



RECOVERY PLANNING ASSISTANCE TEAMS

After the Floods: Planning for Community, Connections, and Resilience

Wharton, Texas

Final Report | December 2019



**American Institute
of Certified Planners**

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Wharton CPAT Members

Ennis Davis, AICP | Team Leader
Adrienne Burke, AICP
Carlos G. Espinoza y Sánchez
Paula Loomis, PhD, AICP, FAIA, LEED AP
Chelsea Young, AICP
Ryan Scherzinger, AICP | Project Manager

CPAT Program Staff

Felicia Braunstein | Director of Professional Practice
Ryan Scherzinger, AICP | Programs Manager
Eric Roach | Program Associate
William French | Program Associate

AICP Community Assistance Planning Services Committee

Justin Garrett Moore, AICP | Chair, AICP Commissioner
Kimberly Burton, AICP CTP, PE, LEED AP ND
Deborah Meihoff, AICP
Robert Paternoster, AICP
Triveece Penelton, AICP
Jesse Saginor, PhD, AICP
Gavin Smith, PhD, AICP
Philip Walker, FAICP
Linda Amato, AICP | Liaison for APA Divisions Council
Alexander Yee | Liaison for APA Student Representatives Council

For more information on the Community Planning Assistance Teams program: planning.org/cpat

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Cover image: Business U.S. Highway 59 as it crosses over the Colorado River in downtown Wharton. (Photo by Patrick Feller)

CONTENTS

The Purpose of the CPAT Program4

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 5

BACKGROUND..... 7

 Introduction8

 Existing Conditions 13

RECOMMENDATIONS 19

 Cultural Resources 20

 Flood Protection 32

 Transportation: Mobility and Accessibility 37

IMPLEMENTATION46

 Improvement Categories 47

 Timing 47

 Project Development and Ownership..... 48

 Implementation Strategies 49

APPENDICES 59

 Appendix A: Community Survey..... 60

 Appendix B: Existing Conditions Maps and Figures 61

 Appendix C: Picture Gallery 81

 Appendix D: Meet the Team 83

The Purpose of the CPAT Program

The purpose of the Community Planning Assistance Teams program is to serve communities facing limited resources by helping them address planning issues such as social equity and affordability, economic development, sustainability, consensus building, and urban design, among others. By pairing expert urban planning professionals from around the country with residents and other stakeholders from local communities, the program seeks to foster education, engagement, and empowerment. As part of each team's goals, a community develops a vision that promotes a safe, ecologically sustainable, economically vibrant, and healthy environment.

APA staff works with the community, key stakeholders, and the host organization(s) to assemble a team of planners with the specific expertise needed for the project. The team meets on-site for three to five days, during which time a series of site visits, focused discussions, and analyses are performed. On the final day, the team reports their results back to the community. A more detailed report is issued to the community at a later date.

Guiding Values

APA's professional institute, the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP), is responsible for the CPAT program. Addressing issues of social equity in planning and development is a priority of APA and AICP. The CPAT program is part of a broader APA Community Assistance Program, which was created to express the value of social equity through service to communities in need across the United States.

Community assistance is built into the professional role of a planner. One principle of the AICP Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct states that certified planners shall aspire to "seek social justice by working to expand choice and opportunity for all persons, recognizing a special responsibility to plan for the needs of the disadvantaged and to promote racial and economic integration." Another principle is that certified planners should aspire to "contribute time and effort to groups lacking in adequate planning resources and to voluntary professional activities."

Program Background

In recognition of the key role urban and regional planners play in shaping vibrant, sustainable, and equitable communities, the APA Board of Directors established the Community Planning Team initiative in 1995. This initiative resulted in a pro bono effort to assist an economically struggling African American community in the East Market District of Greensboro, North Carolina. APA has continued to develop a pro bono planning program that provides assistance to communities in need. In 2005, program efforts were increased after Hurricane Katrina in the Gulf Coast region to include a number of initiatives, including planning assistance team projects in the affected cities of Henderson Point, Mississippi, and Mandeville, Slidell, and New Orleans in Louisiana. Another Gulf Coast recovery project included the Dutch Dialogues, which brought American planners together with Dutch experts to transform the way that Louisiana relates to and manages its water resources. AICP broadened the scope of the CPAT program with its 2009 project in Buzzard Point, a neighborhood in Southwest Washington, D.C. Completed projects since the program's official relaunch in 2011, including Matthews, North Carolina; Story County, Iowa; Unalaska, Alaska; La Feria, Texas; Lyons, Colorado; Brooklyn/Baybrook, Baltimore; Germantown, Philadelphia; and others are all important landmarks in the development of the CPAT program as a continued effort. That list now includes the Yarborough neighborhood of Belize City, Belize, which marks the first international project for the CPAT program. CPAT is an integrated part of APA's service, outreach, and professional practice activities.

More information about the CPAT program, including community proposal forms, an online volunteer form, and full downloadable reports from past projects, is available at: planning.org/cpat.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Wharton was severely impacted by Hurricane Harvey in early September 2017. However, the city has a long history of flooding. The Colorado River, which runs through the city, frequently overtops its banks and most often affects the West End neighborhood, a historically African American area. Less than a year after Harvey, and after almost 20 years of the city studying and building a case, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) finally awarded the city over \$70 million to construct a flood protection system. Following news of the award, the Wharton Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) applied for assistance from the CPAT program through a disaster recovery grant funding opportunity offered by the APA Foundation with support from the Pisces Foundation.

WEDC requested assistance from CPAT to explore ways of integrating the new flood protection system with city plans and projects. The city is interested in leveraging the USACE project to benefit the community beyond flood mitigation to increase connectivity, provide more green space and recreational areas, protect and celebrate cultural resources, attract economic development, and raise the overall quality of life in Wharton. The study area included the entire city but focused primarily on where the new flood protection system is planned, especially the West End. The CPAT project team, including planning professionals from around the country, visited the city for four days in February 2019 to tour the area, engage with and learn from the community, and develop a plan.

This report includes the team's findings, analyses, recommendations, and implementation strategy. Beginning with existing conditions, the report reviews previous and existing planning studies that have an impact on open space and future multimodal connectivity improvement projects within Wharton. Included is an overview of existing land uses and environmental aspects in and around the city and summary of roadway facilities and characteristics for the city's transportation corridors.

The Recommendations section integrates cultural resources, flood protection, and mobility/accessibility with four overarching themes:

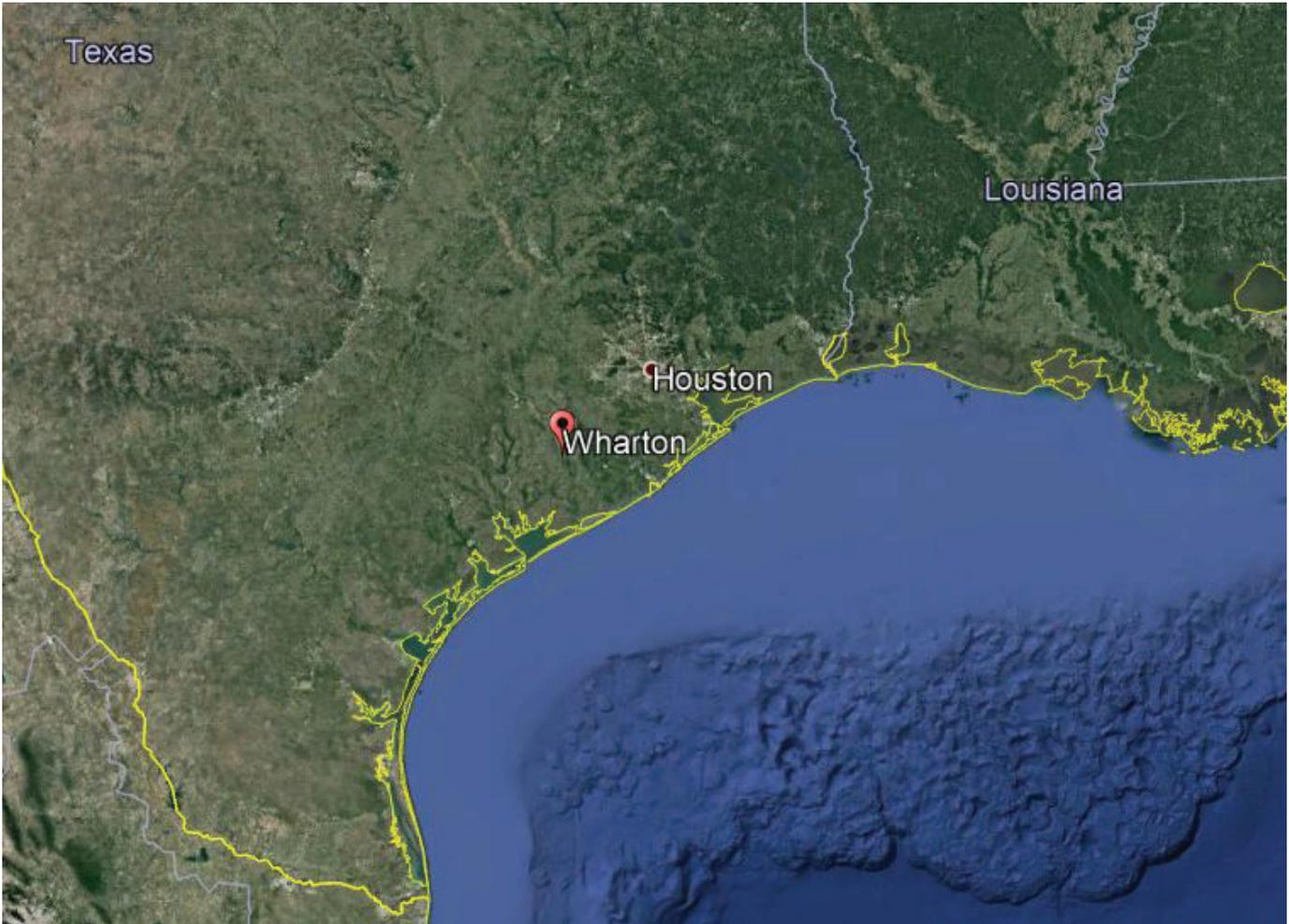
- Coordinate with USACE flood control project managers to use recreational and educational opportunities within USACE processes to transform the levee projects into community assets.
- Plan for flood control maintenance activities to ensure the levee system and associated amenities are maintained and remain functional.
- Integrate cultural resources programming into city programs to take advantage of the levee projects and attract visitors.
- Create an active transportation program and plan to tie the city together, providing safer roads and places for people to walk and bike.

A list of specific recommendations for historical and cultural resources is included, most of which coincide well with policy outlined in the city's comprehensive plan. Regarding the USACE project, recommendations include design possibilities that support education, recreation, and tourist programs. For some activities to be allowed to occur in areas of the flood protection project, the city needs to approach USACE and request permission for desired design changes as part of the USACE Section 408 process. Guidance for the 408 process is provided along with conceptual illustrations of potential designs for sumps in the West End and the levee wall. The mobility and accessibility recommendations are categorized under three key priority statements: (1) Invest in the active transportation network; (2) prioritize safety for all; and (3) coordinate and leverage infrastructure projects with partners.

Finally, the Implementation section shows how improvements are envisioned as a series of smaller projects with different time frames, funding sources, and responsible agencies executing the implementation. Individual projects can be categorized by type, timing, and responsibility in order to facilitate their successful implementation over time. An implementation matrix categorizes each strategy, including lead agencies and timing of projects.

BACKGROUND

Introduction



Just east of US Highway 59, which will soon become I-69, Wharton is 60 miles southwest of Houston on the Coastal Plain of southeast Texas at the coastal bend. (Map from Google Earth)

In the fall of 2017, the APA Foundation (APAF), in cooperation with APA members and other generous donors, began a fundraising campaign to assist communities that were hit hard by hurricanes and other natural disasters. The total raised exceeded \$78,000, and a year later the APAF announced the recipients of a first cohort of disaster recovery grants. Each of the six recipient communities—in Florida, Puerto Rico, and Texas—used their grants to support post-disaster resiliency and infrastructure projects.

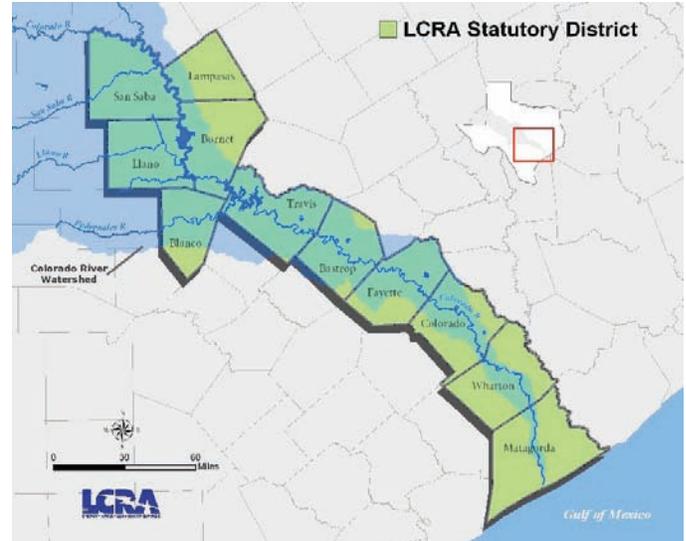
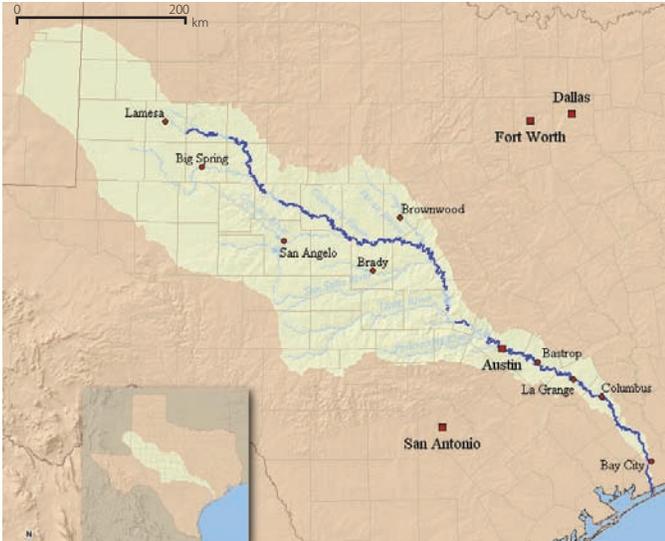
Support for the grant program, including the Wharton project, was provided in part by a grant from the Pisces Foundation, which seeks ways to accelerate to a world where people and nature thrive together. APA's work with Pisces focuses on building back better with green infrastructure after disasters.

The WEDC applied in July 2018 to the disaster recovery RFP issued by the APAF. They applied for a CPAT to assist with the integration of multiple existing plans in preparation for the design phase of a recently awarded \$73-plus million USACE levee

and flood protection system. The city wants to leverage the large engineering project by aligning other plans and projects that will benefit the community. The city wants to identify opportunities to integrate and connect new hazard mitigation infrastructure with existing greenways, empty lots, parks, potential future public spaces, and primary hubs for public services.

The following represent the primary goals of the project.

1. Visualize a design overlay for the USACE levee/flood protection system that leverages existing and future community assets, incorporates green infrastructure, and increases the quality of life for Wharton residents.
2. Identify key connection points and opportunities within the city and create a conceptual multimodal connectivity plan.
3. Develop an inclusive process with the West End neighborhood that offers residents an equitable share in the benefits of planned community improvements and infrastructure investments.



Left: The drainage basin of the Colorado River watershed covers around 15 percent of Texas. (Map created by Kuru from U.S. Geological Survey data)
 Right: Wharton is in the Lower Colorado River Basin in the second-to-last county before reaching the Gulf of Mexico. (Map courtesy LCRA)

4. Leverage the opportunity of integrating recreational space and access as a part of the funded portions of the USACE level/flood protection system through the Section 408 process.

Brief History of Place

The land around Wharton has been inhabited for at least 10,000 years starting sometime during the Paleoindian Period amid the last ice age. It was one of the first areas in Texas explored by Europeans starting in the late 1600s. Spain took and maintained control of the territory until Mexico’s independence in 1821. Until the early 1800s, the Karankawa Indians, a Coco band, lived in the area. The Karankawa settled and hunted around the area’s waterways. By 1850, the remaining Karankawa moved out of the area south to Mexico after many years of continued conflict with new settlers during the westward expansion into the Texas territory.

The earliest settlers in the area received land grants in Stephen F. Austin’s colony. Most were already well established and many owned and brought slaves with them, a point of contention with the Mexican government and part of what led to the Texas Revolution in 1835–36. The land grantees established plantations and ranches in the fertile bottomlands of the area’s waterways. Many settled along Caney Creek because of its rich alluvial soil and because they knew of the tendency for the Colorado River to flood.

Some of Stephen Austin’s original colonists settled and established Wharton as a plantation community in 1846. They named it after two leaders who helped achieve Texas independence, brothers John and William Wharton. Early settlers came from other southern states. The population was around 200 until 1881 when the railroads brought an influx of new settlers increasing the population to almost 1,700 in 1900 and over 2,300 by 1920. Early settlers included Swiss, German, Mexican,

Czech, and Jewish immigrants and descendants of plantation slaves. The greatest growth occurred during the 1930s, rising to almost 4,400. The town’s population reached 5,734 in 1960; 7,881 in 1970; and has hovered near 9,000 since around 1980.

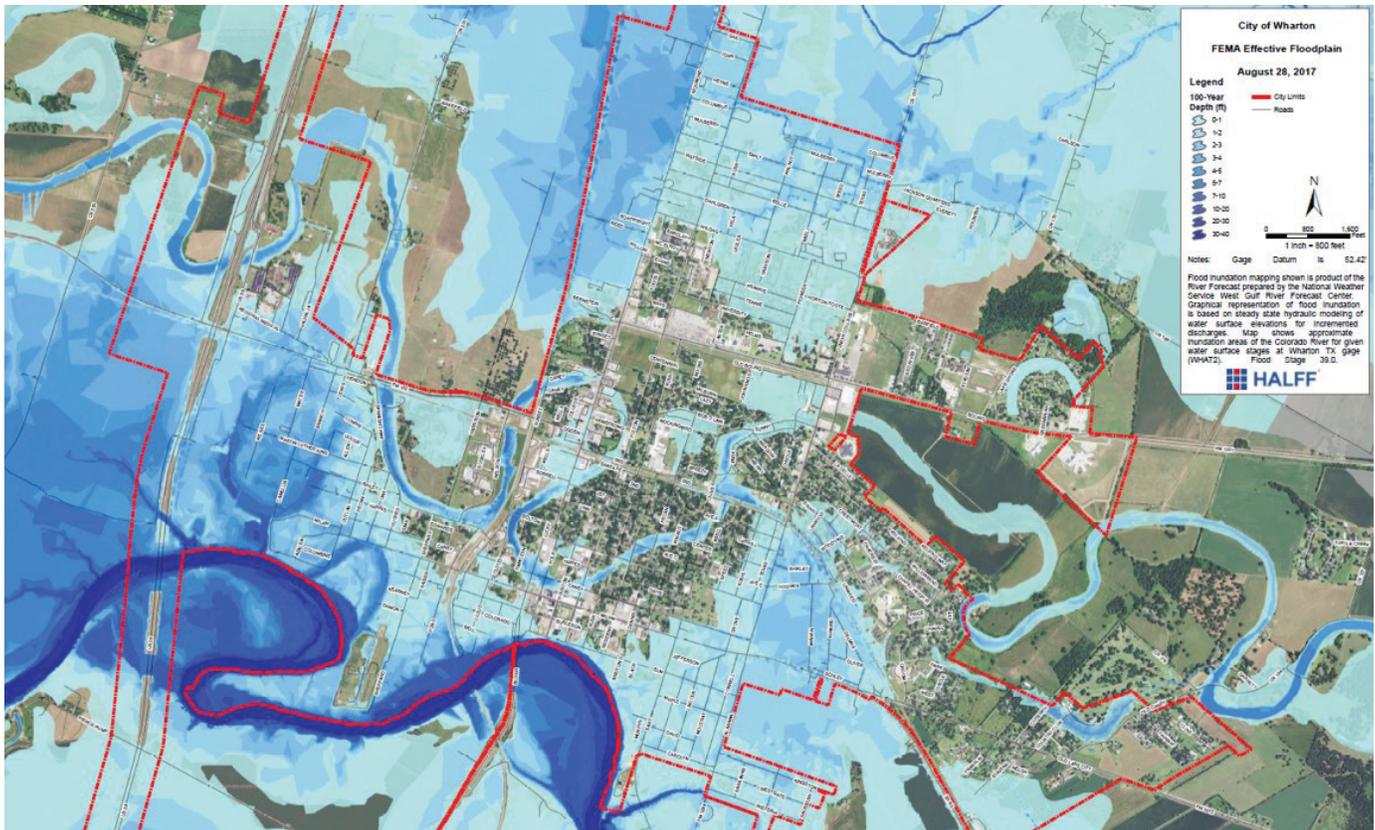
Early crops included potatoes, cotton, corn, rice, and sugar cane. Commercial enterprises included cattle, molasses, and sugar. At different times the community had a cotton oil mill, a sugar cane factory, gristmills, cotton gins, a milk processing plant and dairy, an ice plant, and other industries. Oil and sulfur production in the outlying areas also contribute to the town’s economy.

Colorado River

The city lies on the east bank of the lower Colorado River, which flows southeast and roughly divides Wharton County in half. The Colorado River originates south of Lubbock, Texas, on the Llano Estacado, one of the largest mesas on the North American continent. From there, it flows through Texas Hill Country, the most flash flood-prone area in the country (known as “Flash Flood Alley”). It flows through downtown Austin and it meets many lakes, dams, and man-made reservoirs on its path. Thousands of other rivers, creeks, and streams drain into and join the Colorado along the way as it makes its 862-mile journey, ultimately emptying into Matagorda Bay in the Gulf of Mexico.

The river is vital to the Texas economy. It serves as a critical source of water for farming, municipal drinking water, and electrical power production to various communities across the state. Two authorities created amid the Great Depression in the mid-1930s by the Texas Legislature manage the river system as a water resource. The Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA) manages the section of river that flows through Wharton. The Upper Colorado River Authority manages the northern section.

Flooding is not a new phenomenon for communities along the Colorado River. Records indicate more than 80 major



Colorado River floodwaters take many paths depending on its level, but located near a major bend in the river, the West End experiences flooding at a disproportionate rate than the rest of the city. (Map by Halff Associates, Inc.)

floods in the Lower Colorado River Basin since the 1840s. (See LCRA’s [Highland Lakes and Lower Colorado River Flood Guide](#) for more information). Since 1991, the city has endured 14 substantial flood events, with some years resulting in more than one flood. Flooding from Hurricane Harvey in 2017 was only one event in a long history of flooding. Harvey stood out because of the magnitude of impact across Texas, affecting almost 300 communities. While Harvey stood out as a particularly devastating storm system, flooding in Wharton is a chronic problem, and the impacts disproportionately affecting the city’s West End neighborhood.

Race and the history of settlement patterns in Wharton play a role in the differential experience of flood events. Like many places, Wharton is largely segregated by race and ethnicity. The dividing line, also like many places across the U.S., is the railroad tracks. The West End is a historically African American neighborhood, although now also significantly Latino. For hydrological reasons, the West End experiences flooding much more frequently than the rest of Wharton.

Flooding in Wharton is predominantly due to over-bank flooding from the Colorado River, Caney Creek and Peach Creek because of extreme rain events occurring up river. Flooding threats to the West End begin at lower river gauge

levels than the rest of the city. Once the river rises above its banks and overwhelms the drainage system (both natural and man-made), the water flow heads directly into the West End.

After the major 1998 flood, the city partnered with LCRA, USACE, and the Texas Water Development Board to study the problem and find a solution. In 2006, plans were created for a conceptual flood protection system including internal drainage and channel improvements, levees, and floodwalls. Mitigation will address flooding caused by the Colorado River, including Baughman Slough and Caney Creek. After almost two decades of advocacy for more effective flood protection in Wharton, US-ACE finally allocated over \$73 million to the city for the system in 2018—less than a year after Hurricane Harvey—and was the impetus for requesting help from the CPAT program to lever-age the opportunity with other community aspirations.

Study Area

WEDC wants to leverage the large-scale USACE engineering project by aligning other plans and projects that will benefit the community. The study area therefore includes the entire city of Wharton. However, the study focused primarily on the areas of the city most impacted by the USACE project, particularly the West End, main arterial roads, existing greenways and



Left: Wharton's city limits extend north and south along U.S. Highway 59 (future I-69). (Map from Google Maps.) Right: Widespread flooding in the West End and downtown from Hurricane Harvey in 2017. (Photo courtesy City of Wharton)



other multimodal pathways, and nodes of common interest in the community, e.g., recreation facilities and schools.

CPAT Process

The CPAT team leader, Ennis Davis, AICP, and APA programs manager, Ryan Scherzinger, AICP, conducted a preliminary site visit to Wharton on November 16, 2018. They met with WEDC and several stakeholders and toured the city. Following the visit, they recruited four other volunteer members to join the team with the expertise needed for the project (see Appendix D for team member profiles).

Community outreach for the CPAT project began with understanding the demographic and historical background of the city. Reaching out to a diverse group of individuals representative of the community and other key stakeholders was crucial for the full team's visit. WEDC developed a list of stakeholders and community members for the project.

On the first day of the visit, Friday, February 22, 2019, the CPAT project team met with WEDC for a brief overview and background information relevant to the project including some of the history, ongoing challenges, and opportunities ahead. Following the meeting with WEDC, the team met with city manager Andrew Garza and community development director Gwyneth Teves. They discussed major infrastructure needs throughout the community, including those related to chronic flooding issues. Garza shared his vision for increased connectivity with the new levee system, including incorporating a green belt along the Colorado River through recreational activities and restoration of natural habitat. He expressed how building on the area's strengths and improving local assets will help with economic development efforts and enhance quality of life for residents.

WEDC executive director Chad Odom guided the team on a walking and driving tour of Wharton on the first day of

the visit. The team independently visited different areas of the city throughout the visit, some multiple times, to gain a better understanding of the existing conditions and analyze the feasibility of ideas.

On Saturday, February 23, a diverse mix of stakeholders dropped by to talk with the team to discuss their ideas for recreation, connection improvements around the city, safety concerns, historical and other community assets, flooding issues, and a range of other local input that increased the team's understanding of Wharton.

WEDC reached out to various interest groups and individuals with emails and flyers and placed public notices in the local paper about the workshop held on Sunday, February 24. Ultimately, 48 residents participated. It was apparent many were eager to learn more about the levee project. The workshop offered a chance to get the community thinking about the levees and the rest of the flood protection system in other ways. The team asked community members what they'd like to possibly see in sump areas, what areas of the community could be better connected, how they use the river, what recreation wishes they have, what areas they consider to have safety problems, etc. Community members offered myriad insights and shared stories and local knowledge that provided the team a rich context for the analyses and recommendations presented in this report.

Despite attempts to reach out, one regrettable and significant limitation of the engagement process was the inability to secure the involvement of Wharton's Latino community. The team lacked the people power and connections within the community to get Latinos involved in the process. Future outreach efforts related to this project (and others) should make continued attempts to build trust and gain input from the Latino community. Their insights and involvement are key to understanding and envisioning the future of Wharton.



