How to Retrofit Your Suburb to Make a Downtown

April, 2010
Where to Start...

- How do I attract new residents, businesses and visitors?
- What should the “Town” look like?
- Should we preserve our heritage?
- How can we recognize our assets?
- How can we leverage greater economic development?
- How do we make sure our vision is realized?
Know what has been said (and done)

One Year Action Plan 2009
Five Year Action Plan 2005-2009
2007 Annual Report on Comprehensive Plan
2006 Comprehensive Plan
2009-2018 Capital Improvements Budget Draft Plan
1990 NB Downtown Master Plan
Existing Land Use
Future Land Use
Open Space Master Plan
Strategic Parks and Recreation Master Plan (Draft 2008)
Restricted Zone Changes
Signage Ordinance
Development Standards
Design Standards
Zoning Districts Map
Zoning Ordinance
List of Ordinances “that may be applicable to new development”
Subdivision Ordinance
Platting Ordinance
Sign Ordinance
FEMA website for Floodplains & GIS
Bikeway and Trail Master Plan
County Thoroughfare Plan (2005)
City Thoroughfare Plan (2005)
TX DOT Plan
Road Impact Fee Requirements

Austin-San Antonio Commuter Rail Project (2004 Feasibility Update)
Comal River Water Recreation Area Parking and Circulation Study & McKenna Hospital Area Parking Study
Summary of Events and Initiatives Related to Prince Solms Parking Lots
Walnut Avenue Reconstruction Project
Segments 1, 2, 3
Economic Development Marketing Strategy for 2008-10
Retail Community Profile
NB Convention Center Info
Chamber of Commerce Business Directory
Tourism Statistics
List of Bed and Breakfast
Benchmark Survey
Comal Tourism Study
Town Creek Market Strategy
The Impact of Tourism in Comal County
Master Plan for Wurstfest
Chamber of Commerce Marketing Materials
New Braunfels Historic Resources Survey (January 2009)
TX Historical Commission “Preserving Our Heritage” – A Statewide Plan for Texas
Main Street Association
# Know what has been said (and done)

## 2006 Comprehensive Plan Downtown Goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City Actions</th>
<th>Status of Actions</th>
<th>Where to go from here</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coordinate the TX DOT + agencies on utility improvements.</td>
<td>Ongoing Main Street Program.</td>
<td>Proposed in CIP, approved by Council in January 2007.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reduce/remove overhead utility lines + place underground.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maintain sidewalks and trim trees within the public right-of-way.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Expand street lighting, making sure it is pedestrian-scaled.</td>
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<td>Encourage cleaning of sidewalks.</td>
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<td>Provide landscaped “parking parks” on unused city-owned land.</td>
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<td>Relocate existing industries around or near Main Plaza/Rezone to C2A</td>
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<tr>
<td>Encourage residential uses of 2nd floor spaces for 24-hour activity.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Establish historic/them overly district to promote entertainment uses.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use special zoning regulations to promote tourism/entertainment uses.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>X</strong> Develop and implement a landscape ordinance for downtown.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sponsor streetscape beautification.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Involve community in downtown maintenance (i.e. Adopt a Street).</td>
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<td>Promote celebration of festivals.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Encourage local banks to make low interest loans for “entertainment.”</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>X</strong> Establish a visible visitor information facility in central downtown.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Encourage sidewalk cafes and sidewalk vendors.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide special incentives to lure entertainment businesses.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Improve pedestrian linkages between downtown and river.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Connect a path from river walk to San Antonio Street bridge.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Delineate pedestrian crosswalks with pavement markings/texture.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Establish a downtown walking (exercise) trail program.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>X</strong> Develop a relational location map showing areas of interest.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>X</strong> Install a wayfinding system.</td>
<td>Wayfinding Study to be completed and funded in January 2007. Temporary signs placed in 2005.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>X</strong> Develop informational/directional signage with common themes.</td>
<td>Ongoing Main Street Program.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>X</strong> Create a temporary pedestrian mall around Main Plaza for events.</td>
<td>Main Street Program developed voluntary public parking on private lots. Debate about need for public parking lots continues.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>X</strong> Develop a coordinated system of off-street parking.</td>
<td>Historic survey and inventory of historic structures completed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Create a streetscape design with a historic flavor.</td>
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<td>Preserve the Comal County Courthouse.</td>
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<td>Establish historic architectural guidelines and signage.</td>
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Understand the Economic Strategy

Know Your Assets

• Historic?

