



June 6, 2016

Mrs. Melissa McCollum  
Planning Director  
City of Bastrop  
1311 Chestnut Street  
Bastrop, Texas 78602

RE: Bastrop North Area Analysis

Dear Mrs. McCollum:

The following memorandum summarizes the cumulative analysis of the “North Area” by City Staff, the Gateway Planning Team, the Form Based Code Task Force and community members. For the purposes of this work we have defined the “North Area” as the neighborhoods in Bastrop between Piney Creek and the City Limits to the west, the City Limits to the north, SH 95 to the east and Hawthorne Street to the south.

In 2015, Gateway Planning had the pleasure of assisting Bastrop in an extensive planning process and city-initiated Downtown rezoning. As part of this process Gateway led extensive community member and business owner outreach and their participation helped to craft an updated zoning code that will ensure Downtown Bastrop’s preservation and enhancement.

Following this process, it became evident that the adjacent neighborhoods to the north of the Downtown Form Based Code area also required attention. The North Area, divided from Downtown by railroad tracks, was historically platted as farm lots and thus has developed in an irregular pattern leading to many unique planning and engineering challenges.

Gateway Planning was hired to evaluate the existing conditions of the North Area and to make a recommendation on how to proceed with rezoning and an improvement strategy based on an initial assessment, Task Force leadership and preliminary community feedback.





## Assessment

### Initial observations

On March 3rd, 2016, Melissa led the Gateway Team on a tour of the entire North Area to evaluate and document the existing conditions. Building on our previous understanding in Bastrop we were able to preliminarily assess the issues and dynamics at play. The North Area contains a variety of building types but is primarily residential and the majority of homes are several decades old. It was also evident that there are issues that cannot necessarily be addressed through zoning, and so early on the Gateway Team attempted to bifurcate the discussion between issues that can be addressed through zoning and others that need to be addressed through additional means. It was anticipated that this division will help to organize the next steps between what can be addressed through a form based code and what needs to be addressed through a parallel planning and engineering approach.

### Existing Conditions

#### Zoning

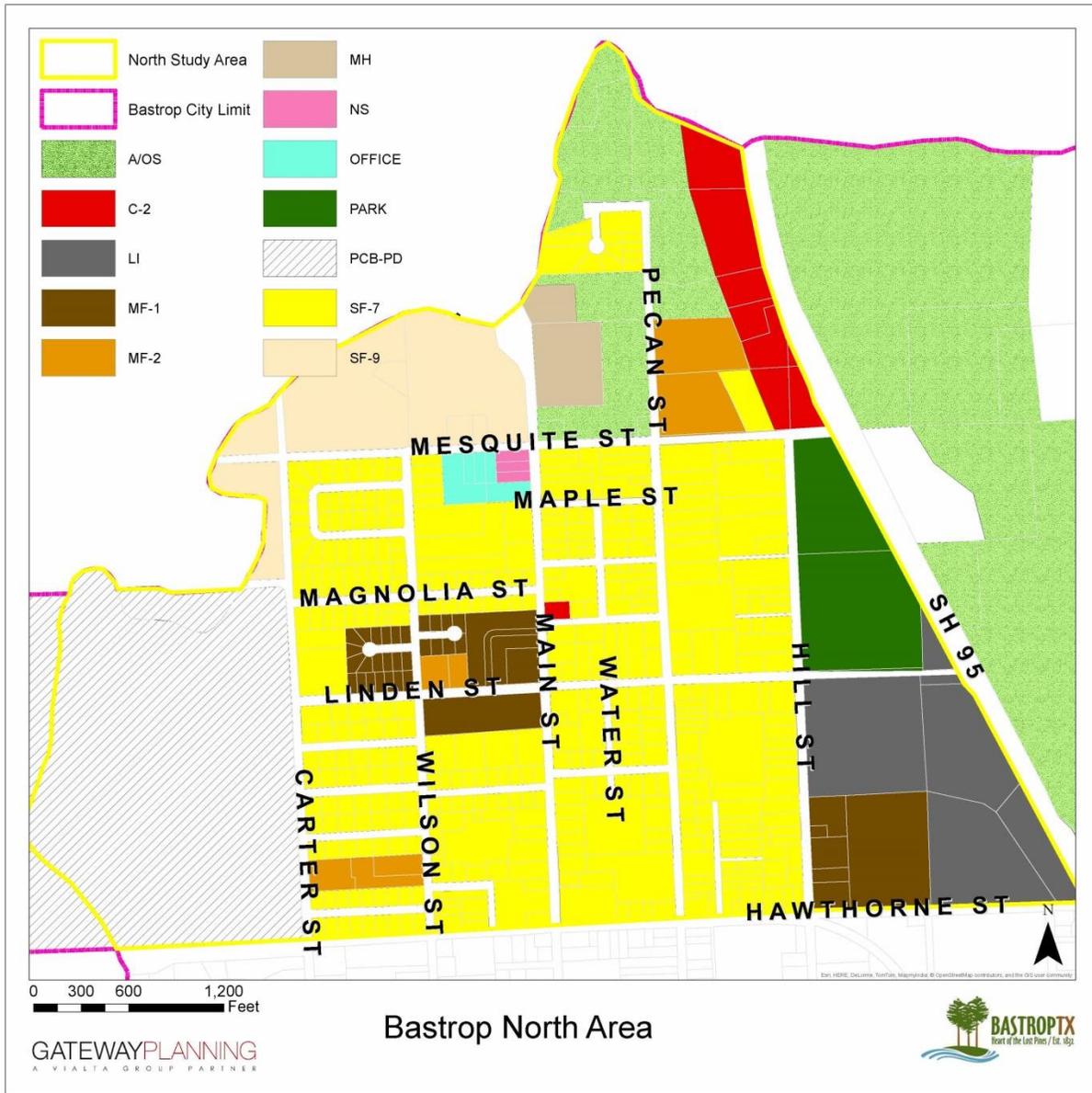
Generally, the North Area is built-out but has significant infill and redevelopment opportunity. As mentioned, it is primarily residential but there is a mix of 11 zoning districts and a newly approved PD:

