



**Downtown Wharton Assessment Report**

**May 8, 2018**

**Developed by the Texas Downtown Association**

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The Wharton Chamber of Commerce and Agriculture and Wharton Economic Development Corporation invited the Texas Downtown Association to perform a downtown assessment on Tuesday, May 8, 2018.

Team members, listed below were selected based on their skills and experience:

- Alysia Cook, Principal, Opportunity Strategies, LLC
- Jennifer Eckermann, Main Street Manager, City of Brenham
- William Myers, Director, Denison Development Alliance
- Nancy Wood, retired Main Street Director and former small business owner, Bastrop
- Catherine Sak, Texas Downtown Association

Prior to the assessment, Wharton representatives completed a pre-visit survey and conference call with TDA staff. Team members reviewed survey results and information about the community and downtown.

The day began with a meeting of downtown stakeholders at Milam Street Coffee Shop. Attendees introduced themselves and their connection to downtown before moving onto discussion of downtown issues and opportunities. The team then broke off into two groups to tour downtown and visit with downtown business owners one on one. After lunch stakeholders met once again at the coffee shop to hear the team's initial observations and recommendations.

Hurricane Harvey caused tremendous damage to Wharton, flooding almost half of available housing units and generating stress and uncertainty among residents and business owners. Downtown Wharton has charm and appeal and the restored Wharton County courthouse is a beautiful anchor for a district that features a variety of architectural styles and small businesses. While downtown was mostly spared from the storm, it has been negatively impacted by rifts between stakeholders.

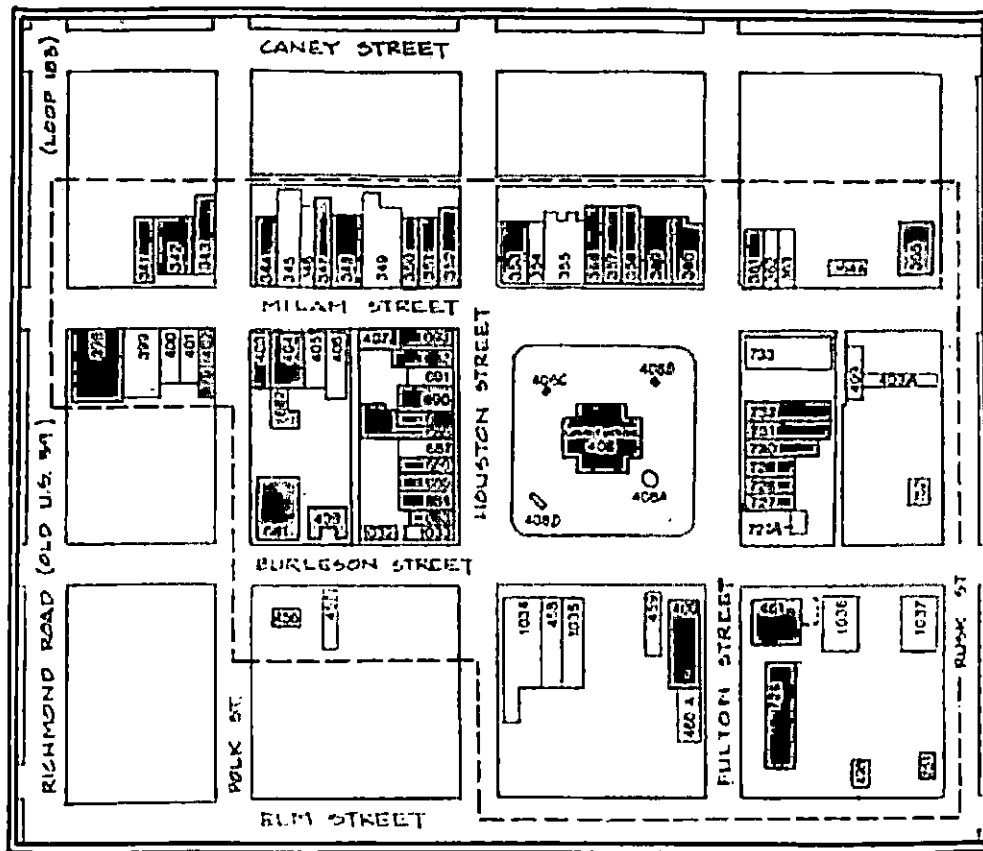
Team members feel strongly that now is the time for the Downtown Wharton community to come together and look to the future rather than the past. A strong downtown that attracts residents and visitors can assist with both short term and long term recovery efforts as well as contribute to the community's larger economic development strategy.

