



TALL CITY TOMORROW



JULY 2016





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Chapter 1

Tall City Today



CONTENTS

- » Population History and Character
- » Land Use Character
- » Environmental Character
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- » Economic Conditions
- » Park & Recreation Amenities
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Population History and Character

Major Themes

- » *Historic Growth.* For many there has been a perception that Midland's population has experienced cycles of boom and bust. However, this is not fully accurate. While the city did experience significant boom periods during the 1920s, 1950s, and 1980s, significant declines in population did not follow these booms. On the contrary, the city experienced strong but stable growth during the intervening decades. This is important to note because it tells community leaders that growth will continue to occur and that planning for that growth is important to ensure that the city's historic quality of life is not lost.
- » *Young and Active.* The city's population remains young and will continue to look for quality education, housing, and recreation opportunities. Growth within the energy industry has attracted young professionals and young Baby Boomers, both groups tend to be very mobile and look for vibrant places to work and play. These populations will likely look for continued investments in the schools and recreation offerings like trails and parks. They will continue to attract commercial developments that are family friendly and vibrant with activity.

INTRODUCTION

Midland evolved from a small community to a regional city through decades of steady growth, punctuated by booms in the 1930s and 1960s. The trend of population change echoes the ebb and flow of the economy with rapid gains during the boom times and stabilization during recessions. With current population increases being fueled by expansions in the energy industry, it is difficult to forecast with certainty how quickly Midland will grow to reach the 200,000 milestone—however, based on current and historic population growth, this is a question of when, not if.

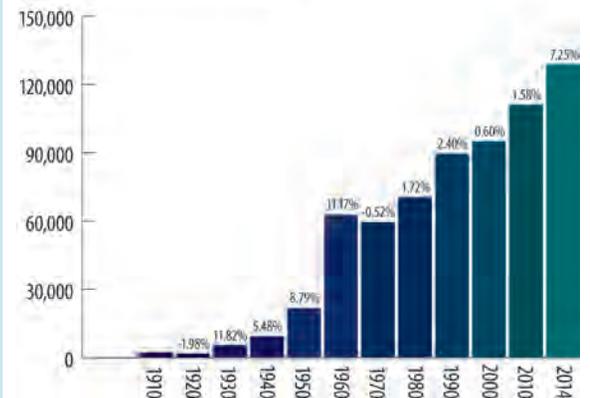
To provide insight into population growth, this section considers the demographics of the current population, analyzes growth patterns, and provides a range of population projections to reflect high, moderate, and low growth scenarios.

KEY TRENDS

Population

- » Midland's population grew by 31% between 2000 and 2014, a change of 29,898 residents. The majority of increase came from in-migration of residents drawn by the abundance of jobs and the strong local economy.
- » In 2010, Midland was the 28th most populous city in Texas with a population of 111,147. Based on the 2014 population estimate of 124,894, Midland has become the 26th most populous city in Texas - a change of 13,747 residents between 2010 and 2014.
- » The Midland Independent School District has an enrollment of 22,749 students across its 24 elementary schools, four junior high schools, two freshman campuses, four high schools; and one head start program. Since the 2010-2011 school year the district has grown by 8%, much of this growth in the elementary ages,

Figure 1.1: Historic Change



reflecting Midland’s growth among young families. It is also interesting to note that the 2014 graduating class had lost over 450 students over a four year period.

Population Projections

- » Due to uncertainties in the economy, it can be challenging to predict Midland’s population growth. Therefore, future population is forecasted based on a range of scenarios: a high growth scenario reflective of population change since 2010; a low growth scenario similar to population change between 2000 and 2010; and a moderate growth scenario between the low and high.
- » The scenario approach reflects the understanding that the city cannot rely solely on the assumption that the recent population growth will continue in perpetuity.



Figure 1.2: MISD Enrollment 2010-2014 School Years

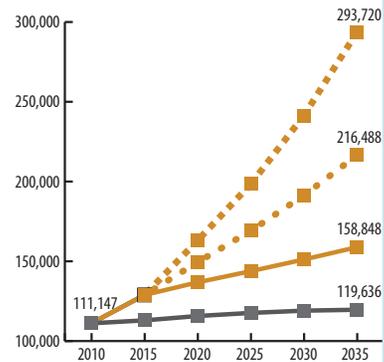
Grade Level	Student Count		
	2010-2011	2013-2014	Difference
Early Education	105	113	8
Pre-K	707	698	-9
Kindergarten	1,765	1,978	213
Grade 1	1,708	2,040	332
Grade 2	1,685	1,874	189
Grade 3	1,604	1,830	226
Grade 4	1,687	1,790	103
Grade 5	1,608	1,827	219
Grade 6	1,578	1,680	102
Grade 7	1,614	1,796	182
Grade 8	1,583	1,687	104
Grade 9	1,708	1,855	147
Grade 10	1,647	1,690	43
Grade 11	1,423	1,451	28
Grade 12	1,314	1,251	-63
Total	20,924	22,749	1,825

Population Projection Scenarios

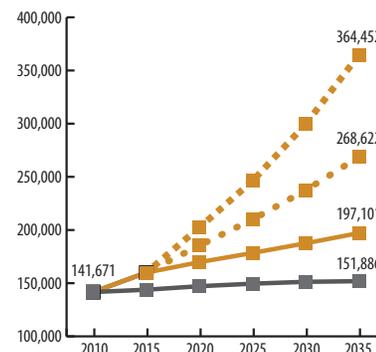
- 4.0% AGR (2010-2014)
- 2.5% AGR
- 1.0% AGR (1990-2010)
- 0% migration



Midland City



Midland Metro Area



Midland +Odessa Metro Area Total

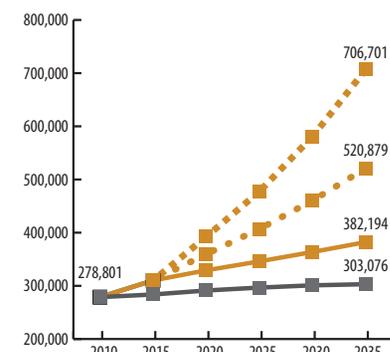
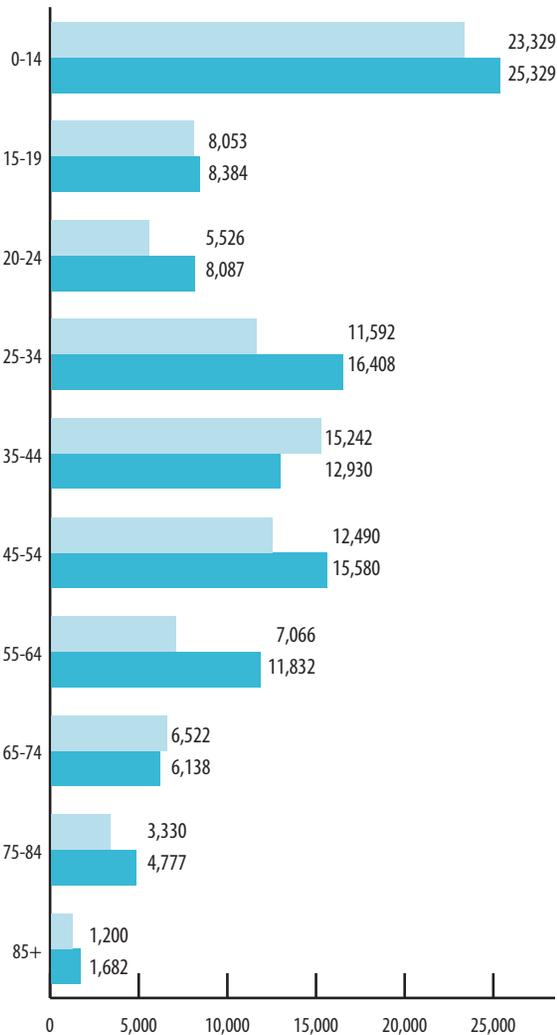


Figure 1.4: Midland Age Composition

Total Population		Median Age	
2000	2010	2000	2010
94,350	111,147	34	33



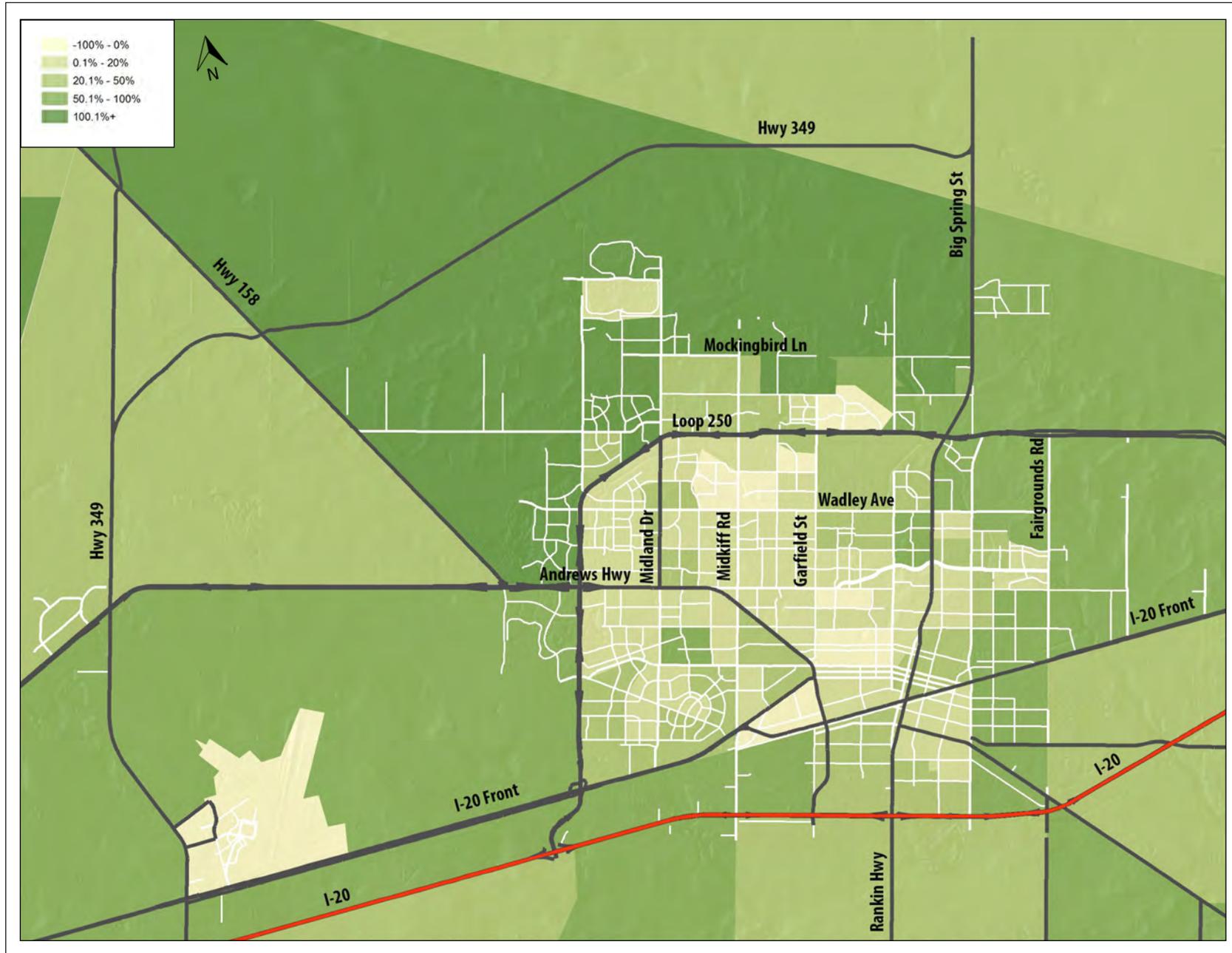
Age

- » Job growth over the last decade has attracted residents both at the beginning of their careers and those well established in the workforce. The migration of young professionals to the area has also increased the number of young children which, four years after the Census, is reflected in the growing number of school enrollments.
- » A growing school population and their young parents mean that over 50% of the city’s population was under the age of 35 in 2010. The amenities and features that this population seeks could play a significant role in the direction of community investments in the coming years.

Race and Ethnicity

- » Caucasian (77%) and African American (8%) comprised the two largest racial groups in the city, with no significant change between 2000 and 2010 in the city’s racial make-up.
- » Like much of Texas and the nation as a whole, residents identifying their ethnic heritage as Hispanic grew from 29% of the total population in 2000 to 37.6% in 2010.

Map 1.1: Population Change 2000 - 2014



TALL CITY TODAY

Land Use Character

Major Themes

» **Growth Areas.** Over the years a number of large annexations have added to the city's total area. These annexations have allowed the city to continue to grow in an incremental fashion. Residential growth, historically, grew in a contiguous manner radiating to the north, west and east out of the downtown. Over the past several years this growth has moved beyond the 250 Loop. The challenge for the city in the coming years is to ensure that this future growth remains connected to the balance of the city and is supplied with the services necessary to create vibrant and stable neighborhoods.

» **Reinvestment.** As noted in Figure 1.6, residential land uses comprise the single largest investment in the city and established business districts reflect significant investment by the business community. Like any wise enterprise, the city and business community will need to continue to invest in the maintenance and improvement of these major capital assets and resources.

» **Community Design and Appearance.** Site design, buffering, and land use separations all play important roles in the appearance and character of what makes Midland. Ultimately a balance must be found between maintaining high standards for quality development and the desire to protect private property rights and personal preferences.

INTRODUCTION

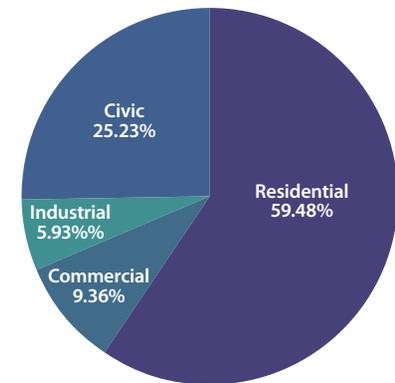
Midland's existing land use and development patterns provide the foundation for the development of a future land use vision. The city's physical growth over time has mirrored its population growth with periods of rapid expansion. The previous section reviewed historic population trends and future population growth. This growth will need to be supported by new housing, additional commercial space, office and job centers, and expanded recreation options. To plan for this new growth an understanding of the city's current land use mix must be intertwined with future needs.

Figure 1.5: Midland Land Use Composition

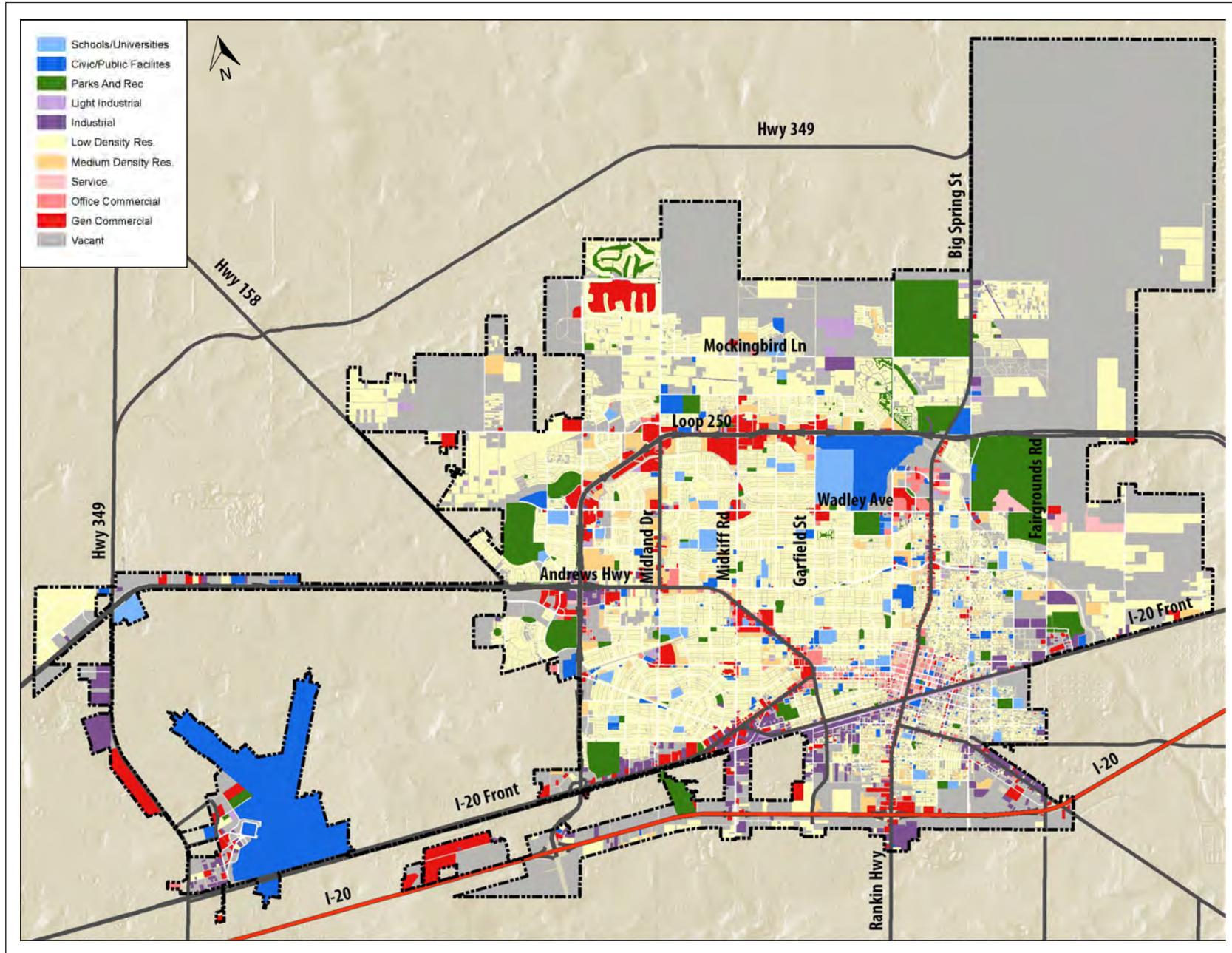
Land Use Category	Acres	% of Land	Acres per 100 People
Residential	12,295.88	59.48%	9.85
Single Family	11,332.26	92.16%	9.07
Duplex	202.71	1.65%	0.16
Multi-Family	760.92	6.19%	0.61
Commercial	1,935.58	9.36%	1.55
General Commercial	1,401.49	72.41%	1.12
Service	141.45	7.31%	0.11
Office Commercial	392.64	20.29%	0.31
Industrial	1,225.99	5.93%	0.98
Light Industry	116.77	9.52%	0.09
Industry	1,109.22	90.48%	0.89
Civic	5,216.14	25.23%	4.18
Civic	594.60	11.40%	0.48
Schools	984.69	18.88%	0.79
Airport	1,061.34	20.35%	0.85
Parks and Rec.	2,575.51	49.38%	2.06
Total Developed Land	20,673.59	100.00%	16.55
Vacant & Open Land	15,500.56	32.68%	12.41
Right of Way	11,262.96	23.74%	9.02
Total Area	47,437.11		36.8

Source: City of Midland & RDG Planning & Design; 2014

Figure 1.6: Midland Land Use Composition



Map 1.2: Current Land Use





KEY TRENDS

In 2012, the population of Midland was 128,894 across 74 square miles of developed land. The community has expanded not only in terms of its overall population but also the size of its footprint. This growth has generally been contiguous and focused within a core area inside the 250 Loop. Map 1.3: Annexation by Decade and Figure 1.7: Historic Population Change, illustrates this evolution.

Residential

- » Midland’s homes account for the single largest use and therefore investment in the community.
- » The unit mix in Midland is roughly 65% owner-occupied and 35% renter-occupied, while 92% of the city’s residential land is single-family use only. A number of the city’s rental units are likely in single-family units but overall the city’s renter stock consumes a very small portion of the city’s overall residential land use pattern.
- » The 2005 Comprehensive Plan identified that the city had 9.32 acres of residential land per 100 people, comparable to the 2014 data illustrated in Figure 1.5. Larger lot sizes and dispersion of development is an important issue when considering the impact on affordable housing options.
- » Over the past ten years much of the city’s residential development has been outside of the 250 Loop.

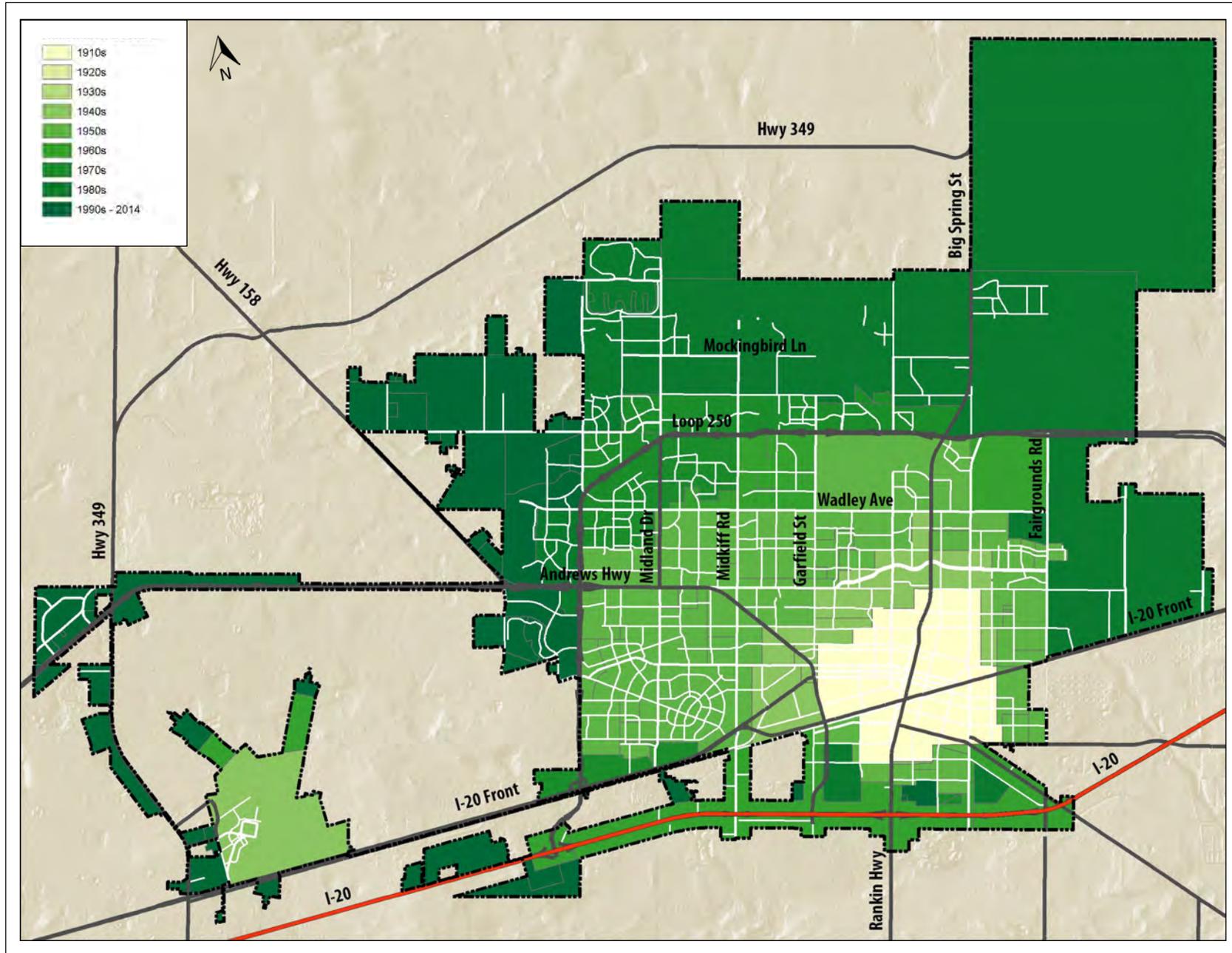


Figure 1.7: Geographic and Population Change

	Population Change	Pop Change %	Total Land Area (square miles)	City Area Change %
1910	2,192	-	-	-
1920	1,795	-1.98%	3.95	-
1930	5,484	11.82%	3.95	-
1940	9,352	5.48%	3.95	-
1950	21,713	8.79%	9.11	130.89%
1960	62,625	11.17%	22.72	149.29%
1970	59,463	-0.52%	29.06	27.91%
1980	70,525	1.72%	34.04	17.12%
1990	89,443	2.40%	63.63	86.93%
2000	94,996	0.60%	64.49	1.36%
2010	111,147	1.58%	71.33	10.60%
2014	128,894	7.25%	74.13	3.93%

Source: City of Midland & RDG Planning & Design; 2014

Map 1.3: Annexation by Decade





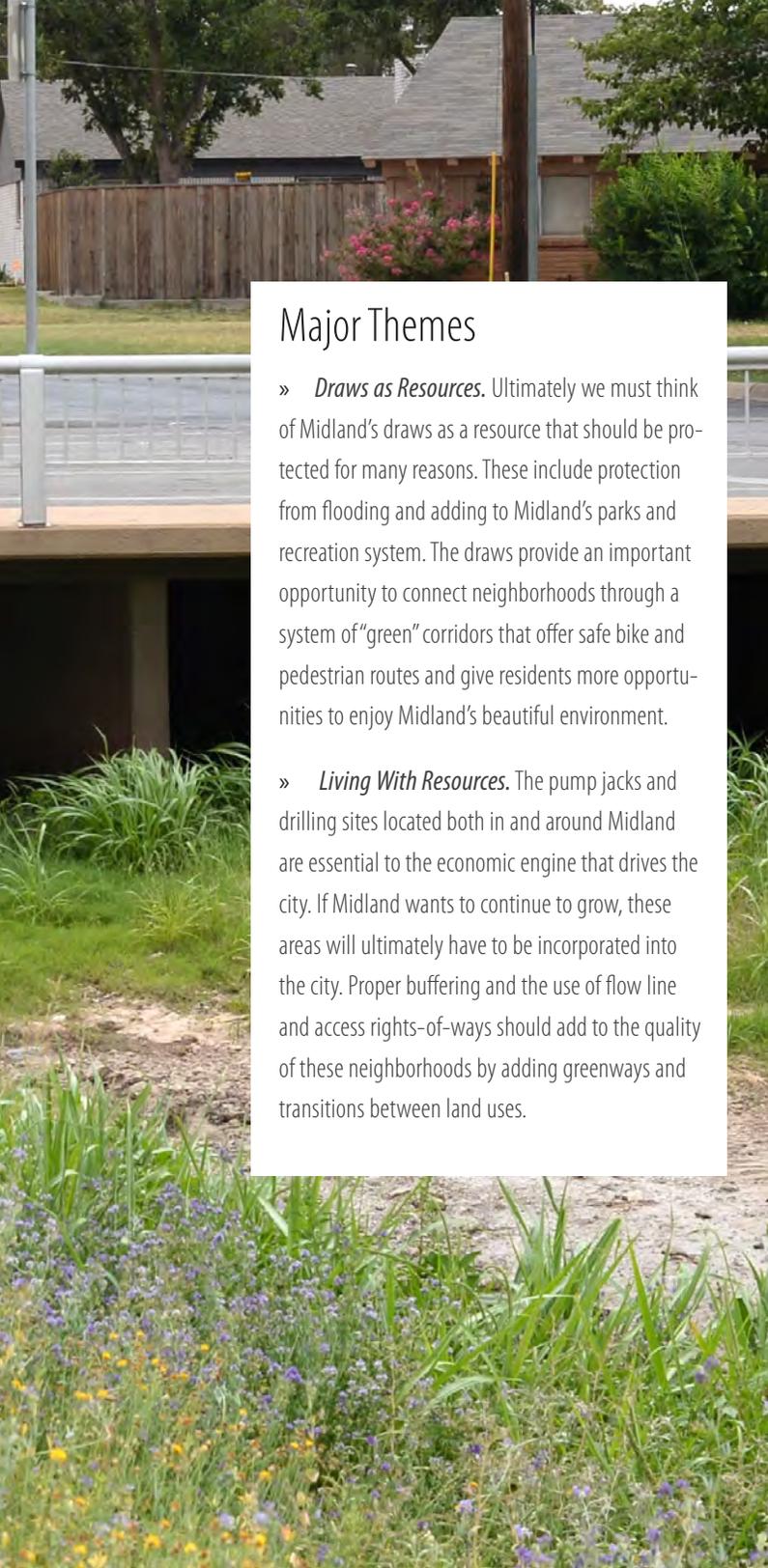
Commercial

- » In Midland, commercial uses have traditionally gravitated to major corridors and highways in order to maximize access and visibility and to reduce impact on residential neighborhoods. These commercial corridors include the 250 Loop; Andrews Highway; West Wall Street; and Big Spring Street.
- » Office and service businesses share many of the same corridors as general commercial uses. While the downtown has been the traditional center of office development, growth has also been seen north in the Claydesta area and west in the area of the Sports Complex.
- » Like most communities, Midland’s commercial land use is dominated by general commercial uses but the city’s role as a corporate center is seen in the percentage of office uses.

Industrial

- » The intensity, and therefore impact, of industrial uses can vary greatly but these uses are essential to a healthy and vibrant economy in many ways.
- » Local oil and gas industries are heavily dependent on these sites and account for the majority of the city’s industrial land uses.
- » The majority of industrial land is located along the southern edge of the city, along West Wall Street, Highway 20, and at the Midland International Air & Space Port.





Major Themes

- » *Draws as Resources.* Ultimately we must think of Midland's draws as a resource that should be protected for many reasons. These include protection from flooding and adding to Midland's parks and recreation system. The draws provide an important opportunity to connect neighborhoods through a system of "green" corridors that offer safe bike and pedestrian routes and give residents more opportunities to enjoy Midland's beautiful environment.
- » *Living With Resources.* The pump jacks and drilling sites located both in and around Midland are essential to the economic engine that drives the city. If Midland wants to continue to grow, these areas will ultimately have to be incorporated into the city. Proper buffering and the use of flow line and access rights-of-ways should add to the quality of these neighborhoods by adding greenways and transitions between land uses.

TALL CITY TODAY

Environmental Character

INTRODUCTION

Midland lies within a large flat region or high plain that is intermittently broken by draws and covered by sparse vegetation. These draws and the oil resources that lie below the surface are the region's biggest environmental features. Identifying these features and acknowledging their impact on the direction of development is important to creating a comprehensive plan and land use vision that meets Midland's future needs.

FLOOD PLAINS

In the past several decades, local, state, and federal agencies have become more aware of the impact that development can have on stormwater erosions and water quality. The management of stormwater and the impact that development has on the city's system of draws should be closely monitored. Development that increases both the volume and velocity of water runoff can create significant flooding and erosion issues both on site and downstream. Although Midland is generally very flat, there are areas where water settles during rain events. These flat depressions, or playas, fill with water during a rain event and hold the water until it either filters through or evaporates.

DRAINAGE AREAS

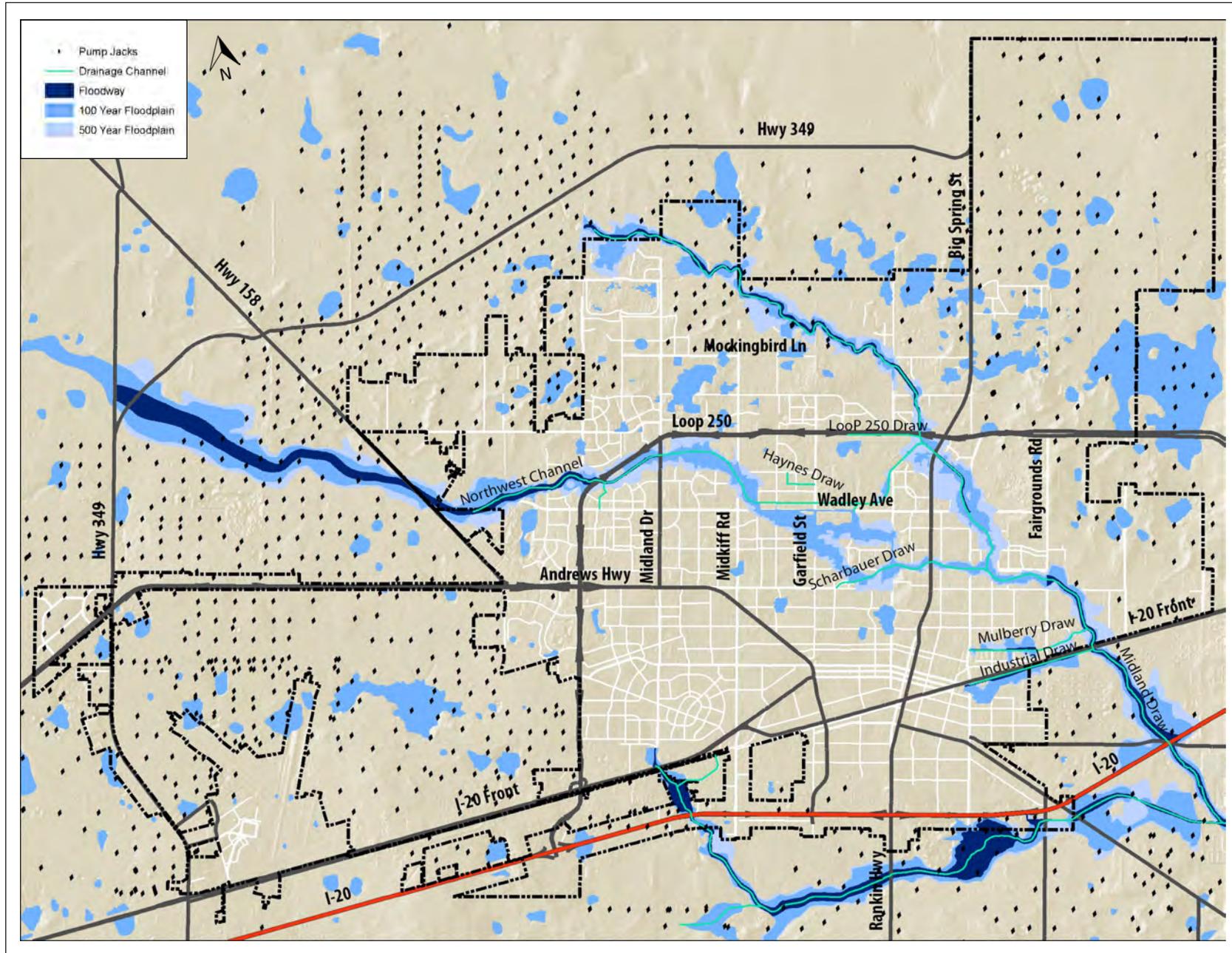
The region's drainage areas, or draws, have a substantial impact on development directions but can also be a vital resource for the city. The draw system includes:

MIDLAND DRAW JAL DRAW JOHNSON DRAW
MONAHANS DRAW SCHARBAUER DRAW

Construction in or within the flood zone of these draws should be avoided.

- » Development within the system of draws has impact on the width of the draws and the occurrence of flooding at key points. Hydrologic and hydraulic studies have been completed on the draws, including a comprehensive assessment in 1996 and a more recent study on the Midland and Jal draws.
- » While development practices that do not assess the larger impact on the community can have serious negative effects, the draws can also be important assets. These areas can function as natural corridors that add to the character and quality of Midland.

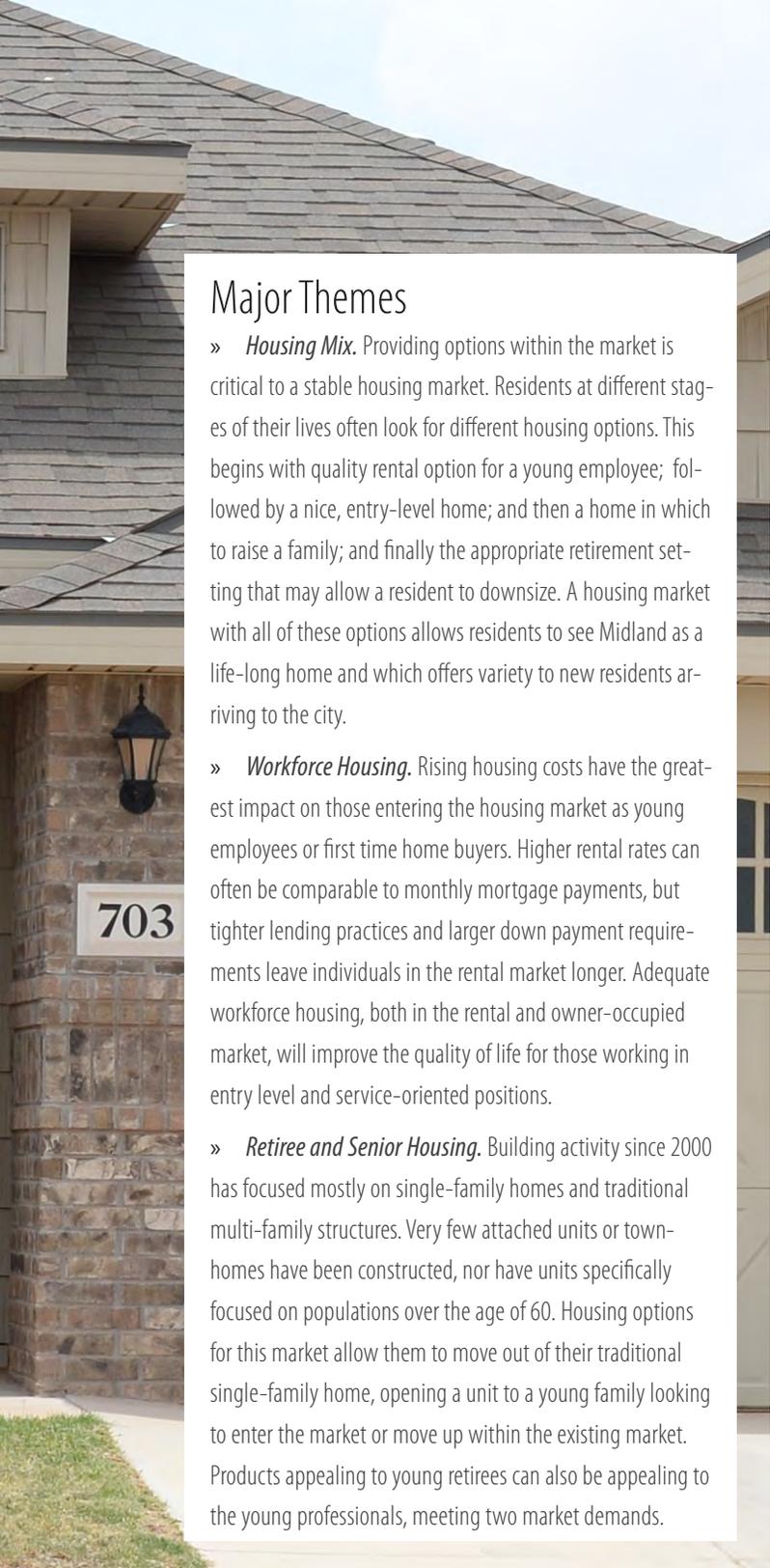
Map 1.4: Environmental Features





OIL AND GAS RESOURCES

- » Oil and gas resources are natural features that ultimately create man-made barriers to development. As a resource that has both local and national significance there is a need to both protect and accommodate these sites.
- » Current regulations require a 500-foot buffer around all existing drilling or extraction sites. This can be reduced to 135 feet with necessary approvals from all parties.
- » The number of existing pump jacks around the city and especially to the north and west will have an impact on development. Ultimately a strategy for incorporating these sites into the city's development pattern will be necessary.



Housing & Neighborhood Character

Major Themes

- » **Housing Mix.** Providing options within the market is critical to a stable housing market. Residents at different stages of their lives often look for different housing options. This begins with quality rental option for a young employee; followed by a nice, entry-level home; and then a home in which to raise a family; and finally the appropriate retirement setting that may allow a resident to downsize. A housing market with all of these options allows residents to see Midland as a life-long home and which offers variety to new residents arriving to the city.
- » **Workforce Housing.** Rising housing costs have the greatest impact on those entering the housing market as young employees or first time home buyers. Higher rental rates can often be comparable to monthly mortgage payments, but tighter lending practices and larger down payment requirements leave individuals in the rental market longer. Adequate workforce housing, both in the rental and owner-occupied market, will improve the quality of life for those working in entry level and service-oriented positions.
- » **Retiree and Senior Housing.** Building activity since 2000 has focused mostly on single-family homes and traditional multi-family structures. Very few attached units or townhomes have been constructed, nor have units specifically focused on populations over the age of 60. Housing options for this market allow them to move out of their traditional single-family home, opening a unit to a young family looking to enter the market or move up within the existing market. Products appealing to young retirees can also be appealing to the young professionals, meeting two market demands.

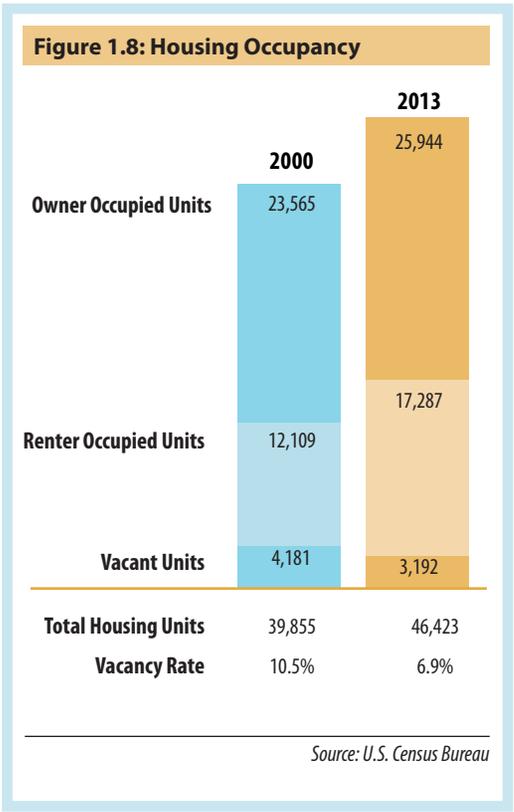
INTRODUCTION

The expense, nature, and disposition of a community's housing stock are some of its defining characteristics. As part of a comprehensive planning process, it is important to consider whether the existing housing stock is adequately meeting the needs of the community. Additionally, tracking data on housing tenure, median value/rent, and price relative to income can help reveal important information about a community's current economic trajectory.

KEY TRENDS

Housing Occupancy

- » New residents to a community often look to rent before buying a home, desiring to understand the community and its neighborhoods first. Midland's recent rapid growth has resulted in an increase in the number of overall units but especially the number of renter occupied units, which in 2013 now make up 40% of the city's occupied housing units.
- » Over the past 13 years the city's population grew by 36%, while the number of housing units in the city increased by 16%. If an average of 2.5 people per household were applied to the population increase, the city should have added over 13,500 units, over double what has been added to the city's housing stock.
- » The tighter housing market has resulted in a lowering of the city's overall vacancy rate. While not dangerously low, maintaining a stock of available units prevents housing inflation, provides a variety of options for residents, and encourages housing in the worst condition to be brought up to code.



Housing Affordability

- » Figure 1.10 presents a comparison of housing value to income. Affordable housing units should not cost more than 30% of a household’s income. Based on household incomes and the number of affordable units available to those income ranges, Midland has a shortage of units for households making less than \$50,000 and more than \$150,000 per year.
 - A shortage of housing in the lowest income brackets forces residents to either live in less affordable housing or to double up with other households. The 2010 Consolidate Plan for Community Development and Housing Funds found an increasing trend of “doubling-up” and/or overcrowding.
 - A shortage of move-up options for households in the highest income brackets results in greater competition for lower priced units and can even drive up the cost of housing in an highly desirable neighborhood.
- » The cost of housing is generally comparable to other cities. Housing is slightly more affordable in Odessa, but Midland is more affordable than Denton or El Paso. The comparison is demonstrated in Figure 1.9.
- » Rental housing tends to be more expensive than the Odessa, Amarillo, El Paso, and Denton markets but comparable to Carrollton. High rental housing costs can have the greatest impact on the city’s service industry employees, young professionals new to the community, and residents in the lowest income brackets.

