

DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN UPDATE



CITY OF GEORGETOWN, TX
FINAL PLAN | MARCH, 2014

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SPECIAL THANKS

A special thank you to all the Downtown Overlay District property owners, tenants and interested persons who participated in the workshops and public hearings during the planning process.

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INTRODUCTION

Over the past ten years the City of Georgetown has worked diligently to implement the vision of the *Downtown Master Plan*, which seeks to maintain the city's unique character while maximizing opportunities for economic development and for enhancing the quality of life for its residents. While many decisions have been made and new development has occurred in Downtown, it is time to update the Plan. Many original master plan ideas are still valid and continue to be supported, while others have changed due to various reasons. The *Downtown Master Plan Update* of 2014 seeks to provide an updated framework for the citizens of Georgetown to use in planning for the future of the downtown through the year 2030.

PLAN PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to update the overall vision for downtown and revise previous concepts and design ideas in order to enable the city, property owners and citizens to make informed, strategic decisions about future developments and enhancements. Changing demographics, new priorities and recent development success have driven the desire to update downtown priorities and concepts. The concepts provided herein were vetted and largely developed by community members, stakeholders, and political leaders in an intensive public outreach process.

This Plan establishes a policy base regarding capital improvements and other public investments, new private-sector development, and opportunities for public-private partnerships. It is a tool to guide policy decisions rather than mandate them, i.e. all private development projects still have to follow specific requirements in regulatory

documents such as *Downtown and Old Town Design Guidelines* and *Downtown Overlay District standards in the Unified Development Code*. However, this Plan, in some cases, might suggest updates to those documents based on the preferred vision as established by the public.

The updated plan details a downtown framework system and identifies the elements that interface most closely with it: new development, pedestrian circulation, streetscape design, wayfinding systems, parks and open space, and circulation and parking. Finally, an Implementation chapter lays the steps for the City to follow in terms of prioritization and funding.

This Plan is based on three fundamental elements for a successful downtown Georgetown:

1. It is a **pedestrian-oriented place**.
2. It is the **heart of the city**.
3. It is a key **economic center** for the entire business community.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

The City of Georgetown sponsored the development of this plan and established an Advisory Committee, comprised of staff members and heads of local boards and commissions, who helped establish basic goals and objectives.

The City of Georgetown embraces open communication and interaction amongst community members, acknowledging that when neighbors work together toward a common goal, positive and proactive planning can occur. Community participation was a key part of the planning process. Residents, property owners, business and civic leaders participated in a series of public workshops. These included a design charrette, which allowed participants to illustrate their visions for downtown. Attendees helped identify key issues, goals and objectives and created key concepts for redevelopment. Information from previous planning efforts, community workshops, committee reviews and on-site observations also inform the plan recommendations.



Residents, property owners, business and civic leaders came together to discuss critical issues.