The following are Short Term, Mid-Range, and Long Term Goals the team recommends community leaders and stakeholders adopt and implement. The team believes that the accomplishment of the following will lead to a thriving vibrant downtown over time. Many of these things are simple, but not always easy. Creating successes in these areas will take unprecedented cooperation and creative collaboration, but every one of these is achievable.




## Short Term Goals

### Define the Downtown District

Review the boundaries of the Courthouse Square National Register District (see details below) and decide if those boundaries would be appropriate for targeting efforts during the first year. We recommend starting with a fairly compact size so efforts can be targeted and more effective. District boundaries can be updated in the future as needed. Below is the map of the district included in the National Register application.



**WHARTON COUNTY COURTHOUSE HISTORIC COMMERCIAL DISTRICT**

-  CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES
-  NON-CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES
-  DISTRICT BOUNDARY
- 408 SITE NUMBER



### **Downtown Wharton/Monterey Square Merchants Association**

We believe that development of a stand-alone downtown organization is key to revitalization efforts. The Chamber is dedicated to supporting all of its members across the City, while a downtown organization will be focused only on downtown.

By starting a 501(c)(3) nonprofit the organization will be able to apply for grants from a variety of sources to help fund downtown projects and programs and offer tax benefits to donors and sponsors. Other downtown associations that were founded as 501(c)(6) nonprofits (generally used by trade and member associations) have started 501(c)(3) organizations to support their mission.

A handful of leaders will need to walk the blocks of downtown and have face to face conversations with business owners about participating and committing to trying something new. This will also be a good opportunity to learn about each other's skills and experience.

It's likely that the new association will need to meet weekly in the beginning to get the organization off the ground before moving to monthly meetings. A top priority should be developing a one year plan that includes a handful of reasonable and attainable goals and detailed action steps.

### **Partnerships**

The most successful downtowns in Texas are those that have successful partnerships among major stakeholders. In Wharton's case that list includes downtown business owners, downtown property owners, downtown merchant association, City of Wharton leaders, county leaders, Chamber representatives, economic development professional, elected officials, primary job providers, local education leaders (ISD and Wharton College), nonprofits, museums, and community members.

Wharton is a diverse place and that should be celebrated. Everyone in your community should feel welcome downtown and recognize it as the heart of the community. Strong partnerships allow for information and resource sharing, identifying new opportunities, and showing a united front to the community at large.

### **Communication**

Communication issues were highlighted by multiple people during our assessment visit. Make sure there are clear connections between different stakeholder groups.

Regularly scheduled meetings of stakeholders can provide an opportunity to share information about plans, events, programs, and more. We suggest this large group should meet monthly at first, and then move to quarterly meetings.

The City of Georgetown hosts a quarterly breakfast meeting that features a speaker, updates from the city on downtown projects, and general information for downtown. Here's a link for details about their most recent event in March and May:

<https://georgetown.org/2018/03/01/breakfast-bites-the-underground-creative-community/>

<https://georgetown.org/2018/05/16/breakfast-bites-new-ways-of-connecting-with-old-buildings/>

The City or EDC would probably be the best entity to coordinate and host these meetings.

### **Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone**

We strongly encourage the development of a Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone (TIRZ) that includes downtown, the West Milam Mercantile Historic District, and at least some properties adjacent to Highway 59.

A TIRZ is an economic development tool that captures projected increase in tax revenue that is created by development within a defined area and reinvests those funds into public improvement and development projects. Ideally both the City of Wharton and Wharton County will sign on to allow for maximum impact.

