

City of Waxahachie 2007 Comprehensive Plan

CHAPTER 3: NEIGHBORHOOD LIVABILITY & IMAGE ENHANCEMENT PLAN



Livability is a long-term asset. It is not a luxury; it should be invested in. It can reposition your economy, support a caring attitude about the least advantaged, and highlight the importance of your historic central city. Livability can also foster a climate of good will, cooperation, and leadership in your diverse civic interests.

The Evolution of Livability – America's Most Livable Communities Website



Table of Contents

Introduction.....3.1

Identity & Image3.3

 Achieving the “Texas Town” Feel 3.3

 Safety 3.4

 Infrastructure..... 3.5

Housing & Neighborhoods3.7

 Figure 3-1: Population Age Distribution – 1970 & 2020.....3.7

Livability & Enhancement Policies..... 3.10

 General Policies..... 3.10

 1. Establish Waxahachie as the Center for Arts, Education & Entertainment in the Southern Region. 3.10

 2. Reinforce & Strengthen the Downtown 3.10

 3. Connect the Entire City with a Hike/Bike/Equestrian Trail System, & Make Connections to the Larger Regional Trail System 3.11

 4. Provide for Clustering of Development to Preserve Additional Open Space..... 3.12

 5. Create Attractive Streets with Views & Walkability 3.13

 6. Design Streets So That the Desired Speed Will Be Achieved 3.13

 7. Consider Energy Costs & Environmental Quality 3.14

 Housing & Neighborhoods Policies 3.15

 8. Encourage Development of Distinctive Neighborhoods 3.15

 9. Provide a Variety of Housing..... 3.16

 Table 3-1: Life-Cycle Categories & Housing Types.....3.18

 10. Effectively Integrate Neighborhood-Oriented Parks & Open Space into Neighborhoods 3.19

 11. Improve Existing Neighborhoods As Necessary..... 3.21

 Retail & Office Policies 3.22

 12. In General, Focus Retail in *Centers* & Avoid Creating *Strip Retail*..... 3.22



2007 Comprehensive Plan

13. Ensure That Retail Areas Are Pedestrian-Friendly 3.22
14. Integrate Retail Centers with Adjoining Neighborhoods..... 3.23
15. Ensure That Retail Areas Contain an Integrated Mix of Uses..... 3.24
16. Ensure That Retail and Mixed Use Developments Are Successful and Sustainable..... 3.24
17. Proactively Plan for the Redevelopment of Existing Retail Centers..... 3.27





Introduction

What do “livability” and “sustainability” in a city mean? They are closely linked, and include such things as establishing a readily identifiable image for the community, and creating a safe and friendly environment where people “choose” to live and invest.

Livability involves such things as the:

- ❖ Creation of friendly walkable communities;
- ❖ Creation of areas with a strong “sense of place”;
- ❖ Celebration of the Public Realm;
- ❖ Aesthetic quality of the community and neighborhoods;
- ❖ Proximity to open space and recreational opportunities;
- ❖ Proximity and availability of other community services such as high quality schools and universities;
- ❖ Ease of access to and quality of retail and restaurants;
- ❖ Amount of traffic congestion and availability of alternative means of travel;
- ❖ Availability of the desired type, style, and cost of housing;
- ❖ Proximity to employment opportunities; and
- ❖ Accessibility to natural areas.

What is “the Public Realm?”

This term includes all spaces that are not privately owned and that are encountered by citizens and visitors on a regular basis such that these spaces influence the perception that citizens and visitors have of Waxahachie. Such spaces include streets, parks, sidewalks, trails, and public buildings.

Sustainability, on the other hand, involves creating an environment that people and businesses want to both invest and re-invest in. It includes such things as the:

- ❖ Achievement of a high quality of livability, as outlined above;
- ❖ Ability of a person to live in the community from birth to old age to death — i.e. throughout his or her life-cycle by offering a broad range of quality housing types that can accommodate singles, families, retirees and elderly needs;
- ❖ Ability to adapt to inevitable changes in population characteristics and economic condition, such as employment opportunities, as the community continues to mature and to age gracefully;



- ❖ Creation of a building, cultural and open space infrastructure that contributes to the desirability of a community over time, and that improves with age, such as parks and open space, cultural facilities, and non-residential buildings such as fast-food and big-box retail that do not have to be torn down and rebuilt when tenants move to another location;
- ❖ Provision of a variety of transportation and circulation options; and
- ❖ Design of infrastructure that is environmentally sensitive and that minimizes long-term maintenance costs.





Identity & Image

Achieving the “Texas Town” Feel

Fundamental to the image of Waxahachie is maintaining its “Texas town feel”. Basic to this image is the need to encourage interpersonal interaction and chance meetings with friends and neighbors. This is already clearly being achieved in the Downtown.

However, except for the downtown, all other retail areas are automobile-oriented, and therefore tend to work against the creation of social gathering places and social interaction that provide a “sense of community”. Such “strip” and “pad” development types tend to ebb and flow in response to evolving and changing markets. Other cities like Plano, Richardson, and Carrollton are suffering because of this condition. Significant portions of their retail market have moved northward leaving vacant and underutilized single-purpose developments. These centers were designed and built exclusively for automobile-oriented retail, and they were “walled off” (i.e., physically separated) from adjacent neighborhoods. After a 20- to 40-year economic life, there are few options besides demolition and reconstruction for new uses.

Other design features also negatively affect the “small town feel”. They include such things as:

- ❖ Roadways that are designed for high speed traffic, and which are hostile to pedestrians and bicyclists;
- ❖ Proliferation of single-use, auto-oriented residential subdivisions that are isolated from each other and from the larger community;
- ❖ Commercial buildings which are set back from roadways with large intervening parking lots;
- ❖ Retail centers that do not create “pedestrian districts”;



Example – Traditional Auto-Oriented Retail Center

- ❖ The concentration of retail and services into large centers, with the resulting lack of small, neighborhood-serving retail and services such as coffee shops and non-chain restaurants; and
- ❖ The inability to circulate throughout the City on hike/bike trails and corridors.

Shared experiences such as City-wide events and festivals can help foster a sense of community. For example, the City of Addison programs major events at Addison Circle – from Oktoberfest, to 4th of July celebrations, to Saturday night movies for the family. This helps to create a family-oriented hometown environment. Another example is the city of Frisco, which sponsors an Easter egg hunt and an annual Daddy-Daughter and Mother-Son Dance.

