

# **Consolidated List of Recommendations**



## 6. Consolidated List of Recommendations

Community Vision for University & Austin Ave Downtown Corridors



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### Consolidated List of Recommendations

GNA has consolidated all recommendations made in this Study in the following pages. GNA encourages readers to go back and read each Section in its entirety to see GNA's research and to understand the supporting documentation for each recommendation.

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### Crosswalk Recommendations

#### **GNA Recommendation #2.1.**

**GNA recommends** that the City add enhancements to the existing crosswalks on Austin Avenue at 10<sup>th</sup> Street and 16<sup>th</sup> Street. The City installed Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFB) to these crosswalks that add significant visibility to the crosswalks. GNA believes that by adding additional, low-cost enhancements to these crosswalks, pedestrian safety could be significantly increased.

1. At the 10th Street crosswalk, the City used a border of “pavers” to differentiate the crosswalk area from the rest of the street. Though the use of pavers is aesthetically very attractive, they do not effectively highlight the pedestrian crosswalk from the rest of the street, making it more difficult for on-coming traffic to see the actual crosswalk. GNA recommends that the City enhance the crosswalks by adding painted transverse side stripes similar to the ones used in standard crosswalks.



2. At the 16th Street crosswalk, the City used painted transverse side stripes to differentiate the crosswalk area from the rest of the street. Though the use of side stripes does define the crosswalk, they are not the most effective way to highlight the pedestrian crosswalk from the rest of the street to on-coming traffic. GNA recommends that the City enhance the crosswalk by adding painted “continental” pattern stripes to increase crosswalk visibility.



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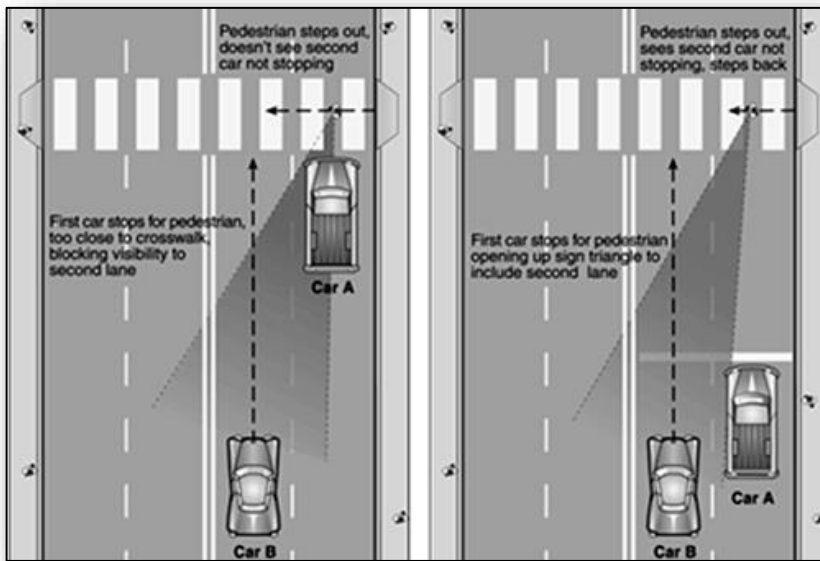
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GNA feels these low-cost enhancements will help better distinguish the existing crosswalks from the street and increase pedestrian safety.

Further increasing pedestrian safety, GNA recommends that the City add advanced stop lines placed 20 to 50 feet prior to each crosswalk. This low-cost enhancement would be an effective solution for making both vehicles stop and see pedestrians using the crosswalk.

It is not uncommon for a motorist to stop for someone in a crosswalk, only for the vehicle following them to not see the pedestrian and veer around, driving through the crosswalk.



Advanced stop lines have been shown to reduce pedestrian-vehicle conflict up to 90 percent.

#### **GNA Recommendation #2.2.**

**GNA recommends** that on future crosswalks, the City use the more traditional continental pattern of crosswalk striping, which more effectively highlights the crosswalk in the street, increase visibility to on-coming traffic and increase pedestrian safety at a lower cost than the use of pavers.

An alternative to the use of the continental pattern for crosswalks would be the use of “colored” crosswalks. GNA feels that the use of “colored” crosswalks especially in the downtown area would visibly highlight the crosswalks on the streets and add to the City’s “art” theme in the downtown area.

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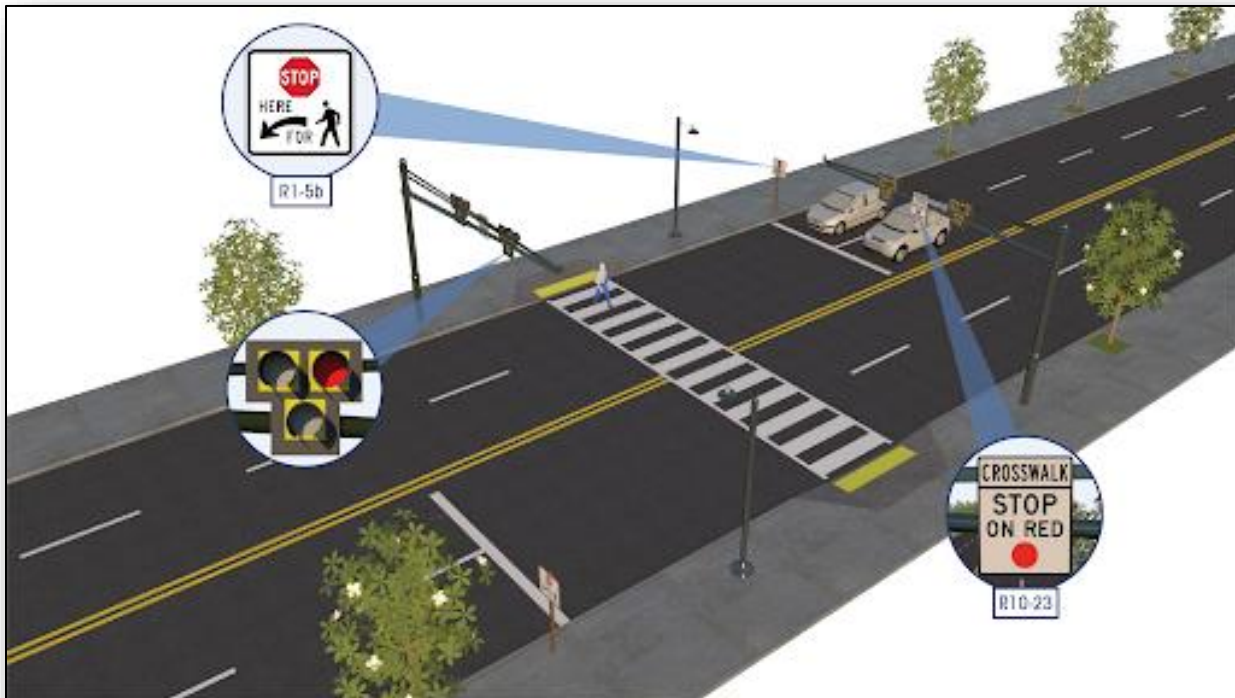
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This low-cost enhancement would not only increase the visibility of the crosswalks, but also differentiate Georgetown from other local communities and increase art awareness. The City could incorporate the painted crosswalks into its annual artist competition.

