



“A GREAT PLACE TO LIVE”

**AGENDA
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2016
CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBER, 7105 WHITLEY ROAD
REGULAR MEETING
6:00 P.M.**

CALL TO ORDER

INVOCATION

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Minutes of Regular meeting of January 5, 2016

REPORTS

1. One Watauga Briefing
Jacquelyn Reyff, AICP

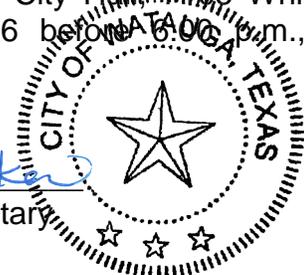
ADJOURNMENT

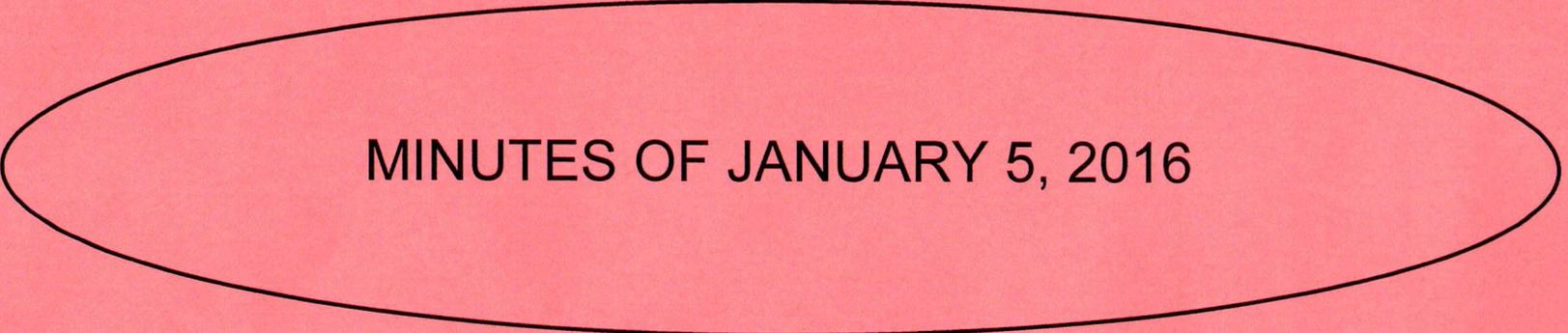
NOTICE

THIS FACILITY IS WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE AND ACCESSIBLE PARKING SPACES ARE AVAILABLE. REQUESTS FOR ACCOMMODATIONS OR INTERPRETIVE SERVICES MUST BE MADE 48 HOURS PRIOR TO THIS MEETING. PLEASE CONTACT THE CITY SECRETARY'S OFFICE AT (817) 514-5825, OR FAX (817) 514-3625 FOR FURTHER INFORMATION.

I, Zolaina R. Parker, City Secretary for the City of Watauga, Texas, do hereby certify that this agenda was posted on the official bulletin board at City Hall, 7105 Whitley Road, Watauga, Texas, on Wednesday, January 27, 2016 before 6:00 p.m., in accordance with Chapter 551 of the Texas Government Code.


Zolaina R. Parker, City Secretary





MINUTES OF JANUARY 5, 2016



“A GREAT PLACE TO LIVE”

**MINUTES
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
TUESDAY, JANUARY 5, 2016
CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBER, 7105 WHITLEY ROAD
REGULAR MEETING
6:00 P.M.**

Larry Clark	Chairperson
Sergio Molina	Secretary
William Boese	Member
Kay Ivey	Member
Cristy McCauley	Member
Ron Holland	Member

And

Jacquelyn Reyff, AICP	Planning & Development Manager
Patricia Rodriguez	Planning & Development Specialist
Denise Wilkinson	Economic Development Coordinator

With

Vice-Chairperson Brad Hearne absent with notice.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Larry Clark called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

INVOCATION

Chairperson Larry Clark gave the invocation.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Minutes of Regular meeting of October 13, 2015

Member Cristy McCauley made a motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of October 13, 2015 as written. Member Kay Ivey seconded the motion with all members present voting aye.

REPORTS

1. Update on progress of One Watauga Development Strategy

Member Cristy McCauley made a motion to move the Report on the Agenda to give the applicant time to arrive. Member Ron Holland seconded the motion with all members present voting aye.

Jacquelyn Reyff, Planning and Development Manager presented to the Planning and Zoning Commission an updated report of the One Watauga Development Strategy, and continued with questions from the Commission.

PUBLIC HEARING

1. **Planning and Zoning Case 16-01** Request from Local Business District (LB) to LB with a Specific Use Permit (SUP) for a Massage Establishment for the property located at 6651 Watauga Road, Suite 109, also known as Block 3 Lot 26R1 of the Singing Hills Addition in the City of Watauga. The use is for massage therapy and foot reflexology business. The property is located north of Watauga Road and west of Rufe Snow Drive. The property owner is Woodcrest Marketplace LP and the applicant is Guifeng Wang.

Chairperson Larry Clark opened the Public Hearing at 6:32 p.m.

Jacquelyn Reyff, Planning and Development Manager introduced Case 16-01 to the Commission regarding the request from Ms. Wang for a Specific Use Permit and the history of the property and was also available to answer questions pertaining to Case 16-01.

Ms. Guifeng Wang and Mr. Wayne Clovis who represented her due to a language barrier were present. Mr. Clovis stood at the podium to answer questions from the Commission regarding Case 16-01.

Chairperson Larry Clark closed the Public Hearing at 6:47 p.m.

NEW BUSINESS

1. **Consideration and action on Planning and Zoning Case 16-01:** Request from Local Business District (LB) to LB with a Specific Use Permit (SUP) for a Massage Establishment for the property located at 6651 Watauga Road, Suite 109, also known as Block 3 Lot 26R1 of the Singing Hills Addition in the City of Watauga. The use is for massage therapy and foot reflexology business. The property is located north of Watauga Road and west of Rufe Snow Drive. The property owner is Woodcrest Marketplace LP and the applicant is Guifeng Wang.

Member William Boese made a motion to approve recommendation to the City Council for Planning & Zoning Case 16-01 for a massage establishment at the property located at 6651 Watauga Road, Suite 109, for a massage therapy and foot reflexology business. Member Cristy McCauley seconded the motion, which passed as follows:

AYES: Ivey, Holland, Boese, McCauley
NAYS: Molina
ABSENT: Hearne
ABSTAIN: Clark

2. Training Session for Planning and Zoning Commission Members regarding zoning.

Jacquelyn Reyff, Planning and Development Manager introduced Ms. Bagley who in turn presented to the Commission information regarding zoning.

ADJOURNMENT

With there being no further business to discuss Chairperson Larry Clark adjourned the meeting.

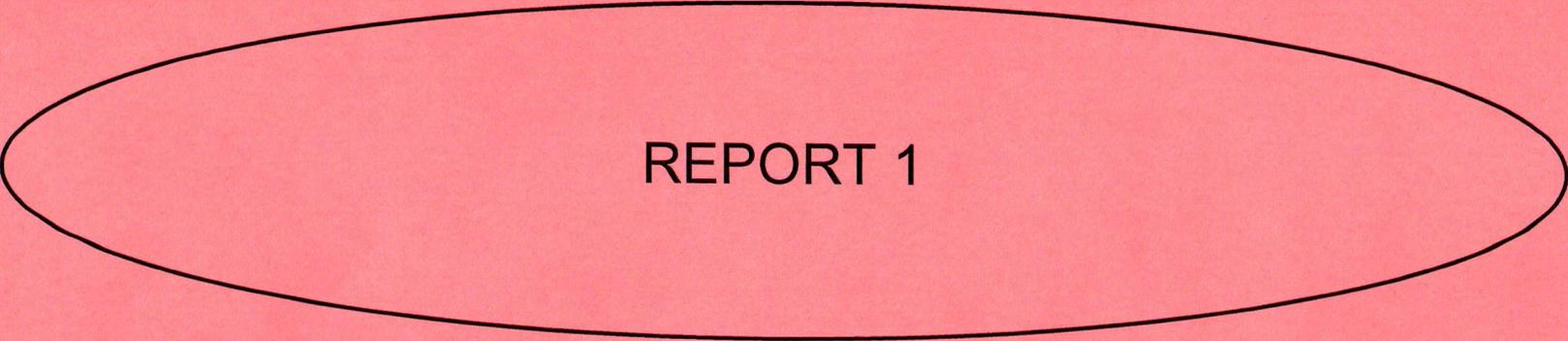
The meeting adjourned at 7:39 p.m.

APPROVED: this the _____ day of _____, 2016.

SIGNED: this the _____ day of _____, 2016.

APPROVED: _____
Larry Clark, Chairperson

ATTEST: _____
Sergio Molina, Secretary



REPORT 1

4 | Economic Development

Baseline Overview and Current Economic Development Efforts

Economic development planning is the process by which a community organizes, analyzes, plans, and then applies its energies to the tasks of improving the economic well-being and quality of life for those in the community. In national trends, the structure of the economy has been evolving into the New Knowledge Economy. To prosper in this new economy, Watauga must:

- Have knowledge of the region's economic function in the global economy
- Create a skilled and educated workforce
- Invest in an infrastructure for innovation
- Create a great quality of life
- Foster an innovative business climate
- Reinvent and digitize government
- Take regional governance and collaboration seriously

The nature of economics is cyclical, based on a combination of factors, including product life cycles, applications of technology, government interventions, and a host of other indicators. Development will happen in a community whether or not it is planned and the community will experience economic changes whether or not they are desired changes. The advantage in planning is that communities can anticipate these changes and guide development to the best of their abilities and capacities.

Watauga's vision as it relates to economic development is to enhance the quality of life for its residents by providing an attractive and desirable place to live, work, play and grow. An expanded and diversified local tax base is keys to this vision. Additionally, creating quality job opportunities and promoting responsible growth are ways economic development should be used as a tool to implement the vision.

It is important to remember that economic development is more than just the recruitment of new business, but also the redevelopment of lagging business. Watauga strives to create an environment that welcomes new industry, attracts new residents, and creates an incentive package that makes Watauga competitive in the Dallas-Fort Worth region. In other words, economic development encompasses intrinsic characteristics that lay the foundation for a thriving, economically fruitful city.

Economic Development Overview

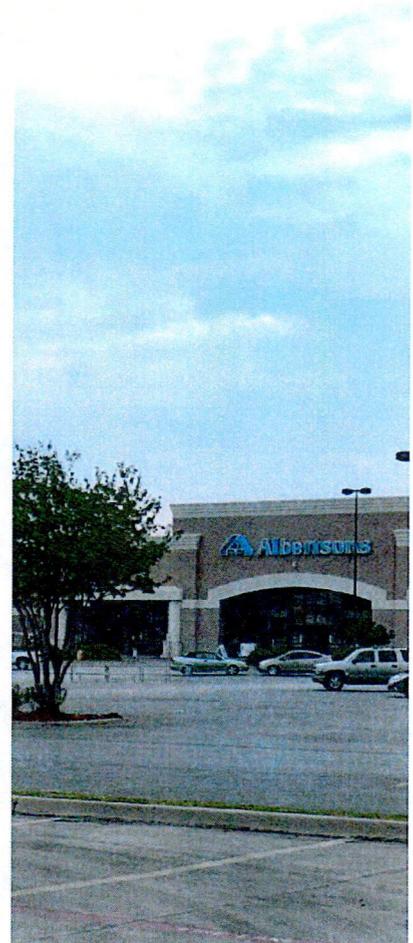
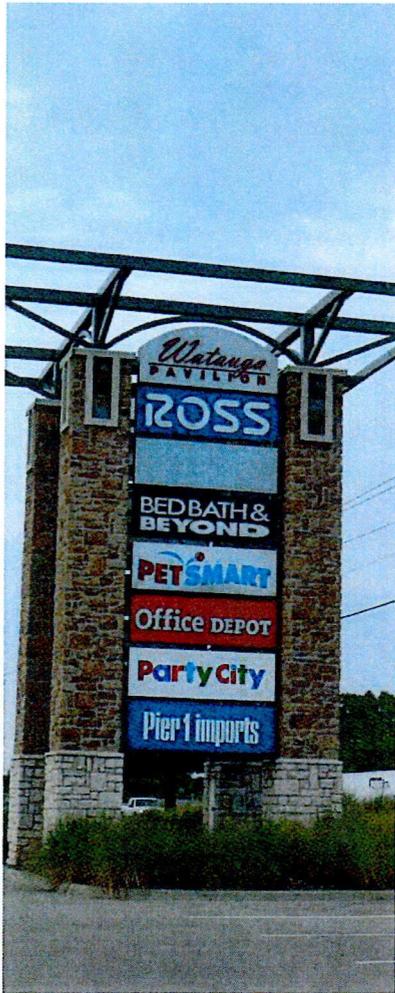
Often the concept of economic development can be difficult to understand because the topic spans a broad range of issues. However, economic development generally can be summarized as the efforts to create and retain jobs in a given area, such as a city, county or state.

THREE BASIC TARGETS OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMING:

Existing business/industry- this refers to efforts aimed at the retention and increased viability of existing local businesses.

New business industry- this refers to efforts aimed at the creation of new business activity within a community, as measured by increases in employment and expansion of the tax base.

Outside investment- this refers to efforts aimed at attracting people into the community to spend money locally.



Current Organizations Supporting Economic Development

City of Watauga

The City of Watauga's Economic Development initiatives currently fall under the Planning and Development department. While Watauga doesn't currently have a separate Economic Development Corporation, the City does encourage development agreements, giving developers sales tax rebates to encourage growth. Additionally the City offers the Watauga Improving Neighborhoods (WIN) Program through the Public Works and Finance departments. The WIN Program is strictly a residential program for neighborhood revitalization, providing a 100 percent grant for community-based groups to clean up and repair distressed parts of neighborhoods.

Watauga is ideally located to attract businesses, situated in Northeast Tarrant County and in close proximity to Fort Worth, Arlington, and Dallas. The City has easy access to enhanced transportation systems, including several state and national highways as well as DFW International Airport. In addition, Watauga is the proud home to Capp Smith Park, a spring-filled lake surrounded by lush grass and walking trails; a 9/11 Memorial Site featuring a piece of steel from the World Trade Center; and the only City Water Tower in the world to hold four floors of office space.

Northeast Tarrant County Chamber of Commerce

The City of Watauga is a member of the Northeast Tarrant County Chamber of Commerce, an association encompassing four cities: Haltom City, North Richland Hills, Richland Hills and Watauga. This four-city area continues to grow at a tremendous rate, an on-going result of years of collaboration and planning by City officials, education leaders and area businesses. A focused and determined pro-business, pro-education, and pro-quality of life approach by all leaders, combined with right-to-work state laws, low taxes and a strong labor force have propelled Northeast Tarrant County into a great place to do business.

Further bolstering the economic development of the area is the current North Tarrant Express project, a cooperative Texas Department of Transportation and multi-city development that expands the critical Northeast Tarrant area corridor extending from I-35 West in Fort Worth to DFW Airport. This \$2.5 billion undertaking will provide for the anticipated traffic growth in the region and adds to the impressive list of economic opportunities this area offers.

For area residents, Northeast Tarrant County has everything. Boasting both new residential communities as well as established neighborhoods, the family-friendly cities of Haltom City, North Richland Hills, Richland Hills, and Watauga offer outstanding housing values and outstanding housing choices.

Easy to get to from anywhere, the Northeast Tarrant area is central to everything. This family-friendly community is close to the major entertainment districts of Fort Worth, Arlington and Dallas and is only a few miles from the famous Fort Worth Stockyards, 20 minutes from the Texas Motor Speedway, 20 minutes from Arlington and the Dallas Cowboys and Texas Rangers and only 30 minutes from Downtown Dallas.

Watauga's pro-business environment and its membership in numerous regional and state economic development organizations provides the assistance needed in bringing business and industry to the area. The City has a bustling business environment of over 400 small, medium, and large firms, providing a diverse group of goods and services to its citizens. These businesses support a quality of life unsurpassed by most towns of this size. While the business base includes several national chains, over 75% are owned by independent business people including many franchise opportunities.

Summary of Retail Leakage and Surplus Analysis

The following is a summary of the information from the Watauga Retail Leakage and Surplus Analysis (dated July 13, 2012 and prepared by Buxton). Since the completion of this study, the City has remained nearly at build out, thus the information gathered from this study is still relevant.

The Retail Leakage and Surplus Analysis examines the qualitative aspect of the community’s retail opportunities. It is a guide to understanding retail opportunities but it is not an analysis that indicates unconditional opportunities. The analysis, sometimes called a gap analysis or a supply and demand analysis, identifies the sales demand of those products and services for which Watauga residents and residents of the retail trade area spend their dollars on. Categories include groceries, restaurants, apparel, entertainment, etc. The gap analysis then identifies whether the market needs are being met (i.e. equilibrium or surplus) or if residents are leaving the trade area for goods and services (i.e. leakage). The creation of trade areas establishes the City’s local retail outlook and its position in the regional marketplace. The trade area for Watauga was determined utilizing a 10-minute drive time analysis. The predominant finding for the retail trade area is significant leakage. Leakage provides a great opportunity for future market growth. Watauga can actively pursue future economic development opportunities to meet the retail market demand with the spending potential and market demand in place. The Retail Leakage and Surplus Analysis study highlights 49 retail industries where leakage is occurring. Further, the study highlights a leakage for the trade area of approximately \$659 million. The significance of this figure is that it represents the raw demand present in the trade area.



