Town Square Initiative

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Reactivate vacant buildings and spaces by working on place.
Place Driven
Market Informed
Feasibility Studies
Market Demand

Demographics

Victoria is located 30 miles inland from the Gulf of Mexico and is within a two-hour drive of Corpus Christi, Houston, San Antonio and Austin. Known as the South Texas Crossroads, Victoria is a regional hub for a seven county area and serves a retail trade area of over 250,000 people.

The Victoria of today is a modern city, but its history is rich and multi-faceted. Founded in 1824 on the Guadalupe River as Guadalupe Victoria, it was named for the first president of the republic of Mexico by Martin De Leon. It developed an early importance as a stop on the La Bahia Road as well as a ranching center and shipping point with its strategic river location. Today, as a regional economic and cultural center, Victoria offers a quality of life that parallels major metro cities with a symphony orchestra, a fine arts association, a nationally recognized Such Festival, numerous historic homes, museums, and libraries, a branch of the University of Houston that complements Victoria College, and the Texas Zoo, designated the National Zoo of Texas in 1984.

Victoria’s downtown still retains a small town atmosphere and benefits from the diversity of industries as well as being the seat of Victoria County. Downtown revitalization efforts are led by Victoria Main Street which has been a designated Texas Main Street city since 2011. The program has worked to ensure downtown contributes to the community’s overall quality of life by providing opportunities for economic growth as well as entertainment.

Office Market

According to the commercial real estate listing service LoopNet, the Victoria office market has approximately 124,400 square feet (SF) of estimated space available in the properties with the clear majority (approximately 100,000 SF) in the Plains Capital Bank building at 101 W. Goodwin. Based on the common ratio of 150 square feet per office worker, this would imply the area’s economy will require the creation of approximately 1,500 new office jobs to occupy this public listing of office space.

Based on the area’s business and industrial composition, TSI estimates that there is a total of 1.85 million square feet of occupied office space. Unfortunately, there are no publicly available data estimating the total space within the Victoria market. That said, according to employment to office space square footage estimates, the demand for space has waned by approximately 226,000 square feet at its recent peak.

These data estimates imply that little to no immediate demand for the development of new office space is present in Victoria.

Residential Rental Market

According to the Texas-based apartment research and marketing firm, ALN Apartment Data which was accessed through the Texas A&M Real Estate Center, Victoria’s rental market has improved substantially since the first quarter of 2016. During that period, the occupancy rate rose from 81.4 percent to a recent 93.3 percent, and average rent per square foot advanced from $1.02 to $1.10.

According to the US Census Bureau, there were approximately 3,000 occupied apartment units in the Victoria area; whereas in 2016 (latest data available), the bureau estimates about 3,600. Applying those estimates to the occupancy rates provided by ALN yields approximately 4,107 total apartment units in the community.

The fast rate of rebound in both occupancy and rental rates indicate there is easily enough demand to absorb the square footage of new residential space from the rehabilitation of the Convent. However, the project will likely require substantially higher rents than $1.10 per square foot.

Hotel Market

Data provided to the Office of the Governor - Texas Tourism Division, indicates that the number of hotel rooms in the Victoria market fell from 1,996 in 2016 to 1,849 in 2017 with a net decrease in the number of hotels from 27 to 25. At the same time, occupancy rates climbed from 47 percent to 56 percent, and the average daily rate increased to $80.45 per room and an average revenue per room of $45.05. By comparison, the statewide average daily rate was $80.15 per night with an occupancy rate of 64.8 percent.

While the data indicate there is no latent demand for the addition of hotel rooms to the Victoria market, this does not necessarily indicate that a new high-end boutique lodging would not do well in the area, and there is no other similar product within the region to compare it to. What can be said is that the hotel market appeared to be in a state of recovery during 2017 from a 2016 low point as seen in the average daily rate, occupancy rates, and the 10 percent increase in the number of room nights sold. In addition, 2018 data is not yet available, although given the assessment of other data, it would appear the local area is well on its way to rebounding from the last slump in oil prices.
Downtown Action Plans
Community Survey Summary

The community survey is the first step in developing the Downtown Action Plan. Complete survey results are available through Canton Main Street.