Multiple TDA member communities have used TIRZ revenue to fund downtown improvements. By establishing a TIRZ now you can capture those funds as redevelopment comes online in the future.

### **National Register of Historic Places**

Wharton has over 30 listings on the National Register of Historic Places, including the Wharton County Courthouse Historic Commercial District and the West Milam Mercantile Historic District.

Listing on the National Register allows property owners to apply for the federal and state preservation tax credit programs as long as the property is utilized for commercial purposes. Nonprofits may take advantage of the state preservation tax credit program only.

The downtown courthouse district, approved in 1991, is roughly bounded by the alley north of Milam Street, Rusk Street, Elm Street, and Richmond Street. The same boundaries could serve as the boundaries for the downtown district or modified as needed. The West Milam district is an important entry corridor into downtown and should be included as part of a downtown TIRZ since properties might also be eligible for the tax credit programs.

Leverage local historic district status by incorporating history into the community's story and branding. Heritage travel generates significant revenue in Texas and the United States and there's no reason why Wharton can't attract heritage travelers.

Link to all National Register listings in Wharton:

<https://npgallery.nps.gov/NRHP/SearchResults/84977b89c49b4743acfbca5018694be8?page=1&view=list>

Link to the application for Wharton County Courthouse Historic Commercial District. Includes history of the district, photos of key buildings, a list of contributing and non-contributing buildings, and additional information. Contributing buildings are eligible for tax credit programs.

<https://atlas.thc.state.tx.us/NR/pdfs/91001624/91001624.pdf>

Link to details about the Wharton County Courthouse Historic Commercial District

<https://npgallery.nps.gov/NRHP/AssetDetail?assetID=e4f3fc24-0aed-4c90-8a5c-c20aba27a649>

Link to details about the West Milam Mercantile Historic District

<https://npgallery.nps.gov/NRHP/AssetDetail?assetID=7ce87af8-d7ec-486c-b98d-5e23f98c3a36>

Link to information about the state and federal preservation tax credit programs:

<http://www.thc.texas.gov/preserve/projects-and-programs/preservation-tax-incentives/texas-historic-preservation-tax-credit>

### **Preservation Tax Credit Programs**

Owners of buildings in the designated National Register districts can take advantage of the state and federal historic preservation tax credit programs. Owner occupied residential properties are not eligible for this assistance. The Texas tax credit program allows nonprofit organizations (museums and art centers for example) while the federal program is available for commercial projects. Nonprofits may sell federal tax credits to recoup their value. The Texas Historical Commission website has all the details and the agency's staff are available to answer any and all questions.

Federal Preservation Tax Credit Programs

<http://www.thc.texas.gov/preserve/projects-and-programs/preservation-tax-incentives/federal-historic-preservation-tax>

Texas Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program

<http://www.thc.texas.gov/preserve/projects-and-programs/preservation-tax-incentives/texas-historic-preservation-tax-credit>

### **Zoning, Ordinances, and Permitting**

Now is the time to review downtown zoning and ordinances affecting downtown development and revitalization. Look at communities in your area, region, and other parts of the state to see what they offer and then update. This will take cooperation between various stakeholders including the City of Wharton, EDC, Chamber, and downtown merchants group.

### Downtown Overlay District

The purpose of a downtown overlay district is to provide guidance for improvements and/or uses within a specific area. We recommend you adopt this type of district, share information with property owners, and promote its benefits.

### Permitted Uses

Be sure that permitted uses include the ones you want in your downtown. Popular downtown uses that might be considered: breweries, wineries, food trucks, pop up retail, pop up services, light manufacturing. Look at neighboring cities as well as cities across the state that have successful downtowns and review uses they allow.

### Streamlined Permitting

The City of Seguin recently announced its new Development Services Center that will be a one stop shop for residents and businesses. Streamlining the permitting process is valuable to business and property owners and is one way a city can support development without providing cash incentives. Communities who implement this quickly develop a reputation of being business-friendly. Link to story:

<https://www.expressnews.com/news/local/article/Seguin-spending-2-9-million-on-one-stop-12855512.php>

## **Mid-Range Goals**

### **Minimum Property Standards**

TDA members like Denison and Sulphur Springs have embraced minimum property standards (MPS) and aggressive code enforcement to encourage building maintenance and repairs.

