DRAFT

City of Brenham

"Envision 2020"

Comprehensive Plan

Provided by

Lower Colorado River Authority

Community and Economic Development Department

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City of Brenham

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INTRODUCTION

Brenham is the county seat of Washington County and provides the retail and service base, as well as primary employment for its region. It is located approximately 70 miles northwest of downtown Houston (Illustration 1.1), but is beginning to feel the effects of growth from the Houston metro region. Over time, it is expected that over 70 percent of the Texas population will live in the triangle formed by Houston, San Antonio, and Dallas / Ft. Worth, which has the potential to dramatically impact the city. Brenham has an opportunity to develop policies to accommodate the expected growth while maintaining its quality of life and rural character. This Comprehensive Plan is an effort to provide recommendations to accomplish that goal.

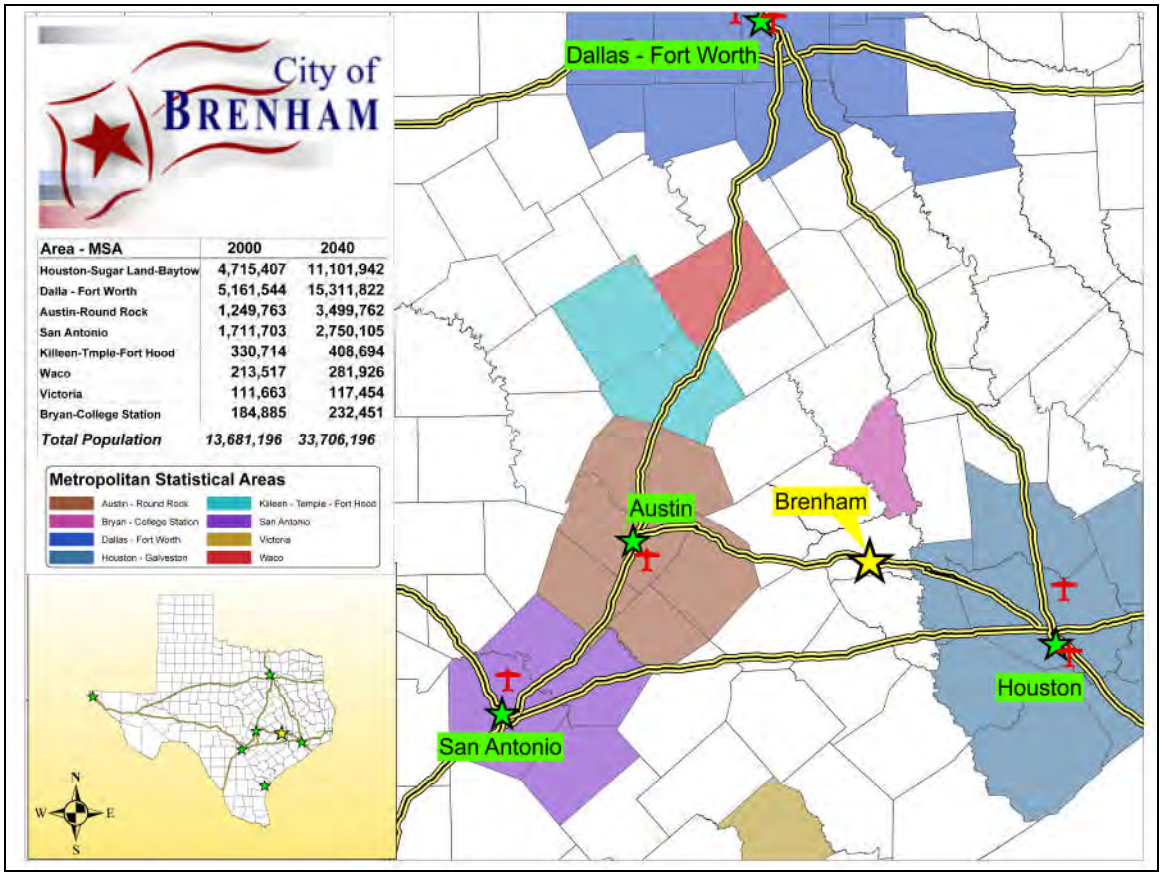


Illustration 1.1: Regional location, and amenities

HISTORY[2]

Brenham is named in honor of Dr. Richard Fox Brenham, a doctor who had practiced in the region and had served in the expedition to Santa Fe in 1841. The first post office opened in 1846. The Washington County Railroad opened in 1860 and Brenham became the distribution center for the state's interior until the rail line was extended to Austin.

Brenham grew quickly during the late 1800's with its population doubling every decade from 1860 to 1900. It served as the regional commercial center during this time with a variety of agricultural and manufacturing businesses.
Brenham has a strong German heritage, with immigration peaking in the early 1880's. This heritage is reflected in the annual Maifest (which was first held in 1881). A German language newspaper the *Texas Volksbote* was published until 1919. German Methodists also founded the Mission Institute, which became Blinn College in 1889, one of the oldest community colleges in Texas.

Brenham has continued to see steady growth throughout its history and is now home to a diverse mix of businesses and residents. Recent growth has been fueled by Houston residents leaving the big city as well as the expansion of primary employment. This growth is expected to accelerate as Houston continues it westward migration.

Washington County's tagline is the Birthplace of Texas and Washington-on-the-Brazos State Historical Site marks the townsite where Texas declared its independence from Mexico and served as the capital of the Republic of Texas. This historical significance as well as Brenham's historic downtown and scenic beauty of the area drive a thriving tourism industry as well.

[2] Adapted from the Handbook of Texas Online

PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY[3]

Brenham is located near the center of the Gulf Coastal Plain, a major physiographic region stretching from the east into the eastern and southern portions of the state. The interior boundary of this region is marked by the Balcones fault line which runs from Del Rio east to San Antonio than north through Austin. This region has minimal topographic changes and rises from sea level to less than 1000 feet at the highest point. Brenham is in a region that gets approximately 40 to 44" of rain annually, and overlies a heavy clay soil base. This suitability for agriculture has helped drive Brenham's development over time as a regional center, including historically a strong cotton economy.

Brenham lies in the Brazos River watershed but no major water features flow through the city. There are several small streams and drainages that flow through town creating some areas of floodplain that impose limits on development. The Gulf Coastal Sands Aquifer underlies the city. This is typically a reliable water source although saline conditions can occur, typically nearer the coast.

CLIMATE

Annual Average Temperature: 69 degrees

Monthly Average High Temperature July: 94 degrees

Monthly Average Low Temperature January: 41 degrees

Annual Average Precipitation: 41.4"

Elevation: 350'

Growing Season: March - October

Prevailing wind: South Southeast

PLANNING PROCESS

[3] Texas: A Geography Jordan, Terry G.; Bean, John L; Holmes, William M.

Brenham is a city that has developed a variety of plans, from Parks and Open Space to thoroughfares, to a Senior Center. There was also a Comprehensive Plan that was originally developed in 1994. In 2007 city leadership determined that it was time to develop a new plan that would incorporate the existing plans and provide clear direction and common goals for Brenham for the next 10 to 15 years. Envision Brenham 2020 is the result of an extensive planning process that seeks to tie existing efforts together and create a common vision for the city as it prepares for its future. The plan includes the following:

- Demographic Analysis – Current and projected population characteristics
- Land Use – Description of current land use and a Future Land Use Plan
- Economic Development – Recommendations for increasing employment opportunities and tax revenues for the City
- Community Facilities – Recommendations for community facilities such as an expanded library, senior center, etc.

- Housing – Recommendations for providing quality housing options for all incomes
- Downtown Revitalization – Recommendations for strengthening the Central Business District
- Historic Preservation – Recommendations to preserve and enhance the historic assets of Brenham
- Implementation Guide – Lists specific actions to accomplish plan goals

WHAT IS A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

A comprehensive plan is intended to address all of the different facets of community development within a common framework. Rather than addressing issues such as housing, economic development, transportation, and others individually, the comprehensive plan takes a big picture look at how all of these

different issues interact. The goal is to identify projects that can generate the highest return on investment in multiple areas of the community. For example, a plan that only addresses economic development may call for focusing resources on business recruitment. However, if there is a housing shortage, businesses are unlikely to locate to the community. A comprehensive plan avoids this conflict by addressing these issues simultaneously to maximize the benefit to the community.

To be successful, a comprehensive plan must have a strong public input component. It is important to understand what the citizens identify as priorities for action because that will engender their support for using limited public resources on projects identified in the plan. Also involving residents in the planning process will empower them to participate in implementation of the plan. The plan is a community plan rather than one simply designed for city government. Residents, civic organizations, and other groups should feel empowered to have an active role in implementing the plan.

The comprehensive plan has a series of goals identified during the public input process. Some of these require government action, while others are more geared toward local organizations. Each goal has a series of projects and actions to implement. This implementation process is the key to success for the plan. Implementation is a long term process; some projects can be accomplished in the first year or two, while others will require more time and investment. The plan balances 'quick' victories that will build enthusiasm and support, while leading to larger successes down the road.

The most important consideration is that the comprehensive plan cannot be put on the shelf. The plan reflects the needs and desires of the citizens of Brenham and should be used regularly to guide decision making. Also, the plan must be continually reviewed to ensure it continues to reflect the community. Ideally, the

plan is reviewed annually, potentially by the Steering Committee and City Council. Any major changes to the community will likely result in an update to the plan. For example, if a developer wants to build a 1,000 home subdivision in Brenham it will dramatically affect priorities and issues for the city. It will be up to the citizens to stay involved and ensure that decisions are being made in accordance with the plan. They cannot sit back once the plan is adopted and not participate in the process. It is critical for city leaders to see the support of the citizens as they allocate resources to the plan.

PLAN DEVELOPMENT

The first step in developing the comprehensive plan was creating a steering committee. This committee consisted of private citizens appointed by the City Council to represent the city as a whole. The purpose of the committee was to work with staff from the Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA) in developing the plan to ensure it reflects the priorities of Brenham residents. The steering committee was involved throughout the public input process and reviewed all aspects of the plan. This group will also take a leadership role in helping to implement the plan by keeping residents involved in task forces and going before City Council to remind them of the plan priorities. As mentioned above, planning requires a focus on public involvement.

In September 2007 surveys were sent with the monthly bills to Brenham utility customers. The survey (Appendix A) was an effort to determine the 'big picture' of community sentiment and priorities. The survey covered topics ranging from historic preservation, housing, economic development and recreational opportunities. Based on the survey results, five topics were selected for further discussion at a series of Town Hall meetings held in each City Council ward in October. The meetings were an opportunity for residents to provide more information on issues identified in the survey. Participants discussed senior

services, animal welfare, transportation, city facilities, and other issues. Overall, residents did not have major complaints about their community, and were supportive of city government overall. The issues they identified were more along the lines of improving facilities and opportunities to enhance the quality of life in Brenham.

Following the Town Hall meetings, a series of focus groups were held to develop programs to address the identified issues. These meetings resulted in a list of projects that the City and other organizations can undertake to implement the plan. Appendix A contains a copy of the survey as well as notes taken at the Town Hall meeting.

In addition to the public input process, a land use survey was conducted. This survey identified the current land use of every parcel in the city limits of Brenham. This shows how the community has developed over time, where undeveloped land is available, and serves as the basis for the future land use plan. A workshop was held that allowed participants an opportunity to draw their vision of what Brenham should look like in the future. The map created in this workshop is a guide for land use decision-making and can serve as the basis for updating the city's zoning code.

The plan was developed based on all of the public input. The goals and recommendations of the plan reflect the priorities of the citizens of Brenham. These recommendations are defined and explained in the body of the plan; however the most important piece in the plan is the last section, the implementation guide, which provides a detailed road map to making things happen. It spells out specific actions, timelines, responsible parties, etc. so that anyone can review the plan and identify how projects can be accomplished. This is the section of the plan that should be required reading for all elected officials,

city staff, and concerned citizens because it outlines how the plan can be successful. Once the plan was developed it went before City Council for adoption. By adopting the plan, city leadership commits to utilizing the plan as a framework for decision making. However, responsibility for implementation goes beyond city government. Local organizations, such as the Chamber of Commerce, Economic Development Foundation, and City administered boards, such as Main Street, Parks Board, and others must be involved in making the plan successful. Also, citizens must stay informed and involved to ensure the plan is kept current and on the front burner of community action. If nobody serves as a champion for the plan, it will be put on a shelf to gather dust.

DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

Successful planning requires a thorough understanding of the demographic characteristics of the community. This information is important because it helps to determine capital projects and community priorities. For example, an aging population requires different recreational facilities and services than a growing, younger generation. Knowing the make up of the community and anticipating demographic trends helps inform the planning process and ensure it incorporates the changing needs of the citizens over time.

The Demographic Analysis incorporates data from local, state, and Federal sources to create a picture of Brenham. It shows the growth of Brenham and the changes in ethnicity, income, education and other factors that define the community. The purpose of this report is to provide decision makers with a clear understanding of what Brenham looks like now and what it will likely look like as the plan implementation progresses.

DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS

Brenham has not experienced the explosive growth seen in many Texas cities, especially those adjacent to Austin, Houston, and Dallas - Fort Worth. It has experienced steady growth over time, which has allowed the city to maintain a high level of service and maintain its character as a rural community. This may change in the next five to ten years as Houston is rapidly growing towards Brenham. This growth may bring Brenham into commuting distance of new businesses locating on the northwest side of Houston.

Table 2-1 Population

	1990 Census	2000 Census	2007 (Est.)
City of Brenham	11,952	13,507	14,402
Washington County	26,154	30,373	32,360

Source: 2000 US Census and Texas State Demographer

Brenham has experienced 17 percent growth since 1990, while Washington County has seen 19 percent. This is somewhat unusual as cities usually experience faster growth than counties. One explanation may be the trend of retirees moving out of the Houston area purchasing 5 and 10 acre 'ranchettes' in Washington County and second homeowners who maintain their primary residence in Houston.

Almost as important as understanding the total number of current residents is knowing their age make-up and other characteristics, such as ethnicity. The age and ethnicity of the citizenry informs city decisions regarding facilities and services.

Table 2-2 Age

	< 19	20 – 24	25 – 44	45 – 64	65 >	Median Age
City of Brenham	4,062	1,122	3,333	2,538	2,452	34.7
Washington County	8,968	1,899	7,680	5,445	5,121	37.4

Source: 2000 US Census

The largest age group in Brenham is the "under 19" cohort, perhaps due to families taking advantage of quality schools and Blinn College. There is a significant drop in the "20 – 24" bracket when many young people leave for college or move to bigger cities to start careers. The challenge is to create jobs and training opportunities that will allow young people to stay in the community after high school. Brenham is fortunate to have a strong employment base, with several large primary businesses. This supports the large percentage of people in the "25 – 64" brackets, which are the prime working and family period.

The "over 65" cohort is nearly 20 percent of the population and growing as Brenham is seen as an excellent community for retirees. Elderly citizens will require additional services and facilities incorporated in the plan's recommendations. This population is typically very active in local affairs with a high voter turnout which provides strong influence on government activities.

Unlike many other rural communities, Brenham has actually experienced faster growth in its "under 19" population (8.9 percent) than its "over 65" (6.1 percent) since 1990. This is likely due to the quality schools and employment opportunities available in the community. This is a good indicator for the future health and vitality of Brenham because the influx of younger people will help to strengthen the community.

Table 2-3: Race and Ethnicity

	White	Black	Native American	Asian	Other	Hispanic of any race*
Brenham	70%	21%	0.3%	1.9%	4.8%	10.2%
Washington County	74.7%	18.7%	0.3%	1.2%	4.0%	8.7%

Source: 2000 US Census

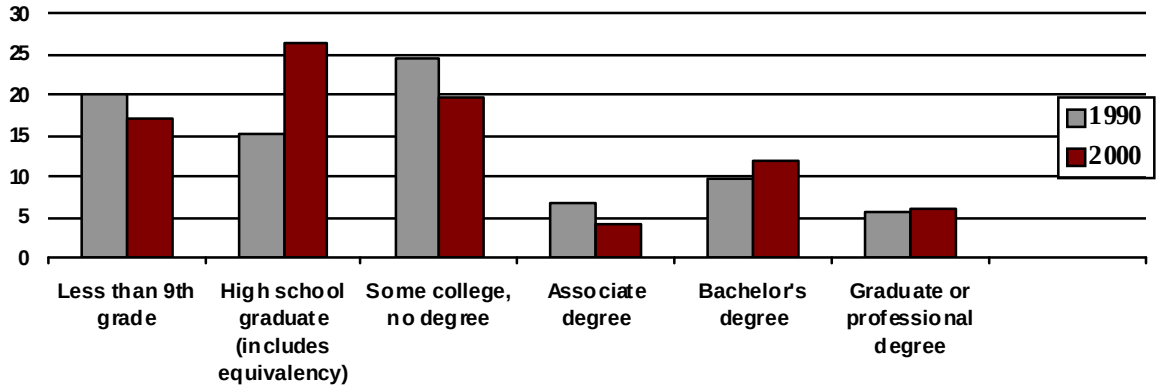
*Hispanic is considered an ethnicity not a race so the numbers will not add up to 100%

Brenham is predominantly white with a larger percentage Black population than the State of Texas. The U.S. Census Bureau tracks Hispanic as an ethnicity rather than race, so respondents can select White and Hispanic, Black and Hispanic, etc. The Hispanic population is slightly lower than the state percentage (which is 12.5 percent). The Hispanic population in Texas overall is growing faster than the population as a whole and it is likely that this trend will be seen in Brenham over the next several years as the Hispanic population becomes a larger percentage of the total.

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Well educated citizens are critical to the vitality and health of a community. Higher educational attainment leads to stronger economic development and a healthier community overall. Since 1990, Brenham has seen improvement in most areas of educational attainment, with a tremendous jump in the percentage of people over 25 with a high school diploma.

Figure 2-1 City of Brenham Educational Attainment 1990 and 2000



Source: 2000 US Census

Brenham lags behind both Texas and the country as a whole in the percentage of residents with either a high school degree or bachelor's degree (Table 2-4). This indicates that residents in Brenham are not taking full advantage of the educational opportunities offered by Brenham ISD and Blinn College. To ensure the continued competitiveness of Brenham for economic development, this issue should be addressed to provide all residents with opportunity to improve themselves by obtaining their high school equivalency or some level of college.

Table 2-4: Degree Comparisons

	High School Degree	Bachelor's or Higher
City of Brenham	68.1%	17.9%
Texas	75.7%	23.2%
United States	80.4%	24.4%

Source: 2000 US Census

Enrollment in Brenham ISD (Table 2-5) has not grown as quickly as the population, which indicates that some of the under 19 population is in private schools or home schooled.

Table 2-5: Brenham ISD Enrollment

1996	4,782
2000	4,703
2006	4,956
2007	4,921
2008	4,813

Source: Texas Education Agency

As the table shows, enrollment dropped slightly before rebounding between 2000 and 2006. The 2008 school year shows a drop in enrollment of over 100 students. It will be important to monitor the enrollment trend to see if it continues to fall, or if this is a one year anomaly.

Brenham ISD is rated Academically Acceptable by the Texas Education Agency. For the class of 2006 (grades 9 – 12) 83.3 percent of students graduated. The state graduation rate is 85.6, showing Brenham is slightly behind in student retention, although an additional 2.1 percent of Brenham students continued their education and received a GED. Brenham is ahead in its test scores with 81 percent pass rate on the TAKS test compared to 68 percent for the state (2006 - 2007 numbers). College placement tests offer a mixed bag with Brenham lagging in the percentage of students taking these tests (48 percent versus 64 percent for the state). However, the scores are higher (1027 versus 989 on SAT and 20.3 versus 19.9 on ACT). Brenham ISD is a tremendous asset for the City and citizens recognize and support the schools.

HOUSING

Housing affordability and availability is a critical factor in the development of a community. The Housing chapter of this plan will identify strategies to ensure Brenham has adequate housing for current and future residents; however, it is important to have the baseline of existing conditions to know what the focus should be in the future.

