

Downtown Georgetown, An Urban Village



5. Downtown Georgetown, An Urban Village

Community Vision for University & Austin Ave Downtown Corridors



Downtown Georgetown, An Urban Village

Community Input

During the Research Phase of the Study, GNA interviewed 26 business, residential and University representatives. Each sector was given a separate unique list of questions, though there was one common question asked of all interviewees about the future of the University and Austin Avenue Corridors:



"The features and design of these corridors will have a lasting and powerful impact on how people experience our great town.

- *What else might you hope to see come to fruition as part of these efforts?*
- *What else is part of your vision for this area of Georgetown? It can be anything."*

The responses ranged from encouraging retail and business entrepreneurship to closing the Square to automobiles. It was clear that all participants valued Downtown Georgetown and considered it the jewel and heart of our City. All agreed that our Downtown needed careful but creative planning as our community maps out the future for Downtown.

The Interview discussions also focused on the need to 1) **strengthen** Downtown businesses; 2) **ensure** Downtown achieved a balance of commercial, retail, office, dining, entertainment, residential, and transit uses; 3) **safeguard** its historic uniqueness, and 4) **foster** a sense of community for businesses, residents and visitors in a unique Downtown Urban Village.

Based on those Interview discussions, GNA researched case studies that could become best practices and lessons learned for Georgetown's future planning process for the University and Austin Avenue Corridors.

Interestingly, none of our case studies have started with the level of rich vibrant resources that already exist in the University and Austin Avenue Corridors. The one thing our studies do have, which Georgetown does not, is a comprehensive plan to guide current and future development.

5. Downtown Georgetown, An Urban Village

Community Vision for University & Austin Ave Downtown Corridors



Research – Corridor Transformation

The “BLVD”, Lancaster, CA. – Corridor Transformation Case Study. Lancaster has a population of over 157,000 (2019). Since the 1920's, Lancaster Boulevard had been considered the commercial /retail “Main Street” center of Lancaster, functioning like Austin Avenue.

The BLVD Transformation Project is a 2/3 mile stretching from of West 10th Street to Sierra Highway - about the same distance as from 2nd St to University Avenue. The project relates to Georgetown in several ways.

With new suburban malls in the early 1990s, Lancaster’s downtown retail volume dropped off and Lancaster Boulevard suffered from high-speed traffic, poor pedestrian facilities, excessive parking, and reduced retail activity. The City realized it needed to create an inviting pedestrian-oriented destination which would strengthen the quality of life in the community and re-establish the Boulevard as the civic and cultural center of the community.

In 2008, the City created the Downtown Lancaster Specific Plan, a community-based revitalization plan. The Specific Plan process included numerous opportunities for community involvement in order to develop concepts that were truly community-based.

Downtown Lancaster Specific Plan Goals:

- Revitalize and improve the Downtown as a place of historic, cultural, social, economic, and civic vitality
- Create a “Destination Place” with a mix of commercial, retail, dining, entertainment, residential, and transit uses
- Create a pedestrian-friendly environment
- Create tools to implement community goals for Downtown

After completing the Specific Plan, the City of Lancaster retained Moule & Polyzoides, Architects & Urbanists to redesign the boulevard’s streetscape. The purpose of the project was to reinvent Downtown Lancaster into a pedestrian-friendly environment, while creating a new destination for residents and visitors to enjoy downtown shopping, dining and entertainment businesses. The project was completed in about 2 ½ years with a budget of \$10 million.



5. Downtown Georgetown, An Urban Village

Community Vision for University & Austin Ave Downtown Corridors



The City knew it would have to protect the existing businesses along Lancaster Boulevard during construction and committed to ensuring that no business would have its frontage obstructed for more than 14 days at a time, so the work was done in phases to protect downtown businesses.

The revitalized Lancaster Boulevard has been instrumental in the turnaround of downtown Lancaster. Within a few years, the City's public investment achieved impressive outcomes:

- Since project completion, revenue from the downtown area is up 119% in 2012, compared to 2007, the year before the BLVD Transformation Project began.
- The BLVD has attracted 52 businesses since late 2009.
- While Lancaster's citywide assessed property valuation fell 1.25% overall from 2011 to 2012, property values in the downtown area rose 9.53%, nearly three times the increase of the next-highest area in the City.



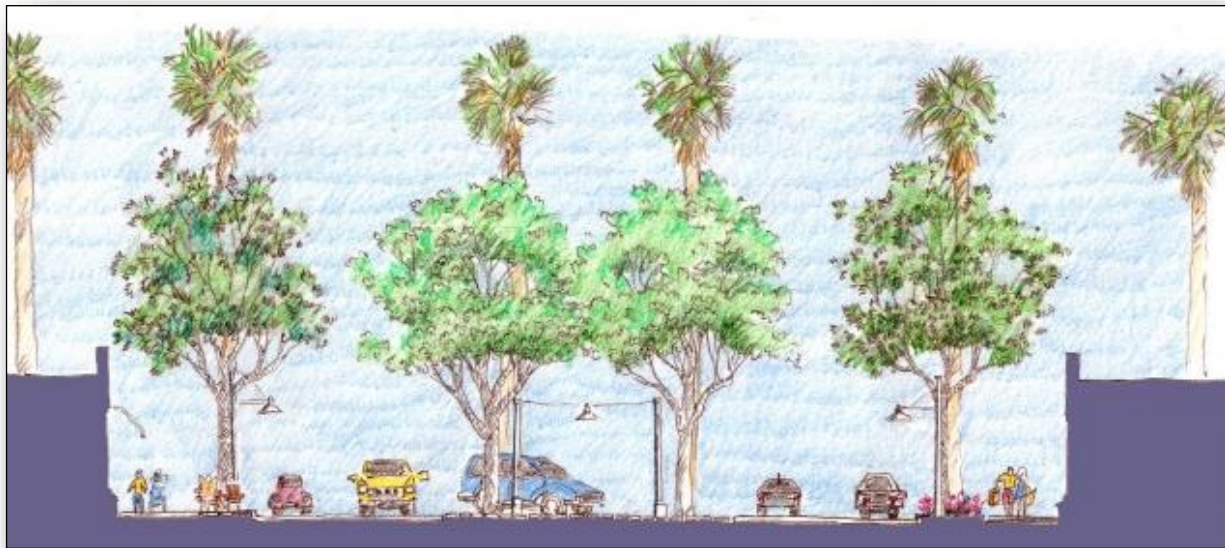
5. Downtown Georgetown, An Urban Village

Community Vision for University & Austin Ave Downtown Corridors



- New private investment is estimated at \$130 million and over 800 permanent jobs have been created.
- The project has generated an estimated \$280 million in economic output, according to the California Redevelopment Association IMPLAN Jobs Calculator.
- The overall number of traffic collisions have been cut in half, while injury-related collisions have plummeted 85% as a result of the new streetscape and traffic patterns.

