

CITY OF BROWNFIELD

2006 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

CHAPTER 6: DOWNTOWN PLAN

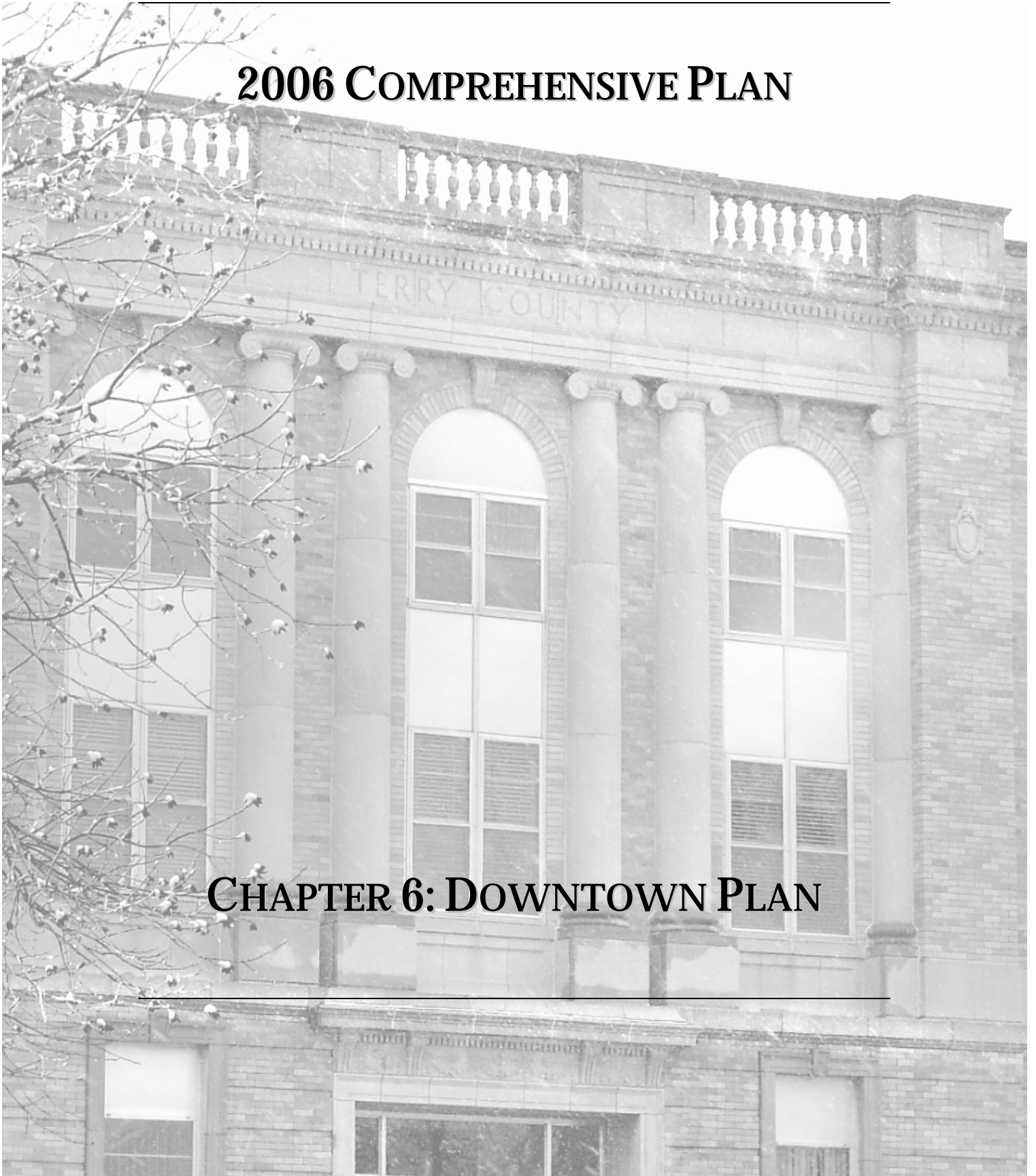


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Introduction

Numerous cities across Texas, both large and small, are trying to find ways in which to revitalize their downtown areas. This effort has been on going in Brownfield and has received increasing attention over the years. Brownfield's downtown area has served as the core of the City, both physically and economically, since before the City's incorporation in 1921. Over the years, many changes have occurred affecting the atmosphere within Downtown. Most notably, the Downtown is no longer the preferred choice of many businesses. Many businesses either have relocated or are now being built along the major highways, such as U.S. Highway 380 and Lubbock Highway. This practice has pulled much of the activity or "life" out of the downtown area. Similar circumstances have been experienced by downtowns across Texas and the country. Additionally, Brownfield's Downtown has been affected by a population decline over the past two decades. With less people living in the community, it has been difficult for businesses to remain profitable in the downtown area. As a result, many businesses have become vacant and buildings are in need of major repairs.

The goal of the Downtown Plan is to initiate a change in the way Downtown Brownfield is perceived. In order to thrive now and in years to come, Downtown needs to be seen as an exciting, vital, mixed-use area where people come to shop, to work, to eat, to be entertained, and even to live. The recommendations outlined here provide a framework by which the City, working with private sector representatives and other groups such as Brownfield Chamber of Commerce, can begin to rejuvenate Downtown, both in perception and in reality.



*Illustration 6-1
Downtown Brownfield (Main Street)*



*Illustration 6-2
Downtown Brownfield (Main Street)*



*Illustration 6-3
Downtown Brownfield (6th Street)*

Definition of Downtown Brownfield

The definition of Downtown Brownfield may be different among the many people who pass by and through it every day. Establishing a definition of and drawing boundaries for Downtown is important for the planning process because it will assist in creating and developing policies to improve the area. Additionally, once an area is defined as the Downtown, then specific capital improvements and land use decision, such as zoning, are easier to implement.

For planning purpose, the downtown area can be defined as (see **Illustration 6-4**):

- (1) The City blocks that surround the courthouse (the old Downtown),
- (2) Four City blocks south of the old downtown area, and
- (3) The City blocks adjacent to Main Street between 4th Street and Lubbock Highway.



