

RENAISSANCE OF THE DOWNTOWN SQUARE

McKINNEY, TEXAS

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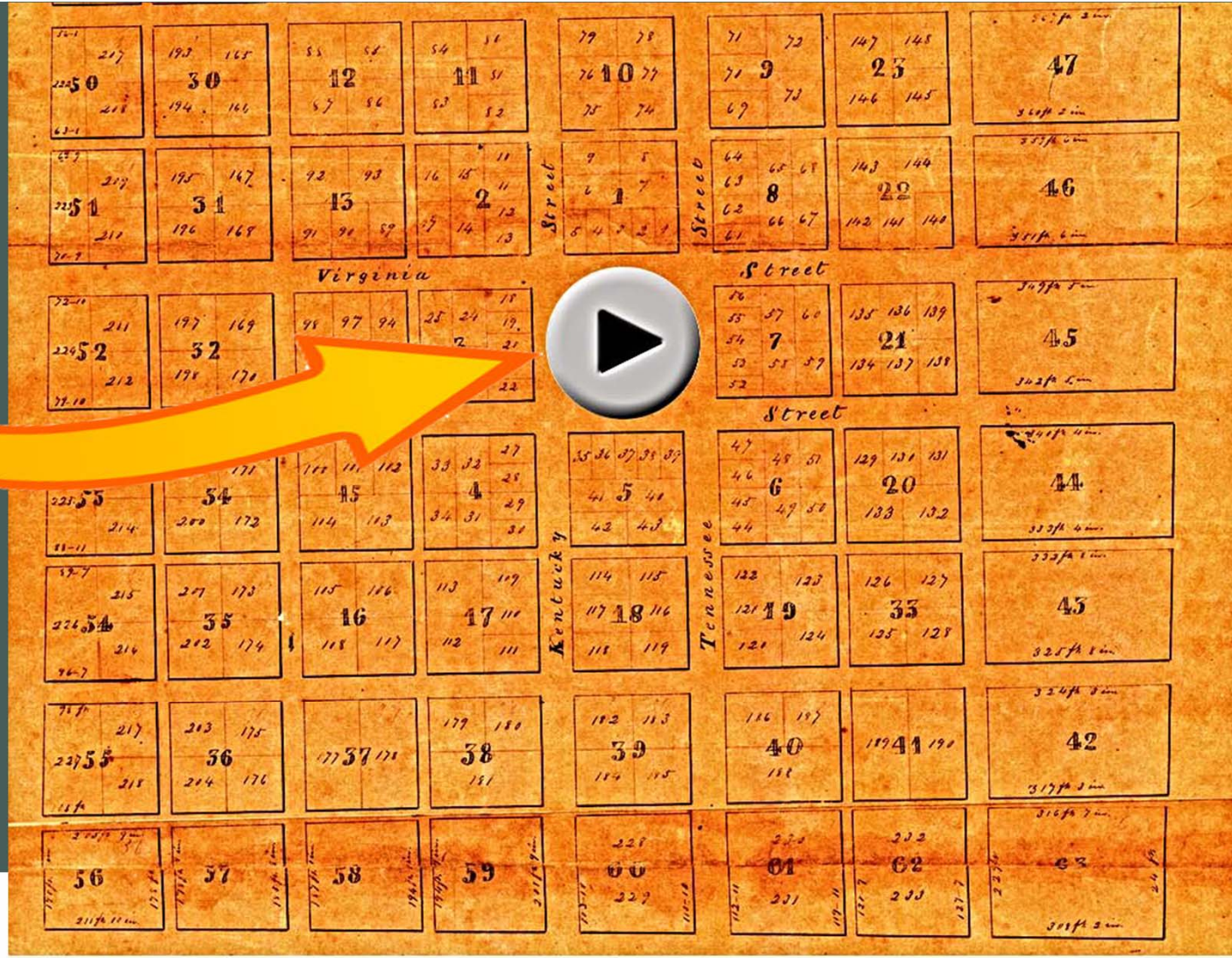
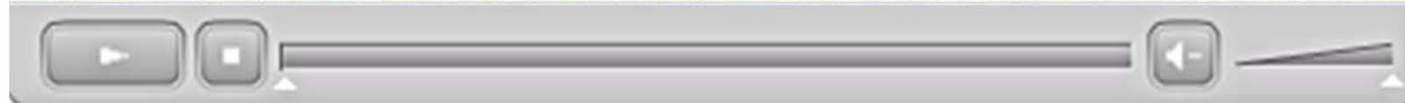


