



## Canton, TEXAS | Downtown Action Plan | 2018







The Town Square Initiative (TSI) at the Texas Historical Commission holistically addresses the challenge of unoccupied and underutilized historic properties.

The TSI team provides services to spur preservation-based projects so that local, small-scale and high-quality development becomes more achievable in Texas downtowns. TSI operates as an affiliate of the Texas Main Street Program, a preservation-based downtown revitalization effort with a 37-year history of success. Utilizing the Main Street principles for community-driven, historic preservation-based economic development, an interdisciplinary team with expertise in architecture, planning, and economic development provides advanced project assistance with a focus on:

- **Conceptual design and financial feasibility studies for unoccupied and underutilized historic properties that are place-driven and market-informed;**
- **Coordinated downtown planning strategies to address development barriers in order to make it easier for local property owners and entrepreneurs to invest in their downtowns;**
- **Increasing and influencing the market exposure of available properties in downtowns across Texas including attracting investors who value historic architecture and the special qualities of each community; and,**
- **Providing information, education, and resources on best practices that have a positive impact on local policy and decision-making.**

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October 2018

## Project Partners







# 1

## Introduction



## Project Background

The Canton Economic Development Corporation through the Canton Main Street Program applied for downtown planning assistance through the Texas Historical Commission's Town Square Initiative in late 2017. The Canton EDC recognized that downtown Canton was at a turning point and wanted to develop a more strategic vision to help the historic core of Canton, a Texas Main Street city since 2001, reach the next level. The Canton Downtown Action Plan summarizes the community engagement and planning effort from January to October 2018. Recommendations and outcomes of this plan will be implemented by the Canton EDC, Canton Main Street, the City of Canton, Van Zandt County, downtown property and business owners, and other leadership organizations committed to downtown's future.

## The Town Square Initiative

The Town Square Initiative (TSI) is an interdisciplinary team (architecture, planning and economic development) that focuses on the challenge of unoccupied and under utilized historic buildings in Texas downtowns. TSI operates as an affiliate of the Texas Main Street Program, a preservation-based downtown revitalization effort with a 37-year history of success. The team provides more advanced and specialized project assistance including downtown planning and feasibility studies.

TSI selects one city each year to provide project management for a downtown action plan to be adopted and implemented by the city and its downtown partners. The team works collaboratively with downtown stakeholders and the community throughout the process and continues the partnership after plan development by assisting with implementation of action items.

TSI's work focuses on two principles. First, increasing the long-term economic sustainability of downtown by supporting small-scale, incremental development. This typically involves working closely with local business and property owners to encourage reinvestment through feasible redevelopment plans that retain the building's historic character. The second principle

is helping communities understand the importance of quality of place in their downtowns. This involves working closely with city officials on public improvements that retain the downtown area's historic character, but also adhere to recognized best practices for streetspace and public space design.

## How to Use this Document

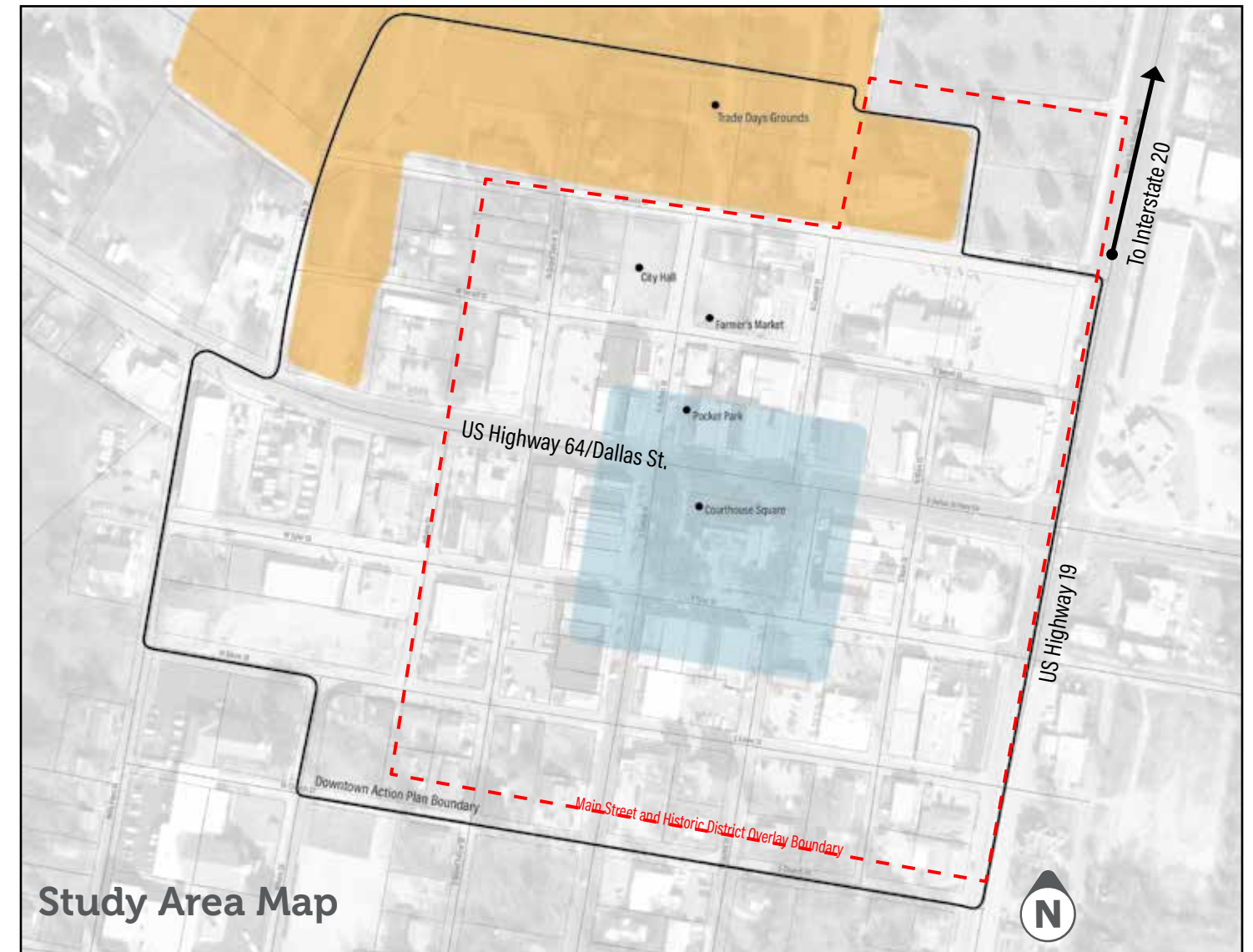
The Canton Downtown Action Plan is intended to be a planning guide for the City of Canton, Canton EDC, and Canton Main Street that is used to strategically prioritize and implement projects that are consistent with the downtown vision. The Canton EDC, as the plan sponsor, is the partner responsible for managing implementation. The time frame for the plan is five years and progress should be systematically evaluated annually.

The plan is written in such a way that TSI continues as an implementation partner. This is partly what distinguishes the work of TSI from that of other downtown consultants. The team continues to advise and provide technical documents to support projects where TSI's involvement is identified in the project matrix.

## Study Area

Canton is located in northeast Texas along Interstate 20 and US Highways 19 & 64. Wooded and rural, Canton is the county seat of Van Zandt County. The historic downtown is a one hour commute to downtown Dallas. The City of Canton is famous for its First Monday Trade Days, a very large flea market event that occurs monthly on over 480 acres just north of downtown.

The plan study area is focused on the historic core, but also addresses the immediately adjoining neighborhoods as well as its connection to the Trade Days grounds. The Canton Main Street boundary and the Historic Preservation Overlay District (HD) are the same. See ordinance 2016-20 for HD overlay. When this plan specifically refers to statistics and characteristics of the downtown district, it is referring to the designated Main Street/HD Overlay boundary.



# Project Outcomes

## Desired Outcomes

Canton approached the Town Square Initiative team after hearing a presentation about their services in November 2017. Funding had been set aside for a strategic planning effort, but the Canton EDC and Main Street had other capital projects planned where that money could be allocated if selected for the 2018 TSI action planning process. To the Town Square team, it was clear that downtown was already a priority and there were financial resources available, but the Canton EDC and the City were lacking a strategic vision to help them guide investment.

The Canton EDC and City also noted the changes in the Trade Days market conditions. As a community, there was a general realization that it was time to stop relying heavily on Trade Days as the main economic driver and begin to invest in other areas that can deliver revenue. Downtowns, as compact areas, can provide better return on investment for infrastructure projects as the capital costs may be less for the smaller area, but the value is higher per acre.

City officials and the Canton EDC expressed a number of priorities that they would like to see incorporated into the process but emphasized historic preservation guidance especially working with individual property owners on improvements; building stabilization assistance including working with property owners and code officials on requirements for redevelopment; and finally guidance on streetscape improvements as the city was progressing block by block using the Department of Agriculture Texas Capital Fund Infrastructure Grant program.

The Canton EDC desired a concise, strategic plan with detailed projects that would help address the above priorities, as well as generally elevating downtown to meet its economic potential while also returning to its place as the center for social life in Canton.

## Community Priorities

The priorities expressed by the Canton EDC and the City were then presented through a survey early in the process to the community. They prioritized these in the following way:

Preserve and rehabilitate downtown's historic buildings



Recruit new businesses and provide resources to help existing businesses expand



Create additional community events and programming in the Downtown area



Create new public gathering spaces



Create a Downtown brand that is different from First Monday Trade Days



Make it easier to walk around Downtown by improving sidewalks and crosswalks



Install downtown signage including parking management signs and business directories



Installation of public art works throughout Downtown



## Plan Goals

The goals for the plan were created after the community identified their priorities and serve as the foundation for the recommended projects.

**HP** Historic Preservation: Enhance downtown's historic character and sense of place by preserving and rehabilitating downtown's historic buildings.

**E** Economics: Increase the economic sustainability of the downtown area by recruiting new businesses and provide resources to help existing local businesses expand.

**C** Community: Re-establish downtown as Canton's social center by developing additional events and programming that celebrate local assets and build community.

**DE** Downtown Experience: Make downtown an enjoyable and comfortable experience by creating new public gathering places and reimagining the streets and sidewalks as places for people.

**I** Image: Elevate the image of downtown for residents and visitors by creating an identity that represents what is unique about the Canton experience beyond First Monday Trade Days.

## Measuring Success

Since this is an action plan, success can be measured by progress towards completion of the projects. However, other metrics (measurable indicators) should be established during implementation that further demonstrate the overall impact and progress towards the goals. TSI can assist with this, but at a minimum, the Main Street Reinvestment data points for Quarter 3 (submitted October 10, 2018) should be utilized as a baseline.





# 2

## Existing Conditions



# History

## History of Canton, TX

by Diana J. Kleiner  
From the Texas State Historical Association Online Handbook



Canton, the seat of Van Zandt County, is on State highways 19 and 64 on the Mill Creek tributary of the Sabine River, fourteen miles southeast of Wills Point in the central part of the county.

The site, originally in Henderson County, was surveyed as early as 1840 by a company of men under Dr. W. P. King. The community stands on the original survey of Jesse Stockwell, who arrived in the area at that time. No settlement was made until 1850, when the town was laid out and named by settlers moving from Old Canton in Smith County. The first district courthouse at Canton opened in 1850, and a post office, the county's fourth, was established in that year.

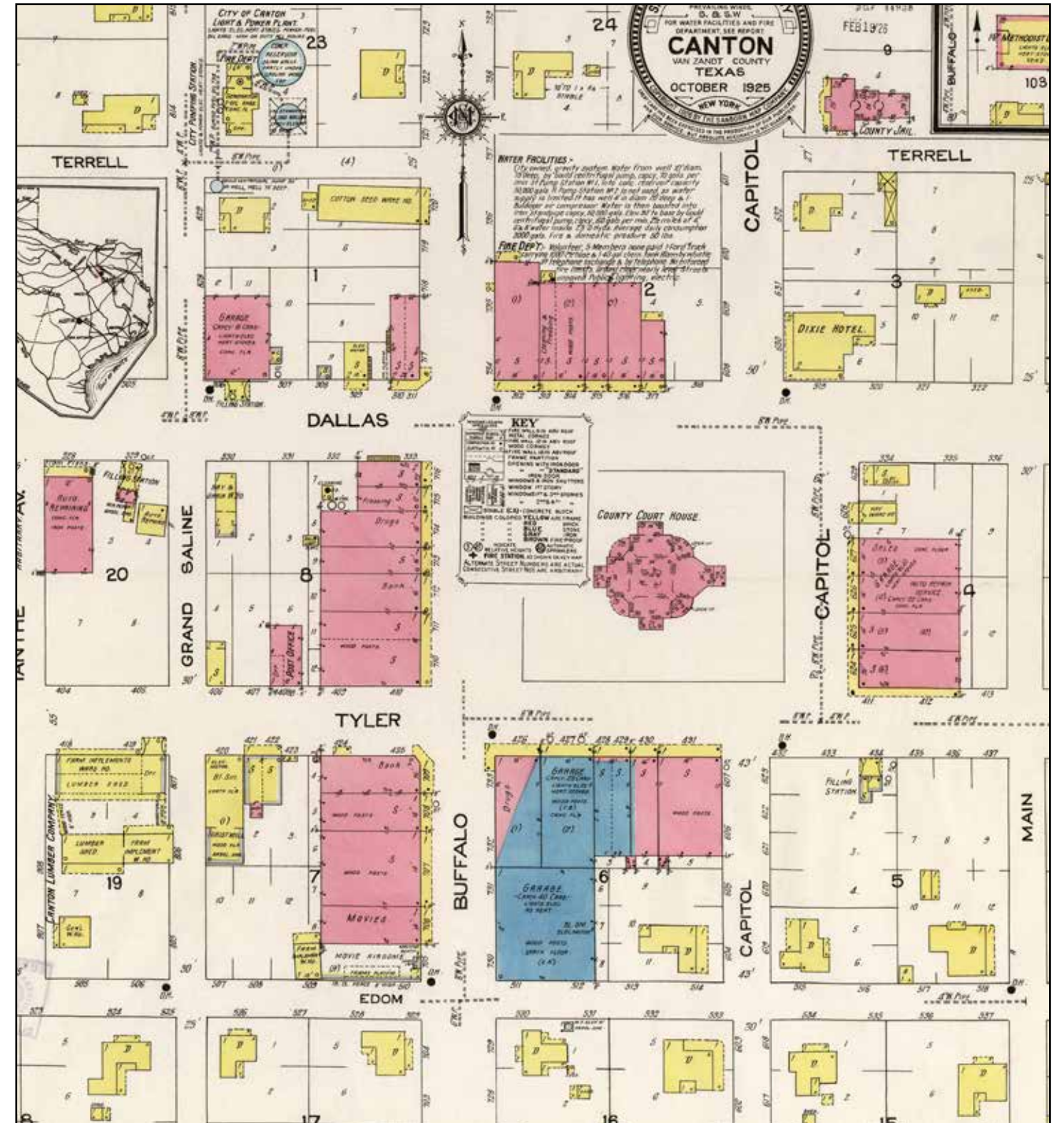
When the Texas and Pacific Railway was built across the county in 1872, it missed Canton by ten miles, and citizens of Wills Point persuaded the county officials to move the county seat there. In the resulting dispute residents of Canton in 1877 went armed to Wills Point to get the records back, and the county judge wired Governor Richard B. Hubbard for aid. The Supreme Court of Texas finally decided in favor of Canton. Unwilling to use the railroad at Wills Point, Canton businessmen established Edgewood, ten miles to the northwest of town, and built an extension to the railroad at a siding formerly called Stevenson.

Property for the town's first school, Canton Academy, was acquired in 1853. Sid S. Johnson began publication of the Canton Weekly Times, the county's first newspaper, in 1860. A Grange was founded in 1876. James S. Hogg, who once served as Canton district attorney, was elected governor in 1880. By 1890 Canton

had flour mills, sawmills, cotton gins, bank, a population of 421. Brick buildings were under construction by 1892, and a new brick courthouse was completed in 1894. Iron ore and anthracite coal were discovered in 1887 and 1891.