Illustration 6-4
Boundaries for the Downtown Area

Existing Downtown Conditions

Downtown Brownfield is a unique place with a unique atmosphere. There are several factors and conditions contributing to the current environment of the downtown area. First, the Downtown has the advantage of several highways running by or through it. U.S. Highway 380 (Main Street) serves as a major east-west thoroughfare and U.S. Highways 82/62 (Lubbock Highway) serves as the major north-south thoroughfare. These highways are thoroughly traveled and send thousands of people by or through Downtown on an average day (please refer to Chapter 3: Thoroughfare Plan for specific information regarding traffic counts). Because of the highways people are brought to the Downtown, this factor contributes to the area being a highly traveled location. Aesthetically, many of the roads in the downtown area are paved with bricks. Some buildings such as the Courthouse, City Hall, bank, churches, and other buildings are well maintained. This feature improves the visual quality of the Downtown and helps to distinguish it from the other portions of the City.

Second, although several highways serve the downtown area there are a number of vacant lots and buildings in and immediately adjacent to Downtown. Many businesses in the Downtown have closed or moved to other locations. Generally, many Cities across America have experienced declines in their downtowns when development moves outward from the core of the city to the highways. For example, one trend that is typically viewed as detrimental to downtown businesses is the development of larger “big box” stores, such as a Wal-Mart store. Generally, this trend removes customers from traditional shops or stores in downtown areas because larger “big-box” stores, due to economies of scale, can offer lower prices on the same type of goods typically sold in a downtown. Therefore, shoppers that desire to save money are more inclined to buy from a “big-box” store than a local business in a downtown area. Brownfield also has another factor that is influencing the amount of vacant buildings and properties – population decline. The fact that Brownfield has declined in population translates into fewer customers for Downtown businesses. Throughout the downtown area, many buildings (some of which are historic) are vacant and are currently in need of major improvement.



*Illustration 6-5
Vacant Buildings Downtown*

Illustration 6-6 shows the existing land use for the Downtown. Table 6-1 displays the amount of acreage per land use category. As can be seen, the largest land use within the Downtown is nonresidential with 38.5 percent of the total acreage. Office use account for the largest type of nonresidential use. The rights-of-way (i.e., roads) land use category is the second largest with 35.7 percent. These two land use categories combined account for 50.5 acres of the total 68.0 acres (74.2 percent) that comprise the downtown area.

Notably, almost 10 percent of the Downtown acreage consists of vacant commercial buildings and five percent of the Downtown acreage is vacant.

Land Use Category	Acres	% of Total Land
Single-Family	2.2	3.2%
Duplex/Townhome	0	0.0%
Multiple-Family	0.4	0.6%
Manufactured Homes	0.2	0.3%
<i>Residential Sub-Total</i>	<i>2.8</i>	<i>4.1%</i>
Parks/Open Space	0	0.0%
Public/Semi-Public	11.5	16.9%
<i>Public Sub-Total</i>	<i>11.5</i>	<i>16.9%</i>
Office	7.2	10.6%
Retail	5.9	8.7%
Commercial	4	5.9%
Vacant Buildings	6.4	9.4%
Open Storage	1.8	2.6%
Parking	0.9	1.3%
Industrial	0	0.0%
<i>Nonresidential Sub-Total</i>	<i>26.2</i>	<i>38.5%</i>
<i>Vacant Land</i>	<i>3.2</i>	<i>4.7%</i>
<i>Rights-of-Way</i>	<i>24.3</i>	<i>35.7%</i>
Total	68.0	100.0%

Note: Downtown surveyed in November 2004
Source: Dunkin, Sefko & Associates, Inc.

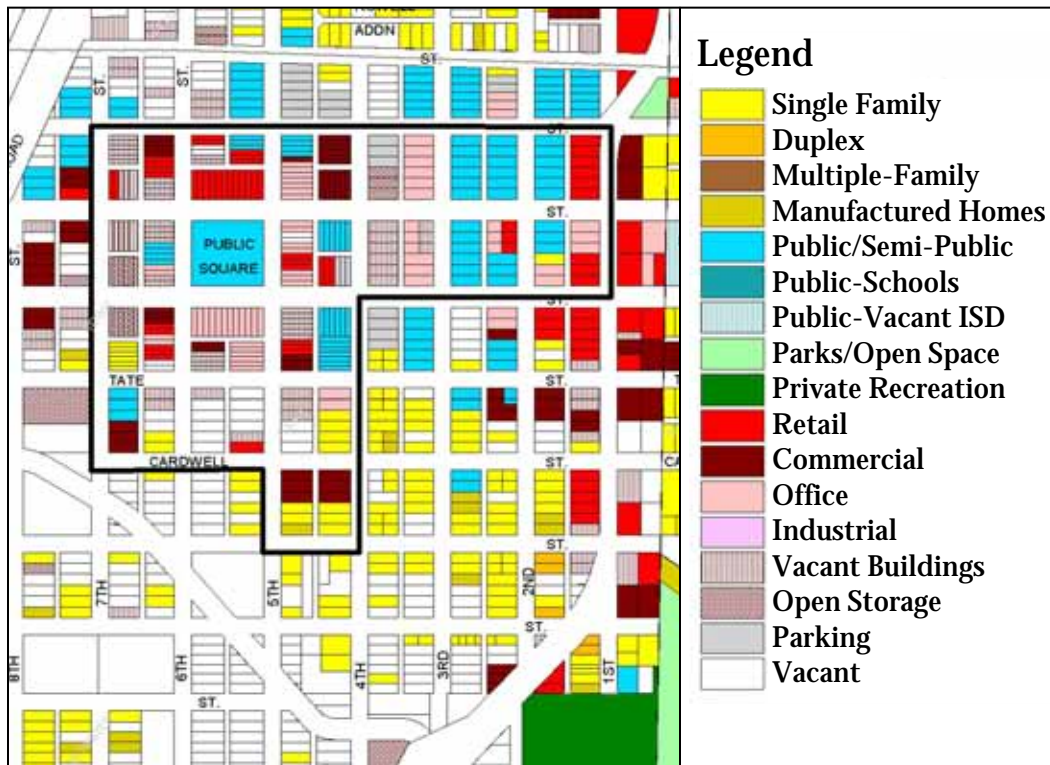


Illustration 6-6
Existing Downtown Land Use

Existing Downtown Planning Efforts

The City has a history of planning for the downtown area. The first planning effort came with the development of the 1981 Comprehensive Plan. This effort dealt with the downtown area or central business district (CBD) as defined by the boundaries of Powell Street to the north, Tate Street to the south, the railroad tracks to the west, and the Lubbock Highway to the east. The 1981 planning effort encompassed a larger downtown area than this 2006 Comprehensive Plan. The 1981 Plan outlined the following eight goals for the downtown area:

