilson
  - 117 W Bufford
  - 120 S Main
  - 123 N Commerce
  - 124 W Ellison
  - 125 N Wilson
  - 128 N Clark
  - 132 N Clark
  - 140 S Dobson
  - 212 E Ellison
  - 300 S Wilson
  - 360 S Dobson
  - 368 S Dobson

- Secondary**
- 117 N Clark
  - 120 Magnolia
  - 124 N Dobson
  - 125 N Dobson
  - 137 N Clark
  - 140 N Dobson
  - 140 W Bufford
  - 200 N Clark
  - 212 N Commerce
  - 217 W Renfro
  - 224 N Commerce
  - 225 S Warren
  - 228 S Dobson
  - 236 S Wilson
  - 240 S Wilson
  - 241 S Wilson

Structures gain significance over time. Generally, a building must be at least fifty years old to be considered significant. Currently in 2015, buildings built in 1965 would be eligible. If the Old Town Plan Update is relevant for the next 15-20 years, that means by 2030 - buildings built in 1980 would be eligible for listing. Often structures are least appreciated, and seen as having no relevance, at about 40 years of age. Caution should be taken in the hasty demolition of structures with the Old Town area.

## Loss of Historic Structures

Figure 2.6 (*opposite*) delineates the loss of historic structures that have occurred in the 20 years. Buildings generally come down one building at a time, and the loss doesn't seem that significant at the time. But over time this can have a devastating effect on the historic character of the area. A clear designation and protection of historic properties can keep this incremental loss from occurring.

However, it should be noted that, when compared to many of the older communities in the region and across the state, Burleson lacks the concentration and depth of historic resources needed to proclaim itself a historic designation. But, what Burleson lacks in true historic resources is offset with opportunities and enthusiasm. The efforts of the City of Burleson, its citizens and the business community will create vibrant, active and special places in Old Town.



# Transportation

The City of Burleson has recently completed the Burleson Master Mobility Plan (MMP). This is a long-range plan that identifies the location and type of roadway facilities that are needed to meet projected long-term growth within the City of Burleson. The MMP serves as a tool to enable the City to preserve future corridors for transportation system development as the need arises. It also forms the basis for Burleson's roadway capital improvement program and developer requirements. The MMP includes detailed information related to roadway classification, right-of-way requirements, design criteria, and number of through travel lanes for each thoroughfare within the City and surrounding extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ).

The development of the MMP utilized demographic and land use data projected for the year 2035. According to the North Central Texas Council of Government's 2035 Demographic Forecast, Burleson is expected to grow to a population of approximately 47,000 with over 24,000 jobs by the year 2035. Information about changes in land use and development patterns associated with this growth was obtained from Burleson's Comprehensive Plan and incorporated into the creation of this MMP. A well-developed MMP based on up-to-date information will ensure that adequate circulation and access will be provided as the City and ETJ continues to grow. It also ensures that the City and ETJ are maximizing and prioritizing its transportation investments appropriately.

As shown in the adjacent map, congestion levels for most roads in Burleson and the surrounding ETJ are low, with traffic volumes lower than the capacity of the roadways. However, sections of Wilshire Blvd and frontage roads along Interstate 35W are at a LOS F, with congestion levels exceeding capacity.

Figure 2.7  
Roadway Classification

Projected traffic volumes in 2035. (MiC60 is a Minor Collector, 60' ROW and MiA is Minor Collector 100' ROW. The blue shows where these streets transition into a neighborhood collector.)



## Transportation, cont'd.

Figure 2.9 below depicts daily traffic volumes expected by 2035 and their classification, Old Town is shown enlarged. IH-35 that runs through the City maintains the highest traffic volume at greater than 100,000 vehicles per day. Major thoroughfares that carry the most local north-south traffic will include Wilshire Boulevard, Alsbury Boulevard, and John Jones Drive (FM 731), while Renfro Street, Hidden Creek Parkway, and FM 917 are expected to carry the most East-West traffic. Ease of access and pulling traffic from IH-35 is one opportunity that Old Town can capitalize on. Creating gateways from high traffic corridors into Old Town can help identify Old Town as a destination.



Figure 2.8 Current Daily Traffic Volumes



Figure 2.9 Projected Daily Traffic Volumes

# Parking

Parking is usually the most contentious issue in trying to manage and develop a mixed-use, walkable district. Burleson's parking requirements are regulated under Article V, Appendix B, of the Burleson Code of Ordinances. Many experts will testify that a perceived parking problem is a good thing to have. The City has acknowledged the need for parking and pedestrian improvements and has spent considerable resources in the past few years to ensure their availability.

There are five areas where off-street public parking is presently available (refer to Figure 2.10 below).

1. The City of Burleson leases land along the Union Pacific Railroad tracks in the 100 and 200 blocks of South Main for public parking. Consideration is being given to expanded and improved parking along the tracks and Main Street in the 100 block of North Main Streets pending an acceptable intersection design to allow safe crossing of Renfro and Main Streets;
2. Parking in front of City Hall;
3. Parking lot across from City Hall on Warren Street;
4. Public parking is available around the current Hill College; and
5. Parking in the commercial strip center owned by the City on the south side of Ellison between Wilson and Warren Streets.

In addition numerous businesses provide parking on-site for their customers and the city allows on-street parking in the Old Town district with no time restrictions.

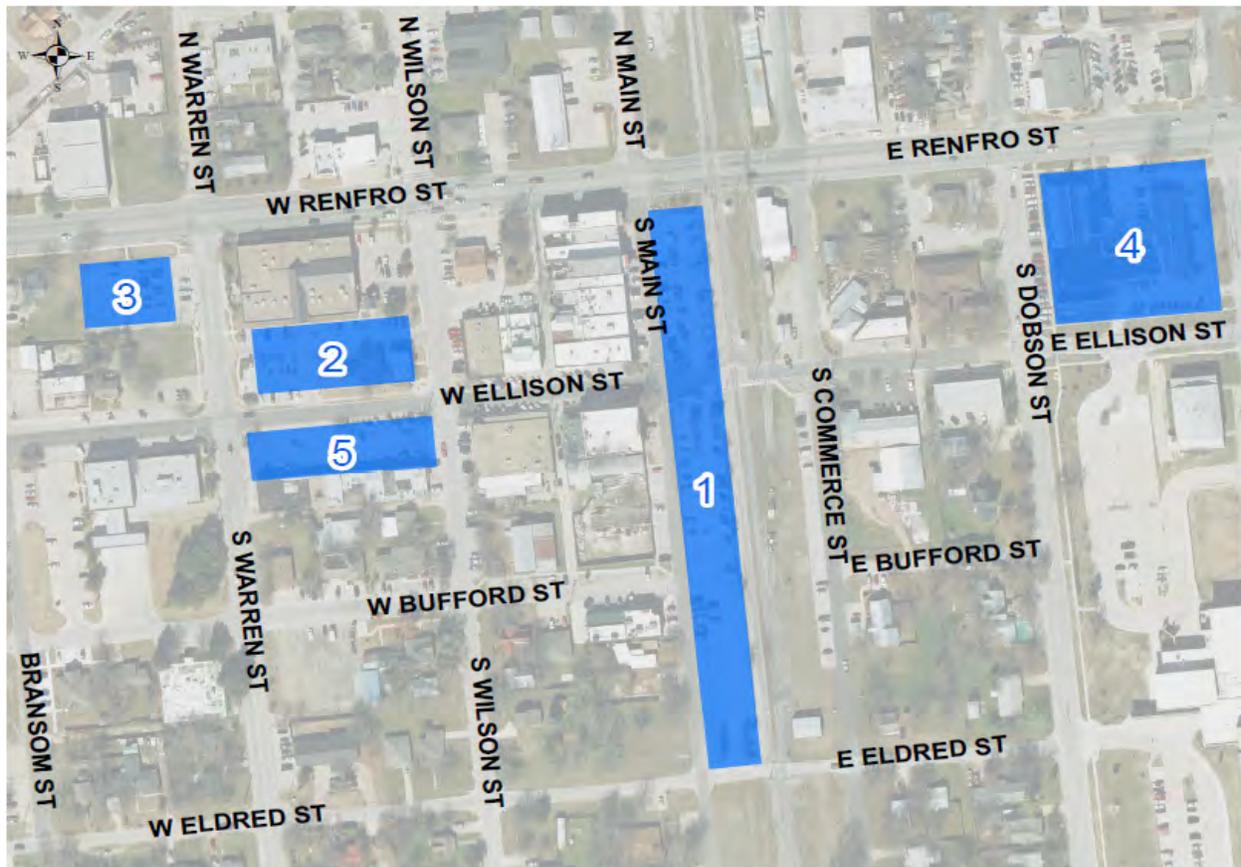


Figure 2.10 Public Parking Map

## Parking, cont'd.

The City has not conducted a detailed parking study of the Old Town Area. The Plan Team did conduct a brief survey and inventory of spaces in the core of Old Town and found that there are a total of about 1,697 spaces, both privately and publicly owned. An inventory of these spaces is depicted in Figure 2.11 below.

Typically the Main Street lots fill up in the evening with restaurant patrons. This is true even during the week day. Parking appears to be plentiful in areas outside of the central core of Old Town near Ellison Street and Main Street. Parking assets are stretched more than typically when public or private events are happening in Old Town. If we look at the most intensely developed blocks of downtown, Main Street between Renfro and Bufford, there is 65,000 square feet of commercial space and 375 parking spaces or, 1 parking space per 140 square feet. This far exceeds the parking ratios of most major big box stores developed recently in Burleson.



Figure 2.11 Public and Private Parking Inventory

## Parking, cont'd.

The prevalence of destination restaurants creates a higher level of parking demand than typical retail uses. Someone once said “there’s not a parking problem if you want to go there” and that holds true for Old Town Burleson. Developing and maintaining a mix of high quality destination businesses far outperforms abundant but unused parking opportunities. People come to Old Town because they want to, and they won’t mind walking 1-2 blocks to reach their favorite restaurant, bar, clothing or antique store.

### Current Management System

Right now there’s no form of on-street parking enforcement and downtown has no posted parking management signs other than signed spaces for people with disabilities. There are no directional signs to most city owned, public parking lots. The lots being redone along the railroad tracks do have some small identification signs at their entrances but more can be done.



# Public Improvements

Public improvements generally include plant material, open space (man-made and natural) and amenities such as seating and lighting. Public improvements are both aesthetic as well as functional, to improve human comfort, and for urban design purposes. Infrastructure improvements, such as curb openings, pedestrian ramps, sidewalks and crosswalks are also important public improvements that emphasize the commitment to Old Town. There are a variety of benefits to having a comprehensive approach to repairing and implementing new public improvements. This section of the plan will review present conditions, current plans for future improvements as well as standards for new development. These efforts will greatly improve retail conditions, livability and moreover will create a more pleasant and unique identity for Old Town which will begin to set it apart from other cities in the region.

## Existing Conditions

Many of Old Town's streets were never fully developed with sidewalks and public amenities and much of what is considered Old Town used to be residential and is now slowly transforming to commercial. Renfro, the principal arterial running through Old Town, is missing many of the amenities needed to transform this district to a more pedestrian oriented area. This is important because 65% of all retail sales are unplanned purchases so the further the customer walks and the easier it is, the more the cash register will ring.

Sidewalks have never been constructed in some areas of Old Town while other areas the sidewalk design has been more of an afterthought while giving the auto priority. West of Clark Street on Renfro the sidewalk layout improves sporadically but still many amenities are missing and a consistent pattern is absent. This approach continues along Renfro and extends into the fringes of the study area. Having an improved, complete set of public improvements is important for Old Town's image development and for establishing a context for the pedestrian customer that lets them know they're still in the district. The only area that has corrected this is the 100 and 200 blocks of South Main (the original town center) and 100 block of West Ellison. This area had a new streetscape in early 1970's and have recently upgraded the sidewalk and parking facilities in this area.

The "Walk Score" system grades cities on their ability to accommodate pedestrians. Overall, the City of Burlington scores very low, 23, on this scale. However, when Old Town is examined closely, the score improves to 80-85. This is an indication of the potential to improve conditions in Old Town and create a vibrant, walkable mixed use area and Burlington is on board.



New fountain



Ballards on Ellison



New sculpture

## Current Effort to Upgrade Public Improvements

In March 2015, the Burlison City Council approved a \$1-million plus contract for improvements in Old Town Burlison. The goal of this project is to make Old Town more welcoming for visitors and safer for drivers, walkers and bicyclists, while maintaining its character and charm. The project encompasses one block on Ellison (from Wilson to Main Street) and three blocks of Main (Renfro Street to Eldred Street). Widened sidewalks, one-way traffic, ADA compliant crossings, decorative brick crosswalks, landscaping, planters, benches and trash cans additional parking spaces are just some of the improvements.

The detailed project list includes:

- A one-lane elliptical roundabout/center island at the intersection of Main Street and Ellison Street that would allow traffic to move more freely (the three-way stop would be removed);
- Widening the sidewalks to thirteen (13) feet along Main Street, from Renfro Street to Bufford Street – a wider sidewalk could accommodate street furniture, landscaping, lighting and sidewalk cafes, and, a landscaped sidewalk “bulb-out” at the intersection corners would create shorter and safer crossings for pedestrians;
- Resurfacing and restriping the existing Main Street parking lot (Renfro Street to Eldred Street) to include one-way parking aisles with angled parking and landscaping improvements; and
- Improving the alley behind Fresco’s (on Main Street) west to Wilson Street to provide pedestrian connections to shops, restaurants and parking areas at city hall.



Sidewalk widening



Resurface/Restripe Parking



Alley Improvements



New roundabout

# Economic Resources and Opportunities

## Commercial

### Restaurants and Bars

One of the great assets of Old Town is the quality and success of its eating and drinking establishments. Most of the current restaurants and bars are centered on or around Main Street, Ellison and Renfro. There have been some single family homes that have been converted to eating establishments on Bufford.

There is a synergy created by the cluster of locally or regionally owned eating establishments and that has created an identity for the area. This is something that the original Old Town Plan recognized as being a critical component to the success of the area. Babe's, a regionally known restaurant, has been able to attract a wider audience than just the local citizenry – opening up the possibility of Old Town having an even greater market draw.

Maintaining an economically strong eating and drinking destination means preserving a diversity of choices, both in terms of food choice and expense levels, staying locally and regionally unique, and recognizing that the public realm (the streets, sidewalks, parking, walkability) all add to the unique atmosphere of this historic area.

### Retail

Although there is some specialty and general retail in Old Town, there is a capacity for much more. A gifts store, a boutique dress store, an antique business are just the beginning to a healthy retail mix. Adding both a diversity and more options creates a synergy that enhances opportunity for investment. Current lease space is in short supply and new construction should focus on ground floor retail opportunities.

### Commercial and Industrial

Commercial activity like light manufacturing and auto repair will become less and less viable in Old Town as land prices increase. There will be an opportunity to transform these sites into more lucrative business or residential opportunities. But until that time, these businesses contribute to the character and personality of the area. As long as their goods and services are in demand, they should be supported and encouraged to remain involved in Old Town activities and decision making.