Figure 18. Total Leakage/Surplus Index and Actual and Potential Sales

Source: Watauga Retail Leakage and Surplus Analysis (dated July 13, 2012 and prepared by Buxton)

The chart below highlights the leakage/surplus index and actual and potential sales by major store types. To understand this chart, 1.0 means that the demand and sales in the area being analyzed are in balance and equilibrium is met. A number less than 1.0 (0.8, for example) means that demand is exceeding sales and that customers are leaving the area being analyzed. In the example of 0.8, the demand exceeds sales by 20%. A number greater than 1.0 (1.2, for example) means that sales are exceeding demand and consumers are coming from outside the City to shop in Watauga. In the example of 1.2, the sales are exceeding demand by 20%.

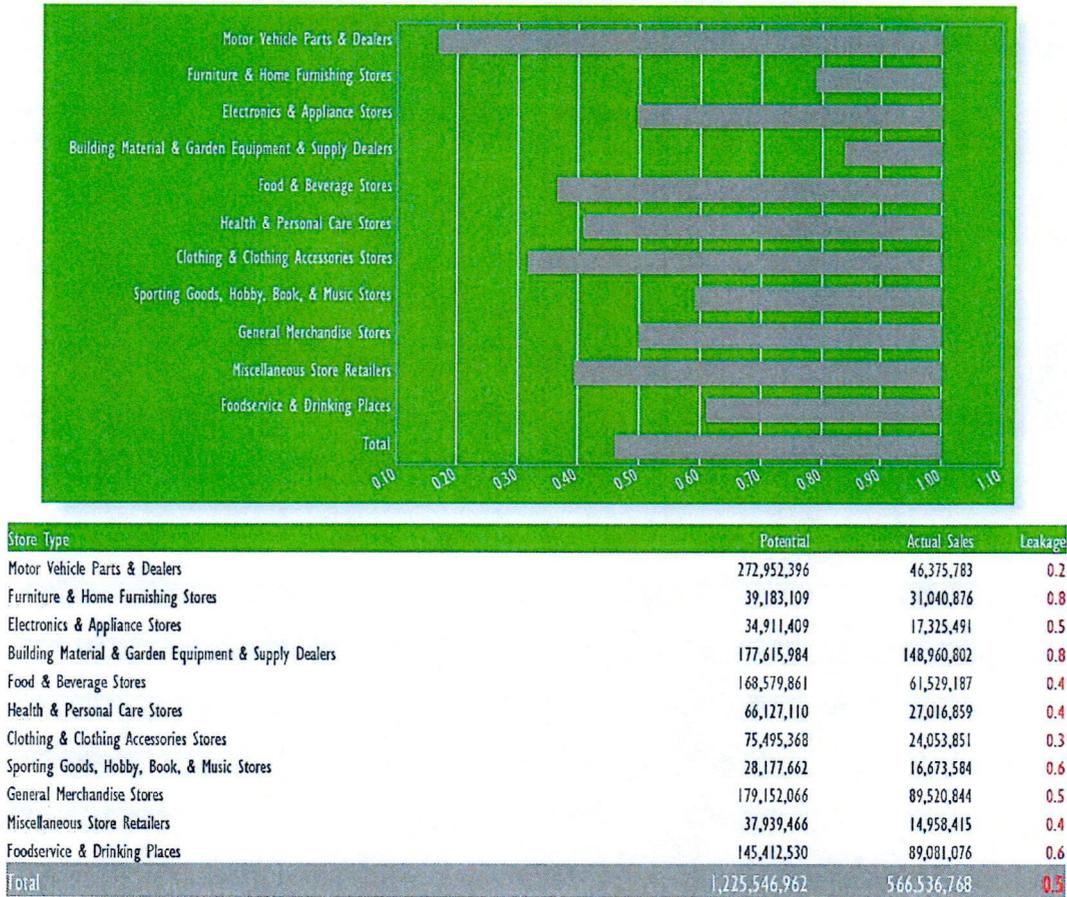
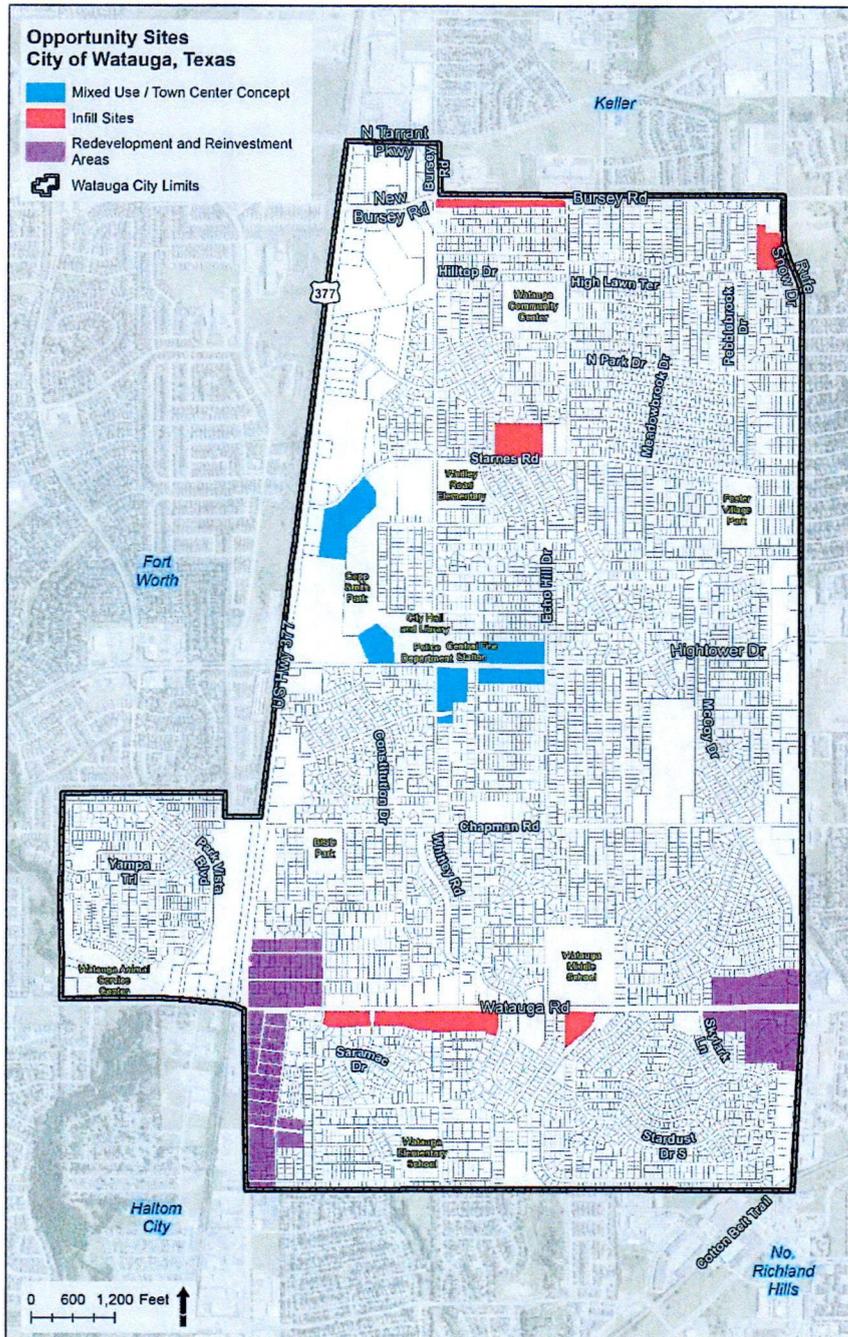


Figure 19. Leakage/Surplus Index and Actual and Potential Sales by Major Store Types
 Source: Watauga Retail Leakage and Surplus Analysis (dated July 13, 2012 and prepared by Buxton)

Identification of Key Development and Redevelopment Sites

Approximately 4 percent of Watauga is vacant land, so a majority of the opportunities for investment in the City will be focused on blighted and underutilized areas. Investment opportunities are broken into three categories: infill sites, mixed use/town center concept zones, and redevelopment and reinvestment areas. These three categories are explained in detail in the following sections.

Figure 20. Opportunity Sites



Key Infill Sites

Infill sites comprise approximately four percent vacant land within the City. These sites can be further divided into four zones.

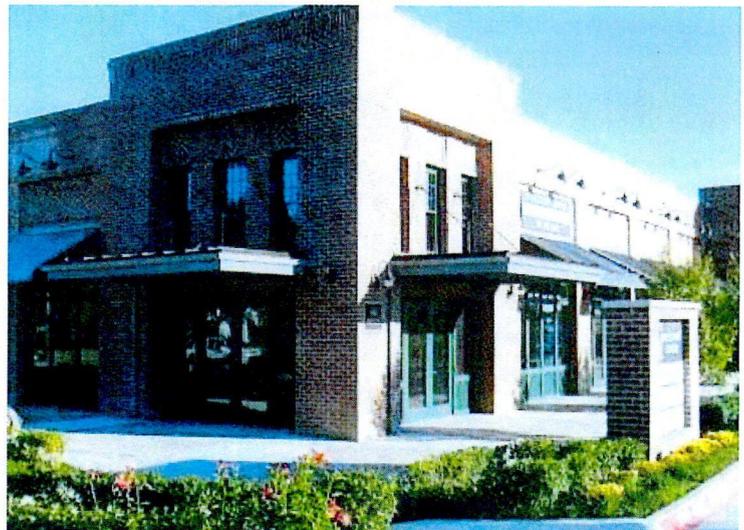
Professional Office Infill

The first infill zone is along the north border of the City. It is bound by Bursey Rd. to the north, Indian Springs Rd. to the east, single-family residential units along Hillview Dr. to the south, and Whitley Rd. to the west. This zone is envisioned to be professional offices. While the parcel depth isn't that large, professional office is a compatible use abutting the single-family residential to the south since the primary occupancy will take place during the day. It is recommended that proper landscaping and screening are installed in between the existing residential area and the future office space in order to further reduce any hindrances the office space may have on the residential neighborhood. Architectural character and massing of this office infill should fit in with the surrounding neighborhood. Appropriate materials include brick and/or stone. Landscaping materials could include native, drought-tolerant species.



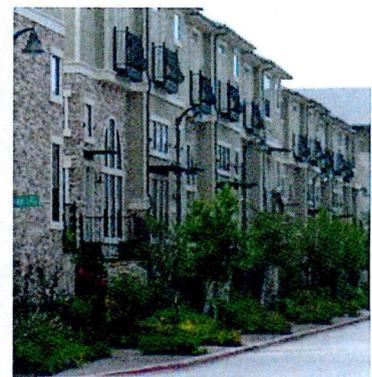
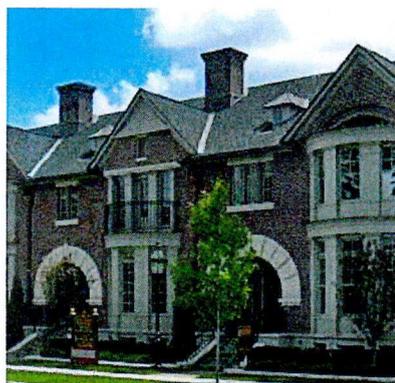
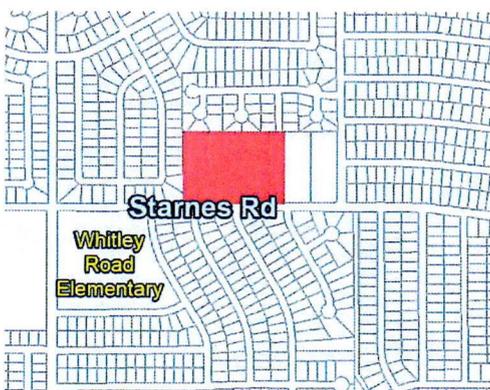
Strip Retail/Office Infill

The second infill zone is at the northeast corner of Watauga. It is bound by existing retail along Bursey Rd. to the north, Rufe Snow Dr. to the east, single-family residential lining High Lawn Ter. to the south, and single-family residential lining Courtney Way to the west. This site is prime strip retail and/or office space. Immediately to the north of this site sits a Dollar General, a Shell gas station, and a small strip of restaurants. North of Bursey Rd. is a neighborhood Walmart and additional strip retail. The proposed strip retail/office infill should serve the surrounding neighborhoods and will bring an additional tax base to Watauga. The character of the new development should match the surrounding neighborhoods in massing and architectural details. Façade materials should include brick and/or stone, and landscaping materials could include native, drought-tolerant species.



Townhome Infill

The third zone of infill is bound by single-family residential lining Courtside Dr. to the north, Indian Springs Rd. to the east, Starnes Rd. to the south, and single-family residential lining Prairie Dr. to the east. The Future Land Use Plan designates this zone for medium-density residential, such as townhomes. Providing a variety of housing types in Watauga, including townhomes, encourages life-cycle housing. In other words, as residents of Watauga age and downsize their housing needs, they have a place to move to within the City. Façade materials of the townhome infill should include brick, stone, and/or stucco, and architectural details should match those of the surrounding neighborhood. Landscaping materials should include native, drought-tolerant species.



Job Diversity Infill

The fourth and final infill zone is bound by Watauga Rd. to the north, single-family residential lining Stardust Dr. to the east, single-family residential lining Haney Dr. to the south and Lalagray Ln. to the west. Watauga Rd is a key corridor in Watauga, connecting the commercial along US Hwy. 377 to the commercial node at Rufe Snow Dr. The Future Land Use Plan designates this land as local office/retail/commercial. By encouraging this type of development along the corridor, the City can increase its tax base as well as provide an opportunity for increased job diversity. Job expansion associated with these parcels could include professional services, leisure/hospitality, information, health care, finance/real estate, retail and construction. With a wide variety of job options, Watauga can keep its residents in the City, as well as attract non-residents. This job diversity infill area should be constructed of brick and/or stone, and architectural details should be in line with the surrounding neighborhoods. Landscaping materials could include native, drought-tolerant species.



Mixed-Use Town Center

The mixed-use town center concept zone is envisioned to enhance the heart of the City. A special character should take place in this zone, tying together the City’s recent investments in Capp Smith Park, City Hall, Library, Police Department, and Central Fire Station. Incorporating residential over retail and townhomes to expand the City’s housing options, this town center zone will play a critical role in the City’s economic development, and if developed correctly, will be a memorable and cherished addition to the region. The concepts described below are ideas of how the City could approach the development of this land. There are many other options that can be explored to fit the City’s needs and desires. The Mixed Use Town Center is broken up into two zones. The first zone is on the northeast side of Capp Smith Park, just south of Starnes Rd. and the second zone is located along Hightower Dr., east of Whitley Rd. and west of Echo Hill Dr.

Zone 1

The first zone, on the northeast side of Capp Smith Park and south of Starnes Rd. is where a majority of the mixed-use development should occur. The high density character within this zone is compatible with the retail to the west of this area, lining US Hwy. 377. Development identity signage at the corner of Starnes Rd. and US Hwy. 377. will indicate that people are arriving somewhere special. Within the development, the orientation of the buildings is both towards the street; for a welcoming pedestrian feel, and towards the drainage channel located through the property; embracing the open amenity as an asset within this development. Building types within this zone include multi-story residential or office over retail, flex office over retail, 1-story retail, and a signature restaurant pad. In addition, there are several plazas that act as gathering spaces or a space for outdoor dining, a unique tree grove, and a food truck area for people to congregate and eat. Enhanced streetscape improvements encourage pedestrian movement along the vehicular corridors, ensuring the zone is vibrant.