By 1896 the town reached an early population peak of 800 and had several churches, a steam gristmill and gin, two weekly newspapers, three general stores and two hotels. But the number of residents had dropped to 421 by 1904. Notorious bank robbers Bonnie Parker and Clyde Barrow once lived briefly at the Dixie Hotel, built in 1915. Canton was incorporated in 1919 and elected a mayor and aldermen. Despite the Great Depression, development of the Van oil field after 1929 brought further expansion, and a Public Works Administration project in the 1930s completed a new courthouse in the community. In 1933 area schools registered 500 white and twenty-eight black students. The population reached 715 in 1940, but residents dwindled again after 1949. In the 1950s, local business included a sweet-potato curing plant, an ice factory, a concrete-tile factory, lumberyards, and a cotton gin. Expansion of the Canton city limits doubled its territory in the 1960s. In 1970 the community had a municipal lake with recreational facilities, seven churches, a school, a bank, a library, a newspaper, and eighty-six businesses. The population doubled between 1960 and 1970 from roughly 1,000 to 2,000, and reached nearly 3,000 by 1990 and is now about 3,500 according to Census estimates.

Canton is known for its First Monday or Hoss Monday trade day. According to various sources, the tradition began with district court meetings held on the first Monday of each month or with the monthly visit of neighbors in Confederate times. The custom began with the swapping of surplus stock by barter and grew to include casual bargaining for or the swapping of dogs, antiques, junk, and donkeys on a thirty-acre grounds.



Above: 1925 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of downtown Canton. Above left: Downtown stories shared during the April 21 Open House.



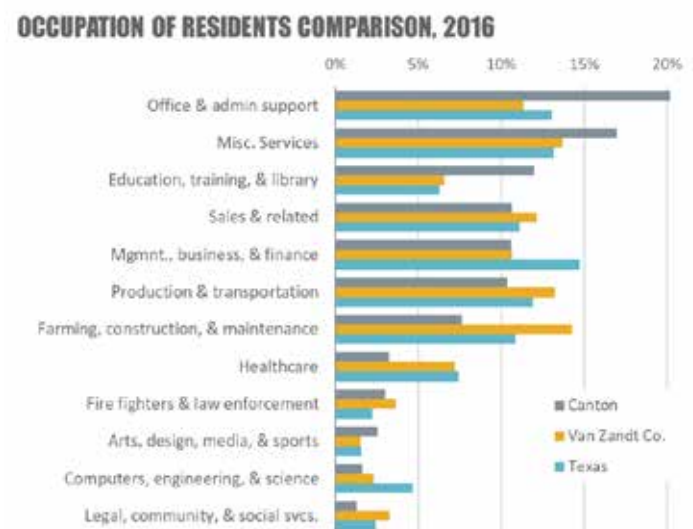
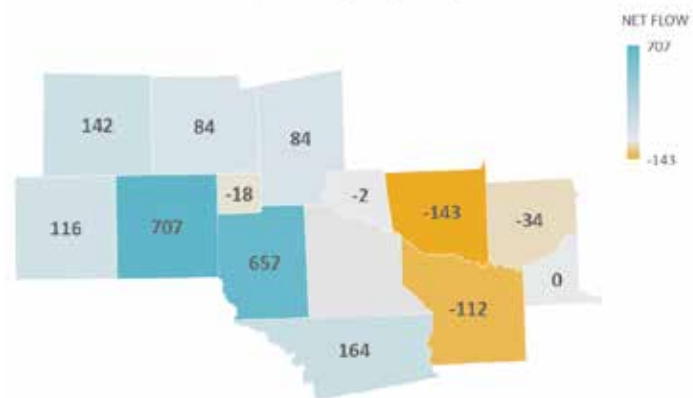
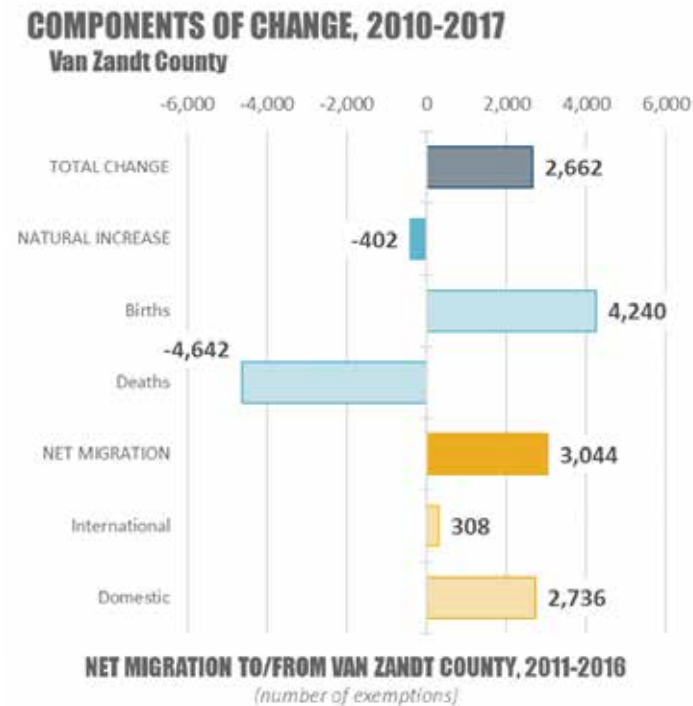
## Demographics

Since 2010, Canton's population has increased 8.9 percent, a substantially faster rate than Van Zandt County as a whole. Moreover, the average annual growth rate of 1.4 percent is the fastest average annual growth rate that Canton has experienced since the 1970s. Since 2010, Van Zandt County's population increased by 2,662. Net migration was the sole contributor to growth in the county as its natural increase was negative - meaning more residents have died than were born during the last seven years. The loss of population through natural increase coupled with a gain through net migration is typically indicative of a community undergoing a fundamental demographic transition. This pattern is often seen in ex-urban communities that are falling into the orbit of a metropolitan area. Without the influx of young families with children moving to the community, it would likely be facing a situation where it has an aging population with fewer children and a potentially declining population.

The pattern of individuals moving from a metropolitan area to the far-flung suburbs is a well-known phenomenon as parents look for better schools to educate their children and families search for more affordable housing. As Van Zandt's western neighbor, Kaufman County, continues to grow, residents should expect even faster rates of in-migration in the future. As a result, area leaders should take a proactive stance and begin planning for the arrival of thousands of new residents over the coming decades. Without proper planning, the area runs the risk of allowing development that would irrevocably alter the quality of life and character of place in Canton and surrounding Kaufman County.

## Labor Force

A growing labor force, coupled with a declining unemployment rate, is an extremely positive indicator of the area's economic situation. In most of rural Texas, a decline in the unemployment rate usually leads to severe labor force shortage which hampers the ability of businesses to add new employees. In the case of Van Zandt County, the area has the benefit of being on the edge of two growing metropolitan areas (Dallas/Fort Worth and Tyler), which strategically positions



the county as an excellent location for employees to call home. Additional attractors are the high quality of education offered in the Canton Independent School District and the relative affordability of housing.

## Commuting Patterns

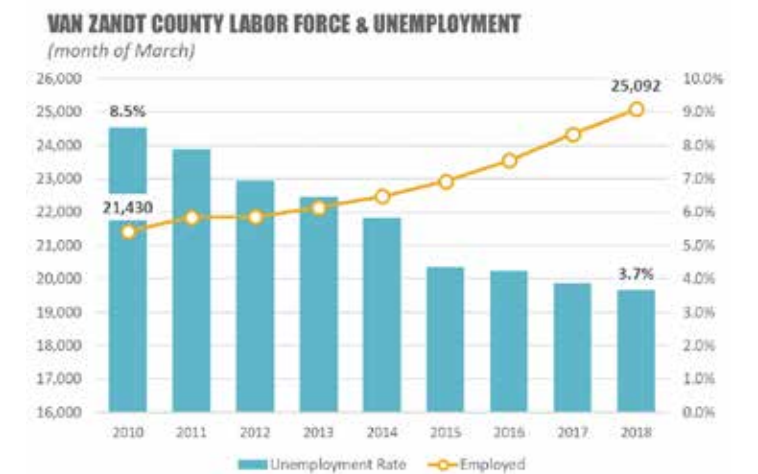
Commuting patterns reveal that fewer than half of employed residents live and work in Van Zandt County. This indicates that local workers are largely reliant on other places for jobs. Among commuters to other counties, the largest portion are commuting to somewhere within the Dallas/Fort Worth metroplex. This is a large enough share that if it increases to 25 percent, it is likely that the federal government's Office of Management and Budget will officially designate Van Zandt County as part of the Dallas/Fort Worth Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). The delineation of MSAs conveys the recognition that there exists "a high degree of social and economic integration" between areas. The inclusion within an MSA can strongly influence decisions made by stores and other businesses looking to make new investment decisions.

## Employment

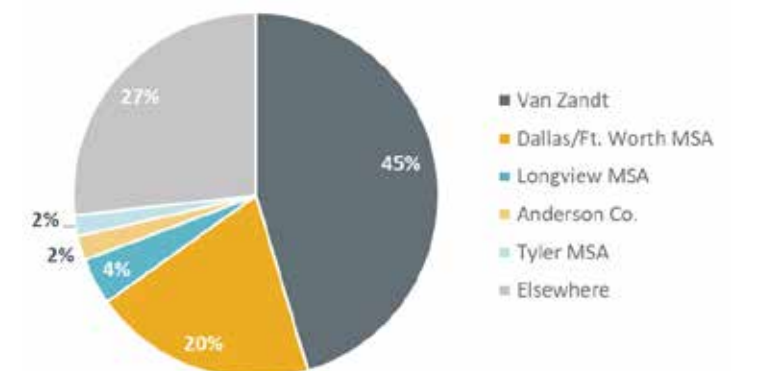
Employers in Canton and Van Zandt County have abundant access to a workforce with basic skills and education. A very high share of Canton residents is employed in certain service-related occupations. For example, local workers are twice as likely to work in office & administrative support positions, other miscellaneous services, and education. On the other hand, relatively few employees who live in Canton hold skilled blue-collar positions in production & transportation or farming, construction & maintenance. Also a small share of Canton residents has earned a bachelor's degree, and this is reflected in the low rate of employment in occupations that require higher education or specialized training. In turn, this tends to limit wages earned and leaves local households with a lower amount of disposable income. Moreover, the low ratio of highly educated and/or skilled workers likely inhibits Canton's ability to attract employers, grow existing companies, and increase entrepreneurship.

One significant trend to note from these data are that sectors which already offered relatively high wages

in the county tended to also be the ones that experienced the strongest growth this decade. This may have significant implications for target industry strategies. Traditionally, economic development practitioners in small Southern towns have adopted a recruitment approach based on offering low wages as part of their competitive advantage. Rather than following this same strategy, consideration should be given to targeting high-skilled, high-wage businesses. While an implicit goal of economic development is to increase local employment, Canton's leaders should also consider other factors in the determination of target sectors, including: increasing the local tax base (sales and property); protecting and enhancing the community's quality of life; promoting a positive image of the community; and increasing the average wages in Canton.



## TOP DESTINATIONS FOR CANTON WORKERS





# Market Analysis

## Income

A very high number of Canton households are low-income and, overall, the area appears to be losing its position relative to the state, especially within the last two decades. This is undoubtedly related to the heavy concentration of low-paying jobs available to area workers and shows the need for the area to diversify its tax base in higher wage sectors. Fortunately, the area has seen recent growth in manufacturing – one of highest paying industries in Van Zandt County. On the other hand, that job growth has been matched by increases in leisure & hospitality, which is one of its lowest paying sectors. While the strength of leisure & hospitality is a positive indicator of Canton’s attractiveness to visitors, the community has not yet translated that into growth in higher paying sectors. That said, a continued strategy to enhance the quality of life and development in the area will inevitably be a draw for businesses and entrepreneurs spreading out from Dallas/Fort Worth.

## Taxable Retail Sales

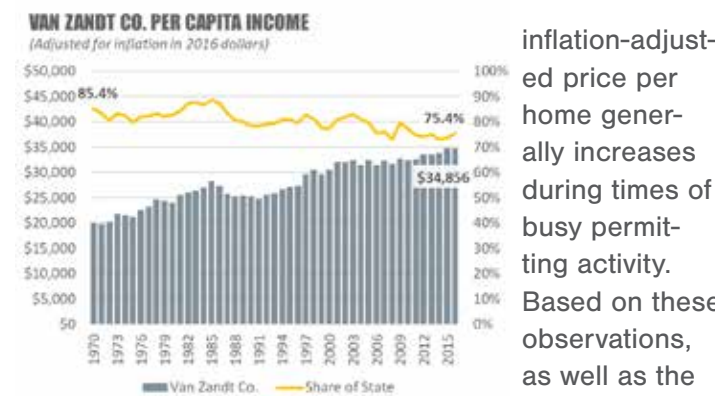
Taxable retail sales (adjusted for inflation) in the City of Canton rose 20 percent from 2010 to 2017 from \$90.3 million to \$104.5 million. This strong growth followed several years of stagnating sales which was most likely related to the “Great Recession.” While sales increased slightly at the start of this decade, they began to increase steadily in 2013 and have shown no signs of slowing since. The number of retail stores located in Canton, however, has seen inconsistent growth during the same period – although the data appears to show somewhat of a correlation between the amount of sales and the number of stores. These data indicate that the recession indeed adversely affected retail sales in Canton for several years. This was likely due to the fact that individuals from throughout the region had less disposable income available for shopping. After an uneven recovery, however, sales in the community have increased at a healthy clip.

## Real Estate

Two clear patterns are revealed from real estate data: 1) the issuance of single-family building permits is strongly cyclical in Van Zandt County and 2) the

	Wages	Change
<b>TOTAL, ALL INDUSTRIES</b>	<b>\$663</b>	<b>10.0%</b>
Manufacturing	\$977	31.3%
Financial activities	\$975	50.9%
Construction	\$842	11.4%
Trade, Transportation, & Utilities	\$730	27.0%
Professional & business services	\$703	-20.6%
Information	\$701	8.9%
Other services	\$600	2.3%
Mining	\$551	-29.4%
Healthcare	\$533	-4.2%
Leisure & hospitality	\$315	15.6%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (QCEW)



inflation-adjusted price per home generally increases during times of busy permitting activity. Based on these observations, as well as the data from the last few years, Van Zandt County leaders can expect to see an increase in housing activity over the next few years. The only question is how long the cycle will last and how high demand for new housing will build. As seen earlier in this analysis, migration from the Dal-

las/Fort Worth Metroplex has been increasing and will likely continue to rise for years despite short-term economic cycles. The implication is that the community and surrounding area should begin to plan for this pending future and influence growth so that – ideally – it will serve to enhance the quality of life in the area and increase well-paying employment opportunities for Canton citizens.

## Considerations for Canton

Long known for its famed First Monday Trade Days, residents of Canton have enjoyed a quality of life rarely experienced in bigger cities. Today, however, this rural East Texas community stands at a crossroads. In recent years, concerns over the loss of business at the Trade Days to competition from similar North Texas markets, as well as the internet, have led local leaders to broaden their search for economic opportunity.

Overall, the findings from this analysis should be viewed as a confirmation of the decision by local leaders to plan for downtown Canton’s future. Because of its proximity to Dallas/Fort Worth – one of the largest and fastest growing metropolitan areas in the country – and location adjacent to a major interstate, the community finds itself in the path of inevitable growth. The analysis within this assessment should indeed serve as a harbinger pointing toward the well-trodden path of suburbanization: population growth is driven by folks moving to Canton from Dallas/Fort Worth; more than half of employed residents must leave the county to find work; and building permits portend a new wave of housing activity.

At present, the community still maintains the ability to choose a different path to the future. While growth will be unavoidable, Canton must recognize that it can manage and shape new development to attract desirable businesses, enhance the quality of life, and maintain a distinct community identity. The TSI team believes the best way forward is to focus new development toward its downtown and improve its status as a destination for shopping, entertainment, and living for residents and visitors alike.

## Assets

### People

- Population growth, thanks to proximity to Metroplex and Tyler.
- Increasing labor force.

### Place

- High quality of life.
- Access to Interstate 20.
- Downtown Canton has “good bones.”
- Bucolic landscape of the area.
- High-performing school district.

### Business

- Monday Trade Days brings recognition and visitors.
- Tourism and agricultural sectors.
- Strong retail sales and tax trends.

## Opportunities

### People

- New population brings higher skills and education.
- Expand educational and workforce development in the area.

### Place

- Develop downtown dining and entertainment options.
- Improve pedestrian infrastructure in downtown.

### Business

- Expand entrepreneurship opportunities by leveraging economic strengths in tourism and agriculture, as well as access to North Texas business community.
- Leverage Monday Trade Days to increase economic activity downtown.
- Expand Canton’s “brand” beyond Trade Days.



# Historic Building Assessment

## TSI Observations

Most of downtown Canton was constructed between 1890 and 1950. The brick buildings visible on the square today area documented as being constructed around 1892, which is about the time the impressive 1894 Romanesque Revival courthouse (now demolished) was completed. These buildings featured construction methods typical of the period with architectural cast iron columns and lintels, and recessed single or double door entries flanked by large display windows.