# Education

## Hill College / Texas Wesleyan

Hill College's Burleson campus is currently housed in an old church facility that occupies one block on the south side of Renfro. The college has been very successful and has outgrown their current facility. They are planning on a significant expansion in the near future, and are very interested in staying within the Old Town area. Hill College anticipates the need for additional classroom square footage within five years of the first phase of an expansion/relocation.

This is an excellent opportunity for Old Town. Increasing the student population will bring energy and life to the Old Town area. More students will increase the need for apartments and other residential options. It will also bring opportunity for new restaurants and retail. But one of the key benefits will be the presence of a young vibrant community and all that adds to creating a great urban space. There is also the potential for shared parking.

Plans have identified two (2) possible locations for new construction that can accommodate the higher education goals for Old Town. A preferred location, fronting Ellison Street, between Wilson Street and Warren Street, should focus on meeting this goal while providing a significant architectural statement, additional retail lease space and housing opportunities to build a permanent residential presence on Old Town.



## Historic Structures



Historic structures are an asset to the Old Town area, and should be viewed as a valuable resource. These structures can serve as the architectural gems that give Old Town its character. New structures should take their design cues from these older buildings, without copying them in a kitschy or tacky way. There is an opportunity to replace historic buildings that have been demolished and add new buildings to fill in the “gaps”. Design standards will play an important role in this effort.

The second story of older structures should be utilized. In earlier times, second floors were often utilized for small offices, professionals, or specialty spaces such as photographic studios. Making second floors viable once again is an opportunity for Old Town to reclaim viable space. New construction should provide these spaces and not simply build a false front that gives the illusion of vertical scale. Old Town needs to be a real place, not a drive by experience.

Architectural guidelines for historic structures can ensure that these buildings are not only protected from inappropriate modifications, but that they are able to obtain their full potential as retail spaces. Appropriate storefronts, signage and awnings can greatly enhance the beauty of an older commercial structure. Guidelines can also assist in the conversion of single family structures to commercial uses. Appropriate guidelines can allow for the change without destroying the character of the original structure. Why go to the trouble to save the historic structure if it is no longer recognizable?

There is an opportunity to encourage owners to make appropriate design modifications to their structures by offering incentives. Many communities have successfully used tax abatement programs for historic structures that meet the standards. State historic tax incentives are also available to buildings that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. These incentives are only available to income producing properties or for non-profits.

## Section 3 – Development Concepts



Image is from the CNU Charrette.

### Purpose of the Concept Plan

The Old Town Plan Update continues the good work of the original Old Town Plan adopted in 1995. After twenty years, much has happened in Old Town and the issues and needs have evolved. Following analysis of the historic and current conditions and circumstances, development of “Concept Plan” to guide future programming is possible. The Concept Plan expands on the original Commercial Land and Mixed Residential District, adding more specific ideas on increasing the density of the district, proposing and emphasizing a mix of commercial and residential in the same building, and breaking the district into neighborhoods. The Concept Plan also recognizes in the Commercial section that there should be a difference in building design between major thoroughfares and pedestrian oriented streets. New use categories to meet the needs of a more urban-centric area are also presented. The Concept Plan addresses the various issues in three broad categories: **Urban Design Strategies**; **Economic Strategies**; and **Historic Preservation Strategies**.

# Proposed Old Town Concept Plan

The Concept Plan (*depicted in Figure 3.1, following page*) considers the trends that are shaping the Old Town District. One of the most influential is the new development that has recently occurred by Interstate 35, four blocks to the east of the original downtown, between Renfro and Ellison. This establishes a considerable sized node that is almost equal in size to the core Old Town Area. In addition, a house on a large lot that had been converted to commercial was torn down at the corner of Johnson and Renfro and replaced with a series of commercial storefronts. These developments have geographically stretched the core downtown by several blocks in each direction and it's only realistic to think that the vacant and underutilized areas between these developments will start to redevelop as Burleson's population continues to climb towards 50,000.

Another key change is that Renfro is no longer a State Highway which means that a more balanced transportation approach that has a greater emphasis on pedestrians can be implemented without requiring TxDOT approvals.

Given these changes and trends, the plan recommends that Renfro be the location of highest density, mixed use development and Ellison a slightly lower density but even more pedestrian oriented (smaller, more human scale buildings). As you move north and south of the Renfro-Ellison corridors, the plan recommends a decreased density to help preserve the residential nature of these neighborhoods. The challenge is that there is still a lot of vacant and underutilized land in this area. The infill development in this area will likely take a couple of decades, so the plan approach is to place infill development between the traditional downtown core and the emerging nodes. The highest demand is likely for residential with some larger chain restaurants wanting access to Renfro's traffic. Thus, the plan calls for some horizontal mixed use development between the existing nodes that can convert to commercial space as demand becomes stronger.

# Old Town Concept Plan

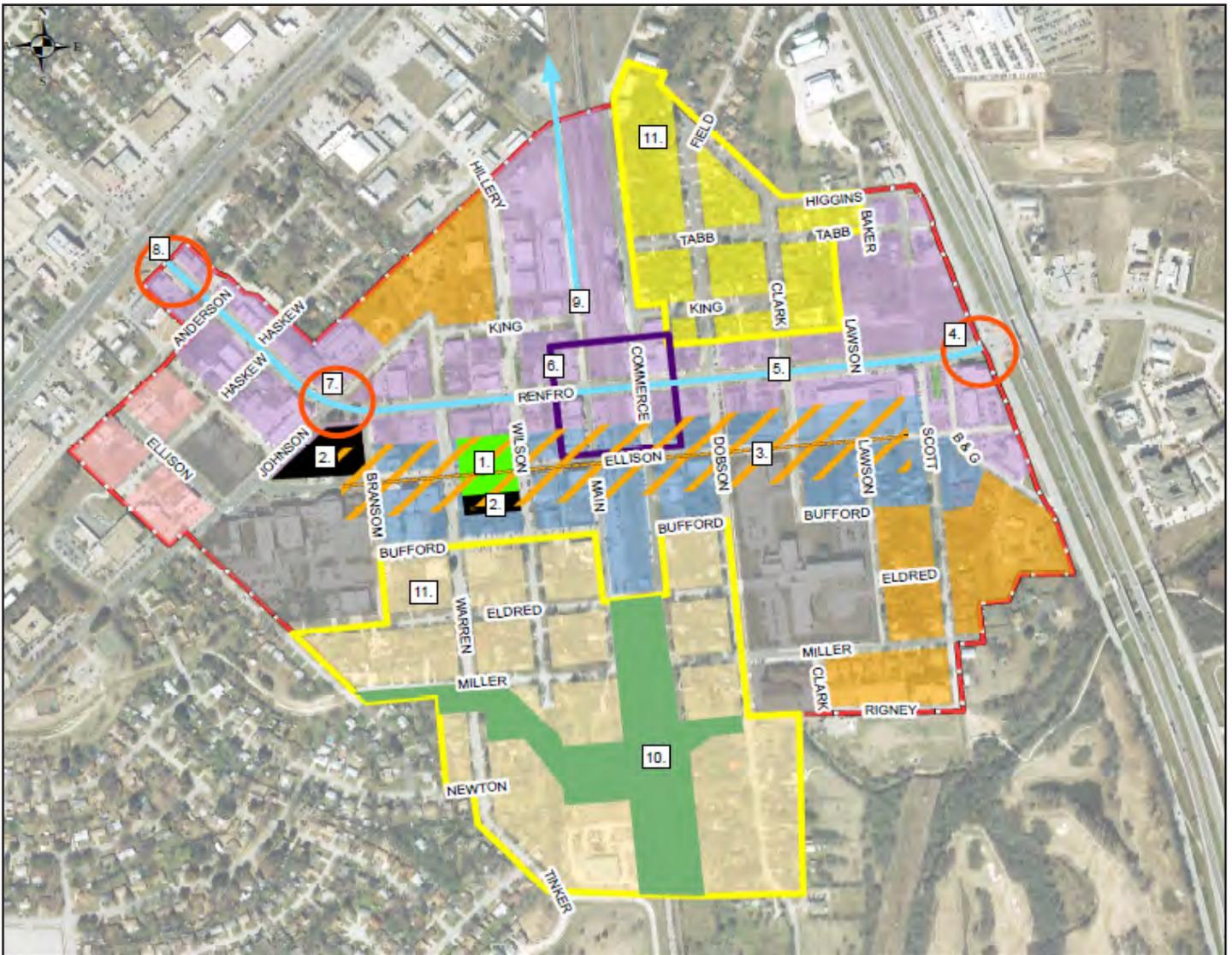


Figure 3.1 Old Town Concept Plan

1. Plaza
2. Potential locations for Hill College
3. Ellsion Pedestrian Corridor
4. Entrance Feature at IH35 and Renfro
5. Renfro Vehicular Corridor with Boulevard
6. New intersection at Renfro/  
Main/Railroad
7. Intersection at Johnson
8. Entrance feature at US 174
9. Extension of Main Street
10. Green Space
11. Defined detached residential perimeter

- Historic/low density residential
- Medium-density detached residential
- Medium density attached residential
- Park/Greenspace
- Church/School
- High-density mixed use
- Pedestrian-centric mixed use
- Live/work

# Urban Design Strategy for Old Town

## Commercial Land

Early commercial buildings were built as zero lot line buildings immediately adjacent to the street. Remnants of this development pattern can be found along Main Street and Ellison. Construction after World War II began using a suburban development pattern which supported the dominance of the car in everyday life. To accommodate parking for a car, the buildings were set back from the street with parking lots in front. This created small, islands of development. Pedestrian connections became less and less important until they have almost completely disappeared. More recent developments, such as B&G Building at the corner of Renfro and IH 35, express the urban design principals mandated by the Old Town Design Overlay.

During community meetings, there was a strong belief expressed by participants that pedestrians should once again be given a priority within Old Town. New Development patterns should enliven the district with sidewalks for strolling, sidewalk cafes and interesting shops. Buildings should be designed to create an urban identity, provide a distinct difference from the other areas of Burleson and promote Old Town as a destination and encourage social interaction.

## Higher Density Mixed Use

Along Renfro and Main Street, there is the opportunity to create a more pleasing environment by adding residential density and providing for retail opportunities. Three to four (3-4) story residential buildings would be appropriate in scale for a thoroughfare street. Two (2) story office or retail buildings would also be appropriate, but all buildings should be set slightly back from the street to allow for a landscaped parkway. This landscape separation between cars and people, creates an environment that is more pedestrian friendly.



High Density Mixed Use with retail on ground floor and residential above



Three story mixed use with retail on ground floor and residential above.

## Wrap Building around Garage

“Wrap” residential structures would fit well in this area. In “Wrap” structures, parking is interior to the property with the residential units wrapped around the structure. Access driveways should be of minimum width and preferably located on the side streets. Another important feature of these structures is that the ground floor apartments have front doors on the street. Stoops and porches provide a sense of separation and privacy.

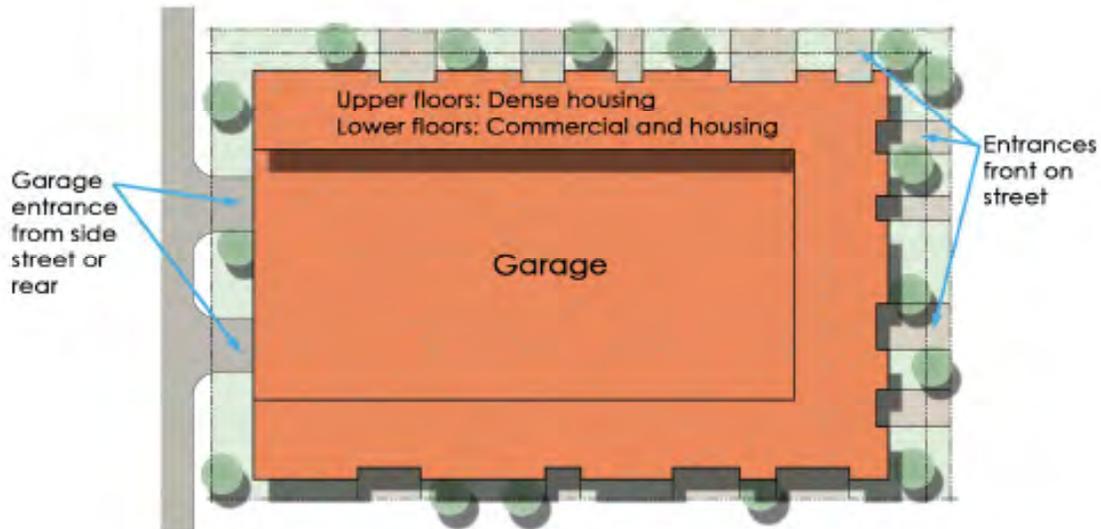


Figure 3.2 Wrap building exhibit

Development would be required to be constructed to accommodate retail uses on the ground floor. Residential structures would be required to have a minimum of fifteen (15) foot clearance from floor to underside of structure on the ground floor to be able to transition to retail uses as the market develops. If the retail demand does not initially justify retail on the ground floor, the units would at first be rented as residential and then converted to retail later on.

New development should not be located at the back of the property with parking in front. Continuous curb cuts should be prohibited.



Ground floor that can be either residential or retail.

## Pedestrian Centric Mixed Use

The scale of Ellison Street is much more pedestrian friendly by its very nature than a major thoroughfare. The 60 foot width is ideal for creating a safe and friendly pedestrian environment. Two lanes of traffic, with angled parking on each side and ample sidewalk width create a setting that is perfect for a variety of urban activities.



New Development along this scale of street is smaller and more focused on appealing to the pedestrian. Retail buildings should be located along the front property line, while residential buildings may allow a garden or stoops to extend into the right-of-way. Parking should be in the rear or if possible integrated into the interior of the building, not visible from the street. Garage doors along a pedestrian oriented street are not appropriate.

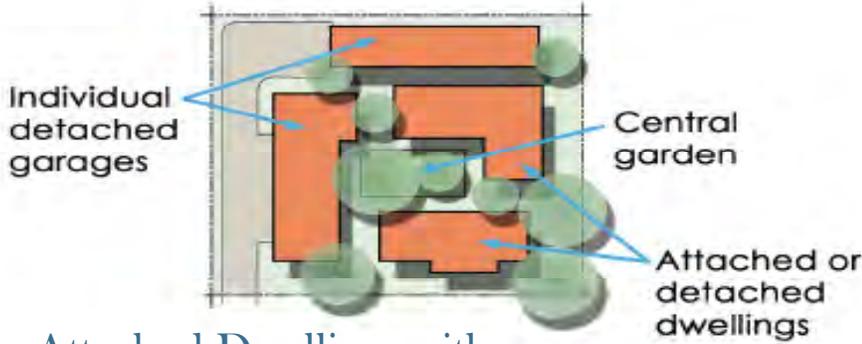
The height should be limited to two (2) stories, but no more than thirty (30) feet. Ground floor residential units should have front doors facing the street. Ground floors in residential areas should be stepped up from the street to create a more private entrance. Ground floors in commercial nodes would be designed for retail use. The floors should be flush with the sidewalk, have large expanses of glass storefronts with a minimum of fifteen (15) feet from floor to underside of structure. These spaces may be used for residential in the beginning but it is anticipated that they would convert to retail when the market allowed. Balconies on the upper floors are encouraged, however they should be integrated behind the front façade line, rather than overhanging the structure.



