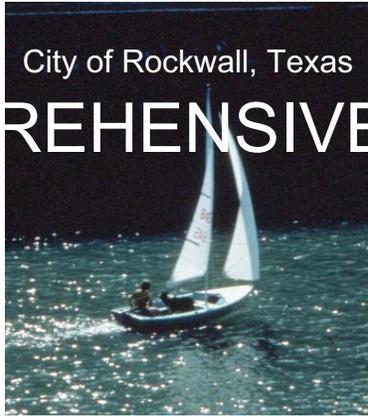


City of Rockwall, Texas

# COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



March 5, 2012

**CITY OF ROCKWALL**

**RESOLUTION NO. 12-07**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE  
CITY OF ROCKWALL, TEXAS, ADOPTING THE  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN IN ACCORDANCE WITH  
THE CITY CHARTER.**

**WHEREAS**, the City Charter of the City of Rockwall, Texas, states that the Master Plan will contain recommendations for the growth, development and beautification of the City and its extraterritorial jurisdiction, and

**WHEREAS**, the City Council of the City of Rockwall has previously authorized a study to update the City's Master Plan, also referred to as the Comprehensive Plan, and

**WHEREAS**, the citizens of the City of Rockwall were involved in the development of the Comprehensive Plan through participation in committee and public meetings, and

**WHEREAS**, Chapter 213 of the Texas Local Government Code states that the adoption of or amendment to a comprehensive plan requires a hearing at which the public is given the opportunity to give testimony and present written evidence and as required by the City Charter a public hearing has been held on the proposed revisions to the Comprehensive Plan, and

**WHEREAS**, the Comprehensive Plan shall serve as a guide to all future Council action concerning land use and development regulations and expenditures for capital improvements,

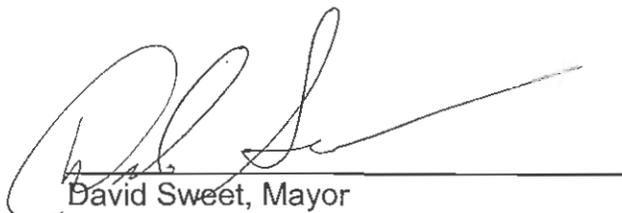
**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ROCKWALL, TEXAS, that:**

**Section 1.** That the Comprehensive Plan as updated by the City Staff and recommended for approval by the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee is hereby approved as the Comprehensive Plan for the City.

**Section 2.** That the Comprehensive Plan shall be used by the City in the planning and as a guide for the future development of the City of Rockwall.

**Section 3.** That this resolution shall take effect immediately from and after its adoption and it is so resolved.

PASSED AND APPROVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF  
ROCKWALL, TEXAS, this 5<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2012.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
David Sweet, Mayor  
City of Rockwall, Texas

ATTEST

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Kristy Ashberry, City Secretary  
City of Rockwall, Texas



APPROVED AS TO FORM:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Pete Eckert, City Attorney  
City of Rockwall, Texas

## CREDITS

# 2012 LAND USE AND THOROUGHFARE PLAN UPDATE

(ADOPTED 03-05-2012 - RESOLUTION No. 12-\_\_\_)

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Kristen Minth

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Michael Hunter, Past Chair

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Michael Hunter  
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#### 2012 Committee

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**Photos by City of Rockwall Planning Department and Townscape unless otherwise noted.**

## CREDITS

# COMPREHENSIVE PLAN POLICY UPDATES (RESIDENTIAL)

(ADOPTED JANUARY 16, 2007 – RESOLUTION No. 07-03)

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## CREDITS

# “HOMETOWN 2000” – COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

(ADOPTED DECEMBER 17, 2001 – RESOLUTION No. 01-40)

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2012 Comprehensive Plan is intended to build upon the City of Rockwall's "Hometown 2000" Plan adopted on December 17, 2001. The City Council, recognizing the growth the City has experienced in the past ten (10) years along with the expansion of its corporate limits and extra territorial jurisdiction (ETJ), appointed the 2011 and 2012 Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committees to study and make recommendations on updating the Future Land Use Plan and Thoroughfare Plan.

The update is also intended to integrate into the Comprehensive Plan, the policy updates adopted in early 2007 by the City Council that established guidelines for new residential growth in the City. Finally, the Plan references the "Parks, Recreation & Open Space Master Plan 2010-2020" which was adopted by City Council in May 2010, with special emphasis on linking this plan with the Land Use and Thoroughfare Plans to ensure a holistic approach to the review of new development and infrastructure planning.

As stated in the Hometown 2000 Plan, the City of Rockwall, Texas has evolved through a colorful history, from frontier outpost on the East Fork of the Trinity to prosperous farming and railroad town at the turn of the century. It saw stagnation through the Great Depression and World War II, and then renewed prosperity as it became a part of the economy of a vast metropolitan region with the advent of commuting, and the construction of Interstate Highway 30 and Lake Ray Hubbard. Each period left an indelible stamp on the growth patterns and physical form of the city.

In the early part of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Rockwall finds itself in a period of unprecedented growth, with its population having increased from 5,000 in 1980 to an estimated 37,000+ residents in the 2010 US Census. According to the most recent "Land Use Assumptions for Impact Fees" report prepared for the City of Rockwall by Dunkin, Sefko & Associates, Inc. in 2007, the City's population is expected to exceed 50,000 residents by 2017. Further, overall employment within the City is expected to increase from 13,400 jobs in 2007 to nearly 22,000 jobs by 2017. Yet much of Rockwall retains a small town character and charm highly valued by residents and businesses that have chosen to make it home. Rockwall's immediate and long-term challenge is to maintain the positive qualities of the town cherished by its citizens while accommodating inevitable growth and change.



THE HARBOR FOUNTAIN (PHOTO BY TCB ENGINEERS)

The 2012 Comprehensive Plan updates the HomeTown 2000 Plan and continues the City's previous planning efforts with a special emphasis on those areas of concern most directly concerned with the physical form of the city: land use, urban design, open space and parks, and transportation. The Comprehensive Plan's recommendations for the shaping of Rockwall's future can be best summarized as guiding principles, paraphrased from the vision and policy statements:

**Land Use**

- Provide for a more compact and integrated mix of land uses and densities that will encourage economic vitality, more self-sufficient neighborhoods, efficient use of land and city services, and a strong sense of community. Discourage development practices that result in sprawl.

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RESIDENTIAL DENSITY**

- Low Density Residential Areas = Less than 2 units per acre
- Medium Density Residential Areas = 2 to 3 units per acre
- High Density Residential Areas = More than 3 units per acre

*(See Future Land Use Map)*

- Provide a greater variety of housing to accommodate a broad range of individual and family demand.
- Retail areas should be designed to be pedestrian-oriented and be integrated with neighboring residential and commercial neighborhoods.
- Strengthen the Downtown area's position as the cultural heart of the community by encouraging retail, restaurant and residential uses in undeveloped or underdeveloped pockets of Downtown, and with development standards designed to enhance its small town form and character.



**STONE CREEK MASTER PLAN**

**Urban Design Framework**

- Use "gateway" design treatments, enhancement of key thoroughfares with street trees, furnishings and public art to reinforce Rockwall's "home town" community character, and provide a more pleasurable driving and walking experience in the city.
- Preserve the majority of floodplains to reduce the risk of long term flooding and to provide interconnectivity of residents and workers within the community through a citywide open space and trail system.

- Ensure that the character of public buildings reflects a sense of permanence and public pride through prominent locations and high quality of design, materials and construction.
- Identify and protect views and vistas that contribute to the community’s character and uniqueness, particularly those from Ridge Road to the lake, from the I-30 and SH 66\_bridges as one arrives to the City, and from other key entry points such as along SH 205 from the north.



**VIEW TO LAKE FROM RIDGE ROAD**

**Urban Design Development**

- Mixed use development may consist of either a “vertical” or “horizontal” mix of uses. For the purpose of defining mixed use, **horizontal mixed use** means two or more different types of uses are placed next to each other (but not attached), planned as a unit, and connected together with pedestrian and vehicular access. An example is a subdivision containing single-family dwellings that is adjacent to a neighborhood commercial development and/or office complex.

**Vertical mixed use** means two or more different uses occupying the same building, usually on different floors. An example is a building with retail on the ground floor and office and/or residential uses on the second, third and/or higher floors. In the vertical mixed use areas designated on the Future Land Use Map, the site layout for commercial and for loft, townhome and urban housing developments should encourage buildings to be placed close to the roadway, with parking primarily located to the rear or side of buildings.

- Landscaping must be designed, installed and maintained to ensure that design objectives and the long-term health of plant materials are achieved. The preservation of existing trees and natural open spaces, incorporating additional native and drought-tolerant planting to enhance the existing landscape, will be emphasized.
- The facades of large commercial buildings, such as big box retail, should be designed and detailed in a manner and scale that minimizes their visual impact on Rockwall’s townscape. This includes vertical and horizontal articulation of building elements.
- Continue to update sign standards to minimize visual clutter while providing clear identity and information.
- Use site design considerations including layout, screening and buffering to minimize negative visual impacts on adjacent properties.



- A site’s dominant natural features—topography, vegetation, drainage and their suitability for particular uses or layouts—should be prime considerations in rezoning discussions.
- On-site drainage features should be designed as amenities, emulating natural water features and land forms wherever possible.
- Continually investigate and adopt techniques or policies that will ensure attractive and unique architecture is designed and built within the city.

### **Open Space and Parks**

- Implement the goals of the Parks, Recreation & Open Space Master Plan 2010-2020 and acquisition of the Wallace Preserve prairie.
- Pursue creation of parks and passive greenways at appropriate locations along the Lake Ray Hubbard shoreline, such as the shoreline north of the Shores golf course.
- Incorporate floodplains into an interconnected greenway network that preserves floodwater storage while providing trails and natural areas.



**CASTLE RIDGE AMENITY CENTER**

### **Transportation**

- Create an interconnected and diverse street pattern to ease congestion by more evenly distributing traffic, and to offer flexibility of routes and modes of transportation.
- Offer mutually supportive transportation choices, balancing convenient and efficient auto access with safe, well designed pedestrian, bicycle and other transportation alternatives and encourage the inclusion of rest areas with benches for pedestrians and bike racks for cyclists to promote these alternatives.
- Design neighborhood streets to encourage traffic to travel at less than 30 miles per hour for safety and to encourage more walking, cycling and social interaction.
- Use Rockwall’s natural features to advantage in the design of street systems to minimize cost and retain the character of Rockwall’s distinctive landscape.

These principles collectively describe a future for Rockwall that build on its heritage, its unique setting, and its prized small town character. This future was described by the HomeTown 2000 Plan's Citizen's Advisory Committee in their overall vision statement for the community, and remains applicable today:

### **We envision a Rockwall...**

that retains and builds upon its charming Texas small town ambience, as expressed in its historic architecture, its Old Town Square, its tree-lined streets and its traditional neighborhoods;

that welcomes and accommodates growth and change in a manner that builds upon our distinctive sense of place, the wise use of our community resources, our community spirit and our quality of life;

that is a true lakefront community taking maximum advantage of our dramatic site, our shorelands, and our views to and from the water;

that takes maximum advantage of our rolling topography, our wooded areas and our creek valleys to help shape a distinctive town character;

that is an attractive, memorable place--one of Texas' most desirable, admired and emulated communities;  
that is a great HomeTown!

## BACKGROUND

### Historical Perspective

Rockwall traces its history as a community to the construction of the National Road of the Republic of Texas in the mid-1840's, which was a major route for settlers traveling westward to Peters Colony near present-day Dallas. Occasionally, high water on the East Fork of the Trinity River prevented crossing to the west, and pioneers chose to settle near the highway on the east side of the river. In 1854, Elijah Elgin donated 40 acres on a hill east of the river overlooking the valley to establish a town. The community was named Rockwall after a curious rock formation resembling a "rock wall" discovered by farmers digging a well, and variously attributed to a lost prehistoric tribe or natural geologic phenomena. In 1873, Rockwall County was formed from the panhandle of Kaufman County, and Rockwall became the county seat.



Farming, cattle ranching and the coming of the railroad in 1886 spurred steady growth for decades. By 1890, there were close to 1,000 residents in Rockwall. The original county courthouse burned and was rebuilt in 1891; at that time Rockwall had a jail, five churches, a public school and a private college. Growth continued through the next three decades, and most of what is now considered the town's historic district was in place by the 1930's.

The Great Depression saw declines in the city's population as families sought work in nearby Dallas. This decline continued through World War II, and very little growth or change occurred in these years. Thus, at the close of the war in the mid-1940's, Rockwall still retained much of its turn-of-the-century small town character.

After the war, the nature of the community's economic structure began a fundamental shift with the advent of commuting. It was estimated that in 1948, one-third of the county's work force commuted to jobs in Dallas, and Rockwall became less an isolated rural county and more a part of the greater Dallas metropolitan area. This trend was accelerated with the construction of Interstate Highway 30 in the late 1950s, which provided easy access to Dallas and facilitated shipping in and out of the community. Its completion and the access it afforded spurred both commercial and residential growth to the south of the original town site.

The construction of Lake Ray Hubbard in 1969 and 1970 further accelerated growth. The county's employment tripled from the lake's completion in 1970 to 1980, and the city's population almost doubled in the same time frame. At the time the lake was under construction the City of Dallas hired planner Marvin Springer to develop a plan (called the

“Springer Plan”) for roadway and public access to the waters edge on land that Dallas owned, similar in character to the area around White Rock Lake. Because Rockwall did not adopt the Springer Plan, much growth in this period consisted of single-family subdivisions near the lake and on its shores, providing attractive home sites but precluding long range plans for continuous public recreational access along the shoreline.

In the new millennium, dramatic growth continues. Population as of the 2000 census was 17,976, a 300% increase from 1980. The population in the 2010 Census was over 37,000 residents. As land near the lake has been built out, the city has continued to grow into the rolling uplands to the north, east and south.

The I-30 Corridor continues to be the City’s primary commercial center; however, other significant commercial and employment sectors have emerged in the past ten (10) years. These include the Harbor District adjacent to the lake, the hospital / medical office district along FM 3097, the Rockwall Technology Park at SH 276 and FM 549, and other developed or planned retail centers along SH 205, SH 66 and other major arterials.

The courthouse square and surrounding historic district remain the symbolic heart of the community, and largely retain their traditional small town character. The City’s adoption of the Downtown Plan in 2004 (which was a key recommendation of the Hometown 2000 Plan), followed by the adoption of the Downtown zoning district and the designation of the City into the Texas Main Street program, has helped position the downtown area for continued success as the City moves forward.

### **The Need for the Plan**

At the advent of the HomeTown 2000 planning process, Rockwall was fortuitously situated as a gateway to the Metroplex, scenically sited on the wooded ridgeline and hills overlooking the lake. Dramatic growth since 1980 is a testament to the qualities that have made the town attractive to longtime residents and newcomers alike. Committee members and citizens-at-large are consistent in citing the physical and visual attributes of the town they most prize. Most often mentioned are:

- Proximity to and views of the lake,
- The turn-of-the-century character of the courthouse square and the surrounding historic district, with its historic buildings, tree-lined streets, traditional block layout and “front porch” ambiance,
- The high quality and attractiveness of its neighborhoods,
- The rolling topography and rural character of the undeveloped lands in the eastern parts of the city,
- Wooded creeks that retain much of their natural character, and
- A small-town feel in such close proximity to a major city.

At the same time the city continues to experience unprecedented growth. Each new private and public development project will either build upon and enhance the town's positive qualities and character, or erode those qualities by contributing to more of the conventional, automobile-dominated sprawl and sameness spreading across so much of the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex. Rockwall's continued immediate and long-term challenge is to maintain the positive qualities of the town cherished by its citizens while accommodating inevitable growth and change.

The 2012 Comprehensive Plan is intended to continue and broaden the community-driven vision for the future of Rockwall as expressed in the Hometown 2000 Plan, and to offer policies and strategies to insure that future growth and redevelopment is consistent with that vision. To this end, the 2012 Plan updates the recommendations, policies and strategies of the City's Hometown 2000 Plan, with special emphasis on the city's growth patterns, the physical form of those patterns, and the community character that has results resulted. For this reason, the Plan focuses on the areas of concern most directly related to future growth and the physical form that growth takes: land use, urban design, parks and open space, and transportation.

For each of these areas of study, the HomeTown 2000 Committee originally created a vision statement, and endorsed a number of policies to guide the implementation of that vision. The 2011 and 2012 Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committees have reviewed these policies and drafted recommendations on updates that were deemed necessary. These policy statements have, in turn, guided the formulation of plans for each of the areas of study. The plans are followed by implementation strategies which, pursued over time, will insure that short-term actions and decisions are faithful to the community's long-term vision for itself.

The Comprehensive Plan is the City's official guide for making decisions about growth and development. The Plan is a summary of the goals, objectives, policies, strategies, programs, and potential projects that will enable the City to achieve its mission of building strong and sustainable neighborhoods, developing a sound economy and providing for a safe community. The contents of this document will give the citizens, property owners, developers, and other enterprises interested in Rockwall, the vision of how the City should grow and develop in the future.

The Texas Local Government Code establishes the legal basis for the comprehensive plan. The Code states that a municipality may adopt a comprehensive plan for long-range development. If a city adopts a comprehensive plan, it must be used as the basis of subsequent zoning amendments. The comprehensive plan is described as a plan for the orderly growth and development of the city and its environs. The plan should "facilitate the movement of people and goods, and the health, safety, and general welfare for the citizens of the city."

## **Planning Process**

The HomeTown 2000 planning process was initiated in September of 2000, with the appointment of a Citizen's Advisory Committee representing a broad range of community interests to guide the development of a long term vision and updated planning recommendations for Rockwall. Shortly thereafter, a consultant team of experts in the areas of planning, urban design, landscape architecture and transportation, led by J. D. Wilson and Associates, was commissioned to facilitate the planning process and produce the plan itself. The final plan was adopted by the City Council in December of 2001.

Initial briefings were held with community leaders, the committee chair and the city's professional staff, which included guided tours of Rockwall's historic town center, its neighborhoods, commercial corridors, and growth areas. Concurrently, the city's existing plans and ordinances were reviewed and analyzed to develop a baseline understanding of the city's goals and objectives and the regulatory framework currently in place. With a foundation of background data, the consultant team initiated a series of informal workshops with the HomeTown 2000 Citizen's Advisory Committee. The initial workshops identified pressing issues, concerns, perceived constraints and opportunities, and resulted in an overall Vision Statement for the town. Subsequent workshops focused on specific areas of concern, and produced Vision Statements and Policy Statements for land use, urban design, open space and parks, and transportation. These Vision and Policy Statements were each reviewed, discussed and refined by the Citizen's Advisory Committee during in-depth workshops dedicated to each topic. They were presented to the public for feedback at a Town Hall Meeting conducted April 19, 2001.

Utilizing the Vision and Policy Statements as guiding principles, and in light of the input from committee members and the Town Hall meeting, individual plans were prepared to give physical form to the visions and recommendations for land use, urban design, open space and parks, and transportation. The Citizen's Advisory Committee reviewed each of these plans in detail. Specific design recommendations were also prepared for several commercial roadway corridors and thoroughfares. The plans were subsequently refined based on committee input, and implementation strategies were prepared, creating a road map for bringing the plans, and the visions they represent, to reality.

During 2006-2007, the City Council implemented a set of comprehensive plan "policy updates" to help guide the City in its planning for new residential growth. Again relying on the expertise and consultancy of Dennis Wilson, the City held interviews and focus groups with custom home builders and developers as well as town hall meetings with interested residents. The policies were adopted by City Council in January of 2007, and many of them were further implemented as amendments to the Planned Development regulations of the Unified Development Code and the creation of a new "SF-1" zoning district.

In March of 2010, the City Council appointed a Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee and directed staff to move forward with updating the existing Home Town 2000 Plan. With an additional area of approximately 3,500 acres being annexed into the City resulting in a greatly expanded extraterritorial jurisdiction, it was recognized by the Council that an update of the Plan is both needed and appropriate at this time.

After kick-off meetings with the Committee, Dennis Wilson of Townscape again stepped in to lead a team of consultants and city staff in a visioning and design charette process to draft ideas for desired and/or projected land uses in the newly annexed areas, as well as other areas of the City that warranted a fresh look and consideration. These ideas were presented to and discussed with the Committee through a series of meetings, and ultimately were refined and incorporated into the updated Future Land Use Plan.



**EXAMPLES OF CONCEPTUAL LAND USE IDEAS DERIVED FROM DESIGN CHARETTE – MAY 2010**

# LAND USE

## Vision

*The City should contain a mix of land uses that will foster economic vitality and provide a broad range of opportunities for living, recreation, shopping and business. Land uses should be distributed in a manner that enhances a sense of community and neighborhood identity. In addition, residents and visitors should have ready access to amenities that the City offers such as recreation, shopping and cultural activities.*

## Land Use Policies

1. **Provide for a mix of uses and densities that encourage economic vitality.**
  - a. **Reserve adequate land for industrial uses on or near IH 30, the proposed Outer Loop and in other areas of the City deemed appropriate for industrial and employment driven development.**
  - b. **Ensure that industrial activities are adequately buffered from residential uses.**
  - c. **Provide for a range of housing types, from large lot custom homes to urban housing in order to accommodate different age groups, incomes and life styles.**
  - d. **Ensure that there is ample recreational amenity for residents and workers.**

The key to Rockwall's future as a quality community that will attract residents and businesses alike is to achieve the objective of creating an attractive "hometown" style of community. This community should make provisions for a broad range of household types to meet the needs and desires of young and elderly alike to ensure that they will always feel that Rockwall is "home."

2. **A greater variety of housing should be provided in *specific* areas of the city to accommodate a broad range of individual and family demand, including lower density or more rural style housing with a country atmosphere and urban style housing within walking distance of services in areas designated on the Future Land Use Map for vertical mixed use.**



ZERO LOT LINE HOUSING (SOUTH ALAMO RD)

In many communities, including Rockwall, our elderly parents and newly independent children often leave the community because it does not offer an environment that suits their changing needs, or that they can afford. Elderly who can no longer safely

drive should be able to live in a low maintenance townhouse or loft and walk to restaurants, coffee shops, a drug store and other services. Similarly, children seeking their independence want an environment where they have ready access to meeting other people like themselves, and where they too have direct access to activities such as stores, restaurants, parks and trails. Garage apartments, guest suites or studios can also offer affordable solutions to housing, as well as providing housing alternatives for both the young and the elderly which is closer to home. When people are raising children, however, they often seek single family homes with yards. This is the type of housing that has been built in Rockwall, almost to the total exclusion of all others.



HOMES FACING A NEIGHBORHOOD PARK IN KENTLANDS; TOWNHOUSES IN RESTON; LIVE/WORK RESIDENCES IN HAILLE PLANTATION; GARAGE APARTMENTS/STUDIOS IN CELEBRATION

Rockwall has grown at an incredible pace since 1980. By far, the majority of housing has been medium to small lot subdivisions. These are typical of the Dallas area, due largely to the fact that during economic boom times, such developments represent a proven market, and funding is generally easy to obtain. The result, however, is that there is very little choice in housing type within the City. As Rockwall grows and achieves its goal of becoming a “hometown” to be proud of, there must be a blend of housing types that will be attractive to the young and the elderly, childless couples and families with children, people who want a more traditional, walkable neighborhood experience and those who want to live on large lots.

To provide these choices, Rockwall’s conventional subdivision development should be balanced in specific areas with other styles of housing, and the living experiences they offer. For example, urban housing such as lofts, condominiums and town houses should be accommodated where there is, or will be, retail and personal service uses within walking distance in those areas indicated on the Future Land Use Map for vertical mixed use. This will also help to ensure the success of retail by giving it a seven-day-a-week / morning-day-evening market.

3. **Ensure that the Downtown area maintains its position as the cultural heart of the community.**
  - a. **Commercial and residential “infill development” (new development on undeveloped or underdeveloped properties within an older established area) should be encouraged Downtown.**
  - b. **Encourage mixed use and urban housing within the Downtown District.**

The Downtown is one of the most important features of the city. It provides a heart and soul for the community and it embodies the Texas town image. It should be strengthened with additional retail and residential development.



ROCKWALL COUNTY BUILDING IN THE DOWNTOWN SQUARE

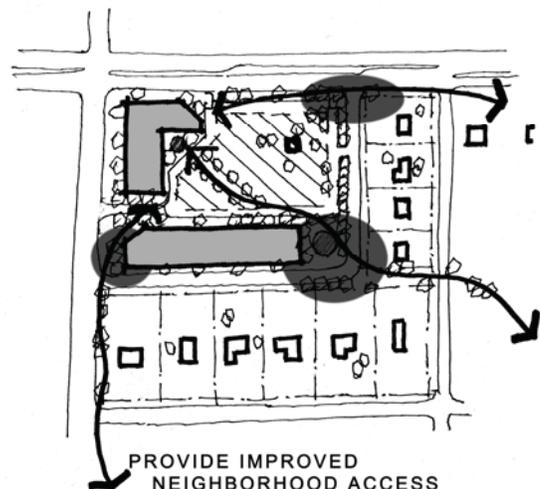


A master plan specific to the Downtown has been developed that addresses such issues as parking, safety and ease of walking throughout the district, infill uses and development, traffic circulation, transition to existing low density neighborhoods.

Since the adoption of the Downtown Plan in 2004 several steps have been taken with regard to the recommended implementation objectives. The primary achievement was the 2007 creation of the new Downtown Zoning District with a form-based zoning code. This new code provides for a mixture of land use, as well as new parking and development standards. Additionally, in 2007, the City conducted a Historic Survey of a twelve block area identified as the Rockwall Downtown Historic Square. The survey is intended to be used as a tool to maintain and preserve Rockwall's historic commercial district, one of the most visible emblems of its past. In late 2008, the City was accepted into the Texas Main Street Program and in early 2009 hired its first Main Street Manager. Following the *Four Point Goals* of the Main Street Program the Main Street Advisory Board has adopted goals drawn from the 2004 Downtown Plan which include promoting enhancements to the "Square" such as lighting, way-finding signage, pedestrian improvements and the potential creation of the San Jacinto Court.

**4. Retail areas should be pedestrian-oriented and easily accessible to adjacent residential and commercial neighborhoods.**

In general, retail areas should be easily accessible from residential neighborhoods and trail systems, as well as by automobiles. New retail areas should be designed and constructed to be integrated with adjacent uses, not walled off from them. This could include creating a horizontal mixed use project



that combines retail with residential or commercial uses, or by creating paths from adjacent developments into the retail area.

For example, in many successful new communities such as Kentlands in Maryland and Haille Plantation in Florida, residential streets and walkways tie neighborhoods directly into the retail areas. This is exactly how the older part of Rockwall and other older Texas cities function. In addition, there is often a transition from retail to single-family, which could include lofts above the retail, live-work units, town houses and smaller lot single-family homes. In some circumstances, existing retail centers could be intensified to include more retail and a mixture of other uses, strengthening retail activity.

**5. Reserve adequate land for industrial and employment uses on or near IH 30, the Outer Loop and other areas of the City.**

Because of its location on I-30, Rockwall serves as a retail center for Rockwall County and beyond. It is also well situated to serve as an industrial and distribution center. This is evidenced by the amount of industrial and technology growth over the past 10 years. The Rockwall Economic Development Corporation has had great success in developing and selling sites in the technology park.

The planned Outer Loop also will open up an important opportunity to attract employment center, light industrial and distribution uses

because of its north/south access to the region and national transportation corridors, and because of its high “identity” potential. This area also affords employees easy access to parks, regional trail and recreation.

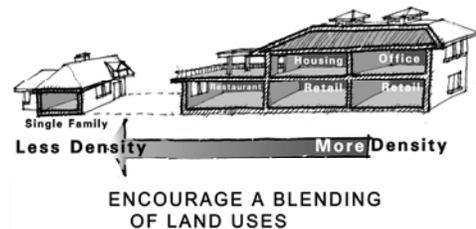
<p><b>SELECTED INFRASTRUCTURE REQUIREMENTS OF TECHNOLOGY COMPANIES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reliable power supply, such as dual feed electric service with underground distribution system for reduced interruption.</li> <li>▪ High grade electrical capacity (can be as much as 25 to 30 watts per square foot versus 5 to 6 watts per square foot for average commercial tenant).</li> <li>▪ Multiple options for telecommunications access, including fiber optics.</li> <li>▪ High floor loading capacity (metal floor plates), and 14 foot or greater ceiling heights to accommodate computer and telecommunications equipment racks.</li> <li>▪ Ample parking, with some covered parking desirable for higher-end tenants. Attractive landscaping, greenbelts, and recreational amenities.</li> </ul>
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Studies indicate that technology companies require a vibrant and energetic work environment with facilities that support a round-the-clock schedule. A site that projects a prestigious image or identity, and that offers convenient access to support services, such as conference facilities and recreational amenities, is also an important consideration for technology firms. At minimum, these firms require flexible space that meets the particular infrastructure needs of technology companies (see box).

Additionally, employment centers should be considered as part of the industrial/technology mix of uses. Employment centers are intended to provide locations for a variety of workplaces, including limited light manufacturing uses, research and development activities, corporate facilities, offices, and institutions. Employment centers are also intended to accommodate secondary uses that complement or support the primary workplace such as hotels, restaurants, convenience shopping, recreation and child-care.

6. **Encourage a blending of land uses that will result in a strong sense of community and neighborhood identity, and in the efficient use of land.**
  - a. **Encourage mixed use residential and commercial development in those areas designated as mixed use on the Future Land Use Map.**
  - b. **Encourage the siting of new school facilities in areas where there will be open space and pedestrian trails.**

Development in Rockwall and elsewhere has been characterized as “plopping down” and segregating land uses. Walls are literally built around retail uses, individual neighborhoods, and office buildings; or barriers may be in the form of large parking lots or solid landscaping. In addition, streets are often cul-de-sac’d or wind around so that there is no connection to neighboring developments. This lack of connection forces everyone to have to hop into a car, wind through the neighborhood and onto an already crowded arterial roadway to go even a few hundred feet away. The lack of walkways and shade, long distances through neighborhoods, danger along arterials, and barriers such as berms, hedges and parking lots make walking out of the question except for those who have no other choice.



A true hometown would be one where there is great social interaction—one knows their neighbors, and children can safely ride their

bike to get a loaf of bread or to school. Creating pedestrian-oriented commercial areas, integrating them with adjacent development, and tying schools and retail into trail systems are some of the ways that the feeling of being in a “hometown” as opposed to just another “suburb”, can be achieved.

**7. Encourage development that will not result in sprawl.**

- a. Provide for clustering of development throughout the city that will result in the preservation of flood plains and the conservation of open space and natural areas.**
- b. Ensure that retail and personal service uses are clustered in the Downtown and village centers in new development areas.**
- c. Strip commercial centers should be avoided.**

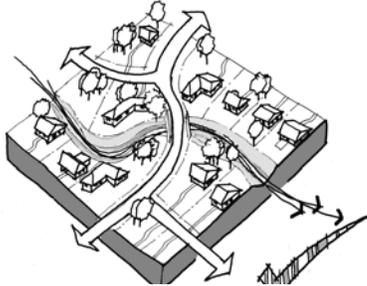
Sprawl has the following characteristics:

- It consists of a uniformly low density, typically 5 or fewer units or 12,000 s.f. of commercial or less per acre;
- It relies on a system of large roadways and extreme flood control measures to support its style of development; and
- Most retail activity occurs in low density strip retail centers, accessible only by auto.

To avoid the effects of sprawl, “smart growth” principles should be employed:

- Higher density mixed use retail and employment centers should be established in areas such as the Downtown, the Industrial/technology area, and at a possible future transit facility, should it occur in the future.
- Ensure that retail and personal service uses are located in the Downtown, and in village centers in new development areas.
- Hike and bike trails should connect throughout the city to parks, retail areas, schools and employment centers. These areas should provide rest areas for pedestrians and cycle racks for cyclists.
- The roadway system should become more interconnected and not rely on all trips of any distance having to use the arterial system.
- Provide for clustering of development that will result in the preservation of flood plains and the conservation of open space and natural areas. For example, if an average density of 2 units per acre is used in some areas and open space and drainage corridors are preserved, then the lots may be 10,000 s.f. as opposed to 20,000 s.f., but there would still be only an average of 2 units per acre and there would be a large shared open space or park.

8. **Preserve flood plains to reduce the risk of flooding hazards and to provide more recreation and interaction for residents and workers through a city-wide open space and trail system.**



**PRESERVE ALL NATURAL DRAINAGE AREAS AND NATURAL FLOODPLAINS**

- a. **Utilize the flood plain and adjacent land to provide flood water conveyance and regional storm water detention, and to provide recreational amenity, natural areas and buffering of land uses.**
- b. **Ensure that open space is accessible to all citizens.**

Preserved flood plains are an essential and attractive component of a healthy land use mix, providing natural drainage, defining development zones and creating opportunities for cluster development that use the open space as an amenity. Floodplains can also buffer incompatible uses, provide the land for a city-wide, linked open space system, and provide “outdoor laboratories” for schools. Their benefits are discussed at length in the Open Space and Parks section of this report.

9. **General residential policies:**

- a. **The City will encourage land use patterns that reflect the neighborhood concept. Support retail and open space (trails and parks) should be within convenient walking distance where possible.**
- b. **All residential lots which are 16,000 s.f. or less should be served by an alley.**
- c. **When residential properties abut a major collector or larger roadway, they should be designed in one of the following ways:**
  - **Lots facing the thoroughfare should be a minimum of ½ acre in size and accommodate on-site parking for 5 vehicles and a turn-around;**
  - **Lots should face an “eyebrow” off the thoroughfare; or**
  - **The side of the lot should face onto the thoroughfare.**
  - **Long, tall fences against the roadway should be avoided.**
- d. **Medium density housing should generally be used where designated on the Land Use Plan, where it would be an extension or continuation of an existing medium density development, or as a buffer from commercial or higher density residential.**
- e. **High density residential should be used as a transitional use from commercial (or existing retail) use, or where it will serve as a logical extension of an existing high density development.**

- f. Where residential uses in a Planned Development abut an existing residential development, the PD lots should be at least the same size as the existing lots or be buffered by open space, trails, walkways, natural screening or a roadway.
- g. In developments where open space, trails and walkways, screening and other common areas are provided, the provision for maintenance of these areas may be required.
- h. Existing surrounding conditions such as lot size, house styles and existing development patterns should be considered in conjunction with the current comprehensive plan to determine appropriate zoning.
- i. At a minimum, new residential development shall be equal to or better than existing surrounding residential development.
- j. All new residential development shall also incorporate the Comprehensive Plan policies adopted via Resolution No. 07-03 and attached hereto as Appendix "A."

