South College Avenue Corridor Redevelopment Plan

February 2002

Project Sponsored By

The City of Bryan
The District

Plan Developed By

The Goodman Corporation

SOUTH★COLLEGE★AVENUE★CORRIDOR

SOUTH COLLEGE AVENUE CORRIDOR

REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

The City of Bryan was incorporated in 1871 and immediately began to flourish thanks to "rich agricultural farmlands, the abundance of cotton, cattle, oil, and the railroad."[1] The original one-square-mile area townsite was heavily dependent upon the rural areas surrounding it. Five years later, in 1876, the Texas State Legislature designated a plot of land south of Bryan to be the site for a new land grant college, the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas. The establishment of what was to become Texas A&M University was the catalyst for the founding of the City of College Station and had a profound impact on the overall urban development of the region, ensuring its continued growth well into the next century.

Figure 1.1 – South College Avenue Tree Canopy

As Bryan and College Station developed early in the 20th Century, the transportation connections between the two cities became more diverse and more critical. Originally, College Station was little more than a train depot for the fledgling college and rail served as the primary connection between the two towns. But as the City of Bryan and the City of College Station grew quickly, so did the infrastructure linking the two towns – and South College Avenue became one of the area's primary thoroughfares.

In its heyday, South College Avenue served as much more than a simple thoroughfare. The avenue was, in reality, a destination point within the City of Bryan. An interurban trolley system linking downtown Bryan and the university in College Station ran along portions of the corridor, crossing the corridor at Old College and continuing on to College Main. Local women's civic clubs planted beautiful live oak trees that would produce large canopies in order that the public might stroll in shaded comfort. Small shops, locally owned restaurants, and homes also dotted the tree-lined avenue.

Approximately 130 years after its founding, the City of Bryan is the seat for Brazos County and is home to more than 65,000 inhabitants. To the south, Texas A&M University has evolved into one of the world's premier institutions of higher learning and, as a result, the City of College Station surrounding the A&M campus has truly become Bryan's sister city. However, South College Avenue's status as a primary destination point and thoroughfare for the area has been diminished by Texas Avenue (SH 6), which runs parallel to the avenue just a few blocks east.

Today, South College Avenue serves as a major arterial between downtown Bryan to the north and Texas A&M to the south, with few reminders of its more glorious past scattered along the way. Gone is the interurban trolley system that once served the corridor. In place of the trolley system, Brazos Transit District, the B/CS region's public transportation provider, and Texas A&M operate limited bus service. Most of the automobile traffic that can be found on the corridor today occurs

[1] http://www.ci.bryan.tx.us/history.htm

on the south end, between Villa Maria Road, a major east-west arterial through Bryan, and the Texas A&M campus.[2] A few landmark restaurants, retail shops, and institutional structures remain, but the area is primarily dominated by industrial sector-related businesses.

In February 2001, officials at The District began discussions with representatives of the City of Bryan regarding planned infrastructure improvements to the existing roadway on South College Avenue. The City of Bryan hired an engineering firm, Freese & Nichols, Inc., to develop plans for the repair and improvement of the surface and draining capabilities of the much-worn street. Sensing an opportunity also to bring some of the lifeblood back to the corridor through an enhanced public transportation presence, while simultaneously repairing the street's aged infrastructure, the City of Bryan and The District contracted with The Goodman Corporation to create a comprehensive redevelopment plan for the corridor.

From May to December 2001, the citizens of Bryan and the stakeholders along the South College Avenue Corridor have been engaged in a series of advisory committee meetings and urban policy and design workshops with City staff, representatives from The District, representatives from the Bryan/College Station Metropolitan Planning Organization (B/CSMPO), a representative from the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), and the consultant team in an attempt to turn back the clock and transform the South College Avenue Corridor into a viable thoroughfare and destination point for the Bryan/College Station community.

[2] For complete assessment of traffic conditions along South College Avenue *see Chapter 4.*

Chapter 2 – Corridor Planning Overview

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Figure 2.1 - South College Avenue

Corridor Planning is a tool for neighborhoods and communities to take responsibility for enhancing the link between land use plans, transportation, and infrastructure decisions. Corridor planning gives neighborhoods an opportunity to affect the development of their immediate surroundings as well as to enhance linkages between neighborhoods and the community.

What Constitutes a Corridor?

Corridors are streets that provide public space for the neighborhood; convenience for pedestrians, vehicles, transit, and bicycles; employment opportunities; and services desired by residents of the neighborhood.

Bringing together all of these activities in a single place requires coordination between land use planning and infrastructure projects. Identifying which activities are important to the corridor is the responsibility of the community affected by the planning effort, and will help the community avoid inappropriate development projects.

For planning purposes, corridors are generally defined as being one lot deep and approximately 1-2½ miles long. If larger, the planning effort risks becoming too fragmented and complicated. Corridor planning focuses on improvements to the public right-of-way and those properties abutting the public right-of-way within this area.

Corridor planning enables a community to 1) understand existing land uses and transportation systems; 2) envision a better future that accommodates appropriate growth and enhances the environment for pedestrians, bicycles, transit, and automobiles; 3) prioritize the investment of time, attention, and financial resources to implementation; 4) protect the unique assets of each neighborhood and corridor; and 5) attract the interest of investors who want to prepare for growth by building the necessary homes and businesses in the urban core.

Effective corridor planning requires the following ingredients:

- *Participation* – Input from a multitude of local sources helps shape a realistic and effective plan. An attempt to consult with local stakeholders and citizens at-large, city staff and public officials, MPO staff, representatives of public transportation providers, and any others dependent upon the corridor should be made during the development phases of any corridor plan.
- *Boundary* – The exact location and boundaries of the corridor should be established at the outset of the planning process. Otherwise, the planning process risks being sidetracked and resulting in an ineffective and unrealistic plan.
- *Vision, goals, and objectives* – At the beginning of the planning process, local stakeholders, working in conjunction with project leaders, need to define what they seek to achieve

through the development of a corridor plan. From the outset the planning process should have identified short- and long-range goals and objectives.

- *Corridor design concepts* – The physical vision for the corridor is a key ingredient in helping to create an environment that is conducive to the goals and objectives envisioned by local stakeholders.
- *Redevelopment strategy* – A successful corridor plan will include a redevelopment strategy that focuses on potential for private property changes. Such a strategy may call for sweeping changes or very few and is completely dependent upon the goals and objectives outlined by the stakeholders.
- *Environmental impact review* – Because corridor plans necessarily affect the natural and built environment of a corridor, verification of environmental benefits of the proposed plan is critical. Unidentified or unresolved environmental issues can effectively kill any redevelopment plan – no matter how well conceived or prepared.
- *Capital improvement and service recommendations* – Any corridor redevelopment plan will likely include capital improvements and/or service recommendations that will enhance the functional and aesthetic characteristics of the corridor. Such capital or service improvement recommendations will necessarily include cost estimates for purposes of project implementation and funding strategies.
- *Rezoning, design standards, and development guidelines recommendations* – Corridor planning requires that the vast areas of property that constitute a corridor be evaluated with regard to existing and desired land uses. If necessary, the final corridor redevelopment document that emerges from the planning process will include recommendations concerning the need to rezone, implement design standards, and development guidelines.
- *Public transportation service recommendations* – The existence of public transportation service serves as a key element in the redevelopment of a corridor. The introduction of public transportation or important service enhancements in the corridor can act as a catalyst for pedestrian-related infrastructure improvements and will provide project partners access to Federal and State funding resources. Federal funding can generally be utilized to support 80% of the public transportation and pedestrian amenity-related costs of the overall project.
- *Organizational enhancements* – Corridor planning requires input from a diverse group of local stakeholders, city staff, elected officials, and other project participants. However, successful corridor planning also requires the development of new institutional entities to oversee and better inform the planning process. Steering committees, advisory committees, technical advisory committees, or some combination of these are examples of organizational enhancements that are generally required for the successful development of the planning process.
- *Market assessment* – A realistic assessment of the market potential of a corridor is critical in order for potential private sector investors to make well-informed decisions about the types of investments that will be successful, where to invest, how much to invest, and even whether or not investing is a smart idea. Equally important, a sound market assessment allows local policymakers to make economic development policy decisions that demonstrate a high level of local commitment, which can encourage private investment in the corridor.
- *Funding strategy* – Perhaps the most critical element to the success of a corridor redevelopment plan is the funding strategy. Funding strategies help to identify sources of funding and outline responsibilities for securing those funds. Without a reasonable and well-defined funding strategy corridor plans tend to sit on the shelf and stagnate.

Chapter 3 – Scope of Services, Goals, and Vision

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Project Scope

The *South College Avenue Corridor Redevelopment Plan* was formally kicked off on May 1, 2001, at Crockett Elementary School. Participants at the meeting included local stakeholders – primarily business owners and residents along the corridor who had been invited to the meeting via a direct mail campaign, City staff and elected officials, representatives of The District, B/CSMPO, and TxDOT, and the consultant team. The consultant team was led by The Goodman Corporation and included Clark Condon Associates, FH&R, Inc., and Freese and Nichols, Inc. Approximately 200 concerned citizens of Bryan actively participated in the meeting.

At the outset of the meeting, the project team outlined the scope of the project and fielded questions from those in attendance regarding the work to be undertaken.

A brief description of the project tasks identified and discussed are detailed below:

1) *Perform Mobility Analysis* – A comprehensive mobility analysis that examines traffic flow, demand for parking, pedestrian/bike connections, and transit usage along the corridor is critical for understanding existing conditions and developing recommendations for improvement.
   - *Traffic Analysis* – Understanding traffic volumes and patterns throughout a corridor, allows the consultant team to identify how well traffic flows and where bottlenecks exist or may develop. The traffic analysis provides the necessary data for the development of the reconfiguration of the street, which similarly dictates much of the redevelopment of the corridor.
   - *Parking Analysis* – Existing and future parking demand also plays an important role in the development of the street configuration, which seeks to minimize the impact on available parking spaces. Without adequate parking, the potential for economic redevelopment is greatly reduced.
   - *Public Transportation Interface Analysis* – Alternative means of transportation access are critical for the long-term redevelopment and economic vitality of a corridor, especially a corridor that caters to more local and less regional market demands. More importantly, provisions contained in the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) provide matching funds – up to 80 percent of total project costs – for pedestrian-related transit infrastructure improvements.
   - *Pedestrian/Bicycle Analysis* – Similar to public transportation, access to a corridor via foot or bicycle is critical to its long-term economic redevelopment. Moreover, by designing public spaces that also accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists, local officials are able to pursue a variety of federal and state funding programs to enhance the aesthetic appeal and functionality of a corridor.
2) *Develop Urban Design Concepts* – Consistency of urban design elements enables an otherwise unidentifiable corridor to develop widespread recognition as a special place and even a destination. Urban design elements generally consist of way-finding and gateway signage, streetscape amenities – poles, lights, information kiosks, bus shelters, and bike racks, and other kinds of street furniture. Other urban design elements include public plazas, art, fountains, and monuments. Taken together, these elements help to enhance the aesthetic appeal and functionality of a corridor, in addition to creating an easily recognizable identity.

3) *Develop Funding and Implementation Plan* – Without a reasonable and well-conceived funding and implementation plan, corridor redevelopment plans run the risk of becoming merely a survey of existing conditions and a wish list for the future. Funding and implementation strategies should identify available and realistic sources of funding and delineate responsibility for securing those funds. Most importantly, a reasonable and well-conceived funding and implementation strategy is critical in terms of garnering the necessary local support for official adoption of a corridor redevelopment plan.

4) *Create Corridor Master Plan* – A comprehensive corridor redevelopment master plan is fundamental to the execution of the redevelopment of a corridor. Without a guidebook that details each element of the plan, who is to participate, and how to achieve the goals and objectives outlined by the community, corridor redevelopment plans can become fragmented and fall short of community expectations.

These project tasks form the foundation of this document – the *South College Avenue Corridor Redevelopment Plan*; however, these tasks were also guided by a set of short- and long-term goals. At the kickoff meeting, local stakeholders were asked to identify the goals for the redevelopment of the corridor that would govern the project over the ensuing months.

Project Goals

The following are the short- and long-term goals of the *South College Avenue Corridor Redevelopment Plan* in order of priority as identified by local stakeholders:

Short-Term Goals

- √ Repair South College Avenue pavement
- √ Improve drainage on South College Avenue
- √ Improve turning movements
- √ Install sidewalks
- √ Install pedestrian-level lighting
- √ Provide infrastructure for bicyclists
- √ Develop a neighborhood identity

Long-Term Goals

- √ Economic development along the corridor
- √ Improved connectivity throughout the corridor

Project Vision

Instrumental in ensuring that the project team adequately performed the duties outlined in the scope of services, while simultaneously working to achieve the project's short- and long-term goals, was the South College Avenue Corridor Redevelopment Advisory Committee (Advisory Committee). The project team, with assistance from City of Bryan staff, solicited local stakeholders who represent a diverse cross-section of interests on South College Avenue to comprise the Advisory Committee. During the course of the planning process, these Advisory Committee members provided overall vision and direction for all facets of the project. Other members of the Advisory Committee

included City staff and other local officials, who provided logistical and technical guidance for the project. The list to the right is a complete listing of Advisory Committee members and the interests that they represent.

Another critical resource guide utilized during the development of the *South College Avenue Corridor Redevelopment Plan* is the 1999 *City of Bryan Comprehensive Plan* (Comprehensive Plan).

In addition to providing a community overview and delineating a city-wide vision and goals, the City's Comprehensive Plan provides guidance regarding the implementation of land use policies; the utilization and conservation of the area's natural resources; recommended improvements for public utilities and services; the development of transportation network infrastructure improvements; and "general urban design guidelines … to improve the overall appearance and function of the City." The Comprehensive Plan also identifies "goals, objectives, and implementation actions to revitalize and enhance the Historic Downtown Bryan, the Central Business Corridor, and *thoroughfares*," which provides much of the planning motivation for the redevelopment of South College Avenue.[1]

Neighborhood Associations

John Clark 846-1534
Sharon or Dan Galvin 846-9777
Bonnie Webber or Helen Spencer at St. Michael's School 822-2715
Ernie Sims at Faith U.C.C. Church 823-0135

Businesses

Billy Binford, Business owner 822-5524
David Borski, Business owner 361-3368
Alan King, Business owner 846-7069
Dahlis Waller, Business owner 776-4350
Jan Lee, Business owner 775-1697
Mark Scarmardo, Business owner 822-7209
Rick Ravey, Architect/ Business owner 779-0769

Technical/Government

Linda Huff, Bryan Economic Development 209-5110
Joey Dunn, Bryan Planning Services 209-5070
David Schmitz, Bryan Parks & Recreation 209-5205
Russell Bradley, City Council Member
Mike Kristynik, BISD 361-5239
Larry Moody, Bryan Housing 209-5176
Sgt. Hugh Wallace, Bryan Police Services 209-5302
Margie Lucas, The District 778-4492
Bob Richardson, TxDOT 778-9707
Doug Woods, Union Pacific 281/350-7626
Alan Gibbs, Utilities/Engineering 209-5030
Art Hughes, P&Z Commissioner, ... 268-5520
Michael Parks, B/CSMPO 260-5298
Tom Williams, Texas A&M 862-7275

[1] Copies of the *City of Bryan's Comprehensive Plan* may be obtained at the Municipal Building, located at the intersection of 29th Street and Texas Avenue or online at the following URL: http://www.ci.bryan.tx.us/planning/compplan/indexlarge.htm

Chapter 4 – Mobility Analysis

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The South College Avenue Corridor is anchored by and wholly dependent upon the street that bears its name. Access to businesses, schools, churches, and other points of interest within the corridor and beyond is entirely dependent upon the transportation network infrastructure of the corridor. Consequently, addressing general mobility issues is most critical when considering how best to redevelop the corridor that surrounds the existing roadway.

This chapter, therefore, examines the general mobility of the South College Avenue Corridor. In this examination the City's transportation-related needs, goals, and objectives in the Comprehensive Plan are also identified and taken into consideration. Analyses of existing and projected automobile traffic volumes and patterns; the need for pedestrian- and bicycle-related infrastructure along the corridor; and the provision of transit service comprise the individual mobility elements that inform this general mobility analysis.

The Comprehensive Plan

The *1999 City of Bryan Comprehensive Plan* provides the primary impetus for evaluating, recommending, and making improvements to the City's transportation network and infrastructure, of which the South College Avenue Corridor is an integral part. Citizens who participated in Community Forum workshops during the preparation of the Comprehensive Plan identified the following citywide transportation needs:

- Public transportation service should be improved to increase ridership.
- Adequate funding resources are needed to ensure that street maintenance and repair will be sufficient to improve and maintain existing roadway paving.
- Traffic conflicts between roadways and the railroads need improvement to reduce delay and improve safety. Additional grade-separated railroad/roadway crossings and grade-crossing safety devices are needed. Relocation of through-train traffic outside the urban area is needed.
- On-street parking on arterial streets that have relatively high traffic volumes during peak periods reduces available traffic-carrying capacity and adds to congestion and delay.
- There is a general lack of bike and pedestrian facilities including on-street bikeways, off-road trails and paths, and crossings for pedestrians and bicycles.

Identifying citywide transportation needs assisted the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee (CPAC), the primary committee involved in the comprehensive planning process, in developing related transportation goals and objectives, some of which were also derived from previous plans – including *Bryan Forward*, *Brazos Vision 2020*, and *1993 Bryan Comprehensive Plan*. Those goals and objectives have informed and guided the individual components of the South College Avenue Corridor planning effort as well. Throughout the remainder of this document, the relevant portions of the *1999 Bryan Comprehensive Plan* will be utilized as a touchstone for the analyses performed and the

recommendations that follow.

It should be noted that the primary transportation goal and objective set forth by the CPAC together constitute the foundation for the South College Avenue Corridor redevelopment planning effort. All other goals and objectives are subsidiary.

> *Goal*: Provide and maintain a multimodal transportation system that will safely, efficiently, and economically accommodate the existing and future mobility needs for people and goods traveling within and through the Bryan-College Station area; promote efficient land use and development; and minimize adverse environmental and socioeconomic impacts.

> *Objective A*: Ensure interagency cooperation and coordination through the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) composed of Brazos County, the City of Bryan, the City of College Station, the Texas Department of Transportation, Texas A&M University, and Brazos Transit District (The District).

Throughout the South College Avenue Corridor redevelopment planning process, the project team worked diligently to adhere to the City's overall guiding vision for an efficient, safe, and economical multimodal transportation system as delineated above. Equally important, the project team, with assistance from its partners – the City of Bryan and Brazos Transit District – made every effort to cooperate and coordinate all planning activities with the appropriate agencies.

Traffic Analysis

> "It is essential that residents, visitors, and particularly potential customers have good access to Historic Downtown Bryan. As such, a top priority should be improvement of street conditions throughout the district. Streets should be in good condition and where curbs and gutters are partial or non-existent, they should be installed to adequately drain the streets and prevent flooding."
>
> ***City of Bryan Comprehensive Plan (1999)***

As one of the primary connectors to downtown Bryan, South College Avenue has long been plagued by a fragmented surface and an inability to drain properly, especially during times of heavy, sustained rainfall. Regardless, many travelers along the corridor have continued to utilize the street as a primary means of accessing downtown Bryan to the north and Texas A&M University to the south – the region's two largest destination points – by virtue of the fact that South College Avenue is the only street that provides direct and convenient access to both destination points.[1]

Despite South College Avenue's strategic position within the B/CS community, much of the traffic that would ordinarily be found on such a street is found instead on Texas Avenue, several blocks to the east. The diversion of traffic to Texas Avenue is partly by design – Texas Avenue (SH 6) is a TxDOT roadway that has been repeatedly widened in order to accommodate increasing automobile traffic in the B/CS region – and partly a result of years of neglect of South College Avenue's infrastructure.

[1] For a complete discussion of the methodology and results of this study, copies of Freese and Nichol's report, *2001 Traffic Study – South College Avenue Corridor,* may be obtained at the City of Bryan Municipal Building.

