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<tr>
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<td>Americans with Disabilities Act</td>
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<tr>
<td>COG</td>
<td>Council of Governments</td>
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<tr>
<td>DART</td>
<td>Dallas Area Rapid Transit</td>
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<tr>
<td>DFW</td>
<td>Dallas Fort Worth</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Downtown Revitalization Program</td>
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<td>Housing and Urban Development</td>
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<td>Extra-territorial Jurisdiction</td>
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<td>Historic Business District</td>
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<td>HPF</td>
<td>Historic Preservation Fund</td>
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<td>FHTC</td>
<td>Forney Heritage Towne Center</td>
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<td>Illuminating Engineering Society of North America</td>
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<tr>
<td>MA</td>
<td>Metropolitan Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Municipal Management District</td>
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<tr>
<td>MUD</td>
<td>Municipal Utility District</td>
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<td>North American Industry Classification System</td>
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<td>Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities, and Threats</td>
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Forney, Texas, is a community in northwest Kaufman County. Over the past decade, dramatic population growth has occurred in and around Forney. This growth has often taken the form of planned residential developments in unincorporated land outside Forney’s extra-territorial jurisdiction (ETJ). Developers have formed Municipal Utility Districts (MUDs) in order to provide needed utilities and infrastructure for these new neighborhoods.

As a part of the City of Forney comprehensive plan, Forney determined to embark on an effort to reinvigorate and restore the historic downtown area as a means of retaining Forney’s small town character and keeping touch with its local history, in the face of the centrifugal forces of planned subdivision development.

“Downtown Revitalization is not simply retail development. It is community Development, which fosters economic growth and improves the quality of life for residents”

Eight Principles for Success

1. Comprehensive: Downtown Revitalization is a complex process requiring a comprehensive strategy. No single project such as a lavish public improvement, “name brand” business recruitment or endless promotional events can revitalize the downtown.

2. Incremental: Basic, simple activities lead to a more sophisticated understanding of the revitalization process and help members of the community develop skills to tackle more complex problems and ambitious projects.

In October 2008, the Forney Economic Development Corporation (FEDC) representatives met with faculty and students from the University of Texas as Arlington’s School of Urban and Public Affairs (SUPA). After this meeting, and
following subsequent discussions, Forney and SUPA reached an agreement for SUPA to produce a proposal for revitalizing Forney’s core downtown area. Prior to this event, the City Council had appointed a committee, known as the Downtown Advisory Committee, which made recommendations for the name and boundaries of this core area now known as Forney Heritage Towne Center (FHTC). The Planning and Zoning commission presented the recommendations to the council at which time the name and boundaries were officially adopted and incorporated into this report.

The proposal encompassed three principal areas. First, SUPA would provide an overall urban design structure for downtown Forney. This would include proposed use and locations of pedestrian, streetscape, Façade, and connectivity improvements for the FHTC, and a general land use proposal for the FHTC.

The second study emphasis would provide an urban design standard. This standard would include specific recommendations for sidewalk and streetscape, landscaping/street trees, building Façade, building height/mass, materials, street furniture, crosswalk, and parking standards.

The First Baptist Church property would be the third study focus. SUPA would provide several redevelopment options for this property, in conformance with the overall Forney Heritage Towne Center redevelopment strategy.
Finally, SUPA would provide a proposed implementation plan. This would include a suggested timetable for improvements and information on available financial resources and programs to assist in the redevelopment efforts.

The plan is intended to be consonant with Forney’s Comprehensive Plan, and is also heavily informed by the EDC Strategic Plan. Public input components included a visual preference survey, a brief survey about the downtown Forney area, and a tracing paper planning exercise. These were all conducted in Forney on the evening of March 16, 2009, in conjunction with the Forney EDC and the City’s Planning Department. Results are referenced throughout this report, and full results of the two surveys are included in Appendices C & D.
Eight Principles for Success (cont’d)

6. Quality: A high standard of quality must be set for every aspect of the downtown district, from window displays to marketing brochures, and from the public improvements to the storefront renovations.

7. Change: Changes and attitude and practice are slow, but definite and essential. The “Main Street” approach often brings about a major shift in downtown’s use, purpose, and future.

8. Action-Oriented: The downtown focus is to simultaneously plan for the future while creating the visible change and activities now.

CHAPTER II

HISTORY OF FORNEY AND THE HERITAGE TOWNE CENTER

“There are no secrets to success. It is the result of preparation, hard work, and learning from failure.”

~ Colin Powell

Downtown Forney has evolved and developed from the late 19th Century until today because of the great successes and unexpected challenges that have occurred throughout its history. The planning for the “Forney Heritage Towne Center” will undoubtedly involve a lot of preparation and hard work, but addressing the challenges and building on the successes of the past will facilitate the development and bolster the growth of this new investment in the district.

From downtown Forney’s beginnings, its vitality has been dependent on its accessibility to transportation systems. Forney was born in the 1870s with its inclusion on the Texas and Pacific (T&P) railroad line to Dallas and Fort Worth (Flook, 59-73). With the railroad, the town experienced its first economic boom in agriculture.

“The coming of the railroad in 1873 and the advent of barbed wire in the late 1870s had prompted a dramatic upturn in Forney’s fortunes. What had been in the 1860s and 1870s a limited economy of subsistence farming, small-scale cattle raising, and cutting became a burgeoning economy of native prairie hay, cotton, and bois d’arc products with ready access to the nation’s markets.”

( Flook, Forney Country, 75)

With this sudden growth in agriculture, farmers came to town, cluttering the streets with their carts, purchasing goods, and using many local services. Later, this growth in agriculture spilled over into growth in Forney’s manufacturing. “Gin Row” was established on East Broad Street, where numerous mills took up shop to process...
cottonseed oil. And from 1899 to 1910, the structure of downtown known today started to develop with businesses appearing on and around Main Street (Flook, 133). All of this economic prosperity, catalyzed by the railroad, gave Forney many of the beautiful neo-classical and prairie homes it still boasts today. This accessibility to the T&P line and growing affluence allowed many residents to take part in other leisurely activities, such as visiting the State Fair of Texas or taking in shows in Dallas or Fort Worth (Flook, 157).

Early in the twentieth century, transportation advances brought change to the town. However, downtown Forney once again was able to maintain prosperity through its transportation interconnectedness. With the development of the interurban rail line from Dallas to Terrell, an early commuter rail system was introduced as a transportation option, and the inclusion of downtown Forney along the line maintained the downtown’s viability. The Forney stop, on Church between Bois d’Arc and Center, allowed for greater accessibility to jobs in Dallas, enabled students to travel to and from local colleges, and allowed housewives, most of whom did not have access to an automobile, to travel to Dallas or Terrell for shopping trips (Flook, 181-183). However, this new success was short lived. The interurban between Dallas and Terrell and the station in Forney was a latecomer to the transportation scene, and by the time it was established, personal automobile service had become more prevalent, and bus service had eclipsed the rail service within ten years of its inception (Flook, 184).

Even though this auto-oriented transportation pattern presented a new challenge to the primacy of downtown, Forney again adapted to the new climate. With the establishment of the “original” US Highway 80 along Broad Street, Forney’s downtown maintained a direct link to Dallas and other neighbors. “Gin Row,” once the center of manufacturing, transitioned into “Filling Station Row” to accommodate this new transportation paradigm (Flook, 183-186). The new economy was able to successfully market gasoline, oil, and garage services to incoming motorists, and
eating establishments took root in and next to downtown, encouraging customers to spend more of their money in Forney.

However, despite the downtown’s proven adaptability a new challenge would arise in the 1950s that would bring about downtown’s decline. With the establishment of the Highway 80 bypass, Forney’s downtown lost access to a key transportation system. Motorists traveling to and from the Metroplex quickly sped past the town, and new commercial development would occur away from the traditional center along this bypass corridor.

This challenge from Forney’s past remains an obstacle to downtown growth in the future. With projects such as the “Forney Heritage Towne Center,” solutions that address this obstacle need to be evaluated to ensure the economic health of the district. Furthermore, the impact from future highway extensions, like those discussed in the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) Mobility 2030 report, need to be examined. As Forney has learned throughout its history, there is also a need to be on the leading edge of transportation shifts. Downtown developed because of the railroad, it continued to develop with the interurban line, and stayed connected with “old” Highway 80, but then lost its advantage with the development of the Highway 80 bypass.

Now, once more, there is evidence of a transportation shift on the horizon. With a greater focus on regional sustainability, there are plans for commuter rail service connecting locations throughout the region, and Forney needs to make sure they are on the forefront of that discussion. The future economic health of the “Forney Heritage Towne Center” and downtown may hinge on the citizens and government taking proactive steps today in setting the foundation for renewed transportation mobility and accessibility.
CHAPTER III
GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 Introduction

Goals for the Forney Heritage Towne Center (FHTC) are centered on the concept of revitalizing and energizing a true city core, or heart. The heart of a city can be identified with numerous attributes, not just the ones enumerated in the goals below. The goals and objectives established in this report are in response to goals and objectives established for the FHTC in the City’s Comprehensive Plan, strategic planning workshop, and other public input. Established goals, such as preservation of the city’s heritage and history, improving the city’s quality of life, and revitalizing and expanding the downtown have been considered and synthesized to apply to the scope of the FHTC. The goals and objectives of this plan envision establishing the Forney Heritage Towne Center as a core of the city expressed through the following attributes.

3.2 Goal One

Goal: The Forney or Heritage Towne Center will become the Community and Civic Heart of Forney

Objective: Forney will seek to build community activity centers in and/or around the Heritage Towne Center

These centers could include a library, community center with athletic equipment, studios, a gymnasium, or even a bowling alley. Other possible facilities could include a pool or natatorium in conjunction with the school district, or a multi-purpose auditorium, pavilion, or community theatre. Church Property Option E provides an alternative for a Heritage Towne Center (HTC) community activity center. Other possible community facility locations include repurposing the former Booker T. Washington School on Main and Chestnut as a library, community center, museum, or other combination of uses. Similarly, the Cotton Gin on Broad Street provides a potential opportunity for creative reuse. As the last extant portion of Gin Alley, the Cotton Gin could serve Forney residents as a visible connection to their community’s history.
Objective: Forney will seek to build community through periodic public events and festivals within the Heritage Towne Center

Current and past festivals have included a 5K Fun Run, an annual auto show, and the City of Forney annual Christmas festival (Forney Hometown Christmas). The goal should be to build upon this foundation, and add events to the point that at least one weekend a month is a festival or event weekend. This can include recurring events such as weekend farmer’s markets and/or craft fairs.

Events should highlight the heritage of Forney and its surrounding area, in order to foster a greater spirit of community and a sense of place. Possibilities could include a fall festival and hayride, which would leverage the historic role of Forney native hay in the development of the community, and a Fourth of July town picnic and fireworks show. Spring events could include a wildflower event and garden show in conjunction with local merchants and the Kaufman County Extension Service.

Objective: Forney will seek to locate civic functions in or adjacent to the FHTC

Locating civic functions within the FHTC enhances the cultural landscape through the use of important structures as landmarks that guide people through the district. The use of these visual cues helps to orient people within the environment and give them a feeling of security and comfort. However, to achieve this objective, the civic landmarks within the FHTC need to take on a similar physical form to the rest of the environment while also being visible from key junctions, intersections, and corridors. For example, future expansion of the sub-court house would be well served by having the building fronting Main Street with parking located behind or next to the building. Other projects such as restoring the old fire station or cotton gin could further develop the landscape of the FHTC.
Objective: Forney will seek to create community gathering places in the FHTC
Forney should strive to create public spaces for community gatherings. These can be planned gatherings, like festivals or markets, which require space for vendors and customers. Just as important is providing space for informal gathering. This kind of community gathering is most often spontaneous, and requires inviting as well as available space. This more informal space can include pocket parks, street benches, and other inviting spaces to linger. Frequently, such places happen despite planning, rather than because of it. Yet, the objective of the FHTC urban design guidelines and design standards is to create a streetscape where such locations would be likely to occur.

Objective: Forney should seek to improve the quality of life for nearby residents
A community’s quality of life refers to the degree to which a person is able to enjoy the possibilities in life resulting from their opportunities and limitations. Within the scope of the FHTC, these life possibilities are defined as increasing with the positive interaction of personal and environmental factors produced through good design and planning. Elements of this planning, such as improved pedestrian connectivity, enhanced bicycle and pedestrian corridors, traffic calming techniques along busy corridors, retail amenities for local residents, and streetscape improvements all serve to increase this quality of life by producing a vibrant street life. The goal is to create an environment conducive to the feelings of wellbeing and belonging for all residents. The following are aspects of this objective:

- **Pedestrian connectivity** – includes the use of sidewalks throughout the FHTC to create access for pedestrians. Connectivity also includes creating pedestrian connections to and from parking locations, key intersections, and key nodes and landmarks.

- **Bicycle and pedestrian corridors** – The creation of on-street and off-street bicycle and pedestrian corridors will reduce traffic within the FHTC by providing alternative transportation for local trips as well as providing access to local parks and other community amenities.

- **Traffic calming techniques on Bois d’Arc** – Traffic calming techniques such as on-street parking, bike lanes, signage, crosswalks, and road design will
reduce automobile speed providing for a safer environment for pedestrians. (assumes cooperation of and with TxDOT)

- **Local Retail Amenities** – Local amenities such as drug stores, hair salons, and convenience stores provide services for nearby residences encouraging pedestrian activity and reducing local traffic.

- **Streetscape Improvements** – The introduction of street furniture, landscaping, and pedestrian-oriented businesses create an attractive, enclosed-feeling environment that will encourage more foot traffic.

### 3.3 Goal Two

**Goal: The Forney Heritage Towne Center will become the Commercial Heart of Forney**

*Objective: Forney should seek to increase the visibility of the FHTC*

To increase its visibility, Forney should create a signage brand along major thoroughfares such as Highway 80 to direct people to the FHTC. The use of signage is an effective, low cost tool to help market the HTC to tourist. This use can be extended in and around the FHTC with gateways to denote the edges and entrances to the district and street ornamentation such as street toppers and banners to create image recognition within the district.

*Objective: Forney should seek to increase transportation accessibility and mobility of the FHTC*

Currently, the best route to downtown is from Highway 80. However this option has limited accessibility because of numerous intersections and the indirect path that exist between highway exits and the FHTC. To make the FHTC more attractive to commercial development, options should be developed that minimize these delays and increase access and mobility options. To achieve this objective, options should include:

- Constructing a direct connection from Pinson Street to Trinity Street Northwest of downtown
- Establishing a commuter rail stop that would provide direct access to North Central Texas from the FHTC
- Improving traffic circulation within the FHTC (particularly on Trinity Street)
- Improving parking within the FHTC
- Developing the existing Broad Street commercial corridor with activity that will encourage economic spillover into the FHTC

**Objective:** Forney should seek to promote economic development initiatives that use its existing resources and assets

Economic development initiatives used within the FHTC should take advantage of the market niches that exist within Forney. These programs should recognize and address existing demographic trends and retail opportunities to maximize their probability of success. This asset-based approach builds on natural, cultural, and structural resources to nurture and develop a market that can be sustained for local benefit. Success of this approach requires a commitment to investing long-term in existing resources rather than looking for a "quick fix."

