



Figure 1. Downtown Commerce Painting

DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION PLAN:

CITY OF COMMERCE, TX

PROFESSIONAL REPORT: STUDY FOR A DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION PLAN FOR THE CITY OF COMMERCE, TX

COLBY COLLINS | THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT ARLINGTON | MAY 2017

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Need for Commerce

The City of Commerce, TX is a community that is increasingly growing through every year. Commerce is not only home to current residents of the city, but it is also home to the local university Texas A&M University—Commerce. As the city continues to grow, there remains a voided interest for more forms of entertainment for many citizens of the city. While the City of Commerce future plan for the downtown area entails a goal of community engagement, the city has yet to provide many activities to encourage more engagement from the students and the residents.

Figure 2. Overview of Texas A&M University—Commerce

Existing Condition

A current count of vacant stores and a community survey will show that a downtown revitalization plan is needed, but lack of public events and poor streetscape prove to be major concerns that should be addressed.



Figure 3. Some cities, such as Bernardsville, New Jersey (above), aim to make walkability and biking a primary function.



“Community engagement is a cornerstone of any effective revitalization effort and must be an early ingredient in building a strong downtown.”

– Andy Kitsinger

(Seven Ingredients For Building a Healthy Downtown, 2013)

Figure 4. Bois D’Arc Bash (Commerce, TX 2013)

Why Revitalize?

- Spur business development
- Create/Develop jobs
- Stimulate the housing market
- Increase occupancy rates
- Entice investors
- Rehabilitate empty buildings
- Replicate the history of the city
- Encourage community pride
- Utilize existing infrastructure
- Increase community engagement
- Reaffirm commitment and inspire involvement from local leaders (Pennsylvania Downtown Center, 2017)

WHAT THE CITY OF COMMERCE CAN DO?

EDUCATE



- ✓ City officials can help provide the residents of the city the benefits that come with downtown revitalization.
- ✓ Provide information how downtown revitalization would better the city for the future



Figure 8. Redeveloping vacant buildings can help attract more people to the downtown area (Vacant building City of Commerce downtown; picture taken by Colby Collins March 16, 2017)

ENCOURAGE/ENGAGE

- ✓ Show existing conditions of downtown area; create/show proposed downtown plan to residents of the city.
- ✓ Encourage residents to get involved with helping develop the downtown plan
- ✓ Help promote the positive impact that comes with redeveloping the downtown area

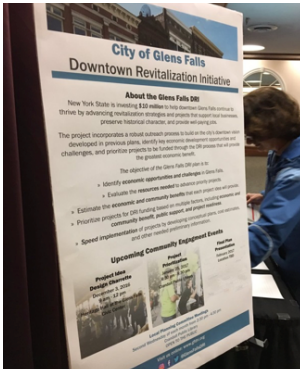
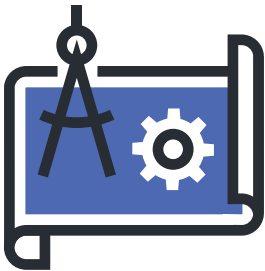


Figure 9. Having as many community engagement events as possible will be beneficial towards the implementation

PLAN/EVALUATE



- ✓ Develop and create a downtown revitalization plan
- ✓ Survey residents/city officials about where they see the city evolving
- ✓ Analyze the findings from conducted research to apply to the downtown plan



Figure 10. Painting in downtown Commerce

PROFESSIONAL REPORT:

Study for a Downtown Revitalization Plan for the City of Commerce, TX

by
Colby Collins

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of The University of Texas - Arlington
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of College of Architecture, Planning and Public Affairs

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May 2017

ABSTRACT

A background study for a downtown revitalization for the City of Commerce, TX.

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Creating a downtown revitalization plan for the City of Commerce can be valuable for not only for the residents of the city, but also the students of the university Texas A&M University—Commerce. Downtown revitalization can be considered the “hotbeds of business creativity, neighborhood activism, non-profit entrepreneurs, economic diversity, and an attraction for visitors, seniors, and young talent” (A Healthy Downtown Is Key to a Strong Community, 2013). Though the City of Commerce has potential to grow and nourish as a community, the steps have yet to be taken to begin the revitalization process. With the average age for the City of Commerce being nearly thirty years old, there is an opening for the city to take advantage of bringing in better opportunities for the middle-aged generation, as well as maintaining things to do for surrounding generations as well. This research report will begin to fill that need with contextual research that will be helpful in emerging a downtown revitalization plan for the City of Commerce. The report will comprise of an existing conditions analysis, planning literature for the downtown area, survey, and study of a similar area(s).

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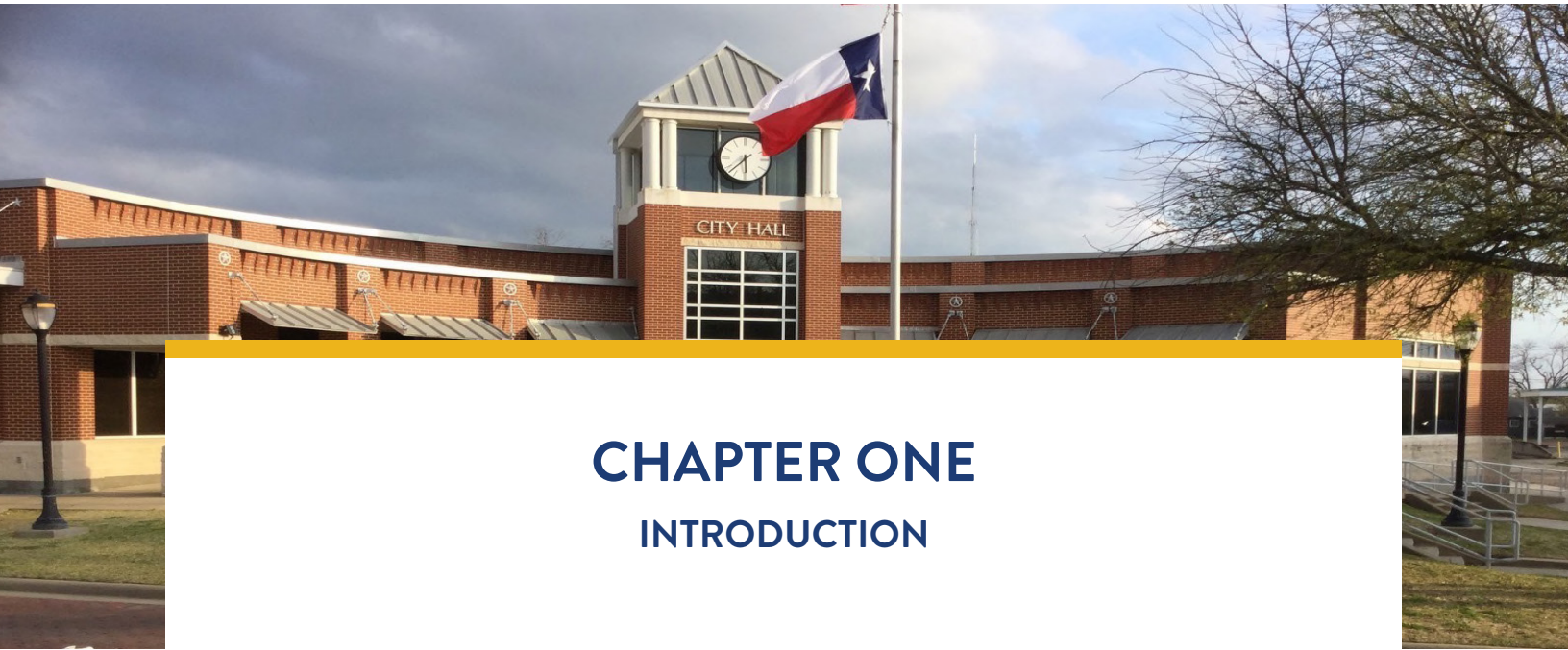
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Figure 11. City of Commerce City Hall

PROBLEM STATEMENT

The City of Commerce, TX is a city that is consistently growing every year. As the city continues to grow, there remains a voided interest for more forms of entertainment for many citizens of the city. While the City of Commerce future plan for the downtown area entails a goal of community engagement, the city has yet to provide many activities to encourage more engagement from the students and the residents.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The research objective of this report is to conduct background research to help put together a plan downtown revitalization plan for the City of Commerce. The report will comprise of an existing conditions analysis, planning literature for the downtown area, survey and study of a similar area(s).

JUSTIFICATION

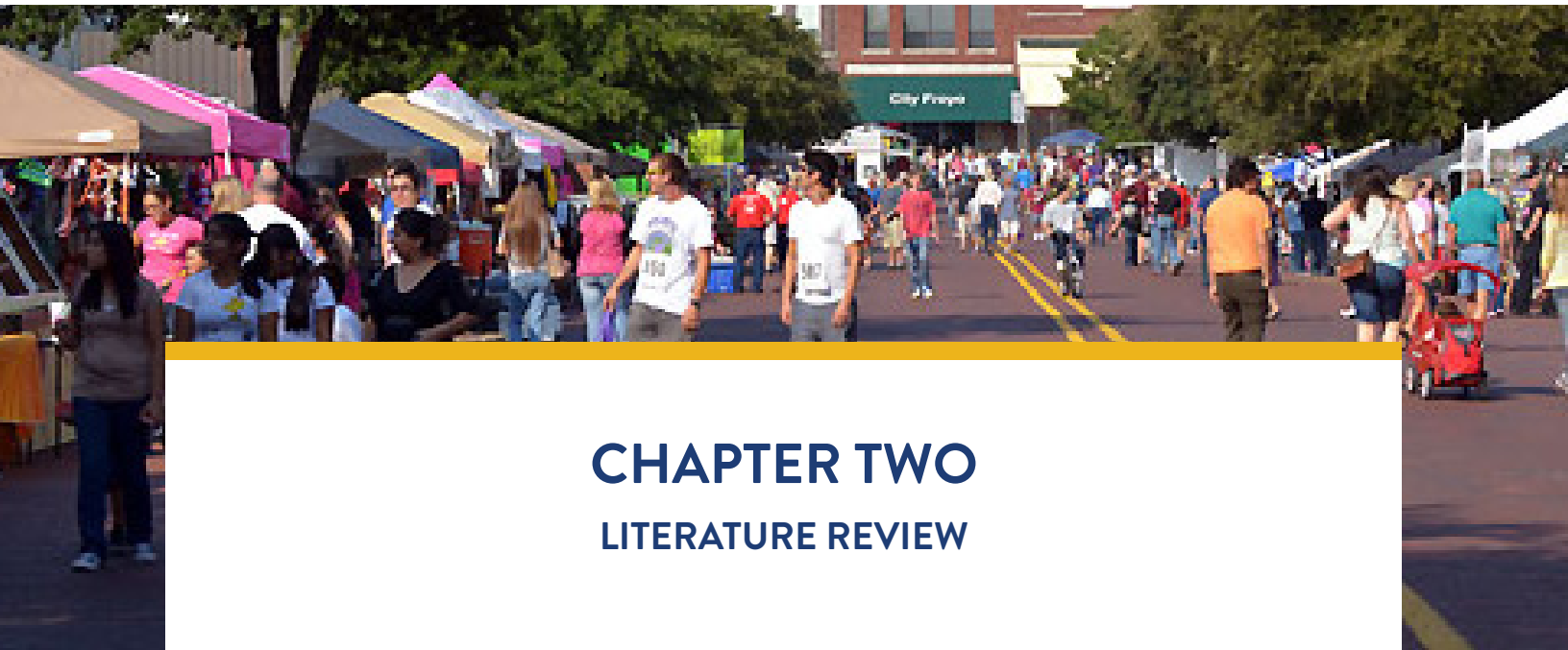
Aside from having a university within the city, the City of Commerce also receives a growth in residents annually. Also, there is a presented overall interest in developing a downtown plan to further the downtown area for better.

BACKGROUND

The City of Commerce is located just 60 miles northeast of Dallas, Texas (City of Commerce, 2017). Though the small town city consists of nearly 9,000

residents (Census.gov, 2017), the university within the city, Texas A&M University—Commerce. brings in a population of 12,302 (Texas A&M University—Commerce, 2017). Due to the university being within the City of Commerce, it opens a void that should be filled with a more activity filled downtown area for not only the residents, but the students of the university as well. While the current downtown area presents itself as an “Old Town District”, there is room for the area to grow and develop into a more vibrant environment. A new revitalization plan would also allow for the downtown area to present more of a “college town feeling” while also being able to bring in new businesses. One of the main benefits that can come from revitalizing the downtown area is that it can bring in an increase in population. Once residents and future students of the university see a vibrant area, it attracts them to wanting to live in the city.

Despite the reasoning provided to revitalize the downtown area, the City of Commerce has yet to make a revitalization plan. Though there could be many reasons in which the city has yet to create a new revitalization plan, the fact is that regardless, there has still been no plan put in place. A revitalization plan can be advantageous to not only residents of the city, but to the university as well. A concrete revitalization plan, once applied, can help create many benefits such as more walkability amongst citizens, community engagement, less traffic, and many more related benefits to the area. The research created and developed through this report should be valuable throughout the development of a future city downtown revitalization plan.




CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Figure 14. 27th Annual Bois D’Arc Bash (Commerce, TX)

INTRODUCTION

While there are many cities that tend to struggle with problems such as traffic congestion and pollution amongst many other problems, there are several solutions that can come from these problems. Developing and implementing a revitalization plan can help lessen many of the issues at hand. By having a downtown that stresses walkability, problems such as traffic congestion and pollution will slowly continue to dissolve. Downtown revitalization research shows that small town cities such as Commerce can further benefit. Creating a downtown environment that promotes a healthy environment (i.e.. walkability, bicycling, etc.) can not only reduce traffic amongst the area, but also encourage overall wellness amongst the community. However, though there are many benefits that come with developing a downtown revitalization plan, there is also the fact that some residents, potentially the older generation, may not want to bring a change like this amongst the city. Some residents who may have been living in the city for several years may simply be fine with how things are currently. Yet, as previously stated, the City of Commerce is a city that is gradually changing for the better just as other similar cities continue to do. Downtown revitalization planning research suggest that a city with a university such as Commerce, can be a good community to bring forth such changes. Nonetheless, it is also understood that though  project like this brings many changes, it can also present its challenges

BENEFITS

The benefits of a downtown revitalization for a city can include a positive impact for the city (community morale), more resources /available options for the city, and health benefits. With 9,000 residents and currently 12,000 students consistently growing by the year, there is a great opportunity for not only the current residents and students to enjoy change amongst the city,

but for the future growing population for the City of Commerce as well.

