Chapter Three

Land Use

The type, pattern, scale, and site design characteristics of each land use contributes to the overall visual character of the community. Therefore, individual land use decisions that are made over the course of time, whether involving zone changes for proposed new development, reuse or redevelopment of vacant and underutilized properties, or major public facility and infrastructure improvements, collectively each has a significant influence the character of the community. The importance of character in creating the image of the community, which contributes to its economic development and desirability as a place to live and work, warrants planning - in advance – as to when, where, and how the community develops in the future.

Each element of this Comprehensive Plan is inherently interrelated as each influence and is influenced by the other elements. For instance, the transportation system provides access to land, which helps determine the use of land and the pattern of growth. The provision or lack of utilities can dictate the amount, location, and timing of development. Design and development character impact community aesthetics and thus, the quality of life enjoyed by area residents. Proximity to public facilities can impact public health and safety at specific locations and, as a result, impact the development potential of an area.

The preparation of this Land Use element involved examination of the community's historic growth and its currently planned development, such as Jap Lowe Estates and the most recent Tesoro Hills, the pattern of existing development and the general types, densities, and character of uses. The general pattern of existing vacant/undeveloped land, single- and multiple-family residential, manufactured home residential, office commercial, light and heavy commercial, light and heavy industrial, parks and open spaces, and special uses, such as public and semi-public uses (schools, civic buildings, churches, etc.) and institutions (Sul Ross State University) were each inventoried and considered in this analysis and plan.

An **Air Installation Compatibility Use Zone (AICUZ)** refers to the noise zones and the accident potential zones, which together form the AICUZ for an air installation. The AICUZ needs to be updated periodically when the number and type of aircraft operations change at an installation.

The purpose of this chapter is to establish the vision for the future physical development of Del Rio and its planning area. Due to the City's proximity to the U.S./Mexico border, its extraterritorial jurisdiction extends five miles from the corporate limits. The primary focus of this chapter is a "planning area" of two miles from the City limits, although the entire five-mile ETJ is subject to the land use policies and recommended actions. Although the five-mile area extends well beyond the urban limits of development, advanced planning provisions are included in this plan to guide future annexations and the future of Del Rio. Advanced planning for the areas outside the City limits is essential, particularly with respect to protection of the *Air Installation Compatibility Use Zone (AICUZ)* and over the flight training areas of Laughlin Air Force Base, the environs of the Del Rio International Airport, the San Felipe Springs to the northeast, the corridor leading to the Amistad Reservoir, and the new outer loop. Without proactive planning and effective land management provisions in these outlying areas, the development or preservation of these areas may be compromised by new, incompatible development. Therefore, long-range planning in these areas is as much a part of the City's plan as the established areas within the City limits, particularly as it relates to managing future land use and growth. For more information on managing development, refer to Chapter 6, Growth Capacity.

The vision as to how Del Rio will develop in the future was formed by the concerns and ideas expressed by residents, civic leaders, land and business owners, and other community stakeholders during the community forum and through a small group interview process, each of which occurred in January 2006. The chapter begins by outlining the key issues relating to the community's existing and future land use, which is followed by recommendations intended to guide the community's ongoing land use decisions. The outcome of this process and the ability of the City to exact control over its future development lie in the implementation of land use and growth policies and the methods of regulation and enforcement.

KEY LAND USE ISSUES

Through the plan development process, including the community forums, civic group presentations, and stakeholder input sessions, there were concerns expressed as to the future land use, growth and character of the community. These individual concerns were merged together and are summarized in the following statements of important land use issues. The purpose of these statements is to express the areas of focus for this plan, which reflect the values, expectations, and priorities of the citizens of Del Rio. The key land use issues are as follows.

Long Term Sustenance and Protection of Laughlin Air Force Base (LAFB)

One of the largest and frequently overlooked industries in the state is the military.[1] The presence of military personnel and their supporting activities pre-dates statehood, yet all too frequently they are overlooked for the essential role they play in the local economy. They are often

[1] Economic Impact of Arizona's Principal Military Operations Executive Summary, May 2002, page i.

considered isolated due to their purposeful physical separation and thus, not recognized for their inherent connection to the general commerce of the community. Regardless, the military operations of Laughlin Air Force Base (LAFB) must be recognized for the substantial contribution that they offer to the community.

LAFB accounts for one third of the employment in Val Verde County, and a combined annual payroll of $135 million. An Air Installation Compatible Use Zone (AICUZ) Study was conducted in 1999, which estimated the LAFB Economic Impact Region (EIR) had a total estimated labor force of 42,813[2] persons and an unemployment rate of 9.4 percent.[3] Therefore, Del Rio's economy is heavily reliant on the government, trade, and service sectors, which together, comprise over 80 percent of total employment. The total estimated impact of LAFB on the local economy in 2006 was $285 million, an increase from $156.15 million in 1998. The estimated annual dollar value of jobs created is $33,557,897.00.

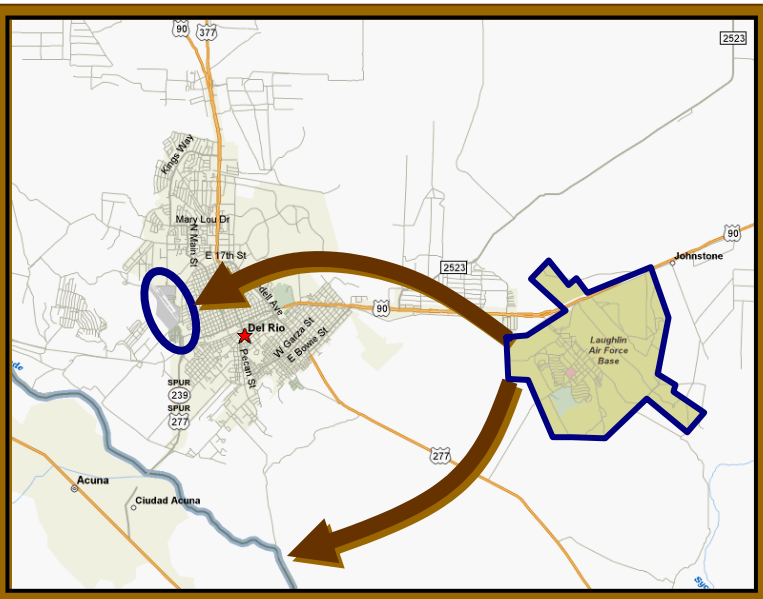
"BRAC" is an acronym which stands for base reallocation and closure. It is the process the Department of Defense (DoD) has previously used to reorganize its installation infrastructure to more efficiently and effectively support its forces, increase operational readiness and facilitate new ways of doing business.

Due to its local economic impact and influence on development, the long-term viability of LAFB is an essential issue that is particularly prominent for the community. Periodically, the United States Department of Defense (DoD) conducts their Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) review. The criteria used by the DoD in making a recommendation for closure or reallocation of military installations includes as its second highest criterion, the "availability and condition of land, facilities, and associated airspace at both existing and potential receiving locations," which relates to the protection of its airspace from encroaching incompatible development. This issue is of significance to the community in its future land use planning to safeguard the long-term operating capacities of LAFB.

The outcome of the 2005 BRAC Report resulted in a gain for LAFB as a result of realigning Air Force practices in Georgia and elsewhere. The bottom line is an addition of 102 military personnel and 80 civilian jobs to LAFB, which will gain the Specialized Undergraduate Pilot Training program, and the Introduction to Fighter Fundamentals training will be realigned from Moody AFB in Georgia and absorbed into the remaining Air Force flying training bases as part of an effort to transform pilot training. Therefore, the base is growing to accommodate these additions. Sustaining its operations and continuing to be seen as vital to the DoD must be a goal with shared responsibility by LAFB, the City of Del Rio, and Val Verde County, City of Spofford, and Kinney County. The City and County's role in its protection is through effective land use planning and management measures.

[2] Air Installation Compatible Use Zone (AICUZ) Study for Laughlin Air Force Base, Texas, April 2000, page 5.

[3] Air Installation Compatible Use Zone (AICUZ) Study for Laughlin Air Force Base, Texas, April 2000, page 5.



The proximity of the Del Rio International Airport and U.S./Mexico Boarder influence the flight operations of LAFB, which is an important consideration in future planning.

There is reason for concern as the development of land – albeit not yet of critical occurrence but nonetheless requiring near-term attention – continues adjacent to and near the military facility. If this pattern is to continue against the recommendations of the Joint Land Use Study, there is an increased possibility of base closure at some point in the future. The last few years has brought development closer to the boundaries of LAFB and into the adjacent, off-base areas that are crucial to the safe and prudent execution of operations.

Encroachment is a growing concern for the DoD, as well as states and local communities concerned about retaining their military bases. Recently, initiatives have been undertaken in Arizona, California, and Florida to address joint land use compatibility. A 2006 Land Use Compatibility Study[4] identified six forms of encroachment, which are both relevant and warranted in this land use study and plan, including:

- Airspace control – According to LAFB, the Del Rio International Airport and the U.S./Mexico border influence arrival and departure flight traffic at the air base. The airport is eight miles west and the border is eight miles southwest. The location and proximity of the airport and border relative to LAFB requires arriving and departing aircraft to be re-routed to avoid conflict. A transition corridor has been established over the base for aircraft departing and arriving at the airport.
- Electromagnetic Spectrum – Population increases and a limited radio frequency bandwidth can sometimes result in great expense if military communication systems must be redesigned to use other portions of the frequency spectrum.
- Vertical Obstructions – Cell phones and other communication systems require towers that can present flying hazards. Regulations of such vertical obstructions are of importance as they relate to the base operations.
- Population Growth – This can result in homeowners living within the areas of flight operations and thus, subjected to unexpected sonic booms. It also means that there is encroachment into sensitive areas around the base.

During the 2001 legislative session, Congress devoted a great deal of time and focus to the topic of ***encroachment.*** Encroachment can be defined as the real or perceived conflict between the military training mission and the physical environment of habitat, species, people and communities. The problem of encroachment arises because all need land for some form of activity, and those needs are often at odds with one another.

Source: Center for Public Environmental Oversight

[4] Edwards Community Alliance: Land Use Compatibility --2006 Project, 2006.

- Environmental Concerns – High altitude air force testing avoids many of the land-based conservation and endangered species issues. However, the military must ensure that its test operations are compatible with air and water quality standards.
- Legislative Issues – It is necessary for those concerned with avoiding future encroachment issues to carefully monitor new legislative initiatives. Sometimes, bills that are introduced for a benign purpose, can have unintended encroachment consequences. The Federally-funded Ports-to-Plains project is a good example whereby its location relevant to the community could pose a risk for development encroachment that happens along the stretch of the Del Rio Relief Loop.

