

DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION

CHAPTER 6 DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION



Anna has significant potential to revitalize and reestablish its downtown area – something other communities have accomplished with great success during the past decade. In many of these communities, the downtowns have become centers of essential growth, providing jobs and raising property values. As part of these newly reinvigorated downtowns, communities are bringing in a strong core of small businesses, business and civic centers, entertainment districts, and unique housing opportunities. Anna is well positioned to design a downtown that functions as a vital business and civic center, bustling with activity and investment. As noted under Anna’s “Strategic Vision” encouragement of small business development is a direction that the leaders of our community want to travel.

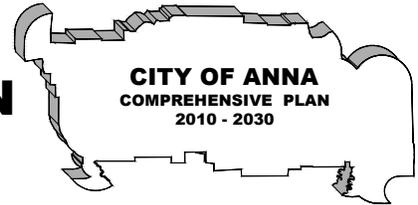
WHY THIS PLAN IS NEEDED

The Downtown Redevelopment Plan, like any successful planning effort, will help shape a vision of a vital downtown into reality. The past in other municipalities has shown that simply planning for a better downtown will not lead to its success – it will require a concerted effort by City leaders, local businesses and residents, and new investors. Anna will need to develop tools that can help create a renewed downtown – appropriate regulations, key strategic public investments and partnerships with the public sector. The final master plan will be the result of public workshops that envision a downtown functioning as a center of community business and culture. Current knowledge and information, as well as strong public input, will make this vision a reality. A key component is the set of strategies that will lead to change – a process that builds on success and encourages private investments that are crucial to the downtown’s vitality.

DOWNTOWN ANNA TODAY

The City of Anna was established in 1913. A plat for the original town site showed seven east-west streets and with a large railroad right-of-way centered around the

CHAPTER 6 DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION



DOWNTOWN IN CONTEXT

Downtown Anna's location within the city makes it a focal point. The downtown Anna study area, with its 138 acres, currently includes a diverse mix of land uses. It is home to Anna's civic area (City Hall, Police Station, and Fire Station), residential neighborhood and industrial and commercial uses. Despite Anna's many promising, successful features, it's important to take steps today that will create a thriving downtown area. This plan aims to do just that. A mix of housing, jobs, services and attractions is necessary to shape a vibrant and pedestrian-friendly downtown.

CURRENT CONDITIONS

Within the downtown area as shown in Figure 13 no predominant permanent land use exists. Commercial land use accounts for 7.7 percent, single family at 13.6 percent, public-semi public at 7 percent, industrial at 7.1 percent. About 23.2 percent corresponds to streets and public rights-of-way. With the low residential mix the area



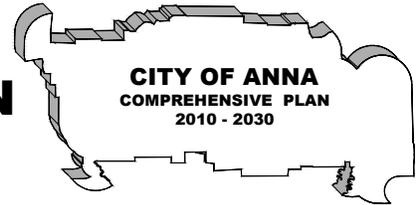
is out of balance, requiring that people travel to and within the downtown primarily by car. This has created a pattern of economic concentration heavily dictated by daytime business activities and a retail environment stunted due to lack of customer diversity and evening hour destinations and activities. Developing a variety of housing options within the downtown and adjacent areas means

more diverse groups will be able to use and appreciate the area on a daily basis, setting the stage for additional services and attractions.

Demographics/ Housing

Downtown Anna is home to approximately 70 dwelling units. Of these units 62 are single family units, 6 are multi-family units and 2 mobile homes. It is estimated that

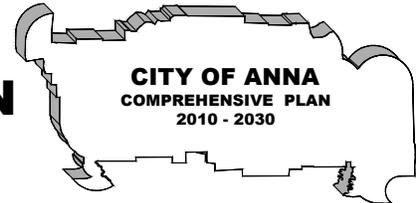
CHAPTER 6 DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION



**FIGURE 13
ANNA
DOWNTOWN REDEVELOPMENT DISTRICT
EXISTING LAND USE**

INSERT LAND USE MAP

CHAPTER 6 DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION



200 residents, or about 2.4 percent of the city's 8,100 total population reside in the Downtown area. Housing density in the downtown area is .5 units per acre with approximately 1.5 persons per acre.

