The Sweetwater, Texas
2022 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

We lead with trust and respect to provide a vibrant, secure community for all.

City of Sweetwater Mission Statement





2022 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN For the City of Sweetwater, Texas

Adopted: November 8, 2022

Prepared for: The City of Sweetwater

Prepared by:



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As Napoleon Hill said, "First comes thought, then organization of that thought into ideas and plans; then transformation of those plans into reality."

By embarking upon this planning process for the first time in the city's history, Sweetwater and its residents have formally captured the thinking and ideating necessary. Transforming this plan into reality is the next essential step.

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Precinct Two
Precinct Three
Precinct Four

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Special Thanks

Argo's Brewhouse and Bookstore, for hosting an engagement event

El Papagayo, for hosting an engagement event

Sweetwater Public Library, for hosting an engagement event

Sweetwater High School, for hosting a presentation

Oak Hall, for hosting an engagement event

The Sweetwater Police Department, for hosting stakeholder sessions.

Dr. Michael Harbour, for providing local imagery for the plan document

Pioneer Museum, for providing local imagery for the plan document

National WASP WWII Museum, for providing local imagery for the plan document

Colophon

This document principally employs the typeface Phoreus Cherokee, designed by Mark Jamra of *TypeCulture*. Headlines and text accompanying many graphics are set in various weights of Industry (designed by Mattox Shuler of Fort Foundry), and Tenso (designed by Jos Buivenga of exljbris).

The document was laid out and typeset by Marshall Hines in Adobe InDesign on Macintosh Computers. Maps were generated by Ryan Lozano and Karina Castillo in QGIS on Windows Computers.

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THE WHAT AND WHY OF A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Sweetwater's First Plan

In 2018, the City of Sweetwater's City Council held a special election for the purpose of proposing amendments to the City Charter. The special election provided the opportunity for citizens to vote on these amendments. One proposed amendment would establish a City function of comprehensive planning and adopt a citywide plan to guide that function in the future.

In 2021, the City of Sweetwater selected a consulting firm to begin the process of preparing the city's first such plan. While this will be the first such plan for the community, it will not be the last. The City Charter requires that the plan be updated every three years, which ensures that the plan stays current and relevant to the growing and changing needs of the community.

It is a significant point in time for Sweetwater, and a unified vision based upon resident input is necessary to establish strategic and coordinated action. Adoption of the final plan demonstrates commitment to community values and movement forward. Then, the work of implementation begins. Where, when, and how the city progresses in the next 10-20 years will have a direct impact on the city's long-term fiscal health, affordability, and vibrancy.



What is a Comprehensive Plan?

Leading a city is a daunting task, both daily and long term. As the name suggests, this Plan outlines a "comprehensive", or allinclusive, picture of city needs and desires. It summarizes the vision and values that are critical to a city, and outlines the path forward. There are always more demands than resources in cities, so clarity and advance planning is crucial.

City officials change over time, so this document serves as the constant guide. It lays out the game plan for Sweetwater. It expresses the goals and direction of the community. Clear expectations and responsibilities are outlined so meaningful progress can be made.

It is Sweetwater's official statement on policy and direction.

Comprehensive plans have two components: a visual component and a text component. The visual component maps out where to place future land uses. It provides informative graphics and illustrations. The text component sets the scene by outlining the existing conditions. From there, it sketches out the future of the city, weaving in analysis and context. The final product ends in an implementation strategy to achieve the vision. Success is wholly reliant on City officials and residents, who must embrace and take ownership of the plan and commit to its execution. Neither the city organization nor the city's residents can do this alone.

What Does a Comprehensive Plan Do?



Documents current needs and forecass future challenges. If done well, Sweetwater can leverage growth that yields only the highest returns for the community. This leads to a stronger community that thinks ahead - becoming more proactive, and less reactive.

Improves effectiveness and communication. Creating a plan puts city leaders in a position to eliminate duplicative efforts and be effective decision-makers across all aspects of the City's operations while maximizing limited resources.

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	TIME \$\$\$
SMALL PROJECTS SMALL PROJECTS	PEOPLE
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Identifies and captures in writing what is important to the community. Having a clear identity and set of values helps Sweetwater avoid turning into Anywhere, USA. Too often, cities feel sterile and faceless, and look the same.



Establishes clear expectations. Elected officials and staff are best equipped to make consistent, predictable recommendations and decisions.

Authority for Comprehensive Planning

Chapter 213 of the Texas Local Government Code (originally created in 1997) outlines the authority delegated to cities as it relates to comprehensive plans. Section 213.002 specifically authorizes a city to adopt a comprehensive plan in accordance with its charter or by ordinance. It also authorizes them to amend it regularly. The comprehensive plan is intended to be kept updated so it will stay relevant to the environment and challenges of the city it is written for.

Creates an informed and engaged citizenry. Engaged residents support city leadership and bring ideas forward. They actively participate in decisions and the work required to achieve more. They represent their neighborhoods and wishes. Most importantly, they contribute to positive change and develop future leaders.

Why Should This Matter to You?

It's simple. The future of a city affects everyone, from the newest arrivals to lifelong residents. Everyone has a vested interest in making their community the best place it can be to live, work and play. This Comprehensive Plan should matter to you if one or more of these apply:

You have time, talent, and/or treasure to offer, and a heart for Sweetwater. There is a place for every community member to step up and contribute to the shared vision. In doing so, they also become a part of the solutions. This input is critical to achieving the vision expressed in this Plan. You want and expect accountability. You seek transparency from your decision makers. Your decision makers likewise rely on insights and assistance from you. This Plan creates the common language necessary to connect decision makers and residents. With this common language there will be more productive dialogue between groups. As an added bonus, this makes it simple to measure plan execution. These measures can be shared and understood in an open and transparent way. You care about the future and the people in it. You may have frustrations about the current situation in your community. Yet, you choose to call Sweetwater home. You may also have loved ones who rely on the future of Sweetwater. Shaping the future of the community is a collective duty and a mutual effort.

You believe in thinking ahead and taking strategic action. If Sweetwater embraces this Plan, it will be the conduit for action that can place the city on a track of growth rather than decline. It can place it on a path of community pride rather than apathy, and a path of connection rather than disconnection. You want to understand how decisions are made. Upon adoption, the City of Sweetwater will set to work implementing the path laid out here. Every discussion and decision reached should have a strong connection to this Plan. By being familiar with its contents, you will have insight into why and how City officials make judgment calls. In addition, you will be well-equipped to participate in those processes.

HOW TO USE THIS PLAN

For Residents

- 1. Be familiar with the document and its contents. Make sure any groups or associations you are part of are, too. As they say, knowledge is power.
- 2. Volunteer to get involved. Coordinate the planning of events with this plan. Set goals that are consistent with this plan. Identify ways to address issues using this plan. Understand who is "assigned" to tasks you have an interest in, and work with them. By joining forces, resource constraints can be overcome.
- 3. Bring local wealth off the sidelines by rallying together. Pursue collective investment in small businesses. Work as a group to jump-start projects that breathe new life into a building or lot. Take rebuilding into community hands. Do this instead of waiting for big developers from outside Sweetwater to make that investment. They don't have the same commitment to Sweetwater that you do. Create spaces for local businesses to get started.
- 4. Participate in the City of Sweetwater's reviews of the Plan. This is the perfect time to suggest innovative ideas. Offer up solutions that have not yet been discussed. Make city leaders aware of the communities' shifting needs so that Sweetwater can adapt.
- 5. Understand that discussions to call out progress, or the lack thereof, are not just about City officials. They are also about the contributions of residents just like you; without a partnership in pursuing collective efforts, change will not occur. Pitch in and celebrate when items are checked off the list. Support open and honest assessment of what isn't working in a way that doesn't become government versus residents.

For City Officials

- Be familiar with the plan's contents. Align the budget, capital improvements plan, regulations, agendas, and reporting with these. Cities always identify goals, but their day-to-day decisions tend to work against them. This happens less when the goals are the centerpiece of every discussion.
- 2. Make it easy for motivated residents and local groups to get involved. Encourage them to join in the work to achieve this vision. There are many local resources that can help the City's small staff achieve more. Every community has residents who want to be part of progress, but they often do not know where to start.
- 3. Conduct dialogue about city business around the tools contained in the Plan. Set an example for locals showing how focused the city leaders are on this path forward. Make it part of meetings, staff reports, and other public venues and resources.
- 4. Stay true to an annual review of this document, policies, and regulations. Without frequent review, these tools will not adapt as needed, making it difficult to ever execute the vision. Update the Plan regularly. Cross off completed items and add new actions and goals. Put effort into meeting with neighborhoods and diverse groups of residents.
- 5. Share this Plan with community partners and residents. Make it easy and convenient to access. Demonstrate how issues are analyzed using the Plan. Help citizens make the connection between the vision and the ultimate action or decision.
- 6. Special projects or unique development opportunities will sometimes present themselves. Reference the Plan when considering the impacts of them. Make the decisions based on the approved Future Land Use Plan and vision. The vision, values, and guiding principles outlined in this document should always guide decisions.

HOW TO UPDATE THIS PLAN

The Plan must be dynamic and adaptable. This is especially true for a rural community like Sweetwater. Support and assistance from the public is critical to keeping it updated. Recommended strategies and policies often cross organizational boundaries, requiring compromise between City officials and other community agencies. It is imperative that members of all groups are part of the periodic review. This is necessary so that all progress in Sweetwater - and not just that of city hall that relates to these strategies is recorded and shared.

Recommendations and their accompanying actions are the items which will need the most frequent review. As existing recommendations are achieved, new ones should be introduced that move Sweetwater toward the future imagined herein.

Staff will be the most common source of these updates as their 'on the ground' work provides an exceptional vantage point to see where new work is needed to improve the community. City Council should also review recommendations yearly to see how progress is being made and if necessary, suggest additions. Though these two groups are the most likely ones to suggest changes to recommendations, public input should be gathered on a regular schedule to help inform staff and Council's work.

> This document is designed to be updated and reviewed in a regular cycle as shown here. It's important to note that this cycle never ends, the process simply repeats once you have completed a full revolution.

Annual Reviews

Successful long-term planning balances visioning and big ideas with resource constraints. Creativity can reduce the squeeze of constraints. The most effective annual reviews are treated as collaborative problem solving sessions. It is important that residents are made aware of and understand the tradeoffs that are required in decision making. This happens with regular, honest discussions about what citizens are willing and able to pay for. Reviews should encourage the sharing of ideas and alternative approaches to getting more done with less.

Three-Year Update*

The plan will receive a full update accompanied by public engagement and updates to the data, strategies and actions - every three years. Otherwise, the plan cannot serve as the guide it is intended to be. Momentum fades and the vision dims. An effort to update can be done more efficiently when conducted regularly. This is a crucial time to celebrate wins, make adjustments, and incorporate new ideas.

The Future Land Use Map

The Future Land Use Map should be part of the annual review so that revisions happen as conditions change. Although zoning decisions should be made in accordance with this map, there may be times when the City recognizes that the Map requires amendments. In these situations, staff should be directed to prepare an update to the Map for consideration and action by the Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council. This public document should be maintained so that it expresses the current community direction and vision. Not only is this helpful for property owners, but it is also important information for both local and outside developers of a single lot or a larger development.

Implementation Strategy

If Sweetwater executes the implementation strategy, action items will be completed from time to time. Others will be ongoing or may need revision. The Plan should always reflect the city's focus for action in following years. It is, in short, the City's playbook. As such, it cannot be left to collect dust. This portion of the annual review provides a time to celebrate positive progress while addressing how to accelerate completion of those items which are not yet finished. It should also be a time to look into the future and add items for implementation which are innovative ideas or larger, long-term projects.

Legal Requirements

Texas state law allows cities to adopt revisions to a comprehensive plan by ordinance. Notice is required to be published in the official city newspaper in advance of the hearing(s). It is recommended that more time be invested in advertising such revisions and doing so weeks - not days - in advance. Other recommended methods include the use of local radio stations, TV stations, social media, flyers at local businesses, and other strategies intended to maximize public participation. Alternative meeting locations in neighborhoods in advance of the formal hearing make this process truly inclusive and less procedural.



*as required by City Charter

VERDUNIT

UNDERSTANDING Sweetwater

Dr. Michael Harbour Photograph

COMMUNITY HISTORY



Initial Settlement

Sweetwater was identified early on as a place suitable for settlement, largely based on its available water sources. Long before the settlers and ranchers arrived, the Kiowa Indians named the site "Mobeetie," which translates to "sweet water".



1877

Source: Taylor County History Center

Only one year after Nolan County was established, the history of Sweetwater as a place begins with the presence of a dugout store for local buffalo hunters, run by Billie Knight.







1881

Sweetwater sees settlers in the area, and was designated county seat during the organization of Nolan County. At this time, it only had a couple of tent stores and no permanent buildings. The Sweetwater Advance began publishing this year, and the Texas and Pacific Railway began service here.



Source: Pioneer Museum



1883

Sweetwater has saloons and other businesses in place. One saloon held cash deposits in lieu of a local bank. It was raided, and its owners murdered.

1902

Incorporation came in 1884, 1897, and 1902.



1911



Source: Pioneer Museum

Thomas Trammell, nicknamed the city's "Father", constructs a Mission Revival-Prairie School style house for his family.

The home also served as the only area hospital from 1923 to 1936 before resuming its original use as a residence.





Source: Henderson Gallerv

1926

Sweetwater Municipal Auditorium was constructed, and it also served as the original City Hall. It was designed in a Spanish Colonial Revival style, most illustrated through the arches, balconies, and exterior detailing. This building was named to the National Register as a landmark in 1982.

Wednesday Morning, September 29, 1926.

CONTRACT FOR BUILDINGS AT SWEFTWATER

SWEETWATER, Texas, Sept. 28 -Contracts totalling \$146,762 were let by the city commit n here

this afternoon for the construction of Sweetwa ...s new Municipal Auditorium and City Hall and two new fire stations, Ramey Brothers Construction Company of El Paso was awarded the general contract for the building of the auditorium, city hall and central fire station. The bid was \$128,583. Work vill begin as soon as materials and machinery can be placed on the ground and the contract specifies the building must be completed in the method and

160 working days. Meyer and Johnson, local conastyer and Johnson, local con-tractors, were awarded the con-tract to build the south side fire station. Other successful biddees were: W. T. Monroe, Greenville, plumbing: Braden-Hudeon Wang-ler Co., San Antonio and Bullock Electric Commany Swoetwater. Electric Electric Company, Sweetwater, wiring, E. C. Veale, Abliene, heat-ing. Twenty-eight firms were re-presented in the bidding and as a presented in the budding and as a result Sweetwater is to get a finer group of buildings than had been planned, according to L. C. Page of Austin, architect. The municipal auditorium and city hall will be a magnificent structure an' afford ample room

for public gatherings, conventions and entertainments. Of Spanish style it was originally planned to be of stuced construction or brick. The successful bidders have con-tracted to use a great deal of stone which will add materially to the appearance of the building. The structure will contain a complete set of offices for the city adminis-tration, space for the public library and a hall for the local post of the American Legion together with the immense auditorium which will the infinense auditorium which will seat several thousand persons and contain a fully equipped stage. In harmony with this building the two new fire stations will be of two new mire stations will be of the same type architecture. The central station will be located next is the auditorium while the south side station will be centrally located to serve the couth side of the city. The construction of these stations will automatically bring brown as increase in the size. of about an increase in the size of the city's fire department with ad-ditional apparatus, emecially hook and ladder equipment for fighting fires in the city's taller structures



1929

Bitter Creek is dammed and Lake Sweetwater is constructed at a cost of around \$450,000. The lake capacity is 4.5 billion gallons.

The Gulf refinery begins operating in Sweetwater.





Credit: National WASP WWII Museum

1943

The Women's Airforce Service Pilots (WASP) were trained alongside British forces during the War. The following year, the program was discontinued.

Source: Pioneer Museum

Surday Morning, November 2, 1930.

200 Employed in **Building of Lake**

SWEETWATER, Nov. 1 .- Per hundred men are now employed at Lake Sweetwitter by the Womlick-Huming-Rollina Construction epmpany, contractors on the new million dollar manyoir. The force was increased last work by the contractors in an of-fort to complete the work by the first of the year. Progress has been halted during the last few weeks by pains failing over the lake's waterabed.



Source: Dr. Michael Harbour Photography

2006

A 585.3 megawatt farm with just under 400 wind turbines is fully commissioned.

2010

Population declines almost 10% from 10,500 in 2010 to 9.477

2022

Lubbock housing developer Betenbough breaks ground on a 94 lot residential subdivision, the biggest single residential development since the 1980s.

DEMOGRAPHICS & POPULATION

Who Makes Up Sweetwater?

Sweetwater's history begins with a story of steady expansion. Between 1890 and 1980, the community's population grew at a consistent rate. In 1970, Texas State Technical College established a campus in Sweetwater, validating this population growth with a regional education institution of its own. As shown in the population trending data below, Sweetwater began to lose citizens and start a slow but steady decline in numbers. The Texas Commission for Environmental Quality projected a 2020 population of 11,564, which it has not achieved as of June 2022. Instead of the 6% increase, it actually decreased by almost 3% from 2010 to 2020.

The Texas Water Development Board projects a population increase of 14% for Nolan County between 2020 and 2050. While it is unclear how much of that will be in Sweetwater, it is important for the city to position itself to attract as much of that as possible. The provision of housing choice and affordability, paired with quality of life elements and job availability are key to that attraction. A place in the 10,000 to 50,000 population bracket sets cities like Sweetwater apart. They offer a small town feel yet contain sufficient amenities for day-to-day needs. Nearby Big Spring is an example of a city in this bracket that has continued to incrementally increase population over time an opportunity Sweetwater has as well.

The age range of Sweetwater residents is extremely varied. This is an excellent opportunity for Sweetwater to build upon, but it will require an in-depth understanding of the types of activities and needs for all of these age brackets. Children under eighteen and adults between the ages of forty and fifty-nine make up over half of the overall population. The graphic above shows the specific breakdown of residents by each age group as part of the 2020 American Community Survey.



Race Distribution 46% White 29.4% Hispani 10.6% Two or More 9.5% Other Household Characteristics **31.4**% 1 Person **25.3%** 2 People

Language Spoken at Home



With just over twenty-five percent of residents speaking Spanish and around one percent speaking either Indo-European or Asian-Pacific Islander languages, the City should consider putting out information in multiple languages.



The largest percentage of households in Sweetwater during 2020 fell within the one person household category, closely followed by the four or more persons household category. The average household size for Sweetwater is just below the state average.

(forty-six percent)

(fifty-four percent).

Age Distribution 28.1% Under 18 18.3% 25-39 15.6% 60-79 4.5% Over 80

Source for all data on this page: ACS, 2020

Primary Industries, Employment and Housing



This table shows the ranges annually of unemployment in Texas. This is measured monthly, so each range represents the lowest figure for that respective year to the highest figure for that same year. Unsurprisingly, figures varied widely in 2020, and to some degree, stabilized in 2021, though the numbers were still higher than pre-2020 numbers. Nolan County's unemployment figures, reported annually, were also higher in 2020 and 2021, though they fell at the low end of the statewide ranges, demonstrating that Sweetwater and area residents fared better in terms of steady employment.

Unemployment range data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics was averaged to produce a single data point for each year since 2016. Nolan County rates were sourced from the Texas Workforce Commission.





American Community Survey statistics from 2020 in the table above show the percentage of Sweetwater residents reporting that worked full-time, part-time (defined as those working less than thirty-four hours weekly), or that did not work. The highest percentages of those not working in 2020 fell in the ranges of sixteen to nineteen years of age and those over sixty-five. Part time work was most prevalent in those aged sixteen to twentyfour. Full time work was most prevalent in the age ranges of twenty-five to fifty-four. 2020 Median Household Income

> Sweetwater \$40,577 UP 83% SINCE 2016

Texas \$63,828 UP 89% SINCE 2016

While Sweetwater's median household income has increased, it is significantly lower than the median household income statewide. In part, this is due to the rural nature of the area: however. the amounts have not kept up with the percentage increase across the state. While the median household income in Sweetwater has increased a total of eighty-three percent over a five year period, the statewide median increased almost eighty-nine percent in that same timeframe.

Source: US Census

Top Six Industries

MANUFACTURING RETAIL 14% 12% HEALTHCARE/ SOCIAL SERVICES **EDUCATION** 12% 11% **LOGISTICS** AGRICUTURAL 10% 10% Source: Sweetwater EDC Percentage of Income Bracket in Which Housing Costs Exceed 30% of Income 6.32% 16% 12.8% 9.6% 6.32% 6.4% 1% 0.58% 0.47% 3.2%% 0 >\$20k \$20-35k \$35-50k \$50-75k \$75k+

An important indicator of affordability and poverty levels in a community is the percentage of income required for housing costs. The table above looks specifically at each income bracket for the years 2016-2020. The percentage figures show the percentage – within each income bracket – of employees within that bracket for which housing costs exceed thirty percent. Unsurprisingly, the lower income brackets are having to devote more of their income for housing costs. This highlights a couple of important things about the Sweetwater population: first, those with substantially lower wages are disproportionately affected by the cost of housing in Sweetwater; second, housing affordability is a much larger concern for those making less than \$35,000 annually. This suggests consideration of a wider spectrum of housing prices and options to meet the needs of all income brackets.

Source: US Census, 2020

Education Distribution

38 %	32 %	19 %	11 %
High School Graduate	Some College	Bachelor's or Higher	No Diploma

The distribution of education levels in Sweetwater residents shows that seventy percent of the population are either high school graduates or have some college.

Ownership and Rental



Age of Residents Living Below the Poverty Line Resdients With a Disability (under 65 years old)





Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020

COMMUNITY ELEMENTS

Community Baseline

To begin a long-term comprehensive plan program for the City of Sweetwater, a baseline must be established that capture where Sweetwater is today. This provides foundation for measuring progress as the plan is implemented, a piece at a time. It provides background about what Sweetw residents shared at the outset of this init planning process. This Plan uses the base information to formulate strategies and actions relating to land use, mobility, hou and other key elements. As future update are made to this Plan, City staff can evalu what measures have been successful by comparing where the community member feel Sweetwater is at that point in time, compared to today.

Phase 1 Launch & Assess Nov 2021 - Jan 2022	Phase 2 Explore Feb 2022 - Mar 2022	Phase 3 Organize Mar 2022 - July 2022	Phase 4 Prioritize & Format <i>Aug 2022 - Sept 2022</i>	Phase 5 Adopt & Implemer Oct 2022 - Nov 2022
Vibrant Community Survey Data Collection, Review, and Analysis Land Use Fiscal Assessment Existing Conditions Assessment Preliminary Plan Outlining	Come & Go Session at Argo's Come & Go Session at El Papagayo Come & Go Session at Sweetwater County-City Library Religious Leaders Session City Leaders Session City Leaders Session Community Conversations at Sweetwater Police Department Community Presentation at Sweetwater High School	<text><text><text><text><text></text></text></text></text></text>	<text><text><text></text></text></text>	Plan Draft Refinement City Council Meetin for Plan Adoption Implementation Summit
	Sweetwater Comprehensive Plan: Vibrant Community Assessment This incluid survey is intended to provide, a light live different persectives (city) elementing, staff, cited	el assessment of the community from several m, partners, etc). The survey consists of 18 questions	19 CD	nity Assessment was the first opportunity for the residents of Sweetwater to give feedback and insight on the Comprehensiv Plan process.
	planning process. While there will be other opport	Lused to set a baseline and initial priorities for the unities during the project timeline to provide vistal; it provides the most complete picture of what		





Top: Presentation of the initial planning assessment results at Sweetwater High School Bottom: Residents identify areas of Sweetwater where they choose or avoid spending time during the come and go engagement session at Sweetwater County-City Library





Actors/Factors/Issues

Actors

Actors are local groups and organizations whose spheres of influence and/ or prescribed duties or purposes can address the factors identified. This could be the strengthening and support of those positive factors, the targeting and minimizing negative factors, and the advancement of a unified vision as it relates to the list of issues.