Table 2-6: Selected Housing Characteristics

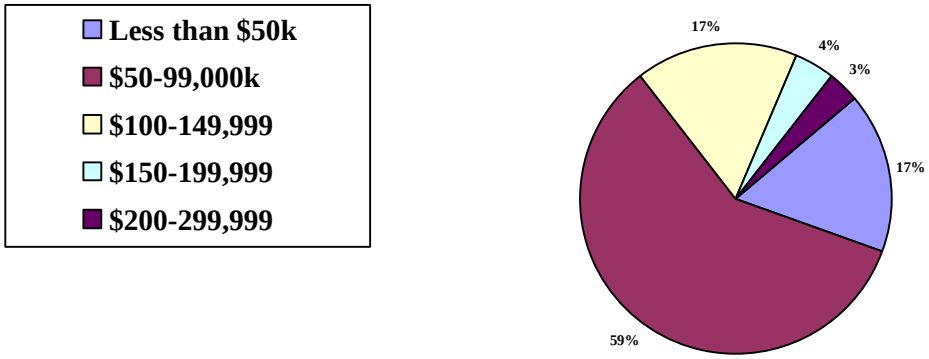
Total Housing Units	5,317	Housing built 1980 – 2000	31.1%
Percent Occupied	92.3%	Housing built 1960 - 1980	37.0%
Owner Occupied	60.1%	Housing built before 1960	31.9%
Renter Occupied	39.9%	Median Home Value	$77,000
Average Household Size	2.4 persons	Estimated Median Home Value 2005	$91,000

Source: 2000 US Census

Unlike many rural communities, the age of housing in Brenham is well balanced, with nearly a third of all homes built in the last 25 years or so. That is reflected in the overall good appearance and condition of homes throughout the city. One area that may be of concern is the fairly low vacancy rate (7.7%). This limits the opportunities for potential new residents to find adequate housing within the City. New construction is happening throughout Brenham which will address some of this issue by adding to the housing stock.

The 2000 US Census shows the median home value is $77,000 which shows that a resident with the median income ($32,198) can afford a median priced home. Figure 2-2 shows the percentage of homes in different price ranges.

Figure 2-2 Housing Value



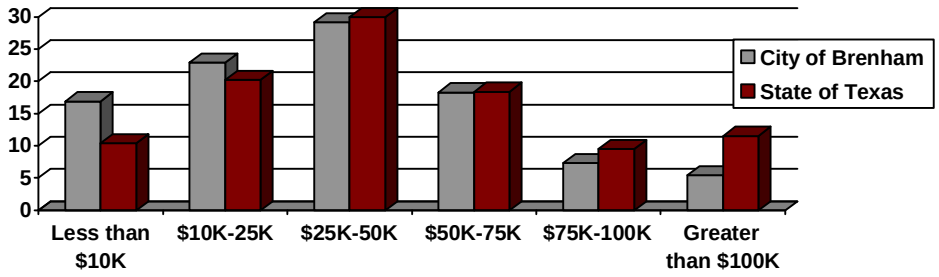
Source: 2000 US Census

This figure shows that the majority of homes in Brenham are in the $50,000 – 99,000 range, which places them within reach of families in the median income. However, the low vacancy rate means that homes may not be available for sale to prospective residents.

INCOME & EMPLOYMENT

The income of Brenham residents tracks reasonably well with the state as a whole, except at the low and high ends of the spectrum (Figure 2-3). Brenham has significantly more residents under $10,000 in income and fewer in the over $100,000 range. This factor brings the median income of Brenham ($32,198) lower than the state's ($39,927). The focus of economic development should be to strengthen the middle class by creating jobs that will allow residents in the lower income range to find better paying jobs in Brenham rather than having to leave the City.

Figure 2-3 **Household Income**



Source: 2000 US Census

While the income in Brenham is fairly strong, 12.8 percent of families in the City are considered below poverty, which is slightly higher than the state at 12 percent.

Brenham is fortunate to have a very low unemployment rate (2.9 percent). This does present a challenge to employers who may struggle to fill vacant positions. However, the income shows that many residents may be under-employed, or employed in lower wage service and retail jobs that may be willing to take higher paying, skilled jobs if given training and the opportunity.

The major industry sectors in Brenham are listed in Table 2-7 below.

Table 2-7: Establishments by Industry Sector

Description	Percent of Employment
Construction	8.2
Manufacturing	15.2
Wholesale Trade	3.8
Retail Trade	13.9
Transportation and Warehousing	2.4
Information	1.8
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	5.8
Professional, Scientific, Mgmt, Administrative	4.6

Educational, Health, and Social Services	24.9
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation	7.1
Other Services	5.6
Public Administration	3.5
Accommodation & food services	10
Other services (except public administration)	15

Source: 2000 US Census

The Economic Development Foundation has developed a plan for economic development that will provide much more information and recommendations than in this plan. This shows that Brenham's economy is diverse and provides a range of employment opportunities for residents.

The major employers in Brenham reflect the diversity of businesses to be found in the City. These include the following:

Blue Bell Creameries
City of Brenham
Brenham ISD
Germania Farm Mutual Insurance
Texas Dept. of MHMR
Texas Home and Health America
Trinity Community Medical Center
Wal-Mart
Source: Brazos Valley Council of Governments

Because of the range of employment options, Brenham has a more stable employment outlook than other towns that are more dependent on one or two major employers or business cluster.

TAXES

Property taxes are a major revenue source for government in Texas, particularly for the school district. Table 2-8 shows the tax rate for the various entities in Brenham along with any allowed exemptions.

Table 2-8: Property Tax Rates in Brenham

Jurisdiction	Tax Rate	Homestead Exemption	Over-65 Exemption	Disabled Person*
Brenham ISD	1.1084	15,000	15,000	10,000
City of Brenham	.5063	0	24,000	0
Washington County General Fund	.2867	0	12,000	12,000
Washing County Road Fund	.1482	3,000	9,000	9,000
Blinn College	.0548	0	12,000	12,000

Source: Washington County Central Appraisal District

The tax rate for Brenham ISD is lower than nearby districts, such as La Grange ISD (1.4025), Smithville ISD (1.6183), and Giddings ISD (1.6162). This is important because property taxes are often contentious as schools struggle to maintain and enhance services while limiting property tax increases.

POPULATION PROJECTIONS

The Texas State Demographer's Office provides population projections at the County level. To create a projection for Brenham, the current population ratio for the City versus the County was used to determine the City's share of projected growth (approximately 44.5 percent at 2000 Census). Using this method, Brenham can expect the following growth:

Table 2-9: Population Projection

2010	15,589
2015	16,722
2020	17,801

Source: Texas State Demographer's Office

This projected growth is a 'middle' range that may prove to be low given the growth of Houston towards Brenham. As jobs and amenities continue to move outward from Houston on US 290, Brenham will become more attractive as a place to live for commuters working in northwest Houston. This may cause faster growth in the future that is not captured by this projection.

CONCLUSION

Brenham is a thriving community that has grown slowly, but steadily, for the last few years. It has maintained its quality of life and invested in its facilities and infrastructure to support its growing population. Brenham provides a diversity of employment, housing, and educational opportunities for residents that make it a sustainable community.

Statistics alone do not create the full picture of a community; however, they can show the fundamental characteristics. The information in this report shows Brenham to be a strong, well balanced community that is positioned well for the future. The recommendations in this plan are intended to build on the quality of life and assets already in the community while making Brenham even stronger and more prepared for any changes that will come in the future.

HOUSING

Brenham has grown steadily with much of its growth happening in the last 30 years. The housing stock reflects this, with over 30 percent of homes having been built between 1980 and 2000 (see Demographic Analysis). Nearly 40 percent of homes have been built between 1960 and 1980, making the majority of homes in Brenham less than 50 years old and this is reflected in the vast majority of homes being in good condition and appearance. The housing goals identified in the planning process reflect the concern of residents that expected growth will change the rural character of Brenham while not providing the type of housing needed by existing and prospective residents. The recommendations will provide guidance to ensure new residential development is in line with community goals of providing a range of housing options for residents at all income levels.

CURRENT HOUSING CONDITIONS

As mentioned, the majority of homes in Brenham have been built since 1960 and a windshield tour reflected that the vast majority of homes are in good condition, providing adequate, safe shelter for residents. This is not to say that there are homes in deteriorating and dilapidated condition in Brenham; however, it is not a widespread issue. Consistent code enforcement and vigilance will ensure that homes in need of remediation are identified and renovated and those that may be borderline can be repaired before needing extensive renovation.

HOUSING PRICE AND AVAILABILITY

The 2000 Census has the median home price in Brenham at $77,000. Anecdotal evidence from realtors and others indicates this has risen significantly in the 8 years since the Census. The current estimate is approximately $130,000 - $150,000 for the median price. Figure 2.3 in the Baseline Analysis shows the price breakdown of homes. Nearly 60 percent are under $100,000, which would

be affordable for a family making the median income of $32,198. Again, these numbers reflect the 2000 Census and may not indicate current conditions since it is likely that housing values have risen faster than incomes. Typically, mortgage should be no more than 30 percent of household income. Table 3-1 shows the mortgage as percent of income. This gives an indication of housing affordability in Brenham.

Table 3-1 Rent and Mortgage as Percentage of Income

Percentage of Income	Mortgage	Rent
< 15%	44.8%	21.6%
15 – 19%	19.6%	14.5%
20 – 24%	8.8%	14.2%
25 – 29%	6.5%	7.8%
> 30%	18.4%	36.6%
Not Calculated	1.8%	5.4%

Source: 2000 Census

Less than 20 percent of Brenham residents pay more than 30 percent of their income for their mortgage. This indicates that most residents are finding homes that are affordable for their income. One area of concern is that over 36 percent of renters are paying more than 30 percent. This likely reflects the lack of rental property available in Brenham and that much of the rental property is for lower income residents. This will likely be a bigger issue in the future, especially with growth at Blinn College and if new jobs are created in the community.

Over 90 percent of homes in Brenham are occupied, and many unoccupied homes may not be available for sale or rent (Table 2-6 in Demographic Analysis). This indicates the potential for a shortage of available housing for newcomers wanting to relocate to Brenham. While new construction is happening in Brenham, it is not likely to meet expected demand and much growth may end up locating in the County surrounding Brenham.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Adequate housing is a fundamental necessity for individuals and the community as a whole. There has to be a variety of housing available at all income levels for a community to be sustainable. The goals identified in this plan will help Brenham achieve a sustainable mix of housing options to support continued growth and provide suitable housing for residents at all stages of their lives.

ESTABLISH DESIGN GUIDELINES TO PROTECT ESTABLISHED NEIGHBORHOODS

What makes Brenham unique is the unique character of its existing neighborhoods. Many communities are beginning to pass ordinances (often called 'McMansion' ordinances) to reduce the potential for small, existing homes to be demolished and replaced with over sized, inappropriate new homes. These homes are often out of character and context with the existing neighborhood and can negatively impact neighboring properties by blocking sunlight and other incursions. Design guidelines can help reduce the potential for negative impacts of in-fill and other redevelopment on existing neighborhoods.

Identify Key Neighborhoods, including Commercial Districts, with Unique Historic and Aesthetic Character that are Appropriate for Design Guidelines

There are three established historic districts in Brenham, including the Central Business District, and two primarily residential areas, the Blinn College District and East Brenham District. The Blinn College District is roughly four blocks between Fifth St in the south and Second Street to the north and from High Street to Jackson Street. The East Brenham District is much larger running from East Main n the south to Crockett Street in the north and from Market Street on the west past Gayhill Street on the east. The City is currently working to create a Historic Preservation Ordinance that would protect the CBD district. Once this is established, there is the potential for it to expand to cover the other two

districts. This is an excellent starting point for establishing design guidelines. Because these areas are already defined it would provide a designated area in which the guidelines would have authority to regulate. This is important in maintaining the historic integrity of these zones. Once standards are established and accepted in these neighborhoods, it may be appropriate to develop standards for other areas of town, or relate them directly to zones defined in the zoning ordinance.

Work with Property Owners, Residents, and Builders to Identify Appropriate Guidelines

Any effort to establish new policies will require public input and coordination with neighborhood groups, builders, and others who will be affected by the adoption of design guidelines. Before moving forward the City should engage in a public education and input process with citizens to obtain their input on what standards are appropriate and what they will support. Most residents understand the benefit from well crafted and reasonable design standards and if they are included in the process and their views expressed they will be more likely to support the imposition of design standards. Public education should be a part of this effort to ensure residents are aware of what the goals of the design guidelines are and how they will benefit from them.

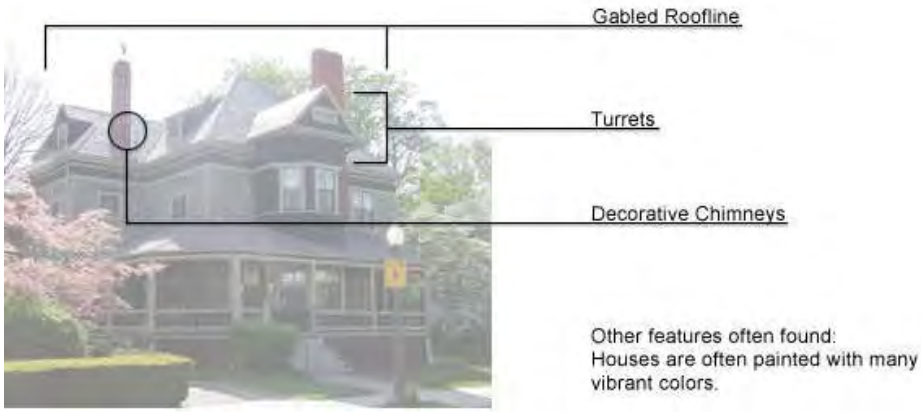
Develop Guidelines to Protect the Character of Neighborhoods from Inappropriate Building or Renovation

Design standards for new construction should require that new buildings share common elements with existing historical ones. They should not require duplication, but rather identify complementary elements that should be included, such as similar materials, height restrictions, window spacing and size, etc. The goal is to allow new buildings that have their own character and

modernity, while not being a glaring stand out to the existing fabric of development.

Rather than creating a lengthy regulatory design, many communities are utilizing design books that are visually oriented with pictures and graphics rather than text to describe the design elements for new development. Illustration 3-1 is an example of what a design book could incorporate.

Illustration 3-1



The goal of design guidelines is to protect the interest of the community as a whole by ensuring good development. When a small residence is demolished and replaced with a large, obtrusive home it can negatively impact the entire

neighborhood. This is not to say large homes are a bad thing; it is simply intended to ensure they are located in appropriate areas.

CONTINUE SUPPORT OF HOUSING ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

Brenham has a strong Public Housing Authority that manages 300 units as well as a voucher program that can provide up to 82 vouchers to subsidize rents. Current budgets are adequate to maintain these properties adequately and to manage the program. The PHA is currently 'frozen' at 1994 levels of funding and cannot add units. While this has not been a huge issue at this time, it may be necessary to revisit this in the future. It will be critical to ensure on-going support for this program because it provides housing for those most in need.

The city currently provides properties that are foreclosed and become city property to Habitat for Humanity for the provision of affordable housing. This is an excellent way to return property to the tax roles by providing housing for lower income residents. This program should continue and the city should coordinate with the county and school district to ensure foreclosed properties are made available in a timely fashion for redevelopment.

Expand Voucher Program to Utilize All Available Vouchers

While the Public Housing Authority currently has 82 vouchers to provide to low income residents, only 49 are currently issued. The challenge is the lack of rental housing and landlords who will accept the vouchers. The Public Housing Authority should begin an education campaign to spread the word about the benefits the vouchers provide and encourage owners to accept them.

The first step will be to identify all rental property owners in town and send a letter to those who do not accept vouchers. The letter should describe the program and how it can benefit the owners through a guaranteed rental rate and

payment, as well as how it benefits the community to provide housing for all residents. The letter can also include a case study of a family that has benefitted from the program.

It is unfortunate that residents may not have access to housing while there are vouchers available. It is critical that an effort be made to publicize this program and build support for owners to accept the vouchers at more rental properties in town.

Support Homebuyer Education Programs, such as a Home Fair offered by the Public Housing Authority, Brazos Valley COG, local banks, etc.

Current conditions in the housing market make it even more important for prospective buyers to have a thorough understanding of the housing and mortgage markets. It is no longer possible to buy a home and be guaranteed it will grow in value quickly. Also, mortgages have grown more complicated and as has been amply seen, many buyers got into situations they did not fully understand and saw their payments go up dramatically as interest rates increased.

Homebuyer education programs can address these issues and create more informed buyers who will be less likely to default or be taken advantage of. The Public Housing Authority, local banks, and others already offer some programs and should coordinate their efforts to reach the broadest audience possible. These organizations should hold regular seminars and publicize them as much as possible so people can take full advantage of the opportunity.

When prospective homebuyers are educated, they will make better decisions and banks can be more confident in their lending. This will create more opportunities for homebuying in Brenham and encourage builders to increase

their activity in the community because there will be a strong base of customers for them.

CONCLUSION

Housing is often overlooked by residents as they are planning for the future. This is because it is often thought that housing will always meet demand and that there is not a place for public participation. However, housing is a critical need for any community and government and other entities play an important, if often underappreciated role in its development. Inadequate housing will hinder economic development because businesses will hesitate to relocate or expand if their new employees cannot find adequate housing. Housing development must be a priority if Brenham is to continue growing and remain sustainable.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Real communities are not created spontaneously, rather they develop over time and their character and appearance is the result of that evolution. This is not to say that a newly built subdivision has no character or sense of community, it is simply an observation that historic places tend to create a stronger sense of place than can be found elsewhere. It is this sense of place and unique character that is often lost as historic areas try to redevelop and follow the next trend. The result of this is much like a historic building with a false façade. Instead of celebrating the true assets of the building they are hidden behind sheet metal designed to mimic a suburban mall.

Historic preservation is about protecting and enhancing those buildings and sites in a community that contribute to its character and sense of place and celebrate the unique heritage of Brenham. It is not about controlling private property or regulating what people can do with their buildings. Successful historic preservation will benefit the community through a higher quality of life (which enhances business recruitment), increased tourism, and a stronger sense of community.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations will enable Brenham to identify and protect its historic assets and to better utilize them to benefit the community. Brenham has a strong Main Street program that is committed to downtown and preserving its character; however, there is not the same commitment to historic preservation in the rest of the community. The two other designated districts outside of downtown will benefit from more attention given to historic preservation and the implementation of this plan.

CONDUCT A HISTORIC ASSET SURVEY FOR ENTIRE CITY

Brenham has three designated historic districts, one encompassing the Central Business District, and two others in primarily residential areas. These areas have an inventory of structures that 'contribute' to its historic character. However, there are other historic structures and sites throughout Brenham that are likely not inventoried or well known. This is a perfect project for existing groups with an interest in historic preservation and other volunteers. This is not something that requires city staff or involvement at this point.

Contact Texas Historical Commission for Surveys and Additional Information

The Texas Historical Commission is committed to working with communities to give them the tools to preserve their historical assets. They have extensive experience in empowering communities and building capacity locally. The first step should be to contact THC to get examples and technical assistance to ensure the survey is done properly. THC can provide information and possibly training for volunteers so the survey is done properly and all the information necessary to preserve identified assets is captured.

Partner with Washington County Historical Commission and other Historical Organizations for Volunteers

While the Washington County Historical Commission is dedicated to addressing the needs of the entire county, this is a logical starting point for volunteers and other assistance. This group likely has information that can be used to start the process. It will be important to have a strong core of volunteers so the project can be completed in a timely manner and the information collected in a useful format. Training and support for the volunteers will be critical for success.

Conduct Survey to Identify Historic Assets Throughout Brenham

The survey should start with research in the library and on-line to gather as much information about potential historic sites as possible. This will allow a more targeted search than simply driving around town looking for things that seem old. Following the research, the public should be notified of the survey to minimize the potential concern and confusion of volunteers out taking pictures and asking questions about properties. This can be done through the newspaper, local radio, and other venues to ensure citizens are informed.

The survey should be structured in such a way that sufficient information is gathered (such as architect, ownership, date built, etc.) to be useful. Volunteers should have digital cameras to photograph the buildings as well. It will be important to be consistent with the pictures so all the pictures have similar perspectives, etc. This will provide consistent information.

Once the survey is completed it can be compiled into a report that can be provided to the city. This may lead to policies to protect individual properties, such as a local Brenham Historic designation.