- A/OS Agricultural/Open Space
- SF-9 Single Family Residential
- SF-7 Single Family Residential
- MH Manufactured Housing
- MF-1 Multi Family Dwelling 1
- MF-2 Multi Family Dwelling 2
- O-Office
- NS- Neighborhood Service
- C-2 Commercial -2
- LI-Light Industrial
- Park Land

This combination of zoning and development pattern has led to some juxtaposition that may not be the most compatible or serve as transitions between uses. Certainly, all uses have their place and can be accommodated given the right circumstances but a haphazard growth pattern has not created areas that encourage reinvestment due to potential unpredictable neighboring development. SF-7 is the predominate zoning category with some limited multifamily and office/retail zoning in limited areas. The SH-95 frontage is predominately Commercial and Light Industrial as well as an LCRA park. There is an



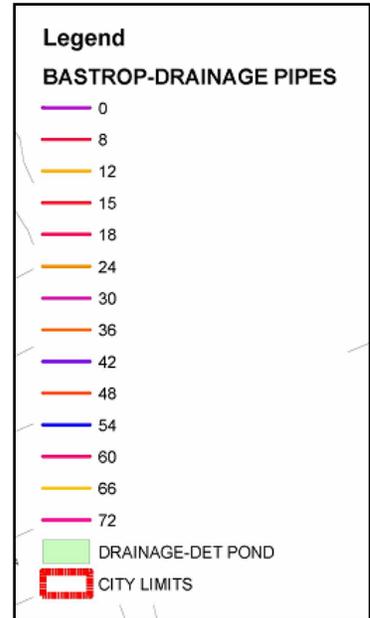
opportunity to improve the compatibility and transitions between the residential and commercial zoning and ensure a variety of housing types and price ranges in the residential areas.

