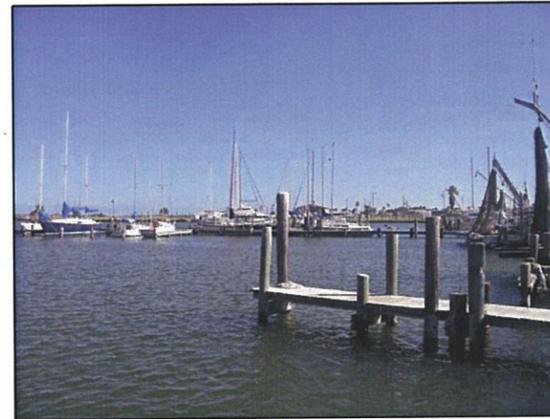
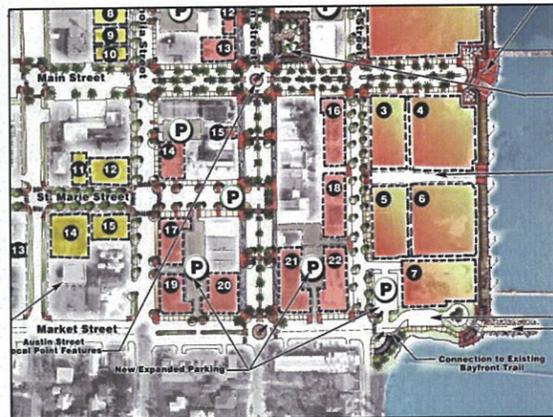


A Vision for Rockport

A Master Plan for the Heritage District and Downtown Rockport



Prepared for the City of Rockport

August 2006
Halff Associates Inc.



Make no small plans.

*They have no magic to stir
Humanity's blood and probably themselves will not be
realized.*

*Make big plans; aim high in hope and work,
remembering that a noble, logical plan once
recorded will never die, but long after we are
gone will be a living thing, asserting itself with
ever-growing insistency.*

*Remember that our sons and daughters are going to
do things that will stagger us.*

*Let your
watchword be order and your beacon, beauty.
Think big.*

Daniel Burnham, Architect

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The following individuals are recognized for their significant contributions to the preparation of the 2006 Master Plan for the Heritage District and Downtown Rockport

Mayor

Todd W. Pearson

Council Member

George Marriott - Ward 1

Council Member

Leo Villa - Ward 2

Council Member

Frank Reilly - Ward 3

Mayor Pro Tem

Jerry Beattie - Ward 4

City Manager

Thomas J. Blazek

Special thanks to those interested citizens who participated in the public meetings held throughout this master planning process.



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A Master Plan for the Heritage District and Downtown Rockport

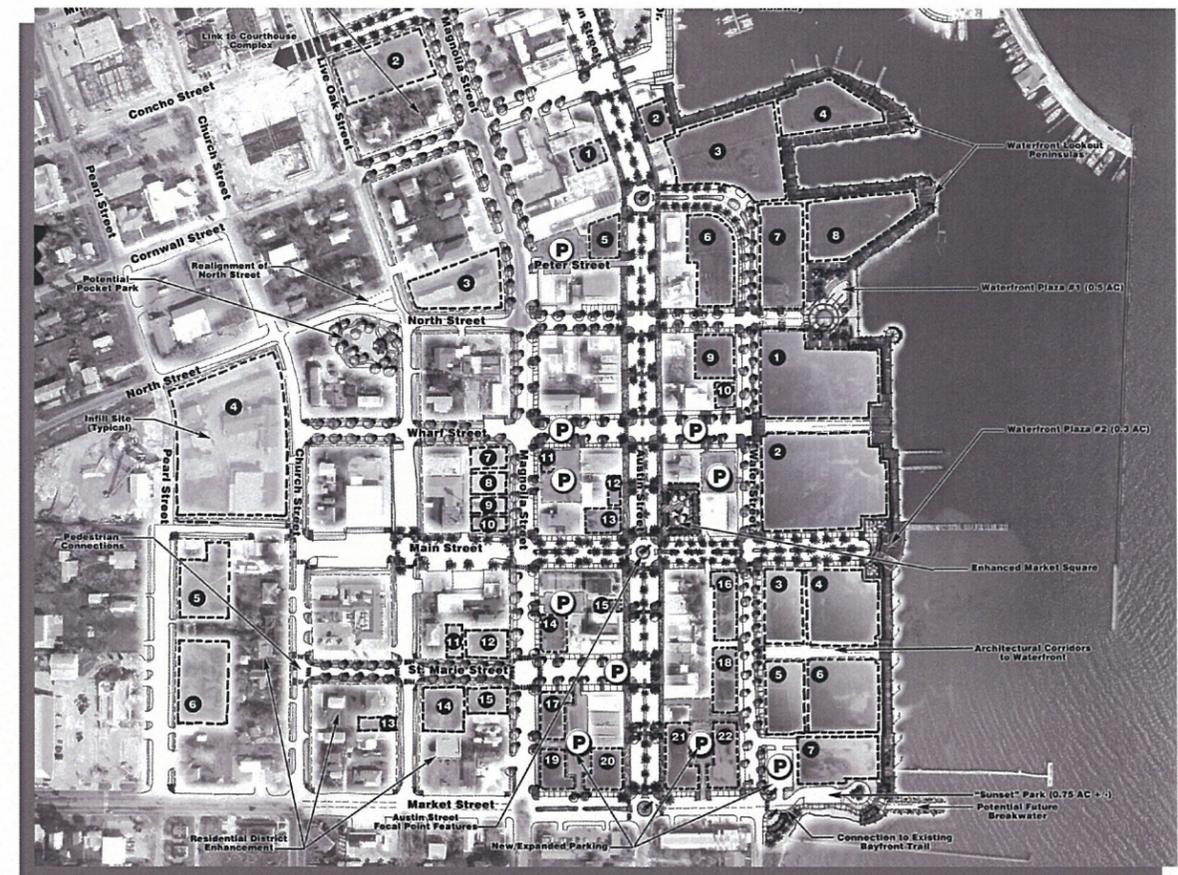
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..... INTRODUCTION





1. Introduction

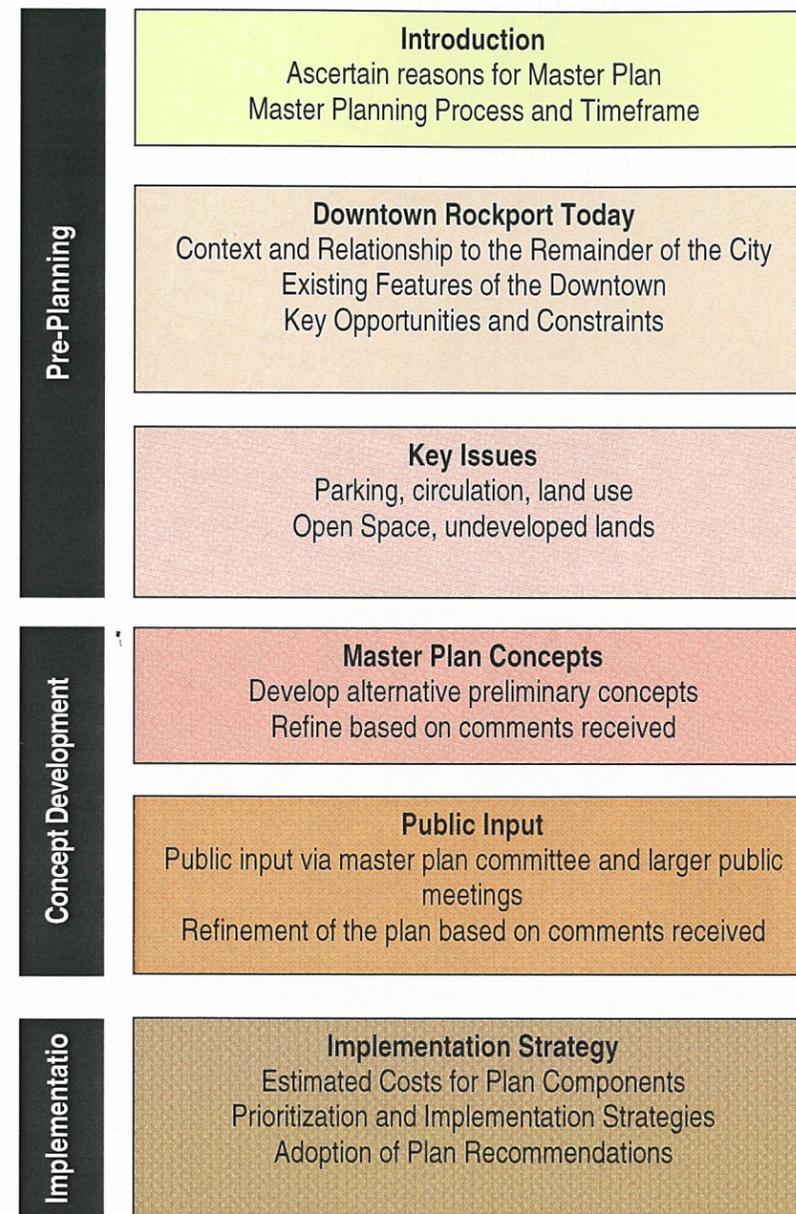
The statement by Daniel Burnham, the famous American Architect, that is shown at the beginning of this report has been used time and time again to describe master plans, but is rarely used in its entire context. When one reads all that he wrote, one can begin to imagine the potential impact of an idea or a series of ideas, and how they have the power to transform and inspire us to do great things.

This master plan aspires to help make Rockport great, not in size or in any number of fantastic buildings or developments, but simply by enhancing those assets that the city already has. Rockport certainly is among the most unique communities in Texas. Located on the Gulf Coast of Texas north of Corpus Christi, Rockport's waterfront location serves as a community of permanent residents, retirees, artists, fishing and boating enthusiasts, and visitors from throughout Texas and the South. It is often said that Rockport is more like the unique coastal resort towns of Florida and the East Coast than any other place in Texas.

Why Create A Master Plan for The Downtown Area?

Rockport, just like the remainder of Texas, is changing as the population of the Southern United States grows and evolves. The entire Live Oak Peninsula is adding new housing and commercial areas, and it is increasingly becoming a destination of choice for retirees from throughout the State.

However, the Downtown area is becoming less appealing to visitors and residents of Rockport. The increase of business development along Business 35 is making it Rockport's real commercial strip. Downtown Rockport's mix of galleries, specialty stores and restaurants is not diversified enough to become a popular destination, and the lack of interest is detrimental to business success.



The Master Planning Process

This report summarizes the findings of the master planning process and identifies the next steps for implementation of a strategic redevelopment plan for the Downtown area.

The Master Planning Process

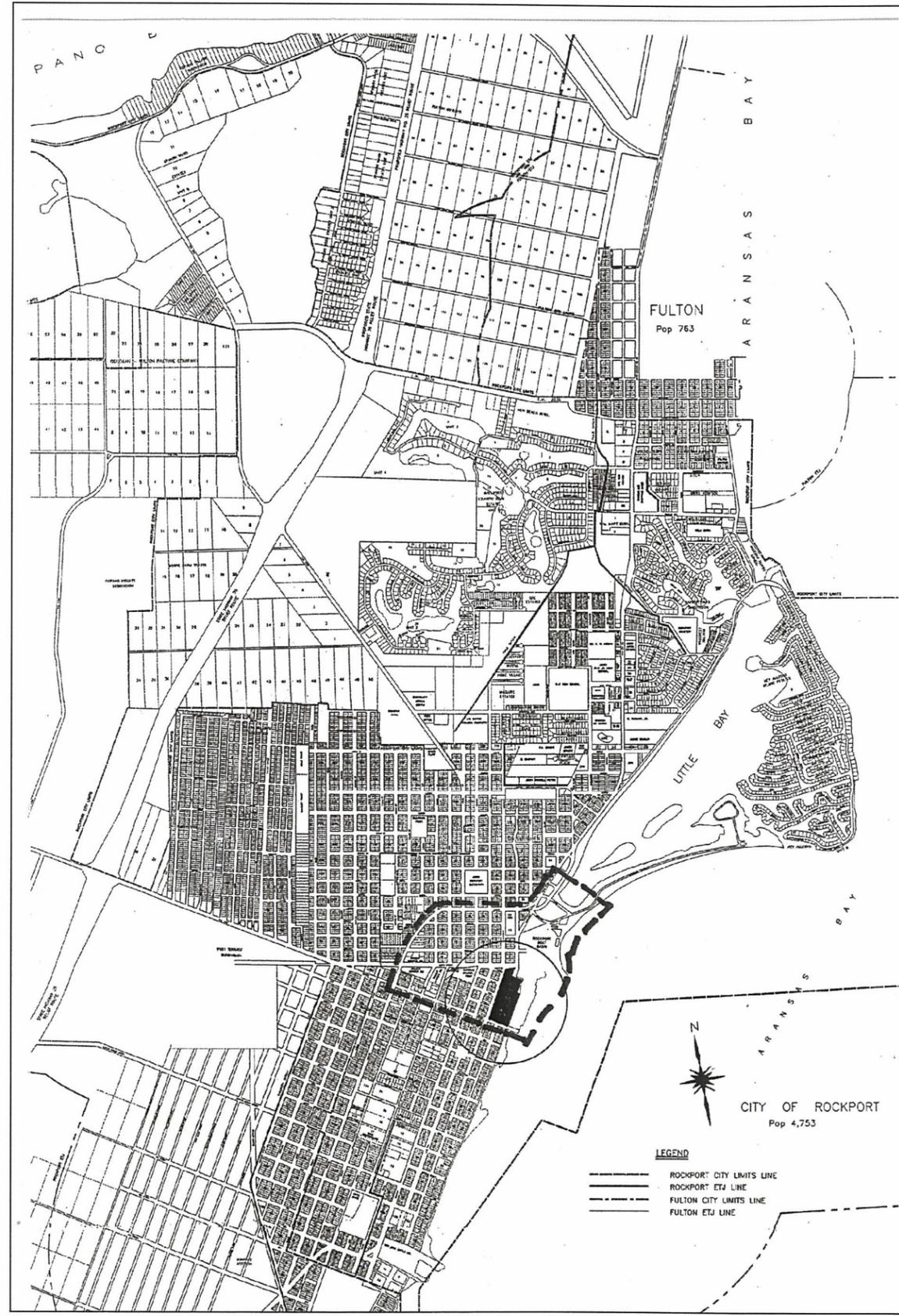
A master plan is a focused review of the issues surrounding a particular area, and the development of a strategy to begin to address the key needs of that area. Development of a master plan is a process that involves review and refinement based on the input that is received. The master planning process includes the steps shown on this page.

