

# Corpus Christi R/UDAT



## Corpus Christi, TX R/UDAT Report

**AIA** Communities by Design  
ENVISION. CREATE. SUSTAIN.





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## THE DESIGN ASSISTANCE TEAM PROGRAM

The American Institute of Architects has a 47-year history of public service work. The AIA's Center for Communities by Design has conducted design assistance projects across the country. Through these public service programs, over 1,000 professionals from more than 30 disciplines have provided millions of dollars in professional pro bono services to more than 200 communities across the country, engaging thousands of participants in community driven planning processes. Its projects have led to some of the most recognizable places in America, such as San Francisco's Embarcadero, Portland's Pearl District, and the Santa Fe Railyard Park.

### Regional and Urban Design Assistance Teams (R/UDAT)

Created in 1967, the AIA's R/UDAT program pioneered the modern charrette process by combining multi-disciplinary teams in dynamic, multi-day grassroots processes to produce community visions, action plans and recommendations. In its 47 year history, the R/UDAT program has worked with over 150 communities.

### Sustainable Design Assessment Teams (SDAT)

In 2005, as a response to growing interest and concern about local sustainability planning, the AIA launched a companion program to the R/UDAT that allowed it to make a major institutional investment in public service work to assist communities in developing policy frameworks and long-term sustainability plans. Since 2005, the SDAT program has worked with over 70 towns, cities and regions.

The Center's Design Assistance Team programs operate with three guiding principles:

**Enhanced Objectivity.** The goal of the design assistance team program is to provide communities with a framework for action. Consequently, each project team is constructed with the goal of bringing an objective perspective to the community that can transcend and transform the normal politics or public dialogue. Team members are deliberately selected from geographic regions outside of the host community, and national AIA teams are typically representative of a wide range

of community settings. Team members all agree to serve pro bono, and do not engage in business development activity in association with their service. They do not serve a particular client. The team's role is to provide an independent analysis and unencumbered technical advice that serves the public interest.

**Public Participation.** The AIA has a four decade tradition of designing community-driven processes that incorporate substantial public input through a multi-faceted format that includes public workshops, small group sessions, stakeholder interviews, formal meetings and presentations. This approach allows the national team to build on the substantial local expertise already present and available within the community and leverage the best existing knowledge available in formulating its recommendations.

**Multi-disciplinary Expertise.** Each project is designed as a customized approach to community assistance which incorporates local realities and the unique challenges and assets of each community. As a result, each design assistance team includes an interdisciplinary focus and a systems approach to assessment and recommendations, incorporating and examining cross-cutting topics and relationships between issues. In order to accomplish this task, the Center forms multi-disciplinary teams that combine a range of disciplines and professions in an integrated assessment and design process.



## INTRODUCTION

The following report provides a narrative summary of the Corpus Christi R/UDAT project, including a series of key recommendations the community can prioritize moving forward to achieve its aspirations for North Beach, the SEA District, the adjacent neighborhoods, the historic downtown, and the surrounding area. The impetus for the project was the ongoing work by the Texas Department of Transportation (TXDOT) on the Harbor Bridge project. The project includes the replacement of the Harbor Bridge and the reconstruction of portions of US181, I-37, and the Crosstown Expressway in a new alignment.

## THE CORPUS CHRISTI R/UDAT PROCESS

In March 2014, a broad-based local steering committee submitted a formal application for a Regional and Urban Design Assistance Team (R/UDAT) project to the American Institute of Architects. As the project application stated, "Corpus Christi and the surrounding bay area communities are poised for a bright future. Removal of the existing bridge will provide an unprecedented opportunity to connect our city's urban core of entertainment, sports, history, and culture. It is the desire of the Steering Committee to bring an AIA Regional/Urban Design Assistance Team to town to help us create this new vision."

In May, an initial visit was conducted by the team leader and AIA staff to meet key stakeholders, refine the scope of work, and determine needed expertise for the R/UDAT team. In the following months, a national team of experts was recruited from around the country, and the local steering committee conducted community engagement to promote the project. The community process took place from August 14-18, 2014. The process was designed with a multi-faceted format and included the following elements:

- A comprehensive tour of the project area and surrounding community, led by local partners, including a bus tour and site visits. Some team members participated in a bike tour of the area as well.
- A series of key stakeholder interviews, small group meetings, and focus groups.
- A public workshop involving approximately 80 residents, which collected input on community assets, identity, and aspirations for the future.
- A three-day design studio with local professionals, planners and partner organizations.



The team members worked closely with local officials, community leaders, technical experts, citizens, and others to study the community and its opportunities. The team's final report provides a narrative account and summary of the recommendations presented to the community on August 18th.

## FRAMING THE OPPORTUNITY

The sudden burst of oil and gas activity in the Eagle Ford Shale region has been a game-changer for the Corpus Christi area. As the R/UDAT application noted, "The City's economic future is bright. The Eagle Ford shale oil and gas fields run from the Mexican border to an area northwest of Houston with the heart of the fields being between San Antonio and Corpus Christi. The result has been a significant amount of development northwest of the City that has already had a positive impact." Employment levels are a full percentage better than the state average. As a result, Corpus Christi is facing an enormous opportunity to leverage economic growth and catalyze a period of transformative change. The existing port has had to re-orient its operations for export, rather than import. Planned developments at the port are currently valued at about \$20 billion. Beyond the port, the area has seen significant growth in the hospitality and service industry. The strategic advantages of location, access to fuel, and labor are positioning the city for additional growth. According to the Texas comptroller's office, sales tax collections for the city government rose from \$56 million in 2010 to \$72.6 million in 2012. After years of static growth rates in the housing sector, over 1,000 new homes were built in the region in 2012. By one estimate, the total impact could approach \$17 billion as investments and jobs continue to build momentum for the area.

The City of Corpus Christi is attempting to build successful long-term strategies that take advantage of this economic growth to realize long-term community aspirations. Recent conversations have included Destination Bayfront, a \$60 million downtown revitalization plan, conversations around luring potential cruise business, plans for a significant resort complex on North Padre Island, and

a major waterpark. The Texas State Aquarium is also planning an expansion. Other current efforts include a citywide comprehensive planning process and a feasibility study to potentially expand the Convention Center.

Corpus Christi is facing an historic opportunity to dramatically remake its physical environment and reinforce what the city represents for its residents, future citizens and visitors. The time to seize this opportunity is now.

## **CORPUS CHRISTI'S CIVIC INFRASTRUCTURE & CAPACITY**

Corpus Christi's citizens sense the historic opportunity that economic growth is creating for the community. During the R/UDAT process, the community excitement and public expectations for great things in the future was palpable. The conditions are ripe for the community to seize control of its future, build novel partnerships, and use this transformative period to realize collective aspirations. Corpus Christi has a well-demonstrated capacity to build cross-sector partnerships that engage in innovative work. In 2003, the City received an All-America City Award from the National Civic League for its civic innovation. Corpus Christi was recognized for the collaboration and engagement highlighted in its innovative programming around the Juvenile Assessment Center (an organization that helps decrease juvenile crime), Forward Corpus Christi (an economic development organization), its Air Quality Group, (it was the only major city in Texas to meet state and federal air quality standards) and a its Junior ROTC team program. The community's annual Buccaneer Days, held since 1938, are another prominent example of community organization. Led by a non-profit organization and appointed Commission, this event includes dozens of partners and sponsors, and generates over 250,000 participants each year. When the community collaborates across sectors, it has proven it can accomplish great achievements. This physical evidence of this capacity is evident as well, including the successfully effort to obtain the USS Lexington, build a prominent aquarium, establish a number of popular museums and cultural attractions, and establish the city as an attractive regional destination for visitors.

## **HARBOR BRIDGE AND THE LEGACY OF A HIGHWAY**

In 1956, the Eisenhower Administration led passage of the Federal Aid Highway Act, a signature piece of urban renewal era legislation that sought to leverage \$25 billion for construction of over 40,000 miles of the Interstate Highway System. This time period was characterized by rapid suburbanization and the decline of urban neighborhoods that were dissected by freeways, often cutting off low-income neighborhoods from the rest of the community. The experience in Corpus Christi was representative of the most communities during this time period. As the project application observes, "Construction of the Harbor Bridge carrying US 181 over the Port's ship channel was completed in 1959. By the end of the 1960s, the road network had received two high-capacity roads linked to the bridge: the north-south SH 286 (locally known as the Crosstown Expressway) and the east-west IH 37. The study area neighborhoods were greatly disrupted, both physically and contextually, by the construction of these roadways. Former through-roads became dead-ends and entire blocks of homes and commercial buildings were demolished. The Harbor Bridge created a physical and visual barrier in the SEA District and further isolated the residential neighborhoods from the downtown. The area known as the 'Northside' encompasses the portion of the city now north of IH 37, southwest of West Broadway, and east of Nueces Bay Boulevard. North Port Avenue bisects the Northside, dividing it into the historically African-American Washington-Coles neighborhood to the east and Hillcrest to the west."

The removal of Harbor Bridge and re-alignment of the highway necessitates a rethinking of the area. It provides a significant opportunity to radically remake the transportation infrastructure by bringing back the local street grid that defined the area in the pre-highway era, and it allows Corpus Christi to engage in long-term visioning about the kind of physical character and placemaking that should define this part of the community into the future. This represents an enormous opportunity. When Harbor Bridge and the highway were built, they defined the area's character for over 50 years. Their removal presents nothing short of the opportunity to redefine this area for the next half century.



## **EXISTING CONDITIONS IN THE PROJECT AREA**

The R/UDAT team found several significant barriers that impede community in the existing physical framework of the project area.

### **Land Use Conflicts**

The predominant land use pattern in the area has been characterized by “development by default,” rather than proactive visioning and planning outcomes. As the application notes, “In the 55+ years following the bridge’s opening, areas proximate to it have developed in ways that were probably not anticipated.” This practice has led to a haphazard collection of adjacencies which do not connect to one another, which do not feed from each other, and which collectively do not contribute to an inviting public realm or connected community. The mix of industrial land use with sports, culture and entertainment can create potential land use conflicts that must be mitigated, particularly given the context of a rapidly growing port with a need for additional land. The community must think strategically about future land use in the area to accommodate all needs without detracting from the character of the district. This must be accomplished through an assertive vision and the complementary policy and design framework that defines what the community wants here.

### **Connectivity and Wayfinding**

The removal of Harbor Bridge provides a significant opportunity to re-stitch the urban fabric of the area and the local street grid to produce an efficient, walkable district that is welcoming to multiple travel modes. The existing connections between many of the attractions in this district, and between this area and the downtown, are insufficient. The R/UDAT team heard many complaints about the difficulty visitors and residents experience navigating this area as well. Directional wayfinding and the supportive public realm that help create the context of place are in need of improvement in the area. The emerging Sports, Entertainment, and Arts (SEA) District represents a significant area where investments in place, connectivity and the quality of the public realm must be focused. The North Beach community, State Aquarium, USS Lexington, and significant natural areas define the northern end of the project area. The project application describes the district as comprised of a host of important cultural assets, including “a convention center, auditorium, sports arena, art museum, science and history museum, water garden, bayfront park, community theater, and historic homes park.”

### **“Gaps” in the Urban Fabric**

The historic neighborhoods that once defined the project area are largely gone, the victims of steady decline since the Harbor Bridge was built. The application also notes that “there are still several blocks of unimproved land available for further

development” between the project area and downtown. The size and adjacencies of existing vacant land provide a strategic opportunity to fulfill community needs, such as housing, that can contribute to a more vibrant district. They also provide an opportunity for complementary mixed-use infill development and investments in the public realm that can contribute to a sense of place and create a unique experience for residents and visitors.

### **Public Realm and Placemaking**

The quality of the public realm in the project area is inconsistent. The team found many significant areas uninviting for pedestrians or bicyclists. This is of particular importance on the waterfront, which provides a unique place embodying the character and identity of Corpus Christi. During the R/UDAT process, the team heard unanimous sentiment that the bayfront is the defining characteristic of the community. The Corpus Christi waterfront should serve as the central civic space in the community, and investments in the public realm at the waterfront are critical moving forward. Public access to and along the waterfront should be of paramount importance. Creating a welcoming environment and visual access to the water will pay exponential dividends in facilitating the city’s relationship with the water and enhancing the identity of the city.

### **Partnership Potential**

The project area is home to many prominent civic institutions and organizations currently. However, the physical framework for the area is reflected in the balkanized condition in which most entities are currently working. As a result, there is a lot of great investment and programming that is happening in isolation, resulting in missed opportunities for exponential impact on the vibrancy of the area. The opportunity to build partnerships and synergies between investments and activities is huge. Aligning current and future investments in the area around a collective strategy is a top priority if the community is to realize its long-term aspirations. The ability to mass resources, create touch points across existing and future programming activities, and engage in collective placemaking that involves the entire community is rich with opportunity and should become a central task moving forward.

# Transportation



## HISTORIC TRANSPORTATION CONTEXT

Construction of the Harbor Bridge carrying US 181 over the Port's ship channel was completed in 1959. The structure replaced a bascule bridge responsible for chronic traffic delays due to its constant raising and lowering. By the end of the 1960s the road network had received two high-capacity roads linked to the bridge: the north-south SH 286 (locally known as the Crosstown Expressway) and the east-west IH 37.

The study area neighborhoods were greatly disrupted, both physically and contextually, by the construction of these roadways. Former through-roads became dead-ends and entire blocks of homes and commercial buildings were demolished. The Harbor Bridge created a physical and visual barrier in the SEA District and further isolated the residential neighborhoods from the "downtown". (Source: 2014 HARBOR BRIDGE R/UDAT APPLICATION)



Historic views of the Harbor Bridge (Source: texasfreeway.com)

## PLANNING FOR THE PROJECT- TRAVEL DEMAND FORECASTS

Travel demand forecasting sets the stage for design of not only the bridge but the entire transportation network connecting to it.

### Issue

The MPO Model provides high level freeway modeling capability but is weaker at the collector level. Special traffic generators like entertainment and recreation are not handled as well in regional travel demand models. The MPO forecast is driven by the location and density of population and employment. The traffic volume forecasts appear to underestimate even the current daily traffic activity in the SEA District suggesting the volume forecast for the arterial intersections and ramp terminals east of the New Harbor Bridge/Interstate 37 revised interchange may be underestimated for average daily conditions, let alone larger events. Longer range forecasts were estimated based on a fixed growth rate.

### Action

Refine the travel demand model to more accurately represent the SEA District/Downtown special generators and longer range or build-out land use in the SEA District/Downtown. Use these refined traffic forecasts for final design decisions.

## Local vs. Regional Bridge Users

A seven mile traffic shed analysis using the MPO Travel Demand Model showed a very strong linkage between Portland and the Downtown/SEA District. If the model were more refined in the SEA District area this linkage would show to be even stronger.



Current and forecast volumes for Interstate 37 and the Crosstown Expressway suggest that the regional linkages are stronger to the south and north, with the longest trips coming from Interstate 37 to the northwest.

### Issue

There are two distinct user groups using the New Harbor Bridge and each generates different travel patterns and could drive different final design solutions.

### Action

Recognize the local vs. regional travel demand patterns in the final design of the New Harbor Bridge



connections recognizing that the local trips are more frequent and potentially more sensitive to inadequate design.

### **Functional Classification and its Relationship to Transportation Planning**

Functional classification is the grouping of roads, streets, and highways into integrated systems, each ranked by its importance to the general welfare, the motorist, and the land-use structure. Functional classification is used to define the role any particular road should play in serving the principal functions of a road: mobility for through movements and access to adjoining land.

#### *Functional Classification from a Regional Perspective (TxDOT)*

As a statewide agency TxDOT looks at transportation from a broad perspective with the Interstate system being a key priority. This perspective influences the planning and design of state managed facilities across the country, and in particular the transition from regional to local facilities can be a challenge for state agencies. This influences design in ways that range from the reliability of the travel demand models used in planning to the design standards used for roadway design.

## **Interstate 37 - Urban Interstate**

**US 181 - Urban Principal Arterial/Freeway/Expressway**

**Highway 286 Crosstown Expressway - Urban Principal Arterial/Frwy/Expressway**

**Interstate 37 (W of Mesquite) - Urban Principal Arterial/Other**

**Water Street - Urban Principal Arterial/Other**

**Shoreline Blvd - Urban Principal Arterial/Other**

**Port Ave - Urban Minor Arterial**

**Chaparral Street - Urban Collector**

*TxDOT prioritization of roadways, with the larger text denoting perceived greater importance.*

#### *Functional Classification at a Local Perspective (such as a business on Chaparral St.)*

The perspective of local business typically begins just outside the door with the street serving the business. Understandably, what happens outside a business owner's front door is going to be a higher priority than what happens on the freeway several miles away. The local business owner may know a lot more about traffic patterns than the DOT or MPO traffic model.

## **Chaparral Street-Urban Collector**

**Port Ave - Urban Minor Arterial**

**Interstate 37 (W of Mesquite)-Urban Principal Arterial/Other**

**Water Street - Urban Principal Arterial/Other**

**Shoreline Blvd - Urban Principal Arterial/Other**

**US 181 - Urban Principal Arterial/Freeway/Expressway**

**Highway 286 Crosstown Expressway - Urban Principal Arterial/Frwy/Expressway**

**Interstate 37 - Urban Interstate**

*Local perspective of roadway prioritizations, with the larger text denoting perceived greater importance.*

The key to a successful transportation system is the integration of local and state transportation priorities to create a system that meets the objectives of statewide and local travel demands.

#### *Issue*

The current functional classifications very likely carried over from the 1959 project are driving the current design, particularly the Interstate 37/Crosstown Expressway/New Harbor Bridge Interchange.

#### *Action*

Reevaluate the functional classifications of roadways in the project study area, specifically Interstate 37 east of the Crosstown Expressway. Seriously consider reclassifying

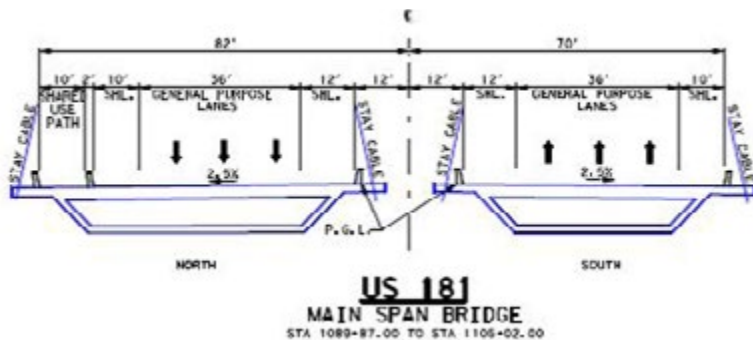
Interstate 37 east of the Crosstown Expressway from Urban Interstate to Urban Principal Arterial/Other (the same as Shoreline Boulevard and Water Street).

## TRANSPORTATION DESIGN ELEMENTS OF THE PROJECT

- Bridge Design
- The Interstate 37/Crosstown Expressway/New Harbor Bridge Interchange
- The North Beach Connection
- Access to SEA District/Downtown

### Bridge Design

The bridge itself provides significant improvements over the existing configuration with safer gentler horizontal curves, less steep approach grades, three lanes each direction and wider shoulders. A shared use non-motorized facility is planned for one side. The New Harbor Bridge is expected to operate at Level of Service A and B (excellent/good) well into the future. The design has surplus capacity in its current configuration.



### Issue

No significant issues with the bridge design identified.

### Action

Support the current bridge configuration.

