

THE DOWNTOWN REDEVELOPMENT Report

PRESENTED BY

The City of Corpus Christi, Texas
Downtown
REDEVELOPMENT
COMMITTEE



photo: Jike Waller
courtesy CVB



The DOWNTOWN REDEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE:

Kay Aeby
Les Cassidy
Simon Castillo
James Chrobocinski
Angelica Flores
Kevin Hopkins
Cecil Johnson
David Loeb
Wayne Lundquist
Monica McLeod Sawyer
Mark Minutaglio
Michael Perez
Phillip Ramirez
Eloy Salazar
Norma Urban

Gary Basinger
Paula Dodd
Vangie Chapa
Evy Coppola
Arthur Granado
John Howell
Kimberly Lemley
Leon Loeb
Chad Magill
Brian Miller
Leah Olivarri
Michelle Peters
Daiquiri Richard
Sheldon Schroeder
Brandi Williams

Our Committee wishes to acknowledge the support provided by the staff of the City of Corpus Christi, particularly the support of the Economic Development Department.

DOWNTOWN REDEVELOPMENT REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Over the last several years, the City of Corpus Christi has made significant financial investment in downtown. This investment can be strengthened by the development of a thriving downtown community. We are pleased to present this Executive Summary of a full report compiled by the Downtown Redevelopment Committee. This report, aligned with the South Central Area Development Plan, is submitted in response to the City Council's goal to redevelop our Downtown.

THE PROCESS

The Downtown Redevelopment Committee (DRC) started meeting on March 29, 2006. A total of 22 committee meetings were held, not including sub-committee and other meetings. The group was composed of various individuals representing community and private sector organizations. Staff support was provided by Economic Development Department of the City of Corpus Christi.

The group sought background information from a variety of sources. City staff provided extensive information on projects, programs, and ordinances. Other organizations, such as the Downtown Management District, provided information on their projects and programs. Members of the group researched studies and efforts of other communities, and group members visited downtown Harlingen to view the results of their Mainstreet Program.

Members of the committee wish to express their appreciation to all who assisted with this research, particularly city staff who provided invaluable support and information.

After considerable background research and brainstorming, the DRC developed a Vision statement for the downtown of Corpus Christi.

THE VISION

“Downtown Corpus Christi is a safe, clean, pedestrian friendly community comprised of a central business district, arts and culture, sports and entertainment areas. This unique, vibrant waterfront community will provide local residents, tourists, and families opportunities to enjoy its fine restaurants, shops and residential facilities.”

The DRC group also conducted an analysis of the downtown area to determine strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT analysis). Out of a long list of individual strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, the group selected the top six in each category which are listed in the chart below.

SWOT ANALYSIS TOP 6 CATEGORIES

STRENGTHS

- Proximity to water & Water Events
- Entertainment/Arts, Culture, Events, Restaurants
- Proximity to tourists/Events
- Can be pedestrian oriented
- Center for employment
- Investing in infrastructure-water, sewage and drainage

WEAKNESSES

- Lack of real plan
- Vacant buildings
- Lack of housing
- Improve our parks/More usable parks
- No grocery store/Lack of retail
- Visually unappealing/Lack of maintenance/Graffiti

OPPORTUNITIES

- Council priority
- Coastal location
- Vacant buildings
- Urban shifts
- Marina improvement
- Restore the Ritz

THREATS

- Lack of marketing/Community perception/Lack of identity
- Divisiveness/Need to work together/Lack of leadership
- Homeless population
- Lack of knowledge/Cooperation/Absentee owners
- Ineffective codes
- Brain drain