SPUR BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Downtown revitalization can help improve business development- by opening a foundation of local businesses, that attract more businesses in the future (Project for Public Places, 2014). When citizens feel comfortable with businesses

in a city, many citizens do not mind returning money back into their community (McCray, 2013).



Figure 15. Picture of a couple attending 31st Annual Bois D'Arc Bash (Commerce, TX)...Page

CREATE/DEVELOP JOB

By being able to gradually bring more business to downtown, it can help result in more jobs to the area. "Small businesses are the backbone of urban economies. They play a critical role in creating jobs for local residents" (Bowdler, 2016; Zeuli, 2016). Research has shown that studies such as a SWOT (Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities, Threats) Analysis help determine the types of jobs that would be beneficial to a city such as Commerce (Jannen, 2017).

STIMULATE THE HOUSING MARKET

There are some cases that show that revitalizing a downtown area can help stimulate surrounding residential properties. Stephen Santola point out, in the website article "Housing Can Help With Downtown Revitalization", that "affordable-housing obligation to foster downtown redevelopment by implementing thoughtful planning and economic policies that allow for the creation of dynamic mixed-use

and mixed-income downtown neighborhoods" (2017). With some surrounding homes in poor condition in the downtown area, choosing to revitalize downtown Commerce can help benefit the surround homes in the future.

ENTICE INVESTORS

While the process of revitalizing a downtown does not happen overnight, the development that occurs over time can help entice investors to the city. John Karras states in "12 Strategies That Will Transform Your City's Downtown", "Structures like vacant government office buildings, abandoned power plants, and other obsolete public facilities in your city's downtown are often prime candidates for redevelopment by the private sector" (2017).

REPLICATE THE HISTORY OF THE CITY

Maintaining the history within a downtown can be created through various forms. Karen Finucan states in "Way To Go", "Signage systems are assuming new roles in downtowns nationwide. Once viewed exclusively as a navigational aid, 'wayfinding' programs now are seen as a way to market an area's resources, alter negative perceptions, evoke a sense of a downtown's history and character, and improve the streetscape" (1999).

ENCOURAGE COMMUNITY PRIDE

A primary principle that cities must be aware of is that in order to have community pride, residents must have pride in their city. Kent Robertson explains in "Enhancing Downtowns Sense of Place" that "community ownership is connected to the degree to which citizens actually use the downtown. The higher the

number of stakeholders, the greater the level of ownership and interest and the greater the potential for downtown to be integral to the overall sense of community the idea that downtown is everybody's neighborhood" (1999).

UTILIZE EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE

The City of Commerce has current buildings within downtown that can be preserved during the revitalization process. For example, the city library located within the downtown area is one of the many buildings that could use a façade uplift. A city landmark such as the library, which has been within the city since the year 1918 (Commerce Public Library, 2017), should be maintained and well-kept in a way that helps the building stay for future generations to come.

INCREASE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Revitalizing downtown Commerce allows one to view the city in a different perspective prior to revitalization. Downtown revitalization is more than bringing more businesses to the city. Revitalization can also bring about a sense of community engagement. Jane Jacobs points out that "cities have the capability of providing something for everybody, only because, and only when, they are created by everybody" (Jacobs, 1961). Amongst bringing in new business development, community engagement in a city helps advance the quality of public spaces (Drier, 2006).

REAFFIRM COMMITMENT AND INSPIRE INVOLVEMENT FROM LOCAL LEADERS

Community involvement ultimately begins with community leaders who have board positions

and council seats. A city is more than the people who hold title positions – it is more about the residents who make up the city and the connections that everyone has with one another. Dorothy Height points out that "Without community service, we would not have a strong quality of life. It's important to the person who serves as well as the recipient. It's the way in which we ourselves grow and develop" (Wright, 2010).

CHALLENGES

One of the main problems encountered when encouraging a downtown revitalization process is trying to inspire residents to bring change to the city. In Commerce, Texas, specifically, there are 60 stores in the downtown area, in which only nearly half of the stores are currently occupied (City of Commerce Economic Development, 2016). In the process of trying to grow these numbers, there are some challenges that can present itself along the way.

LIMITED RESOURCES

It is almost certain that many cities can agree that an entire or some portion of downtown revitalization can be beneficial to the city. However, in many situations, larger cities tend to gather a higher number of financial resources. On the other hand, smaller cities tend to be restricted with resources. Smaller cities, such as Commerce, tend to rely more on private investments opposed to local government funding.

LACK OF BELIEF "WANT TO"

Typically in the case of smaller cities, due to the size of the city, there sometimes tends to be

a “lack of belief” or “want” to help grow the city. Though the median age for the City of Commerce lies within the late twenties, there are some elders who are content with how the city currently is. David Milder and Andrew Dane discuss in “Revitalizing Small Towns: Resolving Downtown Challenges”, that there are different ways that a small city downtown can still appease different generations.

“Successful small communities have developed a range of alternate approaches by leveraging limited resources and working with nearby communities, as well as by creating main street associations, business networks, circuit rider programs and consortiums, and economic development organizations” (Milder and Dane, 2013).

SLOW MARKET

In communities in which a market is considered slow, it could potentially be a leading reason as to why developers may not want to come to the city (Grote, 2014). In cases such as this, it is up to local leaders and residents to help lay the foundation of restoring the downtown district.

LACK OF DATA

For a city such as Commerce, it is important to gather resources and implement as much data into the downtown plan as possible. Certain data information that can be included can consist of how to increase walkability in the downtown area as well as how to keep buildings occupied in the downtown area. Will Lambe, points out several case studies in “Small Towns Big Ideas: Case Studies In Small Town Community Economic” (2016) that can be useful to a city during the process of revitalization.

PUBLIC ATTITUDE

Involving the public throughout the decision-making process is very vital when any changes are being made to a city. City officials should make sure that residents are aware of every decision, whether good or bad, about the direction the city intends on going. Typically when residents find themselves involved in the decisions that are being made for the city, the attitude from the residents tends to be more understanding (Butler Downtown: The Eight Principles, 2016).

PROMOTION

For many of the potential benefits that can come with revitalizing downtown Commerce, one of the initial challenges that the city can face promoting the idea to the residents of the city. There are several ways that residents of the city, students/faculty of the university, and many others can help push the agenda of bringing positive change to the city. Listed below are some ideas that can help a city properly promote a downtown plan.

CITY WEBSITE

There are many residents who find themselves going to the local city website to find out upcoming information that is going on within the city. By keeping residents updated with community meeting times and events, it allows one to feel comfortable knowing that they are consistently updated with what’s going on in the city.

CITY VIDEOS/YOUTUBE

One promotion tool that is slowly being use more and more is YouTube/city website videos. Cities may find it beneficial to use this tool to give residents a visual of what is going on in the city. There are some cities that even post videos of meetings on the city website for those who may have not been able to attend the meeting.

SOCIAL MEDIA

A promotional tool that has become very popular today is the dominance of social media. In today's world, it is nearly impossible to not be involved in social media in one form or another. With social media websites such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, and many others, the sky is the limit for the information that can be supplied to those inquiring about what is going on with the City of Commerce.

NEWSPAPER

Though there are many cities who are slowly starting to shy away from using ads in the newspaper due to social media, the newspaper can still be a reliable source. Though an advertisement does not necessarily have to be in the paper every day, it can simply be in the newspaper on popular days such as Sunday or days with enough notice to let people know about the meeting (Pew Research Center, 2016).

CITY-WIDE AD CAMPAIGNS

As time continues to approach for the city to present the downtown revitalization plan to the residents and other inquiries, the city could choose to run advertisement campaigns throughout the city. Ad campaigns can simply consist of signs such as banners, pole signs, wall signs, and other options so that residents

will know that the time is approaching to participate.

Keeping the community engaged is very vital whenever wanting to keep a city's morale high. The same can be said when producing projects such as a downtown revitalization project for the City of Commerce.

IMPORTANCE OF A PLAN

Creating and developing a downtown revitalization plan for the City of Commerce is vital simply for the potential for the positive impact of the people and city that it can have. Andy Kitsinger states in "Seven Ingredients for Building a Healthy Downtown", "Community engagement is a cornerstone of any effective revitalization effort and must be an early ingredient in building a strong downtown" (2013). However, once a plan is created, that is only the beginning of the process. "Don't create a plan for plans-sake. If you're going to take the time to do it, do it right" (Pathmakers, 2016). The revitalization plan is the foundation for the future of the city. The focus of the plan can be understood through three things: Educating, Encouraging and Engaging, and Planning and Evaluating.

EDUCATE

Often, when there is change that happens in a city, there are many residents who may not truly understand what is going on. For that reason, city officials must understand that educating as many residents as possible is important in the education process. To have a well-responsive community, it is important that all members of the city that all residents receive education in downtown revitalization. Jannen states several

components of educating revitalization efforts such as sharing goals and vision with residents, create a plan to present to the community, and present the incentives to the citizens that could come from revitalizing downtown (Jannen, 2017).

ENCOURAGING AND ENGAGING


Once educating people about the downtown revitalization plan, one of the next important things to do is to encourage and engage the community. When a city can become encouraged and engaged with one another, people tend to get excited for what the future can hold for the city. As previously mentioned, one of the ways to encourage and engage people can be done through promotional events. Other ways that encouragement and engagement can come about through show existing conditions of downtown area and create/show proposed downtown plan to residents of the city, encourage residents to get involved with helping develop the downtown plan, and help promote the positive impact that comes with redeveloping the downtown area (Enhancing Education, 2017).

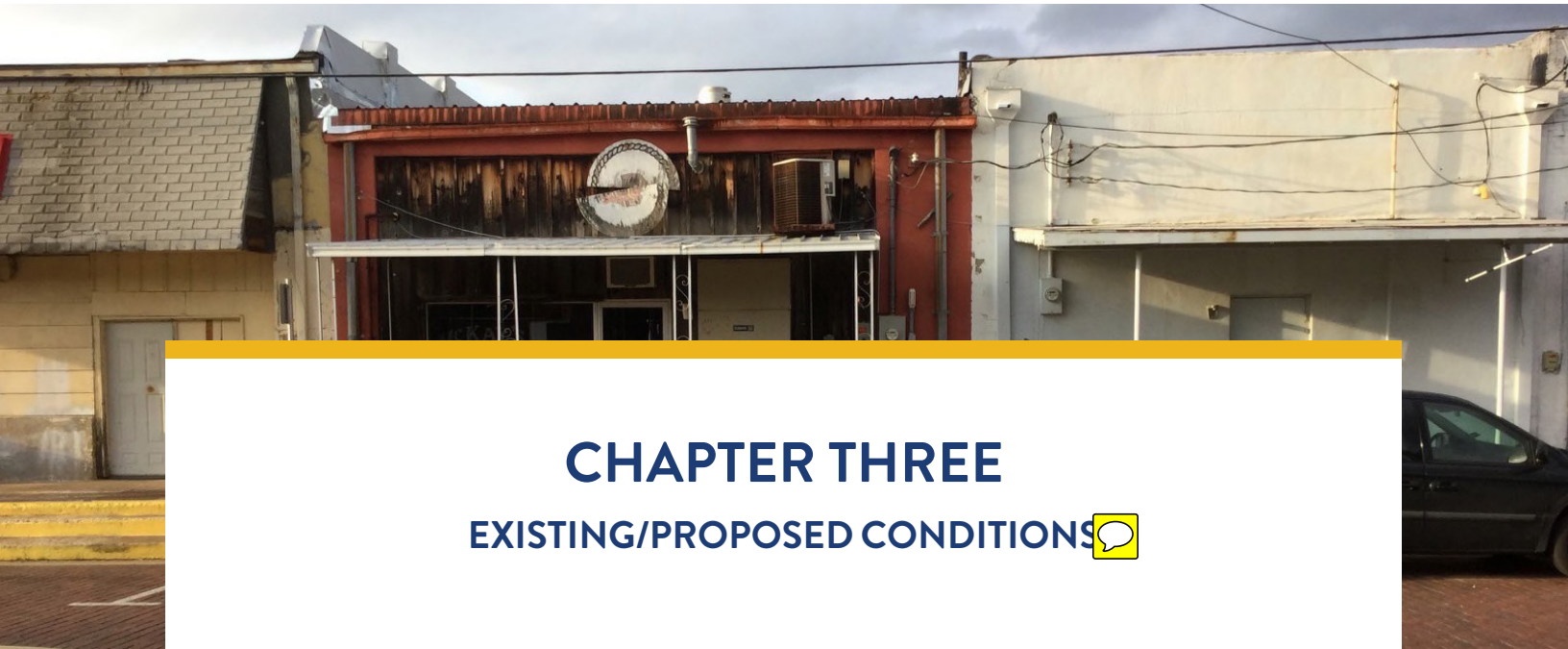
PLAN AND EVALUATE

The planning and evaluating phase can be considered one of the important stages. As a revitalization plan takes place, people become more comfortable knowing that they are being consistently updated with what is going on. Always keeping the people of the city in mind will help planners succeed continuously in the future. Other ways to help plan and evaluate are developing and creating a downtown revitalization plan with community input, survey residents and/or city officials about where they see the city evolving and analyzing findings from

conducted research to apply to the downtown plan (Karras, 2014).

CONCLUSION

The City of Commerce is a city that is consistently growing due to the growth in housing development as well as the annual growth from the city's university (Sperling's Best Places, 2016). In general, the city has not done a good job of providing services to the community that benefits the citizens socially. While the city's economic development department labels itself as "an atmosphere perfect for both the young business professional as well as for those among your workforce nearing retirement (Commerce Economic Development Corporation)", there has been little effort presented to help further develop the downtown area. There are several ways that the City of Commerce can develop a downtown revitalization plan. However, the right foundation must be put into place. As Charles Landry states, "Creativity cannot be really regulated, but it can be encouraged. The redevelopment or revitalization of a city is an art. It depends on the individual strengths of a place and the will of the leadership to bring about change. The goal is to establish a cultural infrastructure." (Landry, 2007). 