The boulevard was narrowed from 5 lanes to 2 lanes with angled parking in the center of the boulevard with speeds dropping from 40 mph to 15 mph without a negative impact to traffic flow.



Stefanos Polyzoides, partner at Moule & Polyzoides, presented the “BLVD” project to a community group at the Georgetown Library a few years back. During his presentation, he discussed the similarities between Lancaster Boulevard and Georgetown’s Austin Avenue.

The BLVD Transformation Project in Lancaster is clearly a best practice that Georgetown should look to as we move forward in the City’s planning process.

5. Downtown Georgetown, An Urban Village

Community Vision for University & Austin Ave Downtown Corridors



Irving Boulevard, Irving, TX – Corridor Transformation Case Study. This case study is from Irving, Texas approximately 175 miles north of Georgetown with a population of 240,000 (2019). Irving's transformation project is still in progress. The Irving Boulevard project stretches from North Sowers Road to Strickland Plaza, a length of a mile which is almost the distance along Austin Avenue from 2nd Street to 18th Street.



On Dec. 10, 2010, the Irving City Council designated a Tax Increment Financing Reinvestment Zone known as the Irving Boulevard TIF to “develop an attractive, sustainable urban core, and it identified the main public improvement project as the reconstruction of the section of Irving Boulevard running through the Heritage Crossing district into a multimodal urban corridor to help promote downtown revitalization”.

The City's goal is to transform the highway into a roadway to accommodate vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle traffic by reducing the number of vehicle lanes to two and using the remaining right-of-way for parallel parking, wider sidewalks, a bike lane, and streetscape amenities. The City recognizes that it will become “One Roadway” with diverse experiences.

CONSOLIDATED PROJECT GOALS

District Identity

1. Strengthen “Irving Heritage District” branding.
2. Develop **entrance portals** that celebrate the district.
3. Incorporate **public art** into streetscape.
4. Develop adaptable streetscape for **community events**.

Infrastructure in public streetscape

1. Plan for **bike friendly infrastructure** and bike lane.
2. Create a balance between **landscape and hardscape**
3. Devise a plan that is **low maintenance**
4. Provide safe **lighting and adequate seating**.

Future Land Use Context and Adjacencies

1. **Minimize impacts** to surrounding businesses.
2. **Attract restaurants and retail**.
3. **Be Sensitive to businesses** that have invested in properties
4. **Evaluate driveways** to balance accessibility, aesthetics, and safety.

Health, Safety, and Welfare

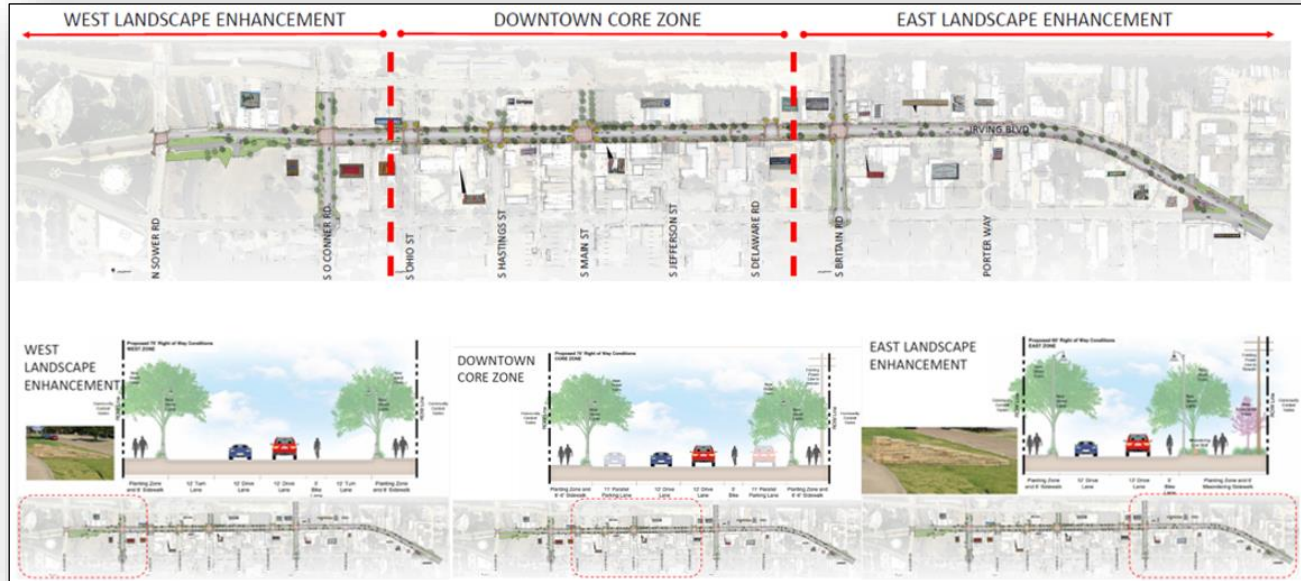
1. Integrate streetscape with surrounding **trail networks**
2. Investigate **traffic calming** and **safe pedestrian crossings**

5. Downtown Georgetown, An Urban Village

Community Vision for University & Austin Ave Downtown Corridors



The Irving Boulevard project consists of 3 zones: West Landscape Enhancement, Downtown Core named “*The Downtown Promenade*” and East Landscape Enhancement. The zones will include Portals that “*celebrate key intersections as gateways to the core of Irving Boulevard’s downtown district*”.