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GOLDEN AGE OF THE DOWNTOWN SQUARE



THE DOWNTOWN SQUARE IN DECLINE



Vacant courthouse



Underutilized buildings

No activity after 5:00 pm

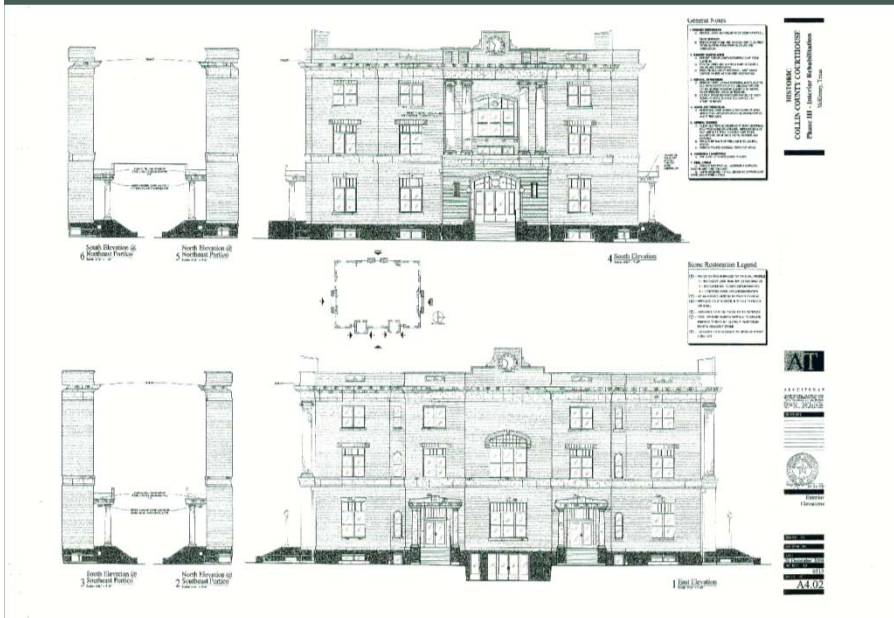


Narrow sidewalks

Automobile-dominated

Substandard infrastructure

REHABILITATION of the COURTHOUSE into the THE MCKINNEY PERFORMING ARTS CENTER



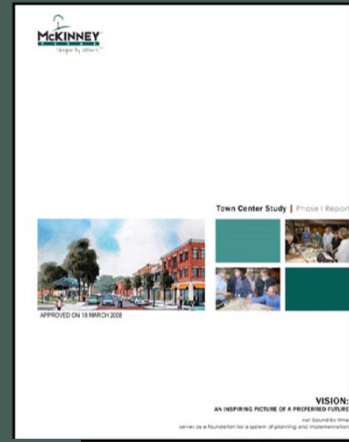
\$9.5 million project completed in 2006

courtroom converted into 427-seat theater

public restrooms, gallery space,
rehearsal rooms, conference rooms,
office space, catering kitchen



TOWN CENTER STUDY INITIATIVE – PHASE 1



Public Design Workshop 1
(Downtown)

Public Design Workshop 3
(Corridors)

August 2006

November 2006

March 2007

June 2007

March 2008

Open House Kick-Off

Public Design Workshop 2
(Transit Village)

City Council approval of
the Town Center Study
Phase 1 Report



TOWN CENTER STUDY INITIATIVE – PHASE 1

Public Design Workshop #1 resulted in an Illustrative Master Plan of preferred concepts for the downtown core area

DallasNews.com

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McKINNEY

is week's McKinney Neighbors: McKinney church guides young knights and prince

Getting back to McKinney's roots

Panel makes push to revitalize historic downtown

By BETH FRED
Special Contributor

As "new urban" town centers continue to dot suburban cityscapes, many communities deal with the tough issue of downtown revitalization.

While the mixed-use hubs promise a pedestrian-friendly, community-centered experience, many folks believe that McKinney's historic downtown offers just that.