Waxahachie too, has a number of community “celebration” events to build on such as:

- ❖ The Scarborough Renaissance Festival;
- ❖ Paint Historic Waxahachie - Plein Aire Event;
- ❖ Gingerbread Trail Historic Home Tour and Arts & Crafts Fair;
- ❖ Bob Phillips Country Reporter Festival; and
- ❖ The Crape Myrtle Festival Fourth of July Parade.

Safety

Another key to building sustainable communities is creating a feeling of “safety”. This can be enhanced by development patterns in three key ways:

- ❖ Creation of high levels of activity (such as mixed-use developments);
- ❖ Site design which ensures “eyes on the street”; and,
- ❖ Creating a sense of “ownership” and “belonging” to the City and its public places by its citizens.

A mixture of uses that include residential as a component in retail, commercial, and civic areas helps to ensure that there is a resident “ownership” of the area, and that there are extended periods of activity — the more people out walking and socializing, the lower the crime rate typically is in an area.

Safety is greatly boosted in public areas like streets, parks and plazas when residents and businesses have a clear view of those public areas. There is the added benefit that residential properties that face publicly accessible open space and plazas accrue a significant property value premium.





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Creating a "sense of ownership" of an area can be achieved in several ways in addition to those listed above. The creation of gathering places throughout the City in parks, pockets of retail, neighborhood and village centers, and civic areas such as City Hall, schools, community centers and churches provide residents with a strong sense of community and commitment.

Research throughout the U.S. has indicated that people who live in gated communities that are physically separated from the surrounding area do not have the same level of "sense of ownership" in a city as those who live in open neighborhoods which are connected to the larger community. Some of the concerns about gated communities have been expressed by researchers including Edward J. Blakely and Mary Gail Snyder in their book "Fortress America" which include:

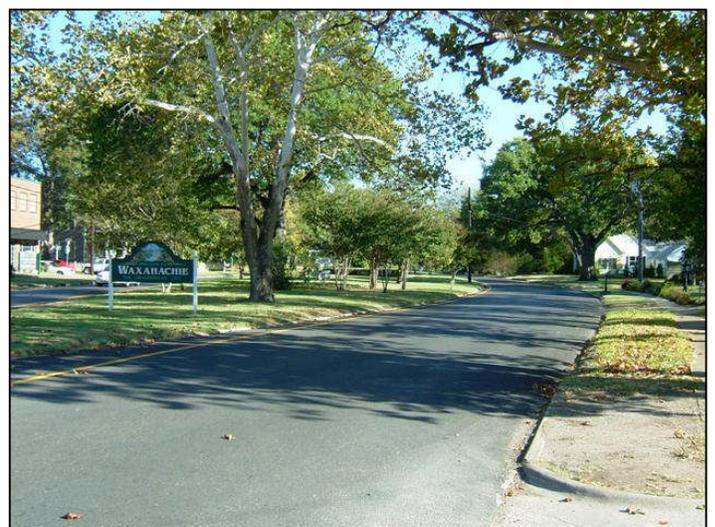
- ❖ The uniformity of its residents in terms of income, housing and political view, leading to a form of reverse ghetto-ization;
- ❖ The tendency over time of residents to vote down taxes for such things as improved schools, revitalization of older areas and general maintenance of the public realm; and;
- ❖ The single-use nature of the neighborhoods which increase vehicle trips and contribute to sprawl.

According to R. D. Wilton, a researcher on community psychology, such communities "do not auger well for urban policies seeking to create mixed-use, mixed-income neighborhoods." In addition, interviews of police departments in cities which have gated communities have shown that there is no indication of a reduction in crime in such neighborhoods.

Infrastructure

The design, quality and location of infrastructure have a major impact on the image of a community. This includes such things as streets, drainage and civic buildings.

Roadway design is one of the most important and overlooked image-builders in a city's arsenal. Tall canopy trees arching over streets have a big visual impact and provide a sense of enclosure and intimacy, while softening the



This Roadway Design Projects a Positive Image of Waxahachie



visual and environmental effects of development and paving.

Drainage is another frequently overlooked image-builder. Integrating floodplains into a comprehensive City-wide open space plan and avoiding concrete-lined channels are vitally important in creating a positive image and adding value to the community. The City is developing a comprehensive parks and trail plans which include drainage corridors. However, these have not identified floodplains based on fully built-out conditions. Rather, they rely on FEMA maps (based on existing conditions at the time the maps were created) and on-site detention to address drainage. This leaves the City vulnerable in future years to possible flooding and having to provide concrete-lined channels and erosion control as the City builds out. In addition, this approach to potential drainage issues misses the opportunity to create major regional amenities with flood-control wet detention areas in public parks. The park plan should therefore be integrated with floodplain management policies to achieve better drainage, as well as to create additional recreation opportunities.





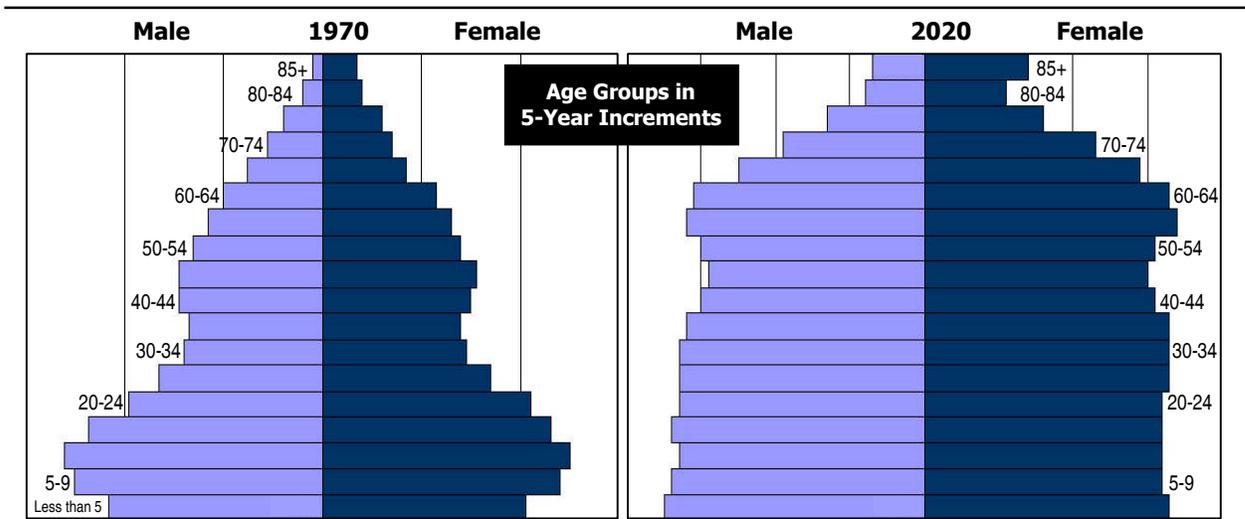
Housing & Neighborhoods

All sustainable communities must provide housing for the full cycle of life – young singles, married couples, families, empty nesters, retirees, and seniors (including independent, assisted-living, and nursing homes). People progressing through each of these life phases have different requirements in terms of size, location, type and cost of housing units. Truly successful cities that provide these options maintain value and continue to attract investment. An important attribute, however, is not to segregate the non-single family unit types, but rather to integrate them into diverse neighborhoods throughout the community.