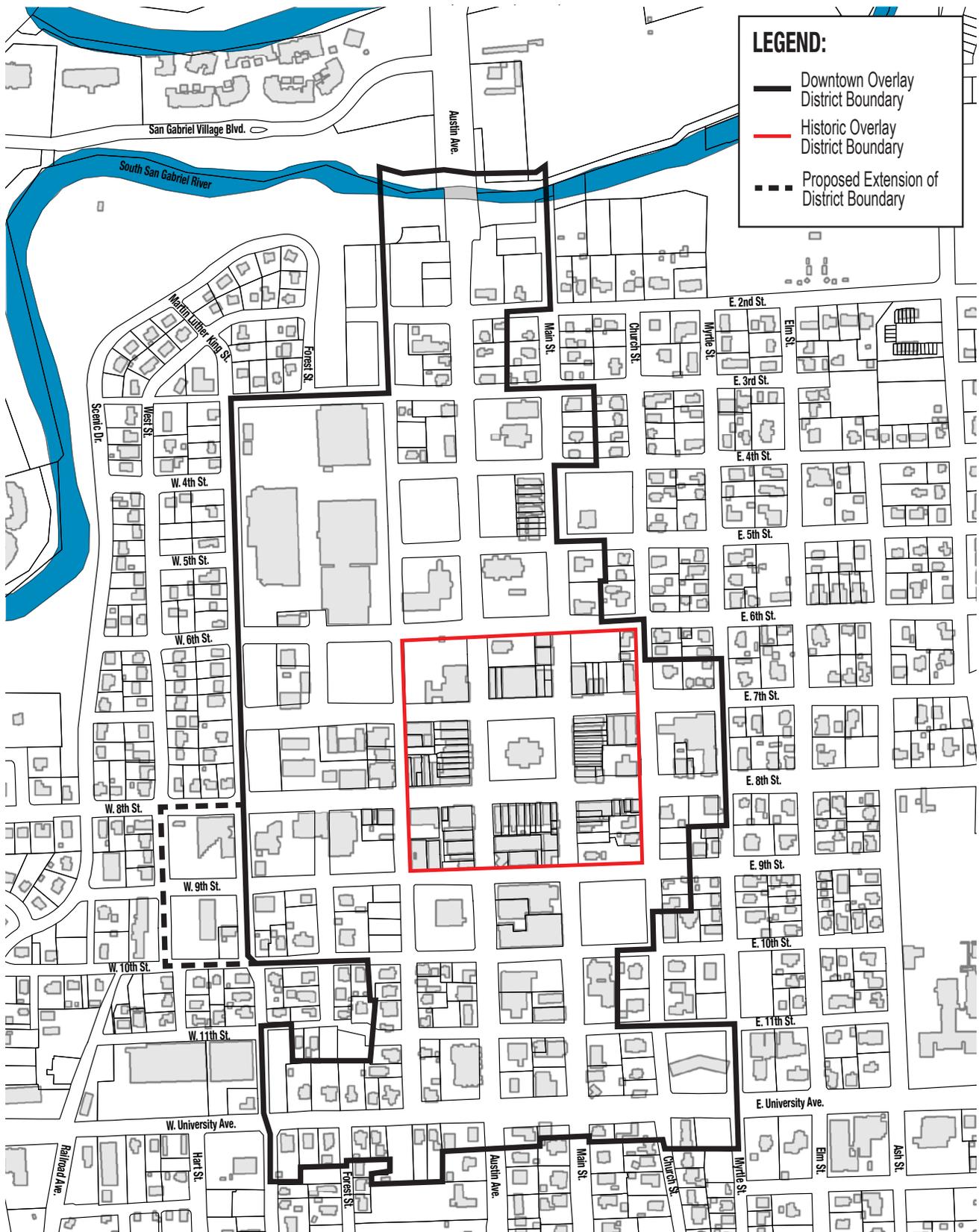
PLAN BOUNDARY

The plan boundary follows that of the Downtown Overlay District, which was adopted in 2001. It also includes the 9-block Historic Overlay District surrounding the courthouse square. The Downtown and Historic Overlay Districts define an area in which special design guidelines apply for many types of improvements. In terms of permitted land uses, the boundary follows the Mixed Use Downtown (MU-DT) zone in the Unified Development Code (see Chapter 5 of the UDC for permitted uses.) This boundary is used for the Downtown Master Plan because it includes all of the properties that have the potential to redevelop with a mix of uses. The planning area is framed by established neighborhoods, which the comprehensive plan envisions remaining stable residential places.

Through development of this Plan, it became apparent that the Downtown Overlay District should be extended to include city-owned properties that will likely redevelop into a Municipal Center. The extension is shown in a dashed black line throughout the document. There was also discussion of including some properties in the northwest quadrant, however this change would warrant more studies.



A series of community workshops helped identify key issues, goals and objectives.



MAP 1 | PLAN BOUNDARY

Georgetown Master Plan Update
 Georgetown, TX
 March, 2014



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MASTER PLAN UPDATE

In the past 10 years, Georgetown has been quite successful in preserving historic resources and promoting economic development downtown, particularly in the blocks framing and adjacent to the historic courthouse. A new library and arts center add to the civic and cultural purpose of the area and new restaurants, retail businesses and wineries have helped enliven and enrich the downtown experience. New townhomes have also presented new housing options. Pedestrian circulation and trails, a major component of the original Master Plan, have improved and each year new capital improvements are made to accommodate more pedestrian activity downtown.

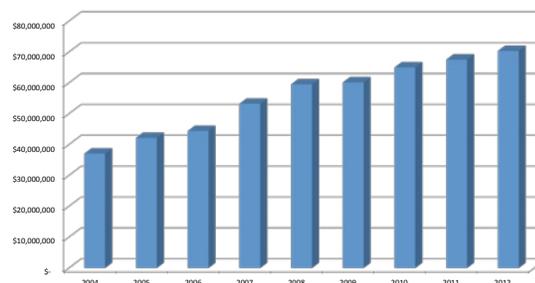
Even with recent success, downtown still faces some challenges that could threaten its competitive advantage. It lies in a corridor of other communities that can attract desirable businesses by offering a “small town” atmosphere. If Georgetown fails to maintain the character of its downtown core and enhance its vitality, then its competitive edge in a broader arena of regional economic and community development would be diminished.