"Downtown McKinney already has pedestrian-friendly shops," said senior planner Barry Shelton. "Plus, it doesn't have that artificial quality some of the new places have — it has a natural feel."

On Tuesday, residents, business managers and property owners convened with the city to discuss a town center study. The goal of the study is to develop a plan for the preservation of one of the oldest downtowns in the area, established in 1848.

The area under the microscope is a five-mile patch of land between U.S. Highway 75, U.S. Highway 380, Eldorado Parkway and Airport Road.

The group listened to a presentation by the city and then filled out surveys to rank the importance of certain concerns. Topics include the commercial corridor, the creation of a transit village with anticipated expansion of the Dallas Area Rapid Transit rail line and the rebuilding of historic downtown and the surrounding neighborhoods.

"We need a cohesive, unified plan," said Julie Vargo, a former McKinney City Council member and downtown resident and property owner. "The city must be inclusive of the downtown property owners and residents."

Based on this feedback, the city will plan for three design workshops, each addressing a different problem. Residents will be able to participate in the two-day planning process.

On a Thursday evening, the planning department will host a small group discussion. Planners will then draw up the ideas created so that the small group can see their ideas on paper during a Saturday morning gathering.

Ms. Vargo anticipates that

parking and infrastructure will need to be addressed as the district re-develops. She hopes the DART rail arrives sooner rather than later, because it would bring more pedestrian traffic to one of the most popular downtown sites in North Texas — not to mention the effect it would have on commuter traffic.

"I think it's important to preserve what you have and to build upon it, to make it the best it can be," said Diane Craig, downtown resident and owner of the shop 120.

However, with fewer funds to back them up and an older image to sell, these downtowns can be left in the dust of the hip, trendsetting outdoor malls. Many residents believe that the uphill battle is worth it.

"It's authentic, and other places are trying to reproduce it," Ms. Craig said. "We've got to support the community we already have."

To get involved in the upcoming workshops, call Kevin Spath at 972-547-7432.

Beth Fred is a Dallas-based freelance writer.

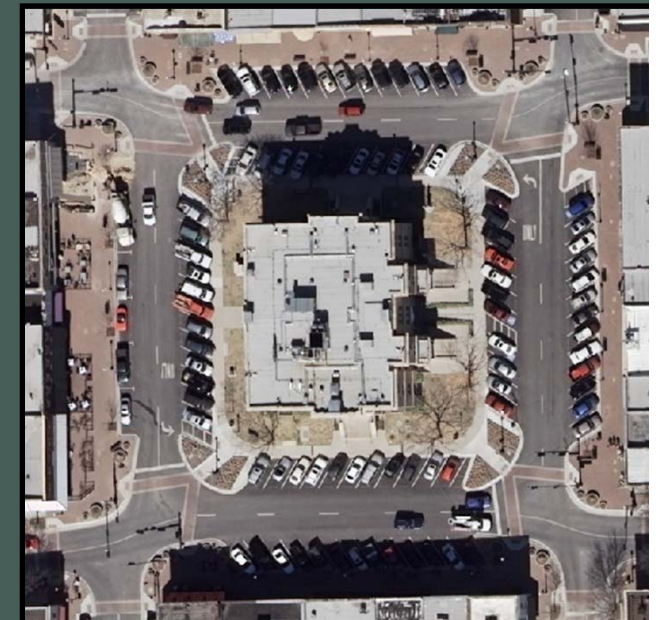
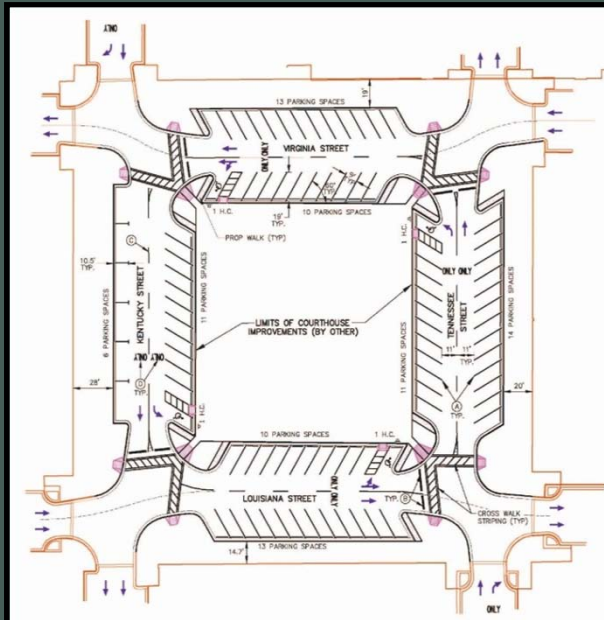
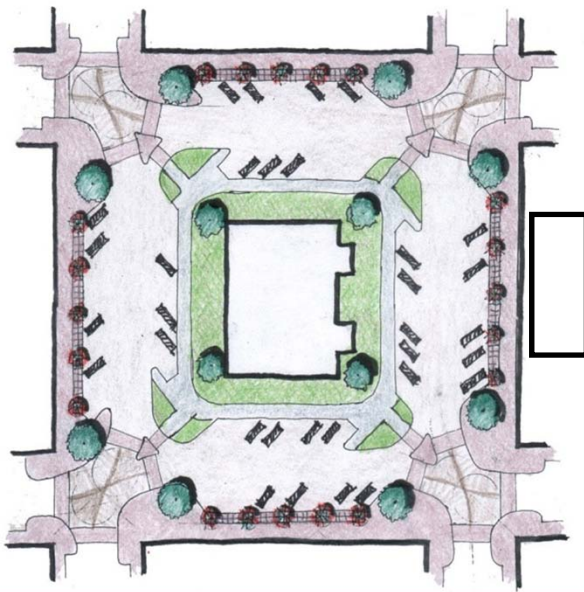


