3-DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

The development strategy for downtown is composed of a set of character areas, development prototypes, and development opportunity areas. The character areas suggest concentrating uses and special features within certain areas of downtown. Development prototypes explore a variety of new building and site configurations for new downtown development. These are broad concepts that could apply to various sites and blocks. The development “opportunity areas” are located within the character areas, and show different scenarios of how redevelopment could occur over time. Focusing development into these character and opportunity areas will help establish a “critical mass” of desired uses and development pattern. A Transition Zone is also indicated, which overlaps with the designated character and opportunity areas. For all new development, it is important that it be consistent the Downtown and Old Town Design Guidelines.

CHARACTER AREAS

The Character Areas are:

1. **Downtown Core**
The retail, dining and entertainment destination of Georgetown and Williamson County.

2. **Downtown North**
A residentially-focused mixed-use area with housing, offices and other retail venues.

3. **Government Center**
The civic spine for the community.

4. **Downtown South**
A commercially-focused mixed-use area with retail, offices and some housing.

ILLUSTRATIVE CONCEPT NOTE:
The goal of this chapter is to provide an overall, long-term vision for new development in the study area. The development scenarios illustrate new buildings throughout downtown, with suggestions about how the character of development might vary, according to the context, as defined by the Character Areas, and by abutting zoning categories. Most new development is likely to occur as two and three story structures, but in some cases, four stories may be appropriate. This added building height may only be achieved through a special review process, which includes a recommendation from HARC. This includes consideration of view corridors, and impacts on adjacent properties.
**3-Development Strategy**

**DOWNTOWN CORE CHARACTER AREA**

While the success of the block faces immediately surrounding the historic courthouse is evident, extending this traditional urban form and atmosphere into more of the surrounding blocks will strengthen downtown’s role as a regional shopping center, living place and destination. Specialty retail, dining and entertainment venues should be present to position the downtown core as an exciting place distinct from regional suburban shopping centers. Generally, everything within a block and a half of the historic courthouse is termed the “Downtown Core” in this plan. The Downtown Core is shown in red on Map #8.

**KEY FEATURES**

This area retains the best definition of a retail-oriented street edge surrounding the Town Square Historic District. It has a collection of historic buildings that provide interest and is served by on-street parking. The existing streetscape amenities consist of brick pavers, benches, decorative lights with banners and way-finding signs. It is, by far, the most active part of downtown.

**DEVELOPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS**

This area should strengthen as the specialty shopping and dining destination for the county; it should be entertaining and highlight the unique qualities of a downtown shopping experience, including shops, restaurants and specialty stores. Office space and apartments on upper floors should be promoted that will help energize this area and support the street level businesses. Existing historic assets should be preserved whenever feasible, and be adapted to a new uses as needed. Surface parking should be kept to a minimum and landscape standards should be applied that will maintain an attractive street edge for pedestrians.

**RECOMMENDED PROJECTS**

- Promote individual retail store rehabilitations through the Main Street Program.
- Facilitate adaptive reuse of historic buildings and redevelopment of vacant lots.
- Continue to promote the historic significance of the courthouse through guided tours and allow flexible use of the interior space (Georgetown Historical Society, Arts & Culture, etc.)
- Continue outdoor activities in the square, including the Poppy Festival, Christmas Stroll, Market Days, First Fridays and Music on the Square.
- Promote new activities such as a Farmer’s Market or Wine/Art Walk.
- Stage small outdoor arts venues.
- Continue to promote dining and specialty retail businesses, such as the wineries.
- Promote development of downtown living and professional offices on upper floors.
- Promote development of more cultural facilities and entertainment venues.
- Continue to improve pedestrian circulation with upgraded, continuous and accessible sidewalks with a higher level of streetscapes and landscapes than other parts of downtown.
DOWNTOWN NORTH CHARACTER AREA

The neighborhood north of the downtown core along Austin Avenue is positioned to orient development towards the South San Gabriel River, which was a popular theme at community workshops during the downtown planning process. Doing so will engage the river with the downtown environment as an actively used amenity. Main and Rock Streets should serve as popular pedestrian and bike routes that link to the river trails and therefore new development should orient to those streets as well as Austin Avenue. The Downtown North Character Area is shown in purple on Map #8.

KEY FEATURES

This area includes many residential structures that have been converted to commercial uses as well as vacant lots. New commercial and mixed use buildings such as El Monumento, Monument Café and Tamiro Plaza have helped activate this area and draw more people to the river; however continuity of circulation and a distinct identity are still lacking. The river, including historic Blue Hole Park, provides a wonderful amenity, but it is not developed to its potential as a major amenity to downtown. The historic Williamson County Jail also is located in the Downtown North Character Area, which could be repurposed as a community-wide amenity in a way that supports heritage tourism initiatives.

DEVELOPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

This area is envisioned as a new “urban village,” where a mix of moderately higher density single family and multifamily infill housing should be promoted, much like the Two Rivers project north of the river. Office space and restaurants are also encouraged for this area, as well as mixed use projects that overlook the river. New development opportunities also exist along Austin Avenue to help create a more pedestrian-friendly environment along the corridor. Chapter 8 explores development ideas for the Austin Avenue North Opportunity Area, which is highlighted in a dashed yellow line on Map #8.

There is an opportunity to provide a stronger pedestrian connection to the river trails along Main and Rock Streets and from the bridge. From the bridge, a stair and ramp leading to the trail below and an overlook area should be considered, to provide a direct connection to the river trail. This would be an amenity that would aid in stimulating development along Austin Avenue, and would be especially appealing to visitors. This also could include interpretive markers, which would be a key element in a heritage tourism program. Upgrading the sidewalks along Rock and Main Streets should also occur to promote pedestrian access from downtown to the river trails.

RECOMMENDED PROJECTS

- Retail along Austin Avenue
- Repurpose the historic jail
- Hotel or Bed and Breakfast
- Restaurants
- Multifamily housing
- Law and professional offices
- Neighborhood-based services, including day care
- Neighborhood parks
- Amphitheatre at the river’s edge
- Improved sidewalks, streetscapes and landscaping
GOVERNMENT CENTER CHARACTER AREA

Three government centers have emerged in the history of downtown’s development. One is around the historic Williamson County Courthouse. A second consists of the various city offices, police department and fire department, scattered throughout the downtown area. The last is the Williamson County Justice Center located to the northwest of the downtown core. Map #4, City and County Owned Properties, illustrates this current distribution of governmental office space. The Government Center Character Area is identified in blue on Map #8.

The City has relocated some of its office space to areas outside of the downtown area. This decentralization of space weakens the role of downtown as the government center. In time, those offices that are oriented to serving the public should return to downtown. The Police headquarters have outgrown their current space in the historic Light and Water Works building and are relocating in late 2013. This provides opportunity for city offices to relocate into this iconic building, creating a civic synergy with the central library.

KEY FEATURES

The area defined as the Government Center currently is home to the police department, justice center, county jail, public library a number of law office buildings and support services. Several surface lots also are used for parking. These existing buildings and undeveloped lots form the basis of a potential municipal center. This area is prime for redevelopment, especially surrounding the new library, which is a prominent civic space for the community and could help pull the downtown core energy to this area.

DEVELOPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

City government functions should be consolidated into a single Municipal Center anchoring the western edge of downtown. Chapter 8 explores ideas for a consolidated Municipal Center surrounding the new library with new buildings and re-purposing old buildings such as the old library and Light and Water Works building. The City should consider extending the Downtown Overlay District to include the old library and the block south of the old library housing the GCAT building, as these blocks would potentially be used as part of an expanded Municipal Center. Special attention to design and building use should be given to areas abutting the existing west-side residential area, to be compatible with the residential character of that area. Chapter 8 explores development scenarios for the Municipal Center Opportunity Area, which is highlighted in a dashed yellow line on Map #8.

RECOMMENDED PROJECTS

• New City Hall (potentially phased,) housing city offices, Municipal Court and Council Chambers
• New public plaza/amphitheater, festival street and park
• New public parking structure (could be phased from surface lot to structure)
• Flexible meeting space
• Incubator space for start-up businesses
• Improved sidewalks, streetscapes and landscaping
DOWNTOWN SOUTH CHARACTER AREA

The area south of the downtown core along Austin Avenue and University Avenue is an important “service” area for the primary retail and entertainment focus of the Downtown Core. Today, it contains many buildings that have a strip commercial character, but in the future it should be more urban in character, with buildings constructed to the street edge and continuous sidewalks accommodating pedestrian activity. The Downtown South Character Area is identified in green on Map #8.

KEY FEATURES

University Avenue is a major point of access into the downtown and the historic Old Town neighborhood from the interstate. It does not provide, however, a strong image for the downtown experience. It is not pedestrian-friendly. This southern portion of Austin Avenue has followed this auto-dominated pattern. Sidewalks are lacking with the exception of the new retail center on the northeast corner of University and Austin. New sidewalk upgrades have occurred along Main Street in this area, which has helped elevate the character and identity of this area.

This area includes a mix of traditional commercial storefronts, transitional business uses and residential structures that have been converted to commercial uses. Other houses remain residential in use. A recent adaptive use project, the conversion of Wesleyan Retirement Center to office space, has demonstrated the potential for larger companies to locate in the downtown when adequate space is available. At the same time, more services are needed in this area to cater to this employment base.

DEVELOPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

Commercial uses that support the surrounding residential neighborhoods are encouraged to locate in this area. A mix of retail and office space should be provided with new buildings that are located at the street edge with parking to the rear are preferred. The eastern, western and southern edges, should continue to serve as a transition to the abutting neighborhoods.