Transition zones between the Down Core and the East and West Landscape Enhancements will preserve the ability to add parallel parking and extend Downtown streetscape east or west pending on future demand.

Initial community engagement efforts were completed in October 2020 and project design began in early 2020, with a design completion scheduled for mid-2021 and an expected construction/project completion date of mid-2023. The City of Irving will be investing more than \$20 million dollars into this public improvement project.



The City is planning on phasing construction to balance the disruption to traffic and businesses with the overall construction timeline and will work with property owners on reconstructing and redirecting driveways that will be impacted by the project.

5. Downtown Georgetown, An Urban Village

Community Vision for University & Austin Ave Downtown Corridors



NORD Avenue, Chico, CA. – Corridor Transformation Case Study. This transformation study was done for Chico, CA., population 95,000 (2019). The study has been used nationally to illustrate the step-by-step effects a transformation could have on an existing roadway similar in size to sections of University and Austin Avenues.

<p>What street treatments & traffic calming tools can be added to reduce speeds?</p>	
<p>Add parking, lighting, colored street treatments & vegetation.</p>	
<p>Add on-street parking, which creates a buffer between motorists and pedestrians.</p>	
<p>Add trees, creating a vertical wall to define the edge.</p>	
<p>Effective public investment primes private development along the transformed street.</p>	

5. Downtown Georgetown, An Urban Village

Community Vision for University & Austin Ave Downtown Corridors

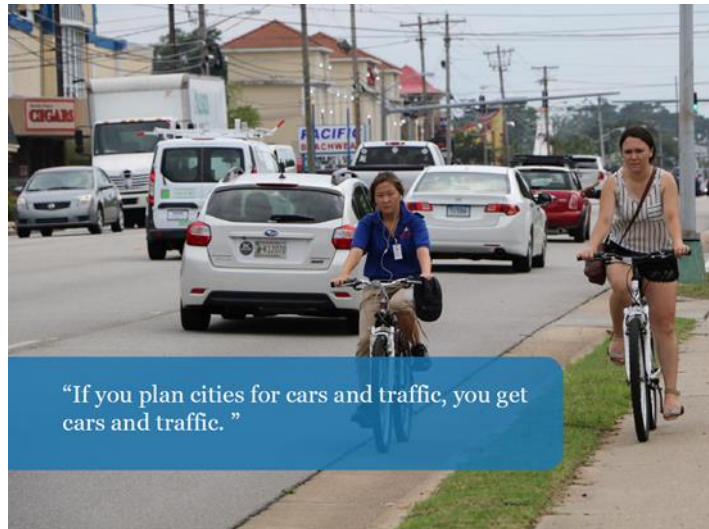


Research – Downtown Mobility

Building an Urban Village in Downtown Georgetown will require solutions that support downtown shopping, dining and entertainment businesses.

Achieving a Corridor Transformation, as already discussed in this Section, can only occur until we understand the importance of creating Complete Streets that consider all users of the University and Austin Avenue Corridors, not just cars, but also pedestrians, shoppers, bicyclers, and trucks. This is especially true as Austin Avenue traverses Downtown Georgetown.

As pointed out earlier in this Study, cars passing through Downtown Georgetown bring no economic value to the businesses in downtown. Cars driving to our downtown and the ability to easily walk around Downtown will bring economic value to Downtown and its businesses. Wide, multiple traffic lanes make it faster to travel “through” downtown but make it less walkable and friendly for customers.



GNA's research has found that Downtown Mobility is not just about vehicular mobility, but just as importantly, pedestrian mobility. A downtown area that is more walkable, means that people are strolling by shops and restaurants, which means more potential customers. A strong residential community around a downtown, like we have in Georgetown with the Old Town residential neighborhood, brings in built-in customers to shops, restaurants and other downtown businesses.

According to the National Association of Realtors, 51% of millennials prefer living in houses where they can walk to shops and have a short commute. You can see that desire in the increase of millennials wanting to move into Old Town due to its walkability and closeness to the shops, restaurants and entertainment around the Square.

GNA also found a very interesting pedestrian mobility project that was recently completed in Myrtle Beach, Florida.

5. Downtown Georgetown, An Urban Village

Community Vision for University & Austin Ave Downtown Corridors



Myrtle Beach, Florida – Downtown Mobility Case Study. The focus of the City's "Walkshop" study was Kings Highway, which bisects the City of Myrtle Beach, separating residential neighborhoods and the downtown core from the beach and commercial and social life of Ocean Boulevard.



In 2016, City planners, private citizens, business leaders and local residents came together for the "walkshop", a walkability workshop followed by a walking audit of the most challenging sections of downtown. The City of Myrtle Beach's vision for the area was where the *"Highway is seen as a public place that is safer and more inviting to all people of all ages and transportation modes, supporting healthy lifestyle choices, active living, thriving businesses, and an age-friendly community."*

The study was partially funded by Coastal Carolinas Association of Realtors with strong support from the City and local Chamber of Commerce.

The current design of Kings Highway appears to generate high motor vehicle speeds due to wide travel lanes, suburban strip-style land use, lack of gateways and other placemaking features. It did not support alternative transportation like walking, biking or transit. This was due to sidewalks with little to no buffer to vehicular traffic, long distances between signalized intersection crossings, and little to no support at mid-block or unsignalized crossing locations. There was also no infrastructure to support or promote biking, forcing bicyclers onto narrow sidewalks.