Over the past 20 years or so, major changes have begun in the composition of the general population. On average, people are living longer, having fewer children, living more single lifestyles, and becoming more ethnically diverse. Consider the following trends identified by William Frey, Senior Fellow with the Brookings Institution, related to the general population:

- ❖ **Traditional Families** – Married couples with children made up only 27 percent of all suburban households in 2000; by 2010, they will constitute as little as 20 percent. Today, the other 73 percent of American Households are made up of singles, families with no children, and single parents with children.

Figure 3-1: Population Age Distribution – 1970 & 2020



Source: Riche, Martha Farnsworth. Farnsworth Riche and Associates. *The Implications of Changing U.S. Demographics for Housing Choice and Location in Cities*. A Discussion Paper Prepared for The Brookings Institution Center on Urban & Metropolitan Policy. March 2001. (Adapted from Figure 1.)

- ❖ **People Living Alone** – People living alone constituted 23.5 percent of households in 2000; by 2010, they will grow to over 33 percent of all households.
- ❖ **Population 35 Years & Over** – Population aged 35 and over reached 46.3 percent in 1990; in 2000, they rose to 50.5 percent.
- ❖ **Minorities** – In the 2000 census, 27 percent of the suburban population in large metropolitan areas nationwide was made up of minorities, up from 19 percent in 1990; minorities were responsible for the bulk of the population growth in many suburban regions.

The demographic changes noted above have important implications for real estate markets. For example, compared to families with children, singles, couples with no children, and retirees are more likely to be attracted to smaller, lower-maintenance housing that is clustered within walking distance of retail, employment and transit facilities. Another interesting fact is that in the Dallas Metroplex in 2005, 26 percent of all households were comprised of single persons; and 47 percent of mortgages were written for singles. This translates into a very large market for quality smaller homes or cottages between 900 and 1,200 square feet.

Most new homes being constructed in Waxahachie are single family detached. This is a reflection of the initial demand for housing in developing areas. Families looking for larger homes (for the money) on single-family lots in a good school district are often the first to move into a new subdivision. However, as in all maturing communities, early residents either “age” in the community or move to another. In fact, the median American moves once every 5 years, so within 8 to 10 years, a majority of the original purchasers typically move out of the community and a new population moves in. This is a phenomenon which all communities have experienced, has contributed to a rapid decline of many monotonous subdivisions. Master-planned communities however, are careful to include a variety of housing types over time.

The additional issue that many fast-growing suburban areas face is the fact that a majority of their building stock and utility infrastructure was built within a relatively short time frame, and will consequently age together and require increasing amounts of maintenance. The best way to avoid the negative effects of this on the quality of the community and the municipal and school tax rate is to ensure re-investment by creating a diversity of housing and retail type and amenities. The greater the diversity of product type, the stronger the market is for each type. The worst possible scenario would be to build all one type and size of home, and one type of retail center as so many communities have done over the last 30 to 50 years.

Based on demographic trends, the maximum sustainable amount of single-family housing appropriate for this region, given the trends noted above, would probably be in the 30 to 40 percent (+/-) range, with the remainder being products such as townhouse, lofts, mother-in-law suites, small apartment buildings





2007 Comprehensive Plan

(6-12 units) and condominiums. Unlike master-planned communities, cities react both to the demand expressed by the development community and to the stated desire of existing residents to build more neighborhoods just like their own. The home-building industry is definitely geared up for responding to the immediate market for single-family homes. They have honed their skills in providing that product as the Dallas-Forth Metroplex has grown outward. However, all major national development companies, and many local companies, are seeing the coming change in demographics and have created divisions that focus on townhomes, lofts, condominiums, mixed-use and other alternative products.

Livability & Enhancement Policies

The *Goals & Objectives* in Chapter 2 and the concepts outlined previously within this chapter provide a basis for these *Livability & Enhancement* policies. The *Implementation Strategies* (Chapter 9) will outline specific ways in which the City can implement these policies, along with other recommended policies from other chapters of the *2007 Comprehensive Plan*.

General Policies

1. Establish Waxahachie as the Center for Arts, Education & Entertainment in the Southern Region

- ❖ Increase cultural opportunities, such as Chautauqua Auditorium in Getzendaner Park, through initiatives including more public and private art venues.
- ❖ Support the City's current higher-education opportunities in terms of adjacent land uses and general City cooperation. Such opportunities include Southwestern Assemblies of God (SAGU), a four-year, private college, and Navarro College, which offers two-year degrees. Navarro College is currently planning a large expansion of their Waxahachie location, and is working with Texas A&M Commerce to provide students the opportunity to earn a four-year degree.
- ❖ Enhance the role of Downtown as the cultural and social center of the City. Support local efforts to create business awareness, promote social events, and create community ties.

2. Reinforce & Strengthen the Downtown

- ❖ Promote the adaptive re-use of historic structures to preserve the City's architectural heritage and sense of authenticity; ensure that new development contributes to the evolution of a strong, pedestrian-oriented mixed use district.



Downtown Waxahachie





2007 Comprehensive Plan

- ❖ Encourage a diversity of housing including mixed use in the Downtown to enliven the district, support retail and provide opportunities for pedestrian-oriented young professional and “empty-nester” living.
- ❖ Enliven open spaces and plazas to serve as focal points, landmarks and gathering places for socializing and celebrations.
- ❖ Increase recreation and entertainment opportunities in the Downtown through the use of mixed use development and cultural events.
- ❖ Connect the Downtown with the rest of the City through the use of trails and transit.