The city has therefore taken the initiative to update their master plan to stay competitive. The ideas presented in this document, the *Downtown Master Plan Update*, are for a future character, one that is not yet realized, but that can easily be achieved if City, County, and business leaders put forth a concerted effort towards implementation. All of the recommendations in this plan are designed to work together, in a cohesive urban design system.

PROGRESS SINCE ORIGINAL MASTER PLAN

Since the adoption of the 2003 Master Plan, the citizens and staff of Georgetown have utilized the document as intended and numerous projects have been initiated as a result of the planning effort. Even through a national economic recession, the City was able to make smart investments and emerge as a community with momentum focused on advancing quality of life. The numbers speak for themselves: in 2002, the city’s valuation was approximately \$2.4 billion and by 2013 the tax base was approximately \$4.7 billion. Sales tax generation went from \$3.54 million in 2002 to \$8.84 million in 2013. The Downtown TIRZ (Tax Increment Redevelopment Zone), which has the same boundaries as this Plan, shows that property values have continually increased over time. In 2004, the downtown TIRZ combined property values equaled about \$37 Million. In 2012, that value had increased to over \$70 Million - almost double! The overall bond rating for Georgetown is scored at an AA+.

Downtown TIRZ Property Values



Downtown TIRZ property values have continually increased since its creation in 2004.

PUBLIC INVESTMENT

- Justice Center, County Jail and Public parking structure (4th Street & Rock Street)
- Georgetown Central Library (8th Street and Forest Street)
- Public Parking Lot (9th Street and Main Street)
- Streetscape improvements (mainly along Austin Avenue and Main Street)
- Signage and wayfinding improvements (throughout downtown)
- Downtown Art Center and Splash Pad (9th Street & Main Street)



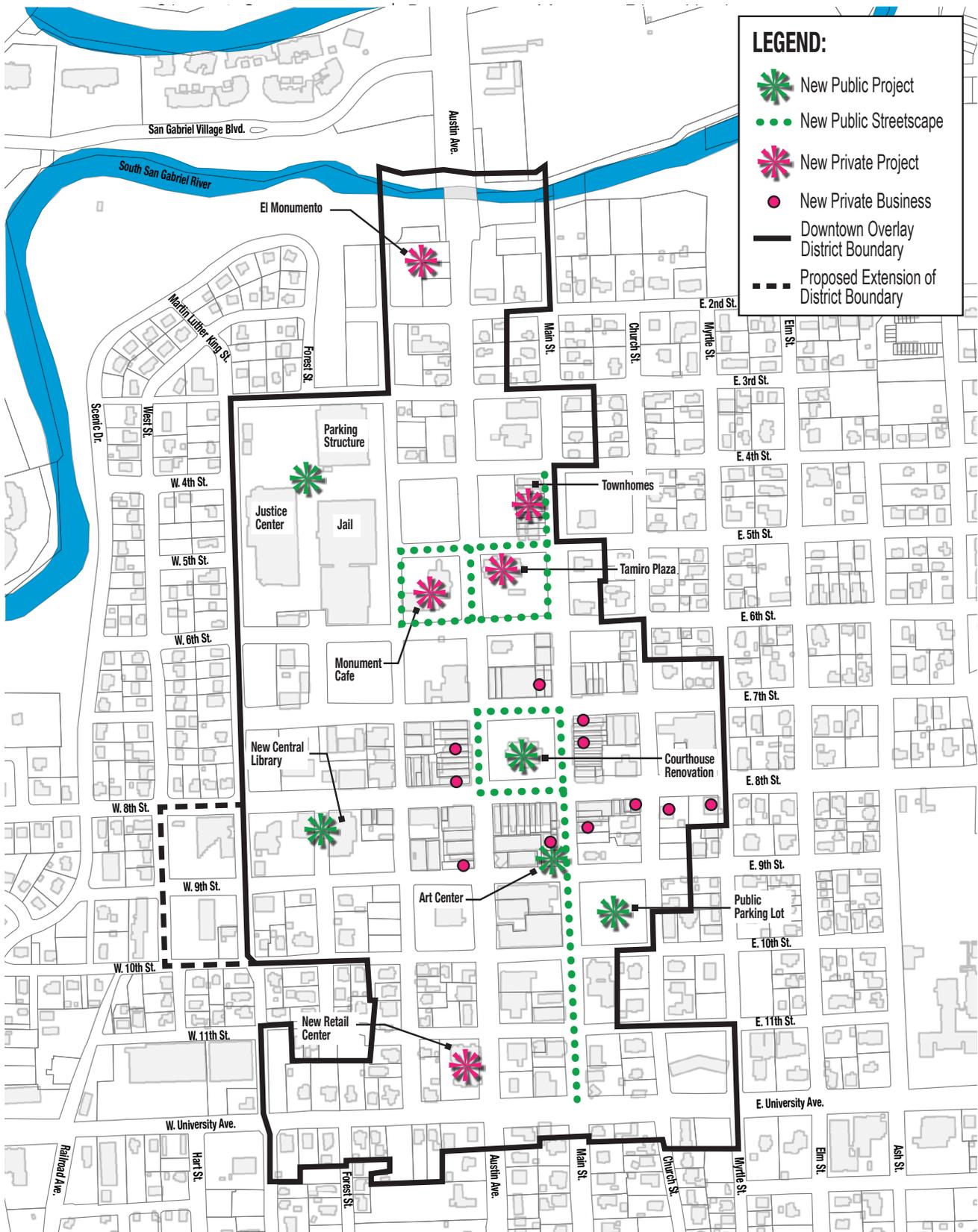
Streetscape improvements and an upgraded public parking lot along Main Street have helped activate it and make it more walkable.