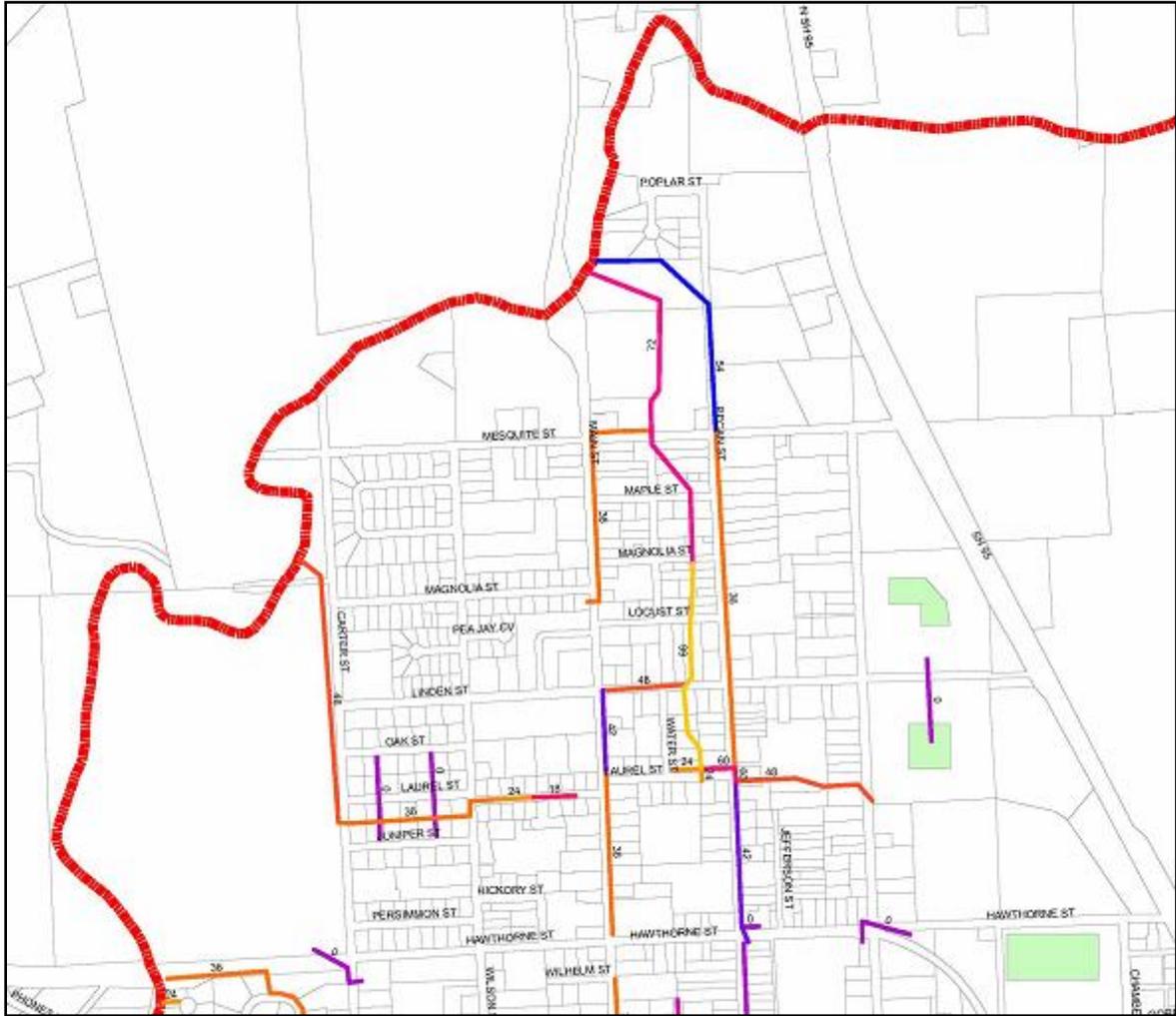


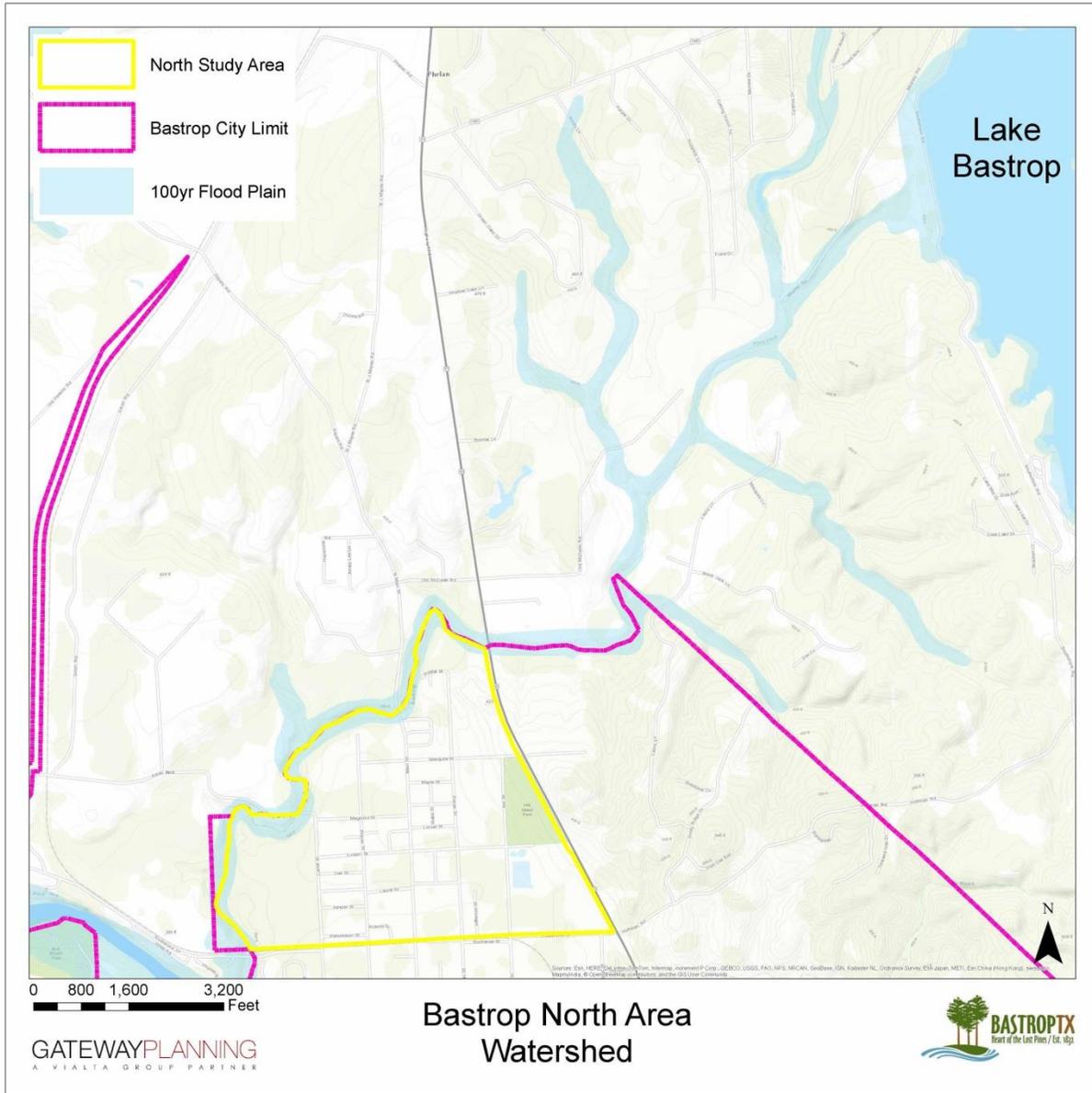


### Utilities

Flooding caused by substandard storm water facilities, less than ideal bar ditch configurations, and general poor condition of streets and utilities was reinforced as a primary concern through the development constraints and Task Force and citizen communication. The City does not currently have complete GIS data on the quality and location of water, sewer, storm water and electric utility locations. Having this complete data will be necessary to plan and prioritize future utility investment.







## Streets

Generally, the street condition is poor in the North Area and most streets lack sidewalks and curb and gutters. Of course not all streets require the same level of facilities, but as flooding is an issue storm water and drainage could be partially addressed through a more complete curb and gutter system. The exception is Juniper Street, Oak Street, and Persimmon Street, which were rebuilt from Carter to Wilson



Streets in 2013, and Pecan Street from Hawthorne to Mesquite, which was rebuilt in 2013 and Main from Hawthorne to Mesquite, which is in above average condition.

The Capital Improvement Project list through fiscal year 2018 currently does not contain any street, water or wastewater projects in the North Area, however, projects are being considered for bond funding that if approved would be added to the CIP list. (The CIP Project List is included at Appendix A).

Future planning efforts should consider improving a primary east-west street to SH 95 to improve access. One opportunity that could be evaluated is an extension of Linden Street to SH 95 which would require coordination with a future expansion or reorganization of the Public Works yard in that area.

Generally, the pedestrian environment needs to be improved in much of the North Area especially improving sidewalk connectivity and pedestrian crossing at intersections. Carter and Main Streets through the North Area are considered “Minor Collectors” on the Master Thoroughfare Plan and may be given extra pedestrian accommodations or be considered for amenities such as bus shelters.

