



SECTION 13: CIVIC IMAGE RECOMMENDATIONS

Civic Image Vision

Concepts such as gateways and special districts gained increasing importance to participants as the public involvement process grew and evolved. For much of the recent past Whitehouse has lacked this component of its urban makeup; however,

many citizens speaking to the steering committee felt that the City should establish some unique urban areas even if it has little raw material to work with at the beginning. Cities such as Southlake Carroll were identified as examples where "something was built from nothing."

***"I moved to Whitehouse at the same time that Southlake Carroll was going through the same growing pains that we are now, their town center grew out of nothing, out of a field."
- Barbara Parmley***

***"[If we have a developer balk at meeting our standards] he's not the one you want in the first place (DS). You want the one standing behind him that is waiting for a community that has the standards [to protect his or her investment(MS)]."
- Debbie Shafer, Mark Sweeney***

Above all, residents choosing to participate in the project strongly supported establishing a desired aesthetic and land use standard and adhering to that vision through zoning. While participants understood why aesthetic standards were difficult to establish within

the Zoning Ordinance, many felt that Whitehouse should be willing to lose some projects in order to eventually get the type of development that would benefit the community the most. While they understood the need to be flexible and work with private sector developers, speakers seemed more concerned with eventually getting the "right development" option over the "first development" option.

***"If a developer comes in and [what they propose] does not fit then we [need to] say 'I'm sorry it doesn't fit... please make it fit because we'd love to have you.'"
- David James***



***"I'm more of a 'let's make it happen mentality,' we have waited 25 years for this area to do something and I think Whitehouse is tired of waiting."
- Susan Shivers***

possibilities due to existing development.

The desire to get something in the works within a very short time was strong. The fears about development constraints within the original town site led to the argument that the new Town Center should be located away from existing development in more of a

***"[As an argument in support for the Town Center near the original town site versus a totally new location,] one little retail square is not a destination for me... but if it's somewhere for me to shop [a place where] my kids have something to do... multiple functions with all these things together... that might be a destination [like we could have in the City's central area]."
- Jan Bellefeuille***

gateway setting near Loop 49. Others countered with the argument that commercial development of that nature would lack the all-inclusive elements which could be possible within a mixed use area near government facilities, employment, and the burgeoning parks system. Those in favor of the original town site did not wish to ignore the possibilities for gateway development; however, argued strongly for differently themed projects in both locations.

***"[To the argument] that we sat around for 25 years... the big difference in the next 25 years is Loop 49... [if we aren't prepared] we're going to be behind the curve."
- Jan Bellefeuille***

Citizens and steering committee members repeatedly stressed the urgency of establishing a detailed District Plan and enacting related ordinances. This desire for quick action was spurred by the TxDOT land acquisitions along Main Street (FM 346).

***"The developers are looking at Whitehouse... they may be speculating near Loop 49... but they're serious about 346... because they figure they can capture our number of houses right here."
- Mark Sweeney***



"The potential for the redevelopment of 346 in particular is emphasized by the fact that everything is being scraped off and torn down so you have a window of opportunity that says here's your chance to do something different for that section of the City. You won't get that chance again for several decades to come... literally if you look down that street our Downtown is gone."

– Mark Sweeney

Participants wished to take action on the Town Center in order to take advantage of the opportunity presented by the right-of-way acquisitions, but also to prevent inappropriate development from occurring before specific district planning could be initiated. Citizens

feared that such development might set the district back in the long run if it was not consistent with the vision established through this Plan. Participants also strongly supported the idea of creating individual gateway districts as a way to brand the City to visitors from Loop 49 and other points of origin. Speakers hoped for regulations which would encourage a unique theme for the City's gateways to truly communicate what community values are important in Whitehouse.

"[Gateways into the community] should have distinct identities and themes that bring you into town."

– Jan Bellefeuille

"[Regarding the regulations we'd like to have for the Town Center]... it's not restricting what's going there necessarily, just how it looks."

– Suzanne Loudamy

"There are people who own land [in the Town Center] that are getting ready to put in a Braums ice cream... and Braums is not bad... but make it the nicest Brahms you've ever seen in your life."

– Jan Bellefeuille

"Whether it's a Taco Bell or a bookstore... if it fits the design criteria so be it. There is a move away from use concerns to form concerns... if you can meet our form requirements and how it's going to look we could care less what you put in there as long as it works and you're a good and compatible neighbor."

– Mark Sweeney

While many speakers supported the notion of land use regulations within these districts, the distinction between regulating use and aesthetics was also highlighted. Though not explicitly stated, the notion of form-based zoning was discussed; wherein, a particular building's conformance

with the style and theme of a district is more important than the use within.



Gateways and Special Districts

Regulatory Mechanisms

New Zoning Districts

Participants in the public involvement program for this study expressed a clear desire for the establishment of several unique and high-quality areas within the City. In general terms, these unique areas can be broken into the categories of either gateways or special districts. The Town Center is an example of a special district which would be developed from this point forward in a manner unlike the rest of Whitehouse.

Significant modifications to the Zoning Ordinance will be required in order to fully implement the recommendations of this Plan. For the purposes of improving the community's civic image, modifications to the Zoning Ordinance beyond simply adding and

One of the things that we have to do as a Planning and Zoning Commission along with the City Council, is once the Plan is approved go in and redo the Zoning Ordinance so that we have more distinct uses per district that don't bleed over into another district."
– Mark Sweeney

modifying existing zoning districts will be essential. Special districts such as the Town Center will require very specific and customized zoning requirements to allow for the specialized land use and aesthetic goals identified by the Plan Steering Committee (PSC) and citizens. In such cases an entirely new zoning district should be created.

Overlay Districts

In contrast to special districts, gateways will not be designed in such a way as to drastically alter the way land within the area is utilized. With special districts the intent is to create a different dynamic of residential and retail usage while a gateway is intended to encompass the existing land use and transportation patterns of Whitehouse within an area of significantly higher quality of aesthetics. In order to achieve this, it is recommended that the City explore the applicability



of overlay districts as a mechanism to further specialize the development regulations within certain crucial areas of the community.

In practice, an overlay district is an additional layer of zoning requirements applied on top of existing zoning. The boundaries of a zoning overlay would not necessarily conform to existing lot lines or the underlying zoning districts. Cities frequently apply an overlay to land within gateway corridors or within areas surrounding downtowns. The districts frequently require additional aesthetic controls or development review.

For example, an overlay district might provide for additional façade requirements for commercial development within the overlay district. These requirements would be in addition to the aesthetic controls applied to commercial development throughout all business zoning districts. The overlay might also require that the Planning and Zoning Commission and/or the City Council have an opportunity to review proposed site plans prior to the issuance of a building permit.

Rather than attempting to create specific zoning districts for each gateway into the City of Whitehouse, it is recommended that the City implement these types of overlay districts within gateway areas to strengthen and customize the general requirements of generic commercial zoning.

Other Regulatory Components

In addition to modifying existing zoning categories and allowing for the use of overlay districts, the City should also consider the adoption of additional Zoning Ordinance components intended to aid in the implementation of the Civic Image Section of this Comprehensive Plan. Sign regulation and site plan/parking lot design were both identified by participants as weak areas within the City's existing regulatory structure. "Sign pollution" was viewed as particularly problematic by many citizens, as was inconsistent design of commercial parking lots and curb cuts.



District Identities

Participants during public workshops expressed an interest in development which identifies Whitehouse as a unique community within the greater East Texas region. This will be particularly important as annexation and urban development

"[Successful communities] all have established themselves as their own town. Whitehouse has always lived off of Tyler... we have never said 'This is who we are, we're not just a bedroom community to Tyler.' For the first time I'm hearing 'We don't want to be swallowed by Tyler, we want to be our own town with our own personality.'"
- Susan Shivers

occur within the rural "gap" between the current Tyler and Whitehouse City Limits. One strategy for achieving this desired civic branding is the establishment of identifiable architectural and aesthetic styles for the community's gateway areas.

One example of such customization might be the utilization of certain façade materials such as the faux sandstone similar to that which was used for the Brookshire's Grocery Store. It is important to make the distinction between the construction type of a building and its aesthetic appearance. Unadorned metal buildings are gaining in popularity among builders thanks to their relatively low cost and swift construction speeds. No participants from the public involvement effort identified this construction type as attractive or beneficial for the community. However, the idea of creating an appealing and meaningful urban space can be independent of the materials used in building construction so long as the exterior façade meets with the aesthetic standard desired by the citizens of Whitehouse.

"I'm all for metal frame buildings... but as far as attracting people; on the outside make them [pretty, so that they fit with what we want our town to look like]."
- Stephen Cotton

Gateway and Special District Signage

One of the first tools used by cities to mark important gateways is signs. Although signs should certainly not become the only delineation method, well-placed and designed signage has its place in an effective civic image program.

Monumental Signage

The large "Welcome to Whitehouse" type of sign is the most prominent implementation within the category. The most effective welcome signs go beyond eloquent wording or high-quality design by



Image 13.1: The concept of welcoming visitors into a city through the use of monumental signage takes a variety of forms throughout the State. The City of Pasadena utilizes very high-profile lighting and signage which is visible throughout the day and evening from US Highway 225.

