

# VISION 2

Illustrative Plan







## A VISION FOR ROUND ROCK

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Downtown Round Rock can become a thriving town center featuring a viable mix of residential, commercial, retail, dining, entertainment and public space uses in a walkable and historically-sensitive environment to enhance Round Rock's economy, quality of life, and sense of place.



# MASTER VISION PLAN

In order to achieve an activated and attractive downtown, the Master Plan proposes a series of physical design interventions that seek a vibrant urban realm. Together these proposals seek to create a Round Rock "brand" and identity.

## Downtown

At the center of the downtown is a new town green around the historic Round Rock water tower. The town green, which is created via a realignment of Round Rock Avenue, is surrounded by pedestrian-oriented retail and commercial uses, such as restaurants with outdoor seating. The town green becomes the focal point of downtown, accommodating festivals, farmer's markets, and other events that draw both locals and visitors.

The scale of the two-block historic Main Street is extended west across Mays, along the town green. Main Street and areas around the new town green are developed in a traditional mixed-use configuration with tall first-story retail and mixed-uses along the street in one to two story buildings with large display windows, awnings, and activated facades. A new bridge connects Main Street to and from the frontage road along the interstate, in order to increase circulation and sight lines into the historic downtown from Interstate 35. At this entry point, a potential new theater and hotel, or other pedestrian-oriented uses, can be regional draws that help assure a 24-hour activation of the street. Ground floor uses along Main Street and around the town green include retail, restaurant, and pedestrian-oriented commercial. Main Street west of Mays and areas around the town green area optimal areas to target to concentrate commercial uses to create synergy. Liberty between Mays and Lewis is another potential area for initial redevelopment opportunity.

Mays Street is re-envisioned with pedestrian-oriented retail buildings of comparable scale to the historic buildings along Main. Widened sidewalks and a narrowed curb-to-curb distance still accommodate the expected traffic flow, while assuring a pleasant street experience for pedestrians.

Throughout the Plan, care is given to introducing signage, especially at the main entry points from the interstate, at the bridges of each of the creeks, and the new Main Street entry. Signage will help differentiate downtown as a distinct district and to announce activities and programs going on in the city. Public spaces, including the streets and the various green spaces and the museum are programmed with activities that help to define the identity of Round Rock, such as the farmer's market, the Artisan Stroll, outdoor movies and plays, parades, town bicycle and foot races, and other sports activities that tie into Round Rock's identity as the Sports Capital of Texas.

## Public Space

A quarter mile from the town green is a cultural and history museum or restaurant and galleries in the Nelson-Crier House (a National Register-designated historic property currently under private ownership) and ¼ mile from this is the Round Rock Community Foundation property (old Main Street ball fields), which should be designed as a combination of open space and uses for the Round Rock Community Foundation. The property should be comprehensively planned to effectively integrate these uses.

Brushy Creek is re-programmed with an extended park and Heritage Trail, connecting to the larger Round Rock trail system and over the creek to a proposed 9 acre park. The Plan calls for saving existing mature trees along with other sustainable development strategies.

## Palm Valley Boulevard (Highway 79)

Along Palm Valley Boulevard (Highway 79), retail and commercial uses along the highway are located along a new frontage road that creates a safer and more pleasant pedestrian experience for shoppers and residents. Stores have parking behind. This area accommodates some multi-family buildings with smaller parks and green spaces.

## Contents of this Section

This section of the Master Plan illustrates the guiding vision concepts of the Plan and describes 6 key strategic planning projects.

Guiding vision concepts include:

- Establishing gateways
- Identifying a coherent urban design language
- Programming the area with community and regional activities
- Identifying a network of public green and open spaces
- Assuring the preservation of historic buildings and urban form
- Describing a street hierarchy and an approach to circulation
- Thinking critically about how to lessen the environmental impact of development

The 7 key strategic planning projects include:

- New Main Street bridge
- New town green
- Streetscaping along Main Street
- Streetscaping along Mays Street
- Streetscaping along Round Rock Avenue
- Streetscaping along Georgetown Street
- Heritage Trail



Initial Master Plan concept diagram sketch showing areas of intensity, critical streets, open space (in green), 1/4 mile walk circles, and civic buildings (in black).



5 minute and 1/4 mile walk

Retail and mixed-use development centered on Highway 79 and Mays Street

Major gateway and signage point

Major gateway and signage point

New town green

Park-once garage

New Main Street bridge connection, theater, and hotel

Major gateway and signage point

Future City Hall and park-once garage

Enhanced creek and park

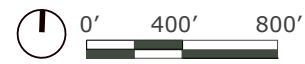
Residential infill

The Round Rock Community Foundation property (old Main Street ball fields) should be designed for a combination of open space and family-oriented social service facilities and administrative offices. The property should be comprehensively planned to effectively integrate those uses. A special zoning district (PUD) will be required to develop this property.

Historic Main Street

Park-once garage

Major gateway and signage point



# TRANSFORMING THE PUBLIC REALM

In order to foster a thriving town center, the Master Plan seeks to augment the urban design of downtown. The photo simulation to the right illustrates how this can happen. In this example, Mays Street is transformed, through streetscaping and strategic infill development, from a high-speed auto-oriented street to a bustling, active commercial district.

The three photos to the right show:

**1. Existing conditions.** Mays Street is 4 lanes wide with no crosswalks or stop signs and limited street lighting. Buildings are setback far from the narrow and cluttered sidewalks.

**2. Streetscape Improvements.** The right-of-way is kept the same, but sidewalks bulb out at corners to make crossing easier. Transformation of Mays from 4 lanes to 3 lanes is a prerequisite for bulb-outs and parallel parking. Parallel street parking, which is conducive to vibrant retail activity, is added to both sides of the street. Crosswalks with special paving, landscaping, and pedestrian-oriented street lights are friendly to those on foot. Trees are one of the most powerful revitalizing asset that a city can invest in.

**3. Streetscaping and Infill Development.** A tight street edge is created through the infill of human-scaled retail and mixed-use buildings. Large windows, awnings, hanging signs, and outdoor dining create a fluid indoor-outdoor dialog. Architectural styles are sensitive to the historic Round Rock character. Note that overhead utilities are removed which have a significant aesthetic value but come at a significant cost.



*Mays Street, Existing Conditions*



*Mays with Streetscape Improvements*



*Key*





Pedestrian-scale lamps

Infill buildings provide a sense of enclosure and define space in between buildings as an outdoor "community room"

Shop awnings and overhangs provide shade, color, and architectural interest

Outdoor dining and activated ground floor with large display windows

Textured sidewalk adds interest to street

Special crosswalk paving favors the pedestrian

Buildings are human-scaled. Retail frontage widths match the historical Round Rock pattern of approximately 30'.

Street trees provide shade and texture

Sidewalks bulb out at corners to make crossing easier

Landscaping provides buffer between pedestrian and vehicular zones and collects stormwater

Roadway is reconfigured for added parallel parking and a center turn lane

*Mays with Streetscape Improvements and Infill Development*

# AREA 1: TOWN CENTER

As the heart of the Vision Plan, this area is centered around the new town green. The green, which is created by the redirection of Round Rock Avenue to Liberty (see models, facing page), is home to Round Rock's iconic water tower and the relocated historic gazebo. Community events at the square include the farmers market and art walks, etc. Pedestrian-oriented retail, restaurant, and mixed-use buildings surround the green, keeping eyes on the park for safety. The new town green is one of the most important moves of the Plan because it creates a central gathering place, a heart and focal point for downtown. The public indicated a desire for a new water feature in the town green.

Main Street is reconnected west and east across Mays, and infilled with retail, mixed-use, and commercial buildings that respect the historical scale of the city. At the east end of the historic Main Street is a new history and culture museum in the Nelson-Crier House, one of Round Rock's architectural treasures. Streetscaping throughout the area includes new trees and landscaping, widened sidewalks that bulb out at intersections, new parallel parking along Mays, special paving, and crosswalks. Mays Street adopts a retail-oriented human-scale character to act as the north-south town center corridor. The existing parking structure acts as a park-once garage, and is enhanced with new signage.



Future rail station and Transit Oriented Development (TOD) opportunity

Heart of Round Rock, town green. Can include small vending businesses for park users.

Safe pedestrian crossings should be introduced at all four corners of the town green.

Part of 205 E Main Street can be used as a public plaza / green space and access to the public garage.

New roundabouts on Liberty St. and Main St.