### **In Process Developments**

During the February meeting the Task Force and Staff discussed several developments that had recently come before the Planning and Zoning Commission. The Task Force discussed that while there is a need for the development of smaller scale housing types, that considering zoning cases in isolation of the rest of the North Area planning context was not necessarily the best approach. The Task Force stated they were open to new housing types, but wanted to explore them in a way where the community could be a part of the process and decide what area would be best for those types of developments and how the details on different housing types could be compatible with existing development.

### **Task Force Leadership**

The Mayor charged the Form Based Code Task Force, which had worked diligently on the Downtown initiative, to lead on the North Area as well. Herb Goldsmith (Board of Adjustment and Chair), Kay Garcia McAnally (City Council), Lisa Patterson (Planning and Zoning Commission), John Koslowske (Resident), Dan Hays-Clark (Historic Landmark Commission), and Bill Peterson (Resident at Large) were joined by new representatives from the North Area Pastor Roland Nava (North Area Resident and community leader), Barbara Clemons (North Area Resident), and Dorothy Haywood (North Area Resident).



The Form Based Code Task Force has been meeting monthly to discuss how to best approach the North Area and how best to engage the public. Gateway Planning created a survey for Task Force members to provide input on their impressions of the North Area. This preliminary input was helpful in preparation for the public meetings. The Task Force was asked to answer the following questions.

1. Outline issues in the North Area
  - What are zoning issues?
  - What are other issues?
2. Create vision – In parallel with the comprehensive plan work what is the desired type of development for the North Area?
3. Strategies – what are the tools to address issues and implement vision

Following this initial internal input the Task Force decided to host a meeting to solicit input from the community at large.

## Community Input

The first opportunity for public engagement was during an event hosted by a Pastor Nava and the In the Streets – Hands up High Ministry - the Bastrop North Area Community Concerns Committee (BNACCC). Task Force Chair Herb Goldsmith assisted in gathering thoughts and concerns from attendees, shown in the table in Appendix B. The top concerns expressed were in regards to housing concerns, transit access and improved street lights for safety.