Timeline for the Downtown Master Plan

The Master Plan is intended to guide the re-development of the Heritage District over the next decade. Like any master plan, external conditions that impact the master plan may change over time, and require that it be periodically updated. This master plan should be viewed as a flexible guide for the redevelopment of the area, and can be modified if key needs or unique opportunities arise. However, neighborhood and property owner involvement should be a key part of any recommendation to revise the master plan once it is adopted.

Integration with the Marketing Study

A companion marketing study was prepared for the waterfront portions of Downtown Rockport, and the recommendations of that plan are built into this analysis and master plan recommendations.



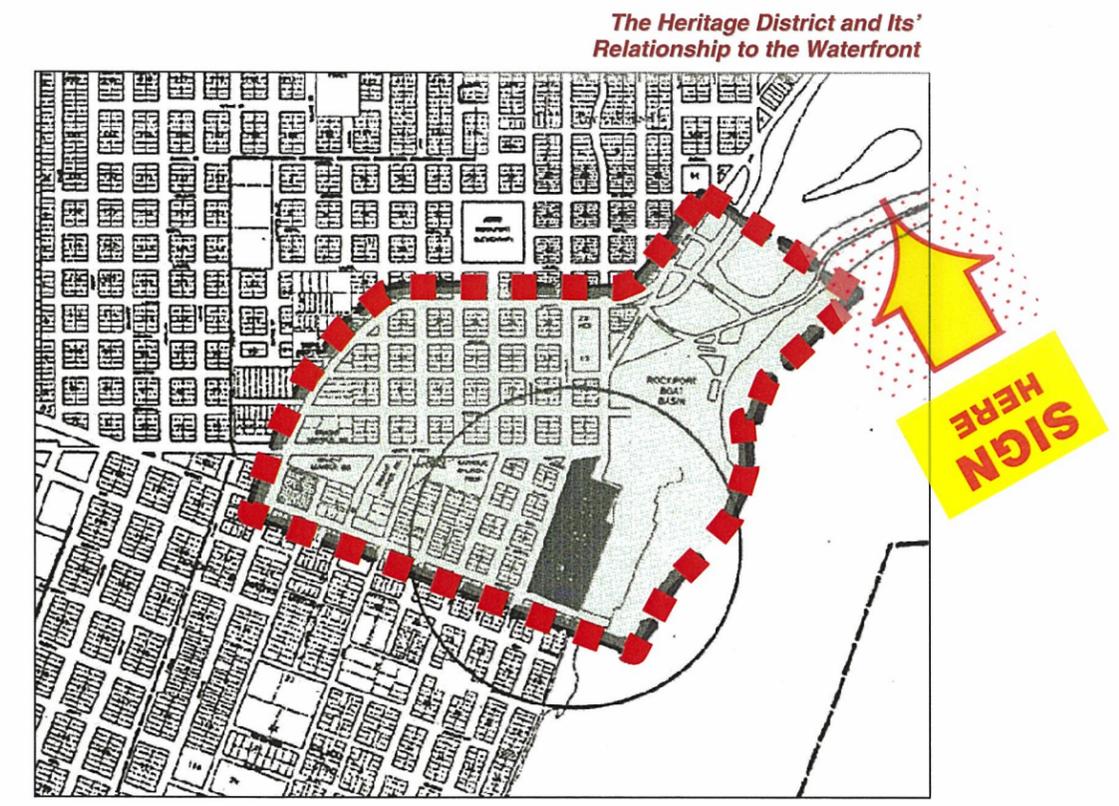
Location of the Downtown within the city limits of Rockport

Regional Context

Rockport is the largest community on the Live Oak Peninsula, so named for the dramatic wind-shaped coastal live oaks that once were a dominant feature of the area. Rockport has a current population exceeding 7,000 residents, and the overall population of both Rockport and Fulton is over 10,000 residents, according to 2004 updates by the U.S. Census service.

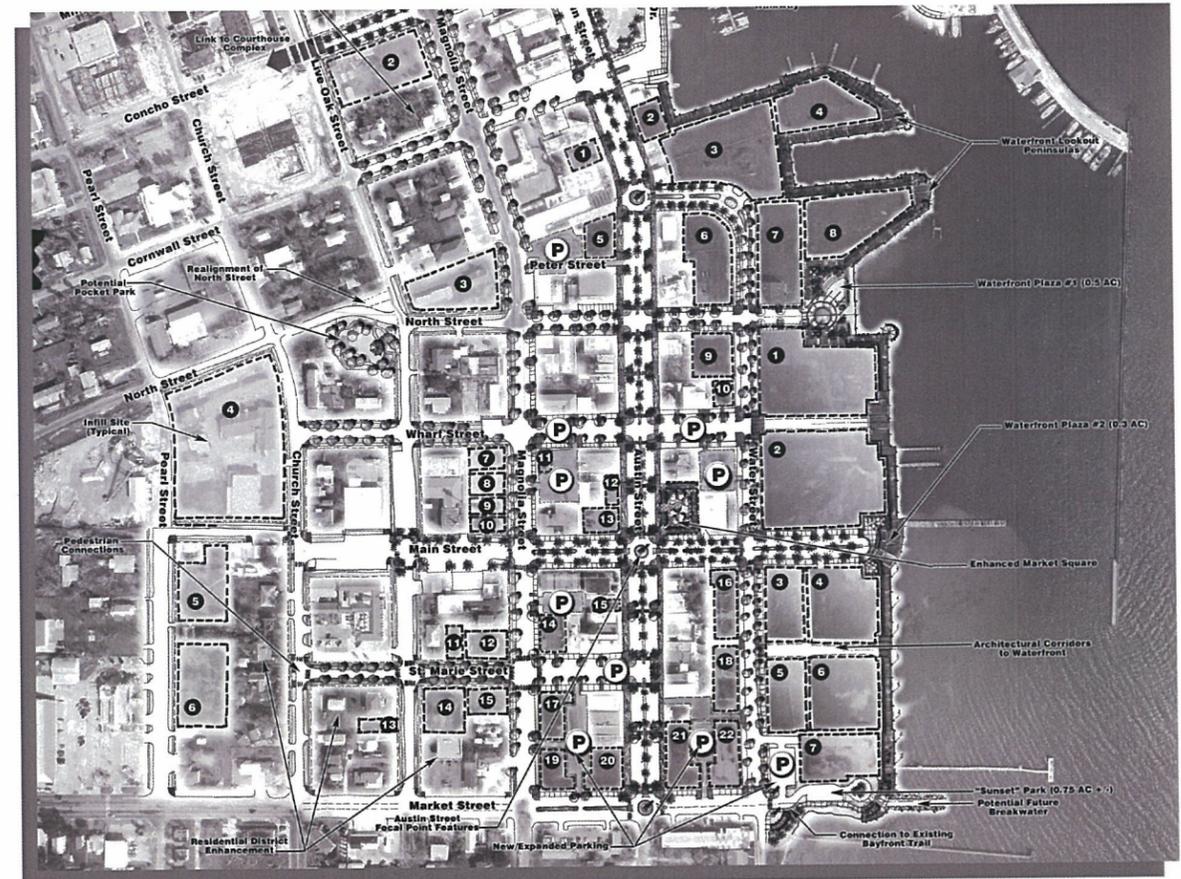
Business 35 once served as the major arterial link between Corpus Christi, Port Aransas, Rockport and Fulton, but is now a local connector between the cities. State Highway 35 now serves as the main regional access thoroughfare for communities on the peninsula. Rockport's sphere of direct control extends approximately two miles south of the Downtown area, and three miles north to the city limits of Fulton, and westward to beyond Highway 35.

The limits of the master plan area are shown below. The Heritage District is bordered by Business 35 to the north and west, Market Street to the south, and by Aransas Bay to the east.





..... THE EXISTING DOWNTOWN



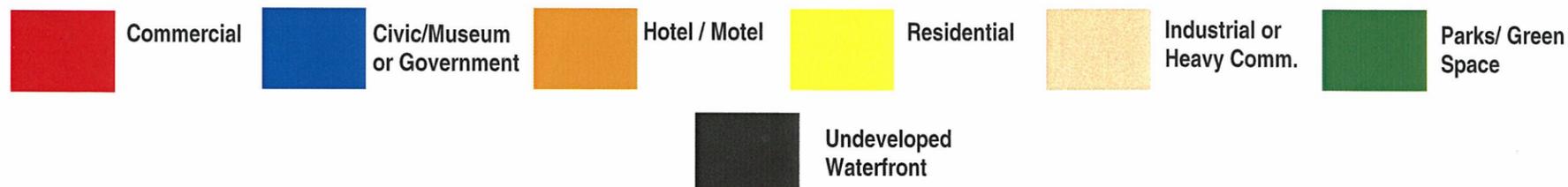


2. Existing Land Uses

The Heritage District includes a variety of land uses that have evolved over the past four decades. The harbor area and past industrial uses of the waterfront land have contributed to a significant commercial base in the Heritage district, and have slowed the transition to higher end residential land uses. Even motels found in this area are older and have yet to evolve into more cosmopolitan lodging.

Key existing land use factors are as follows:

- Existing residential buildings in the area are remnants of a larger residential base in the area, and are moderately priced. In fact, the area contains some of the most affordable residential tracts in Rockport.
- There is relatively little green space in the area, except along the edges of the harbor and Rockport Beach.
- There are only four motel properties in the area, and even the two motels with waterfront views are older and have not been redeveloped.
- Significant heavy commercial uses in the center of the area and towards Business 35 remain active and can inhibit the transition of the area to more upscale uses.
- Government and other public buildings such as churches make up almost 30% of the area, and may also occupy lands that could otherwise be converted to destination uses near the downtown and the waterfront.



3. Undeveloped or Transitional Properties

Several major tracts of land within the planning area are currently undeveloped. The three areas are shown in the map on this page and include:

1. The 13 acre harborfront property includes both privately owned lands and lands controlled by the Aransas County Navigation District. These lands front directly on the harbor and Aransas Bay, and they have significant development potential.
2. Two one acre tracts of land at the northwest and northeast corners of Market Street and Austin Street – the properties have significant commercial exposure, and they will not be fully utilized until the waterfront is developed.
3. The old HEB building at the corner of Business 35 and Magnolia and Austin Streets – the building has been vacant for three years, and has significant harborfront redevelopment potential.

Overall, the building density of the downtown area is not as great as would be anticipated in a typical downtown. The illustration on this page illustrates building massing in the Downtown area. Note areas where sizable gaps exist between buildings. While these may have parking or other types of uses, they result in a less pedestrian friendly environment in the downtown area.



The old HEB property and vacant tracts along the waterfront are the primary re-development opportunities in the core Downtown area.

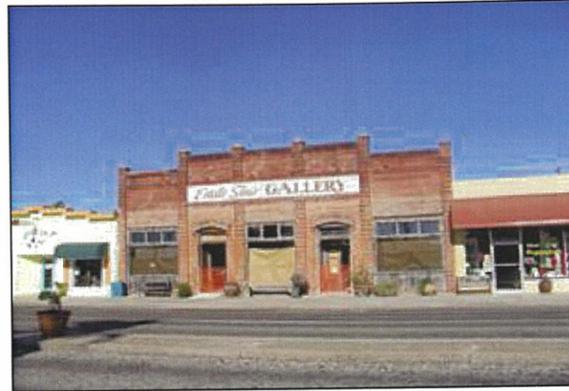
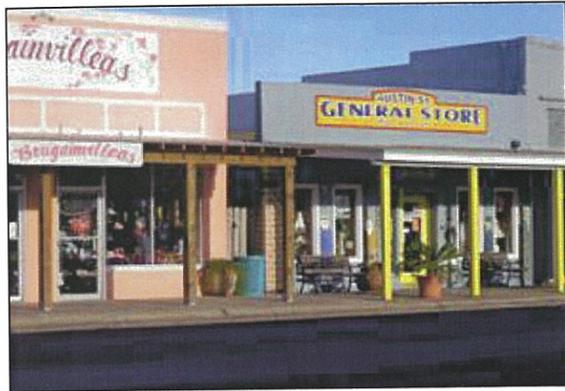
Building Massing and the location of key re-development opportunities in the Downtown area

4. Street Character

Streets in the Heritage district tend to convey a sense of openness. Buildings framing or edging streets do not occur consistently, creating a ragged edge to some streets. This is perhaps nowhere more prevalent than along Austin Street, as shown in the photographs on this page.

Many streets are also not curbed, and as a result the adjacent parkway areas are often used for informal parking. The lack of curbs and no defined turf line creates a ragged edge to the streets and an unfinished look to much of the Heritage District.





5. Building Form and Character

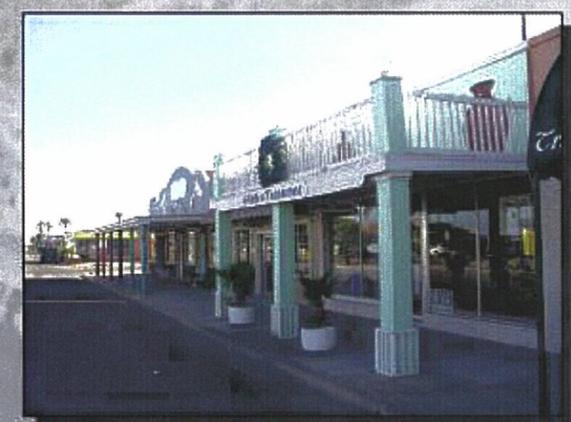
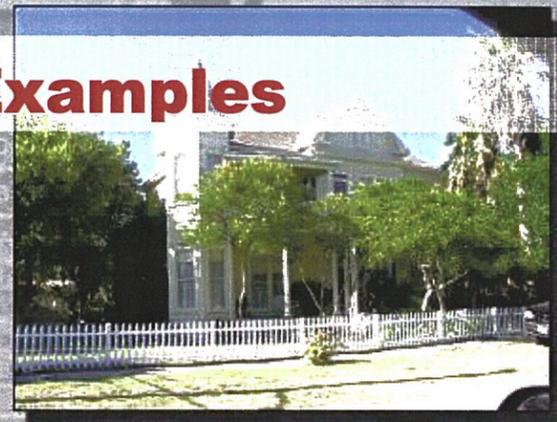
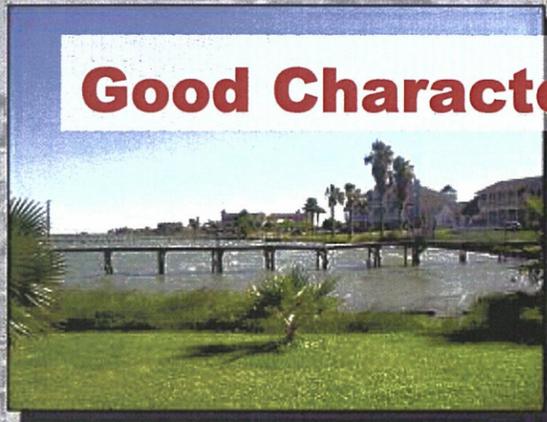
Buildings in the Heritage district range in age from 10 years to over 75 years old. Because of damage from storms over the years, many of the original buildings found in the district have been replaced with newer buildings. There have been no significant building design guidelines in place, and many of the replacement buildings have simply served as quickly constructed non-descript structures. Even the replacement for the historic County Courthouse building has no significant characteristics that tie it to the coastal heritage of the peninsula.