### 3.4 Goal Three

**Goal: The Forney Heritage Towne Center will become the Historical Heart of Forney**

**Objective:** Forney should seek to preserve and build upon the historical character existing in the FHTC

Currently, there are numerous notable urban design elements that still exist from Forney’s historic past, including the Cotton Gin, historic homes and buildings, and the street system. These elements make up the fabric of Forney’s “small town” feel, and should be preserved for future generations to enjoy. To meet this objective Forney should consider:

- Promoting the use of design guidelines to preserve architectural character
- Providing historically appropriate streetscape improvements and Façade
- Developing standards to enhance the historical character of Forney
• Considering Historic district status for surrounding historic homes and the
  Historic Main Street Area
• Using festivals and events to highlight community heritage and history
  and to serve as a catalyst for additional development and redevelopment
CHAPTER IV
EXISTING CONDITIONS

4.1 Regional Conditions

4.1.1 Population
Forney, Texas, is a community located within the Dallas/Fort Worth region of North Texas. The DFW metropolitan area (MA) is currently the fastest growing major metropolitan area in the nation, with a population growth rate of 29 percent between 1990 and 2000, which is twice the national average. Its size moved up in rank from number nine in 1990 to number four in 2006, among the United States MAs, with a total population of 6,003,967, according to July 2006 estimates (U.S. Census Bureau, 2006). Total estimates for employment in 2007 are about 3.6 million.

NCTCOG projections of population growth demonstrate that the Forney area is in the eastern most portion of an arc of population growth covering the northern and eastern portions of the DFW area. Figure 1 shows the population growth from 2000-2030 for the NCTCOG region.
4.1.2 Economic Conditions

A look at North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) population and employment growth projections show that, while Forney is expected to have employment centers, it projects to have greater population than employment growth through 2030. NCTCOG projects both population and employment growth to occur in an uneven pattern, with growth concentrated in the northern and southern quadrants. Overall households in Kaufman County are expected to experience 309 percent growth from 2000 to 2030, while Kaufman County employment is expected to grow 165 percent. (NCTCOG Demographic Forecast, April 2003). Figure 2 shows the employment and household change during 2000-2030 for the NCTCOG region.
Figure 2: Employment and Household change during 2000-2030 for the NCTCOG region
### 4.1.3 Transportation

The region faces transportation issues over the next 20 years. The projected response to these issues, in the form of tollway and rail expansion across the north Texas region, promises to greatly affect the Forney area. NCTCOG’s Mobility 2030 plan envisions the construction of two toll facilities that will directly impact the Forney area: the continuation of SH 161, the George Bush Turnpike, and Loop 9, the Outer Loop around the DFW area. When constructed, these highways will bracket Forney east and west (see Figure 3), and provide additional connectivity with the rapidly growing northern and southern portions of the region. Further, major roadways historically promote growth around them, as development reorders to take advantage of the additional transportation capacity.

![Figure 3: Recommended roadways to the NCTCOG region for 2030](image-url)
Rail transport is rapidly becoming a vital transportation mode in the North Texas area. Increased usage of rail and other mass transit is critical for the region to meet mandated clean air standards and forestall a cutoff of Federal transportation dollars to the region and consequent negative economic impacts. NCTCOG has designated Forney and northwest Kaufman County as part of a study for next generation commuter rail. (See Figure 4) A rail line and commuter in Forney would dramatically transform the Forney Heritage Towne Center, and should be actively encouraged and planned for. The comprehensive plan posits a Transit Oriented Development area within the downtown portion of Forney, and this study proposes a location for a rail station within the FHTC. Rail would be a long term prospect, with construction not finishing before 2025.
4.2 Forney Conditions

4.2.1 Population

Like the greater DFW Metroplex, The Forney area is experiencing dramatic growth. Population within ten miles of downtown Forney is estimated to have changed from 139,410 to 185,059 from 2000 to current year. This represents a growth of 32.7 percent. Over the next five years, the population is projected to grow by 13.8 percent, to 210,505. Comparable growth rates for the United States as a whole are 9.0 percent for 2000-2009 and 5.1 percent projected from 2009 to 2014. (See Figure 5)

Driven by suburbanization and the construction of planned low density residential communities, much of this growth has been outside of the historical city center. Thus, the vast majority of new housing stock is detached, low density single family houses.

The first effect of this type of growth is the diminution in the sense of community expressed in the Strategic Plan’s SWOT analysis, as new residents often have little connection to the community, and work outside of Forney. The second effect of this, over time, will be to place a major strain on infrastructure dollars for Forney, as these developments are annexed at the point that serious maintenance must be performed on MUD installed infrastructure.
4.2.2 Economic Conditions

Median household income for the Forney area is estimated to be $73,223 in 2009, while the median household income for the United States is estimated to be $69,376. Median household income is projected to increase 9.2 percent, to $79,937 from 2009 to 2014.

As Figure 6 shows, Forney has high enough household incomes, and household incomes across a range of income levels, to support a wide variety of retail and professional services.

4.2.3 Transportation

The principal automobile access roads through Forney are Highway 80, Interstate 20, Bois d’Arc (FM 740), Broad Street (Old Highway 80), and FM 548. The most important roads providing access to the FHTC are Bois d’Arc and Broad Street. The FHTC is relatively isolated from the highway system, and currently has no rail access, though NCTCOG is studying a Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) route to Kaufman County.

4.3 Retail/Office Conditions

4.3.1 Regional Competition

The attached maps represent locations of different levels of retail centers in the DFW region. Figure 7 represents retail centers, broken into neighborhood, community, regional, and superregional types. The pink shaded areas represent ten and twenty mile drive distances from Forney.
Figure 7: Regional centers representation at neighbor, community, regional and sub-regional level
These figures represent the market areas for the various center types. Note that Forney is not well serviced by retail at the present time.
4.3.2 Local Competition

The Meadow Ridge Farms development is a $275 million mixed-use project that is planned to start in the late 2010. This lifestyle and regional center project will be the “largest retail space built between Mesquite and Tyler in 30 years,” according to Dallas Business Journal (May 16, 2008).

The project will be located in Forney near Reeder Road, 1.7 miles east of FM 548 and 4.1 miles north of Interstate 20. The scale of the proposed site is 500,000 to 700,000 square feet of retail. Another 1.3 million to 1.5 million square feet of retail could be added in the future. Meadow Ridge Farms is the product of the partnership between EDGE Real Estate Group and Meadow Ridge Farms LLP of Dallas. Start date is planned for late 2010. The Meadow Ridge Farms development plan is a mixed-use project that includes retail, restaurants, and hotel space. Meadow Ridge Development Corporation is planning to build three hotels and 50,000 square feet of office space. Other Details include:

- Three hotels (suites and conference center and TBD);
- 50,000 square feet of office space in phase one;
- Targeted to both Forney and regional markets;
- Big box retail such as Target, Barnes and Noble, and J.C. Penney; and
- National chains, including casual dining restaurant concepts.

Meadow Ridge Farms continues the general trend over time for commercial and retail activities to be pulled toward the Highway 80 corridor. As noted in the History of Forney section, Highway 80 has been a key commercial corridor since its construction. The Forney Heritage Towne Center area benefitted from Highway 80 when it was located on Broad Street, and commercial development has followed the move of the highway to its current location. In addition to the future Meadow Ridge Farms, there is an existing center on Highway 80 at FM 548. This center contains big box retail, with Wal-Mart and Lowe’s as anchors, as well as smaller retail shops and national chain restaurants. There is also a multi-screen movie theatre.

In light of the regional and local competition, it is clear that the nature of the retail and dining mix in the Forney Heritage Towne Center will be critically important to the success of any revitalization. In order to provide an effective and unique mix of
Reinventing the Heart of Community - Forney

customer experiences, careful examination of retail demand and demographic mix is key. As noted in Figure 12, the two largest population cohorts in the immediate Forney area are within the prime child bearing ages 29-44. This is also borne out in table 1 below.

Table 1: 2009 Est. Household Type, Presence Own Children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household Type</th>
<th>within 5 miles</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single Male Householder</td>
<td>15,954</td>
<td>7.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single Female Householder</td>
<td>21,389</td>
<td>10.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married-Couple Family, own children</td>
<td>64,059</td>
<td>31.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married-Couple Family, no own children</td>
<td>52,071</td>
<td>25.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male Householder, own children</td>
<td>5,291</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male Householder, no own children</td>
<td>4,587</td>
<td>2.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female Householder, own children</td>
<td>19,243</td>
<td>9.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female Householder, no own children</td>
<td>11,067</td>
<td>5.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonfamily, Male Householder</td>
<td>5,983</td>
<td>2.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonfamily, Female Householder</td>
<td>3,918</td>
<td>1.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total households with Children</td>
<td>88,593</td>
<td>43.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>203,562</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Claritas

Note that almost 44 percent of households within five miles of the center of Forney were households with children. A more thorough look at the age cohort pyramid reveals that the vast majority of these children are under 14. This points out a significant demographic niche: parents with children.
Another significant age demographic item is the sizeable population over 50, and the relatively large 45-49 year old cohort. There is an older population in Forney now, in addition to young families. Furthermore, the nation’s and region’s population as a whole is aging. This points out the importance of providing retail, dining, recreation, and housing suitable for population groups across the life-cycle within the Forney Heritage Towne Center.

Retail services have not kept pace with this population growth. As noted in the attached North Central Texas Retail Center Location and Service Area maps, Forney is underserviced in terms of retail. Specific and large retail opportunity gaps exist in numerous categories. (See Figure 13)

Figure 12: Age-Sex breakdowns for Forney
Source: Claritas, 2009

Figure 13: Top Ten RMP Opportunity Gaps by NAIC classification for Forney 15 minute drive time radius
Source: (Claritas, 2008)
CHAPTER V

URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK

The specific overall urban design for the Forney Heritage Towne Center is intended to be consistent with this study’s general goals and objectives. It is also in conformance with the direction set in Forney’s Comprehensive and Strategic Plans. In addition to taking direction from previous planning documents, this design reflects public input. The results from the March 16, 2009, public planning exercise, discussed in the introduction, inform the recommendations for sidewalk, building façade, and other streetscape improvements.

5.1 Districts

For urban design purposes, this plan proposes dividing the FHTC into five principle districts, each with their own unique characteristics and design plan. (See Figure 6.1, in the Design Standards section) The first of these districts is the Historic Main Street area, which encompasses the area along Bois d’Arc from Trinity Street to Broad Street, and the area along Main Street from Bois d’Arc to Elm Street. This area represents the historic commercial building stock for the Forney Heritage Towne Center, and is treated in the design standards and design plan in a way that reflects the desire of the officials and citizens of Forney to preserve and protect their heritage.

The second design zone encompasses the former First Baptist Church property and the Kaufman County property along Main Street. Given Forney’s desire to redevelop this entire property, the design plan for this area is treated as a single separate unit. The third zone is the Broad Street Commercial frontage from the eastern side of Bois d’Arc to Center Street, The fourth area is the area along Main Street from Elm to Chestnut, exclusive of the county property. This district is termed the Main Street Corridor. The fifth area is on either side of Chestnut Street at the eastern gateway to the FHTC. This area is planned as a Neighborhood Service area.
Figure 14: Heritage Town Center districts
Figure 15: Urban Design Plan
5.1.1 Urban Design Plan

The Forney Heritage Towne Center urban design plan (Figure 15) is composed of six principal aspects. These represent aspects of the overall design vision of remaking the Forney Heritage Towne Center into the heart of Forney, and serve to facilitate improvements in the community, commercial, and historical aspects of the area. These aspects of the plan include:

- Transportation and connectivity;
- Building form and Façade treatments;
- Streetscape improvements;
- Street tree and landscaping enhancements;
- Parking design;
- Community events and festivals; and
- Marketing of the Heritage Towne Center.

5.2 Transportation and Connectivity

Goal two of this Forney Heritage Towne Center study is to recreate the FHTC as the commercial heart of Forney. Forney’s history demonstrates that the key to commercial vitality is connectivity. Forney’s historical downtown prospered when it had direct access to transportation modes, such as highways and rail. When those connections were lost, it withered. Therefore, implementation of this goal absolutely demands improvements across the entire multi-modal spectrum of connectivity.

Automobile access is the first component for enhancement. Currently, the FHTC is served by Broad Street and Bois d’Arc as primary access roads. (Figure 15) Note that there is no immediate and direct connection to either Highway 80 or Interstate 20. Current access from 80, as the closest highway, is eastbound down Broad Street to Bois d’Arc or westbound down Broad Street to either Chestnut, then Main, or to Bois d’Arc. In either case, a driver seeking the FHTC must negotiate three turns to get to the FHTC. This makes it difficult to attract visitors who are not already familiar with the area.

Providing easier auto access will greatly assist with development of the FHTC. Extending Pinson Street over the railroad tracks and curving it to join Trinity Street would provide access directly from an existing Highway 80 exit, and allow visitors to access the FHTC with only one turn from the highway (see Figure 16).
This arrangement offers several additional advantages. First, it allows Trinity to become a primary gateway to the Forney Heritage Towne Center, thus potentially benefitting the Baptist Church property redevelopment. Plan B, one of the alternatives for the redevelopment of the Baptist Church property, (discussed later in this document), specifically takes advantage of this. Second, extending Pinson offers additional opportunities for redevelopment adjacent to and complementary of the Forney Heritage Towne Center. One possibility to accomplish this would be to build a bridge over the rail line. This would allow the extension of Pinson Road without the addition of another on-grade rail crossing, making travel from Highway 80 to the FHTC even easier, and providing quick access in an emergency situation without
concern for train traffic induced wait times. Finally, this new road offers possibilities for further expansion of Pinson Street. Continuing Pinson south would open up even more development opportunities contiguous with central Forney, and would provide the basis for a future street route that would relieve peak hour congestion relief to Bois d’Arc.

5.3 Gateways
This study envisions locating District gateways and signage at crucial intersections. In addition to a gateway at Trinity between Austin and Bois d’Arc, gateways would be Bois d’Arc and Church Street and Bois d’Arc and Broad Street. Since Bois d’Arc is a Farm to Market road with higher traffic counts, traffic calming is particularly important. Therefore, these two gateways should be larger, with over the street signage and contrasting paving material to provide drivers with visual and sensory clues that they are entering a pedestrian oriented district.

Figure 17: An example of over-the-street monolithic gateway signage

The southeastern end of the FHTC is located at the intersection of Main and Chestnut Streets. As it currently stands, this portion of the Forney Heritage Towne Center is isolated from the principal arterial traffic route along Broad Street. Therefore, this plan envisions extending the borders of the FHTC along Chestnut Street to include the Broad Street intersection (see Figure 33). The principal southeastern gateway would be located at Chestnut and Broad, directing visitors to the Main Street corridor
and the remainder of the Forney Heritage Towne Center. A smaller gateway monument would be placed at the southwestern edge of the district at Main and Chestnut by the former segregated African-American school.