CONSIDER LOCAL HISTORIC DESIGNATION FOR STRUCTURES TO IDENTIFIED THROUGH FEDERAL AND / OR STATE PROGRAMS

A local historic designation can fill in gaps left by Federal and State programs and identify those sites and buildings that are significant to the local history of Brenham but may not meet guidelines for other recognition. These locally significant sites should be recognized because of their contribution to local heritage.

Utilize Survey to Identify Properties that are an Asset to Brenham and Design a Plaque to Recognize These Properties

Local assets may include buildings where prominent citizens lived or work, etc. These buildings contribute to the unique quality of Brenham and should be recognized. The asset survey is the ideal opportunity to identify these properties and gather the information to recognize them.

Many cities have created a local historical designation plaque similar to the Federal one that is placed on properties of local significance. This plaque marks the property and can explain the history and importance of the property. This rewards the owner for preservation because their property is recognized as significant.

Educate Owners and Citizens on the Benefits of Protecting Historic Structures

This should be an extensive part of the historic preservation effort because residents may be concerned that recognition will result in the loss of property rights. Owners and citizens need to be informed of the benefits of historic preservation, including contribution to quality of life, economic development, and tourism. The more people understand about the contribution their property makes to the community as a whole, the more likely they will be to preserve and enhance their historic building. It may also be that owners do not know the significance of their property and need to be educated on that. The idea is for owners to be invested in the process and the importance of preserving unique historic assets.

Utilize Local Designation in Marketing and Tourism Promotion

Many communities are developing books, pamphlets, and walking tours to encourage visitors to view historic assets. A walking tour could be established that would highlight unique features and properties around Brenham to

encourage heritage tourism. Heritage tourism is one of the fastest growing segments of the industry as people are wanting to learn about their ancestry and where they came from. Walking tours can also benefit from new technology such as 'podcasts'. This can be a recorded history of the buildings and sites that is available for download on the Chamber of Commerce website. Visitors can download the 'podcast' and utilize their mp3 player to have an audio history of the tour as they go along.

According to a 2005 study called *Tourism Works for America* conducted by the Travel Industry Association of America (TIA), 471 million Americans included a heritage and cultural activity in their travel plans during 2005. Heritage and cultural travelers also:

- Stay longer than non-heritage travelers (4.7 nights vs. 3.4 nights)
- Spend more money per day than non-heritage travelers ($103/per day vs. $81/per day)
- Pay for lodging more often than non-heritage travelers (62% vs. 56%), and
- Come back more often

There are many valuable resources available on developing heritage tourism programs. Not the least of which are those offered by the National Trust. They have developed five guiding principles that, if followed, will help to make your heritage tourism program a success:

1. Collaborate – Successful cultural heritage tourism programs bring together partners who may not have worked together in the past.
2. Find the Fit – Balancing the needs of residents and visitors is important to ensure that cultural heritage tourism benefits everyone. It is important to understand the kind and amount of tourism that your community can handle.
3. Make Sites and Programs Come Alive – Competition for time is fierce. To attract visitors, you must be sure that the destination is worth the drive.
4. Focus on Quality and Authenticity – Quality is an essential ingredient for all cultural heritage tourism, and authenticity is critical whenever heritage or history is involved.
5. Preserve and Protect – A community's cultural, historic, and natural resources are valuable and often irreplaceable.

As indicated in the statistics above, heritage tourism can have a tremendous economic impact on local economies. Obvious benefits can include new businesses, job growth, and higher property values. Heritage tourism can also add less tangible — but equally important — benefits such as quality of life for residents, and community pride.

Well-interpreted sites teach visitors their importance, and by extension, the importance of preserving other such sites elsewhere. Perhaps the biggest benefit of heritage tourism is that it provides ways for a community to prosper economically while holding on to the characteristics that make it special.
The goal is to benefit the community by preserving historic assets and the best way to do that is to increase tourism and dollars spent locally. Residents will be more likely to support preservation if they can see direct benefits for Brenham.

CONSIDER HISTORIC PRESERVATION ORDINANCE FOR ENTIRE COMMUNITY

The City of Brenham is considering a historic preservation ordinance for the Central Business District and will likely adopt it this year. This will establish a level of protection for designated structures in this historic district. The city should consider expanding the ordinance, or adopting specific ordinances, for the other historic districts and possibly to protect individual properties identified in the asset survey.

One of the common misperceptions about historic designation is that once a property is labeled historic by the National Park Service no changes or renovations can be made. This is not true. In reality there is no enforcement at the State or Federal level to stop improper renovations, the only punishment is that the historic designation can be revoked if the property is changed inappropriately. The caveat to this is for those owners who utilize the 20 percent Federal Tax Credit that will be discussed later in this chapter. Historic preservation is really a local issue, the city will set the standards and requirements to preserve historic sites, so any guidelines and enforcement will come from city government.

Conduct Public Education and Outreach on Benefits of Historic Preservation

The first step in historic preservation is to educate residents about what it really is and how it can benefit the community. Residents, especially those with historic properties, should be at the table throughout the process of developing standards and the ordinance. They will be the ones affected by the regulations so they should have a say in what the regulations are.

It makes sense to begin with the three existing historic districts, and the city already has an ordinance being developed for the CBD. This can serve as the

template for the other two districts which may have unique characteristics and issues that require a more customized approach. The ordinance should clearly lay out the process for owners who want to renovate their historic property to reduce confusion and resentment. Typically, people are willing to go through the process as long as it is not onerous or confusing. The process should be clear and easy for residents.

Again, the THC can serve as a tremendous resource because they have draft ordinances and can provide technical assistance in developing an ordinance that will fit local needs.

Develop Historic Preservation Ordinance

Establishing an ordinance in the downtown is a logical first step and will make it easier to roll out to the rest of the city. However, the impact of a ordinance on residential properties will be different than on commercial properties, so additional outreach and education will be critical to success.

The ordinance should be written to respect property rights and provide flexibility for owners to do some level of improvement and renovation without overly restrictive regulations. A well crafted ordinance will allow for the evolution of properties over time while protecting their historic integrity. The National Park Service guidelines and THC provide excellent examples and guidelines in crafting an ordinance that walks this fine line.

CONSIDER INCENTIVE POLICIES TO SUPPORT HISTORIC PRESERVATION

In addition to the 'stick' of regulations, incentives can be a tool to encourage historic preservation. There are a variety of options to achieve this goal and the city should explore them all to determine which, if any, are a good fit for Brenham.

Educate Owners of the 20% Federal Tax Credits Available

Owners of federally designated properties are eligible for up to 20 percent tax credit for the costs of renovation of their properties. These renovations have to follow the guidelines established by the National Park Service, but can be a tremendous benefit to owners wanting to renovate. There should be an education effort to inform owners about this opportunity and its benefits. This can be strong encouragement for owners who may not think they can afford renovations to undertake projects knowing they will get up to 20 percent of the money back on their taxes. Also, this program will not cost the city anything, which is always good.

Consider a Property Tax Freeze for Historic Properties

The City of Austin has a program that freezes the property taxes on historically designated properties. This is an encouragement to owners to be included in districts and accept designation because they will be insulated from significant value increases. In addition, owners that renovate their properties will not have to pay increased property taxes for a designated period of time (such as 5 years) to allow them to begin to receive benefit from the increased value (such as higher rents in commercial buildings) from the renovations. The benefit to the community is that there is not a net loss of tax income, the taxes will not increase based on the increased valuation for a designated period of time.

Consider Using Public Funds to Encourage Renovations

Many cities have seen the value of utilizing public funds to encourage historic renovations. There is already some level of assistance provided to properties in the Central Business District through the Main Street program. This includes an Incentive Grant Fund and tax phase in for the downtown area. It may be beneficial to expand some level of public assistance throughout the city to encourage property owners to maintain and enhance their historic properties.

PURSUE CERTIFIED LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROGRAM THROUGH TEXAS HISTORIC COMMISSION

The Certified Local Government program is offered through the THC to help communities establish a historic preservation program. It requires a commitment from the community to pursue the certification but it provides access to a variety of resources and grants for preservation projects. To become CLG a city must commit to enforcing legislation to protect historic properties, establish a historic review commission, maintain a historic property inventory, and provide for public participation. More information is available on the THC website. This designation can be pursued at the city level, or by the County Historical Commission and would be worthwhile for both levels of government.

CONCLUSION

Historic preservation will maintain those assets that make Brenham the community it is today. It will attract tourists and contribute to the quality of life for all residents. When property owners hear historic preservation they often assume it means they will lose control over their property and not be able to make improvements or expand. This is not the case, all historic preservation is driven by local standards and ordinances, not those imposed by the State or Federal government. Public outreach and education will be critical to success in preserving historic properties. The benefits of historic preservation are numerous and will directly lead to investment in Brenham. This should be the basis for outreach to citizens so they understand how historic sites and buildings affect them in a positive way and will maintain the quality of life that helps make Brenham unique.

CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT STUDY

Downtown Vision –

Cultivate a strong, vibrant, and diverse downtown that is a destination for local and regional customers.

– Main Street Program, 2007

INTRODUCTION

Downtown Brenham serves as the historic heart of the community and as an economic engine providing a destination for tourist and local residents with restaurants, shops, and entertainment. The downtown is in very good physical condition a result of years of participating in the Historic Commissions Main Street Program wherein the community can establish various funding methods for capital improvements. These improvements include landscaped curb extensions, underground utilities, and public restrooms to name several major improvements. Despite competing commercial districts along US 290 and S. Day and Market Streets, the downtown remains viable leveraging historic architecture, festivals, government services, and high levels of traffic on Main Street and Alamo to carve a niche in which to serve the community.

However, there are still many improvements that can be undertaken that will help existing businesses be more successful as well as attract new businesses to the area. Property and business owners, concerned citizens, the Washington County Chamber of Commerce, Main Street Program, and the city need to coordinate their efforts and activities to ensure that improvements are planned to

enhance the overall character of the area and minimize negative impacts on businesses.

Public input received for the plan shows that residents have some concerns with downtown and want to make improvements to the area. By following the recommendations in this plan, the goals can be achieved. The following are priorities for the Central Business District:

1. Determine and execute a reuse of the "Old Municipal Building".
2. Develop a Downtown Master Plan.
3. Develop Historic Preservation Ordinance.
4. Identify and develop incentives for the CBD
5. Create and execute a plan to improve and increase the parking capacity downtown.
6. Develop a Business Recruitment and Development Package for downtown.

RECOMMENDATIONS

FOSTER A DIVERSE DOWNTOWN WITH A HEALTHY MIX OF SERVICE INCLUDING RETAIL ORIENTED BUSINESSES AND RESIDENTIAL LAND USE.

A strong, vibrant downtown includes a residential mix that fosters street and night life and extended hours of local businesses. Residential uses should be developed in the CBD by encouraging the conversion of second floors to living spaces and ensuring a range of small-scale, medium- to high-density residential models (e.g. condos, town homes, apartments).

The downtown currently contains the following zoning districts B-1 Local Business Mixed, B-2 Commercial, Research, and Technology or B-3 Historical Central Business District, with an Historic District Overlay. Of these districts, only B-3 allows for vertical mixed use: "Residential uses that occupy upper level space over ground level retail space in commercial buildings (p. 56, Brenham Zoning Ordinance)." The City could review the zoning ordinance and revise to allow additional areas within the CBD this option. *Or* remove that wording from the B-3 district and establish a mixed-use overlay, which can be applied not only to the CBD, but other areas that would benefit vertical mixed-use as well.

In addition, mixed use can be promoted within the CBD through an array of private and public incentives, regulatory changes, and marketing strategies. Typically, publicly funded incentives come in the form or reduced fees or expedited permitting process. Reworking ADA standards that pose a barrier to residential development in the CBD is another proactive role for the public sector. Finally, a role for the private sector may be to promote the growth of mixed use within the CBD by providing potential investors with clear, accurate clearing house of information regarding costs, regulations, potential benefits, best cases, and comparable success stories.

INCREASE VISITATION TO DOWNTOWN FROM THE EXISTING TOURISM TRADE TO BRENHAM:

Brenham boasts numerous tourist attractions from state-of-the-art baseball fields to fields of wildflowers. A key goal to increasing visitation to the CBD is to tap into flow of visitors who come to town for other activities. Two methods of attaining this goal include cross-promotion and signage.

Brenham is a large enough community where it is quite possible to visit an attraction or event at a high school or playing field and miss the downtown

entirely. That is why signs placed on thoroughfares promoting businesses and attractions downtown perform an important function to bringing visitors to the area. Additionally, clear signs to help visitors navigate the community eliminate frustration and promote the CBD's presence as well.

Washington County has a very active Chamber of Commerce that promotes events in Brenham frequently and successfully. By linking to the already successful promotions of the chamber, visitors could be attracted to downtown. Cross promotion could be accomplished by creating a "downtown itinerary" listing the shops, restaurants, and activities in the CBD. The itinerary could be provided on the Chamber's website or handed out as a brochure. Further, ensuring that there are events – even on a small scale – held concurrently to large-scale, primary attractions could create synergy, foster partnerships, and increase visitation to the CBD

CREATE A COMPREHENSIVE CITY OF BRENHAM DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN TO PROVIDE VISION AND GUIDELINES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE DOWNTOWN.

Currently, there is not a master plan to guide the development for the downtown. A master plan provides a unified vision of the purpose, aesthetics, and economics of the CBD and a step-by-step roadmap to facilitate its creation. Public input is imperative to the planning process and should include representatives from banks and financial institutions, landlords, business owners, citizens, City staff and other stakeholders to achieve a consensus of values from the community.

Fundamental issues to be resolved in the downtown master planning process include determining the boundary of the CBD (walking distance, historical, similar businesses) and the location and function of any distinct districts within

the CBD. For example, an Art Districts wherein a cluster of galleries, high end shops, lofts and restaurants would attract visitors. In addition parking is a problem downtown because there are not enough spaces or, perhaps more correctly, there are not enough spaces in front of the stores which people wish to visit. Clever methods of opening spaces up in front of stores by removing employee parking out of high demand areas should be identified and implemented.

A master plan should include an inventory the downtown area and determine what resources are available for parking, green space, out door events and other uses. A plan should identify and craft incentives for underperforming areas of the CBD to encourage development (e.g. Alamo Street) and improve pedestrian and vehicular safety as Brenham's downtown is not without problems associated with high levels of vehicular and pedestrian traffic.

DEVELOP ALL PROPERTIES TO THEIR HIGHEST AND BEST USE.

Currently there are underutilized buildings within the CBD that are vacant, used for storage, or underutilized in other ways. Creating a network of stakeholders - investors, chamber, landlords, city officials, builders and business owners – is imperative for quality development downtown. The network should be responsible from everything from promoting the CBD to ensuring reasonable rents and costs and quality infrastructure.

Preserving and protecting the integrity of historic buildings within the CBD is imperative. Investors must be assured that the inherent and unique value of the historic properties in the downtown will be preserved thus preserving and increasing the value of their own investments.

Attracting entrepreneurs to invest in the CBD is proactive effort. Creating and managing a database of potential investors and owners can facilitate the process. Further, recruiting investors to live in Brenham would increase the cultural connection to the city and the district. Equally important is ensuring quality infrastructure, such as water, sewer, electric, and streets to provide a backbone for successful operations in the area.

REDUCE THE RISK AND COST OF REHABILITATING STRUCTURES IN THE CBD.

A barrier to the redevelopment of many buildings downtown is asbestos in the original building materials, such as pipes and ceiling tiles. Asbestos abatement is expensive, time consuming and can scare off potential investors. A downtown stakeholders group should address this issue by working as advocates for potential investors. Providing detailed, accurate information about the costs and potential liability of asbestos abatement may prevent unforeseen and prohibitive costs waylay an enterprise. Other assistance an advocacy group could undertake include assisting in the testing of structures, identifying loans or grants, and lobbying state and federal officials to provide assistance through financial or regulatory relief.

AVOID "IN AND OUT" UNSUSTAINABLE BUSINESSES, SHORT-TERM TENURES AND VACANCY IN THE DOWNTOWN:

During the public input process undesirable business were identified as "businesses or uses that do not contribute to the vision, prosperity, and tax-base of the downtown." A downtown must be stable and provide a range of desired master plan creates a vision of the types of businesses, facades, events desired for the downtown. It also identifies businesses, land uses, and activities that are not desired. An example would be lease space for storage which creates no synergy

with adjacent uses – visitors do not come to visit a storage space and stop to buy lunch.

Nefarious activities within vacant buildings (itinerant and homeless squatting) or inappropriate youth activities (skateboarding, vandalism, loitering) are civil issues that affects downtown businesses disproportionately and must be addressed.

CONCLUSION

Revitalizing Brenham's downtown is a tremendous opportunity for the community. It offers a connection with the past as well as an asset for the future. Downtown can serve local needs as well as attract visitors to the community, driving the local economy. Implementing this plan will help protect what is already successful in downtown and create opportunities for new and existing businesses to prosper. The development of a Downtown Master Plan would foster coordination and cooperation in downtown improvement efforts.

LAND USE STUDY

Land use is a term used to describe the type of development for any given parcel. Historically, municipal land use powers resulted from the problems caused by incompatible, adjacent land uses such as heavy industrial manufacturing and residential. For the safety, health and welfare of the citizenry, cities were provided the authority to create districts or zones in which only certain types of land uses are allowed. Through zoning a strict geographic separation of land uses occurred, stabilizing property values, reducing pollution in residential areas, and segregating the areas where people live from where they shop, work or play.

Brenham adopted its current zoning ordinance in 1995. The zoning ordinance divides the community into six districts: R-1 Residential District, R-2 Mixed Residential District, B-1 Local Business/Residential Mixed Use District, B-2 Commercial, Research and Technology District, B-3 Historical Central Business District, and I Industrial District. The zoning ordinance is a Cumulative or Pyramidal type of zoning ordinance wherein the first zoning category is limited to certain uses, and each additional zoning category allows all uses allowed in the previous category, plus some others (e.g. single family residential in a B-2 district). This strategy works well in rural communities because traditionally people moved close to the industries that provided jobs. Prohibiting this pattern would establish a large number of nonconforming uses.

The land use plan is not a zoning ordinance; it is a policy guide for the city in managing the growth and development of the community. As a starting point, the land use study provides a city-wide inventory of current land uses, which when mapped, shows how the community is formed and how its components fit together. With this information city officials can determine areas of incompatible

land uses, important characteristics about the community, and trends in land use that will effect future development.

LAND USE INVENTORY

The City of Brenham's corporate limits encompasses 7,133 acres with an additional 13,607 acres in the extra-territorial jurisdiction (ETJ) for a total of 18,716 acres. An inventory of the land uses within the City and its ETJ took place in the fall of 2007. The results of this survey are tabulated in Table 6-1: Land Use Inventory.

The largest amount of acreage within the corporate limits is devoted to "single-family residential" - 1,764 acres or thirty-three percent of the total developed area. This ratio is consistent with the analysis from the 1965 comprehensive plan, (Johnson Consulting Engineers) that noted thirty-six percent single-family residential (The 1994 comprehensive planning study did not contain a land use inventory).