Town Center Vision Plan Detail

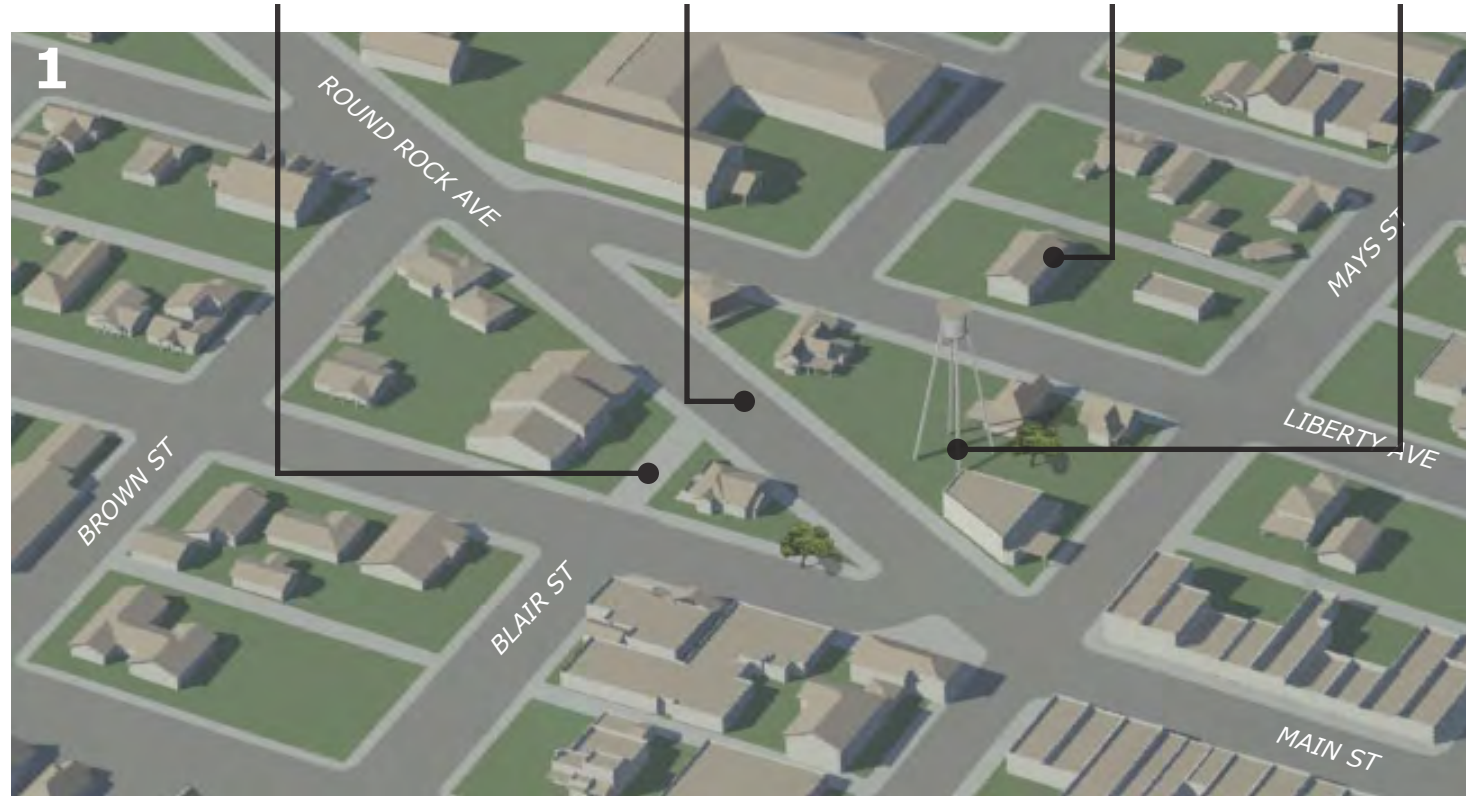


Blair Street does not connect between Main Street and Liberty Avenue

Round Rock Avenue connects diagonally and carries a lot of traffic

Round Rock Donuts

Round Rock iconic water tower

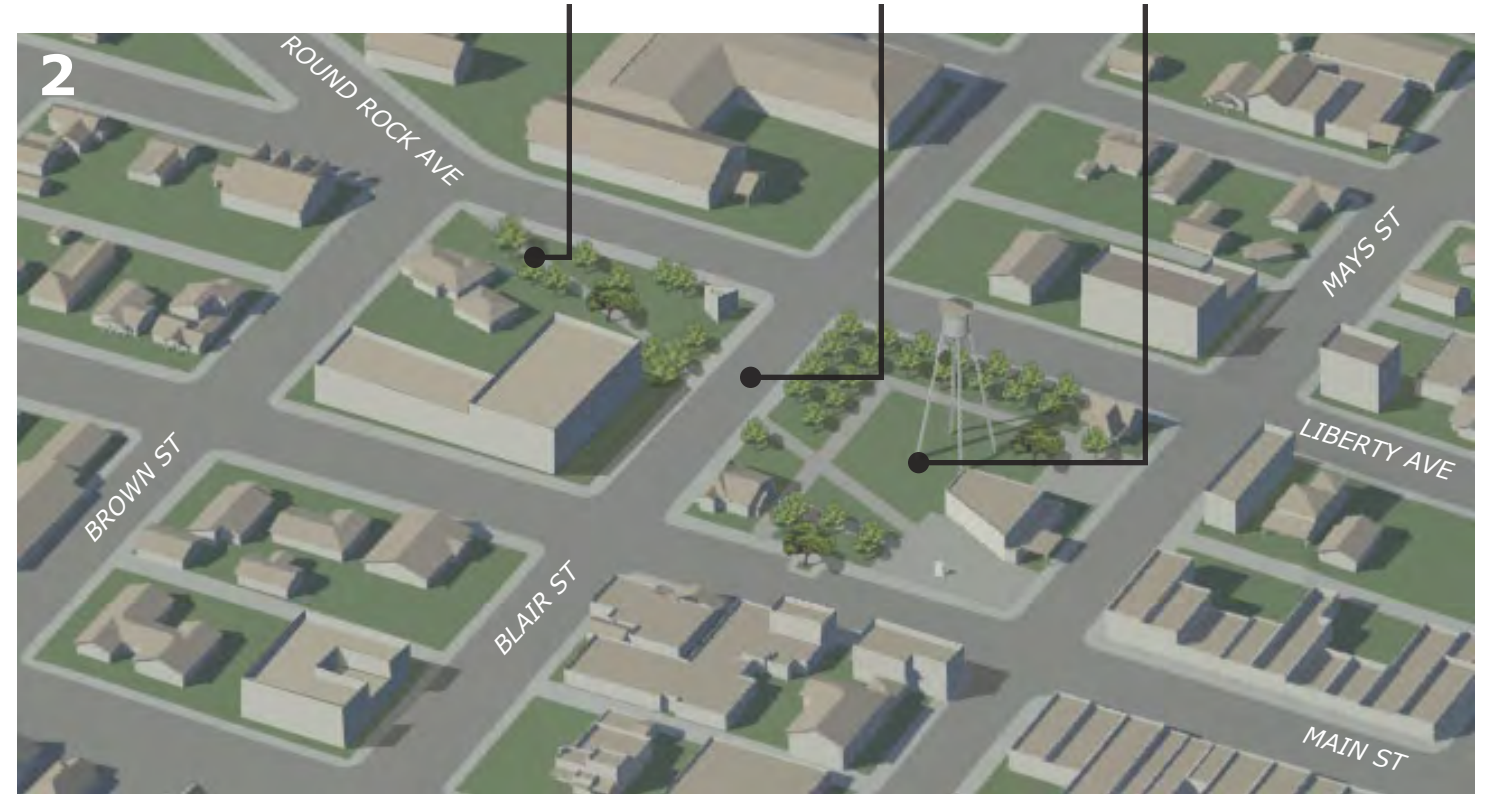


Model of Existing Block Structure at Mays and Main

Historical Diagonal Round Rock Avenue connection maintained visually

Blair Street connects North and South

New town green



Model of Proposed Town Center Area at Mays and Main. Round Rock Avenue stops at Brown and Liberty.



View of rendering to the right



Rendering of Town Green and water tower as seen from Mays Street facing west.

## AREA 2: SOUTHWEST DOWNTOWN

Southwest Downtown hosts the existing city building and future City Hall, an extended Main Street, and a cluster of cultural buildings, potentially including a hotel and iconic theater, and flex space for creative businesses. Other potential uses include pedestrian-oriented mixed-uses. A new iconic bridge connects the west end of Main Street to the frontage road along Interstate 35 where signage and landscaping welcome visitors and announce the historic downtown. This new connection will increase circulation to downtown. At the head of the new bridge and visible from the frontage road, the new hotel and theater with iconic signage act as landmark buildings that anchor the west end of Main Street. The theater could be a regional draw for visitors to downtown and a visual indicator of the historical area of downtown, from the Interstate. Ground floor uses include retail and pedestrian-friendly commercial uses. A new park-once garage serves Southwest Downtown and can accommodate a bus depot. The park-once garage is wrapped with retail uses along the ground floor, in order to maintain the pedestrian-friendliness of the area.

### A Hotel in Round Rock

Based on market analysis undertaken as part of this study, Round Rock has an opportunity to provide a hotel as part of the revitalization of downtown, particularly if located with easy access off the interstate and in close proximity to the retail core. The hotel could be somewhat differentiated in character from the exclusively highway-oriented lodging properties but still preserve a low to mid-level price point. A differentiated product may draw visitors from outside of the immediate area, or visitors to nearby sports, cultural, and convention facilities (e.g. Dell Diamond). Linking the hotel to a cluster of restaurants along Main and around the Town Green, would also increase the potential draw of visitors to the region. Examples of the types of hotel product that would complement the Master Plan objectives, include Hyatt Place, Aloft, and NYLO. See the Appendix for the complete Tourism Overview report that explains the analysis completed, tourism findings, and more information about these three hotel types.

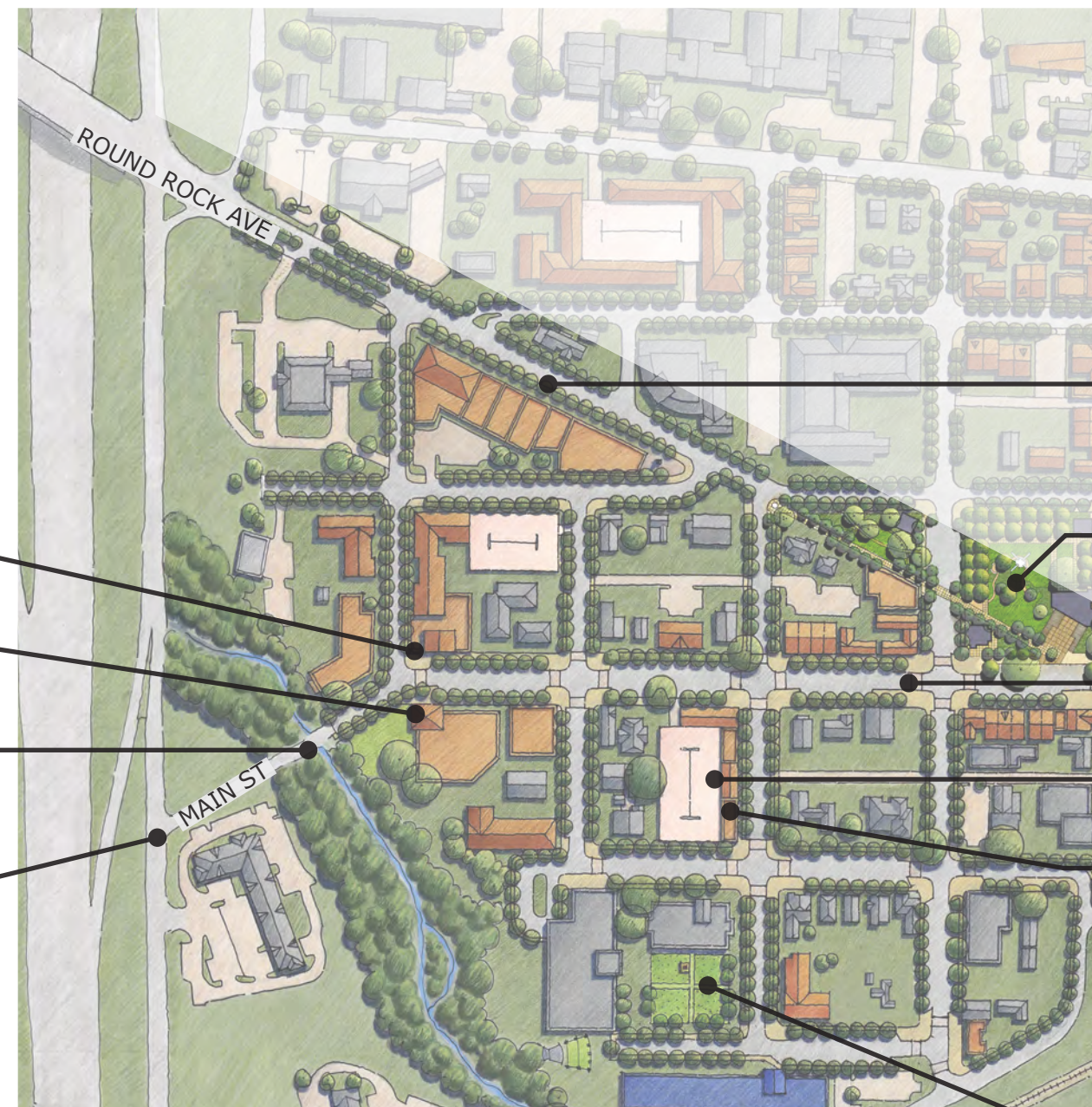
### Connecting Main Street to I-35

A northbound exit ramp from the I-35 frontage road would increase visitation and visibility of downtown Round Rock, and at the same time increase the viability of a hotel in this location.



Key

- Preferred site for hotel and mixed-use development, or other pedestrian-oriented iconic building
- Preferred site for theater with iconic marquee
- Main Street bridge connects to frontage road
- Eye-catching landscaping and historic downtown entry feature



Southwest Downtown Vision Plan Detail

- Round Rock Avenue streetscaping
- Heart of Round Rock, town green. Can include small vending businesses for park users.
- Main Street infilled at historical scale
- Park-Once garage and transit center
- Retail wrapped around garage to create pedestrian edge.
- Civic green at future City Hall





*Rendering of Main Street bridge, facing northeast from frontage road*



*View of rendering to the right*



# AREA 3: CREEKSIDE DISTRICT

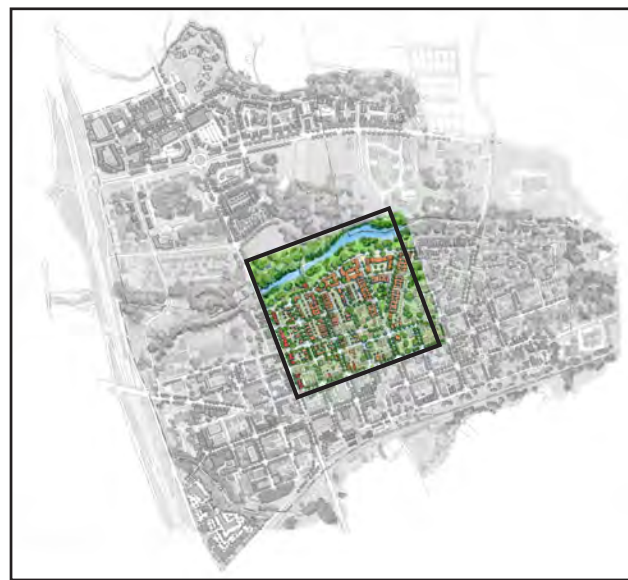
This area immediately adjacent to the creek is gradually redeveloped with townhouses, mixed uses, and small multi-family buildings. Veterans Park on the creek includes new walking trails that are connected to the Heritage Trail and regional system. New buildings front the creek, which is the heart of the district. A pedestrian paseo within a 50 foot public easement (or 10 feet, if constructed by developers) along the creek is lined by restaurants, patios, and balconies to create an activated urbane area to take advantage of the creek itself. A new pedestrian bridge at Lewis links downtown to the new proposed public park, north of the creek.

A walkable block network connects the district to downtown and to Brushy Creek. Note that view corridors may be necessary to protect creek views. Also, designs of creek-facing sides of buildings need special consideration as they will be prominent to park and trail users on the north bank of Brushy Creek.