Following this initial engagement a Town Hall was held during the regularly scheduled Task Force Meeting held on March 24th at City Hall. This meeting, advertised through a newspaper notification and utility bill notices, had good participation from individuals who live in the North Area. The discussion started with a SWOT analysis (strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats) in the North Area. The results of that discussion showing the amount of interest per item are shown below.



<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Totals</b>
Parks	4
Diversity	4
More habitat homes	3
Multi-Family Housing	3
Location	1
Existing Community self-awareness	1

<b>Weaknesses</b>	<b>Totals</b>
Flooding, flood plain, drainage, standing water	24
Lacking basic services	21
Lack of attention to North Area/ concerns	15
Infrastructure not good quality (lack of mapping/info)	9
Lack of sidewalks	8
Lack of responsiveness to North Area	6
Historically focused on city central only	5
City resources	5
Infrastructure located out of PUE's & ROW	4
Lack of funding	3
Traffic, narrow streets, connectivity, speeding, St. lights	3
Ownership issues, multiple lots, hard to buy	2
Rail road crossing	1
Smaller lots	1
Police involvement	1



Housing authority maintenance	1
Tornado assistance	1
Lack of parks	1

<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Totals</b>
Community center w/ existing parks/ shelter/ pool	24
New housing options outside of current code (macro housing)	19
Basic St. lights, sidewalks, infrastructure, speed signs	14
Explore funding options, 1/2 cent sales tax	10
Walking/ biking/ stripping Main St (paint area)	5
Home repair program	3
New model for affordable housing	3
Neighborhood watch/ crime stop program	2
Map infrastructure in city area (drainage, water, sewer)	2
More community involvement/ meetings of north area	2
Enterprise investments zones/ fund infrastructure	1

<b>Threats</b>	<b>Totals</b>
Continued ignoring of North Area concerns, no results	19
Lack of unified vision for what the results should be/ what can actually happen	17
Loss of affordability, higher taxes, home prices	7
New development worsening drainage	5
Development outpaces resources & available infrastructure	2
Overflow room Austin-metro area	2
Traffic, no connectivity to other side of town, lack of street connections	1



Following the SWOT discussion was a more general discussion that included a long term vision for the North Area- what residents would want to see in 2030 - (City services, Types of uses, type of development, amenities, etc.). Consensus emerged around one primary concern – the lack of city storm sewer infrastructure to address periodic flooding throughout the North Area.

## Recommendations

There was valuable cumulative input by the Gateway Team, City Staff, the Task Force and citizens led made more clear the path on how to proceed. It was evident throughout this process that there are very complex zoning issues and also basic infrastructure needs. What emerged was a series of near and longer term strategies to improve the North Area.

### Near Term

#### *Drainage*

Poor drainage is a primary issue and although it is a complex issue there are some near-term strategies that can be considered, including assessing the condition and making improvements to the regional detention pond near the public works yard. Much of the North Area drains into a main line that has capacity but the small lines and surface ditches that lead to it are undersized or require maintenance. These drainage ditches for managing storm water runoff have filled with silt or are overgrown and maintenance needs to be performed through the routine public works maintenance process. Finally a more detailed documentation can be made of the higher risk flooding areas. An opportunity to complete this work is currently being pursued by city staff from a County administered, FEMA funded grant, that is studying the Piney Creek watershed. This study will produce a project list that can then be used to prioritize future CIP projects.

#### *Comprehensive Plan*

The Comprehensive Planning process for the City is currently underway and this effort in the North Area is meant to be compatible with the outcome of that work. Any next steps in the North Area should consider relevant sections of the Comprehensive Plan, potentially including but not limited to: Updated Thoroughfare Plan, Sidewalk inventory, Flood and Drainage Maps, Utilities and Capital Improvement Projects list.



### ***Infrastructure Bond***

A potential Bond election to be held in November 2016 will be considered later this year and a potential project list is currently being evaluated. Funding could be available as early as late 2017 if the bond is approved. As of April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2016 three projects currently on the potential project list in the North Area are:

- The reconstruction of Laurel with Storm water Improvements from Wilson Street to Pecan Street. (Project Cost estimate: \$250,000)
- The reconstruction of Carter Street from the Railroad tracks to Magnolia Street 2,150 linear feet of paving. (Project Cost estimate: \$815,000)
- Carter Street Extension from Magnolia Street to Mesquite Street, 1700 linear feet of paving. (Project Cost estimate: \$696,000)

### ***City Initiated Rezoning- North Area Overlay***

Revise the zoning code to create a North Area Overlay that would address zoning irregularities, provide a greater degree of predictability in the marketplace and ensure good transition and compatibility between uses. Given the unique constraints of the North Area the code needs to anticipate and mitigate the constraints where possible to encourage investment. New and varied housing types need to be accommodated to ensure affordability.