Development along Austin Avenue and University Avenue should be the most intense uses. The intersection of University and Austin should be enhanced as a pronounced “gateway” into downtown with signage and landscaping. The intersection of Main and University should also be upgraded as a secondary gateway. Chapter 8 explores development ideas for the Southeast Quadrant Opportunity Area, which is highlighted in a dashed yellow line on Map #8.

RECOMMENDED PROJECTS

- Mixed-use buildings with retail on the ground floor along Austin Avenue
- Restaurants
- Multifamily housing
- Professional offices, including start-up incubator space
- Neighborhood-based services, including day care
- Neighborhood parks
- Improved sidewalks, streetscapes and landscaping
3-Development Strategy

DOWNTOWN TRANSITION AREA

The area shown in gray on Map #8 indicates an area of transition between the Downtown Overlay District and the surrounding residential neighborhoods. This “transition area” is of special opportunity for unique design solutions. Here, development that is compatible in design and scale with abutting residential uses is especially important. Providing places that serve residents nearby is also key and measures to mitigate impacts of new uses should be a priority.

Improved streetscape amenities should occur in this transition area as well, where sidewalks are to be enjoyed by neighborhood residents as well as downtown users. In the private sector, it is important to include small plazas or courtyards that residents may use and to provide pedestrian connections among buildings to invite interaction along these edges. The UDC assumes setbacks in the entire overlay district to be zero feet, however HARC reviews setbacks on a case-by-case basis. This is an area where variations in setbacks may be appropriate.

Compatible building designs that draw upon residential forms, have variation in massing, and maintain view opportunities and pedestrian circulation through blocks should be particularly welcomed. Note that while the transition area is shown on both sides of the overlay district, the recommendations herein relate only to the Downtown Overlay District properties. However, there may also be opportunities to add more moderate density residential uses in some lots presently zoned residential that abut the mixed use context of the downtown zone. Uses such as townhouses and duplexes would offer compatible transitions between the two zones. Please note that permitted uses, standards and guidelines of the Old Town District Overlay would still apply, i.e. this Plan does not recommend inserting a mix of uses into established residential zones.

DEVELOPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

Some compatible redevelopment, such as repurposing existing single family homes into professional offices or restaurants, has already begun and is particularly welcomed by the abutting residents. In addition, new construction of townhomes and small lot single family homes have been built, which help increase the density of downtown and provide new housing options, and are welcomed by the community. Other transitional uses such as Bed and Breakfast establishments, professional offices and light commercial uses may be considered in this area as long as their architecture is context sensitive and responds to the surrounding residential character and their business hours and uses are limited in hours and intensity. For example, a late night bar with live music and an outdoor patio would not be an ideal use for the transition area.

RECOMMENDED PROJECTS

- A bed and breakfast or boutique hotel
- Multifamily housing of 2-3 stories
- Townhomes, duplexes and small lot single family homes
- Professional offices
- Neighborhood-based services, including day care
- Small parks, plazas and courtyards
DEVELOPMENT PROTOTYPES FOR DOWNTOWN

In order to remain competitive, downtown should offer a range of building types and site configurations that can help to establish a pedestrian-oriented environment and accommodate desired uses. This includes projects of moderately increased densities, of two to four stories (where view protection policies and the UDC Code permit.) Recent trends in successful downtowns include mixed-use projects, which incorporate retail, professional offices and residential together. These uses may be distributed horizontally across a property, or they may be stacked vertically.

New development will happen in different fashions. In some cases, a whole block might redevelop at once if it is individually owned or parcels are assembled. In other instances, single property owners within a block might decide to redevelop on their own. This is called “infill” development. In any case, development that helps to define the street edge with features that are appealing to pedestrians is a major goal.

New development in the transition zone, or properties along the border of the Downtown Overlay Zone, should comply with the guidelines established in the series of workshop activities. These areas will most likely redevelop in a piecemeal fashion, one property at a time. This incremental, small-scale type of development is ideal for those edges to blend the commercial with the residential.

The prototypes presented on the following pages reflect development successes in other communities that can serve as models for new development in downtown Georgetown. Note that many of these also reflect a response to the local context in terms of building materials, scale and design character and that literal translation of some of these projects to Georgetown may not be appropriate. Each of these projects does, however, demonstrate principles of compatible infill that would apply when adapted to the local setting. The following new development prototypes are likely to occur throughout the district:

1. Commercial Infill
2. Mixed Use Infill
3. Horizontal Mixed Use Block
4. Vertical Mixed Use Block
5. Moderate Density Residential
6. Transitional Infill
7. Parking Structure with Retail Wrap
COMMERCIAL INFILL

The following images are of new commercial buildings that are constructed in the core and on the edges of traditional downtowns. They reinterpret traditional design elements with a “contemporary” feel. Parking is usually provided on-site in a surface lot configuration, but is subordinate to the building and pedestrian.

Diagram illustrating a commercial infill development and parking scenario.

