



ROUND ROCK, TEXAS  
PURPOSE. PASSION. PROSPERITY.

# *Southwest Downtown Plan*

City of Round Rock, Texas



This page intentionally left blank.

# *Southwest Downtown Plan*

---

City of Round Rock, Texas

**Adopted February 24, 2005**  
Ordinance No. G-05-02-24-8C1

This page intentionally left blank.

---

# Contents

---

|  |            |
|--|------------|
| <b>Acknowledgements</b>                                  | iii        |
| <b>List of Figures</b>                                   | vii        |
| <b>Executive Summary</b>                                 | 1          |
| <b>Chapter 1: Introduction</b>                           | <b>1-1</b> |
| 1.1 Background   | 1-1        |
| 1.2 Purpose  | 1-3        |
| 1.3 Current Conditions & Land Use                        | 1-3        |
| 1.4 Goals of the Plan                                    | 1-4        |
| <b>Chapter 2: The Planning Process</b>                   | <b>2-1</b> |
| 2.1 Southwest Downtown Survey Results                    | 2-1        |
| 2.2 Summary of Southwest Downtown Plan Public Workshops  | 2-2        |
| <b>Chapter 3: Land Use &amp; Zoning</b>                  | <b>3-1</b> |
| 3.1 The Creation of a Mixed-Use Zoning District          | 3-1        |
| 3.2 Summary of District Design Guidelines Study          | 3-2        |
| 3.3 Zoning   | 3-4        |
| 3.4 New Development                                      | 3-7        |
| 3.5 Compatibility with Existing Single Family Residences | 3-7        |
| 3.6 Land Use & Zoning Recommendations                    | 3-9        |
| <b>Chapter 4: Streets &amp; Circulation</b>              | <b>4-1</b> |
| 4.1 Design of the Streetscape                            | 4-1        |
| 4.2 Traffic & Circulation                                | 4-5        |
| 4.3 Recommendations for Future Changes to Street Layout  | 4-6        |
| 4.4 Streets & Circulation Recommendations                | 4-8        |

---

|  |            |
|--|------------|
| <b>Chapter 5: Parking</b>                                | <b>5-1</b> |
| 5.1 Parking Plan Objectives                              | 5-1        |
| 5.2 Southwest Downtown Plan Area Parking Plan            | 5-2        |
| 5.3 Creating a Shared Parking Agreement                  | 5-6        |
| 5.4 Status of the Parking Plan at Time of Plan Adoption  | 5-7        |
| 5.5 Parking Recommendations                              | 5-8        |
| <br>   |            |
| <b>Chapter 6: Utilities &amp; Drainage</b>               | <b>6-1</b> |
| 6.1 Utility Upgrades in the Southwest Downtown Plan Area | 6-1        |
| 6.2 Stormwater Management & Water Quality                | 6-5        |
| 6.3 Overall Plan for Utilities & Drainage                | 6-5        |
| 6.4 Utilities & Drainage Recommendations                 | 6-8        |
| <br>   |            |
| <b>Chapter 7: Civic Design</b>                           | <b>7-1</b> |
| 7.1 Tree Preservation                                    | 7-1        |
| 7.2 Public Parkland & Plazas                             | 7-3        |
| 7.3 The Streetscape as Public Space                      | 7-5        |
| 7.4 Civic Design Recommendations                         | 7-7        |
| <br>   |            |
| <b>Chapter 8: Design Recommendations</b>                 | <b>8-1</b> |
| 8.1 Providing a Mixture of Uses                          | 8-2        |
| 8.2 Building Height, Setbacks, Buffering & Compatibility | 8-4        |
| 8.3 Lighting, Landscaping & Sign Design Elements         | 8-6        |
| 8.4 Development of a Pedestrian-Friendly Neighborhood    | 8-8        |
| 8.5 Development that Meets Proposed Standards of Design  | 8-9        |
| 8.6 Design Recommendations Summary                       | 8-12       |
| <br>   |            |
| <b>Chapter 9: Conclusion</b>                             | <b>9-1</b> |
| 9.1 Summary of Southwest Downtown Plan Recommendations   | 9-1        |
| 9.2 Implementation                                       | 9-8        |
| <br>   |            |
| <b>Appendices:</b>                                       |            |
| Appendix A: Land Use Analysis                            | A-1        |
| Appendix B: Survey Results                               | B-1        |
| Appendix C: Public Workshops                             | C-1        |
| Appendix D: Ordinance Summary                            | D-1        |
| Appendix E: Adopting Ordinance                           | E-1        |

# *Acknowledgements*

---

## **Acknowledgements**

The Planning and Community Development Department would like to thank public workshop participants, presenters and other City Staff who contributed to the public outreach and planning process for the Southwest Downtown Plan.

### **Round Rock City Council**

Nyle Maxwell, Mayor  
Alan McGraw, Mayor Pro-Tem  
Gary Coe  
Scot Knight  
Tom Nielson  
Scott Rhode

### **Planning & Zoning Commission**

Al Kosik, Chairman  
Peter Drapes, Secretary  
Sandy Arnold  
Dale Austin  
Russ Boles  
David Pavliska  
Larry Quick  
Ray Thibodaux  
Betty Weeks

### **Historic Preservation Commission**

Earl Palmer, Chairman  
Gary Brown, Vice-Chairman  
Bob Brinkman  
Ellen Macaulay  
Lynn Smith  
David Conrad, Alternate

**Planning & Community Development Department**

Joseph L. Vining, AICP, Executive Director of Community Development - *Project Director*  
Jim Stendebach, AICP, Planning Director – *Project Director*  
Susan Brennan, AICP, Principal Planner – *Project Advisor*  
Joelle Labrosse, AICP, Senior Planner – *Project Coordinator*  
Kerstin Harding, Planner Technician – *Project Production & Support*  
Nicole Crutchfield, AICP, ASLA, Senior Planner – *Project Consultant*  
Taylor Horton, Planner – *Project Consultant*  
Shannon Burke, Senior Planner  
Bernadette Hayes, Senior Planner  
Chris Collier, GIS Coordinator  
Randy Hitt, GIS Analyst  
Laura McGinty, GIS Analyst  
Kim Jones, GIS Technician  
Vickie Moreno, Office Manager  
Kathy Miller, Administrative Assistant  
Armida McClure, Planner Technician  
Dianna Hutchens, Administrative Technician

**City Staff – Project Contributors**

James R. Nuse, P.E., City Manager  
Thomas E. Word, Jr., P.E., Chief of Public Works Operations, Public Works Administration  
Tom Martin, P.E., Director of Transportation Services, Transportation Services  
Larry Madsen, Building Construction & Facility Maintenance Manager  
Danny Halden, P.E., City Engineer, Engineering & Development Services  
Michael Thane, P.E., Engineering Manager, Engineering & Development Services  
Gary Wilson, Project Manager, Building Construction & Facility Maintenance  
Brian Baird, P.E., Engineer, Engineering & Development Services  
Sharon Prete, Director, Parks & Recreation Department  
Emsud Horozovic, Forestry Manager, Parks & Recreation Department  
M. James Hemenes, RLA, ASLA, Parks Development Manager, Parks & Recreation Dept.  
Melissa Tyree, Park Development Specialist, Parks & Recreation Department

**Public Workshop Presenters**

Donna Carter, Carter Design Associates  
Matt Strickland, Carter Design Associates  
Charles Heimsath, Capitol Market Research  
Bill Huggins, Huggins Seiler & Associates  
Jim Alvis, PageSoutherlandPage  
Denny Krumm, PageSoutherlandPage  
Sylvan Schurwanz, PageSoutherlandPage  
Judd Willmann, PageSoutherlandPage

**Workshop Participants**

Keith R. Acheson, Gloria Arroyo-Richardson, G. D. Atkinson, Charles Avery, Monica Benoit Beatty, Cathy Carter, Mary Clark, Joe Clifford, Dale & Jan Cohrs, David Conrad, Lee Cook, Frank Correa, Adam Day, Brad & Martha Ellis, Jack & Betty Emert, Susan Erickson, Terry Erickson, Steven Faulkner, Peggie Fink, Carlos Franco, Jesse & Irene Franco, Gary Gaydos, Lee Gaydos, Ray Gill, Bill Glendenning, William Glendenning, Courtney Grant, Sandra Guthrie, Don & Betty Hester, Keith Hoaglund, Mistie Householter, Kyle R. Humphries, Charles Johnson, Dain Johnson, Faye Johnson, Travis Johnson, Jan Kelley, Ruth E. Koughan, Kelly & Steve Kresser, Kanda Kropp, Carol & Keith Kussmall, John W. Ledbetter Sr., Jason Lo, Ronald & Janette Madsen, Jennifer Marciniak, Johnette McNair, Mark McNair, Richard Mercer, Donna Moench, John S. Moman, Brenda Montgomery, Robert Moore, George Murray, Allison Nagle, Carla & Nelson Nagle, Ray Overstreet, Mike Parker, Bill & Sissy Peckham, William Peckham, Mary Pelton, Eva Peña, Evelyn & Jim Peters, Carrie Pitt, Erica Roberts, O'Barr Rost, Debra R. Spellings, Bo Spencer, Ellen M. Stevens, Don Strop, Scott Swindell, Michael Taylor, Mary Jane Todd, Marge Tripp, Kathleen F. Vest, Roger Vest, Camille Weeler, Eric & Kris Whitfield, Ed Wilder, Kenneth Moench.



---

# List of Figures

---

## Chapter 1: Introduction

- 1.1 Aerial photograph with boundaries of the Southwest Downtown Plan Area.  
*Illustration: Kerstin Harding.*
- 1.2 Municipal Office Complex site diagram. *Illustration: Kerstin Harding.*
- 1.3 Preliminary rendering of the new Senior Activity Center. *Rendering: Spencer Godfrey Architects.*
- 1.4 Municipal Office Complex (aerial view from over Brown Street looking south).  
*Rendering: PageSoutherlandPage.*
- 1.5 Southwest portion of the original 1876 downtown plat. *Map: City of Round Rock.*
- 1.6 The 100 block of West Main Street. *Photo: Kerstin Harding.*
- 1.7 Top: 309 West Liberty Avenue. *Photo: Kerstin Harding.*  
Bottom: 304 West Main Street. *Photo: Kerstin Harding.*
- 1.8 San Saba at Main Street. *Photo: Kerstin Harding.*

## Chapter 2: The Planning Process

- 2.1 Survey respondent characteristics.
- 2.2 Southwest Downtown Survey issues to be addressed in the planning process.
- 2.3 Presenters discuss street and sidewalk improvements at the July 13, 2004 meeting.  
*Photo: Kerstin Harding.*

## Chapter 3: Land Use & Zoning

- 3.1 Top: San Saba Street by Wells Fargo. *Photo: Kerstin Harding.*  
Middle: Main Street at Round Rock Avenue. *Photo: Kerstin Harding.*  
Bottom: San Saba at West Liberty Avenue. *Photo: Kerstin Harding.*
- 3.2 Top: 106 San Saba Street. *Photo: Kerstin Harding.*  
Upper middle: 208 South Blair Street. *Photo: Kerstin Harding.*  
Lower middle: 106 West Bagdad Avenue. *Photo: Kerstin Harding.*  
Bottom: 302 West Main Street. *Photo: Kerstin Harding.*
- 3.3 Current Zoning Map. *Illustration: Kerstin Harding.*
- 3.4 Proposed Zoning Map. *Illustration: Kerstin Harding.*
- 3.5 These land uses were identified as most desirable for the Plan Area in a public neighborhood workshop.
- 3.6 General Commercial (C-1) and Mixed-Use (MU-1) Zoning Districts.

## Chapter 4: Streets & Circulation

- 4.1 Liberty Avenue at San Saba Street. *Photo: Kerstin Harding.*
- 4.2 Southwest Downtown Street Improvement Plan. *Illustration: PageSoutherlandPage.*
- 4.3 Proposed Main Street section. *Illustration: PageSoutherlandPage.*
- 4.4 Proposed Brown Street section. *Illustration: PageSoutherlandPage.*
- 4.5 Proposed section, all other Southwest Downtown Plan Area streets (Liberty, Bagdad, Florence, Blair, Harris, San Saba). *Illustration: PageSoutherlandPage.*
- 4.6 Parking capacity could be improved through better use of the remaining alleys. *Illustration: Kerstin Harding.*
- 4.7 Traffic & circulation issues.
- 4.8 Proposed changes to the street layout (all). *Illustration: Huggins/Seiler & Associates.*
- 4.9 Street Layout Proposal #1. *Illustration: Huggins/Seiler & Associates.*
- 4.10 Street Layout Proposal #2. *Illustration: Huggins/Seiler & Associates.*
- 4.11 Street Layout Proposal #3. *Illustration: Huggins/Seiler & Associates.*

## Chapter 5: Parking

- 5.1 Top: Main Street near San Saba Street. *Photo: Kerstin Harding.*  
Bottom: Bagdad Avenue near Brown Street. *Photo: Kerstin Harding.*
- 5.2 Distribution of Parking Spaces in Street Improvement Plan. *Illustration: PageSoutherlandPage.*
- 5.3 Municipal Office Complex diagram with underground parking (shaded). *Illustration: Kerstin Harding.*
- 5.4 Proposed residential parking requirements for the MU-1 Zoning District.
- 5.5 Proposed non-residential parking requirements for the MU-1 Zoning District.

## Chapter 6: Utilities & Drainage

- 6.1 Current and Proposed Southwest Downtown Dry Utility Plan. *Illustration: PageSoutherlandPage.*
- 6.2 Current and Proposed Southwest Downtown Water Plan. *Illustration: PageSoutherlandPage.*
- 6.3 Current and Proposed Southwest Downtown Wastewater Plan. *Illustration: PageSoutherlandPage.*
- 6.4 Current and Proposed Stormwater Management & Water Quality Plan. *Illustration: PageSoutherlandPage.*
- 6.5 Current and Proposed Combined Utility Plan. *Illustration: PageSoutherlandPage.*

## Chapter 7: Civic Design

- 7.1 Top: West Main Street at Round Rock Avenue. *Photo: Kerstin Harding.*  
Middle: 208 West Bagdad Avenue. *Photo: Kerstin Harding.*  
Bottom: 106 West Bagdad Avenue. *Photo: Kerstin Harding.*
- 7.2 These trees are potential candidates for “heritage tree” status according to the Southwest Downtown Plan. *Map: Kerstin Harding.*
- 7.3 The ground surface within a tree’s dripline. . . . *Illustration: Kerstin Harding.*
- 7.4 Major parks and public spaces in the Plan Area. *Map: Kerstin Harding.*
- 7.5 Top: 1927 Baylor Basketball team photo. *Photo: The Texas Collection, Baylor University, Waco, Texas.*  
Bottom: Newspaper photo of wreck at Mays Street railroad crossing. *Photo: The Texas Collection, Baylor University, Waco, Texas.*
- 7.6 Addison Circle, Addison, Texas. *Photo: Joelle Labrosse.*
- 7.7 Top and bottom: 301 West Bagdad Avenue. *Photo: Kerstin Harding.*

## Chapter 8: Design Recommendations

- 8.1 Addison Circle, Addison, Texas. *Photo: Joelle Labrosse.*
- 8.2 400 West Main Street, Round Rock. *Photo: Kerstin Harding.*
- 8.3 Top: Santana Row, San Jose, California. *Schwanke, Dean, et al. Mixed-Use Development Handbook, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Washington, D.C.: ULI-the Urban Land Institute, 2003, pg. 63. Photo courtesy of Federal Realty Investment Trust.*  
 Middle: Downtown Palo Alto, California. *Photo: Joelle Labrosse.*  
 Bottom: McKinney Avenue, Dallas, Texas. *Photo: Joelle Labrosse.*
- 8.4 Top: Elton Lane, Austin, Texas. *Photo: Joelle Labrosse.*  
 Bottom: Texas Street Rowhouses, Portland, Oregon. *Photo: A Cut Above Siding Company website: <http://www.acutabovesiding.com/gallery/condos/index.htm>.*
- 8.5 Fort Road, Saint Paul, Minnesota. *Photo: Kerstin Harding.*
- 8.6 Addison Circle, Addison, Texas. *Photo: Joelle Labrosse.*
- 8.7 Orenco Town Center, Portland Oregon. *Photo: Fader, Steven. Density by Design: New Directions in Residential Development, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Washington, D. C.: ULI-the Urban Land Institute, 2000, pg. 19. Photo: Ed Hershberger.*
- 8.8 Crawford Square, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. *Photo: Fader, Steven. Density by Design: New Directions in Residential Development, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Washington, D. C.: ULI-the Urban Land Institute, 2000, pg. 61.*
- 8.9 American Can, Baltimore Maryland. *Beyard, Michael D., Paul O'Mara, et al. Shopping Center Development Handbook, 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed. Washington, D.C.: ULI-the Urban Land Institute, 1999, pg. 148. Photo: Ron Solomon.*
- 8.10 Location unknown. *Schmitz, Adrienne, et al. The New Shape of Suburbia: Trends in Residential Development. Washington, D. C.: ULI-the Urban Land Institute, 2003, pg. 14. Photo: Ardienne Schmitz.*
- 8.11 Bayou Place, Houston Texas. *Photo: Beyard, Michael D., Paul O'Mara, et al. Shopping Center Development Handbook, 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed. Washington, D.C.: ULI-the Urban Land Institute, 1999, pg. 158.*
- 8.12 Seattle, Washington. *Photo: Sucher, David. City Comforts: How to Build an Urban Village, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Seattle, WA: City Comforts Inc. pg. 152.*
- 8.13 Heritage Square, 22<sup>nd</sup> Street, Austin, Texas. *Photos: Kerstin Harding.*
- 8.14 Top: New Roc City, New Rochelle, New York. *Schwanke, Dean, et al. Mixed-Use Development Handbook, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Washington, D.C.: ULI-the Urban Land Institute, 2003, pg. 66. Photo courtesy of Capelli, Inc.*  
 Bottom: CityPlace, West Palm Beach, Florida. *Schwanke, Dean, et al. Mixed-Use Development Handbook, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Washington, D.C.: ULI-the Urban Land Institute, 2003, pg. 65. Photo courtesy of Elkus/Manfredi Architects Ltd.*
- 8.15 Seattle, Washington *Photo: Sucher, David. City Comforts: How to Build an Urban Village, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Seattle, WA: City Comforts Inc. pg. 173.*
- 8.16 "Hollywood" drive, Palo Alto, California. *Photo: Joelle Labrosse.*
- 8.17 Addison Circle, Addison, Texas. *Photo: Joelle Labrosse.*  
 Bottom: Bowie Town Center, Bowie, Maryland. *Photo: Joe Vining.*
- 8.18 Downtown Palo Alto, California. *Photo: Joelle Labrosse.*
- 8.19 Addison Circle, Addison, Texas. *Photo: Joelle Labrosse.*
- 8.20 Seattle, Washington. *Photo: Sucher, David. City Comforts: How to Build an Urban Village, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Seattle, WA: City Comforts Inc. pg. 40.*
- 8.21 Addison Circle, Addison, Texas. *Photo: Joelle Labrosse.*
- 8.22 Addison Circle, Addison, Texas. *Photo: Joelle Labrosse.*
- 8.23 Left: Downtown Palo Alto, California. *Photo: Joelle Labrosse.*  
 Right: Atomic City, 1700 San Antonio Street, Austin, Texas. *Photo: Austin Citysearch: [http://austin.citysearch.com/profile/10202380/austin\\_tx/atomic\\_city.html?cslink=search\\_name\\_noncust&ulink=search\\_searchslot1\\_520\\_0\\_profile\\_247-429\\_1](http://austin.citysearch.com/profile/10202380/austin_tx/atomic_city.html?cslink=search_name_noncust&ulink=search_searchslot1_520_0_profile_247-429_1).*

- 8.24 Left: Orenco Station, Hillsboro, Oregon. *Photo: Schwanke, Dean, et al. Mixed-Use Development Handbook. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Washington, D.C.: ULI-the Urban Land Institute, 2003, pg. 193.*  
Right: McKinney Avenue, Dallas, Texas. *Photo: Joelle Labrosse.*
- 8.25 Left: Santa Cruz, California. *Photo: Joelle Labrosse.*  
Center and right: McKinney Avenue, Dallas, Texas. *Photos: Joelle Labrosse.*
- 8.26 Left and right: Addison Circle, Addison, Texas. *Photo: Joelle Labrosse.*
- 8.27 Left and center: Addison Circle, Addison, Texas. *Photo: Joelle Labrosse.*  
Right: McKinney Avenue, Dallas, Texas. *Photo: Joelle Labrosse.*
- 8.28 Left: Santa Cruz, California. *Photo: Joelle Labrosse.*  
Right: Seattle, Washington. *Photo: Sucher, David. City Comforts: How to Build an Urban Village. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Seattle, WA: City Comforts Inc. pg. 178.*
- 8.29 Left: CityPlace, West Palm Beach, Florida; *Schwanke, Dean, et al. Mixed-Use Development Handbook. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Washington, D.C.: ULI-the Urban Land Institute, 2003, pg. 306. Photo © 2001 C. J. Walker.*  
Right: 26 Doors Shopping Center, Austin, Texas. *Photo: Joelle Labrosse.*
- 8.30 Top left, center, right and bottom left: Addison Circle, Addison, Texas. *Photo: Joelle Labrosse.*  
Bottom right: McKinney Avenue, Dallas, Texas. *Photo: Joelle Labrosse.*
- 8.31 Left and right: Addison Circle, Addison, Texas. *Photo: Joelle Labrosse.*

# *Executive Summary*

---

**THE SOUTHWEST DOWNTOWN PLAN** (the Plan) presents recommendations, policies and programs to revitalize and enhance the southwestern portion of downtown Round Rock. The Plan promotes downtown Round Rock as the heart of the community by maintaining and enhancing small town feel, historic character, and charm. At the same time, the Plan facilitates the future development of downtown as a thriving multi-faceted hub of city government and economic activity, and as an active gathering place that reflects quality in its built environment and in the services that the neighborhood businesses provide.

The Southwest Downtown Plan Area (Plan Area) is bounded by IH-35 to the west, Round Rock Avenue to the north, Mays Street to the east, McNeil Road to the southeast and Lake Creek to the southwest.

Based on a collaborative planning process involving the City and those that live, work and own property in the area, the Plan has three primary components. The first of these is a proposed mixed-use zoning district that will provide regulatory and design guidance to public and private decision-makers. The adoption of a mixed-use zoning district is proposed to preserve and strengthen the current pattern of development in the Plan Area.

The second component addresses investment that will be made in the Plan Area to improve streets, provide a plan to meet parking demands, and update utilities in order to accommodate future development.

Finally, as a complement to the Mixed-Use Zoning District, the Plan presents design recommendations to assist in creating projects that are consistent with the character that the neighborhood wants to preserve and perpetuate. Following these guidelines may provide more opportunities for creating a pedestrian-friendly environment in the Plan Area.

Overall, the Plan seeks to accommodate change in the Plan Area while:

- Incorporating public input in the planning process
- Revitalizing the district's infrastructure, including streets, curbs, sidewalks, utilities and drainage
- Accommodating existing single-family residences by examining the compatibility of land uses
- Providing for new uses and for the redevelopment of existing buildings
- Increasing public and private parking
- Protecting and enhancing the special character of the area
- Creating a pedestrian-friendly environment

The Plan is organized into nine chapters with recommendations to implement the goals of the Plan. Throughout the Plan, figures in the form of photographs, maps, tables and diagrams are provided as examples.

Chapter One includes an introduction, a description of the Plan Area, the current conditions and land use in the Plan Area, and the goals of the Plan.

Chapter Two reviews the process for the development of the Plan and describes the extensive public participation process. Summaries of public workshops and input can be found in the Plan's appendices.

Chapter Three discusses land use, including types of uses envisioned in the Plan Area and the reasons for proposing a mixed-use zoning district for the Plan Area. The Plan Area is experiencing significant change with the construction of a municipal office complex and the conversion of

houses to businesses. Yet it is also necessary to preserve the character of the neighborhood and to accommodate the families currently living in the Plan Area. To that end, a study was commissioned at the beginning of the planning process to provide recommendations on how the existing scale and character of the neighborhood could be protected while still providing opportunities for new development.

Chapter Four examines traffic and circulation issues expressed in public workshops and proposes potential solutions. City bond funds have been allocated to improve the streets in the Plan Area by constructing curbs, sidewalks and defining on-street parking spaces. Three proposals for modifying street layout are presented. The feasibility of these projects will have to be examined over the next several years since funding is currently unavailable.

Chapter Five presents a comprehensive parking plan developed for the Southwest Downtown Plan Area which aims to address parking issues. Also included in the chapter are recommendations for the future development of surface parking and structured garage parking, which may become necessary as the Plan Area develops.

Chapter Six presents a utility plan for the Southwest Downtown Plan Area. Bond funds will be used to place utilities underground, replace aging utilities, and provide stormwater management and water quality facilities for the Plan Area.

Chapter Seven discusses recommendations for civic design, including such elements as tree preservation, lighting and landscaping standards, and the development of public spaces, including the streetscape.

Chapter Eight describes desirable physical design features of the Plan Area. The design recommendations presented in the Chapter emphasize quality architecture and development, and place value on creating human-scale building designs with strong relationships to the street for both new and expanding developments. These design recommendations will play an integral part in shaping the

development of the Plan Area in accordance with the goals of the Plan.

Chapter Nine provides a summary of all of the recommendations in the Southwest Downtown Plan and strategies for implementation.

When adopted, the Southwest Downtown Plan will be an amendment to the City of Round Rock General Plan. The Plan will be implemented through several policies and ordinances that will apply to the Plan Area. These include the implementation of proposed parking policies, the implementation of a heritage tree plan that may include the protection of specific trees, and the implementation of infrastructure improvements that will include extensive street improvements. In addition, the Southwest Downtown Plan recommends revisions to the City's sign ordinance and adoption of a mixed-use zoning district in the Plan Area.

---

# Introduction **1**

---

## 1.1 Background

The Southwest Downtown Plan Area (Plan Area) is bounded by IH-35 to the west, Round Rock Avenue to the north, Mays Street to the east, McNeil Road to the southeast and Lake Creek to the southwest.

Figure 1.1: Aerial photograph with boundaries of the Southwest Downtown Plan Area



As a mature, suburban community straddling a major transportation corridor, Round Rock has had to respond to constant pressure for change. Current development standards for the City, including the Southwest Downtown Plan Area, are geared towards contemporary larger-lot development. These standards cannot support the redevelopment occurring in the Plan Area because they do

not accommodate the traditional neighborhood feel of one of the oldest neighborhoods in the City. Through a series of public workshops, the Planning and Community Development Department has gathered input from the neighborhood on a variety of topics. Based on this input, the Southwest Downtown Plan will provide guidelines and criteria for new development and for the redevelopment of existing properties and public space in the Plan Area.

The City is constructing the Municipal Office Complex (MOC) on property bounded by McNeil Road, Lake Creek, Harris Street, Bagdad Street, and Brown Street. The McConico Building, the first building completed for the project, houses the City offices for Municipal Courts, Parks and Recreation, and Planning & Community Development. The building was completed in April 2003. The campus construction will include a new City Hall (to be completed in late 2008) and associated government buildings, parking facilities, and street, drainage, sidewalk, utility, and landscaping improvements. A Senior Activity Center and two-level parking garage will be located at 333 West Bagdad Avenue within the MOC. The new Senior Activity Center will allow Staff to develop new, more diverse programming, as well as increase membership and participation. The new Senior Activity Center is expected to be completed in 2005 and will replace the existing facility located on East Main Street. A Parks and Recreation building is proposed for construction at some point in the future, as funding allows.



Figure 1.2: Municipal Office Complex site diagram



Figure 1.3: Preliminary rendering of the new Senior Activity Center with the McConico building to the right. The Center is currently under construction. *Rendering: Spencer Godfrey Architects*



Figure 1.4: When completed, the Municipal Office Complex will consist of City office buildings around a civic plaza (aerial view from over Brown Street looking south). *Rendering: PageSouthernlandPage*

## 1.2 Purpose

The Southwest Downtown Plan (the Plan) presents recommendations to revitalize and enhance the Southwest Downtown Plan Area of Round Rock. The Plan highlights this older neighborhood in Round Rock by examining its small town feel, historic character, and human scale. At the same time, the Plan encourages the development of a thriving multi-faceted hub of city government and economic activity that reflects quality in its built environment and in the retail and services provided. In addition, the Plan encourages a range of residential housing types. This Plan presents opportunities for a mixture of land uses and for street improvements that support the creation of a pedestrian-friendly environment.

The Southwest Downtown Plan’s public input process evolved out of the efforts of the City and those that live, work and own property in the Plan Area. The results are the Southwest Downtown Plan document, with numerous recommendations and implementation strategies, and a proposed mixed-use zoning ordinance that will provide regulatory and design guidance to public and private decision-makers.

## 1.3 Current Conditions & Land Use

Round Rock’s downtown developed in a traditional pattern of small square blocks, with streets running north-south and avenues and alleys running east-west. The Plan Area is approximately twelve blocks of the original downtown, platted in 1876. Round Rock Avenue and McNeil Road are diagonal streets which both provide access to the IH-35 freeway frontage and define the northern and southern boundaries of the Plan Area. Round Rock Avenue was the original road between the first settlement of Round Rock on the Chisholm Trail west of IH-35 (“Old Town”) and downtown (“New Town”) where a railroad station once was located. The east and west boundaries of the twelve-block area are marked by Mays Street and IH-35. Lake Creek defines the southwestern edge of the Plan Area, separating the Plan



Figure 1.5: Southwest portion of the original 1876 downtown plat. The site of the former railroad station is on the lower right.

Area from recently constructed hotels located between Lake Creek and the IH-35 frontage road.

Retail in the Plan Area is concentrated in a block of attached storefronts in the one hundred block of West Main Street. These storefronts were constructed in the 1940s and 1950s, later than those in the main downtown historic district. They do not have the upper stories or stone facades that many of the historic structures do. Other commercial and automotive establishments extend north and south along Mays Street (US 81), which was the main road between Georgetown and Austin until the construction of Interstate Highway 35.

Further west from the commercial district and toward Lake Creek, most of the buildings are one-story houses built between 1910 and 1960. Several are still single-family residences, but most have been converted to small professional offices. Three of the larger houses have been converted to office suites. Owners converting their properties to commercial uses have been required to provide parking, sidewalks, curbs, and gutters to serve their establishments. This has created an inconsistent patchwork of street improvements and parking arrangements in the Plan Area.

The Plan Area is fortunate to have many large trees as an asset, including numerous oaks with trunks over eighteen inches in diameter. In a survey of area residents, employees and property owners, respondents noted trees as one of the Plan Area's most attractive and distinguishing features (see Appendix B, Survey Results).

## 1.4 Goals of the Plan

The overall objective of the Southwest Downtown Plan is to accommodate change within the Plan Area. This should be accomplished while taking into account several goals which were developed based on the scope of the project, including the proposed public investment in the Plan Area, the role of the Planning and Community Development Department in developing a plan for Southwest Downtown, and the input received from the



Figure 1.6: The 100 block of West Main Street



Figure 1.7: Two examples of houses converted to professional offices

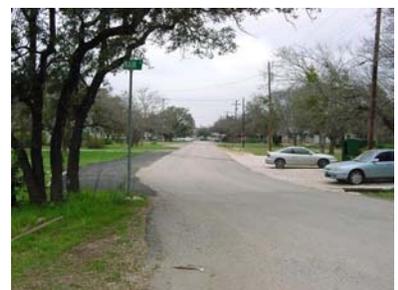


Figure 1.8: Most streets lack curbs and gutters; drainage is a problem.

public throughout the planning process. The following list of goals was developed at one of the neighborhood public workshops.

The objective of the Southwest Downtown Plan is to accommodate change in the Plan Area while achieving the following goals, which include:

- Incorporating public input in the planning process
- Revitalizing the district's infrastructure, including streets, curbs, sidewalks, utilities and drainage
- Accommodating existing single-family residences by examining the compatibility of land uses
- Providing for new uses and for the redevelopment of existing buildings
- Increasing public and private parking
- Protecting and enhancing the special character of the area
- Creating a pedestrian-friendly environment

The following chapters and the recommendations within provide the elements necessary to accommodate change in the Plan Area while meeting these goals.