Townhouses or Rowhouses are an excellent building type for this area. The massing of these structures should be broken down into twenty-five (25) foot increments to reflect the historic lot pattern of old town.

Courtyard housing would also be an excellent building type for this area. Like the “Wrap” building, these structures would have front doors facing the street on the ground floor. This type building has attached dwellings around a central linear walk. Courtyard housing, which are small attached houses that front a common courtyard or garden, carefully massed as a compilation of house-scale masses, rather than large boxy masses.

Figure 3.3

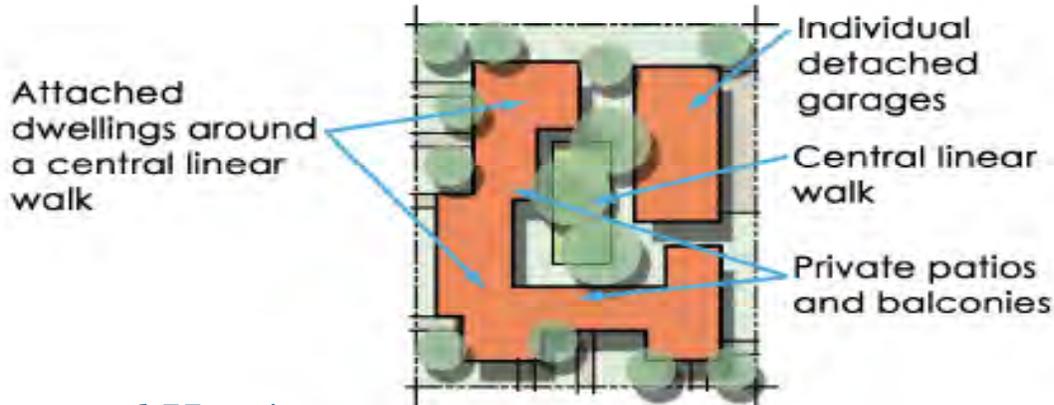


### Attached Dwellings with Detached Garages



Two Story Attached Dwellings with front doors that face the street.

Figure 3.4



### Courtyard Housing Typology



Courtyard Housing from street



Interior Courtyard

## Live/Work

Live work structures are a buildings type that encourage living and working within the same structure. This type of living unit reflects the progression of an apartment from being only a place to occupy in the evenings and at night to a setting where professionals are increasingly incorporating their work into their living space. Whether they're small-business owners, artists, light manufacturers, traveling salespeople, or start-up tech companies, this business-oriented population is looking for residential units outside the typical norm. In this use category residential, office and even light manufacturing are allowed equally.

Buildings would have a two to three (2-3) story neighborhood scale; it makes little difference whether they are residential or office use. Like the other types, these units would have front door access that faced the street. Some may have oversized doors for artist or entrepreneurs.



## Live/Work Studios

# Residential Land

Residential land use in the Concept Plan consists of three basic types of residential uses: Single Family Historic, Medium Density Detached, and Medium Density Attached. It also acknowledges that various neighborhoods have existing established character and the Old Town Plan's aim is to retain that character as more density is added to the neighborhood.

In the residential areas, the landscape becomes especially important. The neighborhood that used to be the Pecan Grove has a strong pattern of large mature trees. These trees are an important part of the heritage and should be maintained. Removal of these trees should not be allowed except when they are no longer healthy. Tree replacement should be required when a tree has to be removed. Front yard trees add to the neighborhood feel and should be valued. New development should plant trees according to the established pattern of the neighborhood. In some neighborhoods, the trees are located in the center of the front yard and in other neighborhoods, they might line the street.

## Single Family Historic

The northeast neighborhood contains many of the oldest homes in Old Town. It also contains many homes that can and should be restored or rehabilitated. The character of this neighborhood is large lots, with relatively small detached houses. There are no sidewalks or curbs, and drainage is handled through bar ditches that line the streets.



Figure 3.5



Historic photos show that this area remains essentially how it used to be. A few new modern homes have been added along the northern and western edges but design standards should be enforced so to encourage appropriate infill development. The Old Town Plan envisions this area to retain and restore the historic homes. The scale and character of new homes should reflect the scale and character of the area in massing and detail. Overly large homes on small lots, often called McMansions, are not appropriate to this area. Garages should be detached and set well behind the front of the house. If owners insist on attached garages, garage doors must not face the street and be located toward the rear of the house.



The historic streetscape should be retained. Curbs and gutters would not be appropriate. If sidewalks are eventually desired they should be located inward of the bar ditches. The bar ditches are quite successful in filtering water and slowing down its progress so that more water enters the ground in heavy storms. Bar ditches are integral parts of the streetscape and should be retained. Additional street trees could be planted to replace trees that have been removed.

Although it should be considered as a last resort, when historic properties are threatened, one option might be to relocate the house onto vacant lots in this neighborhood. Overall, developments and redevelopment opportunities are regulated by Article IV, Old Town Design Standards, adopted in 2010.

## Medium Density Detached

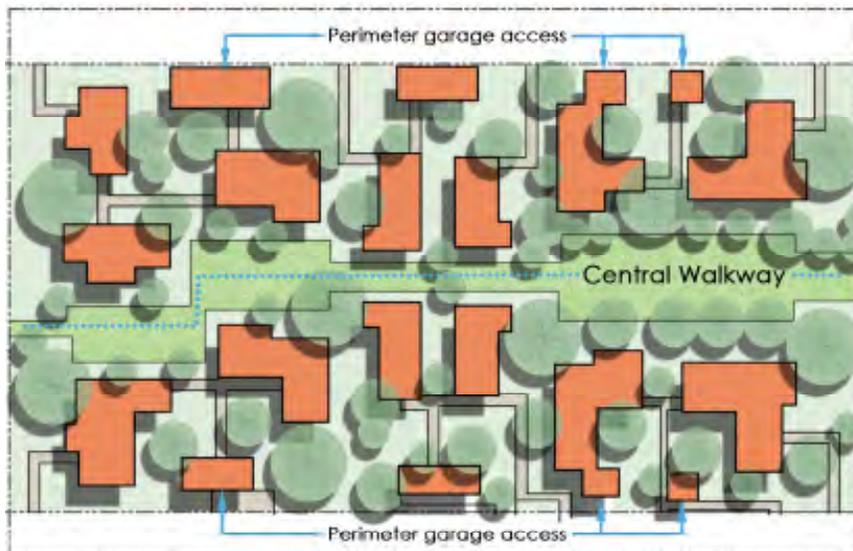


The neighborhood that is south of Ellison developed as a single family neighborhood comprised of small to medium houses on large lots. There is very much a residential feel to the neighborhood that should be maintained. There seems to be vision within the community to add density to this neighborhood, without destroying the character. This can be accomplished successfully by allowing larger lots to be subdivided into small-lot developments, if and only if certain development standards are adhered to.

Development standards would allow certain development types to be used. Interestingly these development types are not new, and are often found within historic districts.

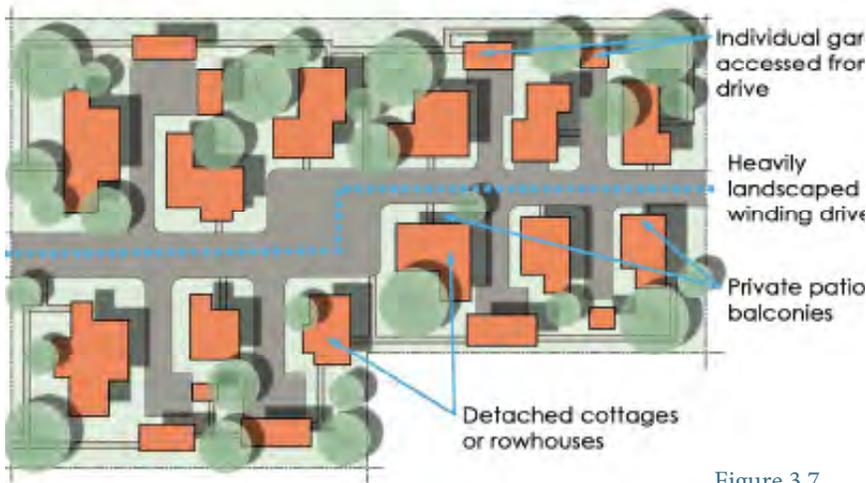
Below are a number of historic development types that could be used within the Medium Density Detached residential areas. What all of these types have in common are:

- Units facing the street should be of the same scale as the adjacent homes;
- The front yard setbacks must align with existing houses on the block (this may differ from setback regulations);
- Houses adjacent to the street have a front door that faces the street;
- There is a shared and common green space;
- Parking is hidden or in the rear; and
- Driveways off the street are no larger than 12 feet.



Garden Walk

Figure 3.6



A Lane Typology for detached housing

Figure 3.7



## Medium Density Attached

The medium density attached area would be located with the Old Grove neighborhood adjacent to Scott and Eldred Streets. Currently, Two-family residential (duplex) is allowed in this area. The concept plan is to allow more variations of this precedent and allow not only duplexes, but tri-plexes and quad-plexes as well. These are essentially large houses with multiple front doors that appear to be one house. These housing types would be appropriate if certain standards are put in place that help maintain the sense of scale and existing neighborhood character.

The standards ensure that buildings are composed of “house-scale” elements and masses and sited on lots, so as to not dominate adjacent houses. Buildings should not exceed 2 ½ floors in height, and generally should have sloped roofs. It is extremely important that buildings of this type take on setbacks and frontages similar to adjacent and nearby houses and those units have their front doors oriented to face the street. Parking should never be in the front yard. Resident parking should consist of open spaces to the rear of the lot or in carports or private garages.

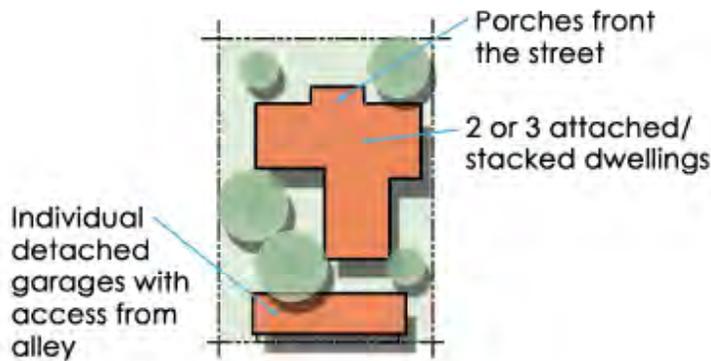


Figure 3.8



## Duplex

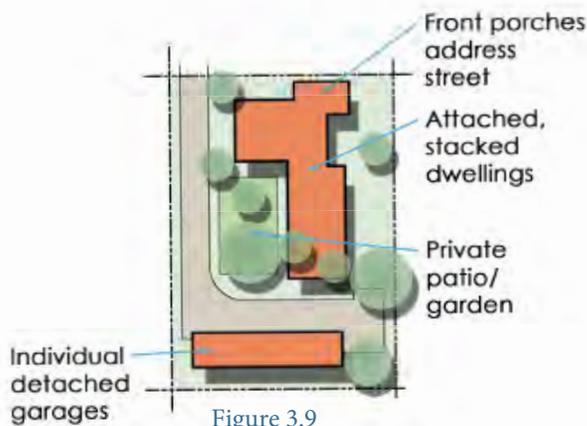


Figure 3.9



## Quadplex

## Public Plaza

One idea universally supported in the two community input sessions and in other community planning work is that Old Town Burleson needs a more formal gathering space. This is important if Old Town is to serve as the social living room for the community. These types of spaces are centers of community life where residents and visitors can engage socially. They should be inclusive social hubs, relevant for everyday activities and looked to on special days. People who are playing, watching, resting, eating, listening, and learning activate these spaces, which should also be places of civic pride and beauty.

The ideal location for such space in this instance is an expanded plaza in front of City Hall. The current space is dominated by the old interurban cars which are nicely restored but tend to dominate the space due to the plaza's size. Most of the people participating in the workshops feel that the current plaza doesn't presently meet the needs of Old Town. Making the plaza larger and adding more programming could make this space more of an asset to Old Town. This is tangent to the core Old Town business district along South Main Street so that Old Town can still be open for retail even on days when there are activities in the plaza.

There are two options for expanding the plaza as illustrated in the figures provided on the following page. One is to leave Ellison in place, forming a counter-clock wise loop between Wilson and Warren Street (*refer to Figure 3.10 on the following page*). Ellison on the south side of the plaza would shift slightly to the south, thus making the plaza into more of a square. This would create a one way circulation loop around the plaza. Parking would be reduced by about 50 spaces, both on-street and from loss of parking in the shopping center. The development of the Warren Street parking lot would make up for the lost spaces.



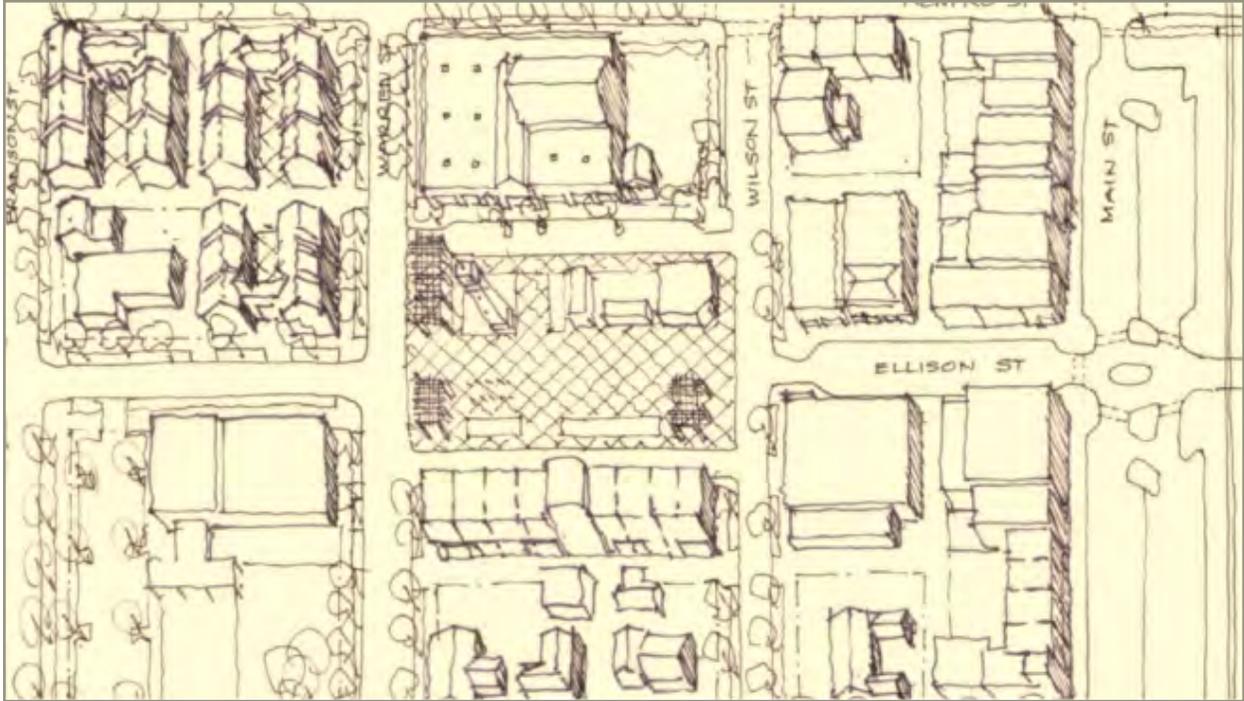


Figure 3.10 - Plaza Plan at Ellison (Image is from the CNU Charrette)