Local Churches Chamber Nurture Nolan Jaycees 4th & Elm Kiwanis Coliseum Board **City Officials** Masons First Methodist TSTC United Way "The Shop" Hospital

Catholic Church
Food Pantry
Ministerial Alliand
SISD
Major Employers
Realtors
Country Club
Arts & Culture Organizations
Local Businesses
WASP Museum
Rotary Club
Lions Club

ce

Factors

Factors are elements of the community's identity that may contribute to creating the identified issues, solving the identified issues, or a combination of both.

Lack of

Entertainment

Cost of Living Good People Golf Courses Sports Rodeo Rattlesnake

Small Town Feel

Roundup

Crime

Drugs

Housing Parks Manufacturing Local Healthcare Things to Do

No Activities Tax Base/Rates Deteriorated Neighborhoods Lack of Retail Code Enforcement Job Offerings External Funding Aesthetics

Where you spend a lot of time Where you see others spending time Where you purposefully avoid

> In February of 2022, attendees of engagement events were asked to use color coded stickers to identify pockets of Sweetwater that are frequently used by residents. They were also asked to identify locations that residents tend to avoid due to a perceived lack of safety, attractions, and/or acceptable conditions.

Issues

Issues are items of concern for the residents of a community. They include observations, beliefs, situations, and widely-accepted universal truths.

Place to Eat Things to Do Jobs Sit Down Dining Blight Lack of Grant Funds Local Support Income Disparity Housing Condition Lack of Recreation Knowledge of Resources Public

Responsibility Infrastructure Tax Base Revenues Aesthetics Local Business Downtown Affordable Housing Schools

HOW ENGAGEMENT INPUT INFORMED THIS PLAN

-

Tu

Vibrant Community Assessment



In-Person and Online Discussions



Stakeholder Meetings and Engagement Events







BASELINE

ESTABLISHED



The Vibrant Community Assessment, a tool created by Quint Studer and referenced in his book, Building a Vibrant Community, was used at the outset of this process. The assessment provided the opportunity for residents to rank Sweetwater across a number of characteristics found to be crucial in building a dynamic community. In the first part of 2022, citizens provided answers to eleven questions, using a ten point scale. The questions are listed below, next to a number representing the average score citizens assigned to Sweetwater for each question.

It is notable that the assessment scores indicate a large gap between where citizens want the community of Sweetwater to be, and where they feel it is right now. The lowest scores were in two categories - the ability to keep talent at home, and the ability to attract new business and talent. However, a clear interest in solving problems and making the community better was shared by nearly every participant. This bears witness to the fact that residents want to be involved in improving Sweetwater.



When given the opportunity, the residents of Sweetwater are very willing to provide insight and help to improve the community. At this event in June of 2022 residents worked through exercises to guide Sweetwater's future.

VIBRANT COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT RESULTS

How engaged are your community's citizens?

How likely is it that young people will live and work in the community after graduating from high school or college?

How attractive is your town to new businesses and/or talent?

How strong is your education system?

How vibrant is your downtown?

How successful are you at getting wealth off the sidelines and encouraging people to invest in the community?

How easy is it to create and run a small business in your community?

How likely are small business owners to receive the training and development they need to thrive long-term?

How proficient is your community at measuring, tracking, and reporting outcomes and results and making objective decisions based on them?

To what extent are local government entities aligned and successful at working together to create a better quality of life for your community?













With 10 being most committed, how committed are you to making your community the best it can be?



Community Obstacles, Assets, and Opportunities

Across a series of surveys, online activities and in-person activities, residents offered a wide range of feedback that included the identification of assets, opportunities and obstacles. One of the online tools the City of Sweetwater used to stimulate dialogue included the sharing of prompts on various subjects. When the community was asked to think about Sweetwater's future and share what they want their it to be known for, they offered up many responses, some of which are featured below.

"A healthy community with active businesses!"

"A community that stands together, neighbors helping neighbors while backing our schools, hospital, city government and businesses."

> "I would like Sweetwater to be known as the 'hub' of the state..."

WHAT DO YOU WANT OUR CITY TO BE KNOWN FOR?

"A place where people get along and there [are] many things for kids and teenagers to do besides get in trouble..." "...Farmers Markets or to open up the square and everyone set up tables to [sell] their stuff."

"Support the leadership and keep them in Sweetwater."

Obstacles: Hindering Progress

The obstacles identified during this process by the community are factors that are limiting Sweetwater's efforts and hindering progress towards its potential. The public was clear about the obstacles that exist locally, and they are summarized in the list below. Some are physical limitations, while others are linked to community attitudes or reveal systemic issues.

Physical Limitations

Declining condition of homes, lack of sidewalks, unattractive corridors, roads in need of repair, absence of affordable housing, aging water and wastewater facilities, limited housing inventory





Community Attitudes

Opposition to change, misalignment between local institutions, agencies and organizations, declining involvement in elections and community events, lack of diversity in representation, tepid support of local businesses, distrust towards local government



Systemic Issues

Outdated codes and regulations, significant income disparities, local resource availability not widely shared, addiction, crime, no ongoing community engagement, difficulties attracting qualified applicants, unmet needs for funding of programs and initiatives



VERDUNITY

Assets: Protect and Improve Upon

During the in-person and online engagement exercises, several community assets were identified as being most unique and valuable to Sweetwater. The future of Sweetwater can be built on these key elements. The most frequently-identified assets are shown here.

Natural Recreation Areas

The City's three lakes and two golf courses are natural assets that can be strategically enhanced to improve the local quality of life as well as attract visitors from around the region.

Small Town Feel

Community members noted a sense of "small town" comfort, offering a slower pace and friendlier environment than larger cities around the state.

Key Location

Sweetwater's vantage point along Interstate 20, paired with its location in the central part of Texas, was cited as an important asset. **Access to Education and Healthcare**

Residents noted that the presence of Texas State Technical College and Rolling Plains Memorial Hospital were assets that other similarly-sized communities lack.

Opportunities: Favorable to Success

Opportunities for improvement were compiled from discussions with residents and stakeholders during community meetings and collected during community engagement events. A community's potential is directly tied to its assets. As noted, the citizens made it clear that they strongly desire to narrow the distance between Sweetwater's current conditions and the desired future for it and the people who do and will call it home. The opportunities listed and described below were the most frequently shared.

Improved Utilization and Information Sharing

Residents recognize that there are many nonprofit organizations, service clubs, charitable and church communities, and local agencies present in the community. However, there is a prevailing belief that these entities are not fully utilized to accomplish more at a grassroots community level. Many shared their frustrations that communication between these groups is low, preventing true partnerships and coalition building. In addition, criticism of communications included the sharing of information with the public. There are citizens who want to pitch in and be involved in the betterment of Sweetwater but find it difficult to learn how.

Strengthened Local Business Environment

Many residents expressed the need for more local businesses that provide alternatives to driving to Abilene or Lubbock. In addition, downtown and major corridors need more attention. Many buildings remain vacant and maintenance is lacking. Some have lost interest in shopping locally, either due to the perception that there are no options for doing so, or due to inconsistencies in hours and days of operation. Others expressed that interested locals who would like to offer services or create business opportunities face barriers such as lack of assistance, clear guidelines and information, and a lack of confidence that local patronage will be sufficient.

Broadened Housing Spectrum

A recurring opportunity identified by residents was the chance to create more available housing that is desirable and in good condition. Some shared that housing is targeted at higher income brackets or entry level, but that other demographics lacked choice. Housing supply could be increased by utilizing vacant properties and upgrading existing homes. Both renters and potential homebuyers would like to see a broader inventory available with variety in size of home, size of lots, type of homes, and affordability. As mentioned above, quality of building materials and façade selections is of primary importance when introducing additional housing products. Diverse neighborhoods with character that residents can take pride in encourage the maintenance of homes in good condition, attracting a much larger audience.

Increased Local Activities

Residents wish for more things to do in their free time without having to leave Sweetwater. This is true for both teens and adults of many ages. They want to take their families out, get in a little exercise, and enjoy the outdoors in pleasant environments. They desire more entertainment options, interesting alternatives to the typical retailers, and dining experiences. Much of the inperson and online discussions centered on the Sweetwater of the past that offered many of these amenities. Concerns about increasing gas prices, the need to stop the outward loss of population, and the ability to repurpose existing buildings and sites prompted many to suggest that there is a fantastic opportunity to meet the demand.

Enhanced Reputation and Appearance

Identifying and making choices that reinforce the unique identity Sweetwater has will help it become more than just another "city on the Interstate". Tourists and potential new residents are looking for interesting and unusual places that stand out. Communities without clear identities, or that try to co-opt the identity of another city, are easily forgotten, if remembered at all. Many residents expressed concern about the appearance and first impression Sweetwater gives visitors, from the "this could be anywhere" interstate activity to the disrepair and vacant buildings along major thoroughfares. They indicated an interest in introducing building types and facades that are high quality, carefully designed, and that offer visual interest not currently found in Sweetwater, with an emphasis on masonry and architectural details. It was also clearly expressed that residents wish to avoid adding metal, vinyl, and other materials that may not age well. Creating a reputation that puts Sweetwater on the map, so to speak, is important. Long-term residents love this community but have shared that it isn't enough for those who live there to love it - others outside of Sweetwater need to be educated on what makes it special.

Community Aspirations: What We Want to Become

Public feedback is highly personalized and specific, but by grouping like responses, aspirations begin to emerge. Together, they form the foundation for the Implementation Strategy and Action Plan outlined in Chapter 9. They provide insights into the community's top priorities and concerns at this point in time. Identifying strategies and actions that can help Sweetwater achieve its aspirations is key to keeping the community focused.

Assets



ASPIRATION



Create a Robust Local Economy By identifying tools that feed into and curate a robust local economy, Sweetwater can build on the assets of its small town feel, key location, and access to education and healthcare. These three assets directly factor into the level of economy present. The opportunities identified locally to improve utilization of existing organizations and partners while better sharing information plays a critical -support role in the local economy. The chance to strengthen the local business environment while enhancing the reputation and appearance of Sweetwater further support and connect to this aspiration.

Natural Recreation Are	eas	Small Town Feel	l	Access t Healthca	o E are	ducation and		Key L	ocation
Opportunities Improved Utilization and Information Sharing	Loca	engthened Il Business ronment	Enhanced Reputation Appearance			Broadened Hou Spectrum	ısing		Increased Local Activities

ASPIRATION



Invest in Children and Teens The assets of existing outdoor amenities, small town character, and access to education and healthcare are all crucial to an environment most attractive to – and best for – children and teens. By seizing the opportunity to better capitalize on existing entities and improving their interaction, focusing on the reputation and appearance of the community, and increasing the number and type of local activities, children and teens are better served than they are currently, while building a sense of community pride at earlier ages.

Natural Recreation Ar	eas Small Town Fe	el	Access to Healthca	Education and re	Кеу	Location
Opportunities Improved Utilization and Information Sharing	Strengthened Local Business Environment	Enhanced Reputation Appearanc		Broadened Hous Spectrum	sing	Increased Local Activities

ASPIRATION



Involve and Engage Residents The small town culture Sweetwater citizens are so proud of also helps tremendously in the quest to better involve and engage its residents in a way a larger city would struggle to do. There are already a multitude of opportunities to increase the sharing of information and awareness of the existence and purpose of local entities. A focus on strengthening the local business environment, reputation, and appearance provides an increased probability that every motivated resident has a role or place to plug in. By increasing local activities – made possible by capitalizing on the spirit of volunteerism and clear desires expressed by the residents – it begins to build a spirit of involvement locally. This further benefits Sweetwater by creating a pipeline of talent and leadership that is more diverse and cultivates interest in running for office or joining the boards of local groups.

Natural Recreation Areas	Small Town Feel		Access to Healthcar	Education and e	Key	Location
Information	trengthened ocal Business nvironment	Enhanced Reputation Appearance		Broadened Hous Spectrum	ing	Increased Local Activities

ASPIRATION



Offer Housing Choices for Everyone Sweetwater's central location in the state, and its presence as one of the only cities in this region in the 10,000 to 50,000 population category, means that it has the opportunity to attract new residents and retain existing ones while keeping the small town feel it is proud to have. Better coordination and alignment of local agencies, organizations, businesses, and clubs is essential to understanding the housing needs of the community. In order to begin augmenting its existing inventory with newer - and different - products and price points, it needs to cultivate a group small local developers while enhancing its attractiveness to outside builders. Seizing the chance to work in a focused and diligent way on an improved appearance and a better publicized and clear identity provides the type of environment attractive to investment. By revamping regulations that encourage onesize-fits-all housing and making space for a broader housing spectrum, the diversity of housing types the public wants to see can finally be planned for and incentivized.

In 2017 the SEED Board completed a housing study that came to similar conclusions. See the appendix for more information on this study.

Natural Recreation Are Opportunities	eas	Small Town Feel		Access t Healthc	to E are	Education and	Ka	ey Lo	ocation
Improved Utilization and Information Sharing	Loca	engthened al Business ironment	Enhano Reputa Appear	tion and		Broadened Hous Spectrum	ing		Increased Local Activities

ASPIRATION



Expand Outdoor Amenities The geographic location of Sweetwater and its existing list of natural assets is the perfect starting point for developing a more complete and attractive mix of outdoor amenities. From uncovering and restoring creek beds and installing trails to adding to existing parks, golf courses, and bodies of water, it has the potential to be both a benefit to locals and a draw to the greater region and state. The opportunities to enhance the community's reputation and appearance, paired with increasing local events and gatherings, supports the path to achieving an expansion of more natural attractions by bumping up sales and hotel occupancy tax collections and spreading awareness.

Natural Recreation Areas	Small Town Feel		Access to E Healthcare	Education and	Кеу	Location
Opportunities						
Information Loc	engthened al Business rironment	Enhanced Reputatior Appearanc		Broadened Hou Spectrum	sing	Increased Local Activities

ASPIRATION



Revitalize Corridors and Occupy Vacancies The small town culture of the community provides context for reimagining corridors in a way that fits that culture - slower traffic, safer streets for walking and cycling, and a more classic, human scale of buildings and design. These are elements of the successful corridor redesigns that attract activity. An expanded focus on green space also fits nicely into this aspiration, as there are many strategies that enhance a natural feel of streetscapes outside of the traditional approach to creating parks. A combination of indoor and outdoor activity in areas of business and residential uses has proven to be attractive, value-adding, and fiscally productive. By strengthening the local business environment and expanding the notoriety of the community as welcoming to micro, small, and mid-sized businesses, corridors can be revitalized more collaboratively, and vacant buildings and lots activated. Broadening the housing spectrum and increasing livability and affordability also connect directly to increasing activity that breathes new life into once-forgotten space.

THE ECONOR INTERIOR OF 1600 NETRUS

HOW TOWNS & CITIES USED TO DEVELOP

For thousands of years, cities all over the world were built and grew incrementally outward, upward, and with increasing intensity. This traditional pattern of development was characterized by a compact and narrow street grid and diverse building types, whose uses were flexible. They were built to human scale, meaning the buildings and objects humans interact with are proportionate in size. The buildings were constructed to house any type of use, and were improved incrementally, or bit-by-bit, when the demand existed and resources were available. New structures or streets were built adjacent to existing buildings or infrastructure because this was the most cost-effective way of growing. Rather than adding on infrastructure burdens that might or might not lead to more development, the philosophy focused on fully utilizing all parts of that infrastructure before expanding further.





Source: Library of Congress



Source: USGS



Source: Google Earth





A SIGNIFICANT SHIFT OCCURS

When the automobile was invented, it led to what Strong Towns coined the "suburban experiment". The creation of the highway system, increasing car ownership, and mass scale housing programs rolled out after World War II. Combined, they created a new environment where developers were able to purchase and develop land out on the edge cheaply while housing could be mass produced, and the suburbs were born. Streets and buildings became more spread out than ever before. Residential, commercial, and other uses were separated; this required even more land. As more land became necessary, more streets and utilities were required and the inventory that cities were responsible for maintaining ballooned. Buildings were no longer designed with unique character and were not built to last; instead, they were designed around a single use and could be reproduced rapidly. Unlike the previous incremental growth, cities began to see massive amounts of sprawling housing, streets, and infrastructure being built in a short amount of time - typically just one or two decades. As this caught on, cities across the country began to embrace and incentivize rapid growth without fully considering long-term impacts. Private developers built subdivision after subdivision, putting in miles of new infrastructure. The developments are presented as being improvements and growth "at no cost to the city" - the attention is drawn to the additional rooftops and tax revenues. This promises affluence and prosperity; as such, there is usually pressure to keep property taxes down, trusting that this affluence and prosperity will lead to a boon in sales tax revenue.

However, when things seem too good to be true, they usually are. The significant cost of this approach has been revealing itself over the last two decades. As cities continue to age and expand, both development (and the revenue boost from it) tapers off. However, the neighborhoods, facilities and infrastructure built decades prior have reached the end of their life cycle and demand replacement. Community leaders are left struggling to keep up with basic service delivery and quality of life expectations with limited resources - exacerbated by the fact that pressures to keep taxes down limited what was collected during the building boom. This starts an eternal cycle where cities fix what they can and defer what's left. Eventually, neighborhoods deteriorate to the point where those who can move out. Those less fortunate are forced to remain in an environment of decline and neglect. Bottom line, this post-World War II approach to building does not generate sufficient wealth from its tax base to cover the costs to serve and maintain it all, particularly when infrastructure replacement costs are considered.



Typically, as a city reaches buildout or a stall in growth, the average age of infrastructure (streets, utilities) outpaces the ability of the city's population to fund maintenance costs.



Time

While a city grows, new revenue comes in. No major maintenance is required because infrastructure is brand new. When a city stops growing, the existing infrastructure is older and repairs are needed. It is impossible to recover from those repair expenses if the development pattern is never adjusted.







MEASURING THE VALUE OF DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

Not all kinds of development yield the same return on investment (ROI). The most financially productive places tend to be clustered around older downtown developments and traditional, walkable neighborhoods. Repeated studies across the country show that street-fronting businesses on small lots in compact, walkable areas - such as those along Broadway - tend to be vastly more productive per acre than suburbanized auto-oriented sites with larger lots and dedicated parking areas. Little infrastructure cost is associated with this Main Street-style development, and units can easily adapt to different uses. Contrast this with the big box/strip mall approach, which eats up valuable land and leads to diminishing returns, if any. It compounds the problem by requiring significantly more infrastructure and is not conducive to reuse.

Common Development Patterns





SHEL

Source: Google Earth



Source: Google Earth



Source: Google Streetview

	•
VALUE PER ACRE	HIGH
INFRASTRUCTURE COSTS	MID
SERVICE LEVELS	HIGH
POPULATION PER ACRE	HIGH
COST PER HOUSEHOLD	LOW



Source: Google Streetview

VALUE PER ACRE	LOW
INFRASTRUCTURE COSTS	LOW
SERVICE LEVELS	LOW
POPULATION PER ACRE	LOW
COST PER HOUSEHOLD	LOW



INFRASTRUCTURE COSTS	HIGH
SERVICE LEVELS	HIGH
POPULATION PER ACRE	MID
COST PER HOUSEHOLD	HIGH
Factors Affecting Affordability and Fiscal Sustainability

Street and Lot Widths

The width of a street and the number of lots located along that street directly impact the cost each lot or household must contribute to maintain the street. The wider the street, the more expensive it is to maintain and rebuild - anywhere from \$500,000 to \$1.5 million per 11' lane mile, depending on if the street is asphalt or concrete, sidewalk widths, and other features.

The household or lot's share of the replacement cost is impacted by the number of properties fronting the street. The greater the lot width (70' in this example) the fewer lots on the street, resulting in a higher share of the street cost per lot. Smaller lot widths (50' in this example) mean more lots can be created on the same length of street, spreading the cost among more lots, which reduces each lot's share.

Apply those facts to this scenario. Say that one mile of a street generates \$10,000 a year for the City's share of property tax revenue from the properties along that mile. Even if one hundred percent of that annual property tax revenue of \$10,000 was dedicated to cover the cost of that one street mile, it would take at least fifty years to pay it off. The problem? That length of time is the entire estimated life of that street mile. Texas cities typically only dedicate three to ten percent of property tax revenue for street maintenance. Using the ten percent figure, the length of time to cover the cost jumps up to ten times the estimated life of that street mile.



Building Coverage and Height

Taxable value can also be increased, based on the building configuration on each lot. Put simply, the closer the size of a building to the size of a lot, the more taxable value is generated. This can be accomplished through multi-story or even single-story building. Requirements for parking and open space can limit the buildable area for a site, so it's important to explore alternatives. This can include regulations that make possible shared parking, stormwater management (regional detention), and parks and open space so an optimal balance between land usage, revenues, and costs can be reached.

Intensity of Development

Intensity has a major influence on the city's ability to cover its costs. In the pair of graphics above, Kronberg Urbanists + Architects illustrate how two similar blocks will have the same infrastructure costs associated with them. Both will need access to power, water, and wastewater infrastructure. But one block spreads the cost of that infrastructure over two properties, and the other across many more. This translates to a wildly different tax burden for the residents of the lower block versus those on the upper block.

Housing types, like Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) and duplexes (two housing units within the same building) have the added benefit of creating a revenue stream for an owner who lives on the property. This makes it feasible for them to age in place, or to live in the place they choose without suffering quality of life problems as they age.

It is common for residents to believe that development with more housing units close together, results in a crowded and unpleasant neighborhood. This scale illustration shows that a higher intensity of development can feel just like the streets of traditional mid-century neighborhoods, as long as the building form is scaled to humans.



VERDUNIT

How Development Patterns Impact Commercial Value

Different patterns of development can produce significantly different values on a per acre basis. Since value per acre gives the most apples to apples comparison of properties, it is a useful metric to understand what patterns are going to help Sweetwater become a more fiscally sustainable place.

Suburban Retail – Walmart





16.983

\$4,326,280

\$254,742

Source: Google Streetview .86 Acres \$1,572,133 **Assessed Value** \$1,828,038 Value Per Acre

Traditional Mixed-Use (Canyon, TX)





Source: Google Streetview 1.88 Acres \$841,450 **Assessed Value** \$459,056 **Value Per Acre**



Small Pad Retail – Whataburger

A01 03	
Assessed Value	S
Value Per Acre	9



Source: Google Streetview 00

Source: Google Earth

Acres	.96
ssessed Value	\$1,726,070

Downtown

\$1,797,990



Source: Google Streetview

33

Assessed Value



Source: Google Earth

Measuring the Value of Development Patterns

Acres Value Per Acre

How Development Patterns Impact Residential Value

Different patterns of development can produce significantly different values on a per acre basis. Since value per acre gives the most apples to apples comparison of properties, it is a useful metric to understand what patterns are going to help Sweetwater become a more fiscally sustainable place.