Over time the square has remained relatively intact. The Dixie Hotel, an important community landmark, was lost at the corner of E. Dallas and N. Capitol, as well as the c. 1900 commercial building at the corner of E. Dallas and N. Buffalo. While some notable facade restorations have taken place, including the 100 block of W. Dallas, the biggest challenge—and opportunity—continues to be extensive modifications to the historic buildings. Common conditions include:

- **Modified storefronts.** However, many appear to contain the original cast iron details.
- **Painted brick.** Old brick is softer; paint traps moisture eventually causing the bricks to fail.
- **Canopies that are the wrong scale and material.**
- **Altered openings including covered transoms, replacement windows and doors, and in some cases windows that have been bricked over.**



## Downtown Building Uses

Generally downtown is occupied, but not vibrant. There is a cluster of restaurants that serves as a draw for residents and visitors. Retail and office make up the majority of land use. At the time the planning process began, there were 12 vacant buildings in the downtown district.

Recorded January 2018

Use Type	No. of Buildings/Parcels	% of Use Downtown	No. of Businesses/Entities/Spaces
Arts and Entertainment	0	0%	0
Auto-Oriented	3	4%	3
Government and Non Profit	5	6%	2
Lodging	1	1%	1
Manufacturing and Processing	0	0%	0
Office and Professional	15	18%	17
Personal Services	7	8%	10
Religious	0	0%	0
Residential	8	9%	8
Restaurants and Bars	6	7%	6
Retail	17	20%	16
Surface Parking	5	6%	5
Underutilized/Storage Building	2	2%	2
Vacant Building	12	14%	16
Vacant Lot	4	5%	4
Total	85		90

## Downtown Designations

- National Register Individual Listings: 1 (*Van Zandt County Courthouse*)
- National Register Districts: 0
- Local Landmarks: 0
- Local Historic Districts: 1 (*Downtown Historic Preservation Overlay - HD*)
- Texas Subject Historical Markers: 7
- Texas Historic Cemetery: 1 (*Hillcrest*)

## Common elements that compromise historic integrity in downtown Canton

Modified storefronts

Painted brick

Canopies that are the wrong size and scale

Covered transom windows

Peeling paint on brick or "spalling"

Windows that have been bricked in

Non-original windows



# District Assessment

## TSI Observations

TSI completed an urban design assessment of the downtown district which included studying condition and use of the sidewalks, public spaces, and streets, as well as traffic, pedestrian, and parking patterns. The appearance of a downtown district portrays its image, which affects how people perceive it and whether they decide to shop or invest there. Therefore, the appearance of downtown Canton should communicate qualities like safety, comfort, vitality, and uniqueness.

Public improvements play an important role in providing an overall favorable impression to residents and visitors – these include everything from lampposts and benches to parking and pedestrian amenities. While they alone cannot revitalize a district, when done correctly, these projects can greatly improve the appearance of the area, reinvigorate local business owners and residents, and send a message that the public sector is willing to invest in downtown. This is vital in motivating building owners to improve their properties as well. It is also important to recognize the place characteristics that exist more organically and add interest to the downtown experience such as alleys, trees, and historic features like brick streets. For a downtown to feel special, essential amenities must be improved without erasing the special qualities of place.

TSI noted the following strengths:

- **Scale and intimacy of the courthouse square**
- **A generally pleasant and comfortable feel with shade, sidewalks and well-proportioned streets**
- **Mostly pedestrian-oriented, with adequate parking and easy access**
- **Secure day and night for all ages**

Canton's areas for improvement:

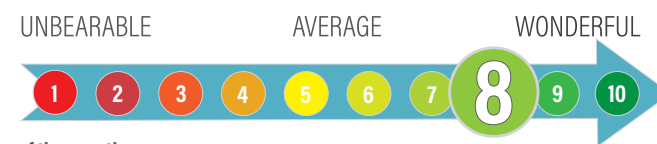
- **Traffic on 64/Dallas is constant and makes crossing for pedestrians dangerous at times**
- **Gateways do not provide a memorable first impression**
- **Lack of vibrancy with little activity on sidewalks and in public spaces**
- **Many of the buildings have been altered and do not convey their historic integrity**

Generally downtown Canton is an appealing and comfortable area. Its scale (street width to building height), courthouse, and rural East Texas charm are definite assets. Below is a visual summary:

## Areas of Strength



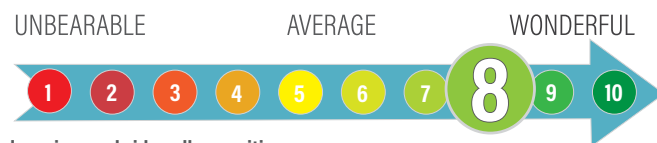
**District Appeal**  
*Is it an inviting, attractive downtown area?*



Opportunities: Protect the scale and intimacy of the courthouse square.



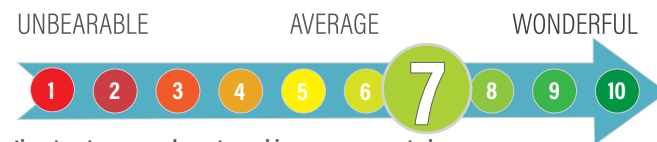
**Comfort**  
*Is it pleasant to be downtown?*



Opportunities: Be purposeful with trees, landscaping, and sidewalk amenities.



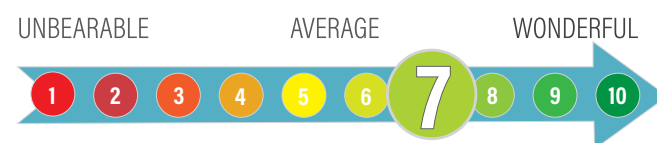
**Access**  
*Can you come and go easily in downtown?*



Opportunities: Better connect storefronts to the streetscape and create parking management plan.



**Security**  
*Is downtown secure for all ages?*

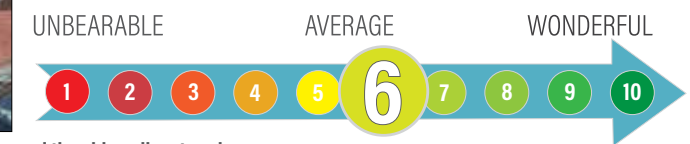


Opportunities: Make downtown a place where kids come to play on the courthouse lawn again.

## Areas for Improvement



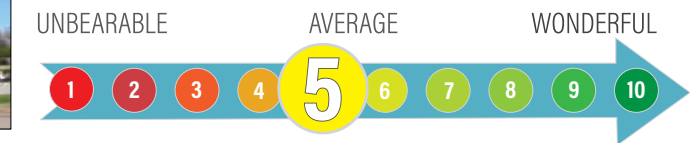
**Safety**  
*Is it safe to enjoy downtown as a pedestrian?*



Opportunities: Enhance crosswalks and expand the sidewalk network.



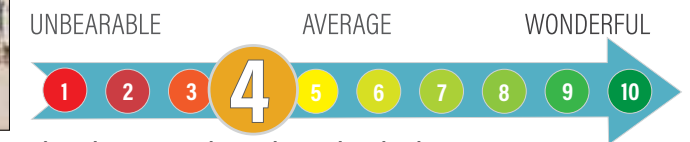
**Gateways and Transitions**  
*Do these areas provide a positive first impression?*



Opportunities: Offer a sense of arrival and provide clear directions to important destinations.



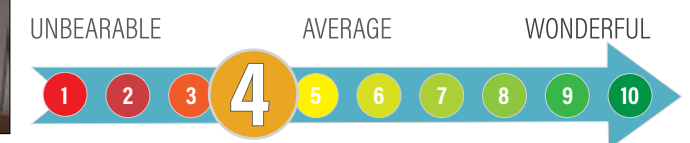
**Interest**  
*Are the streets alive with activity?*



Opportunities: Add new uses and events to activate downtown on the evenings and weekends.



**Historic Integrity**  
*Are original architectural features retained?*



Opportunities: Work with property owners to restore character-defining building features.

**What attracts people most, it would appear, is other people.**

*William H. Whyte*





# 3

## Downtown Vision



# Action Plan Process

The Town Square Initiative team spends a considerable amount of time in the communities during an action planning process. Open houses, group meetings, and one-on-one conversations with property and business owners are critical to shaping the understanding of the existing conditions as well as defining recommendations that are feasible and achievable. Forming relationships with community leaders and the key downtown stakeholders is critical to the team's effectiveness and the overall success of the process.

## Schedule

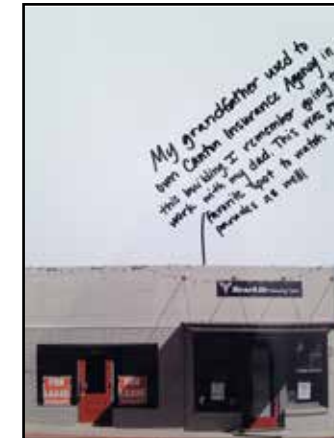
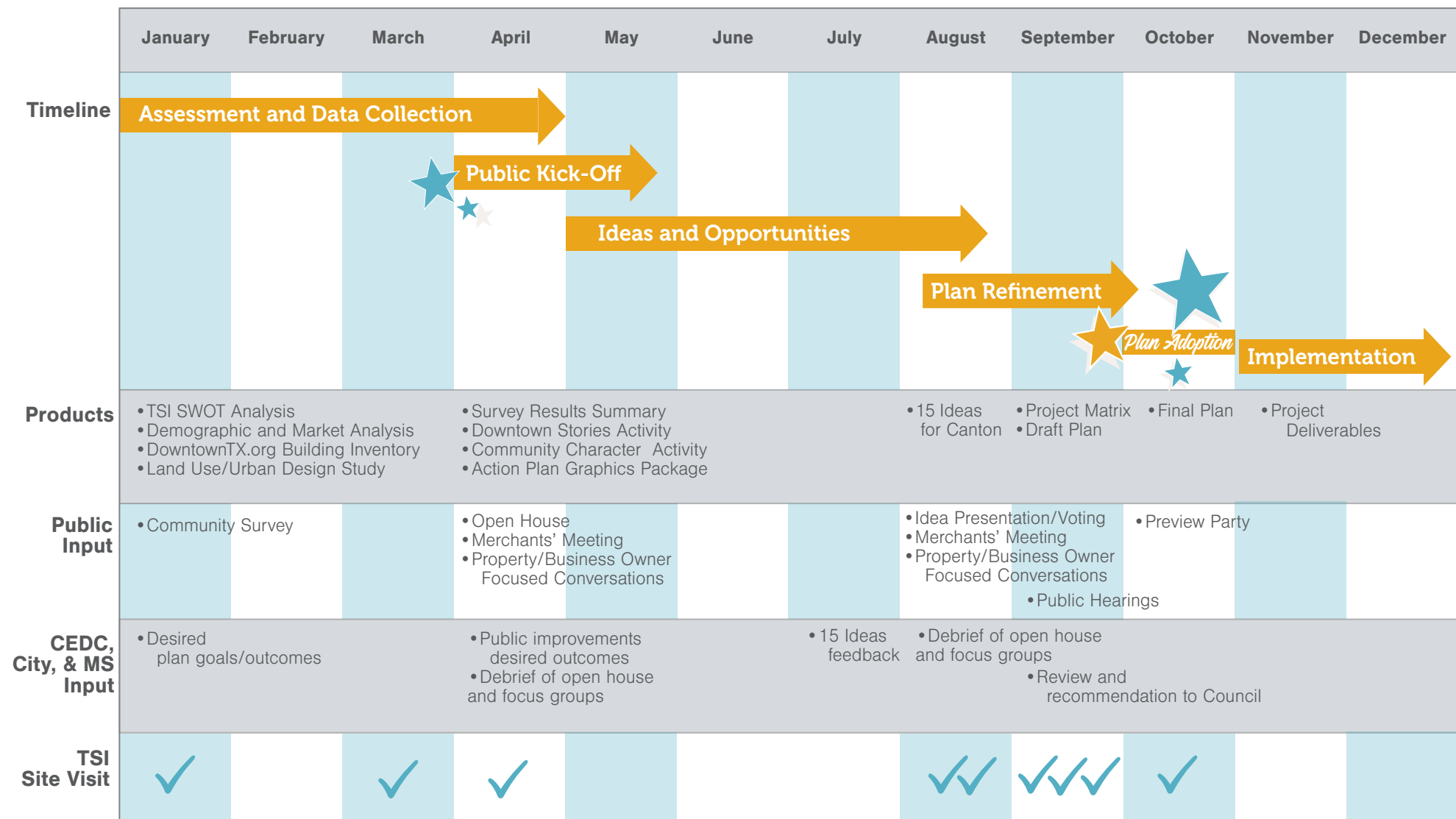
The planning process in Canton took place from January - October 2018. In that amount of time, TSI made nine site visits. The process began with a community survey that resulted in 213 responses, which is more than average for a town with a population of around 3,500. Two large public events were planned - the first, an open house during the grand opening of the Farmer's Market on April 21, and the second, a community presentation of the proposed ideas with voting and socializing at Val's Restaurant on August 7. Each of these visits included a structured meeting with downtown merchants as well as one-on-one meetings with property owners.

## Attendees

Attendees at the various public events included:

- April Merchants' Meeting: 14 Attendees
- April Farmer's Market Open House: 150 +/-
- April Business/Property Owner Meetings: 7
- August Merchants' Meeting: 11 Attendees
- August Idea Presentation: 35
- August Business/Property Owner Meetings: 4

## Downtown Action Plan Schedule



Community members provided feedback in many different formats during the process including informal conversations, notes on their memories in downtown and voting.



## Interactive Opportunities

The community was asked to participate in interactive exercises throughout the process including:

- the online survey;
- a preference activity to help define what character is desired for new uses/development;
- a voting exercise to prioritize and refine the fifteen ideas for Canton, which eventually became the specific project recommendations.

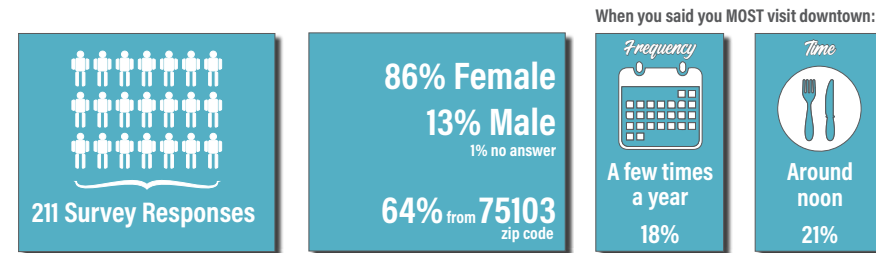
The survey provided the initial context for what is positive and what is less so in downtown Canton. There was a clear indication from the beginning of the process that entertainment uses were missing from downtown and Canton in general. The term “hang-out” was used over and over. Many community members from all backgrounds noted the lack of places where friends and family can get together to socialize and relax - uses that came up included soda fountains, smoothie shops, more restaurants, restaurants with full bars, music venues and beer gardens. People noted that they leave town regularly for movies, nightlife, and bowling. There was a strong desire for more events in downtown especially food and family related activities.

Using the results of the survey, an activity was designed that illustrated the different character of these potential new uses: music venue, coffee shop, lodging, and residential. Attendees at the open house during the Farmers Market shared their thoughts on what they would like to see and then voted for the example projects that best represented the type of character that seemed appropriate to them. Clear favorites included a coffee shop with a large outdoor hang-out space and a boutique hotel as compared to a tiny house lodging or a bed and breakfast on the square. The music venue category was the most popular and there was no clear preference. “Any type of venue will be fine!” The community was lukewarm on adding new residential downtown.

The types of uses and their character was taken into consideration as the TSI team formulated the concepts, or fifteen ideas. After consultation with the Canton EDC and Main Street project leaders, TSI presented these

## Community Survey Summary

### Current Conditions



**The top reasons why you come downtown:**

1. Dining
2. First Monday Trade Days
3. Boutique Shopping

*What you like about downtown:*

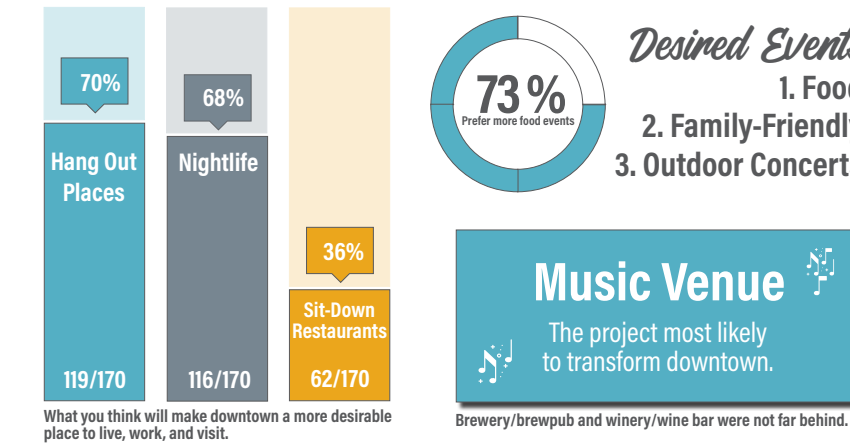
1. Small Town Charm
2. Restaurants
3. First Monday Trade Days
4. Historic Buildings
5. The Courthouse and Lawn

**P** You believe there is not enough parking in downtown and that it can be difficult to find the goods and services that are needed.