One story commercial buildings are most prevalent in the area. Building structure types range from older wooden structures, metal buildings, and plain brick masonry structures to concrete block buildings. Preferred styles of buildings are shown on this and the following pages.

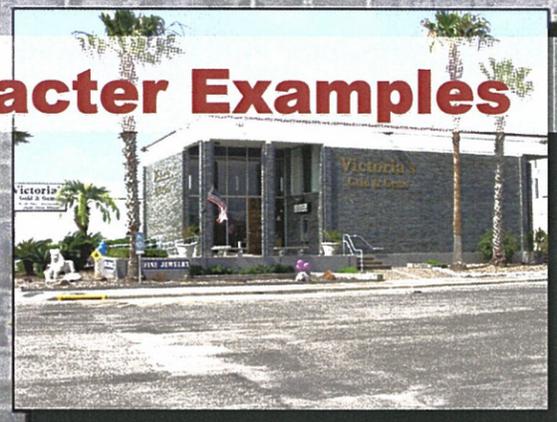
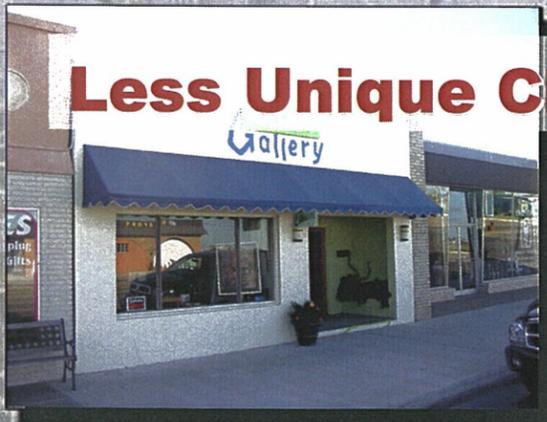
Many of the more recent buildings in the area have not followed the prior architectural style, and as such are poor fits for the area. A return to a cohesive building pattern will be one of the most dramatic ways to change the Downtown area quickly.



Good Character Examples



Less Unique Character Examples



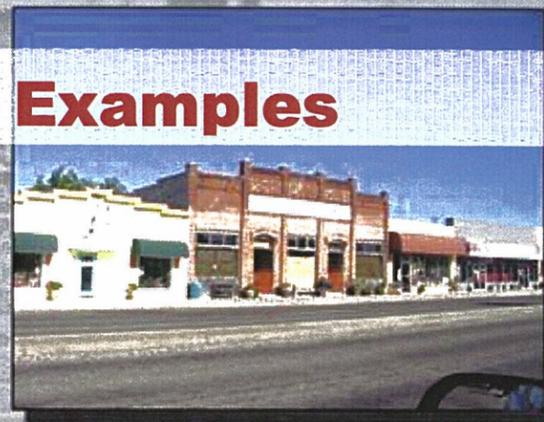
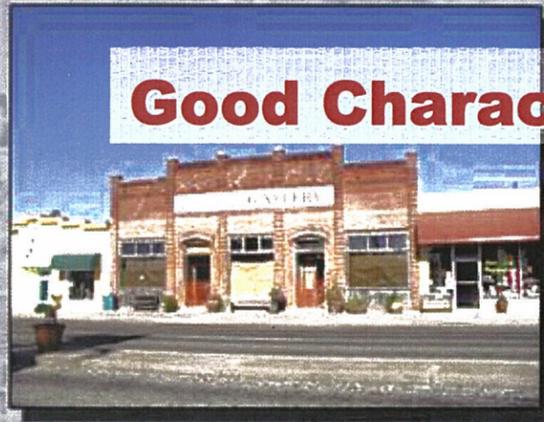
BUILDING CHARACTER - 1

Existing Conditions

City of Rockport, Texas



Good Character Examples



Less Unique Character Examples



BUILDING CHARACTER - 2

Existing Conditions

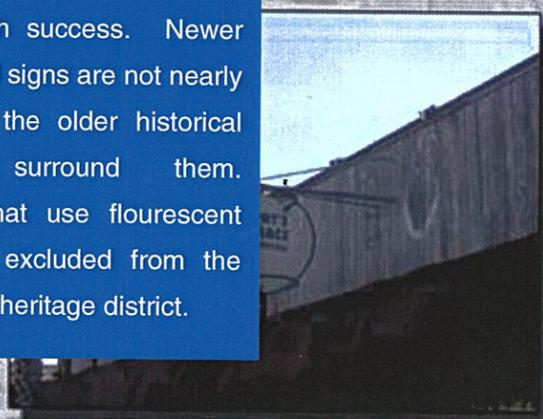
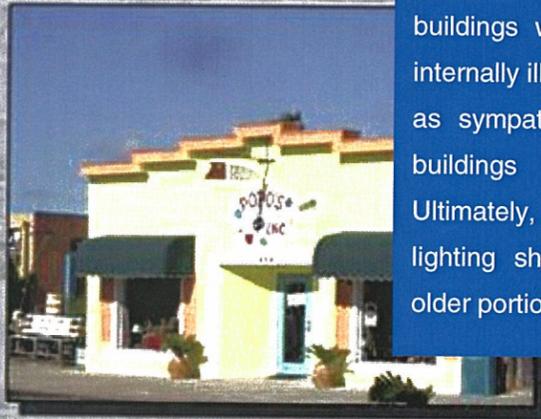
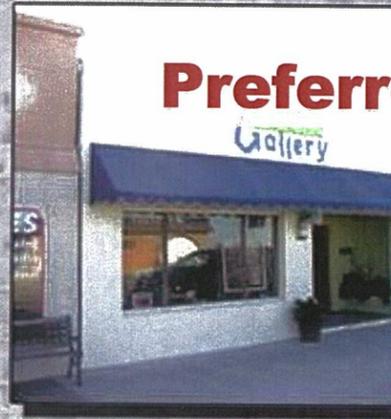
City of Rockport, Texas



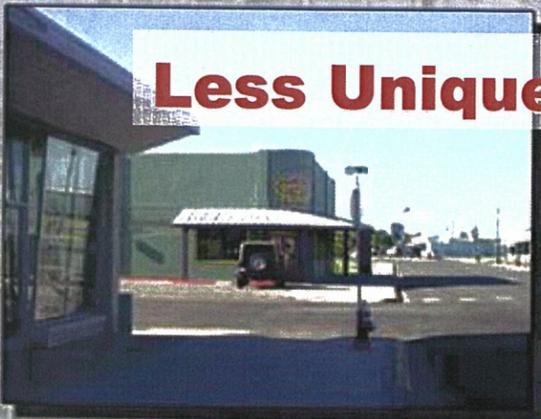
Preferred Sign Examples

6. Signs

There are a variety of sign styles that are used in the downtown area, some more successfully than others. Simple hanging signs with nautical themes have been used on many of the older buildings with much success. Newer internally illuminated signs are not nearly as sympathetic to the older historical buildings that surround them. Ultimately, signs that use fluorescent lighting should be excluded from the older portions of the heritage district.



Less Unique Examples

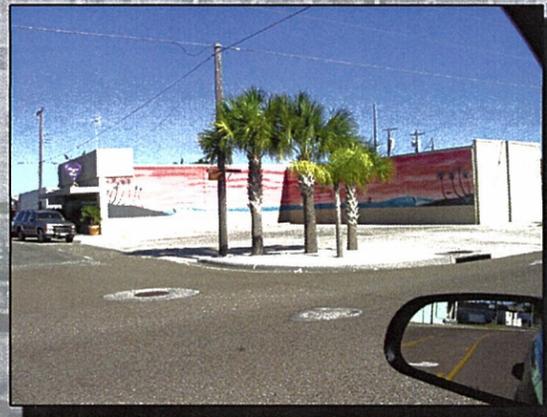




7. Murals and Art

Several great examples of mural art can be found in the district, and they add character to otherwise bland buildings. The old historic "fish" mural in particular is a great example of how murals can transform an area.

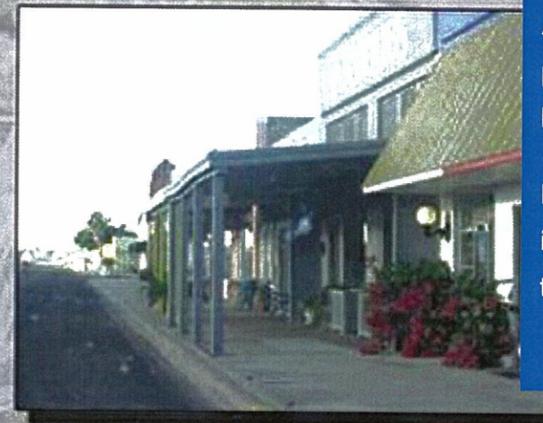
Art should be a key part of any revitalization plan, since it fits in well with the galleries in the area and Rockport's reputation within the arts community.



MURALS AND ART Existing Conditions

City of Rockport, Texas

Preferred Awning Examples



8. Awnings and "Front Door" landscape

Awnings and sidewalk coverings are a popular feature on many of the older buildings in the area.

Potted plants are also used successfully in front of many buildings and contribute to the character of those structures.

Less Unique Examples

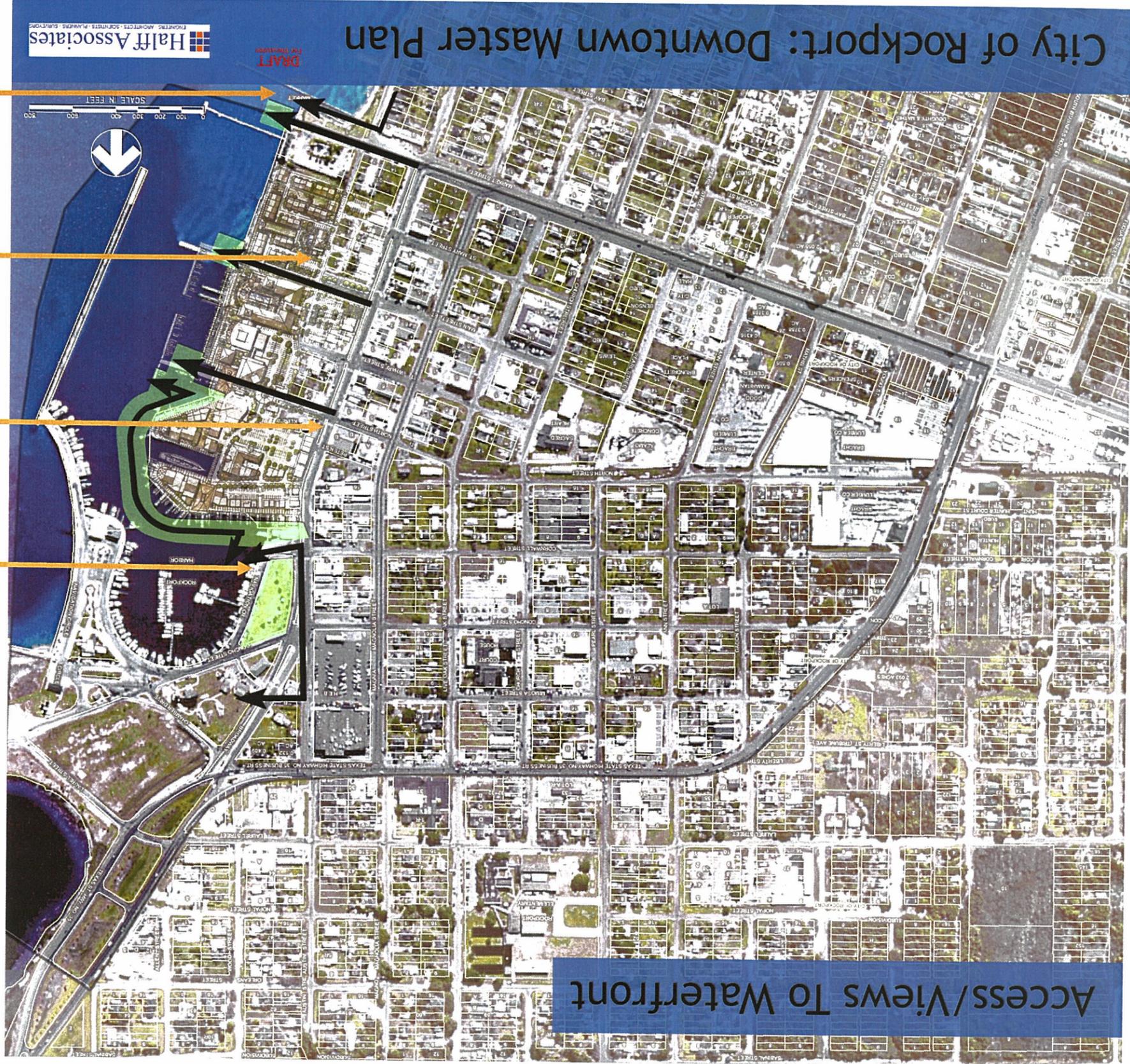
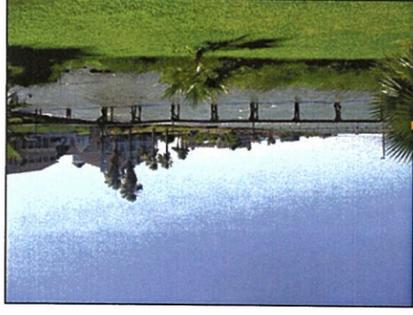
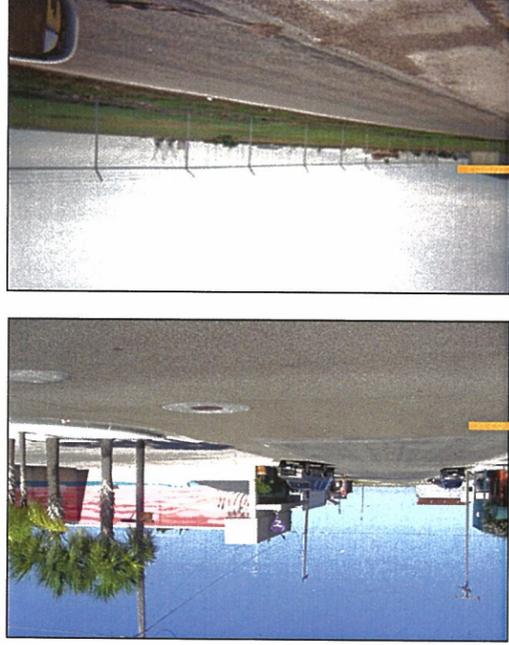