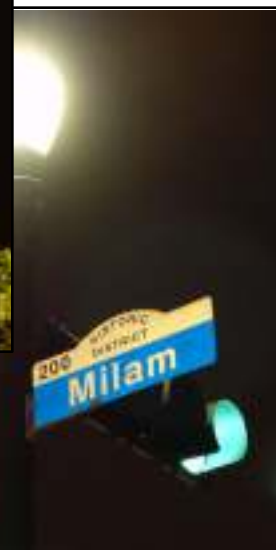
evoking a visceral connection with community symbols. The community symbology most relevant for Whitehouse might include the WPA rock, its agricultural heritage, the lake, or a tangible symbol associated with YesterYear.

Subtle and Functional Signage

Less prominent but more subtly placed signage can be used throughout a gateway or special district to reinforce its identity in a more discreet way.



Image 13.2: The City of Houston reinforces district identities through a variety of signage and streetscaping. Within Downtown the City subtly delineates subdistricts through street signage such as the Theater District (above) and Historic District (right). The street signs are posted on historically styled street lighting and traffic signals to further strengthen the historic feel. The City utilizes various themes in other districts such as highly stylized chrome streetscaping elements in Uptown and other distinct styles such as in Westchase (Image 13.4).



Specialized gateway, district, or municipal logos can be

incorporated into a variety of streetscaping elements such as street signs



(Image 13.2), sidewalk decorations, or as an element of the streetscape itself (Image 13.3). Tyler's "Brick Streets District" is identified primarily in this manner through specialized street signs. Beyond these obvious marketing tools the District advertises itself, thanks to the streetscaping design, allowing for the preservation of existing brick streets and the historically accurate reconstruction of modern brick streets.



Image 13.3: Other forms of subtle district identity reinforcement include logos and symbology integrated within streetscaping elements. The City of Perry'sburg, Ohio incorporates its City Seal on benches and other components of the streetscape (above). Palestine, Texas has painted various community symbols on sidewalks and on pavement within the intersection of several Downtown streets (right). Lampposts and other infrastructural components are painted with a similar color theme.



Image 13.4: The City of Houston utilizes pylons to delineate major street intersections within the Westchase District (right). The pylons are marked with internally lit District logos and stand approximately nine feet tall; a stature appropriate for high visibility when viewed through the window of an automobile. The City of College Station, Texas also incorporates monument style signage for district identification within its streetscaping program. The City has placed pylons with District logos throughout the Wolf Pen Creek District such as this one located along the trail system linking several restaurants (top).

Additional types of signage frequently used to identify gateways are wayfinding and monument signs. The design and placement of signage used to direct visitors to destinations within a gateway or special district is a growing discipline among development professionals.



Wayfinding is an often underused opportunity to further brand a district. District signage which incorporates wayfinding is particularly important for pedestrian districts or trail/park systems (Image 13.4). These small signs, frequently designed in a monument style, are an opportunity to incorporate district and city logos or symbols into the sign's copy.

Established architectural standards for a given district including recognizable structural components or materials for buildings can also be incorporated into the physical design of wayfinding signage. The use of architectural elements in signage is most natural for districts based on historical or natural elements. In Whitehouse the WPA era rock would be a natural component to incorporate into signage.

Signage Scaling

Signage scaling is occasionally mishandled and must be designed in a way which accommodates the District's users. Gateways and other auto oriented areas within a city rely upon larger and more prominent signage. Streetscaping design is increasingly shifting toward the incorporation of elements targeted at



Image 13.5: Scaling of special district signage in order to target the appropriate audience is critical. College Station, Texas takes advantage of both vehicular and pedestrian modes of travel. Street lighting within Wolf Pen Creek has been adorned with artistic metal signage along the District's main thoroughfares (right), while pylon and monument signage are located along the trail and at the entrances of District businesses (top).

motorists within gateways (Image 13.5). Pedestrian oriented districts and trail systems rely upon signage which is scaled for street level use. Small pillars next to sidewalks or stamped concrete are appropriate locations for such signage.



Gateway Locations

"I guess what I would like to see this Committee do is decide if we're going to take an aggressive approach and take advantage of that new loop..."

- Susan Shivers

One concern expressed by participants was that by identifying the original town site as the City's "Town Center" Whitehouse would fail to take advantage of the additional traffic which may be generated as a result of the Loop 49 construction project. This concern is valid, but could be addressed through proper execution of gateway planning which might not only take advantage of new retail markets through attracting loop commuters, but also strengthen and enhance other special districts throughout Whitehouse.

Northern Gateway (Tyler)

The northern gateway which is located on State Highway 110 North is one such opportunity to capitalize on existing and future vehicular traffic. The recommended gateway corridor location would span both the eastern and western sides of State Highway 110 from the northern City Limits to Lilly Road in the south (Image 13.6, Page 291). It is recommended that the principle "Welcome to Whitehouse" effort be made within this gateway as high levels of traffic may result from construction of the Loop 49 and "East Texas Hourglass Conceptual Corridor" projects. Both of these projects could provide new customers for retail businesses within the City of Whitehouse. The Hourglass Corridor in particular has the potential to place Whitehouse in the position of acting as a peripheral gateway into the greater Tyler metropolitan area. If constructed as initially conceived, this freeway system will direct drivers originating from eastern Texas counties through an area just north of Whitehouse.

This gateway corridor is an ideal location to implement general community symbology through district signage and design regulations. Unlike other discussed special districts such as the Town Center or lake related development,



the Northern Gateway lacks an inherent symbol for use in branding. However, it is an opportunity to promote Whitehouse itself. One of the lingering impediments to development north of the gateway is the potential lack

"If you do the extension of Hillcreek Road in this area, which is one of the premier undeveloped sections of our City... this node could become another major retail and commercial area that could provide services to our population as well as people from other communities."

– Mark Sweeney

of land use controls due to annexation restrictions. The type and appearance of commercial property between the Loop 49 interchange and the Whitehouse City Limits will be heavily dependent upon annexation policies of Tyler.

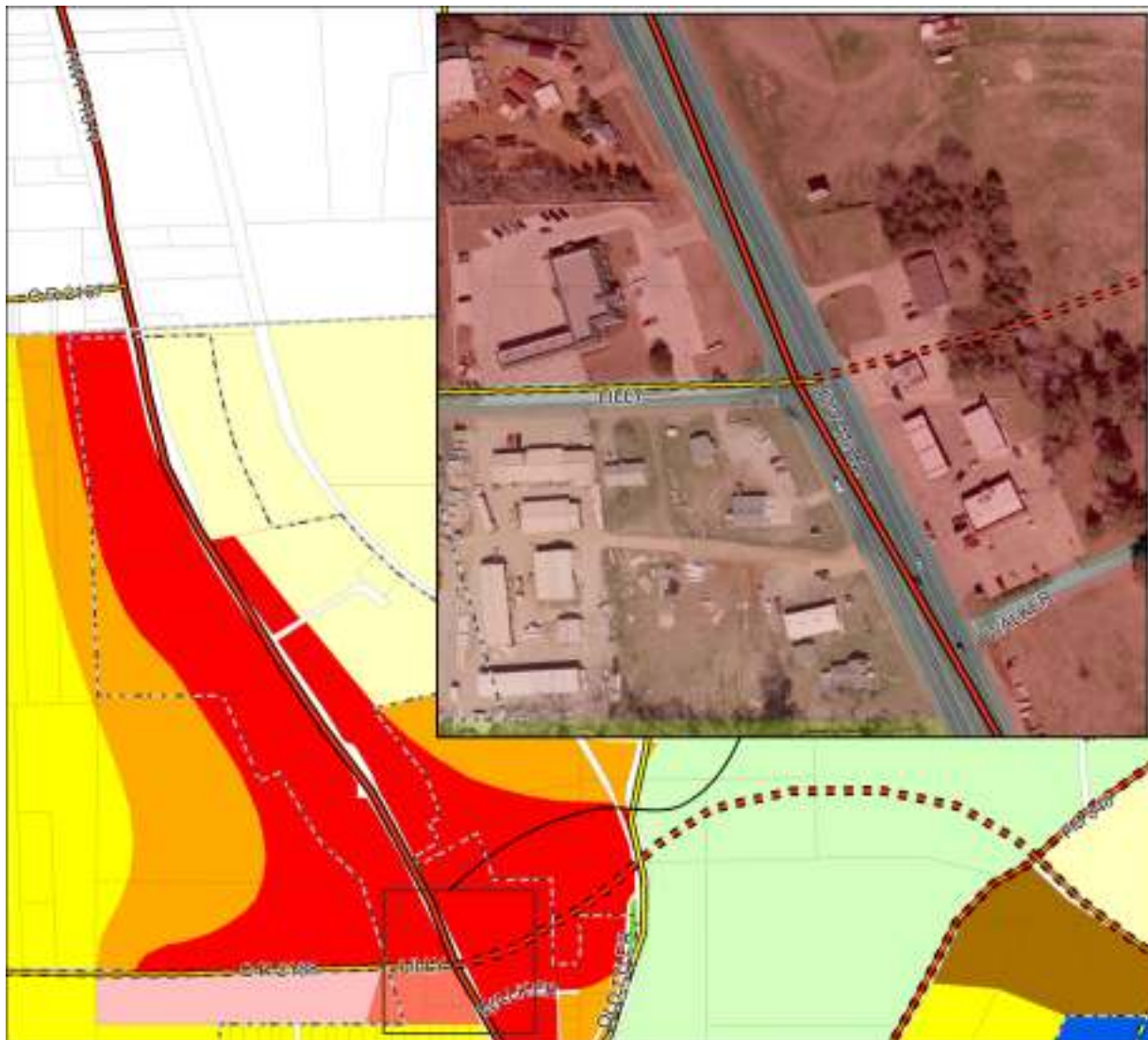


Image 13.6: The recommended northern gateway would encompass land on both the eastern and western sides of State Highway 110 ranging from the northern City Limits to Lilly Road in the south. Future land use colors (Map 10.7, Page 213) are used to identify planned land uses such as High Intensity Office/Retail shaded in red and Medium Density Residential in orange.