Defining and mapping current land use allows an educated approach to decision making regarding future development. Properties were defined using the following categories:

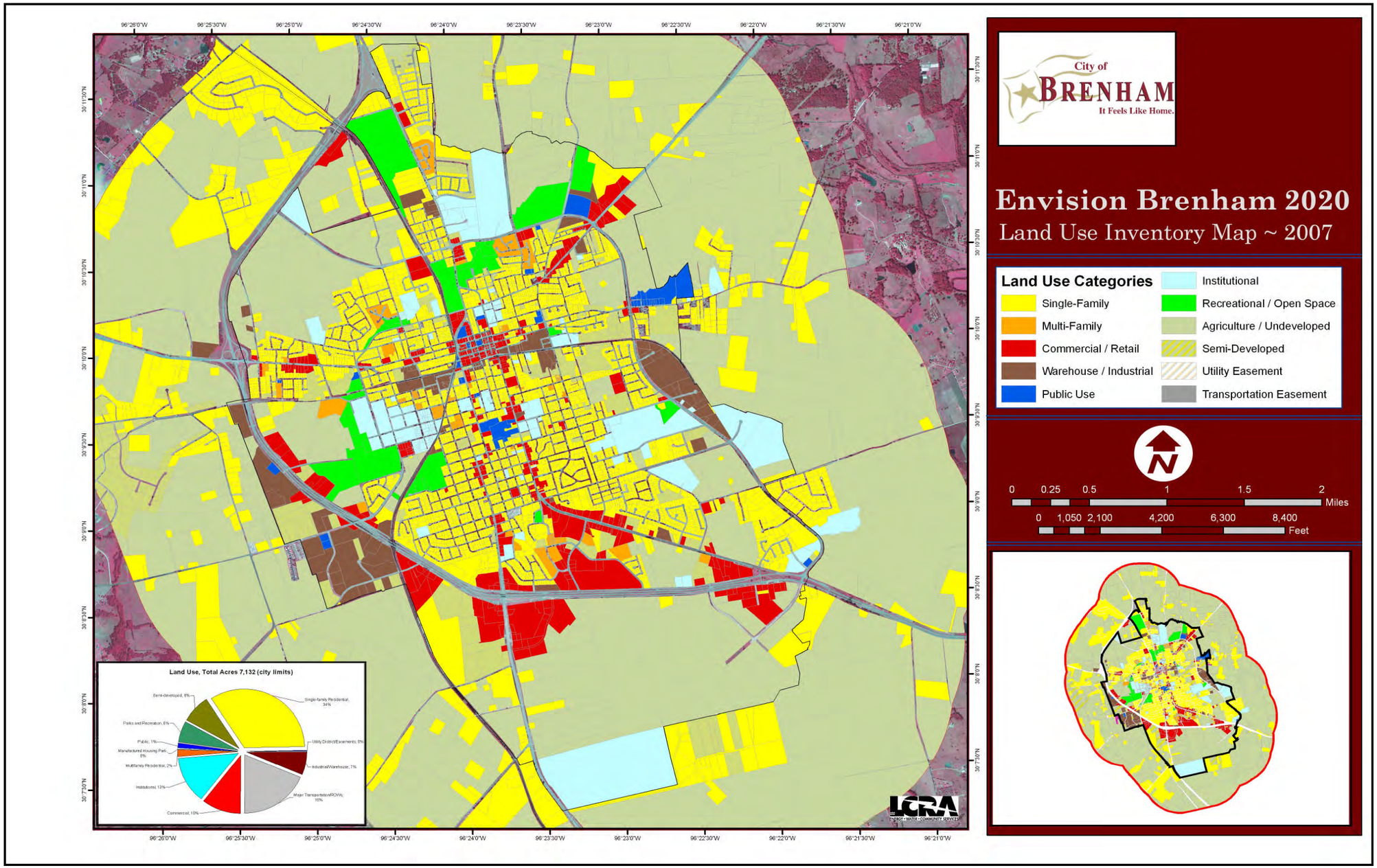
- Agricultural/Undeveloped: Describes land primarily used for farming or ranching activities; however, large tracts of land with no discernable use also fall into this category.
- Commercial: Typical commercial properties are automobile dealerships and garages, warehouses, etc. In addition, bed & breakfast establishments and hotels were identified as commercial.
- Warehouse/Industrial: Property identified as industrial is being used for manufacturing processes, quarries, and other intensive uses.

- Multi Family: Properties with more than one dwelling per housing unit (duplexes, apartments, etc.)
- Mobile Home Park: Property where only mobile homes are allowed to be sited.
- Recreation and Open Space: Land dedicated to open space or recreation
- Public: Public land is that which is owned by government agencies (parks, City Hall, etc) and that of churches, cemeteries, schools, etc.
- Single-Family: Property with a single family detached residence
- Vacant/semi-developed: Vacant land differs from Agricultural/Undeveloped land as it contains no structures and is not used for agriculture purposes. The land is suitable for development with infrastructure such as water, sewer, and streets either currently serving the lot or easily extended and the land has been subdivided into lot less than 10 acres in size. Vacant/semi-developed land identifies the most likely areas (i.e. easiest and least expensive) for development of new residential or other types of land use
- Institutional: Land that is used to for institutional uses includes primarily hospitals and schools.

Table 6-1 Land Use Inventory, City Limits

Land Use Classification	Acres	% DEV	% TOTAL	Acres/100
Commercial	581	11%	8%	4
Institutional	690	13%	10%	5
Multifamily Residential	110	2%	2%	1
Mobile Home Park	5	0%	0%	0
Public	80	2%	1%	1
Parks and Recreation	335	6%	5%	2
Vacant	402	8%	6%	3
Single-family Residential	1,764	33%	25%	12
Utility Easement	3	0%	0%	0
Industrial/Warehouse	348	7%	5%	2
Major Transportation/ROWs	973	18%	14%	7
Total for Developed Areas	*5,291*	100%	74%	37
Agricultural, Forest, other Open Space	1,842		26%	13
Citywide Total	**7,133**		100%	50

The following map *City of Brenham: Land Use, 2008* illustrates the development patterns of the community. In overview, areas adjacent to major arterials (US 290, SH 36) and minor arterials have spawned commercial industrial and multifamily development; greenbelts and parks are sited in the floodplains; and, single-family development is typically located adjacent to local streets, buffered from commercial and residential land uses.


City of
BRENHAM
It Feels Like Home.
Envision Brenham 2020
Land Use Inventory Map ~ 2007
Land Use Categories
Single-Family
Multi-Family
Commercial / Retail
Warehouse / Industrial
Public Use
Institutional
Recreational / Open Space
Agriculture / Undeveloped
Semi-Developed
Utility Easement
Transportation Easement
0 0.25 0.5 1 1.5 2 Miles
0 1,050 2,100 4,200 6,300 8,400 Feet
Land Use, Total Acres 7,132 (city limits)
Single-family Residential, 34%
Utility District/Easements, 8%
Industrial/Warehouse, 7%
Major Transportation/ROWs, 15%
Commercial, 10%
Institutional, 12%
Multifamily Residential, 2%
Manufactured Housing Park, 0%
Public, 1%
Parks and Recreation, 6%
Semi-developed, 8%
LCRA

Agriculture/Undeveloped Lands

Brenham has approximately 1,840 acres of agricultural/undeveloped land within the city limits and 8,816 acres in the ETJ. In the ETJ agricultural land accounts for seventy-six percent of the total as opposed to twenty-six percent in the city limits. Primarily, the large tracts of undeveloped land in Brenham are in the northwest and south east quadrants of the City.

As illustrated in the image below, the undeveloped land represents the last remaining large, undeveloped tracts within the city limits. This undeveloped land offers an opportunity to the city because some of the expected growth in Brenham can be accommodated without annexation.

As noted in the housing chapter, a barrier to additional, affordable housing development within the City is the lack of available land. Constructing a northern extension to Saeger Road would open this area up for single-family residential, institutional and commercial development.

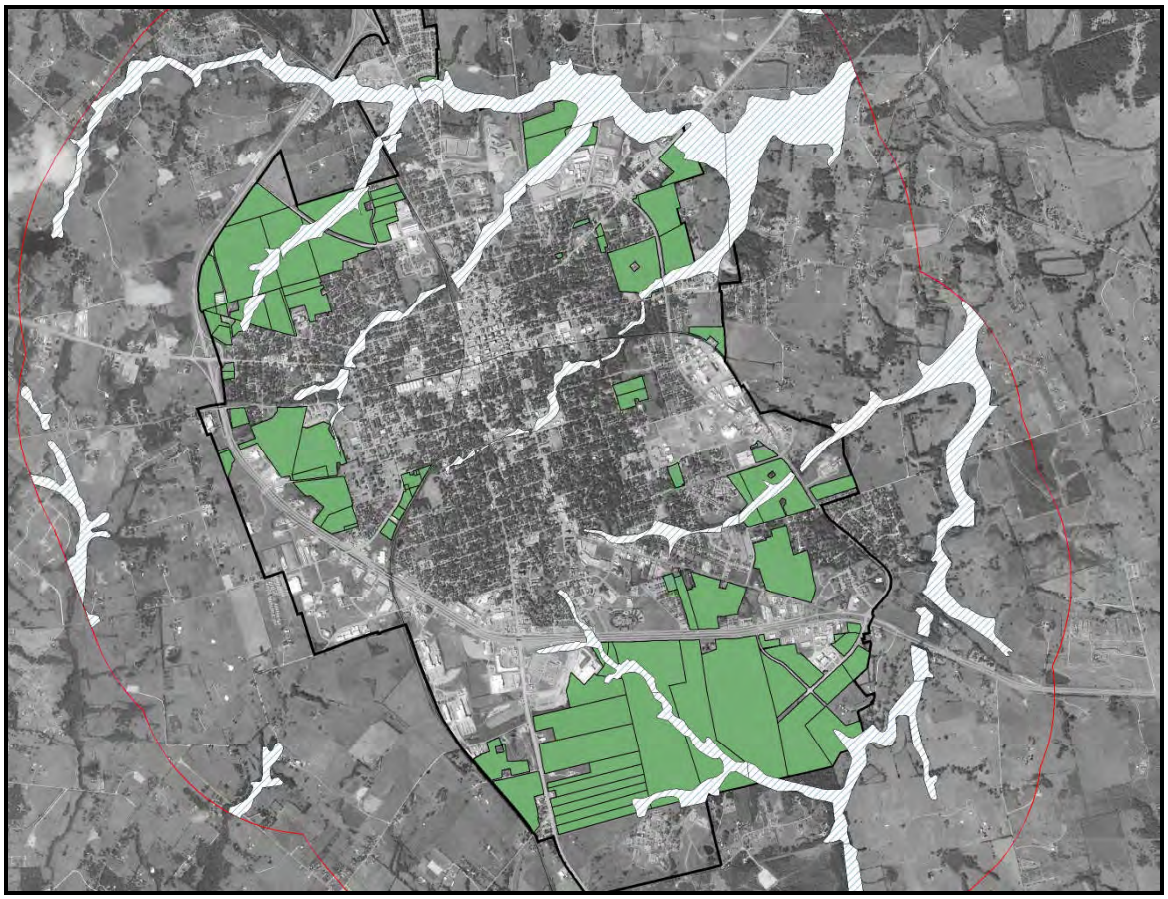


Illustration 6-1: Undeveloped land (green) in the city limits Flood plains are shown as white with blue stripes. This image shows that little of the undeveloped land is unsuitable due to flood plains.

Vacant/Semi-Developed Land

Brenham has approximately 402 acres of vacant land in the city limits, which accounts for eight percent of the developed area, and an additional 223 acres in the ETJ. Analysis of the land use map infers few vacant lots within established subdivisions and that most of the vacant lots are adjacent to the flood plains or in industrial and commercial areas. The majority of vacant lots in the new residential subdivisions are being constructed in the northern section of the City near to the high school.

Residential

Residential land uses are divided into three separate categories: single-family, multifamily, and mobile home park. Single-family are typically detached homes constructed on one or more lots. Land dedicated to single-family residential uses is the second largest behind agricultural land. In the city limits there are 1,764 acres with an additional 1,911 acres in the ETJ. This is typical of most communities, especially rural towns.

Multifamily land use contains multiple housing units on one lot. For example, duplexes, fourplex, apartments, townhomes, and condos are all considered multifamily. In Brenham apartment complexes are located near to major arterials towards the periphery of the community. There are duplexes and smaller multifamily housing units in the vicinity of Blinn College. There are 110 acres dedicated to multifamily in the city limits and no multifamily in the ETJ.

Mobile homes are located in three sections of the community – west of Blue Bell road and south of Old Chappell Hill Road and just west of the industrial area south of FM 389. There are five acres of mobile home parks in the city limits and eighteen acres in the ETJ.

Commercial and Retail

Brenham has more commercial and retail property (581 acres) than many communities of its size. The largest concentration of commercial land use is in four nodes: the Central Business District; the intersection of S. Day and US 290; S. Market Street from Stone Street to US 290; and, SH105 and Blue Bell Road. Commercial development is growing all along the US 290 corridor and TXDOT's reconfiguration of the frontage roads should facilitate this type of growth.

Commercial uses tend to be more intensive than other land uses, with more lighting, truck traffic, and noise, which may create conflicts with neighboring properties. Focusing these uses along Hwy 290, SH36, and on FM 105 is typical and appropriate because of the high traffic generated by commercial uses. These businesses need access to truck traffic and customers, and routing this through residential uses would be inappropriate.

Retail uses do not have the same traffic and visibility issues; however, they also tend to locate on the high traffic areas to tap into the largest potential market. Most of Brenham's retail uses are along US Hwy 290, the CBD and S. Market and S. Day. There are smaller retail centers off of the highway as well.

Industrial

Brenham currently has nearly 348 acres of land dedicated to industrial uses in the city limits and an additional 10 acres in the ETJ. As with commercial, these are located adjacent to US Hwy 290 and Blue Bell Rd. This is appropriate because of the high impact these uses have on adjoining properties. It is likely that further industrial growth will occur in proximity to Hwy 290 primarily due to 90% occupancy rate (yr2008) at the South West Industrial Park owned by the Economic Development Foundation of Brenham.

Public

Public land uses include government buildings and public services such as fire department, Post Office, City Hall, and city utilities. These are lands that are necessary for a city to conduct its business and provide services to its residents. There are eighty acres of public land in the city limits and thirty-two in the ETJ. The primary public land use in the ETJ is the wastewater treatment plant.

Institutional

Institutional land uses include schools, colleges, hospitals, clinics, and prisons. Brenham has thirteen percent of its developed land – 690 acres – dedicated to institutional uses, primarily, Blinn College, Trinity Hospital, Brenham State School, and the public school campuses.

Recreation and Open Space

Recreation and open space lands include parks, green belts, cemeteries, rodeo arenas, and gyms/family recreation centers. There are 335 acres of land used for recreation and open space in the city limits - 255 acres of dedicated, city-owned parks and county-owned fair grounds. Due to policies restricting the availability of use by the general public, the acreage of private recreational facilities, such as golf courses, cemeteries, and public school campuses, are typically not used. Level of service (LOS) is the term used to quantify the adequacy of a park system in a community and is expressed in acres of useable parkland per 1,000 persons. A level of service ranging from 5 acres to 15 acres of developed park land per 1,000 people is targeted. Using the current population estimate of 14,402 and a total acreage of developed park land of 255 acres, the City has a parks and recreation LOS of 16, which is very good.

LAND SUITABILITY

The City of Brenham's primary natural barrier to land development is 1,636 acres of flood plain. The City lies at an elevation of roughly 420 feet to 210 feet above sea level. As illustrated below in Illustration 6-2 there is ample slope to facilitate run off to one of the two channels located to the north and east of the city. Regardless, development in the flood plains should be prohibited. Currently, the City has sited many of it parks in the flood plain, which is suitable and encouraged use. During the public input process there were few discussions regarding problem drainage areas or flooding in the city.

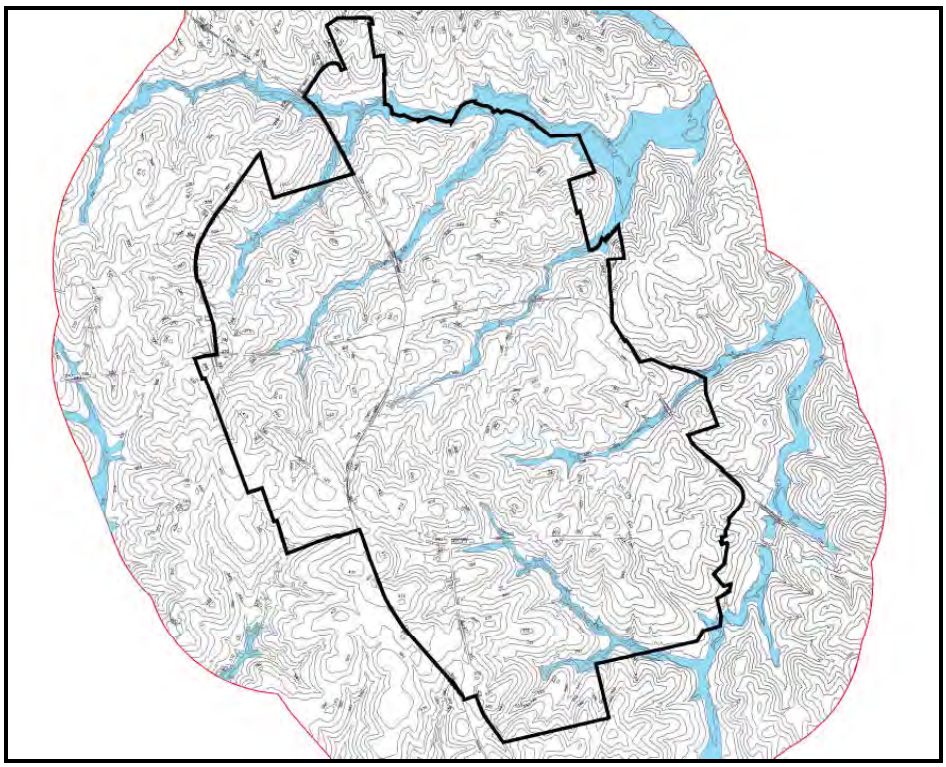


Illustration 6-2: The image above depicts the City with flood plains (blue) and 10 ft. contour lines. The highest elevations in the area are in the southwest.

TRANSPORTATION

In many ways transportation drives land use, highways with high traffic become the conduit for commercial and retail development, local streets open up land for homes while limiting speed and access. *Chapter 7: Thoroughfare Study* of this document provides a thorough analysis and description of the Thoroughfare Plan and Thoroughfare Map for the community. All elements of the Thoroughfare Plan have been incorporated into the Future Land Use Plan and Future Land Use Map.

A key component of the thoroughfare plan is establishing where roadway extensions, road expansions, and new road should occur. These thoroughfare decisions will affect the development in these areas. While the full scope of transportation related issues are addressed in Chapter 7: Thoroughfare Study, a synopsis of the relevant thoroughfare recommendations that will affect land use are as follows:

- US 290: Over the next five to ten years it is possible that the 290 corridor will undergo significant change and development. A partnership between the City, County and TXDOT is funding a major reconfiguration of the frontage roads along 290 between Blue Bell Road and the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad. A thorough study of this project was conducted by O'Malley Engineers in June of 2006 titled *U.S 290 Frontage Road Access Management Plan and Back-up Transportation System Plan*. The affect of this project on land use will be threefold:
    a. Commercial development along the 290 corridor between Blue Bell Road and the BNSF rail line as access to additional developable land is increased.
    b. Commercial, multifamily and single family development to the south of U.S. 290 between S. Market Street and S. Day Street as the

existing street network north of U.S. 290 connects to planned backage roads to the south of U.S. 290.

c. Commercial development adjacent to U.S. 290 north of the rail line to the intersection of U.S. 290 and SH 36. This development will be facilitated when the system of one-way frontage roads is extended past the BNSF rail line.

d. Commercial development north of U.S. 290 on Westwood Lane. A proposed roadway extension of Westwood Lane to Dixie Road would increase safety and provide relief from congestion at the intersection. The extension would also open land for development.

- N. Saeger Road Extension: The thoroughfare plan for Brenham includes extending Saeger Road from W. Blue Bell Road to FM 389. The N. Saeger Road extension from Main to W. Blue Bell would open up approximately 270 acres for development. Specific land uses proffered for the area include single-family, institutional (new elementary school), and recreational (linear park in the flood plain).

- S. Saeger Road Extension: The S. Saeger Lane extension lies just to the west of Blinn College. Most of the adjacent land is currently a cemetery; however, some belongs to Blinn College and potential uses include single- or multifamily or institutional uses.

- FM 389 Extension: A key component of the thoroughfare plan is extending FM 389 east to Tom Green. By doing so, the City will gain an additional east to west thoroughfare that will speed connection between two halves of the city and reduce congestion in the Blinn College area. It will also have the affect of increasing vehicle traffic on FM 389 making it more appealing for commercial and multifamily development.

- East Loop: In the 1994 comprehensive plan a far eastern loop was laid out. This loop would extend to the west of Blue Bell Road and connect SH36 to US290 and would open up a large amount of land to development.

- Scenic Drive Extension: Scenic Drive is an entrance to the new subdivision in the northern section of the city. Ensuring a corridor for future right of way will ensure connectivity to FM 2935. In all likelihood, future land uses in this area will be more single-family residential development and commercial development along the highway.

FUTURE LAND USE

The future land use plan lays the foundation for managing growth in Brenham. It identifies areas most suitable for different kinds of development and allows city leadership to make informed decisions when confronted with development proposals. The land use plan is not zoning, there is no regulatory authority inherent in the plan. As Brenham moves forward with rezoning existing lands or new ones, this will form the basis for the zoning map and ordinance; however, it serves only as a guideline for decision making, not a regulatory document.

