

VERNACULAR ASSETS: PLANNING FOR LOCAL  
CULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT IN TEXAS

by

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## DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my family: Mom, Dad, Chris, Jennifer, my Wilks grandparents, and my Roberts grandparents. My family—and their love, encouragement, and support—made this paper possible, as did their sometimes bothersome refusal to believe that I could fail.

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ABSTRACT

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This paper examines how fast-growing cities in Texas with populations over 100,000 plan for local cultural and environmental resources. In the face of globalization, cities in the United States attempt to craft unique identities for themselves in order to attract tourists, residents, and footloose capital, but plans are often borrowed from work in other cities or are forms of Disneyfication and lead to increasing homogenization among cities. This paper argues that planning based on vernacular assets can better shape local identity, with vernacular assets defined as local cultural and environmental resources that are rooted in place. Plans and related documents from eight fast-growing cities were evaluated as to how or if they protect or develop vernacular assets. The paper concludes that, although the cities do protect

some vernacular assets, these resources are not generally used as a framework for planning or for developing local identity.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

It is a fundamental requirement and goal to build cities with soul.

Beijing Declaration Concerning Urban Culture

#### 1.1 Overview

While the U.S. Census Bureau estimates that total U.S. population grew by just over 6 percent from 2000 and 2006, some American cities grew by more than three times that number.<sup>1</sup> A potential outcome of such rapid growth is that it might complicate efforts to preserve local identity. Rapidly-growing cities might not have the time to plan for sense of place before many of the elements that make up sense of place are lost; efforts can be further hampered in smaller cities, which might not have the resources to devote to beyond-the-status-quo planning efforts. As these cities undergo the kind of growth that must surely make them into places vastly different than they were only a short time ago, the question asked by Davenport and Anderson (2005, 630) arises: “[w]hat happens to sense of place when places change?” Faced with tremendous development pressures, rapidly-growing cities could find it difficult to develop or preserve their sense of place, their identity. As creating or preserving sense of place is a popular theme among city plans, and if local environment and culture are what distinguishes one place from another, how, then, do fast-growing cities plan for local environment and local culture, that is, for vernacular assets, and

how should they plan for these resources? This issue has received little attention in the planning literature and is the focus of my thesis. Cities in the United States tend to imitate planning work from other cities, leading to unremarkable, similar-sounding plans and similar-looking development across the country. The purpose of this analysis is to identify what fast-growing cities in the United States do to plan for local cultural and environmental resources and to identify “best practices,” which could help fast-growing cities shape their planning efforts, without borrowing from another city’s identity.

### 1.2 City Planning, Sense of Place, and Identity

Place has meaning, and this meaning is constructed through a person’s interaction with the physical environment and through socio-cultural processes (Nanzer 2004; Pretty et al, 2003). A sense of place is derived through the physical environment of a particular space, as well as the culture located in that space. What gives space a “character,” then—what makes it unique—is the convergence of the physical and the socio-cultural, which can only be located in that one space. This inherent uniqueness of place is, unfortunately, too often overlooked in planning.

In recent years, the structure of capital has changed, which has affected planning. The U.S. economy has seen a major shift to a service, knowledge, and cultural economy, particularly in urban areas, and these industries do not require the same kind of large-scale facilities that are required by other types of industry, such as manufacturing, and are therefore not as committed to a particular place. Fainstein argues that capital has deconstructed “the previous relations of people and industries to

place” (1991, 25), and capital is now much more mobile than it was pre-mid-twentieth century. Planning reflects this change; planners “pursue footloose firms, offer subsidies to industries willing to stay put...and negotiate deals” (Fainstein 1991, 24). In the face of increasing globalization, competition among cities for footloose capital and for footloose residents is also increasing even more (Leo and Brown 2000; Leo and Anderson 2006). However, as cities become more and more homogenized through globalization, it has become more difficult to compete for capital (and most U.S. cities do not question the need to compete), as cities tend to pursue the same development strategies, making one city appear hardly different from any other, giving residents and businesses little reason to stay. Many of these development strategies include attempts to create sense of place (defined below), but when the same development strategies are employed in different cities, the result is the creation of a sense of some other place. This borrowed type of planning can lead to what Relph describes as “unfortunate consequences” (1996, 911) based on plans “which reduce the diverse identities of localities to comfortable familiarity” for the outsider (ibid), rather than the people who already inhabit a particular place.

Copy-cat planning based on what looks good in other cities without a careful study of how and why those plans work (and if they really do work) can also lead to Disneyfication. Disneyfication is planning and urban design that resembles the Walt Disney Company’s theme park developments, in particular the parks’ Main Street areas of the theme park (Sorkin 1992a). It lends itself to the creation of historic-looking buildings and urban layouts based on what are considered to be traditional

historic architecture and city patterns. The problem is that it is based on a generic history, and not on the history of a particular place—it therefore may have no relation to the heritage of a city in which this design style is implemented. Disneyfication also takes real historic resources and polishes them so that they're more attractive to visitors, so that they seem brighter, friendlier, and more familiar, even if this means that such places then seem foreign to existing residents. Even when it is not modeled after generic historic designs, Disneyfication involves cleaning up a city or district, keeping the ugliness at bay. Trash and graffiti are quickly removed, but so are undesirable persons—such as the homeless or the urban poor—who might frighten away tourists or potential new residents and business owners (Sorkin 1992a). And that points to the motivation at the root of Disneyfication—it is based on a façade, keeping the realness of the city, that is, its real population and its problems, hidden from the elements the city wishes it had instead, that is, upper-income residents and higher tax-generating businesses. Huxtable (1997) remarks on the difference between early American cities that borrowed architectural styles from elsewhere and today's borrowed or copied designs. She writes: “Divorced from the tradition it misappropriates, [today's approach to design] has also become disconnected from all that is essential to the complex act of making environment...Today's themed creations are not, and never will be, real places; they are not meant to be” ( 1995, 69). Hayden adds that theme-based development and place marketing leads cities to become “caricatures of themselves” (18). And Zukin (1995) writes that Disney World acts as a model of how to manage public spaces. It “confirms and consolidates the significance of cultural

power – the power to impose a vision – for social control. It...manages social diversity; it imposes a frame of meaning on the city, a frame that earlier in history came from other forms of public culture” (77). This paper argues that plans to develop or preserve a location’s sense of place might be better crafted if based on a place’s local physical (that is, natural) environment and its local culture rather than if based on attempts to make a place more appealing to outsiders by making the city seem familiar to those who do not live there. The former type of planning would better serve to develop a true sense of place.

“Sense of place” can be an ambiguous term and an elusive concept, varying in meaning from person to person, and thus, from planner to planner. The elements that foster sense of place and the means to measure it vary in the literature, which includes research in the fields of geography and environmental psychology, but Relph (1996) provides a good overview of “sense of place,” and his definition will be used in this paper. Relph writes that sense of place is “the *awareness* of spirit of places, and [is] a faculty which individuals possess rather than [being] a property of environments” (1996, 910; emphasis original). That is, sense of place is not based on, for example, a particular neighborhood’s distinctive architecture but rather is based on what that neighborhood manages to convey to those who happen to find themselves there or what the neighborhood’s residents and visitors perceive about that place. Nanzer defines sense of place as “the manner in which humans relate to, or feel about, the environments in which they live” (2004, 362-363), but Relph’s definition is more useful for this study. He says that spirit of place “refers simply to the inherent and



unique qualities of somewhere” (1996, 909), which I believe are largely drawn from a place’s natural environment and local culture. For this paper, I do not attempt to measure awareness of spirit of place; rather, I looked for the kinds of planning and related activities that could protect or develop the inherent and unique qualities of a place that might convey spirit of place. For this study, then, a city that has a “sense of place” is one that is able to express its “inherent and unique qualities,” to residents and visitors; a city with a strong sense of place is able to instill in a person an awareness that *this* place is somehow different from some other place.<sup>2</sup>

Municipalities have looked for ways to make their locations stand out so as to attract tourists, residents, and businesses, and creating a “sense of place” is frequently cited as a goal of planning. Of the various methods used to create sense of place, three approaches are currently popular among cities and developers in the United States, namely, Richard Florida’s Creative Class concept, the Environmental / Green Cities Movement, and Smart Growth (which is described in Section 2.2.1, below). Florida writes that cities need to enhance quality of life and cultural amenities within their boundaries in order to attract workers from the “Creative Class,” such as lawyers, artists, software designers, and architects, who in turn acts as major stimulators of economic growth; essentially, the theory is that when the local creative class grows, the local economy grows. Strategies developed under this concept work to attract members of the creative class, who will bring with them money, an attractive image for the city, and additional jobs (Peck 2005); strategies include providing high-quality arts

and cultural resources, fine dining and eclectic restaurants, and a vibrant nightlife (ibid).

Although it might not have so well-known a spokesperson as the Creative Class concept does, the Environmental/Green Cities movement is nonetheless well-known in planning today. Strategies typically include encouraging energy-efficient design, water conservation, environmentally-friendly landscaping, and use of alternative energy sources. Cities across America are eager to implement these two planning ideas.<sup>3</sup> When pursuing planning strategies under these two schools of thought, cities use a variety of strategies to determine what sort of image(s) to create for themselves. Some use strategic planning to identify their strengths; some focus on activities that can be used to draw tourists, such as festivals and parades. Cities also look to other places to see what has “worked” there and then implement copied strategies.<sup>4</sup> Although certainly in recent years cities have embraced both cultural planning and environmental planning in various forms, including the Creative Class and Green Cities approaches, when implemented these efforts have generally lacked an emphasis on preservation of or celebration of local resources, with the exception of historic preservation. For example, cities across the nation are encouraging energy efficiency in new construction and are building new flagship cultural institutions, but these activities can take place anywhere and symbolize nowhere in particular. In their attempts to attract outside businesses and residents, cities might overlook the needs of the residents and businesses already at home in their communities; in their attempts to

craft iconic identities, cities might overlook their inherent uniqueness, developed through the combination of natural local environment and local culture.

As Borrup notes, “The assumptions shared by people [i.e., their culture] vary from place to place. As more local communities become global microcosms, it’s increasingly crucial to recognize the many and varied assumptions held by people who share a place” (2006, 4). Borrup encourages using a region’s various cultures to build a sense of community *within* a given community, and the same tactic could also be used to develop an identity for a city or community to the outside region. Local convention and visitors bureaus often promote the use of cultural resources or tourist-friendly environmental assets, but these agencies are not planning bodies, i.e., their activities focus on place promotion and not on planning. Planning agencies, on the other hand, often fail to recognize in their plans the possibilities for crafting identity inherent in local cultural and environmental resources. By focusing on local culture and the local natural environment, a city can forge a unique, or at least uncommon, identity or sense of place.

Carr and Servon argue that cities should plan for an area based on "the unique, locally rooted characteristics that express the ‘place-ness’ of the [area]...We call this 'place-ness' vernacular culture" (2009, 8) <sup>5</sup>. According to the authors' definition of vernacular culture, cities that plan with vernacular culture in mind will ensure that "the people who create the culture and the businesses [located therein]...own the culture and [are] rooted in place" (10). Access to vernacular businesses can help residents resist homogenization. This vernacular culture, Carr and Servon say, "manifests itself

in different contexts" and can include "neighborhoods defined by ethnicity (Chinatowns, Little Italys etc.), trade or business activity (garment districts, flower markets, farmers' markets), cultural activity (theater districts, museums and galleries districts), and sexual orientation of residents (gay districts)" (ibid). Thus local businesses protected through this sort of planning would be "[a]uthentic [and] locally rooted" (9). Carr and Servon's examples of the vernacular can be expanded to include the local environment and, in particular, aspects of a city's culture that reflect the environment. Where aspects of a city's unique local culture (as opposed to the homogenized version that many cities now maintain) remain, these are likely influenced by the local environmental conditions, for example, access to a large river, nearby mountains or desert, and the flora and fauna that inhabit such regions. In Laredo, Texas, for instance, city growth was shaped by Laredo's location by the Rio Grande River (City of Laredo 1997). Aspects of local culture and environment are inextricably linked and together form vernacular assets. Culture changes the local environment, and the local environment shapes culture, and because they are so closely and inextricably related, the local environment can be considered vernacular (see, for example, section on cultural landscapes, below). Planning based on vernacular assets will help foster and protect an authentic, non-generic local identity for each city. As Jon Hawkes writes, "authenticity is a better concept to apply...than distinctiveness. That is, it might be more productive to concentrate on ensuring that the cultural manifestations in a community have a direct relationship with the culture of that

community than to obsess on what makes a particular community...better than...any other” (quoted in Borrup 2006, 167).

For this study, I reviewed literature from environmental planning, cultural planning, geography, and environmental psychology. This research helped me investigate what sort of activities cities might engage in to preserve or develop local resources, as well as why they conduct such activities (e.g., to create a sense of place, to attract tourists, residents, and businesses, or to increase property values). Drawing on the authors cited in this paper as a framework, I argue the kind of cultural and environmental planning that best helps a city to develop its unique identity is based on identifying, preserving, and developing existing local cultural and environmental resources. It is planning that recognizes and appreciates cultural pluralism, that is rooted in a specific place, that is reflexive and critical, and that grows from “a combination of the unique history [culture], geography and topography [environment] of a place and the traditional forms, scale, materials and textures that characterize it [culture and environment]” (Young 2008, 75). This approach to planning recognizes that a city’s culture and its natural environment are linked, and it draws on—and attempts to preserve—local knowledge (Van der Ryn and Cowan 2007). City planning consistent with this locally-based approach preserves “the larger patterns of place and culture” (Orr 2002, 28) through designs that “grow out of and celebrate place” (Van der Ryn and Cowan 2007, 186). Moreover, while open to the changes brought by globalization and competition for capital, this approach to planning is cautious about implementing copy-cat strategies, and questions the need for the new and asks planners

to think about what impact plans and policies will have on the entire community; when change is proposed, this approach asks first if it is needed and if there is a better way to do whatever it is the change is supposed to do (Orr 2002, 28).

Through my research, I hoped to determine if cities use cultural and environmental planning to protect or develop vernacular assets or if they relied more on copy-cat planning. This paper is meant to answer several questions: (1) Do rapidly-growing cities in Texas plan for local cultural and environmental resources? (2) If so, what kinds of planning efforts are used? (3) Why were those planning efforts used, that is, is vernacular asset-based planning used to develop local identity? (4) And do any of these planning efforts meet the standards identified as “best practices” in the literature review? I expected to find that most cities make only few, if any, attempts to foster their individual identities through planning based on vernacular assets.

The next chapter defines cultural and environmental planning for this study and describes how cultural and environmental planning are commonly approached in planning today, and suggests a different approach consistent with Young’s (2008) concept of culturization. Chapter 3 describes the research methods used for this paper. Chapters 4 and 5 provide the findings for this study and highlight examples of how local cultural and environmental resources are protected or developed in the cities examined for this paper. Chapter 6 concludes the paper. Appendix A describes in more detail how the cities examined protect and develop local resources.

## CHAPTER 2

### BACKGROUND, DEFINITIONS, AND METHOD

Local identity should be stressed in urban planning and construction.

Beijing Declaration Concerning Urban Culture

#### 2.1 Definitions, Cultural Planning and Environmental Planning

Cities often use cultural planning in their efforts to improve quality of life, to develop their local economies, and to attract the creative class (see, e.g., Grodach and Loukaitou-Sideris 2007). Environmental planning is used to meet regulations, to make cities more sustainable, to improve quality of life for residents, to make cities more attractive to visitors, and to attract and retain what might be called the “Whole Foods class,” that is, people who consider themselves environmentally-friendly and are willing to pay high prices for environmentally-responsible products and services. How cities pursue cultural and environmental planning is structured, as least in part, by how one frames such planning and the goals set for such efforts, as well as by how one defines terms such as “culture” and “environment” or “nature” (see, for example, Darlow 1996, 293; Orr 2002, 16-18; Van der Ryn and Cowan 2007, 188).<sup>6</sup>

##### *2.1.1 Cultural Planning*

With today’s fierce competition for the nation’s mobile citizens and businesses, many cities in the United States look for ways to make themselves seem different from (and better than) their competitors. Cultural planning is a recent and popular tool cities

use to improve quality of life for residents (Borup 2006) and to distinguish themselves for development purposes (Grodach 2008; Strom 2002). Cultural planning is pursued in several ways, by focusing on places of cultural consumption and production (e.g. theaters, arts districts, ethnic neighborhoods, historic districts) or by focusing on producers of cultural products (e.g., artists, purveyors of ethnic goods, performers, graphic design companies) (Hall 2000; Markusen and Schrock 2006; Carr and Servon (2009).

Cultural plans can further be defined by whether they represent planning *for* culture or planning *from* culture. Planning *for* culture involves developing or creating new cultural resources where these are felt to be lacking. Projects under this type of planning include building new flagship cultural facilities and the creation of new culturally based festivals. Planning *from* culture involves developing, preserving, or assisting existing cultural resources so that they become stronger assets for the city, because of what they can do for the city's image or because of what they can provide for the city's residents. Planning from culture can also be as simple as identifying and acknowledging a city's cultural resources and keeping them in mind during normal city planning processes. I argue later in this paper that planning from culture—that is, planning to preserve, protect, or develop existing local culture (defined below)—leads to creation or development of stronger city identity.

In addition to improving quality of life for residents, cities use cultural planning to create identity for branding purposes. Cities use branding to market themselves, just as businesses do (Evans 2003; Jensen 2007; Zukin 1995), and cultural



planning is frequently used by municipalities as a form of economic development (Markusen 2006; Markusen and Schrock 2006; Strom 2002) and to develop a more cosmopolitan, sophisticated, and attractive identity—which in turn is thought to foster economic growth (Clark et al, 2002). Many of these cities focus on high-profile flagship projects targeted at national and international audiences (Markusen 2006), instead of implementing programs to showcase regional work for a more local audience—a tactic that ignores local contexts “in order to ensure [a project’s] pre-eminence in international ones” (Jones 2003, 160). Except in rare cases where a large-scale cultural project stems from a true part of a city’s identity, such as Times Square in New York, flagship projects that ignore the local do not contribute to forging a unique identity for a particular city. Rather, the use of high-profile projects is merely an example of copy-cat planning. Moreover, they are based, in part, on only one definition of culture.

Culture is typically defined in two ways (Borrupt 2006, 4); it is defined in a way relating to the arts, often focusing on “high-brow” arts, or it is defined as a particular community’s way of life and the signs and symbols thereof, for example, its language, its customs, or its art forms. Huntington and Harrison define culture as “values, attitudes, beliefs, and underlying assumptions” held by a particular group or community (quoted in Borrupt 2006, 4). The Beijing Declaration Concerning Urban Culture defines culture as the “moral standards, value views, ways of thinking, codes of behavior, social mentalities, traditional customs, cultural and scientific literacy, emotions and faiths of citizens.”<sup>7</sup> Borrupt defines culture more simply as “the human

ability to communicate and navigate *the natural and social environment together*” (2006, 5; emphasis added). The signs and symbols of a city’s culture in these definitions would include, again, the city’s language or dialect (or accent) and its art and architecture. A city’s values, attitudes, and beliefs can be expressed through its vision statements, its comprehensive plans, its ordinances, its development processes (and the language used to encourage or discourage development), its programs, and the kinds of planning it conducts. For example, a city that wants to protect the ranching industry around which it was built will likely have ordinances protecting that way of life or comprehensive plans that recommend protecting that way of life. McAllen, Texas, illustrates this example. McAllen’s economy has historically been based largely on agriculture, and the city’s comprehensive plan notes the importance of maintaining an agricultural industry in the area.

Much of cultural planning is based on the arts-based definition of culture, as opposed to the way-of-life-based definition; even planning theorists who espouse more bottom-up, locally-based, democratic forms of cultural planning might focus on the arts and ignore other forms of cultural production that fall under the way-of-life definition (see, for example, Markusen 2006).<sup>8</sup> This may be because arts-based cultural planning is seen by so many city governments as a way to revitalize local economies and regenerate ailing neighborhoods.

In the late 1980s, Bilbao [Spain] was a declining city suffering from high levels of unemployment and “years of economic restructuring, factory closures,...and terrorism” (Ceballos 2004, 183). In 1991, however, the city arranged for a branch of

the renowned Guggenheim Museum to be developed in Bilbao.<sup>9</sup> Designed by noted architect Frank Gehry, the museum has garnered international attention since it opened in 1997, granting Bilbao the kind of cultural icon status usually reserved for places such as New York, London, and Paris (Plaza 2006). Tourists from across the globe travel to Bilbao to see the museum, lifting the city's economy (ibid). Evans notes, for example, that the Guggenheim has added more than £300 million to Bilbao's economy (2003, 432). The turnabout in the city's image was so tremendous—especially considering its international scope—that such transitions based on this kind of flagship cultural project have come to be known as “the Bilbao effect.”<sup>10</sup> While there have been negative aspects of the development of the Bilbao museum and its effect on the city (see, for example, Gómez and González 2001), leading to heavy criticism of such projects, flagship cultural initiatives have nevertheless become very attractive to cities looking to transform their image.

Because of their potential to remake a city's image, the creation of flagship cultural institutions and cultural districts is popular with cities across the nation. Strom writes about this trend, stating that what is remarkable about it is “that so many new facilities have been built in a relatively short time span, and so many have been built outside traditional cultural centers such as New York, Boston, Chicago, and San Francisco” (2002, 3). She adds that, “[w]hereas once the arts were considered a luxury, supported by philanthropy and enjoyed by an elite group of connoisseurs, today's cultural institutions are constructed as an explicit part of a city's economic revitalization program” (ibid, 5). But as several authors have noted, not every city can

be like Bilbao (or London or New York), and the construction of a large, architect-designed, well-funded cultural institution or the creation of a cultural district does not guarantee that anyone will pay attention to it (Evans 2003). Markusen, for example, states that “for all but the very largest cities and some highly specialized medium-sized cities that were ‘first-movers’ in their genres...[large-scale cultural initiatives such as cultural tourism] can provide only modest economic development benefits” (2006, 27). Jensen argues that “what really matters [is] local specificity and identity” (2007, 227), and Markusen argues that cities would have more success in cultural planning if they focused their efforts on planning for local and regional audiences, rather than for long-distance tourists (2006, 27). Further, as Strom notes, some scholars are concerned that these kinds of projects “can be undemocratic and exclusionary” (2002, 17-18).

What can also be exclusionary is the narrow arts-centric cultural planning pursued by many cities, as described above. The arts are without doubt a crucial component of culture, but they are not the only component. They are, perhaps, the most visible, the most widely accessible, the most easily captured, so to speak, and made available to others. It is more difficult, for example, to try to identify, document, and display local accents or dialects or non-public traditions. Moreover, as the way-of-life definition of culture has been often overlooked, there might not be much interest in applying the wider definition to cultural planning. For example, the cities examined for this paper focus their cultural planning efforts for the most part on the arts and on historic preservation.

Most common forms of cultural planning tend to focus on arts-based culture and link culture to economic development and quality of life, but Young (2008) sees culture as a framework for all city planning. Young's recommendations for cultural planning stem from a definition of culture based in a way-of-life concept that is expanded to include a "more comprehensive and integrated concept of culture" (2008, 84). Recognizing that culture subsumes all the various components of a city, he writes that cultural planning, therefore, can address various planning issues, drawing on "the environment, history, and ways-of-life" (2008, 72). He recommends that a blend of postmodern and neo-modern planning theory be used to craft and implement cultural planning and argues for "the strategic and systematic introduction of richer and more meaningful concepts and approaches to culture, and to its research" (ibid). Planning practices within this framework would need to recognize the multiplicity of cultures typically found within a single city, or what Young calls "cultural pluralism" (2008, 73). Young argues for a planning process based on "culturization," which is "the reflexive, critical and ethical use of culture in planning" (ibid, 74) and can be used "to generate a deeper relationship with place" (ibid, 75). Planning and design based on culturization is rooted in the local and "find[s] its cultural locus in a combination of the unique history, geography and topography of a place and the traditional forms, scale, materials and textures that characterize it" (ibid, 75). Cultural planning that is divorced from the environment, that overlooks the link between culture and environment, might inadvertently facilitate loss of the natural environment because it does not fully appreciate the natural world's significance to culture. Planning consistent with a

culturization approach, on the other hand, would help protect the environment. It is this kind of approach to planning that this paper argues would best develop sense of place for a city, and it forms a framework for conducting vernacular asset-based planning. Moreover, combining cultural planning and environmental planning increases the chance of success for both kinds of planning. As Hayden writes, “there is a broad...debate taking place about the extent to which ‘nature’ and ‘culture’ are intertwined...[S]imply trying to protect untouched parts of nature has a very limited possibility of success against the constant production of urbanized space” (1995, 62). She suggests that environmentalists will have a better chance of protecting the natural environment if they “[make] common cause” (ibid, 62-63) with other groups, such as cultural groups. Young’s approaches provide a means for cultural and environmental planning to make common cause. Plans and policy documents examined for this paper were analyzed on how much they rely on a framework consistent with culturization, with plans, ordinances, and other documents that rely heavily on a culturization-type approach seen as doing more to foster a unique city identity than those that do not rely on culturization.

### *2.1.2 Environmental Planning*

In 1969, Congress passed the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), which requires any federal agency proposing a major federal project to prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS); when state and local governments develop projects that will use federal funding or permits from the federal government, it must either prepare an environmental impact statement or obtain clearance from a

coordinating federal agency that an EIS is not required (Daniels and Daniels 2003, 42-44). Since the passage of NEPA, cities have had to keep up with increasing federal and state requirements, and environmental planning has become an integral part of the planning process in many cities. As scientific research has exposed the dangers to humans and the natural environment not just from major, easily identifiable sources such as toxic waste from chemical companies but also from everyday environmental hazards, such as non-point source pollution, cities have expanded environmental planning efforts to include projects that address local concerns about public health. Although this kind of environmental planning can be both costly and complicated, it fits neatly in to a city's role as protector of the public health, safety, and welfare. But environmental planning is an expanding field, and in recent years, the natural environment has also become linked to quality of life in much the same way that culture is linked to quality of life. Cities that have protected their natural assets through high(er) environmental standards are able to market themselves as good places to live and work. For example, Clark et al. (2002) describe how Chicago has not only avoided the decline suffered by so many other major U.S. rustbelt cities but has thrived; the authors argue that Chicago's success stems from its provision of public amenities, including the Chicago Lakefront, the city's tree-planting efforts, and its green roof project (505).

Additional forms of environmental planning are based in ecological design (to be discussed later), sustainable development, and global climate change/footprint-based planning. Environmentalism encompasses a wide range of theories and schools

of policy thought, depending on the values held by a particular planner or environmentalist. Ecological design, sustainable development, and footprint-based planning encourage viewing the environment as connected to more aspects of planning and of cities than just the environment. Sustainable development (described below), for example, connects the environment to equity and to economic development. Mainstream American environmental planning, however, often follows what might be called a “regulate-and-recycle” approach.

Under a regulate-and-recycle approach to environmental planning, cities typically focus on limiting harm to the natural environment while continuing business as usual. They might also provide other limited forms of environmental protection, such as recycling or providing more parks for residents, and their plans might be based in a real concern about the city’s local natural environment. But *explicit* environmental planning of this kind is generally limited to offering programs like recycling, to meeting federal, state, and local regulations, and to placating concerned citizens. As such, environmental planning activities in U.S. cities often center on reducing nonrenewable energy consumption, wetlands preservation for flood protection rather than for protection of wildlife habitat, provision of park land, recycling, and a recent derivation of smokestack chasing, attracting green businesses. Environmental planning in the United States tends to focus less often on preserving nature for nature’s sake and more often on meeting health and public safety standards. And when preserving nature for nature’s sake does occur, the underlying logic for such planning can fail to address it from the perspective of preserving nature for the sake of *local* nature, culture, and



identity. That is, a city could open a botanical garden with the intent to educate the public about the wide variety of plant species found around the world. This kind of project can protect open spaces and educate citizens but does not necessarily protect native plant resources.<sup>11</sup>

Portney describes sustainable development as “a general [concept] whose precise [definition has] yet to be fully explicated” (2003, 4). The form of sustainable development most used today began with the publication of a report commissioned by the United Nations, which stated the need to balance environmental concerns, economic development, and equity among socioeconomic groups and, in particular, among generations and between developed and developing nations. Because sustainable development is seen as a way to preserve the environment and improve the lives of disadvantaged populations without having to make significant changes in the structure or operation of Western economies, it is popular with (some) environmentalists and with corporations. As Meadowcroft writes, sustainable development “suggest[s] that it [is] not a question of a choice *between* environmental protection and social advance, but rather a problem of selecting patterns of economic and social development compatible with sound environmental stewardship” (2005, 268; emphasis original). Common strategies for achieving sustainable development used today include improving a nation’s (or region’s) economy—as this will finance protecting the environment and pursuing social equity—and implementing more comprehensive planning, which allows for integrating environmental concerns into all areas of governmental policy-making (Meadowcroft 2005).

Only recently has much of the nation become concerned about global climate change (Wheeler 2008), although environmental experts have been warning policymakers and the general public about it for more than a decade (Easton 2008, 152-153). It is now a much talked about issue in many municipal governments, and cities are increasingly willing to address the issue of global warming through environmental planning. For example, the United States Conference of Mayors reports that 884 mayors have signed its climate protection agreement; a press release issued by the same organization on July 13, 2007 stated that 600 mayors had signed the agreement.<sup>12</sup> Clearly, an increasing number of city leaders are becoming concerned about global climate change. And the issue is a rising concern for planners, too; just last year (2007), the American Planning Association's monthly magazine, *Planning*, devoted its August/September issue entirely to global warming.

While explicit strategies to address this issue in city plans is not widespread, some municipalities have begun take steps to reduce their carbon or ecological footprint.<sup>13</sup> The release of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere is held to be a major contributor to global climate change, so reducing a city's carbon footprint—that is, how much carbon dioxide the city releases into the air each year—can, in theory, reduce global climate change. Tied to reducing carbon footprint is the reduction of a city's ecological footprint, or the effects a city has on the natural environment based on resources consumed and wastes produced.

Portney describes five ways that cities can reduce their ecological footprints, including “integrated city planning to minimize energy, materials, and land use

requirements,...integrated open space planning, protecting the integrity of local ecosystems, and striving for economic development that has zero net impact on ecosystems” (2003, 20). Activities pursued by cities that follow this approach to environmental planning, that is, planning based on reducing carbon or ecological footprints, include reducing energy consumption or increasing the use of energy derived from renewable sources, reducing air pollution, and preserving forest areas (United States Conference of Mayors 2007).

Environmental planning can also be defined by whether it represents environmental *sustainability* planning or environmental *amenity* planning. Environmental *sustainability* planning focuses on the sustainable use of resources, on sustainable design. This kind of planning encourages the responsible use of resources, discourages waste, and attempts to ensure that resources (e.g. air, water, trees, animals) available now will still be available in the future. Planning under this approach seeks to minimize harm to the environment and to avoid creating or reinforcing inequalities among people; for example, dangerous land uses are not automatically sited near the people who offer the least political resistance. This kind of planning includes encouraging the use of energy-efficient buildings, creating retention ponds, and mitigating pollution. It discourages clear-cutting of trees and encourages preservation of undeveloped open spaces. Environmental *amenity* planning focuses on providing amenities such as parks, pollution-free lakes, and access to natural open spaces. The focus is not necessarily on local resources, such as native plants. Amenity planning can be used to protect nature for nature’s sake, but it can also be a tool to increase

quality of life in a city in order to accomplish other city goals. For example, amenity planning can protect wildlife habitat, but it could also be used to increase property values. Amenity planning overlaps with sustainability planning in some cases. For example, protecting open spaces can both contribute to a city's sustainability and provide a quality-of-life amenity to the city's residents.

Both environmental sustainability planning and environmental amenity planning can protect vernacular assets. For example, cities can prohibit clear-cutting of trees in land development (sustainability planning), and they can also acquire and preserve undeveloped natural open spaces. The environmental planning examined for this paper is that which preserves or provides vernacular assets, whether sustainability or amenity planning. That is, the study examined what cities do to preserve or develop aspects of their environment that are only found in their region or only in certain parts of the world. Two common examples of this type of planning is encouraging or requiring the use of native plants for landscaping and preserving undeveloped open spaces on which local species—both flora and fauna—are located. Other examples, though, could include protecting sites of local types of geological features or using local mineral water sources to help develop community identity outside the region. This paper argues that environmental planning that protects or provides vernacular environmental assets will foster community identity.

The kinds of environmental planning described above can help develop a city's unique identity but can also fail to protect unique local assets. This may be in part due to failure to recognize the role the natural environment can play in local identity and

therefore the role that the local environment can play in quality of life and in economic development. As in cultural planning, environmental planning in the United States also fails to recognize explicitly the interconnectedness of environment and culture. This paper argues that the kind of cultural and environmental planning that best helps a city to develop its unique identity—whether for marketing the city to outsiders or, one would hope, to improve the lives of its residents—is planning that is based on identifying, preserving, and developing existing local cultural and environmental assets.

## 2.2 How Culture and Environment are Linked in Planning and Related Fields

Some scholars in planning and related fields have linked environment and culture in their work. Smart Growth, Historic Preservation (and Green Preservation especially), Ecological Design, and the Slow City movement can each inform efforts by cities looking to create plans that stem from vernacular assets. Although plans based in these schools of thought often fail to reflect the idea that culture influences and is influenced by environment, and that culture and environment are inherently rooted in place, they nevertheless explicitly describe culture and environment as crucial elements to consider in planning.

### *2.2.1 Smart Growth*

The idea of “Smart Growth” as an approach to city planning began in Maryland in the 1990s. It is based on the idea that the typical suburban sprawl that developed in U.S. cities in the twentieth century and the related “leap frog”-type development are unhealthy for communities, their transportation systems, and their environment, and have higher financial costs, as well (Ganapati 2008, 287). From this perspective,

sprawl encourages people to spend more time in their cars and less time interacting with each other. Moreover, sprawl patterns of development lead to homogeneity, with no discernible differences among cities. Major principles of Smart Growth include fostering walkability and a range of transportation options, providing a range of housing options, and encouraging infill development. Other principles relate more directly to cultural and environmental planning and include “Foster Distinctive, Attractive Communities with a Strong Sense of Place[;] craft a vision and set standards for development and construction [that] *respond to community values* of architectural beauty and distinctiveness” (emphasis added) and “Preserve Open Space, Farmland, Natural Beauty and Critical Environmental Areas,” which “bolster local economies, preserve critical environmental areas, [and] improve our communities [sic] quality of life.”<sup>14</sup> Planning and policies developed under these principles focus on the needs of the existing community, as well as incoming residents, and encourages preserving the local economy and community values. Smart Growth has become a widely-practiced planning theory, or at least, many cities borrow concepts from Smart Growth for their planning policies. Six of the cities examined for this paper have developed policies to encourage infill development; they encourage new development to occur in (or “infill”) areas of the city that are already developed, thus reducing sprawl into undeveloped areas.<sup>15</sup> Although Smart Growth can be used to preserve local agricultural economies and to foster sense of place—the Smart Growth Network’s website states that smart growth “seeks to create interesting, unique communities which reflect the values and cultures of the people who reside there, and foster the types of physical environments

which support a more cohesive community fabric”<sup>16</sup>—in practice these principles are often overlooked through Smart Growth’s focus on downtown infill development. In other words, the focus is simply on *where* growth is located and not *what kind of* growth occurs (e.g. local businesses or national chain stores). Moreover, Smart Growth’s sense of place strategies generally seem to center on creating a new identity or sense of place for a city, with the community’s values as guiding principles or standards for new development, rather than working with a community’s existing sense of place.<sup>17</sup> Nevertheless, Smart Growth principles can serve as the foundation for efforts to craft vernacular asset-based planning strategies in cities whose identities are challenged by rapid growth.