REDESIGN OF THE DOWNTOWN SQUARE

Conceptual (2006)



Design (2007) and Construction (2008)

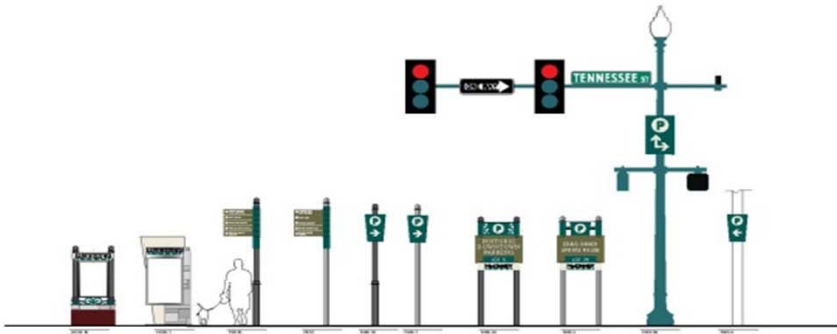


REDESIGN OF DOWNTOWN SQUARE – KEY ELEMENTS

- \$2.6 million project
- Reduced the number of lanes traveling around the downtown square from 3 to 2
- Reconfigured the intersections to decrease pedestrian crossing distances and improve pedestrian safety
- Reconfigured the on-street parking (increased the number of public parking spaces on the square from 70 to 92 spaces)
- Substantially widened the sidewalks (doubled the width on three sides and tripled the width on the fourth side of the square)
- Provided a unified streetscape to provide much-needed shade and greatly enhance downtown's sense of place including landscaping (trees and planters), irrigation, and other sidewalk furnishings such as lighting, seating and waste receptacles
- Upgraded the utility and drainage infrastructure.



WAYFINDING SYSTEM



POSITIVE IMPACTS

These capital initiatives have been the primary catalysts for the renaissance seen in downtown McKinney today and have re-established the square as the primary public gathering place for citizens and visitors alike.

In addition to helping to weather the current economic recession, these initiatives have collectively increased:

- activity after 5:00 pm (new restaurants with sidewalk cafes),
- sales per square foot,
- lease rates per square foot,
- demand for downtown housing,
- sense of community pride,
- sense of security with a more active street life and improved lighting,
- attendance at community festivals/events,
- private investment in the downtown area (a new 4-story boutique hotel; more historic façade improvements; more expansions of downtown businesses; conversion of the historic Flour Mill into loft residential), and
- momentum for more public infrastructure projects expanding outward from the square (voters approved 2010 Bond package with \$12 million for downtown area capital improvements).