According to the study, cities that aim to improve the ability

Overarching Opportunities

- ① ADDRESS Target & Posted Speed
- ② NARROW Travel Lanes
- ③ IMPROVE Crossings
- ④ ADDRESS Complex Intersections
- ⑤ PUT Overly Wide Streets on a Road Diet
- ⑥ MAINTAIN & ENHANCE Sidewalks
- ⑦ IMPROVE Connectivity
- ⑧ DESIGN For Livability (and Lovability)

5. Downtown Georgetown, An Urban Village

Community Vision for University & Austin Ave Downtown Corridors



of people to walk, bicycle, socialize and age in place, need to adopt the following overarching opportunities and short- to long-term projects.

Tourism is a major economic driver for the City and walking and biking are the best way for tourist to experience the area, since it increases the “imageability” of a place. The quality of the environment makes it recognizable and memorable, like Georgetown’s Downtown Square and its surrounding commercial and residential neighborhoods.

Since tourism’s economic potential is influenced by a city’s infrastructure, pedestrian inaccessibility can create hardships for businesses and the local economy. There was a lack of sidewalk connectivity and comfortable and pleasurable pedestrian links between the residential, commercial, downtown and the City’s thriving beachfront culture, especially along Kings Highway.

Kings Highway bisects the City at its most vulnerable point, significantly dampening the desire to walk from the neighborhoods and downtown to the beachfront.

The result of the study was a list of recommendations for making the City more walkable, while strengthening the City’s business and tourism sectors.

The City of Myrtle Beach’s study focuses on a several issues discussed during GNA’s Interviews. The need for increased pedestrian mobility that is directly tied to increased economic value.

***“The economic value of walking has been described as the walking economy. There is a direct link between the city’s economic prosperity and the safety and convenience of the pedestrian experience.” —
City of Melbourne, 2012***

Research – Downtown Parking

In addition to vehicular and pedestrian mobility, it is vital to look at parking strategies, especially in Downtown Georgetown. The downtown parking issue came up several times in GNA’s Interviews, especially with downtown business

5. Downtown Georgetown, An Urban Village



owners. As downtown businesses have grown over the last few years, Georgetown has studied numerous options to expand parking around the Square.

For the last 7 years (2014 – 2020), Georgetown has paid the same consultant, WGI (formerly Carl Walker), to study parking options in our downtown area. In 2019, City Staff recommended the construction of a 4-level above grade parking garage one-half block from the Square in the historically sensitive 9-block Downtown Historic Overlay District.

After significant community discussion, City Council decided to look at other possible sites in the downtown area. Downtown clearly needs additional parking and the possibility a parking garage sometime in the future seems reasonable.

Since downtown parking was one of issues discussed in GNA's Interviews, GNA has researched downtown parking ideas that could be used for Georgetown.

As part of that research, GNA looked at numerous case studies in Texas and around the country.

Castle Rock, Colorado – Downtown Parking Case Study. Castle Rock, Colorado recently completed a very comprehensive study by Kimley-Horn and Associates (Kimley-Horn). Castle Rock is a growing historic community and county seat (Douglas County) with a population of 62,417 (2019) located 24 miles south of the center of Denver. Castle Rock is remarkably like Georgetown in several areas and makes it a very viable downtown parking case study.

Downtown Castle Rock has considerable private off-street parking, public on-street parking and a 3 ½ level County parking garage. The City selected Kimley-Horn in 2017 to conduct a Downtown Parking Study to assess the Town's current and future parking needs. A key goal was Downtown's on- and off-street parking utilization, in addition to parking governance, organizational structure, and enforcement.

Key Objectives:

- ▲ Manage today's parking needs and plan;
- ▲ Prepare for future development;
- ▲ Actively listen to the community;
- ▲ Develop parking management recommendations for both the near- and longer-term; and
- ▲ Provide a roadmap and tools to jump start implementation.

There were several "core values" that were used as a foundation for the Study's recommendations, including 3 areas that Georgetown has not considered in the past.

5. Downtown Georgetown, An Urban Village

Community Vision for University & Austin Ave Downtown Corridors



Access Management & Mobility. This area of study focused on longer-term planning to “*integrate parking with transit, cycling, and pedestrian initiatives, as well as with programmatic support for enhancing transportation and community/economic development elements*”.

Financially Viable and Eventually Self-Sustaining. Kimley-Horn looked at “*creative ways to enhance current investment for future growth in parking and/or transportation-related infrastructure*”.

Environmentally Sustainable. The Study’s recommendations also focused on “*encouraging alternative travel modes through smart growth design and transportation demand management (TDM) principles*”.

Hopefully, the City of Georgetown will consider adding these “core values” to future Downtown parking studies.

As part of the project kick-off, the consultant led a group of Downtown stakeholders on a “Walkability Tour” to experience downtown as a pedestrian and observe elements of the pedestrian environment. One of the goals was to see how real and perceived “walkability” can play an important role in a person’s decision to embrace a “park once” philosophy. Instead of getting back in their car every time they want to move from one store to another, a person could “park once” and then walk around downtown by stores and shops on their way to their next store or restaurant, if the area creates a pleasant and walkable experience.

The Study found that a well-managed parking program developed as a community can advance the community’s economic development goals, improve “*the overall experience of accessing core neighborhoods and an increasingly thriving Downtown business district*”.



5. Downtown Georgetown, An Urban Village

Community Vision for University & Austin Ave Downtown Corridors



Any new or expanded public parking was focused on 3 Downtown Districts: Downtown Core, North District, South Downtown.