DOWNTOWN GOALS AND GUIDELINES

A number of goals for downtown Anna have been developed. The downtown goals are as follows:

TRANSPORTATION

Provide a key role in a regional transportation network.

- Minimize railroad conflicts with street traffic.
- Provide creative parking solutions to manage long- and short-term parking.
- Improve accessibility within the downtown while planning for traffic growth and making traffic flow smoother.
- Create a community with multi-modal mobility that encourages pedestrians, bicycles, automobiles, and some form of public and/or private transportation in the future.

ENVIRONMENT

- Create and promote an image of being the civic heart with safe places to shop, live, work and visit.
- Improve the appearance and design of the streets.
- Improve infrastructure within the core.
- Encourage a mixture of land uses throughout the core.
- Provide incentives for businesses to expand, start, improve or move into the downtown area.
- Protect and improve the natural quality of the area through attractive, environmentally friendly development and maintenance.
- Improve drainage and alleviate flooding problems.

CHAPTER 6 DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION



- Enhance the quality of residential and business areas by increasing knowledge of maintenance requirements, encouraging quality construction, preserving existing housing stock, and increasing code enforcement efforts.
- Include a variety of uses in downtown including housing, offices, shops and entertainment.

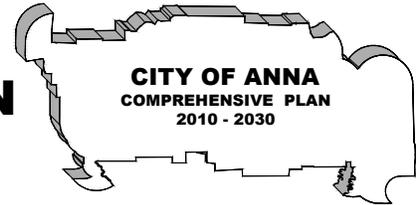
ECONOMY

- Create a community with a strong, diverse and sustainable economy.
- Foster a community with a business-friendly environment.
- Ensure that high-quality core services and infrastructure will be provided to all people.
- Increase the number of jobs and retail sales every year, with rising property values as well.
- Create a significant downtown employment center that will attract capital investment for long-term economic vitality.

LIVABILITY

- Create a community that wisely uses natural resources to create a healthful place to play, work and live.
- Create a community of neighborhoods with easy pedestrian access to a system of parks, open spaces, trails and gathering places promoting interactions within and among neighborhoods
- Value the community's history.
- Ensure that downtown Anna is a community with a clearly established identity.
- Foster pride through an aesthetically pleasing environment.
- Create strong and sustainable neighborhoods.
- Encourage and promote areas that advocate for pedestrian design and amenities.
- Encourage development of an association of small retail and service businesses that are complementary to one another.

CHAPTER 6 DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION



- Encourage businesses that offer goods and services targeted for existing and future downtown residents.
- Encourage the redevelopment and maintenance of historic structures and areas.
- Ensure that there is good pedestrian infrastructure, including sidewalks, shade and calm traffic.
- Encourage an assortment of specialized retail uses, restaurants, and services that will take advantage of the existing downtown worker.
- Reinforce the sense of downtown as having connected activities within a single neighborhood.

SOCIAL EQUITY

- Develop a community where health and human services, including transportation and other supported services, are accessible to all persons.
- Provide an atmosphere that accepts people of all walks of life and fosters a sense of inclusion in our neighborhoods.
- Ensure that Anna is a community where the government is committed to excellence, integrity and efficiency and encourages representation of all segments of the population at all levels.

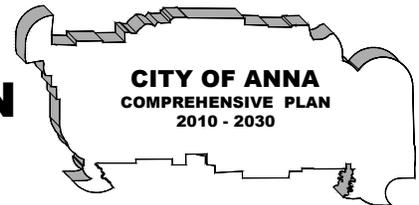
THE MARKET FOR DOWNTOWN ANNA

All successful downtowns have a target market, since downtowns are like any other business district in that it competes for part of the regional market. However, downtowns are often a specialized place – they appeal strongly to a subset of the population. To be successful, downtown Anna should have a clear view of its market, develop to meet their needs and likes, and communicate its services and facilities available.