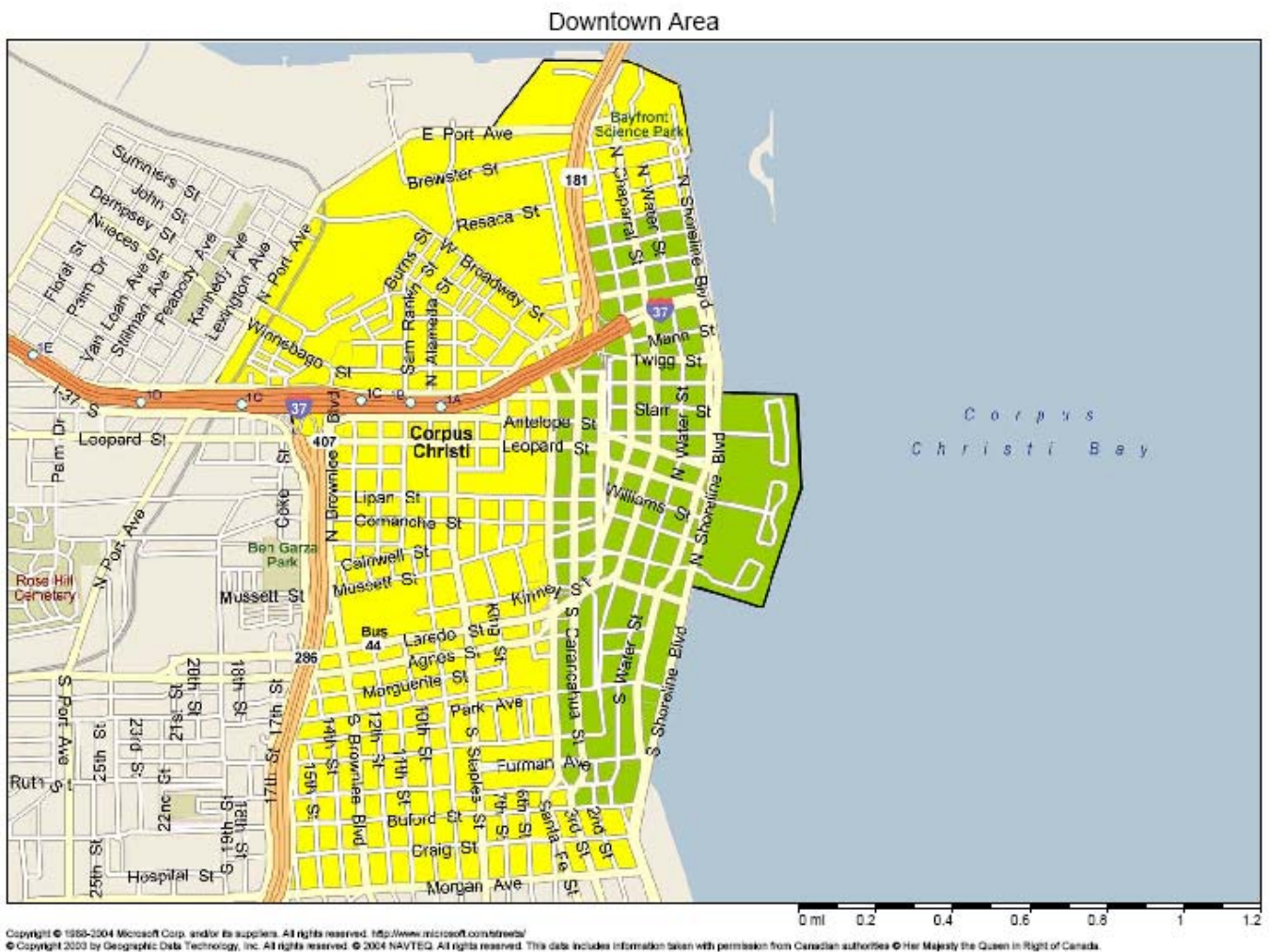
SUCCESSFUL DOWNTOWNS

As discussed, research was conducted to benchmark what successful communities have done to create thriving downtown areas. As the DRC began to develop goals and strategies, one study provided a recent and valuable overview. Research conducted by the Civic Fellows Programs of Cornell University provides a comprehensive description of successful downtown actions based on study of eleven downtowns across the country (*Characteristics of Successful Downtowns: Shared Attributes of Outstanding Small & Mid-sized Downtowns, Gary Ferguson, draft report, September 2005.*) The shared attributes of these successful downtowns as reported by this research are quoted in the chart.

- **No Single Organizational Model Exists.** Contrary to expectations, there are a variety of organizational models among the “great downtown” communities suggesting that the type of downtown organization is less important than the overall ability of the community to deliver needed services.
- **Successful downtowns tend to have multiple traffic generators that supplemented the presence of a larger institution (s), all within short walking distance.** Many, but not all of these traffic generators were purposely strategically located. Serendipity had as much to do with some location decisions as careful planning.
- **Successful downtowns are beloved by citizenry.** The area has regional significance, and there is strong affection for the downtown. There is also controversy and debate.
- **Successful downtowns have been and are continuing to overcome challenges and obstacles.** Just because a city has a great reputation for its downtown, does not mean that it is exempt from challenges. These cities share an innate ability to respond to and overcome challenges.
- **Successful downtowns are walkable.** There is no single design model but, they possess street level pedestrian scale and are well used.
- **Successful downtowns, by and large, had a commitment to mixed use development.** Uses are generally not geographically separated in these downtowns. New projects have mixed use orientations. The various uses tend to be integrated into the downtown fabric. Even when they are separated, they generally remain within walking distance of each other.
- **There is broad public/private investment in the future of downtown.** All of “great downtowns” surveyed in the study are actively planning for the future. They are implementing new projects that broaden the appeal and scope of downtown, and many of these projects have the involvement of a pro-active public sector.
- **The nature of downtown retail appears to be in flux.** As clothing or other traditional retailers close or choose to relocate, these cities report that the resulting vacant storefronts are being filled with restaurants, bars or other food and beverage oriented businesses able to pay higher rents. Local, independent retailers continue to dominate these areas.
- **Entertainment is a driving market segment.** Anchor projects help. All have been able to extend the life of downtown beyond 5 p.m., and all have strong and growing restaurant sectors.
- **There was a prevalence of strong, adjacent residential neighborhoods that are within walking distance of downtown.** These neighborhoods, many of which are upscale, provide a key base of patrons for downtown.
- **Downtown (CBD) housing was either prevalent or underway. The market for housing in the downtown was strong and growing.** Affordability was a major issue faced by many, but residents were invaluable to the retail economy.
- **Universities help but are not the sole answer.** The presence of a higher institution of higher education does not by itself appear to be the deciding factor in determining downtown experience.

THE DOWNTOWN FOCUS AREA

The DRC spent considerable time discussing the focus area of downtown. The DRC recognizes that “downtown Corpus Christi” would traditionally be defined as the area shown in green on the map below, or even a smaller area south of I 37 and perhaps east of the bluff or Upper Broadway. The DRC recommends, however, that a broader area be considered and included in redevelopment considerations. The broad area selected by the DRC, particularly from the perspective of housing and employment potential, is shown in yellow on the map below. While many of the DRC recommendations address the green area as an initial focus, the DRC feels that the yellow area must also be addressed in order for downtown to develop.



RECOMMENDATIONS AND STRATEGIES

Six (6) major topic areas were the basis of six subcommittees that developed strategies and recommendations. The efforts and results of the work of each subcommittee were then reviewed, synthesized and revised by the DRC as a whole. These six major strategic or topic areas were:

- Designs and Plans
- Infrastructure
- Policies
- Business Development
- Marketing
- Organizational Structure

STRATEGY ONE - DESIGNS AND PLANS

The primary goal of the planning recommendations is to improve and enhance connectivity of the neighborhoods identified above by addressing the following means of connectivity:

Pedestrian Experience
Vehicular Access
Event Public Transit
Parks and Green Space

Targeted improvement of the four elements of neighborhood connectivity demonstrates public commitment to Downtown Revitalization. Improved connectivity, in conjunction with other Strategies for incentives and abatements targeted at residential development, are the impetus to spark private investment.