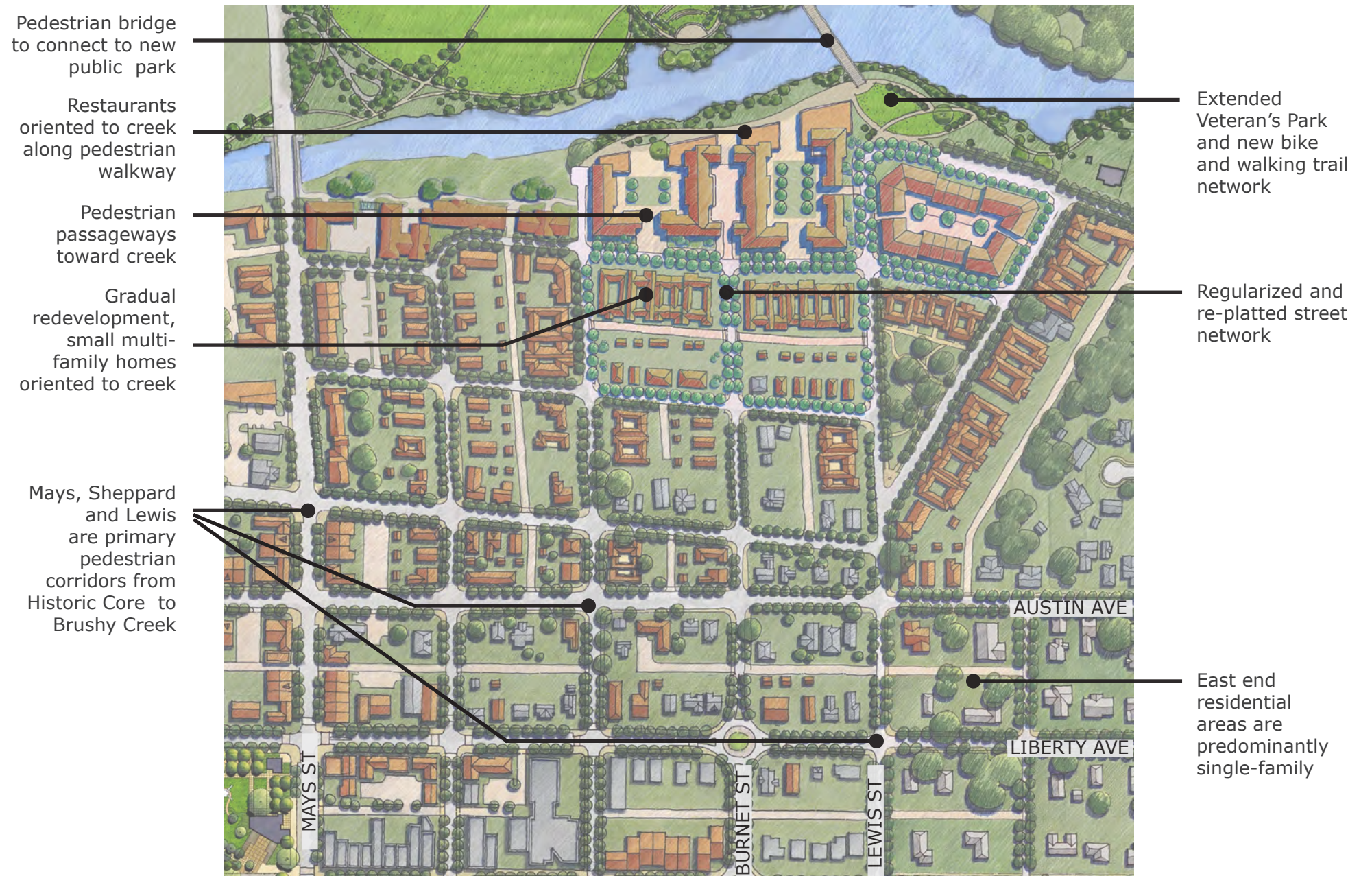
The Master Plan calls for the comprehensive re-platting of this district. The area has many lots that are not legally platting. Since the original platting in the late 1800s, lots have been conveyed and reconfigured, sometimes without legal re-platting. This poses a challenge to development, since re-platting is required before permit issuance, a potentially costly and time-intensive process. A comprehensive re-platting program would help remove barriers to development in this crucial area near the heart of downtown and adjacent to the creek. See the implementation section in Chapter 3 for further information.

## East End Residential

In the areas of this neighborhood to the east Lewis and Spring, single-family uses should be protected. The character of this area is predominately single-family and should remain this way.



Key



Creekside Neighborhood Vision Plan Detail



*Housing typologies appropriate for the district*

The Creekside District should be gradually infilled with single-family homes, townhouses, and small multi-family buildings, such as those shown on this page.



*Texas Brick Bungalow*



*Bungalow in Round Rock*



*Texas Bungalow*



*Texas Bungalow*



*Townhouses*

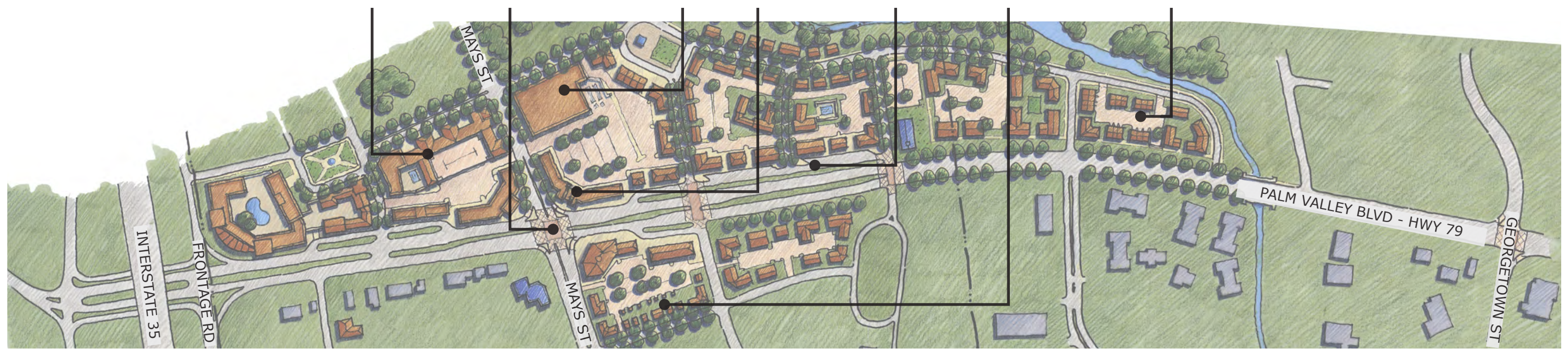


*Townhouses*

# AREA 4: PALM VALLEY BOULEVARD - HIGHWAY 79

The Palm Valley Boulevard (Highway 79) is reprogrammed with retail and commercial uses along the edge. New buildings are oriented to the street, with parking behind, instead of being pushed back behind a sea of parking. The intersections are made more pedestrian-friendly with crosswalks and special paving, along with pedestrian islands. Two new signalized crossings are introduced along the Highway, also with special paving.

- Multi-family housing
- Special paving to accommodate pedestrians
- Large retailer
- Retail with parking behind
- Slip road with retail
- Single-family housing
- Townhouses



Key



# GATEWAYS

## How do you enter downtown?

There are five major gateways in downtown Round Rock. Gateways play an important role in defining the look and feel of the city and help to build the Round Rock "brand" by presenting the first sign of city life.

As Round Rock looks to revive its downtown area and attract both residents and visitors to the area, it is essential for the city to be proactive in defining its "gateways" to downtown.

Buildings, signs, sculpture, framed vistas, trees, lighting, and landscaping can all act as gateways. The renderings on the facing page illustrate concepts for each gateway area. There was an initial public preference for arched gateways, which are shown in addition to pylons on the following pages.

See the following pages for images of what the five gateways could look like.



# GATEWAY IMAGES

The following are concept images depicting potential designs for the five proposed gateways. There was an initial public preference for arched gateways.

## South Mays Gateway

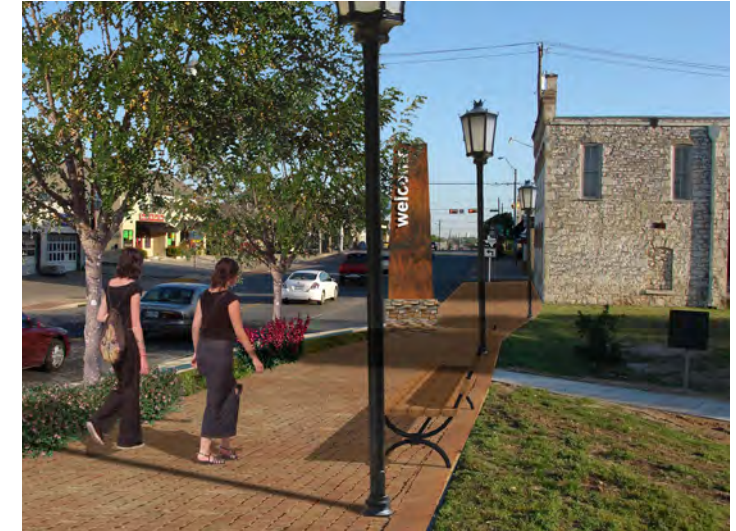
A gateway along Mays, usually used for pass-through traffic, announces historic downtown from the south.



South Mays Gateway: Existing



South Mays Gateway: Proposed Option A



South Mays Gateway: Proposed Option B

## Main Street Gateway

The new Main Street bridge is augmented with entry signage to welcome people from the Frontage Road, on to historic Main Street.



Main Street Gateway: Existing



Main Street Gateway: Proposed Option A



Main Street Gateway: Proposed Option B



### North Mays Gateway

A gateway along Mays, usually used for pass-through traffic, announces historic downtown from the north.



North Mays Gateway: Existing



North Mays Gateway: Proposed

### Round Rock Avenue Gateway

A gateway along Round Rock, as the main entry from the Interstate, announces historic downtown.



Round Rock Avenue Gateway: Existing



Round Rock Avenue Gateway: Proposed Option A



Round Rock Avenue Gateway: Proposed Option B

### Georgetown Gateway

A neighborhood-oriented gateway with an overhead gateway marker or a sidewalk pylon.



Georgetown Gateway: Existing



Georgetown Gateway: Proposed Option A



Georgetown Gateway: Proposed Option B

# CIRCULATION AND STREET NETWORK

## How do you get to the area and move around within it?

The Master Plan proposes a two-part circulation strategy:

1. Calm traffic to create greater safety for pedestrians through road improvements such as roundabouts, medians, bulbouts, crosswalks, and wider sidewalks.
2. Improve the quality of urban design through streetscape improvements, infill development and design guidelines to create a space that is inviting and lively with active uses throughout the day and night.

### Transportation Circulation Plan

Effective traffic circulation for the study area depends on a multi-layered system. Interstate 35, Palm Valley Boulevard (Highway 79) and RM 620 provide regional connectivity. Main Street, Georgetown, Mays, and McNeil serves to connect the study area to the regional system, while Burnet provides local connectivity to the south. Lewis/Spring streets are the main north/south route in the downtown area itself, connecting north to Pecan along the creek, and south to Bagdad. Also critical is a robust, well interconnected trail system utilizing the Brushy Creek and Lake Creek greenways for bicycle and pedestrian connectivity. The potential for the Austin/San Antonio Regional Rail System to establish a commuter rail station near Bagdad and Burnet provides for expanded options for commuters.

The area north of Brushy Creek is primarily dependent on Mays and Palm Valley Boulevard (Highway 79) for connectivity while the area south of Brushy Creek can utilize Mays, Round Rock, Georgetown and McNeil Road for connectivity. The key to connecting these two portions of the community together is the effective use of public roadways and public trails systems. The primary connection is Mays Street with Georgetown as a secondary connection and Lee Street/Summit as a tertiary connection. The development of park space along Brushy Creek and a bike/pedestrian bridge across Brushy Creek east of Mays, further develops an effective grid network of streets, sidewalks, and trails.

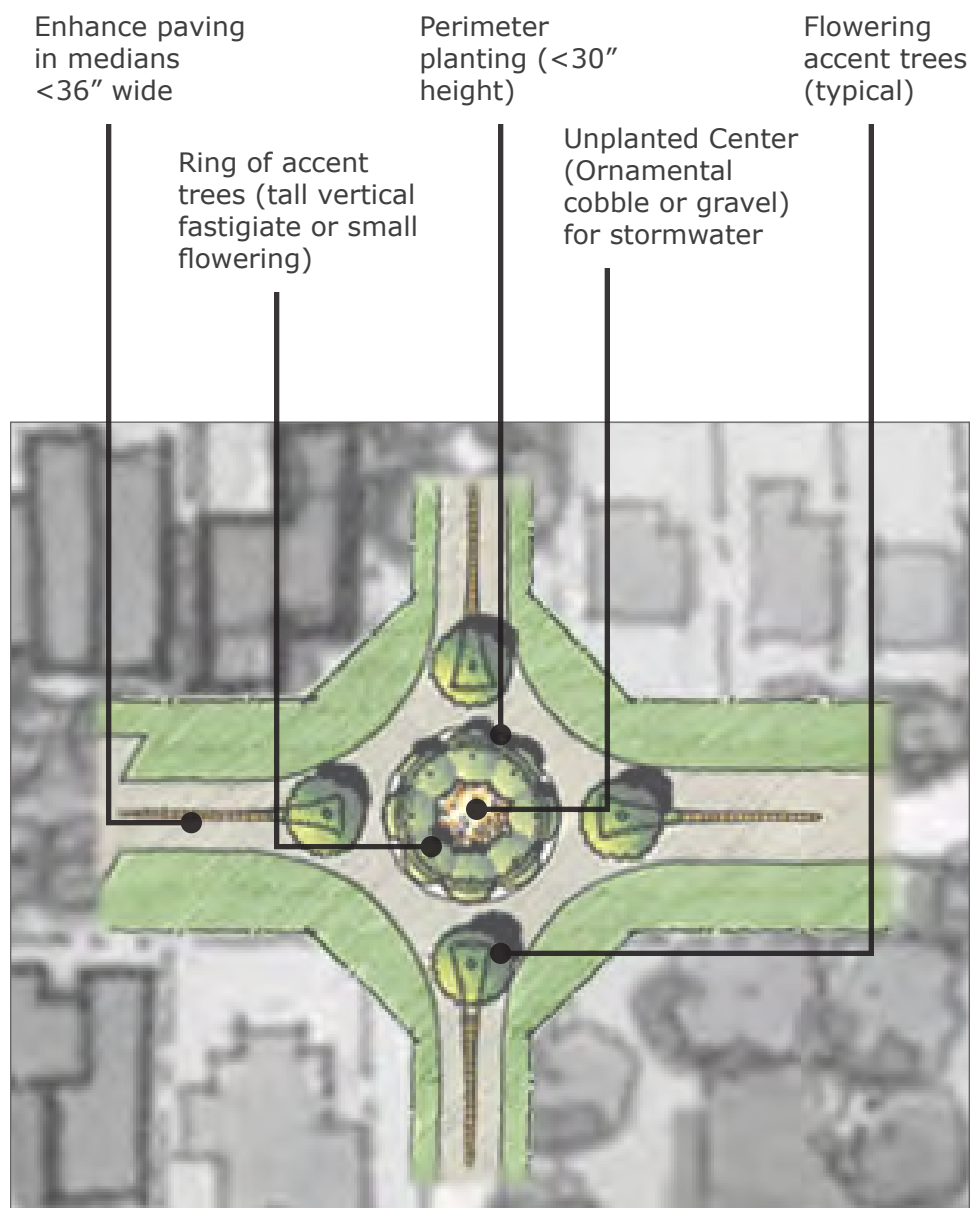
Along all local streets, adequate and contiguous sidewalks foster walkability. South of Brushy Creek, the existing grid is enhanced by the realignment of the Round Rock Avenue corridor onto Liberty and the extension of Main Street to Interstate 35. North of Brushy Creek, the extension of Summit to Palm Valley Boulevard (Highway 79) and the development of backage roads for the various planned redevelopments provide an expanded street grid network and improved mobility.