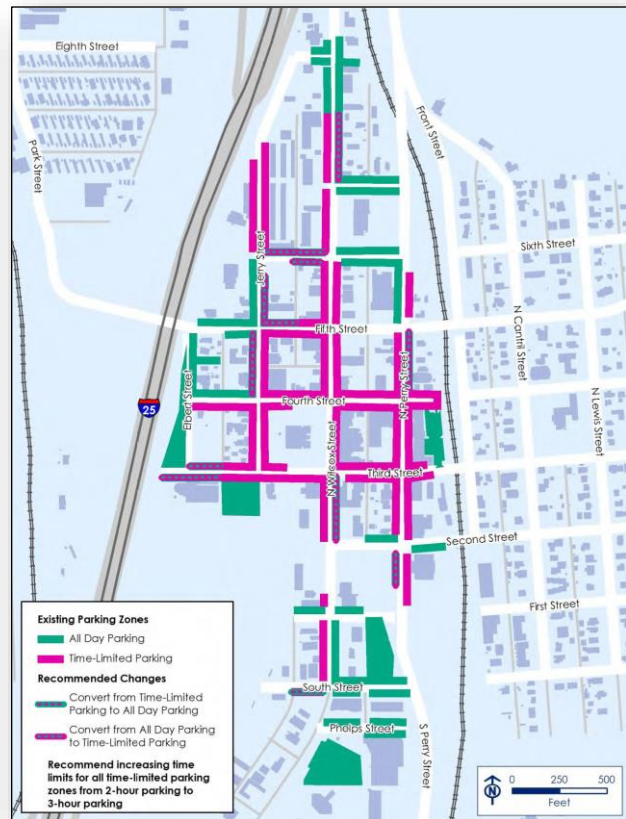
The Study looked at several options for achieving financial sustainability for their Downtown's parking infrastructure, including an interesting recommendation for creating of a "fee-in-lieu" for Downtown property owners to contribute to future public parking facilities and related expenses if they do not meet the parking requirements for their business.

The intent of the fee would be to collect revenues needed to construct new public parking spaces or acquire a public access easement for shared parking. The fee-in-lieu would evolve as land values increase in the downtown area and the need for a parking structure increases.

As part of the Study, Kimley-Horn completed an assessment of the Downtown Bicycle Parking Infrastructure. There were 76 existing bicycle parking spaces located at 10 separate parking locations around the downtown. The Study recommended dedicated bike lanes, additional strategically placed bicycle parking, and bicycle parking signage.

The consultant recommended conducting a formal pedestrian safety audit and a speed/traffic calming assessment, in addition to adjusting the on-street parking time limit from 2 hours to 3 hours to accommodate and enhance downtown business activity and on-street parking space turnover. Georgetown's downtown also has a 3-hour time limit.

The consultant also recommended expanding the existing time-limited parking areas, along with consistently monitoring, and, when necessary, actively enforcing time-limited, on-street parking.



5. Downtown Georgetown, An Urban Village



Kimley-Horn also suggested investing in License Plate Recognition technology and establishing a Downtown/Parking Ambassador position to facilitate more regular monitoring of time-limited parking. The City of Georgetown created two Downtown/Parking Ambassador positions a few years ago.

Regarding sustainable funding strategies, the Study recommended, in addition to a fee-in-lieu program discussed above, other options to support future public parking facilities like public-private partnership opportunities for additional structured parking.

Downtown Perimeter Parking. While researching downtown parking solutions, GNA found that most cities located downtown city-owned garages around the perimeter of their downtown business districts. These perimeter locations were due in large part to the decision to maximize downtown properties for revenue producing businesses, stores, and restaurants instead of public parking lots and garages. In researching downtown parking, GNA identified 2 case studies that have successful perimeter parking solutions that Georgetown should consider.

Annapolis, Maryland – Downtown Perimeter Parking Case Study. The City of Annapolis created the Annapolis “Circulator” that efficiently moves downtown visitors and shoppers from the City’s four parking garages located outside their



central business district, allowing the public to enjoy the downtown's unique shops, food, and entertainment, and the historic charm and harbor attractions. The approach allows visitors and shoppers to “park once” in a City garage and then use the Circulator to travel between various destinations, eliminating the need to continuously find new parking

spaces as they travel to other businesses.

In partnership with downtown businesses, shops and restaurants, Annapolis has also implemented a “PARK SHOP & DINE” program that lets participating businesses provide customers with a coupon to cover one hour of free parking. Shoppers can use more than one Park Shop & Dine voucher while visiting the downtown area. The City provides users with a free smartphone app allowing them to track the Circulator's location and get estimated arrival times.

5. Downtown Georgetown, An Urban Village

Community Vision for University & Austin Ave Downtown Corridors



McKinney, Texas - - Downtown Perimeter Parking Case Study. The City of McKinney has a population of 214,000 (2020). Though over twice the size of Georgetown, it has a remarkably similar historic downtown square and county courthouse. The historic Collin County Courthouse has been converted into the McKinney Performing Arts Center. The City's historic downtown appears slightly larger than Georgetown's district. McKinney is 187 miles north of Georgetown (historic square to historic square).

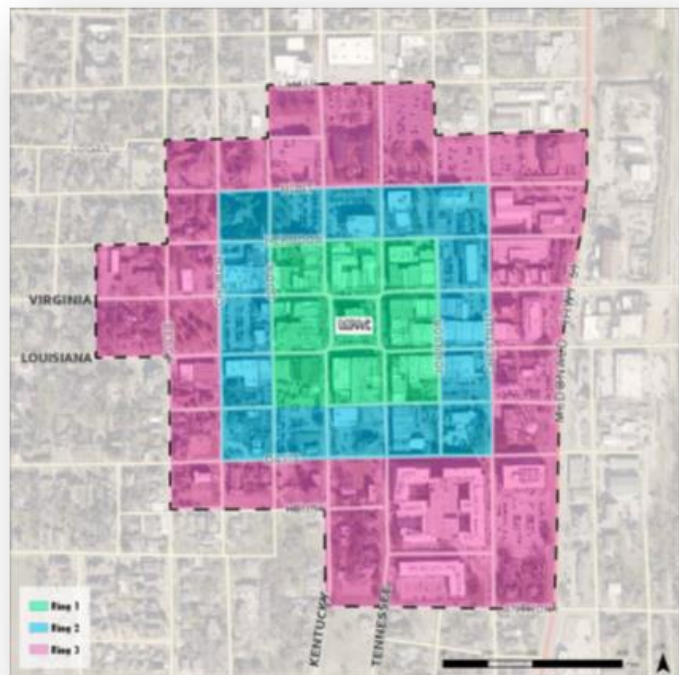


McKinney has gone through a numerous Downtown Parking Studies starting in 2004 with the last update in 2019. The City is currently in the process of completing a new "Downtown McKinney Parking Management Study".