A downtown residential community is the engine for continued downtown revitalization. It is the engine to energize retail, restaurant, and office growth and the key to sustainable growth in tourism, convention, entertainment and hotel markets. Creating Downtown Neighborhoods that are active 24/7 is the key to expanding these other markets.

While the recommended actions, detailed in the attachment, focus on the types of residential environments likely to develop in the detailed focus area the broader focus area, identified in yellow on the previous map, provides significant potential for revitalization of surrounding blighted and declining residential neighborhoods. Revitalization of these areas will be important in providing desirable housing for middle and lower income residents working in a revitalized downtown.

STRATEGY TWO - INFRASTRUCTURE

1. Create a phased plan to make sidewalk improvements at minimum one block at a time:
 - a. Consistent and walkable sidewalks with pedestrian scale lighting, emphasizing down lighting, safety, and ADA accessibility.
 - b. Electrical, Fiber Optic, and Irrigation upgrades installed during sidewalk improvement process.
 - c. Informational WiFi Kiosks at bus stops including interactive GPS bus locations, including wayfinding, and opportunities for business advertising.
 - d. WiFi prepaid parking meters.
2. Improve streets, intersections, connectivity and wayfinding signage entering, between, and exiting all downtown.
 - a. Improve street rideability and brick paver installation.
 - b. Traffic Engineering should provide recommendations to improve the traffic flow between all downtown areas and particularly after peak events to offer citizens the ability to spend their entire day/evening in downtown.
 - c. Improve traffic connectivity between S.E.A. town and DTown with emphasis on looking at Chaparral St. Continuing southward toward I37 as a two-way arterial with parallel parking.
 - d. Where feasible, East/West streets in Dtown then become one-lane, one-way with angled parking to reclaim and add more street level parking in the DTown area.
3. Continue to support Marina improvements understanding our unique downtown asset on water.
 - a. Maximize visibility & usage, improve landscaping, and tourist retail/commercial interactivity on the T-Heads.
 - b. Support & Encourage a regional high speed water taxi to transport local commuters and tourists from Downtown to Packery Channel, Port Aransas, Ingleside, and Rockport.

STRATEGY THREE - POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

1. Increase residential development by:
 - a. Incentives for residential conversions and new residential construction
 - b. Providing incentives for retail and entertainment amenities – such as grocers, drug stores, specialized retail, private cable or satellite television systems, and cinemas – to serve existing and future residents
 - c. Working with other public entities and the business community to enhance the availability and convenience of public transportation so that living downtown becomes a more attractive option.

2. Create a special planning and maintenance district (or adjust existing Bayfront zoning districts) to meet the following goals :
 - a. Providing increased standards for the physical appearance and maintenance of buildings. For example, the boarding of ground floor windows of vacant buildings should be prohibited, and minimum window frontage requirements for new construction would create a more attractive and pedestrian-friendly appearance.
 - b. Implementing “adaptive reuse” principles in rehabilitating vacant and underutilized buildings for new uses. Such principles include the relaxing of parking, density, and other zoning regulations, flexibility in complying with building code requirements, and streamlining of the project approval process.
3. Create standards for designating downtown buildings as blighted and enforce those standards.
 - a. The stigma of having a deteriorated building in Corpus Christi designated as blighted would encourage the property owner to redevelop or sell the property.
 - b. The City, at its option, could inspect and perform needed maintenance on blighted buildings and charge the owner for this work. If unpaid, the City could take a lien on the property to secure payment.
 - c. A designation of a property as blighted under these standards could also be used as an initial step in condemnation proceedings and as evidence in support of state and federal redevelopment grant applications.
4. Code enforcement must be swift and certain. Because of the importance of downtown to our city’s economic development efforts, code enforcement cases in the downtown area should be fast-tracked at all stages of the process, including calling for monthly Building Standards Board meetings to allow more constant review.

STRATEGY FOUR-BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

1. Recruit more retail and commercial businesses to Downtown.
 - a. Encourage the creation of a Downtown Merchants Association to work in partnership to work in partnership with the city’s Downtown Task Force (DTF) which is described in strategy 6 and other groups. This group can function as advocates for the downtown merchants.
 - b. Continue to target city incentives such as tax credits, tax abatement and reduction of permitting fees to the downtown area helping to recruit business to the area.
 - c. Support new businesses during the first 12 months of operation through the creation of rent buy down programs.
 - d. Approve the use of a marketing program to draw more pedestrian traffic to downtown businesses.

- e. Market downtown to existing local businesses to encourage them to open locations in downtown.
2. Support existing downtown businesses.
 - a. Encourage Downtown Management District to finalize plans for a downtown market, encouraging participation from downtown merchants.
 - b. Full scale development of a WiFi community portal to assist downtown merchants in marketing of their businesses.
 - c. Encourage the participation of local financial institutions to provide for loan pools and rent buy downs for downtown businesses.

The DRC recommends that priority be given to local merchants to reflect the local flavor of Corpus Christi. Local art groups, Del Mar College and Texas A & M University should be encouraged to support the development of downtown retail shops, restaurants and residential development showcasing local talent.

STRATEGY FIVE- MARKETING

1. Brand downtown as a “Destination” by creating a visual identity and design standards for publicly funded items such as logos, signage, wayfinding, downtown entry way and pedestrian information kiosks.
2. Develop a strategic marketing plan focusing on culture, residential, new and existing businesses, tourism, entrepreneurs, and the community using traditional and new media.
3. Enhance and develop the downtown “experience” by establishing consistent public events and art experiences which could include: Wednesday night Sailboat Sunset Festival, murals, decorated benches and bus stops, permanent art installations, outdoor markets and park events.