CHAPTER THREE

EXISTING/PROPOSED CONDITIONS

Figure 16. Existing store conditions in downtown Commerce

INTRODUCTION

For one to fully understand the current state of downtown Commerce, the existing study area must be studied thoroughly. A physical study of the downtown study area was conducted, while showing documentation of mapped buildings, streets, and sidewalks. Primarily, the structure for the data was gathered through existing city information and maps.

BUILDING COUNT

For the study, a building count was conducted for downtown Commerce. The building count was held on Thursday, March 16, 2017, between the hours of 5:00 pm and 6:00 pm. Within the downtown area, there were 60 buildings that were counted by one researcher (see Figure 17). Though there were a good number of buildings in the downtown area, there was no physical indication that many of the buildings were being actively used.

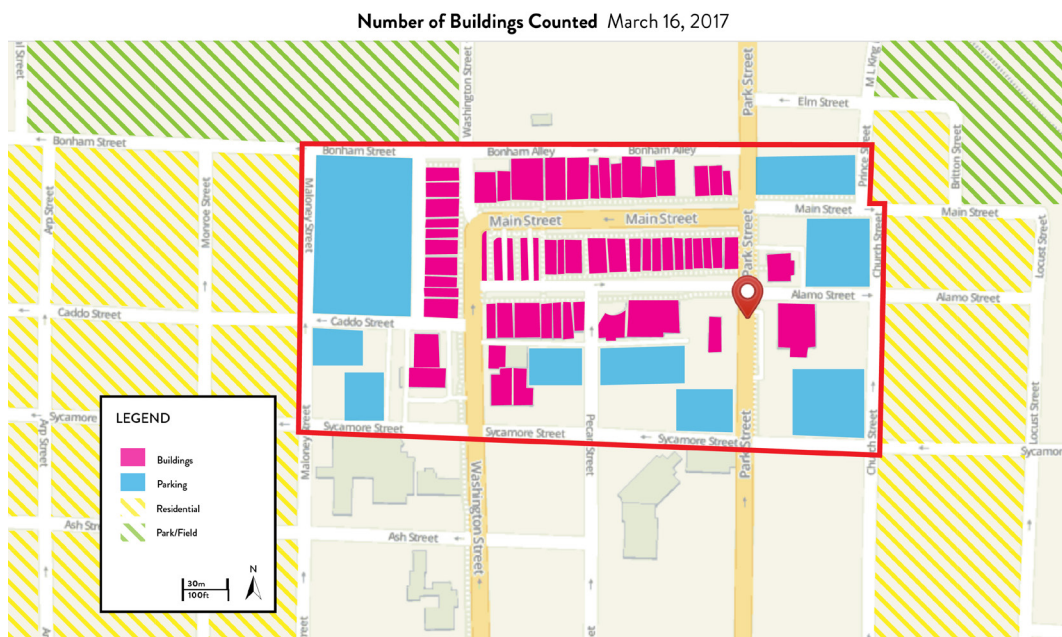


Figure 17. On March 16, 2017, 60 buildings were counted in the downtown area.

Number of Occupied Buildings Counted March 16, 2017

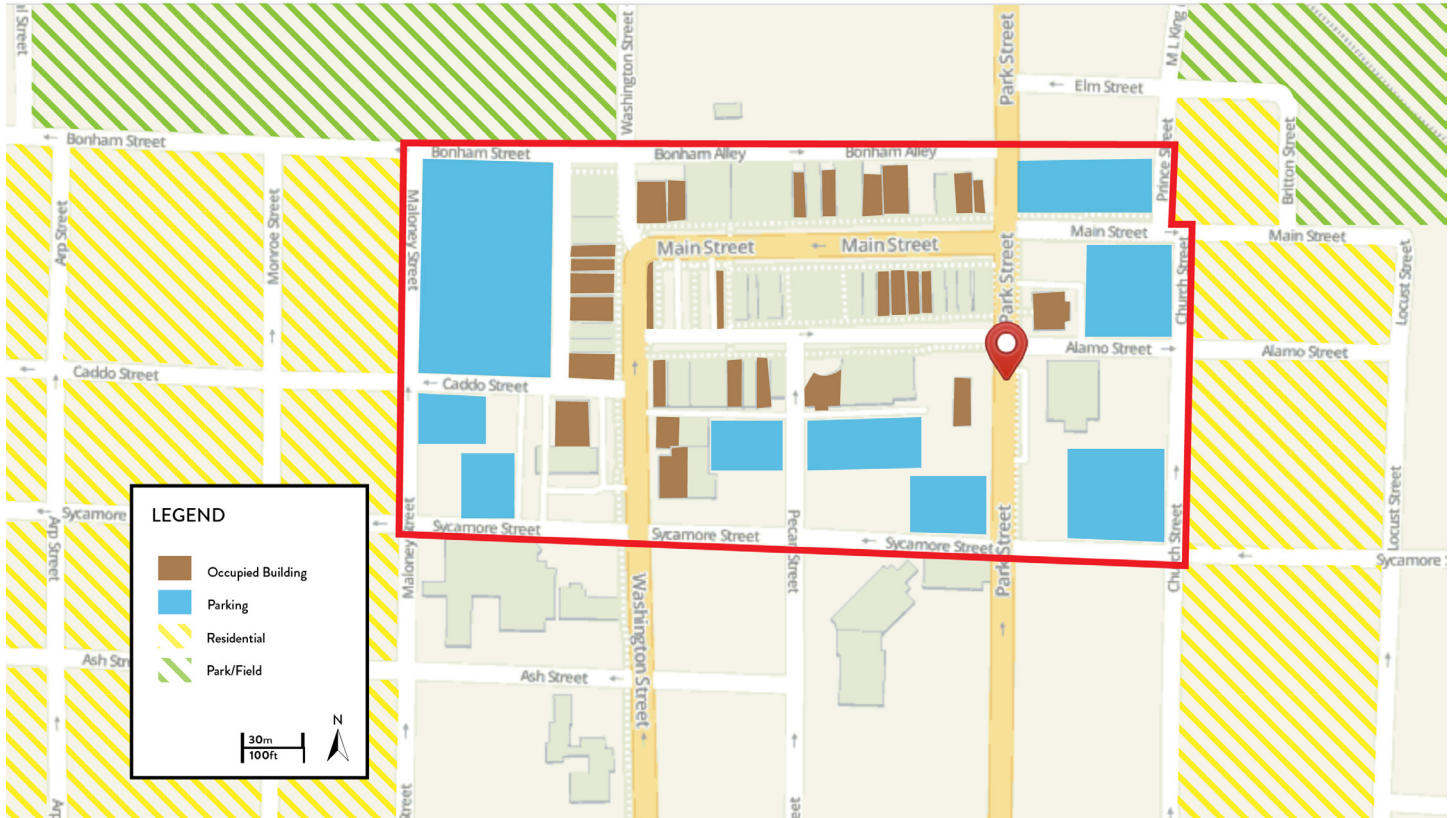


Figure 18. On March 16, 2017, 28 occupied buildings were counted.

BUILDING(S) CONDITION(S)

During the conducted building count, the conditions of the existing buildings as well as streetscape amenities seemed to be in poor condition. Many of the buildings either had paint, wood, or brick detaching from the building. Also, noticed during the count, there was no real consistency amongst the downtown buildings. There are some buildings with masonry material, as well as some with wood.

There is one business that is currently vacant, but decided to board his property closed, opposed to properly vacating the building; which is not allowed by the City of Commerce (Muni Code – Commerce, TX, 2017). Figure 19 and Figure 20 show buildings in Commerce’s downtown that are currently out of compliance with the city (per Article II of the City of Commerce Building Code, 2017).



Figure 19. Illegally boarded building in downtown Commerce (picture taken on March 16, 2017 by Colby Collins).



Figure 20. A building in poor condition in downtown Commerce (picture taken on March 16, 2017 by Colby Collins).

POOR CONDITION BUILDINGS (19)

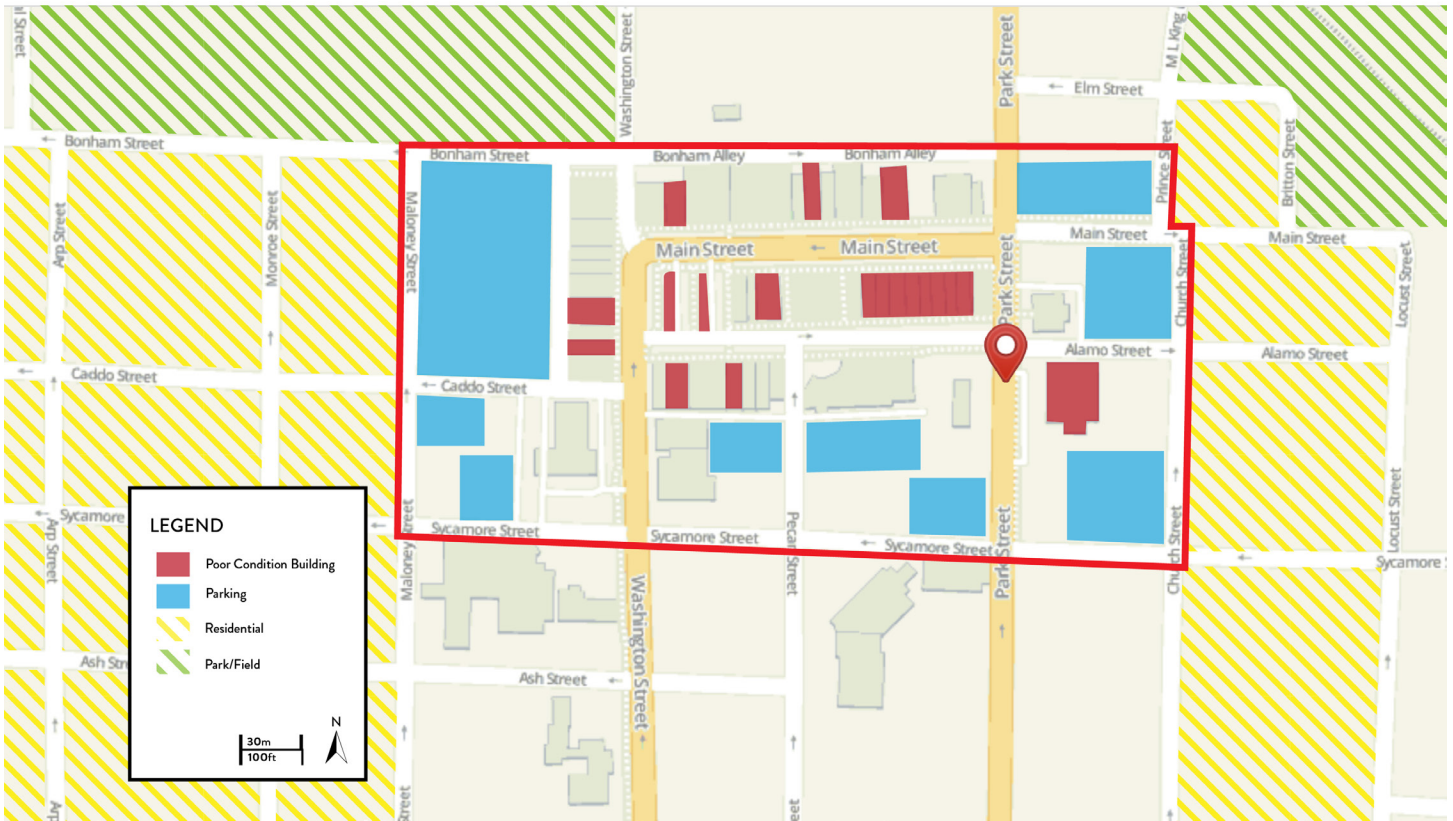


Figure 21. On March 16, 2017, 19 poor conditioned buildings were counted

Number of Buildings out of Compliance (Per the City of Commerce Building Code) Counted March 16, 2017

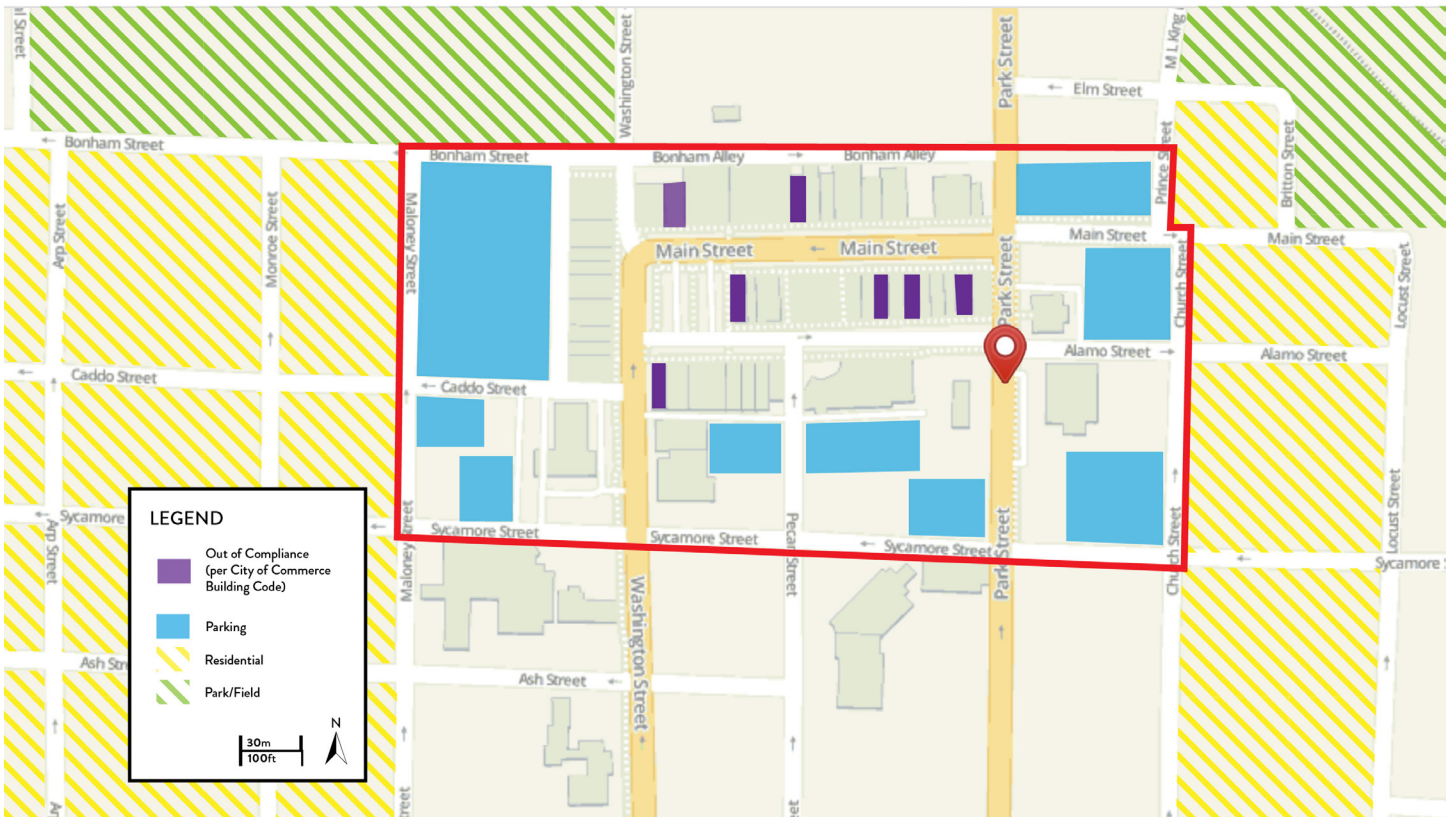


Figure 22. On March 16, 2017, 7 buildings were counted that were considered "out of compliance" (per the City of Commerce Building Code).