### *2.2.2 Historic Preservation, Green Preservation, and Cultural Landscapes*

Historic preservation has long been seen as a way to preserve built symbols of a community’s cultural heritage. What began many years ago as an attempt to save built landmarks of important historical figures and sites of major historical events, historic preservation now also works to save sites and structures that illustrate what everyday life was like for people in the past. For example, several of the cities examined for this paper have historic preservation agencies or commissions that are authorized to recommend protection for properties or districts deemed to be significant simply because they represent a particular historic period or a familiar feature of a neighborhood or district.<sup>18</sup> This more democratic approach to preservation can have a strong influence on a city’s plans to protect its culture, as the built environment is a symbol of a city’s culture, and the historic built environment symbolizes the heritage

from which that culture stems and which often continues to influence a city's culture in present times.

The historic preservation movement in recent years has expanded its focus to encompass the environmental aspects of preservation. This includes, for example, renovating old buildings to make them more energy efficient, but it also includes simply shifting perspectives about what counts as environmentally-responsible. To “green preservationists”, reusing an old building is more environmentally-responsible than constructing a new building to high environmental standards because reusing the old building does not require extracting new resources for construction, does not place additional strain on city infrastructure, and does not build on undeveloped natural space (National Housing Trust 2008; Elefante 2007). Green preservation can thus preserve open spaces in addition to preserving the symbols of a city's culture. Unfortunately, as historic preservation resources are typically limited, cities often must make difficult decisions about which historic sites and structures to save, leaving some resources to be destroyed. This leads to the question of whose history—and thus whose culture—is to be preserved. In addition, historic preservation often acts in the same way as the Endangered Species Act—that is, it doesn't act (or isn't able to motivate residents and city officials to act) to save significant resources until they're almost completely eliminated from a particular city or region.

Cultural landscape protection also safeguards the environment, through preservation of open spaces that have been shaped by culture. Carl Sauer defined cultural landscapes as “fashioned from a natural landscape by a culture group. Culture



is the agent, the natural area the medium, the cultural landscape the result” (quoted in Agnoletti 2006, xi). Cultural landscapes include farms, orchards, forests, and meadows that have been used and maintained for generations or even centuries (Agnoletti 2006). Although they are open space, cultural landscapes are not undeveloped territory. They have been shaped by culture and thus are symbols of culture. A fruit orchard planted by early settlers in a region is an example of a cultural landscape. How such landscapes are used and maintained tells stories about the values and lifestyles of the cultures that shape(d) the land and can be used to distinguish one culture from another. They are truly vernacular assets, and they can therefore be used to develop local identity, at least in areas where cultural landscapes remain. As Hamlin notes, cultural landscapes “have the potential to help retain local character and culture...and to provide for appropriate economic development, while achieving the more obvious aim of environmental protection” (2002, 339).

### *2.2.3 Ecological Design and Bioregionalism*

The theory of ecological design marries the ideas of culture and environment, although “culture” in this case generally refers to local knowledge and way of life rather than anything related to what is commonly thought of as culture (i.e., the arts). Van der Ryn and Cowan encourage the use of ecological design in planning for and designing cities. They argue that “biological diversity and cultural diversity are deeply linked,” and that the loss of one leads to the loss of the other (1996, 164). In this sense, “monoculture” refers not just to plants and animals but also to human ways of life.

The result, Van der Ryn and Cowan argue, “is the placeless sprawl visible from any highway” (1996, 78).

One of the principles of ecological design is to use local resources whenever possible instead of importing resources from other places. For example, Van der Ryn and Cowan describe a farm built in Laredo, Texas, with locally-available materials like mesquite and caliche (1996, 98). Cities might value building practices that rely on locally-available materials because they waste fewer resources (fuel) through transportation and because they can contribute to the local economy, but Van der Ryn and Cowan would argue that homes built from local resources also have a stronger local identity. Such homes belong in—are natural residents of—their communities but would be foreign in other cities that have different environments. And cities that still have long-time residents, residents whose families perhaps have lived in the area for generations, can take advantage of local knowledge of what materials are available and which materials work best for different purposes. Local knowledge is also an integral part of a city’s culture; as Van der Ryn and Cowan state, local knowledge “is best earned through a steady process of cultural accretion” (2007, 85). Cities can contribute to preservation of that knowledge through programs such as historic preservation and oral history; the knowledge can be disseminated through education programs and perpetuated through planning, ordinances, and city policy documents. In ecological design, “local knowledge” often refers to the knowledge of a location held by indigenous people who are rooted in a particular place and whose environment and culture are inextricably linked, but it also refers to residents who would not be

considered indigenous but whose “memories...provide a powerful map of [a place’s] constraints and possibilities” (ibid). In the United States, most cities do not have what is commonly considered an indigenous population. Cities usually do have, however, a cohort of citizens whose families have resided there for generations and who have knowledge of local history, environment, and culture. This local knowledge can be used as a foundation for city planning efforts.

Local knowledge is not found exclusively with residents descended from a city’s original or early settlers. Cities should not ignore the cultures of in-migrating residents, and the cultures and lifestyles of new residents can positively contribute to the identity of a particular city. Young’s concept of cultural pluralism could be especially helpful for cultural planning in cities whose populations are made up of diverse cultural groups. Cities must be careful, however, about contributions from new residents, city programs, or planning processes when they lead to homogenization and displacement of the local. Resisting a push toward monoculture can help a city develop a distinctive identity. Zukin writes that culture “symbolizes ‘who belongs’ in specific places” (1995, 1) and can be exclusionary (ibid, 1-47). While Zukin’s statement about symbology and belonging was part of a critique about how cities use culture as a tool for controlling residents and visitors, it also reflects how cities could use culture as a tool of reassurance. In times of rapid, significant change within a location, a city that takes steps to preserve or reinforce its pre-existing local culture—instead of working to alter its culture so that the city becomes a magnet for outsiders—

might do so in an effort to assure its pre-rapid growth residents that they are appreciated and still welcome.

Bioregionalism is related to ecological design but argues for an even deeper connection to place in—and a larger role for—environmental planning. This approach to environmental stewardship gives the natural world equal weight with the human world, and its view of the environment “adds the influences of cultural behavior, such as subsistence techniques and ceremonies” (Dodge 2005, 355). Bioregionalism holds that humans and their natural environment are interdependent. According to Dodge, “the health of natural systems is directly connected to our own physical/psychic health as individuals and as a species” (ibid, 356).

Bioregionalism calls for planning based on the bioregion, instead of on seemingly arbitrarily-set government boundaries. Proponents of bioregionalism argue that it makes no sense that planning for a particular bioregion is split among different city, county, and state governments, with each governing body possibly making conflicting decisions about how to care for environmental resources within the region. Dodge argues that governance based on these “arbitrary entities” leads to “cultural incoherence” (2005, 356). Proponents also argue that public participation would be more meaningful at the bioregional level. Dodge writes that “one way to make government more meaningful and responsible is to involve people directly day by day...which only seems possible if we reduce the scale of government. A bioregion seems about the right size...” (2005, 358).

Proponents of bioregionalism have varying ideas about how to define a bioregion (how to set its boundaries), but one approach to “making bioregional distinctions,” writes Dodge, “is...cultural/phenomenological: you are where you perceive you are; your turf if what you think it is, individually and collectively.” Other ways of defining a bioregion include basing bioregion boundaries on watersheds, on elevation—“thus a distinction between hill people and flatlanders”—or “in terms of ‘spirit places’ or psyche-turning power-presences, such as Mount Shasta and the Pacific Ocean” (Dodge 2005, 357).

Tying environment again to culture, Dodge states that bioregionalism is based in “the integrity of natural systems and culture, with the function of culture being the mediation of the self and the ecosystem” (ibid, 356). He also writes that a bioregion-based system of government “theoretically would express the biological and cultural realities of people-in-place” (2005, 358). Bioregionalist planning, then, would be a form of vernacular planning—it is based on the environment and culture rooted in a specific place, and it attempts to express the place-ness of an area.

Bioregionalism is unlikely to be implemented by cities in the United States on a deep level. Full implementation of bioregionalism would require establishing bioregional systems of governance, which seems unlikely to happen for the present. Cities can, however, adopt principles from bioregionalism for planning purposes. Planners can look to the environment to establish a framework for planning, and they can develop plans around the local culture rooted in that environment.

#### *2.2.4 Slow City Movement*

The Slow City movement (CittaSlow) is closely related to the type of planning for local assets espoused in this paper. The movement was founded in Italy in 1999 and has not spread beyond Europe and the Asia/Pacific area.<sup>19</sup> Nevertheless, its principles could yet serve as guidelines for city planning in the United States.

Slow Cities work to protect locally-made products that are the result of a particular region's culture, location, and heritage. Recognizing that these three interrelated elements—culture, location, and heritage—lend themselves to the production of goods and of ways of life that are locally distinct and in danger of extinction through globalization, the Slow City movement provides ways for participating cities to protect themselves against homogenization. They are places, write Mayer and Knox “where citizens and local leaders pay attention to local history and utilize the distinct local context to develop in better and more sustainable ways” (2006, 322).

Knox writes that CittaSlow is “a grass-roots response to globalization,” the goal of which is “to foster the development of places that enjoy a robust vitality based on good food, healthy environments, sustainable economies and the seasonality and traditional rhythms of community life” (2005, 6). Cities wishing to be labeled as “Slow Cities” must be certified as such by a committee made up of officials from already-certified Slow Cities. Such cities must adhere to a list of principles and policies, which Knox says “leans heavily towards the enjoyment of food and wine...and the promotion of unique, high-quality and specialist foods” (ibid). But

almost as important to the movement as local foods and beverages is “[p]romoting local distinctiveness and a sense of place” (ibid), and one could argue that so much emphasis is placed on foods and beverages because they can be quite locally distinct and thus foster community identity and because they are so attractive to tourists and other consumers. Knox adds that Slow Cities “must be committed...to supporting traditional arts and crafts [and] also to supporting modern industries whose products lend distinctiveness and identity to the region. They must also be committed to the conservation of the distinctive character of their built environment” (ibid). Several other principles of the movement are based on a commitment to environmentally-responsible living and include reducing pollution, preserving green space, and increasing pedestrian access.

It is easy to imagine small, picturesque Italian villages as benefiting from the CittaSlow movement, but it might be harder to see how an ordinary town in Texas would find it helpful, as Italian villages are already attractive to many outsiders. Knox says, however, that Slow Cities are “ordinary places, but they are places that consciously seek to reinforce their own identity and to facilitate an unhurried and enjoyable way of life for their inhabitants” (2005, 7). U.S. cities with an unhurried way of life might not be common, but it is quite common for a city in the United States to consciously seek to create identity for itself. What such cities could learn from CittaSlow is to rediscover and reinforce their own identities, the identities that they already have based on their location, their history, and their culture.

Despite the close fit between the Slow City movement and the type of city planning I argue is best for cities and city identity, CittaSlow does not function on its own as a viable planning theory for most municipalities in the United States. Many U.S. cities would not be eligible for certification because their locally-distinct ways of life do not fit the Slow City mold. For example, although Knox (2005) says that CittaSlow supports modern industries, a review of the movement's charter reveals a heavy bias in favor of cities with agriculturally-based economies.<sup>20</sup> For cities that are not dependent on agriculture, the Slow City movement could offer scant protection from homogenization, nor, in fact, would any of the cities examined for this paper be eligible for Slow City certification, as certification is limited to cities with a population of under 50,000. Thus many fast-growing cities in the United States would be unable to participate in the program. Further, even U.S. cities with populations under 50,000 may have difficulty meeting some of the requirements for CittaSlow membership, such as “[e]quipping the city with cables for optical fiber and wireless systems” and “[a]doption of systems for monitoring electromagnetic fields” (Cittaslow International 2008), as well as other requirements over which city officials may have little control, such as whether local restaurants use local produce or whether local farms use organic growing methods. Still, the underlying concepts of the movement and its framework for cultural protection could nevertheless provide guidance here in the States, even to larger, fast-growing U.S. cities.



## CHAPTER 3

### METHOD AND ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

#### 3.1 Framework and Indicators of Vernacular Planning

This paper examines efforts of rapidly-growing cities in Texas to conduct cultural and environmental planning intended to develop or preserve local cultural and environmental resources. Sveikauskas defined “fast-growing” cities as “those in which population grew more than 30 percent” during a ten-year time period (1975, 409). For this study, “rapidly growing cities” are defined as cities in Texas that grew by at least 15 percent during the six-year time period from the April 2000 census to July 2006. I relied on data from the U.S. Census Bureau to determine which cities meet the rapid growth qualification; this study focused on cities with population of at least 100,000. Eight Texas cities with minimum population of 100,000 grew by at least 15 percent from 2000 to 2006: Brownsville, Denton, Fort Worth, Grand Prairie, Killeen, Laredo, McAllen, and McKinney (see Table 3.1 for population data). In contrast, the urban growth rate in the United States in 2000 was 1.56 percent and in 2005 was 1.44 percent; the national population grew by 6.4 percent from 2000 to 2006, and the population of Texas grew by 12.7 percent.

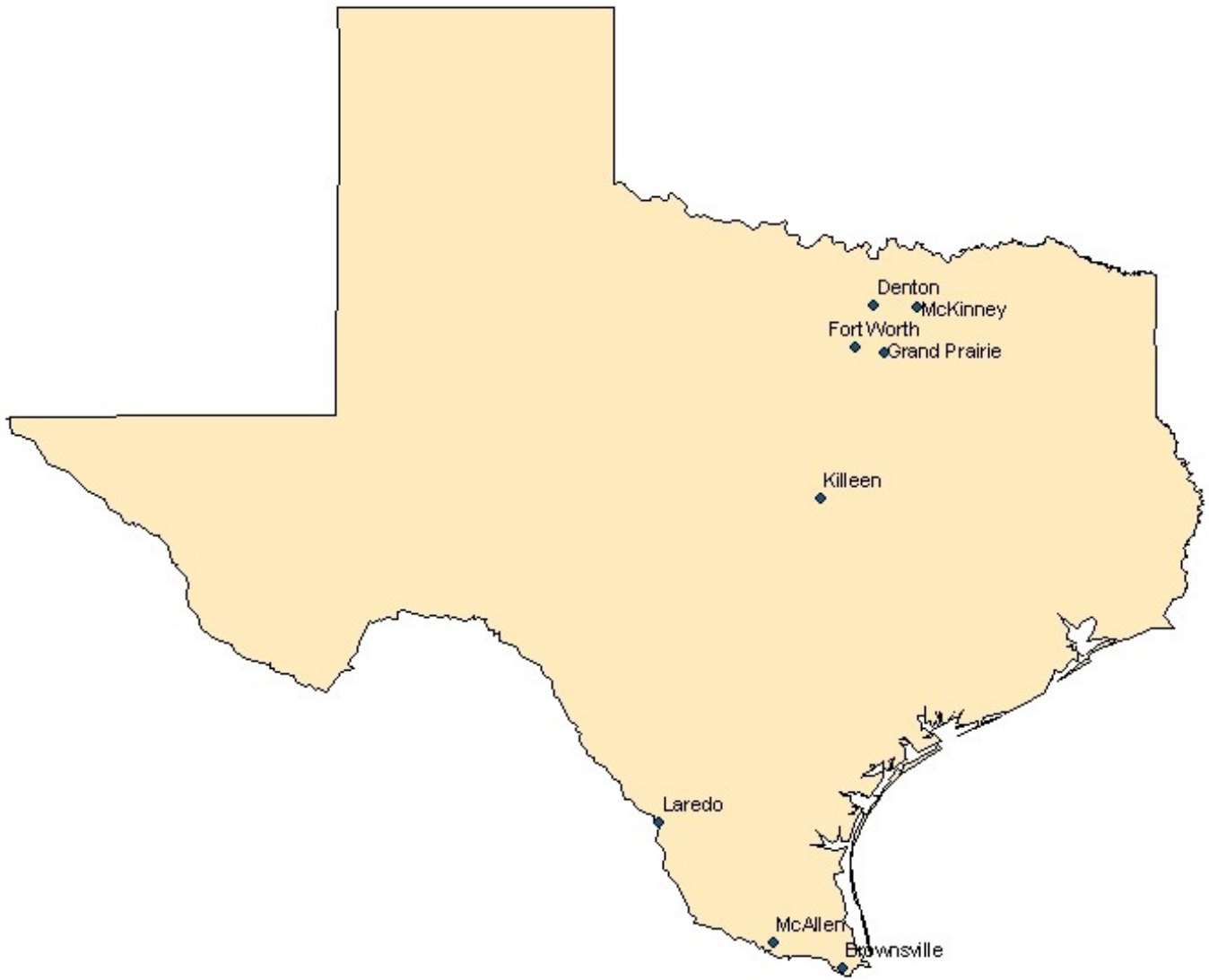


Figure 3.1 Map of Texas showing the eight cities studied  
Source: ESRI ArcMap

Table 3.1 Rapidly-growing cities in Texas with population over 100,000

<b>City</b>	<b>Population, July 2006</b>	<b>Percent change from April 2000</b>
Killeen	102,003	16.7
McKinney	107,530	97.6
Denton	109,561	32.9
McAllen	126,411	18.8
Grand Prairie	153,812	21.0
Brownsville	172,437	21.3
Laredo	215,484	21.3
Fort Worth	653,320	20.7

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, <http://www.census.gov/popest/cities/SUB-EST2006.html> (accessed September 6, 2008)

For this study, I reviewed literature from environmental planning, cultural planning, geography, and environmental psychology. This research helped me investigate what sort of activities cities might engage in to preserve or develop local resources, as well as why they conduct such activities (e.g., to create a sense of place, to attract tourists, residents, and businesses, or to increase property values). In Chapter 1, I suggested that the kind of cultural and environmental planning that best helps a

city to develop its unique identity is based on identifying, preserving, and developing existing local cultural and environmental resources. But what are fast-growing cities actually doing? Do they participate in cultural and environmental planning? Are these two efforts at all linked? If the cities do engage in cultural and environmental planning, what form does it take? If they don't use cultural and environmental planning in the holistic approach described above, what are they doing instead? And how do we recognize cultural and environmental planning based on local assets? In other words, what are the indicators of this type of planning? In Portney's study of how seriously cities take sustainability, his indicators were "[b]ased largely on the policies, programs, and activities of cities" and included comprehensive plans (2003, 28). He writes that, although measuring a city's seriousness in pursuing sustainability can be difficult due, in part, to the varying definitions of what counts as "sustainability" (ibid, 31), the key factor to be used in determining a city's seriousness is "whether issues of sustainability can be said to be clearly and unambiguously on the public agenda" (ibid, 32). A similar argument can be made for determining what counts as indicators of cultural and environmental planning. For the purposes of this study, a city can be said to practice locally-based cultural and environmental planning if efforts to identify, preserve, or develop local resources are clearly articulated through planning documents, city regulations, and other city projects and programs that specifically espouse a concept of protection or cultivation of local environmental resources. For this reason, therefore, one indicator of locally-based planning is the language used within planning documents and other relevant city publications. For example, when describing its

environmental planning, a city that discusses only the state and federal regulations it has to meet would not be said to practice locally-based environmental planning.

Comprehensive plans were also examined because they provide a vision for the city and how planners and officials hope the city will develop, and they provide information about City and community values. Moreover, issues concerning vernacular assets are more likely to be addressed if discussed in a comprehensive plan than in a separate document.

In their research on what cities do to preserve what they call “vernacular culture,” Carr and Servon (2009) argue that local assets are “the unique, locally rooted characteristics that express the ‘place-ness’ of the neighborhood” (8), and that are “rooted in place” (10). Resources that are rooted in place are intrinsic parts of the community, and uprooting these resources facilitates homogeneity in cities. In Carr and Servon’s study, these resources include “small, culturally diverse businesses” (11), “arts and culture venue[s]” (13), and “ethnic/heritage site[s]” (ibid).

Carr and Servon (2009) also argue that the displacement of local businesses by outside businesses "is linked to the loss of community identity" (9). Local or vernacular businesses are defined as authentic and locally-rooted (ibid); locally-rooted businesses are owned by or were created to serve residents who "own the culture" (10). Examples include "boutique restaurants, ethnic grocery stores and culturally-influenced clothing and music stores" (9). Activities to protect vernacular culture can include efforts that assist vernacular businesses. Carr and Servon (2009) give several examples of this kind of activity. One example is providing ownership opportunities. When

local business owners must rent their buildings, they can be priced out as populations grow or areas gentrify and rents increase. Carr and Servon note that "ownership mechanisms that enable the producers of the culture to maintain some control over it...gives residents and entrepreneurs a greater [opportunity] to control the type and pace of change" in an area (ibid, 11). Other examples include providing technical assistance and job or management training and other types of small business assistance and providing "access to capital through loan funds" (ibid, 20). Some of these kinds of activities might be easier to implement through non-profit organizations, in which case cities could provide financial support to organizations that offer such programs. Cities can also protect existing heritage sites or districts and arts districts, instead of Disneyfying them; they can protect local public marketplaces instead of creating new ones ("festival marketplaces") that are not based on local culture, "such as South Street Seaport where vendors are often imported" (2009, 25).

While Carr and Servon (2009) focus mostly on what might be termed "diverse" culture, such as that based in non-white populations or in homosexual populations, vernacular businesses can also be found in fairly homogenous cities. For example, small, mostly white, agrarian towns faced with rapid population growth might find their agrarian lifestyles—including their traditions and their local stores—overtaken and pushed out by incoming, different culture(s). Small towns are not the focus of this study, but it is worth mentioning that although the term "vernacular culture" can—and often does—refer to diverse populations, it nevertheless is applicable to wider use. Whether planning for large cities or small towns, what Carr and Servon (2009)

emphasize is that vernacular planning must be grassroots-based: it must be conducted through a bottom-up approach.

Borrop (2006) notes the importance of identifying and mapping local or vernacular assets, both cultural and environmental. This should be done through a community input-driven process that allows residents to have a say in what is considered an asset worth preserving; the identification process is important for allowing residents to inform planners and other city officials as to what assets are important to them, as well as to point out assets that city officials might have overlooked. Mapping serves several important functions. It provides a visual tool for identifying heritage or vernacular districts, for example, neighborhoods with a high number of long-time, local businesses or areas with a high concentration of native species. Asset maps "[allow] people to see relationships and types of community assets they might not otherwise discover" and "can make clear that similar attributes appear in multiple locations or that, together, make up a new characteristic or quality not previously appreciated" (Borrop 2006, 176). For vernacular asset planning, then, the identification and mapping process can be an important, crucial step.

To summarize, vernacular assets include native plant and animal species or species that began to be cultivated in the region long ago and have become an integral part of the community's identity and reflect its culture (for example, citrus groves planted by early farmers in the McAllen, Texas, region); locally-owned businesses, especially small businesses; buildings made with local materials or in local, distinct architectural styles; local languages, dialects, or ways of speech; local artists or art

forms; and local festivals or celebrations (see table 3.2). Indicators of vernacular planning were derived from the literature review, for example, information on vernacular businesses came from Carr and Servon (2009), and information on local knowledge comes from Van der Ryn and Cowan (2007). The list of indicators was updated through study of city planning documents and ordinances; these planning efforts generally fall under the “other indicators” sections in Chapter 5. Indicators of vernacular planning include programs/projects to preserve, support, or establish local businesses, including (but not limited to) local marketplaces; native species landscaping ordinances; invasive species ordinances; protection of native species or native landscapes through land acquisition, conservation easements, land set-asides, and similar means; language in planning documents or other city documents that acknowledges the importance of local culture and environment to the city’s image/identity; funding for local environmental or cultural organizations that work to preserve or develop vernacular assets; locally-based festivals or celebrations; and identification, documentation, or preservation of local language use (dialect, accent) (see table 3.2). Other indicators include historic preservation programs and oral history projects, especially in which the recorded information is made available to others through educational projects. Historic preservation represents part of the identification process; sites chosen for preservation have been identified as important local assets. Oral histories collect local knowledge, as well as offer opportunities for asset identification. For example, interviewees can describe historically important cultural or environmental sites or characteristics. Finally, cities that use locally-based



planning should use a bottom-up approach that relies on input from existing residents, the holders of local knowledge. An indicator of this reliance on local knowledge is forums for community input to the planning process where questions may be raised and plans and designs may be challenged. Forums of this sort would be outside the realm of the regular city council (or other governing body) meetings when citizens are allowed to provide input on plans that have already been developed. City planners bring expert knowledge to plan-making, and their knowledge must be relied upon to develop plans that are realistic and practicable, but local knowledge is important, too. Moreover, although a city needs to draft visions and goals for itself that a majority (supposedly) of the population supports, as the city cannot follow two or more different paths at the same time (for example, it can't be pro-growth and no-growth at the same time), input from dissenting residents should be considered. Local knowledge is an essential resource for planning, and truly using local knowledge involves more than holding community visioning workshops attended by a small percentage of the population.

Table 3.2 Vernacular assets and indicators of planning for vernacular assets

<b>Vernacular assets</b>
Local (vernacular) businesses
Native plant and animal species
Undeveloped land/natural landscapes and cultural landscapes

Table 3.2 - *Continued*

Buildings made with local materials or in local, distinct architectural styles
Local languages, dialects, or ways of speech
Local artists or art forms / crafts, such as local orchestras or crafts made with locally-available materials
Local community-based festivals, events, or celebrations
<b>Indicators of planning for vernacular assets</b>
Support for local businesses and specific local occupations (e.g. the film industry in Los Angeles, the music industry in Austin, or the farming industry in McAllen)
Native species landscaping ordinances; invasive species ordinances
Protection of native species or native landscapes through acquisition, conservation easements, land set-asides, and similar means
Language in planning documents or other city documents that acknowledges the importance of local culture and environment to the city's image/identity
Funding for local environmental or cultural organizations that work to preserve or develop local culture or environment
Celebrating vernacular assets: locally-based festivals, parades, or events
Historic preservation programs; oral history projects; recorded information made available to others through educational projects
Efforts to inventory, map, or otherwise document existing local culture and environment (vernacular assets)
Identification, documentation, or preservation of local language use (dialect, accent) [note: this item was not found in any of the cities examined]
Plans and programs developed using local knowledge

Table 3.2 - *Continued*

Zoning ordinances or design guidelines that protect local ways of life; design guidelines that use vernacular assets as a theme for creating new identity or character
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### 3.2 Looking for Indicators in City Plans

To look for indicators of vernacular planning, I examined comprehensive plans and other planning-related documents, ordinances, press releases, and information from city-sponsored or city-funded programs, such as cultural events. I also looked at websites for local economic development offices and local arts councils. Plans and ordinances were analyzed as to whether they offered protection for vernacular assets and whether they were consistent with a culturization approach, that is, whether plans and other documents stem from a connection among environment, culture, and history, or a ways-of-life view of culture.

I did not look at the housing elements in the comprehensive plans unless they included a focus on preserving local or vernacular forms of housing. I overlooked this element because—at least in the cities examined for this thesis—it is usually used to fulfill federal Community Development Block Grant requirements and not to draft the kinds of policies that would be based in creating local identity. Similarly, I did not look at transit elements, for the most part, because a quick scan of this element indicated that transit (in these cities, at least) is not generally planned with a goal of protection, preservation, or development of vernacular assets or identity. Safety elements were skipped because personal safety did not pertain to this study. For a

complete list of city plans, documents, and websites examined for this paper, see Appendix C.

### 3.3 Limitations of This Method; Future Research

Cities do not grow in a vacuum; what happens outside a city influences what happens within the city's borders, and for that reason, I might have overlooked some plans or reasons for particular planning decisions because I chose to examine planning at the individual city level instead of looking at planning for Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSA). However, cities in Texas have limited authority outside their corporate limits; large cities cannot force smaller cities to implement plans that fall in line with what the larger cities are doing and vice versa. Thus while certainly cities within the same MSA influence each other, and while sometimes cities in the same region work together to address regional problems, individual cities have authority only to implement plans within their corporate limits and extra-territorial jurisdictions. I therefore examined individual cities instead of MSAs because it is the individual cities that have the authority to develop and then implement plans that shape their identities based on vernacular assets.

Two of the cities examined, Brownsville and Killeen, are still in the process of drafting comprehensive plans, so a direct comparison among the cities could not be made. The City of Brownsville has created a website, *Imagine Brownsville*, for the comprehensive planning process. The website provides information on how the plan will be developed and provides updates on how the process has progressed so far. Information from the website was used to identify values and to gauge the level of

community participation. For Killeen, I drew from a Future Land Use study made for a particular corridor within the city, as well as the city's *Downtown Action Agenda*. These two plans provide insight into the kind of public input used for planning in Killeen, as well as community values. In addition to these two cities with no comprehensive plans, this study includes one outdated plan. Laredo is currently re-drafting its comprehensive plan, which dates from 1991, and of course the changes in the plan could influence how the city's plans fare would in this evaluation.<sup>21</sup>

This paper argues that cultural planning and environmental planning should be done in tandem, but sometimes culture and environment conflict. In some cases, preserving an area's culture could conflict with preserving its environmental resources. For example, a city that traditionally has been a farming or ranching community could find that its long-used farming and ranching practices are harmful to the environment. Further, maintaining open spaces for farming or ranching will compete with preserving open space for its natural resources. This issue is not addressed in this paper.

I did not look at drought-prevention strategies as efforts to protect local assets. For example, encouragement to use xeriscaping solely or explicitly for the sake of conserving water, with no consideration of other reasons to protect or propagate native plant species, was not considered to be vernacular planning. It should be noted, however, that drought-preservation efforts can serve as a symbol of the culture of people living in drought-prone areas, particularly if the efforts are long-standing and widely accepted—that is, if they are rooted in place. Similarly, housing elements were not examined, but a lack of emphasis on vernacular housing within these elements

would inform the discussion on whether (and how) cities make use of vernacular resources.

Another limitation of this study is that cities do more than is published on their websites and in their plans, ordinances, and policy documents, and it is therefore likely that I overlooked some activities that are relevant to this paper. Notes on each city were sent to the planning departments of the examined cities for review, but the planners who reviewed the notes could have neglected to mention relevant information in their comments to me, and, moreover, not every planning department was able to review the notes submitted. In addition, comprehensive plans are not a guarantee of action. Texas law requires that zoning regulations “be adopted in accordance with a comprehensive plan” (Local Government Code Title 7, sec. 211.004), but the law only requires that enacted zoning ordinances do not contradict comprehensive plans. The law does not require that every strategy or recommendation of comprehensive plans be implemented. Comprehensive plans reveal only what cities intend to do; they demonstrate attention to particular issues but do not represent action by cities to address those issues. Thus cities that appear to value and protect local assets based on language in their comprehensive plans might not do so in reality.

Based on the qualitative approach used in this study, it does not appear that location, population size, and rate of population growth are factors in determining whether or how well cities in Texas plan for vernacular assets, with one popular exception: the three cities that appear to use vernacular planning the most are located within the two largest Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs) of the study. However,

location within one of these MSAs does not necessarily correlate with vernacular planning, as will be discussed below. Additional research (from a quantitative approach) might be able to confirm or contradict such a conclusion. Moreover, additional research might discover how Texas' fast-growing cities compare with non-fast-growing cities. In other words, further study might be able to determine if rate of population growth affects whether Texas cities use planning based on vernacular assets or has some other relevant relationship to vernacular asset-based planning. The rate of population growth in the examined cities varies considerably (McKinney grew by 97.6 percent from 2000 to 2006, whereas Killeen grew by only 16.7 percent), but all of the cities in this study can be classified as fast-growing, and planning in these places could be vastly different from planning in slow-growth or no-growth cities.

For this study, determining how or if use of local knowledge is used to develop plans was based on how and when members of the public are allowed to help shape city plans. But public input does not guarantee that local knowledge will be used. Members of the public who contribute to plan development might not possess local knowledge (for example, if they've recently moved to the city). Moreover, plans developed without large input from the public could still rely on local knowledge, if the planners possess that knowledge. Time limitations, however, prohibited the in-depth research (e.g., interviewing members of local community groups) that could provide a deeper understanding of how local knowledge is valued in the cities' planning processes.

Finally, time limitations prohibited studying a wider set of city documents and conducting in-depth interviews with city personnel, but future research in this vein would likely benefit from such practices. For example, goals and strategies relevant to this study could be contained within housing or transportation elements of the cities' comprehensive plans, which were not examined for this study, and city planners could provide insight into culturization-type values that perhaps were used to formulate plans but were not expressed in those plans.



## CHAPTER 4

### FINDINGS: INDICATORS OF VERNACULAR PLANNING AFFECTING BOTH CULTURAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

The unique characteristics of a city should be embedded in every detail and event.

Beijing Declaration Concerning Urban Culture

The next two chapters discuss findings from reviewing city plans and related documents, ordinances, and websites. The chapters also answer the following questions raised in Chapter 3: What are fast-growing cities actually doing? Do they participate in cultural and environmental planning? If the cities do engage in cultural and environmental planning, what form does it take? That is, if the cities do not use cultural and environmental planning in the holistic approach described in Chapter 2, what are they doing instead?

Indicators mentioned in the previous chapter are discussed in more detail here and in the following chapter. For each indicator, a brief overview is given concerning the extent to which the indicator represents a planning technique or method used in the eight cities. In addition, for each indicator at least one example of its use in a city is provided. Best practices are discussed when available. Where best practices were not identified, examples are provided to illustrate best-case scenarios from the cities. Chapter 4 describes findings for indicators that apply to both cultural and environmental resources; Chapter 5 describes finding for indicators that apply to one or

the other (but some overlap is to be expected, as culture and overlap are so closely linked).

The cities use a variety of tools to support their statements in favor of protecting local assets. Denton, Fort Worth, and McAllen appear to value and protect their local assets more than do the other cities, but no obvious pattern appears that indicates why these cities appear to do more than the other examined cities. For example, Denton and Fort Worth are both located within the north central Texas region in the Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington MSA, but so is Grand Prairie, which does comparatively little for vernacular asset protection or development. Likewise, Brownsville, Laredo, and McAllen are all located near the Texas/Mexico border, but Brownsville and Laredo's planning for vernacular resources is not comparable to McAllen's. Population size does not appear to be a factor in whether cities use vernacular planning, either, although size of MSA may have some influence on how cities approach planning. Fort Worth's population in 2006 was 653,320, the largest in the study; Denton's population was 109,561 (the third smallest population in the study), and McAllen's was 126,411. These three cities are located in the two largest MSAs of the study. Denton and Fort Worth are part of the Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington MSA with population 5,694,788 (as are Grand Prairie and McKinney), and McAllen is part of the McAllen-Edinburg-Mission MSA with population 657,394. Percent change in population from 2000 to 2006 does not appear to be related to planning based on vernacular assets; Denton had the second highest population percent change (32.9 percent), and McAllen had the second lowest (18.8 percent).

Inclusion below of recommendations and strategies from comprehensive plans does not mean that cities have followed through with implementation but merely notes when cities are aware of local resources or have an intention to protect them. For example, Grand Prairie's comprehensive plan states that the city "will retain and develop scenic corridors for public activities and use" where possible (City of Grand Prairie 2005, 5.19), with "Natural Features" listed as a possible element of a scenic corridor (ibid, 5.20), but planning staff state that this has not yet been implemented (Kathe Houk, personal communication, November 6, 2008). And for this study, in fact, comprehensive plans were generally more supportive of vernacular resources than were the codes of ordinances, thus it should not be assumed that the recommendations and strategies described below have been implemented.