Rural Estate

Suburban Single-Family

<image><image>

.624

\$292,290

\$468,413

Source: Google Streetview Acres Assessed Value Value Per Acre



Source: Google Streetview Acres .139 Assessed Value \$72,900 Value Per Acre \$542,460

Compact Suburban



Source: Google Earth



Source: Google Streetview

Acres Assessed Value Value Per Acre Townhome/Zero Lot Line (Abilene, TX)



Source: Google Earth



Source: Google Streetview

Acres

Assessed Value

Value Per Acre



\$1,706,548



34

\$74,420

\$92,562

.804

BRIDGING THE RESOURCE GAP

In today's environment, most citizens are not willing and/or able to pay more in property taxes or fees, but cities don't have the revenue needed to cover basic services and maintenance dues to the cost of aging infrastructure. Each year, maintenance expenses grow, and citizens' concerns over property taxes and being priced out of their homes do as well. Recent state legislation to cap property taxes and limit annexation and local control of building regulations has only increased this tension.

There are generally three positions that cities find themselves in when it comes to their position on the growth curve and how they are currently managing the resource gap.

Many cities think they have quantified service costs, infrastructure costs, and a solid plan. However, they generally are not looking far enough ahead and have only quantified short term needs without looking at the bigger picture. The simplest infrastructure costs to quantify are local street replacement and reconstruction. Starting with this level of analysis, one can start to see how critical long term planning is for a community of any size.

	SERVICES	INFRASTRUCTURE	REVENUE	
SCENARIO A In good shape				The city has quantified service costs, knows what its infrastructure liabilities are, and has a good clear plan to generate enough revenue to pay for those things - all while staying within the limits of what the residents there are willing and able to pay for.
SCENARIO B Doing OK for now				These communities tend to be in the middle of their growth phase. Older parts of the city require maintenance, but revenue from new growth is covering these costs. The wave of infrastructure reconstruction costs has not hit these communities yet, but is looming out in the future.
SCENARIO C Already running behind				These are older cities where there is limited growth, and oftentimes decline. Large areas of the city are past their initial life cycle and in need of repair. There are neighborhoods beginning to decline and there is no clear plan for how the city is going to address those needs.

Here is a graphic illustrating Sweetwater's street costs. It takes into account the number of local streets, or streets that are the sole responsibility of the City to maintain and rebuild. If no changes are made to the current development pattern in place, this sizable gap already seems insurmountable. Keep in mind that streets only account for a portion of the resource gap. This does not include an account of the costs to provide other services or types of infrastructure like water and wastewater.

For cities to be financially resilient and affordable for years to come, leaders must work to close the gap between available resources and the obligations which require them - such as the example just illustrated. More specifically, cities must find ways to generate additional revenue as that demand inevitably grows. There are three ways in which a city can close this gap, highlighted in the graphic to the right.



KEY QUESTIONS FOR SWEETWATER

There is a need for more transparent conversations about Sweetwater's resource gap, and a way of demonstrating progress in narrowing that gap, year by year. The questions which must be tackled to move down this path to solvency are listed on this page.

Does the community have the resources to keep up with service expectations and infrastructure maintenance both now and in the future? What is the gap between available resources and that expectation/maintenance? Does the community have the resources needed to repair and maintain (not to mention, improve) streets, parks, utilities, public safety, libraries, and community facilities? What is the gap between available resources and the necessary repairs/maintenance? Will the community's current growth pattern put the community in a better position 20 years from now? Will the quality of life diminish with this current growth pattern?

When it comes to growth and development, what is the biggest challenge or frustration the majority of people are experiencing? How does the community keep up with the growing wants and needs of its residents with the limited resources that it has? How does the community maintain its streets, water lines, utility lines, and older homes in neighborhoods?

How does the community balance maintenance with investing in new facilities, new parks, and new quality of life amenities that attract new residents and businesses to the community? Using the land use fiscal analysis, collecting the data, and reporting fiscal outcomes from Sweetwater's development decisions is central to ultimately answering these questions and capturing maximum value citywide.

THE USEFULNESS OF A LAND USE FISCAL ANALYSIS

In order to align development, services, and revenues, cities need a common language to discuss common problems and find common solutions. Land use fiscal analysis is a powerful tool that can help frame discussions and inform decisions about land use, development, infrastructure, and budgeting. Land Use Fiscal Analysis is a lot-by-lot analysis of property taxes. It looks at both the levy (the amount of taxes paid per lot) and the revenue (the income the city receives of those taxes). The analysis uses property tax revenue per acre (the profit per acre) and net revenue per acre (the profit per acre once costs are subtracted) for each lot. Then, a map is created to show the fiscal productivity of every property in the city. By figuring and mapping revenues and costs this way, we are able to see how land uses and development patterns perform. The analysis also shows which parcels generate enough property tax revenue to cover the costs of service, and which parcels cost more to serve than they generate in revenue. When parcels do not create enough revenue to cover the costs, it requires other parts of the city and other revenue sources to make up the difference.

Cities tend to unfortunately look only at levy amounts across the city and draw conclusions that those with the highest levy amounts (usually the largest in size or newest to be constructed) are providing the most tax revenue to the community. However, this is faulty analysis for a couple of reasons. First, it focuses on the tax levy, but not the revenue generated by the levy. Imagine a business focusing on what they sell their wares for, without factoring in costs. It's a similar problem because it is a focus on an incomplete number. Second, this approach does not allow equity in comparing properties. By standardizing the measure - the revenue per acre - all properties can be examined, compared, and contrasted accurately, regardless of size.



A parcel level analysis of Dallas County assessed values shows property value spread fairly evenly across the county.



When the value is determined on a per acre basis, it becomes clear that the urban core of Dallas County is where the real value is.

POPULATION GROWTH VS. LAND FOOTPRINT

As discussed earlier, the post-World War II development pattern has two characteristics which are problematic. First, they eat up more land and require more infrastructure (both adding to the existing infrastructure network and by requiring more miles to connect the existing network to the new development). Second, the lots are larger and more spread out, meaning fewer people are housed or served by much larger tracts of property.

In most cases, a city's service area expanded much faster than the population of the city over the same period of time. This puts the community in a position where the expanded area has newly built roads, water and sewer lines, additional police and fire coverage, water towers, pump stations, parks, and other quality of life amenities and services for the broader footprint, but there is not enough population or tax base to cover the costs. In terms of finances, this means that the amount citizens were paying prior to this expansion will inevitably increase many times over because the population hasn't likewise grown enough to - just as discussed on a block level above - spread the burden across more people within the city limits.

City Boundary Growth Over Time





CREATING A FISCALLY INFORMED PLAN

This document lays the groundwork for a future Sweetwater that is directly informed by, and adapts to, the fiscal realities of the community. Intentionally guiding development and redevelopment into certain areas of the city and in certain patterns can increase revenues, reduce service costs, and close the city's resource gaps over time. In order to achieve desired outcomes and create a more resilient future, there are a few questions to consider:



How are the current development patterns in Sweetwater performing? Quantifying, mapping, and communicating how different land uses, zoning, and development patterns are performing provides a baseline.



Source: Dr. Michael Harbour Photography

VERDUNIT

What changes to the development pattern can the city implement that increases the value per acre? Where should this development go? The fiscal analysis illuminates where the city's highest and lowest value producing properties are. The characteristics of these patterns can be examined and repeated in other locations around the city to increase the value per acre and maximize the return on public investments.



What are the land use and infrastructure policies Sweetwater needs to have in place that will support a fiscally productive and resilient pattern? This is critical. In many places across the country the patterns that are most fiscally productive for a city can no longer be built under the current code and design standards. Refining and reframing these policies to make it possible to build in this more productive way is one of the things we will recommend in this Comprehensive Plan.



Who are the local people and organizations that Sweetwater needs to collaborate with to build infill and small projects? Historically, local development happened with local developers. However, over the past 60 to 80 years much of the development seen in Texas has been by multi-regional and national development firms. For Sweetwater to grow healthily and sustain itself, it is important to foster local development talent. This means that the City needs to explicitly seek out the locals that are willing to build one building, start one business, develop one parcel, or reinvest in one block at a time. Then, the City must connect them to the resources they need to be successful.



FISCAL BASELINE

In order to best understand the value of the land use fiscal analysis work in Sweetwater, there must be a firm understanding of the fiscal baseline that the city is working with at the time of the analysis. This baseline contains an internal analysis of Sweetwater's current revenues and expense allocations. Later in this chapter, a comparison of the high level financial statistics locally is shown with those of peer communities.

Both elements make it possible to assess the current fiscal performance of Sweetwater on a statistical level - as well as on a geographic level - by pairing the fiscal baseline with the land use fiscal analysis.

This graphic shows the allocation of sources and dollar amounts, which together make up Sweetwater's general operating fund. The general fund in cities is crucial because it funds the majority of city operations and is discretionary in nature. The largest contributor to Sweetwater's general fund is sales tax, making up 23.5% of the general fund, with property tax being the second, making up 22.9%. As discussed previously, property tax is general the most solid and steady source of funding for cities. Municipalities in Texas that are considered the most fiscally resilient derive around 50% of their general fund revenues from property taxes, and Sweetwater is 27.1% shy of that measure.

There are a couple of ways to improve and yield more property tax to increase that figure. The first way - often not supported by residents - is by increasing the tax rate. The second way is by kickstarting redevelopment and concentrating it and new development where infrastructure already exists. Continuing to develop in areas where new infrastructure is required only widens Sweetwater's resource gap to a point from which recovery may be impossible. It is simply a principle of using and maximizing what the city has instead of adding more cost burden. "A city that generates the majority of its revenue from sales or income taxes will be hit hard and immediately when it experiences such consumer declines and job losses. A city that relies on property taxes, however, will not experience such an immediate collapse in its revenues."

> WHEN WILL YOUR CITY FEEL THE FISCAL IMPACT OF COVID-19? Brookings Institute -March 31, 2020.

> > VERDUNIT



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DEVELOPMENT PATTERN AND FOOTPRINT

Sweetwater's city center was built prior to the 1940s, establishing a town square and corresponding neighborhood grid that reaches at least four blocks in each direction. Early residential development in Sweetwater was concentrated in a compact, traditional grid with short blocks. Lots averaged less than 0.2 acres around downtown and Broadway, where the first businesses were established. These areas tend to produce higher property tax revenues because more properties are served by utilities in a compact area, which makes the land more productive. Elements of this compact grid development style include human scale streets and sidewalks. They often feature streets lined with trees and driving is not always necessary, as it is comfortable and safe to be on foot.

As growth and expansion continued into the late 1950s to 1960s, the pattern shifted as suburban-style residential developments started to emerge. Suburban-style development generally includes long blocks and curving streets, large lots and deep setbacks. Clusters of housing are designed with fewer route options. Typically, this type of development does not perform as well in terms of tax revenue generation. Since the appraised and taxable values of parcels in this area are so high in relation to the rest of the city - where values are suffering - they falsely appear to generate more revenue. The reason that this style of development does not perform well in the long-term is because of how it is spread out - costing more to serve with water, sewer, and other public utilities because of the distance those services must travel. That cost is split among fewer lots and tax accounts.



Source: Google Earth

In the case of Sweetwater, the footprint continued spreading, adding infrastructure liabilities to the city's inventory at a faster pace than the population increased. The population then began to decline - and has continued to do so ever since - after reaching 13,914 in 1960. Had the population held steady since 1960's figure, even with today's expanded footprint, the population density would be 1.96 compared to today's 1.5. Today's general fund would go further even with that higher population level. This decline in residents puts the community in a difficult position, because the establish footprint - served with infrastructure, services, and other quality of life amenities - was built to serve over 13,000 residents. As a result of the lessening population, the amount the remaining citizens are paying will increase because the remaining population must sustain this established service area indefinitely.

The fiscal challenge can be easily illustrated when looking at the example of streets. Streets (and the development around them) contributes to the property tax and sales tax bases. This helps the community to pay for and rationalize the infrastructure investment - at least at face value. As outlined previously, street infrastructure is a costly investment that requires ongoing maintenance for the life of the community. Sweetwater is in the position of having more infrastructure than it needs to reasonably serve the people that call the community home. Recouping this investment today, especially in areas of west and east Sweetwater that are sparsely occupied, will be difficult because of the substantial number of vacant lots (and the effect of those vacant lots and decline on property values). The pattern is ripe for, and ideally scaled, for reinvestment. The tight street grid is the most fiscally productive form, and luckily for Sweetwater, it already exists.

Underdeveloped Areas in East Sweetwater



Underdeveloped Areas in West Sweetwater





MARKET VALUE

Market values are evaluated each year as the value of the property or parcel according to its land, buildings, and improvements is appraised. Citywide, the majority of the parcels have a market value below \$75,000. These values have a direct correlation to the amount of property tax that the city is able to collect off of the property. There are multiple factors that can contribute to a lower market value between two similarly sized parcels. Most notably, the state of improvements or structures on a given parcel play the largest role in how a parcel is valued year to year. Lots of similar size in the area to the south and west of the historic core have lower values than those to the north around Lake Santa Fe. This can be directly attributed to the condition of the buildings or the lack of structures entirely. Another contributing factor to the market value of a home or property is the curb appeal and level of maintenance and structure condition. It would be easy to conclude that the solution is simply to build more homes that can command a high price on the real estate market. This is not the case. The impact this has on affordability and accessibility to buyers can backfire badly. Instead, the best approach is to create multiple lot sizes that are maximized with housing that serves all price points, in targeted locations that create momentum and centers of activity, which builds values quicker and holds them longer.





PROPERTY TAX REVENUE PER ACRE

By evaluating the property tax revenue on a per acre basis, clear comparisons between all lots (regardless of value and size) can be made equitably. By dividing the tax revenue of each parcel by that parcel size for every parcel in Sweetwater, a revenue per acre value is created. Revenue per acre is a measure that allows direct comparison between parcels of any size - for example, comparing a 0.10 acre property in downtown to a 30 acre commercial site.

The resulting map shows that the actual profitability of parcels in Sweetwater is low across the city. In fact, eighty-seven percent of Sweetwater's footprint generates less than \$1,000 of revenue per acre annually. This represents a significant cause of the resource gap in this community. By creating a framework within which more productive development patterns can be pursued, revenues could see a large bump. Imagine the increase in revenues (and decrease in the resource gap) if properties across the city increased their revenue per acre just to the next level of \$1,000-\$2,000 per acre.

Highlighting the per acre evaluation demonstrates how smaller properties proportionally provide more value back to the city. What does this mean? Small parcels, regardless of the land use type, may have smaller overall value, yet produce more revenue. They contribute significantly to the tax because of their compact nature. Unfortunately, many contemporary zoning regulations require lots to be larger or establish hurdles to them being smaller.



COMPARISONS TO SWEETWATER

The table above compares Sweetwater's general fund annual revenues on a per acre basis to comparable Texas cities. The higher the bar, the more fiscally productive the land in that city. Sweetwater currently falls in the middle, in large part because of its large footprint. More compact cities like Graham, Hereford, and Andrews each generate over 1.5 times the amount of property tax revenue per acre. The line shows the population density, or number of residents per acre. Generally speaking, more densely developed cities with tighter footprints are ideal; they have smaller service areas, less infrastructure to maintain, and have more households to spread the financial burden across. Each of these elements - *revenue per acre, population density, area/size of footprint, and tax rate* - work together to form a picture of how well the community is doing. For example, Hereford ranks second in the amount of general fund revenue per acre and has the highest population density. Its size ranks third in this list. Together, these elements help to support a tax rate that is the second lowest of this grouping. By working to improve these figures, a city can stretch its dollars further.



MOBILITY FOR EVERYONE

Transportation and land use go hand-inhand in determining the look and feel of a community. If a city plans and builds neighborhoods around auto-oriented development, it will take on a more spreadout form with separated residential, shopping, and employment uses; this requires more infrastructure and generates more traffic. When zoning is used to require strict separation of all uses, more land is consumed.

In contrast, when a city prioritizes walkable, complete neighborhoods, more uses are integrated together in a compact form. This results in fewer driving trips, healthier and safer residents, and less infrastructure to maintain. The most effective and resilient mobility systems are designed to move vehicles efficiently on roadways while prioritizing walkability and safety in areas where people live, work, shop, and socialize. Instead of thinking about making everything accessible by car in 15 minutes, the goal is to make most needs accessible within a 15 minute walk.



STREET NETWORK

The majority of Sweetwater was built in the traditional development pattern, with a grid network of local streets and collectors expanding outward from the historic downtown square, and a few larger arterials that are managed by TxDOT. A Union Pacific railroad line runs east to west through the core of town, creating a barrier that makes it difficult to cross from the north to south sides of town except for one viaduct and two surface crossings. Recent development has taken on a more auto-centric approach, with the widening of Hailey street, construction of the I-20 corridor, and recruitment of new commercial businesses on the southern edge of the city.

Despite the fairly compact development footprint and an established street grid connecting many neighborhoods to the downtown, Sweetwater residents rely almost entirely on driving to get around. Traffic congestion in Sweetwater is relatively minimal, with the exception of some rush hour delays on I-20 and the occasional backup on Broadway. The primary issue with Sweetwater's roadways is that the majority are far wider than they need to be. Not only are wider streets far more costly to maintain, but there is a growing body of evidence demonstrating that excessive width causes speeding and unsafe conditions.

Major Thoroughfares

Below is a map highlighting the major thoroughfares in and around Sweetwater. This includes highways as well as county and farm roads. These represent the bulk of traffic traveling to and through Sweetwater and are intended to carry traffic at high rates of speed. Often, these thoroughfares are under county, state, or federal control.

Local Streets and Roads

Below is a map highlighting local streets and roads, or those built and maintained



The speed at which automobiles actually travel - as opposed to the set speed limit has a massive effect on how safe that roadway is. This graphic shows that as lane width increases, speed increases. The gray regression line illustrates the trend between these two variables. This relationship is true at speeds from 30 to 60 miles per hour.



This graph shows that fatal injuries are more common as both posted and travel speeds increase. Over 45 miles per hour (travel speed), fatal injuries are the most common.

by the City that move cars into, out of, and through neighborhoods, business areas, and other interior parts of Sweetwater. This is where the true costs of development don't reveal themselves until decades after a new development is built, when the infrastructure put in by private developers must be maintained and replaced by the City and its taxpayers. The large gap between available resources and necessary maintenance costs is not only a result of the sheer number of streets and infrastructure on the ground, but also the way that they have been designed. Thoroughfares that are unnecessarily wide can make infrastructure costs skyrocket. The result is infrastructure liabilities being deferred and streets and neighborhoods that slowly deteriorate over time. There are many examples of this in Sweetwater.

A contributing factor to the overly wide thoroughfares present in many communities is the attempt to combine streets and roads, using them interchangeably. Rather than being designed with a clear focus in mind, they are designed to be everything to everyone – and often fail, becoming eyesores and unsafe environments. The transportation system can either help create the kind of safe, walkable community residents desire, or it can get in the way. Streets and roads are not interchangeable.

Streets, Stroads, and Roads



The street is a low-speed area that allows for human activity and interaction. A buzzing Main Street with businesses, or the quiet residential street with children playing in front yards are streets. They can be part of a larger place or can be destinations themselves; they are where people spend time. They prioritize pedestrians but are usable by all. Streets are platforms for economic growth. Stroads are failed attempts to get the economic productivity of a street and the efficiency of a road in one corridor. Designed for high volumes of cars and faster speeds, they also have pedestrian amenities adjacent to high speed lanes, which makes them intimidating to use. A system of traffic signals and driveways accommodate auto-oriented businesses but contribute to more crashes. The primary function of a road is to move people and goods quickly between places. Think of highways and farm-to-market roads, for example. Here, the automobile is prioritized, and higher speeds are appropriate. Effective roads are not focused on businesses. In order to maintain safety, driveways and intersections should be limited. Pedestrian and bike facilities should be separated from travel lanes.



PEDESTRIAN AND BIKE NETWORK

Residents responding to surveys and participating in engagement events share that navigating Sweetwater by bike or on foot can be difficult, uncomfortable, and dangerous. While it is often asserted that a lack of users on sidewalks and in bike lanes demonstrates a lack of demand, this is incorrect. Rather, a lack of users indicates that people do not feel safe using them, they are not in proximity to where they live or work, or that they do not connect to the locations they wish to access. When walking and biking is more convenient and accessible to all residents, they are far more likely to make these healthy activities a part of their daily lives.

Sidewalks

Sidewalks across the city are inconsistent in placement and condition; some neighborhoods have internal sidewalks, but there is minimal connectivity between neighborhoods and other activity areas. Other neighborhoods have no sidewalks at all. In areas where there are sidewalks, they are often flanked by fast-moving cars. In short, existing facilities are insufficient to encourage people to get out of their cars.

The community's WalkScore indicates that the framework is in place for Sweetwater to be much more walkable than it is. The difference between how walkable a core area residence and a residence around the country club or down at Mustang Heights Apartments illuminates how effective this gridded development approach helps to possibly alleviate some auto-oriented errands. However, to fulfill this potential, improvements must be made to the streets and additional local businesses need to be integrated into the neighborhoods. With these improvements, more residents could choose to drive less than they do now - a choice that market studies are showing is increasingly important to people of all ages, but especially for seniors and young professionals.

Walkscores



WalkScore measures the walkable nature of an area using a patented system that awards points based on the distance to nearby amenities after analyzing hundreds of routes. Amenities within a 5 minute walk (a ¼ mile) are given maximum points. Scores range from 0 to 100 and are arranged into five possible categories from "Car Dependent" (0-24 points) to "Walker's Paradise" (90-100 points).

There are many essential elements to consider when focusing on walkability in a community. The infrastructure should provide functionality and feel safe. It is important that sidewalks are approached from a network point of view that are connected and provide access to places people want to go. Cities must make them accessible to people of all abilities, and speeds for vehicles alongside those sidewalks needs to be controlled. Pleasant walks incorporate elements such as shade, landscaping, clearly marked buildings, and wayfinding signage. Cities should approach the creation of walkable routes from three perspectives: the perspective of someone reliant on walking as transportation, the perspective of someone using walking to explore, and the perspective of someone using walking as fitness.

The design of a sidewalk should be at least five feet wide - a width that allows two people to walk side-by-side and accommodates wheelchairs. In commercial areas or areas of mixed usage (such as downtown districts and key corridors) they should be wider. There are three zones to keep in mind when determining the width of a sidewalk. First, the free zone or walking zone - where people on foot are actually occupying space. Second is the service zone, where amenities should be placed. This may include benches, trashcans, lighting, or shade. Third is the transition zone, where those on foot access buildings lining the street. On particularly fast-moving corridors, sidewalks should be separated and not directly abutting the street.



Trails and Shared Use Paths

Trails Master Plan

Streams, Floodplains, and Drainage Corridors

Trails and shared use paths are another integral part of a city's mobility system. While they are often associated with and originate in parks, with careful design they can also feed into the sidewalk network and connect to neighborhoods. Unfortunately, at this time the only trail available to residents is located in Newman Park and is limited to 1/4 mile in distance. It is not integrated into the surrounding neighborhoods.

Parks are the general location of most trails, and for good reason. They generally have a sufficient amount of space necessary to create a loop - or even better, multiple connection points to surrounding areas. Abandoned railroad lines are an excellent location for shared use paths and trails. They are often accessible, though each scenario will require various levels of modification for an accessible entrance and exit for the rail trail. Natural drainage ways often offer opportunities alongside them for trails as well.

