

CITY OF BROWNFIELD

2006 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

CHAPTER 5: IMAGE AND DESIGN PLAN

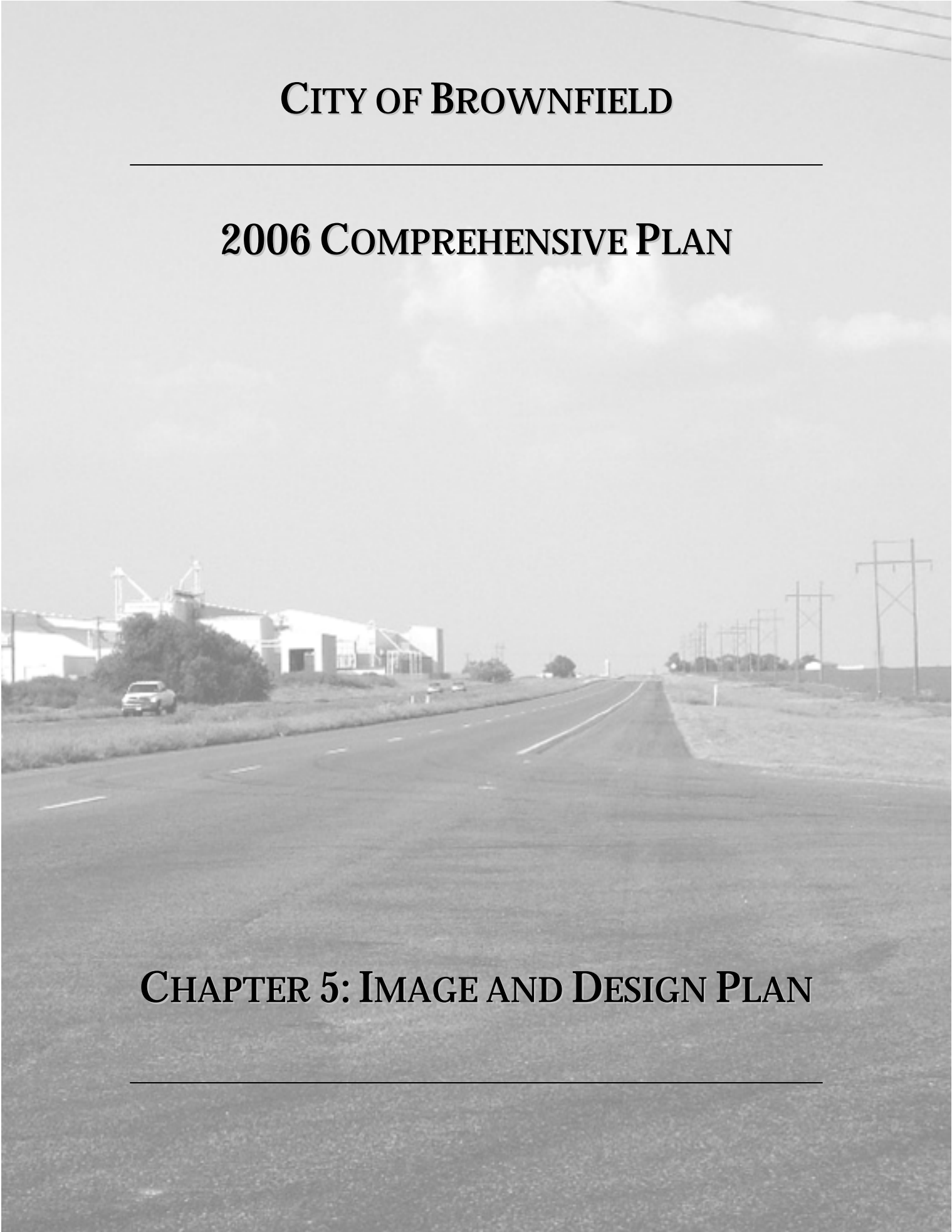


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Introduction

The image and design guidelines presented within this chapter of the 2006 Comprehensive Plan are intended to improve the quality of life, or “livability”, within Brownfield. These guidelines focus on elements of the man-made environment that can be enhanced, such as screening, site design, landscaping, and similar elements. Such elements are often difficult to quantify because their aesthetic quality is inherently subjective - they often deal with the sensory response of people to the physical environment in terms of its visual appearance and spatial character and relationships. Although individual responses to aesthetic considerations vary, the careful application of image-related design principles in planning practice should enhance the quality of the built environment and the corresponding quality of life enjoyed by Brownfield’s citizens and visitors.