ANNA RESIDENTS

Some residents of the City of Anna will work in the downtown in offices and industries that support the local and regional economy. Some will start their own

CHAPTER 6 DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION



businesses to take advantage of a growing population in the surrounding area. Other residents might invest in developing (whether residential or commercial). Downtown will be a shopping destination for a range of retail goods as well as the cultural center of the City. The potential for a library, museum, outdoor venue (amphitheatre), and an indoor theater will provide culture for the local residents as well as visitors. By day, the downtown area will provide a work location for employees; by evening, it will meet the cultural and shopping needs of the city.

RESIDENTS LOOKING FOR A DOWNTOWN ENVIRONMENT

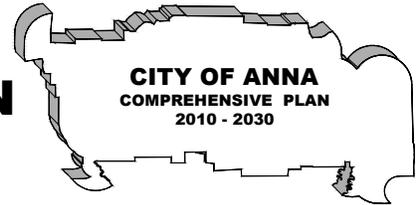
A small downtown with a variety of dining and entertainment options could be attractive to many nearby residents. The opportunity to park once and dine out, attend a cultural event and enjoy an urban park could appeal to a large segment of local residents. It could also attract businesses looking for a branch office or establishing headquarters in a small city. Anna could draw significant populations of potential customers for Downtown Anna.

THE DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN MAP

The master plan maps are shown in Figures 14 and 15 and are graphic representation of the downtown plan vision and of how the different areas could develop. Figure 14 is not intended to be a zoning map, but rather a map showing conceptual building masses to illustrate the concepts and roles for areas. It also shows the transportation concepts that will create the environment that Anna residents want. Figure 15 shows recommended amenities that could be developed as part of the



CHAPTER 6 DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION



overall development scheme such as a Farmer's Market area, "Outdoor Mini Malls", Outdoor Venue, Town Gate, and Open Spaces.

DOWNTOWN FUNCTIONS

Anna's downtown revitalization Plan is a blend of overlapping "functions" that can supply various identified needs.

CIVIC CENTER FUNCTION

A significant city hall, the police headquarters, a library and other public offices could form a center in Anna's downtown. This civic center area could be the physical and conceptual center of downtown Anna. Since the parking would be publicly owned, this provides an ideal opportunity for shared parking that would serve non-profit organizations as well as privately owned businesses. Because hours of use differ from main street activities, the parking for public offices and their visitors can be shared in the evening with local commercial operations. This can anchor an arts district, which is the least financially able to provide ancillary facilities such as parking.

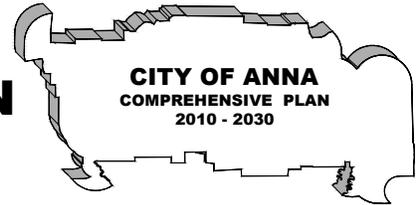
DOWNTOWN BUSINESS FUNCTION

Anna's downtown business district will be a mix of offices, city offices, services and retail operations. It is proposed to be served by a one-way couplet streets.

RESIDENTIAL FUNCTION

Central Anna could become a moderately dense residential area with housing opportunities for the elderly and young people who want to live in an urban setting. Availability of local services would support these varying age groups. Large areas of the downtown that are currently designated for commercial development might better be converted to residential uses to provide the population needed to support other more viable commercial areas.

CHAPTER 6 DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION



MIXED-USE FUNCTION

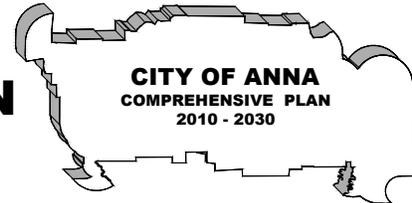
Similar to main streets, mixed-use districts allow multiple uses within a single development. Prime retail space on the ground floor can be mixed with residential or office uses on upper levels. Mixed use is very adaptive to locales where upper floors can house starter businesses, studios or apartments. In many cases renting out the upper floors provides stable income for the development.