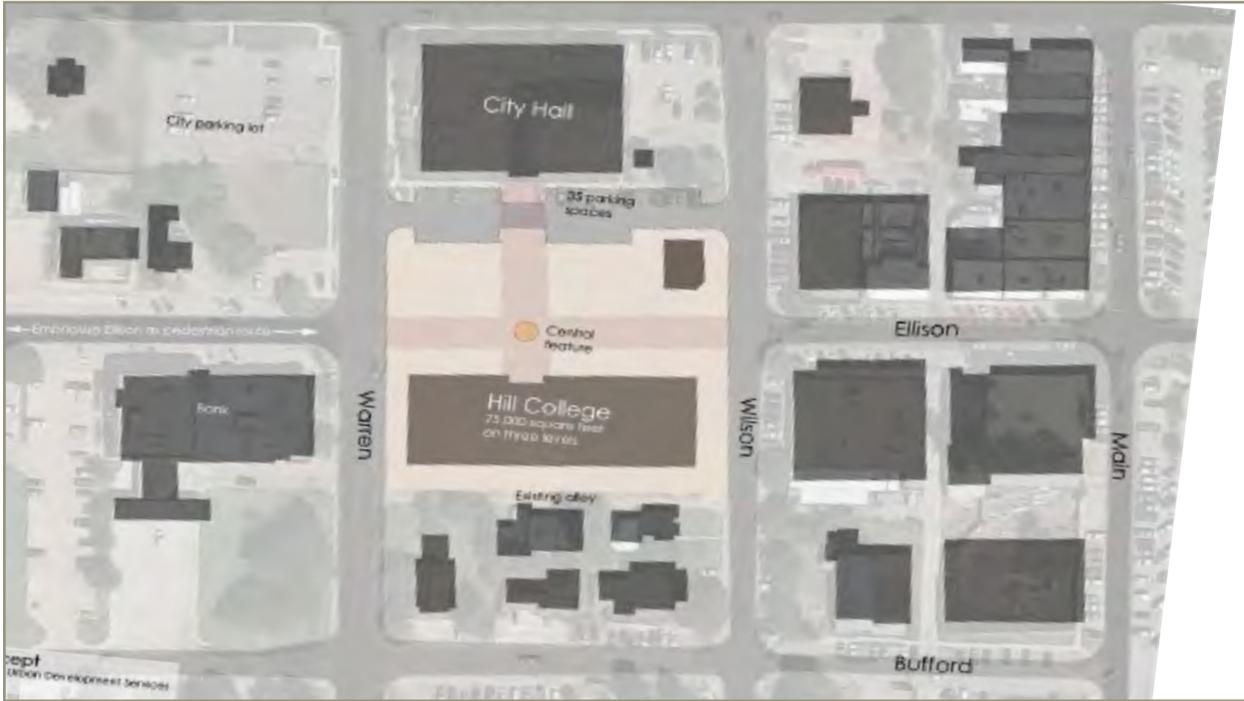


Figure 3.11 - Plaza Plan at Ellison. Place building on southern edge of plaza to activate space.



An urban retail building would be appropriate facing the Old Town Plaza, because it would enliven the plaza with people and activity.



Figure 3.12 - Plaza Plan at Ellison. Place building on southern edge of plaza to activate space.



## Plaza, cont'd.

The second option, which is the preferred option, is to construct a new building, including the Hill College expansion project, on the shopping center parking lot and attach this to the plaza (refer to Figure 3.11). This allows for a larger building site and more importantly it can directly attach an active first floor use (retail, restaurants) to the plaza thus insuring daily activity. The east bound lane of Ellison would move to the south side of the new building thus completing a one-way, counterclockwise street pattern around the plaza and new building. This would reduce parking by about 75 spaces but it has been recognized that the provision of new parking spaces is easily accomplished.

Building plazas and parks in downtowns requires careful planning design. Placing these along primary shopping streets has often done just the reverse of what one would hope for. Permanently blocking or closing streets can be counterproductive but in this instance the street grid would remain open. Almost all the communities that installed pedestrian malls have taken them out. The exception are university towns like Burlington, VT or Boulder, CO that have large numbers of students immediately adjacent to downtown, or in large metropolitan areas that have healthy densities of pedestrians achieved by strong mixed land use patterns such as Denver, CO.



Temporarily blocking off the street with decorative gates or planters has worked in communities that need large spaces for public assembly or crowds. The Third Street Promenade in Santa Monica, CA uses such an approach as does Ybor City a neighborhood in Tampa, FL and the plaza in Santa Fe, NM. The plaza suggested above borrows on these concepts to provide downtown with a public space to use when needed and yet still provide traffic circulation on a typical business day.



Figure 3.12 Hill College

## Locating a New Hill College Building in Old Town Burleson

The prospects of several hundred more new students in downtown Burleson will act as a great revitalization catalyst. The location of the college needs to ensure that the college is an asset to adjoining businesses and has the space to grow in the future. A facility of this size could easily overwhelm existing consumer patterns with additional parking requirements and hours of operation. But at the same time downtown should want the students to be close enough to be an economic asset for businesses. This way students will still be a likely customer of downtown businesses and a stimulant for new business groups that serve their needs. Most importantly the college building will mark a new period in Old Town's growth, so it's important for the building to have a highly visible, prominent location to promote Old Town's revitalization.

The concept plan suggests a preferred and alternative location where a new mixed use project could be sited (see Figure 3.12, above). These locations include Old Town Center, just south of City Hall, and the old police station at the corner of Renfro and Bransom, recently occupied by the City Engineering Department. These two (2) sites were evaluated, and with public opinion and political support behind the plaza, the plaza was chosen as the preferred site.

Parking for these locations could be accommodated by an agreement with the First Baptist Church which has several hundred parking spaces nearby. The parking demand for the college and the Church's demand would likely offset each other making it a good fit. Parking is likely to be in short supply so consideration should be given in the short-term to a larger surface parking lot on Warren and Ellison. Eventually the Warren Street lot should transition to a wrapped parking structure.



## Historic Retail Center

Main Street buildings that face the railroad tracks are critically important to maintaining the character of Old Town. New infill buildings should reflect the historic character of Main Street no matter where they are located in Old Town. They should be at least two (2) stories but could be as tall as three story as long as they retain the character of the old buidings.



The buildings should have ceiling heights that match the heights of adjacent buildings (*appropriate height for infill buildings is depicted in Figures 3.13 and 3.14 on the following page*). Large display windows are also an important feature that should reflect the character of Old Town. Functional canopies offer interesting designs, contribute additional character to the district, and protect from the sun and rain.

Details on older buildings also add to the over-all character of Old Town. Patterns on cast iron columns, and ornate brick work in parapets provide a sense of older, established buildings. An interesting pattern is the significant difference in character between the buildings on the east and west side of the railroad tracks. This dicotomy provides an interesting contrast and should be maintained if possible. The design standards should reflect this flexibility.



The grain elevator is one of the largest structures in the Old Town Area. It's presence reminds the community of it's rural and agricultural history. It should be preserved as a visual reminder of the past.

A passenger depot was at one time located adjacent to the tracks. Recreating the depot as a retail spot, or relocating an abandoned depot would provide a link with the past.

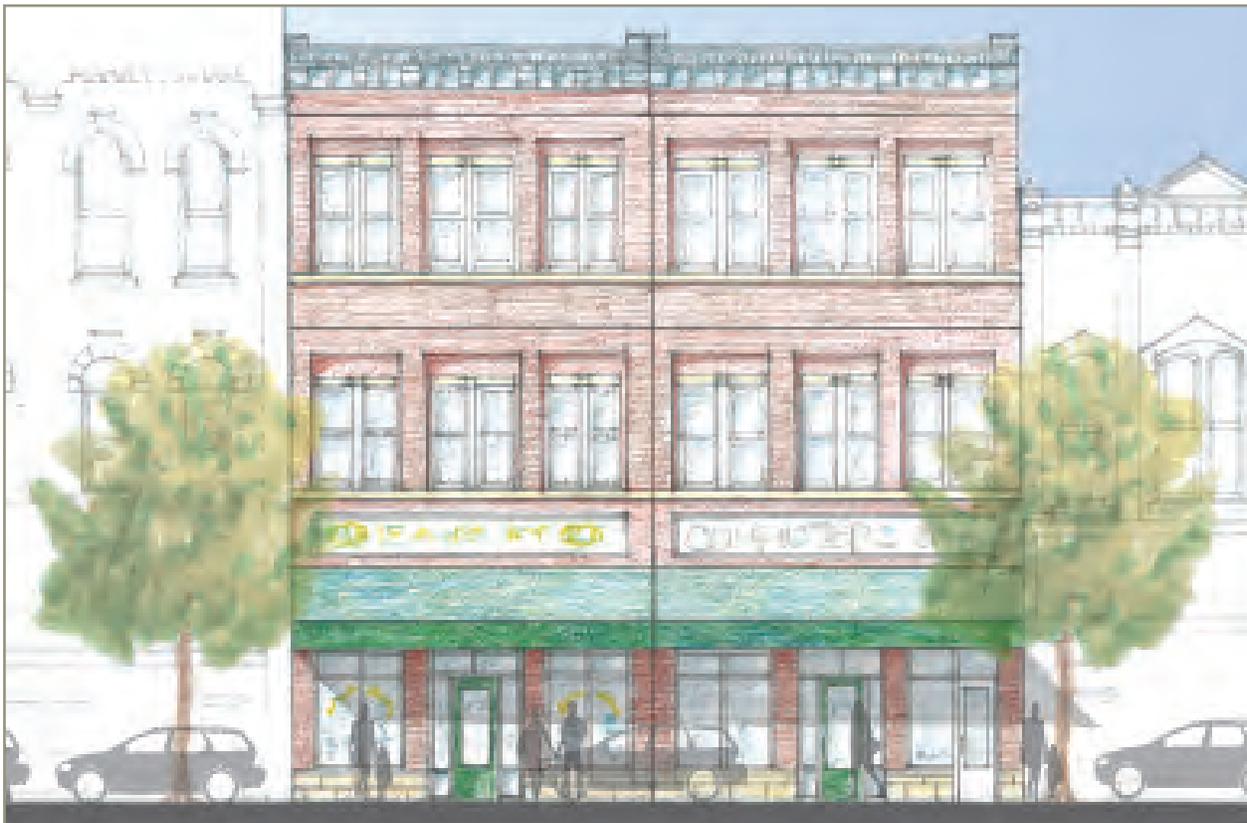
The underutilized gymnasium that is on the grounds of Nola Dunn Academy could be incorporated into the life of the community. Suggestions from citizens included converting the gym to a black box theater for a community theater performance center. It was also suggested that the gym could be a theater associated with Hill College. Either way the gym has the potential to be part of a theater program in Old Town. City/BISD supported recreation programs could also be explored as the prmanent Old Town population expands.

Figure 3.13



This is a prototype two story infill building that retains the character of Old Town. It has large display windows, a canopy, controlled signage, and residential or offices on the 2nd floor.

Figure 3.14



A three story infill building that would be appropriate for an Old Town infill building. The ground floor has a 15 foot clear space to underside of structure. Windows and detailing reflect the historic character of the area.



## Parking Improvements

- Add improved identity signs at city owned, off-street parking lots. Incorporate downtown logo to reinforce brand identity.
- Add directional signs to city owned, off-street parking lots. Incorporate downtown logo to reinforce brand identity. This is being done with the parking lot improvements along Main Street.
- Post suggested parking times for on-street parking. This time limit should be determined by a brief survey and an observation period to determine turn-over ratios. This is likely to be in the neighborhood of a two hour parking duration, during business hours.
- Establish parking lot standards for lot layout, design and circulation. (Sec. 86-109. - Landscaping of parking lots)
- Allow permeable pavement to be included in the list of materials for off street parking lot surfaces. This will help reduce run-off and will aid the growth of landscaping.
- Set forth more specific landscaping requirements for off-street parking such as canopy trees along the perimeter of the parking lot buffer. Trees should be from the listed of city appropriate street trees (drought tolerant canopy trees) Parking lot buffers along the street should be 5' in width. Understory landscape plants should be between 2' to 3' feet at maturity.
- Consider offering incentives for private sector rainwater capture and reuse.
- Continue to monitor parking demand, especially if any new develop occurs in downtown. The ideal balance is to have between 80% to 90% of the spaces occupied. If more than then 90% are occupied along Main Street and Second Street during daytime business hours then it's time to start enforcement or incentives to get people to park in longer term parking.

- New downtown buildings should be exempt from providing their own on-site parking. Any new parking should be behind buildings or underneath but not along the street edge. Any existing, privately owned parking facility or storage lot facing Main, Ellison, Renfro, Warren, Wilson, Johnson, Bransom, Dobson, and Clark should be converted to development that is zero lot setback when possible. This will help improve downtown's pedestrian appeal. Off street parking facilities on these streets should be relegated to the back side or behind buildings in these blocks and not along the street frontage.
- Opportunities to buffer parking areas with landscape hedges placed in the right-of-way should be undertaken.
- Future parking demand by downtown residents could pose an issue if this aspect of downtown sees extensive development. Monitor this situation and if needed move to a system of reserved spaces in the public parking lots if the developer doesn't provide space on site. The spaces could be available for a nominal fee to landlords. On-street enforcement will be required in order to motivate tenants to park in these spaces. This will require the on-street and reserved spaces to be signed and a nominal penalty for on-street parking offenses.
- Develop a long term, public parking plan where surface lots can eventually be transitioned into low rise parking decks as demand increases. If the plaza is expanded and Hill College is constructed then there will likely be more demand closer to the plaza and City Hall. This will be especially true if something is constructed on the shopping center site that the City owns. In this case, the Old Town Plan suggests that the highest priority for parking expansion should be the City's Warren Street lot and striking an agreement to use the Baptist Church's lot on Johnson Street. Using church parking during the week and business hours seems like a good match for the church's needs.





Priority 1 - Make best Use of Street Parking.



Priority 2 - Place surface lots behind buildings.



Priority 3 - Parking lots can evolve into decks if need be.



Priority 4 - Parking lots can be concealed with new infill development.

## Parking Improvements, cont'd.

With the development of the new, mixed use college building, the Warren lot (1) is likely to be a high priority to expand in the short-term due to its location. In the longer-term this site could be a target for a parking garage, including a parking structure wrapped with buildings. This scenario might include retail on the first floor so that this block “economically” connects the college to the plaza and the rest of Old Town. While going vertical is more expensive, it’s imperative for a more compact, walkable community. Right now all the parking happens via surface lots and this makes for low density, semi suburbanized downtown.