The City of McKinney has taken a well-defined approach in identifying possible parking options in their downtown historic district. McKinney looked at its parking occupancy and supply based on "Rings" and "Zones".

The Rings are based on the distance from the City's Square. One of the most important ways that people decide where to park is the distance to their destination. The downtown district consists of three rings based on its distance from the Square, with Ring 1 at the center, Ring 2 in the middle, and Ring 3 at the outer edge.

- Ring 1 is the 9-block core made up of the Square and other historic buildings. It's basically made up of on-street parking and provides just 8.5 percent of the overall parking supply. Ring 1 is very similar to Georgetown's 9-block Historic Downtown Overlay.



5. Downtown Georgetown, An Urban Village

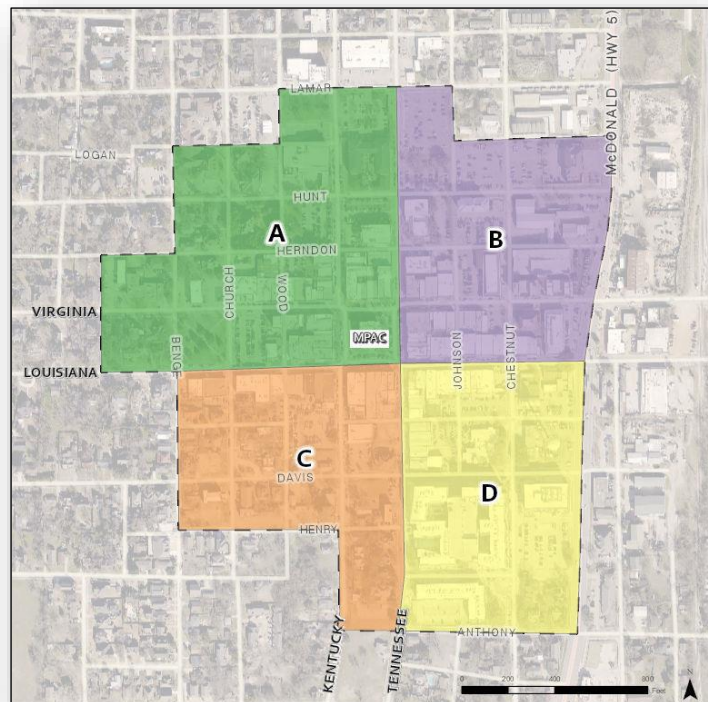
Community Vision for University & Austin Ave Downtown Corridors



- Ring 2 begins two blocks from the Square and makes up 29.4 percent of the overall parking supply in downtown McKinney.
- Ring 3 provides 62 percent of the parking spaces in the study area. This outer Ring also includes both public parking garages. The furthest northern boundary of the outer ring is approximately 4 blocks or 1,000 feet from the Square.

The Zones divide up the historic district into 4 geographic quadrants located in the Northwest, Northeast, Southwest and Southeast areas of the district.

- Zone A is located in the northwest of the study area. Zone A has the greatest number of both private off-street parking and public on-street parking.
- Zone B is the northeast area of the downtown district and has the most total parking spaces of the four zones. This zone also has the most public off-street parking spaces, including the public Chestnut Garage.
- Zone C: is in the southwest portion of downtown and consists of 16 percent of the district's parking with a higher proportion of private off-street parking spaces than the other zones.
- Zone D is situated in the southeast corner of the district. Zone D has the second-highest number of public off-street parking spaces and the City's other public garage located in a mixed-use development called "Davis at the Square". This zone has 24 percent of the overall parking in the district and 28 percent of the area's public parking.



5. Downtown Georgetown, An Urban Village

Community Vision for University & Austin Ave Downtown Corridors

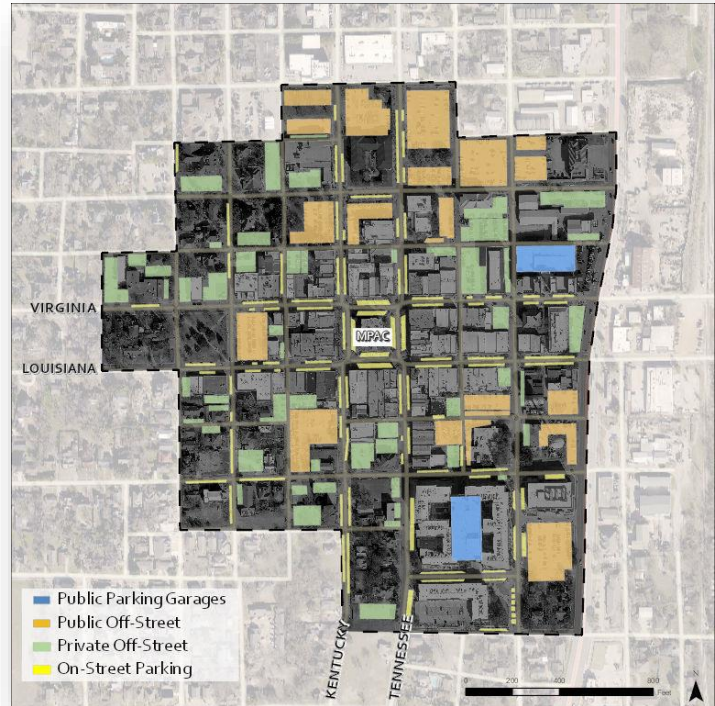


By breaking down their parking supply and occupancy levels by both Ring and Zone, McKinney is in a particularly good position to analyze parking strengths and weaknesses by specific area, allowing the City to accurately track parking and occupancy levels from year to year.

The City has located both public parking garages in Ring 3, their outer ring from the Square. The Chestnut parking garage and the public garage in the Davis at the Square development are 3 blocks from the Square.

The City's Chestnut parking garage, located in Ring 3 and Zone B, has a total of 310 parking spaces and is located along north-south Highway 5 on its eastside. The garage was a public-private partnership between the City and developer, The Sanchez Group. The developer has built a mixed-use project called Chestnut Commons on the southside of the garage. According to the City Manager Paul Grimes, the City will lease the parking garage for five years before taking over ownership.