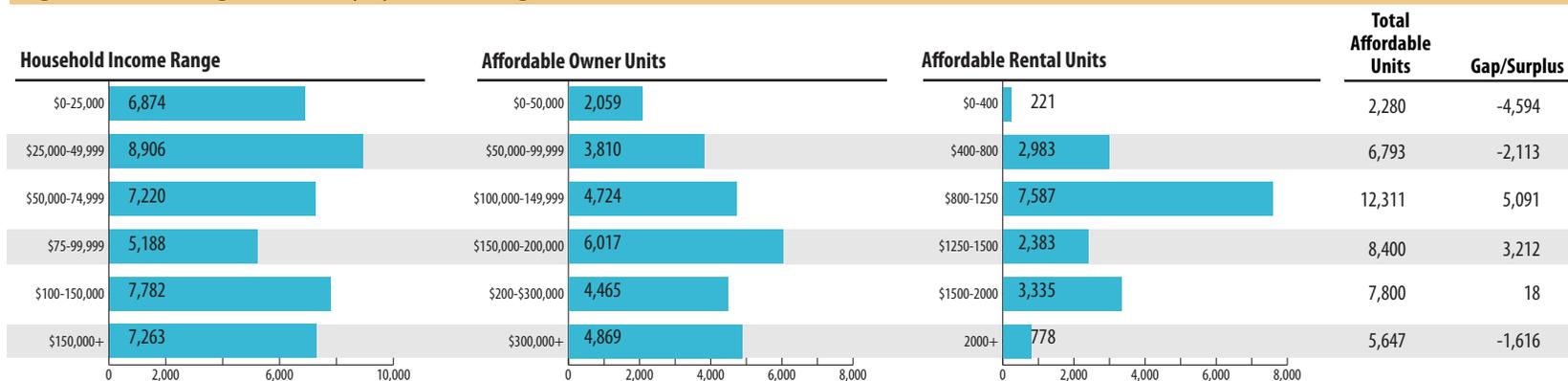
Figure 1.9: Housing Affordability

Value to Income (2010)	Median Rent	Median HH	Median Value	V/I Ratio
Midland, Texas	\$960	\$62,665	\$154,300	2.46
Midland County, Texas	\$950	\$62,993	\$148,600	2.36
Odessa, Texas	\$821	\$52,158	\$103,200	1.98
Amarillo	\$723	\$45,984	\$114,200	2.48
El Paso	\$724	\$41,406	\$117,300	2.83
McKinney	\$1,080	\$81,118	\$187,100	2.31
Denton	\$858	\$48,182	\$148,100	3.07
Carrollton	\$986	\$68,811	\$167,700	2.44

Source: 2009-2013 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

An affordable, self-sustaining housing market, with adequate value and revenues to support market-rate new construction, will typically have a value to income ratio between 2.5 to 3.0. Ratios above 3.0 exhibit significant affordability issues while ratios below 2.0 are significantly undervalued relative to income. Owner-occupied housing that costs between 2.0 and 2.5 times a household’s yearly income is considered affordable. Homes priced above this range can mean that housing costs are greater than what many in the market can afford.

Figure 1.10: Housing Affordability by Income Range



Source: 2013 American Community Survey; RDG Planning & Design, 2015

Figure 1.11: Residential Building Permit Activity

Year	Permits	Monthly Ave.	% Change
2001	175	14.58	13.00%
2002	242	20.17	38.29%
2003	266	22.17	9.92%
2004	295	24.58	10.90%
2005	392	32.67	32.88%
2006	470	39.17	19.90%
2007	514	42.83	9.36%
2008	485	40.42	-5.64%
2009	331	27.58	-31.75%
2010	391	32.58	18.13%
2011	558	46.50	42.71%
2012	598	49.83	7.17%
2013	732	61.00	22.41%
2014	920	76.67	25.68%
Total	6,369	490	

Source: City of Midland & RDG Planning & Design; 2014



Demand

- » The city's single-family building permit activity remained steady during the 2000s as the city grew at a reasonable rate. Beginning in 2011, the housing recovery was beginning and the city was seeing accelerated growth, resulting in a jump of 161 units annually.
- » Based on a strong but stable 1% annual growth rate the city will reach a population of over 158,800 by 2035. To support this growth the city will need to add approximately 622 units annually. These units include both single-family, townhomes, and multi-family units.
- » The demand model is based on the assumption that the city's vacancy rate will remain at approximately 6.5% and that the number of people per household will remain close to 2.63. It also assumes that the city will need to replace 20 units annually due to demolition or conversion to other uses.

HOUSING PRIORITIES

Midland's Consolidated Plan for Community Development and Housing Funds (2010) identified the following housing priorities:

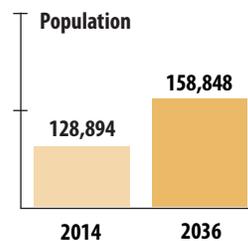
Non-elderly households with incomes from 31% to 50% of Median Family Income (MFI)

Special needs households with income from 0% to 80% of MFI

Owner households with income from 0% to 30% of MFI

Medium priority was given to renter households in the 51% to 80% income groups and all elderly income groups.

Figure 1.12: Housing Demand at 1% Annual Growth Rate



420 Replaced Units
 12,851 Total New Housing Units
 622 Average Annual Construction*



*Average PPH: 2.63 *Projected Vacancy Rate: 6.50%

Source: RDG Planning & Design; 2014

TALL CITY TODAY

Economic Conditions

Major Themes

- » **Leveraging Local Assets.** Midland has several assets that the economic development community should continue to leverage. These assets include the obvious oil and gas industry but also the new Spaceport, the airport, a strong regional medical community, and Midland College to name a few. These resources should be leveraged to help diversify the city's economy and expand job opportunities.
- » **Recruitment and Retention.** In many market sectors there are more jobs than people to fill those jobs. The city and business community must continue to identify resources and amenities that will ensure continued attraction and retention of a stable workforce, beginning with past graduates of the Midland area who likely have a greater commitment and passion to the region.

INTRODUCTION

Midland's economy is often a hard driving force in the community that can generate substantial job growth or create times of constriction. The oil and gas industry, possibly more than most industries, cycles through periods of boom and bust. Midland has weathered these periods and avoided significant population losses and economic crisis.

KEY TRENDS

Employment

- » Midland has an extremely low unemployment rate, creating a high demand for additional employees and the necessary amenities to bring them to Midland.
- » Demand for employees is found across all sectors from oil industry professionals to service and support staff.
- » The largest industries include oil and gas extraction and transportation-related businesses, illustrating the city's dependency on narrow industry sectors.
- » The city's largest employers service local residents and support the oil and gas industry.

Cost of Living

- » The Figure 1.15 Cost of Living measures the difference in the price of goods and services in one location from another. Using a base of \$100,000, this index calculates the income Midland residents would need to make to purchase the same goods and services as the city of origin.

Figure 1.13: Midland Labor Force, August 2014

Labor Force	August 2014
Civilian Labor Force (1)	102.2
Employment (1)	99.5
Unemployment (1)	2.8
Unemployment Rate (2)	2.7
Nonfarm Wage & Salary Employment	
Total Nonfarm (3)	96.4
Mining, Logging, and Construction (3)	29.5
Manufacturing (3)	4
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities (3)	19.6
Information (3)	0.9
Financial Activities (3)	4.5
Professional and Business Services (3)	9.7
Education and Health Services (3)	6.9
Leisure and Hospitality (3)	9.2
Other Services (3)	3.2
Government (3)	8.9

Footnotes:

(1) Number of persons, in thousands, not seasonally adjusted

(2) In percent, not seasonally adjusted

(3) Number of jobs, in thousands, not seasonally adjusted

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics http://www.bls.gov/eag/eag.tx_midland_msa.htm

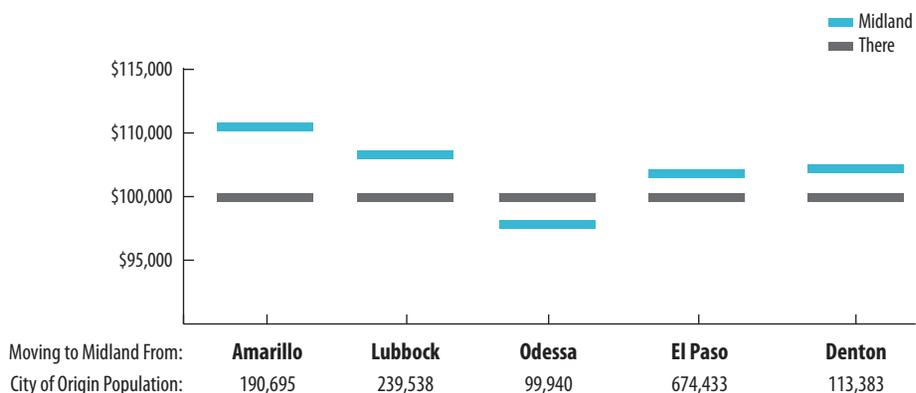
- » The higher cost of living in Midland tends to be driven by higher housing costs. Excluding Odessa, where the cost of living is comparable, housing costs range between 11% and 28% higher in Midland than other communities identified in Figure 1.15.

Commuting Patterns

- » The number of employees coming to Midland on a daily basis is only slightly higher than the number of residents leaving Midland each day. This likely reflects Midland and Odessa’s close economic relationship and Midland’s slightly larger employment base.
- » Travel time to work for Midland residents averages 17.8 minutes. This is comparable to Amarillo, Lubbock, and Odessa, and better than El Paso and Denton where travel times are over 20 minutes.



Figure 1.15: Cost of Living



Moving to Midland From: **Amarillo** **Lubbock** **Odessa** **El Paso** **Denton**
 City of Origin Population: 190,695 239,538 99,940 674,433 113,383

Source: <http://midlandtxedc.com/cost-living>

Figure 1.14: Major Employers

Company Name	No. Employees
Midland Independent School District	200
Warren Equipment Companies	100
Midland Memorial Hospital and Medical Center	100
Dawson Geophysical	100
Midland College	100
City of Midland	80
Patterson Drilling UTI	70
AT&T Wireless	50
Midland County	50
Key Energy Services	40

1 person icon = 100 employees

Source: 2009-2013 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Additional detailed economic data can be found at the Midland Development Corporation website:

<http://midlandtxedc.com/midland-economy>

Park & Recreation Amenities

Major Themes

- » **System Expansion.** Over the years, the city's population has grown but with little growth in the park system. Since the 1980s the city has only built two new neighborhood parks. Offering all residents high quality parks is important to their quality of life. Partnerships and funding sources must be leveraged to assist in expansion of the system while maintaining existing parks.
- » **Draws as resources.** One way to expand and connect the city's recreation system is through the use of the system of draws. This system can function as linear parks and trails that safely connect major destinations and recreation features.
- » **Park Dedication.** Park expansion should follow new development and the residents that will benefit most from the development. The city should work with developers in partnership to ensure residents' park needs are met and to create highly marketable and quality developments.

INTRODUCTION

Midland's park and recreation system offers a high level of service and a wide range of recreational options to its residents. Parks and recreation are a substantial part of a city's quality of life. The early founders of many cities saw both the recreational and economic benefits of parks. By championing the development of marquee parks, founders understood the importance of quality of life for residents living in the community but also for the businesses they were trying to recruit to their cities.

Figure 1.16: Comparison of Park Land Acreage

Classification	Midland	Odessa	El Paso	McKinney	Amarillo	Carrollton
Mini Park	5.9	5.24				
Neighborhood	151.9	109.90	477.00	214.00	147.20	127.20
Community	355	257.50	852.00	295.00	222.00	274.30
Metropolitan	620					268
Regional	186		312.00	409.00	605.30	150.00
Specialty	28.1	181.36		212.00	3.00	464.00
Public Open Space		190.00	940.00			
Linear Parks				521.00	53.00	258.00
Nature Areas				859.00		
School Joint Use Parks					259.40	
Total	1346.9	744.0	2581.0	2510.0	1289.9	1541.5

** Categories are not always consistent from community to community but public golf courses are not included by comparison cities.*

KEY TRENDS

- » The 2012 Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan Update offers the foundation for the following section. That document included a needs assessment and implementation plan for 10 years based on existing facilities, population projections, and communities surveys.
- » Midland's park and recreation system includes 31 neighborhood parks, four specialty parks, four community parks, one metropolitan park, and one regional park totaling 1,172 acres, as well as the 23,000 square-foot Martin Luther King Jr. Community Center. The city's park and recreation system also includes Hogan

Map 1.5: Park and Trail System

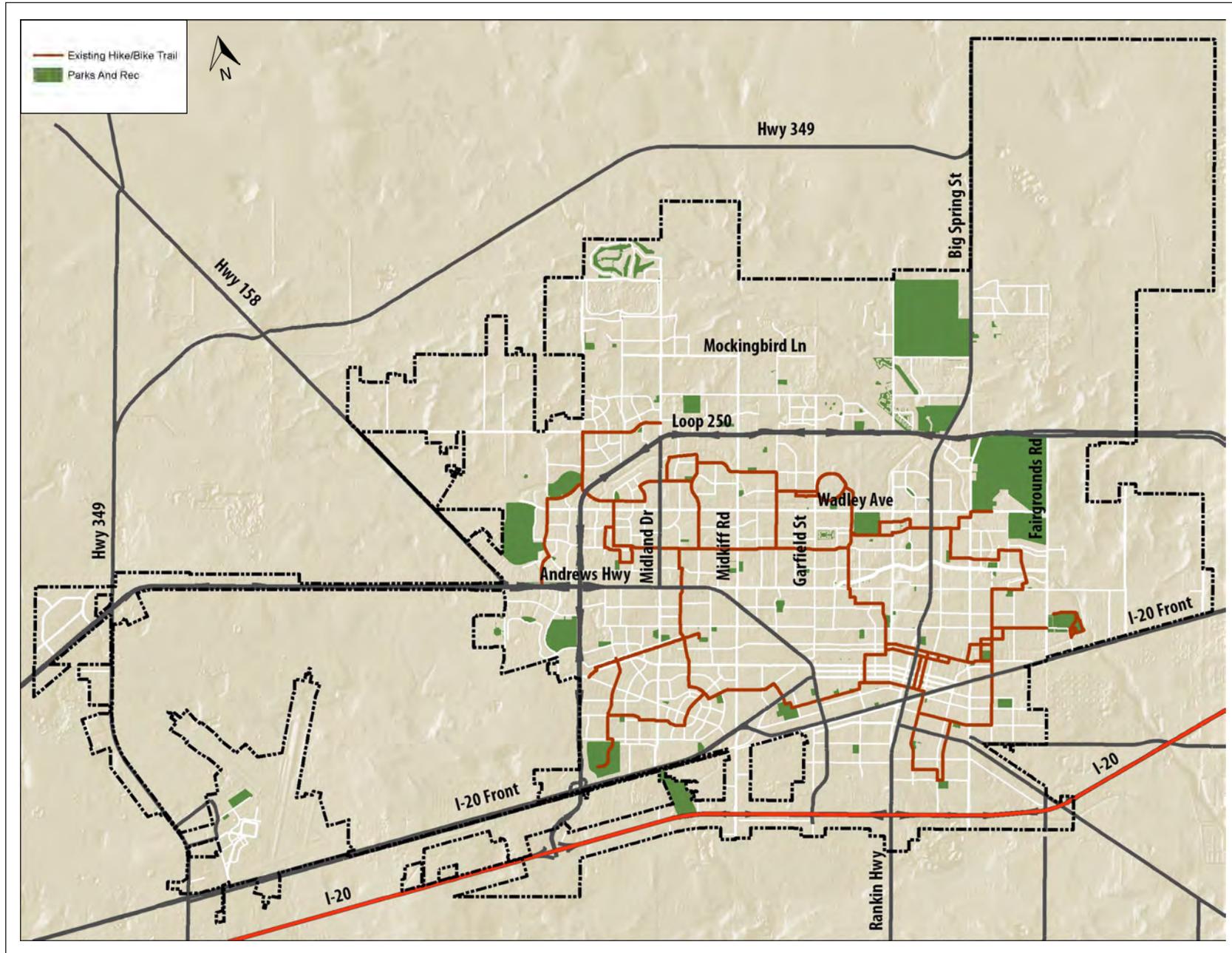


Figure 1.17: Future Parkland Needs

Classification	Existing Acres Per 1000 Residents	Existing Acreage	Add Parkland	2035 Total Parkland Needed
Mini Park	0.05	5.9	+ 1.37	7.27
Neighborhood	1.18	151.9	+ 35.30	187.20
Community	2.75	355	+ 439.24	437.5 / 794.24*
Metropolitan	4.81	620	+ 144.08	764.08
Regional	1.44	186	+ Varies	Varies
Specialty	0.24	28.1	+ Varies	Varies

* Community Park Standard based on 2.75 and 5 acres per 1000 residents

Golf Course and other private recreation facilities that are not traditionally included in a park service analysis. This analysis will consider only those facilities that are open and free to the public.

- » The city currently has 21 miles of trails and is in the process of completing a trails master plan. Trails play an important role in both recreation and transportation. Additional detail on trails, along with bike and pedestrian facilities, is located in the Tall City Today Transportation section.

Geographic Distribution

- » Map 1.6 illustrates the geographic distribution of parks. It is assumed that most residents are comfortable with a half-mile walking distance to a park. This traditionally is the comfortable distance a mother with a stroller would walk to the local playground.
- » Midland's geographic distribution of park resources is generally strong and the system provides convenient access for many of the neighborhoods within the 250 Loop. The areas outside of the loop are experiencing the highest level of residential development and are underserved by neighborhood and community parks.

Figure 1.18: Park Facility Needs

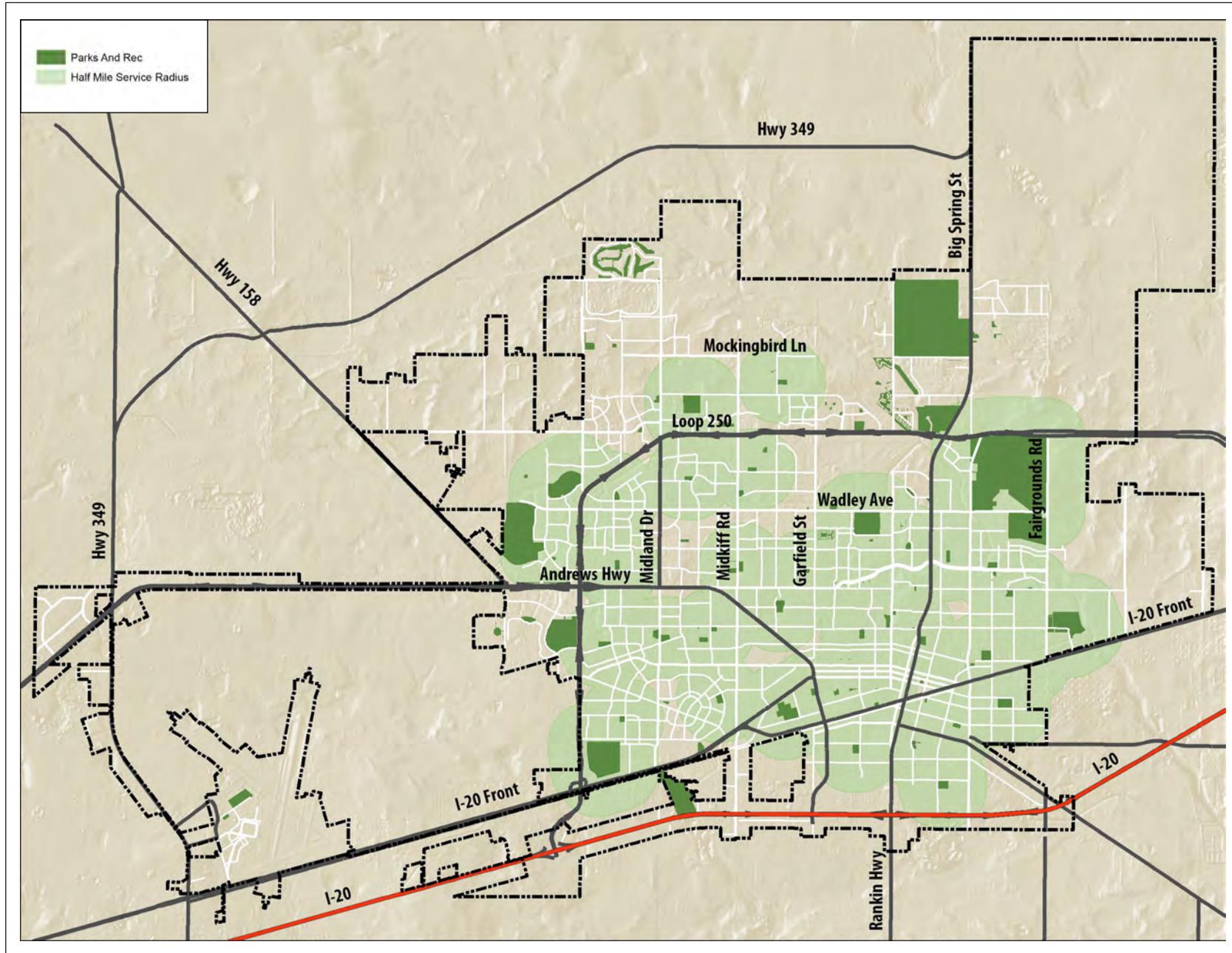
Facility Type	Recommended Facilities Per Population*	2012 Existing Facilities	Recommended Facilities for 2035 Population
Basketball Courts	1 / 5,000	13	32
Football Fields	1 / 20,000	2	8
Pavilion/Picnic Shelters	1 / 2,000	25	79
Playgrounds	1 / 1,000	40	159
Recreation Center	1 / 25,000	1	6
Swimming Pools	1 / 20,000	2	8
Tennis Courts	1 / 2,000	21	79
Trails	1 mile / 10000	4	16
Volleyball Areas	1 / 5,000	16	32

* National Park and Recreation Standards

Level of Service

- » Public parks in the United States are generally classified by type. A standard number of acres per 1,000 people has been developed by the National Recreation and Park Association for each of these types. Midland meets or exceeds these standards except for community parks, for which the NRPA recommends five-to-eight acres per 1,000 residents; Midland has 2.75 acres per 1,000.
- » Based on the forecasted population growth and existing levels of service, Midland's park system will need to add 263 acres of park land. If the city wishes to strive to reach the higher NRPA standard for community park land, the city will need to add 620 acres.

Map 1.6: Park Distribution



2012 High-Priority Elements identified by residents in the Park, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan:

- Hike/Bike/Jogging Trails
- Nature Areas
- Picnic Shelters
- Indoor Recreation Center
- Senior Citizens Center
- Lighted Basketball Courts
- Public Swimming Pools
- Outdoor Basketball Courts
- Playgrounds
- Botanic/Flower Gardens



- » NRPA standards can also be applied to facilities within a system. Figure 1.18 summarizes the most common types of park facilities and projected need based on NRPA standards. The popularity of certain types of recreation have grown and waned over the years; for example, the popularity of tennis courts in the 1970s compared to soccer fields today. Features like picnic shelters and playgrounds are items that generally remain in high demand and will need to be added to the system to support the city's growing population. Partnerships with MISD and other organizations should also be explored when addressing future park needs.

2012 Park Master Plan Observations and Findings

- » The plan identified a shortage of neighborhood parks outside of the 250 Loop and recommended additional parks be developed to serve new development areas.
- » The plan recommended reinvestment and revitalization of aging park facilities, such as Dennis the Menace Park, to improve the overall level of service of the park system.
- » The plan, based on community input, recommends the creation of linear recreation trails which link parks, neighborhoods, and community destinations.
- » As a mechanism to expand the park system to serve new residential neighborhoods, the plan recommends the city adopt a Park Land Dedication Ordinance to require new residential developments to create neighborhood parks or to set aside land for a larger community park to be developed by the city.



TALL CITY TODAY

Transportation

Major Themes

- » **Traffic Congestion and Calming.** Midland's transportation system has had to evolve over the past century to a rapidly growing economy and population. The system has grown but not always at the same rate or with the same level of connectedness necessary to create an effective transportation system that balances transportation flow with the development of safe and welcoming places accessible to pedestrians and bicyclists.
- » **Access/Connectivity.** Piecemeal development often limits accessibility and connectivity for even the shortest errand. Improving access and connectivity in Midland relates to future development and also reinvestment in existing neighborhoods and commercial areas.
- » **Maintenance.** As any system expands, so does the maintenance burden, and Midland's transportation network is no exception. Beyond the obvious impacts on the efficiency of transportation, the street network and rights-of-way also represent the largest component of the public realm and a vital first impression for visitors and new residents. The challenge is to balance the extension of the network with maintenance and improvements to the existing infrastructure.

INTRODUCTION

Midland's transportation system, like most cities in the southwestern United States, grew with the onset of the automobile. Large population growth in Midland in the 1950s coincides with the "heyday" of automobiles becoming the predominant mode of transportation in America. This single point has had the largest impact on the way Midland's street system and transportation planning has evolved. In general, the City of Midland has long planned for roadways, with the first comprehensive thoroughfare plan prepared in 1969.

Midland's most recent thoroughfare plan was prepared in 2005. Since then, three primary factors continue to impact the plan for a transportation system. First, the introduction of oil and gas development in such large numbers within, and adjacent to the city limits has created demands on the transportation plan. This is particularly evident in the northern and western parts of the city and extraterritorial jurisdiction, where growth has been focused. Second, the growth itself has put pressure on the existing roadway grid, creating more congestion and mobility issues than the city has experienced in the past. Finally, the recent introduction of the spaceport license and associated zoning restrictions may have a significant impact on where roads in the western portion of the transportation plan can be located or what they will specifically serve.

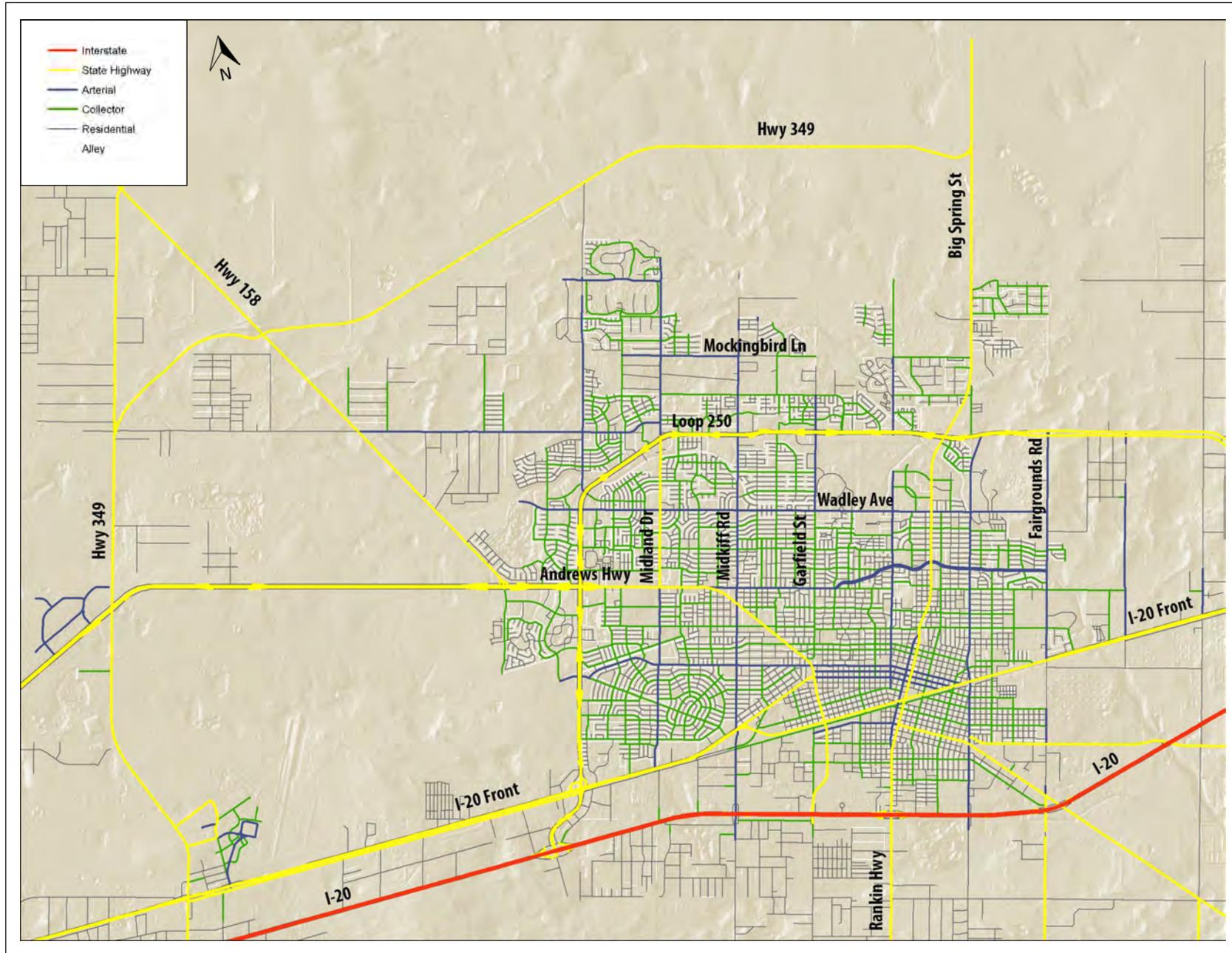
KEY TRENDS

Partners in Transportation Planning

Midland continues to have partners in planning the transportation system both regionally and locally. These include the Midland Odessa Transportation Organization (MOTOR MPO), Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), and the Midland-Odessa Transportation Alliance (MOTRAN). The MOTOR MPO functions as the Metropolitan Planning Organization, providing leadership to the region in planning, funding, and developing the transportation system, in all its forms. TxDOT is the state governmental agency tasked with providing safe and reliable transportation solutions for Texas. MOTRAN is a non-profit organization that



Map 1.7: Functional Street Classification



Over 80% of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they would like to see trails developed as an alternative way to commute.

2015 Hike and Bike Trail Master Plan



promotes transportation infrastructure and economic development in the Permian Basin. Each entity interacts with and supports the goals of developing Midland's transportation infrastructure.

Function Classifications

Midland continues to use a classification system based on their function to describe roadways within the city. Highway, arterial roadways, collector streets, and local roads are the primary designations. In reverse order, these classifications provide increasing mobility and decreasing access.

Regional System

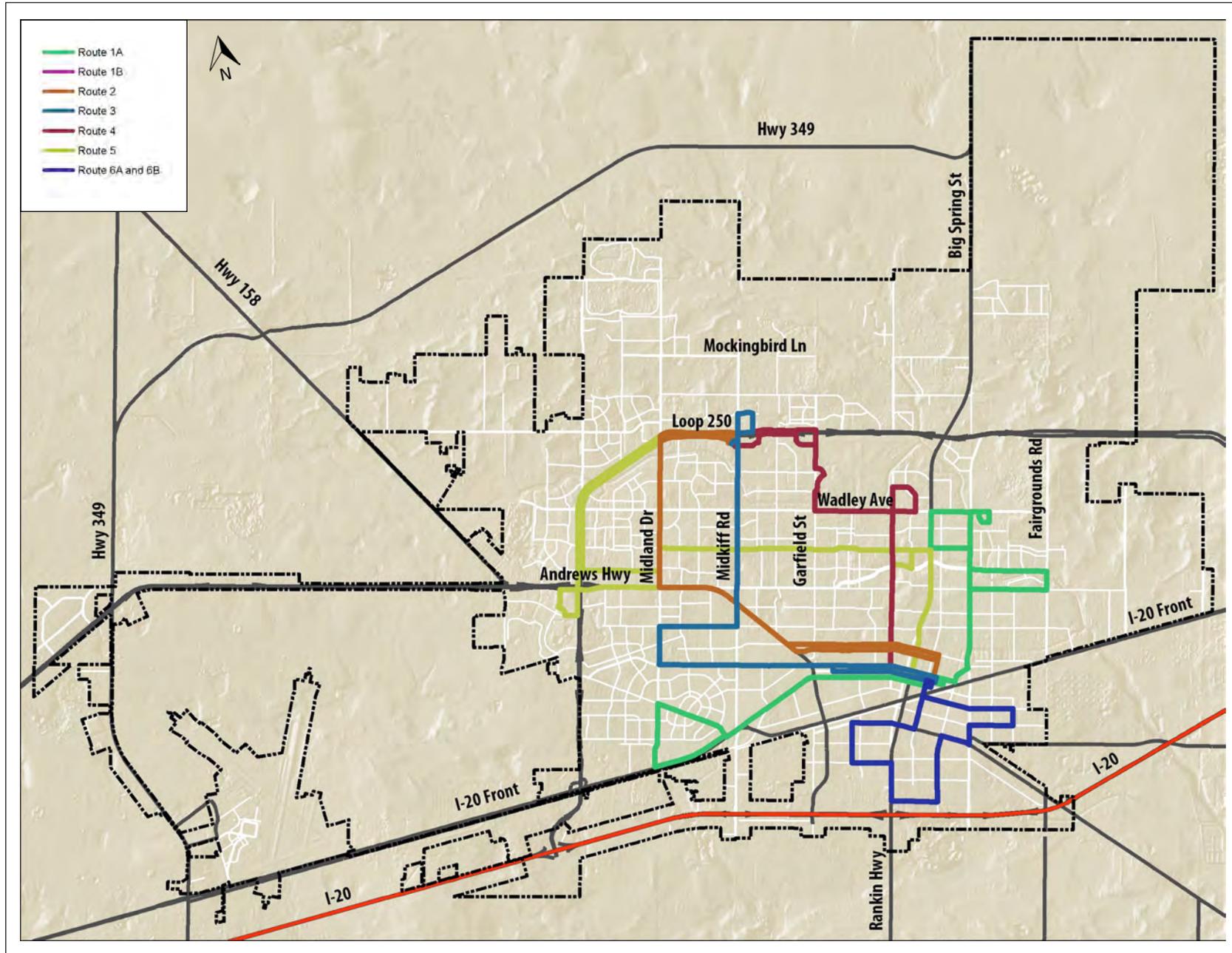
The City of Midland's regional transportation system is primarily concerned with mobility throughout the Permian Basin, with particular importance on service through and around Midland. Roadways that serve in this manner are:

- Interstate 20
- Business 20 (Old Highway 80)
- State Highway 191
- State Highway 158
- State Highway 349 (including the new Craddick Highway portion)
- Farm to Market Road 1788
- Loop 250

Local System

The local transportation system for Midland includes the arterials, collectors, and local streets that provide access to housing, businesses, and public gathering spaces. Arterials within the City of Midland have typically been spaced on the one-mile section lines, but more recent planning is pushing those to potentially 1.5 mile spacing. Collectors in the older portions of Midland are continuous ½ mile connections, narrower than arterials, designed to collect traffic from neighborhoods and offer access to neighborhood destinations. Newer areas of town have fewer primary collectors, and more secondary collectors that are not continuous, but function to move traffic into and out of the section, not necessarily through it. This often forces more traffic onto already busy arterial streets.

Map 1.8: Bus Transit Routes





Trails and Bike Routes

Midland has 21 miles of trails, or approximately one mile for every 5,950 residents. Most trails are in parks except for three disconnected links in the southwest, west, and northern portions of the city. In an effort to create a more connected system, the Hike and Bile Trail Master Plan calls for one mile for every 5,000 residents. To achieve this, the Master Plan calls for seven miles of additional trails in the next five to ten years as a starting goal.

In addition to the trails, the city has 46.4 miles of bike routes that follow existing streets to connect major destinations. Another 11.3 miles are designated running routes throughout the city. The Hike and Bike Trail Master Plan calls for safety improvements to these streets that offer additional buffering and warnings.

Transit

Midland's transit system is part of the Midland Odessa EZRider transit network. The bus system provides services within and between each community. In Midland, the system is comprised of six loops based out of the Downtown Transfer Plaza at Texas and Fort Worth. Buses run along these loops from 6:15 a.m. to 6:10 p.m. on weekdays and from 8:15 a.m. to 4:10 p.m. on Saturdays. The system is an important service to residents, and connections to the hike and bike system along with bike racks on the buses could extend the reach of this system for many residents.

TALL CITY TODAY

Infrastructure

INTRODUCTION

Midland's infrastructure system is a combination of water, wastewater, and stormwater systems designed to serve Midland's needs. These include:

- Water supply resources, treatment systems, and a distribution system, with elevated and ground storage.
- Wastewater collection, treatment methods, and disposal techniques, including reuse opportunities.
- Stormwater and flood control systems, including privately owned and municipally owned detention basins, draw down pipes, storm sewer systems, open channels, natural draws, culverts, and bridges.

KEY TRENDS

Water Supply

Midland's water supply has traditionally come from two sources.

1. Colorado River Municipal Water District (CRMWD). The CRMWD maintains three surface water sources and several well fields, from which they provide raw water to three member municipalities and several customer municipalities, of which Midland is one. Currently the City receives up to 30 million gallons per day (MGD) from the CRMWD, with one contract for a portion of that amount set to expire in 2029.
2. City owned well fields. The Paul Davis Well Field is 30 miles north of town, and has been operating since the 1950's. The T-Bar Ranch Well Field and Clear Water Ranch, about 70 miles west of town, have been recently developed to deliver water to the City of Midland. The City also maintains nine wells near the Midland International Airport for a separate public water system surrounding the airport.

Water Treatment

The Water Purification Plant for the City of Midland is located in northwest Midland, at the corner of Midland Drive and Bluebird Lane. The plant has recently undergone significant upgrades and has the capability to treat 32 MGD as well as to blend with well field sources to meet peak demands while still meeting drinking water quality standards.

Water Distribution

The water distribution system for the City of Midland serves over 40,000 customers by providing potable water through pump stations, storage tanks (both elevated and ground level), and over 830 miles of waterlines. The system contains three current pressure planes over an elevation change of 150 feet. Two new elevated storage

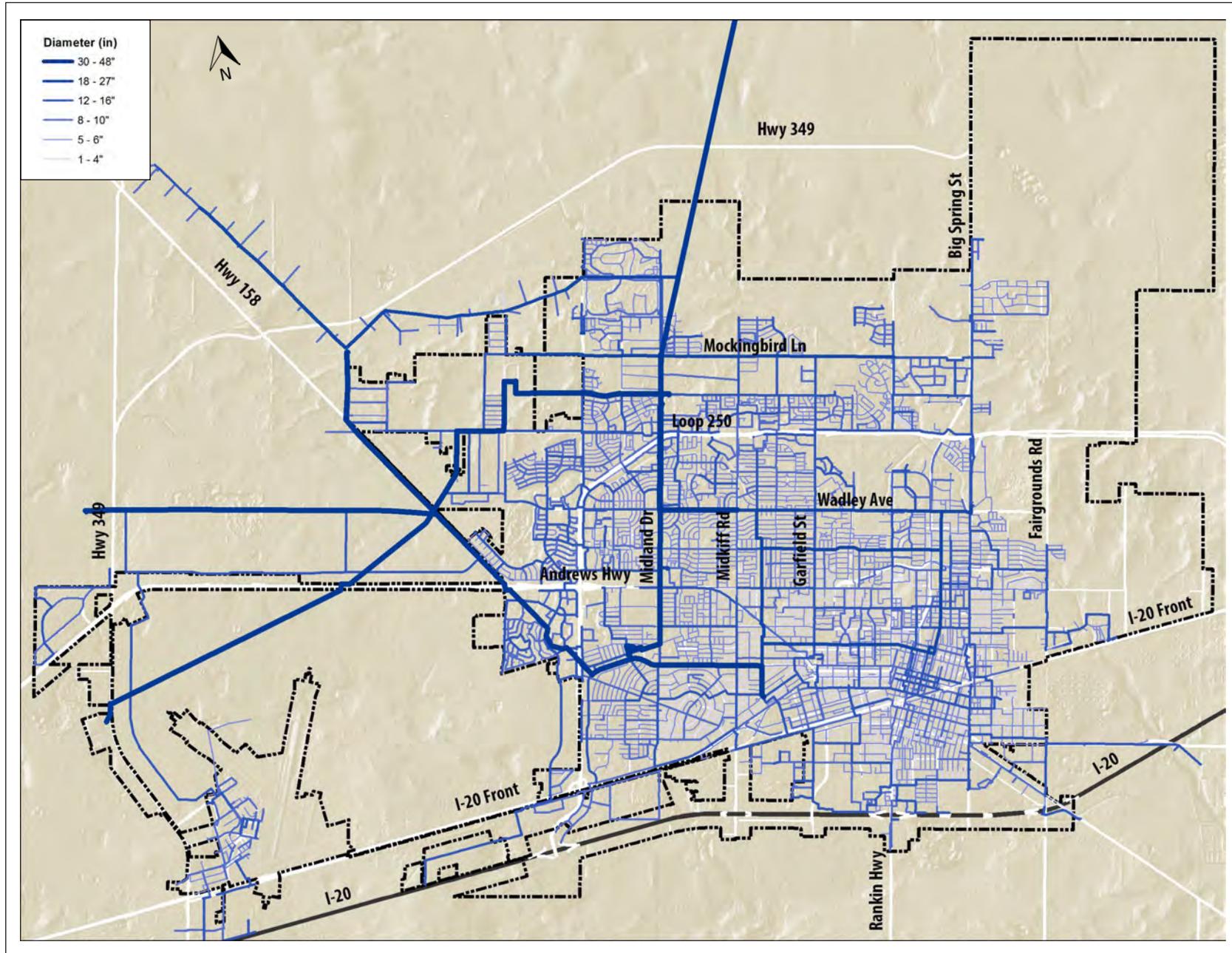
Major Themes

» *Reuse – Stewards of Our Water.* Residents of west Texas understand the importance of water, an often limited resource. The capture and reuse of rainwater, along with the use of wastewater, has many benefits. These include alleviating some flash flooding and being able to irrigate areas during dry periods.

» *Extensions for Growth.* Whether fast or steady, the city will continue to experience growth. Meeting those demands through proper and efficient extension of services will ensure a system that can be supported and maintained by future generations.

» *Multi-purposing.* In life, true win-win scenarios are a rare thing but Midland has captured this opportunity through multi-purposing its stormwater infrastructure. From the creation of parks around ponds that store stormwater to the use of streets for both transportation and drainage, Midland has been successful in turning essential infrastructure facilities into community and neighborhood assets. This idea should be extended to the draw system for both stormwater management and recreation.

Map 1.9: Water Mains





tanks have been constructed within the last few years, as well as the rehabilitation of the four existing elevated tanks. Fire protection is provided at a Class 1 ISO rating through this system.

Wastewater Collection

Wastewater collection for the City of Midland contains over 630 miles of sewer lines, collecting wastewater and delivering it to the water pollution control plant (WPCP). The flow is routed to the plant with a portion diverted through a satellite reuse plant in Windlands/Tumbleweed Park, prior to the WPCP.

Wastewater Treatment

The Water Pollution Control Plant is located on the southeast side of the city, south of Interstate 20, near FM 307. Originally built in 1952, the plant has been expanded to provide primary treatment of up to 21 MGD. In 2014, the city opened a satellite reuse plant in the central/north part of the city, pulling wastewater from the trunk system and treating to a reuse standard for irrigation. This Type I water is provided to Midland College for irrigation purposes. A total capacity of 200,000 GPD is available from this new plant.