Intersection improvements are planned at several key locations to reduce delays and enhance safety and walkability. The reapportionment of Mays from a four-lane roadway to a two-lane roadway with a continuous left turn lane allows for improvements to the existing traffic signal system that improves the throughput of the corridor, while better serving all roadway users. The realignment of Bagdad under Mays provides improved connectivity along the southern edge of the study area.

Through traffic along the Mays Street corridor experiences delays at the intersections of Liberty and Mays and Main and Mays. While traffic modeling has assumed an overall growth of traffic along the corridor, motorists who routinely utilize Mays may choose alternate routes in order to avoid the peak hour delays, which may tend to moderate overall delays. Motorists coming from the south may utilize Logan and Burnet or Mays Crossing and the Interstate 35 northbound frontage road to access the study area from the perimeter. Motorists from the north may elect to use Georgetown or Sunset to Summit/Lee to take advantage of the redundancy of the street grid. Lewis/Spring is positioned as the main north/south neighborhood arterial route connecting north to Pecan along the creek. Creation of a walkable community with strategically placed parking means patrons to the area will park and walk further distances than traditionally occurs, further reducing congestion in the core of the study area.

### Roundabouts

The Plan introduces the possibility of modern roundabouts in downtown. Circular intersections have been in the United States since the 1900s, however their popularity waned in the 1940s and 1950s due to safety concerns. In the 1980s, revised designs (e.g. "modern" roundabouts) were exported from Europe and Australia to the United States. Since then, further research and design modifications have yielded an intersection control method that offers many unique advantages: it is statistically safer than traffic signals or stop-controlled intersections; it offers high capacity with low delay while reducing speeds of through traffic; it serves all modes of travel (automobiles, trucks, buses, bicycles and pedestrians); it offers geometric flexibility to minimize impacts to adjacent properties; it provides opportunities for landscaping and other aesthetic treatments. Additional right-of-way at the intersection may be required for a modern roundabout.



Proposed single-lane roundabout



Palm Valley Boulevard (Highway 79) from west of Interstate 35 to east of Georgetown -

- Frontage road for more local traffic along edge

Mays from Brushy Creek Bridge to Lake Creek Bridge-

- Realigned from four-lanes to two-lanes
- Continuous center turn lane
- On-street parking, wider sidewalks, bulb-outs, and added traffic signal

Liberty from Brown to Burnet-

- Bulb-outs, curb ramps, and crosswalks for enhanced walkability
- Splitter islands east of Mays increase safety

Round Rock/ Brown/ Liberty Intersection-

- Creating Town Green
- Two-lane streets
- Bulb-outs, curb ramps, and crosswalks for enhanced walkability
- On-street parking

Main/ Round Rock/ Mays Intersection-

- Realigning into four-way intersection
- Mays turned into two-lane
- On-street parking and bulb-outs

Main from Interstate 35 to Mays-

- Connection from Interstate 35
- Angled parking, bulb-outs, crosswalks, curb ramps, and sidewalks
- Location of driveways off Main

Georgetown from Main to Palm Valley Boulevard (Highway 79) -

- Create a two-lane corridor
- On-street parking, sidewalks, and crosswalks
- Splitter island at end of bridge

Lewis Street-

- Main North-South neighborhood arterial connecting to Pecan Ave in the north and Bagdad Ave in the south

Burnet and Main, Burnet and Liberty, and Georgetown and Main -

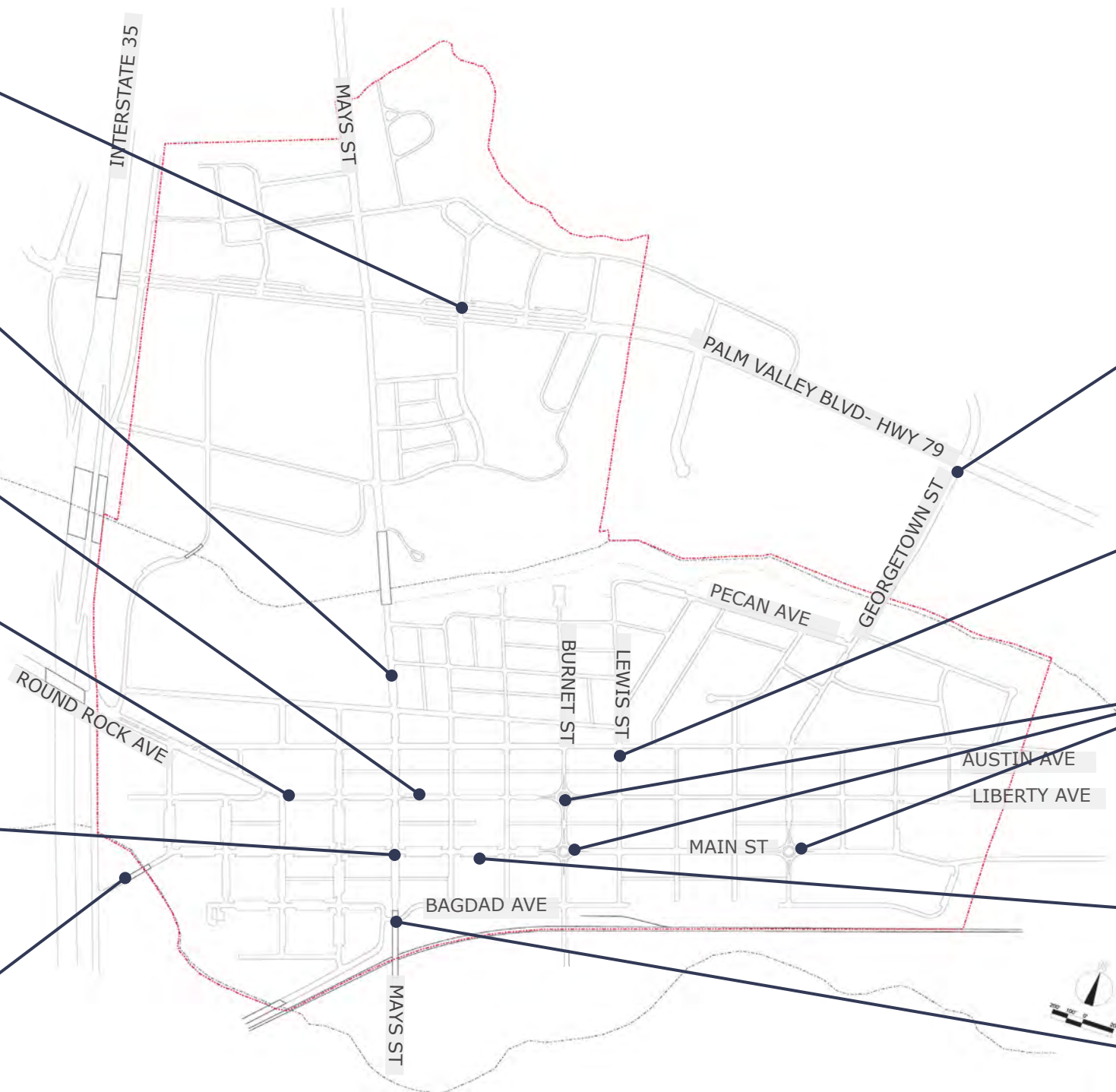
- Single lane roundabout
- Elimination/ realignment of on-street parking and driveways

Main from Mays to Burnet -

- Elimination of existing median
- Widening of sidewalks
- Bulb-outs on all crosswalks, curb ramps, and sidewalks

Bagdad under Mays -

- Realign to pass under bridge span
- Create more space for sidewalk and street lighting
- Realign to support rail/ transit terminal



Recommendations for Circulation

# GREEN AND OPEN SPACE NETWORK

## What is the public realm like?

Because downtown Round Rock is relatively small in geographic scale (about .75 square miles) and is organized in small-scale street grid, the city has the opportunity to create a walkable area, connecting green and open spaces such as the future City Hall civic green, the historic Nelson-Crier House Cultural Museum or other facility, the Round Rock Community Foundation property (old Main Street ball fields) which can be designed as a combination of open space and uses for the Foundation, and Brushy Creek through a system of "great streets."

The Master Plan augments the green and open space network through:

- Enhancements of existing greenspace
- Introduction of new greenspaces
- Streetscape improvements

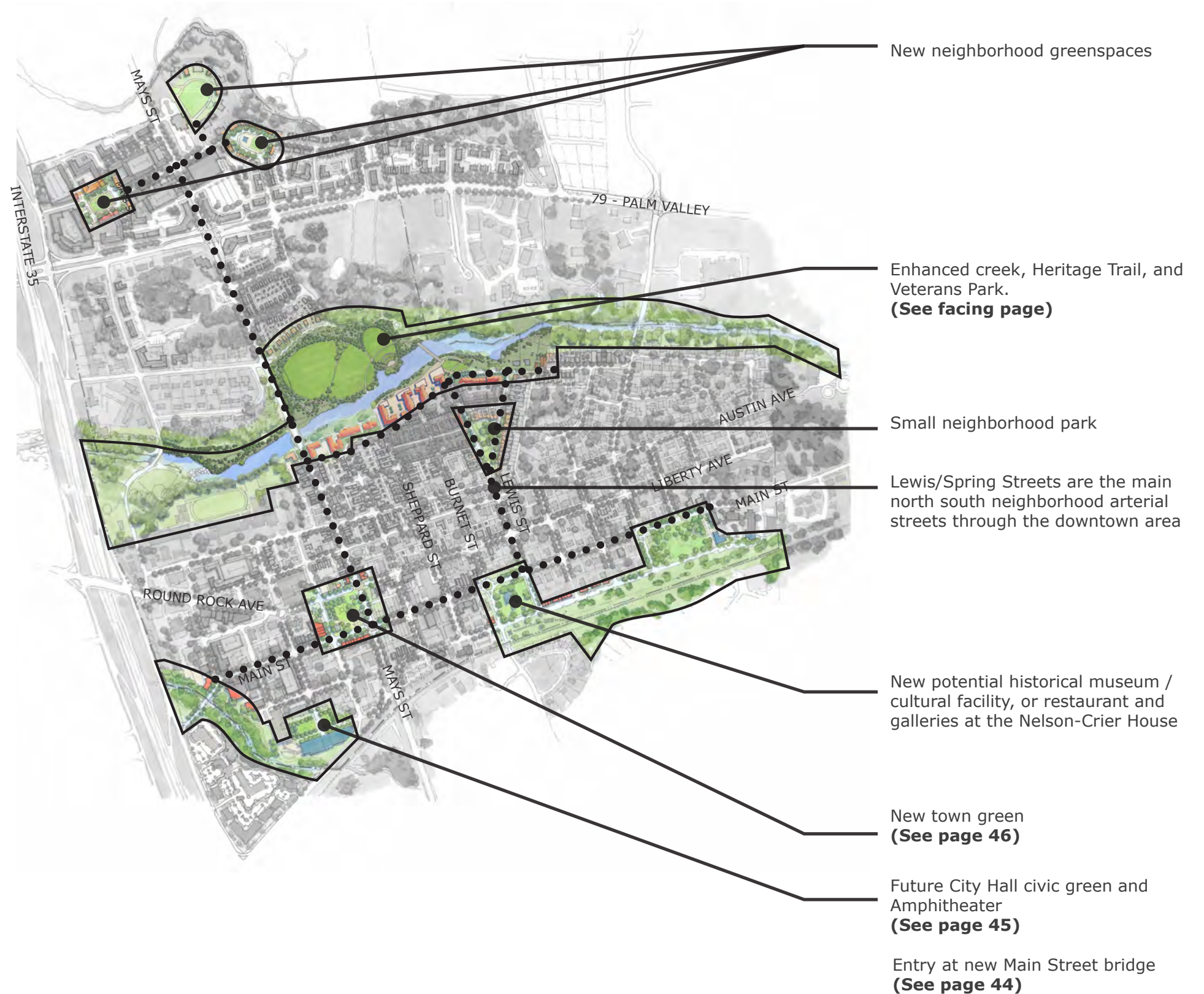
Enhancements of existing greenspaces include:

- Expansion of Veterans Park and introduction of walking and biking trails along Brushy Creek, which connect to the regional trail system via the Heritage Trail.
- Use of the former Senior Center site as pocket park / courtyard for public gatherings and events, which leads to pedestrian entrances to the parking garage. Site could be partially redeveloped.