AWNINGS
Existing Conditions

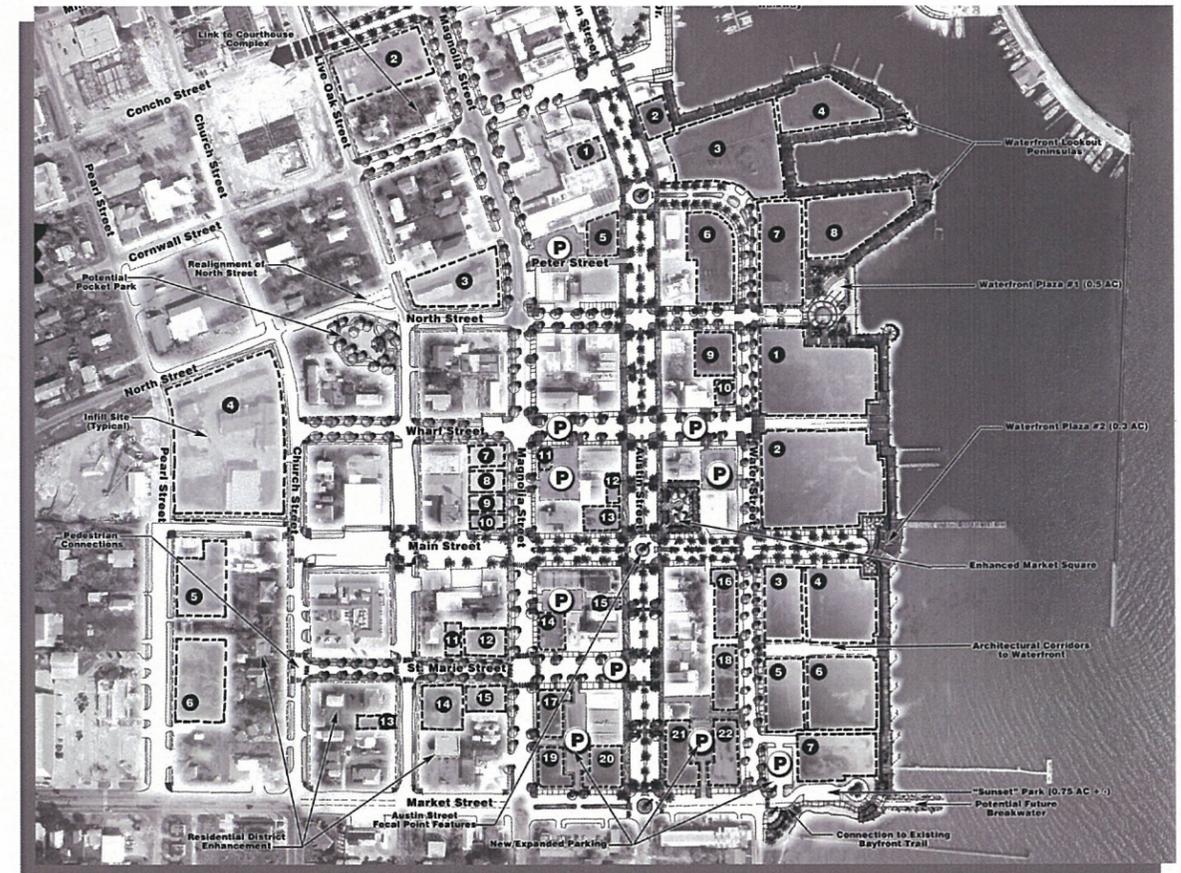
City of Rockport, Texas

9. Access to the Waterfront

Glimpses of water can be seen along the harbor and at the end of Market Street, but not in the core area of the Downtown. The almost total separation from the waterfront is one of the most significant issues facing the Downtown area today, but can also be its greatest asset with the careful preservation of sightlines.



..... A MASTER PLAN FOR The Heritage District and Downtown Rockport





1. A Vision for the Heritage District

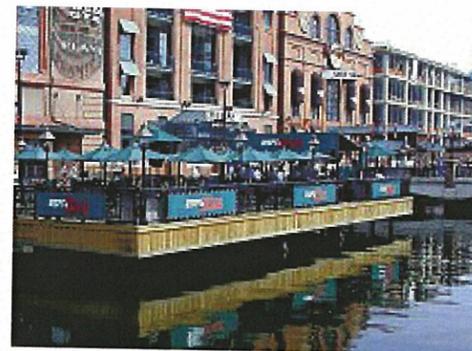
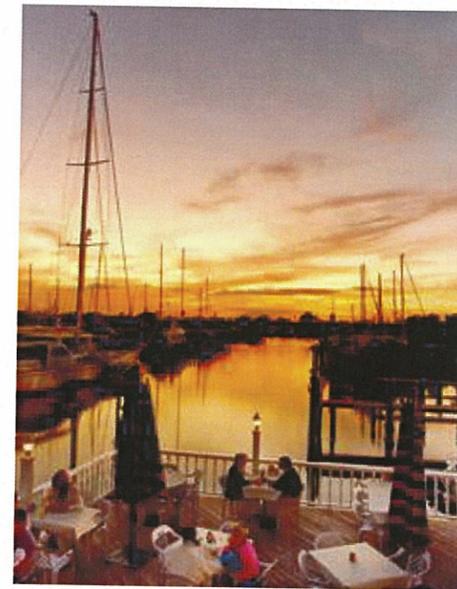
The common vision for the Downtown is based on citizen and property owner comments for the area. This vision is the basis for the recommendations of the Master Plan, and is described in the following statements that answer the question “what do we want Downtown Rockport to be?”

Active and interesting – The Downtown area should be active and full of life, with pedestrians strolling along sidewalks, a great variety of activities and sights to see. It should become a destination unto itself, a place that becomes the beginning point for visits to Rockport, and a continual source of pride for residents of the city.

Connected to the Waterfront – Rockport’s main attraction is the water and the many activities associated with the bay, and the waterfront will be the major attraction in the Downtown area. Open and public connections to the waterfront are vital to the success of Downtown Rockport. Corridors that provide a view to the water will be maintained to remind visitors of the importance of the waterfront.

Friendly and elegant – The Downtown area should exude a sense of friendliness. Buildings should compliment and follow the traditional architectural style of the Texas Coastline. The Downtown area should be elegant in its design, but have a variety of building styles and sizes so that it remains interesting to pedestrians.

Develop the compactness of a true downtown – The downtown buildings should create a strong vertical presence along area streets, and they should be developed into two and three story heights to create the typical “compactness” of a downtown area.





Accessible via walking or bicycle – The compactness and density of buildings should create a strong pedestrian environment. By relegating parking areas to a less visible location, pedestrians will be encouraged to stroll along from store to store, from attraction to attraction, and from where they live to their favorite place to eat. Bicycles will be equally accommodated.



Readily accessible parking in unobtrusive locations – An adequate supply of parking in readily accessible locations will remain, but will be placed in less visually obtrusive locations. Where possible, parking will be hidden by buildings, or will be placed along secondary pedestrian corridors. Parking will be landscaped and divided into smaller “cells” to avoid the impact of a large lot such as the one in front of the old HEB building.



A year-round destination – Through interesting attractions and events in or near the area, Downtown Rockport will become a year-round attraction, with something to interest everyone. It will be recognized as both a place for citizens of Rockport and for visitors to the Live Oak Peninsula.

Economically sustainable – Through carefully considered land use selections, and through active management of the area, Downtown Rockport will strive to be economically sustainable. It will encourage businesses that seek success.

The vision statements outlined above serve as the foundation for decisions and the master plan recommendations for the Downtown and the Heritage District. The overall master plan is shown on the following two pages. Numbers and colors on each illustration correspond to potential opportunities for development (where currently undeveloped) and redevelopment or reconfiguration (where the property is currently developed). The fact that a property is labeled should not be interpreted to mean that existing buildings should be removed immediately, but rather indicates that consideration should be given to altering the development pattern of that area if an opportunity arises in the future. The general size of each opportunity area is shown in the table on page 3 – 5.



**DRAFT
FOR DISCUSSION**

Half Associates, Inc.
ENGINEERS • ARCHITECTS • SCIENTISTS • PLANNERS • SURVEYORS

PROPOSED CONCEPT PLAN

CITY OF ROCKPORT, TEXAS
SEPTEMBER 2005



POTENTIAL INFILL AND/OR REDEVELOPMENT TRACTS

| TRACT NUMBER | APPROXIMATE SIZE (acres) | APPROXIMATE SIZE (square feet) | POTENTIAL USES |
|---|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| PREDOMINANTLY RESIDENTIAL TRACTS | | | (in some cases may include some non-residential or lodging uses) |
| 1 | 0.75 | 32600 | Single family, duplex, townhouse |
| 2 | 0.64 | 28200 | Single family, duplex, townhouse |
| 3 | 0.65 | 28300 | Single family, duplex, townhouse |
| 4 | 2.27 | 98800 | Single family, duplex, townhouse |
| 5 | 0.45 | 19600 | Single family or duplex |
| 6 | 0.62 | 27000 | Single family or duplex |
| 7 | 0.11 | 5000 | Single family or duplex |
| 8 | 0.11 | 5000 | Single family or duplex |
| 9 | 0.11 | 5000 | Single family or duplex |
| 10 | 0.11 | 5000 | Single family or duplex |
| 11 | 0.08 | 3500 | Single family or duplex |
| 12 | 0.16 | 7000 | Single family or duplex |
| 13 | 0.10 | 4600 | Single family or duplex |
| 14 | 0.27 | 12000 | Single family or duplex |
| 15 | 0.16 | 7000 | Single family or duplex |
| 6.59 Acres | | 287,000 square ft. | |

| PREDOMINANTLY COMMERCIAL TRACTS | | | (may include residential component) |
|--|------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1 | 0.10 | 4500 | Commercial, entertainment |
| 2 | 0.14 | 6500 | Commercial, entertainment |
| 3 | 1.14 | 49600 | Commercial, entertainment |
| 4 | 0.62 | 27000 | Commercial, entertainment |
| 5 | 0.16 | 7500 | Commercial, entertainment |
| 6 | 0.53 | 23100 | Commercial, entertainment |
| 7 | 0.64 | 27800 | Commercial, entertainment |
| 8 | 0.73 | 28000 | Commercial, entertainment |
| 9 | 0.25 | 11000 | Commercial, entertainment |
| 10 | 0.08 | 3500 | Commercial, entertainment |
| 11 | 0.03 | 1500 | Commercial, entertainment |
| 12 | 0.05 | 2100 | Commercial, entertainment |
| 13 | 0.16 | 7000 | Commercial, entertainment |
| 14 | 0.05 | 2000 | Commercial, entertainment |
| 15 | 0.05 | 2000 | Commercial, entertainment |
| 16 | 0.25 | 11000 | Commercial, entertainment |
| 17 | 0.19 | 8400 | Commercial, entertainment |
| 18 | 0.19 | 8400 | Commercial, entertainment |
| 19 | 0.16 | 7000 | Commercial, entertainment |
| 20 | 0.19 | 8500 | Commercial, entertainment |
| 21 | 0.27 | 12000 | Commercial, entertainment |
| 22 | 0.27 | 12000 | Commercial, entertainment |
| 6.4 Acres +/- | | 280,000 square ft. +/- | |