### GNA Recommendation #2.3.

**GNA recommends** the City consider using Pedestrian Hybrid Beacons (PHB) instead of Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFB) on crosswalks located on busy streets like University and Austin Avenues. Though more expensive, the PHB beacons allow more protected pedestrian crossings by stopping road traffic only as needed. In addition to PHB beacons, GNA also recommends the City use continental striping or “colored” patterns for all future crosswalks.



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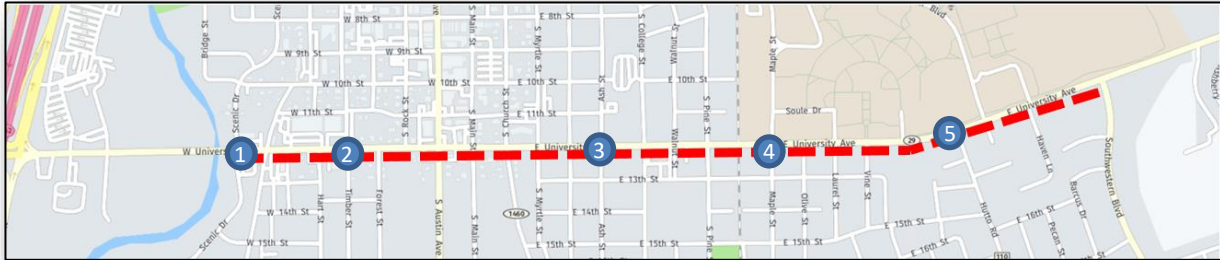


#### GNA Recommendation #2.4.

Based on the GNA interviews and the results from the Community Survey, **GNA recommends** that the City consider adding enhancements or new pedestrian crosswalks at the following locations:

Recommended new or enhanced University Avenue Crosswalks

1. University Avenue at Scenic Drive: New continental striping or “colored” patterns on existing crosswalks to increase driver visibility of crosswalks as described in Recommendation #2.2 above.
2. University Avenue at MLK/Timber Street: PHB crosswalk per Recommendation #3 above.
3. University Avenue at Ash Street: PHB crosswalk per Recommendation #2.3 above.
4. University Avenue at Maple Street: New continental striping or “colored” patterns on existing crosswalks to increase driver visibility of crosswalks as described in Recommendation #2.2 above.
5. University Avenue at Hutto Road: RRFB crosswalk per Recommendation #2.3.



Recommended new Austin Avenue Crosswalk

1. Austin Avenue at mid-block between 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Streets: PHB crosswalk per Recommendation #3 above.



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### Innovative Transportation Strategy Recommendations

#### **GNA Recommendation #3.1.**

**GNA recommends** that the City consider creating a citizen advisory committee to assist in the creation of a framework for a Smart City Vision & Strategy for Georgetown.

#### **GNA Recommendation #3.2.**

**GNA recommends** that the City deploy a 12-month adaptive traffic signal control (ATSC) proof of concept pilot along University Avenue from Maple St to DB Wood Road, like the City of Austin's pilot discussed above. The purpose of the pilot is to examine if the use of ATSC is a viable option for managing Georgetown's traffic congestion along certain mobility corridors like University Ave and Williams Dr. The pilot would allow traffic signals to change or "adapt" timing based on real-time demand.

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### Complete Streets Recommendations

#### **GNA Recommendation #4.1. – Complete Street Policy**

As mentioned above, Secretary Pete Buttigieg, U.S. Department of Transportation, stated in his recent Senate testimony that he strongly supports Complete Street policies: *“I think it’s very important that we recognize the importance of roadways where pedestrians, bicycles, vehicles in any other mode can coexist peacefully. That Complete Streets vision will continue to enjoy support from me, if confirmed.”*

According to Smart Growth America, a total of 1,477 US communities had already adopted Complete Streets policies as of the end of 2018, making a *“clear, public statement that moving people, not just vehicles, is the priority of their transportation networks”*. Complete streets policies address these problems. They provide the planning and political framework for a new paradigm of routinely using transportation investments to create streets intended to serve all users.

**GNA recommends** the City of Georgetown consider developing a Complete Street policy to be the driver in all future transportation projects.

#### **GNA Recommendation #4.2. – University Avenue.**

GNA has 2 short-term and 1 long-term recommendations for University Avenue.

1. **East University Reconstruction Project (Short Term).** Part of the 2015 Road Bond was funding for construction ready plans for the widening from the existing 2 lanes to 4 lanes of East University between Haven Lane to State Highway 130 (Toll Road).

**GNA recommends** that the City only consider the widening of East University from the Inner Loop to State Highway 130. This approach would force





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heavy west bound traffic to use the Inner Loop/Southwest By-Pass as they travel through Georgetown.

- 2. Rightsizing University Avenue (Short Term).** According to the City of Georgetown, University Avenue between Scenic Drive and Southwestern Boulevard has an Average Daily Traffic (ADT) count below the Federal Highway Administration’s guideline of 20,000 ADT for selecting locations that would be good candidates for Road Diets, which would have a minimal or positive impact on vehicle capacity.