Commercial infill development could occur in one or two stories, depending on the location and zoning requirements, but should orient to the street and activate the sidewalk.
MIXED USE INFILL

These images show how a mixed use building can be incorporated into a larger block within a single parcel or group of parcels. These buildings should respond appropriately to their surrounding context with similar mass and scale. The ground floor should include an active use to animate the sidewalk while the upper stories could be office or residential uses. Parking is usually provided on-site in a surface lot condition or shared amongst neighboring properties in a parking structure.

Diagram illustrating a mixed use infill development and parking scenario.

Mixed use infill from 2 to 4 stories could occur in the downtown and should respond to their surrounding context.
**HORIZONTAL MIXED USE BLOCK**

Horizontal mixed use is where various uses are provided on a block, but each use is isolated within an individual building. This configuration is useful when multiple uses on a site is desirable, but a vertically mixed-use building is not financially or logistically feasible.

*Diagram illustrating a horizontal mixed use block development and parking scenario.*

*A horizontal mixed use block incorporates a mixture of uses within a single block, but the uses are isolated. For example, a small grocery store might be located on a prominent corner with an office building or multifamily residential units surrounding it.*
VERTICAL MIXED USE BLOCK
A vertical mixed use block is usually more intensive than a horizontal mixed use block, often requiring underground or above-grade structured parking to accommodate the on-site needs. These examples show how vertical mixed use development can be successfully integrated into a historic downtown with similar form and massing as historic buildings, but with a contemporary feel.

Diagram illustrating a vertical mixed use block development scenario.

Vertical mixed use blocks tend to be larger in mass and scale. Stepping back upper floors, as shown in some of these examples, is one way to reduce the scale of the building from the street level. Parking is generally located underground or in a structure. (Note that a fourth floor, such as the one illustrated at the left, would require special review in Georgetown, but is used to illustrate principles of varied massing.)
MODERATE DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
Downtown Georgetown could benefit from an increase in residential density within the downtown core. These prototypes express ways to accommodate higher density within a downtown context. Parking could be provided in a surface lot condition, tucked under the building or in attached or detached garages.

Diagram illustrating a moderate density residential development and parking scenario.

New residential prototypes of moderate density should be added to the downtown district. Stacked flats, apartments, rowhouses, townhouses, duplexes and small lot single family homes are all ways too accomplish additional density in a manner that is responsive to the context of downtown.
NARROW LOT WIDTH

In some areas of Georgetown, especially along South Austin Avenue, narrow lot widths will pose a challenge for intensifying the parcel and still being able to provide parking on-site. One solution to increasing intensity while providing parking is to offer a multi-story building with “tuck-under” parking. This allows the “front” side of the building, facing the prominent street edge, to include a narrow depth retail use and the “back” side, facing an access drive, to include parking on the ground floor that is covered by the upper floors of the building. Another solution, as shown in the diagram below, is to include an urban, mixed use building along the street edge with carriage houses, or small apartments, behind the mixed use building that include parking on the ground floor in a tuck-under condition with the housing units on the upper floor(s).

Diagram illustrating a narrow lot width development and tuck-under parking below carriage houses.

Tuck-under parking can be provided with secure garage doors (for residential) or open-air (for commercial).
TRANSITIONAL INFILL
Development along the edges of the Downtown Overlay District should be sensitive to the existing established residential neighborhoods. These examples show how new development can positively contribute to both a downtown context and a neighborhood context.

Diagram illustrating a transitional infill development and parking scenario.

Transitional infill architecture should blend the commercial feel of downtown with the surrounding residential neighborhoods.
PARKING STRUCTURE WITH RETAIL WRAP

Structured parking is mentioned several times in this plan and is anticipated for downtown as the density increases. If the structure flanks a significant street, it is important to “wrap” the parking structure with an active use to animate the sidewalk and make the walking experience to and from more destinations more pleasant.

Diagram illustrating a parking structure with retail wrap scenario.

In locations where space is limited, active uses can be “inserted” into the parking bays, which serve to activate the sidewalk, but some parking may be lost on the ground floor.

Whenever feasible, a building “wrap” that abuts the parking structure and adds activity to the street edge is desired.
3-Development Strategy

OPPORTUNITY AREAS

Three opportunity areas are determined as focus areas for redevelopment in the near future. Multiple scenarios are shown for each opportunity area as a basis for envisioning future development opportunities.

The Opportunity Areas are:

AUSTIN AVENUE NORTH
Development scenarios are shown for the Austin Avenue corridor from approximately 5th Street to the river. This area is envisioned as redeveloping into a pedestrian friendly corridor with active uses along Austin Avenue that encourage people to walk from Downtown to the river and vice versa. This area also has a lot of opportunity for infill residential uses that could complement downtown businesses and help activate the downtown core. Residential uses would also help create a seamless transition into the Old Town residential area as well as the residential neighborhood west of the study area and north of the Justice Center.