In addition to the descriptions given in Chapters 4 and 5, Appendix A provides an in-depth description of how each of the cities protects or develops vernacular assets. From the long list of programs, strategies, and recommendations, it might be tempting to draw the conclusion that the cities are active in protection of the vernacular. In reality, however, the programs and strategies overall are not particularly noteworthy. To be sure, the wide breadth of activities is worth noting—though shallow, the large amount of (apparent) interest in vernacular assets could signal that the cities are open to doing more. At this time, though, little among the planning activities stands out as the kind of planning advocated in the preceding chapters.

#### 4.1 Language Linking Culture and Environment to Identity

Language in a city's plans, ordinances, and policy documents could provide an indication of a city's values and therefore what kind of plans and policies the city will pursue in future. If a city's comprehensive plan makes no mention of vernacular resources, if it does not indicate that the city values such resources, then it seems unlikely that vernacular resources will be protected or strengthened through plans, policies, and implementing ordinances. On the other hand, if a city's comprehensive plan states that the city values vernacular resources, it does not guarantee that vernacular resources will be protected, but it could indicate a willingness on the part of the city to work towards that end. Furthermore, official city language in support of vernacular assets gives residents a way to hold the city accountable; residents can point to the city's statements and ask the city to follow through with action. In this study, I looked for language that explicitly connects vernacular resources to city identity.

Every city in this study except one (Brownsville) uses language connecting vernacular resources to city identity, but in general the link is not made strongly.<sup>22</sup> Perhaps this lack of recognition of the connection between assets and identity contributes to a lack of planning for vernacular assets. Denton and McAllen appear to be the only cities examined that make a strong and obvious link between local culture or environment and city/community identity, and both these cities are at the top of the list of examined cities in providing protection for vernacular assets.

*Example: McAllen.*

McAllen makes a weak but explicit link between identity and natural environment in its comprehensive plan and a strong link between its agricultural heritage / economy and identity. Under a section titled “Reinforcement of Community Identity,” the plan argues for the development of gateways to the city that will help the city “establish an image [and] communicate community values” (City of McAllen 2007, 5.2). The elements described in the plan that could contribute to image and communicate values include “preservation of natural features and vegetation” (ibid). The plan goes on later to state that preserving open space “at City entrances...will enhance the image as a freestanding community, rather than as an anonymous component of contiguous [Rio Grande] Valley development” (ibid, 5.3). On the same page, the plan states that preserving the city’s character “requires protection of open space.”

Agriculture has historically been a large part of McAllen’s economy and culture, and the comprehensive plan makes clear that as land in the area becomes urbanized, the city loses part of its identity. The city’s agricultural land, declares the comprehensive plan, “is responsible for the identity and character of the [city]”; thus, argues the plan, “this agricultural character should be preserved and integrated into the fabric of the community” (City of McAllen 2007, 5.19). Recommendations for accomplishing the protection of agricultural lands include establishing an agricultural zoning district, establishing a countryside zoning district, using density bonuses in the agricultural district, and creating a downtown farmers’ market (ibid). Photo captions

on page 5.29 of the comprehensive plan support this sentiment, including the following caption: “Field crops are an important part of McAllen’s economy, heritage, and community character.”

Table 4.1 Best practice, language linking vernacular assets and identity: McAllen

The comprehensive plan states that the city’s agricultural lands are “responsible for the identity and character” of the city. Thus, argues the plan, “this agricultural character should be preserved and integrated into the fabric of the community” (City of McAllen 2007, 5.19). Recommendations for accomplishing the protection of agricultural lands include establishing an agricultural zoning district and creating a downtown farmers’ market (ibid).

#### *4.1.2 Language Recognizing the Importance of Culture and Environment*

In some cases, city documents do not explicitly state a concern for vernacular resources and their relationship to city identity but do make a case for protecting local assets for other reasons. Often, the case for protecting local assets is based in economic development or property values, but sometimes it is couched as a quality of life issue or similar issue.

All of the cities in this study acknowledge the importance of vernacular elements through language that does not explicitly mention identity. Each of these eight cities makes an explicit reference to the importance of open space or natural features. Brownsville, Grand Prairie, and Killeen make one reference each. Five of the cities—Denton, Fort Worth, Laredo, McAllen, and McKinney—reference culture.

Of these, heritage and historic preservation is mentioned the most, referenced by Fort Worth, Laredo, McAllen, and McKinney.

*Examples: Laredo and McKinney*

Laredo's Historic Urban Design Guidelines note indirectly that the city's culture and environment contribute to its attractiveness "to residents, business interests and tourists" (City of Laredo 1997, Intro.7). The guidelines say that Laredo is "known for its beauty, friendliness, historical significance and international border setting" (ibid). The same document remarks that the "Streets of Laredo" are "symbols of [the city's] rich cultural past," and that the streets should be preserved (ibid, 1.6). The document describes several types of historic architecture found in the city, including "Border Vernacular" and "Mexican vernacular" (also called "Border/Mexican Colonial House"). Both styles are said to be "a response to the regional climate" (ibid, 1.10); this description thus links local environment (climate) to local culture (vernacular architecture).

McKinney's comprehensive plan notes the importance of natural features in urban design. The plan states that "McKinney's natural elements...should be considered in the context of urban design[, as they]...influence the physical form of the developed environment and can enhance its value" (City of McKinney 2004, 185). The plan also notes the importance of historic buildings or districts through their contribution to "urban design character" and to revitalization (ibid, 175). For example, the plan states that the State Highway 5 commercial corridor should be studied "to identify those unique elements that may add value to the corridor that are not currently

provided for within McKinney's development standards” (ibid, 181). The corridor predates zoning in McKinney, giving it a “unique nature” that could more strategically enhance revitalization efforts in the area (ibid). Also, the comprehensive plan indirectly recognizes a relationship between culture and identity through the character of the built environment, stating that “McKinney’s urban design character is one of a culturally rich community with historic roots” (ibid, 175).

#### 4.2 Funding or Similar Assistance for Protecting Local Culture or Environment

Some cities do not set up specific programs or projects to manage cultural and environmental resources but nevertheless manage to address vernacular resource concerns simply through the use of funding. For example, rather than establish an easement or transfer of development rights program, a city might prefer simply to identify and purchase lands it sees as environmentally valuable. Another way cities use funding to protect resources without establishing programs that have direct involvement in resource issues is to provide funding to local organizations that protect local resources. For example, a city might provide funding to a local arts council that in turn supports locally-based arts groups, such as a local choir or symphony. This kind of support can also take the form of city-owned facilities that are leased to or managed by local organizations for their use to provide services to the community, such as Fort Worth’s Community Arts Center.

Four cities in the study—Denton, Fort Worth, Killeen, and McAllen—contribute funding directly to protect vernacular resources (Killeen and McAllen provide funding for historic façade rehabilitation, which also protects historic resources,



discussed below). Four cities—Fort Worth, Grand Prairie, McAllen, and McKinney—provide support to local organizations or agencies that protect local resources.

*Examples: Brownsville and Fort Worth*

Brownsville has a 4B sales tax organization, the Brownsville Community Improvement Corporation (BCIC).<sup>23</sup> BCIC funds projects and programs such as parks, athletic facilities, historic preservation, and theaters. For example, in 2006, BCIC gave money to the Resaca De La Palma Battlefield Improvement Project, the Brownsville Tennis Center, Sabal Palm Audubon Center and Sanctuary, and Camille Players, Inc.<sup>24</sup> BCIC also contributed funds to Brownsville’s comprehensive planning project in 2007.<sup>25</sup>

Fort Worth sponsors Mayfest, an annual festival that raises money “for improvements in the Trinity River corridor” (City of Fort Worth 2008, 59-60), which may help protect the Trinity as a local environmental resource. As to cultural support, the comprehensive plan lists renovating the Will Rogers Auditorium and Coliseum as one of the city’s Arts and Culture objectives (ibid, 151); the venue hosts a number of agrarian or western-type events each year, thus reinforcing the city’s western identity. The city also owns the Fort Worth Community Arts Center (FWCAC), which leases office space to non-profit organizations.<sup>26</sup> FWCAC facilities (e.g., gallery, theater) may also be rented by arts groups and individual artists. The FWCAC is managed by the local arts council, which receives some city funding and itself supports a number of local arts groups.<sup>27</sup> The Arts Council provides services that Carr and Servon (2009) say vernacular businesses need: its grants programs provide access to capital for cultural

provides and also provide funding for arts and cultural providers to receive professional training. With the help of financial support from the City of Fort Worth, the Arts Council and FWCAC support continued cultural production in the city.

Table 4.2 Best practice, financial support for vernacular assets: Fort Worth

The City owns the Fort Worth Community Arts Center (FWCAC), which leases office space to non-profit organizations. FWCAC facilities (e.g., gallery, theater) may also be rented by arts groups and individual artists. The FWCAC is managed by the local arts council, which receives some city funding and itself supports a number of local arts groups.

#### 4.3 Efforts to Inventory, Map, and Document Local Culture and Environment

Asset mapping is an important part of planning for vernacular resources. Mapping and related activities can lead both residents and planners to appreciate assets that had been taken for granted and can also raise awareness of the existence of resources that had previously been overlooked (Borrup 2006, 176). Asset mapping can help planners identify areas that are rich in assets that might not traditionally be counted in planning (such as the presence of strong sense of community in a particular neighborhood or the existence of rare native plant communities). It can also connect planners to residents in a way that provides for locally-based community input; in other words, it provides a forum for the exchange of local knowledge (Van der Ryn and Cowan 2007, 179). In addition to mapping exercises, cities can also use inventories and similar means to document vernacular assets. Unfortunately, the cities examined

for this paper do not take much advantage of this planning tool, and when this has been done, efforts have focused mainly on historic resources.

Identification and documentation efforts examined for this paper can generally be classified as efforts to identify and document specific features, such as the presence of particular native species or one particular historic site, and as efforts to identify and document areas where such features might occur, such as historic districts or “visually sensitive locations” (see description of efforts in Denton, below). Seven cities in this study—Brownsville, Denton, Fort Worth, Killeen, Laredo, McAllen, and McKinney—have identified and documented specific features or resources or plan to do so, and three cities—Denton, Fort Worth, and McAllen—have identified and documented where vernacular features or resources might occur, or plan to do so.

All of the cities examined have inventoried or plan to inventory their city’s historic resources.<sup>28</sup> Comprehensive plans for several of the cities recommend identification of assets that could include historic resources. For example, Denton’s comprehensive plan (City of Denton 1999) recommends identifying the “unique and distinctive cultural and architectural features” of the city (ibid, 62), likely referring to the city’s distinctive historic resources. Identification and documentation of environmental resources is not a priority for most of the cities, at least as reflected in comprehensive plans and ordinances. Only Denton, Fort Worth, and McAllen specifically mention identifying natural resources.

*Examples, cultural resources: Fort Worth and McAllen*

Fort Worth conducted a large-scale architectural survey of the county in the 1980s. In 2007, the City allocated funding to begin “the first phase of a citywide historic resources survey” (City of Fort Worth 2008, 126). And the comprehensive plan recommends educating “citizen volunteers” in how to identify local historical resources (ibid, 129-130). The comprehensive plan also suggests developing a plan to identify “historical, archeological, and cultural resources within the existing park system by the end of 2008” (ibid, 58). This likely is only meant to include historical and archaeological resources but could be stretched to include cultural, non-historic resources.

The McAllen comprehensive plan’s recommendations for Performing and Visual Arts include conducting “a survey of cultural facilities to identify clusters of artists that may become an Arts and Cultural District. Locations of existing structures or those that may be suitable for studios, galleries, performance venues, and workshops should be identified” (City of McAllen 2007, 5.17). McAllen’s is the only comprehensive plan in this study that specifically recommends identification of artist clusters or similar resources.

*Examples, environmental resources: Denton, Fort Worth, and McAllen*

Denton is working with the University of North Texas (City of Denton 1999, 103) to develop “a method to systematically identify, evaluate, and synthesize various environmental attributes” within the city (ibid, 103). The comprehensive plan recommends identifying areas with “unique ecological significance for consideration

on a more site-specific basis” (ibid, 25), and the system developed with UNT will likely make such work possible. In addition, the city is creating a tree inventory, funded by a city-established Tree Fund (Denton Development Code, sec. 35.13.7). The Fund “shall be used to purchase, plant and maintain trees on public property, to preserve wooded property that remains in a naturalistic state in perpetuity, to perform and maintain a city-wide tree inventory and to educate citizens and developers on the benefits and value of trees” (ibid). Also, the city maintains a Historic Tree Registry map (ibid). There could be many types of native vegetation within Denton other than trees, and the city does not appear to be doing much to preserve or document them, but its efforts to inventory trees could provide a foundation for an expanded identification project at a later time.

Denton’s comprehensive plan calls for the identification of Visually Sensitive Locations, which include local environmental features. Visually Sensitive Locations include “unique natural or manmade areas considered to be important community places, historic areas, [and] special open spaces” (City of Denton 1999, 73). And one of the comprehensive plan’s urban design strategies is to “identify and map the city’s character areas that will be treated separately” (ibid, 75). Within these areas, features that will be considered significant include “large open spaces,” “waterways,” “historic areas,” and “conservation areas” (which might refer to either historic or environmental areas—the plan is not clear) (ibid).

Denton’s comprehensive plan makes an interesting statement about the city’s ecological resources, referring to the loss of “areas with significant ecological value”

as “loss of our natural heritage” (City of Denton 1999, 101). The plan therefore calls for such areas to be identified and protected. And Denton is one of the only cities in this study that explicitly links the local environment to heritage (and thus, indirectly, to culture).<sup>29</sup>

Fort Worth is the only city in this study that explicitly expresses a wish to identify local species (instead of natural resources in general, as in Denton and McAllen). The city’s comprehensive plan goals state that the city should “[p]repare [a] Fort Worth area inventory of natural habitats and species in 2008” (City of Fort Worth 2008, 181). If followed, this step will work to identify both specific vernacular features and areas where such features are likely to occur. This two-fold identification process is self-reinforcing. Identifying locations of individual species can help planners identify clusters where these species occur, and thus possibly natural habitats, that they might otherwise overlook. Likewise, identifying habitats can help planners determine where native species are likely to occur. For example, locating an in-use habitat for prairie animals that eat particular kinds of prairie plants will signal to planners that such plants are likely present in the area.

McAllen’s comprehensive plan recommends identifying and acquiring open space areas that can serve as buffers between McAllen and surrounding communities (City of McAllen 2007, 5.3). The comprehensive plan also recommends identifying natural resources such as “orchards, stream channels and irrigation canals, valued open areas, and other natural features” (ibid, 6.7), which can then be protected.

Table 4.3 Best practice and examples, identification and documentation: Denton, Fort Worth, and McAllen

<i>Best practice:</i>
<p>Denton</p> <p>The City is preparing a tree inventory. In addition, Denton has worked with the University of North Texas to develop a system that will allow it to identify local environmental features.</p>
<i>Other examples:</i>
<p>Fort Worth</p> <p>Fort Worth’s comprehensive plan recommends preparing an inventory of natural habitats and species within the city. If the project is implemented, the resulting inventory could be used to set priorities for preservation and to provide a motivation to expand local preservation efforts.</p> <p>McAllen</p> <p>The city’s comprehensive plan recommends identifying clusters of artists. If implemented, this project could lay the foundation for other efforts to identify local cultural resources.</p>

#### 4.4. Use of Local Knowledge in Plan Creation

Cities in the United States use a variety of methods to gather public input for plans. They usually allow for public input during what might be termed the final stage of plan development: after plans have been drafted but before they have been approved by the city’s governing body. This input is usually solicited during city council (or similar) meetings or during planning commission (or similar) meetings. Of course residents may express concerns at these meetings, but one could not say plans developed in this way are truly based on community input. These plans do not use local knowledge to determine what issues need to be addressed through city planning

or to develop goals, objectives, strategies, or values for plans. These plans are not the result of a truly bottom-up process. In order to be based (at least in part) on local knowledge, plans must involve public input during the early stages of plan development.

Cities in this study tend to use two methods to solicit input before the final stage of plan development: soliciting public input during initial planning stages, when public input is in the form of a meeting, workshop, or other event that requires attendance; and soliciting public input in the form of interviews, surveys, comment cards, or other such methods to reach residents who cannot or do not attend meetings. And public input processes in early planning stages also vary by whether residents are allowed to help shape or draft goals, objectives, and values or if they are only allowed to provide feedback on goals, objectives, and values that have already been drafted by planners.

Brownsville, Fort Worth, and McAllen solicit public input during initial planning stages through methods that require attendance. In addition, Brownsville, Killeen, McAllen, and McKinney seek input through means that do not require attendance, such as surveys.<sup>30</sup> Several cities also use other ways of basing plans on local knowledge. For example, in Brownsville, residents are encouraged to join one of the five technical committees that advise the plan's Task Force.<sup>31</sup>

A number of cities get the word out about the planning process through newspaper articles, TV spots, and websites, but that kind of activity in and of itself does not make it a bottom-up planning process. Making the public aware of a planning



process does not guarantee that the public will be allowed to help develop the plans being advertised. However, these kinds of outreach activities could be an excellent tool for recruiting members of the public to participate in the planning process.

*Example: Fort Worth*

Fort Worth's most recent comprehensive plan sought public input in several ways. To begin with, Fort Worth hosted "a citywide forum attended by over 200 interested citizens" (City of Fort Worth 2008, 2). During the plan development process, the city hosted sixteen sector meetings (attended by approximately 700 residents) and nine focus group meetings (attended by 160 residents) (ibid). After receiving this community input, planners incorporated public commentary into the plan and then presented the revised plan at sixteen additional sector meetings and "several focus group meetings" (ibid).

In addition to seeking input on its comprehensive plan, Fort Worth also solicits input for other types of plans and programs. According to the comprehensive plan (City of Fort Worth 2008), the city provides an outreach program through the Parks and Community Services Department that "provides an opportunity for neighborhoods, schools, and businesses to act in an advisory capacity for natural landscape enhancements" (ibid, 184). Similarly, one comprehensive plan policy is to "[a]ctively promote citizen involvement in determining park, recreation, and open space needs and desires of the community" (ibid, 59)—but note that the plan does not specify how the public could be involved, nor do the ordinances establish a forum for citizen

involvement, other than establishing a parks and community development advisory board (Code of Ordinances, sec. 24-42).

Fort Worth’s community plan-based Model Blocks program, focused on revitalizing central city neighborhoods, illustrates a truly bottom-up planning process. Each year, central city neighborhoods are invited to submit plans for their neighborhoods that residents have prepared themselves with assistance from city staff. The City selects one neighborhood plan, and the neighborhood receives \$1.2 million to implement it (ibid, viii, 78). This program allows residents to ensure that their concerns are addressed in city plans because they have themselves created the plans.

Table 4.4 Best practice, use of local knowledge/public input: Fort Worth

<p>The Model Blocks program allows local residents to develop plans for their neighborhoods, with assistance from city staff. Each year, one neighborhood is selected to receive \$1.2 million to implement its plan.</p>
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#### 4.5 Summary of Findings for Indicators Applying to both Cultural and Environmental Resources

The eight cities express an appreciation of local culture or environment but do not define what they mean by “local,” “culture,” or “environment.” In many cases the cities attempt to protect existing resources—for example, as described in section 5.5—but they do not define “existing” in a way that indicates a preference for local; “existing” could include developed open spaces landscaped entirely with non-native plant materials and chain stores that have no true connection with the community.<sup>32</sup>

Also, many of the cities' activities work to protect local assets only as part of a larger program; protection of vernacular resources is not stated specifically as a goal. For example, the cities in this study have established ordinances protecting existing vegetation. This protection applies to native plants, but it also applies to almost any other kind of plant already growing on undeveloped lands within the cities at the time the ordinances were established.

Also, many statements in the comprehensive plans examined are vaguely worded and leave much room for interpretation. For example, as discussed in section 5.4.1, the Fort Worth comprehensive plan's goals include retention, preservation, and enhancement of "the best of Fort Worth's cultural past and present" (City of Fort Worth 2008, 150). The city could choose to implement this goal in any number of ways, and with any definition of culture and with any standard as to what is considered "best." In cases when cities publish such vague statements, though they might be well-intentioned, it would be easy for cities to say they are meeting these goals when they are not, and therefore it is more difficult for residents to hold public officials accountable for lack of action.

## CHAPTER 5

### FINDINGS: INDICATORS OF VERNACULAR PLANNING AFFECTING LOCAL CULTURAL OR ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

This chapter continues the discussion of indicators of vernacular assets used in planning. Chapter 4 described findings for indicators of planning that protects or develops vernacular assets in general, that is, planning that can apply to both cultural and environmental planning. This chapter describes indicators of planning for one kind of asset or the other. Indicators of local cultural planning are discussed first, followed by a discussion of indicators of local environmental planning. As culture and environment are linked, there is some overlap among the indicators.

#### 5.1 Support for Vernacular Businesses

Overall, this appears to be a missed opportunity in most cities examined for this paper. Most of the examined cities offer some sort of encouragement for retention of existing businesses, but there is very little focus on vernacular businesses as defined above. According to Carr and Servon (2009), planning to protect vernacular assets must be a grassroots-led effort. Cities can seize opportunities to create plans centered on vernacular businesses, but they cannot create vernacular businesses. Cities wishing to protect vernacular businesses or to encourage the establishment of new vernacular businesses must therefore rely a good deal on participation from businesses owners and customers. If planning for vernacular businesses is truly a grassroots effort, cities will

have to encourage vernacular business owners or would-be owners to initiate bottom-up plans and concepts. But even if they do not themselves develop vernacular businesses, cities can take steps to help vernacular businesses stay in business and to encourage the development of new vernacular businesses. For example, cities can provide “access to capital” and technical assistance to local business owners (Carr and Servon 2009, 20).

Fort Worth (population 653,320 as of July 2006) and McAllen (126,411) appear to pursue local business retention and protection more than the other examined cities. It might be expected to find this to be the case for Fort Worth, which is by far the largest city (population) within the study and might therefore be expected to offer a wider range of public services. Of the cities in this study, however, McAllen ranks fifth in population, so it is somewhat surprising to see such a strong focus (comparatively speaking) on local business protection. McAllen is located within a Metropolitan Statistical Area with an estimated 2006 population of 657,394, though, and this might help explain why its local business protection is similar to Fort Worth's.<sup>33</sup>

One of the more popular mechanisms for vernacular business protection takes the form of zoning districts for agriculture; it is used by Fort Worth, Grand Prairie, Killeen, Laredo, McAllen, and McKinney. In addition, Denton has a rural zoning district in which agriculture is allowed. The agricultural zoning district could allow for the continuation of what had at one time been a common way of life (and, in some cases, still is) in the fast-growing cities examined. It should be noted that while

agricultural zoning might offer protection for agriculture as a way of life, it does not always protect agriculture as a way to make a living, and thus agricultural zoning only sometimes protects vernacular businesses.<sup>34</sup>

A common theme throughout the comprehensive plans and codes of ordinances examined is the preservation of agricultural lands for the present, until such time as the land is needed for urban expansion or until such time as it is practical to extend city services to the agricultural area. Half of the cities describe agricultural use in this way (Fort Worth, Grand Prairie, McAllen, and McKinney).<sup>35</sup> This Smart Growth-type tactic can help existing neighborhoods and downtowns survive because it encourages existing residents, existing businesses, and new growth to remain within existing developed areas. Unfortunately, however, the language used by the examined cities to implement this type of policy shows a disregard for the importance of agriculture to local culture, in cities where local culture is or has been influenced by agriculture. Of the eight cities examined, McAllen is the only city that explicitly recognizes the importance of agriculture to culture (Denton recognizes agriculture's role in the city's heritage but does not point out any other contribution by agriculture to the city's current culture). Although the city's local economy has changed greatly over the past few decades, agriculture is still an important part of the local economy (Lopez 2006, 12).

Another form of support for vernacular business is the business assistance center. While all of the cities examined for this paper have an economic development office of some sort, in many cases economic development efforts are blatantly in favor

of attracting and retaining large businesses, with no priority given to local establishments. Fort Worth has a business assistance center, and McAllen's comprehensive plan recommends the establishment of a "Center for Entrepreneurship" (City of McAllen 2007, 5.56). This kind of establishment does not necessarily protect or develop vernacular businesses, although it can serve that purpose. McAllen also supports a local arts incubator, and Fort Worth's Community Arts Center (city-sponsored but managed by the local arts council) serves a similar function.

*Examples: Fort Worth, Killeen, and McAllen*

Fort Worth's business assistance center (BAC) is part of the city's Economic and Community Development department. The BAC offers counseling, technical assistance, workshops and training, and assistance in obtaining loans for small businesses.<sup>36</sup> This is in line with the comprehensive plan's recommendation to provide "technical and counseling services to existing central city businesses in order to ensure business survival" (City of Fort Worth 2008, 89). The BAC online purposes statements and its policies do not espouse a special concern for local or vernacular businesses, but the services provided by the center are in line with what Carr and Servon (2009) argue are tools for encouraging or protecting vernacular businesses.

In addition to the support it provides through the BAC, Fort Worth also looks to provide more job opportunities to local artists, with recommendations in the comprehensive plan to "[i]nvolve artists in the design of major infrastructure" and to "[e]ncourage public entities and private developers to commission public art" (City of Fort Worth 2008, 150).<sup>37</sup> In addition, the comprehensive plan recommends providing

“artist training and public educational programming” (ibid); as stated in Chapter 2, job training is one of the tools that Carr and Servon (2009) say cities can use to support vernacular assets. And one strategy for Arts and Culture listed in Fort Worth’s plan is to discuss with existing arts groups what their needs are (City of Fort Worth 2008, 152); presumably these discussions are meant to lead to supporting policies or programs.

Killeen also makes an effort to identify and meet vernacular business needs, at least in its downtown. The *Downtown Action Agenda* (City of Killeen, 2007) recommends having a city representative meet individually with downtown business owners to “[i]dentify business issues and needs,” to “[a]ssist owners in addressing those issues and needs,” and to “[l]essen economic isolation” (ibid, 61)—although what form assistance will take is not specified in the plan. Further, the document also notes that, “given the multi-cultural nature of Downtown’s businesses, the [city agent meeting with business owners] might need the assistance of someone who speaks the language of – and is respected by – the business owners located in the district” (ibid), thus demonstrating a willingness on the city’s part to reach out to members of different cultural communities in order to help them stay in business through the downtown’s redevelopment.

The City of McAllen supports an arts incubator, the McA2 Creative Incubator. The city’s comprehensive plan recommends expanding the McA2 to provide “advanced business counseling and technical assistance, more programming...and financial incentives” (City of McAllen 2007, 5.16). The city would also like to open a second incubator. McAllen is also looking for additional ways to provide employment



for local artists (although this is not explicitly mentioned as a goal). Recommendations in the comprehensive plan include “[s]trengthen[ing] connections between local artists [and downtown] by including arts and culture in future Main Street programming” and “[i]ntegrat[ing] art and design features into capital improvement projects” (ibid, 5.17). One way of implementing such a program is suggested in the comprehensive plan, and that is to “[c]onduct an annual design competition for local and regional artists to create interpretive displays on the upright concrete irrigation valves” (ibid, 5.18). The plan further states that an art representative should be involved in “the early design stage” of capital improvement projects in order to “identify opportunities for art incorporation” (ibid, 5.17). McAllen is the only city examined for this paper that seems to express an appreciation of the continuing contribution of agricultural operations to the local economy and is the only city that ties its agricultural heritage and continuing operations to its current culture (see below); it is the only city examined that expresses a desire to retain working agricultural operations as a part of both its economy and its culture.<sup>38</sup> The city’s identification of agriculture as a part of local culture and its policies to protect agriculture represent an example of planning from culture, that is, planning to preserve or assist an aspect of existing culture so that it can continue to be an asset for the city.

McAllen’s comprehensive plan recommends making use of “all available regulatory tools to protect the environment, farming operations, and community character [which is heavily based on the city’s agricultural heritage] in the extra-territorial jurisdiction” (City of McAllen 2007, 5.28). The plan suggests using a

farmer's market "to complement the agricultural lands" (ibid, 5.19). Goals in the comprehensive plan include: "Preservation of agricultural lands and orchards"; "Promotion of development that is sensitive to the agricultural environment"; and "Allowance of an economic return for preserved agricultural lands" (ibid, 5.19). Recommendations include granting density bonuses and transfers of development rights "for the preservation of orchards" and for other reasons discussed below (ibid, 5.20).

Despite the comprehensive plan's insistence that agricultural operations be protected, the city's code of ordinances does not yet provide the breadth of protection for agricultural lands suggested in the plan. Instead, it uses language similar to other cities when describing its agricultural zoning district. The code of ordinances describes the agricultural district's purpose as "a reserved area in which the future growth of the city might occur"; however, the city intends for "agricultural land [to] be held in that use for as long as is practical and reasonable" (Code of Ordinances, sec. 138-161). The ordinances also permit growers of agricultural products to sell or display said products "outdoors on any open or unimproved lot or parcel or on any open area of a lot or parcel with a structure"; this is one of only three exceptions to the ordinance prohibiting outdoor display and sale of merchandise (Code of Ordinances, sec. 78-1 and sec. 78-2).

As far as non-agricultural-based and non-arts-based businesses are concerned, the city is also interested in supporting "existing entrepreneurs" (City of McAllen 2007, 5.5). The comprehensive plan recommends assisting "in the establishment of a Center

for Entrepreneurship” (ibid, 5.56) and facilitating financing for the establishment of local businesses, although the city does not want to be a “direct funding source for private business startups” (ibid, 5.55). It is worth noting that the city wants to give to priority “to entrepreneurial ventures that go beyond the traditional ‘mom & pop’ operations” (ibid, 5.55), so although the city’s local business assistance might help small local businesses, that is expressly not its goal.

Table 5.1 Example, vernacular businesses: McAllen

Comprehensive plan expresses an appreciation for the continuing contribution of agricultural operations to the local economy and ties the city’s agricultural heritage and continuing operations to its current culture.

Comprehensive plan recommends making use of “all available regulatory tools to protect the environment, farming operations, and community character in the extra-territorial jurisdiction” (City of McAllen 2007, 5.28).

### 5.2 Celebrating Culture: Festivals and Other Community Events

Community events give residents an opportunity to celebrate culture together, as a community; the celebratory nature of the events encourages residents to attend the events and to want them to continue, and participating in the events helps reinforce culture. Cities can use these kinds of events to plan for and from culture. New events can be developed around existing cultural ideas, and existing community events can be sponsored by the city, so that the events are able to continue.

Only Fort Worth, McAllen, and McKinney are directly involved in festivals, parades, and similar events that promote or protect local culture—and McKinney’s

involvement is through the city's Main Street program, not through a city department (Fort Worth's is through the city's Parks and Community Services Department; McAllen's is through the Parks and Recreation Departments). Several of the other cities in the study sponsor events that are produced by other organizations, but they are not responsible for the events themselves, and other cities sponsor programs that only indirectly contribute to vernacular resource preservation.

*Examples: Fort Worth, Laredo, and McAllen*

Fort Worth's Herd program features a daily event that celebrates the city's western heritage. Each day, real cowhands drive a small herd of cattle through the city's Historic Stockyards. In addition to being a tourist attraction, the Herd is also used as an educational program, but whatever its purpose, the event is used to celebrate and preserve one aspect of the city's history (City of Fort Worth 2008, 57 and 147). Plans that perpetuate Fort Worth's western heritage are an example of planning from culture; Fort Worth's western culture already exists, and the city has created a program to help preserve it.

Laredo sponsors the city's annual Washington's Birthday Celebration, an event that has occurred annually since 1898. The city helps in several ways; first, it has sponsored the event and has served as an official host.<sup>39</sup> In addition, the city has leased low-cost air space at the Laredo International Airport for an air show for the celebration.<sup>40</sup> It also allocates funds to the Laredo Convention and Visitors Bureau to operate a Washington's Birthday Celebration Museum.<sup>41</sup>

McAllen’s Park and Recreation Department hosts an annual Fourth of July program and parade. This year (2008) was the eightieth annual occurrence.<sup>42</sup> A Fourth of July event does not in itself necessarily represent the culture of McAllen (although it might), but after eighty years, this event has become part of the city’s heritage and local traditions.

Table 5.2 Best practice and examples, celebrating culture—local events:  
Fort Worth, Laredo, and McAllen

<i>Best practice:</i>	
Fort Worth	The Fort Worth herd program features daily cattle drives that take place in the historic stockyards, reinforcing the city’s western heritage and identity.
<i>Other examples:</i>	
Laredo	Laredo sponsors the city’s annual Washington’s Birthday Celebration, an event that has occurred annually in the city since 1898.
McAllen	McAllen hosts the annual Fourth of July celebration, now in its 80 <sup>th</sup> year.

### 5.3 Historic Preservation and Similar Efforts

Historic preservation is a popular way of protecting local culture. Unfortunately, this sometimes only preserves symbols of a city’s past culture and does not necessarily work to enforce the city’s current or pre-rapid growth culture. Nevertheless, it still preserves a part of a city’s culture that can serve to inform or even influence present-day culture.

All eight cities in this study uses historic districts, which are either already established or in the planning stage. Killeen's historic district is new established, added this year (2008). Tax exemptions are also popular, offered by six cities (Brownsville, Denton, Fort Worth, Laredo, McAllen, and McKinney) to owners of historic properties. Building code exemptions seem to be less popular, with just two cities (Brownsville and Fort Worth) mentioning the exemptions in ordinances. These ordinances exempt historic structures from meeting all of the city's building code requirements.

Brownsville, Denton, Fort Worth, Killeen, McAllen, and McKinney require a certificate of appropriateness or similar document to be applied for and reviewed by the City before construction or renovation to the exterior of historic properties may occur. Seven of the cities (Brownsville, Denton, Fort Worth, Killeen, Laredo, McAllen, McKinney) have a designated board, commission, or agent granted the authority to prevent or delay demolition of, renovation of, or moving of historic properties. Several of the cities have design guidelines for designated historic districts or properties—Fort Worth, Laredo, and McAllen—and Killeen's recently-formed historic preservation board is charged with creating design guidelines, as well. In addition to designating historic districts, all of the cities examined designate individual structures or sites. In recognition of their natural heritage, Denton and Brownsville also extend protection to historic trees (Denton Development Code, sec. 35.13.7; Brownsville Code of Ordinances, sec. 344-130). Fort Worth offers education programs related to the city's cattle-related heritage (see below).

Six cities—Brownsville, Denton, Fort Worth, Killeen, McAllen, and McKinney—list specifically local aspects in their designation criteria for historic properties other than the very broad criterion that the structure must be one that has contributed to city *or* state or national history. That is, the site or structure is not required to have state or national significance and, moreover, local significance is listed separately from state or national criteria. All of the cities examined include local importance among their designation criteria, but not all of the cities place special importance on local historic merit. For example, one criterion in Fort Worth is if the structure or site is “associated with the founding, development, or expansion of an historical or established business in the City of Fort Worth, the State of Texas or the United States” (Code of Ordinances, Appendix A, sec. 4.502). This kind of criterion includes local history, but local history is not given any greater importance than is state or national history. But an emphasis on local history can better serve to reinforce local identity. It should be noted, though, that sites with national importance can still be used to reinforce local identity if the site is also tied with local history. For example, a “George Washington Slept Here”-affiliated site would likely not help develop local identity unless George Washington lived or worked in the city where the site is located—in other words, if George Washington was genuinely tied to local history.