The North Area Overlay could include changes to the following:

- Administrative Approval of numerical zoning standards
- Lower minimum area threshold for PD's
- General guidelines for PD additional standards for single family
- Form Based Code for Commercial Zoning
- Alternate street types for streets serving small PD's
- Update legal lot date
- Allowances for multifamily on lots with different setbacks

### ***Bus Shelter***

A CARTS bus shelter is currently being built and a location is being sought. This was a high demand item mentioned at public meetings and would be an easy near term step to show responsiveness.

### ***Public safety***

Public safety is a fundamental issue and the City Manager has offered to coordinate with the police department to increase police patrols and arrange for a Police department community resource officer to host a meeting to discuss safety techniques.

### ***Street Lights***

Street light coverage, related to public safety was also a primary concern; currently a street light appraisal is underway to indicate where street lights are needed the most.



### *Jewels Hodges Park*

The North area only has one public city park and it is currently in poor condition and underutilized. The city can look for ways to improve the attractiveness and increase the park amenities to appeal to a larger cross section of North Area Residents.

### *Longer Term*

The City needs to create an environment where investment in the community by private land owners, publically funded infrastructure and non-profit groups feeds a virtuous cycle whereby investment from one party encourages investment from others uplifting the community and improving the quality of life. This can be done in part by the public sector by taking action on the following:

#### *Infrastructure Investment Strategy*

Create a public investment strategy that is parallel to the rezoning effort that coordinates infrastructure investment in areas that will have the largest demand for infill or redevelopment while taking into consideration areas of the highest deficiency. The first step in this process is to document and map the existing utilities and areas of flooding to provide a baseline for an infrastructure priority map for future capital improvements. This strategy would be a long term look at how to finance infrastructure beyond the potential bond projects currently being considered.

#### *Transit*

The North Area currently has a high concentration of transit users and it would be helpful to coordinate with CARTS on ideas to improve access, improve stop amenities and ways to improve service.

#### *North Area General Plan*

Create a general plan for the North Area that frames the issues that are outside of the realm of infrastructure and zoning in full detail. Create action steps associated with each of these issues and the responsible parties outlining the role of private enterprise, local government and non-profit organizations.

#### *Tax Increment Financing*

Finally, in order to pay for many of the improvements in the North Area Tax Increment Financing was discussed as one possible tool. TIF is not a panacea but has been a useful financing tool for many Texas communities to create a revenue source for the type of improvements that are necessary. A summary on TIF's in Texas has been included as Appendix C.

We look forward to working with you to execute on the next steps to create and plan to prioritize and utility improvements and craft a zoning code that addresses the unique condition of the North Area.

Sincerely,



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard H. Parsons Jr.", written in a cursive style.

*Richard H. Parsons Jr.*

Scott Polikov and Rob Parsons  
Gateway Planning

cc: Mike Talbot, City Manager

Herb Goldsmith – Chair (Board of Adjustment)

Kay Garcia McAnally (City Council)

Lisa Patterson (Planning and Zoning Commission)

John Koslowske (Resident)

Dan Hays-Clark (Historic Landmark Commission)

Bill Peterson (Resident at Large)

Roland Nava (North Area Resident)

Barbara Clemons (North Area Resident)

Dorothy Haywood (North Area Resident)



**Appendix A: CIP Project List**

		Calendar Year -----		2014				2015				2016				2017				2018											
		->																		FY 2018-2019											
		Fiscal Year -----		FY 2013-2014				FY 2014-2015				FY 2015-2016				FY 2016-2017				FY 2017-2018											
		->																													
				Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1																							
		BUDGET																													
		ACTUAL																													
<b>I. WATER SYSTEM CIP PROJECTS: FY 13/14</b>																															
	1. Rehabilitation Projects FY 2012-2013	\$ 500,000	\$ 700,000																												
	a. Groundwater Filtration - Willow Park Well Fields <sup>1</sup>	\$ 500,000	\$ 700,000					●																							
	2. Development of Additional Water Supply	\$ 550,000	\$ 546,000																												
	3. New Water Supply Transmission Line (Partial Funding) HMG Fund Match - New Generators Loop 150, Water	\$ 325,000	\$ 325,000					●																							
	4. Plant	\$ 150,000	\$ 134,000			●																									
	<b>Subtotal FY-13</b>	<b>\$ 1,525,000</b>	<b>\$ 1,705,000</b>																												
<b>II. WATER SYSTEM CIP PROJECTS: FY 14/15</b>																															
	1. Rehabilitation Projects FY 2013-2014	\$ 333,375	\$ 407,000																												
	a. Water Main Repl. Farm St (Fayette to Water)	\$ 182,000	\$ 173,000						●																						
	b. Water Main Repl. Walnut St (Haysel to MLK)	\$ 90,000	\$ 130,000						●																						
	d. Water Main Relo. Tahitian Drive Overpass	\$ -	\$ 79,000																												
	e. Flush Valve Installation	\$ -	\$ 25,000																												
	f. Rehab Contingency	\$ 61,375	\$ -																												
	2. AMI Project	\$ 1,700,000	\$ 1,620,500				●																								
	3. Infrastructure Water Supply	\$ 3,800,000	\$ 460,600			●																									