3. Connect the Entire City with a Hike/Bike/Equestrian Trail System, & Make Connections to the Larger Regional Trail System

- ❖ Interconnectedness needs to be created by requiring convenient pedestrian, bicycle and automobile access as development occurs — both within the project itself and to adjacent developed areas. Further, pedestrian and bicycle connectivity to schools, retail areas, parks, and places of employment should be required. If adjacent areas are not yet developed, provisions for pedestrian, bicycle and automobile access should be established with consideration for future connections/access.
- ❖ Development tends to occur autonomously, primarily due to the fact that areas develop at different times. The challenge is to connect these different developments to not only allow for access in between, but to actually encourage people to walk or bike in between (instead of driving). Such interconnectedness would not only further a positive neighborhood and community feel, but would also help to address current major concerns about the nation’s lack of fitness and rising energy costs.
- ❖ For the purposes of these *Livability & Enhancement* policies, unless otherwise specified the term “parks and open space” means the following or has the following characteristics:
 - At least one acre in size, except for areas specifically designed as village or neighborhood greens or trail links.
 - Usable and contiguous, and does not impede the function of natural systems. If the open space is not contiguous, the open space areas should be linked by trails.



Existing Trail in Waxahachie

- Connected to similar facilities off-site, such as other open space areas, parks (of all types), and trails.
 - Permanently protected from further subdivision/development.
 - Evenly distributed within each phase of the development, unless unique site characteristics exist.
 - May be a "Village or Neighborhood Green" with the following:
 - Minimum of 10,000 square feet, with minimum dimension of 50-feet
 - Bounded by at least three streets
 - Adjacent structures that front onto it
 - Edges defined by trees and pedestrian facilities (e.g., trails, benches)
- ❖ Floodplain areas are generally not able to be developed and therefore should be key components of a City-wide framework of protected open space.
- ❖ Trails should be an integral part of the City's park and open space system – trails are recreation facilities that all age groups can use and, in addition can provide an alternative means of transportation. Each new development should provide trail access to larger City-wide and regional trails.
- ❖ The City should ensure that where trails in floodplains cross major streets, the trails are grade-separated to facilitate safe pedestrian movement in such areas.

4. Provide for Clustering of Development to Preserve Additional Open Space

- ❖ Clustered developments should place special focus on preserving terrain features, drainage areas and tree groupings.
- ❖ Preserved open space should not be just left-over space, but should contribute significantly to the surrounding neighborhoods and the City as a whole.
- ❖ Adopt gross density (units per acre) standards without minimum lot sizes instead of using minimum lot size to address density (if certain criteria is met). This will help to achieve a mix of unit types within neighborhoods while preserving large amounts of parkland and minimizing road and utility costs.
- ❖ As the City continues to grow, there will be a concern that the environment of Waxahachie will suffer as development proceeds and more open land area is lost. In response to these concerns, the City should encourage clustered development in a way that environmentally significant areas such as flood plains, slopes and habitat are protected and open space is conserved. Clustered development would help preserve the semi-rural environment while helping to maintain an important part of Waxahachie's heritage for future generations.





5. Create Attractive Streets with Views & Walkability

- ❖ Maximize the visibility of architecturally distinctive cultural and civic facilities and open space area corridors.
- ❖ Maximize visibility of open space areas by locating parks in prominent locations, and by widening open space corridors such as flood plains and trails where they are crossed by roadways.
- ❖ Where streets terminate or “T” into another roadway, ensure that there is a prominent feature or building at that point. Good examples of prominent features include such things as parks, clock towers, schools and architecturally distinctive civic, cultural or nonresidential structures.
- ❖ Design streets so that they gently curve, to provide oblique views of buildings and streetscape, but still maintain a general grid pattern to maintain a sense of orientation.
- ❖ Ensure that sidewalks are at least 5-feet wide (the minimum dimension that two people can comfortable pass each other) and that canopy trees are located between the sidewalk and curb to create shade and a feeling of safety for pedestrians.
- ❖ Pursue the development of streetscape plans for highly traveled roadways throughout Waxahachie. Such plans should include prioritization of roadways, as well as specific consideration for how trees, pedestrian amenities, lighting, etc. can be integrated retroactively with regard to utilities and easements.

6. Design Streets So That the Desired Speed Will Be Achieved

- ❖ Utilize techniques such as street trees, buildings close to the sidewalk, on-street parking (where applicable), roundabouts, street curvature, “yield” sections and textured paving to achieve desired vehicle speed. In fact, the use of roundabouts in place of stop signs and

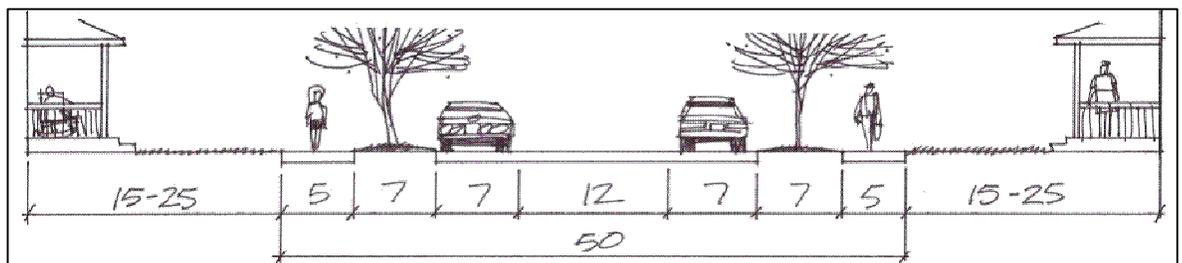


Diagram of a Yield Section

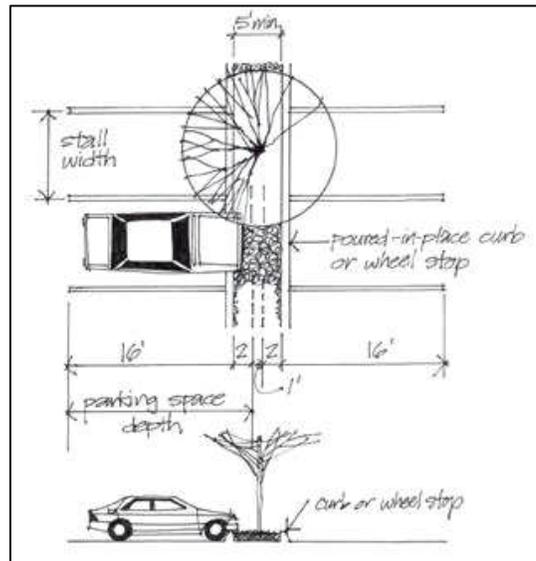
speed bumps have been found to facilitate the flow of traffic at a slower speed, while not impeding emergency services such as EMS and Fire. In addition, streets that are designed

to the related desired speed are inherently more bicycle-friendly because the incidence of motorists exceeding the speed limit is reduced. Use of law enforcement or installing four-way stop signs are signs that "natural speed" cues are not sufficiently in place.