POWELL PARKWAY FUNCTION

The uses along Powell Parkway are and will continue to be primarily commercial in nature, but the streetscape is recommended to be designed to be more attractive to pedestrian use. Residential uses in urban forms are encouraged. Buildings are proposed to be adjacent to the street with parking to the side or rear, providing a stronger definition of the pedestrian environment. On-street parking is provided, if possible, to reduce the need for individual businesses to provide parking and to enhance the pedestrian character of the street. These areas form the heart of a pedestrian environment in downtown, with the highest density buildings built close to the sidewalk and with amenities such as cafes and plazas that provide activity and interest to pedestrians. Buildings heights can be to 2 to 3 stories, with higher heights allowed for exceptional buildings. If Heights of building are higher than 3 stories they should step back to permit additional light to penetrate so that the streetscape is not overwhelmed. As its right-of-way is only 80 feet in most places, and three travel lanes south bound will be provided, it is not possible to develop both on street parking and a wide sidewalk area. The current thoroughfare calls for Powell Parkway to be reconstructed in 120 of right-of-way. The dedication of right-of-ways and/or creative design solutions will be needed to ensure that this is a comfortable walking environment. There are many opportunities to accomplish this on Powell Parkway.



CHAPTER 6 DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION



DOWNTOWN PARKING AND TRANSPORTATION

GATEWAYS INTO DOWNTOWN:

POWELL PARKWAY AT HACKBERRY AND WHITE STREET

Several important entrances into downtown could help create a sense of arrival to Anna. Some type of gateway feature should designate the boundary of the downtown at both Hackberry and White Street with Powell Parkway. An example of a Gateway with an arch as graphically shown is Figure 16. Another way to demarcate the entrance is by the use of obelisk on either side of the street.

STREET TREES

The addition of a regular pattern of street trees in conjunction with on-street parking and sidewalks would signify entering a different area. A landscape modification such as this would be relatively easy to implement and would create a pleasant atmosphere for pedestrians who enjoy walking through downtown.



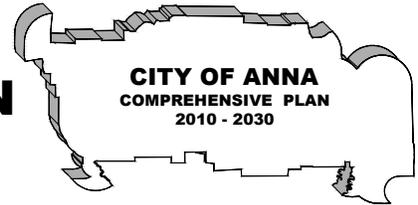
PARKING DEMAND

Many customers refuse to walk more than a block or two to a particular destination, yet the distances needed to walk in many downtowns are similar to those encountered in many suburban shopping malls. The difference between the two experiences is often in the perceived distance to the destination. Walking in a mall offers the customer a variety of amenities, providing additional reasons to visit the mall. In the same fashion, downtown Anna must, in addition to maximizing parking, create an attractive environment to walk. This means creating shady, cool streets with amenities and plenty of shops, and linear small "Outdoor Mini Mall". Where there are no shops along the street, clear visual clues should lead the pedestrian to those areas that have the best pedestrian and shopping areas.

Type of use

Exactly how nearby parking should be depends on the nature of the trip, the type of

CHAPTER 6 DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION



destination and the type of user. Minimum acceptable walking distances can be categorized as:

- 1.) Adjacent (less than 100 ft.), for people with disabilities, deliveries and loading, emergency services and convenience stores.
- 2.) Short (less than 800 ft.), for grocery stores, professional services, clinics and residents.
- 3.) Medium (less than 1,200 ft.), for general retail, restaurants, employees, entertainment centers and religious institutions.

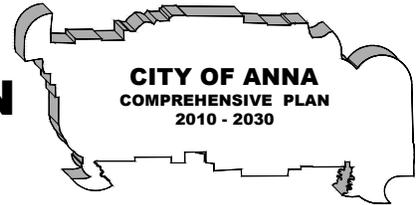
Downtown Residents

As the area adds housing opportunities, more customers will patronize businesses and cultural facilities without having to rely on a car to get there, given the short distances in downtown Anna. Studies show that downtown residents depend less on car trips for their daily needs and are excellent local customers. As the number of residents living in the downtown area increases, the number of parking spaces per customer can be reduced without adverse effects.