**The top reasons why you leave town:**

- Movies
- Coffee Shop
- Nightlife
- Boutique shopping
- Bowling

### Desired Conditions



*Your priorities for downtown's future:*

1. Preserve and rehabilitate downtown's historic buildings.
2. Recruit new businesses and provide resources to help existing businesses expand.
3. Develop additional community events and programming in the downtown area.
4. Create new public gathering spaces.
5. Establish a downtown brand that is different than First Monday Trade Days.

fifteen ideas to the downtown merchants and at a larger public meeting on August 7. Received favorably overall, the most popular ideas included: the entertainment hub in the former Quality Furniture building, walkability improvements that would prioritize downtown as a place for people, returning the historic plaza theater back into a theater, and incentives for historic rehabilitation work and building stabilization.



These images represent the most preferred community character types for future coffee shop/hang-out space, residential, lodging and music venue. From left to right: Cenote Coffee in Austin, TX; McCrory-Timmerman Lofts in Taylor, TX; the Plaza Hotel, Seguin, TX; and, Banger's Sausage House and Beer Garden, Austin, TX.



# Community Participation

## Community Character Activity Tally

April 21, 2018 at the Farmers Market

Coffee Shop Character			
Option	Description	Votes	
1	Coffee Shop/ Hang Out Place	32	52%
2	Traditional DT Building	13	21%
4	Drive Thru	10	16%
3	Mobile	7	11%
		62	
Music Venue Character			
Option	Description	Votes	
2	Outdoor Beer Garden	28	35%
4	Theater	25	31%
1	Dance Hall	18	22%
3	Historic Saloon	10	12%
		81	
Lodging Character			
Option	Description	Votes	
4	Boutique Hotel	22	67%
3	Tiny House Hotel	9	27%
1	One-of-kind His- toric Spaces	1	3%
2	B&B on the Square	1	3%
		33	
Residential Character			
Option	Description	Votes	
1	Lofts	19	54%
2	Live/Work	5	14%
4	Missing Middle	5	14%
3	Alley Apts	6	17%
		35	

## Fifteen Ideas Voting

August 7, 2018 at Val's Restaurant

Projects	High	Low	Weighted Score
Idea 5. Entertainment hub	20	9	49
Idea 1. Walkability	20	1	41
Idea 6. Plaza theater	16	2	34
Idea 12. Preservation incentives	16	1	33
Idea 3. Wayfinding signage	10	4	24
Idea 14. Events for locals	12	0	24
Idea 2. Parklets	9	4	22
Idea 11. Single family infill	7	7	21
Idea 9. Hotel site	4	11	19
Idea 7. Market pavilion	8	1	17
Idea 14. Love your old buildings	7	1	15
Idea 8. Restored courthouse	6	0	12
Idea 10. The hatchery/incubator	0	10	10
Idea 13. Real estate program	1	8	10
Idea 4. Parking management	2	5	9





## A New Vision for Downtown

Combining the community feedback with TSI's assessment and the Canton project team's desired outcomes, a vision map was developed highlighting streets and public space improvements, catalyst projects, historic preservation activities, and public/private partnerships. There is a mix of simpler, immediately actionable items along with longer-term more complex initiatives.

The map represents the community's desire to return downtown to its place as the heart of Canton once again. There is a strong emphasis on adding new entertainment uses for the community to enjoy as well as enhancing streets and public spaces so that downtown becomes a comfortable, appealing, and memorable place. Projects address the connection to Trade Days, but the emphasis remains on making downtown the place to be for locals. If done well, this will naturally draw Trade Days visitors seeking the local experience.

These principles are articulated in the following vision statement:

**Downtown will be lively and feel like the heart of the community once again – it will be the place people come together to socialize, relax, and hang out.**

- **Downtown will support a sustainable mix of businesses that utilizes local talent and serves the community.**

- **Residents will not have to leave Canton unless they want to for entertainment, goods, and services.**

- **The momentum from these efforts will help Canton create a separate identity beyond Trade Days, while at the same time enhancing the Trade Days experience for visitors, encouraging return trips beyond First Mondays.**



Vision Map

**“One thing is certain: If you do it for the local, the visitor will come; if you do it for the visitor, you will lose the local and, eventually, the visitor because it is the local who gives a place character.”**

*Roberta Brandes Gratz*





# 4

## Project Recommendations

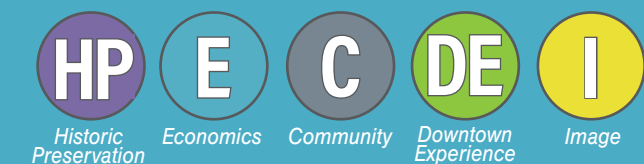
The following pages outline specific projects for the CEDC, Main Street, City of Canton and other partners to complete to achieve the community's vision for downtown Canton. The recommendations are presented in the following order:

- A. Streets and Public Spaces
- B. Catalyst Projects
- C. Historic Preservation, Building Stewardship and Incentives
- D. Other Public/Private Partnerships

A detailed implementation matrix is included at the end. Projects are numbered and are keyed to the matrix using this symbol:

**A6**

The plan goal that each project meets is keyed to these symbols:





## About Walkability

A walkable community is an urban place that supports walking as an important part of people's daily life that has a complementary relationship with transportation, land use, and the character of a place.

## Benefits

**DE** In a downtown core, people must be a priority in order for a healthy economic and social environment to thrive. Making walking enjoyable adds value to the quality and attractiveness of a place. People are more likely to linger on the sidewalks and in public spaces, creating energy and vibrancy, that in turn, draws more people.

## Implementation

In order to achieve a walkable community, a favorable balance must be achieved amongst many considerations and constraints. See figures 1-7 below.

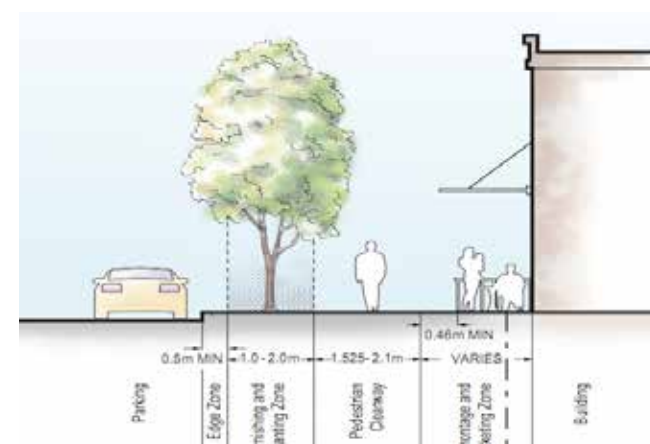
1. Achieving a proper balance between cars and people is essential. Provide adequate and attractive parking in convenient locations along with good sidewalks, crosswalks, shade, and streetscape amenities.

2. Sensible accommodations for accessibility must be implemented sensitively to retain as much historical integrity as possible while minimally disrupting healthy circulation patterns. Locate accessible ramps on side

streets and minimize the use of handrails that visually and physically disrupt the streetscape. Useful and well-designed wayfinding should be thoughtfully incorporated.

3. The configuration must accommodate a variety of uses for a rich, relevant and meaningful streetscape. Merchandise display, informal socializing, special events, and lingering should all be comfortably possible in a town square environment.

4. Vegetation should be introduced and maintained in the form of street trees, planters and hanging baskets as appropriate. This enlivens, softens and creates a friendlier setting for people. Water elements also add greatly to the happiness of a place by providing calming noise, freshness, and interest. Consider maintenance needs of all of these elements before installing.



## Elements for a Walkable Streetscape in Canton



**1** Well-designed storefront access



**2** Curb extensions



**3** Nice places to sit



**4** Vibrant crosswalks



**5** Pedestrian lighting

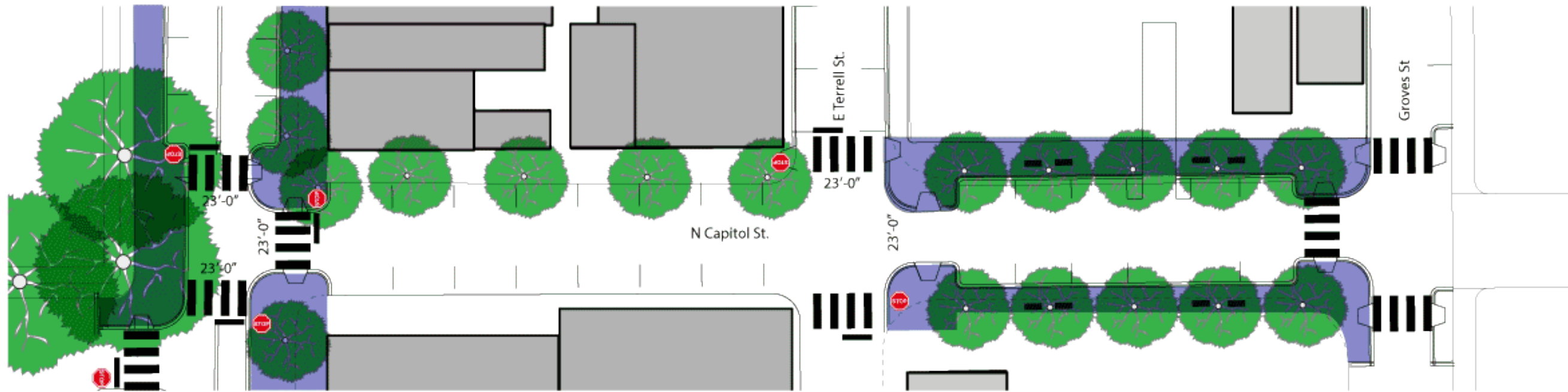


**6** Trees and planters



**7** Directional signs





### N. Capitol Street

Initial goals of the Action Plan were to connect the Trade Days grounds to downtown in order to encourage more people to include the square in their First Monday’s activities. The scope quickly expanded to looking at the entire downtown for walkability after the TSI assessment of the streetscape. It was found that walking is difficult, unsafe and secondary to auto traffic. An overall strategy for addressing this should be prioritized as this is crucial for the creation of a place where economic revitalization can happen. Following are examples of the direction these efforts should take.

Currently, there are no sidewalks on N. Capitol St., which provides the direct pedestrian connection be-

tween downtown and the trade grounds. New urban style sidewalks with street trees, benches, lighting, trash receptacles, and wayfinding system should be provided along both sides of the street on the block between Grove St. and E. Terrell St.

In the block between E. Terrell and 64/E. Dallas, the current sidewalk along the west side has already been modified for ADA accessibility. While the configuration is not ideal, it is serviceable at the moment, so minor alterations should be done to enhance the existing experience.

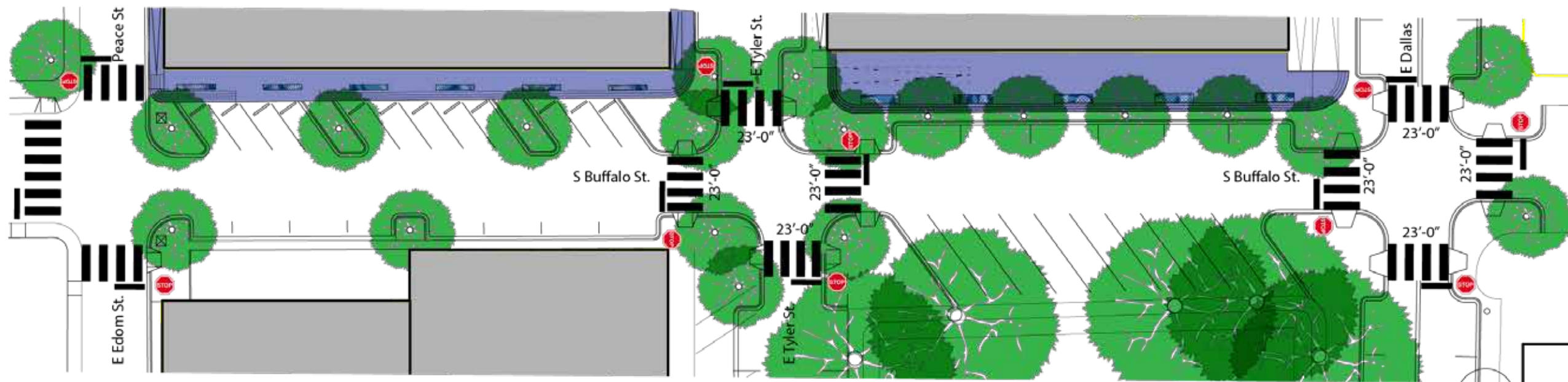
The block should be studied for modifications and mitigation tactics to the excessive handrails such as installing railing planters and street trees.



While there are currently no street trees in Canton beyond the courthouse square, it is essential to provide shade for people in the Texas climate. Besides the personal comfort of mitigating the sun and associated heat, trees enhance the perception and desirability of inhabiting the streetscape.

Street trees should be planted approximately 30’ apart depending on species and circumstances along a sidewalk to provide a continuous canopy. Combined with benches and lighting, a desirable space for walking and lingering is created that helps attract and keep people longer in downtown. This has obvious benefits to all merchants and activities.



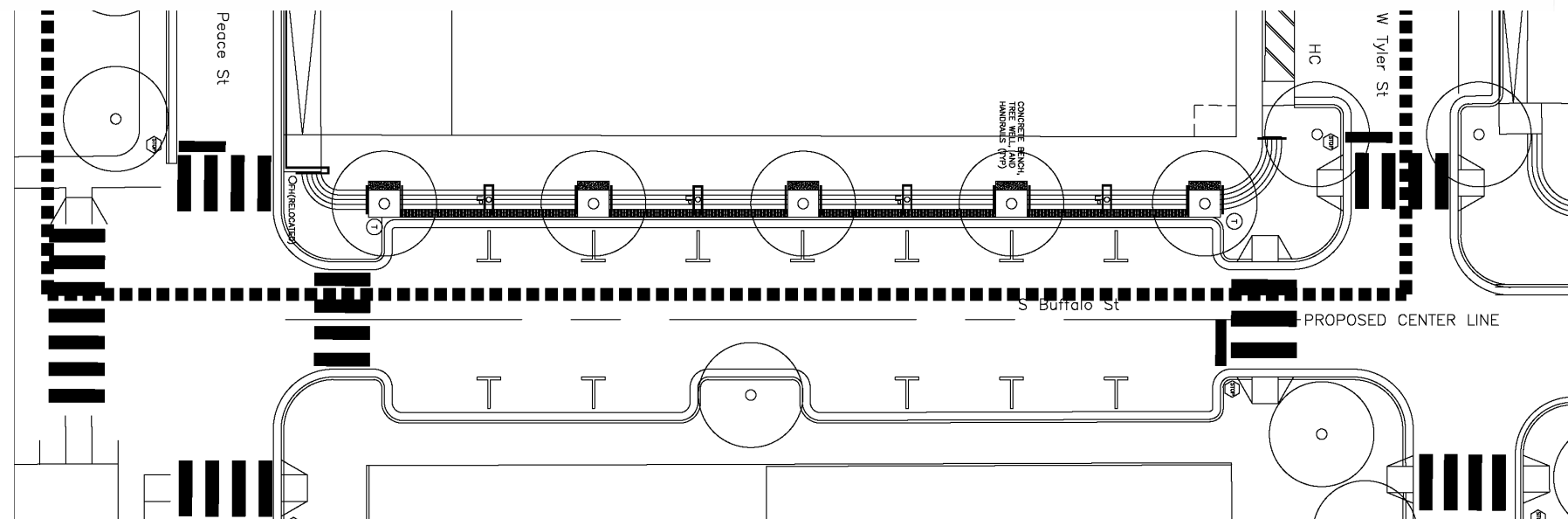


### N. & S. Buffalo Streets

Buffalo street also connects Trade Days to downtown and could be an important link. Similar treatment with new and modified sidewalks as Capitol St. is required between Grove St. and 64/E Dallas.