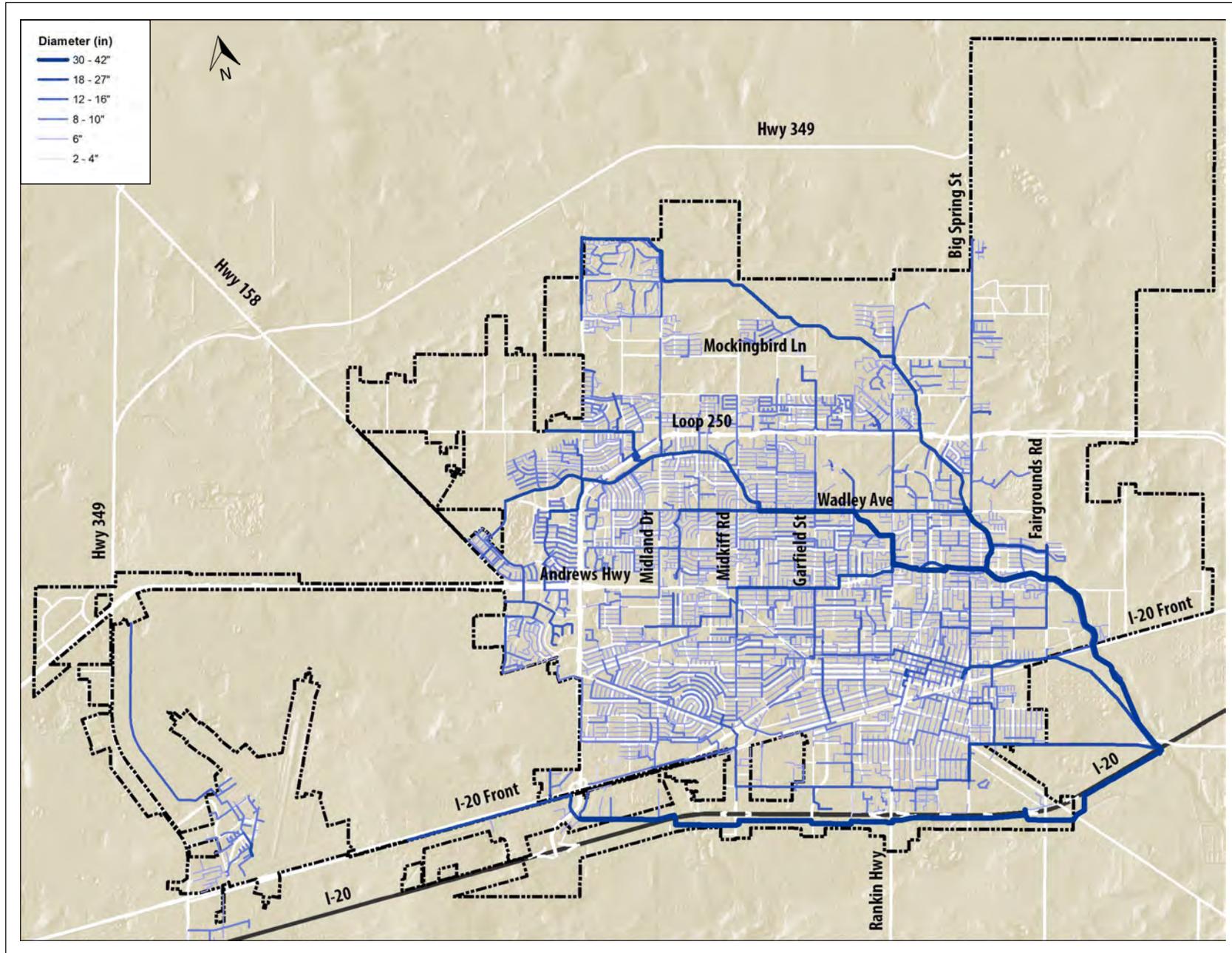
Wastewater Disposal

The City of Midland's current method of wastewater disposal is land application. All effluent from the Water Pollution Control Plant is applied to the irrigation of farms near the treatment plant and at Spraberry. These farms total 5,050 acres of non-public access, City-owned pasture and cultivated land. The farm operations handle all treated effluent from the plant, after detention in the Springberry ponds. Sludge is disposed through beneficial land application on 725 acres near the plant. Additionally with the new satellite reuse plant, Type I treated effluent is provided to Midland College for irrigation.

Flood Control

The City of Midland was built just downstream of the confluence of two major draws, Midland Draw and Jal Draw. The watersheds of these two draws make up 363 square miles of the 412 total square miles of contributing basin for the city's runoff. Four other watersheds contribute the remainder. The vast majority of this area is north and west of the city. Published in 1993, the City's Storm Drainage Design Manual outlines the policy for the planning, design, and installation of stormwater conveyance, detention, and storage facilities. In 1996, the Master Drainage Plan was adopted by the city to outline a long-range plan for drainage improvements, which allow upstream watersheds to develop while minimizing increased flood damage potential in other areas, and to reduce existing flood potential where possible within the city. Recently, the city has developed an update to the Midland and Jal Draw studies. The City owns and maintains detentions basins (some of which double as parks), channels, culverts, and storm sewers as part of their flood control system.

Map 1.10: Sewer Mains





Chapter 2

A Shared Vision



CONTENTS

- » Challenges and Opportunities
- » Public Engagement
- » Community Themes

A Shared Vision

WHY PLAN NOW?

Midland has changed drastically over the past 100 years. From a community of less than 5,000 residents to a regional metropolis of nearly 130,000 residents, this change continues to impact all aspects of the community, its neighborhoods, and its ever evolving role in the region. This reality necessitates consideration of what the future of Midland should look like, a process that begins by looking at the trends and conditions that challenge the city today (see Tall City Today).

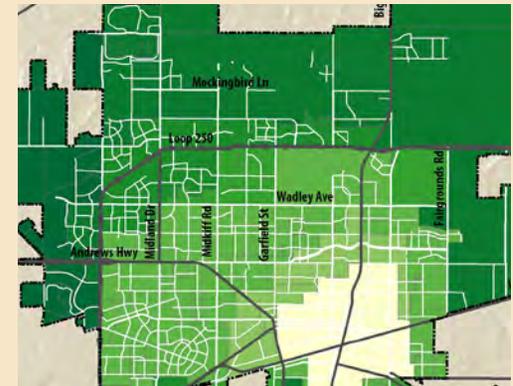
In times of growth it is easy to move forward in a rush, but the Tall City Tomorrow Plan affords community members the opportunity to step back and look at the direction in which their community is going. Development and growth can be viewed in a broader picture of what the city should look like and how it should function in the future. Having a solid vision for the city provides community leaders with the tools necessary to make sound decisions based on the aspirations of residents.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES



Historic Growth

The make-up of Midland's population has changed over the years. Today the city has more young professionals and a growing number of adults living longer lives. These changes affect the types of programs and services the city supports, the type of businesses that are started, and the type of housing that is built.



Fiscal Sustainability

As the city's physical structures grow and expand into new areas, basic services must also expand. Historic population trends show that the city will continue to grow – the challenge is to make sure that growth is efficient and allows for the quality services residents expect at a cost they can afford.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES



Living with Resources

The city's draws and pump jacks are both assets and challenges. The draws can be great natural environments that protect residents from flooding, but they can also collect litter and attract illegal dumping. The pump jacks are the driving force of the economy, but can also limit the physical growth of the city. Living with these resources is a fact of life for Midland, and finding ways to integrate these assets into a quality living environment will be an essential part of Tall City Tomorrow.



Housing Choice

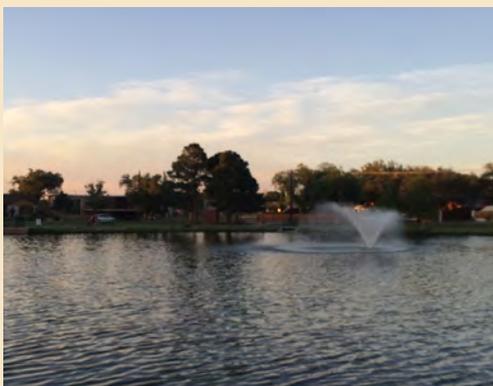
Living in a community with inherent support systems is a fundamental purpose of cities. Residents living longer and changes in generational desires create different housing priorities than those of the past. Housing options at all stages of life have not always been provided, but this idea must be addressed.



Economic Sustainability

Stable economies need diversity in order to weather business cycles and retain talent of all types. Midland's business community will need to build on the emerging economic sectors such as aerospace, education, and healthcare.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES



Quality of Place

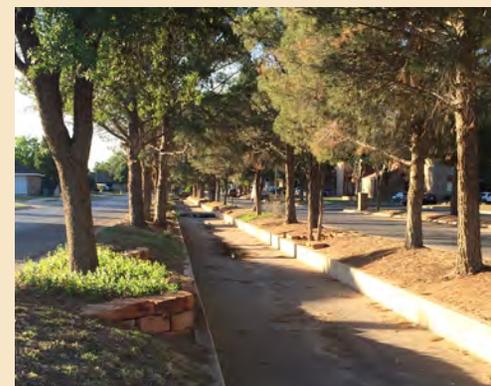
Leading cities have great places where people meet, interact, share ideas, and enjoy their city. Midland lacks these types of gathering spaces.

The city's streets, parks, and other public spaces speak to the character of the community, as well as the pride that residents have in Midland and in what they expect from a great city.



Transportation For All

Midland's traffic system is dominated by the car, and likely will be for the life of this plan. This dominance can limit and isolate some residents. For others, the congestion can take away from time at home or work. Local surveys and national trends show increasing demand for walking, biking, and transit options. A well-planned system that ensures the development of arterial and collector streets in tandem with sidewalks, trails, and bike routes will improve the quality of life in Midland.



Multi-Purposing Infrastructure

The city has a long and generally successful history of addressing stormwater in streets and parks. This has been a highly efficient approach, but development upstream has often stressed these systems. Good development practices in the future will need to ensure that the existing stormwater systems are not overwhelmed and that draws can be used for both stormwater management and recreation corridors.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT: THE FOUNDATION OF THE PLAN

The foundation of Tall City Tomorrow is the community – the residents, leaders, and business owners who attend meetings or offer their input and ideas in different ways. In many ways, the process of developing the plan is as important as the document itself; without the support for implementation from the public and community leadership to guide the process, the plan offers little value.

The community engagement portion of a comprehensive plan, like Tall City Tomorrow, has three primary purposes: to create a vision for the future of the community; to identify problems and develop solutions to create a better future; and to position the community to take advantage of opportunities as they arise.

Public Engagement Process

The approach to public engagement was designed to make participation easy for all stakeholders. From focus groups, design studios, and formal presentations, to social media and online town hall meetings, significant efforts were made to engage all segments of the population.

STEERING COMMITTEE

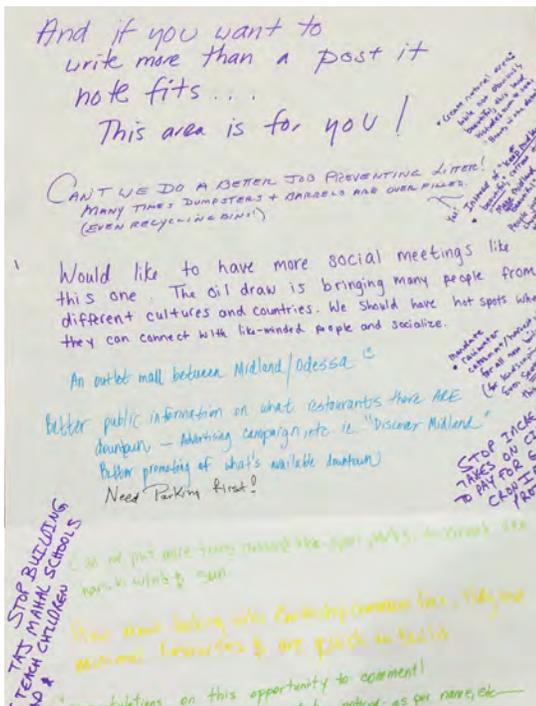
The Steering Committee was thoughtfully selected to represent a cross-section of Midland’s diverse population. These 14 members provided guidance to the engagement process, served as a barometer for the direction of the plan, and will continue to represent the plan through implementation. Their contribution, patience, and support were an invaluable resource in creating a robust plan for the future of Midland that is grounded in public engagement.

STAKEHOLDER GROUP CONVERSATIONS

A proven tool to gain a deeper and more profound understanding of the community, these facilitated discussions covered a broad range of topic areas as each group explored a targeted aspect of the community. A total of 10 facilitated stakeholder group conversations were held throughout the planning process on the following topics:

- Housing and Neighborhoods
- Economy
- Commercial Land Uses
- Downtown
- Transportation
- Public Safety and Fire
- Building and Zoning Codes
- Community Services (schools, parks and recreation, and trash service)
- Oil and Gas
- Community Quality





QUOTES FROM PUBLIC MEETINGS:

“Can’t we do a better job preventing litter!”

“Housing on the north and east. Parks on the north and west.”

“More small affordable housing for senior citizens, teachers, families, and singles.”

DESIGN WORKSHOPS

Early in the process, a three-day public design session was held to offer an informal arena for residents and stakeholders to see, and contribute to, how the physical plan comes together based on community input.

NEIGHBORHOOD WORKSHOPS

The neighborhood workshops brought the planning process to residents and allowed them to talk about their local issues and concerns. Residents were able to review the plan goals and preliminary land use concepts, and were encouraged to share their thoughts and ideas through a variety of input techniques.

MEETING-IN-A-BOX

A Meeting-in-a-Box is essentially a mobile meeting tool; a way to engage residents and stakeholder groups in a guided conversation around the themes of the plan. The opportunity was made available to the groups within the community.

ONLINE ENGAGEMENT

The online town hall is an engagement forum that enables stakeholders to contribute ideas and respond to comments from the comfort of their own computer, phone, or mobile device. This infographic illustrates trends from the online town hall forum. Full results and comments are available from the city by request.

SURVEY

The Community Report Card was an online survey tool used to gauge public opinion, to identify issues, and to solicit ideas for the future of Midland. The outcome of the survey presents a baseline understanding of satisfaction/dissatisfaction with various aspects of the community. This tool was used at the onset of the project and received 138 responses over the course of several weeks. Full survey results are available from the city by request.

The integrated approach to public engagement led to a better understanding of the community, its values, and its vision for the future. As the Tall City Tomorrow Plan is based on the vision of Midlanders for their future, the public participation process was designed to engage the population.



**ONLINE DISCUSSION
TOP VOTE RECIPIENTS:**

Sync lights for steady traffic flow

Redesign the off-coming traffic from the 250 Loop

Create more parking downtown

Better information flow; more kid-friendly activities/events

“While building more parking should be done, I think the city should first make downtown more walk-able, making it easy and comfortable to park and walk.”

COMMUNITY THEMES

Months of public engagements, hundreds of conversations, and countless internet posts helped define a number of community themes, or “big ideas”, helping to define the overall direction of the Tall City Tomorrow Plan. These are ideas from the people of Midland and for the future of Midland.

Diversify the Economy

- » Create a resilient, diverse, and multi-dimensional economy

While residents recognize the strength of the local economy, the creation of jobs and businesses that are not reliant on the oil and gas market would create a more diverse economy that is less susceptible to fluctuations in the national and international energy markets. Areas of expressed interest were the potential of attracting business around the spaceport/international airport and attracting technology businesses to Midland.

Beautify Midland

- » Create a welcoming, clean and beautiful community

The desire to live in an attractive and clean community is universal, and in many ways is requisite to creating community pride. While many areas of Midland are attractive and well-maintained, the mature neighborhoods, commercial districts, and street rights-of-way can suffer from litter, dilapidation, and a less-appealing public realm. The vast majority of comments on this topic were clearly rooted in a genuine desire to build a greater sense of community in Midland.

Input around this theme was broad and practical with the following highlights:

- Address derelict buildings and nuisance issues
- Reduce littering
- Promote drought-resistant plantings
- Plant more trees

Streamline Traffic Flows and Reduce Congestion

- » Develop a transportation network that enables safe and efficient movement for everyone

Residents recognize the impact of rapid growth on the capacity and function of the transportation network. While frustration is common around the topic of transportation and traffic congestion, the general tone of comments was constructive and hopeful that improvements will be made to accommodate current and continued growth.

Input around this theme included the following suggestions:

- Sync traffic lights to manage peak traffic loads
- Create more street connections to alleviate congestion
- Improve on- and off-ramps along the 250 Loop
- Provide more efficient transportation alternatives

An additional idea that transcends the theme was the desire to better connect neighborhoods to parks and schools in order to create a stronger sense of community and a more convenient way of life.

Build Community / Quality of Place

- » *Develop high-quality places for residents to experience and integrate into the community*

Midland is home to longtime residents, as well as transplants drawn by the economy. While these groups are unique in their tenure in Midland, their community objectives are often similar – a place where they can integrate, socialize, and enjoy. Input around this theme focuses on creating high-quality places where residents can build social networks and integrate into the community as their home. Input included the following highlights: more neighborhood parks, more walking/bicycling trails, and more and better places for events.

Connect Civic and Recreational Amenities with Trails and Sidewalks

- » *Maximize the benefit of community amenities by connecting assets*

The value of community amenities increases as these assets become connected. Individually, a park or library serves only the guests that seek out the experience of that particular facility, while a connected network of amenities increases the use of the overall system including each of its individual parts. Input around this theme focused on providing trail and sidewalk connections between parks, recreation fields, libraries, and schools.

Improve Opportunities for Youth

- » *Create a physically and socially connected network of youth support facilities to develop the next generation of Midlanders*

While the school district is managed independently and is outside the scope of the Tall City Tomorrow Plan, the future of the youth is not. This theme area is based on the idea of creating an integrated environment which supports the development of youth into a productive and positive force. This means creating a physically and socially connected network of schools, parks, sport fields, libraries, and entertainment destinations to make Midland a welcoming and supportive environment.

Improve the Downtown

- » *Create Downtown Midland as a place to work, live, and entertain*

Downtowns are typically symbolic to the community as a whole. In Midland, downtown serves as a corporate office environment during the workday but offers little nightlife or weekend activity. The input around this topic was practical: additional parking structures; traffic calming on major roads to make the district more walkable; more social and entertainment events; address dilapidated and derelict structures; better connect nearby neighborhoods to the district; and promote what is available and happening in downtown Midland.



Chapter 3

An Integrated Land Use Vision



CONTENTS

- » LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES
- » FUTURE LAND USE
- » DEVELOPMENT POLICY AREAS
- » A LAND USE FRAMEWORK
- » CAVEATS TO THE FUTURE LAND USE MAP

An Integrated Land Use Vision



LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

The research and community engagement summarized in Chapter Two drives the following nine land use and development principles. These principles are the criteria for land use decisions, and should be applied to all development projects.

1. Development should be contiguous and fiscally responsible

Contiguous and compact development, similar to the city's historic patterns, helps preserve the character of Midland as it grows. This type of development reduces costly infrastructure extensions such as water, sewer, and roads by developing on under-utilized infill properties or in strategic areas adjacent to existing development. Contiguous development minimizes travel distances and encourages development that is more accessible to both pedestrians and cars.

2. Policies and decisions should support appropriate infill development

Infill development supports the economic value of Midland's existing neighborhoods by promoting investment in established areas with existing capital assets, rather than solely at the fringe. Infill development helps make full use of existing infrastructure, thus limiting unnecessary expansions and their associated expense. Such developments are appropriate when they respect the character of the surrounding neighborhoods.

3. Development will preserve draws and flood zones

Preserving these natural features can protect property values for adjacent and downstream developments, enhance and connect the park system, and reduce flash-flooding by providing more natural areas for water to be absorbed. A network of natural preserve areas would enhance community character and allow Midland residents to have better access to nature.

4. Land use policies and regulations should support diverse housing choices

Residents have expressed a clear desire for more diverse housing options, at prices that more people can afford. At the same time, housing needs and preferences are diversifying. The Baby Boomer and Millennial generations are demonstrating a growing preference for smaller lot homes and multi-family housing, in addition to a continued interest in traditional single family homes. A mix of entry level housing options will be important to recruiting young Midlanders back to the city.



5. Plan for community amenities such as parks and schools

Parks, open space, schools, and other public places can serve as neighborhood focal points that promote community activity, personal interaction, a sense of place, and ultimately a sense of ownership in the community.



6. Development and redevelopment should be built around a continuous transportation system that incorporates all types of transportation

A network of streets, trails, and pedestrian paths should provide safe, efficient connectivity and accommodate a diverse set of mobility needs and preferences. Although not every street can or will accommodate all modes of transportation, Midland residents want to see more bike and pedestrian options.





7. Land use decisions should not detract from public safety and should minimize hazards

Land use decisions have a wide variety of effects on public safety and hazard mitigation. Preserving natural drainage-ways to manage stormwater minimizes the risk of injury and property damage due to flooding. A well-connected transportation network promotes better emergency service provision and evacuation routes in case of large-scale hazards. A mixture of land uses within neighborhoods enhances security by creating activity and “eyes on the street” throughout the day.



8. Land use policies and regulations should create and support balanced neighborhoods

Residents often spoke of the need for a greater sense of “neighborhood.” Balanced neighborhoods provide residents with easy access to a variety of places to live, shop, work, play, and engage in community life. Mixing compatible uses, such as a corner store or school in a residential neighborhood, creates a sense of community and promotes efficiencies in infrastructure and travel times. Balanced neighborhoods offer a variety of housing options, access to open space, and contain activity centers such as parks, schools, civic centers, or commercial areas that are well connected to surrounding neighborhoods. Appropriate transitions should be made between higher intensity uses, such as industry, and lower intensity uses, such as homes.



9. Make decisions in a transparent and collaborative manner

Land use and environmental decisions should be made through a transparent process, with opportunity for input from all citizens and affected entities, such as the county, neighboring towns, or school districts. Creation and implementation of land use decisions should be shared responsibilities that promote quality living environments and efficient use of fiscal resources.

FUTURE LAND USE

Chapter One identified three major themes for the city’s future land use:

- » The need to connect new growth areas with the services, businesses, and residents inside the 250 Loop
- » The need for continued reinvestment in the city’s existing assets
- » The need to balance the desire for high quality development with the desire to protect private property rights and personal preference

While reinvestment in the city’s existing infrastructure and housing stock is important, it will not be enough to support the varying desires of a growing population. The projected land needs for Midland, shown in Figure 3.1, are based on a projected population of 158,848 for 2035 (see Figure 1.3, Page 10).

The amount of land designated for planning purposes is greater than the projected need, in order to allow market flexibility and guide longer-term planning. This demand will be accommodated within existing developments that have not built out, through infill sites, and in future developments. The following sections outline how this growth is accommodated, first identifying broad development areas and policies, and then designating specific land uses.

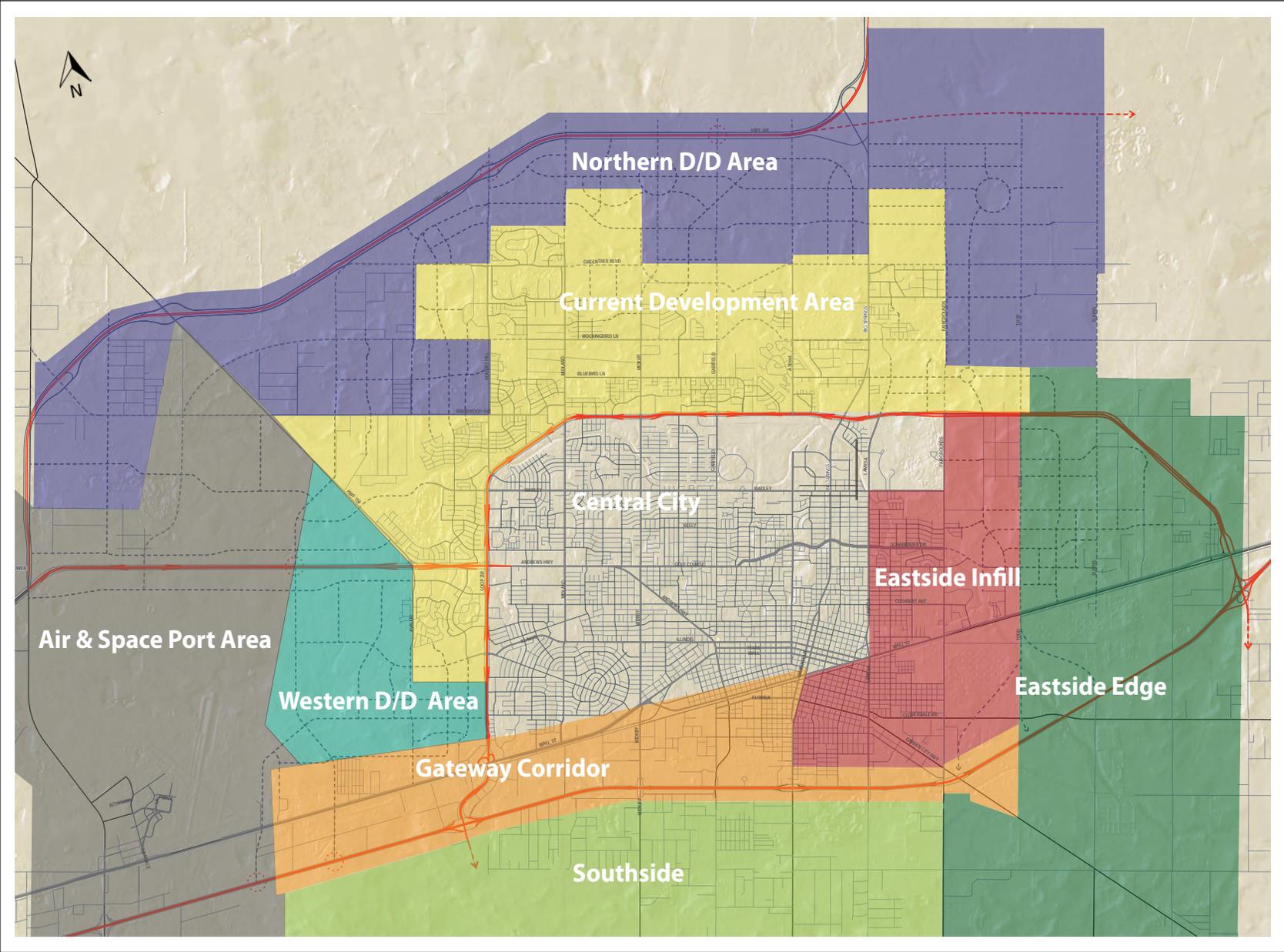
DEVELOPMENT POLICY AREAS

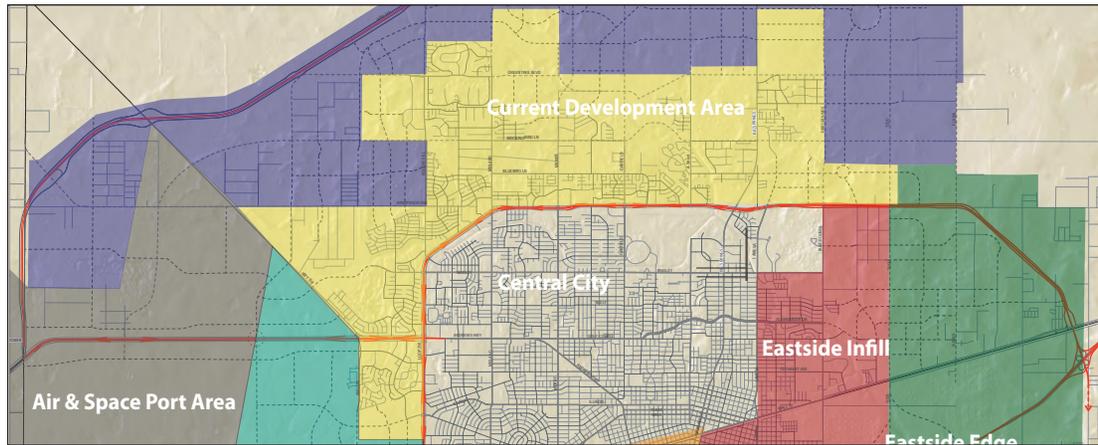
This section draws on the analysis of “Tall City Today” and the guiding principles identified above to formulate policies that are tailored to the city’s unique development areas. For planning purposes, the city is divided into nine areas that share common issues, challenges, and opportunities. The development of these areas over time may be fluid, as new opportunities arise or growth rates fluctuate. The policies identified in the following section should be viewed from a big-picture perspective, with the goal of balancing neighborhoods and providing quality living environments across the city.

Figure 3.1 – Future Land Needs: 2015-2035

Land Use Type	Projected Need (Acres)	Acres Designated for Planning Purposes
Residential	2,700	5,400
Commercial	425-450	640-675
Industrial	270-285	810-855

Map 3.1: Development Area





Current Development Area

The Current Development Area is located just north of the 250 Loop. This area has experienced the most development pressure since the 1990s. Housing has flourished but has focused mainly on single family homes on larger lots with some multi-family areas immediately adjacent to the Loop.

The 250 Loop corridor has been a major development driver. Early land use plans for the area envisioned retail and office at the intersections with single family residential lining the corridor between commercial nodes. The patterns that emerged over time included little single family residential and were dominated by planned districts (PD) that created linear commercial corridors. While the PDs allowed for flexibility, their abundant use has created inconsistent design patterns and left many developers unsure of the city's expectations for the corridor.

ISSUES FACING THIS AREA INCLUDE:

- Compatibility between land uses, specifically between different housing intensities
- North-South connectivity across the loop and congestion points at interchanges
- East-west connectivity for arterial and collector streets
- A lack of neighborhood centers
- A lack of parks and greenways across the area

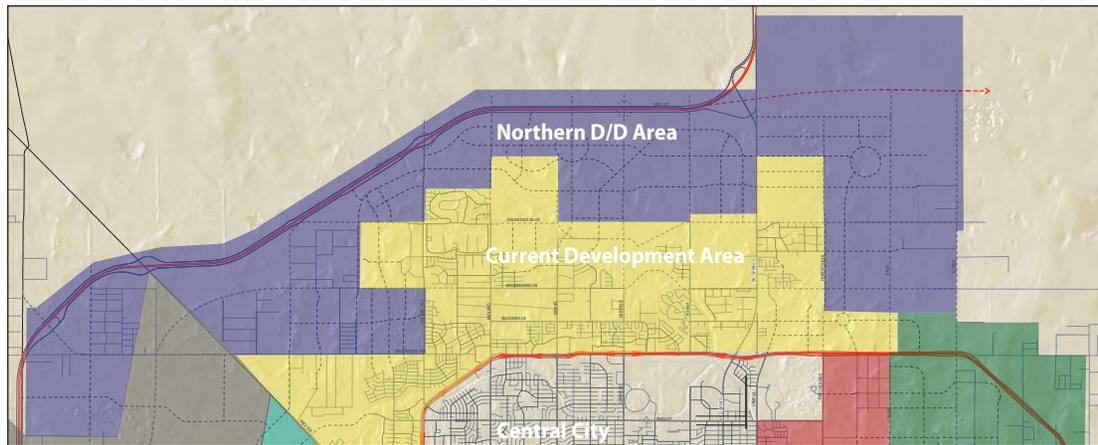


WHAT IS LAND USE INTENSITY?

Land use intensity is the relative level of activity of a land use and the associated traffic flow, paving (impervious coverage) or other external effects (noise, lighting, etc.).

POLICIES

- » Encourage development of prime sites remaining along the 250 Loop.
- » Direct medium and higher density residential uses to areas adjacent to higher intensity assets or along major streets. These areas include undeveloped land east of Big Spring, along Midkiff and Garfield north of Mockingbird Lane, and some locations in the Tradewinds area.
- » Buffers around existing pump jacks should provide protected green spaces with linear trails following buried flow lines. The trails will likely need to follow the edge of the 250-foot buffer, staying an appropriate distance from pumping operations.
- » Encourage mixed use developments with similar land use intensities along the arterial corridors.
- » Extend and connect the existing arterial and collector street system in developing areas. Add connections to existing streets to eliminate gaps, such as on Mockingbird Lane.
- » Direct higher intensity commercial uses to the 250 Loop corridor and major community nodes.
- » Neighborhood-oriented or lower intensity commercial uses should be directed to mixed use areas along the arterial street system.
- » Protect existing draws and buffers that can absorb stormwater and provide trail corridors that connect to the south and east.



North Development and Drilling Area

The Northern Development and Drilling (D/D) Area is located south of Highway 349 and north of the Current Development Area. The Northern D/D Area is dominated by the existing pump jacks and the associated flow lines and access roads. These operations are there for the long term and therefore any growth must accommodate buffering and access. Policies outlined in this section identify ways to allow for growth while protecting operations.

The Highway 349 corridor will likely be the city's northern growth boundary for the next 20 years or more. There are several reasons for this: the ability to easily meet growth needs to the south; the high infrastructure costs that would be needed to accommodate development north of Highway 349; existing drilling and extraction operations; and ownership patterns that make development unlikely.

Draws and playas traversing the area offer opportunities to improve stormwater management and create recreation amenities. This includes large playas in the following locations:

- West of an extended Midkiff
- West of an extended Todd Road
- North of Greentree and east of an extended Garfield

The importance of these resources will be discussed further in the Quality of Life Element.

Much of the city's commercial services are developed in a linear fashion along major streets. These developments are often oriented to one-stop services and not to the experience of parking once to visit multiple des-

tinations. This is a feature that many residents feel is missing in Midland. The northern portions of the city will be even farther from the traditional centers of downtown and the Village. A new neighborhood center should offer a variety of commercial and service oriented businesses in a walkable environment, serving markets north of Bluebird Lane. This center should be a destination for area residents and create a sense of neighborhood that is often missing from post World War II developments. Midkiff and a new east/west thoroughfare may be a potential location. Good traffic connections and access to a variety of housing options and recreation will create a well-balanced neighborhood.

ISSUES FACING THE NORTHERN D/D AREA INCLUDE:

- Balancing and harmonizing development and drilling requirements
- Thoroughfare development and transportation continuity
- Connection to the rest of the city
- The need for neighborhood centers that provide commercial and office services
- Infrastructure extensions and efficient phasing of development
- Park and public space amenities keeping pace with growth
- New annexations as city services extend north and west

POLICIES

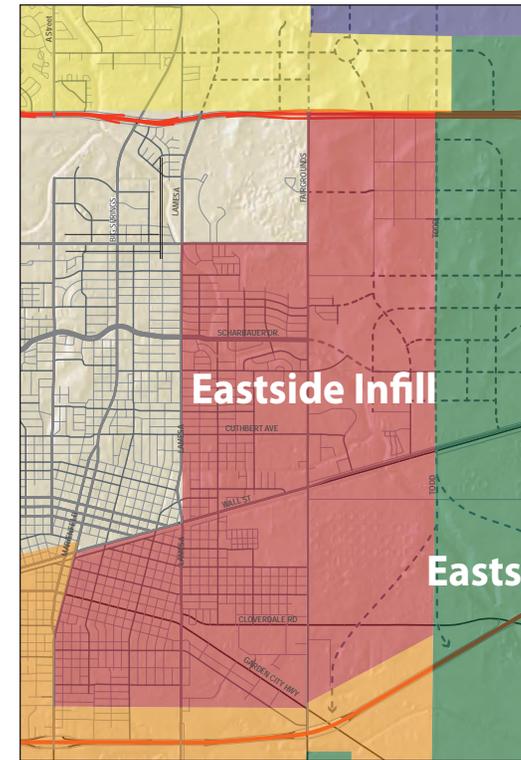
- » Land use policies in developing areas should focus on the intensity of the use rather than just type. This allows housing to be mixed with low intensity commercial uses that generate little traffic or external effects.
- » Low intensity districts should allow for low intensity commercial or office uses, while higher intensity residential should transition to slightly higher intensity commercial or office uses.
- » Existing low density residential developments should be buffered and separated from higher intensity uses.
- » Expansion of low density developments should be avoided, especially in areas that can support more efficient use of land through access to city streets, water, and sewer.
- » Transportation connectivity should be a priority with section and half-section lines being preserved for the city's arterial system and quarter-section lines for the collector street system.
- » A new neighborhood center should provide for a mix of commercial and service uses that are walkable and provide easy access to and from surrounding residential uses.
- » Draws should be preserved with proper buffering to allow for stormwater absorption and recreation trails.
- » A new multi-modal street or parkway should connect parks, neighborhoods and a commercial center. To be considered multi-modal, the street should offer a safe route for cars, pedestrians, and bicyclists.

Eastside Infill Area

The Eastside area contains a mixture of existing development and larger tracts of undeveloped areas. Areas east of Lamesa Road and west of Fairgrounds Road include smaller lot residential, commercial, and even some industrial uses to the south. East of Fairgrounds Road, the development patterns change with larger lot residential and even some light industrial operations. Some oil extraction operations do exist east of Fairgrounds Road, but these are limited compared to other areas of the city. To the south, heavier industrial operations are oriented to the railroad and include the large tank farm. Throughout the area are significant opportunities for new development on sites that have been skipped over or underutilized.

Lamesa Road is viewed by many eastside residents as an important corridor, an image center for the entire neighborhood. Vacant lots and poorly maintained properties are seen as opportunities for new investment in the area. Hopes for additional commercial services, include expanded grocery options and new small businesses, are seen for Lamesa Road. However, image concerns remain especially related to property maintenance.

The success of infill has been demonstrated more than once in the Eastside Infill area. The Sparks and Washington redevelopment projects were highly successful projects that focused both on neighborhood amenities and housing infill. New quality, affordable housing was added to the neighborhood along with improved park and recreation amenities. Partnerships in the neighborhood should support new housing on existing lots, using existing water, sewer and street services, to create new, safe, and affordable housing. With this comes the market to support new or expanded commercial operations along the area's arterial streets.





ISSUES FACING THE EASTSIDE INFILL AREA:

- Use of land resources and infill opportunities
- Addressing image and perception issues
- Incompatibilities between land uses
- Lack of neighborhood retail, specifically grocery services
- Encouraging private markets to capitalize on economically viable corridors

POLICIES

- » Work with neighborhoods to assemble resources and technical assistance to encourage maintenance and improvement of the area's housing stock.
- » Work with local organizations and neighborhood groups to maintain mature street landscaping and replace landscaping with drought-tolerant materials when funding and opportunities arise.
- » Reduce the impact of future commercial development along Lamesa, Fairgrounds, and Todd Road corridors on adjacent residential areas with proper landscaping, parking, and access points.
- » Mix higher intensity residential uses with commercial and employment centers along the area's major roads, including Lamesa, Fairgrounds, and Todd Roads.
- » Maintain and improve the area's streets to support pedestrians and bicyclists, connecting residents safely to neighborhood destinations like Casa De Amigos.
- » Extend east/west collector streets, especially east of Fairgrounds Road to avoid overburdening existing routes.
- » Identify partnerships that can leverage federal dollars and the improvement of local amenities, like parks, recreation and education resources.
- » Direct medium and higher density residential uses to the area's arterial and collector streets with proper transitions or set-backs from existing lower density residential areas.
- » Connect parks, neighborhoods, and commercial centers with a new multi-modal street or parkway. To be multi-modal, the street should offer a safe route for cars, pedestrians, and bicyclists.
- » Incorporate trail amenities into draw improvements. Enhancement of the draws should improve storm-water management as well as aesthetics. Partnerships should be created with the neighborhoods to assist with maintenance and upkeep.

- » Direct new neighborhood commercial centers to the intersection of arterial streets with connections to multi-modal streets.
- A new neighborhood center should include smaller-scale retail, services, and offices that provide a wide variety of services to eastside residents. The center should be viewed as a destination, where residents can park once to shop at multiple destinations. Residential uses may be incorporated into developments and access to existing housing should be safe and intuitive.
- » Direct larger scale industrial and employment-generating operations to areas along or south of Front Street. Some smaller scale employment centers may be located along Fairgrounds Road but should be compatible with transportation resources and have proper buffering from existing residential areas.
- » Civic uses generating higher traffic volumes should be directed to the arterial and collector street systems.

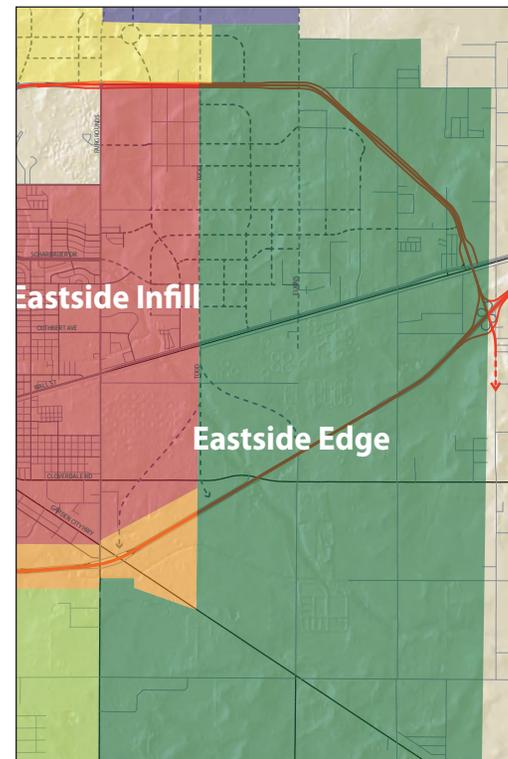
Eastside Edge Area

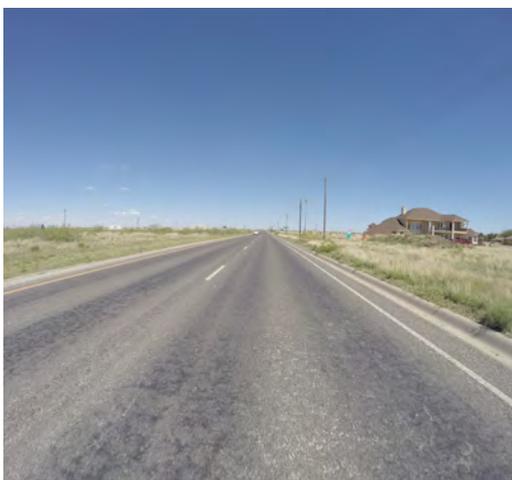
The Eastside Edge is just as it is described; it is located on the eastern edge of the city with the 250 Loop functioning as the eastern boundary. The area includes a mixture of rural residential developments and scattered service-related businesses on the north and more industrial on the south. This industrial area includes the tank farm south of Front Street/Business I-20 and north of Cloverdale Road.

Some sections of this area are outside of city limits but within areas that could begin to experience development pressure in the coming years. The proliferation of drilling operations, especially to the west, could create greater interest in the eastern edges of the city. Those areas outside the city are part of a Midland County Water Supply District, requiring some additional steps to be taken to resolve water and sewer services to these areas. It's important to plan for potential development now, as both water service boundaries, as well as property owner preferences, are important. (For example, owners who prefer to enjoy a more rural setting, as opposed to owners interested in developing their land.)

Long-term transportation decisions will also have an impact on the rate and pattern of development in this area. Over the years, the extension of Highway 349 to the east and south has been discussed. The extension of the highway to Interstate 20 could follow several existing corridors. Any of these options would bisect the area, creating both opportunities and challenges.

Further study of potential alternatives will need to be completed with an understanding of the impact on land use patterns and the city's long term growth needs.



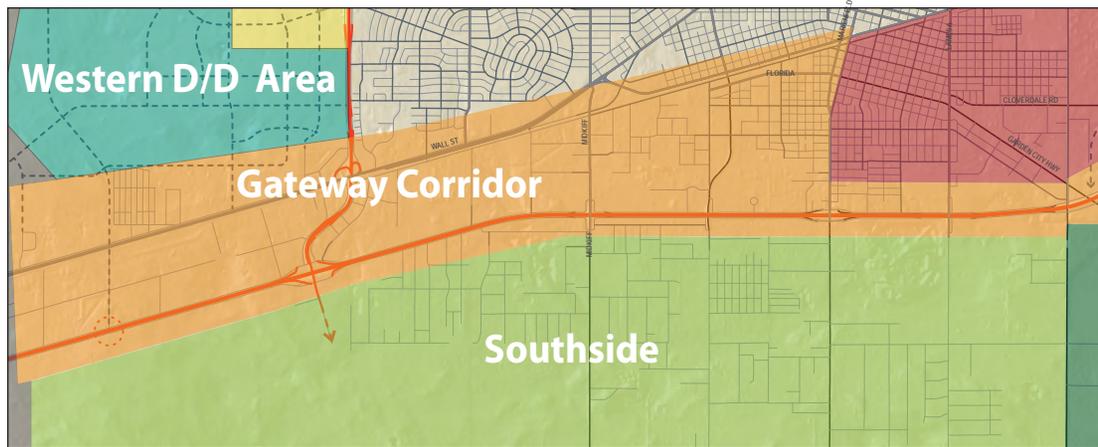


ISSUE FACING THE EASTSIDE EDGE AREA:

- South 349 Loop extension and timing
- Addressing image and perception issues
- Long-term land use future/emergence of development demand
- Distance from existing community features and services
- Neighborhood retail/grocery store
- Infrastructure extension and phasing

POLICIES

- » Work closely with TxDOT and MOTOR to plan for future transportation improvements in the area and associated land use planning.
- » Buffering existing residential developments from new development with adequate separation and transportation access.
- » Extend and connect east/west collector streets to avoid overburdening Fairgrounds, Todd, and Elkin Roads.
- » Incorporate a new north/south parkway street that will connect schools, parks, job centers, and housing with the larger city and provide a safe route for those not in a car.
- » Extend the I-20 Business Park overlay district to the Business I-20 east of Todd Road and potentially east of Fairgrounds Road.
- » Direct large-scale industrial and business park developments to areas along Business I-20, Interstate 20, and east of Elkins Road.
- » Use the draws and playas as resources for both recreation and stormwater protection.
- » Working with Midland County Water Supply District, establish a plan for providing water service to areas outside the current city limits.



