



Town Center Study | Phase I Report



APPROVED ON 18 MARCH 2008



VISION:
AN INSPIRING PICTURE OF A PREFERRED FUTURE

not bound by time
serves as a foundation for a system of planning and implementation

HISTORICAL MR VIEW OF THE STUDY AREA

McKinney has been blessed with a rich and wonderful past. This past provides the symbols for a community that is much more than a suburb of Dallas. Today, McKinney is a city centered about a historic 111 square with all key roads leading to the square.

Agricultural Roots

McKinney serves as the county seat of Collin County. Collin County was established in 1846 and McKinney in 1848. Both City and County were named for Mr. Collin McKinney, a patriot, land surveyor, legislator, and one of the 56 signers of the Texas Declaration of Independence. The cultivation and processing of locally grown crops fueled much of McKinney's late nineteenth and early twentieth-century growth and prosperity. During this period, Collin County emerged as one of the leading agricultural centers in Texas. Cotton prevailed as the county's



largest and most significant farm product; however, corn, wheat, and oats were also grown in large quantities. Although crop production in the McKinney area continues today, its role in the local economy diminished after World War II. McKinney's cotton-processing structures played a significant role in the town center's history and development during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Much of the area's vast agricultural potential was realized through the construction and operation of these facilities. Their establishment aided the town center's commercial development because area farmers came to McKinney to sell their crops and then purchased goods at downtown stores. These property types also laid the foundation for the town center's industrial development and supported the establishment of a textile mill.

Town Square

The town square is one of the symbols that people throughout North Texas recognize as being McKinney. The original town site presented a cardinal-point grid plan with a courthouse square near the city's center, a popular town plan throughout Texas. The majority of the state's county seats, especially those of the same vintage as McKinney, are arranged similarly. The square was the sole public space set aside in the original town plan. Anticipating that property near the town's center would be in great demand for business purposes, the city's surveyors made lots facing onto the courthouse square long and narrow, measuring 25 by 100 feet. Such a layout enabled merchants to erect buildings with storefronts for displaying merchandise. George White and Ethelred Whitley, who surveyed the new town site, divided the remainder of the City's blocks into equally sized lots that were reserved for residential use.

Arrival of the Railroad

The arrival of the railroad in 1872 greatly stimulated economic growth and brought new wealth to McKinney. The railroad enticed several industrial enterprises, such as a textile mill, grain elevators and a flour mill, to locate in the community. It also influenced much of the town center's physical growth and settlement patterns. In addition, the railroad linked the one



State Highway 5 Corridor:

While it is acknowledged that many of the existing businesses along the corridor provide a needed service to the community, the overall appearance and character leaves much to be desired. Many of the properties are older and in poor condition. The potential for redevelopment is hampered by the fragmented nature of the small parcels, particularly on the segment of the corridor south of downtown. There are several areas where the depth of the parcels fronting on State Highway 5 is especially shallow. The parcels between State Highway 5 and Chestnut Street in the southern portion are especially awkward because the west side of Chestnut Street is a viable residential area with a number of historic homes.