**10. Consider Energy Costs and Environmental Quality - Encourage development that is environmentally sensitive in terms of the following:**

- a. Utilize environmentally sound site layout and density that will minimize the need for continuously high levels of energy consumption. This may include such things as:
  - Clustered development that preserves open space and minimizes construction and maintenance of roads and utilities, and
  - Higher density developments in mixed use centers that reduce utility distribution, roads and trips, in those areas designated as mixed use on the Future Land Use Plan.
- b. **Water Quality.** Preserve open space throughout developments to allow ground absorption of water and the natural filtering and cleaning effect of soil and plant material to improve ground and stream water quality. In addition, utilize native and/or drought-tolerant species with organic mulch for landscaping to minimize fertilizers and excessive water use.
- c. **Air Quality.** Improving air quality can involve such things as:
  - Encouraging mixed use in those areas designated as mixed use on the Future Land Use Plan;
  - Providing interconnectedness of streets between neighborhoods and retail, recreation and services to minimize trip length and congestion;

- Providing alternative circulation systems such as transit and hike/bike trails; and
  - Use of low maintenance grass and ground covers to reduce the need for mowing.
- d. Ecology.** Preserve plant and animal habitat areas and corridors in a functional, native condition to maintain biodiversity.
- e. Heat Island Effect.** Maximizing open space through the preservation of natural floodplains, creation of parks, clustering of development, conservation of environmentally sensitive areas, and shading of paving such as streets, parking lots and plazas will greatly reduce the ambient temperature in the city and further reduce energy costs for air conditioning.
- f. Light Pollution.** Continue to minimize lighting into night sky and to neighboring residential areas.
- g. Water Conservation.** The City of Rockwall recognizes that water is one of its most precious resources. All future development in Rockwall should be accomplished employing the most current technology to ensure the most efficient and effective strategies are in place to protect and conserve these valuable water resources.

**Land Use Plan**

The attached Land Use Plan embodies the policies above. Some key elements of the Plan include—

- Vertical mixed use areas in the Downtown District, the area of Ridge Rd and SH 205, and the Harbor District south of I-30.
- An extension of industrial and commercial park uses and employment centers to the east.
- An extensive open space and greenbelt system throughout the City, which is consistent with the Parks and Open Space Plan.
- Low density, rural style residential in the northeast and southeast portions of the city, while providing for higher density residential in mixed use areas and village centers.
- New retail areas allowed only where they are integrated with adjacent residential and employment development.

**RESIDENTIAL LAND USE CATEGORIES**

**Low Density Residential Areas.** Low density residential is generally defined as less than two (2) units per acre; however, a density up to two and one-half (2.5) units per gross acre may be allowed within a residential Planned Development district that includes the dedication and/or development of additional amenities exceeding the minimum standards for residential Planned Developments including but not limited to:

- Parks and open space
- Golf course
- Neighborhood amenity/recreation center
- Integration of schools into the community fabric
- Development of trails and parks in flood plains
- Development of municipal parks and recreation facilities

Low density residential is proposed for the northeastern portion of the city beyond John King Boulevard and the southern and eastern-most areas adjacent to Heath and McLendon-Chisholm. By developing low density residential in these areas, it is anticipated that a rural road section (2-lane with turning lanes) and reduced

sizing of utilities can be used to service the area, particularly when the lot frontage of a development is a minimum of 150-ft or more.

**Medium Density Single Family Areas.** These areas consist of the single family developments that have typically been built in Rockwall. They may be 2-3 units per acre, but generally about 3 units per acre.

**High Density Residential Areas.** These areas may consist of single family, duplex, town home, apartments, lofts, condominiums or other forms of housing that exceed 3 units per acre.

**COMMERCIAL / INDUSTRIAL LAND USE CATEGORIES**

**Commercial Areas.** In areas where commercial is indicated at the intersection of major roadways, particularly in areas of the city where zoning and development have not occurred, commercial zoning should not necessarily be allowed on all four (4) corners. Zoning should only be allowed where the commercial use is eminent and where it would be planned and integrated with the adjacent residential neighborhoods.

The amount of retail and the size of the area to be designated for commercial or mixed use development may be large or small depending on the service area it will serve and the style and quality of development.

**Commercial / Industrial.** This area is where more industrial activities may occur. It is largely buffered from residential by roads and open space.

**Technology / Light Industrial.** This is located on both sides of I-30 and may include technology, research and development, office, and light industrial uses which may include light manufacturing and/or light assembly.

**Employment Centers.** This area is intended to provide a variety of workplaces, including limited light manufacturing uses, research and development activities, corporate facilities, offices, and institutions. Employment centers are also intended to accommodate secondary uses that complement or support the primary workplace uses, such as hotels, restaurants, convenience shopping, and child-care.

### SPECIAL LAND USE CATEGORIES

**Mixed Use Areas.** Vertical mixed use areas include the Downtown, the area of Ridge Road and SH 205, and the Harbor District south of I-30. Development in this category should include a mixture of retail, high density residential, personal service and some limited office uses in a pedestrian oriented area. The development should connect to adjacent development with streets and pedestrian access.

The residential component could include townhouses, living units above the retail, live-work units, and “urban housing”. Urban housing is characterized by multiple family or loft style units, but with units facing and having direct access from street fronts, having structured parking in the center of the block, and having recreational amenities. They must also incorporate retail and personal service uses at street level, or be located within a short walking distance to such services.

**Downtown District.** The Downtown should include a mixture of uses in accordance with the approved Downtown Plan attached hereto as Appendix “B” and the (DT) Downtown district standards and associated regulating plan. The Downtown District includes the “Historic Core” area and several surrounding blocks of vacant and established properties that could be further developed to support the vitality of the overall downtown area.

**Special Commercial Corridor.** This area is intended to provide for regional commercial activity centers, including shopping, services, recreation, employment, and institutional facilities supported by and serving an entire region. A regional activity center could include a regional shopping area, a number of major employers, restaurant and entertainment facilities, and a large high school or community college. A regional activity center is more diverse in its land use.

**Special Districts.** Special Districts may need to be created due to an area’s uniqueness or specific issues that require additional consideration. In these cases, Small Area Plans or Planned Development Districts will be used to develop the specific plans to address these needs.

### **PUBLIC / OTHER LAND USE CATEGORIES**

**Parks and Open Space.** Flood plains and major parks comprise the Parks and Public Open Space category in the Land Use Plan. These areas should be preserved as public and neighborhood-oriented open space, and they should incorporate trails and drainage corridors that are left in a naturalistic state.

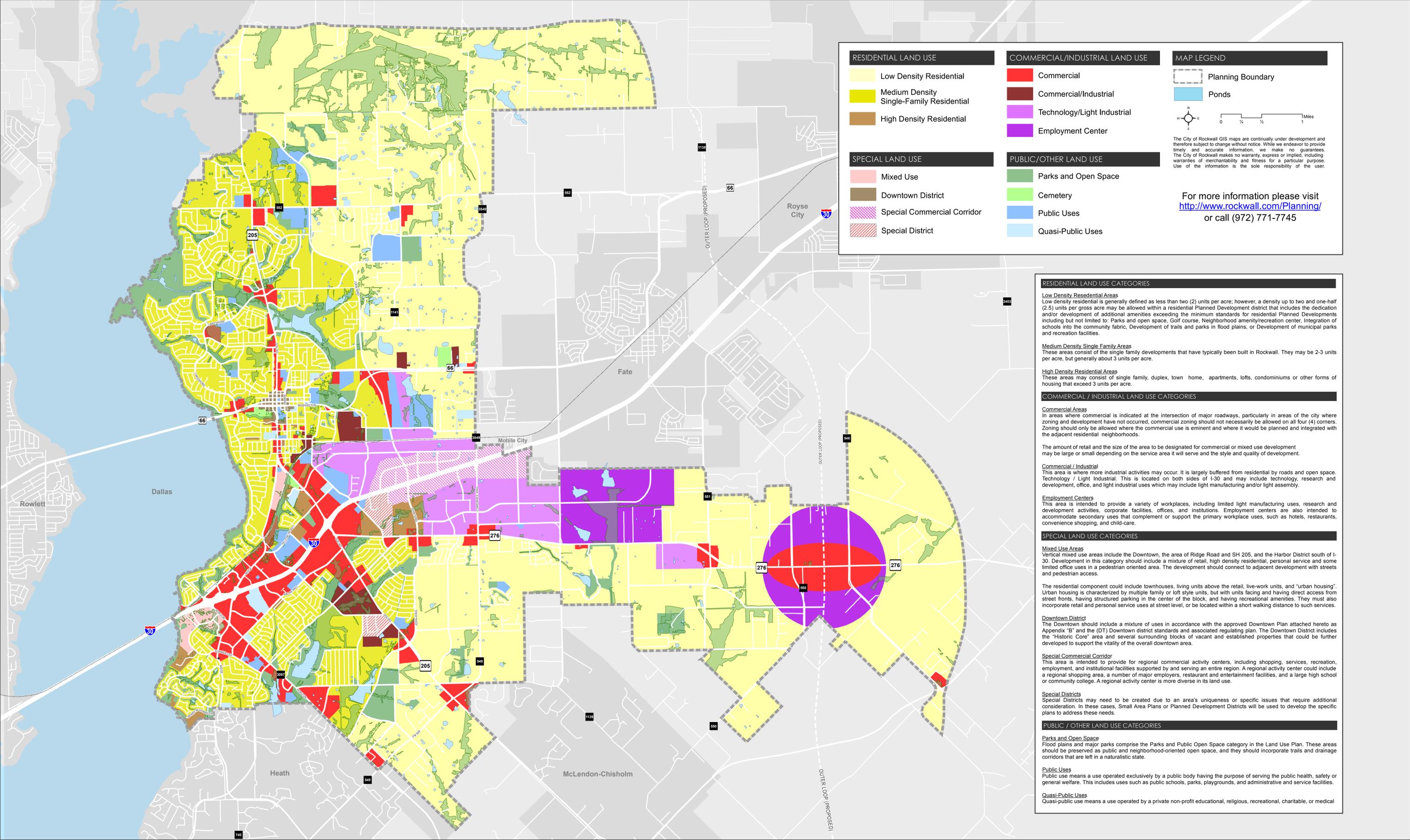
**Public Uses.** Public use means a use operated exclusively by a public body having the purpose of serving the public health, safety or general welfare. This includes uses such as public schools, parks, playgrounds, and administrative and service facilities.

**Quasi-Public Uses.** Quasi-public use means a use operated by a private non-profit educational, religious, recreational, charitable, or medical institution having the purpose primarily of serving the general public, and includes uses such as churches, private schools and universities, community, youth and senior citizen recreational facilities, private hospitals, and the like.

**Cemetery.** Land used or intended to be used for the burial of the animal or human dead and dedicated for cemetery purposes.



# City of Rockwall Future Land Use



RESIDENTIAL LAND USE	COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL LAND USE	MAP LEGEND
Low Density Residential	Commercial	Planning Boundary
Medium Density Single-Family Residential	Commercial/Industrial	Ponds
High Density Residential	Technology/Light Industrial	North
	Employment Center	0 1/4 1/2 1 Miles
		<p>The City of Rockwall GIS maps are continually under development and therefore subject to change without notice. While we endeavor to provide timely and accurate information, we make no guarantee. The City of Rockwall makes no warranty, express or implied, including warranties of merchantability and fitness for a particular purpose. Use of the information is the sole responsibility of the user.</p>
		<p>For more information please visit <a href="http://www.rockwall.com/Planning/">http://www.rockwall.com/Planning/</a> or call (972) 771-7745</p>
SPECIAL LAND USE	PUBLIC/OTHER LAND USE	
Mixed Use	Parks and Open Space	
Downtown District	Cemetery	
Special Commercial Corridor	Public Uses	
Special District	Quasi-Public Uses	

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This area is where more industrial activities may occur. It is largely buffered from residential by roads and open space. Technology / Light Industrial. This is located on both sides of I-30 and may include technology, research and development, office, and light industrial uses which may include light manufacturing and/or light assembly.

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**Special Districts**  
Special Districts may need to be created due to an area's uniqueness or specific issues that require additional consideration. In these cases, Small Area Plans or Planned Development Districts will be used to develop the specific plans to address these needs.

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**Public Uses**  
Public use means a use operated exclusively by a public body having the purpose of serving the public health, safety or general welfare. This includes uses such as public schools, parks, playgrounds, and administrative and service facilities.

**Quasi-Public Uses**  
Quasi-public use means a use operated by a private non-profit educational, religious, recreational, charitable, or medical

# URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK

## Vision

*The City will employ the conscious design of the elements that comprise Rockwall's physical environment—buildings, roads, walkways, trees, open spaces, water, utilities—and weave them together in such a way that an orderly, attractive and harmonious result is achieved. The resulting environment will enhance Rockwall's sense of place, and will impart to residents and visitors a sense of security, convenience, efficiency, comfort and welcome.*

## Policies

1. **Strengthen Rockwall's identity and sense of arrival upon entering the city.**
  - a. **Explore “gateway” design treatments, using signage, plantings and/or architectural elements as appropriate, at the city's key arrival points, (see Urban Design Map and Appendix C – John King Boulevard Design Concept Plan)**
  - b. **Ensure good visibility of the city from the I-30 bridge and causeway by managing vegetation along its side slopes that block views.**

A key feature of attractive and memorable communities is what town designers refer to as a strong “sense of arrival.” It is a clear perception of having passed from one place to another—from countryside to town, or from one community to the next. It is also the community's first visual impression on the traveler.

Rockwall is very fortunate in this regard to have a crisp edge at the Lake Ray Hubbard shoreline. This asset is especially strong as viewed by eastbound travelers approaching the town from the I-30 bridge. Over time, much of this view has become obscured by volunteer growth of trees on



SHORELINE JUST NORTH OF I-30

the side slopes of the jetty. The City should pursue discussions with TxDOT regarding the management of this vegetation to ensure that this growing screen of vegetation is managed to reopen and protect views to the lake and to Rockwall's scenic shoreline. This could be accomplished by creating “windows” in the line of trees through selective thinning and removal, followed by ongoing maintenance to keep these areas clear of tree growth.

This sense of arrival should be reinforced at exits off I-30 with “gateway” design treatments, using signage, plantings, and/or architectural elements such as walls to communicate a distinctive character at these important entry points. The limestone wall, signage and plantings at the Ridge Road exit are a very good example of this idea, and can set a precedent for design elements and materials that could be used at other exits. Properly designed and constructed to high standards, this community entry designs are a source of pride for residents, and communicate a great first impression and a commitment to high quality to potential business and families relocating to the area.

2. **Create an identity for the Downtown that is distinct from competing uses along Interstate 30.**
  - a. **Designate the courthouse square as a community focal point and gathering place for civic, cultural and recreational events, and gear its future improvements and redevelopment to that end.**
  - b. **New infill development and redevelopment within the area defined on the Land Use Plan should employ site design and architecture that builds on the traditional character of the courthouse square.**
  - c. **Explore the use of thematic devices such as special street signs to enhance the uniqueness of the Downtown area.**
  - d. **Downtown should be a safe and enjoyably walkable district.**

The commercial focus of Rockwall has irrevocably shifted to the I-30 corridor, creating an opportunity for the courthouse square and surrounding “Old Town” to reinvent itself as a lively, mixed use, walkable neighborhood that retains the best of its traditional small town character. Incentives should be created to encourage specialty and neighborhood retail, restaurant, and residential uses within a walkable quarter-mile radius of the square, and infrastructure projects must recognize and preserve the narrow streets, trees, short blocks, and period buildings that make the area distinctive and desirable. The adopted Downtown Plan and form-based zoning ordinance



DOWNTOWN EVENT (PHOTO BY DEBBIE HENDERSON)

effectively clarifies the vision and establishes development standards for this important area.

3. **Ensure that the character of public buildings reflects a sense of permanence and public pride.**
  - a. **Public buildings should reflect a high level of quality in their architectural design and construction.**
  - b. **The design of public buildings should strive to reflect a sense of continuity with the community’s past and its future.**
  - c. **Explore a consistency of design expression for public buildings through common materials and other means.**
  - d. **Public buildings, when possible, should be sited on important sight lines to underscore their significance.**
  - e. **Public buildings should be designed and constructed with an emphasis on resource conservation and environmental quality.**



Even modest public building projects offer the opportunity to make a statement about the community’s history, values, and faith in a long future. They should be distinctive and recognizable as public buildings, while setting an example of quality for private sector projects.

4. **Identify and protect views and vistas that contribute to the community’s character and uniqueness.**
  - a. **Preserve remaining views to the lake from Ridge Road.**
  - b. **Preserve and enhance views to the city from the bridges on Lake Ray Hubbard.**
  - c. **Preserve views as you enter the city from “gateway” points to the north, east and south.**

Views to Lake Ray Hubbard are often cited by citizens as one of the assets they most enjoy about living in Rockwall; the high topographic vantage point afforded by Ridge Road is unique in the Metroplex. Before new development blocks the last of these dramatic views, sight line easements (similar to those that protect views to the capitol in Austin) or other creative measures should be employed to preserve the best view corridors. This could help ensure that future generations will enjoy this distinctive aspect of living in the city.

**5. Enhance key thoroughfares to reinforce community character, provide a more pleasurable driving and walking experience, and discourage excessive speeds.**



- a. Use tall, canopy street trees at street edges to give key streets a comfortable and pleasing sense of visual containment, to aid in traffic calming, and to create a separation between vehicles and pedestrians.
- b. Design streets to the minimum width feasible to minimize maintenance and original construction cost and storm water runoff, and to help control speeds.

Streets are far and away the most extensive areas of public space in the city. Their design should balance achieving an acceptable level of mobility with pedestrian safety and an appearance that contributes positively to Rockwall’s traditional community character. Streets should be designed for “multi-use” by pedestrians, bicycles and autos. This achieves several objectives:

- It increases overall mobility
- It increases safety for all users of the street, and
- It reinforces Rockwall’s traditional community character.



JOHN KING BLVD AT FM 1141

**6. Use public art to contribute to the city’s character and unique personality.**

- a. Explore the creative use of water themes in public art to build on the city’s lakeside identity.
- b. Utilize a “percent for art” program to fund public art in concert with capital improvement projects.
- c. Identify key, high visibility locations for public art to maximize the art’s impact and exposure.



HORSE SCULPTURE IN TAOS, NM

Public art can humanize a community and make a memorable impression like few other improvements. The Mustangs of Las Colinas in Irving are an excellent local example of the power of public art to enhance the image and distinctiveness of a community.

Explore the creative use of water themes in public art to build on the city's lakeside identity. Some prominent locations for public art that could maximize the art's impact and exposure are noted on the Urban Design Plan. They include "portals", special intersections and the historic Downtown Square.

- 7. Diminish the negative visual effects of overhead utility lines.**
  - a. Bury or relocate overhead utility lines on the city's key image thoroughfares.**
  - b. Call for underground utilities in new developments.**
  - c. Plant low trees beneath utility lines.**

Overhead utilities along roadways create visual clutter and detract from a community's image. They also restrict the size and types of trees that can be planted, and cause the brutal pruning of larger trees. Shorter ornamental trees can help camouflage overhead lines as well as provide a focus for the eye and shade for pedestrians.

- 8. Develop maintenance and code enforcement strategies to ensure success of Rockwall's urban design goals.**
  - a. Ensure that the code enforcement program is effective.**
  - b. Include codes for structural condition and minimum maintenance of structures to prevent deterioration of the subject property and others in the area.**

One of the most effective tools in preserving neighborhoods is the use of an effective code enforcement program. When properties are well maintained, property values are bolstered and new investment is attracted.

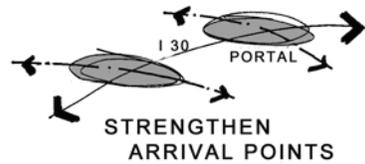
Codes that require a minimum level of maintenance for structures in addition to those that just cover weeds, litter and outside storage, are very important for older neighborhoods. Dilapidated buildings or fences convey the image of a declining area, resulting in a reduction of property maintenance on that block or in the entire neighborhood. There is often an increase in the number of rental units.

## Urban Design Plan

Many of the Urban Design policies described in the previous pages will be best implemented as a series of physical capital improvement or private development projects. These project opportunities are shown on the Urban Design Plan map, and are described below.

### City Entrances

The Interstate 30 (I-30) and State Highway 66 (SH 66) bridge approaches into Rockwall from the west are special, scenic portals, which offer the image of a quaint lakeside community. Existing trees along each side of the I-30 bridge should be selectively removed and continually managed to open up views to the shoreline.



The Urban Design Plan envisions three levels of community entrances, or “portals”, on I-30 and at the City’s borders. Entrances identified as “A” on the Urban Design Map should be similar to the existing I-30 / Ridge Road portal, which contains a large stone wall graphic, Red Cedar evergreen trees as a backdrop, and other accent plantings.



Entrances identified as “B” should have special identification features and intersection treatments as depicted in the John King Boulevard Design Concept Plan (Appendix “C”). Entrances identified as “C” should contain smaller stone identity markers and the least amount of supplemental planting.

All entrances and portals, including other special interest intersections depicted on the Urban Design Plan, should include features, intersection treatments or paving, and/or artwork such as integrated into the new interchanges of SH 205 / IH-30 and John King Blvd / IH-30. These types of features are intended to provide a sense of identity.

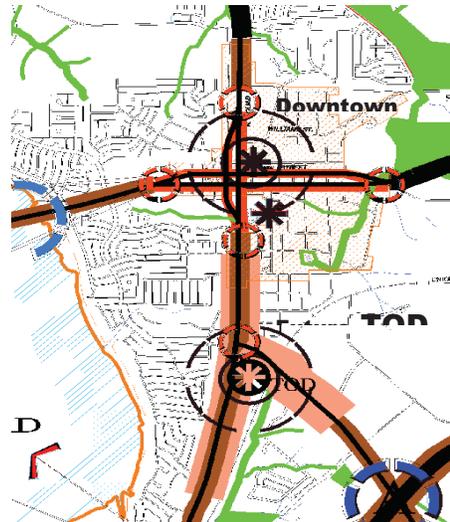


## Downtown Identity

Improvements for the Downtown square could include a redesign of the square itself to provide a better setting for the old County Courthouse building, and create a more pedestrian friendly and useable open space. The adopted Downtown Plan (Appendix “B”) and form-based zoning ordinance effectively clarifies the vision and establishes development standards for this important area.

## Mixed Use Centers

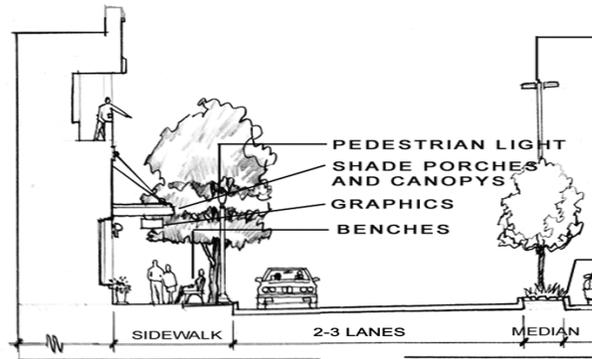
Outside of the Downtown, a pedestrian oriented vertical mixed-use district could be created at the intersection of Ridge Road and Goliad. This new high-density district could be anchored by an enhanced Ridge Road Center. Both the redeveloped Downtown square and this new vertical Mixed Use Center area should encourage infill commercial and residential development. All new development within a ¼ mile radius of these two hubs of activity should be pedestrian oriented. The two districts should each have their own distinct design character, but include facades adjacent to sidewalks and streets, with parking in the center of the block. The architectural style should reflect Rockwall’s image of human scaled, stone clad buildings with shade canopies over walkways, sidewalk cafes, and artful street furniture, graphics and signage.



The “Harbor District” adjacent to the lake along the south side of I-30 is also a viable vertical mixed-use center. New development in this district should adhere to the approved development standards and architectural guidelines approved as part of the Planned Development zoning for the area.

## Enhancing Key Thoroughfares

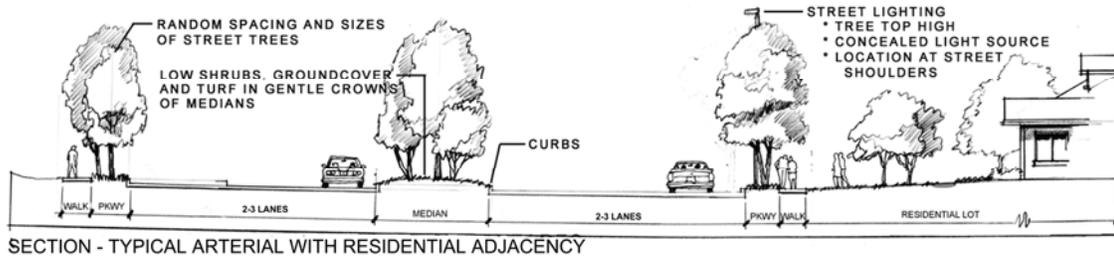
Several of the city’s major arterial roadways are State highways and are under the jurisdiction of TxDOT. Due to the standards currently used by the state to design these roadways, enhancements options are severely limited, but may nevertheless be improved. Roadways that the city has full jurisdiction over have greater flexibility regarding what types of enhancements can be applied. The character of these streets should vary, with different street design treatments for residential and commercial frontages. In addition, pedestrian walkways along these roads should connect to the city-wide park and open space hike / bike trail system. Planting standards and walkways should be included in the design standards for all roadways.



**TxDOT Arterial Roadways.** The city should continue to work with TxDOT to achieve high design standards on future roadways. The standards include:

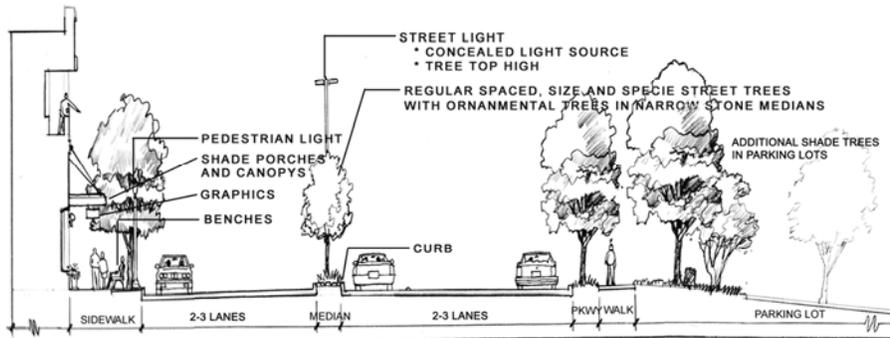
- Street tree planting as close as possible to the outside curb.
- Shrubbery and ornamental tree planting in medians.
- Use of stone-like concrete block retaining walls.
- High quality stamped and colored concrete for pedestrian crossings, intersections and where concrete is required in medians.
- Street lighting should use a concealed luminaire.

**Typical (non-TxDOT) Arterial with Residential Adjacency.** These typical streets should, as indicated in the Urban Design map, should have varying sizes of street trees planted in informal arrangements in each parkway shoulder and median. Hardy native species in groves should be used to create an informal character, while calming street traffic and creating safe walking zones for pedestrians. Low shrubs, groundcovers and turf should be used in low-crowned medians to provide additional streetscape interest. Street lighting should utilize concealed light sources with high cut-offs to eliminate light glare and pollution.



SECTION - TYPICAL ARTERIAL WITH RESIDENTIAL ADJACENCY

**Typical (non-TxDOT) Arterial Thoroughfare with Commercial Adjacency.** These special streets are important in establishing a strong, pedestrian-oriented commercial district. Along the streets indicated in the Urban Design map, new commercial developments are encouraged to build to the front building line in order to create a more traditional, human-scaled height to width ratio of building to street, resulting in a comfortable sense of enclosure and better visibility of shops, offices and store fronts.

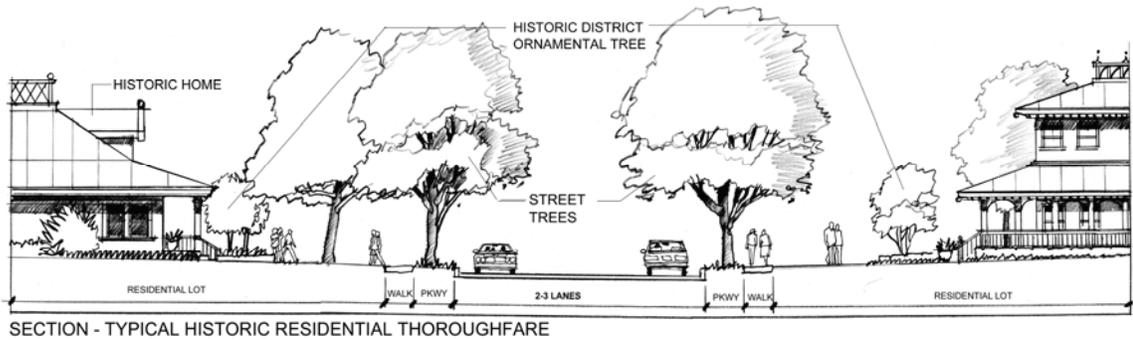


SECTION - TYPICAL ARTERIAL THOROUGHFARE WITH COMMERCIAL ADJACENCY

Surface parking should occur in the rear or side yards, properly screened from public view. These frontages should contain sidewalks that encourage pedestrian activity with street trees, pedestrian level lighting, benches, pots, planters, trash receptacles and covered trellises. Colorful canopies that extend into the public rights-of-way are also encouraged. Upper levels could contain loft apartments or perhaps professional offices to introduce a mixture of uses to this area. The narrow medians in these thoroughfares should be planted with a single species and size of ornamental tree in a regularly spaced pattern. Landscaped roundabouts could be used at key intersections to slow auto traffic, providing a safer walking environment and creating an attractive focal point. Existing commercial uses with large frontages of surface parking should be softened and enhanced with additional shade trees. Parking lot

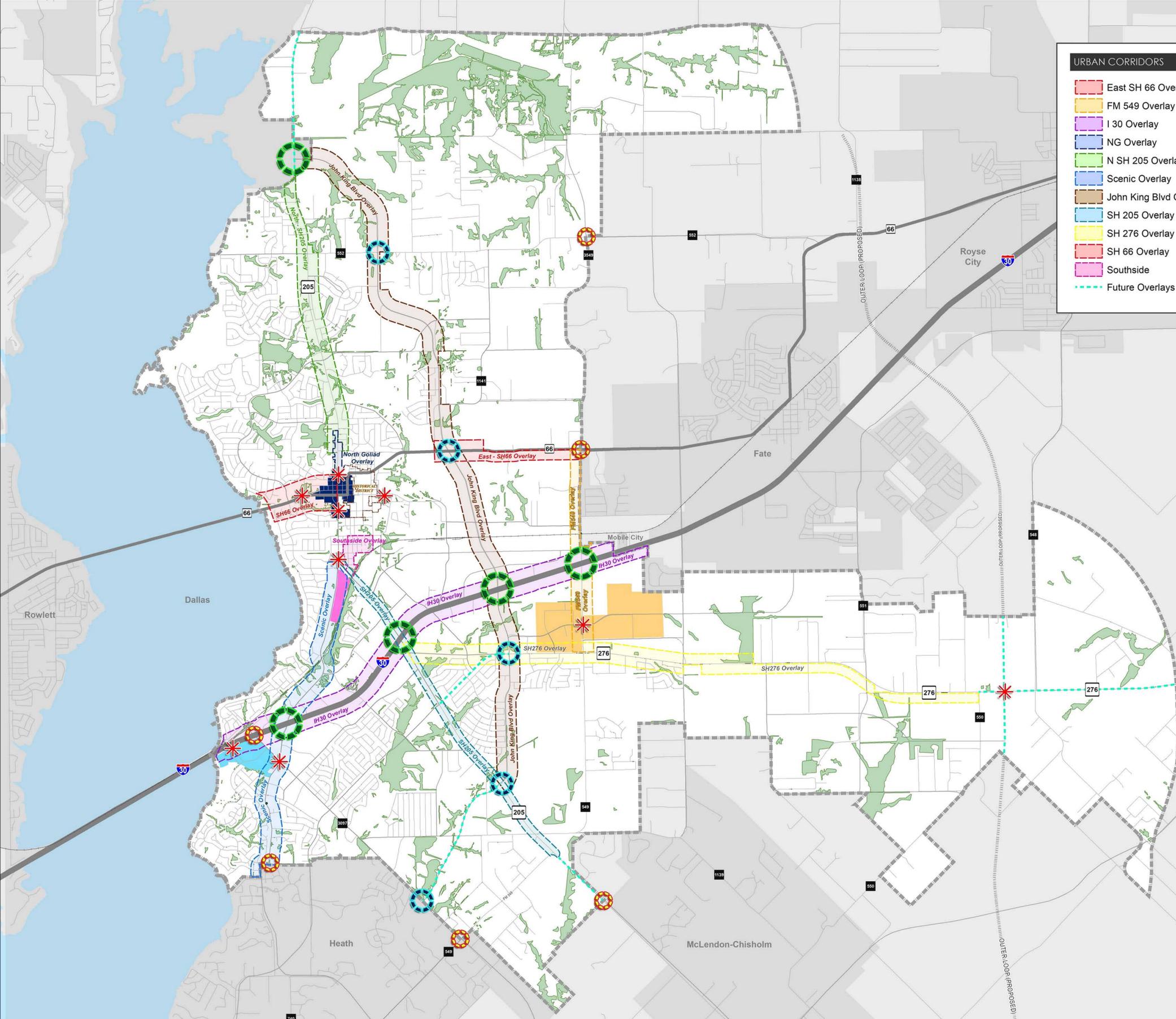
edges should contain low, evergreen plantings to improve the overall streetscape environment while framing views to commercial signage and graphics.

**Typical Historic District Residential Roadway.** The historic Downtown area within ¼ mile radius of the Courthouse Square should be a safe and enjoyably walkable district. Preservation of mature trees and the introduction of new street trees would enhance the area as a pleasant, walkable neighborhood. A particular flowering tree could be planted throughout the historic district to markedly enhance the beauty and identity of the District. Streetlights (with proper glare shielding) and street signage should be of a historic style and character throughout the District.