Figure 3.15

Figure 3.16 (below) also illustrates another high priority for parking development is the lot owned by the railroad north of the tracks on Main Street (1). This could be developed in a similar manner to the existing Main Street lot. This is the most cost effective way to expand parking, even if it means adding traffic lights at Main Street and Commerce Street so the pedestrians can safely cross the street. But, improvements to the Renfro corridor and rightsizing the street are identified and are realistic opportunities since the city has taken responsibility from TxDOT.



Figure 3.16

If development starts to take off close to the current location of Hill College then try to accommodate parking with on-street, head-in angle parking. If more general parking is needed then consider an agreement with Nola Dunn Academy. Another model is to put the parking in the center of the block with some type of outdoor space on top for residents with housing wrapping the deck. This would apply to this block if developed as medium to higher density.

Overall, most of the streets in Old Town are wide enough to accommodate on street parking and striping for new spaces is an inexpensive solution to a perceived parking problem.

Figure 3.17 delineates future parking projections based on existing and proposed inventories as well as the distance of key parking areas to the core of Old Town. The city is currently in the process of adding additional parking in Old Town through the construction of right-of-way parking and parking lots currently under contract by the city.

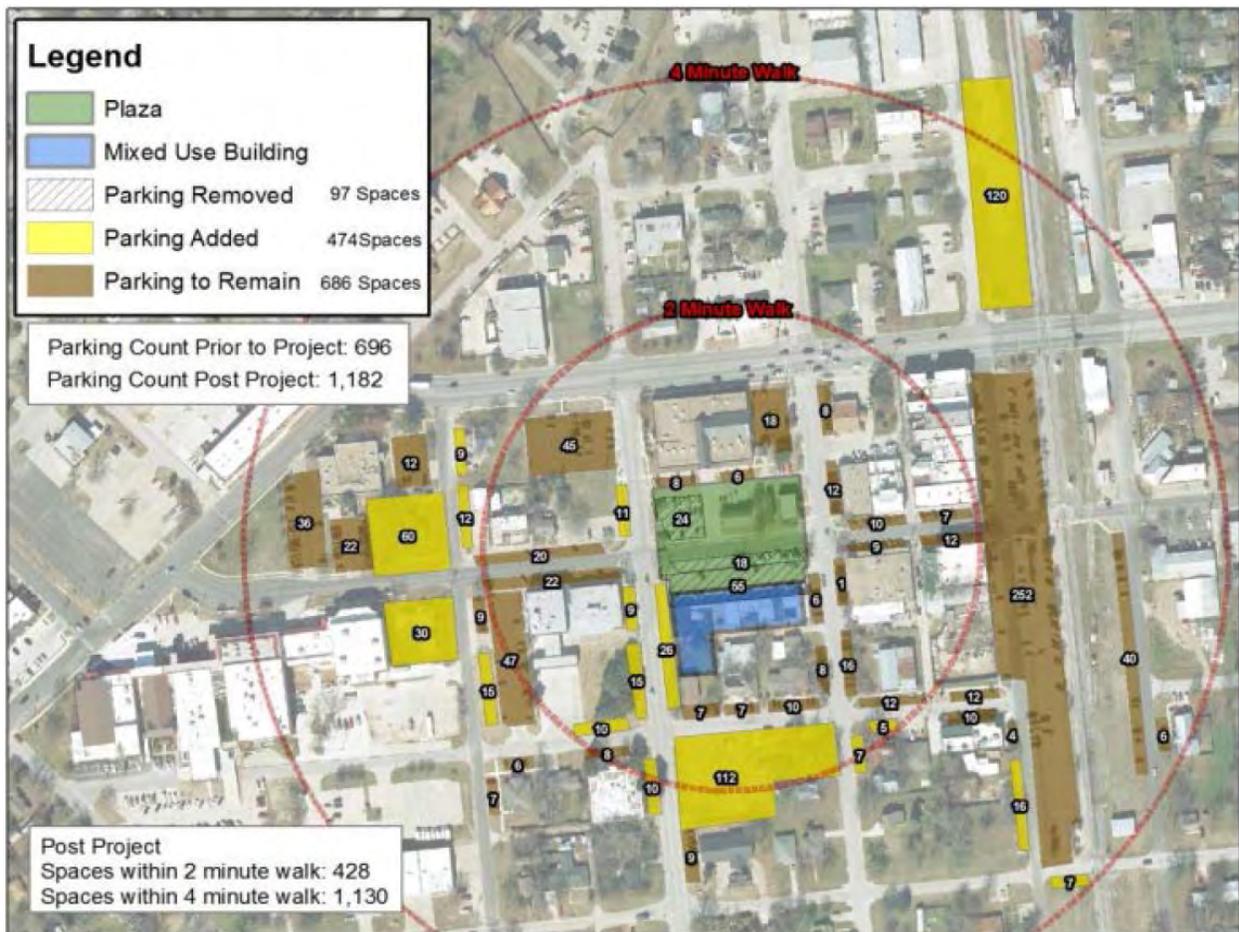


Figure 3.17

# PEDESTRIAN ROUTES and STREET CROSSINGS

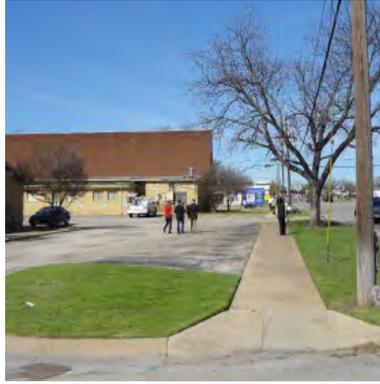
## WALKABILITY

The walking audit conducted early in the design process showed that many of the pedestrian crossings in Downtown are in disrepair or do not meet current American with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards. Focusing on more core intersections will help increase walkability and encourage more people to experience the larger Old Town area.

The following section lists some various approaches mentioned in the public workshops as well as other methods available to improve walkability. These include:

- Add functional awnings to or shade structures over business entrances and store fronts.
- Installing count-down pedestrian crossing lights so the pedestrian can anticipate if they have time to safely cross.
- Brick crosswalks to highlight the pedestrian's area.
- Construct or upgrade crosswalk ramps.
- Lower the speed limit on Renfro to 30 if not 25 miles per hour.
- Restripe the streets to cause lower traffic speed.
- Expand the current way-finding sign system.
- Change the context of the built environment abutting the public areas with a consistent setback for new development.
- Changing the section of some roadways by adding curb bulb-outs or curb extensions to slow drivers passing through Old Town while continuing to efficiently accommodate vehicles. This allows pedestrians to more safely anticipate on-coming traffic and it psychologically narrows the street crossing distance.
- Add street trees when possible for more shade along walking routes.
- Use consistent street furniture that reinforces downtown's architecture and sense of place.
- Upgrade streets and water drainage to eliminate standing water after rain storms.
- Improve sidewalks experiences via storefront design to create better "street theater".
- Add Bike lanes.
- Improve or add on-street parking when possible.
- Plant native, xeric, and flowering landscaping.





## SIDEWALKS

Most of the sidewalks in downtown are too narrow. Sidewalks in front of businesses should ideally be no less than 10 feet wide. This allows for a more interactive, social streetscape. For example, a wider sidewalk would allow for restaurants to place tables and chairs in front of their stores. Functional awnings allow people to continue visiting Old Town even during bad weather and the hot Texas summer. Sidewalks at street intersections should include canopy trees with grates to help create a canopy over the roadway. This helps to slow traffic and shade pedestrians. Outside of the core Old Town area, trees in the parkway (space between the curb and sidewalk) should again include larger canopy trees when possible. When potential customers see other people on the street enjoying themselves, they're much more inclined to do the same.



# SIGNALIZED INTERSECTIONS

## Crossing Renfro

There are currently only two traffic light controlled intersections on Renfro that enable pedestrians to cross in a safe manner. These lights are at Johnson and Wilson Street. Often though people are crossing at Main and Commerce Street with no cross walk signals. One possible solution expressed to the team is to place a signal at both Main and Commerce at Renfro. This is complicated because you don't want traffic backing up on to the railroad tracks as a train approaches. The signal at Commerce would stop west bound traffic before it gets to the tracks so that traffic doesn't back up onto the tracks and the Main Street light would stop east bound traffic before it gets to the tracks. No right on red on to Renfro at each of these intersections would also need to be implemented. Crosswalk signals should be set so that the pedestrian doesn't have to cover more than 3' feet per second with a buffer of time at the beginning and end of the cycle.

This scenario will need to be approved by the Union Pacific Railroad and verified with a certified traffic engineer, but it should make it safer for pedestrians that are trying to cross Renfro. If implemented, this will allow customers to access over 200 new parking spaces if the space between Main Street and the railroad tracks is converted to parking.





Signilization at Main and Renfro looking southeast.



Signilization at Main and Renfro looking northeast.



Signilization at Main and Renfro looking north.

# SIGNALIZED INTERSECTIONS, cont.d'

## Additional Crossing Locations

In addition to a signalized intersection at Main Street, this plan identifies several other key intersections that should be further studied for potential signalized pedestrian crossings. These locations are further on Figure 3.18 below. Pedestrian oriented commercial districts work best when there's a walking loop that allows customers to cross at two points on the street. This allows them to shop on one side of the street and then cross and shop on the other side. With all the development that has happened at the east end of Old Town and with more slated to occur, a signal at this location would allow each side of the street to gain some synergy from the investment that has been made. With vacant property and redevelopment opportunity abundant on the north side of Renfro, these signal improvements become very important contributions to the Old Town area. Additional studies may be necessary to identify appropriate signalization on the Renfro corridor prior to implementation.

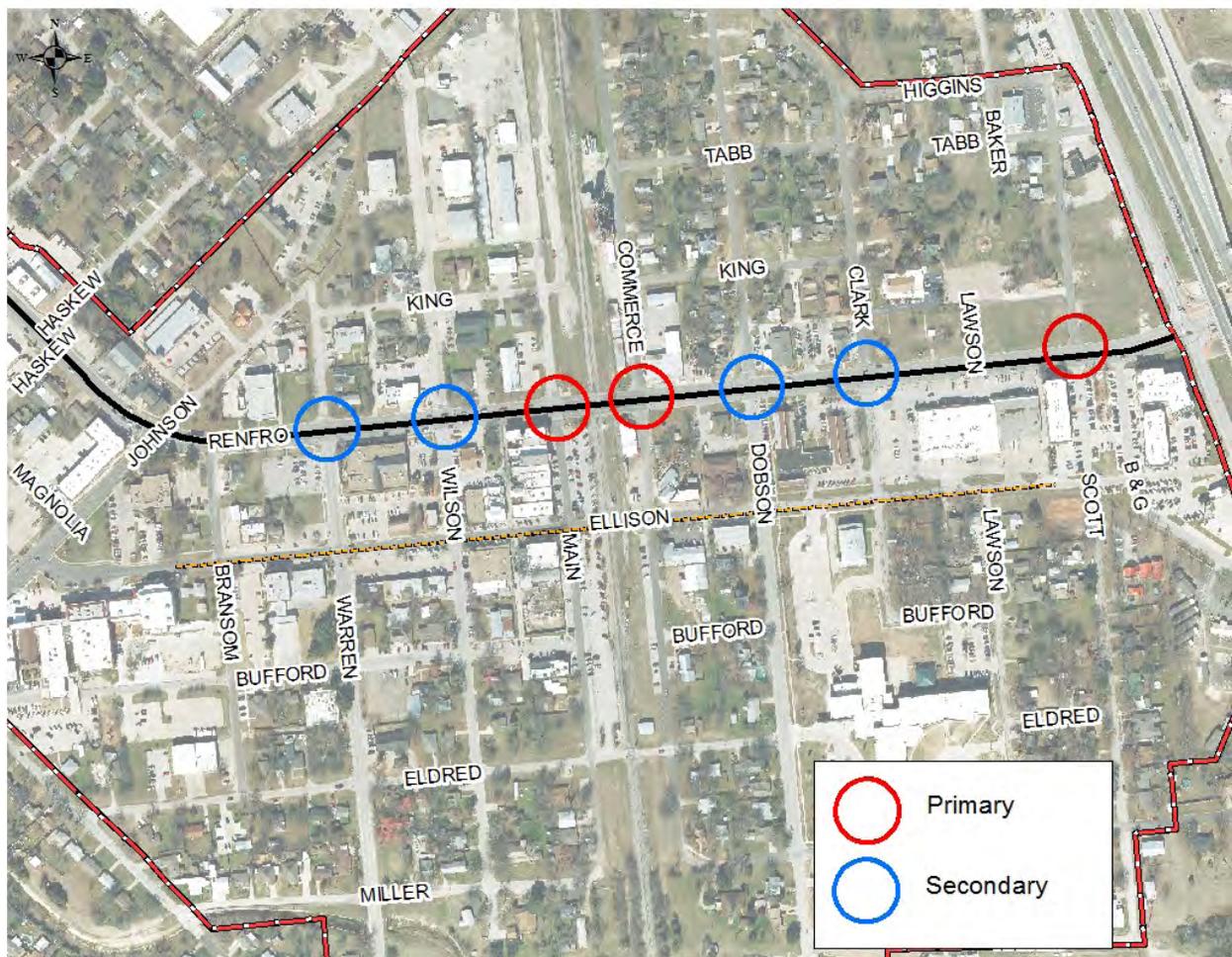


Figure 3.18

# Transformation of Renfro

One of the longer term projects for Renfro is to install a median and begin the transformation of Renfro from high speed FM road to pedestrian friendly commercial street. Initially this could just be done with paint. The core purposes of the median are to provide a safe haven for pedestrians crossing the street, slow traffic with a psychologically narrower street cross-section, and improve first impressions. As funds become available and infrastructure in this area needs to be upgraded, the median could be landscaped and possibly include a bio-swale to add beauty and clean road water before releasing it to Town Creek. Lane widths would be narrowed to the appropriate widths based on context sensitive design approaches.



A progression of the changes possible on Renfro over time, illustrating a transformation of the public realm.



1  
One new building



2  
Bury utilities



3

Add median with trees



4

Add more buildings and trees



5

Add even more buildings and trees



# Pedestrian Crossings

As previously introduced in the Pedestrian Routes and Street Crossings, adding or changing the current streetscape context elements, such as trees overarching the street, medians and curb bulb outs, will help to slow traffic and create a more walkable Old Town. In addition, the City could establish a posted speed limit of 25 MPH in the core Old Town area. While this would increase the travel time through Old Town Burleson by approximately 30 seconds, walkability and pedestrian safety would significantly increase without sacrificing street capacity.

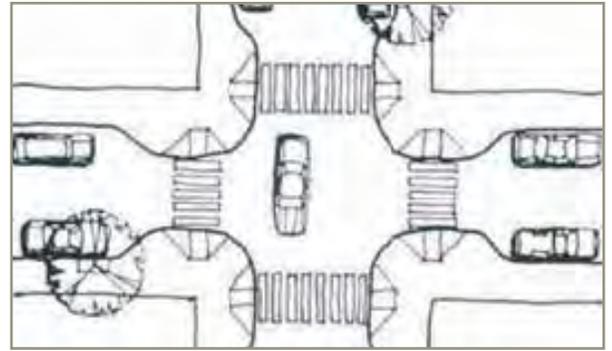


Figure 3.19



Defined Pedestrian Crossing



Defined Pedestrian Crossing at Four-Way Intersection

# Rail Corridor

One of most important safety improvements that will be made downtown is the installation of fence along the UP tracks and at each pedestrian crossing point. Presently this area has no fencing. Old Town Burleson has lots of families patronizing it's businesses and it's important to corral the kids away from the tracks.