815 N. Kentucky Street

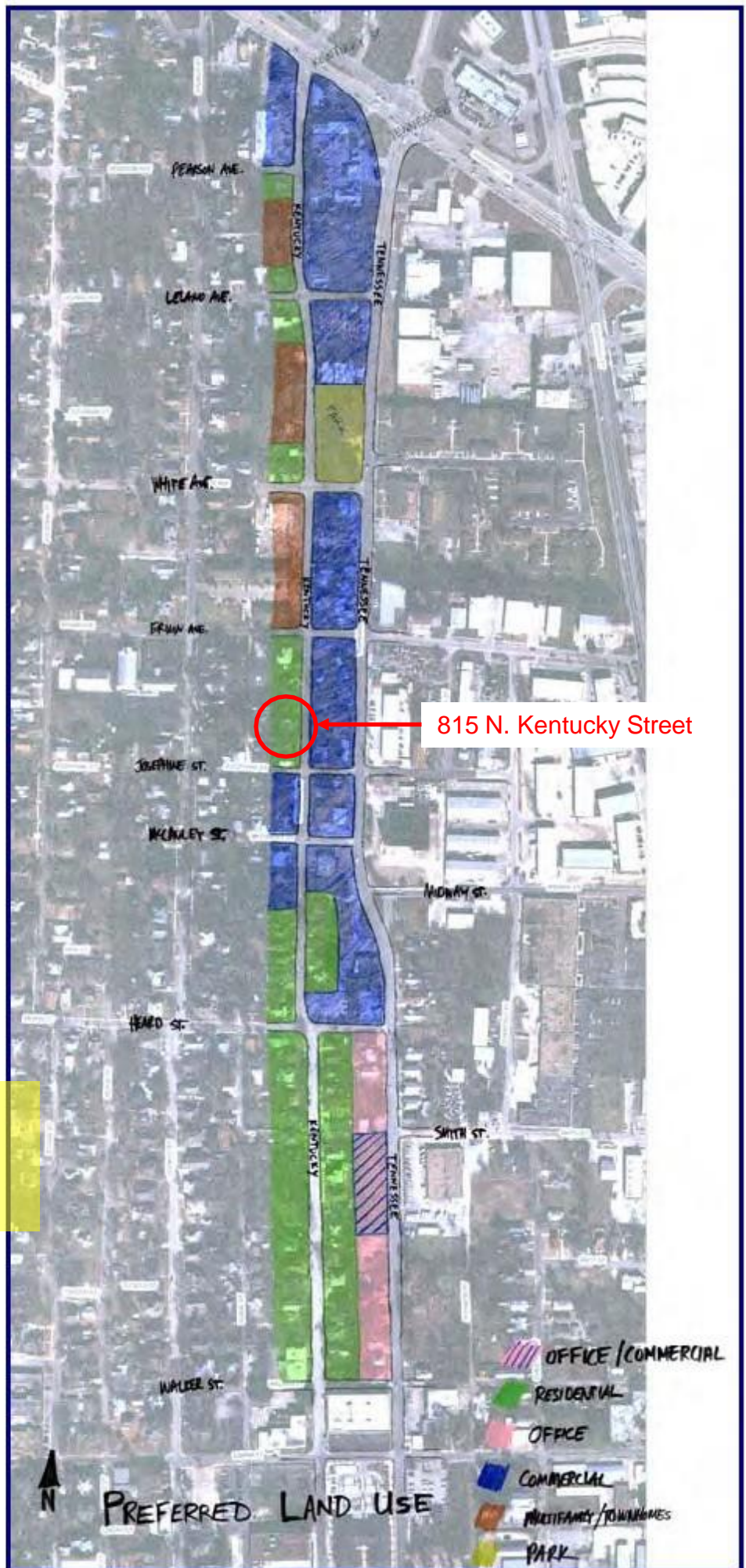
Kentucky and Tennessee Street Corridor:

This corridor was of particular concern because it is so integrally tied into the existing fabric of the Town Center. The historic neighborhood immediately to the west is undergoing something of a renaissance, particularly along Church Street. Many historic homes front on Kentucky Street and would be impacted by the redevelopment of the other side of the street. Since these streets are less traveled than the other corridors, the commercial uses are smaller and seem to be less busy. Many are in poor condition, and the prospects for better development are not clear.

pleasing streetscape and encouraging more pedestrian activity, (2) Allow a reduction in required parking and allow some on-street parking to satisfy parking requirements.

- A pocket park is proposed on Tennessee Street north of White Avenue. This park would not only provide a visually pleasing element to the passers-by, but would also provide a transition from commercial to residential uses. Additionally, the park would serve as recreational space for the residents both east and west of it.

- Expand the Historic District to protect the “unique” McKinney look. Old houses, no matter their size, should not be torn down or inappropriately rehabilitated but, instead, should be restored to remain residential or converted to light intensity office uses.



Tennessee/Kentucky Streets: Encourage transitional redevelopment

As described above, the proximity of Tennessee and Kentucky as well as the mix of older and historic homes and eclectic commercial uses poses a special challenge to infill growth. Conceptually, the solution could rest on creating dual frontage types along these respective streets.

Essentially, Kentucky would be more residential in nature with the facades set back along a front yard zone, although more urban (10 to 15 feet) rather than suburban in scale. Along Tennessee, the frontage would be more commercial, with buildings set closer to the street and built higher (2 to 3 stories).



Essentially, these street pairs would facilitate a smoother transition from the commercial corridor running up and down SH 5 (and to some extent Tennessee Street) with the neighborhoods to the west. Because the viability of commercial businesses, especially at the neighborhood scale, is dependent on parking, the availability of on-street parking and easy access is critical. Accordingly, maintaining both Kentucky Street and Tennessee Street as two-way streets with parking on both sides is desirable. One mechanism to achieve a matching of urban design and street function may be to create a regulating corridor overlay with development standards driven by the street frontage character established for any given section of street.

To specifically address the narrow block condition between Kentucky and Tennessee Street, a prototype town home development has been conceived. This concept could be backed up internally, providing good frontage on both Kentucky and Tennessee Streets. The building type on Tennessee Street could also be designed as a live-work unit to take advantage of the more commercial environment along that street. Parking would be provided internally at the back of the buildings with access at the ends of the blocks on the perpendicular streets.

A slight variation on this prototype design would allow for two larger multi-family buildings (4-plexes that are designed to mimic the appearance of a large house) at the ends of the blocks instead of access for parking behind. The parking in this design would be accessible mid-block along Kentucky and Tennessee Streets instead of at the end of the blocks.