**John King Blvd corridor (see Appendix “C”).** John King Blvd was conceived to provide by-pass traffic relief to Texas State Highway 205 and to provide access and structure for development on the east side of the City. The City should adopt design standards for this corridor similar to those in place for other key entry points to the City, particularly given the opportunity of enhancing the image of an undeveloped roadway corridor.

# City of Rockwall Urban Design Map



URBAN CORRIDORS	SPECIAL INTEREST DISTRICTS	MAP LEGEND
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>East SH 66 Overlay</li> <li>FM 549 Overlay</li> <li>I 30 Overlay</li> <li>NG Overlay</li> <li>N SH 205 Overlay</li> <li>Scenic Overlay</li> <li>John King Blvd Overlay</li> <li>SH 205 Overlay</li> <li>SH 276 Overlay</li> <li>SH 66 Overlay</li> <li>Southside</li> <li>Future Overlays</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Downtown District</li> <li>Harbor District</li> <li>Mixed Use Development</li> <li>REDC Technology Park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outer Loop (Proposed)</li> <li>Planning Boundary</li> <li>Open Space</li> </ul>
<p><b>ENTRANCE PORTALS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Entrance Portal "A"</li> <li>Entrance Portal "B"</li> <li>Entrance Portal "C"</li> <li>Special Interest Intersections</li> </ul>		

The City of Rockwall GIS maps are continually under development and therefore subject to change without notice. While we endeavor to provide timely and accurate information, we make no guarantees. The City of Rockwall makes no warranty, express or implied, including warranties of merchantability and fitness for a particular purpose. Use of the information is the sole responsibility of the user.

For more information please visit <http://www.rockwall.com/Planning/> or call (972) 771-7745

**CONCEPT ENTRANCE PORTALS**

metal logo on cast stone base  
 stone columns  
 cast stone cap support beam  
 cantilevered roof  
 cream limestone  
 waste receptacle  
 cast stone base  
 drinking fountain w/ dog basin  
 metal sailboat icon  
 cast stone cap and base  
 chapped limestone veneer  
 tile mural opportunity?  
 native canopy trees for shade  
 limestone seat wall  
 Rockwall logo on wall ends

# URBAN DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

## Vision

*Commercial development in the City will respect the natural topography and environmental conditions, and will contribute to Rockwall's Texas small-town character. Residents and visitors will immediately identify Rockwall as a place in which they want to invest, raise a family, and conduct business.*

## Policies

- The site layout for commercial and urban style housing developments should encourage buildings to be placed close to the roadway, with parking primarily located to the rear or side of buildings.**



A key element in creating the Texas small town character is bringing buildings to the street. The experience of driving down Rockwall's key streets should be one of seeing a continuous "street wall" of interesting buildings, not large parking lots and signs. Bringing the buildings to the street automatically creates a more pleasing height to width ratio for streets, lending them the comfortable sense of enclosure of an "outdoor room" that is typical of traditional town streets. Making buildings more visible in this way also helps reduce the need for large signs lining the street, because most businesses and their façade signs will be readily visible. It also encourages the creation of attractive pedestrian environments by making it easy to walk from business to business without having to cross large parking areas and multiple driveways. For example, an office worker could have a pleasant and healthy break in the day walking a couple of blocks to lunch, stopping to buy a card and visiting with a friend on the sidewalk rather than being compelled to get in their car and drive.



- 2. Landscaping is an important factor in establishing community image and value. It should be designed and installed to ensure that the desired objectives of the landscaping are achieved, and that the long-term vigorous health of plant material is assured.
  - a. Required landscaping should be comprised of native or hardy, drought tolerant plants, which are adapted to local soils and conditions.
  - b. Landscape plans that are required by City ordinances should be prepared by a registered Landscape Architect or certified nurseryman.
  - c. Irrigation should be included for supplemental water during drought conditions.
  - d. Incentives and standards for preservation of existing mature trees should continue to be followed.



LANDSCAPED ENTRY TO CASTLE RIDGE

Protection of existing trees and extensive, well designed plantings of native plants can be a key strategy in extending the green, small town character of central Rockwall into newer and developing areas.



NATIVE LANDSCAPING & OTHER CONSERVATION MEASURES AT TOYOTA OF ROCKWALL

3. Ensure that the negative visual impacts of large commercial buildings are minimized.
  - a. Long blank facades should be subdivided with vertical breaks (or “articulated,” in architectural terms) to reflect the scale and rhythm of more traditional scaled buildings typically found in Texas towns.
  - b. Parking areas that result from large commercial buildings should be broken up with landscaping.



STONE CREEK RETAIL DEVELOPMENT (NORTH ROCKWALL)

Large buildings, especially big box retail, should be articulated in a manner and scale that reflects Rockwall’s traditional small town character. The facades of buildings between vertical columns or articulation typically found in traditional Texas towns are no greater than a height to length ratio of 1:4.

4. Commercial buildings should be designed and constructed in a manner that contributes to a sense of unity within the community and minimizes the need for maintenance over time. Accordingly, commercial buildings should be constructed of masonry materials and contain at least 20% stone on every façade that faces a street, public open space, trail or park.

Over time, the repeated use of permanent, high quality natural materials such as stone will lend a recognizable character to the community, and impart a sense of permanence and quality. It should improve in appearance with age, rather than deteriorate.

**5. Establish sign standards for the City that will avoid visual clutter, yet provide clear business identity and information.**

- a. Encourage the use of symbols in signage in order to convey information efficiently.
- b. New freestanding signage should be limited to monument style signs, except for along freeway frontage.
- c. Require master signage plans for building complexes and multi-tenant retail in order to coordinate signage.
- d. Use of bright colors intended to gain attention should be considered signage.



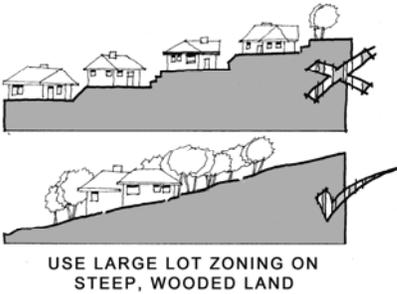
Locating buildings closer to the street will help reduce the number and size of signs. Good sign standards establish a level playing field for neighboring businesses, setting an overall design tone and sense of quality for an entire street or district that minimizes the need for individual signs to compete with one another for attention.

**6. Where potentially conflicting land uses are not part of an integrated master plan, and where there are potentially negative impacts on adjacent property, screening and buffering should be used.**

- a. All garbage storage should be screened from public areas and adjacent properties.
- b. Outside storage, where allowed, should be screened.
- c. Retail should screen residential uses from spill-over light, traffic, views of parking and noise.
- d. Industrial uses should be screened from other uses.

All land uses impact neighboring properties. It is important to minimize negative impacts that may affect the use and enjoyment of those neighbors.

- 7. When considering re-zoning of a property, issues such as topography, vegetation and adjacency of parks and drainage corridors, in addition to other issues, should be considered.
  - a. Zoning which would result in large building footprints and large parking areas should not be placed on land with steep or rolling topography, where major earth-moving and retention walls would result.
  - b. In single family residential subdivisions, large lot zoning or cluster development should be used in areas of steep slopes, dense vegetation and significant drainage courses. Likewise, smaller lot zoning may be placed on land with relatively flat contours.
  - c. Where commercial development occurs along an open space corridor with trails, an entry should be oriented toward the corridor.



Development plans which use natural site features to best advantage will always be well fitted to their sites, be less expensive to construct and maintain, and contribute positively to overall community character. This is especially true in Rockwall's attractive rolling topography, where development insensitive to natural terrain produces a monotonous sameness from one neighborhood to the next.



- 8. All on-site drainage features should be treated in a natural manner so that it forms an amenity.
  - a. Water detention facilities should be treated with soft edges, using natural materials such as stone and vegetation for erosion control.
  - b. Headwalls should be faced with stone where visible to public areas.
  - c. Drainage courses should use vegetation, stone and soil bioengineering (soil lifts and plant material used in a structural manner) as appropriate, rather than concrete for erosion control.

A master drainage plan was completed in 2006. This will ensure planning for adequate long term storm drainage as the city is built out. Typically, cities have required each



DETENTION/RETENTION POND IN STONE CREEK NEIGHBORHOOD

individual project to only provide drainage improvements for its own immediate needs. The cumulative effect of this is that there is soon more water runoff than was ever anticipated. The drainage courses quickly become grossly inadequate, and creeks then need to be graded and lined with concrete

to handle the heavy flows. Having a master drainage plan based on a built-out watershed can anticipate future flows, allowing for the design of attractive water detention areas and drainageways that will help Rockwall's creek corridors retain much of their natural character.

9. **The community should strive to investigate and adopt techniques that will encourage the development of a sophisticated “architectural language” that will inspire unique and attractive buildings authentic to the City’s identity.**
  - a. **Consider proactive methods to encourage high quality and inspiring architecture throughout the City, particularly on undeveloped sites that are highly visible from IH-30 or other major traffic routes.**
  - b. **Develop policies and measures to encourage private developers to incorporate innovative and sustainable designs into their development.**

One suggested approach is to begin with a charrette where the community joins a design team in a collaborative process towards developing design principles, analysis documents, and schematic solutions. As part of a charrette, stand-alone exercise, and/or web-based poll of stakeholders, designers can conduct a *Visual Preference Survey*. This concept is a straightforward method: simply take pictures of the existing built environment within the city (or within other communities with desirable examples of architecture and design), and arrange them in a sequence so that community members can 1) rate the images and 2) develop appropriate design principles or guidelines.

An additional recommendation is to utilize resources such as the City’s Architectural Review Board within the earlier conceptual stages of development review to offer potential ideas or design alternatives to developers and architects who are considering project(s) in the city.

# OPEN SPACE AND PARKS

## Vision

*Rockwall's most significant outdoor features--its floodplains, woodlots, shorelands, sensitive habitats and rare ecosystems--should be woven with existing and future parks, greens and commons into a city-wide, comprehensive open space system designed to serve the wide range of ages, abilities and interests of Rockwall's current and future citizenry. This parks and open space system should reflect a level of character, quality and care that communicates responsible stewardship and pride of place.*

## Policies

- 1. Develop a comprehensive parks and open space system that includes a creative mix of large and small green spaces throughout the city, and that takes advantage of Rockwall's unique open space opportunities.**
  - a. Continue to implement the acquisition and development goals for neighborhood and community parks established in the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan 2010-2020.**
  - b. Encourage the creation of small, private greens and commons in new neighborhoods to enhance their character, desirability and the quality of social interaction within them.**
  - c. Ensure preservation of the Wallace Preserve, a rare remnant of native Blackland Prairie, as an important natural and historical landscape feature.**
  - d. Adopt a long-range goal that every Rockwall resident should be within ¼ mile of a public or private park, greenway or common for their use.**

Rockwall's Parks & Open Space Master Plan 2010-2020 lays a strong foundation for serving the long-range recreational needs of the city. Its recommendations should continue to be aggressively pursued and supplemented with private initiatives to provide the full range of recreational opportunities expected of a community its size, and meaningful green space within walking distance of every citizen.

The 1997 Plan called for the systematic acquisition and development of a citywide system of neighborhood and community parks. The number and location of these facilities are determined by assumed park acreage per capita needs, based on national standards and projected population growth. The formula ultimately results in a neighborhood park within about one-half mile of every household.

The HomeTown 2000 Plan recognized those sound planning principles, and indicated the locations for future neighborhood and community parks in the 1997 plan. It then adjusted some of those locations based on actual acquisitions since the 1997 plan, and extended the network into developing areas of the city.

In addition, the HomeTown 2000 Open Space and Parks Plan reflected its Land Use counterpart in recommending that future neighborhood development in Rockwall incorporate greenways, pedestrian linkages and small neighborhood greens and commons. This complemented the community-wide goal of providing attractive, usable open spaces within walking distance (typically considered one-quarter mile) of every Rockwall resident. In addition to creating more attractive and interesting neighborhoods, such a system of green spaces encourages walking and increased social interaction in the form of face-to-face encounters, enhancing public health, neighborhood cohesiveness and security.

The Parks & Open Space Master Plan 2010-2020 continues to promote the goals and objectives established in the Home Town 2000 Comprehensive Plan in addition to the updated objectives approved by City Council after conducting representative group interviews, community meetings, and a citizen survey.

- 2. Create a regional flood water detention plan that can be integrated with the Parks and Open Space Plan to help create a major amenity for both adjacent development and the city.**

The creation of a regional flood water detention can result in major public parks and reduce the need for each development project to provide significant on-site detention. This can also help reduce development cost. Consideration should be given to the creation of a drainage impact fee, which would cover the costs of constructing and maintaining such regional facilities.

- 3. Actively explore the potential for public waterfront use of the Lake Ray Hubbard shorelands and preserve those areas for use by the public.**
  - a. Preserve areas identified in this plan for public use and enjoyment.**
  - b. Explore potential for parks and passive greenway trails at appropriate locations along the shoreline.**
  - c. Continue to explore potential for future private waterfront development that could include additional public access components.**

Rockwall is unique and fortunate to have such a highly visible and attractive shoreline, yet decades of conventional subdivision development along the lake has left very little remaining opportunity to provide for meaningful public access to the water's edge for the majority of its citizens. In 2005, the City took steps to create public access to lake with the development and opening of the Harbor District. This included a public/private venture, which included public improvements along the lakeshore for the public. The few remaining opportunities for public access must be assessed and, if deemed feasible, protected for future development as public parks, shoreline greenways and/or public/private partnerships with community-wide benefit.

Continuous public access for recreation is also complicated by the technique used to construct the bridges across the lake for State Highway 66 and Interstate Highway 30. In an ideal situation, bridges over public greenways are constructed as open spans, allowing public trails to pass underneath. The SH 66 and IH 30 bridges, however, are constructed as rock jetties except for short open spans several hundred feet out into the lake, making public access beneath them prohibitively expensive.

While subdivision development and physical constraints have precluded the continuous shoreline greenway envisioned in the original development concepts for Lake Ray Hubbard, significant improvements have occurred with the development of the Harbor District and SH 66 Public Boat Ramp. Additional opportunities remain for Rockwall to develop public improvements benefiting the entire community on its shoreline, in particular the lakeside park and nature preserve in the far northern shoreline of the City at the terminus of Dalton Road, which is recognized on the Parks and Open Space Master 2010-2020.

**Northern Shorelands.** The largest shoreline recreation opportunity lies along the currently undeveloped land north of The Shores golf course to Rockwall's city limit line north of Dalton Road. The City of Rockwall should seize the opportunity to provide a generous strip of public parkland along the shoreline that can be accessed by public greenways along the creeks and floodplains extended into future neighborhoods as they are developed. Public access should be provided from Dalton Road, with adequate parking and public facilities for a true metropolitan park at this location. Properly developed, a shoreline park built to high quality standards with hike and bike access to adjacent neighborhoods via linked greenways could provide

higher returns than Rockwall's current model of a single row of lakefront lots in an otherwise conventional subdivision.

This opportunity could be enhanced by coordinating its planning and development with the City of Dallas' proposal for a nature center and preserve on lands they own immediately north of the Rockwall city limit line. Dallas' 1995 Lake Ray Hubbard Master Plan calls for a wildlife sanctuary or nature center on 350 acres of wetland habitat in this area. The report states: "Since this is one of the last significant pieces of undeveloped land on the east shore of the lake, this site could also be developed as a nature center with community park facilities serving the Rockwall area."

A joint development with Dallas represents a unique opportunity for Rockwall. It should not, however preclude or postpone the acquisition of shoreline parkland within Rockwall's city limits in this northern area. This still undeveloped land represents a major opportunity—Rockwall's last opportunity—to take advantage of its unique lakefront location by providing additional access to the Lake Ray Hubbard shoreline for all its citizens.

- 4. Incorporate floodplains into an interconnected greenway network that preserves their natural floodwater storage functions while providing trails, open space and conservation of natural areas.**
  - a. Allow no significant filling of the 100-year floodplain.**
  - b. Incorporate other significant natural areas, such as steep slopes and sensitive habitats, into the greenway network.**

One of Rockwall's most distinguishing features is its landscape of ridges and low rolling hills, dissected by wooded streams and grassy drainage ways. These impart topographic interest and a rolling rural character to the community that is often mentioned by residents and visitors as one of the city's outstanding assets.

These drainage ways and the floodplains associated with them also perform the vital functions of floodwater storage and conveyance during storm events. In addition, the trees and grassy vegetation along their banks control erosion, and allow stormwater runoff to infiltrate naturally into the ground, maintaining the natural water table and aiding water quality. Finally, the natural tree stands in many of Rockwall's floodplains provide important linked habitats for songbirds and other wildlife, and represent an

unmatched recreational resource with the potential for a linked system of natural parks and city-wide trail system development.

The vast majority of Rockwall's floodplains remain in excellent condition. The Open Space and Park Plan recognizes the city's 100-year floodplains as the invaluable natural resources and aesthetic assets that they are, and recommends their protection and incorporation into a city-wide network of interconnected greenways. These multi-objective greenways should be designed and managed to preserve the floodplain's natural functions of movement and storage of floodwater by prohibiting their filling and constriction into narrow channels, and the construction of homes and businesses in flood prone areas. Their protection will also help to save valley's vegetation for its erosion control, aesthetic, and wildlife habitat values, and to allow development of an interconnected trail system linking many of the city's parks and open spaces to each other. The system should also incorporate steeply sloping areas unsuitable for development, as well as wetlands and other sensitive habitats.

Rockwall's floodplains offer some unique opportunities that should be capitalized upon. Many contain a number of existing Soil Conservation Lakes. These offer numerous recreational opportunities such as picnicking, fishing and watching waterfowl. These should be incorporated into the greenway system, and could be enhanced with shoreline vegetation to improve them as habitat for aquatic life and waterfowl. A good example of utilizing existing floodplains for recreational and scenic purposes is the Squabble Creek floodplain immediately west of SH 205. Using



substantial open space and flood plain dedications from both commercial and residential development projects, this greenway has been used to develop a scenic hike/bike trail that links together several residential subdivisions, a planned commercial development and

the Rockwall YMCA, and also accommodate the development of a unique off-road mountain bike trail system with trailhead/parking area adjacent to the City's wastewater treatment facility.

Multi-objective floodplain greenway systems have been a key design feature of new planned communities for decades, and are being retrofitted into existing cities large and small throughout the United States as their myriad benefits are realized. As Rockwall continues to develop, its system of floodplain greenways will become one of its greatest assets and distinguishing characteristics.

- 5. Design parks and open space improvements as first-class facilities, as they represent the public face, or “front yard,” of Rockwall.**
  - a. Ensure that park development reflects a high level of quality and a strong design ethic.**
  - b. Design park improvements for durability, long life and low maintenance requirements.**
  - c. Maintain high maintenance standards for all of Rockwall’s public lands.**

A community’s self-image and “pride of place” are reflected as clearly in few other places as they are in its public facilities, especially its parks. Well-designed park facilities are an invaluable asset to the town’s citizenry, as well as an extremely positive message to businesses and families considering Rockwall as a future home. These considerations begin with wise land acquisition choices, which conform to the long range plan, are carried through with good professional design and high quality construction, and are perpetuated with thorough management plans and high maintenance standards. Park improvements—buildings, site work, play and sports equipment, and furnishings—should be selected or designed for durability, long life and low maintenance requirements. The result is an exemplary park and open space system that is a priceless community asset—a gift and legacy for future generations to enjoy and build upon.

## Open Space and Parks Plan

The Open Space and Parks Vision Statement and Policy Statements serve as guiding principles for the HomeTown 2000 Open Space and Parks Plan and are continued within in the Parks, Recreation & Open Space Master Plan 2010-2020, which seeks to give physical form to those community ideals and aspirations. It looks beyond the “recommended acreage per capita” approach to parks planning and seeks to identify the open space features of Rockwall that lent the community its unique form and landscape character. It then incorporates those features into an interconnected network of public open space. This green framework will delineate future development, help to preserve the community’s small town character, and capitalize on the city’s last opportunities for public shoreline access. It will preserve the natural functions and character of Rockwall’s creeks and drainage ways, and become one of city’s most prized assets.

# TRANSPORTATION

## Vision

*Rockwall's transportation system should recognize and complement the city's land use, urban design and open space goals by providing a balanced, comprehensive framework of transportation choices that offer safe, efficient movement while respecting and reinforcing community character.*

## Policies

1. **Create an interconnected and diverse street pattern.**
  - a. **Create connections to establish continuity of key thoroughfares.**
  - b. **Design new street systems (and explore opportunities to modify existing ones) to create an interconnected, modified grid that offers flexibility of routes and modes, disperses automobile traffic, shortens walking distances and lends order and coherent structure to the community.**

Much of Rockwall's growth prior to the adoption of the HomeTown 2000 Plan had been in the form of conventional cul-de-sac style subdivisions which have few access points and are rigidly separated from other land uses, forcing large volumes of short trip traffic onto relatively few arterials. These arterials are in turn made wider to accommodate more and faster-moving traffic, bisecting business districts and neighborhoods, and greatly impairing the ability of people to walk for even short trips.

The design of a town's street system should complement the community's other important goals in the areas of land use, urban design, and overall livability. It should respect and reinforce the small town character and quality of life that make the town attractive to its citizens.

An interconnected street pattern supports these ideas by providing flexibility of routes and numerous access points for private and emergency vehicles, diffusing automobile congestion and reducing dependence on a few major arterials. Such a system is generally laid out in a grid pattern, which can be "warped" or modified to create offsets or "T" intersections through neighborhoods to provide interest, and to accommodate topography or other site features. It usually employs shorter blocks (250 to 600 feet

maximum in length), such as those typical of Rockwall's Old Town, which slow traffic, facilitate local circulation, shorten walking distances and lend order and a coherent structure to the community. The shorter blocks and grid-like street pattern is especially appropriate for higher density and mixed use development.

2. **Offer mutually supportive transportation choices, balancing convenient and efficient auto access with safe, well designed pedestrian, bicycle and transit facilities.**
  - a. **Provide a safe and enjoyably walkable district in the historic Downtown area within a quarter-mile radius of the courthouse square.**
  - b. **Enhance walkability with an interconnected pattern of streets and continuous sidewalks, short blocks, and safe pedestrian crossings.**
  - c. **Create a long range plan for improving bicycle mobility in the city.**
  - d. **Continue development of a city-wide, interconnecting trail system.**
  - e. **Focus retail, employment, and higher density housing in walkable, mixed use neighborhoods and planned districts as indicated on the Future Land Use Map.**
  - f. **Modify existing codes to allow for the development of Traditional Neighborhood Developments (TNDs) which feature mixed uses, narrower streets, short blocks, alley loading, and continuous sidewalks and trails to reduce auto dependency.**

Transportation strategies and projects must work as well for people, neighborhoods and town character as they do for cars. To be successful, solutions must be conceived comprehensively to work in concert with equally important goals for land use, urban design and open space, and to provide alternatives to use of the private auto as the sole means of transportation for even short trips in the city.

The total level of automobile dependency in Rockwall can be reduced by enhancing the viability and attractiveness of alternative modes of transportation, including walking, bicycling and improving local transit service.

One key to reducing the total number of automobile trips within the community is to encourage block and street layout and design that enhances walkability. This starts with providing sidewalks of adequate width (4 feet is the minimum necessary for two people to pass each other) along streets in a continuous and interconnected system, and keeping block lengths short enough to facilitate moving easily through the community on foot.

Walkability is further enhanced by providing a strip of street trees between the street edge and the sidewalk to provide a physical separation and sense of security. Also important are safe, well-marked pedestrian crossings at intersections, and street corner curb return radii designed for low speeds that require vehicles to make slow turning movements and shorten pedestrian crossing distances.

Numbers of short auto trips can also be reduced by improving bicycle mobility in the city, allowing children to bike to schools, playgrounds and neighbor's homes, and offering adults a transportation choice for short errands, in-town commutes and recreation. This starts with a long-range plan for bicycle mobility that would identify the most likely destinations and routes, and plan for on-street connections (such as restriping for bike lanes) and off-street connections (such as trails) to make bicycle transport a safe, efficient and reasonable transportation option.

The citywide interconnected trail system recommended in the Open Space and Parks plan is an important link in a balanced transportation system, offering alternative routes and modes to many in-town destinations. The heart of this system is the network of linked greenways recommended for the city's floodplains, which extend into most quadrants of the city where they can be linked into neighborhood open spaces and sidewalk systems.

Auto dependency can also be reduced by strategies that link transportation and land use planning in mutually supportive ways. For example, new growth areas such as the Harbor District and the area south of the SH 205 and FM 740 intersection and redeveloping older areas within the Downtown District provide an opportunity to create compact, walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods of retail, employment and higher density housing. This will provide specific areas where residents can choose to eliminate many short auto trips, because goods, services, and sometimes even employment are easily reached by foot or bicycle. Rockwall's existing codes should continue to be modified to ensure that such development, commonly called Traditional Neighborhood Developments (TNDs) and which feature mixed uses, narrower streets, short blocks, alley loading, and continuous sidewalks and trails, are allowable within its regulatory framework.

3. **Design neighborhood streets for safe, low speeds, and to encourage more walking, cycling, and social interaction.**
  - a. **Design streets with roadway geometrics (street width, centerline radii of curves, stopping sight distances on hills and curves, and intersection turning radii) that discourage speeding.**
  - b. **Allow for on-street parking where feasible.**
  - c. **Explore the use of traffic calming measures (planted medians, street trees, roundabouts, neckdowns and others) to address speed problems on existing streets.**

Roadway geometrics are the best known form of traffic speed control. Neighborhood streets should be built with street widths, centerline curve radii, stopping distances and intersection turning radii that encourage slow travel speeds. On-street parking can also be used as part of an overall strategy to reduce speeds through increased “side friction”. Properly designed, these streets encourage appropriate driver behavior, make walking a more safe and pleasurable experience, and eliminate the need for corrective measures such as “speed humps” and added stop sign control at intersections.

Creating “off-sets” in neighborhood street grid patterns with “T” intersections is an effective way to maintain connectivity, but discourage cut-through traffic.

It is important to note that collector or larger streets in most US cities have been designed and laid out in a manner which provides for wide drive lanes and long blocks in order to accommodate fire trucks and to facilitate the movement of traffic. Unfortunately, these roads invite speeding and increase the accident fatality rate. When residents demand that traffic be slowed down, cities usually accomplish this by installing stop signs and speed bumps. The net result, of course, is that this impedes the movement of fire and emergency vehicles, often more than on roads, which are built to a slower design, speed to begin with. In addition, wider streets have more paving area which results in higher initial cost and requires on-going maintenance and repair.

On existing streets where speeding is already a problem, numerous effective traffic-calming measures can be explored for use. Traffic calming is generally necessitated by roadways that are over-designed for their intended purpose. Generous travel lanes that are similar in size to freeway lanes result in a “natural” speed limit that is greater

than the desired (and posted) speed limit. Some proven techniques for slowing traffic include narrowing lanes of traffic, making roadways discontinuous, and providing “friction”. Friction can be achieved by such things as allowing street parking, planting street trees in the parkway, narrowing driving lanes, necking down the roadway periodically (especially at intersections) and installing traffic islands or roundabouts. These measures can significantly slow average speeds while contributing to an attractive, “home town” character. Road humps and stop signs should be avoided, as they tend to severely delay the delivery of emergency services.

4. **Use Rockwall’s natural features to advantage in the design of street systems to minimize cost and retain the character of the landscape.**
  - a. **Neighborhood streets should be designed to run parallel to contours wherever possible to avoid expensive stair-stepping of lots, unless attractive views are opened up with streets going transverse to the topography.**
  - b. **In lower density, rural-style neighborhoods, vegetated roadside swales should be used rather than curbs and gutters to minimize infrastructure cost, enhance water quality and support the feeling of being in the countryside.**
  - c. **Roadway alignments and cross-sections should be designed to save significant stands of existing trees or outstanding specimen trees whenever possible.**
  - d. **Avoid street improvement solutions that require removal of mature street trees that lend the street its “hometown” character.**
  - e. **Work with topography to provide grade-separated crossings for bicycle and pedestrian paths where possible.**

A thorough analysis of existing site features should always be the foundation of site and roadway layout in newly developing areas in Rockwall. “Working with the land” is not only cost conscious, but results in projects that have a more natural fit on the land, that are expressive of Rockwall’s attractive landscape character, and by extension, enhance the character and uniqueness of the community.

Except where important views from the roadway can be capitalized upon, neighborhood streets should be designed to run parallel to contours wherever possible. This can avoid excessive modification of topography with cut and fill and expensive stair-stepping of lots. Existing topography can also be used to advantage in providing grade-separated crossings for bicycle and pedestrian paths where possible.

In lower density, rural-style neighborhoods, vegetated roadside swales should be used rather than curbs and gutters to minimize infrastructure cost and enhance water quality.

New roadway alignments and cross-sections should be designed to save Rockwall's significant stands of existing trees or outstanding specimen trees whenever possible. Improvement projects for existing streets must avoid solutions that require removal of mature street trees that lend the street its "hometown" character.

- 5. Use street furniture on key streets to enhance their functions, appearance and comfort.**
  - a. Provide street furnishings such as benches, waste containers, flower and shrub planters, trees, bollards lampposts and kiosks on streets where walking is desirable and encouraged.**

Street furnishings such as benches, lamp posts, bollards, drinking fountains, trash containers, flower and shrub planters, trees, mounted maps and informational kiosks encourage people to walk. They are a benefit to senior citizens and the disabled, who can use benches or planters as frequent stops for rest, and reward others with amenity, attractiveness and comfort, making walking a natural and pleasurable part of the day. They give residents a reason to come out of their homes and cars and get to know their community and neighbors, which is the essence of a "home town" ambience.

- 6. Continue to support the adopted Thoroughfare Plan with localized adjustments that improve the Plan, through small modifications that enhance minor collector continuity, provide accessibility to activity centers, and provide for delivery of emergency services.**
- 7. Continue to work with Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) to optimize access and circulation in the I-30 corridor.**

Potential improvements include moving the eastbound exit ramp for Horizon Road to the west in order to provide access to future development on the lake edge, and the braiding of exit and entry ramps for Horizon and Ridge Roads on the north side of I-30.

## Transportation Plan

The 2012 Comprehensive Transportation Plan builds upon the existing adopted Thoroughfare Plan with localized adjustments that improve the Plan, and through small modifications that enhance minor collector continuity, provide accessibility to activity centers, and provide for delivery of emergency services. These considerations are discussed below.

As has been discussed, several strong features help to shape Rockwall's special character. It is bounded by a lake with only 2 bridges; it has an historic Downtown which is cut by 2 state highways; it is bisected by both an interstate highway and a railroad; and it is laced with numerous creeks and drainage ways. These features are important to the City and must be respected by the road pattern. Some key elements of the plan include continuity of thoroughfares, roadway sections, traffic calming and possible future transit service.

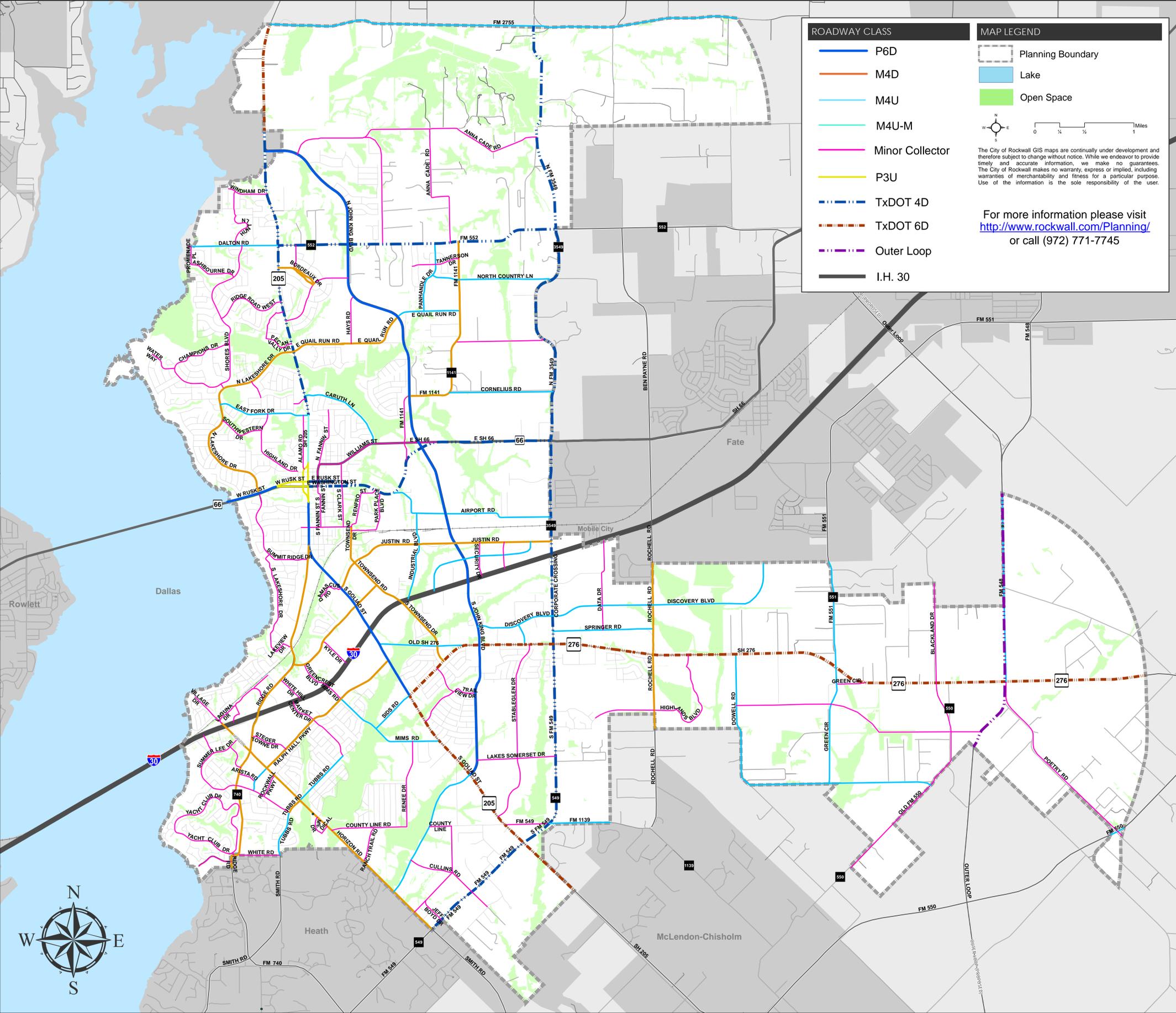
**Continuity of Thoroughfares.** Rockwall suffers from inadequate north/south access. This is made difficult primarily because of the existing rail lines, which limit crossings, and because of the I-30 Freeway. The completion of John King Boulevard and other proposed connections in the plan will help to relieve this problem, but additional opportunities should be found. As more development occurs on the northern edge of the city, existing north/south roadways will become overburdened with traffic. Improving the continuity of minor collector streets can help diffuse traffic by providing numerous alternatives to an overcrowded arterial street

**Roadway Cross Sections.** Rockwall will be a mixture of semi-urban, mixed use pedestrian-oriented areas, traditional medium-density single family subdivisions, and low density rural residential areas. These development types require very different roadway cross-sections. (See also the Urban Design Plan.) The pedestrian-oriented mixed use requires an urban cross section with curb and gutter, street trees, and on-street parking. Rural residential areas should have small 2-lane roadways with drainage swales (which may be supplemented by storm drainage, depending on topography and hydrologic conditions). In addition, certain parts of the City may include unique sections that will more specifically respond to local traffic conditions and existing rights-of-way. As a general principle, all roadways should include a planting strip of street trees and sidewalks to provide safety for walkers and to give the street a comfortable sense of

enclosure . Whenever possible, the planting strip should be a minimum 6 ft. in width and placed between the street and sidewalk. The sidewalk should be 5 ft. in width (less on residential streets and more on retail streets).