According to the City, here are the latest TxDOT-supplied ADT counts for different locations along University Avenue between 2008 and 2019. The ADT counts between Scenic Drive and IH-35 (outside of the scope of this report) were above the FHWA Road Diet of 20,000 ADT and should not be included in a Road Diet.

Location	2008	2010	2014	2019**
East of IH-35 (just west of Scenic Loop)	23,000	22,000	21,200	23,100
West of Austin Avenue	16,900	16,100	16,000	17,700
East of Austin Avenue	15,500	14,900	13,900	16,000
East of Maple	12,300	14,400	13,100	15,900
East of Southwestern	11,000	12,000	11,700	13,100

\*\* TxDOT District Traffic Counts are published typically a 1-2 years after the counts are taken

Based on these figures and FHWA guidelines, **GNA recommends** that the City implement a Road Diet on University Avenue from Southwestern Boulevard to Scenic Drive. This would reduce University Avenue’s 4 lanes (2 lanes in each direct) to 3 lanes (1 lane in each direct and 1 dedicated left-turn lane). GNA feels this approach would still have a minimal or



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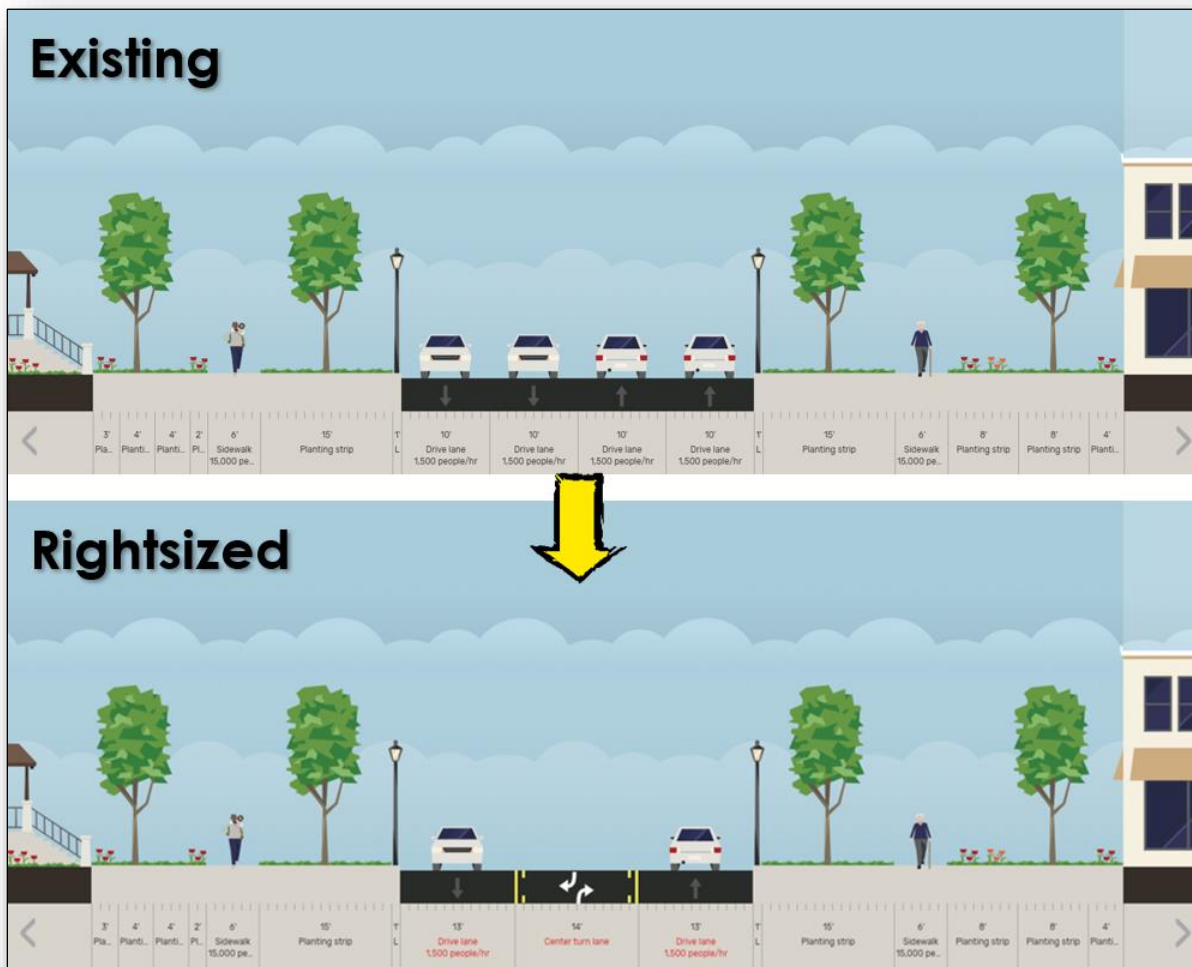


possibly positive impact on vehicle capacity, while enhancing pedestrian safety and becoming a more Complete Street as discussed earlier in this Section.

GNA recognizes that this recommendation is a major shift for the City and further recommends that the University Avenue Road Diet be done at the next planned resurfacing of the avenue and that the dedicated left-turn median be painted to minimize the cost to the City.

Based on the City supplied curb-to-curb widths for University Avenue, GNA has plotted out what the proposed road sections would like at between Ash and Elm Streets and 8<sup>th</sup> Streets (looking east at 1<sup>st</sup> Methodist Church) and then between Timber/MLK and Hart Streets (looking east).