The Heart of Tyler (HOT) states that “Your downtown or traditional commercial district is the most visible indicator of community pride, along with its economic and social health. It is either an asset or a liability in the effort to recruit new residents, new businesses and industries, retirees, tourists, and others to your community and to keep those you already have. Quality of life is what separates successful cities and towns from declining communities in the new millennium” (Heart of Tyler, 2017). The Heart of Tyler also speaks on the importance making downtown “as pedestrian friendly as possible”. By having too many parking spaces in one area, could potentially attract too many cars (Parking Planning for Pedestrian Activity, 2013). 



Figure 25. Poor conditioned, hazardous walking rail in downtown Commerce (picture taken on March 16, 2017 by Colby Collins).

STREETS

Another concern that can affect pedestrians are the current street conditions in downtown. There are several streets in downtown that has concrete damage that affects not only the people who walk on them, but it also affects the drivers on the road as well. This is a problem that may perhaps affect those who may be handicapped as could also cause potential harm to those who use the streets.



Figure 23. Vacant poor conditioned building in downtown Commerce (picture taken on March 16, 2017 by Colby Collins).



Figure 24. Occupied poor conditioned building in downtown Commerce (Drunken Mule Saloon) (picture taken on March 16, 2017 by Colby Collins).



Figure 26. Poor conditioned street (Main Street) in downtown Commerce (picture taken on March 16, 2017 by Colby Collins).



Figure 27. Poor conditioned street (Alamo Street) in downtown Commerce (picture taken on March 16, 2017 by Colby Collins).

EXISTING CONDITIONS SUMMARY

The building count that was conducted reflects that though there are some buildings within downtown, there are currently too many vacant buildings in the area. Creating and developing a downtown revitalization plan would help create building blocks towards making a vibrant downtown. Additionally, revitalizing downtown could help bring character and pride into the city. Though there are existing challenges such as building conditions and streets, a revitalization plan can help work towards providing solutions for the city. Moreover, the City of Commerce can prove to its residents and visitors of the city that they are trying to progress towards a better future for years to come.

Number of Poor Street Conditions Counted March 16, 2017

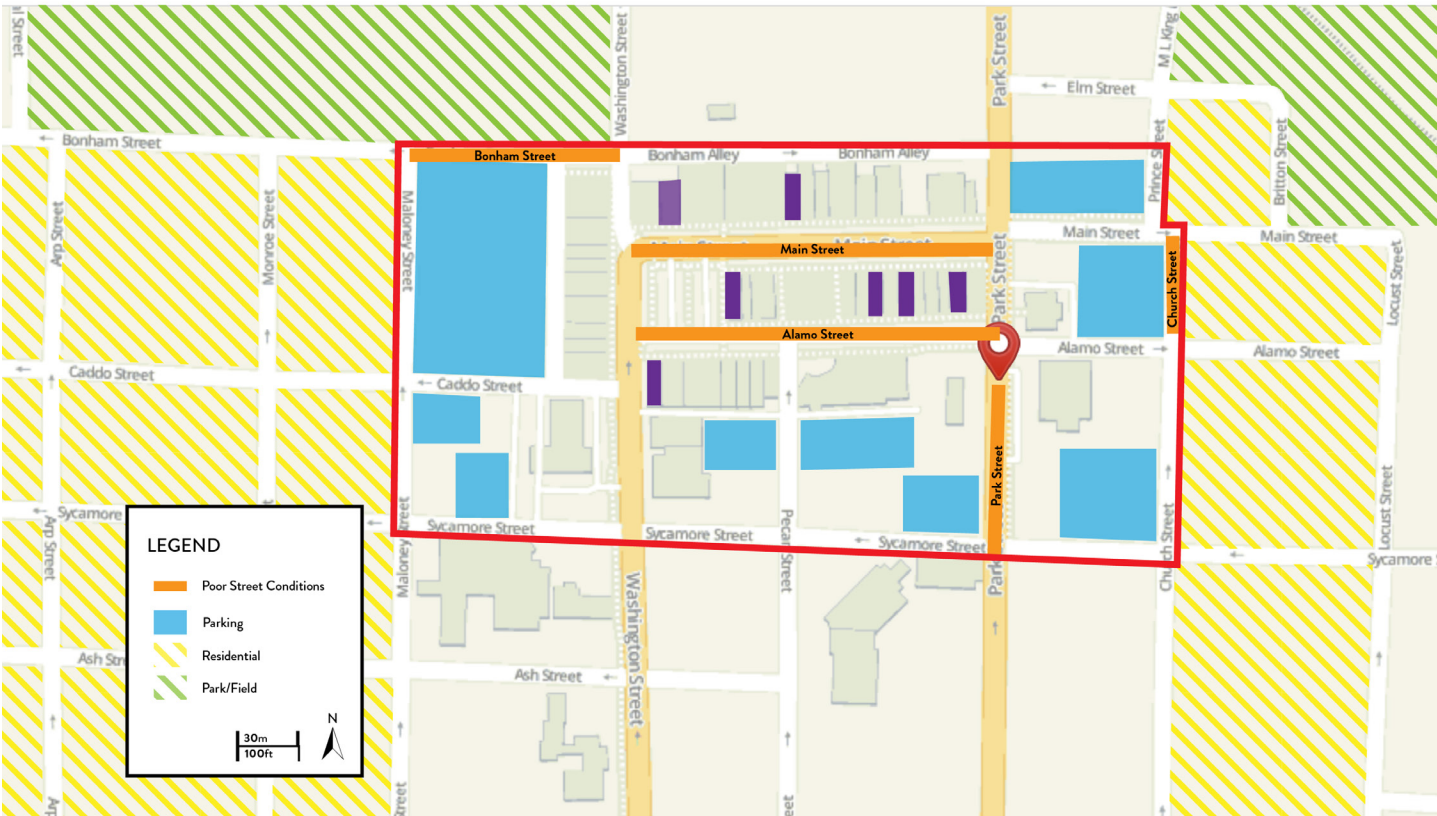


Figure 28. On March 16, 2017, poor conditioned streets were counted that were considered.

CHAPTER FOUR

CASE STUDIES

Fredericksburg, Virginia



Figure 29. Picture of City of Fredericksburg, Virginia downtown (Photo by City of Fredericksburg, Virginia).

HISTORIC DISTRICT

By being incorporated as a city in 1781, Fredericksburg, Virginia is one of the most historic cities within the United States today. In 2015, the strategic plan identified the Main Street Program as a primary model for further strengthening the city. The Main Street Model provided a strategy based on a “Four Star Approach”. Per the City of Fredericksburg, the approach consisted of:

- Promotion: creating a positive image that will enhance community pride and improve consumer and investor confidence in our commercial district.
- Economic Restructuring: strengthening our community’s existing economic assets while diversifying our economic base.
- Organization: establishing consensus and cooperation by building partnerships among the various groups that have a stake in the commercial district.

Population: 27,025
Nearest Major City: Washington, D.C. (47 miles)
Area (square miles): 10.5 square miles
Year Incorporated: 1781

Design: getting downtown into top physical shape and creating a safe, inviting environment for shoppers, visitors, and workers. By developing and implementing the listed approaches, the City of Fredericksburg has been able to become recognized throughout the United States for their downtown revitalization efforts. While being able to add and maintain restaurants, coffee shops, and even art galleries, the City of Fredericksburg has been able to maintain its historic nature for its residents and visitors. (City of Fredericksburg Economic Development, 2017)

Nacogdoches, Texas



Figure 30. Picture of City of Nacogdoches, Texas downtown (Photo by City of Nacogdoches, Texas).

STRUCTURING PARTNERSHIPS TO ENDORSE DOWNTOWN

Nacogdoches is known as the “Oldest City in Texas” (City of Nacogdoches, 2017), due to its year of incorporation. To help revitalize its downtown area, the city has “partnered with the local convention and visitor’s bureau, chamber of commerce, economic development corporation, school district and Stephen F. Austin State University to preserve these buildings and create a vibrant, attractive downtown” (City of Nacogdoches, 2017).

The City of Nacogdoches is able to maintain a vibrant downtown through providing several mixed-use businesses (boutiques, restaurants, galleries). The city has also attracted more people to the downtown area by constructing new residential units. “Several local initiatives, such as the Main Street Planter Box Program, make downtown streets more appealing to residents and visitors” (City of Nacogdoches, 2017).

The city continues to hold a variety of events with

Population: 33, 687

Nearest Major City: Houston, TX (142 miles)

Area (square miles): 27 square miles

Year Incorporated: 1779

the downtown area to help attract visitors along with residents year-round. The city makes it a purpose to have events to help highpoint the city’s historic assets. “One of the largest events is the Texas Blueberry Festival, which draws about 20,000 people annually (many of whom are out-of-town visitors). The city works with Stephen F. Austin State University to promote downtown businesses during student orientation, parents’ weekends, and alumni events. The Nacogdoches County Chamber of Commerce (in partnership with other entities) encourages students, locals and visitors to patronize local businesses through its Shop Nac First program. These partnerships maximize the impact and efficiency of the city’s revitalization efforts” (City of Nacogdoches, 2017).

Rio Dell, California



Figure 31. Picture of City of Rio Dell, California downtown (Photo by City of Rio Dell, California).

SMALL TOWN WITH HISTORIC DISTRICT

Rio Dell's downtown development strategy is to clean up the town and revitalize its critical infrastructure to make the community attractive to outside investors. Rio Dell was issued a cease and desist order in 2002 for both its wastewater treatment and its water supply infrastructure.

Beginning in 2002, Rio Dell was prohibited from permitting any new development until it dealt with its water and wastewater systems. In 2001, Rio Dell launched the Gateway Project, a simple beautification program to redesign the town's north entrance off U.S. 101. Next, local officials installed landscaped medians on Main Street to slow traffic and improve the town's visual appeal. In 2003, the town partnered with the St. Joe Community Resource Center, a community outreach arm of the St. Joseph Health System, to improve the facades of vacant downtown buildings.

Population: 33,687

Nearest Major City: Houston, TX (142 miles)

Area (square miles): 27 square miles

Year Incorporated: 1779

Between 2002 and 2006, for instance, the town issued 39 new business licenses, and businesses opened in eight previously vacant storefronts in town. These new businesses created 18 new jobs, and Rio Dell's Chamber of Commerce membership has doubled (Small Towns Big Ideas: Case Studies In Small Town Community, 2008).

(City of Rio Dell, California, 2017)

San Marcos, Texas



Figure 32. Picture of City of San Marcos, Texas downtown (Photo by City of San Marcos, Texas).

SAN MARCOS: DOWNTOWN SQUARE

The mission for the City of San Marcos downtown states “The mission of the San Marcos Main Street Program is to maintain the unique, historic nature of downtown recognizing its history and planning for its future. We strive to provide economic stability to the heart of our City through a comprehensive revitalization program of the National Main Street Center’s Four Points of Main Street: design, economic restructuring, organization, and promotion” (City of San Marcos: Main Street, 2017). Like the City of Fredericksburg, the City of San Marcos has been able to maintain its historic district, while also providing shopping (San Marcos Outlets), dining, as well as art and culture. Whether a resident, a visitor traveling to Austin or San Antonio, the City of San Marcos is able to use the Four Points of Main Street to help attract people from everywhere to the downtown area (City of San Marcos, 2017).