CPAT Visit Schedule			
Day	Time	Activity	Individuals / Organizations
Friday, February 22	Morning	Grant team meeting	Chad Odom–WEDC executive director Laura Clemons–WEDC contractor
	Mid-morning	Meeting with Wharton city staff	Andrew Garza, Jr.–city manager Gwyneth Teves–community development director Wes Birdwell–engineer, Halff Associates, Inc.
	Afternoon	Tour of city (walking and driving)	Chad Odom–WEDC executive director Laura Clemons–WEDC contractor
	Late afternoon/evening	Team debrief meeting	CPAT
Saturday, February 23	Morning/afternoon	Stakeholder meetings	Just Do It Now Bicycle advocates Parks Commissioner City Commissioner West End residents School Board Wharton County Historical Commission Boy Scouts leader Business owners USACE Drop-in residents
	Late afternoon/evening	Team debrief/working session	CPAT
Sunday, February 24	Morning	Team working session	CPAT
	Early afternoon	Public workshop	48 community members attended
	Late afternoon/evening	Team working session	CPAT
Monday, February 25	Morning	Team working session	CPAT
	Mid-morning	Governmental agencies	Clay Harris–TxDOT Josh Owens–Houston-Galveston Area Council of Governments
	Afternoon	Final debrief and departure	CPAT and WEDC

Existing Conditions

The purpose of the existing conditions analysis is to gain an understanding of Wharton's current landscape, its constraints and characteristics, and to provide further insight to the need and opportunity for possible future improvement efforts. The information contained here documents the baseline conditions related to the environmental setting and identifies social, natural, cultural, historical, transportation, and physical features present in Wharton.

Previous and Ongoing Planning Studies

During the existing conditions data collection and Wharton CPAT visit, the study team obtained information regarding previously completed studies and plans impacting open space and future multimodal connectivity improvement projects within Wharton. The studies included:

- *City of Wharton 2018–2028 Comprehensive Plan Update*
- Colorado River Flood Control Project design documents
- Lower Colorado River Basin, Phase I, *Texas Interim Feasibility Report and Integrated Environmental Assessment*—Volume III Wharton
- *Wharton County Hazard Mitigation Plan*
- Wharton's West End Corridor: A Roadmap Forward

City of Wharton 2018–2028 Comprehensive Plan

The city of Wharton partnered with GrantWorks, Inc. to create a *2018–2028 Comprehensive Plan* for the community with the following guiding principles:

- Reduce potential flood damage by pursuing planning and land-use decisions that will improve the ability of individu-



The Colorado River, seen here as it flows through Riverfront Park in downtown Wharton, offers the community a beautiful asset for recreation and enjoyment, but it also creates periodic flooding with costly damage to property and disruptive forces to the social fabric of the community. (Photo by Adrienne Burke, JD, AICP)

als, communities, economic systems, and the natural and built environment to recover from a disaster.

- Pursue land-use decisions that will provide all residents living in existing and new neighborhoods with safe and convenient access to jobs, housing, and a variety of amenities.
- Maintain the character and integrity of existing neighborhoods, parks, and open space by requiring new construction to meet high quality, context-sensitive development standards.
- Pursue diverse housing development affordable to and serving the needs of all segments of the population.

Below is a summary of relevant recommendations from the comprehensive plan:

1. The Capital Improvements Program 2018–2023 is illustrated in *Figure 1* (see Appendix B). Identified improvement projects include:
 - a. Construction of three (3) general use/soccer fields, one light activity area, picnic tables with BBQ grills and park benches at Harris Park in the West End in 2020–22
 - b. Construction of pedestrian improvements in downtown
 - c. Roadway resurfacing projects primarily in the West End and North Wharton including portions of East Milam Street, Old Boling Highway, Martin Luther King Boulevard and Fulton Streets in 2018–24
2. The *Proposed Thoroughfare Improvement Plan* is illustrated in *Figure 2* (see Appendix B). This plan indicates construction of sidewalks along portions off Ahldag, Pioneer, and Fulton Streets, from Mockingbird to FM 1301/Boling Highway in 2022–28.
3. The *Recreation and Open Space Plan* is illustrated in *Figure 3* (see Appendix B). It highlights the location of existing parks and proposed improvements at Harris Park.
4. The Proposed Thoroughfare System Improvements 2018–2028 is depicted in *Figure 4* (see Appendix B). Recommendations include:
 - a. Adopt a Future Land Use Map/Plan that encourages infill development 2018–2021.
 - b. Consider adopting a Zoning Ordinance with standards for thoroughfare-fronting development.
 - c. Ensure that all future upgrades to thoroughfares within the city limits are designed to the Institute of Transportation Engineers' Context Sensitive Solutions standards with provisions for thoroughfare-fronting development.
 - d. Repave existing sidewalks in deteriorated condi-

tion and continue ADA improvements.

5. Update Subdivision Ordinance to require subdivision streets to connect to existing streets and limit block length to a minimum of 200 feet and a maximum of 1000 feet.
5. *Figure 5* (see Appendix B) shows the *Central Business District Improvements 2018–2028* plan. The major proposed improvement is the development of a pedestrian mall connecting Monterrey Square and Riverside Park and the completion of downtown’s sidewalk network. Identified sidewalk projects will primarily be located along Richmond Road, Milam Street, Elm Street, and Caney Street. In addition, the plan indicates the development of a bike lane path through downtown to connect the Santa Fe Trail to Riverfront Park in 2025–28 using Polk, Caney, and Fulton streets.
6. *Figure 6* (see Appendix B) illustrates the Existing Land Uses within Central Wharton. Commercial and retail land uses are generally located along SH 60/Richmond Road and SH 60/Milam Street in downtown Wharton. Industrial and agricultural processing land uses surround the single-family and semi-development land uses of the West End, while Institutional is the dominant land use in North Wharton. Agricultural and undeveloped land uses are dominant on the outskirts of Wharton.
7. *Figure 7* (see Appendix B) depicts the future land-use map for central Wharton. Significant land-use changes include the proposed Colorado River flood protection system that would provide additional recreational and open space in the West End, a new commercial/retail corridor along US 59, and mixed-use development in downtown, the West Milam Mercantile Historic District, and FM 1301/Boling Highway.

Colorado River Flood Control Project Design Documents (October 2013)

Prepared for the USACE Fort Worth District by Halff Associates, Inc., this document contains the final submittal design plans for the Colorado River Flood Control Project in the West End area of Wharton. A map of the project, which is located along the north side of the Colorado River between Owens Road and Business 59, is depicted in *Figure 8* (see Appendix B).

Lower Colorado River Basin, Phase I, Texas Interim Feasibility Report and Integrated Environmental Assessment—Volume III—Wharton (October 2006)

Prepared for the USACE Fort Worth District/Galveston District in October 2006, this report documents the feasibility studies undertaken to determine a recommended plan for addressing water resource-related problems and needs in the vicinity of Wharton.

Wharton County Hazard Mitigation Plan (October 2015)

A hazard mitigation plan was prepared for the Wharton County Office of Emergency Management in October 2015. Below is a

summary of the recommendations for the city from the study:

- Clean and repair storm drains routinely.
- Increase freeboard requirements for permitting structures in the floodplain.
- Implement a comprehensive watershed ordinance for new development.
- Acquire, reuse, and preserve open spaces adjacent to flood-prone areas.
- Implement a zero-discharge policy for stormwater in subdivision platting.
- Use impact fees to help fund public hazard mitigation projects related to land development.
- Minimize the impact of flooding by installing berms and levees when appropriate.
- Develop flood-use stream/restoration/channelization to ensure adequate drainage/diversion of stormwater.
- Establish a reserve fund for emergency and public mitigation measures.
- Identify and assess the most at-risk critical facilities and evaluate possible mitigation techniques.
- Acquisition and relocation, elevation and “demo-rebuild” of flood-prone structures.
- Install emergency generators at critical facilities.

Wharton’s West End Corridor: A Roadmap Forward (August 2018)

In August 2018, Urban Land Institute (ULI) Houston completed a Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) report focusing on the Spanish Camp Road corridor leading from US 59 into downtown Wharton. The findings specifically addressed:

- The anticipated reduced risk of flooding in the corridor and West End neighborhood when the much-anticipated levee is constructed by the USACE
- Steps that can be taken to meet the critical need for quality affordable housing and alternative housing types in the West End and surrounding neighborhoods
- The need for placemaking along the corridor, welcoming residents and visitors to Wharton, directing them to downtown, and encouraging them to linger along the corridor and explore the neighborhood and anticipated recreation areas along the levee
- A need to build community cohesion through intentional community development activities and expanded recreation opportunities in and around Wharton
- A host of economic development opportunities along the corridor, which can provide sought-after convenience shopping, restaurant/takeout, and personal service options currently lacking in the neighborhood while also reviving vacant commercial space and supporting the strong entrepreneurial population in Wharton

Below is a summary of the recommendations from the ULI study:



Traveling on West Milam Street, the railroad tracks mark the entrance from the downtown and Mercantile Historic District to Wharton's historically African American West End neighborhood. (Photo by Chelsea Young, AICP)

- **Invest in the West End.** The city, WEDC, and other stakeholders (collectively, Civic Stakeholders) are encouraged to concentrate its funding pursuits in support of development and revival of the West End.
- **Address housing in the West End.** With approximately one-half of the neighborhood's housing stock gone or beyond repair, the Civic Stakeholders should support renovations, build new housing on infill lots, support the development of multifamily and/or senior housing, and help residents address title and deed issues.
- **Improve infrastructure.** As one stalwart resident suggested, "Make it nice." The streets, sidewalks, and street lighting require attention in the West End, and Spanish Camp Road will require infrastructure and placemaking improvements if it is to serve as the new entrance to Wharton.
- **Collaborate inclusively.** Intentional, inclusive collaboration and communication takes work, but Wharton is up to the task. With a strong network of nonprofit organizations, the Civic Stakeholders are encouraged to embrace and enhance the work of its nonprofit organizations to further assist and support its most vulnerable residents.
- **Create an implementation strategy.** Finally, the Civic Stakeholders are encouraged to explore available tools, such as the establishment of a Redevelopment Authority and Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone, and, if viable, begin the process immediately to gain access to the necessary development authority and a potential incremental funding source to assist these efforts. A taskforce to help see the work through, led by a paid community leader and champion, who is willing to commit to the work long-term, will help ensure that the initiatives undertaken are successful.

Land Use and Community Characteristics

The following provides an overview of existing land uses and environmental aspects in and around Wharton.

Land Cover

Figure 9 (see Appendix B) illustrates the existing land cover in Wharton and the surrounding area at the individual parcel level. The landscape west of US 59 is dominated by Cultivated Crops, Pasture Land Cover designations.

The West End neighborhood, bounded by US 59, FM 102, the railroad and the Colorado River, consists of a mix of Developed, Open Space, Evergreen and Deciduous Forest Land Cover designations. The most intensively developed area in the West End area is an industrial district situated at the southeast corner of US 59 and FM 102. Wharton's most intensive developed areas are located along the major roadway corridors including Bus 59/Richmond Road, FM 1301/Boling Highway, Milam Street, and Alabama Road between Milam Street and Boling Highway.

WEDC anticipates that the US 59 corridor between FM 102 and SH 60 and the area bounded by the railroad, US 59 and FM 102 will be developed with Medium Intensity Land Cover in the future.

Community Features/Points of Interest

Figure 10 (see Appendix B) displays various neighborhoods and other points of interest, including the location of public schools and parks within Wharton. The interchange of US 59 and FM 102 is a major activity and employment center just west of the West End neighborhood. Anchored by Wharton Junior College, Wharton's public schools are in the northeast section of the city, straddling the FM 1301/Boling Highway corridor.

Floodplain Data

Figure 11 (see Appendix B) displays the floodplain data within Wharton. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) flood zones are geographic areas that FEMA has defined according to varying levels of flood risk. A flood is any relatively high streamflow overtopping the natural or artificial banks in any reach of a stream. Each zone reflects the severity or type of flooding in the area. Most of the city lies within the 100-year floodplain. This does not mean that a storm of this type will happen every 100 hundred years and only every 100 years. It means there is a one percent chance that a storm of this magnitude will occur in any given year. The 500-year floodplain is an area of less probable flood hazard. Excluding the path of Caney Creek, a large portion of Wharton, east of the Kansas City Southern Railroad and north of downtown and the former Gulf, Colorado and Santa Fe Railroad (GCSF) corridor/FM 1299 is located within the 500-year floodplain.

Soils

Figure 12 (see Appendix B) displays a map of the soil types within the study area. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), formerly known as the Soil Conservation Service, is an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture that provides

technical assistance to farmers and other private landowners and managers. The NRCS also produces the U.S. Soil Survey. The most common soil types with Wharton are Brazoria clay and Lake Charles clay along the Colorado River and Norwood silt loam straddling the path of Caney Creek.

Topography

A U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) topographic map with two-foot contour lines is depicted in *Figure 13* (see Appendix B). The USGS is a scientific agency of the U.S. government. The scientists of the USGS study the landscape of the United States, its natural resources, and the natural hazards that threaten it. The organization has four major science disciplines concerning biology, geography, geology, and hydrology.

The majority of Wharton has an elevation between 100 and 114 feet. However, along the Colorado River, the elevation drops as low as 62 feet, creating bluff-like conditions along the river's banks as it winds through downtown, the West End and other neighborhoods. In addition, north of FM 1301/Boling Highway, the elevation gradually drops from 100 to a low of 84 feet above sea level in the vicinity of Baughman Slough.

Historic Districts, Sites and Markers

A map depicting National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) historic districts, sites and markers, made available by the Texas Historical Commission, is shown in *Figure 14* (see Appendix B). The NRHP is the federal government's official list of districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects deemed worthy of preservation for their historical significance. A property listed in the National Register, or located within a National Register Historic District, may qualify for tax incentives derived from the total value of expenses incurred preserving the property.

There are three National Register Historic Districts within the study area. Recognized as downtown Wharton, the Wharton County Courthouse Historic Commercial District was designated in 1991 and is the largest NRHP historic district in Wharton. The 21-acre historic district contains 46 contributing buildings and two contributing objects, including the Wharton County Courthouse. The Linn Street Historic District covers roughly the 500 blocks of Richmond Road and Houston Street and the 100-200 blocks of Linn St., just north of downtown. This six-acre residential district was designated in 1993 with 17 contributing structures.

The West Milam Street Mercantile Historic District is the smallest of the historic districts. Roughly bounded by Sunset, Burluson and Caney Streets, the 600 block of West Milam Street was home to five contributing buildings constructed between 1901 and 1942 when it was designated in 1993. Today, only two buildings in this district remain standing. Dominated by the two-story brick Deaton Grocery Building, the district is immediately adjacent to the Old Texas and New Orleans Railroad Depot, forming the connection between downtown Wharton and the West End neighborhood.

Sites with historical markers are generally concentrated in older residential area bounded by SH 60/Richmond Road,



Built in 1889 and restored in the early 2000s, the Wharton County Courthouse in downtown Wharton is a successful example of historic preservation. (Photo by Ryan Scherzinger, AICP)



West Milam Street is home to the Mercantile Historic District, yet it lacks signage and markers to help tell its story as a part of Wharton. (Photo by Ennis Davis, AICP)

the Colorado River, Alabama Road, and Santa Fe Trail. National Register Historic Sites are generally concentrated in this same area, along with the inclusion of select sites near the West Milam Street Mercantile Historic District. Despite dating back to the late 19th century, there are no officially designated historic districts, sites or markers within the underrepresented West End community.

Roadway Facilities and Characteristics

The following section summarizes the existing roadway facilities and characteristics for transportation corridors in the city. Roadway facility and characteristic information was obtained from the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT).

Functional Roadway Classifications

Figure 15 (see Appendix B) illustrates the functional classification of roads within the city. Roadways are evaluated and classified every 10 years based on the level of traffic service and degree of access they provide.



The Santa Fe Trail crosses SH 60/Richmond Road. (Photo by Ennis Davis, AICP)

Functional classification is the grouping of roads, streets, and highways into integrated systems, each ranked by its importance to the general welfare, the motorist, and the land-use structure. Functional classification is used to define the role any particular road should play in serving the principal functions of a road: mobility for through movements and access to adjoining land. There are three main functional classes as defined by the U.S. Federal Highway Administration: arterial, collector, and local.

Arterial roads generally provide the fastest method of travel and typically have low accessibility from neighboring roads. They are usually designed with long-distance travel in mind and are not as common as the other two functional classes of roads. Examples of arterial roads in Wharton include US 59 and parts of FM 102 and SH 60 near the West End neighborhood.

Collector roads are the second most common and are used as a connection between local roads and arterial roads. They provide a balance between access and mobility. Major collectors in Wharton include portions of SH 60/Richmond Road, West Milam in the West End neighborhood, and Fulton Street.

Local roads are the most common roads by far but are also the slowest for travel. They are designed specifically to have high accessibility and to connect to collector and arterial roads and are typically not used for through traffic. The majority of streets within Wharton are classified as local roads.

TxDOT Roadway Facilities

Figure 16 (see Appendix B) identifies the “on-system” roadway facilities in the city. On-system roadways are those designated on the State Highway System and maintained by TxDOT. TxDOT is a department of the state of Texas overseeing public transportation within the state. Potential connectivity projects on on-system roadways are subject to the TxDOT Roadway Design Manual. Within the study area, on-system roadways include:

- US Highway (US) 59—a highway so designated by the American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials, a nonprofit, nonpartisan association representing highway and transportation departments in the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.
- Business US Highways (BU) 59—the original path of US 59 through Wharton and a roadway beginning and ending on a through U. S. highway, so designated by the Texas Transportation Commission.
- State Highway (SH) 60—A roadway running from Wallis to Matagorda, Texas, so designated by the Texas Transportation Commission.
- Farm to Market Roads (FM) 102, 1299 and 1301—Roadways that are generally located in rural areas, so designated by the Texas Transportation Commission.

The remaining roadways are classified as “off-system.” Off-system roadways are not designated on the State Highway System and not maintained by TxDOT (i.e., city streets, county roads). Examples of off-system roadways include Alabama Road, Spanish Camp Road, Fulton Street and Ahlag Avenue.

TxDOT Annual Average Daily Traffic

Figure 17 (see Appendix B) shows the Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) counts for TxDOT-maintained facilities within the city. AADT is a measure used primarily in transportation planning, transportation engineering, and retail location selection. AADT is a simple but useful measurement of how busy the road is. Traditionally, it is the total volume of vehicle traffic of a highway or road for a year divided by 365 days. One of the most important uses of AADT is for determining funding for the maintenance and improvement of highways. It can also serve as a useful guideline for selecting candidate Road Diet locations to mitigate any negative effect on traffic operations. FHWA has summarized AADT volume threshold guidelines for four-lane roadway. (For more information on AADT, see FHWA’s *Road Diet FAQ* here: https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/road_diets/resources/pdf/fhwas17021.pdf.)



A pedestrian walks along the side of FM 102 near the West End where locals have worn a desire path in the grass next to the road. (Photo courtesy Google Street View)

- Less than 10,000: A great candidate for Road Diets in most instances. Capacity will most likely not be affected.
- 10,000–15,000: A good candidate for Road Diets in many instances. Agencies should conduct intersection analyses and consider signal retiming in conjunction with implementation.
- 15,000–20,000: A good candidate for Road Diets in some instances; however, capacity may be affected depending on conditions. Agencies should conduct a corridor analysis.
- Greater than 20,000: Some agencies have had success with Road Diets at higher traffic volumes. However, agencies are recommended to complete a feasibility study to determine whether the location is a good candidate.

TxDOT Posted Speed Limits

The posted speed limits are illustrated for TxDOT facilities in *Figure 18* (see Appendix B). Speed limits frame expectations for drivers and other roadway users. Properly set speed limits provide a safe, consistent, and reasonable speed to protect drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists along the roadway. Posted speed limits (sometimes called regulatory speed limits) are those that are sign-posted along the road and are enforceable by law.

TxDOT Roadway Projects

The Project Tracker is the gateway to information about more than 14,000 TxDOT projects, providing 24/7 access to the public, employees, and elected officials. *Figure 19* (see Appendix B) identifies planned TxDOT roadway improvement projects within Wharton that are included on Project Tracker. Construction for projects identified are anticipated to occur within the short term (one to four years), mid term (five to 10 years), or long term (more than 10 years). TxDOT-planned roadway projects provide the city with an opportunity for bicycle/pedestrian access and safety improvements, such as bicycle lanes, sidewalks, shared use paths, and marked crosswalks, to be incrementally included with proper coordination with TxDOT.

Short-term surface and roadway restoration projects are expected to occur on SH 60/Richmond Rd. from US 59 to Burseson Street and on SH 60/Milam Street and SH 60/Burseson Street through downtown Wharton within four years.

In addition, the upgrading of US 59 into a rural freeway (Future I-69) is a mid-term project that will have significant economic impact on Wharton. Expected to be under construction from SH 60 to two miles south of FM 102 in five to ten years, it will include the construction of frontage roads and a new interchange between FM 102 and SH 60. This interchange will



SH 60/Milam Street runs through Downtown Wharton. (Photo by Ennis Davis, AICP)

accommodate a planned extension of FM 1301/Boling Hwy.

Long-term projects proposed within Wharton include the extension of FM 1301 from SH 60/Richmond Rd. to a new US 59 interchange and the reconstruction of FM 102 from 0.5 miles east of US 59 to SH 60, along the north boundary of Wharton's West End neighborhood.

Railroads

Figure 20 (see Appendix B) shows the location of railroads within Wharton. The Kansas City Southern Railroad (KCS) bisects the city from north to south. This railroad was originally built in 1881 by the New York, Texas and Mexican Railway, serving as a late 19th century racial dividing line between the West End African American community and downtown Wharton, while also economically stimulating the development of Wharton's West Milam Street Mercantile Historic District.

In addition, Wharton has two abandoned sections of rail lines that once went through town. Bisecting the city from east to west, the Cane Belt Railway was completed in 1899. Eventually becoming the GCFS, it was abandoned during the early 1990s and a 0.8-mile segment between SH 60/Richmond Road and Alabama Road was converted into the Santa Fe Trail. The New York, Texas and Mexican Railway also had a second line in the area, running east from Wharton to Bay City via Boling that has also been abandoned.

The other former rail right-of-way through Wharton runs along the south side of FM 1301/Boling Highway east of the KCS Railroad. Portions of this abandoned right-of-way have since been converted to commercial business parking.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Wharton is a vibrant, heritage-rich community that has been challenged by multiple repeat flooding events over the last few years. Fortunately, after years of study and engineering through USACE, the city is fortunate to have a funded levee project that should move forward soon. This section outlines recommendations the city and other local and statewide partners should consider over time in coordination and with support of the major flood improvement projects. The recommendations include projects and programs that go beyond integration with the levee projects that have the potential to enhance the overall economy and quality of life for Wharton residents. This section provides context and background on why and how the recommendations were created.

The recommendations integrate cultural resources, flood protection, and mobility/accessibility. The overarching themes within the recommendations are to:

- Coordinate with USACE flood control project managers to use recreational and educational opportunities within USACE processes to transform the levee projects into community assets.
- Plan for flood control maintenance activities to ensure the levee system and associated amenities are maintained and remain functional.
- Integrate cultural resources programming into city programs to take advantage of the levee projects and attract visitors.
- Create an active transportation program and plan to tie the city together, providing safer roads, and places for people to walk and bike.

Cultural Resources

Historic Preservation

Historic preservation is much more than saving old buildings. Modern preservation efforts are about saving the heart of communities—ensuring vibrant, special places full of character. This means looking beyond architecture to what makes historic towns and neighborhoods thrive, such as actively used historic buildings, healthy businesses, and community gathering spaces being paramount. As Stephanie Meeks, President of the National Trust for Historic Preservation states in her book, *The Past and Future City*, “We all have special places... places that define us and our community. Places that bring people together and relate our history. Sometimes they are grand and beautiful buildings... Just as often—maybe even more often—they are ordinary places that have become imbued with meaning by stories and memories.” Historic preservation for today’s times goes beyond the building.



Historic preservation and adaptive reuse of the West Milam Street Mercantile District can bridge the gap between the West End community and downtown Wharton. (Created by Ennis Davis, AICP)

The challenge of balancing preservation with progress is continual. When historic buildings are allowed to deteriorate or are torn down, or when our historic street grid is eliminated, a part of our past disappears forever. When that happens, we lose history that helps us know who we are, and we lose opportunities to live and work in the kinds of interesting and attractive surroundings that older buildings provide.

Historic preservation is also viewed as a strategy to implement sustainability. Rehabilitating and adaptively reusing structures is seen as a way to recycle already existing infrastructure. Historic buildings were designed to adapt to their environment and because of this, are often energy efficient in their design. Tearing down existing buildings contributes to additional construction waste and energy production. Although newly constructed homes may have some increased energy efficiency, the process of demolition and new construction involves losing the embodied energy of the existing structure and utilizing new energy to demolish, haul debris, and construct anew.

Existing Resources in Wharton

The Texas Historical Commission’s [Historic Sites Atlas](#) is an excellent resource for understanding what historic and cultural resources have already been documented in Wharton. National Register sites, historic markers, and other recorded information are all available for review. Notable in Wharton are three National Register historic districts: the Courthouse Historic Commercial District (listed 11/5/1991), the Linn Street Historic District (listed 3/18/1993), and the West Milam Street Mercantile Historic District (listed 3/18/1993). Other sites are listed in the Register individually, such as the Texas and New Orleans Railroad Depot.

Preservation and Existing Comprehensive Plan Policy

Wharton’s recently adopted Comprehensive Plan provides multiple policies and strategies that support and encourage

Chapter 4: Land Use Study

- 4.4 Key Land Use Considerations
 - 4.4.1 Remove and Replace Vacant/Dilapidated Buildings; Ensure Distressed Properties are Maintained
 - 4.4.2 Continue Historic Downtown Preservation; Focus New Development in/around CBD
 - 4.4.3 Encourage Infill Development (includes to Revitalize Downtown)
 - 4.4.4 Guide Future Growth to Ensure Wharton Develops in a Sustainable Manner that Retains the City's Character

Chapter 9: Thoroughfares Study

- 9.4.3 Adopt Design Standards Along Major Thoroughfares to Support Economic Development Goals

Chapter 10: Economic Development

- 10.4.1 Continue to Enhance Marketing Efforts
- 10.4.3 Prioritize Quality of Life Improvements that Promote Economic Growth
- 10.4.5 Continue to Invest in Downtown

Chapter 12: Central Business District

- 12.4.1 Leverage Historical Buildings + Character to Project a Unique Image
- 12.4.2 Increase Residential Density Within + In Areas Surrounding CBD
- 12.4.3 Ensure Existing Historic Structures in Monterey Square + Along Milam Street Are Occupied
- 12.4.4 Connect Monterey Square with Riverfront Park through Pedestrian Mall + Increased Commercial Uses Along North Elm Street
- 12.4.5 Improve the CBD Experience by Investing in Pedestrian + Bicycle Facilities
- 12.4.6 Coordinate Funding + Community Efforts to Ensure Continuous Upkeep of Downtown Area

historic preservation within the community. Many of the historic preservation suggestions that follow as generated from the team's visit in February coincide well with policy as outlined in Wharton's Comprehensive Plan. The following policies are helpful in furthering Wharton's preservation efforts.

Economic Impacts, Incentives, and Downtown Revitalization

Historic preservation has a significant effect not only locally, but on regional and statewide levels. Preservation's impact is not limited to economics. It also has a significant impact on quality of life. Preservation demonstrates a positive effect on community, education, economy, sustainability, and affordable housing—all quality of life indicators. According to a 2015 report, [Economic Impacts of Historic Preservation in Texas](#), conducted by the University of Texas Austin

and Rutgers University, preservation activities throughout Texas generated more than \$4.6 billion of state GDP in Texas in 2013 and supported more than 79,000 Texas jobs.