Southern Gateway (Troup/Lake Columbia)

The southern gateway is envisioned with a different focus than its northern counterpart. Rather than establishing a singular gateway corridor, it is recommended that the City focus on the development of several commercial nodes of high-quality commercial development connected by existing and planned residential areas. Because land within the southern gateway area has developed at a slower pace than land in the north, the opportunity to influence the aesthetics and type of land development in the southern gateway could progress more easily.

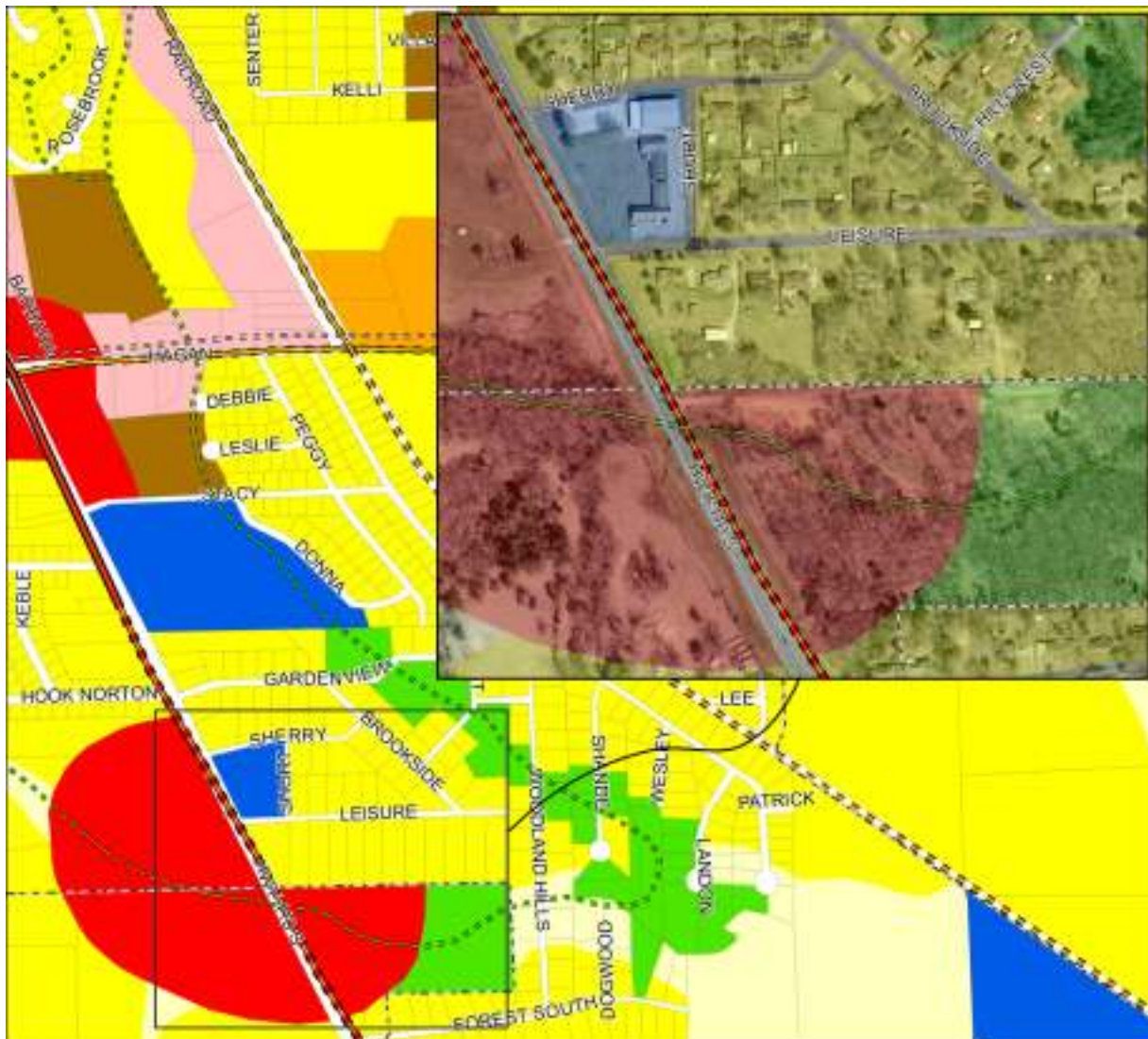


Image 13.7: The recommended internal southern gateway would encompass land on both the eastern and western sides of State Highway 110 including several blocks north and south of the Blackhawk Creek channel. Future land use colors (Map 10.7, Page 213) are used to identify planned land uses such as High Intensity Office/Retail shaded in red, Low Density Residential in yellow, and Parkland in green.



The internal southern gateway node is envisioned on State Highway 110 near its intersection with the Blackhawk Creek channel (Image 13.7). This gateway could be an opportunity to coordinate development of

"If you look at the Plan we need to balance out the City with major gateway entrances from Tyler and Troup... Considering the development of Loop 49, the attractiveness of that area in the northern part of our City will become very important... developers will gravitate to that area to make some money... The southern gateway will be the gateway to future Lake Columbia."

- Mark Sweeney

high-quality office/retail, residential, and parkland within well integrated pedestrian and vehicular systems. Land on both the eastern and western sides