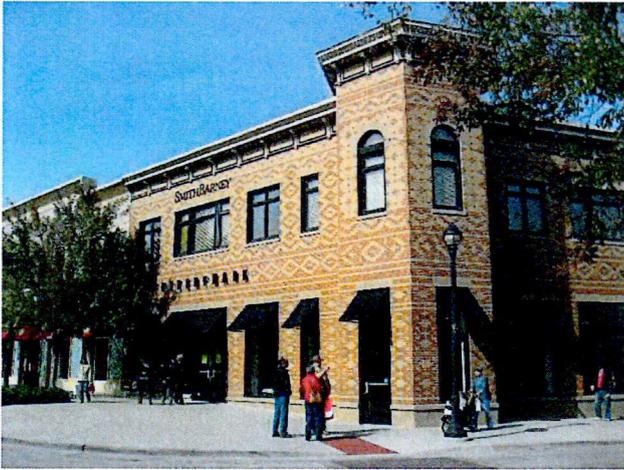
Figure 21. Zone 1- Concept Ideas



Trail character



Tree grove character



Multi-story mixed-use building type



Outdoor dining and shopping with park connection



Food truck area

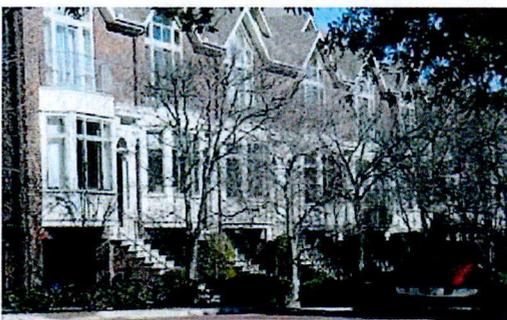
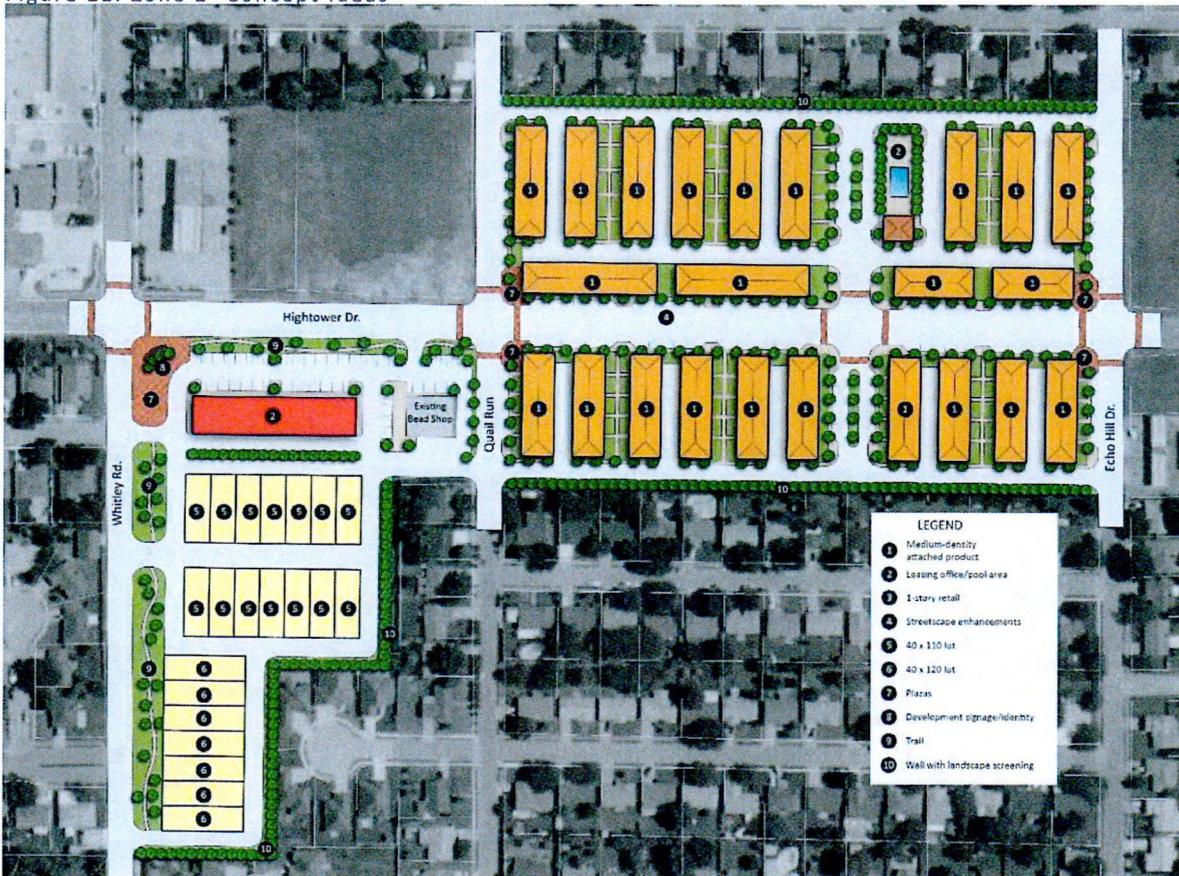


Buildings oriented to create pedestrian spaces

Zone 2

The second zone sits along Hightower Dr. and is bound by Whitley Rd. to the west and Echo Hill Dr. to the east. This zone is an ideal location for medium-density attached residential product and zero-lot-line single family residential as well as a small strip of retail along Hightower Dr. The smaller scale of the medium-density attached product and the zero-lot-line residential is the ideal gradual transition to the existing surrounding neighborhood and, with proper streetscape improvements, this zone will become a continuation of the pedestrian-friendly experience established in Zone 1. Development identity signage should be placed at both ends of the development along Hightower Rd. to ensure wayfinding and a sense of arrival. Plazas are placed at key corners and a trail meanders from the formal sidewalk in front of the medium density attached product along Hightower Dr., down Whitley Rd. Landscaped screen walls surround the edges of the property to ensure the density transition is made with ease.

Figure 22. Zone 2- Concept Ideas



Townhomes lining the street



Zero-lot-line residential

Redevelopment and Reinvestment Areas

The redevelopment and reinvestment locations include areas with older, existing development and should be further assessed. The City should determine the financial gains and feasibility of rehabilitating the existing infrastructure versus soliciting new development. As illustrated in the Property Value Map, several parcels designated at redevelopment/reinvestment areas currently have low property values. With proper investment, these values can increase and bring in more tax revenue for the City.

The following concepts and program examples could be utilized to encourage reinvestment within existing non-residential areas and create more attractive, desirable retail centers. Watauga contains a mix of newly constructed retail as well as aging retail centers. As new retail centers are planned and constructed in the area, older retail centers will begin to experience increased vacancy rates. These older retail centers can deteriorate due to limited reinvestment to maintain high quality aesthetics. In order to increase the existing site's long-term viability, City staff and retail site owners should explore the following design and aesthetics techniques.

Parking Areas

Large expanses of pavement for parking do not contribute to a positive visual image. The City should consider either providing incentives for, or requesting parking areas to be placed on the side or the rear of the primary structure and out of the public view. Reducing the number of required parking spaces could be a possible incentive if developers place the parking on the side or rear of the building. Landscaping and screening, which are discussed in more detail later in this section, should also be incorporated into parking areas.

Lighting

Lighting is needed to provide visibility for businesses and safety for patrons within non-residential districts. To avoid adverse impacts, lighting facilities should reflect away from adjacent residential areas. Lighting aesthetics are also important to consider. The City should examine developing a lighting theme to be used at various non-residential centers in order to brand commercial areas as being uniquely related to the corridor's vision.

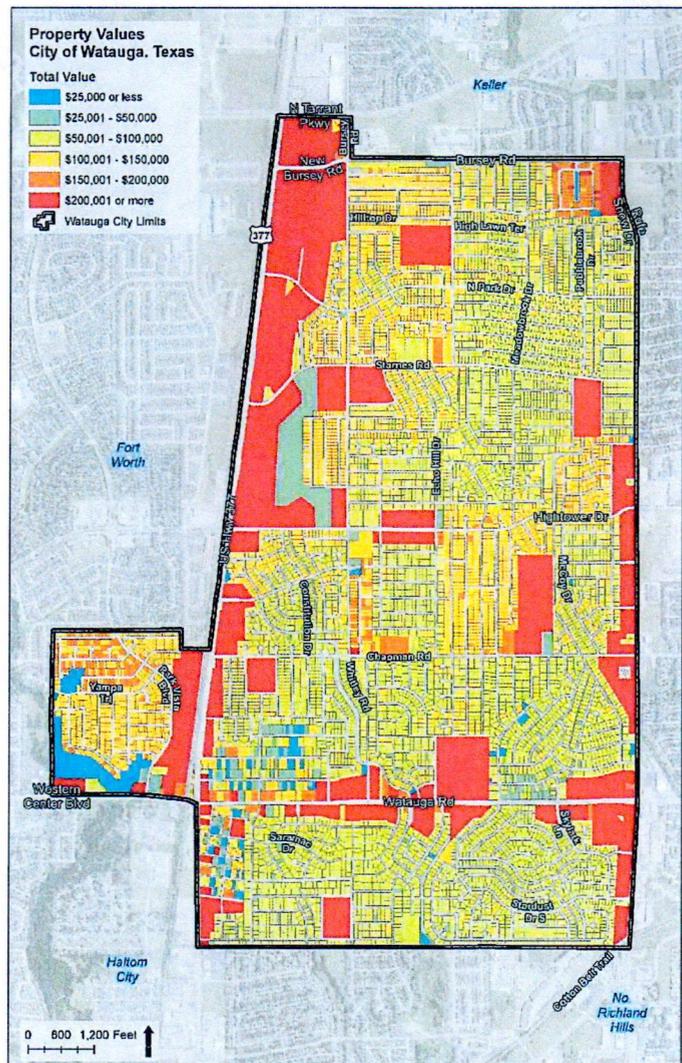


Figure 23. Property Values

Screening

There are many elements that are needed for businesses to operate that are not generally considered to be visually attractive. These various elements include trash receptacles, open storage, expansive parking lots, service areas, and ground- or roof-mounted equipment. Appropriate screening items should include landscaping, landscaping in conjunction with earth berms in parking areas, landscaping in conjunction with masonry walls, parapet walls for roof-mounted equipment, and use of other materials that are compatible with the structure(s).

Landscaping

Landscaping contributes value to property and is an aesthetically pleasing element to incorporate in non-residential areas.

Landscaping is particularly important within the mixed-use, infill, and redevelopment and reinvestment areas. Creative stormwater management techniques such as bio swales and rain gardens along with native plant materials should be encouraged within these sites.

Building Materials

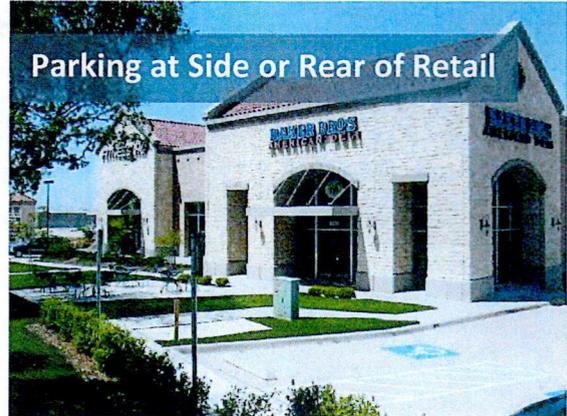
Materials used for the exterior facades or buildings within non-residential areas should generally be limited to brick, stone, rock, or some variation thereof. Either a City official or City Council should be able to approve alternate materials such as concrete, concrete block, or stucco. Reflective and/or mirrored glass should not comprise a large percentage of the building site in. Metal buildings should likewise not be permitted.

Façade Articulation

The façades of large non-residential structures can be large and visually unappealing. This is referred to as massing. Massing concerns have generally arisen in response to large big-box retailers. While retailers are an asset to Watauga, the large flat walls are not a desired character for the City and therefore architecture façade offsets are recommended.

Retail Revitalization Programs

It is in the community's best interest to actively participate and incentivize redevelopment and property rehabilitation. While such participation initially requires the use of public funds, the returns on investment almost always surpass the public spending. Public/private partnerships involve a cooperative relationship by both the community and a developer. From the development standpoint, the ultimate benefit of a public/private partnership is that it allows the developer to participate in a project that, under normal circumstances, may not have been economically viable. The advantage from the public's standpoint is that a new project adds value and tax base to the community. New development, building renovations and building rehabilitations enhance the overall look, feel and value of the community and can positively impact adjacent



residential neighborhoods. The following are examples of strategies that the City may employ to encourage aesthetic improvements within the corridor's existing non-residential areas. It is important to note that the following strategies are for illustrative purposes only. Specifics related to each program should be determined by the City's economic development department and City Council.

Façade Improvement Program

In order to improve the external appearance of existing non-residential centers, the City may create a façade improvement program. Under this program, the City could match private investment up to a certain dollar amount for façade improvement expenses. For example, the City may choose to match a business owner dollar for dollar up to \$50,000 in improvements, with a minimum investment of \$20,000 required for eligibility. A Maximum match should be specified because this program only targets external conditions of a building and not the structure itself. Economic development funds should be utilized for more significant rehabilitation projects.

Retail Landscaping Program

Landscaping has the potential to significantly impact the overall appearance of non-residential centers. Many existing retail and commercial centers in Watauga have minimal landscaping. Many business owners do not have the funding to rehabilitate the exterior structure of their business, therefore a landscaping incentive may entice business owners to perform minor improvements to their property.

Public/Private Partnership

The Public/Private Partnership (PPP) is a significant redevelopment action that may be utilized by the City to encourage and attract development to a specific location. They are generally utilized for large-scale redevelopment projects. This strategy has been highly effective in the Town of Addison, which utilized a PPP to encourage the development of Addison Circle and Vitruvian Park.

Generally speaking, the City would utilize economic development funding to pay for needed infrastructure improvements. The City could also utilize economic development funding to give low interest loans to developers, but traditionally PPP's require more active participation from the City. In extreme cases, the City may issue General Obligation Bonds to pay for infrastructure improvements, as was done in Addison. If successful, the added value and taxable revenue of the development over time would be significantly higher than the initial investment.

Retail Rehabilitation Program

In order to encourage redevelopment of existing retail centers, the City may offer low interest loans, matching funds or even grants in exchange for significant rehabilitation. Significant rehabilitation includes improving and modernizing the interior and exterior of existing structures. These incentives are targeted for more expensive rehabilitation projects and likely require a higher degree of public participation in order to make such investments feasible.



Character Images of Existing Retail Center with Landscaping Enhancements, Infill Retail Sites, Parking Reduction and Façade Improvements

Funding and Incentive Programs

City Incentives

The City of Watauga doesn't currently have a formal economic development, thus there are no formal incentive programs for commercial development, however there is one informal program for commercial development and one formal program for residential areas.

Development Agreements

Watauga offers developers development agreements, providing a sales tax rebate for the development of new commercial infrastructure. Generally speaking, development agreements are contracts between local jurisdictions and property owners. The agreement provides certainty to the developer that his project will be isolated from changes in the jurisdiction's zoning during the course of development while also providing a benefit to the City.

The Watauga Improving Neighborhoods (WIN) Program

The Public Works and Finance departments offer the WIN Program to help rehabilitate residential areas in distress. In partnership with World Changers Organization, 6 Stones Organization and other volunteer organizations, the City provides 100% financial grants and manpower to repair critical maintenance issues for those who are unable to perform the necessary repairs to their homes themselves due to circumstances and difficulties beyond their control.

State Incentives

Texas currently provides assistance and incentives through the following programs:

The Texas Capital Fund Infrastructure and Real Estate Programs

The Texas Capital Fund Infrastructure and Real Estate Programs provide a way for an eligible applicant to receive funds to make infrastructure and/or real estate improvements to support a specific business that is expanding or beginning operations. The business is required to create or retain jobs for Texans.

For more information, visit

<https://texasagriculture.gov/GrantsServices/RuralEconomicDevelopment/TexasCapitalFund.aspx>



Skills Development Fund

This fund was created to financially assist Texas communities and technical colleges in customized job training for their local businesses. The fund is administered by the Texas Workforce Commission. Grants are provided to help companies and labor unions form partnerships with local community colleges and technical schools to provide custom job training. Average training costs are \$1,000 per trainee (typical costs are \$300-\$400); however, the benefit may vary depending on the proposal.

For more information, visit: <http://www.twc.state.tx.us/partners/skills-development-fund>

The Emerging Technology Fund

The Emerging Technology Fund was created by the State to attract investment in cutting-edge research and technology. Projects are eligible for funding if they will result in the creation of high quality new jobs and have the potential to result in a medical or scientific breakthrough.

For more information, visit: http://gov.texas.gov/files/ecodev/etf/TETF_Report_FY2014.pdf

Additional Local Economic Development Funding Tools

The following economic development tools can be utilized by the City of Watauga to enhance its economic development activities. Care should be used to fully understand them and their potential costs before selecting these tools.

Rent Subsidy Program

A Rent Subsidy Grant Program is a way to stimulate commercial investment in Watauga. The program utilizes rent subsidies to encourage the filling of previously unoccupied buildings with new businesses. The grant program is intended to enhance the economic development of the City by offering matching grant funds for rent subsidy to help new businesses survive and thrive during their initial months in a previously unoccupied building. This helps with the creation of new businesses and fills empty buildings at the same time. A prospective business may only have one grant limited to no greater than 50 percent of each month's rent not to exceed a cumulative total of \$5,000 for one year and the applicant must match the grant amount.

Tax Increment Reinvestment Zones (TIRZs)

Tax Increment Reinvestment Zones, or TIRZs, can be described as special districts wherein public improvements are funded with tax revenues resulting from increased property values. The property tax rate paid by property owners is the same as that paid in other areas of a city, but the additional tax paid on the increased property value would be allotted to a special function that would finance improvement projects within a TIRZ. Cities, counties, and other taxing jurisdictions (except school districts) can all participate in a TIRZ; that is, a city can establish a TIRZ, but the county's and other jurisdictions' tax revenues are not automatically affected. They must agree to participate.

The major benefit of such a district is that other taxing jurisdictions can partner with the City and add some or all of their increment to the pool of funds to leverage the public improvements within the district. While school districts cannot realistically participate in a TIRZ, county, college districts, hospital districts and other taxing jurisdictions can potentially double the size of a project, depending on tax rates and participation. Other benefits include the fact that the developer pays their taxes just as they would without a district, but receives the public improvement benefits. Also, personal property and inventory taxes are not part of the district, and those additional tax revenues still go to the taxing jurisdictions. Finally, while the City may actually have to issue the debt, because TIRZ revenues are used to pay the debt, revenue bonds can be used rather than general obligation bonds.

The disadvantages are that only public improvements as defined in the statute can be paid for by the TIRZ. Also, once the TIRZ District debt is paid off, the district is dissolved, leaving the improvements to be maintained by the general fund of the City. The biggest disadvantage, however, is that TIRZs rely on large increases in taxable property values to create the revenues needed, therefore they are utilized mainly for raw land developments or large-scale redevelopment projects. Many of these projects require demolition of blighted properties, resulting in large increases in property values. Creative TIRZs can take increased tax funds from one developing part of a City and fund improvements in another areas.