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

- 1 TEXAS HERITAGE ATTRACTS TOURISTS**

More than 10.5 percent of all travel in Texas is heritage-related, and that number continues to rise. Heritage tourists contribute more than their share to spending, \$7.3 billion or about 12.5% of total visitor spending in Texas. Of that, nearly \$2.26 billion can be attributed directly to the heritage-related portions of their trips. According to a survey of participating sites, the Texas Heritage Trails Program increases revenue and visitation by 13.9%.
- 2 HISTORIC PRESERVATION CREATES JOBS**

Heritage tourism alone created more than 54,000 jobs in Texas in 2013, in diverse areas such as retail, construction, manufacturing, transportation and utilities, as well as services. Overall, historic preservation activities created more than 79,000 jobs in 2013.
- 3 HISTORIC BUILDING REHABILITATION REBUILDS TEXAS COMMUNITIES**

Private property owners invest almost \$741 million annually in rehabilitation of designated historic buildings, more than 7% of all building rehabilitation activity. Public entities add at least \$31 million for a total annual historic rehabilitation investment in Texas of approximately \$772 million.
- 4 INCENTIVES FOR HISTORIC PROPERTIES ATTRACT REINVESTMENT**

Every dollar from federal and state incentive programs triggers \$4 to \$5 of private-sector investment. Since its inception in 1978, the Federal Historic Tax Credit has spurred about \$1.78 billion in private-sector rehabilitation in Texas, generating more than 35,000 in-state jobs and more than \$2.4 billion in state GDP. As the new Texas Historic Preservation Tax Credit takes effect in 2015, the state can expect a strong increase in this investment.
- 5 HISTORY MUSEUMS BRING ECONOMIC VITALITY TO COMMUNITIES**

Texas Historical Museums (there are more than 700) spend over \$93 million annually, not including capital expenditures. Even history museums in the smallest communities across the state attract thousands of visitors annually.
- 6 REVITALIZATION OF TEXAS MAIN STREETS MAKES GOOD BUSINESS SENSE**

Historic downtowns sustain communities and are the focus of the Texas Main Street Program, with 89 cities currently participating. Since the program's inception in 1981, participating Main Streets have produced an average of \$310 million annually in state GDP. Cumulative reinvestment in Main Street areas has totaled over \$5.2 billion since 1981.
- 7 THE STATE'S INVESTMENT IN COURTHOUSES PAYS GREAT DIVIDENDS**

Since 2000, the Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program has awarded over \$251 million in grants to 91 counties. These awards made possible about \$403.3 million in total project spending from 2000 through 2013. These projects have created more than 9,600 jobs and added \$615 million to state GDP, while spurring downtown revitalization in counties large and small.



REHABILITATION OF THE HISTORIC WHARTON COUNTY COURTHOUSE

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION IN TEXAS 9

Source: *Economic Impact of Historic Preservation in Texas, 2015*

The Main Street program has been a tremendous economic success. Originally started in 1980 by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, a Main Street community focuses on economic development in the context of historic preservation. Specifically, Main Street works with historic downtowns because a healthy downtown builds a positive image for the community, creates job opportunities, saves tax dollars, preserves historic resources, and helps control sprawl. Eighty-nine cities in Texas currently participate in the Main Street program. Since the program's inception in 1981, participating Main Streets have produced an average of \$310 million annually in Texas GDP, and cumulative reinvestment in Main Street areas has totaled over \$5.2 billion since 1981.

Texas also has the Texas Town Square Initiative through the Texas Historical Commission. This is a technical assistance service that offers conceptual design and financial feasibility studies, downtown action planning to address development barriers, efforts to increase and influence the market exposure of available properties, and advanced research and problem-solving for priority downtown topics in order to develop best practices and educational materials. The Texas Town Square Initiative is behind the www.downtowntx.org website, which helps promote historic buildings for sale or lease in downtowns throughout Texas. Currently, Wharton is not one of the communities included on this site, but it should be.

Efforts already occurring in Downtown Wharton are taking the revitalization of the historic district in the right direction. The EDC facade grant program, the Wine and Arts Festival on the Square, the amazing restoration of the courthouse, and the opening of multiple new small businesses are all success stories that can lead to more success. Feedback received during the CPAT visit around other possible improvements downtown include having community wifi, more events, more restaurants, and overall, making the downtown more interesting for people of all ages. Other opportunities discussed by the team and community members included:

- Relocating the historic museum downtown (where it originally started) along with the Dan Rather House, one of Wharton's most famous citizens. It was suggested the community reach out to Mr. Rather to see if he would be interested in being involved.
- Bring back the downtown theater culture. Currently the Plaza Theater is a cultural institution on the Square, but downtown used to be home to multiple theaters: the Plaza, Rio, Queen, and Gem. This could involve smaller performance venues, with locations to screen films, or hear live music.
- Work with the owner of 104 S. Resident Street, who is involved in restoring the original Wharton City Hall building.
- Work with the city to identify publicly owned property that could have request for proposals issued for redevelopment.

Wharton used to be a Main Street community, and was in fact, one of the first Main Street programs in Texas. This dates to

1987-1989, as referenced in the Downtown National Register nomination. This is important to note because it is still an option to bring such a program back. For meaningful economic development and programming to occur in the historic downtown of Wharton, some coordinated effort such as a Main Street program or looking for assistance through the Texas Town Square Initiative is necessary. The EDC, Wharton Downtown Business Association, and Monterey Square Merchants would be natural partners to lead such an initiative.

Heritage tourism can be another significant contributor to the economic base in a community. The National Trust for Historic Preservation has defined heritage tourism as traveling to experience the places, artifacts, and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past, and can include cultural, historic, and natural resources.

In Texas, more than 10.5% of all travel in Texas is heritage related. Heritage tourists contribute more than their share to spending, which is \$7.3 billion or about 12.5% of total visitor spending in Texas. Nearly \$2.26 billion can be attributed directly to the heritage portions of their trips. The Texas Heritage Trails Program increases revenue and visitation by 13.9%. Heritage tourism generated more than 54,000 jobs in Texas in 2013, in areas such as services, retail, construction, manufacturing, transportation and utilities.

Options for Wharton to capitalize on the community history, in addition to revitalizing downtown, include:

- Marketing and branding around identity. Using the broad history to create a tagline or brand for the city can help with economic development efforts.
 - o Community members identified the following top attributes in their survey responses as why they love Wharton: small town and rural atmosphere, sense of history and historic buildings, quality of schools, quality healthcare, and proximity to Houston. These reconcile with the feedback received from the community during the city's Comprehensive Planning process.
 - o CPAT team members identified the following attributes that stood out as part of the community identity: agriculture, pecans, cattle, railroad, cotton, horses, sports (especially softball), flooding, oxbow lakes, and diversity of heritage through immigration and the variety of cultures that exist in the town.
- Expand existing series of historic murals around town and maintain existing murals. The murals were recognized in the city's Comprehensive Plan as evocative of Wharton's identity as part of the recommendations under the Economic Development chapter to continue marketing efforts around the community.
- Begin a heritage trail using markers that can be incorporated into the levee project, along the Santa Fe trail, and throughout the community.
- Continue working with Wharton County on state heritage markers. Four markers were recently approved: Louise

State Bank Building, Old Jerusalem Cemetery, Wharton County Library, and Wharton Training School. These markers relate to a diverse community history in Wharton and these efforts should be continued.

- Continue Historic Home Tour highlighting historic residential district in Wharton.
- Activate the train depot. Use the depot with West Milam Mercantile District as an anchor or community space to enhance and emphasize the connection to downtown. The depot would make an excellent visitors center.

Historic properties in historic districts routinely hold their property value better than similar properties in non-historic districts. For a comprehensive look at historic preservation economics, Place Economics is a well-respected firm that works specifically on this issue and provides resources. The National Trust's Research and Policy Lab has also been doing data and analytics around the economic value of buildings,

particularly in their report, *Older, Smaller, Better: Measuring How the Character of Buildings and Blocks Influences Urban Vitality*. The Policy Lab has been replicating this model of study across the country, including Austin, Dallas, Fort Worth, Houston, and San Antonio. The Policy Lab's work is being consolidated at the Atlas of ReUrbanism, available at their website, and is showcased in their most recent report, *Untapped Potential: Strategies for Reuse and Revitalization*. The graphic at left incorporates findings and recommendations from the report.

Tax credits and exemptions for historic preservation are an economic incentive that can also have a tremendous economic impact for projects and communities. At the federal level, despite pressure to eliminate it, the 20% historic preservation tax credit for historic buildings that are rehabilitated and income-producing survived the tax code revisions in 2017. The one change is that the credit must be phased over five years instead of being taken in one year, as had been allowed previously. Federal tax benefits are also associated with donation of historic preservation easements.

It has been demonstrated that each dollar from federal and state incentive programs triggers \$4 to \$5 of private sector investment. Since adoption in 1978, the Federal Historic Tax Credit has spurred approximately \$1.78 billion in private sector rehabilitation in Texas, generating more than 35,000 in-state jobs and more than \$2.4 billion in state GDP.

In 2015, Texas adopted a state historic preservation tax credit to complement the federal tax credit through Texas House Bill 500. The program went into effect on January 1, 2015. The state historic tax credit is worth 25% of eligible rehabilitation costs and is available for buildings listed in the National Register of Historic Places, Recorded Texas Historic Landmarks, and Texas State Antiquities Landmarks. The program is administered jointly by the Texas Historical Commission in cooperation with the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts.

Inclusive Wharton History

In a meeting with the Blairs during the team's visit, they mentioned the "undertold stories" in Wharton. Historic sites associated with African American, Latino, LGBTQ, women, and other traditionally underrepresented groups are beginning to get the attention they have deserved. For most of the preservation movement in the United States, designations and focus have been on sites affiliated with white men. There is a growing recognition that this focus does not tell the entire story of our country or communities, and that the contribution of all individuals should be celebrated and recognized. As the Blairs noted, there is wealth of undertold histories in Wharton.

Opportunities exist for the city to work together with the Wharton County Historical Commission on possible interpretive and educational exhibits, public art, and community engagement around a variety of diverse histories in the community.

African American Heritage: West End

The West End represents a significant opportunity to tell the story of African American heritage in Wharton. Families have

UNTAPPED POTENTIAL
THE **WHY** AND **HOW** OF BUILDING REUSE

Older buildings and neighborhoods are precious civic assets—as essential to cities as parks, schools, or public transit. They provide architectural character, sustain diversity, contribute to dense and walkable communities, and fuel local economies. Reusing older buildings advances community resilience and curbs climate change by reducing carbon emissions and material waste. **Yet, millions of older buildings across the United States lie vacant and underused.** To fully realize their potential, cities need new tools that remove barriers to reusing older buildings and discourage demolition.

TOP STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE BUILDING REUSE

Cities across the country are using innovative approaches to make building reuse easier and more likely. Released in October 2017, the *Untapped Potential* report draws on a partnership between the Preservation Green Lab and Urban Land Institute designed to understand the barriers to building reuse nationally. The report outlines eight top-line approaches to make cities more reuse friendly, detailed below.

- Leverage data and mapping tools to understand reuse opportunities.** Knowing a city's built assets is the first step to being able to target incentives, programs, and infill development.
- Eliminate, reduce, or recalibrate parking requirements.** Fewer parking requirements incentivizes investment in older buildings. Shared parking in nearby locations can also fill this need.
- Adopt a comprehensive adaptive reuse program.** Adaptive reuse ordinances bring together incentives along with flexibility in building and zoning codes, removing unnecessary barriers to reuse projects.
- Cultivate new sources of public and private capital for smaller projects or projects in weaker markets.** Leverage new and existing funds to cover gap financing, pre-development costs, and other expenses.
- Retain and strengthen existing incentives for building reuse.** Support ongoing advocacy for the federal historic tax credit and new and strengthened state historic tax credits.
- Update zoning codes to meet 21st-century needs.** Promote new uses, greater diversity of uses, accessory dwelling units, and other context-sensitive zoning changes to provide more opportunities for reuse and infill.
- Remove barriers that prevent change of use in existing buildings.** Establishing provisions within the zoning code for appropriate and compatible "sister uses" can ease the transition to new uses by reducing red tape.
- Develop a "solutions database" for overcoming building code challenges.** Daylighting creative solutions, successful projects, and paths to navigate complex redevelopment problems can be invaluable to small-scale infill and adaptive reuse projects.

Let's work to foster more sustainable and inclusive cities by removing the barriers to building reuse. More information on the *Untapped Potential* report, as well as additional resources and studies on the contributions of existing buildings, can be found at savingplaces.org/greenlab.

Preservation Green Lab

Untapped Potential: Strategies for Reuse and Revitalization, 2017, National Trust for Historic Preservation, Preservation Green Lab

stayed in the neighborhood since after the Civil War. Although it was not incorporated into the city limits until the 1970s, the history is Wharton's history and important to share, especially in light of significant changes happening in the neighborhood due to flooding, the impending levee project, possible improvements to Spanish Camp Road, and future economic development around the adjacent industry. As Mary Barnes noted in her interview with the team, the West End has "a past, but it's got a future." Incorporating that past into future planning efforts will be important to retaining the remaining heritage, honoring the community, and telling the story of the neighborhood's evolution.

Community sites and schools are an important part of the neighborhood's story. Preserving those sites and/or ensuring that their story is told is important for the neighborhood. Ensuring the neighborhood continues to have community gathering spaces is also important for holidays, festivals, and events like the Juneteenth Festival. Historically, Dawson Elementary school was on the site of Harris Park. A highly visible interpretive opportunity exists at that site to tell the story of Dawson since Harris Park is widely used for events, reunions, and recreation.

The Wharton Training School (WTS) site, now home to Just Do It Now, is another very significant site to the West End and Wharton. As a Rosenwald school site, the Wharton Training School location is important for telling the history of African American education, not just in Wharton, but how it relates to a national movement for African American education. Rosenwald Schools were part of schools funded by Julius Rosenwald of Sears Roebuck in the early part of the 20th century. Through a partnership with Booker T. Washington, Rosenwald funded over 5,000 schools for African American children throughout the American South. According to the Fisk University Rosenwald Fund database, the Wharton Rosenwald school at the WTS site was funded in 1927 to 1928 on four acres, was the "eight teacher type," and included a library. It was a wooden structure with an open-air porch and brick chimneys. More information on the [Rosenwald School program in Texas](#) is available on the Texas Historical Commission website. The 2015 Texas inventory of Rosenwald Schools says that the WTS is extant. However, it is notably not in the originally constructed form.

WTS alumni worked with the Wharton County Historical Commission for a state historic marker that was recently approved and will be placed at the site. This is a good first step in beginning to share the rich history of the WTS with the larger community. Other opportunities such as displaying WTS memorabilia and artifacts like those related to the 1962 Wharton Wolves state football championship at the new Just Do It Now facility will also aid in those efforts.

History around the main churches in the West End is also worth highlighting and exploring. St. James Missionary Baptist Church, St. Stephens Missionary Baptist Church, Martin Luther King Boulevard Church of Christ, Spanish Camp Road Church of Christ, and Macedonia Baptist Church are all community sites significant to the history and current identity of the neighborhood. Engaging church members in the plans for the West

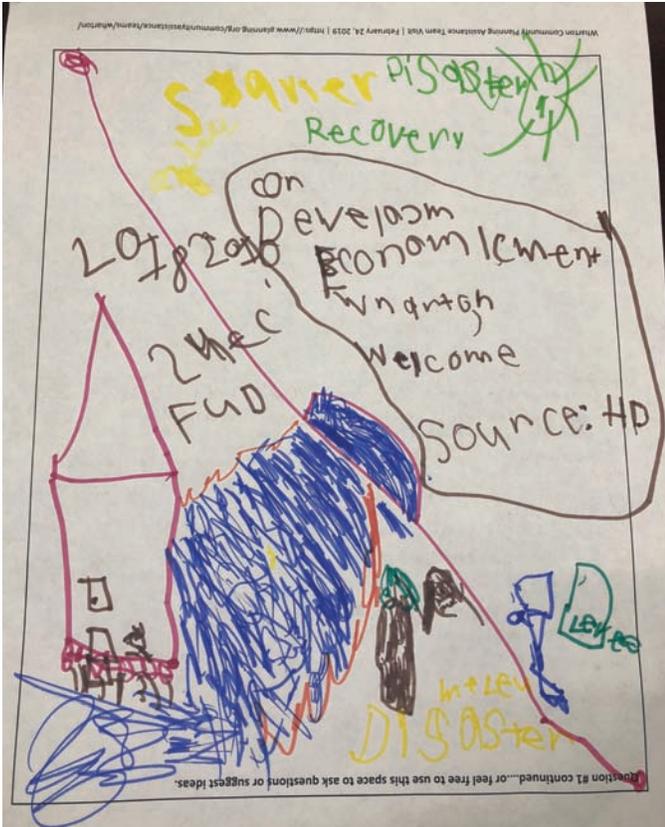


The historic Wharton School, a Rosenwald School, represents an important chapter in Texas history, reflecting the initiative of African American communities who sought educational opportunities for their children during the Jim Crow Era, when all public schools in Texas were segregated by law. Photo courtesy Fisk University Rosenwald Fund Card File Database

End would be beneficial, alongside leaders within the neighborhood. Examples given include Dr. Ennis Alexander Martin, one of the first African American doctors in Wharton and Greg Baines, founder of Just Do It Now.

Commercial districts and uses should also be considered in telling the history of the West End, in addition to the historic homes in the neighborhood. West Milam and Ford Road were both historic commercial areas for the West End prior to incorporation into Wharton and desegregation. The neighborhood has expressed an interest in seeing the West Milam Mercantile District revitalized and reactivated as a link to downtown. Closed restaurants and food spaces like Shanice's BBQ, the Rosewood Club, Soul Sisters, the small grocery store, and smokehouse/sausage establishments no longer exist, but once provided economic vitality and a sense of community in the area. Many residents expressed interest in seeing the small grocery store reopen along Spanish Camp Road. Looking at a business revitalization district or other economic incentives for the neighborhood may be a motivation for a small business entrepreneur or owner to take on such an opportunity. This would provide economic development opportunities for the residents and revive a historic use in the neighborhood.

Lastly, the historic relationship of the West End to flooding cannot be ignored. In an interview with Mary Barnes, she mentioned the lasting psychological and physical effects of dealing with displacement and relocation due to flooding and damage. She acknowledged that some of the more elderly residents simply could not handle the stress of the repeated flooding events and she was certain that it hastened their passing. Ms. Barnes's anecdotal recollections align with findings in Dr. Mindy Thompson Fullilove, M.D.'s book, *Root Shock*. Dr. Fullilove is a medical professional and professor of Urban Policy and Health. In her book, she addresses the physical and psychological impacts of urban renewal, and the profound health impacts that displacement and dislocation of people from their homes and community generate.



During a public meeting, a young West End resident drew a picture of his house and the recent flooding.



Historical markers can cover many different themes in the West End community as shown in these examples from the Newtown Heritage Trail in Sarasota, Florida. Photos by Adrienne, Burke, AICP

At the public workshop held during the team’s visit, this effect was also profoundly demonstrated by a young West End resident. At the event, he drew an image of a house and a flood. When asked if that was his house, he said yes. With further questions, he shared how he had to leave his home as a result of the flooding. His grandmother, who accompanied him, offered more details about the situation. It was a serious moment to recognize the tremendous impact the repeated

flooding events have had on West End residents from the very young to the elderly.

Ms. Barnes noted that she felt a memorial to the neighborhood, and more importantly, the people and neighbors, would be appreciated and welcomed as part of the levee project plans. Examples of such memorials specific to flooding are included later in the report. The memorial, however, does not have to be only for flooding—it could be a celebration of the entire neighborhood and its past.

There is potential to incorporate a West End heritage trail or other marker trail into the sump area or throughout the neighborhood in strategic locations. Markers can be designed to be flood and water resistant. Buffalo Bayou wayfinding signage in nearby Houston provides examples as each marker could address a category or theme of history in the neighborhood. The Newtown Heritage Trail in Sarasota, Florida, is a good example of this strategy, as are other strategies employed by Newtown Alive, the organization dedicated to the neighborhood. Newtown Alive incorporates many options that could be explored in Wharton such as collection of oral histories, research report, a heritage trail mobile app, website, trolley tours, and work on economic development in the neighborhood. Options of categories to include in a West End Heritage Trail include businesses, recreation, churches, leaders, education, sports, transportation, industry, and flooding.

African American Heritage in the Broader Wharton Context

African American history is not limited to the West End in Wharton. Downtown Wharton has a history worth exploring. The downtown National Register nomination for Wharton mentions several businesses facing the courthouse square that were owned by African Americans until the 1920s. One building facing the square was built and owned by an African American businessman. A black history mural is included on a wall in the East End of the community. There may be opportunities for further exploration into African American history in this area.



A black history mural in the East End of Wharton suggests broader opportunities to celebrate African American history in Wharton. Photo by Adrienne, Burke, AICP

Ethnic Heritage

The story of Wharton is full of rich, ethnic history from a diversity of cultures. Several prominent histories stood out during the CPAT visit. The Jewish heritage in Wharton is being investigated by Pat Blair, and she noted that, at one time, most of the downtown merchants were Jewish. Wharton had an initial synagogue that was subsequently replaced by another synagogue in another location. Unfortunately, due to a dwindling population, the second synagogue was closed in 2002 and the building has since burned down. The buildings no longer exist, but there is still a story to share. The Jewish cemetery is maintained by a Houston synagogue and is an excellent place to start researching names and families to highlight this cultural community.

The Czech heritage in Wharton is still evident through food like the kolache, which is served at numerous locations in town. During the CPAT visit, posters were observed for upcoming polka events. A book at the library details the history of Czechs in Wharton County.

Mexican heritage should also be explored. 40% of the city's population is Hispanic. Historic anecdotes related to a "Mexican School" were heard during the team's discussions with community members. There is a Mexican cemetery across from the City Cemetery. Public spaces like theaters were also once segregated for Mexicans. In more recent years, a festival used to be held called Fiesto Hispano Americano. Wolfpak Radio, an internet-based radio station billing itself as the #1 Tejano Conjunto Outlaw Radio, holds a prominent location right on Courthouse Square. Tejano and conjunto are unique Texas-based musical genres that date back to the 19th century and combine jazz, blues, rock and roll. The style notably features the accordion, a similarity with the polka music of the Czechs and Germans that immigrated to Wharton in the 19th century. San Antonio has held an annual Tejano Conjunto Festival for the past 38 years. With Wolfpak Radio, Wharton could also have an opportunity to showcase a truly unique musical style specific to Texas through special events or festivals.

Women's Heritage

Women's history is still unfortunately not widely shared or known in most communities. It was often difficult to tracing women's history, because property ownership records were in men's names. Women's names were often not recorded, unless they gained some level of notoriety. Wharton undoubtedly has women's history worth researching. As one example, during the CPAT visit, information was found on a female entrepreneur named Amanda Watts who ran one of the downtown hotels during its heyday. This is just one possible thread to follow in unraveling the mystery of women's history in Wharton.

Agriculture/Industrial Heritage

Sites that are often overlooked such as former industrial sites, transportation-related sites, or other unconventionally "pretty" sites are beginning to gain attention in telling the story of our communities' development, and sites of important contributions by industry and innovators. These are also associated with the working life of many people in a community's past. An area with historic inquiry is "The Flats," an area located behind the Milam Street Coffee Shop and Wolfpak radio that was home to migrant farmworkers (according to information provided anecdotally during stakeholder interviews). Another example of a specific site associated with an engineering history is the Colorado River bridge downtown—the only Pennsylvania truss bridge left in the state. Niche tourism around these sites is also developing.

In Wharton, there is an opportunity to highlight the agricultural and industrial past of the community, which is still a part of the identity today. The Courthouse National Register nomination notes: "As a service town for agriculture industry, Wharton continues to enjoy the same economic base in the 1990s as it did in the 1890s." This was echoed during the CPAT visit in an interview with a representative from the Houston-Galveston Area Council who noted that he doesn't think people realize how much the economy of Wharton is still based on agriculture. Cotton gins, pecans, the railroad, cattle, and horses and equine culture are just several examples of parts of



A mural in Wharton illustrates the rich history of agriculture in the area and suggests more opportunities to explore and celebrate its continued importance in the community. Photo by Adrienne Burke, AICP



A memorial in Cedar Rapids, Iowa honors all the people in the city's west side neighborhood who lost everything during the flood and had to rebuild and also serves as a stopping point for quiet remembrance along a trail near their new levee system. Photo courtesy The Gazette

Wharton's agricultural and industrial history that is worth incorporating into the community's identity. Opportunities exist for branding and capitalizing on this rural and agricultural history.

Mid-Century Resources

Mid-century architecture is growing in appreciation and interest. Wharton has several examples of these resources and they should be documented and celebrated. Tourism around mid-century resources is also increasing. The Wharton City Hall is an excellent example of a mid-century structure, both the exterior and the interior, which has retained the floor plan and even furnishings. Other potentially iconic sites are the Teepee Motel and the Dinosaur Park, affiliated with local artist Dana Steinheimer who painted the artwork inside the Plaza Theater and is affiliated with Magic Island in Houston. The Texas Historical Commission has a helpful [publication](#) on residential mid-century architecture.

Preservation and Flooding

Local governments play a critical role in making sure citizens are ready, but also in making sure infrastructure is ready. Historic resources need to be a part of disaster preparation and mitigation, post-disaster planning, resiliency and floodplain management conversations. Historic properties have different needs than newer buildings, but it is more than just making a building disaster ready. Historic properties make up the identity and soul of a community and are often significant contributors to the economy, whether home to businesses, part of a well-valued historic district, or drivers of heritage tourism. For some communities, especially those dependent on heritage tourism, historic resources are critical infrastructure that need to be addressed.

As a reality, flooding is a part of the community's history. Rather than hide this fact or downplay it, it is an interpretive and educational opportunity to share the history and invite the community into the conversation. The town's relationship to nature and water bodies like the Colorado River, Caney Creek, Boughman Slough, and Big Peach Creek is a vital part of telling the story of Wharton. Environmental history and environmental education should be included in the levee project as a means of telling the evolution of the community's relationship with the river and flooding.

Examples of communities that have told the story of their relationship with flooding can be found across the country. One example is Johnstown, Pennsylvania, which has a flood museum and uses the story of the Great Flood there to tell the larger story of flooding throughout the community's history. Cedar Rapids, Iowa, has recently installed memorial markers and a sculpture to document and memorialize flooding there. As noted by Mary Barnes during her interview in February, she feels that residents of the West End would be appreciative of such a memorial to document their survival of the three great floods of recent years and their perseverance in rebuilding and remaining in the neighborhood.