Improvements to South College Avenue are necessary for the city's continued growth and economic prosperity. Moreover, development of this South College Avenue Corridor Redevelopment Plan is specifically cited as integral in achieving *Objective B* of the transportation-related portion of the Comprehensive Plan. *Objective B* and the subsequent action items that pertain to South College Avenue are listed below.

> *Objective B:* Plan and develop a unified thoroughfare system based upon functional classification and providing a balanced and well-maintained network of freeways/ expressways, arterials, collectors, and local streets.

Action 1: Provide three major north-south arterial streets traversing Bryan and College Station that will have the following characteristics:

- Provide for the flow of traffic with speeds of 45 to 55 mph;
- Provide for limited access to adjacent property; and
- Provide for grade separation at major east-west arterial street intersections and railroad crossings.

Figure 4.1 – South College Avenue Traffic

Action 4: Optimize traffic flow (through traffic signal timing) in order to encourage commuter traffic off of Texas Avenue and onto the north and south thoroughfares. Also, synchronize traffic signals on all major east-west arterials and Texas Avenue.

Action 9: Develop, adopt, and implement a South College Avenue Corridor Redevelopment Plan.

South College Avenue - Proposed Roadway Configuration

The City of Bryan hired Freese and Nichols in 2000 to assist in the reconfiguration and repair of the South College Avenue roadway. As part of this task, representatives from Freese and Nichols performed a traffic impact study to determine current and projected traffic volumes along South College Avenue. From this study, representatives of Freese and Nichols were then able to determine how best to improve the functionality of the corridor – the extent to which South College Avenue needed widening and where turning lanes are needed; where to place sidewalks within the corridor (while simultaneously minimizing the impact on private property and trees in the corridor); and how much public right-of-way these improvements will require.

A graphic summary of the results of Freese and Nichols' traffic survey along South College Avenue is shown on *Figure 4-2*.[2] Not surprisingly, the south end of the corridor, between Villa Maria Road and Sulphur Springs, carries the highest volumes of automobile traffic daily and is projected to do so for the foreseeable future. The north end of the corridor, the section of roadway between Groesbeck and Texas avenues also carries a considerable volume of automobile traffic – much of it related to the railroad and other industries. Interestingly, and perhaps somewhat disturbing, little automobile traffic enters or exits downtown Bryan along South College Avenue – a trend that must be reversed if downtown Bryan and South College Avenue are going to become the destination points that City officials, stakeholders, and the project team envision.

2 Approximately 60,000 cars per day travel on some portion of the corridor.

Figure 4.2 - Projected 24-hour Volumes along South College Avenue

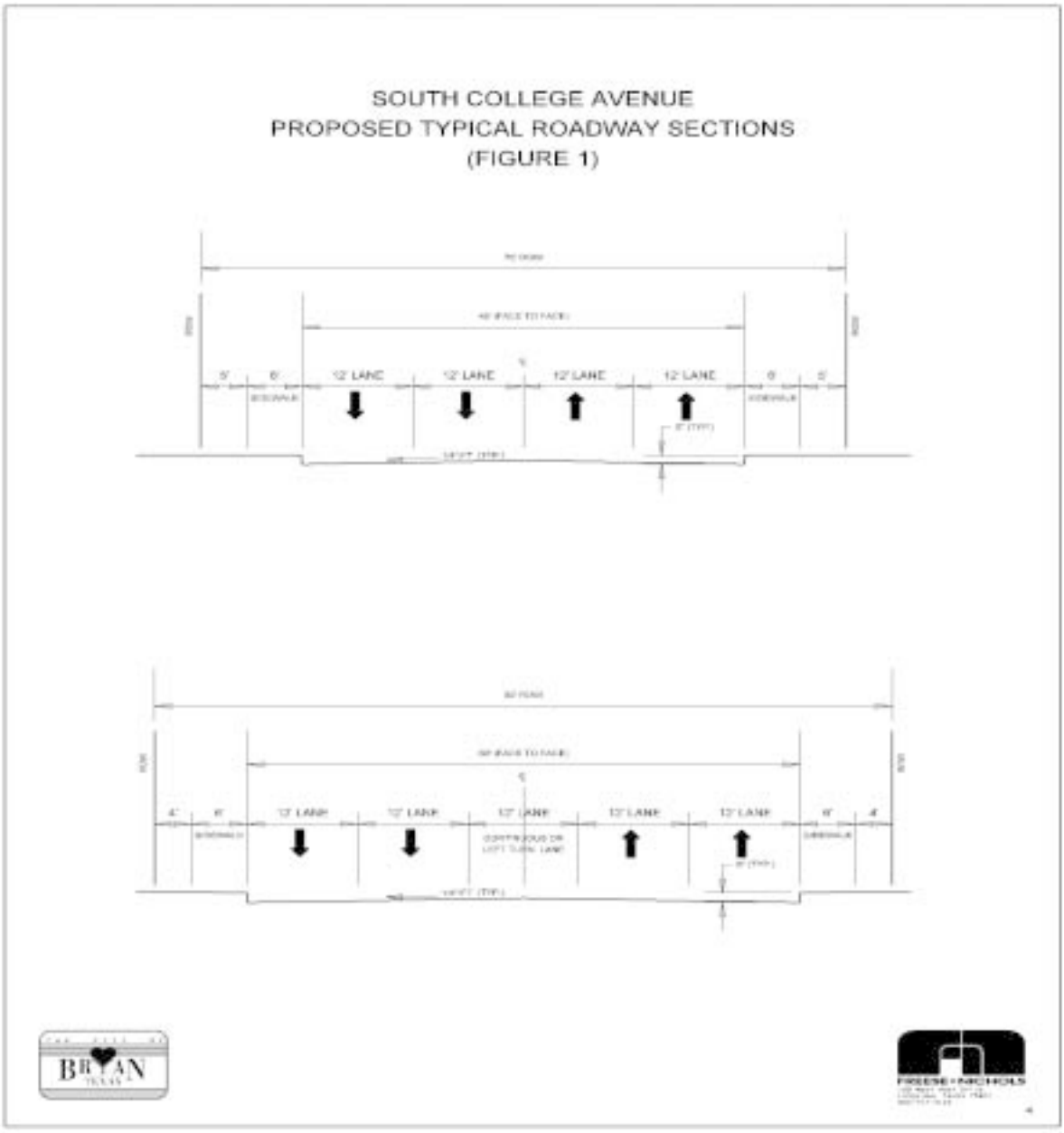

Figure 4.3 - Typical Roadway Sections along South College Avenue

Based on existing and projected traffic volumes, Freese and Nichols developed typical roadway sections for South College Avenue. The top figure included in *Figure 4.3* shows the primary configuration for South College Avenue from approximately Texas Avenue to Sulphur Springs Road, where the TxDOT right-of-way begins. This roadway section calls for a 49-foot, curb-to-curb roadway section (four 12-foot lanes), six-foot sidewalks on both sides of the street, and an additional five-foot buffer on each side for the placement of utilities – altogether a 70-foot public right-of-way.

For the northern portion of the corridor, from 32nd Street to Texas Avenue – much of which is already under reconstruction, Freese and Nichols continues to recommend a 60-foot roadway (four 12-foot lanes with an additional 12-foot center turning lane), six-foot sidewalks on both sides of the street, and a four-foot buffer on each side for the placement of utilities. This configuration creates an 80-foot public right-of-way, which is necessary to effectively and safely handle the high volume of large truck traffic serving the northern end of South College Avenue.

At critical, high-volume, signalized intersections, such as South College Avenue and Villa Maria Road *(Figure 4.4)*, Freese and Nichols proposes widening the roadway to include a right-turn lane and a possible bus turn-out lane. To facilitate these potential improvements, Freese and Nichols recommends that affected corners possess a wider turning radius, which will allow buses (and other large vehicles) to make those turns without encroaching on adjacent lanes of traffic.

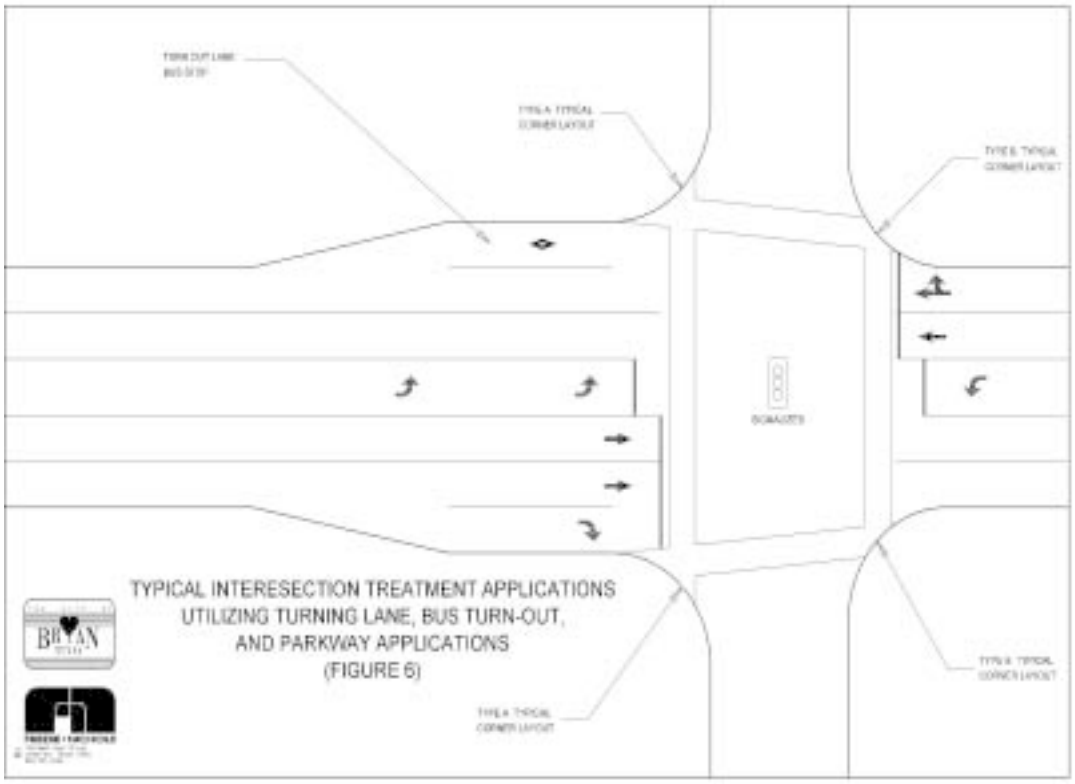

Figure 4.4 – Typical High-Volume Intersection Treatments

Freese and Nichols also designed four types of typical corners for the South College Avenue Corridor (shown in *Figures 4.5 and 4.6*).

In addition to a wider turning radius, Type A corners are designed so that sidewalks interface appropriately with crosswalks and contain ADA-compliant wheelchair ramps. The engineers at Freese and Nichols also designed possible locations for bollards that contain pedestrian push buttons, traffic signal mast arms, benches, and other landscaping improvements to enhance the overall functionality and attractiveness of Type A corners.

Although Type B corners are designed to have a narrower turning radius, they possess many of the same features of Type A corners. How sidewalks and crosswalks interface, the placement of ADA-

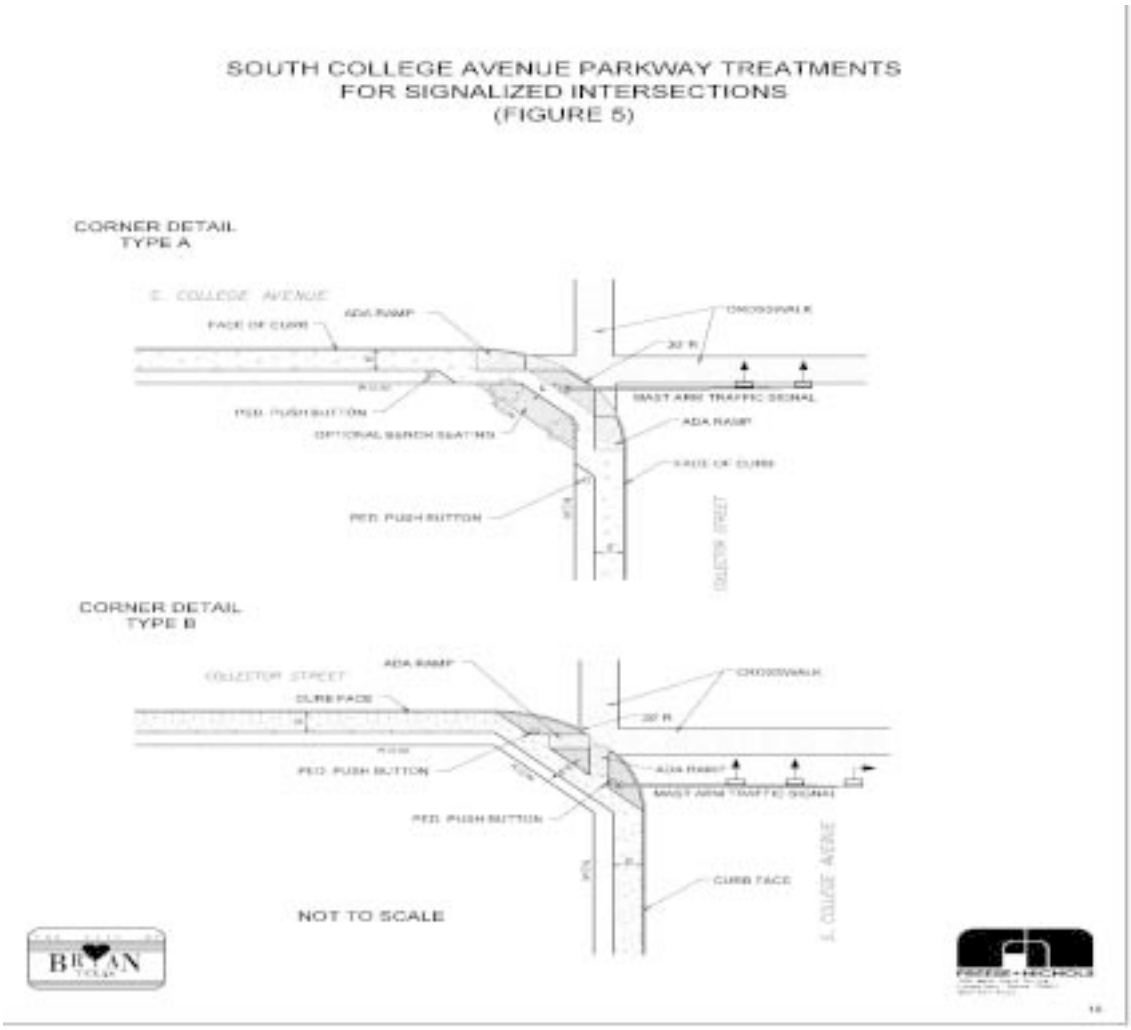

Figure 4.5 - Typical Corner Designs

compliant wheelchair ramps, where bollards for pedestrian push-buttons and traffic signal mast arms are located, and opportunities for benches and/or landscaping are all included in the preliminary design of Type B corners.

Despite the fact that both automobile and pedestrian traffic volumes associated with Type A and Type B corners are significantly higher than at other intersections along South College Avenue (e.g., the intersection of South College Avenue and Villa Maria Road), the majority of intersections with the roadway are either minor streets or private driveways. Thus, Freese and Nichols also designed typical treatments for those types of intersections as well.

For the typical local street *(Figure 4.6)*, Freese and Nichols designed corners that maintained the existing turning radius, because neither large trucks nor buses should be traveling on those residential streets on a regular basis. The other design elements for these types of intersections are also quite simple. Special attention is given to the sidewalk/crosswalk interface, including the possible location of ADA-compliant wheelchair ramps. But, otherwise, no other features are included in this design.

The design for the typical driveway intersection is likewise rather uncomplicated, but does address important efficiency and safety concerns for both motorists and pedestrians.

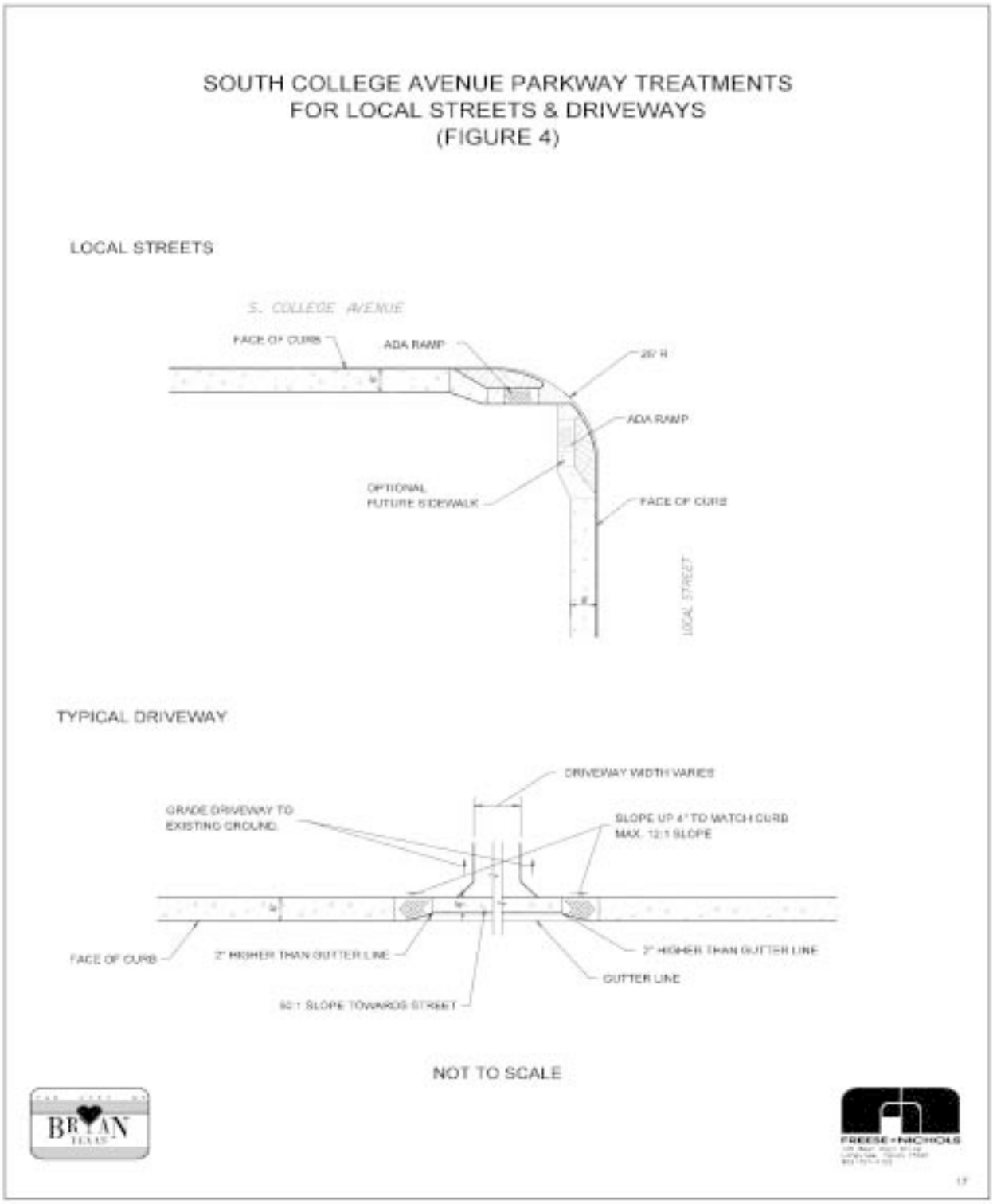

Figure 4.6 - Typical Local Street and Driveway Designs

Pedestrian Analysis

> "Pedestrian facilities include sidewalks, crosswalks, trails, and pedestrian bridges linking neighborhoods, shopping areas, downtown, commercial corridors, industrial areas, schools, and parks/recreation/entertainment areas. Pedestrian walks in downtown Bryan include accommodation for wheelchairs in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements."
>
> ***City of Bryan Comprehensive Plan (1999)***

Citizens participating in Community Forums during the development of the Comprehensive Plan cited a "general lack of bike and *pedestrian* facilities including on-street bikeways, off-road trails and paths, and crossings for pedestrians and bicycles." The lack of pedestrian facilities is painfully evident on South College Avenue. *Figure 4.7* shows a well-worn path through the grass along the roadside, which is a common occurrence within the corridor as much of the area is without sidewalks.