The Parks Master Plan adopted by the City of Sweetwater in 2017 (prepared by Halff & Associates) offers a Streams, Floodplains and Drainage Corridors map (Figure 3.13, pg. 35) highlighting where the City could focus on preserving, protecting and restoring these natural features. The Trails Master Plan map (Figure 4.2, pg. 51) shows where a trail network can be established over time, segment by segment, resulting in ten miles of trails for the community. Each of these segments bisects existing neighborhoods and connects to the existing city parks. This offers another option for opening up the city for access in a way that allows people to get to portions of Sweetwater on foot, since the trail segments are integrated into the existing network of local streets. These are examples of straightforward quality of life projects that are affordable and feasible if done one step at a time and incrementally executed.



Source: Parks Master Plan, Figure 4.2, Prepared by Halff & Associates, Adopted 2017





Source: Parks Master Plan, Figure 3.13, Prepared by Halff & Associates, Adopted 2017



Left: Mustang Harbor Splash Pad at Newman Park.

Right Above: Playground Equipment at Newman Park.

Right Below: Walking Trail at Newman Park.



Bike Network

There is a complete lack of bike lanes across Sweetwater. Cyclists are forced to share the lanes on extremely wide streets, putting them in danger. In the near term, the city could improve connectivity by restriping the pavement to narrow travel lanes, creating obvious space for cyclists that is not in direct competition with the space for cars. Ensuring connectivity and a complete network is key. As funds become available in the future, streets can be redesigned to include more bike and pedestrian pathways separated from auto lanes, and off-street paths can continue to be expanded to connect neighborhoods, parks, and downtown together, making walking a cycling a viable form of travel for those who need or desire it.





Narrowing intersections to increase comfort for cyclists and pedestrians while slowing traffic can be done at a low cost using curbing or paint.



Source: Google Streetview

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Elm Road - Current Street Cross Section



Elm Road – Possible Conversion





CURRENT ZONING FRAMEWORK

Sweetwater's zoning regulations date back to 1986, though the origins are strikingly similar to decades-older approaches to zoning. While there have been piecemeal, periodic updates in the 1990s and 2000s, a comprehensive look at zoning citywide has not happened in almost forty years. It is also important to note that the subdivision ordinance - which works hand-in-hand with the zoning ordinance to establish land development guidance - has not been updated since 1981. These findings require attention, because any comprehensive plan for the community will not be successful if the City does not have contemporary, carefully calibrated tools with which to carry it out.

The current zoning ordinance was written in a cumulative zoning approach, where each zoning district steps up in intensity. For example, the K - Industrial zoning district allows everything that is allowed in the J - Industrial zoning district - and adds another layer of intensity to it. Additionally, the number of zoning districts is excessive for a small community. There are currently fourteen different zoning districts in Sweetwater, and half that would be sufficient. This makes the regulations overly complex, more time-consuming to administer, and can be intimidating and difficult to understand.

The existing zoning tool is problematic for many reasons:

- It creates sprawl, which in turn leads to fiscal strain for cities.
- It is formulaic and does not factor in the context of specific types of areas where it is applied.
- It promotes economic segregation of housing, driving up housing costs and disproportionately impacting residents with lower incomes.
- It makes the mixing of uses difficult, if not impossible – or leads to missed opportunities since it is not specifically addressed.

- It tends to focus on regulation of uses, but without any focus on building and site design, which ultimately affects the community.
- It makes revitalization of neighborhoods and corridors extremely challenging.
- It does not take into account the size of projects and is difficult to tailor or make flexible.
- It encourages the widespread use of manufacturing zoning districts, which allow almost anything by right without review. While today that intention may be to create a commercial use, in the future it could be converted to heavy industry with little or no oversight.

These unfortunate side effects conflict with this vision for a revitalized, vibrant, and growing community now and in the future.



The chart above shows the percentage of Sweetwater's total land area that is dedicated to each zoning type. In this version, like zoning districts were grouped to simplify the data, making it clearer how uses are allocated across the city.

Zoning District	Abbr.
Dwelling District	А
Dwelling District	В
Dwelling District	С
Dwelling District	D
Dwelling District	Е
Dwelling District	E-1
Local Retail District	F
Local Business District	G
Business District	Н
Industrial District	J
Industrial District	К
First Manufacturing District	L
Second Manufacturing District	М
Residential with Livestock District	R

This table summarizes all of Sweetwater's zoning districts by their name and adopted abbreviations. It also shows how the districts were grouped for the simplified pie chart below.

High level observations of the zoning pattern are as follows:

- Manufacturing zoning is found along the western and eastern edges of the city's footprint. Industrial zoning generally follows the rail lines, which are reminiscent of early 1900's zoning when industrial employment was at its peak and people generally lived close to where they were employed. The natural environment in Sweetwater of drainageways, trees, and changes in elevation help to some degree in creating separations and buffers.
- The area that makes up downtown Sweetwater today is currently zoned for two uses. The primary use is commercial or business, which currently defines eight of the nine blocks inside the downtown area. The other zoning category present in downtown is industrial.
- The residential zoning in Sweetwater is separated into four quadrants, each of which are separated by either a commercial or industrial corridor. This zoning is almost entirely reserved for single-family residential.
- The east-to-west stretches of Broadway and Interstate 20, and the north-to-south stretch of Lamar Street together account for the majority of commercial zoning. There is relatively little Local Retail zoning, which is supplemented with a slightly larger quantity of Local Business zoning.

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ZONING PATTERNS

Understanding the current zoning allowances for land within Sweetwater's city limits - and uncovering patterns in them - is step one in identifying where future attention should be focused. There are three areas where the zoning patterns need a fresh re-examination. This is important for cities to do periodically, as most zoning patterns were established between the 1940s and 1960s. The approach to zoning in that time period was hyperfocused on a separation of land use types. As discussed earlier in the plan, that approach has been shown over time to work against the fiscal productivity of a community and fails to take into account mobility options other than the automobile. Clear preferences for selecting where to live (as discussed in the Neighborhoods section on page XX), for selecting locales for tourism destinations, and for selecting where locals spend time include proximity to mixes of land uses and areas safe for everyone to access on foot or by bike as well as by car. Cities may desire certain types of redevelopments, but if zoning has made those types of redevelopment impossible without complex approval processes and public hearings, it is highly unlikely that it will happen at all.

Overabundance of Industrial and Manufacturing

Manufacturing zoning is a must in any community, but placement and amount is key. It generally is zoning that is inherited from midcentury zoning maps that placed manufacturing along the highways that functioned as major hauling corridors at that time. While there is an absence of existing land use data to pull from, it appears from aerial photos that some of the existing manufacturing zoning is consistent with the usage on the ground. However, there are large vacant swaths of land - particularly along I-20 Business in the western half of the city limits - that are unused and either never developed in this manner or the uses have long since ceased. There are many pockets that are still natural and rural in nature, and some homesteads. It appears as though manufacturing zoning is used as a "holding" zone for properties in this area, though the community could certainly play a more active role in preparing for redevelopment (and an improved appearance of this gateway into Sweetwater) by considering an agriculturalbased zoning district to allow less-intensive uses while regulations are reviewed and updated.

The industrial zoning districts in Sweetwater are widespread. Along I-20, it solely forms the gateway into Sweetwater, though it does not appear that several of the tracts have developed in an industrial manner such as an RV park and some retail. Visual impressions of motorists can certainly influence where, when, and how long they choose to stop, so this should be considered as over three miles of the highway frontage on both sides is encompassed within industrial zoning with little limitation and an absence of site design or façade standards. Another long segment of I-20 Business (over a mile and a quarter) at the eastern end of the city is much the same. It appears some reuse of the buildings there has happened over time, though some of that redevelopment activity doesn't rise to the intensity of industry. It should be noted that the nature of industry

has also evolved greatly since the mid-to-late 1900s; in order to curate and guide zoning patterns and results that fit a future-focused vision, an updated approach is needed.

Industrial zoning is also found across a great expanse in north and central Sweetwater, following the rail line. While that approach fit the time in which it originated, unfortunately it contributes to neighborhood decline and mostly affects socioeconomically depressed areas where incomes are lower, property values are lower, and homes and infrastructure is older. The remnants of this zoning can significantly impact those neighborhoods further as they allow intensive uses adjacent to established homes - and it discourages further investment and adaptive reuse of interesting sites, forcing the resource gap to grow as that investment goes elsewhere. These areas are already served with streets and utilities, and there are pockets of vacant land ideal for residential redevelopment if zoned properly.



Source: Google Earth



Source: Google Streetview



Lack of Residential Diversity and Opportunity

The most striking pattern of zoning in Sweetwater is its overreliance on single-family residential. While almost forty-two percent of the land within the city limits is zoned for residential usage, the large majority of that (figure to be verified, then inserted) is reserved only for one and two family units. This has a significant effect on housing affordability. It also appears the multi-family zoning that does exist may have been placed in response to projects and not ahead of it - meaning the community must wait for a developer of multi-family projects to make application for a zone change to even make such a project feasible. The alternative is to identify locations for multi-family zoning that are sited correctly with access to goods and services and proximity to a suitable mobility network and create a structure within with this type of development can fit into the community proactively. For the community to be able to offer housing products at a variety of price points, sizes, and types to make living here work for a much broader audience, this zoning pattern should be re-examined. Another essential piece is allowing more flexibility for housing types within fewer zoning districts so that a wider variety of projects is possible. Classic neighborhoods generally featured many different sorts of residential living in an eclectic and interesting arrangement which simply isn't possible when the zoning map is based on separating anything different into pods around the city.



Source: Google Streetview

Absence of Retail and Service Refinement

The three types of commercial zoning in the current zoning structure are not effectively used in combination around the city. The authorized uses in each of the three zoning districts (F, G, and H) are specific and limited and do not result in various scales of retail and service because they are focused solely on the authorization of uses and do not take into account lot sizes, building sizes, or similar features. Less than four percent of the land in Sweetwater is allocated for local business and retail. There is a lack of nuance in the ordinance, and in the placement of these zoning districts. For example, most of downtown is zoned the same way as most of I-20, though the context is vastly different. The pattern of commercial zoning is also largely a strip development style, linear strips along major thoroughfares. This approach to zoning was predicated by the midcentury notion that every commercial lot must have direct access to a high traffic street or road. Unfortunately, the results of this zoning approach are clear in cities around Texas and the nation where aging corridors contain vacant buildings and lots that are so large that developing elsewhere becomes simpler. A city of this size could benefit more from incorporating neighborhood level, mixed use, small office, and similar activity closer to neighborhoods. This would also promote walkable neighborhoods where day-to-day needs are more convenient and easier to reach. It is important to note that this type of more calculated approach would fit the "small town feel" that Sweetwater's residents have expressed is so important to them.





Source: Google Streetview



COMMERCIAL STOCK AND DIVERSITY

Sweetwater is a town with strong industry offerings. With large industrial areas and an energy sector presence, as well as the nationally centralized location, manufacturing opportunities are plentiful. However, for Sweetwater to retain residents it must also create diversity in commercial offerings. To build a strong local business community, it must provide more support to existing businesses and foster the creation of new ones. This includes mentorship and coaching. A variety of buildings for small business will be critical. Existing commercial buildings can be creatively split to result in smaller leasing spaces. New buildings of a smaller footprint will be more affordable. Structures like tents, trailers, and trucks lend themselves to pop-ups. Smaller footprint commercial buildings can also enhance a neighborhood and provide offerings within a short walk from home. Entrepreneurship thrives when adaptable and incremental growth is provided for and encouraged. In this type of environment barriers to entry are low and people with ideas can efficiently and cost-effectively get a proof of concept. The growing nature of online sales means that retail, office, and service spaces are using smaller spaces than ever before. When the community was asked to give feedback on photos of assorted styles of commercial structures and spaces, respondents were receptive to these small-scale approaches that can be incrementally increased and improved as businesses grow. The next two pages show a spectrum of local buildings and structures that show these ideas at work. Some are local examples, while others are options that would augment the existing offerings.



















HOUSING STOCK AND DIVERSITY

Sweetwater has a few elements of slightly dense housing, but they are isolated examples. Creative design can result in structures with as few as two and as many as eight units that appear from the street like any other single family home. Creating more of this kind of housing variety speaks to what multiple generations seek. It likewise creates a spectrum of affordability that is attractive to both renters and buyers. These products work well on smaller-than-conventional sites, so they will also support the building of fiscal health. The following pages show some of the local housing products along with ideas for designs that could fit into Sweetwater and its existing neighborhoods nicely. This can be accomplished through some standards for design that ensure new housing is of the architectural quality that is desired - and long lasting.

Updating existing structures should also be encouraged and the process should be as simple as possible. Simple incentives and programs can reignite the interest and ability for residents to invest in their existing properties and should be prioritized over incentives for new housing that adds stress to the fiscal situation and infrastructure burden. Sweetwater has an abundance of older, detached single-family housing, the condition of which needs to be improved across much of the City.



























NEIGHBORHOOD LEVEL PLANNING

Neighborhood planning is gaining renewed interest in communities. Neighborhood planning provides the opportunity to achieve transparency and equitable decisions. Due to resource constraints, transformation takes time. However, neighborhood plans support the comprehensive plan by offering detailed planning at a smaller scale, focusing on actions that are short and mid-term. They allow customization within the larger vision set for the city, recognizing that no two neighborhoods are the same. They serve the purpose of identifying specific land, investments, needs, issues, and solutions unique to each one. They can establish a neighborhood organizational structure, document participation and insights from the residents and business owners within the area and lay out a course for specific tasks. These tasks can then be conducted by the neighborhood organization in partnership with the City and local organizations. This approach maximizes the opportunity for representation throughout the community, inviting involvement that would otherwise be limited to the attendance of hearings - by which time, most decisions are already made. Neighborhood plans can be put together quickly and build community in a financially realistic manner that leads to immediate, visible results. Identity can be invested in at any stage of a neighborhood's life cycle, so Sweetwater has an opportunity to make this part of its future.

The scale of neighborhood planning is also customizable. With a small city staff to facilitate, the initial version of these plans could start with the identification of 1-2 single, easily defined, tangible issues in each neighborhood - and helping the neighborhood understand the steps needed to address those issues. A guide for neighborhoods to follow in creating an organization would also be a simple first step. Neighborhood planning exercises also provide opportunities for education and dialogue for which traditional and formal forums like Council and board meetings are not well-suited.






Neighborhoods and Corridor Districts Explained

For the purposes of planning, neighborhoods should be clearly-defined geographic areas, the size of which is heavily reliant on the size of the planning resources available and a number of geographic factors such as subdivisions, natural grade changes, roads and rail lines, and other related elements. Neighborhoods should be small enough that they are walkable given the proper infrastructure and design.

This map represents an attempt to create clearly defined and named neighborhoods that can be used as the basis of advocacy and improvement efforts as well as individual planning areas. For Sweetwater, the map denotes eighteen individual neighborhoods and five corridor districts. Corridor districts function as an area of focus along both sides of a major corridor which the City has identified as primary to the success of community development. They often are used to create design standards that preserve, enhance, and improve gateways into Sweetwater that motorists often take.

A sense of pride is a strong motivator in resident engagement, and where someone calls home is arguably the most critical area to them. Focus on efforts to rally people and raise awareness of issues is effective, and the most memorable and beloved neighborhoods have a number of common characteristics. First, they are unique and offer experiences, amenities, or sights other neighborhoods do not. Second, they have a name and can be easily identified by residents (and differentiated from other neighborhoods). Third, they have values and a history that sets them apart from other areas in the same city. Without these elements, areas function simply as fragmented locations without any clear strategy for maintenance, improvement, growth, or reinvestment. Furthermore, the residents of these fragmented locations often feel powerless, apathetic, and are unsure of what to do about issues they face that residents of other parts of the city are

unaware of. One way to build trust and improve relationships is to meet people where they are and start with accomplishing a single goal, then building on that with another goal, and repeating those efforts.

As cities continue to sprawl outward, corridors of development along wide and fast moving streets are left behind. The buildings become totally or largely vacant over time and the asphalt parking lots begin to crumble. Eventually, they become the very eyesores that residents are concerned make negative impressions on people coming into their city - and along which they feel unsafe and feel surrounded by disrepair. Sweetwater residents identified several corridors which they felt needed a renewed commitment and a facelift. A scatter shot approach to corridor revitalization is rarely if ever successful. Instead, a deliberate strategy of creating quality places, comfortable access, and attractive offerings that draw people in is essential. By identifying these as part of the Neighborhood Map, and by updating the City's regulations, incentives, and development standards, unique identities can emerge for each corridor. These identities often are based in local history, interesting features, and redesign efforts - like pulling buildings closer to the street over time or using outdoor activities and temporary structures to fill in massive parking lots that make a corridor feel more intimate.





Using the Neighborhood and Corridor Map

There is much that can be done once

modified for multiple tenants and uses.

Locations residents identified as purposefully avoiding

Vacant Buildings

preliminary identification of neighborhoods and corridor districts are complete. Minor Vacant buildings are a problem in communities modifications that make the neighborhoods across the country. High maintenance costs, better "fit" the community are possible safety and crime issues, a lack of tax revenue, through amendments to the planning and impacts on surrounding properties are boundaries or names. The current names just a few of the struggles created-particularly are inspired by the streets and subdivisions when there is a concentration of vacant buildings. Over time, that detracts from the that are present within each neighborhood area. While completing a neighborhood initial character of the area and creates a plan for every neighborhood in Sweetwater negative character all its own. The Lincoln cannot happen overnight, the City could Institute of Land Policy notes that the issue establish an easy process for neighborhoods of vacant buildings has reached an "epidemic interested in having a planning endeavor level." Sweetwater also suffers from pockets happen in their location to apply. Another of "hyper-vacancy," a term coined by Alan step could be creating a fund for small Mallach, defined as blocks and neighborhoods improvements in neighborhoods that could where vacant buildings and lots comprise 20% be applied for. Examples of projects might or more of the building stock. Vacant properties include a neighborhood clean-up, a low cost have also been referred to as a "self-feeding analysis of traffic, painting of a mural or problem" by the National Vacant Properties Campaign, meaning that their presence bike lane, installation or trimming of trees, or a community garden. The map can also influences more vacancies as residents and provide a new way to push out information property owners flee the decline or choose specific to a planned project or repair by first to no longer participate in maintenance of making those neighborhoods identifiable their own property, due to the state of the and then using the neighborhood group as a neighboring buildings and lots. When residents conduit for information sharing and dialogue. and community stakeholders were asked in the Design districts, tax increment financing, engagement sessions where they deliberately streetscape parameters, and street redesign avoided spending time, the highest cluster of can be established for identified corridors responses focused on northwest Sweetwater to stimulate new investment and achieve - where there are more vacant homes and lots renewed interest for businesses to locate exist than occupied homes. within and for patrons to visit. Parking lots could be repurposed, and buildings could be

Vacant buildings, residential or commercial, may fall into three categories:

- Structurally unsafe
- In disrepair, structurally safe and/or salvageable
- In sound condition

Other essential characteristics to identify include whether the building is occupied or unoccupied, if it is secured, and if it has historical or meaningful local significance. Strategies for addressing vacant buildings require a categorization and identification as explained above. The absence of monitoring



and addressing these types of properties can allow common issues like increased crime, decreased property values, and a spillover effect on neighborhood properties and even whole communities. Maintenance and demolition is a huge expense for many cities. However, these problems can become chances for productive reuse and revitalization. Understanding the problems leading to foreclosure and abandonment are just as crucial as addressing the symptoms that are physically seen by the community. While no data is available at this time to formulate or map an inventory of vacant buildings in Sweetwater, that data would be exceedingly helpful in planning for how the community should tackle this issue.



Vacant Land

Vacant properties can have the same types of effects as vacant buildings on single blocks, the surrounding neighborhood, and the whole community. Sweetwater has an astounding number of vacant lots. There is terrific opportunity for fiscally productive infill development by inventorying and targeting efforts in these locations. These vacant areas are primarily already served with utilities and streets, and their development would greatly influence the return on the investments the City has already made for these infrastructure networks. Simple, incremental projects with small footprints and diverse offerings would positively change the revenue per acre without requiring costly extensions of services.

In addition to public land that is vacant, there is a staggering number of privatelyowned lots that are vacant or appear to have never developed at all. While there is not solid data identifying these, below are two examples where aerial photos were used to identify vacant lots and tracts in two areas of Sweetwater – an exercise that could be easily replicated citywide.



Above is a map highlighting property ownership in Sweetwater by public entities. These include the City of Sweetwater, Nolan County, Sweetwater ISD, the State of Texas, and Nolan County Health Department.



This version highlights public properties that are currently vacant. While some parcels may be held in vacancy for specific maintenance and access, there may be opportunities for the City to put these properties on the market or incentivize redevelopment by driving down acquisition costs.



The first area above includes land with a southern boundary of West Arizona Avenue, a western boundary of the rail line, a northern boundary of the rail line and West Avenue A, and an eastern boundary of Sam Houston Street.



The second area above includes land within the boundaries formed by I-20 Business/Broadway Avenue on the south, Poplar Street on the west, West 15th Street on the north, and Hickory Street on the east.



Contributors to Vacancies

It comes as no surprise that cities like Sweetwater, where population is in decline, are experiencing the biggest concentration of abandoned properties. The cost of renovation and repair grows as structures age, and this challenge is often compounded by changes in financing policy, unemployment or inadequate income, or looming foreclosure. The death of the surrounding neighborhood or community decline makes it difficult for homes to appeal to tenants or new buyers. Changes in ownership as owners pass away, or the passing away of owners without specifying a responsible party puts properties in limbo sometimes for years. Properties can become abandoned and difficult to sell when there are contamination issues or problems with plumbing and electrical systems which can be expensive to bring up to code. The loss of major industry or employers, and the presence of increased crime can lead to increased abandonment.

There are many complex social and health issues of residents that also factor into this cycle of decline; unfortunately, cities experience an elevated level of decline already struggle to provide adequate support and resources. Local residents and leaders who are unfamiliar and unexperienced with these weighty issues may be unwilling to recognize or pursue action. Unified, communityled action to address not just vacancies but the socioeconomic issues leading to

them is critical to lasting improvement. Vacant and abandoned property matters require multifaceted strategies as they are extraordinarily complex in nature. There is no single tool, program, policy, or action that will fix the problem. A long-term commitment is necessary. Underlying issues compounding over the course of decades aren't resolved overnight.

Community Impacts of Vacancies

The impacts of vacant buildings and lots in a community are far-reaching. Buildings in disrepair send the signal to others passing through that there is an absence of pride or care and indicates a lack of safety - whether that is proven by statistics or not. They encourage residents of the affected areas to move elsewhere, further accelerating the feeling that the neighborhood has been left behind. Other indicators of decline, such as vandalism, junk and trash, are linked to public health issues and increased risk of fire. Property values plummet and with time this erodes the surrounding tax base. Essentially, the properties causing the biggest strain on city resources and bringing the most harm to the reputation of the city contribute the least of all properties. In the meantime, the problem tends to snowball and accelerate unless issues are aggressively addressed by local governments.

Demolishing problem buildings and leaving vacant lots behind doesn't solve the problem, either. Decreasing property values in the surrounding area - caused by both vacant and dilapidated buildings and vacant lots affect the financial security of homeowners and families. They lead to higher insurance premiums, create isolation, and affect mental health for homeowners who watch their single largest life investment, and the neighborhood it is part of, slip away. The community is further weakened as residents of these areas disengage and become apathetic, feeling hopeless. These negative impacts create deep disadvantages for communities of color.