• Regional Employer?

• Tourist Attraction?

• Interstate Highway?

• Active Citizens?

• Artist Enclaves?
Understand the Economic Strategy
Focus Energy Rather than Dispersing it

Segment of project corridor is far longer than other walkable “Main Street” districts.

Lesson 1: Focus Energy Rather than Dispersing it
By breaking the corridor into walkable segments, the plan dismissed a one-size-fits-all approach and instead focused on infill development and design interventions centered around unique neighborhoods. In doing so, the team developed a series of catalytic sites along the corridor that will revitalize surrounding areas in an organic manner, capitalizing on the unique character and urban form of diverse areas neighborhood.

Lesson 2: Activate Vision Plans with Policy Strategies
The project team developed an implementation strategy that translates design concepts and vision into policy actions items. The action items are placed in a strategic implementation matrix that outlines necessary steps for completion, a list of responsible parties and agencies, proposed timeline for completion, and potential funding sources for each action item.

Lesson 3: Re-use of Auto Dealerships
The plan takes existing auto dealerships and transforms auto-oriented uses into places for people’s everyday use. The dealerships can be re-used as big box retailers and super markets, and the vacant lots can be used for infill retail, creating a vibrant neighborhood for the community.

Lesson 4: Plan for the Private Sector Too
Understanding that a successful revitalization effort demands a symbiotic relationship between the public and private sector, the plan provides a set of thoughtfully crafted “Catalytic Policy Initiatives” to enable and encourage the private sector to be an active participant in revitalization of the corridor.
Focus on Branding & Signage

A Brand is:

- Compelling
- Repeatable
- Identifiable
- Supportable (Authentic)
- Turns lemons into lemonade

- Why go to [your town]
- Why shop, live, work, play or stay in [your town]
-
Tie Early Phase Development to Land Values Supportable Rents or Sales Prices

Real Estate Development Potential

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>$655/SF</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>DU/Ac.</strong></td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parking Req. (Spaces/Unit)</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gross SF/Unit</strong></td>
<td>1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Price/Gross SF</strong></td>
<td>$655</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Absolute Price** $655,000

**Costs:**
- **Hard Costs/SF** $300
- **Parking/Space** $20,000
- **Soft Costs (% of Hard)** 20%

**Total Costs** $384,000

**Profit (% of Revenues)** 15%

**Land Residual / Unit** $172,750

**Land Residual/Acre** $7,773,750

**Land Residual/SF** $178.46

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parking Spaces / Unit</th>
<th>-10%</th>
<th>$655/SF</th>
<th>+10%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-Space</td>
<td>$121</td>
<td>$178</td>
<td>$236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-Spaces</td>
<td>$96</td>
<td>$154</td>
<td>$211</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In current market, with current policies (e.g., parking), real estate development is not feasible.

Spurring private investment requires incentives for market investment:
- Reduce parking requirement
- Increase allowable FAR
- Accelerated processing
Create a Compelling Vision
Create a Compelling Vision

The Corridor as a Series of Neighborhoods

Northern Gateway
- Creating a Gateway
- Capitalizing on Proximity to Harbor and River

Downtown
- Linking New Neighborhoods to Existing Urban Centers

Seaside Neighborhood
- Preserving Unique Neighborhood Scale & Identity

O’side Transit Center
- Strengthening Improving
Create a Compelling Vision
Create a Compelling Vision
Create a Compelling Vision
Create a Compelling Vision
Create a Compelling Vision
Make Great Streets

“Good Street” Toolbox

Innovation, Creativity, Identity

Buildings and Facades

Sidewalk treatments

Street furniture

Crosswalks

Landscaping and Sustainability

Traffic and Parking Improvements

Alternative Transportation Facilities
Consider on-street parking as “flex” space
Consider on-street parking as “flex” space
Make New Connections
Make it safe (and inviting) to walk
Make it safe (and inviting) to walk
Design for Slower Traffic