Off-street Parking Policies

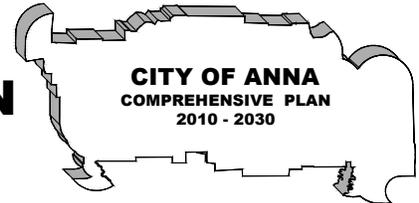
Parking plays an important role in any downtown. However, excessive off-street parking eats away land that can be used to provide destinations and leads to a loss of activity and concentration in an area. It can ultimately discourage the appeal of the area, despite ample parking. With proper parking demand management and sensible use of space, as the area redevelops it can turn parking spaces into more active uses without creating parking shortages. However, this is not to say that there won't be a need for off-street parking in the future in some areas of downtown. It is likely that as areas develop and the demand for land increases, there may be a need for off-street parking facilities. Here are some strategies to consider regarding off-street parking.

CHAPTER 6 DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION



**FIGURE 16
ANNA
TOWN GATE**

CHAPTER 6 DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION



A. On-street Parking

On-street parking is one of the most valuable assets in any community. It acts as a buffer between pedestrians and vehicles, brings customers to a commercial area, and helps ease parking requirements for housing and commercial development.

B. Shared Parking

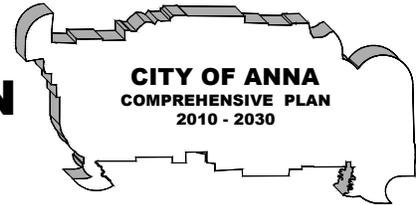
Under shared parking, one parking space easily can serve two or three businesses. While parking should be maximized, it is impractical to provide sufficient parking for each store within a few feet of its front door. This leads to the unfortunate situation in which the parking area sits unoccupied for much of the day. An office building may find its parking spaces nearly unused at the same time (i.e. evenings, weekends) that an adjacent restaurant may be reaching its own peak time for parking spaces. Shared parking also makes good business sense as well, since people can park in one location and visit a range of nearby businesses. Summing the total demand of uses on the block and measuring this at various times of day can help calculate shared parking by block. The time of day with the highest total parking demand is the block's peak demand.

LONG-TERM POLICIES

MAY NEED TO:

- Plan for the appropriate amount and location of necessary parking supply. These decisions will be based on the estimated evaluation of need but also will be based on site-by-site considerations. These include locating sites nearest to intense parking demand and the type and configuration of adjacent land uses.
- Determine the timing of parking need. When should land be purchased and parking developed?
- Encourage walking. An excellent way to encourage customers to use one

CHAPTER 6 DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION



parking space while visiting several businesses is to encourage walking. One way to do this is by improving site design and architecture to make walking a pleasant, safe experience.

DOWNTOWN ANNA MASTER STREET PLAN

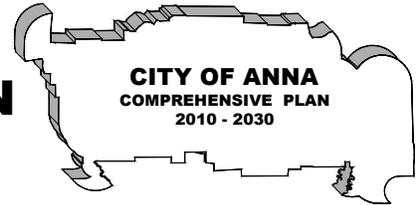
At the core of this plan is developing a way to use downtown streets more effectively. Streets and rights-of-ways take up over 23 percent of downtown Anna's entire acreage. This is the largest publicly owned space in the downtown. Most of the streets are not well designed for through traffic. Only Powell Parkway and White Street both of which are TXDOT facilities allow for heavy traffic use, however, they should be redesigned to be used much more effectively for other uses (West White Street at the time of this writing is under design for improvement). Downtown streets should be viewed as multiple-use facilities, providing the following needs:

- Routes for through traffic
- Access to local businesses and residents
- On-street parking
- Pedestrian travel
- Sidewalk activities, including sidewalk seating for restaurants and limited advertising and merchandising.

The streets downtown vary in width from a 60-foot right-of-way to 80-foot right-of-way. The current typical cross section has narrow travel lanes with bar ditches and no sidewalks. There are few areas with trees or shade and no comprehensive design for shade or weather protection. Also, there are no streets that encourage sidewalk activities such as outdoor eating and limited signage – the kind of amenities that encourage walking, shopping and an overall lively atmosphere.

As part of the plan, there is a recommended alternative design for improving these important rights-of-way. The design makes more efficient use of the available right-of- ways, reallocating wasted space into additional parking or sidewalk width. In

CHAPTER 6 DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION



addition, comprehensive shade and weather protection strategies are envisioned, with a formal street tree program and ways to encourage shade-producing awnings, porticoes and balconies. While it will take many years for all the streets to be completed, this master plan is intended to represent the policy decision of what the street ultimately should become. In this way, annual street improvements will provide constant upgrades to the downtown environment, as well as less disruption and expense than if the improvements occurred piecemeal.