The following recommendations are similar to the current land use discussion above. It discusses each land use individually and identifies where it should be focused and the reasons for that location. The Future Land Use map (Illustration 6-3) shows in detail how growth should occur in Brenham.

Single Family Residential

Between 1990 and 2000, the population of Brenham grew from 11,952 to 13,507 nearly a 13% increase. The population projections provided in Chapter 2:

Demographic Analysis indicates that in yr2020, Brenham can expect its population to grow to 17,801 residents - a 31% increase. This will present a challenge for the community to accommodate this level of growth.

One opportunity for Brenham is the undeveloped and vacant land within the city limits. Vacant land will allow for development in areas already served by infrastructure and within Brenham's taxing authority and regulation. As discussed previously, the construction of additional roadways, such as N. Saeger, will open new areas to residential growth.

Additionally, school campuses attract residential growth. It was noted during the planning process that if N. Sager was extended to Blue Bell Road the land opened up by the roadway would be suitable for siting an elementary school. <u>However, any decision regarding the construction of a school campus must be coordinated by the City and the Brenham Independent School District due to the significant impacts on land use, infrastructure, and the transportation network.</u>

Multi Family Residential

In order for Brenham to accommodate expected growth, there will have to be an increase in the availability of rental property. The future land use map identifies several areas throughout town for multi family development. This may be traditional apartments, townhomes, or other types of multi family properties. As noted in the downtown focus group, an increase in density can be achieved through mix-use wherein commercial or retail properties operate on the first floor and multifamily properties are on the second.

There are three areas identified for multi family development on the future land use map. The first is located to the south of US 290 and north of the State School in the undeveloped land opened up by the backage roads of US 290. Additional,

multifamily is envisioned north of Prairie Lea Cemetery close to Blinn College and between S. Market and US 290. All of these locations are suitable as they are near major arterials.

Manufactured Homes

The City of Brenham Zoning Ordinance provides for manufactured homes only within the B-2 Commercial, Research and Technology District. Within the city limits there are 156 acres are semi-developed land wherein manufactured housing is allowed; however, most of these areas are along the 290 corridor, which due to noise, aesthetics, and other nuisances from adjacent commercial and industrial land uses may not be suitable for low density, affordable, manufactured housing. It is recommended that the City review its zoning ordinance and consider creating a Manufactured Housing District.

Commercial and Retail

As expected, commercial and retail growth will continue to be focused on Hwy 290 and the other major and minor arterials both within the community and at the outskirts as these areas offer the best access and visibility to attract business and industry. This is also beneficial because residential development is not appropriate along a highway because of noise and safety issues.

The primary concern vetted during public hearings is not the location of the commercial districts, but improving aesthetics and ensuring vehicle and pedestrian safety. A land use goal for the community is the development, adoption and enforcement of design and development standards along commercial thoroughfares (US 290 corridor). It is desired, whether through Form Based zoning or another instrument, to mitigate the visual impact of the commercial development by landscaping, changes in set backs and parking lot

infrastructure requirements, building orientation, height restrictions, and signage limitations.

Industrial

Industry is the most intense land use, typically generating the most traffic, noise, and other potential nuisance. Brenham currently has two major industrial areas, one on the west side of town (Brenham Economic Development Foundation Industrial Park) and one in the east (Brenham Business Center). These offer a tremendous opportunity for additional industrial growth in areas already served by infrastructure. In the west, a new water tower is being built to which will promote all types of development – commercial, single family, and such. In addition, the railroad poses a particular asset to the area for the continued development of industrial uses. To the east, access via Blue Bell Road offers a good opportunity for additional industrial growth; however, this may be limited due to the location of the elementary school, which may create single-family development in the area. (During the Future Land Use planning session additional industrial development is also slated for the area south of US 290 along Blue Bell Road at the Brenham Business Center).

Public Parks and Open Space

During the planning process two key parks projects were discussed. The first is the development of a dog park and animal shelter, which is slated to be developed in the north section of town on the east side of SH36. The second project rose from the acquisition of approximately 200-acres to the southeast by the City. The intent of the purchase was to develop a land fill, this however fell through posing a potential opportunity for a park development. It is recommended in the Facility Chapter that this land be sold and not developed as parkland.

The Future Land Use map identifies potential park and open space areas. The map provides a general reference for where parks could be located to best serve proposed and existing development and utilize natural resources. For example, riparian areas or flood plains are excellent parkland as intensive forms of development are prohibited and hike and bike trails in green ways provide connectivity through the community and access to nature.

CONCLUSION

The Future Land Use plan is intended as a guideline for where new development is desired. The map identifies where different uses should be located based on community desires, current land uses, existing and planned infrastructure, and other factors. In order to be effective, city leaders must commit to utilizing this plan in making their development decisions. Growth will happen, this plan offers an opportunity to guide that growth and ensure maximum benefit to Brenham.

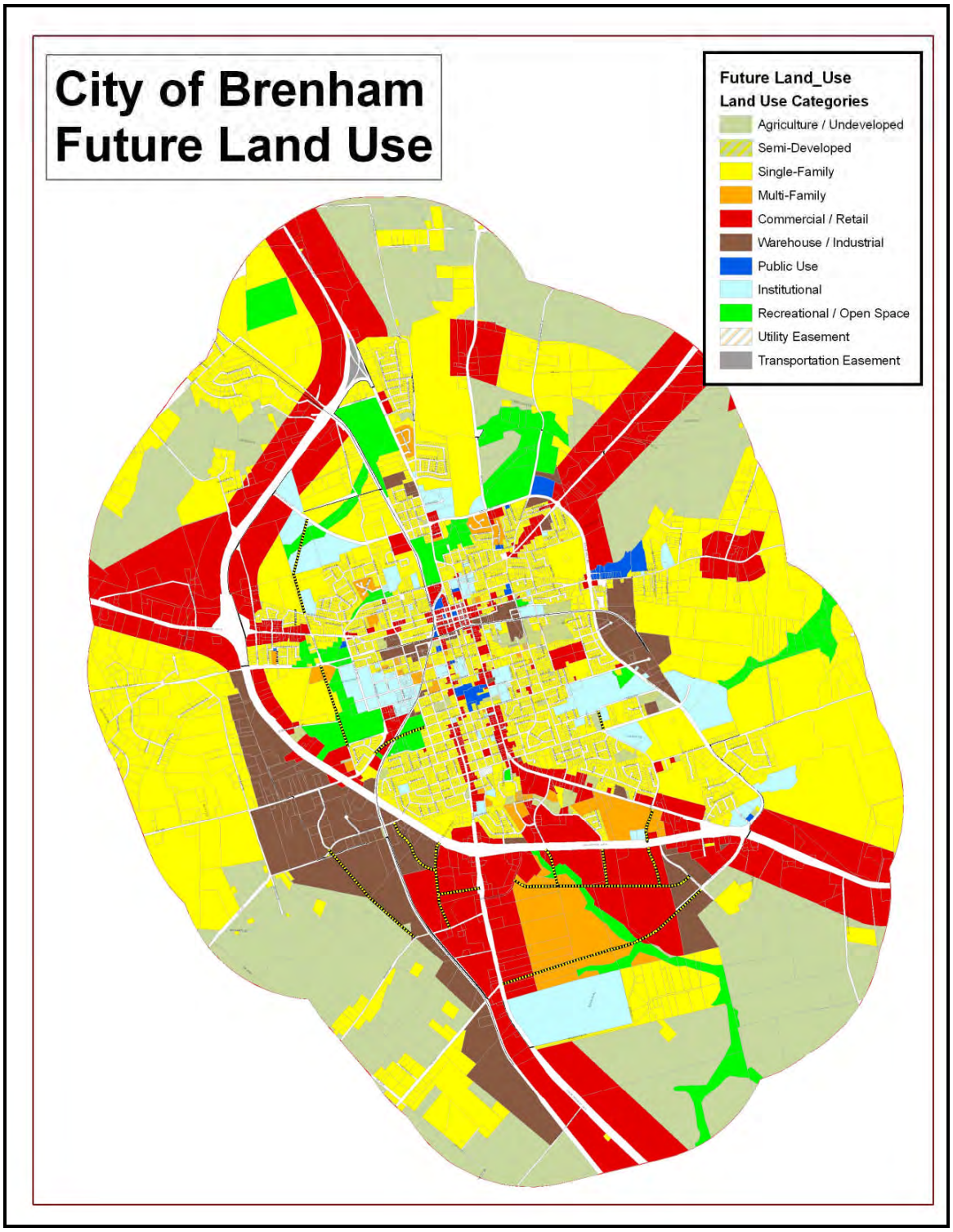


Illustration 6-5: The Future Land Use map for the City of Brenham illustrates desired growth patterns over the next 15 to twenty years.

THOROUGHFARE STUDY

The Thoroughfare Plan guides the development of a safe and efficient street network that facilitates the expedient movement of people and goods throughout a community. Effective thoroughfare planning ensures the capacity of the roadways match the needs of adjacent, existing land use and anticipates future demand.

Traffic volume in Brenham has increased significantly over the last five to ten years, bringing with it congestion and safety concerns. Table 7-1: Traffic Counts, 1992 to 2006 (p. 7-9) provides a detailed tabulation of the increase in traffic counts on major and minor arterials in Brenham. For example, traffic volume at US 290 and S. Day Street alone almost doubled increasing from 15,600 to 29,000 vehicles per day.

The increase in traffic volume is one issue facing the City. In order to study and identify all the problems with the street network a Transportation Focus Group (TFG) was formed. The TFG cast a wide net to garner as much information about the street network as possible. Their analysis incorporated the results of a city-wide survey and town hall meetings, previous transportation studies, city staff and TxDOT expertise, and their own intimate knowledge of the network. This chapter offers a prioritized list of the problems and a plan to meet the transportation challenges facing Brenham.

The street network is truly the frame work from which a town is built around. It is important that the network provide safe access to all developed areas within the community. Roadways are also a tool to establish the type and location of new development. Therefore, it is reasonable that the primary issues identified in this plan deal with safety and access. Typically, the goals of a thoroughfare plan can be placed in one of the following categories.

Existing Corridor Extensions: Traffic volumes in Brenham are growing, both in the local street network and on the regional highways on its periphery. Within the next five years the City will need to construct new roadways and extensions of existing roadways to ensure access throughout the community and within the region.

Street Network Projects: There are sections of the local street network that require realigning, additional signage, and reconstruction to improve safety and level of service.

Future Thoroughfare Corridors: As Brenham grows the street network will expand to connect existing development with future development. The City can establish where corridors or ROW will be dedicated to ensure safe, adequate access to future development.

PRIORITIES

#1 - F.M. 389 Extension to Tom Green: The idea to extend FM 389 through Jackson Park to Tom Green has been on the table since the 1967 comprehensive plan. What makes this project particularly pressing at this point in time is the proposed location of the substation for the Fire Department and EMS on the west side of US290 in the western section of the community. The City lacks an east to west cross-town route to provide fast access to the eastern section of the community from the proposed location of the EMS. The specter of a train breaking down blocking existing east to west routes creates additional concern and import to the extension of FM 389.

Extending F.M. 389 would also allow truck traffic to be routed around Blinn College. Currently, trucks travel through the campus area to access the Brenham

Wholesale warehouse and other locations. Extending F.M. 389 would allow trucks to travel east to Jackson St. then north to the warehouse.

Key Concerns:

1. The resistance to dividing a park with a thoroughfare and adding additional traffic to Tom Green will be substantial. However, identifying additional parkland to offset the loss and planning traffic calming methods for Tom Green may mitigate some of the concern.
2. Cost and buy-in by the railroad to construct a grade separated crossing.

#2 - 290 Corridor: Improvements to the 290 corridor from SH 36 to Blue Bell Road are key to the development of Brenham. Within the planning period the city and county are providing approximate $3.5 million to partner with TxDOT to convert the US 290 frontage roads to one way, establish a grade separated crossing from north to south across the freeway, and reconfigure signage and access to the commercial enterprises in the corridor. The City commissioned Wilson and Company and O'Malley Engineers to conduct a study on the corridor, *US 290 Frontage Road and Access Management Plan, 2006*. The City should rely upon the conclusions and recommendations of that report, which align with the key concerns of the Transportation Focus Group.

Key Concerns:

1. TxDOT's planned location for the grade separated crossing at Blue Bell Rd does not provide the same level of access and opportunity for development as the location of Stringer Street; therefore, Stringer Street should be considered for a future grade separation crossing.
2. The US 290 frontage roads on the east-side of the Burlington Northern Santa Fe railway tracks should connect to the west-side frontage roads

and be similarly reconfigured to one-way. Currently, TXDOT's US 290 project design does not prescribe extending the one-way frontage roads across the railroad tracks. This will negatively impact the development of the US 290 corridor west of the railroad tracks, and access to the city's street network.

3. The corridor must provide adequate connection between the existing street network to the north of U.S. 290 to future backage roads to the south of U.S. 290 to facilitate commercial, multi- and single- family development (the system of backage roads is described later in this chapter).

#3 - Austin and Day Offset: *Transportation Study, 1998* (Pledger Kalkomey, Inc) illustrates two crossover routes to eliminate this offset, which slows traffic considerably on one of the communities' minor arterials. City staff recommended a crossover route from Day to Austin north of Charles Lewis through the drainageway.

Key Concerns:

1. Cost
2. Use of eminent domain

#4 - N. and S. Saeger Street Extension. The construction of North Saeger from Blue Bell to FM 389 is another idea that's been on the table since 1967. Currently, growth within the community has made undeveloped land a scarce commodity. Constructing N. Saeger in particular would open up some of the last remaining undeveloped land within the US290/Blue Bell Rd. Moreover, there is interest in locating an elementary school in the area as well. A South Saeger would provide access to land owned by Blinn College providing them an opportunity to expand.

Key Concerns:

1. If N. Saeger is built that the partnerships are in place to ensure development will follow.
2. Blinn College would benefit from the construction of the roadway extension of S. Saeger; however, there is concern that right-of-way would affect the Prairie Lea Cemetery. Consensus needs to be reached between all parties in order to implement this project.

Westwood Lane: Westwood Lane connects to US 290 in an area of intense commercial development (Westwood Cinema III). Cars are forced to negotiate two to three lanes of heavy traffic when taking a left (eastbound) on Westwood without traffic control. A sophisticated solution is required, because simply installing a four-way traffic light may cause backups on US290 that compromise the safety of travelers on that roadway. One solution, offered during the TFG meeting, is to build a relief road north from Westwood Lane to Dixie Road providing traffic a loop out of the area. However, Westwood Lane is not in the City limits and any solution may be difficult due to the diminished availability of state funding.

Key Concerns:

1. The area is not in the City limits
2. As stated above, the solution must solve the problem without creating more traffic problems.
3. The City will construct a water tower in the area, which will facilitate additional development. The solution must be far reaching and be integrated into a long term traffic and land use plan for the area.

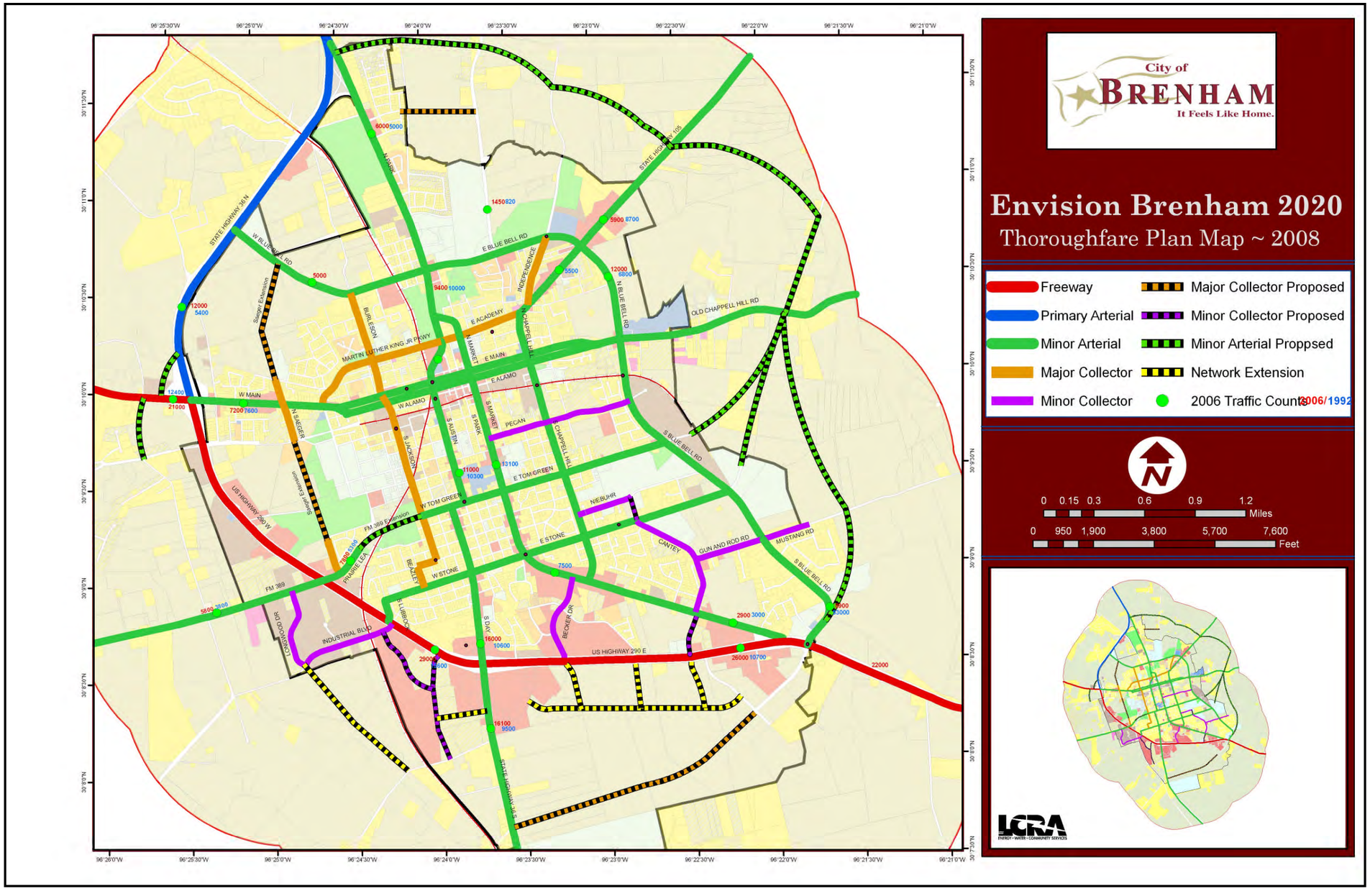
SH 105 at Blue Bell Road: Construction of Blue Bell Rd connecting US 290 to SH36 brought commercial, residential and institutional development to the

eastern sector of the city, as well as increased traffic. SH 105 is a primary entrance to the City from Blue Bell Rd and a series of improvements are proposed to ensure adequate capacity to handle the volume including widening the lanes, increasing turning radii, and modifying the intersections at Academy and Chappell Hill Street.

Existing roadway maintenance and upgrade ($3.0 million) and current road extensions City staff estimate that current projects for repair and maintenance to the street network is an estimated three million dollars (2008). Maintaining safe, quality street network is an important goal for the City; therefore, creating a prioritized street maintenance plan and identifying funding methods (general funds, separate street maintenance fund, or bonds) is key to the overall thoroughfare plan.

THOROUGHFARE PLAN MAP

The following Thoroughfare Plan Map illustrates the location of the thoroughfares in the community by functional classification (major arterial, minor arterial, freeway, and local collector). The map also illustrates the location for potential street extensions and future roadway corridors.