# The Planning Process 2

One of the goals of the Southwest Downtown Plan (the Plan) is to incorporate public input into the planning process. This was achieved in three ways. First, a survey of residents, property owners, and business owners in the Southwest Downtown Plan Area (Plan Area) was conducted. Second, neighborhood issues were discussed in a series of public workshops. The final step in the public input process is the Plan adoption process which includes presentation and public hearing on the Plan to the City of Round Rock's Planning and Zoning Commission and the City Council. The Plan will be adopted as an amendment to the City's General Plan 2000.

Figure 2.1

| Survey Respondent Characteristics  |     |
|--|-----|
| Live in the Plan Area  | 17% |
| Own property in the Plan Area  | 71% |
| Operate businesses in the Plan Area  | 75% |
| Have owned a business or property or lived in the Plan Area less than 10 years | 70% |

## 2.1 Southwest Downtown Survey Results

A survey of residents, property owners and business owners in the Plan Area formed the basis for the major issues that needed to be addressed during the public involvement process. A copy of the Southwest Downtown Survey and survey analysis is in Appendix B (Survey Results).

The February 2003 Southwest Downtown Survey had a twenty-two percent (22%) response rate. The chart to the left is a summary of survey respondent characteristics.

**Assets**

The most commonly mentioned positive feature was the Plan Area’s overall appearance. When asked what they liked most about the Plan Area, many respondents mentioned attributes related to its location, such as proximity and convenience to other places and to services. Respondents also noted that the Plan Area is easily accessible. The trees, greenery, and secluded nature of the neighborhood were also mentioned as positive attributes of the Plan Area.

**Challenges**

The number one concern mentioned in the survey was parking. Sixty-four percent (64%) of respondents noted it as a challenge for the Plan Area. A second challenge noted was traffic. Streetscape design and improvements, street and alley maintenance, and the need for a balance of commercial and residential property in the Plan Area were also mentioned as significant challenges.

**Issues to Discuss in Future Workshops**

Survey responses indicated the top three issues to be addressed in were parking, traffic, and conversion of houses to businesses (see Figure 2.2). The Plan will address these issues and recommend mixed-use zoning, outline design guidelines for new development, and formulate a vision for the neighborhood where a mixture of uses is compatible.

Figure 2.2

| <b>Southwest Downtown Survey issues to be addressed in the planning process:</b> |     |
|--|-----|
| Parking  | 71% |
| Traffic  | 63% |
| Conversion of houses to businesses   | 54% |
| Community appearance   | 50% |
| Large tree preservation  | 46% |
| Historic preservation  | 42% |
| Drainage   | 38% |
| Municipal Office Complex construction  | 38% |
| Sidewalks  | 33% |
| Zoning   | 29% |
| Changes in neighborhood character/identity                                       | 29% |
| Parks  | 25% |
| Crime  | 21% |
| Housing opportunities  | 17% |

**2.2 Summary of Southwest Downtown Plan Public Workshops**

The City’s Planning and Community Development Department hosted a total of eleven workshops after the results of the Southwest Downtown Survey were collected. A final open house was held in November 2004 to present a draft of the Plan to the neighborhood before the formal adoption process commenced.

The following is a list of public workshops held at the McConico Building in the Southwest Downtown Plan

Area. Summaries of each workshop were posted on the City's website for the benefit of those not able to attend the workshops. Written summaries of the workshops are included in Appendix C (Public Workshops).

**June 3, 2003**

**Land Use & Zoning**

Discussion of current zoning, land uses, and appropriate and desired future land uses. Voting exercise to assess workshop participant's preferred types of land uses.

**June 24, 2003**

**Land Use & Zoning**

Discussion of the outcome of the June 3<sup>rd</sup> land use voting exercise and how the results can be implemented in the planning process through a mixed-use zoning district.

**July 15, 2003**

**Traffic & Circulation**

Brainstorming session on traffic, circulation and street design issues.

**August 4, 2003**

**Traffic & Circulation**

Possible solutions for traffic, circulation and street design issues.

**September 16, 2003**

**Civic Design: Streets, Sidewalks & Parking**

Discussion of street widths, street parking arrangements, sidewalks and streetscapes relating to improvements scheduled to begin in 2005. Consultants Carter Design Associates present their analysis of Plan Area street characteristics.

**October 21, 2003**

**Civic Design**

Carter Design Associates present their analysis of features that strengthen area character. Neighborhood preferences assessed regarding the streetscape plan and district design guidelines.



Figure 2.3: Presenters discuss street and sidewalk improvements at the July 13, 2004 meeting.

**November 18, 2003****Defining Parameters for Mixed-Use Zoning**

Discussion of parameters necessary to preserve a pleasant environment in a mixed-use district, including setbacks, density and compatibility issues. Design issues relating to the Plan Area's character are also discussed.

**February 3, 2004****Development Standards**

A draft outline of development standards for the Plan Area is presented, based on previous input.

**April 6, 2004****Development Potential**

Charles Heimsath of Capitol Market Research, a noted consultant on Central Texas property values and land use, discusses development potential in the Plan Area.

**July 13, 2004****Street Layout, Utilities & Drainage**

Architects and Engineers from PageSoutherlandPage present their designs for utility and street improvements in the Plan Area. Staff assesses support for suggested changes to the street layout with a vote.

**September 21, 2004****Summary of the Vision of the Southwest Downtown Plan**

Summary of Southwest Downtown Plan components, including parameters of the proposed Mixed-Use Zoning District, street improvements, utility and parking plans, and proposed street layout changes.

**November 17, 2004****Presentation of Draft Plan to Neighborhood**

A draft of the Southwest Downtown Plan is presented at a neighborhood open house.

After review by the neighborhood, the Southwest Downtown Plan is presented to the Planning and Zoning Commission for recommendation and to the City Council for adoption as an amendment to the City of Round Rock General Plan.

# *Land Use & Zoning* 3

---

## **3.1 The Creation of a Mixed-Use Zoning District**

The Southwest Downtown Plan (the Plan) proposes establishing a mixed-use district for most of the Southwest Downtown Plan Area (Plan Area). The Plan Area is already home to a variety of land uses. Improvements in the Plan Area to provide additional on-street parking and sidewalks to encourage pedestrian circulation are in the planning stages. Several factors should be encouraged in the creation of a mixed-use district. These include:

- Encouraging diverse uses to locate in the neighborhood to provide a variety of housing options, retail and services
- Encouraging the placement of new buildings close to property lines with parking in the rear of the building in order to engage pedestrians and de-emphasize parking facilities with the goal of creating a dynamic streetscape
- Encouraging developments with quality construction that buffer the impacts of parking facilities and vehicular traffic
- Encouraging neighborhood-enhancing economic activity

Mixed-use development lends itself well to neighborhoods that are already developed with both commercial and residential land uses, as is the case in the Plan Area. However, the combination and intensity of land uses must

be compatible with the development pattern and character of the surrounding neighborhood and existing adjacent land uses. In mixed-use districts, multiple uses may be permitted on the same lot, or even within the same structure. However, it should be noted that more stringent building codes are likely to apply, especially when combining residential and non-residential uses. Developments with only one land use would still be permitted in a mixed-use zoning district.

The purpose of adopting the Southwest Downtown Plan along with proposing a mixed-use zoning ordinance for the Plan Area is to facilitate redevelopment in this established neighborhood in a coherent manner. Development standards would then complement the Plan Area's traditional neighborhood structure, and different uses could be allowed to coexist with minimal conflict.

### 3.2 Summary of District Design Guidelines Study

Early on in the planning process, the City of Round Rock contracted with Carter Design Associates of Austin, Texas to complete a visual survey to identify aspects of the Plan Area's historical development pattern that give it character and could be preserved or encouraged in future development. The result was a report entitled, "Principles of Design, Southwest Downtown District" (the Report). Copies of the Report in its entirety are available for review at the Planning and Community Development Department. A summary of the report follows.

#### Summary of the Report, "Principles of Design, Southwest Downtown District"

The five design objectives outlined in the Report are to:

1. Maintain a sense of connection with the historic street grid and single-family house traditions, while accommodating new construction.
2. Enhance connectivity between destinations.
3. Minimize the impacts of increased automobile traffic.



Figure 3.1: The Plan Area's many large trees are some of its most significant assets.

4. Enhance pedestrian activity.
5. Continue the tradition of landscaped right-of-way and specimen tree planting at the street edge and in front yards.



Figure 3.2: Some of the historic properties in the Southwest Downtown Plan Area

Several features of the Plan Area are noted in the Report, including the existing development pattern, which is one of traditional square blocks. Alleys are still present in some cases, or there are at least alley remnants on several blocks. Distinct landscaped zones strengthen the original rhythm, regularity and setbacks of buildings in the Plan Area. There are many large specimen trees, both in the public right-of-way and on private lots. In addition, there are several examples of historic architecture in the Plan Area.

The existing architectural style of the Plan Area is varied, with the noteworthy historic structures dating from the early 1910s through the 1930s. Styles range from transitional vernacular with Victorian influences for the earlier structures, to ones showing marked Craftsman detailing for the later ones. According to Carter Design Associates, although most properties in the Plan Area are not designated as historic landmarks, they do contribute to a vernacular development pattern that relates to the growth of Round Rock and a cultural landscape characteristic of small town development. Conserving the look and feel of the Plan Area as a whole forms the basis of the recommended design principles found in Appendix A (Land Use Analysis).

Overall, Carter Design Associates recommends a “conservation” approach to preservation in the Plan Area. This is defined as the recognition that the Plan Area achieves its significance through contributions by many properties taken as a whole as opposed to a collection of individually important properties. By identifying existing characteristics of setting, site design, building style and scale, and not a particular period of influence, the character of the Plan Area can be maintained even as uses change. New construction can begin to bridge the gap between the traditional architectural styles and later design disparities, thus keeping the Plan Area vibrant.

### 3.3 Zoning

The City of Round Rock’s Code of Ordinances specifies a range of permitted uses for each zoning district. Currently the Southwest Downtown Plan Area is comprised of four zoning districts. Most of the Plan Area is zoned General Commercial (C-1). A limited number of properties remain Single-Family Residential – Standard Lot (SF-2), three are zoned Neighborhood Commercial (C-2) and four are zoned Light Industrial (LI). To date, any adopted zoning changes in the Plan Area have been owner-initiated.

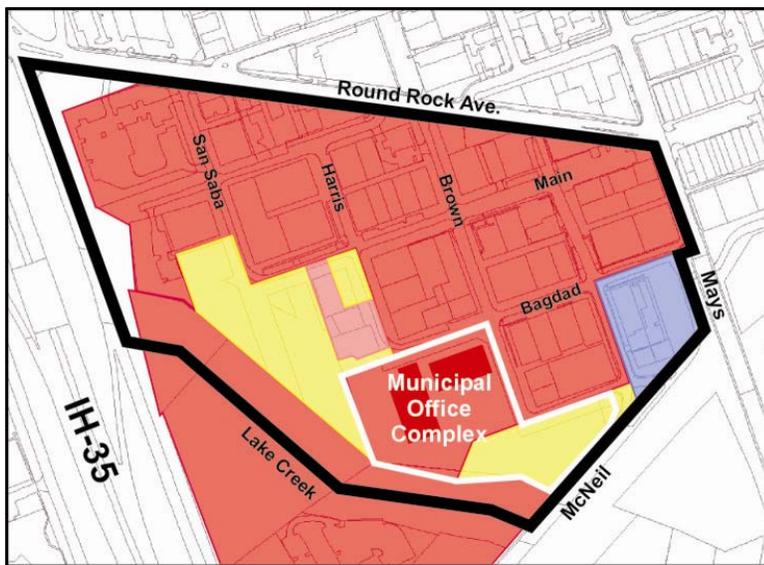


Figure 3.3:  
Current Zoning Map\*

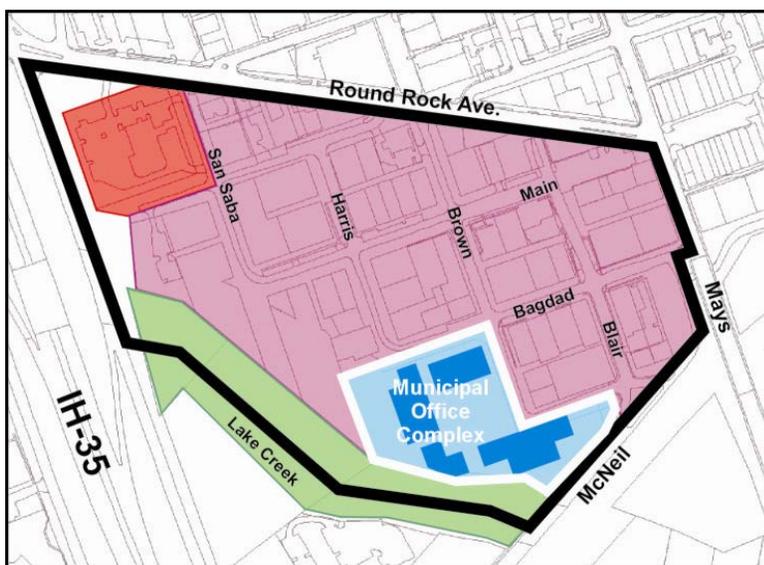
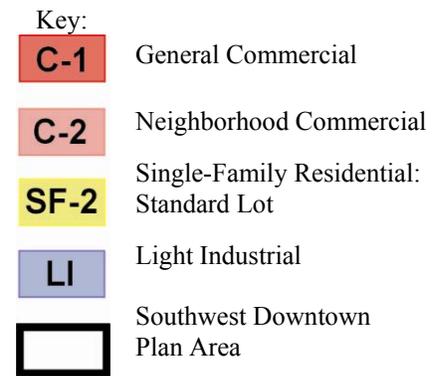
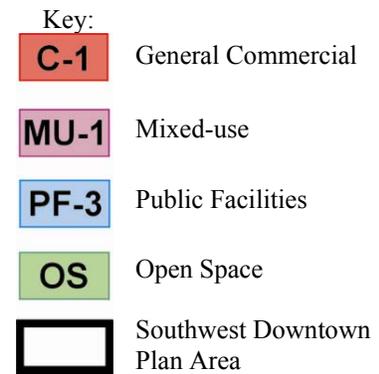


Figure 3.4:  
Proposed Zoning Map\*



\* Historic Overlay (H) Zoning is not shown on maps.

Figure 3.5

**These land uses were identified as most desirable for the Plan Area in a public neighborhood workshop:**

- Single-Family Residences
- Townhouses
- Upper-Story Residential
- Assisted Living Facilities
- Administrative and Business Services
- Office
- Medical Office
- Retail Sales & Services
- Food Sales
- Limited Art & Craft Studio
- Indoor and Outdoor Entertainment Uses
- Laundry Services & Dry Cleaning
- Retail Plant Nurseries
- Eating Establishments
- Bed & Breakfast Establishments
- Museums
- Parks
- Community Services
- Day Care
- Commercial Parking

The map in Figure 3.3 shows the current zoning, and Figure 3.4 shows the proposed zoning for the Southwest Downtown Plan Area. A new mixed-use zoning district (MU-1) is proposed for most of the Plan Area, with a few exceptions. The property on the corner of the IH-35 Frontage Road and Round Rock Avenue would remain General Commercial (C-1), since it has IH-35 frontage. The Municipal Office Complex is proposed to be zoned as a Public Facilities District, and Lake Creek is proposed to be rezoned to the Open Space District (OS). Historic Overlay Zoning for designated local landmark properties will continue to apply, even if a property's base zoning changes.

The land uses listed in Figure 3.5 and defined in Appendix A (Land Use Analysis) were identified at a neighborhood public workshop as having the highest importance for the Plan Area. Those uses included as preferred land uses will be the basis for determining permitted uses in the proposed MU-1 Zoning District. Some uses may only be included when they meet certain conditions.

One concern expressed by workshop participants was what would happen to existing land uses in the Plan Area that are not included in the proposed MU-1 Zoning District? In this case, the property becomes a "nonconforming use". Business operation could continue, but expansion of the building would not be allowed in that location.

The proposed MU-1 Zoning District permits mixed-use buildings and includes an expanded definition of "home occupations", permitting a broader variety of live/work accommodations than is frequently allowed in standard zoning districts.

Figure 3.6 highlights some of the differences between the General Commercial (C-1) and proposed Mixed-Use (MU-1) Zoning Districts. The proposed MU-1 District would permit narrower lots than in C-1, in keeping with the original platting pattern of the Plan Area. The most notable differences between the proposed MU-1 and existing C-1 Zoning Districts' requirements concern height limits and parking requirements. MU-1 proposes

Figure 3.6: General Commercial (C-1) and Mixed-Use (MU-1) Zoning Districts

| <b>C-1 and MU-1 Zoning</b>   |                              |   |
|--|------------------------------|---|
|  | General Commercial<br>(C-1)  | Mixed-Use<br>(MU-1)                                 |
| <b>Examples of Land Uses:</b>  |                              |   |
| retail sales & service, indoor entertainment, day care, government facilities, community services, eating establishments, office, medical office, bed & breakfast, single-family residences, upper-story residential | permitted                    | permitted   |
| mortuary, hotel, auto service & repair, carwash, vehicle sales & rental, gasoline & fuel sales, self-service storage, gun shop, tattoo shop, veterinarian  | permitted                    | <u>not</u> permitted                                |
| townhouses   | <u>not</u> permitted         | permitted   |
| <b>Density &amp; Development Standards:</b>  |                              |   |
| minimum lot width  | 50 ft.                       | 20-25 ft.   |
| minimum front setback  | 15 ft.                       | 0-15 ft.<br>(depending on use)                      |
| minimum side setback (not abutting existing SF)  | 0 or 10 ft.                  | 0 or 5 ft.  |
| minimum rear setback   | 0 or 10 ft.                  | 5 or 20 ft.   |
| maximum height   | 5 stories                    | 3 stories   |
| upper-story residential  | less than 50% GFA*           | up to 67% GFA*                                      |
| <b>Parking:</b>  |                              |   |
| townhouses   | N/A                          | 2 spaces  |
| upper-story residences   | 1.5 per<br>bedroom (BR)      | efficiency or 1BR<br>= 1 space<br>2+ BRs = 2 spaces |
| commercial uses  | no parking credit            | parking credit<br>for existing area                 |
| retail sales & services, indoor entertainment, community service, office   | 4 spaces /<br>1000 sq. ft.   | 2.5 spaces /<br>1000 sq. ft.                        |
| medical office   | 6.7 spaces /<br>1000 sq. ft. | 2.5 spaces /<br>1000 sq. ft.                        |
| eating establishments  | 10 spaces /<br>1000 sq. ft.  | 5 spaces /<br>1000 sq. ft.                          |

\* GFA: gross floor area of all levels as measured from the outside perimeter of the building.

limiting building height to three stories instead of five stories. However, it should be noted that with C-1 development and parking standards, it would be nearly impossible to build a five-story building without structured garage parking or assembling many parcels of land. Additional setback requirements separating commercial buildings from residentially-zoned properties could further complicate the development of a C-1 parcel of land. Parking requirements in the proposed MU-1 Zoning District will be relaxed because of the parking plan for the Plan Area, outlined in Chapter 5 (Parking).

### 3.4 New Development

One of the goals of the Southwest Downtown Plan is to provide for new uses in the Plan Area, for the conversion from residential to non-residential uses, and for expansion of existing buildings. New development could also be in the form of new construction. One of the ways that development in the Plan Area may be accomplished while still maintaining its character is by developing appropriate design guidelines. In public workshops, the neighborhood examined issues of height, setbacks, buffering and compatibility between existing and new uses. The MU-1 Zoning District proposed for the Plan Area provides the standards that are required for new development. Additionally, design guidelines are provided in Chapter 8 (Design Recommendations) of this Plan to further address the desires of the neighborhood, to meet the goals of the Southwest Downtown Plan, and to meet the objectives outlined in the Carter Design Associates Report. Upon adoption of the proposed MU-1 Zoning District, projects will be reviewed by the design standards delineated in a new ordinance.

**Design guidelines will be outlined in this Plan to:**

- Further address the desires of the neighborhood
- Meet the goals of the Southwest Downtown Plan
- Meet the objectives outlined in the Carter Design Associates Report

### 3.5 Compatibility with Existing Single-Family Residences

Adopting mixed-use instead of commercial zoning is intended to encourage residential as well as commercial occupancy in the Plan Area. Additionally, new single-family homes will also be permitted in the proposed MU-1

Zoning District for the Plan Area. Residences of all kinds, including new single-family homes, built after the adoption of the proposed ordinance are assumed to have made design accommodations for locating in close proximity to non-residential uses.

Several existing houses in the Plan Area are still occupied as single-family residences, but they were built when adjacent non-residential development was not anticipated. Certain accommodations would be suggested for new construction or conversion (to a non-single-family use) for buildings abutting an existing single-family residential property. Accommodations could include increasing the separation between buildings, requiring fences for uses abutting single-family residences, and using translucent windows for any windows facing single-family residences.

A new non-residential establishment on a property abutting an existing detached single-family residence will need to meet additional compatibility requirements, as outlined in the proposed Mixed-Use Zoning Ordinance. The existing residence must have been under continuous single-family occupation since the adoption of the proposed MU-1 Zoning District. A list of these properties' addresses will be included in the proposed Ordinance. If one of these residences is converted to a non-single-family use for a period greater than ninety days, the additional compatibility requirements will no longer apply. If a property is later converted back to a single-family residential use, it will not be added to the protected properties list, as the new owner is assumed to be aware of and accept any inconveniences posed by nearby non-single-family uses. If an existing single-family property's owner wishes to waive these additional requirements, he or she may do so; however, these restrictions will not be reinstated.

### **3.6 Land Use & Zoning Recommendations:**

#### **Land Use:**

- Adopt a Mixed-Use Zoning District for the majority of the Southwest Downtown Plan Area, incorporating the desired land uses identified by neighborhood public workshop participants.
- Include design guidelines for development in the Mixed-Use Zoning District that meet the goals of the Southwest Downtown Plan.
- Complete the Municipal Office Complex and remaining proposed public facilities.
- Rezone the Municipal Office Complex to a Public Facilities District.
- Rezone the Lake Creek Corridor to an Open Space District (OS).
- Allow the block on the corner of Round Rock Avenue and IH-35 to retain General Commercial (C-1) Zoning since it has IH-35 frontage.
- Retain historic development patterns wherever possible. Site design should relate to the existing historic fabric.
- Identify and protect sites, buildings and structures with significant cultural, aesthetic and social characteristics which are part of the City of Round Rock's heritage.
- Plan public space to encourage pedestrian use. Spaces should be linked to key activity centers and pedestrian routes where possible. Site and building design leading to and surrounding public spaces should help encourage their use.
- Encourage new development that provides for a mixture of uses, including retail, office and residential.
- Ensure that the combination and intensity of land uses is compatible with current and future development patterns, the character of the surrounding neighborhood, and existing adjacent land uses.

- Provide additional development requirements for properties abutting existing single-family residences to ensure compatibility between adjacent properties.
- Provide guidance in the development of new structures that bears in mind the Plan's land use recommendations and addresses the compatibility issues voiced at public workshops.

### **Mixed-Use Zoning:**

- Encourage and support a diversity of businesses and services downtown.
- Permit a range of housing options, including single-family residences, townhouses, upper-story residences, and live/work units.
- Adopt development standards to encourage the redevelopment of lots that would not be allowed under current commercial standards.
- Encourage development in the Plan Area that meets the intent of the Southwest Downtown Plan and the proposed Mixed-Use Zoning District. The application of design guidelines to all development projects emphasizes quality architecture and development, and places a high value on varied and distinctive building designs, sensitive treatment of historic resources, generous landscaping to accent buildings, and high quality materials and construction.
- Develop compatibility standards to ensure existing single-family residences are protected from excessive light, noise, traffic or other disruptive nuisances.

# Streets & Circulation 4

## 4.1 Design of the Streetscape

Streetscape standards for the Southwest Downtown Plan Area (Plan Area) have been developed as a component of the Southwest Downtown Plan (the Plan). Currently, many of the streets in the Plan Area do not have defined on-street parking, and there are several instances where on-site parking requirements have been met using the existing street right-of-way. In addition, a significant number of driveways and curb cuts exist on each block. In most of the Plan Area, curbs and sidewalks exist where businesses were required to install them, resulting in discontinuous sidewalks and confusion about where private yards end and where the public street begins.



Figure 4.1: The lack of defined curbs and parking areas is a source of some confusion; a few property owners have installed landscape timbers in place of a curb to delineate where street parking ends and their front yards begin.

PageSoutherlandPage, consultants for the Municipal Office Complex project, have created a plan to upgrade streets and utilities in the Plan Area. For streets, this includes defining on-street parking, constructing curbs and gutters, and providing sidewalks. PageSoutherlandPage proposes saving trees in the right-of-way and incorporating them into the streetscape design. In addition, new street trees are proposed to be planted in the Plan Area to define the streetscape.

With the exception of Brown Street, angled parking will be the standard for the Plan Area, providing the maximum number of on-street parking spaces. As the most direct route to the new City Hall, Brown Street will have parallel parking to accommodate wider sidewalks and denser tree



FUTURE STREET CONFIGURATION  
 R O U N D R O C K S W D O W N T O W N D I S T R I C T I N F R A S T R U C T U R E



NOVEMBER 8th, 2004

PageSouthernlandPage  
 The Next 100

Figure 4.2: **Southwest Downtown Street Improvement Plan.** The street improvements are part of an overall infrastructure improvement plan that was approved in a City bond election. Objectives of the street improvements are to complete curbs and gutters to improve drainage, increase the number of on-street parking spaces, complete the sidewalks and improve their appearance, and to preserve the Plan Area’s many large trees and incorporate them into a street tree plan along with new trees. Tree roots and utility placement may warrant minor modifications of the Street Improvement Plan. *Illustration: PageSouthernlandPage.*

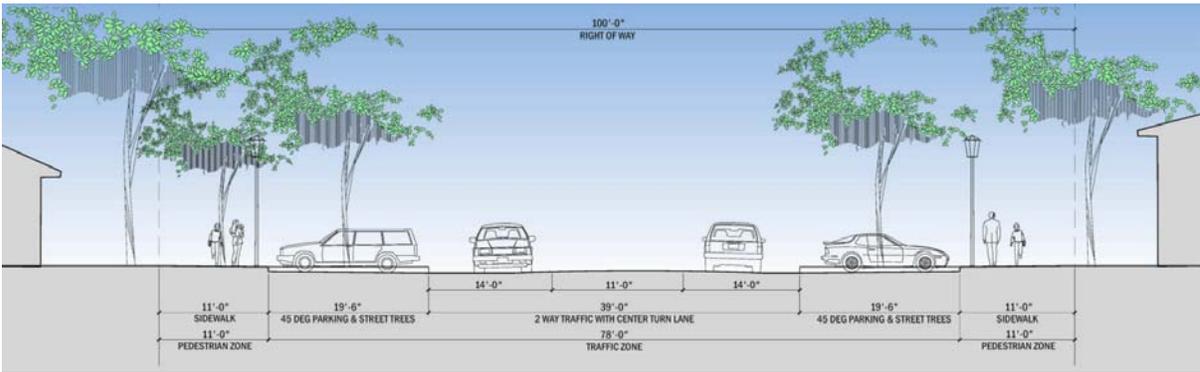


Figure 4.3: Proposed Main Street section\*  
*Illustration: PageSouthernlandPage*

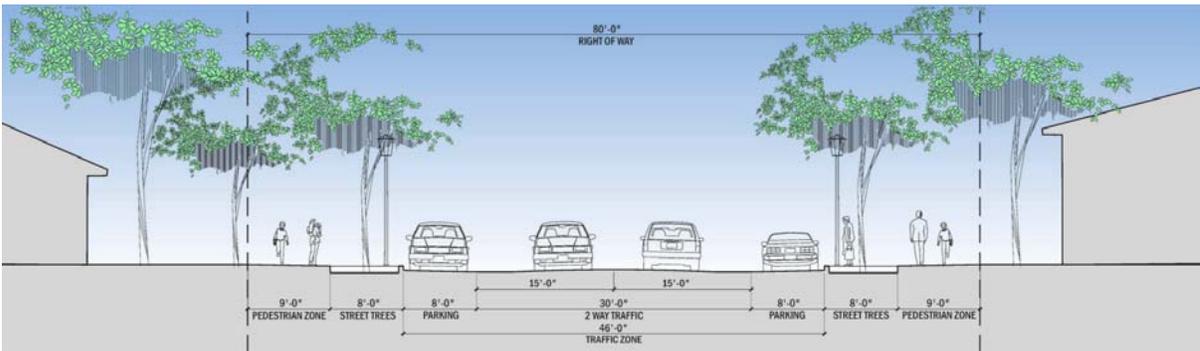


Figure 4.4: Proposed Brown Street section\*  
*Illustration: PageSouthernlandPage*

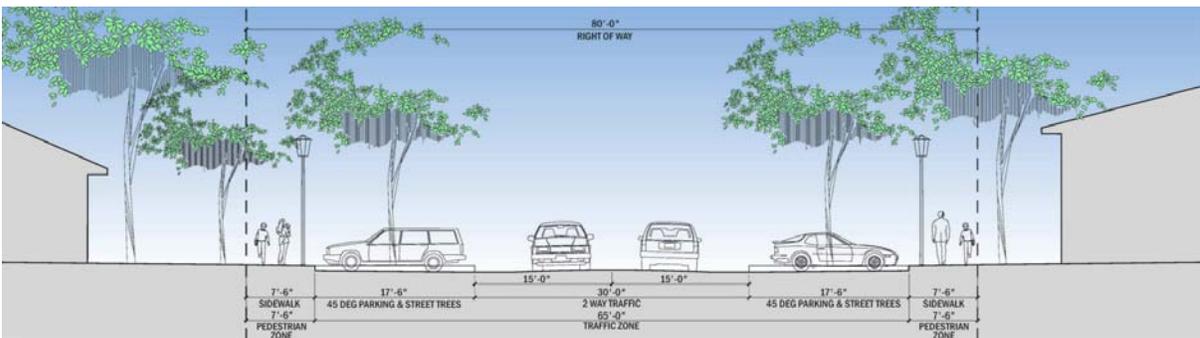


Figure 4.5: Proposed section, all other Southwest Downtown Plan Area streets\*  
 (Liberty, Bagdad, Florence, Blair, Harris, San Saba).  
*Illustration: PageSouthernlandPage*

\* Proposed street sections reflect design of streetscape for the Street Improvement Plan. Minor modifications may be necessary to reflect changes to engineering or to accommodate tree roots and/or utility placement.

plantings to give the street the distinctive characteristics of a boulevard.

In order to unify street design in the Plan Area, the design process must be customized because of existing driveways and parking. City Staff worked with property owners during the creation of the Street Improvement Plan in order to incorporate necessary site-specific changes. The original Street Improvement Plan has been altered many times to establish what would work best for each property. In some cases, existing on-site parking in the right-of-way will be moved, and some property owners have opted to forgo their driveway access in order to have more on-street area for parking spaces.

Originally, most blocks in the Plan Area were served by alleys, some of which are still in use. Others exist legally but have been obscured by trees and outbuildings. The potential use of alleys for service access, utility corridors, and parking should be considered. Vehicle access from the rear of a property may be possible in many instances. This is preferable so that sidewalks are not interrupted with curb cuts that reduce on-street parking and make streets less safe for pedestrians.