## The Interstate 37/Crosstown Expressway/New Harbor Bridge Interchange

Interchanges are broadly classified into two functional categories – “service interchanges” and “system interchanges”. The term “service interchange” applies to interchanges that connect a freeway to lesser facilities (non-freeways) such as arterials or collector roads. Most service interchange forms have at-grade intersections of the ramp terminals and the non-freeway cross-road. These intersections generally have some type of traffic control (stop signs, traffic signals, or yield conditions at roundabout intersections) that may require drivers to either stop or yield to other traffic or pedestrians. An interchange that connects two or more freeways is generally termed a “system interchange”. Generally, the traffic movements within system interchanges are intended to be free-flowing without stopping, except in special cases where toll plazas or ramp metering may be present. (Source FHWA Design Discipline Support Tool, Interchange Design {New Construction and Reconstruction}, Prompt-List for Assessing Key Geometric Features)

A hybrid directional freeway to freeway interchange with a frontage road configuration is proposed that provides free flowing connections (a system interchange) from the New Harbor Bridge and Crosstown Highway to Interstate 37 to the west; but utilizes a series of off-ramps, signals, frontage roads, more signals, and on-ramps (a service interchange) to access Interstate 37 (Downtown/SEA District) west of the interchange.



### Issue

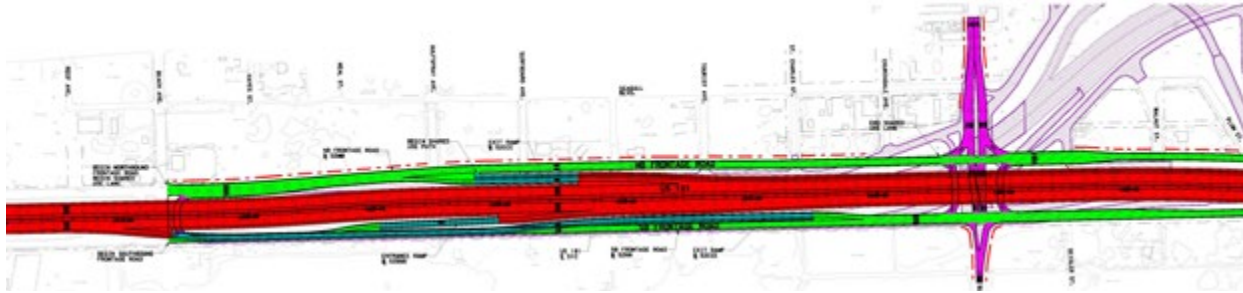
This current interchange design provides good access for the anticipated long distance regional traffic to and from the freeways, but poor connections from the north and south for the locally generated trips between Portland, North Beach, the SEA District, and Downtown.

### Action

Reevaluate the current interchange configuration and improve access and connections to and from the SEA District/Downtown. Consider the elimination of the frontage road concept to a more direct service interchange configuration for traffic to and from the SEA District/Downtown. Evaluate the termination of Interstate 37 (as a freeway) at the location of the interchange to allow a lower speed but higher capacity arterial design immediately east of the interchange.

## The North Beach Connection

The access to North Beach will be about a mile farther north at Beach Avenue after construction of the New Harbor Bridge adding about 3 minutes (1 minute north at 60 mph and 2 minutes back south at 30 mph) to the current travel time.



### Issue

Access to North Beach from SEA District and Downtown will require a longer trip with the extended length of the New Harbor Bridge and revised connection points. Creating connections to the New Harbor Bridge closer than Beach Avenue to the Texas State Aquarium and The Lexington conflict with highway design objectives for reducing the steepness of the approach grades to the higher replacement bridge.

### Action

Enhance the character and condition of Surfside Boulevard to make the longer trip to Beach, The Lexington, or the Texas State Aquarium unnoticeable, as the Boulevard itself becomes the Gateway to North Beach.

## Access to SEA District/Downtown - All or Nothing or Divide and Conquer?

Providing access to a concerted location such as an event venue or downtown core can be approached in several ways. Some strategies support a single use while others create greater synergy in a district or subarea.

### Issue

Multiple stakeholders shared a desire to maintain a concentrated access to and from the SEA District/Downtown at the Interstate 37 termination in support of existing and future development. This narrow focus could result in lost opportunities relative to the utilization and improvement of available access routes.

### Action

While the extension or expansion, or reconfiguration of Interstate 37 from the New Harbor Bridge and Crosstown Expressway to Shoreline Blvd. seems to be the logical choice to improve access to the Downtown and SEA District a more effective approach would be to better utilize already existing alternative routes that may be slightly longer in distance or travel time (Google even shows them as options today) yet could be even faster alternatives to Interstate 37 during peak events. These routes include:

- E. Port Avenue.
- The Agnes Street/ Laredo Street Couplet to North Chaparral and Water Street.
- Power Street (The extension of Fitzgerald Street to North Staples Street could replace this option in the future.)

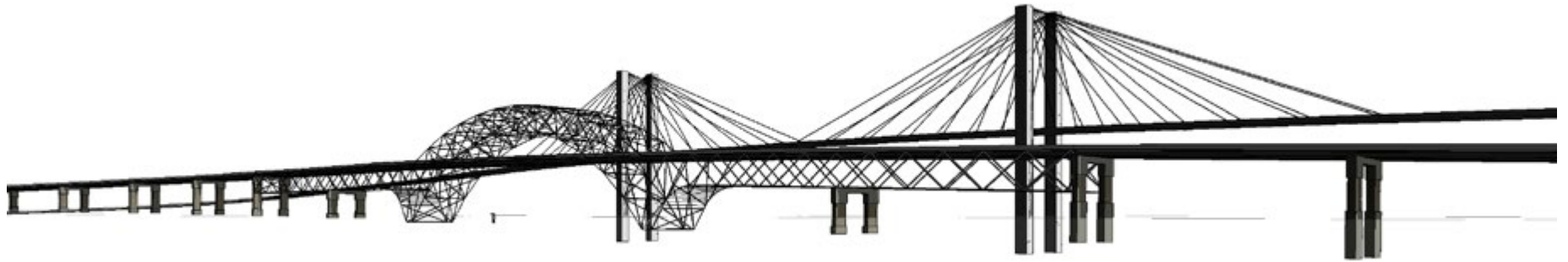
These routes lack the urban amenities of Interstate 37 as it enters downtown and current conditions in the corridors do not encourage their use. However, increased utilization of these routes now and in the future would support increased economic activity along them and provide more effective utilization of the City's transportation network. Providing multiple access opportunities also allows for full or partial road closures to for special events.

## Speed vs. Capacity

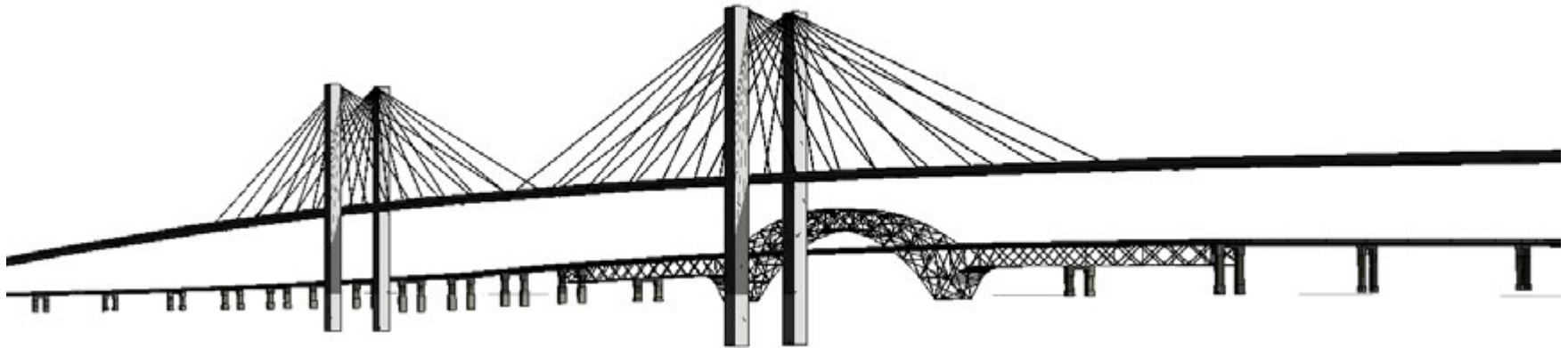
While counterintuitive, faster is not always better when moving high volumes of vehicles. Higher speeds require greater separation between vehicles and reduce the density of vehicles on a roadway. The Transportation Research Board's "Highway Capacity Manual" shows that the throughput of a vehicle lane reaches its maximum between 25 and 30 miles per hour. As a roadway transitions from free flow expressway conditions to an arterial/local street the ability to make lane changes, left and right turns at closely spaced intersections dictates a lower speed to maintain mobility. Higher speeds do create more capacity.

### Issue

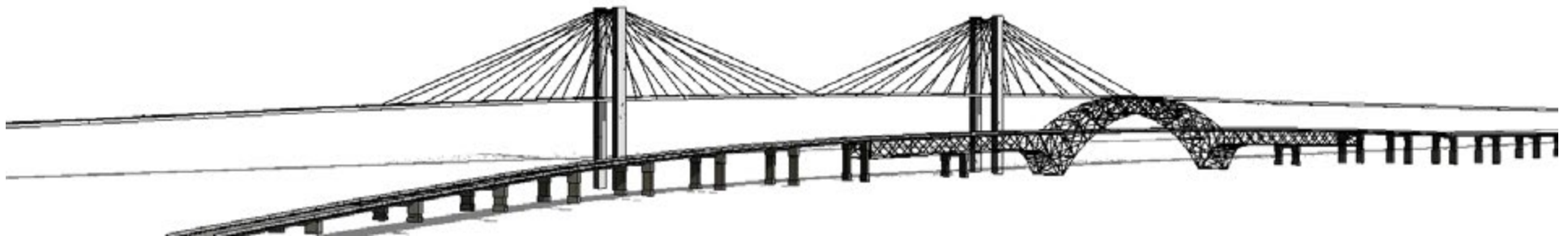
Multiple stakeholders shared a desire to maintain a high speed design to and from the SEA District/Downtown to each freeway section to maintain and improve capacity and access in support of existing and future development. Providing system interchange flyover ramps to and from the SEA District/Downtown has significant cost and right-of-way implications and reduces opportunities to improve or restore past connections lost with the original construction of the current Harbor Bridge in 1959.



*Conceptual rendering of the new bridge as compared to the existing Harbor Bridge, as viewed from the Lexington.*



*Conceptual rendering of the new bridge as compared to the existing Harbor Bridge, as viewed from the park.*



*Conceptual rendering of the new bridge as compared to the existing Harbor Bridge, as viewed from Republic of Texas.*

### Action

Consider lower speed designs for the termination of Interstate 37 and the current existing city arterials. Low speed designs can accommodate more intersections, more cross-street traffic, and respond better to event traffic manual traffic control (police officers).



<http://www.placemakers.com/2013/03/14/walkable-streets-ii-the-documenting/>

## TRANSIT

The Corpus Christi Regional Transportation Authority (CCRTA) Service area covers 830 square miles and provides transit service that supports over six (6) million boardings per year. In addition to fixed route bus services, the CCRTA provides commuter service to employees of the Naval Air Station and Corpus Christi Army Depot and other federal agencies, operates the Corpus Christi Harbor Ferry, provides transportation services to rural communities, assists citizens in creating vanpools and rideshare programs, and provides demand-response curb-to-curb service for qualified individuals with a disability.

### Transit – Buses

Existing transit service in the study area is centered on Staples Street Station with service to and from the SEA District and Downtown. Both Route 78 North Beach and Route 76 the Harbor Bridge Shuttle use the current Harbor Bridge. Service in the SEA District is focused on Chaparral Street and Harbor Drive.

**SHORELINE CONNECTION**

**2014 SUMMER**

**HARBOR FERRY**  
Daily: Sat. May 24 - Mon. Sept. 1  
People Street T-head  
Departs every hour on the hour.  
First departs 12 pm - last departs 8 pm.  
Train Station Aquarium  
Departs every half hour.  
First departs 12:30 pm - last departs 6:30 pm.  
\$3.00 Round Trip - \$1.50 Reduced Fare\*  
Purchase Tickets at People Street T-Head Booth.  
Your Harbor Ferry ticket is your Free Pass on any CCRTA vehicle all day on-day of purchase.  
\*Reduced fare senior citizens, individuals with disabilities, Medicare card holders and students age 17+ of all schools.

**TROLLEY**  
Harbor Bridge Shuttle  
Mon - Sun 75¢  
North Beach  
Mon - Sat 75¢

The CCRTA Customer Service Center Monday-Friday 7am-6pm 361-633-2297 • RideLine 24 hour automated service 361-289-2600 www.ccrtc.org

Source: <http://ccrtc.org/images/2014-harbor-ferry.gif>

### Issue

Both Route 78 North Beach and Route 76 the Harbor Bridge Shuttle will require rerouting over the New Harbor Bridge. The route will be longer, travel time will increase, and operational costs will increase. The final design of the New Harbor Bridge 181/Crosstown Highway/Interstate 37 interchange will have significant operational impacts to bus transit service.

### Action

Plan for increased operational costs and travel times. Actively participate in the final design of the New Harbor Bridge 181/Crosstown Highway/Interstate 37 interchange to ensure that transit operations are addressed in the design of on/off-ramps, and intersections that will be utilized by transit.

### Transit – Ferries

Marine transportation is a key driver of this project. The harbor creates a significant barrier to vehicles and pedestrians as well as an opportunity. While the New Harbor

Bridge will provide a much improved non-motorized facility for pedestrians and bicyclists the walking/riding the distance required to get from the Art Museum of South Texas to the USS Lexington is measured in miles vs. the 3,000 feet across the bay that separates them.

#### ***Issue***

Is expanded Harbor Ferry service a viable mode along the waterfront and across the shipping channel? Can additional landings be implemented to act more like short hop trolley or streetcar than a traditional ferry?

#### ***Action***

Investigate additional landings and ferry capacity to support multiple stops along the waterfront and more frequent service across the channel.

### **Heavy/Freight Rail**

Rail continues to become a more important transportation mode as fuel prices increase, highways become more congested, and the need for effective transportation of bulk commodities increases. The existing rail loop that circles the Port Facilities along Hughes Street, North Broadway under the current bridge, then along Harbor Drive is critical to the long term success of the Port. The loop encircles the Brewster Street Ice House, Hurricane Alley Water Park, Whataburger Field, and Port Heavy Lift Facilities.

#### ***Issue***

Use of the rail loop the will increase significantly in the future. The frequency and length of trains increase will increase. Automobile, bike, and pedestrian volumes will to continue to grow as this area realizes its full development potential in the future. The increasing demand in all modes will increase the conflicts between rail, automobiles, bicycles, and pedestrians

#### ***Action***

Support increased use of the rail loop and implement enhanced rail crossing surface treatments and signals/crossing controls to safely manage automobile, bicycle, and pedestrian crossings.

### **THE KEY QUESTION TO ANSWER**

Where does Interstate 37 end and the SEA District/Downtown begin? Answering this question addresses the following:

- Limited access freeway or city arterial?
- 60 mph or 30 mph?
- At grade intersections or bridges?
- Walkable or restricted?
- A barrier or a connection?



**Big Picture**

## CONCEPTS THAT FRAME THE RECOMMENDATIONS

Corpus Christi grew up along the Gulf of Mexico in an area of significant beauty and strategic opportunity related to the commerce of the Gulf - both economic and recreational. You are a “spring break” and beach destination as well as a place of significant commerce and industry. Your Port is thriving – expanding – and as an integral part of your downtown it and the waterfront are important keys to your potential to build significant quality of life components that can leverage your ability to attract and retain talent, diverse businesses and extended stays.

The R/UDAT team was asked to focus on the parts of Corpus Christi that will change dramatically with the replacement of your bridge. These areas – the SEA District and historic North Beach will see the most direct impact of the bridge relocation, but with a new approach to downtown – and the waterfront – the area of opportunity rightfully should be seen as: North Beach, the SEA District and the Historic Downtown Core. Together these waters’ front aspects of Corpus Christi marry the potential to celebrate – build on - the recreational, cultural, entertainment, historic **and** industrial aspects of what makes Corpus Christi **distinct**.



The overarching concepts that have organized the teams’ investigation:

- Capture the potential of the bridge relocation:
  - for a new sense of arrival into the heart of Corpus Christi
  - for newly available development parcels
  - for reduced barriers between areas in and adjacent to downtown
- Create Connectivity between destination activities and venues
- Create a stronger mix of uses and density that contribute to the potential for vitality throughout the day and throughout the week
- Create a walk-able environment with places to come together and spend time in the public realm

## BRIDGE RELOCATION

The relocation of the bridge creates an unprecedented opportunity to think about the future of your community. An investigation of this potential and a plan that integrates the entire area along the north waterfront can position Corpus Christi for building the amenities and sense of place that are critically important in attracting and retaining the people that make for a diverse and sustainable economy.

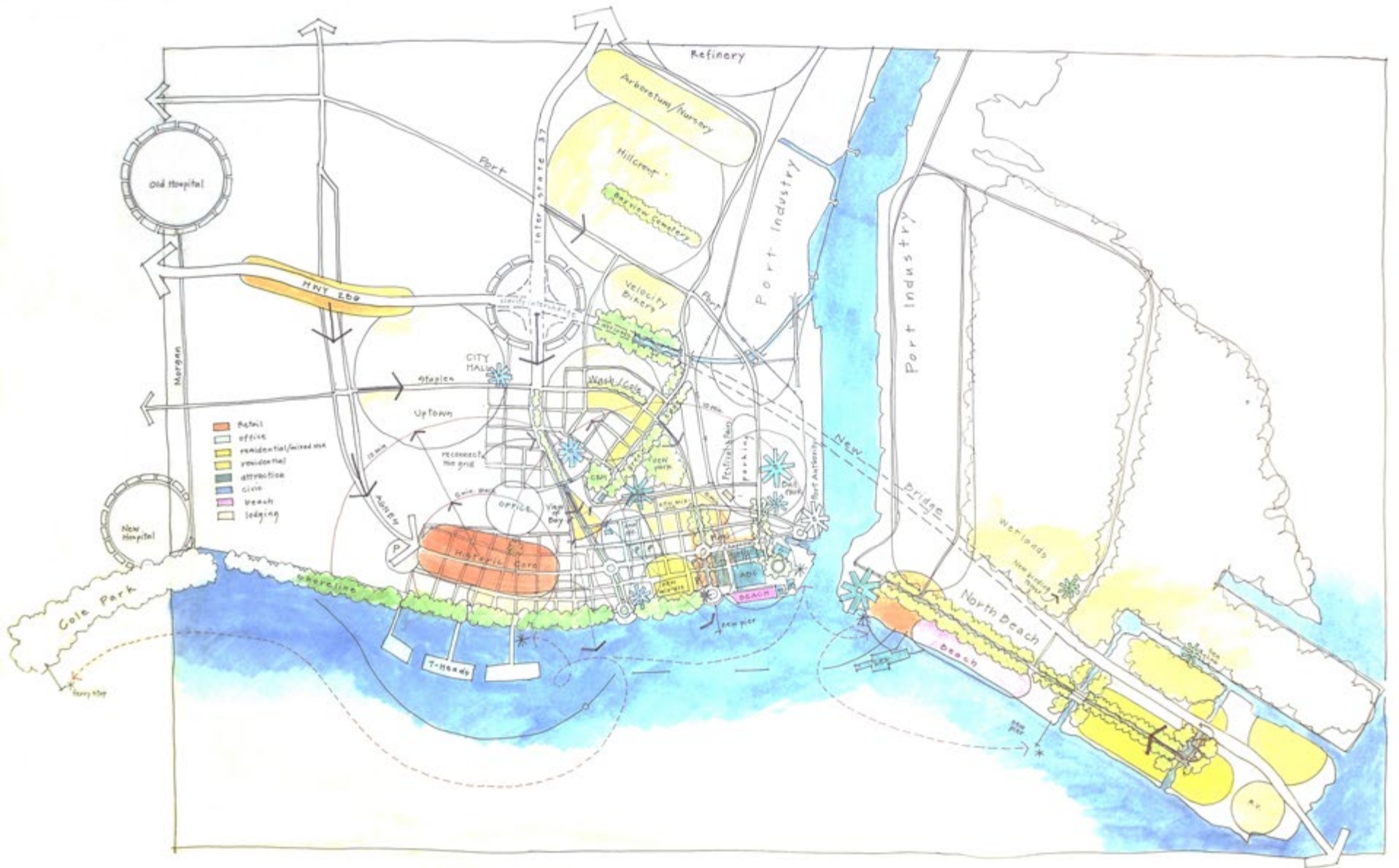
The R/UDAT investigation illustrates how some of these new opportunities might be realized. The investigation also brought to light a number of ways to address connectivity, movement patterns and infill development that do not have to wait until the new bridge is in place.