As part of this cycle, it becomes increasingly rare that businesses, builders, and residents will invest in these areas. Properties with substandard conditions may be rented out and occupied when renters have no other options due to supply or affordability levels. The lack of regular activity and active streets can encourage crime and illicit activity in these locations. They receive a disproportionate number of requests for service. Those still living in the vicinity may become uncomfortable and fearful of being outside frequently. Legitimate tenants may become displaced, and property owners in some instances may allow their properties to deteriorate, leading to demolition by neglect.

When considering the question of demolition vs. rehabilitation of a vacant building, there are many factors that should be taken into

account:

- Rehabilitation and demolition both are accompanied by cost. Depending on the scale of the project, one approach might be more cost-effective than the other.
- Rehabilitation does have an impact on preventing further foreclosures and stabilizing neighborhoods because they strengthen them, rather than leaving them fragmented.
- There is a big difference between vacant and dilapidated beyond reasonable updating and repairs. An evaluation of the building is worthwhile.
- Historic buildings are often built to last with higher quality materials, while recent building approaches are often more disposable in nature, with lower quality materials.
- A community's character is difficult to find when elements of its history are demolished, so location and the history of the site within the larger community is worth examining.
- When demolition is the answer, it is important to activate the space as quickly as possible; this can be done in a temporary manner to maintain activity at the location, or by rebuilding there.
- Existing buildings can be intensified to build more return on investment and perform better in terms of property tax revenue.

VERDUNIT

DOWNTOWN

This area continues to hold interest but causes frustration within the community. Interest is evident by how frequently residents speak about the potential of downtown. It has also caused frustration – despite periodic attention over the past several decades, downtown has continued to struggle as a place of unrealized potential.

Downtown Sweetwater is defined by a 3 square block area outlined by 1st and 4th Streets on the south and north sides and Pecan and Elm Street on the west and east. Local ownership of properties within the community presents opportunities to partner on redevelopment ideas while providing the ongoing support needed to sustain and grow local businesses. Developing these relationships and promoting local development not only adds to the character of downtown but builds up the local development community in Sweetwater.

The downtown area is the nucleus of Sweetwater. While development in this area has been slow and moved outward toward the highway corridors, the updated buildings in the downtown area demonstrate that, with design guidance, new construction can fit in nicely with historic buildings. The historic framework in place has excellent value and potential for a place that is unique and attractive. Another advantage of downtown is that it provides the type of collective mass that makes focused redevelopment efforts often quite successful. It isn't necessarily the scale of the resulting redevelopment that is critical; what matters is achieving as much of it as possible in a single area while creating a center of increased activity that all tenants and owners benefit from. The two to three blocks just outside the border of downtown also provides opportunity for increased density that feeds off of and supports downtown as it grows and attracts tenants. An active downtown, especially one with daytime and nighttime activity, requires residents nearby to create the demand for such.

The Downtown District





SWEETWATEL TITLE COMPAN





Downtown Parking

There are many common statements that are brought into downtown revitalization discussions. One is the question of adequate parking. Fortunately, Sweetwater has more than sufficient parking. There are over twenty block faces with on-street parking in the downtown area – most of which is unused or sparsely used year round. There are also more than twenty surface parking lots of varying sizes in this district. They are a combination of public and private ownership. In the graphic below, where blue identifies on-street parking and red identifies surface off-street parking lots, it is readily apparent that downtown has almost as much space devoted to cars as it does to people. The off-street parking lots that are not often fully utilized are areas that could also be used to bring activity to downtown. Having a vibrant downtown is not solely about having buildings that are fully occupied, but also about creating a center of life and activity in outdoor spaces that are attention grabbing, low cost to carry out, and that bring life to a community.

Downtown Street Widths

As in most of Sweetwater, the streets in downtown are extraordinarily wide. However, unlike most of the community, the presence of on-street parking provides a degree of traffic calming that is needed for a pedestrian-friendly environment. The street widths in this area – illustrated more clearly in the map below – offer the chance for reconfiguration and creative usage that further enhances this quaint and attractive location. Not only can the streets themselves be utilized for block parties and weekend

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events that change their functionality to that of pedestrian plazas, but there is also more than adequate space along the extra wide sidewalks for outdoor seating and shade, decorative lighting, and adding trees and landscaping elements. These are touches that make a downtown district more comfortable and safer for those on foot - who in turn tend to visit more businesses when the stroll is enjoyable and vehicles are minimized.









Source: Google Streetview



Downtown Historical Assets

While Sweetwater itself has several historically significant homes in its oldest neighborhoods, it is fortunate to have an entire commercial district in downtown that is listed on the National Register. The City's zoning ordinance and development regulations do not establish a local level of historic designation or protection at this time, nor do they speak to the treatment of National Register properties. The commercial district in Sweetwater was listed on the National Register in 1984 and it includes ninety-two properties, all of which are identified on this map. The development pattern in this area makes it the ideal location in Sweetwater to begin building a highproducing return on investment. This can be done by shifting to a regulatory structure and that focuses on activating these vacant spaces and lowers the barriers to entry. Not only does this benefit Sweetwater's fiscal health, it also creates an environment where preservation of Sweetwater's unique history is accomplished by utilization rather than complex requirements that may ultimately be cost-prohibitive. For more information on these buildings, consult the Appendix (pg. 96) at the end of this document. The district features properties which were built as early as 1904.

There is often a tension between property rights and preservation, as cities sometimes take an "all or nothing" approach to historic properties. The Texas Legislature gives cities the ability to create regulations that address how these types of properties are monitored and redeveloped. Fortunately, "all or nothing" are not the only choices for communities who want to preserve, enhance, refine, or maintain buildings which are interesting and tell stories to the community. Historic buildings are often better built than their contemporary, disposable counterparts. Historic tourism is big business in Texas that provides a draw to history and architecture lovers from near and far who seek quaint and charming main streets. A small city like Sweetwater could benefit from an approach that incentivizes preservation rather than dictates it.



CATALYST SITES Holiday Bowl

Small communities often make the mistake of believing that projects which can serve as a catalyst for change, renewed interest, and community investment must be large scale, expensive projects. While there is no doubt that multimillion dollar projects can start momentum, it is an unfortunate truth that some cities wait for those huge projects to come rather than starting right away with approachable, realistic, low cost, and low risk steps that build momentum as well. These steps include the reactivation of abandoned or unused property, the creation of popular and lively places, and appealing to multiple age groups. The great news about this type of strategy is that it often requires less government subsidy and cultivates local champions and leaders from citizens who love their community.

On the following pages are a series of existing locations in Sweetwater which have wonderful potential as catalyst projects to accomplish everything mentioned above. Local leaders, residents, and business owners contributed ideas during the engagement process that helped pinpoint locations of interest and which have meaning for the community. Suggestions below should be predicated by contact and coordination with the existing property owner or during a transition of property ownership.



Characteristics of Note

- Highly visible location off Highway 70 as well as I-20
- Potential to draw from a regional area
- Fondly remembered by locals
- Recent activity on the neighboring lots and in adjacent buildings

Incremental Tranformation Ideas

Short Term (0-6 months)

- Creating activity in the parking lot with outdoor activities that appeal to all ages, such as lawn games, market activities, pop-up miniature golf, food trucks, live music, cook-offs, outdoor movies, public art expos, public art projects, youth bike safety course, RC car or other races, outdoor community engagement events
- 2. Recruiting locals who would have in interest in rehabilitating the property on their own or as part of a team of locals to lower individual risk

Mid to Long Term (6 months to 2 years)

- **3.** Utilizing indoor space as overflow or inclement weather market space
- 4. Using a portion of the building space in coordination with the active parking lot area, starting with smaller occupancies
- Revamping of the entire building for occupancy by multiple tenants who also offer a variety of family friendly activities



Nolan County Plaza Parking Lot



Characteristics of Note

- Incremental Tranformation Ideas
- Highly visible location on Broadway Avenue
- Potential to contribute to downtown core
- Close in proximity to regularly-visited businesses that are active mid-day and weekends
- One of the most sizable parking lots in Sweetwater, but largely underutilized
- Contributes to a focused corridor revitalization
- Would support active adjacent businesses

Short Term (0-6 months)

1. Reactivating the parking lot with outdoor activities that appeal to motorists and locals including a farmers' market, festival space, parklets, plaza for food and retail trucks and trailers, live music, literary lots, community picnics or potlucks, children's pop-up events, micro retail (tents or temporary pods), cook-offs, local restaurant & business promotional events, obstacle courses, outdoor community engagement events

Mid to Long Term (6 months to 2 years)

- 2. Making events that have been successful permanent annual or semiannual events
- **3.** Adding string lights and more semipermanent outdoor seating, eating space, and patio space



Downtown Multi-Story





Characteristics of Note

- Provides residential and commercial base to support downtown business growth
- Compact building environment is ideal for small and affordable residential units (second story) and ground floor levels can be creatively broken up into smaller scale retail and office units
- Optimal location for business incubation and coworking space
- Would bring a daytime and nighttime presence to downtown
- Additional redevelopment would have the biggest impact on revenue per acre citywide
- Offers a walkable environment and housing free from yard maintenance that is attractive to multiple age groups
- Preserves important historic character that does not exist in other parts of Sweetwater





Downtown Multi-Story, continued



Incremental Tranformation Ideas

Short Term (0-6 months)

- Identify a package of building, fire, and zoning code regulations that can be relaxed or phased in order to facilitate redevelopment
- 2. Undertake process streamlining to accelerate approvals and lower risk and expense

Mid to Long Term (6 months to 2 years)

- **3.** Expand on existing façade program to target these buildings and include other improvements to drive down the cost of updates
- **4.** Work with property owners to arrange a tour of downtown buildings to highlight opportunities within the identified area
- Proactively meet with local financial institutions to build support for rehabilitation of these buildings
- **6.** List available space online where it is easily viewable while coordinating with realtor community





Lamar Street Corridor



Characteristics of Note

- High visibility corridor from I-20, and heavily traveled
- Close proximity to active businesses, hospital, and school
- Opportunity to fill in gaps that start to update and concentrate activity along corridor
- Appropriate context for "missing middle", or low- to mid-level density multifamily housing products
- Activation of vacant lots which currently aren't contributing to revenue per acre
- Utilizing these lots would have a positive impact on nearby property values and fill in gaps in the existing sidewalk network
- Partially walkable environment that can be improved incrementally to create a safer and comfortable setting
- Connects to planned trail system

Incremental Tranformation Ideas

Short Term (0-6 months)

- **1.** Identify an approach for marketing properties and contacting area builders as well as interested local investors
- 2. Review and reexamine zoning to allow by right multifamily residential products of two to eight units

Mid to Long Term (6 months to 2 years)

- **3.** Create design guidelines for this segment of Lamar Street in order to guide future redevelopment projects
- **4.** Proactively meet with local financial institutions to build support for rehabilitation of these buildings
- List available space online where it is easily viewable while coordinating with realtor community
- Discuss improvements that may be necessary to serve these lots - consider lowering redevelopment risk and broadening pool of potential builders and investors by making these capital investments as a city



Source: Google Streetview



Source: Google Streetview







Source: Google Streetview





FUTURE LAND

The Future Land Use Map

The Future Land Use Map, or FLUM for short, is an important part of this plan. Zoning and land use decisions are to be made in a manner that is consistent with this plan now and in the future, as outlined in Texas' Local Government Code. In order to create a tool that will provide options for the community as needs and proposals change, this map includes land use categories that are flexible and can better accommodate change over time. The City of Sweetwater should utilize the flexible nature of these categories by applying the text components and recommendations of this Plan when making future zoning decisions. In short, the FLUM is the guide, and the content of this plan is the context used to finetune recommendations to decision makers.



How to Use this Map

FUTURE LAND USE CATEGORIES

Parks & Open Space



Upon receipt of a rezoning application, or when considering an initiation of rezoning by the City, consult the FLUM to see what categories the property/ies are labeled.

2

3

Review the corresponding land use category description(s) and determine if the request or proposal is consistent.

Consider the request in the context of the Land Use Guiding Principles and any related Corridor District or Neighborhood guidelines.

4

5

Compare the request to the text components of this Plan, including Catalyst Project and Implementation recommendations.

Staff prepares a written recommendation that identifies the best fit and provides background information summarizing their analysis, which is then presented to the appropriate decision makers.



This land use category includes public and private parks, sports fields, and other types of recreational facilities. New and planned facilities should be added through an amendment to the Future Land Use Map when they are identified. Parking to serve these sites should be broken up to avoid large masses of asphalt, pedestrian and cycling access should be clearly marked and signed, and shade structures should be incorporated.



This land use category includes facilities for public, governmental, educational, institutional, and/or religious purposes. It is anticipated that, as these entities continue to grow and desire expansion for their facilities, the Future Land Use Map will need to be amended to accommodate this growth. Facilities need to be sited with consideration for residential uses in proximity to these facilities. The City is strongly encouraged to create design standards to guide future construction and remodeling. It is important that projects in the Civic category set the example for thoughtful siting and design, creating a sense of place that can be replicated throughout the community.

Regional Commercial



These places are first identified by their principal focus on auto-oriented traffic. Logically placed near high-traffic intersections and highways, these spaces bring people from many surrounding neighborhoods. Typical uses will include regional businesses including but not limited to retail, motorist services (like gas stations) and offices. Care should be given to make the experience for users pleasant and safe once they exit their vehicle. Design, siting, landscaping, lighting, signage and parking should all be reimagined in a way that prevents Sweetwater from looking like every other city with a highway. When adjacent to any residential category, appropriate space for transition that create a buffer through placement of landscaping, berms, and xeriscape elements are strongly recommended.

Future Land Use Categories, continued

Corridor Revitalization



This land use category is focused along key corridors which were identified for targeted revitalization. Street reconfiguration projects should be focused along these corridors to define and enhance their identity. Appropriate uses in this category include a mix of multifamily residential on vacant infill sites as well as adaptive reuse of existing buildings. Office, retail, personal services, and small-scale craft work and/or manufacturing where the use can be wholly contained within a building or carefully screened. Pop-up uses, micro-retail, food trucks, and stands should be encouraged to bring activity and utilize the large swaths of existing parking. Placement of new or expansion of existing buildings should generally be encouraged to move towards the street to break up the auto-dependent, higher speed feel of the corridors in their present state. Provisions for those on foot should be incorporated into the design of the site, both in terms of walkable access and building scale that is comfortable to human form and not designed solely around automobiles. Where adjacent to residential areas, the revitalization area should include connection points and human scale design that connects to and compliments the residential area nearby.

Neighborhood Commercial



This land use category is a predominantly commercial extension of a traditional neighborhood. These places generally grow along with a neighborhood and need to be allowed to change over time to intensify as its surrounding neighborhood does. Generally speaking, these are placed along a corridor of some kind, often a higher traffic roadway that serves as the edge of a neighborhood. These areas bridge pedestrian and auto-oriented development patterns. Street parking and continuous building frontages are very important here as it creates a pleasant experience for people who traverse the area on foot. Large parking lots which separate the building from the street would be out of scale here. If larger parking already exists here, sharing of parking should be encouraged. Higher intensity, small lot residential is acceptable here as well. Public spaces can be created through good architectural practices like forecourts and pedestrian amenities in building setbacks. When adjacent to any residential category, appropriate space for transition that create a buffer through placement of landscaping, berms, and xeriscape elements are strongly recommended.

Traditional Neighborhood



This land use category embraces the presuburban development pattern with smaller lots, smaller setbacks, shorter blocks, diverse housing types and a mix of uses. Compatible housing types include single-family detached, accessory dwelling units, bungalow courts, townhomes, duplexes, fourplexes, and small to medium sized apartment buildings. This mixing of activities and uses allows the area to adapt and change over time to suit the needs of its inhabitants. Though it is not required for uses to always be mixed within the same building, it is important to note that large single use developments (such as large multiplex apartments or retail centers with large land area devoted to parking) do not suit traditional neighborhoods. Similar uses that are pedestrian in nature can work when parking does not replace people. Mixed-use neighborhoods are places where residents can live, shop, work, and gather and access all of these activities largely on foot.

Residential Mix



This land use category provides for neighborhoods that allow a flexible mix of residential building types and lot sizes, diversifying offerings for those seeking housing. This also encourages multiple price points that benefit the community's housing affordability. Most housing types should be allowed here. Compatible housing types include single-family detached, accessory dwelling units, bungalow courts, townhomes, patio homes, and duplexes. Commercial uses need to be context sensitive. This means that small or pop-up facilities, or a residential home near a street corner converting to neighborhood-scale commercial use are generally acceptable. Stacked or horizontal live-work arrangements that are residentially scaled would also be well-suited. Neighborhood-scale commercial should be allowed along avenues and higher intensity roadways. Auto-first strip centers would be out of scale. Pedestrian connectivity is essential. Parking can happen along the street or be accessed via driveway or rear-alley. Small neighborhood parks are appropriate.

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Downtown

Business & Industry



This land use category is intended for a mix of non-residential and residential land uses. Residential and office uses are highly encouraged on second and third floors, with restaurants, small scale craft manufacturing or maker spaces, and retail ideally in the first floor. Personal services would also be appropriate here. Facade design and renovations should be done in the context of the environment in a way that contributes to and is consistent with the historic character of the building - but does not detract from it. Special attention should be paid to using features to enhance the human experience on foot: this includes material choices. sizable windows on the ground floor, and understated, smaller signage. Recommended amenities to create a unique character and feeling of safety for those on foot include plants, outdoor seating, and shade. Where adjacent to residential areas, the revitalization area should include connection points and human scale design that connects to and compliments the residential area nearby.



This land use category is focused on low-impact industry, campus-style sites, offices and related accessory uses. Operations in this category are contained within buildings, are compatible with surrounding scale and intensity, and have minimal effects that could be a nuisance to the surrounding area. They are generally located along major rail or highway corridors. They should use site design and building design in all instances, but especially when adjacent to residential uses, to provide adequate buffering through man made elements, xeriscaping or landscaping, open space, or berms. Design cues should incorporate those of surrounding developments to provide a continuous pleasant aesthetic and visual impact.

Industry Center



This land use category includes concentrations of industry and trade that may result in effects surrounding properties considered a nuisance, such as sound, outdoor lighting, outdoor storage, and truck traffic. They are generally located along major highways and roads. They should use site design and building design to provide adequate buffering with surrounding developments and to provide a pleasant aesthetic and visual impact. Care should be taken to maximize the appearance of these facilities where they have primary frontage at important gateways. When adjacent to residential areas, transitions between land uses should be managed carefully through design and minimizing/eliminating noxious impacts. Establishing greenbelt areas that are carefully managed and curated by using plants and natural materials that can withstand the Texas heat while providing visual interest are strongly encouraged. Solid, opaque screening with natural materials such as stucco, masonry, and stone should be provided to shield view of industry areas and minimize noise and glare.

Land Use Guiding Principles

During hearings on land use requests (including, but not limited to rezoning), each decision making group should discuss during the hearing process how the principles listed below apply to what is being requested. These provide a depth to analysis and proceedings that is not currently present, based on feedback received during the engagement process and officials' workshop. They provide a higher level of consideration and where applied will support the achievement of the Sweetwater vision. These principles were assembled based on discussions and input with the Planning and Zoning Commission, the Municipal Development District, and the City Council.

Does the request under consideration:

- **1.** Promote expansion of the economic base to create job opportunities?
- **2.** Make the best use of infrastructure investments already in place?
- **3.** Contribute to an adequate and diverse supply of housing for all income levels?
- 4. Create new or enhance existing neighborhoods by making them more complete and that serve the needs of those that live there?
- **5.** Facilitate redevelopment and infill that meets community needs and is complementary to the city?

POLICY AND SPENDING DECISIONS

During the process of public engagement, residents were asked to identify the principles they felt were essential for local decision makers to openly discuss and consider when making decisions on policy and spending and are shown and elaborated on below. Key questions to help guide these discussions are also included.

Community Partnerships

Are there community partners related to this topic that should be involved in this discussion? Can this topic be tackled as a public-private partnership? How can relevant stakeholders be reached using local resources? How can residents be included in this effort? What partners can help support this/that portion of our population?

Data-Driven Approach

What data do we have on this issue? What data could or should be collected? What does the data on this issue tell us? How does this land use decision affect our community's property tax revenue per acre? What type of return on investment should or can be expected? How can mapping be used to maximize the data we have or collect?

Economic Prosperity

How does this issue promote economic prosperity community wide? What does economic prosperity look like for Sweetwater? How can we pursue a diversity of offerings – of all uses – that lead us in a prosperous direction? Which decisions can we make that invest in and foster a local network of entrepreneurs?

Innovation and New Ideas

How can we make this better? Does the way we have been doing/approaching this still make sense, or is it time for a change? What actions can we take to better engage citizens and capture their ideas? What training can we offer our staff and boards to help them practice their responsibilities in an innovative and proactive way?

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY & ACTION PLAN

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

Five Things to Do Right Away

- 1. Create a formalized Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for a five year period, updating each year as part of the budgeting process. An accompanying annual process needs to include identification of projects, creation of project sheets, prioritization of projects, how projects were prioritized, and funding. Examples of the types of improvements to be included in this plan are listed below. The highest priority capital projects should be those that address aging infrastructure needs while stabilizing or enhancing property values in the vicinity. This approach maximizes the return on investments.
 - Drainage projects
 - Utility infrastructure projects
 - Parks and trails
 - Sidewalk projects
 - City buildings (construction, renovation, and maintenance)
 - Land, easement and right-of-way acquisition
 - Major equipment and vehicle purchases
 - Planning and design studies
 - Aesthetic enhancements (gateway treatments, streetscaping upgrades, wayfinding signage)
 - Major technology purchases
- 2. Update zoning, signage and land development regulations to address the newly-adopted vision for the community outlined in this Plan. Bring regulations into compliance with state and federal legal decisions and regulations.
- 3. Involve and utilize Sweetwater residents, organizations, business community, and agencies in plan implementation by establishing a local coalition building on the Implementation Summit held in November 2022. Use it to empower the community and avoid duplicative efforts to achieve more with less.
- **4**. Align development and budgeting with the

community's values and desired outcomes by investing in projects that increase tax revenues while limiting additional costs and infrastructure liabilities.

5. Establish a coalition to introduce accountability and monitor plan implementation on a monthly basis in strong partnership with City Hall and other partners listed below. They should be working behind the scenes to build education and awareness of the Plan community and regionwide and take the lead on reporting progress to the community. This coalition must be open to and inclusive of all residents, and that represents all parts of Sweetwater's population outside of those already serving on boards, commissions, and other official entities.

An Incremental Focus

Oftentimes plans lose traction quickly because implementation recommendations prioritize too many large, complex projects that take many years to complete and require funding the city doesn't have. An alternative approach is to embrace an incremental, iterative approach that makes meaningful progress toward bigger goals immediately with the resources the community has available. The proposed implementation program was built around the Strong Towns "barbell strategy", where roughly 80 percent of projects are small, low risk projects that can be completed quickly with minimal resources and the other 20 percent toward larger high risk, high reward projects.

The program prioritizes small, low-cost tactical strategies in the near term (0-2 years) to continue education about the community's vision and priorities, build momentum and strengthen relationships with the citizens and partners. This implementation plan should be reviewed and updated every three years in accordance with the City Charter to evaluate work that was completed, assess current conditions, and then establish a new program for the next three years. Action items related to critical bigger projects involving large financial commitments, land acquisition or partnerships have also been prioritized in the near term so the city can begin to refine, prioritize and fund these projects in future years as resources become available.