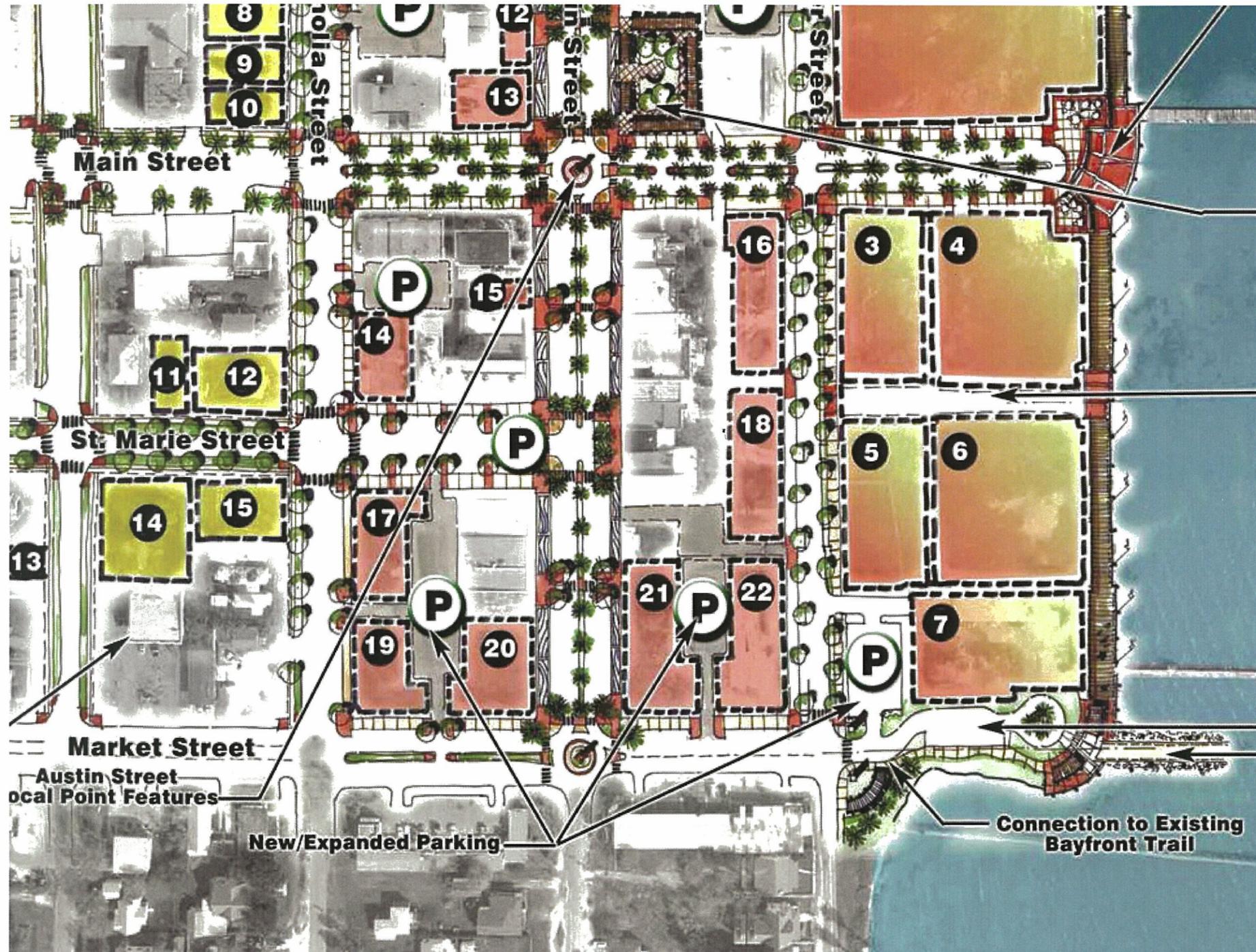


POTENTIAL INFILL AND/OR REDEVELOPMENT TRACTS

| TRACT NUMBER | APPROXIMATE SIZE (acres) | APPROXIMATE SIZE (square feet) | POTENTIAL USES |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| MIXED USE TRACTS | | | (variety of uses are contemplated for these properties) |
| 1 | 1.26 | 54900 | Mixed Use, high density residential, lodging, entertainment, ground level commercial |
| 2 | 1.65 | 71800 | Mixed Use, high density residential, lodging, entertainment, ground level commercial |
| 3 | 0.5 | 21700 | Mixed Use, high density residential, lodging, entertainment, ground level commercial |
| 4 | 0.85 | 37000 | Mixed Use, high density residential, lodging, entertainment, ground level commercial |
| 5 | 0.5 | 21700 | Mixed Use, high density residential, lodging, entertainment, ground level commercial |
| 6 | 0.85 | 37000 | Mixed Use, high density residential, lodging, entertainment, ground level commercial |
| 7 | 0.6 | 26100 | Mixed Use, high density residential, lodging, entertainment, ground level commercial |
| 6.21 Acres | | 270,000 square ft. | |

Acreages shown are approximate and indicate usable land area, which may be less than the actual overall property area.

Land use types are subject to City of Rockport zoning and development standards and requirements.



2. Components of the Master Plan

Parking

Many small parking areas can be created within the district to provide close in parking. However, the major difference between a typical downtown and a suburban development is that parking is not a dominant design feature in a true downtown. Areas with "P" for parking are shown on the drawing on this page, and indicate where potential new parking could be provided. On-street parking is also available through-out the district, and additional parking will be provided along Austin Street once new diagonal parking spaces are built.

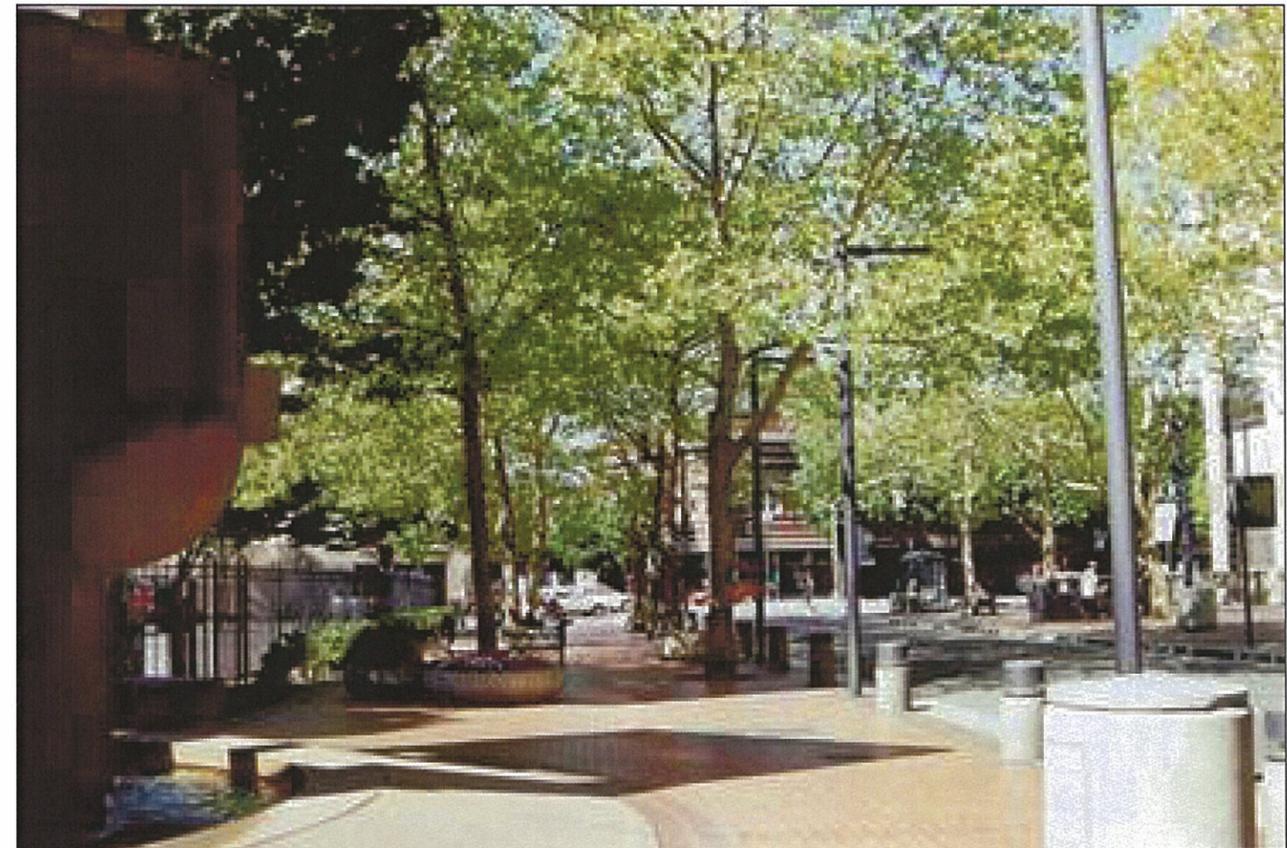
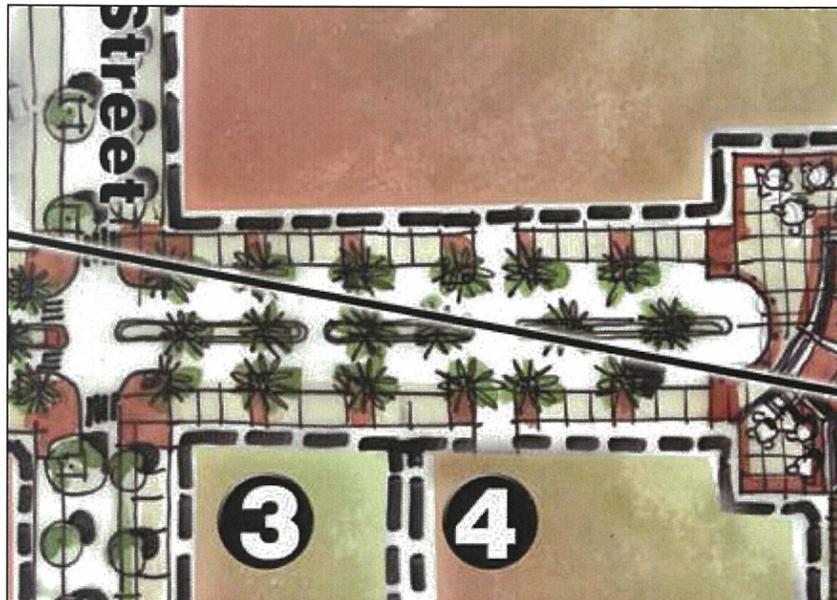


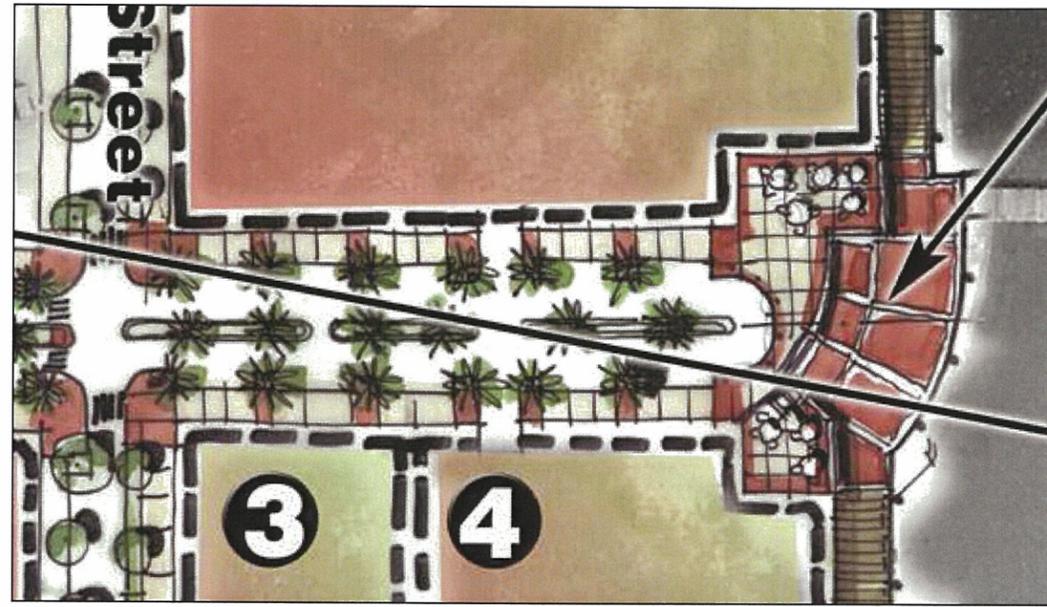


Streetscape

Streetscape features should be used to create a more welcoming walking environment. Trees, pavers, and attractive crosswalks can be used to add interest to Austin, Magnolia and Water Streets.

The photographs on this page illustrate the type of character desired for the downtown area.

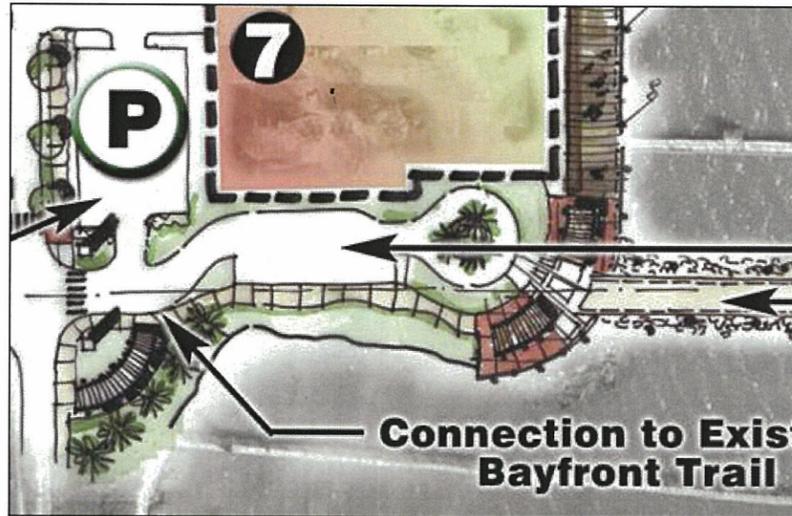


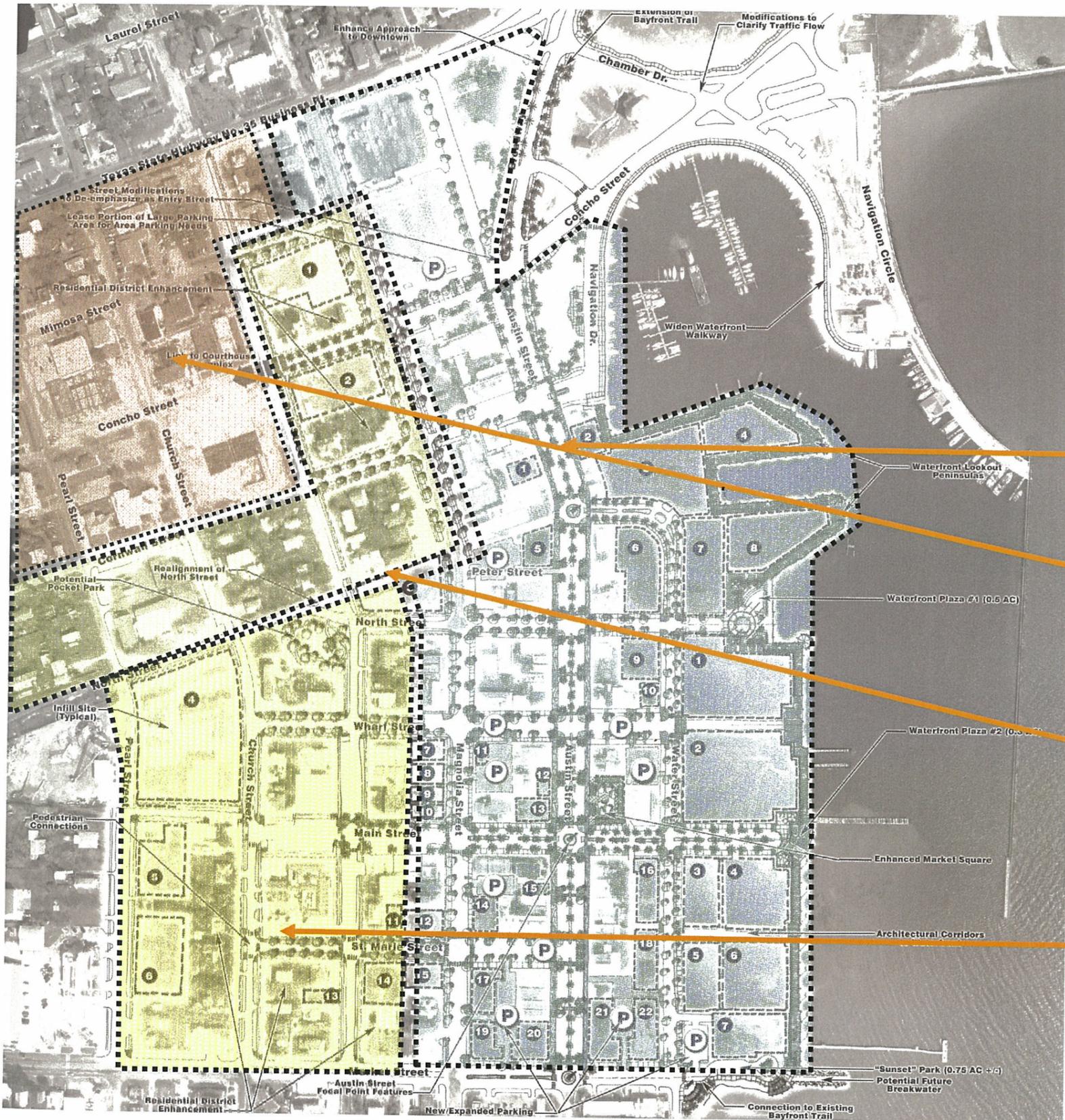


Development of the Waterfront

The single most significant action that can benefit downtown Rockport is the development of the waterfront property along Water Street. Suggested use for the property will include residential in the form of condominium units, ground floor retail and restaurants, and facilities for parking, boat slips and marina supplies developed by the Navigation District.