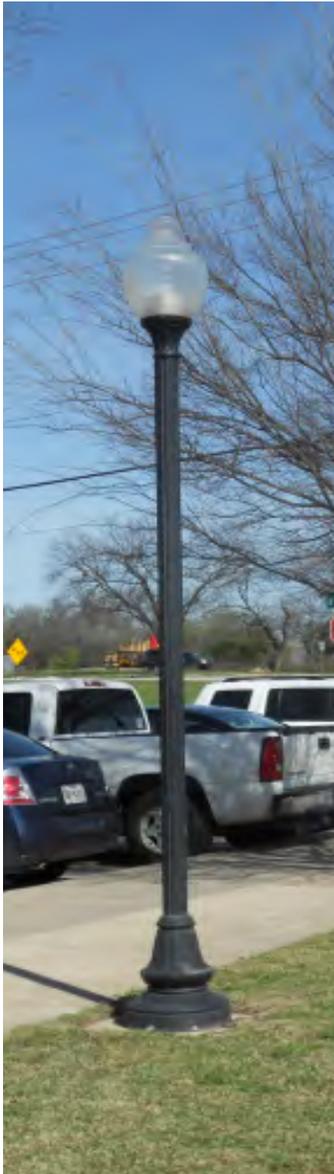


Existing tracks - no fencing



Image depicting fencing adjacent to tracks.

# Public Improvements



## Lighting

Period lighting highlights the historic qualities of Old Town Burleson but again this is limited to the core Old Town area. The existing lights have recently been reconditioned, painted and fitted with new luminaires. New developments in Old Town should match these light as they're readily available. Make sure that luminaires emit a light that is about 3,000 Kelvin which is a more natural appearing light color.

The light poles can accommodate banners to help market the district. This is a great feature and should be expanded if possible when more lights are added.

## Seating

Right now public seating is mainly relegated to the original core area of Old Town. There are a variety of benches being used. Having a more consistent bench will help establish more of a brand identity for Old Town. Babe's Chicken has used old farm tractor seats as a novelty seating. Some of this is fine. In this situation it might be best to declare seating that isn't the standard seat used throughout the district to be "art" and have the Old Town Design Standards Review Committee approve the designs.



# Wayfinding

The term “way-finding” was first used in 1960 by architect Kevin Lynch in *The Image of the City*, where he referred to maps, street numbers, directional signs and other elements as “way-finding” devices. This narrow description may explain the current misunderstanding that way-finding is essentially the same as “signage”. Travelers use way-finding to navigate unfamiliar environments.

Signage is one component but context and experiences along the route are also important. Context and experience are derived from elements of the natural and built environment such as building placement, landscaping and width of roadway. These elements make an impression on the traveler and combine to make a trip memorable—or not. Locals and visitors alike should have an impression of an obvious connection between Old Town and the emerging business district. The design elements of this connection should complement the image of historic Old Town, as well as facilitate travel from one place to another.

An important component of this Master Plan is building on the present way-finding system. An expanded system of signs can help create a cohesive identity or brand for Old Town and maybe even tie into the whole community. Once this is established, the signage palette should be applied in strategic places to serve the needs of the drivers, pedestrians, locals, and visitors. In addition to vehicular and pedestrian signs, entrance signs should be installed at key points in Old Town. Suggested locations are at South Scott Street and East Renfro, Johnson and Renfro and just east of Renfro and Wilshire at Anderson.



Examples of way-finding signage

## Entry Markers

One suggestion has been to develop an archway over Renfro but these can be quite expensive and difficult to maintain. Shown below are some entrance pillars (*Figure 3.20*). Pillars function much like a gateway because the pedestrian or motorist will line up the two and quickly formulate this as an entrance.

Visitors who find themselves in new surroundings need to know where they are in the overall scheme of things. Successful way-finding signs need to be conspicuous or have a high degree of visibility from a great distance and the messages should be quickly read (not too many words) accurate and familiar. The current signs are design to “look old” with a weathered edge. Unfortunately this makes them appear dirty. Next time they need to be upgraded consider a graphic done with a genuine rustic material. This reinforces the concept better. Also reserve the destinations for key anchors such as, Nola Dunn Academy, City Hall, Hill College, Hidden Creek Golf Course, Town Creek trail, etc. Businesses typically are not listed. Most people will formulate their travel plans in relation to major destinations. The majority of users that take note of these signs are first time or infrequent visitors. Note, public parking should probably be on a separate but similar sign so that the way-finding and parking signs feel more like a family of signs.

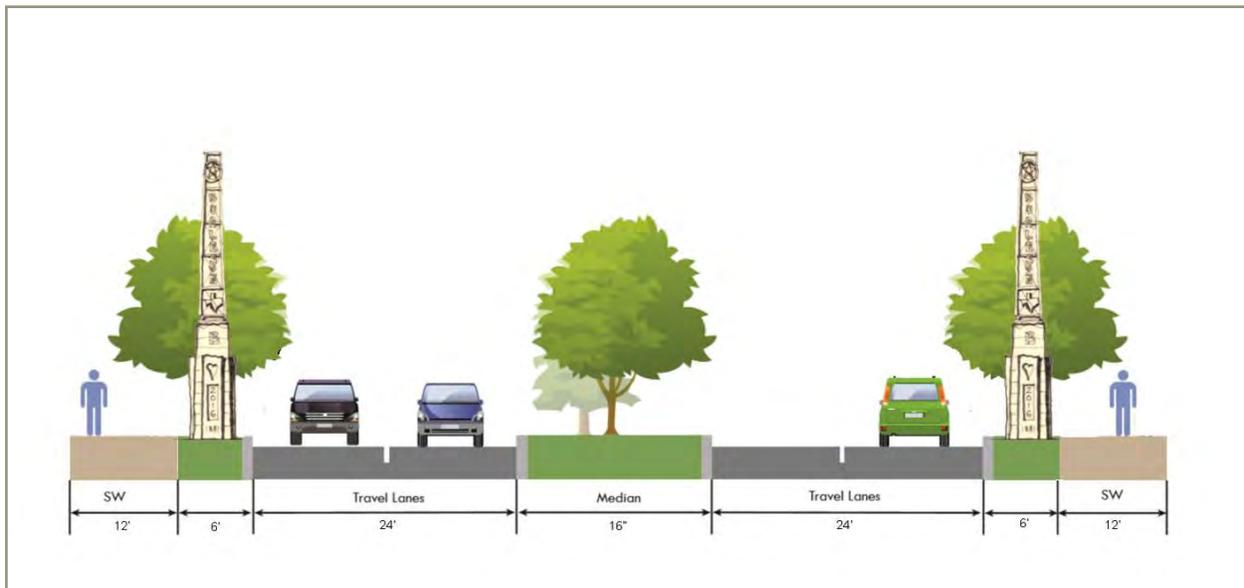


Figure 3.20 - Entry Markers with Street Cross Section

## Dumpsters



With several restaurants downtown, dumpster locations and enclosures are critical to maintaining Old Town's ambiance. Restaurants generate an immense amount of garbage that needs to be dealt with quickly for obvious reasons. Right now the businesses are placing the dumpsters on public Rights of Way (ROW) or in the middle of alleys. This has caused the alleys to be impassible or inaccessible for fire trucks. Having the dumpster on the street takes up prime parking spaces. It's recommended that the dumpsters be placed adjacent to and fronting the alleys and away from the passing public. This allows the sanitation company to remove the garbage in one of two ways.



1. The dumpsters can be rolled into the alley for front pickup by the truck crew. This usually requires the staff to have to get out of the truck.
2. The sanitation company can move to a side truck pickup system.



# Storm Water Management Program



A curbside rain garden to slow water down and filter runoff.



Filtering water in a contained curbside retention area.

## Phase II Stormwater Regulations

The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) is responsible for implementing a comprehensive program to enforce Phase I and Phase II.

### Regulatory Background:

On October 27, 2014, the City of Burleson received authorization of its Texas Pollutant Discharge Elimination System General Permit from the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality. The general permit requires the City of Burleson, a Phase II Small MS4 (municipal separate storm sewer system), to implement a Storm Water Management Program (SWMP) within the 5 year general permit term. The City of Burleson's SWMP includes best management practices developed for each of the following 5 minimum control measures:

- Public education, outreach, and involvement on storm water impacts
- Illicit discharge detection and elimination
- Construction site storm water runoff control
- Post-construction storm water management in new development and redevelopment
- Pollution prevention / good housekeeping for municipal operations

As part of the City of Burleson's phase for permit, there are several filtration projects that can be used to comply with the federal mandates associated with Phase II.

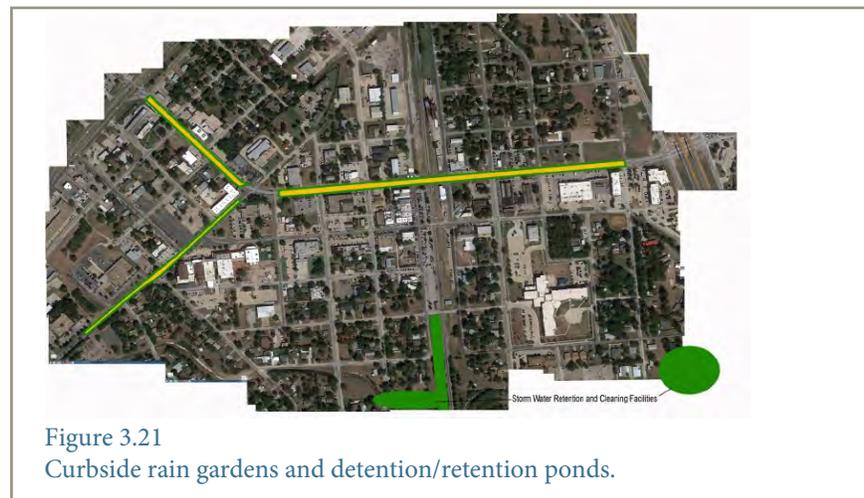


Figure 3.21  
Curbside rain gardens and detention/retention ponds.

## Water Detention, Retention and Filtration

Numerous studies have documented that storm water runoff from developed areas contributes significant amounts of pollution to lakes and streams. The increase in impervious surfaces such as rooftops, roads, and parking lots can increase urban runoff and have a detrimental impact on aquatic ecosystems due to increased concentrations of sediment, nutrients, pesticides, road salts, heavy metals, pathogenic bacteria, and petroleum hydrocarbons. The best way to reduce the negative effects of storm water from new development is to use BMPs (Best Management Practices) to treat, store, and infiltrate runoff onsite before it can affect downstream water bodies. Innovative site designs that reduce impervious area and low impact development practices may be used to reduce storm water runoff and improve water quality.

### Rain Gardens

Rain gardens use the chemical, biological, and physical properties of soils, plants, and microbes to remove pollutants from storm water. These happen more closely at the point of origination such as along or in parking lots or along the curbs of roadways.

The pollutants are removed through four processes:

- Settling
- Chemical reactions in the soil
- Plant uptake
- Biological degradation in root zones

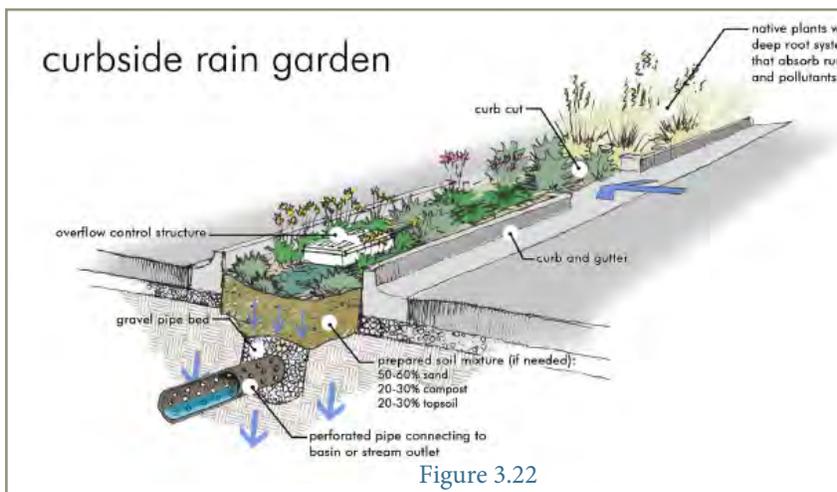


Figure 3.22





A typical rain garden that captures water.

When runoff enters a rain garden, the water slows down because of the physical depression of the garden and the vegetation in it. The soil and debris that are then deposited cause settling. The vegetation also traps some of the pollutants attached to the sediment in a process known as filtration. Because sediments tend to settle on top of the rain garden and clog it, the garden must be maintained regularly to help remove sediments efficiently.

## Chemical Reactions in the Soil

The soil in rain gardens interacts with pollutants via two main processes: adsorption and volatilization.

- Adsorption occurs when the pollutants stick to soil particles.
- Volatilization occurs when the pollutants evaporate.

## Plant Uptake

Plants take up nutrients through their roots and use the nutrients for growth and other processes. When the plants die, those nutrients may be released back into the rain garden. To prevent this release, dead plants need to be removed regularly.

## Biological Degradation in Root Zones

Microbes in the soil break down organic and inorganic compounds, including oil and grease, and help eliminate disease-causing microorganisms, or pathogens.

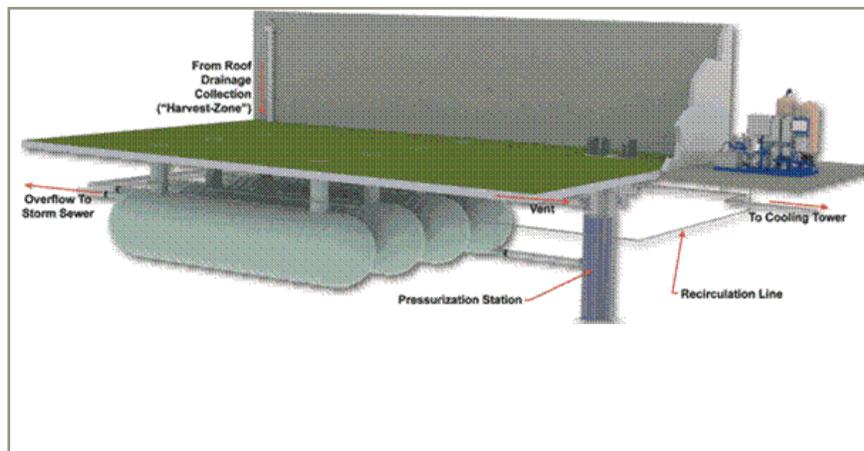


Figure 3.23  
Underground storage retention, located below a plaza.

## Water Retention Facilities

### City Plaza

When the plaza in front of City Hall is developed, there could be the opportunity to include underground storage tanks for a rain water collection system. Installing the system here might allow other development in the area to help meet these new standards. The water could be used for landscape watering or as a means of slowing discharge into Town Creek. Figure 3.23 on the previous page illustrates a retention facility constructed below an open space area, such as a plaza.

