

## PLANNING PROCESS



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The City of Anna Strategic Plan, as one of the City's annual goals, directs staff to Promote Downtown Redevelopment. Creating a Downtown improvement plan will help shape a vision of a vital downtown into reality. Facilitating stakeholder and public input for envisioning a vital downtown is a critical component for the planning process to be successful. The City Council adopted a resolution establishing a representative Citizen Advisory Group to advise and guide staff on downtown planning efforts.

The representative group consisted of nine members identified as key downtown stakeholders. Represented were business owners, property owners, the City Council, the Planning and Zoning Commission, Economic Development Corporation, and local developers. The group was instrumental in identifying downtown problems, objectives, area boundary, and characteristics (Image 7).

**Image 7: Members of the Downtown Advisory Group meet on April 24, 2014**



## Downtown Strengths

Prior to listing downtown area problems, Downtown-area strengths were identified. These provide a positive foundation for future growth and help set the tone for the future vision. These strengths were recognized as positive attributes upon which to build on as the City moves forward.

- Location
- Accessibility
- Available land
- Proximity to DART railroad
- Area is growing
- Existing 4th Street
- Historic ambience
- Historic buildings
- Historic Sherley Store
- Businesses prospering
- Local restaurants
- Suitability for events

## Downtown Weaknesses

During the regular meetings of the Downtown Area Group, multiple problems were identified specific to the Downtown area. Though not all inclusive, the 12 problems identified by this plan provide a good overview of the issues facing downtown and consequently the need for a plan to address them. The following were identified by the members of the Downtown Advisory Group as key problems impacting the Downtown-area:

- Lack of unique identity
- Lack of defined boundary
- Current Downtown small
- Dangerous for pedestrians
- Limited parking
- Limited public space & parks
- Limited activities/attractions
- Lack of business variety
- Poor lighting at night
- Poor drainage
- Poor street condition
- Limited wayfinding signage

**Lack of Unique Identity** | The study area is predominantly single family residential, light commercial, and public and institutional land uses. With the exception of the strip of historic commercial buildings along Fourth Street and several historic, vintage single-family residences, much of the Downtown area is fairly generic small town. The Quonset hut buildings along Powell Parkway belonging to the Anna Fire Department and Anna Grain provide some sense of place, architectural differentiation, and convey a relationship to Anna’s agricultural past as one enters the Downtown area from the South on Powell Parkway.

**Lack of Defined Boundary** | There is not a clearly defined area-of-transition between where the rest of the City ends and the Downtown Area begins – especially when drive south from the north, or for east-to-west traffic on White Street. Furthermore, as land use in the study area is predominantly single-family housing, there is no characteristic change in density as one enters the Downtown Area. An old, unused water tower provides the single most visible cue, along with the Quonset huts along Powell Parkway, that one is entering the Downtown Anna area. The Downtown area is more of a commercial corridor oriented along Powell Parkway (SH 5).