Partnerships

City of Sweetwater The City is the primary entity responsible for implementation of the plan. The City will have a role in every action item being proposed. If a strategy is viewed as important for the community but not something within the City's direct control (such as the school system), the City is expected to actively engage with the lead entity to accomplish the task.

Local Agencies Many of the initiatives covered in this plan will require collaboration with other local agencies within and around Sweetwater at the county, state and federal levels.

Local Resources There are a wealth of resource groups within Sweetwater. The assembly of a community resource directory was spearheaded by Sweetwater-Nolan County Health Department, who the consultants have engaged with to provide suggestions for additions to this thorough and detailed asset, available at https://nolancountyhealth.com/ resources/.

Community Members Sweetwater desires to be a community where neighbors, citizens, businesses, churches, and other community organizations work together to make lives better for everyone, every day. The City and community must work to engage different segments of Sweetwater to make them aware of the plan and engage them in the small, incremental implementation initiatives that will enhance quality of life in neighborhoods while also sharing the resource burden with the City.

Public-Private Partnerships Certain projects are eligible for public-private partnerships (PPPs). These provide an opportunity for the City and other local agencies to partner with the private and non-profit sectors to jointly participate (primarily through funding) in the implementation of development and infrastructure projects.

IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS

There are several distinct types of implementation activities. Each action item proposed falls under one or more of the following categories.



Guidelines

Plans and design guidelines (such as technical standards) that are used to guide development of the functional and visual environment throughout the city or within certain "districts".



Regulations

Ordinances and adopted policies that are used to guide and enforce development patterns in the city, most notably the zoning, sign, and land development ordinances.



Financial & Process Incentives

One way a city can influence high quality development is to provide monetary incentives. Examples include reduced fees, tax rebates and loans or grants. Expedited processes that save developers time (and money) are another method a city can use. These measures open up development opportunities equitably to anyone who wants to partake in them.



Capital Investments

Infrastructure projects and other city investments that help preserve and enhance economic growth, property values and quality of life.



Tactical/Community

Low budget projects that can be executed by residents and other partners to addresssafety and quality of life issues and test ideas while waiting for funds to become available for more permanent improvements.



Education and Communication

Programs and activities that inform, engage and connect citizens, local businesses and agency partners, and help with promotion of the community to prospective residents, developers and employers.



Partnerships

Specific partnerships and collaborative efforts that are needed or that can help to achieve the desired vision for the community.

IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

					Asp	irati	ons				Tin	ning		Reso	urces
	Action	Action Type	1 – Economy	2 – Youth	2 – Recidents		4 – Housing	5 - Outdoor	6 – Corridors	Always	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Local Agencies	Local Partners Needed As
Strateg	y: Improve User Experiences														
1.1	Apply herbicides routinely to eliminate burrs and spiked seeds from park grass.	Maintenance & Improvements								•				City of Sweetwater Staff	
1.2	Add seating and shade in multiple locations at each park facility so users have a place to rest from the heat.	Partnerships, Maintenance & Improvements										•	•	City of Sweetwater Staff	Sponsors, Volunteer Labor, Promotors
1.3	Add portion of the East Ridge School property to the park system as a new park. Note: Also a recommendation of the 2017 Parks Master Plan.	Partnerships, Maintenance & Improvements									•			City of Sweetwater Staff, City Council	
1.4	Add a walking trail and picnic area at Santa Fe Park. Note: Also a recommendation of the 2017 Parks Master Plan.	Maintenance & Improvements										•	•	City of Sweetwater Staff	Sponsors, Volunteer Labor, Promotors
1.5	Install a trail segment at Sweetwater Country Club. Note: Also a recommendation of the 2017 Parks Master Plan.	Maintenance & Improvements											•	City of Sweetwater Staff	Sponsors, Volunteer Labor, Promotors
1.6	Create a schedule and earmark dollars in the Capital Improvement Plan to annually update a portion of the City's existing playground equipment by repainting, adding shade structures, performing repairs, or replacement. Note: Also a recommendation of the 2017 Parks Master Plan.	Budgeting, Maintenance & Improvements									•			City of Sweetwater Staff, City Council	
1.7	Approach local partners and service organizations about creating a small fund for revitalization of the downtown corner parklet at Oak and E Broadway. Hold a contest for local students to submit their ideas for using the space and select the best design to be instituted over a weekend.	Partnerships, Maintenance & Improvements											•	City of Sweetwater Staff, City Council, TSTC, SISD	Investors, Volunteer Labor, Promoters, Volunteer
1.8	Establish a citywide plan identifying locations for painted bike lanes as a low-cost and incremental step. Once identified, use paint to create these and promote widely through an online map and other marketing tools.	Programming, Tactical/Community, Maintenance & Improvements											•	City of Sweetwater Staff, City Council	Promoters, Sponsors
1.9	Add free public wi-fi at City parks and recreational areas.	Maintenance & Improvements											•	City of Sweetwater Staff, City Council	Investors, Promoters, Sponsors
1.10	Address sidewalk gaps along major streets within neighborhoods by identifying a target area of focus and installing segments each year as part of capital improvements.	Programming, Budgeting, Maintenance & Improvements											•	City of Sweetwater Staff, City Council	
1.11	Adopt safe routes to school principles and focus on expanding and increasing safety for children walking and biking around schools. Identify intersections that are not ADA accessible and create a plan to address those gaps where ramp placement is needed.	Programming, Budgeting, Maintenance & Improvements									•	•		City of Sweetwater Staff, City Council	
1.12	Offer a need-based waiver request for residents to apply for usage of park facilities to hold family events at no cost.	Programming, Budgeting									•			City of Sweetwater Staff, City Council	
1.13	Install pet waste stations at city parks to encourage residents walking their pets to clean up after them.	Maintenance & Improvements										•		City of Sweetwater Staff	Sponsors, Volunteer Labor, Promotors

					Aspir	atior	IS			Tin	ning		Reso	urces
	Action	Action Type	1 – Economy	2 – Youth	3 – Residents	4 – Housing	5 - Outdoor	6 – Corridors	Always	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Local Agencies	Local Partners Needed As
Strate	gy: Strengthen Local Identity and Create Opportunities													
2.1	Coordinate a regional advertising/digital awareness campaign about the dual enrollment pathway available through TSTC.	Education & Communication, Partnership								•			City of Sweetwater Staff, City Council, TSTC, SISD	Promoters, Volunteer Talent/Expertise, Sponsors
2.2	Establish classes, network opportunities, and discounted services to support new and established small businesses. Examples include classes on business plans, accounting, and hiring. Discounted services might include graphic design, legal review, business plan review, and logo design. By connecting local and regional expertise with small business, both parties can benefit.	Education & Communication, Partnership, Tactical/Community, Programming										•	City of Sweetwater Staff, Chamber of Commerce, SEED	Promoters, Volunteer Talent/Expertise, Sponsors
2.3	Share information monthly that highlights local businesses and what they offer to Sweetwater by way of services, products, and jobs. Provide a way for local business owners to apply for consideration.	Programming, Education & Communication							•				City of Sweetwater Staff, Chamber of Commerce, SEED	Promoters, Volunteer Talent/Expertise, Sponsors
2.4	Initiate a "celebrate local successes" campaign featuring short videos on social media and the City's website that tell the stories of locals who have had an idea and made it happen.	Programming, Education & Communication								•			City of Sweetwater Staff, Chamber of Commerce, SEED	Promoters, Volunteer Talent/Expertise, Sponsors
2.5	Host an information sharing session every two years that includes local agency and government boards, to offer the opportunity for them to interact and discuss how they can better support one another and accomplish more together, in a public setting.	Programming, Education & Communication									•		City of Sweetwater Staff, P&Z, SEED, City Council, Nolan County	Promoters, Volunteer Talent/Expertise, Sponsors
2.6	Hire a recreation director to head up programming for sports and other types of activities for kids, teens, and adults.	Programming, Budgeting										•	City of Sweetwater Staff, City Council	
2.7	Select a local building for renovation into a youth activity center. Pursue fundraising, acquisition, and establish a board of directors.	Programming, Partnerships, Budgeting										•	City of Sweetwater Staff, City Council	Investors, Volunteer Labor, Promoters, Volunteer
2.8	Pursue matching grant opportunities to leverage existing funds and multiply their potential impact. A list of suggested grant opportunities can be found in the Appendix.	Programming, Partnerships, Budgeting								•			City of Sweetwater Staff	Investors, Promoters, Volunteer Talent/Expertise
2.9	Establish a marketing campaign targeting small business, start-ups, and home-based businesses that includes information about available space for lease or sale, incentives available, and other resources.	Programming, Partnerships, Incentives, Budgeting								•			City of Sweetwater Staff, SEED, Chamber of Commerce	Investors, Promoters, Volunteer Talent/Expertise
2.10	Explore options for a partnership to create a coworking space downtown.	Programming, Partnerships, Incentives, Budgeting										•	City of Sweetwater Staff, SEED, City Council, Chamber of Commerce	Investors, Volunteer Labor, Promoters, Volunteer
2.11	Work with local banks to create a financial education program (in person or online course) for first-time home buyers.	Education & Communication, Partnerships									•		City of Sweetwater Staff	Promoters, Volunteer Talent/Expertise, Sponsors
2.12	Approach and collaborate with local banks and employers to create a buyers assistance program that provides gap financing to purchase homes in neighborhoods with declining values. Pair with city inventory of vacant properties to incentivize reuse.	Education & Communication, Partnerships									•		City of Sweetwater Staff	Investors, Promoters, Volunteer Talent/Expertise
2.13	Draft map and guidelines for builders and small scale developers to gain access to city inventory of vacant properties at low or no cost. Include fee waivers, technical assistance, and other benefits to attract interested and motivated parties.	Programming, Education & Communication, Guidelines, Partnerships, Incentives									•		City of Sweetwater Staff	Promoters, Volunteer Talent/Expertise, Sponsors

					Aspir	atior	15			Tin	ning		Reso	urces
	Action	Action Type	1 – Economy	2 – Youth	3 – Residents	4 - Housing	5 – Outdoor	6 – Corridors	Always	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Local Agencies	Local Partners Needed As
Strate	gy: Become a Destination and Capitalize on Trends													
3.1	Pursue designation as a Small City through the Texas Main Street Program to gain access to grants, design assistance, expertise, and a wide network of successfully revitalized downtowns around the state.	Programming, Partnerships									•		City of Sweetwater Staff, City Council	Promoters, Volunteer Talent/Expertise, Sponsors
3.2	Identify locations in downtown for placement of public art and publish a solicitation for area artists to submit sketches of their ideas.	Partnerships, Tactical/Community								•			City of Sweetwater Staff	Promoters, Volunteer Talent/Expertise, Sponsors
3.3	Organize a local group of artists to refresh the mural on Broadway and identify other buildings where murals could be impactful. Identify property owners and coordinate with them to obtain permission and pursue grant funding.	Partnerships, Education & Communication, Partnerships, Tactical/Community								•			City of Sweetwater Staff	Promoters, Volunteer Talent/Expertise, Sponsors
3.4	Create picture-worthy areas around Sweetwater that present opportunities for social media posts on platforms like Snapchat, Instagram, and TikTok.	Partnerships, Tactical/Community							•				City of Sweetwater Staff	Promoters, Volunteer Talent/Expertise, Sponsors
3.5	Create a relocation guide to feature local services, businesses, and contacts. Provide discounts and include information that helps new residents - both from outside the city and state - transition easily.	Education & Communication, Partnerships										•	City of Sweetwater Staff, Chamber of Commerce	Promoters, Volunteer Talent/Expertise, Sponsors
3.6	Advocate for broadband expansion and stay informed about the potential funding resources outlined in recently-released 2022 Texas Broadband Plan in order to make Sweetwater competitive as a relocation destination for remote workers.	Partnerships							•				City of Sweetwater Staff, City Council, Nolan County	Promoters, Volunteer Talent/Expertise, Sponsors
3.7	Set up meetings with small-scale residential builders who focus on infill development to assess their willingness to consider Sweetwater, and under what conditions they would consider it, and/or would consider acting as advisors for local construction companies who might want to undertake a series of small projects.	Education & Communication, Partnerships, Tactical/Community								•			City of Sweetwater Staff	
3.8	Invest in low-cost, high-impact features such as mosaics, fountains, potted plants, string lights, and street furniture.	Tactical/Community							•				City of Sweetwater Staff	Volunteer Labor, Volunteer Talent/Expertise,
3.9	Encourage the installation of awnings and other manmade shade structures where planting of additional trees is not possible through matching funds.	Incentives							•				City of Sweetwater Staff	
3.10	Seek out and establish relationships with small-scale developers familiar with downtown housing products.	Education & Communication, Partnerships									•		City of Sweetwater Staff	
3.11	Reach out to communities in the region, such as Snyder and Colorado City, and create a system for cross- promoting their events while they promote Sweetwater's events in their communities.	Education & Communication, Partnerships								•			City of Sweetwater Staff, Chamber of Commerce	Volunteer Labor, Promoters

					Aspir	atio	ns			Tin	ning		Reso	urces
	Action	Action Type	1 – Economy	2 – Youth	3 - Residents	4 - Housing	5 – Outdoor	6 – Corridors	Always	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Local Agencies	Local Partners Needed As
Strateg	y: Create a Culture of Stewardship													
4.1	Put out a call for locals interested in making small investments on projects within Sweetwater and pursue crowdfunding of small startups and building renovations.	Partnership, Tactical/Community, Incentives									•		City of Sweetwater Staff, SEED, Chamber of Commerce	Promoters, Volunteer Talent/Expertise, Sponsors,
4.2	Host a quarterly park cleanup utilizing local volunteers.	Partnerships, Tactical/Community, Maintenance & Improvements							•				City of Sweetwater Staff	Volunteer Labor, Promoters, Sponsors
4.3	Launch a public service program with SISD and TSTC to offer credit for students working on short-term community projects.	Education & Communication, Partnerships, Tactical/Community									•		City of Sweetwater Staff, SISD, TSTC	
4.4	Allow local schools to "adopt" a vacant lot and use it to teach kids crafts, gardening, building, and other skills.	Education & Communication, Partnerships, Tactical/Community										•	City of Sweetwater Staff, SISD	Volunteer Labor, Promoters, Volunteer Talent/Expertise
4.5	Design a package of materials and a short video to encourage locals to get involved in local government and explain how to do so, creating a pipeline of leadership and talent to feed into city boards, to organize residents and be part of plan implementation.	Education & Communication, Guidelines, Partnerships										•	City of Sweetwater Staff	Promoters
4.6	Identify a staff member to serve as the main point of contact for residents interested in getting involved. This position should coordinate informal task forces to execute the different actions outlined in this plan.	Programming, Education & Communication, Partnerships								•			City of Sweetwater Staff	
4.7	Put out a call for local adults willing to teach skills to children and teens. Partnering with local organizations, set up a series of free or low-cost classes.	Education & Communication, Partnerships									•		City of Sweetwater Staff	Promoters, Volunteer Talent/Expertise
4.8	Institute a training program for city council and board members on an annual basis.	Education & Communication								•			City of Sweetwater Staff	Promoters
4.9	Hold periodic contests (blogs, videos, photography, volunteer project ideas) that capture and magnify the voices of local youth and demonstrate a commitment to a city that will be shaped by these groups. Winning submissions should become part of the marketing campaigns that highlight and promote Sweetwater.	Education & Communication, Partnerships										•	City of Sweetwater Staff, Chamber of Commerce	Promoters
4.10	Utilize volunteers to collect research and help write simple grant and loan applications. For more complex applications, utilize regional resources like the West Texas Council of Governments.	Programming, Education & Communication, Partnerships							•				City of Sweetwater Staff	Volunteer Talent/Expertise
4.11	Focus on maintenance of existing infrastructure and redeveloping within that system to improve revenue per acre.	Maintenance & Improvements, Budgeting							•				City of Sweetwater Staff	
4.12	Put together a community volunteer program to help local senior citizens with errands, shopping, rides, and home/property upkeep, along with periodic phone calls to check in.	Education & Communication, Partnerships									•		City of Sweetwater Staff	Volunteer Labor, Promoters, Sponsors
4.13	Address animal control concerns of residents with an annual public education campaign related to leash laws, spay/neuter, and penalties for owners.	Education & Communication, Partnerships							•				City of Sweetwater Staff	Promoters
4.14	Evaluate and update plan contents and implementation plan as per city charter (every three years).	Programming										•	City of Sweetwater Staff, P&Z, City Council	
4.15	Assemble a Unified Development Code that contains regulations and regulatory incentives to incremental redevelopment and high-yield revenue per acre development. Additional information can be found in the Appendix.	Regulations, Guidelines								•	•		City of Sweetwater Staff, P&Z, City Council	

		Asp				ation	S			Tim	ing		Reso	urces
	Action	Action Type	1 – Economy	2 – Youth	3 - Residents	4 - Housing	5 – Outdoor	6 – Corridors	Always	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Local Agencies	Local Partners Needed As
Strateg	gy: Facilitate Continuous and Open Dialogue													
5.1	Create a series of community listening sessions, and hold these in different neighborhoods at places of business, of worship, and other locations locals feel comfortable gathering.	Education & Communication							•		•		City of Sweetwater Staff, P&Z, City Council	Promoters, Sponsors
5.2	Administer the vibrant community assessment annually to all local citizens by making it available online and in print at local businesses and locations.	Education & Communication							•	•			City of Sweetwater Staff	Promoters
5.3	Provide an annual report to Sweetwater citizens in print and online that compares prior years' results of the vibrant community survey to the current years and highlights accomplishments of the current year and goals for the next.	Education & Communication							•		•		City of Sweetwater Staff, City Council	Promoters
5.4	Utilize residents and local businesses for outreach and marketing of events and pushing information to the greater community – social media isn't adequate on its own.	Programming, Education & Communication							•				City of Sweetwater Staff	Promoters, Sponsors
5.5	Put together an "exit interview" questionnaire for high school and TSTC students and distribute prior to the end of each school year. Include queries about their future plans, their thoughts on Sweetwater, and suggestions to make it a place they would want to stay.	Education & Communication							•				City of Sweetwater Staff, SISD, TSTC	Promoters, Volunteer Talent/Expertise
5.6	Invite key partners to provide periodic reports at City Council meetings or workshops throughout each year.	Education & Communication, Partnerships							•				City of Sweetwater Staff, City Council	Volunteer Talent/Expertise
5.7	Provide information to the public, both written and verbal, in both English and Spanish.	Education & Communication							•				City of Sweetwater Staff	Volunteer Labor, Promoters, Volunteer Talent/Expertise

					Aspira	ation	S			Tin	ning		Reso	urces
	Action	Action Type	1 – Economy	2 – Youth	3 – Residents	4 – Housing	5 – Outdoor	6 – Corridors	Always	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Local Agencies	Local Partners Needed As
Strateg	y: Tackle Forgotten Spaces and Neighborhood Decline													
6.1	Take action to limit or prohibit game rooms.	Regulations								•			City of Sweetwater Staff, P&Z, City Council	
6.2	Start a neighborhood vacant lot cleanup program.	Programming, Partnerships, Tactical/Community										•	City of Sweetwater Staff	Volunteer Labor, Promoters, Sponsors
6.3	Identify strategically-placed vacant lots that could provide opportunities for green space, walking paths and outdoor seating, community gardens, splash pads, or outdoor gathering areas in neighborhoods without those.	Programming, Maintenance & Improvements										•	City of Sweetwater Staff	
6.4	Coordinate an outreach program with code enforcement and local resources to provide aid and support to property owners with physical and financial limitations.	Programming, Education & Communication, Partnerships, Incentives, Tactical/Community									•		City of Sweetwater Staff	Promoters, Sponsors
6.5	Offer a biannual junk haul for local neighborhoods and residents.	Programming, Partnerships							•				City of Sweetwater Staff	Volunteer Labor, Sponsors
6.6	Create a place for resources on the city's website that provides information to property owners and heirs of property in Sweetwater informing them of their responsibilities, consequences of not addressing those responsibilities, and simplifying the process of property transfers.	Education & Communication, Guidelines									•		City of Sweetwater Staff	Promoters
6.7	Shift economic development incentives to prioritize new construction when it is infilling vacant lots, and redevelopment of existing buildings and parcels.	Incentives							•				City of Sweetwater Staff, SEED, City Council	
6.8	Enact a vacant building registry for property owners to provide their contact information for ease of outreach and increased accountability for upkeep, as well as a cost recovery program to incentivize renovation and reuse.	Programming, Regulations								•			City of Sweetwater Staff, City Council	
6.9	Work with the Nolan County tax appraisal district to create a public education campaign demystifying the process of how surplus and tax delinquent properties can be acquired.	Education & Communication, Partnerships							•				City of Sweetwater Staff, Nolan County	
6.10	Put together and maintain a GIS database of vacant properties and buildings to monitor and enforce registration, to document actions taken, and to strategically identify pockets where there may be opportunities to assemble property (once reclaimed) for important projects.	Programming, Incentives									•		City of Sweetwater Staff, Nolan County	
6.11	Investigate and pursue the establishment of an affordable home repair and foreclosure prevention assistance fund.	Education & Communication, Partnerships									•		City of Sweetwater Staff	Volunteer Labor, Promoters, Sponsors
6.12	Create a guide to help neighborhoods organize and create their own associations. Put a registration process in place for these associations and identify a city staff member to function as the point of contact for coordination and information sharing about zoning, City projects, and other initiatives happening in those areas.	Programming, Education & Communication, Partnerships								•			City of Sweetwater Staff	
6.13	Adopt and enforce International Property Maintenance Code or similar legislation.	Programming, Regulations									•		City of Sweetwater Staff	
6.14	Determine situations where voluntary relinquishment of vacant properties and buildings may be possible in exchange for liens or fines, and where purchase of these properties would be strategic.	Programming, Guidelines, Incentives									•		City of Sweetwater Staff	
6.15	Promote periodic purging and property maintenance by hosting an annual citywide garage sale, donating unsold items to local charitable organizations and offering free haul-off.	Incentives, Tactical/Community							•				City of Sweetwater Staff	Volunteer Labor, Promoters, Sponsors
6.16	Contact Texas Tech College of Architecture to visit downtown Sweetwater and provide ideas and sketches for renovation of 2nd and 3rd stories.	Partnerships										•	City of Sweetwater Staff	
6.17	Write a mini-grant program where neighborhoods can apply for small grants for outdoor neighborhood projects.	Programming, Partnerships, Incentives, Tactical/Community, Budgeting										•	City of Sweetwater Staff, City Council	Investors, Sponsors