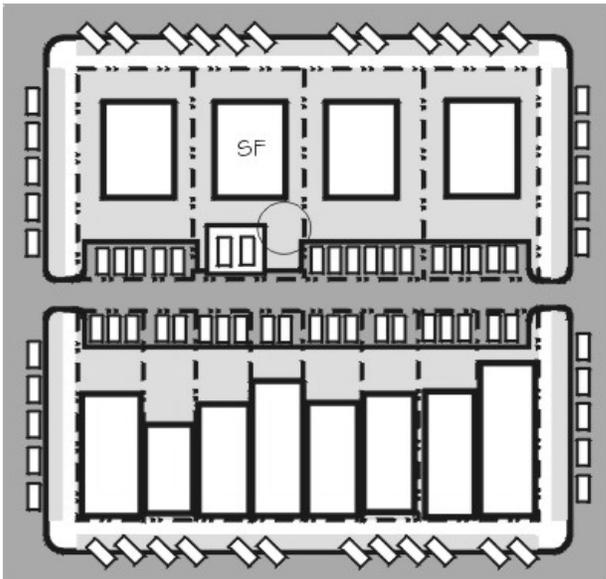


Figure 4.6: Parking capacity could be improved through better use of the remaining alleys. Employees could park in back, freeing street spaces for customers. Fewer driveway cuts would permit more street spaces. Customers are less likely to mistakenly use a resident's (for example the single-family house (SF) to the left) private parking spaces if they are located in the rear.

## 4.2 Traffic & Circulation

Two public workshops were held to discuss issues of traffic and circulation. At the first meeting, the neighborhood was asked to develop a list of traffic issues it felt needed to be addressed:

Figure 4.7: Traffic & circulation issues

### Street Layout Issues:

1. Connect East and West Main Street for both pedestrians and cars
2. Have better access to RM 620
3. How do we minimize cut-through traffic?
4. What about one way streets in Southwest Downtown?
5. Create uniform street sections
6. Variable paving widths/lanes
7. Round Rock Avenue abandonment to re-create grid at Liberty and Main
8. Extend Main to frontage of I-35
9. Alley connections

### Streetscaping Design Issues:

(trees, signs, etc.)

1. Create uniform street sections
2. Variable paving widths/lanes
3. Signage not consistent
4. Wayfinding signs needed for City buildings (Municipal Court, etc.)
5. Sidewalk continuity
6. Street continuity – stop signs, stop lines, etc.
7. Tree preservation in right-of-way

### Business-Related Traffic Concerns:

1. Truck traffic through the neighborhood
2. Delivery trucks
3. On-street parking of delivery trucks
4. Reckless driving by delivery drivers

### Interstate 35-Related Topics:

1. McNeil exits – what is the impact of closing on and off ramps?
2. Impacts of Hesters Crossing changes

### Pedestrian & Bicycle Access & Safety:

1. Connect East and West Main Street for both pedestrians and cars
2. Alley connections
3. Connect new Municipal Office Complex to existing City Hall building on East Main Street
4. Children using Liberty - pedestrians
5. Brown/Blair need pedestrian improvements
6. Look at Berkman Elementary and C.D. Fulkes Middle School enrollments to coordinate pedestrian routes
7. Connection between Main Street and hike and bike trails of Trails Master Plan
8. Bicycle access and safety on streets as well as trails

### Traffic in Specific Areas:

1. Traffic on RM 620 and Mays
2. Light at Liberty and Mays
3. Blair traffic: confusion, stop signs, access to Round Rock Avenue
4. Difficulty entering Round Rock Avenue at W. Main Street stop sign
5. Liberty and Brown intersection

### Traffic Issues for Specific Segments of the Population:

1. How does transportation system serve seniors?
2. Children using Liberty - pedestrians
3. Berkman Elementary and C.D. Fulkes Middle School enrollments for pedestrian routes

The second public workshop determined that many of these issues could be addressed through the redesign of the streetscape.

Currently, many of the intersections in the Plan Area are not clearly marked. Future traffic controls used will depend on what, if any, changes are made to the street layout and traffic patterns. With upgrades to streets, there will be consistency in street paving and design. Signage and pavement markings will be applied consistently as well.

Pedestrian routes will be greatly improved with the installation of sidewalks on both sides of the street. A strong connection should be established between the Plan Area and future trails and open space, which would benefit both cyclists and pedestrians.

### 4.3 Recommendations for Future Changes to Street Layout

Several options for changes to the street layout were proposed by the neighborhood in public workshops at which participants brainstormed on traffic, circulation and street design issues. Potential solutions were then examined by City Staff, producing three project proposals for street layout changes. These project proposals include:



Figure 4.8: Proposed changes to the street layout can be grouped into three projects\*:

- 1) Extend West Main Street across the creek to the frontage road of IH-35
- 2) Close Round Rock Avenue between Brown and Mays, routing traffic to Brown and Liberty
- 3) Extend Harris Street north to Round Rock Avenue

*Illustration: Huggins/Seiler & Associates*

*\* If these three proposals are funded, feasibility and traffic studies will be required.*



Figure 4.9: Proposal #1: extend Main Street across Lake Creek to the IH-35 frontage road.

Illustration: Huggins/Seiler & Associates



Figure 4.10: Proposal #2: redesign the Round Rock Avenue – Liberty – Main – Mays intersections.

Illustration: Huggins/Seiler & Associates



Figure 4.11: Proposal #3: extend Harris Street north to intersect with Round Rock Avenue.

Illustration: Huggins/Seiler & Associates

### **Proposal 1: Extend Main Street across Lake Creek to the IH-35 frontage road.**

This was suggested as a means to improve access to the Plan Area and create a “gateway” into downtown. This proposal would require purchasing land and building a bridge over Lake Creek while accommodating a hike-and-bike trail along the Creek.

### **Proposal 2: Redesign the Round Rock Avenue-Liberty-Main-Mays intersections.**

There are three parts to this proposal:

- Close Round Rock Avenue between Brown and Mays Street. This area could be used as public space in the future.
- Reconnect Main Street across Mays Street with a four-way intersection.
- Divert traffic from Round Rock Avenue to Liberty Street and install a signal at Liberty and Mays. Traffic heading eastbound on Liberty will be diverted back to Main Street at Sheppard or Burnet Street.

### **Proposal 3: Extend Harris Street north to intersect with Round Rock Avenue.**

This proposal was originally suggested as a way to provide a direct route to and from the new Senior Activity Center at Harris and Bagdad. The City would be required to acquire the property at 400 Round Rock Avenue, and Liberty would have to be terminated in a cul-de-sac on the west side of Brown Street to provide access to businesses.

At the time of the Plan’s adoption, no funding or timeline is in place for these three proposals. It is unlikely that they would commence before the end of this decade. Additional feasibility and traffic studies will be required.

## Ranking of Street Layout Changes

The neighborhood put these changes to a vote by asking workshop participants to assign a priority to the three proposals or to indicate if they thought a proposal inappropriate for the Plan Area. The results of voting were as follows:

**Proposal #2** (Redesign the Round Rock Avenue-Liberty-Main-Mays intersections) received a high-medium priority, the highest of the three proposals. Three people thought the proposal was inappropriate and should not be considered.

**Proposal #1** (Extend Main Street across Lake Creek to the IH-35 frontage road) received a medium priority rating. One person felt the proposal should not be considered.

**Proposal #3** (Extend Harris Street north to intersect with Round Rock Avenue) received a medium-low priority rating, with four people indicating that the proposal should not be considered.

Please note that these proposals have not been subjected to a Traffic Impact Analysis as an objective measure of their effectiveness, nor has funding for such a study been sought. If the results of the Traffic Impact Analysis indicate a positive impact from any/all of the proposals and the City Council decides to pursue any of them, the next steps would be to obtain cost estimates and put forth a bond referendum in a City general election.

## 4.4 Streets & Circulation Recommendations

- Implement plans to improve streets by adding new curbs, gutters, sidewalks and on-street parking.
- Minimize disruption to businesses and property owners while street and sidewalk construction is in progress.
- Increase and define on-street parking.

- Fund the planting of street trees as part of the Street Improvement Plan.
- Continue to work with property owners during the implementation of the Street Improvement Plan to incorporate site-specific changes if necessary.
- Encourage vehicular access from the rear of a property in order to have continuous sidewalks and to accommodate additional on-street parking.
- Continue to address traffic and circulation issues that were presented at neighborhood public workshops.
- Improve continuity through consistent street design, pavement markings and signage.
- Establish a strong pedestrian connection between the Southwest Downtown Plan Area and future trails and open space.
- Examine the potential of the three street layout proposals brought forward by the neighborhood and outlined in Chapter 4 (Streets and Circulation). Complete necessary traffic studies and explore funding options to assess feasibility.
- Ensure coordination with the City of Round Rock Parks and Recreation Department for proposed street layout changes to ensure a hike and bike trail can be located under the proposed bridge connecting Main Street to the IH-35 frontage road, and to assist in the design of the public space that would result from the proposed redesign of the Round Rock Avenue-Liberty-Mays intersections.



---

# Parking 5

---



Figure 5.1: In the absence of curbs, most street parking and sidewalks have been installed in the City's right-of-way by individual property owners when their properties were converted to commercial uses. Similarly, some residential property owners have constructed parking areas, often unpaved, in front of their homes. The street improvement plan is in part intended to increase total on-street parking capacity by specifying consistent curb, sidewalk and parking patterns.

The availability of parking in the Southwest Downtown Plan Area (Plan Area) is one of the primary concerns of residents and business owners. This was revealed in the Southwest Downtown Survey of neighborhood opinion. Parking becomes increasingly important as single-family houses are converted to business uses.

## 5.1 Parking Plan Objectives

The parking plan presented in this chapter seeks to meet the following objectives:

- Residential parking should be provided on-site.
- On-street parking should be utilized to increase the availability of parking, to slow traffic, and to improve pedestrian safety.
- Surface parking lots should be located in the neighborhood to accommodate nearby businesses within a one- to two-block radius. Required parking for non-residential establishments could then be provided within five hundred feet of a business.
- Structured parking should be located underground or be designed to resemble a street-level building.
- Access to parking via alleys is appropriate where possible. Locating on-site parking at the rear of buildings is preferable in all cases.

- Alleys should remain clear and passable at all times.
- Generally, off-street parking should be located at the side or rear of buildings to ensure that entering and exiting vehicles do not interrupt pedestrian movement at the front of a building.
- The construction of new sidewalks and on-street parking will mean that existing parking areas in the street yard of properties in the Plan Area will no longer be accessible.
- Shared parking lots and shared parking access drives should be designed where feasible.

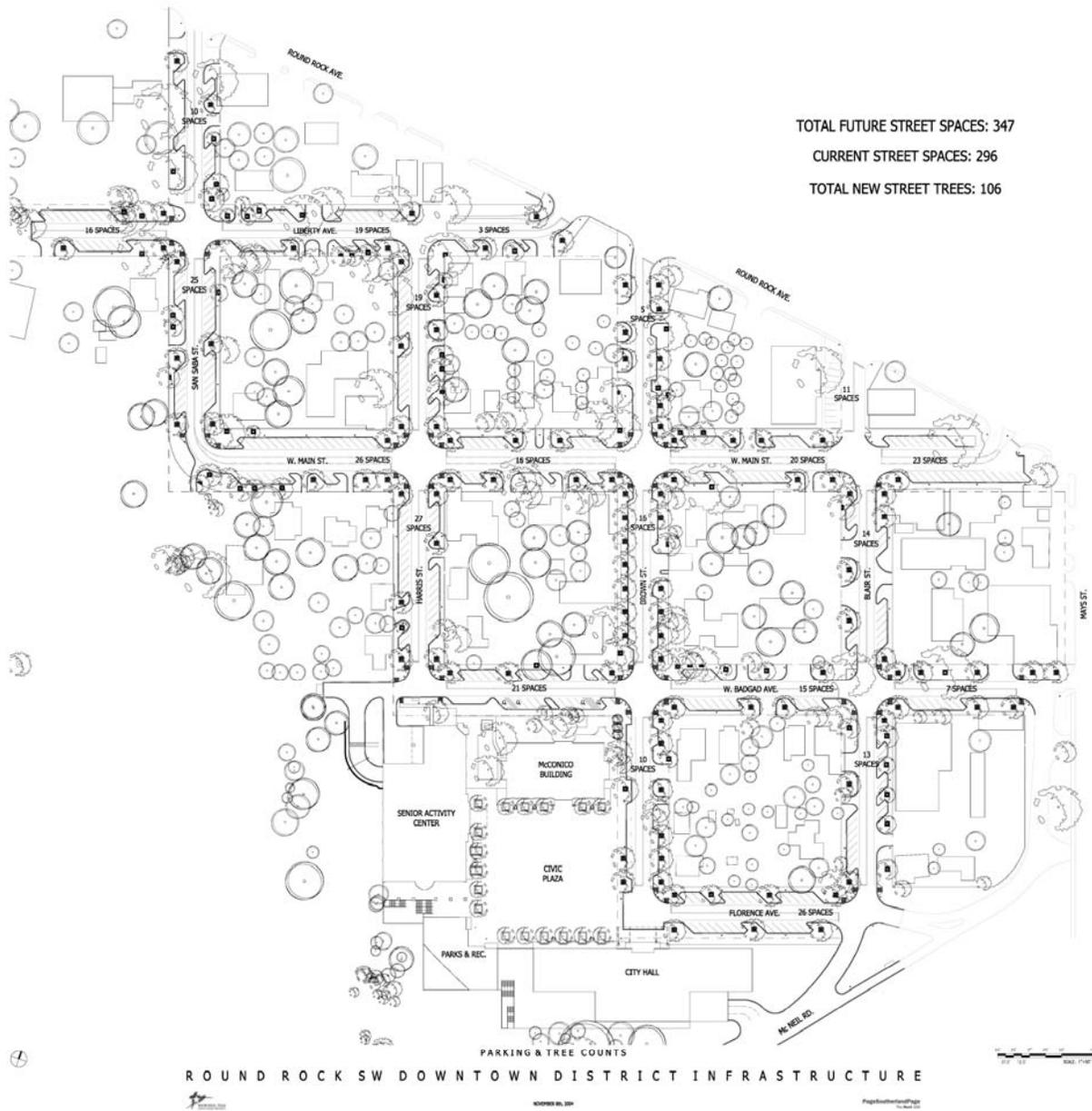
## **5.2 Southwest Downtown Plan Area Parking Plan**

This parking plan for the Plan Area consists of several elements that work together in order to meet the parking demand of those that visit, live, or work in the Plan Area. Several proposed elements are listed below along with recommended parking standards that could be adopted as a component of a proposed mixed-use zoning ordinance for the Plan Area.

### **1. Create On-Street Parking**

Street parking and associated curbs and gutters will be developed in the first phase of the Municipal Office Complex bond-funded Street Improvement Plan. Over three hundred and forty on-street parking spaces will eventually be provided, with angled parking spaces as the standard for the Plan Area. Parallel parking will be provided on Brown Street to create a boulevard effect to the future City Hall.

Because of the variety of block configurations, current on-street and street yard parking, and existing curb cuts, PageSoutherlandPage's design for on-street parking was addressed on a block by block basis as part of the Southwest Downtown Plan's (the Plan) public participation process.



**Figure 5.2: Distribution of Parking Spaces in Street Improvement Plan.** The Street Improvement Plan will eventually yield a total of 347 on-street parking spaces. Tree roots and utility placement may warrant minor modifications to the Street Improvement Plan. *Illustration: PageSoutherlandPage.*

Note: All municipalities are subject to the regulations of the Americans with Disabilities Act which requires municipalities to provide designated spaces for handicapped parking. The City of Round Rock is currently seeking state approval of a uniform handicapped parking plan for the Southwest Downtown Plan Area.

## 2. Provide On-Site Parking for the Municipal Office Complex

The City of Round Rock will provide parking for Municipal Office Complex employees and visitors.

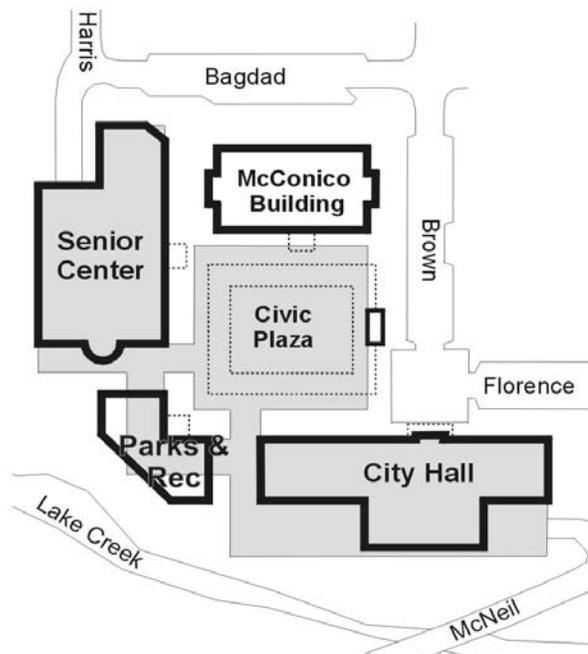


Figure 5.3: Two levels of underground parking (shaded) are part of the Municipal Office Complex (MOC) plans. These spaces will be open to the public after business hours.

## 3. Require That New Residential Uses Provide Parking On-Site

Residential uses are required to provide on-site parking spaces in all cases to ensure that residents have guaranteed parking spaces, and they will therefore not occupy on-street parking being used by patrons of local businesses.

The number of required residential spaces in the MU-1 is slightly reduced from standard residential zoning requirements as it is expected that units will be smaller than those in the average subdivision. Parking for single-family residences and townhouses is required to be covered but not enclosed in a garage. In a mixed-use project, off-street parking for residents must be clearly marked to distinguish it from employee or customer parking.

Figure 5.4: Proposed residential parking requirements for the Mixed-Use Zoning District.

| <b>Required Off-Street Parking Spaces</b>   |                    |
|---|--------------------|
| <b>Residential</b>  |                    |
| <b>Use</b>  | <b># of Spaces</b> |
| Single-family detached homes  | 2 spaces           |
| Townhomes, upper-story residential units:   |                    |
| one bedroom   | 1 space            |
| two or more bedrooms  | 2 spaces           |
| Efficiencies and lofts without defined bedrooms (including residential portion of live/work unit):  |                    |
| under 800 sq ft   | 1 space            |
| 800 sq ft or more   | 2 spaces           |
| <i>For special residential uses, such as senior or assisted living facilities, the Zoning Administrator may adjust requirements as appropriate for their populations.</i> |                    |

**4. Create New Parking Requirements in the Proposed MU-1 District for Non-Residential Uses**

Parking requirements are adjusted in the proposed Mixed-Use (MU-1) Zoning District to reflect the available street parking and the efficiency of a shared pool of parking for the entire Plan Area.

Figure 5.5: Proposed non-residential (restaurants, office, retail, etc.) parking requirements for the Mixed-Use Zoning District.

| <b>Required Off-Street Parking Spaces</b>   |                          |
|---|--------------------------|
| <b>Non-Residential</b>  |                          |
| <b>Use</b>  | <b># of Spaces</b>       |
| Restaurants   | 1 space / 200 sq ft GFA* |
| All other non-residential uses (office, retail, etc.)   | 1 space / 400 sq ft GFA* |
| <i>The GFA of a building at the time of the adoption of this ordinance is exempted from this parking requirement.</i> |                          |

\*Gross Floor Area (GFA) - The total area in square feet of all floors of a building measured from exterior walls.

- The Gross Floor Area (GFA) of an existing non-residential building at the time of the adoption of the Ordinance is exempted from the required parking standard. However, expansions to the GFA of the building must meet the parking required for its use.
- In the event that a structure is demolished after the adoption of the Ordinance, a credit shall be granted for the GFA that existed on the lot, prior to demolition, at a ratio of 1 space for every 400 square feet of GFA. This credit shall only be applied to new non-residential development.
- An exemption of the required on-site non-residential parking may be issued by the City's Zoning Administrator to accommodate for parking constraints on the site. For example, an exemption may be appropriate is when a heritage tree (as defined in Chapter 7, Civic Design) is located on a lot, making it difficult to develop on-site parking.

## **5. Locate Public Surface Parking Lots in the Southwest Downtown Plan Area**

The City will be researching financing mechanisms and potential sites for strategically located public surface parking lots in the Plan Area. At some point, these surface parking lots could be converted into structured garage parking, as necessary.

### **5.3 Creating a Shared Parking Agreement**

For non-residential uses, shared parking facilities are encouraged where practical. Joint use of required parking spaces may occur where two or more establishments on the same site or on separate sites are able to share the same parking spaces because their parking demands occur at different times. Shared parking is beneficial because it reduces the number of parking spaces that need to be constructed while still meeting the demand for parking.

In order to utilize shared parking to meet parking standards, an agreement would be submitted as part of the

City's site development review process. The purpose of this review would be to ensure that a parking area will supply at least the minimum number of required spaces for each use during its respective peak parking time, as well as the location and number of parking spaces that are being shared. There may also be cases where an establishment has more than the required parking it needs, and the additional spaces could be leased to another establishment within five hundred feet. To implement a shared parking agreement, standards will need to be developed and adopted as an amendment to the City's Zoning Ordinance.

## **5.4 Status of Parking Plan at Time of Plan Adoption**

At the time of adoption of the Southwest Downtown Plan, construction of the street improvements has not commenced but is expected to begin in the first quarter of 2005. Well-defined on-street parking should help to alleviate some of the concerns of residents and business owners; however, continued assessments of the Plan Area will be necessary to ensure that parking demands are being met.

Due to the phased nature of infrastructure improvements, some new establishments may be created in advance of nearby on-street parking improvements. In the interim, owners may be required to pave and stripe parking spaces on the streets adjacent to their establishments. These temporary improvements should be in accordance with the proposed Street Improvement Plan.

As the Plan Area develops, it may be necessary to establish a parking district which would allow property owners with on-site parking constraints to pay into a fund. Funds collected could then be used to establish public parking in strategically placed locations in the Plan Area to help meet increasing parking demands.

## 5.5 Parking Recommendations

- Implement an overall parking strategy for the Southwest Downtown Plan Area that accommodates changes in density over time. This includes exploring options for public surface lots, commercial parking, and ultimately, structured garage parking.
- Maximize on-street parking. For streets that have not yet been improved, continue to use available on-street parking; however, temporary parking improvements may be necessary for non-residential uses until street improvements are completed.
- Require that residential uses provide parking on-site.
- Provide adequate parking for commercial buildings by emphasizing the use of on-street parking and shared parking facilities.
- Provide an exemption from parking requirements in the proposed Mixed-Use Zoning District for non-residential land uses where square footage of the existing building is not increased.
- Implement alternative parking standards to address the unique conditions of the Plan Area.
- Adopt shared parking agreement requirements as part of the parking requirements section of the City's Zoning Ordinance.
- Explore potential locations and financing mechanisms for public surface parking lots in the Plan Area.
- Design structured garage parking so it does not diminish the pedestrian experience, either through appropriate design or by constructing parking structures underground.
- Encourage access to parking via rear driveways and alleys.
- Ensure that alleys remain clear and passable at all times.

# *Utilities & Drainage* 6

---

## **6.1 Utility Upgrades in the Southwest Downtown Plan Area**

A portion of the City's bond project to build the Municipal Office Complex includes infrastructure improvements for the Southwest Downtown Plan Area (Plan Area). Infrastructure improvements funded by the first bond issuance are scheduled to be completed by the end of 2006, including improvements to water and wastewater utilities, underground dry utilities, and stormwater facilities.

Water and wastewater systems will be upgraded. The respective lines have been resized to reflect future demand. As work progresses in the Plan Area, all existing buildings will be reconnected to new lines. To avoid the need for streets to be torn up in the future, connections will also be "stubbed out" to the property lines of undeveloped lots.

The dry utilities, including gas, electric, phone, cable, and fiber optic cables, will all be operated through a single network of underground concrete channels that will also be able to accommodate future technologies. In most cases, providers will be able to add new cable by pulling it through the ducting system without having to excavate. The City of Round Rock Engineering and Development Services Department and a team of consultants from PageSoutherlandPage are working with utility providers to finalize a route for underground facilities that does not interfere with tree roots and other features.

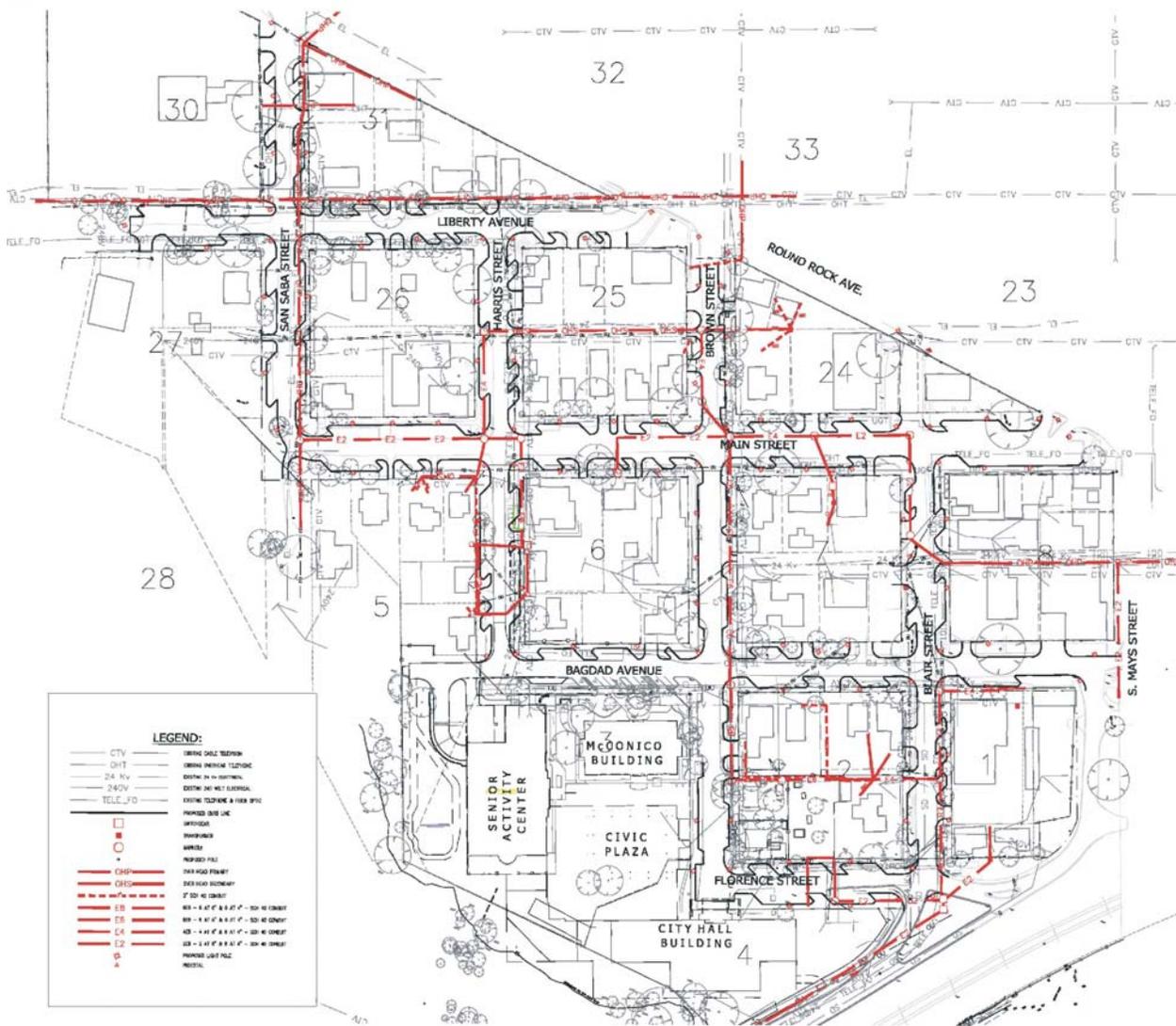
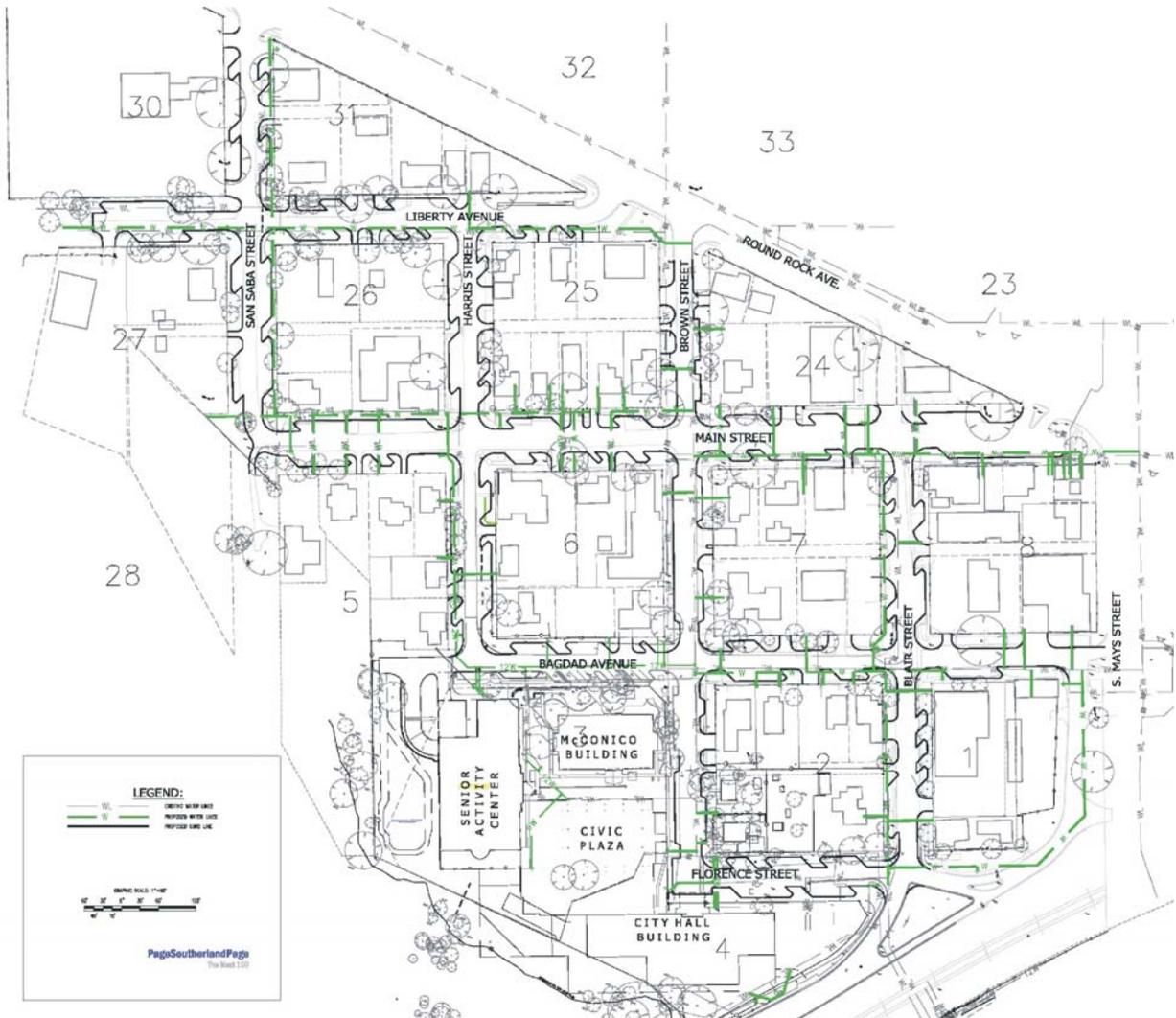


Figure 6.1: **Current and Proposed Southwest Downtown Dry Utility Plan.** Gray lines indicate existing dry utility (electric, phone, cable, communications) lines; proposed new and rerouted lines are in red. Dry utilities will be routed through underground channels so that new technologies can be threaded through them without excavating. Tree roots and other impediments may warrant minor modifications to the dry utility plan. *Illustration: PageSouthernlandPage.*



**Figure 6.2: Current and Proposed Southwest Downtown Water Plan.** Gray lines show existing water lines; green lines show proposed lines. Services will be “stubbed out” to vacant properties so that streets need not be torn up when future development occurs. Tree roots and other impediments may warrant minor modifications to the water plan. *Illustration: PageSoutherlandPage.*