Population: 60,684

Nearest Major City: Austin, TX (29 miles)

Area (square miles): 30.3 square miles

Year Incorporated: 1877



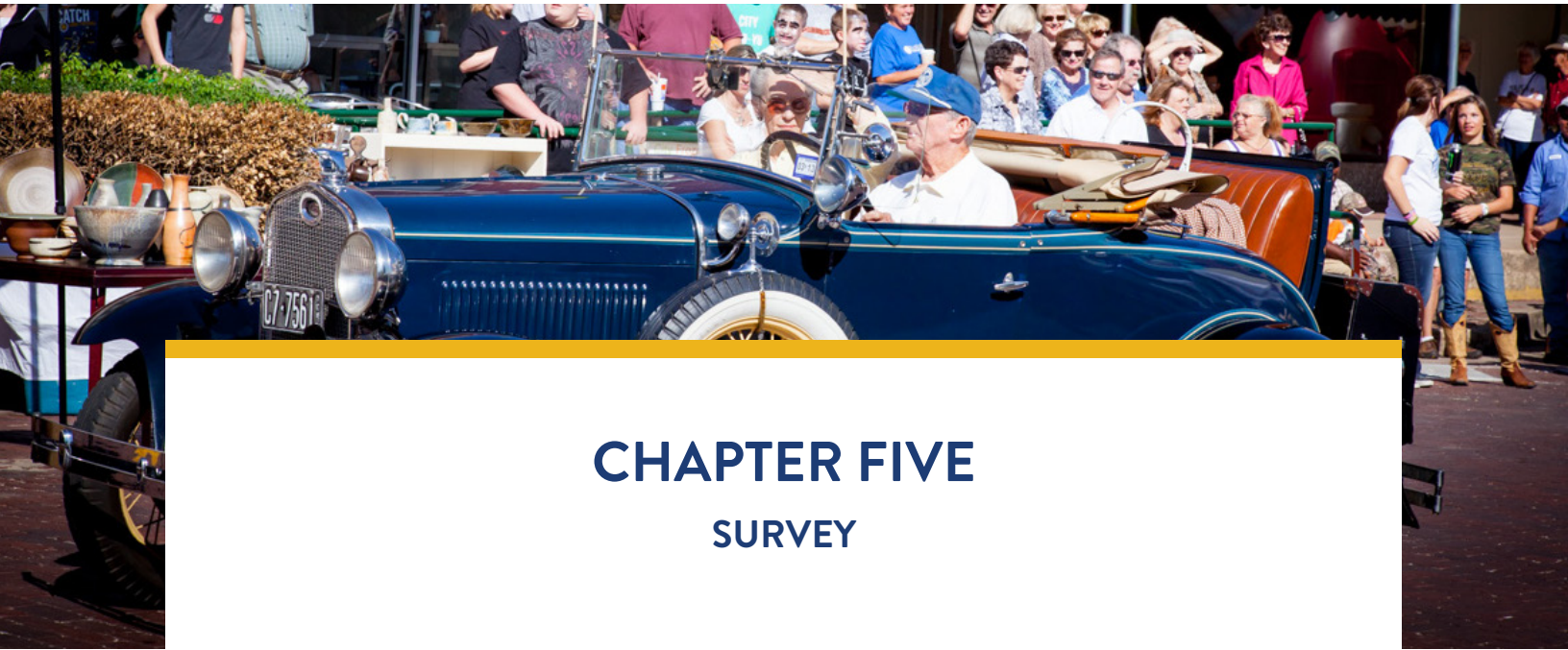


Figure 33. Picture of 31st Annual Bois D'Arc Bash (Commerce, TX)

CHAPTER FIVE

SURVEY

INTRODUCTION

For one to grasp a better understanding of the City of Commerce downtown area, a survey¹ entailing a questionnaire about the conditions of the Commerce downtown area was conducted for residents of the city who wanted to participate. The data that has been collected from the survey has been assembled below to help further demonstrate the complications and areas that the downtown area can improve.

METHODOLOGY

The downtown revitalization survey consisted of example questions from other downtown revitalization surveys. The survey participation was publicized through a survey link on February 20, 2017 (link shared with city staff and members of city boards and commissions). The survey link was also shared through the City of Commerce newspaper² (The Commerce Journal), and the city's Facebook page. The survey was open to the City of Commerce public from February 20, 2017 to March 13, 2017.

RESULT SUMMARY

There was a total of 104 people who completed the downtown revitalization survey. The survey questions revolved around where the residents would like to see the downtown area progress in the future. The survey results are presented in the Appendix section.

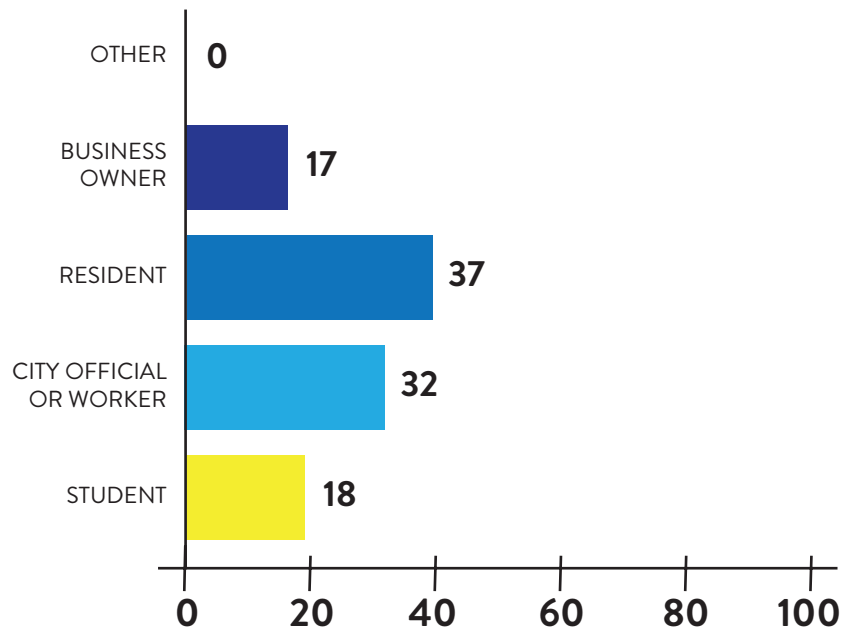


Figure 34. Results from question: “What best describes you?”

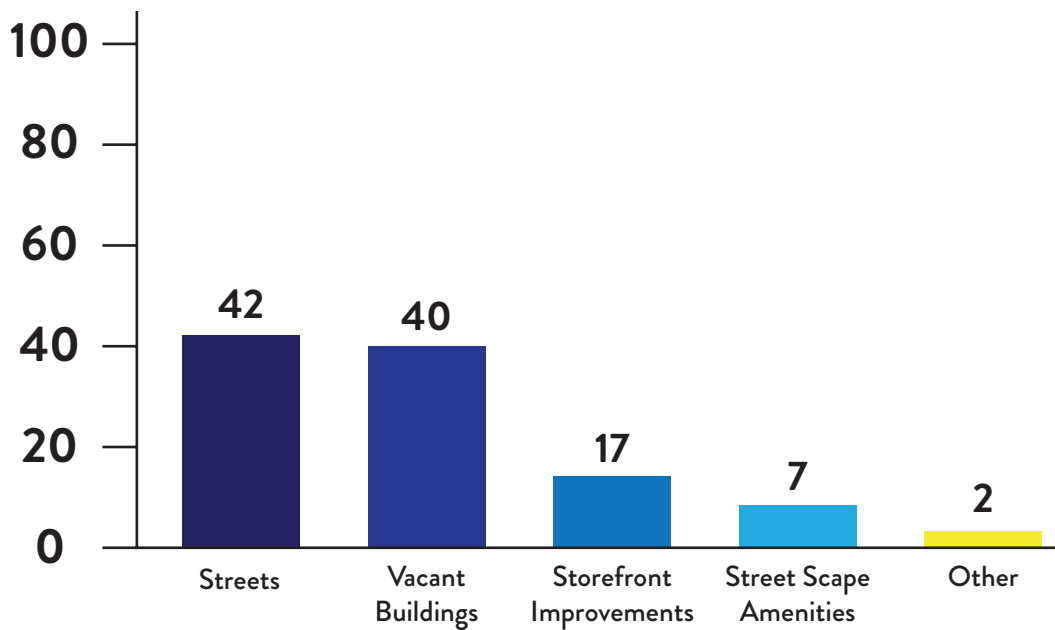


Figure 35. Results from question: “What is the most important problem that needs to be corrected within the downtown area?”

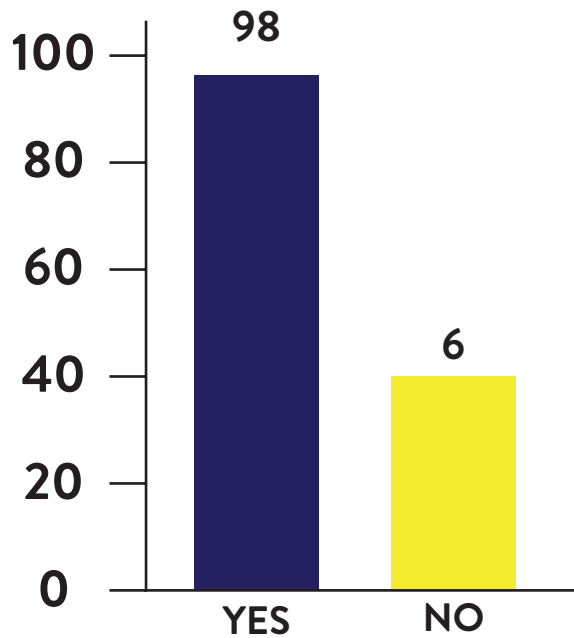


Figure 36. Results from question: “Do you believe the City of Commerce is in need of a downtown revitalization?”

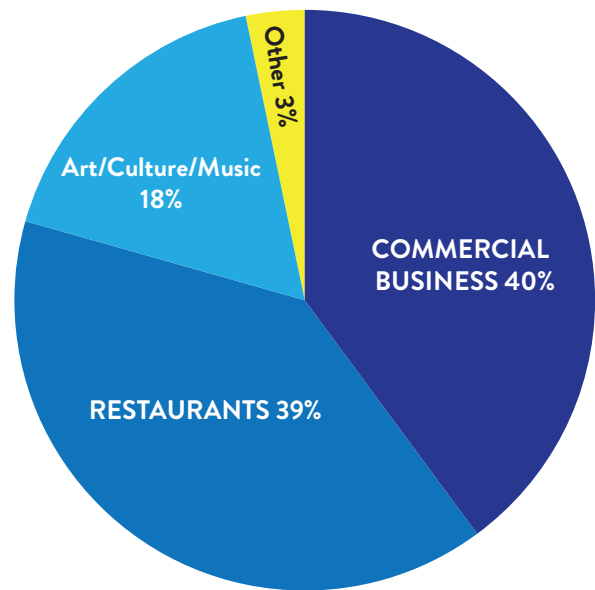


Figure 37. Results from question: “What type of businesses should be recruited to downtown Commerce?”

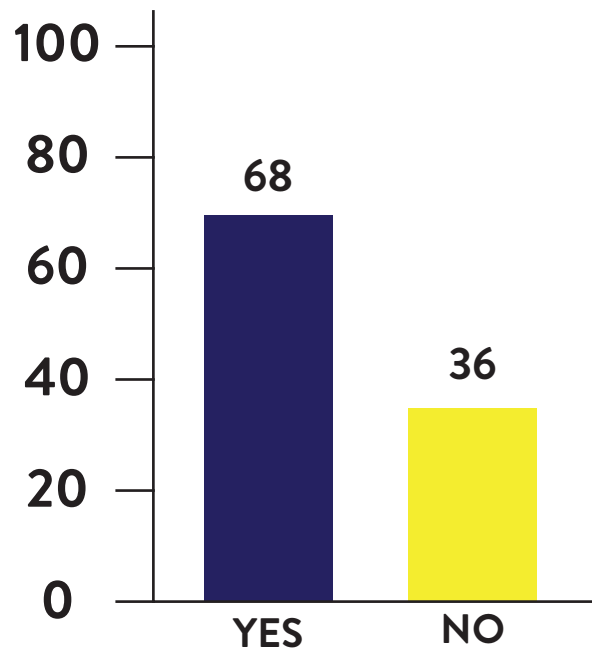


Figure 38. Results from question: “Do you live within 1,000 feet of this focus area?”

EDUCATE

The majority of the survey respondents consisted of residents of the City of Commerce (see figure 34). 42% of the respondents believed that the primary focus of the downtown area should be the streets (see figure 35). Educating members of the city of potential benefits for revitalizing the downtown area can be beneficial for those who may question how the city is trying to grow. Furthermore, a question used from the City of Gothenburg, Nebraska Downtown Revitalization Plan, "Revitalization development in downtown should be distinctly different than what exists today" show a response of 52% agreeing while 28% disagreed with the statement (see Figure 40). While it is important the city educates the city about the potential benefits that can come with revitalizing downtown, it is also important to educate the citizens about the potential issues that can arise.

Part of educating citizens is also making sure that all city officials are doing their best to educate citizens as well. In the question "Does the local economic development corporation do enough to assist with protecting the interests of local businesses while marketing the community to prospective new businesses?", 45% of respondents answered, "Not Sure" (see Figure 42). Moreover, the question "What is the best way to advertise to other about the benefits of revitalization?", respondents answered 43% (Social Media) and 37% (Word of Mouth).

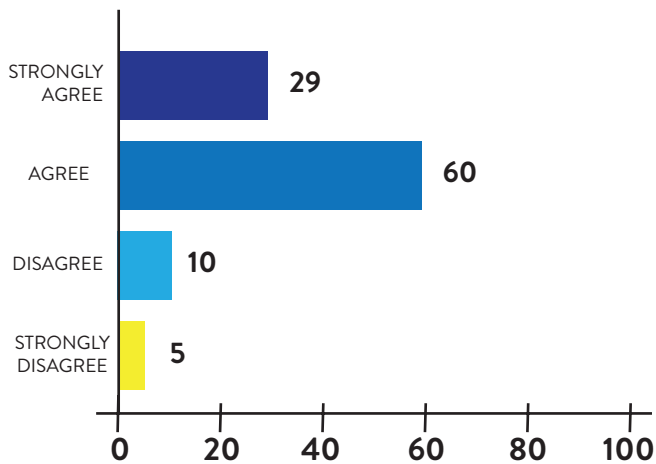


Figure 39. Results from question: "Land uses downtown should serve the local market as well as the region"

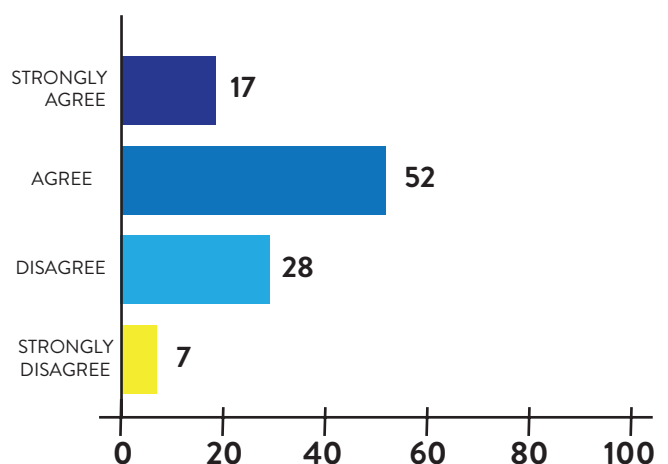


Figure 40. Results from question: "What is the best way to advertise to others about the benefits of revitalization for downtown Commerce?"