It is recommended that the City investigate the feasibility of establishing TIRZs to assist in financing public improvements in specific geographic areas. Tarrant County and other taxing entities should be approached to participate, but regardless of whether these entities are involved, a TIRZ district or districts should still be investigated. The amount of additional tax revenue from improved property valuations from the City alone will likely be significant enough over the long-term to contribute to physical improvements that visibly enhance a geographic area designated as a TIRZ district.

For more information, visit: http://www.nctcog.org/trans/sustdev/landuse/TIF_TIRZ.pdf

Municipal Management Districts (MMDs)

A Municipal Management District is a special district that can be set up with some of the attributes of both a TIRZ and a PID. It can use a combination of existing and new taxes and also can use special assessments to construct public improvements within the district. It involves a process of being set up either by the City or by special legislation.

For more information, visit: <http://www.nctcog.org/trans/sustdev/landuse/MMD.pdf>

Public or Business Improvement Districts (PIDS/BIDS)

A second category of development incentives are known as Public Improvement Districts (PIDs) or Business Improvement Districts (BIDs). These incentives do not rely on increases in tax revenues, but they do rely on “assessments” or property owners to pay for the public improvements within the district. The City Council, upon petition by the property owners, creates an assessment district and existing properties are assessed based on existing property values and benefit to the property. It is not a tax because they property owners petition to be charged (assessed) an annual assessment fee to provide the revenues needed to pay for the public improvements within the district. An assessment lien is placed on individual properties and is superior to all but other tax liens. The majority of owners, based on the number and value of property owned, have to agree to the improvement plan and the assessment scheme.

One benefit is that, unlike a TIRZ, increases in values are not needed to fund the district so it is an excellent mechanism for redevelopment projects. A second advantage is that a PID or BID can be created to construct and maintain improvements with no time limit, thereby alleviating the City of the burden. Again, because the debt is paid for by revenues from assessments backed by property liens, revenue bonds can be used to finance improvements. Finally, based on a feasibility analysis, benefits can be assessed at different rates to different classes or properties, depending on use and distance or amount of benefit received. For example, retail uses could also pay a minor portion of the district improvements if they receive benefit.

There may be certain areas such as a town center, where a combination of a TIRZ district and an overlaying PID/BID district could be used. The TIRZ could be used to finance and construct the improvements and the PID/BID could be used to maintain them over time. This would keep the long-term assessments to a reasonable amount but would enable other jurisdictions to partner on constructing the improvements.

For more information, visit: <http://www.nctcog.org/trans/sustdev/landuse/PID.pdf>

State and Federal Programs

The following programs are state and/or federal programs offered for existing and new businesses. This list is representative of current programs but it is not all-inclusive.

Research & Development (R&D) Tax Credit

This program was enacted by the 76th Texas Legislature and involves state Franchise Tax Credit for research and development (R&D) expenditures. A qualified business is eligible to receive a credit from the State of Texas for an amount equal to four percent of the business's incremental (as defined by the U.S. IRS) R&D expenditures and a maximum credit of 25 percent of their franchise tax liability in the first year of the biennium, increasing to five percent with a 50 percent cap in the second year of the biennium and thereafter. These benefits apply statewide, with increased credits available for state strategic investment areas (as defined by the State), and include federally designated "urban enterprise communities."

For more information, visit:

<http://investinamericasfuture.org/>

Texas Community Development Block Grant Program (TxCDBG)

The Texas Community Development Block Grant (TxCDBG) Program helps smaller communities in Texas meet infrastructure needs in low- to moderate-income areas. Projects funded by the TxCDBG must benefit at least 51 percent low- to moderate-income persons, which are defined as those who earn equal to or less than 80 percent of the area median family income figure. Project objectives are required to either aid in the prevention or elimination of slums or blight, or include activities designated to meet community development needs that have a particular urgency.

For more information, visit <http://www.nctcog.org/envir/SEEDevEx/tcdp/index.asp>

Small Business Franchises Tax Exemption

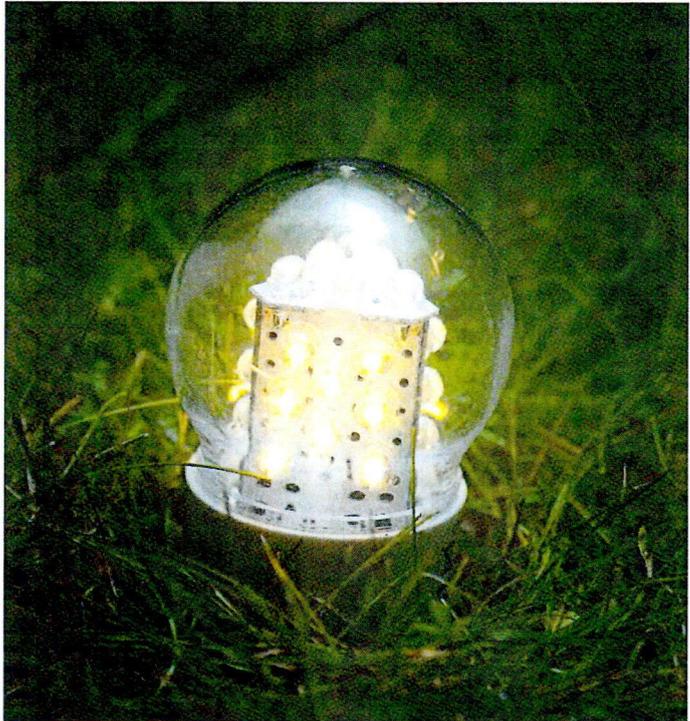
This program was enacted by the 76th Texas Legislature (1999) and allows for an exemption from paying the State franchise tax for small businesses. In order to qualify, small businesses must have gross receipts of less than \$150,000 annually.

For more information, visit: http://comptroller.texas.gov/taxinfo/taxpubs/tx98_806.html

Texas Leverage Fund

The Texas Leverage Fund (TLF) is an economic development bank offering an added source of financing to communities that have passed the Economic Development Sales Tax. The Texas Economic Development (TxED) Department may loan funds directly to a local Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) to finance eligible projects. Sales tax revenues pledged by the IDC need only be sufficient to cover projected annual debt service as specified in the TLF Program guidelines. This allows cities to leverage their economic development sales tax and to pursue additional projects.

For more information, visit: http://gov.texas.gov/files/ecodev/TLF_Guidelines.pdf



Bond Financing Options Summary

Bonds may be issued by non-profit development corporations or authorities pursuant to the Development Corporation Act of 1979 (the "Act"). The Act allows non-profit corporations to issue bonds on behalf of cities, counties, conservation or reclamation districts for eligible projects. The purpose of bond financing is to promote new and existing businesses, encourage employment in the state, and increase the tax base of the community where the project is located. The following types of bonds are available:

- Tax-Exempt Industrial Revenue Bonds for Manufacturing Projects- Bonds issued to finance land and depreciable property for manufacturing facilities.
- Exempt-Facility Bonds- Bonds issued to finance certain facilities such as airports, dock and wharf facilities, mass commuting facilities, high-speed inter-city rail facilities, or certain qualified hazardous waste facilities (including certain training and storage facilities).
- Taxable Industrial Revenue Bonds- These bonds typically have higher interest rates than tax-exempt issues, these issues do not have restrictions on the use or amount of the issue.
- Sales Tax Bonds (Bonds issued pursuant to Sections 4A and 4B of the Development Corporation Act)- Available only to cities that have passed the local Sales and Use Tax for Economic Development. These can be taxable or tax-exempt bonds, depending on the type of project and business. Issues are primarily for manufacturing or industrial projects, but can also be issued for commercial, recreational, infrastructure, and other types of projects.

Property Tax Rule 9.105

This is a refund of the state taxes (franchise taxes or sales taxes) paid by companies owning certain abated properties. A company that meets the following three conditions may apply for a refund under this tax rule:

- The company has paid property taxes to a school district on property that is located in a reinvestment zone established under Texas law.
- The company is exempt in whole or in part from property tax imposed by a city or county under a tax abatement agreement established under Texas law.
- The company is not in a tax abatement agreement with a school district.

The refund is equal to the amount of property taxes that would have been paid had the company entered into a school district abatement agreement with terms identical to the city or county abatement agreement, not to exceed the net state sales and use taxes and state franchise taxes paid or collected and remitted during that calendar year. The refund amount may also be limited by a statewide appropriation per year for this refund program.

For more information, visit: <http://comptroller.texas.gov/taxinfo/proptax/law08/rules1.html#9.105>

State Sales and Use Tax Exemptions

- Manufacturing Machinery and Equipment- Applies to leased or purchased machinery, equipment, replacement parts, and accessories that have a useful life of more than six months, and that are used or consumed in the manufacturing, processing, fabricating, or repairing of tangible personal property for ultimate sale, are exempt from state and local sales and use tax. Texas businesses are exempt from paying state sales and use tax on labor for constructing new facilities and the purchase of machinery exclusively used in processing, packing or marketing agricultural products by the original producer at a location operated by the original producer.
- Natural Gas and Electricity- Texas companies are exempt from paying state sales and use tax on electricity and natural gas used in manufacturing, processing, or fabricating tangible personal property. The company must

complete a “predominant use study” that shows that at least 50 percent of the electricity or natural gas consumed by the business directly causes a physical change to a product.

For more information, visit: <http://comptroller.texas.gov/taxinfo/sales/>

Tax Credits

- Worker Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC)- A federal tax credit given to companies that hire employees from certain target groups. The tax credit is used to reduce a company’s federal tax payment in the current tax year, or it can be used retroactively for three years or carried forward for fifteen years. The WOTC provides a tax credit of up to 40 percent to employers who hire certified tax eligible employees. The maximum tax credit is \$2,400.
- State of Texas Tax Refund- This tax refund program provides a state tax credit of up to 20 percent of \$10,000 in wages during the first year. An employer may qualify for a state tax refund if the employer:
 - Pays certain State of Texas taxes (franchise, state sales and use, inheritance, etc.);
 - Pays wages during the first year of employment to an employee who is a Texas resident and has received certain benefits during the month of hire; and
 - Provides and pays for part of the cost of qualifying major medical insurance for the employee.

For more information, visit: <https://www.doleta.gov/business/incentives/opptax/> and <http://comptroller.texas.gov/taxinfo/refunds/sales/>

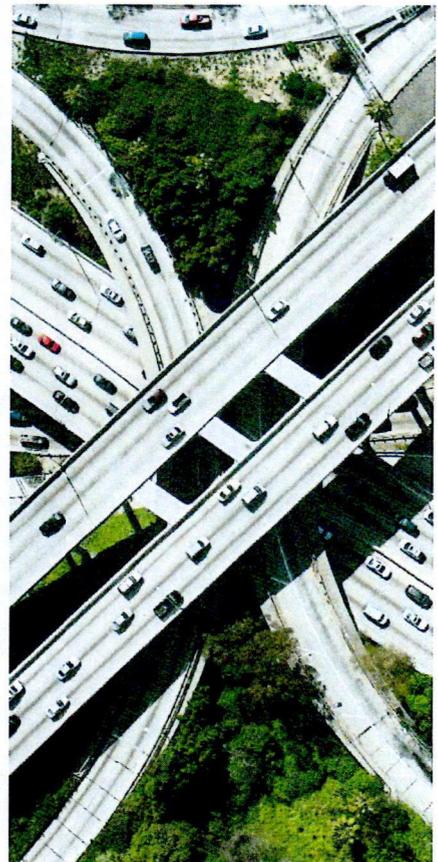
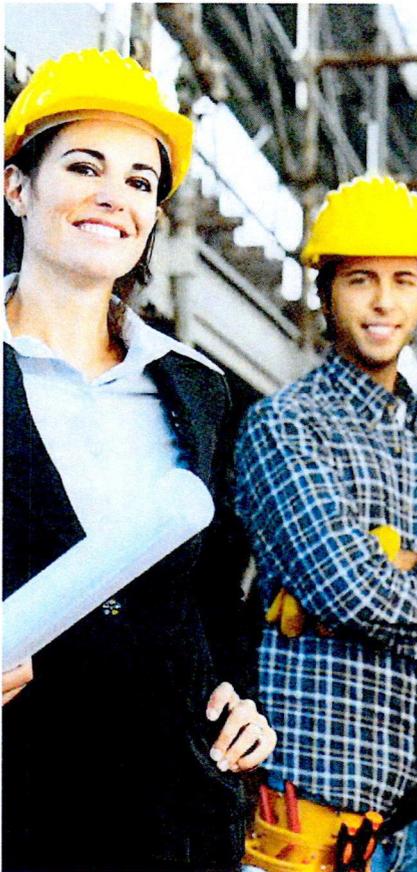
Brownfields Economic Development Initiative (BEDI)

Funding from the Brownfields Economic Development Initiative (BEDI) can go towards the redevelopment of abandoned industrial and commercial facilities where redevelopment is burdened by environmental contamination. The brownfield site must be in an area with low to moderate incomes or benefit people with low to moderate incomes and the land must be used for economic development of some sort, not land banking. Sponsored by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) this federal grant provides a maximum of \$2 million per grant. BEDIs must be paired with Section 108 Loan Guarantees and receive approval from the local Community Block Grant Entitlement Agency. The primary advantage to the BEDI program is that federal funds are used to improve the quality of the site and the money doesn’t have to be paid back. Conversely, the site is subject to federal government approval, the project requires documentation and expenditures, and development and cleanup must happen together.

For more information, visit: <http://www.nctcog.org/trans/sustdev/landuse/BEDI.pdf>

Economic Development Key Objectives

- Explore the creation of a formal Economic Development Corporation
- Expand professional office uses
- Develop a city-wide marketing campaign to leverage current housing stock, proximity to Downtown Fort Worth, and access to major transportation corridors and new toll facilities
- Encourage development within the infill, mixed-use town center and redevelopment/reinvestment zones through the use of incentives
- Target identified underserved retail market segments
- Establish and maintain a forecast of housing type needs and set periodic goals to meet anticipated housing demand
- Maintain an incentive database and provide assistance to businesses seeking funding opportunities
- Maintain current database of available property and building space
- Continue to monitor and maintain current retail and demographic data relevant to the City
- Actively pursue development and partnerships for the mixed-use town center
- Work with existing property owners to improve identified reinvestment and redevelopment areas



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6 | Community and Neighborhood Livability

Neighborhood and Community Livability

Livability includes the built and natural environments, social equitability, educational opportunity, and cultural possibilities that add up to the community's quality of life. Planning for, and creating these characteristics may seem difficult, but the intangible nature of certain elements should not serve as a deterrent. A sense of place, civic pride, and quality neighborhoods are palpable items to anyone who visits or calls Watauga home. Livability can be felt at community gatherings and seen in quality designed development. Working towards a more livable Watauga is an achievable and valuable task.

Watauga is a unique community with its own values and vision. The following section describes in more detail some of those tangible aspects that, when tailored to fit the needs and vision of Watauga, can help the City to grow in a manner that enhances the quality of its neighborhoods, improves the visual appeal of the City, and helps to create quality neighborhoods and vibrant retail areas. This section is intended to be used to guide decision makers as the City grows.

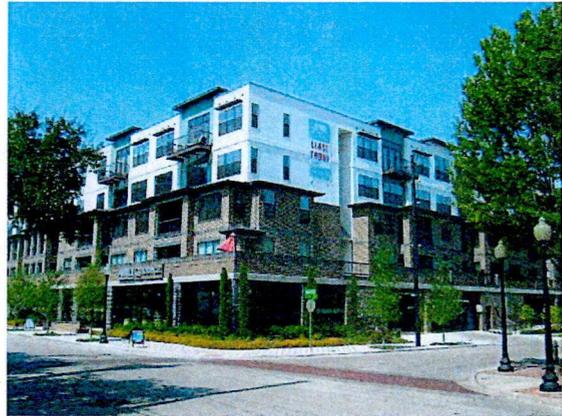


Current Planning Trends

The practice of urban planning has evolved over time. Today's trends are shaped and guided by in-depth research and lessons learned. The preceding efforts have produced the following planning trends applicable to Watauga.

Mix of Land Uses

A variety of land use types contributes to a neighborhood's walkability and vibrancy. Providing a mix of land uses increases pedestrian activity and helps to create a sense of place within the community. Mixed land uses may be vertical mixed use (typically retail at ground level and office and/or residential on upper levels), or horizontal mixed use (each use is contained within its own structure but planned into a single development). Mixed-use development should be encouraged at key locations within Watauga.



Traditional Neighborhood Design

Traditional Neighborhood Design (TND) incorporates a number of design features to encourage connectivity and facilitate active neighborhoods. Examples of several TND design features include:

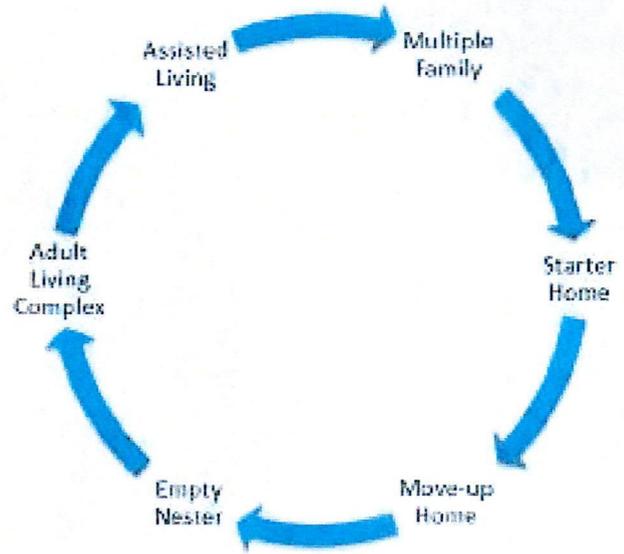
- Connected street grid
- Reduced housing setbacks from the street
- Front porches
- Neighborhood pocket parks
- Distinctive architectural design elements
- Sidewalk and pedestrian integration
- Various housing sizes
- Neighborhood centers accessible by car and foot

The advantages of TND should continue to be explored within Watauga, particularly in areas of future residential development and zoning laws may need to adapt to embrace the above design elements.