Flood Preparedness and Mitigation for Historic Properties

Due to the prevalence of historic communities both along the coast and in flood-prone areas, the intersection of historic resources, flooding, and sea level rise has garnered more attention throughout the preservation community in the last five years. Multiple resources are available to help communities through the pre- and post-disaster planning horizons. Currently, the Wharton County Hazard Mitigation Plan does

not address historic or cultural resources as a specific resource vulnerable to flooding. This should be readdressed during the next update. The following are a sampling of planning resources from around the country that can be used as guidance:

- **FEMA Publication 386-6: Integrating Historic Property and Cultural Resource Considerations into Hazard Mitigation Planning**
 - o To date, Annapolis, Maryland is the only community in the country that has followed the exact model as outlined in 386-6. Their project, *Weather It Together: Protect our Historic Seaport*, created a **Cultural Resources Hazard Mitigation Plan**. The plan assesses the significance of cultural resources within the 100-year floodplain boundary and risk from flooding associated with those resources.
- **FEMA P-467-2: Floodplain Management Bulletin: Historic Structures**
- **Texas Historical Commission Disaster Resources for Historic Properties**
- **Galveston Historical Foundation: Center for Coastal Heritage + Resiliency**
- **National Trust for Historic Preservation: Treatment for Flood-Damaged Historic Buildings**
- **Video: Drying Out Flooded Historic Properties**
- **Resilient Heritage: Protecting Your Historic Home from Natural Disasters**
- **Protecting Florida's History from Hazards: A Guide to Integrating Cultural Resources into Disaster Planning**
- **Elevation Design Guidelines for Historic Homes in the Mississippi Gulf Coast**
- **Elevation Design Guidelines for Historic Homes in the Louisiana GO Zone**

Practical strategies for preparing buildings in areas that are known to flood or are in flood-prone areas are also important to consider. Dry and wet floodproofing can be considered per FEMA requirements for floodplain construction. Currently, FEMA distinguishes between residential and commercial construction for purposes of flood mitigation. Elevation is the only option recommended for residential structures. The city's floodplain management ordinance does include a procedure for variances for historic structures: "Variances may be issued for the reconstruction, rehabilitation or restoration of structures listed on the National Register of Historic Places or the State Inventory of Historic Places, without regard to the procedures set forth in the remainder of this article" (City of Wharton Code of Ordinances Section 18-304(d)(5)). The following documents are helpful examples for mitigation and adaptation strategies for historic structures:

- **Flood Mitigation Guide: Maryland's Historic Buildings**
- **Historic Charleston: Flood Mitigation Options for Historic Buildings**
- **Mitigation + Adaptation Strategies for Historic Structures + Sites**

Because many of downtown Wharton's buildings are masonry construction, relocation or elevation is unlikely. Two specific examples of flooding adaptation in historic districts with buildings that largely cannot be located due to masonry construction are:

- **Houston Spaghetti Warehouse project** - From *Houston* magazine: "A local development group purchased the former Spaghetti Warehouse building at 901 Commerce in the Market Square Historic District. The group plans to complete a renovation of the 15,000 SF structure built in 1901. Their vision includes an open-air street market on the flood-prone first floor and a bar on the second floor."
- **Alexandria, VA** - Historic district with c.18th and 19th century masonry buildings at ground-level that are prone to flood. Property owners and businesses are ensuring that first floor construction is flood-ready: limiting floor coverings to concrete or wood and making all fixtures and furniture movable in the event of flooding. Businesses can flood, but cleanup and post-disaster recovery is much simpler.

Disaster planning activities related to historic preservation include, but aren't limited to:

- Inventory historic properties in floodplain. (Pre-Disaster)
- Develop post-impact damage assessment data for historic properties. (Short-term recovery period: 1-60 days post-disaster)
- Create a post-disaster historic resource assessment team comprised of building department, preservation planner, architect, engineers, and volunteers (if available). (Pre-disaster and short-term recovery period: 1-15 days)
- Create a historic preservation response network (Pre-disaster, emergency period, and short-term recovery period)
- Review and update historic property review and permitting procedures with the City and Texas Historical Commission to ensure that procedures expedite redevelopment and include consideration for hazard mitigation measures. (Pre-disaster and short-term recovery period: 15-90 days post-disaster)
- Develop a post-impact workshop or mailing to private historic property owners to let them know about restoration requirements and to avoid demolition. (Pre-disaster and short-term recovery period: 15-60 days)
- Develop procedures for post-disaster restoration plan. Prioritize resources for making temporary and long-term repairs. (Pre-disaster, short-term recovery period: 1-90 days; and long-term redevelopment: 4 to 18 months)
- Encourage local building officials to employ hazard mitigation measures for repairs to historic structures damaged during a disaster. (Pre-disaster and long-term redevelopment: 4-24+ months)
- Ensure that historic properties are not destroyed by demolition or that damages are exacerbated by recovery

activities (i.e., debris removal). (Emergency period and short-term recovery period: 1-60 days)

Cemeteries

Cemeteries present unique problems in disaster preparation and are a special resource to plan for in relationship to flooding. Wharton should undertake a disaster preparedness plan for its cemeteries as part of overall disaster preparation planning for historic resources and ensure cemeteries are included in any post-disaster planning as well. Resources like “Cemetery Disaster Planning” from the Chicora Foundation should be used in developing a disaster preparation plan. The National Center for Preservation Technology and Training (NCPTT) also has resources for preparing and responding to disasters in relation to cemeteries.

Many of the cemeteries are linked to the untold histories within the community, highlighting African American, Jewish, and Mexican heritage. Cemeteries are a unique aspect of a community’s cultural landscape and a tangible, visible way to communicate history of a place. Preservation of cemeteries is a respectful way to honor the legacy of those who contributed to the community over the years. Like buildings, documentation of cemeteries is important, and making sure they are included in the state historic resource inventory is essential.

The City Cemetery is maintained by the Wharton Cemetery Association, which is currently trying to fundraise for an endowment for cemetery preservation. The cemetery includes white, Hispanic, and African American burials. In

the West End, the St. James Missionary Baptist Church has a cemetery affiliated with the church. This cemetery should be a high priority to have documented and recorded, especially in light of a proposed industrial spur road proposed adjacent to it. The Jewish Cemetery is maintained by a Houston synagogue since a synagogue no longer exists in Wharton. Jewish people are also buried near the entrance of Evergreen Cemetery. Across from the City Cemetery is the Mexican Cemetery, which is cared for by an organization called Preservation of our Ancestors. Ancestors of the San Antonio founders and Canary Islanders are both reported to be buried in this cemetery.

General Preservation Recommendations

Documentation is the most important historic preservation strategy for structures and sites. Documentation can vary from basic architectural information and photos to full-blown Historic Architectural Buildings Survey (HABS)-level architectural drawings. Advances in technology also allow for 3D laser scanning and photogrammetry, which allow for production of scaled drawings in a much faster and more accurate manner than past documentation efforts. Documentation should also include ensuring that the structures are included in the state’s inventory of historic places.

Should a building be demolished or damaged beyond repair, documentation ensures a record exists for the prior structure. This is especially important given the community’s propensity to experience flooding, and because the first policy



Wharton’s cemeteries, such as the Mexican Cemetery seen here, and others are important historical resources. Photo by Adrienne Burke, AICP

within the city's Comprehensive Plan Key Land Use Strategies is in part to "Remove and Replace Vacant/Dilapidated Buildings." It is recommended that all buildings over fifty years old be documented with, at a minimum, photography and basic architectural information prior to demolition, and encouraged to first evaluate whether the building could be rehabilitated.

Priorities for documentation in Wharton include:

- Remaining West End structures. Since 1994, over 200 buildings have been lost in the West End. Due to the levee project, risk of flooding, and economic development, the existing buildings are under threat. Documentation is very important, even if it is a windshield photo survey of each building.
- Remaining buildings in West Milam Mercantile Historic District. The West Milam Mercantile Historic District is a National Register of Historic Places-listed district. It is a very small district with buildings demolished already. Documentation and a preservation plan for the remaining buildings is important, especially in planning for revitalized connections between downtown and the West End.
- Cemeteries within the city. As noted above, cemeteries are an especially vulnerable historic resource. Documentation and survey of existing markers and headstones is important.

Mothballing is the process of properly sealing a building that is vacant but waiting for rehabilitation or an adaptive reuse. Historic buildings have a better chance of being rehabilitated if they are kept weathertight and maintained while being empty. Wharton should prioritize what vacant historic buildings are significant but have a chance of rehabilitation in the future. Guidance on proper mothballing techniques are available in [Preservation Brief 31](#) from the National Park Service Technical Preservation Services.

Consider Local Preservation Ordinance

Wharton's Comprehensive Plan supports creation of a zoning and/or historic preservation ordinance in the Land Use Policy Section 4.4.2: Continue historic downtown preservation; focus new development in/around CBD. Historic preservation happens at the local level.

Local preservation ordinances are the backbone of the historic preservation regulatory framework where preservation regulations have the most impact and effect. Listing on the National Register of Historic Places, while important and significant for a resource, has no legal protections associated with the listing. Local historic preservation ordinances are where historic resources are protected from alteration and demolition. Ordinances vary from place to place, largely depending on state law. Texas allows cities to "regulate the construction, reconstruction, alteration, or razing of buildings and other structures" in "designated places and areas of his-

torical, cultural, or architectural importance and significance" through ordinances. The ordinance establishes the parameters of what a community will regulate and is important to keep up to date. Preservation regulation has been upheld as a valid use of a community's police power as established in *Penn Central Transportation Company v. City of New York*, 438 U.S. 104 (1978).

Ordinances may include, but aren't limited to:

- Establishing districts or local landmarks
- How to establish districts/landmarks
- Creating historic resource or design review Board
- Listing Board processes and procedures
- Enumerating criteria for Board decision-making
- Explaining Board application procedures/requirements
- Setting out guidelines for design review or incorporating by reference
- Regulating signage
- Regulating archaeological resources
- Determining demolition by neglect standards and penalties
- Requiring specific information for demolition or relocation applications
- Setting economic hardship provisions
- Creating process for emergency actions
- Laying out appeals process and enforcement/penalties/injunctive relief provisions
- Explaining any tax incentives or exemptions
- Severability clauses

Preservation ordinances are a form of government regulation. Preservation interests and the interests of property owners are then balanced using design guidelines specific to a community. A preservation ordinance lays out the process for implementation and oversight of the guidelines, usually through a historic preservation review board.

Alternatively, communities are also creating conservation districts. These districts are areas located in neighborhoods with unique or distinct physical character. A neighborhood conservation district offers another option for districts that may not meet the threshold for a historic district but would still benefit from a designation that helps protect their unique character. Community input into what makes the neighborhood special is vital to developing strategies and tools to protect the neighborhood, and the efforts are most successful when initiated by the neighborhood. These conservation districts are a way to protect older neighborhoods that may not meet criteria for designation as a local historic district or are not yet eligible for districting. Wharton can investigate whether state enabling legislation has been adopted that would allow for such districts. See page 31 for a list of actionable recommendations related to cultural resources.

Cultural Resources Recommendations

Project	Goal Range	Description
Participate in Section 106 Process	Short term	Get involved in Section 106 review process for Phase II of the levee system to help encourage more sensitive design relative to historic downtown Wharton.
Join Main Street Program or Texas Town Square Initiative	Short term	Explore becoming a Main Street community and/or part of Texas Town Square Initiative.
Create West End Flooding Memorial	Short term	Place memorial or monument to flooding and flood survivors in the West End neighborhood. Incorporate into levee project/sump areas.
Document At-Risk Structures and Resources	Short term	<p>Prioritize documentation of existing buildings in West End, West Milam, and cemeteries. It is recommended that <i>all</i> the remaining structures in the West End have at least a windshield survey completed. Historic structures should be prioritized and have additional documentation. The remaining structures in the West Milam National Register District should have a more intensive documentation completed and be prioritized for rehabilitation.</p> <p>Documentation may lead to possible future National Register nominations or form the basis for a local register established via a historic preservation ordinance.</p>
Highlight Environmental History	Short term	Incorporate environmental history and history of flooding into the levee project.
Establish Historic Resource Mitigation Practices	Short term	<p>Triage and identify most at-risk historic structures and sites.</p> <p>Prepare pre- and post-disaster mitigation plans for most at-risk historic structures and sites.</p> <p>Identify mitigation strategies to protect historic structures from future flooding.</p>
Develop West End Heritage Trail	Mid term	Options of categories to include in a West End Heritage Trail (that could be incorporated into the sump area or strategic locations around the West End neighborhood) include businesses, recreation, leaders, education, churches, transportation, industry, and flooding.
Include Preservation in Economic Development	Mid term	<p>Incorporate history into branding and marketing of Wharton relative to tourism and economic development.</p> <p>Promote tax incentives for eligible historic structures in the community. Prioritize buildings that could be rehabilitated or adaptively reused and properly moth-balled; explore RFPs for any city-owned historic resources.</p>
Engage in Cemetery Preservation	Mid term	Survey and document cemeteries. Create mitigation plans and/or master plans.
Update Hazard Mitigation Plan	Mid term	Include historic and cultural resources in next <i>County Hazard Mitigation Plan</i> update.
Explore Under-told History	Long term	Explore the diverse, under-told history of Wharton and integrate it into economic development, public history, and community revitalization. Coordinate with future trail connections or downtown revitalization efforts.
Prepare Mitigation Plans	Long term	Prepare pre- and post-disaster mitigation plans for less at-risk historic resources in Wharton, including cemeteries.
Adopt Historic Preservation Ordinance	Long term	Consistent with <i>Comprehensive Plan</i> recommendations, adopt local historic preservation ordinance.

Flood Protection

The city will greatly benefit from the funded levee project that will protect the city against future flooding. With that said, the city should coordinate with USACE to take full advantage of project educational and recreational opportunities typically available in USACE civil works projects to integrate those opportunities into the city neighborhood fabric. That could expand income-generating opportunities that support the long-term maintenance costs of the flood protection system. USACE plans for multiple flood protection projects to be implemented in phases, including a Phase 1 Levee, a Phase 2 Levee, and multiple projects within the phases. At this time, there are opportunities for the city to begin coordinating with USACE on community needs and desires within these levee projects to not only address the flooding issues, but to provide value to the community through thoughtful coordination of community amenities and resources within the realm of the levee project. Depending on funding, USACE has flexibility within their projects to provide educational aspects to their projects or to accommodate environmental/historic concerns. USACE educational materials are generally oriented toward flood control, resilient measures, environmental issues, and sustainability issues. All are excellent topics for Wharton. The education portions can be signage, a path with signage or other small-scale educational materials.

Wharton's Flood Protection System: Phase 1 Levee and Section 408 Process

The USACE project is designed to protect Wharton from future floods. There are three major parts to the project: (1) a levee that separates the city from the river; (2) a wall that separates the downtown from the river; and (3) a series of sumps that retain water during large rain events. Three of the sumps carve large portions out of the West End, with one sump being large enough to contain two soccer fields.

It is important to Wharton that all three portions of the project take full advantage of design possibilities to support education, recreation, and tourist programs. If properly planned and designed, the flood protection system can directly and indirectly generate income to offset the system's annual maintenance costs. Such design possibilities include trails along the levee with educational signage to promote recreation

and education about flood control and changes in river/water patterns; a glass retaining wall in downtown with educational signage to preserve the view shed of the river and promote recreation, tourism and knowledge about the river; and a raised educational trail over the wetlands of the sumps in the West End that can promote recreation, tourism, and education about flood control, wetlands, the river, and changes in river/water patterns.

It is envisioned that, in addition to being places of water retention and drainage, the largest sumps could contain functions that could be used by the city during periods when the sumps do not contain water. Recommendations include activity fields such as soccer fields, grassy areas for arts festivals or music festivals, or space for stretching and yoga. These activities would be able to be conducted in open grassy areas with a modest slope and there would be no need for structures that would impede the flow of water.

There is a wetland at the river-end of the largest sump. An elevated educational walkway could be built over the wetland. This walkway could serve as an educational path with plaques to describe the levee system and the wetland. The enlarged portion of the walkway at the edge between the wetland and the grassy portion of the sump could also serve as a stage where bands could perform, and audiences could have picnics in the grassy area.

For these activities to be allowed to occur in the sump/levee project, the city needs to approach USACE and request permission to have these design changes made to the projects and to have these activities in the sump as part of the USACE 408 process.

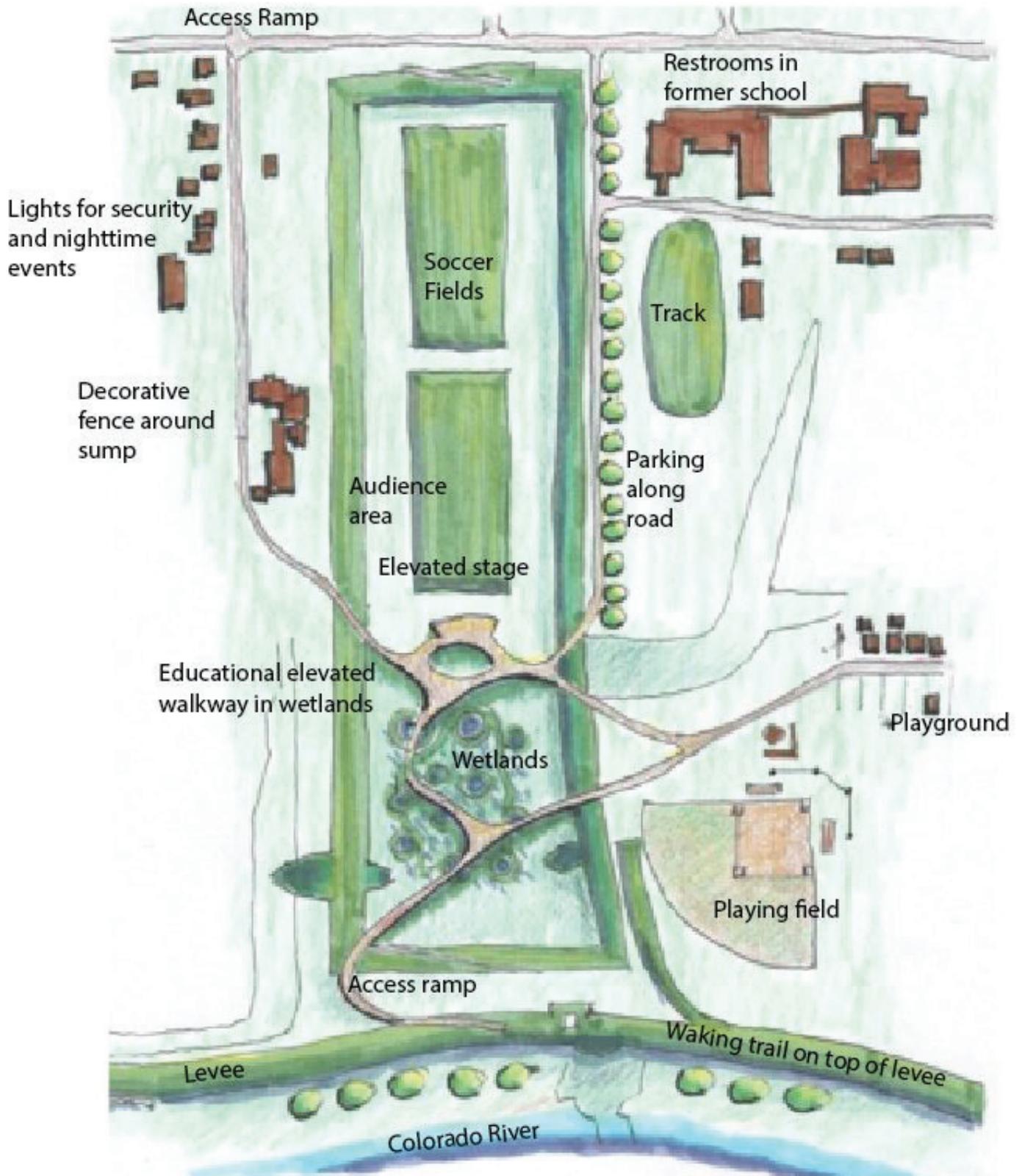
USACE 408 process

Through the Civil Works program, USACE serves the public by providing quality and responsive management of the nation's water resources. As a result, USACE, in partnership with stakeholders, has constructed many civil works projects across the country. Given the widespread locations of the projects, many embedded within communities, there may be a need for others outside of USACE to alter or occupy these projects and their associated lands. Reasons for alterations could include improvements to the projects, relocation of part of the project, or installing utilities or other nonproject features to serve the community good.

To ensure these projects continue to provide their intended benefits to the public, the U.S. Congress mandated that any use or alteration of a civil works project by another party is subject to the approval of USACE. This requirement was established in Section 14 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899, which has since been amended several times and is codified at 33 USC 408 (Section 408).

Section 408 provides that USACE may grant permission for another party to alter a civil works project upon a determination that the alteration proposed will not be injurious to the public interest and will not impair the usefulness of the civil works project.

USACE's procedures for reviewing requests for Section 408 permission are contained in [Engineer Circular \(EC\) 1165-2-220](#). The corresponding internal guidance related to designating a lead district as referenced in EC 1165-2-220 can be found on the [USACE website](#). There is also a fact sheet with additional information about Section 408 and the revised policy.



The proposed sump areas for the levee project might include a number of minor modifications to allow for community enhancements yet still maintain the full design and functionality of retaining floodwater. (Drawing by Paula Loomis, PhD, AICP, FAIA, LEED AP)

Section 408 Project Examples

Many communities have been granted permission for modifications to USACE projects under Section 408 for amenities that increase quality of life. Requests to USACE district offices are evaluated on a case-by-case basis to determine if the proposed alteration would be injurious to the public interest or affect the operation or integrity of the USACE project.



Great River Trail: East Moline, IL

Photo courtesy QC Trails

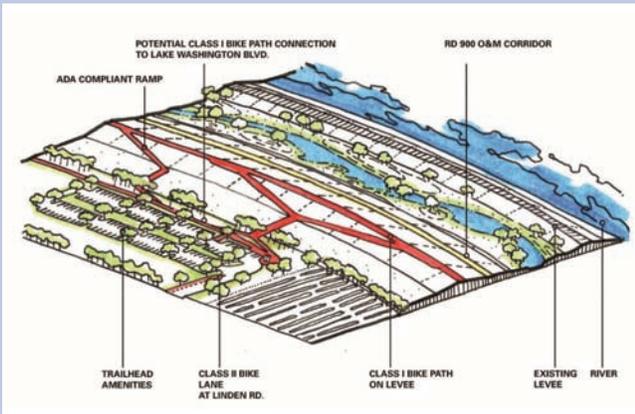
In 2018, the city of Moline, Illinois, requested permission to construct a paved access path from the land surface up the backside of a levee to connect the existing Great River Trail. A copy of the city's request is available in USACE's digital library [here](#).



Southport Setback Levee Recreation Trail Report: West Sacramento, CA

The above trailhead concept was included in the 2017 [Southport Setback Levee Recreation Trail Report](#). Illustration by Design Workshop.

The Southport Setback Levee Recreation Trail project along the Sacramento River required a Section 408 permit. The trail will become an integral part of the city's Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Trails Master Plan with its focus on active transportation.



Plaquemine Riverfront Recreational Trail Improvement Project: Plaquemine, LA

Photo courtesy City of Plaquemine

The master plan for the Plaquemine Riverfront Recreational Trail offers a design to enhance the recreational opportunities and beauty of downtown Plaquemine. The project required permits from USACE and Atchafalaya Basin Levee District. The design provides visitors with a great view of the Mississippi River and will add to the area's tourist attractions and will also serve as an alternative to vehicle use for residents to get to downtown. Learn more [here](#).



Salt Creek Levee Trail: Lincoln, Nebraska

Photo courtesy Andrew Sensenig

The Salt Creek Levee Trail project includes 13.5 miles of levee along Salt Creek in Lincoln, Nebraska, and allows hikers and bikers to follow and enjoy the natural beauty of the creek and surrounding habitat. The Lower Platte South Natural Resources District is the local sponsor, which operates and maintains the USACE project. The document with USACE's finding of no significant impact is available [here](#).



As a conceptual example, decorative fencing and lighting could be installed above and around the sump areas and grassy areas for soccer fields and festivals, which don't require any permanent structures, inside the sumps. An elevated walkway over the wetlands of the large sump would also offer the community a beautiful new amenity near the river. (Drawing by Paula Loomis, PhD, AICP, FAIA, LEED AP)

"To serve the public good" is the reason why the city should approach USACE as part of the 408 process. The city, at a minimum, should ask USACE to provide sloping within the sump to accommodate the anticipated activities of festivals and soccer games. They should also ask to have at least two access stairs that can be used by the public to access the sump as well as a decorative fence (rather than a chain-link fence) around the sump and lighting appropriate for evening activities that can be turned on.

The city should also ask to have permission to access the levee top as a public walking trail. If possible, the city should ask to have the following design changes made. First, provide glass sections inserted into the floodwall between downtown and the river to maintain the river viewsheds. This change will be much harder to make after USACE finishes construction so this should be the city's first design change request. Second, the city should ask to have an elevated walkway over the wetlands of the large sump. Third, the city should ask for educational signage along the wall downtown, the top of the levee, and the elevated walkway over the wetlands.

The city should start the 408 process with USACE as early as possible. It may be possible for USACE to include simple items (like gently sloped drainage) at no additional cost and in a manner that is conducive to the activities being proposed. It may also be possible for USACE to include other mutually beneficial items in their project such as the educational raised walkway, a decorative fence around the sump, and appropriate lighting with the project if there is adequate funding in the project. Even if USACE cannot provide these items, they may still be able to make small changes to their project that facilitate the city's projects in the future to provide these amenities. Asking USACE should not impede the progress/schedule or the funding of the levee project.

The Wharton project is being designed by the Fort Worth District with construction management to be handled by the Galveston District. It is recommended that the city approach the Fort Worth District first. See the box below (on page number 24) for examples of other projects requiring Section 408 permits.



Glass floodwalls, if a possibility for the Wharton flood protection project, would help maintain a view of the river for residents and visitors. (Photo courtesy Flood Control International)



This conceptual drawing represents the potential for a new public space and opportunity to connect Riverfront Park and downtown with scenic viewsheds in both directions. (Drawing by Paula Loomis, PhD, AICP, FAIA, LEED AP)

Phase I levee recommendations (potential recreational uses, sump location, and public access points)

See the site plan and sketches for potential recreational and education uses for the sump. It is anticipated that the location, general height, slope and layout of the sump would remain as designed. There may be changes needed to the grading of the sump on the interior. The activities (sports and festivals) would occur in the sump, but facilities that could impede water flow and/or require utilities such as toilets would be provided outside of the sump. There should be at least two access stairs/ramps to the sump (although more would be beneficial). The proposed stairs/ramps in the sketch connect to the levee and local roads/sidewalks. See the sketch above left for a general concept of the decorative fence and lighting.

Levee/sump management recommendations to handle operations and maintenance and permitting/processing for future improvements in the system

The city will not need a division to handle the operations and maintenance or permitting/processing for the future improvements. They will need to hire either a company to perform the maintenance (mowing, etc.) or use city personnel. They will need someone in the city to coordinate and write the permit. They will also need a person to review use permits in the future to ensure the sumps are not damaged. If the city does not have

enough manpower or expertise, they could either hire an additional person or hire the work out.

Phase II levee/floodwall (east of Bus 59/Richmond Road) Recommendations

Once the levee is built, there will be opportunities for the city to open the path along the top of the levee for walking and educational purposes.

Phase II design recommendations: Opportunity for Section 106 input – maintenance of historic viewshed

We recommend that the city have discussions about historic viewsheds as the levee project progresses, especially the historic view of the river from the courthouse square area. There are examples where floodwalls have been made of glass to allow pedestrians to see to the river. The city should have discussions with USACE about the floodwall construction. It is very expensive to create a wall out of glass and this would be an expensive undertaking for the city if attempted after the wall has been constructed. The city should address the desire for a glass wall as early in the process as possible. USACE may not be able to include a glass wall in the project. If this is the case, the city should work with USACE to determine how it can get people over the wall to enjoy the view of the water. These conversations should happen early so the city's preferences can be included in the initial design and not have to be changed later.

Transportation: Mobility and Accessibility

In Wharton, you will see people walking, biking, driving in cars, trucks, as well as taking the bus (school bus or Colorado Valley Transit). With any transportation mode, people want to feel safe and be able to logically and easily access their destinations. The current city transportation infrastructure prioritizes driving as the primary means to get around with wide roadway corridors, high speeds on major corridors, and plenty of parking lots. There are definite ways, however, in which the existing infrastructure could be improved to accommodate safe and accessible locations for the other modes including active transportation (walk/bike) as well as for cars.

In coordination with the upcoming levee projects, there are opportunities to integrate community amenities within the large-scale infrastructure project. The Wharton community desires access to the Colorado River waterfront and natural areas supporting it. From a mobility and access standpoint, the levee projects can and should integrate opportunities for walking and biking and can be coordinated within a comprehensive walk and bike network throughout the city. The recommendations below support a comprehensive network for walking and biking, including new trails within the levee project, trail extensions to the existing Santa Fe trail, new sidewalks, new bike-ways, and an overall approach to enhancing inclusive mobility, access, and safety for all modes of transportation.