City of
BRENHAM
It Feels Like Home.
Envision Brenham 2020
Thoroughfare Plan Map ~ 2008
Freeway
Primary Arterial
Minor Arterial
Major Collector
Minor Collector
Major Collector Proposed
Minor Collector Proposed
Minor Arterial Proppsed
Network Extension
2006 Traffic Counts 2006/1992
0 0.15 0.3 0.6 0.9 1.2
Miles
0 950 1,900 3,800 5,700 7,600
Feet
LCRA
STATE HIGHWAY 36 N
W BLUE BELL RD
E BLUE BELL RD
N BLUE BELL RD
S BLUE BELL RD
OLD CHAPPELL HILL RD
MARTIN LUTHER KING JR PKWY
E ACADEMY
E MAIN
W MAIN
E ALAMO
W ALAMO
S MARKET
PECAN
E TOM GREEN
W TOM GREEN
E STONE
W STONE
NIEBUHR
CANTEY
GUN AND ROD RD
MUSTANG RD
US HIGHWAY 290 W
FM 389 Expansion
FM 389
PRAIRIE LEA
INDUSTRIAL BLVD
US HIGHWAY 290 E
STATE HIGHWAY 36 S
S DIX
BECKER DR
S LIBERTY
S JACKSON
S AUSTIN
S PARK
CHAPPELL HILL
INDEPENDENCE
BURLESON
N MAIN
N SAUER
Sauer Extension
Loop Extension
CONSHOCKO DR
96°26'0"W
96°25'30"W
96°25'0"W
96°24'30"W
96°24'0"W
96°23'30"W
96°23'0"W
96°22'30"W
96°22'0"W
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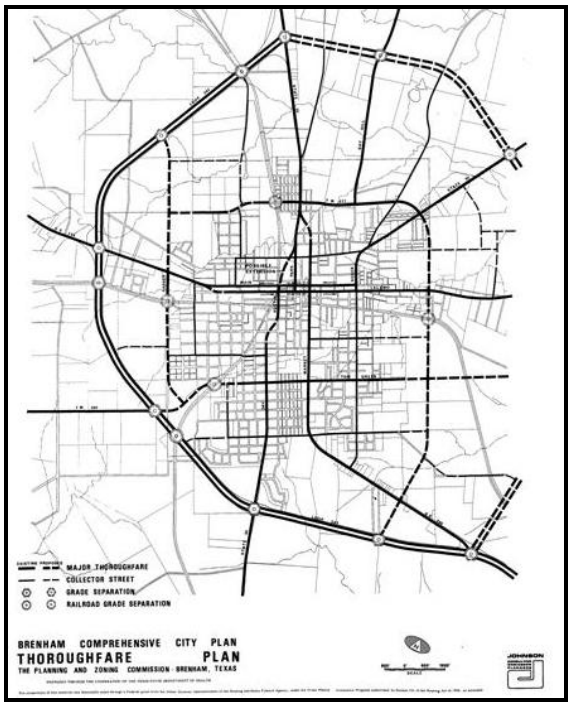
30°11'30"N
30°11'0"N
30°10'30"N
30°10'0"N
30°9'30"N
30°9'0"N
30°8'30"N
30°8'0"N

PREVIOUS STUDIES

The following section provides summaries of the previous studies conducted on the city of Brenham's transportation system. These studies have been scanned and can be viewed in their entirely on a separate compact disc included with this document.

City of Brenham, Comprehensive Plan, 1967 (Johnson Consulting Engineers & Planners): In 1967, the City's thoroughfare system problems included: 1) high levels of traffic congestion in the Central Business District (CBD); 2) Lack of proper traffic controls; 3) Offsets of connecting streets between subdivisions. The US 290 by-pass was complete and helped alleviate the traffic congestion within the CBD; however, parking, insufficient paving width, and multiple turns continued to slow traffic in the downtown. The image below, *Thoroughfare Plan Map,* illustrates the basic proposals from the plan such as an eastern loop (unbuilt), Blue Bell Road (built), F.M. 389 extension (unbuilt), grade separated crossing at Stringer Road (unbuilt), Tom Green extension (built), and N. & S. Saeger Lane extensions (unbuilt).



City of Brenham, Texas *Comprehensive Plan, 2005*: In 1995, the City of Brenham developed a Thoroughfare Plan as part of its overall comprehensive plan. The Thoroughfare Plan included an analysis of the level of service (LOS) on the significant intersections and segments of roadway throughout the transportation system. LOS is the qualitative measurement of the efficiency the roadway based the relationship of the volume of traffic to the capacity of the roadway. LOS tells us about traffic speed and travel time, freedom to maneuver, traffic interruptions, comfort and convenience, and safety of a segment of roadway. LOS is qualified using a ranking system where "A" is best and "E" worst. In the 1995 plan, LOS "C" is considered the minimal desired capacity.

Table 7-1 Traffic Counts shows how traffic has increased on segments of roadway in Brenham. Clearly, the greatest increase is on the peripheral arterials – US290, SH36, and Blue Bell Rd (FM577). Interestingly, some of the interior thoroughfares such as W. Main and Market actually have seen a decrease in the traffic counts.

Table 7-1: Traffic Counts, 1992 to 2006

			Traffic Counts		
PrimRd	Rd_Seg	Class	1992	2006	Difference
US 290	West of Blue Bell RD	Frwy	10,700	26,000	15,300
US 290	West of Day	Frwy	15,600	29,000	13,400
US 290	South of West Main	Frwy	12,400	21,000	8,600
SH 36	South of US 290	Mart	9,500	16,100	6,600
SH 36	North of West Main	Part	5,400	12,000	6,600
Blue Bell Road	South of SH 105	Mart	6,800	12,800	6,000
Blue Bell Road	East of SH 36	Mart	5,900	11,600	5,700
S. Day St	North of US 290	Mart	10,600	16,000	5,400
SH 105	W. of Blue Bell Road	MajCol	8,700	12,700	4,000
Blue Bell Road	North of US 290	Mart	5,300	8,900	3,600

PrimRd	Rd_Seg	Class	1992	2006	Difference
FM 389	East US 290	MajCol	5,300	7,800	2,500
Austin Parkway	South of Blue Bell	Mart	7,300	9,400	2,100
FM 389	W. of US 290	MajCol	3,800	5,800	2,000
Austin Parkway	South of SH 36	Mart	5,000	6,100	1,100
S. Austin Street	College/FM 389	Mart	10,300	11,000	700
FM 2935	N. of Blue Bell Road	Mart	820	1,450	630
West Main/Alamo	East of Market	Mart	7,200	7,600	400
SH 105	East of Blue Bell Road	Mart	5,500	5,900	400
S. Market St	W. of 577	Mart	3,000	2,900	-100
West Main	East of 290	Mart	7,600	7,200	-400
S. Market St	South of Stone	Mart	7,500	7,100	-400
West Main/Alamo	West of Market	Mart	10,000	8,300	-1,700
S. Market St	College/FM 389	Mart	13,100	11,000	-2,100

Functional Class Key:

Frwy - Freeway
Part – Principal Arterial
Mart – Minor Arterial
MajCol – Major Collector
MinColl – Minor Collector

Public opinion - garnered through focus groups and the town hall meetings - refutes the idea that traffic has lessened within the CBD or any interior cross-town route. The high level of congestion in the CBD noted in 1967 is still a concern; however, this may not mean that the traffic count data is incorrect. Instead, other factors may contribute to the congestion: 1) increased traffic on the periphery has substantially slowed egress and ingress into the community creating bottlenecks at intersections along US290, SH 36, SH105 and Blue Bell Road; 2) increased commercial activity along interior thoroughfares and downtown has brought additional truck traffic and deliveries; and, 3) changes in land use, such as constructing the elementary school on the east side at a distance from residential uses, increases local cross-town traffic, which would slow the north to south cross-town routes. All of these factors are decreasing the level of service without necessarily meaning additional traffic counts.

Table 7-2: Traffic Flow Projections in LOS reinforces the idea that congestion is occurring at the intersection of the cross-town routes and the circumferential routes. The area of the worst LOS is SH105 at Blue Bell Road and FM 389 at US 290 is a problem area as well.

Table 7-2 Traffic Flow Projections in LOS

				LOS				
PrimRd	Rd_Seg	Class	LOS "E" Capacity	1992		2006		Difference
SH 105	W. of Blue Bell Road	MajCol	11000	0.79	C	1.15	E	0.36
S. Austin Street	College/FM 389	Mart	14000	0.74	C	0.79	C	0.05
FM 389	East US 290	MajCol	11000	0.48	A	0.71	C	0.23
Austin Parkway	South of Blue Bell	Mart	14000	0.52	A	0.67	B	0.15
Blue Bell Road	South of SH 105	Mart	21000	0.32	A	0.61	B	0.29
Blue Bell Road	East of SH 36	Mart	21000	0.28	A	0.55	A	0.27
FM 389	W. of US 290	MajCol	11000	0.35	A	0.53	A	0.18
S. Market St	College/FM 389	Mart	21000	0.62	B	0.52	A	-0.10
W. Main	East of 290	Mart	14000	0.54	A	0.51	A	-0.03
US 290	W. of Day	Frwy	58000	0.27	A	0.50	A	0.23
SH 36	South of US 290	Mart	35000	0.27	A	0.46	A	0.19
S. Day St	North of US 290	Mart	35000	0.30	A	0.46	A	0.15
US 290	W. of BLUE BELL ROAD	Frwy	58000	0.18	A	0.45	A	0.26
SH 105	East of Blue Bell Road	Mart	14000	0.39	A	0.42	A	0.03
SH 36	North of W. Main	Part	29000	0.19	A	0.41	A	0.23
US 290	South of W. Main	Frwy	58000	0.21	A	0.36	A	0.15
W. Main/Alamo	W. of Market	Mart	28000	0.36	A	0.30	A	-0.06
W. Main/Alamo	East of Market	Mart	28000	0.26	A	0.27	A	0.01
S. Market St	South of Stone	Mart	28000	0.27	A	0.25	A	-0.01
S. Market St	W. of 577	Mart	28000	0.11	A	0.10	A	0.00
FM 2935	North of Blue Bell Road	Mart	14000	0.06	A	0.10	A	0.05

Transportation Study, 1998 (Pledger Kalkomey, Inc): Conducted in August of 1998 provides a comprehensive analysis of the City's thoroughfare network including eliciting public input to identify problem intersections and other issues. The study provided detailed solutions with cost estimates to problem traffic areas throughout the street network. Most of the recommendations in that report are still relevant despite being written 10 years prior.

Using the Transportation Study and input from the town hall meetings as a starting point the Transportation Study focus group updated the list of problem traffic areas. The result of this effort are provided in the subsection "Problem Traffic Areas", which include the intersection, problem, solution and where the problem was identified – its source. The problem areas are identified in order of priority.

US 290 Frontage Road and Access Management Plan, 2006 (Wilson & Company and O'Malley Engineers): This report is a thorough analysis of the 290 corridor from the frontage roads of Old Mill Creek Road to Blue Bell Rd. The analysis covers all aspects of the development of this corridor including the location for extending existing roads in the network and creating new ones to facilitate growth and ensure adequate level of service in the corridor. While some recommendations from this study at times reiterate projects identified since the 1967 comprehensive plan, there are proposals for the logical development of the land south and east of US 290.

PROBLEM TRAFFIC AREAS:

What follows is a list of the problem traffic areas identified in the previous studies that were vetted by the TFG and determined important enough to include in the comprehensive plan for the City. Where the source is noted as the

Transportation Study (1998) a much greater level of detail regarding the solution and costs can be found in that study.

Austin Street at Main &Alamo Streets

Problem #1: Southbound Austin Street traffic has a difficult time taking a left hand turn onto Alamo.

Solution: Install left-hand turn signal at Main St. and Austin St. and Alamo St and Austin St.

Problem #2: People run the stop sign at Austin and Main because they are concentrating on the next intersection at Alamo.

Solution: Install a larger stop sign for south bound Austin.

Source: Transportation Committee (2007) and Transportation Study (1998)

South Day from Tom Green to 290

Problem: Traffic is slow and difficult to cross.

Solution: Install continuous left hand turn lane from Tom Green Street to 290

Source: Transportation Committee (2007)

Seward and Main

Problem: Overflow parking at Seward and Main causes slow traffic and creates an unsafe area for pedestrians.

Solution: Install no parking signs along Main and work with the owner's of Manuel's to discourage the practice.

Source: Townhall Meetings (2007)

SH 36 and North Park Road

Problem: Confusing confluence of the two roads and high speeds.

Solution: Reconfiguration of the intersection and signage – requires further study and partnership with TxDOT.

Source: Transportation Committee (2007)

Market Street intersections from Pecan to Becker

Problem: Offsets between east-west roads create difficult and confusing intersections.

Solution: See Transportation Study (1998)

Source: Townhall Meetings (2007) and Transportation Study (1998)

Academy Street at North Park Street

Problem: Difficult to take a left-hand turn across Park from Academy

Solution: Provide left turn lane for westbound approach on Academy Street.

Source: Transportation Study (1998)

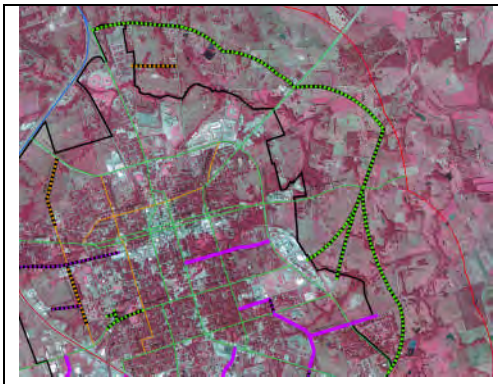
PROPOSED CORRIDORS AND EXTENSIONS

290 Corridor - Stringer Street Extension

Extend Stringer Street to meet S. Chappell and construct an overpass across 290 to connect to development south of US290. The placement of the overpasses connecting from the north to the south side of 290 is

	290 Corridor - Backage Roads south of US290 between Blue Bell and S. SH 36 Construct backage roads to connect with Stringer and Cantey. These roads will create the framework for the commercial and mixed-use

	F.M. 389 Corridor Street extensions in the west side of the community include extending FM 389 to Tom Green, Saeger from Blue Bell to Farewell, and Old Mill and Old Country to 290.

	**East Loop:** Establishes a corridor to the east of Blue Bell Road. Tom Green and Stone would extend to connect with this loop.

SUMMARY

Over the next five to ten years traffic volume within and on the periphery of the City of Brenham will increase. Regional traffic between Houston-Galveston MSA and the Austin and San Antonio MSAs will only get heavier. The projected population increase will mean more cars on the city's roadways. In the short-term, the City of Brenham is working in partnership with TxDOT and the county for the successful reconfiguration of the US 290 corridor. Eliminating the two-way frontage roads will increase safety and access to the commercial development in the area. The remaining thoroughfare priorities - in particular the FM 389 extension - are no less important; however, the barriers to execution are perhaps greater and will require a significant amount of time and effort to fund, design, and receive local buy-in.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STUDY

The Brenham Economic Development Foundation (EDF) and Chamber of Commerce are extremely active in promoting Brenham as a business and tourist destination. The EDF works closely with existing industrial and manufacturing businesses to ensure there successful and to keep them in Brenham. Rather than creating another economic development plan, this will be left to these organizations and the plans they have developed. The recommendations identified in this plan relate to implementing existing plans and better incorporating the airport into economic development activities.

Economic development has changed over the years from focusing solely on business recruitment to a more holistic approach that incorporates tourism, and especially business retention and expansion. An often overlooked statistic is that typically 80 percent of new jobs come from existing businesses expanding not new businesses relocating into the community. The EDF and Chamber have grasped this new reality and are actively working with local businesses to ensure they are successful and that tourism is growing in Brenham.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The city's role in economic development should be to support the EDF and the Chamber in their efforts to promote business. Rather than trying to have a parallel economic development program or competing efforts it will be more effective for the city to support the Chamber and EDF in their efforts. This may take the form of financial support or, more importantly, policy support, such as an incentive policy that is appropriate and serves existing and prospective businesses.

SUPPORT THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION

As mentioned, the EDF has recently completed work on a Target Business Analysis which identifies appropriate businesses for the EDF to target in a marketing campaign. In addition, they have completed a Business Retention and Expansion plan to identify how existing businesses can be better served. The city should work with the EDF to determine what role it can play in implementing these plans.

City Leaders Should Regularly Meet With Area businesses and Owners

One area where city leadership is key is in establishing good relationships with existing employers. City leaders should be active in meeting business owners and learning about their business. This shows the business they are respected and supported by the community. It also allows the business owners to know they have a contact with the city when issues arise. Economic development is spurred by growing local businesses more than recruitment, so every effort should be made to support existing businesses.

Continue to Support the Workforce Maximization Program

A common issue identified by employers is the lack of available workforce. The low unemployment in Brenham means that businesses may struggle to fill available positions and may not be able to expand due to limited workforce. One tool that is being implemented is the workinbreham.com website. This site allows employers to post positions and is a portal for area job searching. The city should actively participate in this website and utilize it for all city job postings. This would help drive traffic to the site and make it more successful overall.

Provide Community Education About Local Businesses and Employment Opportunities

The city should also work with the EDF and Brenham ISD to spread the word about employment opportunities. Young people are often unfamiliar with the role of city government and the variety of jobs available. By educating young people, the city will be building a future workforce that will be needed.

The Banner Press currently runs business profiles regularly that highlight a local business. This educates citizens on the employment opportunities, as well as services and goods being produced in the area. This is not a city function per se, but should be supported. Teacher education is another opportunity to spread the word of local businesses. If teachers knew what businesses did and what skills were need by prospective employees they could tailor programs to address those needs as well as inform students of opportunities.

DEVELOP ADDITIONAL UNRESTRICTED INDUSTRIAL SITES

Brenham's existing unrestricted industrial park is full and there is limited available land for new industrial uses. The future land use plan identifies areas that may be suitable for this type of development. The city can potentially participate as a funding partner in land acquisition and development, or by providing in kind services of installing utilities and roads. Having an identified industrial area is important to minimize encroachment from incompatible uses (such as homes) and to maintain a stable price for the land. As development occurs land prices can be pushed out of reach of industrial users making it unfeasible for them to move into an area.

CONSIDER ESTABLISHING DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Commercial districts can also benefit from design standards, particularly those that are adjacent to or within primarily residential areas. These smaller scale retail and office districts are not intended as major commercial centers and with good design can easily be a valued part of a neighborhood rather than an intrusion as would a poorly designed center. Design guidelines should address such issues as requiring a percentage of building frontage to be masonry or brick, prohibiting metal buildings when visible from a street, and other requirements. These commercial centers should be designed to front onto the street with minimal setbacks rather than being set off the road behind a parking lot. This interaction with the street and adequate sidewalks will enhance pedestrian access and appearance. In addition, commercial centers should 'cluster' access points to minimize curb cuts onto the street which increases congestion and reduces safety. In addition to setbacks, building material and signage is important. Illustration 6-1 is an example of a retail center that is not appropriate for a neighborhood area.

Illustration 6-1

This type of development may be appropriate on a major highway, it should not be allowed on a collector or arterial in town.

Illustration 6-2 is an example of retail development that is appropriate along a collector or arterial in a more residential area. This type of development does not have to be an interruption of the fabric of the area, rather it can enhance it. Retail that is accessible without a vehicle will benefit the city in many ways, including reduced traffic, cleaner air, and foster a sense of community in the neighborhood by creating a gathering place.

Illustration 6-2

SUPPORT THE CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU AND CHAMBER OF COMMERCE IN IMPLEMENTING THE TOURISM ASSESSMENT

LCRA recently worked with the Chamber to conduct a county-wide tourism assessment. This assessment led to a series of recommendations to enhance tourism throughout Washington County. Because Brenham is the key player in the county, it should support the implementation of this plan. Visitors to Washington County will likely stay in Brenham, thus contributing more to the local economy. The city should work closely with the Chamber to ensure it is an

active partner in increasing tourism in Brenham because of the many benefits it will have on the local economy.

Continue to pursue a County-wide Hotel Occupancy Tax

The City of Brenham has a Hotel Occupancy tax that helps fund tourism related activities in the community. This tax is a tremendous asset for the community because it brings in additional revenues from visitors rather than being an additional tax on residents of the area. The tax supports tourism activities that benefit the entire County; however, it is only collected from businesses in the city limits of Brenham. If the tax were County-wide it would provide even more funding for the Washington County Chamber of Commerce and Convention and Visitor's Bureau which would allow them to provide additional services and marketing to attract even more visitors to the area. The community should work with the tourism businesses and CVB to promote this to County leadership to encourage them to adopt the tax across the County.