- Create and/or upgrade of MPS standards.
- Build awareness of MPS requirements.
- Catalog/Document MPS violations in a dedicated area.
- Ramp up enforcement on the worst violators then work down the list.
- Use fines, liens, warrants to force compliance.
- Liens/fines can be forgiven conditionally upon compliance or formal plans, building permits, property sales, etc.
- Old signage (other than "historic" value) should immediately be removed.
- Address: old planters, broken windows, old benches, boarded windows, peeling paint, weeds, striped parking (public & private), street striping.

### **Pedestrian Safety**

Downtown should be walkable and offer safety to pedestrians. Right now there are no crosswalk signals for pedestrians in place at the primary downtown intersections. We witnessed large trucks speeding through downtown, sometimes taking up both lanes of traffic. Law enforcement should be encouraged to ticket violators to discourage speeding through downtown.

### **Small business development**

According to a 2014 Census Bureau report, firms with fewer than 20 employees made up 89.4 of all US businesses (<http://sbecouncil.org/about-us/facts-and-data/>)

#### Secondary businesses

Downtown Wharton is home to a number of service related businesses on the square. Some of these business owners might consider welcoming retail inside their locations. The Lil' Blue Goat Gallery in Mansfield is located in the first 15 feet of an optometrist's office in Downtown Mansfield. The doctor's staff provides assistance to customers in the early part of the day, while the gallery owners generally manage the site in the afternoon and evening when it's busy.

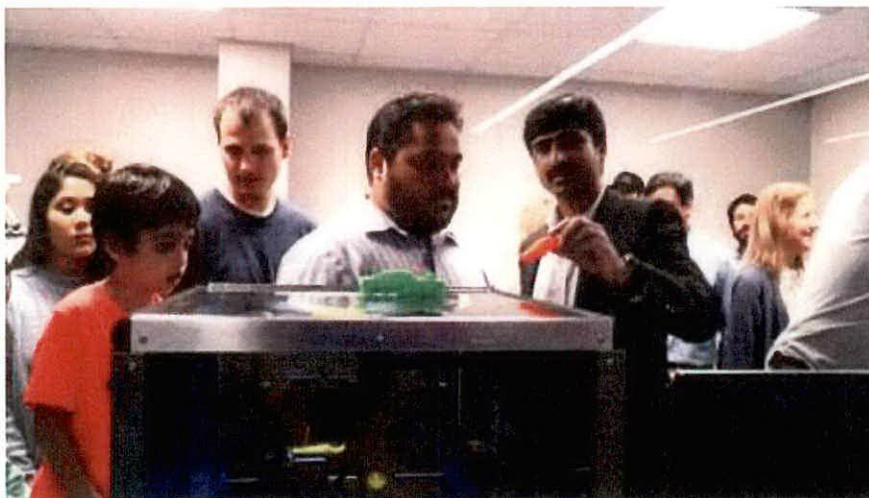
#### Business Incubators

The addition of a retail incubator would provide small spaces for new retail businesses and allow owners to test the market and build a customer base. There are a number of different models – a larger building can be divided up into different stalls or rooms that house individual businesses.

In Mississippi the Pascagoula Redevelopment Authority staged sixteen Katrina cottages (see more about Katrina cottages under Housing) on a vacant lot to create a new downtown shopping district known as Anchor Square. The cottages are the perfect size for new businesses and there are a variety of businesses that call the complex home.

(<https://www.anchorsquare.com/>).

Tyler is home to the Innovation Pipeline, a membership based lab that provides access to technology and equipment for entrepreneurs. Members are able to learn how to use all sorts of equipment including 3d printers, routers, and more. This type of incubator is more focused on tech and entrepreneurship. Link to website: <https://www.tylerinnovationpipeline.com/>





### Small Business Resources

Does the Chamber or EDC offer any resources to small businesses? Other TDA members have hosted small business workshops to bring information about succession, latest trends, tax changes, etc. Would it be possible to partner with the Coastal Plains SBDC to bring workshops and seminars to Wharton?