### In North Beach

#### *Long Term in response to the new Bridge:*

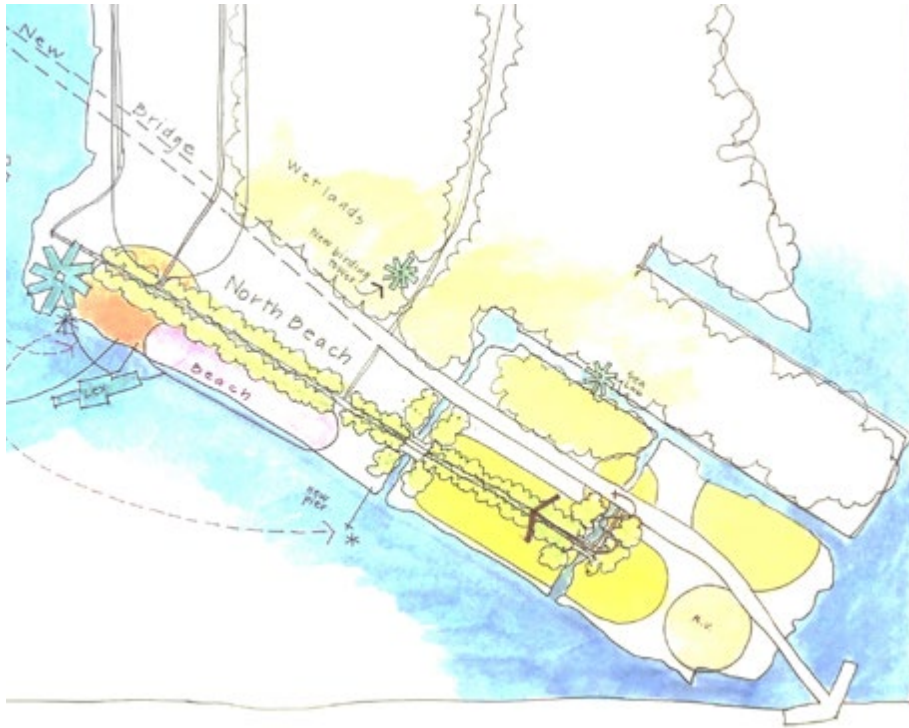
- Make “Aquarium Boulevard” beautiful and delightful – worth the extra time needed to get from the more northern exit off the bridge to the Aquarium, the Lexington and the Beaches
- Concentrate commercial activity – retail and lodging – near the Aquarium and the Lexington
- Use old bridge site near the Aquarium for well-planned new RDE (retail, dining and entertainment). Venue parking should be beyond the RDE, not between it and the Aquarium and the Lexington
- Use green infrastructure to mitigate flooding/storm surges and to make birding and engagement with the coastal environment a part of North Beach’s destination offerings
- Connect North Beach to SEA District with a regular water taxi or ferry at the north end of Shoreline
- Address new needs for public safety with a North Beach fire station, EMC and police substation (perhaps as a gateway component of the new bridge exit)





**Near Term:**

- Initiate “Aquarium Boulevard” beautification/enhancement with the expansion of the Aquarium
- Develop better way finding and signage
- Develop a ferry stop adjacent to the Art and Science Museums



**In the historic downtown**

**Long Term in response to the new Bridge:**

- Reconnect the grid of streets “above the bluff” – at grade
  - This new connectivity creates opportunities for mixed-income residential in the “downtown adjacent” historic Washington Coles neighborhood
- Make the new approach to the waterfront and downtown – “Aubrey Nuevo” (the old Highway 37) – a boulevard with pedestrian and bicycle friendly street intersections
  - Encouraging movement/activity between the historic downtown and the SEA District

- Create a zone of offices and mixed-use around the courthouse that contributes to a critical mass of daytime users
- Keep the scale of this development modest to protect the spectacular NEW VIEWS of the water as you arrive on “Aubrey Nuevo”
- Bring buildings to-the-side walk with ground floor uses that are extroverted
  - Parking is behind the building, on the street and in a public deck that serve this entire area
  - This parking deck can be used for event parking nights and weekends
- Make a round-about at Chaparral and Aubrey Nuevo
  - This distinctive intersection leads people into both the historic downtown and the SEA District
- Make a round-about at Shoreline and Aubrey Nuevo to celebrate connecting with the city’s water front

**Near Term:**

- Identify multiple routes for arrival and departure – by car/bus – to SEA District venues
  - These can include: Port, an extension of Staples (across the old water treatment site) and Agnes
  - The use of Agnes brings people along Chaparral through downtown and creates new visibility and potential for downtown businesses and venues
  - New public parking at Agnes and Chaparral can be used both for downtown event parking with bike rentals and shuttles to the SEA District
- Sign and promote these routes to your local/regional community
- Begin infill development around the courthouse using development patterns that are urban not suburban
- Create a public parking deck that can support higher density in this area and that provide event and waterfront overflow parking nights and weekends
- Develop better signage and way finding for downtown and for the SEA district



## In the SEA District

Long Term in response to the new Bridge:

- Make "Broadway Nuevo" – site of the old bridge base - a neighborhood scaled walk-able street
- Shift the new street to the east of the right-of-way creating larger development parcels between Tanchua and Broadway Nuevo
- Use these parcels for a mix of office, residential and RDT (retail, dining and entertainment venues)
- Residential towers are appropriate in this new sward
- Towers would have deck parking with ground floor retail hiding the decks
- On Broadway Nuevo's east side incrementally develop mixed-use helping to increase density and residential options
- Maintain the historic residences where they cluster in a critical mass



## CONNECTIVITY

Corpus Christi has many impressive and well-used destination venues and activities: from the Texas State Aquarium, the Lex and the BEACH in North Beach to Whataburger Field and the museums in the SEA District. But in many ways – literally and conceptually – these venues seem “stand alone.” Without connectivity that is people friendly and walk-able, you are not leveraging the potential of these venues to support additional restaurants, shops and specialty retail. A critical mass of these amenities adds texture, interest, and a sense of place. It is important to have these types and kinds of places to encourage people to linger – to encourage them to spend time (and money) in your downtown.

Without good connectivity it is also hard for visitors (and locals) to understand how much there is to do in your core historic and waterfront area. Without this sense of “things to do” beyond “one destination” activities it is hard to attract multi-day visits, conferences and conventions, and new businesses, residents and retirees.

### North Beach

- Create strong way-finding and signage that celebrates your venues and your relationship to the water
  - Make the water ferry or taxi a necessity in leveraging the impact of your venues
- Make North Beach the first day of a visit, not the only day
- Connect people to the water and to nature
  - Develop your birding potential and opportunities for nature enthusiasts to hike, kayak/canoe and bicycle along the Nueces Bay

### Historic Downtown

- Direct people to downtown venues
- Focus on creating a critical mass of eating and specialty retail in one or two blocks and grow outward from these destination areas
- Make it easy to find alternative parking
- Shuttle people from event venues so that they can develop the habit of eating and shopping in the downtown before and after ball games or a concert

## SEA District

- Focus on Port Street as a near-term connective street between the Museums and Whataburger and Hurricane Alley
  - Recruit additional retail, dining, and entertainment venues for sites along Port near the Museums
- Work with the Corp of Engineers to relocate their offices so that their site adjacent to the Museum of Art and the Science Museum can be used for a ferry/taxi terminal that connects North Beach with the SEA District
  - Develop a café/restaurant site at this ferry stop
- Develop good signage and way finding between venues
- Work with the Port Authority as they develop their new facility to include a “port viewing platform” that lets you watch the big ships and port activity



### Shoreline

- Replace the parking at the north end of Shoreline (on the old barge dock site) with a Shorefront “beach” that can attract sunbathers and “site-seers”
  - Can’t get in the water but you are at the water’s edge
  - Creates an extroverted waterfront activity as an anchor at the end of Shoreline
  - Activates the public realm with a new “gathering space”
  - Have shaded overlook on the sidewalk above; this overlook can also host food trucks and have areas for eating and enjoying food/snacks



- Create a new pier on axis with Fitzgerald
  - Visual “terminus” for Fitzgerald and the future connection to the extension of Staples
  - Allows you to “get out on the water” for boat watching
  - Provides a new place to fish
- Complete the “greening” of Shoreline south of the convention center (phase three of Shoreline redevelopment)
- Incorporate shade structures that enhance the experience of walking

### MIXED USE AND INCREASED DENSITY

Concentrating and increasing density creates a character and sense of place that is urban and walk-able rather than suburban and car-oriented. The SEA District, in particular, is poised for this kind of investment and development.

### SEA District

Apart from the vacation of right-of-way associated with the bridge replacement there are vast areas of openness in the SEA District that could be developed for a mix of uses that bring people to the area throughout the day, nights and weekends. With more people, it is easier for businesses – cafes, restaurants, and specialty retail - to thrive between episodic special events and with people walking and moving through the district it is not only more interesting but also safer.

One of the most under-utilized areas of the district is the Shoreline – the water’s

edge. This proposal investigates mid-density waterfront residential with family friendly cafes on the street level and a destination restaurant on a roof terrace.

This area has probably been seen as a potential hotel site or expansion site for the convention center. We are recommending that the convention center expand to the west onto blocks that are currently surface parking. Included in that concept is a 1000 space parking deck that is fronted by retail/commercial. The deck can serve the convention center and the proposed new waterfront residential as well as the district's entertainment venues.

A convention center hotel is proposed a block further to the west. This site is appropriate for a tower and can have an associated deck. The hotel guests are then also in an easy walk of the museums, the ferry, the ball park and the other destination venues of the district.

Additional residential and mixed-use is illustrated. Making Chaparral have mid-density frontage will make it – long-term – a street that people will enjoy walking between the historic downtown and the museums.

Other recommended infill in the district include a makers space – an ideal warehouse conversion; a crafts/arts incubator and market; and the preservation (and celebration) of Heritage Park as an event venue and heritage site.

## Historic Downtown

Housing in the downtown is essential to revitalization of this part of your city. Your historic building stock is incredible and loft conversions have been thriving in many other cities the size of Corpus Christi.



## WALKABLE PUBLIC REALM

A strong sense of place depends on attention to the “third places” of our built environment. If the “first place” is our homes and the “second place” is where we work, the “third place” is where we spend our leisure time with friends and family. Third places are parks, cafes, shops, bookstores, makers’ places and the walking and strolling that let’s us watch people, window shop and visit together. A walk or bike ride along the bay front clearly is a great local example of people seeking out a third place. But, a third place also implies lingering and spending time in a place. Creating those third places is an important – an essential – part of any revitalization effort.

Good places in the built environment are connected and supported by pedestrian friendly streets that have good walking surfaces, good lighting and way-finding to build confidence and safety, and are interesting (and beautiful!) along the way. Much of that interest comes from not just great views and good/interesting architecture but also from shops, eating establishments and extrovert ground floor activities.



## DOWNTOWN ADJACENT NEIGHBORHOODS

Roads and industry cut off the Washington Coles neighborhood and today it is an area of disinvestment and vacancy that belies the rich cultural and historic contributions that this neighborhood represents. Increasingly, these “downtown adjacent” areas are attractive for reinvestment because they are within an easy walk of attractions both cultural and entertainment – and in the case of Washington Coles – the waterfront. This proposal recommends a strategy of new residential that will include a mix of choices in size, type and will serve a mix of incomes. Existing houses that can be retrieved or restored should be preserved and new housing should include townhomes, duplexes, live/work and apartments as well as single family detached. Amenities – in addition to location – should include a neighborhood park (on the old water treatment site,) a biking and walking trail (on the abandoned rail bed,) and a small market (that can serve nearby downtown residents as well.) The realization of this potential will depend on the relocation of the bridge and the ability to “knit” this neighborhood back into the larger community.



## CONCEPTS TO ACTION

This proposal illustrates ONE way the concepts of this investigation might be realized. As the leaders and decision makers and stakeholders of your community leverage the potential of these areas it is important to return with each action to the concepts and use these concepts as a test of whether each move will reinforce the larger potential to make your historic water front and port the thriving place it can and should be.



**Landscape**



## CLIMATE BASED DESIGN

Corpus Christi's hot and windy climate plays a distinct role in the life and identity of the city. Weather patterns have had profound effects on attitudes towards outdoor activities both positively and negatively. Its humid subtropical climate is in contrast to much of Texas, which, while generally considered hot, is also predominantly dry. In Corpus Christi, rainfall average is over 31 inches, however the city has recently been in a period of sustained drought. Rainfall tends to occur in concentrated periods, which creates potential for flooding from frequent downpours. The North Shore and even some low lying parts of downtown are vulnerable to floods despite the protective influence of the Sea Wall. Storm surge from hurricanes represents a greater concern with potential velocity wave action that would overtop low lying development throughout the North shore. These flood risk issues should shape future development decisions to mitigate risk and sustain long-term development.

Perhaps the climate's most distinct feature is the presence of constant high sustained winds throughout the year, making it one of the windiest cities in the country with an average sustained wind (according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) of 12 miles per hour, meaning there is always a constant breeze. The constant breeze relieves the heat and humidity, especially when there is shade. Winds can become quite forceful at any time of the year with gusts reaching forty miles. Wind also creates a unique sporting environment, including opportunities for wind surfing, kite surfing, and sailing.

Informal interviews and conversations with the community indicated that the climate represented a significant barrier to outside activities as straightforward as a five minute walk. Respondents stated that walking outdoors for even a short amount of time made them feel uncomfortable and sweaty, especially in the context of the downtown office worker environment. The comfort problem is compounded by the prevalence of impervious, heat radiating surfaces from buildings and vast open parking lots, creating an increase in temperature. This effect from the built environment is conventionally referred to as the 'heat island effect.' Many of the stressors from the heat island effect can be relieved by focusing on increasing shade canopy in the city and by providing opportunities to cool down. This can be achieved through a combination of built shading structures, incentivizing the use of heat reflecting materials, creative opportunities to cool off with amenities such as mist sprayers, or private retailers providing cool drinks. Most importantly (and easiest to do) is to increase the urban tree canopy throughout the city.

### Action Items Now

Increase urban shade canopy along favored pedestrian corridors in the city.

Provide cool, shaded urban oasis destination to encourage office workers and tourists to step outside.

### Action Items to Phase

New land use planning and building code should focus on flood hazard mitigation and should incentivize microclimate based design.

## THE SHAPE OF THE LAND

Historic Corpus Christi is primarily entered through Highway 37 to the West and Highway 35 across the Corpus Christi Harbor Bridge. The downtown area is characterized by the bluffs overlooking the bay from the central business area and the historic Washington Coles neighborhood. Moving south from Broadway, the bluffs give way to a low lying area of the historic downtown. The lowest point is at Water Street, which was the original shoreline edge of the city. With the completion of the Sea Wall in 1941, Corpus Christi not only had a signature public realm asset but also several new city blocks with the infill from Water Street to Shoreline Boulevard.

A study of high points and low points surrounding downtown indicate several opportunities with the replacement of the Corpus Christi Harbor Bridge. With a shifting traffic pattern and reconfigured traffic ways comes the potential for reconsiderations of gateways and entries to the downtown. For Example, the depressed portion of Highway 37 currently bifurcates the upland downtown and the Washington Coles neighborhood. Also due to its sunken configuration, the highway fails to capture the view of the Bay upon entry into the downtown. With the reduced traffic burden on 35, the bridge road can be configured to extend Broadway to the East in a way that knits together Washington Coles neighborhood with the Cultural district. Lastly, low lying areas identified in a preliminary survey indicate that there are significant low lying areas with difficult drainage during storm events.

### Action Items Now

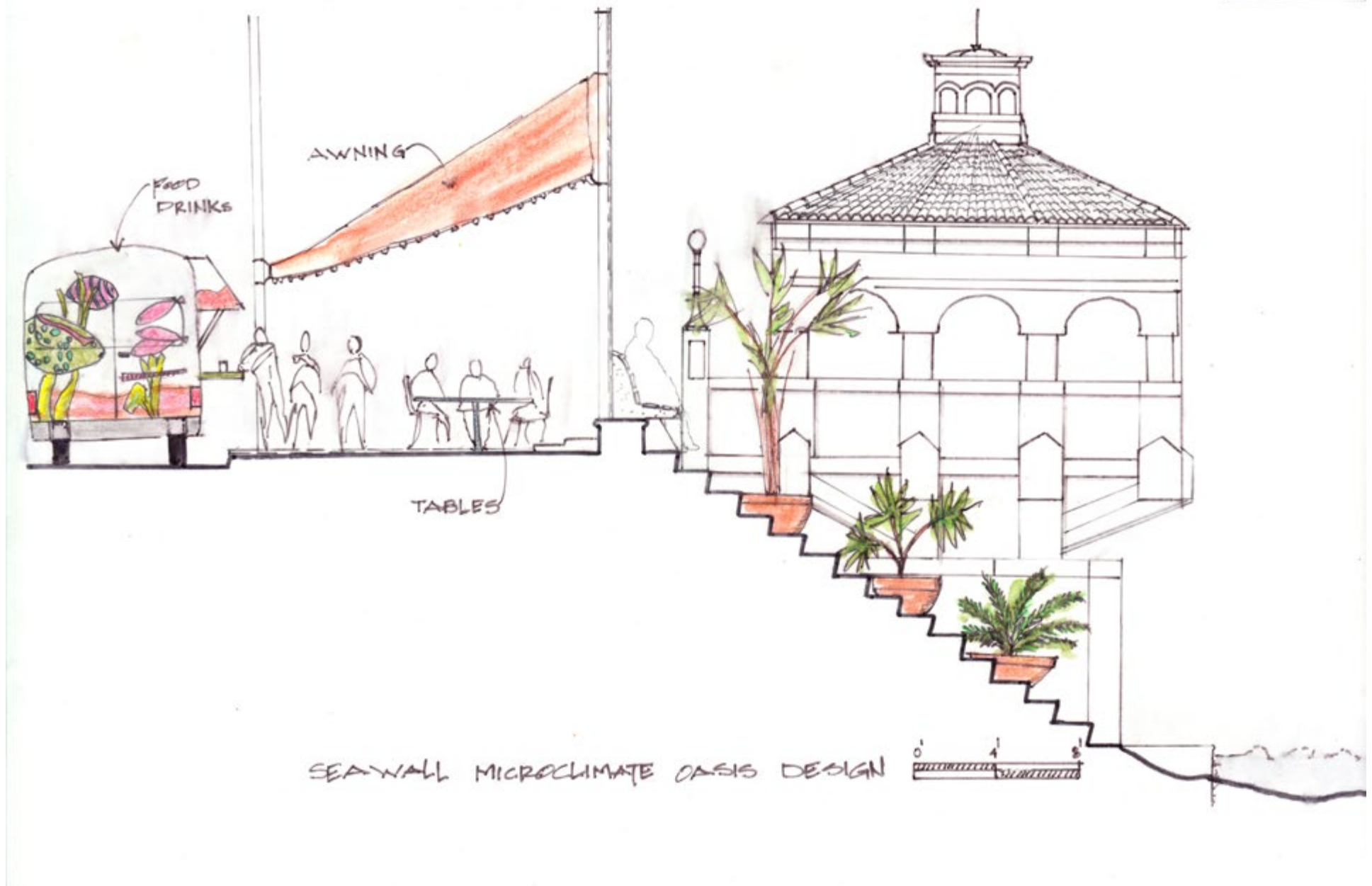
Consider wayfinding strategies that attract visitors and locals to scenic overlooks and provide visual interpretation, either through signage or smart phone applications.