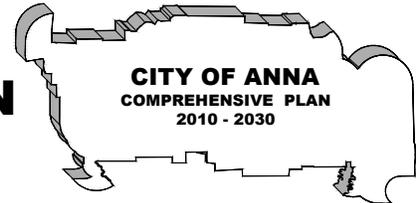
DOWNTOWN MASTER STREET PLAN MAP

The Master Street Plan map shows the recommended street improvements in the downtown core. This plan should be used as a guide for strategic improvements over time, there is no sequence inferred, but rather, public investment should stimulate and support private investment as opportunities arise. A significant element of the Plan is a one-way couplet for Powell Parkway and Interurban Street. The couplet streets will enhance the flow of traffic and allow for increased frontage for retail storefronts. Additionally, during special events and festivals such as “Glow Fest” or some other event the Interurban section of the couplet could be temporarily closed so that the street section becomes a venue itself as it transforms into a large outdoor pedestrian mall with vendors, festival activity booths etc. Two new street sections are being planned. The first street has been dubbed “Towne Lake Circle”. The second street actually leaves the Downtown area and becomes an elevated section of Hackberry Blvd. as it crossed the railroad track. Additionally several sections of existing streets are being proposed as being abandoned. The land recovered can become part of the tax base rather than a liability from a maintenance standpoint. Figure 17, the Downtown Master Street Plan Map identifies the new elements as well as street sections that are recommended for closure.

SIDEWALK USE REGULATION

Other regulatory changes that should be implemented are those that govern the use of the public rights-of-way in the downtown. There are two types: those that regulate and allow architectural projections over the public right-of- way (namely arcades,

CHAPTER 6 DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION



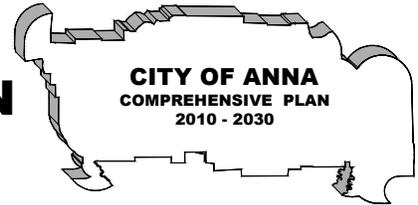
porticos, and balconies), and those that regulate the temporary use of the sidewalk for commercial enterprise (such as sidewalk restaurants, signs, displays of merchandise and vending carts).

A. Architectural Projections Permits

This plan encourages the extension of shade-producing structures over the sidewalk, especially where those sidewalks are widened to more than 10 feet. While shallow awnings do not need supports, shade protection that covers the sidewalk often can involve supports on the sidewalk in the form of columns.

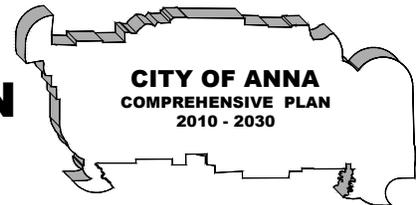
These should be permitted with certain conditions, namely ensuring that the public use of the sidewalk continues, that there is sufficient clearance both vertically and horizontally, and that the conditions for their temporary or permanent removal is spelled out when it applies to a public right-of-way. A balcony also may be formed to provide shade and a unique seating area on the second story. These often are useful for restaurants and hotels and can stimulate development within second stories of buildings. These structures should be covered by a sidewalk use permit ordinance that spells out the standards and conditions. Aesthetically, any use of balconies, arcades or porticos should be complimentary to the building's architectural design and style.

CHAPTER 6 DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION



**FIGURE 17
ANNA
DOWNTOWN MASTER STREET PLAN MAP**

CHAPTER 6 DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION



B. Sidewalk Use Permits

A second category is the use of sidewalks for commercial purposes. This is one of the easiest ways to enliven a downtown, since it draws people and activity to the sidewalk areas. Where sidewalk widths exceed 10 feet, narrow tables can be used and still allow the minimum travel width necessary (five or six feet in most jurisdictions). When the sidewalk is wider, an area can be enclosed for full table seating. In addition, some small “A-frame” signs can be accommodated. On a cautionary note, however, this type of signage should be regulated. Competition for customers may lead to chaos and overly aggressive displays. This plan recommends that regulations be adopted for permits that allow sidewalk seating, specifying the location of tables, the width of unobstructed walking area, and the owner’s responsibilities for cleaning and trash disposal.