Design elements such as landscaping, screening, and signage – which are typically reviewed by the City during the development approval process – will serve as the basis for many of the recommendations herein. New projects offer the opportunity for development standards to be implemented as part of the zoning process. By implementing the image and design guidelines recommended here, site development and building design standards for future development can be applied throughout the City, without the need for planned unit development zoning. Applying these standards in a uniform manner would have a significant impact on the quality of life and the community image of Brownfield.

BACKGROUND AND DEVELOPMENT OF THIS CHAPTER

The level, type, and amount of guidelines appropriate to enhance the image of Brownfield will ultimately come from the community itself. This process is accomplished by the City’s leaders, with the support of the general public, constructing public policy to accomplish the vision the City has for itself. This chapter and subsequent recommendations were developed based on the following three primary sources.

Visual Character Survey:

A Visual Character Survey (VCS) is a technique where respondents are asked to score a series of photographs (images) based on their preferences with regard to what they find to be visually preferable. The images illustrate various aspects of the developed environment. The VCS is an effective method of receiving attitudinal, aesthetic-based input, since the survey allows respondents the ability to view real-world examples of developed areas and elements. The VCS, consisting of 105 images, was administered during the preparation of the 2006 Comprehensive Plan.

Please refer to Appendix A and Appendix B for a complete summary of the VCS and its findings.

Goals & Objectives Chapter:

The Goals and Objectives from Chapter 2 of this Comprehensive Plan provided the necessary direction to form the recommendation within this chapter. From the Goals and Objectives it is evident that the City substantially desires to improve the image of the City. The following goals and their objectives help establish a foundation for enhancing the image of the City:

- Goal-17) Maintain and build upon the “small-town” feel and unique characteristics of the community.
 - Objective-a. Utilize the Comprehensive Plan, specifically the Future Land Use Plan, in daily decision-making regarding zoning, land use and development proposals.
 - Objective-b. Determine appropriate locations for future residential and non-residential development, while considering existing neighborhoods and natural features.
 - Objective-c. Identify areas on the Future Land Use Plan that are appropriate for a variety of residential densities (e.g., low, medium, and high).
 - Objective-d. Review, and if necessary revise, the City’s Zoning Ordinance to ensure that high standards are required for new nonresidential development.
 - Objective-e. Ensure that new nonresidential development enhances the quality of life in Brownfield.
 - Objective-f. Ensure that new development, both residential and nonresidential, will be compatible with existing land uses in terms of use, density, scale, and off-site effects.
 - Objective-g. Assess current development review procedures to ensure that they are adequately enforcing the City’s development policies.
- Goal-18) Improve the appearance of the City along major traffic corridors.
- Goal-19) Develop relationships with private/non-profit organizations (such as businesses and churches) to assist in City beautification efforts.
- Goal-20) Develop appearance standards.
- Goal-21) Promote the program “Keep Texas Beautiful.”

Comprehensive Planning Advisory Committee (CPAC) Meeting:

The recommendations in this chapter are also based on the input provided at several meetings of the Comprehensive Planning Advisory Committee (CPAC). The CPAC discussed image and design issues and the level of appropriateness of the recommendations. The input received at the CPAC meetings was critical in the development of this chapter.

Image-Related Elements to Consider

As stated in the introduction, the City can utilize zoning to ensure aesthetically pleasing projects. Some of the issues that can be considered by the City during the processing and approval of development projects are:

- Outside Storage,
- Loading Areas,
- Refuse Containers,
- Minimal Landscaping Elements,
- Nonresidential Building Facades,
- Articulation of Building Facades,
- Residential Driveway and Garage Configuration,
- Residential Screening, and
- Signage.

Each of these elements adds an important component to quality development. While some, such as building height, building setbacks, driveway location, sidewalks and parking, are addressed in the City Zoning Code, others, such as fencing and building materials, have traditionally been considered on a site-specific basis. The following sections of this chapter discuss design elements under such categories as Overall Design, Layout, Site Elements, and Building Standards.

OUTSIDE STORAGE

Outside storage areas are generally defined as areas where goods and materials are displayed or stored outside a building for more than 24 hours or on a permanent basis. Common examples of materials include pre-fabricated storage sheds, pipe, lumber, and some landscaping materials. Although many nonresidential uses require outside storage areas to accommodate the types and amount of goods necessary to be successful, these areas (if they are displayed in an unsightly manner) can detract from the overall positive image that Brownfield desires to portray along most major thoroughfares.