The extended FHTC area along Broad Street to Main Street is envisioned as a mixed use neighborhood service center. The preferred uses would include commercial or neighborhood retail, such as small grocery or convenience store, pharmacy, coffee shop/bakery, or small café. This business mix would garner the majority of its customer base from the immediately surrounding residential areas, and provide a regular stopping place for local citizens. These services have also been identified as needed in the retail market gap analysis, and desirable in the downtown survey, as mentioned in previous sections.

Additional possibilities are offered by a repurposing of the former segregated Booker T. Washington School. This building could provide a civic or community use such as a library or community center. The historical aspect of the building could be commemorated with a museum, display, or historical marker and informative plaque, and help connect the FHTC with Forney’s nearby African-American community.

5.4 Main Street Corridor and Connections to Park
The Main Street corridor is also critical to improving bicycle and pedestrian access to the Forney Heritage Towne Center. The plan envisions connecting the Forney Heritage Towne Center to the Regional Park with a pedestrian/bicycle trail (See Figure 18). The trail would extend from the terminus of the park trails to the foot of the Main Street extension, then via the right-of-way on the north of the railroad tracks to Center Street. Specific issues that must be addressed concerning this trail connection are safe track crossing at Main and Chestnut, and provision of sound and physical barriers to the track along the length of the trail. Some combination of physical barrier and landscape buffer should be considered in order to provide safety and aesthetic appeal to encourage use.
Figure 17: Bike trail system connecting church property to regional park.
The pedestrian and bicycle trail connection can also provide direct access to the FHTC. In order for this to succeed, bicycle racks should be provided at the trail head in the FHTC, as well as throughout the district, in order for cyclists to safely secure their bicycles. There are also possibilities to provide interpretive or historical signage along the trail, highlighting the role of the railroad in Forney history and the heritage of the Blackland Prairie. Native grasses and perennial flowering plants should be included as the dominant feature of the trail landscaping. Native grasses can be linked to area history and the hay industry, and should be heavily represented in landscape plantings, especially colorful or decorative species like little and splitbeard bluestems, lindheimer’s muhly, buffalo grass, and pink muhly.

Since the majority of the Main Street Corridor is isolated from Broad Street, and because Main is immediately adjacent to residential areas, this plan views it as an opportunity to provide denser housing stock. Multi-family and narrow lot housing is not widely available in the rest of Forney, but can be seen as desirable by younger singles and older adults who do not want or cannot manage the burdens of
maintaining the home and landscape of a detached single family suburban house. Provision of lifecycle appropriate housing in the Main Street corridor helps with the goal of creating the community heart of Forney within the FHTC.

The use of a broader zoning classification for the Forney Heritage Towne Center allows for the classification of types that have characteristics or traits in common (e.g. mix use, residential, parking, public spaces) without mandating the intensity of each classification. These broader zoning classifications allow for greater flexibility in land use zoning for the public and developers.

1. One Story Detached
2. Two Story Detached
3. Two Story Townhomes
4. Two Story Semi-Detached

*Figure 22: Different options for the residential development*

This study recommends that the area on either side of Main Street from Center to Chestnut, excepting the Former segregated African-American school property and properties immediately adjacent to Chestnut Street to be designated medium residential. The medium residential zoning is suggested to have building orientations and setbacks and lot sizes similar to existing historic housing situated west and
south of the Forney downtown. Figure 22 provides examples of possible densities within the proposed medium density zoning.

Thus, the Main Street corridor becomes a connection between the commercial and mixed use historical core of the FHTC to the neighborhood service district at Main street and Chestnut Street. In addition to providing a physical connection between these two activity nodes, the Main Street corridor can provide a retail clientele base for the FHTC, as younger and senior and retired adults are those most attracted to living in an urban and pedestrian oriented neighborhood.

5.5 Streetscape Plans and Pedestrian Oriented Design

In order to facilitate pedestrian access to and desire to walk around the FHTC, and to promote a safe, healthy, and active street life and increased retail and commercial activity within the district, this study proposes streetscape design that covers sidewalk dimensions, landscaping and street tree recommendations, street furniture and signage standards, and pedestrian crossing and automobile parking standards.

Several factors are very important in any pedestrian oriented design. The overall goal is to provide as pleasant and inviting an environment as possible to encourage pedestrian use and promote customers and visitors lingering in the area, potentially increasing their time spent shopping and promoting business for FHTC vendors. The critical nature of available shade and seating cannot be overstated. This is Texas, and summers can be brutally hot. Without adequate shade, pedestrian activity will be minimal. No one wants to trudge across large expanses of burning hot asphalt or concrete in August in Texas. Thus, the streetscape design incorporates ample street trees and landscaping to soften the sun. Proposed building standards should require awnings and canopies for buildings to provide customer shade and shelter from inclement weather. Provision for benches in the Heritage Towne Center provides an additional design element, as well as need stopping points for the elderly, or for families with young children.

Street furniture includes items like trash receptacles, bicycle racks, planters, and appropriate signage. These features act together to promote a lively and active street scene which encourages use by providing a unique experience and sense of
place for the FHTC. Standards should ensure that street furniture does not interfere with a clear pedestrian way.

Safety is another key issue in the design. The design envisions numerous traffic calming measures for the FHTC. These include wider pedestrian areas and consequent narrowing of auto lanes. Crosswalks will be highlighted with contrasting brick, stamped and colored concrete, or paver sections, and street corners will “bump out” to narrow the street and lessen the distance in traffic that pedestrians must negotiate. Lighting should be upgraded, with a district wide standard fixture and design template, in order to promote safe after dark pedestrian activity. The addition of more residents within the FHTC would also help promote safety, with additional “eyes on the street” and a resident presence after normal business hours.

The streetscape design is presented in figure 15 and 23. Figure 15 presents an overhead view of the FHTC and its design plan. Figure 23 represents an overhead view of the proposed streetscape improvements for Main, Bois d’Arc, Elm, and Trinity street. Figures represent cross sections of the proposed streetscape improvements by location. Note that these proposed streetscape plans principally address the historical main street section of the plan.
Figure 23: Proposed street improvement plan for Forney HTC
The streetscape plan for Main Street includes a number of features designed to increase aesthetics, sense of place, and to encourage pedestrian and festival usage. The most notable feature is the boulevard design with landscaped median from Bois d’Arc to Center Street. This feature, in conjunction with the increased pedestrian way and large ten foot landscape and tree buffer, provide a sense of enclosure and repose to the street, as well as needed shade as the trees mature over time. The pedestrian way, coupled with the landscape area, is wide enough to incorporate street furniture and still maintain an adequate free walkway. Lighting is per the proposed design standard.

As seen in the plan view (Figure 23), there are block end crosswalks and bump-outs. All these features serve to calm traffic. Angled street parking is available the length of the street. Main Street’s proposed design also facilitates closure of the street with bollards for festivals or for weekend farmer’s markets, in keeping with the goal of creating the community heart of Forney in the HTC.
Figure 25: Recommended street plan for Main street

Figure 26: Recommended street plan for Bois-D-Arc street
Figure 27: Recommended street plan for Elm street

Figure 28: Recommended street plan for Bios-D-Arc street plan II (near church property)
The streetscape plan for Bois d'Arc is divided into two areas. The first area is between Trinity and Front Streets, and is presented in Figure 28. The plan is not symmetrical due to existing conditions and building stock. The northwest side of the street has the wider sidewalk, along with a large landscaped area and angled parking, the opposite side of the street has a narrower sidewalk and only area for street tree wells, but the same angled parking. The purpose of this is to calm traffic and maintain a sense of place for a pedestrian oriented mixed use area.

As noted above, the streetscape plans described here principally pertain to the Historic Main Street area. The Elm Street Plan, however, can be used as a template for other streets in the FHTC. With generous sidewalks, street trees in tree wells, and angled street parking, this design would fit the Main Street Corridor, as well as the commercial areas on Broad Street. The Church property streetscape would be specific to the chosen design, but should at least meet the design standard minimums, similar to the Elm Street plan.

5.6 Parking
While on street parking is described above, the FHTC requires addition parking areas for festival events or other overflow. This plan envisions limiting large expanses of parking in favor of smaller lots. The reasons for this are that large parking expanses are generally unsightly, create barriers for pedestrian access, and can effectively kill street life. Therefore, the plan places overflow parking in two areas.

The first is along Front Street between Main and Center streets. This area is already used for commercial parking. Properly buffered and landscaped, per the design standards in Section 6, this area can continue to provide overflow parking close to the core of the FHTC. The second area is the railroad right of way between Elm and Center streets. This, too, would need to be landscaped and buffered. This lot could provide parking for people interested in hiking or biking on the trail, which has a proposed trail head at Center Street (see Figure 15). Parking for the Baptist Church property redevelopment would be specified by the approved development plan.
5.7 Rail Station
The railroad right-of-way area between Center and Elm Streets would be a possible choice for a commuter rail station. As noted in the existing conditions section of this study, NCTCOG does have the Forney area under study for a commuter rail stop. Placing the station in the area between Elm and Center Street would be respectful of the heritage of the Texas and Pacific rail station that was formerly located in the same area, and would provide easy pedestrian access to the core of the FHTC. Locating a commuter rail stop within the FHTC would dramatically change parking needs. A large number of people would likely need to park during the day and use the commuter rail, requiring parking structures adjacent to the station. It would transform development of the district, providing much more traffic and opening up extensive opportunities for attracting major national chains, and TOD in the area. This study strongly recommends that Forney and Kaufman County continue to work avidly to attract this rail line.

5.8 Building Form and Façade Treatment
Building form and Façade standards are other important aspects of the Forney Heritage Towne Center’s urban design. The FHTC benefits from the presence of historical commercial building stock within the borders of the district, and historic homes adjacent to it. This building stock creates an atmosphere that is genuine. Building upon this authenticity is the foundation of this study’s building and Façade standards. To that end, the standards differentiate between the historic Main Street area, with its heritage building stock, and the remainder of the Forney Heritage Towne Center. Façades and building forms within the Main Street area must closely conform to the historical building type in terms of height and Façade to a degree that new construction in the rest of the district does not.

Suggested maximum building height is three to four story in the historic area, and three story outside of that area. Building heights within the Baptist Church property will be per the specific chosen development plan. However, building height and placement within the Baptist Church property should be sensitive to the adjacent residential uses, and in keeping with the historical nature of the nearby homes.

Façade treatment within the Main Street Area is designed to conform to the historical standard of existing building stock. Infill construction or rehabilitation of existing
buildings should proceed with the aim of matching the Façade design, materials, and building setback of adjacent historic structures. Specific architectural elements present in most historic commercial structures in the area include (1) cornices with dentil details, (2) brick string courses at top of first floor, (3) masonry pediments extending beyond the roofline, (4) tall first floor windows with (5) transoms above, and (6) fixed suspended or post supported awnings. New infill structures should possess at least four (4) of these elements, and preferably all six. Building setbacks should match adjacent historic structures in order to preserve the traditional street wall.

![Diagram of architectural elements](image)

*Figure 29: Architectural elements of historic commercial structures*

Below is an example of the possible look of Main Street with Façade improvements. Note that this example uses other historical building Façades, not the precise historical Façade standards proposed in this document. This image is for illustrative purposes only, to provide a visual indication of the effect of Façade improvements on the streetscape. Note also that this image is representative of Façade improvements only, and is not representative of proposed sidewalk and other streetscape enhancements.
5.9 Festivals and Events

Creating the FHTC as the community heart of Forney is one of the three principal goals for this study. Regular festival and community events within the district helps promote the area as the downtown core, or heart of the community. Events would bring visitors to the district and promote FHTC area businesses year round. The Forney EDC has begun this promotion with several events, such as Turkey Trax Auto Show, Rabbit Trax 5K fun run, Friday luncheons in the park, and the City of Forney contributes with the Forney Hometown Christmas. This study proposes that the goal for festival events should be at least one event per month. These events can include regular farmer’s markets within the FHTC as well as events like fun runs and festivals.

Events should be designed to reflect Forney’s history and the area’s heritage. These can include such events as a Fall Festival and Hayride and a Spring Wildflower and Garden Show to reflect the history of the Blackland Prairie, and Forney hay. Events like these provide ample opportunity for developing family traditions, with child-friendly activities like hay rides, pumpkin carving contests, animal and raptor exhibits, and seedball making classes. Ample resources exist within Forney and Kaufman County, as Master Gardeners and Naturalists must perform service hours to retain their certifications, and are usually eager to undertake these kinds of fun and educational activities.
Farmer’s markets are also an excellent opportunity to promote activity within the FHTC. As noted in the Claritas Retail Market Power Gap™ analysis and detail in Appendix B, food at home is an underserved market in the area, and fresh produce markets offer a product not available in the big box retailer, eliminating concerns about competition with existing businesses. Over time, these markets can encourage numerous local businesses providing value added agricultural products, like honey, jams and jellies, herbal beauty products, and floral and garden plant material. Organic farmers can begin to grow specialty produce for the "Forney Greenmarket." The proposed Main Street design is ideal for closing off the street with bollards on weekends for this type of market.

Periodic antique and craft shows are also a natural fit for a historic downtown area. These kinds of shows would also take advantage of Forney’s former reputation as an antiques capital, and serve to revitalize a market niche. Finally, Fourth of July picnics and fireworks shows are a perennially popular festival. Summer festivals reliably promote extensive restaurant business in other North Texas locations like the city of Addison.
With all of these events and festivals, starting small, engaging the community, and partnering with state and county authorities and local and national non-profits help develop size and effectiveness over time. Aside from the Agricultural Extension Service, national groups such as the Native Plant Society of Texas and the Native Prairies Association could provide expertise and potential assistance for event planning and exhibits. Helping establish a non-profit corporation to manage and promote a Greenmarket or other ongoing event in the FHTC can leverage community and outside financial assets and human capital.

**5.10 Marketing, Market Niches**

One way of approaching downtown redevelopment is through identification and exploitation of market niches. Two types of niches are relevant: niches that already exist in terms of a cluster of same type stores or businesses, and possible niches based on demographics and retail spending patterns.

**5.10.1 Existing Niches**

*Business Inventory*

The business activities of Downtown Forney can be divided into three categories: general retail, beauty related retail and office/professional. The biggest portion of retail shops in the FHTC is beauty related retail: there are currently eleven beauty related retail businesses out of 34 total businesses in downtown Forney. There are eleven other types of retail including dentist, reception and event rooms, general or miscellaneous retail, funeral, coupon shop, one printing cloth shop, and other sales shops. However, there are relatively few restaurants are located in the FHTC, with only two restaurants or food service businesses located in the district. Eleven offices are in The FHTC, including two banks and two insurance companies, an engineering service company, a construction company, law office, and a marketing company.

*Retail Opportunity Gaps*

According to the retail opportunity gaps of downtown Forney (see Appendix B) general merchandise and shopping centers are needed, and have high opportunity gaps in terms of the population growth in the City. The analysis also indicates the need for health and personal care stores, as well as grocery and beverage stores. Electronics and appliance stores, furniture and home furnishing stores, miscellaneous
stores, sporting goods, hobby, book, music stores are in need as well in terms of opportunity gaps.