Customer service training is always beneficial to small businesses – both owners and employees. This type of training should be offered to small businesses across the community since a visitor's first impression could be at a gas station or convenience store on the edge of town. Texas Friendly Hospitality Program Instructors are positioned to help deliver Customer service training to business owners and their employees.

### Small Business Grants

During the stakeholder meeting we learned about the local façade improvement grant program. The City might want to consider other grant options in the future:

- Building Improvement Grants – The City of Bowie offers mega grants for exterior and interior improvements. Paris Main Street offers similar grants that are funded by donations and fundraising events.
- Signage Grants – The City of Georgetown offers signage grants for downtown buildings. Sign design must be approved by the city.
- Rental Reimbursement Grants – The City of Taylor was the first to offer a rental reimbursement grant program to recruit specific types of businesses to vacant downtown buildings. The City of Sherman developed their own program but only reimburses the business owner after they've been in operation for one year.

### Business to business support

Downtown business owners have a variety of skills and experience. Downtown business owners could take turns hosting other downtown businesses for coffee or breakfast and present a mini-class on a trend or topic – social media, cross promotions, online sales, connecting with customers, etc.

### **Cultural Resources and Opportunities**

Investment in the arts leads to cultural and economic impacts as noted in a recent report by the Texas Cultural Trust, which found that the arts generate over \$5 billion each year for the Texas economy and employs nearly 800,000 workers.

### Plaza Theatre

The Plaza Theatre is a great cultural resource to have downtown. The theater's shows attract downtown visitors who also patronize other businesses. There is interest in applying for cultural district designation from the Texas Commission on the Arts as well as recruiting museums and galleries to downtown properties.

### Museums

Local museums attract visitors but may need help with capacity building, researching grant opportunities, and building relationships with donors.

### Film Friendly Certified Community

The Texas Film Commission sponsors this program for communities that are interested in hosting film crews. Certification is not complicated and requires just three steps. Learn more here: [https://gov.texas.gov/film/page/fftx\\_overview](https://gov.texas.gov/film/page/fftx_overview)

### Cultural District Designation

We heard from stakeholders that there is interest in applying for the Texas Commission on the Arts Cultural District designation. This can be a great way to unify the cultural arts community and to use the designation as a marketing tool. Designated cultural districts may apply for Arts Respond Project funding: <https://www2.arts.state.tx.us/tcagrant/TXArtsPlan/ARP.htm>.

It is imperative that if the community spends the time to develop a successful application that there is interest and commitment to sustaining the district and promoting Wharton as a cultural destination. Otherwise all of that effort will have been in vain.

### Wharton County Courthouse

The restored courthouse is an amazing asset for Downtown Wharton. It is truly one of the most beautiful in the state and we know there are visitors who would take advantage of an opportunity to tour the building and learn its history. It's our understanding that tours aren't currently offered and that the building isn't open during events.

When we spoke to members in other communities with historic courthouses we learned that tours are typically limited to specific times during the year and are often led by volunteers from local historic commissions or courthouse staff. Members also said it was rare for the courthouse to be kept open during events due to concerns about wear and tear on the building and lack of staff to monitor behavior.

### **Events**

Downtown events can serve a number of purposes. They can contribute to quality of life, they can generate sales for downtown businesses, and they can raise awareness about downtown and all that it has to offer.

It's important to find a balance with events. Planning and execution can take a lot of time and money and there are a limited number of sponsors and donors in the community.

During our visit the team asked business owners about downtown events – what was working, what wasn't, and what they'd like to see in the future.

### Monthly Event

Several people mentioned interest in organizing a monthly event that featured live music, activities, and late hours for businesses. This can be a great way to encourage more locals to visit downtown on a regular basis.

### Juneteenth Event

Juneteenth brings the most people downtown, but most businesses close during the event. Those that stayed open reported they made sales. Downtown leaders should meet with event organizers to identify areas to work together and connect with attendees.