### Main Street

Ponds could be constructed at bottom of Main Street, Wilson and Dobson before water enters Town Creek. This would allow the water to be collected and filtered before entering the creek system. There are various types of ponds that could be constructed, both wet and dry ponds. The best approach was not considered in this plan but there appears to be an adequate amount of space at this location for these types of facilities. A civil and environmental engineer needs to examine this in greater detail.

## Retention Ponds vs. Detention Ponds

Two different kinds of ponds are often used for flood control and storm water runoff treatment: wet ponds and dry ponds. Both systems function to settle suspended sediments and other solids typically present in storm water runoff. Wet ponds are also called retention ponds and they hold back water similar to water behind a dam. The retention pond has a permanent pool of water that fluctuates in response to precipitation and runoff from the contributing areas. Maintaining a pool discourages re-suspension and keeps deposited sediments at the bottom of the holding area.

Detention ponds are more common in the arid west and serve as important flood control features. They are usually dry except during or after rain or snow melt. Their purpose is to slow down water flow and hold it for a short period of time such as 24 hours. Urban areas rely on these structures to reduce peak runoff rates associated with storms, decreasing flood damage.

Although detention ponds can vary in size and shape, they all function to settle storm water particles and reduce peak flows. All of the ponds are designed to be separate from local groundwater supplies to prevent movement of dissolved pollutants in surface water to groundwater sources.

Potential Funding Sources: Small Cities CDBG.; Safe Routes to School

## Urban Design Standards

The Old Town Design Standards have been established to help guide Old Town's development and redevelopment. These design standards are found in Appendix C, Article IV, Division 3, Burleson Code of Ordinances. Based on the community workshops, the Old Town plan offers some additional thoughts on how the stakeholder's vision can be achieved using these standards. The standards should allow the area to develop new buildings that are integrated with the adjacent development while retaining the ambiance and elements that have given Old Town its broad appeal. The Old Town Plan is recommending more formed based development standards as well as lot layouts and setbacks to achieve a building envelope that is more compatible with downtown's established pattern.

### Front Lot Line Coverage

Front lot line should have 100% front lot line coverage because the display window needs to be along the edge of the sidewalk and it needs to be continuous. Requiring this type of development is critical because contiguous store fronts lining the street produce more impulses for the pedestrian to keep walking and exploring. This is important because typical pedestrians will only walk about seventy feet in an unstimulating environment before they lose interest. The current code requires a minimum of 80% front lot line coverage. The Old Town Plan Process is recommending 100% coverage so that a more compact environment is achieved.

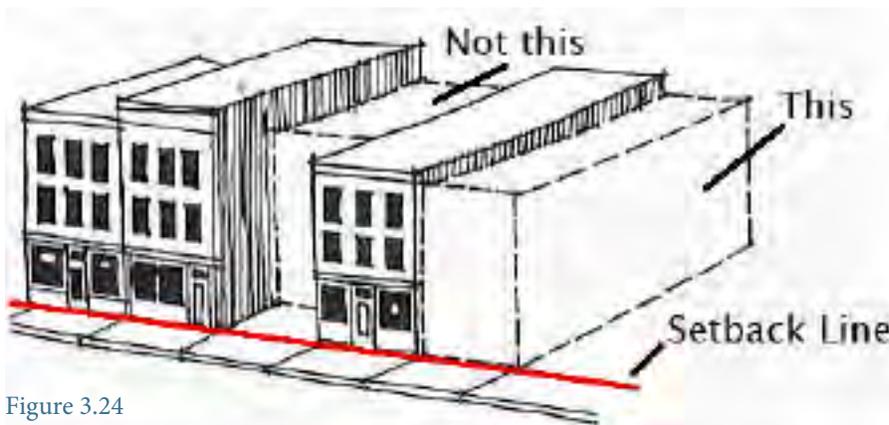


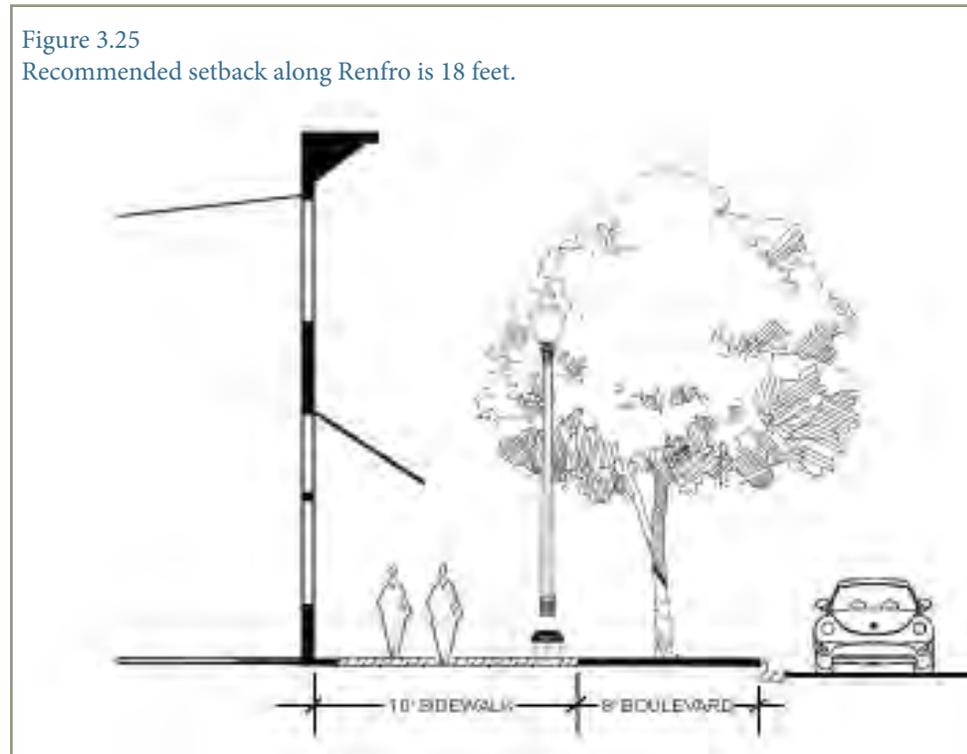
Figure 3.24  
Appropriate building setbacks

Drive-through businesses should be discouraged or prohibited in the primary shopping district because they lessen the incentives for the pedestrians to keep walking. Parking and drive-throughs should be limited to alley access only.

The current setback distance between the front property line and the primary front plane of the building are a minimum of two feet and maximum 15 feet. The Old Town Plan encourages a maximum of 5' setback for smaller width building (less than 50') and a maximum of 15' for buildings over 50' for no more than 20' of one center portion of the building for an entrance foyer. This should provide a more enticing retail environment. Under no circumstances should corner buildings be recessed from an intersection.

It's important for these structures to act as “bookends” to frame the street wall. Applying this to Old Town means that as new development occurs (conversion of parking lots, vacant lots, car lots, old gas stations or redevelopment ), it should be built up to the street corner.

Entrances or foyers should directly abut the sidewalk. Buildings may have recessed entrances but the facade should be a zero lot set back on the primary shopping streets mentioned above. Each storefront should have its own entrance that remains unlocked during business hours (as opposed to a back or side door). Storefronts can be accessed from interior spaces but this is discouraged.



### Storefront windows

The current code stipulates between grade and the heads of first floor windows on the type A façades, the total glass area including window frames must be a minimum of 40 percent of the area, and a maximum of 80 percent of the area. The Old Town Plan recommends the first floor storefront should be about 80% glass from about 2 feet above grade to about 10 feet above grade to encourage the time-honored tradition of window shopping. This helps increase the feeling of security on the street and it allows the street to project a safer image after hours. The current light transmission factors should be left as is for the first floor. If sun is a problem for retailers, then try to solve this with canopies or awnings.

The current design standards should also specify minimum display window and transom window heights and a minimum first floor ceiling height.

## Storefront windows , cont'd.

These standards should apply to commercial buildings located within Old Town. Public buildings such as, libraries, post offices and schools would be exempt from this standard. At the same time sound commercial planning practices should place these aforementioned uses tangent to the central business district and not in the middle of a retail street so that they can feed customers to the commercial street.

Figure 3.26

Depiction of first floor glazing for commercial buildings.



## Standard Sidewalk Width

Article IV, Division 3, Section 4.61 of the Old Town Design Standard requires that the sidewalk and parkway, that part of the pedestrian section of the public ROW that supports plantings, green-space and open-space, together must be at least ten feet wide with the sidewalk separated from the curb by the parkway. This can be a combination of sidewalk (minimum of 5') and green space, maximum of five (5) feet.

The Old Town Plan is suggesting that these guidelines remain in place for areas outside of the primary shopping district of Main Street, Wilson and Warren a block north of Renfro and a block South of Ellison and from the Union Pacific Railroad Tracks to Johnson. Inside this area the plan suggests a more urbanized core Old Town area to support a more pedestrian oriented district. Street furniture, street lights, benches, trash receptacles and drinking fountains should typically be located in the parkway section in the core area and less greenery. Thus the recommendation to have a more urban standard for the core Old Town area. Street trees would be encouraged. These boundaries can move further out in the Old Town Overlay as newer, more dense development occurs.

# Economic Strategy for Old Town

The traditional way of retailing products is changing and changing fast due to technology. This is going to make it more and more difficult for traditional retailers to compete unless they add value to their products or services to differentiate themselves. Old Town is already well positioned in some ways to combat this. Restaurants and microbreweries are a form of retailing that adds “value” to a product. Second, restaurants depend on atmosphere or “theater” to help sell their products. Theater and value added retailing will be more of what’s to come in the future of retailing. Keeping these two things in mind, it’s important for downtown to work on the built environment’s physical appearance, connectivity and walkability, and building an atmosphere where entrepreneurs want to invest. Today people can choose to be in business, live, or be educated anywhere. This is why having a physical environment and support network to help one achieve their goals is critical to attracting and retaining this populace. In short we see Old Town’s expanded future role as the place for creative people that think, design, innovate and ultimately produce. The production part is where the ultimate economic development starts to happen.

## Management of the Commercial Area

The growth and development of a commercial district is increasingly complex in this day of instantaneous shopping center and lifestyle center developments. The development community can construct a brand new, shiny commercial product in a very short time via pension funds, real estate trusts and other financial tools. But having an original, organically grown, locally grown commercial district says a lot about a community. Old Town must continue to be the social living room of the community. This is an invaluable, sought after, community and economic development trait. The importance of this is that a successful, vibrant downtown can be one of the best calling cards to further a community’s overall economic development efforts.

It’s recommended that Burlson consider further involvement and a more active role for the Old Town Business Alliance (OTBA), a community based non-profit, to work with city staff to help market the resources of the district, to help recruit businesses that fill out the business mix, to act as a broker for business development, provide training services and financial assistance, to help property owners with façade improvements and help the city coordinate public improvements.

This could be done in concert with a board of directors of downtown business and property owners and city liaisons to oversee implementation and coordination of this plan. Funds for this can come from a variety of sources such as Public Improvement Districts or Business Improvement Districts. Burlson can do this on their own or they can tap into the wisdom, experiences and knowledge via the Main Street Program.

## Main Street Program

One successful model for managing a commercial district is the Main Street Approach™. In Texas the agency that implements the program is the Texas Main Street Program in the Texas Historical Commission.



The Main Street Four-Point Approach® is a community-driven, comprehensive strategy that encourages economic development through historic preservation in ways that are appropriate for today's marketplace. The four points include:



**Organization:** Creating partnerships between stakeholders to further cooperation and consensus in downtown revitalization efforts. The Main Street programs get everyone working toward the same goal. Partnerships can create effective leadership and advocacy for OldTown revitalization efforts.



**Promotion:** Marketing a downtown's unique characteristics to residents, visitors, investors and business owners. The Main Street program develops a positive, promotional strategy through advertising, retail activities, special events and marketing campaigns to encourage commercial activity and investment in the area



**Design:** Enhancing the downtown's physical environment by capitalizing on its best assets including historic buildings, and creating an inviting atmosphere through attractive window displays, parking areas, public improvements, enhancing the physical appearance of the district by rehabilitating historic buildings, encouraging appropriate new construction, developing design management systems and integrating long-term planning.

**Economic Restructuring:** Strengthening a community's existing economic base while also expanding and diversifying it. By helping existing businesses expand and recruiting new businesses to respond to today's market, the Main Street program helps convert unused space into productive properties and sharpens the competitiveness of business enterprises.

## Hill College / Texas Wesleyan

The idea of an expanded Hill College/Texas Wesleyan is critical to the implementation of this plan and it's rare for a downtown to have a college located in it. Hill College is committed to growing in Burlson which will bring more students, instructors and visitors to the core Old Town area. Right now a new main instructional building is being considered within Old Town. This could merely be the beginning of the College's presence if the community embraces Hill College and helps to cultivate a public sector support network for growing the College. Long term the College's presence can generate investments in the community by students opening businesses. This is why it's important for the overall downtown to begin to position itself as an incubator without walls. In the near future, an expanded student base will be likely to attract the following business services:

- Telecommunication equipment
- Technology support
- Food service
- Entertainment
- Recreation
- Book and media retail outlets
- Graphics and printing support
- Housing

Hill College, like many community colleges is more of a commuter college but still students will spend money at nearby businesses if they are well run and offer competitive prices. King College in PA just released its impact statement and determined that each student spent approximately \$650 per month in off campus purchases.

One of the key by-products of having Hill College in downtown is that it affords business access to student workers. This segment of the work force tend to be more reliable and flexible in their schedules. Additionally, Old Town can possibly become the real life laboratory for some of the course work that students are undertaking, such as food service, business, hospitality, recreation, technology, automotive, child daycare, nursing etc. Recent discussions with BISD also indicated a strong comittment to supporting a work-like laboratory scenario through it's career counseling programs. It's important to note that not all the topics will be taught at this campus and, as Hill College's course offerings develop, it will represent an economic opportunity for downtown thus, the need to have an active management component dedicated to Old Town for economic development is multiplied.



# Housing



The economic impact of housing is one of the largest imaginable for Old Town. An increase in housing will help increase ad valorem tax base, will increase retail sales tax with expanded purchases by new residents and will generate more local sales due to the multiplier effect of materials and services purchased by the development. There are several types of housing that can be constructed in Old Town but there are two types of housing that the Old Town Plan is encouraging that help the entrepreneur get a foothold.

## Live Work Housing Project

The first is a live-work product designed for entrepreneurs where occupants can live upstairs and have a storefront presence on the first floor. This type of product is conducive to service providers and some cottage industries such as:

- Instructional class room (yoga, music, dance, art, etc).
- Business services such as accounting and insurance.
- Cottage industries for low impact manufacturing (for example, anything made out of cloth or covered in cloth or food manufacturing-baking).
- Artists.
- Medical such as dentistry, chiropractor, etc.

## Live Work / Light Clean Manufacturing

This housing product is more for the manufacturing processes and more intensive than the live-work product discussed earlier. This product involves more noise, possible dust, higher sound levels, painting, limited amounts of heat, etc. This type of housing is intended for the artist-fabricator that is working on larger pieces and their processes would not be conducive to the central business district. The housing above the space would be limited to the occupant of the first floor manufacturing space and would be one bedroom studios.