MUNICIPAL CENTER
Relocating and consolidating city offices downtown in a campus-like environment is desired. Multiple scenarios are shown for this area which runs along 8th Street from Rock Street to West Street. It includes multiple city-owned properties, some of which consist of existing buildings that could be repurposed for Municipal Center uses. Multiple amenities for the public are showcased in each scenario, including enhanced public parking and numerous parks, plazas and pedestrian ways. A “festival street” along 8th street would also provide an additional space to have festivals, farmer’s markets and other special events. This street could serve vehicle traffic on most days, but would be closed for special events and become a pedestrian plaza. This would result in less road closures around the square and provide another place within downtown to host special events, thus helping to broaden activities within downtown.

SOUTHEAST QUADRANT
The Southeast Quadrant includes the area along Austin Avenue from 10th to University and along University from Austin to Myrtle. Multiple development scenarios are shown for this area which is envisioned as being more commercially focused. Just as new development in the Austin Avenue North opportunity area is intended to pull activity north of the square, the Southeast Quadrant opportunity area is intended to pull activity south of the square. Recent pedestrian improvements along Main Street set the stage for new development to orient to this important street in downtown. The southern gateway to town, at the intersection of University and Austin, should also be enhanced with new development and streetscaping.
The recommended land uses are based on the principles of this plan and preliminary market analyses. In general, new development should:

- Positively engage the pedestrian realm, i.e. the sidewalk and street.
- Include more development intensity along major streets such as Austin Avenue and less intense uses in areas abutting existing residential areas.
- Provide uses and services that are currently lacking in downtown.
- Incorporate more housing choices to activate downtown.
- Incorporate more open space in the form of small parks and plazas for residents and visitors to enjoy.

The following list explains intentions of the land uses shown in the following opportunity area development scenarios:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Existing Buildings</th>
<th>Residential</th>
<th>Hotels</th>
<th>Municipal Center</th>
<th>Parks</th>
<th>Plazas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Buildings remain in their current state. Interior and exterior renovations may be necessary.</td>
<td>Buildings consist of residential uses in the form of small lot single family, attached two-family, or multifamily configurations.</td>
<td>Buildings consist of lodging uses. These could be in the form of a small, boutique style hotel or a larger, more regional hotel.</td>
<td>Buildings consist of Municipal Center uses such as Council Chambers, Municipal Court, City Manager’s Office, Finance and Administration, Economic Development, Planning and Downtown Community Services, among others.</td>
<td>Open space which includes more greenery. These could include playgrounds, workout equipment, performance areas or general passive open space.</td>
<td>Open space which is more formal and hardscaped. These could include outdoor seating areas or performance spaces.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ILLUSTRATIVE CONCEPT NOTE: Many variables will determine how new development actually occurs, and it should be noted that while multiple scenarios are shown, other development scenarios are possible as well. Phasing will be an important consideration. Property ownership, infrastructure improvements, financing options and other incentives and opportunities will determine the evolution of downtown development.
AUSTIN AVENUE NORTH OPPORTUNITY AREA

A key development opportunity exists along Austin Avenue from 5th Street to the river (see Map #9.) New development in this area will help build on the momentum of recent projects (Monument Café, Tamiro Plaza, Townhomes, and El Monumento) and develop a stronger northern gateway and connection from the river to downtown.

Basic Objectives

Any development on these blocks should be knit into the surrounding downtown context and should serve to extend Austin Avenue as a pedestrian-oriented street by adding retail activity at the sidewalk edge. Residential prototypes are ideal in this area, especially in the transition areas adjacent to Old Town. New development in this area should also strengthen Main and Rock Streets as major pedestrian spines to the river from downtown.

Automobile Access and Parking

Automobile access and visibility is ideal, as this area is located along Austin Avenue, the city’s main north-south spine. An existing public parking lot, owned by the city, exists on the northwest block of 5th and Austin. Any development should replace these existing spaces. Some blocks in this area could take advantage of topography to create a two-level parking deck with upper and lower entrances. Any large parking areas on these sites should be planned such that they can help to serve the historic district as well. All parking should be located to the interior of parcels and should be well landscaped per design guidelines.

Pedestrian Connections

Pedestrian connections across Austin Avenue are weak and many blocks lack basic sidewalks. Austin Avenue should be enhanced with improved crosswalks and preferential treatment for pedestrian crossings at intersections. At least one pedestrian-activated control should exist between 2nd and 7th Streets. Connections to other amenities in the area, such as Blue Hole Park and the Courthouse Square should be provided.

A public parking lot exists on the northwest block of 5th & Austin, across from Monument Cafe.
Edges to Abutting Neighborhoods

Edges to abutting neighborhoods should be considered. The eastern side lies along Main Street and is flanked by the established residential neighborhood of Old Town. Development should be sensitive along this edge. Residential functions will be most appropriate, to serve as a transition into the residential context. The county Justice Center frames the western edge, along Rock Street. This edge could work well as a service-oriented side for some development scenarios, such as parking. New residential development west of Rock Street and north of 2nd Street should also be considered to help activate Blue Hole Park and its pedestrian connections along Rock Street. Neighborhood parks are also an appropriate transitional use.