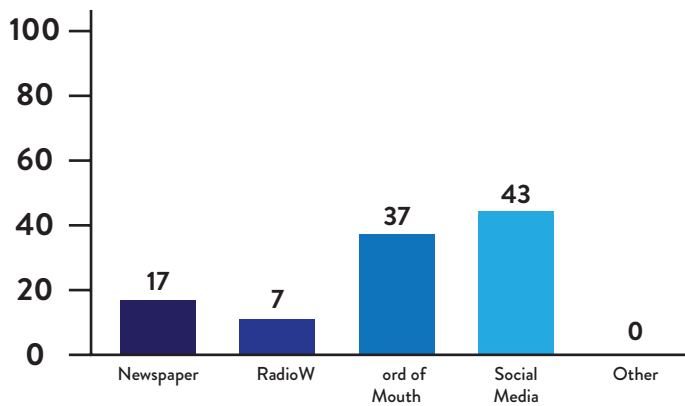


Figure 41. Results from question: "Development in downtown should be distinctly different than what exists today."

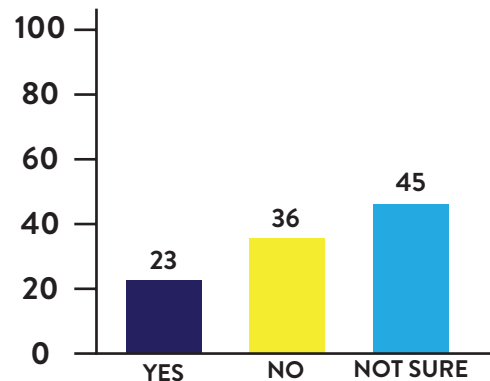


Figure 42. Results from question: "Does the local economic development corporation do enough to assist with protecting the interests of local businesses while marketing the community to prospective new businesses?"

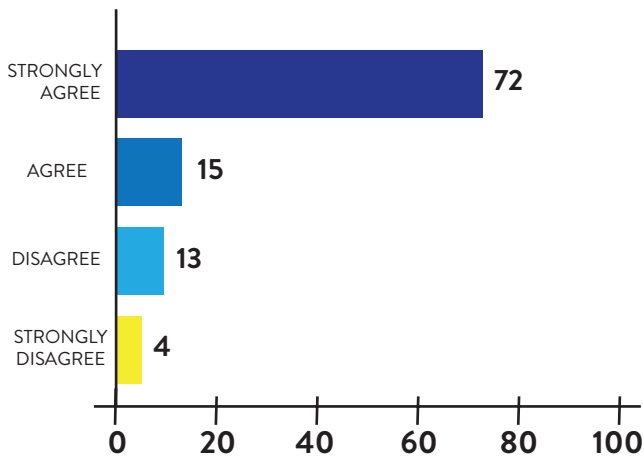


Figure 43. Results from question: “There are too many empty buildings in downtown Commerce.”

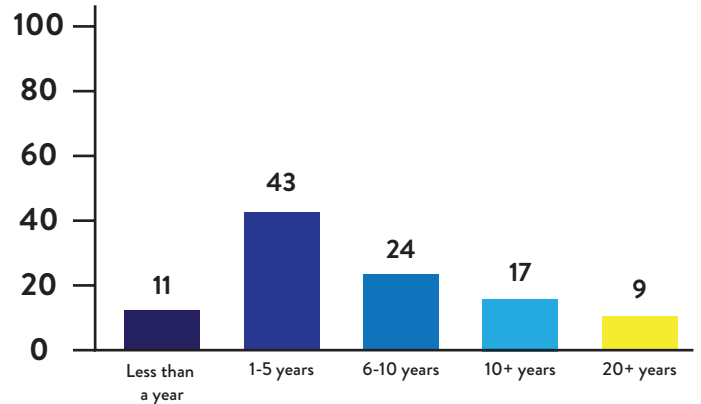


Figure 44. Results from question: “I have lived in Commerce for (Less than a year, 1-5 years, 6-10 years, 10+ years, 20+ years, Not a resident)”

ENCOURAGE/ENGAGE

To help encourage and engage citizens to participate in the planning process, it helps to gain a better understanding of how citizens feel about the current downtown status. Out of the 104 people who responded to the survey, 72 people “strongly agree” to the statement “There are too many empty buildings in downtown Commerce” (see Figure 43). Citizens responded to the question “What amenities should be implemented in downtown Commerce” by stating that high speed internet is needed (37%) (see Figure 45). Though the city currently has a strategic plan in place (City of Commerce (TX) – Economic Development Strategic Plan), there is no currently strategy in place that directly correlates to the downtown area. Per the question “Why do you think people shop and/or eat in other cities opposed to Commerce?”, 47% responded that other cities have better shopping environments while 37% responded that better restaurants are available in other cities (see Figure 47). Based on the survey results, it seems that more people are looking to bring more shopping and food options to downtown.

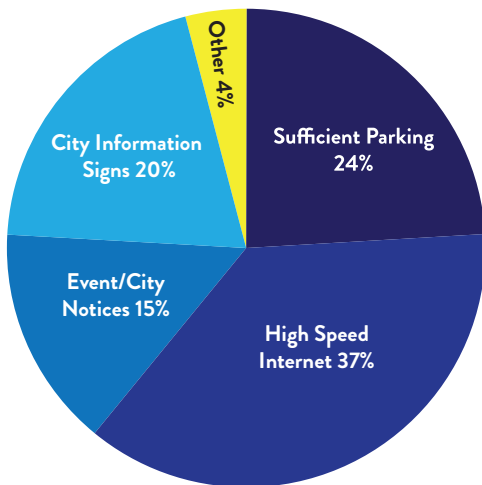


Figure 45. Results from question: “What amenities should be implemented in downtown Commerce?”

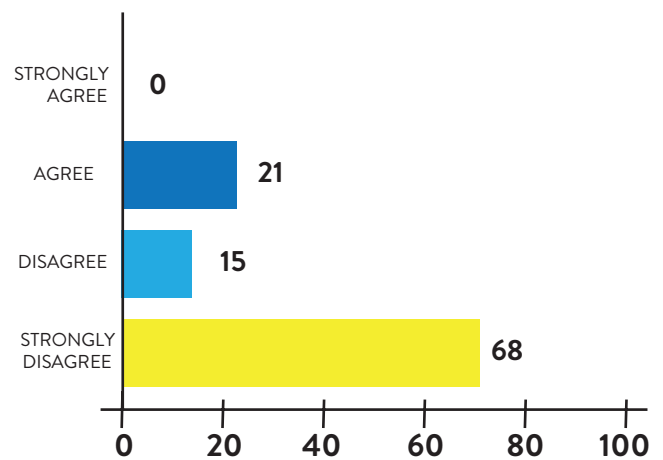


Figure 46. Results from question: “The buildings in downtown Commerce are in good condition”

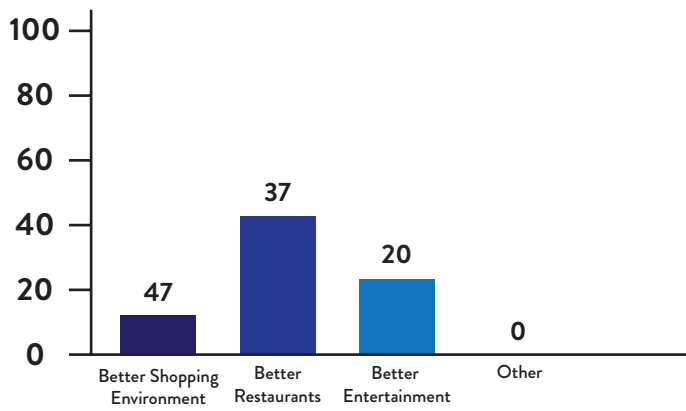


Figure 47. Results from question: “Why do you think people shop and/or eat in other cities opposed to Commerce?”

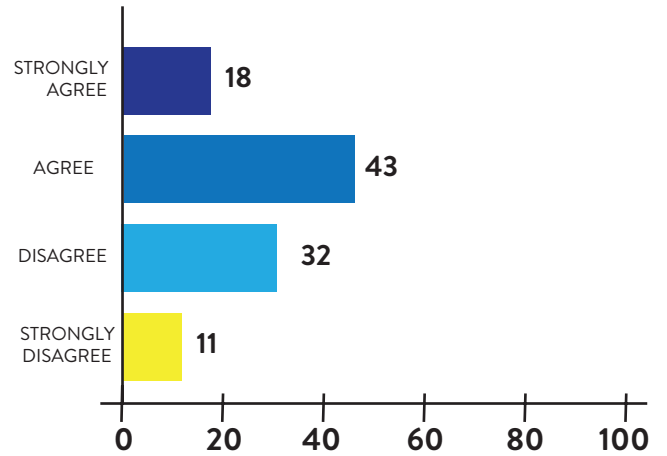


Figure 48. Results from question: “The character of new development in downtown needs to match what is in place today.”

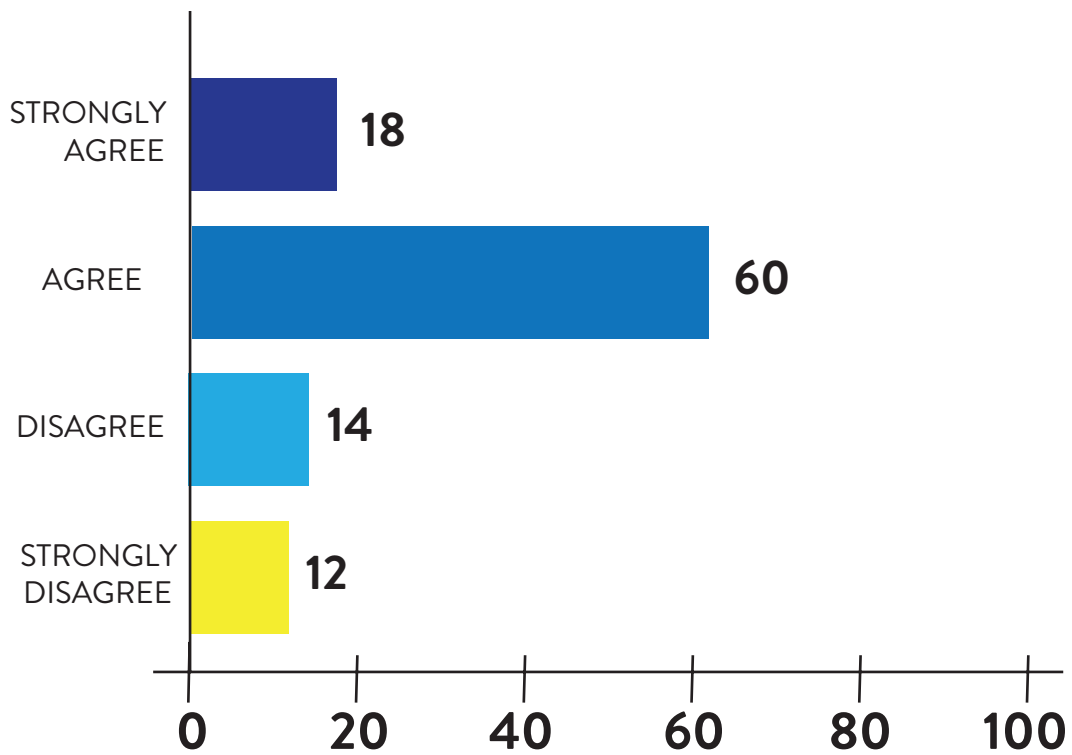


Figure 49. Results from question: “More public spaces should be a part of the downtown.”

SURVEY SUMMARY

Overall, results show that citizens are interested in improving the streets as well as occupying vacant buildings with commercial businesses and restaurants. Enhancing buildings and streets can not only improve safety in the area, but it can gradually help the city regain its historic and vibrant feel back to the city.