*Illustration 5-1
Examples of Outside Storage*

It is recommended that the City require all new businesses to locate outside storage areas such that they are not facing onto or primarily visible from any major thoroughfare. When a site is adjacent to residential land uses, outside storage areas should be required to be screened from public view with a screening wall or fence at least six feet in height. The City should also specify that outside storage materials may not be stacked above the height of the screening wall. If outside storage cannot be located or positioned such that it is not facing onto or primarily visible from any major thoroughfare (e.g., behind the building, etc.), then it should be displayed in an orderly manner. This requirement is generally not applicable to most retail businesses.



*Illustration 5-2
Examples of Screening Methods*

LOADING AND SERVICE AREAS

Many types of nonresidential uses require loading docks and service entrances to receive and distribute goods. Also, service bays, such as those used by automobile repair shops (**Illustration 5-3**), can be unattractive. Thus, the placement and screening of these elements are of a primary concern to ensure quality development. Currently, there are no regulations stating how service doors should be placed on-site or how far loading areas should be set back from street or residential areas. The following recommendations define ways in which potentially negative impacts of loading and service areas can be alleviated through quality design.



*Illustration 5-3
Service Bays*

Location:

Loading docks and service bays should be positioned such that they do not face onto and are not visible from the front of buildings. Loading docks should generally be located to the rear of nonresidential buildings. Service bays or doors (i.e., for a commercial use) should be placed to the side or rear of the structure.



*Illustration 5-4
Loading/Service Area*

Distance:

The City should require loading areas to be set back from the street at least 50 feet in most cases within its zoning regulations. Additionally, offsite maneuvering of delivery vehicles should be prohibited.

Screening:

If loading areas or service bays are adjacent to residential uses, then they should be screened or have an additional setback.



*Illustration 5-5
Example of a Screening Wall Built to
Conceal a Loading/Service Area*

REFUSE CONTAINERS

As ubiquitous as a parking lot, refuse is an unavoidable product of business development. Trash receptacles, however, do not have to be unsightly or reduce the visual quality of nonresidential developments. Two key factors can ensure this: the placement of these receptacles and the design of screening elements for them.

Location:

Trash receptacles should be prohibited in front parking areas, or should be placed within a visually screened area. Trash receptacles may be placed in the rear of buildings without required screening.

Screening:

Trash receptacles placed in the front or side yards should be screened from public view with a masonry wall (on three sides with a gate on the fourth) that is at least one foot taller than the container, and that is compatible with the primary building. "Public view" should be defined as the view from a major street as well as the view from any adjacent residential uses. "Compatible" should be defined as similar in material and color to the primary building. It is further recommended that the gated side, which is to be used for garbage pickup service, remain closed except when service is being provided.



*Illustration 5-6
Example of a Refuse Area Being Screened*



*Illustration 5-7
Example of a Refuse Area that is not Screened*

LANDSCAPING ELEMENTS

As communities have become more urbanized, the need for landscaping elements has become increasingly apparent; landscaped areas provide a natural visual relief within a stark man-made environment. Landscaping elements that are placed alongside the roadway or as a part of a nonresidential development can improve the image of the City. Such elements are often incorporated into individual sites as they are developed; however, they are not currently required for developments in Brownfield.



*Illustration 5-8
Examples of Landscaping Elements in Medians and Rights-of-Way*

First, it is recommended that the City take advantage of the public domain alongside roadways (i.e., highways) and incorporate drought tolerant landscaping elements within medians and sections of adjacent rights-of-way. Many communities have successfully incorporated native plants, such as wildflowers, along their highway rights-of-way. An expanse of flowers indigenous to the region or some other native plant material could provide an attractive, seasonal transformation of these major corridors. Any landscaping that is integrated alongside the roadways should utilize locally recommended, drought tolerant plants and xeriscape techniques to reduce the amount of watering needed.

Second, it is recommended that some landscaping be required within nonresidential sites along major streets and highways, and should apply to new construction and to any major remodeling, or where the primary function of the building is altered. However, due to the semi-arid West Texas climate, many typical landscaping materials could have

problems taking hold and flourishing in Brownfield's natural environment. Therefore, the City should establish landscaping standards to reproduce landscaping elements that many Brownfield businesses have been able to implement and maintain (please refer to **Illustration 5-9** for examples).