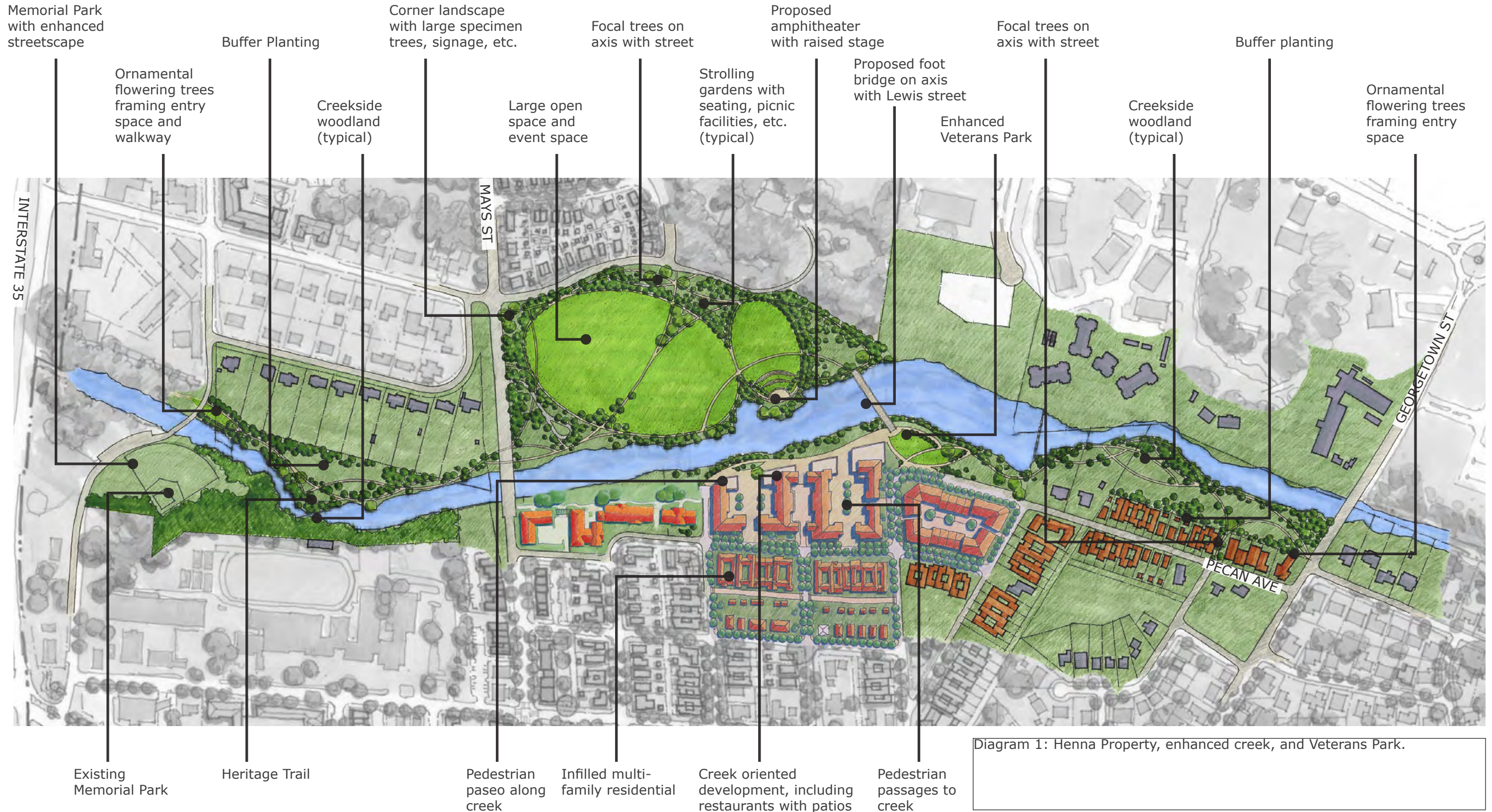
Introduction of new greenspaces include:

- A new town green at Mays and Main, that is home to the iconic Round Rock water tower and community functions like the farmers market and July 4th celebrations. Safe pedestrian crossings should be introduced at all four corners of the town green.
- A new civic green in southwest downtown adjacent to the future City Hall for more formal events and gatherings.
- A new park north of Brushy Creek for passive and active recreation that links south to Veterans Park and the regional trail network.
- Adaptive reuse of the Nelson-Crier House as a cultural or historical museum.
- New neighborhood parks in the Creekside District and north of Palm Valley Boulevard (Highway 79).

Streetscape improvements are discussed in Chapter 4, The Design Guide. Examples of streets targeted for new streetscaping include Sheppard Street and Lewis Street (as the main north/south street), to emphasize connections between downtown and Brushy Creek.



ENHANCED CREEK AND VETERANS PARK WITH HERITAGE TRAIL



## NEW MAIN STREET BRIDGE

Inspired by Round Rock's location along the frontier between the rolling topography of Texas Hill Country to the west, and the flatter, fertile Blackland Prairies to the east, the Entry landscape design combines elements that allude to both natural and man-made landscapes that recall Round Rock's ecological and cultural history.

A rhythmic composition of native ornamental grasses flanks both sides of the entry road, reminiscent of the crop rows associated with the Blackland Prairie Region's agricultural heritage. Rows of native canopy trees stand atop long linear berms that run parallel to rows of grasses, alluding to the hilly, wooded terrain of the Texas Hill Country to the west. Low, accent walls of native stone, extend along some of the linear berms. Randomly interspersed within the linear pattern of grasses, trees and topography, some of the walls flank both sides of the entry road, creating a sense of gateway and arrival. Others slice into the face of the linear landscaped platforms, accenting the landscape with an architectural element that relates to the design of the entry bridge, and highlighting the symbolic connection to the rocky soils and tree-studded rolling hills associated with Texas Hill Country.

Signage and other environmental graphics may be incorporated with the design of some walls as entry monuments to clarify the goal of establishing a clear and identifiable landscape experience at the western threshold to/from town.

- Pilaster with integrated lighting
- Flowering accent trees
- Enhanced paving on bridge
- Crop rows of ornamental, native grasses
- Pedestrian access across bridge to connect to future trail on Lake Creek
- Low stone walls, typical. One with entry signage
- Oak trees, typical