					Aspira	atior	IS			Tin	ning		Reso	urces
	Action	Action Type	1 – Economy	2 – Youth	3 – Residents	4 - Housing	5 – Outdoor	6 – Corridors	Always	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Local Agencies	Local Partners Needed As
Strateg	gy: Practice Inclusive Governance													
7.1	Establish a "citizen's budget" document each year that outlines the proposed budget in a way that citizens can follow, in English and Spanish, using graphics and language that is relatable and educates about limitations and needs that exist. Once the annual budget is approved, update the document accordingly and make it available online.	Education & Communication, Budgeting							•				City of Sweetwater Staff	Promoters
7.2	Write a 2-3 page guide for the website on what each board and commission is responsible for, who is on it, regular meeting dates, and contact information for each board liaison. Include photos of members, agendas, and minutes from their meetings.	Education & Communication								•			City of Sweetwater Staff	
7.3	Work with SISD to establish a student council to provide advice to the City Council representative of a youth perspective and to share ideas.	Education & Communication, Partnerships									•		City of Sweetwater Staff, City Council, SISD	Promoters
7.4	Revamp board and council agendas that clearly outline agenda items and highlights the decision being considered, the amount of money being discussed, and/or the question being asked. Put the agendas out a week in advance and post it on social media channels as well as around the community in official - and unofficial - places where people gather.	Education & Communication								•			City of Sweetwater Staff, P&Z, City Council	Promoters
7.5	Adopt a policy for recruitment of board and council members, including a commitment to diversity and representation in appointment of members. Include an educational campaign prior to appointments to help potential applicants understand what will be asked of them.	Education & Communication									•		City of Sweetwater Staff, P&Z, City Council	Promoters
7.6	Establish performance measures as part of annual budgeting that clarify roles of city departments and publicly sets expectations for each year.	Programming, Education & Communication, Budgeting										•	City of Sweetwater Staff, City Council	
7.7	Produce a strategic plan for each neighborhood identified in the plan that looks at specific properties and choreographs initiatives, capital projects, demolitions, and tactical neighborhood projects.	Programming, Education & Communication, Guidelines, Partnerships, Incentives,							•			•	City of Sweetwater Staff, P&Z, City Council	
7.8	Design a 1-2 hour orientation and onboarding process for board and council members prior to their first official meetings.	Education & Communication							•				City of Sweetwater Staff	
7.9	Enlist the help of local students and residents to complete a citywide sidewalk inventory and condition assessment. Use GIS to incorporate all of the collected data and incorporate into capital improvement discussions each year.	Programming, Partnerships, Tactical/Community, Maintenance & Improvements, Budgeting									•	•	City of Sweetwater Staff, SISD	Volunteer Labor, Promoters, Volunteer Talent/Expertise



APPENDIX 1: HISTORIC PROPERTY DETAILS

#	Address	Construction Date	Alteration Date	Description/Significance	National Register	Listed	Recorded TX Historic Listed Landmark
1	Highway Bridge, W Broadway across the ATSF Railway Tracks	1935	NA	Two-lane, reinforced-concrete highway bridge with arched girders built by the Texas Highway Department in cooperation with the United States Bureau of Public Roads. Highway Engineer Gibb Gilchrist and contractor W.R. West collaborated on the publi works project. The bridge has much ornate detailing in the concrete along the railings, and includes concrete light standards along each side of the bridge.	2	6/7/1984	
2	300 W Broadway	Between 1922 & 1927	NA	Small, one-story brick veneer service station with hipped roof. This typical 1920s station consists of a small rectangular office area with original wooden windows and door, and an open pump area supported by two massive tapered columns. A pressed- metal ceiling adorns the open pumping bay. A much newer (1940s) grease-rack building is joined to the station by a wooden and corrugated metal storage area.		6/7/1984	
3	219 W Broadway	Between 1922 and 1927	NA	Three tile and concrete commercial buildings with brick veneer facades, now combined as one auto dealership. The simple facades include some cornice and parapet detailing in brick. Some original wooden-framed windows remain, while other storefronts have had the windows replaced with new, aluminum-framed, plate glass. The storefront on the middle building is completely enclosed, hiding the fact that the structure is roofless. All the buildings are painted.		6/7/1984	
4	211 W Broadway	Between 1904 and 1914	NA	One-story brick building, now stuccoed on front facade. Three-bay front with entrances in the narrow center bay, and a wooden garage door and new storefront in the outer bays. The corbeling along the cornice is still evident through the stucco.		6/7/1984	
5	207 W Broadway	Between 1914 and 1922	NA	Simple, one-story brick building with originally contained two storefronts. Metal-framed plate-glass windows, a metal and glass modern door, and new brick panels fill the storefronts. The transom lights above the wooden awning are filled with wood.		6/7/1984	
6	113 Pecan	Pre-1914	NA	One-story brick building now completely stuccoed. All detailing on front façade has been obliterated, and a metal overhead door, new windows, and a solid wood-paneled door added.		6/7/1984	
7	115 Pecan	Between 1922 and 1930	NA	Two-story brick building with unique polychrome brickwork on front façade. In addition to the red and black brickwork patterns, the principal features of the façade are the heavy concrete lintels above the window and storefront areas. All windows are now filled in with wooden inserts.		6/7/1984	
8	201 W Broadway	Between 1908 and 1914	NA	Two-story dark-red-brick hotel with a corner entrance. Unusual brick ornamentation, with buff brick set to form panels and to create a bracketed effect along the parapet edge. A wooden awning extends along the Broadway façade of the building. All doors appear to have been replaced, and window and transom openings are covered in wood. The building was used as a hotel until the 1940s, when automobiles replaced the railroad as the primary means of travel.		6/7/1984	
9	218 W Broadway	Between 1922 and 1927	NA	Awkward complex of several units, all additions to a large, brick-veneered, tile building. Numerous doors and windows have been added to the building to join the various components, all of which have been altered substantially throughout the years. The most visible intrusion is a huge, corrugated-metal canopy supported by metal pipes which covers the pump area.		6/7/1984	
10	206 Ash	Late 1940s	NA	Two-story brick building with metal casement windows and plate-glass display windows. Simple structure with no ornamentation. Though it is of a later date than most other buildings in the district, it is of mass and materials similar to much of the district. Attached structures in the rear may be of an earlier date, and may have been moved in from other locations.	L	6/7/1984	
11	219 W 3rd	1929	NA	One-story Mission Revival building. Exterior walls are of brick covered on the front façade in stucco. The front façade consists of a Mission Revival parapet, arched windows with fanlights, and a recessed entry way with French doors. The name "Johnston" and the year 1929 are etched on the upper façade. The building is virtually original.		6/7/1984	
12	207 W 3rd	Between 1930 and 1934	NA	One-story stucco-over-tile building in Moderne style. Small building is a good example of the style, with strong horizontal banding, corner metal casement windows, exaggerated pilasters flanking the recessed entrance, and glass-block inserts.		6/7/1984	
13	218 W 3rd	Between 1922 and 1927	NA	One-story brown-and-black brick building designed for use as an auto dealership. One of the few buildings in the district that has maintained its original use throughout its history. The building, with its original plate-glass show windows, terra-cotta tile beneath the windows, and art deco light fixtures is little changed from the original.		6/7/1984	
14	200 W 3rd	Between 1927 and 1930	NA	One-story brick structure built as a grocery store, and housing at various times a feed store, laundry, auto dealership, and implement dealerships. The red and black brick building has a stepped parapet and the multiple-bay construction typical of the 1920s. The bays remain intact, though some have been filled in with plaster and aggregate.	2	6/7/1984	
15	305 Pecan	Late 1940s	NA	One-story brick garage with flat roof. The narrow façade contains a large, wooden, overhead door and a single-paneled wooden door with a glass-block transom.		6/7/1984	
16	307 Pecan	Between 1937 and 1940	NA	One-story brick building with a stucco façade built as a grocery store. Has many details common to Moderne style, especially in the black ceramic tile used as accents on the walls. The original transoms are filled in with corrugated metal, though the original glass display windows still span the front of the building. The Prairie style double doors are original, and a flat wooden awning runs the length of the building.		6/7/1984	
17	311 Pecan	SE corner in late 1930s	After 1947	One-story concrete block building covered in heavily textured stucco, surrounding a tiny brick building in the southeast corner Multi-light windows, carved wooden door, and aluminum storm door.		6/7/1984	
18	313 Pecan	Between 1937 and 1941	NA	One-story gasoline station. Original section at east corner of the building is stuccoed brick, and has a metal canopy over the pump area. The older building is surrounded by a newer concrete-block section.		6/7/1984	
19	401 Pecan	Between 1922 and 1930 (brick warehouse) and pre- 1914 (some sheds)	NA	Complex of buildings including lumber sheds and brick warehouse on the southern side of the lot. The one-story lumbershed on the north side of the complex, with a tin roof and brick walls, existed as early as 1914. The brick warehouse was built of multicolored brown brick to replace an earlier frame structure. Though the warehouse remains intact, the original storefront windows and entrance are filled in with vertical wood panels.		6/7/1984	
20	Railroad row, south of W 1st	Circa late 1910s	NA	One-story, hipped-roof, frame building with brick veneer applied to the lower part. Very little has been altered on this building, which has large, diamond-shaped, composition shingles, multilight wooden windows, large wooden freight doors, and interior brick chimneys. The outline of the diamond-shaped Railway Express sign is visible on the exterior of the building.		6/7/1984	
21	119 W Broadway	1922-1923	NA	One-story building of concrete blocks and brick built to house a service station, a "stadium and cinema," and a hardware store and warehouse. The building was modified at a later date, probably in the 1930s, with the addition of stucco and black-ceramic tile ornamentation. At that time the corner bay was rounded. Original doors, windows, and transoms remain in some portions of the building.		6/7/1984	
22	101-107 Oak	1914-1915	NA	One- brick and concrete building that has housed a variety of businesses over the years, including a cafe to serve passengers from the trains stopping across 1st Street. The building originally had a corner entrance and typical wooden storefronts along the Oak Street facade. Over the years, the building has been modified with stucco and a conglomeration of entrances and garage doors.	2	6/7/1984	

#	Address	Construction Date	Alteration Date	Description/Significance	National Register	Listed	Recorded TX Historic Listed Landmark
23	109-113 Oak	1911	NA	Two-story brick hotel built in 1911 and operated as the Commercial Hotel until after World War II. The dark brick facade has been covered in stucco, though original details, including recessed panels, a dentil course, and the date "1911," are still visible. An arched window marks the upstairs hallway. The wooden storefronts retain their original paneled-glass doors, and a metal shed awning covers the front of the building.		6/7/1984	
24	121 Oak	Between 1908 and 1914	NA	Two-story brick building now covered in stucco. Originally dark brick, very similar to 109 Oak. The projecting brick cornice and some ornamentation are The lower facade was renovated in the 1950s with tilted-glass show still visible. windows and new brick. The one-story addition on the northern side of the building was added in the late 1940s or 1950s. At various times fraternal orders such as the Loyal Order of the Moose, the I.O.O.F., and the Woodmen of the World met on the second floor.		6/7/1984	
25	101 W Broadway	1976	NA	One-story contemporary, brick, office building surrounded by parking lots. Building has extended flat roof and smoked-glass windows. Surrounded by extensive landscaping and parking lots, the building, though attractive, is an interruption to the streetscape.		6/7/1984	
26	116-120 Broadway	Between 1922 and 1927	NA	One-story brick building with a mezzanine. The simple four-bay facade is divided by five engaged pilasters and includes simple brick ornamentation at the cornice line. The original marble remains under the storefront windows, though some doors have been replaced with new metal and glass units. Interior pressed-metal ceilings and the wooden mezzanine balustrade remain or the interior. Among the many stores housed in the building over the years were Sears and Roebuck, and Safeway.		6/7/1984	
27	112-114 W Broadway	Between 1908 and 1910	NA	Two-story solid masonry structure originally used for offices and retail stores. Three-bay storefront arrangement is repeated in the upper façade divisions, with one large arched window flanked by two smaller units. Above the three window openings bracketed ledges form a broken cornice. The building has a crenelated parapet which includes cast-stone ornamentation simila to the other façade elements. Although the original storefront arrangement remains, alterations include new doors, a wooden awning, and an awkward stucco and tile band across the façade.	r	6/7/1984	
28	206 Pecan	Between 1927 and 1930	NA	One-story brick structure. All original entrances and windows have been covered in stucco, and the entrance consists of two solid, covered, wooden doors set in a recessed entryway.		6/7/1984	
29	119 W 3rd	Between 1922 and 1927	NA	One-story brick commercial building constructed as a general store. At various times the building was divided into as many as six store fronts, housing such diverse businesses as music stores, several furniture stores, barbershops, and a saddlery. Over the years, the building was modified with popular remodeling materials including black ceramic tiles under the plate-glass windows, new textured stucco, and a metal mansard roof. The alley behind the store was enclosed and a door added to the Pecan Street side to create the Nolan Furniture Company Appliance Annex.		6/7/1984	
30	108 W Broadway	Between 1908 and 1914	NA	Two-story, solid masonry structure with Neo-Classical references. The front facade is virtually intact, with cast-stone projecting cornice and ornamentation on the engaged pilasters forming panels above and under the 1/1 wooden windows. Older wooden storefronts also remain, with glass-paneled doors and transoms covered in plywood. A large air-conditioning unit is balanced precariously on the wooden awning. The building has housed a series of office and retail uses over the last 70 years, including the local selective service offices in WWII. An exterior stairwell connects this building and 201 Oak.	g	6/7/1984	
31	201-203 Oak	1902	Front façade altered late 1920s	Two-story brick and stone building constructed for J.A.J. Bradford. The south wall (Broadway façade) is brick covered in stucco, with rusticated stone courses forming lintels and sills for the windows and a corbeled cornice. The front façade (Oak) was originally in this style as well, but was replaced by the present brick in the late 1920s. This façade is dark-red brick with a projecting brick cornec, a crenelated parapet, and large windows. The storefronts have been remodeled several times over the building's history.		6/7/1984	
32	205 Oak	1902	NA	Two-story brick commercial building built for S.D. Myres, famous saddlemaker and early mayor of Sweetwater. The original brick façade is now covered with vertical, corrugated metal and a modern brick and glass storefront. However, the original from probably remains under the metal and could be uncovered with minimal effort.	t	6/7/1984	
33	207-209 Oak	1902	NA	Two-story rusticated stone building built by pioneer J.F. Newman. For many years the Elk's Lodge had meeting space on the second floor of the building. The parapet ornament, which reads "1902 Newman", has been removed but is in the possession of the building's owner. The building has bracketed cornice and arched openings for both the second-floor windows and the first-floor storefronts. The second-floor windows are double-hung 1/1 wood with a semicircular metal insert with embossed far design. The first-floor storefronts have been modified, though the original arched shape is still preserved behind the modern signage.	L	6/7/1984	
34	211 Oak	Between 1902 and 1908	1970s	Two-story brick building wit original polychromatic brick façade covered with corrugated metal. The original façade probably remains fairly intact under the metal and could be uncovered. The storefront has been heavily altered, with large rubble stone added along with new doors and windows. A stairwell to the upper floor opens into the sidewalk. This stairwell is shared by 205 and 211 Oak.)	6/7/1984	
35	213 Oak	Between 1902 and 1908	NA	One-story brick commercial building. Its relatively unadorned façade has a raised central parapet and brick coping. The lower part of the façade has been altered with a recessed doorway, new plate-glass windows, and vertical wood siding. The building ha a metal awning.	s	6/7/1984	
36	215 Oak	Between 1902 and 1908	NA	One-story brick building that has housed many different retail businesses over the years. Original brick detailing still evident, though stucco covers much of the simple façade. The original storefront has been removed and replaced by a modern plate-glass and metal arrangement recessed several feet.		6/7/1984	
37	217 Oak	Between 1902 and 1908	Altered in 1930s, again in 1970s	One-story brick building built between 1902 and 1908. It originally had a simple brick façade with flat awning, typical transom and storefront. During the early 1930s, a Moderne façade was attached. This was a stucco alteration, and the awning was replaced by one of canvas. During the 1970s, a metal, vertically seamed front was installed over the Moderne façade. Removal of the 1970s façade will reveal the Moderne façade, and make this a contributing structure.	.5	6/7/1984	
38	219 Oak	Between 1902 and 1908	Altered in 1940s	Originally an ornate two-story brick building built between 1902 and The facade is 1908. Gutted and totally remodeled in the early 1940s. The facade is now stuccoed in a Moderne look, with horizontally and vertically grooved concave elements. Metal easement windows are in front and back, and metal covers the transoms in the front, and the lower floor has been altered in th recent past with new brick and display windows.		6/7/1984	
39	221-225 Oak	Between 1902 and 1908	Altered in 1940s	A two-story brick bank building erected between 1902 and 1908 by Thomas Trammel, the well-known early Sweetwater pioneer. Gutted and totally remodeled in the Moderne style in the early 1940s. The building is now a stuccoed, two-story structure with both vertical and horizontal concave detailing along the parapet. The building has metal casement windows and a large band of black ceramic tile around the front where the transoms once were. The building still has its Moderne, grooved, metal awning, but the lower part of the front has been altered with new brick work, doors, and windows to a limited degree.		6/7/1984	
40	111 W 3rd	Between 1922 and 1927	Altered in 1950s	One-story brick commercial strip, with front modified with metal, stucco, and new brick. Metal awning across front facade.		6/7/1984	

#	Address	Construction Date	Alteration Date	Description/Significance	National Register	Listed	Recorded TX Historic Listed Landmark
41	112 W 3rd	Between 1911 and 1913	Addition in 1970s	One-story Neo-Classical Revival brick building built as a bank. The small brick building has Tuscan columns flanking its recessed entrance and pedimented doorway. A large addition on the west side of the building was constructed in the 1970s. The Sweetwater Reporter began publication in 1911, and acquired this building in 1923. The building is marked as a Recorded Texas Historic Landmark. It served from 1913 to 1923 as the headquarters for the Texas Bank and Trust.	3	6/7/1984	
42	306 Pecan	Between 1937 and 1941	After 1947	One-story concrete-block building with brick veneer. Buff brick walls ornamented only by a simple concrete parapet cap. Three- bay front with narrow separate entrance bay. Transoms filled with wood, and an abbreviated metal awning complete the front façade.		6/7/1984	
43	301 Oak	1925	NA	Two-story reinforced-concrete building with brick curtain walls built for the Texas Bank and Trust Company. Neo-Classical red- brick building with ornamentation in the Ionic order, including columns flanking the front door and a projecting cornice with dentils around the street facades of the building. Brick pilasters divide the facades, and windows and doorways are delineated with additional cast-stone ornamentation. Three pedimented doorways lead into the interior. The banking lobby is relatively intact, with much of the original woodwork and counters, and the original vault.		6/7/1984	
44	309 Oak	Late 1940s	NA	Brick building after 1947 that replaced several older built brick buildings. Part served as the drive-up bank for the Texas Bank; the building consists of an open steel framed roof. The Clark Agency is in a small office in the northern part of the structure.		6/7/1984	
45	311 Oak	Between 1908 and 1914	NA	One-story brick building intended as an electrical supply store. The tall façade is accented by exaggerated pilasters at the corners, with cast-stone pilaster caps. A corbeled cornice, recessed sign panel, and relatively new storefront complete the front façade. A flat wooden awning runs across the building just below the transom area, which is filled in with stucco.		6/7/1984	
46	313-315 Oak	Between 1914 and 1922	NA	One-story brick building containing two storefronts. Simple ornamentation including some corbeling at the cornice A concrete lintel spans both storefronts. One storefront is flush with the of the building and has wood-framed windows, a multi-light transom, and glass- wooden doors. The northern store has a recessed entrance, glass paneled and wood covering the transom lights.	2	6/7/1984	
47	317 Oak	Between 1914 and 1922	Altered late 1970s, early 1980s	One-story, flat-roofed, brick building that has been heavily modified with a new brick facade, carved wooden door, and tinted glass.		6/7/1984	
48	319 Oak	1910	Between 1914 and 1922	Two-story brick building with full basement, built for commercial use on the first floor and offices on the second. Has been a saddle shop, grocery store, J.C. Penney's department store, and a furniture store since the late 1950s. In the early years, district court was held in the upstairs office section while the courthouse was being built. The building consists of a storefront divided into three bays by engaged pilasters and iron posts, with a smaller bay at the south side that contains stairs to the second-floor offices. The store-front is recessed, with ceramic and a metal tile under the store windows, glass-paneled wooden doors, ceiling in the entry. The dominant feature of the building is the large metal cornice. The date "1910" appears above the stairway entrance. The interior is virtually original, with metal ceilings, a mezzanine at the rear of the first floor, and the original offices on the second floor.		6/7/1984	
49	323 Oak	Between 1914 and 1922	NA	Simple, two-story, brick building which originally housed a grocery store on the first floor and a print shop upstairs. Little ornamentation other than a tile panel above the storefront and green ceramic tile under the windows and in the recessed entryway. Upper-story windows filled with wood.		6/7/1984	
50	325 Oak	Between 1914 and 1922	NA	Two-story brick building constructed as offices, store, and ice house for Texas Electrical Service Company. Variegated brown brick with cast-stone ornamentation around the parapet. An open porch at the rear of the building allowed access to the ice vault from West 4th Street. Rustic stone has been used to enclose the original storefront, and windows on all facades are covered in metal.		6/7/1984	
51	112 W 4th	mid-1930s	NA	One-story, brick-faced, tile structure built in the mid-1930s as an expansion of Higginbotham-Bartlett's lumberyard on Pecan Street (directly west). Buff brick facade facing w. 4th has engaged pilasters delineating openings in the building, and there is some ornamental brickwork around the cornice.		6/7/1984	
52	401 Oak	Between 1922 and 1927	NA	Two-story brick building with terra-cotta façade built according to a plan used by Montgomery Ward across the state, although there is no record that Ward's ever occupied the building, which stood vacant for years during the 1930s. The terra-cotta facade includes urn statuary along the curvilinear foliage swags, parapet, and a variety of medallions. Green terra-cotta panels the upper facade are repeated in in a wide band of green tile between the first and second- window level. The lower storefront has been altered with black ceramic , new brick, and new windows and doors. The upper story windows are covered with corrugated metal.		6/7/1984	
53	405 - 409 Oak	Between 1902 and 1908	Alterations to front façade in the 1930s	One-story concrete building built early in the century and altered in the 1930s to its present appearance. The front of the building is identical to that of 116 Oak. Storefronts consist of stucco scored to look like stone, a metal-tile shed roof at the parapet edge, and wood-framed plate-glass transoms, and glass-paneled wooden doors. A brick pillar from the Wright Hotel (now demolished) remains at the northerm edge of the building.		6/7/1984	
54	110 W 5th	Between 1922 and 1930	NA	One-story brick building constructed as a bus garage. Brick similar to 501 Oak. Three-bay front ornamental panels and a vaguely Mission style parapet. Storefront bays have been filled in with stucco and new windows and but the basic structure remains doors, but the basic structure remains intact.		6/7/1984	
55	501 Oak	About 1930	NA	One-story brick building used over the years as an automobile dealership, grocery store, and manufacturing concern. The major feature of this building is the arrangement of regularly spaced pilasters with rounded caps. Brick panels between the pilasters are in a basketweave pattern. The original storefront areas have been filled with stucco, and the transoms covered in metal.		6/7/1984	
56	503 Oak	About 1930	NA	Moderne style stucco over tile building built as a bakery. The building has strong lines, including some vertical delineation at the south end (probably a former entrance), though the original design has been somewhat altered by closure of windows and doors. Another interesting feature is the porthole window at the north end of the front facade.		6/7/1984	
57	South of 100 block of E 1st	1916	NA	Red-brick freight depot built for the Texas and Pacific Railway which arrived in Sweetwater in 1881. Building has a two-story office section and a one-story warehouse/freight section with large metal freight doors. The building is of fireproof construction with brick-veneered tile walls and a concrete roof. The exterior brick work is accented by a concrete string course and parapet, now painted white. Most windows and doors have been replaced with new aluminum and glass units. The Missouri-Pacific Railroad was always a major Texas and Pacific stockholder, and absorbed T&P complete in the 1940s.	,	6/7/1984	
58	112 Oak	Between 1902 and 1908	NA	One-story concrete building that has held as many as three stores. Unadorned stuccoed front facade with raised central parapet. Half the lower facade is now enclosed with wooden garage doors, while the other half consists of two fixed plate-glass windows and a glass-paneled wooden door.		6/7/1984	
59	116-120 Oak	Between 1930 and 1935	NA	One-story brick store building with metal-tile shed roof supported by a bracketed cornice. Front divided into three storefronts by brick pilasters. Flat awning suspended from front of building below transom areas which have been filled with wood. Similar to 405 Oak Street.		6/7/1984	