Maximize use of the 'Birthplace of Texas' slogan

During the tourism assessment, participants were asked what the local 'tagline' was. Many identified 'Birthplace of Texas' but it was not consistently recognized as the community tagline. The historic significance of Brenham and Washington County is a tremendous asset and this slogan captures that importance. The community should embrace this slogan and capitalize on it to market the area. If all entities and businesses were on the same page it would reinforce the unique character of the area and create a strong brand for marketing Brenham and Washington County.

Pursue an Investment in Public Relations

The Convention and Visitors Bureau has contracted with a firm to promote Brenham to travel writers and others. This program will bring writers into the

community and allow them to visit the area and enjoy the attractions. This will result in travel articles and write ups in various magazines across the region and country. This kind of promotion is tremendously important to promoting Brenham as a destination.

Another investment in public relations would be to focus on developing local relationships and educating residents, businesses, etc. on the role and responsibility of the Chamber of Commerce and Convention and Visitors Bureau. This outreach would help to inform people of what this group does and how important they are in providing economic development to the community. It also would help in the effort to promote the County-wide Hotel Occupancy Tax because residents would understand how it can benefit them by attracting additional visitors who bring additional money into Brenham. Public relations is a critical investment to show the value of the Chamber and CVB and should not be left as an afterthought.

SUPPORT RETAIL DEVELOPMENT

Retail development is an often overlooked but important aspect of economic development. Retail brings in sales tax dollars which are key to funding local government. It can also enhance quality of life by providing goods and services locally and reducing the need for citizens to travel elsewhere for them.

<u>The Chamber of Commerce Should Establish a Retail Development Task Force</u>

The Chamber of Commerce is tasked with supporting local businesses. It may seem counterintuitive to have the Chamber work to bring new retail business in; however, it should be viewed as making the economic pie bigger rather than cutting the existing pie into smaller pieces.

The task force should include representatives from the Chamber, EDF, local business owners and developers to ensure a broad range of opinions. The group should start by identifying barriers to retail development and then focus on strategies to address those barriers. By having a diverse group it will build support and enthusiasm for any work that needs to be done.

Consider a Retail Incentive Policy

Many communities have begun offering incentives for retail development. This is not to say that incentives should be given to any fast food restaurant that opens its doors. Incentives should be targeted to those developments that provide more to the community. This may include development that has a strong design component or incorporates open space and landscaping or other amenities. As with any incentive policy it must be structured to protect the city's interest. This includes 'clawback' provisions that will force the return of public money if benchmarks are not met.

Incentives can include assistance with infrastructure costs, tax abatements or tax rebates. In Austin, a portion of the sales tax being generated by The Domain, a mixed use retail center, is being rebated to the developer in exchange for a percentage of apartments being set aside as affordable housing. The policy should encourage retail development that benefits the city, not just the developer.

INCORPORATE THE AIRPORT INTO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

The airport did not receive much discussion during this planning process; however, it presents a tremendous opportunity for Brenham. It already serves as a destination for visitors who come simply to eat at the diner on property. Businesses will appreciate the availability of an airport and the property around

the airport may be suitable for some level of development to support new businesses. There are a number of small aviation businesses in Texas and the nation that can be attracted to Brenham and the available land near the airport.

There is an Airport Development Plan that was developed in 2005 and this should serve as the basis for improving the airport. The city and EDF should work together to ensure the airport is incorporated into economic development activities and becomes a key element in attracting new business to Brenham.

CONCLUSION

Brenham is fortunate to have a strong foundation towards a sustainable economy. There is a variety of quality jobs in the tourism, service, and manufacturing sectors that contribute to a diverse economy. This diversity helps Brenham weather the ups and downs of economic trends because it is not dependent on any one sector of the economy. The EDF and Chamber work closely to position Brenham as a destination and have a strategic vision to building the local economy. The city should support these efforts as much as possible because of the positive impacts it will have on the community. In addition, other aspects of this comprehensive plan will help support economic development, such as increasing housing opportunities and improving the quality of life through community development. As this plan is implemented Brenham will continue to build its economy and enjoy on-going success.

FACILITIES

Brenham is a community that provides excellent amenities and facilities for its citizens. Citizens have access to a variety of parks with a range of activities, a state of the art aquatics center, a senior center that provides excellent service, among other facilities. The community is blessed with a strong quality of life, the vast majority of homes are well maintained, community appearance is high, and public safety is a priority.

This high quality of life is what has made Brenham an attractive destination for businesses and people leaving the big city for a quieter lifestyle. The recommendations in this plan will build on the strengths Brenham has to ensure the high quality of life is maintained in the face of expected growth and changing demographics.

Brenham is fortunate to have a strong planning process in place for community facilities. There is a Parks Commission that has developed a Park and Open Space Master Plan. This should be the basis for park planning into the future. There is a task force with representatives from the Parks Commission, the Senior Center, and other groups working to determine how best to serve the needs of the citizens with a new facility. This group can lead the charge for the development of an integrated Community Center that incorporates an expanded library, a Recreation Center, and a Senior Center. A project of this scope will require involvement from the entire community, not just city government, and if designed properly will become a treasured asset to Brenham.

RECOMMENDATIONS

As mentioned, Brenham has existing plans for most of its community facilities. These plans have been developed to meet the expected needs of the community and should be the basis for work in the future. The recommendations identified here are intended to support the goals of the existing plans rather than replacing them. They are based on the survey and Town Hall meetings conducted as part of the plan development and have citizen support to implement. The existing Task Force should take the lead in moving this effort forward because they have already done some work towards this goal and have representation of the existing groups.

SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PARKS MASTER PLAN

The Parks Master Plan is a detailed document that includes an implementation guide with a Target Budget Year identified for each item on the project list. The city should utilize this document as it does its budget planning each year to ensure the plan is implemented. Many of the projects identified are not high dollar items and would immediately have an impact on park safety and accessibility. This includes the installation of automatic external defibrillators in parks, adding a lightning detector at the baseball field, and construction an arched entrance feature at Park Street in Fireman's Park. These 'low hanging' fruit are projects that will have an immediate impact and show that Brenham is committed to moving forward with actually implementing its plans. This will build community support and enthusiasm for longer term, more expensive projects that need to be undertaken.

CONSIDER DEVELOPMENT OF A FACILITY THAT COMBINES A COMMUNITY CENTER, SENIOR CENTER, AND LIBRARY

The Senior Center is in 'borrowed' facilities and would benefit from a permanent home. The Center currently serves hundreds of residents each week with meals,

activities, trips, etc. and continues to grow. Its current location is adequate in size, parking, and location; however, because it belongs to the school district, which has its own plans, the Senior Center is limited in its planning for the future.

The Library will soon reach its capacity and need to expand. The Library's strategic plan identifies issues with its current capacity and location as well as opportunities. Its current location makes it problematic that it could expand due to limited space on the lot. It is also in a very busy area with high traffic that can be a problem for elderly and young patrons who do not drive. A new location would allow the library to meet its growing needs and provide better service to Brenham residents. The library has a plan to create a facility that incorporates a kitchen, meeting facilities, and other amenities that will serve the community more than just providing books and computer access.

Finally, a Community Center is an issue identified by many residents as a need. The center could incorporate large rooms suitable for meetings and receptions, etc. A full service kitchen would be a tremendous asset in attracting meetings, receptions, etc. that will help offset the costs of the facility.

The benefits of developing a unified facility are that the costs can be reduced because only one property will need to be purchased. Also, rather than having three facilities, each with their own kitchens, restrooms, etc. a single facility will combine these things, thus reducing costs. In addition, the facility will get use throughout the day and evening thus making it more cost effective to operate. Common areas can be used by Seniors during the day, then opened up to youth and community activities in the evening. Also, a center would create a new 'place' in the community where people can gather and interact which will strengthen the community and enhance quality of life.

Research Other Communities Facilities and Success Stories

Other communities have been very successful in developing community centers along the lines of what Brenham is attempting. One facility that has been a great success is the Galloway-Hammond Recreation Center in Burnet, TX. This facility offers an indoor swimming pool and full gym with ball courts, weight room, cardio equipment and programming. The center was built by a non-profit group that raised money through grants, sponsorships, 'Buy-a-Brick' programs, and other sources. Once the facility was built it was turned over to the City of Burnet to staff and manage. The non-profit has a continuing role in supporting the center through fundraising to help offset the costs. This type of partnership could be a model for Brenham because the entire cost of the facility was not borne by the city government.

Another example is the City of Loveland, CO, which has a campus that contains the library, community center (with recreation and senior center), City Hall, and an outdoor amphitheatre / fountain. The facility is on approximately 14 acres near downtown Loveland. The library includes a coffee shop and meeting room, while the community center offers a range of activities and classes serving young and old. The recreation center offers memberships much like a private gym and programming (such as childcare) and classes also bring in revenue. The senior center is in the same building with the recreation center but has designated rooms where activities can be held that will not be interrupted. The center is active at all times of the day, with different groups coming and going. The outdoor amphitheater allows for concerts and other gatherings to occur. It has become a center of community life and activity in Loveland.

Survey Citizens and Facility Users to Identify Their Priorities

To ensure a new facility meets citizen needs, it will be important to get their opinions. A brief survey could be created that asks users what amenities they

want to a new facility to include as well as what their current primary uses are. The survey could include questions on what would entice more people to use a new facility as well to ensure needs are met when the facility is designed.

The survey should also include a question about the location of the facility. It will be important to site on a property that allows access to all residents, including those who do not drive. It should also be in a spot that allows for future expansion. For the center to become a true asset it should be in a location where all residents can enjoy it and take advantage of the amenities it provides.

Develop a Facilities Plan

Proper planning prevents poor performance is a well known adage and it is true. Once the concept is determined it will be critical to develop a facilities plan that includes the design, budget, timeline, and other needs to develop the building. It should also include an estimate of on-going budget needs and funding requirements to ensure proper maintenance, staffing, and programming to make the facility successful. A facilities plan will likely require the involvement of an architect or other consultant to ensure it provides all necessary information. The planning process should not be rushed to avoid creating a facility that does not meet long term needs. This plan should be created in the next couple of years to move the process forward.

Develop On-going Funding Mechanism

It is always easier to find money to build something new than it is to fund on-going maintenance and operations. It will be critical to ensure on-going funding for the facility before it is developed. Washington County, Brazos Valley Council of Governments, and others all contribute funding to the library and senior center. A new facility with expanded services might encourage more funding from these entities; however, it should not be counted on unless it is secured before the facility is built.

DEVELOP A NEW ANIMAL SHELTER IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ANIMAL FRIENDS

Brenham is fortunate to have a group of committed citizens who have purchased property and raised the money to build a Spay Neuter Clinic and dog park on the northwest edge of town. This kind of citizen involvement is an asset to the community because they help provide amenities and services beyond the resources of city government. The property owned by the Animal Friends could serve as a location for a new, improved animal shelter. The existing facility is inadequate and it would be difficult to expand at its current location.

Develop a Facilities Plan

The Animal Friends have a preliminary plan for a shelter that would include educational facilities that is an estimated $4 million. It may be more appropriate in the short term to develop a less elaborate facility that is designed to allow for future expansion to accommodate education and other programs. The facilities plan will include the design, construction budget, and should have an estimate of on-going operations and maintenance costs. This will allow the city to work with its funding partners to properly fund the budget for the facility. The Animal Friends group has a successful fundraising program as demonstrated by their success in developing the Spay/Neuter Clinic and dog park. This group can be utilized to help raise money to build the shelter.

Build and Operate New Shelter

Funding to build the shelter can come from a variety of sources. As discussed above it is usually easier to find money to build something new than to maintain existing facilities. On-going funding can present a challenge, especially with staffing and maintenance. The city and county already have a funding mechanism in place and this should be reviewed to ensure it is adequate. Volunteers from the Animal Friends and other organizations may be a resource

to help reduce staff time; however, there should not be an over reliance on volunteers. This is a government function and should be funded appropriately to serve the needs of the community.

INCREASE PEDESTRIAN SAFETY AND AMENITIES

Many Brenham residents do not have access to a car; these are not just young people, but the elderly and disabled. These residents are often unable to safely access community facilities because of a lack of safe places to walk. In addition, walking is a popular form of exercise and many residents currently walk through town nearly every day. Rather than spending money to develop a walking track that is really a single purpose facility, these resources could be spent on making improvements throughout the city that will make walking an attractive option for all residents, both as exercise and access. Rising gas prices will also lead people to consider walking or bicycling for some daily tasks and providing safe access will make this more feasible for residents.

Identify Common Pedestrian Routes Through Town

The first step in developing pedestrian access is to identify where people are currently walking. Obvious destinations include schools, parks, especially the skate park, and downtown. These should be starting point for designing the pedestrian network. The future land use plan also identifies where new growth may occur that will drive additional pedestrian needs. This is especially true of residential areas which are major sources of pedestrians. The purpose in identifying where people are trying to walk to and from is critical to prioritize where improvements should be made. This will allow limited resources to be targeted to those areas most in need.

Identify and Prioritize Needed Improvements to Enhance Pedestrian Connectivity

Once the routes have been defined the next step is to determine what, if any improvements are needed. It may not be necessary to install sidewalks throughout, a simple designation (see picture) may suffice on lesser traveled roads. The idea of marking roads is to raise driver awareness that pedestrians may be present. There may be some areas of town, particularly on busy streets, that will require sidewalks or other off street facilities to accommodate pedestrians. This will require significant investment and should be considered a longer term goal for the city. New sidewalks should be installed first in those areas that will provide the most benefit.

Illustration 9-1

Lighting is another key component to pedestrian safety. This is not to say Brenham should be lit up like a stadium, but key intersections and areas should be well lit to enhance safety in the evening. This includes areas where people will tend to congregate at night, such as downtown. Directional and shielded lights can focus illumination where needed and reduced light pollution and impacts on adjacent areas.

Finally, signage and 'wayfinding' is a consideration for improving pedestrian access throughout town. Key walking routes should have signage geared toward pedestrians. This would include directional signs and possibly additional information about sites in town. Historic buildings and locations could have a kiosk explaining their significance as part of the overall wayfinding signage.

Illustration 9-2

Good signage will help visitors navigate through town and may attract them to places they would not have known to visit. It also will serve the purpose of making drivers aware that they are in a pedestrian zone and should be more careful. The idea of improving pedestrian access is to make Brenham safer for existing residents who are unable or unwilling to drive, as well as make it more attractive to visitors who want the experience of strolling through a historic community.

Identify Potential Trail Development

In addition to increasing the connectivity within the developed parts of Brenham, there are many areas that could be connected through the development of a trail network. The future land use plan identifies areas along creeks and within floodplains that are suitable for linear parks and trail development. These areas are unsuitable for other development, so it would be an effective use of this land to provide open space and increased connectivity throughout Brenham.

Identify Funding for Trail and Pedestrian Improvements

The biggest challenge to implementing these recommendations is funding. The city has limited resources to devote to projects of this type, and the necessary

improvements far exceed available money. The city should be creative in how it develops these projects and utilize a broad range of resources to pay for necessary (and desired) improvements.

One opportunity is to work with developers to encourage them to include trails and sidewalks in new development. If the city adopts a park set aside requirement in the subdivision ordinance these amenities could count towards that. Property owners could also be asked to donate easements on their property for a trail route. This would benefit the city by reducing the cost of trail development, serve as matching funds for grant applications, and the owner may receive a tax write off for the value of the donated easement. There are numerous state, federal, and private grants that can be utilized to help pay fortrails and pedestrian improvements. If the trail network connects different facilities in town, such as schools, parks, shopping, etc. they tend to score higher on many grant applications. These connections can also open the door for transportation funding that may not be available for strictly recreational trails. The resource guide included identifies grant resources the city can pursue.

Finally, local fundraising and sponsorship can be utilized. While it can be a challenge to ask citizens for funding for projects, it can be very successful. Residents, clubs, and businesses can also 'adopt' a section of trail once developed to help maintain and keep it clean. This would reduce maintenance costs for the city and increase citizen buy in for the trails. This support will keep them in better condition and encourage citizens to use the network. This use will enhance the safety of the trails as well because if people are there all the time then there will not be an opportunity for trouble makers to take advantage.

PROTECT AND ENHANCE COMMUNITY APPEARANCE

While most of this plan has focused on recreational amenities (and projects that can involve substantial financial investment) this goal will allow for action at a minimal cost. It focuses on recommendations that will protect and improve the community, making it more attractive and safe for current and potential residents. A clean, attractive community has a huge impact on the success of economic development activities and in the overall quality of life.

Strictly Enforce All Ordinances to Protect Community Appearance

The city has the authority to maintain the health and safety of the community through code enforcement. The city already is doing this and should continue to strictly enforce its ordinances. Code enforcement officials are likely aware of problem areas and properties and should focus their efforts on those areas. The 'Broken Window' theory is based on the idea that leaving small problems unresolved leads to larger issues in the community. The experiment was with two identical parked cars on the same street. When the window was broken on one vehicle it was totally stripped and vandalized overnight. The car without a broken window was not vandalized. The conclusion is that leaving small things, like a broken window, unrepaired leads to a larger breakdown.

An enforcement campaign can begin with education to inform property owners of the negative impact their property has on their neighbors. This can include letters and photographs of the offending property sent to the owners. Some communities are more aggressive and put large signs up on property that is not up to code with the owners name on it and a pronouncement that the property is not in compliance. This public shaming often has more impact than just sending letters and notices. Brenham is doing a good job in this area and should build on its success to ameliorate those remaining properties that are not in compliance.

Continue the 'Yard of the Month' Program

People want to know their efforts are appreciated, and a 'Yard of the Month' program does just that by recognizing those residential and commercial properties which go above and beyond enhancing the appearance of the community. The Garden Club has responsibility for managing this program and recognizes contest winners. This should continue to be supported by the Garden Club and the community as a whole.

EVALUATE AND EXPAND CIVIC FACILITIES AND UTLITIES TO MEET EXPECTED GROWTH

In recent years, the City of Brenham has invested in new facilities for city government that will ensure quality service to its citizens for the future. This includes City Hall, which was acquired and renovated for much less than would have been spent on new construction. This move allowed the former City Hall to be redeveloped as headquarters for the police department. These facilities are located adjacent to downtown, thus generating visitors into downtown and customers for area businesses. A new water tower is also being built on the west side of town to better serve this area. To continue serving the growing city, additional investment is needed.

Develop a Fire Station on the West Side

A new fire station is planned on the west side of US 290, thereby providing service in this area and reducing the issue of access if a train were to be blocking major intersections. Public safety is a primary function of local government, so it is critical to provide support to the fire department to ensure adequate service to all areas of the community.

SELL THE 200 ACRE FORMER POTENTIAL LANDFILL SITE

The city currently owns approximately 200 acres to the southeast of the city limits. The land is too far from existing services to cost effectively provide utilities so the city would not see a significant benefit in holding on to the property for future development. The City Council has in the past voted to sell the property and this recommendation should be strongly considered. The property could be utilized for residential development, possibly including a golf course development, or a conservation subdivision in which much of the land is preserved as community open space.

CONCLUSION

The recommendations in this plan are varied with a focus on long term improvements to the community. The majority will require a strong commitment and investment from the community as a whole to be successful. The benefit of the planning process is that the citizens have identified these projects as priorities and should support their implementation. As Brenham grows it will be important to maintain and improve the amenities that contribute to the quality of life and character of Brenham.