The city's recent *Comprehensive Plan* update states: "Investing in active transportation infrastructure like bike facilities, sidewalks, and trails can improve the safety, health, and happiness of a community" (p. 8–12). The mobility and accessibility needs of the Wharton community include the desire for more

places to walk, bike, and exercise, and to safely get from place to place efficiently with little to no conflicts or safety concerns. The recommendations below support multimodal priorities and projects that can provide inclusive mobility and accessibility for all Wharton residents.

Mobility and Accessibility Priorities

The mobility and accessibility recommendations are categorized below under three key priority statements. Each statement is intended to encompass multiple projects and types of recommendations, all supporting inclusive mobility and accessibility for Wharton. Projects supporting these priorities are listed in this section under the "Transportation Projects" heading below. The three priority statements are:

- Invest in the active transportation network.
- Prioritize safety for all.
- Coordinate and leverage infrastructure projects with partners.

1. Invest in the active transportation network

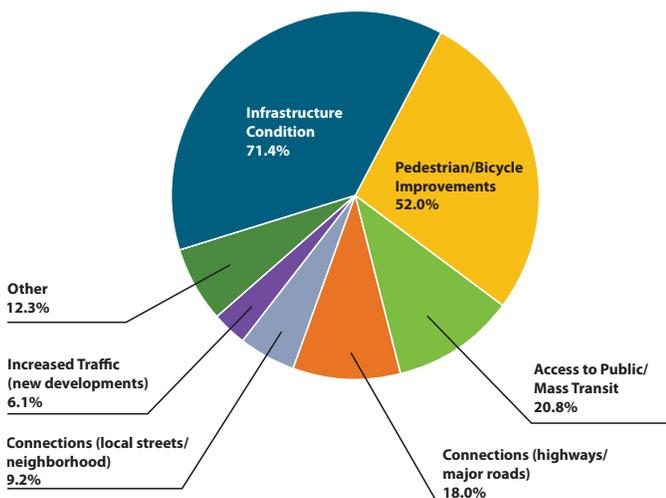
Active transportation includes any nonmotorized form of getting around including walking, biking, running, skating, scooting, stroller pushing, and more. Although this definition seems somewhat recreational, every person that gets out of a motorized vehicle (car, truck, bus, etc.) is a pedestrian and deserves a safe place to walk without conflicts from vehicles to reach a desired destination. Generally, cities have become so car-centric that even the small, yet important, investments to provide safe places for pedestrians have been overshadowed by major highway projects, roadway extensions, and maintenance to those roadways for cars.

Although providing for and maintaining roadway infrastructure is important to a community's viability, neglecting infrastructure outside of the routine roadway maintenance can be detrimental to a community's safety, economy, and overall livability. The investments in active transportation do not need to be monumental to start, but building upon smaller projects like new curb ramps at key intersections or signal improvements to accommodate pedestrian crossings, the community will begin to realize the value in those investments allowing for more people to safely get around and support the local economy. There are dozens of active transportation project recommendations that support this action statement, but the top two projects below could have the largest impact.

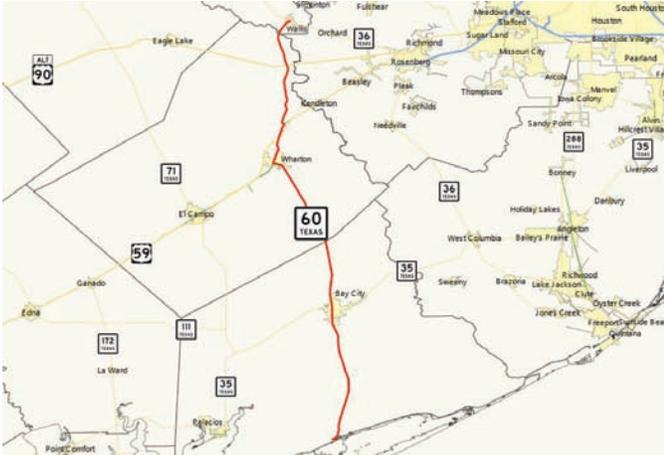
- **Extend the Santa Fe Trail**

The current Santa Fe Trail goes from North Richmond Road on the west to North Alabama Road on the east, totaling 0.8 miles in off-street linear trail. To extend the trail to the west, the property just west of the existing western terminus is a city-owned right-of-way and could allow for an extension to be built through to North Sunset Street

In your opinion, what are Wharton's most important transportation issues (select up to three).



The results from the [Comprehensive Plan General Survey](#) shown here illustrate the established need for more pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, as well as improved connectivity throughout the city.



A busy commercial truck route passes directly through downtown Wharton instead of other potential corridors. Courtesy City of Wharton



The current configuration of one-way streets downtown causes confusion and safety issues. (Map by Chelsea Young, AICP)

(an additional 0.2 miles). On the east terminus of the trail, there is a park directly across North Alabama Road that does not currently have a safe crossing from the trail to the park. The trail could be extended across the street through the park to continue along city-owned right-of-way down to Croom Park near Croom Drive (an additional 0.8 miles). If extending both west and east, the total trail would be close to two miles, doubling the size of the existing trail. Additionally, with the future levee projects, there are ways that this trail could connect to recreational amenities within the levees and sumps to provide more outdoor access for Wharton residents and visitors. See the connectivity plan map (in the Implementation section) for additional context.

- **Connect schools and community destinations through sidewalks and bikeways**

Sidewalks are deficient and often nonexistent along many of Wharton’s roadway corridors. This creates an unsafe environment for people, specifically school-age children and senior citizens, without adequate places to walk to and from key destinations. As for biking, if someone wanted to bike to a destination, riding along the current roads would be the only option besides the Santa Fe Trail. Biking on some of Wharton’s streets is not a problem given the low traffic and/or slower speeds. However, with formal bike routes throughout the city with on-street bike lanes, bicycle-friendly corridors, and trails, getting around by bike could be an option for more people. The implementation timeline map (in the Implementation section) shows a general network that can prioritize roadway corridors for more direct walking and biking options around Wharton’s community destinations.

2. Prioritize Safety for All

Safety is and should be paramount in any capital project or program either the city or another entity implements. Design-

ing and constructing projects for the general public must consider the safety and welfare for all residents. With that said, there are a few safety-related observations that include heavy truck traffic in the downtown district, lack of infrastructure for people to walk safely throughout Wharton, and outdated intersection and corridor design that prioritizes speedy traffic flow versus safety and efficiency for all modes (cars, trucks, walking, biking, etc.). Like the active transportation projects, there are dozens (or more) safety-related project recommendations, but the top three that should be considered for near-term implementation consideration are listed here.

- **Perform a study to reroute the truck corridor away from downtown and convert one-way streets to two-way**

Downtown Wharton is centered around the beautiful and historic courthouse, which serves as a major community asset for a variety of events, commerce, and attracting visitors. Despite the value of that asset, a truck route passes directly through the center of downtown along both East Milam Street and East Burleson Street as east-west one-way pairs, allowing heavy commercial trucks to rumble through the quaint downtown at all hours of the day. Trucks pass through Wharton daily following signs for US 59 Business and Texas State Highway 60 toward Matagorda or up toward US 59.

Both East Milam Street and East Burleson Street are directly in front of the historic Wharton County Courthouse. And both corridors function as a central main-street-type corridor in downtown Wharton with retail, restaurants, and other attractions. The all-day truck traffic detracts from a safe, vibrant, downtown feel. There are other potential corridors within Wharton that could provide a more through-route connection to State Highway 60 and US 59 (specifically for trucks) away from downtown. One potential example is North and South Alabama Road which meets State Highway 60. A more comprehensive study would be needed, but with coor-



The intersection of Milam Street and Richmond Road with the addition of crosswalks as a part of a proposed SH 60 roadway resurfacing project would increase safety and add a more inviting feel to downtown. Converting the street from one-way to two-way would also eliminate confusion for drivers. (Created by Carlos G. Espinoza y Sánchez)

dination with TxDOT (with possible coordination consideration with the [Texas Trucking Association](#)), an alternative route or routes could be determined and formalized through a jurisdictional transfer between Wharton and TxDOT that would support the safety and economic viability of Wharton residents.

In a related matter, the current one-way corridors that support the truck route along Milam and Burleson Streets are unnecessary. They prioritize trucks including wider corridors and higher speeds, which makes it more difficult for pedestrians to walk along and cross the corridors. The current one-way east (Burleson) and west (Milam) two-lane corridors have at least 12-foot lane widths with ample right-of-way for on-street parking on both sides of the street. The wide-open corridors have no traffic-calming measures in place and appear almost highway-like allowing vehicles to get through as fast as possible. By converting these one-way corridors to two-way, traffic will slow down, parking won't be compromised, and the downtown area will be more of a "destination" instead of a "pass-through" corridor (see the U.S. Federal Highway Administration's [Pedestrian Safety Guide and Countermeasure Selection System](#) for more information on one-way/two-way street conversions.) Changes would also result in providing safer and more comfortable conditions for walking and biking downtown.

There are a few more one-way roads within the downtown vicinity to support the major east-west corridors of Burleson and Milam that should be studied further and considered for two-way conversion. Those one-way corridors include South Houston (southbound for one block only between West Milam and East Burleson), South Fulton (northbound for one block only between West Milam and East Burleson), and South Resident (northbound for one block between West Milam and East Burleson). These side-road one-way streets are confusing and unsafe for anyone driving, especially visitors in the downtown district.

- **Create a sidewalk and walkability program**

Supporting the "invest in the active transportation network" priority discussed previously, an interconnected ADA-compliant sidewalk network is also important to residents. Beyond the benefits of active transportation, an interconnected sidewalk network creates a major safety remedy that prevents on-street conflicts between vehicular traffic and people. By formalizing a sidewalk or walkability program, the city and other community partners can work together to identify community priorities. Those priorities should include "quick-win" projects that could be budgeted for in the general fund for capital improvement projects each year. There are likely key corridors where safety for pedestrians needs to be assessed further to make improvements, such as along FM 102 coming into the city from US Highway 59, where crashes and at least one fatality have occurred for pedestrians walking along and/or crossing that corridor.

Crosswalks and lighting accommodate safer, more visible places to walk, but are often overlooked pedestrian-related improvements. The sidewalk and walkability program should include identification of safe crossing locations where crosswalks or mid-block crossings should be implemented as well as identify dark areas where people walk at dawn or dusk and where lighting needs to be installed. Corridors that seem unsafe for pedestrians could also be evaluated to develop traffic-calming measures to slow traffic down and provide more awareness to cars that pedestrians may be present.

- **Update signalized intersections**

Specific to the major thoroughfare corridors within Wharton, the traffic signals are outdated and need updating to provide accommodations for pedestrians and to make it clearer to cars what is expected within the intersection (such as notification of one-way corridors, pedestrian crossings, etc.) and street names in general. The majority of the



The city should explore leveraging resources through grants or other means for projects supporting greenspace near or around the levee projects, including Riverfront Park pictured here. (Photo by Carlos G. Espinoza y Sánchez, AICP)

signalized intersections in and around downtown and other Wharton locations do not have clear signage identifying which streets are converging, nor do they have pedestrian signals or even lights that are visible to a pedestrian to know to observe a green light for crossing the street.

The figure below shows the intersection of Milam and South Richmond Avenue, one of the highest-traffic volume locations in the city according to the *Comprehensive Plan*. This is a busy intersection with trucks coming in along South Richmond, as well as pedestrian and car traffic coming into and out of downtown. The “do not enter” sign is confusing as well as off-putting when coming into Wharton to reach downtown. Additionally, there are no safe places for pedestrians to cross, i.e., there are a lack of crosswalks, pedestrian signals, and curb ramps.

This second example is an intersection at West Milam and North Houston where there are no clear street signs designating the street name, the signals are at an angle and so high up that pedestrians have a difficult time seeing when the light is green, and two one-way pairs on two of the corridors.

Another busy intersection that has unclear street signage but does have pedestrian crossing signals is at Boling Highway and North Alabama Road near multiple schools and the HEB grocery store. This intersection could be improved with mast arm signals to allow for clearer street signage and to more obviously notify vehicular traffic that there could be pedestrians in the intersection crossings.

There are a few signalized intersections throughout Wharton that are within TxDOT right-of-way and are

planned to be updated in the near future. The city should coordinate closely with TxDOT to ensure the updates accommodate inclusive multimodal opportunities for cars, trucks, walkers, and bikers where appropriate.

3. Coordinate and Leverage Infrastructure Projects With Partners

The priorities and projects identified in this plan cannot be implemented by merely one entity. Partnerships will be necessary to ensure success of project implementation. As one example, the levee projects are and will be coordinated through the USACE and the city, but coordination with other city-oriented and state entities will be necessary to ensure success including community understanding and support. Specific to the inclusive mobility and accessibility recommendations, coordination and partnerships to leverage the greatest benefit for more people are desired. The following should be prioritized.

- **Coordinate trails and recreational active transportation locations within the USACE flood protection projects**

Many residents would like to see more access to greenspaces near the waterfront. Through the USACE projects and the city’s parks and recreational needs, there are opportunities to use city rights-of-way to provide recreational access including trails along the waterfront to connect to the levee projects.

- **Coordinate roadway corridor and intersection projects with TxDOT where feasible**

TxDOT maintains FM 102, Richmond Road, Boling Highway, and East Milam Street (with parts of East Burleson Street). A list of upcoming TxDOT sponsored roadway projects (see *Figure 19* in Appendix A) identifies short-term (one to four years), mid-term (five to 10 years) and long-term (more than 10 years) implementation. Additionally, there are multiple proposed intersection update projects through TxDOT’s Yoakum District within Wharton. The city and other entities should communicate to TxDOT needs or community aspirations for improvements to the existing intersections within the TxDOT right-of-way, including the signalized intersections along Richmond Road.

Coordination with TxDOT on any upcoming grant or funding opportunities should be done at least once a year, as TxDOT will usually do a statewide Transportation Alternatives Program call for projects where Wharton can apply for funding assistance on implementing active transportation-related projects (identified in this plan).

Transportation Projects

Four sets of project lists are provided below as a part of the mobility and accessibility recommendations. The four categories include walk/bike trails, roadway corridors, intersections, and programs.

Walk/Bike Trail Recommendations

Wharton currently has one formal 10-foot-wide shared-use trail, the Santa Fe Trail, that allows for safe, off-street walking,

Walk/Bike Trails

Proposed Project Name	Limits	Description
Santa Fe Trail Extension West	North Richmond Road to North Sunset Road (0.2-mile segment, 10' to 12' wide)	This trail extension would continue the existing Santa Fe Trail over North Richmond Road through city-owned property towards North Sunset, a proposed north/south bikeway that would head toward Milam Street and connect to the West End
Santa Fe Trail Extension East	North Alabama Road connecting Croom Park II to Croom Park I via greenway easement (0.8-mile segment, 10' to 12' wide)	This trail extension would build upon the existing Santa Fe Trail with a safe crossing over North Alabama Road to Croom Park II and would continue along a city-owned greenway easement to the baseball fields at Croom Park I
Santa Fe Trail Extension North	Olive Street at Santa Fe Trail to Sivells Elementary School (0.5-mile segment, 10' to 12' wide)	This extension would start at Mayfair Park and meander within Mayfair Park north toward Sivells Elementary School, providing a safe shared-use path to and from an elementary school to connect to the existing Santa Fe Trail
Riverfront Trail Renovation	Park entrance near South Rusk and East Elm Street, through Riverfront Park to a gazebo within city-owned property near Collins Street (0.4-mile trail, 10' to 12' wide)	There is an existing off-street trail within the city's Riverfront Park, but the existing trail is only five feet wide, making it more of a narrow pedestrian-only trail. The current trail could be widened to allow shared-use (bikes/pedestrians) and has the potential to connect with the larger walking/biking network presented in this chapter
Levee System Trail	From the sump near Harris Park in the West End, along the proposed levee alignment adjacent to the Colorado River, to Riverfront Park (1.8-mile trail, 10' to 12' wide)	The proposed recreational uses within the USACE projects should tie to the overall walking/biking network in Wharton. This proposed trail would follow along the levee alignment from the West End near Just Do It Now and Harris Park and would provide a connection into/near the downtown area at Riverfront Park

biking, skating, and strolling, etc. There is also a park-related trail (with only five-foot-wide sidewalks) within Riverfront Park that could use improvements including extensions to trail-related projects within the levee projects. Trail projects provide healthy and active opportunities for people to get outside and move. They also improve and increase the number of safe places to walk and bike.

The table above lists specific trail recommendations supporting inclusive mobility and accessibility. A variety of trail recommendations within the levee and sump projects (a variety of surfaces and uses) would connect to this trail network and the overall walking and biking network projects presented in this chapter.

Roadway Corridor Recommendations (Walk/Bike/Drive)

Today, there are some corridors where sidewalks exist in Wharton, but often the sidewalks are beyond their useful life with cracks, no curb ramps, and ultimately unsafe or unfit for walking. In a few areas around town, sidewalks were recently constructed in compliance with ADA standards (e.g., most of East Milam Street from North Sunset Street to South Richmond Avenue) that could be built upon for future sidewalk projects to provide a safer sidewalk network. However, there is a definite lack of a comprehensive sidewalk network including curb and gutters along key corridors that

could safely allow pedestrians to get from destination to destination without conflicts with vehicles within the roadway.

Multiple corridors are identified in the proposed connectivity and implementation timeline maps (in the Implementation section) where both walking (sidewalks) and biking (bike lanes or other bikeways) should be considered for implementation.

In Wharton's recent *Comprehensive Plan* update, the street system study in section 8 presents prioritized projects to support improved infrastructure and mobility throughout Wharton. That plan recommends roadway maintenance and improvements within four phases: Phase 1 (2018–21), Phase 2 (2022–24), Phase 3 (2025–26), and Phase 4 (2027–28). It provides overlays to streets with minor repairs needed and some reconstruction of roadways in very poor condition.

TxDOT has planned projects over the next ten years (see *Figure 19* in *Appendix A*) that could also integrate the walking, biking, safety, and intersection improvements proposed in this plan within their planning and implementation process. The recommendations from this plan can and should be coordinated with any of the roadway corridor projects to maximize the benefits of using general funds and state funds for roadway improvements for all modes. Further discussion on this is included in the Implementation section of this report.



An extension of the Santa Fe Trail east of Alabama Road on a city-owned easement would connect to existing recreation at Croom Park and create more walking and biking opportunities for the community. (Created by Carlos G. Espinoza y Sánchez)

Roadway Corridors		
Proposed Project Name	Limits	Description
Update truck route through Wharton	Remove from Milam and Burleson to another location	A traffic study would be necessary in coordination with TxDOT and others for a possible jurisdictional transfer to allow the truck route on another roadway to take trucks out of the downtown district. This would provide safety and economic value to the downtown district.
*Milam Street: convert from one-way to two-way	Richmond Road to Resident Street	Converting this corridor to two-way traffic would slow down traffic coming into downtown to allow for a safer environment for people walking. On-street parking would still be available on both sides of the street if needed. With the courthouse as one of the main downtown attractions, traffic calming measures (or road diet) along this and Burleson corridors will support a safer pedestrian environment for downtown. TxDOT has plans for ACP Overlay (asphaltic concrete pavement) along Milam and Burleson Streets through downtown from Richmond Road to east/outside of Wharton city limits within the next four years (Project ID: CSJ 024101049). This TxDOT project could, at minimum, allow for new restriping along Burleson/Milam, including updated crosswalks at Polk, Houston, Fulton, Rusk, Resident, Grove, and Alabama. If two-way conversion is feasible, restriping the corridor accordingly could be timed with this TxDOT project. If two-way conversion is not feasible within this time frame, the restriping of the roadway should narrow lanes to allow for a protected bikeway on one side of the street to designate a safer location for cyclists (see project below recommending bikeways along this corridor).
*Burleson Street: convert from one-way to two-way	Richmond Road to Resident Street	Like the Milam Street one-way to two-way conversion, Burleson could be a much safer, pedestrian-friendly corridor supporting downtown commerce directly adjacent to the historic courthouse. Traffic-calming measures should be incorporated into this project as well to slow traffic and accommodate for pedestrians. TxDOT has plans for ACP Overlay (asphaltic concrete pavement) along Milam and Burleson Streets through downtown from Richmond Road to east/outside of Wharton city limits within the next four years (Project ID: CSJ 024101049). This TxDOT project could, at minimum, allow for new restriping along Burleson/Milam including updated crosswalks at Polk, Houston, Fulton, Rusk, Resident, Grove, and Alabama. If two-way conversion is feasible, restriping the corridor accordingly could be timed with this TxDOT project. If two-way conversion is not feasible within this time frame, the restriping of the roadway should narrow lanes to allow for a protected bikeway on one side of the street to designate a safer location for cyclists (see project below recommending bikeways along this corridor).

Roadway Corridors

Proposed Project Name	Limits	Description
Resident Street: convert from one-way to two-way	Burleson to Milam	This corridor is only a one-way segment northbound for one block to allow for cars and trucks continuing along State Highway 60 from Burleson a place to merge back with two-way traffic along Milam. This one-way street would be unnecessary as a one-way street once Burleson and Milam are converted to two-way.
S. Houston Street: convert from one-way to two-way	Milam to Burleson	This corridor is only a one-way segment southbound for one block to allow for cars/trucks continuing along State Highway 60 towards Burleson to head east towards the merge back with two-way traffic along Milam. This one-way street would be unnecessary as a one-way street once Burleson and Milam are converted to two-way.
S. Fulton Street: convert from one-way to two-way	Burleson to Milam	This corridor supports the other three one-way corridors surrounding the historic courthouse and would be unnecessary once the main corridors of Burleson and Milam are converted to two-way streets. Having one-way corridors in the heart of downtown have allowed for wide car-focused corridors that are difficult and unsafe for pedestrians to cross. By converting to two-way streets, cars slow down, parking can still be within the corridor, and safer crossing enhancements can be made at intersections and appropriate mid-block crossings.
**Complete the sidewalk network through downtown	Map 9B in the <i>Comprehensive Plan</i> supports a sidewalk network downtown	Downtown is a place where people visit, gather, and participate in community events. There are ways to improve the downtown experience specific to pedestrians, but creating an integrated network of sidewalks, curb ramps, and safe places to cross (not to mention the landscaping that can support this). The <i>Comprehensive Plan</i> illustrates green lines on this map “9B: Proposed Thoroughfare System Improvements 2018-2028” to complete the downtown sidewalk network.
Bikeway/walk network projects (see connectivity map; corresponds with projects below)		
*FM 102 sidewalks and/or bikeways	From Walmart west of Highway 59 to Richmond Road	There are currently no sidewalks and only a large shoulder on the outside lanes of this corridor. Constructing sidewalks would be a major safety solution along this corridor where people are seen daily walking to/from the business within the US 59 highway vicinity. Bikeways could be considered within the shoulders and/or provided separately as buffered bike lanes within any construction that may take place within the FM 102 corridor. For example, TxDOT has a project that will take place within the next four years Project ID: CSJ 070902055–Seal Coat that would go west of Wharton City limits past Highway 59 to Richmond Road/FM 102 intersection. Within this seal coat, restriping to accommodate for a bike lane could be considered.
N. Spanish Camp Road sidewalks	From FM 102 to N. Sunset Street	
Mattie Street sidewalks	From FM 102 to Martin Luther King Boulevard	
W. Milam Street (West End) sidewalks	Camelia Avenue to the railroad tracks just east of Ford Street	
E. and W. Milam Street sidewalks and bikeways	From the railroad tracks to Alabama Road	
Hughes Street sidewalks	W. Spanish Camp Road to W. Milam Street	

Roadway Corridors

Proposed Project Name	Limits	Description
N. Sunset Street sidewalks and bikeways	From the proposed west extension of the Santa Fe Trail (just south of Ogden) to Milam Street	
*N. Richmond Road sidewalks and bikeways	From FM 1301 (Boling Highway) to Milam Road (approx. one mile)	Propose sidewalks (with curb/gutter) and possible separated bikeway within corridor. TxDOT has plans for mill and inlay along the Richmond Road surface from FM 1301 to Burlison Road within the next four years (Project ID: CSJ 008910023) which at minimum would allow for new restriping including updated crosswalks at Burlison, Milam, Caney, FM 102 and FM 1301. Curb and gutter with sidewalks within this same stretch of corridor are desirable and could be coordinated within this timing with TxDOT for implementation. Bike lanes could be striped with consideration of a physical barrier for the bike lanes. This corridor does not necessarily need bike lanes if N. Fulton Street includes bike lanes along a similar segment of that road.
N. and S. Fulton Street sidewalks and bikeways	From Riverfront Park at E. Elm Street to FM 1301 (W. Boling Highway)	"8B Proposed Street Improvements" map in the <i>Comprehensive Plan</i>
E. Ahldag Ave. sidewalks and bikeways	N. Richmond Road to N. Alabama Road	"13A Capital Improvements Program 2018–2023" map in the <i>Comprehensive Plan</i>
Sidewalk projects along E. Ahldag Avenue and N. Fulton supporting the "Wharton Safe & Accessible School Routes"		
W. and E. Boling Highway sidewalks and bikeways	N. Richmond Road to N. Alabama Road	
N. Alabama Road school connections sidewalks	South side of Sivells Elementary near Oriole Lane, around east side of Sivells, across E. Boling Highway, adjacent to the east side of Wharton Community College, up to E. Ahldag Avenue	Sidewalks are very much needed near the schools along this corridor. The city has proposed sidewalks along Pioneer (west of N. Alabama) to connect a few of the schools, but sidewalks on the busy side of N. Alabama should be prioritized.
N. and S. Alabama Road sidewalks and bikeways	E. Ahldag Ave. to East Elm Street (south of Milam)	
E. Elm Street bikeways	S. East Ave. to S Alabama Road	
S. East Ave. bikeways	Collins Street to E. Elm Street	
Collins Street	S. East Ave. to gazebo at end of Riverside Park trail	
* TxDOT projects		
** <i>Comprehensive Plan</i> projects		

Intersections

Proposed Project Name	Limits	Description
Milam and S. Richmond		
Downtown District overhaul		All signalized intersections need improvements/updates for safety and clarity
Notification of one-way street		
FM 102—Add traffic signals at Mattie Street/Spanish Camp (from <i>Comprehensive Plan</i>)		Reference the <i>Comprehensive Plan</i> —pink and green circles along FM 102 on this map: “9B: Proposed Thoroughfare System Improvements 2018-2028”
Trail crossings—mid-block intersections	N. Alabama Road	Propose a few that need to be considered and prioritized to safely get people across to a destination (i.e., Croon Park II)
Railroad crossing along Milam		Show example for how to designate getting pedestrians and bikes over railroad track

Programs

Proposed Program Name	Description
Active Transportation Plan	An overall plan to help prioritize bikeway projects; could include a bike parking program (bike racks for businesses)
Levee educational programs	
Sidewalk/Walkability program including Safe Routes to School program	Develop a plan and program to improve walkability—there are spotty sidewalks, outdated and dilapidated sidewalks, sidewalks that are not ADA accessible, lack of sidewalks adjacent to schools and community amenities. How does the city prioritize these projects?
Develop formal program for street maintenance and improvement	This was identified in the <i>Comprehensive Plan</i> —roads in disrepair and no clear plan forward for a comprehensive look at improving.
Transit expansion or new programs	Plan scheduled trips to Sugar Land and Houston throughout the week.
Parking study	Understand what parking is available and maximize/share parking for businesses and events. Understand the parking needs of new recreational amenities.
Wayfinding and branding	From the existing Santa Fe Trail to the proposed extensions, bikeways, and new trails within the levee system program, a map and trail markers could help people navigate getting around by walking/biking within the variety of walking/biking infrastructure available.