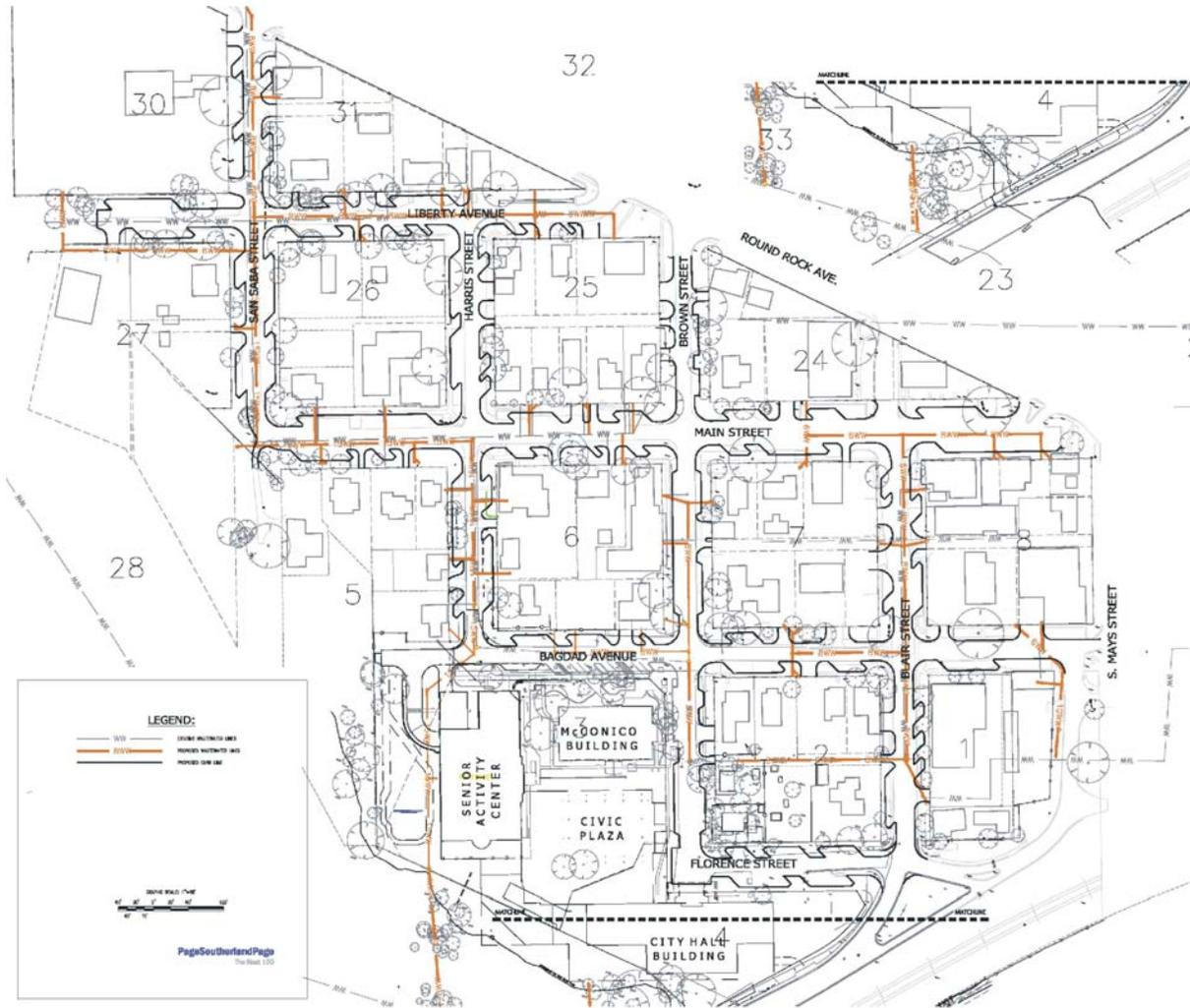


Figure 6.3: **Current and Proposed Southwest Downtown Wastewater Plan.** Gray lines indicate existing wastewater lines; orange lines are proposed lines. Overall capacity in the Plan Area will be increased. Tree roots and other impediments may warrant minor modifications to the wastewater plan. *Illustration: PageSoutherlandPage.*

## **6.2 Stormwater Management & Water Quality**

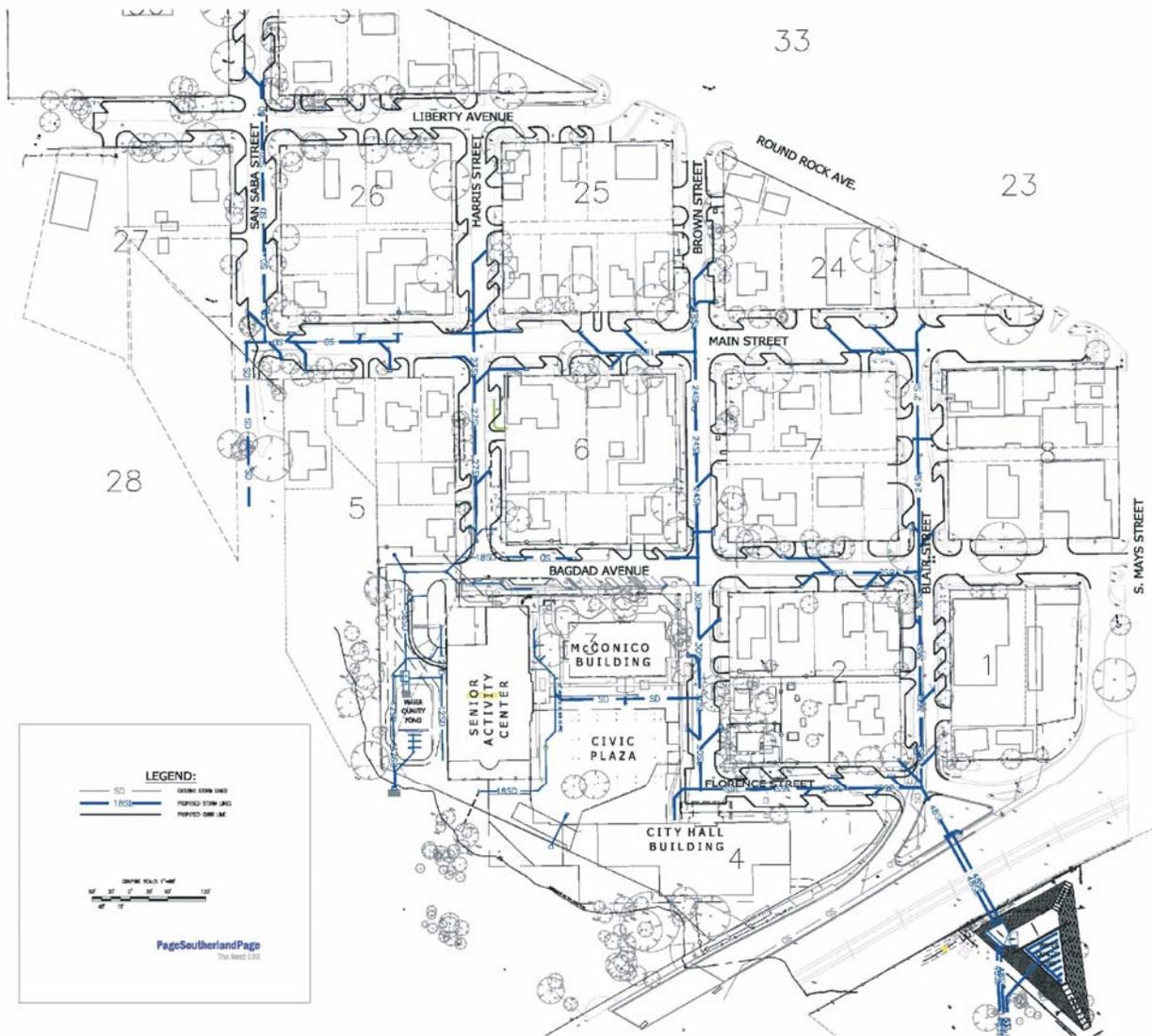
Two important components of drainage are stormwater management and water quality. Stormwater is managed through the collection and conveyance of runoff in order to avoid downstream flooding. Typically, developers are required to provide stormwater management for their individual projects, triggering the need to build a detention pond on-site. For the Plan Area, the City is designing and installing infrastructure to allow participation in the Regional Stormwater Management Program.

As part of the improvements occurring in the Plan Area, the City will provide two water quality ponds. The first water quality pond to be constructed is adjacent to the Senior Center and will serve the northwest portion of the Plan Area. The second will be constructed downstream, south of the railroad tracks along McNeil Road to serve the Plan Area as a whole. These ponds will serve current water quality needs while accommodating future new construction. Figure 6.4 shows the location of the two new facilities.

Water quality ponds reduce the impact of pollutants discharged to surface and groundwater. Maintaining water quality is important since the Plan Area is over the Edward's Aquifer Recharge Zone. Typically, a developer is required to provide water pollution abatement measures that meet the standards mandated by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ); however, the City intends to file a Water Pollution Abatement Plan (WPAP) with TCEQ for the Plan Area. While developers will still be required to file with the State, projects developed in compliance with the WPAP should not be required to provide individual water quality ponds.

## **6.3 Overall Plan for Utilities & Drainage**

PageSoutherlandPage has provided an illustration showing the placement of utilities in the Southwest Downtown Plan Area. This is shown in Figure 6.5.



**Figure 6.4: Current and Proposed Stormwater Management & Water Quality Plan.** Gray lines indicate existing storm lines; blue lines are proposed lines. Rather than requiring each property owner to create pond facilities on-site, stormwater will be conveyed to centralized water quality ponds. Tree roots and other impediments may warrant minor modifications to the stormwater and water quality plan. *Illustration: PageSoutherlandPage.*

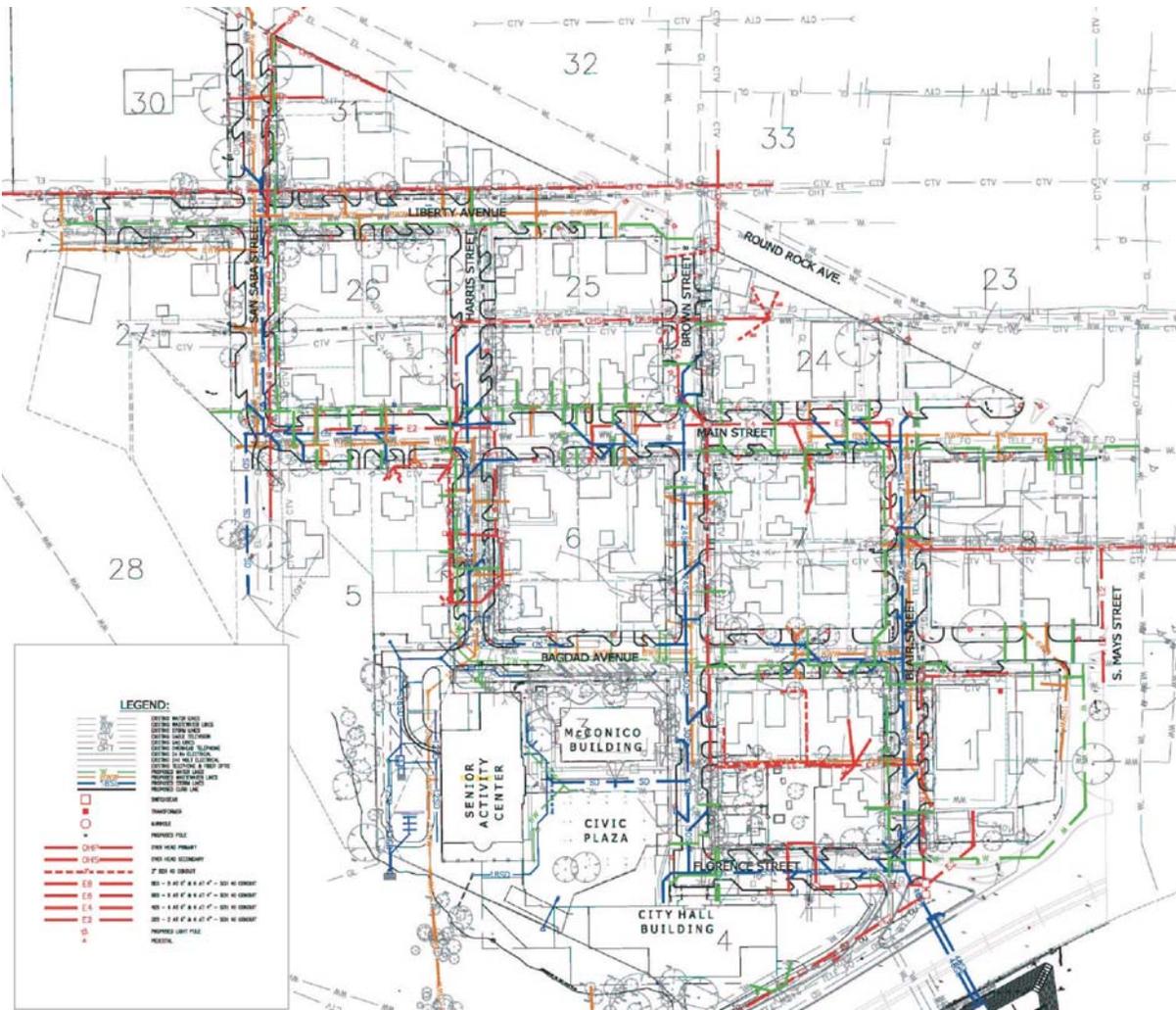


Figure 6.5: **Current and Proposed Combined Utility Plans.** Dry utilities (electrical, phone, cable – in red) will be moved to underground conduits, allowing lines to be added without requiring the excavation of existing lines. Water (green), wastewater (orange), and gas (black) service will be upgraded. Stormwater (blue) will be diverted to centralized water quality ponds. Tree roots and other impediments may warrant minor modifications of the proposed combined utility plan. *Illustration: PageSoutherlandPage.*

## **6.4 Utilities & Drainage Recommendations**

- Upgrade utilities and locate them underground where possible. For placement of utilities, utilize alleys where possible.
- Design utilities to simplify and accommodate future development in the Plan Area.
- Provide regional stormwater and water quality facilities to serve the entire Plan Area.

---

# Civic Design 7

---



Figure 7.1: Some of the notable trees in the Plan Area

Public space is always important, but especially when the streetscape design and an increased density and mixture of land uses encourage pedestrian activity, as in the Southwest Downtown Plan Area (Plan Area). Many of the design guideline objectives from the Carter Design Associates Report summarized in Chapter 3 (Land Use & Zoning) pertain to elements of civic design which contribute to the Plan Area's character. As discussed in this chapter, these can be physically incorporated into the Plan Area through additions to the public space, such as street trees, landscaping, street furniture and lighting. This chapter also addresses the addition of public plazas and trails, as well as the preservation of large trees.

## 7.1 Tree Preservation

Large tree preservation was the most significant specific appearance issue noted in response to the Southwest Downtown Survey (see Appendix B). Forty-six percent (46%) of Survey respondents found that large tree preservation was a concern that needed to be addressed. According to the Survey, preserving large trees was especially important to area residents and to those that have been in the Plan Area for more than ten years.

A number of significantly sized trees are located in the Plan Area, many of which predate settlement. The City of Round Rock has an existing Tree Protection and Preservation Ordinance in place that protects trees of a certain size and species that are in good health. If a

protected tree is removed, the loss must be mitigated by replacing it at a rate stated in the Tree Protection and Preservation Ordinance or by paying into a City tree fund. The amount paid into the fund is determined by the size of the tree that is removed. Since parcels of land are small and additional development in the Plan Area is anticipated, locating replacement trees on the same lot may not be possible. Replanting may be better suited in the City's right-of-way along the street as part of the public streetscape. The proposed streetscape design from the Street Improvement Plan presented in Chapter 4 (Streets & Circulation) incorporates extensive street tree plantings into its design. Large trees that already exist in the right-of-way will be preserved and incorporated into the streetscape design. The Tree Protection and Preservation Ordinance applies to all areas of the City. One change recommended for the Southwest Downtown Plan Area is that funds collected from the Southwest Downtown Plan Area should be allocated for the purpose of planting, maintaining and replacing the trees within the Plan Area.

Some of the trees in the Plan Area contribute significantly to the character of the area and therefore warrant possible additional preservation efforts. For the purposes of the Southwest Downtown Plan only, these trees are called "heritage trees". A "heritage tree" is large in size, healthy, and a noted specimen because of its age and presence in the Plan Area. In Figure 7.2, potential "heritage trees" are indicated because they appear to be of a significant size and a protected species, as identified through aerial photography and by inspection from the street. These trees should be further inspected at some point in the future. Many are on private property, and further inspection would allow them to be measured and their health determined.

Regardless of their designation as a "heritage tree" in the Plan, compliance with the City's Tree Protection and Preservation Ordinance is required if a tree meets the criteria for protection under the existing Ordinance. However, the designation of "heritage trees" in this Plan highlights a tree's importance to the neighborhood, and its preservation would be beneficial in maintaining the character of the Plan Area. This Plan recommends

additional review at a later date to develop the criteria by which additional protections for “heritage trees” will be incorporated into an ordinance.

Figure 7.2: These trees are potential candidates for “heritage tree” status according to the Southwest Downtown Plan. Further study is necessary to conclusively determine which trees qualify for this status and what additional protections will be recommended beyond those provided by the Tree Protection and Preservation Ordinance.

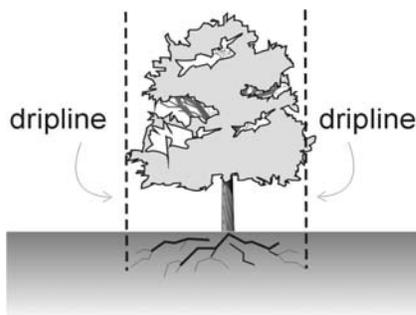
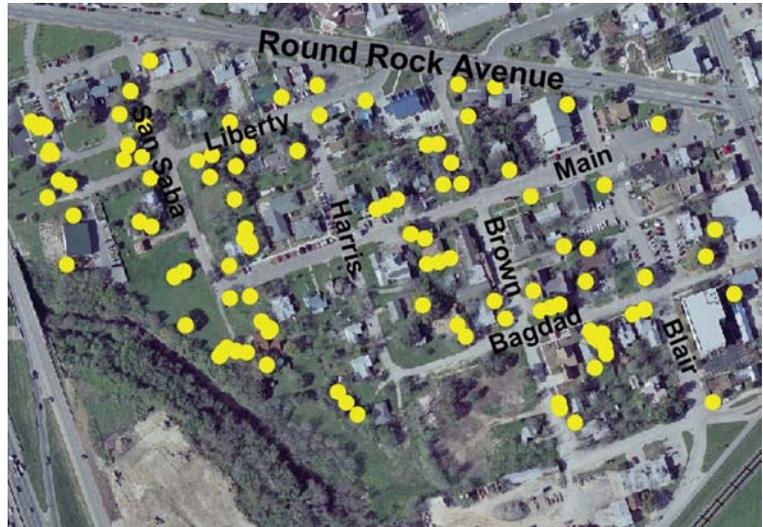


Figure 7.3: The ground surface within a tree’s dripline should not be covered up if the tree is expected to survive.

Accommodating “heritage trees” presents both challenges and opportunities. In general, the tree’s root system extends out as far as its canopy, which is also known as the “dripline”. A tree is likely to die if its roots are built or paved over. However, trees can be incorporated into courtyards and landscaping by using the area over the root system for seating. The area under the canopy should remain unpaved except by material that is sufficiently air- and water-permeable.

## 7.2 Public Parkland and Plazas

The City has identified several areas that will become defined public open spaces in the Plan Area.

### Lake Creek Corridor

The City of Round Rock adopted the “The Citywide Trails Master Plan” in April 2004. The purpose of The Trails Master Plan is to identify key trail corridors to establish a framework for a future citywide network of trails, green-belts, and recreation amenities linking major parks and features of Round Rock. One of the corridors identified, the Lake Creek Corridor, forms the southwestern boundary of the Plan Area. The entire Lake Creek

Corridor is approximately 3.25 miles long. The Corridor connects with the Round Rock West Greenbelt and terminates at the McNeil Road Corridor west of IH-35. The Corridor will connect the existing Lake Creek and Rabb Parks located at the confluence of Lake Creek and Brushy Creek east of IH-35. Round Rock’s Municipal Office Complex (MOC) offers an ideal site for a major trailhead facility along the Lake Creek Corridor.

### Round Rock Municipal Office Complex – Civic Plaza

The central feature of the MOC will be a civic plaza, framed by the McConico Building, the Senior Activity Center, and the City Hall. The Civic Plaza will serve as a community landmark to be utilized as a venue for public gatherings including artistic performances and lectures.

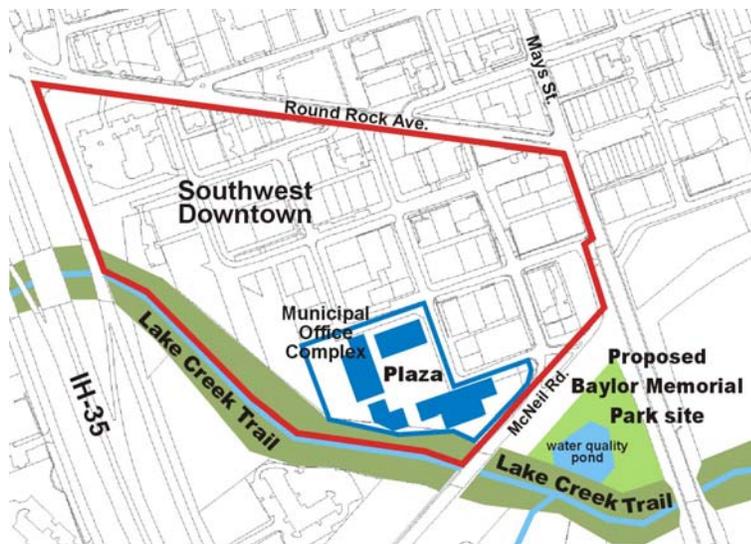


Figure 7.4: Major parks and public spaces in the Plan Area

### Baylor “Immortal Ten” Memorial Park

The City’s Historic Preservation Commission has proposed the development of a memorial park to remember ten Baylor University students who lost their lives on January 22, 1927. “The Immortal Ten”, as they became known, died when a passenger train hit the basketball team’s bus at the Round Rock railroad crossing on Mays Street (US 81). In 1935, an overpass was completed over the railroad crossing that was the crash



Figure 7.5: 1927 Baylor University Basketball team photo; newspaper photo of wreckage at the Mays Street railroad crossing



Addison Circle, Addison, Texas

Figure 7.6: Streets and sidewalks are some of the most significant, but often overlooked, public spaces.

site. Baylor University still remembers these “Immortal Ten” each year during homecoming and has expressed interest in helping raise funds to develop a memorial in Round Rock. The planned Baylor “Immortal Ten” Memorial Park would honor the team and be located in close proximity to the site of the accident. This park is in its conceptual stages. The proposed site along the railroad track at McNeil Road is on land currently owned by the City of Round Rock in the area where a water quality pond will be located. The proposed park could serve as a potential connection to Lake Creek Trail.

### 7.3 The Streetscape as Public Space

The street is the most significant public space in the Plan Area. An essential part of creating a vibrant mixed-use district is to have a safe and attractive pedestrian environment. Creating efficient access to street parking, parking lots and public facilities requires that people be able to walk safely to their destinations or between multiple destinations.

The Southwest Downtown Plan Area’s street improvements will contribute to the creation of a pedestrian-friendly street environment in the following ways:

**Separation from traffic** – Pedestrian safety and comfort are enhanced by separation from traffic with on-street parking, street trees and street furniture.

**Sidewalks** – Sidewalks proposed for the Plan Area are at least 7 ½ feet wide. Street furniture and outdoor displays provide amenities for pedestrians. However, sidewalks should have a pedestrian zone that is free from obstruction.

**Lighting** – Lighting is an important element in a mixed-use district where there are a variety of activities, some of which occur in the evening. Streets and pedestrian areas should be lit so residents and visitors to the area feel safe walking in the evening hours. The style of street lamp selected for the Municipal Office Complex will also be used throughout the Plan Area. The lampposts also include brackets for banners which can be used to advertise local events.

**Street Furniture** – Lampposts, benches, trash receptacles, bicycle racks, planters, and even newspaper racks, are all elements of street furniture. These examples add scale and character and also invite people to stop and enjoy the streetscape and public space. The furniture selected should complement historic buildings in the Plan Area and be compatible with newer construction. In addition, benches, bike racks, and trash receptacles will be installed at the Municipal Office Complex. A system of wayfinding signs, including street signs, directional signs and other district information signs, should be developed for the Plan Area.

**Landscaping** – Landscaping helps distinguish between public and private spaces. Plant materials can be used to define outdoor eating areas and pedestrian paths between parking and building entries. Adequate sight distance must be provided for motorists and pedestrians entering and exiting a site. Landscaping should not interfere with the efficiency of traffic and pedestrian movement. Where appropriate, street tree planting could replace street yard landscaping requirements for commercial uses; however, the need for a unified streetscape appearance will require that certain street trees be planted at the same time. The location of street trees is determined by Consultants PageSoutherlandPage’s Street Improvement Plan.

**Building Design Standards** – Building design standards for the proposed Mixed-Use Zoning District will encourage design that will help enhance the streetscape. Principles behind these standards are discussed in detail in Chapter 8 (Design Recommendations). A few examples are listed below.

- Reduce side and front setbacks.
- Increase building transparency at the street level.
- Provide shade structures.
- Prohibit parking in the street yard.
- Orient the main entrances of buildings to east-west streets, reinforcing the development pattern of the City’s original downtown plat.
- Limit driveways and other interruptions of the sidewalk.



Figure 7.7: Examples of “street furniture” near the McConico Building that will be used for the Municipal Office Complex. Lampposts, like those pictured above, will provide street lighting for the Plan Area.

- Add building offsets and details to enhance visual interest at the pedestrian level.
- Design building signage to be in harmony with the style and character of a development.

## **7.4 Civic Design Recommendations**

- Meet the five design guideline objectives outlined by Carter Design Associates:
  1. Maintain a sense of connection with the historic street grid and single-family house traditions, while accommodating new construction.
  2. Enhance connectivity between destinations.
  3. Minimize the impacts of increased automobile traffic.
  4. Enhance pedestrian activity.
  5. Continue the tradition of landscaped right-of-way and specimen tree planting at the street edge and in front yards.
- Identify and preserve healthy “heritage trees”.
- Ensure that large trees in the street’s right-of-way are accommodated and incorporated into the streetscape design.
- Earmark Tree Protection and Preservation Ordinance funds collected in the Plan Area for the purpose of planting, maintaining and replacing trees within the Southwest Downtown Plan Area.
- Establish a hike and bike trail along Lake Creek, as identified in the City’s Trails Master Plan.
- Construct a civic plaza at the center of the Municipal Office Complex, as identified in plans for the Complex.
- Acquire funding to create Baylor Memorial Park south of the railroad tracks and then establish connections between the park, Lake Creek Trail and the Plan Area so that there is easy and safe access to the Park.

- Coordinate with the City of Round Rock Parks and Recreation Department on public improvements that may affect the location of proposed hike and bike trails.
- Create a safe and attractive pedestrian environment in the Plan Area.
- Use landscaping or other structural elements to define open space and gathering spaces, and to distinguish private property from the public streetscape.
- Adopt revisions to the Landscaping Development Standards in the Zoning Ordinance which allow planting of street trees to replace street yard landscaping requirements for commercial uses.
- Ensure that future street tree plantings contribute to a uniform streetscape appearance and are planted according to Street Improvement Plan.
- Provide street lighting and recommend pedestrian-scaled lighting throughout the Plan Area.
- Provide wayfinding signs, including street signs, directional signs, vehicular directions, pedestrian directions, business wayfinding, and district information signs throughout the Plan Area.
- Apply the Signs for Historic Districts and Historic Landmarks Ordinance to the Southwest Downtown Plan Area.
- Encourage that the future replatting of lots reinforces the original downtown platting of narrow lots facing the East-West avenues, with building fronts coming up to the street and the rear of the building abutting the alley, middle of the block, or internal parking areas.

# Design Recommendations 8



*Addison Circle, Addison, Texas*

Figure 8.1: These setbacks are appropriate for the building type and adjacent buildings.



*400 West Main Street, Round Rock, Texas*

Figure 8.2: An office suite that has a "residential look"

The purpose of this chapter's design recommendations is to assist property owners, developers and designers in creating projects that are consistent with the character that the neighborhood wants to preserve and perpetuate; for example, the residential styling of many of the office buildings that exist in the Plan Area. The design recommendations included in this chapter apply to the portion of Southwest Downtown Plan Area (Plan Area) that is recommended for rezoning to Mixed-Use (MU-1). Designing for a mixed-use district at the scale of a traditional neighborhood requires attention to design and detail to ensure compatibility between various types of land uses and buildings. This chapter aims to define an approach to mixed-use design. Although many of these design approaches are characteristic of traditional design, they are not meant to dictate a particular architectural style but rather an appropriate scale and level of detail that encourage disparate uses to coexist harmoniously.

During Southwest Downtown public workshops, preferences to retain a residentially scaled neighborhood were expressed on numerous occasions. The following strategies could be used to accommodate design at a residential scale:

- Establish setbacks that are appropriate for the building type and adjacent buildings.
- Encourage structures other than civic buildings have a "residential look" so that their scale is appropriate for the neighborhood.
- Preserve large trees.

In public workshops, neighbors examined issues of height, setbacks, buffering and compatibility between existing and new uses. These elements will be addressed in the proposed MU-1 Zoning District via a set of development standards for new development and for expansions to existing development. The intended use of the proposed Mixed-Use Zoning Ordinance is to implement density and design standards, originally during the City’s site plan development process. Additionally, proposed ordinance design guidelines are explained in-depth in this chapter to further address the desires of the neighborhood and meet the goals of the Southwest Downtown Plan (the Plan).

Building design issues highlighted in this chapter:

- Height
- Setbacks
- Buffering
- Compatibility

## 8.1 Providing a Mixture of Uses

As mentioned in Chapter 3 (Land Use), “mixed-use” refers to multiple uses that are permitted on the same lot, or even within the same structure. In the Plan Area, new commercial development could provide local services; however, the Plan Area could grow to become destination-based, where people come from outside the neighborhood to shop, eat at neighborhood restaurants, use local services and explore entertainment options. The expansion of the Municipal Office Complex will add significant numbers of people in the Plan Area during business hours. In addition to the housing and commercial uses that already exist in the Plan Area, new housing, open space and commercial development will provide the mix of uses desired by the neighborhood. Examples of mixed-use development are shown to the right.

Residential uses are a major component of mixed-use development. The proposed Mixed-Use Zoning Ordinance will continue to allow new single-family development, but additional types of residential development will also be permitted. These residential uses include townhouses, upper-story residences, and live/work units. Design standards specific to these uses will be included in the proposed Mixed-Use Zoning Ordinance.



*Santana Row, San Jose, California*



*Downtown Palo Alto, California*



*McKinney Avenue, Dallas, Texas*

Figure 8.3: Examples of mixed-use buildings



*Elton Lane, Austin, Texas*



*Texas Street, Portland, Oregon*

Figure 8.4: Row houses are defined as individual units connected at the sides by common walls with private access to each unit from the street. Units often have a narrow front façade with parking in the rear.

For townhouses, some of the standards which could be included in an ordinance are listed below. Images provided to the left illustrate examples.

- Townhouses should be designed in a “row house” form. Row houses are multiple housing units built adjacent to one another with common walls and separate access to each unit from the street. These units are often 2 or 2½ stories tall with raised front steps off the sidewalk to access the main entrance. Units often have a narrow front façade and rear parking access.
- The front building setback could be reduced to engage the pedestrian on the sidewalk. For residential buildings, visual privacy can be improved by raising the entrance and main floor level at least four feet.
- The length of walls facing a public street could incorporate vertical divisions in order to reduce visual building bulk. Building offsets and individual roof lines, separated by recessed entries, could also help to define individual units.