In addition to a general dearth of sidewalks, the corridor lacks adequate pedestrian-level lighting necessary for safe pedestrian movements after dark. Equally dangerous, many of the critical intersections along South College Avenue do not currently have adequate, well-defined crosswalks or ADA-compliant wheelchair ramps.

Because of these deficiencies, the City's Comprehensive Plan delineates a concrete objective and set of action items for addressing the City's pedestrian-related transportation needs. *Objective E* and the subsequent action items that apply to the South College Avenue Corridor are listed below:

Objective E: Develop a Pedestrian Improvements Plan, which establishes prioritized pedestrian walkway improvements for future construction. This plan should also address Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance.

Action 1: Identify areas that are characterized by high pedestrian activity and evaluate the feasibility of creating "pedestrian zones" where pedestrians are provided with quality facilities and protected from interference with impeding vehicular traffic.

Figure 4.7 – Existing Pedestrian Pathways along South College Avenue

Action 2: Undertake a pedestrian study that identifies the needs of the walking public, centers of pedestrian activity, and the presence or absence of pedestrian-related infrastructure. Improve access for citizens with disabilities.

Action 4: Install continuous sidewalks as well as pedestrian crosswalks and pedestrian activated signals along major arterials at quarter-mile intervals.

Action 5: Link residential neighborhoods with bikeways and pedestrian walkways.

Action 6: Install sidewalks along both sides of minor and major arterials and on both sides of collectors that have marked crosswalks at intersections.

For the successful redevelopment of the South College Avenue Corridor, continuous, well lit, safe sidewalks traversing the length of both sides of the corridor are imperative. In addition to providing access to the corridor's anchors – downtown Bryan and Texas A&M University – access via sidewalks to destination points within the corridor is critical. Many of the existing neighborhood-oriented businesses, schools, and churches along the corridor rely on a certain amount of foot traffic for their well-being.

With the repair and reconfiguration of South College Avenue, Freese and Nichols will also undertake the design task of integrating the construction of sidewalks where none presently exist and repairing existing sidewalks where appropriate.

According to Freese and Nichols' plan, six-foot wide sidewalks will be placed directly in back of the curb the entire length of the corridor.[3] All sidewalks constructed within the corridor will possess wheelchair accessible ramps and otherwise will comply with all provisions outlined in ADA. Exact alignments of the sidewalks on both sides of the street are dependent upon right-of-way and other considerations at each location.

Bicycle Analysis

> "Bryan has a sizeable population of residents using the bicycle for both transportation and recreation. Trip generators for bicycle use include [Texas A&M University]; Bush Presidential Library; historic downtown Bryan; Carnegie Library; retail, commercial, and office centers; elementary and high schools; and local parks and recreation/entertainment facilities."
>
> ***City of Bryan Comprehensive Plan (1999)***

All of the bicycle trip generators listed above for the City of Bryan can be accessed via the South College Avenue Corridor--making it one of the most important accessways in the city for bicyclists. However, few, if any, bicyclists ever venture out onto South College Avenue–and for good reason. Much of South College Avenue's length is exceedingly restricted in its ability to accommodate both automobile and bicycle traffic. Potential conflicts resulting from mixing motorists and bicyclists on such a narrow roadway could be deadly. Again, the project team turned to the City's Comprehensive Plan for direction. The City's transportation *Objective F* and the relevant action items are provided below:

Objective F: Develop a *Comprehensive Bikeway Plan* that establishes prioritized bikeway improvements for future construction, such as the following potential improvements:

Action 3: Encourage provision of bicycle parking where car parking is required at a ratio of 1:5, where appropriate.

Action 5: Install, improve, and maintain sidewalks and designated bicycle facilities, especially in and around schools, bus stops, and commercial areas and workplaces throughout the city in accordance with the *Pedestrian Improvement Plan* and *Comprehensive Bikeway Plan*.

3 The City's *Central Business Corridor Study* also prescribes six-foot sidewalks as the preferred sidewalk width.

Action 6: Design and retrofit appropriate roadways to accommodate bicyclists or pedestrians including bike routes and bike lanes, where appropriate.

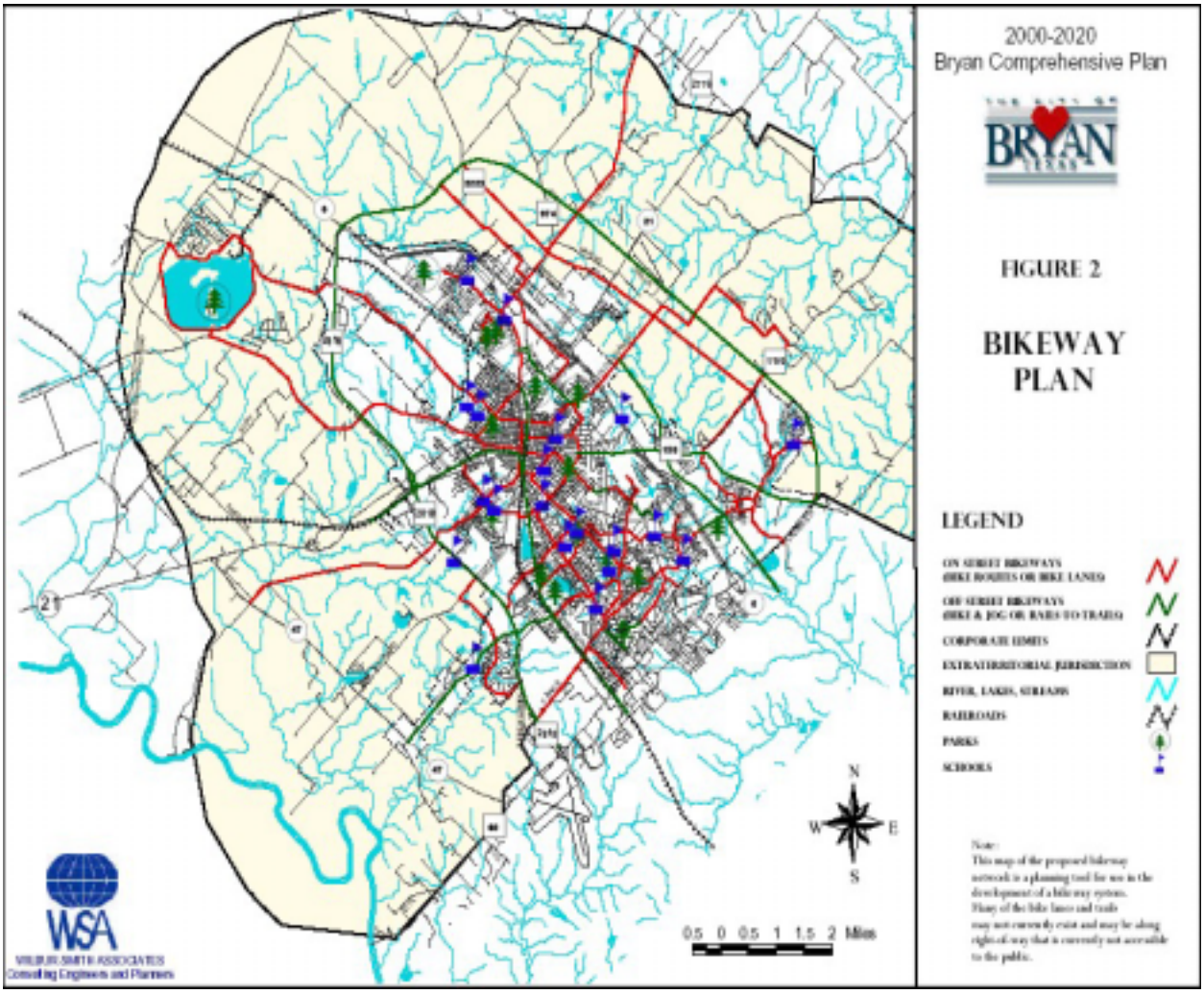

Figure 4.8 - City of Bryan Bikeway Plan

As a result of its review of the Comprehensive Plan's bicycle-related objective and action items, the project team decided to explore other alternatives to accommodate the needs of both motorists and bicyclists. The project team determined that a bikeway should be constructed one block east of South College Avenue on Cavitt Street, which runs parallel to South College Avenue for most of its length. Cavitt Street, primarily a residential street, has little traffic and a very wide right-of-way. The street could easily be reconfigured through simple striping to create a safe and efficient environment for bicyclists. In this way, bicyclists can traverse the length of South College Avenue and access the corridor at the cross streets. This strategy also allows for easy bicycle access to downtown Bryan, Texas A&M, and points outside the corridor, without unnecessarily imperiling the lives of bicyclists in doing so.

Interestingly, upon closer review of the City's Comprehensive Plan, the project team also discovered that the *Comprehensive Bikeway Plan (Figure 4.8)* had also identified Cavitt Street as a bikeway to be developed.

Transit Interface Analysis

Perhaps the most critical component in the successful redevelopment of any corridor is transit. Public transit within a corridor is vital because it *1)* establishes a corridor as a major destination point within the urban environment; *2)* carries valuable customers to the businesses, social service providers, and other institutions found within the corridor; and *3)* allows for the use of federal capital dollars to make important transit-related public infrastructure improvements.

Without public transit a corridor is, in reality, just another street – nothing more – and not necessarily deserving of special consideration or funding assistance from the federal government. The *City of Bryan Comprehensive Plan* also recognizes the importance of transit. Below are transportation *Objective D* and the subsequent action items that pertain to the provision of public transportation within the City:

> *Objective D:* Provide and encourage utilization of alternative modes of transportation including transit, bicycles, and pedestrians.
>
> *Action 1:* Increase coordination between the City and Brazos Transit District (The District) for effective transit service planning and ridership promotion in Bryan.
>
> *Action 2:* Install transit shelters at major traffic generators.
>
> *Action 5:* Compile and implement public involvement strategies to achieve a consensus on proposed thoroughfare improvement alternatives.
>
> *Action 6:* Educate the public regarding transportation issues, including public awareness of and adherence to traffic laws for all automobile drivers, bicyclists, and pedestrians.

Because of transit's importance to the success of the project, the South College Avenue Corridor planning process has paid careful attention to the utilization of transit within the corridor – especially fixed-route services provided by The District, one of the project's sponsors, and Texas A&M University.

The District currently operates 18 revenue vehicles in the B/CS area. Of those vehicles, eight are utilized on a fixed-route basis and the remainder are used for demand-responsive services. To facilitate fixed-route service, The District also operates one transfer terminal centrally located on Texas Avenue between the Bryan Central Business Corridor and the Texas A&M University campus. Fixed-route operations in B/CS currently average 1,050 riders per day. Demand-responsive services average approximately 276 riders per day. Of the fixed routes offered, the Orange, Red, and Maroon routes serve the highest number of patrons per day (218, 185, and 144, respectively). *Table 4-1* shows monthly ridership for each route from September 2000 to August 2001.

	Blue	Red	Yellow	Green	Orange	Purple	Maroon	Pink
Sep 2000	1,976	3,331	2,146	2,890	4,053	1,953	2,822	387
Oct	2,355	4,166	2,553	2,992	5,182	2,373	3,455	439
Nov	1,796	3,161	2,266	2,718	3,864	2,078	2,738	20
Dec	1,767	2,820	2,007	2,279	3,323	1,724	2,490	1
Jan 2001	2,341	3,889	2,529	2,700	4,175	1,865	3,089	87
Feb	1,968	3,942	2,143	2,391	4,139	2,200	3,230	139
Mar	1,966	3,831	2,510	2,536	4,298	2,043	3,252	234
Apr	2,142	3,582	2,308	2,185	3,964	1,689	3,395	127
May	2,387	4,220	2,778	3,735	4,417	2,171	3,584	119
Jun	2,159	3,922	2,641	2,532	4,582	2,115	3,192	15
Jul	2,171	3,839	2,379	2,418	4,530	2,159	3,122	35
Aug	2,817	4,499	2,853	3,121	4,896	2,736	3,630	21

Table 4.1 - Bryan Interurban System - Ridership for 2000-2001

Along South College Avenue, The District primarily operates the Red route of its Interurban System, which enters the corridor on North Avenue and travels north into downtown Bryan. The Yellow and Maroon routes also operate a short distance along the corridor traveling north from University Avenue in College Station to Sulphur Springs Road and traveling south from North Avenue to University Avenue, respectively.

Texas A&M University also operates one of its student shuttle routes, Traditions (the Pink route), along South College Avenue. The Traditions route enters South College Avenue from University Avenue and travels north to Villa Maria Road where it exits the corridor.[4]

During the South College Avenue Corridor planning process, the project team and local stakeholders identified the need for an enhanced public transportation presence in the corridor. Although the south end of the corridor near College Station is fairly well served by transit, the majority of the north end of the corridor is not. At a minimum a need exists for a southbound route from downtown Bryan to Villa Maria Road on South College Avenue. The additional route would greatly improve service along the corridor and would also provide additional opportunities for the use of federal funding to support transit-related pedestrian infrastructure improvements.

Officials at The District readily acknowledge the need for additional service on South College Avenue in order to achieve the objectives discussed above. Moreover, The District is intent on searching for ways to modify existing routes in order to provide service in both directions along the street. However, The District's interest in enhancing public transit in the corridor goes well beyond the introduction of a new bus fixed-route. The District believes that a long-term goal for transit in the corridor should be the reinstitution of rail trolley service on South College Avenue.

[4] To obtain a full-sized copy of Brazos Transit District's Interurban System Map or Texas A&M University's Route Information, contact either The District or Texas A&M University.

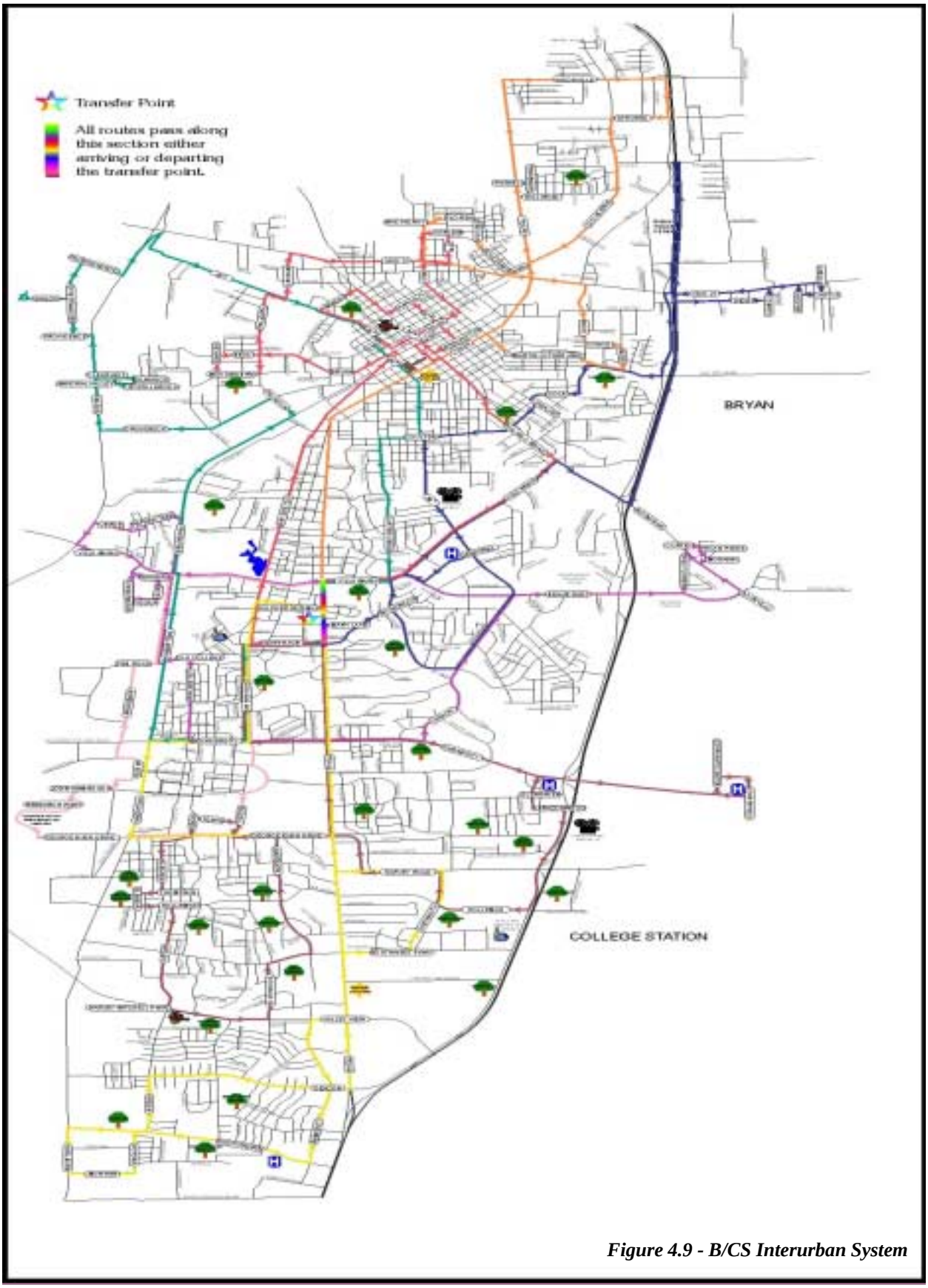

Figure 4.9 - B/CS Interurban System

The City of Bryan has also expressed a desire to promote passenger rail transportation wherever and whenever possible. The *City of Bryan Comprehensive Plan* outlines the following objective with regard to passenger rail service:

> *Objective I:* Provide and promote rail transportation to meet existing and future needs for freight and passenger rail service, including railroad safety measures to minimize conflicts with other transportation modes and adjacent land uses.

Visions of reinvigorating the South College Avenue Corridor have long included reintroducing passenger rail service to B/CS in the corridor. For example, until very recently, The District's fixed-route service in the B/CS area featured rubber-tire trolley vehicles and was called the Interurban Trolley System, named after the famed rail trolley service that once plied the streets of B/CS. While obviously not comparable to an investment in fixed-rail service, The District's Interurban Trolley System paid homage to a more glorious time in B/CS transit history and, in its own way, tried to evoke a sense of nostalgia to encourage ridership.

Whether or not passenger rail service is feasible in the South College Avenue Corridor will require additional study – and, if feasible, considerable public investment. However, the fact that an increased transit presence in the corridor is required in order to maximize service and provide important opportunities for redevelopment does not need further study.

Chapter 5 – Urban Design Concepts

5

> "A … district is largely characterized by its physical appearance. Factors influencing the appearance include architecture, façade maintenance, gateways, signage, landscaping, open space, street furniture, and lighting. Additions or improvements to the appearance will encourage residents and visitors to come to [Historic Downtown Bryan] for single and multi-purpose trips. If an area appears depressed, underutilized, or unsafe, people will avoid it. If it is active, attractive, and safe, people will come."
>
> ***City of Bryan Comprehensive Plan (1999)***

Although the above quote from the City's Comprehensive Plan deals primarily with Historic Downtown Bryan, the words can also easily be applied to South College Avenue. The current state of the physical appearance of South College Avenue can best be described as fragmented and not altogether aesthetically pleasing, although certain bright spots do exist. For example, the corridor does possess many fine trees and some properties adjacent to the street have fine edifices and are beautifully landscaped, but those are the exceptions, not the rule. In any event, South College Avenue is not currently a place where residents of and visitors to B/CS want to come "for single and multi-purpose trips." On the contrary, stakeholders along the corridor readily concede that large portions of the corridor appear underutilized and even unsafe.