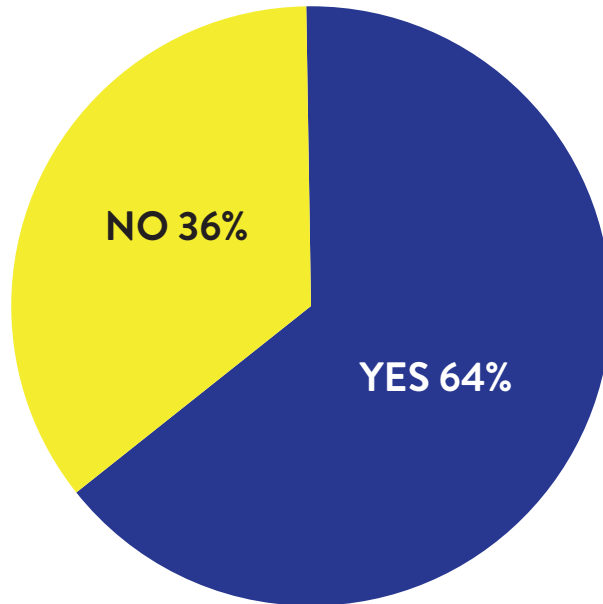


Figure 50. Results from question: "Commerce downtown should rebrand itself"

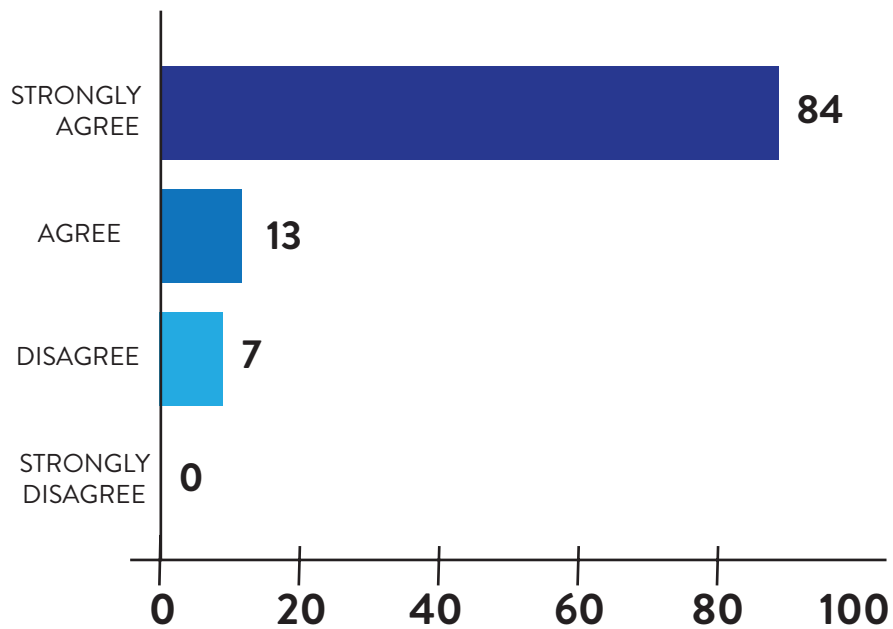
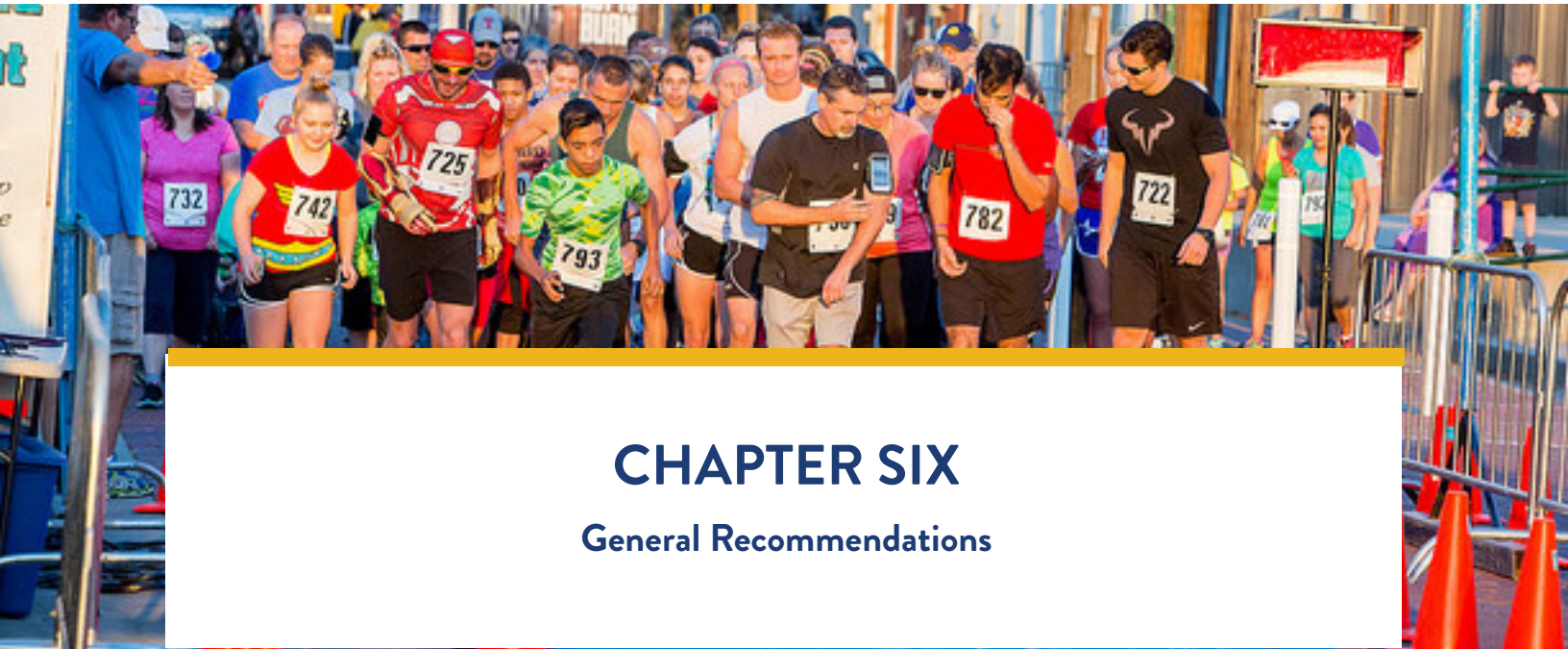


Figure 51. Results from question: "Downtown should continue to be the civic core of the community."



CHAPTER SIX

General Recommendations

Figure 52. Picture of 31st Annual Bois D’Arc Bash (Commerce, TX)

NEIGHBORHOOD PRESERVATION

There are several neighborhoods located within the city of Commerce. The neighborhoods within the city comprise of various home styles and sizes. Over the years, there have been several homes and areas that have been remodeled and restructured to stay updated to try and stay consistent with the changes in the city. Nonetheless, there are still some changes that could still be made that could help enhance the city of Commerce downtown area in a positive way. There are also several businesses that could benefit from some type of rehabilitation. Fortifying the neighborhoods correspondingly entails larger social interaction and organization of neighborhood inhabitants to endorse their mutual interests.

MORE VARIETY OF USES

As previously stated, with the implementation of a downtown revitalization plan comes changes for the better. One of the main changes includes providing more variety of uses for the people who visit the downtown Commerce area. A complete city contains a wide range of uses to meet the day-to-day desires of its residents. The wide range of uses can include many things such as better facilities,

housing options, office space, and retail. The downtown area can add options such as the ones mentioned and still be able to maintain its historic feel towards the city.

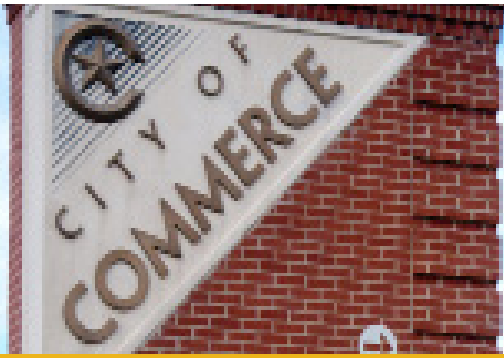
ARTS DISTRICT

In many places around the world, there are cities who make it a purpose to include art and culture within its downtown areas not only for the residents of the city, but also for visitors of the city to view as well. The city of Commerce could also benefit from the same idea. According to APA How the Arts and Culture Sector Catalyzes Economic Vitality, “Arts and cultural activity can increase attention and foot traffic to an area, including attracting visitors and increasing the length of time and money they spend, thereby contributing to continued development. Similarly, the presence of public art and related streetscape amenities such as artist designed lighting, signs, and benches is a way to attract pedestrians.” The city can also work with various non-profit organizations to donate art so that organizations can have it in their buildings as well.

PEDESTRIAN-FRIENDLY STREETS

One of the main focus points for a downtown revitalization plan should be creating more walkable streets for its citizens and visitors of the city. A mixture of community infrastructure plans and private expansion can help reshape the streetscape of downtown Commerce. For example, by adding something such as signature brick sidewalks or adding more trees along the streets can help offer not only an enhanced pedestrian experience, but

it can correspondingly connect the city as a whole visually. On-street parking helps minimize traffic amongst the area, while also offering a safe buffer for pedestrian well-being. Pedestrian paths within neighborhoods should be re-evaluated within the city. There are several sidewalks within the city and downtown area that could remodeled. There are also areas that could use sidewalks for pedestrians within the downtown area.



CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

Figure 53. City of Commerce Town Square Sign

There is information throughout this report that presents the City of Commerce’s past and existing conditions, challenges to revitalizing the downtown area, advantages to improving the downtown area, strategies that can be taken to improving the downtown area, while also providing a proposed methodology section describing the different phases and steps that will be taken to help further improve the downtown area. Steps that can help improve the process of developing a downtown revitalization plan includes:

EDUCATE

- City officials can help provide the residents of the city the benefits that come with downtown revitalization.
- Provide information how downtown revitalization would better the city for the future

ENCOURAGE/ENGAGE

- Show existing conditions of downtown area; create/show proposed downtown plan to residents of the city.
- Encourage residents to get involved with helping develop the downtown plan
- Help promote the positive impact that comes with redeveloping the downtown area

PLAN/EVALUATE

- Develop and create a downtown revitalization plan
- Survey residents/city officials about where they see the city evolving
- Analyze the findings from conducted research to apply to the downtown plan

Overall, the proposed downtown revitalization plan will be presented through research on how it will affect the City of Commerce. The proposed research for a revitalization plan will address the needs and wants of the downtown area from the citizens of the city. The revitalization plan will also provide a structured vision for the future of the city that will be beneficial to the city for many years to come.

APPENDIX

SURVEY RESULTS

1) What best describes you? (Student, City official/worker, business owner, resident, other)

Student	18
City official/worker	32
Business owner	17
Resident	37
Other	0

2. What is the most important problem that needs to be corrected within the downtown Commerce area?

Streets	42
Vacant Buildings	40
Storefront Improvements	13
Streetscape Amenities	7
Other	2

3) Do you believe that the City of Commerce is in need of a downtown revitalization?

Yes	98
No	6

4) What type of businesses should be recruited to downtown Commerce?

Commercial Business	40
Restaurants	39
Art/Culture/Music	18
Other	7

5) Do you live within 1,000 ft. of the study area (downtown)?

Yes	68
No	36

6) Land uses downtown should serve the local market as well as the region?

Strongly Disagree	5
Disagree	10
Agree	60
Strongly Agree	29

7) Revitalization development in downtown should be distinctly different than what exists today

Strongly Disagree	3
Disagree	28
Agree	52
Strongly Agree	17

8) What is the best way to advertise to others about the benefits of revitalization?

Newspaper	17
Radio	7
Word of Mouth	37
Social Media	43
Other	N/A

9) Does the local economic development corporation do enough to assist with protecting the interests of local businesses while marketing the community to prospective new businesses?

Yes	23
No	36
Not Sure	45

10) There are too many empty buildings in downtown Commerce

Strongly Disagree	4
Disagree	13
Agree	15
Strongly Agree	72

11) I have lived in the City of Commerce for

Less than a year	11
1-5 years	43
6-10 years	24
10+ years	17
20+ years	9

12) What amenities should be implemented in downtown Commerce?

City Information Signs	24
High Speed Internet	37
Event/City Notices	15
Sufficient Parking	24
Other	4

13) The buildings in downtown Commerce are in good condition

Strongly Disagree	68
Disagree	15
Agree	21
Strongly Agree	N/A

14) Why do you think people shop and/or eat in other cities opposed to Commerce?

Better Shopping	47
Better Restaurants	37
Better Entertainment	20
Other: N/A	N/A

15) The character of new development in downtown needs to match what is in place today?

Strongly Disagree	11
Disagree	32
Agree	43
Strongly Agree	18

16) More public spaces should be apart of downtown

Strongly Disagree	12
Disagree	14
Agree	60
Strongly Agree	18

17) Commerce downtown should rebrand itself

Yes	64
No	40

18) Downtown should continue to be the civic core of the community

Strongly Disagree	N/A
Disagree	7
Agree	13
Strongly Agree	84

APPENDIX

City of Commerce Demographics

2015 Per the US Census Bureau

Population: 8, 892

Median Age: 25

Race & Ethnicity:

White: 52%

Black: 23%

Hispanic: 15%

Asian: 6%

American Indian: 2%

Education:

Household:

Median Household Income: 23,000

*For residents 25 years and over

High School or Higher: 80%

Bachelor's Degree or Higher: 30%

Graduate or Professional Degree: 13%

Unemployed: 15%

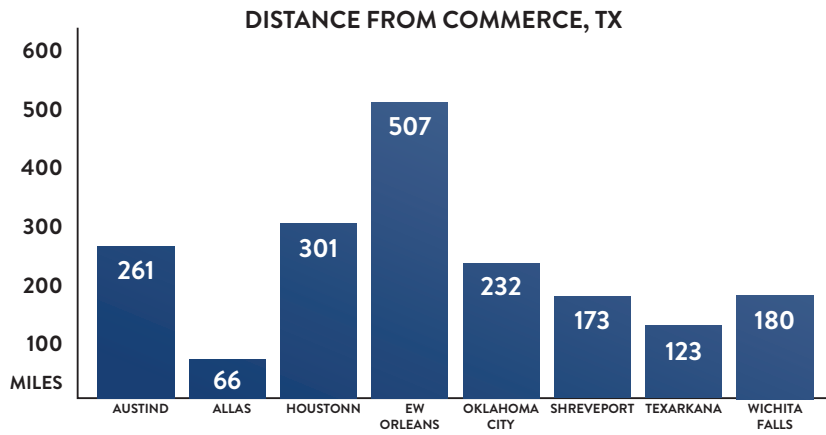
***All information per the US Census Bureau

Location



APPENDIX

Distances



Population

YEAR	POPULATION
2007	9600
2000	7742
1990	6825
1980	8136

Recreation

- 3 Parks
- 5 Area Lakes
- 1 Country Club
- 1 Health/Recreation Center
- 2 Libraries
- 1 Public Swimming Pool
- 131 Motel/Hotel Rooms
- Boys & Girls Club
- Youth Sports
- NCAA Division II Athletics
- Senior Adult Programs

APPENDIX

Local Attractions

Bois d’Arc Bash & Car Show
 Annual Golf Tournament
 Christmas in Downtown Commerce
 Texas A&M University-Commerce
 Northeast Texas Children’s Museum
 Fourth of July in the Park
 Cowhill Chilifest & Bar-B-Q Cookoff
 Planetarium

Medical

5 Medical Doctors 3 Dentists
 2 Chiropractors
 4 Hospital Beds, Hunt Memorial/Presbyterian
 24-Hour Emergency Care, CT Scanner
 Geriatric-Psychiatric Outpatient Program

Incentives

Tax Abatement — City, County, Hospital District
 Enterprise Zone
 Reinvestment Zone
 Economic Development Corporation
 4-A Sales Tax City
 Industrial Development Association

Area Attractions

Cooper Lake
 Southwest Dairy Museum
 Audie Murphy/
 American Cotton Museum
 Greenville Entertainment Series
 Threadgill Entertainment Series
 DFW Metroplex within 65 miles