STRATEGY SIX - ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

1. Establish a new and visible symbol of the City’s commitment to renewal and to a new future for downtown Corpus Christi by creating a Downtown Task Force, headed by Economic Development and composed on city staff from various departments to expedite and foster development in the downtown area as defined by the DRC. The DRC further recommends that at least one additional staff member be added to the Economic Development Department to help coordinate this task force and assist with implementation of this plan, including monitoring of progress.
2. The Task Force will also research and bring forth recommendations to the City Council and City Manager on a financing plan for the implementation of this plan, with possible funding sources including use of annual budget resources, capital

improvement bond program financing, utility revenue bonds, tax free housing finance bonds, federal and state grant funds, other public and private funding sources including local sources such as the RTA, and a tax increment financing zone (TIF).

3. DRC members will establish an advocacy group (or enhance an existing group such as the Heart) which will help move the downtown agenda forward, work proactively with other organizations and invite the membership and participation all interested groups and individuals, including the City Council.

CONCLUSION

The DRC effort is only the beginning of a process that must involve a wide range of interests and stakeholders continuously in the future. This report must be viewed as a living document, subject to re-thinking based on future opportunities and challenges. Unfortunately, there are no easy answers or simple solutions to redevelopment. The DRC, however, hopes that these recommendations will be the foundation for a more vigorous renewal of downtown Corpus Christi and result in:

- More economic activity, particularly housing and commercial;
- Less under utilized land;
- Fewer vacant buildings; and
- An aesthetically pleasing, cherished heart for the community.

STRATEGY ONE-DESIGN AND PLANS

Goals and concepts for Design and Planning have developed around five (5) key areas or "Neighborhoods". These areas are identified, for the purposes of this document, as follows:

Neighborhood 1-Convention Center, American Bank Center, Ortiz Center, Heritage Park, museums, Water Garden, and other adjacent indoor performance and event venues.

Neighborhood 2-Whataburger Field, Concrete Street and possible future Public Sports complex and amusement or water park.

Neighborhood 3-Bayfront master plan area and the block between Shoreline and Water Street along the length of the master plan area. Anticipated character of this neighborhood is high end high density residential, hotel and office along the private blocks between Shoreline and Water Street. These high density developments serve as a backdrop for the Bayfront master plan.

Neighborhood 4-Extending North to South from Heritage Park to First United Methodist Church and East to West from Water Street to Lower Broadway. Anticipated character of this neighborhood is mid to high end residential lofts and apartments over retail, dining and entertainment establishments. This neighborhood would have an eclectic and vibrant atmosphere created by the varied cross section of its development.

Neighborhood 5-Extending North to South from I-37 to Furman and East to West from Lower Broadway to Carancahua. Anticipated character of this neighborhood is mid to high end high density residential and office environments enhanced by the existing religious institutions.

The primary goal of the planning recommendations is to improve and enhance connectivity of the neighborhoods identified above by addressing the following means of connectivity:

Pedestrian Experience
Vehicular Access
Event Public Transit
Parks and Green Space

Targeted improvement of the four elements of neighborhood connectivity demonstrates public commitment to Downtown Revitalization. Improved connectivity, in conjunction with other Strategies for incentives and abatements targeted at residential development, are the impetus to spark private investment.

A downtown residential community is the engine for continued downtown revitalization. It is the engine to energize retail, restaurant, and office growth and the key to sustainable growth in tourism, convention, entertainment and hotel markets. Creating Downtown Neighborhoods that are active 24/7 is the key to expanding these other markets.

While the recommended actions, detailed in the attachment, focus on the types of residential environments likely to develop in the detailed focus area the broader focus area, identified in yellow on the previous map, provides significant potential for revitalization of surrounding blighted and declining residential neighborhoods. Revitalization of these areas will be important in providing desirable housing for middle and lower income residents working in a revitalized downtown.

STRATEGY ONE-DESIGNS AND PLANS

GOALS

A. Pedestrian Experience - Initiate Pedestrian Friendly Environment through highly visual capital improvements for streets, parks etc. thereby promoting an environment conducive to residential and retail development, resulting in an economic stimulus for downtown

ACTIONS

A-1 Create or improve sidewalks through the installation of brick pavers & widening of existing sidewalks where feasible. In addition complete the ADA improvements scheduled to be done on remaining Intersections as per the City's initial ADA Downtown improvement program.

- a. Develop a downtown master plan with an evaluation of sidewalks to be included for improvement.
- b. First phases of improvement should focus on the detailed focus area identified in green on the Downtown Focus Area map (included in the executive summary).
- c. Master planning efforts should consider work completed and / or planned by the DMD to date to create a cohesive plan.
- d. The broad focus area should be targeted proactively as these areas begin to show potential for revitalization.
- e. See the Infrastructure Strategy for additional recommendations related to sidewalks.

A-2 Add landscaping along downtown streets. (The landscaping, to be added, should be native or Xeriscape certified so as to reduce the amount of irrigation & maintenance required.)

- a. Trees
- b. Small Plants

A-3 Street furniture and lighting

- a. trash receptacles
- b. bike racks
- c. water fountains
- d. pedestrian scale lighting that produces adequate illumination for security and does not produce vertical light pollution.
- e. storefront lighting
- f. lighting in parking lots

A-4 Design and Implement Wayfinding Signage

- a. Design phase is underway
- b. More phases follow
- c. Implementation

STRATEGY ONE-DESIGNS AND PLANS

GOALS	ACTIONS
<p>A. Pedestrian Experience - Initiate Pedestrian Friendly Environment through highly visual capital improvements for streets, parks etc. thereby promoting an environment conducive to residential and retail development, resulting in an economic driver for downtown</p>	<p>A-5 Amend Zoning Ordinance to Create specific zoning regulations along east west street frontages between Neighborhoods 3 and 5 to enhance pedestrian scale and comfort.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Features such as storefront (glass) facades, awnings, street furniture, planters should be included, at street level. b. Service and parking entrances should be required to be accessed from Water Street which is better suited to vehicle service. <hr/> <p>A-6 Utilize large scale Public Art strategically placed for pedestrian appreciation and to create visual synergy between linear Neighborhoods 3, 4, and 5.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Create "Gateway" elements at the east / west street intersections with Water Street drawing pedestrians from the Bayfront into Downtown.(These elements could possibly be incorporated into the traffic light structures at certain intersections.) b. Large scale public art installations located in the Bluff Park on axis with the selected east / west streets. These art pieces will work in conjunction with the "Gateway" elements above. - Graphic slide to illustrate actions 5 and 6 <hr/> <p>A-7 Improve perception of Safety</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Create street Ambassadors program b. Improve parking lot lighting c. Install strategic security cameras monitored by CCPD d. Require storefront night sidewalk lighting.