**Niche Markets**

Analysis of niche markets leads to selecting the most potentially effective markets and pinpointing potential consumer market segments. According to Forney’s business inventory and the retail opportunity gaps, the niche markets of downtown Forney can be grouped into the following two areas:

*Niche Market based on need:*

First, food and beverage retail are in need to meet the demand from downtown employees as well as Forney’s projected future consumer spending patterns. Second, small convenience store, grocery stores, and pharmacies are in demand. The basic items for daily life need to be provided nearby in order to attract future residents in the FHTC.

*Niche Market based on existing retail:*

We can see from the business inventory above, good numbers of beauty related stores are located in downtown Forney. It is considered a potential niche market since there is an existing beauty related store cluster in downtown Forney. Second, antique stores and clothing stores can also be identified as a good niche market in downtown Forney. Considering the historic value of downtown Forney and the existing beauty related store cluster, antique store and clothing stores are a potential niche to catch the existing beauty related retail consumers in downtown Forney as well as attracting new consumers. The retail opportunity gap shows the highest demand for merchandise and shopping places for clothes, so these existing niches have room to expand and develop.

**5.10.2 Possible Niches**

*Moms with Children*

According to the Forney demographic data, almost 44 percent of households within five miles of the center of Forney are households with children. As noted in the Existing Conditions section of this study, most of the children are under 14. Thus, the moms with kids niche has demographic support. Marketing to young families dovetails with some of the existing niches in the FHTC, such as salons and beauty supply stores, and clothing stores. However, this niche market offers much more
opportunity in terms of types of businesses. For example, community or civic facilities such as a library, athletic centers, climbing walls, and/or a pool could provide opportunities for parents to bring their children to the FHTC on a regular basis. While the children were at their swim lesson or karate class, the parents could visit a salon, a store, or a coffee shop.

The moms with kids niche therefore presents opportunities in the areas of educational and recreational services, such as art studios, music stores, martial arts, and dance studios. It also offers opportunities for restaurants, coffee shops, bakeries and ice cream and candy stores. Youth oriented apparel and sporting equipment stores are also part of this niche.

_Aging Baby Boomers_

Another growing demographic is that of aging baby boomers. There currently is a sizeable population over 50, and the relatively large 45-49 year-old cohort within the Forney area. This demographic is in the prime earning period of their lives, but will progress to a lower earning stage within a few years. This demographic is composed largely of parents whose children have left the home. Many have more leisure time and disposable income.

The types of businesses they need include pharmacies, medical care, diagnostic facilities, physical therapy and other allied health trades, and grocery and fresh produce stores. These retail classifications are underserved in Forney, and present large retail opportunity gaps. Types of businesses that appeal to this demographic also consist of restaurant and entertainment establishments, including fine dining, community centers, art galleries, antique shops, and golf and other recreational activity shops.

_Professional Offices_

The opportunity for professional offices, including allied health professionals, gerontologist and general practitioner offices, and diagnostic facilities should be explored. These kinds of offices fit well in a downtown and historical setting, and offer an opportunity to repurpose both commercial and residential buildings in and around the downtown area. This is also a market niche that would naturally connect the FHTC with activities around the new medical center.
Antiques
Forney formerly billed itself as “The Antiques Capital of Texas,” and maintains some antique shops in old buildings along Highway 80. Relocating some of these businesses to the historic FHTC, could enhance this niche for the town as a whole. Other successful downtown redevelopments in the North Texas area, like downtown Grapevine and McKinney, have active antiques niche markets.

Local Residents
Rather than immediately attempting to attract visitors from outside the immediate Forney area, the FHTC can focus first on providing services and value to nearby residents. This is especially important consideration given the near term construction of Meadow Ridge Farms, with a large population of national chain retail businesses. To begin with, the FHTC might consider looking to providing a different kind of service. The overall design plan includes this idea of growing from within. The southeastern portion of the FHTC could very easily become a neighborhood service center, as the study proposes, providing basic convenience products to nearby residents. A strong civic and community services presence, as anticipated in several of the Baptist Church property proposals, can also provide an impetus or spark for growth. If the FHTC has facilities and businesses that provide for nearby citizens first, it can establish a regular and reliable customer base on which to build additional market niches.

Civic Activity
One option to establish a clear identity for the FHTC is to create a civic or community center, which can then help establish mixed use activity around it. This study considers civic and community facilities as key traffic generators for the FHTC. Currently, City Hall, the Kaufman County Sub-Courthouse, and the US Postal Service Office are either in or adjacent to the FHTC. Each of these facilities creates jobs and provides a reason for citizens to visit the area on a periodic and regular basis. This acquaints people with the FHTC area and provides a captive customer base in the form of employees to patronize FHTC shops and restaurants. Possible additional civic/community facilities that could be located in the FHTC are a library, an athletic and community center, meeting facilities, and a pool.
The strategy of generating customer traffic through community facilities has been a part of numerous successful downtown redevelopments or town centers such as Grapevine, Keller, and Southlake. This niche strategy complements other niche strategies, like moms with kids, and aging baby boomers. The community facilities provide reasons to connect these demographic groups with the FHTC, and helps fulfill the study goal of creating the FHTC as the community heart of Forney.
CHAPTER VI
DESIGN STANDARDS

6.1 Purpose
The Forney Heritage Towne Center Urban Design Guidelines were developed as a component of the Downtown Forney, Texas Redevelopment Plan undertaken by the City of Forney, EDC, in collaboration with SUPA.

The Guidelines are written as a tool to ensure that future development and redevelopment supports the community’s vision for Forney Heritage Towne Center. All new projects should be reviewed to determine how they contribute to the urban design framework, including the goals and objectives, prior to evaluation under the detailed guidelines. These Design Standards have been developed to define specific principles that are needed to develop and maintain a historically appropriate mixed use, pedestrian friendly environment in conformance with this report’s goals and objectives.

6.2 Applicability
The historically accurate preservation and restoration of heritage structures would be the most direct way of preserving and maintaining iconic architectural characteristics of the FHTC. The National Parks Service’s Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties (1995) provides an excellent example of this kind of strict standard. However, this report’s guidelines recognize that the strict historical approach is not always viable, particularly in the case of infill redevelopment. Therefore, alternative approaches to new construction ensure such construction is compatible with local character provide a less restrictive alternative still promotes preservation of historical appeal. In anticipation of infill and redevelopment that may occur, primarily on vacant or underutilized lots along Chestnut, Bois D’Arc, Elm, and Main Streets, including the First Baptist Church property, the Guidelines provide overall direction on site planning issues such as Façade development and streetscape design for new construction.

The underlying principles for new construction are encouraging new developments to be complementary to the character of the FHTC. New construction is not intended to
mimic older façades, but to respect the form and patterns of heritage buildings that support the vision of Forney Heritage Towne Center. In addition, it is important to provide spaces that encourage public engagement and spatial enclosure with suitable human scale.

### 6.3 Design Approach
The City of Forney conducted a public meeting as part of the public input process concerning redevelopment of the FHTC. The meeting was held in Forney, Texas on Monday, March 16 at 6:30 pm. Turnout was excellent, and the attendees appeared interested, attentive, and motivated to provide their best input for redeveloping the Forney Heritage Towne Center. Forney and SUPA moderated two activities: a visual preference survey, and hands on tracing paper exercise. In addition, SUPA administered a brief survey. The full results are presented in Appendix B.

### 6.4 Application
The Guidelines apply to areas within Forney Heritage Towne Center boundary includes areas along Chestnut Street, Bois D’Arc, Elm Street, Main Street and extension of Main Street. The Guidelines recognize that within the Forney Heritage Center boundary there are different needs to be assessed in terms of conformity with existing developed downtown and future planned downtown area.

### 6.5 General guidelines within Forney Heritage Towne Center
These Guidelines should be referred to when existing buildings are being refurbished or renovated and when redevelopment of an existing property or group of properties within the boundary of Forney Heritage Towne Center is being undertaken.

### 6.6 Special Districts within HTC

**Historic Main Street**
The intersection of Main Street and Bois d’Arc is the primary location of historical retail mixed use building stock in Forney. This area of historical buildings extends along Bois d’Arc from Trinity Street to Broad Street and along Main Street from Bois d’Arc to Elm Street. Due to the historic nature of most of the buildings within this small area, Façade standards should be the strictest here. Specifically, infill construction should be built with the same Façade pattern as adjacent buildings,
including identical fenestration patterns with transoms above main windows, and brick dentil features and stringing on the top floor cornice. Brick pediments projecting above the cornice area are also a traditional feature of historic Forney downtown Buildings, and should be included. (See Figure 29) Materials should be brick, with decorative stone accents (subject to approval). Setbacks should be identical to adjacent buildings, to maintain the historic street wall.

**Baptist Church and County Property**
These guidelines (other than those specific to the Main Street Historic Area) apply to development projects in former Baptist Church Property Area, including new buildings and/or alterations to existing buildings. Specific design elements are unique to each proposed plan, but the overall streetscape design standards should conform to the overall standards laid out in this report.

### 6.7 Built Form Guidelines
Built form refers to buildings and/or part of buildings along street in downtown area that are adjacent or connected to the street and provide spatial enclosure.

**Building Orientation**

- **Street Walls** - Buildings throughout the FHTC should maintain a continuous building edge to provide a sense of pedestrian enclosure, except areas where there would be parks, courtyards, and plazas that are integral to the urban environment. For purposes of this standard, new or infill construction should locate at least 75 percent of its front face at the back edge of the sidewalk. The goal is to retain the visual impact of the historic street wall.

- **Ground Level Retail** - Retail, restaurant, entertainment, customer service, or other functions that create significant human activity should be encouraged for ground level uses. If possible, architectural features and floor plans at the ground level

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![Figure 31: Encourage uses with significant human activity at ground level.](image)
should allow flexibility for conversion between different uses.

- **Entrance Exposure** - Where office and retail/entertainment spaces coexist, consider placing the retail entrances and prime exposure at the corners and the office entrances at mid-block locations.
- **Service Loading** - Service parking and loading areas should not be oriented towards pedestrian walkways located in rear.

**Building Entrances**

- **Entrance Coverings** - Building entrances should be clearly defined using overhangs, awnings, recessed openings, and similar forms. If used, awnings and canopies should be simple, sloped awnings projecting far enough over the sidewalk to provide shade or rain protection for pedestrians. In the historic Main Street area, awnings should be suspended solid awnings or solid awnings with historically appropriate support posts.
- **Doorways** - Doorways should be adequately illuminated. Wherever possible it is encouraged to use existing doorways. Replacement of store entry doors should be of the same material and general design as the original if possible.

**Building Façades**

- **Historic Preservation** - Preserve original façades wherever possible. In construction of new façades, the building edge should be designed to conform according to characteristics of adjacent buildings in the surrounding area.
- **Openings** - Façade should have significant openings that provide transparency.
- **Details** - Façade detail, texture, depth, a shadow pattern, human scale is preferred, instead of blank walls. Within the historic Main Street area, cladding - if not original to the building - should be removed in order to

Figure 32: Preserve original façades and continuity of architectural rhythm with adjacent buildings.
Reinventing the Heart of Community - Forney

expose the original details, enhancing the building’s architectural rhythm with adjacent buildings. Lengthy façades that face pedestrian walkways should be divided with horizontal articulation to avoid “blank” walls.

• **Materials** - Preferred façade material for new construction and renovation is brick or stone masonry.

**Building Design**

• **Setbacks** - To provide a sense of continuation in Main Street, Bois D’Arc, building setbacks should follow minimum setbacks of adjacent buildings. New construction and renovation should follow adjacent buildings wherever is possible, or at least provide eight-foot to fifteen-foot pedestrian walkway area.

• **Height** - The building height on existing property of Main Street should be of 2 stories or continue the height of the existing adjacent buildings to maintain the visual continuity of the streetscape.

• **Shorter Buildings** - New construction that is fewer stories in height than adjacent buildings should consider methods to increase its height such as increasing the floor to floor height or using tall parapet.

• **Taller Buildings** - New construction that is higher than adjacent buildings should at least have façade divisions and openings on ground and first floor that conform to characteristics of adjacent buildings.

**Building Signage**

• **Signage Location** - Signs should be flat against the façade or blade signs. Individual tenant signs may be located on individual storefronts, over display windows, and/or at entries. Retail signs along sidewalks should be located a minimum of eight feet above the pedestrian sidewalk.
• **Restrictions** - No sign should be erected or maintained in any form or at any location where it may obstruct or in any way interfere with the view of or be confused with any approved traffic-control device. Signs should not cover or obscure architectural elements. A flat mounted sign should occupy no more that 10 percent of the building’s façade. Reader boards, portable, or temporary self illuminated signage should not be allowed.

• **Signage Lighting** - Signs that are externally lit from the front are recommended. The source of light for any sign should not be directed into any residential area or toward any oncoming traffic. The source of illumination by whatever means should not reflect directly on residential property. Neon-lit signs should be permitted only if size and location is controlled to prevent excessive light or obtrusiveness. Flashing signs and dynamic displays are not permitted.

**Temporary Signage (Sandwich Boards)**

• **Sandwich Board Restrictions** - Temporary sandwich board signs should have a maximum height of three feet and a maximum width of two feet, and require a permit. Sandwich board signs should not permitted on landscaped areas maintained by the City of Forney. Sandwich Board signs should only be permitted during hours of operation. Illumination should not be permitted.

• **Sandwich Board Location** - Sandwich board sign should be placed directly in front of the building/store and only one sandwich board sign should be in front of the building. If tenants share the building, both wishing to use sandwich boards, arrangements should be made among the tenants.

• **Sandwich Board Materials** - Sandwich board signs are encouraged to use signage consistent with the character of the Forney Heritage Towne Center, including hand painted, carved,
unique signage, such as finished wood, metal or chalkboard material. Plywood should not be permitted. Signs should be stable and self-supporting.

- **Sandwich Board Maintenance** - All sandwich boards should be kept in good condition. A picture or example of the sandwich board sign should be provided for inspection.

### Building Lighting

- **Entrance Lighting** - Lighting should be provided in storefront signage, entrances and doorways, and other unique features of the façades.
- **Street Lighting** - To add visibility and impression of life on the street, there should be brighter lighting at the street and second level at night time.
- **Lighting Uniformity** - Lighting should have intensities and uniformity ratios in accordance with the current (i.e. most recently updated) recommended practices of the Illuminating Engineering Society of North America (IESNA) as contained in the following:
  - IESNA RP-33-99 Lighting for Exterior Environments;
  - IESNA RP-6-01 Sports and Recreational Area Lighting;
  - IESNA RP-8-00 Roadway Lighting; and
  - IESNA RP-20-98 Lighting for Parking Facilities.
- **Light Pollution** - All lighting should be focused downward and cut off shields should be required where needed to prevent light from spilling onto adjoining properties or R-O-W Lighting should be controlled by a photo cell or seasonally-adjusted timer switch.
- **Festival Lighting** - Lighting may include string lighting in trees or uplighting in a tree lawn/grate and/or planting bed. Uplighting should be waterproof, directional, and use fixtures that shield the light source from passing vehicles and pedestrians.