OVERALL ADVANTAGES:
- Good automobile access
- Many blocks include large, assembled properties
- Ability to engage river as major development amenity
- Builds off of recent development momentum
- New retail could serve employees from Justice Center during daytime

OVERALL ISSUES:
- High traffic volumes and speeds impede pedestrian flow across Austin Avenue
- Institutional use on the western edge could limit the ability to stimulate nearby redevelopment for residential
- Residential neighborhood along the eastern side is a sensitive edge
- Austin Avenue in this area has a significant grade change, limiting retail building prototypes (would have to be stepped) and willingness to walk long distances.

DEVELOPMENT SCENARIOS

With these basic planning principles in mind, two alternative scenarios are illustrated to demonstrate potential redevelopment that would be compatible with the objectives of this downtown plan. In these scenarios, the area redevelops with a combination of vertical mixed use buildings (retail at the street level and professional offices and residential above), purely residential buildings, one-story retail buildings and lodging uses. New open space is proposed to support the area as well. The presented ideas are only conceptual at this point. Timing, land ownership and willingness to redevelop, among other factors, may change how the area actually redevelops.
Scenario A – Mixed Use Development

In this scenario, Austin Avenue includes a mixture of commercial and residential uses. More intense mixed use development is placed closer to the square, while lower intensity buildings would be present further from the square and along the transition edges. Two new parks are proposed: one at the historic jail site (which includes an addition and repurposed use) and one at the western terminus of 2nd Street, which would move the existing detention into an underground tank with access points. A new pedestrian-activated signalized crossing is provided at 4th Street in this scenario, which connects into the new hike and bike trail along the river to the west. A large mixed-use development is proposed at 2nd Street east of Austin to help activate the river trails.

Key Features:
- Buildings orient to Austin Avenue.
- A mixture of residential uses, including apartment/condos, townhomes and small lot single family homes are provided.
- Two new parks provide passive open space for residents to enjoy.
- The historic jail is repurposed as a Bed and Breakfast, museum or other use with a proposed compatible addition.
- A new mixed use development and large plaza is proposed across Austin Avenue from El Monumento.
- The historic bridge over the South San Gabriel River includes an expanded sidewalk with an overlook area and a grand staircase and ramp connecting into the existing trails on either side of Austin Avenue.
3-Development Strategy

Scenario B – Mixed Use Development with Hotel

In this scenario, Austin Avenue includes a mixture of commercial and residential uses and numerous existing buildings are retained. A hotel is placed at 2nd and Austin, across from El Monumento, which engages the river with a terraced landscape and small stage for performances or special events such as weddings. Some existing buildings are repurposed such as the historic jail and adjacent county office building. A park is provided at the historic jail and above the existing detention facility at 2nd and Rock. New pedestrian-activated crossings are proposed along Austin Avenue at 5th Street and mid-block between 3rd and 4th Streets.

Key Features:
- Buildings orient to Austin Avenue.
- A mixture of residential uses, including apartment/condos, townhomes, multiplexes and small lot single family homes are provided.
- Two new parks provide passive open space for residents to enjoy.
- A new terraced park at the river’s edge provides open space and a venue for outdoor entertainment.
- The historic jail is repurposed as a Bed and Breakfast, museum or other use with a proposed compatible addition.
- A new hotel brings lodging into downtown.
- The historic bridge over the South San Gabriel River includes an expanded sidewalk with an overlook area and a grand staircase and ramp connecting into the existing trails.
**MUNICIPAL CENTER OPPORTUNITY AREA**

The Municipal Center opportunity area lies along West 8th Street and is framed by Rock Street on the east and West Street on the west. It is envisioned as a new municipal center for city government and related services that builds off the synergy from the popular new Central Library.

**Basic Objectives**

The focus of this development would be a new city hall that would accommodate key administrative and service functions in one central location. Ideally, offices that are presently distributed downtown as well as in outlying areas would relocate there, although some could remain in satellite locations within walking distance. The existing police station building, which is a historic resource, would be retained and repurposed when the police headquarters are relocated. The old library building could also be retained and converted into a civic or arts use. A series of new, connected walkways, plazas and small pocket parks would help serve employees and the larger public as well.

**Automobile Access and Parking**

Automobile access for this area is provided by 8th Street from Austin Avenue or by MLK Street. Parking for the library and surrounding buildings is currently provided per individual site with overflow parking provided across 8th Street from the library on land owned by the county. A parking structure is envisioned for the long-term in this area to serve government facilities as well as businesses in the area. However, an interim solution might be to use the existing county land for an upgraded surface parking lot that could be flexible in use.

The existing overflow parking lot on county land could serve as an interim surface parking lot until a parking structure is built.