STRATEGY ONE-DESIGNS AND PLANS

GOALS	ACTIONS
<p>A. Pedestrian Experience - Initiate Pedestrian Friendly Environment through highly visual capital improvements for streets, parks etc. thereby promoting an environment conducive to residential and retail development, resulting in an economic driver for downtown</p>	<p>A-8 Provide adequate crosswalks for safe pedestrian access across streets through use of material change at intersections, in order to make drivers more aware of pedestrian traffic.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Phase the detail focus area as a priority. b. Continue into broader focus area with a strategic location plan
<p>B. Vehicular Access-Improve vehicular connectivity between the (5) identified neighborhoods and arterial connectors out to other parts of the city.</p>	<p>B-1 Improve Vehicular intersection at I-37 - Chaparral / Mesquite</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. traffic study needed to identify better connectivity between Neighborhoods 1 and 2 and Neighborhood 4 along the Chaparral / Mesquite corridor. (i.e. Reversal of traffic flow along Chaparral & Mesquite or transition to two-way traffic on Chaparral) b. Transition of traffic onto Water Street currently is inconvenient for motorists and deflects activity from the primary Retail and Restaurant Neighborhood 4. <hr/> <p>B-2 Improve Vehicular intersection at Agnes/Laredo - Mesquite/Chaparral</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. traffic study needed to identify better connectivity between Neighborhoods 4 and 5 and the Bayfront corridor (Shoreline). b. Access into the Retail / Restaurant corridor of Neighborhood 4 on the south end. Chaparral and Mesquite streets currently dead-end into bluff, these streets need better outlet / access to Bayfront corridor.

STRATEGY ONE-DESIGNS AND PLANS

GOALS	ACTIONS
<p>B. Vehicular Access-Improve vehicular connectivity between the (5) identified neighborhoods and arterial connectors out to other parts of the city.</p>	<p>B-3 In conjunction with planning of the Harbor Bridge realignment planning for redevelopment of the current downtown terminus of I-37 into a boulevard suitable as a downtown entry and at a scale suitable to coexist with downtown pedestrian, and public transit traffic.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. traffic study should focus on providing multiple entry and exit routes for event traffic in Neighborhoods 1 and 2. Traffic patterns should set up to allow traffic to disperse through Downtown if desired and not be routed specifically away from Downtown. b. Access into the Retail / Restaurant corridor of Neighborhood 4 should be developed as part of the traffic routing scheme. c. Adequate pedestrian access should be provided across the I-37 Corridor, via a pedestrian bridge or improved crosswalk system.- Graphic slide to illustrate locations
<p>short term planning study must be in conjunction with Harbor Bridge realignment. Incorporate improved pedestrian connection across I-37 – item c. above.</p> <p>long term solution should incorporate master plan of the area including the most beneficial traffic flow for Mesquite and Chaparral Streets.</p>	

STRATEGY ONE-DESIGNS AND PLANS

GOALS	ACTIONS
<p>C. Public Event Transit-Create Public Event Transit system improving connectivity between Event Venues in Neighborhoods 1 and 2 and the south end of the Bayfront Master plan (Memorial Coliseum) through Neighborhoods 3, 4, and 5. This system should take advantage of parking venues throughout downtown and promote convenient use for downtown residents, hotel visitors and restaurant / retail patrons. Non-downtown residents will be encouraged to interact and spend time within the downtown area and reduce post event traffic issues by taking advantage of this system.</p>	<p>C-1 Incorporate design of bus stops into the pedestrian streetscape design.</p> <p>C-2 Bus stops should be unique to and easily identifiable downtown while maintaining pedestrian scale.</p> <p>C-3 Design unified bus stop signage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Uniquely identifiable bus stops for event routes b. Evaluate and designate more accessible stops <p>C-4 Stops should be spaced for convenience of Downtown patrons (probably spaced every other block at a maximum)</p>
<p>D. Parks and Green Space-Create "Showplace" Bayfront suitable to host the City's major events</p>	<p>D-1 Maintain focus to complete Bayfront master plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The traffic routing and scale (2 lanes each way) of the adopted plan provides for renewed emphasis on the pedestrian and park environment. b. Care should be taken to maintain the Civic / Public features of this plan such as Memorial Coliseum. The public venues will be critical as private development density grows along the west side of Shoreline. c. Include development of bike path running north and south for the entire length of the Bayfront.

STRATEGY ONE-DESIGNS AND PLANS

GOALS

E. Create “front yard” of Neighborhood 5 with park / green space that would expand and incorporate the existing Memorial Balustrade.

ACTIONS

E-1 Closure of Upper Broadway to expand usable park area and provide greater pedestrian access of the existing Memorial Balustrade.

a. The road closure would provide a much-needed urban green space in the uptown area and allow people to better appreciate the vistas over downtown and the bayfront.

bathe value of potential residential developments along the bluff and the presence of religious institutions located in this area would be enhanced.

c. Incorporate large-scale public art pieces into the Memorial Balustrade park area. These art installations would be aligned on axis at the ends of the east / west streets of Downtown Neighborhood 4 to create a visual connection between the Uptown bluff and the Bayfront, , as noted in the in the Pedestrian Experience Section, Item #6.