Grand Prairie includes one designation criterion that is specifically locally-based—if the structure “[r]epresents a resource that contributes to the character or image of a defined neighborhood or community area” (Unified Development Code, Appendix R, sec. 2.1)—but in order to be designated as historic, structures must meet

at least three criteria, and none of the other criteria is specifically local. Laredo's designation criteria might include the specifically local, but the language in the ordinance is vague. It states that structures and sites being considered for designation "shall have documentation establishing [their] contribution to the historic and cultural heritage of the city" (Land Development Code, sec. 24.66.3).

Laredo and McKinney's recommendations to continue the cities' traditional grid street pattern could help perpetuate local culture. While not necessarily protecting culture, it could serve to reinforce local perceptions about what form the built environment should take. If perpetuated throughout the city, then future generations of residents might subconsciously learn to note that cities with grid street patterns feel like home, and cities without grid street patterns do not.

*Examples: Denton and Fort Worth*

As with all the cities in this study, Denton has historic districts, and the comprehensive plan encourages the addition of more districts. A related strategy in the plan is to designate structures "having historic or cultural significance" and to offer a fifteen-year exemption from city taxes to owners of designated properties (City of Denton 1999, 96); a fifteen-year exemption would be an increase over the ten year abatement offered to owners of rehabilitated historic properties through the code of ordinances (Code of Ordinances, sec. 10-130). Specifically local criteria for designating historic sites and structures include the structure being "the work of an architect or master builder whose individual work has influenced the development of the city," if it is a "building or structure that because of its location has become of



value to a neighborhood, community area or the city,” or if it has “[v]alue as an aspect of community sentiment or public pride” (Denton Development Code, sec. 35.215). In addition, the criteria for designation of historic conservation districts note that districts under consideration must express “a local identity as recognizable combination of qualities common throughout an identifiable geographical area” (ibid, sec. 35.7.7.3).

Proposed exterior alterations to a designated historic structure that would change the structure’s character require a certificate of appropriateness, which must be cleared through the Landmark Commission and must conform to the established design guidelines for the district (Denton Development Code, 35.7.7). Alterations that would not change the character of a designated structure within a historic district do not require a certificate of appropriateness, but they must match the existing structure (ibid).

In addition to preserving historic districts, Denton also offers some protection for its natural heritage. The city has a tree preservation ordinance, the purpose of which is, in part, to preserve remnants of the Cross Timbers Forest and to preserve historic trees (Denton Development Code, sec. 35.13.7). The city’s Historic Landmark Commission is charged with making recommendations about historic trees, and the city maintains a Historic Tree Registry map (ibid). The city’s expansion of historic preservation efforts to include trees connects environment to culture, although making this connection is not an explicit goal of the program. A tree is considered historic if it “stands at a place where an event of historic significance occurred that had local, regional, or national importance; or at the home of a citizen who is famous on a local,

regional, or national basis” or if it “has taken on a legendary stature to the community...[or is] mentioned in literature or documents of historic value” (ibid). Historic Trees may not be destroyed or moved without a permit (Denton Development Code, sec. 35.13.7).

Fort Worth’s Evans and Rosedale district is being redeveloped with a heritage/historic preservation theme meant to “celebrate the African-American heritage of Near Southeast Fort Worth” (City of Fort Worth 2008, 87); the city is using federal funds to acquire property (although historic properties are not specified in the comprehensive plan) and to demolish non-historic structures. The city is also “rehabilitating a historic building” in the district (ibid).

Fort Worth has three types of historic preservation overlay districts (Code of Ordinances, Appendix A, sec. 4.100)—Highly significant endangered, Historic and cultural landmark, and Demolition delay—as well as a conservation district (discussed below; ibid, sec. 4.400). Fort Worth’s Historic and cultural landmark district is intended to preserve individual landmark structures. In addition, the city’s comprehensive plan encourages the establishment of additional historic districts, in particular districts “for thematic purposes, such as Hispanic-American cultural resources, transportation related resources, or modern architecture” (City of Fort Worth 2008, 130).

The comprehensive plan also encourages the city to “ensure the continued success of the Historic Stockyards” (City of Fort Worth 2008, 151); the city’s identity is tied to western heritage, and the stockyards are a popular physical symbol of the

city's past. As discussed earlier, the city recognizes the importance of its western heritage, and it is to be expected, therefore, that the city would pursue policies to keep that part of the city's identity alive. Daily demonstration cattle drives through the Stockyards, funded with hotel/motel tax funds (City of Fort Worth 2008, 96), help reinforce cowboy culture, or at least the appearance of cowboy culture to outsiders. A western theme also runs through the ordinances listing designation criteria for historic landmarks and districts, which include "[s]ite[s] or structure[s] associated with a documented theme in the history of Fort Worth such as the Pioneer and 'Fort Worth' era, the Cattle Drives and the Stockyards, Railroads, development patterns, or oil, aviation and other industries" (Code of Ordinances, sec. 4.502).

Fort Worth also uses other locally-based criteria for designation, such as sites that "[have] been identified as the work of an important architect or master builder whose individual work has contributed to the development of the City of Fort Worth" and sites that are "of a significant historic event, including, but not limited to...[the location of] a specific event important to the history of the city, state, or country such as...the site of the original military fort at Fort Worth" (Code of Ordinances, Appendix A, sec. 4.502), as well as sites or structures that "[represent] a resource, whether natural or man-made [that] greatly contributes to the character or image of a defined neighborhood or community area" (ibid). Designation criteria for conservation districts include structures or sites that "[are the location of] a significant historic event or [are] identified with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the culture and development of the area" (ibid, sec. 2.102).

The comprehensive plan recommends that new construction within historic districts be required to adhere to established design guidelines (City of Fort Worth 2008, 130), and the code of ordinances requires that new construction taking place where a historic structure has been demolished in a historic district must conform to design guidelines for the district (Appendix A, sec. 4.504). In addition, a certificate of appropriateness is required before the exterior of a designated historic structure may be altered (with certain exceptions) or before a historic structure may be demolished or moved (ibid).

The comprehensive plan indicates a willingness to include education in city preservation efforts. The plan recommends training “citizen volunteers [on how to] to identify historic elements and document structures, sites, and streetscapes” (City of Fort Worth 2008, 130); moreover, one goal of the plan is to “[e]ducate the public on technical issues, the benefits of preservation, and the true diversity of Fort Worth’s history” (ibid, 120). The city also has developed an educational component to the Fort Worth Herd program; participants in the program learn about the historic importance of cattle drives, about tools used in cattle drives, and about what life was like for cattle drivers.<sup>43</sup>

Fort Worth allows certain exemptions from the ad valorem tax to owners of historic properties (City of Fort Worth 2008, 128). Fort Worth also offers exemptions to the city building code. According to the comprehensive plan, the City adopted a section of the International Building Code that “relates specifically to historic buildings and allows some leniency in the code requirements for historic buildings” (ibid, 129).

Fort Worth is a Certified Local Government (CLG), meaning it participates in a federal preservation program administered through the National Park Service, aimed at encouraging local governments to pursue historic preservation. A city must follow certain procedures to become a CLG, including establishing a preservation ordinance and participating in the national register program. It also must “[m]aintain an active survey of local resources.”<sup>44</sup>

Fort Worth drafted a citywide preservation plan that recommended strengthening historic preservation incentives (City of Fort Worth 2008, 127); the city council therefore appointed a committee to recommend changes to the current incentive program (ibid, 132). Finally, sites associated with historic people or events and “[d]esignated historical areas” are among the criteria for designation as a scenic corridor (ibid, 137).

Table 5.3 Best practices, historic preservation: Denton and Fort Worth

Denton

In addition to the usual set of historic preservation practices, Denton also protects historic trees and maintains a Historic Tree Registry map.

Fort Worth

The city’s Evans and Rosedale cultural district is intended to celebrate the African American heritage of the area, and the comprehensive plan recommends adding more theme-based cultural districts. This kind of policy has the potential to use historic preservation to pursue cultural pluralism within city planning.

In addition, daily cattle drives help perpetuate and preserve the city’s western heritage.

#### 5.4 Other Efforts to Preserve Local Culture

Cities use a variety of efforts to preserve local culture, other than historic preservation, asset mapping, and protection for vernacular business. These include strategies and policies described in comprehensive plans (that might or might not be implemented), as well as implementing tools such as ordinances meant to protect existing ways of life—including zoning ordinances—and design guidelines that draw on existing culture for themes or that encourage the use of locally-available materials. Protection of scenic corridors of cultural resources is another option for cities.

There are six cities that use zoning ordinances to protect community character or way of life: Brownsville, Denton, Fort Worth, Laredo, McAllen, and McKinney. This typically is accomplished through agricultural zoning or rural zoning designations that allow for the continuation of traditional residential standards for the area. Brownsville, Grand Prairie, Killeen, Laredo, McAllen, and McKinney use non-zoning ordinances other than design standards to protect community or neighborhood character or way of life. This includes allowing the keeping of livestock in cities whose planning areas have been quite rural in character until fairly recently. Only half of the cities examined (Brownsville, Denton, Grand Prairie, and McKinney) use design guidelines to preserve the existing character of a neighborhood or district, other than historic districts. In addition, three cities use design guidelines not to protect *existing* character but to *create* neighborhood or district character drawn from community-

based themes, such as local environment or vernacular architecture; the cities are Grand Prairie, Laredo, and McKinney.

In addition to using official design guidelines, some cities include policies, goals, and strategies in their comprehensive plans that are intended to preserve existing culture. In this study, five cities use this approach in their comprehensive plans: Denton, Fort Worth, Grand Prairie, McAllen, and McKinney. And two cities—Laredo and McKinney—include in their comprehensive plans policies, goals, objectives, or strategies (other than design guidelines, mentioned above) meant to create neighborhood or district character and drawn from community-based themes, such as local environment or vernacular architecture. Three cities (Fort Worth, Grand Prairie, and McKinney) offer or suggest protection for scenic corridors, which can include manmade features, such as historic neighborhoods. And two cities (Grand Prairie and Killeen) allow for the naming of parks, streets, or other public areas based on vernacular assets. Six cities (Brownsville, Denton, Fort Worth, Laredo, McAllen, and McKinney) use additional methods to protect or perpetuate local culture. For example, Killeen, Fort Worth, and McKinney have city art commissions responsible for overseeing city-sponsored arts programs and projects.

All of the cities examined indicated that zoning districts had been established, in part, to protect places of historical or cultural importance. Whereas Denton, Killeen, McAllen, and McKinney make this statement only in reference to historic district zoning designations, Brownsville, Grand Prairie, Fort Worth, and Laredo use this language in speaking of zoning districts generally.

*Examples: Fort Worth, Killeen, and McAllen*

Fort Worth has established conservation districts, which can be used for historic preservation purposes but also could be used for other purposes. Criteria for designation includes if the area represents the “Character of Fort Worth”; that is, if the area is “[d]istinctive in character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the City of Fort Worth” (Code of Ordinances, Appendix A, sec. 2.102); another criterion for designation is whether the area represents the character of a particular neighborhood, if the area “represents a resource, whether natural or man-made, which greatly contributes to the character or image of a defined neighborhood or community area” (ibid).

Although cultural policies and strategies outlined in Fort Worth’s comprehensive plan seem to focus only on the arts and on historic resources, the plan defines culture in a broad way in the following excerpt:

No single place captures the diversity of Fort Worth more than the Cultural District, where culture is presented in its broadest sense: from the art, music, theater, and dance typically associated with cultural facilities, to agriculture, equestrian activities, horticulture, and sports (City of Fort Worth 2008, 143).

In further discussion of the importance of culture to the city, the comprehensive plan’s arts and cultural goals and objectives include “[r]etain[ing], preserv[ing], and enhanc[ing] the best of Fort Worth’s cultural past and present” (ibid, 150). And a particular aspect of Fort Worth culture influenced development of the city’s comprehensive plan—the protection of private property rights:

The plentiful supply of land and the independence it symbolized attracted pioneers to settle Fort Worth...Land and its ownership were seen as wealth or a means to wealth. A strong connection was perceived between economic independence and the ownership of land. Though our economy has diversified,



the traditions and attitudes shaped by our history are strong. We want to choose how we use our land, as long as it does not negatively impact a neighbor's use of property (City of Fort Worth 2008, 7).

In addition, the city has an Arts Commission charged with overseeing the city's public art program. Opportunities for artists to participate in public art projects are open to artists from across the nation, but local and state artists are also invited to participate.<sup>45</sup> Artists can also participate by serving on the Arts Commission, whose members must include five arts professionals, "of which at least one (1) must be a practicing artist" (Code of Ordinances, sec. 2-58). Further, the public art program is about more than simply providing residents access to art; an additional purpose of the program is "to commemorate the city's rich cultural and ethnic diversity" (ibid, sec. 2-56).

Killeen's plans recognizes how the city has been shaped by its proximity to Fort Hood, stating in the city's *Downtown Action Agenda* (City of Killeen 2007), for example, that "Killeen is unique as the home of Fort Hood, which is the largest military base in the world" (15). Moreover, the *Agenda* demonstrates the city's appreciation of the cultural mix that has evolved in the city, "thanks to the presence of Fort Hood" (ibid, 50). The downtown plan implicitly recommends capitalizing on the city's ethnically diverse population to help distinguish Killeen and its downtown from other cities in the region, stating that the city should seek out "[m]ulti-cultural and ethnically eclectic businesses" for the downtown (ibid, 46). Perhaps wanting to ensure the downtown appeals to a wide audience, though, the *Agenda* recommends that recipients of sign grants in the Historic Downtown be required to include English on

their signs; it also recommends the City pass an ordinance that does “not allow Downtown business signs to be solely in a language other than English” (ibid, 56). This recommendation could be meant only to make the downtown appeal to a wide audience and not be an effort to retain an English-speaking-only culture. If implemented, however, the City will have to take care in how it writes and enforces the ordinance. Although such a restriction could help draw to the downtown more of the local population—who might see non-English signs not as foreign but rather as run-down—it could lead to Disneyfication and to marketing the downtown more to outsiders than to members of the community.

Killeen also has an Arts Commission, two functions of which are to “develop a community multi-cultural arts program will enhance tourism” and to “stimulate an interest in the local arts of all cultures and minority groups.”<sup>46</sup> Again, the city is concerned with preserving its multi-ethnic community and with using its diversity to distinguish the city from others in the region.

McAllen’s two major zoning districts are Agricultural and Open Space and Single Family Residential, which, according to the comprehensive plan, “reflect the existing development patterns in McAllen” (City of McAllen 2007, 3.9). Further, the city’s comprehensive plan recommends basing zoning districts not on use but on community character (ibid, 6.6) and to use “correlating standards for density/open space (residential) and intensity/landscape surface (non - residential) to preserve character” (ibid).

The comprehensive plan's section on Growth Management uses strong language in favor of protecting community character, recommending use of "all available regulatory tools to protect the environment, farming operations, and community character in the [extra-territorial jurisdiction]" (City of McAllen 2007, 5.28); of course, this does not protect community character within the corporate limits. And, as mentioned earlier in the paper, the city recommends acquiring and maintaining open space as a buffer between the city and surrounding jurisdictions so as to "enhance the [city's] image as a freestanding community, rather than as an anonymous component of contiguous [Rio Grande] Valley development" (ibid, 5.3). Finally, McAllen's comprehensive plan recommends identifying the right kind of businesses to attract to the downtown, taking care "to attract businesses that complement the current genuineness of the area" (ibid, 5.10).

#### 5.5 Ordinances Protecting Native Species

One way to preserve local environment is to protect native vegetation through city ordinances. Approaches to protecting native vegetation, which are vernacular environmental assets, vary among the examined cities. They include ordinances that encourage or require the planting of native species for new development (and redevelopment) and ordinances that prohibit or discourage the removal of existing native vegetation.

Landscaping ordinances can specify what kinds of plant materials may be used in new development and redevelopment and provide Cities an opportunity to foster local development and design practices that are based on using, preserving, or

propagating environmental resources. Such ordinances in practice typically vary in their restrictiveness, and thus possibly their effectiveness, based on whether they *require* the use of native plants or simply *encourage* developers to use them. Some ordinances encourage the use of only native plant materials but *do not* require them; others require the use of climate appropriate plants, which will of course include but are by no means limited to native plants, so that developers may be able to avoid using any native plants at all. The most restrictive kind of native plant landscaping ordinances would require the use of native vegetation only. Of these three methods, Laredo and McKinney use the second; Fort Worth, Grand Prairie, Killeen, and McAllen use the first; and Brownsville (in one overlay district only) uses the third.

In addition to requiring the use of native plant materials in landscaping for new development and redevelopment, additional protection may be offered through ordinances that require or encourage the protection of existing vegetation, which can protect native species. All of the cities in this study provide some protection for existing vegetation. In most cases, trees are the only kind of plant material specifically mentioned or protected.

In cases where native plants are not explicitly required in the ordinances, cities might nevertheless be able to persuade developers to use native plant materials based on the wording in the landscape ordinance's purpose statement. Developers could believe their projects are more likely to be approved if their plans contribute to the purpose of the city's development regulations. Brownsville, Denton, and Killeen each state in the ordinances that the purpose of the landscape ordinance includes the

preservation or protection of native plant species. Of these three cities, Brownsville's ordinance is the weakest, mentioning an intent to preserve "significant trees and vegetation," where the definition of significant trees includes "any *Sabal texana* with a trunk taller than ten feet" and "any other palm with a trunk taller than 20 feet" (Code of Ordinances, sec. 344-63; also, see note 85). Denton's purpose statement is the strongest of the three, with an expressed intent to protect and preserve "native and specimen vegetative species, their ecosystems and natural habitats," to promote "native plant species preservation and replenishment, and "[to] encourage the use of drought tolerant and low water usage vegetation" (Code of Ordinances, sec. 31-2).

Nowhere is there a concern for native animal species, except indirectly through language in support of preserving wildlife habitat and through one of Grand Prairie's ordinances, which prohibits the trapping or hunting of any wild "animal, reptile, bird or fish" and prohibits the removal of the young or eggs of same in city parks (Code of Ordinances, sec. 18-12). This ordinance does not specifically address native species but indirectly offers protection for any native animal species that happen to be in the city's parks.

*Example: Denton*

In Denton, developers are encouraged to use trees species from the selected species list to meet the tree requirements of the landscape ordinance, and the list includes several native species (Site Design Criteria Manual, Appendix A). In addition, the city council may offer development incentives to developers who preserve remnants of the Cross Timbers Forest "over [and] above tree preservation and/or

upland habitat requirements” (Denton Development Code, sec. 35.13.7.A.9; Deborah Viera, personal communication, November 26, 2008).

Denton offers protection for Quality Trees and for Protected Trees, but these do not necessarily have to be native trees; Quality and Protected Trees are so designated based on size, species, and clustered planting patterns (Deborah Viera, personal communication, November 26, 2008). Protected trees are defined as “[a]ny healthy tree with an eighteen (18) inch or greater dbh [diameter at breast height]” and quality trees are defined as “[a]ll healthy trees that have a dbh that is greater than six (6) inches, but is less than eighteen (18) inches” (Denton Development Code, sec. 35.13.7). Protection for such trees is in the form of an outright prohibition of their removal and of tree credits granted to developers as an incentive to preserve trees (prohibition applies only to Historic trees, but Protected trees could be mitigated; Deborah Viera, personal communication, November 26, 2008). Protected Trees must be “preserved unless mitigated” as described in the ordinances (mostly replacement of removed trees) (Denton Development Code, sec. 35.13.7). In addition, Denton also protects what it calls Secondary Trees and Large Secondary Trees; these are Mesquite (native to Texas), Bois Arc (presumably the Bois d’Arc tree, which is native to Texas), Locust Hackberry (some Hackberry species are native to Texas), and Cottonwood (some species are native to Texas) trees of minimum size requirements (ibid).<sup>47</sup> As with Protected Trees, Large Secondary Trees must also be preserved unless mitigated (ibid). Incentives for preserving Quality trees include the addition or subtraction of required parking spaces, permission to deviate from city parking lot design and parking lot landscaping

standards, increase in block length in subdivisions, and increase in cul de sac length in subdivisions (ibid). Some incentives offered by the city “are conditioned and require the preservation above [and] beyond the minimum preservation requirements” (Deborah Viera, personal communication, November 26, 2008).

The purpose statement in Denton’s landscape ordinances specifically mentions the preservation of trees, including remnant stands of Cross Timbers Forest (Denton Development Code, sec. 35.13.7.A). Also, Denton has an ordinance concerning Land Disturbing Activities, one purpose of which is to prevent the “untimely and indiscriminate removal or destruction of trees, understory, and ground cover” and to “prevent damage to and unnecessary removal of vegetation during the land development and construction process” (Denton Development Code, sec. 35.18.1). These elements do not necessarily protect native species but could work to that effect.

#### 5.6 Land Set-Asides

This form of vernacular environmental asset protection involves shielding natural landscapes from development and other activities that could inflict long-lasting damage. Such action can protect native species and also can protect the habitat that native species need to survive. Preserving these open spaces for the long term can also ensure that residents remain accustomed to having access to and views of their native landscapes, which helps reinforce local culture. Cities can pursue land set-asides through purchase, conservation easements, transfers of development rights, land dedications as requirement for development, and similar means.

This planning tool does not appear to be overly popular with fast-growing Texas cities with population over 100,000, other than for providing parks, where parks are meant for human recreation and not for open space protection. Denton and McKinney have the strongest language indicating use of this tool, specifically mentioning dedications and easements of land for other than park and recreation purposes. Brownsville, Killeen, and Laredo appear not to rely on this indicator at all, and Grand Prairie could only be said to use it if language in its comprehensive plan is stretched; the plan encourages preservation of scenic corridors, which may include ‘natural features’ (City of Grand Prairie 2005, 5.19-5.20). Fort Worth and McAllen’s comprehensive plans use vague language that could also be stretched to include preservation through land set asides (see Appendix A).

*Examples: Denton and McKinney*

Denton uses language that indicates a preference for preserving undeveloped land or native landscapes, although it does not always explicitly state that it will act on that preference. For example, strategies listed in the comprehensive plan’s Growth Management section include “preserve wildlife habitats” (City of Denton 1999, 25). Under Ecosystem Management Goals & Strategies, the plan states that the city will “develop and implement strong resource conservation plans for energy, water, native, and restored wildlife habitat areas, sensitive lands, and urban forests” (ibid, 102). The plan further states that this “will be promoted through education programs, incentives, design standards and regulations” (ibid, 103) and lists “[a]cquiring and preserving open spaces considered to be of high value by the city” as one of the city’s goals (ibid)—



although the plan does not specifically state here that native landscapes are considered to be “of high value.” Several pages later, however, the plan lists Land and Soil Management goals that specifically mention native or natural landscapes, including “[a]dminister a program to acquire and manage important natural areas that preserve wildlife habitat and native landscapes,” “[a]ctively protect, manage, and enhance our natural stream corridors and other waterways as natural ecological systems, [and] important wildlife habitat,” and “[c]reate an integrated system of publicly owned natural areas to protect the integrity of important conservation sites, protecting corridors between natural areas, and preserve outstanding examples of our diverse natural environments” (City of Denton 1999, 107). In addition, the Implementation section of the comprehensive plan lists a “Publicly Owned Conservation Lands Program” as an implementation tool under the heading Environmental Management (ibid, 179).

Another step the city takes to preserve native landscapes (and species) is to establish what it calls Tree Trusts. These are described as “[a]reas of a minimum of one acre that have the characteristics of Cross Timber Forests” (Denton Development Code, sec. 35.13.7). The Eastern Cross Timbers is an ecoregion of Texas that runs through Denton County (and several other North Central Texas counties). The Cross Timbers “[separate] the region of Black Prairies on the east from the Grand Prairies on the west.”<sup>48</sup> In other words, the Cross Timbers represent an important ecological feature that visibly mark a change in landscape and environment. Such areas are to be protected “with a permanent easement that shall limit any future land disturbing

activity or construction that would impact and/or damage the tree(s) and shall run with the land...Methods for the long-term conservation of said trees may include permanent conservation easements, restrictive covenants, or other such legal mechanisms” (Denton Development Code, sec. 35.13.7). Further, trees that are used to satisfy other development requirements cannot be counted toward a tree trust, nor can areas “that are un-developable” (ibid).

McKinney’s comprehensive plan specifically mentions using easements to preserve what it calls “‘high priority’ floodplains,” areas the city has designated as valuable natural landscapes. The plan describes these areas as having “to varying degrees, environmental, cultural, and/or visual assets worthy of acquisition and preservation” (City of McKinney 2004, 147). It does not on this page (ibid) specifically link native landscapes to high priority floodplains, but one of the goals listed in the Parks and Recreation section of the plan is to “[e]ncourage conservation of native habitat, wildlife, stream corridors, and wooded areas” (ibid, 141); one of the strategies to achieve this goal is to “[r]equire preservation of high priority flood plains through parkland dedication and/or easements” (ibid). A related strategy is to “[s]eek the donation of land for parks and open space” (ibid).

This goal is implemented by McKinney’s code of ordinances, which requires dedication of “all lands remaining within the 100-year floodway...as an easement” before a development permit will be granted, “unless [the lands are] designated as open space under terms and conditions approved by the city council” (Code of Ordinances, sec. 142-41). And according to the city’s “Green McKinney” website, the city has

“made significant progress in acquiring meaningful riparian corridors in advance of development. These areas are the primary wetlands and wildlife habitats in the McKinney area” (but the website and city plans do not specify what is meant by “significant progress”).<sup>49</sup>

Table 5.4 Best practices, land set-asides: Denton and McKinney

<p>Denton</p> <p>Tree Trusts were established through the Denton Development Code; Tree Trusts conserve remaining stands of Cross Timbers Forest through use of permanent easements. (Denton Development Code, sec. 35.13.7)</p>
<p>McKinney</p> <p>The Code of Ordinances requires lands located with the city’s 100-year floodplain to be dedicated as an easement unless the lands are dedicated as open space. (Code of Ordinances, sec. 142-41)</p>

### 5.7 Other Efforts to Preserve Local Environment

In addition to efforts to protect vernacular environmental resources described earlier, cities have several other tools that they use. Zoning ordinances may be used to protect existing local natural resources other than native species or existing trees (which are described under 5.5, above). Cities may develop plans specifically for particular natural areas, and some cities own or manage designated wildlife areas. And cities may express the intent to protect resources through their policies, goals, and strategies described in comprehensive plans, which may be implemented in a variety of ways.

Brownsville and Denton use zoning ordinances to preserve existing vernacular natural resources, with Brownsville using a resaca overlay district and Denton using a Rural district (see below). Five of the examined cities express an intent to protect resources in their comprehensive plans: Denton, Fort Worth, Grand Prairie, McAllen, and McKinney.<sup>50</sup> Fort Worth has developed a master plan for an undeveloped or wildscape area, and Fort Worth and McAllen own or manage a wildlife area (with Denton a possible third city; see note).<sup>51</sup> All of the cities in this study except McAllen are members of the Tree City USA program; each participating city must have a “tree care ordinance,” a tree board or department, and an urban forestry program with “an Annual Budget of at Least [sic] \$2 Per Capita.”<sup>52</sup> And Brownsville, Grand Prairie, Laredo, McAllen, and McKinney use additional tactics to protect the vernacular environment (described in Appendix A).

*Examples: Denton and Fort Worth*

Denton’s Rural zoning districts are intended partly to preserve farming in the area but also to protect forest areas and “scenic values” from incompatible uses (Denton Development Code, sec. 35.5.1.1). The city’s comprehensive plan takes a strong stance on environmental protection. The plan says that environmentally sensitive areas “should be an overlay district to all land use designations” (City of Denton 1999, 58), and the development code supports this statement, applying the standards of the Environmentally Sensitive Areas subchapter to “all land and all development within the...corporate limits of the city,” with some exceptions (Denton Development Code, sec. 35.17.2; see description below). The comprehensive plan also

states that in the city's eastern half, which still retains many areas with mature trees, new development "should occur in a manner that preserves forested and treed areas, which in some areas may constrain growth" (City of Denton 1999, 18). Floodplain preservation is mentioned several times (ibid, 18, 21, 41), with the comprehensive plan stating that the city should determine how to "prevent development in the 100-year floodplain" (ibid, 41). Although some concern for preventing floodplain development is likely based on safety issues, the city does note that floodplains make up almost a fourth of the planning area (ibid, 58), making them an important part of the city's natural environment. As far as implementation is concerned—that is, actual protection—the Code of Ordinances classifies some lands as Environmentally Sensitive. Environmentally Sensitive classifications include Water Related Habitat and Upland Habitat (Denton Development Code, sec. 35.17.4). Upland Habitat is protected through a requirement that residential development "retain a contiguous fifty percent (50%) tree canopy, which shall remain predominantly in its natural state" and that clustered development be used (ibid, sec. 35.17.9). The city's Cross Timbers Park is a designated Environmentally Sensitive area. Located in one of the Denton's floodplains, it "contains a remnant stand of the eastern Cross Timbers forest" that is protected by its designation as environmentally sensitive and by its status as a park.<sup>53</sup> Further, the comprehensive plan encourages making further provisions for wildlife through the city's open spaces. It says that open space should be connected "[w]here possible" to "form a network" for wildlife migration and to facilitate habitat protection (City of Denton 1999, 186), but the implementation portion of the plan does not

suggest a way to accomplish the formation of a wildlife migration network or any other open space network.

Fort Worth's comprehensive plan includes a section on endangered species and natural habitat. This section's goals include "[b]egin to propagate and restore populations of native plant species in 2008" (City of Fort Worth 2008, 181). If implemented, this goal would protect native species and could serve as a best practice for vernacular asset-based planning. The city owns the Fort Worth Nature Center and Refuge and is planning to restore landscapes there (ibid, 187) and has drafted a master plan for improvements at the Center (ibid, 56). Further, the comprehensive plan includes a strategy to develop a plan to designate and protect "Wildwood Bottoms at Lake Worth as a nature sanctuary" (ibid, 184). In other sections of the plan, the city recommends preserving "rivers, creeks, and floodplains and parks and public open space" (ibid, 59) and clustering new development in order "to conserve existing tree cover, wildlife habitat, [and] natural waterways," among other features (ibid, 37). Further, the comprehensive plan states that the city wants to "[set] aside reserves for native vegetation and wildlife that once roamed the prairies" (ibid, 8).

#### 5.8 Other Indicators

Several of the documents examined include vague or ambiguous statements expressing concern for vernacular assets that are not followed by recommended policies or strategies; these statements simply illustrate values that could be translated into policies in the future.

In Denton’s comprehensive plan, strategies for economic diversification include “[r]ecogniz[ing] and support[ing] environmental conservation and enhancement activities for their contributions to the local economy and quality of life for residents, workers, and ecosystems of the city” (City of Denton 1999, 120)—but what form that support or recognition should take is not described in the plan. Further, “environmental conservation and enhancement activities” might have nothing to do with vernacular assets.

Fort Worth’s comprehensive plan mentions that the city’s residents “have repeatedly stated their desire to reinforce the city’s small town atmosphere and friendly character in planning for our future” (City of Fort Worth 2008, 133), and similar statements were made in the comprehensive plans for Denton and Laredo. The Land Use section of Laredo’s comprehensive plan includes in its goals the protection and enhancement of “the friendly atmosphere and the quality of life that characterizes Laredo” (City of Laredo 1991, III.9). Denton’s comprehensive plans declares that, although the city “is no longer a small town, there are certain qualities of small town life that our citizens hold dear” (1999, 4). These statements are indirect references to culture and the importance of preserving local culture, but how this is to be accomplished, however, is not made clear. While these cities might recognize the importance to residents of retaining city character, they might not know how to (or care to) implement policies to meet such a goal.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION

We must eschew conformity and embrace identity.

Beijing Declaration Concerning Urban Culture

Because vernacular assets contribute to sense of place and to local identity, planning to develop sense of place or identity should include planning for these assets. And as argued above, vernacular assets (when linked together, as in culturization) can form a framework through which to approach city planning in general. I expected to find that most cities do not attempt to foster their individual identities through planning based on vernacular assets and do not plan for vernacular assets; my research identifies how the studied cities plan for vernacular assets. Contrary to expectations, I find that the cities do attempt to develop identities based on local culture and environment, to a certain extent. However, their planning efforts rarely link culture and environment together, and local assets do not receive the level of attention that could most effectively develop a distinctive local identity. To determine whether the cities plan for vernacular assets, I developed a list of indicators of vernacular planning. These indicators include: programs/projects to preserve, support, or establish local businesses; native species landscaping ordinances and invasive species ordinances; protection of native species or native landscapes through land set-asides; language in planning documents or other city documents that acknowledges the importance of local culture



and environment to the city's image/identity; funding for local environmental or cultural organizations that work to preserve or develop vernacular assets; locally-based festivals or celebrations; identification, documentation, or preservation of local language use (dialect, accent); historic preservation programs and oral history projects; use of local knowledge; and zoning and design guidelines to protect vernacular assets. I looked for these indicators in city planning documents, ordinances, and related documents.

Earlier in this paper I wrote that, for the purposes of this study, a city can be said to practice locally-based cultural and environmental planning if efforts to identify, preserve, or develop local resources are clearly articulated through planning documents, city regulations, and other city projects and programs that specifically espouse a concept of protection or cultivation of local resources, and I argued that Young's (2008) culturization approach formed a framework for conducting vernacular planning. When viewed from this angle, although the cities do plan for some vernacular assets, to a certain extent, very few of the cities use vernacular cultural and environmental planning as a framework for planning in general. In general, they use historic preservation and arts support for cultural planning; for environmental planning, the cities preserve existing vegetation, with little preference given to native plants. Culture and environment are not linked for planning purposes, except for one statement in McAllen's comprehensive plan, described above. The cities do not pursue identification and documentation of vernacular assets on a large scale. The cities do not use vernacular asset-based planning as a framework to develop local identity,

although some cities draw on vernacular assets—along with other elements—to help shape local identity. In addition, the cities’ activities are not, for the most part, best practices that could help other cities. Several best practices emerged from the study, however. In addition, among the examined cities there are also some efforts that, though not necessarily best practices, could nevertheless serve as examples to other cities, especially if expanded.

In the sections below, I answer in more detail the research questions stated in Chapter 1: (1) Do rapidly-growing cities in Texas plan for local cultural and environmental resources (vernacular assets)? (2) If so, what kinds of planning efforts are used? (3) Is vernacular asset-based planning used to develop local identity? (4) And do any of these planning efforts meet the standards identified as “best practices” in the literature review?

### 6.1 What Cities Are Doing to Protect Local Assets

The cities appear to value vernacular resources, albeit on a small scale. Most of the work to protect vernacular assets stems from ordinary approaches to planning and does not offer strong protection for the vernacular. The few best practices identified in this study are described in the next section.

I did not expect the cities to use vernacular assets in developing identity but found to the contrary that rapidly-growing cities in Texas do attempt to develop identities based on local culture and environment, to a certain extent. However, their planning efforts rarely link culture and environment together, and local assets do not receive the level of attention that could most effectively develop a distinctive local

identity. Moreover, vernacular asset-based planning is not the foundation of planning in these cities, or at least not explicitly. Instead, vernacular assets are treated as a discrete element in planning, just as roads, parks, and neighborhoods are, or as a contributor to another element, as historic structures are to cultural elements.