**Pedestrian Connections**

Pedestrian connections from the courthouse square to this area are weak. Although a signalized intersection exists at Austin and 8th which makes crossing Austin Avenue quite easy, sidewalks along 8th Street to the library are deteriorating and not handicap accessible. These sidewalks should be a major priority for the city to improve access from the square to the library and the potential future municipal center. One concept that is carried over from the previous master plan is to develop 8th Street from Rock to Martin.
Luther King Street as a “festival street” that can be closed off to autos for street fairs, farmer’s markets, and other special events and performances. This would offer more opportunities for large events downtown, in addition to the festivals in the square. Another pedestrian corridor that is recommended in each of these scenarios is the Forest Street right-of-way. Restoring this as a pedestrian connection between 7th and 8th Streets will be consistent with new development in the area and provide a focal point for the library’s main entry and spine.

**OVERALL ADVANTAGES:**
- Provides a centralized location for city government offices such that services are convenient to patrons.
- Creates a focus of activity for the western edge of the downtown.
- Creates additional outdoor space for general public use as well as for special events.
- Supports job creation and economic development programs.

**OVERALL ISSUES:**
- North side of 8th Street is currently primarily owned by the County and would require a land swap or purchase in order to develop city hall in this location.
- Reusing existing buildings would save time and money, but would still separate government uses that might function better together.

**DEVELOPMENT SCENARIOS**
With these basic planning principles in mind, three alternative scenarios are illustrated to demonstrate future opportunities for a new municipal center. Each scenario suggests future development for the county and surrounding private properties as well to illustrate the overall vision of this plan. Participation from the county is encouraged and future county uses could fit in with the theme of a municipal center. The presented ideas are only conceptual at this point. Timing, land ownership and willingness to redevelop, among other factors, may change how the area actually redevelops.

*A detailed Municipal Center Study was conducted separately and is provided as an appendix to this Plan.*
Scenario A.1 – City Hall North

In this scenario, a new city hall is proposed north of the library to bring a true civic presence to 8th Street. Another building is illustrated just west of city hall on 8th Street, which could serve the county or private development. This area could be temporarily used as a surface parking lot until a parking structure is developed. The existing police station, GCAT building and old library are kept and reused as municipal center and/or public space. A parking structure is considered at the corner of 7th and Rock Streets, which would serve the municipal center and surrounding businesses. The placement of the structure would allow for vehicles to not interfere with the pedestrian-focus of 8th Street, as drivers could use 7th Street for access. New private development is shown south of 8th Street along Rock Street as well to help strengthen Rock Street as a pedestrian corridor. A series of connected public walkways, plazas and pocket parks are provided throughout, with the main focus on 8th Street, the Forest Street spine and behind the library.

Key Features:
- New City Hall north of Central Library
- Retain and reuse old library, GCAT building and police station
- Temporary parking lot at corner of 8th and MLK (on County land)
- Festival Street along 8th Street
- Series of connected public walkways, plazas and pocket parks that could transform into event spaces
- New public parking structure at 7th and Rock Streets
Scenario A.2 – City Hall East
In this scenario, reuse of existing facilities (old library, GCAT building and old police station) would be the same as scenario A.1. A new city hall would be constructed east of the library at the corner of 8th and Rock Streets. A parking structure is placed at the intersection of 9th and Rock Streets, which would be shared with the bank (existing spaces would be replaced in structure.) It would include a small retail component on the ground floor facing 9th Street to help activate the sidewalk. New private (or county) development could occur north of the library along 8th Street to enclose the festival street space. This area could be temporarily used as a surface parking lot until new development is built. A series of connected public walkways, plazas and pocket parks are provided throughout, with the main focus on 8th Street, the Forest Street spine and behind the library.

Key Features:
- New City Hall east of Central Library
- Retain and reuse the old library, GCAT building and police station
- Temporary parking lot at corner of 8th and MLK (on County land)
- Festival Street along 8th Street
- Series of connected public walkways, plazas and pocket parks that could transform into event spaces
- New public parking structure at 9th and Rock Streets
**Scenario B – City Hall West**

In this scenario, a new city hall (either an addition to the old library or new construction) is illustrated on the old library block. This new building would become the civic anchor to 8th Street and the Municipal Center campus. The old police station and GCAT buildings would be retained and repurposed with municipal uses as well. A new parking structure would be provided at 8th and Rock Streets to serve the Municipal Center, Library and surrounding businesses. It would include a building “wrap” of retail uses to activate 8th Street. New private (or county) development could occur north of the library along 8th Street to enclose the proposed festival street space. This area could be temporarily used as a surface parking lot until the parking structure is developed.

A series of connected public walkways, plazas and pocket parks are provided throughout, with the main focus on 8th Street, the Forest Street spine and behind the library.