An opportunity exists with the annual Texas Capital Fund Grant to immediately begin work on the west side of S. Buffalo between E. Tyler and Peace streets. Considerations here are to try to avoid the haphazard solutions applied to other blocks. Key elements are trees, side street ramps, and minimal use of handrails. Working with local TxDOT engineers early is key to deploying a successful solution.

See Matrix A1 - A5 for implementation details.





# A6 Streets and Public Spaces Wayfinding Signage

## About Wayfinding

Wayfinding signage is an essential tool to lead people not just to the downtown district, but to various amenities and attractions as well. Wayfinding systems not only direct people to points of interest but also convey an image or sense of place. Typically a system starts with gateways, which are markers at community entrances designed to show visitors they have arrived at some distinct place. These can be actual signage, landscaping, abstract monumental features or works of art. Once people are within the district, directional signage helps them find their way to shops, dining, parking, cultural anchors, public restrooms, visitor services, and more. Directional signs should have clear design specifications for those visible to pedestrians, to auto-traffic, or both for safety reasons. Interpretative signs and historical markers can offer more information about the destinations themselves as unique sites of interest. Finally, great downtowns offer landmarks and other photo-inspiring signage that help people connect to the place and remember their experience.

## Benefits

**DE** A very small percentage of visitors actually go to the visitor center, so wayfinding systems help people find the best aspects of your district. A coordinated sign system results in measurable increases in pedestrian traffic and sales activity, as well as visitation to other cultural attractions.

## Implementation

Successful wayfinding in downtown Canton is critical because of the large number of visitors already coming to the area for Trade Days. It should be developed and implemented as a complete signage plan and program using the sign types illustrated below. It could include other marketing displays, kiosks, and official city materials, as well as the parking signs required in the parking management policy. It is recommended that Canton first complete their image-building identity project and then undertake the creation of a wayfinding system. This will ensure consistency among projects with the downtown brand.

It is recommended that the signage design build off of work that has already been done for the Town Square Park, using similar materials and a possible color palette of lime green and charcoal grey.

See Matrix A6 for implementation details.

**“Nationally, less than 5% of visitors stop at visitor information centers – IF they can find that.”**

*Roger Brooks*



## Recommendations for memorable and successful wayfinding in Canton



Gateway signs



Landmark signs



Photo-inspiring signs



Directional signs



Interpretative signs



Parking signs



Unplanned signs

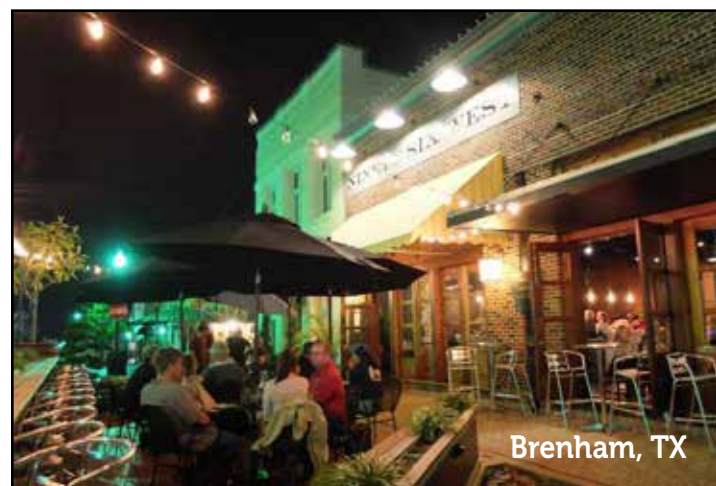


## About Parklets

The term “parklet” refers to the conversion of on-street parking spaces or un-used portions of right-of-way to provide “mini-parks”—amenities and green space for the public. Parklets are typically created by building a platform on the pavement to extend the sidewalk space and retrofitting it with benches, planters, tables and chairs, and bike racks. Some right-of-ways, such as state highways, may not permit building a temporary parklet so outdoor dining in the form of sidewalk cafes is encouraged in these areas to enliven the streetscape and encourage economic development.

## Benefits

- DE** By increasing pedestrian activity and encouraging people to linger longer, parklets create economic opportunity for local businesses. Measurable impacts include rises in weekday evening pedestrian traffic, in business revenue, and in public perception of the area’s community character.
- C**



## Implementation

The priority area recommended for implementation has been designated around the square (shown in purple on the Parklet Area Map). Canton Main Street should “test” a parklet and outdoor dining area through a temporary pop-up event to help educate business owners and locals about what they are and how they add to downtown. Eventually a more formalized permitting process should be developed with the city that provides design guidelines to ensure appropriate safety standards are met and clarifies how to apply for a permit as well as maintenance requirements.

See Matrix A7 for implementation details.



## Parklet FAQ

**How do you decide where to build parklets?**  
An area has been designated by this plan for parklets to encourage more pedestrian activity around the Courthouse Square. Local businesses apply to host a parklet, which they pay to construct and maintain.

**Are parklets temporary or permanent?**  
Parklets are not permanently affixed to the roadway or sidewalk in any fashion.

**Who maintains parklets?**  
The host is responsible for maintaining the area. If well-maintained, they may apply for annual renewals.

**Can food and alcohol be served?**  
If the hosting business has a liquor license to serve alcohol to their customers, you are able to eat and drink during their serving hours.

**What is required in a typical permit process?**

- Parklet application
- Application fee
- Site plan showing dimensions
- Description of elements included
- City license and maintenance agreement
- Proof of insurance
- Documentation of support from abutting property and business owners.
- City council can approve spaces in existing parking. Spaces that are residual and not used for parking can be approved administratively.

**Are there best practices for design?**  
See the National Association of City Transportation Officials, Urban Street Design Guide. <https://nacto.org/publication/urban-street-design-guide/interim-design-strategies/parklets/>



# A8 Streets and Public Spaces Parking Management

## About Parking Management

Every resident complains about parking. While it may seem that the issue is not enough parking, rarely is this the case in smaller downtowns. The issue is that the existing parking is not managed well. It is important to understand the difference between the perception of parking availability and the reality of parking availability. Education is often the most important aspect of a parking management policy.

Parking management policies are designed to address downtown parking holistically and create multiple targeted solutions to be implemented simultaneously in order to resolve the conflict. Typically parking management plans address the following things:

- Striping best practices for angled and parallel parking
- How to best manage on-street parking with time limits or meters
- Designated locations for employee parking
- Suitable permanent locations for public off-street parking
- Special considerations for evening and event parking
- Enforcement procedures
- Parking directional signs

In Canton, there is a need to find parking solutions to support:

- **Trade Days visitors and their impact on the core of downtown;**
- **Downtown as a county employment center;**
- **Small businesses so they can thrive and sustain as a diverse local retail and services base; and,**
- **The desired entertainment destination uses.**

*Parking lot signage helps clarify where to park but also can promote a positive image for the downtown.*

## Benefits

**DE** Parking management solutions can be low-cost and with a high return on investment as measured in number of visitors, lengths of stays and overall better downtown circulation and access. Parking management programs can be designed to be revenue-generating, paying for themselves as well as providing a stream of income to be reinvested into downtown.

## Implementation

Canton should begin with a parking inventory and focused meetings with the groups affected by the “parking problem” including county officials, people who work downtown, business owners, and owners of private lots. Once the specific challenges are clearly articulated, the City, the Canton EDC and Main Street can work together on outlining the specific strategies that will form the basis of the parking management plan which can include things like a parking shuttle and downtown employee parking pass. There are a number of parking lots, both publicly and privately owned in downtown. It is recommended that some of these lots be designated and clearly signed for everyday use and for Trade Days use. Special consideration needs to be taken during the wayfinding process to incorporate the appropriate signs for both the parking lots and directional signage to them. Outreach will be necessary on the part of Main Street to educate both residents and visitors on the new policy.

*See Matrix A8 for implementation details.*



*The Parking (Perception) Problem*

**500 Feet**  
The average distance from the back of a big box store parking lot to the front door.

**200 Feet**  
The average block length in downtown Canton.





## About Catalyst Projects

Catalyst projects are those that spur other development through their types of use, their financial investment, their location, and their potential to create excitement and potential for other projects. In bigger towns, these are typically large hotels and sports stadiums, but in smaller downtowns they can be more modest developments that focus on creating viable relationships with the existing downtown elements that will have significant impact to restitching the core fabric.

## Entertainment Hub

**E** In Canton, an appropriate catalyst project would be the establishment of an entertainment hub at the Quality Furniture-Eubanks building, located at 180 W. Tyler St. This use is indicated by the community survey call for nightlife, entertainment, and the desire for encouraging people to hangout in downtown as people once did.

**HP**

## Benefits

It is important that catalyst projects are viewed not in terms of short term gain to a city, but rather as part of a long term holistic strategy to build lasting and significant value. Incentives, recruiting, and strategic thinking are necessary for generating the most benefit. These extended benefits include foremost the attraction of other businesses and activities that strengthen the quality of downtown. They also obviously bring immediate economic value in higher tax collections for particular properties as well as adjacent properties.

For an entertainment hub, the direct extended benefits would be to encourage more nighttime and weekend activities, to entice First Monday visitors into downtown after shopping, and to provide a central gathering place for the community.

## Implementation

An entertainment hub should be an all ages offering that is family as well as adult-friendly. Serving a broad range of patrons fits into the Canton lifestyle and would provide a large customer base for a successful business. The building is big enough to host games and recreational sports like pool tables, bocci ball, etc., as well as serve as a live music venue and sports bar.

Careful recruitment and financial support should be given to the use of the Quality Furniture-Eubanks building as an entertainment hub. Devices such as 380 agreements, building improvement assistance, tax abatements, etc. should all be considered for recruiting a desirable business.

Guidance through the permitting process should also be given to any developer and any streamlining of the permitting process should be done on this and future projects in downtown to overcome unfamiliar codes and process.

Improvements to the surrounding streetscape should be considered when the project gets underway to create good walkability to Trade Days and the square to help ensure success of the venture.

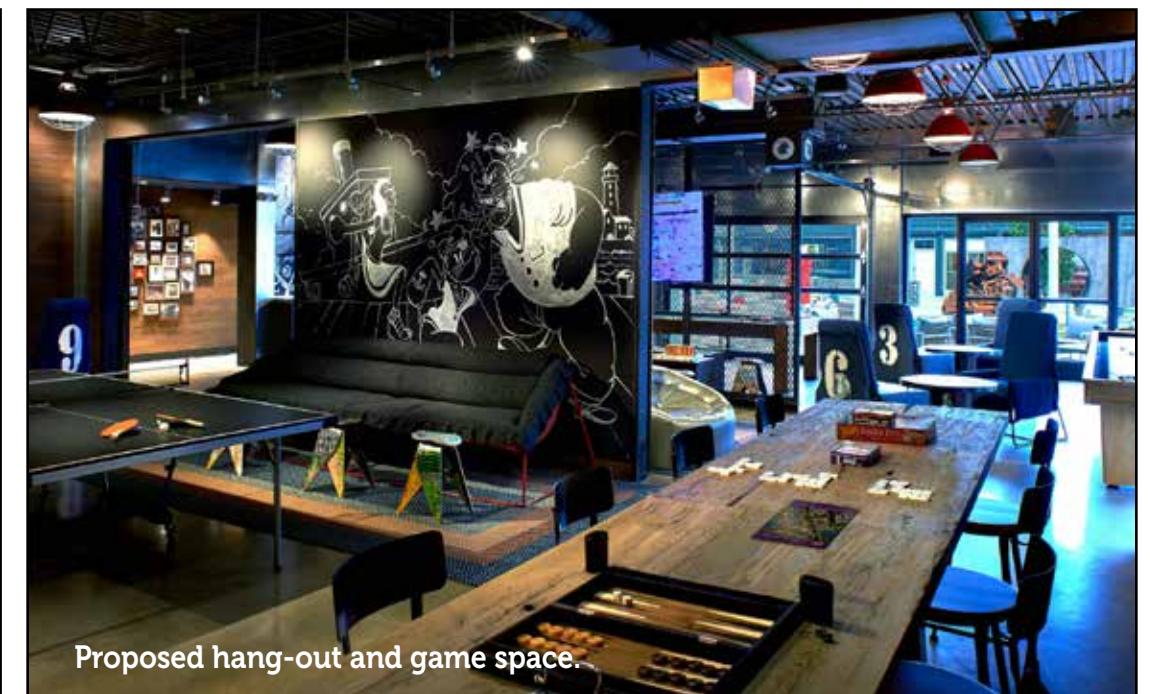
See Matrix B1 for implementation details.



Location Map



Existing conditions at 180 W. Tyler.



Proposed hang-out and game space.



# B2 Catalyst Projects Plaza Theater

## About a Downtown Theater

Thinking strategically is important in downtown revitalization projects. There is a unique opportunity to create a chain of multiple events that address several problems with one strategy.

Starting with the community survey and verified by TSI observations, a downtown theater is a highly desirable attraction for Cantonians. Returning the c. 1945 Plaza Theater to a movie venue as well as a live music and performance venue would meet this need. Similar community theaters can be found in other Texas towns. The LanTex in Llano is owned by the city with staffing and maintenance by Main Street volunteers. It shows first run movies as well as musical performances, one of which is broadcast on the radio. Pearsall's Oaks Theater is privately owned and also shows first run movies. The renovated historic Texas Theater in the Bishop's Arts District of Dallas was a catalyst project developed through Community Block Grant Development, low interest loans and community fundraising.

The historical configuration of the Plaza Theater with the current Canton EDC offices is mostly intact and is a relatively easy rehabilitation project. The auditorium floor is the most altered, but it is a reasonable project to undertake restoration. Relocating the Canton EDC and history museum sets other projects into effect as well.

## Benefits

**E** Returning the Plaza Theater to a working movie house furthers several objectives of the Action Plan by bringing people downtown, providing entertainment, adding energy to the nightlife, and creating a critical mass of activities to anchor the downtown. It is also part of a catalyst strategy that will help other properties in downtown. Rehabilitating the Plaza Theater into a working theater again would result in a community-desired movie theater and two newly renovated buildings.

## Implementation

The 1924 bank building (203 S. Buffalo St.) at the

corner of S. Buffalo and E. Tyler is currently uninhabitable because a life lease restriction on a portion has made the building unsellable and has stymied the remodeling and use of the entire building. The uninhabitable Hilliard Hardware (207 S. Buffalo St.) building next door has the same owner who needs to free up capital with the sale of the bank building. If the Canton EDC were to buy the bank and rehab around the life lease temporarily carrying those costs that a private owner could not, then they could either use the building for their offices or lease the building around the life lease until that is no longer an issue. They could then sell the building presumably at a profit. This would free up the necessary capital for the Hilliard Hardware building to also be rehabilitated.

See Matrix B2 for implementation details.

## Case Study: Texas Theatre, Dallas, TX

Texas Theatre	
Acquisition Cost	\$ 400,000
Remodel Cost	\$ 3,800,000
Community Block Grant Development - forgivable loan	\$ 1,200,000
Low interest loan from City \$400,000	
Southern Dallas Development Corporation loan	\$ 600,000
Gifts and community fundraising	\$ 2,000,000
<b>Total debt today</b>	<b>\$ 250,000</b>
Monthly Expenses including debt service	\$ 3,500
Rent to private sector - Aviation Cinemas	\$ 5,000
<b>Cash Flow</b>	<b>\$ 1,500</b>



Plaza Theater, 119 N. Buffalo St.



1924 Bank Building, 203 S. Buffalo St. and historic Hilliard Hardware at 207 S. Buffalo St.



**About a Market Pavilion**

Canton should build on the success of the farmer’s market by building a multi-use market pavilion at the current or a nearby site. The pavilion should be a simple, but well designed and built outdoor space that includes basic restrooms and possibly other facilities that would allow its use as a city and a leasable special events venue.

**Benefits**

**E** Providing shade and rain protection will make the market more sustainable and enjoyable. Many cities around the state have outdoor pavilions that support the local food movement, and they have become centers of activity. A market pavilion would enhance the established farmer’s market and provide better accommodations that would help grow the market. It would also be available for other community events, and it could be leased for private events, which would help the market be self-sustaining.

**C**

The pavilion can be thought of as a Trade Days grounds for locals. The emphasis on a producers market ensures that the experience is unique to Canton and created by locals for locals. Such an authentic experience is highly desirable not only by current residents, but also by visitors seeking unique, authentic experiences they cannot get at home. This could lead

to future residents who want to have such authentic experiences as part of their everyday lives. If located at the current location between Groves and E. Terrell or close by, the market can also become a connecting activity between Trade Days and downtown, which was an initial objective of the Action Plan.