Southside Area

The Southside Area encompasses the land south of the city’s existing city limits and the I-20 corridor. Scattered development has occurred throughout this area resulting in little uniformity and a mixture of residential and light industrial uses. The area is served by a Midland County Water Supply District and sewer services are not provided by the city, which has also resulted in inconsistent service standards. These inconsistencies could have a considerable impact on the market’s interest in the area. Service standards, access to water and sewer, and development quality in the area are significant concerns for many in the development community that would likely have to be addressed before significant private investments would be made in the area.

Future transportation decisions could have a substantial impact on this area, including a potential south side loop. Community members have also discussed the idea of moving the railroad corridor to the south. Both of these concepts are likely beyond the life of this plan and would be large capital projects. These should be monitored but the impact of these is well beyond current planning efforts.

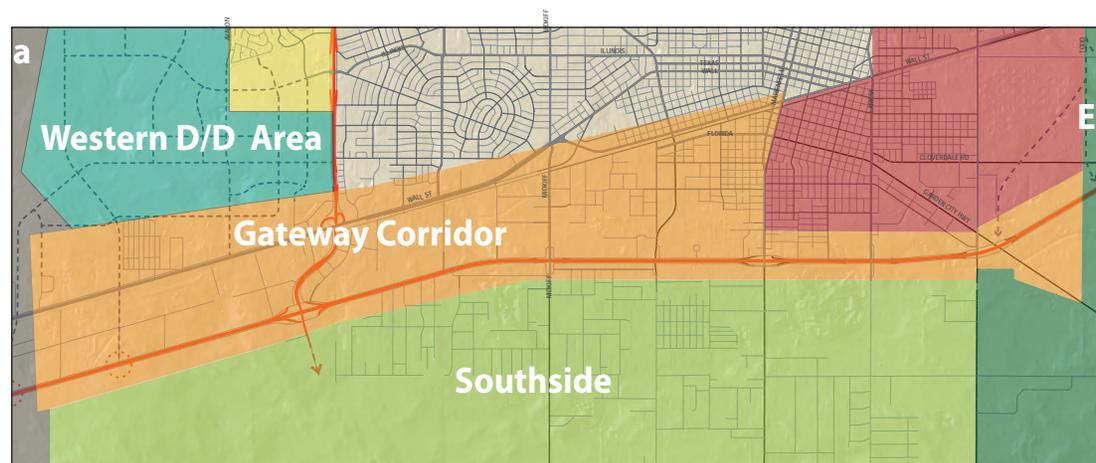
ISSUES FACING THE SOUTHSIDE AREA:

- Access to urban services, specifically water
- Addressing the area’s image and perception issues
- Evolving development patterns into a more cohesive community
- Long-term transportation connectivity
- Impact of the I-20 corridor on economics and land use



POLICIES

- » Work with the county to establish minimum building standards to assist improving life safety in the area.
- » Establish a long-term plan, with key partners, for water services in the area.
- » Work with other agencies, including the school district, to offer adequate services to the area in a manner that creates a more consistent land use pattern.
- » Work with transportation providers and funders to ensure consistencies in both quality and access to transportation.



Gateway Corridor Area

The Gateway Corridor area includes Interstate 20, Business I-20, and the BNSF Railroad line. These corridors include some of the city's oldest and newest industrial operations, along with an extensive mix of visitor oriented services and housing. In the middle of all of this activity is the serenity of the I-20 Wildlife Preserve and Jenna Welch Nature Study Center, a jewel for the city as a recreation destination, educational resource, and a great example of stormwater management.

As one of the business capitals of west Texas, Midland's image is often set by the impression visitors have from these corridors. For some, these corridors may be the only impression they have of the city. As the city plans for the future, community leaders must decide what they want that impression to be and how that may differ from other cities along I-20 such as Big Spring or Abilene. The need to improve that first impression is starting to be addressed with the implementation of the I-20 Business Park Overlay District, but any desire to distinguish the Tall City from others along the I-20 corridor may require efforts beyond city hall. Private initiatives combined from assurances that the overlay district can provide should be explored.

The business and development opportunities in the area are tremendous. This includes opportunities for new business park sites, light industrial, services related to the aerospace industry, and visitor services. The Big Spring/Rankin Highway interchanges have some of the most visible visitor services and the potential to mix visitor services, community commercial and higher density residential uses.

The potential for new economic development and the creation of employment centers is strong and should be combined with good transportation planning. All three of these east-west corridors can create both great opportunity and great challenges. The hard dividing line, especially regarding north-south connectivity, will create challenges to connect new jobs with housing and services to the north. Finding ways to move traffic efficiently will be a key to creating quality developments.

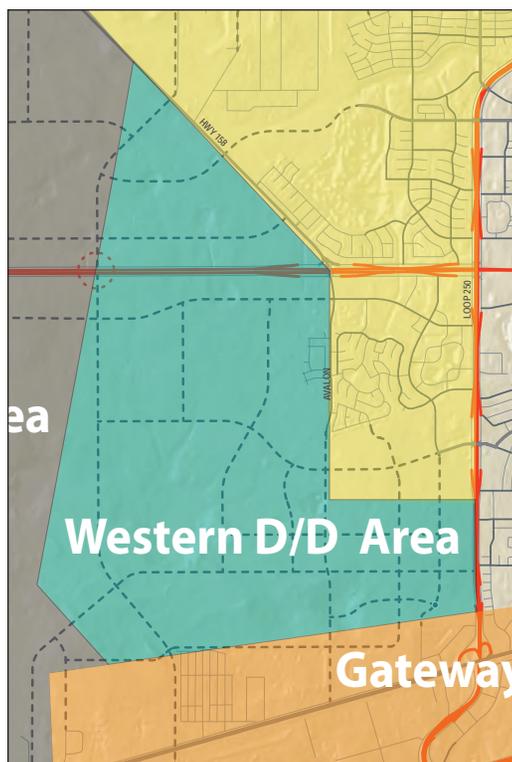
ISSUES FACING THE GATEWAY CORRIDOR AREA:

- Evolving land use along I-20 and Business I-20
- Interchange development
- Corridor character and appearance
- Theme and focus for the corridors
- Traffic operations and clarity to users
- Options for expansion of visitor services

POLICIES

- » Employment reserve areas should allow for a range of industrial, office, or even retail development as long as it supports or strengthens major employment uses.
- » Site design should be done in a way that does not restrict future development by creating fragmented parcels, or impeding circulation or connections to future development areas.
- » Provide adequate separation and buffering between higher and lower intensity uses.
- » Work with property owners along the corridor to provide adequate screening of outdoor storage areas, ideally using natural screening materials when possible.
- » Ensure proper circulation within and between sections created by the area's arterial street and highway system.
- » Work with economic development organizations to provide proper wayfinding and gateway features at the major interchanges.
- » Unless proven to support the primary purpose of job development, single-family residential, K-12 education, or other civic uses should be discouraged within areas that have existing industrial uses or are designated as employment reserve or business park.





- » Regional commercial uses should avoid large expanses of concrete that provide no shade or ability to absorb stormwater.
- » Commercial developments should offer both internal and external pedestrian connections, especially between the area's hotels, restaurants, and retail services.
- » New commercial developments at major intersections should use shared entrances and avoid multiple access points.

Western Development and Drilling Area

Like the Northern Development and Drilling Area the Western Area is dominated by existing, and potential, future, pump jacks and is located next to an area experiencing strong growth. Unlike the northern area the Western Area has almost no public thoroughfare infrastructure and the opportunity for significant job centers along its western edge and the Highway 191 corridor.

Although development within this area has started it could be slowed by several factors. The two biggest of these are the existing and potential drilling operations and the unknown impacts of the Air & Space Port operations. Close adherence to the 500-foot buffer around drilling and pumping operations would leave little to no developable land, or would at least make the necessary infrastructure improvements for development economically unfeasible. The impacts of the Air & Space Port operations are likely to be minimal but until this is fully operational it will leave some questioning the feasibility of residential or larger scale development.

Outside of the above mentioned hurdles, the area has tremendous assets, including one of the city's larger playas. This area provides an excellent opportunity for expansion of the city's recreational offerings while being a leader in stormwater management. Areas like the I-20 Wildlife Preserve, which is part of the same draw, should function as a model for this area and the draw should connect this area to the rest of the city. Additional assets include access to the Business I-20 corridor and the airport and the sports complex; making it an excellent location for housing that is close to jobs and entertainment.

ISSUES FACING THE WESTERN DEVELOPMENT AND DRILLING AREA:

- Accommodating any growth around existing and potential drilling and extraction operations
- Development of a public street system
- Infrastructure extensions
- Connections to the balance of the city
- Potential land use conflicts with the Air & Space Port

POLICIES

- » Land use regulations in developing areas should focus on the intensity of the use rather than just type. This allows housing to be mixed with low intensity commercial uses that generates little traffic or external effects.
- » Pumping operations should be incorporated into neighborhood designs providing proper buffering and separation.
- » When possible, right-of-way for flow lines and access roads should be incorporated into the city's trail system or even offer local street access.
- » Transportation connectivity should be a priority with at least one north/south connection between Highway 191 and Business I-20 and at least two east/west connections running the length of the area.
- » Draws should be preserved with proper buffering to allow for stormwater absorption and recreation trails.
- » The playas should be preserved to allow for proper stormwater absorption and as an open space resource.

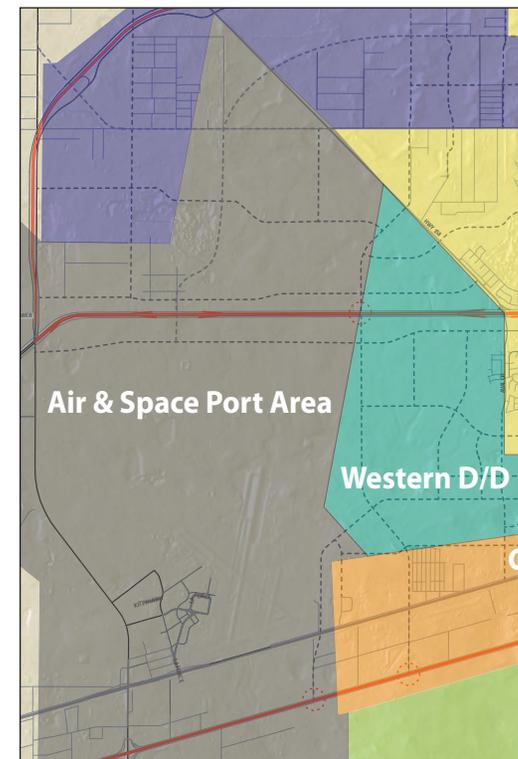
Air & Space Port Area

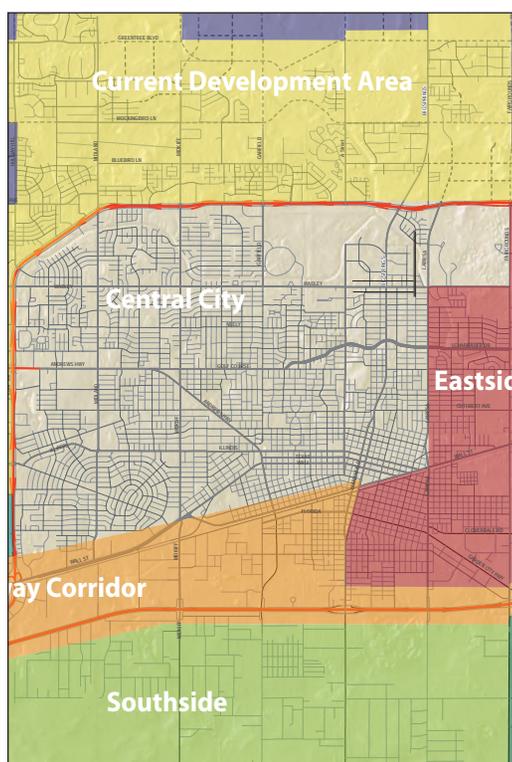
The Air & Space Port Area is one of the most challenging land use areas but one with great potential. The new Air & Space Port and associated land use regulations are still untested. Full operation and the beginning of flights will help define the area's potential. Regulations should protect this important economic development resource while not prohibiting development. This balancing act will be especially important along with Highway 191 corridor. The corridor has significant development potential but this development must ensure the safety needs of the Air & Space Port. Development along the corridor should also not happen ahead of areas contiguous to the city and cause expensive infrastructure extensions.

Much like the Western Development and Drilling Area, the Air & Space Port Area has a large number of drilling and extraction sites and few streets. The Highway 191 is a good arterial road but the area has few connecting collector or local streets. Drilling and extraction operations will also have a substantial effect on the amount of land that can be developed. For areas immediately around the airport there are fewer drilling sites and greater opportunity to build on the resources that the airport and Interstate 20 provide.

ISSUES FACING THE AIR & SPACE PORT AREA:

- Uncertainty about the direction land use will take
- Thoroughfare development and transportation connectivity
- Balancing and harmonizing development with existing and potential drilling and extraction operations





POLICIES

- » Areas north of the airport should be protected for future development, with development in the near term being done in a way that does not limit the future economic development potential of the area. This includes the protections of future thoroughfare corridors and the prevention of odd-shaped or inaccessible parcels and infrastructure systems that make it costly to extend future water and sewer lines.
- » Development will need to meet buffering requirements around pump jacks but should work to incorporate rights-of-way for access roads and flow lines into trail and local street systems.
- » Guidelines similar to those in the I-20 Business Park Overlay may be applied to the Highway 191 corridor as a major entrance into the city.
- » Height and density requirements should protect the airport and Air & Space Port operations.
- » A collector street system should be identified to provide direction and understanding to future developers.

Central City Area

The Central City Area is the heart of historic Midland. The area includes the majority of the city population and its major commercial centers. As illustrated in Chapter 1, growth has radiated out from the downtown core. These neighborhoods are the image of the city and what many longtime Midlanders associate with their hometown. The patterns of development have been contiguous but types of land uses have generally been very separated. This pattern of development results in a heavy dependence on cars to move between home, work, and entertainment and few walkable neighborhood centers. This pattern left many residents noting a lack of iconic destination districts.

Like any city, Midland has older neighborhoods that have declined over the years. Lack of maintenance has left some neighborhoods with sporadic housing quality. Since the 2000s the city has done several excellent infill and redevelopment projects that have brought quality housing to older neighborhoods. The Central City Area also has some of the city's toughest transportation challenges, including a lack of Loop 250 crossings and congestion on arterials such as Big Spring Street.

ISSUES FACING THE CENTRAL CITY AREA:

- Product enhancement to build the Midland experience
- Maximizing infill sites
- Transportation alternatives and balance across the system
- North/south connectivity across the loop
- Corridor quality and utilization
- Neighborhood conservation

POLICIES:

- » Continue to maintain and improve public facilities and infrastructure that support infill development and reinvestment in the city's existing neighborhoods.
- » Identify priority areas where the city can lessen hurdles to private investment through improvements to streets, parks, and schools (working with MISD).
- » Support new mixed-use projects through proper zoning and infrastructure.
- » When possible, connect existing collector and arterial streets for improved mobility.
- » Improve key routes within the existing street system for improved sidewalk connections. Such routes should offer safe routes to schools, parks, and commercial centers.
- » Improve the quality and image of draws and include adjacent trails for better connectivity.
- » Continue to enforce property maintenance standards on both private and public property.
- » Evaluate signage and landscaping requirements along the areas high-volume corridors.
- » Enable increased densities when impacts such as parking and access are addressed.
- » Review zoning requirements and infrastructure needs for the re-use, redevelopment, and revitalization of low performing or declining commercial areas.

Additional policies and recommendations regarding the downtown and neighborhoods will be provided in Tall City Tomorrow's supporting plan elements later in this document.

A LAND USE FRAMEWORK

Land Use Philosophy: A Flexible Approach

Contemporary growth in American cities has tended to separate different land uses through zoning. The concept of single-use zoning grew out of a need to separate people's homes from major industries, in order to protect their health. Still today, some uses can produce so much traffic, noise, smells, or other effects that separation remains the most appropriate policy. However, increasingly, mixing compatible, different uses is shown to create interesting and attractive communities. The Tall City Tomorrow plan recommends a flexible land use approach that allows mixing of uses.

A development pattern that encourages a mix of land uses and activities has a variety of benefits:

- » By promoting activity at various times of day, among various types of uses, it increases security, vitality, and the number of people using public spaces.
- » Reduces the number of miles that people must travel daily by car, since homes are in close proximity to jobs and services.
- » Opens opportunities to build a variety of housing types. The development of housing above office and commercial establishments adds vitality to business areas and increases the economic yield on property.
- » Nationally, more communities are finding that by mixing land uses, neighborhoods are more attractive and appealing to residents.
- » Plans and land development policies that provide appropriate use mixing also provide greater flexibility for developers, and avoid unnecessary regulation.

Midland can achieve all these benefits by using a flexible land use framework that allows for appropriate mixing of compatible uses. The land use framework recognizes existing land use patterns while establishing an intensity based approach for developing areas. While this approach may allow for land uses with similar intensity to be integrated, each land use category has unique requirements for the following attributes:

- Types of Allowable Uses
- Intensity, or density
- Compatibility (transitions between uses)
- Form and design

In this section of the plan, each land use category is described in terms of its purpose, form, uses, intensity, and compatibility requirements.

Use: Integration and mixing of uses

One advantage of an intensity based framework is its ability to integrate different land uses. Uses may be integrated in two ways: horizontally and/or vertically. Horizontal integration keeps individual building purposes separate but relates buildings harmoniously to each other. Vertical integration puts more than one use in the same building. In the Tall City Tomorrow framework, most of the city's land is in multiple-use categories, but certain areas, such as industrial, are still kept as single-use areas.

Understanding Mixing of Uses and Transitions

Horizontal Integration



Horizontal integration of uses means that different uses are housed in different buildings but are related to each other.

Vertical Integration



Vertical integration of uses means that different uses are located in the same buildings.

Intensity

The Tall City Tomorrow framework designates how much development occurs in an area and how that development affects its neighbors. This is measured by intensity and/or density of development. In residential areas, intensity is measured by dwelling units per acre. For other uses, like the amount of traffic a project generates or how it affects its neighbors determines intensity. Intensity for non-residential uses can also be measured by a factor called floor area ratio or FAR, calculated by dividing building area by site area.



Defining Dwelling Units Per Acre: If six single-family houses are included on an acre of land the density of the site is 6 units per acre (du/A). The higher the number of units on an acre the more intense the land use.

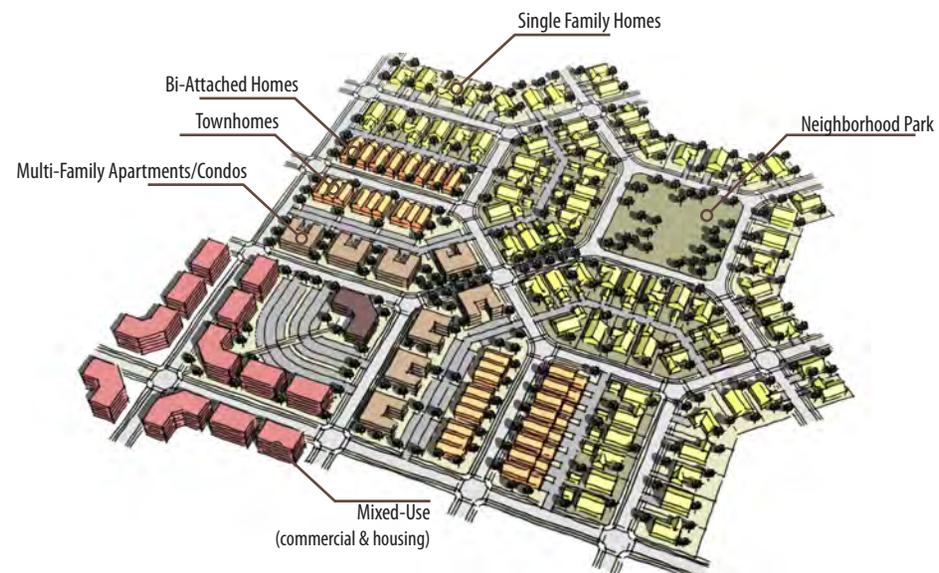
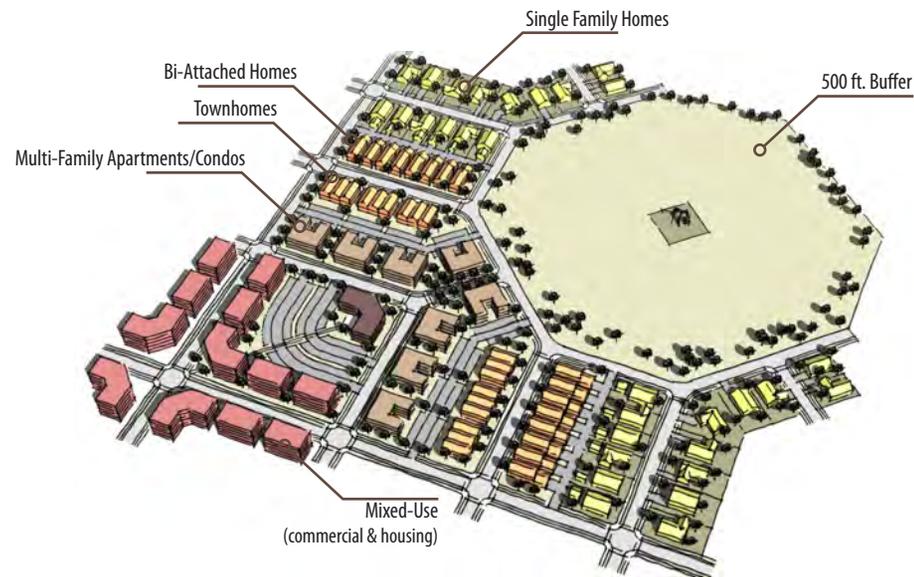
COMPATIBILITY

One of the most important concerns in land use planning is the relationship between different uses and their relative compatibility with each other. In areas where densities are low, compatibility is usually achieved using spacing between buildings and by congregating similar uses together. This simple method is easy to administer and understand; however it can lead to some undesirable conditions such as increased commute times and un-walkable neighborhoods.

Compatibility in multiple-use districts can be attained in a more nuanced way by focusing more on the performance (effects) of various uses and designing land use regulations that allow for more integration of uses. If carefully done, the integration of uses can be achieved so that commute times become shorter, and neighborhoods become more walkable and interesting, all while preserving privacy, security and aesthetics.

The land use categories described in this plan exist on a continuum of intensity, and therefore have a continuum of compatibility methods. As land uses become more intense and uses become more integrated, compatibility methods focus less on spacing and congregating of similar uses, and more on performance-based methods that directly address issues such as noise, traffic, privacy, and aesthetics.

It is important to remember that while the intensity-based concept proposes mixing uses, it does not mean that every land use is appropriate everywhere. Location standards and compatibility requirements for higher impact uses are an important part of the land use system proposed in this plan.



FORM

Form relates to how the developments in the land use categories are laid out, including the street pattern, the type of infrastructure required, how buildings relate to each other (e.g. - are buildings close together or separated?) and the relation of buildings to the street. Form also includes the scale of the buildings - the length, width and number of stories. The degree to which the buildings in an area are similar to each other in terms of these “form” characteristics impacts the perceptions of compatibility, and therefore market value.

CAVEATS TO THE FUTURE LAND USE MAP

The development concept and future land use map are based on population projections, economic trends, environmental analysis, and public input. As explained on page 60, the amount of land that is planned for is much more than the projected need, in order to provide market flexibility, avoid creating a false land shortage, and provide long-term planning. This means that many areas shown in the maps are unlikely to develop in the 20-year time frame.

Three important points about the Development Concept and Future Land Use Map

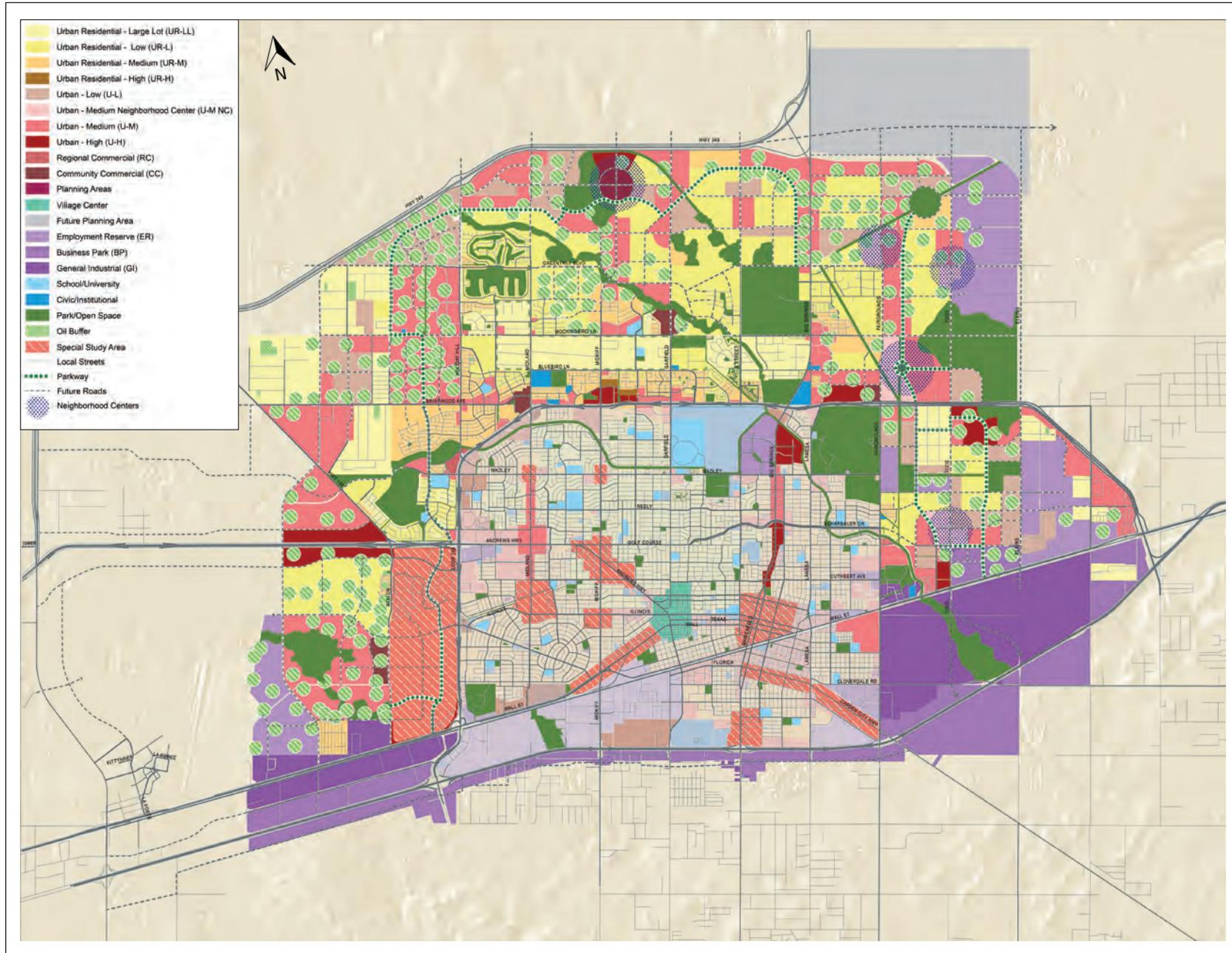
1. PROPERTY OWNERS DECIDE The Future Land Use Map depicts new land uses for privately owned properties. The transition of these properties from their current use to the depicted use is expected to occur slowly over time, in response to market demands, as property owners voluntarily sell, develop, or change the use of their land.

2. GENERALIZED MAP The Future Land Use Map should be interpreted generally and is not intended to provide the specificity or the rigidity of a zoning map or engineering document. The map should provide guidance for the zoning map and is meant to show:

- » Generalized land use locations and transitions: The boundaries between land uses on the map are “fuzzy” lines and are meant to show approximate areas for transition, rather than rigid boundaries. The exception to this are those areas that preserve playas for stormwater management and recreation.
- » Collector and Arterial Street connections: Critical arterial and collector street connections are specified on this map, though the exact routes will depend on detailed engineering studies. Local streets will be determined as development occurs.

3. BASIS FOR LAND USE DECISIONS The Future Land Use map should provide the basis for decisions of the Planning Commission, the City Council, and private developers. The map is a critical part of the approval process for development proposals and zoning decisions.

Map 3.2: Future Land Use



LAND USE: URBAN RESIDENTIAL-LARGE LOT (UR-LL)**DESCRIPTION:**

- » Neighborhoods with very large lot, single-family homes that are typically within the existing city development area.

POTENTIAL ZONING:

- » Country Estate

INTENSITY (DU/A):

> 1

**USES:**

Restrictive land uses, emphasizing housing and open space. Civic uses may be allowed with special use permits.

FORM:

Most houses use individual wastewater systems and are unlikely to experience extension of urban services. Good access to collector streets. Sidewalks should be provided on at least one side of interior streets and connect to pedestrian systems outside the development. Draws should be multi-purposed, absorbing stormwater and being a recreation and open space amenity.

COMPATIBILITY:

Compatible with most single-family detached housing. Gradual transitions in density should occur between UR-LL and higher density residential. New construction adjacent to existing UR-LL should be complementary even at slightly higher densities.

LAND USE: URBAN RESIDENTIAL-LOW (UR-L)

DESCRIPTION:

- » Neighborhoods emphasizing single-family detached homes, although other single-family attached and small lot single-family homes may be permitted based on location.

POTENTIAL ZONING:

- » Single-Family Dwelling District

INTENSITY (DU/A):

1-6



USES:

Restrictive land use, emphasizing single-family detached development, although innovative single-family forms may be permitted with special review. Civic uses are generally allowed, with special permission for higher intensity uses. Developments will be provided with full city services.

FORM:

Developments should provide connectivity within and between developments both for cars and pedestrians. A framework of streets and open space should create a sense of neighborhood. Densities should be higher at transition points with other more intense uses or districts.

COMPATIBILITY:

Compatible with most single-family detached housing, attached single-family and some townhome developments. Traffic and higher intensity uses should be directed away from these areas and along major thoroughfares. Building elements and scale should be consistent with surrounding development.

LAND USE: URBAN RESIDENTIAL-MEDIUM (UR-M)**DESCRIPTION:**

- » Neighborhoods that incorporate a mix of housing types, including single-family detached, single-family attached and townhouse uses. Civic uses would also generally be allowed.

POTENTIAL ZONING:

- » Single-Family Dwelling District
- » Manufactured Housing District
- » Townhouse Dwelling District
- » Two-Family Dwelling District

**INTENSITY
(DU/A):****6-12****COMPATIBILITY:**

Applies to older established neighborhoods of the city which have diverse housing types, and in developing areas that incorporate a mix of development. Projects may be incorporated in a limited way into UR-L districts and into mixed use projects and planned areas.

USES:

Restrictive land use, emphasizing a mix of housing styles including single-family detached, single-family attached, and townhouses. Limited multi-family development may be allowed with special review and criteria. Civic uses are generally allowed, with special permission for higher intensity uses.

FORM:

High level of connectivity between and within developments. Connections to neighborhood commercial services and civic destinations should provide a sense of neighborhood. Developments should have articulated scale and maintain the identity of individual units. Densities should be higher at transition points with other more intensive districts.

LAND USE: URBAN RESIDENTIAL-HIGH (UR-H)

DESCRIPTION:

- » Neighborhoods that incorporate a mix of housing types, including multi-family housing. These areas may also allow small scale office and commercial uses but the primary use is residential.

POTENTIAL ZONING:

- » Manufactured Housing District
- » Townhouse Dwelling District
- » Two-Family Dwelling District
- » Multi-Family Dwelling District

INTENSITY (DU/A):

12+



USES:

Allows multi-family and compatible civic uses. Some limited office and convenience commercial within primarily residential areas may be appropriate.

FORM:

Located at sites with access to major thoroughfares and activity centers. Should be integrated into the fabric of nearby residential areas, while avoiding adverse traffic and visual impacts on low-density uses. Traffic should have direct access to collector or arterial streets to avoid overloading local streets. High level of pedestrian access and connectivity, avoiding the creation of compounds.

COMPATIBILITY:

May have conflicts with low density residential developments that may be resolved or minimized through project design. Traffic and other external effects should be directed away from lower-intensity uses. Landscaping, buffering, and screening should be employed to minimize negative effects. May be incorporated into mixed use projects or planned areas.

LAND USE: URBAN-LOW (U-L)**DESCRIPTION:**

- » Neighborhoods with relatively low-density housing and easily accessed neighborhood commercial services. As compared to denser areas, U-L has more space and separation of uses, with farther distances between destinations and fewer shared amenities.

POTENTIAL ZONING:

- » Single-Family Dwelling District
- » Manufactured Housing District
- » Office District
- » Local Retail District

**INTENSITY
(DU/A):****2-7****USES:**

A mix of complementary uses including mostly single-family, with some attached, townhome and small multi-family projects, schools, small parks and churches, and neighborhood retail or mixed use.

FORM:

Uses are integrated so that residents can access them by walking or biking. U-L areas use a high connectivity grid street pattern to expand viable locations for low intensity commercial uses, and allow multiple access points and route choices between all uses.

COMPATIBILITY:

Compatibility will be achieved through gradual increases of intensity transitioning from one land use to another. A cross-section of this area may show large lot single family next to medium lot single family, next to small lot single family, next to townhomes, next to small commercial. Although the focus is on gradual changes in intensity, these changes should occur at a small enough scale to ensure inclusion of a range of land uses within roughly a quarter square mile (160 acres) in order to encourage walking, biking, and the reduction of auto trips.

- Different intensity uses are positioned to create a smooth transition from lower to higher intensity uses.
- Larger commercial or office uses should cluster around arterial streets.
- Smaller commercial uses may be appropriate on collector streets.

LAND USE: URBAN-MEDIUM (U-M)

DESCRIPTION:

- » Vibrant, urban areas that draw customers and employees from outside the immediate area. A mix of housing types (see UR-M), neighborhood and community commercial, office, and service uses.

POTENTIAL ZONING:

- » Single-Family Dwelling District
- » Townhouse District
- » Office District
- » Local Retail District

INTENSITY (DU/A):

7-12



USES:

A mix of complementary uses, including single-family housings, multi-family housing, schools, mid-sized parks and churches, commercial and mixed use. Amenities such as parks, plazas and quality streetscapes should be more prevalent than in U-L areas.

FORM:

A high-connectivity grid pattern expands viable locations for commercial land uses, and allows multiple access points and route choices between uses. As compared to U-L, U-M encourages closer proximity between transportation, housing, and shopping choices.

COMPATIBILITY:

Land uses and intensities should be integrated at a finer grain than within the Urban—Low Intensity designation. As compared to U-L areas, compatibility should be achieved through increased attention to traffic circulation and parking, site and building design, and on-site operations.

- Land uses are sometimes mixed vertically, resulting in complementary and alternating times of use and the ability to share parking areas.
- Different types of land use are positioned to create a smooth internal transition from lower to higher intensity uses; however, this transition happens over a shorter distance than within the U-L designation.
- Larger commercial or office uses should cluster around arterial streets.
- Smaller commercial uses are appropriate on any street provided that a smooth transition in intensity of uses is maintained.

LAND USE: URBAN-HIGH (U-H)**DESCRIPTION:**

- » These areas improve economic performance and opportunities for social interaction, by locating diverse and complementary uses in close proximity. Higher-density mix of housing (see UR-H), major commercial, office, and service uses, and limited industrial in suitable locations.

POTENTIAL ZONING:

- » Townhouse District
- » Multi-Family Dwelling District
- » Office District
- » Commercial District

INTENSITY (DU/A):**12+****USES:**

A mix of complementary uses, including multi-family residential, large offices, medical buildings, regional commercial, limited industrial, institutional uses such as churches, schools, or hospitals, and other regional attractors. Residential uses range from townhomes/ rowhouses up to apartment towers. Parking garages or public parking lots may be found in these areas. Higher levels of urban amenities are used to offset the area's intensity level.

FORM:

Good access to freeways, highways, arterials, and transit, yet still designed around pedestrians. A high-connectivity grid pattern provides viable locations for higher intensity land uses, and allows multiple access points and routes between uses.

COMPATIBILITY:

Land uses and intensities should be fully integrated and mixed. Compatibility should be achieved through increased attention to traffic circulation and parking, site and building design, and on-site operations.

- Different land uses can be close together because design and amenities take into account these juxtapositions and make appropriate accommodations.
- Form and design rules and performance regulations address aesthetic and functional compatibility.
- Limited industrial uses may be allowed with requirements that they mitigate any anticipated negative impacts on adjacent land uses and that they are located on arterial streets or rail lines.
- Land uses should be fully integrated horizontally and mixed vertically, resulting in complementary and alternating times of use and the ability to share parking areas.

LAND USE: REGIONAL COMMERCIAL (RC)

DESCRIPTION:

- » Areas characterized by major community and regional commercial development that are both large in scale and have high traffic impact. May include high-density residential use. Typically located at intersections of arterial streets.

POTENTIAL ZONING:

- » Regional Retail District
- » Office District
- » Central Area Business District

INTENSITY (DU/A):

12+



USES:

A broad range of retail services, including large-scale stores and services, auto related services, and large offices. Shopping and commercial uses total at least 150,000 sq. ft. Multi-family uses can be mixed in with commercial, but commercial would be the dominate use.

FORM:

Should be located along arterial streets and accommodate the automobile, while providing good pedestrian and bike access to adjacent streets and trails. Horizontal and vertical mixing of uses should be encouraged. Regionally appropriate landscaping should be used along all frontage roads and within parking lots. Internal pedestrian system should allow customers to park once and conveniently access several destinations within a retail center.

COMPATIBILITY:

Similar to Urban-High. Land uses and intensities should be fully integrated and mixed. Compatibility should be achieved through increased attention to traffic circulation and parking, site and building design, and on-site operations.

- Potential negative effects on surrounding residential areas should be limited by location and buffering.
- Activities with potentially negative visual effects should occur within buildings.
- Heavy landscaping should be used along boundaries with lower-intensity uses.
- Different land uses can be close together because design and amenities take into account proximities and makes appropriate accommodations.

LAND USE: URBAN-MEDIUM NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER (U-M NC)**DESCRIPTION:**

- » These districts will be new village hubs for the city's growth areas. They should offer small to moderate scale commercial development connected to an anchor store such as a grocery store surrounded by a mix of housing types including townhomes and small lot single family.

POTENTIAL ZONING:

- » Single-Family Dwelling District
- » Townhouse District
- » Office District
- » Local Retail District

**INTENSITY
(DU/A):****10+****USES:**

Should include a mix of traditional neighborhood businesses including small scale commercial, office, civic and residential. The commercial uses should be low impact and provide a variety of neighborhood services.

FORM:

Low to moderate building and impervious coverage, located along major streets in areas close to residential growth centers or at nodes created by significant intersections of streets. Developments should emphasize pedestrian scale and relationships among businesses and accommodate automobile access without being dominated by an automotive scale. Good pedestrian circulation should connect businesses and surrounding residential uses.

COMPATIBILITY:

The emphasis for these areas should be on creating unique neighborhood centers or villages. Compatibility should be achieved through increased attention to traffic circulation and parking, site and building design, and on-site operations.

- Land uses may be mixed vertically in smaller scale two to three story buildings.
- Horizontal mixed use must create should create smooth internal transitions from lower to higher intensity uses in distances similar to U-M or U-H.
- Larger commercial uses should cluster around arterial streets.
- Smaller commercial uses are appropriate on any street provided that a smooth transition in intensity of uses is maintained.

LAND USE: EMPLOYMENT RESERVE (ER)

DESCRIPTION:

- » Areas preserved for larger business development essential to Midland’s economic stability and future growth. These areas protect larger acreages to maximize clustering for specialization, synergy, transportation efficiency, and knowledge exchange.

POTENTIAL ZONING:

- » Business Park District
- » Technology Park District

INTENSITY (DU/A):

12+



USES:

Centers with major office and business uses, such as technology and research centers, corporate headquarters, and lower intensity industries. Non-industrial/non-office uses should be limited to services or commercial uses that are needed to support the primary employment generators. Multi-family may be appropriate when integrated as part of a holistic development that incorporates the above mentioned uses.

FORM:

Require a higher standard for industrial infrastructure, urban design, access, and other factors. Transportation improvements should enhance connectivity, efficiency, and capacity. Do not allow subdivisions that create inefficient street layout, poor parcel configuration, or otherwise limit future development in ER areas

Compatibility:

Adjacent and internal development should not compromise the viability of employment lands. Incompatible uses such as lower density residential or K-12 schools should not be located within ER areas.

- Development abutting an ER boundary, whether inside or outside the boundary, should be held to higher design standards to ensure compatibility between ER uses and possible adjacent residential uses.
- In cases where transportation infrastructure has been installed with the purpose of providing capacity to ER areas, any proposed rezone or subdivision outside of the ER area must not reduce the transportation capacity of the ER area below the level intended.

LAND USE: BUSINESS PARK I-20

DESCRIPTION:

- » Development area along the I-20 corridor where special consideration should be given to the image travelers have as they pass through Midland. Preservation of sites suitable for industrial and business development adjacent to railroad and interstate access is important to the economic development of the region.

POTENTIAL ZONING:

- » Business Park District
- » Regional Retail district

INTENSITY (DU/A):

12+



Compatibility:

Same as ER District. Additionally, apply special design controls. Encourage industrial park design which includes design and placement of buildings, screening or prohibiting outdoor storage, parcel sizes which allow for long term expansion of individual users, special landscaping requirements, and buffering treatments for truck access and loading facilities. Design standards should mitigate negative aesthetic, traffic, and other impacts.

USES:

Much of the corridor will focus on warehousing and distribution with larger scale visitor services located at the major intersections, such as Big Spring. Multi-family may be appropriate when integrated as part of a holistic development that incorporates retail and office uses.

FORM:

Similar to ER areas with a strong emphasis on high design and landscaping standards. Signage and landscaping should be held to a higher standard because of the heightened visibility of the corridor. Transportation improvements should enhance connectivity, efficiency, and capacity. Increased stormwater runoff due to larger impervious coverage should be mitigated on site through best management practices.

LAND USE: GENERAL INDUSTRIAL (GI)

DESCRIPTION:

- » Areas intended to accommodate industrial uses that are difficult to integrate with less intensive uses due to negative impacts from heavy traffic, noise, or odors.

POTENTIAL ZONING:

- » Industrial District

INTENSITY (DU/A):

-



USES:

All types of industrial: manufacturing, warehousing, distribution, and office/industrial flex space. Uses in this area can be smaller in size than in the Business Park areas and aesthetic standards are less stringent.

FORM:

Designation of any new GI areas should be done with consideration of the following factors:

- Freeway and rail access;
- Availability and capacity of water and sewer service;
- Proximity to existing employment centers;
- Compatibility of neighboring land uses;
- Brownfield status;
- Impact of added employee/truck traffic to the level of service of roadways in the surrounding area and impact on the non-industrial uses along those roadways.