### Action Items Phased

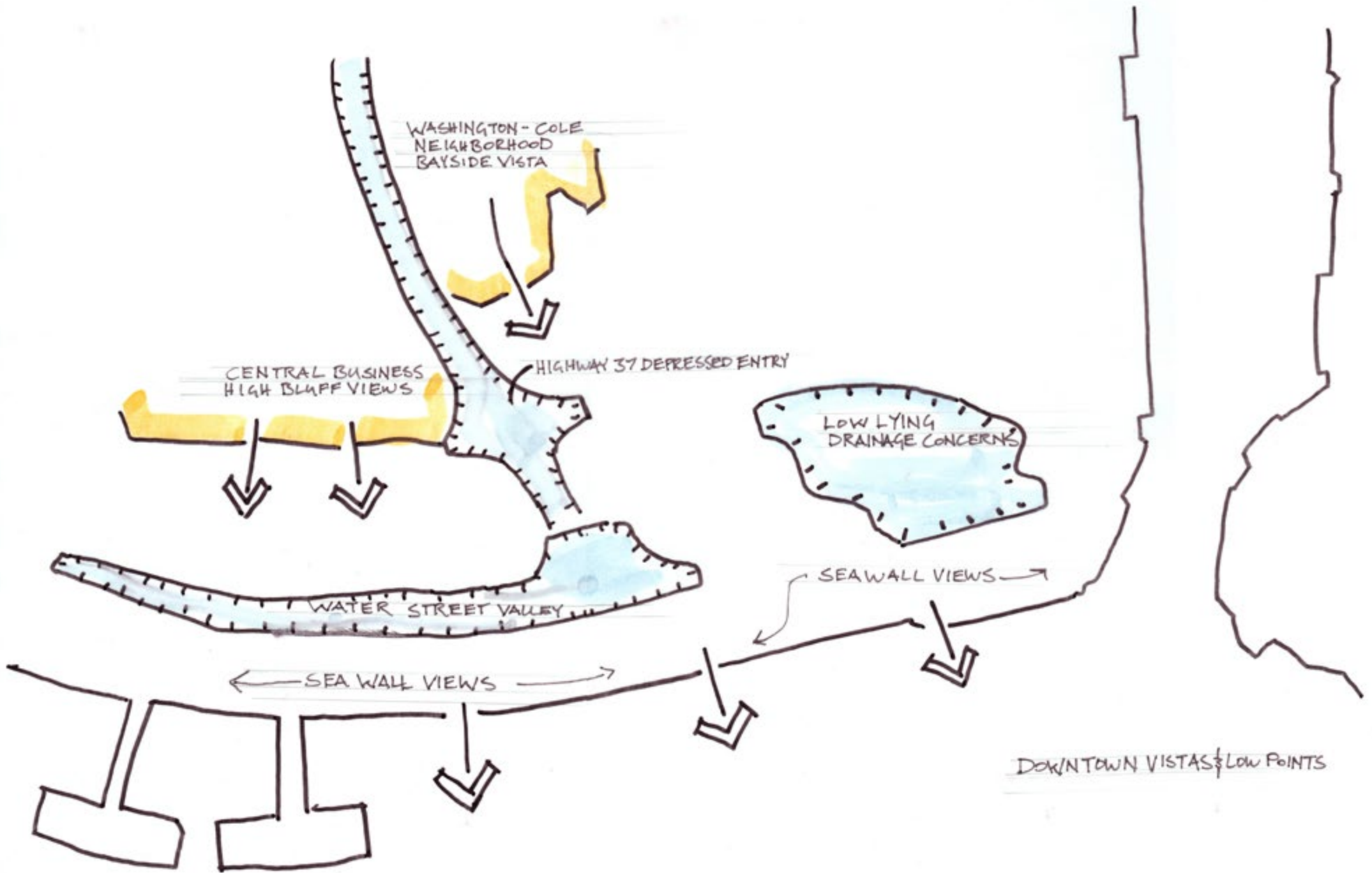
Assess the elevation and physical alignment of Highways 37 and 35 with considerations for eliminating grade separations and creating street level boulevards.

Develop a plan for revitalizing the Washington Coles neighborhood; its views, historic character, and proximity as a walkable community tied to downtown employment centers makes it a logical choice for neighborhood re-development.

Develop a drainage system that relieves low lying areas in the downtown area by taking advantage of open space created by the decommissioning of the Highway 35 bridge route.



*This section illustrates the potential of lightweight investments to mitigate the heat of the city. A simple awning canopy is shown with flexible seating and tables shaded beneath it. A food truck retailer operates a portable concession stand by the promenade and ornamental planting in movable pots create a small oasis and break from the heat.*



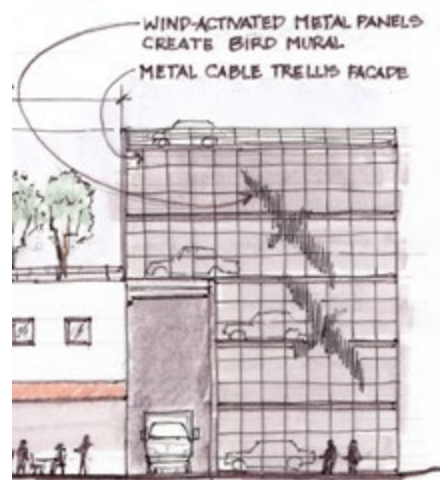
Highpoints in the downtown landscape are highlighted in orange; the blue tone indicates low lying areas in the landscape. Arrows indicate views toward Corpus Christi Bay.

## LANDSCAPE ORIENTATION & PUBLIC ART

Since the Harbor Bridge was built, it has been both a visible landmark and an icon for Corpus Christi. In this urban landscape, with few significant hills or valleys, we can see far and wide. The Bridge was a beacon, a welcoming gesture, and a threshold. The new bridge will also play all of these roles, but it will not play them fully for ten years. In the meantime and as a buildup to this grand cultural landmark, we have the opportunity to expand and deepen our placemaking and wayfinding systems. Citizens have embraced the newness that is coming. What if we begin to provide beautiful new functional landmarks that root us in place right now?

Many participants in the stakeholder sessions and the Friday public meeting described a city full of attractions and amenities but many of them are difficult to find and have no connective links. Some of Corpus Christi's most iconic moments are expressed through its infrastructure. The flood protection of the Seawall is not only a work of engineering, it is a work of public art and public space. As Corpus Christi invests in its next generation of development, it is important to create a strategic vision by integrating public art with public work. The civic and landscape importance of the future bridge will create new gateways into the downtown and the North Shore.

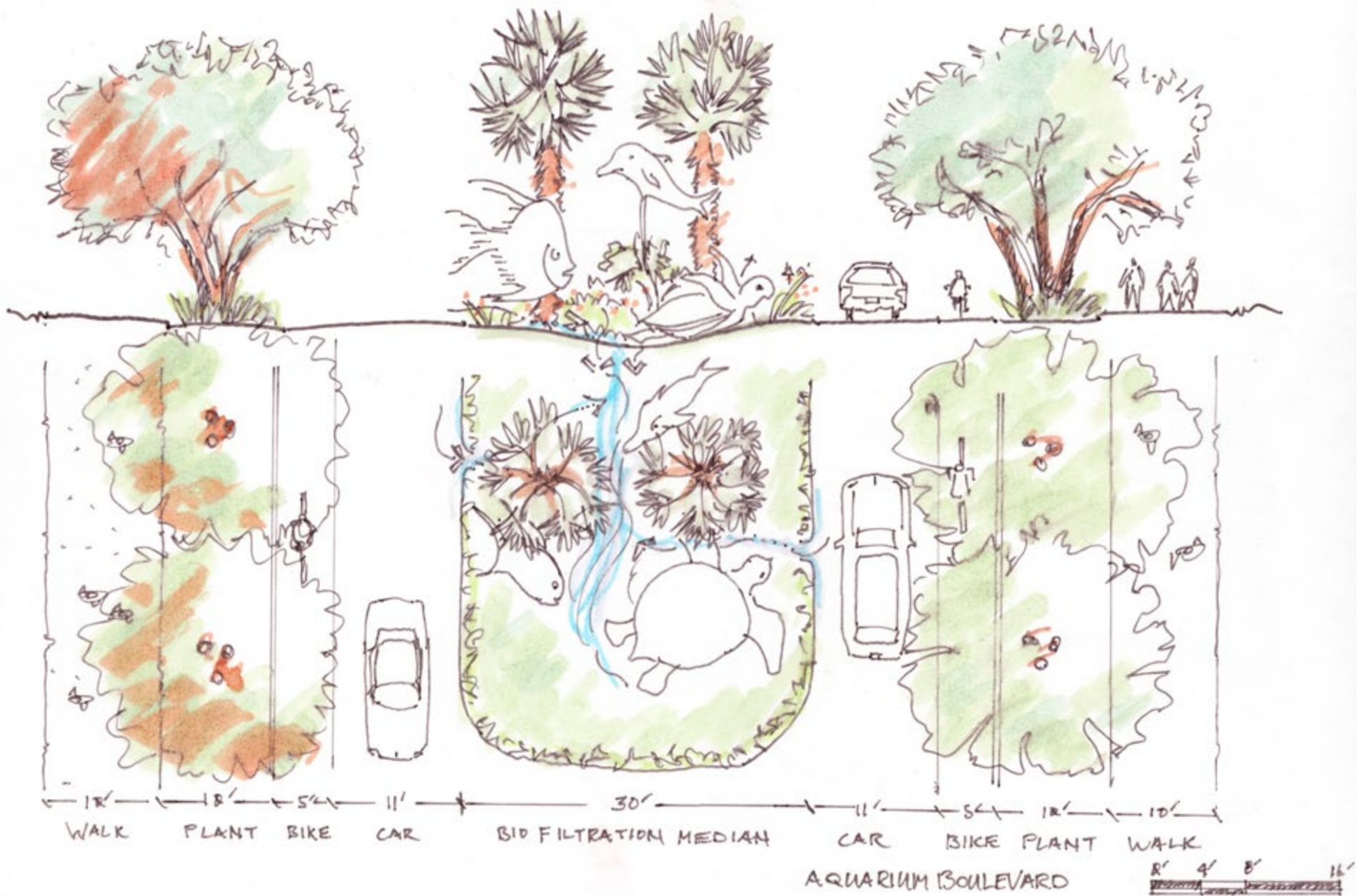
Throughout our tour of Corpus Christi, the R/UDAT team sought opportunities to create destinations to connect locals and visitors throughout the downtown landscape. We foresee two scales of public art: a large scale that utilizes major infrastructure and public works improvements to create legibility and gateways in the greater landscape, and a second scale that creates walkable "rewards." For example, the hotels are walkable to the cultural district but there is a lack of visual enticement. A visual landmark of scale would help to create foot traffic and would also create an attractive marker to catch the eye and lead one into the cultural district.



*Strategic placement of public art and major civic structures, like the Sea Wall or the future bridge create landmarks in the city. Public Art can create iconic original wayfinding and accommodate functional purposes too, such as the façade to a parking garage or the generation of sustainable wind power.*



*Velocity Bike Course with sustainable wind power installations.*



*With the creation of a new entry to the North Shore, there will be an opportunity to create a unique gateway to the North Shore. The section here envisions the creation of a boulevard that celebrates the sea life of the Gulf with a series of unique sculptures along a well-shaded and beautiful boulevard. This boulevard will create an interpretive gateway to Texas's most celebrated aquarium as well as a celebration of endemic sea life.*

## Action Items Now

Consider sponsoring a Walkable Rewards Program. One example cited by a stakeholder was a mural program that would strategically locate artful murals of shorebirds throughout walkable streets of downtown such as Chaparral and parts of Shoreline Boulevard.

## Action Items Phased

Consider public art's ability to influence the size, shape, and appearance of the roadway and bridge infrastructure projects. These are gateway opportunities that only come along once a generation.

Develop an art improvement program that links key pedestrian corridors to increase the legibility of the built landscape in downtown and throughout the surrounding neighborhoods.

## NATURAL ASSETS & ECOSYSTEM SERVICES

Outstanding Natural assets surround Corpus Christi; the view of the Bay is the most iconic, but there are several others. As previously mentioned in other sections, wind provides relief from heat and humidity as well as the energy needed for several popular water sports including sailing and windsurfing. It's impossible to imagine Corpus Christi without its wind or water. How could you celebrate Buccaneer Days or the Wednesday night Sail Boat races? Corpus Christi is also an incredible migratory bird flyway and boasts a diverse range of songbirds, raptors and shorebirds, giving the city the moniker as "The Birdiest City in America." Lastly, the Bay is popular among recreational fisherman, with families and people of all ages frequently seen casting a line out into the Bay. These natural assets are a small but visible representation of the way the environment provides value to people. We call this value "Ecosystem Services." In order to ensure the value is there for generations to come, we have proposed design opportunities associated with the bridge improvement that will enhance water quality, reduce flood risk and create better pedestrian and cycle connections.

Corpus Christi's identity is shaped by its dependencies to water. The access to the port is an unmatched economic asset in the region and a key driver to long-term growth. The bay is the iconic draw of the city, a place of play, promenade and cultural adornment. However, while the shoreline is currently beautiful and attractive, it is also a place of risk with storm surge representing a significant threat to residents on the North Shore and potentially to areas of downtown. Red Tide algal blooms also reveal our dependency on the health of the Bay; when these blooms occur Corpus Christi is cut off from its greatest asset. Flooding from heavy rainfall is also a potential risk, both to water quality as well to life and property. Recognizing the relationship between the built environment and water is fundamental to understanding the opportunities the living systems and green infrastructure offer to the citizens of Corpus Christi.

As the next generation of infrastructure is designed, it is important to design with the ultimate goal of accomplishing multiple aims, and a water quality and flood protection plan is logical. The Corpus Christi Harbor Bridge Project is not only catalytic to re-imagining the historic downtown and North shore; it can also accomplish many things, including improving quality of life and the regeneration of ecosystem services. The new bridge's shift of traffic patterns enables us to use a Green Infrastructure approach to protecting water quality and stormwater management. Green infrastructure uses vegetation, soils, and mimics natural processes to clean water, mitigate flood hazards, restore habitat and clean the air. Over the coming decade, communities across the country are expected to have to spend almost \$300 billion dollars to upgrade and repair existing infrastructure, and FEMA projects that 25% of annual damages from flooding are related to stormwater management capacity. Corpus Christi will also be impacted by a share of these costs over the coming decade.

The Blue/Green way section is an example of creating new amenity and beneficial habitat through the management of stormwater. A combination of greenways that create shaded linked open space corridors will be combined with strategic blue ways which will add water launch destinations and wetland flood vents to treat stormwater runoff and mitigate flood hazards. Several of these green infrastructure projects can be initiated with the implementation of the new harbor bridge; along North Broadway; along the proposed Broadway Nuevo in the R/UDAT concept plan; along Timon and Surfside Boulevards; and in tandem with the bridge improvements proximate to beach road. As the Blue/Green Way plan develops and extends shaded open space corridors throughout the city, it will become a valuable tool to protect and capitalize on Corpus Christi's natural assets and reconnect pedestrians and cyclists to the fabric of Corpus Christi's neighborhoods.

## Action Plan for Now

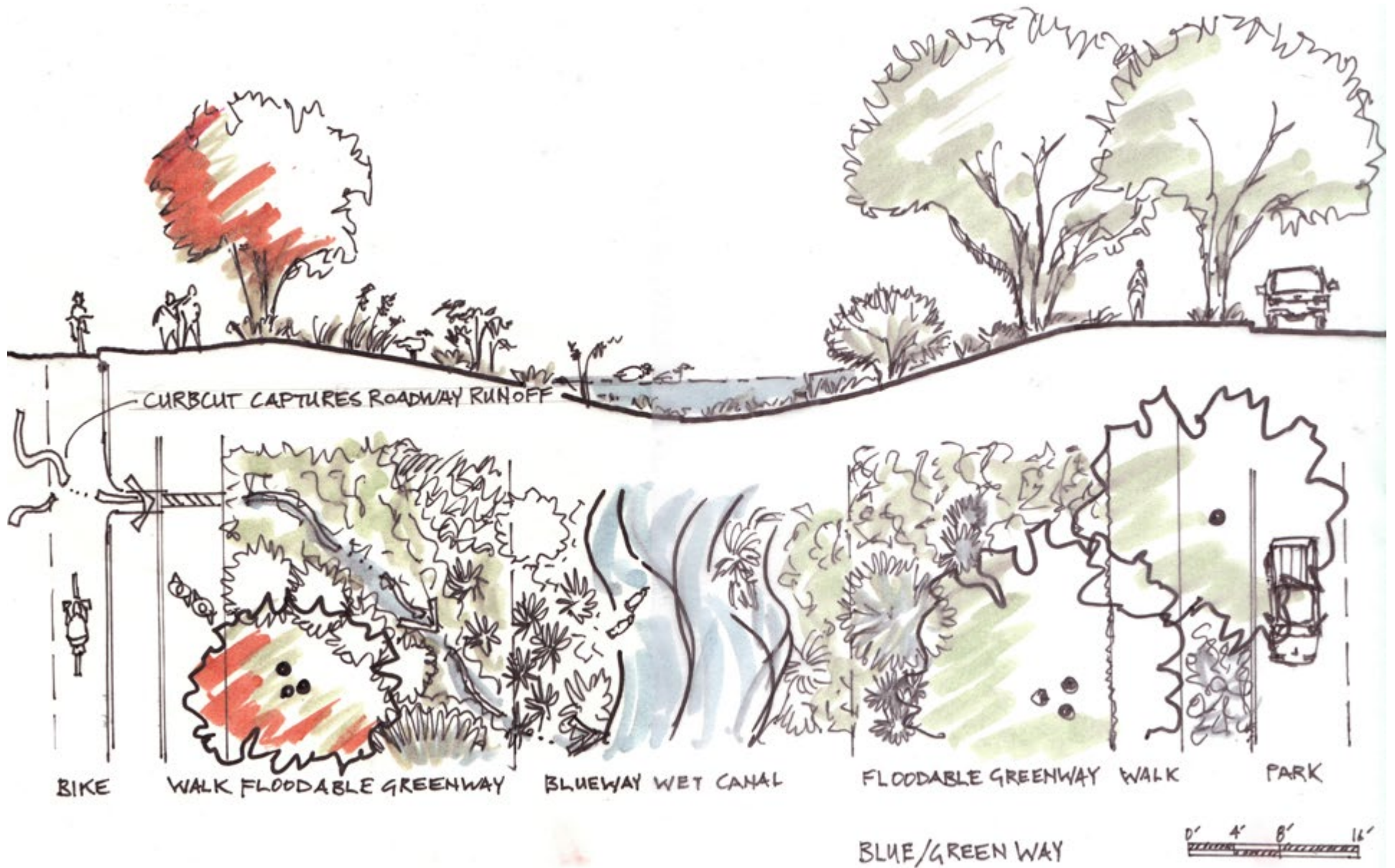
Incorporate and celebrate Corpus Christi's natural assets in the identity and branding.