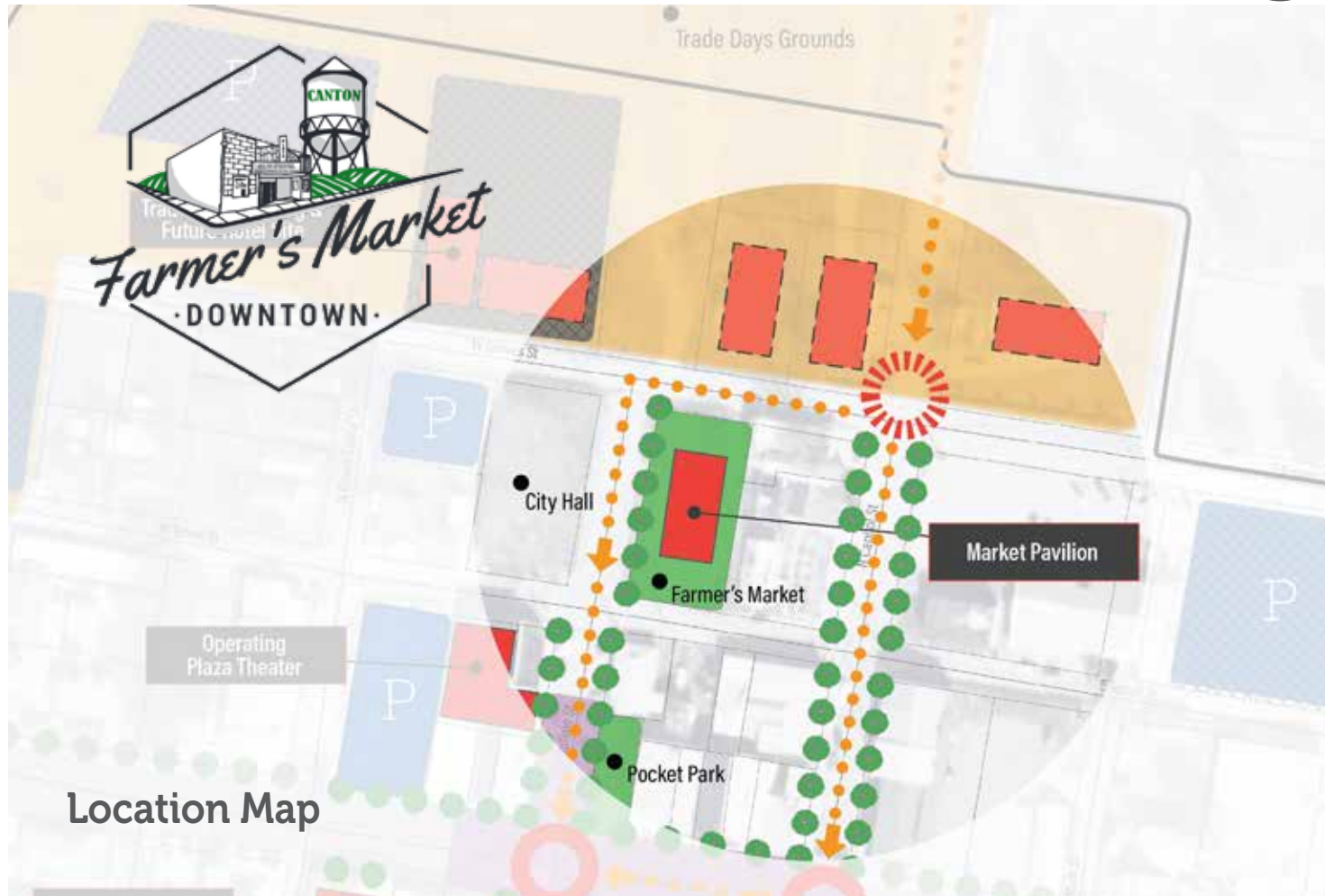
**Implementation**

At the same time of construction, connecting elements like sidewalks, trees, and wayfinding should be concurrently built to take full advantage of the market pavilion’s effects on drawing Trade Days customers downtown. This should also tie into the downtown walkability improvements for an obvious and easy transition from the Trade Days grounds to downtown.

Carefully consider other programming possibilities as well as private rental opportunities in the area so these amenities can incorporated early and thoughtfully.

Funding from the Texas Department of Agriculture and participation in the Go Texas Certified Farmers Market program along with USDA and Community Development Block Grants should all be explored in order to create a quality structure that will have maximum impact to the vibrancy and economic revitalization efforts for downtown.

*See Matrix B3 for implementation details.*



Opening day at Canton's market.



Texarkana, TX



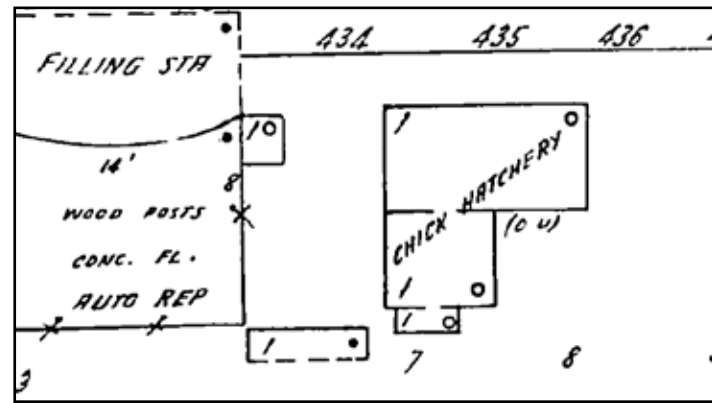
Harrisonburg, VA



# B4 Catalyst Projects The Hatchery

## About The Hatchery

The “Hatchery” is a proposed economic development project for the Canton EDC named after the chick hatchery that once occupied the property. The concept is for the organization to acquire and rehabilitate the former First National Bank of Canton building at the corner of E. Tyler and S. Main streets for the purposes of relocating their offices and establishing the Canton Business Center (the “Hatchery”).



This vacant single-story commercial building is 7,444 square feet and has a market value of \$78,960, according to records provided by the Van Zandt County Appraisal District for the year 2018. The Canton EDC and Canton Visitors Bureau currently occupy the former Plaza Theater, which is located 201 N. Buffalo St. and totals 5,006 square feet.

## Benefits

**E** This relocation would provide the two entities with an additional 2,438 square feet as well as an estimated 2,000 square feet currently occupied by the Canton Plaza Museum (new site to be determined) at the former First National Bank.

TSI recommends using this additional 4,400 square footage to support new economic development-related functions, including a conference room and small, furnished flexible space both of which could be rented to generate revenue. Having a conference room in Canton would provide the Canton EDC with a professional space for hosting potential prospects. The EDC should target local startups and entrepreneurs to occupy the

executive office spaces, which could also be shared on an as needed basis.

An additional use to consider is the provision of workforce training and/or entrepreneurial education. The eastern third of Van Zandt County is included within the Tyler Junior College taxing jurisdiction; however, this institution currently has no presence within Van Zandt County. Given that area residents are being taxed yet receiving no services, the Canton EDC should leverage this situation by encouraging the college to provide some sort of business education and/or workforce development services in the proposed Canton Business Center. One other potential partner to contact about contractual education and business assistance services is the Tyler Innovation Pipeline.

## Implementation

A strategy should be developed by the EDC to determine the appropriate focus of the incubator. Initially it appears that cottage agricultural business activity already begun with the farmer’s market might be a viable focus, which would indicate including a shared commercial kitchen facility and gearing business support towards small scale manufacturing.

After a focus is determined, a feasibility study should be done before moving forward to determine costs including use of the building. The building is vacant and reportedly has minor fire damage, but is reportedly otherwise sound.

See Matrix B4 for implementation details.



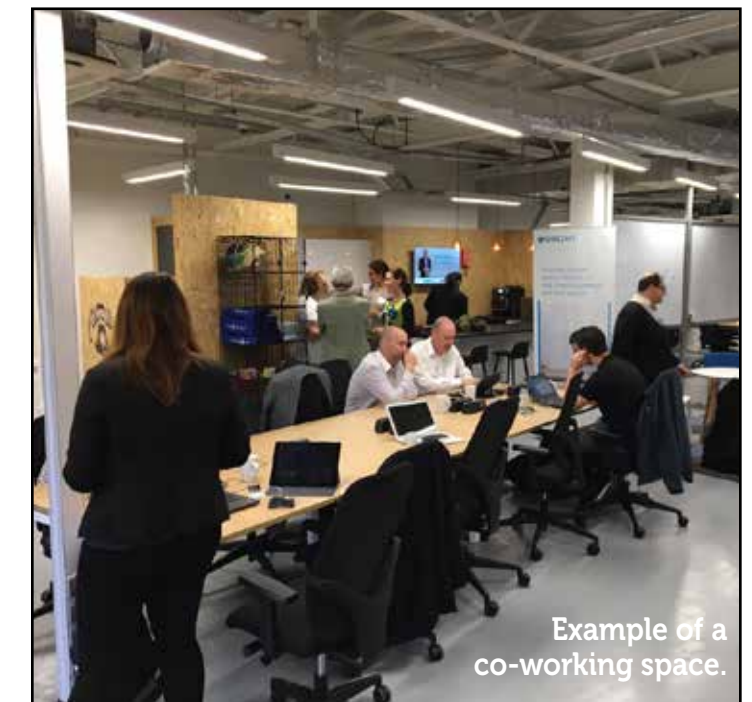
Tyler, TX



Location Map



Example of a commercial kitchen space.



Example of a co-working space.



# Catalyst Projects Van Zandt County Courthouse Restoration B5

## About the Courthouse Restoration

The Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Grant Program (THCPP), is an award-winning, nationally recognized program administered by the Texas Historical Commission. To date the program has funded 70 Texas courthouse restorations, and another 26 have received emergency or planning grants. In 2018, Van Zandt County was awarded a \$450,000 grant award to develop architectural plans and specifications for a full restoration of the courthouse to its 1937 configuration, and a complete upgrade of the building and all its systems to comply with life safety code and accessibility standards during the most recent round of the process. A planning grant does not necessarily guarantee additional grant funds to complete the restoration, but a planning grant is required to be eligible to apply for restoration funds.

## Benefits

- HP** Restored historic courthouses have proven to be an economic booster for the Texas and local county economies. The counties with restored historic courthouses also see an impact in the form of increased safety, accessibility, energy efficiency, tourism, and more.
- E**



Restored courthouses around Texas serve as the cultural and social center for their communities. Georgetown programs their square constantly and the 1911 Williamson County Courthouse, restored in 2007, serves as a dramatic focal point for events like the Poppy Festival (pictured) and the Georgetown Wine Swirl which has raised over \$400,000 for the local facade grant program.

## Implementation

The presence of the county seat, especially the foot traffic it brings to downtown, and the charm of the courthouse square as a public space, are two of Canton's most important assets. A beautifully restored building contributes to the vitality of the district in many ways. The City of Canton, the Canton EDC and Main Street need to be active partners involved in general planning with Van Zandt County and the Van Zandt County Historical Commission so areas of overlap and support can be identified such as shared downtown amenities. Many restored courthouses include museum space, special event space, and public restrooms for downtown. The restored courthouses are often tourism drivers as well, so planning accordingly for visitor amenities will be beneficial. Discussion about the upper level jail space should take place early as it presents opportunities to drive tourism.

Embarking on the restoration of the courthouse is a major infrastructure project in downtown and requires an enormous financial commitment from the County. Generating positive community goodwill for the project is an important role that Main Street can play.

See Matrix B5 for implementation details.





# C1 Identity and Events Image Building Campaign

## About Image-Building

In the Main Street Four Point Approach™ to revitalization, promotion means positioning downtown as the center of the community and hub of economic activity, while creating a positive image that showcases a community's unique characteristics. There are three ways to do this:

- Image-building and marketing campaigns;
- Special events and festivals;
- Business and retail promotions.

Image-building activities change negative impressions and reinforce positive perceptions to promote the district as a cohesive unit. This can be accomplished through identity development, marketing campaigns, image-building events, or products. For Canton, this is a chance to shape a message for downtown. Rather than being thought of as empty, old, and boring — actual responses from the Community Survey — Canton has the chance for people to think of exciting, progressive, fun, unique, vibrant, lovely, family-oriented, etc. Again, all words were used in the survey to describe the desired future downtown Canton.

## Benefits

Image-building will create positive emotional connections to downtown. This results in measurable impacts such as increased attendance at events, new volunteers and more volunteer activity, increased sponsorship and fundraising abilities and overall more public support for Main Street, Canton EDC, and public investment in downtown. It also creates a competitive advantage in attracting entrepreneurs and business expansions.

## Implementation

It is recommended that Canton work with a professional consultant to develop a new downtown identity. The identity needs to address the different logos and brands all in use now: VisitCantonTX, DowntownCantonTX, Canton Main Street, First Monday Trade Days, Farmer's Market and City of Canton. The process of creating this may involve some additional structured, facilitated conversations with different downtown stakeholders including property owners, business owners, residents and consumers although the Action Planning process has yielded a fair amount of community feedback already.

Downtown marketing professionals, such as Roger Brooks, have noted the downtowns that are the most successful are the ones that market experiences versus physical things (*The 20 Ingredients of an Outstanding Downtown*, Destination Development Association, 2017). To that end, TSI recommends pursuing a concept that focuses on Canton as a comfortable place. Part of identity development is articulating words that will always describe your place and TSI recommends:

- Comfortable
- Friendly
- Relaxed
- Charming
- Rural

This can be refined with professional expertise, but the identity development is one of the first projects Canton should undertake. It will then inform many of the other action plan recommendations that will utilize the concept such as wayfinding, parking management, and additional event creation.

See Matrix C1 for implementation details.



Examples of other Texas Main Streets logos and identity starting top left and going clockwise: San Marcos Love Downtown identity at their wine swirl; Georgetown's Most Beautiful Town Square and Shop Small Treasure Hunt; and Taylor's Taylor Made at a ribbon cutting ceremony for a local business expansion.





## About Events Promoting Local Assets

Similar to image-building, this recommendation is about re-positioning downtown as the center of the community and hub of economic activity through the strategic use of events and activities. Typically, Main Street programs do this two ways:

1. **Special events/festivals:** these bring potential customers and excitement to downtown. They are designed to make a long-term impact on the district and its businesses through exposure versus same-day increased sales.

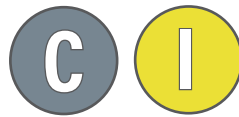
2. **Business/retail promotions:** these should attract customers and “ring registers,” making an immediate impact on businesses. Retail promotions include everything from events to coupons to advertising.

During the Community Survey, the public ranked “Create additional community events and programming in the Downtown area” as their third priority. In particular, they requested: food-based events (like markets, farm-to-table dinners, food and wine pairing events), family-friendly events, and outdoor concerts.

Over the past year, Canton Main Street has already created a number of new events and activities including the Farmer’s Market and Outdoor Movie Series. TSI recommends continuing the momentum from these efforts and continuing to strategically develop special events to help change people’s perception about what there is to do in downtown. **It is especially important to remain focused on designing events for local Canton residents. If these are done well, then visitors will seek them out preferring the sense of discovery versus those that feel “touristy.”**

## Benefits

When events are done well, they bring people to downtown and change the way people feel about it. This results in increased foot traffic, increased sales activity and creates new opportunities for business growth. For example, outdoor movies allow nearby restaurants to serve food to-go, increasing sales without needing more square footage.



## Implementation

First, Canton Main Street should continue to strategically develop special events to meet the needs of the community. A previously successful evening music series was mentioned during the merchant meetings and nightlife remains a much-desired amenity. Coordinating this around First Mondays would bring both locals and visitors to downtown on a Friday or Saturday evening.

Second, Canton Main Street needs to collaborate with downtown merchants on business and retail activities that promote shopping local. This may mean creating a merchant’s association or reshaping the Promotions Committee to include a number of downtown merchants to focus on retail events. These activities would include Shop Local cooperative marketing efforts (already underway), Small Business Saturday promotions, and possibly a monthly evening shopping event. Many Main Street cities host some version of a Sip, Shop and Stroll where shops stay open until 8:00 PM or later the same evening each month (Third Thursday, Fourth Friday, etc), offer beer and wine for strolling, and in-store specials. Consistent hours among businesses is a necessity in order to attract new shoppers and retain customers.