Range of Housing Opportunities and Choices

A range in housing options is important to ensure the full life cycle housing is available. Enabling residents to stay within the community throughout their lives, even as housing desires change, is an invaluable component of a city. Smaller starter homes, apartments, townhomes, and retirement facilities are important to ensure adequate housing for young adults, families with children, empty-nesters and retirees. Additionally, a range of housing options combats inequality and provides housing for all income levels.



Walkable Centers

The usage and ownership of the car continues to decline, while populations opt for alternative transportation modes. More feet on the street is leading a renewed focus on pedestrian amenities. To cater to this renewed movement, walkable centers within residential and nonresidential areas should be designed to be pedestrian-friendly through the use of sidewalks, signage, connectivity, seating, landscaping, lighting and scale and placement of buildings in relation to streets. This type of design creates a vibrant street atmosphere which improves the health of residents and promotes a better sense of public safety.

Strong Sense of Place

In large metropolitan areas, cities are faced with the challenge of establishing an identity. Often times, the transition from one city to its neighbor is indistinguishable. Aesthetic appearance and improvements, when combined with community branding, will help to make Watauga distinguishable from its neighbors, giving the City a sense of place. Additionally, neighborhoods with detailed building design, streetscaping, and amenities create local character and charm, which helps to maintain property values over time.

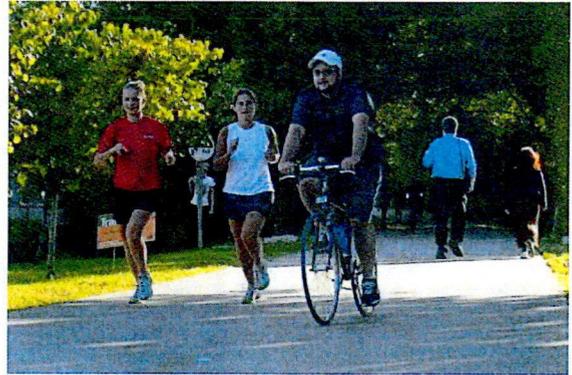


Open Space Preservation, Sustainability, and Water Management

Guiding development towards existing neighborhoods preserves open space, which can support the overall desirability of an area. Flood mitigation, water management, permeable pavements, bioswales, and rooftop gardens are among the many innovative developments in sustainability efforts. Limiting development within floodplains and other environmentally-sensitive areas preserves natural drainage systems and decreases development costs. Planning for the City's water needs for the future is critical and steps can be taken to ensure that there will be enough water for future demand. As the state of Texas comes out of a severe drought, encouraging low-impact, drought-tolerant landscaping is an excellent way to cut down on excessive water use.

Variety of Transportation Choices

Transportation variety generally evokes images of light rail and bus public transit service, but it can also refer to pedestrian connectivity, bike lanes and park-and-ride or carpool facilities. The availability of a range of transportation options provides residents of all income levels with mobility and accessibility. These options provide essential access to employment, healthcare, groceries and everyday goods and services.



Community and Stakeholder Collaboration in Development Decisions

An inclusive planning process where citizens are engaged ensures that decisions made by City leaders are reflective of the community's vision. This becomes even more critical as council and commission members change. Additionally, stakeholder, primarily developers, should be involved in the review of development regulations to ensure that standards and processes are reasonable and fair to developers, while reflecting the community's vision. Most importantly, City staff should assume responsibility for coordinating and encouraging collaboration between these different groups.

Community Health

Planning for an active community with adequate infrastructure to support recreation and alternatives to automobile travel helps increase the level of physical activity of all residents. Moreover, the health of a community's residents can be directly impacted through development decisions. Physical design of the built environment, availability of recreational facilities/activities, and incentivized uses are opportunities for cities to have a positive impact on the health of their citizens.

Walkable Neighborhoods

A city's walkability is determined by the availability of pedestrian connections and proximity of residential and retail land uses. By offering an alternative to driving for basic errands, citizens have a healthier option that saves money spent on gas and helps improve air quality. Sidewalks and bike lanes improve pedestrian travel. When these elements are integrated into neighborhoods, citizens can walk or bike to a grocery store, restaurant, or convenience store.

Recreation

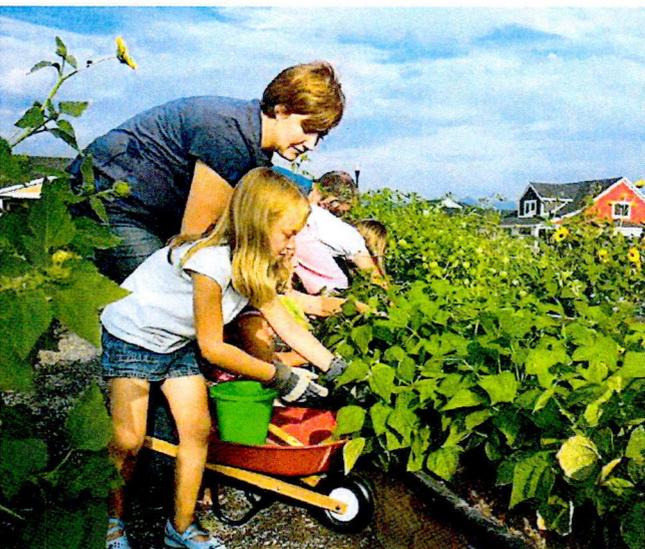
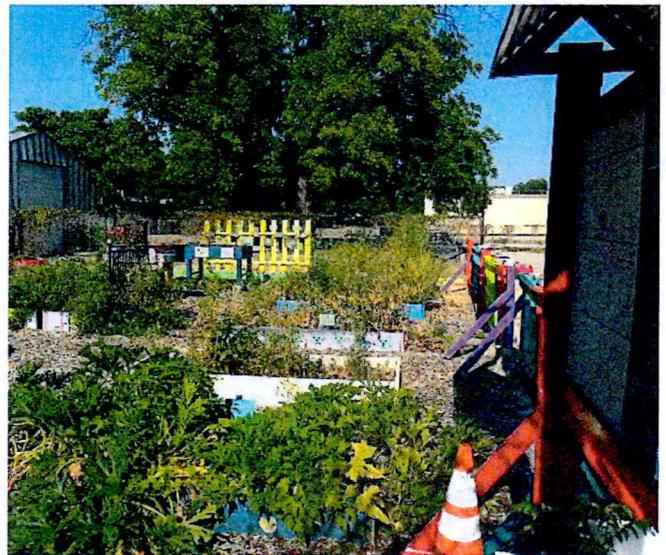
Recreational amenities should provide opportunities for increasing physical activity and social interaction. In addition to providing traditional park space, cities should consider developing trail networks with adequate signage and instructional workout stations located along the trails. Other park options include dog parks, or smaller pocket parks that are typically located in a vacant lot of a developed neighborhood. Community gathering places should also be available, such as pavilions, theaters/amphitheaters, and seating areas near water features or public art. Organized events including festivals and parades can encourage community activity, with both physical and social involvement.



Land Uses

Certain land uses, by nature, promote public health, such as the availability of medical care and access to fresh, healthy food. Cities can encourage these uses by ensuring they are permitted uses within the zoning ordinance, and developing incentives to encourage these businesses to locate within the city. Doctor and dentist offices and urgent care centers are often important destinations for families with young children or elderly people. Grocery stores, small neighborhood markets, farmers markets, and community gardens are different options that provide healthy food options. Farmers markets and community gardens can also be beneficial in supporting the local economy, encouraging social interaction, and are typically more environmentally-friendly with reduced transportation and packaging needs. Encouraging the development of grocery stores, small neighborhood markets, farmers markets and community gardens can support residents' access to healthy food options.



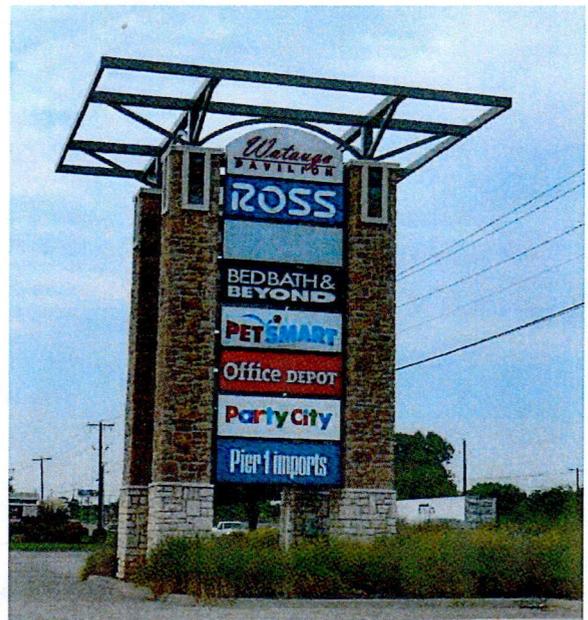


Design Character

The character and feel of a community is in many ways defined in the visual realm. A look and feel that is recognizable, charming, and unique helps to define a community's character. As a city, there are numerous elements that play into character. These range from signage and building design to landscaping and street design. Although it may appear to be an inordinate task to plan and implement comprehensive design characteristics, with the proper tools a city can define their character and instill a sense of community pride. Watauga is in an important transition; the existing built environment has many remarkable traits, and these assets should serve as the cornerstones for the future vision. There are some areas, however, such as older commercial corridors, which may be in need of attention. In order to achieve a cohesive design character, the City should work to transform critical visual elements. These improvements will meet the expectations of the citizens and visitors of Watauga. The following section provides design strategies that should be used as development decisions are made. These strategies are typically codified in the zoning and subdivision ordinance and will help guide citizens and decision makers through the process of revitalizing the design character of Watauga.

Commercial Signage

One important component to enhancing the overall image of Watauga is sign regulations. Regulating commercial signage can reduce visual clutter, creating a positive city image and even help define corridors or districts. Since commercial signage is generally intended to be seen by the driving public, it is important to consider public safety in the regulation process. In order to achieve this goal, signs should be aesthetically pleasing and effective, but also sized appropriately. This requires context sensitive solutions. For example, along a freeway, signs may need to be larger for people to see them from farther distances and high travel speeds. Often times, pole signs are often used along freeways and high-speed roads. An attractive and effective alternative to a pole sign is an appropriately sized monument sign. This trend is common in many cities across the country and the results have shown a cleaner, more sophisticated city appearance. In residential or pedestrian areas, effective signage may be much smaller in scale. Additionally, sign standards should encourage integration of signage with the surroundings. This may include scale, landscaping materials and building design.



Decisions related to sign regulations must follow the rules set forth in Chapter 216 of the Texas Local Government Code. Chapter 216 establishes the means by which a municipality may regulate the removal, relocation or reconstruction of a sign. When developing sign regulations, the City should determine feasible and fair alternatives. Any new sign regulations must be balanced between the public interest and the needs and rights of the business community. For instance, sign regulations should enhance the roadway by improving the visual appearance and safety, but regulations should allow for businesses to advertise enough to entice their customers or clients to stop.

Finally, sign standards for other areas in the community should reflect the image and character the city hopes to achieve. These goals can be achieved with increased design and material standards for monument signs, the requirement of unified multi-tenant signs for retail shopping centers, and the prohibition of unsightly sign types.

Screening and Buffering

The purpose of screening and buffering is to enhance the visual appearance of the community by separating incompatible land uses, improving the appearance of parking areas and public right-of-ways, minimizing soil erosion, and reducing stormwater runoff. Screening typically focuses more on the visual impacts of the use while buffering focuses more on light and sounds. There are many techniques for screening and buffering. Types of screening include fences, walls, trees or large shrubs placed strategically to help blend a use into the surrounding environment or prevent unsightly items from being seen. Natural screening includes strips of land such as hills or berms, clumps of trees and shrubs or other landscape features that are used to reduce headlight glare and traffic noises. The following screening techniques should be considered:



- The use of masonry walls where residential and non-residential areas abut. Masonry is more durable and requires less maintenance than wood fencing
- Use of trees along the line between the residential and non-residential use, particularly if parking lighting is present, to help mitigate lighting impacts
- Screening of trash receptacles through a masonry or brick wall, an opaque gate enclosure, and required landscaping materials
- Screening of loading docks, when present, through the use of walls, berms and landscaping
- Use of screening walls to hide commercial outside storage areas from the public view and abutting residential areas

Buffering incompatible uses with a tiered system based on adjacent use types can also help to reduce the negative impacts of development. Establishing Level One, Two and Three screening and buffering requirements (where Level One has the minimum requirements and Level Three has the maximum) can help to simplify the process for city staff and developers. More intense commercial uses adjacent to residential uses should have increased buffering and screening requirements (i.e. Level Three) and less intensive uses, such as office adjacent to multi-family should require Level One screening and buffering.

Landscaping

Landscape requirements can enhance the perception of the City, particularly along major corridors. Non-residential landscaping requirements should consider the following:

- Minimum landscape buffer along collector streets and along all arterial streets
- Minimum tree requirements for street frontage
- Minimum number of shrubs based on linear street frontage
- Maximum percentage of turf grass coverage
- Use of native, drought-tolerant landscaping to reduce water use, when possible
- Low Impact Design (LID) landscaping techniques to retain and absorb a portion of a site's stormwater runoff
- Landscaped islands in parking areas



Non-Residential Design Standards

Attractive, quality commercial development requires considering both site design and architectural design. Effective site design must produce safe site circulation for both automobile and pedestrian traffic. This is achieved through strategic ingress and egress points, proper building orientation, parking design and adequate land dedication for landscaping. When these elements work in unison, a commercial development can accommodate high traffic businesses and remain functional. Key elements Watauga should include in their non-residential design standards are:

- Building orientation
- Lot coverage
- Setbacks
- Pedestrian circulation and trail connections
- Number and location of access points
- Access easements
- Parking lot design and parking requirements
- Landscaping requirements
- Screening and buffering requirements
- Location of refuse enclosures

Architectural design guidelines also contribute to the positive image of a city. They guide future development and advance the community character established in the City's

Development Strategy. The development of nonresidential design standards should be done with a clear vision of the future of Watauga. Design trends are important and should be researched prior to establishing the standards. However, an emphasis on quality materials and clearly defined and enforceable standards may prove to be of greater value. Quality designed buildings will draw visitors to the area and create a sense of place for residents. City staff should define a list of approved building materials, percentages of masonry coverage, roofing materials, and other design related standards to help guide future development. The City should consider the following factors when developing non-residential design standards:

- Building heights
- Vertical and horizontal articulations
- Entryway design and orientation
- 360-degree architecture
- Façade materials: masonry percentages, mixture of materials, color, prohibited materials
- Façade requirements: awnings, canopies, parapets



Street Character/Design

Median Treatments

The use of medians is recommended as a form of access management and to provide opportunities for increased visual quality. Medians should be used at roadway entrances and along major corridors. Signage, pavers, stone, lighting and plant materials may enhance the overall appearance.

Intersection Enhancements

Intersection enhancements can be used to both increase aesthetics and contribute to community branding. Intersection enhancements, such as pavement treatments, corner plazas, landscaping and decorative lighting may be utilized to improve the aesthetic appeal of a corridor, particularly at major intersections. The addition of the Watauga logo may help brand the corridor. While such an addition may seem subtle, it may help to clearly delineate Watauga to visitors.

Sidewalks

Establishing a well-connected pedestrian network is an effective way to encourage people to travel short distances by walking. Sidewalks and pedestrian crossings are the most common approach to creating the network. Sidewalks allow people to move freely and serve as a significant method of transportation for many people in a small community like Watauga. Sidewalks and their design, notably their relationship to the street, can either be inviting for a pedestrian by having tree cover and a buffer from the street or not inviting by placing pedestrians in the direct sun and closer to moving vehicles.

It is recommended that the sidewalks be incorporated along both sides of all major roadways to provide a safe connection for pedestrians and to enhance the overall aesthetics of the City.

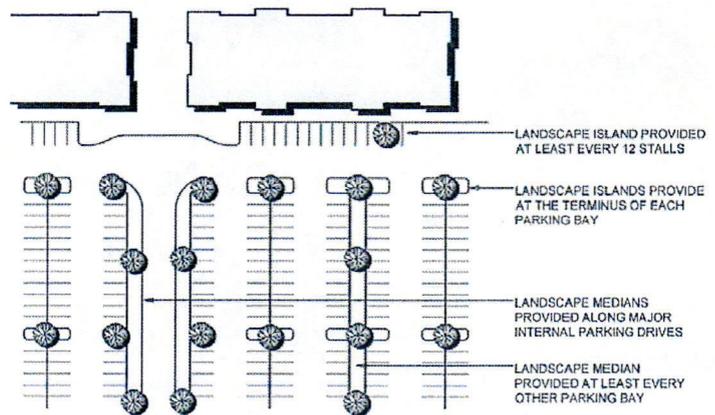
Corridor Landscaping

Landscaping should be utilized at key intersections and site entrances throughout the City. Landscaped areas should include not only large trees and shrubs, but also seasonal color, small trees and plants. Trees near buildings and pedestrian walkways should be pruned up to nine feet in height to ensure safe clearance. Landscape beds and planters should be provided at building entrances and outdoor seating areas. Shrubs, landscape berms and enhanced landscaping, in addition to turf grass, should be used to buffer parking lots from the public view and may also be used to screen loading docks and other visually unattractive areas. Landscaping native to North Texas should be encouraged to protect water resources and ensure drought tolerance.