- ❖ Utilize landscaped roundabouts in existing and new neighborhoods where appropriate, to slow and calm traffic but allow continuous movement, and to provide visual relief in long, straight streets.

7. Consider Energy Costs & Environmental Quality

- ❖ Encourage development that is environmentally sensitive in terms of the following:
 - Site Planning. Utilize environmentally sound site layout and density that will minimize the need for continuously high levels of energy consumption. This may include such things as:
 - Clustered development (i.e., conservation subdivision design) that preserves open space and minimizes construction and maintenance of roads and utilities, and
 - Higher density developments in mixed use centers that reduces utility distribution, roads and trips.
 - Water Quality. Preserve open space and throughout developments to allow ground absorption of water and the natural filtering and cleaning effect of soil and plant material to improve ground and stream water quality. In addition, utilize native and/or drought-tolerant species with organic mulch for landscaping to minimize fertilizers and excessive water use.
 - Heat Island Effect. Shading paved areas reduces the temperature by 40 degrees on the surface and seven to 11 degrees in the ambient temperature. Preservation of open space through the maintenance of natural flood plains, creation of parks, clustering of development, conservation of environmentally sensitive areas, and shading of paving such as streets, parking lots and plazas will greatly reduce the ambient temperature in the city and further reduce energy costs for air conditioning.



Graphic Depiction of How the "Heat Island Effect" Can be Reduced in Parking Areas with Shade Trees in Landscaped Strips





- Air Quality. Improving air quality can involve such things as:
 - Encouraging mixed use,
 - Providing interconnectedness of streets between neighborhoods and retail, recreation and services to minimize trip length and congestion,
 - Providing alternative circulation systems such as transit and hike/bike trails; and
 - Use of low maintenance grass and ground covers to reduce the need for mowing.
- Ecology. Preserve plant and animal habitat areas and corridors in a functional, native condition to maintain a level of bio-diversity.
- Light Pollution. Consider implementing a "Dark Sky Ordinance", which will help to minimize lighting into the night sky and to neighboring residential areas.
- ❖ Plan for transit service which will connect major retail venues, Downtown, and neighborhood centers with future regional rail to reduce frequency and duration of trips by the residential and daytime population.
- ❖ Utilize green building and neighborhood development standards in the design and construction of all new buildings and neighborhoods.
- ❖ The City should consider adopting buffer requirements for major stream channels, tributaries and waterways to protect natural drainage corridors as a valuable resource for the community.

Housing & Neighborhoods Policies

8. Encourage Development of Distinctive Neighborhoods

- ❖ Provide schools, open space, neighborhood services, retail, dining and entertainment choices within walking distance of most neighborhood residents.
- ❖ Utilize a traditional or modified grid of small blocks as a foundation for new neighborhoods to enhance orientation, walkability, route choices and community interconnectivity. The perimeter of a block should not exceed 3,000 feet in length. Where a block face exceeds 800 feet, a minimum 20-foot pedestrian access easement should be provided through the block, except where adjacent to a golf course.
- ❖ The preservation of open space, its location within the neighborhood and its use (as a common green, recreation area, preservation of flood plain or other use) also creates unique and special neighborhoods.



- ❖ The location and mix of housing where each property has different characteristics — view, proximity to open space, access to retail services, house size and type — create neighborhoods that attract reinvestment because of each property’s uniqueness. This is often not the case in large homogenous subdivisions.



Housing Tree Concept
Large lots & homes were prominent features along main entry streets into Downtown Waxahachie when it was developed. This is typical of old Texas towns.

- ❖ Identify and preserve existing neighborhood landmarks, such as historic or distinctive buildings and prominent natural features, to foster neighborhood pride, distinctiveness and sense of ownership.
- ❖ Utilize a “housing tree” as areas are developed, whereby the largest lots and homes are located on the main entry streets with smaller lots and homes internal to the neighborhood.

9. Provide a Variety of Housing

- ❖ It is important for cities to provide a variety of housing for the full life cycle of citizens and to meet the needs of different segments of the population – people of different ages, socio-economic levels, and employment levels.
- ❖ The “full-life cycle” is intended to describe all stages of life – young singles, professional couples, families with children, empty-

SPECIAL HOUSING TYPES

Cottage. Single Family, but house size is a maximum of 1,500 square feet.

Multi-Unit Large Home. A building which is designed and constructed to look like a large single family home, but may contain 4-6 units. Parking is located behind the main structure and may be accessed by a drive-thru from the front street, or by an alley.

Loft. These are units which are located in association with retail (either above or in close proximity to) and generally include a mezzanine space. They are often located above the first floor which may be office of retail use.

Live-Work Unit. A live-work unit is a residential unit which includes the capability for the ground floor space adjacent to the front sidewalk to become an allowed business use.

Mother-in-Law Suite. This is an accessory residential unit located on a single family lot which does not have a presence on the front street. It will also include a separate entry from the main house. It is often constructed above the primary unit’s garage or attached to the rear of the primary home.

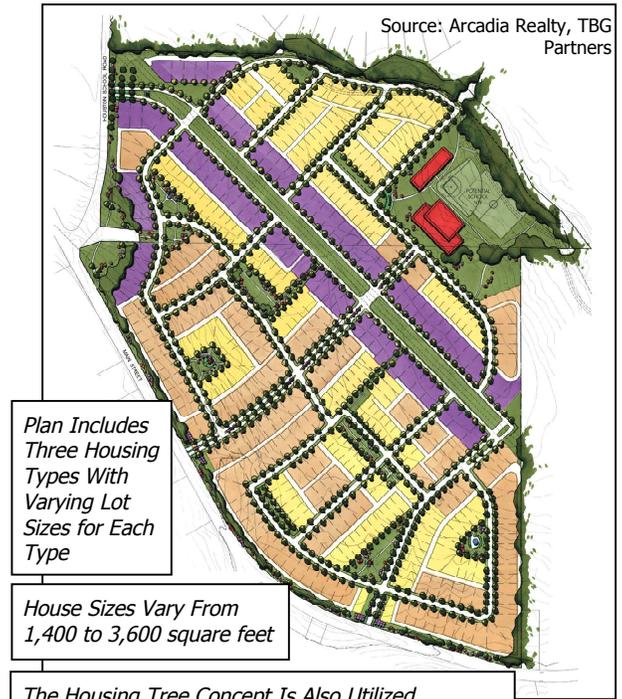
Carriage House. A carriage house is similar to a mother-in-law suite except that it is generally larger, located on a larger lot and located above a large parking garage or stables.