Presently, there is incompatible land use within the 65 decibel noise contour to the northeast of the base.[5] There are 51 acres of the Gateway Apartments development situated on the north side of U.S. 90 that fall within this area. Advanced planning must ensure that this area is not encroached upon any further in the near or distant future. In addition, it must be a consideration that the noise contours could change depending upon a change in flight mission, an increase or decrease in the number of assigned aircraft, or the addition of model types to the base's fleet, which could pose further concerns for encroachment in the future.

Without adequate land use management and controls, commercial development could extend further east along U.S. 90 and throughout the ETJ. Steps must therefore, be taken in the near-term – consistent with the recommendations of the AICUZ Study - to effectively manage future development, extending well beyond the 20-year horizon of this plan. Such steps must include diligent enforcement of the compatible use district zoning to ensure development within the AICUZ area of influence and flight training influence area is compatible with LAFB flying operations.[6]

The DoD has issued compatibility guidelines for use in conjunction with military installations, which include recommendations for determining acceptability and permissibility of land uses. Areas within the AICUZ are specified as to the maximum amount of noise exposure compatible for living and working areas. As a result, the AICUZ Study recommends varying levels of development dependent upon their proximity to the base and its runways. Generally, the density of residential development may range from one residential dwelling unit per 20 acres nearest the ends of the runways to one residential dwelling unit per acre as the distance from the ends of the runways increases. Furthermore, there is a recommended restriction of height limiting both structures and natural growth to no more than 50 feet.

The **Accident Potential Zone (APZ)** describes the area beyond the airfield runway where an aircraft mishap is most likely to occur if one occurs. It does not indicate a probability of an accident occurring, but is to be used for planning purposes. Based on historical data, aircraft accidents are most likely to occur near the airfield runway during aircraft takeoff and landing. An APZ is calculated for aircraft flight tracks to and from the airfield runway based on the number of aircraft operation.

[5] Air Installation Compatible Use Zone (AICUZ) Study for Laughlin Air Force Base, Texas, April 2000, page 37.
[6] Air Installation Compatible Use Zone (AICUZ) Study for Laughlin Air Force Base, Texas, April 2000, page 40.

A Compatible Land Use and Hazard Zoning Ordinance was adopted for LAFB, which establishes the authority of a Del Rio – Val Verde County Joint Zoning Board. However, there have not been any zoning restrictions established for the AICUZ influence area and flight training area other than reference to the Land Use Compatibility Guidelines in the AICUZ Study. Within the City, the Gateway Apartments falls within the contour of the 65 decibel limit, which is zoned R-M, Multiple Family District. Increasing development within proximity to the base will increase safety and quality of life concerns for residents, while also constraining the capabilities of the base to achieve its military missions. In addition to noise exposure considerations, the AICUZ guidelines also contain Accident Potential Zone (APZ) guidelines for the areas nearest the ends of the runways. These guidelines encourage protective development measures through local land use controls.

LAFB recently requested and was approved for realignment of the main entrance to the base from U.S. 90 to the new outer loop. The main entrance will now enter through a main gate off of the loop road that will encircle the east side of the City. This means that base personnel, their families, and civilian employees will no longer have to cross the railroad tracks to access the base. The anticipated loop road will provide relief of commercial truck traffic from having to travel along Veteran's Boulevard through the heart of the City. Rather, truck traffic may travel U.S. 90 east through Del Rio to the loop and north around the City connecting with U.S. 290 north of the City.

Day-night average sound level (DNL) is used to describe the cumulative or total noise exposure during an average annual day. DNL is an energy average noise level over a 24-hour period.

GOAL: Effective land use management and zoning controls to protect the short-term and long-range missions and operations of Laughlin Air Force Base (LAFB) and the Del Rio International Airport.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. Amend the Laughlin Air Force Base Compatible Land Use and Hazard Zoning Ordinance to include more specific provisions within the ordinance to regulate development density, height, and noise reduction standards within the established Controlled Compatible Land Use Area (7,108 acres).[7] A zoning ordinance map must correspond with the regulations. The ordinance provisions should be consistent with the recommendations of the AICUZ Study, which recommends the following:
   a. No allowable land use other than open/agricultural use within the established clear zones;
   b. Industrial or recreational/open land use within Accident Protection Zone I;
   c. Any land use but public, provided residential development is limited to a maximum density of one dwelling unit per acre;
   d. No residential use without Noise Level Reduction of 25-30 dB within the Day-Night Average A-Weighted Sound Level (DNL) 65-69 dB zone; and,
   e. No residential use without within the Day-Night Average A-Weighted Sound Level (DNL) 70-74 dB zone.

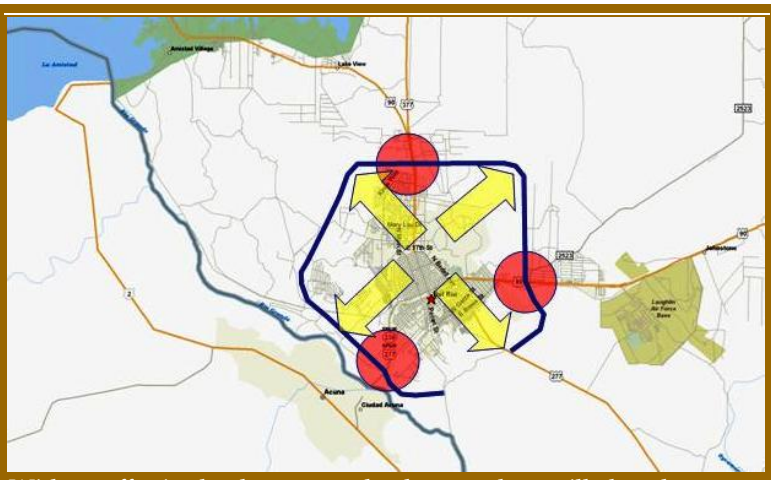
[7] In accordance with Figure 5.2, Laughlin AFB Compatible Land Use Zoning

2. Within the Compatible Land Use and Hazard Zoning Ordinance establish a designated fringe to the Controlled Compatible Land Use Area to account for possible adjustments or expansion of the designated area as a result in changes to the mission or operations of the base. The zoning provisions should apply within this fringe area similar to the controlled area.
3. Place a file on County records relating to the defined boundaries of the Controlled Compatible Land Use Area such that the zoning requirements are denoted in the deed records so property owners within this area are so notified of the restrictions and requirements.
4. Establish criteria for consideration and approval of variances, which should be included within an amendment to the Compatible Land Use and Hazard Zoning Ordinance. Such criteria should include, but not be limited to, a requirement for unique or peculiar circumstances, the condition is not self-imposed, there is unnecessary and undue hardship, the variance would not be contrary to the public interest and is within the spirit of the ordinance, there is no authorization of use other than those permitted, there would be no adverse affect to health and safety, and there is no conflict with the Comprehensive Plan.
5. Consider incorporation into the ordinance amortization provisions for nonconforming uses, which would prescribe a specific period of time for which the nonconforming use may remain after which it must be removed to conform with the ordinance.
6. Establish provisions in the ordinance requiring identification and issuance of nonconforming situations permit, which must be filed by the owners of property within the defined limits of the Controlled Compatible Land Use Area. Said provisions would establish a basis for consideration of the amortization procedures.

Growth of the Del Rio International Airport must continue to be closely coordinated with LAFB to ensure compatible flight operations.

7. Include provisions in the ordinance relating to the extended authority for the issuance of building permits and inspection of construction.
8. Coordinate with Kinney County located to the southeast – also within the Controlled Compatible Land Use Area - to adopt a Joint Zoning Board and similar zoning restrictions.
9. As the International Airport continues to grow its enplanements/deplanements and expand its air service, coordinate an update of the airport master plan with LAFB to mitigate to the degree possible any encroachments or barriers to the base missions and operations.
10. Coordinate with the Government Services Administration (GSA) in the ongoing management and operation of the border crossing, as well as possible realignment of the international bridge, such that it is compatible and consistent with the base mission and long-range operational plans.
11. Establish an intergovernmental board made up of representatives of the City, Del Rio Airport Board, Val Verde County, Kinney County, LAFB, GSA, U.S. Border Patrol, and other public or essential private agencies to coordinate activities that are sensitive to the operations of the base and airport, and the objectives of each agency/organization. The board should meet quarterly or on an as-needed basis to review recent legislative actions, development plans, public/private infrastructure projects, and other applicable projects or plans.

12. Adopt and incorporate into the City's zoning ordinance as well as that of the Compatible Land Use and Hazard Zoning Ordinance environmental performance standards relating to electromagnetic radiation, exterior lighting and nuisance standards, and the control of dust and particulate matter.
13. Adopt and incorporate into the City's zoning ordinance as well as that of the Compatible Land Use and Hazard Zoning Ordinance a telecommunication facility ordinance requiring a conditional use permit for all construction and expansion of wireless telecommunication facilities. Provisions and standards should be included for required setbacks, proximity to structures and rights-of-way, height, co-location, fencing, and lighting.



Without effective land use controls, the outer loop will alter the pattern of future development as new development seizes the opportunity along a new traffic corridor.

14. For all areas within a specified distance (to be determined) of the Day-Night Average A-Weighted Sound Level (DNL) 65-69 dB zone, require Noise Level Reduction of 25-30 dB in all residential structures.
15. Adopt a policy regarding the provision of utilities by the City within the compatibility use zones, with specific criteria required to merit infrastructure extension or improvement.
16. Collaborate with the County and LAFB to establish a fund, which may be used to leverage state and federal dollars, for use in property acquisition, securing easements and/or purchasing development rights, with priority given to the most affected areas.
17. Adopt and incorporate into the City's zoning ordinance the provision permitting industrial zoned uses near the Del Rio International Airport.

Management of Future Growth

The management of the City's pattern of future growth is important, particularly as it relates to the impending development of the outer loop. Such a major transportation improvement has the potential to greatly impact the pattern of development, based on the popular adage, "build it and they will come." While this presents economic opportunity, at the same time, it leads to concern for premature extension of facilities and services to, in effect, support sprawling, non-compact development. Contributing to such pattern is the amount of new development occurring in Ciudad Acuna, which is increasingly influencing traffic and trade patterns and manifesting itself in the form of development in Del Rio.