### Freedom Festival

Encourage organizers to move Freedom Fest back to July or the end of June depending on the calendar. We heard from a number of people who wondered why Wharton was hosting a 4<sup>th</sup> of July type celebration in May. Moving the event to evening hours and including water-based activities to keep attendees cool would help beat the heat.

### Wine and Art Fair

Since the assessment we have heard there have been some discussions about who will lead and coordinate this event. We hope that all parties are able to come together and agree on a plan moving forward.

We developed a survey for wine events and asked approximately 50 TDA members to respond. Fifteen completed the survey and the results can be found in separate files provided with this report.

### **Downtown Banners**

Currently there are light post banners advertising businesses that are no longer downtown or have closed completely. These should be removed immediately since they're no longer relevant.

We were told that Centerpoint has prohibited new banners in Downtown Wharton. We hope that City of Wharton leaders are able to negotiate with the company to allow new banner installation in the future. Banners are a great way to add color, promote events, and help brand the district.

### **Shop Local**

Small Business Saturday has become a very popular event for small businesses and an excellent way for communities to show their commitment to shopping locally. Wharton can register as a neighborhood champion on the American Express website to receive promotional items and learn about marketing opportunities.

Ideally a shop local campaign will be maintained year round. Residents need to be educated about the effect of shopping locally and what sales tax revenue pays for in the community.

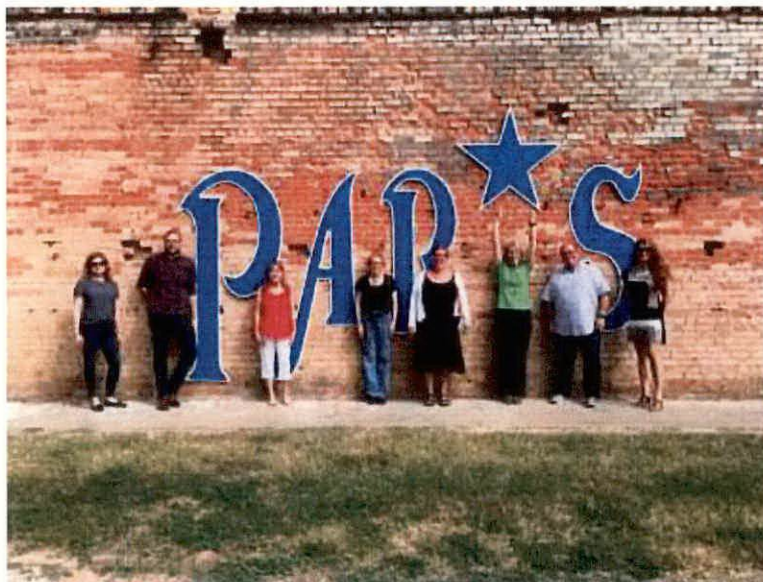
Comanche and Waxahachie both developed effective campaigns a few years ago that illustrated how local sales tax pays for vital city services including public safety.

The Lamar County Chamber of Commerce hosts an amazing annual Shop Local campaign that offers cash prizes to lucky winners. From October to December, local businesses purchase rolls of raffle tickets from the chamber (chamber members get a discount) which are distributed to their customers. All participating businesses are listed on posters that are distributed across the county. Per state law, businesses must offer one ticket to each person that walks in their door. Those who make a purchase get one raffle ticket per \$10 spent (there is a cap for large items like cars). The week prior to Christmas everyone gathers in Downtown Paris for the raffle drawing since you must be present to win. At 6 pm on the dot the winning raffle tickets are drawn - \$10,000 for the top winner and \$1,000 for the second.