The following are recommended landscaping guidelines:

- One tree per 50 feet of street frontage, and
- A minimum 300 square-foot landscaping area consisting of shrubs or ground cover should be located within the front yard.



Illustration 5-9
Landscaping around Existing Brownfield/Lubbock Businesses



Illustration 5-10
A Brownfield Business with almost no Landscaping

NONRESIDENTIAL BUILDING FACADES

The importance of building materials used on the facades of nonresidential structures along major roadways cannot be overstated. Cities across the nation have recognized the importance of ensuring that nonresidential structures along major roadways are as reflective of community image as signage, landscaping, or any other development-related element commonly associated with aesthetics. Currently, the City does not have any standards for building materials used on the facades of nonresidential structures.

Therefore, in order to promote an improved community image along the major roadways, it is recommended that the City prohibit metal buildings along the Lubbock and Tahoka Highways except by special use permit (SUP). If metal buildings along the Lubbock and Tahoka Highways are approved by SUP, then the front building façade should have at least 30 percent brick or masonry materials. **Illustration 5-12** provides several examples of façade improvements.



*Illustration 5-11
Metal Buildings*



Illustration 5-12

Metal Building Facades with Brick and Stone Improvements

RESIDENTIAL DRIVEWAY AND GARAGE CONFIGURATION

The placement of a residential driveway and garage can have a substantial impact on a neighborhood's visual appearance. In situations where alleys are not used in the design of a neighborhood, then driveways must be attached to the street. With driveways attached to the street, a common method used in home construction is to locate the garage directly in front of the home, see **Illustration 5-13**. However, from a planning perspective there are two main challenges/issues with the placement of driveways and garages in the front of homes.

Challenge/Issue #1)

If a garage is constructed in front of the home, then the garage generally becomes the most dominate visual feature of the home, see **Illustration 5-13**. While this layout is cheaper to construct (less concrete is required for paving if constructed in large numbers) it generally does not contribute to the visual appeal of a neighborhood and does not conform to the image of quality neighborhoods established in the Goal & Objectives.

Challenge/Issue #2)

With garages located directly in the front of the homes, less space is available for on-street parking in small lot subdivisions (i.e., 6,000 square-foot lots).

Therefore, it is recommended that driveways and garages, in all new subdivisions should have a combination of the configurations shown in both **Illustration 5-13** and **Illustration 5-14**.



Illustration 5-13
Example of Garages Facing the Street



*Illustration 5-14
Example of J-Drives – Garages do not Face the Street*

RESIDENTIAL SCREENING

At present, the City does not require a screening wall or fence to be erected between residential and nonresidential uses. Additionally, there is no requirement for any type of screening between neighborhoods and roadways. Screening elements, whether a wall or landscaping, should be required between:

- residential and nonresidential uses, and
- neighborhoods and arterial/collector streets.

Such screening should be initially constructed by the developer (the nonresidential use typically should construct a screening element between a residential and nonresidential use), and then should become the responsibility of the private property owners (typically a homeowners association or businesses).

A requirement to screen residential neighborhoods from nonresidential uses and roadways would serve several functions. First, screening would improve the appearance from the road - the view of backyard fences and garages would be transformed to a more aesthetically pleasing perspective of a visually cohesive screening element. Increased privacy for residents' homes is another positive effect. In addition, screening not only improves the image of the roadway but also serves as a buffer for homeowners by decreasing the impact of noise from the adjacent roadway. There are several elements that can be used for effective screening as the following recommendations exemplify.

Screening Wall Examples

If a screening wall is used, the wall should be constructed entirely (100 percent) of brick, masonry, or other like material (such as HardiPlank). It should also be at least six feet in height. Wood, although it is an attractive material to use for screening walls initially, is a high maintenance material and should therefore not be permitted for screening walls.



*Illustration 5-15
Subdivision without a Screening Wall*



*Illustration 5-16
Subdivision without a Screening Wall*



*Illustration 5-17
Wood Screening Wall in Deteriorating Condition*



*Illustration 5-18
Subdivision with Landscaped Screening*

Landscaping Screening Elements

In addition to screening walls, various types of landscaping can provide effective screening. Types include landscaped berms, which generally need wide setbacks, and requirements should include that the landscaped berms be three to four feet in height with a maximum slope of 3:1.