As new development continues to occur, the more established areas face disinvestment and decline. Significant infill and development potential exists in these areas, which already have

public infrastructure – albeit aging and requiring rehabilitation - readily available municipal services such as fire, police, and emergency medical services, and public facilities such as parks, schools, and libraries. Neighborhood revitalization efforts, and redevelopment of existing areas will maximize the efficient use of resources and help to re-establish the integrity and vitality of what is becoming "tired" neighborhoods. Without an established effort to reinvest in these areas, the community may be plagued by continued decline of its housing stock, which often leads to other community ills.

Unless protective land use measures are put in place, the character of areas will shift when adjacent development occurs.

Older retail establishments are located along Main Street, stretching south from Gibbs Street to Nicholson Road. As new residential development occurs to the west and northwest, and Tesoro Hills begins construction in the southeast, commercial retail and service businesses will closely follow along each of the major roadway corridors, unless growth management and land use controls are firmly in place. Newly forming markets resulting from residential development, i.e. rooftops, will be exploited leading to strip commercial development extending toward the northern City limits along Veteran's Boulevard from Gibbs Street all the way to Braddie Drive – and possibly beyond. Smaller convenience stores and "neighborhood" commercial uses are also likely to appear at intersections around the community, particularly in proximity to developing areas. Therefore, land use and growth policies have as much relevance to sustaining existing development, preserving the validity of older, historic structures, and protecting the integrity of neighborhoods and established commercial areas as they do to the outlying future growth areas.

A concern heard repeatedly was the negative impact the sprawling pattern is having on the character of the community. For instance, the outlying peripheral areas that have – or had in many cases - an agricultural character are slowly being transformed to a rural countryside character. However, as development continues to occur, the character of this area will transform as well as more homes and businesses are built. The area is likely to witness new subdivisions with smaller lot sizes and thus, greater density, which will entirely shift the now rural character. Therefore, the character sought by these property owners may no longer exist in the coming years, giving reason to move farther out in search of peace and tranquility. In this way, the identity of the community is being slowly lost as the "edge" is blurred with a haphazard pattern of development. While this progressive pattern is a natural occurrence for growing communities, there is nonetheless, interest in remedying the impacts on community character.

GOAL: Management of future growth through effective land use planning and controls.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. Collaborate with Ciudad Acuna to develop a bi-national land use and growth plan. Such plan would establish an open line of community on long-range planning matters. It would

also allow coordination of infrastructure improvements that are of mutual interest and benefit, such as the location of a possible new international bridge. A decision of this magnitude will have significant influence on future land use thereby warranting advanced planning.

2. Promptly proceed first, by means of voluntary and secondly, via involuntary (only as necessary) annexation of the land along both sides of the new outer loop. Alternatively, the City may enter into an agreement with land owners whereby the City agrees not to annex while that land owner concedes not to develop until such time as it is warranted or to develop in strict adherence with City policies and ordinances.
3. For development outside of the established urban area (see Chapter 6, Growth Capacity for definition of the urban area), require preparation of a fiscal impact study – or dynamic model for ongoing use - to assess the costs of providing facilities and services versus the benefits gained through municipal tax revenues. The economist should be selected and paid for by the City, with reimbursement by the land owner requesting development.
4. Zone the annexed areas along the outer loop, as applicable, as well as other corridors and areas where there is increased development pressure, as Agriculture/Open. Such zoning is intended as a holding zone until which time as development is both feasible and warranted, as determined by the Zoning Board with recommendations from City Council. Development is considered feasible and warranted when there is a net positive fiscal impact on the City - and other taxing jurisdictions - and when it may be provided efficiently with public facilities and services. The minimum lot size should be increased above two acres to ensure the area remains of agricultural character and open. Since part of the area along the loop is within the Controlled Compatible Land Use Area, as well as the proposed fringe area (see #2 on Page 1-6) the City may be able to amend the Compatible Land Use and Hazard Zoning Ordinance to include provisions for managing development along the corridor.

> "A municipality … may not annex a publicly or privately owned area, including a strip of area following the course of a road, highway, river, stream, or creek, unless the width of the area at its narrowest point is at least 1,000 feet."
>
> Source: Chapter 43, Annexation, Section 43.054, Width Requirements, Texas Local Government Code.

5. Adopt a utility extension policy with strict criteria warranting extension. The criteria should include, among others:
    a. proximity of the subject property to the existing City limits and the established urban area;
    b. proximity to the existing utility service areas, with proven feasibility of efficiently extending water and sewer mains;
    c. Readily available provision of adequate public services, e.g. fire and police protection, emergency services, etc.;
    d. Public improvements constructed to City standards; and,
    e. Actual fiscal impact on the City for provision of facilities and services.

    The willingness of a land owner to pay for an extension should not be considered a factor unless it is proven that there will be a net positive fiscal impact.
6. Develop a target area infrastructure improvement program to enhance the attractiveness of structural rehabilitation, redevelopment, and/or infill development. Such infrastructure

program should make available curb and gutter streets and sidewalks, adequately sized water and sewer lines, and sufficient drainage improvements.

7. Amend the zoning ordinance to include major and minor waivers of area standards within the area generally south of 17th Street. The use of waivers would inject flexibility into the conventional requirements thereby eliminating the barriers to reinvestment. Minor waivers may be approved administratively whereas major waivers would require approval by the Planning Commission. Major waivers would be defined as "one time" of "cumulative building addition" increases in floor area of greater than 15 percent, and any other change interpreted as "major" by appropriate City staff. A minor waiver, on the other hand, would include "one time" or "cumulative building additions" less than 15 percent and any other change interpreted as "minor" by City staff.
8. All of the above recommendations absolutely warrant enhanced standards to prevent impacts on adjacent properties. Amendment of the zoning ordinance is thereby warranted to incorporate infill and compatibility standards, bufferyard requirements, and other applicable standards to ensure compatibility and prevent compromise – or avoidance - of other requirements.
9. Conduct a land use assessment and subsequently analyze the current zoning to determine whether or not there is a balance in the ratio of residential to nonresidential zoning. In the case of an overabundance of commercial zoning – beyond that needed to support the population plus 20 percent for market flexibility – conduct a City-wide rezoning with an emphasis on directing development within the "urban area" and in a nodal (concentrated at major intersections) versus strip commercial pattern. As long as there is an abundance of available zoning there will be a diluted market for redevelopment and infill development.
10. Use the earlier recommended fiscal impact model to adopt policies and criteria for the consideration of zone changes, particularly those requesting a map amendment from a residential to commercial district.
11. Since the City – or County - does not have zoning authority within the extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ) and in fact, are precluded from adopting any regulation that restricts the use, bulk, height, or density of development,[8] amend the subdivision regulations, which apply within the ETJ, to include traffic sheds requirements. The concept of traffic sheds essentially controls the amount of development that can generate and load traffic on the roadway system beyond its design capacity. Therefore, development can occur on each property to the point of burdening the road capacity at which time it must be improved to

Street reconstruction as shown by this example is essential to induce reinvestment, rehabilitation, and infill development.

The traffic shed works on the basis that each landowner gets a proportionate share of the capacity of the road based on the amount of land they own. This avoids the problem that adequate facilities' ordinances and concurrency management have where, when capacity is exhausted, development stops. It also allows the market to make improvements to enhance the capacity or the system.

[8] Section 212.003, Extension of Rules to Extraterritorial Jurisdiction, Texas Local Government Code.

allow further development.

12. Amend the zoning ordinance to include a countryside district, which allows large lot residential development. This district would be appropriate within those areas around the periphery of the existing urbanized area where utilities are not readily available or this is the preferred development type. Within this district, development clustering would be required to preserve the character of development.
13. Amend the subdivision regulations to establish the provisions and standards for cluster development.

Compatibility of Land Use and Future Development

There was concern expressed as to the compatibility between adjacent land uses and the resulting impacts on property values. Due to traffic patterns and volumes, property abutting the arterial roadways has higher land values thereby almost obligating the land for more intensive non-residential development. Such condition leads to strip commercial development as is occurring along U.S. 277/377 and Bedell Avenue, two significant north-south corridors. The land development pattern has contributed to the strip commercial use along these and other corridors by setting residential development a limited distance from the thoroughfare frontage, limiting the site development alternatives of the property. The effect of this land use pattern is neighborhoods abutting the commercial frontage - thereby creating issues of incompatibility – and undesirable impacts on community character associated with multiple signs and driveway entrances, large expanses of paving for parking lots, and limited open space for landscaping. An alternative to strip commercial development is concentrating it in nodes at major intersections where the infrastructure can be designed to accommodate increased traffic and buffering intensified to separate and protect adjoining properties.

A common occurrence is a 300-foot commercial reserve separating a residential district from an arterial roadway, which is the basis for incompatibility between uses. As shown below, only a 6' fence separates a residence from an industrial building.

Without a landscaping or bufferyard ordinance, other than a fenced screening requirement in the C-2-A Commercial, First Height District, there is virtually nothing to protect existing neighborhoods from the impacts associated with abutting uses. As an example, the Industrial District that bisects the City along the railroad tracks between St. Joseph Street and U.S. 277 has residential districts and thus, uses permitted directly adjacent on the north and south. There are no defined setback requirements, height limits, or screening requirements to provide an effective buffer from the widely incompatible uses.

The City's current zoning allows for literally miles of commercial uses along both U.S 90 and 277. In fact, it is fair to say that there is more commercially zoned land than market to support it within the 20-year horizon of this plan. The length of commercial zoning in effect, translates into a line of incompatibility between commercial and the abutting residential zoning. In some instances, a C-1, Local Commercial District is placed as if to provide a buffer between C-2-A, Commercial, First Height District, and R-S, Single Family and Occupations District, or R-M, Multiple Family District yet, due to the cumulative nature of the ordinance, virtually any use is allowed within the C-2-A District thereby exacerbating the issue of incompatibility. For instance, the C-2-A District permits everything in the C-1, Local Commercial District plus truck repair, lumber yards, drive-in theaters, and manufacturing shops, among others. This means that everything from a single-family residence to a school, machine shop, or motel are all permitted uses within the same zoning district. Therefore, by its very nature, incompatibility has been built into the zoning regulations, which will continue without substantial amendment.