The cities in this study do not make a strong link between city identity and vernacular assets, but making this link explicit could help cities refine or expand their existing efforts to protect vernacular assets. For example, historic preservation could be encouraged not just for preservation of history but for protection of the environment, and the city could provide incentives to preserve homes in the same way that it provides incentives to preserve trees. In addition to providing tax abatements to owners who renovate their historic properties, a city could provide density bonuses and similar incentives to developers for leaving historic properties intact within a particular area being developed. A city could also enact ordinances stating that no building over a certain age may be demolished without review by the local historic commission or planning staff, even if the building does not have a landmark designation. It could be that the city would not block the demolition of any non-designated structure, but such a restriction would at least give the city an opportunity to save additional historic buildings, and just as important, it would encourage developers to make use of existing resources.

In general, when the examined cities do make a connection between culture or environment and identity, they make at least a minimal effort to then protect or develop that resource. For example, McAllen's comprehensive plan makes a strong link

between agriculture and open space and the city's identity; the same document recommends strategies to protect existing farming operations, including using "all regulatory tools" to do so (City of McAllen 2007, 5.28) (although the city's ordinances do not yet provide powerful regulations to protect farming). Cities run into difficulty, however, when they have less tangible elements to protect. For example, both Fort Worth and Denton's comprehensive plans mention a small-town atmosphere that residents would like to retain, but neither plan suggests how to accomplish that. Protecting or developing this kind of elements may require actions such as limiting new development or the number of new building permits in order to restrict the number of new residents moving to the city, or a similar hard-to-implement policy.

Although they do not generally make a strong connection between vernacular assets and identity, the cities do nevertheless make some effort to protect these local resources. One of the ways the cities attempt to protect vernacular resources is through financial means, rather than through preservation ordinances or programs. For example, Denton has established a tree fund that can be used to "preserve wooded property that remains in a naturalistic state in perpetuity" (Denton Development Code, sec. 35.13.7). Cities also purchase areas known to be wildlife habitat and sites that are culturally significant; they renovate historic buildings, as well. For example, Fort Worth owns the Fort Worth Nature Center and Refuge and also sponsors the Fort Worth Herd. While it is unlikely that most cities would have the money to financially support local resource protection on a wide scale, it can be an effective tool for environmental resource conservation. When cities do not have the manpower or other

resources to protect environment or culture directly, they can support organizations—such as arts councils or friends-of groups—that do such work. Grand Prairie, for example, supports the local arts council. Support for local organizations that protect vernacular assets can help fill gaps in city-led efforts in cultural and environmental preservation. Cities can also apply for state and federal funding to help support such programs.

Identification and documentation should be an integral part of programs to preserve resources, cultural or environmental. Cities in this study tend to focus their identification efforts on historic preservation. McAllen is the only city studied that expands the focus of its cultural asset identification beyond historic resources, to include local artists. But any of the cities in this study could benefit from a broader-in-scope cultural asset mapping or documentation project.

Denton and Fort Worth make the strongest statements about identification of environmental assets. Denton has established a program with the University of North Texas to develop a system to identify and evaluate local environmental resources. As mentioned above, Fort Worth is the only city examined here that specifically mentions native species when describing projects to identify resources. Fort Worth has by far the largest population of any of the cities included in this paper and might have the greatest resources available for conducting such an ambitious project. Nevertheless, this project, if implemented, can serve as an example to other fast-growing cities in Texas, even those with fewer resources available to undertake a project of this kind. In such cases, cities might want to train resident volunteers who could serve as the labor

pool in identification projects. And using residents to collect information would also provide another forum for use of local knowledge.

Collecting local knowledge is critical for protection and production of local assets. For one thing, local knowledge as described earlier in this paper is itself a vernacular asset. Second, residents can make planners aware of issues and values that planners might otherwise overlook. Of the eight cities examined, no city appears to use local knowledge for comprehensive planning in a way that represents a true bottom-up approach. In most of the cities, public input is solicited before the final stages of plan development, but often that input is used to draft a vision statement for the city or to help plans gain a better understanding of what residents see as the city's strengths and weaknesses. In other words, public input is not necessarily used to identify strategies to address problems. That is not to say, however, that public input has not played an important role. In McKinney, for example, a "statistically valid" number of residents were interviewed by phone in the comprehensive plan's public input stage, and residents were able to complete a survey on the Internet; both of these methods allow for input from residents who are not able to attend workshops or focus group meetings. Moreover, cities that have already established a system of gathering local input to help shape a plan's Vision Statement can expand their outreach efforts to allow for input into other components of a plan, such as goals, objectives, and strategies. And Fort Worth's Model Blocks program is a good example of how cities can let residents have a strong role in shaping city plans.

Protection of existing culture is important but has to be balanced with the culture of incoming residents so as not to be exclusionary and must also be balanced with evolving culture among existing residents. Young's cultural pluralism provides a framework for cultural planning that balances various diverse cultures. Cities interested in preserving (or developing) local culture will need to articulate such goals clearly in order to facilitate the development of ideas that can implement goals, and they will also need to look for resident input in more meaningful ways than simply holding workshops. Workshop-type outreach activities are important, but planners need to cast a wider net. Using a statistically-valid telephone survey to gather public opinion on what goals should be established in comprehensive plans is a good start to establishing more of a bottom-up planning process, as are programs that give neighborhoods the opportunity to develop their own plans.

Fast-growing cities in Texas do make some effort to retain existing businesses, though not always out of concern for what could be classed as vernacular businesses. A common way of protecting local businesses is protecting farm lands from encroachment from other uses, and this is usually done through zoning ordinances. Another form of protection is through business assistance centers aimed at assisting small and new businesses. What for the most part is absent from these cities is a concern for the locally-based business that is rooted in serving a local clientele with local needs from a local perspective, that is, businesses run by residents who are rooted in the community and understand the local culture and can therefore tailor products and services to meet local demands in a way that outsiders cannot or could only do with

difficulty, and who also contribute to and perpetuate culture. Fort Worth comes closest to assisting vernacular businesses in the ways that Carr and Servon (2009) suggest. Its Business Assistance Center offers a number of programs that assist small, possibly vernacular businesses. It provides technical training for business owners, counseling, and “access to capital.”<sup>54</sup> Protection for vernacular businesses, though, is not an explicit goal. Killeen also makes an effort to connect with vernacular business needs in its downtown.

Some of the cities in this study provide loans or job training to local businesses, but most city efforts reviewed focus on attracting new business or on retention of local businesses that provide a large labor force. It can be healthy for cities to find ways to protect local jobs and to create more jobs, but fast-growing cities should not overlook their existing vernacular businesses or opportunities to develop new vernacular businesses. Such businesses are rooted in place and can help protect culture and reinforce local identity. For example, Fort Worth’s Evans and Rosedale district is the kind of district that Carr and Servon describe as “defined by ethnicity” (2009, 10), with a culture that is rooted in that particular place. Fort Worth could provide tools through its BAC for the district’s vernacular businesses to avoid being forced out during redevelopment and revitalization.

Surprisingly, Fort Worth is the one city in the study that includes information about festivals and similar activities in its comprehensive plan. It might be argued, then, that Fort Worth is the only city in the study that sees such activities as part of its overall vision for the city, or Fort Worth might be the sole municipality examined that



sees festivals as an important community asset worth mentioning alongside other city assets.

Historic preservation is quite popular, with several cities even becoming directly involved in the restoration of historic structures. Some cities examined require new development to complement existing historic structures—requiring new development to complement (but not match) existing historic structures is different from requiring new development to fit a neo-traditional architectural style that might not have been present in the city previously (a form of Disneyfication), which would likely not serve to reinforce or protect culture. In addition, the focus on historic preservation among the examined cities could indicate that planners and city officials use a very narrow view of culture, with only past ways of life protected. These cities could use historic preservation as a foundation for wider cultural preservation efforts.

Historic structures, once officially designated as historic, can be subject to oversight by an agent of the city—usually a historic preservation office, board, or council—who can prevent or delay demolition of the structures or renovation to the exterior. And cities sometimes provide exemptions to taxation as an incentive to preserve historic properties. What cities in this study are not doing—at least, not explicitly—is preserving cultural landscapes. Even McAllen, which ties part of its heritage to agriculture, appears solely concerned with protecting farming in its ETJ, and this is for economic and urban design purposes, not to protect cultural landscapes. Farm lands are valued for their scenic worth in several cities, and they are especially valued as tools for Smart Growth. Farm lands help keep new development directed

into already developed areas. McAllen is the only city examined that still sees an economic value in farming<sup>55</sup>—other than the economic development uses of local farmers markets—and, again, none of the cities examined attempts to protect cultural landscapes. Denton, however, does try to preserve historic trees. This can serve to protect native species of trees as well as symbols of culture, if the trees were cultivated, protected, or valued by earlier residents. Laredo makes an important connection in its Historic Urban Design Guidelines. It notes that the city’s history is tied to the Rio Grande River, declaring that the “river crossing and the banks of the river are the reason Laredo exists today” (City of Laredo 1997, 6.1), thus implicitly linking culture and environment.

Oral history is not used. This kind of activity is commonly conducted by local preservation organizations, which cities might sponsor, instead of being conducted by cities directly. It could be that cities lack the resources to conduct oral history projects themselves or do not realize their importance, but planners could learn from the information collected from such projects. An example of how this might work could be derived from a current planning project in Fort Worth. Planners could use oral history interviews to form an in-depth understanding of the cultural background for the Evans and Rosedale district, which would shape the plans they develop for the area. Though it may sound like a public relations strategy built on Disneyfication, the Fort Worth comprehensive plan’s recommendation to establish historic districts for thematic purposes could do much to preserve local culture, if the efforts were genuine and if they were linked with particular culture groups.

The Evans and Rosedale district could also provide an example of using cultural pluralism in planning. If it is pursued as an authentic heritage/cultural district and not simply as a marketing or development strategy, the city's Evans and Rosedale district could be a strong cultural protection project, and the expansion of similar efforts to other cultural areas would be noteworthy. Moreover, such districts could provide what Hayden calls "a larger conceptual framework....to support...a more inclusive 'cultural citizenship,' [that is]... 'an identity that is formed...out of a sense of cultural belonging'" (1995, 8). This framework would stem from cultural planning that "acknowledge[s] and respect[s] diversity [similar to Young's cultural pluralism], while reaching beyond multiple and sometimes conflicting national ethnic, gender, race, and class identities to encompass larger common themes" (ibid). An example of a new thematic district that "encompass[es] larger themes" could be the Western or pioneer experience of all early residents, including women and minorities.

Historic preservation plays an important role in cultural planning, but it often serves to protect solely the built environment and not, for example, cultural landscapes. Moreover, it might not capture an accurate picture of local culture, especially when only a certain kind of structure—for example, large homes—is preserved. Preservation thus is susceptible to overlooking structures, sites, and other aspects of culture that capture the elements contributing to what Relph calls spirit of place, "the inherent and unique qualities of somewhere."

The local environment contributes to a place's inherent qualities, and native plant ordinances can act as a safeguard against the disappearance of those qualities. A

number of cities in this study rely on tree protection ordinances to protect existing vegetation; but considering the common drought issues in Texas, it was surprising not to find stricter and more widespread regulations requiring the use of native plants. Several of the cities encourage the use of native plants, prepare and provide lists of native species, or require a permit before existing vegetation (whether native or not) can be removed, but cities could do more to protect native resources. Cities can require—not just suggest—the use of native vegetation in landscaping for new development or, at the least, a blend of native and climate-adaptive plants, and cities that focus their native vegetation requirements on trees could expand their ordinances to include a wider range of native plant types. For example, Fort Worth, Denton, Grand Prairie, and McKinney could require the use of prairie grasses for lawns in new residential development. Cities could also attempt to protect native animal species in ways other than protecting open spaces that might (or might not) provide habitat.

Land set-asides unfortunately, are not yet a common approach to preservation in most of the cities examined for this paper. Several of the cities use land set-asides for park and recreation purposes, however, and they could expand their land dedication programs to include protection for native landscapes.<sup>56</sup>

Other methods to protect the vernacular environment include establishing open space zoning districts or creating scenic corridors or view sheds meant to protect at least the view of natural areas, if not the natural areas themselves. Fort Worth recommends undertaking the propagation of native species. Several of the cities examined either own or manage native landscapes or natural areas (or plan to do so).

Cities that follow this example would no doubt incur some costs by emulating such an example, but it is an effective way to ensure that at least some of a city's native, natural landscape is protected. And where local environmental organizations are unable or unwilling to take on such a task, it might be up to the city to do it, if it is to be done at all. In some cases, the city could use eminent domain to acquire what few scraps of land have not yet fallen to development.

### *6.1.1 Putting Elements Together*

Each of the indicators described in this study represents planning efforts that can be done independently; however, activities covered by the different planning tools can also work together and, in fact, will likely work better in combination with other efforts. Illustrating how cultural and environmental planning are often conducted—that is, independently of each other—the most recent issue of *Planning* magazine (November 2008) contains an article about a city that shapes its identity based on its heritage and another article about a city that based its plans on the city's natural environment. An approach consistent with culturization would put the two planning approaches together. Oral histories provide an example of how this might work. Oral histories are usually conducted to collect historical information, but they can also help in the general collection of local knowledge, knowledge about vernacular culture and environment. Planners can conduct oral histories to learn more about the type of plants and animals that long-time residents have seen in the area. Elderly local residents could have a lot of knowledge about which native species were seen in the area when they were younger, species that could still be present somewhere or could be

reintroduced. They might also be able to speak to what kind of environment in general such species need in order to survive or how best to grow or propagate them. Planners can also use oral histories to learn more about some of the various cultural groups that have been in the city for awhile in order to learn more about the groups' needs and how they will interact with the planning process, the better to develop planning processes that will lead to wider and deeper participation from the entire community. Another example of how to use the different planning tools together is providing funding to local organizations to identify and document vernacular assets. For instance, a city can give money to a local environmental organization that documents native species in return for use of the inventory compiled by the organization.

The cities in this study do not use cultural and environmental planning together, and only McAllen mentions the relationship between culture and environment (although Denton suggests this link through its historic tree protection program). Although they do not make the connection between culture and environment, some of the cities borrow from planning concepts that do make the connection. For example, Smart Growth is rather popular; although the cities do not specify that they use this approach, Smart Growth ideas are prevalent. The cities do not, however, appear to rely on the elements of Smart Growth that would foster local identity based on local resources, that link culture and environment, or that encourage the protection of vernacular assets. The cities encourage infill, encourage the preservation of vacant land for the present, and encourage the creation of a pedestrian environment (enhancing walkability), but these standards are generally used to guide new

development to help fashion a new identity for the cities or for particular neighborhoods.

The cities do not appear to use planning that reflects a foundation in ecological design. Grand Prairie requires the use of some native stone materials for some of its overlay districts, but this requirement is part of a plan to create a comprehensive design theme and not an effort to use local materials for environmental purposes. Local knowledge is used to some extent in a number of cities, as described earlier. Historic preservation is used by all of the cities, but none of the cities emphasize green preservation. Cultural landscapes are not mentioned, and principles from the Slow City movement are not used.

#### *6.1.2 Revisiting Concepts in Cultural and Environmental Planning*

Chapter 2 described approaches to cultural and environmental planning commonly employed by cities in the United States. The preceding sections in this chapter provide an overview of how the studied cities plan for vernacular assets; this section returns to the approaches described in Chapter 2 and provides an overview of how the cities use those specific approaches, if at all.

Most of the cities in this study plan *for* culture to a certain extent, for example, McKinney's Christmas Festival, and Killeen's Downtown Action Agenda's recommendation to develop a community event to be held in the downtown each year. Cities that attempt to create identities and design guidelines based on general local cultural themes also use planning for culture. For example, Grand Prairie's design guidelines for its Lakeridge Parkway overlay district are based on a Prairie Modern

theme, derived from the city's prairie environment. The design theme is not based on existing culture or neighborhood characteristics but rather is an attempt to create neighborhood character. Some of the cities in the study also plan *from* culture; for example, Fort Worth's herd program, Killeen's efforts to use its multi-cultural population as one of the draws to its downtown, and McAllen's identification of clusters of artists for cultural district creation purposes, as well as its protection of local farming operations, are based in planning from culture. Brownsville, Denton, Grand Prairie, and McKinney use design guidelines to preserve existing character in neighborhoods and non-historic districts.

Cultural planning is also divided into plans that focus on places of cultural consumption and plans that focus on production or on producers of cultural products. All of the cities in this study use planning focused on places of cultural consumption/production through their preservation of historic districts. Laredo supports local cultural producers by sponsoring the Washington's Birthday Celebration. Fort Worth and Killeen focus on both cultural places and producers. Fort Worth's Community Arts Center provides a place for cultural consumption and provides assistance to local cultural producers. Killeen's downtown plan calls for retaining existing ethnic businesses (producers of culture) and using the city's multi-cultural base as a way to attract residents and visitors to its downtown (a place of consumption and production). Fort Worth's plans for its cultural district also represent a focus on places of consumption and production. Overall, the focus of cultural planning in the cities appears to be on preserving past aspects of culture through places of cultural



production (e.g., historic preservation), and not much on encouraging production of culture in the present.

Carbon footprint/climate change reduction is a concern for leaders in at least half of the examined cities. Mayors in Denton, Fort Worth, Laredo, and McKinney have signed the U.S. Conference of Mayors' climate protection agreement. Each of these cities protects forested areas or open spaces, which is thought to help combat climate change. Sustainable development and its emphasis on balancing environment, equity, and economic development are not much used as an environmental planning tool in the examined cities. A more common method of environmental planning is a regulate-and-recycle approach combined with an emphasis on preserving existing trees, floodplains, and attractive open spaces.

Environmental planning efforts in the cities do not fall neatly into the categories of environmental sustainability planning and environmental amenity planning. Rather, the cities' activities overlap between the two kinds of environmental planning. For example, acquisition of open space can be used to make a city more sustainable, but, depending on the open space acquired, it can also provide an amenity. Land set-asides and other forms of open space protection, though, were usually recommended in order to provide amenities to residents, whereas native plant-related ordinances generally appeared to be motivated by sustainability concerns (such as lack of adequate water supplies).

## 6.2 Best Practices

Examination of plans and ordinances in the cities turned up few examples of best practices. In some cases the cities recommend in their comprehensive plans activities that, if implemented, could serve as best practices or that, if expanded, could be an example to other fast-growing cities of how to care for vernacular assets. These activities are all described above and will not be described in detail here.

Several programs or activities that could serve as best practices come from Fort Worth. One program is the Model Blocks program. The program was not examined in-depth, so it would be difficult to say how much local input was really used, but the program as described in the comprehensive plan (City of Fort Worth 2008) seems an excellent example of how cities can allow for a bottom-up planning process. Fort Worth also illustrates best practices in financial support for vernacular assets. As mentioned above, the city owns the Fort Worth Community Arts Center (FWCAC). The city also provides financial support to the Arts Council. The Arts Council and FWCAC each provide for continued cultural production in Fort Worth, and this is made possible by financial support from the City of Fort Worth. Fort Worth also celebrates local culture through the herd program. This daily program reinforces the city's western identity.

In Denton, historic trees are protected, and the city maintains a Historic Tree Registry map. This activity goes beyond typical historic preservation work and links culture and environment (although this is not an explicit goal of the program). In addition, the city is making a tree inventory and has established a system to identify

local environmental features within the city. Denton also provides for land set-asides for remnants of native tree stands through its Tree Trust. And McKinney's Code of Ordinances requires that lands located with the city's 100-year floodplain be dedicated as an easement unless dedicated as open space. Finally, although it does not represent an action by the city, McAllen's comprehensive plan strongly ties the city's identity to one of the area's vernacular assets, that is, local agriculture. The comprehensive plan states that the city's agricultural lands are "responsible for the identity and character" of the city. Thus, argues the plan, "this agricultural character should be preserved and integrated into the fabric of the community" (City of McAllen 2007, 5.19).

Among the cities there are also some efforts that, though not necessarily best practices, could nevertheless serve as examples to other cities, especially if expanded. For example, McAllen's strategy to identify clusters of artists (if implemented) could be expanded to include identification of other kinds of cultural producers. Another example from McAllen is the comprehensive plan's strong recommendations to protect agricultural lands. If implemented, the plan's agricultural protection strategies could protect vernacular businesses and cultural landscapes; in addition, the strategies could help protect the city's identity, as stated above. Fort Worth's comprehensive plan recommends preparing an inventory of natural habitats and species within the city, which would be a best practice in identification of vernacular assets, if implemented. Fort Worth's comprehensive plan also recommends establishing theme-based cultural districts, which could increase cultural pluralism in the city's cultural planning, if

implemented in a way that uses local knowledge and does not create Disneyfication of the districts.

### 6.3 Concluding Remarks

This thesis will help lay the groundwork for further research on sense of place. By identifying which cities preserve or develop local resources and which resources those cities choose to preserve or develop, this thesis will allow other researchers to compare sense of place in those locations to determine whether such planning efforts do lead to strong sense of place. In addition, future research on vernacular resource planning could examine smaller cities in Texas or could look at cities outside of Texas. For example, it would be interesting to note if cities in states with stronger environmental regulations make better use of vernacular resources or if they simply write local regulations in such a way as to meet state regulations. In addition, there are a number of small towns and cities that are also undergoing very rapid growth. The challenges in these cities can be different from those faced by larger cities. Moreover, some of these towns and cities could be implementing innovative planning strategies that could inspire larger cities. Additional research could also investigate whether cities that rely heavily on local knowledge or bottom-up planning processes for developing plans also tend to have a stronger recognition of (or protection for) vernacular assets.

Planners should give serious thought to how they define culture, as their definition of culture will mold their cultural planning. Several of the cities in this study have found that zoning districts offer one way of protecting rural or agricultural

ways of life, but cities do not always consider these as contributing to culture. Design guidelines or design-based overlay districts could help preserve the built character of an area, which can reinforce cultural standards concerning local architecture. Other aspects of culture could be more elusive to identify and plan for and more difficult to protect. Cities might have to work with local organizations in order to develop methods of identifying and then preserving aspects of local culture. A local 4B sales tax organization could help fund such efforts. For example, Brownsville's 4B organization, BCIC, already funds local cultural organizations, such as a local theater group and a historical organization, but BCIC could also direct funds toward projects and organizations that identify other aspects of local culture.

Fast-growing cities in Texas with populations over 100,000 could not, for the most part, be said to use vernacular assets to shape their identities, as expressed through their visions of themselves (comprehensive plans) and implemented through ordinances and related programs, nor do they appear to use culturization as a framework for planning. However, these cities do value and plan for their vernacular assets to a limited extent, and this lays the foundation for developing a wider, more coherent policy of planning based on the vernacular. What is missing now is the connection to identity and planning consistent with Young's culturization approach—the connection between environment and culture that would act as an overarching concept to coordinate planning policies and strategies. Culturization tied to identity would facilitate planning that leads to stronger local identity for both residents and visitors and thus a better ability to convey the inherent and unique qualities of a

particular city. Granted, if all cities used vernacular asset-based planning, cities would still use copy-cat planning, in a sense, but because the plans would be based on each city's own vernacular resources, the cities could avoid homogenization. Moreover, plans would be based on an appreciation of existing resources—including existing residents—and on the relationships among these resources. Cities concerned with attraction and retention—be it of residents or of businesses—would do well to demonstrate that they appreciate and will care for what they already have.

APPENDIX A

IN-DEPTH DISCUSSION OF SELECTED INDICATORS:  
HOW THE CITIES IN THIS STUDY PLAN  
FOR VERNACULAR ASSETS

This Appendix is an expanded in-depth discussion for each indicator. It describes what, if any, activities the examined cities undertake to protect local resources according to the indicators used in this study and also describes supporting language from planning documents. Best practices and examples from Chapters 4 and 5 are repeated here.

#### In-Depth Discussion, Language Linking Culture and Environment to Identity

According to the Denton Development Code, one of the purposes of preserving the city's environmental resources, "including but not limited to remnants of the Cross Timbers Forest" (sec. 35.13.7), is to "[m]aintain and enhance a positive image of the City" (ibid). Although language similar to this is used in a number of cities, that is, linking well-kept natural surroundings to positive image, this ordinance specifically mentions native vegetation (Cross Timbers Forest) as contributing to the city's image. But note that enhancing "a positive image of the City" could simply mean marketing the city to outsiders in such a way that the city appears attractive on the surface, without tying the city's identity to its environment in any meaningful way. In other words, it might simply be environmental Disneyfication.

Subchapter 17 of the Denton Development Code regulates environmentally sensitive areas. Two of the purposes listed for why the subchapter was adopted relate to the native environment. They are: "[p]rotect the natural and ecological resources that are essential elements of the City's health and *community character* and which provide irreplaceable plant and wildlife habitat" (Denton Development Code, 35.17.2;



emphasis added) and “[p]reserve and enhance the City’s distinctive community character and quality of life by ensuring that its natural and built environments are consistent with the community vision and values embodied in The Denton Plan” (ibid, 35.17.2). Even though the latter purpose is somewhat vague in offering environmental protection, both purposes link the natural environment to the community’s character.

Fort Worth’s comprehensive plan argues that civic identity is influenced by urban form, and that urban form is itself shaped by, among other elements, “trees, the Trinity River and waterfront spaces,...and scenic corridors” (City of Fort Worth 2008, 133). The city’s code of ordinances also gives a nod to linking culture/environment and identity, stating that “Fort Worth represents the unique confluence of time and place [i.e. local environment] that has shaped the identity of generations of citizens” (Appendix A, sec. 4.500).

Grand Prairie links urban design standards to city identity. Goal 4 of the city’s comprehensive plan is “Update Grand Prairie’s Identity,” which the city is accomplishing by creating overlay districts with new design standards. For several of the overlay districts, the recommended architectural theme for the design guidelines is “Prairie Modern,” no doubt derived from the city’s location within the Blackland Prairie ecoregion, and some of the guidelines themselves are based on vernacular architecture or local history (see for example City of Grand Prairie 2003b, 2). The city is also looking to expand the design guidelines throughout the Grand Prairie (City of Grand Prairie 2005, 5.18), and has had some success with this (Kathe Houk, personal communication, November 6, 2008).

Killeen makes just one reference to culture/environment and identity. The city says that the purpose of its landscape regulations (Code of Ordinances, sec. 8-501) is, in part, to “preserve and protect the unique identity and environment of the city...” Note, however, that the landscape regulations merely suggest the use of native plants, and that is only for water conservation purposes (ibid, sec. 8-508), thus the city does not make a strong link between its identity and a truly local environment.

Laredo somewhat vaguely links its culture to identity, stating in its comprehensive plan that one of the Growth Management goals is to “protect and enhance the friendly atmosphere and the quality of life that characterizes Laredo” (City of Laredo 1991, III.9). The city’s Historic Urban Design Guidelines also create a link, noting that the guidelines are meant to “preserve, protect, and enhance historically, architecturally, archaeologically significant sites and structures which impart a distinct aspect to the city” (City of Laredo 1997, Intro.8) and to “recognize and protect the unique character and qualities of the Rio Grande [sic] its integral relationship to the City’s downtown core” (ibid) [which links environment to identity].

McAllen makes a weak but explicit link between identity and natural environment in its comprehensive plan and a strong link between its agricultural heritage / economy and identity. Under a section titled “Reinforcement of Community Identity,” the plan argues for the development of gateways to the city that will help the city “establish an image [and] communicate community values” (City of McAllen 2007, 5.2). The elements described in the plan that could contribute to image and communicate values include “preservation of natural features and vegetation” (ibid).

The plan goes on later to state that preserving open space “at City entrances...will enhance the image as a freestanding community, rather than as an anonymous component of contiguous [Rio Grande] Valley development” (ibid, 5.3). On the same page, the plan states that preserving the city’s character “requires protection of open space.”

Agriculture has historically been a large part of McAllen’s economy and culture, and the comprehensive plan makes clear that as land in the area becomes urbanized, the city loses part of its identity. The city’s agricultural land, declares the comprehensive plan, “is responsible for the identity and character of the [city]”; thus, argues the plan, “this agricultural character should be preserved and integrated into the fabric of the community” (City of McAllen 2007, 5.19). Recommendations for accomplishing the protection of agricultural lands include establishing an agricultural zoning district, establishing a countryside zoning district, using density bonuses in the agricultural district, and creating a downtown farmers’ market (ibid). Photo captions on page 5.29 of the comprehensive plan support this sentiment, including the following caption: “Field crops are an important part of McAllen’s economy, heritage, and community character.”

McKinney uses language similar to Fort Worth to link local culture and identity in the city’s ordinance concerning the city’s historic preservation overlay district: “It is recognized that the historic districts and landmarks within the city represent the unique confluence of time and place that shaped the identity of generations of citizens, collectively and individually” (Code of Ordinances, sec. 146-

97) As with Fort Worth's similar statement, the city links local environment ("place") and identity (and, in a sense, culture—"the identity of generations of citizens...").

McKinney's comprehensive plan also links (albeit weakly) environment and identity, as well as culture (as expressed through historic structures) and identity. The plan notes that maintaining "a unique 'McKinney Character'...includes such things as the proper utilization of our existing rolling terrain and wooded stream corridors [and] the preservation of historic downtown McKinney and the surrounding historic residential neighborhoods" (City of McKinney 2004, 175).

#### In-Depth Discussion, Language Recognizing the Importance of Culture and Environment

Imagine Brownsville, the Internet home of Brownsville's comprehensive planning process, describes some elements of the city's vernacular environment, "such as [the city's] resacas and unique and diverse habitats," as "tremendous natural and geographic assets."<sup>57</sup> The city has no completed comprehensive plan for me to draw on for this Indicator, and the language is missing from the code of ordinances.

Denton's Code of Ordinances notes that the city's urban forest, though not necessarily made up of native species, can "[contribute] to a strong sense of neighborhood, community and quality of life" (Code of Ordinances, sec. 31-2). In addition, Denton's comprehensive plan refers the city's sense of community as "a delicate natural resource," which is "a legacy from the past [that] once lost cannot be regained" (City of Denton 1999, 6). This statement could be an indirect reference to the city's culture and the importance of preserving it. Finally, according to the

comprehensive plan, Denton is a diverse city whose uniqueness “is a sense of community pride” and which the comprehensive plan is meant to preserve.

Fort Worth’s comprehensive plan makes several comments about vernacular assets and identity. Early in the plan, the Trinity River and its tributaries are referred to as “important resources,” and the Trinity River itself is described as “Fort Worth’s greatest natural asset” and “an important economic asset” (City of Fort Worth 2008, ix). The comprehensive plan also says the city is “blessed” with its culture, which includes “a rich and diverse cultural life,” “western heritage,” and “a diverse population” (ibid, 6). Finally, the plan says that “[n]eighborhood art facilities...add to the character and culture” of the city (ibid, 143).

In the code of ordinances, landmarks or districts of historical or cultural significance are deemed “necessary to promote the economic, cultural, educational and general welfare of the public” (Appendix A, sec. 4.500). In a similar vein, the code of ordinances establishes a conservation overlay district in recognition of the city’s “many unique and distinctive residential and commercial areas that contribute significantly to the overall architectural and cultural character and identity of the city,” which the city council wishes to preserve and protect (ibid, sec. 4.400). The ordinance also notes the council’s wish “to provide a means of conserving the distinctive atmosphere or character of areas” (ibid).

Grand Prairie’s comprehensive plan states that the city should protect its “abundant open space,” as “[p]rotecting a natural setting adds value not only to housing and developed properties, but invites entertainment and recreational venues”

(City of Grand Prairie 2005, 6.3). Killeen’s ordinances on building and construction note that the “unique...environment of the city” contributes to the city’s economic base” (Code of Ordinances, sec. 8-501).

Laredo’s Historic Urban Design Guidelines note indirectly that the city’s culture and environment contribute to its attractiveness “to residents, business interests and tourists” (City of Laredo 1997, Intro.7). The guidelines say that Laredo is “known for its beauty, friendliness, historical significance and international border setting” (ibid). The same document remarks that the “Streets of Laredo” are “symbols of [the city’s] rich cultural past,” and that the streets should be preserved (ibid, 1.6). The document describes several types of historic architecture found in the city, including “Border Vernacular” and “Mexican vernacular” (also called “Border/Mexican Colonial House”). Both styles are said to be “a response to the regional climate” (ibid, 1.10); this description thus links local environment (climate) to local culture (vernacular architecture).

McAllen’s comprehensive plan (City of McAllen 2007) includes open space in a list of elements that contribute to the “initial impression” formed by visitors to the city (5.10). The plan also says that “[c]ultural and environmental resources are essential amenities” (ibid, 5.13). McAllen is the only city studied that makes a straightforward link between culture and environment and the rest of planning. The comprehensive plan says that “the relationship between culture and the environment with other physical planning elements is too often considered separately from their overall context. This [separate consideration] often results in strategies that are not

properly integrated and, thus, less successful than if there was a more holistic viewpoint during the planning process” (ibid, 5.13).

The comprehensive plan also recognizes the importance of historic preservation. A photo caption in the plan reads, “*To sustain the urban character of Downtown*, the front building wall must be maintained, the historic architecture and facades preserved, and an enhanced pedestrian - scaled environment created” (City of McAllen 2007, 5.9; emphasis added). Also from the comprehensive plan: “Character creates the image of the community, which contributes to economic development and desirability as a place to live and work.” Two elements that contribute to community character, according to residents, are “the genuineness of Downtown” and “valued environmental resources” (ibid, 5.1).

McKinney’s comprehensive plan notes the importance of natural features in urban design. The plan states that “McKinney’s natural elements...should be considered in the context of urban design[, as they]...influence the physical form of the developed environment and can enhance its value” (City of McKinney 2004, 185). The plan also notes the importance of historic buildings or districts through their contribution to “urban design character” (ibid, 175) and to revitalization. For example, the plan states that the State Highway 5 commercial corridor should be studied “to identify those unique elements that could add value to the corridor that are not currently provided for within McKinney's development standards” (ibid, 181). The corridor pre-dates zoning in McKinney, giving it a “unique nature” that could more strategically enhance revitalization efforts in the area (ibid). Also, the comprehensive

plan indirectly recognizes a relationship between culture and identity through the character of the built environment, stating that “McKinney’s urban design character is one of a culturally rich community with historic roots” (ibid, 175).

#### In-Depth Discussion, Funding or Similar Assistance for Protecting Local Culture or Environment

Brownsville has a 4B sales tax organization, the Brownsville Community Improvement Corporation (BCIC) (see note 23). BCIC funds projects and programs such as parks, athletic facilities, historic preservation, and theaters. For example, in 2006, BCIC gave money to the Resaca De La Palma Battlefield Improvement Project, the Brownsville Tennis Center, Sabal Palm Audubon Center and Sanctuary, and Camille Players, Inc. (see note 24). BCIC also contributed funds to Brownsville’s comprehensive planning project in 2007 (see note 25).