- (1) **Growth and Function:**
Ensure functional arrangement of land uses (i.e., diversity)
- (2) **General Character:**
Establish a high quality urban environment
- (3) **Accessibility:**
Improve roads, parking (address parking shortages), and create pedestrian traffic
- (4) **Retail Activity:**
Promote Downtown as the dominate retail center
- (5) **Office Activity:**
Promote Downtown as an office center (secondary to retail uses)
- (6) **Residential Activity**
Have different types and create a “24-hour environment”
- (7) **Cultural / Entertainment Activity**
Create a lively Downtown (cultural, social, educational, etc.)
- (8) **Environmental Quality**
Public spaces and recreation areas, uses of the natural features (e.g., draw)

The Downtown element of the 1981 Comprehensives Plan was an ambitious plan that was written during a booming economy when the City was anticipating substantial growth. Its goals were set to be accomplished in 20 years and listed objectives to be accomplished in five years. However, when the growth anticipated in the 1981 Plan did not occur many of the goals/recommendations for the Downtown element no longer appeared valid. With the declining population, businesses moving to the highways, and shops leaving Brownfield, by the year 2000, the downtown area had many vacant buildings and properties.



Illustration 6-7
Terry County Courthouse



Illustration 6-8
Terry County Courthouse

In 2003, the City initiated the next step in the planning process with the Visionaries in Preservation Program, which is sponsored by the Texas Historical Commission (THC). The goal of the Visionaries in Preservation Program is historic preservation of buildings. The following area the stated goal of the program:¹

The Texas Historical Commission's (THC) Visionaries in Preservation Program empowers Texas communities to:

- *shape the future of their historic preservation efforts through visioning and planning, and*
- *provide training and assistance tailored to achieve local preservation goals.*

The City submitted an application to become a member city in the Visionaries in Preservation Program. The City gained accepted into the program and listed the following goals and issues on its application.

- Goals:
 - Identify resources within the community
 - Heighten community awareness and pride
 - Develop zoning preservation plans
 - Move toward economic development and revitalization
- Issues and problems that need to be addressed:
 - The lack of funding prohibits the City and other entities to afford upkeep and maintenance and to accept donations of property
 - Absentee ownership
 - Large percentage of people in lower socio-economic groups
 - Declining and aging population
 - Lack of leadership



*Illustration 6-9
First Baptist Church (Main Street)*

¹ Texas Historical Commission Website: www.thc.state.tx.us/visioninpres/vpdefault.html

A group of architecture students, from Texas Tech University, has made the most recent step concerning the historic preservation of the downtown area. In May of 2004, the Texas Tech group studied the architecture of buildings in Downtown and focused on the older historic buildings that were constructed around the 1920s. The group developed a historic preservation district ordinance that could overlay the existing ordinance and created regulations for Downtown buildings. Furthermore, the group created unofficial design guidelines to further direct either a historic preservation commission or zoning board in the restoration of buildings in Downtown. The following is a brief summary of some of the major recommendations made by the architecture students:



Illustration 6-10
*Old Brownfield State Bank – Built 1918**
(The first brick structure built in Brownfield)
 *Source: Burns, Smith, Urquieta; *Brownfield, the Star of the South Plain*, May 2004, Texas Tech University (A study by University students)

- Establish a Brownfield Historic Preservation Commission (BHPC).
- Appoint a City official to be a Historic Preservation Officer to administer the historic preservation ordinance.
- Designate local historic landmarks – criteria includes:
 - Buildings possessing significance in history, architecture, archeology, and culture.
 - Buildings associated with historical events or figures.
 - Buildings with distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction.
- Allow retail sales, service, government, general or professional office, religious, educational or residential uses in Downtown.
- Eliminate setbacks for Downtown buildings (in most cases).
- Establish a minimum lot width of 25 feet for Downtown lots.
- Establish a minimum lot area of 7,000 square feet for Downtown lots.
- Eliminate lot coverage/floor-area ratios.
- Eliminate parking requirements for Downtown uses.
- Require landscaping only when needed to screen parking or dining areas.
- Require new buildings to be constructed in a similar manner to existing buildings.
- Prohibit the painting of brick and stone materials.
- Support the use of awning and canopies for Downtown buildings.
- Support the use of lighting fixtures.
- Preserve features of historic buildings.
- Design new building additions to be compatible with historic buildings in mass, materials, and color.

Community Input

As part of the comprehensive planning process, input has been solicited from the community regarding the downtown area. This input is critical for planning the future of the downtown area. It reveals, in general, how the community feels towards Downtown and is used to gauge how much community effort should be given to improving the area. In order to gain this community input for the planning process, the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee (CPAC) participated in two exercises that helped shed light on the issues concerning Downtown and served as a foundation for the Downtown recommendations (located at the end of this chapter). The two exercises used were a visual character survey (VCS) and a CPAC regular meeting dedicated to downtown area visioning. The following two sections explain in detail the input received from these exercises.