Refer to **Appendix “D”** for the recommended typical street sections to be utilized in the community, in accordance with the adopted Thoroughfare Plan.

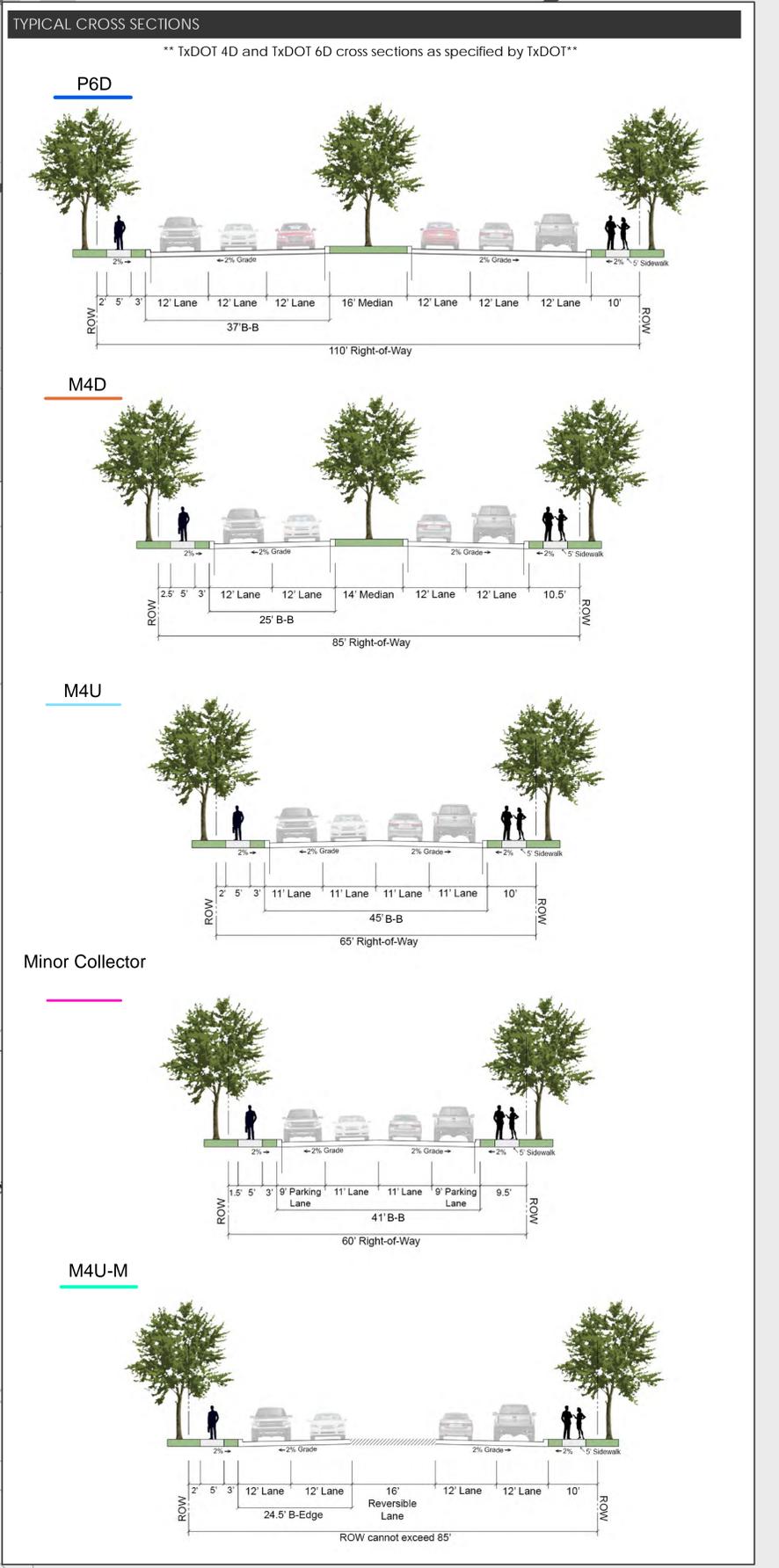
# City of Rockwall Thoroughfare Plan



ROADWAY CLASS	MAP LEGEND
P6D	Planning Boundary
M4D	Lake
M4U	Open Space
M4U-M	
Minor Collector	
P3U	
TxDOT 4D	
TxDOT 6D	
Outer Loop	
I.H. 30	

The City of Rockwall GIS maps are continually under development and therefore subject to change without notice. While we endeavor to provide timely and accurate information, we make no guarantee. The City of Rockwall makes no warranty, express or implied, including warranties of merchantability and fitness for a particular purpose. Use of the information is the sole responsibility of the user.

For more information please visit <http://www.rockwall.com/Planning/> or call (972) 771-7745



## IMPLEMENTATION

The following are recommended implementation strategies designed to ensure that the goals of this plan are achieved.

1. **Continue to Update and Revise the Unified Development Code.** The ordinance should continue to include such items as incentives for clustering development, preserving open space and integration of land uses. It should also include an alternative that would permit a traditional neighborhood development (TND).
2. **Continue to Update and Revise the Subdivision Ordinance.** Future updates should more closely reflect the city's current practices and set out a procedure for dedication and maintenance of neighborhood parks and floodplains.
3. **Continue to Update and Revise the Engineering Standards.** The City uses the North Central Council of Governments (NCTCOG) engineering standards. These standards, however, should continue to be modified to include improved standards for headwalls, treatment of drainage, roadway design, and other infrastructure that has a high impact on the community's image.
4. **Continue to Update and Revise the Downtown Plan and Incentives Program.** An incentive program would encourage development in the area and could include such items as a tax rebate program, grants for façade enhancements, a Tax Increment Financing District (TIF) and other financial incentives.
5. **Continue to Update and Revise the Parks Plan.** The updated Plan should continue to include elements such as coordination of the parks plan with regional drainage and detention facilities, an extended open space corridor and trail system, and a plan for use of any public lands along the lake shore.
6. **Prepare a program for preserving views to the lake.** This may include the acquisition of "view easements" or development incentives.

7. **Continue to Preserve Lake front access as recommended in this Plan.**  
This plan sets areas for public lakefront access. The City should continue to initiate negotiations intended to preserve and develop these sites for the use and enjoyment of all Rockwall citizens, as well as continue to enhance the recently developed lake front areas such as The Harbor and the SH 66 Boat Ramp.
8. **Preserve the Wallace Prairie Grasslands and other important rural assets** through acquisition or conservation easement.
9. **Work with the State to:**
  - Design and install landscape enhancements for newly constructed roadways such as street trees, stone-faced walls, and streetlights that focus downward.
  - Gain agreement for roadway edge street tree planting along existing roadways.
  - Traffic signal enhancements
  - Move I-30 access ramps at the lake edge westward, to facilitate access to the Harbor District on the lake shore.
10. **Institute a “Percent for Art” program for all public works projects.**
11. **Establish a comprehensive open space acquisition and maintenance program.** This may include participation of adjacent homeowners association, the creation of public improvement districts, corporate sponsorships and other ingredients.
12. **John King Boulevard:** Create special design standards for John King Blvd and implement into the 205 Bypass Corridor Overlay district.
13. **Develop a visual preference survey and/or other methods to analyze current architectural goals of the community, and develop ways to encourage award-winning architecture and design.**

CITY OF ROCKWALL

RESOLUTION NO. 07-03

A RESOLUTION BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ROCKWALL, TEXAS, ADOPTING THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CITY CHARTER; PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

**WHEREAS**, the City Charter of the City of Rockwall, Texas, states that the Master Plan will contain recommendations for the growth, development and beautification of the City and its extraterritorial jurisdiction; and

**WHEREAS**, the City Council of the City of Rockwall has previously authorized a study to amend the City's Master Plan, also referred to as the Comprehensive Plan; and

**WHEREAS**, as required by the City Charter, a public hearing has been held on the proposed revisions to the Comprehensive Plan; and

**WHEREAS**, the Comprehensive Plan shall serve as a guide to all future Council action concerning land use and development regulations and expenditures for capital improvements;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ROCKWALL, TEXAS:**

**Section 1.** That the Comprehensive Plan as amended is hereby approved as the Comprehensive Plan for the City.

**Section 2.** That the Comprehensive Plan shall be used by the City in the planning and as a guide for the future development of the City of Rockwall.

**Section 3.** That this resolution shall take effect immediately from and after its adoption and it is so resolved.

**PASSED AND APPROVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ROCKWALL, TEXAS, this 16<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2007.**

*William R. Cecil*

William R. Cecil, Mayor

ATTEST:

*Dorothy Brooks*  
Dorothy Brooks, City Secretary



City of Rockwall

# Comprehensive Plan Policies

## 1. Encourage the development of distinctive neighborhoods.

An important step in creating neighborhoods of enduring value is to insure that each neighborhood and each property in that neighborhood is distinctive and unique to the greatest extent possible. This can be achieved by the following:

- **Preserving open space and integrating it into the neighborhood** as common green, recreation area, preservation of flood plain or other use.
  - **Locating housing to ensure a mixture of amenities** such as views, proximity to open space or access to retail services.
  - **Identifying and preserving existing neighborhood landmarks**, such as historic or distinctive buildings and prominent natural features, to foster neighborhood pride, distinctiveness and sense of ownership.
  - **Utilizing a “housing tree”** as areas are developed, whereby the largest lots and homes are located on the main entry or perimeter streets, and smaller lots and homes are located internal to the neighborhood.
- a. **Encourage large master planned neighborhoods with a mixture of uses, unit types and lot sizes to create sustainable neighborhoods and to facilitate transitions between uses**



Housing Tree Concept - Large lots & homes were prominent features along main entry streets into Downtown Rockwall when it was developed. This is typical of old Texas towns.

- i. **The inclusion of a range of high quality, well-constructed and appropriately situated residential unit types should be part of all new larger developments.** It is important to provide a variety of housing for the full life cycle of citizens – young singles, young professionals, professional couples, families with children, empty-nesters, retirees and seniors, including those requiring living assistance. This should include high income homes of various types (large lot, small lot, townhome, loft and condominium) and more affordable housing types (small lot/small home, townhome, loft, condominium, mother-in-law suite and carriage house).
- It is important however, that **these varied housing types not be consolidated in one large area** which could become blighted (or

stigmatized), but rather dispersed in appropriate areas with proximity to open space, recreation and services such as retail.

- **Provide for a mixture of uses and residential unit types in development, including a requirement of differing residential home type and size on properties over 50 acres; and increasing the level of diversity and the addition of neighborhood retail with increasing development size.**
- ii. **Support the creation and integration of residential units suitable for young people and empty-nesters by encouraging developments of 50 acres or more to include:**

- At least ten percent of the total number of units to be suitable for young persons, empty nesters and the single elderly.
- Units that would qualify include townhouses, cottages, lofts (with adjacent mixed use retail), and mother-in-law suites and carriage houses (in association with single-family homes). To ensure quality, such units/lots should meet the following criteria.
  - Homes on lots that are narrower than 55 feet should have rear-entry garages;
  - Townhouses should have a minimum required square footage of livable space (e.g., 1,200 square feet), with no maximum size. Townhouses must also have rear-entry garages.
  - Any lots/units directly adjacent to or across a street from a park/open space should face onto the open space.
- Notwithstanding the above, the ten-percent requirement may also include homes designed and built to appear like a traditional large home, but which may include up to four living units.

**SPECIAL HOUSING TYPES**

**Casita/Cottage.** Single Family, but house size is a maximum of 1,500 square feet.

**Multi-Unit Large Home.** A building which is designed and constructed to look like a large single family home, but may contain 4-6 units. Parking is located behind the main structure and may be accessed by a drive-thru from the front street, or by an alley.

**Loft.** These are units which are located in association with retail (either above or in close proximity to) and generally include a mezzanine space. They are often located above the first floor which may be office of retail use.

**Live-Work Unit.** A live-work unit is a residential unit which includes the capability for the ground floor space adjacent to the front sidewalk to become an allowed business use.

**Mother-in-law Suite.** This is an accessory residential unit located on a single family lot which does not have a presence on the front street. It will also include a separate entry from the main house. It is often constructed above the primary unit's garage or attached to the rear of the primary home.

**Carriage House.** A carriage house is similar to a mother-in-law suite except that it is generally larger, located on a larger lot and located above a large parking garage or stables.

**Townhouse/Brownstone.** A single-family dwelling unit constructed in a series, or a group of units having common walls, each on a separate lot.

**b. Support clustering without minimum lot sizes.**

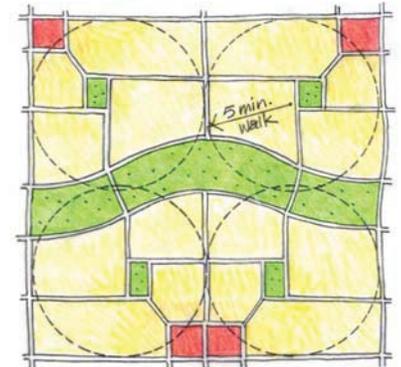
Many citizens have voiced concern that the environment of Rockwall in general will suffer as development continues and more vacant land area is lost. In response to these concerns, the City should encourage clustered development such that environmentally significant areas such as flood plains, slopes and habitat are protected and open space is conserved. Clustered development would help preserve the environment while helping to maintain an important part of Rockwall's heritage for future generations.

- i. Clustered developments should place special focus on preserving terrain features, drainage areas and tree groupings. In fact, prime open space and trails should be identified first, then planned around with lots and facilities.
- ii. Preserved open space should not be just left-over space, but should contribute significantly to the surrounding neighborhoods and the City as a whole.
- iii. Adopt gross density (units per acre) standards without minimum lot sizes instead of using minimum lot size to address density. This will help to achieve a mix of unit types within neighborhoods while preserving large amounts of parkland and minimizing road and utility costs.

**c. Require 20% open space for all new residential subdivisions over 5 acres in size; and allow dedicated flood plain (if present) to count for up to 50% of that requirement.**

**d. Require proximity to neighborhood-oriented parks for residential lots under 12,000 s.f.**

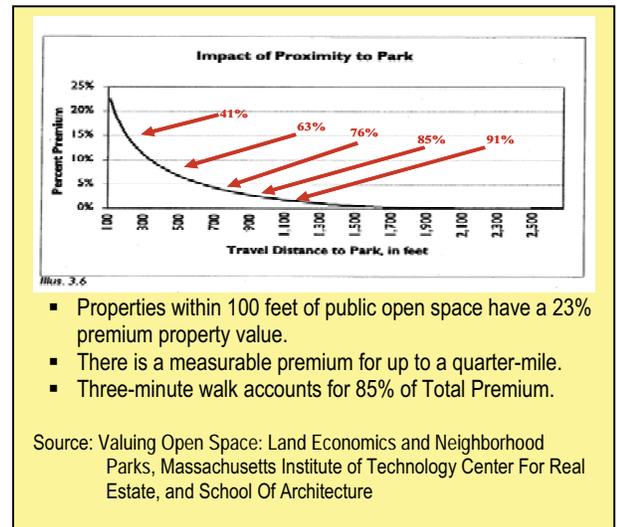
- i. For the purposes of these policy concepts, a neighborhood is generally defined as having a radius of a 5-minute walk, or ¼ mile.
- ii. Neighborhood-oriented Parks do not fall under the City's parks and recreation standards for parks. These parks are primarily landscaped, and serve as a visual amenity and a gathering place for socializing with neighbors. They are generally maintained by a neighborhood association, although they may also be dedicated to the City. In areas with residences that are marketed to families with children, Neighborhood-Oriented Parks may contain a small playground.



- iii. Neighborhood-oriented parks should be centrally placed to create a neighborhood focus, whether utilizing drainage and flood plain areas, topographic or vegetative features.
- iv. There should be a minimum Neighborhood-Oriented Park ratio of at least one acre for every 20 residential lots.
- v. Such parks and open space should generally have no smaller dimension than 50 feet.
- vi. All parks and open space should either be bounded by lots, or bounded by streets with lots fronting onto the streets and adjacent open space. These configurations provide access to such parks and open space, thereby encouraging a sense of community and “ownership”.
- vii. To ensure that the maximum value accrues to both parks and homes, adjacent homes should directly face the park, whether or not there may be an intervening street.<sup>1</sup> If homes face onto the open space and there is no public street, then the homes could be accessed via a mews-type street.
- viii. No lot of 12,000 or less should be further than 800 feet from a public park or open space corridor in order to benefit from a property value premium.
- ix. A hike-and-bike trail system should connect homes, parks, schools, retail, employment, and entertainment centers, wherever possible. These trail connections should be primarily off-street dedicated trails, and only be located adjacent to streets in retail areas, and where otherwise it is absolutely necessary for continuity.
- x. The subdivision and development process should include consideration of the way in which residential and



Open Space & Trail Effectively Integrated Into a Neighborhood Area



Mews-Type Streets are a little and provide for a little more parking wider than alleys

<sup>1</sup> Miller, Andrew Ross. Valuing Open Space: Land Economics and Neighborhood Parks. Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), February 2001.

nonresidential lots are laid out – adjacency and accessibility to park and open space areas should be optimized in all types of development.

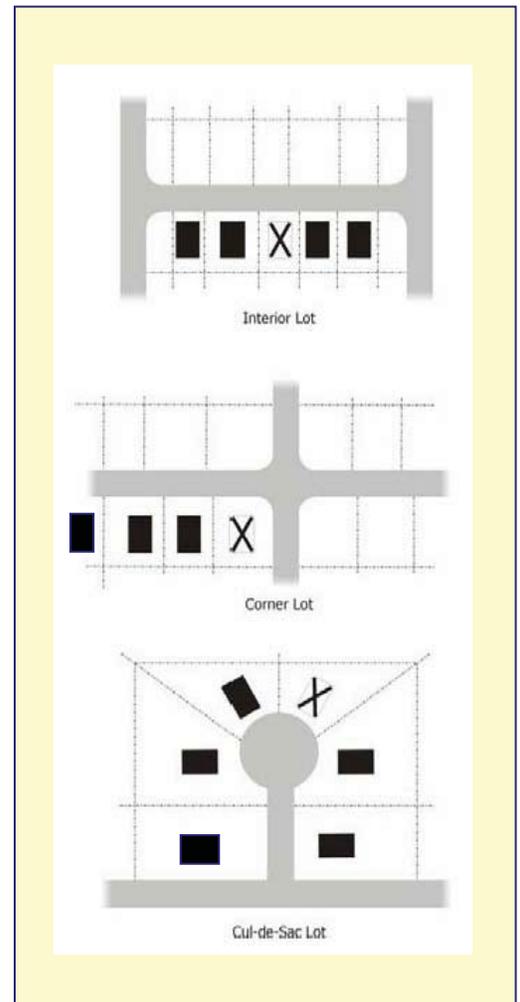
- xi. In neighborhoods, smaller residential lots or more dense residential units should be located in the closest proximity to the parks and open spaces provided – this will maximize the value of those lots and areas, and the parks and open spaces off-set smaller lot sizes.
- xii. Where possible, other green areas should also be utilized, such as landscaped medians, round-abouts, street islands, conservation areas and village greens to provide a heightened sense of open space.



Source: Arendt, Randall, et al. Rural By Design: Maintaining Small Town Character, Chicago, IL. Planners Press, The American Planning Association, 1994

**e. Establish higher standards for residential design.**

- i. **Establish Anti-Monotony standards** single family detached homes and townhomes.
- ii. **Single Family.** Homes should differ in appearance by varying such things as floor plans, number of stories, elevational articulation, roof configurations, masonry and garage location.
  - Ensure that no home is similar in appearance on any block face.
  - Homes must differ in appearance in any two of the following ways
    - ~ Number of stories
    - ~ Garage location
    - ~ Roof Type and layout
    - ~ Articulation of the front facade
- iii. **Townhome.** Homes should differ in appearance through the use of varying entry features, use of detail and trim, use of materials, articulation and setback.
- iv. **Establish higher standards for fences,** including pulling them back from the front of buildings along a street, the property line on corner properties, and requiring wrought iron or



board-on-board type fences adjacent to roadways. Only wrought iron type will be allowed adjacent to open space.

- Fences between houses may be 6 feet in height and solid, but should not extend closer to the street than 15 feet behind the front outside corner of the home. Only wrought iron style fence should be allowed adjacent to streets, open space, trails and neighborhood parks.
- Fences along a side street-
  - ~ May be no closer to the street than 10 feet behind the property line,
  - ~ May not overlap the house within 20 feet of the front wall, and
  - ~ Fences along a rear alley may be up to 6 feet in height, but should be located at least 3 feet back from the property line. The area between the fence and alley must be irrigated and planted with grass, ground cover, shrubbery or trees.

v. **Subdivision Perimeter Fencing.** Homes should face toward all roadways or toward open space which faces roadways; but where approved, wrought iron type fencing which may include stone or masonry pillars (where the highest standard of construction and engineering is met) should be used. High quality wood fencing may be also allowed with special approval from the City.

f. **Change the Zoning Ordinance to establish modified standards**

i. **Create a standard SF-E-1 district**

- Allow only one unit per gross acre with a minimum lot size of 8,400 s.f. and a minimum house size of 2,500 s.f., and require a minimum of 20% open space.
- Allow for densities up to two (2) units per gross acre with a Planned Development under condition of total conformance with all requirements.
- Additionally, in a Planned Development, allow density greater than one (1) unit per gross acre and up to two and one-half (2.5) units per gross acre with a mixture of uses and residential unit size with no minimum lot size. This would require P D zoning and may be allowed based on the following
  - ~ Topographic conditions that will result in quality open space and building arrangements,
  - ~ Mix of unit types to accommodate elements of “life-cycle” housing,

- ~ Amount and distribution of open space to enhance value-creation,
- ~ The overall master plan and arrangement of buildings and uses
- ~ The property should be 100-acres or more in size to adequately accommodate the transition to surrounding development.
- ~ Dedication and/or development of additional amenities which could include—
  - i. Parks and open space,
  - ii. Golf course,
  - iii. Neighborhood amenity/recreation center,
  - iv. Integration of schools into the community fabric,
  - v. Development of trails and parks in flood plains,
  - vi. Development of municipal parks and recreation facilities.

**ii. Update the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances** to clarify the items above and ensure that the new standards can be relied upon by the development community.

## **2. Facilitate Approval of Quality Projects**

- Require an administrative review of residential developments greater than 5 acres and all commercial developments to ensure that such projects meet the intent of the Comprehensive Plan.
- Work with developers to produce exceptional projects in a timely manner by establishing a third party professional design review to work with staff and proposed developments to ensure a higher overall quality of development.

# DOWNTOWN PLAN

## BLUE PRINT FOR A DOWNTOWN VILLAGE



TOWNSCAPE, Inc.  
With  
Newman Jackson Bieberstein  
Kelly and Associates



## CREDITS

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Kelly and Associates

Adopted by City Council  
November 15, 2004

Photos by Dennis Wilson, Jim Richards and Rowland Jackson unless otherwise noted.

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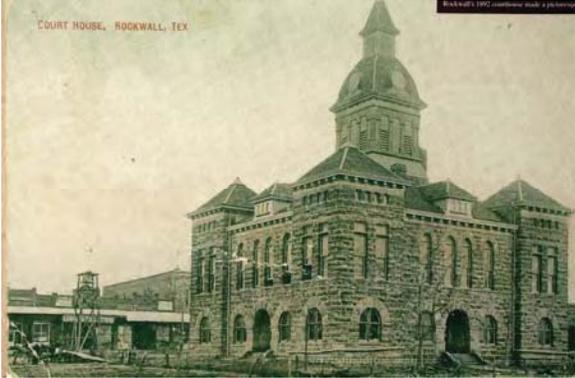
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# Downtown Rockwall

AN URBAN VILLAGE

## BACKGROUND

### HISTORY



TOP AND MIDDLE: ORIGINAL COURTHOUSE CONSTRUCTED IN 1878. BOTTOM: ORIGINAL RETAIL ON EAST SIDE OF COURTHOUSE SQUARE.

In the 1850's, while digging a well, early settlers discovered an underground stone wall which appeared to be constructed by prehistoric man (a conclusion that has been debated over time), hence the name "Rockwall" became the identity for the settlement. On April 17, 1854, Elijah Elgin filed the original plat granting the public square and existing streets high on a hill overlooking the East Fork of the Trinity River. These forty acres of land was part of the 572 acre homestead of B.F. Boydston who had obtained his title in 1848. Boydston sold 132 1/2 acres to W.B. Bowles on June 24, 1852. Thus, the founders of the town to be known as Rockwall, Texas were Elgin, Bowles and Boydston. Shortly thereafter, the US Post Office moved from Heath to Rockwall and the Masonic Hall was built on the Town Square. The first school was housed in the lower floor of the Masonic Hall, the first drugstore was established and John Heath left his farm in Heath and opened a general store in Rockwall. At the time, the new town was in Kaufman County. Rockwall County was established in April 1873 and the town of Rockwall was incorporated in 1874.

The County's first Courthouse was located in a building situated on the southeast corner of the present county square. On March 16, 1875, fire destroyed the Courthouse building and all records were lost. A new wooden Courthouse building was constructed in 1878 and the commissioner's court wisely provided for the construction of a separate stone building to house the county clerk and county records. That office and the county's records were saved in 1891 when a fire destroyed the county's second Courthouse building. In 1892, construction began on a new Courthouse constructed of native sandstone and built on the site of the present day Courthouse. The sandstone remained strong and firm but the crumbling mortar caused the second story court room and offices to be condemned several years prior to the destruction of the building. Many inspections and much study concerning repairs were delivered before the building was razed in 1940



and construction began on the present day Courthouse. The present day Courthouse was constructed in 1940 with help from the WPA program instituted by President Roosevelt in the 1930s.

The need for additional space for county offices fostered by the county’s growth led in 1982 to the purchase of a building at the corner of Rusk and Fannin Streets and the relocation of certain county officials to that building, which was designated the “Rockwall County Court House Annex.”

Rockwall is a blend of historic structures and 19th Century storefronts on the town square that surround the historic courthouse. The courtesies and small town atmosphere of the first merchants are still alive and well in present day downtown Rockwall.

## CURRENT PLANNING

### COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The City of Rockwall, Texas has evolved through a colorful history, from frontier outpost on the East Fork of the Trinity to prosperous farming and railroad town at the turn of the century. It saw stagnation through the Great Depression and World War II, and then renewed prosperity as it became a part of the economy of a vast metropolitan region with the advent of commuting, and the construction of Interstate Highway 30 and Lake Ray Hubbard. Each period left an indelible stamp on the growth patterns and physical form of the city.

Recently, Rockwall has found itself in a period of unprecedented growth, with its population having quadrupled to over 20,000 residents since 1980. Yet much of Rockwall retains a small town character and charm highly valued by residents and businesses that have chosen to make it home. Rockwall’s immediate and long-term challenge is to maintain the positive qualities of the town cherished by its citizens while accommodating inevitable growth and change.

In 2001, the City adopted a new Comprehensive Plan called “*Hometown 2000*.” The plan focused on the extraordinary growth pressures that the City of Rockwall was under. This Plan updated the City’s previous planning efforts with a special emphasis on those areas of concern most directly concerned with the physical form of the city: land use, urban design, open space and parks, and transportation.



*View of Downtown Church Steeple from SH 66*

The principles and policies embodied in the Plan collectively describe a future for Rockwall that build on its heritage, its unique setting, and its prized small town character. This future is described by the HomeTown 2000 Plan’s Citizen’s Advisory Committee in their overall vision statement for the community—

*We envision a Rockwall...*

*that retains and builds upon its charming Texas small town ambience, as expressed in its historic architecture, its Old Town Square, its tree-lined streets and its traditional neighborhoods;*

*that welcomes and accommodates growth and change in a manner that builds upon our distinctive sense of place, the wise use of our community resources, our community spirit and our quality of life;*

*that is a true lakefront community taking maximum advantage of our dramatic site, our shore lands, and our views to and from the water;*

*that takes maximum advantage of our rolling topography, our wooded areas and our creek valleys to help shape a distinctive town character;*

*that is an attractive, memorable place--one of Texas' most desirable, admired and emulated communities;*

*that is a great HomeTown!*

#### ZONING ORDINANCE

In May of 2004, the City adopted a new Zoning Ordinance which implemented many of the policies established in the Comprehensive Plan. In particular, it --

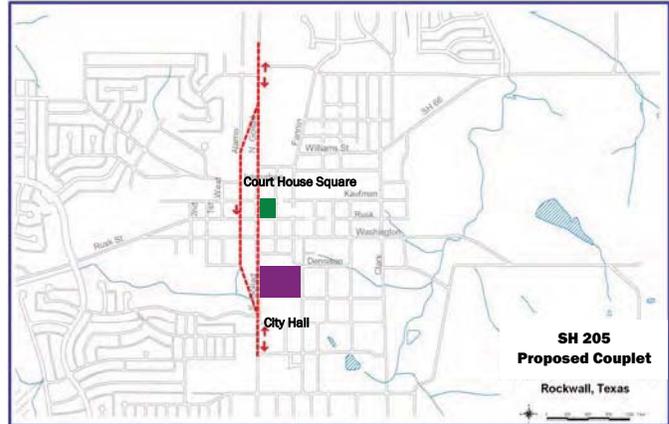
- Implemented development standards that reinforces the “Home Town” character
- Streamlined Procedures
- Consolidated and organized the ordinance to make it more user-friendly
- Provided for more administrative and Planning Commission reviews and approvals in order to expedite quality development
- Will result in more “Sustainable” Development

The CBD (Downtown) District was not significantly affected. It will be modified based on approval of this *Downtown Plan*.

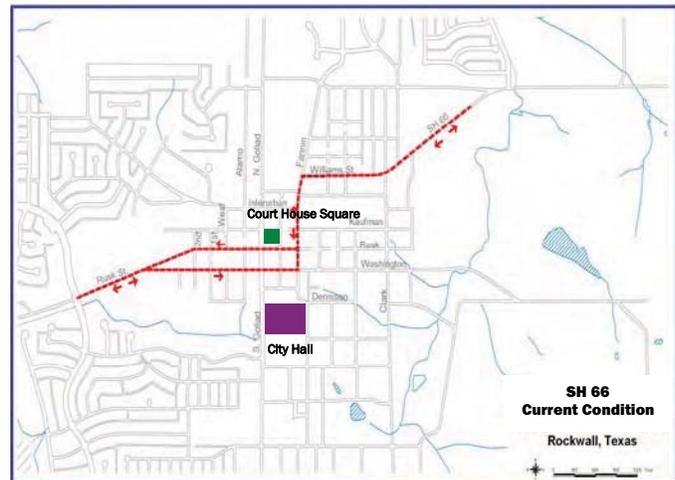
**SH 66 AND SH 205**

Plans for the SH 66 and SH 205 couplets have a great impact on the Downtown. They affect the “comfort” and safety of streets, and the ability of pedestrians to circulate to take advantage of shopping and dining. They also affect the ability to close downtown streets for special events like the highly successful Cruise and Blues Festival.

The current plan for SH 205 calls for a 1-way couplet between N. Goliad and N. Alamo in the area of the Downtown. This arrangement will improve the existing conditions by making N. Goliad 1-way and therefore easier for pedestrians to cross. There would continue to be no curb-side parking along N. Goliad.



The current plan for SH 66 calls for a 1-way couplet between Rusk and Washington. (See Figure 1 SH 66 Alternative Concepts) In fact the roadway has already been improved between the lake and N. Goliad. However, it continues to place 1-way automobile and truck traffic adjacent to the Square. This, along with SH 205 (N. Goliad) traffic, will limit the ability of the City to close downtown streets and hold large community events like the popular “Cruise and Blues” festival. An alternative to that configuration is to create a couplet between Washington and an extension of Dennison which would pass by the north side of City Hall and join a widened Washington in the area of the old City Hall.



This alternative alignment has several advantages. It avoids pedestrian/vehicle conflicts in the downtown, takes traffic past fewer residences, and gives City Hall a front door at the intersection of two major roadways. Thru-truck traffic would also be removed from the Courthouse Square and central retailing area. It also has some disadvantages. TxDOT has already rebuilt Rusk and Washington from the “split” to N. Goliad; additional buildings may be taken; and the east-bound roadway would go through the City Hall site separating the Seniors Center and City Hall.

The Downtown Plan is developed so that either SH 66 roadway concept could be accommodated.