STRATEGY ONE-DESIGNS AND PLANS

GOALS	ACTIONS
<p>F. Enhance existing small parks within the existing Neighborhood 4 area to create venues for small Neighborhood level events, Enhancement of these small parks will increase value of adjacent sites as potential residential developments.</p>	<p>F-1 Enhancements to La Retama, Artesian and Spohn Parks</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Create spaces for activities, events and doggie parks where applicable b. Program events & activities c. Provide lighting, seating, electrical, art, landscaping d. Maintenance of parks is high priority e. Provide space conducive for the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Art Walks • Farmers Market • Shakespeare in the Park series • Lunch concert series, etc.
<p>G. Funding</p>	<p>G-1 TIF District</p> <p>G-2 2004 and/or 2008 City Bonds</p> <p>G-3 Downtown Management District (DMD) funds</p> <p>G-4 City Tax Abatement</p> <p>G-5 Renewal Community</p> <p>G-6 Bond Referendum</p> <p>G-7 Section 108 HUD</p> <p>G-8 CDBG Funds</p> <p>G-9 Gift donors for public art program</p> <p>G-10 TXDOT</p> <p>G-11 Financial Institutions</p>

STRATEGY TWO-INFRASTRUCTURE

GOALS	ACTIONS
A. Pedestrian scale lighting	<p>A-1 Address neglected existing lighting</p> <p>A-2 Provide lighting in SEAtown and Downtown Districts</p>
B. Improve all sidewalks, consistent in all areas including ADA accessibility	<p>B-1 Needs analysis on every sidewalk in the larger and smaller focus areas</p> <p>B-2 Work with DMD and their sidewalk grant program standards</p> <p>B-3 Implement sidewalk improvements in phases</p> <p><u>Phase 1.</u> Needs analysis on every sidewalk in the larger and smaller focus areas--focus on walk ability, electrical, irrigation, and fiber optic needs</p> <p><u>Phase 2.</u> Plan at least one complete block at a time or larger for sidewalk replacement</p> <p><u>Phase 3.</u> Consult with AEP, and other stakeholders to minimize risk during demo phase</p> <p><u>Phase 4.</u> Demo sidewalks and install electrical, irrigation, and fiber optic</p> <p><u>Phase 5.</u> Install new sidewalks</p> <p><u>Phase 6.</u> Curb height changes-ADA compliance and installation of ramps</p>
C. Provide Fiber Optics and Irrigation throughout sidewalks of the area	<p>C-1 Conduit implementations to add capabilities of running Fiber Optic Cable with Irrigation for trees/plants at the same time sidewalks improvements are done.</p> <p>C-2 Conduit implementation to add capabilities of running Fiber Optic Cable with Irrigation for trees/plants at the same time the sidewalks are being upgraded. Locate all existing Duct Banks, user Privileges/Agreements, and perform needs analysis for future use.</p>
D.. Improve traffic flow in the Downtown area and particularly after small/peak events	<p>D-1 Drive traffic from major events to the areas of retail, restaurants, bars, and other events into the downtown area (currently we usher them out very quickly to the freeway, we should offer the option at the very least to re-enter the downtown area).</p>

STRATEGY TWO-INFRASTRUCTURE

GOALS	ACTIONS
E. Provide high speed water taxi to transport local commuters and tourists to Rockport, Port Aransas, Ingleside, Packery Channel and Downtown	E-1 Provide docking area for the high speed water taxi E-2 Share cost with other areas the taxi visits
F. Information for tourists/people walking/traveling the downtown area	F-1 Kiosks at Bus Stops with GPS capability to locate the bus. Also see online marketing and area information for the downtown area.
G. Improve signage entering and within Downtown areas, Bayfront area with Downtown, Sea Town, Corpus Christi and	G-1 Increase size and visibility of signage, consistent wording, colors and themes. DMD/RTA & SEA Town already in process of addressing this item G-2 Utilize contractor, working on SEAtown Wayfinding, for Downtown Wayfinding.
H. Improvement connectivity between Downtown and Sea Town and entrance from I-37	H-1 Traffic studies impact 1. <u>Chaparral</u> becoming a 2-way with parallel parking to connect SeaTown and DownTown. 2. <u>East/West streets</u> that may become 1-lane one way street aligned with angled parking to reclaim and add to the total # of parking spaces in downtown.
I. Marina Improvement	I-1 Invest monies on Marina landscaping in preparation for upcoming "Texas International Boat Show" in April 2007. Potential source of funding is monies slated from the 2004 Bond Election-\$250,000. Project responsibility would include DMD, Marina and City of Corpus Christi.

STRATEGY TWO-INFRASTRUCTURE

GOALS	ACTIONS
J. Infrastructure Traffic Flow Master/Long Term Plan	J-1 Include for alternative, possible railway or monorail system in long term traffic flow master plan. 1. Connectivity between TAMUCC and Downtown
K. Funding	K-1 TIF District K-2 2004 and/or 2008 City Bonds K-3 Public/private partnerships' (city matching private dollar donations) K-4 Corporate sponsorships K-5 State and Federal transportation grants K-6 Downtown Management District (DMD) Funds K-7 ADA Accessibility Funds K-8 RTA Funds K-9 Texas Parks and Wildlife grants K-10 Crime Control District/Police Department K-11 Financial Institutions

STRATEGY THREE-POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

GOALS	ACTIONS
A. Create a neighborhood environment by promoting development of residential facilities	A-1 Promote mixed use residential units by providing city incentives.
	A-2 Develop a Farmer's market
	A-3 Attract specialized retail, entertainment (first run Cinema Theater, specialized grocery/wine store). Support local retailers
	A-4 Make the downtown area a viable alternative for Del Mar and TAMU students by offering free transportation, permanent free wireless access, extending the fiber network
	A-5 Define our niche. Bayfront, Port facilities, proximity to Mexico, Marina wireless community.
	A-6 Create a strategic long-term plan for downtown-similar to the Abilene, TX plan.
B. Strengthen and Improve Code enforcement	B-1 Institute a systematic façade inspection of buildings that are in danger of decaying and falling into disrepair
	B-2 Modify ordinances' code to address vacant lots and buildings