VISUAL CHARACTER SURVEY (VCS)

A visual character survey (VCS) is a technique where CPAC members were 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 covered several topics, which included the downtown area. Images shown in the VCS displayed downtown concepts from various Texas cities (including Brownfield itself). Although it is not necessarily scientific, 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 following four images depict the highest or lowest rated VCS images related to downtowns. Three images tied for the highest or most favorable (**Illustrations 6-11 to 6-13**) and one image had the lowest and most unfavorable score (**Illustrations 6-14**). A favorable image has elements that the CPAC members felt were



Illustration 6-11

VCS Image that received highest and most favorable score



Illustration 6-12

VCS Image that received highest and most favorable score

appropriate for the downtown area. Concepts that are common among the three most favorable images are public spaces, seating areas, lively and interesting sidewalk environments, canopies/awning, landscaping, and pedestrian-friendly elements. **Illustration 6-14**, the lowest and most unfavorably image, does not have the same qualities as the favorable images and is not a visual concept that the CPAC members felt was appropriate for the downtown area



Illustration 6-13

VCS Image that received highest and most favorable score



Illustration 6-14

VCS Image that received lowest and most unfavorable score

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CPAC) REGULAR MEETING

The CPAC held a regular meeting in 2005 to discuss the downtown area. At the meeting, CPAC members expressed their concerns, issues, and ideas related to the Downtown. The following subsections detail the main topics discussed at the meeting.

Establish Goals and Actions for the Downtown

The CPAC expressed the desire to have goals specific for the downtown area. This concept was identified as a high priority for the City. However, there was apprehension regarding the setting of goals with respect to the realistic ability to implement the goals in the form of actions.

The CPAC members felt that that establishing goals was of paramount importance for the downtown area but could be pointless if the goals were never put into practice. Therefore, the CPAC concluded that each goal should be crafted with respect to the feasibility of that goal being implemented. Members firmly expressed that setting goals too high should not be included within this document and that any Downtown goals should have the ability to be accomplished. Additionally, the CPAC also felt that the having fewer goals would be better than have a long list of goals because it would be easier to act on a smaller and concise listing.

Need “Concrete” Methods to Preserve Downtown

The preservation of historic Downtown buildings was another major topic discussed by the CPAC members. It was expressed that the City should have “concrete” methods to preserve Downtown buildings. The Visionaries in Preservation Program has been beneficial to establishing basic goals and objectives but further (“concrete”) action is needed to preserve historic Downtown buildings.

Move Towards Becoming a Texas Main Street Program

The CPAC felt the City should continue to build upon the Visionaries in Preservation Program and take the appropriate steps to join the Texas Main Street Program. The Texas Historical Commission (the same organization that administers the Visionaries in Preservation Program) administers the Texas Main Street Program, which “helps Texas cities revitalize their historic downtowns and neighborhood commercial districts by utilizing preservation and economic development strategies.”² The Texas Historical Commission reports that their Main Street Program is one of the most successful downtown revitalization programs in the nation and over 130 Texas cities have participated in the programs.³ The CPAC concluded that the downtown area would benefit from such as program. The closest City with a Main Street Program can be found in Levelland, Texas.



*Illustration 6-15
Southwest Corner of Main Street and 6th Street*

² Texas Historical Commission Website: www.thc.state.tx.us/mainstreet/msdefault.html

³ Texas Historical Commission Website: www.thc.state.tx.us/mainstreet/msdefault.html

Downtown is a Great Location

With major highways passing through or nearby it, Downtown Brownfield is physically situated in a positive location. Members felt that the Downtown's location could be built upon to create a livelier Downtown. It was the consensus of the group that some travelers could be enticed to stop in Downtown if the area was attractive and interesting.

Clean-up Downtown Buildings

Another major concern that many CPAC members had was the existing conditions of Downtown buildings. Currently, many buildings have major structural problems, such as deteriorating walls. Additionally, many building Downtown have been neglected in terms of regular maintenance, such as painting, and have boarded-up windows. A major cause of this problem is because many of these buildings have remained vacant for months and years. In addressing the structural, maintenance, and code enforcement related issues, the City has had difficulty with working with absentee landlords. Specifically, some CPAC members, who have been involved with improving Downtown and have businesses Downtown, reported that absentee landlords have shown little interest in improving the Downtown and generally tend to hold onto properties while asking above market prices for properties with serious maintenance issues.



*Illustration 6-16
Building with Reported Structural Problems*



*Illustration 6-17
Building at the Corner of Main Street and 8th Street*

Festivals and Events for Downtown

Many people view the downtown area as the center of the community. CPAC members thought a viable idea was for the downtown area to host a festival or event. In hosting a festival or event, the Downtown could be infused with new life and could help be a catalyst for the growth of the downtown area. Currently, there have been issues with having festivals and events Downtown because there is a lack of electrical outlets for venders. For example, the Harvest Festival is not held in the downtown area because of this reason.



Illustration 6-18
Events held Downtown could help to Bring Activity into the Area



Illustration 6-19
Events held Downtown could help to Bring Activity into the Area



Illustration 6-20
A View of Main Street (Looking West)

An Action Person or Agency needs to be Identified

CPAC members were concerned with which agency or group would be responsible for implementing the Downtown improvements. They concluded that an agency or several agencies should be identified as the primary implementation agent(s). The City, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Downtown Merchants Association already play important roles in the downtown area. Communication between these groups should occur (and continue to occur) to inform each group of the efforts of the others. In general, the City would fulfill the role as a lead agency because of its power to regulate land use and to develop a Downtown plan. However, other organizations are critical to the success of the Downtown and will continue to play major roles in the development and redevelopment of the Downtown.



*Illustration 6-21
Businesses along 6th Street
(South of Broadway Street)*



*Illustration 6-22
Downtown Offices along Broadway Street
(Across from the courthouse)*



*Illustration 6-23
Southwest Corner of Broadway Street and
5th Street*

Downtown Goals

The CPAC has worked to develop the following goals, which can also be found in Chapter 2 of this 2006 Comprehensive Plan. These goals are closely tied to the recommendations found within the next section of this chapter.