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nesters, retirees and seniors, including those requiring living assistance. This should include high income homes of various types (large lot, small lot, townhome, loft and condominium) and more affordable housing types (small lot/small home, townhome, loft, condominium, mother-in-law suite, carriage house and others).

- ❖ The inclusion of a range of quality, well-constructed and appropriately situated residential unit types should be part of all new developments. This can provide affordable accommodation alternatives for a variety of housing needs of various age groups, employment, and economic status. Such residential unit types include small homes/small-lot development, townhouses, multi-unit homes, carriage houses, mother-in-law suites, live-work units (adjacent to retail and commercial areas), and loft apartments (in mixed use areas).
- ❖ The primary beneficiaries of these types of accommodation include large sectors of the population which currently have limited opportunities in Waxahachie due to the type of housing being currently being constructed. (See *Table 3-1* on the following page.) These sectors of the population includes, but is not limited to:
 - Young singles desiring small, affordable accommodation,
 - Young, single professionals desiring proximity to retail and entertainment,
 - Couples seeking to start families,
 - Baby boomers,
 - Seniors on fixed incomes, and
 - Retirees desiring a smaller, low-maintenance unit in a walkable, mixed use neighborhood (similar to the Uptown area of Dallas).
- ❖ It is important however, that these varied housing types not be consolidated in one large area which could become blighted (or stigmatized), but rather dispersed in appropriate areas with proximity to open space, recreation and services such as retail.



The Plan for the Homestead at Mills Branch (in Lancaster, TX)

Table 3-1: Life-Cycle Categories & Housing Types

THE FOLLOWING ARE LIFE-CYCLE CATEGORIES AND THEIR TENDENCY TOWARD PARTICULAR HOUSING TYPES AND LIFE STYLES.

Cohort Life-Cycle	Single-Family	Cottages (<1,500 s.f.)	SFA/Townhouse	Multi-Family	Loft	Hi Rise Condo	Mother-in-Law Suite	Carriage House	Urban Retail Accessible
Young Persons (Birds leaving the nest)				*	*		*		*
Young Professionals			*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Shared Clerical				*	*			*	*
Service Industry				*	*		*		
Young Couples	*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*
Families with Children	*		*						
Empty Nesters	*	*	*			*		*	*
Retirees		*	*			*			*
Single Elderly			*			*	*	*	*
Senior Assisted Care				*					*
Senior Nursing Care				*					

NOTE: Refer to the black textbox on page 3.16 this chapter for a description of some of these housing types.

- ❖ The City should support the creation and integration of residential units suitable for young people and empty-nesters by encouraging developments of 20 acres or more to include:
 - At least five percent of the total number of units to be suitable for young persons, empty nesters and the single elderly. Units that would qualify include townhouses, cottages, lofts, etc. (with adjacent mixed use retail), and mother-in-law suites and carriage houses (in association with single-family homes).
 - To ensure quality, such units/lots should meet the following criteria.
 - Homes on lots that are narrower than 55 feet should have rear-entry garages;



Mews-type streets are narrow, but provide for a little more parking and are wider than alleys

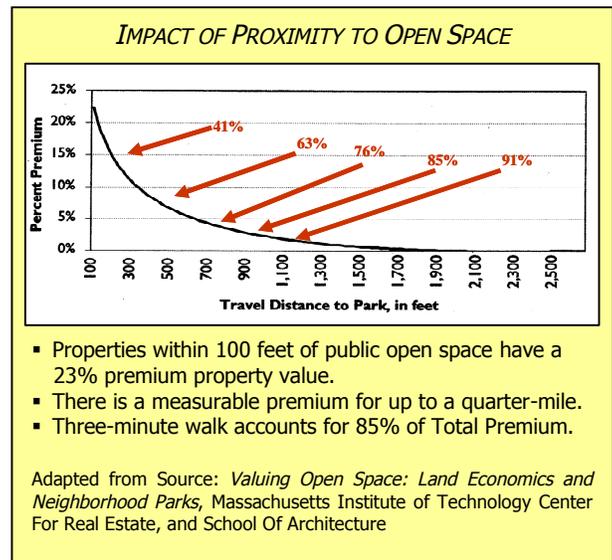


- Townhouses should have a minimum required square footage of livable space (e.g., 1,200 square feet), with no maximum size. Townhouses must also have rear-entry garages.
- Any lots/units directly adjacent to or across a street from a park/open space should face onto the open space.
- Notwithstanding the above, the five-percent requirement may also include homes designed and built to appear like a traditional large home, but which may include up to four living units.

10. Effectively Integrate Neighborhood-Oriented Parks & Open Space into Neighborhoods

For the purposes of these policy concepts, a *neighborhood* is generally defined as having a radius of a 5-minute walk or 10-minute, or ¼ to ½ mile. *Neighborhood-oriented Parks* do not fall under the City’s parks and recreation standards for neighborhood parks. These parks are primarily landscaped, and serve as a visual amenity and a gathering place for socializing with neighbors. They are generally maintained by a neighborhood association, although they may also be dedicated to the City. In areas with residences that are marketed to families with children, Neighborhood-Oriented Parks may contain a small playground.

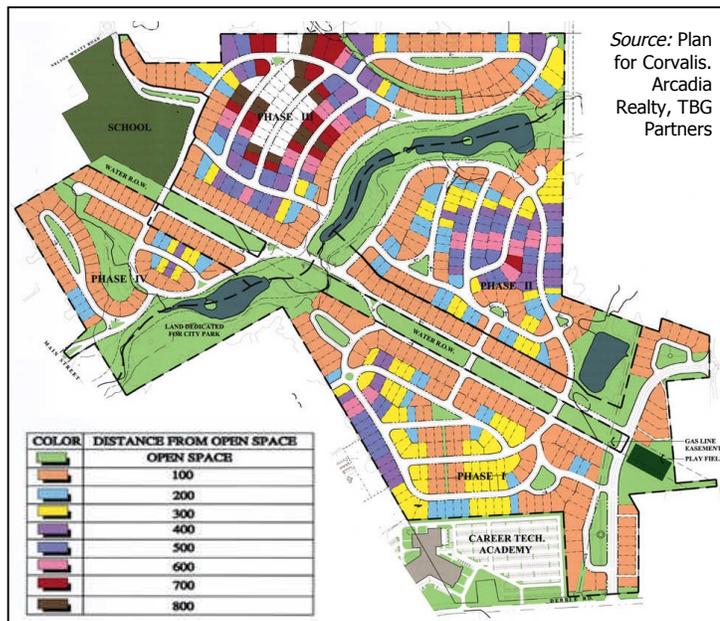
- ❖ Neighborhood-oriented parks should be centrally placed to create a neighborhood focus, whether utilizing drainage and flood plain areas or topographic and vegetative features.
- ❖ There should be a minimum Neighborhood-Oriented Park ratio of at least one acre for every 100 residential lots.
- ❖ Such parks and open space should generally have no smaller dimension than 50 feet.
- ❖ All parks and open space should either be bounded by lots, or bounded by streets with lots fronting onto the streets and adjacent open space. These configurations provide access to such parks and open space, thereby encouraging a sense of community and “ownership”.