*Fort Road, Saint Paul, Minnesota*

Figure 8.5: Two floors of residences over ground-floor retail.

For upper-story residences, the ground floor of the building would be occupied by non-residential uses with apartments on the upper floor or floors of the building. For single-story structures, one residential unit could be permitted on the ground floor in addition to the commercial uses. Residential units of a building should have separate entrances from the commercial units.



*Addison Circle, Addison, Texas*

Figure 8.6: Residences over shops. The façade details make a few large shops appear to be many small ones.

“Live/work” units also can provide residential spaces in a mixed-use district. A live/work unit is defined as a single unit where both business activities occur and a dwelling area is provided. The residence is typically occupied by a person responsible for the work performed on the premises. The unit should have the elements of a dwelling unit, including a kitchen and a bathroom. Often, these buildings have commercial exteriors. This differs from a mixed-use building since both the residential and commercial components are in the same unit. This also differs from a home occupation in that there are fewer restrictions on the type and extent of the commercial use.

## 8.2 Building Height, Setbacks, Buffering & Compatibility

Since a mixed-use district includes both residential and commercial uses permitted in close proximity to one another, it is necessary to minimize conflicts that may occur between neighboring properties with different land uses.

### Height

Controlling the relative height of adjacent buildings is the primary means of improving compatibility between different uses. A multi-story building might create light and privacy problems for a smaller building next to it. A block with buildings that are all the same height can have a uniform, austere look. Varied heights appear more casual and spontaneous. The maximum height proposed for the Mixed-Use Zoning District in the Southwest Downtown Plan Area is three stories, not to exceed fifty feet. As mentioned in Chapter 3 (Land Use), additional restrictions apply to development adjacent to existing single-family residences. See page 8-5 for specific examples of compatibility issues relating to existing single-family uses.

### Setbacks

A setback is the required distance between the structure and the property line. Setbacks apply to all sides of a building and create an element of control over the density and character of development. Minimum setbacks are also established for safety purposes such as to prevent the spread of fire. Attached buildings must be separated by an appropriate fireproof wall. These common-wall buildings are often found in traditional architecture in the forms of attached storefronts and row houses. Setbacks can also be used to ease the transition between adjacent buildings of different scales or conflicting uses.



*Orenco Town Center, Hillsboro, Oregon*

Figure 8.7: The visual bulk of this three-story building is minimized by its height, variation in the wall plane and open ground floor.



*Crawford Square, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania*

Figure 8.8: Variation in height and massing add interest and informality to a streetscape.



*American Can, Baltimore, Maryland*

Figure 8.9: An appropriate setback creates harmony between offices of different scales (and an outdoor courtyard).



Figure 8.10: Buffers need not be large to be effective. The front yard of this house would be undefined without this simple picket fence.



*Bayou Place, Houston, Texas*

Figure 8.11: A restaurant with outdoor seating can be an asset to a neighborhood – *if it's at a reasonable scale.*



*Seattle, Washington*

Figure 8.12: The building on the left was built in 1993 of economical modern materials, but complements its historical neighbor's orientation, setback and proportions.

## Buffering

Specific design elements may be required in order to improve the compatibility between different uses. Some of the more common buffering methods include landscaping requirements, sound walls, or other specific building design requirements. Buffering elements provide interest and protection for small spaces.

## Compatibility

Compatibility is the ability of land uses to exist in harmonious or congenial combination. The main compatibility issue in a mixed-use district exists between single-family residences and other land uses. Compatibility standards are development measures necessary for a new use moving in next to an existing disparate use. The most common conflicts that may arise have to do with the differences in the size of buildings on adjacent lots, noise and traffic generation, hours of operation, and possible odors.

In order to improve compatibility in the Plan Area, buildings located next to existing detached single-family residences should meet additional requirements which will be listed in the proposed Mixed-Use Zoning Ordinance. Examples of these requirements could include:

- Setting the new structure at least five feet from the neighboring property line and maintaining a minimum ten-foot separation between structures at the sides
- Creating a standard limiting the height of a building that abuts a single-family residence
- Requiring translucent glass on any windows that face an existing single-family residence
- Developing a standard for fences requiring a finished face abutting existing single-family residences
- Recommending that a new use that abuts an existing single-family residential use not have a full commercial kitchen. Uses with limited kitchens, such as coffee houses or sandwich shops could still be permitted.

Another compatibility issue between land uses is the privacy of residents of the Plan Area. Privacy is not necessarily improved with distance from another use. Deeper setbacks often offer a more direct view into a neighboring unit. A residence located close to the street can improve its privacy by raising the main living area so pedestrians cannot look directly in a window at the street level. When uses are in close proximity to one another, translucent side windows can provide increased privacy. Common fireproof walls, as are required between row-houses, offer greater privacy between residential units than houses with standard side setbacks.

### 8.3 Lighting, Landscaping & Sign Design Elements

#### Lighting

The positioning and location of light fixtures is important to ensure safety while simultaneously protecting residences from excessive light overflow. Light overflow can be prevented by arranging fixtures to deflect light away from residential areas. Lighting should also be oriented so that direct glare or excessive illumination onto the street does not interfere with the vision of drivers. Fixtures should be small, shielded and directed toward the building rather than toward the street to minimize glare for pedestrians as well.

The design and materials of lighting fixtures should be consistent with the character of the Plan Area. Fully recessed downlights, gooseneck lights or other incandescent fixtures appropriate to the style of a building are preferable. Incandescent white light is encouraged. Exposed conduits are discouraged. For street and parking lot lights, the height of fixtures should be low enough to prevent the overflow of light onto adjacent properties. As mentioned in the previous chapter, antique style lampposts are planned for the Plan Area's street lighting.



*22<sup>nd</sup> Street, Austin, Texas*

Figure 8.13: The developer of these condominiums linked three large old houses with structures that are recessed and painted gray to blend into the background. Looking down the street the connecting structures between the original buildings are almost undetectable.



*New Roc City, New Rochelle, New York*



*CityPlace, West Palm Beach, Florida*

Figure 8.14: Appropriate lighting illuminates the shop fronts and pedestrian areas, the store signs and the architectural features of the building.



*Seattle, Washington*

Figure 8.15: Even a small landscape area softens the edge of a parking lot considerably.



*Palo Alto, California*

Figure 8.16: A “Hollywood drive” (with a planting strip between tire paths) is less obtrusive than a full-width driveway.



*Addison Circle, Addison, Texas*



*Bowie Town Center, Bowie, Maryland*

Figure 8.17: These shops use signs on their facades, awnings and umbrellas, all of which are small enough to engage the passing pedestrian.

## Landscaping

Landscaping is recommended to accent building entries and to screen the perimeter of parking lots and structured garage parking. Plant materials can be used to soften hard building lines and reduce the appearance of building bulk. Additional landscaping may be desired on the part of a property owner or tenant to create a buffer between two uses. Landscaping standards will be included in the proposed Mixed-Use Ordinance.

In other zoning districts, tree planting is required in the street yard. Because of the extensive nature of the street tree plantings in the Street Improvement Plan discussed in Chapter 4 (Streets & Circulation), it may be appropriate to consider that street trees be credited towards the required street yard plantings. The need for a unified streetscape appearance will require coordination of timing of street tree planting. The location of street trees is determined by the Street Improvement Plan.

## Signs

Signs should be in harmony with the style and character of a building. They are an integral design component of the building architecture, building materials, landscaping and overall site development. The City has an existing sign ordinance with which all signs must comply. The City also has an additional sign ordinance which applies to all signs for buildings with historic zoning. The size and design specifications in the City’s historic sign ordinance are better suited for the Plan Area because of the scale and attention to design that is desired in the Plan Area. The Planning and Community Development Department anticipates making some modifications to this ordinance in the near future to make it more user-friendly. Revisions may increase the potential for well-made and creatively designed signs. This Plan recommends that the Signs for Historic Districts and Historic Landmarks Ordinance be amended to include the Southwest Downtown Plan Area within its purview.

## 8.4 Development of a Pedestrian-Friendly Neighborhood

To encourage the development of a pedestrian-friendly neighborhood, emphasis should be placed on the orientation of buildings, walkways and landscape amenities to enhance the safety and convenience of pedestrian movement. Site and landscape designs should incorporate outdoor pedestrian use areas with amenities such as trellises, shade trees, raised planters, and landscaped berms to create useable, inviting, semi-protected areas. Public courtyards and plazas should be visible from street corridors and major pedestrian access routes to encourage their use and ensure safety.

As mentioned in Chapter 7 (Civic Design), design standards to be incorporated into the proposed Mixed-Use Zoning Ordinance may include:

- Allowing construction to the front or side property line
- Prohibiting parking in the street yard
- Discouraging new curb cuts for individual driveways, which would interfere with pedestrian traffic
- Requiring a certain degree of transparency in the form of windows and openings on the ground floor of buildings
- Requiring periodic offsets and changes in a façades of large buildings to maintain pedestrian scale
- Encouraging building façade detail such as awnings, to add visual interest
- Encouraging the illumination of a building's façade to highlight architectural details.

Regardless of its height, a building's ground level, including wall and window heights, should be human-scaled in order to create comfortable pedestrian areas at the street level. Store display windows and landscaping provides visual interest for pedestrians. Signage on buildings can also be oriented to pedestrians.



*Downtown Palo Alto, California*

Figure 8.18: The openness of the shop on the ground floor of this building is interesting and inviting to the pedestrian.



*Addison Circle, Addison, Texas*

Figure 8.19: Outdoor seating areas bring activity to the street, making the street a place to linger, as well as to pass through.



*Seattle, Washington*

Figure 8.20: Sidewalks are improved with benches and seating areas (which can be incorporated into landscaping features).



*Addison Circle, Addison, Texas*

Figure 8.21: The entrance to this public parking garage does not interrupt the surrounding streetscape.



*Addison Circle, Addison, Texas*

Figure 8.22: Street trees create a separation between pedestrian and auto areas, while providing shade for both.

New or renovated buildings, especially those with first floor retail, should front with windows and entryways to the street. This is particularly true on West Main Street where it has been suggested by Carter Design Associates (the consultants who completed the design guidelines study for the Southwest Downtown Plan Area – see Appendix A, Land Use Analysis) to build to the front property line where possible, in order to mirror the development of East Main Street. Grouping commercial buildings will also create pedestrian zones where people can visit shops, restaurants and services without getting back into their vehicles. In addition, buildings could be designed so they do not have driveways and parking areas that interrupt the continuity of the streetscape.

Creating a physical separation between vehicular and pedestrian movement, wherever possible, is important when creating a pedestrian-friendly streetscape. Parking areas should have limited street frontage. Additionally, retail and other uses with significant pedestrian traffic and street frontage should not be interrupted by driveways. Safe pedestrian access should be provided to the entrances of commercial uses from the street or from nearby parking.

With respect to the streetscape, street trees provide shade for pedestrians. Benches, trash receptacles, and bicycle racks can be provided for use by pedestrians and cyclists. Lighting should also be provided for pedestrians during evening hours. These elements lend scale and character to a pedestrian area and encourage the use of the street.

## 8.5 Development that Meets Proposed Standards of Design

The photographs included in this chapter provide examples of development that may meet proposed standards of design in a mixed-use zoning district, but they are not meant to dictate a particular architectural style.



*Downtown Palo Alto, California*

*Atomic City, Austin, Texas*

Figure 8.23: Retail in residentially scaled buildings is approachable and inviting.



*Orenco Station, Hillsboro, Oregon*

*McKinney Avenue, Dallas, Texas*

Figure 8.24: The facades of these large buildings are divided into vertical segments to bring their visual bulk down to a pedestrian scale.



*Santa Cruz, California*

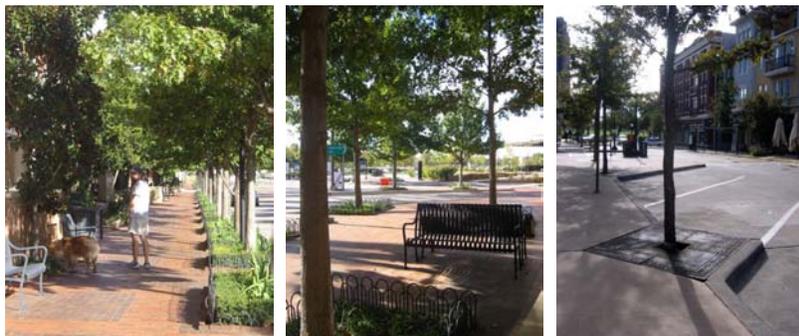
*(center and right) McKinney Avenue, Dallas, Texas*

Figure 8.25: Drawing a distinction between the ground and upper floors with an awning, moldings, or even a change in color, frames the sidewalk's area and relates even tall buildings to the pedestrian scale.



*(left and right) Addison Circle, Addison, Texas*

Figure 8.26: This outdoor eating area, shown in both photos, is clearly separated from the sidewalk by a low wall and grille.



*(left and center) Addison Circle, Addison, Texas*

*McKinney Avenue, Dallas, Texas*

Figure 8.27: Street trees shelter pedestrian areas, making both residential and commercial streets more inviting.

Figure 8.28: Small, intimate courtyards can be tucked into small outdoor spaces such as between buildings.



*Santa Cruz, California*



*Seattle, Washington*

Figure 8.29: Larger courtyards create inviting public spaces.



*CityPlace, West Palm Beach, Florida*



*26 Doors Shopping Center, Austin, Texas*

Figure 8.30: Street furniture such as benches and planters distinguish areas for vehicles and pedestrians, walkers and browsers.



*McKinney Avenue, Dallas, Texas (center & right) Addison Circle, Addison, Texas*



*Addison Circle, Addison, Texas*



*McKinney Avenue, Dallas, Texas*

Figure 8.31: Pocket parks provide green space, inviting the passerby to pause away from the activity of the street.



*(left and right) Addison Circle, Addison, Texas*

## 8.6 Design Recommendations

### Summary

- Incorporate design standards to minimize land use conflicts that may occur between neighboring properties.
- Ensure that landscaping, signage, and light fixture design reflect the recommendations provided in the Plan.
- Encourage the development of a pedestrian-friendly neighborhood, with emphasis on the orientation of buildings, walkways and landscape amenities to enhance the safety and convenience of pedestrian movement.
- Ensure that outdoor pedestrian use areas include amenities such as trellises, shade trees, raised planters, and landscaped berms to create inviting outdoor areas.
- Adopt a mixed-use zoning district that reflects the proposed design standards presented in the Southwest Downtown Plan.

# Conclusion 9

---

The following is a summary of the recommendations expressed throughout the Southwest Downtown Plan (the Plan). The recommendations may be implemented through various means, including changes to City codes, new construction, and road improvement projects. Implementation mechanisms are outlined in Section 9.2 (pages 9-8 to 9-10). Adoption of the Southwest Downtown Plan is the first step in the implementation process, and the recommendations contained within will require subsequent action plans and ordinances. Public hearings, recommendation by the Planning and Zoning Commission, and adoption by the City Council will be required in most cases.

## 9.1 Summary of Southwest Downtown Plan Recommendations

### Land Use & Zoning Recommendations:

#### Land Use:

- Adopt a mixed-use zoning district for the majority of the Southwest Downtown Plan Area incorporating the desired land uses identified by neighborhood public workshop participants.
- Include design guidelines for development in the Mixed-Use Zoning District that meet the goals of the Southwest Downtown Plan.

- Complete the Municipal Office Complex and remaining proposed public facilities.
- Rezone the Municipal Office Complex to a Public Facilities District.
- Rezone the Lake Creek Corridor to an Open Space District (OS).
- Allow the block on the corner of Round Rock Avenue and IH-35 to retain General Commercial (C-1) Zoning since it has IH-35 frontage.
- Retain historic development patterns wherever possible. Site design should relate to the existing historic fabric.
- Identify and protect sites, buildings and structures with significant cultural, aesthetic and social characteristics which are part of the City of Round Rock's heritage.
- Plan public space to encourage pedestrian use. Spaces should be linked to key activity centers and pedestrian routes where possible. Site and building design leading to and surrounding public spaces should help encourage their use.
- Encourage new development that provides for a mixture of uses, including retail, office and residential.
- Ensure that the combination and intensity of land uses is compatible with current and future development patterns, the character of the surrounding neighborhood, and existing adjacent land uses.
- Provide additional development requirements for properties abutting existing single-family residences to ensure compatibility between adjacent properties.
- Provide guidance in the development of new structures that bears in mind the Plan's land use recommendations and addresses the compatibility issues voiced at public workshops.

**Mixed-Use Zoning:**

- Encourage and support a diversity of businesses and services downtown.
- Permit a range of housing options, including single-family residences, townhouses, upper-story residences, and live/work units.
- Adopt development standards to encourage the redevelopment of lots that would not be allowed under current commercial standards.
- Encourage development in the Plan Area that meets the intent of the Southwest Downtown Plan and the proposed Mixed-Use Zoning District. The application of design guidelines to all development projects emphasizes quality architecture and development, and places a high value on varied and distinctive building designs, sensitive treatment of historic resources, generous landscaping to accent buildings, and high quality materials and construction.
- Develop compatibility standards to ensure existing single-family residences are protected from excessive light, noise, traffic or other disruptive nuisances.

**Streets & Circulation Recommendations:**

- Implement plans to improve streets by adding new curbs, gutters, sidewalks and on-street parking.
- Minimize disruption to businesses and property owners while street and sidewalk construction is in progress.
- Increase and define on-street parking.
- Fund the planting of street trees as part of the Street Improvement Plan.
- Continue to work with property owners during the implementation of the Street Improvement Plan to incorporate site-specific changes if necessary.
- Encourage vehicular access from the rear of a property in order to accommodate continuous sidewalks and additional on-street parking.

- Continue to address traffic and circulation issues that were raised at neighborhood public workshops.
- Improve continuity through consistent street design, pavement marking & signage.
- Establish a strong pedestrian connection between the Southwest Downtown Plan Area and future trails and open space.
- Examine the potential of the three street layout proposals brought forward by the neighborhood and outlined in Chapter 4 (Streets and Circulation). Complete necessary traffic studies and explore funding options to assess feasibility.
- Ensure coordination with the City of Round Rock Parks and Recreation Department for proposed street layout changes to ensure a hike and bike trail can be located under the proposed bridge connecting Main Street to the IH-35 frontage road, and to assist in the design of the public space that would result from the proposed redesign of the Round Rock Avenue-Liberty-Mays intersections.

### **Parking Recommendations:**

- Implement an overall parking strategy for the Southwest Downtown Plan Area that accommodates changes in density over time. This includes exploring options for public surface lots, commercial parking, and ultimately, structured garage parking.
- Maximize on-street parking. For streets that have not yet been improved, continue to use available on-street parking; however, temporary parking improvements may be necessary for non-residential uses until street improvements are completed.
- Require that residential uses provide parking on-site.
- Provide adequate parking for commercial buildings by emphasizing the use of on-street parking and shared parking facilities.

- Provide an exemption from parking requirements in the proposed Mixed-Use Zoning District for non-residential land uses where square footage of the existing building is not increased.
- Implement alternative parking standards to address the unique conditions of the Plan Area.
- Adopt shared parking agreement requirements as part of the parking requirements section of the City's Zoning Ordinance.
- Explore potential locations and financing mechanisms for public surface parking lots in the Plan Area.
- Design structured garage parking so it does not diminish the pedestrian experience, either through appropriate design or by constructing parking structures underground.
- Encourage access to parking via rear driveways and alleys.
- Ensure that alleys remain clear and passable at all times.

### **Utilities & Drainage Recommendations:**

- Upgrade utilities and locate them underground where possible. For placement of utilities, utilize alleys where possible.
- Design utilities to simplify and accommodate future development in the Plan Area.
- Provide regional stormwater and water quality facilities to serve the entire Plan Area.

### **Civic Design Recommendations:**

- Meet the five design guideline objectives outlined by Carter Design Associates:
  1. Maintain a sense of connection with the historic street grid and single-family house traditions, while accommodating new construction.

2. Enhance connectivity between destinations.
  3. Minimize the impacts of increased automobile traffic.
  4. Enhance pedestrian activity.
  5. Continue the tradition of landscaped right-of-way and specimen tree planting at the street edge and in front yards.
- Identify and preserve healthy “heritage trees”.
  - Ensure that large trees in the street’s right-of-way are accommodated and incorporated into the streetscape design.
  - Earmark Tree Protection and Preservation Ordinance funds collected in the Plan Area for the purpose of planting, maintaining and replacing trees within the Southwest Downtown Plan Area.
  - Establish a hike and bike trail along Lake Creek, as identified in the City’s Trails Master Plan.
  - Construct a civic plaza at the center of the Municipal Office Complex, as identified in plans for the Complex.
  - Acquire funding to create Baylor Memorial Park south of the railroad tracks and then establish connections between the park, Lake Creek Trail and the Plan Area so that there is easy and safe access to the Park.
  - Coordinate with the City of Round Rock Parks and Recreation Department on public improvements that may affect the location of proposed hike and bike trails.
  - Create a safe and attractive pedestrian environment in the Plan Area.
  - Use landscaping or other structural elements to define open space and gathering spaces, and to distinguish private property from the public streetscape.
  - Adopt revisions to the Landscaping Development Standards in the Zoning Ordinance which allow planting of street trees to replace street yard landscaping requirements for commercial uses.

- Ensure that future street tree plantings contribute to a uniform streetscape appearance and are planted according to the Street Improvement Plan.
- Provide street lighting and recommend pedestrian-scaled lighting throughout the Plan Area.
- Provide wayfinding signs, including street signs, directional signs, vehicular directions, pedestrian directions, business wayfinding and district information signs throughout the Plan Area.
- Apply the Signs for Historic Districts and Historic Landmarks Ordinance to the Southwest Downtown Plan Area.
- Encourage that the future replatting of lots reinforces the original downtown platting of narrow lots facing the East-West avenues, with building fronts coming up to the street and the rear of the building abutting the alley, middle of the block, or internal parking areas.

### **Design Recommendations:**

- Incorporate design standards to minimize land use conflicts that may occur between neighboring properties.
- Ensure that landscaping, signage, and light fixture design reflect the recommendations provided in the Plan.
- Encourage the development of a pedestrian-friendly neighborhood, with emphasis on the orientation of buildings, walkways and landscape amenities to enhance the safety and convenience of pedestrian movement.
- Ensure that outdoor pedestrian use areas include amenities such as trellises, shade trees, raised planters, and landscaped berms to create inviting outdoor areas.
- Adopt a mixed-use zoning district that reflects the proposed design standards presented in the Southwest Downtown Plan.

## 9.2 Implementation

The adoption of the Southwest Downtown Plan plays an integral part in the future development of the Southwest Downtown Plan Area (Plan Area). Implementation of the Plan is proposed through the following ordinances and policies:

- Adoption of a mixed-use zoning district
- Implementation of the Street Improvement Plan and associated recommendations
- Implementation of parking plan policies proposed in Chapter 5 (Parking) and the examination of a future parking district
- Development of criteria for additional protections of “heritage trees” in the Southwest Downtown Plan Area
- Adoption of a revised historic sign ordinance to include the Southwest Downtown Plan Area

In order to better implement the recommendations of the Southwest Downtown Plan, a mixed-use zoning district is proposed for the Plan Area. A summary of the proposed MU-1 Zoning District (MU-1) can be found in Appendix D. This new Zoning District will allow a mixture of uses to be permitted and co-exist, without compromising the quality of life of residents in single-family dwellings. The MU-1 District proposes design standards that will complement and enhance the Plan Area and meet the goals of the Southwest Downtown Plan.

The Plan is intended to be used as a guiding tool to encourage new development while accommodating existing single-family residences. The Plan provides background on why a mixed-use zoning district would work well in the Southwest Downtown Plan Area. Design recommendations assist in defining the look of a pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use neighborhood.

At the time of Southwest Downtown Plan adoption, a consulting team from PageSoutherlandPage is continuing to work on the development of the Municipal Office Complex and the associated plan for street improvements and utility upgrades. Minor modifications may be

required to the layout as construction begins due to constraints imposed by existing tree roots and other impediments.

Infrastructure improvements should begin in 2005, and are expected to occur in phases. A construction phasing schedule is currently being developed to reflect the construction timeline and availability of funding. Due to the phased nature of infrastructure improvements, some new uses may be established in advance of nearby on-street parking improvements. In the interim, paving and striping may be required on the streets adjacent to new non-residential uses. These temporary improvements should be in accordance with the proposed Street Improvement Plan. Another objective of the construction phasing is to minimize disruption to businesses and property owners while public improvements are in progress.

As mentioned earlier, funding for street trees and parking will be considered as part of the Southwest Downtown Plan implementation process. As the Plan Area develops, it may be necessary to establish a parking district which would allow property owners that cannot develop their required parking on-site to pay into a district-wide parking fund to finance public parking facilities. The City is looking to strategically place public surface parking lots in the Plan Area. These lots may eventually need to be developed as structured parking garages at a future date. If shared parking is to be encouraged, the information required to be included in a shared parking agreement will need to be adopted formally as part of the parking requirements in the City's Zoning Ordinance.

Existing trees on private lots will need to be inspected more closely to determine their size and condition as new development progresses. Funds that are set aside for tree planting and replacement should be used in the Plan Area.

As mentioned in Chapter 8 (Design Recommendations), the Signs for Historic Districts and Historic Landmarks Ordinance should be revised and then amended to include the Southwest Downtown Plan Area. The types of signs that would be permitted in the Plan Area would be similar to many of those found there now. However, the design

of signs according to a revised historic sign ordinance would ensure that the signs are complementary to the scale and character of the Plan Area.

It is clear that on-going review of the Southwest Downtown Plan Area to assess the effects of Plan implementation will be required. The proposed Mixed-Use Zoning Ordinance is the first of its kind for the City of Round Rock, so City Staff will continue to review design and development standards to ensure that they continue to support the Plan Area's development pattern.

# *Appendices*

---



# *Appendix* *Land Use Analysis* **A**

---

The two figures in this appendix are given as a supplement to Chapter 3 (Land Use & Zoning). These figures give a more detailed examination of the research and discussion that contributed to the development of the land use and zoning recommendations in the Southwest Downtown Plan and in the proposed Mixed-Use Zoning District.

## **Land Use Definitions**

One of the first exercises in the neighborhood public workshops was to examine how land uses in the Plan Area are changing and determine which uses the neighborhood wanted to encourage. In land use voting exercises at the June 6 and 24<sup>th</sup>, 2003 public meetings, lists of land uses under consideration were posted with their definitions and participants voted their preferences. The results became the basis for the permitted land uses in the proposed Mixed-Use Zoning District. Figure A.1 lists the land uses and definitions from these exercises. Only the preferred uses are included. Those that were eliminated in voting have been omitted.

Figure A.1: Land Use Definitions

| Use   | Definition as Provided in Public Workshop on Land Uses   |
|---|--|
| <b>Administrative and Business Services</b> | Offices or private firms or organizations which are primarily used for the provisions of executive, management or administrative services. Typical uses include administrative offices, and services including real estate, insurance, property management, investment, personnel, travel, secretarial services, telephone answering, photocopy and reproduction and business offices of public utilities, organization and associations, or other use classifications when the service rendered is that customarily associated with administrative office services. |
| <b>Assisted Living</b>                      | A combination of housing, supportive services, personalized assistance, and health care designed to respond to the individual needs of those persons who need help with activities of daily living but who do not require continuous skilled nursing care.   |
| <b>Bed and Breakfast</b>                    | A private residence or commercial operation that offers sleeping accommodations and serves breakfasts at no extra cost to its lodgers.   |
| <b>Commercial Parking</b>                   | Parking of motor vehicles on a temporary basis within a privately owned off-street parking facility, other than accessory to a principal use. Typical uses include commercial parking lots or parking garages.   |
| <b>Community Service Facilities</b>         | Uses of a public, nonprofit, or charitable nature providing professional service of an ongoing education, training, or non-correctional counseling to the general public, on a regular basis, without a residential component. Typical uses include libraries, museums, senior centers, community centers, youth club facilities, and social service facilities. Does not include soup kitchens.   |
| <b>Day Care</b>                             | Day care (in home): A residential use, in which an individual or organization provides daytime care for six or fewer children not related by blood or marriage to, or not the legal wards or foster children of, the attendant adult.<br>Day care (all other): A non-residential building where care, supervision, custody or control is provided for children or adults for any part of a 24-hour day up to 12 hours of total daily operation.  |
| <b>Eating Establishments</b>                | An establishment engaged in the preparation and retail sale of food and beverages for on-premises consumption. Typical uses include restaurants, fast food restaurants, diners, cafeterias, bars and taverns, and dinner-houses.   |
| <b>Food Sales</b>                           | An establishment engaged in the preparation and retail sale of food and beverages for off-premises consumption. Typical uses include groceries, delicatessens, meat markets, retail bakeries, candy shops, ice cream parlors, and other specialty food sales.  |
| <b>Indoor Entertainment Activities</b>      | Participatory and spectator-oriented recreation and entertainment uses conducted within an enclosed building. Typical uses include bowling alleys, game arcades, pool halls, dance halls, and movie or other theaters.   |
| <b>Laundry Services &amp; Dry Cleaning</b>  | A personal service-oriented establishment primarily engaged in providing drop-off dry cleaning and laundry services.   |

(Continued)

Figure A.1 (continued)

| <b>Use</b>                            | <b>Definition as Provided in Public Workshop on Land Uses</b>  |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Limited Art &amp; Craft Studio</b> | An establishment primarily engaged in the sale of goods which are custom produced in small quantities, often one of a kind. The use may include the sale or production of goods or a location for arts and crafts activities in a class or studio. Typical uses include galleries, arts and crafts studios, custom tailoring and dressmaking shops, retail art supplies and hobby materials, florist shops, photographic studios, picture framing shops, and arts and crafts schools.  |
| <b>Museum</b>                         | A public facility primarily devoted to the procurement, care and display of objects of lasting interest or value.  |
| <b>Office</b>                         | The use of a building or a portion of a building for the provision of executive, consulting, professional, management, or administrative services. Typical uses include administrative offices and services including real estate, law, architecture, design, engineering, accounting, insurance, property management, investment, personnel, travel, secretarial services, telephone answering, and business offices of public utilities, organizations and associations, or other use classifications when the service rendered is that customarily associated with office services. |
| <b>Office, Medical</b>                | A use providing consultation, diagnosis, therapeutic, preventative, or corrective personal treatment services by doctors, dentists, medical and dental laboratories, or similar practitioners of medical and healing arts for humans, licensed for such practice by the state.   |
| <b>Outdoor Entertainment</b>          | Participatory and spectator-oriented recreation and entertainment uses conducted in open, partially enclosed, or screened facilities. Typical uses include sports arenas, racing facilities, amusement parks, golf driving ranges and miniature golf courses.  |
| <b>Park</b>                           | Park, linear/linkage: Usually developed around a natural resource such as a creek, river, or lakeshore.<br>Park, neighborhood: A site of approximately 1 to 15 acres which serves the area within ¼ to ½ mile radius with both active and passive recreational opportunities.  |
| <b>Passenger Terminals</b>            | Facilities for the takeoff and landing of airplanes and helicopters, and terminals for rail or bus service. Typical uses include bus passenger terminals, train passenger terminals, airports, and helicopter landing facilities.  |
| <b>Plant Nursery</b>                  | A retail-sales oriented establishment where plants are propagated and raised for future planting out or sale which supplies vegetable and flower plants, shrubs and trees to the home-garden market.   |
| <b>Retail Sales and Services</b>      | An establishment primarily engaged in the sale, lease or rent of new or used products to the general public, including those providing personal services, entertainment, product repair or sales of consumer goods.  |
| <b>Single-Family Residences</b>       | Single-family, detached home: A single dwelling unit, located by itself on a single lot with no other dwelling units attached.   |
| <b>Townhouse Residences</b>           | A medium intensity land use devoted to moderate density attached residential development. May be developed in a fee simple or condominium configuration.   |
| <b>Upper-Story Residential</b>        | Dwelling units in a building with ground-level non-residential uses.   |

## **District Design Guidelines Report Recommendations**

The City of Round Rock contracted with Carter Design Associates of Austin, Texas to produce specific guidelines for preserving the Plan Area's character that could be used in the Plan and future ordinances. The firm conducted a visual survey to identify aspects of the area's historical development pattern that give it character, and then produced a report with a set of design recommendations to aid in preserving those patterns. The Report is summarized on pages 3-2 to 3-3 and the recommendations are summarized in the table on the facing page (Figure A.2).