- Goal-1) Work with the Chamber of Commerce to attract new businesses to Downtown.
- Goal-2) Work with the Chamber of Commerce to retain existing businesses in Downtown.
- Goal-3) Review the existing standards for Downtown, and revise them if necessary.
- Goal-4) Review the uses allowed Downtown, and ensure that an array of compatible uses is permitted.
- Goal-5) Investigate opportunities for public and private investment in Downtown.
- Goal-6) Allow mixed uses (i.e., nonresidential and residential uses) in Downtown to encourage a more lively area.
- Goal-7) Investigate grant possibilities for enhancing Downtown.
- Goal-8) Encourage aesthetic improvements in Downtown (e.g., sidewalks, trees, brick pavers, and street furniture).
- Goal-9) Identify absentee landlords of Downtown buildings.
- Goal-10) Identify Downtown buildings that should be preserved.
- Goal-11) Investigate the Texas Main Street program and decide if the City would benefit from participation in such a program.
- Goal-12) Investigate other State and Federal programs to support Downtown. (State examples: Certified Local Government (CLG) Grants, Texas Preservation Trust Fund (TPTF) Grants, Heritage Tourism Program, the Texas Downtown Association – the Anice Read Fund; Federal examples: Federal Tax Credits, Historic Preservation Easements, Save America’s Treasures, the National Trust for Historic Preservation (NTHP), and the Intervention Fund)

Downtown Recommendations and Implementation

The input received from the CPAC members, during this 2006 comprehensive planning process, revealed that this Downtown Plan should have specific recommendations that could be implemented by the City. Therefore, the following recommendations have been developed as actions the City can take within the next five (5) to ten (10) years. Furthermore, goals have been prioritized into goal to be started and or accomplished within five (5) years (by 2011) and goals to be started and or accomplished within ten (10) years (by 2016). The purpose of this section is to establish realistic recommendations that can be implemented successfully by City staff.

ADD A DOWNTOWN/CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT (CBD) ZONING DISTRICT

Currently, the City does not have a zoning district tailored to meet the unique dynamics found within the downtown area. The Downtown's present zoning district is a C-2 (General Commercial) district. For instance, the C-2 District requires businesses to have a 25-foot front yard setback. The Downtown businesses cannot meet this setback because they were built before the Zoning Ordinance was adopted and therefore are, by ordinance, non-conforming structures. However, the non-conforming structures are allowed to continue to exist in perpetuity and are considered "grandfathered." Nonconforming structures are limited in terms of their ability to expand the physical structure. Furthermore, if more than 50 percent of the value of the nonconforming structure is destroyed, then the structure can only be rebuilt in conformance with the current Zoning Ordinance. Since the entire area around the courthouse is generally nonconforming, this requirement would in effect have a building constructed (rebuilt) in a manner that would be inconsistent with the surrounding nonconforming buildings.



Illustration 6-24

*Downtown Structures are Nonconforming Structures in the Current C-2 District
(All Structures should have 25-foot setbacks, which these do not have.)*

(Note: There is a difference between a non-conforming structure and a non-conforming use. A non-conforming structure is a building that doesn't meet specific standards, such as a setback distance. A non-conforming use is a land use type, such a residential use or office use the does not conform to the uses allowed, either by right or conditionally, within a zoning district. For further information, please refer to Article 6 of the City's Zoning Ordinance.)

The uses allowed in the downtown area are another major issue that needs to be addressed. A vibrant, healthy downtown has a diverse makeup, with activity occurring both day and night. A downtown area that virtually shuts down on evenings and weekends is not meeting its potential. One of the main reasons that Downtown is so narrowly perceived as either vacant or just a place to work is that it is lacking a diversification of land uses typically found in downtown areas across America, most notably “after five” activities/businesses and residential uses.

In order to address the nonconforming issues and to create a lively Downtown, it is recommended that, by the year 2008, Brownfield establish a new Downtown zoning district that accommodates the existing structures and allows for a diversification of land use that is compatible with the City’s desired Downtown image.

Recommended Land Uses within a New Downtown Zoning District

Diversifying the land use within a new Downtown District will be an essential step toward developing and redeveloping the Downtown environment. Some of the various uses that are envisioned include:

- Retail shops,
- Offices (professional and administrative)
- Restaurants and specialty food shops (e.g., coffee, doughnuts, etc.),
- Sports grill,
- Hotels,
- Day spas/Salons,
- Performing arts theater,
- Movie theater,
- Small grocery or convenience stores,
- Townhomes & zero-lot line homes,
- Apartments, condominiums, and retirement living communities
- Public uses/facilities, and
- Plazas and open spaces.

Recommended Standards

Minimum, standards for structures should conform to the existing historic buildings. This would allow all the historic structures to be conforming structures. The Downtown and its design is a truly unique and interesting part of the City, no other part of the City has the feel or atmosphere of Downtown. A major contributing factor for this area’s uniqueness is the historic structures and the way the structures are designed and laid out in respect to the street, height, architectural design, etc. This pattern should be allowed to continue and would allow a developer to maximize more area of a property.

CONDUCT A SURVEY OF DOWNTOWN BUSINESS OWNERS

A survey of Downtown business owners should be conducted by the year 2007. The purpose of the survey would be to help the City determine what role the public sector should have in revitalization efforts from the perspective of people operating businesses in the area. Either this could be an actual scientific survey, in which case a survey consultant would likely be needed, or the survey could simply be conducted by the City staff or another organization. A questionnaire delivered to each business in person by a City official would be a positive way to ensure that business owners recognize the importance of their responsiveness; mailing questionnaires is not as likely to elicit an equally high response rate. Possible questions that could be asked include:

- What specific improvements do you feel would have the most positive impact on Downtown as a whole? Choices could include: sidewalks, roadways, building facades, gateways, directional signage, and other.
- What improvements would you like to make to the exterior of your business that you are not currently able to afford? Choices could include: new doors, new windows, new fenestration (detailing), new paint, and other.
- How could the City most effectively help with Downtown revitalization? Choices could include: marketing efforts, directional signage, altering City regulations, business development, City-sponsored events, and other.

Responses to the survey would help the City more effectively decide how and where capital funds would best be spent in order for both the private and public sectors to get the most benefit for funds expended.

IMPROVE THE DOWNTOWN IMAGE

It is recommended that the City improve the image of Downtown and help promote a place where people will want to visit, shop, and even live. Improving the image of the downtown area should be a top priority for the City, because a City-initiated improvement effort could help foster growth and investment into the downtown area. The following three subsections are low cost recommendations the City can implement (by the year 2011) to improve the image of Downtown.