Certain types of trees can provide effective screening as well. This option can be seen in **Illustration 5-18** and **Illustration 5-19**. General requirements for landscaping elements being used for screening should include a maintenance provision to ensure that a consistent visual screening is provided. It is recommended that screening elements, whether a wall or landscaping, should be required between residential neighborhoods and both nonresidential uses and arterial/collector streets.



*Illustration 5-19
Example of Screening Wall*

SIGNAGE

Regulating signage is one of the simplest and most effective ways in which a city can ensure a positive community image. There are two primary aspects of signage that should be considered. The first is the number of signs that nonresidential uses are permitted to have. The second is the type of sign a nonresidential use is permitted to have, which is addressed herein.



*Illustration 5-20
Monument Signs:*

First, it is recommended that Brownfield allow one sign per frontage on a public right-of-way. Second, it is recommended that the City encourage the use of monument signs along major thoroughfares. Although many in the development community desire large, tall signs to maximize visibility, monument signs can be just as effective, as evidenced by communities across the country. The maximum allowable height, including the base, for a monument sign should be about six feet (6'). The overall surface area of the sign, including the base, should be no more than about eighty (80) square feet per side. Freestanding "pole signs" could still be permitted, but monument signage is encouraged and preferred. The maximum height of freestanding "pole signs" should be 25 feet and be no larger than 200 square feet in size.



*Illustration 5-21
Freestanding Pole Signs*

Supplemental Recommendations

KEEP TEXAS BEAUTIFUL PROGRAM

The City should continue to be involved with the Keep Texas Beautiful (KTB) program, which is a formal neighborhood/community clean up program. The program is the “the grassroots arm of the Texas Department of Transportation’s ‘Don’t Mess with Texas’ litter prevention campaign and ‘Adopt-a-Highway’ program.”¹ The program has been adopted by over 300 communities in Texas and offers its affiliates a variety of services to promote grassroots beautification efforts. The City should participate in KTB-sponsored programs such as “The Don’t Mess with Texas Trash-Off.” The KTB reports this event is the single largest one-day cleanup event in the state, with nearly 200,000 volunteers. Additionally, there was input from the CPAC members that Brownfield needs a cleanup program along the highways to help improve its image.



Illustration 5-23

*The City should be involved in Cleanup Efforts such as “Trash-Off” – a Statewide Effort
Image Source: www.ktb.org*

CONTINUED CODE ENFORCEMENT

The City currently has a proactive code enforcement policy. Enforcing the regulations that the City already has is a key method to improving the image of the City. Therefore, it is recommended that the City maintain its current level of code enforcement.

EXTEND THE CITY LIMITS NORTH

The City should consider extending its City limits to the north to encompass more of the Lubbock Highway frontage. Due to the high volume of people traveling this corridor, the area along the Lubbock Highway is critical to the image of the City. Therefore, the only way to ensure that the corridor develops in agreement with the vision of the 2006 Comprehensive Plan is to extend the City limit boundaries north. This would give the City the proper authority to apply these recommendations to one of the main entrances into the City, the Lubbock Highway area.

REMOVING SIGNS FROM VACANT BUILDINGS

One of the issues raised during the input process of the 2006 Comprehensive Plan was how many vacant buildings had dilapidated signs, which posed a problem to improving the image of the City. The City should investigate the possibility of removing dilapidated signs associated with vacant buildings. At a minimum, the City should address dilapidated signs, as well as buildings, with the current code enforcement measures.

¹ Keep Texas Beautiful Website: www.ktb.org

Conclusion

It is recommended that the following policies be adopted in order to preserve and improve Brownfield's overall community image:

- (1) The City should continue to pursue improving its overall image (especially along the Lubbock and Tahoka Highways) with design standards.
- (2) The recommendations that relate to improvements that can be initiated by the City should be prioritized and then included within the Capital Improvements program (i.e., landscaping elements within highway medians and sections of adjacent rights-of-way).
- (3) The recommendations related to aesthetic elements that will be the result of private development should be incorporated into the City's zoning regulations or subdivision regulations.

These three policies, in conjunction with the recommendations listed throughout this chapter will be useful tools to guide development. Overall, this chapter has proposed recommendations that will influence the aesthetics of non-residential and residential development along Brownfield's thoroughfares. Since future business development will have an important effect on the image of the City, it is critical that the City implement these design recommendations. The recommendations discussed throughout this chapter are summarized in **Table 5-1**.