**Old Anna “Coyotes”  
Water Tower**

**Quonset Huts along Powell Parkway**

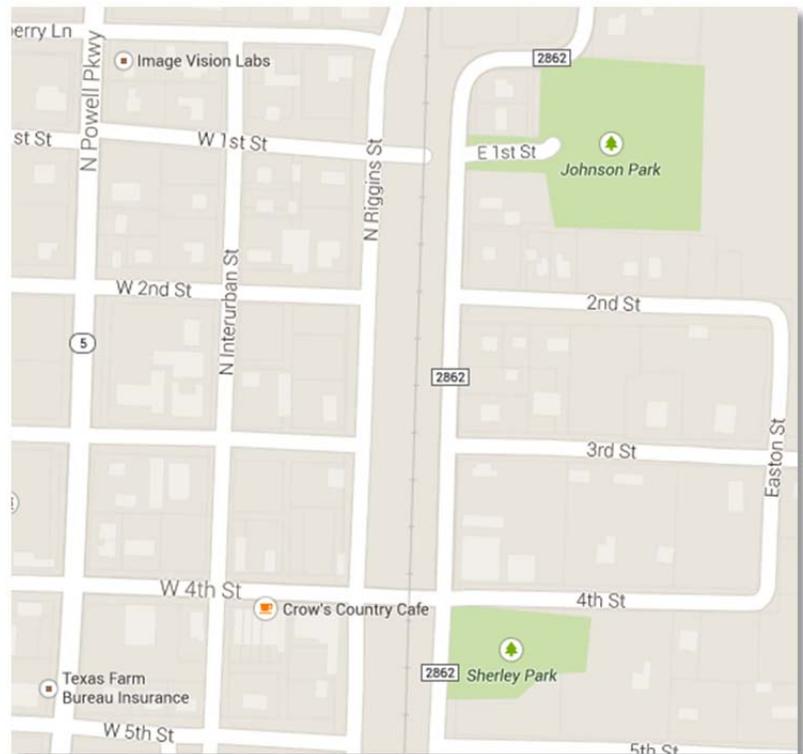


**Current Downtown is Too Small** | What people consider Downtown Anna today is really just the strip of restaurants and commercial buildings along East Fourth Street – with City Hall located to the west on Powell Parkway.

**Dangerous for Pedestrians** | The study area lacks signalized crosswalks, consistent sidewalks, and other than wide shoulders on Powell Parkway, is lacking in bicycle lanes. It is not uncommon to see people walking across Powell Parkway to eat at the restaurants on East Fourth Street.

**Limited Parking** | Most of the current customer parking for Downtown Anna is along East Fourth Street in the Texas Department of Transportation right-of-way. This parking is technically unlawful; however, the law is not enforced.

**Map 1: Downtown Parks**



Map source: Google, 2014

**Limiting Public Space & Parks |**

Located within the study area boundary are two city parks: Johnson Park, and Sherley Park. Despite promising names, both are essential sports complexes with the exception of a small playground area at Johnson Park. Sherley Park is a baseball field with some limited seating (Map 1).

**Limited Activities/Attractions |**

Downtown today mostly consists of restaurants. Along Powell Parkway there are two convenience stores, public and institutional uses, and professional offices. The historic Sherley Museum is a major potential regional draw; however, it is only open several times a year for visitation. Downtown Anna has limited activities and attractions for people of all ages holding variety of interests. Its primary draw is as a place to gather, eat, and enjoy

occasional live music. A major objective of this plan is to investigate ways to expand activities and attractions by expanding the Downtown area.

**Lack of Business Variety** | Downtown is characterized by restaurants, professional offices, financial, single-family residential, and public and institutional uses. The predominant land use is single family.

**Poor Lighting at Night** | The study area is dark and has inconsistent lighting at night. It is unsafe for pedestrians and bicyclists.

**Poor Drainage** | The Current Downtown has inconsistent curb and gutter. Furthermore, in places where there is curb and gutter, some of it has filled in with soil, vegetation, and debris and is no longer functional. Compounding this, years of street resurfacing have raised the street to level or above that of the gutter. Powell Parkway (SH 5) and other streets are lined by drainage ditches. They are slow to drain and fill up with standing water after heavy rains. The study area is relatively flat and slow to drain. Storm water runoff is slow to dissipate, and ponding and flooding are real concerns in heavy rain events. The area has a high risk of severe weather, especially in the spring months when warm moist air from the gulf collides with cold fronts and upper level disturbances. The following pictures were taken during a severe weather event on January 25, 2013 (Image 8).

**Image 8: Flooding in Downtown Anna during January 25, 2012 Storm Event**



**Poor Street Condition** | Many of the streets in the study area are cracked, overgrown with weeds and grass on the edges, and in poor condition. Interurban Street is a particularly good example. It lacks visible striping, defined edges, and is narrow (Image 9).

**Image 9: Poor Condition of Interurban Street  
(Looking North from Fourth Street)**



**Limited Wayfinding Signage** | Other than street signs, there are limited wayfinding markers in Downtown Anna. There are no markers on White Street (FM 455) or Powell Parkway (Hwy 5) directing motorists to the central district. The single most visible markers are the old water tower and Quonset Huts at Anna Grain and the City of Anna Fire Department. Anna City Hall, located on Powell Pkwy across from Fourth Street, is another visual cue that you are in the heart of Anna. It is however, small and easily missed.