The Report distinguishes between the characteristics of the major streets (Main and Brown) and the other streets within the Plan Area, and advises different development and design guidelines for each type. These guidelines shape character through scale, orientation, proportion and attention to the public space, without specifying a particular architectural style or period. Many of these concepts were adapted through later Plan decisions, which are reflected in Chapter 7 (Civic Design) and Chapter 8 (Design Recommendations). The design and development features in Figure A.2 are presented in their original form, and do not reflect these later changes.

**Figure A.2: Design and Development Features Recommended by Carter Design Associates\***

*\* These recommended design and development features come from the Carter Design Associates report, which was completed at the beginning of the planning process. These features have not been altered to reflect later Plan decisions.*

|  | MAIN STREET  | BROWN STREET  | OTHER DISTRICT STREETS   |
|--|--|---|--|
| Right of Way (ROW) Width                     | 100'   | 80'   | 80'  |
| Suggested Road Width Including Parking       | 65'  | 55'   | 44'  |
| Parking                                      | Angled   | Parallel  | Residential Parallel   |
| Front Setback                                | 0'   | 10'   | Average 20'  |
| Public ROW with Landscaping and/or Amenities | 17'-6"   | 12'-6"  | 10' Sidewalk and Planting Strip<br>8' Landscaping Zone   |
| Building Height                              | 48'  | 38'   | 28'  |
| Suggested Uses                               | Main Street Retail<br><br>Residential/Commercial /Retail Mixed-Use<br><br>Commercial<br><br>Restaurant<br><br>Office   | Multi-Family (Small Scale)<br><br>Commercial/Office Mixed-Use<br><br>Community Service Offices<br><br>Office<br><br>Civic   | Residential<br><br>Residential/Office Mixed-Use<br><br>Boutique Retail<br><br>Bed & Breakfast<br><br>Office  |
| General Development Guidelines               | Design new structures to complement traditional Main Street building forms<br><br>Engage pedestrians with Interactive first level<br><br>Stress verticality of structure but clearly mark horizontal separations<br><br>Feature display windows<br><br>Use pediments and articulated corner details<br><br>Use pedestrian scale building materials<br><br>Infill vacant lots | Encourage public/private ROW improvements<br><br>Encourage removal of improvements in the ROW<br><br>Animate public ROW with awnings, trellises & canopies<br><br>Emphasize entrances with public open spaces, art and other decorative features<br><br>Design pedestrian improvements to encourage connection between the retail and civic centers | Design new structures to be residentially scaled and detailed<br><br>Design street improvements to discourage speeding and cut through traffic<br><br>Provide sidewalks and enhanced pedestrian connections<br><br>Continue tradition of specimen tree planting and landscaped street yards. Encourage public/private partnerships to develop landscape options<br><br>Provide parking required for businesses to the rear of structures |



# *Appendix* **B** *Survey Results*

---

The Southwest Downtown Plan evolved in consultation with area residents, employees and property owners in all phases of its development. An open house was held in November 2002 to introduce the planning process, assess neighborhood concerns and answer questions about new development already in progress (particularly the Municipal Office Complex). In February 2003 a survey was distributed to neighborhood stakeholders (property owners, residents, business owners and tenants) to assess their concerns and identify topics for discussion in neighborhood workshops. Eleven of these workshops were held over fifteen months, where these concerns were discussed and options for addressing them evaluated. Finally, comments from stakeholders and the general public will be solicited in public hearings before the Planning & Zoning Commission and City Council as part of the Plan's adoption process.

## **Survey**

The Southwest Downtown Survey was distributed to stakeholders in February 2003 in order to assess concerns about the Plan Area and the issues that should be addressed in the public workshops. Questions #1 ("what three things do you like best about the southwest downtown area?") and #2 ("what are the three most important challenges facing the area?") were open-response questions without prompts. Responses were grouped by topic for analysis. Question #3 gave a list of potential discussion topics with check boxes, with instructions to check as many as the respondent wished. Findings are summarized on the following pages. A complete copy of the Survey is provided on pages B-5 to B-6.

## Southwest Downtown Survey Analysis

Surveys distributed = 111; surveys returned = 24

Response rate = 22%

### #1 What three things do you like best about the southwest downtown area? all respondents

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| appearance  | 54% |
| other places/services are conveniently nearby                   | 29% |
| quiet/secluded  | 21% |
| location (unspecified)  | 21% |
| trees/greenery  | 17% |
| community/people/neighbors                                      | 13% |
| easily accessible to outside area                               | 13% |
| balance of commercial uses                                      | 8%  |
| not much traffic in area  | 8%  |
| upscale the area; improve income potential of properties        | 4%  |
| area has gotten too expensive                                   | 4%  |
| residential/commercial mix                                      | 4%  |
| more commercial development                                     | 4%  |
| character (unspecified)   | 4%  |
| connections between the Plan Area and the rest of downtown      | 4%  |
| attract customers   | 4%  |
| parking (unspecified)   | 4%  |
| traffic (unspecified)   | 4%  |
| other – likes (not related to scope of Southwest Downtown Plan) | 13% |

### #2 What are the three most important challenges for the southwest downtown area? all respondents

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| parking (unspecified)  | 64% |
| traffic (unspecified)  | 50% |
| street/streetscape design/improvements                             | 14% |
| street/alley maintenance   | 14% |
| more residential/too much commercial                               | 14% |
| area has gotten too expensive                                      | 9%  |
| residential – commercial mix                                       | 9%  |
| appearance   | 9%  |
| trees/greenery   | 9%  |
| drainage/flooding problems   | 9%  |
| attract customers  | 9%  |
| vandalism  | 9%  |
| upscale the area   | 5%  |
| balance of different commercial uses                               | 5%  |
| infrastructure is old/outdated                                     | 5%  |
| infrastructure is ugly   | 5%  |
| city parking is intruding on businesses                            | 5%  |
| lack of sidewalks  | 5%  |
| specific traffic problem   | 5%  |
| other challenges (not related to scope of Southwest Downtown Plan) | 23% |

| #3 What issues would you like to discuss in a planning workshop? | all respondents |
|--|-----------------|
| parking  | 71%             |
| traffic  | 63%             |
| conversion of houses to businesses                               | 54%             |
| community appearance   | 50%             |
| large tree preservation  | 46%             |
| historic preservation  | 42%             |
| drainage   | 38%             |
| city hall/new project construction                               | 38%             |
| sidewalks  | 33%             |
| zoning   | 29%             |
| changes in neighborhood character/identity                       | 29%             |
| parks  | 25%             |
| crime  | 21%             |
| housing opportunities  | 17%             |
| other  | 17%             |

#3 “Other” (write-in) issues to discuss in a planning workshop (as reported in survey responses):

- “Pedestrian connectivity to East Downtown terminology suggests that the SW district is separate and apart from the E. Main St. downtown area. Easy access to all downtown areas; idea of creating a mini-central park/central to E & W Main St.”
- “I am very concerned over the proposed 8' to 10' fill grading of the new city hall complex property and potential for creating flooding and unsightliness to my neighborhood.”
- “How large trucks are going to be able to access alley. Currently they pull forward into TxU Duplex parking lot & back into alley to unload rolls of newsprint. Cannot access alley from Mays due to trees & utility lines. With plans to relocate fire station only current option used will be eliminated, unless new option can be determined.”
- “Streets”

**Demographic Section:**

| About the respondents:  | all respondents |
|---|-----------------|
| live in the area  | 17%             |
| own property in the area  | 71%             |
| operate business in the area  | 75%             |
| # persons employed in area  | 103             |
| have owned a business or property or lived in the area less than 10 years | 70%             |

**Demographic variation in response to #3** (“what issues would you like to discuss in a public planning workshop?”):

| item   | residents | property owners | business owners |
|--|-----------|-----------------|-----------------|
| traffic                                      | 50%       | 59%             | 72%             |
| parking                                      | 75%       | 76%             | 78%             |
| sidewalks                                    | 50%       | 41%             | 28%             |
| drainage/flooding problems                   | 75%       | 41%             | 28%             |
| historic preservation                        | 50%       | 35%             | 39%             |
| large tree preservation                      | 100%      | 41%             | 39%             |
| community appearance                         | 75%       | 53%             | 50%             |
| zoning                                       | 25%       | 24%             | 22%             |
| conversion of houses to businesses           | 25%       | 53%             | 56%             |
| changes in neighborhood character & identity | 25%       | 29%             | 33%             |
| housing opportunities                        | 50%       | 18%             | 6%              |
| city hall/new project construction           | 50%       | 35%             | 33%             |
| crime/vandalism/loitering                    | 0%        | 29%             | 28%             |
| parks & open space                           | 25%       | 12%             | 28%             |

| item   | how long have you lived, worked or owned property in the area? |         |           |         |
|--|--|---------|-----------|---------|
|  | 0-4 yrs  | 5-9 yrs | 10-14 yrs | 15+ yrs |
| traffic                                      | 56%  | 71%     | 100%      | 25%     |
| parking                                      | 44%  | 100%    | 100%      | 50%     |
| sidewalks                                    | 33%  | 14%     | 33%       | 50%     |
| drainage/flooding problems                   | 33%  | 29%     | 33%       | 50%     |
| historic preservation                        | 44%  | 29%     | 0%        | 75%     |
| large tree preservation                      | 44%  | 14%     | 67%       | 75%     |
| community appearance                         | 67%  | 29%     | 67%       | 25%     |
| zoning                                       | 44%  | 14%     | 0%        | 50%     |
| conversion of houses to businesses           | 67%  | 57%     | 33%       | 50%     |
| changes in neighborhood character & identity | 56%  | 14%     | 0%        | 0%      |
| housing opportunities                        | 11%  | 0%      | 0%        | 50%     |
| city hall/new project construction           | 44%  | 29%     | 33%       | 50%     |
| crime/vandalism/loitering                    | 11%  | 14%     | 67%       | 25%     |
| parks & open space                           | 56%  | 0%      | 0%        | 25%     |

**Southwest Downtown Survey**  
**Sondeo - Centro de la Ciudad/Suroeste**

This survey will be used to determine topics for upcoming public workshops. Please return the survey in the reply envelope by January 31, 2003. *Este sondeo será utilizado para determinar los temas para talleres públicos en el futuro próximo. Favor devuelva el sondeo en el sobre adjunto en o antes del 31 de enero de 2003.*

1. What three things do you like best about the southwest downtown area?  
*¿Qué tres cosas le gustan más sobre el área del suroeste del centro de la ciudad?*

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. What do you think are the three most important challenges facing the area?  
*¿Cuáles son en su opinión los tres desafíos más importantes que enfrenta esta área?*

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. Please check the key items you would like to discuss in a public planning workshop:  
*Favor marque los temas más importantes que le interesaría discutir en un taller de planificación público:*

- traffic (*tránsito*)
- parking (*estacionamiento*)
- sidewalks (*aceras*)
- drainage/flooding problems (*drenaje/problemas de inundaciones*)
- historic preservation (*preservación histórica*)
- large tree preservation (*preservación de árboles grandes*)
- community appearance (*apariencia de la comunidad*)
- zoning (*zonificación*)
- conversion of houses to businesses (*conversión de casas a negocios*)
- changes in neighborhood character & identity (*cambios en el carácter e identidad del vecindario*)
- housing opportunities (*oportunidades de vivienda*)
- city hall/new project construction (*ayuntamiento municipal/nuevo proyecto de construcción*)
- crime/vandalism/loitering (*crimen/vandalismo/merodear*)
- parks & open space (*parques y espacios abiertos*)
- other: (*otros:*) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(OVER / ATRÁS)

**Please tell us about yourself. These questions are optional, but may help identify funding sources.**  
**Favor cuéntenos acerca de usted. Estas preguntas son opcionales, pero pudieran a ayudarnos a identificar fuentes de financiamiento.**

4. In this area, do you (check all that apply):  
*En esta área, usted (marque todas las que correspondan):*
- live in the area (*vive en el area*)                       own property (*es dueño de propiedad*)  
 operate a business (*opera un negocio*)                       other (*otro*): \_\_\_\_\_
5. How long have you owned a business or property, or lived in the area?  
*¿Cuánto tiempo ha sido dueño de negocio o propiedad, o vivido en el área?*
- 0 – 4 years (*años*)     5 – 9 years (*años*)     10 – 14 years (*años*)     15 + years (*años*)
6. What is your ethnic background? (check all that apply)  
*¿Cuál es su origen étnico (marque todas las que correspondan)*
- African-American (*afro-americano*)                       Anglo/Caucasian (*anglosajón/blanco*)  
 Asian-American (*asiático-americano*)                       Hispanic/Latino (*hispano/latino*)  
 Native American (*indio americano*)                       Pacific Islander (*islas del pacífico*)  
 multi-ethnic (*multi-étnico*)                       other (*otro*) : \_\_\_\_\_

**Residents: (Residentes:)**

7. Do you own or rent your home?  
*¿Es propietario de casa o alquila la misma?*
- own (*propietario*)                       rent (*alquilado*)
8. How many persons in your household (including yourself) are:  
*¿Cuántas personas en su hogar (incluyéndolo a usted) tienen:*
- under 18 years \_\_\_\_\_ 18-54 years \_\_\_\_\_ 55-64 years \_\_\_\_\_ 65 + years \_\_\_\_\_  
*menos de 18 años \_\_\_\_\_ entre 18-54 años \_\_\_\_\_ entre 55-64 años \_\_\_\_\_ más de 65 años \_\_\_\_\_*
9. What is your approximate gross (all sources before taxes) annual household income?  
*¿Aproximadamente cuál es el ingreso bruto anual (de toda fuente, antes de los impuestos) de su familia?*
- \$0 - \$25,000     \$26,000 - \$50,000     \$50,000 - \$75,000     \$75,000 +

**Business and Non-resident Property Owners (Propietarios de negocios y no residentes):**

12. If you own property, how is it used?  
*Si es dueño de propiedad, ¿cómo la utiliza?*
- residential (including rental property) / *residencial (incluyendo propiedad alquilada)*  
 retail (shop, restaurant) / *detallista (tienda, restaurante)*  
 office (*oficina*)                       vacant land (*terreno vacante*)  
 other (*otro*) : \_\_\_\_\_
13. If you own a business, how many employees do you have? \_\_\_\_\_  
*Si es propietario de negocio, ¿cuántos empleados tiene? \_\_\_\_\_*
14. If you own a business, do you own or rent the building?  
*Si es propietario de negocio, ¿es propietario también de su edificio o lo alquila?*
- own (*propietario*)                       rent (*alquilado*)

Thank you for your time and input. We will keep you informed of future workshop dates by mail.  
*Le agradecemos su tiempo y contribución. Le mantendremos al tanto de las fechas de talleres futuros por correo.*

---

# Appendix **C** *Public Workshops*

---

The Southwest Downtown Plan evolved in consultation with area residents, employees and property owners in all phases of its development. An open house was held in November 2002 to introduce the planning process, assess neighborhood concerns and answer questions about new development already in progress (particularly the Municipal Office Complex). In February 2003 a survey was distributed to neighborhood stakeholders (property owners, residents, business owners and tenants) to assess their concerns and identify topics for discussion in neighborhood workshops. Eleven of these workshops were held over fifteen months, where these concerns were discussed and options for addressing them evaluated. Finally, comments from stakeholders and the general public will be solicited in public hearings before the Planning & Zoning Commission and City Council as part of the Plan's adoption process.

## **Public Workshops (June 2003 – September 2004)**

Eleven workshops were held between June 2003 and September 2004 to discuss planning issues and assess the priorities and preferences of the participants. Announcements of each meeting were mailed (and/or emailed) to all area property owners, employers, residents and tenants, as well as those who attended the November 2002 open house, or who requested to be added to the contact list. Notices were also posted on the City calendar and website, in the *Round Rock Leader* and the *Austin-American Statesman*. Summaries of each meeting were posted on the Southwest Downtown Plan website soon afterward for the benefit of those unable to attend. These summaries are given on the following pages (most illustrations and handouts have been omitted for the sake of brevity and because they appear elsewhere in the Plan).

## Acknowledgements

The Planning & Community Development Department would like to thank public workshop participants, presenters and other City Staff who contributed to the public workshops.

### Presenters

Donna Carter, Carter Design Associates  
Matt Strickland, Carter Design Associates  
Charles Heimsath, Capitol Market Research  
Bill Huggins, Huggins Seiler & Associates  
Jim Alvis, PageSoutherlandPage  
Denny Krumm, PageSoutherlandPage  
Sylvan Schurwanz, PageSoutherlandPage  
Judd Willmann, PageSoutherlandPage

### City Staff – Project Contributors

James R. Nuse, P.E., City Manager  
Thomas E. Word, Jr., P.E., Chief of Public Works Operations, Public Works Administration  
Tom Martin, P.E., Director of Transportation Services, Transportation Services  
Larry Madsen, Building Construction & Facility Maintenance Manager  
Danny Halden, P.E., City Engineer, Engineering & Development Services  
Michael Thane, P.E., Engineering Manager, Engineering & Development Services  
Gary Wilson, Project Manager, Building Construction & Facility Maintenance  
Brian Baird, P.E., Engineer, Engineering & Development Services  
Sharon Prete, Director, Parks & Recreation Department  
Emsud Horozovic, Forestry Manager, Parks & Recreation Department  
M. James Hemenes, RLA, ASLA, Parks Development Manager, Parks & Recreation Department  
Melissa Tyree, Park Development Specialist, Parks & Recreation Department

### Workshop Participants (names as given on sign-in sheets)

Keith R. Acheson, Gloria Arroyo-Richardson, G. D. Atkinson, Charles Avery, Monica Benoit Beatty, Cathy Carter, Mary Clark, Joe Clifford, Dale & Jan Cohrs, David Conrad, Lee Cook, Frank Correa, Adam Day, Brad & Martha Ellis, Jack & Betty Emert, Susan Erickson, Terry Erickson, Steven Faulkner, Peggie Fink, Carlos Franco, Jesse & Irene Franco, Gary Gaydos, Lee Gaydos, Ray Gill, Bill Glendenning, William Glendenning, Courtney Grant, Sandra Guthrie, Don & Betty Hester, Keith Hoaglund, Mistie Householter, Kyle R. Humphries, Charles Johnson, Dain Johnson, Faye Johnson, Travis Johnson, Jan Kelley, Ruth E. Koughan, Kelly & Steve Kresser, Kanda Kropp, Carol & Keith Kussmall, John W. Ledbetter Sr., Jason Lo, Ronald & Janette Madsen, Jennifer Marciniak, Johnette McNair, Mark McNair, Richard Mercer, Kenneth & Donna Moench, John S. Moman, Brenda Montgomery, Robert Moore, George Murray, Allison Nagle, Carla & Nelson Nagle, Ray Overstreet, Mike Parker, Bill & Sissy Peckham, William Peckham, Mary Pelton, Eva Peña, Evelyn & Jim Peters, Erica Roberts, O'Barr Rost, Debra R. Spellings, Bo Spencer, Ellen M. Stevens, Don Strop, Scott Swindell, Michael Taylor, Mary Jane Todd, Marge Tripp, Kathleen F. Vest, Roger Vest, Camille Weeler, Kris & Eric Whitfield, Ed Wilder.

## **Workshop Summaries:**

These summaries were written and posted on the web shortly after each workshop, and do not reflect later updates. Some items, particularly timelines, have changed significantly. They are included here as background information only. Please refer to the Plan chapters for current information.

### **June 3, 2003: Land Use & Zoning**

McConico Building Community Room, 7:00-9:00 p.m.

#### Introduction:

The Southwest Downtown Plan is intended to allow residents, business and property owners to agree on a direction that changes should take, and create guidelines so that they are sensitive to the Plan Area's character and scale – and so that the qualities that drew people to locate their homes and businesses here are preserved. These guidelines may include rezoning, infrastructure improvements, or landscaping and design guidelines, depending on the direction chosen by participants.

#### Discussion of survey:

Executive Director Joe Vining referred to a handout to discuss the results of the Southwest Downtown Survey, which was the basis for selecting meeting topics. Not surprisingly, the most frequently cited issues of concern were traffic and parking. The next most frequently-cited issues (conversion of houses to businesses, community appearance, historic and tree preservation) indicate a strong interest and concern for the Plan Area's character and appearance. Next were infrastructure issues: sidewalks, drainage and the new Municipal Office Complex. Less commonly-cited issues included changes in neighborhood character & identity, vandalism, and housing affordability.

70% of the respondents had owned business or property in the area less than 10 years, a figure that parallels the percentage of Round Rock residents who have lived in the City less than 10 years.

#### Description of the Municipal Office Complex:

The McConico Building is the first of the Municipal Office Complex (MOC) buildings to be completed. The MOC will eventually include a Senior Activity Center and City Hall, which will surround a Civic Plaza. There will be two levels of underground parking, and walkways between buildings will access a future trail along Lake Creek. The Senior Activity Center and Plaza are expected to be completed in 2005, and the City Hall several years later. The fire station on Florence will be relocated to accommodate the City Hall.

The City has worked out a centralized stormwater drainage system for the Plan Area. Rather than small water quality ponds on individual properties, most stormwater will drain into a single water quality pond on the other side of McNeil Road.

It was also noted that Lake Creek will eventually be part of a citywide greenbelt/trail system.

#### Current zoning and permitted land uses:

Currently the Southwest Downtown Plan Area is divided in four zoning districts. Most of the area is zoned C-1 (General Commercial). There are a few remaining houses zoned SF-2 (Single Family Residential – Standard Lot), and a few of them are in the process of being rezoned C-2 (Neighborhood Commercial). The block that includes the SBC facility and Lee's Auto Body is zoned LI (Light Industrial). All the zoning changes in the Plan Area have been owner-initiated.

Each Zoning District specifies which uses are permitted and which are not. Uses that are permitted by right are allowed under all circumstances, and conditional uses are permitted if the property meets a few extra criteria, e.g. a minimum lot size, maximum building size, frontage on a collector or higher street, etc.

Dot-voting exercise:

Participants were given 20 dot stickers, and instructed to use them to vote for the land uses they believe are appropriate for the Southwest Downtown Plan Area. They were instructed not to use more than 5 of their dots on any one use, not to trade dots with other participants, and not to cover up each others' dots. All dots are considered favorable votes; there are no "against" votes.

Answers to participants' questions about land uses:

- The difference between "food sales" and "eating establishments" is that food (prepared or not) is not consumed on the premises in food sales; there are no eating areas. Customer traffic patterns are different, and these establishments have different impacts on their neighbors.
- "Mixed use" means two or more uses in a small area – the same block, the same lot, or the same building. The classic example is apartments or offices over ground-floor retail. The permitted uses must be carefully defined, because some uses are incompatible, or become incompatible beyond a certain scale.
- The "senior" district is a new addition to the zoning ordinance. This is housing specifically for senior citizens and can take the form of anything with a senior-oriented amenity package, from single-family houses to assisted living facilities.
- A participant asked why "place of worship" was permitted in all districts. The law limits the restrictions that a city can put of religious activity. While the place of worship itself – the sanctuary – is permitted in any district, the square footage of accessory uses (such as offices, day care, schools, gyms, garage sales etc.) are limited.
- The difference between "auto service" and "vehicle repair" is that auto service facilities work on the car while the owner is there, while cars may stay at a vehicle repair facility for several days.
- "Commercial parking" is paid parking not associated with any other use (e.g. a lot or ramp may be next to a restaurant but is not specifically for the use of that restaurant's patrons).

June 3, 2003 **Land Use Voting Exercise** (350 total votes)

| <u>votes</u> | <u>land use:</u>  |
|--------------|---|
| 34           | Eating Establishments   |
| 32           | Retail Sales & Services   |
| 30           | Limited Art & Craft Studio  |
| 26           | Office  |
| 26           | Upper-Story Residential   |
| 24           | Administrative & Business Services  |
| 22           | Single-Family Residence   |
| 18           | Bed & Breakfast   |
| 15           | Passenger Terminals   |
| 14           | Townhouse Residences  |
| 12           | Assisted Living, Museum   |
| 11           | Community Services, Food Sales  |
| 8            | Plant Nursery   |
| 7            | Commercial Parking, Medical office  |
| 6            | Indoor Entertainment Activities, Laundry Services & Dry Cleaning, Outdoor Entertainment |
| 5            | Day Care, Park  |

uses eliminated in this exercise

| <u>votes</u> | <u>land use:</u>   |
|--------------|--|
| 4            | Cocktail Lounge/Bar  |
| 3            | Personal Improvement Services  |
| 2            | Research Services  |
| 1            | Amenity Center, Auto Service Facilities, Duplex, Liquor Sales  |
| 0            | Carwash, Communications Services, Equipment Repair Services, Financial Services, Funeral Home, General/Limited Warehousing & Distribution, Government Facilities, Indoor Sports & Recreation, Light Manufacturing & Assembly, Multifamily Residences, Place of Worship, Retail Sales & Services w/ Outdoor Storage, Self-Service Storage, Service Station, Theater, Utilities, Minor & Intermediate, Vehicle Repair Facilities & Body Shops, Vehicle Sales, Rental or Leasing Facilities, Veterinary Services, Warehouse & Freight Movement, Wholesale Trade, Wireless Transmission Facilities |

### **June 24, 2003: Land Use & Zoning**

McConico Building Community Room, 7:00-9:00 p.m.

#### Discussion of the MOC plans:

The other buildings in the MOC complex, and their underground parking, were described. The Senior Center and Plaza are the next buildings to be constructed, and at this time completion is anticipated in mid-2005.

#### Area demographics:

Staff distributed a handout of 2000 Census figures comparing the Southwest Downtown Plan Area to all of Round Rock, as an insight to the Plan Area's demographic makeup. The most striking distinctions were the difference in median age (53.9 years in the Plan Area vs. 30.1 years in the City as a whole), and the difference in proportion of people over 65 (28% vs. 4%, respectively).

#### Discussion of first voting exercise:

The first dot-voting exercise presented a chart of 52 different land uses to be considered for the Plan Area. Participants were given a sheet of 20 dot stickers and instructed to indicate the uses they considered appropriate, and not to put more than 5 dots on any one use.

The uses with the most votes were: eating establishments; retail sales & services; limited arts & craft studio; office; upper-story residential; administrative & business services; and single-family residences. Twenty-four uses did not receive any votes. [The complete listing of uses is given in Figure 3.2.]

#### Second voting exercise:

The top 22 uses from the first dot-voting exercise were posted on a chart for the second exercise. The procedure was similar, except that each participant was given 8 dots and instructed not to use more than 2 dots on any one use. Results will be analyzed by Staff and reported at the next meeting.

The purpose of the exercises is to determine whether the uses that stakeholders consider appropriate for the area coincide with the uses permitted by the current zoning, and if not, whether other existing zoning districts are appropriate, or if a new zoning district should be created.

Participants asked for clarification of several of the proposed land uses for the exercise:

- "Indoor Entertainment" is an indoor activity, participatory or not, such as a bowling alley, video arcade, etc.

- “Townhouses” under Round Rock’s Zoning Ordinance are moderate-density attached housing units at a maximum density of 12 units/acre. They are configured for owner occupation under either a condominium or fee simple arrangement, although there is nothing to prevent individual owners from renting out their units.
- Pictures on the illustration boards are intended to be an indication of the overall form and scale that the proposed uses generally take – they are not intended to indicate architectural style.

Drawing exercise:

In this exercise potential zoning district boundaries were traced over an aerial photo of the Southwest Downtown Plan Area to test different arrangements and solicit public comment.

All zoning scenarios have these elements in common:

- The Lake Creek floodplain is zoned OS (Open Space), because it is unsuitable for building and is expected to eventually be part of a citywide trail system.
- The new Municipal Office Complex (MOC) site will be zoned PF (Public Facilities).

**Scenario #1:**



This scenario is intended to describe how the Plan Area is evolving now. Currently only a few properties are *not* already zoned C-1: a Light Industrial block (SWB and Lee’s garage), and a few Single-Family parcels near Main and San Saba. In this scenario, the entire Plan Area other than the MOC and the trail would eventually be zoned C-1.

**Scenario #2:**



This scenario leaves the area along major streets General Commercial, but the interior of the neighborhood is designated C-2 (Neighborhood Commercial). C-2 permits most of the uses permitted in C-1, but on a smaller scale, limiting the height and square footage of buildings, and prohibiting intense commercial uses such as auto body shops.

**Scenario #3:**



This scenario is similar to #2, but does not cut across lot lines and accommodates existing C-1 uses near Main and Blair.

**Scenario #4:**



In this scenario only the two properties with IH-35 frontage are zoned C-1, and the rest is zoned MU – Mixed Use [note: later only the north property would remain C-1].

There are several ways that a mixed-use district could be accomplished. One way is to use a Planned Unit Development (PUD), in which a unique mix of uses and design standards are negotiated for specific area. The advantage of this method is a great deal of flexibility; the disadvantages are that it

makes the development process slow and cumbersome, and that it is more appropriate for large tracts with a single owner/developer.

Another way would be to create a mixed-use district, similar in principle to other overlay districts in the current zoning ordinance. What "mixed use" would mean for the Plan Area would have to be defined. A set of permitted uses would be established, based on input from the community (including the land use dot-voting exercises), as would a set of compatibility standards to ensure that different uses can exist harmoniously side by side. A set of design and/or landscaping standards may also be appropriate to give a set of disparate uses a more unified appearance.

Discussion:

- Several participants asked what uses would be included under a mixed-use zoning district, and how it would differ from C-1. Permitted uses would be based on public input, such as the two dot-voting exercises. Additional measures might include height limits lower than the 5 stories permitted in C-1 districts.
- A participant commented that creating a mixed-use zone would permit a closer definition of use and form than using existing zoning districts.
- One resident noted that the fact that her house was zoned C-1 would prevent a family from getting a residential mortgage to buy her house, and wanted to know if mixed-use zoning would allow continuing residential use of her house. Staff answered that they expected it would, since it would indicate that the City's intention is not to eliminate residential use from the area, but someone in the lending industry could give a more definitive answer.
- Several participants wondered how mixed-use zoning would affect their property values and tax assessments.
- When a property's zoning is changed so that it no longer accommodates the existing use, the use is considered nonconforming. A nonconforming use may continue, but may not expand, and when the property is sold it must adhere to uses permitted by the new zoning.

Conclusions:

None of the participants agreed that the current zoning should be left alone as in Scenario #1. By consensus, participants preferred Scenario #4.

## **July 15, 2003: Traffic & Circulation**

McConico Building Community Room, 7:00-9:00 p.m.

Brainstorming exercise:

This meeting was the first of two on the subject of traffic and circulation. Tom Word, Public Works' Chief of Operations, was present to answer questions and conduct a brainstorming exercise in which participants voiced their concerns and ideas about how to improve traffic in the Plan Area. At the following meeting Staff will present possible solutions for discussion.

The following issues emerged in the ensuing discussion (grouped by topic):

- Traffic on the major roads (IH-35, FM 620, Mays and McNeil) is heavy and only getting heavier. The challenge is how to accommodate increased traffic while being pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly.
- At McNeil and IH-35, the northbound exit and the southbound entrance ramps will be closed when the ramps in the area are changed to connect to SH 45 (approximately 18 months from now). This may also discourage traffic that cuts through from US 79 via Georgetown Avenue, Main Street and Burnet Avenue to McNeil.