Denton has a tree fund, which may contribute to the local environment. The funds “shall be used to purchase, plant and maintain trees on public property, to preserve wooded property that remains in a naturalistic state in perpetuity, to perform and maintain a city-wide tree inventory and to educate citizens and developers on the benefits and value of trees” (Denton Development Code, sec. 35.13.7). “Wooded property that remains in a naturalistic state” could include the local/vernacular environment. Denton also supports local arts and cultural groups, such as the Tejas Storytelling Association, through its hotel/motel tax fund,<sup>58</sup> and it supports the local arts council, which in turn provides support for local arts groups through its grants program.<sup>59</sup>



Fort Worth sponsors Mayfest, an annual festival that raises money “for improvements in the Trinity River corridor” (City of Fort Worth 2008, 59-60), which may help protect the Trinity as a local environmental resource. As to cultural support, the comprehensive plan lists renovating the Will Rogers Auditorium and Coliseum as one of the city’s Arts and Culture objectives (ibid, 151); the venue hosts a number of agrarian or western-type events each year, thus reinforcing the city’s western identity. The city also owns the Fort Worth Community Arts Center (FWCAC), which leases office space to non-profit organizations (see note 26). FWCAC facilities (e.g., gallery, theater) may also be rented by arts groups and individual artists. The FWCAC is managed by the local arts council, which receives some city funding and itself supports a number of local arts groups (see note 27). The Arts Council provides services that Carr and Servon (2009) say vernacular businesses need: its grants programs provide access to capital for cultural provides and also provide funding for arts and cultural providers to receive professional training. With the help of financial support from the City of Fort Worth, the Arts Council and FWCAC support continued cultural production in the city.

Grand Prairie provides financial support to the Grand Prairie Arts Council through the city hotel/motel tax (Kathe Houk, personal communication, November 6, 2008). Further, the city recently renovated the city’s historic Uptown Theater, which is now home to the Arts Council. The Arts Council, in turn, supports local artists and arts groups. For example, the Arts Council provides student scholarships to graduating

high school students. The scholarships “are intended to reward fine arts students for past accomplishments and to encourage future pursuits.”<sup>60</sup>

According to its comprehensive plan, McAllen plans to provide “financial assistance to...owners [of historic properties] through a façade rehabilitation program” (City of McAllen 2007, 5.15). Also, one of McAllen’s goals for Cultural and Environmental Resources is the “[p]rovision of incentives and financial and technical assistance to facilitate desired outcomes” (ibid, 5.14). With such a vague statement, it’s difficult to predict how the city will choose to implement this goal. However, the city does provide indirect support for the arts by providing hotel tax revenue to the McAllen Chamber of Commerce (City of McAllen 2008), an organization that is active in supporting local artists and arts groups.<sup>61</sup>

McKinney has a 4B sales tax corporation, the McKinney Community Development Corporation (MCDC), the purpose of which “is to enhance McKinney's aesthetic, cultural and leisure amenities.” The organization’s website says that the organization was created “by the McKinney City Council and residents who recognized the need to set aside money for this important public service.”<sup>62</sup> The MCDC has provided financial support to various organizations that contribute to vernacular assets, including the Heard Natural Science Museum & Wildlife Sanctuary, the Heard-Craig Center for the Arts, the Heritage Guild of Collin County, and the Collin County Historical Society.<sup>63</sup> The city also provides direct financial support to the Heard Natural Science Museum and Wildlife Sanctuary,<sup>64</sup> an organization that

strives to “provide the best possible habitat for native and endemic wildlife species” and to “preserve functional examples of pre-settlement Collin County ecosystems.”<sup>65</sup>

#### In-Depth Discussion, Efforts to Inventory, Map, and Document Local Culture and Environment

Brownsville’s heritage officer is required to create a heritage survey each year (Code of Ordinances, sec. 312-181). It is not clear what information is included in the survey or how that information is collected, but it is nevertheless an effort to gather information about particular cultural resources within the city.

Denton’s comprehensive plan states that “unique and distinctive cultural and architectural features of Denton should be identified, restored, preserved and maintained” (City of Denton 1999, 62); if implemented, this project could help the city shape identity-focused planning. The comprehensive plan also recommends identifying the city’s “character areas.”

Fort Worth conducted a large-scale architectural survey of the county in the 1980s. In 2007, the City allocated funding to begin “the first phase of a citywide historic resources survey” (City of Fort Worth 2008, 126). And as mentioned above, the comprehensive plan recommends educating “citizen volunteers” in how to identify local historical resources (ibid, 129-130). The comprehensive plan also suggests developing a plan to identify “historical, archeological, and cultural resources within the existing park system by the end of 2008” (ibid, 58).

Killeen recently conducted a historic resources survey (City of Killeen 2008). Laredo has published a “Guide to Los Dos Laredos,” which lists 122 historic properties.

In addition, the Historic Urban Design Guidelines (City of Laredo 1997) includes among its goals the establishment of “criteria and procedures for data investigation and identification of historic resources” (ibid, Intro.9). McAllen (2007) has “solicited a survey of several historic neighborhoods to assess their key features and locations” (3.9-3.10). The City is also working to “survey and define the historical nature and boundary” of the city’s historic downtown/central core (City of McAllen 2007, 5.14). And the McAllen Historic Preservation Council is charged with maintaining an inventory of local historic properties (Code of Ordinances, sec. 138-414).

McKinney’s comprehensive plan (City of McKinney 2004) recommends surveying the city’s State Highway 5 commercial corridor, which predates the city’s 1969 zoning ordinances (City of McKinney 2006, 1), and identifying its unique elements, which could then be used as a basis for design guidelines. While the area is not necessarily what would be traditionally considered historic, it is nevertheless an older area with the same distinction found in many historic districts—it features elements of design or use that could not be built today because of new(er) zoning requirements. And McKinney’s efforts to identify pre-zoning unique aspects of the corridor in order to further spur revitalization in the area does represent an attempt to document vernacular assets.

As stated above, Denton’s comprehensive plan states that “unique and distinctive cultural and architectural features of Denton should be identified, restored, preserved and maintained” (City of Denton 1999, 62). Although this likely has to do with historic preservation only, as the comprehensive plan suggests identifying and

restoring these resources “in keeping with the historic preservation plan” (95), the recommendation might be stretched to include distinctive cultural but non-historic resources.

Also as stated above, Fort Worth suggests developing a plan to identify “historical, archeological, and cultural resources within the existing park system by the end of 2008” (City of Fort Worth 2008, 58). Again, this likely is only meant to include historical and archaeological resources but could be stretched to include cultural, non-historic resources.

The McAllen comprehensive plan’s recommendations for Performing and Visual Arts include conducting “a survey of cultural facilities to identify clusters of artists that may become an Arts and Cultural District. Locations of existing structures or those that may be suitable for studios, galleries, performance venues, and workshops should be identified” (City of McAllen 2007, 5.17). McAllen’s is the only comprehensive plan in this study that specifically recommends identification of artist clusters or similar resources.

As to environmental resources, Denton is working with the University of North Texas (UNT) to develop “a method to systematically identify, evaluate, and synthesize various environmental attributes” within the city (City of Denton 1999, 103). The comprehensive plan recommends identifying areas with “unique ecological significance for consideration on a more site-specific basis” (ibid, 25), and the system developed with UNT will likely make such work possible. In addition, the city is creating a tree inventory, funded by a city-established Tree Fund (Denton

Development Code, sec. 35.13.7). The Fund “shall be used to purchase, plant and maintain trees on public property, to preserve wooded property that remains in a naturalistic state in perpetuity, to perform and maintain a city-wide tree inventory and to educate citizens and developers on the benefits and value of trees” (ibid). Also, the City maintains a Historic Tree Registry map (ibid). There could be many types of native vegetation within Denton other than trees, and the city does not appear to be doing much to preserve or document them, but its efforts to inventory trees could provide a foundation for an expanded identification project at a later time.

Denton’s comprehensive plan calls for the identification of Visually Sensitive Locations, which include local environmental features. Visually Sensitive Locations include “unique natural or manmade areas considered to be important community places, historic areas, [and] special open spaces” (City of Denton 1999, 73). And one of the comprehensive plan’s urban design strategies is to “identify and map the city’s character areas that will be treated separately” (ibid, 75). Within these areas, features that will be considered significant include “large open spaces,” “waterways,” “historic areas,” and “conservation areas” (which might refer to either historic or environmental areas—the plan is not clear) (ibid).

Denton’s comprehensive plan makes an interesting statement about the city’s ecological resources, referring to the loss of “areas with significant ecological value” as “loss of our natural heritage” (City of Denton 1999, 101). The plan therefore calls for such areas to be identified and protected. And Denton is one of the only cities in

this study that explicitly links the local environment to heritage (and thus, indirectly, to culture) (see note 29).

Fort Worth is the only city in this study that explicitly expresses a wish to identify local species. The city's comprehensive plan goals state that the city should "[p]repare [a] Fort Worth area inventory of natural habitats and species" (City of Fort Worth 2008, 181). If followed, this step will work to identify both specific vernacular features and areas where such features are likely to occur. This two-fold identification process is self-reinforcing. Identifying locations of individual species can help planners identify clusters where these species occur, and thus possibly natural habitats, that they might otherwise overlook. Likewise, identifying habitats can help planners determine where native species are likely to occur. For example, locating an in-use habitat for prairie animals that eat particular kinds of prairie plants will signal to planners that such native plants are likely present in the area.

McAllen's comprehensive plan recommends identifying and acquiring open space areas that can serve as buffers between McAllen and surrounding communities (City of McAllen 2007, 5.3). The comprehensive plan also recommends identifying natural resources such as "orchards, stream channels and irrigation canals, valued open areas, and other natural features" (ibid, 6.7), which can then be protected.

#### In-Depth Discussion, Use of Local Knowledge in Plan Creation

Brownsville is still in the planning stages of its comprehensive plan, so it's difficult to say for certain how much public participation will affect the final plan.

However, the City appears to have made an effort to get the public involved so far. According to the website for the plan process, public participation will be used to determine “shared objectives and a vision for Brownsville.”<sup>66</sup> Public participation will take (or has taken) the form of “public meetings and interviews with many community leaders and stakeholders as well as...various neighborhood workshop meetings.”<sup>67</sup> So far the City has conducted interviews with seventy-five stakeholders “to seek input about the city’s existing conditions and its future” and has held five workshops, plus additional workshops at which 8,500 attendees voted on prioritizing goals.<sup>68</sup> Although the average residents (i.e. not community leaders, city officials, or business owners) might not have been able to help establish which goals and priorities would be included in the vote for consideration in the comprehensive plan, residents are invited to serve on one of the planning Task Force’s five technical committees.<sup>69</sup> In addition, the City is conducting an online survey of Brownsville residents to assist planners in understanding the city’s existing conditions.<sup>70</sup> Finally, in recognition of its heritage and community culture, the planning process is a bilingual one, with the comprehensive plan’s public outreach website available in English and Spanish.

The Denton plan states that the community will need to be involved to a large degree if community assets are to be cared for properly (City of Denton 1999, 4). It also includes a section that describes how the public should be involved and why, and not solely for comprehensive planning, but for the city’s planning process as a whole. Strategies for involving the public in planning include holding meetings in affected neighborhoods before zoning change hearings are scheduled (City of Denton 1999, 11),



conducting “[t]elephone surveys, mail surveys, or door-to-door interviews” when planners are attempting to gauge community feeling on important issues (ibid), and holding town hall meetings or charettes as appropriate (ibid). Unfortunately, the plan does not state whether any of these methods were actually used in preparing the Denton Plan. It does state that residents were greatly concerned about environmental quality and protecting the environment (ibid, 101). As the Denton plan itself displays a good deal of concern for the environment, it might be that the plan’s level of concern was influenced by the residents’ concern (although this is not explicitly stated).

Fort Worth’s most recent comprehensive plan sought public input in several ways. To begin with, Fort Worth hosted “a citywide forum attended by over 200 interested citizens” (City of Fort Worth 2008, 2). During the plan development process, the city hosted sixteen sector meetings (attended by approximately 700 residents) and nine focus group meetings (attended by 160 residents) (ibid). After receiving this community input, planners incorporated public commentary into the plan and then presented the revised plan at sixteen additional sector meetings and “several focus group meetings” (ibid).

In addition to seeking input on its comprehensive plan, Fort Worth also solicits input for other types of plans and programs. According to the comprehensive plan (City of Fort Worth 2008), the city provides an outreach program through the Parks and Community Services Department that “provides an opportunity for neighborhoods, schools, and businesses to act in an advisory capacity for natural landscape enhancements” (184). Similarly, one comprehensive plan policy is to “[a]ctively

promote citizen involvement in determining park, recreation, and open space needs and desires of the community” (ibid, 59) —but note that the plan does not specify how the public could be involved, nor do the ordinances establish a forum for citizen involvement, other than establishing a parks and community development advisory board (Code of Ordinances, sec. 24-42).

Fort Worth also runs a community plan-based Model Blocks program, focused on revitalizing central city neighborhoods. Each year, central city neighborhoods are invited to submit for their neighborhoods plans that they have prepared themselves, with assistance from city staff. The City selects one neighborhood plan, and that neighborhood receives \$1.2 million to implement the plan (ibid, viii, 78). This program allows residents to ensure that their concerns are addressed in city plans because they have themselves created the plans.

Public input for Grand Prairie’s comprehensive plan was mainly through the Internet. In addition, interested persons could speak with the mayor or city council members directly (Kathe Houk, personal communication, November 6, 2008).

Killeen has no comprehensive plan available for review at this time, but stakeholder involvement was sought for its *Future Land Use Plan for SH195/SH201* (2005) and for the city’s *Downtown Action Agenda* (2007). Stakeholders for the former were defined as “representatives from Fort Hood [located in Killeen], representatives from the Future University [City sought out a four-year university to locate within the city], representatives from the Texas Veterans Land Board, local developers, property owners, and local residents” (City of Killeen 2005, 17).

Stakeholders were interviewed for the plan, but it is not clear at what stage they were involved. Additionally, an inventory of existing conditions prepared by planners was presented at a public meeting at which public input was solicited (ibid, 18). For the *Downtown Action Agenda*, stakeholders included downtown business owners/managers, downtown property owners, and “residents living in Downtown’s primary trade area” (City of Killeen 2007, 17). Stakeholders were surveyed “to gauge the health of Downtown Killeen, as perceived locally” (ibid, 17). Plan makers also held a series of “discussions, focus groups, and meetings” (ibid, 22) that served to “engage community members in defining their preferred image of the future Downtown Killeen” (ibid, 10); this process led to the development of a vision for Killeen’s downtown, which serves as the basis for the *Downtown Action Agenda*. The *Downtown Action Agenda* and the *Future Land Use Study* were prepared by consultants and therefore do not necessarily reflect usual Killeen policy or planning processes (especially concerning public involvement). However, the level of public involvement used to create these plans could set precedents for future planning efforts conducted by the City.

Laredo’s comprehensive plan does not discuss public input in detail, but it does say that goals and objectives were derived from public participation at a citizen input workshop (City of Laredo 1991, I.2). The City also provides for public input through its Citizen’s Environmental Advisory Committee (Code of Ordinances, sec. 33-1). The Committee’s establishing ordinance states that one duty of the Committee is to “conduct surveys of the general population of the city...to ascertain the public's

interest, convenience, and need for environmental protection and similar environmental issues” (Code of Ordinances, sec. 33-1).

McAllen’s comprehensive plan began seeking input during its “Discovery and Reconnaissance phase” of plan development (City of McAllen 2007, Appendix A, 1). Project consultants met with “10 to 25 community members who expressed their ideas and preferences as to how the community develops in the next 20 years and beyond,” and this input provided the basis for the plan (ibid). On the same day that consultants met with this handful of community members, the City also hosted a Citizens’ Congress attended by more than 400 residents. Comments from this latter meeting also provided input for the plan (ibid, Appendix A, 1). Additionally, the comprehensive plan specifically mentions that the arts and culture section of the plan was the result of citizen input during plan development (ibid, 5.14).

In McKinney’s comprehensive plan development process, the plan’s Joint Committee, composed of the city council and the Planning and Zoning Commission (City of McKinney 2004, 15), held twelve monthly meetings to discuss the plan, and the public was allowed to provide input after each meeting (ibid, 17). The City sponsored three community meetings and, later, “stakeholder group meetings” (ibid, 3). Approximately 100 stakeholders were also interviewed privately (ibid, 17). Public input was used largely to determine the Vision for the plan (ibid, 16). Additional input was provided through a “statistically valid” telephone survey of approximately 400 residents (ibid, 18, 21) and through an online citizen survey questionnaire (ibid, 3, 17).

### In-Depth Discussion, Support for Vernacular Businesses

Although Brownsville does not have an agricultural zoning district at this time, the City has one “on hold,” and the Land Use component of the comprehensive plan (in development) addresses also the issue of agricultural zoning (Christopher Golden, personal communication, November 14, 2008).

Denton’s comprehensive plan (1999) advocates that retail/commercial areas be planned so as to avoid overlapping service areas and thus avoid competition between proposed and existing commercial uses. Specifically, the plan states that the “amount and type of proposed retail-commercial uses permitted in an activity center is based upon an analysis of the potential market...The analysis should also take into consideration all other nearby existing or approved commercial uses and the possibility of overlapping service areas” (City of Denton 1999, 48). While this is not a direct effort to protect vernacular businesses, it could nevertheless serve that purpose.

In addition, Denton’s comprehensive plan encourages economic diversification as a way to maintain a healthy local economy. This includes attracting new businesses to the area, but it also encourages retaining existing local businesses and the creation of new local businesses. The plan says that “[l]ocal business ownership and small business creation should be considered high economic diversification priorities” (City of Denton 1999, 117). It also recommends that the city “[s]upport the retention of [the] existing business and major institution base [University of North Texas]” (ibid, 119).

Fort Worth's business assistance center (BAC) is part of the city's Economic and Community Development department. The BAC offers counseling, technical assistance, workshops and training, and assistance in obtaining loans for small businesses (see note 36). This is in line with the comprehensive plan's recommendation to provide "technical and counseling services to existing central city businesses in order to ensure business survival" (City of Fort Worth 2008, 89) through the Business Assistance Center.

In addition to the support it provides through the Business Assistance Center, Fort Worth also looks to provide more job opportunities to local artists, with recommendations in the comprehensive plan to "[i]nvolve artists in the design of major infrastructure" and to [e]ncourage public entities and private developers to commission public art" (City of Fort Worth 2008, 150) (see note 37). In addition, the comprehensive plan recommends providing "artist training and public educational programming" (ibid); as mentioned above, job training is one of the tools that Carr and Servon (2009) say cities can use to support vernacular assets. And one strategy for Arts and Culture listed in the comprehensive plan is to discuss with existing arts groups what their needs are (City of Fort Worth 2008, 152); presumably these discussions are meant to lead to supporting policies or programs.

Like several other cities in this study, Grand Prairie allows the keeping of livestock and poultry in its agricultural districts (Unified Development Code, Article 4, Permitted Use Charts). Livestock Sales are also permitted in the agricultural districts, as are grain and feed sales, which could allow for continued use of local farming

operations as the city grows (ibid). In addition, the ordinances allow vendors of some agricultural products to be exempt from its itinerant vendors, merchants, and peddlers ordinance. The ordinance states that “(v)endors of farm produce, poultry, stock or agricultural products in their natural state [are exempt if the products are] if raised on land owned or leased by the vendor, and if such products are sold at the site where those items are grown or raised” (Code of Ordinances, sec. 20-33).

Killeen also makes an effort to identify and meet vernacular business needs, at least in its downtown. The *Downtown Action Agenda* (City of Killeen, 2007) recommends having a city representative meet individually with downtown business owners to “[i]dentify business issues and needs,” to “[a]ssist owners in addressing those issues and needs,” and to “[l]essen economic isolation” (ibid, 61)—although what form assistance will take is not specified in the plan. Further, the document also notes that, “given the multi-cultural nature of Downtown’s businesses, the [city agent meeting with business owners] might need the assistance of someone who speaks the language of – and is respected by – the business owners located in the district” (ibid), thus demonstrating a willingness on the city’s part to reach out to members of different cultural communities in order to help them stay in business through the downtown’s redevelopment.

The City of McAllen supports an arts incubator, the McA2 Creative Incubator. The city’s comprehensive plan recommends expanding the McA2 to provide “advanced business counseling and technical assistance, more programming...and financial incentives” (City of McAllen 2007, 5.16). The city would also like to open a

second incubator. McAllen is also looking for additional ways to provide employment for local artists (although this is not explicitly mentioned as a goal). Recommendations in the comprehensive plan include “[s]trengthen[ing] connections between local artists” and downtown “by including arts and culture in future Main Street programming” and “[i]ntegrat[ing] art and design features into capital improvement projects” (ibid, 5.17). One way of implementing such a program is suggested in the comprehensive plan, and that is to “[c]onduct an annual design competition for local and regional artists to create interpretive displays on the upright concrete irrigation valves” (ibid, 5.18). The plan further states that an art representative should be involved in “the early design stage” of capital improvement projects in order to “identify opportunities for art incorporation” (ibid, 5.17). McAllen is the only city examined for this paper that seems to express an appreciation of the continuing contribution of agricultural operations to the local economy and is the only city that ties its agricultural heritage and continuing operations to its current culture; it is the only city examined that expresses a desire to retain working agricultural operations as a part of both its economy and its culture.

McAllen’s comprehensive plan recommends making use of “all available regulatory tools to protect the environment, farming operations, and community character [which is heavily based on the city’s agricultural heritage] in the extra-territorial jurisdiction” (City of McAllen 2007, 5.28). The plan suggests using a farmer’s market “to complement the agricultural lands” (ibid, 5.19). Goals in the comprehensive plan include: “Preservation of agricultural lands and orchards”;



“Promotion of development that is sensitive to the agricultural environment”; and “Allowance of an economic return for preserved agricultural lands” (ibid, 5.19). Recommendations include granting density bonuses and transfers of development rights “for the preservation of orchards” and agricultural areas (ibid, 5.20).

Despite the comprehensive plan’s insistence that agricultural operations be protected, the city’s code of ordinances does not yet provide the breadth of protection for agricultural lands suggested in the plan. Instead, it uses language similar to other cities when describing its agricultural zoning district. The code of ordinances describes the agricultural district’s purpose as “a reserved area in which the future growth of the city might occur”; however, the city intends for “agricultural land [to] be held in that use for as long as is practical and reasonable” (Code of Ordinances, sec. 138-161). The ordinances also permit growers of agricultural products to sell or display said products “outdoors on any open or unimproved lot or parcel or on any open area of a lot or parcel with a structure”; this is one of just three exceptions to the ordinance prohibiting outdoor display and sale of merchandise (sec. 78-1, sec. 78-2).

As far as non-agricultural-based and non-arts-based businesses are concerned, the city is also interested in supporting “existing entrepreneurs” (City of McAllen 2007, 5.5). The comprehensive plan recommends assisting “in the establishment of a Center for Entrepreneurship” (ibid, 5.56) and facilitating “financing for local entrepreneurs,” although the city does not want to be a “direct funding source for private business startups” (ibid, 5.55). It is worth noting that the city wants to give to priority “to entrepreneurial ventures that go beyond the traditional ‘mom & pop’ operations” (ibid,

5.55), so while the city's local business assistance could help small local businesses, that is expressly not its goal.

McKinney's comprehensive plan states a desire to retain existing businesses (City of McKinney 2004, 23), although it does not specify locally-based operations. In addition, the city co-sponsors the McKinney Performing Arts Center, housed in the former county courthouse, which the city helped to renovate. The Arts Center leases office space for non-profit and other organizations. This kind of service can help local cultural organizations stay financially afloat.

#### In-Depth Discussion, Celebrating Culture: Festivals and Other Community Events

In Brownsville, the annual Charro Days Fiesta has been organized by civic boosters since 1938, and the City of Brownsville is one of the event's major sponsors.<sup>71</sup> This event is not organized by the city, but it is a major annual event tied to local culture that the city helps make possible.

The North Texas State Fair and Rodeo has been an annual event in Denton since 1928. The City of Denton is one of the event's sponsors.<sup>72</sup> The City of Denton also sponsors the Denton Arts and Jazz Festival (annual event since 1990), the Denton Holiday Lighting Festival (now in its 20<sup>th</sup> year), and the Redbud Festival (local Arbor Day celebration in its 15<sup>th</sup> year).<sup>73</sup>

Fort Worth's Herd program features a daily event that celebrates the city's western heritage. Each day, real cowhands drive a small herd of cattle through the city's Historic Stockyards. In addition to being a tourist attraction, the Herd is also

used as an educational program, but whatever its purpose, the event is used to celebrate and preserve one aspect of the city's history (City of Fort Worth 2008, 57 and 147).

Laredo sponsors the city's annual Washington's Birthday Celebration, an event that has occurred annually since 1898. The city helps in several ways; first, it has sponsored the event and has served as an official host. In addition, the city has leased low-cost air space at the Laredo International Airport for an air show for the celebration. It also allocates funds to the Laredo Convention and Visitors Bureau to operate a Washington's Birthday Celebration Museum (see notes 39-41).

McAllen's Park and Recreation Department hosts an annual Fourth of July program and parade. This year (2008) was the eightieth annual occurrence.<sup>74</sup> A Fourth of July event does not in itself necessarily represent the culture of McAllen (although it might), but after eighty years, this event has become part of the city's heritage and local traditions.

The City of McKinney's Main Street program manages the annual Dickens of a Christmas festival held in the city's historic downtown. Although a Dickens-themed festival may or may not accurately symbolize McKinney culture, the festival is a long-standing local tradition that has brought attention and visitors to the historic downtown and its local businesses for nearly thirty years.<sup>75</sup>

#### In-depth Discussion, Historic Preservation

Brownsville is active in historic preservation, at least as far ordinances are concerned. The city has a number of ordinances related to preservation, including

heritage zoning in the form of overlay districts. There are two types of districts used for heritage preservation. One is a Heritage Overlay District (HD), which preserves historic districts, and the other is a Heritage Landmark District (HL), which preserves landmarks (individual structures). Other ordinances include the establishment of the position of heritage officer (Code of Ordinances, sec. 312-63), who is authorized to delay permits for renovation or demolition of historic structures (ibid, sec. 18-158). In addition, a certificate of appropriateness is required before the exterior of a “designated heritage site” may be altered (ibid, sec. 348-1702). Also, the code of ordinances includes a provision meant to prevent historic property owners from allowing their designated property to fall into a state of disrepair that would require or allow for demolition (ibid, sec. 348-1675).

Owners of some historic properties in Brownsville are exempt from ad valorem taxation (Code of Ordinances, sec. 94-57); properties that have been allowed to deteriorate may be blocked from further exemptions (ibid, sec. 312-217). Brownsville also allows some historic structures to be exempt from some aspects of the City’s building code, in particular those “relating to the construction, alteration, repair, enlargement, restoration, relocation, or moving of buildings or structures,” as long as the structures are deemed to be safe by the city’s building official (ibid, sec. 18-121).

Specifically local criteria may be used to qualify sites and structures for heritage overlay districts. Brownsville’s designation criteria include “[i]dentification with a person who significantly contributed to the cultural [sic] and development of the city” (Code of Ordinances, sec. 348-1642), “[i]dentification as the work of an architect

or master builder whose individual work has influenced the development of the city” (ibid, sec. 348-1642), and “[u]nique location of singular physical characteristics representing an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood, community or the city” (Code of Ordinances, sec. 348-1642). On a wider but still regional scale, a site or structure may be designated if it has “[c]haracter, interest, or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the city, state, or county” (ibid).

Brownsville’s Code of Ordinances protects Historic Trees and Landmark Trees. These trees are considered “significant vegetation” and must be reported on landscape plans if the developer plans to remove the trees (Code of Ordinances, sec. 344-130). They do not appear to receive the same level of protection as offered in Denton’s ordinances, but their protection extends the reach of the city’s historic preservation and cultural planning efforts.

As with all the cities in this study, Denton has historic districts, and the comprehensive plan encourages the addition of more districts. A related strategy in the plan is to designate structures “having historic or cultural significance” and to offer a fifteen-year exemption from city taxes [up to 50 percent of the tax] to owners of designated properties (City of Denton 1999, 96); a fifteen-year exemption would be an increase over the ten year abatement offered to owners of rehabilitated historic properties through the code of ordinances (Code of Ordinances, sec. 10-130). Specifically local criteria for designating historic sites and structures include the structure being “the work of an architect or master builder whose individual work has influenced the development of the city,” if it is a “building or structure that because of

its location has become of value to a neighborhood, community area or the city,” or if it has “[v]alue as an aspect of community sentiment or public pride” (Denton Development Code, sec. 35.215). In addition, the criteria for designation of historic conservation districts note that districts under consideration must express “a local identity as recognizable combinations of qualities common throughout an identifiable geographical area” (ibid, sec. 35.7.7.3).

Proposed exterior alterations to a designated historic structure that would change the structure’s character require a certificate of appropriateness, which must be cleared through the Landmark Commission (Denton Development Code, sec. 35.7.7.9) and must conform to the established design guidelines for the district (ibid, 35.7.7.6). Alterations that would not change the character of a designated structure within a historic district do not require a certificate of appropriateness, but they must match the existing structure (ibid, sec. 35.7.7.7).

In addition to preserving historic districts, Denton also offers some protection for its natural heritage. The city has a tree preservation ordinance, the purpose of which is, in part, to preserve remnants of the Cross Timbers Forest and to preserve historic trees (Denton Development Code, sec. 35.13.7). The city’s Historic Landmark Commission is charged with making recommendations about historic trees. The City maintains a Historic Tree Registry map (ibid). The city’s expansion of historic preservation efforts to include trees connects environment to culture, although making this connection is not an explicit goal of the program. A tree is considered historic if it “stands at a place where an event of historic significance occurred that had local,

regional, or national importance; or at the home of a citizen who is famous on a local, regional, or national basis” (ibid) or if it “has taken on a legendary stature to the community...[or is] mentioned in literature or documents of historic value” (ibid). Historic Trees may not be destroyed or moved without a permit (ibid, sec. 35.13.7).

Fort Worth’s Evans and Rosedale district is being redeveloped with a heritage/historic preservation theme meant to “celebrate the African-American heritage of Near Southeast Fort Worth” (City of Fort Worth 2008, 87); the city is using federal funds to acquire property (although historic properties are not specified in the comprehensive plan) and to demolish non-historic structures. The city is also “rehabilitating a historic building” in the district (ibid). The city has three types of historic preservation overlay districts (Code of Ordinances, Appendix A, sec. 4.100)—Highly significant endangered, Historic and cultural landmark, and Demolition delay—as well as a conservation district (discussed below; ibid, sec. 4.400). Similar to Brownsville’s Heritage Landmark district, Fort Worth’s Historic and cultural landmark district is intended to preserve individual landmark structures. In addition, the city’s comprehensive plan encourages the establishment of additional historic districts, in particular districts “for thematic purposes, such as Hispanic-American cultural resources, transportation related resources, or modern architecture” (City of Fort Worth 2008, 130).

The comprehensive plan also encourages the city to “ensure the continued success of the Historic Stockyards” (City of Fort Worth 2008, 151); the city’s identity is tied to western heritage, and the stockyards are a popular physical symbol of the

city's past. As discussed earlier, the city recognizes the importance of its western heritage, and it is to be expected, therefore, that the city would pursue policies to keep that part of the city's identity alive. Daily demonstration cattle drives through the Stockyards, funded with hotel/motel tax funds (City of Fort Worth 2008, 96), help reinforce cowboy culture, or at least the appearance of cowboy culture to outsiders. A western theme also runs through the ordinances listing designation criteria for historic landmarks and districts, which include "[s]ite[s] or structure[s] associated with a documented theme in the history of Fort Worth such as the Pioneer and 'Fort Worth' era, the Cattle Drives and the Stockyards, Railroads, development patterns, or oil, aviation and other industries" (Code of Ordinances, sec. 4.502).

Fort Worth also uses other locally-based criteria for designation, such as sites that "[have] been identified as the work of an important architect or master builder whose individual work has contributed to the development of the City of Fort Worth" (Code of Ordinances, Appendix A, sec. 4.502) and sites that are "of a significant historic event, including, but not limited to...[the location of] a specific event important to the history of the city, state, or country such as a Civil War battlefield or the site of the original military fort at Fort Worth" (ibid), as well as sites or structures that "[represent] a resource, whether natural or man-made [that] greatly contributes to the character or image of a defined neighborhood or community area" (ibid). Designation criteria for conservation districts include structures or sites that "[are the location of] a significant historic event or [are] identified with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the culture and development of the area" (ibid, sec. 2.102).



The comprehensive plan recommends that new construction within historic districts be required to adhere to established design guidelines (City of Fort Worth 2008, 130), and the code of ordinances requires that new construction taking place where a historic structure has been demolished in a historic district must conform to design guidelines for the district (Appendix A, sec. 4.504). In addition, a certificate of appropriateness is required before the exterior of a designated historic structure may be altered (with certain exceptions) or before a historic structure may be demolished or moved (ibid).

The comprehensive plan indicates a willingness to include education in city preservation efforts. The plan recommends training “citizen volunteers [on how to] identify historic elements and document structures, sites, and streetscapes” (City of Fort Worth 2008, 130); moreover, one goal of the plan is to “[e]ducate the public on technical issues, the benefits of preservation, and the true diversity of Fort Worth’s history” (ibid, 120). The city also has developed an educational component to the Fort Worth Herd program; participants in the program learn about the historic importance of cattle drives, about tools used in cattle drives, and about what life was like for cattle drivers (see note 43).

Fort Worth allows certain exemptions from the ad valorem tax to owners of historic properties (City of Fort Worth 2008, 128). Fort Worth also offers exemptions to the city building code. According to the comprehensive plan, the City “adopted Chapter 34 of the International Building Code, which relates specifically to historic

buildings and allows some leniency in the code requirements for historic buildings” (City of Fort Worth 2008, 129).

Fort Worth is a Certified Local Governments (CLG), meaning it participates in a federal preservation program administered through the National Park Service, aimed at encouraging local governments to pursue historic preservation. A city must follow certain procedures to become a CLG, including establishing a preservation ordinance and participating in the national register program. It also must “[m]aintain an active survey of local resources” (see note 44).

Fort Worth drafted a citywide preservation plan that recommended strengthening historic preservation incentives (City of Fort Worth 2008, 127); the city council therefore appointed a committee to recommend changes to the current incentive program (ibid, 132). Finally, sites associated with historic people or events and “[d]esignated historical areas” are among the criteria for designation as a scenic corridor (ibid, 137).

Grand Prairie has become directly involved in historic preservation by renovating the city’s historic Uptown Theater (City of Grand Prairie 2008, 11), a project that cost the city over five million dollars (Kathe Houk, personal communication, November 6, 2008). Other preservation efforts include using historic sites as criteria for scenic corridors. As in Fort Worth, corridors based on historic resources must contain sites related to historic people or events or designated historical areas (City of Grand Prairie 2005, 5.19-5.20). In addition, Grand Prairie allows

parklands, park roads, major improvements and facilities to be named after historic (and living) local leaders (Code of Ordinances, sec. 18-29).

Killeen began the planning process for its historic district this year (City of Killeen 2008) likely as part of the city's effort to become a Certified Local Government or as part of the city's *Downtown Action Agenda* (discussed below). The city's preservation efforts also include conducting a historic resources survey, passing a heritage preservation ordinance (in spring 2008), the establishment of a historic overlay zoning district, and the seeking of funding for façade grants (City of Killeen 2008). The survey and ordinance were likely also part of the city's *Downtown Action Agenda* or its efforts to become a CLG. Killeen also requires property owners wishing to alter their historic property to apply for an order of design compliance, which must be approved by the Historic Preservation Board (HPB) before the alteration may occur (Code of Ordinances, sec. 31-828. Both individual sites or structures and districts may be designated as historic (ibid, sec. 31-829). And the HPB must "promulgate and update as necessary design guidelines for use in a historic district" (ibid, sec. 31-827).