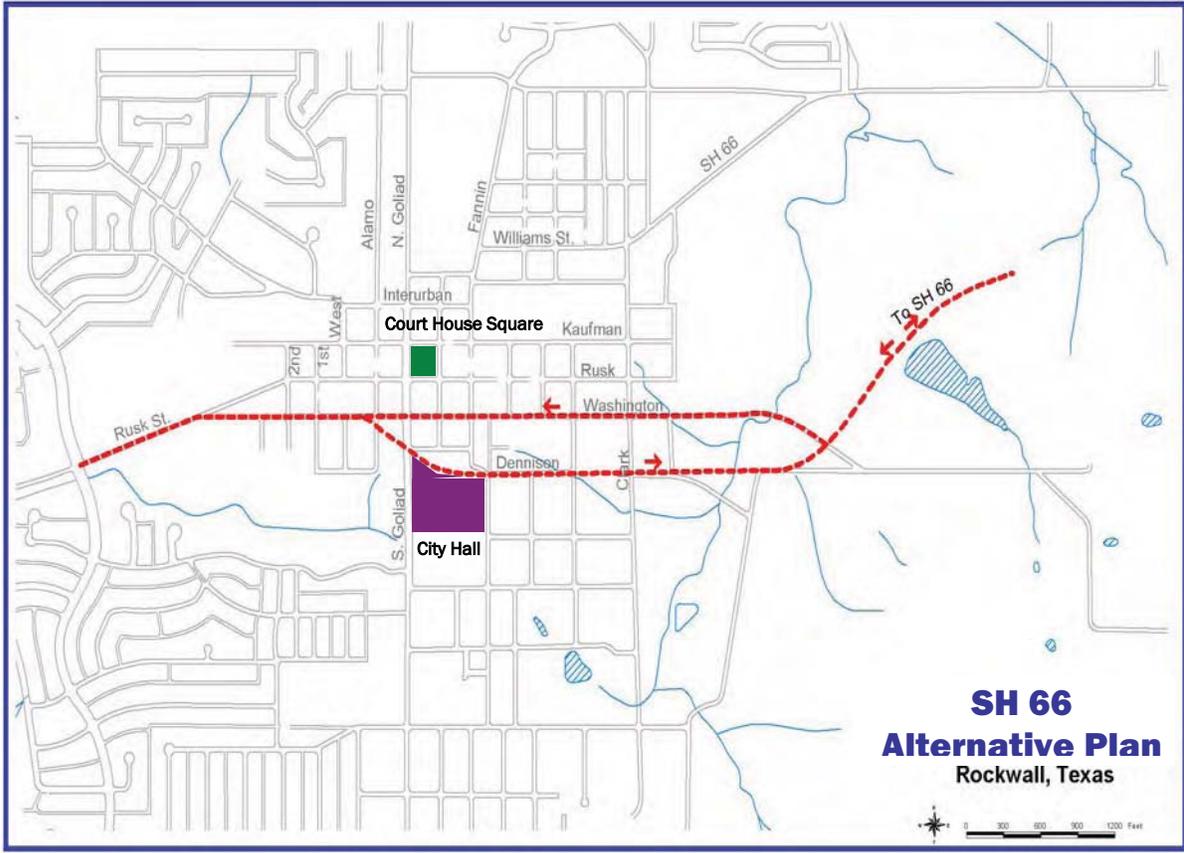
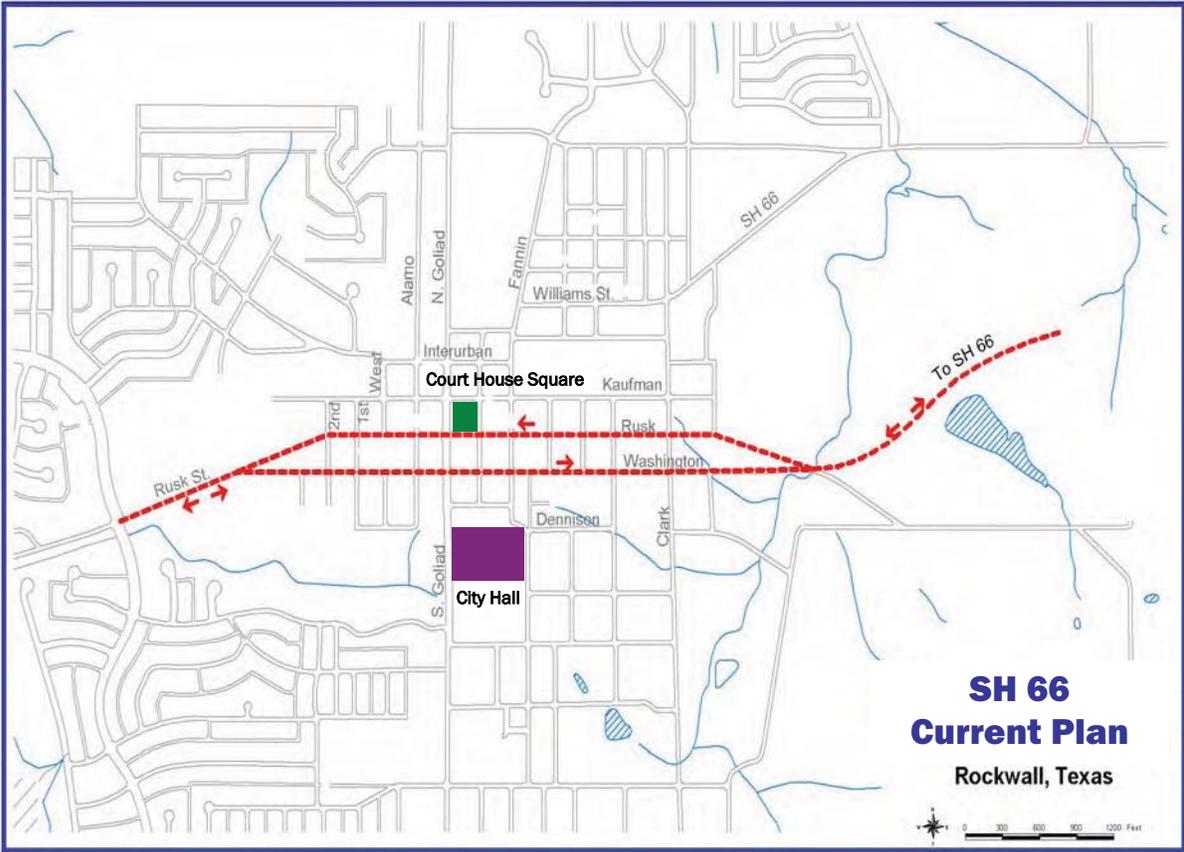


FIGURE 1 SH 66 ALTERNATIVE CONCEPTS

PLAN AREA

Figure 2 Downtown Plan Area represents the boundaries of the Downtown Plan.

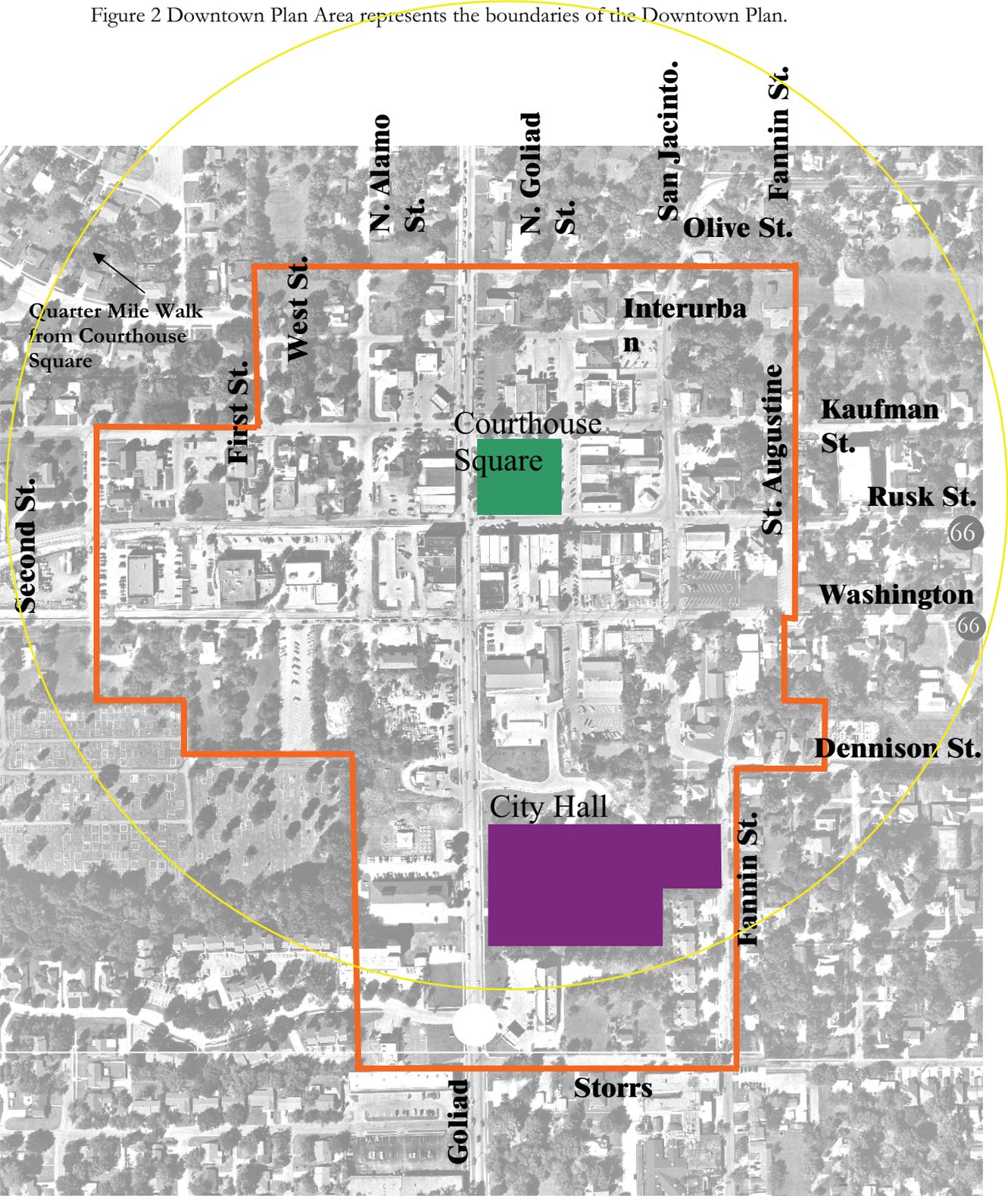


Figure 2 Downtown Plan Area

# THE PLAN

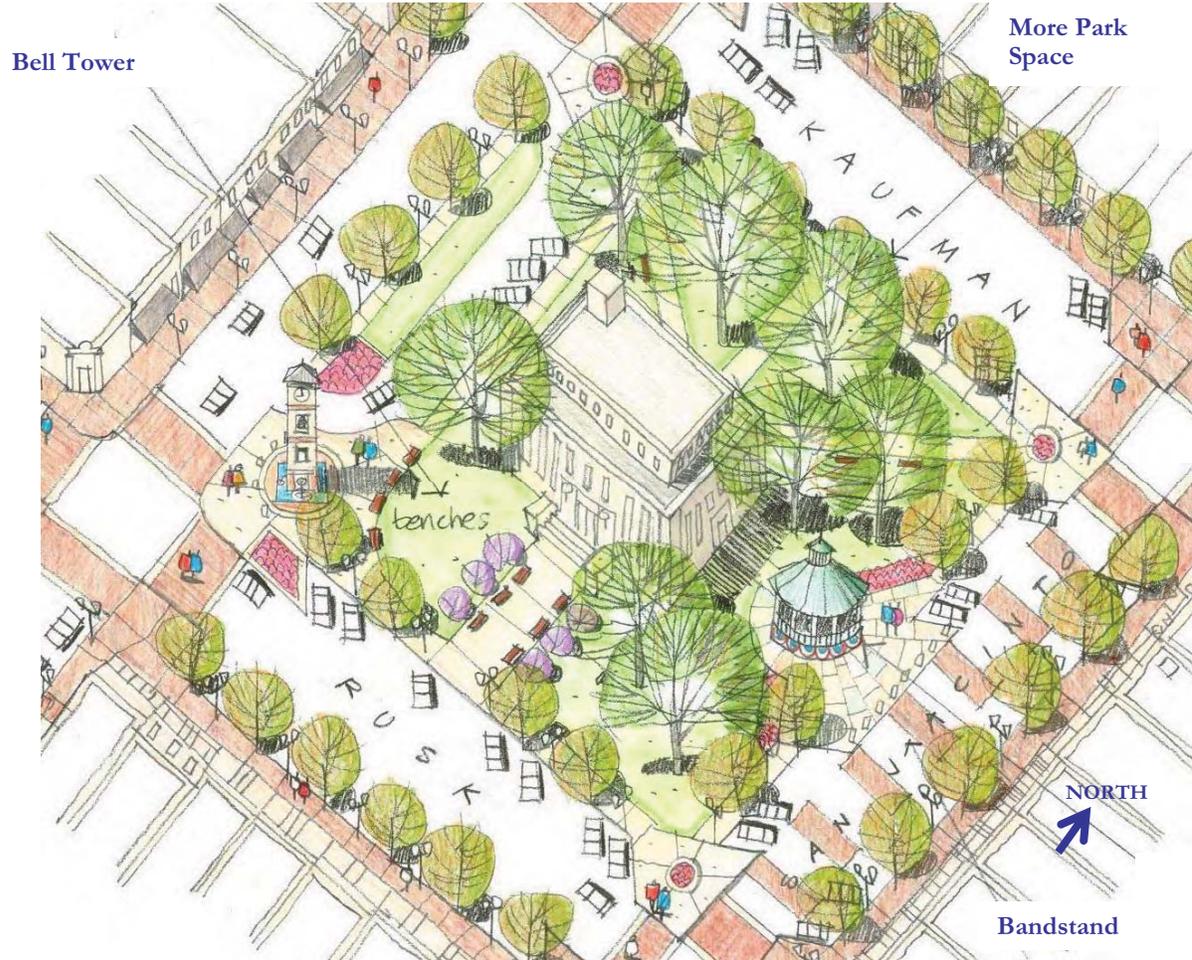
## THE VISION

The Downtown should reflect the very “soul” of Rockwall. It should be a pedestrian-oriented place with active street life, healthy retail and a common “green” for community gatherings. It should be the friendly, family-oriented cultural center of the community; a place where people of all ages gather for social, recreational and shopping reasons. It should be a place where restaurants and shops abound; and a place where young professionals, seniors and “empty nesters” can find high quality urban-style housing

Key to realizing the vision is to clarify the role of the Courthouse Square and to establish land use, development and streetscape standards.



## COURTHOUSE SQUARE



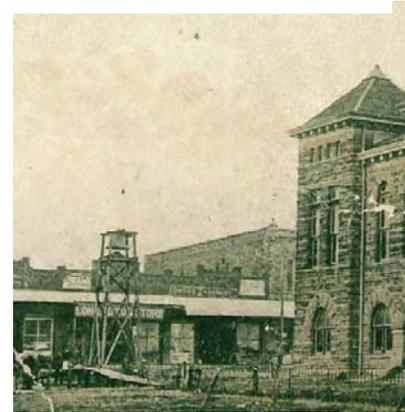
**The Square.** If Downtown is the cultural center of the City, the Courthouse Square is “ground zero.” The vision for the Courthouse Square is to create a larger “green” that can provide increased visual relief to the roadways, sidewalks and buildings surrounding it, and provide increased opportunity for community-oriented festivals and events. In addition, it is intended to include enhancements that will increase its role as a focus for civic life and identity, such as a band stand and a landmark bell/clock tower.

Complementing the Square, it is intended that blocks that face the Square are developed with 2-3 story buildings which contribute to the historic character of the area and provide a “street wall” which immediately distinguishes the Square from adjacent neighborhoods and creates a comfortable sense of enclosure.

**More Park Space.** In order to achieve the increased amount of green space on the Square, parking is moved off of the Courthouse grounds and placed on the public street, with the exception of the parking area adjacent to North Goliad (SH 205). Parking may, however, also be restricted on Rusk if the current plan for SH 66 is implemented. The increased amount of public green will immediately make the area more open and attractive, and will provide a venue for community-based outdoor functions and festivals.



BELOW, THE 1892 COURTHOUSE WITH AN ADJACENT BELL TOWER



**A Landmark Corner.** A clock and bell tower at Downtown’s most visible corner will provide a sense of arrival, a vertical point and a meeting place for the citizens and visitors. Much like other great places – “Meet you under the eagle at Wanamaker’s” (in Philadelphia), or “Meet you by the fountain in Fountain Place” (in Dallas), “Meet you at the bell tower in Rockwall.” The conceptual tower is reminiscent of an historic bell which adorned the Square at the turn of the century. The modest fountain at the base provides visual and aural interest, inviting passers-by to park, linger and enjoy exploring Downtown.



BELOW, 1940 COURTHOUSE EAST FACE



**Bandstand on San Jacinto.** A bandstand would provide the focus for regular concerts and civic activities, as well as for major community events such as the Cruise and Blues Festival. For such events, San Jacinto, Rusk and Kaufman could be closed to create accommodate festival-goers and event booths.



BELOW, LOOKING NORTHWEST AT N. GOLIAD AND KAUFMAN



**Infill Development Character.** An important element in creating a great place is providing a sense of enclosure and continuity of interest at the sidewalk level. This would be accomplished by ensuring that new construction is a minimum of 2 stories in height and built close to the sidewalk with ground floor windows and eye-catching retail displays. This image illustrates new infill development on three corners of Kaufman at Goliad.



BELOW, LOOKING SOUTH FROM RUSK ON SAN JACINTO



**San Jacinto Court.** The block of San Jacinto between Rusk and Washington provides an unusual opportunity for a protected outdoor dining area and pedestrian connection between the shops around the Square, the City Hall Complex and possible future consolidated parking area south of Washington Street. This area would be in shade most of the day and could provide an intimate pedestrian-scale area for shopping and dining, just off the Square. It is currently being used as a one-way travel lane with angled parking.

## LAND USE

The Land Use Plans below (Figure 3 Land Use A and Figure 4 Land Use B) represent several important land use features. Retail is shown along block faces surrounding Courthouse Square and adjacent streets in order to ensure a cohesive retail district and attractive pedestrian area. Retail should be required to be constructed on the ground floor of any block face shown as “Retail at Grade” on Figures 3 and 4. Appropriate new infill projects should be directed to vacant or under-utilized corners of the Square.

Building height, which may be up to 4 or 5 stories in the Downtown, will be required to be no greater than 2 stories when adjacent to single family zoned property outside the District. This will help minimize the impact on adjacent neighborhoods.

Civic uses such as the County Courthouse and City Hall are very important features in creating the cultural center of the City.

The balance of land in the Downtown District may be developed for office, retail or residential provided that they adhere to the form-based development standards that ensure they will contribute to the pedestrian-oriented character of the Downtown.

Figure 3 Land Use A  
**Land Use A**  
 (Southern Alignment of SH 66)

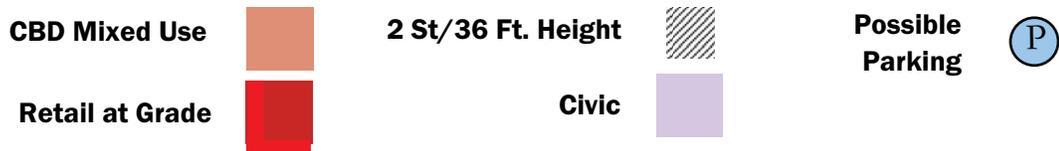
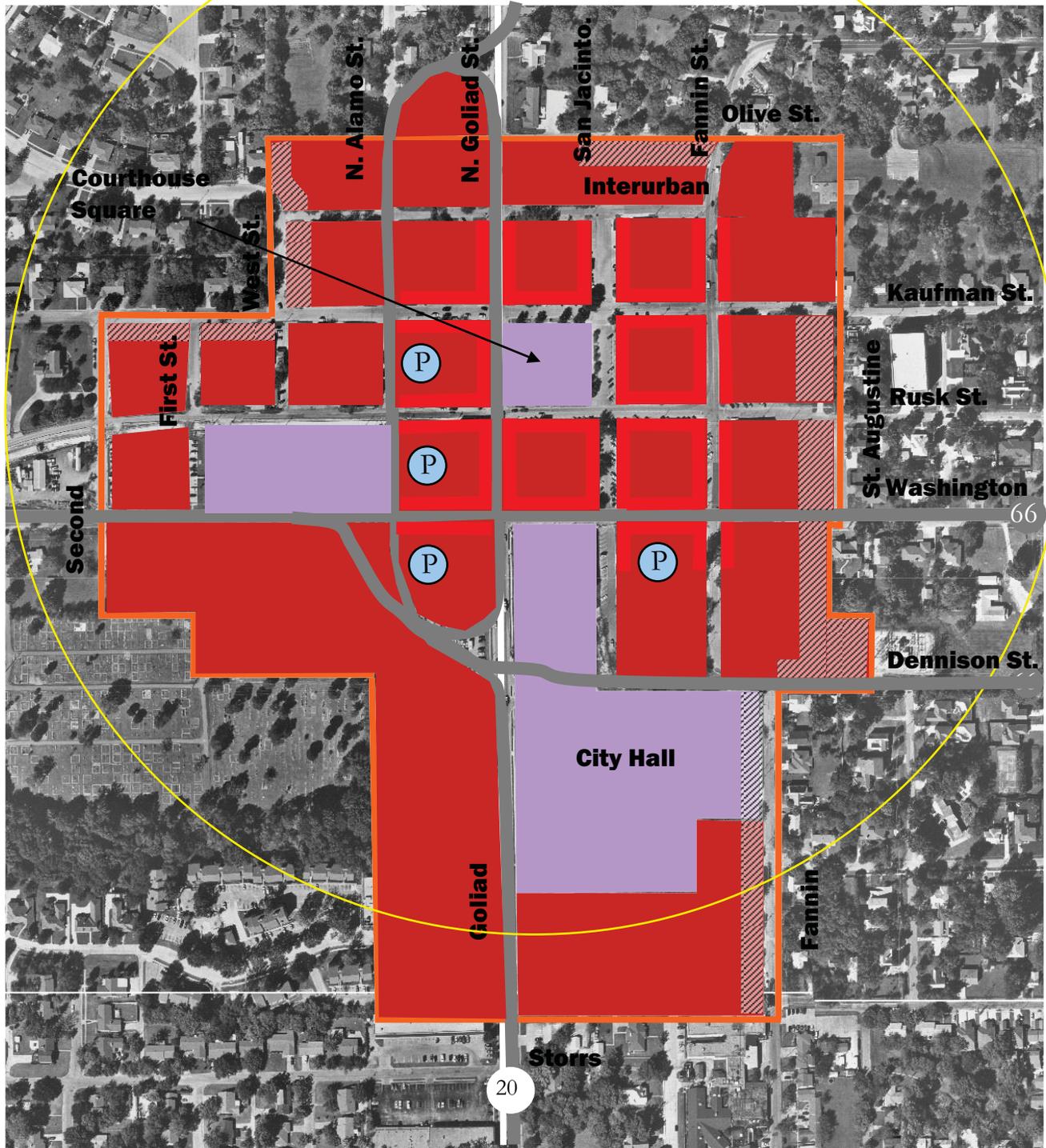
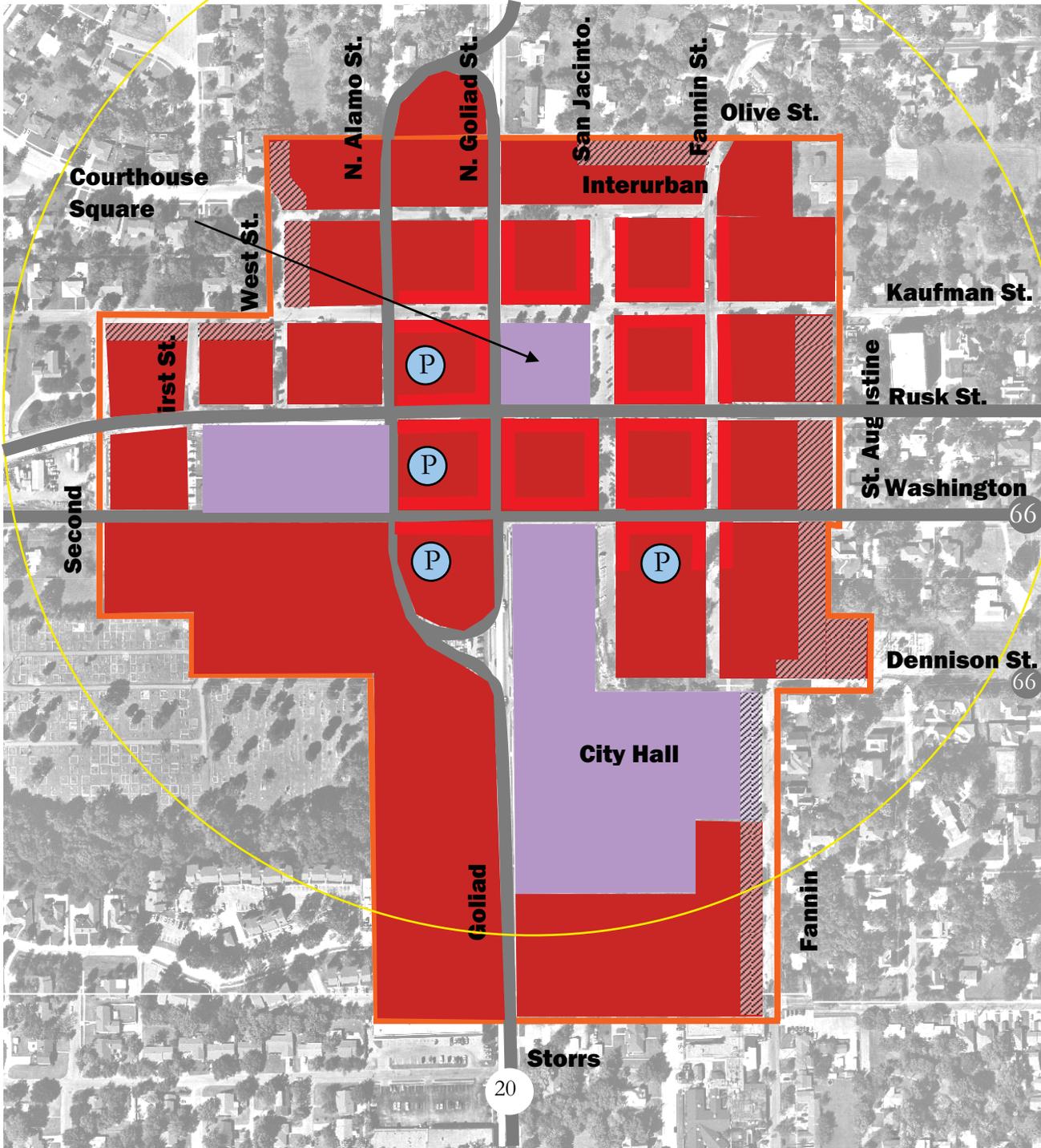


Figure 4 Land Use B  
**Land Use B**  
 (Northern Alignment of SH 66)



**RETAIL**

The core retail area should be located largely where it is today, surrounding the Courthouse Square. In addition, it should extend to street fronts as indicated in the Land Use maps. This will serve to create a large pedestrian-friendly area. Retail use may also be located throughout the district and in mixed use buildings. Corners of blocks make particularly good retail and restaurant sites.

The types of retail should include restaurants, coffee shops, retail stores and personal services uses. The standards for retail downtown should include the following:

1. Most of the street face of the retail building should be composed of windows and doors at grade to provide views into and out of the businesses.
2. Public entries (front doors) should be inset at least 6 feet to avoid doors hitting pedestrians and to provide a “crush” space for patrons who are exiting a shop before proceeding along the sidewalk.
3. Sidewalk seating for restaurants, cafés and ice cream shops should be allowed. Sidewalk retailing and display may be allowed during certain special events.
4. Pedestrian-oriented signs such as hanging, projecting, building, awning, sandwich signs and window signs should be allowed with guidelines.



**ENTRIES SHOULD BE INSET, AND SIDEWALK SEATING SHOULD BE ALLOWED.**



## HOUSING

In the Downtown District, there should be a variety of housing including townhomes, lofts (with or without retail at grade) and “big home”-style properties (buildings and site plans which look like large homes, but may contain 2-6 or so living units. The design and finish of these properties should be targeted to young professionals, “empty nesters” and retirees.

The standards for residential downtown should include the following:

5. Buildings should be within 15-25 feet of the curb. This allows for a 10-15-foot sidewalk (with street trees), 5 feet or so of landscaping adjacent to the building (if an entirely residential structure) and where necessary, steps leading up to a stoop or entry. Balconies, chimneys and stoops may intrude on this setback. “Big Home” buildings may be set further back with additional landscaping.
6. Entries to residential units located at grade should be elevated 24-30 inches above the sidewalk. This provides for a sense of privacy and separation from the public realm of the sidewalk.
7. Windows must face the street in order to ensure “eyes on the street”. Balconies are also encouraged on the street side.
8. Parking for all residential units should be internal to the block.
9. Housing is encouraged above ground-level businesses. There should be access to these types of units from the sidewalk via a recessed entry or courtyard.



A TURN-OF-THE CENTURY RESIDENTIAL HOTEL LOCATED AT THE NORTHWEST CORNER OF WASHINGTON AND N. GOLIAD

POSSIBLE HOUSING TYPES, CLOCKWISE  
FROM RIGHT: "BIG" HOUSE, TOWNHOUSE,  
LOFTS ABOVE RETAIL, LOFTS ABOVE RETAIL



**PARKING**



**PLANO STATION WRAPS A PARKING STRUCTURE WITH RETAIL AT GRADE AND RESIDENTIAL ABOVE**

Fundamental to creating a “walkable district” is to ensure that parking is allowed on streets, and that “on-site” parking is located in the center of blocks and “lined” with retail, office or residential uses. Higher density projects and consolidated parking areas should utilize parking structures in order to minimize the amount of land and street frontage allocated to parking.



**DOWNTOWN MOUNTAINVIEW CONSOLIDATES PARKING IN STRUCTURES AND LOTS BEHIND RETAIL, AND INCLUDES MID-BLOCK CUT-THROUGHS**



**CONSOLIDATED PARKING GARAGES SHOULD BE “LINED” WITH USES SUCH AS RETAIL, HOUSING OR OFFICE, SIMILAR TO THIS PROJECT AT MOCKINGBIRD STATION**



**MOST DOWNTOWNS, INCLUDING PLANO HERE, ALLOW ON-STREET PARKING ON STREETS TO INCREASE EASE OF ACCESS AND PROVIDE A “COMFORT ZONE” FOR PEDESTRIANS FROM PASSING TRAFFIC**

## DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

Downtown development should be governed by a form-based code which sets out standards that ensure that any new development that occurs will contribute to the creation and sustainability of a vigorous pedestrian-oriented district.

The following are some key standards which should be included:

1. Construct new buildings close to the sidewalk and ensure continuous frontage except for mid-block access to parking.
2. Provide sidewalks with street trees and awnings to provide shade for pedestrians, and pedestrian-level lighting for safety.
3. All new buildings should be 2-4 stories in height, with a transition to adjacent single family areas outside of the District.
4. Utilize historic architectural elements such as pediments, recessed entries, canopies and tri-partite architecture (base, middle and top) in designing new buildings.
5. Construct ground floor for retail use along block faces which are identified for retail in the Downtown Land Use Plan.
6. Provide windows at grade along all block faces with retail, and windows and balconies overlooking the street on all block faces with residential.
7. Encourage infill at key corners around the Square, and encourage the use of vertical architectural accents at corners.
8. Utilize brick, stone, concrete and stucco construction.
9. Allow no new parking lots in front of buildings within the district.
10. Avoid blank walls.
11. Encourage new on-site parking to be structured.
12. Encourage enrichments such as public art and seasonal color.
13. Require that signage be appropriate for a pedestrian district through standards for placement, size, materials, lighting and recommended color schemes.



## STREETSCAPE PLAN

The Streetscape Plan extends beyond the Downtown and includes older residential areas to the north, east and south, including the Historic District. Specific standards will be adopted as part of the Engineering Standards for the Square, the Core, the Perimeter and the State Highways which go through the area. (See Figure 5 Streetscape Zones below.) The following is a discussion of key characteristics of the streetscape for Downtown.

All streets in the Downtown area should be “pedestrian-friendly. They should provide a broad sidewalk, shade trees between the sidewalk and the street edge and sidewalk lighting is no greater than 12-14 feet. Curbs should “bump out” at intersections to make pedestrian crossing safer and quicker, and to provide additional queuing space at crossings. Parking should be allowed on all streets except, possibly, for State Highway segments. The buffering of pedestrians from traffic through placing parking, trees and other landscaping helps to create a feeling of safety and security.

It is intended that the **Square** (that is, the streets immediately surrounding the Square) is the most intensely streetscaped zone. The streets will have trees planted on both sides with regular 25-35 foot spacing, with pedestrian lighting on architectural poles interspersed. The poles will support double-headed pedestrian-oriented street lights and will provide a high level of lighting for retail and restaurant activity and special evening events. All lighting sources will be metal halide and shielded to focus downward to increase efficiency, and to prevent glare and light “pollution”. All light poles will be capable of accepting flags and banners.

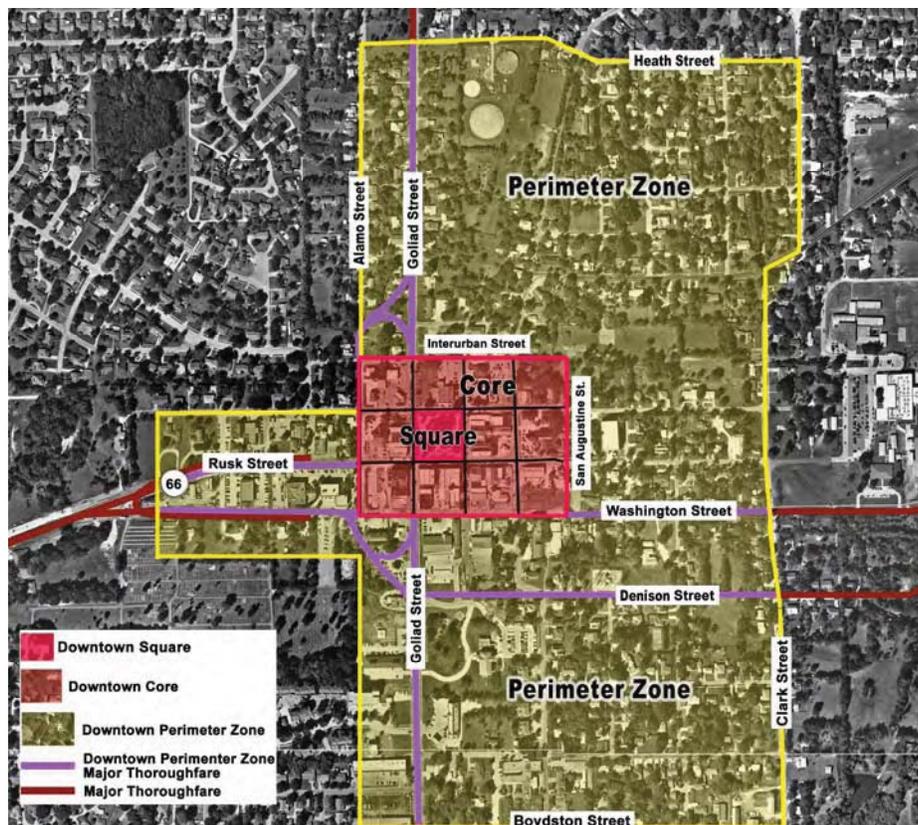


Figure 5 Streetscape Zones



Traffic signal poles will be modified to bring the traffic signal up close to the arm, and will add street names in a consistent manner. The poles will be painted to match the light fixtures and bollards in the district. Traffic Signal Poles will be standard TxDOT issue, with specific mounting standards for signals, street signs, intersection lighting. All poles will be painted chocolate brown to match other street furniture. (See Figure 6 Traffic Signal Poles in Downtown below.)