Public spaces along the waterfront will be a key feature to draw pedestrian traffic to and from the water. A continuous pedestrian promenade along the waterfront will provide an interesting setting for harbor and boating activities.





The Establishment of Sub-Districts

The Heritage District, which includes the Downtown area, has a variety of use districts. Due to differences in the timing of development for land use

The establishment of sub-districts as part of the approval of this master plan will allow subsequent guidelines and actions by the City of Rockport to be tailored to specific areas of the Heritage District.

types, the Master Plan recommends that sub-districts be established in the Heritage District. Each district has its own unique characteristics and design requirements. Each district

includes both sides of the boundary streets. The recommended sub-districts are as follows.

Waterfront District – this area is bounded by the harbor front, Market Street, Magnolia Street, and Business 35. Many of the tracts in this sub-district are undeveloped or underdeveloped, and the master plan envisions a significant transformation of this district over time. This area is envisioned as a mixed use district, with ground floor commercial and residential units or hotel space above.

Governmental District – consists of a mixture of governmental, commercial and residential land uses, with Aransas County facilities serving as the focal point of the area.

Magnolia Residential District – this district is bounded by Magnolia Street, Live Oak Street, Mimosa and North Streets. As in the Market Street District, two to three story single family, townhouse and four-plex residential units are envisioned in this area. A traditional residential look is envisioned for this district.

Market Street Residential District – boundaries include Market Street, Live Oak Street, North Street, and Pearl Street. This area is envisioned as a one to three story townhouse and multi-family residential district, with a mix of homeowner occupied and rental units. A traditional residential appearance is envisioned for this district.



Pedestrian Connectivity

Increasing pedestrian flow in the district is one of the key goals of the Downtown Plan. However, simply providing improved places for people to walk on will not increase the flow of pedestrians if interesting and appealing uses and destinations are not also included in the district. Easy pedestrian movement must go hand in hand with the increased density in the core downtown area. The following key pedestrian corridors are envisioned by the Master Plan.



Connectivity from Pearl Street to the Waterfront – sidewalk connections from the residential districts along Pearl Street to the waterfront will be an important element in connecting the components of the district together. These connections include 6 foot wide sidewalks on both side of each street, along with street trees and brick paver enhancements at each intersection.



Waterfront boardwalk – a continuous pedestrian boardwalk along the waterfront will be provided. Ideally, the boardwalk area will be accessible to all residents and visitors, but low traffic portions may be gated for closure during late evening to early morning hours. The boardwalk should be at least 20 feet in width, and should include seating areas, canopies for shade in selected areas, and occasional locations for activities.



Proposed conversion of Austin Street

..... IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES





Implementation Recommendations

1. Introduction

This chapter outlines a strategy to begin to implement the recommendations of the Master Plan discussed in the previous chapter. This chapter discusses:

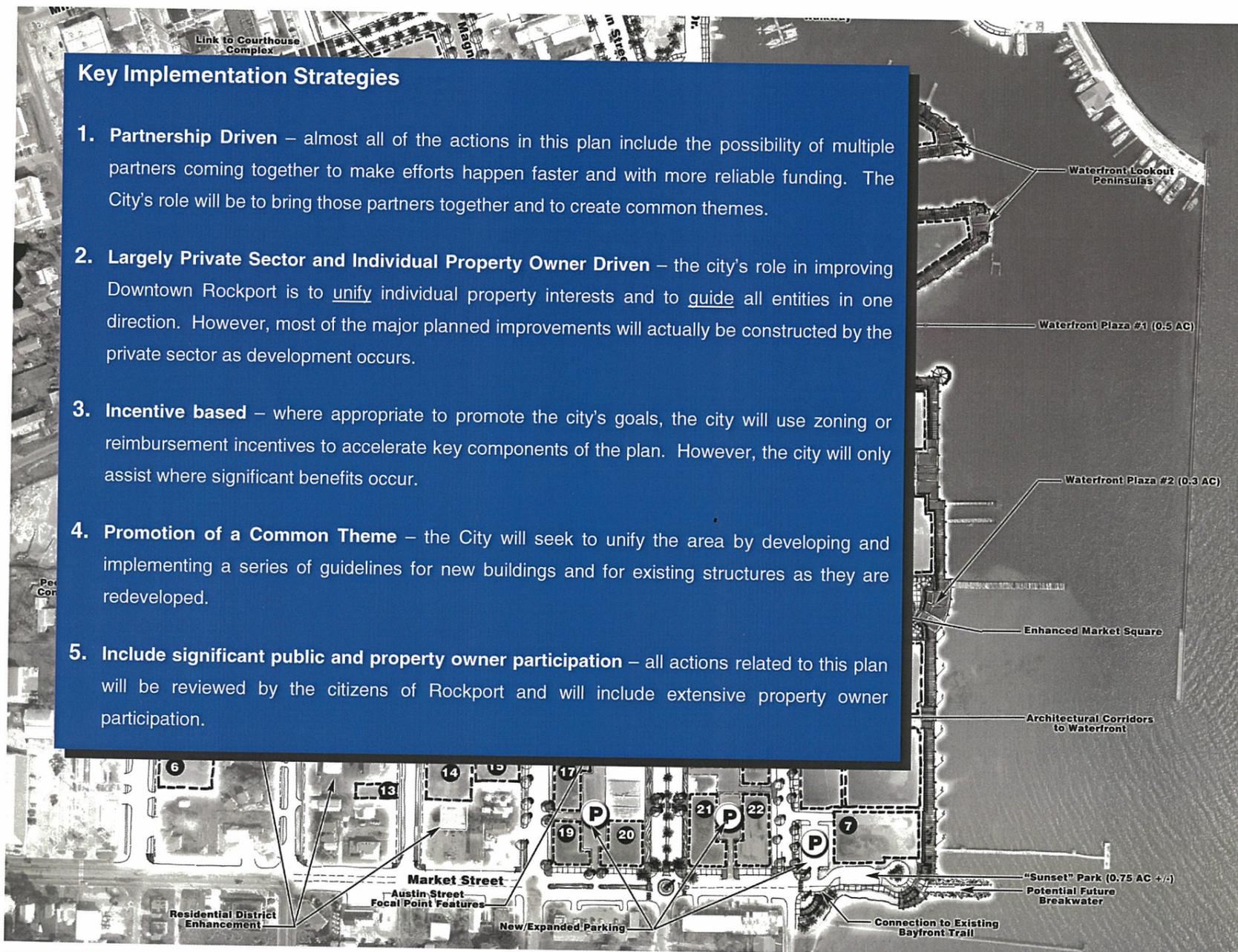
- Key Philosophical Underpinnings of the Implementation Strategy
- Potential Physical Improvements and Cost Estimates for Each
- Potential Funding Mechanisms
- Recommended Actions and Timeline

Key Implementation Guiding Principles - Enhancements to the Heritage District and Downtown Rockport will be guided by the implementation strategies shown on this page. These represent a philosophical underpinning for all of the actions recommended by the Master Plan.

2. Recommended Physical Improvements & Potential Cost of Each

The table on the following page illustrates the major physical improvements that are recommended for the Downtown area and the Heritage District. These improvements include actions by all participating partners, including the City, Aransas County, the Aransas County Navigation District, and individual private property owners. The table illustrates large scale actions. Individual lot by lot improvements will be performed by each property owner as directed by design guidelines for the area.

Priority levels have been assigned to each potential improvement. These priorities may be re-considered as new opportunities occur. Priority levels are High Priority (red) to be accomplished in the next five plus years, Medium Term (blue), to be initiated and completed within 10 years, and Longer Range (green), to be initiated within 10 years but not necessarily completed within the next decade.



Key Implementation Strategies

1. **Partnership Driven** – almost all of the actions in this plan include the possibility of multiple partners coming together to make efforts happen faster and with more reliable funding. The City's role will be to bring those partners together and to create common themes.
2. **Largely Private Sector and Individual Property Owner Driven** – the city's role in improving Downtown Rockport is to unify individual property interests and to guide all entities in one direction. However, most of the major planned improvements will actually be constructed by the private sector as development occurs.
3. **Incentive based** – where appropriate to promote the city's goals, the city will use zoning or reimbursement incentives to accelerate key components of the plan. However, the city will only assist where significant benefits occur.
4. **Promotion of a Common Theme** – the City will seek to unify the area by developing and implementing a series of guidelines for new buildings and for existing structures as they are redeveloped.
5. **Include significant public and property owner participation** – all actions related to this plan will be reviewed by the citizens of Rockport and will include extensive property owner participation.





Major Improvements Planned for the Heritage District

| Item | Recommended Component | Prime Responsibility / Potential Partner(s) | Estimated Cost | Priority - Need for Improvements |
|-------------------------------------|---|--|---|---|
| 1. | New Harbor Jetty – construction of a 500'+/- rock ballast jetty to provide wave protection for the southern portion of the Rockport Harbor. | Primary - Aransas County Navigation District | \$1,000,000 +/- to \$2,000,000 | High Priority - the proposed jetty is vitally important to allow the expansion of the southern portion of Rockport Harbor, and to allow future boat slips. Private up-front funding with governmental reimbursement could be used to help expedite this project. |
| 2. | Replacement Bulkhead – South Harbor – replace 2500 linear feet of existing bulkhead along the old industrial portion of the Rockport Harbor | Primary – developer of vacant waterfront property Partner(s) – Aransas County Navigation District | \$2,500,000 +/- to \$5,000,000 | High Priority - Existing bulkheads require replacement prior to development of the vacant waterfront lands. |
| 3. | South Harbor Boardwalk – 2500 linear feet of 20' to 30' wide boardwalk and slip access corridor along the South Harbor edge | Primary – South Harbor developer Partner(s) – City of Rockport | \$1,000,000 to \$1,250,000 | High Priority - Includes walking area, seating, protective railing, lighting and periodic overlooks. Provides access to harbor waterfront. May be controlled by private development entity as long as general public access is allowed during day and evening hours. |
| 4. | Austin Street Streetscape and Parking Conversion – replacement of parallel parking with diagonal parking and wider sidewalks along seven blocks of Austin Street. | Primary – City of Rockport Partner(s) – Aransas County, TxDOT, adjacent property owners | \$2,300,000 to \$2,500,000 (\$230,000 to \$350,000 per block) | High Priority - Includes new sidewalk, brick banding, new islands at corners and mid-block, trees, decorative lighting (10 per block) |
| 5. | Parking Additions in Heritage District – Construction of on-street parking along Main, Wharf and North Streets, and off-street parking at Magnolia and Wharf and at Wharf and Water. | Primary – City of Rockport Partner(s) – downtown property owners (individual assessment). | \$500,000 (\$2000 per space +/-) | High Priority – planning and design of initial surface parking construction to allow development of existing parking areas along Austin and Magnolia. |
| 6. | Market Square Plaza – construction of a central square linking Austin Street to waterfront development | Primary – City of Rockport Partner(s) – property owner (may be reimbursed by city). | \$400,000 to \$650,000 | Medium Priority - Recreates former central plaza along Austin Street. Creates central gathering place. |
| 7. | Waterfront Plazas (2) – terminal plazas at waterfront. Total area of both plazas 0.75 to 1.0 acres. | Primary – South Harbor developer Partner(s) – City of Rockport | \$750,000 to \$1,000,000 total for both plazas | High Priority - Provides high activity node points along waterfront, surrounded by restaurants and harbor front retail. May be built out into water if permitted by Gen. Land Office and Navigation District. Should remain open to the public at all times. |
| 8. | Magnolia and Water Street Streetscape – sidewalk widening and corner treatments, trees, pedestrian scale lighting, paver crosswalks at key corners | Primary – City of Rockport, Developer (where property is undeveloped along Water and Magnolia) Partner(s) – adjacent property owners (funding of benches, planters, etc.) | Water Street - \$1,250,000 to \$1,500,000 Magnolia - \$1,500,000 | Medium Priority – Landscape and sidewalks to encourage pedestrian movement. Primarily installed as development occurs by owner of each adjacent property. |
| 9. | Sunset Park / Market Street Terminus – Waterfront park and parking area at end of Market Street. Portion of land may be acquired or leased from Navigation District. | Primary – City of Rockport Partner(s) – Property Owner / Developer of adjacent property, Navigation District. | \$500,000 | Medium Priority – waterfront attraction, should be paired with improvements to Market Street. |
| 10. | Market Street Streetscape / Gateway to Heritage District – Streetscape and gateway sign at Market and Business 35, and along Market to Terminus Plaza. | Primary – City of Rockport Partner(s) – Adjacent property owners, TxDOT through landscape cost sharing | \$500,000 to \$1,250,000 | Medium Priority – very high visibility location |
| 11. | Building Façade /Sign Improvements – funding source for grants or low interest loans for façade improvements to existing buildings. | Primary – City of Rockport | \$500,000 | High Priority – seed funding to encourage improvements to existing buildings in the area. Preferred to be distributed as no-interest loans with two to three year pay back. |
| 12. | Pedestrian links to Residential Districts – sidewalk, street trees, streetlight and corner ramp improvements to create strong walking connection from residential to waterfront. | Primary – City of Rockport Partner(s) – Adjacent property owners | \$600,000 to \$1,500,000 (\$75,000 to \$100,000 per block) | High Priority – major element linking residential to waterfront. Intended as incentive to attract residential development to non-waterfront portions of the district. |
| 13. | Austin Street Focal Intersection Treatments – intersection pavement, roundabout elements | Primary – City of Rockport | \$500,000 | Low Priority – major intersection elements |
| 14. | North Street Pocket Park – residential area park/green space | Primary – City of Rockport | \$150,000 | Low Priority – intended as incentive to encourage residential development in the Heritage District |
| 15. | County Courthouse and County Buildings Perimeter Landscape – improvements to area around County buildings to improve walking connection to Business 35 and Magnolia | Primary – Aransas County Partner(s) – City of Rockport | \$250,000 to \$750,000 | Medium priority – improvements to improve appearance of County maintenance buildings and to improve walking connections to Courthouse. |
| 16. | Navigation District / Civic Building – waterfront civic building, art museum | Primary – Aransas County Navigation District Partner(s) – City of Rockport | \$5,000,000 | Medium Priority – Civic building overlooking waterfront should be sized to accommodate a variety of uses and to serve as a major waterfront attraction. |
| Total Potential Expenditures | | | \$16,450,000 to \$21,550,000 | |