Laredo's historic districts are protected through overlay zoning districts (Code of Ordinances, sec. 24-66). In addition, the city also provides protection for individual structures or sites through landmark designation (ibid). Owners of historic properties must seek permission from the Historic District/Landmark Board before renovating, altering, or demolishing the exterior of their historic properties (Land Development Code, sec. 24.1.2.2); the City points out that this permission must be sought even in cases when a building permit would not be required.<sup>76</sup>

Laredo has established Historic Urban Design Guidelines (City of Laredo 1997) to protect the city's built heritage, to protect the city's character, and to "preserve and enhance one's ability to perceive a sense of time and place in the district during its period of significance" (11). Ad valorem tax exemptions are available to property owners who rehabilitate their historic buildings (Land Development Code, sec. 24-84).

Laredo has a historic preservation officer (a position established in the code of ordinances) who is responsible for keeping track of historic properties within the city and with "maintain[ing] and updat[ing] the inventory of all locally significant historic landmarks, the structures within the historic districts, and all Recorded Texas Landmarks and National Register properties" (Code of Ordinances, sec. 24-2.4.1). The City has published a guide to local historic properties.<sup>77</sup> And, tying environment to culture (through history), the city's historic design guidelines comment on how the city's history is tied to the Rio Grande River, noting that the "river crossing and the banks of the river are the reason Laredo exists today" and recommending that the river crossing be recorded as a historic site (City of Laredo 1997, 6.1).

McAllen's comprehensive plan recommends expanding the existing Art Walk program to include a heritage walk (City of McAllen 2007, 5.17). The Art Walk program is "a self-guided tour of art galleries and art hosts in one of the oldest areas of McAllen,"<sup>78</sup> and the comprehensive plan suggests developing an expanded version of the tour that could "relate to the history and local significance of the area by way of historical facts" (ibid, 5.17).

In addition to individual landmark structures, McAllen has one historic district, established September 8 (2008).<sup>79</sup> And as in Fort Worth, McAllen's code of ordinances recognizes that "the buildings and structures of the City of McAllen represent the unique confluence of time and place that shaped the identity of generations of citizens" (Code of Ordinances, sec. 138-410). Criteria for designating historic districts include whether the site(s) represent "an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood" (ibid, sec. 138-413).

McAllen's comprehensive plan recommends that design guidelines be developed for historic districts (City of McAllen 2007, 5.14). Also, a certificate of appropriateness is required from the city's Historic Preservation Council before historic structures may be demolished or altered on the exterior (Code of Ordinances, sec. 138-415). The City offers exemptions from the ad valorem tax to owners of designated historic properties (ibid, sec. 98-69). Finally, the city's comprehensive plan offers vague encouragement for protecting cultural and environmental resources by stating that the city should provide "incentives and financial and technical assistance to facilitate desired outcomes" (City of McAllen 2007, 5.14).

McKinney has several historic district zoning designations: the historic preservation overlay district (Code of Ordinances, sec. 146-97), the commercial historic district (ibid, sec. 146-96), and the McKinney town center district (ibid, sec. 146-95). The commercial historic district designations is intended to encourage development that maintains the character of the city's historic core area, and the town center district "addresses the historical town center area and its preservation and

redevelopment planning” (Jennifer Cox, personal communication, November 3, 2008). Commercial uses are allowed in the commercial historic district, and both commercial and residential uses are allowed in the McKinney town center district. Designation criteria include one characteristic that could be said to reflect a focus on local history: “A historic landmark or district may be designated if it...[r]epresents an established and familiar visual feature of the city,” (ibid, sec. 146-168). An additional criterion could be said to show a focus on local history—if the site or district is “associated with the lives of persons significant in our past” (ibid)—but the language is vague and does not necessarily imply a focus on city or regional history, as opposed to state, national, or world history.

McKinney’s comprehensive plan recommends that redevelopment in the commercial historic district follow historic design guidelines (City of McKinney 2004, 189), and the city planning department must issue a certificate of appropriateness before historic properties may be altered on the exterior or demolished (Code of Ordinances, sec. 146-96, sec. 146-97).

To encourage preservation, the city has established a Historic Neighborhood Improvement Zone, wherein property owners may receive an exemption to ad valorem taxation “based on verified investment meeting specified criteria” (Code of Ordinances, sec. 98-83, sec. 98-84). McKinney also has a home recognition program, called Preserve Historic McKinney. The program “recognize[s] property owners who have revitalized our historic residential community by making significant exterior improvements to their individual properties.”<sup>80</sup> The Historic Preservation Advisory

Board selects a number of the residential properties to “be recognized in a calendar published by the HPAB” (ibid). And finally, McKinney became directly involved in preservation when it worked with Collin County to restore the Collin County courthouse.

#### In-Depth Discussion, Other Efforts to Preserve or Develop Local Culture

Brownsville does not appear to use additional efforts to protect local culture at this time, although this might change once the city’s comprehensive plan is completed. As stated above, the city’s zoning ordinance includes the protection and preservation of “places and areas of historical, cultural, or architectural importance and significance” as one of the reasons for establishing a zoning ordinance (Code of Ordinances, sec. 348-3). Another statement within the ordinance says that the “zoning regulations and districts have been made with reasonable consideration for the character of the districts” (ibid), but this is a fairly common statement in city ordinances in Texas and does not necessarily indicate a preference for protecting city identity through preservation of district character. Planning staff, however, say that the City has “on hold” an ordinance that would establish rural residential zoning districts (Christopher Golden, personal communication, November 14, 2008).

Other ordinances in Brownsville that have to do with preserving local way of life include permitted uses under the code of ordinances sec. 348-156, which allows farming and citrus orchards in the Dwelling Use districts, “provided no sales office is maintained.” Agriculture once played an important role in the Brownsville economy,

and permitting the use of farming and citrus orchards within Dwelling Use districts allows for this part of Brownsville's heritage to continue.<sup>81</sup> Livestock and fowl are also allowed to be kept, provided certain distance and care regulations are met (Code of Ordinances, sec. 10-63). While this ordinance does not necessarily protect local culture, again, it can allow for the continuation of agriculture-based lifestyles. Finally, the city created one design guideline drawn from an existing resource. Design guidelines for the resaca overlay district require that each visible structure "shall have a subdued earth-tone color" and any unpainted bricks "shall have colors similar to the Fort Brown Hospital" (Code of Ordinances, sec. 348.1071).

The Denton Development Code offers protection for rural areas through the establishment of a rural zoning district, the Rural District. The ordinance's purpose statement says that the Rural District designation is intended to "ensure that the farming, forest, environmental and scenic values of these areas are protected from incompatible development that may result in a degradation of their values" (Denton Development Code, sec. 35.3.1.1). The designation includes two land use types—residential and commercial. The Rural District designation and the wording of its purpose statement demonstrate the city's concern to protect a rural way of life.

The city's development code allows for an "alternative development plan" as a "discretionary process" for meeting city-mandated design standards (Denton Development Code, sec. 35.13.5). One of the criteria for approval of alternative development plans is whether the proposal for development "[p]reserve[s] existing neighborhoods" (ibid). Protection of existing neighborhoods is also called for in the



comprehensive plan (City of Denton 1999, 95). The comprehensive plan argues for using small areas plans to develop distinctive areas within the city, which will “help knit the components of the community into a place that has unique identity and special character” (ibid, 56).

According to the comprehensive plan, Denton values its “local distinctiveness” and prefers new development that will enhance the city’s existing character (City of Denton 1999, 72). “[C]ompatible variety” in design is encouraged, that is, design that is compatible with—but does not copy—existing structures (ibid, 72, 47). Denton also recognizes that its identity is linked to the local university, the University of North Texas (UNT), and advocates strengthening its connection with UNT. In fact, the city has already allocated funds to develop the corridor between downtown and the campus’ Visual Arts Center (ibid, 56). The city moreover recognizes the importance of the local arts scene to local culture and to the local economy, and the comprehensive plan’s economic diversification strategies include providing support for the city’s “artists, art organizations, and institutions because of their significant contributions to the city’s healthy business climate, their role in creating a cultural environment that attracts high-wage employers to the region, and the substantial benefits they provide to residents” (ibid, 118).

Fort Worth uses various zoning districts to preserve existing neighborhood character. For example, the city has various special purpose districts, such as a downtown urban design district. One purpose of this district “is to establish design standards for new construction and certain renovations of property in the downtown

area *in order to protect and enhance the character of downtown*” (Code of Ordinances, Appendix A, sec. 4.1200; emphasis added). Stables “for the commercial boarding of horses” are permitted in some districts, subject to certain standards, which helps perpetuate the city’s western heritage—although this is not described as a reason for permitting stables (Code of Ordinances, Sec. 5.132). As described earlier, Fort Worth has established conservation districts, which can be used for historic preservation purposes but also could be used for other purposes. Criteria for designation includes if the area represents the “Character of Fort Worth”; that is, if the area is “[d]istinctive in character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the City of Fort Worth” (Code of Ordinances, Appendix A, sec. 2.102); another criterion for designation is whether the area represents the character of a particular neighborhood, if the area “represents a resource, whether natural or man-made, which greatly contributes to the character or image of a defined neighborhood or community area” (ibid).

Fort Worth’s Land Use component of the comprehensive plan lists a policy to “[p]reserve the character of rural and suburban residential neighborhoods” (City of Fort Worth 2008, 37) and a strategy of “[e]ncourag[ing] new development [to be] in character with...existing neighborhood scale, architecture, and platting pattern[s]” (ibid, 39). Fort Worth also offers protection for scenic corridors, which can be designated as such if they reflect the character of Fort Worth or the character of a particular neighborhood (ibid, 137).

Although cultural policies and strategies outlined in the comprehensive plan seem to focus solely on the arts and historic resources, the plan defines culture in a broad way in the following excerpt:

No single place captures the diversity of Fort Worth more than the Cultural District, where culture is presented in its broadest sense: from the art, music, theater, and dance typically associated with cultural facilities, to agriculture, equestrian activities, horticulture, and sports” (City of Fort Worth 2008, 143).

In further discussion of the importance of culture to the city, the comprehensive plan’s arts and cultural goals and objectives include “[r]etain[ing], preserv[ing], and enhanc[ing] the best of Fort Worth’s cultural past and present” (ibid, 150). And a particular aspect of Fort Worth culture has influenced the development of the city’s comprehensive plan—the protection of private property rights:

The plentiful supply of land and the independence it symbolized attracted pioneers to settle Fort Worth. Our economy thrived, first on agriculture and then on oil. Land and its ownership were seen as wealth or a means to wealth. A strong connection was perceived between economic independence and the ownership of land. Though our economy has diversified, the traditions and attitudes shaped by our history are strong. We want to choose how we use our land, as long as it does not negatively impact a neighbor’s use of property (City of Fort Worth 2008, 7).

In addition, the city has an Arts Commission charged with overseeing the city’s public art program. Opportunities for artists to participate in public art projects are open to artists from across the nation, but local and state artists are also invited to participate (see note 45). Artists can also participate by serving on the Arts Commission, whose members must include five arts professionals, “of which at least one (1) must be a practicing artist” (Code of Ordinances, sec. 2-58). Further, the public art program is about more than simply providing residents access to art; an

additional purpose of the program is “to commemorate the city's rich cultural and ethnic diversity” (ibid, sec. 2-56).

Grand Prairie has design guidelines to protect certain existing areas of the city, in particular the Central Business Districts. The guidelines are implemented through overlay districts; the guidelines recommend “that design elements in new development or refurbished structures enhance the cultural history of the corridor” (Unified Development Code, Appendix R, 12) and include “base colors of Texas materials” (ibid). The city has four central business district areas, CBD1, CBD2, CBD3, and CBD4 (Kathe Houk, personal communication, November 6, 2008). In CBD2, new development is only permitted if it is integrated with existing buildings, in order to “maintain the functional and visual appearance of the dominant architectural style” (Unified Development Code, Appendix R, 23).

Grand Prairie also has established several overlay districts with design guidelines meant to *create* character not drawn from existing neighborhood characteristics but, rather, based on general vernacular assets. For example, in the Lakeridge Parkway Overlay District, landscaping materials “indigenous to the Black Prairie Region [in which Grand Prairie is located] are also recommended,” including Austin stone (Unified Development Code, Appendix U, 2). Austin stone is also encouraged as a material to be used to meet the district’s stone front façade design requirement (ibid, 6).

Grand Prairie’s comprehensive plan (City of Grand Prairie 2005) strategies include taking existing conditions into consideration when “determining appropriate

infill zoning” (ibid, 4.7). And the comprehensive plan includes a policy on scenic corridors, which the plan says should reflect, among other elements, the character of Grand Prairie or the character of a particular neighborhood (ibid, 5.19-5.20).

In Killeen, livestock, fowl, and swine may be kept in areas zones as agricultural open space or as agricultural residential (Code of Ordinances, sec. 6-43). Beekeeping is also allowed within the city. Streets may be renamed in order to “enhance a neighborhood through association of the street name with its location, area characteristics, history and similar factors” (Code of Ordinances, sec. 25-118). Killeen also recognizes how the city has been shaped by its proximity to Fort Hood, stating in the city’s *Downtown Action Agenda* (2007) that “Killeen is unique as the home of Fort Hood, which is the largest military base in the world” (15); moreover, the *Agenda* demonstrates the city’s appreciation of the cultural mix that has evolved in the city “thanks to the presence of Fort Hood” (ibid, 50). The downtown plan implicitly recommends capitalizing on the city’s ethnically diverse population to help distinguish Killeen and its downtown from other cities in the region, stating that the city should seek out “[m]ulti-cultural and ethnically eclectic businesses” for the downtown (ibid, 46). Perhaps wanting to ensure the downtown appeals to a wide audience, though, the *Agenda* recommends that recipients of sign grants in the Historic Downtown be required to include English on their signs; it also recommends the City pass an ordinance that does “not allow Downtown business signs to be solely in a language other than English” (ibid, 56). This recommendation could be meant only to make the downtown appeal to a wide audience and not be an effort to retain an English-

speaking-only culture. If implemented, however, the city will have to take care in how it writes and enforces the ordinance. Although such a restriction could help draw to the downtown more of the local population—who might see non-English signs not as foreign but rather as run-down—it could lead to Disneyfication and to marketing the downtown more to outsiders than to members of the community.

Killeen also has an Arts Commission, two functions of which are to “develop a community multi-cultural arts program will enhance tourism” and to “stimulate an interest in the local arts of all cultures and minority groups.”<sup>82</sup> Again, the city is concerned with preserving its multi-ethnic community and with using its diversity to distinguish the city from others in the region.

Laredo has a Low Density Residential zoning designation that is “designed to reflect the small town character of Laredo” (City of Laredo 1991, IV.1). Laredo also has an Agricultural zoning district intended to “provide an area for agricultural pursuits protected from infringement of urban development” (Land Development Code, sec. 24.62). According to the code of ordinances, the city’s zoning regulations in general were designed “with consideration, among other things, for the character of the district” (Land Development Code, sec. 24-60) (see note on this language in the discussion on Brownsville, above). Large livestock may be kept within agricultural districts, and fowl are also allowed to be kept (Code of Ordinances, sec. 6-61 and 6-42).

As to design guidelines, one of the comprehensive plan strategies is to adopt “an official architectural style as a standard for traditional architecture and to be reflected in modern architectural interpretations” (City of Laredo 1991, III.16). The

comprehensive plan also encourages that street patterns begin once more to follow the traditional grid pattern found in the historic part of the city (ibid, III.2, IV.3).

McAllen's two major zoning districts are Agricultural and Open Space and Single Family Residential, which, according to the comprehensive plan, "reflect the existing development patterns in McAllen" (City of McAllen 2007, 3.9). The keeping of livestock, fowl, and bees are permitted, with certain distance and space requirements (Code of Ordinances, sec. 14-4, 14-5, 14-12, and 14-112). Goals in the comprehensive plan include adopting standards and pursuing strategies that ensure new development complements the character of existing neighborhoods and districts (City of McAllen 2007, 5.8, 5.10). For the downtown area, for example, the comprehensive plan says that new development should maintain the "'authenticity' of Downtown" (ibid, 5.58). The plan recommends basing zoning districts not on use but on community character (ibid, 6.6) and to use "correlating standards for density/open space (residential) and intensity/landscape surface (non - residential) to preserve character" (ibid).

The comprehensive plan's section on Growth Management uses strong language in favor of protecting community character, recommending use of "all available regulatory tools to protect the environment, farming operations, and community character in the [extra-territorial jurisdiction]" (City of McAllen 2007, 5.28); of course, this does not protect community character within the corporate limits. And, as mentioned earlier, the comprehensive plan recommends acquiring and maintaining open space as a buffer between the city and surrounding jurisdictions so as to "enhance the image [of McAllen] as a freestanding community, rather than as an

anonymous component of contiguous [Rio Grande] Valley development” (ibid, 5.3). Finally, McAllen’s comprehensive plan recommends identifying the right kind of businesses to attract to the downtown, taking care “to attract businesses that complement the current genuineness of the area” (ibid, 5.10).

McKinney allows for the keeping of livestock, fowl, and bees, subject to distance and space restrictions (Code of Ordinances sec. 26-11, 26-13, 26-14). McKinney has an agricultural zoning district meant, in part, to protect agricultural lands from being encroached upon by other uses (ibid, sec. 146-67). The city also has several residential estate districts, as well as single family districts, some of which are meant to “to stabilize and protect the residential characteristics of [said districts]” (Code of Ordinances, sec. 146-68, 146-69, 146-70, and 146-71). The city also provides Estate Mix districts, which allow some agricultural uses. Although such uses must meet certain standards so that the uses “do not conflict with the enjoyment of residential properties,” the comprehensive plan emphasizes that “residents should expect the agricultural uses to provide a different character to the area and a different quality of life than [in] other districts,” that the Estate Mix districts “are intended for rural areas, and are not typical of what would be planned for in a suburban setting” (City of McKinney 2004, 92).

The comprehensive plan describes design standards meant to complement existing character in several areas of the city. In the Regional Commercial Center district, developments are not to use lighting levels high enough “to pollute the night sky or disrupt the enjoyment of nearby residential areas” (City of McKinney 2004,



110). And at the intersection of State Highway 5 and Virginia and Louisiana Streets, “[d]esign treatments should complement the existing architectural style of downtown” (ibid, 181). In downtown, redevelopment is to be “sensitive to” existing uses and patterns (ibid, 189). Similar to Laredo’s recommendations on street patterns, McKinney’s comprehensive plan states that new development and redevelopment with the Residential Historic District should maintain the historic area’s standard grid street pattern (ibid, 191).

The comprehensive plan also outlines design guidelines to be used at gateways to create community character or image. The guidelines are based on the city’s vernacular assets in general. For example, the gateways should use “brick or native stone” and should be influenced by vernacular architecture (City of McKinney 2004, 179). Major thoroughfares in the Regional Employment Center districts are to “emphasize and protect important view corridors” (ibid, 106), and the city’s thoroughfare network should “[correspond] to the natural contours and physical features of the landscape” (ibid, 25).

McKinney also has an Arts Commission. The commission provides funding to local arts groups.<sup>83</sup>

#### In-Depth Discussion, Ordinances Protecting Native Species

Brownsville’s resaca overlay district “is intended to help protect the quality of life in and near those resacas that are particularly sensitive to development” (Code of ordinances, sec. 348-962(71)), with “resaca” defined as “any waterway” (sec. 348-

1071). This district requires the use of native trees to fulfill the required trees provision of the landscaping ordinance (Code of Ordinances, sec. 348-1071).<sup>84</sup> In addition, the City is developing an ordinance that would “require native plantings around [the city’s] historic battlefields” (Christopher Golden, personal communication, November 14, 2008).

Brownsville’s landscaping ordinances requires developers to obtain a permit before removing existing trees. Significant vegetation to be removed must be described in the developer’s submitted landscape plan and must be “mitigated with approved plants (palms) of a combined equal caliper (height) or greater” to the removed vegetation (Code of Ordinances, sec. 344-130). Significant vegetation includes the *Sabal texana* palm tree (Sec. 344-63), which is native to the region.<sup>85</sup> In addition, within Brownsville’s resaca overlay district, no existing vegetation may be moved without a permit from the City.

In Denton, developers are encouraged to use trees species from the selected species list to meet the tree requirements of the landscape ordinance, and the list includes several native species (Site Design Criteria Manual, Appendix A). In addition, the city council may offer development incentives to developers who preserve remnants of the Cross Timbers Forest “over [and] above tree preservation and/or upland habitat requirements” (Denton Development Code, sec. 35.13.7.A.9; Deborah Viera, personal communication, November 26, 2008).

Denton offers protection for Quality Trees and for Protected Trees, but these do not necessarily have to be native trees; Quality and Protected Trees are so designated

based on size, species, and clustered planting patterns (Deborah Viera, personal communication, November 26, 2008). Protected trees are defined as “[a]ny healthy tree with an eighteen (18) inch or greater dbh [diameter at breast height]” and quality trees are defined as “[a]ll healthy trees that have a dbh that is greater than six (6) inches, but is less than eighteen (18) inches” (Denton Development Code, sec. 35.13.7). Protection for such trees is in the form of an outright prohibition of their removal and of tree credits granted to developers (as an incentive to preserve trees) (prohibition applies only to Historic trees, but Protected trees could be mitigated; Deborah Viera, personal communication, November 26, 2008). Protected Trees must be “preserved unless mitigated” as described in the ordinances (mostly replacement of removed trees) (Denton Development Code, sec. 35.13.7). In addition, Denton also protects what it calls Secondary Trees and Large Secondary Trees; these are Mesquite (native to Texas), Bois Arc (presumably the Bois d’Arc tree, which is native to Texas), Locust Hackberry (some Hackberry species are native to Texas), and Cottonwood (some species are native to Texas) trees of minimum size requirements (ibid) (see note 47). As with Protected Trees, Large Secondary Trees must also be preserved unless mitigated (ibid). Incentives for preserving Quality trees include the addition or subtraction of required parking spaces, permission to deviate from city parking lot design and parking lot landscaping standards, increase in block length in subdivisions, and increase in cul de sac length in subdivisions (ibid). Some incentives offered by the city “are conditioned and require the preservation above [and] beyond the minimum preservation requirements” (Deborah Viera, personal communication, November 26, 2008).

The purpose statement in Denton’s landscape ordinances specifically mentions the preservation of trees, including remnant stands of Cross Timbers Forest (Denton Development Code, sec. 35.13.7.A). Also, Denton has an ordinance concerning Land Disturbing Activities, one purpose of which is to prevent the “untimely and indiscriminate removal or destruction of trees, understory, and ground cover” and to “prevent damage to and unnecessary removal of vegetation during the land development and construction process” (Denton Development Code, sec. 35.18.1). These elements do not necessarily protect native species but could work to that effect.

As mentioned above, Grand Prairie prohibits the killing or trapping of animals in its parks. In addition, Grand Prairie’s landscape ordinance is meant, in part, “to preserve existing trees whenever possible and discourage clear cutting of lots for development” and to “preserve the existing natural environment” (Unified Development Code, sec. 8.1.1). The city offers a tree preservation incentive in the form of tree credits for preserved trees of at least a certain size (*ibid*, sec. 8.6.2.2).

In Killeen’s landscape plan ordinance, it is suggested that native plant species be used (Code of Ordinances, sec. 8-508). The city’s landscape ordinance also provides a list of recommended trees for planting, which includes (but is not limited to) native species, and credit is given for the preservation of existing trees, but these are not required to be native species (*ibid*, sec. 8-510).

Laredo also requires tree replacement/mitigation when trees are removed, but this is only required when certain stream systems are disturbed. Removed trees must be replaced by at least twenty-five percent of the same species as the removed trees

(Land Development Code Book, sec. 24-57.7). The city also offers tree credits for preservation of existing trees, but the existing trees are only required to be of minimum size; they are not required to be native (Land Development Code Book, sec. 24.83.4).

McAllen also uses tree credits to encourage preservation of existing trees. Extra tree credits are given for the preservation of native, non-palm trees (Code of Ordinances, sec. 110-51). And in the case of commercial development, no trees over a certain size may be removed with prior review by the planning director, which could protect existing trees of native species (*ibid*, sec. 110-55).

Finally, McKinney has a tree preservation ordinance, as well, the purpose of which is “to promote tree preservation through site design and by controlling indiscriminate removal of trees; and to contribute to the long-term viability of existing trees through their protection during construction or land disturbing activities” (Code of Ordinances, sec. 146-136); the ordinance is also intended to protect “healthy quality trees and promote the natural ecological, environmental and aesthetic qualities of the city” (*ibid*). Quality trees are defined as tree species “that typically [have] significant positive characteristics worthy of preservation” (*ibid*). The city provides a list of Quality Trees in the code of ordinances’ Appendix A; a good number—although by no means all—of the trees on the Quality Tree List in the document are native species.

In cases where native plants are not explicitly required in the ordinances, cities might nevertheless be able to persuade developers to use native plant materials based on the wording in the landscape ordinance’s purpose statement. Developers could believe their projects are more likely to be approved if their plans contribute to the

purpose of the city's development regulations. Brownsville, Denton, and Killeen each state in the ordinances that the purpose of the landscape ordinance includes the preservation or protection of native plant species. Of these three cities, Brownsville's ordinance is the weakest, mentioning an intent to preserve "significant trees and vegetation," where the definition of significant trees includes "any *Sabal texana* with a trunk taller than ten feet" and "any other palm with a trunk taller than 20 feet" (Code of Ordinances, sec. 344-63). Denton's purpose statement is the strongest of the three, with an expressed intent to protect and preserve "native and specimen vegetative species, their ecosystems and natural habitats" and to promote "native plant species preservation and replenishment, and "[to] encourage the use of drought tolerant and low water usage vegetation" (ibid, sec. 31-2).

#### In-Depth Discussion, Land Set-Asides

Denton uses language that indicates a preference for preserving undeveloped land or native landscapes, although it does not always explicitly state that it will act on that preference. For example, strategies listed in the comprehensive plan's Growth Management section include "preserve wildlife habitats" (City of Denton 1999, 25). Under Ecosystem Management Goals & Strategies, the plan states that the city will "develop and implement strong resource conservation plans for energy, water, native, and restored wildlife habitat areas, sensitive lands, and urban forests" (ibid, 102). The plan further states that this "will be promoted through education programs, incentives, design standards and regulations" (ibid, 103) and lists "[a]cquiring and preserving open

spaces considered to be of high value by the city” as one of the city’s goals (ibid)—although the plan does not specifically state here that native landscapes are considered to be “of high value.” Several pages later, however, the plan lists Land and Soil Management goals that specifically mention native or natural landscapes, including “[a]dminister a program to acquire and manage important natural areas that preserve wildlife habitat and native landscapes,” “[a]ctively protect, manage, and enhance our natural stream corridors and other waterways as natural ecological systems, [and] important wildlife habitat” and “[c]reate an integrated system of publicly owned natural areas to protect the integrity of important conservation sites, protecting corridors between natural areas, and preserve outstanding examples of our diverse natural environments” (City of Denton 1999, 107). In addition, the Implementation section of the comprehensive plan lists “Publicly Owned Conservation Lands Program” as an implementation tool under the heading Environmental Management (ibid, 179).

Another step the city takes to preserve native landscapes (and species) is through what it calls Tree Trusts. These are described as “[a]reas of a minimum of one acre that have the characteristics of Cross Timber Forests” (Denton Development Code, sec. 35.13.7). The Eastern Cross Timbers is an ecoregion of Texas that runs through Denton County (and several other North Central Texas counties). The Cross Timbers “[separate] the region of Black Prairies on the east from the Grand Prairies on the west” (see note 48). In other words, the Cross Timbers represent an important ecological feature that visibly mark a change in landscape and environment. Such areas are to be protected “with a permanent easement that shall limit any future land disturbing

activity or construction that would impact and/or damage the tree(s) and shall run with the land...Methods for the long-term conservation of said trees may include permanent conservation easements, restrictive covenants, or other such legal mechanisms” (Denton Development Code, sec. 35.13.7). Further, trees that are used to satisfy other development requirements cannot be counted toward a tree trust, nor can areas “that are un-developable” (ibid).

Fort Worth uses land dedications to acquire land for parks. This program could be used for obtaining native landscapes, and the Fort Worth comprehensive plan indicates that the city is considering such an approach. The comprehensive plan describes its land acquisition efforts thus: “[I]and dedication (typically through the subdivision process) is the City’s principal tool for obtaining parkland...A proactive acquisition strategy of purchase and set aside, coupled with park dedication requirements for residential developers, *would serve both to protect our natural resources* and to provide land for recreation activities for future generations” (City of Fort Worth 2008, 57; emphasis added). Still, the emphasis appears to remain on recreation and similar uses for open space.

Language in Grand Prairie’s comprehensive plan might be stretched to include land acquisition as a means of preserving native landscapes. The plan states that “[w]here possible, the City will retain and develop scenic corridors for public activities and use” (City of Grand Prairie 2005, 5.19), with “Natural Features” listed as a possible element of a scenic corridor (ibid, 5.20). According to planning staff in the city, retention and development of scenic corridor “is a preferred activity,” but the city



has not yet been able to implement it (Kathe Houk, personal communication, November 6, 2008). Also, drainage easements help protect the city's floodplains (ibid; City of Grand Prairie 2006).

McAllen's comprehensive plan recommends offering density bonuses to developers "to reward greater amounts of open space" included in park land dedications. One of the goals of the comprehensive plan is to continue "policies requiring open space land dedication as part of land development projects" (City of McAllen 2007, 5.3). This might refer more to parkland set aside for recreation purposes rather than land set aside for preservation of native landscapes; the language in this part of the plan is not clear. Another part of the comprehensive plan, however, recommends offering density bonuses and transfers of development rights "for the preservation of orchards, to protect other valuable features, or meet other community objectives" (ibid, 5.20). Although it is not specified in the plan, these "other valuable features" could include native landscapes. Other Open Space Preservation goals are "Preservation of National Wildlife Refuge lands in the northern ETJ [Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction] area" and "Preservation of the natural landscape [which likely refers to native landscapes]" (ibid, 5.3). The plan recommends "[i]ncorporation of resource standards for protection of...valued open areas, and other natural features" (ibid, 6.7) as one of the implementation tools for preserving open space through developer dedications.

McKinney's comprehensive plan specifically mentions using easements to preserve what it calls "'high priority' floodplains" (City of McKinney 2004, 141, 147),

areas the city has designated as valuable natural landscapes. The plan describes these areas as having “to varying degrees, environmental, cultural, and/or visual assets worthy of acquisition and preservation” (ibid, 147). It does not on this page (147) specifically link native landscapes to high priority floodplains, but one of the goals listed in the Parks and Recreation section of the plan is to “[e]ncourage conservation of native habitat, wildlife, stream corridors, and wooded areas” (ibid, 141); one of the strategies to achieving this goal is to “[r]equire preservation of high priority flood plains through parkland dedication and/or easements” (City of McKinney 2004, 141). A related strategy is to “[s]eek the donation of land for parks and open space” (ibid).

This goal is implemented by McKinney’s code of ordinances, which require dedication of “all lands remaining within the 100-year floodway...as an easement” before a development permit will be granted, “unless [the lands are] designated as open space under terms and conditions approved by the city council” (Code of Ordinances, sec. 142-41). And according to the city’s “Green McKinney” website, the city has “made significant progress in acquiring meaningful riparian corridors in advance of development. These areas are the primary wetlands and wildlife habitats in the McKinney area” (but the website and city plans do not specify what is meant by “significant progress”) (see note 49).

#### In-Depth Discussion, Other Efforts to Preserve or Develop Local Environmental Resources

In addition to natural asset protection described above, Brownsville also protects environmental resources through its Greens Division, which moves valuable

trees.<sup>86</sup> “Valuable” is not defined by the Greens Division, but the definition could include native or historic trees. Also, the City has “on hold” an open space zoning district (Christopher Golden, personal communication, November 14, 2008).

Denton’s Rural zoning districts are intended partly to preserve farming in the area but also to protect forest areas and “scenic values” (Denton Development Code, sec. 35.5.1.1) from incompatible uses. The city’s comprehensive plan takes a strong stance on environmental protection. The plan says that environmentally sensitive areas “should be an overlay district to all land use designations” (City of Denton 1999, 58), and the development code supports this statement, applying the standards of the Environmentally Sensitive Areas subchapter to “all land and all development within the...corporate limits of the city,” with some exceptions (Denton Development Code, sec. 35.17.2). The comprehensive plan also states that in the city’s eastern half, which still retains many areas with mature trees, new development “should occur in a manner that preserves forested and treed areas, which in some areas may constrain growth” (City of Denton 1999, 18). Floodplain preservation is mentioned several times (*ibid*, 18, 21, 41), with the comprehensive plan stating that the city should determine how to “prevent development in the 100-year floodplain” (*ibid*, 41). Although some concern for preventing floodplain development is likely based on safety issues, the city does note that floodplains make up almost a fourth of the planning area (*ibid*, 58), making them an important part of the city’s natural environment. As far as implementation is concerned—that is, actual protection—the Code of Ordinances classifies some lands as Environmentally Sensitive. Environmentally Sensitive classifications include Water

Related Habitat and Upland Habitat (Denton Development Code, sec. 35.17.4). Upland Habitat is protected through the city's Development Code, which requires that residential development "retain a contiguous fifty percent (50%) tree canopy, which shall remain predominantly in its natural state" (sec. 35.17.9) and that clustered development be used (ibid). In addition, the comprehensive plan encourages making further provisions for wildlife through the city's open spaces. It says that open space should be connected "[w]here possible" to "form a network" for wildlife migration and to facilitate habitat protection (City of Denton 1999, 186), but the implementation portion of the plan does not suggest a way to accomplish the formation of a wildlife migration network or any other open space network.

Fort Worth's comprehensive plan includes a section on endangered species and natural habitat. This section's goals include "[b]egin to propagate and restore populations of native plant species" (City of Fort Worth 2008, 181). If implemented, this goal would protect native species and could serve as a best practice for vernacular asset-based planning. The city owns the Fort Worth Nature Center and Refuge and is planning to restore landscapes there (ibid, 187) and has drafted a master plan for improvements at the Center (ibid, 56). Further, the comprehensive plan includes a strategy to develop a plan to designate and protect "Wildwood Bottoms at Lake Worth as a nature sanctuary" (City of Fort Worth 2008, 184). Other sections of the plan recommend preserving "rivers, creeks, and floodplains and parks and public open space" (ibid, 59) and clustering new development in order "to conserve existing tree cover, wildlife habitat, [and] natural waterways," among other features (ibid, 37). In

addition, the comprehensive plan states that the city wants to “[set] aside reserves for native vegetation and wildlife that once roamed the prairies” (ibid, 8).

Grand Prairie’s comprehensive plan urges making more use of open space, mainly for providing recreation and protecting property values, but it also states that open space can include “passive areas for trails and wildlife sanctuaries” (City of Grand Prairie 2005, 6.3). However, the plan does not in that section explicitly recommend direct involvement in preserving open spaces; it simply states that the city “should take advantage of its abundant open space,” with supporting policies recommending that the city ensure that open spaces “are readily accessible to the public” and to use the city’s floodplains “to provide recreational amenities” (ibid). The comprehensive plan’s Vision, though, does advocate for protecting and preserving Grand Prairie’s “natural features” (ibid, 2.2). And, in an effort perhaps to reinforce the features of local environment in the public mind, the code of ordinances allows parklands, park roads, major improvements, and facilities to be named after “[o]utstanding and/or predominate physical characteristics of the land,” “[p]redominate plant materials,” and “[s]treams, rivers, lakes and creeks” (Code of Ordinances, sec. 18-29.1).