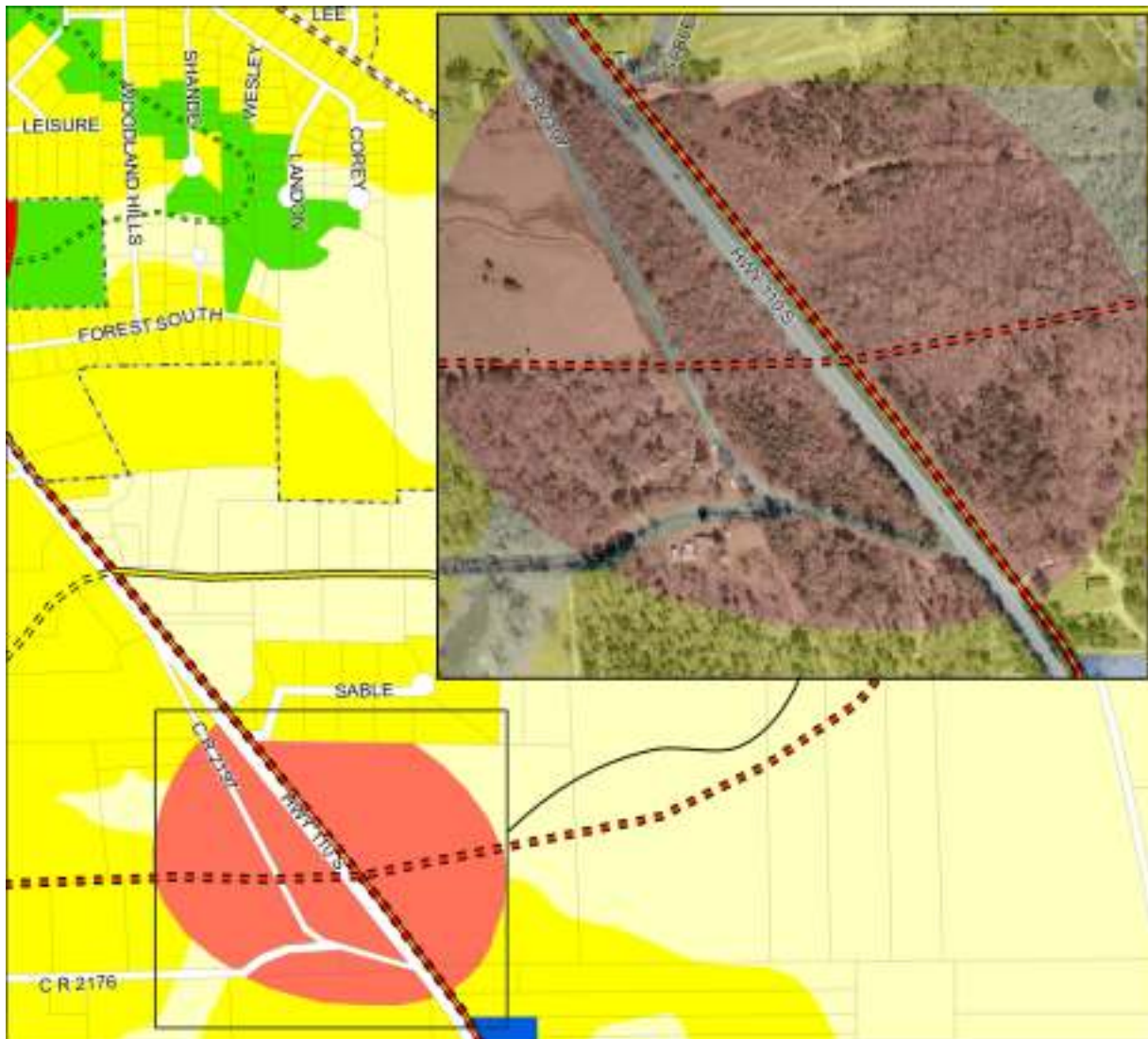


Image 13.8: The recommended outer southern gateway node would include land on both the eastern and western sides of State Highway 110 encompassing land to the north and south of the proposed southern loop. Future land use colors (Map 10.7, Page 213) are used to identify planned land uses such as Medium Intensity Office/Retail shaded in pink and Low Density Residential in yellow.



of State Highway 110 could be designed in a manner which greatly increases development value by tightly integrating commercial activities with the proposed hike and bike trail along the Blackhawk Creek channel.

A second outer gateway is envisioned a mile and a half to the south at the intersection of the proposed southern loop and State Highway 110 (Image 13.8). This gateway could be developed with a slightly less intense commercial node surrounded by existing and future residential neighborhoods.

The specific alignment of the southern loop and its associated land uses will be heavily dependent on engineering analysis and the economic feasibility of construction of this type of transportation facility. Under the right development conditions it may be possible for commercial development within this node to also take advantage of existing natural characteristics such as water features and the rolling terrain.

Both gateway nodes will be dependent upon water availability and the annexation policy practiced by the City. At present, non-municipal water systems hold exclusive rights to sell water to customers within much of the City's southern area.

The City should also closely monitor development around Lake Columbia as it impacts transportation and retail markets within Whitehouse. One intent of the southern gateway is to provide convenient retail locations within close proximity

"[Regarding Lake Columbia development] two words came up and everybody laughed, one word was hotel and the other was airport... and believe it or not, those are both highly possible."
- Danny Hogden

to the lake. Unless significant infrastructure improvements can be established near the lake without municipal support, urban development within close proximity to the lake will be expensive and slow to occur. Therefore, Whitehouse is in a position to benefit from business resulting from

recreational and general needs vehicular traffic of lake residents and visitors. Urban design and land uses within the gateway should be planned accordingly.



Eastern and Western Gateways (US 69 and Lake Tyler)

The clearly defined entry point into Whitehouse from the north and south is along State Highway 110. By contrast, travelers entering from the east or west initially encounter Whitehouse through less clearly defined points along FM 346.

Western Gateway

Vehicular traffic entering Whitehouse from US Highway 69 or other portions of unincorporated western Smith County first encounters urban development near the intersection of Rhones Quarter Road (FM 2964) and FM 346. High intensity



Image 13.9: The recommended western gateway would surround the intersection of FM 346 and Rhones Quarter Road (FM 2964) including property fronting on the proposed southern extension of Rhones Quarter Road. Future land use colors (Map 10.7, Page 213) are used to identify planned land uses such as Medium Intensity Office/Retail shaded in pink, Light Industrial in gray, and Low Density Residential in yellow.



uses at the intersection of Paluxy Drive (FM 756) and FM 346 are likely to become a reality with the widening of this north/south thoroughfare. Due to jurisdictional limitations, the City of Whitehouse cannot significantly increase its ETJ to the west. Therefore, it is recommended that a gateway be established encompassing the commercial node planned for the intersection of FM 346 and Rhones Quarter Road instead (Image 13.9).

Whitehouse ISD has practiced a policy which locates all school campuses within the Whitehouse City Limits. As long as this policy continues the traffic levels entering the community through this gateway will only increase. The School District includes large portions of land just south of Tyler's booming Broadway (US 69) corridor and may continue to fuel traffic into Whitehouse which would not otherwise exist.

Appropriate annexation will also be vital to Plan success within this gateway. At present, the City Limits does not extend to the intersection of Rhones Quarter Road and FM 346. If infrastructure conditions allow, the City should aggressively pursue annexation in order to implement the gateway components of this Plan. Annexation of land along both major thoroughfares within a timely manner is also critical in order to establish the planned land use pattern prior to the establishment of unregulated development which could hamper the ultimate achievement of this Plan's goals.

Eastern Gateway

Traffic originating from southeastern Smith County can potentially enter the community through several corridors including the southern gateway. As a result, identifying a specific gateway corridor is problematic. Instead, it is recommended that the City focus on high-quality lake related development and a special district for Lake Tyler.



Town Center Special District

One of the most popular components of the 1995 Plan as identified by public involvement participants was the inclusion of a "Town Center" concept. This idea has been carried over into the current Plan with an expanded scope and more defined focus.

***"[Southlake Carroll's Town Center is] one of those places that feels good to shop there, it's a feel-good place."
- Susan Shivers***

One of the most critical needs of a successful Town Center will be the definition of what type of place Whitehouse needs to create. A repeated theme expressed

***"I think what I'm hearing tonight... is a desire to capture a sense of place that makes you want to go back there."
- Mark Sweeney***

by participants was the desire for something special and unique in Whitehouse. The intent was for a Town Center which would clearly and memorably define the community as its own entity within the greater Smith County context.

Location

Despite the legitimate arguments against focusing on the original town site as the location for the Town Center District (Section 9, Page 159), the location identified in 1995 remains viable for development. Constraints, such as nontaxable City and School District uses, can be turned into an advantage by providing for a critical mass of retail customers during the workday.

The Future Land Use Plan identifies approximately 78 acres within the original town site as the Town Center District. The recommended northern boundary of the District along State Highway 110 is between its intersection with Wildcat and Hearon just north of Horton Street and the Austin Bank complex (Image 13.10, Page 298). The District's southern boundary on State Highway 110 extends just under 150 feet south of its intersection with Hearon including the Whitehouse Church of Christ and Pro One sites.

The District's western boundary along Main Street (FM 346) extends just west of Willingham Road. To the east the District extends to Senter Avenue and includes

the intersection of Bascom Road (FM 848) and Main Street (FM 346). The boundaries expand upon the original Town Center as proposed in the 1995 Comprehensive Plan by extending the District to the west of State Highway 110, to the south of Main Street, and to the west of Bascom Road.



Image 13.10: The recommended boundary of the Town Center Special District encompasses approximately 78 acres within the original Whitehouse town site. Future land use colors (Map 10.7, Page 213) are used to identify planned land uses such as Town Center shaded in purple, Medium Intensity Office/Retail in pink, High Density Residential in brown, Public/Semipublic and blue, and Low Density Residential in yellow.

District Vision

Land Use

Participants expressed a desire to see a variety of new land uses within the Town Center District which are not already common within Whitehouse. In terms of



retail, the desire was that the City should allow for businesses meeting not only every day shopping needs but also look to encourage niche retail targeting specialty markets not presently served within Whitehouse or possibly even Tyler.

"[Within the Town Center it] would be nice if you had retail which was both necessity and discretionary shopping plus multi-use facilities for sports or entertainment."
- Russell Rischard

"I'm personally not offended by a restaurant that serves alcohol, but when you get into just straight beer joints like we've got down the road we'll have problems."
- Stephen Cotton

The discussion of land use and potential businesses also included a debate regarding entertainment venues within the Town Center District. Some participants raised valid concerns regarding the sale of alcohol and presence of restaurants hosting live

music events. Citizens speaking at the public workshops frequently favored a family-friendly atmosphere, but also appreciated the benefit to the community's tax base of entertainment oriented restaurants and clubs. As long as the City Council could enact zoning and behavioral ordinances that could "do it right," the consensus of citizens present seemed to favor encouraging these types of activities within the Town Center if the primary purpose of such establishments was not limited to the sale and consumption of alcohol.

"[About this question of having entertainment and clubs in the Town Center], I'm a lover of jazz, if you do it right... you'll draw decent people and you'll have a nice clientele."
- Joe McGill

Aesthetics and Streetscaping

"[If we are going to do a Town Center then we need to] set up a business corridor with requirements for façades and signs."
- Maegan Schneider

Citizens also expressed an interest in the establishment of higher aesthetic standards for buildings and streetscaping, which would allow for and encourage high levels of pedestrian activity. The participants clearly aspired toward a district developed to higher quality standards, which would

represent the community in a manner not currently found within the City.