IMPLEMENTATION

A wide range of potential improvements have been identified to create a connected and inclusive citywide multimodal network. These improvements are envisioned to be implemented as a series of smaller projects with different time frames, funding sources, and responsible agencies executing the implementation. With the varied nature of the improvements, a strategy of implementing smaller projects that can be funded using different funding sources may be prudent. Individual projects can be categorized by type, timing, and responsibility, in order to facilitate their successful implementation over a period of time.

- Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT)
- Traffic Operations (TO)
- Transit (TR)
- Transportation Systems Management (TSM)
- United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)
- City of Wharton (Wharton)
- Wharton County (WC)
- Wharton Economic Development Corporation (WEDC)
- Wharton Independent School District (WISD)
- Wharton West End Initiative (WWEI)

Improvement Categories

To facilitate the implementation and funding of improvements, separate improvement categories were identified so that funding might occur through a variety of funding sources if the project cannot be feasibly implemented as a single construction project. The identified improvements can be divided into the following categories (column six in the implementation strategies table below), although overlap may exist in terms of both funding and implementation. In addition, each of these categories may have certain funding opportunities and restrictions.

- Community-Based Partnership (CBP)
- Kansas City Southern Railway (KCSR)
- Roadway (RDWY)
- Roadside Environment (RE)

Timing

In order to implement the recommended improvements, it may be necessary that they be developed as individual projects or a group of projects, according to whether they are more feasible in the short term or long term. For the purposes of this discussion, the following time frames are established:

- Short term: One to four years
- Mid term: Five to 10 years
- Long term: 10+ years

Short Term

It is feasible that the implementation of some improvement projects could be included as a part of existing city, Wharton County, TxDOT, or USACE initiatives for short-term projects. Other relatively low-cost projects involving additional stake-



An illustration of a bike lane on Fulton Road demonstrates one example of a multimodal connectivity and safety improvement. (Created by Ennis Davis, AICP)



Built to flood, Houston's Buffalo Bayou Park Trail has become one of the most popular off-road trail systems in the American South. After a century of being treated as an afterthought, the Buffalo Bayou Partnership (BBP) was established to focus on turning a 10-mile segment of Buffalo Bayou through central Houston into a premier linear public green space. In 2003, a master plan was developed for the incremental implementation of rehabilitation of former industrial property, habitat restoration, flood control management, cultural programming, hiking and bike trails, kayaking, canoeing facilities, and mixed-use development along the waterway. (Photo by Ennis Davis, AICP)

holders without significant right-of-way acquisition might be included in this category as well.

Mid Term

Larger, more complex projects, especially those requiring additional study, environmental clearance through a Project Development and Environment study or through other National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 provisions typically require more time to be fully implemented. These may also include projects that entail more complex engineering and design, and possible right-of-way acquisition.

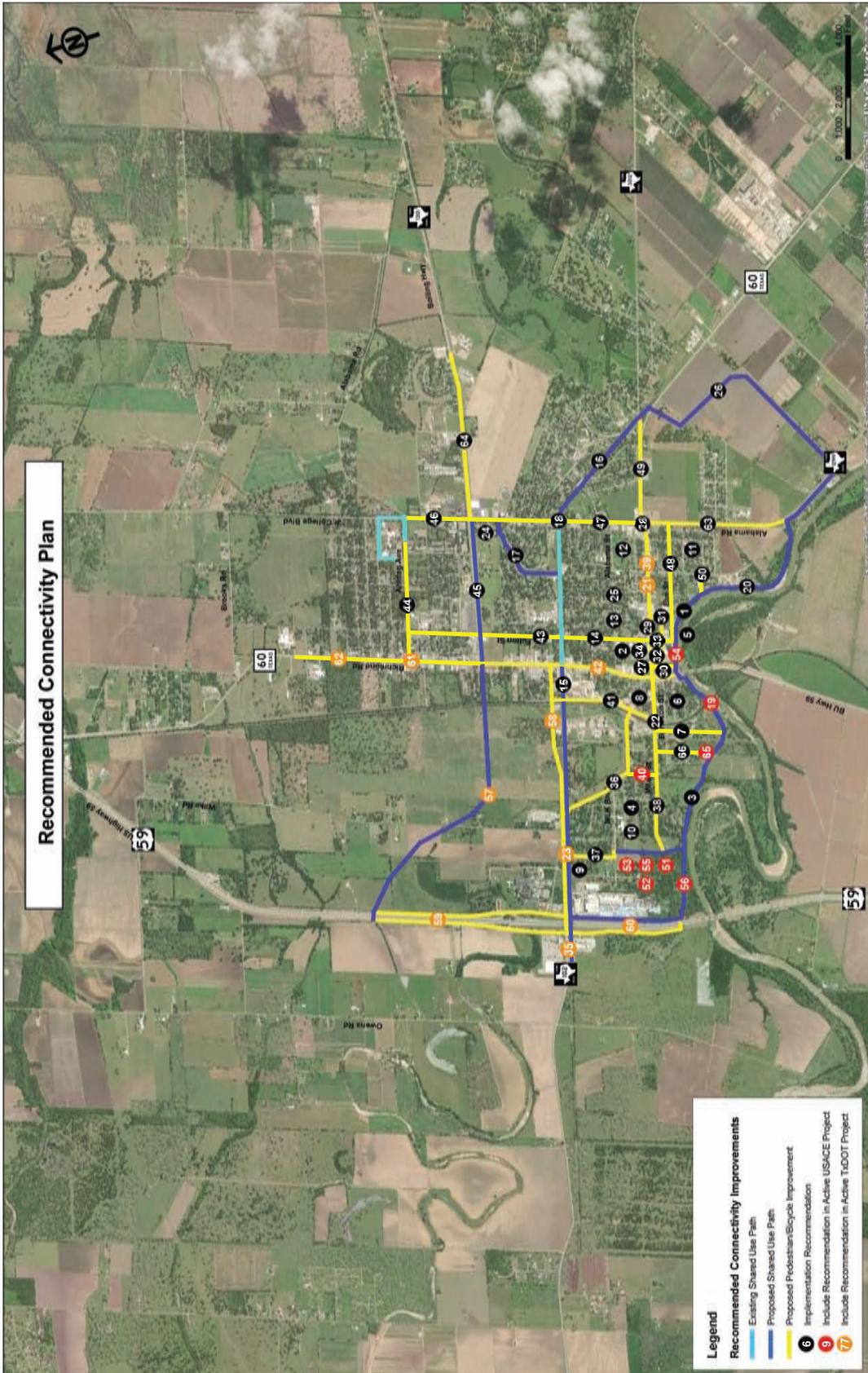
Long Term

Long-term projects include those that may involve complex engineering analysis and design in addition to possible right-of-way acquisition. These projects tend to be higher cost and may require more complex funding mechanisms.

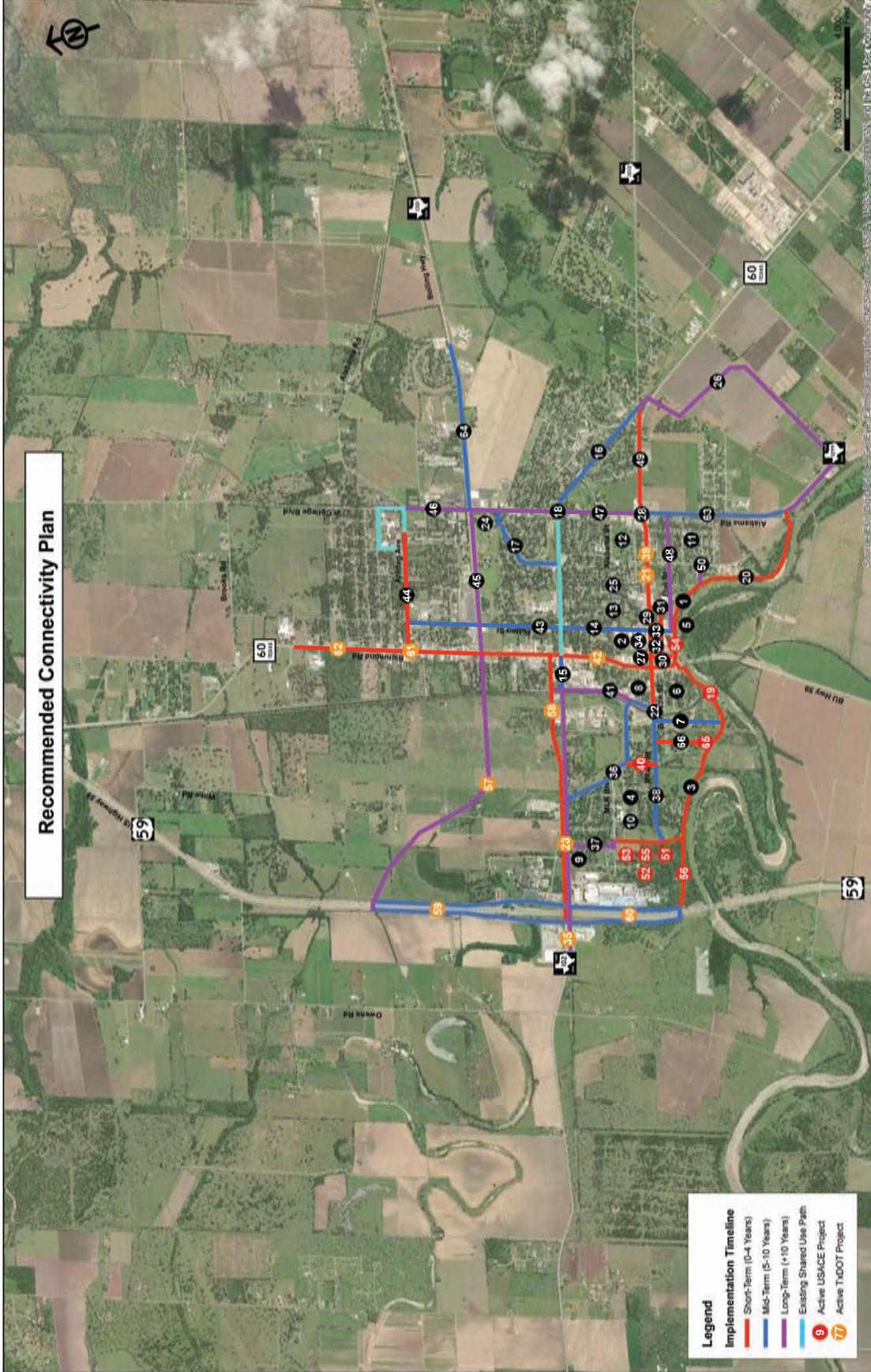
Project Development and Ownership

While improvements identified as a potential part of the USACE Colorado River Flood Protection System are located within project right-of-way, other entities might assume control of the funding, implementation, and even ownership of recommended improvements and facilities that are constructed or implemented within their right-of-way. Examples include bicycle and pedestrian network facilities and improvements that are in the rights-of-way maintained by TxDOT, WISD, and the city. In addition, funding from private sources might be used to supplement public funds to advance project development.

Implementation Strategies



(Map created by Ennis Davis, AICP)



(Map created by Ennis Davis, AICP)

Implementation Strategies—Cultural Resources

Map No.	Project ID	Official Project Name	Project Limits	Recommended Improvements	Category	Lead Agency	Timing
1		Participate in Section 106 Process	Citywide	Get involved in Section 106 review process for Phase II of the levee system to help encourage more sensitive design relative to historic downtown Wharton.	RE	Wharton, USACE	Short Term
2		Join Main Street or Texas Town Square Initiative	Downtown Wharton	Explore becoming a Main Street community and/or part of Texas Town Square Initiative.	CBP	WEDC, Wharton	Short Term
3		Create West End Flooding Memorial	West End	Place memorial or monument to flooding and flood survivors in the West End neighborhood. Incorporate into levee project/sump areas.	CBP	Wharton, WWEI	Short Term
4		Document At-Risk Structures and Resources	Citywide	Prioritize documentation of existing buildings in West End, West Milam, and cemeteries. It is recommended all the remaining structures in the West End have at least a windshield survey completed. Historic structures should be prioritized and have additional documentation. The remaining structures in the West Milam National Register District should have a more intensive documentation completed and be prioritized for rehabilitation.	CBP	Wharton	Short Term
5		Highlight Environmental History	Citywide	Incorporate environmental history and history of flooding as well as educational opportunities into the levee project.	CBP	Wharton, WEDC, USACE	Short Term
6		Establish Historic Resource Mitigation Practices	Citywide	Triage and identify most at-risk historic structures and sites. Prepare pre- and post-disaster mitigation plans for most at-risk historic structures and sites. Identify mitigation strategies to protect historic structures from future flooding.	CBP	Wharton	Mid Term
7		Develop West End Heritage Trail	West End	Options of categories to include in a West End Heritage Trail (that could be incorporated into the sump area or strategic locations around the West End neighborhood) are businesses, recreation, leaders, education, churches, transportation, industry, and flooding.	CBP	Wharton, WWEI	Mid Term
8		Include Preservation in Economic Development	Citywide	Incorporate history into branding and marketing of Wharton relative to tourism and economic development. Promote tax incentives for eligible historic structures in the community. Prioritize buildings that could be rehabilitated or adaptively reused and properly mothball; explore RFPs for any city-owned historic resources.	CBP	Wharton	Mid Term
9		Engage in Cemetery Preservation	Citywide	Survey and document cemeteries. Create mitigation plans and/or master plans.	CBP	Wharton	Mid Term

Implementation Strategies—Cultural Resources

Map No.	Project ID	Official Project Name	Project Limits	Recommended Improvements	Category	Lead Agency	Timing
10		Update <i>Hazard Mitigation Plan</i>	Citywide	Include historic and cultural resources in next <i>County Hazard Mitigation Plan</i> update.	CBP	WC	Long Term
11		Explore Under-told History	Citywide	Explore diverse, under-told history of Wharton and integrate into economic development, public history, and community revitalization. Coordinate with future trail connections or downtown revitalization efforts.	CBP	Wharton, WISD, WWEI	Long Term
12		Prepare Mitigation Plans	Citywide	Prepare pre- and post-disaster mitigation plans for less at-risk historic resources in Wharton, including cemeteries.	CBP	Wharton	Long Term
13		Adopt Historic Preservation Ordinance	Citywide	Consistent with <i>Comprehensive Plan</i> recommendations, adopt local historic preservation ordinance.	CBP	Wharton	Long Term
14		Active Transportation Plan	Citywide	Create an overall “active transportation plan” for implementation of sidewalk and bikeway projects and programs supporting active transportation (functions in coordination with the city’s capital improvement plan)	TSM	Wharton, WEDC	Short Term

Implementation Strategies—Mobility Projects

Color Code:

Red: Recommendation should be included within an active USACE project.

Yellow: Recommendation should be included within an active TxDOT project.

Map No.	Project ID	Official Project Name	Project Limits	Recommended Improvements	Category	Lead Agency	Timing
15		Santa Fe Trail Extension West	N. Richmond Rd to N. Sunset Road	New 10'- to 12'-wide trail connecting existing Santa Fe Trail with Sunset Road. Project would include marked crossing at SH 60/Richmond Road. Coordinate with TxDOT. A raised crosswalk with rectangular rapid flashing beacon or HAWK signal should be considered.	RE	Wharton, TxDOT	Mid Term

Abbreviations:

CBP—Community-Based Partnership

KCSR—Kansas City Southern Railway

RDWY—Roadway

RE—Roadside Environment

TxDOT—Texas Department of Transportation

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Map No.	Project ID	Official Project Name	Project Limits	Recommended Improvements	Category	Lead Agency	Timing
16		Santa Fe Trail Extension East	N. Alabama Road to Croom Park I	New 10'- to 12'-wide trail connecting existing Santa Fe Trail with Croom Park I via former Santa Fe Railroad right-of-way. Project would include marked crossing at Alabama Road. A raised crosswalk with rectangular rapid flashing beacon or HAWK signal should be considered.	RE	Wharton	Mid Term
17		Santa Fe Trail Extension North	Olive St to N. Alabama Road	New 10'- to 12'-wide connecting Santa Fe Trail to Sivells Elementary through Mayfair Park	RE	Wharton, WISD	Mid Term
18		Santa Fe Trail Mid-Block Crossing Safety Enhancement	Alabama Road	Install mid-block crossing from eastern terminus of existing Santa Fe Trail across N. Alabama Road to connect with Croom Park I. A raised crosswalk with rectangular rapid flashing beacon or HAWK signal could be considered.	RWDY	Wharton	Short-Term
19		Levee System Trail USACE 408 Process	US 59 to Richmond Road.	Approach USACE (Fort Worth District first) and request permission for approval for access and usage of proposed levee maintenance road as trail facility.	USACE	Wharton, WEDC	ShortTerm
20		Levee System Trail—Phase II—Section 106 Review Process	Richmond Road to Alabama Road	Request Riverfront Trail as part of the Section 106 review process for phase II of the levee system along floodwall and proposed levee to replace riverfront trail lost for proposed sump area.	USACE	Wharton, WEDC	Short Term
21	024101049	SH 60 Surfacing/Roadway Restoration	Milam Street and Burleson Street from Richmond Road to Alabama Road	Add new sidewalk(s) and bike lanes where applicable on E. Milam Street from Resident Street to Alabama Road and marked crosswalks at existing signalized intersections (Polk Street, Houston Street, Fulton Street, Rusk Street) through downtown Wharton as part of TxDOT roadway restoration project (TxDOT Project ID 02410149). In addition, update/add signage at all intersections identifying Milam and Burleson Streets as one-way roadway facilities to enhance multimodal safety.	RDWY	TxDOT	Short Term

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Map No.	Project ID	Official Project Name	Project Limits	Recommended Improvements	Category	Lead Agency	Timing
22		Railroad Crossing Enhancement	W. Milam Street at KCSR	Modify W. Milam Street railroad crossing to include space for pedestrians and bicyclists.	RWDY	KCSR, Wharton	Mid Term
23	070902048	FM 102 Intersection Improvements	US 59 to Richmond Road	Consider installation of new traffic signal at Mattie Street, intersection realignment at Spanish Camp Road, and marked crosswalks at US 59, Mattie Street, Spanish Camp Road, and Richmond Road as part of TxDOT project (TxDOT Project ID 07092048)	TO, RDWY	TxDOT	Long Term
24		Sidewalk/Walkability Program i Including Safe Routes to School Program	Citywide	Develop a plan and program to improve walkability—there are spotty sidewalks, outdated and dilapidated sidewalks, sidewalks that are not ADA accessible, lack of sidewalks adjacent to schools and community amenities. This program could be coordinated with the <i>Active Transportation Plan</i> .	TSM	Wharton, WISD, WEDC	Short Term
25		Develop Formal Program for Street Maintenance and Improvement	Citywide	Use the <i>Comprehensive Plan's</i> roadway inventory to understand which roadways should be prioritized for maintenance or reconstruction to help plan and budget for projects supporting the CIP and long-term budgeting and routine maintenance.	TSM	Wharton	Short Term
26		Santa Fe Drainage Channel Trail	FM 3012 to FM 1299	Construct Trail parallel to Santa Fe drainage channel within existing channel right-of-way.	RE	Wharton	Long Term
27		Polk Street Bikeway Section 106 Review Process	Caney Street to Elm Street	Reconstruct Polk Street as a part of USACE drainage pipe project to include dedicated bikeway facility.	USACE	Wharton, WEDC	Short Term
28		SH 60 DT Wharton Jurisdictional Transfer	SH 60 from FM 1301 to Alabama Road	Request a TxDOT traffic study for a possible jurisdictional transfer of SH 60 from FM 1301 to Alabama Road from FM 1301 to E. Milam Street and Alabama Road to Richmond Road.	RDWY, TSM	TxDOT, Wharton	Short Term

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Map No.	Project ID	Official Project Name	Project Limits	Recommended Improvements	Category	Lead Agency	Timing
29		Milam Street: Convert from One-way to Two-Way	Richmond Road to Resident Street	Consider conversion from one-way to two-way streets with context-sensitive bicycle and pedestrian improvements.	RDWY, RE	Wharton	Long Term
30		Burleson Street: Convert from One-Way to Two-Way	Richmond Road to Resident Street	Consider conversion from one-way to two-way streets with context-sensitive bicycle and pedestrian improvements.	RDWY, RE	Wharton	Long Term
31		Resident Street: Convert from One-Way to Two-Way	Burleson to Milam	Consider conversion from one-way to two-way streets with context-sensitive bicycle and pedestrian improvements.	RDWY, RE	Wharton	Long Term
32		S. Houston Street: Convert from One-Way to Two-Way	Milam to Burleson	Consider conversion from one-way to two-way streets with context-sensitive bicycle and pedestrian improvements.	RDWY, RE	Wharton	Mid Term
33		S. Fulton Street: Convert from One-Way to Two-Way	Burleson to Milam	Consider conversion from one-way to two-way streets with context-sensitive bicycle and pedestrian improvements.	RDWY, RE	Wharton	Mid Term
34		Complete the sidewalk network through downtown	Downtown Wharton	Complete the downtown sidewalk network as indicated in <i>City of Wharton 2018–2028 Comprehensive Plan</i> :	RE	Wharton	Mid-Term
35	070902048	Santa Fe Trail Extension West	Walmart west of Highway 59 to Richmond Road	Add new sidewalk or extend Santa Fe Trail paralleling FM 102 between SH 60/ Richmond Road and Walmart east of US 59 interchange. Coordinate and consider inclusion into TxDOT FM 102 Reconstruction Corridor Study (TxDOT Project ID 070902048)	RE	TxDOT, WEDC, Wharton	Long-Term
36		North Spanish Camp Rd Streetscape	FM 102 to N. Sunset Street	Reconstruct Spanish Camp Road to include trail, sidewalks, streetscaping, and lighting as recommended in ULI-Houston TAP Report	RDWY, RE	Wharton, WEDC	Mid Term

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Map No.	Project ID	Official Project Name	Project Limits	Recommended Improvements	Category	Lead Agency	Timing
37		Mattie Street Sidewalks	FM 102 to Martin Luther King Boulevard	Add new sidewalk	RE	Wharton	Long Term
38		W. Milam Street Sidewalks and Bikeways	Camelia Avenue to KCSR	Add new sidewalk	RE	Wharton	
39	024101049	E. Milam and Burleson Street Sidewalks/Bikeways	Richmond Road to Alabama Road	Add new sidewalks to eliminate gaps in sidewalk network. Coordinate pedestrian improvements, including ADA accessible ramps at intersections with TxDOT SR 60 surfacing and roadway restoration project (TxDOT Project ID 024101049)	RE	TxDOT, Wharton	Short Term
40		Hughes Street Sidewalks USACE 408 Process	W. Spanish Camp Road to W. Milam Street	Request addition of new sidewalk and sharrow markings as part of USACE flood control drainage reconstruction along Hughes Street	USACE	Wharton, WEDC	Short Term
41		N. Sunset Street Sidewalks and Bikeways	Ogden to Milam Street	Add new sidewalk from proposed west extension of the Santa Fe Trail to Milam Street	RE	Wharton	Long Term
42	008910023	SH 60/Richmond Road Surfacing/Roadway Restoration	FM 1301 to Burleson Street	Add new sidewalks and signed, separated bike lanes where applicable, and marked crossings at all signalized intersections (FM 1301, FM 102, Caney Street, Milam Street, Burleson Street) as a part of TxDOT surfacing/roadway restoration project for SH 60/Richmond Road between FM 1301 and Burleson Street (TxDOT Project ID 008910023)	RDWY, RE	TxDOT	Short Term
43		Fulton Street Sidewalks and Bikeways	E. Elm Street to Ahldag Avenue.	Add "8B Proposed Street Improvements" indicated in <i>Comprehensive Plan</i>	RDWY, RE	Wharton	Mid Term
44		E. Ahldag Avenue Sidewalks and Bikeways	N. Richmond Road to N. Alabama Road	Add 13A Capital Improvements Program 2018–23 improvements indicated in <i>Comprehensive Plan</i> (bikeways should be separated from traffic)	RDWY, RE	Wharton	Short Term

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Map No.	Project ID	Official Project Name	Project Limits	Recommended Improvements	Category	Lead Agency	Timing
45		FM 1301 Sidewalks and Bikeways	N. Richmond Road to N. Alabama Road	Add new sidewalk and separated bike-way facilities (bike lane with barriers from traffic)	RDWY, RE	TxDOT	Long Term
46		N. Alabama Road Sidewalks	Oriole Lane to Ahldag Avenue	Add sidewalk along Alabama Road to connect Sivells Elementary School and Wharton Community College	RDWY, RE	Wharton	Long Term
47		Alabama Road Sidewalks and Bikeways	Ahldag Avenue to Elm Street	Add sidewalks and bikeways. Sidewalks should be implemented regardless of the potential jurisdictional transfer to TxDOT. Bikeways should be included with any future TxDOT improvements along the corridor and should be separated bikeways (either side path or along the roadway with barriers from traffic).	RE	Wharton, TxDOT	Long Term
48		E. Elm Street Bikeways	S. East Avenue to S. Alabama Road	Add new bikeway—could be a signed route with sharrow markings designating this corridor as a bike route due to low traffic volumes along the corridor.	RE	Wharton	Long Term
49		S. East Avenue Bikeways	Collins Street to E. Elm Street	Add new bikeway—could be a signed route with sharrow markings designating this corridor as a bike route due to low traffic volumes along the corridor.	RE	Wharton	Long Term
50		Collins Street	S. East Avenue to Phase II Levee	Add new bikeway—could be a signed route with sharrow markings designating this corridor as a bike route due to low traffic volumes along the corridor .	RE	Wharton	Long Term
51		USACE 408 Process	Vineyard Sump	Request permission from USACE (Fort Worth District first to have design changes for activities in the sump as part of the USACE 408 Process.	USACE	Wharton	Short Term
52		USACE 408 Process	Vineyard Sump	Request that USACE provide sloping within the sump to accommodate the anticipated activities of festivals and soccer games.	USACE	Wharton	Short Term

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Map No.	Project ID	Official Project Name	Project Limits	Recommended Improvements	Category	Lead Agency	Timing
53		USACE 408 Process	Vineyard Sump	Request to have at least two access stairs that can be used by the public to access the sump as well as a decorative fence around sump and lighting appropriate for evening activities.	USACE	Wharton	Short Term
54		USACE Section 106 Process	Richmond Road to Rusk Street	Request permission from USACE and for glass sections to be inserted into proposed floodwall along Elm Street between downtown and the river to facilitate view of the view sheds.	USACE	Wharton	Short Term
55		USACE 408 Process	Vineyard Sump	Request permission from USACE for an elevated walkway over Vineyard Sump wetland area	USACE	Wharton	Short Term
56		USACE 408 Process	Citywide	Request permission from USACE for educational signage along trails associated with flood protection system	USACE	Wharton	Short Term
57	141203038	FM 1301 Extension	Richmond Road to US 59	Include trail, sidewalks, or appropriate bicycle facilities as a part of TxDOT corridor study for the extension of FM 1301 (TxDOT Project ID 141203038)	RDWY, RE	TxDOT	Long Term
58	070902055	FM 102 Seal Coat	US 59 to Richmond Road	Consider adding designated bicycle facility signage between US 59 and Richmond Road, marked crosswalks at US 59 Frontage Road intersections, and marked crosswalk in vicinity of Mattie Street as part of TxDOT seal coat project (TxDOT Project ID 070902055)	RDWY, RE	TxDOT	Short Term
59	008908100	US 59 Convert Non-Freeway	SH 60 to 0.26 miles N. of FM 102	Include new sidewalks along proposed US 59 frontage roads within Wharton city limits or at a minimum between 0.26 miles north of FM 102 and the future FM 1301 extension. (TxDOT Project ID 008908100)	RDWY, RE	TxDOT	Mid Term

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Community Survey

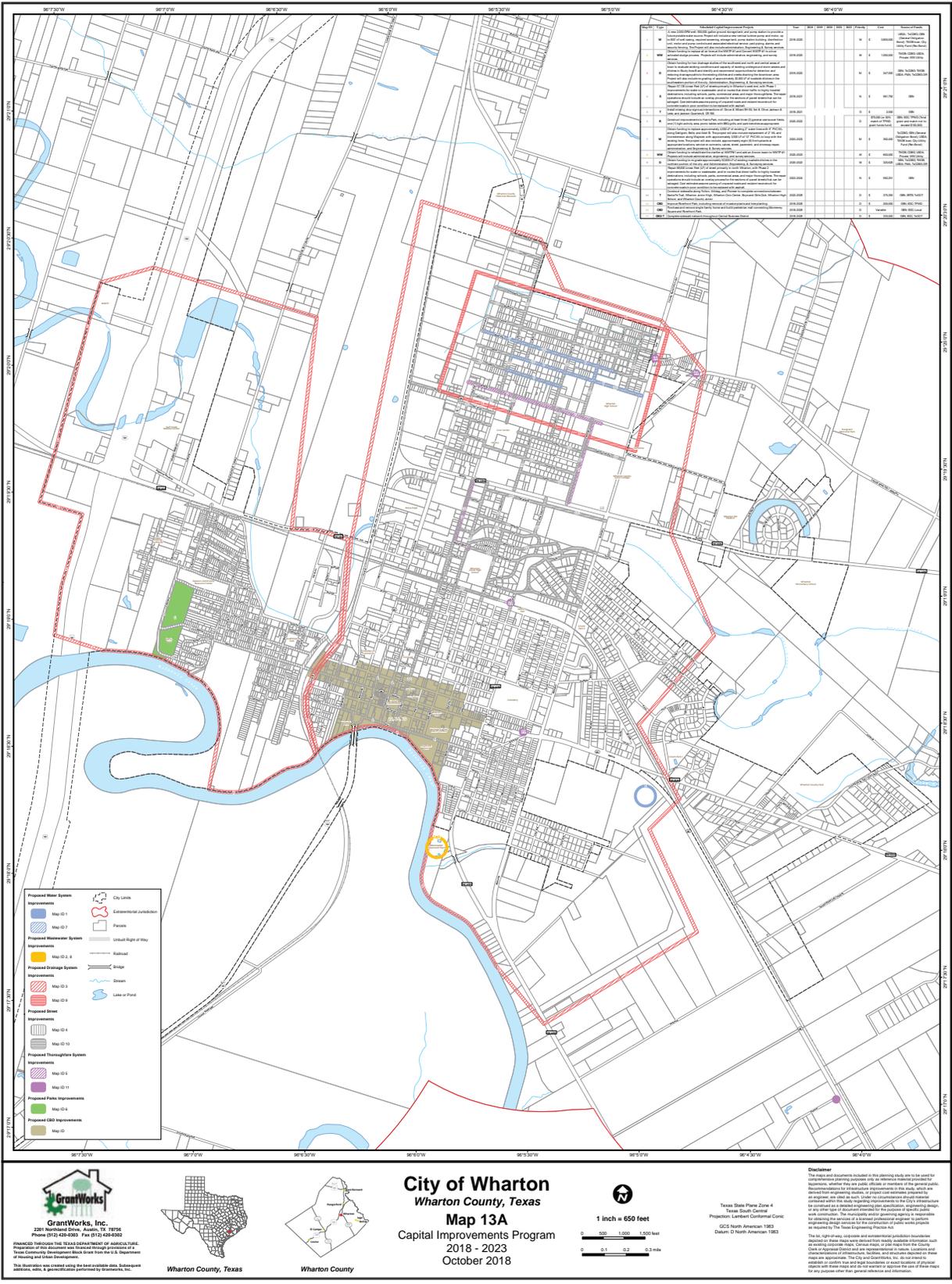
The CPAT conducted a short survey among residents at the public workshop on Saturday, February 23, 2019. The following table is a record of the results.