Downtown Mural Project

In an effort to improve the visual appearance of the downtown area, the City should begin a "Downtown Mural Project." The City should work with owners of Downtown properties to find suitable locations for murals. Once locations have been identified, an artist could be commissioned to paint murals depicting a variety of themes. *(Note: Community groups such as churches or schools could also contribute and participate by providing volunteers for the mural project.)* The City should obtain input from the community and Downtown businesses to find the

appropriate theme or themes for the Downtown murals. For example, a theme could depict the various phases of the City and County's history. Additionally, murals could be used for advertising purposes and promote Downtown shopping. **Illustration 6-25** through **Illustration 6-28** are examples of murals painted in downtowns across Texas.



*Illustration 6-25
Mural (Midland, Texas)*



*Illustration 6-26
Mural/Advertising (Hico, Texas)*



*Illustration 6-28
Murals (Lufkin, Texas)*



*Illustration 6-27
Mural/Advertising (Celina, Texas)*

A Proactive Code Enforcement

Code enforcement is one way in which Brownfield now improves building conditions Citywide, unit by unit. Many cities have code enforcement policies that are reactive – that is, violations of general code regulations are not enforced unless and until a complaint is made. Other cities have code enforcement policies that are more proactive – that is, staff is actively looking at areas of the community from a regulatory perspective, and enforcing codes as they see violations on a regular, consistent basis, even without a complaint being made.

From the community input received during the comprehensive planning process, buildings in the downtown area are in need of improvements, ranging from broken windows to crumbling walls. Therefore, it is recommended that the City use a proactive code enforcement policy to improve existing Downtown structures.

Downtown Gateway Treatment

Modern society is extremely dependent on the automobile; because of this, people often receive their first impression and initial knowledge of a place from the roadway. Gateway treatments are effective in conveying messages to people passing by. A well-designed, visible gateway treatment placed at a strategic location provides citizens and visitors with a visual image of the geographic location that is Downtown. The purpose is to announce and acknowledge the downtown area as a special place within Brownfield. It is recommended that the City create one Downtown gateway treatment along Main Street or at another site selected by the City.



*Illustration 6-29
Downtown Gateway*

Downtown Banner Signs

Banner signs are signs that can be affixed to a tall light pole or utility pole. These signs are recommended for use within Downtown Brownfield in two primary ways. First, they should be used to announce special events occurring Downtown. Placing banner signs that advertise these events throughout the downtown area would help market them. Second, banner signs could be used throughout Downtown on a daily basis to further demarcate it as a special area of the City. **Illustration 6-30** shows an example of such a banner sign that announces that the area in which it is located is a unique area of the community. The City should attempt to have at least 15 light or utility poles equipped to hang banner signs



*Illustration 6-30
Downtown Banner Sign*

Investigate Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Districts

A tax increment financing (TIF) district can be described as a special district created by a city under State law to help finance the cost of redeveloping an area that would not otherwise attract significant private investment in development in the near future. Within a TIF, property owners pay taxes as usual based on the assessed value of their property. Incremental increases in taxable value from new development within the zone over a “base year” produces tax revenue that is then added to a TIF fund for financing public improvements in the district.

It is recommended that the City coordinate with the City’s Economic Development Corporation and Chamber of Commerce to investigate whether the Downtown would substantially benefit from establishing a tax increment financing (TIF) district.

PRESERVATION AND BECOMING A MAIN STREET CITY

As mention previously, the CPAC felt that the City should continue efforts to preserve historic buildings and to plan the downtown area. The City has already applied to the Visionaries in Preservation Program and has a draft historic preservation ordinance written by architecture students from Texas Tech University. These efforts have helped promote historic preservation, but additional steps should and can be taken.

In order to further historic preservation efforts, it is recommended that, by 2009, the City investigate joining the Texas Historical Commission’s Main Street Program, which “helps Texas cities revitalize their historic downtowns and neighborhood commercial districts by utilizing preservation and economic development strategies.”⁴ This program would serve to help preserve historic buildings and promote new growth (i.e., economic growth) Downtown. Additionally, this program could be established as the lead action “person” or agency that could be responsible for coordinating the efforts to preserve and promote the downtown area.

MARKET THE DOWNTOWN

It is recommended that the City (in coordination with the City’s Economic Development Corporation and Chamber of Commerce) should develop a simple marketing plan that highlights the uniqueness of the downtown area. The marketing plan for Downtown Brownfield should be developed at least by 2009 and focus on attracting and maintaining new businesses. A secondary intent should focus on the Downtown shopping, living, and nearby recreational opportunities.

Downtown Brownfield, although it has experienced challenges in recent years in terms of occupancy and perception, is still a unique area of the City in which to office and to develop a business. One of the challenges that Downtown has faced is the relocation of many businesses that were once located therein to other areas. In order for Downtown

⁴ Texas Historical Commission Website: www.thc.state.tx.us/mainstreet/msdefault.html

to be competitive and to help start redevelopment, it needs a marketing plan to help promote and further define the area. The following concepts could be used in a marketing effort:

- Location: Downtown Brownfield is in a great location along several major highways. It serves as the county seat for Terry County and is approximately a 30 or 45-minute drive to Lubbock.
- Mixture of Uses: Downtown Brownfield is a place where people can live and work in the same general area.
- Preservation Efforts: The community is actively pursuing to maintain its existing historic structures.
- Rest Stop for Travelers: The Downtown is on the way to Ruidoso, NM (and other major destinations) and is an ideal location for travelers to stop, relax, and eat.



*Illustration 6-31
Area South of Downtown
(Note: The Brick Paving Denotes the Downtown Area)*



*Illustration 6-32
Downtown*

CREATE ACTIVITY IN THE DOWNTOWN

Hosting Festivals

Organized programs and events within the downtown area are perhaps the most significant way in which the City can entice people to come to Downtown Brownfield. It is recommended that, by 2009, the City attempt to host programs, similar to the Harvest Festival, in Downtown. Generally, the public's overall perception could change to view the Downtown as a place for social interaction and community focal point. Programs and events will provide opportunities for the public to experience Downtown Brownfield.

However, as noted in the community input process, the Downtown cannot host some events because there are not enough electrical outlets to meet an event's electrical demand. Therefore, in order to address this issue the City needs to provide a means for events to have electricity. It is recommended that any new streetlights placed in Downtown be equipped with electrical outlets, as seen in **Illustration 6-33**. Additionally, the City should investigate the feasibility of replacing streetlights around the courthouse and Main Street with distinctive street lighting seen in **Illustration 6-33**.