*See Matrix C2 for implementation details.*



Studies have shown that, in order, these are the best money making times for retail:

1. **Saturday 11 am – 1 pm**
2. **Saturday 3 pm – 5 pm**
3. **Sunday 3 pm – 5 pm**
4. **Sunday 11 am – 1 pm**

(Bob Phibbs, The Retail Doctor)



Brenham, TX: Hot Nights, Cool Tunes



# D1 D2 Historic Preservation and Building Stewardship Incentives

## About Incentives

Because historic downtowns are largely made up of privately owned buildings, revitalization cannot occur without the support and investment of individuals. Gaining their support is critical. The most common and effective tools for encouraging building rehabilitation in Main Streets is the combination of design guidelines and financial incentives. Together these work to encourage building improvements and ensure they are done at the highest quality possible.

Since Canton became a Main Street in 2001, several notable rehabilitation projects have happened, but modifications and alterations continue to be a factor that contributes significantly to the perception that downtown is not a pleasing experience. Notably, preserving and rehabilitating downtown's historic buildings was the community's highest ranking priority. Working systematically with property owners to rehabilitate<sup>1</sup> their buildings should be one of the highest priorities for Canton EDC and Canton Main Street.

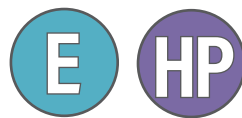
To that end, two new financial incentives programs are recommended:

- **“Above and Beyond” Preservation Grant**
- **Building Stabilization Revolving Loan**

These incentives can help offset the additional costs of proper restoration versus sub-par alterations, and thus act as a “carrot” to encourage proper design. For these financial programs to be effective, the proposed project must be approved by a design review board before it receives any of the incentives.

## Benefits

With effective incentives in place, investors and property owners are more likely to undertake rehab projects. Appropriate



<sup>1</sup> Many communities use the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings as the starting point for guiding Main Street design (see the sidebar on page ). In historic commercial districts, rehabilitation is a practical way to make commercial buildings economically productive once again. Rehabilitation blends a building's original, distinguishing physical characteristics with the requirements of new uses and new tenants.

design changes positively affect property and/or resale values of buildings and increase a property owner's ability to attract or retain quality tenants. Projects like this also increase the desirability of the entire downtown to potential shoppers, visitors, and other investors. Other property owners will make changes to remain competitive.

## Implementing an Above and Beyond Grant Program

It is recommended that the Canton EDC and Main Street create a new grant program to support property owners going “above and beyond” in returning the exterior facades of their buildings to their original historic condition. This may include uncovering transom windows, removing slipcovers, rebuilding canopies, and reconstructing features such as storefront windows and recessed entryways if those have been removed over time. Doing the work correctly can be more costly.

Grants like this are typically 50-50 matching grants and the amount per project can vary; however, in order to see results, the minimum recommended is \$10,000 or more resulting in a total project minimum of \$20,000. The money for these programs in Texas most often comes from various fund-raising efforts or Type B EDC sales tax. All projects requesting grants should adhere, at a minimum, to the Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation; and, in the future, local design guidelines.

## Implementing a Building Stabilization Loan Program

A number of building owners cited concerns about the cost to make necessary building improvements for code compliance such as accessibility and fire suppression. It is recommended that the Canton EDC and Main Street also create a building stabilization loan program to help resolve these issues and make more buildings tenant ready and code compliant. This type of program is a common tool in Main Street programs and it is frequently used for building maintenance, code compliance, interior renovations, structural repairs, etc.

Typically, one or several local banks pool money that is earmarked for the program. Often, there is a per-project cap of anywhere from \$25,000 to \$100,000. Rates are typically set at either a percentage of or a number of points below prime. The Department of Agriculture's Texas Capital Fund also offers funds through their Small and Microenterprise Loan Fund Program.

See Matrix D1-D2 for implementation details.





## About Preservation Tools

This part of the plan refers to increasing the overall community perception of historic preservation and its benefits in Canton's historic downtown. The quality and condition of the buildings in the downtown district matter. The built environment not only visually communicates community character, vitality, and culture, but directly impacts the economic viability of the district. In order to adequately protect and preserve downtown for the future, certain tools, in addition to incentive programs, need to be in place and administered correctly. These tools include:

- **outreach and education initiatives;**
- **An ordinance with a design review process;**
- **and adopted design guidelines.**

This is not just about telling people what they can or cannot do. It is also about educating property owners and business owners about the historic value of their buildings and spaces, helping them see that they are more than property owners—they are stewards with a responsibility of maintaining their building in a way that that contributes to the public realm in downtown Canton. Canton EDC and Main Street need to communicate that guidelines and land use regulations are necessary in order to protect these irreplaceable assets. These tools work best when paired with financial incentives and the Canton EDC has already demonstrated commitment to financially supporting reinvestment in downtown. It is essential that a larger preservation framework is in place to ensure quality design outcomes.

## Benefits



These tools help protect the aesthetic integrity of the district and help stabilize or increase property values. Each community is unique. Going through this process will help protect Canton's authenticity as the creation of design guidelines will capture what is special about Canton. Once such a resource is created, talking to building owners about restoring their buildings becomes much easier.

## Implementing Preservation Tools

Canton has a historic preservation ordinance in place. It was adopted in 2003 and amended in 2016. The Main Street Design Committee is the appointed "Historic Preservation Design Board." Education and training is needed for both staff and these committee members on the Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation and the design review process. Another program at the THC, the Certified Local Government Program or CLG, supports the work of local historic preservation programs and provides training, technical assistance, and grant funds for certified communities. Canton should work towards CLG status.

Grants can support projects like National Register nominations and design guidelines. Design guidelines need to be developed in Canton to assist staff, property owners, as well as building and business owners in the design review process. Guidelines should be adopted as a referenced source in the historic preservation ordinance. They should include information on the proper techniques for all design work in downtown including facade work, paint selection, reviewing and addressing new work on previously altered buildings, masonry condition and cleaning, signs, canopies, accessibility, lighting, new construction, and more.

If done correctly, design guidelines are a one-stop resource for building owners to learn about: historic construction techniques; local permitting procedures; available design assistance; contact information for building inspectors, contractors and sign manufacturers; and incentives. This is a much-needed resource in Canton and will help alleviate many design and code concerns that have arisen over the past year or so.

Finally, all of this should be done with an engaging education and outreach program that includes building history research and interpretative materials and events. This could include historic happy hours, walking tours, or signage and mobile app development.

*See Matrix D3 for implementation details.*



116 E. Dallas, c. 1900



116 E. Dallas, 2001



116 E. Dallas, 2018-

## Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation

*(Taken from the National Park Service's The Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation & Illustrated Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings)*

1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.
2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.
3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.
4. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historical significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials.
7. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.
8. Significant archeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.



# E1 Public Private Partnerships Groves Street Parcel

## About Groves Street Parcel

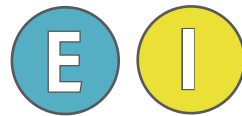
First Monday Trade Days attracts an average weekend visitor count of 200,000 people according to the Canton's Visitor Bureau. Many of these visitors stay in the seven+ motels, 17+ bed and breakfasts and nine+ RV parks in the area. Many also stay in neighboring communities. Within the downtown district there is currently only one lodging use.

Hospitality trends now demonstrate that visitors are seeking local experiences. The market impact of sites like Air BnB, which promise travelers the chance to live like a local, have forced even larger hotel chains to shift their model to one that promotes unique experiences. People want their stays to be memorable. They want to feel as if they are part of the local scene and not tourists. Historic downtowns inherently offer these one-of-kind experiences. The market demand already exists, but additional time is needed to continue to foster local entertainment and dining options to compliment an overnight stay. Attracting a smaller, more intimate lodging experience to downtown Canton is a longer-term project, but is an obvious strategic new use consistent with the plan's vision.

The identified site is the Groves Street parcel where N. Buffalo St. ends. This is adjacent to the Trade Days grounds and on one of the key pedestrian corridors to the square. Slightly elevated, it provides a view of downtown and would also offer a visible landmark for those traveling from the square towards the Trade Days grounds. As the plan evolves, this area becomes a focal point for activity – the perfect location for a destination hotel.

## Benefits

A destination boutique hotel will help elevate the image of downtown Canton. In addition, lodging uses bring visitors to downtown in the evenings and weekends. This creates pedestrian activity 24/7 supporting dining, nightlife, events, and retail. However, one does not necessarily drive the other. The plan allows for a coordinated and strategic effort, which is



required for success. Development of this particular parcel will also add property, sales, and hotel tax revenue to city and county tax rolls.

## Implementation

This recommendation is about creating an overnight boutique experience that immerses visitors in the charm of downtown Canton. While the number of visitors would currently support an additional small hotel or bed and breakfast, the evening and weekend amenities in downtown including dining, nightlife, events, and shopping, do not yet offer an experience that would meet the expectations of visitors seeking more boutique style accommodations.

The Canton EDC should first begin conversations about ownership of the Groves Street parcel. The ideal arrangement would be for the EDC to acquire the parcel and recruit an operator using the land as an incentive. If the site cannot be purchased, then perhaps a long-term lease can be arranged. Other potential sites can be identified if necessary. The character of the hotel will depend on the chosen site and ownership arrangement. During the community character preference activity, the public expressed a strong desire for a small (10 or so room) traditional hotel concept as opposed to a tiny house hotel, a cluster of unique Air BnB style spaces throughout downtown, or a bed and breakfast experience on the square. The community also expressed a strong connection to the historic Dixie Hotel. Its character and scale are ideal for this site and a modern interpretation would be suitable.

See Matrix E1 for implementation details.



Top map inset: The Dixie Hotel offers inspiration for a future downtown lodging experience.

Below: The Wander Inn provides a unique boutique hotel experience near Round Top Texas for the biannual Antique Week market.





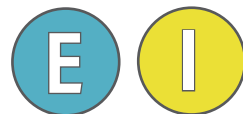
## About Residential Infill

One of the most common phrases used during the planning process to describe what people like about Canton is its rural character. New residents are choosing Canton because of the gently rolling East Texas wooded feel. They like that they can exit the interstate and not drive through endless residential suburbs to reach the center of town. However, growth is coming. As the market analysis demonstrates, the population increase is inevitable as the Dallas and Fort Worth metro area continues to expand.

This recommendation is about preserving one of Canton's distinguishing characteristics in a way that benefits downtown and increases the quality of life for existing and new residents. While new residential neighborhood development may not seem within the scope of a downtown action plan, TSI sees a specific opportunity for infill residential of an entire neighborhood (60+ homes) on one site immediately adjacent to the downtown district that could be transformative for the downtown business climate. More broadly, pursuing pro-active development policies that preserve the rural character will elevate Canton within the region making it a community of choice for new residents leaving the DFW area seeking a small town, rather than suburban, lifestyle.

## Benefits

A 2013 study by Smart Growth America compared compact central business districts and suburban neighborhoods in seventeen regions across the country (Building Better Budgets: A National Examination of the Fiscal Benefits of Smart Growth Development, May 2013). More compact new development costs, on average, 38 percent less in up-front infrastructure than "conventional suburban development" for things like roads, sewers, and water lines. It costs 10 percent less in ongoing service delivery by reducing the distances law enforcement or garbage trucks must travel to serve residents. Well-connected street grids cut down on this travel time, too. And compact development produces on average about 10 times more tax revenue per acre.

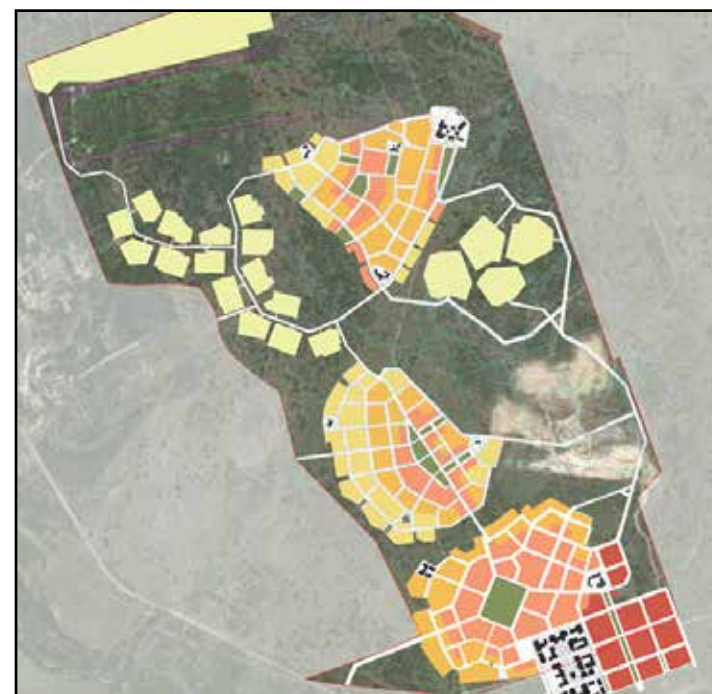


## Implementation

Canton should create a city resolution that articulates the community's desire to protect its rural character by pro-actively planning for new neighborhoods that will continue the historic pattern of the downtown core and its surrounding residential areas.

As part of the city's comprehensive planning process, the Canton EDC and City should identify priority traditional neighborhood sites for single family infill, both large tracts for neighborhoods and smaller individual projects. The 17 acres to the west at the termination of W. Tyler and W. Edom Streets should be studied closely for feasibility. All potential residential sites should have the appropriate future land use designation and any potential development barriers identified such as infrastructure, utilities and drainage costs. The city should also adopt a subdivision ordinance in priority traditional neighborhood areas that requires elements like block lengths, sidewalks and alleys to continue the city grid development patterns.

*See Matrix E2 for implementation details.*



Examples of traditional neighborhood development in Texas include Cobb Ranch near Georgetown (far left), and Plum Creek in Kyle (center and right.). These developments preserve open space and offer homes that front tree-lined gridded streets with sidewalks, front yards, and garages accessed from rear alleys.



# Implementation Matrix

Canton, TX Downtown Action Plan					17-Sep-18
PROJECT RECOMMENDATIONS	TIMELINE	COSTS	IMPLEMENTATION PARTNER	POSSIBLE FUNDING SOURCES	
	immediate short (yrs 1-2) mid (yrs 3-4) long (5+)	\$ = 0 - 49,000K \$\$ = 50,000 - 249,000K \$\$\$ = 250,000 - 1,000,000M \$\$\$\$ = 1,000,000M+			
<b>A. Streets and Public Spaces</b>					
<b>A1. S. Buffalo Street Streetscape Improvements</b>					
<b>A1.1</b> Follow water line replacement with new striping. Configure temporary street alignment to test intersection improvement recommendations.	immediate	\$	TSI, CoC	<a href="#">Department of Agriculture Texas Capital Fund, Downtown Revitalization and Main Street Infrastructure Grant Program</a>	
<b>A1.2</b> Paint high visibility crosswalk with pedestrian pavement marking and signs.	immediate	\$	CEDC, Main Street, TSI, CoC		
<b>A1.3</b> Install bulbouts at the intersection of S. Buffalo at 64/Dallas and S Buffalo at Tyler to align intersection and protect pedestrians at busy crossings.	mid	\$\$	TSI, CoC		
<b>A1.4</b> Reconfigure sidewalks and crosswalks for better walkability and mobility with improved handrail location, seating and planting considerations.	mid	\$\$\$	CEDC, Main Street, TSI, CoC		
<b>A1.5</b> Plant drought tolerant street trees every 25 to 35 feet on center. Trees should be located between the curb and buildings in the public right of way. Large tree wells (80 square feet minimum) will help to ensure the survival of trees along N Buffalo.	mid	\$\$	CEDC, Main Street, TSI, CoC		
<b>A1.6</b> Add lighting to achieve appropriate footcandles necessary for pedestrian safety and visibility at night.	mid	\$	CoC		
<b>A1.7</b> Install parallel on-street parking along both sides of street. For detailed information on where angled and parallel parking should be located, please refer to "Parking Strategy."	mid	\$\$	CoC		
<b>A2. N. Buffalo Streetscape Improvements</b>					
<b>A2.1</b> Follow water line replacement with new striping. Configure temporary street alignment to test intersection improvement recommendations.	immediate	\$	TSI, CoC	<a href="#">Department of Agriculture Texas Capital Fund, Downtown Revitalization and Main Street Infrastructure Grant Program</a>	
<b>A2.2</b> Paint high visibility crosswalk with pedestrian pavement marking and signs.	immediate	\$	CEDC, Main Street, TSI, CoC		
<b>A2.3</b> Install bulbouts at the intersection of N. Buffalo at 64/Dallas and N Buffalo and E Terrell to align intersection and protect pedestrians at busy crossings.	mid	\$\$	TSI, CoC		
<b>A2.4</b> Reconfigure sidewalks and crosswalks for better walkability and mobility with improved handrail location, seating and planting considerations.	mid	\$\$\$	CEDC, Main Street, TSI, CoC		
<b>A2.5</b> Plant drought tolerant street trees every 25 to 35 feet on center. Trees should be located between the curb and buildings in the public right of way. Large tree wells (80 square feet minimum) will help to ensure the survival of trees along N Buffalo.	mid	\$\$	CEDC, Main Street, TSI, CoC		
<b>A2.6</b> Add lighting to achieve appropriate footcandles necessary for pedestrian safety and visibility at night.	mid	\$	CoC		
<b>A2.7</b> Install parallel on-street parking along both sides of street. For detailed information on where angled and parallel parking should be located, please refer to "Parking Strategy."	mid	\$\$	CoC		
<b>A3. N. Capitol Streetscape Improvements</b>					