#### University Avenue Road Diet between Ash and Elm Streets

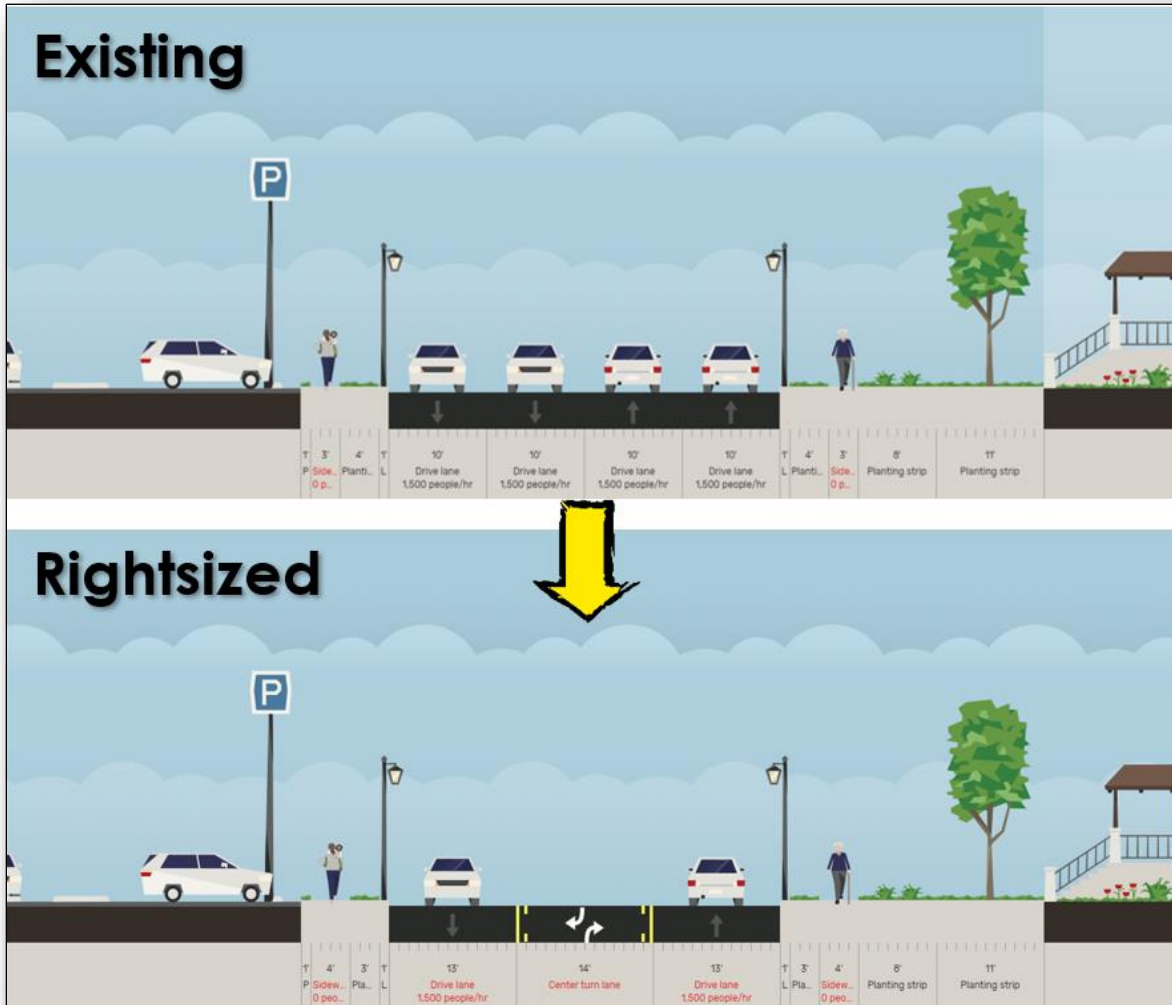


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#### University Avenue Road Diet between Timber/MLK and Hart Streets



- 3. Rightsizing University Avenue (Long Term).** If the Rightsizing University Avenue (Short Term) project above is successful, GNA recommends at some point in the future the City make the Rightsizing (Short Term) project more permanent between Southwestern Boulevard and Main Streets and replace the painted dedicated center turn lane with raised curb medians between the dedicated left-turn areas.

**GNA recommends** as part of this Rightsizing (Long Term) project that the City reduce the 42-foot curb-to-curb street width to 37 feet by relocating the northside curb line. That 5-foot reduction in street width would then be added

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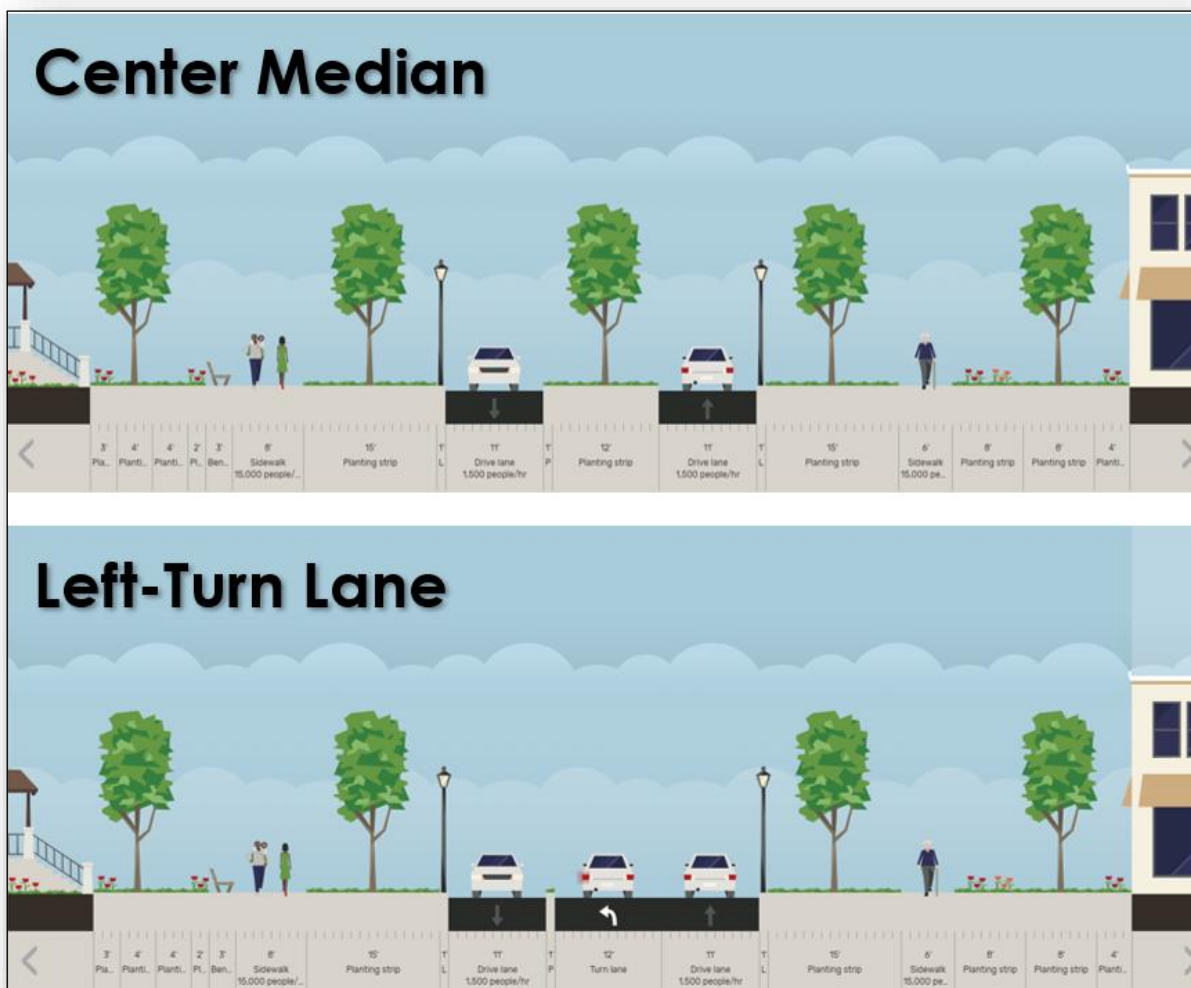
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to the existing sidewalk to create a new 11 foot wide Shared Use Path, including space for benches, runners and bikers.