- ❖ To ensure that the maximum value accrues to both parks and homes, adjacent homes should directly face the park, whether or not there may be an intervening street.⁵⁻¹ If homes face onto the open space and there is no public street, then the homes could be accessed via a mews-type street.
- ❖ No home should be further than 800 feet from a public park or open space corridor in order to benefit from a property value premium. This may not be feasible for in large-lot developments (where lots are over one acre in size), and therefore an exception may be made for this type of development.
- ❖ The hike-and-bike trail system should connect homes, parks, schools, retail, employment, and entertainment centers, wherever possible. These trail connections should be primarily off-street dedicated trails, and only be located adjacent to streets in retail areas, and where otherwise it is absolutely necessary for continuity.
- ❖ The subdivision and development process should include consideration of the way in which residential and nonresidential lots are laid out – adjacency and accessibility to park and open space areas should be optimized in all types of development.
- ❖ In neighborhoods, smaller residential lots or more dense residential areas should be located in the closest proximity to the parks and open spaces provided – this will maximize the value of those lots and areas, and the parks and open spaces off-set smaller lot sizes.



Open Space & Trail Effectively Integrated Into a Neighborhood Area (Calgary, Canada)



Source: Plan for Corvallis. Arcadia Realty, TBG Partners

Lots Are Optimized for Proximity to Parks & Open Spaces

³⁻¹ Miller, Andrew Ross. *Valuing Open Space: Land Economics and Neighborhood Parks*. Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), February 2001.





- ❖ Where possible, other green areas should also be utilized, such as landscaped medians, roundabouts, street islands, conservation areas, and village greens to provide a heightened sense of open space.

11. Improve Existing Neighborhoods As Necessary

- ❖ Work with neighborhood associations and property owners to achieve the following:
 - Retrofit neighborhoods with canopy trees to slow traffic and to shade sidewalks and street paving, when physically and financially feasible. On streets that are excessively wide, or where desired, strategically locate tree planters in the parking lane of the street, being careful not to interrupt drainage. The installation of street trees can be achieved by developing a City program for planting trees in neighborhoods as residents request it and on a cost-share basis.
 - Utilize techniques such as street trees, roundabouts and textured paving to achieve desired vehicle speed.
 - Install landscaped roundabouts to break-up long straight streets, where physically possible.
 - Screen rear alleys and garages when they abut public streets and open space.
- ❖ Assist existing neighborhoods in making hike-and-bike trail connections to a City-wide open space and trail system.
- ❖ Facilitate volunteer-based programs to upgrade housing and improve neighborhood areas. Funds for such programs could be garnered from grants or from charitable donations (e.g., from businesses, churches).
- ❖ Document the conditions of neighborhoods as they age to identify deteriorating areas and to prioritize such areas for improvements. Facts that should be documented include but are not limited to, code violations, public safety reports (e.g., police and fire), and ownership/rental percentages. There are many methods that can be used to determine these facts, including door-to-door surveys.



In order to slow traffic on existing streets which are too wide, roundabouts could be constructed, and tree wells could be installed in parking lanes at key locations to narrow the perceived street width. In addition, curbs may be "bumped out" at intersections, taking care not to impede drainage.

Retail & Office Policies

12. In General, Focus Retail in Centers & Avoid Creating Strip Retail

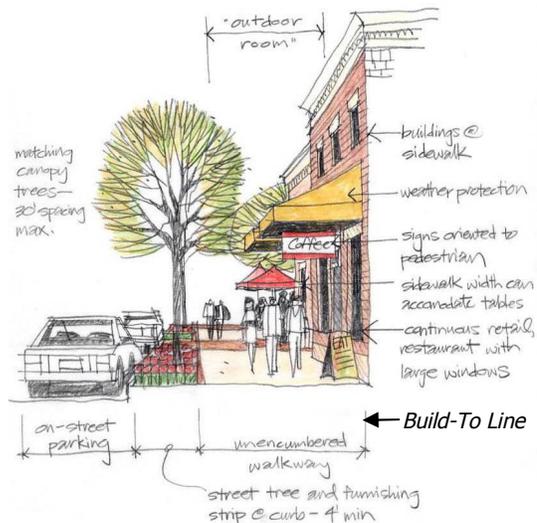
- ❖ Local retail centers should contain 15-20 acres, and be master planned for a pedestrian friendly environment.
- ❖ Where existing ownership patterns and market conditions dictate "strip-style" retail development, then ensure shared access, cross access, a consistent build-to line and continuity of sidewalk adjacent to buildings along the corridor.



Diagram of Strip Retail Development

13. Ensure That Retail Areas Are Pedestrian-Friendly

- ❖ Site buildings fronting onto roadways with a build-to line, and with parking internal to the project.
- ❖ Include trees and canopies for pedestrian areas along the outside perimeter of buildings, between the sidewalk, and street and within parking areas. In addition, ensure that canopy trees are planted to shade people, cars and paving in parking lots.
- ❖ Orient business signage for easy viewing by pedestrians.
- ❖ Allow for interesting, eye-catching detail such as sidewalk signs, public art and sidewalk displays to enrich the experience of the public realm.
- ❖ In retail areas, encourage the design of small gathering spaces and sidewalks of sufficient width to accommodate both pedestrians and sidewalk tables in order to maximize opportunities for social interaction.



Source: James Richards, *Places to Flourish*, 2005





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- ❖ Big box retail buildings themselves should be required to be designed to fit more easily into the City fabric by:
 - Dividing the façades into visually smaller pieces. This is not simply alluding to façade offsets, but to actually making the large building appear as though it is a series of smaller stores.
 - Finishing out the entire building in an attractive manner, including all parts of the building that are visible from public streets, trails and internal circulation (including parking areas).