- The southbound off ramp from IH-35 to FM 1325 is scheduled to be closed to accommodate toll entrances to SH 45. Southbound access to La Frontera will be through Hesters Crossing – which participants did not like. The City is trying to convince TxDOT that this is undesirable and will cause traffic to backup on IH-35.
- TxDOT has planned HOV (high-occupancy vehicle) lanes for IH-35, but with their current budget they are unlikely to be added for at least 13 years.
- Union Pacific has approved the City's plan for a railroad crossing at A.W. Grimes Boulevard, which will hopefully open in early 2005. This will relieve some of the traffic on Mays. More new north-south arterials are planned on both sides of IH-35.
- The City is working on a public transportation plan, now that it is too big to qualify for CARTS (which is intended as a rural service). The type of system depends on the budget.
- There is a rail district proposal, which would create a commuter rail system from Georgetown to San Antonio, but there are several problems: 1) freight rail companies would have to agree to move to a different set of tracks, and 2) it's very expensive.
- East and West Main Street need to be better connected, both for pedestrians and cars. The City is working on improving the pedestrian crossing.
- A participant asked about using one-way streets in the Plan Area.
- West Main could be extended to the frontage road to relieve some of the traffic turning east on Round Rock Avenue. The exit ramp would have to join the frontage road north of the intersection with Main so that drivers aren't tempted to cut across all lanes of the frontage road in a short distance.
- Turning left onto Round Rock Avenue is very difficult; it would help to have a light between Mays and IH-35.
- If Harris went all the way to Round Rock Avenue (through the Golden Chick), instead of stopping at Liberty, there would be a direct route to the new Senior Activity Center and Municipal Office Complex.
- Many people avoid the Mays – Main - Round Rock Avenue intersection by cutting through on Liberty and turning left at Mays. It would be helpful to have a traffic light synchronized with the one at Mays – Main - Round Rock Avenue.
- Another participant suggested closing Round Rock Avenue between Brown and Mays, routing traffic onto Liberty. West Main would be reconnected to Mays, and then both Liberty - Mays and Main-Mays would be 4-way intersections at right angles. The closed portion of the street could become a public square or park.
- People often get confused on Blair, because they come quickly off McNeil, and first there's a stop sign, then there's not, the road changes widths and there are several different street parking configurations. Cars frequently get sideswiped.
- Wayfinding signs would be helpful – many people have difficulty finding the new Municipal Court and have to stop to ask for directions.
- There should be uniform street sections for the Plan Area, so that street widths, controls, sidewalks, bicycle paths, markings, signs and street parking arrangements are consistent.
- Participants would like to see streetscape improvements similar to East Main.
- Big oak trees should be preserved in streetscaping plans. Most rights-of-way in the Plan Area are 80 feet wide, so there is room to adjust parking and planting strips around them.

- Participants were asked where the major pedestrian routes in the Plan Area are. They cited the Liberty-Mays and Main-Mays crossings. Alleys were suggested as pedestrian paths. Mays, Blair and Brown were cited as important north-south pedestrian routes.
- It would be logical to have a good pedestrian connection between the new and old City office complexes, perhaps under the Mays overpass.
- It's important to extend pedestrian access from the city blocks to the trail along Lake Creek, which will eventually extend through the City.
- Participants noted cut-through truck traffic in the Plan Area.
- Some delivery trucks park on the street, creating a hazard. A cited location was on Brown just south of Round Rock Avenue, where cars turning right onto Brown may not see them in time.
- Trees and wires make some alleys unsuitable for truck deliveries.

### **August 4, 2003: Traffic & Circulation**

Planning Department Meeting Room, 7:00-8:20 p.m.

At the previous meeting, Tom Word, Public Works' Chief of Operations, had taken questions and suggestions about traffic issues in the Southwest Downtown Plan Area. He had discussed them with his staff and was ready to give their recommendations regarding these issues and discuss alternatives, although final decisions will be made at a later date.

#### Round Rock Avenue - Liberty Avenue - Mays Street:

At the July 15<sup>th</sup> meeting there were many complaints about the Round Rock Avenue - Mays - Main intersection. Many felt that the intersection is intimidating for pedestrians and destroys continuity between East and West Main Street. During rush hour traffic backs up far enough that it's difficult to turn onto Round Rock Avenue from Brown or Blair. Another consequence of traffic backing up on Round Rock Avenue is that many turn onto Liberty, and then try to turn left onto Mays, although there is no traffic signal there. Other participants noted that it was difficult to turn onto westbound Round Rock Avenue for access to the freeway.

One participant had suggested closing Round Rock Avenue between Liberty and Mays, directing traffic from Round Rock Avenue to Liberty and Brown (see street layout diagram, pg. B-24). East and West Main Street would be directly connected in a standard 4-way intersection. Signals on Mays Street at Liberty and Main would be synchronized. The closed portion of Round Rock Avenue could become a public space, or the downtown grid could be extended.

Under this plan, the Round Rock Avenue - Liberty - Brown intersection would be an easily signaled Y- intersection, with traffic heading to north Mays diverted to Liberty and then to a standard, signaled 4-way intersection at Liberty and Mays. Eastbound and southbound traffic would be directed south on Brown to Main St (the Brown - Main intersection may then require modification). The Main - Mays intersection would be a standard 4-way intersection (the well canopy would be moved – again), and the two signals on Mays would be synchronized. The Round Rock Avenue - Liberty - Brown signal would also provide a controlled access to westbound Round Rock Avenue from the Plan Area.

#### Extend Main Street to frontage road:

Another suggestion was to extend Main Street to the west across the creek to connect with the frontage road. This would relieve some of the congestion at the IH-35 - Round Rock Avenue intersection, and increase traffic on West Main. An additional signal may be necessary at Main and Brown, especially if the changes at Round Rock Avenue - Liberty - Brown are implemented. The

connection to the frontage road would have to be south (“upstream”) from the exit so that drivers could not exit and immediately cross three lanes of frontage road to access Main Street.

#### Extend Harris Street to Round Rock Avenue:

Another suggestion was extending Harris Street north to intersect with Round Rock Avenue and closing the Liberty Avenue - Round Rock Avenue intersection (on the south side of Round Rock Avenue), keeping Round Rock Avenue - Liberty - Brown a simpler 3-way intersection. This would provide a direct route from Round Rock Avenue to the new Senior Center at Harris and Brown. The City would have to purchase right-of-way where the Golden Chick drive-thru is now.

#### Other street layout issues:

Many of the intersections in the Plan Area are unregulated; it is expected that most will have 2- or 4-way stop signs, but the controls used will depend on what, if any, changes are made in street layout and traffic patterns.

Cut-through traffic was discussed at the previous meeting. Most of the problems are in the Georgetown – Main – Burnet route, and it is expected that the opening of A. W. Grimes Boulevard and closure of the McNeil entrance and exit to IH-35 will greatly decrease this problem.

One-way streets had been suggested, but were determined to be inappropriate since they are unnecessary and would make navigation more confusing.

Another suggestion was to use alleys as pedestrian routes, but this would create a lot of mid-block street crossings where there are no traffic signals and drivers do not expect to encounter pedestrians crossing the street, and would therefore be very unsafe. The department concluded that the alleys were designed strictly for service use, and should remain that way.

#### Street design:

Another issue of significant concern is the inconsistency in street paving and design. The Department would address these issues by improving the streets with curbs and gutters (no drainage swales), and diverting storm drainage to a retention pond on the other side of McNeil. A set of standard street sections would be created to maximize on-street parking and keep curbs and sidewalks consistent and continuous. Signage and pavement markings would be applied consistently, and everything possible would be done to keep the trees that are so important to the Plan Area’s character and history.

A page of proposed street sections was distributed. It was explained that these are standard sections, and that it will require more study to determine the best arrangement of traffic, parking, sidewalk and landscaped areas. Accommodation would also have to be made for bus stops or drop-off areas.

The 4-lane undivided section is more or less what currently exists on Round Rock Avenue. If part of Round Rock Avenue is closed, diverting traffic to Liberty and Brown, two blocks of Liberty may also take this 4-lane, no parking configuration, since it is expected to take most of the Round Rock Avenue traffic.

Divided street sections (with medians) are proposed for Brown and Main Streets. The 2-lane divided section with 45° angled parking is proposed for Main; this is the same section as the first two blocks of East Main Street, but without parking in the median. The 2-lane divided section with parallel parking is proposed for Brown. Parallel parking does not yield as many spaces as angled parking, but it has been shown to make parking easier for older people (Brown is a main route to the WBCO building and the future Senior Activity Center). The Brown - Main intersection may merit special treatment or signaling.

Minor/local streets would adopt a 2-lane undivided section with 30° angled parking. 30° parking does not yield as many spaces as 45° parking, but uses less of the right-of-way, allowing for more landscaping.

Sidewalks, pedestrian routes & bike lanes:

Although all the streets in the Southwest Downtown Plan Area will have sidewalks on both sides, it is still important to identify main pedestrian routes which connect significant destinations (such as schools) and possess certain safety features such as crossing busy streets at controlled intersections. Transportation Staff prepared a map of such routes, illustrating primary pedestrian routes throughout the western half of downtown and connections to the future bike & trail system along the creeks. A participant commented that many kids walk to school on Liberty, and suggested that it be added as a principal pedestrian route.

One thing that these sections don't include is a bike path system. Within the 80-foot right-of-way there really isn't room for traffic lanes, bike lanes, parking and sidewalks – it seems to come down to bike lanes or parking. A participant commented that the area does need better accommodation for bicycles – especially with the school nearby – and that there really should be at least one safe route in and out of the area, perhaps on Main, connecting to the trails along Lake and Brushy Creeks. Mr. Word agreed that Public Works would consider it.

Another participant asked if there were room for a bicycle lane on Mays. The Mays right-of-way is already pretty much filled, with buildings right up to its edge, so finding room for bike lanes is unlikely as it would involve either removing a traffic lane or some buildings.

Delivery trucks:

Truck traffic is an inevitable consequence of business activity, but problems can be dealt with by working with business owners on a case-by-case basis to arrange for appropriate loading zones, off-hours or small-truck delivery.

IH-35 changes:

The completion of SH 45 will necessitate closing several ramps near the IH-35 - SH 45 intersection, including the McNeil exit and entrance ramp. The Hesters exit is expected to take the bulk of the diverted traffic. TxDOT is planning for HOV (high-occupancy vehicle, a.k.a. carpool) lanes on IH-35 in the future, but probably not for 15-20 years, unless alternate funding sources are found.

Public transit:

Regional rail (San Antonio to Georgetown) is still under consideration, but the main problem is funding. There is a proposed funding district, but it has no taxing authority and at least for the immediate future, none of the cities is in a position to make a serious financial commitment. Express busses could be used in the meantime, but are unlikely to be used much if they are stuck in traffic with everyone else. HOV lanes would solve this problem, but are unlikely to be constructed in the near future.

Round Rock will need to have its own internal bus system, but it will have to be funded by something other than sales taxes. The City is not a member of Capital Metro, and probably never will be because it would cost \$20 million a year, and property taxes would increase 20 cents per \$100. Other Texas cities with populations under 100,000 spend less than \$2.5 million - \$3 million per year on their bus systems.

**September 16, 2003: Civic Design: Streets, Sidewalks & Parking**

McConico Building Community Room, 7:00-8:20 p.m.

Introduction:

Executive Director Joe Vining welcomed participants and introduced consultant Donna Carter of Carter Design Associates, which the Department has hired to analyze the area's historic patterns of design and development and incorporate them into district design guidelines.

Visual survey of area characteristics:

As part of their analysis, Ms. Carter's firm had conducted a visual survey to identify aspects of the Plan Area's historical development pattern that give it character -- things that stand out as "neighborhood quirks" and could be preserved and encouraged or accommodated in future development. In order to preserve a pattern, she noted, you first need to recognize it.

Ms. Carter discussed their findings, referring to four display boards describing conditions on:

- 100 block of West Main Street** (between Mays and Blair)
- 200 block of West Main Street** (between Blair and Brown)
- 300 block of West Main Street** (between Brown and Harris)
- 200 block of West Bagdad Avenue** (between Blair and Brown)

Each board illustrated analysis of a single block. Each included a list of the block's most interesting features, photo collages of both sides of the street, and a historic Sandborn Insurance map of the block.

One characteristic the Carter Design Associates team immediately noticed was that properties generally face the more formal east-west streets. The north-south streets are more like side streets: narrower and more informal (although all the streets within the district (except West Main) have the same right-of-way, the width of paved road surface varies considerably). The character of the street pattern is important not only as a framework for development but also because the streetscape is the Plan Area's largest and most significant public space.

Originally, most blocks in the downtown area were served by alleys. A few are still in use; others exist legally but have been physically obscured by trees and outbuildings. Their potential for service access and parking should be considered. Alternatively, there have also been proposals to give the alleys to adjacent property owners, a proposal that could become part of the utility plan.

The firm observed that West Main Street has a unique set of conditions. It is the only street within the district that has a 100-foot right-of-way instead of 80-foot. The buildings become less dense and are set back further from the street as it progresses west. The 100 block (between Mays and Blair) is commercial, with traditional storefronts built all the way up to the front (and side) property lines, creating a very direct relationship with passers-by. On the 200 block, buildings begin to be set back from the property line and there are a few houses. Newer residential and commercial buildings on the 300 block are also set back 15-18 feet; a traditional measure significantly shorter than is typical of suburban development. How this historical trend should be continued or adapted to new buildings (and building types) should be considered in the Plan.

One way to increase historic continuity is to look at the Plan Area's traditional palate of materials. A distinctive example is the mortared stone curbs that lie near the front property line of a number of properties. In most cases grass has grown up around them. They are a rather unique and subtle way of delineating private and public space, and incorporating them or otherwise making reference to them in a new streetscape design could make it seem to be a more naturally evolving streetscape than an imposed one [note: the curbs are most visible on the north side of West Bagdad between Blair and Brown].

One of the attractive things about the area is its many large specimen trees. Some of the trees are actually in the right-of-way, and parking spaces are worked around them. This casual arrangement is an important part of the area's character, and should be continued with new street trees planted close to traffic lanes, to shade the street and allow for natural cycling as some of the less-healthy trees die.

The quality of the pedestrian environment is another essential consideration. A good pedestrian environment, with shade, places to sit, lighting and landscaping gives the public street space

character, and makes the area feel more like a district than a series of destinations. Strong connections between the neighborhood and the open space (and future trails) along Lake Creek are equally important issues to be addressed.

#### Parking configurations for Brown Street and Main Street:

The next phase of the Municipal Office Complex, the Senior Activity Center, may begin construction as early as January. In order to finalize construction plans, some decisions need to be made about nearby street improvements, which are part of the project. Mr. Vining invited participants to take a break and look at three sets of illustrations describing different street parking configurations at the Brown and Main Street intersection. Each arrangement permitted a different number of parking spaces and additional street trees:

**Angled parking** on both Brown and Main Streets: 78 spaces / 24 new trees

**Parallel parking** on both Brown and Main Streets: 61 spaces / 71 new trees

**Combination parking:** Parallel on Brown, angled on Main: 71 spaces / 46 new trees

The combination “angled on Brown, parallel on Main” was not considered because one of the aims of the project is to create continuity with the angled parking pattern on East Main. Perpendicular (90-degree) parking was not considered because it requires too much right-of-way.

These illustrations were accompanied by street section drawings describing angled and parallel parking on both Brown and Main. All scenarios include street trees and ample sidewalk/landscaping areas. Both Main Street sections included a center turning lane. It was noted that these diagrams should be considered prototypes; a specific design would need to accommodate specific conditions such as trees and driveways.

Participants were asked for their comments on the proposed parking scenarios, which included the following:

- A participant suggested that if the parking arrangement did not allow much room for trees in the right-of-way, shade could still be provided by planting trees in private yards, next to the sidewalk (with the owner’s permission).
- Round Rock does not use compact parking spaces; any arrangement will be able to accommodate larger vehicles.
- A participant commented that parallel parking somehow feels more crowded.
- The biggest problem with parallel parking is that it’s difficult and no one knows how to do it anymore since it’s not required on drivers’ tests.
- Under an alternative angled parking arrangement, drivers back into an angled spot instead of heading in (much like backing into a parallel parking space). This permits much better visibility when pulling out into the street.
- Although there are many big old trees in the Plan Area, not all are in good health, and some will die – it would be a good idea to start planting other trees now, so that they have grown by the time the old trees are gone.
- Having to park a block or so from one’s destination becomes less of a problem when the walk is pleasant; when the streetscape is well-designed, with shade canopies and generous sidewalks.
- There are plans to eventually put most utilities underground.

Mr. Vining asked participants for positive and negative points about each parking arrangement, and wrote them down. Participants then voted for their preferred configuration with a dot sticker. Their comments and the voting results are listed below [explanatory notes in square brackets]:

### **1. Angled Parking (on Brown and Main Streets):**

78 spaces/ 24 new trees; 10 votes

positives:

most parking  
mirrors [east] downtown  
more "envir" impact  
business advantage

negatives:

fewer trees

### **2. Parallel Parking (on Brown and Main Streets):**

61 spaces/ 72 new trees; 1 vote

positives:

most trees  
better walking environment

negatives:

least # parking spaces  
poor drivers [most difficult parking arrangement]

### **3. Combination Parking (parallel on Brown, angled on Main):**

77 spaces/ 46 new trees; 6 votes

positives:

almost as many spaces [as angled]  
mirrors [east] downtown

negatives:

## **October 21, 2003: Civic Design**

McConico Building Community Room, 7:00-8:30 p.m.

### Introduction & announcements:

The City Council has rejected the angled parking configuration in favor of combined parking, because it wants to create more of a boulevard feel on Brown Street. It is also becoming apparent that parking configurations will have to be designed block by block to accommodate numerous trees and other conditions unique to each lot.

### Carter Design Associates' (CDA's) presentation:

CDA presented three illustration boards as a starting point for discussion about clarifying/creating a consistent and coherent plan for the area streetscapes. The first display board was a plan diagram noting existing and future civic buildings. The streets are classified into types or patterns: Main Street, a commercial corridor with its 100-foot right-of-way, with dense shop fronts and short setbacks near Mays; Bagdad and Brown as secondary streets with 80-foot rights-of-way; Brown as the primary north-south street; and other local streets (Liberty, San Saba, Harris, Blair and Florence) as quieter, local streets; and the east-west alleys (effectively existing or not) or either side of Main Street as narrow service roads.

The variation in street type, purpose, destination and function suggest different setbacks and landscaping to differently frame the public realm. Main and Bagdad are envisioned as having strong connections to the future greenway along Lake Creek, thus creating significant pedestrian activity along the street, which could be enhanced with benches, wider sidewalks, and prominent shop displays. These are also more commercial streets, which require more services (deliveries, parking) than office or residential areas, so the alleys could be especially useful. The secondary streets are

envisioned as having more office, institutional and residential uses, which although still heavily used have less of a need for parking, and can therefore accommodate more landscaping on the street. The local streets, having primarily office and residential uses with still less need for parking, are envisioned as being quieter, with narrower traffic lanes and extensive landscaping on the street.

The second board listed area characteristics and grouped them into strengths and weaknesses, as to whether they helped to point toward a consistent character/identity for the Plan Area.

Strengths listed were the generous right-of-way with wide landscape areas, large trees, deep setbacks, the civic center, and the historic stone curbs and walls remaining in the Plan Area. The right-of-way and setbacks leave room to accommodate an attractive streetscape, and the trees and stone curbs give unique characteristics to work with and build on when designing it.

Some of the weaknesses listed were a lack of pedestrian amenities or consistent sidewalks and alleys, which contribute to a lack of consistency and definition of public areas, in addition to creating functional problems for pedestrians. Building encroachment into the right-of-ways implies that the public realm is weakly defined, and makes reestablishing that realm problematic. The fragmented nature of the historic building stock – the fact that buildings have been constructed and altered considerably over many years means that they have no particular common style, form or theme, other than being generally traditional.

The third board showed photos of different commercial and residential building forms, to encourage discussion of what forms would be appropriate for the area and how guidelines could be created to distinguish them. CDA also included two illustrations to demonstrate the cumulative effect that buildings of different forms might have. One illustration took an aerial photo of the 400 West Main small office complex, which covers about a quarter-block, and quadrupled it to show what the block might look like if all the properties were developed similarly. On the lower right is a similar illustration of a residential lot quadrupled to demonstrate what a block of houses on relatively large lots would look like. The implications for density, parking, landscaping and economy of overall land use are strikingly different.

#### Discussion:

- A participant suggested that there could be alternate parking requirements for the Plan Area, as there is not enough room for the number of spaces required under standard zoning requirements. Alternate standards could allow some parking spaces to be a short walk away rather than on-site. Perhaps street parking would be considered a community parking pool, a part of which could be counted toward a commercial establishment's parking requirement.
- There was a consensus about prohibiting "franchise architecture" in the Plan Area, but there were also reservations about having overly restrictive design regulations.
- There was an expressed preference for a more residential scale, which was described as including:
  - setbacks that are appropriate for the building type and the adjacent buildings
  - structures that have a residential look (other than civic buildings)
  - the preservation of large trees
- Several participants had concerns that densities would become too high. It was explained that one of the purposes of this Plan is to establish upper size and density limits for new construction. The market will determine how close to that limit developers will choose to build. The overall economy will determine the strength of the market.
- There was considerable discussion about the status of the alleys. In places where the alleys exist as public right-of-way they are used. In other places they are overgrown or even have structures built in them. Mr. Vining drew a diagram of how the alleys could add a significant amount of parking to the block, though the location is probably more suitable for employee parking than customer parking. Whether this arrangement is feasible depends partly on what utilities will be located in the alleys.

## November 18, 2003: Defining Parameters for Mixed-Use Zoning

McConico Building Community Room, 7:00-8:45 p.m.

### Introduction & announcements:

The purpose of this meeting is to address compatibility issues as part of a proposed Mixed-Use Zoning District. In earlier meetings participants decided that a mixed-use zoning district would be appropriate for most of the Plan Area, and voted on what uses should be included as part of a mixed-use ordinance. The City Council is also interested in how such an ordinance might apply to other parts of the City.

### Definitions:

The first two Southwest Downtown Plan workshops dealt with land use issues. One exercise compiled a list of land uses that participants agreed would be appropriate for the Plan Area (mostly small-scale residential and commercial uses). A second exercise looked at the current zoning and how it might be changed to include these land uses. Participants decided that a new “mixed-use” zone best described the combination they were looking for. In a third exercise the new zoning, including the mixed-use district, were mapped within the Plan Area.

Since the Mixed-Use Zoning District includes both residential and commercial uses, it is necessary to minimize any conflicts between neighboring properties with different uses. The next exercise will explore some of these conflicts and possible mitigation measures. First, though, there are some terms and concepts that should be defined:

**Compatibility** refers to issues that arise when adjacent properties have different land uses. It is for the most part an issue between single-family residential and other uses. Restaurants are typically very difficult to bring into existing neighborhoods, although it can be done successfully under the right conditions. The most common conflicts have to do with differences in the size of buildings on adjacent lots, noise and traffic generation, hours of operation, and smells. Compatibility standards are additional measures that a new use must take when building or moving in next to a different existing use, such as incorporating building or landscaping features to improve privacy or restricting business hours.

Controlling the relative **height** of adjacent buildings is a primary means of improving compatibility between different uses. A tall building may create light and privacy problems for a shorter building next to it. A block with buildings that are all the same height can have a uniform, master-planned look; varied heights appear more casual and spontaneous.

**Setbacks** (the distance that a structure must be from the property lines) give some control over the density and character of development, and can also help ease a transition between adjacent buildings with very different sizes or uses. Minimum setbacks are also imposed to prevent the spread of fires; independently owned buildings on adjacent lots with no setbacks share a common fireproof (“party”) side wall. These common-wall buildings are very common in traditional small-town architecture as attached storefronts and row houses.

**Buffering** is a design element used to improve compatibility between uses. Some of the more common buffering elements are landscaping requirements, sound walls, or other specific design features (for example, to improve privacy when a residential building is close to the street, raising the floor level or placing a low fence at the property line). [A handout illustrated a combination of buffers and setbacks in a case where multifamily units are developed around an open space; the buildings are set a consistent distance from each other and trees screen views into neighbors’ units. A similar effect occurs when alleys are used for parking, which acts as a buffer from properties across the alley.]

Compatibility exercise:

Participants were given handouts illustrating compatibility scenarios in which a single-family home was next to one of three different uses. They were then asked to write down what concerns they would have about the arrangement and what suggestions they had for improving the situation. The exercise assumed that the single-family house existed before the other use moved in later (into either a new or existing building), because the most conflicts occur between single-family residents and other uses. Participants were asked to think in personal terms, as though it were their house and something moved in next door; what conditions would they want the new building to meet to make the arrangement acceptable? Some instructions and questions came up with each of the scenarios:

**Scenario #1** (house next to a three-story building):

- Would it make a difference if the properties were back-to-back?
- Think about issues like visual privacy – upper floors looking down into a neighboring building – and shading.

Discussion & comments:

- The most difficult thing about this scenario is the difference in height, which relates to the proximity to the lot line. Perhaps the number of these [tall] structures on a block could be limited.
- Not all blocks are the same – maybe there could be different height limits on Round Rock Avenue, Mays and Main.
- Perhaps the building could be no more than one story taller than the house [note: under the current zoning ordinance, single-family houses may be up to 2-1/2 stories tall].
- One participant suggested that the side setback of the three-story building be equal to its height. Planning Director Jim Stendebach noted that one of Austin's setback rules refers to a ratio of the building's height.
- Trees, a limestone wall and water noises were suggested as buffers.
- If there were a courtyard, the neighbor wouldn't have to look at a wall.
- Maybe the face or the side of the building should show some variation in setback [i.e. parts of the building's front and/or sides should be offset slightly to break up the wall mass].
- Zero-lot-line housing arrangements (in which houses have no setback on one side and a wider setback on the other) generally do not work in existing neighborhoods, because they only work with other zero-lot-line houses. In addition to the setback issue, there are also privacy issues to be dealt with; most zero lot line development requires that the side of the house on the property line (which looks onto the neighbor's property) have translucent windows or no windows.
- Consider the situation if the building is there first and the house is built next to it. Some communities have problems with tear-downs, where small houses on small lots are replaced by very large houses [West University in Houston, Clarksville in Austin]. Would a large house cause similar problems for a neighboring small house? What if the building were built smaller than necessary to accommodate a small house, and then the house was replaced with a large one?

The discussion concluded that design as well as size is very important in creating a successful pairing of buildings.

**Scenario #2** (house next to townhouses/row houses):

- Under the current ordinance, townhouses can be as dense as 12 units per acre. How should the alleys work in this case? Should there be parking underneath?

- A participant asked if the townhomes had a front yard. They were answered that there would probably be a smaller one, and that this should be an issue to consider. Participants suggested a stoop or façade variations.

Discussion & comments:

- The same height issues in scenario #1 apply here [note: current ordinance permits both detached single-family homes and townhomes to be a maximum of 2-1/2 stories].
- Perhaps there could be only one story difference between the end unit of the townhomes and the house.
- What if the house is built taller than the townhome? What about the townhome residents' privacy?
- There was some confusion about where people park in a townhome arrangement, since the buildings are connected. Usually parking is in the rear, accessed through an alley or cul-de-sac, or there is a parking lot nearby.
- If the townhomes have a short front setback, a raised stoop could improve their privacy.
- Varied setbacks for the townhomes could avoid a "wall effect".

Again it was concluded that design considerations make all the difference. Design is normally not regulated except under special circumstances, which these appear to be.

**Scenario #3** (house next to a restaurant [the restaurant is depicted as being in a large existing house]):

- Participants were instructed to remember that restaurants might be open late, serve alcohol, and/or create strong food smells.

Discussion & comments:

- One participant suggested that this arrangement only be permitted if the house and restaurant have the same owner.
- Greenery and plants would help the restaurant blend with the neighborhood.
- Restaurant noise and hours – and hours of trash collection – could be limited.
- Would it make a difference if they were across the alley from each other, or one lot over?
- Would it make a difference if the restaurant were a quiet little tearoom? It can be difficult to fit a commercial kitchen into an existing house, so the kinds of restaurants that could fit might be limited. Maybe the neighbor's permission should be required if they want a commercial kitchen, but not if it's a smaller-scale restaurant, like a tearoom.
- One participant noted that the most desired land use from earlier exercises was "eating establishments", but this discussion makes it sound like it would be impossible to locate one in the Plan Area. Another said that she had expected that any eating establishment would only be serving lunch.
- Mr. Stendebach noted that one of the mechanisms in the Zoning Ordinance is the special exception provision, in which additional uses are permitted within a district if they meet certain additional criteria and are approved by the Zoning Board of Adjustment in a public hearing. Perhaps this provision could be used for some uses, or to permit a third story to some buildings if they meet special design criteria.
- A participant asked how many single-family residences were left in the Plan Area [answer: between 15 and 16 residences].
- There was additional discussion on the complications that arise if the restaurant was established first and the resident moved in later.

Participants were asked to add any more comments they had to their handouts before they were collected.

### **February 3, 2004: Development Standards**

McConico Building Community Room, 7:00-8:45 p.m.

#### Construction updates:

The next building in the Municipal Office Complex (MOC) to be built is the Senior Activity Center. Construction should begin in a few months (perhaps April) and is expected to be completed in another 14-16 months for occupation in summer 2005.

As part of the MOC, PageSoutherlandPage (PSP) is preparing a utility plan for the entire Plan Area. This will include a centralized stormwater system and a set of street improvements to improve the Plan Area's appearance and accommodate utilities without harming the larger trees.

#### Tree preservation:

Accommodating the Plan Area's many large trees has made the utility improvement plan suddenly very complicated, since utilities cannot extend within the trees' drip lines without injuring their roots. The City's Arborist, Emsud Horozovic, is in the process of conducting a tree survey for PSP's utility plan. So far he has identified 14 trees that are at least 32 inches in diameter and another 61 trees between 16 and 32 inches in diameter in the Plan Area right-of-way. This tree survey will also be the basis for a southwest downtown tree preservation plan, which at this point can be generally summarized as follows:

1. Identify the "heritage trees" by size, species and health. Appropriate measures must be taken to protect the trees from damage during construction.
2. Design a street tree program - design a streetscape and parking to accommodate existing heritage trees whenever possible, and create a planting program to fill in the street tree canopy and replace trees that are ailing.
3. Develop a mitigation program for property owners who want to redevelop, creating incentives for tree preservation while implementing a replacement program when this is not possible.

#### Parking:

Planning and Public Works Staff are also working on a parking strategy for the Plan Area. It would proceed in phases as the area grows and parking needs increase. It would operate under the assumptions that the City offices and C-1 – Zoned properties (which are assumed to have higher development potential) will provide their own on-site parking, leaving street parking for the use of local businesses. The progression, as currently proposed, is summarized below:

1. A recent parking study estimated that there are currently approximately 290 street spaces in the Plan Area.
2. Street improvements funded as part of the Municipal Office Complex construction will raise the number of on-street parking spaces to over 300 (not including parking for MOC offices).
3. Street improvements are made to the other streets in the area, raising the total number of on-street spaces to around 360.
4. Townhouses and other residential properties will provide their own off-street parking so that residents don't have to compete with neighboring businesses' customers.
5. The Mixed-Use Zoning District will be defined as a new zoning category designed to take advantage of the increased street parking offered by smaller blocks, and to foster a pedestrian-

friendly environment. The parking requirement may be lowered from current requirements (an appropriate amount is being evaluated).

6. The City is looking at a few locations to construct supplemental parking lots (for public use), which at some point could be expanded as structured parking, if necessary.

#### Summary of Donna Carter's Report:

Carter Design Associates provided a draft of their design guidelines, including a summary of major points. Full discussion will be possible with their final report.

Objectives for Southwest Downtown Design Guidelines:

- Maintain a sense of connection with the historic street grid and single-family house traditions while accommodating new construction.
- Enhance connectivity between destinations.
- Minimize the impacts of increased automobile traffic.
- Enhance pedestrian activity.
- Continue the tradition of landscaped right-of-way and specimen tree planting at the street edge and in front yards.