**GNA recommends** that the new curbed medians (between the dedicated left-turn lanes) be landscaped with trees and other vegetation to enhance the Avenue as a true Complete Street.

GNA has plotted out what the proposed road sections would look like between Ash and Elm Streets and 8th Streets (looking east at 1st Methodist Church)



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### GNA Recommendation #4.3. – Austin Avenue.

GNA recommends that the City consider 1 short-term and 1 long-term recommendations for Austin Avenue.

1. **Rightsizing Austin Avenue (Short Term).** According to the City of Georgetown, Austin Avenue between 2<sup>nd</sup> Street and 18<sup>th</sup> Street has an Average Daily Traffic (ADT) count below the Federal Highway Administration's guideline of 20,000 ADT for selecting locations that would be good candidates for Road Diets and would have a minimal or positive impact on vehicle capacity.

According to the City, here are the ADT counts for different locations on Austin Avenue during the June-July 2020 time period.

Austin Ave @ 2 <sup>nd</sup> Street	12,900
Austin Ave @ 5 <sup>th</sup> Street	13,500
Austin Ave @ 9 <sup>th</sup> Street	10,400
Austin Ave @ 11 <sup>th</sup> Street	10,800
Austin Ave @ 16 <sup>th</sup> Street	8,500

GNA would like to point out that these ADT counts are pre-COVID-19 and are probably lower than the average ADT counts before the COVID-19 pandemic occurred. The latest GNA figures show an ADT count of 15,400 on Austin Avenue at 2<sup>nd</sup> Street on August 20, 2020.

Based on these figures and FHWA guidelines, **GNA recommends** that the City implement a Road Diet on Austin Avenue from 2<sup>nd</sup> Street to 18<sup>th</sup> Street. This would reduce Austin Avenue's 4 lanes (2 lanes in each direction) to 3 lanes (1 lane in each direction and 1 dedicated left-turn lane). GNA feels this approach would still have a minimal or possibly positive impact on vehicle capacity, while enhancing pedestrian safety and becoming a more Complete Street as discussed earlier in this Section.



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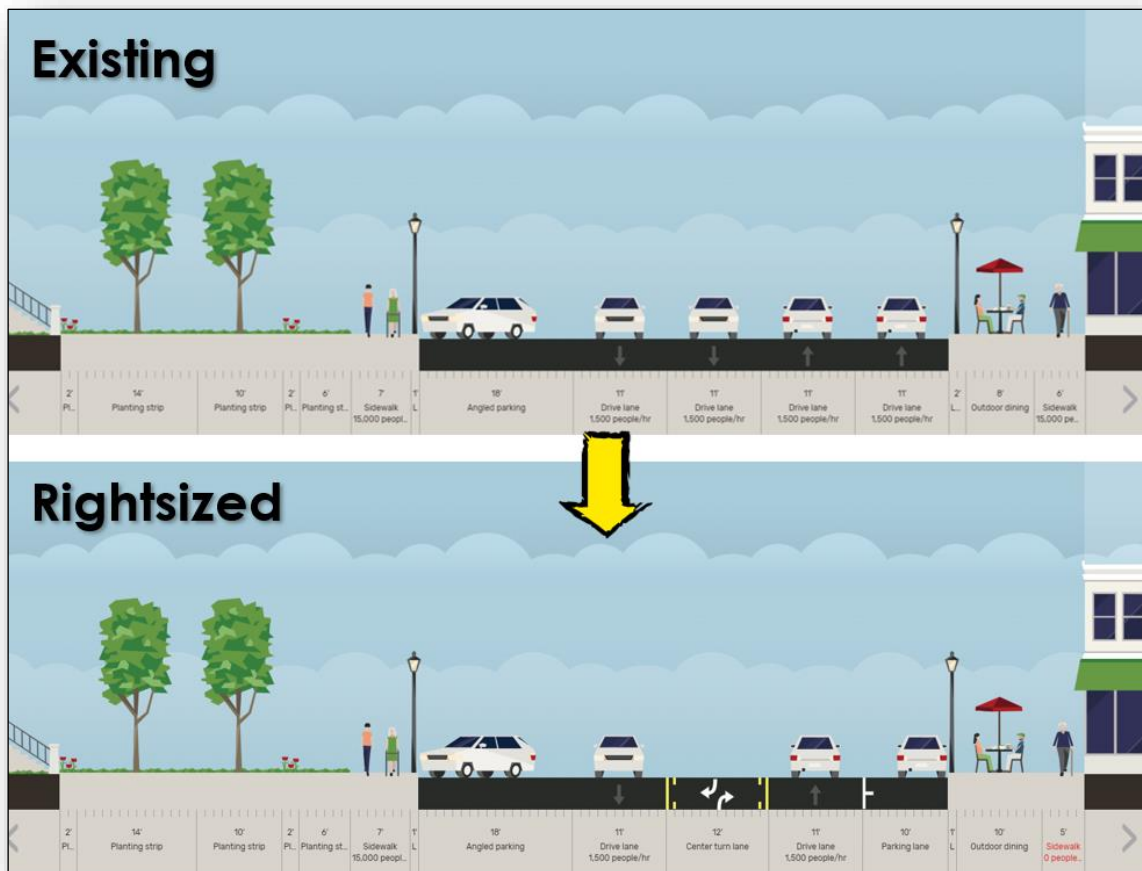
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GNA recognizes that this recommendation is a major shift for the City and further recommends that the Austin Avenue Road Diet be done at the next planned resurfacing of the road and that the left-turn median be painted to minimize the cost to the City.