Manhattan, NY



Portland, OR



Chicago, IL

Examples of How "Big-Box Retail" Can Fit Into a Mixed Use Development

- Providing attractive, landscaped, pedestrian-friendly connections to surrounding residential areas (so that surrounding residents are more likely to walk to the store regardless of its size).
- Being required to be integrated into a retail "village" (so that they are not stand-alone structures), or to be located close to the street to facilitate future recycling to smaller uses.

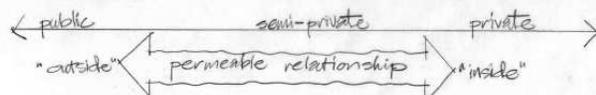
14. Integrate Retail Centers with Adjoining Neighborhoods

- ❖ This could be accomplished by utilizing transition uses such as townhomes and live-work units, and by providing pedestrian, bicycle and automobile access.
- ❖ Since retail properties are often carved out of larger tracts of land and the residential land is developed first, ensure that the retail portion is conceptually planned, that pedestrian and vehicular connections are provided for, and that transition uses may be accommodated.
- ❖ Endeavor to screen service areas with buildings rather than tall screening walls, whenever possible.

- ❖ Where possible, retrofit existing centers to improve pedestrian connections to adjacent neighborhoods.

15. Ensure That Retail Areas Contain an Integrated Mix of Uses

- ❖ Mixed use retail areas should be encouraged to include office, live-work and residential units in order to strengthen the retailing component, reduce trips, and increase activity (and thereby, safety and security). These uses may be either vertically or horizontally mixed, but should be comprehensively planned and integrated with pedestrian and vehicular connections.
- ❖ Encourage inclusion of "third places", such as coffee shops, bookstores, sidewalk cafes and ice cream stands to foster social interaction. Ideally, these should be sited immediately adjacent to the public realm (such as sidewalk, plaza or Neighborhood-Oriented Park) to maximize opportunities for people-watching and informal encounters.
- ❖ Encourage inclusion of neighborhood services in retail centers, such as banks, dry cleaners, neighborhood hardware and grocery stores, and a range of dining and entertainment options.



Source: James Richards, *Places to Flourish*, 2005

16. Ensure That Retail and Mixed Use Developments Are Successful and Sustainable

The concept of retail and mixed use development is more than simply defining land uses. Successful mixed use developments, old and new alike, have key elements that make them *feel* like special places. The following elements, while they are not easy to define or outline, can be generally identified, and should be incorporated in all retail and mixed use developments:

- ❖ A Defined Character. Considerations should be made to the type of atmosphere that is intended to be created, such as a village-like character. *Authenticity* of design and context should also be considered.





2007 Comprehensive Plan

- ❖ An Effective Mixture of Uses. A mixture of both horizontal and vertical uses should be established, and should include uses such as retail, residential, live-work and/or office uses. Mixed use developments should be at least two stories in height, and the ground floor should primarily be constructed to retail standards (i.e., a minimum 16 feet in ceiling height).
- ❖ Maximum Setbacks. Maximum setbacks (build-to lines) bring building facades closer to the street and to the pedestrian. This also helps to achieve internalized parking.
- ❖ A Central Gathering Space or Focal Point. This type of element not only creates an identity for the development, but often establishes an obvious pedestrian focus. A gathering space or focal point can be in many forms, including but not limited to a park, plaza, fountain, or civic building.
- ❖ A Pedestrian Orientation. The first consideration of circulation within the development should be toward the pedestrian experience in getting from one place to another, including access to the development from adjacent neighborhoods and areas. Elements such as wide, lighted sidewalks, benches, shade trees, canopies, and attractive views add to the pedestrian feel.
- ❖ Interesting Architecture. Many downtown areas of old Texas towns recognized that buildings around the town square had to be special. Such buildings often had intricate moldings, spires, canopies, balconies, etc. Though historic-style architecture is not necessary, buildings should have tripartite design (a base, middle and top), be tall enough to create a feeling of being in an outside "room", and have an interesting



This Gathering Space in Southlake Town Center Creates a Focal Point



Legacy Town Center (Plano) Has a Modern Character & A Small Lake That Creates a Focal Point



West Village (Dallas) Has Retail, Office and Residential Uses, and Narrow Setbacks

façade (windows, entries, and displays for retail) at ground level. Buildings in mixed use developments should appeal to the pedestrian and to the passer-by – they should be varied and different enough to be inviting to make people want to stop and experience more.

❖ Strategic Parking Solutions. While the focus of mixed use areas should be on the pedestrian, the reality is that parking is still an important part of developed areas, and needs to be adequately provided. The City should consider the following parking solutions.

- Shared parking between uses should be permitted in order to lessen the overall amount should be permitted.
- On-street parking should be encouraged wherever possible.
- Where on-street parking is not possible, such as for retail directly facing an arterial roadway, a single double-row of parking (approximately 60 feet) should be allowed in front of the retail.



New Mixed Use Areas Are Trying to Recreate the Interesting Architecture That Waxahachie Has in Its Downtown



These Parking Garages Are “Hidden” By Buildings That Line Them

- All parking structures should be lined with buildings to make it convenient for users and to enhance the pedestrian environment from the adjacent streets.
- Any parking lots that are created should be internal to the development, and should be broken up into small areas (as opposed to large expanses that are often part of shopping centers and malls).



17. Proactively Plan for the Redevelopment of Existing Retail Centers

- ❖ Since retail centers often fail because of a surplus of retail-zoned land, competition from other centers and a weakening market that is moving to other areas, such centers should generally be redeveloped. Redevelopment should largely consist of non-retail uses such as new residential (including townhomes and patio homes) and Neighborhood-Oriented Parks, with limited retail uses (such as a coffee shop, bakery or restaurant). In addition, new homes in a neighborhood area often reinvigorate investment in the adjacent neighborhoods.
- ❖ All redevelopment of retail centers should be geared to creating attractive pedestrian areas which are well connected to surrounding development.
- ❖ Developments with big box retail buildings and shopping malls could be retrofitted into pedestrian-oriented developments by looking at the underground utility runs, “out-parcels”, parking pads, vehicular circulation and the basic building structure to determine how to extract a street and block pattern for infill. Another key issue is to determine how any redevelopment would connect to surrounding streets and paths. Therefore, it is important to review new big box and retail development for future redevelopment options prior to approval.



At Legacy and Custer Road in Plano, this was an underutilized retail-zoned parcel which was redeveloped with new patio homes. (Conceptual Plan from *Joint Retail Study*, 2002, Townscape, Inc.)