*Figure 7 Pedestrian Lighting around the Square*



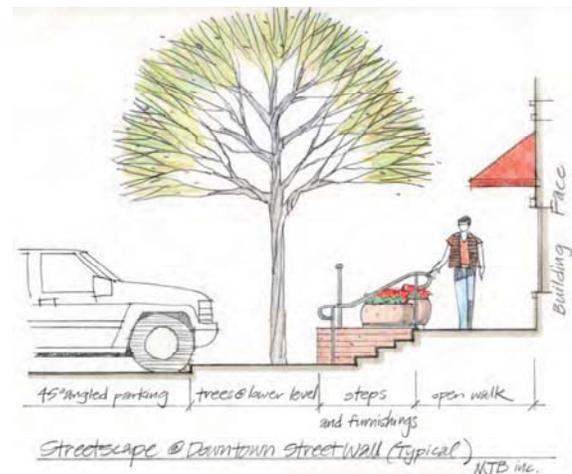
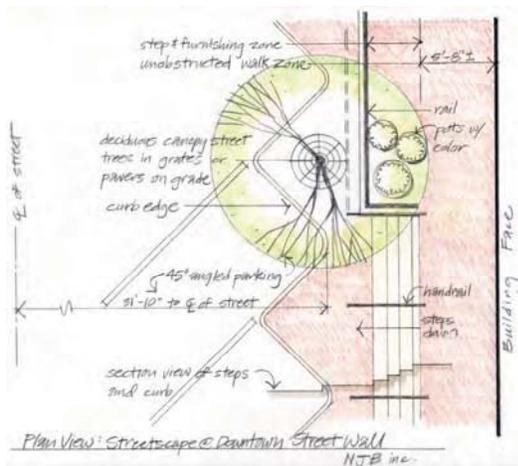
*Figure 6 Traffic Signal Poles in Downtown*

The **Core Zone** will be the second most intensely streetscaped area. It will include street trees and lighting similar to the Square, but will include single-headed lighting fixtures.

Sidewalks are a particular issue in the Core area because of the topography and elevational changes between the street and the building floor. A walking strip should be provided in front of parked cars, with trees being planted in the triangle which results from the angled parking configuration. Controlled and safe steps should be provided at two locations on each block with this condition. This increases pedestrian safety and allows opportunities for outside seating and dining.



CONCEPT FOR STREET TREE PLANTING AND ACCOMMODATION OF GRADE CHANGES



The **Perimeter Zone**, which includes the Historic District, will include single light on a pedestrian-level pole identical to the historic-type fixture being used in the Downtown Core. This will occur where lighting is requested or required.

It is intended that **State Highways** will utilize the historic character fixtures as they proceed through the Downtown area. Lighting of intersections could utilize the larger pole-mounted fixtures being used on traffic signals in the Core. Otherwise, it is intended that high levels of lighting would not be utilized as these roadways proceed through Downtown single-family residential areas.

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## IMPLEMENTATION

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There are great impediments to developing in older areas of cities.

- Land parcels are often split into small individual sites which are difficult to consolidate for a workable project.
- Development often means demolition of existing structures which adds to the overall cost of the project.
- Rehabilitating and upgrading existing buildings often exceeds the cost of new construction and involves exceptions to zoning ordinances and the Building Code in addition to other unexpected difficulties.
- Risk in an unproven and specialized market.
- Older areas often have substandard infrastructure (streets, sidewalks, utilities).

Implementation strategies must be geared to overcoming cost and risk penalties in developing downtown, and to ensuring the highest possible quality of development. Below are several proven mechanisms to realize these goals.

### COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

A Community Development Corporation (CDC) can play a vital role in facilitating development Downtown. It can —

- Acquire and assemble land on an “opportunity” basis.
- Acquire public land from governmental agencies without going out to bid.
- Package and market assembled development parcels to developers who will design and build in accordance with established plans and goals.
- Coordinate and provide financial incentives to qualifying development.
- Receive funds from both public and private sources to assist in its mission.
- Take an equity position in development deals.
- Create a rotating fund to facilitate future development.

A specialized CDC with a focus on creating mixed use pedestrian-oriented development and administering a Parking District would greatly advance the evolution of Downtown toward the vision expressed in this Downtown Plan.

## **PUBLIC IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT**

A Public Improvement District (PID) may be formed by a municipality to provide enhanced maintenance, security, amenities or other improvements or operations, above the level that the city normally provides. The creation of a PID could aid in the creation of consolidated parking structures and the management of parking Downtown. The district would be funded by an assessment on property owners.

## **PUBLIC PROPERTY**

Surplus public property held by the City, County or TxDOT provides an important opportunity to provide consolidated parking Downtown and to attract high quality projects. When a City or Community Development Corporation controls key parcels of land, it provides leverage with developers to build in the city and obtain developments that are uniquely sensitive to the City's goals.

Cities like Plano have used land they have acquired, or have determined to be surplus, to great advantage. Plano was able to attract redevelopment in their Downtown by negotiating directly with developers for mixed use projects with additional parking for public use. In addition, the City provided a long term lease on the land with an escalating lease clause that will provide it with income over the long term

## **TIF DISTRICT**

Creating a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District could provide funds for improvements for the area which would be paid for by the increase of tax revenues resulting from the new construction which would be attracted as a result of the improvements. This would result in no additional cost to property owners besides the normal payment of ad valorem taxes.

When a TIF District is created, the base taxable value is established at the current level. The increase of this taxable value (or a portion of it) is then available to pay off bonds which were issued for the initial improvements, and to pay for further improvements as established in the documents creating the district.

## **ZONING**

Revisions to the existing CBD should occur to allow for a mixture of land uses, establish appropriate parking standards for the Downtown (as opposed to suburban or rural standards), and establish "form-based" development standards. The key to obtaining quality development which will contribute to the special village atmosphere and be sustainable, is rigorous architectural and site layout standards. They will ensure that all new projects will directly contribute to the overall success of the District.

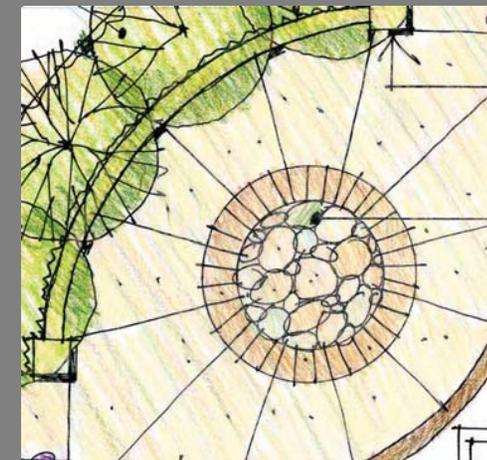
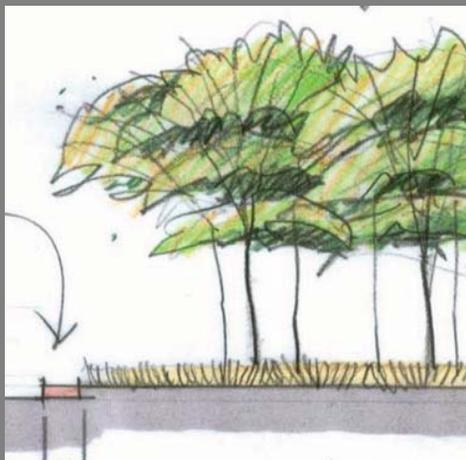
## **PARKING AUTHORITY**

A parking Authority could be created to build and manage parking downtown. It could provide shared parking that would serve several uses, thereby reducing the overall number of parking spaces in the Downtown. They could also contract with new developments to add public parking to their development, as was done in Downtown Plano's new mixed use developments. The responsibilities of a Parking Authority could also be assumed by a Community Development Corporation.

# ROCKWALL

## JOHN KING BLVD. DESIGN CONCEPT PLAN

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City of Rockwall, Texas

September 2009

TOWNSCAPE, Inc.

Rockwall Comprehensive Plan 2011  
Appendix "C"

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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# JOHN KING BLVD. DESIGN CONCEPT PLAN

## 1. BACKGROUND & INTRODUCTION

John King Blvd. is a City initiated, funded and constructed roadway. Named for an exceptional City leader, statesman and former Councilman, it was conceived to provide bypass traffic relief to Texas highway 205 which penetrates downtown, and to provide access and structure for developing properties on the east side of the City.

The design concept for this corridor is intended to evoke and enhance an image of the City of Rockwall that has evolved through the Comprehensive Plan, development standards and development approvals over recent years.

From the outset, it was determined that this concept would provide the City with a “kit of parts” and clear direction on how they could be applied to this specific corridor. A side benefit is that elements of this design concept are flexible enough to be used to meet identity and enhancement needs throughout the City – along other roadway corridors, entries, hike and bike trails and such.

It is anticipated that the elements for John King Blvd. would be detailed by a landscape

architect for each specific application. The quality of construction of the physical elements is paramount. They will provide a timeless legacy to the community – aging with grace and beauty for all to enjoy.



## 2. ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

### OBSERVATIONS

The strongest enhancement concepts for John King Boulevard should build on the existing landscape character, both natural and manmade, that the roadway traverses. It must also recognize the likely character of future land uses, and build upon existing branding efforts throughout the city so that a cohesive community character continues to emerge and strengthen through these efforts. Townscape’s field observations and analysis of aerial photos and planning documents recognized the following attributes as significant cues and inspiration for enhancement concepts.

**Several wooded creeks and drainage ways** cross the boulevard at fairly regular intervals. These wooded bottoms are the most dramatic landscape feature of the corridor. Their visual impact can be heightened and the corridor made more interesting extending the character of these woods into the boulevard parkways and medians at the crossings, reinforcing the character of the creeks and creating a visual rhythm for the roadway traveler.

**Prairie uplands** with broad, rolling slopes and long views occur between the wooded

bottoms. The dominant visual character here is of prairie grasses sparsely studded with lower-growing tree species.

**Gateway identity** opportunities exist where John King Boulevard begins at North Goliad, at South Goliad, and on both sides of Interstate 30.

**Key intersections** offer opportunities to create “pulse points” along the driver’s path with enhanced paving and plantings, and to provide seating and shade for trail users.

**Future land uses**, as presently zoned or called for in the Comprehensive Plan, can cue related design treatments. For example, more structured, formal plantings and material finishes would be appropriate at commercial and mixed-use intersections, while more naturalistic arrangements might be used in rural/future residential areas that have yet to be developed.

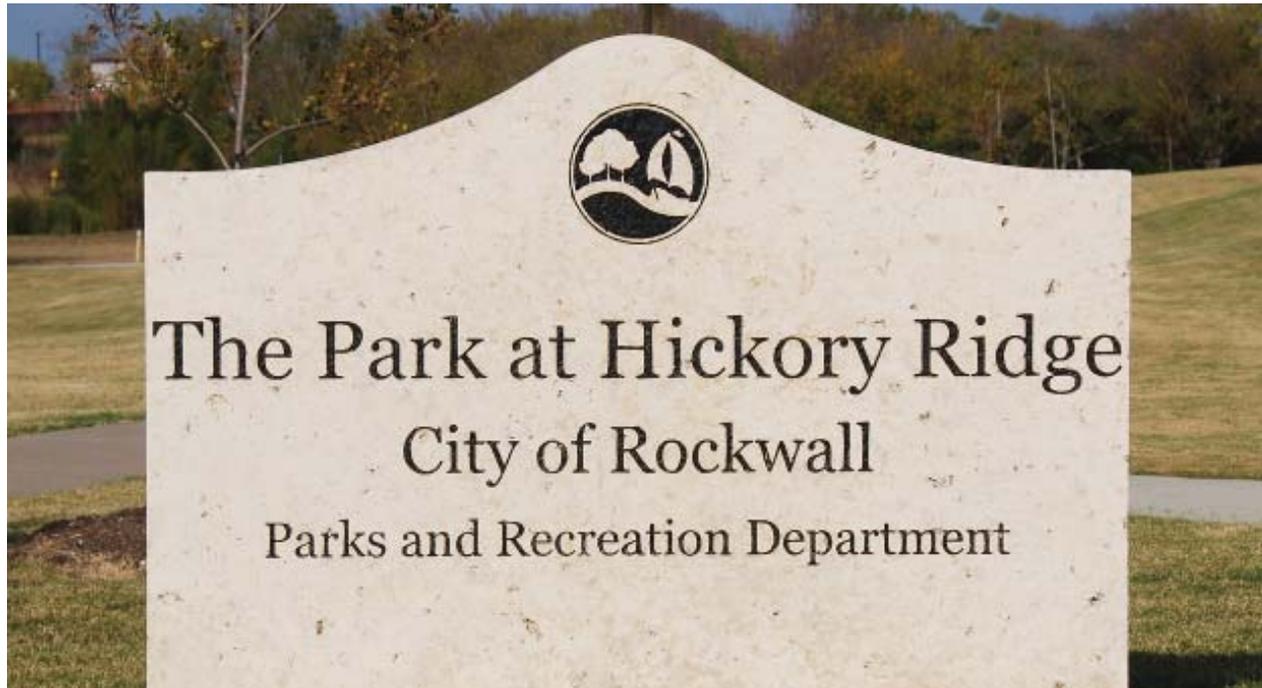
**Existing community icons and branding efforts**, including the Rockwall County Courthouse,

existing limestone “gateway” walls, and the Rockwall Technology Park entrances all share a consistent look of native limestone, the classic Times Roman font and drought tolerant plantings that are appropriate to carry forward into new designs. Newer additions such as the Harbor Place development and the newest murals at I-30 and 205 have introduced a pale yellow color into the townscape that can enhance plain concrete abutments along the roadway.





2. ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES





2. ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES





### Prairie Uplands



2. ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES



**Wooded Bottoms**



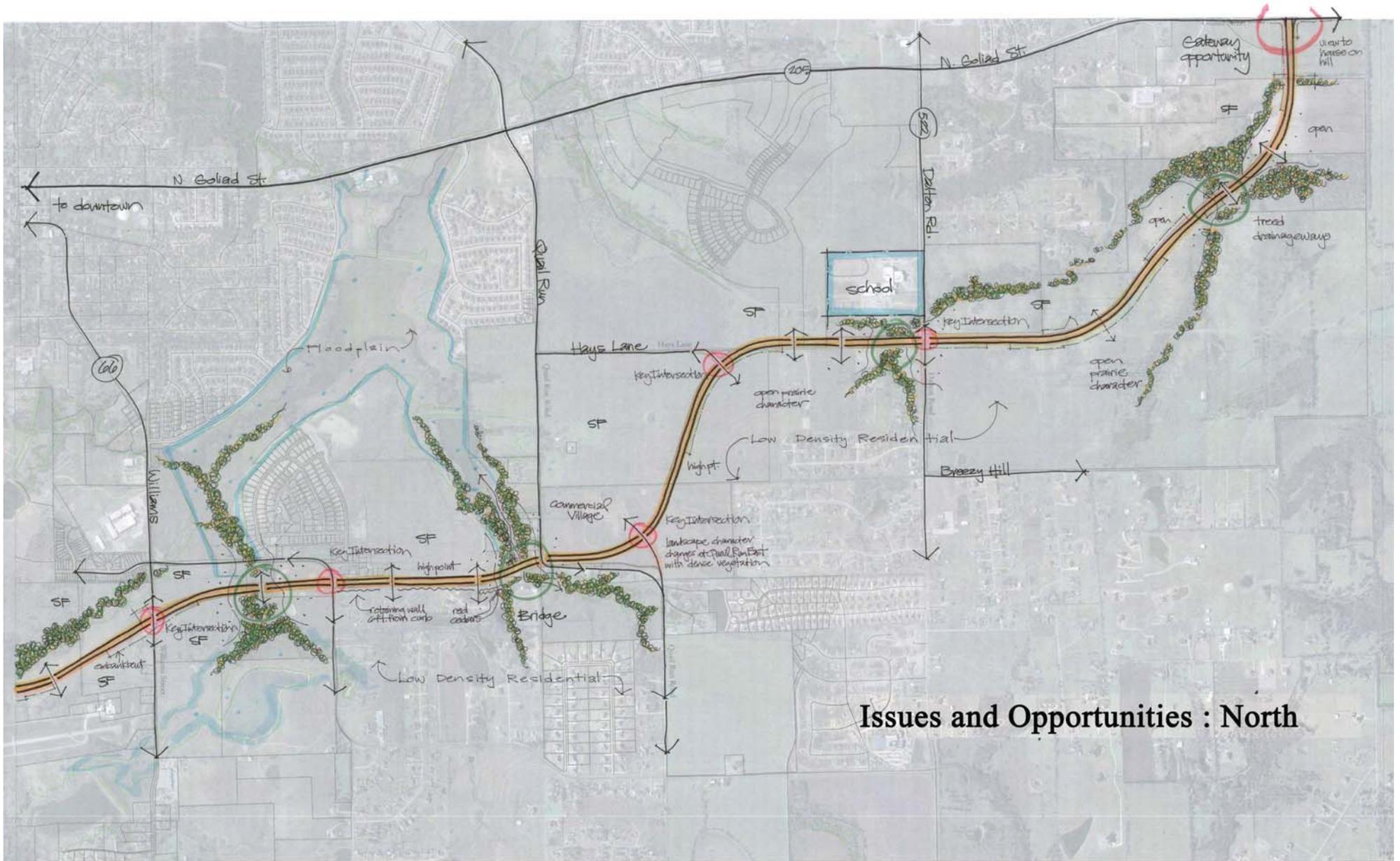


Issues and Opportunities : South

# JOHN KING BOULEVARD CONCEPT

CITY OF ROCKWALL TEXAS





**Issues and Opportunities : North**

**JOHN KING BOULEVARD CONCEPT**  
 CITY OF ROCKWALL TEXAS

### 3. DESIGN CONCEPT AND PALETTE

John King Boulevard provides opportunities for enhancement and placemaking that can be a strong reflection of Rockwall's history, culture, natural landscape and values, and an important investment in furthering the city's position as a first-tier home and business location. To realize this potential, these impressions must be translated into usable architectural terms, and guided by overarching concepts that tie the individual parts together into a perceivable and pleasing whole.

#### GUIDING CONCEPTS

**Build on the Strengths of the Existing Landscape.** Heighten the visual impact of the wooded bottoms and prairie uplands by emulating and enhancing those landscape types in the medians and parkways.

**Unity with Variety.** Consistent architectural and planting materials, colors, sign fonts, and related elements will lend

overall unity to the road corridors. While unity is desirable, "sameness" is not. Varying configurations to fit the unique characteristics of individual sites will allow this consistent palette to be interpreted in slightly different yet complementary designs, providing variety within a unified whole.

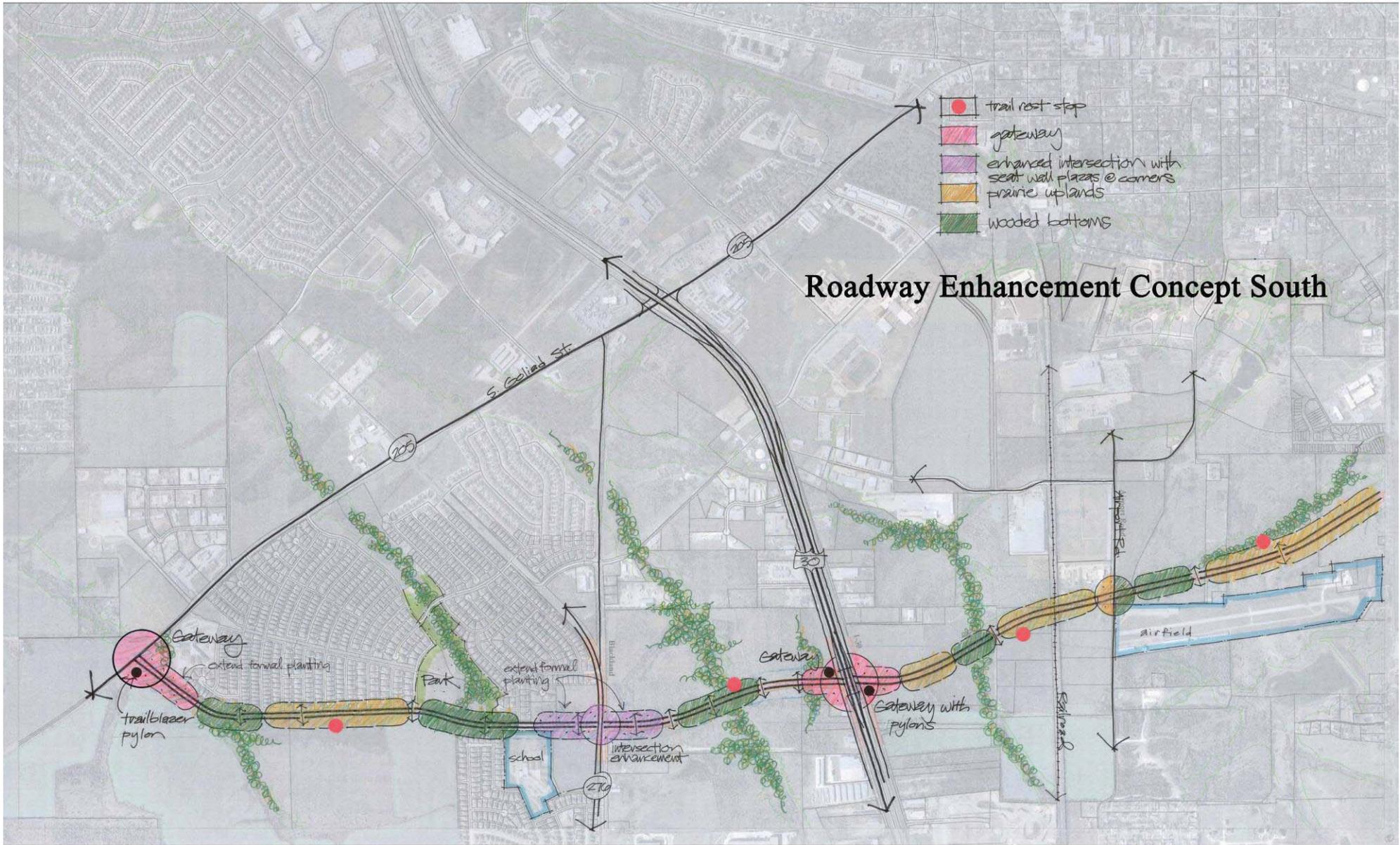
**Pulse Points.** The "wooded bottoms" crossings and major intersection enhancements will act as "pulse points" in the driving experience, punctuating the boulevard corridor with sophisticated design forms and eye-catching detail at regular intervals, producing a pleasing and predictable visual rhythm in the driving experience.

**Quality and Timelessness.** The design forms for John King Boulevard should be rooted in Rockwall's strong landscape and heritage, while coexisting comfortably with new development, never looking "dated." High quality of materials and construction

should be a defining characteristic of new enhancement projects.

#### PALETTE OF FORMS AND MATERIALS

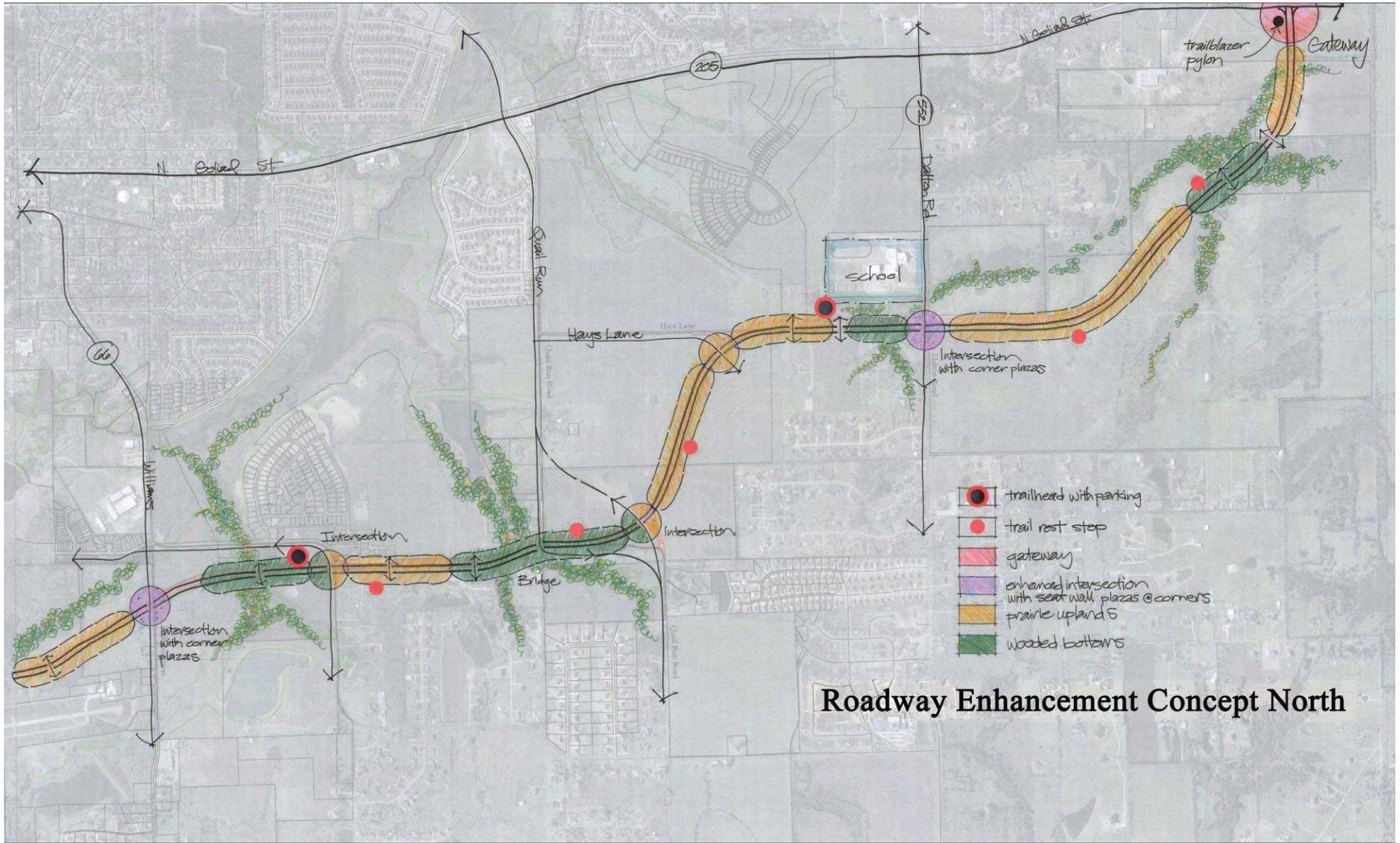
- Austin limestone block
- Native fossil limestone
- Cast stone
- Times Roman font
- Pale cream/yellow concrete stain
- Native and drought-tolerant trees, shrubs and grasses in bold, rhythmic patterns
- Freestanding horizontal limestone walls
- Vertical landmarks and focal points
- Sailboat icon or city logo repeated in architectural elements
- Pure geometries; timeless classic forms



**Roadway Enhancement Concept South**

**JOHN KING BOULEVARD CONCEPT**  
CITY OF ROCKWALL TEXAS





**Roadway Enhancement Concept North**

# JOHN KING BOULEVARD CONCEPT

CITY OF ROCKWALL TEXAS

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## 4. DESIGN ELEMENTS

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### ROADWAY ENHANCEMENT CONCEPT DIAGRAM

The Roadway Enhancements Concept diagrams identify locations for the boulevard “character zones,” and key architectural and landscape architectural elements, which collectively comprise a “family” of related design treatments to lend character and a distinct Rockwall image to the boulevard corridor.

### DESIGN ELEMENTS

#### MEDIANS AND PARKWAYS

The median and parkway design concepts reflect the “character zones” in which they are located:

**The Wooded Bottoms:** These areas are intended to appear as extensions of the vegetation in the natural wooded creeks and drainage ways that are spanned by the boulevard. Accordingly, planting arrangements should be tight, informally grouped masses of native and adapted riparian canopy and understory trees designed to emulate the character of the creek vegetation. These tree masses are to be set in native

ornamental grasses to minimize the need for maintenance.

**The Prairie Uplands:** In these areas lower growing tree species native (or adapted and of similar character to the natives) to the rolling hills of eastern Rockwall County would be arranged to emulate the sparser tree cover of the surrounding uplands. These informal tree groupings would also be set in masses of native ornamental grasses, minimizing maintenance needs.

The concepts illustrated reflect accurate roadway dimensions and indicate that trees should not be planted in the median areas where future roadway expansion is likely to occur. The illustrated plant materials and their design arrangements are indicative of the size and character appropriate for the character zones in which they occur; subsequent detailed planting plans will make specific plant species recommendations that take into account site-specific horticultural conditions and established project budgets.

#### KEY ENHANCED INTERSECTIONS

Special intersection enhancements are proposed for three key intersections (shown in purple on the Enhancements diagram). The adjacent boulevard medians would be planted

with three or more formal groupings of matching canopy trees set in beds of ornamental grasses. The three or more tree groupings should be separated by conventional turf, such as Bermuda to create a visual pattern and rhythm that signals the intersection for the approaching motorist. As the median narrows to accommodate its turn lane, the median plantings would transition to ornamental grasses and drought-tolerant shrubs.

Small paved “plaza” areas with seat-height limestone walls would anchor each corner of the intersection, providing visual interest for motorists as well as informal seating and shade for trail users and other pedestrians and cyclists.

#### GATEWAY IDENTITY

Due to the wide variation in site size and configuration at potential gateway sites, the “kit of parts” approach, utilizing a combination of limestone walls, the vertical “trailblazer” monument pylon, canopy or ornamental trees and broad masses of drought tolerant shrubs and grasses can be used to great effect. This will result in a “family” of gateway designs comprised of the same key elements, but arranged in unique compositions

to best fit their particular site configuration and topography.

#### **TRAIL REST STOPS**

Shaded “rest areas” are shown in preliminary locations on the Enhancements diagram, spaced roughly one mile apart on both sides of the boulevard. This results in a rest area along the boulevard about every half mile. The key design elements shown in the

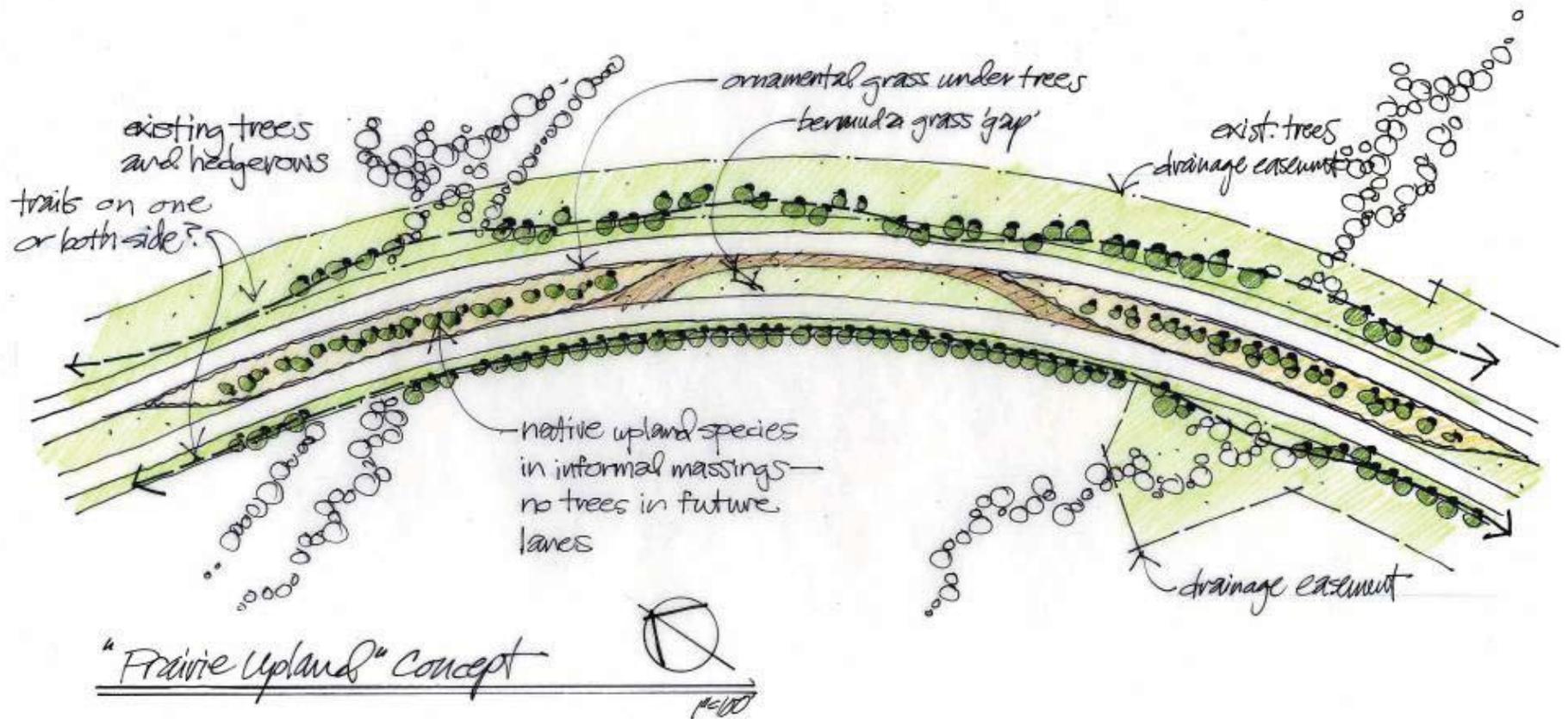
prototype design consist of a shaded shelter of limestone and architectural metal, a seat-height wall for informal seating, a waste receptacle and a drinking fountain with dog dish. The edges should be enhanced with boulders and drought tolerant plantings as shown.