Major Improvements Planned for the Heritage District

1. New Harbor Jetty
2. Replacement Bulkhead-South Harbor
3. South Harbor Boardwalk
4. Austin Street Streetscape and Parking Conversion
5. Potential Parking Additions in Heritage District
6. Market Square Plaza
7. Waterfront Plazas (2)
8. Magnolia and Water Street Streetscapes
9. Sunset Park/ Market Street Terminus
10. Market Street Streetscape/ Gateway to Heritage District
11. Building Façade/ Sign Improvements
12. Pedestrian links to Residential Districts
13. Austin Street Focal Intersection Treatments
14. North Street Pocket Park
15. County Courthouse and County Buildings Perimeter Landscape
16. Navigation District/ Civic Building (may utilize current or alternative location within Downtown area)



The table below illustrates the potential funding needs of each participating entity. Note that the amounts shown are only for the major public realm projects that could occur in the district.

| Responsible Entity | Potential Range of Funding |
|---|------------------------------|
| City of Rockport | \$ 4,950,500 to \$ 6,070,000 |
| Aransas County Navigation District | \$ 4,250,000 to 6,000,000 |
| Aransas County | \$ 280,000 to 1.0 million |
| Grant Services (TPWD, TXDot, Foundations, others) | \$ 1.0 to 2.5 million |
| Private Sector Development/ Redevelopment | \$ 3,519,500 to 4,855,000 |

3. Potential Funding Mechanisms

Recommended Funding Sources for the Heritage District Plan

Significant funding sources must be identified to begin implementation of the recommendations of the Heritage District Master Plan. Funding for these initiatives should combine three key characteristics. It should be:

1. **A reliable and continuous funding source** – as much as possible, funding sources should be identified that are ongoing, and that can provide revenue for improvements and renovations on a continuous basis over the life of the plan.
2. **Predominantly private sector driven** – funding for much of the improvements in the Heritage District area should be derived from the private sector or gathered specifically from the district itself. Publicly derived funds such as bonds should be used only for major improvements that benefit the city as a whole.
3. **Managed by representatives of the Heritage District** – funds derived from the Heritage area or specifically allocated for the district can be managed and designated by representatives of the area. City oversight by the City Council and city staff should be maintained to ensure that funds are used in an appropriate manner.

A combination of the following funding sources is recommended. Based on currently available information, estimates of the funding levels for each source on an annual basis are provided. The funding level estimates shown are preliminary, and will require further detailed analysis to more precisely quantify the amount of potential funding. Funding sources are in three categories:

- A. Public Funding Mechanisms
- B. Grant or Reimbursement programs
- C. Private Section Fundings/Incentives

A. Public Funding Mechanisms

1. **Tax Increment Finance District (TIF) or Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone (TIRZ)** - Tax increment financing (TIF) allows local governments to fund developments by borrowing against future tax collections from property in a district. The statutes governing tax increment financing are located in Chapter 311 of the Texas Tax Code.

Uses of TIF or TIRZ zones - this financing can be used for redeveloping the area and constructing “public improvements” in the targeted area. Public improvements generally mean streets, parking, sidewalks, streetscape, curbing, and lighting, but also can include boardwalks and other waterfront facilities.

How a TIF works - in a TIF zone, the tax base of the real property in the zone is frozen for TIF purposes. As improvements are implemented, the base property tax value in an area increases, thereby generation tax revenue that can be used to pay back revenue bonds or to reimburse developers for construction of infrastructure that benefits the public good. In a preferred TIF scenario, all or most taxing entities in the reinvestment zone forego, for a limited period, taxes on increases in the value of the real property to finance the improvements that generated such increases.

Initiation of TIF - Tax increment financing can be initiated in two ways. First, affected property owners may petition the City and City Council to create a TIF zone. The petition must be submitted by owners of property that constitutes at least 50 percent of the appraised property value within the proposed zone.

TIF may also be initiated by a city council without the need for a petition. If not initiated by petition, an area may be considered for tax increment financing only if it meets at least one of the following three criteria:

- The area's present condition must substantially impair the city's growth, retard the provision of housing, or constitute an economic or social liability to the public health, safety, morals or welfare. Further, this condition must exist because of the presence of one or more of the following conditions: a substantial number of substandard or deteriorating structures, inadequate sidewalks or street layout, faulty lot layouts, unsanitary or unsafe conditions, a tax or special assessment delinquency that exceeds the fair market value of the land, defective or unusual conditions of title, or conditions that endanger life or property by fire or other cause; or
- The area is predominately open, and because of obsolete platting, deteriorating structures or other factors, it substantially impairs the growth of the city; or
- The area is in or adjacent to a "federally-assisted new community" as defined under Tax Code Section 311.005(b).

Within developed areas of the city, the reason usually cited to justify a reinvestment zone is that the area's condition substantially impairs the city's growth because of a substantial number of substandard or deteriorating structures. *This condition might require that certain portions of the Heritage District be excluded from the TIF District boundaries.*

The Texas Tax Code places several further restrictions on the creation of a reinvestment zone for tax increment financing:

- No more than 10 percent of the property within the reinvestment zone (excluding publicly-owned property) may be used for residential purposes. *This requirement does not apply if the district is created pursuant to a petition of the landowners.*
- A reinvestment zone may not contain property that cumulatively would exceed 15 percent of the total appraised property value within the city and its industrial districts. The current total appraised property value within Rockport exceeds \$900 million, mandating a 15% cap level at

\$135 million. Any TIF district that is created must have a current value below \$135 million.

- A city also may not create a reinvestment zone or change the boundaries of an existing zone if the zone would contain more than 15 percent of the total appraised value of real property taxable by a county or school district. It is not anticipated that the Aransas County Independent School District would participate.

Issues related to the creation of a TIF in the Heritage District – several issues should be considered to determine if a TIF is a satisfactory funding mechanism for the Heritage District.

- The District preferably should be created by petition of the property owners, so as to allow the inclusion of portions of planned residential areas that form part of the waterfront.
- Property owners in the district should understand that the majority of the increased property tax value in the area will come from new development of sites such as the waterfront, and not from existing properties (although these are anticipated to rise in value as well over time).
- The City should invite Aransas County and the Aransas Independent School District to participate in the district. However, since changes in Texas statutes were made in 1999, very few school districts have elected to participate in TIFs.
- The life of the TIF district should be a 20 to 25 year period.
- The TIF district could potentially raise \$2.5 to 5.0 million over a 25 year time frame, and could fund other improvements to reimburse developer construction of public infrastructure features of the district.
- A detailed financing plan developed with all other participating taxing entities is required to create the TIF District. Firms that specialize in the process of setting up a TIF district should be engaged to prepare the financial and legal documents that are needed.

Recommendation – Strongly recommended as a potential revenue source for public improvements within the district.



2. **Property Tax Abatements** - An alternative to the creation of a TIF district is to offer property tax abatements for specific projects that meet the goals of the district. The abatements are typically for a 10-year period, and are typically tied to job creation and the value of the investment.

The State Comptroller's office tracks tax abatements; their office indicates that the majority of abatements given over the past decade have been for industrial or manufacturing uses that have significant job creation potential. Uses in the Heritage District that could benefit from tax abatements include retail, office or commercial uses.

Key differences between a TIF District and the offering of tax abatements

- **Immediate Impact on city revenue** – the TIF District uses potential increases in tax revenue, and does not impact current property tax revenue, and therefore has less of an impact on the city's finances. Abatements for new development also do not impact current finances, but kick in after the agreed period of time.
- **Focus on individual developments, rather than area as a whole** – abatements are intended to make the development of specific tracts more attractive, and do not immediately raise any new revenue. The TIF District creates revenue that is used both for incentives and for public improvements that benefit both existing and new property owners.
- **Tax burden** – a TIF uses new development to ease the rising tax burden on existing properties in an area.

Recommendation – if alternative sources for funding public improvements are accepted, then property tax abatements in lieu of the creation of a TIF district, can serve as a significant incentive for specific investments in the area. However, without alternative funding sources,

the TIF district is deemed to be a better method of increasing investment in the district.

3. **Hotel/Motel Tax Fund** - Rockport's Hotel/Motel tax generates approximately \$494,000 per year. Funding comes primarily from special assessments on hotel and motel rooms. Funds raised by this tax source must be used to promote tourism and to direct special promotions and events. The majority of that funding currently is allocated to preserve historical facilities such as the Fulton Mansion, operate the Texas Maritime Museum, promote the arts in the area, and to operate and maintain the City's convention facility and any visitor information centers.

Some portions of the Heritage District project are intended to boost tourism and visitation in Rockport, and so may be justifiable expenditures of the Hotel/Motel Tax. Consideration should be given to determining where these revenues could be used to help promote the Heritage District.

Recommendation – as soon as possible, and on an annual basis, allocate a percentage of available Hotel/Motel revenue to eligible components of the Heritage District.

4. **Citywide Bond Funding** - A few of the improvements proposed for the Heritage District can be considered as community-wide investments that benefit all of the citizens of Rockport. These include the creation of gateways into the downtown area, improvements along streets in the area, and the long range creation of a new city hall and bay front civic facilities.

Recommendation – consider future bond programs within the next ten years to fund key Heritage District improvements.



5. **Rockport General Fund** - Specific components of the Heritage District may be included as Capital Improvements Projects and funded through the general fund of the city. No specific such projects have been identified by this plan, but funding should be allocated on an annual basis to cover administrative and operational costs associated with the Heritage District.

Recommendation – allocate \$50,000 annually for grant leveraging purposes, and as seed funding for incentives.

6. **Rockport Beach Permit** - A special \$2.00 fee could be attached to the beach annual permit to help address the current subsidies of the beach area. The \$2.00 fee would raise the annual permit to \$12.00 per car, still a very reasonable rate. With the number of annual permits ranging from 11,500 to 12,000, this fee could raise approximately \$25,000 per year. For daily permits, an allocation of \$0.50 per permit could raise over \$10,000 per year, resulting in a total of \$35,000 per year that could be raised from this funding source.

In turn, general fund revenues that are currently used to cover a portion of the operating costs of the beach could be redirected to address increased operational and maintenance costs in the area as new public infrastructure is added.

Recommendation – allocate \$50,000 annually for grant leveraging purposes, and as seed funding for incentives.

7. **Aransas County Navigation District** - The Navigation District is responsible for the development and operations of the Rockport Harbor. With a funding source and the ability to seek voter approval for bond sales, the Navigation District could construct some of the necessary harbor improvements. The District's request for debt issuance for an expansion of the Rockport Harbor and to construct a protective jetty at the end of Market Street was rejected by voters in 2005, but could be reinitiated over the next

few years. The District could potentially fund some portion of the waterfront jetty and bulkhead repair through revenue bonds.

B. Potential Grant Sources

1. **SAFTEA-LU Funding** – new federal enhancement funding has been allocated to the State of Texas, and could be used to fund streetscape or pedestrian mobility and trail improvements in the Downtown area. Timing for future calls, beyond the current one closing in April of 2006, for projects is not known at this time. Funding levels for future calls are also not known at this time. SAFTEA-LU is a reimbursement program, requiring up front expenditure of city funds prior to periodic reimbursements by TxDOT. The program requires a minimum 20% city match.

Recommendation – aggressively pursue SAFTEA-LU funding in future calls, with up to a \$500,000 local match, resulting in a project budget exceeding \$2,000,000.

2. **Historic Grants** - The Texas Historical Council (THC) awards grants for preservation projects from the **Texas Preservation Trust Fund (TPTF)**. Created by the Texas Legislature in 1989, the TPTF is an interest-earning pool of public and private monies. The earned interest and designated gifts are distributed yearly as matching grants to public and private owners of eligible historic properties and archeological sites.

TPTF grants pay up to one-half of total project costs to help preserve Texas' cultural resources. Grant funds are awarded for acquisition, development, planning and education.

Project types eligible for grant assistance include:

- Archeological sites
- Commercial buildings
- Public buildings such as schools, city halls, libraries and museums

- Unique historic structures such as bridges, water towers, lighthouses and ships
- Monies for training individuals and organizations about historic resources and preservation techniques

3. **Foundation Grants** – Major Texas based or national foundations could provide funding for specific components of the Heritage District. Examples of major foundations include the Walmart Foundation, or the Trull or Meadows Foundations (Texas based foundations). Foundation grants typically must be matched to the philosophical goal of the granting foundation.

4. **Texas Department of Transportation Landscaping Program (TxDOT)** – reimbursement funding for streetscape along major TxDOT roadways in or adjacent to the Heritage District may be provided by the Corpus Christi District of TxDOT. The grant funding is typically a 50% / 50% cost share, and can be used for landscaping and irrigation only, but not for entry markers or signs.

Recommendation – pursue TxDOT assistance for Market Street and Business 35 landscaping.

5. **Texas Parks and Wildlife** – Parks or plazas within the Heritage District may qualify for grant funding from the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. However, the small and very specific scope of the downtown parks may not make them highly competitive grant candidates. Boat Ramp grants may also be considered for specific improvements along the harbor or at the terminus of Market Street. Boat ramp grants require a 50% local match, and can request as much as \$250,000.

Recommendation – pursue boat ramp and minor trail grants.

6. **Friends of the Heritage District organization** – a private based non-profit entity could be established to create a conduit for corporate or private funds for the Heritage District. The organization may be newly created or could be

organized by an existing entity, such as the Rockport Fulton Chamber of Commerce. Such an entity could adopt specific target projects each year and conduct project specific fund raising efforts.