Without question, the City of Bryan recognizes the benefits of urban design elements and their ability to create an identity for a specific place. More importantly, the City also recognizes a need to identify, through elements of urban design, other commercial areas within the city aside from downtown Bryan. For example, the City's Comprehensive Plan contains a strategic plan for the City's Central Business Corridor (CBC), which consists of the areas surrounding Villa Maria Road and Briarcrest Avenue. Below are the primary urban design *Goal* and *Objective A* for the CBC as identified in the City's Comprehensive Plan:

Goal: The CBC shall have attractive landscaping and area signage that identifies it as a major commercial area of the City.

Objective A: Create an aesthetic and physically appealing character in the CBC that identifies it as a major commercial area. Utilize urban design guidelines to create a more attractive appearance.

Because South College Avenue is a linear corridor much like the CBC and, in fact, intersects the CBC, the same goal and objective are being utilized here.

Public Participation

One of the primary objectives of the general public meetings and Advisory Committee meetings was to evaluate the overall attractiveness of South College Avenue and to make specific recommendations for enhancing its aesthetic qualities through improvements to a number of urban design elements. Urban design elements considered during the planning process included landscaping, gateway and monumental architecture, enhanced transit stops, signage, sidewalks, street furniture, lighting, parks, and open space.

By the end of the public involvement process in August 2001, a consensus among local stakeholders and the project team had been reached regarding the nature and scope of urban design improvements to be implemented in the South College Avenue Corridor.

Urban Design Elements

Sidewalks and Lighting

Participants at both the Advisory Committee meetings and the general public workshops quickly concluded that they preferred to extend the types of sidewalk and lighting improvements currently being installed on Main Street (north of South College Avenue) in downtown Bryan to the rest of South College Avenue. Stakeholders identified the old-fashioned style of the pedestrian-level light standards and basic concrete sidewalk *(Figure 5.1)* as appropriate for South College Avenue.

The project team explored the idea of different sidewalk and lighting treatments for different *districts* along the corridor, but discovered that stakeholders did not readily perceive (or did not wish to perceive) any distinct areas along the corridor worthy of its own sidewalk and lighting treatments. Consequently, this plan calls for the continuation of the sidewalk and lighting treatments southward, down the length of the corridor to approximately Greenway Drive, where the urban neighborhood gives way to Hensel Park on the east and open space along the TxDOT right-of-way on the west.

Figure 5.1 - Sidewalk and Lighting Improvements

Site Amenities

In conjunction with the identified light standard, stakeholders also expressed a desire for complementary street furniture, signposts, and other site amenities. During plan development, stakeholders approved benches, traffic arm masts, trash bins, and even bike racks that belong to the family of site amenities that complement the existing light standard.

Figure 5.2 - Site Amenities

The specific site amenities to be selected for the remainder of the corridor will require further input from stakeholders as selected portions of it are redeveloped over time or if stakeholders approve specific design/development standards contained in a more comprehensive overlay district for the corridor. Furthermore, much will depend on the types of amenities required at specified intersections, transit stops, and other public spaces.

Signage

In addition to site amenities, the project team explored stakeholder reactions to issues of signage in the corridor. Stakeholders generally liked the idea of improved wayfinding signage throughout the corridor, but never fully decided on the size and/or style of signage to be utilized – whether the City should utilize traditional wayfinding signage or whether new signage should be developed expressly for the corridor. Although the general consensus was that signage should complement any other amenity improvements, this matter will need to be revisited when portions of the corridor redevelopment plan enter into final design and construction or whenever the City enters into an overlay district planning phase for the corridor.

The project team also discussed the idea of uniform sign design standards for businesses and other institutions with stakeholders. It was quickly determined that stakeholders preferred to maintain the individualistic qualities of the existing signage, which they felt adds to the local charm of the corridor.

Trees

Without question, South College Avenue's greatest physical asset is its trees. Despite years of neglect of much of the rest of its public infrastructure, South College Avenue still possesses numerous beautiful trees that line the street, providing welcome shade from the Central Texas sun, standing as an enduring testament to the street's historic past.

At the outset of the planning process, representatives from Clark Condon Associates conducted an inventory of all significant trees along the corridor that might possibly be in danger if the roadway were widened without regard for their existence.[1] For this survey, significant trees are defined as

[1] For a complete inventory of significant trees along South College Avenue see *Appendix C - South College Avenue Tree Inventory*.

large (usually very old) slow-growing trees, whose canopies provide meaningful shade relief. If lost, these trees would be virtually impossible to replace immediately. Significant trees included several stands of live oaks, one post oak, one cottonwood, and one pecan.[2] Altogether, 44 significant trees were identified by this survey.

Because trees are such an integral part of the character and feel of South College Avenue, stakeholders participating at both Advisory Committee meetings and the public urban design workshops agreed that a tree-planting campaign should be included in the redevelopment of the corridor. Basic tenets of the tree-planting campaign are that *1)* trees should be replanted in the event that they are lost due to the repair and reconfiguration of the roadway; and *2)* trees should be planted in areas where they do not currently exist but are deemed needed. Stakeholders did not specify the type(s) of trees to be planted in this campaign, but given the proliferation of live oaks in the corridor, it would seem that live oaks are the tree of choice for South College Avenue.

In future, if the City enters into a more comprehensive overlay district planning phase for the corridor, this plan recommends that stakeholders identify specific guidelines for the types and spacing of trees to be planted throughout the remainder of the corridor not addressed here, especially on privately held properties. Without such guidance the redevelopment potential for the corridor would be somewhat reduced, as individual property owners might select types of trees (or other landscaping) that are not particularly compatible with the overall redevelopment effort. In such instances potential investors might be discouraged from investing in adjacent properties, leaving significant gaps in the corridor's redevelopment.

[2] During one of the public forums, the project team discovered that a local women's group planted several stands of live oaks early in the 20th Century, further adding to their historical significance.

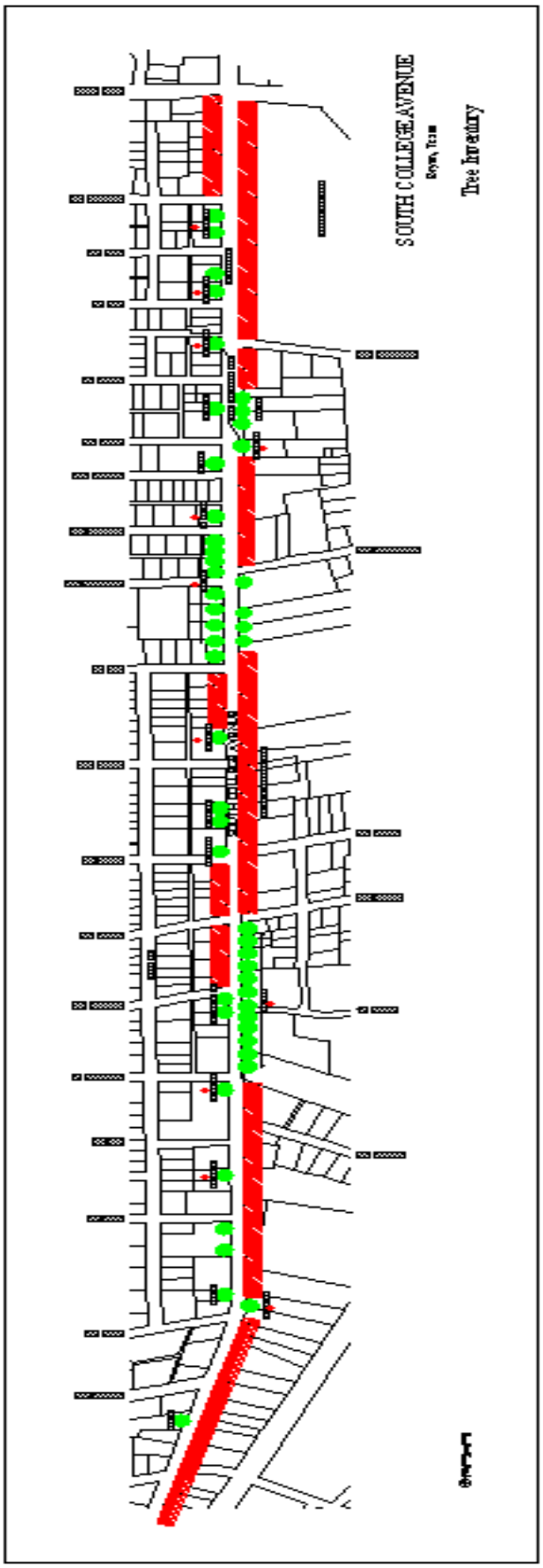

Figure 5.3 - South College Avenue Tree Inventory Map

Typical Street Enhancements

Similar to the selected site amenities for South College Avenue, the typical pattern proposed for enhancements to the street follows patterns already established along the corridor. Several of the existing stands of live oaks on South College Avenue create a pattern where trees stand in a line approximately 50 feet apart on-center. Likewise, the existing pattern for the deployment of pedestrian-level street lighting in downtown Bryan is approximately 50 feet on-center.

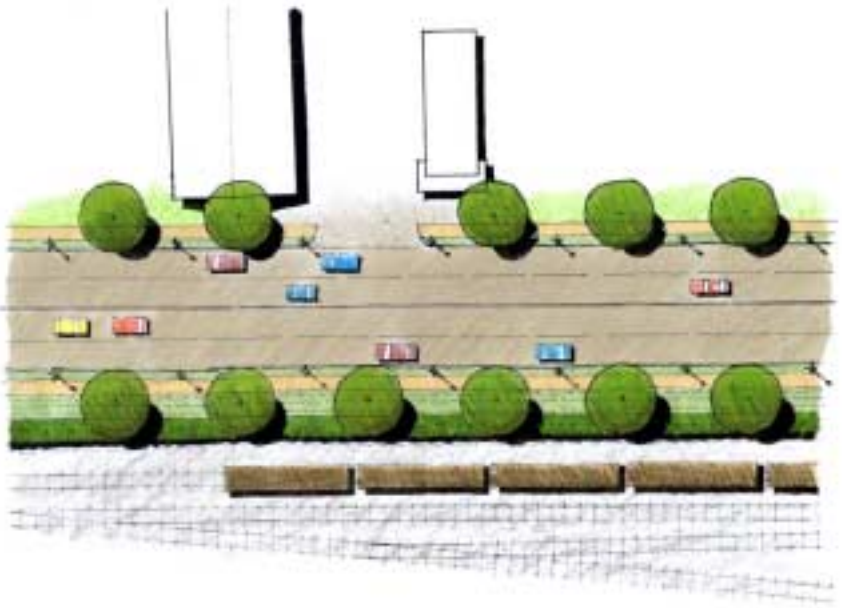

Figure 5.4 - Typical Street Enhancement Pattern

For the redevelopment of the rest of South College Avenue, Clark Condon Associates has proposed that these patterns be emulated down the entire length of the corridor on both sides – an alternating, regular pattern of trees and pedestrian-level lights lining the historic street. Also, included in this concept are sidewalks on either side of the roadway connecting the corridor from end to end.

Without question, stakeholders supported every facet of the conceptual design of typical street enhancements. According to many the historic line of trees is still what makes South College Avenue a vibrant place. The addition of sidewalks with appropriate street lighting for pedestrians further enhances the corridor's status as a desirable place to either live or do business.

Figure 5.5 is a lengthwise cross-section of the proposed pattern for typical enhancements to South College Avenue, which are currently being installed along South Main Street (north South College Avenue).

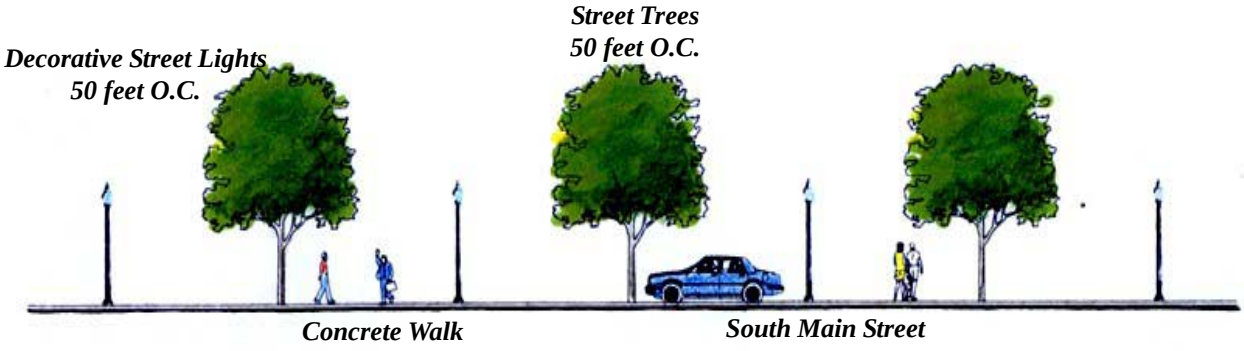

Figure 5.5 - Typical Street Enhancement Pattern - lengthwise cross-section

Figure 5.6 is a widthwise cross-section of the same improvements. In this drawing the alignment of sidewalks directly in back of the curb on either side of the roadway is more visible.

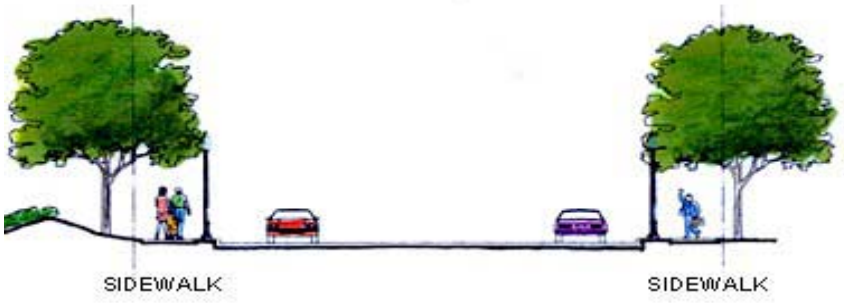

Figure 5.6 - Typical Street Enhancement Pattern - widthwise cross-section

Enhanced Intersections

As noted in the *Traffic Analysis in Chapter 4 – Mobility Analysis,* daily automobile traffic on South College Avenue is rather light at many locations along the corridor. However, several intersections on South College Avenue do experience relatively high volumes of automobile traffic and, as such, require special consideration when planning infrastructure improvements or urban design enhancements. Intersections on South College Avenue that warrant special planning consideration include Sulphur Springs Road, Villa Maria Road, Carson Street, and Texas Avenue.

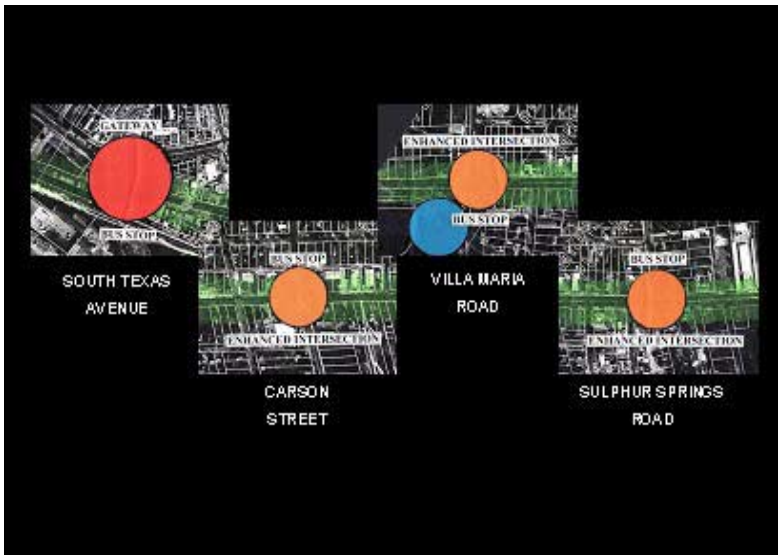

Figure 5.7 - Proposed Enhanced Intersection Locations

Sulphur Springs Road/Villa Maria Road - As noted, the south end of the corridor carries the highest volumes of both automobile and pedestrian traffic in the corridor. The intersections of Sulphur Springs Road and Villa Maria Road *(Figure 5.8)*, in particular, experience heavy traffic volumes and, as a result, are signalized. Neither intersection, however, possesses much in the way of aesthetic charm. In fact, a visitor to B/CS would find it difficult to distinguish one intersection from the other – if it were not for the posted street signs and the municipal golf course that borders the west side of South College Avenue north of Villa Maria Road.

Figure 5.8 South College Avenue at Villa Maria Road

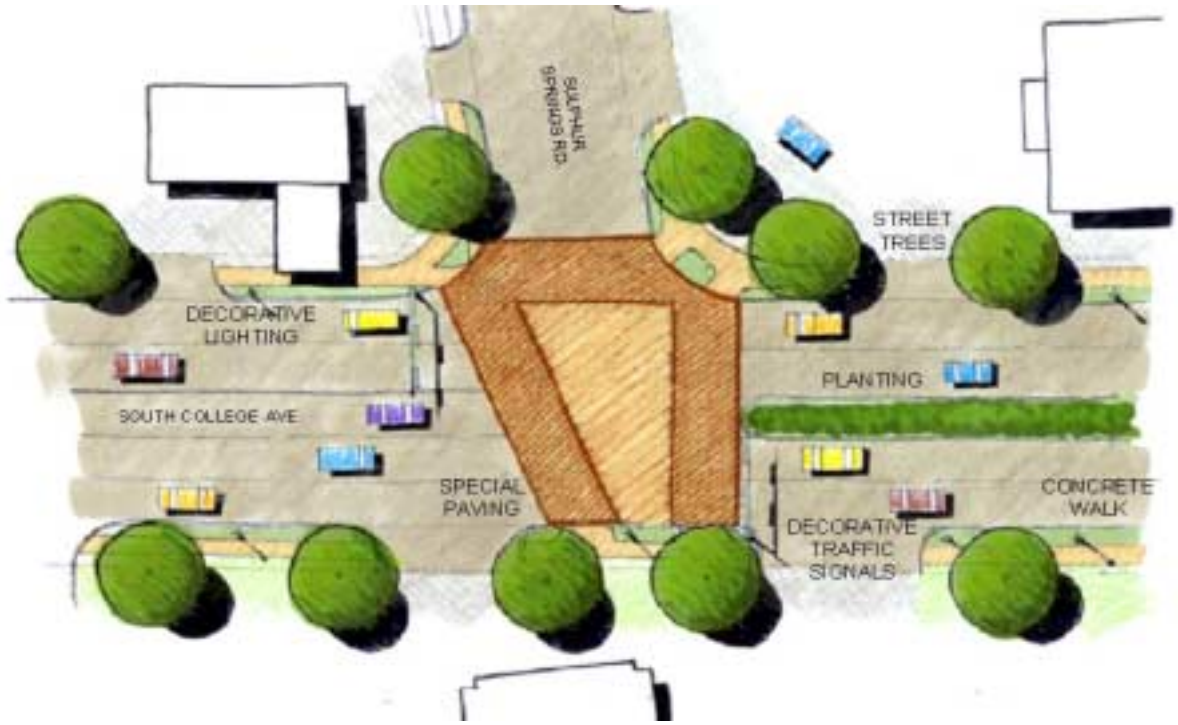

Figure 5.9 - Proposed Enhanced Intersection at South College Avenue and Sulphur Springs Road

To create a more aesthetically pleasing, functional, and safe environment that also begins to create an identity for the entire corridor, representatives from Clark Condon Associates proposed the conceptual treatments in *Figure 5.9*. Stakeholders readily embraced the understated simplicity of the intersection design in conjunction with the typical street enhancements described earlier. In particular, stakeholders reacted very positively to the need for enhanced crosswalks at Sulphur Springs and other critical intersections. The use of pavers to demarcate crosswalks was especially warmly received, although final design decisions will be made at a later date. Also proposed was the use of some type of colored pavers to fill in the intersection itself – to complement adjacent improvements and further create a sense of place at the intersection.