### **Placemaking**

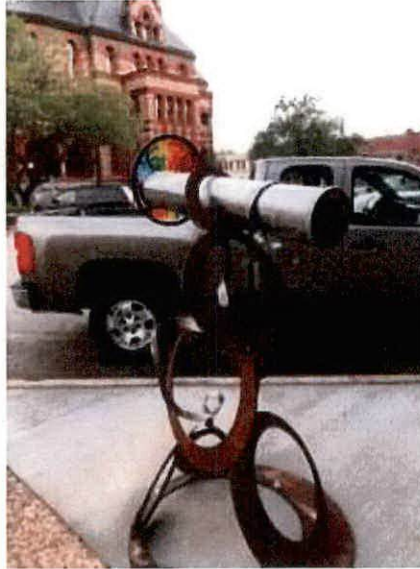
Downtown Wharton is home to a number of murals with primarily historic themes. When the next opportunity arises, consider adding public art that is more abstract or that stands out in comparison to what's currently in place. Downtown visitors – both local and out of town- are all about taking photos and you need to give them a great backdrop.

Downtown Paris is home to a vacant lot that has been repurposed as a great selfie spot and event venue. City staffers created a graphic out of plywood and paint and installed the letters PARS (visitors become the I to spell Paris). The lot is used regularly during downtown events, including the annual pumpkin patch.



Denison is beginning an initiative in the next few weeks to build awareness of and encourage creation of additional photogenic sites. #CaptureDenison

Waxahachie recently installed a human sized kaleidoscope in the downtown that was immediately a magnet for children, parents, business owners, and visitors.



Placemaking isn't just limited to murals or public art. It's also about creating an environment that encourages people to slow down and enjoy a place. Mount Pleasant is home to the Alley on Third, a project that transformed a service alley into a live music venue, or a place to enjoy a meal. This project was selected for a Spirit of Downtown award by judges in 2017.



## Long Term Goals

### Connectivity

Wharton is fortunate to have a number of destinations within short distance of one another.

- Downtown
- Wharton County Courthouse
- Colorado River Trail
- Santa Fe Trail
- Train Depot and Museum
- 20<sup>th</sup> Century Technology Museum
- Wharton County Historical Museum
- Dinosaur Park

Connecting these areas by trail, bike paths (on and off street), and sidewalks will allow for better walkability and encourage residents and visitors to take advantage of these resources. Use temporary methods to test possible routes and community interest.

The City of Waxahachie secured a \$750,000 matching grant from Texas Parks and Wildlife to create a trail system that connects local attractions. They report that the trail is one of the most used features in the entire town. The city is working on a trail that will connect with the neighboring community of Midlothian.

Traffic cones and chalk can be used to create bike lanes over a weekend. Put up temporary signage that directs cyclists and pedestrians on a specific route.

### Recreation

A recent report from the Bureau of Economic Analysis indicates that recreation is a larger share of the US economy than agriculture and fossil fuel and mining sectors

(<http://www.dailyyonder.com/recreation-bigger-share-u-s-economy-ag-mining-report-says/2018/05/10/25528/>). Furthermore, another study credits recreational activities for increasing rural populations. (<http://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/blogs/stateline/2018/04/19/outdoor-recreation-driving-population-boom-in-rural-areas>)

The river's proximity to downtown is a great asset that is currently underutilized. Downtown Bastrop is home to a business that offers kayak, canoe, and stand up paddleboard rentals and guides. The owners host an annual stand up paddle board event that attracts visitors and residents.

We checked the depth of the Colorado River in Wharton and Bastrop on May 15 and found that the river's depth in Wharton was almost twice what it was in Bastrop. Would it be possible for Wharton to provide river access for this type of business or something similar?

Cycling is a multibillion dollar industry and there are opportunities to attract both road and mountain bike enthusiasts to Wharton. Cyclists tend to have disposable income, spend more at local businesses, and can contribute to business growth. (<https://bicyclecoalition.org/facts-biking-improves-business/>).

### **Housing**

There are already a number of residential housing units in Downtown Wharton and there is the potential for more units to come online on the upper stores of downtown buildings and in nearby vacant lots.

#### Denison

Denison offers an incentive program for housing that has been well-received by citizens and investors.

Link to program details: <https://www.cityofdenison.com/207/Community-Development>

#### Paris

In Downtown Paris, Texas, another developer started a condominium association so he could sell the units rather than maintain them as rental housing. This might be an option for owner occupied housing.