## Action Items Phased

Develop a green infrastructure action plan to reduce demand on grey infrastructure (conveyed sewerage systems). The EPA has recognized that reducing runoff through greenway infiltration and bio-retention is effective for improving water quality, often at less cost than traditional pipe, pump and lift infrastructure.

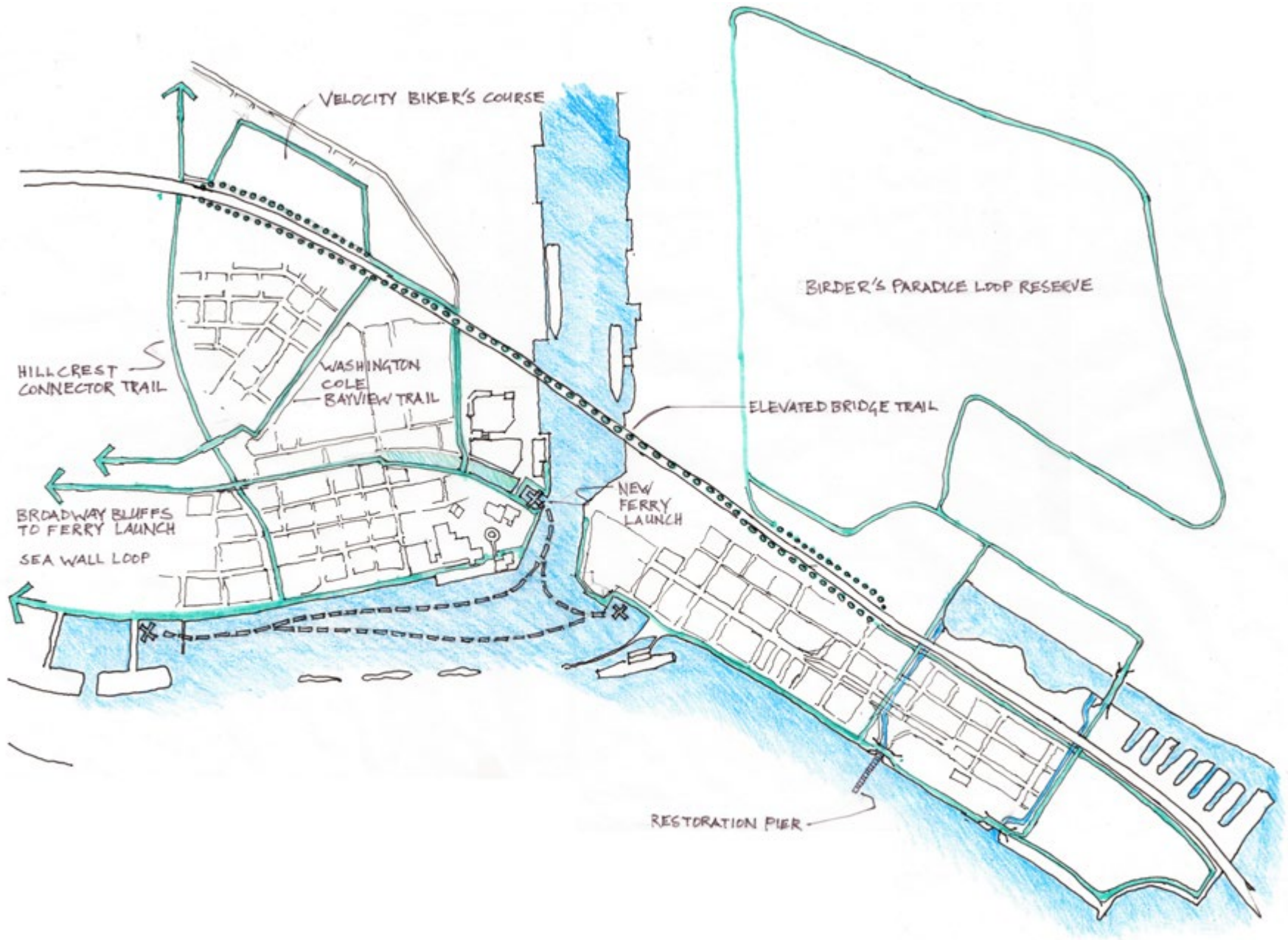
Establish land use planning and building codes that account for storm surge risk, particularly on the North Shore, and protect natural assets particularly areas sensitive to water quality and migratory bird wetlands.

Establish a Blue/Greenway plan that provides connective public amenity, stormwater management and habitat opportunities for local flora and fauna.



The Blue/Green Way incorporates multi-modal cycle and pedestrian options with green infrastructure and flood mitigation design to create amenities and protect built and natural assets.





BLUE/GREEN WAY PLAN  
(CONNECT ECOLOGY TO CONNECT PEOPLE)

*A plan that improves water quality and reduces runoff can benefit the citizens of Corpus Christi by reducing long term storm sewer capital costs, keeping water clean and creating new green and blue connections for the city.*

## DOWNTOWN COOL CONNECTORS

Our tour through downtown Corpus Christi took us to several attractive destinations that stand out as strong attractors for tourism as well as the local life of the city. However, they are isolated by a significant acreage of parking. While parking is an important asset, there is far more supply than demand can account for. There is a predominance of car infrastructure and a lack of people infrastructure; the paucity of shade, straight-forward linkages between destinations, and street comfort amenities has impacted the value of assets found in the cultural district and in the historic areas of downtown. Like wildlife, people need their own habitat trails and environmental conditions to enjoy the city.

These linkages should focus on revitalizing and maintaining foot traffic between assets, from the downtown central business district to the Cultural District and Convention Center to the hotels. For example, Heritage Park is a beautiful two block treasure of historic homes fronting Chaparral, but it is separated from the convention center and the art museum by barren, featureless parking lots. As future development progresses along the south side of Chaparral, the value of creating an attractive and comfortable pedestrian environment will help create foot traffic between area destinations. This strategy should be comprehensively employed through a Business District Implementation plan that creates linkages through the development of pedestrian oriented retail, hardy shade trees, and visual attractors block by block.

From an arrival perspective, changes to the traffic flow of highway 37 will be vitally



*In this section a future parking structure is fronted by pedestrian oriented retail along Chaparral and a new parking garage for the convention center is wrapped with a wind activated mural, celebrating the city's unique avian assets.*

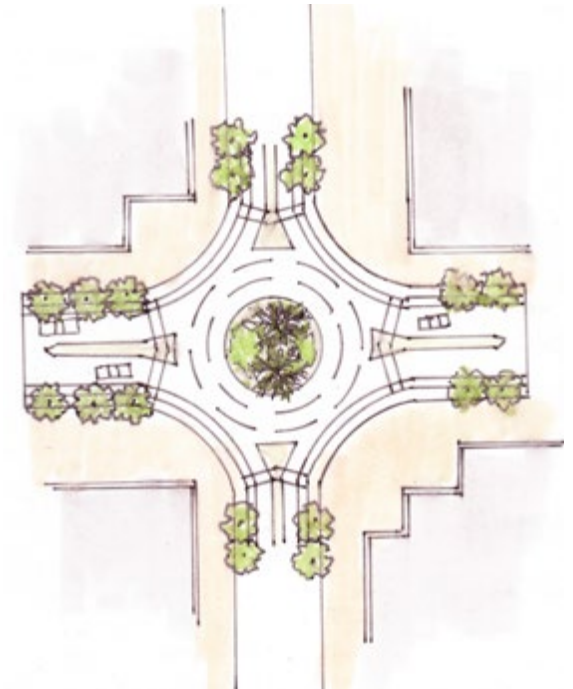
important. As noted in the Downtown Vistas & Low Points diagram previously, Highway 37 lacks a gateway view despite its orientation to Corpus Christi Bay and the Sea Wall. The concept plan proposes the elevation of 37 to adjacent street grade and the renaming of the downtown entry to Aubrey Nuevo, recalling the historic name of the street. This would also be complemented with the inclusion of a roundabout circulator, which could accommodate traffic volumes while creating an iconic vista and a sense of welcome to the historic downtown.

### Action Plan for Now

Develop a walkable rewards strategy, as mentioned in the Climate Based Design and the Landscape Orientation and Public Art sections the walking environment would be improved simply by creating cultural or amenity destinations every block along potential retail and cultural armatures. Shoreline Boulevard along the Seawall, Chaparral are important North South streets to consider.

### Action Items Phased

Develop a gateway traffic plan that creates visual thresholds to the city, roundabouts and improvements to roadway view sheds would increase the destination appeal to the downtown.



*The incorporation of city roundabouts along major downtown traffic corridors will maintain a consistent traffic flow, create new gateway opportunities and vistas and create a safer pedestrian environment.*

A comprehensive Business Improvement District (BID) plan with responsibilities to create pedestrian friendly and attractive corridors and weekly street life programming throughout the year should be implemented.

The BID Plan should also develop a plan for incentivizing retail and residential growth a long destination armatures and corridors. These linkages should focus on revitalizing and maintaining foot traffic between destination and retail assets.

## NEW LIVES FOR OLD SITES

Our journey through downtown, up into the Washington Coles and Hillcrest neighborhoods and across to the North Shore, uncovered several sites that represent attractive opportunities for enhancing connections and creating new destinations and commercial opportunities. Several of these sites were previously abandoned and are simply derelict or underutilized. We believe that several of these old sites could take on new life through the new Harbor Project through new alignments and connections in the traffic pattern, and some are ready for a makeover today with minimal investment.

On the North Shore, the dredge spoil site north of the Texas Aquarium will continue to grow from excavation work associated with the New Harbor Bridge Project. We envision new causeway open space trails that could be established to tour bird enthusiasts along this expansive habitat for ground nesting and shore boards. This tour could expand and link the outreach missions of the Audubon Society, the Texas Aquarium and Sea Lab to further enhance the eco-tourism draw of the North Shore.

In the Cultural District, the parking lot fronting the bayside of the Art Museum could be transformed into a complementary outdoor destination to the Convention Center and Art Museum. The shorefront area could become an all day event with the appropriate investment in open space and the addition of a ferry stop that would shuttle tourists back and forth between the Aquarium, the Art Museum, the convention center and a signature beach plaza that would front the bay. It is easy to imagine creating a place that would allow kids to let loose their pent-up energy after touring the museum while also giving adults a place to lounge about. The synergy of creating an outdoor oasis with multiple cultural destinations will add to the energy of the cultural district and create a visible expression of the vitality of the district.

The parking lot that serves Whataburger field is a tremendous expanse

of hot, impervious ground, but with the popularity of baseball games the demand is understandable. However, during non-game hours and outside of the season, these spaces are often underutilized. As 181 becomes safer to cross (especially with the Broadway Nuevo improvements) these lots could become the downtown's experimental flex space. It's easy to see how these lots can functions as fair grounds, farmer's markets, and convention center exterior expo space with the right investment in east-west boulevard improvements and the creation of shady green perimeters along the lot's edges.

Moving westward up the bluffs into the Washington Coles neighborhood, there is a vast open green along Nueces street. This former refinery area could become a park for recreational off road biking, which would help meet the unmet demand for active recreation experiences in the bike community and would also begin to return a measure of activity to a forgotten corner of the city. An environmental site assessment evaluating contamination and land use concerns would be required to determine if the proposed use could be accommodated.

In the Hill Crest neighborhood along Nueces Bay Boulevard, there is a great potential location for a contract grow nursery which would provide acclimated trees, shrubs and herbaceous plants for the new Harbor Bridge Project. A contract grow operation is a great opportunity for growing the green jobs economy, providing opportunity in the Hill Crest neighborhood and meeting an important need for site improvements along the Harbor Bridge Street Corridors. By establishing a nursery prior to construction, young trees can be purchased and grown to specification size at the nursery and at a cost savings the supply and schedule will be assured.



*Recreational bikers would have an ideal off-track course in this neglected open space along Nueces and Burns.*



*A new nursery creates jobs and creates vitality and supports the neglected Hill Crest Neighborhood.*

**Action Plan for Now**

Develop a temporary oasis pop-up garden for the bayfront parking lot and measure foot traffic impact to area institutions and retailers.

**Action Items Phased**

Assess target sites for implementation according to proposed use. Prioritize pedestrian oriented improvements along the Bay front and quick-win sites like the Nueces Bay Birding Reserve and the Bike site.

Pursue green jobs funding opportunities for the Hill Crest Nursery Project.

# Connections & Recreation



## PART-TIME CARS, CHEAP LIFTS, AND BIKING FOR JOY

Nationally, the millennial generation is leaning away from car ownership. As they are entering adulthood in a changed economy, they are seeking walkable bikeable multimodal cities in which they can navigate with smartphones and where they do not have to own or pay for a full-time car.

Fast Company's article "Millennials Don't Care About Owning Cars, And Car Makers Can't Figure Out Why" tells us: From 2007 to 2011, the number of cars purchased by people aged 18 to 34, fell almost 30%, and according to a study from the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, only 44% of teens obtain a driver's license within the first year of becoming eligible and just half, 54% are licensed before turning 18.

### NEW INFORMATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Supporting this trend are both government infrastructure (sidewalks, buses, trains, bike lanes, signage, etc) and a new class of app-based services that enable universal navigation of transit, temporary car rentals, and on-demand services. New taxi services like Lyft and Uber, both of which have a presence in Corpus Christi, are making it both possible and cheaper to not own a car.

In the 70 largest U.S. cities, bicycling increased 63% from 2000-2010

—U.S. CENSUS BUREAU, LEAGUE OF AMERICAN BICYCLISTS, 2011-2010 AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY.

In a 2007 survey of young professionals, 92% said they prefer to work for a company that is environmentally friendly. Business Wire, 2007

—MONSTERTRAK JOINS FORCES WITH ECOAMERICA TO LAUNCH GREENCAREERS BY MONSTERTRAK

Traveling by bike encourages more frequent stops than a car. In a study of Toronto merchants, patrons arriving by foot and bicycle visit the most often and spend the most money per month. —The Clean Air Partnership, 2009

—BIKE LANES, ON-STREET PARKING, AND BUSINESS

The quality of bicycling in the northern Outer Banks region positively impacts vacationers' planning: 12% report staying three to four days longer to bicycle; 43% report that bicycling is an important factor in their decision to come to the area; 53% report that bicycling will strongly influence their decision to return to the area in the future

—NC DEPT OF TRANSPORTATION DIVISION OF BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN TRANSPORTATION, 2004

These services also create new social networks as part of their core brands, focusing on building trust between drivers and passengers. The marketing of these new economy businesses is mostly viral as users are excited to share their stories of good experiences with the service. For a city trying to share an image of friendliness and ease of travel, these services are great informal greeters and tour guides for cities.

Corpus Christi has homegrown brands like Hop Corpus, a local electric cart service downtown and appears to have a bar cycle multi-rider vehicle. The cities that are successfully attracting new downtown residents are building both physical and informational infrastructure to make getting around easy so that citizens can focus on their lives, not on traffic.



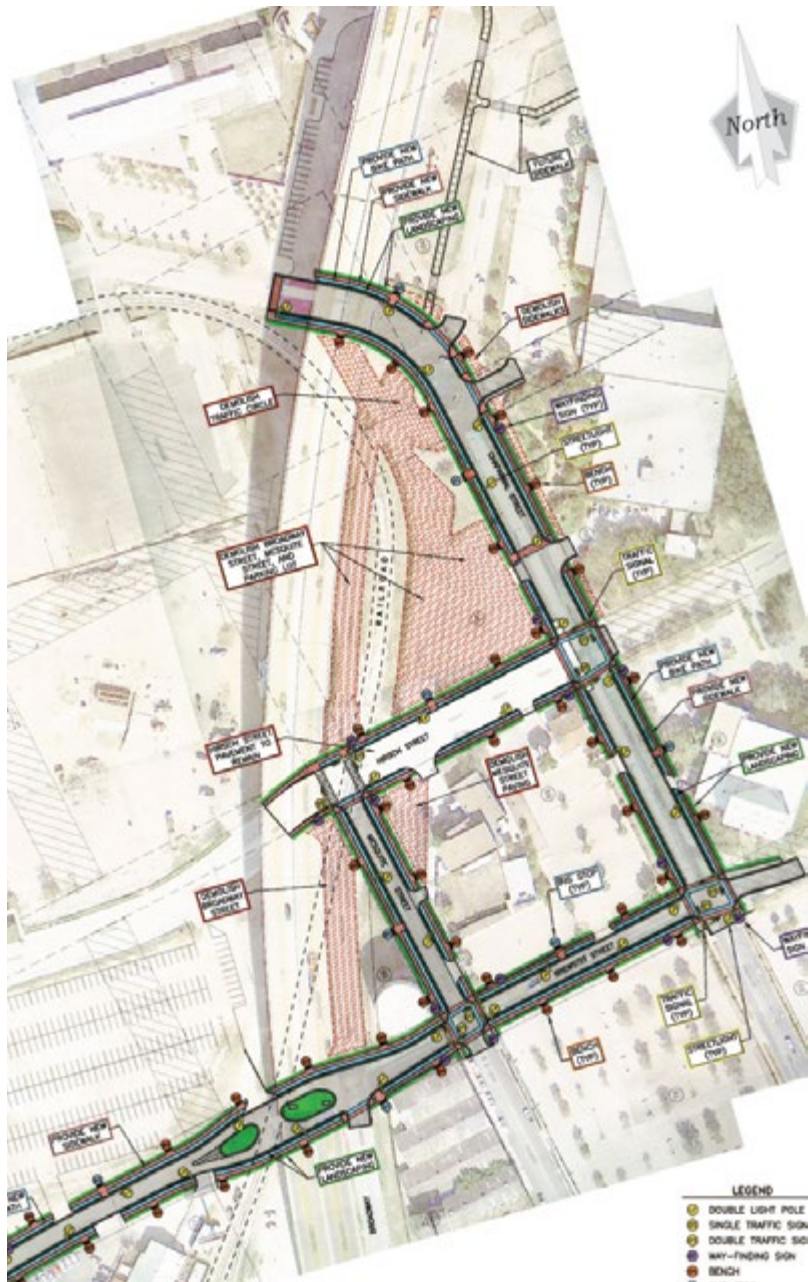
*Lyft is a modern taxi service that connects riders and drivers through a social network and processes their payments all with mobile phones.*