#### **EXPOSED CONCRETE WALLS**

Low exposed concrete headwalls visible from the travel lanes of the boulevard should

be colored with the same pale yellow concrete stain utilized for the new John King Boulevard bridge spanning Phelps Branch. This subtle color change will be helpful in tying disparate elements of the corridor together and giving the boulevard design a “finished” appearance.

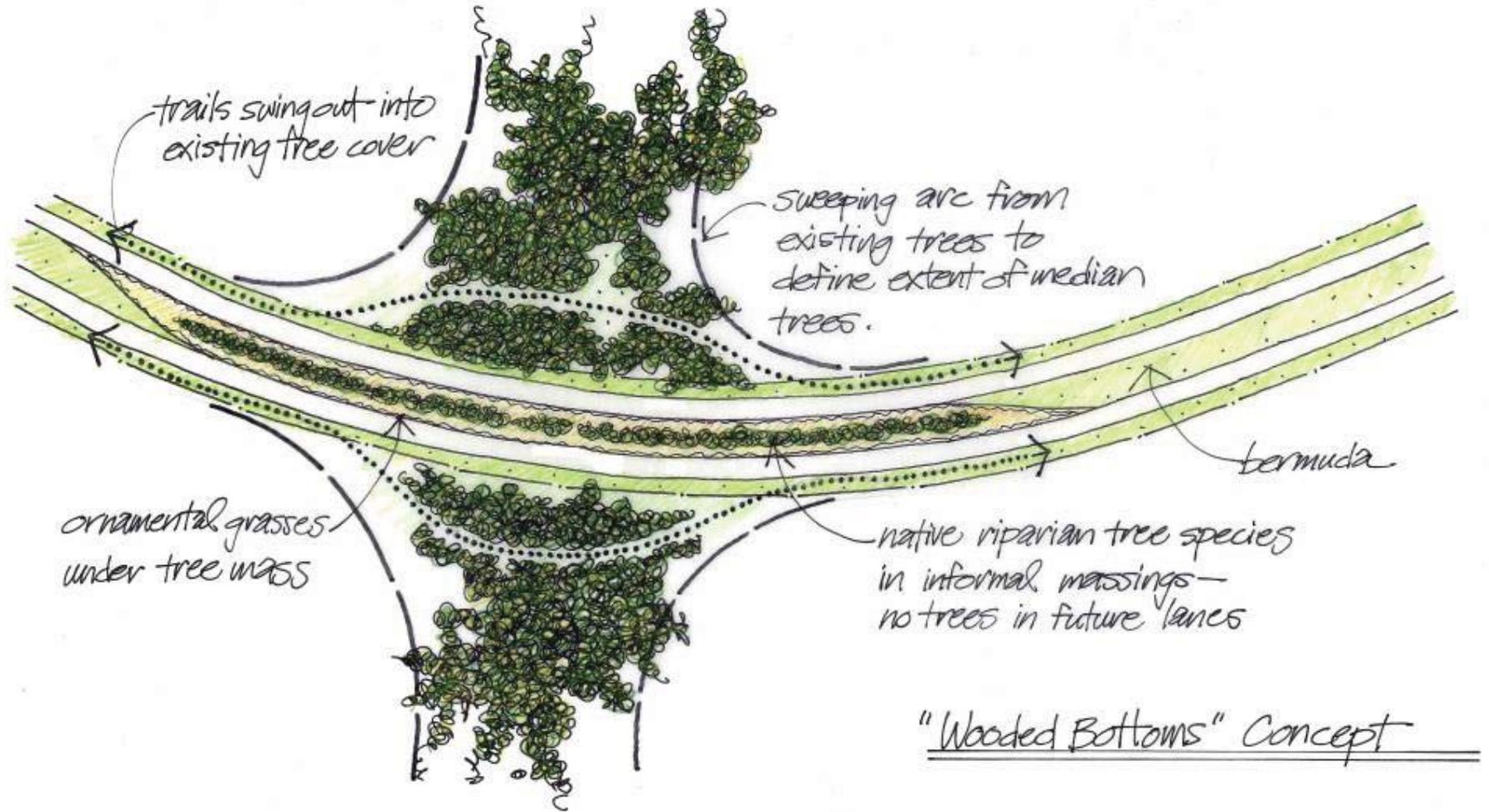
# Roadway Landscape Concepts

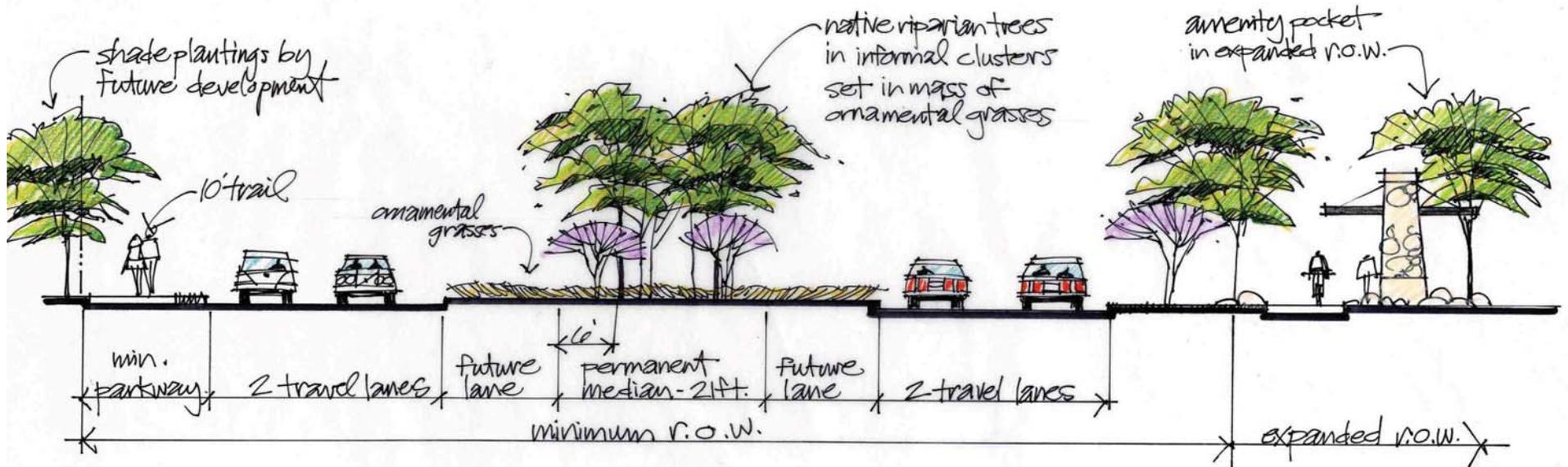




Roadway Planting: Upland Prairie Concept 11=10'

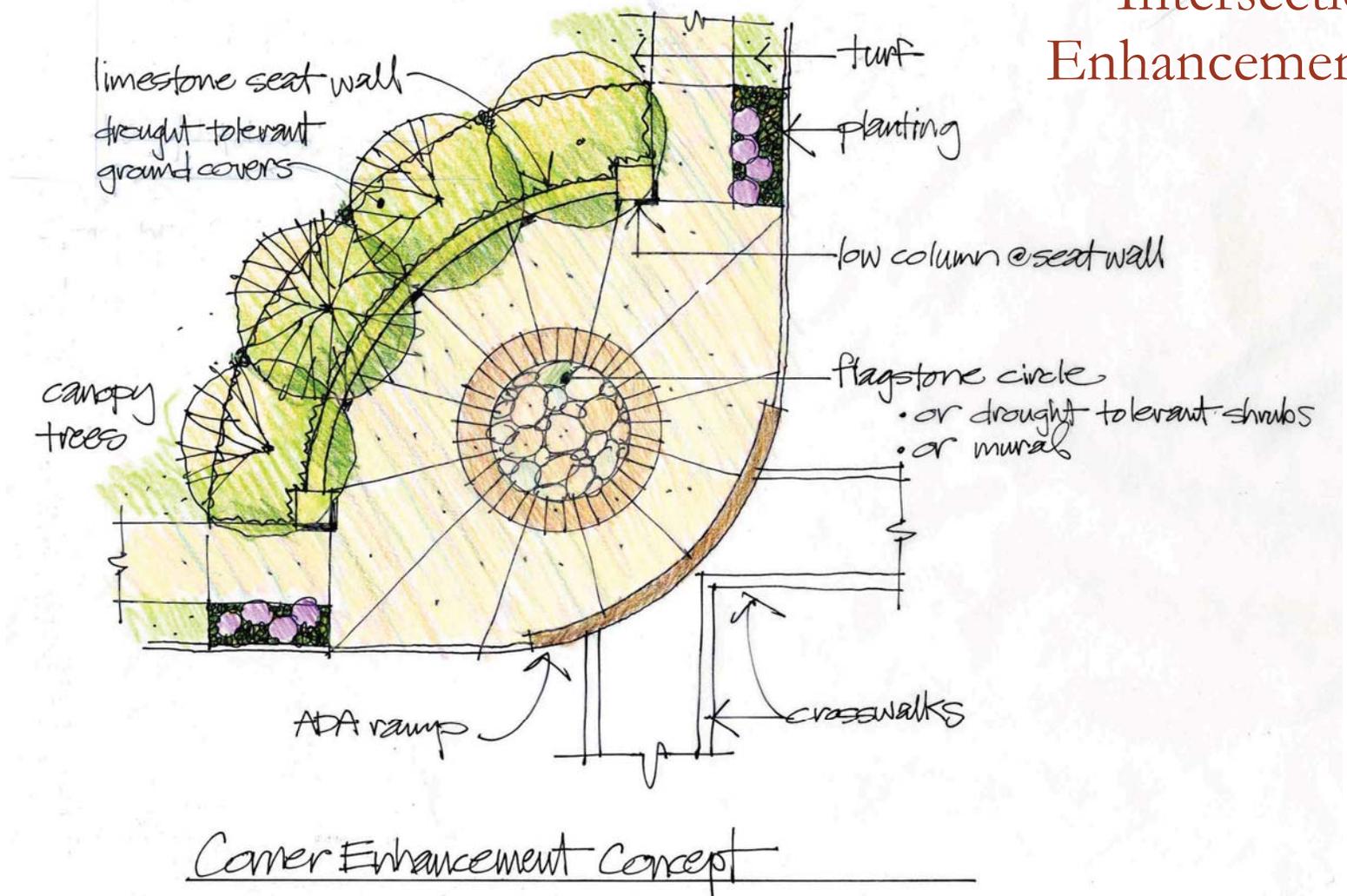
4. DESIGN ELEMENTS

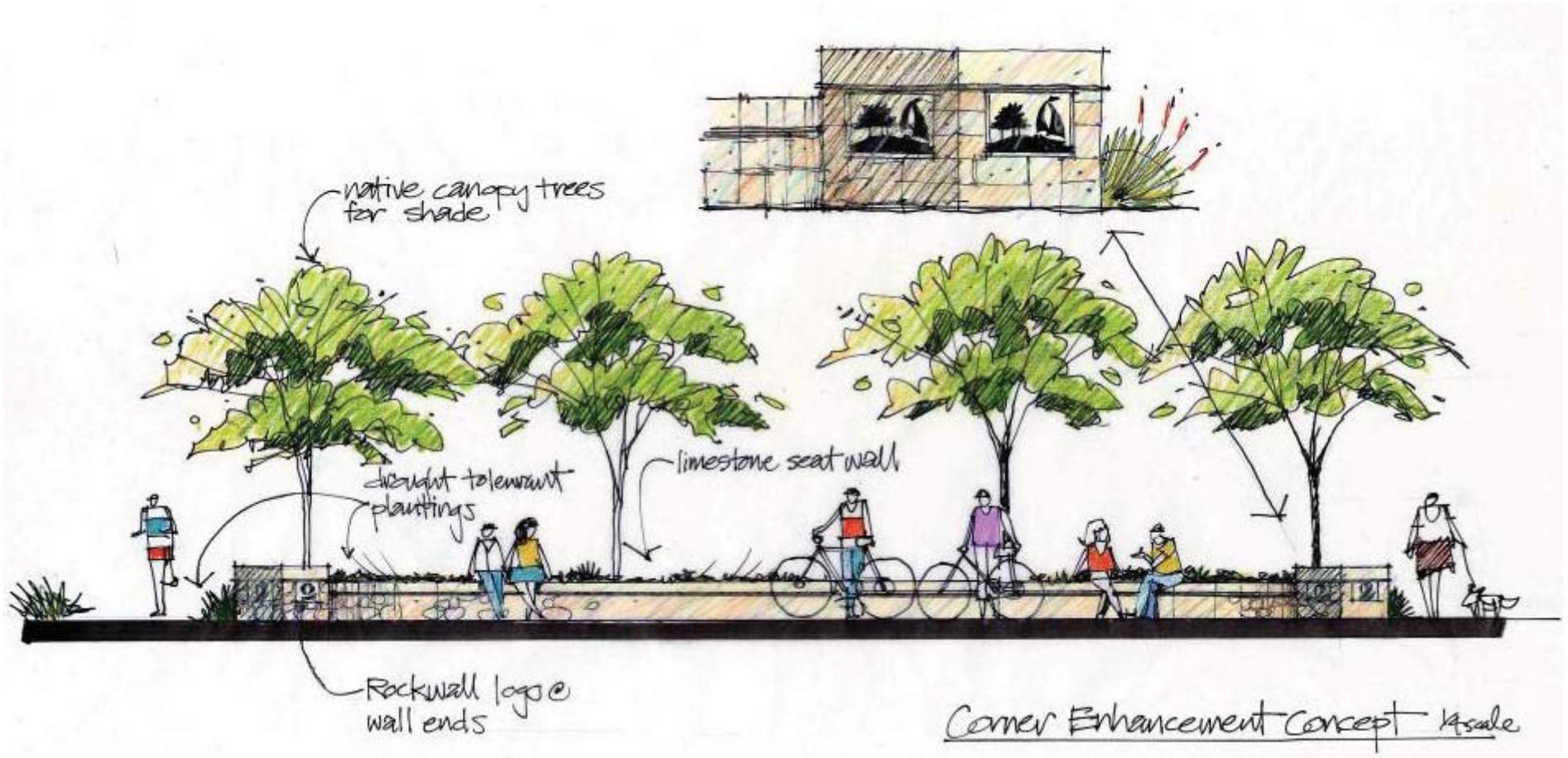




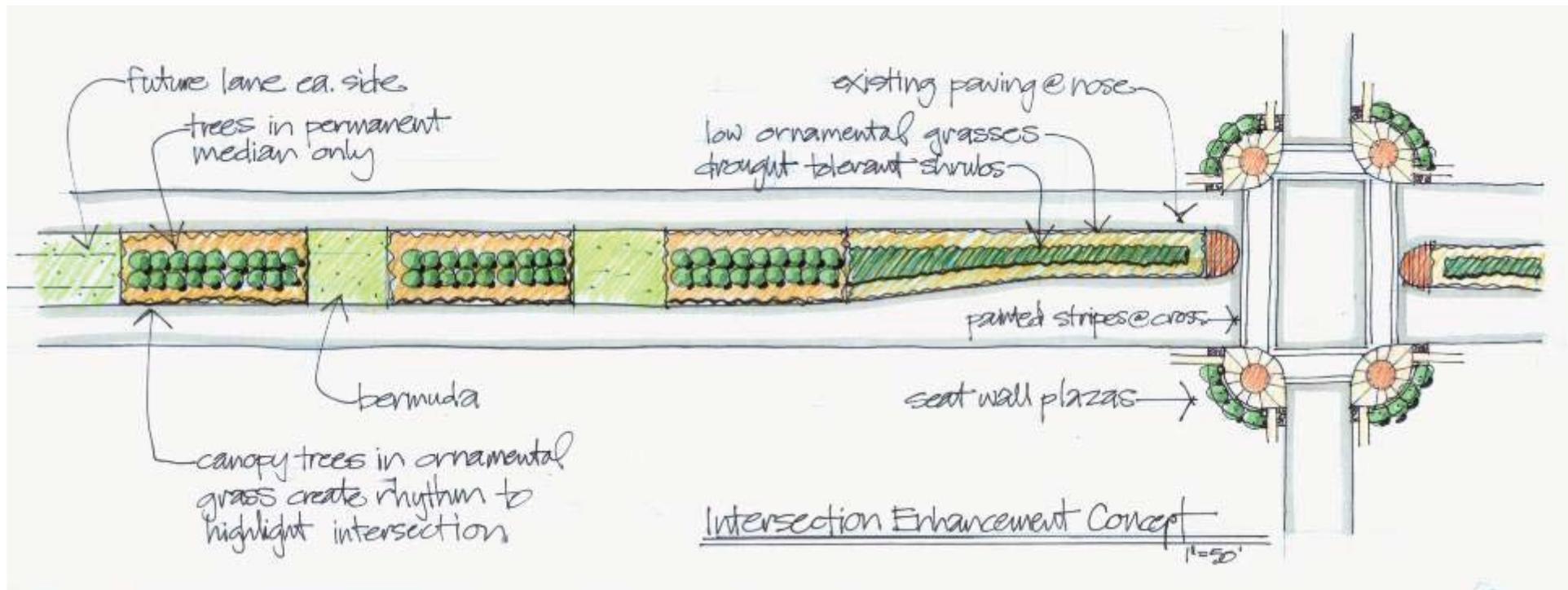
Roadway Planting: Wooded Bottoms Concept 1"=10'

# Intersection Enhancements

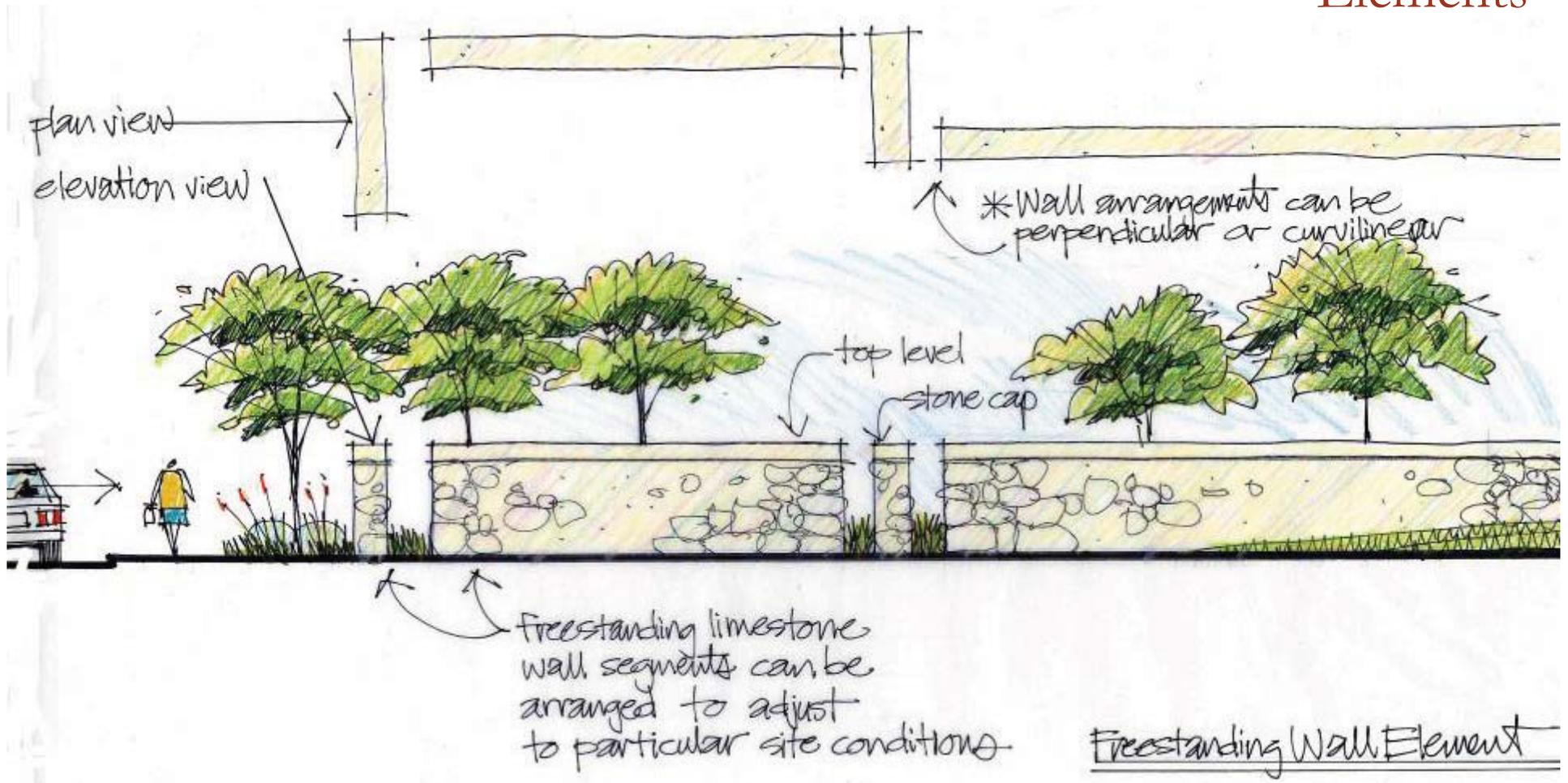




4. DESIGN ELEMENTS



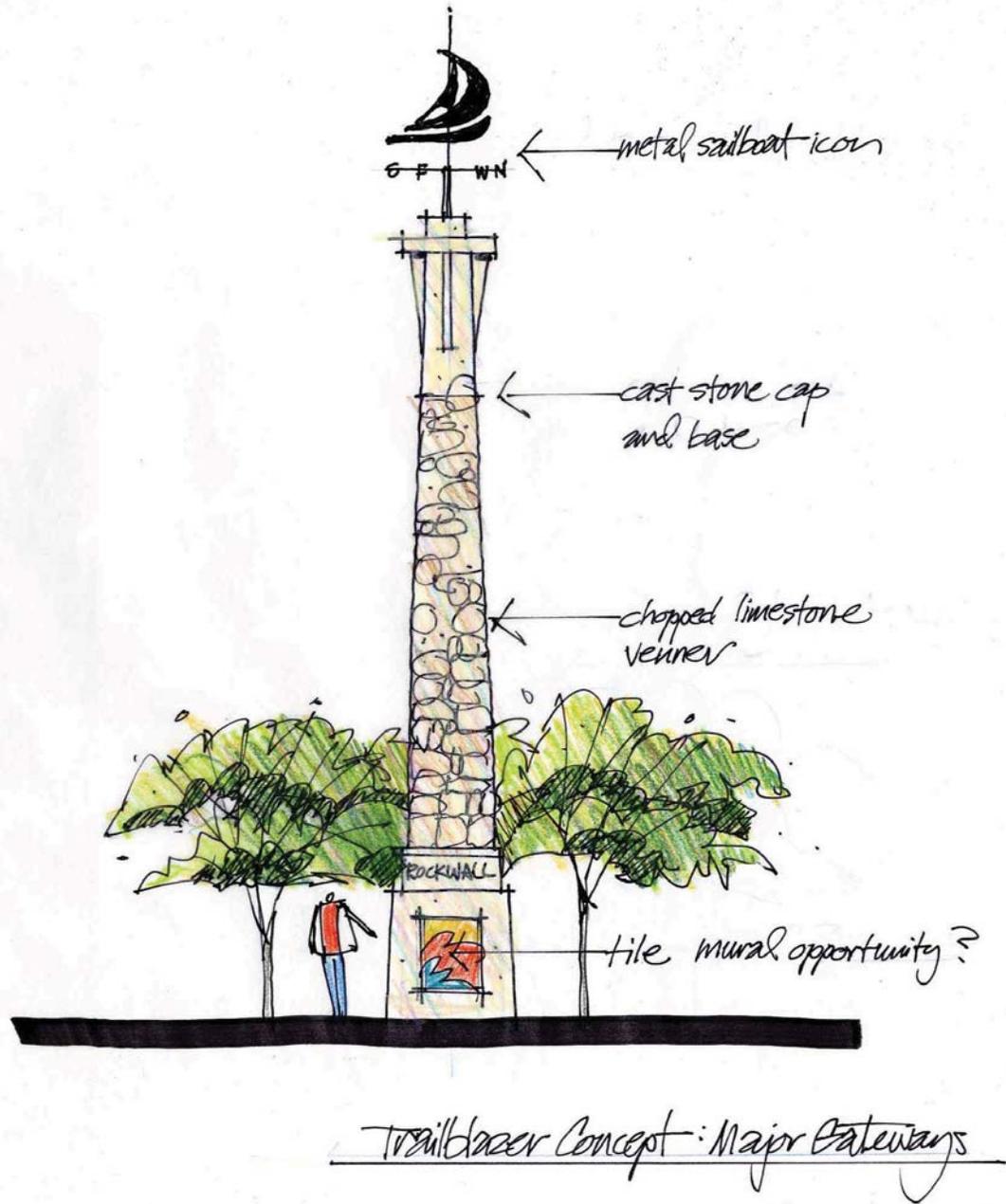
# Placemaking Elements

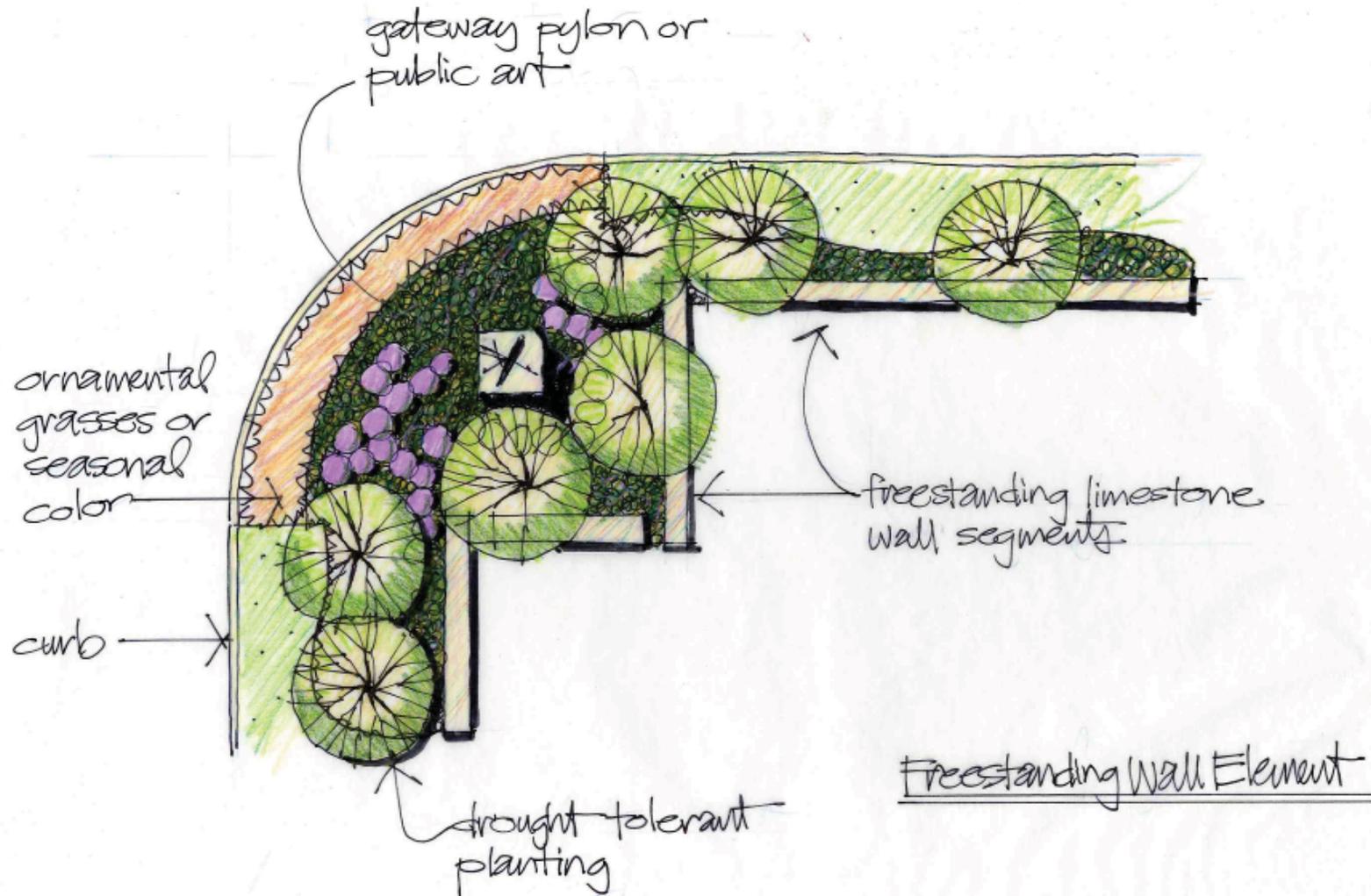


4. DESIGN ELEMENTS

### Gateway Pylon Concept

- North Goliad @ Bypass
- South Goliad @ Bypass
- I-30 @ Bypass (2)





4. DESIGN ELEMENTS







### 5. ACCESS POLICIES

#### JOHN KING ACCESS MANAGEMENT POLICY

The purpose of this section is to provide the policy and decision making process for determining access to James King Boulevard. Access management involves the planning and coordination of the location, number, spacing and design of access points from a roadway to adjacent land. Historically, transportation and access management plans have concentrated primarily on efficiently controlling the movement of vehicles by seeking to reduce conflicts and maximizing the traffic capacity of a roadway. However, recent planning efforts recognize that transportation is inextricably linked to land use decisions and that sprawl and inefficient land use policies go hand in hand with congestion, reliance on automobiles, and increased pollution.

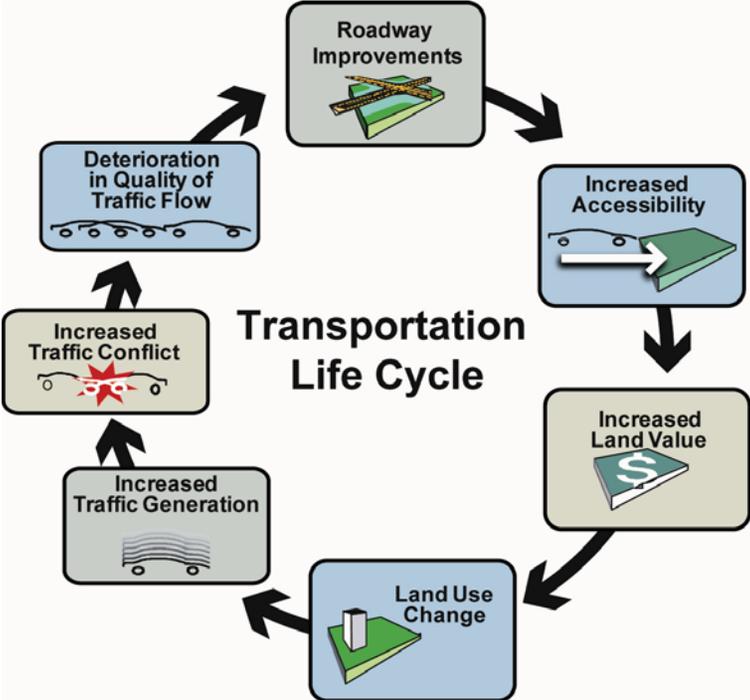
The “Transportation/Land Use Cycle” involves a sequence of events in which improvements are made to the transportation network that lead to new land use development, which generates additional traffic and the need for further roadway improvements.

It is possible to stop this cycle with proper management of access and network design. The following policy establishes the idea that one standard does not fit all. The spacing and

design standards for the roadway should accommodate varying land development types with flexible standards. The result will be a roadway that maintains a high level of mobility, while supporting wise land development patterns.

Accordingly, this policy varies according to the area through which the roadway passes and the function of the roadway itself. The land development context of this boulevard in its current and planned state varies from rural to sub-urban to urban. This policy seeks to balance the access requirements for each of these development contexts with the desire to maintain the mobility function of this arterial road. The chart on the following page should be referred to during planning and designing of this roadway.

To see how the standards apply to the corridor, please refer to the Access Standards Diagrams below.



5. ACCESS POLICIES

**John King Access Standards**

Development Context	Median Opening Spacing	Partial Access Spacing	Shared Access	Reciprocal Easement Agreement	Shared Access Lanes	Street Connectivity Minimum	Signal Spacing
Rural – Special Use	800 ft min	250 ft min	N/A	N/A	Required	1.0	1 Mile
Sub-Urban – Single Use	600 ft min	250 ft min	Required	Recommended	N/A	1.2	½ Mile
Urban – Mixed-Use	500 ft	250 ft min	Required	Recommended	N/A	1.3	¼ Mile

**JOHN KING ACCESS STANDARDS**

**MEDIAN OPENING SPACING**

Openings should only be provided for street intersections or at intervals designated by the Access Standards below. Spacing between median openings must be adequate to allow for introduction of left-turn with proper deceleration and storage lengths.

**PARTIAL ACCESS SPACING**

Right-in and right-out driveway or private street access locations seek to create a mid-block parking ingress and egress. These access points are defined by a split or T design that restricts full access. They are not associated with a median access opening.

**SHARED ACCESS**

Parcels are required to share full and some partial access locations through agreement. When possible, shared access should be accomplished through placement of access connections on shared parcel lines or through private drives, streets and stub-outs.

**RECIPROCAL EASEMENT AGREEMENT**

When applicable, owners and permittees of parcels may enter into an agreement for reasonable access, ingress and egress between property lines for the purpose of paved driveways, roadways and/or walkways.

**SHARED ACCESS LANES**

Similar to off-site access roadways, shared access lanes establish the shared access easements for rural land owners to connect to the city street system. They can be established along shared parcel lines or at the discretion of the city.