The City also used a public-private partnership to develop their other public parking garage, Davis at the Square, located in Ring 3, Zone D. The garage (in blue) was developed as a 9-acre mixed-use project with retail on the first floor and residential housing above. The public garage is situated between 2 wings of the project. Like the Chestnut Commons public parking garage, the City has a 5-year lease agreement on the Davis at the Square garage with the private developer before they take ownership of the garage.



5. Downtown Georgetown, An Urban Village

Community Vision for University & Austin Ave Downtown Corridors



With the larger public parking lots and 2 new public parking garages located in the outer Ring 3 of the district, the City considered cost-effective ways to link downtown customers to these perimeter parking spaces.

In 2017, the City began an innovative Downtown Area Shuttle or DASH for short. Anyone wanting to use the six-passenger electric shuttle can wave

down the driver or call a

telephone number. DASH helps alleviate downtown parking congestion by offering free rides to downtown visitors walking to and from parking lots and garages surrounding the Square during peak dining and shopping hours.

The service is available midday Wednesday through Sunday and in the evenings Thursday to Saturday. During that time, Dash connects users from the district's parking lots and garages to stores, restaurants, businesses and events in the downtown area.

One of the recommendations in the current Downtown McKinney Parking Management Study is to expand the DASH shuttle and begin a downtown fixed route parking "circulator". Apparently, the proposed circulator would be similar to the Circulator described in the Annapolis, Maryland case study above.

As mentioned earlier, historic downtown McKinney is remarkably like Georgetown's historic downtown in size, makeup and character. Both historic downtowns are regional magnets with unique stores, restaurants and retail businesses. McKinney is an excellent case study for Georgetown with lessons learned that can benefit us as we plan Downtown's future.

5. Downtown Georgetown, An Urban Village

Community Vision for University & Austin Ave Downtown Corridors



Downtown Georgetown, An Urban Village Recommendations

GNA Recommendation #5.1. – Corridor Transformation

GNA recommends the City start a community planning effort to develop a future vision of the University and Austin Avenue Corridors, along with creating trackable short- and long-term actions items to achieve that transformation. The case studies documented in this Section show how other communities have already successfully created robust mobility corridors shared with cars, pedestrians and bicyclers.

GNA Recommendation #5.2. – Pedestrian Mobility

GNA recommends the City conduct a Walkability Audit for the Corridors, like the Myrtle Beach “Walkshop”, which was described earlier in this Section. The Audit would identify areas that need to be improved in the Corridors to maximize pedestrian safety and to encourage people to walk to local shops, restaurants and businesses along the Corridors, instead of getting in cars and traveling to big box stores on the Interstate.

GNA Recommendation #5.3. – Downtown Parking

Parking in and around Georgetown’s downtown area has become a never-ending challenge. Downtown businesses need additional parking. GNA feels that Georgetown needs to look at the parking issues in a comprehensive manner and encourages the City to consider the recommendations below.

1. Future Parking Studies. When the City of Georgetown decides to start their next downtown parking study, **GNA recommends** that the City issue an RFP for the selection of a new consultant, instead of using the same consultant they worked with for the last 7 years. GNA feels that its time to get fresh eyes and new ideas for solving our downtown parking challenges.

GNA recommends that the new study should also consider solutions to create a Complete Street design that will consider not only cars, but also pedestrians, bicyclers and delivery trucks. To date, the City’s studies have been silent on the needs of these other downtown users. For example, with our narrow downtown

5. Downtown Georgetown, An Urban Village



streets, trucks delivering goods to restaurants and entertainment businesses often block traffic to make their deliveries. We need to see how other cities have dealt with these types of common issues.

GNA recommends for the City to focus on public-private partnerships (P3), when considering any new structured parking options. As discussed earlier in this Section, the City of McKinney has very successfully negotiated the construction of 2 new downtown parking garages in partnership with developers. Not only does this approach make it more cost-effective for the City, but it also generates new commercial development in the City.

2. Downtown Parking Planning & Management. **GNA recommends** that the City look at how downtown parking is incorporated into downtown's overall planning. Currently, parking is not part of the HARC reviews when new developments are proposed for downtown. GNA recommends that parking be given a "seat-at-the-table" from the very beginning of the planning and review process.

Since parking is such a critical component for downtown businesses, **GNA recommends** that the City conduct a "Parking Impact Analysis" on every proposed downtown development. This approach would give the City the ability to better plan for long-term parking issues.

GNA recommends that the City adopt a similar planning method used by the City of McKinney to track parking space inventory and usage by breaking down parking supply and occupancy level data by both Rings and Zones,

McKinney uses Zones to divide up their downtown district into 4 geographic quadrants located in the Northwest, Northeast, Southwest and Southeast areas of the district. The Rings are based on the distance from the McKinney's Square and are divided into three rings based on distance from the Square, with Ring 1 at the center, Ring 2 in the middle and Ring 3 at the outer edge.

This approach puts McKinney in a particularly good position to accurately analyze parking strengths, weaknesses and trends by specific area. This structure allows them to track parking and occupancy levels from year to year. By adopting this parking inventory planning methodology, Georgetown would have a much better understanding of current and future parking demand and usage by specific area and not just downtown as a whole.

5. Downtown Georgetown, An Urban Village

Community Vision for University & Austin Ave Downtown Corridors



3. Downtown Perimeter Parking. GNA has learned through its research on downtown parking management approaches that cities with a core downtown district have successfully planned for locating larger parking lots and garages around the perimeter of their downtown core. **GNA recommends** that the City continue to focus the development of any new parking lots or garages around the perimeter of downtown.

Cities have learned that reserving expensive downtown core property for revenue-producing businesses makes more business sense than locating large parking lots and garages in this core business zone.

Larger lots and garages should be developed around the perimeter of a compact downtown district. Cities like Annapolis, Maryland and McKinney, Texas are good examples. Case studies of these cities can be found in this Section.