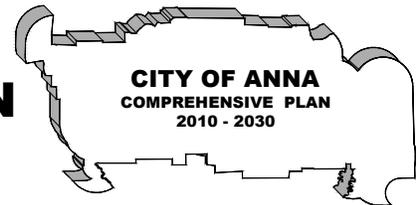
OPEN SPACES, PLAZAS & AMENITIES

Downtown Anna can offer a variety of urban open spaces that will, in their own right, attract visitors. These should be distributed through the overall downtown but focused primarily on the “Outdoor Mini Mall” area between Powell Parkway and Interurban Street north of the Existing Fire Station and south of the new police/utility billing building and a second location east of Sherely Street where Fourth



Street Currently exists leading to an outdoor venue as shown on the Plan. Several other areas exist where open spaces may be used as focal points. Two of these locations are where the thoroughfare couplets begin (Interurban Street and Powell Parkway merges). Other areas include a proposed water feature west of Powell Parkway south of Existing Fifth Street and the proposed green belt area adjacent to Slayter Creek which forms the Downtown Redevelopment Districts western

CHAPTER 6 DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION



boundary.

PUBLIC ART

Public art enriches the urban environment by providing destinations, meeting points and a unique identity to the city. Civic art can take on a variety of forms from statuary to plazas and fountains. Each has a distinct character and place in the urban area. Various types of public art could be used at gateway locations, in the “Outdoor Mini Mall” or as focal points at selected locations.



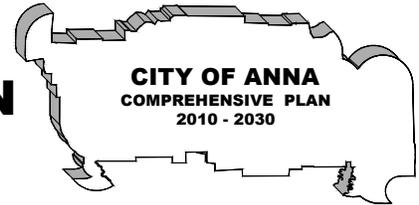
FARMER’S MARKET

One way to attract people to the downtown is providing a market for local farmers to sell their wares. Residents benefit from fresh produce, and farmers profit from higher returns than they can get from wholesale sales. Local markets also provide a place for people to meet and attract a different group of people than might ordinarily come downtown. A location for this activity could potentially be in the area currently used as Riggins Street between Seventh Street and Fifth Street.

DESIGN STANDARDS

Simple zoning will not be effective in developing the kind of downtown envisioned in this plan. Most downtowns include design standards to ensure compatibility between the private uses and the public shared spaces that are the heart of a downtown. However, design processes can often be highly discretionary, and the lack of predictability can discourage investment. Downtown Anna should have easy to use,

CHAPTER 6 DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION



effective and objective standards that can be processed quickly. The current zoning ordinance needs to be changed to include an overlay district where the downtown area can have special treatment in regard to setbacks, parking, architectural controls and other tools to enhance and encourage development.

DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT WAY-FINDING PLAN

Ideally, the location of downtown should be clear to any visitor or resident from the major arterials and freeways. This means that exit signs should be added to U.S. 75. The signs for downtown should be distinctive and promote the “branding” of downtown.

SECURE COMMITMENT FOR DEVELOPMENT

One of the first goals is to secure a commitment for an initial development that will showcase downtown for its potential as a vibrant mixed-use area. While there are many expressions of interest in downtown development, changing these expressions of interest into bricks and mortar will require a great deal of hard work .

CONCLUSION

This plan constitutes ambitions, vision and a plan of action that will transform downtown Anna into a center of economic growth and community pride. While this may seem daunting at first, it is important to both hold an ambitious vision and proceed cautiously. There is a cycle of success and reward that should be followed, with small, relatively inexpensive steps taken at first, evaluating their success, and then taking larger steps as momentum grows. Even small changes can build confidence in the downtown’s investment potential, but nothing will be as effective as a long-term commitment to the downtown’s success by City leadership. The best way to sustain this is through repeated successful projects and a very public celebration and recognition of these successes. Adoption of this plan is not the end of the process but the beginning as new tools are developed - then adopted – then implemented.