		Calendar Year ----- ->	2013				2014				2015				2016				2017				2018			
		Fiscal Year ----- ->	FY 2012-2013				FY 2013-2014				FY 2014-2015				FY 2015-2016				FY 2016-2017				FY 2017-2018			
		BUDGET	ACTUAL	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4																
<b>I. STREET IMPROVEMENT CIP PROJECTS: FY 13/14</b>																										
		\$																								
1.	Street Improvement Projects 2013-2014	1,232,432	\$ 1,145,204																							
a.	Hunters Crossing (Javelina, Other Various Locations)	\$ 54,560	\$ -					●																		
b.	Juniper St (Carter to Wilson)	\$ 18,624	\$ -					●																		
c.	Oak St (Carter to Wilson)	\$ 18,624	\$ -					●																		
d.	Persimmon St (Carter to Wilson)	\$ 18,624	\$ -					●																		
e.	Pee Jay Cove (Entry Way)	\$ 4,000	\$ -					●																		
f.	Pecan St (RR to Linden)	\$ 168,000	\$ 168,000					●																		
g.	Hasler St (SH 71 to Old Austin Hwy) <sup>2</sup>	\$ 365,000	\$ 336,667					●																		
h.	Chambers St (Cedar to Hawthorne) <sup>2</sup>	\$ 585,000	\$ 640,537					●																		
	<i>Subtotal FY-14</i>	1,232,432	\$ 1,145,204																							
<b>II. STREET IMPROVEMENT CIP PROJECTS: FY 14/15</b>																										
		\$																								
1.	Street Improvement Projects 2014-2015	778,452	\$ 644,214																							
a.	Walnut St (Main to MLK)	\$ 79,581	\$ -									●														
b.	Gordon St (SH 95 to Chambers)	\$ 52,306	\$ -									●														
c.	Cypress St (Pecan to Dead-end)	\$ 27,275	\$ -									●														
d.	Buttonwood St (Pecan to Fayette)	\$ 17,600	\$ -									●														
e.	Church St (Cedar to Spring)	\$ 101,690	\$ -										●													





d. Emile St (MLK to SH 95)	\$ 375,000	\$ -	<input type="checkbox"/>																				
<i>Subtotal FY-18</i>			<input type="checkbox"/>																				
<b>ROADWAY PROJECTS TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 2,010,884</b>	<b>\$ 1,789,418</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>																				

NOTES:

1. Potential future roadway projects are not included in existing or currently proposed funding options.
2. The construction of these projects will be contracted by a third party. All other projects will be constructed using in-house crews and equipment.



## Appendix B: Community Input

The first opportunity for public engagement was during a Pastor Nava hosted event for Concerns from the Bastrop North Area Community Concerns Committee (BNACCC) (In the Streets – Hands up High Ministry). Task Force Chair Herb Goldsmith was able to assist in gathering thoughts and concerns from attendees, shown in the table below.

### Bastrop's North Area Community Concerns

Concern	Totals
Community Center (youth/seniors)	21
Housing Apartments/ Homes	13
More Street Lights	10
Add 1 more bus run per day/ weekend service	9
Bring in more small business	8
Covered Bus Shelter	6
Share in City's parades and activities (in north area)	7