**Canton, TX Downtown Action Plan**

17-Sep-18

PROJECT RECOMMENDATIONS	TIMELINE immediate short (yrs 1-2) mid (yrs 3-4) long (5+)	COSTS \$ = 0 - 49,000K \$\$ = 50,000 - 249,000K \$\$\$ = 250,000 - 1,000,000M \$\$\$\$ = 1,000,000M+	IMPLEMENTATION PARTNER	POSSIBLE FUNDING SOURCES
<b>A3.1</b> Follow water line replacement with new striping. Configure temporary street alignment to test intersection improvement recommendations.	immediate	\$	TSI, CoC	<a href="#">Department of Agriculture Texas Capital Fund, Downtown Revitalization and Main Street Infrastructure Grant Program</a>
<b>A3.2</b> Paint high visibility crosswalk with pedestrian pavement marking and signs.	immediate	\$	CEDC, Main Street, TSI, CoC	
<b>A3.3</b> Install bulbouts at the intersection of N. Capitol at 64/Dallas, N Capitol and E Terrell, and N Capitol and Groves to align intersection and protect pedestrians at busy crossings.	mid	\$\$	TSI, CoC	
<b>A3.4</b> Reconfigure sidewalks and crosswalks for better walkability and mobility with improved handrail location, seating and planting considerations.	mid	\$\$\$	CEDC, Main Street, TSI, CoC	
<b>A3.5</b> Plant drought tolerant street trees every 25 to 35 feet on center. Trees should be located between the curb and buildings in the public right of way. Large tree wells (80 square feet minimum) will help to ensure the survival of trees along N Buffalo.	mid	\$\$	CEDC, Main Street, TSI, CoC	
<b>A3.6</b> Add lighting to achieve appropriate footcandles necessary for pedestrian safety and visibility at night.	mid	\$	CoC	
<b>A3.7</b> Install parallel on-street parking along both sides of street. For detailed information on where angled and parallel parking should be located, please refer to "Parking Strategy."	mid	\$\$	CoC	
<b>A4. 64/Dallas Streetscape Improvements</b>				
<b>A4.1</b> Follow water line replacement with new striping. Configure temporary street alignment to test intersection improvement recommendations.	immediate	\$	TSI, CoC	<a href="#">Department of Agriculture Texas Capital Fund, Downtown Revitalization and Main Street Infrastructure Grant Program</a>
<b>A4.2</b> Paint high visibility crosswalk with pedestrian pavement marking and signs.	immediate	\$	TSI, CoC	
<b>A4.3</b> Reconfigure sidewalks and crosswalks for better walkability and mobility with improved handrail location, seating and planting considerations.	mid	\$\$\$	CEDC, Main Street, TSI, CoC	
<b>A4.4</b> Plant drought tolerant street trees every 25 to 35 feet on center. Trees should be located between the curb and buildings in the public right of way. Large tree wells (80 square feet minimum) will help to ensure the survival of trees along N Buffalo.	mid	\$\$	CEDC, Main Street, TSI, CoC	
<b>A4.5</b> Add lighting to achieve appropriate footcandles necessary for pedestrian safety and visibility at night.	mid	\$	CoC	
<b>A4.6</b> Install parallel on-street parking along both sides of street. For detailed information on where angled and parallel parking should be located, please refer to "Parking Strategy."	mid	\$\$	CoC	
<b>A5. Courthouse Square Streetscape Improvements</b>				
<b>A5.1</b> Retrofit streetscape on west side of S. Buffalo between Dallas and Tyler by widening sidewalk and restriping parking to parallel.	mid	\$\$	CEDC, Main Street, TSI, CoC	<a href="#">Department of Agriculture Texas Capital Fund, Downtown Revitalization and Main Street Infrastructure Grant Program</a>
<b>A6. Wayfinding Signage</b>				



PROJECT RECOMMENDATIONS	TIMELINE immediate short (yrs 1-2) mid (yrs 3-4) long (5+)	COSTS \$ = 0 - 49,000K \$\$ = 50,000 - 249,000K \$\$\$ = 250,000 - 1,000,000M \$\$\$\$ = 1,000,000M+	IMPLEMENTATION PARTNER	POSSIBLE FUNDING SOURCES
<b>A6.1</b> Hire a professional design firm to develop a comprehensive wayfinding and signage design package. Deliverable would be a detailed manual of the signage and wayfinding system which will include locations, dimensions, and materials in addition to designs and content.	mid	\$\$	CEDC, Main Street, CoC	HOT Funds
<b>A6.2</b> During the wayfinding signage design process, ensure that key destinations (City Hall, Visitors Center, Courthouse, Public Parking, Trade Days Gates, Farmers Market, etc.) are included. Add walking distance times to destinations as appropriate.	mid	NA	CEDC, Main Street, CoC	
<b>A6.3</b> Plan/install signage within Trade Days grounds that directs people to downtown.	mid	\$	CEDC, Main Street, CoC	
<b>A6.4</b> Design and install iconic downtown directional signage on water tower.	mid	\$	CEDC, Main Street, CoC	
<b>A6.5</b> Coordinate signage efforts with overall streetscape improvements; agreements with TXDOT and other applicable improvements.	mid	NA	CEDC, Main Street, CoC	
<b>A6.7</b> Design and install downtown monument sign	mid	\$	CEDC, Main Street, CoC	
<b>A6.8</b> Fabricate and install wayfinding signage throughout downtown.	mid	\$	CEDC, Main Street, CoC	
<b>A7. Parklet and Outdoor Dining Program</b>				
<b>A7.1</b> Plan a temporary parklet demonstration to educate business owners, property owners, and the public on what they are and how they activate the downtown streetscape. Note: International Parking Day is September 21, 2018.	immediate	\$	CEDC, Main Street, TSI, CoC	<a href="#">AARP Community Challenge Grants</a>
<b>A7.2</b> Determine location and design specifications in partnership with interested property/business owners and input from city public works and engineering staff.	short	NA	CEDC, Main Street, TSI, CoC	
<b>A7.3</b> Draft permitting process and ordinance for adoption.	short	NA	CEDC, Main Street, TSI, CoC	
<b>A8. Parking Management</b>				
<b>A8.1</b> Inventory number of spaces.	immediate	NA	TSI	
<b>A8.2</b> Identify particular challenges (employee parking, county parking, etc.).	short	NA	CEDC, Main Street, TSI	
<b>A8.3</b> Identify permanent public parking lots (including public parking for county uses) and special event/Trade Days parking lots which can be paid lots during peak times.	short	NA	Main Street, TSI, CoC, VZC	
<b>A8.4</b> Create an employee parking pass so employees of downtown businesses can park for 2+ hours in designated areas without enforcement.	short	NA	Main Street, CoC	
<b>A8.5</b> Enforce the two-hour time limit for street parking on the square with either installation of metered parking or a parking monitor position.	short	\$	CoC	
<b>A8.6</b> Develop a parking shuttle program that benefits downtown businesses and visitors.	short	\$	CEDC, Main Street, Business Owners	
<b>A8.7</b> Reinvest funds from enforcement and special event parking in shuttle program or other initiatives that drive spending in downtown businesses.	short	\$		Self-funding + possible additional revenue
<b>A8.8</b> Coordinate with wayfinding sign design process to include a parking signage package for downtown as a deliverable.	mid	NA	CEDC, Main Street	
<b>B. Catalyst Projects</b>				



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<b>B1. Quality Furniture as an Entertainment Hub</b>				
B1.1 Provide performance based incentives for new owner/operator	immediate	\$-\$\$	CEDC	
<b>B2. Plaza Theater</b>				
B2.1 Test the concrete floor to verify materials and depth of concrete.	immediate	\$	CEDC	
B2.2 Develop feasibility study for theater re-use plan and costs.	short	NA	TSI	
B2.3 Recruit theater business operator.	short	NA	TSI, CEDC	
B2.4 Draft lease to own agreement for operator.	short	NA	CEDC	
B2.5 Hire a contractor to complete theater improvements.	short	\$\$	CEDC, Theater Operator	<a href="#">Texas Department of Agriculture Capital Fund Real Estate and Infrastructure Program</a>
B2.6 Develop feasibility study for 203 S Buffalo re-use plan and costs.	short	NA	CEDC	
B2.7 Enter into agreement to purchase 203 S Buffalo.	short	\$\$	TSI	
B2.8 Create conceptual design and architectural plans for rehabilitation of 203 S. Buffalo.	mid	\$	TSI, CEDC, Design Professional	
B3.9 Hire a contractor to oversee construction.	mid	\$\$\$	CEDC	
B2.10 Move CEDC, Main Street, Chamber and Visitors Center to 203 S. Buffalo. Combine with possible uses TBD including Go Local Canton Gift Shop, museum, co-working space, and professional offices.	mid	\$\$\$	CEDC, Main Street, Chamber	
<b>B3. Market Pavilion</b>				
B3.1 Continue to promote and increase exposure for Canton's producers market.	continuous	\$	CEDC, Main Street, Business Owners	
B3.2 Create conceptual design and architectural plans for pavilion. Consider commercial kitchen and other enhanced amenities to create business development opportunities for producers.	mid	\$	TSI, CEDC, Design Professional	
B3.3 Acquire property or long-term lease for property.	mid	\$\$	CEDC, CoC	
B3.4 Apply for grant funds.	mid	NA	CEDC, Main Street, CoC	<a href="#">USDA Farmers Market Promotion Program</a>
B3.5 Hire a contractor to oversee construction of improvements.	mid	\$\$\$	CEDC	
<b>B4. The Hatchery</b>				
B4.1 Develop vision and mission for the Hatchery as a space to incubate local businesses. Consider potential focus on developing a pipeline to support agricultural entrepreneurs and products.	mid	NA	CEDC, Main Street, Chamber, Business Community	
B4.2 Enter into agreement to purchase 231 E Tyler (former Texas Bank and Trust).	long	\$\$	CEDC	
B4.3 Create conceptual design and architectural plans for redevelopment.	long	\$	TSI, CEDC, Design Professional	
B4.4 Hire a contractor to oversee construction of improvements.	long	\$\$	CEDC, Main Street	
B4.5 Consider permanent relocation of CEDC, Main Street, Chamber and Visitors Center to 231 E Tyler.	long	NA	CEDC, Main Street, Chamber	
<b>B5. Van Zandt County Courthouse Restoration</b>				
B5.1 Discuss the future location of shared downtown amenities including museum, visitor center, and public restrooms during the county's space planning phase.	immediate	NA	VZC, Main Street, CEDC	



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B5.2 Develop full architectural plans and specifications for restoration to its 1937 configuration.	short	\$\$\$	VZC	THCPP Planning Grant recipient, Round X, announced April 27, 2018
B5.3 Complete restoration after successful application to Round XI THCPP (Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program) construction grant funds.	mid	\$\$\$\$	VZC	Round XI (2020-2021) application will likely open Nov 2019.
B5.4 Work with County Historical Commission to increase interest from public and generate broad community support for project.	mid	\$	Main Street, VZCCHC, VZC	
<b>C. Identity and Events</b>				
<b>C1. Image Building Campaign</b>				
C1.1 Create a cohesive, professional but friendly, identity for downtown that addresses the relationship with Trade Days but sets it apart.	mid	\$\$	CEDC, Main Street, Design Professional	
<b>C2. Events to Promote Local Assets</b>				
C2.1 Continue shop local efforts by establishing a merchants group as part of the Main Street Promotions committee that will partner with Main Street to plan and execute business and retail promotions in Downtown	immediate/ continuous	\$	CEDC, Main Street, Business owners	
C2.2 Design and implement additional events for the local community that can include Trade Days crowds for economic impact, but are catering towards residents, such as Saturday night entertainment on the Square.	immediate/ continuous	\$	CEDC, Main Street, Business owners	
<b>D. Historic Preservation, Building Stewardship and Incentives</b>				
<b>D1. Historic Preservation Grant Program</b>				
D1.1 Develop scoring criteria for matching funds to property owners that follow the tailored Design Guidelines and/or the Secretary of the Interior Standards and go above and beyond in the rehabilitation of exterior building features.	short	NA	TSI, CEDC, Main Street	
D1.2 Set aside a dedicated amount of funds annually	continuous	\$-\$	CEDC	EDC Funds or Main Street fundraiser (ex. City of Georgetown Wine Swirl)
D1.3 Promote the program.	continuous	NA	CEDC, Main Street	
<b>D2. Building Education Materials and Stabilization Revolving Loan Fund</b>				
D2.1 Create a guide to downtown development that clarifies the code requirements and permitting process.	immediate	NA	CEDC, Main Street, CoC	TxCDBG Small and Microenterprise Revolving Loan Fund
D2.2 Find a local banking partner.	short	NA	Main Street, CEDC, Local Bank	
D2.3 Develop program guidelines and administrative responsibilities.	short	\$	Main Street, CEDC	
D2.4 Promote the program.	continuous	NA	Main Street, CEDC	
<b>D3. Preservation Ethic</b>				



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<b>D3.1</b> Create an interpretative experience/walking tour highlighting the history of downtown buildings.	immediate	\$	Main Street, VZCCHC	
<b>D3.2</b> Re-establish the Historic Preservation Design Board and Certificate of Appropriateness process at outlined in Ordinance 2016-20.	short	NA	Main Street, CoC	
<b>D3.3</b> Draft tailored design guidelines to assist property/business owners, city staff, and EDC/Main Street staff in reviewing projects that alter the exterior of buildings in the HD Overlay District.	mid	\$	TSI, Main Street, CoC	
<b>D3.4</b> Establish a tax abatement program for contributing properties in the HD Overlay to freeze city portion of taxes at pre-rehabilitation amount for 5-10 years.	mid	NA	CoC, Main Street, CEDC	
<b>D3.5</b> Become a Certified Local Government.	long	NA	CoC	
<b>E. Public/Private Partnerships</b>				
<b>E1. Groves Street Parcel</b>				
<b>E1.1</b> With owner's permission, complete feasibility study for new construction of boutique lodging on Groves parcel.	mid	NA	TSI, CEDC	
<b>E1.2</b> Develop recruitment materials and incentive package for owner/operator.	long	\$\$	CEDC, CoC	
<b>E2. Single Family Infill Opportunities</b>				
<b>E2.1</b> Advocate for a city resolution to protect Canton's rural character by pro-actively planning for new neighborhoods that will continue the historic pattern of the downtown core and its surrounding residential areas.	mid	NA	CEDC, CoC	
<b>E2.2</b> Identify potential sites for single family infill both large tracts for neighborhoods and smaller lots for individual projects.	mid	NA	CEDC, CoC	
<b>E2.3</b> Adopt a subdivision ordinance that requires traditional city grid development patterns including 200' block lengths, sidewalks and connectivity.	mid	NA	TSI, CoC	

## Conclusion

### The Beginning

The Canton Downtown Action Plan is a thoughtful result of several months of research, observations, community input, and at the core of it, passionate conversations between the TSI team and many earnest individuals of the Canton EDC, city staff and officials, business and property owners, and engaged citizens.

The Action Plan is the beginning of an exciting, deliberate reawakening of the physical, cultural, historical, and economic downtown heart of a proud, vibrant, and spirited community.

### Next Steps

The next phase is to develop and scope the particular projects in the Action Plan in regards to the financial and personnel resources available and create a timetable for implementation. Responsibilities should be thoughtfully distributed to the Canton EDC, Main Street Board, and City of Canton as well as to engaged individual citizens as appropriate. This implementation process will continue to be coordinated through the Canton EDC with the assistance of TSI.

It is important to keep the community informed and

engaged throughout the realization of these projects. Including as any members of the community as possible in these projects is important to keep up interest, foster personal connections to the vision, and ensure continued high levels of enthusiasm and support for a better Canton.

Setting realistic expectations, meeting them, and celebrating the successes of each step along the way is essential to maintaining project momentum and credibility.

TSI has no doubt Canton is about to transform downtown into an even better version of itself. The process of creating the Action Plan has already had positive effects in the community, and a renewed optimism and energy is already present. Cantonites are ready for a better a downtown, and more importantly, they are ready to make it happen. ■





**TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION**  
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