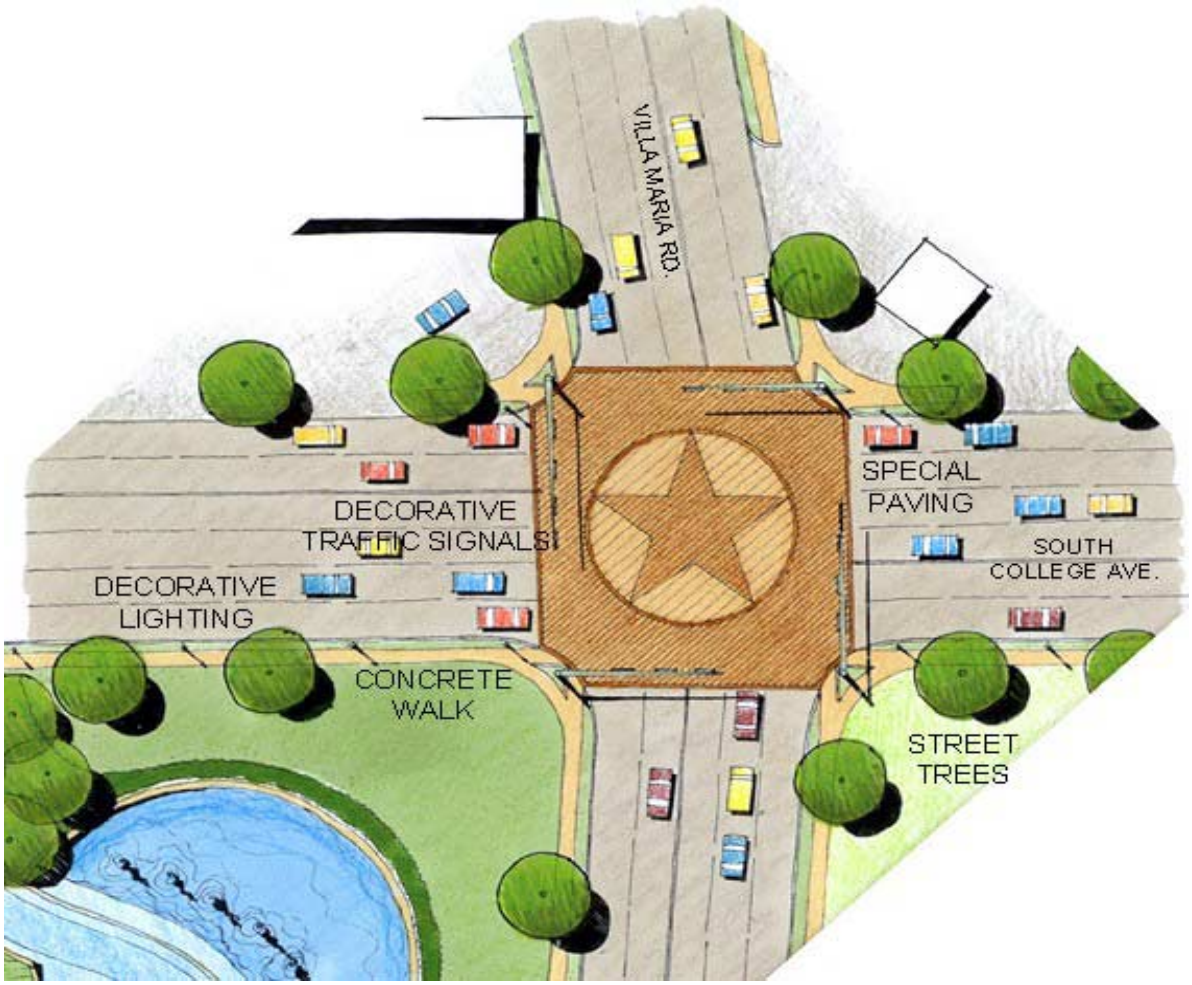

Figure 5.10 - Proposed Enhanced Intersection at South College Avenue and Villa Maria Road

Building on the design developed for the Sulphur Springs intersection, Clark Condon Associates proposed similar improvements to the intersection at Villa Maria Road. In addition, because the four-way Villa Maria Road intersection connects South College Avenue to the City's designated CBC, a *plaza* with some sort of stylized, yet simple, motif constructed with pavers was suggested for the center of the intersection. Such a feature would physically and visually connote the intersection's significance within the city. Clark Condon Associates also recommended landscaping around the existing dam and retention pond and along the parkway near the edge of the street. Each of these

conceptual recommendations was warmly received by stakeholders – although final design for each is to be determined.

Carson Street - Carson Street lies in the heart of the corridor on South College Avenue farther to the north. The land uses surrounding Carson Street include multi-family residential, single-family residential, and a variety of commercial uses. Carson Street also serves as the primary east-west thoroughfare on the north end of the corridor. As a result of these conditions, the Carson Street intersection is one of the few signalized intersections on the north end of the corridor before downtown.

Similar to the improvements proposed for the Sulphur Springs Road intersection, Clark Condon Associates has proposed the creation of enhanced crosswalks and an intersection plaza that utilizes colored pavers. Unlike Villa Maria Road, no motif is recommended for the center of this intersection.

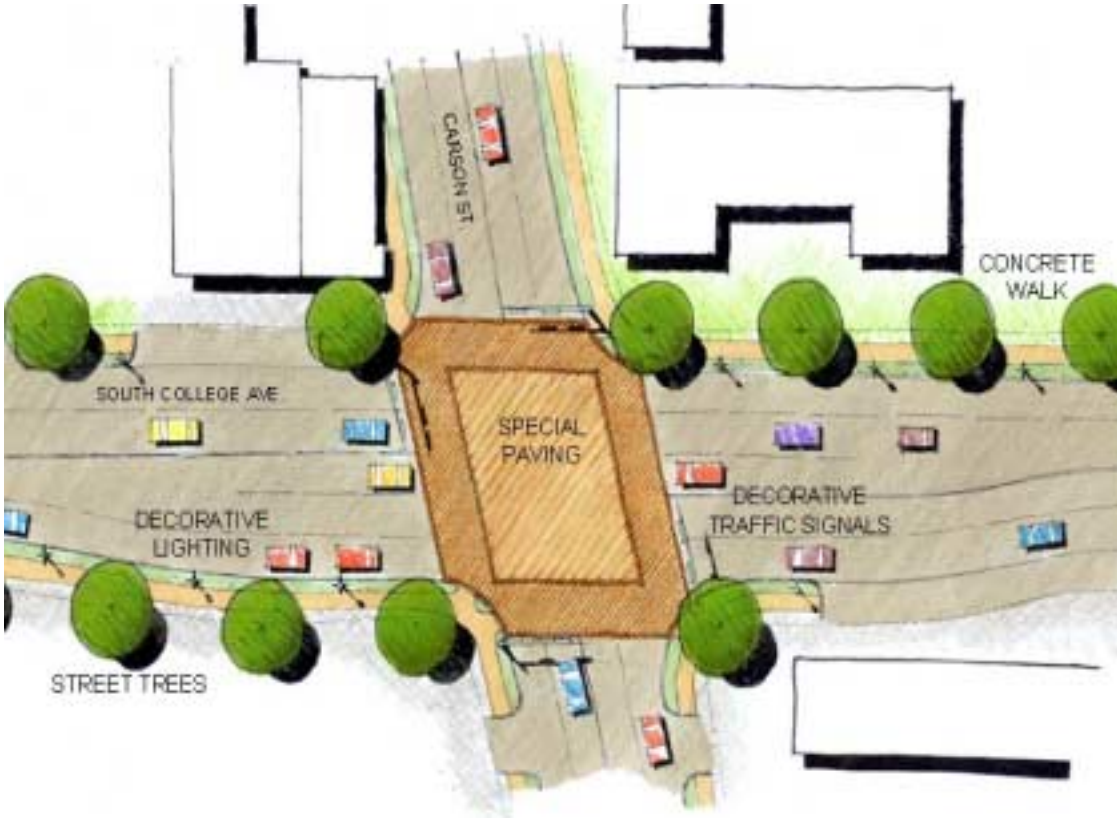

Figure 5.11 - Proposed Enhanced Intersection at South College Avenue and Carson Street

Stakeholders again welcomed Clark Condon Associates' proposal for enhanced urban design elements at the Carson Street intersection. In particular, many stakeholders noted Carson's significance as an east-west through street – especially for local neighborhood activities – and suggested that particular attention be given to these uses during final design.

The final intersection for enhanced treatment proposed by Clark Condon Associates is Texas Avenue. However, the Texas Avenue intersection is also a prime location for other enhanced treatments as well, including an enhanced transit stop and a gateway/monument location. Because it is perhaps the best location for a monument/gateway on the corridor, the proposed enhancements will be desribed in the section pertaining to monuments/gateways later in this plan.

Enhanced Transit Stop Locations

South College Avenue/Main Street was once a primary corridor for public transportation in the B/CS area, but the historic Interurban Trolley of yesteryear has been replaced by the Red route of Brazos Transit District's Interurban fixed-route bus service of today. The Red route currently serves approximately 180 persons daily, and a great majority of those patrons either board or alight somewhere along South College Avenue. However, bus stops along the corridor are virtually non-existent, and if they do exist, they are seriously dilapidated and outdated.

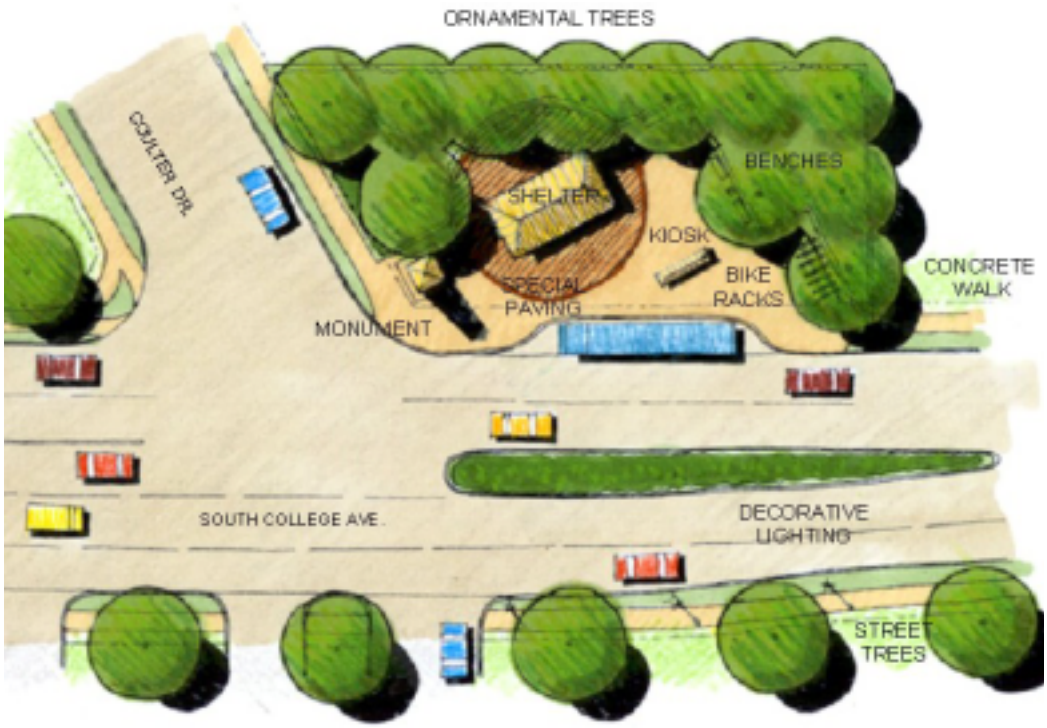

Figure 5.12 - Proposed Transit Stop Enhancements at South College Avenue and Coulter Drive

Based on boarding and alighting frequency data, and through discussions with representatives of Brazos Transit District, the project team identified six key locations, either at or near important intersections, for the establishment of enhanced transit stops. The locations identified include *Sulphur Springs Drive, Villa Maria Road, Carson Street, Coulter Drive or Dodge Street, Texas Avenue,* and *32nd Street* near downtown Bryan.

In general, transit stop enhancements can be incorporated into the intersection enhancements already presented above. Elements of these enhancements will likely include shelters, benches, trash bins, wayfinding signage, bike racks, and lighting. In certain instances, bus turnouts – as depicted near Coulter Drive in *Figure 5.12* – could be incorporated into the design of the transit stop. However, bus turnouts greatly increase the expense associated with a proposed stop, and may prove infeasible at some locations due to limitations on the City's ability to acquire additional right-of-way. In any event, the size and scope of any proposed enhanced transit stop will have to be carefully considered during final design phases.

Stakeholders also have recognized the need for an enhanced transit presence on South College Avenue. Indeed, both workshop and Advisory Committee participants expressed general pleasure over the conceptual transit stop designs and the possibilities for federal funding assistance and economic development associated with those improvements. Stakeholders are, however, also cognizant

of the limitations on right-of-way in certain areas of the corridor and are concerned about costs. Consequently, transit usage, final design considerations, and available funding will determine the size and scope of the transit stops to be constructed.

Gateway/Monument Locations

Texas Avenue - Texas Avenue is the primary thoroughfare for the entire B/CS region. It runs parallel to South College Avenue for much of its length, but nearly intersects with it just south of downtown Bryan. From the strip of roadway that links the two streets at this location, several important directions can be seen – north to downtown Bryan, southeast down Texas Avenue toward College Station, and southwest down South College Avenue toward Texas A&M University. This unique vantage point makes the intersection of South College Avenue and Texas Avenue the perfect site for either a gateway or a monumental architectural statement – or both.

Figure 5.13 - Proposed Gateway/Monument Enhancements at South College Avenue and Texas Avenue

For the development of the South College Avenue/Texas Avenue intersection, representatives from Clark Condon Associates created the conceptual design in *Figure 5.13*. Hallmarks of the design include an ultra-stylized motif stamped into the intersection plaza with colored pavers, decorative traffic signals, an enhanced transit stop, special pavers on adjacent sidewalks, additional landscaping, and, most importantly, a monumental object of art or architectural feature. This feature not only designates the area as special within the South College Avenue/Texas Avenue corridors, but it also creates a gateway from these corridors into downtown. *Figure 5.14* is a cross-section of a proposed gateway monument at the intersection of South College Avenue and Texas Avenue.

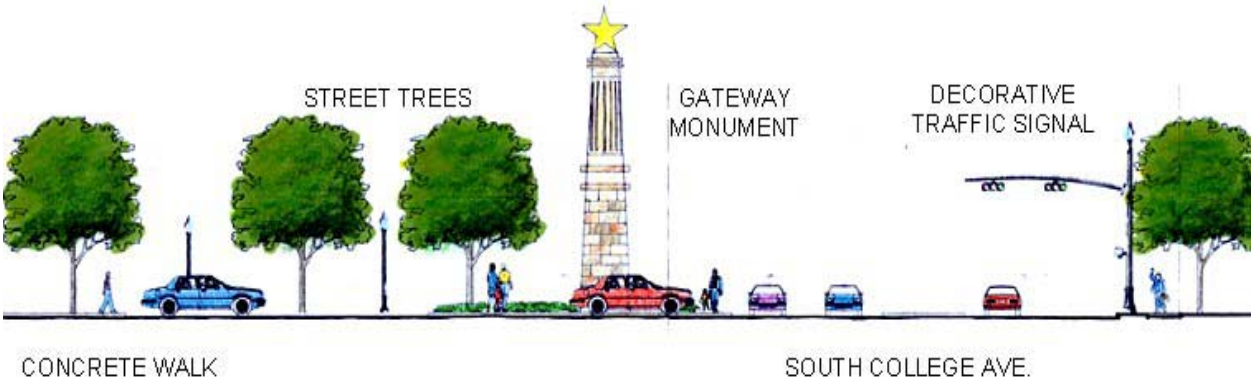

Figure 5.14 - Cross-section of Proposed Gateway/Monument Enhancements at South College Avenue and Texas Avenue

The concept of utilizing the South College Avenue/Texas Avenue intersection as a monument/gateway site was solidly supported by local stakeholders. However, the type of monument or object of art that might be placed at that location was never seriously discussed during any stakeholder meetings. Also, concerns about costs were raised again. As for the other, more typical street improvements, however, stakeholders once again voiced unequivocable support.

Greenway Drive/Hardy Street - Other gateway/monument opportunities on South College Avenue identified by Clark Condon Associates and the project team are located the intersections of Greenway Drive and Hardy Street.

Greenway Drive is located at the southern-most tip of the urbanized part of the South College Avenue Corridor. South of Greenway Drive, bordering South College Avenue, is College Station's Hensel Park on the east and large swaths of open land on the west. The City of Bryan has erected a "Welcome to Bryan" sign at that site that greets travelers heading north into the city.

Figure 5.15 - Proposed Gateway/Monument Enhancements at South College Avenue and Greenway Avenue

Clark Condon Associates is proposing a similar, but not quite as understated, gateway be erected at that site *(Figure 5.15)*. The gateway would include some form of low-scale monumental architectural feature on either side of the roadway, connected by a texturized band of pavement – most likely colored pavers that complement other enhancements in the corridor. The typical street enhancments begun in downtown and extending the length of the corridor would terminate at that location.

Figure 5.16 - Proposed Gateway/Monument Enhancements at South College Avenue and Hardy Street

At the intersection of Hardy Street on the north end of South College Avenue near downtown, Clark Condon Associates foresees a similar entryway from the downtown into the heart of the South College Avenue Corridor *(Figure 5.16)*. From this elevated vantage point, the entire length of South College Avenue to its terminus

at Texas A&M University is visible *(Figure 5.17)*.

The physical characteristics of both of these proposed sites make them ideal for creating corresponding gateways into the heart of the South College Avenue Corridor. Furthermore, these gateways would create definitive boundaries for the corridor that will help create a sense of place on South College Avenue.

Figure 5.17 - View South from Proposed Gateway/Monument Site at South College Avenue and Hardy Street

Reaction to the project team's proposals for gateways at Greenway Avenue and Hardy Street was mixed. Stakeholders expressed satisfaction with the gateway design concepts proposed for both locations; however, with the exception of the proposed gateway at the intersection of Texas Avenue and South College Avenue, gateways are considered a lower priority – especially when the availability of funds is limited. Stakeholders would much rather see roadway repairs and the typical roadway improvements go forward before funds are spent on gateways at Greenway Drive or Hardy Street.

Parks and Open Space

South College Avenue possesses very little park or usable open space, despite its length, with one very important exception – the Bryan Municipal Golf Course *(Figure 5.18)*. The golf course lies adjacent to South College Avenue between Roundtree Drive and Villa Maria Road. A large earthen berm separates the golf course and Country Club Lake from the roadway. In its present condition, very little vegetation, aside from a few scattered trees and grass, exists on the site. By and large, the space is significantly underutilized.

Figure 5.18 - View of Bryan Municipal Golf Course from South College Avenue

Representatives from Clark Condon Associates have proposed two physical enhance-

ments at either end of the park space that would greatly enhance the beauty of the area and would help attract more people to the park. Conceptual designs envisioned by Clark Condon Associates follow.

On the north side of the site, Clark Condon Associates has designed a *pocket park* within the larger park area *(Figure 5.19)*. This pocket park features a park entrance sign, a central plaza with an interactive water feature for children, another fountain, and a sheltered bandstand or picnic area. Enveloping the area are numerous trees and vegetation. Automobile parking is located adjacent to the site.

Figure 5.19 - Pocket Park on North side of Bryan Municipal Golf Course

On the south side of the park, Clark Condon Associates has enhanced the design of the existing dam and water retention pond *(Figure 5.20)*. Surrounding the pond is a hedge or a garden. Additional trees provide shade and create a more park-like feel for the area. In the retention pond, Clark Condon Associates has added water features or fountains that help to enliven this passive park setting.

These conceptual designs for the park were very well received by participants at the various public meetings. In general stakeholders felt that these improvements, in conjunction with typical street enhancements and the tree planting campaign, would prove to have the greatest impact on the redevelopment of the South College Avenue Corridor.

Figure 5.20 - Enhanced Treatment on South side of Bryan Municipal Golf Course

However, concerns about costs were pervasive throughout the planning process. With every proposed enhancement, questions regarding cost were raised in one context or another. Given that the primary short-term goal for the redevelopment of South College Avenue, repair of the roadway and installation of sidewalks, is likely to cost approximately $22,000,000, other enhancements to the corridor seem almost superflous to stakeholders. Consequently, all of the enhancements proposed by the project team are minimal in terms of magnitude and price.