Compatibility:

Development within GI areas will be similar in nature, so compatibility is less difficult to manage. However, in areas where industrial abuts other land use categories, the following should be considered.

- Design standards: including land buffers, architectural and site design standards, and other appropriate standards implemented through PUDs or new codes or guidelines.
- Operational standards that consider traffic, noise, lighting, and air quality.

LAND USE: CIVIC/INSTITUTIONAL/SCHOOL/UNIVERSITY

DESCRIPTION:

- » To provide space for educational, institutional, assembly, and other public uses, including hospitals, major campuses (high school, Midland College), cemeteries, airport, landfills, water plant, and major utilities.

POTENTIAL ZONING:

- » Various

INTENSITY (DU/A):

-



USES:

- Educational: Public, private and parochial institutions at K-12 and post-secondary level, or trade/business schools and their accessory uses.
- Institutional and Assembly: Community or cultural facilities, religious institutions, public health care or human services facilities and their accessory uses.
- Other: Government or non-profit organizations and accessory uses.

FORM:

Government facilities should be held to the same standard for site design and connectivity as any private enterprise of similar intensity

Compatibility:

Civic uses may be permitted in a number of different areas, including residential areas. Maintenance, operating facilities and public works yards should generally be located in industrial areas. Individual review of proposals requires an assessment of operating characteristics, project design, and traffic management. Industrial operating characteristics should be controlled according to same standards as industrial uses.

LAND USE: PARK/OPEN SPACE

DESCRIPTION:

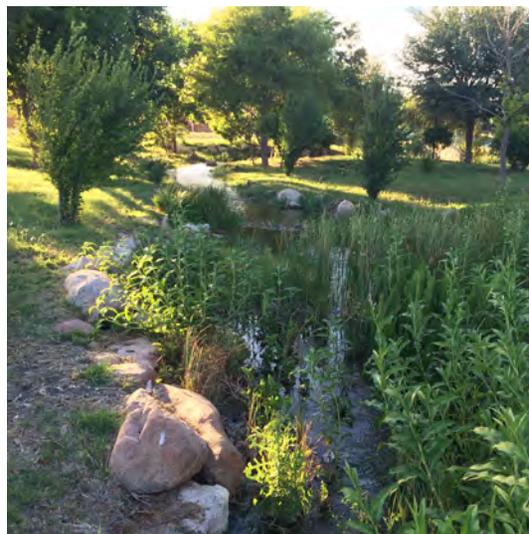
» Areas intended to remain undeveloped and natural or recreational in character.

POTENTIAL ZONING:

» Various

INTENSITY (DU/A):

-



USES:

Limited, primarily natural. Any development is recreational and low impact in nature (such as park shelters or ball fields), while complementary to the purpose of the wider area as open natural space.

FORM:

Traditional park and recreation areas including both passive and active recreation. Environmentally sensitive areas and draws that should be preserved and possibly incorporated into the city's trail system.

Compatibility:

These areas are valuable for the natural character and uses within them should have minimal impact. This requires minimal visual, auditory, and other pollutants that would reduce the pristine character of areas. Aids for compatibility may include:

- Heavy landscaping screening, very large buffers; height limitations, zero odor emissions, strict ambient noise requirements.

More intense recreation uses, like sports complexes should be treated like comparable commercial uses for the traffic and compatibility issues that they can generate.



Chapter 4

Tall City Housing & Neighborhoods



CONTENTS

- » Issues and Opportunities
- » Housing Demands
- » Housing and Neighborhood Plan
- » Goals
- » Initiatives and Policies



Tall City Housing & Neighborhoods

INTRODUCTION

Midland has a quality housing stock and healthy demand for new housing. Meeting that demand with a range of affordable options supports economic efforts and is fundamental to providing safe and affordable workforce housing. Midland residents have expressed a desire for a wider variety of housing options at prices accessible to middle-income buyers.

Housing & Neighborhood Issues & Opportunities

In the previous Tall City Today section, housing mix, workforce housing, and retiree and senior housing were identified as major themes. These themes are all very closely tied together. Even before the city's most recent boom, construction activity focused mainly around homogenous developments of either single-family detached housing or large scale multi-family housing. In recent years the market's ability to meet the demand for new workforce housing was at capacity, leaving new residents with few options. Addressing the need for adequate and affordable workforce housing means the market will provide additional variety, including new senior housing options.

Beyond the above tangible housing themes, residents also experienced a desire for the creation of more "neighborhood" settings. This idea is detailed in Chapter 3's land use policies for developing areas, but supporting or creating clearly defined neighborhoods in revitalizing areas is also important. Greater variety in neighborhoods close to job centers, like the downtown and the hospital district, creates strong neighborhoods and greater reinvestment interest. However, housing developers and lenders tend to build what has worked in the past. The market can be slow to adapt, often requiring a pioneering spirit from a small group or individual to demonstrate the success of a new approach. The Wall Street Lofts may ultimately be an example of this type of success story that leads to greater development interest in and adjacent to the downtown.

Tall City Tomorrow Housing Demands

To support a 1% annual growth rate over the next 20 years, Midland needs to add approximately 12,430 new housing units. This comes out to approximately 622 units annually. The distribution of those units should offer greater variety than in the past. A proposed mix by type is shown in the graphic to the right. The proposed mix suggests a higher proportion of single-family attached houses (townhomes) and multi-family (both apartments and smaller four-plexes) in the future, based on community demand.

On paper these numbers look great, but ultimately the private market drives housing production in the city. As noted, developers understandably tend to build what they know and are comfortable with. Buyers continue to buy these units because that is what the market is offering them. Moving forward, housing and land use policies will need to work closely with the private market to identify hurdles to the construction of a variety of housing types and ensure that land use regulations do not inhibit new and innovative approaches.

TALL CITY TOMORROW HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

The fundamental goal of Tall City Tomorrow and specifically of this section is to ensure that existing and future neighborhoods add to the livability of the city and strengthen the economic base. Housing is one of the private market’s largest capital investments, and the streets, sewers, and water lines that serve those homes are the largest public capital investment. New developments must create true neighborhoods and a quality housing stock that future generations will want to invest in and do not feel burdened by. At the same time, existing neighborhoods must be conserved and not neglected. These neighborhoods reflect large public investments and fiscal responsibility suggests that these investments need to be protected and used to the highest degree possible.

The following goals provide the basis for addressing the issues, opportunities, and challenges raised above. These goals were reviewed and approved by the Steering Committee.





**POSTED TO TALL CITY TOMORROW
DISCUSSION PAGE:**

“Everyone agrees that housing is a problem, but understand city governments can’t control prices. Prices are set by supply and demand.”

— Jackson B.

GOALS

1. Establish neighborhoods that will provide good residential environments and places that are safe to live, learn, and play.

Participants in the planning process felt strongly that future development needed to create new neighborhoods, not just subdivisions. Neighborhoods have focal points such as a park or a school, are interconnected with the rest of the community through streets, trails, and draws, and have easy access to everyday services. These are all features that need to be incorporated with any new development and require a cooperative effort with parks and recreation, MISD, and the development community. Ultimately everyone wants to create a product that is appealing today and for many years into the future.

2. Ensure that Midland’s future housing stock relies upon conservation of existing housing and investment in new diverse housing options affordable to all income levels.

The city’s best source of affordable housing is within its existing housing stock. Poor property maintenance, structural deterioration, and delayed maintenance of public infrastructure can quickly degrade neighborhood quality and property value. This has the dual effect of diminishing the city’s stock of sound affordable housing and suppressing the economic benefits of rehabilitation. Reinvestment in older neighborhoods is essential to providing a continuing source of affordable housing.

3. Provide adequate housing opportunities for the diverse needs of Midland’s population.

Over the past several years Midland has attracted a growing number of young families and young professionals. Their housing needs are very important but the need to provide proper and adequate housing for others, especially retirees, elderly, and handicapped, remains an important component in the housing mix. Between 2000 and 2010 the number of residents over the age of 75 grew by 43%. Offering housing alternatives to this age group ensures they remain in Midland and opens up existing housing to young families.

4. Provide more housing for moderate income families

From the early stages of the planning process, residents expressed concern over the cost of housing, both owner-occupied and rental. Analysis of the city’s housing stock and income ranges indicates that there is a significant shortage of affordable housing for households making less than \$50,000 (see page 24). Current construction costs mean that new units cannot be constructed for these households. Conservation of existing housing and innovative financing strategies are necessary to meet the demand.

INITIATIVES AND POLICIES

1. Expand housing diversity by type and cost

Action item: Implement an intensity-based land use approach, as outlined in Chapter 3.

The previous chapter outlined an integrated land use vision that shifts away from separated land uses to greater integration based on intensity of uses. This approach should support the development of a more diverse housing mix and encourage developments to have a wider range of uses and residential types. For example, the intent of the Urban Medium District would allow for a range of housing styles including single-family detached, single-family attached, and townhomes. Densities within an Urban Medium District may range from seven units per acre (smaller lot single-family detached) to 12 units per acre (townhome density). Examples of this type of development exist today in Midland, including the neighborhood south of Wadley Avenue between Mark Lane and Whittle Way. This area includes a mix of high-density apartments, medium-density townhomes, and smaller lot single-family. What the area lacks are good connections to other land uses that include jobs and commercial services.

The above example is not the norm and the transition for the local housing industry to deliver a more mixed product approach will take time and require the cooperation of both the city and builders. It may also require the city to facilitate new partnerships between specialized builders.

Action item: Direct city investments and redevelopment dollars toward mixed-income projects.

Over the years the city has done an excellent job of leveraging Community Development Block Grant funding. These dollars have been used, along with park and public facility improvements, to make positive impacts on neighborhoods. Projects like Bradford, Washington, and San Juan should be celebrated and shared with other communities as great success stories. However, in recent years these dollars have become tighter, making larger scale projects harder to complete. In the future, new approaches and funding techniques may need to be considered. These approaches will need to blend resources that may include HOME/CDBG funds, lending consortium (see sidebar), low-income housing tax credits, and tax increment financing.

By blending sources, projects can also offer a greater mix of income levels, including workforce housing units. For many residents working in the service industry, the cost of housing is a high burden. These individuals are “doubling up” or working multiple jobs to cover housing costs. This is often the hardest housing market to address, as the profit margins are not high enough to attract private market construction and prospective tenants often make over the income limits required to qualify for housing assistance programs.

In addition to blending income levels these projects should also provide a mix of housing styles. Traditionally neighborhood redevelopment projects have focused on single-family housing while low-income housing tax credits tend to be used for multi-family construction. Blending these sources should allow for a mix of housing styles within a single development.

LENDING CONSORTIUM

The city's need for additional affordable workforce housing will require a stable source of financing. Such a financing program should be designed for maximum leverage, shared risk, and quick turnover rather than long-term financing. A lending consortium is a cooperative venture among lending institutions active in Midland that spreads individual exposure. These cooperative ventures can attract the support of other agencies such as the Texas Housing Foundation and the Federal Home Loan Bank. A lending consortium is an ideal instrument to provide short-term financing or patient financing for builders and contractors in the community, and to provide interim financing for projects developed by a development corporation like Midland Community Development Corporation. The central missions of a consortium in Midland may include:

Construction and long-term financing of key housing types that are identified as high priorities in the Consolidated Plan for Community Development and Housing Funds

Construction lending to private builders of workforce housing

Mortgage financing to low and moderate-income buyers who fall outside of normal underwriting standards for institutions

HOUSING DIVERSITY ON A REDEVELOPMENT:

Overall redevelopment concept for 1.5 block in Omaha, NE; ownership townhomes with live/work potential; senior apartments; single-family homes. Financing included city property acquisition; HOME/CDBG funds; lender consortium assistance; low-income housing tax credits, and TIF.



Action item: Review land use regulations, such as the zoning code and subdivision ordinance, to ensure that there is adequate flexibility to allow a wide range of housing options.

Traditional zoning ordinances from the mid-twentieth century valued low density and separation of different land uses. Midland's ordinance has a number of single-family districts but the higher density districts like the Townhome district appear to be harder to use. In a 2013 Zoning Diagnostic Report, completed for the City of Midland, it was noted that developers expressed concern that the current regulations often required them to come to the Council for a PD to build a townhome development that met market needs. These types of hurdles are a good example of an ordinance that hinders rather than supports planning goals.

The city is currently updating the zoning ordinance. Final changes should be done in light of the goals and policies identified in this plan. Many of these align closely with the concerns identified in the 2013 Diagnostic Report, including opportunities for greater density and improvements to key districts like townhome (TH) and duplex (2-F) districts.

Action item: Work with a local development corporation to implement a senior housing project that is targeted to moderate- to low-income senior households.

A well-balanced housing strategy must include housing for seniors. Over the past decade the number of adults over the age of 65 has grown as the nation's Baby Boomers move into their retirement years. Housing markets across the country are finding that today's seniors are more active and looking for housing options that accommodate that lifestyle. Increasing the mix of housing types, including duplex, townhomes, and downtown condos, will address some of this demand and will also meet the needs of young professionals. More targeted approaches may also be taken to offer senior-oriented projects. These may include the expansion of existing facilities and the development of new projects.

Strategic projects can help meet the needs of both young families and seniors. For example the combination of a purchase/rehab/resale program with a senior-oriented development can meet the needs of two different markets. Under this program lower income senior households could buy into a senior oriented development using the proceeds from the sale of their existing home. Often these homes need updates that discourage young families. A non-profit developer like MCDC would agree to purchase the senior resident's current home. That home is then rehabilitated and resold to a household meeting specific income requirements. Funding sources like HOME funds can be used to assist in the purchase or rehab work necessary on these homes. This sort of combined program provides quality housing for both the senior and a young household just entering the housing market.

2. Revitalize and stabilize older neighborhoods

Action item: Continue to identify neighborhood assets as focal points for successful neighborhood revitalization.

Successful neighborhoods include spaces where people see and greet each other, work and play together in common enterprise, and have a shared sense of ownership. These spaces increase the level of positive interaction that is the essence of a living neighborhood. Good community spaces can take many forms - a well-maintained public park surrounded and watched over by residents has been a model of success in Midland but spaces like a community garden, the median of a parkway, or a community center can all be focal points. These types of facilities, along with good maintenance, tell residents that their neighborhood matters to fellow residents and the larger community, generating greater investment in the upkeep and maintenance of their own property. These environments are not just created by the city but can be done in partnership with the school district, churches, or a strong neighborhood association.

Action item: Expand rehabilitation and demolition programs.

Demolition dollars are in short supply in every community but are important to ensuring the safety of residents and to help avoid undue hardship on adjoining property owners. Programs oriented toward clearance of dangerous structures and housing maintenance and rehabilitation will be essential to providing safe housing and stabilizing older neighborhoods.

Housing rehabilitation and maintenance programs should include a mixture of owner and renter assistance programs. Owner assistance programs may include:

- » Emergency repair program for very low income residents in need of emergency repairs. These programs are designed to meet critical individual needs, but also keep viable housing from deteriorating further.
- » Direct rehabilitation loan programs that provide forgivable loans or grants to low income households
- » Energy efficiency loans for improvements that can extend the life of a house and substantially reduce utility bills for a household

These examples and many more can be funded using dollars from CDBG programs, local funds, or even partnerships with local utilities.

Action item: Target public facility improvements to the highest risk neighborhoods.

Reinvestment in a neighborhood often needs to begin with the infrastructure that holds a neighborhood together. This can include addressing street quality, appearance and efficiency of drains, or stormwater run-

THE CONSOLIDATED PLAN FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND HOUSING FUNDS

Objectives:

Acquire land in selected neighborhoods.
Land is to be developed into affordable housing for low-income households

Provide financial assistance to low-income, first-time homebuyers to purchase new homes

Develop affordable housing for low-income, elderly homebuyers through HUD 202 funding

Provide financial assistance for rehabilitation or reconstruction of homes occupied by low-income homeowners

Provide financial assistance to low-income homeowners for minor repairs



off. When these types of facilities are in poor condition or cause regular and visible problems, residents see no reason to invest their private dollars. Available resources are never sufficient to address these problems but by setting priorities, dollars can be used in a more targeted way. To identify neighborhoods both with the highest needs and greatest capacity the city should consider:

- » Concentration of code violations and demolition orders
- » Existing support capacity from neighborhood associations and/or local service providers
- » The availability of community institutions like parks, schools, churches, or community centers
- » Links to surrounding neighborhoods and access to commercial services

Once targeted neighborhoods are identified, the implementation of a neighborhood empowerment zone should be considered. These zones allow the city to create added incentives, including waiving fees related to construction of buildings in the zone, entering into agreements to refund sales tax for sales made within the zone (for a set period of time), and entering into agreements for sales tax abatements.

Action item: Fund additional code enforcement officers to allow for proactive code enforcement.

Code enforcement for most communities is not about a lack of proper regulations but more of a capacity issue. Staffing levels mean that code enforcement is complaint-driven and does not allow for a more proactive approach. With additional staffing the city may be able to be more aggressive with property maintenance issues and building code violations. These actions may be combined with public outreach and education on property maintenance along with neighborhood cleanup initiatives that provide dumpsters and other resources. These types of initiatives can be done in coordination with local organizations that focus on community beautification.

3. Encourage infill development.

Action item: Establish incentives for the development of vacant lots.

Infill housing refers to housing that is built on vacant or under-used lots in existing neighborhoods. Vacant lots can be a good resource for new affordable housing. Additionally, infill development is beneficial for a number of reasons:

- » Efficiency: Making use of existing infrastructure, such as roads and sewer.
- » Expanding options: Allowing established neighborhoods to respond to a changing market by providing new housing types and features.
- » Filling in gaps. Giving new life to vacant/under-used lots that detract from neighborhood vitality.

However, these lots may have site issues that need to be addressed such as dilapidated structures that need to be removed. Site issues along with the scattered nature of vacant lots can make infill development challenging. The adjacency of lots, allowing for easier movement of resources and supplies between job sites, is an important component to the development of affordable housing. The city should identify barriers to the development of vacant lots, especially in targeted neighborhoods. This may include fees for demolition, dumping, and hook-ups. Removing or reducing these fees or providing a privately funded pool of money to off-set these costs can begin to eliminate hurdles. Some cities will also assist in the assembly of vacant lots, generally focused on targeted neighborhoods. These lots can then be sold or given to either for-profit or not-for-profit developers to encourage development in otherwise struggling neighborhoods. These types of programs can be combined with increased demolition and property maintenance to create visible change and momentum in a struggling neighborhood.



Action item: Require any infill development receiving incentives to complement the character of the surrounding neighborhood and to provide diverse housing options for a variety of income levels.

It is important for infill development to complement the character of the existing neighborhood and provide appropriate transitions where needed. Principles that should be considered with any infill development include:

- » Transitions: Provide transitions between higher intensity uses and lower intensity uses.
- » Scale: The size and height of the buildings is in keeping with surrounding buildings.
- » Context: The design fits the housing styles around even if the type of units are different. Other context variables on a site may include views that enhance the site or draws and playas that may add open space amenities.
- » New housing options: A neighborhood should provide housing options for people of all ages. It should provide options for young families to grow throughout the phases of their lives. Further, a neighborhood should allow the elderly to age in place without leaving their neighborhood.



Action item: Provide public facility improvements that create favorable environments for private investment on underutilized sites.

Demand for affordable housing is high and many Midland residents have shown a desire to continue to invest in older neighborhoods. Preferences are also changing, as many families appreciate active urban spaces that provide living, shopping, entertainment, and work places with good walking, biking, and transit access. Neighborhoods like the Village can provide these environments and meet these market demands. Redevelopment and infill in older neighborhoods depends on private investment but the city's policies and actions should not create conditions that discourage that investment. Policy directions that may encourage investment include:



- » Infrastructure and street improvement. While redevelopment and infill sites usually have infrastructure, these facilities are sometimes obsolete and require improvement. These types of improvements should not be hurdles to the development of new affordable housing and mixed use environments and the city should consider funding alternatives to address these improvements as projects come forward.
- » Public facilities. Parks, schools, community centers, sidewalks and trails, and other amenities can provide anchors that are proven to create private development response. These amenities benefit current residents and the reinvestment or installation of these should generate private development response. Improvements to parks like Washington or San Juan are great examples of projects that benefited existing residents and paid for themselves through the added housing and tax base.
- » Code enforcement. Poor property maintenance and nuisances can degrade the value of surrounding property and discourage reinvestment. Consistent, predictable enforcement will minimize these disincentives and create momentum for new private development.

4. Encourage Downtown's evolution as a neighborhood with housing

Action item: Use appropriate city incentives for the development of housing adjacent to jobs and activities.

As downtowns have evolved in recent years, there are many success stories to learn from. Almost all of the successes include a residential component. Land use and development policies will be instrumental in achieving the area's neighborhood goals. Incentives to adding housing both in and around the downtown do not always have to be the traditional fiscal approaches, although having tools like tax increment financing can be very important. Other incentives may include:

- » Density bonuses for added open or public space
- » Improvements by the city to parking and pedestrian environments
- » Adding family-friendly public amenities including parks, open space, greenways, plazas, bikeways, or public art
- » Encouraging MISD to expand and/or improve education services in the area
- » Reviewing parking requirements to make sure they do not create a hurdle for new residential development
- » Encouraging safety improvements such as additional foot or bicycle officers
- » Reducing permit fees and processing time for infill residential projects



The proper mix of affordable housing is also important and incentives should be used to facilitate a mix of housing costs. While many of the young professionals working in the downtown can afford slightly higher rents, the service workers that support the businesses in the district need more affordable options. Programs like low income housing tax credits, historic tax credits, and resources like the lending consortium should be used to ensure a good mix of affordable housing.

Action item: Work with the Chamber and economic development groups to encourage services and businesses that support workers and residents in the downtown.

The expansion of the business base in the downtown is important both to provide services to workers that come to the district during the work day but also to attract and retain households in and around the district. The city should be a partner with the business community to expand the overall economy of the district and encourage services that benefit the worker, visitor, and resident of the district.

[5. Preserve and enhance special needs housing](#)

Action item: To address homelessness in Midland, a coalition of agencies should implement a Continuum of Care model.

A Continuum of Care (CoC) model is a nationally recognized approach to address homelessness and the causes of homelessness. HUD defines CoC as “a community plan to organize and deliver housing and services to meet the specific needs of people who are homeless as they move to stable housing and maximize self-sufficiency. It includes action steps to end homelessness and prevent a return to homelessness.” Using this type of model, the city and local agencies should identify and develop strategies specific to Midland’s needs. Traditionally these strategies include providing additional emergency shelter beds, transitional housing, and permanent supportive housing. Additionally strategies such as rent or mortgage assistance, housing counseling, medical or health counseling, and budget counseling should be provided and targeted to the highest risk households.

Action item: Require large scale projects to incorporate universal design standards into at least a portion of all units.

The need among special needs populations, including the aging and people with physical and mental disabilities, is only growing. Much of the discussion to this point has focused on providing a diversity of housing styles but housing must also accommodate individuals with varying levels of independence at various stages of life. Universal design means that homes can be used by the widest range of people possible. Closely tied to accessible design, universal design means that every aspect of a home from the bathroom to the garage are more accessible and comfortable to use. At a minimum, universal design standards should be applied to at least a portion of all units within a larger project or subdivision.

POSTED TO TALL CITY TOMORROW DISCUSSION PAGE:

“Very tight housing market, with growth only really tied to oil prices, and not an adequate focus on creating districts or planned developments with mixed uses and amenities (hopefully TCT will start us on a better track for that)..”

– Barbara B.



Chapter 5

Tall City Transportation



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- » Issues and Opportunities
- » Transportation Plan
- » Goals
- » Initiatives and Policies



Tall City Transportation

INTRODUCTION

Transportation is critical to Midland's ability to serve the present and future needs of the city. Mobility and access help form the city, advance public safety, expand the economy, and enhance the quality of life that Midland offers its citizens, businesses, and visitors. For that reason, a comprehensive plan for growth must be built around a transportation framework that accommodates private motor vehicles (cars and heavy transport vehicles), bicycles, pedestrians, and transit. This chapter presents a plan for a future system that supports growth and meets the needs of a wide variety of users.

TRANSPORTATION ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Growth creates both opportunities and challenges for a community. For Midland, the transportation system has experienced its share of challenges in the last five years. Increasing traffic volumes have created congestion issues at key bottlenecks and additional wear and tear on the streets. At the same time, federal and state dollars to expand the system have not always kept pace with growth. Many communities and states have resigned themselves to the fact that these dollars cannot be relied upon to address future needs.

Since World War II, transportation has focused on the car and truck, but in recent years transportation preferences are undergoing change both locally and nationally. Nationally, the share of trips made on foot or bicycle and by transit is increasing. Communities are finding that their transportation systems must respond to meet these changes in the market, especially since more options benefit the street system as well as residents' physical wellbeing. Midland's transportation opportunities and challenges cross all modes of transportation and must be planned for to ensure stable economic growth and a high quality of life.

Streets & Thoroughfares

Midland's street system is its largest public capital investment and its maintenance and ability to move people and goods is fundamental to the city's quality of life. In the coming years key issues will be:

- » Maintaining and improving connectivity in growing areas of the city. The city's system of arterial, collector, and local streets provide a good network of connected streets within Loop 250. This pattern should be maintained and continued in growth areas and these should connect to those within Loop 250.
- » System maintenance is a challenge for the city, especially a growing city, where dollars for expansion often compete with maintenance dollars. Street maintenance is important throughout the city, but especially in

targeted neighborhoods where reinvestment is being encouraged. A good, quality street tells residents, visitors, and investors that community quality is important to Midland.

- » Multi-modal streets are not a new concept to Midland. Bike routes have already been identified within Loop 250 and should be expanded to new developing areas. High speed arterial streets, like Andrews Highway, may not be appropriate for this system, but the city has a very good system of local and collector streets that are appropriate for bicyclists and pedestrians. The system should also be expanded in developing areas along a parkway system that connects neighborhoods, parks, and schools.
- » Managing access points along collector and arterial corridors improves not only capacity and traffic flow, but also safety while offering more opportunities for landscaping.
- » Connecting land use and street capacity to avoid over, or under, building streets. Understanding the land uses and the traffic volumes that those uses will generate is important to understanding the street design, but it is also important to understanding the pedestrian environment that must be created. Widening streets is an expensive proposition and overbuilding streets can create speed and safety issues. The neighborhood centers identified in the land use plan must connect to a street system that is moving people in vehicles, on two wheels, and on foot.

Bicycle Facilities

Bicycle transportation is not for everyone, but riding a bicycle for short trips can be an efficient option for most people and an important source of freedom for youth and those without cars. Challenges to any bicycle infrastructure include:

- » Continuity; connecting major destinations without interruption
- » Diversity; having facilities appropriate to land use and/or street context
- » Comfort; because most routes depend on streets, having good street connectivity will allow users to pick the level of street they feel most comfortable using

Sidewalks

Sidewalks are the foundation of the city's pedestrian system and serve different roles. These include routes for recreational walking or running, safe route to schools, or trips to destinations from parking or bus stops. There are several issues with the sidewalk system:

- » Coverage can be sporadic and not consistent across the city. Sidewalks are now required in all new developments, and more thought is being given to placement by both the city and developers. However, before this requirement sidewalks were often an afterthought, especially in some commercial developments, where pedestrians are placed in environments that are uncomfortable.





Context Sensitive Design

Context Sensitive Design takes a more holistic approach to transportation planning, where street network design involves deeper consideration of community planning issues such as adjacent land uses, intensity of development, and multiple modes of travel. The desired goal is to design street sections that accommodate expected traffic volumes at speeds that reduce barriers for pedestrians, cyclists, and transit users. Features of this approach include:

- » “Streets as places”, making community identity a key component in street corridor design.
- » The surrounding community influencing the design of a given roadway, instead of having a standard cross-section for a roadway that is applied everywhere.
- » Accommodate all modes of travel and making walking, transit, and bicycling more enjoyable and practical.
- » Design features that enhance safety by controlling speed and access.
- » A street design that may change as it passes through different “context zones” or land uses within the community.
- » Capacity being provided through a network of streets, rather than focusing on widening a single corridor to accommodate more vehicular traffic.
- » Longer distance trips being concentrated along limited access routes.
- » Focusing transit where land uses can support it.
- » Measuring network performance by more diverse standards than just level of service for automobiles.

** The information in this section is adapted from the Institute of Transportation Engineers proposed recommended practices manual: “Context Sensitive Solutions in Designing Major Urban Thoroughfares for Walkable Communities” which is available at www.ite.org.*

- » Condition, especially in older neighborhoods, can be an issue. Tripping hazards and ADA accessibility are challenges for most communities. Just getting a handle on the location of problem areas can make it difficult to understand the scope and cost of repairs.
- » Funding for maintenance or gap filling is often a challenge. Sidewalks in new developments are often factored into the cost of the development and ultimately the purchase price of a home. In older areas, the cost of maintenance or construction of connecting sections falls either to the homeowners, city, or a combination of the two.
- » Comfort level can be a major factor in how or if a sidewalk is used. Not all sidewalks are equal, and those that place pedestrians close to high speed traffic can leave the pedestrian feeling uncomfortable, and can place children in danger. Separation between traffic and the sidewalk offers a buffer and an opportunity to create a more pleasing environment for both the driver and pedestrian.



Trails

Midland’s existing trails and multi-use paths are highly popular and an important resource for both pedestrians and bicyclists. The recently completed Hike and Bike Trails Master Plan has put an additional spotlight on the importance and enjoyment residents find in the trail system. The city’s trails can serve basic transportation and recreation needs, but they also present challenges:

- » Continuity is just as important in trails as it is with sidewalks or bicycle facilities. Trails should connect to places, rather than leaving users in dead ends or in areas without comfortable accommodations.
- » Funding for construction and maintenance of trails often competes with scarce parks resources. This is due to the perception that trails are seen as recreational, similar to other park and recreation facilities, rather than a component of the transportation system. In recent years the public health and transportation connections have broadened resources to a small degree.
- » User conflicts can often arise from the variety of users, including walkers (with and without their dog(s)), bicyclists, in-line skaters, and skateboarders. These users all operate at different speeds and can lack consideration of other users. On more heavily-used trails in Midland, signage explaining the “rules of the road” or even separation may be necessary.



Transit

Unlike many cities, Midland does not have a long history of public transportation. The city grew after the heyday of streetcars, and instead grew up in the post-World War II era of the solo car. This has created a culture not familiar with public transportation and a development pattern that is difficult to serve. This creates specific challenges:



- » Coverage is the challenge in every system. All users would like the transit system to stop on their block (or in front of their house) and take them directly to their destination. However, no system can afford to function in this way. Many parts of the city lack the concentration of population necessary to support transit. However, some areas have potential and new neighborhood centers should be connected to the downtown, schools, and other important destinations.
- » The first and last mile is often how transit planners refer to the pedestrian and/or bicycle connections between the final origin/destination and the location of bus stops. As outlined above, the challenge is to make these connections comfortable and safe.
- » Pedestrian safety builds on the need to make sure sidewalks and bicycle systems are safe and comfortable. In addition to good, connected sidewalks, pedestrians need to feel safe crossing the street to reach their transit stop and their destinations. The crossing of multiple lanes of traffic can be difficult for seniors and the handicapped, making transit more difficult to use.
- » Service hours can be difficult to extend in a community with limited funding, a small fleet, and low rider density. Limited hours can limit the use of the system by those in most need of it – the service workers employed in a wide variety of business across the community.

Air Service

The Midland International Air & Space Port is located half way between Midland and Odessa. It is the closest airport to Big Bend National Park and many counties in West Texas, making it a regional destination. Originally a World War II air school location, thousands of bombardier pilots were trained in the area. Currently, the runways are home to one of only two commercial spaceports in Texas. With the presence of XCOR and Orbital Outfitters, the new Spaceport Business Park will create a location for additional space related business on the property.

The Midland International Air & Space Port is a significant asset for the city, and has experienced tremendous growth over the past several years in the surrounding land. Much of that has been oil and gas development, but also industrial, commercial and some retail uses have located near the airport. The airport will continue to be an important transportation and economic resource. Maintaining and, if necessary, expanding transportation access to the airport, along with implementation of land use regulations related to the airport, will be essential to supporting this resource. Additional information related to the Airport Master Plan, the Spaceport Business Park, and the other uses near the airport are found in those site specific documents.

TALL CITY TOMORROW TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Streets and alleys take up over twice as much land as all of Midland's parks, schools, and public and civic buildings combined. For most residents and visitors, their primary contact with the public realm is on streets. Private motor vehicles will continue to be the way most users experience these streets. In 2015 only 2.25% of commuters used public transit, walked, or biked to work in Midland. A factor in this small percentage is related to the design and character of the city's transportation system. The primary goal for the city will continue to be maintenance and expansion of the system into growing areas, but diversifying and visually enhancing the system is also important to residents. To successfully implement the land use and quality of life features that residents identified, the system will need to become more diverse over time.

The following goals, initiatives, and action items are designed to ensure the safe operation of the city's transportation system, accommodate all forms of mobility, and advance the city's overall development goals.

GOALS

The following goals in the area of transportation have guided the development of this comprehensive plan:

1. Develop a future transportation network that will support desirable patterns of community development.

There is a complex relationship between streets and adjacent land uses. As the city continues to grow, the transportation network must work in conjunction with the land use plan. The city must integrate existing and future land uses with the design of appropriate streets, and vice versa, to achieve residents' desires for a high level of connectivity and neighborhoods that have a sense of place and quality. When context and land use are part of the street design process, it moves the design process from a focus on traffic measurements to a priority on place-making.

2. Provide a transportation system that is safe, convenient, and offers a variety of interconnected modes.

Traffic was a major concern for many participants in the planning process. Concerns ranged from congestion and delays to safety. The design of streets and the level of connectivity those streets have plays a major role in ensuring a safe and convenient system. A truly unified city requires good connections among neighborhoods and destinations centers. Alternative local links also reduce dependence on major arterials like Big Spring Street for local traffic movement. The overall network should also encourage different modes to provide safe and comfortable alternatives to the car for short trips.





3. Connect Midland's neighborhoods and community destinations with a trail system that will provide a safe and healthy transportation alternative.

Midland's neighborhoods, activity centers, civic districts, and major open spaces should be linked by a trail system that meets both recreation and transportation needs. An active transportation system increases mobility, helps create a healthy city, and creates a quality of life benefit that many residents expect from a city the size of Midland.

4. Ensure that Midland's transportation system is adequate to meet the demands placed upon it.

Midland has continually grown, both in bursts and at a slow pace, and this growth has required a transportation system that meets demand. Different streets in Midland have different demands placed upon them, driven by the surrounding land use and regional context of the street. Connecting surrounding land uses and regional demands with the design and maintenance of the street will ensure that the system functions at a high level and remains safe for all users.

INITIATIVES AND POLICIES

Midland's transportation system is made up of many parts that should form a comprehensive and balanced system. This section will identify initiatives related to the overall system and then break it down into its component parts.

Thoroughfare System

Map 5.1 depicts the proposed thoroughfare system for the City of Midland while Map 5.2 illustrates the bike and trail system. The proposed thoroughfare system is based on the general functional differences between street classifications. Mobility increases as the classification changes from local streets to freeways, while access decreases along the same line. Therefore the primary functions of the roadway types are displayed as a combination of mobility/movement versus property access.

1. Coordinate thoroughfare and land use plans

Action item: The City of Midland will ensure that street improvements and expansions to the network support the implementation of an intensity-based land use approach

As the city moves toward a land use approach that is based on the mixing of land uses with similar intensities, and therefore similar traffic demands, coordination between the land use plan and thoroughfare plan will be essential. The thoroughfare plan should reinforce the vision of efficiency through enhancements to existing streets, improvements to areas of congestion and poor operation, and improvements to connectivity.



Action item: A context sensitive approach will be applied to street design

Much like the above action item, this item stresses the need for collaboration between land use and thoroughfare design. The street network should involve a deeper consideration of issues such as adjacent land uses, intensity of development and multiple modes of travel. New development should be located on streets of appropriate type and capacity, or include measures necessary to supply the required capacity.

Action item: Require a traffic impact analysis (TIA) for large scale projects

A TIA is a way to evaluate the impact of large developments on a roadway system, but also on the pedestrian environment. Completing a TIA should be considered for any land use plan amendments to a higher intensity, and required for residential projects that generate more than 2,000 trips a day, or for nonresidential projects that generate more than 2,500 trips a day.

2. Establish street connectivity standards

Action item: The thoroughfare system will provide good street connections that offer a choice of routes and separate local traffic from major arterials

Street connectivity benefits all parts of the system. Alternative routes for shorter trips indirectly increases the capacity of arterial streets for more regional or cross-city traffic. More options also means better quiet street opportunities for pedestrians and bicyclists and improved delivery of emergency services.

Action item: The city will establish guidelines for greater street connectivity that includes pedestrian routes

These guidelines should be built on the idea of improving efficiency of the roadway system by measuring and increasing connectivity. This may include urban design concepts regarding block length, alleys, street widths and simple requirements such as street and sidewalk stubs to adjacent vacant land and future neighborhoods. To improve connectivity between neighborhoods and improve emergency response, the number of entry points should be based on the number of lots, and where available alleys should continue to be used for the trash collection, parking, and access management.



3. Create multi-modal corridors

Action item: All appropriate forms of transportation will be incorporated into the city's transportation system

Not every street can be a multi-modal corridor or will incorporate all forms of transportation. For example, all of the city's collector streets should accommodate pedestrians and bicycles, but only some may include transit. For arterial streets the pedestrian, bicycle, and transit accommodations may occur along parallel local streets, trails, and some service roads. For the minor arterial system, sidewalks should connect transit users to stops and destinations. Every street improvement project that expands the capacity for motor vehicles on minor arterials and all collectors should include accommodations for transit and active modes (pedestrians and bikes).

Action item: The future transportation system will include a multi-modal parkway

In the developing areas of Midland, a parkway system should connect parks, schools, and neighborhood centers. The importance of the corridor should be evident in the additional attention to detail that the street is given. This may go beyond providing multi-modal options, but may include additional landscaping or accent lighting. Visitors should know that this is an important route that will take them to key destinations.

4. Establish new street standards**Action item: The city will implement design standards that maximize safety and efficiency of arterials through the development and implementation of an access management plan**

The ultimate goal of an access management plan should be to improve safety and efficiency. The implementation of an access management plan should limit driveways on arterials and collector streets and increase connections between uses. Good access management has many benefits including increasing the efficiency of parking, reducing crashes and conflict points, and reducing stress on motorist and pedestrians.

Action item: Develop and implement new standards for street ROW widths and lane configurations to augment access management, mobility, and cost effectiveness

New design standards should take into consideration multi-modal accommodations and the best practices in stormwater management. This opportunity should also be used to review existing construction standards for potential cost savings or improvements to high traffic areas.

Expressways

Expressways are identified as roadways with a functional classification higher than arterial. These would include interstate highways and other freeways such as State Highway 191 and Loop 250, as well as the Cradick Highway (SH 349), and any future extensions of those highways. Additionally, expressways can include limited access, higher speed city streets, although Midland does not yet have any city-owned street fitting that description.

The purpose of expressways is almost exclusively for the movement of traffic with access limited to designated locations. For freeways, access is restricted to on-off ramps at major intersections, with businesses accessed along frontage roads. Some expressways could have access at intersecting streets through traffic signals, but these would be limited in number and spaced several miles apart. Speed limits could range from 50 to 75 mph for the various roadways, offering high-speed mobility through, around, and in-between major parts of the city.

POSTED TO TALL CITY TOMORROW DISCUSSION PAGE:

“Make a interchange from loop 250 to 191 heading west.”

– Danny T.



1. Expand and improve the expressway system as needed

Action item: Evaluate the need and promote the development of strategic corridors

Corridors to evaluate for inclusion in the future expressway system include:

- » State Highway (SH) 158 from SH 191 to SH 349
- » SH 349 freeway (Craddick Hwy) extended from Big Spring Street to I-20, north and east of Midland
- » A future north-south expressway from SH 349 (Craddick Hwy) to BI-20 in the area of Fairgrounds, Todd, or Elkins Roads, serving downtown
- » An east-west expressway from Loop 250 West along Wall and Front Streets to connect to downtown and the potential north-south expressway listed above. Evaluation includes potential movement of railroad facilities from within the city
- » A new south loop, south of Interstate 20. This corridor may be well beyond the life of this plan, but should be evaluated and monitored as the city grows. The Permian Basin MPO, through its South Midland Mobility PEL Study has begun evaluation of possible routes, and the city should stay engaged in any further studies.

Action item: Continue to update the existing expressways

The City of Midland should promote the development of the following changes/updates to existing expressway locations:

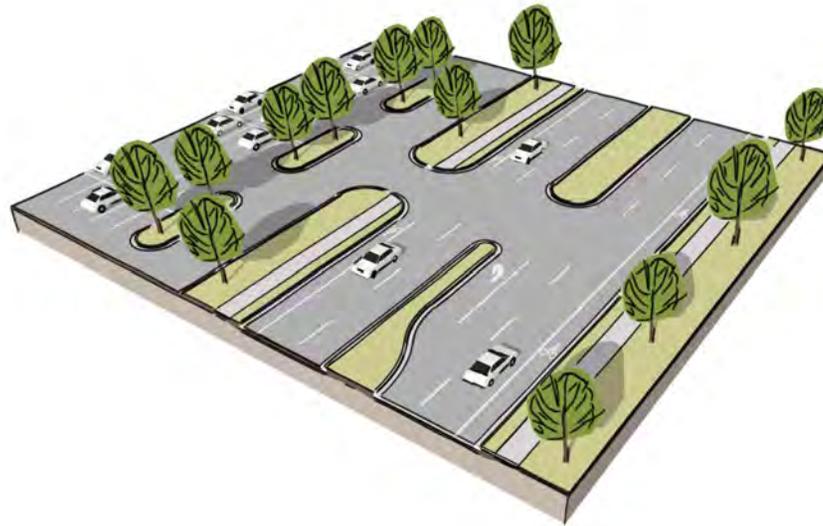
- » Transition to one-way frontage roads along I-20 from Loop 250 East interchange to FM 1788 interchange, including required interchange reconfigurations (see TxDOT's I-20 Corridor Study from 1999 and upcoming re-study)
- » Completion of Loop 250 and construction of interchanges from Fairgrounds to BI-20
- » Completion of SH 349 (Craddick Hwy) and interchanges, including potential underpass locations (no access)
- » Continue to reevaluate and develop the SH 191 corridor in light of the MPO's 2012 Corridor Study/Management Plan and the newer restrictions from the Midland Air & Space Port's launch safety corridors
- » Encourage implementation of the operational and safety improvements to BI-20 identified in TxDOT's 2005 Business 20 Traffic Study

Arterials

Arterial roadways are the framework of the street system in any city. Intended to carry large volumes of traffic, arterials therefore should have limited access to adjacent properties. Historically in Midland, these streets were located at one mile intervals in a grid pattern. Additionally, they have typically contained a continuous left-turn lane in the center as opposed to raised medians.

Existing arterial streets include Wadley Avenue, Big Spring Street, and Andrews Highway. Each of these would be considered a “major” arterial. Minor arterials are similar in function, but due to their location or adjacent land uses, do not convey as much traffic. Examples of those in Midland are Florida Avenue, “A” Street, and Lamesa Road. Speed limits for arterial streets range from 35–45 mph, and intersections should range from four to eight per mile, with traffic signals at approximately half-mile intervals. Proposed arterial spacing can range from one to one-and-a-half miles apart.

The adjacent diagram illustrate the proper context of arterials to the surrounding land use.



1. Acquire ROW for expansion of the arterial system into growth areas

Action item: Acquire right-of-way for proposed routes ahead of development

Recent roadway development has been hampered by the need to acquire ROW for new locations. Environmental clearance, ROW acquisition, and utility adjustments should be completed for future arterial locations ahead of development.

2. Prioritize construction spending

Action item: Develop and routinely evaluate and update an arterial roadway capital improvement plan

This document would be used as a guide for prioritizing ROW acquisition, design services, and ultimately construction spending.