Based on the City supplied curb-to-curb widths for Austin Avenue (64 feet between 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> and 46 feet between 6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup>), GNA has plotted out what the proposed road sections would look like between 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Streets (looking south at the Square) and then between 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Streets (looking south at the Bank of America building) one block north of the Square.

#### Austin Avenue Road Diet between 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Streets



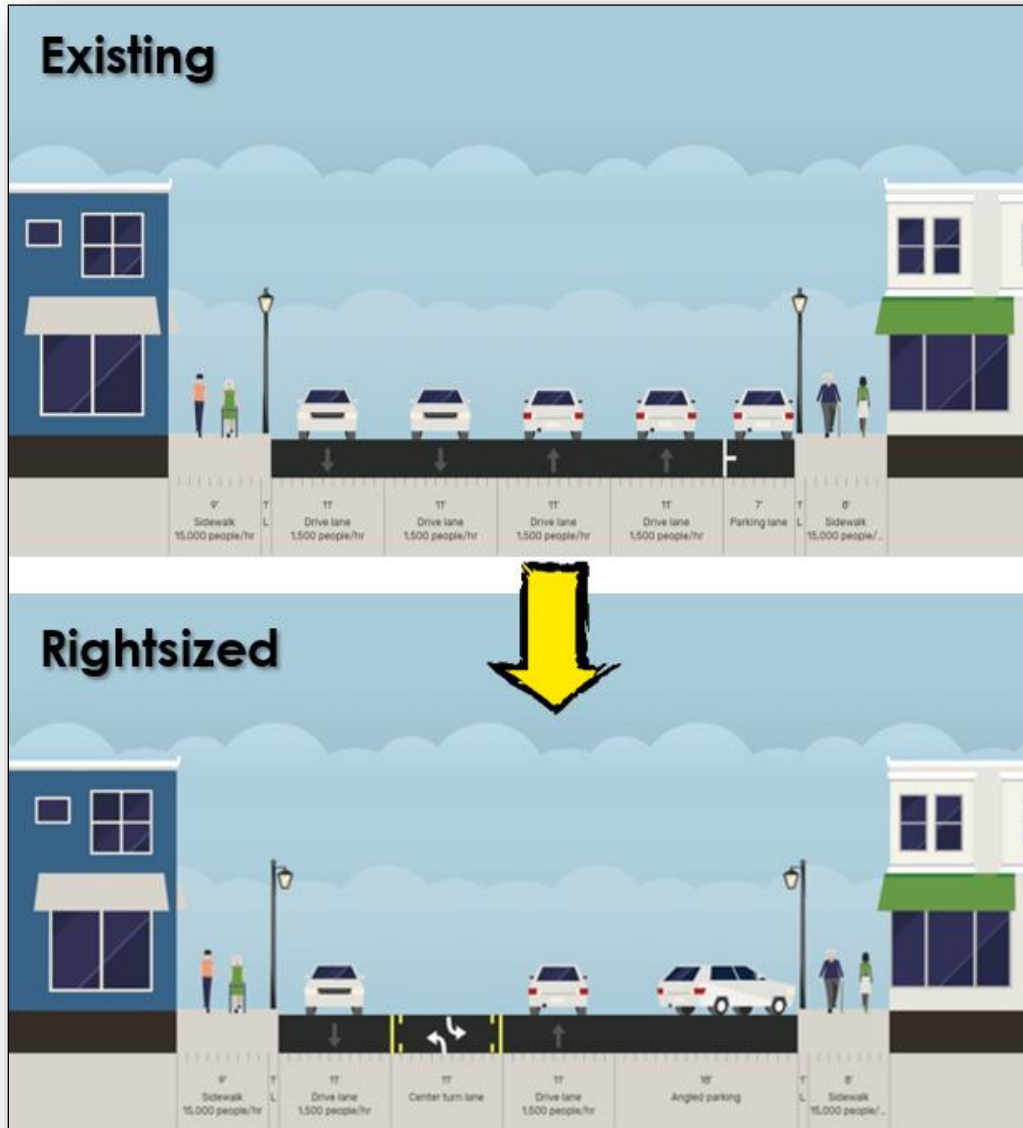
As you can see, this Road Diet approach has added new on-street parallel parking (12 new spaces) on the west side of Austin Avenue between 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Streets.

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#### Austin Avenue between 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Streets



As you can see, this Road Diet approach has added new angled parking on the west side of Austin Avenue between 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Streets. New angled parking would also be added between 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Streets and between 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Streets, giving the City 15 new angled parking spaces. When adding the 12 new parallel parking spaces on between 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Streets, this Road Diet concept would immediately add 27 new parking spaces Downtown on Austin Avenue at little cost to the City.