Image 13.11: High density housing is frequently used to buffer downtown style development from contemporary neighborhoods. In Arlington, Virginia attractive yet high density homes (above, above left) are located within two blocks of a bustling urban/mixed-use area. Through proper land use scaling, residents living within the neighborhood do not suffer from excessive noise or light but can quickly and safely walk to entertainment, shopping, and transit hubs within the neighboring urban district (left).

"The concept is that the Town Center becomes a focal point for a variety of activities. A lot of people with good incomes will want to live there in high quality housing of various types, which will in turn provide support for retail." - Mark Sweeney

These high aesthetic standards are critical in order to facilitate the creation of an environment attracting pedestrian traffic. It is also important that the City remain consistent with the recommended land uses surrounding the Town Center District. The High Density Residential planning category applied to land south of the Town Center is envisioned as an area for the development of a wide variety of multi and single-family housing types. These developments should be laid out in a way which could provide safe and convenient pedestrian access into the Town Center, but will still maintain the feel of more traditional pre-WWII neighborhoods. Tightly incorporating residential development with the proposed trail system and constructing complete on-street sidewalks will also allow for pedestrian traffic into the Town Center.

"One of the things that is [a problem for our planned Town Center] is that from the outer lying areas of our town there is no pedestrian or bike access."
- Russell Rischard



Permitting vertical mixed-use which would allow for residential lots above businesses engaged in retail and entertainment activities is also crucial. Providing for adequate parking within the Town Center is also important in order to protect the surrounding neighborhoods from disruptive parking by Town Center customers.

"We should work toward building the Town Center with residential on top of the commercial. Mixed use development has been very successful in other communities."
- Mark Sweeney



Image 13.12: Urban design which encourages pedestrian activity relies upon a wide assortment of site planning considerations. One of the most essential characteristics are wide sidewalks with buildings located on the front property line. Providing a relatively unbroken façade is also critical and can be accomplished even when businesses such as fast food restaurants or banks require drive-through windows, as with this building in Perrysburg, Ohio.



In accordance with citizen comments, front and side setbacks should be relaxed or eliminated to allow for zero lot line construction similar to traditional downtown main street development. Creating an appealing pedestrian environment relies on a wide variety of factors including building layout. Parking lots should be located behind buildings in order to maintain the most pedestrian friendly on-street experience.

While traditional downtown style buildings are the most conducive building type used by developers in order to accomplish this goal, contemporary structures such as banks or restaurants with drive through windows (Image 13.12) or even gas stations (Image 13.13) can be accommodated within a pedestrian friendly environment. With these types of uses it is crucial that development regulations provide the framework to allow for appropriate site layouts.



Image 13.13: This gas station with the pump islands located behind the building is another example of contemporary retail uses which have been well incorporated into a pedestrian setting, but still accommodate vehicular needs.



Access from parking areas located behind buildings should be provided to the street by alleys. Both pedestrian and vehicular needs should be accommodated with appropriately designed alleys and back streets.

It is not always advisable to attempt to accomplish both pedestrian and automobile access within the same area. In some cases, urban design should attempt to segregate pedestrian and vehicular traffic such that both transportation modes are effectively accommodated. Urban design should incorporate well lit and open design which still communicates a comfortable scale to pedestrians. While vegetation can be



Image 13.14: This well-designed pedestrian alleyway located in Downtown Raleigh, North Carolina utilizes appropriately scaled vegetation and street lighting to create an urban space which is perceived as both welcoming and safe.

effective for softening the environment, care should also be taken to avoid the creation of hiding places and dark spots within alleys. High levels of visibility from the street and surrounding buildings contribute heavily to the perception of safety both during the day and at night (Image 13.14).

Highlighting each component of strong pedestrian oriented design is beyond the scope of this planning program. However, based on citizen comments it is recommended that Whitehouse explore the possible incorporation of these design components into the ordinances impacting development within the Town Center District.

It is also critical that the City engage both the development community and citizens in an ongoing effort to establish regulations specifically targeted toward the Town Center District. The involvement of both citizens and development professionals will be key in order to provide the City Council with the confidence it needs to enforce such ordinances.



Historic Resources

Image 13.15: The demolition of Shahan's Grocery (below) following right-of-way acquisition related to the Main Street widening project was a possibly galvanizing loss for many Whitehouse residents. Several structures including the Whitehouse Mercantile and other buildings most recently used by community groups were also demolished within recent years (right).



Many participants also lamented the loss of several historic structures within the original town site. With the widening of Main Street (FM 346), several buildings which had become symbols of the community were lost to right-of-way acquisition. One high-profile building demolished was Shahan's Grocery (Image 13.15). Long

after ceasing operation as a full-time retail establishment, the owners still opened the building during YesterYear festivals for ice cream sales and other festival activities.

These losses prompted strong arguments for the retention and adaptive reuse of the remaining historic sites within the Town Center District. Many citizens view the District as an opportunity to recapture some of the historical character of the community. Preferences for

"We have forgotten our town history... I would like to see us recapture some of that... it might not be exciting but it was our roots." - Kimberly Rischard

"[Our Town Center] has to be something where people will get up and drive out here to eat ice cream, to sit down and spend some money... good music, good whiskey, good anything just gets better with time, and that's what we need to look at. Dig up some of that history." - Joe McGill

land use types and urban design components further support this desired return to a historic style of downtown development.

Signature Town Center District Components

Intersection of Main Street and Bascom Road

One critical component of the Town Center District will be the intersection of



Image 13.16: The proposed realignment of Railroad Avenue will create a four-way intersection with Bascom Road, providing increased market value for land near the intersection and create a second transportation link into the Town Center District through both pedestrian and vehicular modes. Hashed lines indicate planned roads (red and orange), sidewalks (gray), and trails (green). Purple shading indicates land which is planned for Town Center land use.

Main Street (FM 346) and Bascom Road (FM 848). At present, this intersection does not represent any components of the identified District vision. Land uses include several City buildings, vacant land formerly occupied by Waller's Store, self storage, and other unimproved land. Due to the Main

Street widening project, most of the structures on the southern side of the street have been removed through TxDOT land purchases.

Currently, both Bascom Road and Railroad Avenue terminate at their intersections with Main Street, separated by 500 feet (Image 13.16). The 1995 Plan called for a realignment of Railroad Avenue to intersect with Bascom Road's southern terminus in a more traditional four-way intersection. The advantages for traffic flow throughout southeastern Whitehouse are considerable with this realignment. Beyond the regional transportation impacts the realignment of this intersection will change the appearance and functionality of the eastern portion of the Town Center District.



***"I know we're going to grow, I think we have a great opportunity [right now] if we put the right stuff in our Town Center."
- Joe McGill***

Proper execution of this realignment from a land use and civic image standpoint will provide for the opportunity to link the proposed hike and bike trail and the on-street Main Street/Hagan Road sidewalk loop to the pedestrian oriented Town Center District. The realignment will also increase the market value of commercial land near the intersection and establish a bookend effect with the intersection of Main Street (FM 346) and State Highway 110.

State Highway 110, Main Street (FM 346), and Railroad Triangle

The roughly triangular shape formed by State Highway 110, Main Street (FM 346), and the railroad right-of-way lies within the heart of the originally proposed Town Center. This land is the most highly visible area within the District, but also faces the most challenging development constraints. The two



Image 13.17: The area within the Town Center District bound by State Highway 110, Main Street, the railroad right-of-way, and Horton Street will be pivotal in any Town Center design. Hashed lines indicate planned roads (red and orange), sidewalks (gray), and trails (green). Purple shading indicates land which is planned for Town Center land use.

most significant landowners within the triangle area are WISD and Austin Bank. Ownership of the land within the entire triangle area includes only eight institutions or families.



Several ideas proposed during public involvement centered around the ultimate disposition of School District property. The 1995 Plan recommended converting the Brown campus for use as a new City Hall and retrofitting portions of the property grounds as open space. The Plan also recommended that Horton Street be rerouted to curve to the south and intersect with Main Street just behind the existing campus building.

"[Within the Town Center] why don't we have something like Harvey Hall?"
- Stephen Cotton

One option suggested by participants was for the School District and City to work together to build a joint City Hall and WISD Administration Building facility on the site currently occupied by the Brown Elementary School campus. This type of cooperative venture would allow the City government and School District to maintain separate office space while sharing common amenities such as meeting space, Board/Council Chambers, and administrative support equipment such as printing and technology infrastructure. The joint venture would also allow for an adaptive reuse project to retrofit the WPA rock gym as a small convention center used by both institutions. This option would permit each entity to more efficiently fund higher-level technology and facilities through cooperative and efficient use of budgets that would otherwise be cost prohibitive for use by only one group.