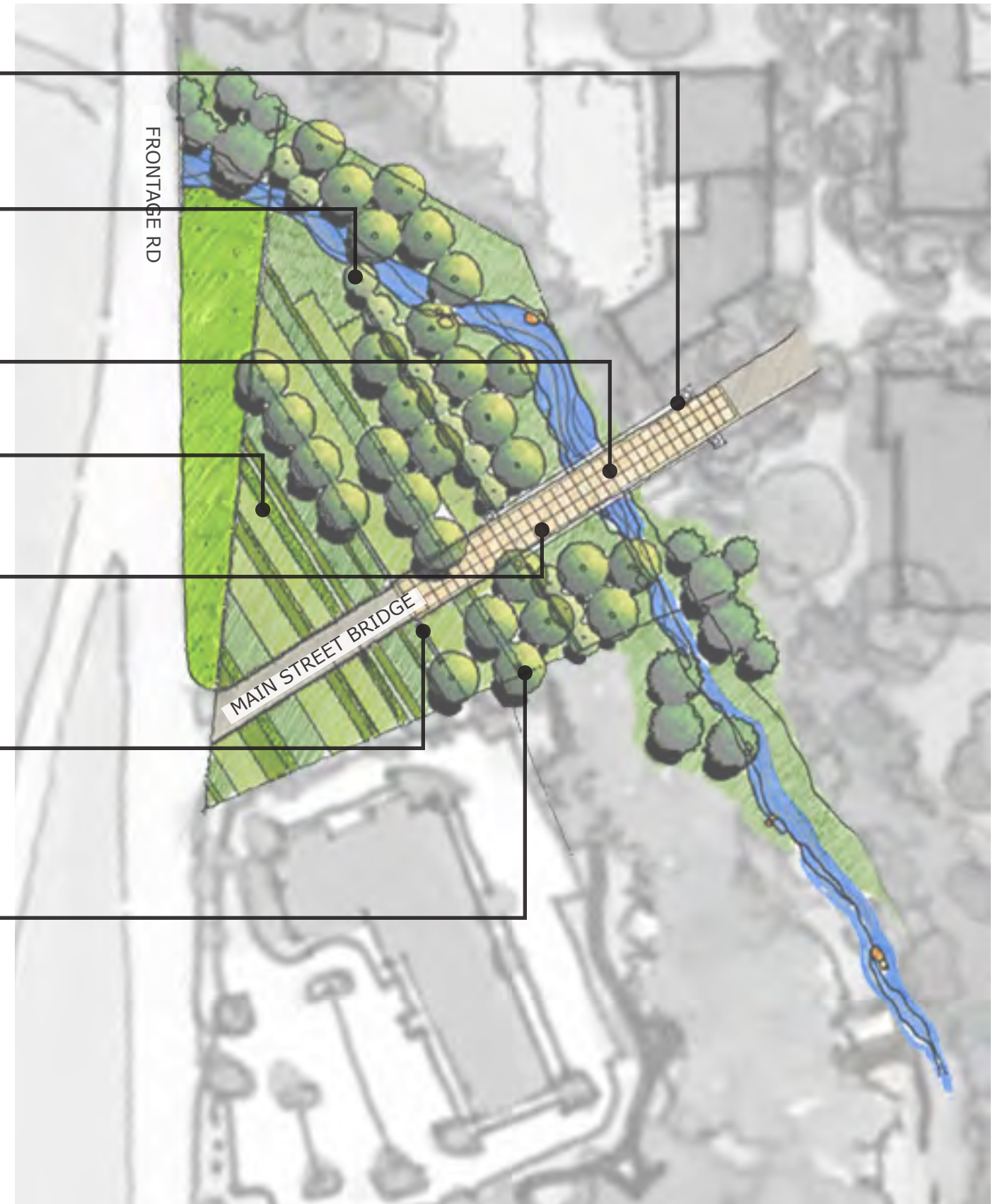


Diagram 2: New Main Street entry green and bridge



CITY HALL CIVIC GREEN AND AMPHITHEATER

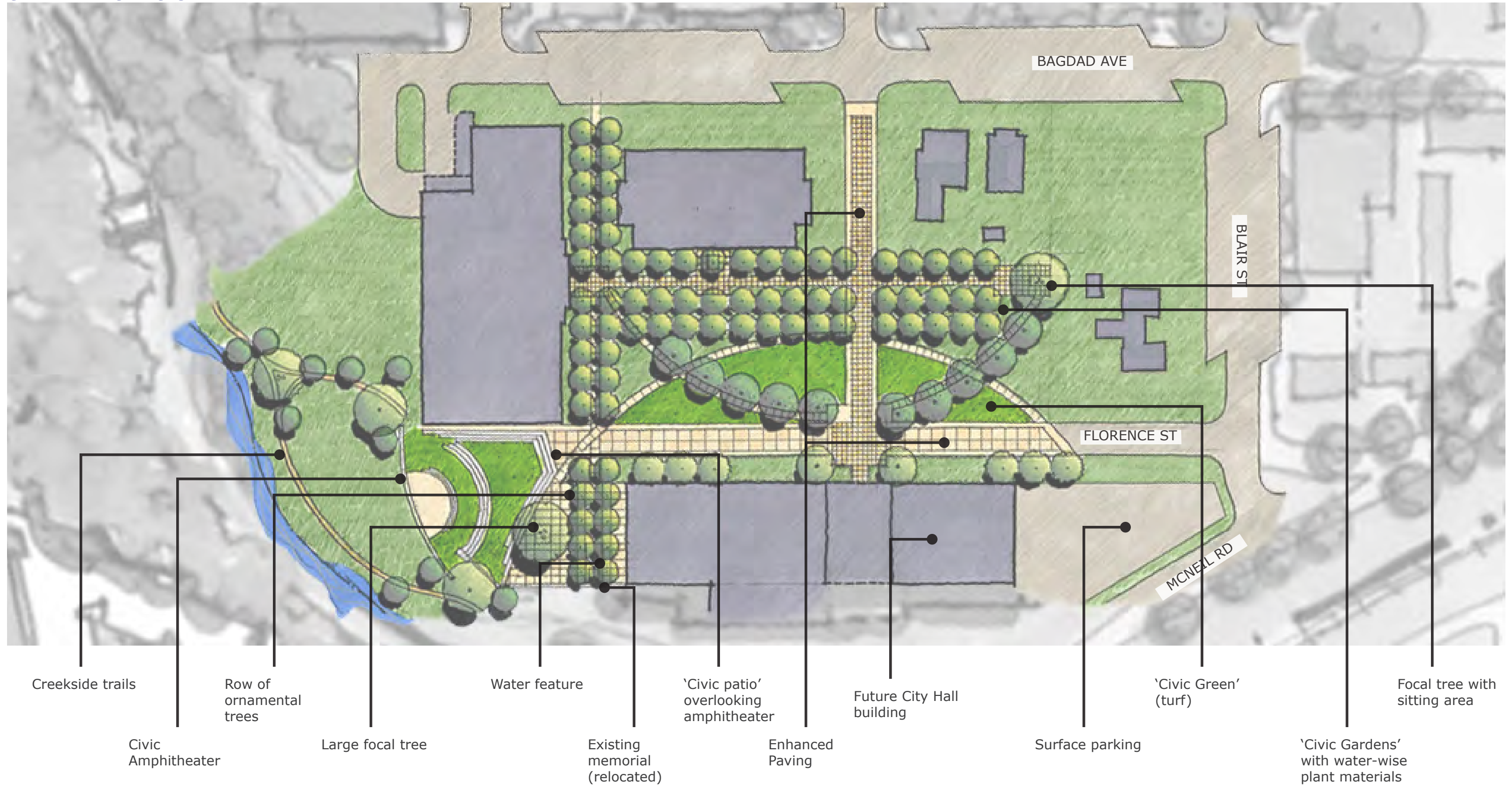


Diagram 3: New City Hall civic green and amphitheater

CONCEPTUAL NEW TOWN GREEN



Diagram 4: Conceptual new town green with existing iconic water tower.

# A SUSTAINABLE APPROACH

## How does the place grow and thrive over time?

Sustainability has received great attention in recent years as cities face growing populations, competition for natural resources, and environmental problems related to previous growth patterns of sprawl. Pollution, congestion, health problems, long commutes, and social isolation - all development-related problems - decrease the quality of urban life.

The Downtown Master Plan seeks to address these issues through creative design strategies and community-based development code to link "people to place." This means connecting Round Rock's residents, businesses, and visitors to the resources around them - linking

neighborhoods to each other through improved transit options and walkability, local businesses and jobs, and vibrant recreation and leisure centers.

The Round Rock Master Plan embraces the basic tenants of sustainability, emphasizing that a successful Master Plan is inclusive of all ages, groups, and cultures, providing a mix of housing, jobs, transportation, and recreation opportunities that appeal to a diverse group. Not only is the community provided with greater options, but these new choices are integrated in a holistic manner, rather than separated to ensure that the physical design connects the community. As such, sustainability

is an over-arching principle of the Master Plan - informing design and policies decisions to improve environmental quality, expand economic opportunities, and unite the community for a strong, cohesive city. The Plan presents some immediate design interventions and policies to move Round Rock towards a more sustainable future, and also outlines some long term goals for the city to better connect it to the greater Austin region. As such, the Master Plan "thinks regionally" and "acts locally."

The table below presents general six elements of sustainability. While not all of these are discussed in detail, they provide the city with key focus areas.

### Housing & Neighborhood Design



- Multi-family housing
- Mixed-use residential development
- Adaptive re-use
- Increased density
- Infrastructure for solar and wind power
- Energy Star and low flow appliances
- Gray water re-use for playing fields, irrigation, and storm-water management

### Transportation



- Potential Regional transit stop connecting to Austin Metro Rail
- Traffic calming measures like roundabouts, bulb-outs, crosswalks
- Smart parking policies
- Carpool, bus circulator, bike lane
- Intermodal transit center

### Materials & Landscaping



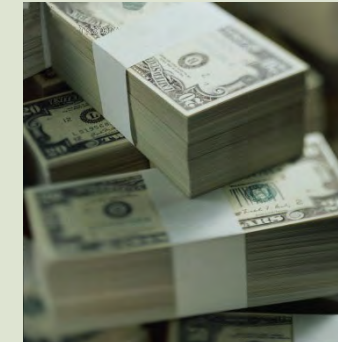
- Preservation and re-use of existing quality materials and workmanship
- Grey water/stormwater planning
- Expansion of tree canopy
- Low VOC construction and interior design materials
- Solar orientation
- Limit hardscape and exposed pavement
- Pollution reduction and improved air quality measures
- Storm water management integrated into medians/parkways
- Preservation of green spaces

### Human Capital



- Planning and providing for all ages groups, and cultures for inclusive city
- Strong education and job training system
- Volunteer opportunities to connect younger people to older people
- Recreation opportunities to promote exercise and improved public health
- Local farmers market
- Promote the arts
- Empower groups for community participation
- Engage and inform community of Plan through mixed media (person to person meetings, community groups, blogs, twitter, facebook, video, TV)

### Market Incentives



- Local businesses
- Creative "green" industries
- Development incentives for LEED Certified and/or other recognized green development
- Adaptive re-use to save historic core
- Jobs to housing program
- Brownfield rather than greenfield development
- Infill development opportunities
- Link tourism development to environmental protection and resource management

### Integrated/Interdisciplinary Governance



- Integrated design approach to Plan
- Involve multiple departments for joint authorship and oversight
- Multiple stakeholder involvement for comprehensive rather than fragmented Plan and implementation
- Interdisciplinary planning meetings and design review
- Regulations to preserve greenspace from development



# AN ACTIVATED DOWNTOWN CORE

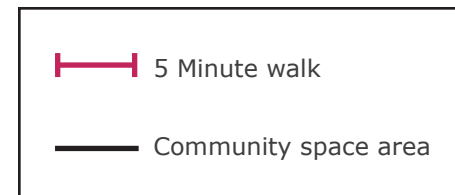
## 5-Minute Walk to 'Activity Centers'

The Downtown Master Plan seeks to create vibrant community spaces programmed with a variety of activities that serve all ages, groups, and citizens in downtown Round Rock. This highlights seven community "activity centers" based on the open space network laid out on page 42. Each activity area is within a five-minute walk (one quarter-mile) of one another. Each area has its own identity that informs the uses appropriate for each place. The list is in no way exhaustive and seeks to create, rather than limit, opportunities for community gatherings. Many of the ideas were developed during the community charrette as residents expressed the types of activity they would like to see in their city.

Together, the six areas form a communal spine for downtown Round Rock, linking tourism and performing arts venues to the City Hall, historical museum and restaurants. The former Senior Center Site on Main Street can be used as a pocket park / courtyard with buildings along the south and west sides.

## Heritage Trail on Brushy Creek

Located in the heart of downtown Round Rock, Heritage Trail will be a significant public space that will offer visitors recreational, educational, environmental and cultural experiences unmatched by any other place in Central Texas. The scenic trail will lead visitors through the history of Round Rock, from old town Brushy, and the frontier days, to new town Round Rock and the commercial and educational boom at the turn of the century, to the modern day City of Round Rock and the medical, educational and commercial hub of today. Heritage Trail will become a destination for eco-tourism and civic pride. Heritage Trail will also be a catalyst for redevelopment along Brushy Creek and throughout downtown. Heritage Trail will start in Old Town Brushy by "the rock" with a number of sculptural stories and interpretative signs to tell the story of the frontier days. As the trail continues east along Brushy Creek, toward downtown, the story of the commercial and education boom of the early 1900's will be told through interpretive signs, sculptures and custom "time portal" view points. As the trail goes under Interstate Highway 35 (IH-35), the trail will transition to tell the story of how IH-35 changed the face and history of Round Rock forever. As the trail continues east to Mays Street, the natural beauty of the corridor, along with interpretive signage, will tell the story of why water and environmentally sensitive corridors like Brushy Creek are so important to modern day Round Rock and the future of the city. As the trail heads east under Mays Street, the story of modern day Round Rock will start to unfold with the story of Dell, the Round Rock Express, destination retail, and the medical and educational hub of Central Texas being told through sculpture, interpretive signs and "view portal" view points.



Key showing Activity Centers



## Activity Centers

A description of the potential uses for the key Activity Centers (See map on facing page for locations):



Round Rock Cultural Node:  
Performing Arts Venue and Hotel

- Gateway and terminus for town parades
- Beginning of "Artisan Stroll" or "restaurant row"
- Tree planting to create boulevard gateway effect



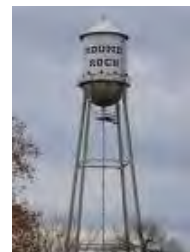
Civic Green and Amphitheater

- "Sundays In The Park" - live music
- Movies in the park
- Community theater
- Convention center
- Outdoor fairs



Town Green

- Town Christmas tree
- Christmas Family Night
- Farmers market
- "Blessing of the Pets" day
- Tourism Information Center



Nelson-Crier Historical Museum and Park

- Art gallery/historic museum gift shop
- Community picnics and pot-lucks
- Historic/cultural art fairs
- Halloween/pumpkin events
- Restaurants



Veterans Park, Heritage Trail, Memorial Park

- Bike/hike/walking trails and races
- BBQ/picnic areas
- Tree planting events
- Boy scout and Girl Scout activities
- Civic and eco-tourism
- Public and performance spaces



Flexible / Vacant Neighborhood Parks and Openspaces

- School fairs and fundraising space
- Community gardens
- Temporary playgrounds
- The former Senior Center Site on Main Street can be used as a pocket park / courtyard with buildings along the south and west sides.



# HISTORIC PRESERVATION

## Historic Residential-Character (HRC) District

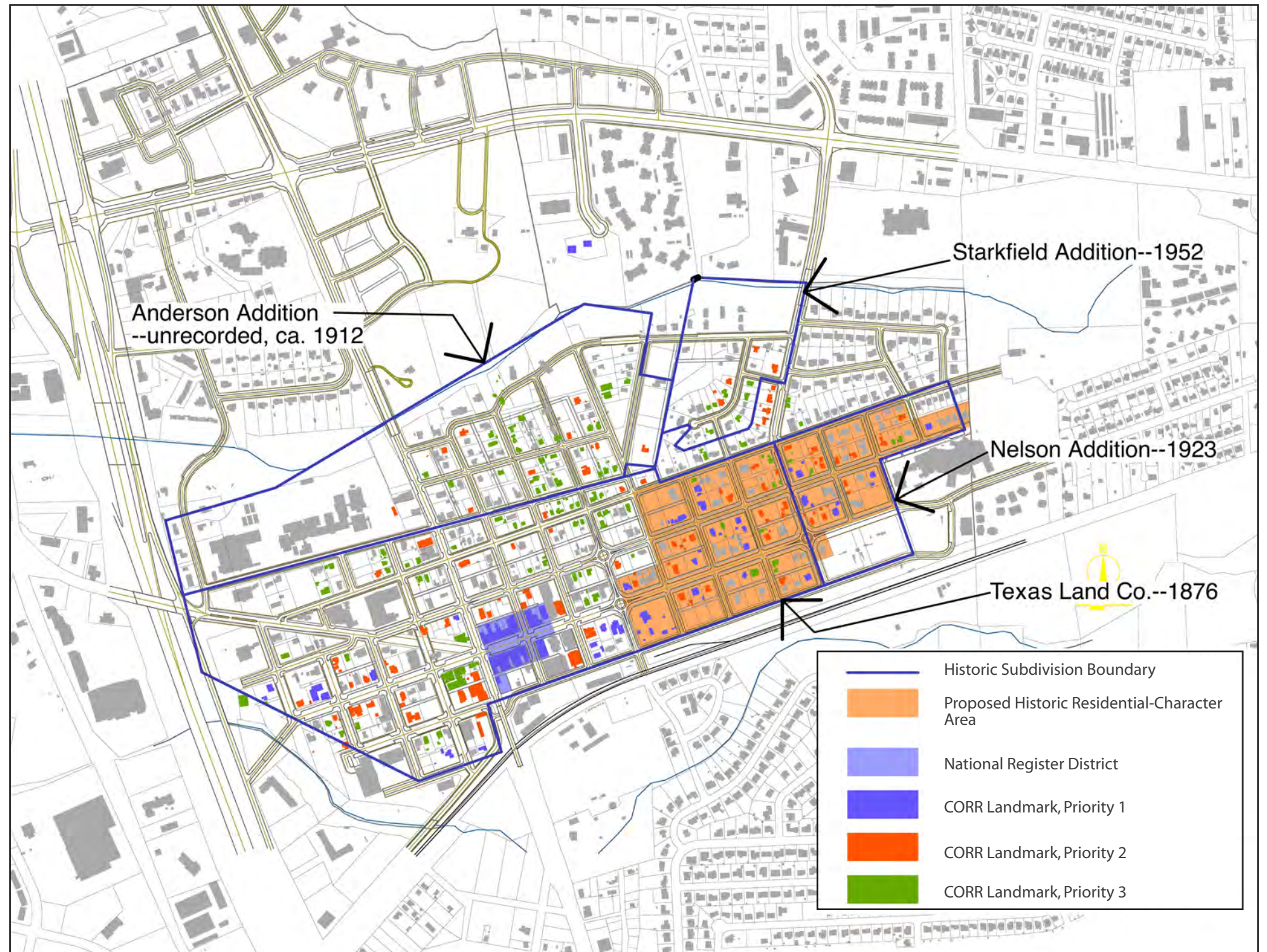
The historic character of Downtown Round Rock is one of the great assets of the city, and throughout the visioning process citizens expressed overwhelming support for preserving historic districts and buildings in the context of this Master Plan. Although the Round Rock Commercial Historic District was designated over 25 years ago, and there are also 55 individual buildings zoned Historic in the downtown area, there are a significant number of historical buildings in the Master Plan study area that are not historically designated or protected. Of particular concern is the residential area of downtown.