## HERE COME THE BICYCLES

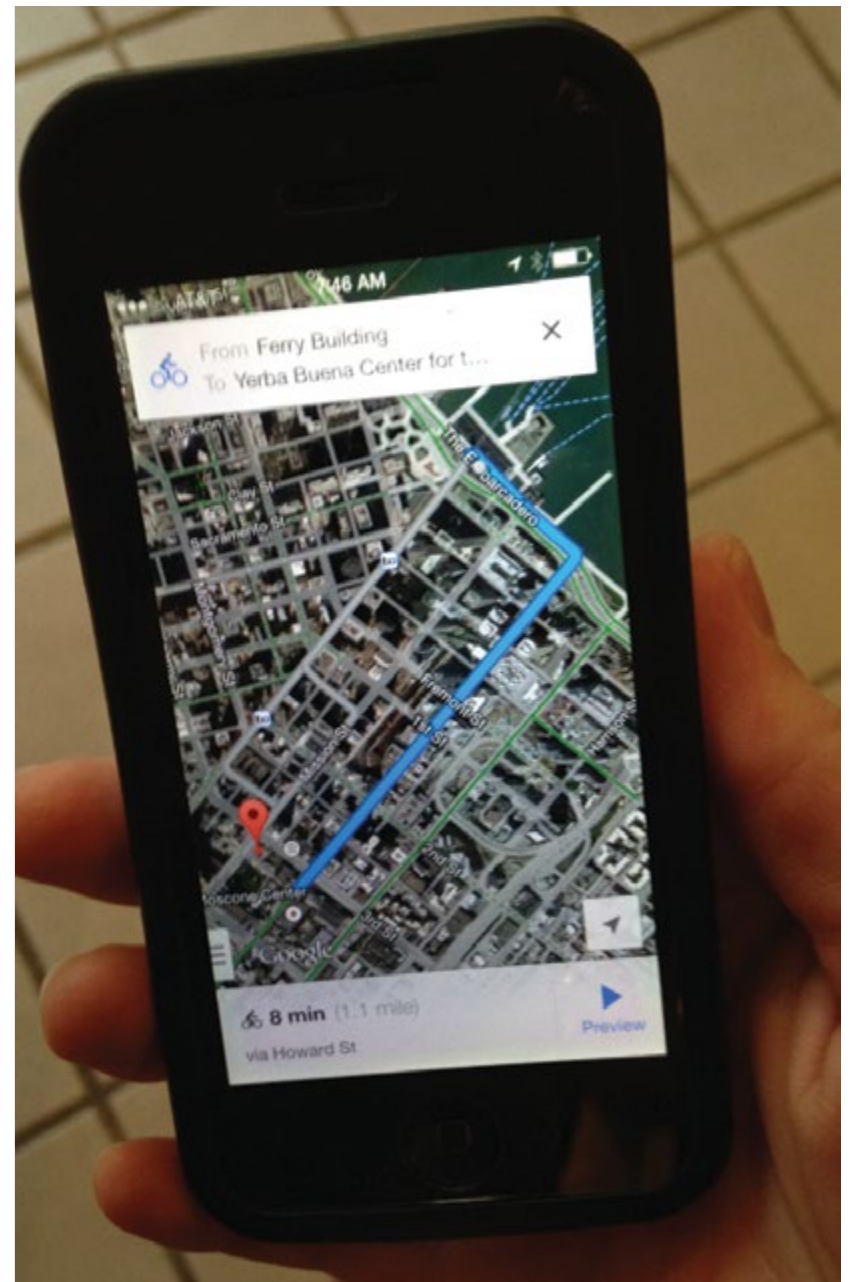
While Lyft, Uber, Hop Corpus, and bar cycles all use the same road infrastructure as an owner-occupied car, modes including walking, running, and riding a bicycle require more protected infrastructure to keep citizens safe while they travel. These modes are also increasingly popular in cities across the country as the millennial generation gets back to the childhood joy and the adult thriftiness of riding a bike. For financial health, physical health, and mental health, biking is regaining popularity. As it does, this sometimes-hobby is emerging as a real alternative to driving a car for short trips and it is supporting the creation of new niche markets and new business opportunities. Bicycle-friendly companies are finding that bikes are helping them retain young



*Uber is another modern taxi service that works through mobile phones. Hop Corpus is a local electric cart company that offers rides around downtown.*

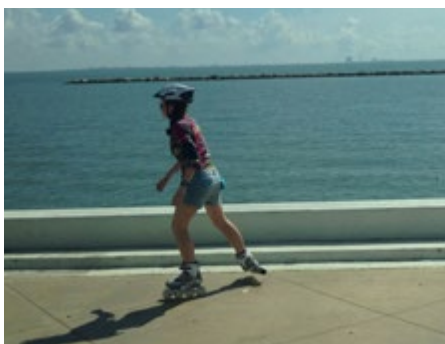


*Proposed bicycle lanes for the SEA District will be most successful if knit into a wider fabric of routes. Connectivity to the shoreline, Mesquite Street, and Port Avenue will make for the most pleasant riding route and the least amount of conflict with cars and pedestrians.*



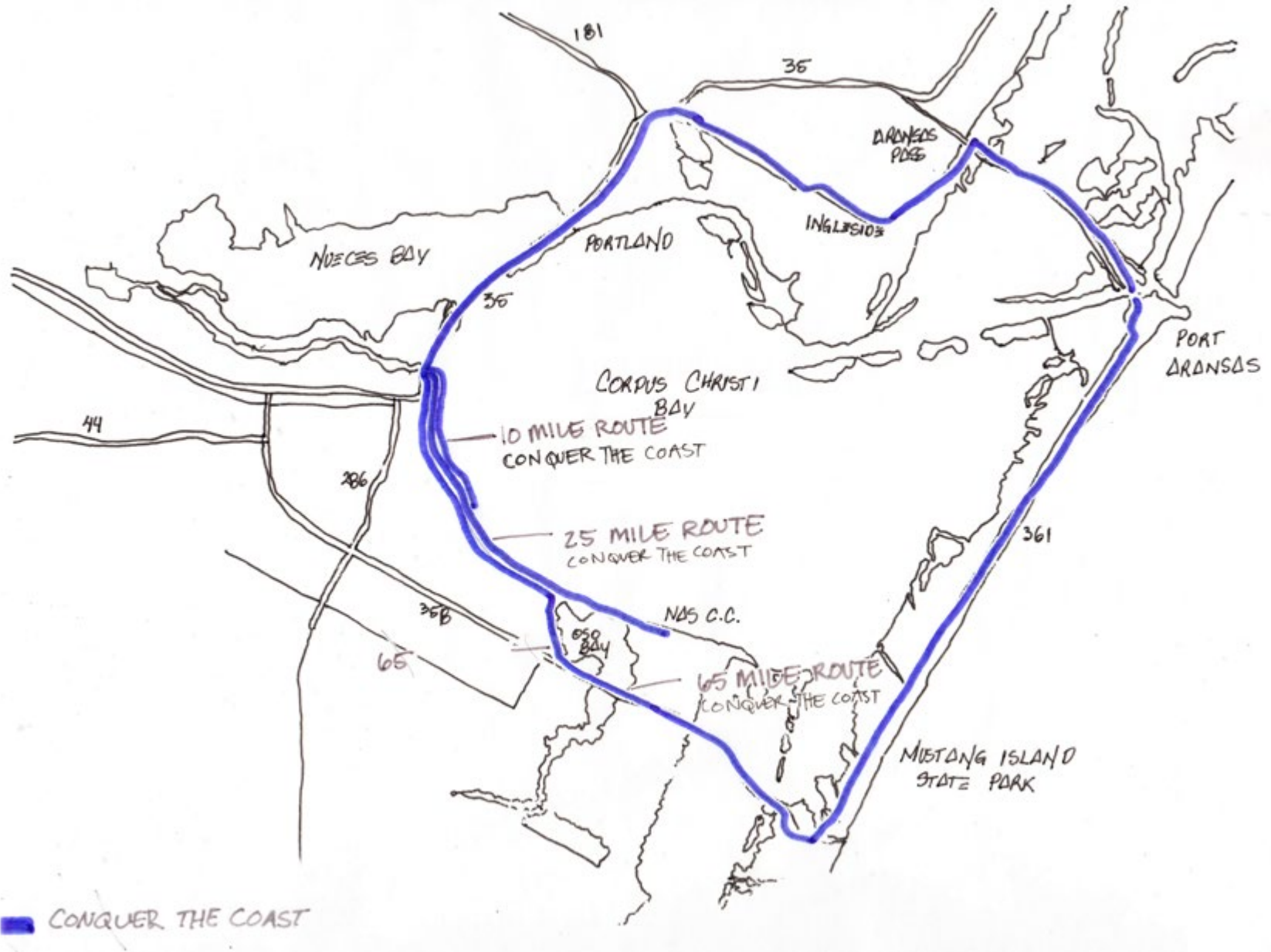
*Cities with significant bike infrastructure can support ridership by providing data to Google for bike directions.*



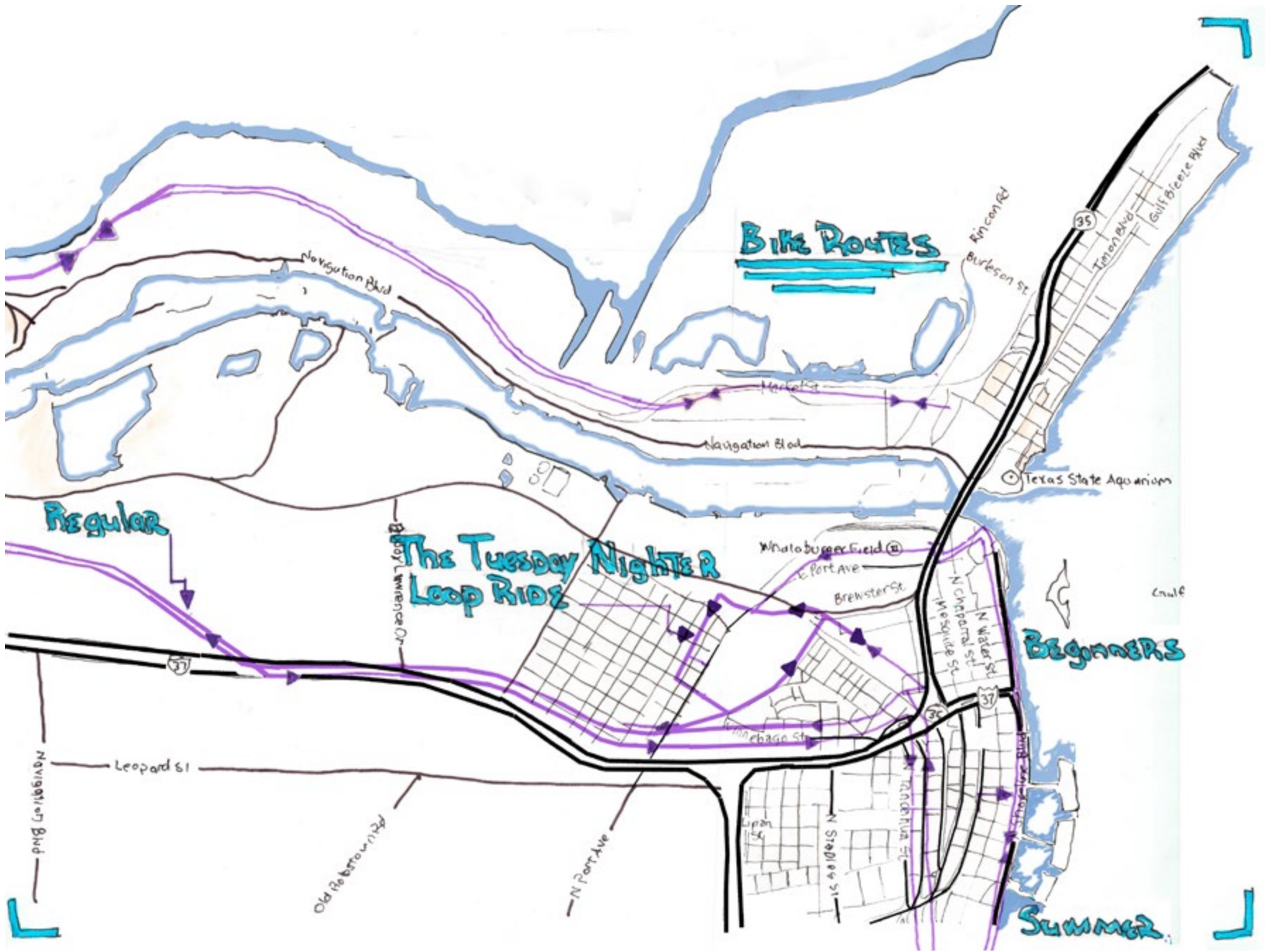


*The existing bike & multimodal culture is supported by events like Conquer the Coast, infrastructure like the Shoreline path, and initiatives like the signage about sharing lanes. Building on these investments will help make the city easier to navigate without a car and more desirable for new residents downtown.*

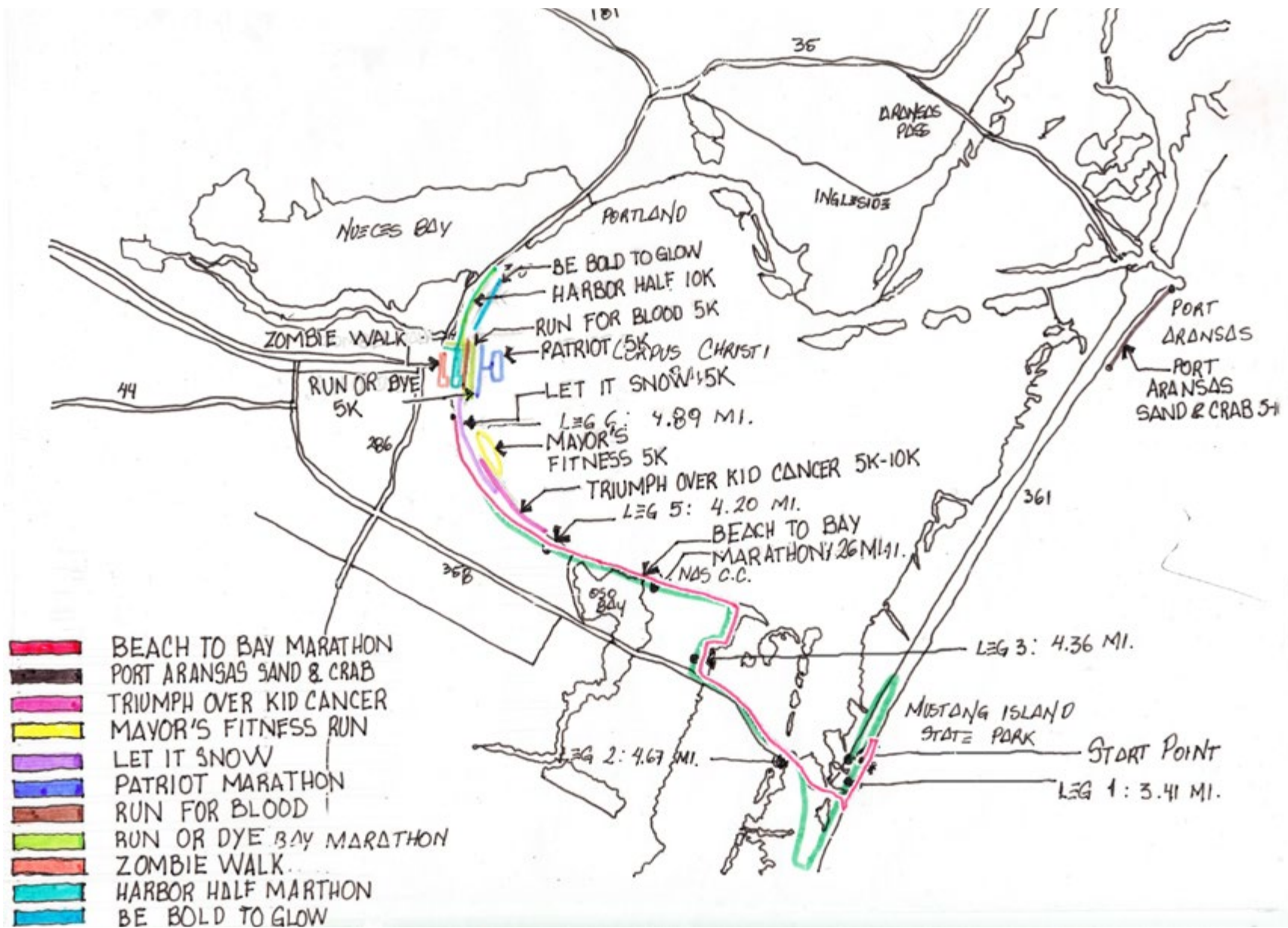
# ANNUAL BIKE EVENTS



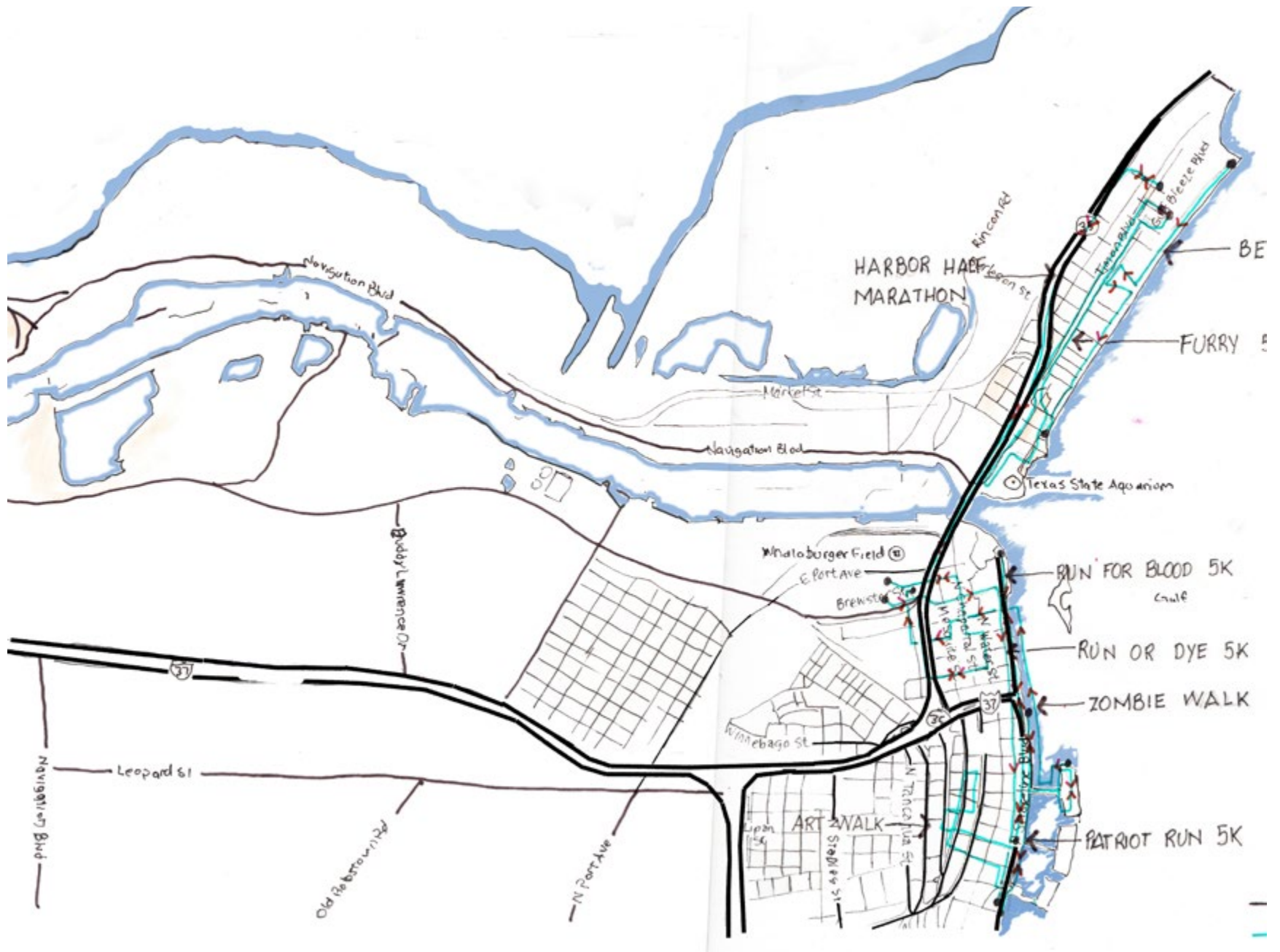
Sampling of recent bicycling events in Corpus Christi.