Another useful suggestion was to reroute Horton Street in a similar manner to the 1995 proposal with an alignment near the existing "back entrance" of Brown Elementary onto Main Street. This alignment would create an "L" rotated 180° and would allow the School

"The change that will make it fiscally attractive for the School District to revise their perspective will be retail development, all the way around the site."
- Mark Sweeney

District, Austin Bank, and other landowners the opportunity to develop additional retail and mixed-use property along a pedestrian friendly rear "main street." The increased land value of retail activities could spearhead the process of deferring development costs of the Brown campus redevelopment project. The proposed Horton Street realignment should be included on the Thoroughfare Plan if it is accepted as a part of ongoing Town Center District planning.



***"We could create an ongoing and usable public space for YesterYear within the Town Center District... an open development that would allow for a landscaped plaza, meeting area, etc. If you could create a permanent space for it... that would help to build momentum and support for our main community event of the year."
- Mark Sweeney***

Existing playground land on the Brown campus which is currently surrounded by the WPA rock wall would provide an ideal location for an open-space plaza. During the workday this area could support the City Hall and Administration Building employees and provide open-air seating for Town Center District restaurants. The plaza

could also support Convention Center activities and provide for a permanent home for the YesterYear festival (Image 13.18).

The existing WPA rock work would reinforce the historic nature of the festival and provide a historical heritage component for the convention center and governmental activities. Site constraints will limit the scale



Image 13.18: The portions of the Brown Elementary site occupied by the playground and WPA era rock gym could be adapted for use as a convention center if the Town Center District develops as proposed and features a wide variety of pedestrian oriented land uses and streetscaping elements. If properly executed, the indoor and outdoor facilities could focus on its historical heritage and compete effectively against the larger convention centers throughout East Texas for small and medium-sized events. The convention facilities could also be the permanent home for YesterYear and other community festivals and events.

of events which could be hosted on such a convention center and plaza site. However, if intimately scaled urban/park spaces and historically significant facilities such as these are located within an attractive and pedestrian oriented Town Center, they could successfully compete against larger facilities for convention business. While the Town Center District must undergo significant



redevelopment to make this vision a reality, the East Texas region has few convention areas which could offer such an appealing setting.

This proposal relies upon the establishment of a partnership with the School District as well as involvement from other landowners within the "triangle" section of the Town Center. While the proposal is a departure from the recent status quo, the proposed configuration could more than offset construction expenses. The alternative is to

surrender what could become the keystone of Whitehouse's most prominent asset.

"If we give up on that corner we've given up on a cornerstone... and lost a chance to strengthen the City's sense of identity... we may hear 'No, no, no.' But I guarantee you that if you knock on the door long enough they will finally start saying 'Yes.'"

- Mark Sweeney

"[I think we should return to the idea that] we talked about [in 1995 which is] taking Horton and starting that as our square and bring it around to [the current parent pick up behind Brown]."

- Debbie Shafer

Land fronting on Main Street (FM 346) just east of the existing playgrounds should also be developed in an aesthetically pleasing and compatible manner. Specific planning efforts will need to be conducted involving the landowners and School District in order to assure interconnectivity between the retail and administrative uses within the existing Austin Bank area, the proposed School District/Municipal office complex, Civic Center, and mixed-use retail and residential development along Main Street (FM 346). The proposal to reroute Horton Street behind the existing campus to connect with Main Street would help facilitate this linkage and allow for a continual corridor of mixed-use development. Pedestrian activity could be encouraged not only along sidewalks fronting on the main thoroughfares but also along Horton Street.

"The fear is we will do the same old thing as we did in the past, but if this is designated as a Town Center with a special ordinance in place... you have an opportunity to entice people onto the street and into a series of interior courtyards and plazas where people could come in and park behind the buildings then shop, dine and work at their leisure, throughout the District."

- Mark Sweeney



"My [conceptual vision] is a town 'square' more than a town 'strip.'"
– Susan Shivers

Attempts should be made throughout the District to provide for welcoming pedestrian spaces and not simply a historically themed "strip mall." Particularly within rear parking areas, aesthetic regulation will be required in order to produce attractive and functional spaces beyond the main thoroughfare frontage of Main Street (and State Highway 110).

North and South Hearon Squares

On both the north and south sides of Main Street (FM 346) Hearon Street runs parallel to State Highway 110 before turning to the east and intersecting with it (Image 13.19). The result is two modified city blocks north of Main Street and one south of Main Street. Existing land use fronting on both segments of Hearon



Image 13.19: Hearon Street creates two modified city blocks as it runs parallel to State Highway 110 north of Main Street. The same alignment is observed south of Main Street in a nearly mirrored image.

Street is detached single-family housing. Commercial or unimproved land, which generally resulted from the Main Street widening project, is found on State Highway 110 and Main Street.

Based on participant comments throughout the public involvement workshops, it is recommended that as redevelopment occurs within these blocks, front setbacks from Main Street and State Highway 110 should be relaxed in order to push the structures closer to the primary thoroughfares. Lot consolidation



between property fronting on the primary thoroughfares with back lots fronting on Hearon Street should also be encouraged. This design would allow for parking and activities such as trash collection and merchandise handling to be located in the rear of each building. Parking lots located in front of buildings should be prohibited with possible exceptions made for a single row of parking if a consistent approach can be applied to contiguous sites.

Higher intensity residential developments or buildings with vertical mixed-use (office/retail on the first floor and residential in upper stories) should be permitted for lots fronting on Hearon Street's western side. Wide pedestrian friendly sidewalks should be required as a component of development in front of all new structures within the Town Center District as redevelopment occurs.

"Establishing a TIF district is the next step in creating something to allow us to make these proposed streetscape and pedestrian improvements a reality... it would allow the property taxes to be frozen... and the tax revenue that is generated from the new development would then be put right back into the District for infrastructural and aesthetic improvements."
- Mark Sweeney

The City may wish to assist developers with the cost of installing and maintaining appropriate streetscaping elements through grants and other funding mechanisms. A Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district is another valuable financing tool which allows for cities to leverage money, which

would otherwise be collected in property taxes toward the development of public infrastructure such as roads and sidewalks. In general, the mechanism works by agreement between taxing agencies such as the County, School District, and City to reinvest the additional tax revenue expected as a result of a redevelopment project.

Zero lot line development and the elimination of side setbacks are also recommended to encourage a pedestrian feel. Establishing maximum allowable side and front setbacks may be necessary in order to accomplish this urban form of tightly integrated buildings.

District Timeline



Image 13.20: The Whitehouse Mercantile Co. building as it appeared in 1997 during the annual YesterYear parade

The project to widen Main Street (FM 346) has had both a positive and negative impact on the City's civic image and former downtown. Several buildings such as the Whitehouse Mercantile Co., Shahan's Grocery, and other lesser known buildings have been lost to redevelopment or

right-of-way acquisition (Image 13.20). Several buildings, such as the old Methodist Church (housing "Town & Country Furniture" prior to demolition), have also been lost to redevelopment pressure (Image 13.21).

Many of the structures served as centerpieces for not only community identity, but also played prominent roles in the YesterYear festival and associated heritage tourism. These pieces of history can never be rebuilt with the same authenticity as the original structures. The losses of the structures are permanent and



Image 13.21: The Whitehouse Methodist Church sanctuary (operated as "Town & Country Furniture" prior to demolition) as it appeared in 1997 during the annual YesterYear parade

painful for many within the community; however, the widening project has also provided an extremely rare opportunity for the City to implement this Plan within an abbreviated timeline. While new buildings cannot replace the intrinsic value of the demolished historic structures, right-of-way acquisition will accelerate the natural redevelopment pace of buildings not necessarily representing the desired aesthetics of the Town Center.



"This is the thing that the clock is ticking on... because Main Street is being expanded... and businesses and residences have been moved out... I can promise you as sure as I'm sitting here that this land is going to get flipped over many times and you're going to see development pop up in the next one to two years that you've never seen pop up before... that's why the Town Center idea is a time crucial item... you will lose that area if you don't do something in the next year."
- Mark Sweeney

As a result of the widening project, this is the best time in Whitehouse's history to make a substantial change in the aesthetic and land use dynamics of the City's original town site. With large portions of the

landscape cleared, pressure to redevelop and capture the anticipated transportation capacity will be increased. The City should undertake additional planning steps related to the Town Center District to identify and focus the District Vision. Drafting and adopting the requisite development regulations within a reasonable time frame will also have a direct impact on the District's ultimate conformance with the desires expressed by Whitehouse residents.

Lake Tyler Special District

General Scenario, Location, and Conditions

With the economic and environmental importance of Lake Tyler it is recommended that the City of Whitehouse explore the possibility of creating a special district which would focus on lakefront development. The planning jurisdiction of the City of Whitehouse extends throughout much of the waterfront property on the lake's southwest bank. A special district targeted to capture some of the economic and recreational potential of the lake was a very popular concept among public involvement participants. The concept is that Whitehouse should look to partner with the City of Tyler in order to create a district on the east side of Whitehouse which could bring both municipalities a substantially higher level of benefit than could be achieved through individual actions.

"[In terms of a theme for the City] one possibility is to pull a theme from the lake, we may want to think about a nice hotel [in that area as well]."
- Joni Burdett



Image 13.22: The principal uses surrounding Lake Tyler are large lot single-family residential homes. Land fronting on the Lake is also used for recreational purposes including a park, boat launch area, RV park, and small marina.