### 6.8 Streetscape Guidelines

Streetscape refers to the entire system of streets, sidewalks, landscaping, and open space, by which people circulate through and experience the downtown.

**Gateway Design**

One of the most important elements of the streetscape is marking the entrances to convey a message to car travelers as well as pedestrians that they are entering a
distinct space. Street intersections that are marked as a gateway to the Forney Heritage Towne Center, especially outside of the downtown core, tend to represent important arrival points and pedestrian crossing points.

Figure 33: Gateways and signage plan
Gateway Locations - Gateways to the Forney Heritage Towne Center should be located at intersections of Broad Street and Bois D'Arc; Broad Street and Chestnut; Bois D'Arc and entrance to Church property; Bois D'Arc and W Trinity Street, and South Chestnut Street and Main Street.

Gateway Design - Gateways can be in the form of landmarks such as a clock tower, centerpiece, fountains, or public art that represent the significance of the downtown area.

Gateway Street Materials - Special pavements at pedestrian crosswalks, “teardrop” extensions of the sidewalk, and other distinctive urban landmarks should be considered for these locations. These features also help to calm traffic.

Streetscape Signage and Wayfinding

Street Signage Orientation - Encourage signs that are oriented towards pedestrians in commercial area as well as public gathering places.

Street Signage Location - Pedestrian wayfinding should be separated from traffic signage and signaling elements.

Street Signage Design - Streetscape signage should be designed to convey a consistent visual message. A graphic standard should regulate supporting structure, background color and text of signage consistently throughout the area. Signs should be easily read by pedestrian as well as motorists. Supporting structure should be designed and arranged to avoid cluttering. Signs can be organized containing multiple messages. Specific walking trails and bicycles lanes should be differentiated by separate logo and signage design.
Walkways
Walkways should encourage comfortable, pleasing and safe pedestrian experience.

- **Walkway Width** - The width for sidewalks should be a minimum of eight - fifteen feet, depending on the location and available space on existing sidewalks.

- **Walkway Design** - Decorative paving design should be consistent to give a sense of visual continuity. Decorative paving should be used to emphasis
intersections, pedestrian crossings, and to define places such as sitting areas or other outdoor activities.

- **Walkway Materials** - Brick and/or other natural stone masonry are the preferred paving materials.
- **Walkway Lighting** - Placement of pedestrian lighting is advised to be not taller than one story high to avoid conflict with tree canopy as well as possible awnings or canopy. Low streetlights shine the light under the canopy.

Examples of appropriate and inappropriate street lighting height in order to provide lighting in conjunction with street trees and building awnings.

**Street Furniture**

Street furniture refers to public seating/benches, trash receptacles, outdoor dining seats, bike racks and other accessories placed on sidewalks. These features add character, as well as help create functional and attractive outdoor spaces for public use. The inclusion of well designed and appropriately placed street furniture can transform a sterile and poorly utilized area into an area that should be attractive to users and thus promote outdoor activity. It is very important to organize street furniture so that it is clear of pedestrian movement yet easily accessible.

- **Furniture Materials** - Street furniture located in public right-of-way should have similar materials and colors.
• **Furniture Location** - Street furniture should be located in high pedestrian activity areas such as near major building entrances, pedestrian intersections, and outdoor gathering places. Public seating should be oriented to provide a sense of security and comfort.

• **Outdoor Dining** - Outdoor dining areas should not disturb pedestrian or vehicular circulation. Unobstructed pedestrian width should be minimum six feet. Outdoor dining areas may be distinguished by additional barriers such as planters.

• **Trash Receptacles** - Cluster waste receptacles with other furniture whenever possible.

• **Bicycle Racks** - Bicycle racks, if provided, should be located near intersections and can also serve as a traffic calming measure.

**Street Trees**

Street trees help to provide a sense of separation between pedestrians and vehicles, soften hard edges of the built environment, define space, provide essential shade to pedestrians and vehicles, and minimize the "urban heat island effect" created by large areas of paved surfaces.

• **Tree Location** - All street trees should be planted at an average of 30-feet on center along Main Street, Bois d'Arc, Elm, Trinity, and Center Streets in the Heritage Towne Center. Street trees should not be located closer than 15-feet from a street lamp post.

• **Tree Size** - All required street trees should have a minimum caliper of four inches and be at least ten-feet in height at the time of installation.

• **Species Choice** - Street trees used should be of the same species along both sides of each street on a block. Species should vary from block to block.

• **Tree Wells** - Street trees should be centered within a minimum of four feet by four feet irrigated tree wells. Street trees should be centered a minimum distance of three feet from the back of the curb. Tree wells may be constructed either as raised tree curb pits covered with native ground cover plant material or flush grate tree pits covered by ornamental tree grates or paver grates. Ornamental tree guards should be permitted.
Examples of street tree placement: In tree wells with iron guards and ground cover plants

**Street Landscaping**

- *Planters* - Cluster planters with other street furniture whenever feasible, such as in seating areas and other gathering places for outdoor activities. Design of planters should be compatible with other furniture. Private planters that are compatible with the building design and materials may be allowed to define main entrances as well as outdoor dining areas.

- *Indigenous Plant Material* - In keeping with the historic environment of the Forney area, indigenous plantings are preferred for street trees and all other street landscaping. In particular, use of grasses and other ornamental plant material native to the Blackland Prairie environmental region should be encouraged. Furthermore, use of native or well adapted plant material significantly reduces plant mortality, disease, maintenance and water requirements, as well as offering the benefit of hosting beneficial local species. Table two lists appropriate trees and other plant materials.
Table 2: List of appropriate trees and other plant material

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Street Trees:</th>
<th>Small &amp; Ornamental Trees:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bosque or Drake Elm - <em>Ulmus Parvifolia</em> 'Bosque' or 'Drake'</td>
<td>Mexican Buckeye - <em>Ungnadia Speciosa</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cedar Elm - <em>Ulmus Crassifolia</em></td>
<td>Foster's Holly - <em>Ilex x Attenuata</em> 'Fosterii'*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese Pistache - <em>Pistacia Chinensis</em></td>
<td>Yaupon Holly - <em>Ilex Vomitoria</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caddo Maple – Acer Barbatum var. “Caddo”</td>
<td>Tree Wax Myrtle - <em>Myrica Cerifera</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas Ash – <em>Fraxinus Texensis</em></td>
<td>Mexican Plum - <em>Prunus Mexicana</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Eve’s Necklace – <em>Sophora Affinis</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following trees, if located within 10-feet from the back of curb, will require root barrier.

Public Art Centerpiece

Public art can convey the culture, history and aspiration of a community as well as invite participation and interaction. The choice of choosing the public art itself is as important as the location where it will be displayed. Public art may take many forms, where each can serve informational, recreational as well as educational purpose.

- **Public Art Locations** - All proposed artwork in public walkways should maintain a minimum sidewalk width according to respective street design standards, minimize the potential for concealment and anti-social activities, and maintain clearance from above and below ground utilities. Public art/centerpiece should not disturb circulation and movement of motorists and pedestrian.

- **Public Art Materials** - Proposed public art should be made of durable material and finishes such as stone or metal.
6.9 PARKING
Angled street parking should be provided along Main Street, Bois D’Arc, Elm, and Center Streets. Parking within the Baptist Church property, Area B, should be in accordance with the specific chosen redevelopment plan. Large area surface lots between building fronts and the street should be avoided. Parking within the Baptist Church property should reflect the overall standards for the Forney Heritage Towne Center, with an emphasis on creation and maintenance of a safe, inviting, and accessible pedestrian environment.

- Parking Lots - Open space parking areas should be located behind buildings wherever possible or at least buffered with adequate landscaping. Landscaping of parking lots function as buffer for adjacent streets and buildings, reducing glare and noise and facilitating improved aesthetics and sense of pedestrian space.
• **Safety** - Parking spaces should be well illuminated and visible from a public area or building openings. Pedestrian routes in open parking spaces should be well defined and accessible. Building exteriors should have good lighting. Loading and docking areas should not form hidden areas and blind spots.

• **ADA Parking** - All parking spaces, ramps, and other streetscape elements should conform to ADA standard to provide equal accessibility. Wherever possible, ramps and related elements should be simple and visually integrated with overall built forms and streetscape.
CHAPTER VII
BAPTIST CHURCH PROPERTY OPTIONS

The former First Baptist Church site offers the largest single redevelopment opportunity in the Forney Heritage Towne Center. It also provides an opportunity to potentially create a new community and economic core (or heart) for Forney within the FHTC. The following five redevelopment options result from the application of the overall proposal goals and objectives to this property, and the analysis and research discussed in this report. In most cases, the specific redevelopment plans also address the adjacent Kaufman County property, as well as the potential inclusion of portions of adjacent residential parcels within the development. These plans are suggested development/design alternatives only. Specific plans and renderings will be a product of a future collaboration between Forney and individual developers.

Design standards for the property should meet the overall standards outlined in this document. There is no significant historical building stock on this property, other than the Reagin House. Therefore, the stricter standards applying to the Main Street Historical area would not apply to whatever development occurs within the former church and county property. The goal of any redevelopment here should be to integrate with and enhance the economic base and historical sense of the Heritage Towne Center, in keeping with the goal of creating the Forney Heritage Towne Center as the historical heart of Forney.

Each plan is different in many aspects, but every plan includes green spaces and public squares. This common feature is important in keeping redevelopment in accord with the goal of making the Forney Heritage Towne Center the community heart of forney. Plan B envisions the inclusion of a combined city/county civic building as one of the main features of the redevelopment, in keeping with this goal, and provides a central location and visitor locus for the development. Plan E presents a community athletic center as a centerpiece of the property.

Several of the plans include changes to Trinity Street in anticipation of an extension of Pinson Street across the Union Pacific Railroad Line to Trinity and the creation of a
new gateway for the FHTC. With this extension, options A and B envision Trinity Street as the main entrance to the development.

The principal feature of each of these options is an emphasis on mixed use, pedestrian friendly development. This is intended to integrate the property into the FHTC as a whole and to enhance the consumer experience. In keeping with the goal of recreating the FHTC as a commercial heart of Forney, attractive landscaping, a quality mix of retail, restaurant, and office, with the addition of civic activity, would lead to a vibrant and interesting street life for the area. Combined with the historic building stock in the FHTC this would provide a different feel and level of experience, not available in other retail and mixed use developments around Forney.

7.1 Option A- Retail Lifestyle Center One
This option proposes a retail lifestyle center on the Baptist church property.

**Accessibility:** Primary access would be along a reconfigured Trinity Street at Bois d’Arc (A in Figure 34). Secondary access would be at either end of the center on Elm Street, which would now be a through street all the way to Church Street (B & C in Figure 34). Center Street would be pushed through the eastern side of the proposed center (D in Figure 34). Mixed use and office buildings designed to complement existing historic housing would line Bois d’Arc Street. As discussed in the Overview, there is a possibility of connecting the main highway exit street, Pinson, directly to Trinity Street, reducing travel time from Highway 80 to less than two minutes.

**Uses:** The center would be primarily retail, with possible second floor professional offices. These stores and offices would face a central square (E in Figure 34). Larger spaces would be available for junior anchor stores (F & G in Figure 34).

**Architecture/Design:** Design would conform to FHTC design standards, including streetscape/sidewalk design, landscaping, lighting, materials, and building height/Façade standards.
Streetscape Design Examples

Parking: Primary parking will be in a surface lot on the east side of the property, behind the center (H in Figure 34). There could be on street parking along the central courtyard and along the southwestern side of Trinity Street within the center.

Pedestrian Space: One goal of this proposal is to create a pedestrian friendly environment where families and individuals can visit and linger. There are green areas within the center and along Main Street at Center Street. There are also spots for outdoor dining.
Figure 34: Option A- Retail Lifestyle Center 1
7.2 Option B- Mixed Use Civic Center

This option proposes a mixed use retail/office center arranged around a civic building and town square.

**Accessibility:** Primary access would be from Bois d'Arc Street (A in Figure 35), with secondary access from Elm Street (B in Figure 35). Other access points would be from Center Street and Church Street (C & D in Figure 35). Primary pedestrian access would be from Bois d'Arc and Trinity (E in Figure 35).

**Uses:** This proposal would be principally retail arranged around a multipurpose city hall/county sub-courthouse building (F). There would be possible office or professional space on the second floor of retail buildings. Retail or mixed use would continue down Main Street, strengthening the core FHTC area.

Examples of civic buildings.

**Architecture/Design:** Design would conform to FHTC design standards, including streetscape/sidewalk design, landscaping, lighting, materials, and building height/Façade standards.

**Parking:** Street side parking would be available throughout the center, supplemented by surface lots on Main Street and Church Street (G and H in Figure 35).

**Pedestrian:** Pedestrian access and gathering places set this proposal apart. The main access point at Trinity and Bois d’Arc along with the fountain square provide a
festival center and unique Gathering place for Forney. Residents could shop, recreate and dine, with outdoor seating overlooking the fountain.
Figure 35: Option B-Mixed Use Civic Center Forney Heritage Towne Center
7.3 Option C-Historic Streetscape Continuation

This option proposes a continuation of the FHTC streetscape into the church property.

**Accessibility:** Primary automobile access would be from two entrances at Bois d'Arc, one at Trinity Street, and one near Church Street (A & B in Figure 36). An additional vehicle entrance would be from a continuation of Elm Street through the Church property from Main to Church Streets (C and D in Figure 36).

**Uses:** This proposal envisions a continuation of the extant mixed use streetscape on Main and Bois d'Arc, with two story buildings containing retail street level use and office or residential units on the second floor (E in Figure 36). In addition, this proposal shows the expansion of the county sub-courthouse between the existing courthouse and Main Street (F in Figure 36), in order to establish a continuation of the street wall down the Main Street corridor.

**Architecture/Design:** Buildings in the Baptist church property would comply with the design standards for the FHTC. This will include streetscape/sidewalk design, landscaping, lighting, materials, and building height/façade standards. (see pictures)

**Parking:** Primary parking would be street parking along the Elm Street extension (G in Figure 36). There would also be a proposed surface lot on the east side of the property to serve both the mixed use buildings and the expanded sub-courthouse.

**Pedestrian Space:** Pedestrian access would be similar to the rest of the FHTC, with the goal of providing an enhanced shopping, working, or dining experience and promote customer lingering or “stickiness.” In addition, the plan proposes a town square or green space at the corner of Main Street and Church Street. This could serve as a community gathering or small festival space.
Option C
Historic Streetscape Continuation

Figure 36: Option C-Historic Streetscape Continuation
7.4 Option D- Retail Lifestyle Center Two
This option proposes an alternative arrangement for a lifestyle center development.

**Accessibility:** Primary vehicle access would be from Bois d’Arc (A in Figure 37). Alternate entry points would be from Elm Street (B in Figure 37) and Center Street (C in Figure 37).