3. Identify and dedicate funding sources

Action item: Provide dedicated funding sources for arterial roadway development

A reliable and innovative funding program is necessary to meet the ongoing demand of major roadway projects. The city should identify those sources and align them to project priorities identified in the arterial roadway capital improvement plan.

4. Develop and update design criteria

Action item: Develop new design criteria for arterial streets to include options for medians and alternate pavement sections

The existing subdivision ordinance is inconsistent with the desire for medians or multi-modal facilities, and may be overly conservative with pavement depths relative to other cities in the region. However, the increasing heavy truck traffic on certain streets has resulted in pavements deteriorating at a faster rate, driving the need to evaluate construction standards.



Action item: Implement a landscaping program for high profile corridors

Residents frequently noted the desire to improve the image of high profile corridors. Future arterial streets should include room for adequate landscaping. Aesthetic improvements may also include adjustments to sign ordinance and increased landscaping requirements for parking lots that are visible from arterial streets. Some improvements may also apply to existing corridors, such as those connecting visitors from the airport to the heart of the city. Applying enhancements along these corridors would make it more attractive and demonstrate the significance of the corridor.

Collectors

Collector streets are designed to be the local distribution system for a city, collecting and distributing traffic between local and major streets (arterials and expressways). Historically, collectors were located at half-mile intervals in each direction and ran the length of the section. Examples include Bluebird Lane, Neely Avenue, Cuthbert Avenue, Oriole Drive, and Ward Street. Approximately 20-30 years ago, collectors were relegated to distribution of traffic within a section boundary and through traffic was discouraged. This change in philosophy resulted in multiple collector street connections in each arterial mile, and those collectors do not have continuous paths through to the next arterial roadway. Examples of these collectors are Spence Drive, Crowley Boulevard, Heritage Boulevard, and Legends Boulevard.



Moving forward the city will likely continue to have two types of collector streets. "Primary" collectors should connect through neighborhoods, offer continuous routes for several miles, and should offer intersecting arterials, but not end at those arterials. Primary collectors provide desirable multi-modal facilities for bicyclists and pedestrians with reasonable connectivity, but lesser traffic volumes.

They are not as conducive to residential housing that fronts the street, as that number of driveway cuts and on-street parking should be low for higher mobility, but not quite as high as an arterial. Non-residential access is acceptable, but should be controlled with shared driveways where appropriate.

Secondary collectors provide the neighborhoods with the distribution of traffic to the perimeter, but without providing the through connection. Residential access would be unrestricted on a secondary collector, speeds would be slower, and widths could be reduced.

The diagrams on the previous page illustrate the proper context of collectors to the surrounding land use.

1. Dedicate right-of-way ahead of development

Action item: Acquire right-of-way for primary collector streets ahead of development

Due to the incremental nature of development, the dedication of collector streets can often happen in a disjointed way. This is part of the reason that recent roadway development has been slowed or discontinuous. Environmental clearance, ROW acquisition, and utility adjustments should be completed for all known future primary collector locations.

2. Provide better distinction between primary and secondary collectors

Action item: Clarify the use and function of primary and secondary collectors in the Subdivision Ordinance as noted in this document

Currently, Midland's city code distinguishes between primary and secondary collectors only in discussions related to ROW width and pavement. Use and function go undefined and have been interpreted in various ways through the years. The city should clarify those distinctions as mentioned in this section.

3. Develop and update design criteria

Action item: Develop new design criteria for collector streets based on roles as primary and secondary designation

The existing subdivision ordinance is inconsistent with the desire for multi-modal facilities. The city should also develop new access management guidelines/regulations for the new collector street designations.

Action item: Require all new collector streets to be designed with complete street components.

The city's collector system should serve a variety of functions and users. Features of a complete street should include:

- » A pedestrian/bicycle domain set back from the roadway by street landscaping and an adequate greenway setback from curb to walk; or designation of an on-street bike route, along with a continuous sidewalk.



NEIGHBORHOOD WORKSHOPS - WHAT NEEDS TO BE ADDRESSED IN ORDER TO BEGIN IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF PLACE IN MIDLAND?:

“Better night lighting on major city streets; maintain existing lighting”

- » Special lighting and street graphics to promote a sense of security and well-being.
- » Well-marked pedestrian crossings, sometimes with features such as crossing nodes that reduce the distance pedestrians must travel to cross the street.
- » Street furniture that claims part of the street environment for people who are outside of vehicles. This may not be appropriate for all corridors, but could be very important in proposed neighborhood centers.
- » Attractive landscaping to promote a sense of community.
- » Adequate buffering of draws and stormwater drainage areas to lower the volume and velocity of rain-water and decrease flooding events.

4. Designate a parkway route in developing areas

Action item: *Develop a parkway that connects major destinations*

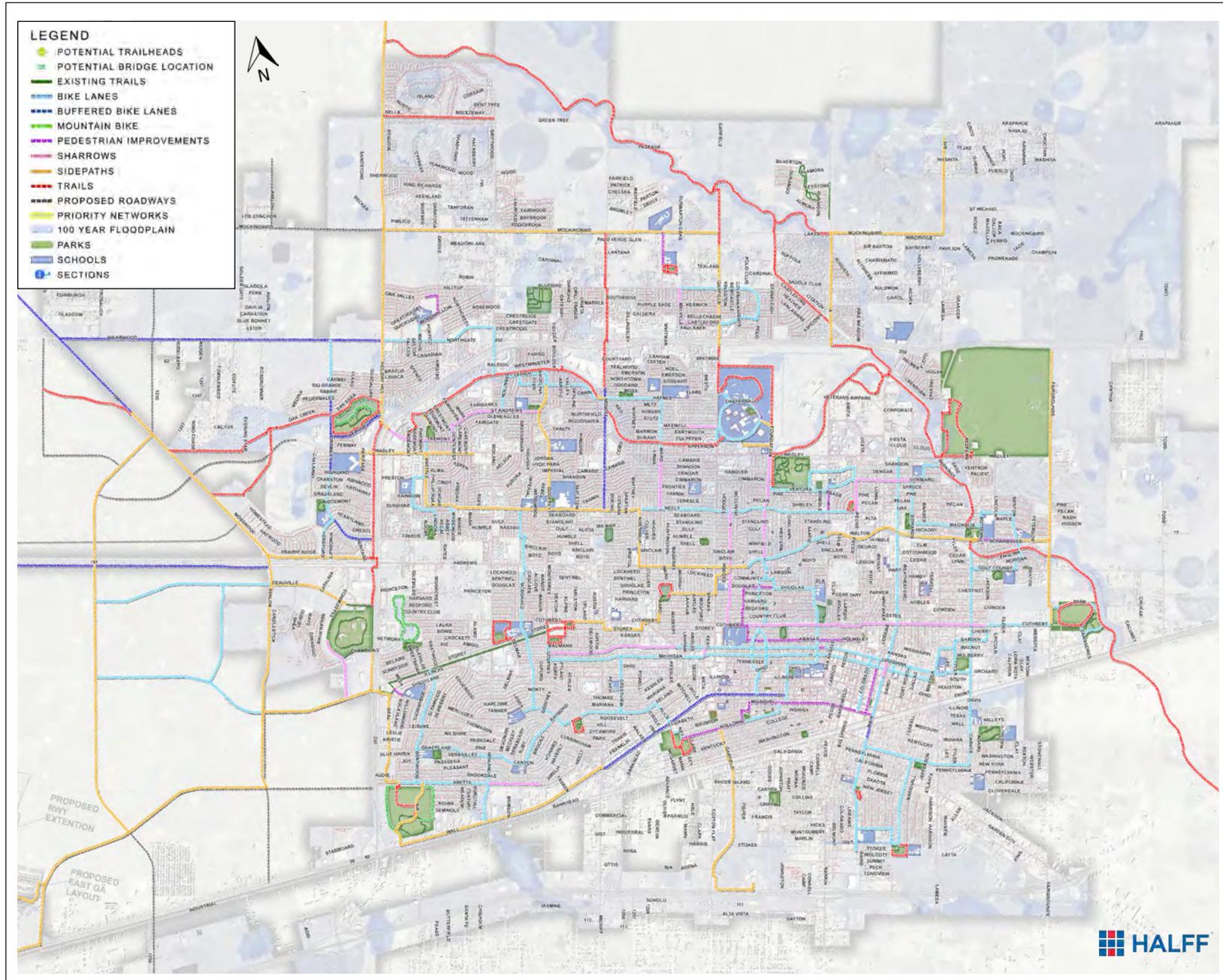
A parkway should connect neighborhoods, parks, and activity centers and project a strong and unified community image. These streets have special characteristics that unify rather than divide neighborhoods; accommodate pedestrian and bicycles as well as vehicular traffic; and encourage adjacent development to be oriented toward, rather than away from, the public right-of-way. The parkway should function as a complete street (see above).

Local Streets

Local streets serve Midland’s neighborhoods and the individual properties within commercial areas. They provide direct, low-speed access for relatively short trips and are often the routes traveled by families out for an evening walk or joggers getting their exercise. On-street parking is permitted and mobility is not the highest priority. Calming elements such as curvilinear streets, cul-de-sacs, offset intersections, raised crosswalks, and other devices can help keep traffic speeds low.

Although proposed local streets are not shown on the Transportation Plan Map, the diagrams on page 127 illustrate the proper context of local streets to the surrounding land use.

Map 5.2: Trail Map



1. Review and update design criteria

Action item: Update design criteria to ensure that local streets are designed for their role in the transportation system

Midland should allow and encourage street standards that are both functionally appropriate and relate to the role of the street in the city. These standards should:

- » Protect life safety services while not oversizing streets. Overly wide streets encourage higher than appropriate speeds that create safety problems. Parking controls and limitations to one side are tools that can help maintain emergency access and control speeds.
- » Reflect the context and role of the street in the system. The design of streets should reflect desired performance. For local streets this would be slower traffic that creates a comfortable environment for pedestrians or just children playing in a front yard. Wide streets in residential settings tend to increase traffic speeds and development costs as well as increase drainage concerns.
- » Control development costs. One way to control development cost and the base costs for lots is to limit the width of local street and thus the hard costs of a development. Narrower streets may not be appropriate for every neighborhood or buyer, but a narrower street that uses the alley for service access and even resident parking can lower costs while still providing adequate access for life safety services.

Action item: Require sidewalks on at least one side of all streets in residential subdivisions with densities greater than one unit per acre

All neighborhoods should provide safe access for pedestrians, whether it is a neighbor out for a run or a family out for an evening stroll. While leaving a neighborhood to experience a unique or special trail is a nice alternative, residents should not have to get in their cars to go for a walk or run. Additionally, sidewalks should connect to schools and other transportation routes, including trails and greenways.



Bike and Pedestrian System

The city's transportation system should encourage all modes for appropriate trips – short distances that do not require automobile travel, for example. A large majority of trips are within three miles. Therefore, street standards should include reasonable accommodations for all users. The concept of “complete Streets,” multi-modal facilities that serve automobiles, bicycles, and pedestrians in an attractive public environment, should be integrated into the transportation, park, and pathway networks of the city.

From a development perspective, a system that encourages multi-modal transportation includes:

- » Public infrastructure that connects neighborhoods and destinations
- » Elimination of barriers that discourage or obstruct pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users
- » Project designs that provide safe and pleasant passage from the public to private realm

All of the street section diagrams illustrate how bike and pedestrian facilities should be incorporated. The City's 2014 Hike and Bike Trails Master Plan also illustrates different trail sections that are appropriate for Midland.

1. Improve and expand the existing trail network

Action item: Implement the 2014 Hike and Bike Trails Master Plan

Midland's Hike and Bike Trails Master Plan outlines an extensive list of potential projects that will connect key destinations. The plan includes priority projects, design standards, funding sources, and responsibilities.

Action item: Improve trail connections to streets and destinations

A trail that provides miles but does not connect to its surroundings may provide benefits to people seeking workouts, but it fails in its transportation mission to move people to places. In addition, poor access or visibility to and from surroundings can create public safety problems. Trails should be designed or retrofitted to provide convenient and barrier-free access to adjacent streets and major destinations.

Action item: Identify a reliable funding source for trail development

Midland will need to develop a reliable funding source for trail development. The traditional method of trail funding through the Federal Transportation Alternatives program, faces challenges with every reauthorization, and must compete for declining funds with a wider variety of projects. In addition, good trail maintenance is important, and total costs will increase as the system expands. Because trails are both transportation and recreation facilities (and sometimes transportation to recreation), funding from the capital and operating budgets for the Parks and Public Works Departments is both necessary and appropriate. However,



KEYS TO A SUCCESSFUL PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE SYSTEM

Directness. The system should provide relatively direct routes to destinations without taking people far out of their way.

Integrity. The system should connect to places and provide continuity, rather than leaving users in dead ends or uncomfortable places.

Safety. The system should be physically safe to its users and not present hazardous conditions.

Comfort. The system should understand the various capabilities and comfort levels of its users. For example, senior citizens may take a relatively long time to cross a street, and some bicyclists are not comfortable riding in mixed traffic.

these funds are also limited, and other sources should be explored. Private developments should build trails within their boundaries and connect paths to nearby regional trails. Costs may be shared when there is an obvious regional benefit.

2. Expand the existing bike system

Action item: Expand the existing bike system to key destinations beyond Loop 250

Midland's bike system within Loop 250 offers a system of well-connected streets to key destinations. Outside of the loop, the trail system is not as strong. Extension of the system should connect neighborhoods, shopping areas, schools, and other community destinations. The 2014 Hike and Bike Trail Master Plan identifies corridors and treatments that are appropriate to those areas. In addition to the existing signage, treatments may include dedicated bike lanes or other street markings, such as sharrows, to signal drivers that bicyclists may be in the area.

Action item: Remove barriers to expanding the bike system

The greatest challenge to expansion of the bike system in Midland are man-made barriers – especially the Loop 250 corridor, where even cars find it challenging to cross the expressway. Improvements to existing crossings should include bicycle and pedestrian features, and future crossings of any expressway or arterial street should take into consideration the need to move people along with cars. Features may include better defined cross walks, refuges for pedestrians, pedestrian signals, and clearly defined bike lanes.

Action item: Improve the bicycle-friendliness of Midland

Midland should work to create an environment that is friendly to both bicyclists and pedestrians. The “4 Es,” education, enforcement, encouragement, and evaluation, which the League of American Bicyclists views as the measure of a bicycle friendly community, should be adopted in Midland. This system recognizes that engineering alone does not create a successful bicycle culture. The components of the 4 Es include:

- » Education: making cyclists and motorists aware of the rules and practices of safety and etiquette and their mutual rights and responsibilities as road users
- » Enforcement: helping to ensure safety by enforcing rules that pertain to all users
- » Encouragement: executing events and programs that promote bicycling and its many benefits
- » Evaluation: establishing benchmarks and measurements to gauge the effectiveness of bicycle initiatives

3. Develop a pedestrian system plan

Action item: Identify high priority sidewalk segments per an established sidewalk plan or safe routes to school plan

Midland needs to develop and implement a strategic plan for the city's pedestrian network. The plan needs to address key challenges including:

- » Expanding neighborhood sidewalks on local streets that provide access to destinations such as schools and transit stops
- » Addressing barriers to pedestrian travel such as major intersections, long arterial street crossings, and signal timing
- » Connecting the sidewalks to the trail, bike, and transit systems

To address these issues the plan will need to:

- » Identify a complete street network and the pedestrian corridors that should be developed and funded as part of the city's thoroughfare plan
- » Establish clear standards for local sidewalks that include well-maintained sidewalks within a half mile walking radius of elementary and middle schools and neighborhood parks
- » Identify key pedestrian barriers that obstruct access for important user groups, including children and adults
- » Relate other active modes or facilities to the sidewalk network
- » Develop a phased implementation program

Action item: Include sidewalks in all updated street design standards.

As the city reviews and updates street design standards, sidewalks must be included in all street types exclusive of expressways. This should include proper crossings and signalization and coordination with utilities.

Action item: Establish a dedicated funding source to address gaps and maintenance of the sidewalk system

Maintenance and filling the gaps within an existing sidewalk system can be one of the most challenging priorities in a pedestrian system. For new areas, the city can work with the developers to ensure that quality of life amenities like sidewalks are included in the final design. During street maintenance and reconstruc-



**POSTED TO TALL CITY TOMORROW
DISCUSSION PAGE:**

“Improve and build sidewalks. I cannot walk to our neighborhood park without walking in the road.”

– Sarah O.



tion some improvements are made for ADA compliance. However, funding to fill the remaining gaps often falls solely to the city, although some communities have done shared funding approaches with property owners. To maintain the system and fill the gaps, the city will have to look at a variety of funding sources that include local support from civically minded residents and organizations.

Transit System

Midland's transit system, run by EZ-Rider, provides a system that covers some of the major destinations in the city, radiating out from the downtown. The city has a small role in the transit system and funding for expansion of these services is very limited. In the future, the city will need to continue to work with the transit authority to ensure that development can ultimately be accessed by transit and that residents have safe routes to get to transit stops.

1. Ensure that future projects are transit friendly

Action item: Incorporate transit access into street design standards and projects on appropriate corridors

As streets along existing transit routes are improved or modified, transit friendly features should be included. Amenities should include enhanced pedestrian access and street crossings at transit stops; signal cycles that give pedestrians time to cross; space for shelters; and signal controls. As the city is revising and updating existing street standards all of these features should be included.

Action item: Implement standards that provide good transit access between major projects and transit routes.

A successful transit system needs to provide clear and consistent service, but the experience that the rider has getting to the bus stop and waiting at the stop is also important. The connections between that stop and the entrance to a major destination are also important. For example, examine whether there is a clear and safe path or a large parking lot with no defined pedestrian route. Unsafe paths or waiting in uncomfortable settings can deter residents from using the service. All major projects and smaller projects along existing routes should consider the length and nature of the path between their front door and the transit stop.

2. Connect transit to other modes of travel

Action item: Connect the hike and bike system with the transit system

Most individuals are comfortable walking a quarter- to half-mile to a bus stop, but the experience needs to feel safe and comfortable. This distance can be expanded with the use of a bike. The existing bike racks on buses make it easy to connect the "first mile" and "last mile" of a multi-modal trip. However, like the pedestrian, the bike routes to and from bus stops must be safe and comfortable.



Chapter 6

Tall City Tomorrow Character



CONTENTS

- » Issues & Opportunities
- » Tall City Tomorrow Character Plan
- » Goals
- » Initiatives & Policies



“Can’t we do a better job preventing litter! Many times dumpsters and barrels are over filled. (Even the recycling bins)”
– Community Comment

Tall City Tomorrow Character

INTRODUCTION

The traditional elements of a comprehensive plan help guide land use directions, transportation and infrastructure services, and other city services like parks. Throughout the Tall City Tomorrow process, residents also expressed a desire to address community character and quality. The image of the city both internally and externally was very important to residents. They saw that great cities go beyond basic systems and elevate the pride and quality of life that residents and visitors alike experience. Chapter 9 will review many of the quality of life features, such as parks, recreation, culture, and natural environments. Tall City Tomorrow Character identifies initiatives and action items that will promote Midland’s character through the built environment. Defining a vision and the action items necessary to achieve that vision requires a discussion of the issues and opportunities related to community appearance, landscaping, and community design.

ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

Community Appearance

Community appearance has a direct impact on residents’ attitudes toward investment in their community and neighborhoods. Many spoke of a need to get a better handle on litter and the appearance of entrances into the city. One concern was of their own first-impressions of Midland as newcomers, as well as seeing the city through the eyes of guests, and the fact that this was not always a positive experience. They noted concern that this first impression did not speak to the quality of many Midland neighborhoods and developments. Midland is not unique, in that property maintenance is a struggle for many communities and can often result in a cycle of decline starting with just one low-quality property on a block. Defining a ‘good appearance’ can be difficult, as it can mean different things to different people. Cities need to have a well-defined baseline for building and property maintenance, as well as the political will to enforce those standards. This effort also needs to include community education regarding expectations and how to properly address problem properties in a neighborhood. The first key element is community support, which has been expressed by residents through the Tall City Tomorrow process.

Urban Landscape

Good and well maintained landscaping can be a crucial contributor to an attractive community image. Landscaping can have many benefits and fill an important role in land use. These include:

- » Minimizing compatibility issues between adjacent but different land uses
- » Offering shade on hot days and blocking harsh winds
- » Breaking up concrete environments such as large parking lots
- » Shading homes and reducing utility bills
- » Strengthening commercial districts (studies have found that shoppers will spend more in environments that have greenery and good landscaping)
- » Overall enrichment of the urban environment

Landscaping can also play a very important role in providing a positive first impression to visitors. Residents spoke often of the negative first impression of some of the land uses along the city’s gateway corridors. These uses are vital to the city’s economy and a common issue for many cities. Good landscaping and screening along the city’s gateway can change travelers’ focal points, exemplifying the quality community that many residents find in the city’s neighborhoods.

In Midland’s hot, dry climate, sustaining an attractive landscape requires selection of appropriate materials and an understanding of proper maintenance. Landscaping often defaults to turf and other non-native materials that require watering and ongoing maintenance. Since the last drought, residents have been encouraged to try more xeriscaping, a landscaping approach that uses more native materials that require less water. However, residents jokingly noted that some property owners seem to think that xeriscaping also means zero-maintenance. This is definitely not the case and while the use of native materials should be encouraged, an understanding of how to maintain those materials is also needed. To begin this process, the city should be a leader in demonstrating use of good materials and maintenance of public properties.

Community Design

People are attracted to places that offer a quality experience and are active with people, because they provide residents with a sense of community and belonging. The desire for these types of places in Midland is evident on a nice evening in Wadley Barron Park. Resident fill this park to walk, enjoying the pond, and meet their neighbors. These spaces are limited in Midland, and residents recognized that commercial centers are designed for single-stop experiences, with limited opportunity to interact with neighbors or visit other businesses without getting back into a car.

Creating great places is not easy and involves more than just buildings. It has to include the smaller details, such as good sidewalks, landscaping, public spaces to meet others, defined edges, and possibly features that draw people in like public art, street furniture, or water. It is difficult to legislate good places but attention to the details of the site design or adding features to existing neighborhood centers is essential to creating the types of destinations that Midland residents desire.



“More trees, flowers, hardgrasses, flowering cacti, pretty things to help make it look nicer.”

– Samantha H

“More green spaces with shading and seating and practical water features”

– Community Comment

TALL CITY TOMORROW CHARACTER PLAN

GOALS

1. Ensure that Midland’s built and natural environments are regionally appropriate and well maintained.

The severe droughts of the past 10 years have made many residents aware of the natural environment around them. The intense heat in the summer months and hard winds also drive the character of the built environment. Using materials that are appropriate to the climate and conditions of Midland not only celebrate the character of the city and region, but last longer and are easier to maintain. Low maintenance materials are just that, low-maintenance. Residents, businesses, and the city should place a high priority on education and enforcement of quality maintenance.

2. Identify partnerships to produce neighborhood and commercial centers that are attractive, functional, and of high quality.

City officials, developers, and residents alike want new developments to reflect the character and quality of Midland. In previous sections of Tall City Tomorrow, the need for proper circulation, pedestrian access, and the mixing of uses to create quality neighborhoods has been discussed. High quality building materials and good landscaping create attractive destinations where consumers want to spend their time and money. The city will need to work closely with the development community to ensure quality products that meet the needs of today’s residents, reflect the pride residents have in their community, and that will last well into the future.

3. Create vibrant multi-use destinations that support activities and residential settings for multiple generations.

In Chapter 3 the need to create “balanced neighborhoods” was identified as one of the guiding land use principles. Balanced neighborhoods provide residents with easy access to a variety of places to live, shop, work, play, and engage in community life. Neighborhoods should also be places where residents can find a home at all stages of their lives. National trends show that retirees and young professionals are often looking to live in environments with easy access to jobs, services, and entertainment. These vibrant neighborhoods should be places where generations can interact with common and diverse options.

4. Encourage the development of places where Midland residents can gather and socialize to build connections.

On any beautiful evening in Midland one can find residents enjoying the trails around Midland College or feeding the ducks at Wadley Barron Park, but few of these environments exist. Most dining and shopping opportunities are one-stop destinations, and few of the city’s parks are attractors like Wadley Barron. Future park space should include more amenities like water features or open spaces to run a dog; and commercial spaces should mix uses and offer outdoor dining and common spaces where musicians can play and shoppers can rest and talk with friends.

INITIATIVES & POLICIES

1. Improve landscaping regulations

Action item: Support and encourage the use of native landscaping materials

The most recent drought was especially hard on the city's trees, shrubs, and grasses. Any non-hardy materials quickly withered and died. This experience led to a greater interest in using more native materials and doing more xeriscaping. Some areas have been replanted but many of the trees lost to the heat or ice storms have not been replaced. In partnership with Keep Midland Beautiful, the community should work to raise money and apply for grants that support tree and plant material giveaways. Along with these materials should be educational information on the proper maintenance and care of native plants.

Action item: Develop and implement an education program on the use and maintenance of native materials

One of the biggest challenges to using more native materials is the learning curve that often must accompany any change. Often residents struggle with the different look that these materials have and how to provide proper maintenance. To some, these materials may look unkempt compared to the highly manicured look of less drought-tolerant materials. Invasive weeds can still be an issue and depending on the plant material some trimming and pruning may be required. In partnership with local schools, the Texas A&M Agrilife Extension, Keep Midland Beautiful, and the City, educational material and workshops should be developed that can be shared in schools, at community events, and through continuing education venues.

Action item: Require additional landscaping for large projects

Tree planting and landscaping in larger projects and especially in large parking lots has multiple benefits. Trees shade parking and walkways, decrease the heat island effect, help orient customers in large parking lots, manage circulation, and can be integrated into design elements that provide public spaces and safe paths for pedestrians. Landscaping and circulation in larger developments should create an environment that is friendly and reflects the pride residents have in Midland's western climate.

Action item: Work with property owners and local civic organizations to plant trees and native landscaping along major corridors

The streets of any community may be the only public environment that most individuals experience on a daily basis. As residents and visitors travel along a city's streets, they are forming opinions about a community or neighborhood. Trees and landscaping can have a strong impact on the opinion that is formed. This is not an easy or inexpensive endeavor and must be taken on with the assistance of the local community organizations, business owners, redevelopment efforts, and active neighborhoods. Reconstruction of any arterial or collector street should include landscaping along with appropriate pedestrian and bicycle features.



“The city needs to help get dead trees out of people’s yards. We must do all we can to encourage people to make our city more attractive. . . . We’re a very hospitable community.

– Written Comment from November, 2014 workshops.

2. Upgrade site design standards

Action item: Require pedestrian accommodations in all site designs

New developments and redevelopment of existing sites must include better pedestrian connections. At a minimum this may include:

- » Safe walkways between parking areas and business entrances
- » Defined walkways between businesses within a development
- » Median breaks and refuge areas when crossing major streets
- » Well defined crosswalks that offer the pedestrian the shortest possible crossing
- » Connections to any adjacent trails or sidewalks
- » Safe and convenient connections to public transit stops

Action item: Expand design guidelines for all arterial streets

Midland has implemented standards for the I-20 corridor through the BP overlay district but these standards should be expanded to include arterial or other streets of civic importance. This should include Loop 250 access roads and major entrances into the community, like Andrews Highway. Standards may include basic landscaping, lighting, sidewalk and crosswalk design, utility placement and visibility, and screening of stored materials.

Action item: Develop design guidelines specifically for new neighborhood centers

The land use plan outlined in Chapter 3 calls for neighborhood centers that are vibrant mixed-use destinations where land uses are integrated. Appealing neighborhood centers combine a set of ingredients that include safe and comfortable streets and sidewalks, properly scaled buildings, visual interest, and a mix of uses that allow people to live, work, and play within a cohesive and comfortable environment. Design guidelines for the neighborhood centers identified in the Tall City Tomorrow Land Use Plan (page 82) should focus on good landscaping, connectivity, shared parking, stormwater management that creates amenities, public spaces, properly scaled signage, and connections to public transportation.

Action item: Offer incentives for on-site retention of stormwater and the use of that retention area as a site amenity

Encouraging the use of low-impact development techniques should decrease the volume and velocity of stormwater entering the streets and draws with the added benefit of creating onsite amenities. Techniques may include:

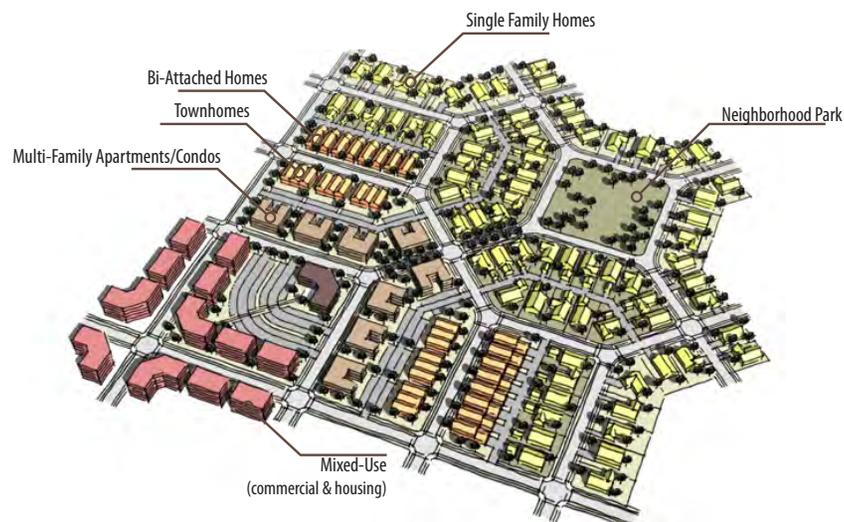
- » Onsite retention of stormwater to create a water feature/amenity for the development
- » Using rooftop collection systems and green roofs to capture rainwater that can be used later for irrigation
- » Using pervious pavement, pavers, or asphalt in appropriate locations
- » Using planters, landscaped strips next to roads and parking areas to encourage stormwater infiltration and temporary detention



3. Enhance new residential development areas.

Action item: Establish basic neighborhood design principles for new developments

For many years Midland, like most American cities, has tended to build “subdivisions” or “additions” that are separated from community services, shopping, and jobs. The combination of these features is what often makes a strong neighborhood, where we can interact with others and decrease the stress of moving around the city. Chapters 3 and 4 have expressed the importance of mixing and combining uses that have similar intensity. Locating differing uses next to each other does not mean that you have automatically created a sense of place and character. Certain design aspects should be considered that help integrate uses and create a sense of community. As illustrated in the adjacent diagram, future developments should include key design components necessary to create integrated neighborhoods.



- » Mix of land uses and housing types. In the diagram to the right a variety of housing types are mixed together, with appropriate transitions at rear and side lot lines. To achieve the desired mix of housing in the graphic on page 100, a majority of the land area is devoted to single-family detached, with attached or medium density development taking up the next largest portion, and finally high density apartments taking up the smallest portion. While the apartments require the least amount of land they can provide a significant portion of the area’s overall unit count.

Other cities without much greenery do great jobs hardscaping or building structures that are all cohesive, fit in with the area, and look great for years to come. Force builders to invest in that now to save quick deterioration in the future.

— Samantha H



- » Connectivity. Differing housing styles are connected by sidewalks, which connect to parks and business centers. Clearly defined crosswalks create a safer environment for pedestrians and well-connected streets provide drivers multiple routes in and through the neighborhoods, reducing traffic loads on any one street.
- » Stormwater protection. Although not illustrated in this particular diagram, draws and playas should be preserved as features that enhance the neighborhood. These enhancements should also protect residents in the neighborhood and downstream from flash flooding.
- » Focal points. Neighborhood focal points create gathering places and sense of community. This diagram connects housing directly with nearby amenities like the park, shops, and jobs.

Action item: Require features in low density developments that create a sense of community

Different people have different preferences and density alone does not make or break a great neighborhood. Many people desire new houses but still seek the diversity and neighborliness of the best established neighborhoods in the city. Others want “elbow room” and seek a bigger lot in a lower density development. Almost universally, everyone wants an attractive development that gives them a sense of belonging to a community. Certain features can help make even better communities:

- » Street connections for both community contact and public safety access
- » Trail and pathway connections
- » Lot clustering to maintain open space
- » Community access to draws and open space

4. Improve community appearance

Action item: Review and update property maintenance codes and enforcement procedures

Poorly maintained buildings and sites have an enormous effect on the visual quality of Midland, which can be depressing to residents as well as to property values. A review of property maintenance codes should be completed along with an assessment of enforcement procedures. A review of the property maintenance code should address those items that have the greatest impact on life safety, visual quality, preservation of community maintenance standards, and enforcement of the ordinance. The city should consider a proactive approach for key corridors and neighborhoods that are experiencing declining values. With increased enforcement should also come access to assistance, as often people do not have the resources to improve the appearance of their property. Along with property maintenance notifications, the City should provide information on local organizations that offer assistance to residents. This may even be done in partnership with local civic and church organizations.

Action item: Develop property maintenance material and education programs on how to be a good neighborhood

Good property maintenance programs combine awareness of the need for reinvestment and upkeep with the tools necessary to being a good neighbor. Preparation and distribution of a property standards manual should encourage good neighbor behaviors before enforcement is needed. The manual should be a friendly and clear document that sets out the expectations for residents of Midland as a community for individual building and property maintenance. It can also help provide useful information, such as locations of sites to dispose of or recycle unwanted household items. Educational programs should also be developed, especially for first time homeowners and renters. This may be done in conjunction with local realtors or landlord associations.





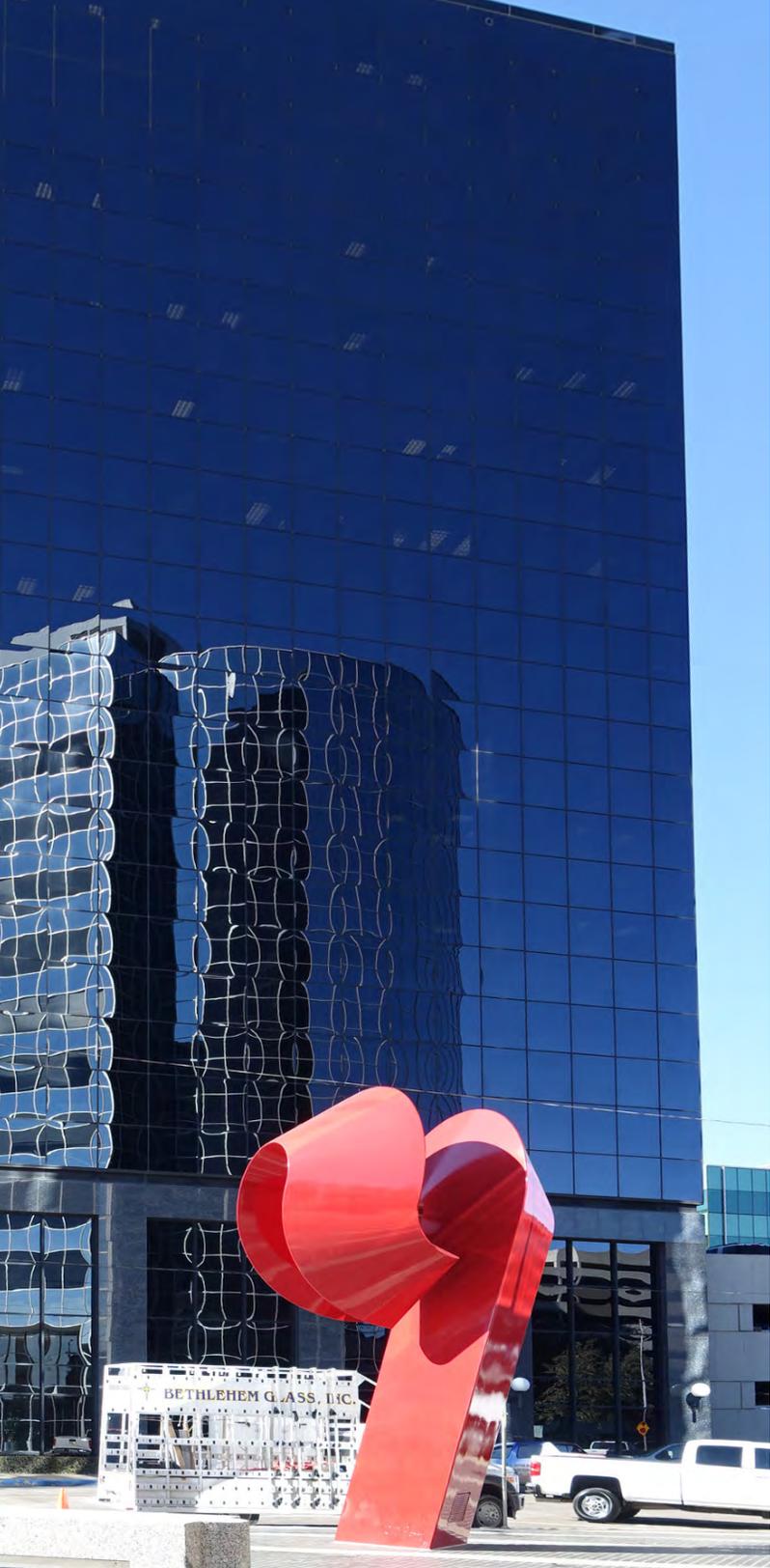
Chapter 7

Tall City Central District Plan



CONTENTS

- » Issues and Opportunities
- » Central District Plan
- » Goals
- » Recent Plans and Actions
- » Initiatives and Actions



Tall City Central District Plan

A Big Heart: Toward a Living City Center

INTRODUCTION

Downtown is the basis for Midland's identity as the Tall City. In 1929, when Midland had yet to reach a population of 5,500 people, T.S. Hogan opened his 12-story skyscraper, the Petroleum Building, the tallest building between Fort Worth and El Paso. Opened in the face of the Great Depression, the building expressed a civic aspiration, a drive to build something big and important in the middle of the Permian Basin. But the Petroleum Building, with its spires and stonework and the adjacent Yucca Theater, aimed higher than mere feet above ground. In 1928, Hogan the builder told the Midland Reporter, "It is not enough to offer prospective citizens brick and stone. The spirit too must be fed. It must be surrounded by beauty."

In subsequent decades, the core of Midland represented in steel, brick, stone, and glass the economic cycles of the city – periods of major construction as oil boomed, during the 1950s and 1960s, the 1980s, and most recently the rapid growth of the last ten years. These periods of rapid growth were largely focused around office development, satisfying for the voracious demand for space created by the energy and financial industries. These cycles of growth have generated a building inventory and skyline unusual even for a city of a much larger population. Downtown Midland over the years has developed and sustained itself as a major presence on the plains.

Around the country, downtowns in cities of all sizes have experienced a rebirth. The most successful of these have established themselves as "places" as well as "presences" – places that attract people to live and to experience, as well as to work. The last thirty years has seen a reintroduction of types of uses and activities to city centers that had previously moved away – housing, shopping, entertainment, eating and drinking – and these uses interact with one another to create a new sense of city life. Opinion surveys and market results have demonstrated the affinity that younger generations have for city life. Geoffrey Webb, a theoretical physicist who has turned his attention to understanding the unifying principles of cities has succinctly described good city planning as "maximizing interaction, minimizing distress." This measurement describes active and safe city centers and provides a prism through which we view central districts. Most importantly, though, high functioning centers also encourage and attract innovation, becoming in the words of British architect Peter Cook a "garden for ideas."

By and large, Midlanders do not believe that Downtown, despite its millions of dollars of high quality capital investment, functions as successfully as it could in this way. New residents have moved to the city from other Texas cities and parts of the country with strong, multiple use downtowns and those residents long for Midland to have this same kind of vitality at the center. Longtime residents have seen other places as well and want to bring the lessons of those cities back home, while imbuing them the unique character of the Basin and its people. Downtown is very important to Midlanders of all ages, and in general, people know what they want. However, it has proven more difficult to put these new aspirations, rooted in the spirit of T.S. Hogan, into operation. The purpose of this chapter is to channel these hopes of a downtown that is a place, as well as a presence, into actionable recommendations that will, over time, generate the type of city center that Midland wants and deserves.

DOWNTOWN ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

First, it is important to define what we mean when we talk about “downtown” and “city center.” The term “downtown” as used in Midland generally describes the area with the greatest concentration of multi-story buildings – the “tall” in the Tall City. On a map, much of this area is reflected by the original street grid, where streets run in true ordinal directions: north, south, east and west. This dense core is more or less defined by A Street on the west, Main Street on the east, Missouri Avenue on the south, and Kansas Avenue on the north. The crossroads of its two defining streets is the intersection of Big Spring and Wall. But a broader area, extending north to Cuthbert Avenue, south to Front Street and the Union Pacific line, and east to Lamesa Road, is also part of downtown, and frames the high-intensity office core.

In Midland, the center or heart of the city goes even farther. The confluence of Garfield Street, Illinois Avenue, and Andrews Highway is a major concentration of activity one mile west of the traditional crossroads intersection, and includes Midland Memorial Hospital, and a variety of both big and small retailers. This activity focus has been branded (not altogether successfully) as “Old Town” or the “Village.” While the physical environment does not necessary reflect these names, they do suggest an appreciation for the area’s relatively smaller, potentially more intimate scale, and its openness as a setting for small business and innovation.

These two nodes are connected by mixed use corridors and surrounding residential areas that reflect the first eras of Midland’s major growth. In addition to the area’s neighborhood integrity and walking distance access to major employment and commercial cluster, streets like Wall Street and Texas Avenue host a variety of office and civic uses and have a demonstrable quality as pedestrian avenues. This connecting corridor also mixes many of Midland’s cultural, educational, and historical assets – the Museum of the Southwest, the Marion Blakemore Planetarium, the George W. Bush Childhood Home, the Fredda Turner Durham Children’s Museum, and the Halley Library and Museum.

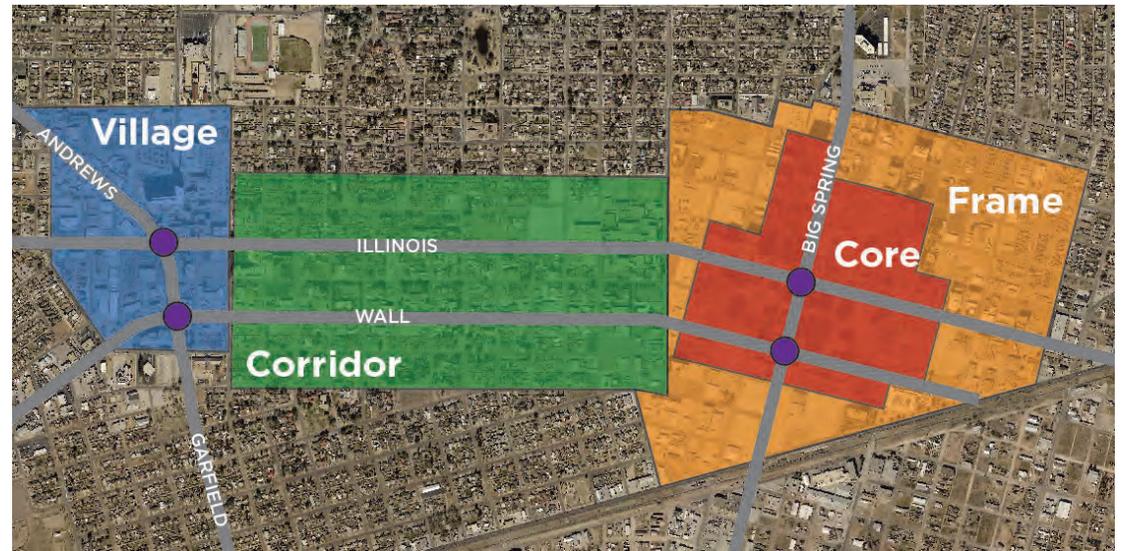


**POSTED TO TALL CITY TOMORROW
DISCUSSION PAGE:**

“I like the idea of re-vamping downtown Midland. I think if there was more stuff to do, it would be easier to live in Midland.”

– Staci N.