The City of Tyler owns all of the land fronting on the lake and much of the undeveloped landlocked property behind the residential lake lots. Historically, Tyler has limited development of land fronting on the lake to uses such as large lot residential homes, a small marina, park uses, or generally unimproved land.

The City of Whitehouse has the right to annex and control land use and subdivision activities within this land. Whitehouse is also in a position to provide urban level services such as fire and police protection as well as other infrastructure

improvements. Tyler has the option to develop much of the landlocked area as single-family homes or leave the property largely unimproved. Although this option is viable, the prospect of developing this land at urban densities and for largely commercial uses would offer dramatically higher lease values. As discussed



Image 13.23: One of the prime locations for a water oriented special district on Lake Tyler lies on the Slack Road Peninsula. The land's elevation is conducive to a canal system and the site is served by several roads with strong potential for capacity upgrades.

during the design charrette portion of the public involvement program, the two Cities should work together to identify and plan for the development of



this special district. One potential location for this District is in the peninsula circled by Slack Road (Image 11.23, Page 313).

***"If residents along the shores of Lake Tyler, such as The Reserve, could sail their boat around and dock it in front of a retail shop and eat and shop here in Whitehouse... they will do it."
– Mark Sweeney***

The area consists of approximately 140 acres with terrain sloping gently toward the lake. This topography would be ideal for the proposal to route the lake inland and develop a mixed-use district with a commercial boardwalk assessable by both

automobile and boat. The site would also contain land set aside for the development of a canal based subdivision (Image 13.24).

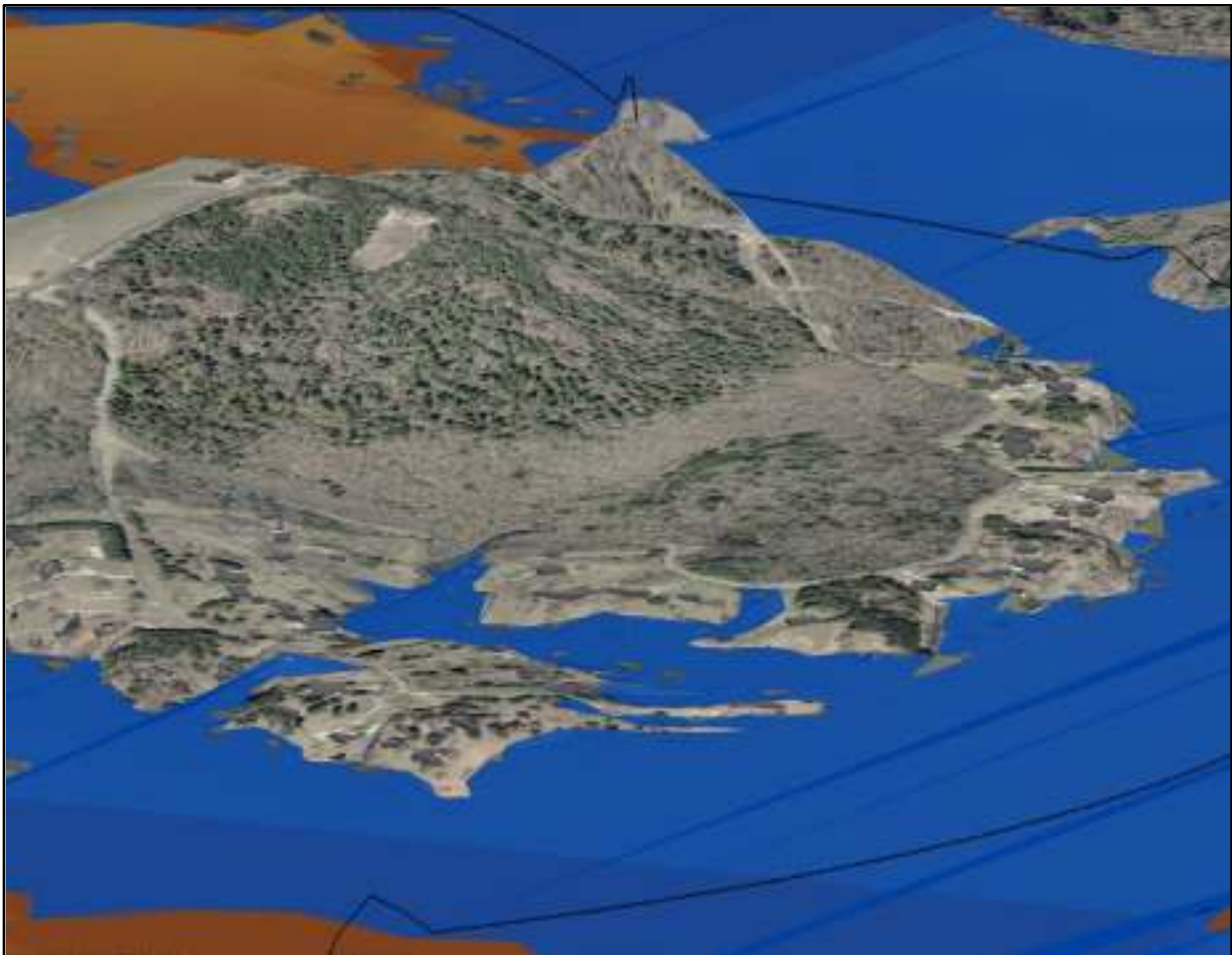


Image 13.24: The Slack Road Peninsula has elevation characteristics which are generally conducive to canal development with high land to the rear of the property and low land bisecting the area in a north/south direction. This rendering shows elevation exaggerated by a factor of seven and a viewing angle "looking" to the north northwest.



Generalized Land Use Recommendations

Butler Planning Services is solely focused on urban planning and does not have licensed architects or engineers on staff. Therefore, any discussion regarding the specialties of these fields should be considered preliminary and conceptual in nature. The engineering feasibility of this project must be thoroughly explored by professional and licensed engineers if the City wishes to pursue implementation of this proposal. All information presented within this Plan regarding the lake development is provided solely for illustration purposes to explain the thought process of citizens during the design charrette portion of public involvement.

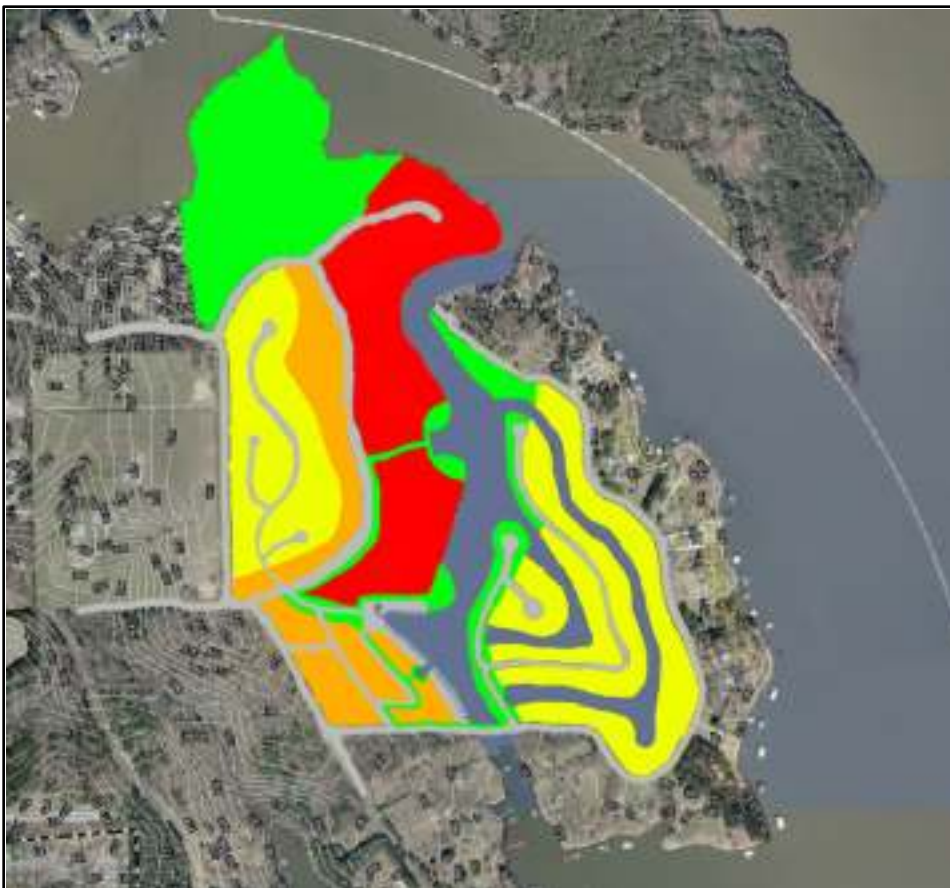


Image 13.25: The conceptual design for a Lakefront Special District as discussed during public involvement would involve the construction of an inland canal system and allow for a variety of land uses. Land shaded in red is envisioned as a mixed-use area with entertainment oriented retail. Land shaded in yellow and orange represents residential neighborhoods of various densities. Land shaded in green indicates parkland or boardwalks.