Stakeholders expressed an interest in preserving the historic context and visual character of the neighborhood area through the implementation of a Historic Residential-Character (HRC) District as part of the Master Plan (in orange, to the right). In this area, historic character should be preserved and enhanced, while single-family uses are also protected. The Historic Residential-Character (HRC) overlay will need to have standards as part of the form-based code.

In the future, the citizens of Round Rock may choose to create a more formal historic district in the residential area, to complement the Commercial Historic District already in place in Downtown. Depending upon community goals for the historic district, design standards for preservation and new construction and incentives for rehabilitation projects may be implemented with the Historic District.

Historic districts protect, enhance and preserve areas that have historic and architectural significance. Historic districts are typically geographically or thematically defined, and contain a significant concentration of buildings which are united by their history and architecture. A minimum of 51% of the principal buildings within the district must contribute to the historic character of the district. Contributing buildings must be at least 50 years old, date from the period of district significance, and retain architectural integrity from the period of significance. There are two types of historic districts -- National Register Historic Districts, which are designated by the Texas Historical Commission and the National Park Service, and local historic districts, which are designated by the City of Round Rock.

In the district, uses should be restricted to single-family residential, or other low density uses as long as the look of the development is residential in character. See pages 112-113: Design Guidelines for the Historic Residential-Character (HRC) Overlay District and other Historic Areas.



Current historically-designated buildings and districts are shown in light and dark blue. Additional historic buildings documented in the City of Round Rock (CORR) 1992 Inventory of Historic Sites are shown in orange and green. Proposed Historic Residential-Character District, including portions of the historic Texas Land Company and Nelson Addition subdivisions, is shown in light orange.



## BRANDING AND MARKETING

### *How does Round Rock best market its assets to attract businesses, residents and visitors?*

Round Rock's tourism 'brand' is the Sports Capital of Texas. Historic downtown Round Rock has the potential not only to promote this brand, but also to add to it with its other identities and attractions on both the local and regional levels.

Taken together the components of the Master Plan are meant to create a 'brand' for downtown Round Rock, one that is based on several identities, rather than just a sports-related one.

Round Rock should highlight the amenity value of having a historic, walkable downtown. The fact that downtown is designed to foster a synergistic environment and has so many memories for the community and that it has such intricate and extensive public space make it a commodity for visitors and residents.

The city should:

- Acknowledge that downtown is not only the physical center of Round Rock, but also the social center. In making a brand for downtown it is essential that social infrastructure is stressed. Downtown is the "host" of social events since it is perfectly designed for maximum social and economical interaction. "Festival Central" is an identity that would encourage economic growth because of the social draw, making downtown a "hotspot" once again.
- Understand that the appeal of downtown Round Rock is it's reflection on the past. This reflection provides safe, comfortable, leisurely opportunities for the community to interact. It is the link to all the components of the community and a space that draws everyone together creating cohesiveness and awareness of community life and needs. The community's needs could be met through special events that create awareness and resources toward solving special interest problems in the community, making downtown a true public realm in partnership with private business.
- Consider that the "old west" and "outlaws and rangers" [good guys v. bad guys] is a theme that has a wider appeal to those who may not be from Texas. It is also an appropriate theme since it is part of our heritage. Round Rock should honor this heritage and this should be a component of its identity. The city could consider horse-drawn carriage tours from "Old Town" to "New Town."
- Seek grants from historic preservation organizations on the national and state levels, for interpretation and contextual storytelling features and signage that has a uniform appearance to signal that each plaque/sign is a piece of the story.
- Leverage the trail system in the Parks Master Plan. The parks and downtown plans together create a uniquely diverse environment and complement each other.

- Find a way to advertise downtown as the "face" of the community. Downtown represents Round Rock's small town roots. This should remain part of its identity as it is a revered sentiment of locals and visitors alike. "Americana" is a highly valued commodity and draws attention to itself almost innately.
- Highlight the amenity value that downtown provides for economic development and reinvestment when it comes to social, leisure, visual, natural, historical, synergistic civic/community space.
- Find stakeholders for a public-private partnership for the promotion of downtown as a host to special events that create a draw to the area, thereby helping business and community. A "Downtown Coalition" made up of downtown business members, area charity organizations, farmer's market organization, downtown residents, etc. could coordinate event programming for downtown, ensure guidelines are followed, and be the liaison for stakeholders and the city. Possible "City Partners" include Dell, HEB, YMCA, Boy Scouts, Rotary Club, and the schools.
- Put out a request for proposals to incentivize creative local businesses to root in downtown. For example a brew pub with high end bar food, for example, would appeal to business class residents and visitors as well as the entertainment/connoisseur crowds.

Another key component of downtown Round Rock's marketing program is initiation of a comprehensive signage program. Uniform city signage can promote the different districts in downtown, and can announce coming attractions or events. The city should:

- Inventory existing public and private signs and sign structures.
- Adopt a sign code that ensures effective and attractive signage without sacrificing local creativity. Avoid blandness.
- Encourage professional local graphic designers and sign consultants to participate in iconic sign design.
- Place street signs, flags, and/or banners at five main gateways to announce downtown Round Rock and along major streets to announce local events and culture. (See Gateway section)
- Continue to develop signage for public parking garages.

To facilitate the marketing and branding effort, the City could:

- Develop a leasing brochure for downtown retail properties

that would highlight the specifics of the market (based on the demographics detailed in the market study, including a description of trade area characteristics, traffic statistics, property taxes and values, and resident income data). The brochure should allow for flexibility in order to accommodate property sheets on specific properties that are currently being marketed. The leasing brochure should also highlight resources and details of any incentives that might be available such as tenant allowances, tax credits, or other owner contributions, as appropriate.

- Create a "visit your hometown" campaign to encourage Round Rock citizens to take advantage of the amenities, events, and services in downtown.



# INFRASTRUCTURE

## *Prioritization*

Infrastructure improvements should be prioritized by the City and community. Many areas of infrastructure upgrades compliment each other and thus can be performed in tandem or staged and sequenced in a manner to reduce overall costs. The following section discusses infrastructure improvements and investments needed to accommodate growth in Downtown Round Rock.

## *Water*

The current downtown study area includes a water distribution pipeline network consisting of mostly six inch lines with some two inch and eight inch lines. The main feed is a 12 inch line on the 890 pressure level. In order to accommodate redevelopment as well as serve existing development under current codes, water system improvements are needed.

## *Fire Protection*

Portions of the current system are undersized to provide adequate fire flows. The demand on the water distribution system to accommodate fire flow under current codes depends on building size, construction type and whether sprinkler systems for fire suppression are provided. Typically, the range of fire flows required is 2000 – 3500 gallons per minute. The water system in the downtown area operates on the 890' pressure level which provides approximately 60 psi at the highest elevation in the study area. While the pressure levels in the study area may be adequate the line sizes are too small to satisfy the 10 foot per second velocity limitation in the fire code. In order to satisfy current codes the downtown area should have a grid of 12 inch and eight inch lines.

To build toward this goal, a system of water line improvements was envisioned for the Catalytic Project Areas (Priority Phases 1-6) which will strengthen the distribution system. The proposed improvements are defined for the Priority areas and are shown on the exhibit Water Utilities – Proposed Improvements. The extent of the improvements and the exact alignments will depend on how the city redevelops and which tracts or roadway improvements come forward for development first.

When designing a building with a fire sprinkler system, the effectiveness of the fire sprinkler system allows for other areas of the fire and building code to be waived that would normally be required if built without a sprinkler system. For example, fire flow requirements, fire lane requirements, fire hydrants required, and fire wall ratings are often times

reduced. Travel distances are increased, and handicap areas of rescue assistance are eliminated. In addition to the reduced cost of installing the fire sprinkler system with the construction of the building, another advantage is that the building may be used for many different types of occupancies instead of limiting to only occupancies that are not required to have a fire sprinkler system installed.

## *Wastewater*

The wastewater system in the downtown study area consists primarily of six and eight inch lines which tie into 18 inch and ten inch lines, extending from the treatment facility on the east side of downtown westerly into the downtown area. The City of Round Rock Wastewater Master Plan anticipates a new 18 inch line extending into the study area. It is assumed that the new 18 inch improvement will be constructed by the city. Since it is difficult to foresee which existing lines in the downtown area will require upgrading due to line condition or size, an allowance was made in the preliminary cost estimate for each priority phase. It is anticipated that the upgrades would be for new eight inch lines, which is proportionate to the area in each respective phase.

## *Drainage*

With respect to stormwater conveyance, the existing drainage system within the study area varies substantially in character. The Round Rock Avenue and Mays Street systems include a robust storm sewer system whereas parts of the eastern downtown area rely primarily on surface drainage with few storm sewers. It is useful in urban redevelopment for tracts to have access to storm sewers to receive flows from site underground drainage systems including site water quality ponds. It can be awkward to discharge site runoff to the surface, especially in the case of foundation drains or other sources which may be present in dry (non-rainfall) periods.

Similar to the wastewater upgrades, it is anticipated that storm drain extensions will be necessary for each of the Priority Areas as a basis for preliminary cost estimates. Although no specific alignments are proposed, in the redevelopment process as specific needs are known, further design can be completed to appropriately locate drainage improvements.

Round Rock Avenue and Mays Street are part of the TxDOT roadway system. As redevelopment occurs it will be necessary to coordinate street, utility and storm sewer upgrades within these streets with TxDOT. Traditionally TxDOT cooperates with municipalities to allow for improvements to meet growth challenges.

## *Regional Water Quality*

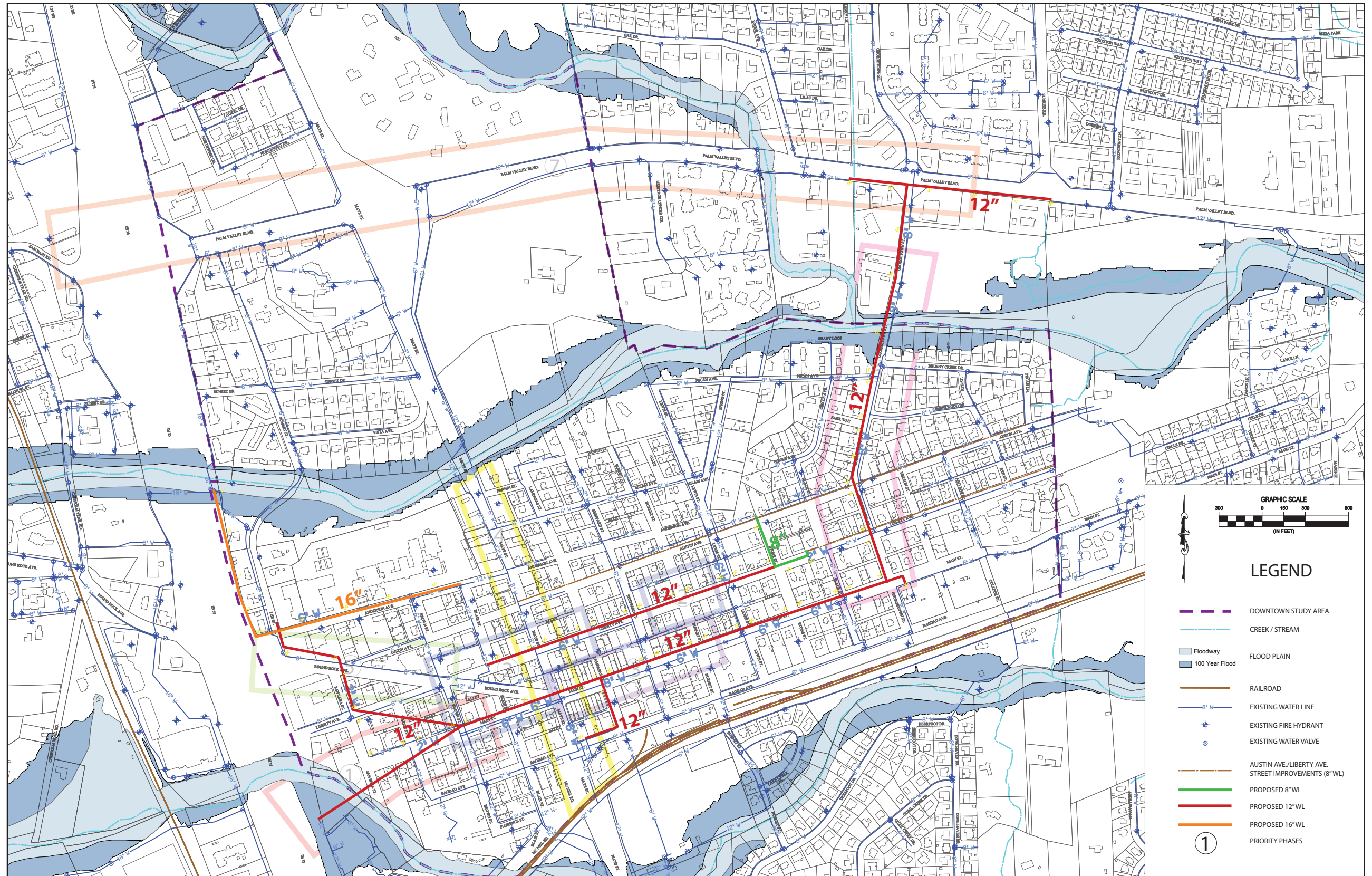
The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) has adopted rules that govern the Edwards Aquifer zone. These rules require that development over the aquifer must implement measures known as “best management practices” (BMPs) to reduce the impact on water quality in and upstream of the aquifer. Since the eastern boundary of the Edwards Recharge Zone, as mapped by TCEQ, bisects the downtown area, their requirements will apply to future re-development. Since the tract sizes are small within the downtown area, it would be advantageous to have a regional water quality approach and due to the urban nature of the downtown, water quality ponds would best serve as the BMP. There are three areas where regional water quality ponds could effectively compensate for redevelopment. The existing storm drainage systems from Mays Street, Sheppard Street and Spring Street terminate on the south bank of Brushy Creek. If existing public right-of-way is available, or if sites can be secured at these locations, it may be feasible to construct ponds and recover all or part of the cost from user fees. Such fees are often more attractive to site developers than placing small ponds on a site.