Parking Standards and Design

Parking lots should be broken up with a landscape median between every other parking bay. Landscape islands containing at least one tree should be provided at the terminus of each row of parking and additionally at every twelve parking spaces. Parking lots greater than 50 parking stalls should consider a landscape median on each side of major internal parking drives. Parking aisles should be arranged perpendicular to building entrances when possible. Surface parking in the front of businesses should be discouraged in pedestrian-oriented environments. In these areas, parking should be encouraged on the side or at the back of a business.



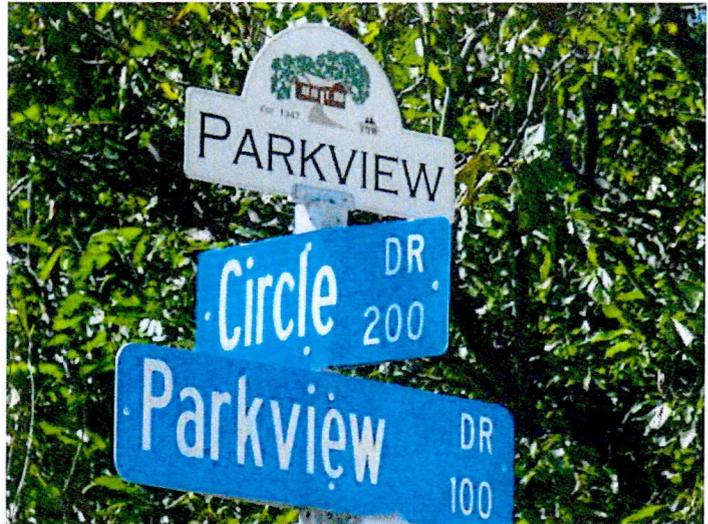
Street Signs and Sign Toppers

The City should continue branded street signs and major intersections with the City's logo. This will help visitors and residents identify these areas as part of Watauga. Additionally, sign toppers for individual neighborhoods within the City should have a uniform look to them. This uniformity might include the same color, shape and/or font.

Connectivity

New development within Watauga should focus on integration of land uses- ensuring that development contains connections, both vehicular and pedestrian in nature, to adjacent land uses. The following strategies will aid in improving overall community connectivity:

- Encourage multiple street connections between adjacent developments
- Ensure that neighborhoods provide access to parks and trails, when present
- Work with developers to incorporate parks and trails as development occurs, either through easement, land dedication or purchase
- Provide sidewalks in all future residential developments
- Provide multi-modal facilities, such as trails and bike paths



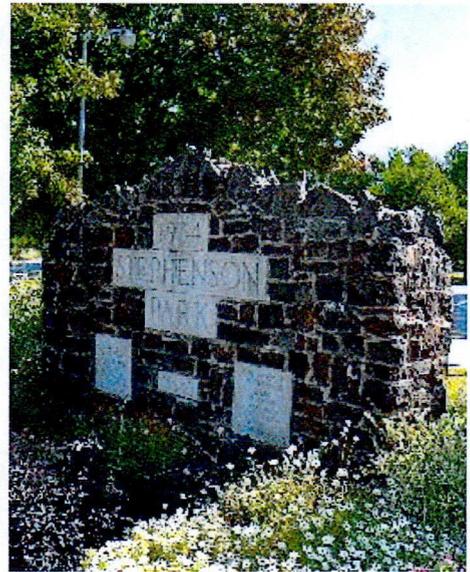
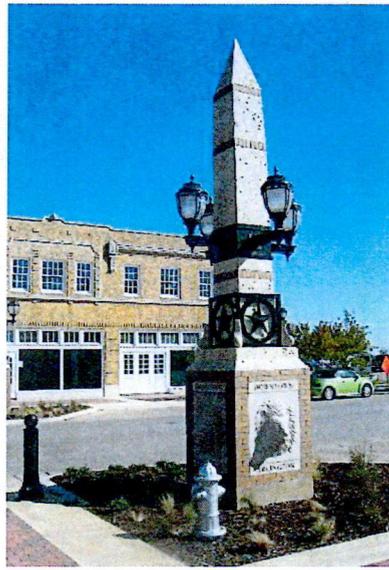
Community Branding

The visual monotony that is often inherent to communities within a particular geographic area makes it appear that each one is just like its neighbor. For example, the visual appearance of a community to a traveler along US Hwy. 377 may be very similar to the appearance of any other nearby community. This lack of design variety, especially along major corridors, tends to create anonymity, and it becomes difficult for people to know when they have left one community and entered another. Gateways can provide a strong sense of arrival to, as well as a sense of departure from, the community. These features are the first thing visitors see when they arrive and the last impression visitors have when they leave.

It is important for Watauga to distinguish itself from the surrounding communities and improve the overall visual landscape of the city. Creating a cohesive street sign system throughout the city is a simple first step in the right direction. Gateway features are also a great way to tie the city together. Watauga currently has gateway signage at key entry points into the City as well as a well-branded water tower that can be seen from several points in the City.

Consideration should be given to expanding a uniform branding concept for the City, including street signs, gateways, and key corridor improvements. Hierarchical distinction between primary and secondary gateways and corridors can be achieved through design

An important factor in the design of gateways is to develop an entryway that provides a sense of identity for community while projecting a desirable image for the city. Consideration should be given to establishing a uniform design concept for all gateway areas, and hierarchical distinction between gateways and corridors can be achieved through design modifications for each location. Focusing efforts on targeted areas will help to leave visitors and residents with a positive and memorable experience when traveling through Watauga. Figure 38 identifies gateway signage and key corridor enhancement areas.



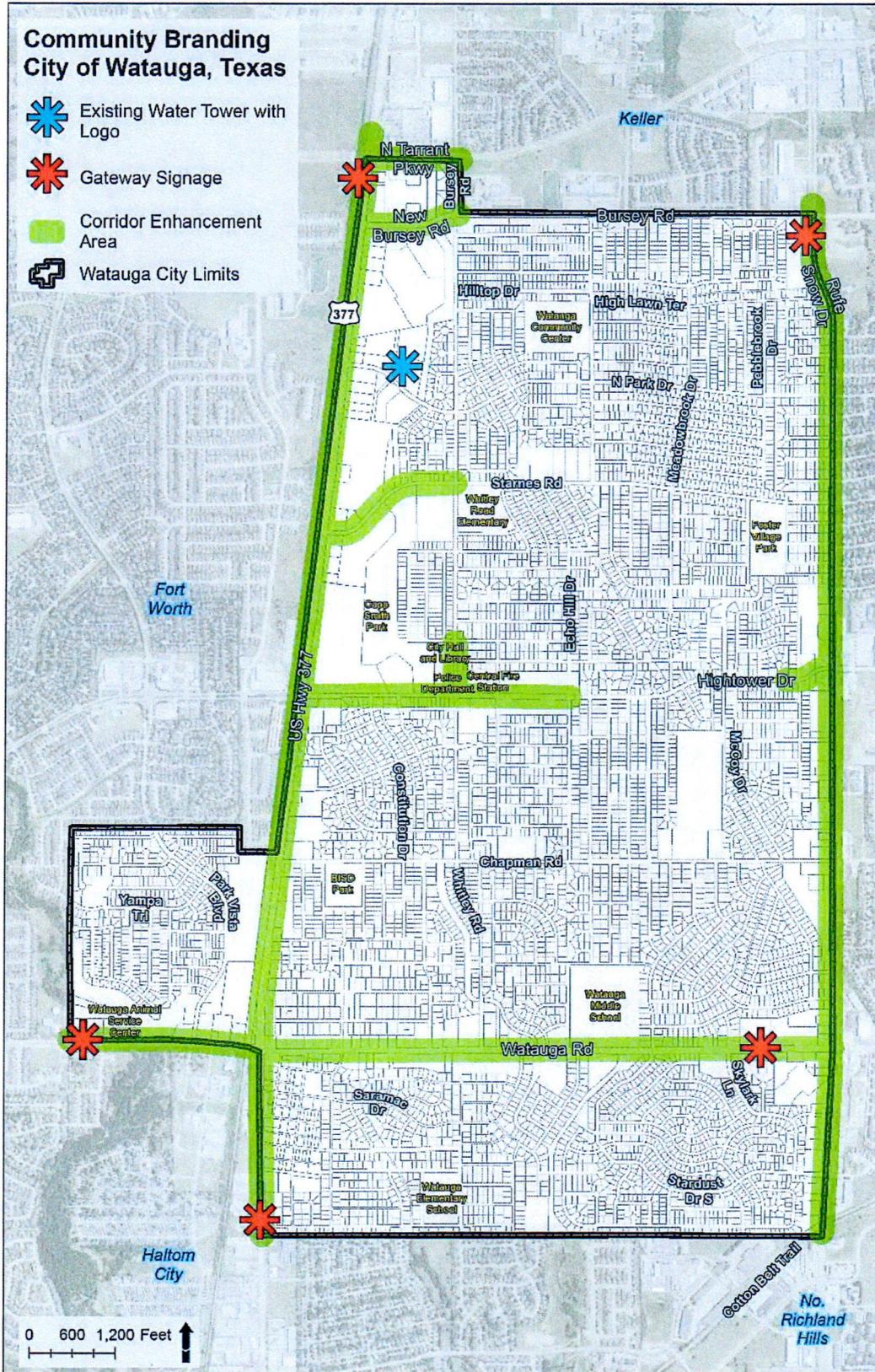


Figure 38. Community Branding

Gateways

The design and location of gateways into the City of Watauga should be guided by several factors. One of the most obvious factors is the number of people using a particular entry point. The most heavily traveled roadway in Watauga is US Hwy. 377. Primary gateways located at the entry points into the City along this corridor should be large in scale and contain recognizable features that identify Watauga. Typical elements include, but are not limited to, monuments, interior and/or exterior lighting and accentuated landscape. The City currently has gateway monuments located at the major city entry points. These locations are ideal for such signage, however it is encouraged that the City pursue further enhancements to make these gateway signs more prominent. Adding additional landscaping around these gateway signs can significantly increase the prominence without incurring major costly renovations. Additionally, these gateway areas may include enhanced medians utilizing masonry columns or low walls, enhanced landscaping, decorative street lighting, street trees, decorative pavement treatments or other identifies that signify arrival into the City. Figures 39 and 40 illustrate conceptual gateway considerations.

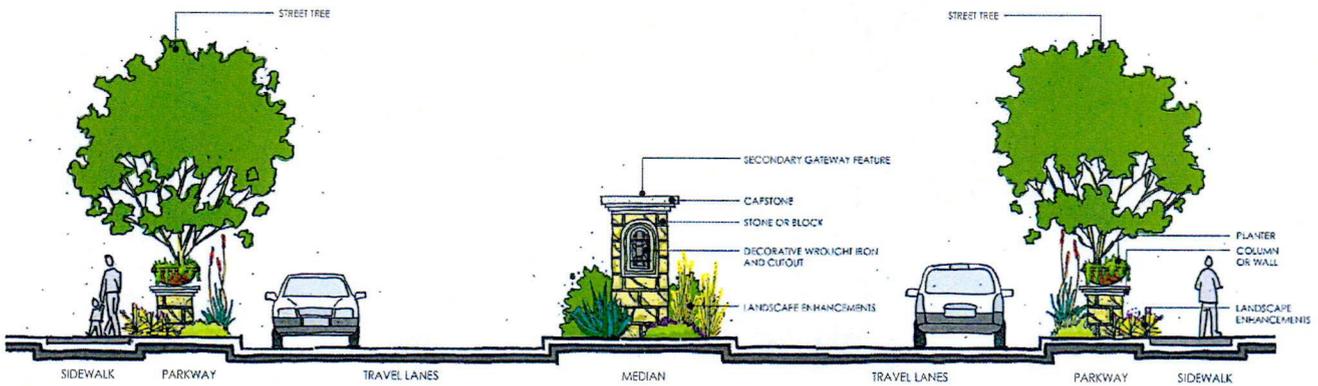


Figure 39. Conceptual Gateway/Corridor Design Street Section

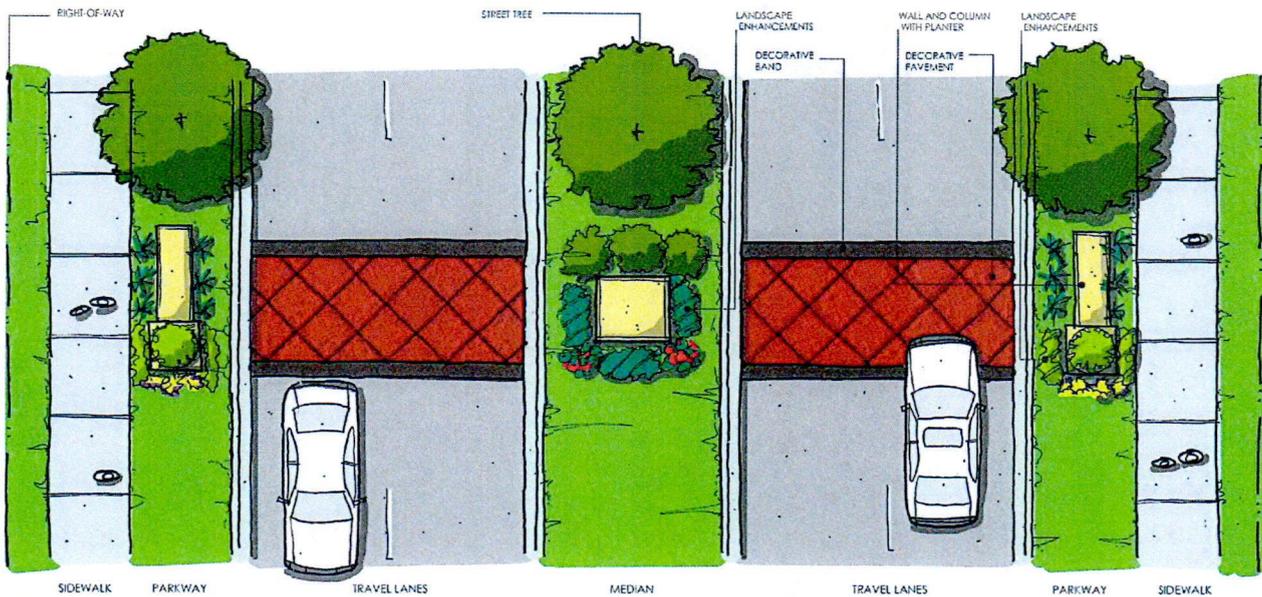


Figure 40. Conceptual Gateway/Corridor Design Plan View

Corridor Enhancement Areas

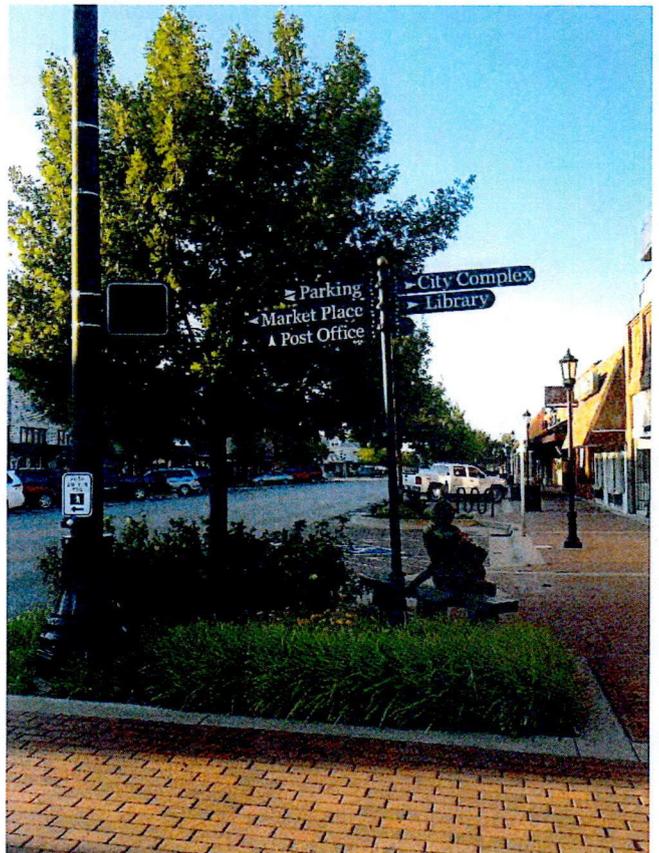
Joined with gateways, corridor enhancements can greatly contribute to the sense of arrival in Watauga. Figure 38 identifies key corridors for the City to consider for future improvement. These corridors were selected because they serve as gateways, are the most highly visible areas, and most traveled by visitors to the City. A few of these efforts are strategically smaller in scale when compared to improving an entire roadway, and will require less investment by the City, while providing a substantial visual impact. Focusing development efforts on these corridors, such as along Starnes Rd. or Hightower Dr. will also advance the branding and community image of Watauga.