Chapter 7 – Funding and Implementation Strategy examines the issues of cost raised by stakeholders. It delineates all of the costs associated with the proposed improvements; it explores a variety of funding alternatives and mechanisms; and it develops short- and long-term strategies for securing funds and making the redevelopment of South College Avenue a reality.

Chapter 6 – Market Area Analysis

6

"The business development climate in Historic Downtown Bryan, the Central Business Corridor, and *other areas* must continue to be strengthened through a joint public-private initiative to promote the establishment and growth of desirable retail, service, restaurant, and entertainment businesses."

City of Bryan Comprehensive Plan (1999)

The primary ingredient necessary to enable public-private cooperation and spur economic investment in the South College Avenue Corridor is an honest and accurate assessment of the corridor's (and the City's) market potential for investment. Having a deep understanding of the demographic, firmagraphic, and psychographic characteristics of the market area enables City leaders and others promoting the redevelopment of the South College Avenue Corridor to attract the type and quality of private investment that will be most successful in the South College Avenue Corridor context.

Demographic Profile

In the 2000 Census, the B/CS Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) had a population of over 135,000 persons. The market area surrounding South College Avenue includes every person within a two-mile radius of the corridor and consists of the majority of the B/CS MSA. In general, the South College Avenue Corridor market area can be regarded as a slow growth area – the population is only projected to increase by 1.2% and households by 2.3% by 2005. Sixty-two percent of the residential properties are renter occupied. The region is also remarkably young; 58% of the population is under the age of 30.

Geographically within the B/CS region, the slowest growth areas and the areas that are actually anticipated to lose population over the next five years are primarily centered on South College Avenue – as *Figures 6.1 and 6.2* demonstrate. *Figure 6.1* shows the current block group-level distribution of the population of the South College Avenue Corridor market area. The block groups with the highest populations densities (yellow, orange, and red) are those on the outer edges of the ring on the map – the suburbs. The block groups with the lowest population densities (green) are primarily located well within the ring on the map – the heart of the City of Bryan.

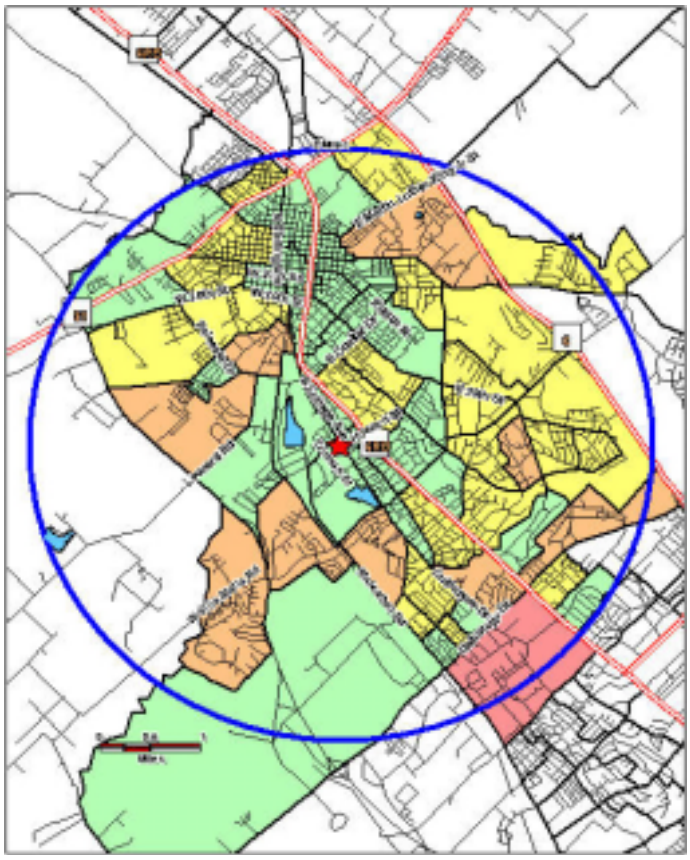

Figure 6.1 - 2000 Total Population by Block Group

Figure 6.2 shows the projected population change between 2000 and 2005. The areas in blue, the heart of the city, are actually projected to lose population over the next five years.

Figure 6.2 - 2005 Population Change by Block Group

Firmagraphic Profile

In 1990 the City of Bryan had a total of 1,760 classifiable businesses and College Station had 1,012. Over the past ten years, Bryan has seen a net increase of 277 businesses, while College Station has seen a net increase of 450 businesses. The City of Bryan peaked at 2,537 businesses in 1996 and had approximately 2,062 businesses as of the fourth quarter of 2000.

Over the past ten years, Bryan has experienced significant increases in six major categories (Standard Industrial Classifications). Miscellaneous Retail has added 136 new operations; Business Services has increased by 63 establishments; Agricultural Services grew by 37; Food Stores increased by 34; Special Trade Contractors added 30 businesses; and Personal Services experienced a net increase of 21 firms. Building Materials, Repair Services, Automotive Dealers, Service Stations, and Wholesale Trade suffered significant losses over the same time period.

Gross sales of all reporting outlets in the City of Bryan grew from $900 million in 1990 to $1.6 billion in 2000. Sales growth peaked in Bryan in 1992 and 1996, rising 10% and 10.1%, respectively. College Station had sales gains of 18.3% and 18.4% during those same years. Since 1996 sales in both cities have tapered somewhat.

Based on recent demographic and firmagraphic trends, these patterns are unlikely to change. The College Station economy will continue to expand at a faster rate than Bryan, unless policies are developed and changes are put into effect. The successful redevelopment of South College Avenue and downtown Bryan could be the catalysts that reverse those trends.

To further demonstrate the loss of business experienced in the City of Bryan over the past ten years, the FH&R report examines the demand and supply for several categories of business in the South College Avenue Corridor market area, and contrasts those statistics against the City of College Station and the entire B/CS region.

Demand and Supply of Eating and Drinking Establishments in Bryan/College Station

Demand for eating and drinking in the B/CS region is measured by two methods. The actual demand is equal to gross sales tax receipts reported to the State of Texas. Demand for food and beverage away from home is based on data from the Consumer Expenditure Survey (CES), Personal Consumption Expenditures (PCE), National Income and Product Accounts (NIPA), Census of Retail Trade (CRT), and Claritas' demographic estimates. The supply of restaurants is tabulated from State of Texas records and other databases and FH&R's survey of restaurants.

During FY2000, the City of Bryan had gross sales of $63.8 million and the City of College Station had gross sales of $123.1 million. In Bryan, sales have increased by nearly $20 million ($41.6 million to $63.8 million), while the number of restaurant outlets has decreased (from 165 to 159) over the ten-year period between 1990 and 2000. Average sales increased, however, from $252,479 to $401,328. In College Station, sales increased from $53.2 million to $123 million, while the number of establishments increased dramatically from 121 to 174 and average sales jumped from $440,176 to $707,816.

Demand and Supply of Other Businesses

Within the South College Avenue Corridor market area, residents are consuming $228 million annually of the following goods and services:

- Alcohol, Tobacco $23,899,950
- Auto Fuel, Auto Servicing $34,362,530
- Clothing Cleaning, Clothing Repairs ..... $ 4,686,020
- Computers, Office Equipment ..... $ 5,126,340
- Entertainment, Recreation ..... $ 5,819,730
- Health Care $23,165,820
- Home Entertainment Equipment ..... $ 9,424,030
- Restaurants $35,627,620
- Toys, Sporting Goods ..... $ 9,262,220
- Vehicles, Boats $77,195,140

While this level of demand is substantial, the areas which the consultants at FH&R regard as underrepresented and would be beneficial to the redevelopment of the corridor are: 1) Home Entertainment Equipment, 2) Computers and Office Equipment, and 3) Restaurants. In particular, FH&R notes that the data suggests that the introduction of one large-scale Home Entertainment store specializing in TVs, appliances, and sound equipment could be successful in the corridor. Although the automotive sector continues to be strong within the city limits, FH&R believes that the existence of more car lots would be detrimental to the redevelopment of the corridor.

Other findings contained in the report argue that Entertainment, Recreation businesses would not likely find the corridor profitable. Furthermore, the introduction of Health Care operations could have either positive or negative impacts on the corridor – depending on the operating entity. However, FH&R also believes that the likelihood of any new Health Care facilities locating in the corridor is remote.

The following business categories have shown tremendous growth (in excess of 100%) over the past ten years in the two ZIP Codes that include the corridor and downtown Bryan: Miscellaneous Retail – 223%, Fabricated Metal Products – 250%, Wholesale Trade Durable Goods – 125%, Building Materials – 146%, Food Stores – 136%, Apparel and Accessory Stores – 260%, Furniture & Home Furnishing Stores – 200%, and Business Services - 368%. Despite this growth, FH&R believes that some new competition on a modest scale could be supported in these categories.

Psychographic Profile

To generate a psychographic profile of consumers in the South College Avenue Corridor market area, FH&R relies on consumer data from MicroVision. MicroVision is a micro-geographic consumer targeting system that goes beyond traditional geo-demographic analysis. Through MicroVision, consumers are more readily identified and companies can respond profitably to ever-changing consumer demands.

MicroVision's aggregates consumer demand data and U.S. Census data into a system built at the ZIP+4 level of geography. The data can create an exact profile of a company's best customers and allows it to target as few as five to fifteen households for a direct marketing campaign, instead of the 300 households of traditional targeting systems.

Every household in the United States is classified into one of 50 unique lifestyle segments. Each lifestyle segment consists of households that are at similar points in the lifecycle and share common interests, purchasing patterns, financial behavior, and needs for products and services.

To provide further flexibility to consumer segmentation strategies, MicroVision assigns each of the 50 lifestyle segments to one of nine groups. Each group contains segments with similar characteristics or habits, creating the ability to simultaneously target many lifestyle segments that will respond alike to products or services.

The dominant MicroVision segment within the B/CS MSA is known as *University USA*, which reflects the large college student population associated with Texas A&M University and Blinn College. The dominant MicroVision segment within the South College Avenue Corridor market area, the two-mile radius around the corridor, is known as *Trying Metro Times*, a name which mirrors the economic fortunes of many of the area's residents.

The following pages contain a description of the consumer habits and lifestyle characteristics associated with the *University USA* and *Trying Metro Times* MicroVision segments. See *Appendix D - South College Avenue Corridor Market Study – FH&R, Incorporated* for a complete listing of the distribution of MicroVision Lifestyle Segments in the B/CS MSA and the South College Avenue Corridor market area.[1]

[1] Businesses interested in learning more about how to utilize MicroVision data or locating in either the South College Avenue or B/CS MSA can contact FH&R, Incorporated, in Houston, Texas

University USA Profile

1999 Lifestyle Data

Lifestyle Profiles with the *Highest* Market Index

LEISURE & RECREATION	Percent Penetration	MicroVision Index	Rank
1. Eat at quick service specialty bagel outlets	3.2	358	1
2. Played tennis in the past year	14.8	322	1
3. Played billiards/pool in the last year	33.2	319	1
4. Went roller blading/in-line skating last year	11.9	316	1
5. Shopped at The Gap in the last 4 weeks	19.5	306	1
6. Shopped at the Circle K in the last 6 months	17.0	299	1
7. Own roller blades/in-line skates	17.3	282	1
8. Drank Tequila in the last 6 months	21.3	277	1
9. Drank Miller Light beer in the last 6 months	15.2	273	1
10. Went jogging in the last year	23.5	263	1
11. Eat at quick service coffee house restaurants	2.9	259	3
12. Wear soft contact lenses	18.1	257	1
13. Attended movies 2-3 times per month	18.1	256	2
14. Weight lifted in the last year	20.9	256	1
15. Shopped at The Limited in the past 4 weeks	7.2	252	2
16. Shopped at Citgo Quik Mart in the last 6 months	9.8	249	2
17. Played basketball in the last year	21.7	246	1
18. Drank domestic red wine in the last 6 months	17.3	244	3
19. Went to a bar/nightclub in the last year	45.5	242	1
20. Ate at Little Caesars in the last 4 weeks	5.7	241	1

COMMUNICATIONS & TECHNOLOGY	Percent Penetration	MicroVision Index	Rank
1. PC primarily used for education/school	29.9	336	1
2. Switched online/internet service provider at least once last year	9.3	265	4
3. Average monthly expenses for online/internet is < $15	11.7	264	1
4. Use internet/online services 11 or more times/week	18.0	262	2
5. Method of collect calling is 1-800-collect	9.0	231	2
6. PC is used 21+ hours/week	17.0	203	2
7. PC primarily used for games	7.0	172	2
8. PC primarily used for surfing internet or world wide web	5.8	171	7
9. Switched long distance company at least once in past year	36.6	166	2
10. Average monthly expenses for local phone service is <$20	24.7	163	6

FINANCIAL SERVICES	Percent Penetration	MicroVision Index	Rank
1. Have an auto loan from a vehicle manufacturer	18.9	248	1
2. Have a loan for furniture, appliances or electronics	20.5	225	1
3. Changed residence or relocated last year	27.6	222	1
4. Transfer funds over the telephone	21.2	211	1
5. Would do home banking by personal computer is tech. available	56.9	207	1
6. Have renter insurance	19.8	206	8
7. Receive primary financial advice from a friend/family member	32.1	182	1
8. Worked w/financial planner to set up financial plan	12.8	181	5
9. Strongly Agree-Life insurance companies give reliable advice	17.5	173	3
10. Bank primarily by ATM	54.0	170	3

47 - University USA Segment

1999

Sustaining Singles Group

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1999 Lifestyle Data

MEDIA PREFERENCES	Percent Penetration	MicroVision Index	Rank
1. Read Rolling Stone Magazine	16.6	411	1
2. Read Women's Fashion Magazines	18.8	311	2
3. Read Music Magazines	27.4	299	1
4. Watched MTV last week	30.0	292	1
5. Read Vogue Magazine	12.3	287	2
6. Read Glamour Magazine	16.3	285	1
7. Read Playboy Magazine	13.0	276	1
8. Read the Cable Guide	14.1	269	2
9. Read Cosmopolitan Magazine	19.9	260	1
10. Listen to modern rock	11.6	247	1
11. Listen to album oriented/progressive rock format	23.1	245	1
12. Watch the MTV Music Video Awards	18.4	241	2
13. Watch Simpsons	24.2	237	1
14. Watch Party Of Five	10.1	229	1
15. Watch Simpsons MONDAY-FRIDAY	15.2	226	1
16. Read Computer Magazines	17.7	204	2
17. Watch Friends	27.4	203	1
18. Read PC World	5.8	198	3
19. Watched VH-1 last week	14.8	198	2
20. Listen to classic rock	15.9	197	1

HOME FURNISHINGS & IMPROVEMENTS	Percent Penetration	MicroVision Index	Rank
1. Home has a refrigerator (not frost free)	21.4	163	10
2. Home has a water purifier/filter	23.3	146	6
3. Purchased a coffee maker-automatic drip or electric last year	7.2	141	2
4. Purchased a vacuum cleaner last year	9.0	136	5
5. Purchased kitchen cooking/serving products last year	32.9	135	1
6. purchased lawn/porch furniture last year	4.3	134	7
7. Own a espresso/cappuccino maker	7.6	130	15
8. Purchased a sofa sectional last year	6.1	118	8
9. bedding/bath goods, last year	59.9	115	1
10. Purchased table settings last year	14.1	109	22

POWER UTILITIES	Percent Penetration	MicroVision Index	Rank
1. Last contacted electric company to change or add a service	16.7	260	2
2. Don't know heater type	17.8	252	4
3. Don't know type of water heater	23.6	225	8
4. Heat pump used as air conditioner is 6+ years old	6.3	192	5
5. Heater type is built-in room or baseboard heaters	16.6	185	6
6. Last contacted gas company to change or add service	8.5	184	3
7. Electric bill averages less than $40	35.3	183	8
8. Would like to choose natural gas or energy provider	31.0	156	1
9. Prime heating system fuel is electricity	35.2	150	9
10. Last contacted electric company due to billing problems	12.5	145	11

47 - University USA Segment

Sustaining Singles Group 1999

Trying Metro Times Profile

1999 Lifestyle Data

Lifestyle Profiles with the *Highest* Market Index

LEISURE & RECREATION	Percent Penetration	MicroVision Index	Rank
1. Ate at Sonic's in the last 4 weeks	2.2	153	9
2. Smoke 9 or more packs of cigarettes/week (heavy smoker)	11.9	151	5
3. Ate at Ponderosa in the last 4 weeks	1.5	142	8
4. Ate Domino's in the last 4 weeks	3.1	142	8
5. Ate at Long John Silver's in the last 4 weeks	2.9	140	9
6. Ate at Hardee's in the last 4 weeks	5.6	136	12
7. Shopped at the Circle K in the last 6 months	7.7	136	12
8. Purchased VCR/electronic toys in the past year	16.4	133	7
9. Shopped at convenient food mart in the last 6 months	7.7	133	5
10. Shopped at ARCO in the last 6 months	4.8	132	11
11. Ate at the Golden Corral in the last 4 weeks	1.2	132	10
12. Smoked Marlboro cigarettes in the last year	12.9	128	8
13. Ate at Jack In The Box in the last 4 weeks	1.7	128	12
14. Purchased cigarettes at convenience store in last 30 days	19.4	128	10
15. Shopped at Superamerica in the last 6 months	3.7	127	7
16. Purchased camping equipment last year	8.7	125	13
17. Get car's oil changed by other household member	9.6	124	12
18. Purchased fountain soft drinks at convenience stores in last 30 days	12.1	123	11
19. Purchased tennis shoes in the last year	11.3	122	10
20. Spend $50 or more per month at convenience stores	18.2	122	9

COMMUNICATIONS & TECHNOLOGY	Percent Penetration	MicroVision Index	Rank
1. Do not use long distance phone service	8.3	195	8
2. Method of collect calling is 1-800-collect	6.1	157	8
3. Primary reason for paging services is for family use	5.1	141	8
4. Have selective block for regular wire phone	18.3	133	8
5. Have call blocking for regular wire phone	12.8	132	8
6. Have made collect calls in past 6 months	15.1	129	10
7. Have caller id for regular wire phone	37.8	129	7
8. Household does not have a PC	67.4	127	8
9. Plan to add new service to regular wire phone in next 6 months	9.6	125	12
10. Plan to add caller ID to regular wire phone next 6 months	5.1	124	20

FINANCIAL SERVICES	Percent Penetration	MicroVision Index	Rank
1. Have credit life insurance	8.3	147	9
2. Use credit card less than once a month	20.0	140	8
3. Do not have an ATM or debit card	43.2	134	13
4. Do not know the amount of money needed to retire comfortably	58.2	124	10
5. Strongly Agree: Banks give reliable advice	22.5	124	8
6. Have a loan(s) from a consumer finance company	13.2	120	17
7. Use teller at any branch to pay bills	15.7	118	11
8. Have a loan for furniture, appliances or electronics	10.7	118	19
9. Have credit card credit insurance	7.8	115	17
10. Agree: Consumer finance company's give reliable advice	9.2	112	18

40 - Trying Metro Times Segment

1999

Mainstream Singles Group

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1999 Lifestyle Data

MEDIA PREFERENCES	Percent Penetration	MicroVision Index	Rank
1. Read National Enquirer Magazine	12.6	165	6
2. Watch Sally Jessy Raphael	7.3	164	5
3. Watch Maury Povich Show	6.9	163	5
4. Watch Rescue 911	8.6	161	3
5. Watch WWF Wrestling	7.0	158	10
6. Watch Jerry Springer Show	7.9	148	9
7. Read Field & Stream Magazine	8.2	147	6
8. Watch Star Trek: Deep Space Nine	7.1	147	4
9. Watch Jenny Jones Show	7.4	146	11
10. Watch Family Matters	11.8	144	8
11. Watch Baywatch MONDAY-FRIDAY	6.2	144	10
12. Watch Montel Williams Show	8.7	143	9
13. Watch The Days Of Our Lives	8.7	143	7
14. Watch America's Most Wanted: Final Justice	8.4	143	9
15. Watch America's Most Wanted: Final Justice	8.4	143	9
16. Read Rolling Stone Magazine	5.7	140	10
17. Watch Living Single	7.1	140	11
18. Watch Walker Texas Ranger	17.4	139	4
19. Read Star Magazine	5.6	138	9
20. Watched TNN (The Nashville Network) last week	18.9	135	8

HOME FURNISHINGS & IMPROVEMENTS	Percent Penetration	MicroVision Index	Rank
1. Home has a refrigerator (not frost free)	16.0	122	14
2. Purchased curtains last year	4.8	119	12
3. Purchased kitchen/dining room furniture last year	5.3	118	11
4. Remodeled the kitchen last year	4.9	111	10
5. Purchased a coffee maker-automatic drip or electric last year	5.6	110	14
6. Purchased a clothes dryer last year	3.9	105	17
7. Own a deep fryer	19.6	104	17
8. Purchased a vacuum cleaner last year	6.9	104	25
9. Home has a stove and oven combination	84.3	104	15
10. Remodeled the bathroom last year	5.7	101	18

POWER UTILITIES	Percent Penetration	MicroVision Index	Rank
1. Last contacted gas company was due to billing problems	10.6	172	4
2. Have 1 window or wall-mounted air conditioner	19.0	150	10
3. Use a window or wall-mounted air conditioner	35.1	143	11
4. Heater type is other	13.4	141	14
5. Strongly Agree: Easier to replace old appliance w/same brand	11.0	140	11
6. Do not have a cooling system thermostat	19.7	139	14
7. Last contacted electric company due to billing problems	12.0	139	12
8. Have a gas stove and oven combination (non-convection)	41.5	139	11
9. Last contacted gas company to check on account	5.4	139	14
10. Last contacted gas company for non-billing issue last month	7.5	139	10

40 - Trying Metro Times Segment

Mainstream Singles Group

1999

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Chapter 7 – Funding and Implementation Strategies

7

"Any enhancement plan must be considered an economic development plan as well as building renovation and appearance plan. Economic Development is the cooperative action between the public and private sectors, which results in widespread and sustained private investment."