**Uses:** The center would be primarily retail, with possible second floor professional offices. These stores and offices would face a central square (D in Figure 37). Note that this design proposes moving the existing county sub-courthouse to a different location within the FHTC.

**Architecture/Design:** Design would conform to FHTC design standards, including streetscape/sidewalk design, landscaping, lighting, materials, and building height/Façade standards.

**Parking:** Streetside parking would be available throughout the proposed center. There would be a surface lot on the east side of the center (E in Figure 37), and a parking structure at Main and Center Streets (F in Figure 37).
Fountain and Sitting Areas

Pedestrian Space: This proposal would have numerous pedestrian amenities, from fountains and landscaped sitting areas to a pedestrian plaza and gazebo (G in Figure 37). Spaces for outdoor dining would also be available. The plaza would also function as festival space.
Figure 37: Option D - Retail Lifestyle Center II
7. 5 Option E-Community/Civic Center
This option proposes transforming the Baptist Church Property into a multi-functional community and civic center for Forney.

**Accessibility:** Primary automobile access will be via Bois d'Arc Street (A in Figure 38), with secondary access via Elm and Church Streets (B in Figure 38). Pedestrian and bicycle access is one of the signature points of this option. This option envisions a continuation of the Main Street Corridor hike and bike trail the entire way through the Baptist Church property (C in Figure 38).

**Uses:** Option E proposes a community athletic center and pool for the site (D in Figure 38). Activities/functions could include exercise equipment and studios, gymnasium, handball/racquetball courts, meeting facilities, and/or an indoor pool. In addition, the plan proposes a large open area for outdoor activities such as Tai Chi, adult education, picnics and reunions, weddings and special events, and similar functions (E in Figure 38). This open area will be connected via trail across Main Street to the linear hike (and bike) trail running from the FHTC to the Regional Park (C in Figure 38). There is also space for mixed use retail buildings on Main and Center Streets and Bois d'Arc and Elm Streets. The sub-courthouse would be expanded in front of the existing structure, to reinforce the street wall along Main Street.

**Architecture/Design**

**Architecture/Design:** Design would conform to FHTC design standards, including streetscape/sidewalk design, landscaping, lighting, materials, and building height/Façade standards.
Parking: Street parking will be available along portions of Bois d'Arc, Main, and Elm Street. Off street parking will be available for the community center on Church Street, with a larger lot behind the proposed mixed use building at Main and Center Streets (F).

Pedestrian Access: The real strength of this proposal is in pedestrian connectivity. The plan features a central public "square" at the terminus of Elm Street and a large city park with multi modal pedestrian and bicyclist, hiker and biker connectivity to the rest of the FHTC and the Regional Park (F). The square and park can facilitate pedestrian gatherings and festivals.
Figure 38: Option E - Community and Civic Center
CHAPTER VIII
IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM

This report has reviewed the history, existing conditions, goals and objectives, and possible revitalization options for the Forney Heritage Towne Center. Based on this information, an implementation plan has been formulated to set priority levels for each of the goals and objectives that have been established and to determine the timeline for when they should be incorporated into the FHTC. The format of this implementation plan is set up as actionable items that need to be addressed to accomplish the objectives for the FHTC. Obviously, immediate action items are of the highest priority followed by mid-range and long range action items. The timescale established of one-two, three-five, and five-ten years for each priority group is meant as a suggestion, and are not to be considered hard and fast ranges.

Goal: FHTC as the Community and Civic Heart of Forney

Objective: Community activity centers in and/or around the HTC

Immediate Actions (1-2 Years)

- Determine feasibility for the development of a community/civic center within the FHTC
- Determine feasibility for repurposing/redesignating the "former Booker T. Washington school" on Main Street as a library or other community facility
- Determine feasibility for repurposing the historic buildings such as the “Cotton Gin” as a community facility
- Explore public/private partnerships with the local school district and local non-profits to leverage available financial and human capital resources

Mid-Range Actions (3-5 Years)

- Hire a program manager for community activity centers
- Develop a community/civic center
- Develop programming for the center
Reinventing the Heart of Community - Forney

- Determine feasibility of additional facilities such as a natatorium, bowling alley, and community theatre or stage.
- Work with the school district to develop joint-use facilities (gymnasium, natatorium, theatre)

**Long-Term Actions (5-10 Years)**

- Develop additional facilities
- Develop joint-use facilities

**Objective: Public events and festivals within the Forney Heritage Towne Center**

**Immediate Actions (1-2 Years)**

- Promote existing events and festivals through advertising, such as, banners within the FHTC, newspaper, and City’s webpage
- Determine the feasibility of developing a weekly farmer’s market
- Hire an events planner/coordinator
- Develop partnerships with local community and arts groups to sponsor festivals and events
- Dedicate public space for events

**Mid-Range Actions (3-5 Years)**

- Refine plan to include at least one event per month in the FHTC
- Determine feasibility of street closures for public space for events
- Determine feasibility of creating other public spaces or parks for events

**Long-Term Actions (5-10 Years)**

- Develop additional public space for events
- Develop relationships with regional chambers of commerce as well as national arts, cultural, historic, and environmental organizations to promote and expand FHTC festival, event, and arts and culture related business activities
Objective: Locate Civic Functions within or adjacent to the HTC

Immediate Actions (1-2 Years)
- Determine feasibility of developing iconic sub-courthouse expansion fronting Main Street or moving to another prominent location creating a street presence (based on Baptist church options)
- Determine feasibility of locating other city and county functions within the FHTC (fire, additional administration)
- Determine feasibility of relocating City Hall and/or combining City Hall with the Kaufman County Sub-Courthouse

Mid-Range Actions (3-5 Years)
- Coordinate municipal facilities plan with FHTC plan
- Coordinate county facilities plan with FHTC plan

Long-Term Actions (5-10 Years)
- Determine feasibility of locating state and national facilities within or adjacent to the FHTC

Objective: Create community gathering places

Immediate Actions (1-2 Years)
- Improve existing public gathering places
- Create destinations in green spaces, along paths and at nodes, anchoring spaces for rest, recreation, and gathering
- Determine feasibility of displaying public art or exhibits in vacant store fronts or civic/community buildings to improve the streetscape
- Determine the feasibility of working with local museums to display public art throughout the FHTC
- Incorporate a public square or other dedicated gathering space in the FHTC plan

Mid-Range Actions (3-5 Years)
- Develop dedicated public spaces in the heart of the FHTC
• Determine feasibility of a percent-for-art ordinance (percent of CIP funding for public art programs)
• Encourage public and private developers to incorporate functional public gathering spaces/public art in their projects
• Investigate turning the Cotton Gin, colored school into a functional gathering place

**Long-Term Actions (5-10 Years)**

• Implement percent-for-art ordinance
• Use other Capital Improvement Program funding for public space or art improvement

**Objective: Improve Quality of Life for residents in and around the FHTC**

**Immediate Actions (1-2 Years)**

• Improve pedestrian connectivity between current event locations, landmarks, work places, and gathering places and current parking locations and intersections
• Develop transportation plans within and around the FHTC around people rather than vehicles
• Incorporate into the FHTC plan on-street and off-street bicycle and pedestrians connections between surrounding neighborhoods and parks
• Determine feasibility of traffic calming on Bois d'Arc
• Plan additional on-street parking locations to enhance a street presence
• Encourage developers to provide local amenities for locals
• Develop a plan for the FHTC that incorporates pedestrian oriented zoning, streetscape improvements (such as street furniture, on-street parking, street trees), and traffic calming strategies

**Mid-Range Actions (3-5 Years)**

• Develop safe crossings at busy intersections
• Develop the first phases of bike and pedestrian connectivity plan
• Implement of streetscape improvements and traffic calming

**Long-Term Actions (5-10 Years)**
- Continue all quality-of-life plan development and phasing
- Determine feasibility of expanding urban design standards to the Broad Street Corridor

**Goal: FHTC as the Commercial Heart of Forney**

**Objective: Increase the visibility of the FHTC**

**Immediate Actions (1-2 Years)**
- Develop a FHTC sense of place marketing strategy
- Incorporating signage and gateway locations into the FHTC plans

**Mid-Range Actions (3-5 Years)**
- Develop signage along Highway 80 guiding people to the FHTC
- Develop gateway entrances to the FHTC
- Create a distinct signage brand with street sign toppers, banners, and other signage throughout the FHTC
- Determine feasibility of placing signage on I-20 or other main traffic routes
- Advertise the FHTC on the City’s webpage
- Work with local business to promote the FHTC

**Long-Term Actions (5-10 Years)**
- Continue and evolve place marketing campaign
- Determine the feasibility of expanding the FHTC boundary to raise its visibility

**Objective: Increase transportation accessibility and mobility**

**Immediate Actions (1-2 Years)**
- Repair existing roads and sidewalks
- Develop a plan to improve traffic circulation within the FHTC
- Research feasibility of developing a commuter rail stop
- Coordinate transportation in The Comprehensive Plan with FHTC plan
- Research requirements for Main Street and other downtown improvement funds
• Research requirements for project and improvement financing

*Mid-Range Actions (3-5 Years)*

• Develop a connection from Pinson Street to Trinity Street and beyond to open up the Northwest side of town for redevelopment
• Develop a plan to increase commercial potential of Broad Street

*Long-Term Actions (5-10 Years)*

• Continue to work on commuter rail connection
• Revisit transportation plans impacting the FHTC

**Objective: Economic Development Initiatives and Programs**

*Immediate Actions (1-2 Years)*

• Perform a thorough market analysis for the FHTC, Forney, and surrounding region
• Develop economic development initiatives that build on the assets of the market area and identified market niches
• Develop a consensus and commitment to a long term investment to the asset development strategy
• Investigate and establish funding sources for tax benefit programs such as Public Improvement District or Tax Increment Financing district for FHTC area

*Mid-Range Actions (3-5 Years)*

• Continue to work with the Chamber of Commerce, EDC, and other local economic corporations to build greater consensus
• Revisit and update economic goals

*Long-Term Actions (5-10 Years)*

• Continue to revisit and update asset based goals
Goal: FHTC as the Historical Heart of Forney

Objective: Preserve and build on Forney’s historic character

Immediate Actions (1-2 Years)
- Determine feasibility of ordinances and design standards that preserve and incorporate historical structures and elements of Forney’s past
- Determine feasibility of creating a historic district status for the FHTC and surrounding historic neighborhoods
- Determine feasibility of heritage tourism for historic buildings, roads, and locations in and around the FHTC
- Seek historical status for appropriate structures

Mid-Range Actions (3-5 Years)
- Determine the feasibility of Forney creating a tourism and visitors center
- Develop heritage or cultural festivals that highlight history

Long-Term Actions (5-10 Years)
- Continue to promote Forney’s history in promotional campaigns
CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSIONS

Based on public input, current and past planning that has involved the Forney Heritage Towne Center, and the existing conditions of the FHTC, Forney should first focus on the first two goals of making the FHTC the heart of the City’s community, civic, and cultural life. Public input from citizens has shown that, while they are interested in reinvesting and reinventing the downtown area, there is also substantial interest in preserving the “small town” feel of the district.

Part of that feel comes from the organic nature of the core of the downtown, but it also results from the human scale that exists in and around this historic area. FHTC planning efforts should support and guide future development and renovations that build upon the archetype of the downtown core and add to the small town urban feel. Additionally, planning efforts should encourage festivals, events, and design community programming around Forney’s culture and heritage. Currently, Forney has a list of events that take place within the FHTC, however, these and new events would benefit from better public space, streetscapes, and landscapes proposed in the urban design framework and Design Standards. If the FHTC is to become the heart of the community, Forney needs to have public spaces that can be viewed as the City’s living room and kitchen, where the activities of the community such as local dining and entertainment take place.

The last goal for the FHTC is to transform it into the commercial heart of the City. Demographics, market analysis, and future projections show that there is an opportunity for substantial economic growth to occur within the FHTC, but this growth needs to build on the assets of the community and find market niches that either currently exist or likely will exist in the near future. A challenge to this goal is the accessibility of the FHTC. Currently, the path to the district is indirectly routed from Highway 80 and may limit opportunities because of the additional time it takes to travel from the highway. Additionally, development along the highway will continue to be more appealing to developers because of the ease of developing greenfields and the greater visibility of the location. FHTC strategies must first address these concerns to raise the attractiveness of the district. Because of its
authentic and organic quality, the FHTC has a niche that other developments such as Meadow Ridge Farms cannot fill, however for this niche to be capitalized on, locals and tourists must have easy access and mental awareness of the FHTC. Forney’s own history has shown that downtown’s economic viability hinges on its visibility and accessibility to transportation systems, the same is true today.

Even though these findings have established a firm foundation and strategy for reinvestment into the FHTC, certain aspects of this report are still limited and require more analysis to refine the best course of action to accomplish the goals of the FHTC. This proposal has laid down key demographics, such as household income, employment, and age; however, a complete demographic and market analysis should be performed to better understand what niches exist for the FHTC and how the FHTC can be better marketed through signage, marketing campaigns, and events. Forney should also seek out best cases of similar downtown revitalization plans, and seek to supplement these suggestions with scenarios that worked in similar cities.

Another limitation of this proposal is the design standards and options. This proposal endeavored to cover the main elements that a FHTC design standard should cover, but it is not intended to be a finalized version of FHTC urban design standards, nor a full design ordinance. The City’s Community Development Department should review the pros and cons of differing design standards before implementing any zoning change and codes for the district.

In closing, the success of reestablishing Forney Heritage Towne Center as the heart of the city will require a dedication from its citizens, businesses, and government officials. This district cannot be transformed overnight and it will require the FHTC to patiently build upon its local assets and avoid looking for the quick fix to solve its current economic disadvantage. The character and quality of the Forney’s downtown is something that can be used a catalyst for this redevelopment into the FHTC and guide its growth into a sustainable place future generations will treasure.
APPENDICES

Appendix A: Funding Source and Grant Information

Below is a summary list of funding sources and grant information. The remaining pages in appendix A gives more funding details followed by financing and park funding strategies that can be applied.