#### Waxahachie

A developer in Downtown Waxahachie converted one building into a mixed use development by building out second story residential units and first floor commercial. He worked around the elevator requirement in the building code by including one residential unit on the first floor.

#### Katrina cottages

After Hurricane Katrina a group developed the Katrina cottage to serve as short term housing. Today the primary designer has a number of house plans available for purchase that go beyond the original 300 square foot cottage. This could be a possible option for vacant lots adjacent to downtown.

Link to designer: <https://www.marianne cusato.com/>

Note: While TDA usually avoids making recommendations for private sector services we thought this option would be worth consideration and encourage stakeholders to research extensively.

### **Signage**

Signage helps direct visitors and residents to community attractions, including downtown. Directional signage from Highway 59 and Highway 102 to downtown is currently lacking. Wayfinding signage that lists attractions will also help move people through the community and downtown.

Since state highways are involved then it will be necessary to work through the process dictated by TxDOT. While this takes time the outcome is worth it.

Using temporary wayfinding signage can help you test sign locations and content. See the link below for examples from Walk (Your City). Their signs include a QR code that smart phone users can scan to learn more about a destination or to download a map. You could make something similar using a local printer. Do not use signs that require adhesive since they will just require more clean up.

<https://walkyourcity.org/>

Downtown McKinney features signs on each corner of the square that direct visitors to businesses and attractions off their square.

Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT) funds have been used by other communities to pay for design and installation. The City of Elgin hired a firm to design their signs and assist with the TxDOT approval process while city employees made the signs.

### **State Highways**

We were glad to hear that the City of Wharton and EDC have discussed regaining control of state highway routes through downtown and hope this is accomplished in the near future.

When the City does gain control, it should consider converting one way streets back to two way, which could help slow traffic, or at least reduce the speed limit if funds aren't available for conversion.

**This concludes our recommendations. TDA will continue to be a resource for Wharton as you move forward with downtown revitalization efforts. Please do not hesitate to contact us with questions, referrals, or additional information.**



## Resources

### Anice Read Fund

The Anice Read Fund is the grant program of the Texas Downtown Association. The Fund was started to honor Anice Read, a TDA founder and the first director of the Texas Main Street Program. Funds must be used for downtown projects and programs. Visit the website to learn more, download the application, and review past grant recipients.

<http://www.texasdowntown.org/anice-read-grants.html>

### Citizens Institute for Rural Design

The Citizens' Institute on Rural Design in a National Endowment for the Arts leadership initiative in partnership with the USDA and Project for Public Spaces, inc., along with the Orton Family Foundation. Project for Public Spaces, Inc., is the lead cooperator and administrator of the program.

<https://www.rural-design.org/>

### Texas Commission on the Arts

Information about the Cultural District designation program and the Texas Touring Roster program can be found here.

<http://www.arts.texas.gov/>

### Texas Historical Commission

#### *Texas Preservation Trust Fund*

The fund makes grants for preservation projects and education. In 2018 THC announced a special round of grants specifically for communities and historic resources impacted by Hurricane Harvey.

<http://www.thc.texas.gov/preserve/projects-and-programs/texas-preservation-trust-fund>

### *Town Square Initiative*

Since Wharton participated in the Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program then you are eligible for services through the THC Town Square Initiative. Visit their website to learn more: <http://www.thc.texas.gov/town-square-initiative>

### Texas Parks and Wildlife

Recreation grants could help with development of trails connecting different attractions and parts of town.

<https://tpwd.texas.gov/business/grants/>

### Keep Texas Beautiful

KTB sponsors the GCAA program which awards funding for beautification programs. The process is very competitive since there are cash prizes.

<http://ktb.org/programs/awards/governors-community-achievement-awards.aspx>

Humanities Texas

Humanities Texas grants enable communities throughout the state to develop programs of local interest promoting heritage, culture, and education.

<http://www.humanitiestexas.org/grants>

Project for Public Spaces

The Lighter Quicker Cheaper movement focuses on LQC projects that make an impact on placemaking. The site below includes links with a lot of information and ideas.

<https://www.pps.org/reference/lighter-quicker-cheaper/>