Depending on the location, these ponds could be designed to compliment a park environment or the pedestrian paseo anticipated for the Sheppard Street ROW. Ponds can be located underground, enhanced with natural rock walls or slopes or covered with a deck.

## *Process*

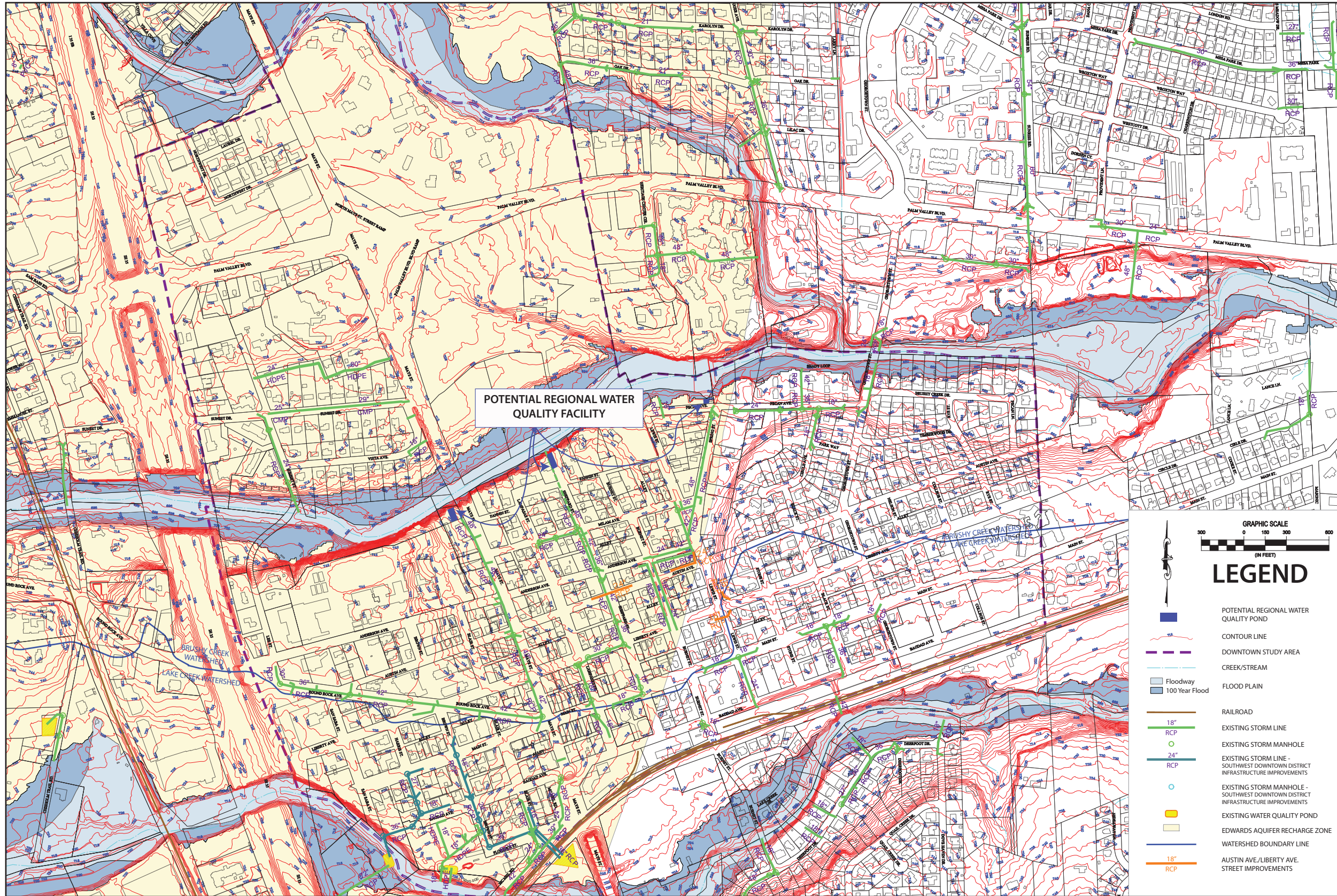
Typically a city does not have a major Capital Improvement Project that can fund all of the utility upgrades needed for a redeveloping area. Once a Master Plan is adopted, it should inform decisions that are made about city general repair and maintenance improvements, general roadway bond projects, and private development requirements. If a downtown roadway is being rebuilt or improved then water, wastewater and storm sewer upgrades should be constructed with that project. As redevelopment tracts come into the review process, the staff should work to define what improvements will be constructed as a part of the private development and if any off-site upgrades would be required and whether there are public funds available. Ultimately the market drives where development may occur first. There is an opportunity for the city to get the private sector to contribute to upgrades since the public's investment has added value to the private property. The process can be a continual assessment of priorities based on available funding and development pressure. It is important that the Engineering and Development Services staff is incorporated into the Master Plan process, adoption and implementation.





The utility lines shown are schematic in location and are subject to change based on actual design and field conditions.

*Proposed water utility estimate*



*Proposed regional water quality ponds (and existing storm sewers)*

# PROGRAM DATA

The following charts and narrative present the existing and proposed quantities of key land uses within the Master Plan. Included here are the numbers for proposed retail/restaurant, office, civic/cultural, hotel, and residential land uses. The key to the right of the charts shows the areas of the Plan where each land use is proposed.

The land use numbers included here are based on the economic Demand Analysis (2009) performed as part of this Plan. The Market Analysis is presented in full in the Appendix.

## Commercial Development

The Demand Analysis estimates that new employment growth in the area between 2007 and 2023 will generate office space demand for

1.7 million square feet of new office space in the area. Given just over 900,000 square feet of space which is vacant (newly constructed) or under construction, new office space demand is likely satisfied for the next several years. Small-scale, niche office space (live/work) may be a possibility in the downtown area for those tenants looking for non-traditional office space. It is estimated that the downtown district could reasonably capture 8 to 10% of total office market demand, or long term demand of approximately 73,000 to 91,000 square feet of new office space.

## Residential Development

It is likely that new housing development will be restricted by available space for construction rather than market demand. Based on estimates, 207 new residential units are supportable between 2009 and 2013, 240

units between 2013 and 2018, and 257 new units between 2018 and 2023 for a total of 704 new residential units in the downtown area.

## Retail Development

Currently Round Rock has approximately 120,000 square feet of ground level street-oriented space in its downtown core. The Demand Analysis recommends that retail recruitment efforts take advantage of this space. Round Rock should fulfill retail demand by first filling existing ground level space with retail before building more space.

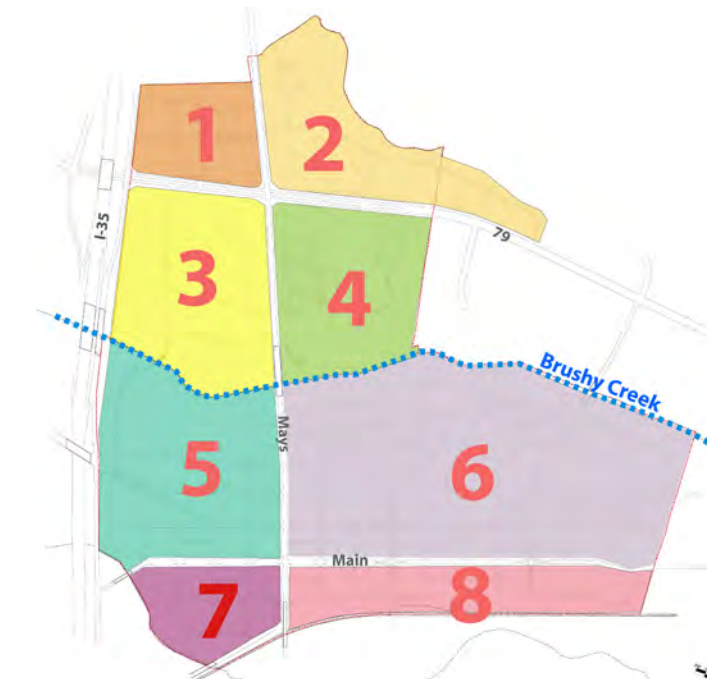
The Analysis estimates that the downtown core could support between 107,000 and 145,000 square feet of active retail space, thereby creating a downtown destination core of retail space.

As a true main street in the midst of big-box centers, strip malls, and indoor malls, downtown Round Rock can offer a different product. The balance of retail types and sizes is critical to the overall success of a project. Furthermore, downtown Round Rock increases its successes for making deals if it does not compete with the mega shopping centers for their national chain oriented tenants.

## Other Land Uses

Civic and Cultural uses are proposed in the main core of downtown and a small amount in Area 3. A new hotel is proposed in Area 5 at the beginning of Main Street, which would be visible from the Interstate, acting as a gateway to the city.

NORTH OF CREEK								
A. Existing		Retail/Restaurant SF	Office SF	Civic/Cultural SF	Hotel SF	Total SF	# Residential Units	
1	NW	not included in program analysis						
2	NE			59,528		59,528	20	
3	SW	77,745	40,278	103,860		221,883	97	
4	SE	51,857	26,889	50,614		129,360	338	
	TOTAL	129,602	67,167	214,002		410,771	455	
B. Net New								
1	NW	not included in program analysis						
2	NE	99,500	51,500	-53,528		97,472	173	
3	SW	-8,191	66,000	8,000		65,809	45	
4	SE	21,000	21,000	0		42,000	77	
	TOTAL	112,309	138,500	-45,528		205,281	295	
C. Gross								
1	NW	not included in program analysis						
2	NE	99,500	51,500	6,000		157,000	193	
3	SW	69,554	106,278	111,860		287,692	142	
4	SE	72,857	47,889	50,614		171,360	415	
	TOTAL	241,911	205,667	168,474		616,052	750	
SOUTH OF CREEK								
A. Existing		Retail/Restaurant SF	Office SF	Civic/Cultural SF	Hotel SF	Total SF	# Residential Units	
5	NW	90,761	46,865	264,822		402,448	25	
6	NE	38,224	151,018	44,349		233,591	300	
7	SW	46,104	56,343	85,251		187,698	6	
8	SE	20,029	106,311	45,921		172,261	18	
	TOTAL	195,118	360,537	440,343		995,998	349	
B. Net New								
5	NW	40,452	44,122	0	70,000	154,574	189	
6	NE	53,614	28,537	-1,804		80,347	370	
7	SW	28,340	30,173	61,168		119,681	125	
8	SE	31,800	-10,860	46,100		67,040	19	
	TOTAL	154,206	91,972	105,464	70,000	421,642	703	
C. Gross								
5	NW	131,213	90,987	264,822		487,022	214	
6	NE	91,838	179,555	42,545		313,938	670	
7	SW	74,444	86,516	146,419	0	307,379	131	
8	SE	51,829	95,451	92,021		239,301	37	
	TOTAL	349,324	452,509	545,807	0	1,347,640	1,052	



Program Data Key: Areas north (1-4) and south (5-8) of Brushy Creek