**Key Features:**
- A new City Hall (addition or new construction) is proposed on the old library block
- Retain and reuse GCAT building and police station
- Temporary parking lot at corner of 8th and MLK (on County land)
- Festival Street along 8th Street
- Series of connected public walkways, plazas and pocket parks that could transform into event spaces
- New public parking structure at 8th and Rock Streets
SOUTHEAST QUADRANT OPPORTUNITY AREA

The Southeast Quadrant opportunity area lies along Austin and Main Streets from 9th Street to University Avenue. This area along Austin could benefit from pedestrian prioritization. Main Street has recently been upgraded with pedestrian facilities and is quite pleasant to walk along. New development could help energize this area and accent it as a major gateway into downtown.

Basic Objectives
Any development in this area should be carefully knit into the surrounding downtown context and should serve to extend Austin Avenue and University Avenue as pedestrian-oriented corridors by adding retail activity at the sidewalk edge. New development in this area should also strengthen Main Street as a major pedestrian spine.

Automobile Access and Parking
Austin Avenue provides good automobile access, but because of high traffic volumes and relatively high traffic speeds, it effectively divides downtown into two halves. An existing public parking lot, owned by the city, is located on the northeast block of 10th and Main. Each scenario proposes to replace the existing surface lot with a public parking structure that incorporates ground floor retail along Main Street, a concept that has been previously explored. Any large parking areas on these sites should be planned such that they can help to serve the historic district as well. They should be located to the interior of parcels and be well landscaped per the required design guidelines.

Pedestrian Connections
Pedestrian connections across Austin are weak and many blocks lack basic sidewalks. Austin Avenue should be enhanced with improved crosswalks and preferential treatment for pedestrian crossings at intersections. At least one pedestrian-activated control should exist between University and 8th Streets. Main Street has been upgraded with pedestrian amenities in this area and should continue to be a focus for new development in order to accent the priority the city has placed on it.

Austin Avenue in this area lacks basic sidewalks and marked crossings.

Sidewalks and pedestrian amenities along Main Street in this area have been upgraded and should continue to be the focus for new development.
Edges to Abutting Neighborhoods

Edges to abutting neighborhoods should be treated with sensitivity. East, west and south of this opportunity area lie existing residential uses and/or single family homes that have been converted into commercial uses. Development along these edges should be sensitive to the existing building form and uses.

Some single family homes have been converted to commercial offices in this area, which provide smooth transitions into the abutting residential neighborhoods.

OVERALL ADVANTAGES:
- Good automobile access and visibility
- Opportunity to create a distinctive gateway and image for downtown
- New retail could serve employees from medical office building at University and Church during daytime

OVERALL ISSUES:
- High traffic volumes and speeds impede pedestrian flow across Austin Avenue
- Residential neighborhood along the eastern side is a sensitive edge
- Parcels could be challenging to assemble for large redevelopment opportunities
- Narrow lot widths could be challenging for urban prototype development

ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT SCENARIOS

With these basic planning principles in mind, two alternative scenarios are illustrated to demonstrate potential development that would be compatible with the objectives of this downtown plan. In these scenarios, the area is developed with a combination of vertical mixed use buildings (retail at the street level and professional offices and residential above) and one-story retail buildings. Many existing buildings in the opportunity area are retained. A new plaza and pocket park is proposed at the First Texas Bank of Georgetown site to celebrate the beautiful existing trees on that block. Other open space is provided within individual developments. The presented ideas are only conceptual at this point. Timing, land ownership and willingness to redevelop, among other factors, may change how the area actually redevelops.
3-Development Strategy

Scenario A – Infill Development
In this scenario, new development carefully considers property ownership and building age and integrity. It retains many existing buildings, although the uses may change over the years. It provides a balanced urban form with new, multi-story urban buildings as well as smaller-scale infill buildings. It provides a prominent gateway at University and Austin. A new public parking structure is proposed where the existing lot exists with a “wrap” of retail uses to activate Main Street. Some parcel widths are constrained in this area. A solution for these sites is proposed which allows for “tuck-under” parking to exist on the ground floor with a retail edge along Austin or University and commercial office or residential uses could then be located on the upper level(s).

Key Features:
- Infill development throughout opportunity area, carefully considering property ownership and existing building inventory
- Parking structure with retail wrap located at the northwest corner of 10th and Main Streets
- New plaza and pocket park at 10th and Austin
- A pedestrian-activated signalized crossing at 10th and Austin
Scenario B – Mixed Use Block Development

In this scenario, new mixed-use block development is proposed that would require assembling key properties between Austin Avenue and Main Street. This scenario would greatly intensify the area with both residential and commercial activity and help frame Austin Avenue as a pedestrian-oriented street, as well as greatly intensifying Main Street. It would provide a prominent gateway at University and Austin that includes a small park on the corner. A new public parking structure is proposed where the existing lot exists with a “wrap” of retail uses to activate Main Street. Many new buildings incorporate courtyards or plazas that provide outdoor amenities for the building users.

Key Features:
- Large-scale block redevelopment along Austin Avenue
- Parking structure with retail wrap located at the northwest corner of 10th and Main Streets
- New plaza and pocket park at 10th and Austin
- A pedestrian-activated signalized crossing at 10th and Austin