4. Downtown Parking Circulators. As pointed out in Recommendation #5.3.3. above, Annapolis and McKinney have both understood by locating larger parking areas on their downtown's perimeter, their downtowns not only need to be more walkable, but cities need to find ways to connect their perimeter parking with their downtown businesses.

As a short-term solution, **GNA recommends** that the City take McKinney's example and begin an electric 6-seat shuttle that will pick up people shopping, eating or working downtown and take them to their next stop or their parked car. The shuttle could run during high-demand parking times at midday and evenings on selected days.



The shuttle would be free to customers and the cost could be financed through the Downtown TIRZ fund since it directly helps bring customers to downtown businesses. The new electric shuttle could also highlight Georgetown's Red Poppy theme.

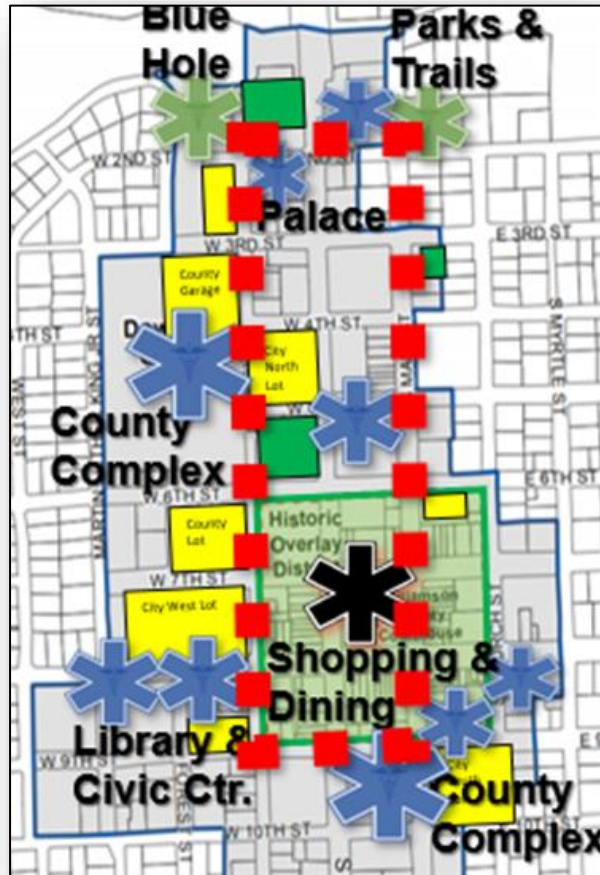
5. Downtown Georgetown, An Urban Village

Community Vision for University & Austin Ave Downtown Corridors



GNA also recommends that the City consider a mid-term solution of starting a free handicap-accessible fixed route “Circulator” as Annapolis successfully uses to connect their perimeter parking garages to their downtown businesses. As mentioned earlier, McKinney is now also considering adding a downtown circulator, in addition to their existing electric DASH shuttle.

A Georgetown circulator could run on Rock St from 2nd St to 9th St. Then it could turn east on 9th St and then left on Main St. The circulator could then travel north on Main St until it reaches 2nd St where it would turn west (left) to Rock St, making a loop around downtown. This route would connect existing employment centers and larger parking lots to our downtown business district, making it easier for people to shop and eat downtown.



5. Downtown Structured Parking. GNA supports the concept of adding future structured parking around the perimeter of the downtown business district when the demand is documented. **GNA recommends** that any future structured parking not only be located around the outside perimeter of downtown, but also be developed through public-private partnerships like McKinney has successfully achieved in the building of its 2 downtown parking garages.

GNA recommends that all approved structured parking developments clearly document all related projects costs at the beginning of the project. Approved project budgets should accurately document all costs, including planning, engineering, site work, design and owner contingencies, and estimates of construction and operational and maintenance cost.

5. Downtown Georgetown, An Urban Village

Community Vision for University & Austin Ave Downtown Corridors



GNA considers 2 locations as possible future 4 level structured parking developments. The developments should include retail, restaurants, office space and housing whenever possible.

Rock Street Garage Concept

This parking garage concept would use the City's existing parking lot on the west side of Austin Avenue between 4th and 5th Streets.

Parking Level 1 would be constructed at grade level at Rock Street due to the lower topography on the west side. This level would be one parking level below Austin Avenue. Main access to the parking garage would be at this level off Rock Street.



Parking Level 2 would be at grade level to Austin Avenue and have access from 5th Street. Retail would be added on the east side of the structure along Austin Avenue.



Parking Level 3 would be one level above Austin Avenue grade level and would cover the entire block like Parking Level 1.



Parking Level 4 would be the top parking level and open to the sky with no roof structure. This design would give the appearance of a 2-story structure garage from Austin Avenue.



5. Downtown Georgetown, An Urban Village

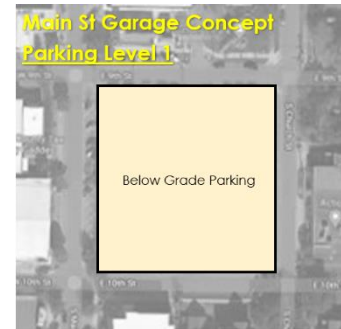
Community Vision for University & Austin Ave Downtown Corridors



Main Street Garage Concept

This parking garage concept would use the City's existing parking lot on the east side of Main Street between 9th and 10th Streets.

Parking Level 1 would be constructed one level below grade.



Parking Level 2 would be on grade with Main Street and act as the main access to the garage. Retail would be added on either side of the parking garage's entrance. Residential townhouses would be located on the 9th and Church Street side, along with a section along 10th Street.



Parking Level 3 would be one level above Main Street parking level. Flexible, shared workspace would be located on the west side above the retail shops on Main St. The flexible workspace could be used by local entrepreneurs and start-ups. The 2nd floor of the residential townhouses would continue as described in Level 2.



Parking Level 4 would be the top parking level and open to the sky with no roof structure. This design would give the appearance of a 2-story parking garage from all surrounding streets.