Sampling of recent bicycling events in Corpus Christi.

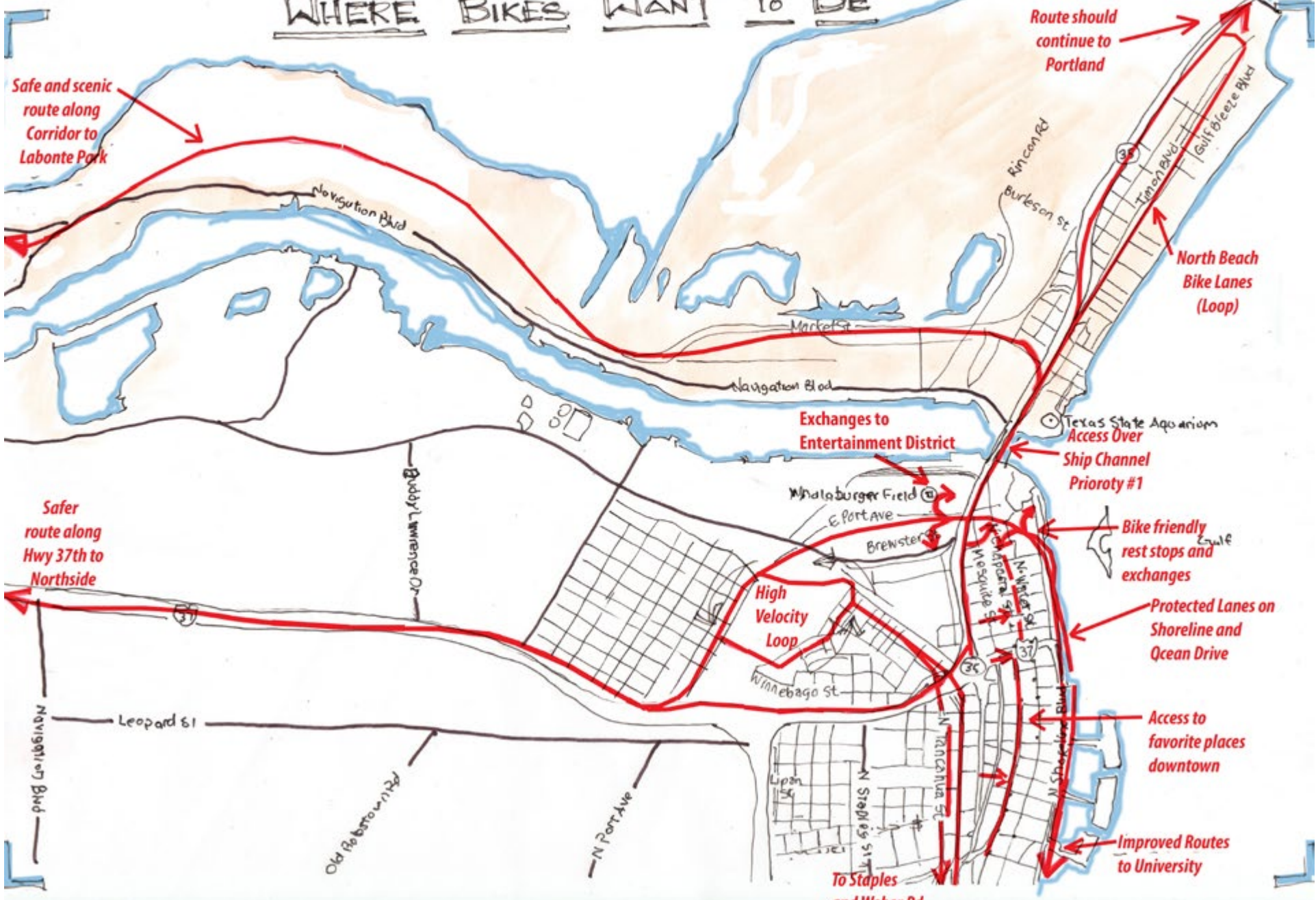


Sampling of recent walking/running events in Corpus Christi.



Sampling of recent walking/running events in Corpus Christi.

# WHERE BIKES WANT TO BE



The Where Bikes Want to Be map was generated by local cyclists aggregating current and desired routes for complete trips.

professionals and bike-accessible businesses report higher spending by customers who arrive on two wheels. Bikes are not just a hobby anymore. They are supporting vital local businesses again.

The current bicycle culture and infrastructure in Corpus Christi are both nascent comparatively speaking. While there is a major national trend in growth of bicycle use, especially among millennials, the CC bike culture is currently local and small. Dedicated riders gather and ride as a pack for safety along the shoreline and along frontage roads for distance. They have 3 rides each week for serious riders to log miles and to have fun.

While most current riders are pioneers riding without significant infrastructure, we anticipate growth in cycling that is consistent with other beachfront cities. There are two distinct types of riders we anticipate in the next phase of ridership are those who ride for exercise & commuting and those who ride for leisure (visitors and future downtown residents).

In the Corpus Christi MPO Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, we do not yet have bicycle count numbers or crash numbers for the local market. Planning for unknown demographics is a challenge when highway and street traffic information for cars is readily available. In order to best plan for multimodal infrastructure, more comprehensive data will be needed to set the city up for the best return on its investments.



*Cruiser culture is natural in beach communities.*

### GOING FORWARD

We propose a highly-collaborative working method for future street engineering downtown and along the coasts. The budget for FY 2015 includes over \$1.8 million for pedestrian and bicycle facilities. This significant budget is a real opportunity to change connectivity and mobility in Corpus Christi.

We recommend slowing the building process to include data collection and deep community engagement to maximize the ROI of this city investment.

Integrating transportation experts with parks experts and the bike/ped/running advocacy community organizations will support the best possible path-making and wayfinding for



*Themed bike rides begin with a route, a costume idea, and a time. Inviting the public into the bike culture will help expand riding beyond the current group of core riders.*

expert and beginning cyclists. The bike community is very well organized and regularly produces well-attended events among its members. Cyclists will be able to work with downtown organizations to roll out tests of future infrastructure projects and wayfinding systems that make sense with their modes of travel. Pedestrians and cyclists travel at different speeds and have different needs in the landscape. They will best be able to advise on the signage they would like to see.

### IN THE NEXT MONTH

We recommend the bike community begin to host more public rides with easy routes downtown and themes that celebrate what makes Corpus unique. Perhaps a Birding on Bikes ride,



a Cowboy Ride, and a Surf the City ride in which everyone wears surf-themed clothes while riding on the Shoreline. These rides can start small with themed clothing and build up to customized bikes, bike floats, trailers and other fun elements that make them into bike parades.

We also recommend that the bicycle community and public officials alike consider beach cruiser culture as an appropriate and accessible style of cycling for the beachfront city. Cruiser culture is strong elsewhere and becomes a huge driver of business because the bikes move slowly and are geared for short casual rides around town, often out to eat or for crawls.

The DMD/SEA could hold morning



**ITERATIVE DESIGN** Street stencil workshops with local cyclists, designers, and artists are an affordable and temporary early test of potential new bike lanes and shared routes. They can be made and installed in a four hour afternoon workshop.

workshops in which cyclists and walkers from the community meet in their current stomping grounds to install Walk Your City and temporary bike signage installations. By sketching with community leaders and engineers on the street, users will be able to learn about the limitations of infrastructure while also articulating their needs directly with the people best equipped to implement the long-term solutions.

In a second Saturday workshop, collaborators could set up one \$199 traffic



**COUNTING BIKE TRAFFIC** The WayCount is a low-cost car and bicycle traffic counter that maps its findings in a streamlined way. It's accessibility makes it ideal for collaborations between city employees and community traffic enthusiasts.

counter at a key location to measure bike traffic for the weekend. Collaborators can also look at WalkScore.com data to review the baselines for pedestrian experience design work ahead.

We recommend initiating regular monthly streetsweeping of major bicycle corridors as identified by the local cycling community.

We recommend strategy and planning for serious ongoing counting of pedestrians and cyclists. Many

communities work with advocates to do manual counts, others set up heavy duty traffic counters in bike lanes, still others do small scale tests with affordable DIY-style kits like the WayCount by TomorrowLab which can be set to measure cars or bikes and sells for \$199 (<http://waycount.com/buy>).

We recommend coordinating with the cycling community on the design and finish qualities of the new bike path at the Port. Riders currently travel from North Beach toward the new path on the edge of the surface roads that carry oil trucks. Riders do not relish the proximity to the trucks anymore than the truck drivers do. Perhaps there is a way to safely move bicycle traffic out

of the way of trucks while maintaining access for riders to the wetland natural area and the longer roads to the west of the Port.

**IN THE NEXT YEAR: Celebrate the Water Every Week with Ciclovía**

We recommend that downtown organizations partner with one another, the health industry, the bike community, and local vendors to close down 4 miles of Shoreline every week for a Sunday Ciclovía. The safe zone temporarily created for the non-pioneer bike riders will invite further participation and support for the next phases of bike infrastructure development. Celebrating the most successful bike space you have right now will invite



**Ciclovía Tucson** is a localized ciclovía, or cycling event for which the road is closed to all motorized traffic. Event planners run Kickstarter campaigns to raise the money to close streets and host the 5 mile closure. These events have become regular dates in major cities—sometimes quarterly, sometimes every week—they give a safe wide space for riders and pedestrians to exercise and experience their city. The ciclovía (pron. see-k-o-lo-vee-ah) is a temporary change of traffic pattern to test citizen interest before any infrastructure is actually changed to accommodate cycling traffic.



future success and good community storytelling. Supporting area businesses and a lineup of food trucks is another positive business outcome of this immediate win.

The Project for Public Spaces: "As spring comes to north American cities, so will a series of Ciclovía events that will not only get communities active and using the largest public spaces in their cities – their streets – but will also capture their imagination by giving them a new perspective to experience their city. ... But Ciclovía events can also be powerful transportation planning tools to facilitate discussion around bike-ped issues, catalyze demonstration projects for context sensitive streets, and lay the groundwork for long-term multi-modal investments that can improve mobility and turn streets into quality public spaces." <http://www.pps.org/blog/using-ciclovía-to-plan-your-streets/>

**IN TEN YEARS: We Don't Know Exactly Where We Are Going Yet, But It Doesn't Mean We Are Not Going**

Working with the growing and changing downtown resident groups and greater Corpus Christi user groups, we recommend knitting together a resilient fabric of streets and paths to allow many different paths from one location to another safely, while experiencing nature, and while seeing your public art investments.

We recommend the introduction of the Velocity Park and other multimodal amenities will encourage and enable exercise downtown, helping to create the quality of life that will attract downtown residents.

We recommend the integration of bike building and repair into a Maker Space downtown. Building and repairing bikes makes for good community building activity and often helps foster the kind of creative connections that lead to the creation of new small businesses.

We recommend the reactivation of the train depot into a bike station and major meeting place for rides.

We recommend tying existing greenspace and frontage road straightaways into major bicycle corridors to maximize current investments and build on existing travel patterns. The new greenways can be punctuated with stopping areas under highway bridges made noteworthy with public art (like the park area between Agnes and Laredo Streets at the 286).

We recommend becoming masters of your own movement data. By integrating local data collection into the research and planning process, the city will best be able to manage both its infrastructure portfolio and its national reputation. National organizations like WalkScore will continue to update their databases with the best data available. By sending up-to-date data to these lifestyle services, the city can reduce the work that needs to be done to convince out-of-town professionals to relocate to Corpus Christi.

The city will also be better able to invest limited resources where the traffic demand for cycling is already established. By collecting new data and responding to it, the city will be able to better serve citizen needs, cultivate a safe environment for cycling, and reduce



***Buffalo Bayou Hiking and Biking Trails in Fort Worth connect bicycle and walking pathways with existing infrastructure adjacent to roads.***

the demand for downtown car parking while encouraging social and financial investment in downtown communities.



# Economic Development



## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

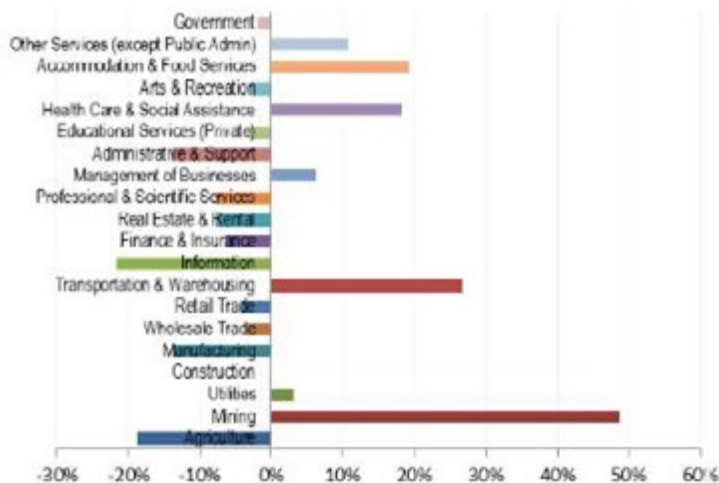
As mentioned in the Introduction section, the Corpus Christi economy has performed well in recent years. Significant employment and in result population projections The transportation and urban design changes recommended with the Harbor Bridget Realignment open up new opportunities to leverage growth in the region to attract new residential, retail, and entertainment development, as well as visitors, to the study area.

### Economic Trends

The five key industry clusters in the Coastal Bend Workforce Development Area (WDA) region, which includes Nueces County, are oil and gas, construction, industrial manufacturing, health care, and hospitality. In Nueces County, the top industries are Health Care and Social Assistance (17.2%), government (16.9%), accommodations and food services (11.8%) retail trade (10.7%) and Construction (9.0%). Oil exploration and production activities in the Eagle Ford Shale have been a driving economic growth in the Corpus Christi area in the last few years. Growth in the Eagle Ford Shale is expected to increase Port traffic significantly and is driving railroad improvements and public barge and dock facility improvements to meet growing rail traffic at Port cargo terminals.

In addition to activities at the Eagle Ford Shale the Corpus Christi economy is expected to get a boost from several planned and proposed investments. There is over \$17 billion in planned and proposed projects in the area.

### Employment Growth by Industry, 2008-13.



**Nueces County Employment Growth. Source: Industry Cluster Analysis for the Coastal Bend Workforce Development Area**

Construction of the projects is expected to occur one to two years before operations. The greatest addition of employment will occur during the construction period with a more tempered addition of permanent employees.

### Major Industrial Development Projects, 2014 - 2018

Company	Investment (\$ Millions)	Product	Operational
Tianjin Pipe Company/ TPCO Ame	1,300	Steel Pipe	2014
OxyChem	70	Propane Distribution	2015
LyondellBbasel	400	Ethylene Plant	2015
Voestalpine	700	Steel	2016
OxyChem	1,400	Ethylene Plant	2016
M&G Group	751	PET Plant	2016
CCI	400	Condensate Splitter	2016
Cheniere	12,000	LNG Plant	2017

### Jobs by 2018

Construction Jobs (Person Year- Jobs)	5,081
Permanent Jobs	1,480

Note: A person year job represents a job for one person for a year, i.e. if one person holds a job for two years, this equates to two person-year jobs.

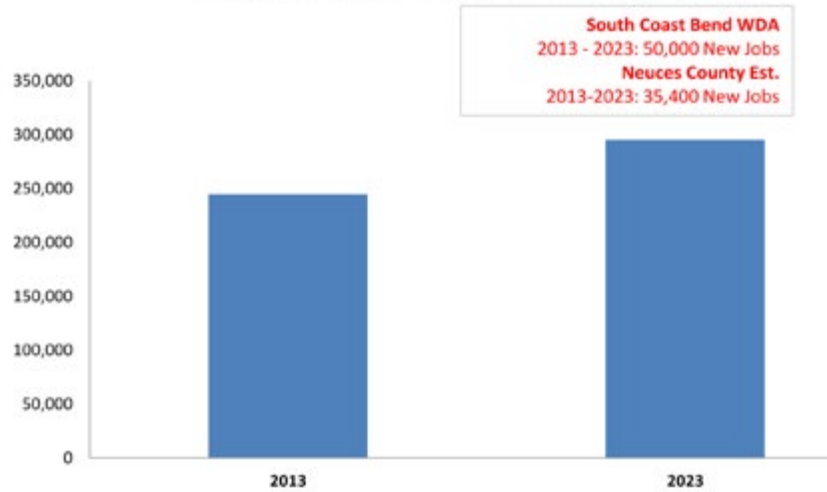
Source: Industry Cluster Analysis for the Coastal Bend Workforce Development Authority

### Projected Employment

All new proposed projects may not be developed, but an industry cluster analysis, prepared by Professor Jim Lee of the EDA University Center at Texas A&M University -Corpus Christi, anticipates that there will be approximately 50,000 new jobs between 2013 and 2023 in the greater Coastal Bend WDA. Nueces County makes up approximately 70 percent of the Coastal Bend WDA and based on its share of employment, there would be an estimated 36,000 new jobs in Nueces County in the next 10 years.

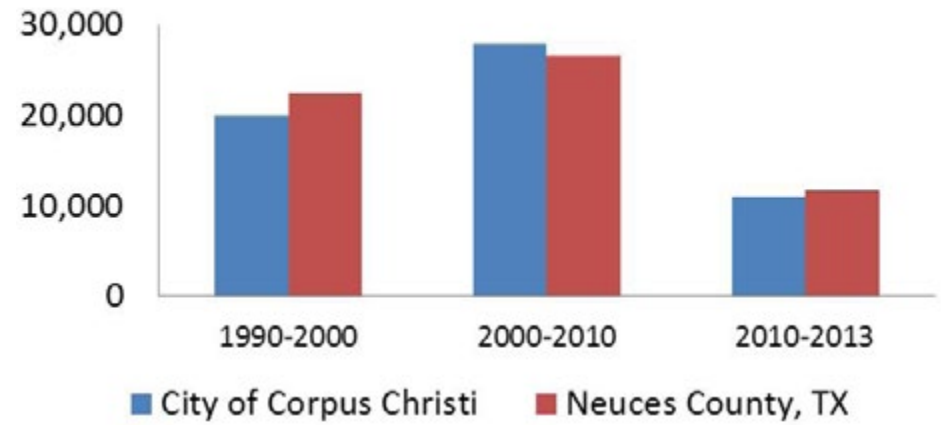
Higher energy prices have made the exploration of Eagle Ford Shale highly profitable, but there are concerns about the impacts to the Corpus Christi economy if energy prices should drop or if the promised investments dry up. These are valid concerns, but are even more the reason why efforts should be made to strengthen the quality of life as well as economic infrastructure of Corpus Christi. As reported by the US Travel Association, half of corporate executives classified quality of life factors, such as cultural and recreational opportunities, as either “very important” or “important” to their site selection decisions (Source: “27th Annual Survey of Corporate Executives” Area Development Magazine Q1/Winter 2013) and “young professional in particular, heavily favor locations offering diverse activities—such as outdoor recreation, arts and cultural attractions – when deciding where to start their careers.” (Source: “Top Site Selection Factors: Quality of Life Still Matters,” Area Development Online, November 2011). More amenities, improved walkability and quality entertainment options will help to both attract and keep new residents.