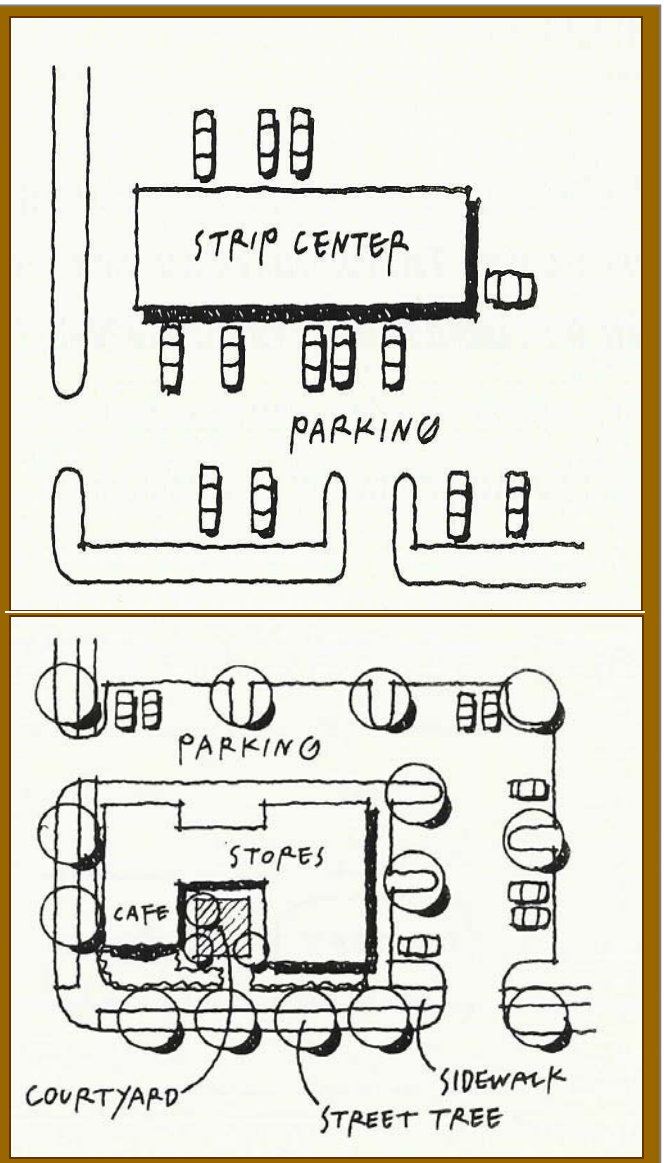
Development along each of the major corridors is predominantly zoned C-2-A, Commercial, First Height District, where buildings may be placed as close as 10 feet to the front property line yet, since there is no rear yard setback, buildings are generally all placed to the back of the site – nearest the abutting residential use. Instead, if a minimum rear yard were established buildings would be pushed forward, which would place the parking to the side or rear. With appropriate bufferyard standards the parking would be effectively separated and screened from the adjacent residential zoning. Furthermore, side yards of commercial uses that abut a residential district are required to have the same setback as uses within the R-M, Multiple-Family District, which does not acknowledge the differences in the intensities of use. To better assure compatibility, the intensities of uses must be recognized, with compatibility standards integrated into the zoning regulations.

Screening requirements apply to all outdoor storage or activities and stipulate a minimum 6.5 foot wall. However, these requirements are applicable only to the C-2-A, Commercial, First Height District and C-2-B, Commercial, Second Height District. This requirement is not applicable to either of the other two commercial districts or the industrial district. Therefore, in order to buffer such storage and activity areas, they must apply to all nonresidential districts, with heightened standards in the C-1-A, Neighborhood Commercial District and particularly the C-1-H, Historical and Commercial District.

GOAL: Improved land use compatibility and cohesiveness.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. Consider amending the zoning ordinance to incorporate density bonuses into the residential districts within a distance of 300 feet of all arterial roadways and highways. This technique allows residential development to have the density necessary to recover the increased land values and costs of property with arterial road frontage. At the same time, amend the subdivision regulations requiring marginal access streets when residential development abuts an arterial roadway or highway. The streetscape bufferyard standards would also provide the necessary buffering for the abutting residences.
2. Conduct a comprehensive zoning study whereby undeveloped commercially zoned property is considered for rezoning to a residential district. This is particularly appropriate for properties that remain undeveloped, are abutting residential development to the side, where there is a large enough tract of an arrangement that could accommodate residential use, and/or those that are not immediately adjacent to a major intersection. Such approach would favor a nodal, commercial centers approach versus a strip commercial pattern.
3. Initiate rezoning of land that is presently zoned for commercial use but developed residentially or as an institution. An example



The use of a "build-to" line versus a large front yard setback shifts the placement of parking, thereby forging a very different corridor environment and appearance.

is the stretch of Wildcat Drive where the Southwest Texas Junior College and Sul Ross State University is located, along with the developing multiple family residential uses to the south.

4. Consider amending the zoning ordinance to eliminate its cumulative or pyramidal nature, which allows all uses of a district of lesser intensity in each subsequent district. Such arrangement creates incompatibility, particularly when lower intensity uses are constructed in higher intensity districts thereby permitting both uses by right.
5. Further to #4 above, the intensity of individual uses within the current districts needs to be further classified according to their use intensity. This would allow adequate standards for buffering, which, to be effective, must vary according to the intensity of the use. For instance, within the C-2-A Commercial, First Height District, permitted uses include wholesale bakeries as well as retail sales of farm equipment and machinery and earth-moving and heavy construction equipment, which vary widely in their use intensities.
6. Amend the zoning ordinance to identify the C-2-A Commercial, First Height District as the applicable district adjacent to arterial roadways and highways, as it zoned currently. Within this district, require a maximum versus minimum building setback thereby bringing the buildings to within 15 feet – versus 10 feet required currently - of the front property line. Concurrently, adopt the streetscape and abutting use bufferyard requirements and standards for building wall articulation and fenestration to avoid long expanses of blank walls adjacent to the street.
7. Amend the zoning ordinance to require screening of outdoor storage or activities in all non-residential districts, with increased standards within the C-1, Local Commercial; C-1-A, Neighborhood Commercial; C-1-H, Historical and Commercial; and I, Industrial Districts.

Distinguishing and Enhancing Neighborhood Character

As expressed by residents, neighborhoods need to be connected - literally and figuratively - to the balance of the community. In other words, rather than separating them through zoning and physical barriers like major streets and highways, they should be tied together with linear greenways, trails and sidewalks, focal points such as parks or schools, and integrated with commercial conveniences. Furthermore, social integration is important to preserve a sense of community. Preserving the integrity and enhancing the identity of neighborhoods is one way to achieve this goal.

According to the 2000 Census, 81 percent of community residents are of Latino/Hispanic decent. The older neighborhoods throughout the City reflect this culture and heritage through corner grocers and neighborhood churches. Residential streets with brightly colored homes and decorative wrought iron fencing are common. These are distinctive features that contribute to the character and identity of these neighborhoods as special places. This should be both allowed and encouraged. However, the City's zoning regulations must allow for differences in the desired character of neighborhood areas. A one-size-fits-all approach forms barriers to identity creation. Therefore, the standards must be equipped and flexible to adapt to different neighborhood environments.

The adaptive reuse of homes is visible throughout Del Rio, especially in the older neighborhoods where a distinct spatial form represents the cultural, economic, and regional solutions residents have developed to meet their needs. The Mexican-American "housescape" refers to a detached, single-family dwelling and its immediate surroundings in the urban barrio. The housescape is a complex of elements that includes the front yard up to the fence or wall. American-style homes are transformed to Mexicanized or Latinized homes – extending to all four corners or the lot, allowing for more maximum use of space. Zoning standards for instance, that require relatively larger lot sizes and moderate to large front-yard setbacks, limit accessory structures to rear yards, and restrict building coverage may be barriers to the housescape. This is not to say though, that these standards are applicable City wide. Rather, they warrant their own set of standards or a special district to accommodate such arrangement.

Differences in neighborhood character need to be further pronounced to foster enhanced identity and character.

For the Latino culture and lifestyle, housing and parks are much more than buildings and open spaces. They are vital components of social and ethnic identity. These spaces facilitate social interactions and activities. The fusion of Anglo and Latino cultures produces manifestations compatible not only with compact cities, but also with New Urbanist and Smart Growth cities.[9] The Latino lifestyle represents an untapped resource that can facilitate the development of sustainable communities. Latinos' cultural preferences for social interaction, their adaptive reuses, and their lifestyle choices have created a de facto Latinized version of New Urbanism and Smart Growth communities. However, the pressure for immigrants to assimilate to the dominant U.S. notion of proper use of domestic and public spaces limits utilization of Latinos' cultural propensity for compact and New Urbanist lifestyles.[10]

There is an interesting dichotomy among neighborhoods throughout the community. Those that are recently developing on the north side are of a contemporary "Americanized" variety, with curvilinear streets, homes setback from the street with front lawns and no fences, garages accessed by the adjacent wide curb-and-gutter street section, and nonresidential uses at the subdivision edge. Comparatively, in many of the neighborhoods on the south side of San Felipe Creek there is a very different neighborhood environment. Here, traditional lots and homes have perimeter fences (including maximizing the requirements for front yard fencing, i.e. 100 percent solid up to three feet), in many cases no garages, and corner groceries and neighborhood churches.

[9] "Latino New Urbanism: Building on Cultural Preferences", Opolis Vol.1, No.1: Winter 2005, page 33-48.
[10] "Latino New Urbanism: Building on Cultural Preferences", Opolis Vol.1, No.1: Winter 2005, page 33-48.

In addition to the design of subdivisions and styles of houses and appurtenant features, neighborhood character is defined by such characteristics as the amount of open space, rights-of-way and street widths, street cross-section, sidewalks, and entry markers or monuments denoting a sense of arrival. These too, are important to distinguish a sense of place and belonging for residents.

GOAL: Improved definition and uniqueness of neighborhood character.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. Require the use of perimeter bufferyard treatments rather than fences or walls, which will both improve the appearance and avoid the perception of physical separation. Fences or walls may be part of a bufferyard treatment given certain criteria reLatinoog to bufferyard width and specific design standards. The bufferyard treatments should vary according to the abutting street classification and adjacent use. For instance, a subdivision adjacent to an arterial would require more intensive bufferyard treatments than one adjacent to a collector or local street. Similarly, a subdivision that abuts a nonresidential use or district would be handled differently than one that abuts another residential use or district, with a sliding scale according to the density of residential use.
2. Incorporate into each of the residential zoning districts a minimum open space ratio. So as not to reduce development density, the lot sizes should be adjusted proportionate to the amount of open space. For instance, the R90 Rural Single Family Residential District and perhaps, the R-10 Low Density Single Family Residential District are intended to have a suburban character. To preserve this character, a minimum open space ratio of 40 percent should be integrated into these districts, with adjustments in lot sizes and allowance of clustering higher density units to offset the reduced development efficeincy. The required minimum open space could be used around the perimeter of a development to preserve its character regardless of neighborhing land uses and/or integrated within and through the development as common open space, trails, and parks.
3. Amend the zoning ordinance to include a minimum of 40 percent open space within the R-S Single Family and R-S-O Single Family and Occupations Districts. Similar to the R-90 and R-10 Districts, the minimum open space could be used around the perimeter of a development to preserve its character regardless of neighboring land uses and/or integrated within and through the development as common open space, trails, and parks.
4. Incorporate into the zoning ordinance provisions requiring use of an average lot formula (ALF). This mechanism requires a mixture of different lot widths allowing different housing styles, floor plans, sizes, and hence, price ranges. This requires an average – rather than a minimum – lot width with a certain percentage being required to be larger than average. Incorporation of a housing palette into the ordinance is also necessary in coordination with the ALF so as to ensure a consistent character from lot to lot. In other words, without specified dimension criteria built into the housing palette there are no requirements to prevent the same size house being built on a smaller lot, which is inconsistent with the intent of the ordinance.