Question: On a scale of 1 to 5 (1 being the lowest value, 5 being the highest value), please tell us what you value most about living in Wharton. This isn't a ranking; you can assign a number to every item on the list.

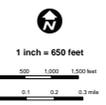
Value—Lowest (1) to Highest (5)	1	2	3	4	5
Small town and rural atmosphere				2	17
Natural areas	1		3	9	7
Appearance, views, and beauty of Wharton and surrounding areas			7	2	10
Access to the river and waterways	1		8	2	7
Sense of history; historic sites and buildings			3	4	11
Events such as farmers markets, festivals, BBQs, etc.	1	1	4	4	9
Arts and culture opportunities like the Plaza Theater	1	3	1	3	9
Recreation centers and ball parks		4	3	5	8
Schools and school facilities	1	3	3	1	10
Proximity to Houston	1		3	3	12
Community groups and organizations (community centers, churches, clubs, etc.)			2	6	10
Health and healthcare facilities	2		4	1	12
Access to daily care such as childcare or eldercare	3	2	3	2	9
Other:					
Java Jam					
All our churches					
Antique shops					
Wharton Junior College Senior Citizens Program					
No more tax abatements					

Appendix B: Existing Conditions Maps and Figures

Figure 1: Capital Improvements Program 2018–2023



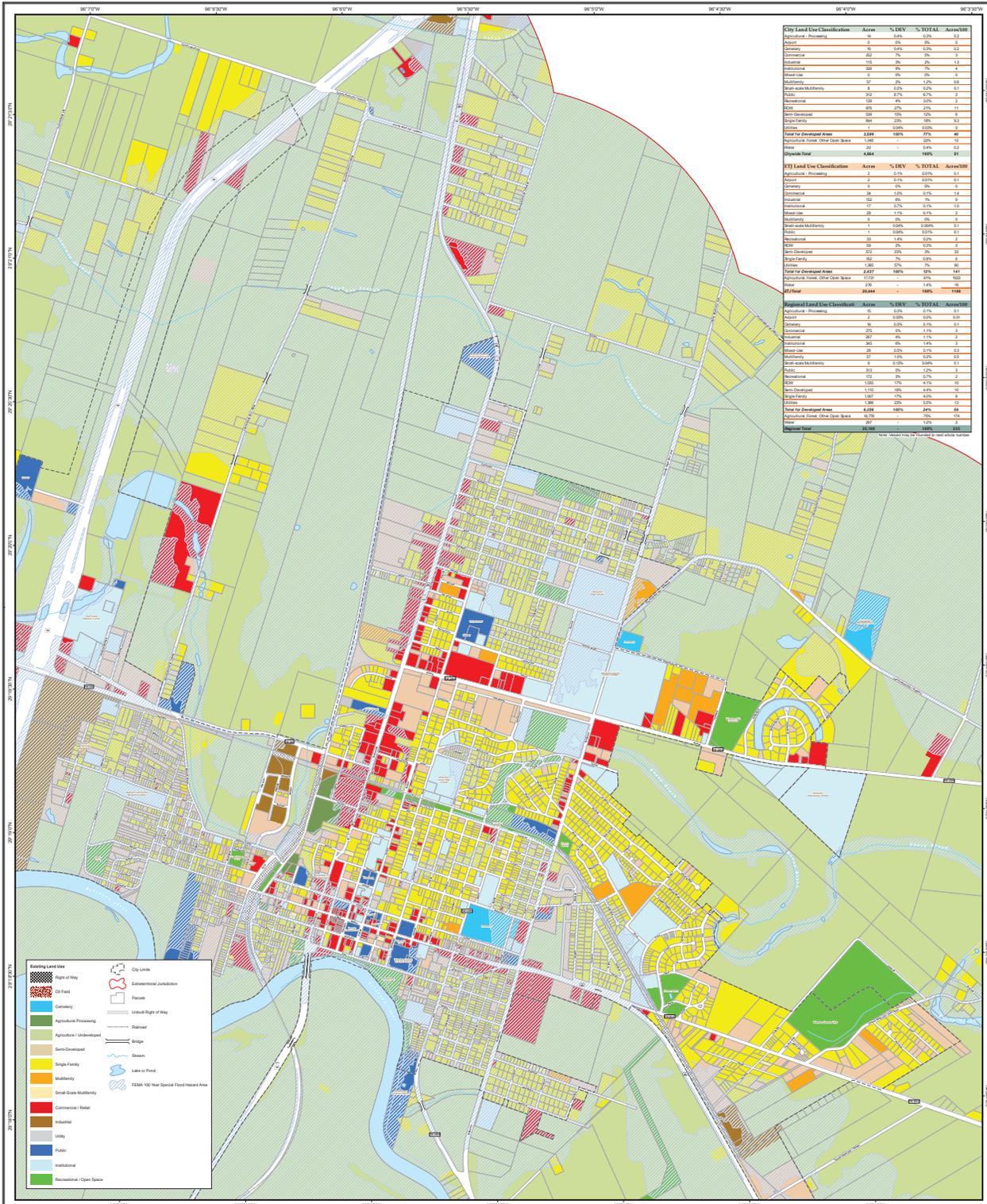
City of Wharton
Wharton County, Texas
Map 13A
Capital Improvements Program
2018 - 2023
October 2018



Texas State Plane Zone 4
Texas South Central
Projection: Lambert Conformal Conic
GCS: North American 1983
Datum: North American 1983

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Figure 6: Existing Land Use (Central Wharton)

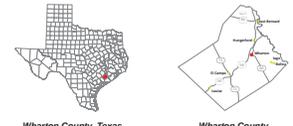




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Phone 812-431-0353 Fax 812-431-0352

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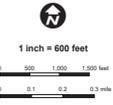
This illustration was created using the best available data. Subsequent
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Wharton County, Texas

City of Wharton
Wharton County, Texas

Map 4A
Existing Land Use
(Central Wharton)
October 2018



1 inch = 600 feet

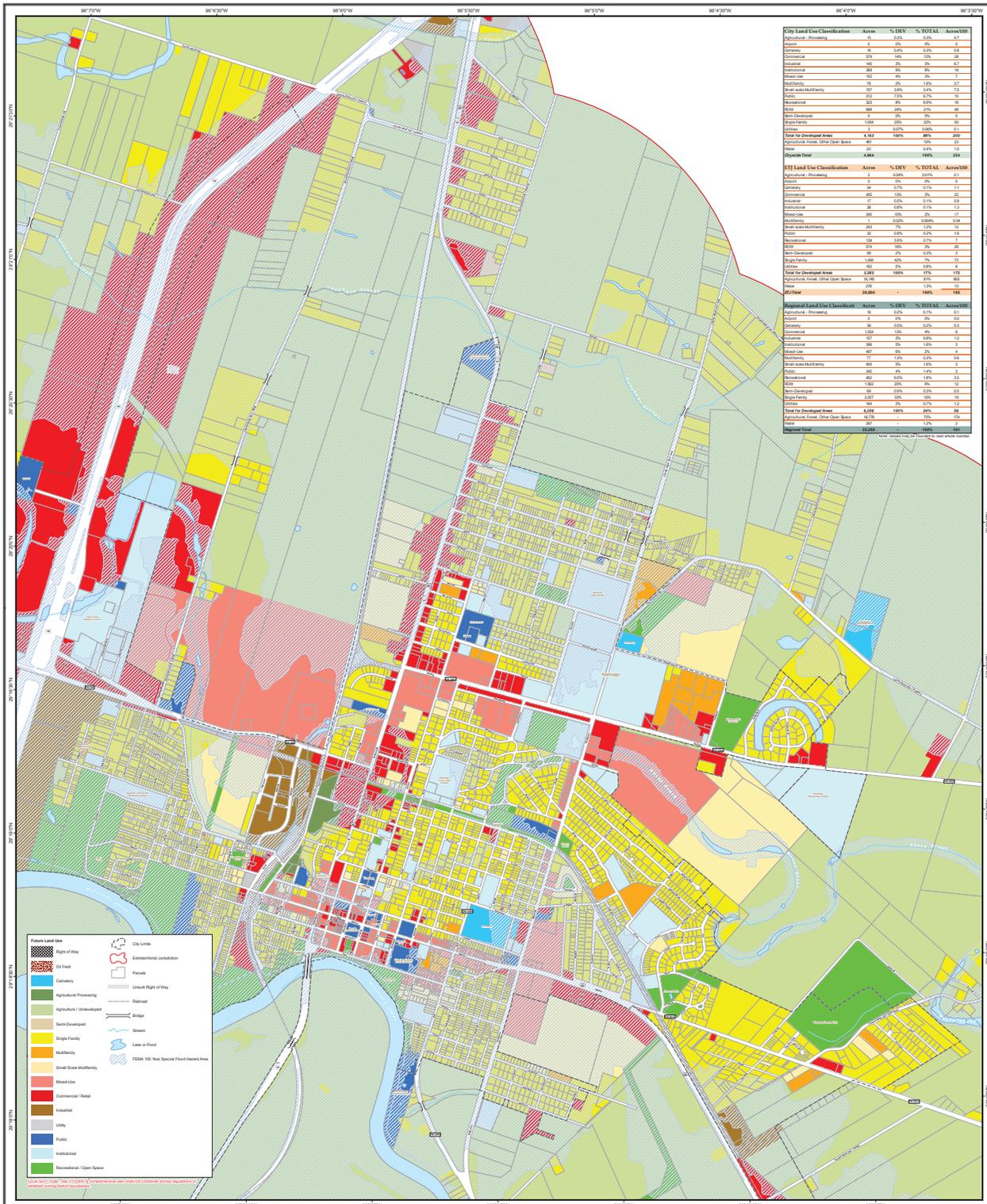
0 500 1,000 1,500 feet

0 0.1 0.2 0.3 miles

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Texas State Plane Zone 4
Texas South Central
Projection: Lambert Conformal Conic
GCS: North American 1983
Datum: G North American 1983

Figure 7: Future Land Use (Central Wharton)

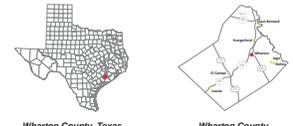




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Phone: 512-433-0353 Fax: 512-433-0352

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Wharton County, Texas

City of Wharton
Wharton County, Texas

Map 4B
Future Land Use
(Central Wharton)
October 2018



1 inch = 600 feet

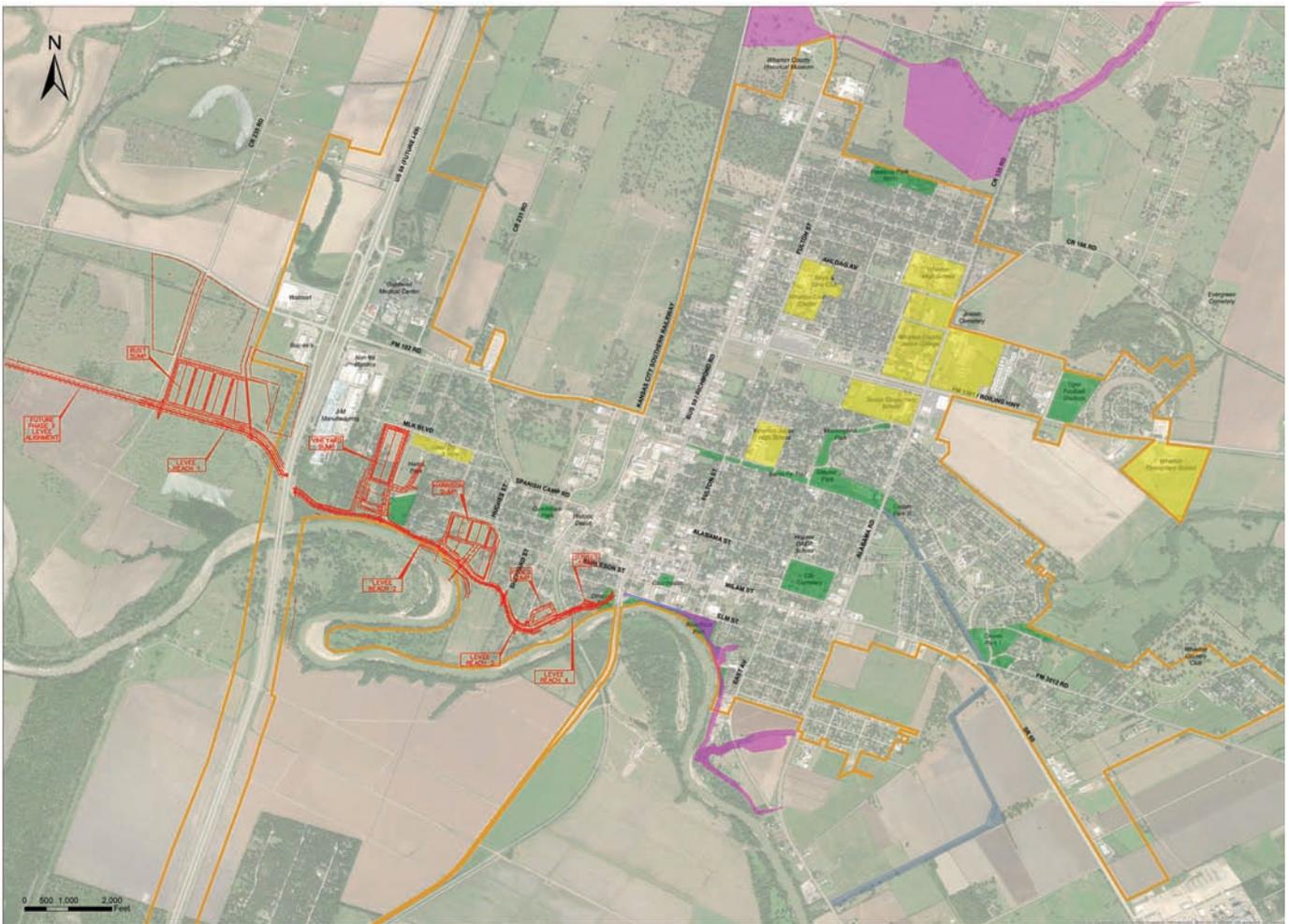
0 500 1,000 1,500 feet

0 0.1 0.2 0.3 miles

Texas State Plane Zone 4
Texas South Central
Projection: Lambert Conformal Conic
GCS: North American 1983
Datum: G North American 1983

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Figure 8: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Flood Control Project in West End of Wharton



The areas in red on this map represent the final submittal design plans for the USACE Colorado River Flood Control Project in the West End area of Wharton. The system is located along the north side of the Colorado River between Owens Road and Business 59. (Map created by Ennis Davis, AICP)