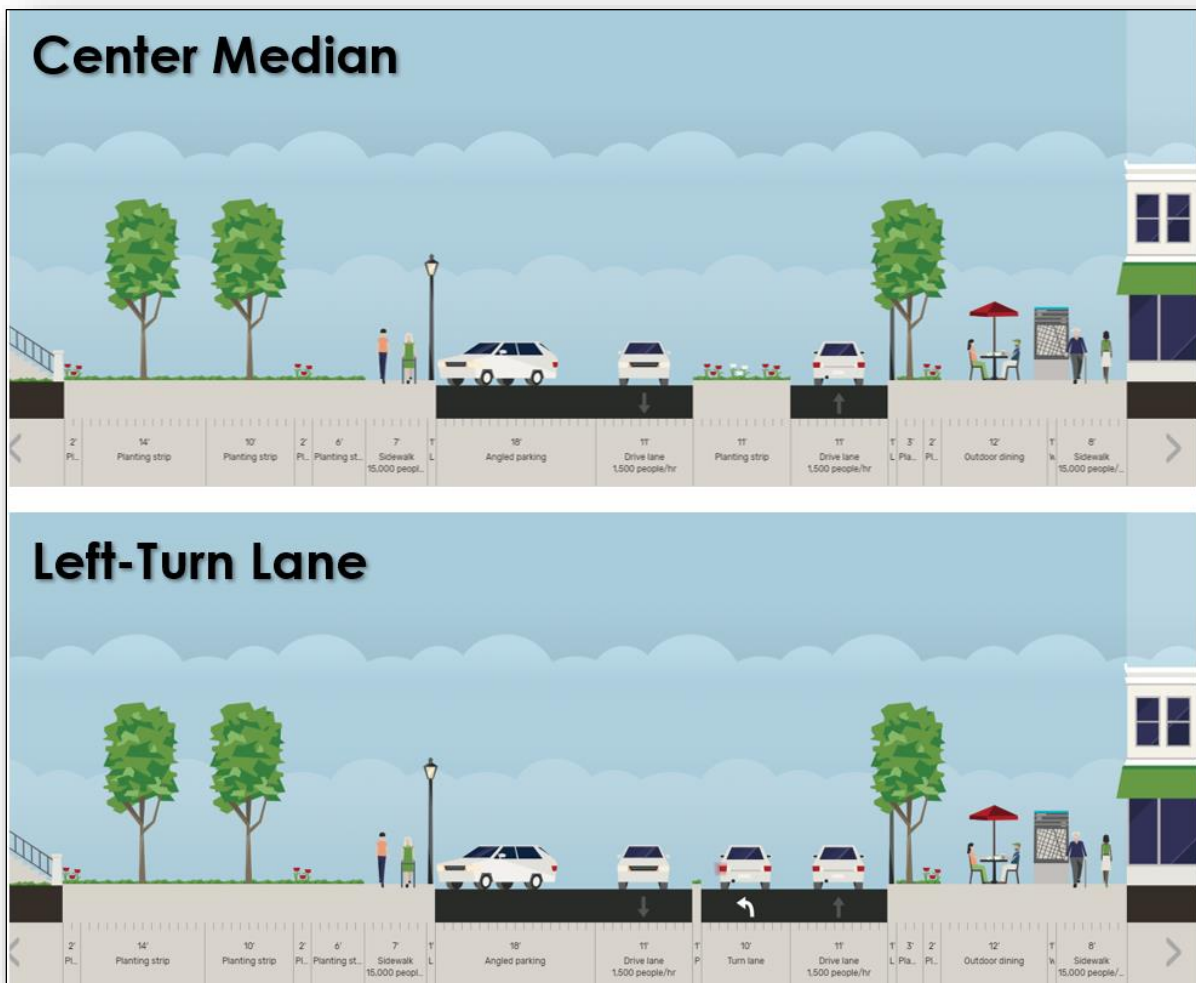
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- 2. Rightsizing Austin Avenue (Long Term).** If the Rightsizing Austin Avenue (Short Term) project above is successful, **GNA recommends** at some point in the future the City make the Rightsizing (Short Term) project more permanent between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Streets and replace the painted dedicated center turn lane with raised curb medians between the dedicated left-turn areas.

**GNA recommends** as part of this Rightsizing (Long Term) project that the City reduce the 64 feet curb-to-curb street width between 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> Streets to 54 feet by relocating the westside curb line. That 10-foot reduction street width would expand the outdoor eating areas and create a dedicated landscape barrier between the outdoor eating areas and the road.