5. Amend the subdivision regulations to include parkland dedication requirements. Generally, this would include a five percent set-aside for parkland, for which the required open space proposed in #2 above would be credited. For properties less than two hundred fifty acres, a fee-in-lieu of dedication would be required, which would be placed in a special parkland dedication account for that property. (Refer to Chapter 4, Parks and Recreation for more detail.)
6. Establish a new residential zoning district designed to allow – and encourage – an environment reflective of many of the current neighborhoods to the west of Downtown and south of San Felipe Creek. This zoning district would allow the following:
    a. Smaller lot sizes in exchange for a higher ration of common open space, which may be used for social gatherings;
    b. Allowance for mixed commercial use, subject to design standards and performance critiria to ensure compatibility;
    c. The current fencing standards, e.g. 100 percent solid up to three feet. These standards would then be repealed for those subdivisions without front yard fencing;
    d. Reduced front yard setbacks, from 25 feet to 15 feet; and,
    e. Street pavement width necessary to accommodate on-street parking on both sides.
7. Incorporate into the zoning ordinance limited use requirements for places of assembly, particularly concerning neighborhood churches. The standards should include a minimum lot size, on-site parking requirements, and building bulk in the context of neighboring residential structures.
8. Pursue changes to subdivision and zoning regulations that will permit residential mixed use, cluster development necessary to implement an urban village, including issues such as lot size, setback, lot coverage, parking requirements, sidewalk requirements, street layout, and block size.
9. Amend the zoning ordinance to include provisions for a mixed use zoning district that allows a blend of different residential densities and nonresidential uses, subject to increased performance standards relating to site design, building arrangement, and buffering to ensure compatibility and design cohesiveness. This is not proposed as a planned unit development but rather as a permitted development option with written standards as to required densities and corresponding open space ratios and other design requirements. Such district should reward the preservation of permanent open space, conservation of natural resources, and provision of development amenities with incentive provisions for increased density.
10. Amend the subdivisions to require dedication of open space at neighborhood entrances – distinguished from subdivision (collection of smaller neighborhoods) entrances – to allow portal markers or monuments. The open space should be a triangular area measuring 30 feet along each intersecting street - or an intersecting street and abutting property line - and a tangent between the two lines.
11. Amend the zoning ordinance to include neighborhood landscaping or xeriscaping requirements, such as street trees within the parkway – coordinated with utility placement – and a minimum of two trees per unit and one tree per 50 linear feet of street frontage, or portion thereof.

12. Consider amendment of the street right-of-way and pavement widths of collector and arterial streets to accommodate different street cross-sections (divided versus undivided) and more open space. (Refer to Chapter 5, Transportation, for more information.)
13. Continue the proactive program for handling the condemnation, demolition and/or rehabilitation of substandard structures and underdeveloped property.

Downtown Enhancement and Economic Reinvigoration

Downtown has a history of being a focal point for the community's commerce and governmental activity. Similar to downtowns across the country, Del Rio has continued to experience a decline of business activity as large-scale retailers have located along major highway frontages on the fringe of the community, primarily along U.S. 90 West. Without taking proactive steps to reinvest and hence, rescue the central core, continuation of such development pattern risks the economic integrity and viability of Downtown.

As the historic heart of the community, residents have voiced their desire to see Downtown once again become a center of activity in the community. They are interested in seeing it retain its historic character, made evident by the urban traditional scale of buildings, street enclosure, and emphasis on the pedestrian. There were numerous references to protecting the community's small-town atmosphere, which in part, relies heavily on strong recognition of a City center, rather than auto-oriented strip centers and big-box retailers. Citizens would like to see more businesses occupying vacant storefronts and the creation of public spaces and attractions to draw residents and visitors. The establishment of Downtown as a local and regional destination is also desirable. Achieving this vision requires formulation of policies and codes to enact control over the use, character, and scale of development.

The urban character of Downtown is still intact, which should be retained and strengthened as part of its unique identity.

Boulevard street sections offer opportunities for added green space and street trees.

Downtown contains a mixture of public uses, such as City Hall, Val Verde County Library, the historic Del Rio High School, Val Verde County Winery (the oldest winery in Texas), with numerous semi-public institutions such as churches and non-profit organizations. There are also industrial and intensive commercial uses near the railroad. Commercial uses include a blend of offices and retail establishments primarily located along S. Main Street, Garfield, and Pecan Streets. The prevailing residential use is single-family, with many manufactured homes scattered throughout the area on individual lots, and houses that have been converted to multiple tenant dwellings. There are several instances of

home-based businesses, some of which are commercial uses and others used for home occupations, corner grocery stores, and churches.

While the appearance of corridors and individual properties, the integrity of neighborhoods, and preservation of valuable open space are both individually and collectively essential to the community's vision, there is perhaps no greater opportunity to establish an identity than through the enhancement and reinvestment in Downtown. Care must be taken to ensure that individual improvements and new development honors the building form and architectural unity of Downtown. Currently, this area is zoned C-2-B, Commercial, Second Height District, as is the entire South Main Street, Pecan and Garfield Street corridors. The benefit of this zoning is that there are no height limits, which helps to maintain the urban character of the area. However, there are no minimum building height provisions to ensure that the two-story Downtown block face is preserved.

Due to the cumulative nature of the current zoning ordinance, the standards of the C-2-B Commercial, Second Height District refer to the C-2-A Commercial, First Height District, which refers to the R-M, Multiple-Family District. The character of these three districts is intended to be different yet the same standards apply. For instance, in the immediate Downtown area, a front yard setback of 10 feet, side yard setback of at least seven feet (or a distance equal to 30 percent of the height of the structure), and a 60 percent lot coverage is not appropriate, nor does it reflect the existing urban character. Rather, the standards should replicate what is there – minimum two-story height, zero front and side yard setbacks, and an 80 or 90 percent lot coverage - now to preserve its character. The uniqueness of its urban character and historic architecture, among other reasons, warrants its own zoning district and development standards. This district would have a different set of permitted and conditional uses including upper floor residential use, height and area requirements suitable to an urban environment, and design standards associated with the building form and architecture.

A challenge confronting the revitalization of Downtown is at least partially rooted in the past land use policies – or lack thereof. Communities who have redeveloped their downtowns have taken a firm stand as to the location of commercial development, directing it inward, rather than allowing it to locate on the edge of town, thereby drawing traffic and other businesses away from the center of the City. Doing so requires an implementation tool giving the City the ability to effectively manage its pattern of growth in a manner that is consistent with its development objectives and community vision.

Coupled with development policy, is a range of practical issues that act as barriers to redevelopment. Parking is generally a constraining issue for businesses locating downtown. Those that develop on large, vacant parcels have sufficient land to meet their parking needs and requirements. Within a downtown environment, large expanses of parking are not feasible or preferable. There must therefore, be acceptable alternatives for the businesses and their employees, which may involve land assemble and development of public parking. The existence of multiple public buildings makes it easier to justify. The assembly of land may also be necessary to accommodate larger building sites for more significant mixed use developments.

Incentives are commonly essential for attracting businesses to locate downtown, rather than along one of the corridors. Resolution of other typical problems, such as code-related issues (building and fore codes often present problems due to requirements for elevators for handicap accessibility and electrical updates), condition of infrastructure, and traffic access and circulation must also be studied and addressed to make Downtown a reasonable and attractive locational option.

Del Rio is home to an active community of artists, many of whom have initiated monthly art gallery walks and educational programs for the community, and particularly the children through dance, pottery and painting classes. Organized groups such as this could leverage funding assistance and serve as a catalyst for revitalizing Downtown.

In 2002, Del Rio was selected to participate in the Texas Main Street Program, a component of which was not only an examination of historic preservation, but also an Economic Development Assessment. Economic issues facing the community were examined and recommendations were made by the Texas Historical Commission (THC). Among the recommendations were seizing tourism opportunities in Downtown, expanding local businesses, and organizing local businesses for monthly discussions so that they are kept aware of what each other is offering the community. Del Rio has access to a constant stream of visitors from LAFB as well as those visiting the Amistad Reservoir. For instance, every three weeks military personnel and their families travel to/from the base, which presents an opportunity for capturing their business. With the ESPN ranking as the best bass fishing lake in the world, visitors of Amistad Reservoir also offer an opportunity for increased visitors and patronage. Presently Downtown has limited options in terms of restaurants or entertainment venues for them to enjoy. This is a high priority if the City is to capitalize upon this community asset.

Case Study Example

Del Rio can look to Southern California for creative solutions. Santa Ana, California is approximately 80 percent Hispanic and in the early 1990s their downtown was dying. People came because they either were a city or county employee or had to serve on a jury. What many residents said they wanted to see instead of sprawling growth in the City's ETJ, were the local family business, the bridal shops, corner grocery stores – families strolling downtown, workers walking to lunch, store signs in Spanish next to the ubiquitous Starbucks shop, street vendors, professionals living in artists lofts a block from Main Street. Immigrants arrived in large numbers but left as quickly as they could afford to. Now the City is trying to keep them. Santa Ana has refurbished historic facades, built brick sidewalks with benches and replaced a methadone clinic and bus depot with artists' lofts. Santa Ana is now a fledging hub of "new urbanism," an increasingly popular antidote to sprawl that promotes dense, walkable neighborhoods where people live, work and play. ("New Urbanism embraces Latinos", Haya El Nasser, USA Today, Feb 16,2005.)

In this particular case study, Santa Ana's Department of Planning and Development implemented an Enterprise Zone to develop a loan program for funds to be allocated to the restoration of run-down buildings. The City has used tax credit and Empowerment Zone incentives for developers and landowners. Today, the "Artists Village" offers monthly open artists' studio nights for residents and tourists.