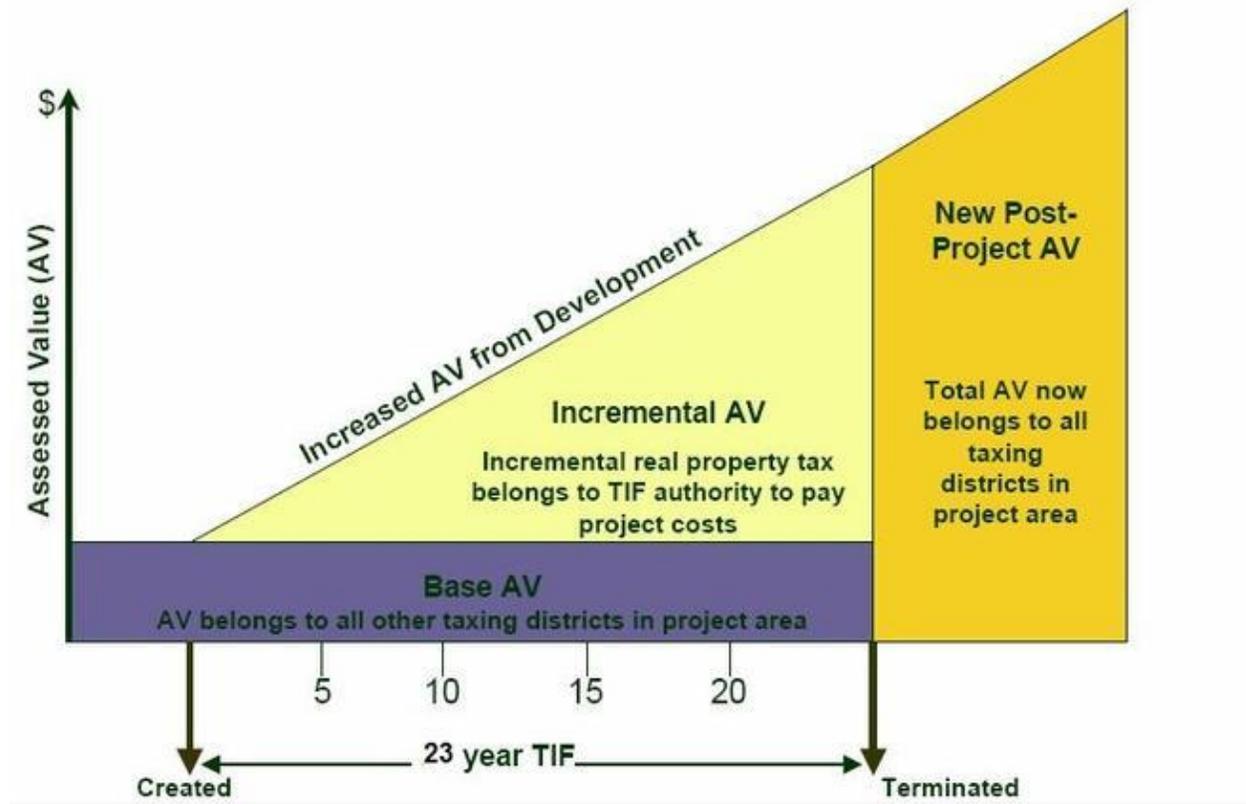


## Appendix C: Tax Increment Financing Summary

The Task Force and city leadership has been discussing tools that can be used to fund improvements in the North Area, one of these tools is Tax Increment Financing (TIF). The following is a synopsis of Tax Increment Financing in Texas to provide some background information to further explore if TIF is one of the right tools for the North Area.

A TIF is a special district covering a portion of the city that captures a percentage of the increase in value in taxes (see diagram). The tax increment reinvestment zone (TIRZ) is the actual formal district vehicle.

### TIF Assessed Value (AV) Over Project Life



The contributing taxing units include the city and can also include, at their discretion, the school district, the county and any other taxing units. School districts normally opt out as the committed revenue still is counted into the “Robin Hood” state contribution. The taxing units within the district can elect the portion of their increment in the taxes to contribute to the TIF (0 percent to 100 percent).

TIFs can be created by developer or city initiation. If city initiated, the TIRZ can only include single family residential for no more than 10%.

In many places there are specific minimum requirements for finding blight in order to implement a TIF. Texas has no such requirement anymore. However a type of the “but for” test applies. The TIF area’s condition must “substantially impair the city’s growth, retard the provision of housing or constitute an economic or social liability because of dilapidated structures, unsafe conditions, and a delinquency that exceeds the value of the land or because obsolete



platting or other factors have kept the land open.” The city must affirm that the TIF will significantly enhance the value of all taxable real property in the zone.

A board is created for the TIF to manage how funds are allocated. The city must submit a preliminary development plan and a preliminary finance plan before the TIF is created. After creation of the TIF a formal financing plan includes the following:

- a detailed list of estimated project costs;
- a list of all proposed public works or improvements within the zone;
- an economic feasibility study;
- the estimated amount of bonded indebtedness to be incurred;
- the timing for incurring costs or monetary obligations;
- the methods for incurring all the estimated project costs and the expected sources of revenues, including the percentage of tax increment to be derived from the property tax of each taxing unit;
- the current total appraised value of taxable real property in the zone;
- the estimated captured appraised value of the zone during each year of its existence; and
- the duration of the zone.

After a vote of approval from the TIF board, it is passed as an ordinance by the city. The participating taxing units then approve the percentage, if any, of their tax increment they will dedicate to the fund.

Voter approval is not required to implement a TIF but often public hearing are helpful to keep the public apprised of money spent from the TIF and to provide input.

TIF money can be raised up-front by securing bonds against anticipated revenue or in a pay as you go method. Because relying solely on TIF revenue to repay the bonds is risky, bond financing is very difficult. Because of this, revenues will need to be accrued for some time in the TIRZ account before any meaningful capacity can be available for infrastructure investment.