Table 3: Grant Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grants</th>
<th>Provider</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Amounts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Revolving Loan/Grant Program</td>
<td>Forney Economic Development Corporation</td>
<td>Provide businesses located or locating within boundary of Historic Business District (HBD) for the preservation, improvement and beautification of their business</td>
<td>up to $25,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Trust</td>
<td>National Trust</td>
<td>Preservation planning and educational efforts</td>
<td>$500 - $5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preservation Funds</td>
<td>Johanna Favrot</td>
<td>Projects that contribute to the preservation of an authentic sense of place</td>
<td>$2,500 - $10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johanna Favrot Fund for Historic Preservation</td>
<td>National Trust</td>
<td>Projects that contribute to the preservation of an authentic sense of place</td>
<td>$2,500 - $10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cynthia Woods Mitchell Fund for Historic Interiors</td>
<td>National Trust</td>
<td>Assist in preservation, restoration, and interpretation of historic interiors</td>
<td>$2,500 - $10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Trust</td>
<td>National Trust</td>
<td>Predevelopment, acquisition, mini-permanent, bridge and rehabilitation loans for residential, commercial and public use projects</td>
<td>max $150,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loan Fund (NTLF)</td>
<td>Downtown Revitalization Program</td>
<td>Acquisition of land for public infrastructure improvements, water &amp; sewer facilities/lines, road/street, etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas Main Street</td>
<td>Texas Main Street Cities</td>
<td>Texas cities with historic commercial buildings in downtowns and neighborhood business district</td>
<td>Training and Assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cities</td>
<td>Texas Historical Commission</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation Funding</td>
<td>National Trust and Federal Highway Administration</td>
<td>Transportation-related historic preservation projects</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historic Preservation Fund</td>
<td>Partnership between National Park Service and States</td>
<td>Activities like educational, preparation of a National Register nominations and development of comprehensive plan preservation plans</td>
<td>Training and Assistance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
National Trust for Historic Preservation’s Main Street Center Program

Main Street America is a successful nation-wide initiative of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. It provides a strong strategy and implementation program for its members, as well as expertise and support through its various networking gatherings and financial assistance initiatives. Most Main Street Programs around the country are Income Tax-exempt as 501c3 corporations within the City government of its host municipality. The Main Street Center program offers many benefits, but should be weighed against the cost of certain requirements:

- Must pay Membership fees.
  - $295/yr for basic membership
  - $495/yr for upgraded membership, which provides discounts to the yearly conference, and customer listings for fellow programs

- Must maintain a Program Director.
  - Full-time or part-time
  - Salaried according to local needs, or local market salaries

- Must maintain a board of directors, committees, and documentation.
  - Budget reports
  - Bylaws
  - Monthly meetings, advance agenda

- Must maintain an operating budget, mainly for salaries and fringe costs.
  - Specifically dedicated to revitalizing downtown commercial districts
  - Examples include around $30,000/year for a town Forney’s size

In addition to these requirements, the benefits represent the real content of the program. The strategy is built on four points: Organization, Promotion, Design, and Economic Restructuring, with eight accompanying principles that outline the details. Full content is available only to members. A short, incomplete summary of benefits includes the following:

- Strategy. A well-tested and nationally-approved commercial revitalization of historic Main Streets
  - After 5 years, the average city has added the following to its Main Street:
    1. 150 net new jobs
    2. 50 net new businesses
    3. $6.3 million dollars invested in the commercial district
• Access to similar programs around the country, both for-profit and non-profit. This network can serve as a tool for everything from orientation to implementation of a Main Street Plan. It includes access to a national discussion board and electronic mailing list.

• Investment Monies. The National Trust for Historic Preservation owns two companies dedicated to investing in downtowns and counsels its members in federal grant competition strategies.

Locally, The Main Street Center program boasts significant improvement in Rockwall, McKinney, Mineola, Weatherford, and many more North Central Texas towns and cities. More information can be retrieved from the National Trust’s extensive website: www.mainstreet.org.

**Revolving Loan/Grant Program**

The Forney Economic Development Corporation (FEDC) has incentivized economic development within the Historic Business District (HBD) through the Revolving Loan/Grant Fund (RLGF). The RLGF is intended to provide businesses located or locating within the defined boundary of the HBD funding for the preservation, improvement and beautification of their business to encourage the creation or retention of employment within the district. Businesses that conform to HBD land use regulations and are not agriculturally based may receive funding for half of the improvement cost, up to $25,000, provided they finance and provide evidence of the ability to secure the remaining amount (minimum forty percent through commercial lending and ten percent private equity/cash).

Interested applicants must contact the Trinity Valley Community College (TVCC) Small Business Development Center (SBDC) to obtain additional information about the RLGF Program, including the requirements for submitting an application for funding. The Forney Economic Development Board of Directors evaluates each loan application to determine the credit worthiness of borrowers, the anticipated benefits to the City of Forney residents, project feasibility, and compliance with federal, state and local laws, regulations and policies.
Applications for loans are available at the Forney Economic Development Corporation located at 212 Bois D’Arc Street, Forney Texas or on-line at the EDC’s website, www.forneytexasedc.org.

**Texas Department of Agriculture: Downtown Revitalization Program**

**Summary**
The Texas Department of Agriculture’s (TDA) Downtown Revitalization Program (DRP) allows cities to receive a maximum of $150,000 to use toward the acquisition of land needed for public infrastructure improvements, water and sewer facilities/lines, road/street construction/improvements, natural gas line construction/improvements, electric, telephone and fiber optic line construction/improvements, traffic signals and signs drainage improvements, sidewalk construction/improvements, including ADA ramps and rails, lighting, public parking lot construction/improvements, other construction activities required to eliminate architectural barriers for the handicapped in the historic business area of the City.

**Requirements**
Applications for the DRP are taken once per year and cities may submit only once per application round. Eligibility is limited to non-entitlement cities. These are cities that do not receive Community Development Block Grant funds directly from HUD, or do not participate with an entitlement county. Main Street communities are not eligible for this funding. Funds are to be used in the cities designated downtown area and may be used for projects on commercial strips outside this area. Funds may not be used to pay engineering for the project but the engineering may be part of the community match.

**The Process**
Reimbursement for construction expenses, on average, takes three weeks for draws, if the contract is in compliance. The contract period is two years from the execution date of the contract at which point the project must be complete. After the application is submit, the eight highest scoring applications will be processed for award. The average time from receipt of applications to a contract being sent to the city for signature is approximately 90 days. Contact TDA if you have any questions, (512) 936-0273.
Texas Historical Commission: Texas Main Street Cities

Summary
Each year, the Texas Historical Commission selects up to five Texas cities and urban areas as official Texas Main Street cities. Selected communities are eligible to receive a range of services including ongoing comprehensive training for Main Street managers and board members, training for communities in successful economic development approaches, a three-day, on-site evaluation and full report with recommendations, design assistance, consultation with downtown merchants about visual merchandising and window display, advice on heritage tourism programs and marketing, and participation in the First Lady’s Tour of Main Street cities. Texas cities with historic commercial buildings in their downtowns and neighborhood business districts may apply for Main Street designation.

Requirements
Cities with populations up to 50,000 must agree to hire a full-time Main Street manager for three years and provide funding for the local program. Cities with a population of more than 50,000 must cooperate with a private nonprofit organization, hire a full-time staff of two for at least five years and provide funding for the local program, and pay a graduated fee of $7,500 the first year, $2,500 the second year and $1,500 each year thereafter. Cities that complete the first three-year cycle of the program are encouraged to continue participation in the network as a Sustaining Main Street City. A community may be designated a Provisional Texas Main Street city if it applies for the official program the previous year and meets other program requirements.

The Process
Applications are available by May 15 and due no later than 5 p.m. on the last working day of July for the following program year. For more information contact the Texas Historical Commission, (512) 463-6100.

National Trust Preservation Funds
National Trust Preservation Funds provide two types of assistance to nonprofit organizations and public agencies: 1) matching grants from $500 to $5,000 for preservation planning and educational efforts, and 2) intervention funds for preservation emergencies. Matching grant funds may be used to obtain professional
expertise in areas such as architecture, archeology, engineering, preservation planning, land-use planning, fund raising, organizational development and law as well as to provide preservation education activities to educate the public.

**Johanna Favrot Fund for Historic Preservation**
The Johanna Favrot Fund for Historic Preservation provides nonprofit organizations and public agencies grants ranging from $2,500 to $10,000 for projects that contribute to the preservation or the recapture of an authentic sense of place. Individuals and for-profit businesses may apply only if the project for which funding is requested involves a National Historic Landmark. Funds may be used for professional advice, conferences, workshops and education programs.

**Cynthia Woods Mitchell Fund for Historic Interiors**
The Cynthia Woods Mitchell Fund for Historic Interiors provides nonprofit organizations and public agencies grants ranging from $2,500 to $10,000 to assist in the preservation, restoration, and interpretation of historic interiors. Individuals and for-profit businesses may apply only if the project for which funding is requested involves a National Historic Landmark. Funds may be used for professional expertise, print and video communications materials, and education programs.

**Partners in the Field Challenge Grant for Statewide and Local Partners**
The Partners in the Field Challenge Grant for Statewide and Local Partners is a transformative challenge grant program to expand preservation field services nationwide. The grant program is a collaboration between the National Trust for Historic Preservation and Statewide and Local Partners, funded by a generous gift from Robert Wilson. The primary purpose of Partners in the Field is to expand the delivery of preservation field services across the country by building the capacity of statewide and local preservation organizations to provide these services on the ground, and by building their long-term capacity for philanthropy to sustain their preservation work. Partners in the Field challenge grants are only available to recognized National Trust Statewide & Local Partners.

**National Trust Loan Fund**
National Trust Loan Fund (NTLF) specializes in predevelopment, acquisition, mini-permanent, bridge and rehabilitation loans for residential, commercial and public use.
projects. Eligible borrowers include not-for-profit organizations, revitalization organizations or real estate developers working in certified Main Street communities, local, state or regional governments, and for profit developers of older and/or historic buildings.

**Transportation Enhancements Funding**
Since 1991, states have dedicated over $2 billion in Federal-aid highway funds to thousands of transportation-related historic preservation projects; historic resources have also benefited from transportation enhancement money for landscaping, land acquisition, historic bridge and road activities, and streetscapes in historic commercial districts. For more information on transportation enhancements funding, view Building on the Past, Traveling to the Future, a free guide prepared by the National Trust and the Federal Highway Administration.

**Historic Preservation Fund**
The Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) provides grants to states, tribes, and local governments to use for activities like education, preparation of National Register nominations and development of comprehensive preservation plans. The HPF receives annual appropriations from Congress, and this federal money is matched by state dollars. The fund is administered in a partnership between the National Park Service and the states through state historic preservation offices, tribes and local governments.
PUBLIC FINANCING DISTRICTS

Public Improvement District

Summary

A Texas Public Improvement District (PID) is a public financing vehicle that can be used by a developer to finance the cost of public infrastructure related to his project as defined in the Public Improvement District Assessment Act (Chapter 372 of the Texas Local Government Code). A PID is formed over property that will benefit from public improvement projects to be constructed. Assessments are levied, on property within the city or city’s Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ), in a manner that apportions costs according to the benefits received from the public improvements. Bonds are issued to fund the improvements and its proceeds are deposited to a construction fund. As eligible projects are completed (see below), the proceeds in the construction fund are used to acquire facilities from the developer. Assessments are paid by the property owners (usually over a period of years, although assessments may be prepaid in full or in part at any time) and transfer along with title to the property. Therefore, end users typically pay the bulk of assessment, as the public improvements benefit the end users’ property. Projects that are eligible include landscaping, fountains, distinctive lighting, signs, sidewalks, streets, other roadways, pedestrian malls, pieces of art, libraries, off-street parking facilities, mass transportation facilities, water, wastewater, drainage, park, projects similar to the foregoing, acquisition of real property for the improvement, special supplemental services, and payment of expenses for the establishment, administration, and operation of the district.

Requirements

The developer must initiate a petition that calls for a defined area to be declared a public improvement district. After receiving a petition to establish a PID, the governing body of the city or county may appoint an advisory board to develop an improvement plan for the PID. A public hearing on the advisability of the improvements must be conducted. The governing body of the city or county must adopt a resolution or order by majority vote authorizing creation of the PID. Twenty days after authorization of the PID, construction of the improvements may begin. A five-year on-going service plan and assessment plan must be developed. The city or county establishing the district must provide notice and a hearing to determine the total cost of the improvements and to prepare an assessment roll. After any
objections have been heard and considered, the governing body may levy, by
ordinance or order, the special assessments against the taxable properties within the
district.

The Process
You can read the Public Improvement District Assessment Act (Chapter 372 of the
Texas Local Government Code), or seek a PID Consultant who is knowledgeable and
experienced in the process. Important information to research or receive assistance
from a consultant on includes:

- Determining the bonding capacity of the proposed district, given the
developer’s desired assessment level
- Performing an analysis of competitive tax rates in the area
- Estimating and attempting to control developer assessments through the
  proper phasing of bond issues
- Determining the PID-authorized facilities list
- Educating the developer and (if necessary) the authorizing city or county and
  conducting workshops when needed
- Preparing alternative assessment apportionment methodologies and assisting
  the developer in selecting the most appropriate one to satisfy his objectives
- Preparing a Public Improvement District Financing Plan
- Preparing a timeline of tasks to be performed, to keep the process moving
  along as anticipated
- Preparing the Service and Assessment Plans

Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone

Summary
A Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone (TIRZ) is a public financing vehicle whereby a
developer can receive financial assistance from the taxing agencies in the zone for
the construction of public infrastructure projects as defined in Tax Increment
Financing Act (chapter 311 of the Texas Tax Code). A TIRZ takes place in a zone
requested by a developer by petition to the appropriate city or county. The type of
projects that can be financed are, flood and drainage facilities, parking facilities,
parks, pedestrian malls and walkways, sewer, streets and street lights, utilities, and
water. A TIRZ is funded by one or more of the taxing agencies in the zone contributing all or a portion of the tax dollars attributable to the increased value in the zone that would normally go to that taxing agency. However, the city or county forming the district must determine that development or redevelopment would not occur solely through private investment in the reasonably foreseeable future (presumably because the project would not be financially feasible without the funding provided by the TIRZ). The only real disadvantage to the developer is navigating the process of getting a TIRZ formed and, in some cases, getting bonds issued. Making a contribution to the TIRZ keeps the tax base moving forward and gives the taxing agency more taxes in the future, without having to give up any of the tax revenues that it is currently collecting.

Requirements
The governing body must prepare a preliminary reinvestment zone financing plan. As a practical matter, when the zone is requested by developer petition, the developer is typically expected to prepare the financing plan. The local government creating the zone must provide a 60-day written notice of its intent to designate a reinvestment zone and of the hearing on the proposed zone to the other taxing units that levy property taxes in the area. Once the local government creating the zone has provided its 60-day notice of a proposed zone, the other affected taxing units must designate a representative to meet with the local government creating the zone to discuss the Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone Project Plan and Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone Financing Plan within 15 days. In addition to meeting with the representatives of the other taxing units, the local government creating the zone must provide a formal presentation to the governing body of each taxing unit that levies real property taxes within the proposed zone. After the local government creating the zone has made its formal presentations to the other taxing units, it must hold a public hearing on the creation of the TIRZ. Following the public hearing, the governing body of the city or county may, by ordinance or order, designate a contiguous area as a TIRZ. Once the city or county has adopted the ordinance or order creating the zone, the board of directors of the zone must prepare both a Project Plan and a Financing Plan. (Again, where a developer has requested the TIRZ, the developer would typically be expected to prepare these documents.) After the project plan and the reinvestment zone are approved by the board of directors and by the city or county’s governing body, the other taxing units with property...
within the zone contract with the city or county regarding the percentage of their increased tax revenues that will be dedicated to the tax increment fund. Lastly, the redevelopment zone is established, the board of directors must make recommendations to the governing body of the city or county on the implementation of the tax increment financing.