Current Conditions

- **86% Female**
- **13% Male**
- **1% no answer**

- **211 Survey Responses**
- **64% from 75103 zip code**

The top reasons why you come downtown:
1. Dining
2. First Monday Trade Days
3. Boutique Shopping

The top reasons why you leave town:
- Movies
- Coffee Shop
- Nightlife
- Boutique shopping
- Bowling

When you said you MOST visit downtown:
- **Frequency**
  - A few times a year: 18%
  - Around noon: 21%

- **Time**
  - 70%
  - 68%

Desired Conditions

73% Prefer more food events

**Desired Events**
1. Food
2. Family-Friendly
3. Outdoor Concerts

Music Venue
The project most likely to transform downtown.

What you think will make downtown a more desirable place to live, work, and visit:
- 119/170
- 116/170
- 62/170

Brewery/brewpub and winery/wine bar were not far behind.

Your priorities for downtown's future:
1. Preserve and rehabilitate downtown's historic buildings.
2. Recruit new businesses and provide resources to help existing businesses expand.
3. Develop additional community events and programming in the downtown area.
5. Establish a downtown brand that is different than First Monday Trade Days.

Parking.

You believe there is not enough parking in downtown and that it can be difficult to find the goods and services that are needed.
15 IDEAS for CANTON
COME VOTE ON WHICH IDEAS YOU WANT TO SEE HAPPEN!

Community Workshop #2
TUESDAY 5-7PM
7 AUGUST 2018
AT VAL’S ITALIAN RESTAURANT
5:30 PRESENTATION
Voting immediately afterwards
Downtown will be lively and feel like the heart of the community once again — it will be the place people come together to socialize, relax, and hang out.
A New Vision for Downtown

Combining the community feedback with TSB’s assessment and the Canton project team’s desired outcomes, a vision map was developed highlighting streets and public space improvements, catalyst projects, historic preservation activities, and public/private partnerships. There is a mix of simpler, immediately actionable items along with longer-term more complex initiatives.

The map represents the community’s desire to return downtown to its place as the heart of Canton once again. There is a strong emphasis on adding new entertainment uses for the community to enjoy as well as enhancing streets and public spaces so that downtown becomes a comfortable, appealing, and memorable place. Projects address the connection to Trade Days, but the emphasis remains on making downtown the place to be for locals. If done well, this will naturally draw Trade Days visitors seeking the local experience.

These principles are articulated in the following vision statement:

Downtown will be lively and feel like the heart of the community once again – it will be the place people come together to socialize, relax, and hang out.

- Downtown will support a sustainable mix of businesses that utilizes local talent and serves the community.
- Residents will not have to leave Canton unless they want to for entertainment, goods, and services.
- The momentum from these efforts will help Canton create a separate identity beyond Trade Days, while at the same time enhancing the Trade Days experience for visitors, encouraging return trips beyond First Mondays.

“One thing is certain: If you do it for the local, the visitor will come; if you do it for the visitor, you will lose the local and, eventually, the visitor because it is the local who gives a place character.”

Roberta Brandes Gratz
About Parking Management

Every resident complains about parking. While it may seem that the issue is not enough parking, rarely is this the case in smaller downtowns. The issue is that the existing parking is not managed well. It is important to understand the difference between the perception of parking availability and the reality of parking availability. Education is often the most important aspect of a parking management policy.

Parking management policies are designed to address downtown parking holistically and create multiple targeted solutions to be implemented simultaneously in order to resolve the conflict. Typically, parking management plans address the following things:

- Striping best practices for angled and parallel parking
- How to best manage on-street parking with time limits or meters
- Designated locations for employee parking
- Suitable permanent locations for public off-street parking
- Special considerations for evening and event parking
- Enforcement procedures
- Parking directional signs

In Canton, there is a need to find parking solutions to support:

- Trade Days visitors and their impact on the core of downtown;
- Canton as a county employment center;
- Small businesses so they can thrive and sustain as a diverse local retail and services base; and,
- The desired entertainment destination uses.

Benefits

Parking management solutions can be low-cost and with a high return on investment as measured in number of visitors, lengths of stays, and overall better downtown circulation and access. Parking management programs can be designed to be revenue-generating, paying for themselves as well as providing a stream of income to be reinvested into downtown.