Traffic Calming Toolbox
Put Your Road on a Diet
Put Your Road on a Diet
Mix your uses, densities, & building types

Single Family Home

Mixed-use Tower
Mix pedestrian-friendly frontages

Arcade  Awning  Gallery  Shopfronts
Activate a Mix of Open Spaces

- Gateway and terminus for town parades
- Beginning of "artisan stroll" or "restaurant row"
- Tree planting to create boulevard gateway effect

Ampitheater Pocket Park

- Sundays in the park live music
- Movies in the park
- Community theater
- Convention center outdoor fairs

- Town Christmas tree
- Farmers market
- "Blessing of the Pets" day
- Tourism Information Center
- Creative business BID celebration

- Art gallery/historic museum gift shop
- Community picnics and pot-lucks
- Historic/cultural art fairs
- Halloween/pumpkin events

- Community yoga/meditation space
- Movies on the town green
- Sam Bass Day celebration
- Dancing fountains for children
- Dia de Los Muertos celebration
- Toddler "T" ball park

- Bike/hike/walking trails and races
- BBQ/picnic areas
- Tree planting events
- Boy scout and Girl Scout activities
- Scouting activities for the community

- Skate park
- School fairs and fundraising space
- Community gardens
- Temporary playgrounds

TORTI GALLAS and partners, inc
Use a Form-Based Code

- Tool for regulating development to achieve a specific urban form.
- Creates a predictable public realm by controlling physical form (less focus on land use).
- Addresses the relationship between building facades and the public realm.
- Addresses the form and mass of buildings.
- Addresses the scale and types of streets and blocks.
- Regulatory not advisory.
Reform parking – Seven Strategies

- Charge the Right Price for Curb Parking
- Return Meter Revenue to the Neighborhoods
- Invest Parking Revenues in Better Transit
- Universal Transit Passes
- “Unbundle” Parking Costs
- Share Parking
- Remove or Reduce Minimum Parking Requirements
Reform parking – Toolkit

- Park-once strategy
- Shared parking
- Enforce / Introduce on-street parking time limits
- Establish Parking Review Board
- Create Downtown Parking Benefits District
- Price on-street (curb) parking
- Provide Downtown employees with discount to “Park-once” garages
- “In lieu” fees for developers.
- Update minimum parking requirements to reflect trip generation
- Reduce parking requirements for desired development.
Lavish attention on implementation

Five Key Areas

• Prioritize Actions
• Streamline the Regulatory Framework
• Create Public/Private Partnerships
• Incentivize Development
• Identify Funding Sources and Mechanisms
• Establish a Downtown Champion to Carry the Plan Forward
Reform parking = Increased Land Value

Now: Corridor lined with auto uses.

Future: Transformed into a pedestrian neighborhood.
Establish a Set of Critical Success Factors

1. **Wayfinding**
   - Install Highway signage for historic Downtown New Braunfels on Interstate 35, State Road 46, Loop 337 and Walnut Ave.
   - Increase font size and place logo on all Downtown Wayfinding Signage.

2. **Improved Walkability**
   - **Create pilot road diet:** re-stripe street for angled parking on West San Antonio.
   - Create and delineate crosswalks around Town Square and to and from Bandstand.
   - Designate and enforce slower speeds (20-25 miles per hour) around Town Square.
   - Gather traffic count data to enable planning for additional traffic calming projects.

3. **Parking Reform**
   - Create “park once” district with legal development rights for new development.
   - Establish and enforce on-street parking limits.
   - Establish Downtown parking design ordinance.

4. **Economic Development**
   - Establish Downtown Development Corporation funded by a PID (Public Improvements District).
   - Incentivize “infill occupancy” and “infill development” for retail and office businesses in vacant space along San Antonio Street and infill development for vacant lots on San Antonio Street.
   - Solicit a “Select Service” Hotel to locate in Downtown.
Link Success Factors to Policy Changes

1 Expedited Permitting for Infill Development in Key Areas
# Assign Responsibility, Timeline & Funding

## Implementation Matrix: Parking Reform

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

- Know Your History
- Inventory the Market
- Create a Compelling Vision
- Make Great Streets
- Mix your uses and building types
- Reform Parking
- Lavish attention on implementation