City of Bryan Comprehensive Plan (1999)

Through the development of its Comprehensive Plan, the City of Bryan has begun to create the necessary public/private framework to overcome many economic development challenges faced by the City and ensure the prosperity of its citizens. The Comprehensive Plan has allowed for the creation of the recently approved *Downtown Masterplan,* the *Central Business Corridor Plan,* and this *South College Avenue Corridor Redevelopment Plan*. More importantly here, the Comprehensive Plan has provided critical guidance concerning the City's goals, objectives, and priorities as they relate to the redevelopment of South College Avenue and the creation of this plan.

In addition to relying on the Comprehensive Plan for guidance, the successful implementation of this *South College Avenue Corridor Redevelopment Plan* will depend upon 1) continued public/private cooperation over time; 2) identifying and securing adequate financial resources; 3) the marketing of investment opportunities in the corridor; and, 4) regulatory consistency within the City.

Public/Private Cooperation

Chapters 1-5 detailed much of the effort to include the citizens of B/CS and stakeholders along the South College Avenue Corridor in the beginning stages of the planning process. However, for this endeavor to be truly successful, the City and stakeholders will have to maintain high levels of cooperation as the project develops over the course of the next several years. The project team noted on a number of occasions and in a number of ways that the redevelopment of the South College Avenue Corridor was not a short-term project, and that not all the changes would occur immediately. On the contrary, South College Avenue did not become an afterthought overnight, and its redevelopment will take time.

The types of public/private partnerships that will need to occur for this project to be successful are many and varied, and will doubtless require varying degrees of financial commitments from both sides. The City has already recognized that the total cost for the repair of the roadway and the installation of sidewalks and lighting will equal nearly $22 million. At the end of 2001, the City is prepared to begin Phase I of street reconstruction from 32nd Street to Groesbeck Avenue at a cost of nearly $3 million, but otherwise no other funds have been committed. When subsequent phases of the project are initiated, it is likely that the City will look to sources of funds outside of city coffers. In particular the City will be looking for private sector partners who would stand to benefit from public infrastructure improvements being constructed either on or adjacent to their property. As example, a private business owner might find it to his/her benefit to donate a portion of his/her property for the construction of an adjacent public space or enhanced transit stop. If designed, built, and maintained well, this space could provide a steady stream of patrons to the business owner. For other portions of the project local stakeholders may be asked to contribute more indirectly – through the assessment of taxes, user fees, or other local funding mechanisms.

Economic Development Mechanisms

The following section is a menu of public and semi-public (or semi-private) economic development mechanisms or strategies that the City and its partners may consider utilizing to support the redevelopment of the South College Avenue Corridor.[1] For some portions of the project, the City and its partners may be able to utilize several of these strategies simultaneously; for other portions of the project, only one strategy may be appropriate.

Transportation Corporations[2] – A city may establish and utilize a nonprofit transportation corporation to *1)* promote and develop public transportation facilities and systems by new and alternative means; *2)* expand and improve transportation facilities and systems; *3)* secure and obtain rights-of-way for urgently needed transportation systems and to assist in the planning and design of those systems; *4)* reduce burdens and demands on the limited funds available to the TxDOT commission and increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the commission; and *5)* promote and develop transportation facilities and systems that are public, although these facilities and systems may benefit private interests as well as the public.[3]

Development Corporations – A city may establish and utilize non-profit, development corporations to promote the creation of new and expanded business enterprises. A Section 4A-development corporation is funded by the imposition of a local sales and use tax dedicated to economic development. A Section 4B one-half cent sales tax can be used to promote a wide range of civic and commercial projects that relate to the revitalization and redevelopment of commercial areas.

Municipal Bonds – With voter approval, a city may issue bonds to finance a variety of infrastructure improvements and certain manufacturing and commercial facilities. Bonds have been used to finance everything from street repairs, to the construction of libraries and baseball stadiums. Bonds may be issued through development corporations, a tax increment financing district, or the city itself.

Self-assessment Benefit Districts – Self-assessment districts levy a special assessment tax (often in conjunction with local property or sales taxes) on businesses and property owners within a geographically specified district to support specific public capital improvements or maintenance of those improvements within the district. Examples of self-assessment benefit districts include:

- *Municipal Management Districts* – Often utilized in downtowns or areas with significant commercial densities, Municipal Management Districts allow commercial property owners to enhance the district area through the financing of facilities and improvements, beyond what the city or property owners already provide. Improvements may be paid for by a combination of self-imposed property taxes, special assessments, impact fees, and other charges against the property owner. Such districts are intended to enhance, and in some instances even replace, existing city services in the area.

1 Several mechanisms/strategies cited here are also found in the *City of Bryan Comprehensive Plan* (1999)
2 See Chapter 431 Texas Transportation Corporation Act of the Texas Transportation Code.
3 See Vernon's Texas Civil Statutes, Article 1396–1.01 for general discussion on nonprofit organizations.

- *Public Improvement District* – Public Improvement Districts, often referred to as PIDs, allow a city, or a defined geographic area within a city, to levy and collect special assessments for property in order to fund public infrastructure improvements. Improvements may include water, wastewater, sewer drainage, sidewalks, streets, public transit, parking, libraries, parks and recreation, landscaping, art installation, pedestrian malls, and other similar projects. Safety services and business-related services such as advertising, recruitment, and development are also eligible to receive financial support.

- *Road Utility District* – Road Utility Districts (RUDs) are utilized to construct, acquire, improve, and provide financing for a road facility. In addition to a roadway, a road facility can be defined as,

  > "property, an easement, or works constructed, acquired, or improved as necessary or appropriate for the improvement of a river, creek, or stream to prevent overflow or the construction and maintenance of a pool, lake, reservoir, dam, canal, or waterway for the purpose of drainage, if the property, easement, or works is related to or in furtherance of the construction, acquisition, or improvement of a road."[4]

  For South College Avenue this expanded definition could prove especially important since drainage has historically been a problem and vast areas of the Corridor are within a flood plain. Some RUDs have also been utilized to support the construction of pedestrian walkways and bicycle paths.

- *Special Service Areas* – Within a geographically defined special service area, property owners are taxed with a mill levy or other special assessment. The funds generated from this assessment are used for infrastructure improvements, maintenance programs, public parking, or other capital improvements.

Property Donation - A city may chose to provide land to promote economic development. Furthermore, a city may even partially develop a site to demonstrate to businesses that are contemplating locating in the area the city's commitment to (re)development at that location. The purchase of land for municipal facilities – including water and sewer treatment plants, industrial parks, municipal airports, and city streets provide just a few examples.

Property Tax Incentives – Property tax incentives are utilized by cities to attract commercial enterprise. Examples of property tax incentives include:

- *Property Tax Abatement* – A city may enter into an agreement with a private corporation to abate (waive and/or postpone) property taxes in a "reinvestment zone" to spur (re)development within that zone.

[4] See Chapter 441. Road Utility Districts of the Texas Transportation Code.

- *Tax Increment Financing Districts* – Within a geographically defined zone, public infrastructure and other improvements are publicly financed through the contribution of all additional future tax revenues that are attributed to the increase in the property values due to the improvements in the zone.

User Fees/Venue Taxes – Through the adoption of user fees or venue taxes cities can collect funds from visitors or tourists to finance specific, voter-approved economic development projects. Projects may include the construction of any number or type of public facilities. Venues that may be taxed or charge additional user fees include car rentals, zoos, parking lots, hotels, and parks – to name but a few.

Regardless of the economic development strategies utilized or the degree to which they exist and develop over time, a strong sense of cooperation and teamwork between stakeholders, the City, The District, and all other project participants will be critical. In many ways, the development of this *South College Avenue Corridor Redevelopment Plan* constitutes only the first step in the formation of the community-wide partnership that will be necessary to redevelop South College Avenue.

Federal and State Funding Programs

Although public/private cooperation will be critical to the successful redevelopment of the South College Avenue Corridor, it also may not be sufficient to accomplish all of the goals set forth by the stakeholders. Because of the size and scope of the task to be undertaken, the project's partners will undoubtedly need to identify and pursue other, greater sources of funding – specifically federal and state funding programs.

Federal and state governments provide billions of dollars in funding each year for worthy capital projects through a myriad of formula and competitive funding programs – including both outright grants and very low-interest loans. Below, in alphabetical order, are descriptions of many of the available funding programs that might prove useful for the overall redevelopment of the South College Avenue Corridor.

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)

Purpose: Since 1974 CDBG has been the backbone of improvement efforts in many communities, providing a flexible source of annual grant funds for local governments nationwide. With the participation of their citizens, communities can devote these funds to a wide range of activities that best serve their own particular development priorities, provided that these projects (1) benefit low- and moderate-income families; (2) prevent or eliminate slums or blight; or (3) meet other urgent community development needs.

Eligible Activities: As one of the nation's largest federal grant programs, the impact of CDBG-funded projects can be seen in the housing stock, the business environment, the streets, and public facilities of almost every community. Traditionally, the largest single use of State CDBG funds has been the provision of public facilities. In the last few years, however, the program has played an increasingly key role in stimulating economic development activities that expand job and business opportunities for lower income families and neighborhoods.

States establish their own programs and rules to govern the distribution of their CDBG funds. While States may implement policies that give priority to particular activities—economic development projects or wastewater treatment systems, for instance—their choices are limited by the activi-

ties that are eligible under the national program, which include (but are not limited to):

- Acquiring real property (primarily land, buildings, and other permanent improvements to the property) for program purposes. CDBG also helps communities demolish property and clear sites to prepare the land for other uses.
- Reconstructing or rehabilitating housing and other property. From homeless shelters to single-family homes to shopping centers, CDBG enables communities to improve properties that have become less usable, whether due to age, neglect, natural disaster, or changing needs. New construction of housing is allowed only in certain circumstances.
- Building public facilities and improvements, such as streets, sidewalks, sewers, and water systems, parks and community centers, fire stations.
- Helping people prepare for and obtain employment through education and job training, welfare-to-work activities, and other services.
- Assisting for-profit businesses for special economic development activities. Such projects might include microenterprise loans to low-income entrepreneurs, assembling land to attract new industry, or business loans to help retain or expand existing businesses that employ low-income workers.
- Providing public services for youths, seniors, or the disabled.
- Carrying out crime reduction initiatives such as establishing neighborhood watch programs, providing extra police patrols, rehabilitating or constructing police substations, and clearing abandoned buildings used for illegal activities.
- Assisting homebuyers directly through, for example, downpayment assistance or a revolving loan fund for first-time buyers.
- Enforcing local building codes to reverse housing deterioration and other signs of blight.
- Meeting planning and administrative expenses, such as costs related to developing a Consolidated Plan and managing CDBG funds.

Responsible Governmental Agency: HUD/Municipalities

Web Address: http://www.hud.gov/cpd/cdbg.html

Job Access/Reverse Commute (JARC)

Purpose: The Job Access and Reverse Commute grant program assists states and localities in developing new or expanded transportation services that connect welfare recipients and other low-income persons to jobs and other employment-related services.

The JARC grant program is intended to establish a coordinated regional approach to job access challenges. All projects funded under this program must be the result of a collaborative planning process that includes states and metropolitan planning organizations (MPO), transportation providers, agencies administering Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Welfare to Work (WtW) funds, human services agencies, public housing, child care organizations, employers, states and affected communities, and other stakeholders. The program is expected to leverage other funds that are eligible to be expended for transportation and encourage a coordinated approach to transportation services.

Eligible Activities: Job Access projects are targeted at developing new or expanded transportation services such as shuttles, vanpools, new bus routes, connector services to mass transit, and guaranteed ride home programs for welfare recipients and low-income persons. Reverse Commute projects provide transportation services to suburban employment centers from urban, rural and other suburban locations for all populations. Criteria for evaluating grant applications for JARC grants include:

- Coordinated human services/transportation planning process involving state or local agencies that administer the Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF) and Welfare-to-Work (WtW) programs, the community to be served, and other area stakeholders;
- Unmet need for additional services and extent to which the service will meet that need; and
- Project financing, including sustainability of funding and financial commitments from human service providers and existing transportation providers.

Other factors that may be taken into account include the use of innovative approaches, schedule for project implementation and geographic distribution.

Responsible Governmental Agency: In urbanized areas with 200,000 population or more, MPOs select the applicant(s). In small, urbanized areas under 200,000 population and in non-urbanized, rural, areas states select the applicant(s). Tribal governments must go through the state process but, once selected, can choose to be sub-recipients of the state or apply directly to FTA.

Web Address: http://www.fta.dot.gov/wtw/jarcgfs.htm

Livable Communities Initiative (LCI)

Purpose: Objectives of the Livable Communities Initiative are to improve mobility and the quality of services available to residents of neighborhoods by:

- Strengthening the link between transit planning and community planning, including land use policies and urban design supporting the use of transit and ultimately providing physical assets that better meet community needs
- Stimulating increased participation by community organizations and residents, minority and low-income residents, small and minority businesses, persons with disabilities and the elderly in the planning and design process
- Increasing access to employment, education facilities and other community destinations through high quality, community-oriented, technologically innovative transit services and facilities
- Leveraging resources available through other Federal, State and local programs

Eligible Activities: Eligible project planning activities include:

1. Preparation of implementation plans and designs incorporating Livable Communities elements
2. Assessment of environmental, social, economic, land use, and urban design impacts of projects
3. Feasibility studies
4. Technical assistance

5. Participation by community organizations and the business community, including small and minority-owned businesses and persons with disabilities
6. Evaluation of best practices
7. Development of innovative urban design, land use, and zoning practices

Eligible capital activities or capital project enhancements of demonstration projects include:

1. Property acquisition, restoration or demolition of existing structures, site preparation, utilities, building foundations, walkways, and open space that are physically and functionally related to mass transportation facilities
2. The purchase of buses, enhancements to transit stations, park-and-ride lots and transfer facilities incorporating community services such as day care, health care and public safety
3. Safety elements such as lighting, surveillance, and community police and security services
4. Site design improvements including sidewalks, aerial walkways and bus access and kiss-and-ride facilities
5. Operational enhancements such as transit marketing and pass programs, customer information services, and advanced vehicle locating, dispatch, and information systems.

[Note: Congress has established independent financial appropriation to support the LCI program. Funding can be drawn from all TEA-21 resources to meet LCI objectives.]

Responsible Governmental Agency: FTA

Web Address: http://www.fta.dot.gov/library/planning/livbro.html

Statewide Transportation Enhancement Program (STEP)

Purpose: The goal of the program is to encourage diverse modes of travel, increase the community benefits to transportation investment, strengthen partnerships between State and local governments and promote citizen involvement in transportation decisions.

Eligible Activities: To be eligible for consideration, all projects must demonstrate a relationship to the surface transportation system through either function or impact, go above and beyond standard transportation activities; and incorporate one of the following 12 categories:

1. Provision of facilities for pedestrians and bicycles
2. Provision of safety and education activities for pedestrian and bicyclist
3. Acquisition of scenic easements and scenic and historic properties
4. Scenic or historic highway programs (including providing tourist and welcome center facilities)
5. Landscaping and other scenic beautification
6. Historic preservation
7. Rehabilitation and operation of historic transportation buildings, structures, or facilities (including historic railroad facilities and canals)
8. Preservation of abandoned railway corridors (including conversion and use for pedestrian and bicycle facilities)

9. Control and removal of outdoor advertising
10. Archaeological planning and research
11. Environmental mitigation to address water pollution due to highway runoff or reduce vehicle-caused wildlife mortality while maintaining habitat connectivity
12. Establishment of transportation museums

STEP is a statewide competitive program and is administered in accordance with applicable federal and state rules and regulations. The funds provided by this program are on a cost reimbursement basis and is not a grant. Projects undertaken with enhancement funds are eligible for reimbursement of up to 80% of allowable costs. The governmental entity nominating a project is responsible for the remaining cost share, including all cost overruns.

Responsible Governmental Agency: TxDOT

Web Address: http://www.dot.state.tx.us/insdtdot/orgchart/des/step/introduction.htm

Surface Transportation Program (STP)

Purpose: The STP provides flexible funding that may be used by States and localities for projects on any Federal-aid highway, including the National Highway System (NHS), bridge projects on any public road, transit capital projects, and intracity and intercity bus terminals and facilities. A portion of funds reserved for rural areas may be spent on rural minor collectors. STP is the largest FHWA flexible funds program. Funding is at 80% Federal share and may be used for all projects eligible for funds under current FHWA and FTA programs.

Eligible Activities: States may obligate apportioned funds for the STP only for the following:

- Construction, reconstruction, rehabilitation, resurfacing, restoration, and operational improvements for highways (including Interstate highways) and bridges (including bridges on public roads of all functional classifications), including construction or reconstruction necessary to accommodate other transportation modes, and including the seismic retrofit and painting of and application of calcium magnesium acetate, sodium acetate/formate, or other environmentally acceptable, minimally corrosive anti-icing and de-icing compositions on bridges and approaches thereto and other elevated structures, mitigation of damage to wildlife, habitat, and ecosystems caused by a transportation project funded under this program.
- Capital costs for transit projects eligible for assistance, including vehicles and facilities, whether publicly or privately owned, that are used to provide intercity passenger service by bus.
- Carpool projects, fringe and corridor parking facilities and programs, bicycle transportation and pedestrian walkways, and the modification of public sidewalks to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.
- Highway and transit safety infrastructure improvements and programs, hazard eliminations, projects to mitigate hazards caused by wildlife, and railway/highway grade crossings.
- Highway and transit research and development and technology transfer programs.
- Capital and operating costs for traffic monitoring, management, and control facilities and programs.
- Surface transportation planning programs.