**The Process**

You can read the Tax Increment Financing Act (Chapter 311 of the Texas Tax Code), or you can seek a TIRZ Consultant who is knowledgeable and experienced in the process. Important research areas include, evaluating the feasibility of a TIRZ, determining the bonding capacity of the planned zone, educating the municipality (if necessary), as well as the client, preparing Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone petition, determining whether/how much taxing agencies within the planned zone have contributed to any prior TIRZ districts, preparing the preliminary and final TIRZ Project Plan and TIRZ Financing Plan, assisting the developer in negotiations with taxing agencies for contributions to the tax increment fund, preparing a timeline of tasks to be performed, to keep the process moving along as anticipated, preparing and/or comment on the development agreement, and advising on various ways to fund the project(s), such as issuing and phasing bonds.

**Other Financing Districts**

**Tax Increment Financing**

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Districts assist in financing development of unimproved or blighted land by dedicating the real estate property taxes to be generated by the built project to a TIF Fund for payment of the principal and interest on TIF Bonds. Under a TIF, the property owner pays taxes on the full value of the property, and the taxing entities pay into the TIF Fund the taxes attributed to the added value of the land due to the new development. TIF Bonds may be issued for a maximum of 20 years and may be used to pay for public improvements associated with a development including but not limited to parking, infrastructure, land acquisition, and utilities. Additional information can be found on the Texas State Comptroller of Public Accounts website at Tax Increment Financing Registry.

**Municipal Management District**

A Municipal Management District (MMD) is a relatively new economic development tool that allows commercial property owners to enhance a defined business area.
The district has the power to levy an ad valorem property tax, wastewater, drainage, road, or mass transit improvements that are located inside and outside the district.
**Park System Funding Strategies**

Various grants programs by different agencies can be used to fund the park projects. The funding is competitive and takes perseverance to collect, so aggressive pursuit can result in match funding and grants that will help the Parks Master Plan to materialize. The following are samples of public funding that is available and should be pursued.

| 1. | Outdoor Recreation Grants | This program provides a 50% matching grant to acquire and develop parkland or to renovate existing public recreation areas. The maximum amount in each application is $400,000. The deadline for the application is July 31 of each year. |
| 2. | Indoor Recreation (Facility) Grants | This program provides a 50% matching grant to construct recreation centers, community centers, and other facilities. The maximum amount in each application is $417,563. The deadline for the application is July 31 of each year. |
| 3. | Recreational Trail Grants | This program provides up to 80% of the project cost. The deadline for submitting the application is June 1. The funds from this project can be spent on motorized and non-motorized recreational trail projects such as the construction of new recreational trails, the improvement of existing trails, the development of trailheads, and acquisition of trail corridors. |
| 4. | Regional Park Grants | This provides 50% matching grant funds to local governments in order to create large, intensive-use recreation areas, regional systems of parks, and conservation areas with trail linkages. This also provide for linear greenways between parks and other community amenities in Texas urban areas. |
### Table 5: North Central Texas Council of Governments Grants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRANTS</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sustainable Development Funding Program</td>
<td>This grant was created by its policy body, the Regional Transportation Council, to encourage public/private partnerships that address existing transportation system capacity, rail access, air quality concerns, and mixed land uses.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 6: Texas Department of Forestry Grants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRANTS</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cooperative Forestry Assistance Funds</td>
<td>This grant is available on a 50% cost-share basis for projects including trails and greenways, beautification efforts, and public education and training. The range for the grants is from $5,000 to $10,000.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B: Retail Sales and RMP Gap Data

The following contains graphical and tabled market data for existing markets and demographics within a 15 minute drive of the Heritage Towne Center.

Figure 39: Comparison of total annual expenditures growth rate

Figure 40: Apparel Annual Expenditure

Figure 41: Entertainment Annual Expenditure
Figure 42: Food at Home Annual Expenditure

Figure 43: Health Care Annual Expenditure

Figure 44: Household Equipment Annual Expenditure

Figure 45: Miscellaneous Personal Items Annual Expenditure
Reinventing the Heart of Community - Forney

Figure 46: Miscellaneous Items Annual Expenditure

Figure 47: Other Miscellaneous Items Annual Expenditure

Figure 48: Shelter and Related Expenses Annual Expenditure

Figure 49: Transportation Expenses Annual Expenditure
Table 7: Retail sales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Retail Sales</th>
<th>Consumer Expenditures</th>
<th>Supply (Retail Sales)</th>
<th>Gap/Surplus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>General Merchandise Stores-452</td>
<td>$323,368,451</td>
<td>$178,218,833</td>
<td>$145,149,618</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>GAFO *</td>
<td>662,612,829</td>
<td>526,900,417</td>
<td>135,712,412</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Health and Personal Care Stores-446</td>
<td>134,249,857</td>
<td>77,765,744</td>
<td>56,464,113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Food and Beverage Stores-445</td>
<td>316,278,781</td>
<td>268,969,697</td>
<td>47,309,084</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Electronics and Appliance Stores-443</td>
<td>62,895,794</td>
<td>36,051,939</td>
<td>26,843,855</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Furniture and Home Furnishings Stores-442</td>
<td>70,168,570</td>
<td>46,929,077</td>
<td>23,239,493</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Miscellaneous Store Retailers-453</td>
<td>68,953,166</td>
<td>56,960,737</td>
<td>11,992,429</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>General Merchandise Stores-452</td>
<td>$323,368,451</td>
<td>$178,218,833</td>
<td>$145,149,618</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Warehouse Clubs and Super Stores-45291</td>
<td>147,223,452</td>
<td>21,272,612</td>
<td>125,950,840</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Other General Merchandise Stores-4529</td>
<td>171,085,855</td>
<td>45,621,004</td>
<td>125,464,851</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Pharmacies and Drug Stores-44611</td>
<td>116,163,728</td>
<td>63,032,677</td>
<td>53,131,051</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Grocery Stores-4451</td>
<td>286,616,810</td>
<td>256,631,764</td>
<td>29,985,046</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Electronics and Appliance Stores-443</td>
<td>62,895,794</td>
<td>36,051,939</td>
<td>26,843,855</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Furniture and Home Furnishings Stores-442</td>
<td>70,168,570</td>
<td>46,929,077</td>
<td>23,239,493</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Supermarkets, Grocery (Ex Conv) Stores-44511</td>
<td>272,468,137</td>
<td>252,121,802</td>
<td>20,346,335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Department Stores Excl Leased Depts-4521</td>
<td>152,282,596</td>
<td>132,597,829</td>
<td>19,684,767</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Electronic Shopping, Mail-Order Houses-4541</td>
<td>115,071,872</td>
<td>97,245,286</td>
<td>17,826,586</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* GAFO (General,merchandise, Apparel, Furniture and Other) represents sales at stores that sell merchandise normally sold in department stores. This category is not included in Total Retail Sales Including Eating and Drinking Places.
RMP Gap Analysis

Appendices C and D: Tracing Paper Exercise, Downtown Survey and Visual Preference Survey

Summary Results Analysis
As was mentioned in the report a public meeting was held in Forney, Texas on Monday, March 16 at 6:30 pm. Turnout was excellent, and the attendees appeared interested, attentive, and motivated to provide their best input for redeveloping the Forney Heritage Towne Center. Forney and SUPA moderated two activities: a visual preference survey, and a hands-on tracing paper exercise. In addition, SUPA administered a brief survey. The purpose of these surveys and exercises was to get a clear picture of what the residences of Forney envisioned for the redevelopment. The visual preference survey was concerned with the look of the HTC, including building architecture and streetscape. While, the tracing paper exercise was concerned with the location of civic and community buildings, bicycle trails, and the preferred land use of the HTC. And lastly, the SUPA survey looked at what people perceived as being important to the HTC such as restaurants or how often they visited the district.

Visual preference Survey
Full results are included in the Excel file. Responders were asked to rate the appropriateness of various images for redevelopment of the Forney Heritage Towne Center. The scoring was from +5 (very appropriate) to -5 (very inappropriate). The table below presents the highest rated slides for each of the 9 categories.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Slide Category</th>
<th>Survey Preference</th>
<th>Raw Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Building Height</td>
<td>Two story</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials</td>
<td>Brick Façade</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking</td>
<td>Angled Street Parking</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sidewalk/Street Furniture</td>
<td>Wide Brick/Paver</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lighting/Street Furniture</td>
<td>City Logo Trash receptacle</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street Trees Landscaping</td>
<td>Tree wells</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parks/Greenspace</td>
<td>Multi-use Festival space</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Art/Fountains</td>
<td>Fountain</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church Property Concepts</td>
<td>Lifestyle Center</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Several items received negative reviews, including Parallel street parking (-2.5), striped reflective crosswalks (-0.7), stucco building material (-0.6), and concrete sidewalks (-0.2). Please see the entire results file for all the detailed information.
**Downtown Survey**

Highlights of the Downtown Survey results emphasize the perceived importance of food service establishments and city/county offices to the Heritage Towne Center. City/County offices and Restaurants were the clear leaders in terms of frequency of visits to the downtown area. Similarly, food service establishments from coffee shops, bakeries, and casual dining to fine dining were the leaders in terms of business/activity types citizens either wished to see, or felt were missing in the Heritage Towne Center. Almost 85% of survey respondents reported visiting the Heritage Towne Center at least weekly. That statistic might, however, be an artifact of audience self selection. Please see the entire results file for detailed information.

**Table Notes Tracing Paper Exercise**

Table notes from the Tracing Paper Exercise revealed a wide range of discussion topics and some commonalities as well. Common items for discussion included much discussion on parking issues and lack of downtown parking (including parking for downtown parks), more pocket parks, landscaping, and greenspace downtown and along the railroad tracks, and the possibility of bike lanes down the Main Street extension. Other areas mentioned at more than one table were public fountains (Main and Elm Streets mentioned more than once as a possible location for this) and possibly closing off downtown street(s) as pedestrian only areas. Please refer to the detailed table notes file for more. This includes complete notes.

This summary and the other documents are initial data results, and SUPA will continue to refine this work product over time for inclusion in any final report.

**Forney Heritage Towne Center: Tracing Paper Exercise: Consolidated Table Notes**

**Table A:**

- Emphasized need to retain the character of the City
- Did not like modern architecture
- Against the addition of anything more than two story development
- Was extremely fond of single use development
- Did not like the existing sub county courthouse
- Wanted parking up against the train tracks
- Thought that Bois d'Arc would have to be widened eventually, did not want to turn this into a main entry
• Not interested in mixed use
• Interested in bike trail down Main Street
• Wanted to demo the old Baptist Church

Table B:
• The fountain seemed to be an overwhelming feature at main and elm
• A garden/events gathering area in the vicinity of the church and county office
• Dispersed parking, but smaller stacked lots rather than expanding surface lots

Table C:
Susceptibility to change
• RED: They agreed quickly that the Regan House should be preserved.
• RED: They all like the style of the City Hall and suggested that maybe façade on main street/adjacent buildings could match the city hall.
• Did not mark any other buildings
• Wanted the Cotton Gin factory to be removed.
• Wanted to improve buildings on the lot of gas station and adjacent buildings.
• Was not familiar with areas on Main Street extension; one never went there
• Downtown Core: Main Street – Bois D’Arc T Area

Mobility
• Wanted more sidewalks, but they were also looking at existing street width in considering that. Considering if Main Street should be pedestrian only.
• They were all excited about bike lanes and even wanted walking/jogging trail on Main Street extension and other streets connected to the Baptist Church property.
• If possible even to other areas outside the downtown border.
• Do not think that currently there are areas in downtown where people congregate.

Greenery, Parks, Plazas and Gateways
• Want more landscaping on entire areas, especially Main Street
• New parks along railway, on the church property
• Identified the intersection of Main and Elm Street as an ideal location for fountain/public art.
• Gateway from Bois D'Arc, and at the end of Main St. extension.

Buildings and Parking

• No industrial/manufacturing
• Parking if possible along railway area ... Identified an empty lot for parking structure.
• More parking possibilities on Main Street and Bois D'Arc.
• Downtown core remains the same.
• Possible congregation location on the church properties, esp. on the corner from Elm Street.

Table D:

• Wanted to keep historic buildings and improve Façade work on other historic building
• Very interested in the removal of "non appropriate" buildings along main street and redevelopment with 2-3 story mixed use
• Fountain, @ Main and Elm
• Continue Elm street through the existing church property
• Close off main street and elm intersection to traffic for special events
• Redevelop bois d arc and main street high step sidewalks as per pictures in "Forney Country" book?
• Expand linear park along rail corridor if safety component is addressed
• Develop bike lanes along main to new park
• See pocket park and church parking lot and a current outdoor gathering place, see main @ elm and pocket park as future gathering places
• Revitalization of the cotton gin and caboose and/or redevelopment
• Gateways: Bois D' Arc at Broad Street, Chestnut at Broad Street, Bois D' Arc at Church Street
• Interested in mix use in Baptist church property with park next to Bois D’ Arc at Baptist Church; store fronts face trinity and bois d arc with preference for parking behind building away from streets
• Walkable areas and safety very important
Table E:

- Were interested in creation of more parks on the undeveloped land (e.g. sub county courthouse or in the Bois D’Arc T Area)
- Parking lots were distributed in small dimensions all over the Bois D’Arc T Area
- Fountain was located between the intersection of the Main and Elm streets;
- Originally, Downtown Core was Bois D’Arc T Area, later on, it was expended till the Main Street (however, they did not indicate it on the map)
- No industrial/manufacturing/infill development was indicated on the map
- No bike lane was drawn (nevertheless, it was mentioned that down of the Main Street is a nice big park and may be the bike lane should be put on that street. The number of bikers isn’t big)
- Former Booker T. Washington school and museum should be reserved, and building needs some maintenance work
- Single and 2-story buildings were drawn alone the Main street
- There was a question whether the 2nd warehouse in use or what for that building is now?
- Gateways were indicated all around the city (T-form map)
- City Hall is the place for events’ gathering

Table F:

- Original Depot burned 1950’s
- Broad Street as corridor; connects to other
- Hardware store to become museum
- Booker T. is the old school
- Parks don’t have any parking
- North Bois D’Arc building restoration
- Could change look of convenience store – viable business
- Back of main block is in trust to University of Texas San Antonio
- Broad Street is the business entry into Forney
- Make a loop?
- Total access to park etc; total sidewalk improvement
- The walk to Post Office is dangerous
- Access to Post Office is hard even by car
• Houses on Broad Street are commercial
• Don’t like bikes on sidewalk
• Katy Trail?
• Need safe flow from retail to Broad Street
• Wal-Mart/80 is dangerous
• Better parking would promote people visiting caboose
• Public seating/concert area by tracks
• What goes in next to Xeriscape park must enhance it
• Back of Cotton Gin has sewer issues
• Bois d’Arc/Pacific Street has lots of traffic pass by
• Post Office generates traffic
• There is no space in existing downtown
SOURCES

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Forney Economic Development Corporation (www.forneytexasedc.org)
Texas Department of Agriculture (www.agr.state.tx.us/)
Federal Highway Administration (www.fhwa.dot.gov/)
ACHP-Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (http://www.achp.gov/)