Figure 9: Land Cover

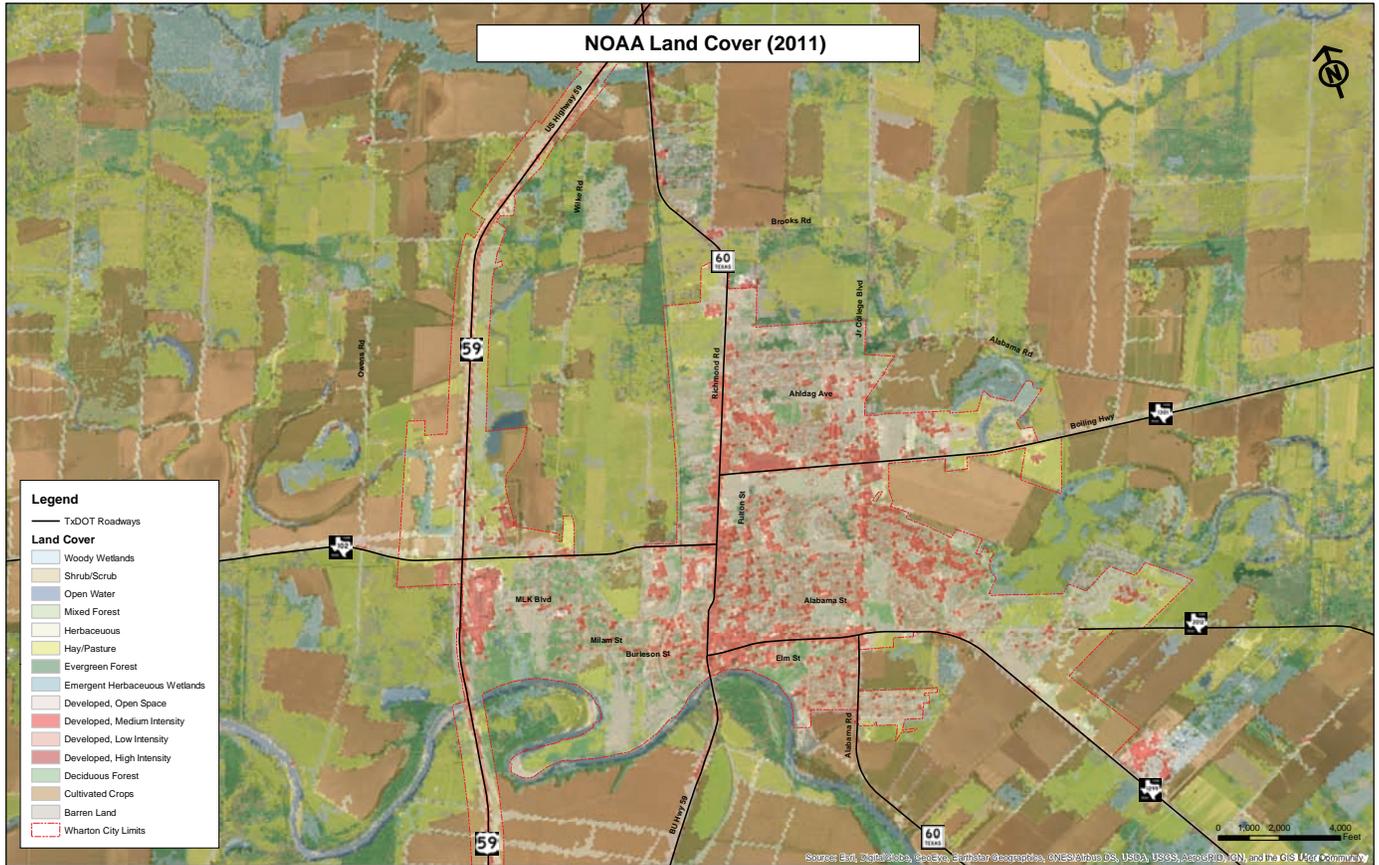


Figure 11: Wharton Floodplain Data

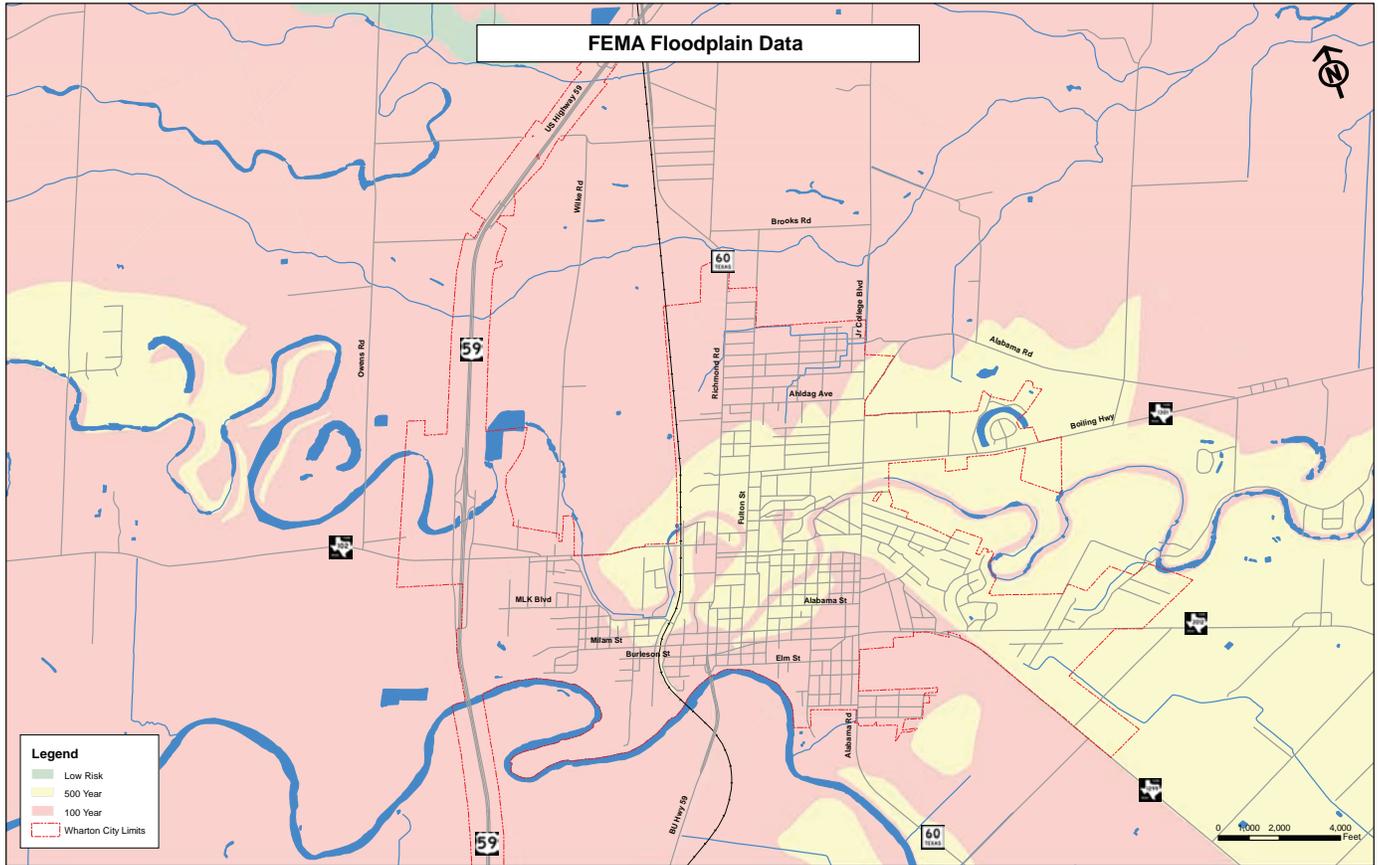


Figure 12: Wharton Natural Resources Conservation Service Soils Survey

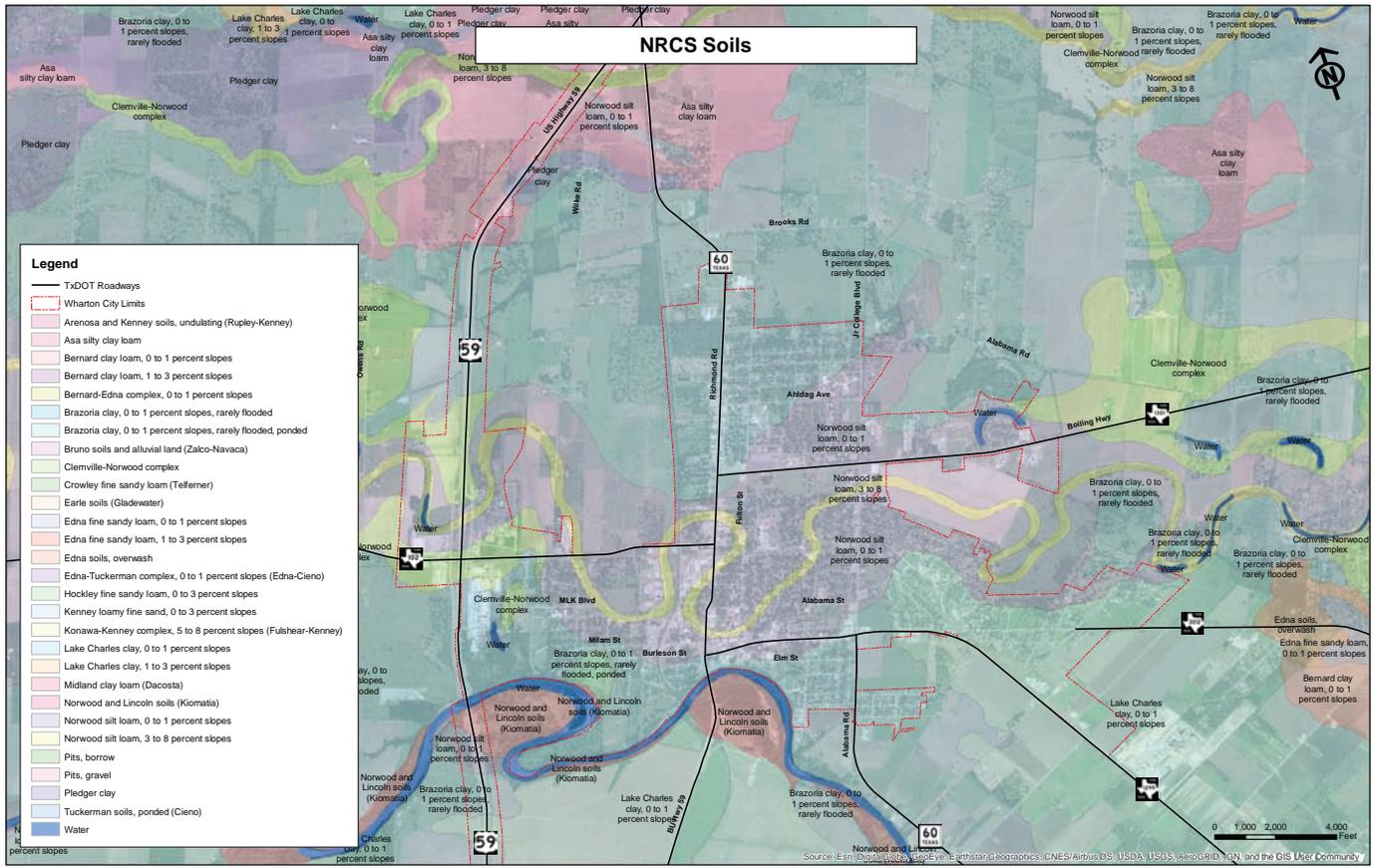


Figure 13: Wharton Topography

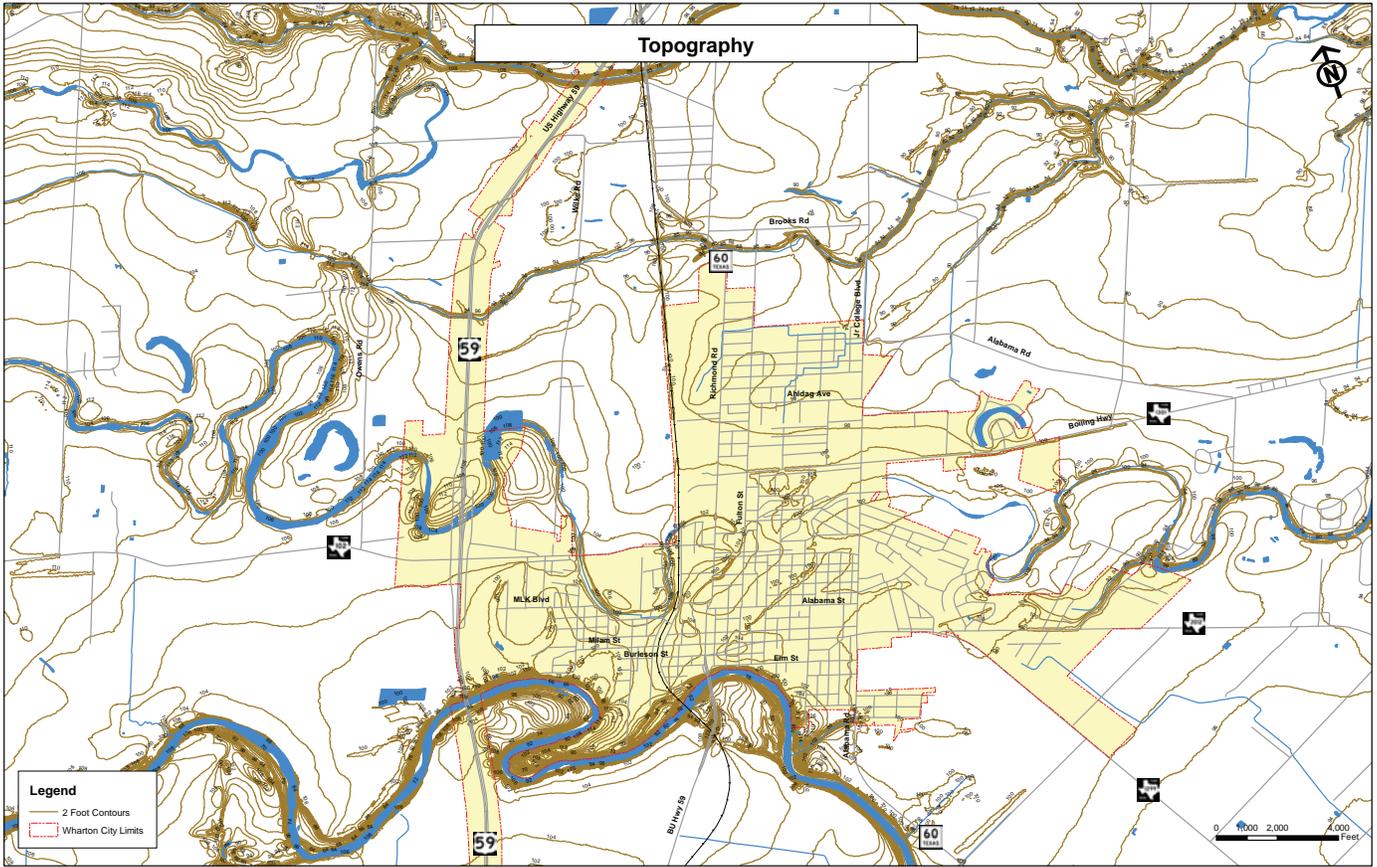


Figure 14: Wharton Historic Districts Sites Markers



Figure 15: Wharton Functional Roadway Classification

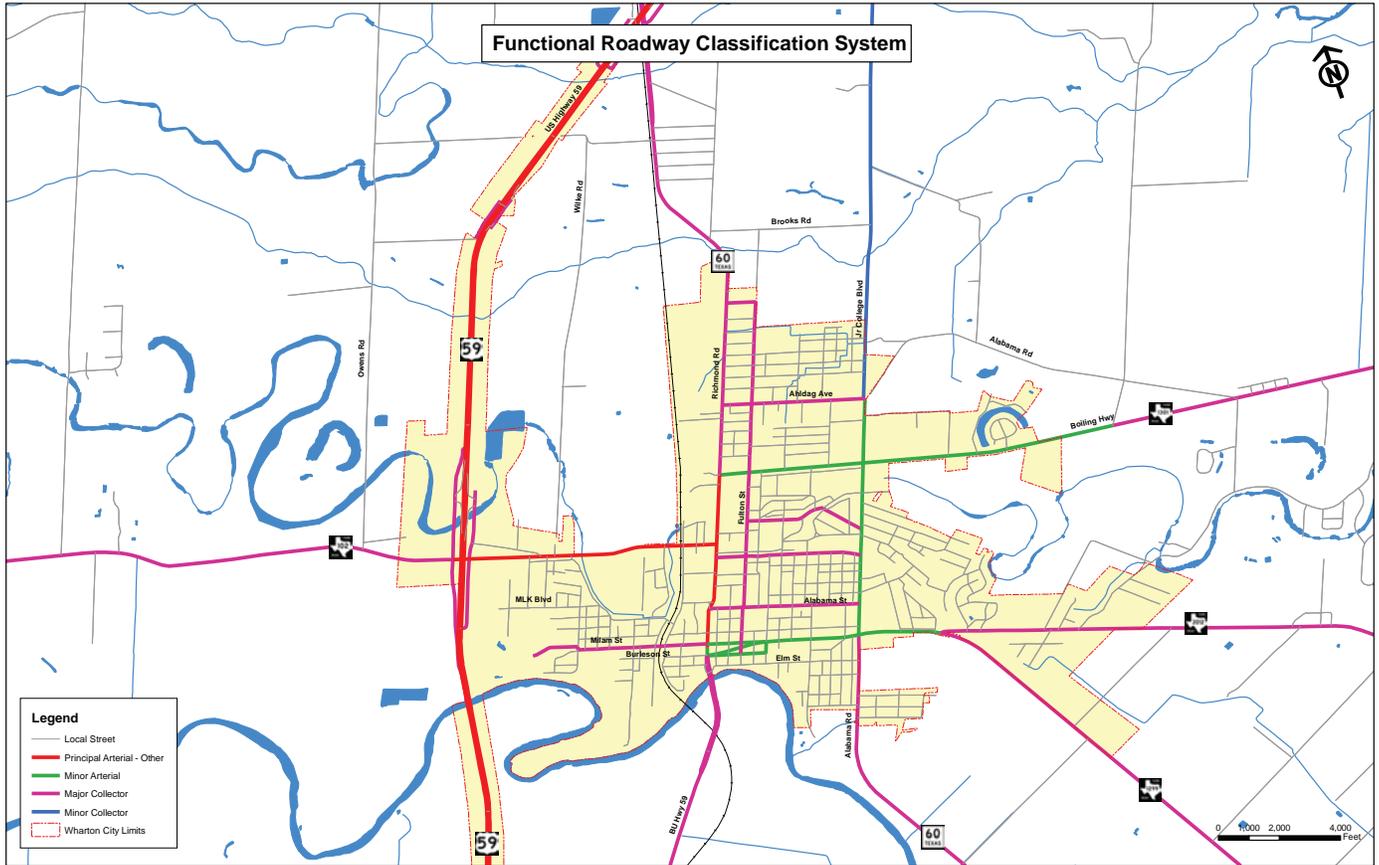


Figure 16: Wharton TxDOT Roadway Facilities

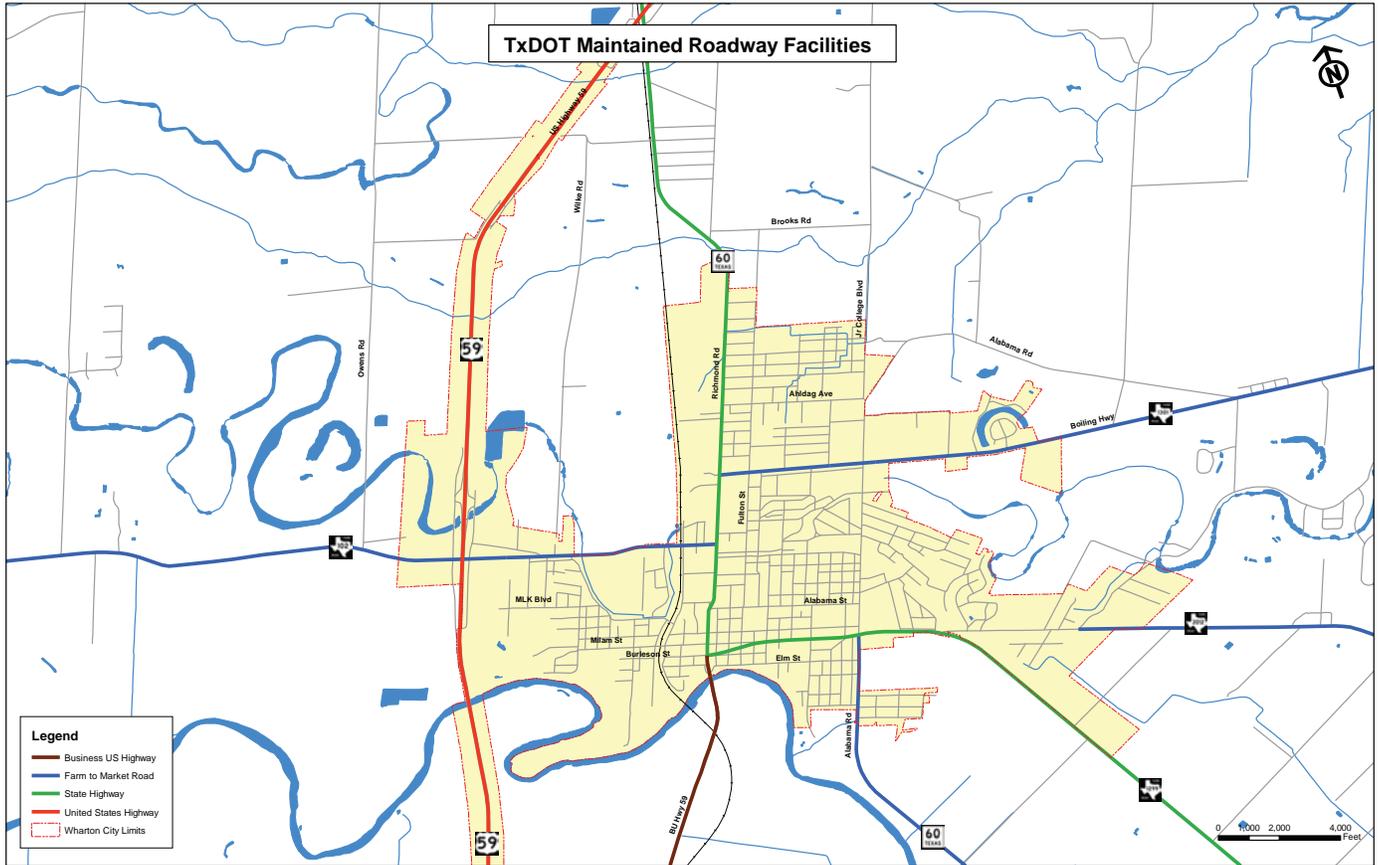


Figure 19: Wharton TxDOT Roadway Projects

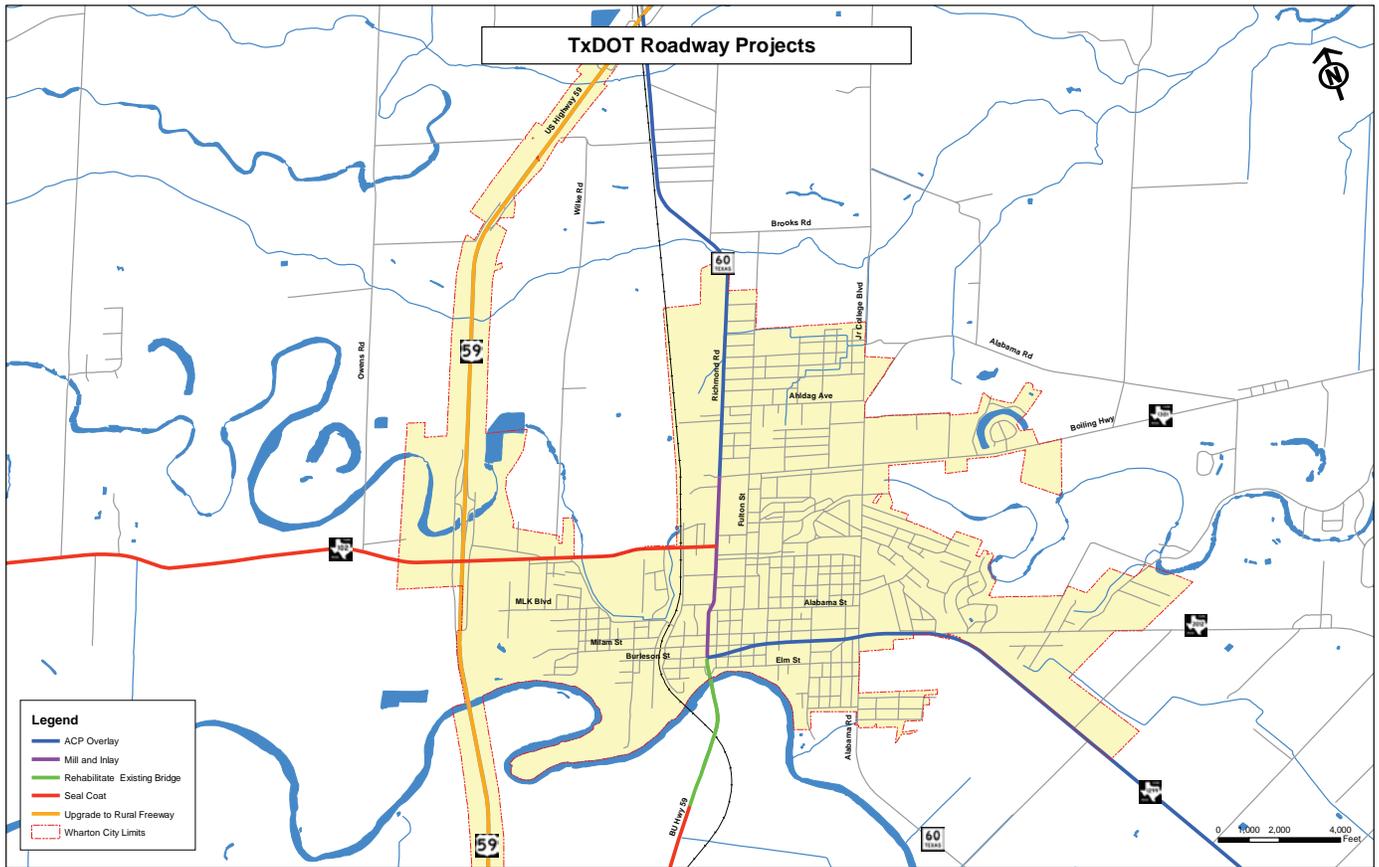
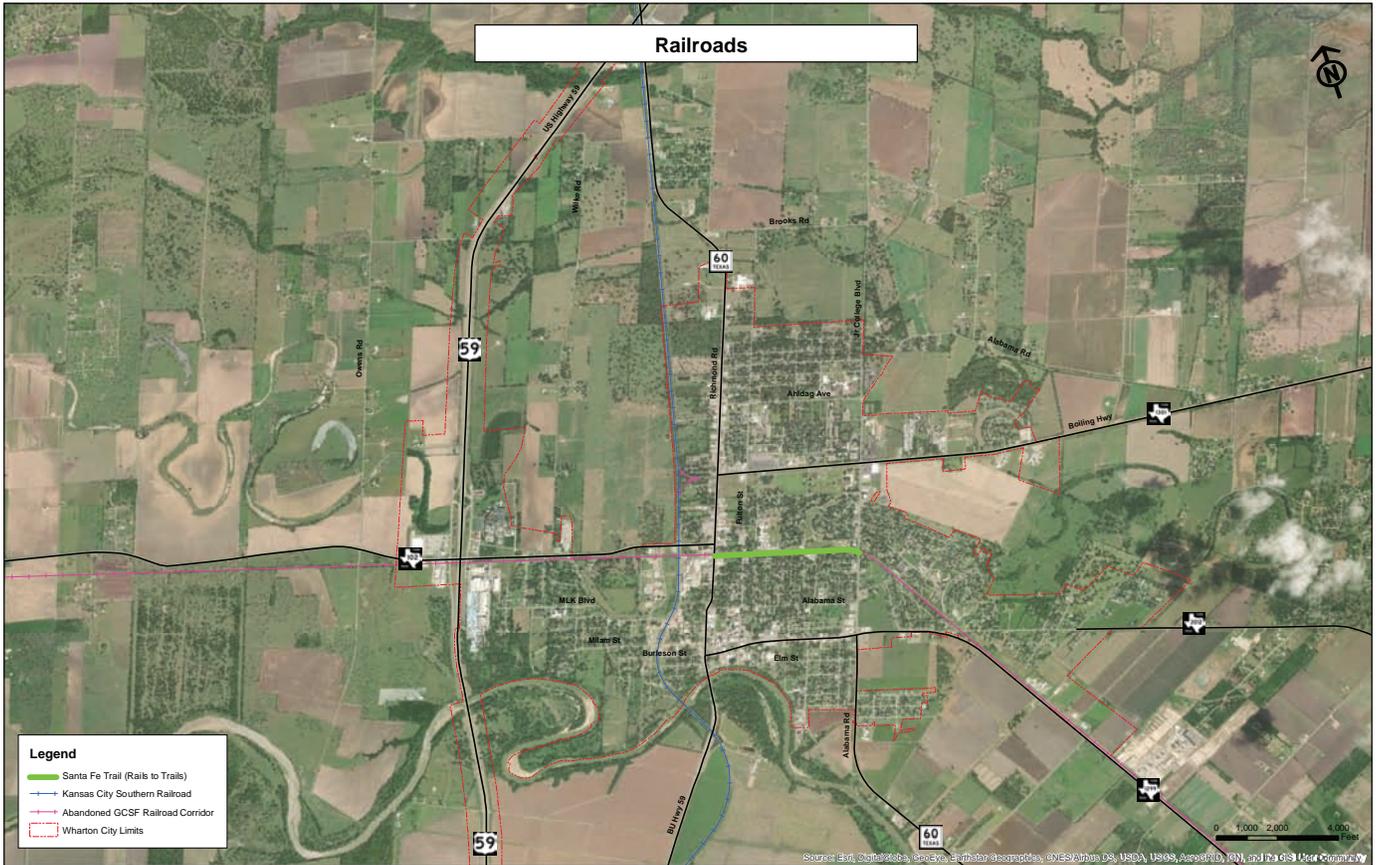


Figure 20: Railroads



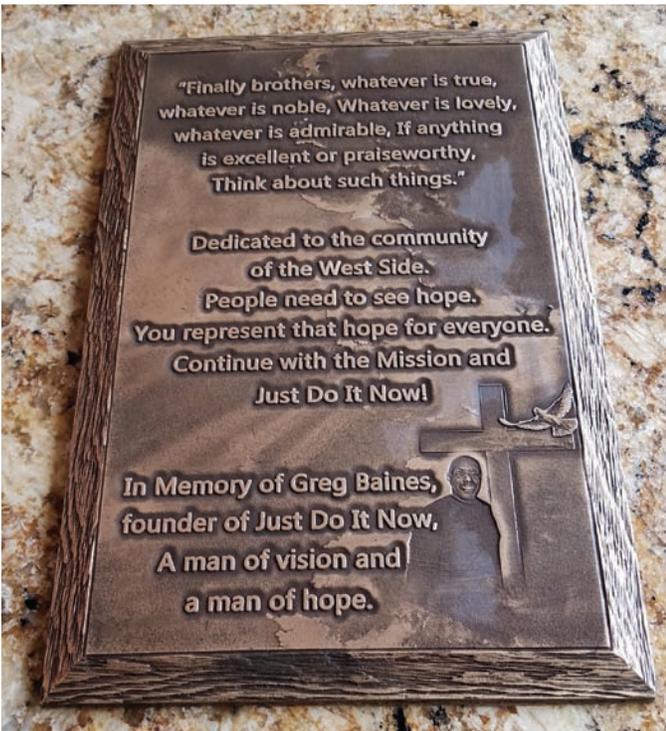
Appendix C: Picture Gallery



Cotton is still grown in and around Wharton with a few cotton gins still in operation. (Photo by Ryan Scherzinger, AICP)



Storefront facades along Milam Street leading into downtown are lit at night. Downtown Wharton is a Texas gem with a classic town square, beautifully restored courthouse, and many sound historic buildings. (Photo by Ryan Scherzinger, AICP)



A plaque outside their facility honors the founder of **Just Do It Now**, a faith-based community organization in the West End whose mission is "to assist all individuals, at-risk or otherwise, in changing the things which keep them from inner peace." The organization serves the community with a variety of programs in the areas of recreation, education, housing assistance, and community revitalization efforts. (Photo by Ryan Scherzinger, AICP)



The Mennonite Disaster Service has assisted the community's post-Harvey recovery by building many new houses, elevated to reduce damage from future flooding. (Photo by Ryan Scherzinger, AICP)



About 50 residents and stakeholders attended the team's public workshop during their visit to Wharton. (Photo by Ryan Scherzinger, AICP)



The CPAT volunteers stopped for a team photograph during a walking tour of downtown in front of the beautifully restored Wharton County Courthouse. From the left is: Adrienne Burke, AICP; Carlos G. Espinoza y Sánchez; Chelsea Young, AICP; Ennis Davis, AICP; and Paula Loomis, PhD, PhD, AICP, FAIA, LEED AP. (Photo by Ryan Scherzinger, AICP)

Appendix D: Meet the Team



Ennis Davis, AICP | Team Leader

Ennis Davis has 17 years of experience in the fields of architecture, land-use planning, transportation planning, and graphic design. He is currently senior planner with Alfred Benesch & Company and an in-house consultant project manager with the Florida Department of Transportation, District Five Planning & Environmental Management Office. He is the cofounder of and regular contributor to ModernCities.com, TheJaxson.org, and Transform Jax, which incorporates his commitment to the concepts of tactical urbanism, civic advocacy, and social media.



Adrienne Burke, AICP | Team Member

Adrienne Burke is assistant director with the Planning and Economic Opportunity Department in Nassau County, Florida. She previously worked for Riverside Avondale Preservation, a nonprofit preservation advocacy organization in Jacksonville. Prior to joining RAP, she worked for the City of Fernandina Beach, Florida, as the community development director. Burke's expertise is in cultural and natural resource policy, with a focus on historic preservation programs and resiliency and sea-level rise. She is well-versed in land development code and comprehensive plan management. Burke holds degrees from the University of Virginia and University of Florida. She is a member of the Florida Bar, serves on the Florida Public Archaeology Network Board of Directors, and is a past board member with the Florida Trust for Historic Preservation.



Carlos G. Espinoza y Sánchez | Team Member

Carlos Espinoza y Sánchez has six years of experience in the fields of real estate, land-use planning, transportation planning, graphic design, and social media. He is currently a project manager with Windrose Land Planning Services and manages over 50 ongoing redevelopment projects in the Houston area. He is the founder of CGES | Planning, a vlogging YouTube channel that focuses on blogging and documentary-style filming on Houston's city life in the fourth-largest and most diverse city in the country. He also serves as an APA Ambassador, helping champion diversity, inclusion, and equity in planning among young people.



Paula Loomis, PhD, AICP, FAIA, LEED AP | Team Member

Paula Loomis is the executive director for the Coast Guard Shore Infrastructure Logistics Center with responsibility for over 35,000 buildings and structures at 2,000 sites worldwide including master planning, programming, design, construction, and operations as well as vehicles, support equipment, and waterway aids to navigation. She has 35 years of experience in architecture, planning, and teaching with a concentration in public and military facilities. She was previously the Sustainability Program manager for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, command architect for Air Combat Command, established the Virginia Beach office of EDAW, and taught at Hampton University. She is currently an adjunct professor at Stevens Institute of Technology, where she teaches Research Methods for their Doctor of Philosophy in the Built Environment program and Temporary Structures for Heavy Construction for the Master of Construction Management program. She also serves on their Examination Committee. Her planning research investigated the economic redevelopment success of local communities following Base Realignment and Closure. Loomis will be retiring from federal service, taking a new position as the director of research/senior architect/senior planner for The Urban Collaborative firm.



Chelsea Young, AICP | Team Member

Chelsea Young brings 10 years of professional transportation planning experience working in both the public and private sectors. Young has focused on both local and regional transportation and land-use planning projects with an interest in active transportation (walking/biking). Young is active in her community, serving on two local nonprofit organizations as a board member, including Neighborhoods to Trails Southwest and Blueprint Houston. She is currently a senior associate at Traffic Engineers, Inc. in downtown Houston.



Ryan Scherzinger, AICP | Project Manager

Ryan Scherzinger is programs manager for APA's professional practice department and is based in Chicago. He manages and has worked extensively on the Community Planning Assistance Teams program, providing direct technical assistance to communities around the country and abroad with multidisciplinary teams of experts. He has managed myriad programs and special projects for APA since 2007, including community workshops, case studies, federal grants, symposia and lecture series, study tours, international events, allied outreach and coalitions, and interactive public exhibits.



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205 N. Michigan Avenue
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