Illustration 6-33
Example of an Electrical Outlet place in a Downtown Streetlight

Living in Downtown Brownfield

The main reason downtown areas originally developed was to provide a concentrated area within which people could live, work, eat, and buy goods. Residential uses should be encouraged as part of the adaptive reuse of existing buildings on upper floors of multiple-story buildings. If a residential use shares the same multiple-story structure as a nonresidential use, then the lower floors should generally be reserved for retail or office uses. This type of adaptive reuse of downtown area buildings has occurred across Texas in both large and smaller cities. Not only could this provide a unique housing component in Brownfield, but also residents Downtown would help create additional activity. Furthermore, townhomes or garden homes would also fit the existing character of Downtown.

It is recommended that when the new CBD zoning district is developed residential uses be allowed in the downtown area. Example of residential uses could include new townhomes or garden homes or loft apartments above existing retail in existing buildings. Additionally, downtown living traditionally offers housing opportunities to the elderly, who do not have the capability of maintaining a single-family home.

STREETSCAPE ELEMENTS

The term streetscape can be described as the aesthetic value of the view along a street. Positive or negative, numerous elements contribute to this view, including landscaping, street trees, and street hardware (e.g., lighting, stop lights, etc.). The incorporation of aesthetically pleasing streetscape elements within Downtown Brownfield can help to provide the City with a downtown area that has a pleasing view from the road and will help to make the area more conducive to pedestrian activity. The following improvements are recommended for consideration within Downtown Brownfield by the year 2011.



*Illustration 6-34
Examples of Streetscape Elements Creating a Distinctive Atmosphere*

Street Hardware

Light fixtures within a room can create a distinct atmosphere. Likewise, light fixtures along a street can create an ambiance when special attention is given to their design and aesthetic appeal. It is recommended that the City place new distinctive streetlights in Downtown. There are numerous choices for streetlights. The City could review old pictures of Downtown and attempt to replicate the type of lighting that was prevalent during Downtown Brownfield's early years. An example of distinctive street lighting can be found with **Illustration 6-33** (Page 6-22).

Landscaping Elements and Street Trees

The integration of natural elements has generally been the ideal within the dense urban settings society has created. However, the successful integration of such elements often eludes cities because of the way in which the landscaping is installed. The key is to make landscaping elements a part of the overall streetscape through consistency and maintenance.

The City has previously reviewed whether to place street trees in Downtown. The last time the City considered the topic it decided it was not the appropriate time to begin placing street trees in Downtown. With this fact taken into consideration, it is recommended that the City revisit the concept of planting street trees in Downtown. If, at some point in the future, the City decides to have street trees Downtown, then it is recommended that the City develop a comprehensive landscape plan for Downtown. Additionally, the City should investigate any cost share opportunities for landscaping along the highways that run through the Downtown with the Texas Department of Transportation.



*Illustration 6-35
Street Trees in Lubbock, Texas*

PEDESTRIAN ELEMENTS

In order to create a more walkable downtown area in Brownfield, there must be elements in Downtown that make it conducive to pedestrian activity. The following is a discussion of recommended elements to be implemented by 2012.

Sidewalks/Walkways

Perhaps the most basic element necessary for a pedestrian environment, sidewalks allow people to move freely. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, downtown areas were truly the center of commerce for Texas towns, and walkways allowed people to safely distance themselves from the street to shop for goods and services. These walkways were also often covered with awnings or overhangs to provide protection from the Texas sun. Wide, expansive walkways remain in Downtown Brownfield today, which is an advantage for the City. Unlike many communities trying to create pedestrian activity in a certain area, there is no need to retrofit the downtown area in Brownfield with sidewalks. Notably, many of the existing sidewalks have been retrofitted to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

It is recommended that the City install well-designed landscaping within the Downtown walkway areas to further create a pedestrian environment, see **Illustration 6-36** for landscaping example. Additionally, the incorporation of awnings and wide overhangs on building facades within Downtown would provide shade for pedestrians, as they did in the past.

Street Furniture

Another important element of a pedestrian environment is the provision of a place for pedestrians to stop and rest, to take a break and take in the scenery. Further, to prevent clutter, trash receptacles are a necessity for any active pedestrian area. In order to promote a pedestrian environment, it is recommended that the City incorporate benches and trash receptacles into the downtown area. The incorporation of benches and trash receptacles that are designed with the desired environment in mind can add to the aesthetics of the downtown area. As with special light fixtures, furniture can also help create a certain atmosphere within an area, just as it can within a room. It is recommended that the City choose light fixtures, benches and trash receptacles that are of similar, complementary design. This will begin to create the atmosphere within Downtown Brownfield for which the City is striving.



*Illustration 6-36
An Example and Landscaping and Street Furniture*

ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS (GUIDELINES)

The idea of older downtown areas conjures many images, but principally the idea centers around the buildings and their design. Mostly flat facades, some with overhangs, constructed of brick, stone, or clapboard, these structures have been imitated in many newer Texas communities in search of a past. The City of Brownfield does not have to search, however. Brownfield's past is written on the walls of its old Downtown buildings. In order to maintain the atmosphere within Downtown the City should consider some architectural guidelines. Such guidelines can be difficult to establish, primarily because aesthetic quality is subjective in nature. However, protection of Downtown Brownfield in terms of basic visual quality could be achieved through the minimal regulation of building materials and building height. The following is a discussion of recommendations to be implemented by 2016.

Building Materials

The concept of establishing allowable building materials is mainly to ensure that the construction of new structures and the rehabilitation of old buildings are completed in a manner that is in keeping with the Downtown vernacular. Specifically, the City should not allow metal-exterior buildings within the downtown area, and should require that all facades, including new or refurbished buildings, be of brick or similar material (in appearance and quality) that is compatible with existing original materials. Additionally, the City should investigate the use of façade easements to preserve the façades of Downtown buildings. These simple requirements would ensure the consistency of the materials used in Downtown Brownfield.