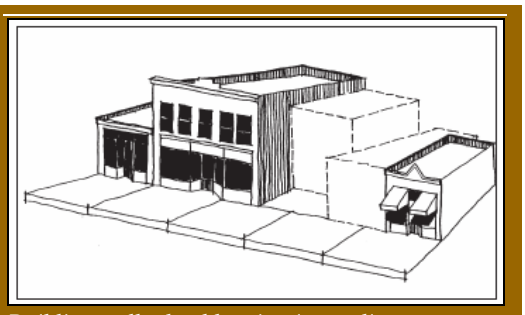
GOAL: Aesthetic improvement and economic rejuvenation of Downtown.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. Conduct a market and economic study focused on the Downtown and its immediate environs to include analysis of its current economic conditions and contributions, such as taxable values, sales and property tax collections, its relative market area, and its capture of the local economic base. The analysis should include a detailed inventory of building space, including both ground and upper floors, and its current occupancy and utilization, specifically identifying lease-able space. The types of businesses must be inventoried along with characteristics like business hours, numbers of employees, types and numbers of patrons, and other relevant factors. A business mix assessment should be prepared to identify the current mix of businesses and the optimum future mix of uses. Of particular importance will be to identify targeted businesses along with strategies and necessary incentives to attract their location to Del Rio. However, care must be taken to attract businesses that complement the Downtown and its local flavor. Financing mechanisms will be essential to identify means for offering incentives, attracting redevelopment, overcoming code compliance issues, and assisting in physical enhancement efforts.
2. Prepare concurrently with the above recommended study a constraints analysis to identify limiting factors for development, redevelopment, and improved utilization of Downtown properties and buildings. The study should include interviews of business and land owners and lessees as well as an objective review. Such factors as land and building ownership, building and lease space sizes, building conditions, building code issues such as ADA

accessibility and fire access, lease rates, parking, vehicular and pedestrian access, and other contributing factors should be identified and addressed.

3. Create a fiscal impact model to gauge the economic impact of proposed new development. This would be an important tool to ensure that new development contributes positively to the tax base, offsetting the required expenditures for the provision of public facilities and municipal services. This should also include a component to gauge the market and economic impact of business expansion elsewhere in the community on the Downtown area. Fiscal policies must then be adopted as to not only the appropriateness but the economic suitability of zone change requests and new development.
4. Amend the C-2-B Commercial, Second Height District to include height and area regulations suitable to retain the current urban character of Downtown. Specific provisions of the district would include a required build-to-line at the front property line; zero side yard setbacks; minimum two-story building height; allowance of upper floor residential use and incentives for high-density urban living; and building form requirements and design standards related to building bulk and scale, historic façade materials and architectural detailing, window and doorway fenestration, awnings and canopy treatments, and sign placement. District provisions must address pedestrian ways and amenities, street trees and planters, gardens and plazas, public art displays, outdoor activities and displays, and other applicable standards.

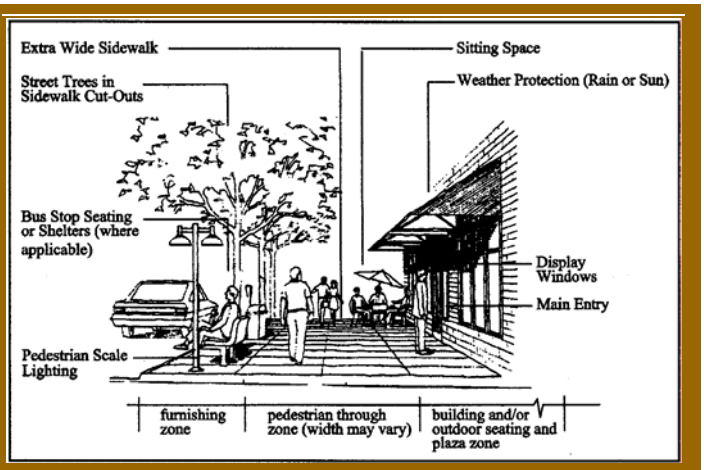


Building walls should maintain an alignment at the sidewalk's edge to increase building enclosure and enhance the urban character of Downtown.

5. Create portal entry enhancements to form a sense of arrival into Downtown. Illustrated in **Figure 3.1, Northern Main Street Enhancement**, is a rendering of possible physical improvements along the northern most section of Main Street, just before crossing the railroad tracks, as viewed from its intersection with Pierce Street. This street block could form a portal entry to Downtown from the north. Similar types of improvements could be installed at points entering Downtown from each direction, which would give form and demarcate entry to a "Downtown District". Currently, there are no physical features – other than a change in building form - to distinguish Downtown from any other area of the community, so it blends into the fabric of the area, rather than emerging as a "place" within the larger community.
6. Prepare a branding and marketing plan to determine the portrayed image of the Downtown District. To be successful, Downtown must have its own character and identity, uniquely distinguished from the rest of Del Rio and other communities. The outcomes of the branding plan must manifest themselves in the physical improvements of the area, including unique street signage, pavement markings, streetlight and lamp standards, incorporation of the logo and theme, sidewalk stamps and textures, banners, and other enhancements, as exhibited in Figure 3.1, Northern Main Street Enhancement. The marketing plan must provide the logo, motto, and general theme, the mediums used to convey the message, and the broadcast strategies.
7. Prepare a Downtown Master Plan to identify physical enhancements to the Downtown and along each of the major corridors leading into it. Such enhancements should seek to improve

the urban character of the district through standards to increase the building enclosure. The plan should address pedestrian ways and amenities, street trees and planters, gardens and plazas, public art displays, outdoor activities and displays, and other requirements. Public rights-of-way enhancements should be addressed including street cross-sections (width, turn lanes, medians), traffic controls (signs, lights, speed tables), pedestrian improvements (sidewalks, crosswalks, way-finding, pedestrian-actuated signals, curb cuts, ADA accessibility), and property access (driveway location, number, width, design).

8. Adopt development form and architectural standards to ensure the historic and visual integrity of Downtown is maintained. As dispalyed in the illustration, use of colorful buildings that reflect the history and culture of the community may help to make it distinctive, as long as it is done with care and consistent with an urban design plan for the area. The standards should have the intent of carrying forward the distinctive architectural features and detailing of buildings, preservation of the original facades, and ensuring that enhancements are compatible with the overall Downtown theme. Determination of this theme should be accomplished through a Downtown Master Planning process.
9. Conduct a Downtown parking study and prepare a plan. The study should include an inventory of both on- and off-street parking spaces. The number of spaces would be compared to the parking demand of the existing businesses yielding a surplus or deficiency. The location of parking spaces and their restrictions (hours and duration) must be evaluated to identify necessary policy modifications or needed parking improvements. The study should document the options and solutions to address any deficiencies, including a warrant for an elevated parking structure. Current policies and management of Downtown parking should be reviewed with recommendations for management organization, fee structure, and enforcement.
10. Form a public-private partnership for revitalization and redevelopment of Downtown. Such partnership would include a role for the City in acquiring and assembling larger parcels of land to allow more sizeable development; vacating rights-of-way and easements, as necessary; conducting studies on the local market, traffic and parking, and design options; and being a mutual investor in projects such as a parking garage. Consider the formation and use of a tax increment financing district, which would define the district boundaries and create a source of funds for capital costs of public works or improvements, new buildings, structures, and fixtures; demolition, alteration, remodeling, repair or reconstruction; clearing and grading of land; and costs for financing, professional services, and administration.



Creating a pedestrian-scale Downtown streetscape contributes to the enclosure of space reminiscent of an urban environment. Two story buildings and narrowed vehicular pathways help to enclose space.

11. Create attractive incentive packages to entice retailers and employers to locate or relocate within the Downtown district. Such incentives may include use of the City's bonding capacity for major public improvements, tax abatement or rebates for businesses that locate in Downtown and commit to pre-established lease terms, forgivable loans, subsidies to lower Downtown lease rates to make them favorable to other areas in the community, low interest loans and loan guarantees, state and federal grant and loan programs, provision of public parking improvements, and others. Together, the incentives must outweigh the advantages of locating in other areas of the community – or in another community.
12. Encourage a broad mixture of uses including office and retail commercial businesses, service-related establishments, cultural and entertainment activities, and high-density residential use. To ensure compatible co-existence, establish performance standards regarding lighting, signage, parking, and noise, among other locally determined variables. Allow and create incentives for the use of upper floors of commercial buildings for residential purposes, including important provisions for reserved resident parking, a blend of uses that offer convenient services, and protection from nuisances associated with intensive commercial districts. Seek ways to introduce retirement housing into the Downtown area, thereby offering close proximity and access to services and community amenities.
13. Designate firm boundaries for the Downtown, within which high-density housing is permitted without encroachment into the abutting low-density single family neighborhoods. Within the defined Downtown, concentrate higher intensity residential uses with allowances for increased building heights and floor area ratios. Also allow building conversions from single-family to multiple-family dwellings. Higher density residential uses should be located closer to the commercial center with lower density uses across the street and adjacent to single-family dwellings, which will mitigate visual impacts and preserve the neighborhood environment. In the Downtown fringe, "granny-flat" accessory units should also be permitted.
14. Adopt design standards for residential uses within the Downtown and its defined fringe areas to ensure their appearance reflects a more urban character. Specific performance standards should be created reLatinoog to building design and articulation, orientation, height, setbacks, parking, and resident access to ensure compatibility and cohesiveness with the Downtown environment.
15. Maintain City and County government presence in the downtown with a long-term commitment for staff consolidation and expansion of office space. Provide both functional and aesthetic connections between the Courthouse, City Hall and other activity centers and destinations in Downtown through unified design and pedestrian amenities.
16. Coordinate with TXDoT to develop a way-finding system in the community to direct visitors to the Downtown and pedestrians to individual sites within the Downtown area such as the Courthouse, City Hall, the City Auditorium, etc.

Historic Preservation

There is great pride in Del Rio's history and heritage. The past must be embraced to sustain valued historic buildings and places, such as the downtown area and older neighborhoods and

homes. There is also a direct relationship between historic preservation and community character that simply cannot be replaced once lost. This plan must therefore, remain sensitive to the community's past.

The City of Del Rio has the C-1-H Historical and Commercial District zoning designation in the zoning ordinance. Presently there are two small pockets of land with the C-1-H district: at the intersection of Las Vacas Street and Greenwood, which is a small triangular piece of vacant land and Downtown, south of the Spring, along Cantu Street between Elm Street and Jones Street. The purpose of this district is generally to protect and promote the preservation of historical buildings and overall conservation and preservation of the district. However, the use, height, area, and parking regulations are the same as the C-1, Local Commercial District, which refers to the R-M, Multiple-Family District. The standards are therefore, entirely out of character for a historic district. There are no guidelines or standards for preservation of historic integrity, allowable changes or alterations, or permitted uses. The latter is left to issuance of a special permit, which contains references to historically applicable uses or criteria for consideration of such uses.