So Midland’s central district may be conceived as two major activity centers, the dense Downtown core surrounded by a lower density “frame” and the Medical Center/Village area, incorporating a major regional hospital and associated offices and major community retailing, connected by a mixed use corridor that includes residential, office, civic, and cultural uses. This district and its immediate surroundings includes most of the essentials of city life – major employment, schools, recreation, churches, shopping, culture and museums, hotels, health care, government and civic life – all close to one another. These are the ingredients of the living city center that Midlanders of all ages want. A somewhat deeper investigation into issues and opportunities will guide us to the strategic actions that can bring these ingredients to life together.



Midland’s Central District

Issues

As noted above, the center of Midland is rich in assets. Its employment concentration in notable buildings give it a distinct big city feel. Its cultural corridor features important institutions within a distinctive residential neighborhood. It includes a major and growing regional hospital, a leading health care center that attracts thousands of visitors. The Village subdistrict provides affordable places for new enterprise. Yet, there are issues that tend to prevent this combination of assets from reaching its full potential. These include:

Separate development focuses that lack synergy. The central district has key development focuses: the office center, the museum cluster along Missouri Avenue, the regional hospital, and retail development at the foot of Andrews Highway. But there is relatively little interaction among and within these focuses. In different situ-

ations, they are divided by heavy traffic, complex intersections, gaps in development between focuses, and large parking lots. In great urban districts, one development focus leads to another, and different centers reinforce each other.

Large amount of surface parking and underused land. Despite a number of parking structures, Downtown Midland has an exceptionally large amount of surface parking. Within Downtown (the core and frame subdistricts) 25% of the total land area (excluding street right-of-ways) is used for surface parking. Other large areas are open or in very low intensity use. These underused lands tend to divide major projects from one another and the central core from its context. For example, parking lots and underused land between Pecos and North A Street divide the core from the corridor and specifically from Midland High School. Similarly, lots in the corridor between Main and Weatherford Streets separate the core from surrounding residential areas. At the other end of the central district, parking lot patterns, while necessary, make it difficult to move from one area to another in what could be a walkable urban district.

Retail scarcity. The Village subdistrict has extensive retail uses, including an 80,000 square foot strip center, two small-box chain pharmacies, small business blocks along Dodson Street and Andrews Highway, and fast-food restaurants. However, retail and restaurant uses, which animate street frontages, are scarce in the Downtown core. Although a few large office buildings in the core have restaurants or limited retail occupants, most do not. Smaller scale retail buildings are scattered throughout the larger Downtown district, but generally do not rise to create mutually reinforcing clusters. Retail space at street level in the new Wall Street Lofts is a welcome change in the single-use land development pattern found in most parts of the central district.

Few evening attractions. The central district in general and the Downtown area in particular lack activities or uses that keep people in the area in evenings. Downtown's restaurants, hotel, convention center, and the Yucca Theater offer some activity after business hours, but fall short of generating the energy found in strong city centers. Cultural features in the corridor subdistrict are closed on most evenings, and most uses in the Village tend to be single purpose businesses that also do not encourage multi-destination visits. Most of Midland's night activity takes place outside these traditional centers around the Loop or near the Sports Complex.

Parking in Downtown Midland



**POSTED TO TALL CITY TOMORROW
DISCUSSION PAGE:**

“I think that re-vamping downtown Midland needs to be done with our history and heritage in mind. We don't need anything that looks like Austin or Dallas or anywhere else - it should honor Midland's history and architecture.”

— Jackie W.



**POSTED TO TALL CITY TOMORROW
DISCUSSION PAGE:**

“The city needs to work with developers to rehab old buildings and create parking solutions”

– Cory M.

Lack of civic space. Parks and public spaces can be important catalysts for development and community life. Wadley Barron, Hill, and Haley Parks are significant open spaces near the center, but are too far away from the core and too internal to residential neighborhoods to function as central civic parks. Centennial Plaza on the Courthouse/Convention Center block between Main Street, Colorado Street, Wall Street, and Texas Avenue, is the core’s main public space, but is relatively small at about 1.5 acres and formal in design. In addition, the district lacks a larger scale space for events and informal recreation.

Residential inventory. Nationwide, housing has been a key to downtown revitalization, injecting day and night activity into central districts. Downtown’s large employment base and Midland’s demographics create significant residential possibilities. The successful lease-up of Wall Street Lofts at Wall and Main Streets demonstrates the market potential for housing in the city center. However the residential development surrounding the project is not integrated into the Downtown and Village subdistricts.

TALL CITY TOMORROW CENTRAL DISTRICT PLAN

Participants in the planning process recognized the importance of a vital city center to efforts to maintain economic growth and diversification, and to help advance Midland’s overall goal of providing a satisfying and attractive place to live and work for current and future residents. They identified the following goals to achieve this outcome.

GOALS

1. Establish Downtown Midland as a regional destination.

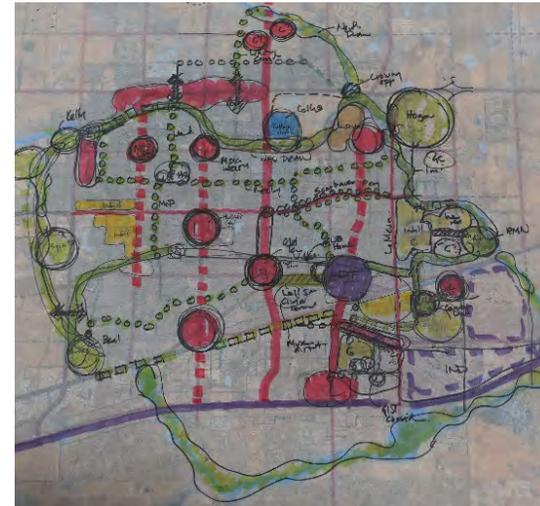
Participants envisioned Midland as a city with a variety of centers, each offering individual features and character, and a relationship to each other and their immediate surroundings. They perceived the Downtown, the Medical Center/Village, and historic district that together make up the heart of the city as separate but related areas. This larger central district should present both individual destinations and a unified and connected center that together define the primary image that the city presents.

2. Create a “cultural core” in Downtown Midland that is a living, working, and entertainment destination.

As part of its mission as an image center, engine for economic growth, and life enhancer for the city’s residents, the central district should become a focus for arts and culture. In some ways, it has accomplished this, through its concentration of museums, the historic Yucca Theater in Downtown, and the possibility of an enhanced civic space at Centennial Plaza. But other facilities, often fundamental to Downtown growth, are located in other parts of Midland or, as in the case of the Wagner Noel Performing Arts Center, in locations that serve the entire Midland-Odessa metropolitan area. However, the central district can use its existing assets and opportunities, like land resources, to create art and culture opportunity centers, including work and sales space.

3. Offer an urban lifestyle in Downtown Midland with quality residential options.

Successful multi-use city centers have become neighborhoods as well as employment, retail, and entertainment centers. Neighborhoods have permanent, around-the-clock residents who claim the area as their personal territory. In doing this, they create a secure and lived-in environment that becomes more comfortable and secure for other people to enjoy – an urban environment that emphasizes positive and mutually reinforcing interaction. Wall Street Lofts, which opened in 2015, has been very well-received by the market and has demonstrated the attraction of high-quality, high-amenity downtown housing. This market has room to grow, but other features, including nearby schools like Midland High, Midland Academy and area churches, create ideal conditions for family housing and other products. Housing can be the glue that binds the city center together.



Early diagram of multi-nucleated Midland

POSTED TO TALL CITY TOMORROW DISCUSSION PAGE:

“I believe that a mix of affordable apartments, affordable dining, and civic-friendly installations like museums, art galleries, and community centers could help revitalize downtown.”

– Owen R.



The future of Downtown and the larger central district also are highly relevant to goals established under the category of Sense of Place and Community Character, which include the following:

- Ensure that Midland's built and natural environments are regionally appropriate and well maintained.
- Identify partnerships to produce neighborhood and commercial centers that are attractive, functional, and of high quality.
- Create vibrant multi-use destinations that support activities and residential settings for multiple generations.
- Encourage the development of places where Midland residents can gather and socialize to build connections.

RECENT PLANS AND PUBLIC ACTIONS

The energy boom of 2012-2015 produced major corporate office construction in both the Downtown core and in other areas, notably in the Highway 191/Deauville Boulevard corridor and the Claydesta office park. But significant efforts to plan and execute more diversified development in the central district have been occurring.

Three particularly important efforts that frame the initiatives proposed by this chapter include:

- The SMART Downtown Plan of 2007
- Wall Street Lofts
- Midland Market Concept
- The Courthouse Site Redevelopment

The following discussion will summarize these major efforts and their relevance to the future of central Midland.

The Smart Downtown Plan

This comprehensive downtown plan concentrated on the core and frame districts, but included a portion of the corridor subdistrict, an area south of the UP tracks to Pennsylvania Avenue, and largely residential areas east to Lamesa Road and north to Cuthbert Avenue. The stated objective of the plan was to “assist the City of Midland and other advocates with the preparation of real-estate strategies and urban planning programs for downtown that will produce tangible results and information leading to careful investment and a well-served market.” The plan included a market analysis of the Downtown trade area, estimating a ten-year demand for about 1.6 million square feet of office space, 320,000 square feet of retail space, and up to 4,000 housing units. Of this total demand, the market analysis assumed a potential Downtown capture rate of 20% for retail space or 120-130,000 square feet; 30% for office space or 475,000 square feet; and a portion of the projected residential demand drawing from rental and attached housing potential.

The Smart Plan used these market projections as inputs to three alternative scenarios. These included:

- » A “Big Bang” scenario, based on the premise that one major executed public project would catalyze development of the surrounding area. This scenario defined redevelopment of the Centennial Plaza/Courthouse site as this catalytic project.
- » A “District” scenario, identifying separate districts around the periphery of downtown, each with an activity focus and ultimately growing together into a revitalized district.
- » A “Corridor” scenario, with new growth directed in a linear format along four types of streets: regional corridors (Front and Big Spring Streets), historic Wall Street, streets with potential pedestrian character (Pecos and Loraine Streets), and a transit loop (a north-south circulator route using Marienfeld, Colorado, Michigan, and Missouri Streets with extensions).

The Smart Plan identified a Final Preferred Plan based largely on the district scenario with street typology elements of the corridor concept. This preferred plan was based on three overall components:

- » A “sustainable centralized downtown area” offering mixed uses and clusters of village and neighborhood-oriented development around the outer boundary of the district.
- » Adjoining park districts to help define neighborhoods and attract people outside of normal business houses, complementing Centennial Plaza.
- » Streets that define character, addressing pedestrian needs and providing street trees and streetscape design consistent with the character of individual districts.

The Preferred Plan established five focus districts:

1. **An Urban Residential Village** on a 9 square block area on the northwest periphery of Downtown, between San Angelo, Marienfeld, Ohio, and Louisiana. The proposed village consists of street defining multifamily residential around a central square block park.
2. **A Civic Center district** in the north central area of downtown, bounded by Tennessee, Main, Ohio, and Loraine Streets. The concept called for a square block park between the City Hall and County blocks, surrounded by mixed use, government, or private offices.
3. **A Traditional Residential Village**, including small lot single-family homes around a central square block park in the northeast edge of the downtown district. This area incorporates some pre-existing single-family development.



[POSTED TO TALL CITY TOMORROW DISCUSSION PAGE:](#)

“Use the Plaza in downtown Midland for public cultural events - Midland festival ballet, local musicians, Big Spring Orchestra.”

— Sara S.



4. **An Urban Core**, focusing on the Courthouse/Centennial Plaza blocks as a catalyst for development on surrounding blocks.

5. **A Gateway Entertainment and Meeting District**, including the south edge of Downtown between Missouri Avenue and Front Street. This concept envisioned signature entertainment attractions, mixed use buildings, and retail uses, with a large city square park across Missouri Avenue from the Hilton Hotel.

Wall Street Lofts

This important project represents Downtown Midland's first large scale partnership to build new multi-family housing in the Downtown core. The project, which opened for occupancy in 2015, was developed on the strategic block bounded by Main, Baird, Wall, and Texas Avenue and includes 108 rental units with a connected parking garage. The building provides four stories of housing with first floor retail, and was designed to maintain an existing three bay commercial building that houses one of Downtown's signature restaurants. The project configuration is similar to that envisioned for the northwest residential village in the Smart Downtown Plan, but was developed on a core downtown site. The project has rented well in its first year of occupancy and demonstrates the market for a mid-rise, high-amenity residential product.



Midland Market Concept

A concept for a Midland Market has been proposed for a site immediately east of Wall Street Lofts, between Main Street, Texas Avenue, Baird Street, and Weatherford Street. The concept envisions a city market block surrounded by permanent retail buildings along the street edges. While the concept is not fully developed, it is significant by suggesting the value of a space devoted to small local enterprises in the Downtown core and focusing on full, after-hours use of an underdeveloped but strategically located property. It suggests a potential demand that was not anticipated by previous formal planning efforts for Downtown Midland. This concept type, in various locally adapted forms, has a significant record of success in helping to revitalize traditional downtown districts.



Courthouse/Centennial Plaza Site Redevelopment

With the demolition of the Midland County Courthouse, the "Courthouse Block" including the Courthouse structure, Centennial Plaza, and Midland Center became a focus of attention for major development. A plan for a 53-story Energy Tower office project with other mixed uses was canceled in 2014, and a subsequent proposal process awarded development rights to a plan to build a mixed use project featuring a signature hotel on the site. Other elements of the proposed project would include enhancement of Centennial Plaza and modernization of the convention center. The proposal also calls for additional retail uses.

INITIATIVES AND ACTIONS

Envisioning the heart of Midland as an interaction of four related and connected subdistricts leads to the possibility of a truly diverse and multi-purpose central district. The initiatives and recommended actions presented here propose a program that is within Midland’s reach and can help to channel private investment to meet the goals identified by the Tall City Tomorrow process. They build on some of the concepts proposed by the 2007 downtown plan, modified by trends and advances of the last eight years and ideas identified by citizens of all ages during the preparation of this plan. In this “big heart,” linkage is especially important, both within and among subdistricts. The major strategic components of this approach include:

- Complete the Centennial Plaza Core Project
- Increase the resident population of the Downtown Core and Frame
- Create space for innovative, entrepreneurial retail space in the Core
- Establish an innovation corridor that unites the north and south sides of the city.
- Integrate existing and potential parks and open spaces into a green network that connects the core, corridor, and village districts and their major resources.
- Use alternative transportation to connect the two primary activity centers with a walkable, revitalizing corridor.
- Recast the Medical Center/Village District as a walkable, intimate area that connects with its surrounding neighborhoods

1. Complete the Centennial Plaza Core Site

Complete the courthouse redevelopment project as a catalytic project, recognizing its importance but also understanding that it, by itself, will not be sufficient to reignite the downtown core. The current concept for the “Courthouse Block” and Centennial Plaza is important because it includes a quality hotel and supporting mainstream retail in its use mix. This will add needed hotel rooms to expand the market for events in an upgraded Midland Center. As long as supply is reasonably managed, two excellent hotels are far better than one – establishing the core as a place where visitors will find choice, convenience, and positive experience. Any program for the site should be ambitious and scaled to Downtown’s markets and needs, factors that were probably not the case with the Energy Tower proposal. But the failure of that previous proposal has also raised the stakes involved in executing any future project. In view of this, it is also important to recognize the limits of a single project, however important, to generate enough energy to revitalize an entire central district. The “Big Bang” approach of depending on one project to accomplish complex goals has generally proven to be ineffective. Other initiatives will be necessary to complement and spread this project’s beneficial impact. Complementary actions in the larger district will improve the courthouse/Centennial Plaza project’s ultimate success.





Initiatives necessary to implement a strong redevelopment project are generally in place through previous city action. These include the following:

A. Provide supporting public financing and public enhancements.

Action item: Finance site preparation and improvement costs caused by the extraordinary demands of major redevelopment.

Development in Downtown, and particularly on this site, includes costs and requirements not experienced by greenfield development of similar projects. These include hazard abatement and demolition of existing structures; high construction permit fees; and parking costs created by the need for either structured or underground parking. These costs are traditionally financed through Tax Increment Financing, a tool that should be reinstated in the downtown.

Action item: Enhance Centennial Plaza.

Centennial Plaza is the Downtown Core's primary public space and is properly sized for both structured events and informal activity. Improvements to its design can improve both its utility for events and its environment for routine activity and use as the "living room" of the core.

Action item: Improve Midland Center as a conference and event venue.

The third part of the triad is the Midland Center convention and event venue. The facility provides about 12,000 square feet of column free exhibition space and five upper level breakout rooms. An update will position Midland Center to take advantage of a second Class A hotel, and in turn will generate new business for two hotels in the downtown. Conference facilities in those hotels can also expand the attraction of Midland Center, including its ability to host larger events. Ultimately, in the future, Downtown Midland may require a larger convention facility, but Midland Center augmented by hotel facilities should suffice for at least the mid-term future. In the long-term, underused land south of Missouri Avenue provides an excellent future site, including a core-oriented front door and an industrial rear area for loading, delivery, and back of house functions.

2. Increase the city center's resident population.

The 2007 Smart Plan and subsequent efforts, including discussions held with such groups as downtown businesses and young professionals during the preparation of Tall City Tomorrow, all emphasized the need and demand for Downtown living. Downtown residential, a key ingredient of downtown revitalization across the country, takes advantage of new preferences for urban living by both younger and older adults, and adds activity, life, and proprietorship to urban core districts after regular business hours. Other advantages for Midland include:

- » Using residential development to “right-size” the commercial core, reducing the amount of underutilized or vacant land that disperses downtown activity.
- » Reduces average daily miles traveled and commuting times by giving people the opportunity to live and work within easy walking or bicycling distance, or by providing access by local routes rather than major commuter arterials.
- » Creates a neighborhood constituency that improves observation of central city areas, and integrates existing neighborhoods into the Downtown core.
- » Uses land and building resources more effectively.

A. Initiate a family-oriented, medium-density residential neighborhood in the northeast part of the Core district.

Medium-density housing includes small-lot single-family detached, single-family attached, and townhomes, ranging from 6 to 20 units per acre. The 2007 plan also proposed urban housing development in this general area, but this recommendation calls for beginning this neighborhood development toward the core, utilizing sites that now provide surface parking for county offices. A number of blocks in the Frame subarea are already in small-lot single-family use, and this concept connects these blocks to the center of the district. Neighborhood institutions like the YMCA, the First United Methodist campus, and Midland Academy also reinforce family housing in this area.

Action item: Partner with Midland County to build a new employee parking structure adjacent to the County Administrative Building.

Opening land for residential development begins with reducing the amount of land devoted to surface parking. A parking structure adjacent to the County administrative facility would accommodate county employees and free up land in the area now used for surface parking. A possible site is the half-block north of the administration center; another option is a joint arrangement with the First United Methodist Church to build a cooperative structure on the church parking site south of the county building.

Action item: Assemble existing county parking lots and adjacent vacant or underutilized land, making these sites available for residential development.

Privately owned land may be purchased outright as part of a redevelopment authority, or incorporate private owners into a development partnership with the value of their land as equity. Public funding will be necessary for acquisition and site preparation in order to offer housing at this relatively moderate density at feasible costs. Several options for proposals are open, including use of a master developer who in turn either builds or offers sites to participating builders, or taking proposals on individual sites or blocks from builder/developers, following detailed site development and building design standards.



Examples of housing in and adjacent to downtown districts.



B. Encourage and expedite adaptive residential and mixed uses in key buildings and sites in the Core.

Adaptive reuse for high-density rental housing (and other income-producing) uses can take advantage of historic tax credits and for affordable projects, low-income housing tax credits. Focus buildings include the highly important Texas Avenue “row” including the Vaughn Building, Building of the Southwest, Western United Building, and Petroleum Building; and the art-deco 105 West Wall building. Demolition of the Midland Executive Center and Mid-America Buildings along Illinois Avenue opens a site that could be a multi-use space for parking, open space, and food truck park.

Action item: *Provide appropriate public incentives for adaptive reuse of historic or architecturally significant but underused core buildings.*

Public initiatives may include TIF, authorization for use of tax credits if necessary including expediting National Register listings, making publicly controlled land available for supporting parking, and waiver of construction permit fees on the basis of public benefit for reusing these important structures.

Action item: *Establish a predictable incentive structure for new construction of residential projects in the Downtown core and frame.*

Wall Street Lofts was a pioneering project in several ways. In addition to demonstrating the market for high-amenity and relatively high-rent residential development, it also represented a pioneering partnership, with city participation, in project financing through tax increment financing, which in turn created some controversy. Midland should establish a predictable and reliable incentive structure for residential projects. Variables in determining level and type of assistance include environmental remediation issues and cost; housing mix and affordability; design quality; public realm improvements; special development costs; and location in areas designated by the comprehensive plan.

C. Support rehabilitation and infill development in the Corridor and Medical Center/Village subdistricts.

Action item: *Establish a residential rehabilitation financing program for declining properties in the Corridor subdistrict.*

While most homes in the Corridor subdistrict are in good and excellent condition, scattered housing deterioration occurs and can have a serious impact on the value and marketability of surrounding homes. A rehabilitation program should address this spot deterioration, using direct or leveraged rehabilitation loans and in some cases, acquisition, rehabilitation, and resale of units by a community development corporation. The Corridor and Village subdistricts also have significant infill residential opportunities, and the city should support zoning changes that comply with comprehensive plan recommendations.

3. Develop destinations for innovative and creative retailing.

Complement mainstream retail in Downtown and other city center subdistricts by creating environments for small enterprises and innovative retailers. The Midland Market proposal described previous identified something fundamentally important – the need for small-scale innovative retailing and the potential value for a city marketplace as a key destination in the core of Midland. Such a project is appropriate on a site that is within easy walking distance of the most intense part of the Core (including an area with a number of out-of-town visitors) but not directly in the center. The project’s area should be appropriately scaled and combined with a more conventional private development that serves an established market, such as a continuation of the housing precedents established by Wall Street Lofts.

A. Develop a mixed use city marketplace in, but on the edge of the Downtown Core.

Action item: Assemble an appropriate site that meets the criteria for this type of project.

The site described by the Midland Market proposal, on the square block immediately east of Wall Street Lofts between Baird, Weatherford, Wall, and Texas Avenue meets the criteria of a site near visitors, within easy walking distance of the Core, and in a transitional area between intense and less intense development. This site is helped by nearby major development initiatives, but other sites also present themselves. The project will eventually require a public/private partnership involving existing property owners, a developer, a market operator or development corporation, and the City of Midland.

Action item: Create a conceptual site design that guides the development process.

A feasible project could include the following elements:

- » A half quadrangle formed by street-oriented buildings defining a market square, on half of a block. A gateway can define entry into the interior square. Surrounding buildings would include retail at the first level with access to both the interior square and the street, with the possibility of one or two levels of residential uses above.
- » An open or sheltered market square in the interior of the block, accommodating both events and vendor sales. Midland’s relatively mild climate suggests that this space could receive significant year-round use.
- » A residential block with below grade parking defining the edge of the market square, expanding the Wall Street Lofts market.





B. Reinforce local retailers in the Medical Center/Village subdistrict by creating a positive, connected public environment, including traffic flow and street design.

While Midland's transportation investments like Loop 250 are primarily designed to move traffic, they also have represented major investments in economic and business development. Commercial businesses and offices grow around the access that these roads offer. Retail areas in established areas have transportation issues as well, but they are different. Many observers consider the Village to be Midland's major existing center for a variety of interesting, locally-owned retail uses. This cluster is ideally located to be an especially vital and walkable business concentration. However, the intersection of major streets creates an environment that is fractured and difficult for all modes of travel to negotiate. A program to address these transportation issues would enhance the business environment and help the Village grow as a diverse and modern business center. A concept to accomplish this is presented later in this chapter.

Action item: Execute the project with the appropriate financing and organizational structure.

In several cases, the marketplace is operated by a nonprofit corporation or authority, or by a private, for-profit entity. Nonprofit operation, financed as a community project, may provide a friendlier environment for young local businesses that can make the market a unique attraction. A housing or office element would be developed as a private project, using the incentive structure identified above.

4. Establish a business innovation corridor that links the Core with the south side of downtown across the railroad.

Downtown Midland traditionally has grown as the center of the energy industry and this enviable status is likely to continue into the future, regardless of market fluctuations. But the city center can also prosper by specializing in another facet of the energy industry – that is, the energy of new industry, new ideas, and new enterprises. A prime exhibit is Susie's South 40, a confectionery south of the Downtown Core and a demonstration of how a combination of on-line marketing, great products, and a memorable visitor experience can bring new energy to Downtown. The Marienfeld Street corridor between Front Street and Missouri Avenue, where Susie's South 40 conducts business, appears to be an excellent place for this type of enterprise. The corridor includes an established business, a business development center that house the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, available land, good access, and a railroad crossing that links to South Midland. Traffic here is present, but moves at a much more leisurely pace than that of adjacent Big Spring Street.

Action Step: Develop a program with property owners and economic development organizations, including the Hispanic Chamber, the MBDC (Midland College's Business and Economic Development Center), and others to define and market this corridor for innovative new and mature businesses.

A number of successful examples of such branding have occurred in advancing cities. Oklahoma City's Automobile Alley, extending north from the city's downtown core, began with such a modest branding process. This has led to millions of dollars of new enterprises, including both business and housing development.

Action step: Structure and develop a small business incubator that provides space for new businesses to start and grow, with the ability either to grow in place or move out into new, larger space.

The incubator movement has evolved into the private sector, but began through private nonprofit organizations. The typical incubator program included seed capital financing, affordable space with shared services, and technical assistance. Increasingly, incubators have been developed privately, and venture capitalization has become somewhat more available on the private side. Whether public or private, an incubator belongs in an innovation corridor and can use either new construction or adaptation of an existing building with sufficient open floor space for maximum flexibility. Sites for incubators have included former furniture factories, garages, car dealerships, and supermarkets.

Action step: Develop an attractive but not extravagant public environment that establishes the business theme of the corridor.

Physical identity creates a better business address and gives an individual enterprise the sense of being part of something bigger. In addition, a good basic public realm, including sidewalks, some landscape, and consistent, well-maintained lighting presents a sense of efficiency, quality, and functionality. The growth of Chicago's Ravenswood District is an excellent example of using building stock and functional public improvements to parlay a decaying industrial area into a well-known center of innovative business activity.

Action step: Create financing programs and incentives to encourage and sustain new business.

This step should engage the private sector from an advisory and financing perspective and may include:

- Brokering and referral of clients to existing technical assistance programs.
- Re-establish TIF with guidelines for its use to help finance site development and capital building improvements.
- Building equity partnerships.





5. Integrate parks into a green midtown network.

Connect the central district's parks and open spaces, existing and future, into a green web that permeates the city's heart. Where necessary, develop new open spaces that meet the needs of a mixed use neighborhood and enhance difficult to use sites. Parks increase the desirability and marketability of development districts to both existing and prospective residents. The ability of parks to generate new surrounding development has been clearly demonstrated, from Central Park in New York in the nineteenth century to the Atlanta Belt Line in the twenty-first. The 2007 Smart Plan recognized this formative role by proposing full block urban squares in the center of its various development districts. But large scale park development is expensive from both a capital and operational perspective and takes land out of consideration for development. Also, the parks proposed by that plan concept are relatively isolated from one another and from the surrounding fabric of built-up midtown neighborhoods.

A different approach starts with the parks and resources that already exist in the area, using them as the foundation for a major quality of life amenity that reinforces the attraction of living and working in a city center. The approach includes initiatives that address:

- Condition and use of existing parks.
- Development of new open spaces to fill functional and physical gaps.
- Linkages among parks, museums, and other life quality resources.

A. Implement a program to rehabilitate and enhance existing parks in the heart of Midland.

Parks that serve areas within or near the city center include Hill, Wadley Barron, Haley, Dennis the Menace, and Ulmer Park. Centennial Plaza, the Core's only public open space, will be upgraded as part of any courthouse redevelopment project. A comprehensive rehabilitation program will help these parks maintain their status as anchors to their respective neighborhoods.

Action item: Develop rehabilitation and enhancement master plans for each of the central district parks.

These should include neighborhood participation and should address demographics of the service areas; present and future demands; evaluation of site, structures, and equipment; and a master plan with cost estimates.

Action item: Establish a priority-setting process and dedicate funding through the city's capital improvement program to implement the park master plans one park at a time.

The process should establish criteria based on such factors as level of use, access, impact on neighborhood and area development objectives, safety issues, nature and need for park facilities, and other criteria. An objective priority-setting process that involves all city departments involved with planning and maintenance of parks should be held. The priorities then form the basis for a ten-year central park improvement program, with parks completed one by one over the course of the implementation period.

B. Develop new parks to fill physical and functional gaps.

Action item: Acquire and improve open or underused sites at the seams of Midland's two intersection grids as image features that both define to core and provide public use.

The heart of Midland was actually platted on three intersecting street grids. The Downtown Core's streets are lined up in ordinal directions (north is true north). The area northwest of A and Indiana Street is rotated about 12 degrees counterclockwise, while streets south of Indiana parallel or run perpendicular to the Union Pacific railroad tracks. The result are triangular seams where these grids meet each other, creating parcels that are very difficult to develop. Examples are sites at the divergence of Indian and College Avenues; "Indiana Islands" between Indiana and Holloway Avenues; land between A and Carrizo Streets; and A Street and a continuation of San Angelo Street south of Tennessee Avenue. Landscaping and some limited public improvements, street furniture, water and other aesthetic features, and public use as space permits could turn these difficult spaces into community assets that mark transitions in the city fabric. In a few cases, sites have been developed with small and interesting buildings and businesses that can be integrated into these public spaces.

Action item: Develop an informal multi-use open space that meet the informal recreation needs of downtown residents.

While an improved Centennial Plaza will be an attractive formal space for events and downtown life, a growing resident population will require spaces with more room – to run, play informal games, walk dogs, and other essentials of urban life. A possible opportunity for this informal open space is a 4 acre triangular site north of Front Street between Big Spring and adjacent to the county library. It is currently part of a large parking lot, about half of which is devoted to library parking. These large lots south of Missouri Avenue are underutilized, however, and actual parking use could be consolidated in other lots. In the long term, this site could be part of a large redevelopment project that could include new convention facilities if markets exceed the capacity of Midland Center.



POSTED TO GOALS BOARD AT PUBLIC WORKSHOP

“Bring parkway concept inside the Loop by connecting local parks”

Action item: Design small neighborhood parks into new residential areas in and round the downtown core.

Small open spaces for play and informal activity should be designed into family-oriented residential developments. The actual form of these open spaces depends on the nature of the project and housing design. They could include green conversion of streets, neighborhood squares, or greenways, but would be designed primarily for local neighborhood use.

C. Link parks, schools, museums, and historic sites into a connected network of “parkway streets.”

As part of the unifying fabric for newly developing areas, the Tall City Tomorrow Plan proposes a parkway that will connect new neighborhoods together. In Midland’s heart, this connecting concept can take the form of a web of connecting streets that link parks and open spaces, important community facilities, museums and historic sites, and schools. This network provides a number of opportunities for walking routes, neighborhood improvement projects, urban design enhancements, and private property enhancements. They also expand the catchment area of neighborhood facilities by providing safe routes to parks and schools.

Action item: Establish a network of connecting “parkway streets” that will be addressed through this program.

Candidate streets should provide direct routes between features, relatively low to moderate traffic volumes, slow to moderate speeds, and attractive land use and street environments. The newly adopted Hike and Bike Master Plan should be used to define parkway streets and proposed pedestrian and bicycle improvements consistent with the plan. The diagram in this section illustrates a possible parkway street network for the city center area.

Action item: Define a menu of features to include in parkway streets, survey streets for the presence of these elements, and develop plans and cost estimates for each segment.

Features should include continuous sidewalks or pedestrian paths, bike facilities if applicable, identifying and wayfinding graphics, and street landscaping. Intersections with major streets and other barriers require special attention, and safe crossings of arterials should be designed into the segment plans.

Action item: Include parkway street improvements into the capital improvement plan, preferably coordinated with rehabilitation of the parks that they connect.

As future capital improvement programs are developed the parkway streets should be included with higher priority parkways done first. A priority parkway would include those connecting parks that are being rehabilitated or routes along which a significant redevelopment project is being completed.

6. Use alternative transportation to reinforce the Corridor's linkage of the Core and Village subdistricts.

While private automobiles account for the vast majority of trips made in Midland, the city does have a transit system with significant patronage and designated and signed bicycle routes that serve specific destinations. Alternative transportation, including transit, bicycle, and pedestrian accommodations are ideally suited to an area like the central district, where maximum travel distance between activity nodes is less than two miles. This can shift some short local trips from car to other modes and increase the ease of routine movement in the area. But it also helps build development density if service is pleasant, frequent, and convenient enough, and helps define the brand and ultimately the future of this district.

A. Develop a frequent transit shuttle connecting the two major activity nodes – the Core and the Village – by way of the district's mixed use corridor.

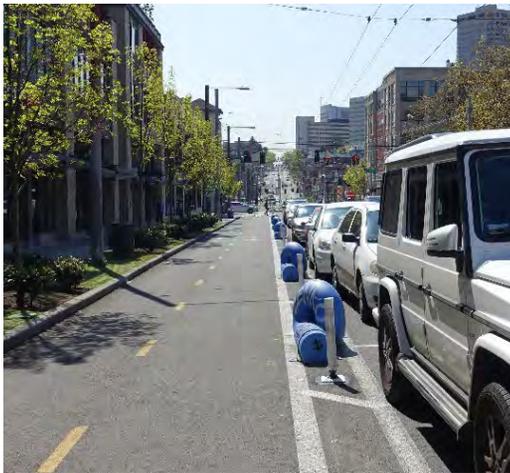
The 2007 Smart Downtown Plan correctly envisioned a role for transit in the downtown revitalization process. It recommended a transit loop with a north-south orientation in the office core of Downtown. However, office workers do not generate a significant routine demand for transit during the basic workday. An east-west loop that serves the most intensive part of the Core, the Corridor and museum district, and Midland Memorial Hospital and surrounding office and retail area presents a richer passenger opportunity.

Action item: *Study the feasibility and character of an east-west transit loop linking the Core and Medical Center/Village with direct, frequent service and interchange with other routes in the Midland bus system.*

An effective system in this context, should have several important attributes:

- » Simplicity. Often, in an effort to serve everything, circulator shuttle routes become difficult to understand and subject to many route diversions. A transit loop in this area must be simple and direct for maximum service quality and frequency. A route concept illustrated in this section operates between Weatherford Street and Meta Drive along Illinois and Wall Street as its primary routes. The only diversion warranted may be a short run to the museum district one block south of the Wall Street leg.
- » Frequency. An effective shuttle service must be very frequent, running on short enough headways to make it unnecessary to use a schedule. The loop proposed above is about 4 miles in length, requiring about 20 minutes to complete. In a single direction, the loop could provide 30 minute frequencies with one vehicle. Operating as a bi-directional loop with one vehicle in each direction can provide 10-15 minute service to each point along the route, within the range of an effective service.
- » Distinctive. Image is important for this service, and part of its advantage is long-term; that is, encouraging residential density and building utility through good service. A distinctive vehicle is important in helping advance this image. Effective shuttles like Denver's 16th Street Mall and Santa Barbara's downtown shuttle take different approaches to establishing a strong image.
- » Low cost. Ideally, a shuttle service should be free, and its operation could be funded through a business improvement district.





B. Establish a clear and safe bicycle transportation system within this central district.

The heart of Midland, essentially two miles from end to end, rich in a variety of destinations, and flat topographically, is ideally suited to local bicycle transportation. Nationwide, areas with visible and easy to use bicycle facilities have proven highly appealing to the millennial generation, and are often associated with innovation and urban interaction. Interestingly, corridors with strong bicycle infrastructure like cycle tracks have also experienced increases in retail business and in some cases new levels of residential development. Portions of Louisiana and Michigan Avenues currently have east-west bike lanes, establishing some precedent for bicycle transportation in the connecting corridor.

Action item: Implement and adapt recommendations of the 2014 Connect Midland Plan for the city center.

Connect Midland maintains and expands the current Michigan/Louisiana Avenue bike lanes and adds north-south lanes along Broadway/N Street, F Street, Colorado Street, and Main Street. A major recommendation is providing protected bike lanes along the Wall Street corridor. This recommended route should be extended through the Core district to the Front Street intersection. These bike lane corridors should also include bicycle wayfinding signs marking routes to area destinations, including the George W. Bush Childhood Home, schools, parks, and the museum district.

Action item: Begin a pilot bike share system in the central district.

Bike share systems work best within districts about the size of Midland's district and could start on a relatively small scale, with between six to ten stations. They can be an effective local transportation system, complement the transit loop, and accommodate visitors traveling to museums and conference or business destinations. Hospitals and health insurance companies have been significant sponsors of these systems, and the Midland Memorial Hospital is a logical advocate for promoting the city center as a healthy living environment.

7. Recast the Medical Center/Village Subdistrict as a walkable, mixed use activity and employment center.

Create the destination neighborhood that many residents identified during the public engagement process. The Medical Center brings hundreds of workers to the area a day while the surrounding Village District offers shopping and dining. For the most part these uses are disconnected and the area does not feel like a destination where you park once to visit multiple businesses. Improving access and adding to the mix of land uses can create a vibrant neighborhood district where people live, work, and shop.

A. Implement a traffic and pedestrian redesign program to increase clarity, reduce traffic conflicts and congestion, increase safety, and provide better pedestrian connections.

To date the district has been designed for easy movement of the car. This should be retained while creating a better environment for the pedestrian. These improvements should create defined areas for pedestrians that make for safe and comfortable access within reasonable distances. Until this happens, few residents will be interested in leaving the hospital on foot or parking once to visit multiple businesses. It will also be important to connecting the district to adjoining residential uses.

B. Improve business district features, including public parking and streetscape, focusing on multi-occupant small business blocks – notably the Dodson Street and Andrews Highway blocks

Improvements to the business district should create a customer friendly environment and done in a targeted approach. Improvements should not be scattered, but focused on specific blocks or nodes that create an impact and build momentum for additional private and public investment.

C. Develop a neighborhood square as a common area for both the commercial district and the adjacent residential neighborhoods.

A shared green space is a great opportunity to bring residents and visitors together. The space could be designed in partnership with the hospital. Research has found that access to nature improves the healing process and while this space may not be directly attached to the hospital improved access between the two could create a great opportunity for the hospital and neighborhood. The space could incorporate aspects of a “healing garden” where hospital visitors and patients could find a retreat while also having spaces where shoppers and residents could meet and gather.

D. Expedite urban housing development on underused blocks or deteriorated sites on the western edge of the district.

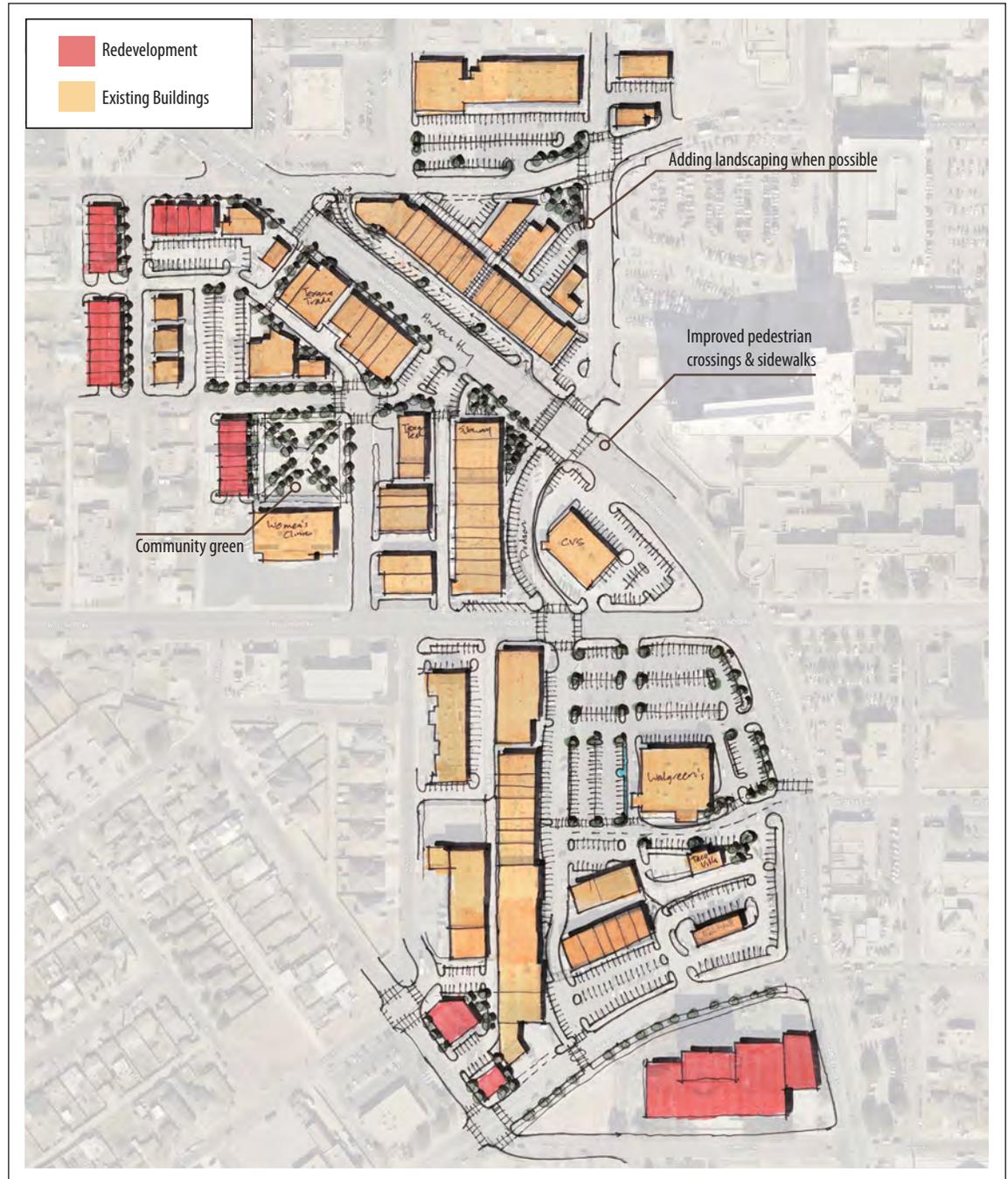
Earlier sections of the Tall City Tomorrow Plan placed an emphasis on the need for more affordable and diverse housing options. The underused blocks on the edge of the district provide a great opportunity to incorporate high quality urban housing that is adjacent to jobs and shopping.

Dear City Planners - Thank you for even doing this and soliciting citizen input. Here are my comments....

Old Town areas/downtown:

“Encourage or provide incentives for attractive storefronts (trees again) but also promote rehabbing of old buildings - for restaurants, retail, art galleries, music venues. Make it an entertainment area.”

The Village / Medical Center Area





Chapter 8

Tall City Tomorrow Infrastructure



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- » Infrastructure Plan
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- » Water and Sewer
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Tall City Tomorrow Infrastructure

INTRODUCTION

Any city's first priority is to provide basic services to its 'customers' – the residents and taxpayers of the community. This responsibility begins with the services that are essential to public health, safety, and commerce, such as police, fire, emergency services, water, waste disposal, storm drainage, and transportation. Other services like libraries and parks, while not essential to people's safety, are vital investments in residents' wellbeing. Still others, like education, are provided by other agencies, but require partnerships with city government. This section of the Tall City Tomorrow Plan addresses all of those essential services, outside of transportation, and the facilities needed to manage and maintain those services.

ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

A Growing System

Accommodating growth has been discussed in many other sections of Tall City Tomorrow. Expansion of infrastructure systems is strongly related to such policy issues as community growth directions, circulation, land use policy, and neighborhood character. For example, connected street patterns that offer multiple ways into and out of neighborhoods can save lives during emergencies. Dispersed land use patterns raise the cost of public services and increase the amount of sewer and water lines and streets needed to serve neighborhoods. The use of septic systems on the edge of city development can raise the cost to expand the city's system and the cost for adjacent homeowners. As Midland grows, maintaining a level of service that meets citizens' needs and expectations will continue to be a challenge.