- Transportation enhancement activities.
- Transportation control measures listed under the Clean Air Act.
- Development and establishment of management systems.
- Participation in natural habitat and wetlands mitigation efforts related to projects funded by this program, which may include participation in natural habitat and wetlands mitigation banks; contributions to statewide and regional efforts to conserve, restore, enhance, and create natural habitats and wetlands; and development of statewide and regional natural habitat and wetlands conservation and mitigation plans, including any banks, efforts, and plans authorized pursuant to the Water Resources Development Act of 1990.
- Infrastructure-based intelligent transportation systems capital improvements.
- Environmental restoration and pollution abatement projects (including the retrofit or construction of storm water treatment systems) to address water pollution or environmental degradation caused or contributed to by transportation facilities, which projects shall be carried out when the transportation facilities are undergoing reconstruction, rehabilitation, resurfacing, or restoration.

Responsible Governmental Agency: FHWA/MPO

Web Address: http://www4.law.cornell.edu/uscode/23/133.html

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

Purpose: On August 22, 1996, "The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996," a comprehensive bipartisan welfare reform plan that dramatically changed the nation's welfare system into one that requires work in exchange for time-limited assistance was signed into law. The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program replaces the former Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Training (JOBS) programs, ending the federal entitlement to assistance.

Eligible Activities: The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA) gives states enormous flexibility to design their TANF programs in ways that promote work, responsibility, and self-sufficiency, and strengthen families. Except as expressly provided under the statute, the federal government may not regulate the conduct of states.

States may use TANF funding in any manner "reasonably calculated to accomplish the purposes of TANF" *(see "A Guide on Funding Services for Children and Families through the TANF Program").* These purposes are: to provide assistance to needy families so that children can be cared for in their own homes; to reduce dependency by promoting job preparation, work and marriage; to prevent out-of-wedlock pregnancies; and to encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.[5]

Responsible Governmental Agency: In TANF, states and territories operate programs, and tribes have the option to run their own programs. States, territories, and tribes each receive a block grant allocation with a requirement on states to maintain a historical level of state spending known as maintenance of effort. The total federal block grant is $16.8 billion each year until fiscal year (FY) 2002. The block grant covers benefits, administrative expenses, and services. States, territories, and tribes determine eligibility and benefit levels and services provided to needy families.

Web Address: http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/opa/facts/tanf.htm/

5 TANF funding may be used to support transportation costs incurred in getting program recipients to and from places of employment or vocational training. These funds can also be used as local match for other federal funding.

Transportation & Community & System Preservation (TCSP)

Purpose: The TCSP provides funding for grants and research to investigate and address the relationship between transportation and community and system preservation. States, local governments, tribal governments, and MPOs are eligible for discretionary grants to plan and implement strategies which improve the efficiency of the transportation system, reduce environmental impacts of transportation, reduce the need for costly future public infrastructure investments, ensure efficient access to jobs, services and centers of trade, and examine development patterns and identify strategies to encourage private sector development patterns which achieve these goals. Through the TCSP, States, local governments, and MPOs implement and evaluate current preservation practices and activities that support these practices, as well as develop new and innovative approaches.

Eligible Activities: Projects eligible for Federal highway and transit funding or other activities determined by the Secretary of Transportation to be appropriate are also eligible for TCSP funding. This allows a broad range of transportation activities to be funded. Grants will be awarded for new and innovative transportation activities meeting the purposes of the TCSP program, but remain unfunded under the current Federal-aid program.

Responsible Governmental Agency: FHWA/Congress

Web Address: http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/tcsp/

Texas Department of Transportation – Toll Credits

Purpose: Municipalities, public transit agencies, and other eligible entities of the state may use toll revenues that are generated and used by public, quasi-public, and private agencies to build, improve, or maintain highways, bridges, or tunnels that serve the public purpose of interstate commerce as credit toward the non-Federal share requirement for any funds made available to carry out eligible Department of Transportation-related capital projects.

Eligible Activities: New Mass Transportation and Federal-Aid Highway capital projects are eligible for toll credit funding.

Responsible Governmental Agency: TxDOT

Web Address: http://www4.law.cornell.edu/uscode/23/120.html

Texas Parks & Wildlife Department – Park Grant Funds

Texas Recreation and Parks Account Program (TRPA) of the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department allows local units of government to apply for park grant funds for outdoor recreation from the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department. This program provides 50 percent matching grant assistance to eligible local governments for the acquisition and development of public recreation areas and facilities.

Welfare to Work (WtW)

Purpose: In August 1996, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act reformed the nation's welfare laws. It created a new system of block grants to the States for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) changing the nature and provision of welfare benefits in America.

Moving people from welfare to work is now one of the primary goals of federal welfare policy. The new Balanced Budget Act of 1997, signed by the President on August 5, 1997, helps achieve

that goal by authorizing the U.S. Department of Labor to provide Welfare-to-Work Grants to States and local communities to create additional job opportunities for the hardest-to-employ recipients of TANF. These grants will provide many welfare recipients with the job placement services, transitional employment, and other support services they need to make the successful progression into long-term unsubsidized employment. On November 29, 1999, the President signed the Welfare-to-Work and Child Support Amendments of 1999, which make programmatic changes that simplify eligibility for the Welfare-to-Work program.

Eligible Activities: Funds may be used to help move eligible individuals into long-term unsubsidized jobs using strategies such as: job creation through short-term public or private sector wage subsidies; on-the-job training; contracts with public or private providers of job readiness, job placement, and post-employment services; job vouchers for similar services (except for grantees which are not Private Industry Councils or Workforce Investment Boards, which may provide these services directly); community service or work experience; job retention and supportive services (if such services are not otherwise available); or six months of pre-employment job training or vocational educational training.[6] Grantees have up to three years to spend the funds.

Responsible Governmental Agency: There are two kinds of grants: *1)* Formula Grants to States and *2)* Competitive Grants to local communities. A small amount of the total grant money also has been set aside for special purposes: 1 percent for Indian tribes and 0.8 percent for evaluation.

Web Address: http://www.fta.dot.gov/wtw/notebk.html

The programs detailed above comprise many of the most important and readily accessible federal and state funding programs available to support the redevelopment of the South College Avenue Corridor. However, without question, the full list of programs available to support this project is far longer, and, in fact, over time many of the programs above will either be transformed or even replaced. Consequently, the City, The District, the B/CSMPO and their project partners will need to carefully monitor the responsible agencies and their programs to take full advantage of the opportunities that they present.

While the above list is a sampling of the kinds of federal and state funding programs that are available to the City, The District, and their partners, how and to what degree they will be able to take advantage of them will depend on the following three factors:

- As discussed, continued coordination efforts between stakeholders, the City, The District, the B/CSMPO, FTA, TxDOT, and others (the project's leadership) will be integral to the project's ultimate success.
- The ability of the project's leadership to identify, pursue, and secure federal, state, and local funding opportunities that will help to defray project costs, no matter how seemingly insignificant, is of equal importance.
- The ability of the project's leadership to encourage and promote private enterprise development in the South College Avenue Corridor will *1)* provide a needed infusion of private capital, which can be utilized to leverage additional federal dollars in grants; *2)* ensure the development of an expanded tax base, which will be necessary in the years ahead to maintain the public's investment.

6 Similar to the TANF program, WtW funds may be used to support recipients' transportation costs and may be used as local match for other federal funds.

Implementation Strategy

> "A strong spirit of cooperation between business owners in Historic Downtown Bryan, the CBC and *other areas*, and the City of Bryan should be fostered in the adoption and implementation of new and improved regulations for landscaping, signage, and property maintenance. These will provide the mechanisms to improve the appearance in the City as a whole. The City will provide the organizational capacity and resources needed to implement the Plan."
>
> ***City of Bryan Comprehensive Plan (1999)***

Cooperation will indeed be the key for the successful implementation of this plan to redevelop the South College Avenue Corridor. Over the coming months and years, stakeholders, the City, The District, and their partners will all face certain challenges that must be overcome in order for the project to move forward. For example, one challenge that has already been identified and discussed at length during the planning process is the issue of converting utilities from overhead to underground.

Along the corridor today, most of the City's major utilities hang on poles, a condition which clearly detracts from the aesthetics of the corridor. Furthermore, the wires are often in conflict with the corridor's trees, which frequently have to be pruned in order to safely and effectively accommodate the wires. Yet, despite these problems, the utility poles will likely remain because burying utilities is an extremely expensive proposition.

Figure 7.1 - Typical Utility Pole on South College Avenue

One of the reasons that the costs are so high is due to the fact that each pole carries so many different types of utilities – phone, electrical, cable, and transformers *(Figure 7.1)*. Other costly problems associated with converting utilities from overhead to underground include the need to utilize non-standard delta pad-mount transformers *(Figure 7.2)*, the negative impact burying utilities might have on adjacent properties, and the need to convert utility services to existing buildings.

Throughout the planning process many stakeholders expressed a desire that the utilities be buried, while others questioned whether the City could really afford to do so at this time. In the end, it was decided that this redevelopment plan would recommend that the utilities be buried, if at all possible. However, if burying utilities proved too costly (in the short-term), then this redevelopment plan would recommend some form of aesthetic treatment for the poles.

Beyond cooperation, the redevelopment of the South College Avenue Corridor will also require a sensible implementation strategy. Already this Plan has identified a myriad of public and semi-public economic development mechanisms and federal and state funding grants that can and should

be utilized by the various members of the project partnership to support the corridor's redevelopment. This Plan has also provided project leadership with a meaningful assessment of market conditions in the corridor and B/CS market areas that will enable them to promote private enterprise further augment the efforts of the project partnership. It is hoped that these components of the Plan will provide the framework necessary to sustain the efforts of the project partnership in the years ahead.

Figure 7.2 - Three-phase Wye Pad-mounted Transformer

Design/Development Standards

One element critical to the redevelopment of the corridor, but not expressly considered during the development of this Plan is the creation of an overlay district that identifies certain design/development standards to complement the corridor's existing zoning and various land uses. An overlay district is intended to regulate all public and private (re)development projects occurring within the corridor – which is defined as one lot deep on either side of the street. Over time these regulations (design/development standards) will help to create an aesthetically cohesive, pedestrian-friendly, and economically more vibrant corridor. An overlay district was not considered during the development of this Plan, because the formal adoption of many standards, which constitute an overlay district, requires the participation and approval of a majority of local corridor stakeholders at the ballot box. Thus, an entirely new overlay district planning process will have to be undertaken by the City that addresses design/development standards for each of the corridor's land uses.

During the development of this Plan, the project team noted that the corridor could be divided in to three visually distinct districts, which also correspond to the preponderance of land uses within each district. For example, between downtown and Coulter Avenue, the majority of land uses are either commercial or light industrial. As such, the majority of existing buildings – whether currently in use or not – possess business-oriented façades. However, not all building façades conform to this general rule and a certain amount of vacant property also exists within this area. For redevelopment of the corridor to be successful, all existing or planned structures must conform to adopted design/development standards as individual properties are (re)developed over time. The other two districts within the corridor consist of *1)* the area between Coulter Avenue and Villa Maria, which is zoned primarily mixed-use for residential and business, but possesses some institutional land uses as well; and *2)* the area between Villa Maria and the city limits, in which retail and service sector businesses predominate.

Specific design/development standard elements not addressed by this Plan but that must be considered during the overlay district planning process should include, but are not limited to:

Buildings – Regular and uniform façade characteristics of individual buildings create a sense of place and stability within the Corridor that can help to spur appropriate levels and types of (re)development. Specific elements that should also be considered during the overlay district planning process when considering building guidelines include:

- Architectural designs for new or renovated structures that complement prevailing land uses and existing buildings
- Number and design of building levels
- Building projections or recesses
- Construction materials
- Use of glass or windows
- Building accent features (e.g., overhangs or awnings)
- General façade conditions
- Building orientation to the street and setback requirements
- Building entryways

Screening – Obscuring or hiding areas within the corridor that have functional, but little aesthetic, value is important when trying to create a strong sense of place that attracts (re)development. Depending on the individual property, screening elements can either be incorporated into building structures or be freestanding. Freestanding screening elements should be constructed of compatible materials throughout the corridor. Elements that generally require some level of screening include:

- Service equipment (e.g., air conditioners)
- Service areas (e.g., loading docks)
- Equipment on roof tops
- Trash facilities
- Commercial/utility vehicles

Parking – Adequate and consistent parking facilities are also critical for the redevelopment of the corridor. Regardless of zoning and land uses, all parking within the corridor should be paved and should be connected to the buildings they serve with adequate and appropriate walkways. With a structured parking facility, the architecture should relate to the building it serves. Other parking elements to consider include:

- Minimum parking ratios
- Parking area access and egress
- Parking area circulation
- Orientation of parking spaces
- Landscape island requirements
- ADA requirements
- Shared parking facilities

Design/development standards relating to sidewalk configurations, street lighting, wayfinding signage, and other streetscape elements (including monuments and furniture) have been addressed to varying degrees by this Plan, but will require further articulation by local stakeholders during a more comprehensive overlay district planning process.

PHASE I

City Council members have suggested one option for funding and implementing this Plan that the City might explore – having TxDOT purchase the roadway and all of the existing and needed public rights-of-way in the corridor, with the provision that TxDOT also adopt this Plan in its entirety. While there are no guarantees that TxDOT would agree to this purchase, the conditions contained in this Plan, or, if they did agree to both, make the repairs and improvements to the right-of-way in a timely manner, the City would be able to allocate those resources toward other important endeavors.

However, it should also be noted that historically TxDOT has not shown interest in purchasing additional roadway if it does not perceive that the purchase will help facilitate access to other TxDOT or National Highway System roadways. According to the Freese and Nichols study, the levels of service currently experienced on South College Avenue are not and in 20 years would not become so poor that TxDOT would automatically consider purchasing the roadway from the City. In addition, if TxDOT were to purchase and rehabilitate the roadway, they might require that the City pay for any maintenance costs incurred thereafter, which is exactly the position that the City finds itself in today.

Assuming that either TxDOT refuses or the City declines to have TxDOT purchase the Corridor's right-of-way, this Plan provides another implementation strategy that coincides with the City's Phase I redevelopment of South College Avenue, which is slated to begin within the next few months. It is hoped that this strategy will launch the beginning of the actual transformation of the South College Avenue Corridor into the place envisioned by stakeholders. Fortunately, the City of Bryan is already financially dedicated to begin improvements to South College Avenue. Therefore, the remaining tasks to be accomplished by The District and the project's other partners will merely have to support and reinforce the City's efforts.

The City of Bryan has committed $3 million to improvements on South College Avenue, between 32nd Street and Groesbeck Avenue, for Phase I of the corridor redevelopment. The City estimates that it will need to spend approximately $22 million in order to complete improvements to the remainder of the corridor. Funding for improvements to the remainder of the corridor is not currently committed and will take years to secure.

The District, in partnership with the City of Bryan, must begin pursuing Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funding to support many of the corridor enhancements described above. Under the authorizing language contained in the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21), The District and its partners are able to secure funding through a variety of means.

The primary means of securing capital funding through FTA involves a coordinated and concerted effort by the project partnership to formally request funding be earmarked for this project by the partnership's Congressional delegation. Transportation requests for the Congressional appropriations process must be made in early Spring 2002. In addition to making the formal requests in writing, the project partnership should consider sending a delegation of representatives to visit with Congressional staff to inform them of the project's objectives.

Before an earmark has even been requested, the project partnership must also complete the process of "conceptual engineering" (of which this Plan constitutes a significant part) necessary to support the construction of eligible pedestrian-related transit infrastructure and to secure an LONP from FTA. Through the provisions of the Livable Communities Initiative (LCI), the project partnership is able to secure a LONP, which will allow it to capture all local investments in the project and leverage an 80 percent reimbursement by FTA as funds become available. Once an LONP has been secured, the project can proceed as quickly as local funds become available, secure in the knowledge that for every local dollar spent, FTA will match with five.

With that scenario in mind, the project team has calculated the benefits to the overall redevelopment of the corridor that this strategy will bring. Although the majority of the improvements to the corridor identified in Chapter 4 of this Plan are consistent with what is already being planned by the City, approximately $2 million in improvements are beyond the scope ($22 million) of what the City is currently prepared to fund.

By the project team's calculations, approximately $2.2 million (10%) of the improvements currently planned by the City are eligible for reimbursement by FTA. These are the types of improvements that can be regarded as creating a more transit-friendly environment along the corridor (e.g., sidewalks and lighting). As a result, these FTA-eligible items can free valuable City resources to be targeted toward other improvements elsewhere in the corridor. In other words, that $2.2 million will leverage an additional $1,760,000, which funds nearly all of the remaining FTA-eligible (e.g., transit stops and pocket parks) and non-FTA eligible improvements (e.g., monuments) identified in this Plan. Of course, these additional FTA-eligible enhancements (approximately $1.1 million) will leverage an additional $880,000 to be invested in the corridor. Most importantly, this strategy will generate an additional $2,640,000, thereby reducing the amount of total local funding that the City will have to contribute to the corridor's redevelopment.

A simplified breakdown of the impact of this Plan on project costs is provided below:

Existing City of Bryan Commitment - $22,000,000

- Includes roadway and drainage improvements, lighting, sidewalks, and landscaping
- 10% FTA-eligible leverages $1,760,000

Total Enhancement Cost - $2,000,000

- Includes additional trees, lights, sidewalks, transit stops, intersection improvements, monuments/gateways, and parks
- $1,100,000 FTA-eligible leverages $880,000

Revised Project Budget - $24,000,000

- FTA-eligible Enhancements $3,300,000
- FTA Contribution $2,640,000
- *City of Bryan Commitment* *$21,360,000*

The cost of repairing the South College Avenue roadway, however, remains the greatest single expense to be incurred in redeveloping the corridor. In addition to the possible use of federal funds programmed through the FTA to support high-volume transit lanes or the construction of rail lines, other sources of federal and state funding that could prove immensely helpful to the City's efforts to repair the roadway are available. However, these funds must be programmed through the B/CS MPO. The City and it partners should make every effort to identify and secure funding through the B/CS MPO for that purpose.

To further complement these efforts, the project partnership should also pursue other smaller funding programs provided for under the auspices of TEA-21, which have been delineated above. In particular, the STEP, TCSP, and JARC programs may be able to provide some additional financial assistance that will reduce the local burden and speed up the timeframe within which the construction tasks can be completed.

STEP & TCSP – The STEP and TCSP programs both provide limited amounts of funding to support most of the enhancement activities contained in Chapter 5 of this redevelopment plan. Efforts to get people out of automobiles and into transit or to preserve vital, community transportation resources and spur economic development are the foci of the STEP and TCSP programs, respectively. Because these programs support eligible transportation-related capital expenditures, TxDOT Toll Credits may be able to be utilized as local match. [Note - toll credits are not to be confused with cash; sufficient federal dollars must be available to purchase outright any capital items.]

JARC – The Job Access Reverse Commute program does not appear on the surface suitable for the effort to redevelop the South College Avenue Corridor. However, the program does allow for the purchase of new vehicles and will fund 80 percent of the first three years of the operating costs of new service – provided that the new service further enables people to reach places of work or related training. Furthermore, WtW and TANF dollars can be utilized as local match, so no local dollars have to be expended. The District recognizes the need for additional service along the South College Avenue Corridor to justify further enhancements and the JARC program could be the key to initiating that service.

For its part, the City of Bryan may also be able to set aside a portion of its CDBG funds to assist in the redevelopment of the corridor. CDBG funds may be utilized in so many different ways that is it difficult to speculate here how they might be best utilized in the corridor – depending on the partnership's ability to secure other funding. Below are two ways in which CDBG funds might prove useful for the redevelopment effort:

- Building public facilities and improvements, such as streets, sidewalks, sewers, and water systems, parks and community centers, and fire stations.
- Acquiring real property for program purposes. CDBG also helps to demolish property and clear sites to prepare the land for other uses.

Congress will begin the process of reauthorizing TEA-21 in January 2002, at which time it will consider a plethora of roadway and public transportation projects for funding. The reauthorization process is essentially a one-time event; the resulting authorizing legislation (e.g., TEA-21) will not be reauthorized again for another five to six years – in FY2007 at the earliest. Also, the projects that Congress selects for the bill will be guaranteed to receive a certain level of funding. If the project is not selected, the Congressional delegation representing B/CS will have to formally request funding during subsequent annual appropriations processes for transportation funding. However, with full community support for the project and an LONP in hand, the project stands a much better chance of being selected during the next reauthorization period.