There are a variety of tools and techniques that can be utilized for the preservation of historic resources, including zoning overlay districts, conservation districts, tax incentives, grants, historic preservation programs, and education. Economic incentives are essential to a preservation program as they help owners of historic properties with costs they incur in complying with a historic preservation ordinance. In addition, incentives often encourage the rehabilitation and restoration of properties, which contribute to the revitalization of neighborhoods and the downtown district.

Chapter 211 of the Texas Local Government Code, Section 211.003, states that in the case of designated places and areas of historical, cultural, or architectural importance and significance, the governing body of a municipality may regulate the construction, reconstruction, alteration, or razing of buildings and other structures.

The State of Texas passed enabling legislation allowing local governments to offer tax abatements and assessment freezes of historic properties. Incentive programs may be designed to meet the individual needs and fiscal situations of local governments. Therefore, the City could design incentive programs to meet its needs and fiscal situation. Any alteration to or destruction of a structure without a Certificate of Appropriateness would result in the loss of incentives. Property owners would also receive a historic landmark marker.

Historically significant properties and structures contribute to the interest and intrigue of the community for tourists.

GOAL: Sustained historic integrity and contribution to community heritage and cultural value.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. Conduct a survey of historic structures and properties throughout the community. The purpose of this intensive survey project is to identify all the resources within the community that are potentially eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, and to provide the City and other city, state, and national agencies with a comprehensive data base that covers all the historic resources. Subsequently, encourage properties to be designated as Significant or Historical landmarks.
2. Amend the C-1-H Historical and Commercial District to include unique use, height, and area regulations that relate to the district. Specific uses should also be identified and incorporated into the district rather than relying on special permits.
3. Evaluate the placement of the C-1-H district to identify if there is an opportunity to amend the zoning map to expand it within the downtown area.
4. Adopt a historic preservation ordinance including criteria for historic designation, architectural review, requirement for certificates of no effect or certificates of appropriateness, certificates of economic hardship, use regulations and property development standards, and design guidelines.
5. Seek funding assistance through such programs as the Certified Local Government Grants Program, Texas Preservation Trust Fund, Texas Historical Courthouse Preservation Project, and Heritage Tourism Program.
6. Heighten public awareness and education regarding historic resources within the community. For instance, partner with the school district to develop strategies and programs to educate students and get them involved with revitalization efforts.

Environmental Consciousness and Sensitive Planning

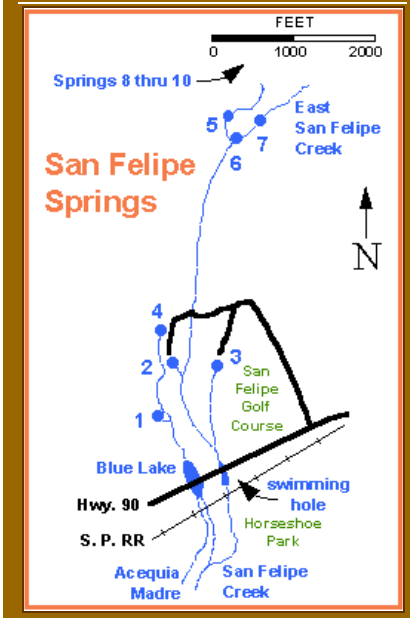
The availability of water makes Del Rio a special place, and unique among communities across the Rio Grande Valley. The headwaters of the San Felipe Creek are about 2.5 miles upstream of U.S. 90 in Val Verde County. The creek runs downstream to its confluence with the Rio Grande. The Creek is fed by the San Felipe Springs, three large and one small spring, one mile northeast of Del Rio. The significant stream segment is within the Edwards Plateau eco-region. The ecological significance of San Felipe Creek is based upon the following criteria:

- San Felipe Springs, one of the largest spring systems in Texas, is the sole public water supply for the City. San Felipe Creek contributes to base flow of the Rio Grande south of Del Rio.
- The flow from San Felipe Springs is very high quality water, which supports contact recreation and public water supply uses.

- Del Rio lies near the 100th meridian, which is considered the divide where eastern and western bird species overlap in distribution. Over 340 bird species have been observed in Del Rio and surrounding vicinity. As such, San Felipe Creek is a top bird watching site.
- The Spring produces 90 million gallons of water a day.[11]
- Remaining habitat of threatened and endangered devils river minnow.

Therefore, protection of the aquifer must be handled through plan policies, flexible zoning provisions, and other environmental restrictions to avoid the potentially harmful and irreversible effects of development.

Citizens of Del Rio view sustainability of quality open spaces and protection of resources as essential considerations to guide the pattern, direction, and type of future development. Among the environmental resources that are highly valued for protection is the San Felipe Springs. Protection from the encroachment of incompatible and increasing development density is critical for preserving the sensitive recharge areas, which are located both within the City limits and five-mile extraterritorial jurisdiction. Excessive use of water and contamination of wellheads are real concerns considering that the aquifer is designated as a sole source of drinking water for the community and its surrounding residents.



The San Felipe Springs are a sensitive and highly important resource for the community, which warrant protection and conservation measures.

Source: Edwards Aquifer Website

The portion of the City limits that is within the springs area is zoned R-220, Estate Residential Single-Family District. This district requires a minimum lot size of 220,000 square feet, or just over five acres per dwelling unit. It is foreseeable that this district was established to restrict density over the aquifer. However, development may occur across the entire area without any further ordinance restrictions on use or provisions requiring setbacks from vulnerable features and standards for on-site treatment systems. Furthermore, since each lot is required to be greater than five acres, as long as each parcel has access and there are no public improvements being dedicated, they are pre-empted from the City's subdivision regulations.[12] This further constrains the City's ability to manage development and hence, control the destiny of the primary water source. Instead, the City could require development clustering in this area, which would include benefits such as increased open space and recharge areas, resource conservation, and reduced impervious surface cover, storm water runoff, and water consumption.

[11] Ecologically Significant River & Stream Segments of Region J (Plateau), Regional Water Planning Area, Texas Parks and Wildlife, page 49.

[12] Texas Local Government Code, Section 212.004, Plat Required.

The outcome is development that maintains an equivalent density to that currently permitted – and possibly slightly higher to act as an incentive - thereby meeting the objectives of the landowner, while meeting other environmental and community objectives. There are areas interspersed throughout the community and the larger planning area that posses valuable natural resources warranting protection. Lands along the San Felipe Creek, within floodplain areas in northeast Del Rio, and the watershed protection zone located in the Jap Lowe Estates offers opportunities for resource conservation and land preservation. While these areas are sensitive to urban development, they may be utilized to fulfill other community objectives, such as environmental protection and sound resource management.

San Felipe Creek is a tremendous asset and environmental resource for the community, valued for its beauty, recreation, and water supply.

Residents of Del Rio are interested in creating a community that is both unique and attractive. There were numerous comments received regarding the desire for more green space integrated as an amenity into development. This objective may be achieved by adopting sound environmental conservation and responsible land development practices. Sensitive areas along the creek and within the floodplain and wetlands may be incorporated within development as a natural amenity, while sustaining their resource function. Doing so requires a regulatory system that balances development efficiency and resource protection. Through sound land planning, resources may be preserved and effectively integrated into development without compromising private interests.

The restoration of natural areas, such as creeks and vegetated lands within protected open spaces or parks can also serve as a catalyst for economic development. Similar to the attractiveness of the park and open space along San Felipe Creek, there are other natural features to give the public an opportunity to enjoy nature rather than the rear lots of adjacent development. With good design, resources can provide a unifying linkage throughout the community, which greatly influences land use decisions and community character.

GOAL: Protection of sensitive environmental resources from the potentially harmful affects of incompatible development.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. Designated as a sole source aquifer thus providing the drinking water supply for the City, it is advisable for the City to consider annexation of a defined critical area that is subject to development pressure. The boundaries of the "critical area" are yet to be defined, but are intended for those areas that are highly vulnerable to development.

2. Amend the zoning and subdivision regulations to encourage development clustering. This approach allows an equivalent density that is concentrated in a smaller area of the site rather than spread across the site as is now permitted in the R-220, Estate Residential Single-Family District. The smaller development area will preferably be outside of the protection area or at a minimum, in the area of least sensitivity. Encouragement of this approach may be accomplished with density bonuses for increased open space ratios and achievement of other performance standards.
3. Adopt an Aquifer Protection Overlay Zone providing for a prohibition of certain designated uses and their associated activities, establishment of setbacks from vulnerable features, design standards and sunset provisions for wastewater treatment systems, and procedures for handling non-conforming uses.
4. Amend the subdivision regulations to allow and encourage alternative subdivision designs, such as clustered housing and conservation (50 percent open space) and preservation (80 percent open space) development. These alternative neighborhood environments would allow the City to protect its water resources. Incentives should be created to allow increased density generally equivalent to the loss of units required to set aside land for open space and resource conservation. Incorporate a site capacity calculation into the requirements to allow for adjustments of development intensity to actual site conditions. This tool allows sites that are constrained environmentally, such as that within the San Felipe Springs area, to develop while, at the same time, safeguarding the environment.
5. Consider the option of establishing a permanent conservation easement over a defined aquifer protection zone, which would prevent any harmful effects of development. Such conservation easement could be used for open space and recreational purposes. It may either be voluntarily created by the property owner(s) or acquired by a government agency. The easement would be a legally binding covenant that is publicly recorded and runs with the property deed for a specified time or in perpetuity. It gives the holder the responsibility to monitor and enforce the property restrictions imposed by the easement for as long as it is designed to run. An easement does not grant ownership nor does it absolve the property owner from traditional owner responsibilities, i.e. property tax, upkeep, maintenance, or improvements.

Entrances to the community cast a first and lasting impression on those who visit.

Community Character and Appearance

Community character is vitally important to those who live in Del Rio, which was clearly emphasized during the public involvement process. Residents desire a clean and well-kept community; plentiful parks, trails and recreational opportunities; attractive entrances, corridors

and commercial districts; safe and livable neighborhoods; quality school and government facilities; and strict, yet reasonable, enforcement of codes. The character of the community is also important though, for those who pass through or visit Del Rio. From an economic development perspective, the first impression is a lasting impression. All of the desires expressed above are highly valued for both those who live or may live in the community. It must be acknowledged, though, that character does not happen on its own. Rather, it must be carefully managed through individual land use decisions and appropriate, yet reasonable development standards.