STRATEGY THREE-POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

GOAL	ACTIONS
C. Provide parking in the Downtown area	C-1 Use the “shared parking” concept. Allow for parking spaces to be utilized for multiple purposes (day time office work; night time entertainment)
	C-2 Reinvest all parking meter/ticket monies received downtown into improving the current parking.
	C-3 Sell parking passes with clear limitations for current business employees. Specific vehicles, certain area, certain times.
	C-4 Increase street parking by reducing 1-way cross streets to 1 lane and add angled parking spaces. Construct the spaces using an open & porous design (a 50/50 mix of brick and green space). This allows for better drainage, and creates additional low maintenance green space.
	C-5 Design newly constructed parking garages utilizing a mixed use (retail, office space) design for the first floor in the green area of downtown. Encourage long-term users to park in these garages and allow the customer traffic to use the street spaces.
	C-6 Improve amenities for pedestrian and bicycle traffic. Add seating, bike racks, etc.
	C-7 Create parking spaces by providing use of currently wasted space, sizing spaces for smaller vehicles & motorcycles.
	C-8 Use WiFi parking meters

STRATEGY THREE-POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

GOAL	ACTIONS
D. Safety is a top priority and citizens and visitors perceive downtown as a safe environment	D-1 Work with police to coordinate a specialized patrol.
	D-2 Request police department to provide facility security surveys for downtown businesses
	D-3 Police department to have a faster turnaround for criminal complaints
	D-4 Create a downtown neighborhood watch program with residents and businesses
	D-5 Recommend security lights, cameras, anti graffiti equipment for downtown
E. Create an Overlay District	E-1 Prohibit boarding of ground floor of vacant buildings
	E-2 Encourage window displays
	E-3 Require some percentage of windows area on walls facing streets
	E-4 No new billboards
	E-5 Pattern overlay district after other cities that have successfully revitalized their downtown
	E-6 Penalize landowners for holding vacant buildings for an extended period of time.
	E-7 Create and publish blighted property standards
	E-8 Create an eminent domain policy for development of blighted property
	E-9 Issue vacancy registration fees. Based on the total number of years a property is vacant, regardless of varying ownership over time. Bill quarterly. Increase fees as downtime progresses. Apply fees collected to additional costs to enforce. Have the ability to place liens on property for the fees owed.

STRATEGY THREE-POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

GOAL	ACTIONS
F. Funding	F-1 TIF District
	F-2 2004 and/or 2008 City Bonds
	F-3 CDBG/HUD Grants
	F-4 Downtown Façade Improvement Grant Program
	F-5 Abandoned Building TAX
	F-6 City taxes/fees-hotel/motel tax, sales tax, parking meters/tickets, etc.
	F-7 Sell parking passes
	F-8 State and/or Federal Transportation Grants
	F-9 DMD Funds
	F-10 Crime Control District/Police Department
	F-11 City Tax Abatement
	F-12 Renewal Community
	F-13 Financial Institutions

STRATEGY FOUR-BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

GOALS	ACTIONS
<p>A. More Retail and commercial businesses in Downtown</p>	<p>A-1 Provide infrastructure to encourage business development. Infrastructure needs include improved sidewalks, lighting, streetscapes etc. Develop plans to present infrastructure needs to City for 2008 bond program.</p>
	<p>A-2 Provide incentives such as rent buy downs and low interest loans to facilitate new business start ups.</p>
	<p>A-3 Support new business during first 12 months of operation (gap period) by providing free or reduced cost marketing which promotes Downtown events and businesses.</p>
	<p>A-4 Create a Downtown Task Force comprised of key city staff to assist in carrying out the Downtown Redevelopment Agenda.</p>
<p>B. Priority given to recruiting businesses that reflect local crafts, arts and retail.</p>	<p>B-1 Work with local art groups/Del Mar College/TAMU to reach the art community to encourage them to develop Downtown art galleries. (Public/private partnerships)</p>
	<p>B-2 Market the Downtown area to local business owners and provide incentives for them to locate in Downtown.</p>

STRATEGY FOUR-BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

GOALS	ACTIONS
C. Encourage new business downtown	<p>C-1 Speed the approval process for downtown businesses to encourage movement</p> <p>C-2 Create an avenue for tenants to voice their thoughts & ideas similar to those available for landowners</p> <p>C-3 Dedicate a downtown task force for business & residential recruitment for downtown.</p> <p>C-4 Offer unique advantages to encourage relocation of small business owners</p> <p>C-5 Develop program for small business owners to participate in a downtown market.</p> <p>C-6 All Downtown businesses assist in developing an e-commerce website through the city's WiFi Network</p> <p>C-7 Involve local financial support from banks/SBA/ACCION/SBDC to support new or expanding businesses</p> <p>C-8 Create a Downtown Merchants Association</p> <p>C-9 Economic Development Office will make contact with property owners to discuss redevelopment concerns relative to their property.</p>
D. Funding	<p>D-1 TIF District</p> <p>D-2 2004 and/or 2008 City Bonds</p> <p>D-3 Downtown Façade Improvement Grant Program</p> <p>D-4 Foundation Grants</p> <p>D-5 Public-Private Partnerships (City matching private dollar donations)</p> <p>D-6 Downtown Revolving Loan Fund</p> <p>D-7 DMD</p> <p>D-8 City Tax Abatement</p> <p>D-9 Renewal Community</p> <p>D-10 4A Funds</p> <p>D-11 SBA 504 Loan Program</p> <p>D-12 Financial Institutions</p>