PRIVATE INVESTMENT

- Two Rivers Residential Development - not in the study area, but influential to downtown resurgence (Austin Avenue & San Gabriel Village Blvd.)
- Grape Creek and Georgetown Wineries (downtown square)
- El Monumento restaurant (2nd Street & Austin Ave.)
- Ruby K's restaurant (8th Street & Church Street)
- Thundercloud Subs restaurant (9th Street & Main Street)
- Gumbo's restaurant (downtown square)
- The Hollow restaurant (downtown square)
- Hummingbird Hollow retail (9th Street and Austin Ave.)
- Union on 8th event center (8th Street and Myrtle Street)
- All Things Kids retail (downtown square)
- The Escape retail (downtown square)
- The Southern Hippie retail (8th Street & Main Street)



New restaurants have helped enliven downtown.



MAP 2 | PROGRESS SINCE 2003

Georgetown Master Plan Update

Georgetown, TX

March, 2014



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DOCUMENT ORGANIZATION

The plan is organized in eight topic areas:

1. EXISTING CONDITIONS
 - Reviews guiding city policies
 - Notes opportunities and issues
2. BASIC FRAMEWORK
 - Explains and illustrates the comprehensive vision for downtown
3. DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY
 - Introduces the character areas
 - Introduces new development prototypes
 - Introduces development scenarios for key opportunity areas
4. PEDESTRIAN AND BIKE CIRCULATION AND STREETScape DESIGN
 - Recommends priorities for pedestrian improvements
 - Recommends sidewalk and crosswalk enhancements
 - Provides hierarchy of design elements
5. AUTOMOBILE CIRCULATION AND PARKING
 - Recommends circulation improvements
 - Provides parking strategy
6. WAYFINDING AND PUBLIC SIGNS
 - Identifies locations for wayfinding and public signs
 - Provides recommendations for sign design improvements
 - Recommends design solutions for accenting important gateways
7. PARKS AND OPEN SPACE
 - Identifies sites for new parks, plazas and open space in downtown
 - Public art placement
8. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES
 - Identifies funding mechanisms
 - Identifies criteria for setting priorities



ILLUSTRATIONS NOTE:

The *Downtown Master Plan Update* incorporates several illustrations that demonstrate design concepts. These include sketches of some specific development opportunities. Note that the sketches illustrate how the principles would be applied to these situations, but they do not dictate that the sites are to be developed as shown.

PLAN BOUNDARY NOTE:

This plan establishes policies for the Downtown Overlay District only, as shown in the Plan Boundary (Map #1.) In some cases, maps within the document include diagrams that extend beyond this area, for the purposes of illustrating functional relationships with adjoining neighborhoods. This does not mean that policy ideas from the Downtown Overlay District should extend beyond the boundaries and into those areas.