Multi-Purposing

More communities are capitalizing on the opportunities created by new thinking in stormwater management. Past approaches often channelized draws or tubed it underground. This, along with increased amounts of impervious coverage, intensified both the volume and velocity of stormwater runoff. Newer approaches find ways for nature to absorb stormwater, slowing down the runoff and helping lessen the effects of localized flooding. This also creates a great opportunity to use these revitalized "greenways" for trails and open spaces. By multi-purposing streets, draws, and detention basins the city can add community amenities, beautify corridors and parks, and reduce the risk of flooding.



Stewards of Our Water

The droughts of the last decade have left a lasting impression on many residents, seeing the effects in their personal lawns and in the city's tree canopy. As what can frequently be a limited resource, the use and reuse of water will be important to the character of Midland's future environment. Finding ways to capture rainwater and reuse wastewater will ensure a more consistent irrigation pattern for the city's plant materials. Using this water to sustain the city's tree canopy also helps provide shade in the hot summer months and wind breaks year around. In the coming years the challenge will be to educate new residents on the proper use of this resource and to hold to water policies during the wetter cycles.

TALL CITY TOMORROW INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN

As any city grows and evolves so must its infrastructure systems. These systems are in need of constant repair, replacement, occasional expansion, and evaluation of the level of need. Midland will continue to be a growing city, at times quickly, but historic trends show that growth is a given. Every city must constantly monitor the need to improve or expand services with a vision toward long term cost efficiencies. Growth in services and maintenance of existing services must be done with an eye toward the long term cost. Delaying maintenance and expansion or supporting growth that does not use services efficiently can only cost a community more in the long run.

“The use of water for public use is important to development recreation and defines sense of place in Midland. Our current and future parks must use our water resources responsibly and provide greenspaces for public use. Model a project similar to the Lubbock Lakes Projects.”

— Public Meeting Comment



INFRASTRUCTURE GOALS

1. Provide public services in a manner that balances cost efficiency and level of service.

Midland will need to continue to provide high levels of equitable, effective, and responsive public services. This will have to be done in a way that controls costs for both the short and long term. The systems and infrastructure that foster this high-quality service should be continually maintained and expanded as necessary to support reasonable, contiguous urban growth. Projects can often be delayed because they are not visible to the public but are essential to long term fiscal responsibility and customer (resident) satisfaction.

2. Guide the extension of water and sewer services in a way that supports efficient patterns of community development.

Over the decades Midland has grown in a continuous pattern, extending growth from the existing city edge. Maintaining this pattern, and avoiding developments that skip over large undeveloped parcels, ensures that water and sewer extensions are done in the most efficient manner possible. This will be especially challenging for Midland as it deals with growth around pump-jacks. These areas will require a group effort by the city, developers, and oil companies to ensure that growth in these areas is done in the best interest of the entire community.

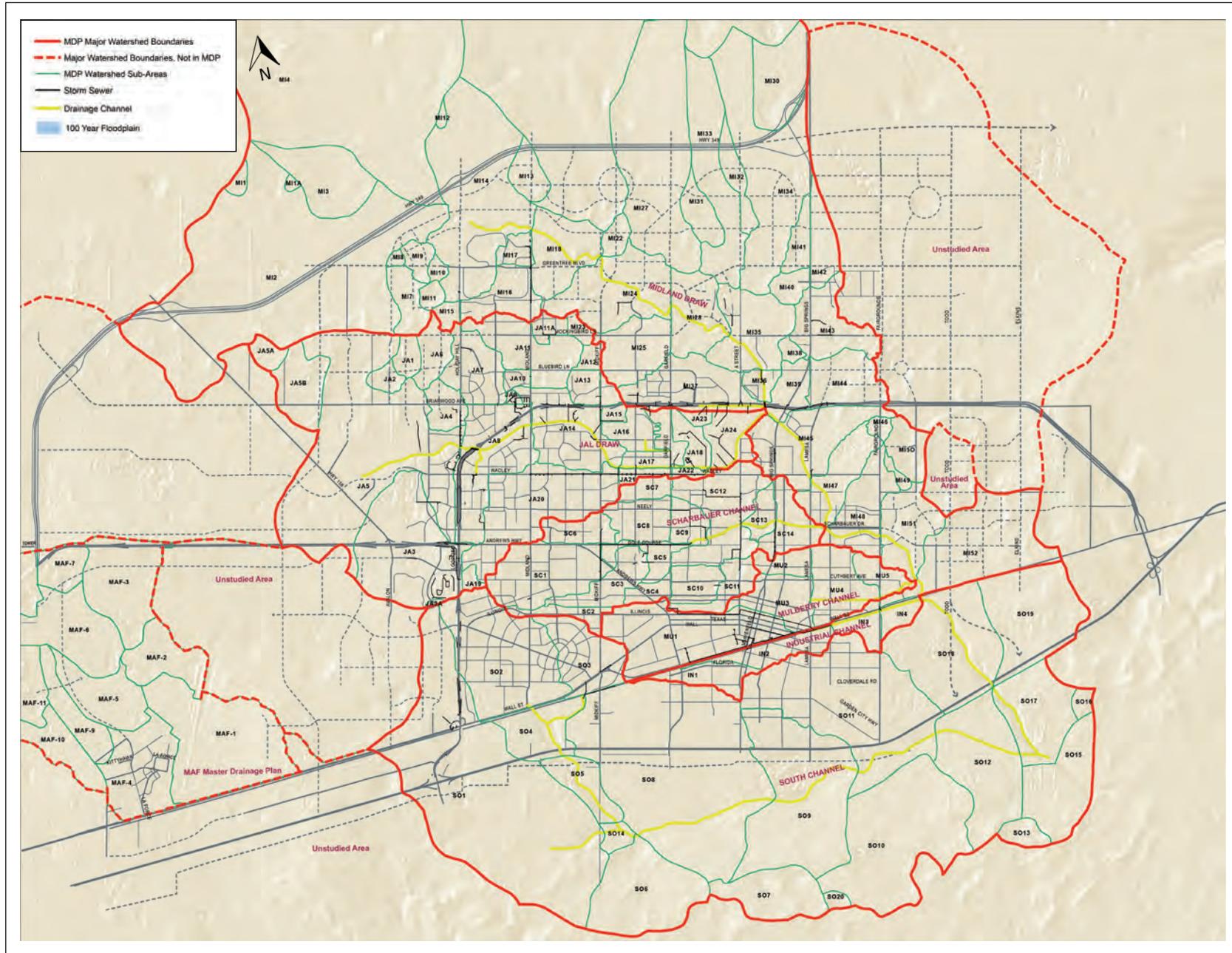
3. Ensure land use and transportation patterns that support the efficient and cost-effective delivery of emergency services.

Midland's development and design patterns should support community character goals and market demands while ensuring that emergency services can effectively serve residents. Subdivisions with single entry points and vegetation that is not well managed can create safety risks and increase costs to service providers. The city's policies and ordinances should create neighborhoods that are well connected and easily served by emergency services while not over-building infrastructure.

4. Expand emergency services to maintain a high level of service to current and future residents.

As Midland grows so will the need to expand police and fire services. This may mean the need for additional personnel or additional stations in growth areas. The level of services provided by current locations and staffing should be closely monitored to ensure that future residents feel the same, if not better, levels of safety and security.

Map 8.1: Storm Water





“Draws: leave them natural (unpaved) and lay concrete or even pea gravel paths for bikes, walking, even equestrian. They can still carry water in a flood.”

– Comment submitted via Tall City Tomorrow website

“Use the draws for badly needed bike paths for easy access to exercise and transportation for all.”

AN INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN

Storm Water

1. Implement existing studies/improvements

Action item: *Use the Master Drainage Plan to categorize, prioritize, and maintain a drainage Capital Improvement Plan.*

Midland has had the basic framework plan for needed stormwater improvements since the mid-1990s. However, a lack of funding has discouraged an organized effort to tackle the long list of needed projects. The City of Midland should prioritize the potential projects based on public safety, best value, and market demands, and update a CIP annually.

Action item: *Adopt a stormwater fee to provide funding resources for capital improvements and management practices.*

Funding for drainage projects has consistently been the primary problem with completing any extensive improvements. Midland has investigated the potential for a stormwater utility fee on multiple occasions. While other cities in West Texas have implemented this fee and increased it several times to help pay for compliance with regulations as well as capital projects, Midland has not been able to muster enough general funds to do either.

2. Coordinate existing ordinances and documents with the Land Use Plan and current regulations

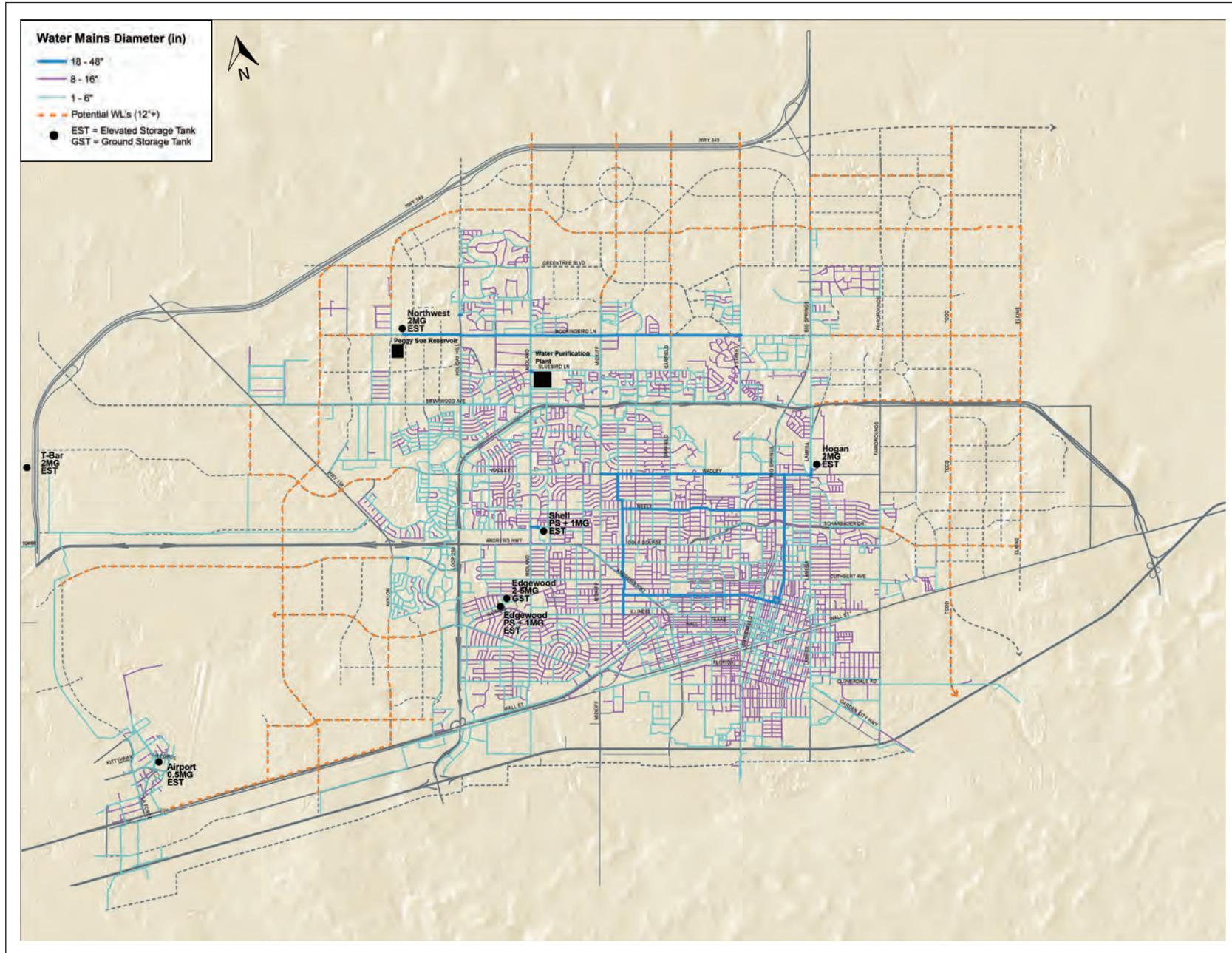
Action item: *Expand or update the Master Drainage Plan to incorporate areas within the Land Use Plan.*

The original Master Drainage Plan was adopted in 1996. A recent study updated two of the draws, however, many areas within the Land Use Plan are not part of the studied watersheds. An update of the entire document would ultimately provide guidance to the city for development of those areas.

Action item: *Expand the Storm Drainage Design Manual to include appropriate storm water management practices and opportunities for unique solutions.*

The Storm Drainage Design Manual was issued in 1992. Since then, many new regulations have impacted the design of stormwater management facilities, including water quality rules and additional software and methodologies for hydrology and hydraulics. An update of this document would assist the city in addressing these new elements in drainage.

Map 8.2: Water





3. Improve the draw system

Action Item: Use the draw system within the city to better manage storm water and to incorporate the city's trail system. (See also Quality of Life Initiative 4)

The condition of the draw system can be sporadic, resulting in some sections that perform poorly during peak rain falls. Improvements should enhance stormwater management and provide a quality greenway that is accessible to residents. Draws should offer non-motor vehicle access around the city and connect destinations such as parks, schools, churches, and commercial centers across the city.

Water and Sewer

1. Conduct master planning efforts for water and sewer

Action item: Create a new sewer collection master plan based on the Land Use Plan intensities.

The most recent sewer collection master plan for Midland was conducted in 1982. Very few areas identified in that document remain undeveloped. The proposed Land Use Plan expands the area for service well beyond what that plan foresaw. A new master plan would provide the city with better guidance for trunk line extensions and oversizing requests.

Action item: Create a new water distribution master plan based on the Land Use Plan intensities.

The City of Midland has continued to maintain a distribution system model that describes the existing facilities, updating every so often to accommodate the newest locations. Some area-specific modeling has studied needed improvements, but a full master plan based on the proposed Land Use Plan would provide a better long-range outlook for needed improvements, system inadequacies, and performance enhancements.

Action item: Consider water and sewer treatment capacities and alternative solutions for expansions of the treatment plants.

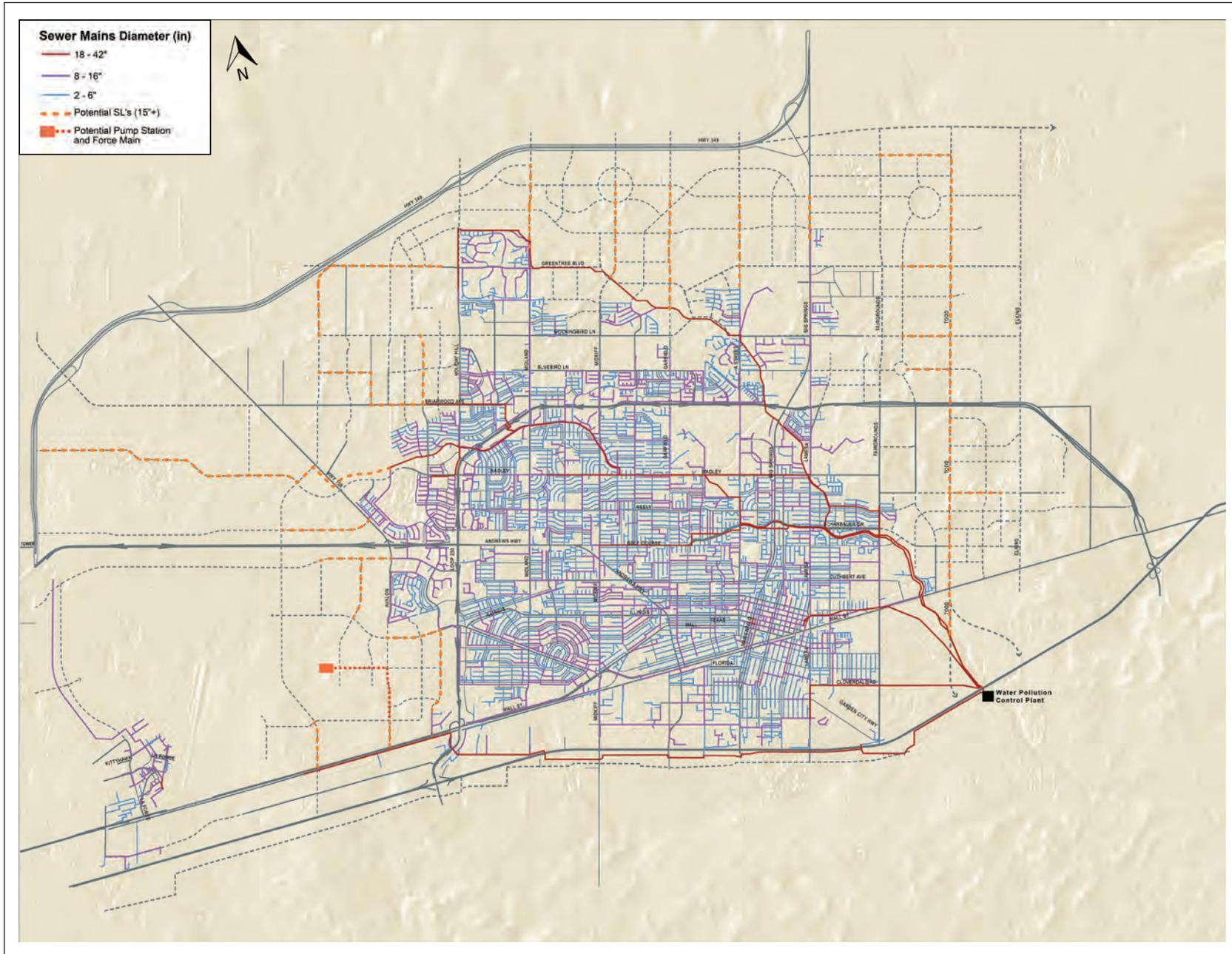
In addition to the collection and distribution systems of the city, the treatment plant capacities will need to be continually analyzed for potential expansion. Alternative solutions to the expensive prospect of expanding the plants should always be considered, including additional re-use, blending of sources, and public-private partnerships.

2. Balance aesthetics and economic development with water consumption

Action item: Plan for water needs and the future of the region, considering potential drought scenarios.

Recent drought conditions across all of Texas have made people more acutely aware of the importance of long-term water supplies. The City of Midland has stayed completely engaged and should continue to do so in the planning of water supplies in the entire West Texas region.

Map 8.3: Sewer





“Conserve water: mandate rainwater catchment (gutters to barrels or tanks) in commercial development, to water those trees in item #2. (Even Seattle conserves and harvests rainwater!)”

– Public Meeting Comment

Action item: Educate the public on the pros and cons of xeriscaping, low water use, and native plant materials.

As restrictions were made in the last several year in Midland, the public responded with decreasing water usage in drastic amounts. Many citizens started looking for alternatives to the traditional landscaping options in Midland. The city has an opportunity to educate the public on all of the benefits and challenges to using these desert-friendly materials. Using city test cases in parks and municipal facilities is a great way to lead by example.

3. Fund water and sewer infrastructure to leverage development and redevelopment

Action item: Build and finance water and sewer infrastructure in coordination with the Land Use Plan and market demands.

As Midland grows in infrastructure development through roadways, drainage, and water/sewer improvements, the impact to city development will be felt in the influence of the Land Use Plan combined with market demands for expansion. The City of Midland can use the master planning efforts to determine logical places to instigate construction or participate with developers in oversized trunk lines.

Action item: Study the suitability of impact fees to fund water and sewer infrastructure extensions.

Similar to the storm water utility fee, the City of Midland long ago rejected the concept of impact fees as a funding source for needed infrastructure. However, as the city continues to grow, and the pressure to develop large water, sewer, and roadway projects in advance of final development increases, the city should once again consider this funding tool. This conversation should also include the need for additional capacity at the treatment facilities to support continued growth.

Solid Waste

1. Improve efficiencies in solid waste collection and disposal

Action item: Plan for long-term regional solid waste needs through the expansion of the landfill.

The city-owned solid waste facilities, specifically the landfill, provides for invaluable services to not only the municipality, but the entire region. Long-term planning for the protection and expansion of this resource is critical.

Action item: Encourage diversion of waste away from landfills through recycling, mulching, and reduction of garbage.

A primary way to extend the life of the landfill, and potentially save expenditures on large expansion, is to encourage diversion of waste streams away from the landfill. Education of the public to reduce the amount of garbage they produce, mulching of natural materials, and recycling of ordinary items can make a substantial difference over a number of years.

Action item: Consider the feasibility of a transfer station and/or recycling center in growth areas.

With the anticipated growth of services and geographical reach, the operations of solid waste could be well-served by the addition of a municipally operated recycling center or a transfer station in the northwest region of the city, reducing the distance traveled by solid waste collection vehicles.



Fire, Police, and Emergency Medical Services

1. Provide exceptional facilities and services

Action item: Use the Land Use Plan to study long-range services areas.

The land use plan provides guidance on long range growth directions but ultimately this will be driven by market demands. The police and fire departments should work closely with MISD, as they are often faced with the same challenges in predicting growth directions. It should also be noted that the decision by a school district or fire department to build a new facility can often be a driving force for development in growth areas, as these are highly attractive neighborhood facilities.

Action item: Balance the intensity of development and response times to locate facilities, including fire stations, and branch police stations.

For many cities, the intensity of call volume may be within a small geographic area. Every department must balance the demand for service in those areas with providing balanced service across the city. Higher density areas, because of their greater populations, can also have higher call rates but can also be easier to serve with faster response times. All of these demands must be balanced with the land use plan and the desire to see reinvestment in the city's older neighborhoods.

2. Encourage site and development design that creates safer environments

Action item: Clearly define public and private spaces.

Undefined spaces can often leave visitors feeling unwelcome and unsafe. Well-defined public spaces are places where people can literally see and be seen. These spaces increase the level of positive interaction that is the essence of a quality neighborhood. Hidden or neglected public spaces have the opposite effect, attracting nuisances and sometimes crime, and being scary or off-putting places that people avoid.

Action item: Design spaces with natural surveillance.

Areas with natural surveillance are designed to have physical features that can include walkways, gathering areas, roadways, and structures that eliminate hiding places and increase human presence and supervision.

Action item: Maintain public spaces and enforce existing codes to create environments that feel well-kept and safe.

Property maintenance can have significant impact of a visitor's comfort level. Areas filled with litter and overgrown landscaping can feel unwelcoming and unsafe. Studies have also shown that the best way to combat property damage and illegal activity is to create a strong sense of ownership. If a public space feels "owned" by the community, and any damage is quickly cleaned up or removed, criminal activity often decreases.

“Greatly reduce crime and traffic. Hire more police at a much higher rate and pay our existing police at the higher rate also (\$80-100k/yr) so they do not quit for the ‘oil field’”

3. Maximize fire safety through site design

Action item: Prohibit developments with one access point.

Large developments with one access point can leave homes and business isolated during emergencies. The more access points or street connections that a development has, the easier it is for emergency personnel to reach areas in need of their services.

Action item: Enforce vegetation maintenance to protect against fire hazards, especially during droughts.

Good management of vegetation, especially during drier months, is especially important on the city’s urban edge. The most danger can often occur where urban and rural areas meet. Enforcement of vegetation controls in these areas can protect life and property on the city’s growing edges.

Other Municipal Facilities

1. Build and renovate public facilities so the citizenry can be proud of their community buildings

Action item: Accommodate growth and modernize services by creating high quality community facilities that match the pride of our citizenry for Midland.

Midland residents have a significant amount of pride in their community, as they should. Historically, the founders of American cities built public facilities - city halls, county courthouses, and libraries - which expressed the pride they have in their communities. Too often today the emphasis is placed on budget constraints rather than on quality design within a budget. Public funds should be used prudently with an eye to quality design that speaks to the pride residents have in their community.

Action item: Evaluate the need, location, and functional suitability for public buildings.

City Hall – A recent study concluded that the City Hall offices have inadequate and inefficient space for the current and future uses of the city staff. Many options exist for solving this problem and should be taken into account as the city accommodates growth and modernizes its services.

Midland Center – The need for additional convention space is documented in many other reports with no clear resolution. As redevelopment occurs around the facility, the city will need to make hard decisions about the size and location of the Center. These decisions should also be made in light of existing facilities like the Horseshoe. This should be done with the desire to create a vibrant and active downtown district.

Animal Services – The city’s animal services facility has undergone a very recent renovation and should meet the city’s needs for many years. As growth and other changes occur, this facility can be monitored for any future needs.

Municipal Court – The city is currently constructing a new municipal court building to serve its current and future needs in this area.

Aquatic Centers – The city has recently completed the upgrade to one of their two aquatic facilities and have added a splash pad at the Scharbauer Sports Complex. As a vital asset to the quality of life in Midland, aquatic centers should be maintained and expanded as practical.

Community/Recreation Centers – Currently the MLK Community Center is the only recreational center for the City of Midland, and did undergo a renovation within the past few years. The City’s Parks Master Plan indicates a severe inadequacy of these community or recreation centers. With potential growth of the citizenry, these facilities will need to be added in appropriate locations and scheduled with recreational activities to engage the population.

Senior Centers – In addition to recreation centers, the city will need to evaluate the potential need to provide additional centers or otherwise expand the senior facilities in Midland. Residents at public meetings voiced concern about the need for activities and facilities that meet the needs of Midland’s senior residents. The need to provide services and activities oriented toward seniors should be balanced against the interest of aging Baby Boomers. This population will not only be larger than previous generations but will have different interests that may not be met by traditional senior centers.

Other Buildings and Facilities – Police and Communication Center, fire stations, Citizen’s Collection Station, health & senior services, and the various treatment plants are the remaining city facilities, but have been discussed previously within this section of the Tall City Tomorrow plan.



Chapter 9

Tall City Tomorrow Quality of Life



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- » Issues & Opportunities
- » Tall City Tomorrow Quality of Life
- » Goals
- » Initiatives & Policies



Tall City Tomorrow Quality of Life

INTRODUCTION

Midland provides a high quality of life to its residents, not only by providing valuable jobs and homes, but also through community amenities such as parks, trails, cultural facilities, and good schools. Continuing to support that quality of life is important to Midland's residents. While the city continues to grow, residents want to make sure that the features they love about Midland remain constant. This is important for existing residents but also when businesses are trying to attract and retain employees. Chapter 6 explored the aesthetic character of the community. A city that looks good and offers a great quality of life offers people the opportunity to expand their horizons, encourages a sense of community, advances creativity, and creates happy residents. Happy and engaged people are ultimately more productive and connected to the community. These attributes are especially important to a community that is trying to attract and retain quality residents and therefore a quality workforce.

Tall City Tomorrow Quality of Life is the parks, recreation, and cultural element of Tall City Tomorrow Plan. It draws heavily on the input residents provided during the planning process and the city's existing Parks Master Plan.

ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

Park Expansion

Midland has a number of excellent parks but park expansion has been slow over the years. During times of fast growth the city has not had the tools in place to make sure that the park system grew with the population. New neighborhoods have often been left without a park within walking distance (see page 32, Park Distribution). When growth has slowed, the city is often left without the budget resources, public support, or the sites necessary to fill in the gaps. Park acquisition and financing has to be separate from maintenance budgeting and the expansion of the system has to be done with a long term vision. Cities often purchase park land with a phased approach to development of that land. For a larger community park the land may even be purchased well ahead of residential development but with a longer term vision toward residents' needs.

Draws and Playas

Numerous sections of this plan have discussed the opportunity that the playas and draws offer. These discussions have included:

- » Using the draws to expand the trail and bike system in Tall City Tomorrow Transportation
- » Multi-purposing the draws and playas for recreation and stormwater protection in Tall City Infrastructure
- » Expanding the city’s parks and open spaces by using the playas in Tall City: An Integrated Land Use Vision
- » Adding to the city’s character by improving the draws and making sure they are clear of debris in Tall City Character

Like all of the central United States, Midland doesn’t have mountains or oceans but it has its own special and beautiful qualities. The playas and draws offer the best access to the region’s natural beauty and the animal and floral life. Incorporating these assets into the city’s park and recreation system will add to the city’s quality of life, enhance stormwater protection, and connect residents to destinations around the city.

Cultural Connections

Heritage and cultural opportunities and arts and entertainment have always been important to Midland residents. For many communities these events are centered in distinctive districts or neighborhoods, but this is not the case for Midland. The city lacks distinctive and identifiable districts or neighborhoods where residents gather to share in the arts and entertainment. There are venues scattered around the city but no central hub of activity and energy. The Tall City Central District Plan and the Land Use Vision identifies districts that could be improved and locations for future neighborhood centers. Supporting the city’s traditional history and culture, while providing opportunities for new artists, will preserve the city’s culture and expand residents’ creative opportunities.

TALL CITY TOMORROW QUALITY OF LIFE PLAN

Parks, recreation, and cultural resources are more than just about residents’ play and leisure time, but are critical to the city’s health, civic, and economic quality. Midland should be a hometown to every resident, a place that provides them opportunities to connect with fellow residents and make healthy life choices. No resident should be isolated from the community or lack easy access to the city’s parks. To achieve high quality services and cultural assets, communities must come together to provide the resources necessary for long term investment. If these investments are not made, Midland will continue to be challenged to be seen as a “hometown.”



“Perhaps more than any time in recent history, the City of Midland should consider the intangible “Quality of Life” issues that can transform a common city into a great city.”

– 2012 City of Midland Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan

GOALS

1. Provide park facilities and recreation services accessible to Midland’s growing population.

Midland’s historic trend has been to focus on the need for housing and commercial needs during growth periods without the consideration of additional open space needs. Once the growth slows, the community’s support for funding is often hard to find. In the future Midland must incorporate open space and parks into the demand created by any new population and must monitor the needs and interests of existing residents closely.

2. Develop one or more cultural districts within Midland that offer a rich variety of art and entertainment options.

Residents throughout the planning process talked about their love of the city but also lamented that there was limited opportunity for arts and entertainment. It is always easier to feel that the “grass is greener” in another community but residents should not have to leave the community on a regular basis to find these options. Midland should provide a wide variety of options in places that allow residents to feel connected to the community.

3. Identify and establish an interconnected network of natural areas that provide recreation options and protect natural resources.

What makes for a high quality of life varies from household to household but there are a few items that are common. Good schools and parks are often at the top. Every resident, from the mom pushing a stroller on an evening walk to a group of friends from school should be able to access the city’s parks and open spaces. Recreation options should not require a ride in a car, but access to the city’s best natural resources should be easy and allow residents to make healthy life choices on a daily basis.

4. Encourage neighborhood and community destinations that are family friendly and support strong social networks.

In an age of social media, when many young residents’ interactions take place online, communities need to be even more vigilant in providing quality spaces for people to relax, exercise, and interact with fellow residents. Personal interactions and relationships make for stronger communities but those places first have to exist in a city. Residents that are isolated are less invested in their property, their neighborhood, and ultimately in their community. If Midland wants to remain the family-friendly community it is, the city will need to support the development of places that bring people together in safe and affordable ways.

INITIATIVES & POLICIES

1. Update the city’s existing Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan as required

Action item: Implement existing and future parks, recreation, and open space master plans.

Cities are required to complete a comprehensive parks, recreation, and open space master plan every 10 years. The last plan completed for Midland was in 2007, meaning that an extensive update should take place in the next year. The update to this document offers the city a great opportunity to assess the city’s park needs after a heightened growth period that had not yet started in 2007. More important is the implementation of this document. This strategic vision should be implemented by the city to ensure the continuation of a high quality system and access for all to quality parks.

2. Add park land to the city’s system to ensure the same level of service as the city’s population grows

Action item: Expand the city’s neighborhood park system to growth areas outside of Loop 250.

Within areas that are already developing the city must take more aggressive steps to identify and secure property for parks. For areas that have not already seen development the city must implement a park dedication system that ensure that new neighborhood parks are developed in conjunction with new growth (see Initiative 5).

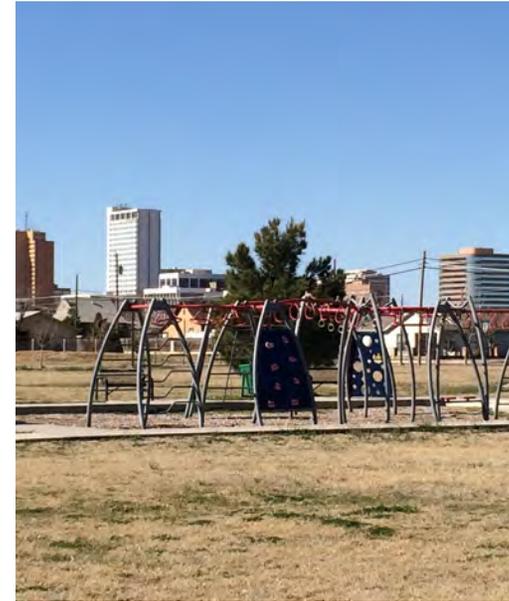
Action item: Add to the city’s community park system through the preservation of large playas

As the city grows in population new community parks will also need to be added. Residents should expect that at minimum the city will maintain the current level of service or acres per resident that exist today. Surrounding the city are several large playas. These areas provide a great opportunity to enhance stormwater protection, connect residents to the region’s ecosystem, and expand the city’s parks system. These parks may have to be slightly larger than the playa itself to ensure good stormwater protection and adequate space for park amenities. These areas should also be connect to surrounding neighborhoods, the park system, and major community destinations through the draws and hike and bike system.

3. Plan for enhancements to existing parks

Action item: Budget adequately for the maintenance and improvement of existing parks on an annual basis

The city should provide a reliable and diversified funding package for park maintenance, capital improvement, and operations. This may including working with local organizations to assist in these efforts. This works best for maintenance and capital improvements but not necessarily for operations. Although, companies may be tapped to sponsor some operations or events. As part of these partnerships and through the Park and Recreation Master Plan, locations for new recreation interest (dog parks, Frisbee golf, etc.) should be identified and development and operations budgets assembled.



“Host Specialized events in Parks”
– Community Comment



4. Use trails and the draws to connect the city's existing and future parks through a linear recreation system

Action item: Implement the 2014 Hike and Bike Trails Master Plan (see also Transportation initiatives)

Midland's Hike and Bike Trails Master Plan outlines an extensive list of potential projects that will connect key destinations. The plan includes priority projects, design standards, funding sources, and responsibilities. This system can be an easier and sometimes more affordable way to connect residents in underserved neighborhoods to parks.

Action item: Fund improvements to existing draws

The condition of the draw system can be sporadic and older sections with the existing city can have the least appealing environments. For some of the city's draws, especially in the eastern half of the city, the draws are channelized or attract debris. Improvements should enhance stormwater management and provide a quality greenway that is accessible to residents. Draws outside of Loop 250 should also offer non-motor vehicle access around the city and connect these areas to destinations, such as parks, schools, churches, and commercial centers inside the Loop.

5. Identify and implement new programs and policies for funding park expansion

Action item: Adopt a park land dedication ordinance

Neighborhood parks are a fundamental component of any park system. These are the parks where families walk for playground time or a picnic. They are the spot where neighbors interact and connect with their community. In the past there has been no set policy or ordinance to ensure that new neighborhood parks are developed in growing areas. The city should adopt a park land dedication ordinance that would assist in the acquisition of neighborhood park land. This can be done by requiring either a land dedication or payment of cash in lieu of a dedication by developers as a condition of subdivision plat approval. The development of these spaces then can be phased in as growth occurs within an area. Ultimately everyone benefits from this type of approach – one development doesn't have to cover the full cost of including a park, and they have added value to their development because of the appeal neighborhood parks have for buyers.

Action item: Team with local civic organizations and philanthropists to fund the expansion and improvement of the park system

The city should develop partnerships and sponsorships with local organizations to assist with the improvement and expansion of the park system. For smaller neighborhood parks partnerships with civic organizations can assist in the maintenance for fundraising for smaller scale improvements, such as new playground equipment. For larger scale or community parks the city should consider teaming with local businesses or philanthropists to fund or sponsor expansions. These often include naming rights and other recognitions for the sponsoring company.

6. Preserve or enhance natural habitat and open spaces

Action item: Maintain and improve the existing habitat areas.

Spaces like the I-20 Wildlife Preserve should be supported as a community amenity. City support may come in the form of infrastructure, such as adequate road access and quality signage directing residents and visitors to the site. These sites provide great education opportunities, open spaces for walking trails, and improved stormwater management.

Action item: Require preservation of existing playas as development occurs around them.

These resources should be preserved, both for the stormwater management protection they can provide and also the natural features that they can provide to residents. Midland's stormwater system is heavily dependent on the draws and streets, often resulting in standing water in the streets. In future development the playas should be used to assist in the absorption of this stormwater and protection from flash flooding along the draws.

Action item: Connect the city's playas through greenways and draws and make them accessible to the public.

As a key part of the city's future community park system the playas should be connected through a system of greenways, draws, and parkway system. The draws provide an easy and comfortable way to make these resources connect for people outside of their cars. Using the proposed parkway system (See Tall City Tomorrow Transportation: Collectors Initiative 4) motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists should be connected to the playas.

7. Implement land use regulations that support the development of mixed-use developments

Action item: Implement land use guidelines outlined in Chapter 3.

Chapter 3 outlined the benefits of encouraging a mix of land uses and activities. Implementation of an intensity-based approach combines like uses and encourages the creation of more vibrant centers of activity. These centers add to residents' quality of life by improving access to daily services, jobs, and entertainment options.

Action item: Direct city investments and redevelopment dollars toward mixed-use projects.

Residents asked for more destinations where a person could walk, dine, and shop in one stop. The city should prioritize infrastructure and redevelopment dollars in the Central District and the Eastside Infill area toward projects that create mixed use destinations. This same approach should be taken for any of the city's existing commercial nodes.

“Create more parks: not just manicured ball-fields, but “natural areas,” where people can walk/bike/horseback ride. While the Basin is not beautiful, it is interesting and there is beauty in the details—the small things like the various flora and fauna.”

– Community Meeting Comment

“I'd like to see more parks/walking trails/central shops where you could spend an afternoon (think small town downtowns with a central anchor) hanging out.”

– Greta M.

“Don’t be so quick to eliminate western culture from Midland, please. Western heritage, ranching, and such played a rather large part in developing the area, and it seems to be forgotten in all cultural events. Please bring some back.”

— Ken M.

8. Connect the city’s museums and cultural destinations

Action item: Improve pedestrian and bicycle access between the city’s museums and the destinations

The Museum District is a great community amenity but access to this area is limited. Expansion of the Hike and Bike system should include access to the city’s museums (in and outside the district) and connect key destinations together.

9. Work with local organization to develop a cultural heritage plan

Action item: Identify ways that the city can assist in implementation of a cultural heritage plan

Long time Midland residents take an immense amount of pride in the city’s history and character. Efforts should be made to encourage the preservation of Midland’s cultural heritage and history through the development and implementation of a cultural heritage plan. The plan should build awareness with new residents about what makes Midland special and the pride that long-time residents have in the community.

Chapter 10

Tall City Tomorrow Implementation

CONTENTS

- » Regulatory Mechanisms & Annexation Policies
- » Roles
- » Plan Maintenance
- » Implementation Strategy



Tall City Implementation

INTRODUCTION

Any plan is only as good as the follow-through and implementation of its policies and initiatives. This chapter reviews the recommendations outlined in the preceding chapters with additional information about making these visions a reality. Components of this chapter include:

- » **Regulatory Mechanisms & Annexation Policies:** Annexation is one tool for accommodating growth over time. This section outlines policies for evaluating areas for annexation
- » **Roles:** This section summarizes the key players involved with achieving the goals of the plan
- » **Plan Maintenance:** This section outlines a process for maintaining the plan, and evaluating progress in meeting the plan's goals.
- » **Implementation Strategy:** Outlined in Appendix B, this section summarizes the initiatives and actions proposed in Tall City Tomorrow, and presents projected time frames for the implementation, responsible parties, and potential funding sources.

REGULATORY MECHANISMS & ANNEXATION POLICIES

The regulatory tools of the city, including zoning and subdivision regulations, are essential to implementation of the plan. The city's recent discussions on the update of these regulations means that many of the recommendations within the Tall City Tomorrow Plan can be implemented through simple refinement of existing regulations.

Annexation Policies

One of the important regulatory tools that the city can use when addressing growth and development is annexation. Chapter 43 of the Texas Local Government Code prescribes the process by which communities can annex land within Texas. This section of state code provides the legal framework for annexation but each community should also establish a policy framework for implementation of annexation codes. For Midland these policies should take into consideration the following criteria:

- » **Areas with Significant pre-existing development.** Areas outside the city that already have substantial commercial, office, or industrial development are logical candidates for annexation. In addition, existing residential areas developed to urban densities (generally higher than 2 units per acre) should be considered for potential annexation. However, these areas should be closely considered under a cost benefit analysis (see following).

- » **Protection of Future Growth Areas.** In order to allow the city to guide its growth and development more effectively, future growth areas will need to be managed through annexation. Annexation will allow the city to extend its zoning and subdivision jurisdiction, thus guiding development in a direction that will provide safe and healthy environments.
- » **Public Services.** In many cases, public service issues can provide compelling reasons for annexation. Areas for consideration should include:
 - Parcels that are surrounded by the city but remain outside of its corporate limits. In these situations, city services may provide enhanced public safety with improved emergency response times. These situations should be resolved and avoided in the future.
 - Areas that are served by municipal infrastructure. Midland’s sewer and water system should not be extended into areas that are not already annexed into the city and if areas exist that receive services they should be considered priority areas for annexation.
- » **Community Unification.** While difficult to quantify, a split between people who live inside and outside the corporate limits can be harmful to the city’s critical sense of community and identity. Establishing unified transportation and open space systems and maintaining a common commitment to the city’s future can be important factors in considering annexation.
- » **A Positive Cost Benefit Analysis.** The economic benefits of annexation, including projected tax revenues, should compensate for the additional cost of extending services to newly annexed areas. The city’s review policy for annexation should include the following information:
 - Estimated cost impact and timetable for providing municipal services.
 - The method by which the city plans to finance the extension and maintenance of municipal services.
 - Identification of tax revenues from existing and probable future development in areas considered for annexation.
 - Calculation of the added annual operating costs for urban services, including public safety, recreation, and utility services, offered within newly annexed areas.





ROLES

The public, decision-makers, and staff must be concerned with the short and long-range consequences of present actions. Each of these groups plays a role in ensuring that decisions are made in the interest of good quality design and protecting the integrity of what makes Midland great.

Responsibilities: Elected/Appointed Officials

Decision-makers, along with staff, must be conscious of the rights of others. Decisions should expand choices and opportunities for all persons, including the disadvantaged, and promote economic integration. Officials include the City Council and City Boards and Commissions.

Responsibilities: City Staff

City staff should continue to seek meaningful input from the public on the development of plans and programs. Tall City Tomorrow is rooted in a public engagement process, and thereby the goals and initiatives represent the aspirations of the community. Recommendations from staff to decision-makers should provide accurate information on planning issues to all affected persons and to governmental decision makers.

PLAN MAINTENANCE

The initiatives and action items of Tall City Tomorrow are ambitious and long-range, and its recommendations will require funding and other continuous support. The city should implement an ongoing process that uses the plan to develop annual improvement programs, as outlined below.

Annual Action and Capital Improvement Program

The Planning Commission and City Council should define an annual action and capital improvement program that implements the recommendations in this plan. This program should be coordinated with Midland's existing capital improvement planning and budgeting process, even though many of the plan's recommendations are not capital items. This annual process should be completed before the beginning of each budget year and should include:

- » A work program for the upcoming year that is specific and related to the city's financial resources. The work program will establish which plan recommendations the city will accomplish during that year.
- » A three year strategic program. This component provides for a multi-year perspective, aiding the preparation of the annual work program. It provides a middle-term implementation plan for the city.
- » A six year capital improvement program. This is merged into Midland's current capital improvement program.

Annual Evaluation

An annual evaluation of the comprehensive plan should occur at the end of each fiscal year. This evaluation should include a written report that:

- » Summarizes key land use developments and decisions during the past year and relates them to the comprehensive plan
- » Reviews actions taken by the city during the past year to implement plan recommendations
- » Defines any changes that should be made in the comprehensive plan

The plan should be viewed as a dynamic changing document that is actively used by the city as a source of information and guidance on policy and public investment.