**STREET CONNECTIVITY**

Street connectivity requirements are essential to maintaining the long-term mobility of a corridor and potentially very important at the local neighborhood level, since connectivity is a key factor in ensuring that people can walk or bike between neighborhoods, cul-de-sacs and communities. An interconnected street system is necessary in order to promote orderly and safe development by ensuring that streets function in an interdependent manner, provide adequate access for emergency and service vehicles, enhance access by ensuring connected transportation routes, and provide continuous and comprehensible traffic routes.

Connectivity shall be defined by the ratio of links to nodes in any subdivision.

- A. The connectivity ratio shall be the number of street links divided by the number of nodes or end links, including cul-de-sac heads.
- B. A link shall be any portion of a street, other than an alley, defined by a node at either end. Stub outs to adjacent property shall be considered links. For the purpose of determining the number of links in a development, boulevards, median-divided roadways, and divided entrances shall be treated the same as conventional two-way roadways. A pathway between neighborhoods for walking, bicycling and

emergency access shall be counted as a link.

- C. A node shall be the terminus of a street or the intersection of two or more streets. Pathway connections between neighborhoods and to an adjacent trail can count as a street connectivity link, but are limited to one per development.
  - 1. Any curve or bend of a street that exceeds 75 degrees shall receive credit as a node. Any curve or bend of a street that does not exceed 75 degrees shall not be considered a node.
  - 2. A divided entrance shall only count once.

**Required Ratio**

- A. Street Network
  - 1. The street network for any subdivision with internal roads or access to any public road shall achieve a connectivity ratio of not less than 1.3 in the Urban Context Zone, 1.2 in the Sub-Urban Context Zone and 1.0 in the Rural Context Zone.
- B. Street links and nodes along a collector or arterial street providing access to a proposed subdivision shall not be considered in computing the connectivity ratio.

- C. Stub outs shall be considered as being present as a link at the ratio of one link per side as provided for purposes of determining if the required ratio has been met.
- D. Trail connections out of the subdivision shall be considered as being present as a link at the ratio of one link per side as provided for purposes of determining if the required ratio has been met.

**SIGNAL SPACING**

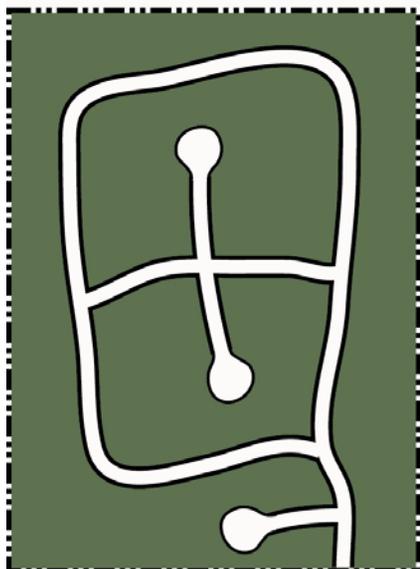
Spacing between intersections is especially critical in rural areas because vehicle speeds are high. One-mile spacing between public road intersections is preferred.

The ideal spacing for traffic signals is at least one half-mile apart (2,640 feet), which also corresponds to the preferred spacing of intersections between arterials and collectors in a sub-urban development pattern.

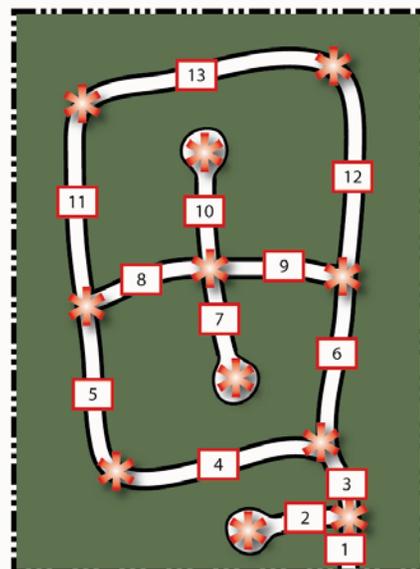
A minimum spacing of one-quarter mile (two to three blocks) is appropriate for an urban area. This shorter distance encourages pedestrian access and slows traffic through the urban area.

5. ACCESS POLICIES

Base Design

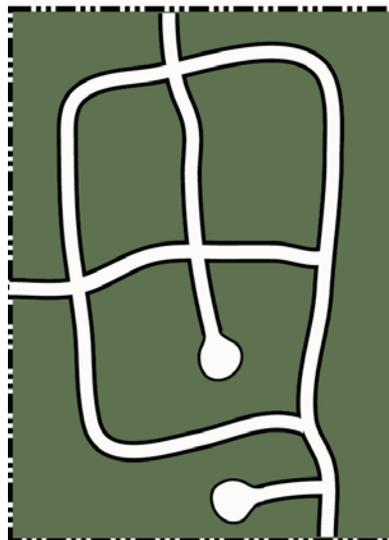


13 Links / 11 Nodes = 1.18

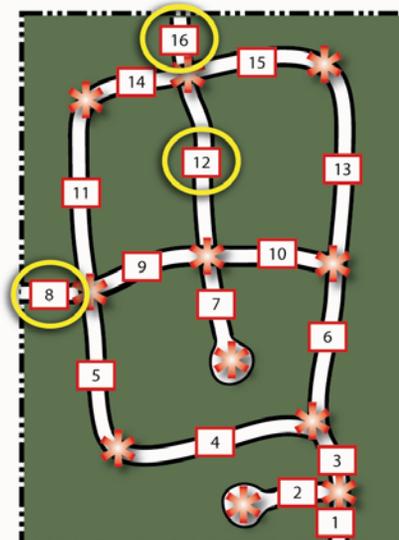


Node X Link

Improved Design

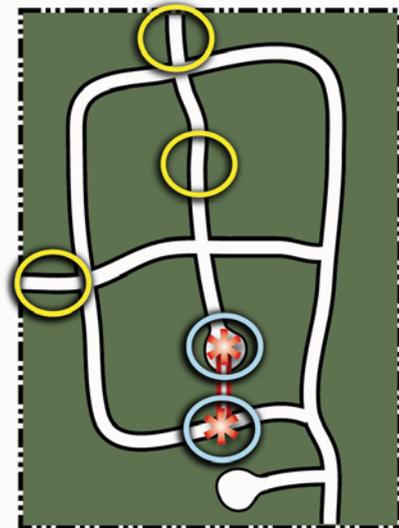


16 Links / 11 Nodes = 1.45

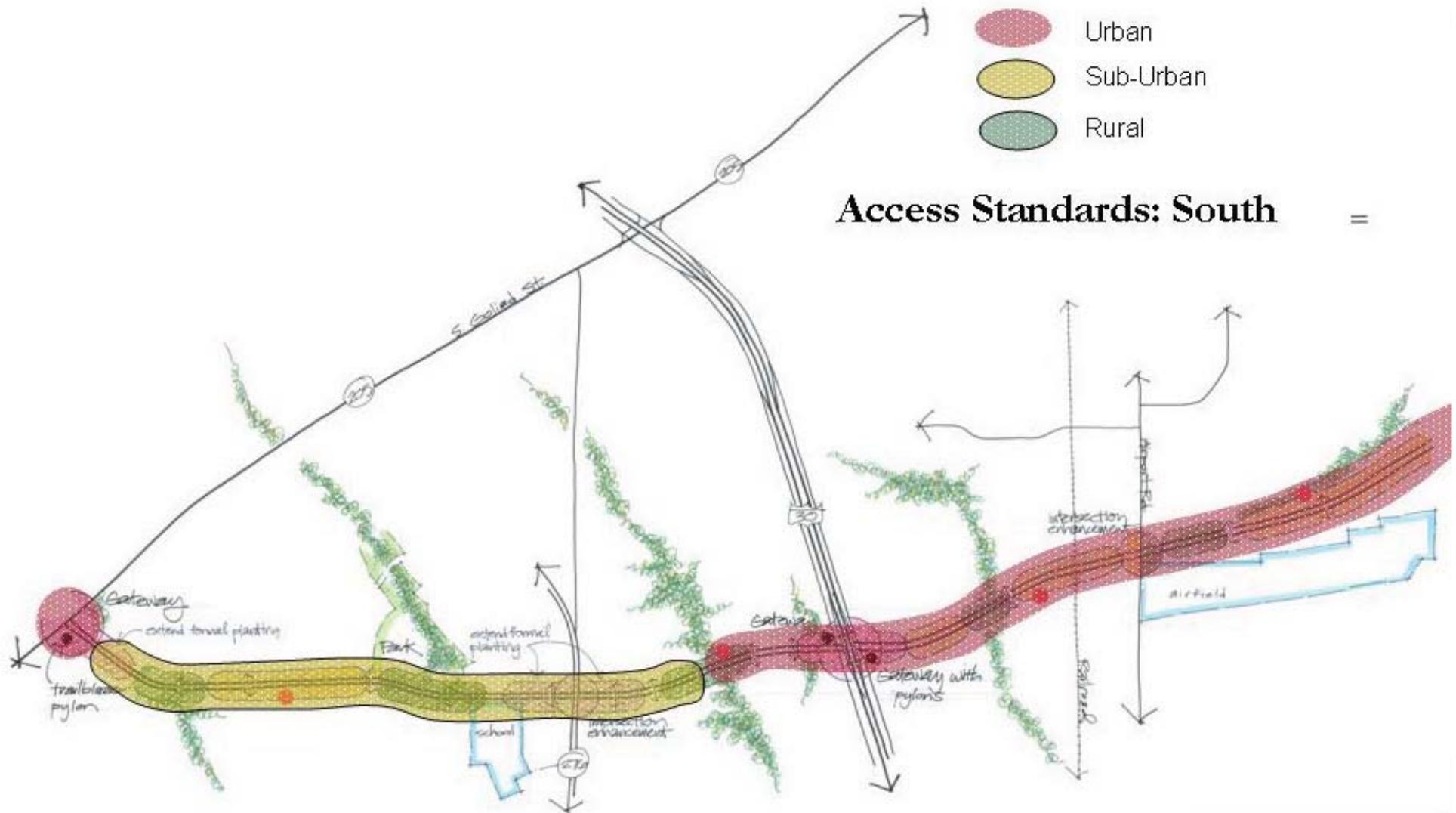


Node X Link  
New External Links

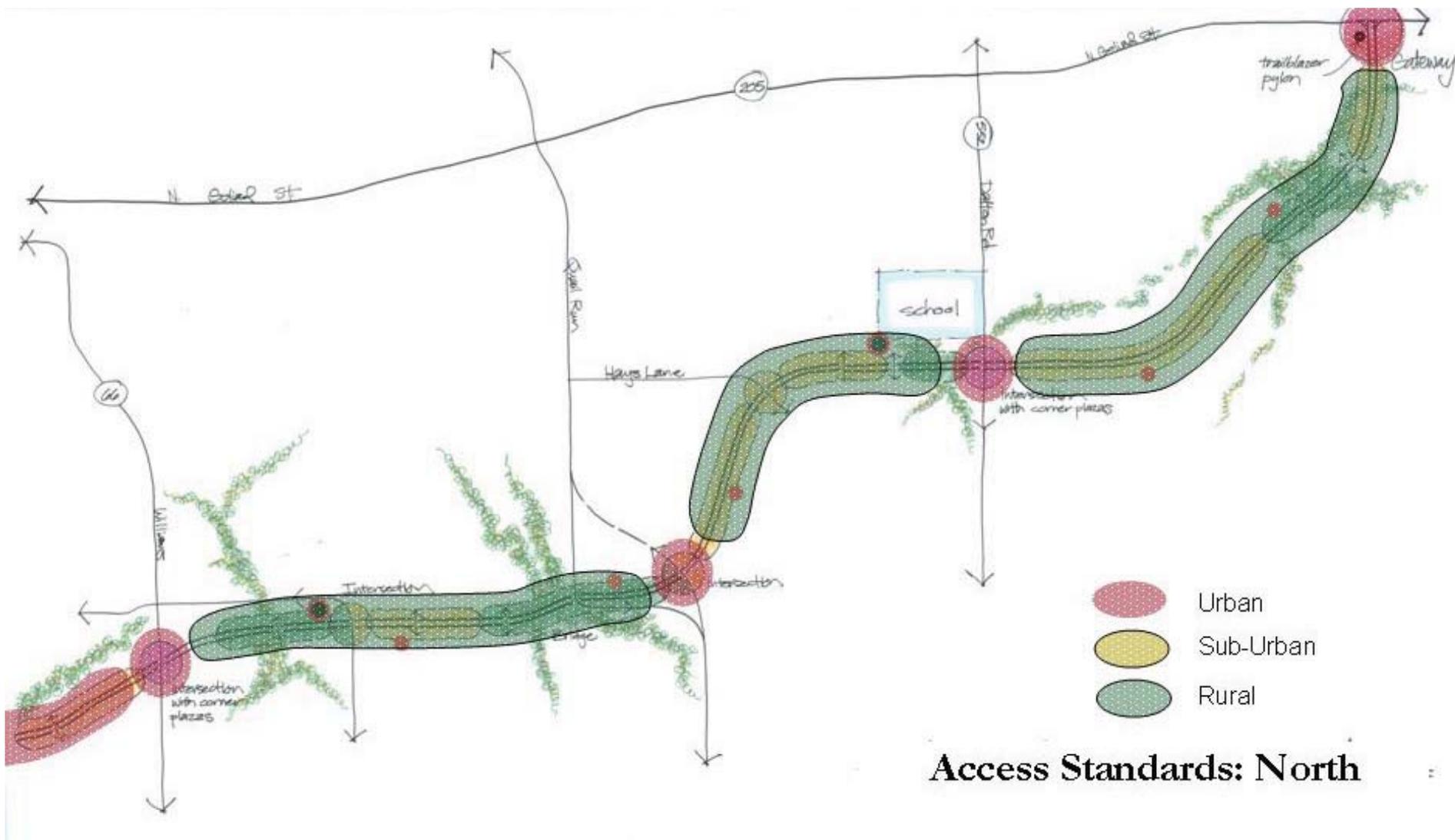
Addition of Pedestrian Connection



New External Links  
New Internal Links



5. ACCESS POLICIES



6. IMPLEMENTATION

6. IMPLEMENTATION

This concept design represents a long term vision for enhancement of the corridor. It will not likely be built within a short time horizon.

**INCORPORATE TRAIL SYSTEM INTO THE THOROUGHFARE PLAN**

Nationally as well as within the Metroplex region, communities are realizing that multi-modal access such as bicycle and pedestrian trails are an important ingredient to becoming sustainable. This is reflected in the new LEED-ND (Neighborhood Development) standards. The trail system should therefore be added to the Thoroughfare Plan in order to ensure continuity of the system.

**ADOPT PLAN AS DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR THE OVERLAY DISTRICT**

Adopt this John King Boulevard Plan as guidelines and standards for the 205 By-Pass Overlay District.

**COST SHARING OF ENHANCEMENTS**

As a general rule, developments make improvements to the curb line which would

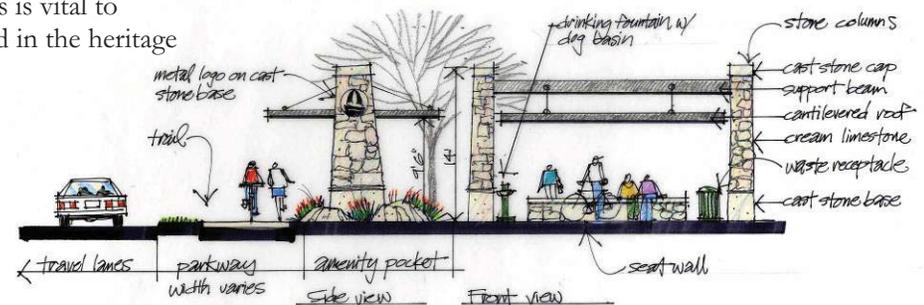
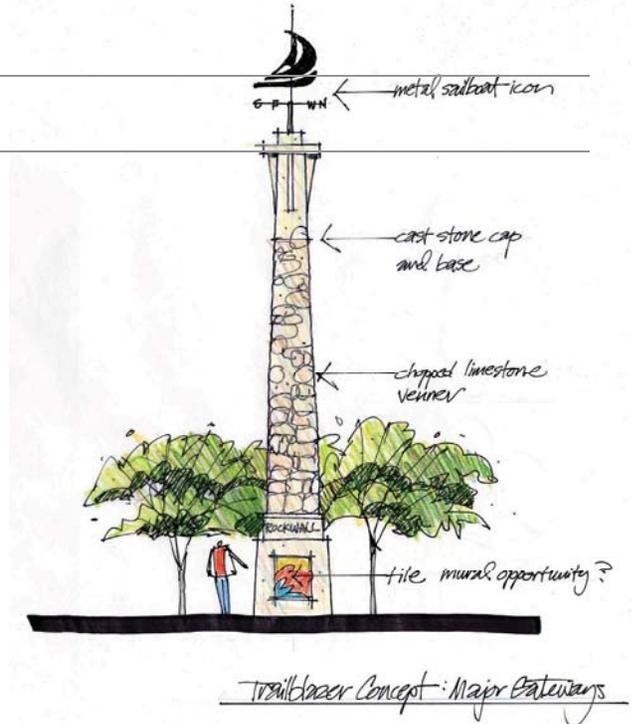
include sidewalk/trails and landscaping elements of this plan. Notable exceptions would be Landmark Pylons and trailhead washroom facilities. The City should provide landscaping within the median except when development requires additional median cuts in accordance with the City adopted standards.

**CITY ENHANCEMENT PRIORITIES**

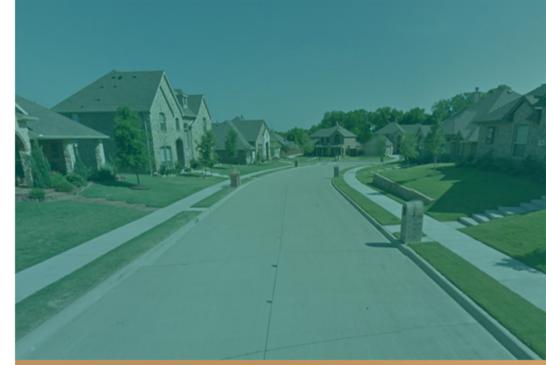
The highest visual impact improvement would be landscaping the medians in the "Wooded Bottoms" area as a first priority. This could be followed by additional landscaping of medians and the introduction of gateway pylons.

**QUALITY STRUCTURAL FEATURES**

A qualified landscape architect should be engaged to provide final design and detailed specifications for all structural elements including wall, pylons, corner plazas and amenity pockets. The quality of design and construction of these elements is vital to building upon an image rooted in the heritage of the community.



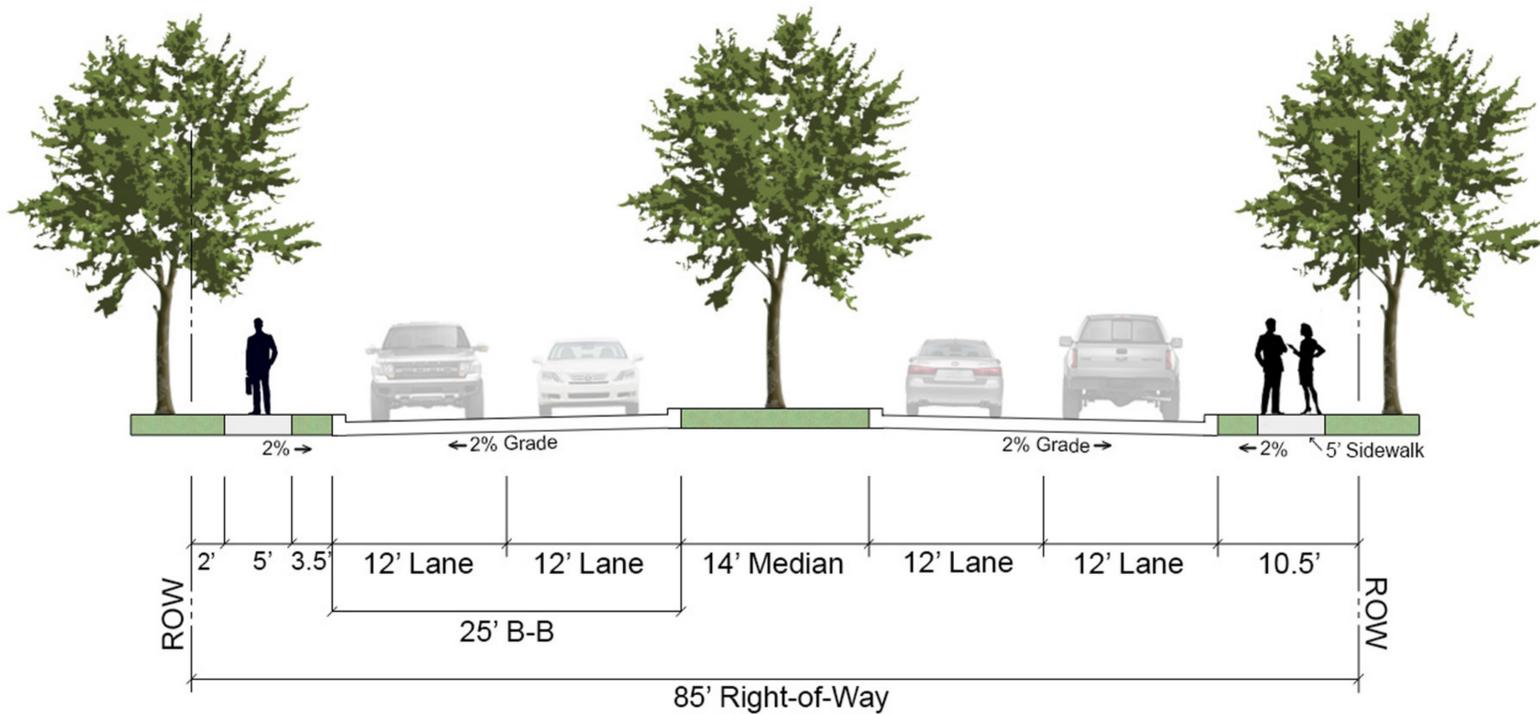
# Appendix D



# Street Type: M4-D

Major Collector 4 lane divided highway

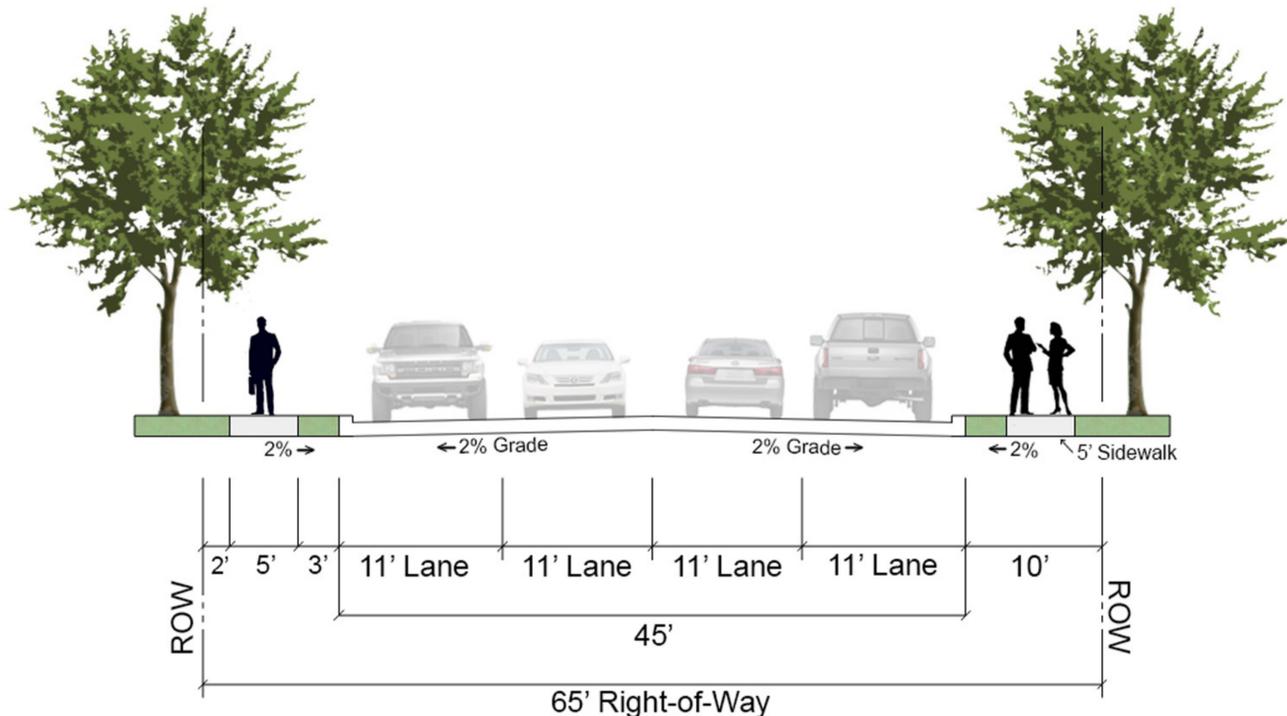
- 85' Right-of-Way
- No on-street parking
- 40 MPH Design Speed



# Street Type: M4-U

Major Collector 4 lane undivided highway

- 65' Right-of-way
- No on-street parking
- 35 MPH Design Speed

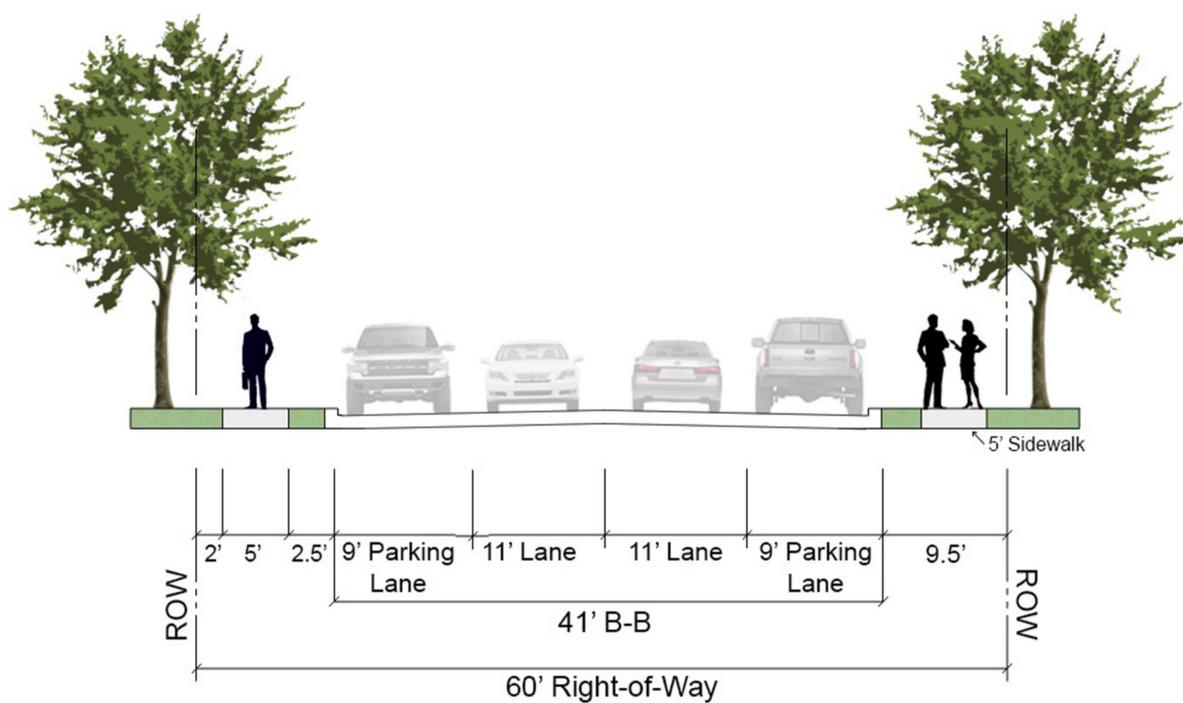




# Street Type: Minor Collector

Minor Collector 2 lane undivided highway

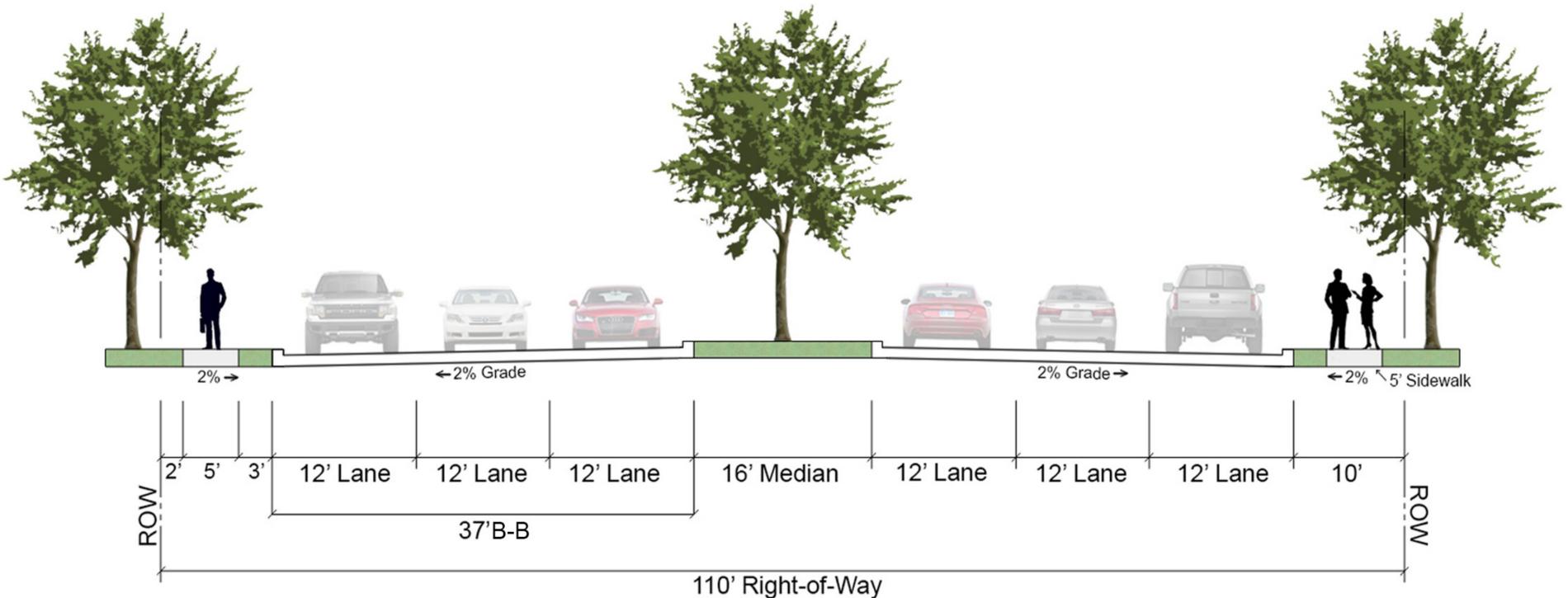
- 60' Right-of-way
- 2-on-street parking lanes
- 30 MPH Design Speed



# Street Type: P6-D

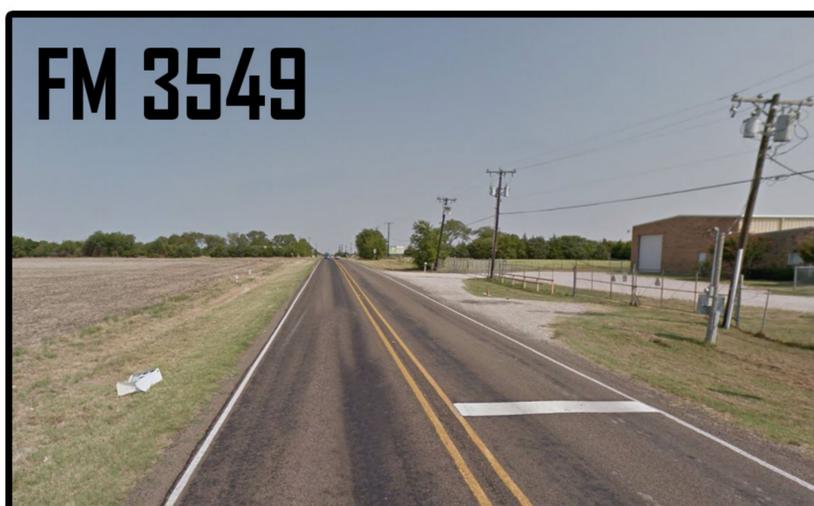
Principal Arterial 6 lane divided highway

- 110' Right-of-Way
- No on-street parking
- 45 MPH Design Speed



# Street Type: TX DOT

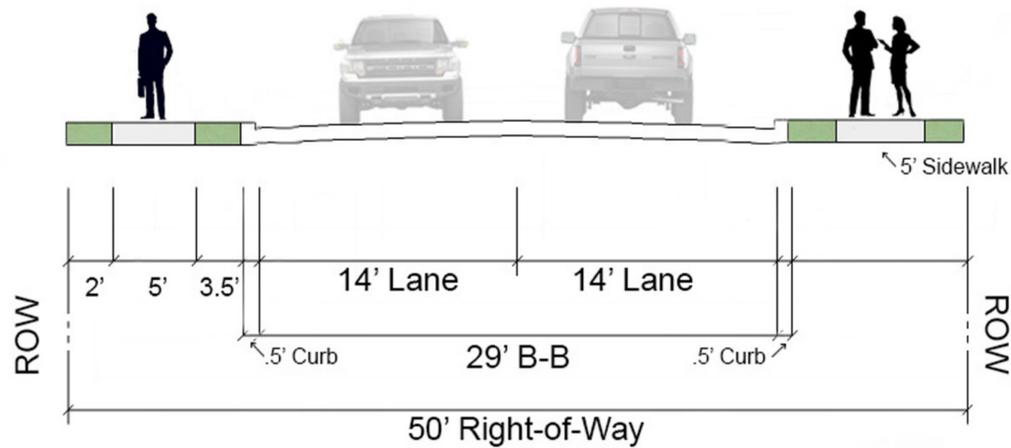
Texas Department of Transportation Principle Arterial highways



# Street Type: Residential

Residential 2 lane undivided roadway

- 50' Right-of-way
- On-street parking
- 30 MPH Design Speed



# Street Type: Rural Local

Rural Local 2 lane undivided roadway

- 65' Right-of-way
- No on-street parking
- 30 MPH Design Speed
- No curb and gutter