#	Address	Construction Date	Alteration Date	Description/Significance	National Register	Listed	Recorded TX Historic Listed Landmark
60	122 Oak	Between 1914 and 1922	NA	Two-story brick building constructed with retail space at ground level and offices on the second story. Typical brick commercial construction with raised central parapet and some corbeling. Ground-floor entrance for stairwell. The first-floor facade has been heavily modified with stucco and vertically grooved wooden storefronts.		6/7/1984	
61	100 E Broadway	1928	NA	Two-story brick building erected in 1928 and modified heavily in the 1950s. Presently the is completely encased in white- enamel, metal panels and has 1950s heavy plate glass frameless doors. However, the original copper window frames still hold the first-floor show windows, and according to City officials, the original fenestration, cornices and details remain intact under the metal shell. Levy Brothers, pioneer merchants and civic leaders, had several stores on this site, beginning in 1911. Removal of the metal panels will expose a significant and contributing façade on a key corner of the downtown.		6/7/1984	
62	115 E 1st	Between 1914 and 1922	NA	One-story, small brick building. Probably had a simple wooden storefront. Now stuccoed, with plate-glass and aluminum windows and doors. Wooden awning projects from front façade.		6/7/1984	
63	101 Locust	Between 1935 and 1940	NA	This one-story building with stucco over tile was built between 1935 and 1941 as a bakery. It has metal casement windows with fixed transom lights and glass-paneled doors. A metal overhead door has been installed on the south side of the building. The building has Moderne influences, particularly the rounded parapet cap. Originally the entry and the windows on either side were shaded by a small metal awning with rounded corners. This has since been removed. Other than that, the building retains its original appearance to a high degree.		6/7/1984	
64	111 Locust	Between 1930 and 1935	NA	A one-story brick commercial building built between 1930 and 1935. Has slight Moderne influence in its rounded parapet cap. The original store-front has been filled in with stucco and new brick, as have the transoms. A solid wooden door is the only remaining opening in the façade. A small metal awning spans the front.		6/7/1984	
65	110 E Broadway	Between 1902 and 1908	NA	One-story brick building which has been altered many times throughout its history. Built between 1902 and 1908 this structure has served as a dry-goods store, a hardware store, and an auto supply store. Currently the front façade is covered in gray marble and white granite. The display windows and plate-glass door are trimmed in gold anodized finish. A terrazzo entry floor has the name of the store inlaid in it. Cox's has been in business in Sweetwater since 1895 but did not utilize this building until the 1930s.		6/7/1984	
66	114 E Broadway	Between 1935 and 1937	Lower level altered in the 1950s	Two-story Moderne theater, built between 1935 and 1937. Originally an early twentieth-century stone building occupied the site. Between 1935 and 1937 the building was razed except for its two side walls. A new structure was built within the two walls, as a new steel framework, a new roof, and new front, and a new rear were all built. The front façade was stuccoed in a Moderne style common in that era. In the 1950s, the lower part of the façade was altered by installing mosaic tiles on the walls, an oversized metal marquee across the front, and metal-framed windows and a glass door. The theater is still in business, showing first-run movies.		6/7/1984	
67	116 E Broadway	Late 1940s or 1950s	s NA	A one-and-a-half-story commercial structure with an interior mezzanine built after 1948, probably in the 1950s. Walls are stuccoed, while the front facade is encased in metal. Upper- windows are rather small casement units, while the lower level has large, metal-framed display windows.		6/7/1984	
68	Courthouse Square	1976	NA	This massive purple structure replaced the third Nolan County Courthouse, which was built in 1915-1917. The new courthouse is essentially a closed structure, with few entrances or other exterior openings. It presents a grim and forbidding face to the street. In contrast, the earlier red-brick and terra-cotta building included entrances on all four facades and ample fenestration, making the courthouse a vital part of downtown activity. The 1915 courthouse was designed by C.H. Page and Brother. Austin, while the 1976 courthouse was the work of Hampton Associates, Sweetwater.		6/7/1984	
69	101 E 3rd	1886	Present façade added 1920s	The present Neo-Classical building with limestone and stucco façade, erected in the 1920s, surrounds a much older stone building erected in 1886. The 1920s façade includes five limestone columns in Roman Doric style, a projecting cornice, and a parapet crowned by an eagle that was carved from a single block of limestone. Much of the 1920s interiors remains, including the pressed-metal ceiling, original vaults, and some counters and teller furnishings. The stone building, built by merchants N.I. and J.D. Dulaney, was reportedly the first stone building in Sweetwater. The First National Bank occupied the building from 1901 until it failed in the 1930s. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, 1982.		6/7/1984	
70	103 E 3rd	1886	Remodeled various times until 1950s	One-story stone structure originally half of the stone building built by the Dulaney family (see 101 E 3rd). Has been remodeled at various times over the years in styles and materials popular at those times. In 1930s it had a black Carrera-glass storefront. Presently has a 1950s brick and wood façade with metal and glass windows and doors, and a recessed entryway.		6/7/1984	
71	105 E 3rd	pre-1902	NA	One-story brick building that originally shared a common storefront with 109 E. 3rd. The major remnant of the original facade is the elaborate brick cornice. The lower portion of the facade has been covered with stucco and "rustic" wood siding, and the store windows replaced with tinted glass. Old-style glass paneled wooden doors remain.		6/7/1984	
72	109 E 3rd	pre-1902	NA	One- story brick building with stucco facade. Originally shared a brick facade with 105 E. 3rd, and had an elaborate brick cornice. The original storefront has been replaced with modern plate-glass and aluminum windows and doors, and new brick has been added.		6/7/1984	
73	111 E 3rd	pre-1902	NA	One-story brick building altered many times since its construction. Originally had a brick cornice and a metal or stone parapet ornament. Renovations in the past eight decades include black and mosaic tilework, stucco, and doors and windows. The transoms have been covered in plywood.		6/7/1984	
74	113-117 E 3rd	1901 (first floor), 1906 (second floor)	NA	Two-story stone and brick building with a six-bay front facade and two storefronts. Parapet ornament contains the words "R.A.Ragland," for the builder and original tenant of the building. Ragland was a Sweetwater pioneer, and he and Judge Royston C. Grane had their law office in the After 1909, the building housed a variety of tenants. It fell into disrepair, and was under condemnation when purchased and restored by its present owners. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1979. Recorded Texas Historic Landmark, 1979.		5/14/1979	
75	119 E 3rd	1929	NA	Two-story brick building built as a furniture store. The exterior of the building is relatively unchanged, with the original storefront still visible, though some of its elements are encased in metal . The original marble remains beneath the plate-glass show windows in the recessed entryway. Fixed-glass transoms and a retractable canvas awning complete the storefront . Second-story wooden windows and a simple concrete ornamentation for the parapet are also intact. The interior mezzanine, reached by a wide, wooden stairway, has a wooden balustrade.		6/7/1984	
76	123 E 3rd	1928	NA	Four-story commercial and office building built during Sweetwater's heyday as a sign of confidence in the future. Built on the site of the old Nolan County Jail. The simple structure is of freproof construction with 12 inch brick curtain walls. Numerous large wooden windows allow ample light into all offices in the building. The first floor originally consisted of several storefronts facing both E.3rd and Locust , with brick pilasters delineating the bays and large plate- glass windows and transom lights . In the 1930s, the first floor facade was partially covered in black Carrera Glass , including an etched panel bearing the name of "Bowen's Drug." Much of this glass remains , although it needs some maintenance and repair.		6/7/1984	

#	Address	Construction Date	Alteration Date	Description/Significance	National Register	Listed	Recorded TX Historic Listed Landmark
77	310 Oak	Between 1914 and 1922	NA	One-story brick and concrete- block building. Although the brick facade has been stuccoed, the original storefront arrangemen remains , along with glass- paneled wooden doors. The store windows have been parti ally filled in with new brick, and a metal awning is suspended from the front of the building. The building has housed insurance agencies for at least 55 years.	t	6/7/1984	
78	314-320 Oak	Between 1914 and 1922	NA	One-story, cast-stone building with the original cast-stone construction visible on the south alley wall. The variegated brick facade on Oak Street may not be original, but was in place by 1930. A wooden awning suspended by metal ties from metal rosettes covers the sidewalk in front of the building. Four storefronts have recessed entryways, tile under the display windows , and paneled doors with beveled glass.		6/7/1984	
79	324 Oak	1922	NA	Two-story brick theater/lodge hall built when Texas Bank and Trust acquired the old Masonic Hall at 301 Oak for demolition. Though the first floor has been radically altered with new brick and frosted glass, the original stone cornice and pilaster strips remain. Most of the second story-windows have been covered in corrugated metal.		6/7/1984	
80	307 Locust	1922	1940s-1950s	A one-story brick and stucco office building. The northern part was built between 1922 and 1930, and the southern part was added in the late 1940s or early 1950s. The entire front was remodeled when the southern portion was added. The front facade is now covered in stucco, with fossilized limestone surrounding the glass panel door. Large, horizontally oriented, plate glass windows surrounded by metal box-like frames span the front. A horizontally grooved parapet cap tops the facade and accentuates the building's low, long look. A long, curved, flat, aluminum awning also spans the entire front of the building. Metal letters spelling out "Lone Star Gas Co," are mounted on the awning, and "Blue Flame" is centered in its middle.		6/7/1984	
81	SW corner of E 4th and Locust	1926	Altered after 1946	A two-story fire station built in 1926. Designed by Page Brothers of Austin, Architects and built by Ramey Brothers. Contractors, of El Paso. The fire station was built in conjunction with the Municipal Auditorium/City shares its style Originally fire stucco, in a projecting one-story section which formed a balcony for the second floor. Three long, arched, multipaneled casement windows opened onto the balcony, which had a wrought iron railing around its entire perimeter. A four-sided bell tower on the north side of the building continued the Spanish Colonial theme. Some time after 1946 the station was modified to its present appearance. The projecting front balcony was removed and the entire front facade was then bricked. Larger metal overhead doors were installed on the lower level of the facade to accommodate larger trucks. The bell tower's openings were filled in, and a cover for the outside statics on the north side of the building was also installed.		6/7/1984	
82	400 Oak	1930s	NA	One-story, brick, Tudor Revival residence built after 1930 on the site of a much older frame residence which had also been onced by Lang Aycock. Buff brick with simple steep gable, brick chimneys. Prairie-style windows, and wrought iron railings. This is the only residence in the district, and is unusual in that it was built after much of the area became commercialized.		6/7/1984	
83	408-412 Oak	Between 1914 and 1922	NA	One-story, red-brick building with buff brick ornamentation. Originally used as an automobile dealership, later as the International Harvester dealership. The three-bay storefront has been filled with a hodgepodge of vertical wood siding and doors.		6/7/1984	
84	414 Oak	Between 1914 and 1922	NA	One-story concrete-block and brick building constructed as a garage, and used over the years as a bus depot, body and paint shop, and since the mid-1940s as Cathey's Poultry and Eggs. The simple brick façade, now covered in stucco, still shows its origins as a garage, as two of the three bays contain original wooden garage doors. The third bay is filled by a wood and glass storefront. A painted sign is barely visible at the top of the façade.		6/7/1984	
85	418 Oak	Between 1914 and 1918	Alterations in 1930s	One-story brick building with stucco facade which was probably added in the 1930s. Facade influenced by Moderne style, with window wall curving into a recessed entrance, strong horizontal lines produced by the metal awning, and glass-block panels.		6/7/1984	
86	420 Oak	Between 1927 and 1930	NA	Brick service station/gar age that has remained virtually unchanged since its construction. Open corner bay construction with a pressed-metal ceiling on verge of collapse. The original wooden storefront remains intact at the back of the open bay, with wooden doors and multilight wooden windows. Recently some wood covering the party wall with 418 Oak was removed, and two World War I recruiting posters were uncovered.		6/7/1984	
87	114 E 4th	1924	Altered Late 1970s	One-story brick church with raised basement, corbeled cornice, and narrow windows. Basic shape of the structure little altered, though four Greek Doric columns that once supported the front entrance have been removed. An outside entrance has been added at the basement level on the E. 4th Street facade. Original colored-glass windows and wooden doors have been replaced with aluminum and plate glass.		6/7/1984	
88	201 E 3rd	1931	NA	Large brick post office designed by James A. Wetmore, Acting Supervising Architect of the Postal Service. The Neo-Classical building has eight large Ionic columns across the recessed entryway, a raised basement level, and long-narrow windows. The building has a hipped roof which is clearly visible, though surrounded by a raised parapet. Although the exterior doors have been replaced, the interior of the building is almost original, and includes a high-ceilinged lobby and service area with dentil moldings and original interior doors.		6/7/1984	
89	200 E 4th	1945	Remodeled 1980-81	New city offices remodeled from an old grocery store built between 1941 and 1947. The original one-story brick building has been covered in stucco and given arched window surrounds and other Spanish touches in an effort to be compatible with the Auditorium/Municipal Building complex to the North across E. 4th.		6/7/1984	
90	NE corner of E 4th and Locust	1926	NA	Two-story brick and reinforced concrete building designed by Page Brothers, Architects, and built by Ramey Brothers Contractors of El Paso in 1926. The Spanish Colonial Revival building is of fire-proof construction, with brick-faced tile curtair walls. The ornate structure originally housed the auditorium, city hall, a city library, and the city jail. The building originally had metal and metal-casement windows throughout and most of those remain. New plate-glass doors have been installed in th front, and new metal handrails have also been put in. The City of Sweetwater has stabilized this building, and has completed a total restoration of the structure.	e	6/7/1984	
91	211 E 4th	1933	Additions in the late 1940s and 1950s	Two-story buff-brick office and operations building. Terra cotta detailing includes window and door surrounds, molding, quoins and cornice ornamentation. Building has original 3/3 metal windows and original doors. Original (southeastern) portion is of brick-veneered tile with a full basement. Other sections were added after 1946, using similar materials. Sweetwater is the operations center of Bell's 915 area code, and Southwestern Bell has been a major employer in the city since the 1920s.	,	6/7/1984	
	309 Ragland St					8/14/2003	2003
93							1992
94	509 E 3rd						1989 1979
95 96	610 E 3rd 810 E Broadway Ave						1979
97	400 Locust St						1987
	1400 Sam Houston St						1996

APPENDIX 2: COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Entities, points of contact, websites, and contact information for a wide array of local resources can be found in the Sweetwater-Nolan County Public Health Department's Area Resource Directory

https://nolancountyhealth.com/resources/



APPENDIX 3: COMMUNITY DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

Substandard Buildings and Vacant Properties

Without clear legal authority and processes in place to address these, the problem will continue to compound. An organized and well thought out approach that is compliant with all applicable local and state regulations yet maintains accountability for property owners is necessary. Sweetwater's ordinances on substandard structures require review to ensure compliance with the Texas Supreme Court decision in City of Dallas v. Stewart.

Building Code Requirements

In order to facilitate infill redevelopment that is more affordable and fiscally sustainable for Sweetwater, it is crucial to adopt the International Existing Building Code. With this code, the International Building Code, and the International Fire Code, create local amendments that can make older building stock - particularly downtown - simpler to occupy or renovate. Consider bringing buildings up to code a section at a time where reasonable. Ultimately, the goal of getting buildings occupied should be most important. While the ultimate goal is compliance with requirements, an incremental approach to such compliance is far more valuable to the community.

Subdivision Layout and Design Specifications/Access Management

While most cities have design specifications that determine how driveways, streets, lots, and subdivisions are created. Sweetwater does not. Unfortunately, this means that past reviews of proposed development has necessitated the use of specifications from other communities. If Sweetwater is serious about moving forward in pursuit of fiscally sustainable development and redevelopment, it must adopt specifications that reinforce these ideas and establish a framework for getting the most productivity of every property and building site. Without careful coordination in the management of driveway access, Sweetwater will soon create more traffic issues with too many conflict points that interrupt access and create an unsafe environment for motorists as well as those on foot. Infrastructure that is built will continue to be excessively wide - which costs the city immensely - and it may not be as long-lasting as expected, making maintenance costs rise. Streets need to be designed as streets and not roads, and be narrower in their dimensions. Block lengths should be shorter and mimic the traditional street grid already in place.

Sign Ordinance Requirements

Signage in communities is intended to offer information, attract shoppers, and advertise a business presence. However, if a city does not have established and clearly explained parameters for signage it can quickly become visual clutter that results in a city that looks just like everywhere else along the interstate. It is difficult to see and appreciate a city when it is largely defined by distracting and conflicting messages. Over time, as businesses vacate properties, signs fall into disrepair without requirements in place. They can become safety hazards and eyesores. A city of Sweetwater's size needs to have a clear strategy and design aesthetic that over time can transform the look of its corridors and view from I-20. These regulations take time for a transformation to occur because they are limited in addressing existing signs. The sooner these can be put into place, the better.

Zoning Ordinance Requirements

As outlined in the land use section of this plan, Sweetwater's zoning ordinance is outdated in its approach to land use and prohibits or makes unnecessarily difficult the mixing of uses and reuse of existing buildings. The number of zoning districts is too high, and represents a substantial hurdle to housing supply, housing affordability, and the establishment of a strong local entrepreneurial network of small businesses. In order for the corridors and neighborhoods identified in this plan to begin transitioning into an era of redevelopment and updating, a zoning strategy steeped in incrementalism is necessary. This includes design standards that will unify the identified corridors, and flexible land use categories that can be easily administered and interpreted by staff without lengthy review and hearing processes. The ordinance needs to ensure that elements which create fiscally sustainable development which yields a high revenue per acre are included by right. These include: smaller minimum lot sizes, smaller setbacks, higher density allowances for square footage, small parking minimums only where necessary, broader zoning districts that allow for a spectrum of housing, and the incorporation of landscaping and design standards to create higher-quality development.

APPENDIX 4: RESOURCES FOR FUNDING AND ASSISTANCE

Resource Name	Associated Organization	Type of Resource	Resource Name	Associated Organization	Type of Resource	Resource Name	Associated Organization	Type of Resource	Resource Name	Associated Organization	Type of Resource
Historic Tax Credits	Nat.Trust Community Invst. Corporation	Program	Hometown Grant program	T-Mobile	Grant	HOME Program Rental Assistance	Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs	Grant	Shade Structure Grant Program	American Academy of Dermatology	Grant
Housing Needs in Rural America	National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC)	Document	Community Development Block Grant Program for Rural Texas	Texas Department of Agriculture	Grant	HOME Program Homebuyer Assistance Program	Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs	Grant	Neighborhood Revitalization Grants	H&R Block Foundation	Grant
Community Facilities Direct Loan & Grant Program	USDA Rural Development	Program	Texas Rural Business Fund	Texas Department of Agriculture	Grant	Texas Bootstrap Loan Program	Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs		Our Town Grants	National Endowment for the Arts	Grant
Water & Waste Disposal Loan & Grant Program	USDA Rural Development	Program	Rural Texas Grant Awards	Texas Rural Communities, Inc.	Grant	HOME Program Single Family Repair	Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs		Challenge America	National Endowment for the Arts	Grant
Socially Disadvantaged Groups Grant Program	USDA Rural Development	Program	Rural Water Assistance Fund Program	Texas Water Development Board	Loan	Rural Water Loan Fund	National Rural Water Association	Loan		Mellon Foundation	Grant
Rural Cooperative Development Grant Program	USDA Rural Development	Program	Libraries Transforming Communities: Focus on Small and Rural Libraries	American Library Association	Grant	Water and Wastewater Loans	Communities Unlimited	Loan	Call for Artists	Texas Commission on the Arts	Services
OneRD Guarantee Loan Initiative	USDA Rural Development	Loan	Routine Airport Maintenance Program	Texas Department of Transportation	Grant	Community Facilities Loans	Communities Unlimited	Loan	Downtown Revitalization Grants	Texas Department of Agriculture	Grant
Single Family Housing Direct Home Loans	USDA Rural Development	Loan	State Infrastructure Bank	Texas Department of Transportation	Loan	Workforce Pathways for Youth	Texa A&M Agrilife Extension Service	Grant	Paul Bruhn Historic Revitalization Grants Program	National Park Service	Grant
Single Family Housing Repair Loans & Grants	USDA Rural Development	Loan/ Grant	Local Government Assistance Program for City and County Roads	Texas Department of Transportation	Services	Community Connect (Broadband)	U.S. Department of Agriculture	Grant	Community Policing Microgrants	U.S. Department of Justice	Grant
Rural Placemaking Innovation Challenge	USDA Rural Development	Program	Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside Program (Biking/ Pedestrian)	Texas Department of Transportation	Grant		Humanities Texas	Grant	Crime Stoppers Assistance Fund	Office of the Governor	Grant
Intermediary Relending Program	USDA Rural Development	Program	Traffic Safety Grants	Texas Department of Transportation	Education		The Meadows Foundation	Grant	Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant Program	Bureau of Justice Assistance	Grant
Rural Business Development Grants	USDA Rural Development	Grant	Middle Mile Grant Program (Broadband)	National Telecomm and Information Administration	Grant	Biannual Library Grants	Tocker Foundation	Grant	Rebuilding Texas Grant	Keep Texas Beautiful	Grant
Rural Innovation Stronger Economy (RISE) Grant Program	USDA Rural Development	Grant	Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A)	U.S. Department of Transportation	Grant	Local Parks Grants	Texas Parks & Wildlife Department	Grant	Anice Read Grant	Texas Downtown	Grant
	US Economic Development Admin (EDA)	Loan/ Grant		Community Foundations of Texas	Grant	Recreational Trails Grant Program	Texas Parks & Wildlife Department	Grant	Local Design Workshops	Citizens' Institute on Rural Design	Services
National Trust Preservation Funds	National Trust for Historic Preservation	Grant	Green Bag Grants	Keep Texas Beautiful & H-E-B	Grant	Parks for All Program	Hydro Flask	Grant	Safe Places to Play	U.S. Soccer Foundation	Grant
African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund	National Trust for Historic Preservation	Grant	USDA Rural Repair Grant	U.S. Department of Agriculture	Grant	Community-Built Playspaces	Kaboom!	Grant			
The Cynthia Woods Mitchell Fund for Historic Interiors	National Trust for Historic Preservation	Grant	Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant Program	Department of Housing & Urban Development	Grant	Albertsons Foundation Grants	Safeway Foundation	Grant			
Emergency/Intervention Funding	National Trust for Historic Preservation	Grant	Trails Grants	Rails-to-Trails Conservancy	Grant	Aldi Smart Kids Grants	Aldi Foundation	Grant			
Hart Family Fund for Small Towns	National Trust for Historic Preservation	Grant	Reconnecting Communities Program	U.S. Department of Transportation	Grant	Good Sports Grants	Action for Healthy Kids	Grant			

APPENDIX 5: 2017 SEED HOUSING STUDY

SWEETWATER HOUSING STUDY

The sweetest place in Texas for business.

The 2017 Housing Study can be found at: https://www.sweetwatertexas.net/2017housingstudy/





The City of Sweetwater

200 E 4th St Sweetwater, TX 79556