#### Development standards:

(Re)development standards are still under discussion and evaluation, but based on compatibility discussions in earlier meetings, suggest that new construction be allowed to extend to side property lines when there is rear access to the property via an alley or similar. Front setbacks would be minimal: 10-15 feet for townhomes and less for commercial. It is also suggested that special accommodations be made for buildings next to existing single-family homes (used as homes, not businesses), such as:

- There must be at least 15 feet of separation between the existing home and a new neighboring building.
- The neighboring building may be no more than one story taller than the existing home.

These restrictions would *not* apply to buildings next to single-family homes that were built after the adoption of the Ordinance, as they are presumed to understand and accept the implications of living close to non-residential uses and to have made appropriate design accommodations.

#### Discussion:

There were questions about the amount of impervious cover that would be permitted as currently described, and concerns about flooding downstream. Staff explained that the utility plan would direct all the Plan Area's rainwater to a water quality pond just south of the railroad tracks, instead of each property providing its own water quality pond. The centralized water quality pond is more efficient overall, and puts much less of a burden on small property owners. The Creek will be part of a significant park and trail system, so the quality of the water running into it is taken very seriously.

A participant expressed a great sense of loss at losing the residential character of the neighborhood as it has been until recently, and dismay at the proposed permissible intensity of development.

Another participant expressed concern that changing to Mixed-Use (MU) zoning from General Commercial (C-1) would change the development potential of his property. He expected that at some point the market would support high-rises in downtown and that MU zoning would interfere with that. Staff responded that they did anticipate tall buildings in the Plan Area - but not in their lifetimes. Most lots are quite small and a developer would have to buy many of them and do considerable demolition to assemble a parcel large enough, whereas there are still many undeveloped large parcels near the highways and the future SH-130 which would be much simpler and less risky for large-scale

development. MU zoning would allow developers to take advantage of the street parking and walkability of a traditional street grid and allow more intense use of small properties, without waiting for a developer willing to go through the hassles of major land assembly. Other advantages of MU zoning are that it creates a common expectation that the Plan Area will continue to have a fine-grained traditional neighborhood feel that is more in scale with its traditional development pattern (which is what attracted many business owners in the first place - see survey); that it accommodates more residential uses; and that it restricts uses to those that can function well in close proximity to one another. The Southwest Downtown Plan is intended as an interim measure to allow moderately increased intensity of development on small parcels, until market demands necessitate higher-intensity development and large-scale land assembly.

A participant asked about the Light Industrial property in the Plan Area, and whether business would be shut down if zoning were changed to Mixed-Use. Existing uses are not shut down when there is a change in zoning of any kind; instead the property receives a nonconforming status, which means that operations cannot be expanded in that location. The next owner of the property may also continue the nonconforming use, but may not expand.

There was some confusion about the state of the street improvement plan. Currently the plan is to provide parallel parking on Brown and angled parking everywhere else, but as one begins to look at each street, with its trees and driveways, it becomes clear that any parking plan will have to be flexible and site-specific. It has also since been noted that on streets other than Main, angled parking significantly reduces sidewalk width, which may be undesirable.

### **April 6, 2004: Development Potential**

McConico Building Community Room, 7:00-8:30 p.m.

#### Presentation by Charles Heimsath, Capitol Market Research:

Executive Director Joe Vining introduced Mr. Charles Heimsath, whose firm, Capitol Market Research, studies commercial real estate markets in the Austin metropolitan area. The firm's primary products are due diligence reports and feasibility analyses for banks and real estate firms, usually for new construction. Its research is based on a biannual survey of the Austin metropolitan area's major office properties.

His research finds that the office market peaked in December of 2000. When young companies were unable to maintain funding, occupancy dropped from 96% to under 75%, leaving 8 million square feet vacant in a market of 33 million square feet. Rents soon dropped 25-40%. The firm's analysis concludes that enough excess capacity exists in the region that there will not be a need for new office construction until 2008-2009 at the earliest. A handout indicated that Round Rock's situation is similar, except that occupancy is lower, hovering around 70%.

He reminded the audience that this analysis refers only to office complexes over 10,000 square feet, and noted that there is still a good market for small offices, since there are many more businesses needing 1,500 square feet or less of office space than need 200,000 square feet. Low interest rates are making these properties attractive for small businesses to buy as well as rent. He noted that prices for these properties tend to be higher on a per square foot basis than for larger properties.

He shared a few observations about factors contributing to the success of smaller business properties/districts. It is essential for small-scale retail to have parking in front of the store - although it could be "teaser" parking - just enough that customers anticipate a spot in front, although most of the required parking may be a half-block away. He also noted locating all the parking to one side of a district is much less effective than having many smaller, well-distributed facilities.

Mr. Vining explained that the Southwest Downtown Plan is part of a strategy to improve the development climate in the Plan Area by improving the drainage, utilities and streets to foster

changes for the better over the long term. Mr. Heimsath agreed that any improvements that are sensitive to the Plan Area's character will improve the market for its properties.

Comments & questions:

- A participant commented that several times people have walked into her office and asked if she wanted to sell it.
- Another asked about how the future of the Austin real estate market would affect properties in Round Rock. Mr. Heimsath explained that in the long term the trend has been for construction to move outward as the supply of large parcels closer in is reduced. Of course, at this time a quarter of the office space closer to Austin is vacant. He referred to a handout showing the mean rent per square foot per year is \$18.35 in Austin and \$18.74 in Round Rock, but noted that there is only one property in Round Rock large enough to be counted in the survey.
- A third participant noted that the per square foot price can be misleading with smaller properties because there is more common space (bathrooms, kitchenettes) shared with other offices.
- A participant noted that every parking spot on Blair was taken today; one resident was frustrated that several people tried to park in her driveway and one had to be "shoed off" her lawn.
- There was a question about whether businesses would still have to provide off-street parking or whether their needs could be accommodated with on-street parking, and when would he find out so he could develop his property? Mr. Vining explained that Staff is trying to work out whether the street parking will be sufficient - which will depend on how many street parking spaces are available once accommodations are made for driveways and trees, checking with Public Works to be sure the streets won't be overburdened, and persuading the City Council to adopt the parking strategy. A southwest downtown parking plan might require setting up a special district to pay for shared parking facilities. The goal is to include a parking strategy included in the Southwest Downtown Plan.

## **July 13, 2004: Street Layout Design, Utilities and Drainage**

McConico Building Community Room, 7:00-8:45 p.m.

Welcome and announcements:

Executive Director Joe Vining welcomed participants, noting many new faces. He summarized the progress of the Plan in meetings over the last year and explained that the first half of this meeting would be to present the street and utility improvement plans prepared by consultants PageSoutherlandPage (PSP), and the second half to discuss some proposed changes in traffic routes and gauge the level of public support for them. He asked participants to consider the proposals in light of the neighborhood as a whole; matters concerning individual properties will be discussed in individual meetings with property owners.

Streetscape & parking presentation:

PSP Architect Sylvan Schurwanz presented the final plan for street and streetscape improvements. Some of the goals of the street improvement plan are to upgrade the utilities, increase the total on-street parking and make the street as attractive and interesting as possible in order to facilitate the transition to a mixed-use district. The improvement plan aims to achieve a balance between accommodating increased traffic and parking needs, and providing an attractive streetscape that incorporates the large old trees.

Most streets within the Plan Area will have two lanes with angled parking that provides pedestrians with a comfortable separation from moving traffic. Curbs will be routed around the older trees. The design of Main Street will be a variation on this pattern, with a center turning lane and angled parking,

reflecting the pattern on East Main Street. Brown Street will be a direct route from Round Rock Avenue to the new City Hall. It will be designed as a tree-lined avenue with parallel street parking and more street trees planted.

The total number of on-street parking spaces in the Plan Area will increase from 296 to approximately 339 spaces, although the final figure will be adjusted somewhat.

Utility plan presentation:

PSP Engineer Judd Willmann gave an overview of proposed utility upgrades for the Plan Area.

The two most important components of drainage are stormwater management and water quality, especially since the Plan Area is in the aquifer recharge zone. Models show that it will be better to drain the Creek relatively quickly rather than wait for the peak flow from upstream to arrive at the same time. The City will provide two water quality ponds, eliminating the need for ponds on individual properties. The first pond is currently under construction next to the Senior Activity Center, and will serve the northwest portion of the Plan Area; the second will be constructed downstream, on the other side of the railroad tracks to serve the district as a whole.

The water and wastewater systems will be generally upgraded. The lines have been resized to reflect future demand; main water lines under the City's sizing system will be 12". All existing buildings will be reconnected to new lines, and connections will be "stubbed out" to the property lines of undeveloped lots so that the streets won't need to be ripped up to provide connections in the future.

The dry utilities (gas, electric, phone, cable, fiber optic) will all be run through a single network of underground concrete channels that will also be able to accommodate future technologies. In most cases providers will be able to add new cable by pulling it through the ducting system without digging anything up. Public Works and PSP are working with utility providers to finalize a route that doesn't interfere with tree roots and other features.

Discussion:

- A participant was concerned about the net loss of parking spaces in front of her building. Currently she has five head-in spaces at the edge of her property, but under the street improvement plan the curb and sidewalks would be restored and there would be only three angled spaces directly in front of her property. It was explained that there is a trade-off between increasing the total number of parking spaces in the Plan Area and the number directly in front of individual properties. The whole Blair Street area is especially difficult because there is so much going on there. Accommodating delivery vehicles is also a concern. Again, participants were asked to make appointments with the Planning Department to discuss concerns regarding individual properties.
- Several participants asked for clarification of the construction schedule and how visitors will find their way around during the process. Construction will hopefully begin in 2005 and last about 24 months. Construction will proceed in several phases so that all streets will not be torn up at the same time. There will be pre-construction meetings with the neighborhood before construction begins. The City is looking at a consultant to work on a wayfinding system for the entire City, and wayfinding during and after the construction phase would be an aspect of that system.

Specific proposed transportation projects:

The second half of the meeting was given to the discussion of traffic improvements that emerged from brainstorming exercises in an earlier meeting. Proposals had been grouped into three main projects for discussion and prioritization.

Because there has been some confusion regarding the status of these projects, Mr. Vining took a moment to clarify the process for implementing the proposals. There is currently no funding or timeline for any of these proposals. If the neighborhood supports them, the next steps would be to

perform traffic studies and cost-benefit analyses, evaluate the priority of the proposals in relation to other public improvement projects, then obtain funding. The first step is to gauge the level of neighborhood support for pursuing the proposals further.

**The proposed projects:**



**1) Extend Main Street to the IH-35 frontage road.** This would require acquiring land and building a bridge over Lake Creek. The bridge would be one-way coming into downtown from the frontage road but the rest of Main Street would remain two-way. The bridge also has potential as marking a significant “gateway” to downtown.

Williamson County Commissioner Limmert has offered a historic bridge to the City, which could be used to span the Creek. The Rowe Valley Bridge was the first project by Brown & Root and currently spans the San Gabriel River near Hutto. The bridge has not been in use for many years and would not be the structural support for the bridge, but the arched sides could be attached to a contemporary concrete bridge [note: further investigation determined that moving the Rowe Valley Bridge would be prohibitively expensive].

Comments:

- The bridge looks a lot like the old railroad bridge over the Round Rock.
- Given growth rates in the Plan Area, would it make more sense to make the bridge two-way instead of one-way?
- Who would use the bridge? Most people passing through would use McNeil. Most of the people going into or through downtown come from RM 620, not the interstate. The answer to this question will probably change significantly when the changes to the exit and entrance ramps are completed.
- Would there be a pedestrian component of the bridge? There would be some kind of pedestrian connection to Lake Creek, which would be part of a citywide hike-and-bike trail system, but not to the frontage road.

**2) Redesign the Round Rock Avenue – Main – Mays and Liberty – Mays intersections.** There are 3 parts to this proposal:

- a) Close Round Rock Avenue between Brown and Mays. This area could be used for park space.
- b) Divert traffic from Round Rock Avenue to Liberty and install a signal at Liberty and Mays.
- c) Reconnect Main Street across Mays in a 4-way intersection.

Comments:

- It's not a good idea to close Round Rock Avenue – it's been there over 100 years and is one of the most important streets in the City
- How would you get into downtown if Round Rock Avenue were closed? To get to downtown from the west you would go from Round Rock Avenue to Liberty and right on Mays, or from Round Rock Avenue right on Brown and left on Main.
- Wouldn't it hurt downtown businesses by making access from the freeway indirect?
- You want to take cut-through traffic out of downtown because you want people to stop and park and shop there. It's more friendly if it's less busy.
- Having a park downtown could be an attraction for downtown, which needs them.
- Would there still be access to the properties on Round Rock Avenue? One property would need a driveway extension but the rest have access to other streets.
- In order to close Round Rock Avenue the City would have to acquire it from TxDOT and then decide if closing the street is appropriate.
- Five-way intersections can be distinctive and make an area interesting and distinctive.
- A lot of people get confused by the Round Rock Avenue – Main – Mays intersection. They think Main is a bend in Round Rock Avenue.
- There's a big problem with people cutting through downtown to avoid routes with more lights. This plan would make the downtown route less appealing.
- Would East Liberty be widened too? Would it become a major route for people cutting through downtown to the Georgetown Bridge? East Liberty would have to be widened to four lanes, but we can't tell for how far yet – perhaps for 1-3 blocks.

**3) Extend Harris Street north to intersect with Round Rock Avenue.** This was originally suggested as a way to provide a direct route to and from the new Senior Activity Center. The City would have to acquire the property that is now the Golden Chick, and Liberty would have to be terminated in a cul-de-sac on the west side of Brown Street to provide access to businesses and keep the Round Rock Avenue – Liberty – Brown intersection manageable.

[There were no comments referring to this proposal.]

Ballots were distributed that asked participants to assign a priority to the three proposals or to indicate if they thought the proposal inappropriate. Ballots were collected as participants departed.

**September 21, 2004: Summary of the Vision of the Southwest Downtown Plan**

McConico Building Community Room, 7:00-9:00 p.m.

Introduction:

Executive Director Joe Vining gave a quick overview of the Plan, putting it in context. All of the City's other area and neighborhood plans have dealt with developing or newly developed areas; this is the first to directly address redevelopment. The Southwest Downtown Plan will be an umbrella set of recommendations for ordinances and policies to support the vision of the Plan and coherently shape redevelopment. These recommended ordinances will include:

- 1) Adding a new Mixed-Use Zoning District to the Zoning Ordinance;
- 2) Rezoning parts of Southwest Downtown to a Mixed-Use Zoning District;
- 3) Adopting a tree preservation plan;
- 4) Implementing infrastructure improvement plans to improve drainage, add utility capacity and improve the streetscape
- 5) Implementing a Parking Plan to manage current and future parking needs for the Plan Area as a whole.

Street, sidewalk & utility improvements:

Planning, Public Works and PageSoutherlandPage are finalizing the street and utility improvement plans. Construction should begin early in 2005.

Questions/comments:

- A participant asked if utility service would be interrupted during construction and was assured that any interruptions would be minimal.
- Some utilities will be routed through some alleys.
- Will the street improvement plan provide handicapped access? All sidewalks and public facilities must be accessible, but it is a bit unusual to apply ADA standards to street parking and to the district as a whole instead of to individual properties.

Proposed changes in street layouts:

There has been a considerable confusion regarding the proposed street layout changes that were discussed and voted on at the last workshop. **These proposals are not part of the street and utility improvement project.** They were proposed at an earlier workshop about transportation, and the last workshop's vote was to gauge neighborhood support for pursuing them further. For any of the proposals to be adopted the City would have to hire an independent engineer to complete a Traffic Impact Analysis to be sure there are no unforeseen effects, the proposals would have to pass public hearings with the Planning & Zoning Commission and City Council, Public Works would have to find an appropriate spot in their schedule, and voters would have to approve funding in a bond election. For some of the proposed changes, the City would have to persuade TxDOT to release control of Round Rock Avenue. The earliest any of these projects could be approved for construction is 2008.

Voting at the July 13, 2004 workshop prioritized the proposals as follows:

- 1) Extend Main Street to the IH-35 frontage road
- 2) Changes to the Liberty – Mays and Mays – Main – Round Rock Avenue intersections (signal at Liberty & Mays, connect East and West Main Street, close Round Rock Avenue between Brown and Mays)
- 3) Changes to the Liberty – Harris – Round Rock Avenue intersection (extending Harris to Round Rock Avenue and closing part of Liberty)

A few people did not vote or voted against some or parts of the proposals.

Further investigation has determined that it is unrealistic to move the Rowe Valley Bridge to cross Lake Creek. Releasing the bridge from the state system would take a minimum of five years, and everything from the lead paint on makes it prohibitively expensive. There is still interest in incorporating a similar traditional design.

Questions:

- Participants inquired what was the intent of the proposals to close Round Rock Avenue and extend Harris to Round Rock Avenue [see July 13, 2004 meeting].
- If Round Rock Avenue were closed, what would take its place? Suggestions have ranged from park space to a parking garage. The participant replied that it's expensive to take out that much commercial space.

Parking plan:

Planning Director Jim Stendebach outlined a parking strategy. The small blocks in the Plan Area accommodate more street parking than usual, and the street improvement plan will increase overall street parking from 296 to 340+ spaces. Since this pool of shared parking is more efficient than individual lots, parking requirements in the proposed Mixed-Use Zoning District can be reduced.

In the proposed Mixed-Use (MU) Zoning District, street parking should be able to serve both existing businesses and the conversion of existing structures to commercial use. These structures will have no off-street parking requirement. New structures and additions will be subject to a reduced parking requirement that is approximately half of what would be required under C-1 (General Commercial) zoning. This requirement could be met by providing parking on-site, within 500 feet of the property, or by paying into a fund for public parking facilities.

Residential development in MU will be required to provide on-site off-street parking. Standard parking requirements would apply in all other zoning districts.

Questions & Comments:

- A participant noted that the main parking problem now is that most of the street parking spaces are taken up with employee parking so there is little room for customers – especially on the 100 block of West Main where there is no room for off-street parking. Staff answered that this is a case where it's the responsibility of the owners to require that their employees park further away, leaving the spaces in front for customers. Another participant noted how parking on the courthouse square in Georgetown has improved since they put 2-hour limits on parking on the square, and businesses required their employees to park a block or two away on a lot provided for them. Here, the lot for City employees at the end of Brown Street frees up street parking near the McConico building.
- Wouldn't a restaurant owner be in for a rude awakening when customers don't have anywhere to park? Different kinds of restaurants have different parking needs – street parking should be sufficient for most restaurant types at the size of the existing buildings in the Plan Area – if they expanded they would be subject to an off-street parking requirement. Also, these are minimum requirements – those who anticipate needing more parking they are welcome to provide it.
- How does the reduced parking requirement compare to, for example, Wal-Mart's? Wal-Mart has very high customer density and chooses to build significantly more parking than the city requires; it's their policy to design for After-Thanksgiving-Sale crowds. The downside is the sea-of-asphalt aesthetic and the expense of providing spaces that are unused most of the year.
- It should be noted that the City only specifies minimum parking requirements – if a property or business owner thinks that their property/business would benefit from additional parking they may provide as much as they wish.

- This proposal should be taken as the concept for the parking plan – many specifics cannot be resolved immediately. One issue is what will happen with the fire department site at Blair and Bagdad – will it be a fire station, and EMS station, or will the fire department decide not to use it?
- When will the fire department decide whether to keep a station in the Plan Area? It's difficult to guess because the Department is currently looking for a new Chief and Deputy Chief at the same time. They will also have to balance service needs against other parts of the city.
- There were concerns about the distribution of street parking, which is limited by various physical constraints. Concerns about individual properties should be discussed in a meeting with Planning Department Staff.
- The Municipal Office Complex will be another source of after-hours public parking. The MOC will not have a reduced parking requirement, as it will not be in the MU Zoning District. It will provide enough parking for daytime needs, and after business hours will be open to the public.
- Where would this be stated as policy? Parking requirements are part of the Zoning Ordinance. These changes are proposed for the new MU Zoning District, which would be an amendment to the current ordinance. There will be a summary of the ordinance included in the Plan, but the rules would not change until the new ordinance is adopted and the area zoning changed.
- Could you count the street spaces directly in front of your lot toward your off-street parking requirement? No, the street spaces would be absorbed into the pool that covers the parking requirement that is waived for the existing area of the building. The parking requirement applied to new construction and additions may not be met with street parking but must be provided on site or off-street within 500 feet or with a contribution to a fund for public parking facilities.
- Parking meters are not being considered at this time.
- How will parking be handled during jury calls? Jurors will be accommodated in the MOC facilities when they are completed.
- A participant requested some sort of timeline on the website to keep track of the various plans and ordinances in progress. Staff answered that it may be helpful, but it should be understood that the timeline is very much subject to change. Also there are really two timelines – the Plan and Zoning Ordinance timeline and the street and utility improvement construction timeline.

#### Tree preservation plan:

Rather than creating a special policy for the Southwest Downtown Area, the Plan will use the existing Tree Protection and Preservation Ordinance with the stipulation that all mitigation funds collected in the Plan Area will be spent there as well.

#### Zoning changes:

In the last decade or so, the Plan Area has become a patchwork of zoning districts as some properties convert to commercial use and others choose to maintain residences. The result is that very incompatible uses are permitted close to each other, and one property may have to be rezoned in order to have the same use as its neighbor. Also the existing zoning districts are geared for new construction and their density and parking requirements are unwieldy in a traditional development with small blocks and lots.

In the first few workshops participants decided to simplify zoning in the district to three districts: C-1 (General Commercial) for properties with IH-35 frontage, PF (Public Facilities) for the Municipal Office Complex, and a new Mixed-Use Zoning District for most properties. The Mixed-Use District reflects the constraints and potential of the Plan Area with a distinct set of land uses, development standards and design standards [see Appendix C: District Ordinance Summary].

The Mixed-Use Zoning Ordinance specifies a range of land uses appropriate for a small-scale area where commercial and residential uses may coexist in close proximity. Especially intense, noxious or

large-scale uses have been excluded. Density and Development standards describe lot sizes, setbacks and height limits appropriate for the area's small lots, and define parking standards that make use of the ample street parking.

The design standards encourage consistency with the Plan Area's existing architecture and increased visual interest at the pedestrian scale, based on recommendations from Carter Design Associates. Compatibility standards apply to properties adjacent to single-family homes, which were not designed to be in close proximity to non-residential uses. They include additional restrictions on use, proximity and height – other accommodations are under consideration.

Mr. Vining referred to a chart comparing the C-1 and MU Zoning Districts (most properties are currently zoned C-1): He noted that lots in MU are permitted to be narrower, in keeping with their original platting. The biggest differences are height limits and parking requirements. MU limits building height to 3 stories instead of 5, but it should be noted that with C-1 development and parking standards it is nearly impossible to build a 5-story building on lots as those in SWDT, except in awkward configurations such as two floors of office over three of parking or by combining many lots. Part of the purpose of the Plan is to promote development.

Parking standards were relaxed because the pool of shared street parking is more efficient than individual lots, which are also difficult to accommodate on small lots. Other cities that have undergone similar revitalizations have found standard parking requirements excessive. If a high-volume chain restaurant wanted to move into the Plan Area, there might have to be some adjustments.

The new Mixed-Use Zoning District does put a few businesses into nonconforming status, but overall makes the Plan Area much more developable (nonconforming status means that the use is allowed to continue in that location, but may not expand).

#### Questions & comments:

- [relating to compatibility standards] What if someone built a three-story building that looked like a two-story building? The story limit is a height issue, not an aesthetic one, so this would not be acceptable.
- Under the design standards of the proposed ordinance, pole-mounted, roof-mounted and attached cabinet or box signs are not permitted – what kinds of signs *are* permitted? A sign ordinance already exists for the area, and is currently being updated. Some signs that are allowed are façade signs, monument signs, awning signs and signs that hang from poles. Existing signs are grandfathered in.
- How will this affect loan criteria [asked by a property owner who had found that banks would not extend a residential mortgage to a commercially-zoned house]? Problems in qualifying for a commercial property loan generally involve noncompliance with existing ordinances, such as a non-approved use or insufficient parking. Clearly stating that both residential and commercial uses are permitted and specifying parking requirements that can realistically be met on the Plan Area's small lots should make it easier to certify that properties are in full compliance with zoning requirements.
- A participant asked how the public would be notified about public hearings. For hearings regarding the Plan affected parties will be notified through mailings, emails and the website. There will also be posted meeting agendas and notification in the local newspapers. To rezone properties to MU, by law all property owners subject to the zoning change and those within 300 feet of them must be notified by certified mail.
- A participant asked about the displacement of historically disadvantaged populations. The Plan includes rezoning to explicitly permit residential use and compatibility standards to minimize effects of redevelopment on those who choose to remain – so it is not expected that anyone will be displaced.

Goals summary of the Southwest Downtown Plan:

Staff presented a summary of goals that the Southwest Downtown Plan was designed to achieve:

**Goals of the Southwest Downtown Plan**

Accommodate change in the area while:

- Incorporating public input in the planning process.
- Revitalizing the district's infrastructure, including streets, curbs, sidewalks, utilities and drainage.
- Accommodating existing single-family residences by examining the compatibility of land uses.
- Providing for new uses and for the redevelopment of existing buildings.
- Increasing public and private parking.
- Protecting the special character of the area
- Creating a pedestrian-friendly environment

A participant commented that he believed the Plan as presented would not just protect but enhance the Plan Area's character.

Work on the plan will continue through October. City Staff will present a complete draft of the Plan at the next meeting (mid-November). The Plan will then go to the Planning & Zoning Commission and City Council in early 2005.

# *Appendix* **D**

# *Ordinance Summary*

---

## **Proposed MU-1 (Mixed-Use) Zoning District Ordinance Summary**

### **Purpose**

To establish and preserve areas of the Southwest Downtown in accordance with the development and design principles put forth in the Southwest Downtown Plan. Mixed-use zoning refers to the combining of complementary residential and commercial uses in the same building, on the same site, or in the same block. Staff will explore varying standards for new construction versus expansions and conversions.

### **Summary of Permitted Land Uses:**

The following uses are permitted without special conditions:

| Use                                |
|------------------------------------|
| Community Services                 |
| Government Facility                |
| Office                             |
| Park, Linear and Linkage           |
| Park, Neighborhood                 |
| Place of Worship                   |
| Single Family, detached home       |
| Single Family, zero lot line       |
| Single Family, village residential |

The following uses are permitted, provided that they meet supplementary use standards which will be developed in the ordinance for each of the uses listed as “permitted with conditions”.

| Use                                       |
|---|
| Bed and Breakfast                         |
| Commercial Parking                        |
| Day Care                                  |
| Eating Establishments                     |
| Group Living                              |
| Indoor Entertainment Activities           |
| Live/Work Units                           |
| Office, Medical                           |
| Retail Sales and Services                 |
| Townhouse (maximum 14 units per acre)     |
| Upper-Story Residential                   |
| Utilities, Minor                          |
| Utilities, Intermediate                   |
| Utilities, Major                          |
| Wireless Transmission Facilities, Stealth |

The following uses are permitted subject to special exception criteria and are therefore only allowed if approved as a special exception by the Zoning Board of Adjustment.

| Use                                    |
|--|
| Outdoor Entertainment                  |
| Passenger Terminals                    |
| Restaurants with Outdoor Cooking Areas |

## **Summary of MU-1 (Mixed Use) Density and Development Standards:**

- Minimum lot area of 3000 square feet, or 2500 square feet for townhouses (14 units per acre maximum).
- Front setbacks vary from 0 feet to 15 feet depending on building type.
- Rear setbacks vary from 5 feet to 20 feet depending on whether there is a legal alley that provides access to the center of a block.
- Allowable height is 3 stories but not to exceed 50 feet. New construction next to existing single-family must be set back at least 5 feet, and then the height can be increased at a 45 degree angle with distance from the existing structure.

## **Summary of Mixed Use Design Standards**

These standards are not intended to be of a particular style or period, but to encourage high-quality construction/development that fits the scale and functional characteristics of a mixed-use district with a traditional block structure. Staff will explore developing varying standards for new construction, expansions and conversions.

- The length of walls facing public streets should be broken into smaller planes with an offset or interruption by a pilaster or structural frames, change in roof line or architectural materials.
- Color schemes should be harmonious and compatible with the neighborhood.
- Window proportion, shape, position, location, pattern and size should be taken into account. Windows should have trim and the glass should not be mirrored.
- Building elevations that face a public street, park or plaza should have wall planes consisting of a significant percentage of windows and/or entrance areas, especially for ground floor non-residential uses.
- Exterior wall finish, building articulation and roofing requirements will be similar to those found in the existing Local Commercial (C-2) Zoning District.
- The Historic Sign Ordinance should be revised and expanded to include the Southwest Downtown Plan Area.
- Design features such as dormers, shutters, variation of roof lines, arched entries and balconies should be used as part of an integrated, comprehensive building design.

## **Summary of Compatibility Standards**

Compatibility standards are intended to protect adjacent properties and residential neighborhoods from adverse impacts sometimes associated with adjacent higher intensity development. Included in the ordinance are requirements for: visual screening (dumpsters, trash receptacles, outdoor storage, ground mounted equipment, and roof-mounted mechanical equipment), noise, and lighting. Additional compatibility measures such as fencing for properties next to existing detached single-family residences will also be included.

*Appendix* **E**  
*Adopting Ordinance*

---

The *Southwest Downtown Plan* was adopted by the City Council on February 24, 2005 as an amendment to the *General Plan 2000*. The Plan will serve as a strategy document and reference with which future ordinances relating to the Plan Area shall be in accordance. A copy of the adopting Ordinance (# G-05-02-24-8C1) is provided on the following pages. “Exhibit A” in the Ordinance refers to the *Southwest Downtown Plan*.

ORDINANCE NO. G-05-02-24-8C1

AN ORDINANCE ADOPTING THE SOUTHWEST DOWNTOWN PLAN PURSUANT TO THE GENERAL PLAN OF THE CITY OF ROUND ROCK, TEXAS, CODIFIED UNDER SECTION 11.107, CODE OF ORDINANCES (1995 EDITION), CITY OF ROUND ROCK, TEXAS; AND PROVIDING FOR A SAVINGS CLAUSE AND REPEALING CONFLICTING ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS.

WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of Round Rock has previously adopted the City of Round Rock General Plan 2000 ("General Plan"), codified under Section 11.107, Code of Ordinances (1995 Edition), City of Round Rock, Texas, which sets out the procedure for adopting neighborhood plans; and

WHEREAS, the Planning and Community Development Department through a series of neighborhood workshops has submitted the Southwest Downtown Plan for adoption; and

WHEREAS, after considering the public testimony received at a public hearing held on January 12, 2005, the Planning and Zoning Commission has recommended that the Southwest Downtown Plan be adopted; and

WHEREAS, the City Council has determined that the Southwest Downtown Plan be adopted, Now Therefore

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ROUND ROCK, TEXAS, THAT:

## I.

*Exhibit "A"* is hereby adopted as the "Southwest Downtown Plan", attached hereto and made a part hereof, as if fully set out in this ordinance.

@PFDesktop\...00MA\WORLDGX\O:\WDCX\ORDINANC\050224C1.WPD/vr

II.

A. All ordinances, parts of ordinances, or resolutions in conflict herewith are expressly repealed.

B. The invalidity of any section or provision of this ordinance shall not invalidate other sections or provisions thereof.

C. The City Council hereby finds and declares that written notice of the date, hour, place and subject of the meeting at which this Ordinance was adopted was posted and that such meeting was open to the public as required by law at all times during which this Ordinance and the subject matter hereof were discussed, considered and formally acted upon, all as required by the Open Meetings Act, Chapter 551, Texas Government Code, as amended.

READ, PASSED and ADOPTED on first reading this the 24<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2005.  
Alternative 2.

READ and APPROVED on first reading this the \_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2005.

READ, APPROVED and ADOPTED on second reading this the \_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2005.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
NYLE MAXWELL, Mayor  
City of Round Rock, Texas

ATTEST:  
  
\_\_\_\_\_  
CHRISTINE R. MARTINEZ, City Secretary