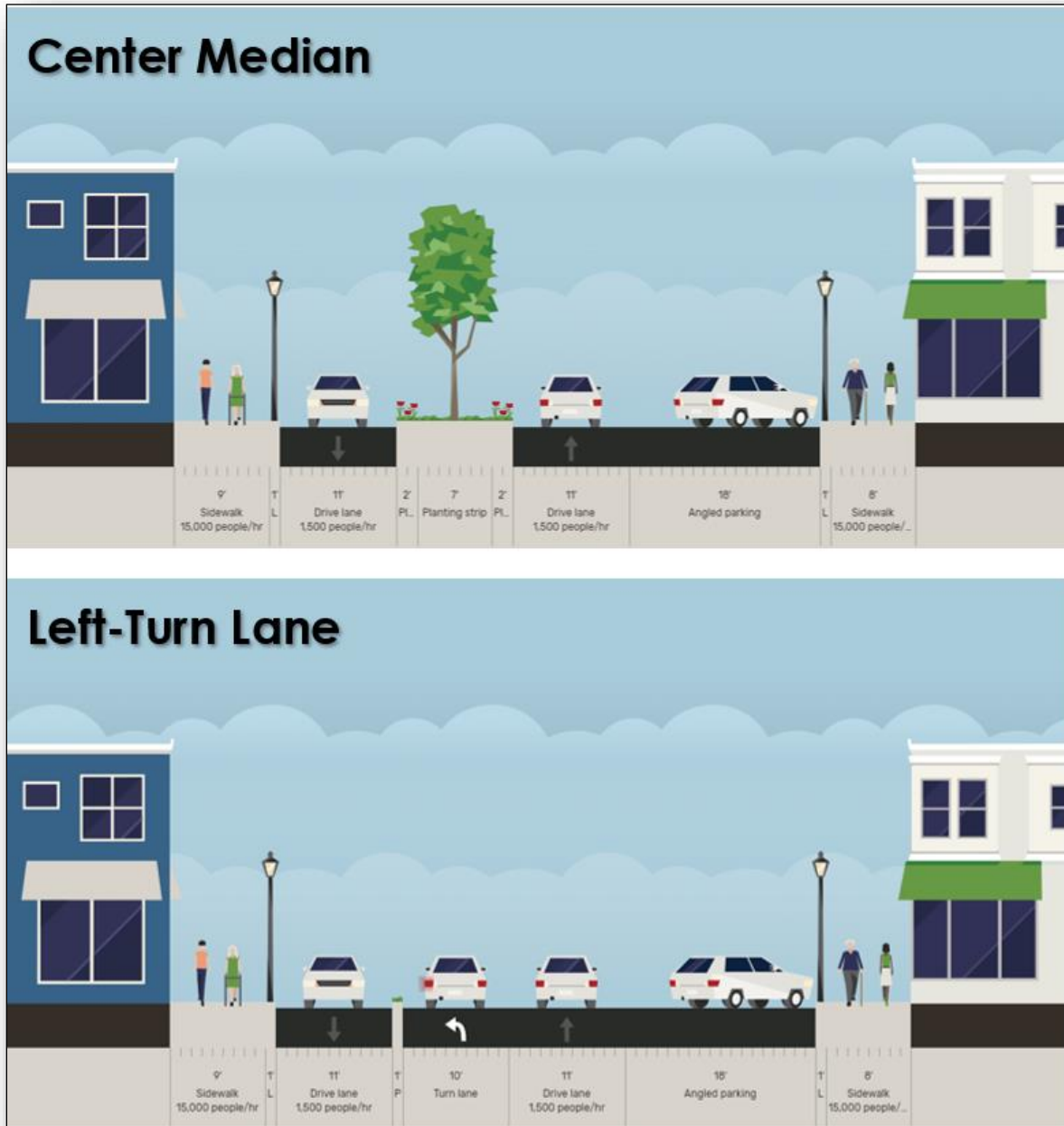


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The other parts of Austin would maintain their existing street widths and create raised curb medians between the dedicated left-turn areas, like the block between 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Streets below.



**GNA recommends** that the new curbed medians (between the dedicated left-turn lanes) be landscaped with trees and other vegetation to enhance the Avenue as a true Complete Street.

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### **GNA Recommendation #4.4. – Secondary Residential Streets.**

**Existing Traffic Impact on Secondary Residential Streets.** As mentioned earlier in this Section, numerous participants brought up increased traffic on 3 residential streets that are located within the University and Austin Avenue Corridor area. These streets have become major thoroughfares car and truck cut-through traffic residential neighborhoods. Specifically, College Street North of University Avenue, 2<sup>nd</sup> Street East of Austin Avenue and Railroad Avenue South of University Avenue were identified during our Interviews.

GNA recommends to the City that Traffic Calming devices, described in this Section, be located on these streets. GNA realizes that the City will need to study and elevate the need for Traffic Calming devices along these streets and offers to assist City staff in any way.

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### 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 streets, trucks delivering goods to restaurants and entertainment businesses

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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.

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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.

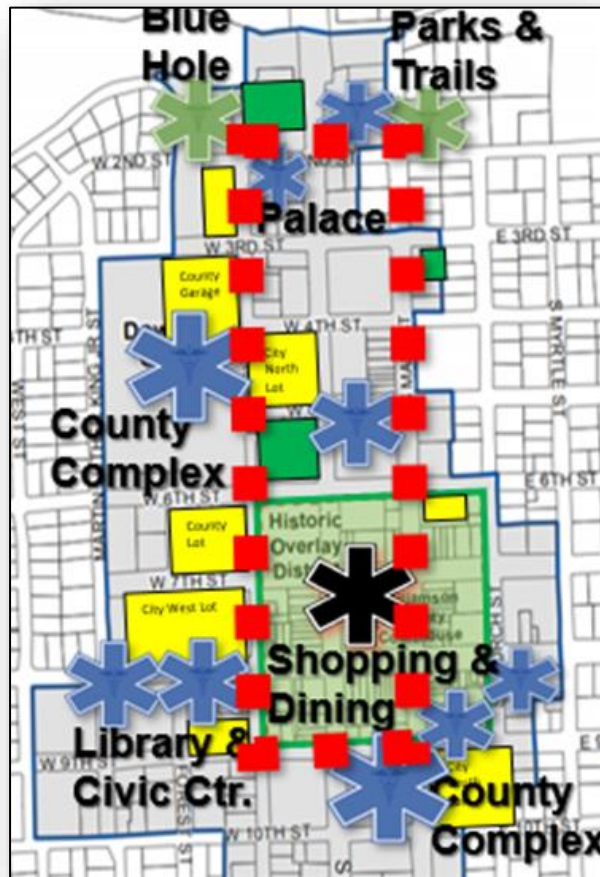
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**GNA also recommends** that the City consider a mid-term solution of starting a free handicap-accessible fixed route “Circulator” as Annapolis successfully uses to connect their perimeter parking garages to their downtown businesses. As mentioned 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 2<sup>nd</sup> St to 9<sup>th</sup> St. Then it could turn east on 9<sup>th</sup> St and then left on Main St. The circulator could then travel north on Main St until it reaches 2<sup>nd</sup> 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.

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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 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> 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 5<sup>th</sup> 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.



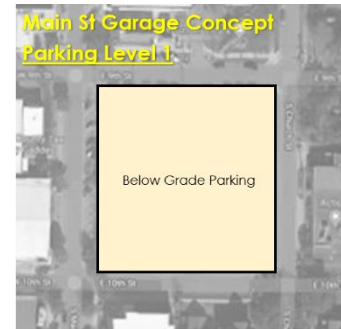
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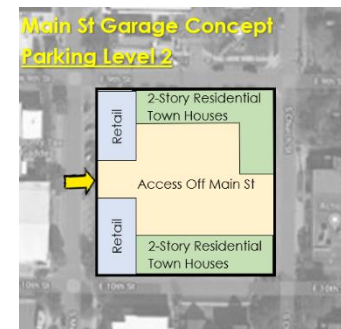
### Main Street Garage Concept

This parking garage concept would use the City's existing parking lot on the east side of Main Street between 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> 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 9<sup>th</sup> and Church Street side, along with a section along 10<sup>th</sup> 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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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.