The Old Town Plan is encouraging this type of product for the industrial area in the northern part of the study area. The advantage to this type of space is that it's difficult for individuals to find a space that that can be a manufacturing-retail space and afford it due to their lack of credit but if this is attached to a housing unit it's easier to finance. Again, the idea here is that Hill College's presence can bring more entrepreneurs and having the right amenities will help to attract them. A more in depth market study should be undertaken to determine the demand for such a space prior to construction. (The Habitat Newburgh, NY affiliate is researching this topic right now.)

## Convertible Housing Tool To Make Live Work Possible

A way to make live-work possible is to develop a convertible product that allows first floor residential to be easily converted to retail when needed. This way the unit is treated as a personal residence and is much easier to finance.

Building spaces that small, independent retailers can occupy in a vertical mixed use building has its challenges. Some of these are:

- Lenders aren't used to seeing this type of product and are thus reluctant to lend;
- Vertical mixed use with housing on top of retail is more difficult and expensive to develop than either space alone due to taller first floor ceiling heights and life safety building codes;
- Larger, established credit retailers are reluctant to open stores in places without a critical mass of other stores and shoppers;
- Developers don't want to hold and lease spaces that are peripheral to their principal development business;
- Trying to accommodate parking for both public and housing tenants can be difficult; and
- Constructing all residential units on the first floor won't build foot traffic for other retailers.

Convertible housing is a way to solve this. This means that developed spaces are sold as residential and can convert to retail as the market demand becomes more solidified. This allows the developer and the ultimate owner to meet less stringent lending requirements than if the project was simply a commercial space or a first floor commercial storefront as a part of a vertical mixed use building. This also allows the owner and future business owner to test the market when the time is right. If not, the housing can convert back to residential thus reducing foreclosed properties. The Old Town Plan sees this as a product that is best suited for Ellison, east of the tracks. The Oaks 5th Street Crossing in Garland and the Union in Carrollton have both implemented these types of products.

Combining this housing type with the traditional and historic 30 foot lot widths in older downtown areas takes us back to a successful, valuable and proven development pattern. Additionally, by requiring multiple story development, we immediately meet the need for flex space that attracts the types of business owners and residents you would expect for Old Town.





## Retail

### Restaurant / Entertainment

This has long been the corner stone of Old Town Burleson's business mix. It's rare for a small downtown to have the types of restaurants that Old Town has (regional chains mixed with local businesses).

This mix serves to bring people from a much larger geographic trade area. The actual amount of this draw is not known at this point and a market study to determine this catchment area should be undertaken as one of the first steps. Additionally the participants should be asked about what they do before and after they arrive in Old Town and what they would like to do and what other restaurants and entertainment they would like to see in Old Town. In terms of restaurant expansion, look to different menus, price points and formats that build off of the present mix of restaurants. This allows the customer market to expand and not compete directly with existing businesses.

The most logical expansion of this category is in clothing and household accessories but this will require a greater number of storefronts to be constructed and therein lies the challenge. Most small businesses would not be considered credit tenants by a lending institution and can't afford the rents associated with new development, especially in a 2-3 story mixed use development. The subsidized rents, low interest loans or start-up grants, for instance, may be realistic options. More so, the development of small, reasonably priced spaces, based on a traditional development pattern, will provide the much needed pedestrian based storefronts.

## Boutiques and Destination Retailing

Burleson has numerous traditional clothing retailers but these are scattered around Old Town and almost all of them are functioning as a destination businesses. This type of retailing fares much better with other fashion-clothing stores clustered in the same area. When people shop for clothing they usually like to shop more than one store. Thus one of the basic strategies should be to try to gather these boutique clothing stores into one area, no more than 70' apart. This will develop a greater synergy amongst the businesses thus increasing sales even more. Also part of this business mix could be shoe stores, jewelry and accessories, wedding gowns and personal services such as hair, nail and spa treatments. Having these adjacent to or close to Main Street would be advantageous so that dining at one of the restaurants could also be part of the draw.

There are a couple of areas where this would be well suited. The old lumber yard on the south side of Babe's is one site. This could be done as a part of new parking structure or mixed use development that has commercial storefronts lining the site so you don't see the parking. This will link the new development at the corner of West Bufford and Main Street to the rest of Old Town. The parking in this area is heavily sought after which should help generate continuous foot traffic for the stores. The other location that could be good is the first floor of a new building that faces onto an expanded plaza. The city's involvement in these developments could make it possible for small entrepreneurs to locate in these new developments.



# Historic Preservation Strategy for Old Town

The heritage of Burleson is centered in Old Town. The community input during the Old Town Plan update process reflected a strong interest in historic preservation. Although this same interest was identified in the original Old Town Plan, significant steps were not taken to protect the historic structures of Burleson in the intervening years. The result has been a loss of significant structures, community conflict and inappropriate alterations to historic structures. As the district becomes more and more popular, as both a retail and housing destination, the development pressures will increase significantly. Conflict may arise between developers acquiring property and the community trying to save older structures. A robust historic preservation plan can help set goals and clarify process. This will assist City Council in their decision making process, assist developers in knowing the community's expectations, and allow citizens to have a voice in historic preservation issues.

Following is a list of action steps and strategies for implementing a historic preservation program in Old Town:

## Create a Strategic Historic Preservation Plan

The purpose of a Strategic Historic Preservation Plan is to create a long-term vision and a set of practical and achievable strategies for creating the City's historic preservation program while building a more broad-based historic preservation ethic within the Burleson community.

The plan would include recommendations in: planning, zoning, economic development, historic resources, incentives and education/advocacy. The Strategic Preservation Plan can provide concrete strategies to create a preservation program and capitalize on Burleson's unique historic resources that have a proven positive impact on economic development, heritage tourism, and quality of life.

While the following historic preservation strategies were developed from conversations with citizens during the Plan Update process, they are not a true Historic Preservation Plan. A preservation plan is a much more thorough process with greater community involvement and buy-in.

## Create a Local Historic Survey

One of the first steps is to conduct an architectural and historic survey of Old Town to document and record those structures and sites of historic importance to Burleson. A standard approach is to use the Secretary of Interior's criteria for National Register Districts to determine the integrity of structures and districts. These are quite rigorous standards and we believe that the results would not align with the sentiments of Burleson.

As a brief observation, it is our opinion that many of the vernacular, simple houses and commercial buildings would qualify and that the buildings considered “historic” by the community would not qualify because of significant alterations to the original structure. This would cause considerable consternation. We believe this issue of criteria, could best be addressed at the local level during the Strategic Historic Preservation Plan Process.

## Establish an Enabling ordinance for Creating Local Landmarks and Historic Districts

It’s important to establish a local enabling ordinance to allow for landmark designation of property once an acceptable survey has been complete. The enabling ordinance establishes the ability for the City to create landmarks or historic districts according to state law. The process would enable an overlay zoning designation to be enacted.

## Create a Historic Preservation Ordinance

A Historic Preservation Ordinance may be adopted once the enabling ordinance is created. This ordinance would set out the specific criteria for designation, who can designate and the process for designation. Much of this will have been considered in the Historic Preservation Plan. It may be determined, for instance, that the owner has to approve the designation. On the other hand it may allow designation without owner consent. There are many other aspects a Historic Preservation Ordinance may address. Some of the ideas listed below could be made a part of the Ordinance.

## Establish a Set of Design Guidelines for Renovation of Historic Properties

Historic Preservation design guidelines differ from the guidelines that already exist for Old Town. These new guidelines would serve to protect or repair the historic integrity of a structure or district. They are more specific and much more detailed than the existing Old Town guidelines and deal specifically with designated buildings. These guidelines would generally follow the Secretary of Interiors standards for rehabilitation and restoration. It is possible with good guidelines, that a building could be restored so that it would meet the more rigorous federal and state standards for integrity. Perhaps one day being able to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

## Create a Historic Landmark Commission to Review Changes to Landmarks

Establish a Landmark Commission once Design Guidelines are created. This may not need to be a new commission but could be done by the Old Town Design Standards Review Committee, with some education and modifications of membership to reflect a more historic preservation based committee. There may be an issue with trying to combine the commissions as there will be inevitable conflicts between new development and preservation. A well managed commission with members who are willing to work together to resolve conflicts would be ideal. The Historic Preservation Plan should address this potential conflict and based on community input make a recommendation as to the structure of a Landmark Commission.

## Create a Demolition Delay Ordinance

Another tool that would be useful to Old Town Burleson is the Demolition Delay Ordinance. This ordinance creates a “cooling off” period if there is a conflict with development and the demolition of a significant structure. This time allows preservationist and the developer to come up with a viable alternative plan. Can the building be incorporated into the new development? Can the building be moved? Can someone else purchase the property? A six month delay creates the space and time to look for alternatives before resorting to demolition. If resolution is reached quickly the project can move forward without delay.

## Create Tax Incentives for Historic Renovations and Restorations

A positive way to encourage preservation and restoration is to offer local tax incentives. Traditionally this is given for restoration projects that meet the design criteria and invest a significant amount into the project. It is traditional that the amount invested must be at least half of the appraised value – minus the land cost. The “significant amount” varies from 30%-50% in Texas towns. Sometimes the ordinance is more flexible and just says a “significant” amount, leaving the exact percentage as an administrative decision. The incentives can vary, but are often a 10 year abatement of local property taxes. Sometimes the incentive is to freeze property values at the pre-improved rate for 10 years and sometimes it is a combination such as during the first five years there are no city property taxes, and during the next five years the owner pays 50% of the improved value of property taxes. This incentive has been shown in numerous studies in Texas to be a great investment for cities, as the City re-coups the abated taxes within 4-5 years because of the improved property values.

# Section 4 - Implementation & Strategy



## Implementation

### Plan Action Steps

The following section lists recommended action items by topic. These topics are presented as they are found in the plan and are listed by major areas so all the related action steps can be grouped together. The topics are listed as sequential steps.

# Plan Action Steps

## Urban Design Strategy

### Commercial Land

Action Step	Slightly increase height along Renfro to Three to Four Stories
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### Residential Land

Action Step	Conceal parking for new residential development, no front entry garages
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Action Step	Establish building standards for first floor residential so it can be converted to retail and commercial
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Action Step	Ellison should be transition in height (3 stories) between Renfro to the north and the neighborhoods to the south
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Action Step	Develop a live/work zoning product
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Action Step	Encourage tree canopy replacement especially in “The Pecan Grove” neighborhood.
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Action Step	Designate the neighborhood N.E. of Renfro and the Union Pacific tracks as a local historic district
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Action Step	Retain large lot layout in the N.E. neighborhood with only one house per lot
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Action Step	Retain historic streetscape of N.E. neighborhood
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Action Step	Designate N.E. neighborhood as the location to move other historic structures to if needed.
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Action Step	Conditionally allow lots to be subdivided into small lot developments in Medium Density neighborhoods
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Action Step	Allow medium density attached triplexes and quadplexes as long as they appear as one house
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## Locating Hill College

Action Step	Finalize location for new Hill College Education building adjacent to plaza. Start Design process.
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## Historic Retail Center

Action Step	Develop and reinforce the railroad's influence in Old Town's physical development by retaining agricultural related buildings in this area and possibly constructing another depot
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## Parking Concepts

Action Step	Develop a parking management plan for on-street parking and parking lots.
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Action Step	Develop a long range plan that allows for the development of parking structures.
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Action Step	Surface parking lot acquisition, expansion and buffering on Warren/Ellison, North Main and Renfro Street.
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## Pedestrian Routes and Street Crossings

Action Step	Install traffic and pedestrian crosswalk lights at Renfro and Main, Renfro and Commerce and Renfro at Scott Street. Identify additional intersections for installation of pedestrian crosswalks.
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Action Step	Add median to Renfro where possible
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Action Step	Add countdown style crosswalk lights at intersections
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Action Step	Brick crosswalks to highlight the pedestrian's area
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Action Step	Construct and upgrade crosswalk ramps
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## Pedestrian Routes and Street Crossings, continued

Action Step	Continue adding curb bulb-outs or curb extensions at intersections
Action Step	Develop an overall streetscape plan to add more street trees when possible, especially along Renfro via rain gardens and a new median
Action Step	Establish minimum width for sidewalks and paving patterns in front of their businesses
Action Step	Lower speed limit on Renfro to 25 MPH from 30 in conjunction with new Median

## Public Improvements

Action Step	Public Plaza - enlarge the present public plaza and establish programming on a daily basis
Action Step	Establish lighting standards for public lighting (bulb type and fixture style)
Action Step	Establish standards for public seating supplied by businesses.
Action Step	Establish a simpler way-finding graphic
Action Step	Establish standards for being listed on way-finding signs
Action Step	Install entry pylons on Renfro at Scott Street, Johnson and Just east of Wilshire.
Action Step	Establish standards for locating, screening and method or emptying business dumpsters
Action Step	Consider a system of storm water management via rain gardens, water retention facilities and wet or dry cleaning ponds.

## Public Improvements

Action Step	Add landscaping and decorative iron fence to along rail corridor
Action Step	Pursue extending Main Street north to Wilshire / I35

## Urban Design Standards

Action Step	Establish a “Build to Line” for certain projects
Action Step	Establish a “Build to Line” of 18’ from the curb line along Renfro.
Action Step	Increase front lot line coverage to 100%
Action Step	Increase the percentage of first floor transparency to 80% from 40%
Action Step	Establish a more urbanized sidewalk cross section (pedestrian amenities) for areas adjacent to the core Old Town Area.
Action Step	Revise IH 35 and Old Town Overlay districts to remove overlap in the district boundaries.

# Economic Strategies

## Management of Commercial Area

Action Step	Establish a public-private nonprofit with staff and to manage Old Town's growth.
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### Hill College

Action Step	Recruit businesses that relate to the core curriculum of Hill College
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Action Step	Work with the College and BISD to provide their students with needed amenities and employment opportunities
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Action Step	Develop clean, light manufacturing space for students and entrepreneurs that might need this type of space, such as a small business development center and business incubator building
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### Housing

Action Step	Develop a convertible housing product (residential to retail) building code exception
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Action Step	Develop a live-work housing product and building code exception
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Action Step	Develop a live-work light manufacturing product, and building code exception
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### Retail

Action Step	Develop a business assistance incubator program
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Action Step	Try to establish (build) a series of storefronts affordable for small boutiques
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Action Step	Work with Hill College to provide culinary classes and restaurant management classes
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Action Step Think of Old Town as a real life classroom for Hill College Students to gain experience

Action Step Recruit other restaurants that expand menu offerings, price points and formats that build off of the 10 regionally recognized restaurants.

## Historic Preservation Strategies

Action Step Create a strategic historic preservation plan

Action Step Conduct a local historic survey

Action Step Establish an enabling ordinance for creating local landmarks and historic districts

Action Step Create a historic preservation ordinance

Action Step Establish a set of design guidelines for renovation of historic residences and commercial buildings

Action Step Create a historic landmark commission to review changes to landmarks

Action Step Create a demolition delay ordinance

Action Step Create tax incentives for historic renovations and restorations