Implementation

Canton should begin with a parking inventory and focused meetings with the groups affected by the “parking problem” including county officials, people who work downtown, business owners, and owners of private lots. Once the specific challenges are clearly articulated, the City, the Canton EDC and Main Street can work together on outlining the specific strategies that will form the basis of the parking management plan which can include things like a parking shuttle and downtown employee parking pass. There are a number of parking lots, both publicly and privately owned in downtown. It is recommended that some of these lots be designated and clearly signed for everyday use and for Trade Days use. Special consideration needs to be taken during the development and incorporation of the appropriate signs for both the parking lots and directional signage to them. Outreach will be necessary on the part of Main Street to educate both residents and visitors on the new policy.

See Matrix A8 for implementation details.
FIND YOUR PLACE IN HISTORIC DOWNTOWN, TX

I'm looking for a building to buy in historic downtown Texas

GO!

Tools and Resources

TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
real places telling real stories
1. Real Estate Listings
2. Building Inventory
3. Historic Survey & Photos
Imagine the Possibilities
The Original Historic Properties Tour
For downtown developers, investors, entrepreneurs, and residents

Tour Information
DATE: Saturday, June 9th
TIME: 10:00 – 11:00 AM, registration at 9:30 AM
TOUR BEGINS: Bar Under the Sun, 702 N. Chaparral
HOSTED BY: Downtown Management District
MORE INFO: 361-882-2363

See the properties:
downtowntx.org/corpus-christi–texas

“This building is not empty!
It’s full of opportunity!!

It’s here, it’s happening, and it’s now! Bring the site to life!”

Find your place: downtowntx.org
Downtown buildings on display in Linden

Imagine the possibilities tour

By: Heather Wright
Posted: May 10, 2017 05:47 PM CDT
Updated: May 16, 2017 05:55 PM CDT

LINDEN, TEXAS - Folks in Linden plan to light up downtown Friday evening for an event they hope will lure entrepreneurs.

The tour, called "Imagine the Possibilities," will showcase available downtown properties.

It’s part of the state-wide effort to breathe new life into downtown areas across Texas. The Texas Historic Commission recently launched DowntownTX.org, a software application designed to revitalize how downtown programs connect potential investors to development opportunities in Texas historic downtown areas.

Main Street Linden officials say between 10 and 15 properties will be on display there. Linden residents already have an idea of what they’d like to support in their town.

Main Street Linden Manager Allie Anderson said, “Everyone wants a coffee shop. People are talking about mixed-use spaces, pub and grills, wine stores … a lot of retail more focused on locally made or locally sourced goods.”

The tours will be held Friday night from 5pm until 8pm in downtown Linden.

Givens Mercantile, 1925. Linden, TX
For sale and for lease by owner.
LINDEN MAIN STREET POP-UP WEEK ENDS WITH A NEW SHOP

Photo by Ben Woods - Linden Main Street Manager Allie Anderson on left and Faith Works Studio owner Renee Murphy proudly holding the lease paperwork for her new location at 124 S. Main St.
Every Main Street city will be added.
Your City on DowntownTX.org

Consult with TSI on data available, project partners and long-term maintenance
1. Provide basic data
2. Complete training and host an optional demonstration
3. Finish the required fields for your site to go live
4. Launch your site
5. Host an Imagine Tour
6. Maintain, add, promote, repeat!

*New users need to complete a training. Can be done via video or in-person.
DowntownTX.org Basics

1. Users and log-ins
2. Completing the community page
3. Boundaries
4. Updating real estate listings
5. Adding photos and documents
Project Types and Applications

The Town Square Initiative is comprised of a professional team with expertise in architecture, economic development, and city planning. TSI accepts requests for assistance for endangered properties on an ongoing basis from any community currently participating in TSI programs. Endangered properties may receive priority.

TSI provides direct project assistance resulting in two types of deliverables:

Feasibility Study

- This study assists property owners and public officials in evaluating the redevelopment potential of a historic property.
- Typically includes a review of local development barriers and market conditions, a re-use plan with renderings, an operating pro-forma, and gap financing recommendations. Most studies emphasize the use of the state and federal historic preservation tax credit programs.
- Example: Texas Theater Feasibility Study, Kingsville

- A property owner must be able to establish in their request that there is sufficient local capacity to move a project forward. A strong application will demonstrate an existing community preservation ethic, the ability of the project to enhance the quality of place in downtown, a potential market to sustain a new use and support from public officials. Applications are required to be jointly completed by a property owner and local government designee.

Downtown Action Plan

- This is a specialized downtown planning report with program and policy recommendations to comprehensively address local barriers to redevelopment.
Town Square Initiative

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