The physical character of Del Rio is perhaps, the single most evident glimpse of its economic viability, proactive government, and civic pride. The initial impression of the community is formed by the quality appearance of its development, including the nature of community aesthetics; condition of municipal facilities and spaces; amount and quality of public open space; maintenance of roadways and public infrastructure; and the overall attractiveness of the community. The appearance of the community contributes to quality of life and livability for those who reside in Del Rio, as well as those who may be making an investment or relocation decision. Simply put, beauty adds value to the community. The appearance of a community is one of the foremost influences of value and, hence, one of its most regarded assets. Residents take pride in their community and its attractive and interesting places. Businesses also like to locate in attractive environments, which improve their ability to recruit employees, host clients and investors, and continue to invest in their facilities.

Character and appearance are of top priorities according to a broad cross-section of the community that participated in the public input process. Residents recognize the importance of livability in the success of their economic development and, therefore, both desire and expect quality new development and redevelopment. There is a strong desire to improve the entrances to the community with distinctive gateways, enhance the roadway environs with streetscape improvements, increase the amount of green space adjacent to the rights-of-way and throughout the community, add more landscaping and screening of parking areas, control the size and location of signage, incorporate more public displays of art and community history, better manage the appearance of structures and vacant properties, and diligently enforce the City's codes.

The appearance of the corridors is one of the issues raised most often by residents. After all, Spur 239, U.S. 90 and U.S. 277/377 are the most highly traveled roadways in the community, carrying both those who travel them daily and those who are introduced to the community for the first time. The appearance of these corridors may be characterized, first, by their wide street sections and, secondly, by large building setbacks and expanses of parking adjacent to the street, limited provision of green space or landscaping, multiple points of ingress and egress interrupting the pedestrian ways, a proliferation of signage (in many cases over-sized and of an unwarranted height), and widely varying building styles and use of materials. Achieving enhanced corridor environments involves policies, programs, regulations, and incentives addressing each of the contributing factors. Enhancement of a single factor will help, but will not result in a positive visual impact. Instead, each of the factors must be handled together to revitalize and re-establish a desired character and appearance.

There are two separate, yet related, components involved in improving the appearance of corridors. First is the street right-of-way itself, which is owned and controlled by the City, County, or the Texas Department of Transportation. Within the public right-of-way, the design of the pavement surface, including whether the roadway is undivided or divided by a raised median, improved with curb and gutter, or constructed of asphalt or concrete, contributes to the appearance of the corridor. Maintenance of the pavement surface, as well as the open space within the right-of-way, is also significant to its visual appeal. The preservation of natural features, such as vegetation and wetlands, and provision of green space and landscaping helps to soften the roadway environs and enhance views. The design of structures, such as bridges and overpasses, retaining walls, and drainage improvements, are also important elements in the overall design scheme. Each of these improvements is largely at the discretion of the City (in coordination with TXDOT for the state-owned facilities), as well as the County in the peripheral areas.

The second component involves private property, which must be either regulated or provided with incentives to achieve the desired development outcomes. Typically, regulations and standards pertaining to building appearance, signage, landscaping, screening and buffering, and open space are applied city-wide or to the properties within a certain distance of specified corridors. Incentives for compliance with the standards may include automatic approval, increased density (for residential uses) or intensity (for non-residential uses), relaxed parking requirement (meeting specified conditions), reduced dimensional standards, or financial participation through grants or when done in conjunction with a public infrastructure improvement.

Enhancement of the community's primary corridors offers an opportunity to distinguish itself from other communities and create a unique, positive identity.

Based on the comments received from residents, the appearance of the community entrances from U.S. 90, U.S. 277/377, and Spur 239 are highly important. Residents are proud of their community and would like to portray a positive first impression on those who visit or pass through the community for the first time. The entrances offer opportunities to establish an image, communicate community values, and attract attention to local attractions and destinations. Formal points of entry - or gateways - also define the boundaries to distinguish it from territory outside of its jurisdiction. Simply put, gateways help to form the community's physical identity. Entryway enhancement to establish formal gateways include improvements to the roadway, such as a landscaped median, increased green space, preservation of natural features and vegetation, and special pavement treatments; significant entry monuments; liberal open space and well-designed landscaping; upgraded lighting standards; way-finding signage; and well-maintained and attractive adjacent properties. Currently, there is only a small entrance sign along U.S. 90 at the eastern city limits.

GOAL: Beautification and improvement of community character and identity.

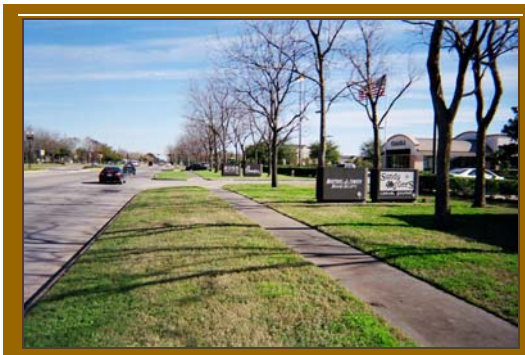
RECOMMENDATIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. For the land abutting Spur 239, U.S. 90, and U.S. 277/377, integrate into the zoning standards an allowable increase in density for a specified distance (commonly 300 to 400 feet). This measure is both important and necessary for residential development to occur abutting major streets where the land values are higher due to its street frontage. Increased density is therefore, necessary to offset higher land and development costs. Coupled with the density bonus must be standards and requirements for marginal access streets and streetscape buffering.
2. Amend the zoning regulations to require a maximum build-to-line of 10 feet in the commercial districts. At the same time, increase the rear setback to 40 feet. Include design standards reLatinoog to streetscape and property line buffering, monument signage, and standards for blank walls adjacent to street right-of-way.
3. Amend the commercial districts to include a minimum landscape surface ratio (LSR) of 20 percent for all properties, as opposed to the lot coverage requirements that does not accouunt for impervious surfaces. This requirement would ensure an increased minimum percentage of each site is pervious area. For the C-1, Local Commercial and C-1-A, Neighborhood Commercial Districts, the LSR should be increased to 30 percent to ensure improved compatibility and design cohesiveness with the adjacent and surrounding neighborhoods. The increased landscape surface better reflects that of residential uses. In addition, design standards must be integrated and applied within these latter two districts to manage building scale and massing, building and roof design, lighting, signage, and access.
4. Incorporate into the development code bufferyard requirements, which establishes a set standards between, and in certain cases within, each of the zoning districts. A combination of bufferyard width, landscape material selection and density, earthen berms, and fences or walls may be used in various arrangements, each meeting the standard. In this way, either a wide bufferyard with limited plant density or a narrow bufferyard with or without a fence and increased plant density may each meet the requirement, which may be altered due to the size of the parcel, site constraints, or individual preference. The bufferyard standards should offer a credit for choice of native, drought resistant plant materials and xeriscaping. The bufferyard standards should be applied between adjacent properties and districts, along public or private rights-of-way, and within parking areas. The standards must vary according to road classification, the adjoining district or use, and the size and location of parking areas.
5. Adopt building design standards. Use of these standards throughout the community, and particularly along each of the primary corridors and entranceways, will greatly enhance the aesthetic character of development. Design standards should be applied to the C-1, Local and C-1-A, Neighborhood Commercial Districts to manage district spacing and maximum floor area, building height, roof design, building shape, and the location of parking. For the other commercial districts, standards should regulate the building shape, which must vary according to building size, roof and skyline, and loading placement and screening. Industrial district standards should differentiate between outer (those with street frontage and visible to the public) and interior (those shielded or screening from public view via building

This landscaped fence is exemplary of an attractive and effective buffer treatment between uses.

orientation, location, or design) elevations. Truck loading and exterior storage areas must be effectively screened and buffered.

6. Adopt additional sign regulations to identify both permitted and prohibited signs. The allowable size of a sign on the walls of a building should have a maximum allowable size and should vary according to its distance from the street right-of-way. For instance, signs on buildings that are close to the right-of-way should be smaller than those set a greater distance away since they may be of equal visibility and legibility. The ordinance should include a bonus for buildings located closer to the right-of-way. A bonus of increased square footage should also be allowed for low-profile monument versus pole signs. A master sign plan should be required to allow a conformance review for multi-use properties and multi-tenant buildings. The size, height, and spacing of billboards along the U.S. 90 and U.S. 277/377 should be restrictive. Upon adoption of the sign regulations, the City should consider a sign amortization program, which establishes a prescribed period of time – or sunset – before nonconforming signs must be removed.



The use of monument signage and added green space can have a significant visual impact on roadway environs.

7. Adopt fencing standards and incorporate them into the subdivision regulations. The location and acceptable materials of subdivision fencing should be submitted and approved concurrent with the final plat. The fencing should be constructed by the developer and should be of consistent type and design around the perimeter of the subdivision and adjacent to any public street right-of-way. Along arterial roadways, the fencing should have decorative columns and relief at least every 200 feet. Its proximity to the right-of-way should be such to allow sufficient space for the required street bufferyard.
8. Require fencing of utility corridors so they are not visible from local streets. Alternatively, include the utilities within easements that are included across the rear of each lot.
9. Establish significant gateways at each of the community entranceways. Gateway treatments should include large permanent monuments, extensive landscaping leading to and around the entry point, lighting, a boulevard road section (where possible), well-manicured open space, and textured or patterned pavement.
10. Prepare corridor enhancement plans for U.S. 277/377, Spur 239, and U.S. 90. The plans should identify public street improvements, including added green space, sidewalks, roadway lighting standards, highway signage, and street cross-section (divided versus undivided). In addition, private realm enhancements should be identified and regulations or incentives

outlined to achieve an environment reminiscent of that illustrated in **Figure 3.2, Corridor Enhancement**. Private property enhancements include building to a maximum versus minimum front setback, streetscape bufferyards, monument signage, restrictions on wall signage, landscaping and screening, and parking/loading area enhancement.

FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

The essence of comprehensive planning is a recognition that the community does not have to wait to react to development. Rather, it can determine where and of what character development will be. Through active community support, this plan can ensure that new development meets certain standards and that it aids in achieving the desired community character.

As a guide for land development, the **Future Land Use Plan, Figure 3.3**, captures and develops into policies and regulations the community's values regarding how, when, and where Del Rio will grow in the future. This is significant since the findings and recommendations contained in this plan provide the basis for decisions pertaining to the City's zoning and subdivision ordinances, which are the primary tools to implement the plan.