ALTERNATIVES

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The following are a series of Downtown alternatives that while not intended to be all inclusive of every conceivable scenario, nor limited to a very limited forced choice of options, are intended to provide an overview of broad realistic planning scenarios for Downtown Anna's future development for consideration.

Alternative 1: Do Nothing

Though not intended to imply that planning is not currently occurring, or land use controls are not in place (they are), this option could be considered business as usual. In other words, the downtown area would be allowed to develop according to the vision of developers and current ordinances. Though not necessarily a bad thing, much of study area would likely continue to be characterized by single uses, residential uses, and auto-centric orientation. Likewise, there would be no higher standards regarding building appearance and that of the streetscape than exist currently. This would also do nothing to improve pedestrian and bicycle safety either. As Anna grows, the locus of commercial activity would likely remain along the major I 75, Powell Pkwy (SH 5), and White Street (FM 455) corridors, potentially overshadowing the small commercial strip of Downtown along Fourth Street. It would be unlikely that the current Downtown Anna would be a thriving district along the lines of downtown McKinney, Frisco, or Grapevine.

Alternative 2: Focus on a Smaller Area

Yet another option would be to plan for a smaller Downtown area as opposed to the current nearly 190-acre study area. This would provide short-term benefits as the planning efforts could be very detailed, highly context sensitive, with a very narrow focus. Consequently, a smaller study area could yield nearer-term results as the redevelopment of only a few city blocks would complete a large portion of the plan. Drawbacks of limiting the planning efforts to a small area would be the potential for missed opportunities as Anna grows, the limited regional draw of a small area compared with larger neighboring downtowns, and the contextual risk of lacking of sufficient space for transitioning from more residential and lower intensity land use areas to a vibrant commercial and/or mixed-use district. Likewise, the proximity of potential impacts such as increased traffic, night time lighting, and noise associated with higher intensity uses may conflict with lower intensity uses if the downtown were very small without appropriate transitions.

Alternative 3: Focus only on Transportation Infrastructure and Parking

Another near-term planning alternative would be to constrain the focus to improving the downtown transportation infrastructure, drainage, and parking. This would address the problem of parking – cited as a problem by nearly all members of the Downtown Area Group – and support vehicular accessibility of local businesses (Image 11). Currently, on-street parking on Fourth Street is technically illegal as it is on the TxDOT right-of-way. Furthermore, the condition of many of the streets downtown, especially Interurban, is substandard with significant surface weathering. Limiting the planning efforts to infrastructure, parking, and consequently street storm drainage would do nothing to control land use and the appearance of Downtown-area buildings.

Image 11: Informal Parking at Intersection of Interurban and Fourth Street

Alternative 4: Focus Only on Land Use

The development of land is primarily driven by private, market forces. Focusing exclusively on land use controls would simplify planning efforts from the City's end of thing by narrowing this study to zoning overlay district concepts, public space reservations, and public space improvements. Land use controls and incentives could specifically target infill development to achieve higher density and intensity levels. Though simplifying the planning efforts, this course of action would do nothing to improve pedestrian and bicycle safety, lack of parking, poor drainage, and the lack of connectivity of downtown streets.

Furthermore, denser development and more intense land uses would only exacerbate current infrastructure and parking problems. Land use and transportation are fundamentally interrelated elements of any thriving urban space.

Alternative 5: Integrated Land use and Transportation infrastructure plan

Integrating land use and transportation infrastructure planning into one comprehensive document that addresses land use, building design, streetscape elements, pedestrian and bicycle safety, landscaping, wayfinding, public art, and utilities offers an opportunity to provide one coherent vision for the development of Downtown Anna – as each of these features is interrelated, impacts the overall built environment, and impacts the experience of residents and visitors alike. Combining these interrelated elements into one plan will provide a holistic blueprint for ensuring that Downtown Anna develops as a coherent, high-quality, and sustainable district. Though a complex plan with many moving parts may take decades to realize, the outcome will be predictable and aligned with one road map.