STRATEGY FIVE-MARKETING

GOALS	ACTIONS
<p>A. Brand Downtown as a DESTINATION</p>	<p>A-1 Create logos, signage, way finding.</p> <p>A-2 Create graphic standards.</p> <p>A-3 Establish boundaries with visually exciting "entryway" to Corpus Christi, Downtown and/or the Bayfront</p> <p>A-4 Create kiosks with maps that show "You are here" for pedestrian traffic</p>
<p>B. Develop a definitive strategic marketing plan with focus on residential and business participation</p>	<p>B-1 Define Target Market for campaigns. Report statistics of age and income of individuals who gravitate to downtown areas in cities with similar geographics as</p> <p>B-2 Utilize press kits, promotions, collateral materials, national advertising campaigns, and cooperative efforts with convention and Visitor Bureaus, Chambers of Commerce, One Stop Shop promotions, realtors and grass roots campaigning. Focus on range of markets: business, entrepreneur, tourist, churches, retirement,</p> <p>B-3 Produce newsletter or special mailings highlighting new and existing businesses moving or relocating to our downtown. Utilize web sites to increase reach and ease of use (ex. click here to subscribe to newsletter).</p> <p>B-4 Develop web site portal (with staff person dedicated to updating it), one stop shop materials, frequent advertising, press releases and links. Focus on business development.</p>
<p>C. Create downtown memorable experiences.</p>	<p>C-1 Develop monthly activities in the downtown area, which are well publicized, and increase reach for existing events. Examples include Festivals, Art Walks, Restaurant Walks, Chef Demonstrations, Outdoor Markets, Business networking mixers in the park, Dances and special musical entertainment , Taste of Downtown. Must give incentives to get participation from businesses to allow for street closures and for better community involvement.</p>

STRATEGY FIVE-MARKETING

GOALS	ACTIONS
<p>C. Create downtown memorable experiences.</p>	<p>C-2 Sunset "Experience" every Wednesday night during sailboat regattas, more frequent movies and outdoor activities offering free events. Establish consistency in promoting all events in the downtown.</p>
	<p>C-3 Bumper stickers pointing to "Follow me downtown" for residents/downtown business owners. Develop interactive participation with Downtown publications (ex. On the street interviews of people for newsletters and web sites, photo contests, podcasts, etc. to encourage frequent interest). FYI, Caller Times, Padre Island Moon, SouthSide Sun, etc. to include downtown insert in their publication. Articles, columns or inserts listing our downtown events in publications in surrounding areas.</p>
	<p>C-4 Create art experiences downtown such as decorated park benches, temporary murals for boarded up buildings (like the one on corner of Starr/Mesquite), permanent murals, "Dances With Dolphins" type exhibits with multiple artist participation and tourist walking tour, "sculpture walk", etc. Consider the extraordinary Wyland Whaling Wall, 3-D illusion murals on buildings (Eric Grohe" and sidewalk paintings.</p>

STRATEGY FIVE-MARKETING

GOALS	ACTIONS
<p>D. Get cooperation and buy-in from entities that want to move downtown forward</p>	<p>D-1 Need enthusiastic and knowledgeable presenters to set up speaking engagements for community organizations to bring the public aboard to gain support and spread the word of the project and keep the public updated.</p> <p>D-2 Develop sales force to gain the investors and potential residential occupants for the downtown project</p> <p>D-3 Set up incentives within the sales force to acknowledge their efforts and success.</p> <p>D-4 Assist business owners in developing cooperative advertising for downtown events to patronize restaurants, bars and shops with discount coupons or incentives following special events at Downtown area venues. This effort gives downtown visitors more reasons to stay downtown for longer periods of time.</p>
<p>E. Funding</p>	<p>E-1 Foundation Grants</p> <p>E-2 Public-Private Partnerships (City matching private dollar donations)</p> <p>E-3 Corporate Sponsorships</p> <p>E-4 DMD</p> <p>E-5 Financial Institutions</p>

STRATEGY SIX-ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

GOAL	ACTIONS
<p>A. Establish a new and visible symbol of City's commitment to renewal and to a new future for Downtown Corpus Christi by creating a staff Downtown Task Force.</p>	<p>A-1 This staff Task Force, headed by Economic Development, will be composed of city staff from various departments to expedite and foster development in the downtown area as defined by the DRC. Examples of the types of staff included, on an as needed basis are: legal, utilities, planning, finance, budget, engineering, fire, police, code enforcement, and development services. This task force will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A catalyst • An advocate of the area that encourages property owner and citizen advocacy • An expeditor of business • An oversight group to ensure timely maintenance/security/code enforcement • A group with the ability to implement programs or processes. Programs or processes that should be considered for implementation include Main Street, a Planning and Maintenance District, and a vacant building enforcement pilot project which includes more aggressive and expedited enforcement.

STRATEGY SIX-ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

GOAL	ACTIONS
<p>B. Develop a financing plan for implementation of this report and long-term Downtown funding.</p>	<p>The city's Downtown Task Force should also research and bring forth recommendations to the City Council and City Manager on a financing plan for the implementation of this report, with possible funding sources including use of annual budget resources, capital improvement bond program financing, utility revenue bonds, tax free housing finance bonds, federal and state grants funds, other public and private funding sources including local sources such as the RTA, and a tax increment financing zone (TIF). The DRC had considerable discussion about the creation of a TIF with as much of the area identified by the DRC as "downtown" as possible recognizing the 10% residential constraint. The DRC was concerned that a TIF a) would not fully provide for the financing needs identified in this plan. b) should not be seen as the only source of funds. c) should enhance not offset current funding commitments to the area.</p>
<p>C. Enhance advocacy for Downtown and this report</p>	<p>DRC members will establish an advocacy group (or enhance an existing group, such as the Heart). This group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will move the agenda forward for the downtown as presented in this report and continue to identify and implement new opportunities for revitalization; • Will meet regularly to help implement and monitor the progress on accomplishing the agenda • Will encourage membership and involvement of other interested groups and individuals including city management, appropriate city boards and commissions, DMD, Heart, the three Chambers, CVB, EDC, etc. The DRC welcomes the City Council to join this group and participate actively in their efforts.
<p>D. Funding</p>	<p>D-1 General Fund D-2 4A Board</p>