Goal: Establish Guidelines to Protect Established Neighborhoods

Objective: Identify Key Neighborhoods that are Appropriate for Design Guidelines

Actions	Duration	Timeline	Who's Responsible?
Begin with existing designated historic districts	3 Months	FY 2010	City Staff, Residents of identified neighborhoods
Work with property owners to identify additional neighborhoods that may be suitable	1 Year	FY 2010	City Staff, Residents
Identify commercial areas that may benefit from design guidelines	1 Year	FY 2010	City Staff, Business and Property Owners

Possible partners?
Property owners, Historic Commission, Garden Club

How will you measure success?
Neighborhoods identified for design guidelines by end of **FY 2010**

Estimated funding needed and possible sources?
Minimal Funding to Identify Neighborhoods

Goal: Develop Guidelines to Protect Established Neighborhoods

Objective: Work with Property Owners, Residents, and Builders to Identify Appropriate Guidelines

Actions	Duration	Timeline	Who's Responsible?
Research 'Best Practices' from communities who have adopted standards	6 Months	FY 2011	City Staff
Develop public outreach and input process to get citizen feedback on potential standards	6 Months	FY 2011	City Staff, Residents
Work with key stakeholders to develop appropriate guidelines based on public input and best practices	6 Months	FY 2011	City Staff, Property Owners, Builders
Adopt Guidelines to protect neighborhood character	3 Months	FY 2011	City Council

Possible partners?
Property owners, Historic Commission, Garden Club, Builders

How will you measure success?
Appropriate guidelines developed and adopted by **FY 2011**

Estimated funding needed and possible sources?
Staff Time and attorney costs to develop appropriate standards and ordinance

Goal: Continue Support of Housing Assistance Programs

Objective: Expand Voucher Program to Utilize all Available Vouchers

Actions	Duration	Timeline	Who's Responsible?
Develop education campaign to inform rental property owners of the voucher system and benefits of participation	3 Months	FY 2010	Public Housing Authority
Identify Rental Property Owners and reach out to them with education program	1 Year	FY 2010	Public Housing Authority
Consider potential incentives (advertising, write ups in the paper, etc.)	3 Months	FY 2010	Public Housing Authority

Possible partners?
Rental Property Owners, City of Brenham

How will you measure success?
All vouchers are utilized to provide housing assistance

Estimated funding needed and possible sources?
Minimal funding to develop program and outreach

Goal: Continue Support of Housing Assistance Programs

Objective: Support Homebuyer Education Programs

Actions	Duration	Timeline	Who's Responsible?
Identify all existing programs offered by Brazos Valley COG, Public Housing Authority, local banks, and others	3 Months	FY 2010	Public Housing Authority, local banks, BVCOG
Determine how to better coordinate programs	3 Months	FY 2010	Public Housing Authority, local banks, BVCOG
Provide outreach and information on all available programs through every outlet so potential participants can find the information easily	On-going	FY 2010	Public Housing Authority, local banks, BVCOG
Determine what, if any, additional programs should be offered	On-going	FY 2010	Public Housing Authority, local banks, BVCOG

Possible partners?
City of Brenham

How will you measure success?
Enrollment in classes increases by 10%

Estimated funding needed and possible sources?
Minimal funding to coordinate activities

Goal: Conduct an Historic Asset Survey for Entire City

Actions	Duration	Timeline	Who's Responsible?
Contact Texas Historical Commission for Surveys and Additional Information	1 Month	FY 2011	City Staff, Historical Commission
Partner with Washington County Historical Commission and other Historical Organizations for Volunteers	3 Months	FY 2011	City Staff, Historical Commission
Develop Survey Standards that are appropriate for Brenham	3 Months	FY 2011	City Staff, Historical Commission
Conduct Survey to Identify Historic Assets	6 Months	FY 2011	City Staff, Historical Commission

Possible partners?
Area Historical Commission, Museum, Library

How will you measure success?
Survey completed by **FY 2011**

Estimated funding needed and possible sources?
Staff time to coordinate activities

Goal: Consider Local Historic Designation for Structures Identified through Federal and / or State Programs

Actions	Duration	Timeline	Who's Responsible?
Utilize Survey to identify suitable properties and recognize with a locally designed plaque	6 Months	FY 2013	City Staff, Historical Commission
Educate owners and citizens on benefits of protecting historic structures	On-going	FY 2013	City Staff, Historical Commission
Utilize local designation in marketing and tourism promotion	On-going	FY 2013	City Staff, Historical Commission, Chamber of Commerce

Possible partners?
Area Historical Commission, Museum, Library, Chamber of Commerce

How will you measure success?
Local Recognition Program in place by **FY 2013**

Estimated funding needed and possible sources?
Staff Time to coordinate activities
Cost of Plaques

Goal: Consider Incentive Policies to Support Historic Preservation

Actions	Duration	Timeline	Who's Responsible?
Educate Owners about the 20% Federal Tax Credit Program	On-going	FY 2013	City Staff, Historical Commission
Consider a Property Tax Freeze for Historic Properties	6 Months	FY 2013	City Staff, City Council
Consider Using Public Funds to Encourage Renovations	6 Months	FY 2013	City Council

Possible partners?
Texas Historical Commission, Property Owners, Main Street

How will you measure success?
Incentive Policy in place by **FY 2013**

Estimated funding needed and possible sources?
Staff Time to coordinate activities
Cost of incentive programs

Goal: Pursue Certified Local Government Program through Texas Historical Commission

Actions	Duration	Timeline	Who's Responsible?
Contact THC to determine program requirements	1 Month	FY 2014	City Staff, Historical Commission
Determine if it is appropriate to pursue	3 Months	FY 2014	City Staff, Historical Commission
Pursue CLG certification	1 Year	FY 2011	City Staff, Historical Commission

Possible partners?
Texas Historical Commission

How will you measure success?
Certified Local Government in place by **FY 2014**

Estimated funding needed and possible sources?
Staff Time to coordinate activities

Goal: Foster a Diverse Downtown with a Healthy Mix of Business and Residential Uses

Actions	Duration	Timeline	Who's Responsible?
Review and revise the City's zoning ordinance to allow for additional residential uses in through out the CBD.	6 months	FY 2010	City Staff, Downtown Revitalization Committee
Review regulations that affect development in the CBD, such as ADA	3-6 Months	FY 2010	City Staff, Downtown Revitalization Committee
Identify and implement private and public incentives for the creation of mixed-use development in the CBD	6 Months	FY 2011	City Staff, Downtown Revitalization Committee
Develop marketing strategies to provide potential investors with a clearing house of information.	12 Months	FY 2011	City Staff, Downtown Revitalization Committee

Possible partners?
Washington County Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Revitalization Committee, Downtown Business Owners

How will you measure success?
An increase in residential development in the CBD
Adopt an incentive policy to promote residential uses in the downtown
Tie in with existing promotion campaigns of the Washington Co. Chamber of Commerce

Estimated funding needed and possible sources?
Staff time, Incentives

Goal: Increase Visitation to Downtown from Existing Tourism Trade

Actions	Duration	Timeline	Who's Responsible?
Increase cross promotion of events (see Washington County Tourism Assessment).	Ongoing	FY 2009 - 2020	Downtown Revitalization, Washington Co Chamber of Commerce, City
Increase and improve signage (see Facilities Chapter).	Ongoing	FY 2009 - 2020	Downtown Revitalization, Washington Co Chamber of Commerce, City, TxDOT Mainstreet
Develop a "Downtown Itinerary" listing shops, restaurants and activities. Post on Chamber's website or handed.	6 Months	FY 2010	Downtown Revitalization, Washington Co Chamber of Commerce, City

Possible partners?
Washington Co. Chamber of Commerce. City Parks Department, Other event organizers

How will you measure success?
Increased visitor presence downtown during event weekends
Increased sales tax and revenue with CBD

Estimated funding needed and possible sources?
TxDOT, General Revenue, Chamber of Commerce

Goal: Create a Comprehensive Downtown Master Plan

Actions	Duration	Timeline	Who's Responsible?
Research and review existing downtown master plans to help determine scope and responsibility of the process.	3 Months	FY 2009	Downtown Revitalization
Develop a scope of service and contract with a firm or entity to facilitate the process.	12 Months	FY 2009	Downtown Revitalization, City, Mainstreet

Possible partners?
Texas A&M, LCRA, Private Engineering & Planning Firm, City

How will you measure success?
The completion of a clear, concise master plan for the downtown.

Estimated funding needed and possible sources?
$50,000 to $100,000

Goal: Consider Historic Preservation Ordinance for Central Business District

Actions	Duration	Timeline	Who's Responsible?
Conduct Public Education and Outreach on Benefits of Historic Preservation	1 Year	FY 2009	City Staff, Historical Commission
Develop Historic Preservation Ordinance for CBD	6 Months	FY 2009	City Staff, Historical Commission

Possible partners?
Area Historical Commission, Museum, Library, Chamber of Commerce, Texas Historical Commission

How will you measure success?
Historic Preservation Ordinance for CBD adopted by **FY 2009**

Estimated funding needed and possible sources?
Staff Time to coordinate activities
Attorney Fees to develop ordinance

Goal: Develop All Properties to their Highest and Best Use

Actions	Duration	Timeline	Who's Responsible?
Preserve and protect the historic building in the CBD – see historic district section	Ongoing	FY 2009 - 2020	City, County Historic Commission,
Create and manage a database of potential investors for the CBD.	6 Months	FY 2010	Downtown Revitalization Committee
Recruit investors to Brenham	Ongoing	FY 2009 - 2020	Downtown Revitalization Committee, EDF
Ensure quality infrastructure in CBD	Ongoing	FY 2009 - 2020	City, Mainstreet

Possible partners?
Historical Commission, City, Property Owners, EDF, Blinn College

How will you measure success?
Reduce vacancy
Increase sales tax and revenue
Increased diversity of businesses

Estimated funding needed and possible sources?
Office of Rural Community Affairs, CDBG Grants
Small Business Administration

Goal: Reduce the Risk and Cost of Rehabilitating Structures in the CBD

Actions	Duration	Timeline	Who's Responsible?
Identify a point-of-contact for an advocacy group (Downtown Revitalization) for potential investors to help minimize the affect of asbestos abatement on investment in the CBD.	3 Months	FY 2012	Downtown Revitalization
Identify loans or grants to help reduce the costs of asbestos abatement.	6 Months	FY 2012	Downtown Revitalization
Lobby state and federal officials in order to reduce the costs and regulatory complexity of asbestos abatement	Ongoing	FY 2012	Downtown Revitalization
Pretest or access structures for asbestos and estimate abatement costs.	Ongoing	FY 2012	Downtown Revitalization

Possible partners?
Texas Historical Commission, TCEQ

How will you measure success?
Increased investment in the CBD.
Development process simplified.

Estimated funding needed and possible sources?
Private donors and non-profits

Goal: Avoid 'In and Out', Unsustainable Businesses and Short Term Tenures in Downtown

Actions	Duration	Timeline	Who's Responsible?
Work to identify desired businesses and promotion/marketing plan to recruit them.	12 Months	FY 2010	Downtown Revitalization Committee
Ensure appropriate enforcement of ordinances and laws to eliminate all inappropriate, harmful behavior in the downtown area.	Ongoing	FY 2010	City Police Force, City, Downtown Revitalization Committee

Possible partners?

City and County Police, Youth Organizations, Churches, Non-Profits

How will you measure success?

Longevity of tenant tenures, Diversity of downtown enterprises

Estimated funding needed and possible sources?

$50-100K for master plan.

Goal: Develop a balanced transportation system capable of moving people and goods in a safe and efficient manner

Actions	Duration	Timeline	Who's Responsible?
290 Corridor: One-way frontage, grade-separated crossing at Stringer, (future two-way frontage west of railroad)	3 to 5 Years	FY 2009 to 2012	TxDot, City, County
Austin and Day Offset	2 Year	FY 2010 to 2011	City
Westwood Lane	2 Year	FY 2015	County, City
Austin Street at Main &Alamo Streets Problem: Southbound traffic has a difficult time taking a left hand turn onto Alamo.	1 Year	FY 2010	City
South Day from Tom Green to 290 Problem: Traffic is slow and difficult to cross.	1 Year	FY 2010	City
SH 36 and North Park Road Problem: Confusing confluence of the two roads and high speeds.	2 Year	FY 2015	City
Market Street intersections from Pecan to Becker Problem: Offsets between east-west roads create difficult and confusing intersections.	1 Year	FY 2010	City

Possible Partners?
County, TxDOT, Private developers, Federal Government

How will you measure success?
Fewer accidents and less congestion

Estimated funding needed and possible sources?
See engineering studies for specifics regarding cost estimates.

Goal: Ensure that the thoroughfare system has adequate capacity for the development densities and land uses served:

Actions	Duration	Timeline	Who's Responsible?
F.M. 389 Extension to Tom Green:	4 Year	FY 2009 to 2012	City, BNSF, Federal Gov
S. Saeger Street Extension.	2 Year	FY 2015	City, Private Developers, Blinn
N. Saeger Street Extension.	2 Year	Timing Market Drive	City, Private Developers, Blinn
U.S. 290 Corridor: Dedicate right-of-way for Backage Roads south of US290 between Blue Bell and S. SH 36	1 Year	FY 2010	City
East Loop: Establish a corridor to the east of Blue Bell Road. Tom Green and Stone would extend to connect with this loop.	2 Year	FY 2012	City
Widen Stone Street east of Market to establish east to west cross town route.	2 Year	FY 2012	City

Goal: Protect and Enhance Community Appearance

Objective: Consider Establishing Design Guidelines for Commercial Development

Actions	Duration	Timeline	Who's Responsible?
Research 'Best Practices' from communities who have adopted standards	6 Months	FY 2011	City Staff
Develop public outreach and input process to get citizen feedback on potential standards	6 Months	FY 2011	City Staff, Business Owners
Work with key stakeholders to develop appropriate guidelines based on public input and best practices	6 Months	FY 2012	City Staff, Property Owners, Builders
Adopt Guidelines	3 Months	FY 2012	City Council

Possible partners?
Commercial Property Owners, Builders, Developers

How will you measure success?
Commercial Design Standards adopted in key areas by **FY 2012**

Estimated funding needed and possible sources?
Staff time, Attorney fees to develop ordinance

Goal: Support the Economic Development Foundation

Actions	Duration	Timeline	Who's Responsible?
City Leaders should regularly visit area businesses and owners	On-going	FY 2009 to 2020	City Staff, Elected Officials
Support Workforce Maximization Program	On-going	FY 2009 to 2020	City Staff
Provide community education about local businesses and employment opportunities	On-going	FY 2009 to 2020	City Staff

Possible partners?
City and County Elected Officials, Brenham Economic Development Foundation

How will you measure success?
Regular meetings held with business owners
Workforce Maximization is adopted by all major employers
Local Residents are increased proportion of local workers

Estimated funding needed and possible sources?
Staff time, Cost of participating in workforce maximization

Goal: Develop Additional Unrestricted Industrial Sites

Actions	Duration	Timeline	Who's Responsible?
Utilize Future Land Use Plan to identify suitable sites	3 Months	FY 2012	City Staff, EDF
Ensure Zoning supports industrial uses in appropriate areas	6 Months	FY 2010	City Staff
Ensure adequate utilities and roads to support industrial uses	On-going	FY 2009 to 2020	City Staff

Possible partners?
Brenham Economic Development Foundation, TxDOT

How will you measure success?
New unrestricted industrial sites designated and zoned appropriate by **FY 2012**

Estimated funding needed and possible sources?
Staff Time
Cost of utility improvements
General Fund, Bonds, Certificates of Obligation, EDF Funds

Goal: Support the Convention and Visitors Bureau and Chamber of Commerce in Implementing the Tourism Assessment

Actions	Duration	Timeline	Who's Responsible?
Continue to pursue County-wide Hotel Occupancy Tax	On-going	FY 2009 to 2020	Chamber staff, Elected Officials
Maximize use of 'Birthplace of Texas' slogan	On-going	FY 2009 to 2020	Chamber Staff, local businesses
Pursue investment in public relations	On-going	FY 2009 to 2020	Chamber Staff

Possible partners?

City and County Elected Officials, Brenham Economic Development Foundation, local businesses

How will you measure success?

Adopt Hotel Occupancy Tax
Slogan is adopted County-wide and is branded with the area
Brenham is highlighted in regional and national travel write ups

Estimated funding needed and possible sources?

$30 – 50,000 annually for public relations push
CVB and Chamber budgets

Goal: Incorporate Airport into Economic Development Activities

Actions	Duration	Timeline	Who's Responsible?
Conduct regular meetings with Airport Board	On-going	FY 2009 to 2020	City Staff, EDF, Airport Board
Determine limitations on business development around airport	6 Months	FY 2012	City Staff, EDF, Airport Board
Increase access and connection of airport to City	On-going	FY 2009 to 2020	City Staff, EDF, Airport Board
Market airport as asset for prospective businesses	On-going	FY 2009 to 2020	EDF, Chamber, Airport Board

Possible partners?

Airport users, FAA, TxDOT

How will you measure success?

Increased usage of airport

Increased appreciation of value of airport to the community

Estimated funding needed and possible sources?

Staff time

Cost of transportation options to connect airport to City

Airport funds, General funds

Goal: Support the Implementation of the Parks Master Plan

Actions	Duration	Timeline	Who's Responsible?
Identify priorities from Parks plan and utilize in budget discussions	On-going	FY 2009 to 2020	City Staff, City Council
Identify small projects that can be done quickly and do those.	1 Year	FY 2009	City Staff

Possible partners?
Parks Board, Parks Users

How will you measure success?
Park plan projects are funded appropriately
Small Projects (External Defibrillators, lightning detector, etc.) completed by FY 2009

Estimated funding needed and possible sources?
Dependent on projects
$50,000 - $100,000 for small projects
General Funds, state and private grants, fundraising

Goal: Consider Development of a Facility that Combines Community Center, Senior Center, and Library

Actions	Duration	Timeline	Who's Responsible?
Research other communities facilities and success stories	3 Months	FY 2010	City Staff, Parks Board, Senior Center volunteers, Library
Survey citizens and facility user to identify their priorities	3 Months	FY 2010	Parks Board, City Staff
Develop Facilities plan based on survey findings and best practices	6 Months	FY 2011	Parks Board, City Staff
Develop on-going funding mechanism	6 Months	FY 2011	Parks Board, City Staff

Possible partners?
Washington County, Texas Parks and Wildlife, local civic groups, local sports clubs, Library

How will you measure success?
Community Center developed by **FY 2012**

Estimated funding needed and possible sources?
$1,000,000 - $5,000,000 to build center depending on facilities included
Ongoing staffing, programming, maintenance
General Fund, Bonds, State and Private Grants, Fundraising

Goal: Develop a New Animal Shelter in Partnership with Animal Friends

Actions	Duration	Timeline	Who's Responsible?
Develop a Facilities Plan	6 Months	FY 2011	City Staff, Animal Friends
Build new shelter	1 Year	FY 2012	City Staff

Possible partners?
Washington County

How will you measure success?
New Shelter complete by **FY 2012**

Estimated funding needed and possible sources?
$300,000 - $1,000,000 to build new shelter depending on size, etc.
Local fundraising, bonds, private grants

Goal: Increase Pedestrian Safety and Amenities

Actions	Duration	Timeline	Who's Responsible?
Identify common pedestrian routes through town	6 Months	FY 2014	City Staff, Police Dept., Schools, Senior Center
Identify and Prioritize Needed Improvements to Enhance Pedestrian Connectivity	1 Year	FY 2014	City Staff, Police Dept., Schools, Senior Center
Identify Potential Trail Development	6 Months	FY 2014	City Staff, Parks Board
Identify Funding for Trail and Pedestrian Improvements	6 Months	FY 2014	City Staff, Parks Boards

Possible partners?
Parks Board, Parks Users, Texas Parks and Wildlife, TxDOT

How will you measure success?
Pedestrian access improved throughout Brenham

Estimated funding needed and possible sources?
Dependent on projects
General Funds, Bonds, state and private grants, fundraising

Goal: Protect and Enhance Community Appearance

Actions	Duration	Timeline	Who's Responsible?
Strictly enforce all ordinances to protect community appearance	On-going	FY 2009 to 2020	City Staff
Continue the 'Yard of the Month' program	On-going	FY 2009 to 2020	Garden Club

Possible partners?
Commercial Property Owners, Builders, Developers

How will you measure success?
Significant decrease in the number of citations for code infractions

Estimated funding needed and possible sources?
Staff time
Attorney Fees to develop ordinance

Goal: Evaluate and Expand Civic Facilities and Utilities to Meet Expected Growth

Actions	Duration	Timeline	Who's Responsible?
Regularly review facilities and programs to ensure they are meeting current needs	On-going	FY 2009 to 2020	City Staff
Develop a Capital Investment Plan to ensure proper budgeting for infrastructure improvements over time	1 Year	FY 2009	City Staff
Develop a Fire Station on the west side of Brenham	1 Year	FY 2010	City Staff, Fire Dept.

Possible partners?
Bluebonnet Electric Co-op

How will you measure success?
Needed facilities are budgeted for appropriately and planned for in a timely fashion

Estimated funding needed and possible sources?
Dependent on projects identified and needed improvements
General Revenue, Bonds, Certificates of Obligation