The general concept for the District would involve construction of a primary canal through the peninsula running north/south approximately parallel to CR 2133. The canal would have two outlets into the lake. One of these outlets would

be constructed at the low water mark in the south with the other located at the approximate location of the City of Tyler's boat launch area adjacent to Hillcreek



Park. The canal would be wide enough to allow for simultaneous use by many boats moving in either a north or south direction. The canal would also allow for boat parking and launches. West of the canal, citizens participating in the design charette expressed a desire for entertainment oriented retail, high-end multi-family homes, and mixed commercial and residential development. A design which emphasizes attractive natural park amenities was also desired by participants. Image 13.25 (Page 315) illustrates this land use layout. Areas shaded in red represent entertainment oriented retail or entertainment/residential mixed-use. Orange shading indicates multi-family residential, while green represents boardwalks or park areas.

Participants also supported the idea of extending smaller canals to the east of the primary channel in order to support single-family homes with direct access to the lake. The concept would work in a similar fashion to contemporary neighborhoods designed with cul-de-sacs and alleys. However, in this design

"You can dare to dream... and that's what [we on the City Council] asked the committee to do, we probably put some pie-in-the-sky things in here but if we don't dream we will just be stuck with what we've got now... we'll be talking about [the same things in 15 years all over again]."

- Suzanne Loudamy

"This kind of planning causes you to throw out everything you ever thought you knew about Whitehouse... you can really look at a blank slate and say 'What could it be?'"

- Jan Bellefeuille

the alleys would be replaced with narrow canals allowing residents to access their homes by car from the front or by boat from the rear. It is envisioned that these homes would be built at a higher density than existing lake development. This area is shaded in yellow on Image 13.25. The proposed design would require the construction of at least one bridge across the primary channel in order to continue Slack Road. The conceptual design presented in this document terminates Slack Road near the existing boat dock; however, alternate designs could allow for a second bridge over the primary canal at this location. The conceptual design also calls for land in the

homes by car from the front or by boat from the rear. It is envisioned that these homes would be built at a higher density than existing lake development. This area is shaded in yellow on Image 13.25. The proposed design would require the

"I think if we're going to become a destination... then we need to decide what we want to be... let's see that we're dreaming [with a solid goal in mind]."

- Susan Shivers



current Hillcreek Park to be reconfigured for additional entertainment oriented retail uses. Parkland within the development should be constructed in order to balance this loss of park acreage.

Additional land running south of this site to the east of CR 2133 could be developed in a similar fashion if the concept on the Slack Road Peninsula proves successful. This redevelopment could extend to the south as far as the current marina area. Successful development of this site will impact land



Image 13.26: The Kemah Boardwalk is a Texas example of the retail portion of the proposed lakefront district. Entertainment, dining, shopping, and lodging are all provided within the boardwalk area. The project was established by Landry's Restaurant Inc. as a single development. (Image source: <http://www.kemahboardwalk.com>)



Image 13.27: Residential development allowing for canals as "back alleys" to detached single family housing is gaining popularity for oceanfront property such as this development north of Galveston, Texas. (Image source: <http://www.digitalglobe.com>)

Texas. This residential project is built within Galveston Bay and offers rear

use and transportation throughout the surrounding properties. As a result, planned land use and transportation facilities should be considered and amended if necessary as the District is planned. The Kemah Boardwalk, located south of Houston, Texas is an example of the entertainment retail portion of this concept (Image 13.26). This District was established by a single developer, Landry's Restaurants Inc. The boardwalk offers a variety of restaurants and entertainment such as a carnival, aquarium, specialty retail, and boat tours. The boardwalk also includes a hotel. An example of the canal oriented single-family residential component of the proposed lakefront district is located north of Galveston,



access to homes through a canal system (Image 13.27, Page 317). Although this neighborhood and the Kemah Boardwalk are located on ocean water, other cities have had success with similar development on lakes. As envisioned by participants during the design charette, the lake development in Whitehouse would allow for the mutual benefit of both Whitehouse and Tyler through the creation of a unique entertainment and residential area.

The conceptual nature of the design presented in Image 13.25 should be emphasized once more. This design was created to illustrate the possibilities of the District utilizing only elevation data maintained by Smith County. Full engineering analysis conducted by licensed engineers will be crucial in order to fully assess the feasibility and layout of such a project. Infrastructure provisions and transportation safety must also be addressed.

Regulatory and Operational Agreements

"If the lakeside land is annexed into our City Limits it would have to be platted and zoned... so we control it from that angle, Tyler controls it from the leasing perspective, it would be a lucrative deal for Tyler to make so much more money off of the land and we get a top-tier development out of it... then we both win."

– Mark Sweeney

Planning, development, and management of a project in this location will require high levels of corporation and coordination between the Cities of Whitehouse and Tyler. It is envisioned that this joint effort would be a partnership beginning with early conceptual

planning and continuing through the everyday administration of the District.

It is recommended that the City of Whitehouse annex the property and provide the municipal services required to operate land at urban densities such as infrastructure and fire/police protection.

"When I think about other cities that have land near lake areas and what they're doing like Rockwall, Rowlett, and Grapevine and I see what benefits they've gotten out of that... some of those cities have reaped unbelievable benefits in terms of revenue and attractiveness by what they've done with a nearby lake."

– Mark Sweeney



Whitehouse would benefit from the development of the District through sales tax generation and the externalities of increased commercial traffic. It is further recommended that the City of Tyler retain ownership of the land. Tyler would benefit from drastically increased lease potential over the currently landlocked property. A successful lake development will also increase the visibility of Tyler and the region in terms of tourism. Both Cities would bear the shared responsibility of planning and developing the project through public/private partnerships.

Civic Image Implementation

Previous Implementation

Few organized efforts were made toward addressing the City's urban and civic image prior to the 1995 Comprehensive Plan. Since that Plan was adopted, the elected and appointed City officials have made some attempts to pass various aesthetic regulations into the Zoning Ordinance. Many of these efforts have been undertaken only recently and have yet to yield concrete results.

Following the 1995 Plan the City failed to codify the recommendations regarding the Town Center resulting in little or no progress toward the goals identified in that document. Furthermore, The City and School District, joint partners in the 1995 Plan, have missed some opportunities to work together for the betterment of the Town Center District.

Civic Image Five-Year Action Agenda

Just as in previous sections the following action agenda may require modification to account for unanticipated events and budgetary constraints. The City should make an attempt to accomplish as much as possible regarding codification of this and other ongoing planning efforts in order to take advantage of the unique opportunity resulting from the Main Street (FM 346) widening project.



While this action agenda contains relatively few individual items is important to note that many of the recommended actions represent complicated projects involving multiple elements within this and other sections of this Comprehensive Plan. As the details involved in implementing the Civic Image Section of this document go beyond the scope of a Comprehensive Plan, many recommended action items will require significant investments of staff time or the employment of private-sector consultants.

These documents should make additional amendments to this action agenda and provide details for the full implementation program. For example, these studies could recommend specific actions regarding financing structures, regulatory amendments, etc.

Year 1:

1. Budget for consulting services or allocate City staff time for conducting ongoing planning activities related to the specifics of the Town Center Special District and major City Gateways which go beyond the scope of this Comprehensive Plan.
2. Identify civic image needs which should be included as components of the recommended Zoning Ordinance update.
3. Open a dialogue with the City of Tyler regarding the conceptual plans contained within this document for a Lakefront Special District.

Year 2:

1. Complete a Town Center and Gateway Plan establishing specific plans for the urban design, theme, and marketing of these Districts.
2. Incorporate the recommendations of the Town Center and Gateway Plan into the overall Zoning Ordinance update.
3. In conjunction with the City of Tyler budget for consulting services or allocate City staff time for conducting ongoing planning activities and feasibility analysis related the Waterfront Special District on Lake Tyler.



Year 3:

1. Complete a Waterfront Special District Plan in conjunction with the City of Tyler.

Year 4:

1. Update City GIS data sets necessary for Comprehensive Plan evaluation as they relate to civic image and the newly established Special Districts and Gateways.

Year 5:

1. Undertake a minor update of this Comprehensive Plan to account for changing conditions and implementation successes or failures.

Ongoing Implementation

Actions should be conducted on a regular and ongoing basis as triggered by certain events. These triggers could include occurrences such as annexations, major development proposals, or unanticipated changes in the East Texas region.

One potential impact regarding civic image, which should be monitored continuously, is the status and success of the park system. In this preliminary visioning effort for the Town Center District, it is assumed that the recommendations made within the Parks Section of this document will be fully implemented. On-street sidewalks and off-street trails will be the most critical elements impacting civic image and the Town Center concept.

"The right trail enhancements are a major component of the Town Center... any type of a pedestrian enhancement that would connect this area with the overall pedestrian system makes a lot of sense from both perspectives."

– Mark Sweeney