Media

1 Weekly Newspaper
 1 Daily County Newspaper
 1 Radio Station – KETR
 1 Cable TV Station
 Cable TV — 60 channels

Highways

Interstates

1-30 —10 miles

State Highways

11, 24, 50, 71, 224

4-lane State Hwy

24/50 (10 mi. to 1-30)

Education

School	Grades	Enrollment	Rating
Elementary	Headstart -2	464	Recognized
A.C. Williams	3 - 5	345	Recognized
Middle School	6-8	354	Acceptable
High School	9-12	432	Acceptable

APPENDIX

Major employers/manufacturers

Texas A&M University-Commerce	850	Guaranty Bond Bank Banking	9
Covidien	347	Commerce Vet Clinic Small Animal Medicine	9
Commerce ISD	230	Wee Care @ Sha Sha's World Child Care Provider	8
Wal-Mart Super Center	200	Personalized Printing Commercial Printing	8
Legacy Housing, LTD	128	Total Care Pharmacy Pharmacy	7
Encompass Home Health Home Health Care	100	Century 21 First Group Real Estate	6
City of Commerce	88	Lone Star Credit Union Credit Union	6
Ben E. Keith	81	Hoover's Automotive Inc. Parts, Repair & Tires	6
Lone Star Eatery BAR & Grill Restaurant	70	The Duncan Insurance Agency Insurance	6
Brookshire's Food & Pharmacy	68	State Farm Insurance & Financial Srvc	5
First Choice Home Health	65	Northeast Texas Children's Museum Children's	
Hunt Memorial-Presbyterian Hospital	60	Activities & Exhibits	5
Oak Manor Nursing Home	57	Inwood National Bank Banking	4
Legacy Housing, LTD Housing Wholesale	55	Affordable Furniture & Etc.	4
Hydro Aluminum-Commerce	51	Churchill at Commerce Apartment Community	4
Colonial Lodge Retirement Inn Assisted Living	50	Healthy Glow Tanning Salon Tanning	4
McDonald's Restaurant	48	AIS Financial Financial Planning & Wealth Mgt	4
Alliance Carpet Cushion Co. Foam Carpet Pads	43	Progressive Heat & Air Conditioning Contractor	3
Atmos Energy Corp. Natural Gas Util (Hunt Co.)	31	Huffman Farm Supply Feed	3
Live Oak Professional Center Medical Services	26	Dyer Insurance Agency Insurance	3
Commerce Auto Group Automobile Dealership	25	Diversified Insurance Insurance	3
Hayter Engineering, Inc. Civil Engineering		Talley Auto Parts & Service	3
Consultant	22	The Commerce Journal Newspaper	3
Williams Motors Automobile Dealership	16	Bickham Florist Floral	3
Country Home Estates Assisted Living Fac.	15	Commerce Funeral Home & Cremation Service	2
Latson's Office Products & Commercial Printing	14	Kartridge Korner Inc. Electronic Equipment	2
Chicken Express Restaurant	12	Bois d'Arc Bed & Breakfast Lodging	2
Esquire Tool & Mfg. Precision Machine	12	JK's Professional Inspections Construction Phase	
Chogie Manufacturing Precision Machining	12	Inspections	2
Quality Concrete Aerobic Septic Tank & Strm		Video Technology Services Custom Installer	2
Shelters	11	Edward Jones Investments Investment/Insurance	2
Alliance Bank Banking	10	The Original I.C.S. Roofing Roofing Contractor	2
Country Cleaners & Cellular Dry Cleaning & Cellular		Oncor Electric Delivery Electricity	2
Phones	10	Creative Expressions Studio and Gallery	1
KETR . FM Non Commercial Radio	10		

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AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEMONSTRATION PROJECT: Public-private effort whereby public sector contributes land, financing, or the like, and private sector (developer) contributes their expertise and money to joint development of an affordable housing project; program is designed to educate delivery system (property owners, developers, lenders, public officials, community at-large, etc.) on the “value” of developing product in the market and to prove up support.

BUSINESS RETENTION: Program, frequently administered by an economic development entity, which assists with the recruitment (attraction) or retention of business either into or within a designated area; program elements might include financial assistance, regulatory assistance, and/or marketing.

Capital Improvement Plan (CIP): Dollars earmarked for improvement and extension of infrastructure in municipalities.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE (CDA) (STATE): Program authorizes up to certain percent state tax credits to eligible contributors investing in approved community projects; in certain instances applicants must meet economic distress criteria; non-profit developers subject to limitations on per project tax credits.

Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) (Federal): Federal grants, administered through local or regional offices, designed to lower the overall cost of a project; projects must demonstrate the ability to improve the economic conditions of an area.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (CDC): Nonprofit organizations based in specific neighborhoods and subject to local governance. CDCs may rehabilitate and build affordable housing for neighborhood residents, foster local economic development, and provide an array of related social services.

Cultural Arts Activities: Activities and programs which encourage use of the arts in a designated area by a variety of participants.

CULTURAL TOURISM: Marketing and promotion of cultural and historic community elements of interest to visitors to an area; a thriving industry for many areas of the east and south. Cultural tourism efforts generally originate at a grass-roots level, but quickly require the assistance and coordinate of municipal and state entities. In select instances, matching dollars are available for marketing from state resources.

DESIGN STANDARDS: Formal set of standards (either administered through an appointed design-review committee and/or municipal staff) for development which require certain character and quality levels for the built and natural environments.

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD WAIVERS: Waivers or variances by cities for items including height limits, setbacks, density, lot coverage, rear access, etc.

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION (EDA) (FEDERAL): Public entity which provides assistance in the form of planning grants and construction financing – for the development of projects in rural and urban locations which will result in the creation of jobs for the community.

EDUCATIONAL SEMINARS: Programs hosted by a variety of entities (i.e., lender, developer, municipal, etc.) which promote an open dialogue among individuals and organizations which represent the delivery system; can occur in a variety of forums; purpose is to provide participants with various perspectives and an understanding of initiatives intended to facilitate development process.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORTS (EIRS): Analysis used to assess environmental impacts and determine mitigation measures needed prior to advancing a redevelopment plan, specific plan, or community plan. As impacts are identified, the City may be asked to conduct additional environmental reviews or focus on identified areas.

FAÇADE MAINTENANCE PROGRAM: Any program – local, state or federal – including low interest loans and/or grants – which encourage investment in, and improvement to, building facades within a planning area; may also be designed as a matching funds program, within a district, for building façade maintenance.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION EASEMENT: Mechanism which permanently protects historic properties; a private legal interest conveyed by a property owner to a preservation organization or to a government entity. Once in place, it binds both the current owner and future owners to protect the historic character of the property subject to the easement. While some easements are for a period of years, in most instances easements are created as permanent restrictions.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVOLVING LOAN FUND: Fund available to provide low interest loans to property owners at any income level in historic districts; usually available on a competitive basis to all property owners of any income level for exterior rehabilitation projects.

HOME: HOME Investment Partnership Program, whereby HUD allocates funds by formula among eligible state and local governments to strengthen public/private partnerships and expand the supply of decent, safe, sanitary and affordable housing for very low-income families.

IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT: Both an organizing and financing technique for area revitalization; District provides stable stream of income for activities and projects considered special to area or in addition to general municipal services. Districts are vehicle for providing additional services for a fee and not a substitute for services funded through traditional tax revenues.

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LEVEL-OF-SERVICE: Level-of-service is a measure used to describe street standards necessary to address the role of the street; roads within communities are designed to meet specified goals regarding mobility, connectivity, and regional planning and land use development; by adjusting level-of-service you address the tension between through-trips and access to activities and services along the roadway (corridor).

LOW INTEREST LOANS/SUBORDINATION: Loans for construction, acquisition, operation, etc. are offered to qualifying individuals or organizations at a preferred interest rate; subordination by a public (city/county), private (lender), or semi-private organization of a loan provides a guarantee to the lending organization that in the event of default debt service will be paid.

MAIN STREET PROGRAM: Financial and advisory assistance for downtowns and neighborhood commercial districts by use of preservation and economic development strategies; affiliated with the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

MANAGEMENT DISTRICT: Both an organizing and financing technique for area revitalization; provides stable stream of income for activities and projects considered special to area or in addition to general municipal services; are vehicle for providing additional services for a fee and not to substitute for services funded through traditional tax revenues; similar to Improvement District, but emphasis on marketing, management and promotion.

MUNICIPAL MANAGEMENT DISTRICT: (Chapter 375, Local Government Code) District also called downtown management districts, created within an existing commercial area to finance facilities, infrastructure and services beyond those already provided by individual property owners or the municipality; improvements may be paid for by self-imposed property taxes, special assessments and impact fees, or by other charges on district property owners; creation of the district does not relieve a city from providing basic services to the area; created to supplement, not supplant, the municipal services available to the area.

PARK-IN-A-PARK: Creative method by which parking is secondary to design and landscaping, giving visual appearance of cars in park rather than trees in a parking lot.

PARKING DISTRICT: Designated area wherein parking design, development and management issues among multiple facilities are controlled by select entity beyond that provided for by standard municipal levels of service and control.

PEDESTRIAN ENHANCEMENTS AND LINKAGES: Various public, private and non-profit initiatives to improve the pedestrian environment in a designated area, i.e., permanent and temporary streetscape

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elements, sidewalk widening, reduced speeds, etc.; resulting environment designed to accommodate needs of pedestrians, as well as through- and destination-traffic, by incorporating select infrastructure improvements, design elements, and traffic management mechanisms; methods to achieving this include: separating traffic through use of parallel streets, limiting access points, linking parking lots, coordinating traffic signals, adding alternative transportation lanes, widening sidewalks, providing crosswalks, providing street lights and furniture, preventing “deadening” uses without building front, and incorporating transit stops.

PREDEVELOPMENT FUNDING GRANTS: Financing for project expenses incurred prior to construction, i.e., soft costs including consulting, design, engineering, and planning, and marketing, etc. Note: The Economic Development Administration (EDA) has funds for predevelopment and construction costs.

PUBLIC SUBORDINATION: City/county provides a guarantee to the lending organization that, in the event of default, debt service will be paid.

REDEVELOPMENT: Restoration of existing buildings and properties blighted and/or which diminish the character and function of a neighborhood including adaptive use and historic preservation properties.

REGULATORY REFORM: Initiative by government entity to amend existing regulatory documents to be responsive to prevailing market and economic conditions; examples might include: new or amended zoning designations, planning approval process reform, updated comprehensive plan, etc.

REVENUE OR GENERAL OBLIGATION BOND: If a project has a secure revenue stream, such as parking fees resulting from construction of a parking structure, bonds may be issued and amortized by the anticipated revenue which results from the improvement that was funded; bonds are not secured against the taxing authority of the City, and therefore do not require a public vote.

REVERSE MORTGAGE: Low interest loan based on equity in home; particularly relevant for seniors; use of reverse mortgage dollars are generally restricted to property reinvestment projects.

REVOLVING LOAN FUNDS: Flexible funding in the form of loans, guarantees and interest subsidies to firms which further local development goals; designed to alleviate high costs and short supply of capital for businesses, particularly small ones, or those located in distressed areas; components include: lower rates, longer terms; many capitalized by/with federal funds combined with private funds.

RE-ZONE PARCELS: Either city-owned and initiated, or petition-based, through an organized effort initiated

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by the “advocacy entity” to enlist the support of property owners within a designated area – request for a change in property zoning designation (to mixed-use); the objective is to provide landowners the incentive and economic strength to maintain and redevelop a high-quality environment and react more swiftly to market trends.

SCHOOL PROGRAMS: Programs (i.e., essays, art, civic participation) which encourage the involvement of students in a designated area.

SELF-CERTIFICATION PROGRAM: Contractors assume responsibility for inspecting and certifying the correct completion of their own work; quality is assured by random spot checks; contractors who cheat lose their licenses.

SIGNATURE PROJECT: Public-private effort whereby public sector contributes land, financing, or the like, and private sector (developer) contributes their expertise and money to joint development of a significant project within a designated planning area; program is designed to encourage development of project which will serve as a catalyst for additional investment.

SMART GROWTH: Growth management program which combines incentives, disincentives, and traditional planning techniques to promote a pattern of growth that achieves economic, environmental, and quality-of-life objectives.

TAX ABATEMENT OR REBATE: Taxing entity (usually the city) abates or rebates a portion of tax burden; this can happen in the form of an adjustment on an individual property basis, or in an abatement zone.

TAX EXEMPT BOND FINANCING: Method of financing long-term debt issued by government whereby bondholders need not include interest payments on taxable income.

TAX INCREMENT FINANCING (TIF): A district obtains funds from increases in regular tax revenues that arise from new development in the district; incremental increase in tax revenues over designated base year revenues is diverted to a special fund; diversion of regular tax revenues rather than additional fees to generate revenue for district investments; can be used in conjunction with municipal bond issues whereby increment is pledged to repayment of the bond issue, or actual increase allocated to an administering agency directly to finance redevelopment activities.

380 LOANS: Chapter 380 is a reference to chapter 380 of the Texas Local Government Code. This chapter of the Texas Local Government Code authorizes Texas municipalities, both home-rule and general law

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municipalities to provide assistance for economic development. Texas cities may provide monies, loans, city personnel, and city services for promotion and encouragement of economic development.

TRANSFER OF DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS (TDR): Ability to transfer property entitlements from one property to another when one of the parcels is located in a designated development area.

TRANSIT-SUPPORTIVE LAND USE: (Also referred to as Transit-Oriented Development or TOD) Land uses and land use forms supportive of alternative forms of transportation; typical elements include: high-density residential, employment uses, commercial developments and public spaces.

TURNKEY FACILITIES: Buildings, frequently institutional, developed (and sometimes managed) by a private entity for another entity; benefits to developer include a developer fee, management fee, position in the project, etc.

URBAN RENEWAL: Tool used for purpose of eliminating slum or blighted areas within municipality, and positioning areas for development or redevelopment; actions under urban renewal include demolition of structures, construction of infrastructure and public spaces, sale of property, and relocation of businesses and residents.

UNDERGROUND UTILITIES: City works with local utility and cable companies to place all utility lines underground; maintenance, weather-related repairs, and service disruption costs are reduced; City also encourages low-rate programs to assist developers with burying utility infrastructure.

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