According to Grand Prairie’s planning staff, the city’s greatest environmental asset is Joe Pool Lake. The city makes efforts to prevent water pollution in the lake, and much of the land adjacent to the lake is protected due to its ownership by the U.S. Corps of Engineers—although planning staff note that “some City sponsored development is occurring on parcels leased from the Corp” (Kathe Houk, personal

communication, November 6, 2008). Planning staff also note that the Corps of Engineers is responsible for preserving most of the city's open space, relieving the city of that duty and offering some added protection from development (ibid). In addition, the city's Unified Development Code requires a minimum of 15 percent open space dedication for all residential development with more than twenty units or ten acres, but planning staff state that this has yet to be enforced (ibid).

Laredo offers public education through demonstrations on the use of native plants for water conservation purposes (Code of Ordinances, sec. 31-141.16), and, as described earlier, it has a Citizen's environmental advisory committee (ibid, sec. 33-1).

In McAllen, the use of open space to buffer the city edges (City of McAllen 2007, 5.2) could serve to protect the environment, in addition to serving a gateway-type purpose. The comprehensive plan recommends increasing "the amount of natural green space with new development" (ibid, 5.60) for downtown; this is unlikely to do much to preserve the vernacular environment, but as with the city buffers, it could provide links to larger natural areas located elsewhere in the city. And another recommendation for downtown in the comprehensive plan is to support preservation of "natural resource areas" (ibid, 5.60). The plan's section on open space preservation recommends amending the subdivision regulations to allow for clustered development that would preserve in the range of 30 percent to 80 percent open space per subdivision (ibid, 5.4). It also recommends working with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Department to add more land to the National Wildlife Refuge (ibid).

The City manages Quinta Mazatlan, a historic home and (small) native plant and wildlife habitat, part of the mission of which is to encourage “wildlife habitat stewardship and restoration” (Code of Ordinances, sec. 74-182). Also, the code of ordinances requires the Department of Parks and Recreation to prepare a list of vegetation native to the Lower Rio Grande Valley, with the list to be “provided by the Planning Department” (ibid, sec. 110-56), presumably for distribution to developers and other interested persons.

In McKinney’s comprehensive plan, preservation of natural features is encouraged through Goal L, “Protect Environmental Resources of McKinney” (City of McKinney 2004, 25) and Goal H, Objective 1, “McKinney's natural features - including slopes, woodlands, and floodplains - [can serve] as gateways into the community” (ibid, 24). Several of the zoning districts are supposed to be developed in ways that “[respond] sensitively to the natural environment and North Texas ecosystem” (see, for example, ibid, 99, 114). Developers are encouraged to incorporate natural features “such as streams, wetlands, and groves of trees” into designs (ibid, 100, 103, 106), and parks are to be “developed in areas to preserve existing trees, wetlands, or natural habitat” (ibid, 89-90, 114). Public streets are encouraged to follow or “be sensitive to” the natural slope of the land (ibid, 90, 114); the comprehensive plan says that the strategy is supposed “to maximize views,” but it could also serve to preserve natural features that would otherwise be ruined by road construction.

One of the goals of the comprehensive plan is to encourage preservation of native habitat and other natural areas, and one recommendation for achieving this goal

is to develop floodplains from two of the area's creeks, "the City's major open space and habitat preservation resources" (City of McKinney 2004, 141). The comprehensive plan also recommends developing a master plan for the city's Erwin Park, which has approximately 200 acres of land (ibid, 164).



APPENDIX B

END NOTES

<sup>1</sup> American Factfinder, “State and County Quick Facts,” United States Census Bureau, <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/00000.html> (accessed November 20, 2008).

<sup>2</sup> How a person perceives a place’s qualities or characteristics can vary according to the person’s race, gender, and socio-economic background (see, for example, Jorgensen and Stedman 2001 and Nanzer 2004). In addition, Tuan implies that sense of place will be perceived differently by visitor and resident. He writes that sense of place “is rarely acquired in passing. To know a place well requires long residence and deep involvement” (1975, 15).

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, recent issues of *Planning* magazine, published by the American Planning Association. Examples include “The Only Way to Fly: Airports and airlines are going green” in November 2007, “What Stays in Las Vegas Is Green” in February 2008, and the August/September 2007 special issued dedicated to global warming. The Autumn 2008 issue of *Journal of the American Planning Association* also has an environmental focus.

<sup>4</sup> For example, the Downtown Arlington Management Corporation (Arlington, Texas) recently hired as executive director Ms. Maggie Campbell, the former director of the Old Pasadena Management District in Pasadena, California. During Ms. Campbell’s work in Pasadena, the Old Pasadena Management District used grant money from the Levitt Foundation to establish a pavilion that hosts an annual summer concert series. The Downtown Arlington Management Corporation recently concluded a project to create a Levitt Pavilion in downtown Arlington, led by Ms. Campbell. See [www.oldpasadena.org/news/2003OPARonlinesm.pdf](http://www.oldpasadena.org/news/2003OPARonlinesm.pdf) (accessed November 20, 2008) and <http://www.downtownarlington.org/LEVITTPAVILIONARLINGTON/tabid/73/Default.aspx> (accessed November 20, 2008).

<sup>5</sup> This article has not yet been published and therefore has not been paginated. Page numbers are derived from an advanced copy of the text.

<sup>6</sup> Orr (2002) and Van der Ryn and Cowan (2007) describe the flawed environmental planning and stewardship that are the result of failing to think of nature or the environment in a way that casts a role for humans as a part of the environment and not apart from the environment.

<sup>7</sup> Beijing Declaration Concerning Urban Culture, adopted by the 2<sup>nd</sup> International Forum of Urban Planning & International Conference on Urban Culture, June 11, 2007 in Beijing, China. Printed in “Special Report,” 2007, *China City Planning Review* 16, no. 3: 8-9.

<sup>8</sup> For example, Hayden (1995) describes a debate on historic preservation between Herbert Gans, a sociologist, and Ada Louise Huxtable, a noted architectural critic. Huxtable favored preserving the architectural gems created by the city’s wealthy elite; Gans favored saving the built environment of the city’s poor and working classes. Hayden writes that “[a]s they argued, their underlying values made the debate more heated. He wanted more social history, she wanted more culture.” Here, Hayden defines culture in the “arts-and-culture” sense, rather than in the “way-of life” sense of the word. If she had used the way-of-life definition, she would have noted that both Gans and Huxtable wanted to preserve the city’s culture but focused on different aspects of that culture.

<sup>9</sup> Guggenheim Bilbao Museoa 2007, “History of the Guggenheim Museum,” p. 1, retrieved from [http://www.guggenheim-bilbao.es/secciones/el\\_museo/historia.php?idioma=en](http://www.guggenheim-bilbao.es/secciones/el_museo/historia.php?idioma=en) (accessed October 30, 2008)

<sup>10</sup> Also known as “the Guggenheim effect”; see, for example, Gómez and Gonzáles 2001, 899.

<sup>11</sup> An example is the Brooklyn Botanic Institute’s New York Metropolitan Flora Project. The project is an attempt to document the flora, native and non-native, of metropolitan New York (Moore et al 2003). The motivation for the project stems, in part, from the premise that “[s]tudying the vegetation changes in highly populated areas is critical to understanding the future of life in our rapidly urbanizing world” (<http://www.bbg.org/sci/nymf/>; accessed

October 25, 2008). Missing from the project's description is any recognition of the natural environment's contribution to local culture or identity and any connection between native environment and the environmental health of the region in general, and this omission is typical of environmental planning in the United States.

<sup>12</sup> See <http://www.usmayors.org/climateprotection/list.asp> (accessed October 27, 2008) and [http://usmayors.org/climateprotection/climateagreement\\_071307.pdf](http://usmayors.org/climateprotection/climateagreement_071307.pdf) (accessed October 27, 2008).

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Smart Growth Network, "Principles of Smart Growth," <http://www.smartgrowth.org/about/principles/default.asp> (accessed October 27, 2008).

<sup>15</sup> The cities are Denton, Fort Worth, Grand Prairie, Killeen, McAllen, and McKinney.

<sup>16</sup> Smart Growth Network, "Foster Distinctive, Attractive Communities with a Strong Sense of Place," <http://www.smartgrowth.org/library/byprinciple.asp?prin=5> (accessed October 30, 2008).

<sup>17</sup> For example, the supporting text for the principle "Foster Distinctive, Attractive Communities with a Strong Sense of Place" includes the following statements: "Guided by a vision of how and where to grow, communities are able to identify and utilize opportunities *to make new development conform* to their standards of distinctiveness and beauty. Contrary to the current mode of development, smart growth ensures that *the value of infill and greenfield development* is determined as much by their accessibility (by car or other means) as their physical orientation to and relationship with other buildings and open space" (emphasis added). See <http://www.smartgrowth.org/about/principles/principles.asp?prin=5> (accessed November 20, 2008).

<sup>18</sup> For example, the City of Grand Prairie, Texas' plans for its Central Business District include preserving some of the area's the post-World War II structures, not because notable Grand Prairie citizens built or lived in the structures but because the post-World War II era was noteworthy in the city's history. New construction in the area is encouraged to reflect the district's history and its automotive and rail transportation theme (see City of Grand Prairie 2005). Other cities that have an emphasis on local history in the historic preservation designation criteria are Brownsville, Fort Worth and, to a certain extent, McAllen.

<sup>19</sup> The only countries outside Europe to have certified Slow Cities are Australia, New Zealand, and South Korea. See <http://www.cittaslow.net/> (accessed November 20, 2008).

<sup>20</sup> CittaSlow, "'CittaSlow International' Charter, <http://www.cittaslow.net/sezioni/Rete%20Internazionale/pagine.asp?idn=1384>" (accessed on September 4, 2008).

<sup>21</sup> According to Laredo's planning director, the comprehensive plan's Land Uses no longer make sense in light of changes to the city's Thoroughfare plan (Keith Selman, personal communication, October 25, 2008). I presume that wide changes will be considered for the Land Use component of the comprehensive plan.

<sup>22</sup> It could be that Brownsville will use language connecting vernacular resources and city identity once it has produced a comprehensive plan.

<sup>23</sup> In Texas, cities are granted the right to form economic development corporations that are authorized to use city sales tax to fund quality-of-life improvements; the corporations are authorized under Economic Development Sales Tax Article 5190.6 V.T.C.S., Development Corporation Act of 1979 (see <http://www.window.state.tx.us/specialrpt/stateloc05/>; accessed October 26, 2008).

<sup>24</sup> Brownsville Community Improvement Corporation, “Fiscal Year 2006 Funded Projects,” [http://bcic.cob.us/bcic\\_2006\\_funded\\_projects.asp](http://bcic.cob.us/bcic_2006_funded_projects.asp) (accessed October 26, 2008).

<sup>25</sup> Brownsville Community Improvement Corporation, “Fiscal Year 2007 Projects[:] City of Brownsville Planning and Community Development Department,” [http://bcic.cob.us/projects\\_fy\\_2007\\_city\\_of\\_brownsville\\_planning.asp](http://bcic.cob.us/projects_fy_2007_city_of_brownsville_planning.asp) (accessed October 26, 2008).

<sup>26</sup> Fort Worth Community Arts Center, “Office Space,” [http://www.fwcac.com/?rentals/rent\\_me](http://www.fwcac.com/?rentals/rent_me) (accessed October 29, 2008)

<sup>27</sup> Arts Council of Fort Worth and Tarrant County, “Arts Council Grants Recipients,” <http://www.artsfortworth.org/?/whowefund> (accessed October 29, 2008).

<sup>28</sup> Grand Prairie’s comprehensive plan does not mention inventorying local historic resources, nor does the Code of Ordinances; however, the City maintains a list of fifty significant local landmarks on its website at <http://www.gptx.org/HistoricalMarkers.aspx> (accessed October 26, 2008).

<sup>29</sup> In addition, Laredo’s Historic Urban Design Guidelines (1997) note that the city’s history is linked to the Rio Grande River; McAllen’s comprehensive plan (2007) ties the city’s agricultural open spaces to local heritage.

<sup>30</sup> Because Killeen does not have a comprehensive plan, determination of the amount or kind of public input solicited for plans was based on a Future Land Use study made for a particular corridor within the city and the city’s *Downtown Action Agenda*.

<sup>31</sup> City of Brownsville, “Technical Committee” <http://imaginebrownsville.com/technicalcommittee.php> (accessed October 26, 2008).  
Ibid, “Comment and Sign Up,” <http://www.imaginebrownsville.com/community.php> (accessed October 26, 2008).

<sup>32</sup> A national chain store can have a connection with the community. For example, in many small towns in Texas, the local Dairy Queen serves as a community center (see , for example, <http://my.preservationnation.org/site/News2?JServSessionIdr001=qh8g6pxiz1.app7a&page=NewsArticle&id=8071>, accessed December 2, 2008, and [http://www.redorbit.com/news/science/374823/bridge\\_city\\_texas\\_dairy\\_queen\\_prepares\\_to\\_reopen/index.html](http://www.redorbit.com/news/science/374823/bridge_city_texas_dairy_queen_prepares_to_reopen/index.html), accessed December 2, 2008). But cities when cities do not clarify what they mean by “existing,” they show no preference for this kind of resource.

<sup>33</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, “Table 1. Annual Estimates of the Population of Metropolitan Statistical Areas: April 1, 2000 to July 1, 2006,” <http://www.census.gov/popest/metro/CBSA-est2006-annual.html> (accessed October 22, 2008).

<sup>34</sup> Killeen does not yet have a comprehensive plan, so it does not have a single document available to provide an overarching vision for the city that could express a desire for the city to retain local businesses—agricultural or otherwise.

<sup>35</sup> McKinney’s agricultural zoning district is intended both to reserve land for future growth and to protect land from encroachment from incompatible uses. See Code of Ordinances, sec. 146-67.

<sup>36</sup> Fort Worth Business Assistance Center, Home Page, <http://www.fwbac.com/default.asp> (accessed October 26, 2008).

<sup>37</sup> The comprehensive plan does not suggest that these opportunities be limited to local artists.

<sup>38</sup> For most of the cities in this study, the lack of concern for existing agricultural operations might be due to agriculture no longer having much effect on the local economy. For example, according to the Handbook of Texas Online, agriculture is still an important but dwindling part of Denton’s economy. See s.v. “Denton, Texas,” <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/DD/hed5.html> (accessed October 29,

2008). The Handbook also writes that Killeen's economy was largely based on farm trade until what was to become Fort Hood was established in the city in 1942. See s.v. "Killeen, Texas," <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/KK/hdk1.html> (accessed October 29, 2008).

<sup>39</sup> Washington's Birthday Celebration Association, "About Us," <http://www.wbcalaredo.org/2008/about-us.html> (accessed October 29, 2008).

Washington's Birthday Celebration Association, "Sponsors," <http://www.wbcalaredo.org/2008/sponsors.html> (accessed October 29, 2008).

<sup>40</sup> See, for example, City of Laredo Council Communication, February 18, 2003, <http://www.ci.laredo.tx.us/Finalread/2003%20Final%20Readings/2003-O-039.htm> (accessed October 29, 2008).

<sup>41</sup> City of Laredo City Council Meeting, January 27, 2003, Minutes from the meeting, <http://www.ci.laredo.tx.us/city-council/council-activities/council-minutes/2003Min/M2003-R-02.htm> (accessed October 29, 2008).

<sup>42</sup> City of McAllen Parks & Recreation, "Fourth of July Celebration," <http://www.mcallen.net/parks/events/fourth.aspx> (accessed November 8, 2008).

<sup>43</sup> City of Fort Worth Parks and Community Services, "Herd Educational Programs," <http://www.fortworthgov.org/pacs/theherd/info/default.aspx?id=1098> (accessed October 29, 2008).

<sup>44</sup> National Park Service, "Certified Local Governments," [http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/clg/become\\_CLG.html](http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/clg/become_CLG.html) (accessed October 26, 2008).

<sup>45</sup> Fort Worth Public Art, "Become One of Our Artists," [http://www.fwpublicart.org/nu\\_site/page.php/id/artists](http://www.fwpublicart.org/nu_site/page.php/id/artists) (accessed November 7, 2008).



<sup>46</sup> City of Killeen Arts Commission, “Mission,” <http://www.ci.killeen.tx.us/?section=190> (accessed November 7, 2008).

<sup>47</sup> Although Large Secondary Trees are granted some protection through the Denton Development Code, Denton’s Site Design Criteria Manual (City of Denton 2004) discourages use of these trees. The Manual’s Appendix A classifies these trees as “Undesirable Tree Species” and states that they cannot be used to meet tree canopy requirements (p. 43).

<sup>48</sup> Handbook of Texas Online, s.v. “Cross Timbers,” <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/CC/ryc4.html> (accessed October 29, 2008).

<sup>49</sup> City of McKinney, “Green McKinney – City,” <http://www.mckinneyinfo.com/green/city2.html> (accessed October 28, 2008).

<sup>50</sup> Again, Brownsville and Killeen do not have comprehensive plans available yet; when their plans are published, they might express an intention to protect local natural resources.

<sup>51</sup> Although many cities across the United States have botanical gardens, zoos, and similar facilities that can help to preserve or showcase native species, for this Indicator I considered only facilities that are specifically meant to preserve natural habitat, or native species in a natural state. The Fort Worth Nature Center and Refuge contains over 3600 acres with native flora and fauna (<http://www.fwnaturecenter.org/>; accessed November 20, 2008); Quinta Mazatlan in McAllen is a much smaller example of city-managed natural environment preservation, at fifteen acres (<http://www.quintamazatlan.com/about.htm>; accessed November 20, 2008). In addition, according to an article in the *North Texas Daily*, the City of Denton, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the University of North Texas, and Texas Women’s University are collaborating to develop the Clear Creek Natural Heritage Center in Denton (McInnis 2001, <http://media.www.ntdaily.com/media/storage/paper877/news/2001/04/25/CampusNews/Nt.Tw>

u.Join.To.Build.Clear.Creek.Nature.Center-1895869.shtml; accessed 10-19-2008). According to the City of Denton, the natural heritage center is scheduled to open in 2009, although visitors are welcome to explore the area before that time (<http://www.cityofdenton.com/pages/quickpress.cfm?object=1838&method=displayNewsItem&newsID=694&showArchive=yes>; accessed November 20, 2008). However, I have been unable to determine for certain if the center will focus on native species, wildlife habitat, or similar local resources.

<sup>52</sup> Arbor Day Foundation, “Tree City Standards,”

<http://www.arborday.org/programs/treeCityUSA/standards.cfm> (accessed October 29, 2008).

<sup>53</sup> City of Denton, “Cross Timbers Park,”

<http://www.cityofdenton.com/pages/mygovplanparkscrosstimbers.cfm> (accessed November 8, 2008).

<sup>54</sup> City of Fort Worth, Fort Worth Business Assistance Center home page,

<http://www.fwbac.com/> (accessed October 25, 2008).

<sup>55</sup> Considering Brownsville’s multi-million dollar agricultural industry, I expect the city’s comprehensive plan, once finished, will provide some protection for local agriculture. See City of Brownsville, “About Brownsville,” [http://www1.cob.us/about\\_brownsville.asp](http://www1.cob.us/about_brownsville.asp) (accessed November 20, 2008).

<sup>56</sup> The cities are Fort Worth, McAllen, and McKinney.

<sup>57</sup> City of Brownsville, “Imagine Brownsville – Project Overview,”

<http://www.imaginebrownsville.com/projectoverview.html> (accessed October 29, 2008).

<sup>58</sup> City of Denton City Council, “City of Denton city council minutes September 25, 2007,”

<http://www.cityofdenton.com/pages/citycouncminutes.cfm?object=1561&folderID=706&action=files> (accessed October 29, 2008).

- <sup>59</sup> Greater Denton Arts Council, "Grants Program," [http://dentonarts.com/gdac99/about\\_gdac/programs/grants\\_program\\_at\\_gdac.htm](http://dentonarts.com/gdac99/about_gdac/programs/grants_program_at_gdac.htm) (accessed October 29, 2008).
- <sup>60</sup> Grand Prairie Arts Council, "Student Scholarships," <http://www.artsgp.com/Student%20Scholarships.htm> (accessed October 29, 2008).
- <sup>61</sup> McAllen Chamber of Commerce, "Quality of Life," <http://www.mcallen.org/Business-Community/Quality-Life> (accessed October 29, 2008).
- Rio Grande Valley Arts Council, "The Origins of the RGV Arts Council," <http://www.rgvartscouncil.com/mission.html> (accessed October 29, 2008).
- <sup>62</sup> McKinney Community Development Corporation, "About," <http://www.mckinneycdc.org/mcdc/content.nsf/content-display/About?opendocument> (accessed October 26, 2008).
- <sup>63</sup> Ibid, "Projects," <http://www.mckinneycdc.org/mcdc/content.nsf/content-display/Projects?opendocument> (accessed October 29, 2008).
- <sup>64</sup> The Heard Natural Science Museum and Wildlife Sanctuary, "Sponsors," <http://www.heardmuseum.org/theheard/sponsors.asp> (accessed October 26, 2009).
- <sup>65</sup> Ibid, "Sanctuary," <http://www.heardmuseum.org/attractions/sanctuary.asp> (accessed October 26, 2008).
- <sup>66</sup> City of Brownsville, "Project Overview," <http://www.imaginebrownsville.com/projectoverview.html> (accessed October 26, 2008).
- <sup>67</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>68</sup> Ibid, "Project Updates," <http://www.imaginebrownsville.com/projectupdates.php> (accessed October 26, 2008).

<sup>69</sup> Ibid, “Comment and Sign Up,” <http://www.imaginebrownsville.com/community.php> (accessed October 26, 2008).

<sup>70</sup> Ibid, “Latest News,” [http://www.imaginebrownsville.com/news\\_single.php?id=24](http://www.imaginebrownsville.com/news_single.php?id=24) (accessed October 26, 2008).

<sup>71</sup> Charro Days Fiesta, “Sponsors,” <http://www.charrodaysfiesta.com/sponsors.htm> (accessed November 20, 2008).

<sup>72</sup> North Texas State Fair and Rodeo, “Sponsors,” <http://www.ntfair.com/page.aspx?PID=317> (accessed November 7, 2008).

<sup>73</sup> Denton Festival Foundation, Inc., Home Page, [www.dentonjazzfest.com](http://www.dentonjazzfest.com) (accessed November 7, 2008).

Denton Holiday Festival Association, Inc., “Denton Holiday Lighting Festival,” <http://www.dentonholidaylighting.com/> (accessed November 7, 2008).

Keep Denton Beautiful, “15th Annual Denton Redbud Festival,” [http://www.kdb.org/redbud\\_festival.shtml](http://www.kdb.org/redbud_festival.shtml) (accessed November 7, 2008).

<sup>74</sup> City of McAllen Parks & Recreation, “Fourth of July Celebration,” <http://www.mcallen.net/parks/events/fourth.aspx> (accessed November 8, 2008).

<sup>75</sup> McKinney Main Street, “Dickens of a Christmas,” <http://www.dickensofachristmasfestival.com/> (accessed November 20, 2008).

<sup>76</sup> City of Laredo Department of Planning and Development, “Guide to Planning and Development,” <http://www.cityoflaredo.com/city-planning/about/plat.html> (accessed October 25, 2008).

<sup>77</sup> Ibid, “Announcements,” [www.cityoflaredo.com/city-planning/about/announcements.html](http://www.cityoflaredo.com/city-planning/about/announcements.html) (accessed October 29, 2008).

<sup>78</sup> McAllen ArtWalk, “About Us,”

[http://mcallenartwalk.com/index.php?module=pagemaster&PAGE\\_user\\_op=view\\_page&PAGE\\_id=10&MMN\\_position=22:22](http://mcallenartwalk.com/index.php?module=pagemaster&PAGE_user_op=view_page&PAGE_id=10&MMN_position=22:22) (accessed October 25, 2008).

<sup>79</sup> City of McAllen. 2008. Agenda, City Commission regular meeting (September 8). Retrieved from <http://www.mcallen.net/files/docs/officials/meetings/2008/ccagenda090808.pdf> (accessed October 19, 2008).

<sup>80</sup> City of McKinney, “McKinney Establishes Program to Recognize Historic Homes,”

<http://www.mckinneytexas.org/NewsItemsplain.asp?id=996> (accessed October 25, 2008).

<sup>81</sup> Handbook of Texas Online, s.v. “Brownsville, Texas” (by Alicia A Garza and Christopher Long), <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/BB/hdb4.html> (accessed October 29, 2008).

<sup>82</sup> City of Killeen Arts Commission, “Mission,” <http://www.ci.killeen.tx.us/?section=190> (accessed November 7, 2008).

<sup>83</sup> City of McKinney, “Arts Commission Recommendations Accepted by Council,” press release dated September 4, 2008, [http://www.ntx-news.com/artman/publish/printer\\_48485.shtml](http://www.ntx-news.com/artman/publish/printer_48485.shtml) (accessed October 23, 2008).

<sup>84</sup> Required trees must be native to Cameron, Hidalgo, Starr, Willacy, or Kenedy counties. Brownsville is the county seat of Cameron County, and Hidalgo, Starr, Willacy, and Kenedy are surrounding counties.

<sup>85</sup> Handbook of Texas Online, s.v. “Texas Palm” (by Carl C. Wright),

<http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/TT/tpt4.html> (accessed October 29, 2008).

<sup>86</sup> City of Brownsville Green Division, Home Page,

[http://pw.ci.brownsville.tx.us/green\\_division.asp](http://pw.ci.brownsville.tx.us/green_division.asp) (accessed October 26, 2008).

APPENDIX C

LIST OF CITY PLANS, DOCUMENTS, AND WEBSITES EXAMINED

This document lists city plans, documents, and websites examined for the paper. Links (URLs) provided in the References list or in the endnotes are not duplicated here. Websites are listed when they provided information for the study, not simply access to documents. In addition, at the end of this document is a list of city planning staff members who reviewed my notes on planning activities in their respective cities.

### Brownsville

- “Imagine Brownsville,” City of Brownsville Comprehensive Plan website, <http://www.imaginebrownsville.com/home.php>
- City of Brownsville Code of Ordinances, accessed through Municode.com
- “About Us” page, City of Brownsville, <http://www.cob.us/about/>. The version of the “About Us” page used for this study, accessed May 12, 2008, is no longer available through the City of Brownsville website. The older version of the page is available through the Internet Archive at [http://web.archive.org/web/20031008060208/www.cob.us/about\\_brownsville.asp](http://web.archive.org/web/20031008060208/www.cob.us/about_brownsville.asp) (accessed December 1, 2008).
- Website for the City Forester, accessed May 12, 2008. This page is no longer available through the City of Brownsville website.
- Website for the City of Brownsville Green Division, [http://pw.ci.brownsville.tx.us/green\\_division.asp](http://pw.ci.brownsville.tx.us/green_division.asp). This version of the website, accessed October 26, 2008 is no longer available through the City of Brownsville website.

- Website for the Brownsville Economic Development Corporation (BEDC), <http://www.bedc.com/> (accessed December 1, 2008)
- Website for the Brownsville Community Improvement Corporation (BCIC), <http://www.bcic.cob.us>. This version of the website, accessed October 26, 2008, is no longer available through the City of Brownsville/BCIC website.

### Denton

- City of Denton comprehensive plan
- City of Denton Open Space Master Plan, available at <http://www.cityofdenton.com/pages/openspace.cfm?object=4735&folderID=425&action=files> (accessed December 1, 2008)
- City of Denton Code of Ordinances, accessed through Municode.com
- City of Denton Development Code, available at <http://www.cityofdenton.com/pages/devcode.cfm?object=1613&folderID=45&action=files> (accessed December 1, 2008)
- City of Denton Site Design Criteria Manual
- City of Denton City Council Minutes, September 25, 2007
- Website for the City of Denton's Cross Timbers Park
- Website for the Denton Festival Foundation
- Website for the Greater Denton Arts Council, <http://www.dentonarts.com/> (accessed December 1, 2008)
- Website for Keep Denton Beautiful



- Website for the North Texas State Fair and Rodeo

### Fort Worth

- City of Fort Worth comprehensive plan
- City of Fort Worth Code of Ordinances, accessed through Municode.com
- Website for the City of Fort Worth Business Assistance Center
- Website for the City of Fort Worth Housing and Economic Development Department, <http://www.fortworthgov.org/ecodev/> (accessed December 1, 2008)
- Website for the City of Fort Worth Parks and Community Services Department's Herd Program
- Website for the City of Fort Worth Public Art Program
- Website for the City of Fort Worth Urban Forestry Compliance Section, <http://www.fortworthgov.org/pacs/info/default.aspx?id=37810> (accessed December 1, 2008).
- Website for the Arts Council of Fort Worth and Tarrant County

### Grand Prairie

- City of Grand Prairie comprehensive plan
- City of Grand Prairie Code of Ordinances, accessed through Municode.com
- City of Grand Prairie Unified Development Code, <http://www.gptx.org/PlanningAndDevelopment/Planning/UnifiedDevelopmentCode.aspx> (accessed December 1, 200)

- City of Grand Prairie *Unified development code: Appendix P*
- City of Grand Prairie *Unified development code: Appendix R*
- City of Grand Prairie *Unified development code: Appendix S*
- City of Grand Prairie *Unified development code: Appendix U*
- City of Grand Prairie *Budget in the Brief 2007-2008*, [www.gptx.org/Budget/documents/2007-2008BudgetintheBrief.pdf](http://www.gptx.org/Budget/documents/2007-2008BudgetintheBrief.pdf) (accessed July 13, 2008)
- City of Grand Prairie *2008 Economic Development Report*
- City of Grand Prairie *Storm water management plan*
- Website for the City of Grand Prairie Economic Development department, <http://www.gptx.org/EconomicDevelopment/> (accessed December 1, 2008)
- Website for the Grand Prairie Arts Council, <http://www.artsgp.com/>, (accessed December 1, 2008)

### Killeen

- City of Killeen Code of Ordinances, <http://www.ci.killeen.tx.us/?section=195> (accessed December 1, 2008)
- City of Killeen Downtown Action Agenda
- City of Killeen Future Land Use Plan
- City of Killeen Historic Preservation Program Timeline
- City of Killen Parks and Recreation Master Plan, [http://www.ci.killeen.tx.us/index.php?action=download\\_resource&id=68&modu](http://www.ci.killeen.tx.us/index.php?action=download_resource&id=68&modu)

le=resourcesmodule&src=%40random456b2dbde8bf1 (accessed December 1, 2008)

- Website for the City of Killeen Arts Commission
- Website for the Greater Killeen Chamber of Commerce (the City's economic development agency), <http://www.killeenworks.com/> (accessed December 1, 2008)

### Laredo

- City of Laredo comprehensive plan
- City of Laredo Code of Ordinances, accessed through Municode.com
- City of Laredo Land Development Code, [http://www.ci.laredo.tx.us/city-planning/Land\\_Development\\_Code\\_Book.pdf](http://www.ci.laredo.tx.us/city-planning/Land_Development_Code_Book.pdf) (accessed December 1, 2008)
- City of Laredo Historic Urban Design Guidelines
- City of Laredo City Council Meeting Minutes, January 27, 2003
- "Guide to Planning and Development," from the website for the City of Laredo Planning and Zoning Department, <http://www.ci.laredo.tx.us/city-planning/about/plat.html> (accessed December 1, 2008)
- Website for the City of Laredo Environmental Services Department, <http://www.esd.cityoflaredo.com/ESDWeb/news/main.cfm> (accessed December 1, 2008)
- Website for the Laredo Development Foundation, <http://www.ldfonline.org/> (accessed December 1, 2008)

- Website for the Washington's Birthday Celebration Association

### McAllen

- City of McAllen comprehensive plan
- City of McAllen Code of Ordinances, accessed through Municode.com
- *City of McAllen Adopted annual operating and capital budget, fiscal year 2008-2009*
- City of McAllen Adopted Budget 2008, <http://www.mcallen.net/files/docs/finance/adoptedbudget0809.pdf> (accessed December 1, 2008)
- McAllen Cultural Resources Survey [historic preservation], [http://www.mcallen.net/files/docs/devservices/planning/historic\\_preserve05.pdf](http://www.mcallen.net/files/docs/devservices/planning/historic_preserve05.pdf) (accessed December 1, 2008)
- City of McAllen City Commission Agenda for September 8, 2008
- Website for the City of McAllen Parks and Recreation Department
- Website for McAllen Art Walk
- Website for the Heard Natural Science Museum and Wildlife Sanctuary
- Website for the McAllen Chamber of Commerce
- Website for the Rio Grande Valley Arts Council

### McKinney

- City of McKinney comprehensive plan

- City of McKinney, “Urban Design Elements: Corridors,” from the city’s *Town Center Study*
- City of McKinney Code of Ordinances, accessed through Municode.com
- City of McKinney [updated] Zoning Regulations, <http://www.mckinneytexas.org/Agendas/p&zmeetings/102808/08-352M%20-%20Zoning%20Ordinance%20Updates/Proposed%20Zoning%20Regulations%20-%20Exhibit%20A.pdf> (accessed December 1, 2008)
- City of McKinney Approved Plant List, [http://www.mckinneytexas.org/Associations/144/data/forms/1016/Zoning%20Ordinance/APPENDIX%20A%20Final%2010-17-2006%20\(2\).pdf](http://www.mckinneytexas.org/Associations/144/data/forms/1016/Zoning%20Ordinance/APPENDIX%20A%20Final%2010-17-2006%20(2).pdf) (accessed December 1, 2008)
- City of McKinney press release, February 21, 2008
- Website for City of McKinney’s “Green McKinney” project
- Website for the City of McKinney Arts Commission
- Website for the McKinney Community Development Corporation

#### Other Resources

- Handbook of Texas Online, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/> (accessed December 1, 2008)
- List of cities participating in the 2008 Texas Main Street Program, updated September 1, 2008

- Texas Local Government Code, Chapter 211
- Website for the Arbor Day Foundation's Tree City USA program
- Website for the National Park Service's Certified Local Governments program

The following members of city planning staff reviewed my notes  
on their respective cities:

Brownsville: Christopher Golden, Comprehensive Planning Manager

Denton: Deborah Viera, AICP, Environmental Compliance Coordinator

Grand Prairie: Kathe Houk, AICP, CPM, AAE, Chief Comprehensive Planner

McKinney: Jennifer Cox, AICP, Assistant Planning Director

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<http://www.cityofdenton.com/pages/devcodemanuals.cfm?sitedesigncm%2Epdf&object=1822&folderID=88&fileID=834&action=view> (accessed June 25, 2008).

City of Fort Worth, Texas. 2008. *2008 Comprehensive plan for the city of Fort Worth*.

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<http://www.gptx.org/PlanningAndDevelopment/Planning/UnifiedDevelopmentCode.aspx> (accessed July 11, 2008).

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<http://www.gptx.org/PlanningAndDevelopment/Planning/UnifiedDevelopmentCode.aspx> (accessed July 11, 2008).

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<http://www.gptx.org/PlanningAndDevelopment/ComprehensivePlan.aspx> (accessed May 12, 2008).

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<http://www.gptx.org/EnvironmentalServices/documents/StormWaterManagementPlanforweb.pdf> (accessed November 8, 2008).



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## BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Rachel Roberts earned a bachelor's degree in French with a minor in History in 1998 from Texas A&M University, and she worked for seven years as an archivist at a historical society. Her previous academic work and her professional interests contributed to her interest in the cultural aspects of cities and of planning. In addition, her concern for the environment and her belief that the natural world contributes to identity have been long held. Pursuit of the degree of Master of City and Regional Planning has allowed Ms. Roberts to combine her interests in a way that should enable her to assist communities in becoming better places to live.