Corridor enhancements are created through the use of key design elements. These elements are intended to improve the aesthetics of the area as well as increasing pedestrian activity, and overall beautification. The inclusion of median enhancements are critical to corridor enhancements. Median treatments generally consist of street trees, increased landscaping, raised masonry planter boxes and decorative street lighting with banner flags. Additionally, intersection enhancements improve the look and feel of an intersection within the corridor. These improvements assist in raising awareness of pedestrian traffic and providing visual enhancements to the corridor. The most appropriate elements to include in the intersection enhancements are generally decorative pavement treatments identifying the boundaries of the intersection, pedestrian refuge areas, bollards, corner enhancements such as brick pavers or stamped concrete, low masonry planter boxes, landscape enhancements, and decorative lighting.

The elements described above provide the general ingredients necessary to create effective corridor enhancement. While all elements may not be utilized at each location, the City should consider the most appropriate elements for each designated corridor. The following information is intended to provide guidance for the corridors identified for enhancement.

US Hwy. 377

US Hwy. 377 is the major commercial thoroughfare through the City. Due to the high volumes of traffic, improvements will have a significant positive effect on the City's image. The existing investment of several shopping centers is a great framework and starting point for further investment along this corridor. Building on this investment, the City should continue the enhanced commercial signage along this corridor. Incorporating the City logo with these enhanced commercial signs may also be considered. Coordinated landscaping should also be included to intensify the unified character for US Hwy. 377.



Additional considerations for improvements to this corridor include adding pavement treatments such as brick pavers and pedestrian refuse areas to existing pedestrian crossings to create visual appeal and increase awareness of pedestrian traffic. Streetscape improvements may include corner treatments with decorative placement, bollards, street trees, increased landscape setbacks, masonry planter boxes and decorative street lighting with banner flags. Finally, wayfinding signage along the corridor can help direct visitors and residents to their destination.

Watauga Road

Watauga Road serves as a key east/west corridor within the City. Median and intersection enhancements are recommended along this corridor. These improvements may include a monument column, similar in design and materials to the primary gateway signs. Alternately, low masonry walls with the City's name and logo fronted by tiered landscaping would create well-defined entry points into the city at both ends of Watauga Rd. Median improvements and decorative lighting as described above would also complement the design of the gateway.

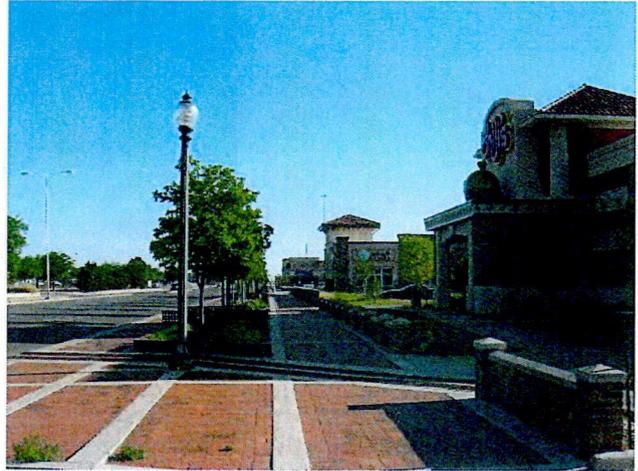
Rufe Snow Dr.

Rufe Snow Dr. is the major north/south corridor on the east side of the City. Since this is a shared corridor with the City of North Richland Hills, the City of Watauga should work closely with the City of North Richland Hills officials and staff to ensure the design of this corridor has a cohesive look and feel. Improvements on the west side of the street might include a gateway monument with landscaping, south of Bursey Road, enhanced sidewalks, decorative lighting with banners, mass plantings, groundcover, street trees, and pavement treatments at intersections.

Hightower Dr.

New development along Hightower Dr., west of Echo Hill Dr. should include streetscape enhancements such as street trees, masonry planter boxes, secondary gateway signage, and brick or stamped crosswalks. To further add to the enhanced streetscape, parallel parking is encouraged on both sides of the street near future mixed-use areas. This parking application can be a layer of safety, keeping the pedestrian further away from moving traffic while also encouraging vehicles to travel at slower speeds. This character should follow up Whitley Road to City Hall and the Library, further unifying this area as a special place in the City.

The small extension of Hightower Dr. west of Rufe Snow Rd. should pull in elements from the Rufe Snow Dr., including street trees, landscaping and sidewalk improvements, in order to promote Hightower Dr. as a major east/west connector within the City and encourage vehicular and pedestrian traffic to patron this route.



Pedestrian amenities along a commercial corridor



Pedestrian-scale lighting

Starnes Road

Similar to the enhancements on Hightower Dr., the improvements along Starnes Rd. should include street trees, masonry planter boxes, secondary gateway signage, brick or stamped concrete crosswalks, decorative lighting with banners, and parallel parking. The elements within this corridor should have a consistent character in coordination with the other enhanced corridors within the City.

New Bursey Rd.

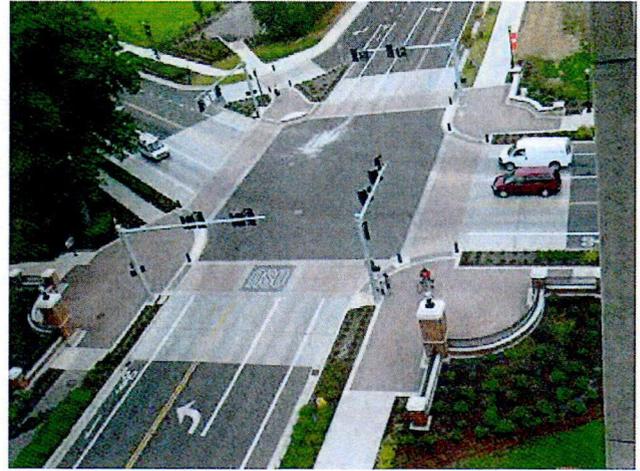
The short stretch on New Bursey Rd., from US Hwy. 377 to Whitley Road should include the same elements as those along US Hwy. 377. This stretch of road acts as a connector between the residential units that line Bursey Rd. on the east side of Whitley Rd. and the commercial development along US Hwy. 377. Commercial and wayfinding signage should be incorporated along this stretch, as well as enhanced sidewalks are encouraged along this corridor, to help promote walkability from adjacent residential leading to the commercial development.

North Tarrant Pkwy.

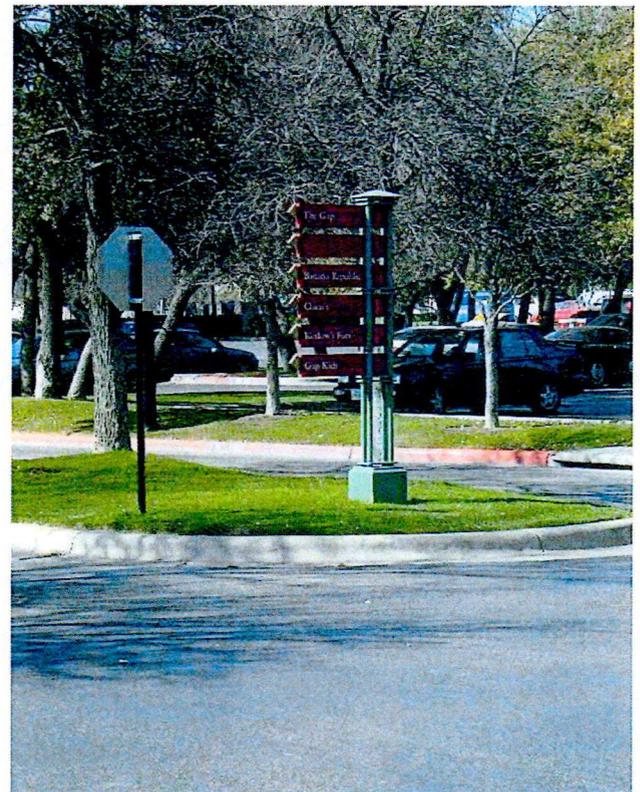
Similar to New Bursey Rd., the short distance of North Tarrant Pkwy., between US Hwy. 377 and Whitley Rd. should act as a connector between the commercial thoroughfare and the residential neighborhood. This corridor should focus on enhanced sidewalks, commercial and wayfinding signage, landscaping elements, and decorative lighting with banners, denoting the entrance into Watauga from the neighboring municipalities.

Wayfinding Signage

Wayfinding ties brand identity with directing residents and visitors to a city's main attractions while also allowing them to discover new attractions or events. Wayfinding should be designed in stages while always maintaining consistency. Stage one wayfinding should be utilized at entry points to the City to direct visitors and residents to attractions. Stage two should be located at the point of destination and serves to identify parking. Stage three should be focused on the pedestrian realm and indicate entry points at the destination. In order for the City of Watauga to maintain a successful and effective wayfinding system, the signage must feature consistent and recognizable graphics and placement standards. The City should also consider incorporating existing branding elements taken from gateway monuments into all wayfinding signage.



Enhanced intersection streetscape



Wayfinding signage

Housing and Neighborhoods

As an established city, Watauga must continue to reinvest in its existing neighborhoods in order to promote their long-term vitality. Focusing on neighborhood strategies is important because the existing housing stock in the City must remain competitive with surrounding cities' new residential developments. The goal is for Watauga to retain lifelong residents while also attracting new families and residents. Thriving neighborhoods increase quality of life, support excellence in the education system and help to meet employment center needs. In addition, thriving neighborhoods are vital for positive visitor perceptions, and the ultimate image of Watauga.

The defining characteristics of a thriving neighborhood are generally quality housing occupied by residents who take pride in their homes, properties and neighborhoods. A neighborhood is the setting in which residents develop a sense of belonging. These social ties are developed through everyday social interactions, common interests and simply by being neighbors. It is therefore in the public interest not only to maintain neighborhood conditions, but to also enhance existing neighborhoods with public investment.

Successful housing strategies invoice a variety of techniques, both public and private, and require cooperative actions by property owners, tenants, the City, local organizations and volunteer groups. While personal investment in property is a key component for attractive neighborhoods, the City may also positively impact and encourage private investment by creating and maintaining livable neighborhoods. Livable neighborhoods are those which may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Opportunities for neighborhood interaction
- Access to public amenities
- Well-maintained infrastructure
- A sense of community, identity or belonging
- Access to conveniences such as retail, schools and neighborhood services
- Well-maintained housing
- Life-cycle housing

As a first-tier suburb, the City of Watauga has many challenging housing issues. A large portion of the housing stock within the City was constructed during the 1970's and 1980's. The issue of an older housing stock is it creates a marketability challenge, particularly in such a high-growth region as the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex. The benefit of Watauga, however, is the general livability of the community's neighborhoods, including its general location in proximity to Fort Worth and major interstates, its park system, its quality public facilities and the City's strong vision for the future.

Existing Housing Stock

Understanding the City's existing housing stock plays an important role in developing strategies to preserve and improve Watauga's neighborhoods. Additionally, knowledge of the existing housing stock is useful to identify housing strengths and weaknesses of the existing conditions as well as areas of focus for future planning efforts.

Watauga’s current housing is primarily limited to single-family detached homes. Multi-family housing is present, but does not make up a significant portion of the overall housing stock. Watauga has approximately 8,490 total housing units within the city limits. The majority of the homes within the City are owner-occupied at 78 percent with renter-occupied housing making up the additional 22 percent. Watauga’s vacancy rate is four percent. As seen from the Table 6 below, a majority of the housing stock was built between 1960 and 2009, with the 1980-1989 being the decade of most residential development.

This data tells a story of a community with an abundance of aging homes, limited new development and a need to plan for reinvestment and revitalization. Based on the current housing stock analysis, it is recommended that strategic housing initiatives and revitalization plans be considered in the near-term. These projects will require both city staff and neighborhood residents working together to preserve desirable areas and begin improving areas in need. Almost half (42 percent) of the housing stock is valued between \$50,000 to \$99,999, with another 45 percent valued between \$100,000 and \$149,000. The median value of homes in Watauga is \$104,400, slightly below the state average of \$128,900. With lower than average home prices, Watauga is attractive to home-buyers in the Metroplex.

 **HOUSING**
Source: U.S. Census ACS 2009-2013 5-Year Estimate

Units	#
Total number of housing units	8,490

Occupancy	%
Occupied housing units	96%
Vacant housing units	4%

Year Structure Built	%
2010 or later	0%
2000 to 2009	14%
1990 to 1999	11%
1980 to 1989	36%
1970 to 1979	26%
1960 to 1969	10%
1950 to 1959	2%
1940 to 1949	0%
1939 or earlier	1%

Value	%
Less than \$50,000	2%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	42%
\$100,000 to \$149,000	45%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	10%
\$200,000 to \$299,000	2%
\$300,000 or more	0%

Median value	\$
Watauga	\$104,400
Texas	\$128,900

Housing Tenure	%	Avg. Size
Owner-occupied units	78%	2.85
Renter-occupied units	22%	3.12

Housing Type	Owner-occupied	Renter-occupied
1 unit, detached	98.9%	91.7%
1 unit, attached	0.7%	1.7%
2 units	0.0%	0.0%
3 or 4 units	0.0%	0.8%
5 to 9 units	0.0%	8.1%
10 or more units	0.0%	7.7%
Mobile home or other type of housing	0.4%	0.0%

Household Type	Owner-occupied	Renter-occupied
Family households	73.8%	27.2%
Nonfamily households	26.2%	72.8%

Table 6. Housing

Housing Conditions

The quality of Watauga’s neighborhoods are integral to the community’s overall character. Maintenance of both private and public property is critical to neighborhood safety, viability, and sustainability. Maintenance of neighborhoods and facilities also affects the larger community. If left unabated, blighted areas create a ripple effect, which impedes other civic objectives, including economic development and private investment.

Another important reason to assess housing conditions is to monitor home values, which affect the income the City receives from property taxes. If a community’s housing stock has deteriorated over time, the City’s tax revenue is negatively impacted. Conversely, if a community experiences quality residential development over a period of time, the tax revenue received by the City is increased. In recent years, the City of Watauga has conducted a property conditions survey. The following sections are based on the the 2013 survey criteria and findings:

PROPERTY CONDITION SURVEY CRITERIA

STRUCTURE RATING- USE SEPARATELY FOR MAIN BUILDING AND ACCESSORY BUILDINGS.

A	Adequate weather protection, no deterioration to roof, exterior surfaces, eaves, siding, windows or screens.
B	Slight deterioration of weather protection, roof, exterior surfaces, or eaves. A few broken or loose siding pieces. A cracked window or torn screens.
C	Inadequate weather protection (exposed or unpainted wood), greater than 25% of wall area needs paint. Missing or loose roof material. Some deterioration of eaves. Slight waves in roof line. One broken window with missing glass.
D	Obvious waves or dips in roof line. Eaves and fascia need to be replaced. Large amounts of roofing missing. 25% of the siding pieces missing or decayed. Two or more broken windows.
F	Disapidated and/or inhabitable.

FENCE

A	Fence maintained in good condition.
B	Fence missing a few pickets or leaning slightly or slight deterioration of fence material.
C	Fence not reasonably plumb and/or missing several pickets, or major deterioration of fence material.
D	Fence leaning to a point where it is dangerous or structural members no longer capable of supporting imposed weights.

YARD CONDITION

A	Well-maintained and landscaped yard/lawn.
B	Lawn cut only – edging or trimming needed. Other yard areas need aesthetic treatment (shrubs, etc.) NV
C	Grass and weeds exceed 8 inches in height. Some dead trees or other plant material. Bare patches of lawn area.
D	Grass and weeds exceed 12 inches in height. Large areas of bare ground. Several dead trees and/or shrubs.

DRIVEWAY – SIDEWALKS AND OTHER FLATWORK

A	All flatwork in good condition.
B	Some very slight cracking (no separation – no displacement) or very minor spalling. NV
C	Slight displacement (less than 1”) of flatwork at joints or at cracks. Spalling exceeds 25% of surface area.
D	Major displacement (greater than 1”) of flatwork at joints or cracks. Portion of the pavement missing or crushed. Spalling exceeds 50% of area.

TRASH, DEBRIS AND/OR OUTSIDE STORAGE

A	No trash, debris or other outside storage.
B	A few scattered items of trash or litter. A few items of prohibited outside storage.
C	Concentration or accumulation of trash or litter. Several items of prohibited outside storage.
D	Trash, debris or other prohibited outside storage covering more than 40% of the yard area.

JUNK OR INOPERABLE VEHICLES

A	No inoperable vehicles at the premises.
B	One inoperable vehicle at premises.
C	Two or more inoperable vehicles at premises.
D	One or more junk vehicles on premises.

The City should continue to conduct the annual property conditions survey as this survey determines sound neighborhoods as well as areas that need revitalization or rehabilitation. Figure 41, Neighborhood Housing Conditions Map, compiles the information from the Residential Property Conditions survey and groups neighborhoods into one of three categories; Preservation, Conservation, and Rehabilitation. Understanding where neighborhoods in need are located or clustered can help simplify targeted efforts for revitalization. Further, understanding where sound neighborhoods are located can help to identify where current plans and programs are working best. These such plans and programs may be extended into areas in greatest need.

It should be noted that the Neighborhood Conditions Maps is a broad survey intended to identify the different needs in the various residential neighborhoods of Watauga. The map is not intended to apply to each individual property within the designated areas, but the quality of the overall neighborhood requires significant repair. Therefore the category used to identify a neighborhood refers to the overall character and not specific homes.