<i>Table 5-1 Image and Design Plan Recommendations City of Brownfield, Texas</i>
<p><u>Outside Storage</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is recommended that the City require all new businesses to locate outside storage areas such that they are not facing onto or primarily visible from any major thoroughfare. • When a site is adjacent to residential land uses, outside storage areas should be required to be screened from public view with a screening wall or fence at least six feet in height. • The City should specify that outside storage materials may not be stacked above the height of the screening wall. • If outside storage cannot be located or positioned such that it is not facing onto or primarily visible from any major thoroughfare (e.g., behind the building, etc.), then it should be displayed in an orderly manner. This requirement is generally not applicable to most retail businesses.
Source: City of Brownfield's Image and Design Plan.

Table 5-1 (Continued)
Image and Design Plan Recommendations
City of Brownfield, Texas

Loading and Service Areas

- Location: Loading docks and service bays should be positioned such that they do not face onto and are not visible from the front of buildings. Loading docks should generally be located to the rear of nonresidential buildings. Service bays or doors (i.e., for a commercial use) should be placed to the side or rear of the structure.
- Distance: The City should require loading areas to be set back from the street at least 50 feet in most cases within its zoning regulations. Additionally, offsite maneuvering of delivery vehicles should be prohibited.
- Screening: If loading areas or service bays are adjacent to residential uses, then they should be screened or have an additional setback.

Refuse Containers

- Location: Trash receptacles should be prohibited in front parking areas, or should be placed within a visually screened area. Trash receptacles may be placed in the rear of buildings without required screening.
- Screening: Trash receptacles placed in the front or side yards should be screened from public view with a masonry wall (on three sides with a gate on the fourth) that is at least one foot taller than the container, and that is compatible with the primary building. “Public view” should be defined as the view from a major street as well as the view from any adjacent residential uses. “Compatible” should be defined as similar in material and color to the primary building. It is further recommended that the gated side, which is to be used for garbage pickup service, remain closed except when service is being provided.

Landscaping Elements

- It is recommended that the City take advantage of the public domain alongside roadways (i.e., highways) and incorporate drought tolerant landscaping elements within medians and sections of adjacent rights-of-way.
- It is recommended that some landscaping be required within nonresidential sites along major streets and highways, and should apply to new construction and to any major remodeling, or where the primary function of the building is altered.
 - The City should establish landscaping standards to reproduce landscaping elements that many Brownfield businesses have been able to implement and maintain (please refer to **Illustration 5-9** for examples).
 - The following are recommended landscaping guidelines: One tree per 50 feet of street frontage, and a minimum 300 square-foot landscaping area consisting of shrubs or ground cover should be located within the front yard.

Source: City of Brownfield's Image and Design Plan.

*Table 5-1 (Continued)
Image and Design Plan Recommendations
City of Brownfield, Texas*

Nonresidential Building Facades

It is recommended that the City prohibit metal buildings along the Lubbock and Tahoka Highways except by special use permit (SUP). If metal buildings along the Lubbock and Tahoka Highways are approved by SUP, then the front building façade should have at least 30 percent brick or masonry materials. **Illustration 5-12** provides several examples of façade improvements.

Residential Driveway and Garage Configuration

It is recommended that driveways and garages, in all new subdivisions should have a combination of the configurations shown in both **Illustration 5-13** and **Illustration 5-14**.

Residential Screening

It is recommended that screening elements, whether a wall or landscaping, should be required between residential neighborhoods and both nonresidential uses and arterial/collector streets.

Signage

- It is recommended that Brownfield allow one sign per frontage on a public right-of-way.
 - It is recommended that the City encourage the use of monument signs along major thoroughfares. The maximum allowable height, including the base, for a monument sign should be about six feet (6'). The overall surface area of the sign, including the base, should be no more than about eighty (80) square feet per side. Freestanding "pole signs" could still be permitted, but monument signage is encouraged and preferred.
- The maximum height of freestanding "pole signs" should be 25 feet and be no larger than 200 square feet in size.

Keep Texas Beautiful Program

The City should continue to be involved with the Keep Texas Beautiful (KTB) program.

Continue Code Enforcement

It is recommended that the City maintain its current level of code enforcement.

Source: City of Brownfield's Image and Design Plan.

Table 5-1 (Continued)
Image and Design Plan Recommendations
City of Brownfield, Texas

Extend the City Limits North

The City should consider extending its City limits to the north to encompass more of the Lubbock Highway frontage.

Removing Signs from Vacant Buildings

The City should investigate the possibility of removing dilapidated signs associated with vacant buildings.

Source: City of Brownfield's Image and Design Plan.