7. **General Land Office** – grants for shoreline protection, such as the renovation of bulkheading along the harbor front, may be available from the State of Texas.

Grant Recommendations – an aggressive target goal of \$1,000,000 to \$2,000,000 in grant or reimbursement fund awards over a 10-year period is recommended by this plan.

C. Incentive Based Mechanisms

The majority of the proposed district features can be implemented as individual properties are improved. Therefore, a two pronged approach is recommended.

1. District design requirements should be put in place that mandate a certain level of improvements.
2. Incentives can also be used to encourage property owners to implement other features that are beneficial to the area.

1. **Tax Abatements** – for key projects, tax abatements may be used as an incentive to spur new development or the redevelopment of specific projects. Abatements will impact the funding of a tax increment district, if one is created, and require that the preferred philosophical approach of the city be predetermined. Tax abatements generally follow two formats:

- Freezing of property taxes at current levels for a period of time – property taxes can be held at a specific level prior to the construction of major improvements that can raise the value of a building.
- Partial or total abatement for a period of time – rather than maintaining current levels, property taxes can be reduced or even completely eliminated for an agreed upon period of time. Partial or total abatements



may be more applicable to smaller redevelopment efforts where the impact on tax receipts by the city is not as great.

2. **City of Rockport Development, Subdivision or Inspection Fee Abatements** – Development fees required by the City may be waived for specific redevelopment projects or projects in specific areas. For smaller renovation, these development and/or inspection fees might be low, but can be used as a small incentive to spur the renovation of existing structures. For larger projects, fees may be higher but may actually represent a smaller percentage of the overall project.
3. **Coordination with other public works or transportation improvements** – as utility, street and sidewalk improvements are made, additional amenity improvements can be added into those projects in a very cost effective manner. Often time the project cost can be reduced considerably.
4. **Partnering with Developers and Building Owners** is frequently possible as new downtown projects are developed in Rockport. For example, sidewalk improvements and streetscapes could be built as a building façade is being upgraded.

5. **Chapter 380 Economic Development Program** - Texas Law allows the granting of specific economic development incentives to entities that meet goals established by the city or that provide significant infrastructure features. Typically, these funds can be given on a case by case basis. Chapter 380 incentives could allow Rockport to identify large public facility projects and reimburse a development entity for up-front costs through property tax rebates over time. This program may have significant benefits to Rockport, especially to help fund waterfront improvements in a timely fashion, and could be a key funding mechanism.

A potential funding scenario, incorporating some of the potential funding strategies shown on this section is shown in the table on the following page.



Rockport Downtown Master Plan – Scenario Illustrating Potential Revenue Sources

| Revenue Source | Estimated Average Annual Amount (at 10 years out) (1) | Potential Revenue over 10 Years (1) | Potential Revenue over 20 Years (1) | Intended Use of Revenue Source | Advantages and Disadvantages |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| City of Rockport Revenue Sources | | | | | |
| Tax Increment Finance (TIF) District (Assumes increment of \$150,000,000 in 10 yrs., \$250,000,000 after 20 yrs.) | \$250,000 to \$300,000 annually | \$2,500,000 to \$3,500,000 | \$5,000,000 to \$8,000,000 | Public improvements, streetscape, façade improvement fund, developer reimbursement for improvements | Must follow district establishment regulations |
| General Bond Sales for area improvements with citywide benefit | N/A | \$2,500,000 | \$5,000,000 | Major area improvements | |
| General Fund (for capital improvements) | \$50,000 | \$500,000 | \$1,000,000 | For improvements to public facilities in the district. | Can be used for grant leveraging |
| Subtotal – City Components | \$300,000 to \$350,000 annually | \$5,500,000 to \$6,500,000 | \$11,000,000 to \$14,000,000 | | |
| Potential Public Partnerships | | | | | |
| Navigation District (current tax rate – \$0.04624 per \$100) | N/A | Amount to be determined – prior estimates of area improvements exceeded \$5,000,000 | Amount to be determined – prior estimates of area improvements exceeded \$5,000,000 | Harbor and breakwater improvements, may construct and manage boat slips | Must obtain voter approval |
| Aransas County (current tax rate - \$0.32414 per \$100) | N/A | To be determined | To be determined | Improvements to County facilities in the downtown area | Could contribute by incorporating street and building improvements to County facilities in the district |
| Aransas County ISD (current tax rate - \$1.5184 per \$100) | N/A | To be determined | To be determined | For education related facilities in the downtown district | Must have direct tie to education |
| Subtotal – Public Partnerships | N/A | To be determined | To be determined | | |
| Potential Grant Funding | | | | | |
| TxDOT Beautification Grant Program | N/A | \$50,000 | \$100,000 | For gateway area treatments and beautification along Business 35 | Assumes district has funding available |
| Historic Renovation Grants | N/A | \$25,000 | \$50,000 | Historic building renovation (must determine which buildings are eligible) | May only apply to a few structures in the area |
| Park Grant Sources (1 grant) | N/A | \$150,000 | \$500,000 | Waterfront parks and renovations | Funding levels uncertain for next Biennium |
| SAFE TEA - LU Trail Grant | N/A | \$500,000 | \$500,000 | For trail and pedestrian mobility enhancements | 20% local match required, must conform to TxDOT standards and requirements |
| State of Texas & Federal Government – Shoreline protection assistance | N/A | \$250,000 | \$500,000 | Shoreline protection, bulkheads | Competitive funding source, depends on State and Federal funding of grant programs |
| Boat Ramp Grant Funds (TPWD) | N/A | \$250,000 | \$250,000 | For improvements to water access facilities | Funding levels uncertain, limited opportunities for boat ramps in the harbor area |
| Foundation Assistance | N/A | \$250,000 | \$250,000 | Will vary based on foundation area of focus | Area projects may be good match for foundations that are interested in coastal and downtown renewal |
| Subtotal – Potential Grant Funding | N/A | \$1,225,000 | \$2,400,000 | | |

Rockport Downtown Master Plan – Scenario Illustrating Potential Revenue Sources (continued)

| | | | | | |
|---|-----------------|---|--|--|--|
| Potential Private Sector Funding | | | | | |
| Sidewalk/Streetscape Improvements (assumes 30% new streetscape in 10 years, 50% in 20 years) | N/A | \$3,500,000 | \$5,800,000 | For streetscape adjacent to new development or building renovations (portion funded by private sector as required) | Assumes construction in segments as each area is improved. Improvements along Austin Street may occur at one time. |
| Waterfront Improvements – Pocket Parks (3) | N/A | \$1,750,000 | \$1,750,000 | For amenity areas along the boardwalk | |
| Boardwalk Improvements (2500 lf @\$400 to \$500 per linear foot) | N/A | \$1,000,000 to \$1,250,000 | \$1,000,000 to \$1,250,000 | For publicly accessed boardwalk | |
| Utility Infrastructure (Allowance Amount only for Illustrative Purposes) | N/A | \$1,500,000 | \$3,000,000 | For upgrades to public infrastructure | |
| Public Parking Structure (300 spaces, incorporated into private parking structures in the area) | N/A | \$3,000,000 to \$4,000,000 | \$3,000,000 to \$4,000,000 | For hire parking within the core Downtown area | |
| Total Potential Public Sector or District Revenue | \$50,000 | \$10,470,000 to \$11,650,000+/- | \$12,770,000 to \$13,950,000+/- | | |
| Total Potential Funding Sources over 20 Years | | \$17,195,000 to \$19,375,000 +/- | \$25,170,000 to \$29,350,000+/- | | |

4. Recommended Action Plan and Timeline

The following steps are recommended to immediately begin the process of the renovation and enhancement of Downtown Rockport. These steps are also summarized in the table on page 4 – 14.

Study the feasibility of a TIF District – conduct a financial and legal review to determine the potential benefits of creating a TIF District. Determine the boundaries of the district, the potential revenue sources, and the mechanism to establish the district. It may be beneficial to consider a TIF District that is created via property owner petition to allow for a greater residential component of the District.

If feasible, create the TIF District – formally establish a TIF district with goal and potential projects that the district will be responsible for.

Create and adopt Design Guidelines for the District – develop a palette of guidelines for buildings, property sites, parking, signage and lighting within the Heritage District. Conduct test cases to ensure that the guidelines function correctly. Include both the public at large as well as the development community in the creation of the guidelines.

Develop a formal Chapter 380 policy – develop and adopt a policy that will guide the use of Chapter 380 incentive funding.

Establish preferred concept plan for the Waterfront Property - Work with the Waterfront property owner to establish the preferred development levels for the waterfront tracts, and assist with discussions to trade property with the General Land Office and the Navigation District.

Develop vacant properties - As a high priority, encourage the development of the vacant waterfront and old HEB properties by the private sector. Work to expedite and where appropriate facilitate the redevelopment of those properties.

Develop a marketing strategy for Downtown Rockport – once development patterns along the waterfront are established, use those patterns to create a uniform marketing strategy for the downtown area.

Begin design and construction on the conversion of Austin Street – design modifications to Austin Street. Once detailed construction costs are known, consider grant sources and apply if any of the sources are feasible and timely.

Develop funding scenarios for both Aransas County and the Aransas County Navigation District – work with both public entities to fund improvements in the area to be funded by those entities.

Promote the redevelopment of residential sub-districts in the area – consider creating a model block and working with property owners and / or developers to modify that block.

Other recommended actions are shown on the following page.



A Master Plan for the Heritage District Recommended Initial Action Plan

| Item | Description | Lead Entity or Entities | Estimated Duration once started | Potential Start of Effort | Potential Cost |
|------|--|---|---------------------------------|---------------------------|---|
| 1. | Master Plan Approval | City of Rockport (consider parallel resolutions by Aransas County and Aransas County Navigation District) | N/A | March/April 2006 | None |
| 2. | Conduct TIF/TIRZ Study – define zone boundaries, develop financial plan, set up legal framework and governing board | City of Rockport, (Aransas County, Aransas County Navigation District if participating) | Six Months | 2006 - 2007 | \$50,000 to \$100,000 |
| 3. | Waterfront Property Trade or Acquisition - Develop agreement for property trade with ACND and General Land Office | Property Owner, Aransas County Navigation District, City of Rockport | Four Months | 2006 - 2007 | None to \$25,000 (legal, planning) |
| 4. | Jetty and Bulkhead - Develop agreement for construction of jetty and bulkhead renovation | Property Owner, Aransas County Navigation District, City of Rockport | Four Months | 2006 - 2007 | None to \$25,000 (legal, preliminary engineering) |
| 5. | Prepare agreement for development of Harbor front property – determine cost share, reimbursement, design and zoning characteristics | City of Rockport, Property owner, Property Developer | Four Months | 2006 - 2007 | None to \$20,000 (legal, planning) |
| 6. | Prepare and Approve Design Guidelines and Review Entity – use waterfront property as sounding board to test guideline impacts | City of Rockport, Downtown Property Owners, Property Developers | Six Months | 2006 - 2007 | None to \$20,000 (legal, planning) |
| | Prepare agreement with HEB property developer – include design guideline requirements | City of Rockport, Property owner, Property Developer | Four Months | 2006 - 2007 | None to \$20,000 (legal) |
| | Determine initial revenue bond sale, proceed with initial bond sale | City of Rockport | Four Months | 2006 - 2007 | To be determined (\$20,000 as allowance for bond counsel) |
| 7. | Begin survey / design for Austin Street | City of Rockport | Four to Six Months | 2007 - 2008 | To be Determined (\$100,000 as temporary allowance) |
| 8. | Begin construction, initial phase of Austin Street | City of Rockport | Eight to Ten Months | 2007-2009 | To be Determined (\$1,000,000 as initial construction amount) |
| 9. | Establish incentives for redevelopment – determine incentives, funding source (TIF?), approval | City of Rockport | Three to Four Months | 2007 | None to \$20,000 (legal, financial) |
| 10. | Begin Parking Redevelopment – design and constructions | City of Rockport | Six Months | 2007-2008 | To be Determined (\$250,000 as temporary allowance) |
| 11. | Bulkhead and Jetty design | Property Owner, ACND, City of Rockport | Six Months | 2007-2008 | To be Determined |
| 12. | Bulkhead and Jetty construction | Property Owner, ACND, City of Rockport | Twelve Months | 2007-2009 | To be Determined |
| 13. | Begin development of Harbor front property | Property Owner, Developer | One Year to Eighteen Months | 2007 | To be Determined |
| 14. | Begin Neighborhood redevelopment | Property Owner, City of Rockport | One Year | 2007-2008 | To be Determined (\$250,000 as temporary allowance) |



5. Design Guidelines

The following are examples of guidelines from other communities that may in part be relevant to the unique conditions in Rockport. Samples may be obtained from the communities charged with implementing them. The key to design guidelines is the clarity with which they present the intent of the community, and the degree of flexibility which they provide.

Danien, Georgia – Historic District Guidelines – good graphic quality as it relates to architecture, very easy to see intent, but does not specifically say what to do.

Isla Vista, California – Downtown Guidelines – coastal community with many similar characteristics to Rockport.

Ocean City Development Corporation, Ocean City, Maryland – design guidelines for the downtown area. Document is very clear and concise.

Manhattan Beach Downtown Development Guidelines – guidelines for downtown area with broad range of land uses.

Galveston, Texas - design standards for historic properties. While these guidelines target historic structures, many of the principles discussed are applicable to Rockport.

Georgetown, Texas Downtown Guidelines – has a Texas point of view that may be more in line with the degree of freedom that we allow Texas developers to have.

Downtown Design Guidelines for San Clemente, California– guidelines for older master planned California coastal community.

Santa Cruz California – Area Specific Plans and Guidelines – plans for harbor and beachfront areas that have many similarities to portions of the Rockport downtown area.

Many other examples of guidelines are available from coastal communities throughout the United States. Guidelines for Rockport should create a framework that governs the following key elements:

- Land uses, both allowed and not allowed
- Building placement on a lot
- Building relationship to adjacent streets and to other buildings
- Compatibility between adjacent land uses
- Building size, height and volume
- Building setbacks
- Building color
- Streetscape elements adjacent to the building
- Relationship of parking to the building and to the lot it serves
- Vegetation types and sizes
- Nighttime illumination
- Signage
- Façade treatments
- Façade variation and setback of portions of the facade
- Fenestration
- Awnings

6. Conclusion

Rockport has a unique opportunity to re-shape and re-consider its downtown area over the next few years. The ability to work with land owners and downtown merchants that are truly passionate about the city and its future can create a vibrant and one of a kind waterfront environment that is truly one of the jewels of coastal Texas and the entire Southeastern United States. This plan is the first of many steps in the creation of that vision.