Building Height

Downtown Brownfield is denser than most other areas of the City, with buildings that are constructed close together, but most are relatively small and are generally one or two stories in height. In order to maintain consistency between new and existing Downtown structures, it is recommended that the City establish a regulation that requires the height of new or rehabilitated structures to be similar to what exists in Downtown Brownfield today. An exception should be made for any building recognized as a focal point or City landmark. Exceptions should be made on a case-by-case basis. This height regulation will help to preserve the existing environment in Downtown Brownfield. Further, in the pedestrian-oriented environment for which Brownfield is striving, it is important for the structures in the area to be constructed at a human scale. A human-scale environment could be described as a space wherein pedestrians feel comfortable, both psychologically and physically, with the size of structures and other elements of the built environment. This concept will be maintained and enhanced by requiring the height of buildings to be consistent with what currently exists.

Conclusion

One of the most difficult aspects of planning is implementation. There were two main areas of concern that CPAC members felt applied to making the Downtown a success. First, the CPAC wanted to have tangible goals and recommendations that the City and others could attempt to accomplish. They felt that having accomplishable goals and recommendations would be better than establishing a long listing of various unrealistic goals and recommendations. One CPAC member, who had served on other various committees, commented that the difficulty with planning is not setting or having goals but that the difficulty lies within acting upon them. Therefore, each recommendation set within this Chapter 6 has a year, either 2011 or 2016, at which the recommendation should be accomplished or at least should have been acted upon in some manner. Inclusion of these goals and recommendations should be considered with the City's annual budget process and Capital Improvement Programming (CIP). Furthermore, a CIP listing of Downtown improvements items (e.g., street trees, electrical outlets, etc.) could help further define specific actions to improve Downtown.

Second, goals and recommendations can be set or established but without anyone to act upon them, the integrity of the planning process is weakened. The City is the primary action agency or person responsible for the general planning of Downtown, but the City is not alone in its improvement efforts. The Downtown Merchants Association, the Brownfield Chamber of Commerce, the Brownfield Industrial Development Corporation (BIDCorp [the City's Economic Development Corporation]), other local business, and the community as a whole are all stakeholders in the downtown area. The City and these various groups should work collectively to improve Downtown Brownfield. A periodic review of the goals and recommendations should occur and should have input from the aforementioned groups.



*Illustration 6-37
Brownfield City Hall
(The City will be the lead agency in improving the downtown area)*

On the following page, the recommendations for Downtown Brownfield are summarized and a timetable for their completion is given in **Table 6-1**.

Table 6-1
Summary – Downtown Recommendations
City of Brownfield, Texas

<u>RECOMMENDATION</u>	<u>YEAR OF COMPLETION</u> *
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>New Downtown Zoning District</u></p> <p>It is recommended that Brownfield establish a new downtown zoning district that accommodates the existing structures and allows for a diversification of land use that is compatible with the City's desired Downtown image.</p>	2008
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Downtown Survey</u></p> <p>A survey of Downtown business owners should be conducted.</p>	2007
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Improve the Downtown Image</u></p> <p>It is recommended that the City improve the image of Downtown and help promote a place where people will want to visit, shop, and even live. The following are specific methods:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Downtown Mural Project 2) Proactive Code Enforcement 3) Downtown Gateway Treatment 4) Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District 	2011
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Preservation and Becoming a Main Street City</u></p> <p>In order to further historic preservation efforts, it is recommended that the City investigate joining the Texas Historical Commission's Main Street Program</p>	2009
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Market Downtown</u></p> <p>It is recommended that the City (in coordination with the City's Economic Development Corporation and Chamber of Commerce) should develop a simple marketing plan that highlights the uniqueness of the downtown area.</p>	2009
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Create Activity Downtown: Hosting Festivals</u></p> <p>It is recommended that the City attempt to host programs, similar to the Harvest Festival, in Downtown.</p> <p>It is recommended that any new streetlights placed in Downtown be equipped with electrical outlets, as seen in Illustration 6-33.</p>	2009
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Create Activity Downtown: Living in Downtown Brownfield</u></p> <p>It is recommended that when the new CBD zoning district is developed residential uses be allowed in the downtown area.</p>	2008
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Streetscape Elements: Street Hardware</u></p> <p>It is recommended that the City place new distinctive streetlights in Downtown.</p>	2011
*In the year specified, the recommendation should be accomplished or at least should have been acted upon in some manner.	

*Table 6-1 (Continued)
Summary – Downtown Recommendations
City of Brownfield, Texas*

<u>RECOMMENDATION</u>	<u>YEAR OF COMPLETION*</u>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Streetscape Elements: Street Hardware</u></p> <p>It is recommended that the City revisit the concept of planting street trees in Downtown. If, at some point in the future, the City decides to have street trees Downtown, then it is recommended that the City develop a comprehensive landscape plan for Downtown. Additionally, the City should investigate any cost share opportunities for landscaping along the highways that run through the Downtown with the Texas Department of Transportation.</p>	2011
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Pedestrian Elements: Sidewalks/Walkways</u></p> <p>It is recommended that the City install well-designed landscaping within the Downtown walkway areas to further create a pedestrian environment, see Illustration 6-36 for landscaping example.</p>	2012
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Pedestrian Elements: Street Furniture – Benches and Trash Receptacles</u></p> <p>In order to promote a pedestrian environment, it is recommended that the City incorporated benches and trash receptacles into the downtown area.</p>	2012
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Pedestrian Elements: Street Furniture Design</u></p> <p>It is recommended that the City choose light fixtures, benches and trash receptacles that are of similar, complementary design. This will begin to create the atmosphere within Downtown Brownfield for which the City is striving.</p>	2012
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Architectural Elements: Building Materials</u></p> <p>The City should not allow metal-exterior buildings within the downtown area, and should require that all facades, including new or refurbished buildings, be of brick or similar material (in appearance and quality) that is compatible with existing original materials. Additionally, the City should investigate the use of façade easements to preserve the façades of Downtown buildings.</p>	2016
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Architectural Elements: Building Heights</u></p> <p>It is recommended that the City establish a regulation that requires the height of new or rehabilitated structures to be similar to what exists in Downtown Brownfield today.</p>	2016
*In the year specified, the recommendation should be accomplished or at least should have been acted upon in some manner.	