Neighborhood Preservation (NP)

Typically speaking, Watauga's newer neighborhoods, built in recent years, make up the majority of the Neighborhood Preservation area. The Neighborhood Preservation category is appropriate for areas identified with predominantly sound, quality housing, which includes approximately 30 percent of the residential acreage within Watauga. Additionally, Neighborhood Preservation areas have well-maintained streets, parks, and recreation areas. In areas identified for Neighborhood Preservation, the City should adopt policies to sustain and protect existing desirable conditions.

This can most successfully be achieved by proactive code enforcement in and around these areas as well as the formation of a Neighborhood Association if one does not currently exist. Also important is ensuring that a complementary relationship with adjacent land uses is provided through careful review of development proposals in proximity to the identified areas. An effective Neighborhood Preservation strategy includes the continued provision and maintenance of adequate utilities and community facilities, such as parks, schools and streets. Preservation efforts by Watauga within these areas should minimize the need for future rehabilitation programs. Appropriate City departments can implement the Neighborhood Preservation strategies as part of the normal planning, community development, and code enforcement practices.



Example Neighborhood Preservation structure

Neighborhood Conservation (NC)

The Neighborhood Conservation strategy is appropriate in areas where a majority of the housing stock is in sound condition, but scattered throughout the neighborhood are instances of poorly maintained houses or a public facility of service deficiency that could contribute to the decline of the area. Currently, 70 percent of the residential acreage within the City is considered Neighborhood Conservation and these neighborhoods were primarily constructed before 1990. The intent of the Neighborhood Conservation strategy is to target areas wherein a relatively small amount of effort could be expended to improve the quality of housing and to reduce the likelihood of further deterioration of units.

The City should encourage homeowner maintenance in these areas. Code enforcement should continue their efforts to address code violations, and work with neighborhood organizations to identify code violations. Incentive programs can encourage residents to perform minor and major exterior repairs. Proactive intervention can result in housing units being improved, which would enhance the overall image of the neighborhood and Watauga while preserving the housing stock. Additionally, homes in this area have the opportunity to be evaluated for potential demolition/rebuild strategies. Property values in Neighborhood Conservation areas have not deteriorated to the point where significant investment is unlikely.



Example Neighborhood Conservation structure

Neighborhood Rehabilitation (NR)

The Neighborhood Rehabilitation strategy is appropriate in areas where the housing units are in need of more intensive repair, such as a new roof or a structural repair. (For the purpose of discussions herein, intensive or major repairs are generally those that require a professional to complete.) Currently, none of the neighborhoods fall within in this criteria, however with an aging housing stock, homes in the Neighborhood Conservation category could fall into the Neighborhood Rehabilitation category if small maintenance issues are left unrepaired, leading to further deterioration.



Example Neighborhood Rehabilitation structure

Neighborhood Conditions Analysis

While a majority of the City is comprised of Neighborhood Conservation, additional efforts can be taken to bring a majority of these neighborhoods into the Neighborhood Preservation category. The Neighborhood Preservation areas serve as a model of what's working in the City. The City's neighborhoods are comprised mostly of sound homes and offer quality options for Watauga residents. Again, the City should encourage residents living in Neighborhood Conservation areas to make the needed repairs in order to maintain attractiveness. For those residents who are not physically or financially able to make the repairs themselves, the City should promote their Watauga Improving Neighborhoods (WIN) program to these particular homeowners, to ensure the repairs are financed and completed.

Toolbox for Housing Strategies and Redevelopment

Many of the neighborhoods that exist today do not have an organized homeowners association, and a dialogue with residents is often difficult due to the limited collaborative structures in place. In order for neighborhoods to thrive, targeted actions must take place to create a cohesive residential base with well-connected groups of neighborhood leaders.

Watauga established the Watauga Improving Neighborhoods Committee in 2014 as an effort to review and select residential properties that qualify for maintenance and neighborhood revitalization while coordinating volunteer organizations to perform the maintenance. Additionally the committee is tasked to monitor properties, volunteer organizations, and funds to ensure that the projects are being completed and that funds are being utilized appropriately. The formation of this committee is a step in the right direction. Going forward, in order to keep this strategic focus on neighborhood revitalization, the City should implement a neighborhood outreach program. This would likely require a new hire to be focused on getting to know each existing neighborhood association, acting as a voice for neighborhoods which do not have a neighborhood association, coordinating with partnership organizations, serving as the conduit for communication of neighborhood activities, hosting events to engage residents, and bringing a point of contact to the City that currently does not exist. In addition to the neighborhood coordinator, the neighborhood outreach program should incorporate activities to engage current residents in code enforcement and revitalization activities.

The following are housing strategies and programs Watauga could consider:

Minor Rehabilitation and Replacement Program

The main goal of the Minor Rehab Repair Program is to prevent the decline and deterioration of qualified single-family occupied structures by helping them maintain their home through rehabilitation.

Rental Housing Inspection Program

The purpose of the Watauga's Rental Housing Inspection Program is to protect the vitality and integrity of the City by ensuring its rental housing stock is maintained in a safe and healthy manner and that tenants are provided dwelling units that meet fire, building and health standards through proactive, yet fair and reasonable enforcement of codes and ordinances.

Tarrant County Housing Partnership (TCHP)

The Tarrant County Housing Partnership administers approximately \$1 million in assistance for down payments and closing costs. The financial assistance is provided in the form of a zero-interest loan that is forgivable if the buyer continues to reside in the home for a period of five years or more, based on the amount of assistance.

Neighborhood Renaissance

The Neighborhood Renaissance program is a proactive approach by a City towards improving neighborhoods and attracting reinvestment. The City building official identifies properties that are deemed to be unsafe or dangerous, often properties with significant structural damage that are beyond repair. The City then purchases the existing structure and demolishes the dangerous home. The City then sells the vacant property to a private party under the condition that the new structure has a value approximately five times higher than the sale price of the land. Funds from the sale of the land are placed into an Economic Development fund. This program is beneficial for two primary reasons. First, the project removes dilapidated and dangerous eyesores from neighborhoods. Second, it creates value by incentivizing new, higher quality development within the neighborhood. While dangerous structures should be removed city-wide, the most opportunistic locations should be concentrated in areas where private investment is likely. This will make the program more effective by ensuring that the City is able to sell the vacant property to a private party, rather than maintain ownership of the property indefinitely due to a lack of demand for private investment within certain areas.

Demo-Rebuild

The intent of the Demo-Rebuild program is to make existing neighborhoods in Watauga attractive to private development. The program encourages a private party to purchase an existing home, demolish the existing home and build a new structure containing a higher value than the existing structure. In exchange for demolishing an existing structure and replacing it with one of higher value, the City will assess property taxes on the existing structure, rather than on the new higher value structure, for a period of seven years. Private investment is a key cornerstone of this program and therefore some areas may be more appropriate for this program than others. Stable neighborhoods with access to public facilities, parks, or other amenities are places where people feel comfortable making private investment.

Exterior Incentives

Exterior Incentives are those which encourage private owners to perform minor external improvements to their property in exchange for a City rebate. External improvements may include adding a front porch, new faced or roof replacement, among others. Generally speaking, property owners will spend a specific amount of money on private improvements, such as \$10,000, and the City will rebate the owner ten percent of total value, or as specified by City Council.

Living Space Expansion Program

In many neighborhoods, the structural condition of an individual property may be in excellent condition, but the structure may not meet the living space desired by the existing resident or the current market environment. A program that encourages the addition of a new living space should be established by the City. Rather than focusing on demolition, this program focuses on adding additional square footage to the existing structure, such as a new section to the home or a second story. Many of the housing types within the City are ranch-style homes that are rectangular in nature. A housing prototype guidebook should be considered by the City that provides several housing expansion options for ranch-style homes, enabling residents to visualize how their existing home could be expanded. The investment in a home expansion can be extensive and therefore certain neighborhoods within the City will be more attractive for significant investment than others.

Housing Prototype Guidebook

The City may consider hiring an architect or urban designer as a consultant to develop a pattern book or housing prototype book for demo-rebuild properties. This guidebook should consider predominant housing patterns within the City, such as predominant lot sizes, and should define various housing styles, designs or options that could be utilized for development within those parameters and constraints. The prototype guidebook should also provide scenarios for maximizing living space on small lots. If desired, many of the housing prototype examples may be pre-approved by the City, encouraging redevelopment by avoiding certain fees or bypassing certain approval processes.

Landscape Incentives

Landscaping has the potential to drastically improve overall appearance of private properties and can significantly enhance the look and feel of neighborhood streets. Landscaping incentives may be used by the City to encourage landscaping enhancements on private property by providing a percentage match on the total amount spent on such improvements. A minimum improvement amount should be provided, such as \$2,000 worth of improvements. It may be beneficial to provide a landscaping guidebook that provides several landscaping options for various housing types. The City may require landscaping improvements to closely follow certain elements within the design guidebook in order to be eligible for a rebate.

Arborist Consulting Program

The City may consider providing arborist consulting appointments to a community. Residents would be able to schedule a 15-30 minute appointment with the City Arborist where they could discuss landscaping enhancement ideas for their home. This program would help to encourage landscape enhancements on the private sector.

Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood parks are intended to provide a direct benefit to individual neighborhoods. They are centrally located in order to promote use and access by neighborhood residents. Attractive neighborhood parks, with a mixture of passive and active recreational options, provide space for neighbors to congregate and socialize. Picnic areas and grilling areas provide locations for families to enjoy time outdoors, playgrounds create spaces for children to play and basketball courts, volleyball courts or tennis courts provide spaces for youth to play. Parks not only provide a recreational element, but studies have shown that property values adjacent to parks are typically higher to a similar product not adjacent to a park.

Neighborhood Assistance Program

One of the main tools for preserving long-term neighborhood integrity is by establishing an identity to various neighborhoods within the City. Creating a neighborhood assistance program provides organizational tools for residents to create and maintain neighborhood organizations. Neighborhood organizations can then take on a more active role in encouraging private property maintenance and identifying any development issues, because the neighborhood as a whole is viewed in its entirety. The City may also aid the formation of neighborhood identities by placing neighborhood signage toppers on street signs and by creating gateways at primary neighborhood entrances, such as collector roadways. These examples, among others, help to foster a sense of identity, pride and attachment between residents and neighborhoods. City funds may be allocated using an annual grant program. Neighborhood Assistance programs should first be focused on neighborhoods in good condition- primarily those falling the Neighborhood Preservation and Neighborhood Conservation categories.

Connectivity Enhancements

A determining factor for making neighborhoods attractive for reinvestment is walkability. Generally speaking, the ability for residents to walk to nearby amenities is a highly desirable characteristic. It may be necessary for the City to proactively create or improve sidewalks, pathways, bicycle routes and trails and mitigate any major impediments or barriers to walkability in order for residents to have convenient access to parks, transit, public facilities and retail.

Faith-Based/Civic Partnerships

Similar to Christmas in July, the City may work with local civic and faith-based organizations to provide more significant aid to various residents within the community. Rather than performing only minor outside maintenance and repair, volunteer groups may select one or several homes for an extreme makeover where more significant repairs or additions may be performed. For example, teams may add internal lighting fixtures, perform roof repairs, kitchen updates or increase the amount of living space. A City building official and builder should be involved to provide technical expertise and coordination. The City may desire to have some monetary contributions towards repairs, but much of the materials, time and effort will likely be donated and volunteered.

Funding Sources

Watauga's WIN program is an excellent program that provides assistance to citizens in need of funding. On top of the WIN program, there are many state and federal grant and loan programs that may be used to improve the condition of a neighborhood. The following are some of the programs currently available. The City should investigate these programs to determine which would be most helpful in addressing local housing challenges. The City may not be able to utilize some block grant programs until it attains a certain population. However, many of these state and federal programs would not require any monetary contribution from the City, and they would benefit the community through the infusion of funding and related volunteerism that would be part of the implementation of such programs.

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)

The Community Development Block grant allocates funds for neighborhood revitalization, economic development and the provision of improved community facilities and services through funds from the Housing and Urban Development Department. Proposed CDBG projects must be consistent with the program's priorities of having a benefit to low- and moderate- income residents, the prevention or elimination of slums or blight, or other community development activities that address an urgent threat to public health and safety.

Down Payment Assistance Program (DPAP)

The Down Payment Assistance Program helps very low- and low-income families purchase a home by providing an interest-free loan, ranging from \$5,000 to \$10,000, depending on the county in which the property is located. Assistance is for the down payment of a house as well as eligible closing costs. The borrowers pays the loan when the home is either sold or refinanced, or at the maturity of the original mortgage. No City participation in funding is necessary.

Fair Housing Initiatives Program (FHIP)

Fair Housing Initiatives Program is a federal program that assists people who believe they have been victims of housing discrimination while attempting to purchase or rent housing. This program is managed through the Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. This is the only federal grant program with the purpose of supporting private partnerships to prevent and overcome housing discrimination.

Habitat for Humanity

Habitat for Humanity is a non-governmental, non-profit organization that addresses issues of poverty all over the world by building affordable and decent housing. Homes are built using volunteer labor and the organization makes no profits on the sales. Homeowners are expected to put in approximately 500 hours of sweat equity into their own home or other projected homes as part of the housing agreement. Mortgage payments for homeowners are deposited into a locally administered Funds for Humanity and the proceeds go towards future construction.

Healthy Homes Program

The Healthy Homes Program addresses many childhood diseases and injuries that are related to hazards in the home, including mold, lead, allergens, asthma, carbon monoxide, home safety, pesticides and radon. This federal program, run through the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, provides grants to non-profits, for-profit organizations, state and local governments, federally-recognized Indian Tribes, and colleges and universities. HUD does not provide these grants directly to individuals.

Home Investment Partnerships Program (HOME)

The Home Investment Partnership Program provides grants and loans to help state and local governments, in partnership with non-profits, to fund safe, decent, affordable housing to extremely low-, very low-, and low-income families. HOME is the

largest Federal block grant to state and local governments designed exclusively to create affordable housing for low-income families. The flexibility of the program empowers people and communities to design and implement strategies tailored to their own priorities and needs. HOME requires participating jurisdictions to match 25 cents of every dollar the program funds.

Housing Tax Credit (HTC) Program

The Housing Tax Credit Program directs private capital towards the development and preservation of affordable rental housing for low-income households. Funded through the US Treasury Department, the program provides a source of equity for the development of affordable housing, maximizes the number of affordable units added to the state's supply, and ensured that the state's affordable housing supply is well maintained. To qualify for the tax credit, either 20 percent or more of the project's units must be rent-restricted and occupied by individuals whose income is 50 percent or less of the median family income; or 40 percent or more of the units must be rent-restricted and occupied by individuals whose income is 60 percent or less of the median family income. Developers of low-income rental housing use the tax credit to offset a portion of their federal tax liability in exchange for the production of affordable rental housing.

Housing Trust Refund

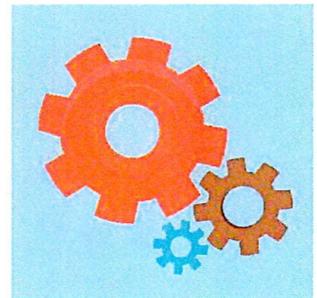
The Housing Trust Refund is a program that provides funds in the form of no-interest loans for predevelopment expenses, including market studies, site plans, architecture and engineering studies, and other pre-construction expenses. Funds are awarded on a competitive basis to non-profits, for-profit organizations, local governments, public housing authorities, community housing development organizations, and income eligible individuals and families for the acquisition, rehabilitation, and construction of affordable housing.

My First Texas Home- Down Payment Assistance Program (DPAP)

Administered through the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs, My First Texas Home Down Payment Assistance Program helps very low- and low-income families purchase a home by providing a competitive, fixed, low-interest loan for the down payment for first-time homebuyers. Loans range from \$5,000 to \$10,000, depending on the county in which the property is located. The loan can go towards the down payment and eligible closing costs and the borrower pays the loan when the home is either sold or refinanced, or at the maturity of the original mortgage.

Texas Bootstrap Loan Program

The Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs administers the Texas Bootstrap Loan Program to provide very low-income families with an opportunity to help themselves through "sweat equity". All participants under this program are required to provide as least 65 percent of the labor necessary to construct or rehabilitate their home. They can contribute to the labor personally or they may build or rehabilitate housing for others. If the owner has a documented disability prohibiting him or her from fulfilling their sweat equity requirement, he or she may fulfill their requirement entirely through noncontract labor assistance from friends, family or volunteers. The maximum Bootstrap loan may not exceed \$45,000 per household. The owner may obtain additional funds from other department and non-department sources as long as the total amount of the amortized repayable loan funds from all sources does not exceed \$90,000.



Community and Neighborhood Livability Key Objectives

- Continue to improve streets, sidewalks and parks in Watauga
- Maintain Code Compliance efforts
- Review and update design regulations to incorporate the Development Strategy's recommendations
- Expand wayfinding signage efforts
- Continue to improve and expand gateway feature/zones and implement corridor enhancement areas
- Encourage the development of life-cycle housing, including a diverse range of lot sizes, housing sizes and housing types
- Maintain and expand neighborhood improvement strategies and continue to monitor neighborhood conditions
- Develop a recognition program to encourage homeowners and businesses to enhance and maintain their properties with quality exterior upgrades
- Ensure funding continues for City staff personnel to oversee neighborhood related activities
- Encourage the formation of Neighborhood Associations and establish regular channels of communication