### Projected South Coast Bend Employment



Source: Industry Cluster Analysis for the Coastal Bend Workforce Development Authority

### Corpus Christi and Neuces County Historical Population Growth



Historical Projections Chart – Source: US Census

### Population Trends

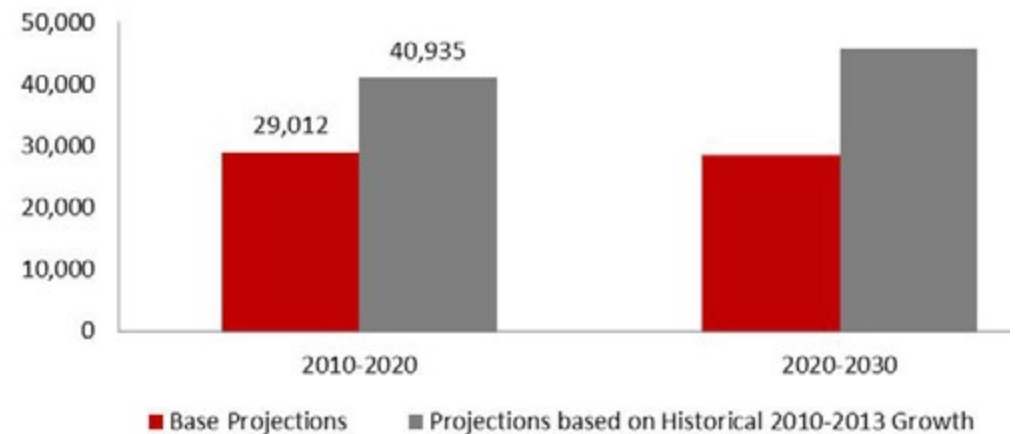
In line with economic trends, population has also grown tremendously in Corpus Christi and has the rate of growth, particularly in recent years. Between 2000 and 2010 the city of Corpus Christi grew by almost 28,000 residents, an annual growth rate of 0.96%. In the three years between 2010 and 2013, the city’s annual growth rate was almost 40 percent higher.

Most of this growth has been captured in Corpus Christi’s South Side. Between 2000 and 2010 reported households in the study area—the historical downtown, SEA District and North Beach, grew from 622 to 925.

### Projections

The State of Texas estimates population growth of approximately 30,000 between 2010 and 2020, but based on the annual growth rate between 2010 and 2013, the population growth between 2010 and 2030 is projected at almost 40,000 in Nueces County. By 2030, base line projections estimate a total of 58,000 new residents in Nueces County.

### Neuces County Projected Population Base Projections and Projections Based on Historical 2010-2013 Growth



Projected Nueces Population Projections – Source: Texas State Data Center

## WHAT CAN THIS MEAN FOR CORPUS CHRISTI? DOWNTOWN RENAISSANCE (A MOVE BACK TO THE DOWNTOWN)

*Corpus Christi should be taking advantage of the current regional economics and projected 20-year growth of 58,000 new residents to funnel public investment and new development in the Downtown and SEA District areas.*

Across the country, there has been a movement back to downtown districts. Cities, such as Los Angeles and Durham, NC, had downtowns that lost population for decades, where employees drove-in during the day and in the evenings, left empty, dark streets where the homeless made up the largest population. However, for a myriad reasons, including commuting costs (both financial and social), changing demographics, homes affordability, and a desire for walkable urbanism, a growing number of people are interested in homes in urban environments and are willing to consider a wider range of residential typologies.

**Table 1: Change in Population and Jobs: 2000-2010**

Job Node*	Percent Change ( 2000 - 2010)	
	Population	Jobs
Downtown Los Angeles	71.9%	45.9%
Downtown Chicago	95.6%	10.5%
Downtown Dallas	94.8%	5.1%
Downtown San Diego	65.6%	1.7%
Downtown San Antonio	1.9%	-0.8%

\*Job Node geographies are defined using Census Tracts.

Source: Levy, Paul R. and Lauren M. Gilchrist. *Downtown Rebirth: Documenting the Live-Work Dynamic in 21st Century U.S. Cities.*

*Source: Levy, Paul R. and Lauren M. Gilchrist. Downtown Rebirth: Documenting the Live-Work Dynamic in 21st Century U.S. Cities*

### Why are people moving to downtowns?

- Walkability
- Amenities - Cultural, shopping
- Urban Activity (Social connectedness)
- Authenticity

Between 2000 and 2010, many downtowns saw double-digit population growth in and around their city centers, with Chicago and Dallas almost doubling population in its downtown core. While major growth was only seen in Dallas'

downtown in the last decade, the trend towards multifamily urban dwelling is growing throughout Texas.

### Texas Association of Realtor report double-digit growth in condominium (condo) and townhome sales among Texas's four major markets in the first six months

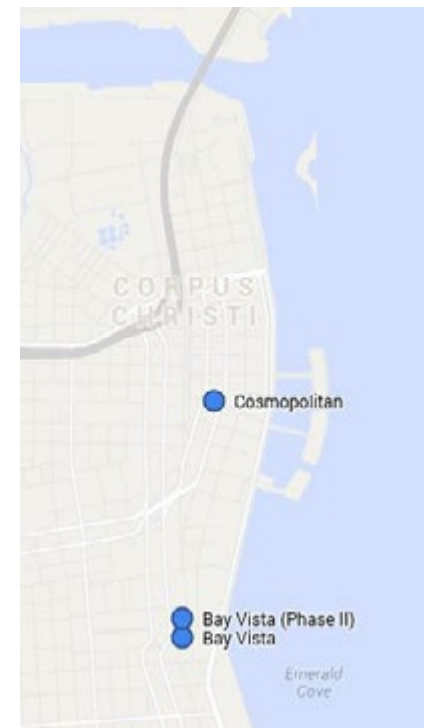
of 2014. According to Dan Hatfield, Chairman of the Texas Association of Realtors, "The thriving economic growth in Texas's major metro areas has led to a revitalization and redevelopment of our urban centers, providing new needs and opportunities for condo development." Mr. Hatfield further explains that condos offer greater affordability than other housing types on the market

"The thriving economic growth in Texas's major metro areas has led to a revitalization and redevelopment of our urban centers, providing new needs and opportunities for condo development." – Dan Hatfield, Chairman, Texas Association of Realtors

which is attractive to many residents. According to Jim Gaines, Ph.D., economist with The Real Estate Center at Texas A&M University, developers are looking specifically for opportunities to build and invest in multi-family development in urban centers and some suburban centers.

The ball has started rolling on new residential projects in Downtown. There is very limited existing residential development in the historic downtown and SEA District, but there are two projects planned and underway in downtown with 330 units (Bay Vista Phase II and the Cosmopolitan) and a second 165-unit apartment complex under construction, further south on the bayfront. Bay Vista was a successfully developed new apartment building and BBL Builders, a developer from Dallas, is currently working on a second phase.

**The City should continue to support new development in the historical downtown as well as in the SEA District. Sites in the SEA District currently offers desirable bayfront views and a number of cultural and entertainment activities. Public infrastructure improvements that are addressed with the Harbor Bridge Realignment project will provide improved walkability and additional shopping amenities, and a truly urban environment, making the area more attractive for residential users.**



Source: Googlemaps and Development Websites

## THE SEA DISTRICT AND DOWNTOWN RISE TOGETHER

Corpus Christi has several extremely successful local and regional destinations concentrated within the SEA District, the historical downtown, and North Beach. The SEA District has an estimated 1.7 million visitors to over 13 venues featuring live music, a water park, professional sports, and museums. With more than 560,000 annual visitors the Texas State Aquarium is the 25th top visited attraction in the state of Texas and the USS Lexington is the 36th top visited attraction in the State.

Despite the individual success of these attractions, the area does not yet function as a comprehensive regional destination. Existing physical barriers, such as the Harbor Bridge, and limited wayfinding make it difficult to move between destinations. Visitors need to get back into their car to drive from attraction parking lot to parking lot and it is difficult to understand what other entertainment options are within the District. Existing transit infrastructure creates and reinforces the disconnect between the historical Downtown and the SEA District and bifurcates the area with the Harbor Bridge.

By removing the physical transit barriers and implementing improved wayfinding and signage throughout the district as well implementing additional proposed urban design elements to better connect the historical downtown, SEA District, and North Beach, Corpus Christi has an opportunity to build a world-class destination.

### Work Together: A Tide of New Visitors Lifts All Boats

We would like to stress the importance of different venues and, even, organizations working together to help market and support the area. Recognizing the importance of coordination, the SEA District was recently formed earlier this year and is beginning to establish marketing efforts for the area. This is very important for the coordination of specific sports, entertainment, and art venues within the area, but marketing efforts and coordination should also be extended for SEA District venues to work with North Beach attractions as well as the historical downtown.

- Additional new residents in the downtown can help to support restaurants and retail in the SEA District.
- Future shopping available in the SEA District can provide a stronger variety of retail and entertainment amenities to attract new residents in the downtown.
- With better transit/ferry connections, more Texas State Aquarium visitors can visit the Museum of Science and History or the Art Museum of South Texas.
- North Beach visitors can take a day to visit Hurricane Alley Waterpark.

Creating better connections between attractions will help to “build” the critical mass of entertainment options necessary to attract a significantly larger amount of visitors.

## Money Left on the Table

While the historical downtown, SEA District, and North Beach have a number of successful sports, entertainment, and arts destinations, there are limited shopping and restaurant amenities in the area, particularly in the SEA District.

The lack of easily accessible retail and food establishments constrains the ability of local and regional visitors to spend their dollars in Corpus Christi. Based on existing Corpus Christi tourism attendance and visitor spending data, we benchmarked potential visitor and local spending that is available to be captured within the historical downtown, SEA District, and North Beach, if there were additional amenities.

With an improved district, the R/UDAT team believes there is the potential to capture a full meal from each visitor. Instead of dinner and a movie, the SEA District could market “How about dinner and a Hooks game?”

- **Employees.** Within the historical downtown, SEA District, and North Beach areas there is approximately 20,000 employees. Workers often make a certain level of spending near their workplaces. Using adjusted national worker annual spending estimates, we estimate that employees can support approximately almost 80,000 square feet of restaurant and food store shopping and another 60,000 square feet of retail.
- **Regional Visitors.** Professor Lee of the EDA Center at Texas A & M estimated that of the 7.4 million visitors to Corpus Christi, 820,000 were visitors to the Downtown who spent a total of \$127 million in the Corpus Christi area (Economic Pulse, 3Q2014). Assuming that little to none of regional visitors shopping or food store expenditures are made in the study area (due to the lack of these retailers), we estimate based on average visitor spending on these items that there is 85,000 square feet of these uses that could be supported by regional visitors within the district.
- **Local Visitors.** Local visitors also support retail and entertainment uses within the SEA District. Based on SEA District estimates of visitation and estimates of regional visitors to the area, we estimate local visitors at approximately 820,000 in the SEA District. The average visitor to Corpus Christi spends a little over \$100 a day on all expenditures, but based on SEA District estimates of revenue compared to tourist spending estimates, local visitor are spending an estimated \$16 per trip, including attraction ticket prices and other spending.

### Current Retail Potential

Based on estimates of current sales in the study area and the estimated retail potential there is almost 200,000 square feet of retail potential that could be captured within the historical downtown, SEA District and North Beach today if there were additional quality retailers.



**Mid to Long Term Growth Potential**

Looking 10 years out, we estimated retail potential and entertainment spending potential based from new local and regional visitors. Texas tourism data reflects a 4 percent historical growth rate for Corpus Christi MSA tourists, trending that forward and assuming a 20 percent growth due to the improved coordination and physical connections, we estimate that local residents and visitors will support an additional 250,000 square feet of retail and \$38 million in entertainment revenues in the next 10 years.

In the long term, new residents are likely to provide additional retail spending within the area and additional attractions will generate even greater additional entertainment revenue beyond what is quantified.

**Create a Retail, Dining, Entertainment (RDE) Corridor to Better Connect SEA Destinations**

We recommend encouraging the development of a new RDE corridor to help weave together the individual attractions in the SEA District. A corridor of festive retail linking the museums and the waterpark, Whataburger Field, and Brewster Street Ice House will provide needed additional retailers while also providing an interesting path through the district.

**Festive RDE Concept:** Should include restaurants and bars that are open later into the evening to extend the night activities of Brewster, Whataburger Field, and the upcoming Alamo Draft House Cinema eastward.

**Positioning:**

- National entertainment retail options such as House of Blues, Dave and Busters
- Limited number of popular regional restaurant/bars from Austin or San Antonio (Many of your regional visitors are coming from these areas. It may be helpful to have a few well-loved regional chains, but your strength should be local Corpus Christi chains)
- Local restaurants that are not currently located near the Downtown (Some examples may include: Snoopy’s II, Ropers, Dloungue, Staples (Sushi), Izzy’s, Silverado’s Smokehouse, Cotton’s, B&J’s Pizzeria)

**Residential/Retail:** As residential population grows and a potential hotel is added, retail may also include more convenience/general merchandise.

**Additional Attractions**

We believe making better physical and marketing connections between existing attractions is a true priority. The SEA District is still evolving; Whataburger Field opened in 2005; Brewster Street Ice House opened in 2006; Hurricane Alley Waterpark opened in 2011; and the Alamo Draft House Cinema is opening this year. Additional attractions will help to support growth throughout the downtown area and the City should continue to encourage cultural uses and entertainment uses to locate in the SEA District area.

**Convention Center and Hotel Expansion**

Currently the closest hotel to the convention center is just under a half mile away but is located on the other side of the I-37. Quality hotel rooms closer to the convention center are needed within close proximity to a convention center. It should be noted that Corpus Christi is currently studying the potential for a convention center expansion and hotel study. The study, when available, should provide direction

for the need and scale of a new convention center expansion. For purposes of this project, we have assumed that there is a new hotel and need for a convention center expansion. A new hotel will add new vitality and will provide further support to retail developments proposed within the SEA District.

## FUNDING TOOL BOX

While there is a great opportunity with the Harbor Bridge Realignment, there are also a number of elements that may need to be funded for the successful implementation of the project. These include:

- Transit Infrastructure
  - Bridge Realignment Project
  - I-37 Reconfiguration
  - Street reconfiguration
- Streetscape, signage and art
- Convention Center expansion and parking structure

Numerous funding sources will have to be layered to implement the overall Harbor Bridge Realignment project. These should be further explored during the General Comprehensive Plan. The following section provides a high-level outline of potential resources.

Potential funding tools include:

**Tax Increment Financing.** Given the major improvements in the area expected after the realignment of the Harbor Bridge and implementation of study recommendations, tax increment financing would be the best tool to capture the additional value created in the study area. However, there is a current TIF zone, that expires in 2028, over much of the historical downtown and SEA District area. The City should further explore options with adjusting the boundaries and function of this TIF.

**Local Resources.** The City does not have capacity to raise local sales and tax rates, but has some abatement options. State transportation, bicycle, and art funding should also be explored.

- Sales Tax - The City of Corpus Christi is already charging the maximum Texas sales tax levy of 8.25 percent with 6.25 percent going to the State.
- Hotel Tax – The City may consider bonding and using a portion of hotel tax receipts

to support the expansion of the convention center.

- City Property Tax Abatement – The City has an existing property tax abatement project in Downtown and may want to reconsider how it functions with the proposed recommendations in this project.
- City Hotel Tax Abatement – Particularly for the costs of the convention center expansion and the public parking structure they City may want to consider raising funds for the parking structure through a hotel tax abatement. This should be studied on a case by case basis to understand the full value of abatement across a 10, 20 or 30 year period.

**Federal Funding.** There are a number of federal funding sources that can be pursued to support this project. Many of these sources can take several years to obtain, but Corpus Christi has the advantage that the bridge realignment is a few years out.

- Federal Transportation Funds- The region is capturing more than \$560 million in Federal transportation funds specifically for the bridge realignment, but the City and county should pursue other funding programs for pedestrian and streetscape improvements, as well as bicycle route funding
- CDBG. Community Block Group Funding can be used for a variety of purposes.
- Brownfields Grants. Brownfields grants can be used to support the cleanup and development of brownfield areas.
- Federal Affordable Housing Funds. There are number of affordable housing sources that can be used to support the mixed-income residential projects that are anticipated in the Washington-Cole District and in the SEA District, including:
  - Choice Neighborhood
  - Low Income Housing Tax Credits
  - Senior Housing
- New Markets Tax Credits – New Markets Tax Credits support commercial projects in low-income areas. These funds were critical in the revitalization of the Durham, North Carolina, and can also be accessed to support particular projects in Corpus Christi.

**Shared Parking.** Shared parking within the proposed convention center district may be a huge benefit to residential developers. Structured parking can cost up to \$15,000 to \$20,000 per space and shared parking with other uses can limit these costs substantially. Cost savings of \$3 to \$4 million can help to make a project feasible that



otherwise was not, or can be reinvested into public infrastructure into a project.

**Public-Private Development.** One of the major advantages Corpus Christi has is that a large chunk of the land within the SEA District, adjacent to the Convention Center, is owned by the City. Through an RFP/RFQ process this may enable the City to acquire significant public benefits from a new hotel or other commercial developer. Public benefits may include development or contributions to a parking structure, streetscape improvement, or other public infrastructure costs.

**EB-5 Funding.** Is a program through the IRS in which foreign investors can make contributions into commercial projects in the US that support a certain number of jobs. This resource has been used increasingly to provide support to a variety of different projects.

**Capturing Regional Resources.** A significant amount of investment is being made within the region; an estimated \$17 billion is planned and proposed in different industrial projects in the region. The total cost of the bridge replacement, at approximately \$800 million, represents less than 5% of this investment. The City and Nueces County will bear any costs of these projects in terms of stress on public infrastructure and traffic and should also consider opportunities to obtain funds to support public benefits.

### ***ECONOMIC CASE STUDY: DURHAM, NORTH CAROLINA***

Durham North Carolina's downtown suffered from several decades of population loss and disinvestment, but has recently been transformed into a downtown with destination dining and entertainment and is known as a small business incubator specializing in high tech and bio tech innovation.

#### **Downtown Disinvestment**

Similar to Corpus Christi, Durham's middle class left the Durham downtown and, according to the Self-Help Fund, a Community Development Fund Institution (CDFI) who partnered in the project, Durham's downtown was peppered with vacant buildings before the turnaround and nearly all downtown census tracts had a poverty rate over 30% , a median family income less than 60% of the area median income and, even more challenging than Corpus Christi, an unemployment rate more than twice the national level. (Self Help. "New Markets Tax Credit Impacts: A Case Study in Durham, North Carolina")

The regional economy was based on tobacco and the downtown grew up around the tobacco industrial mills. The downtown waned with suburbanization, but was hit hardest when the American Tobacco Company Complex shut their doors in 1987 and left a 14-acre "industrial wasteland" in downtown Durham.

#### **The Turnaround**

There were several redevelopment projects in Downtown Durham in the 1980's and 1990's. This included an Omni Hotel and Civic Center (in 1989) and a minor league stadium, the Durham Bull Athletic Park (1995). None were individually able to lift the downtown out of its dull drum, but with the substantial investment in the mixed-use American Tobacco complex, located adjacent to the Durham Athletic Park, there was an identifiable turning point:

- In 2002, the City and County of Durham believed that the renovation of the American Tobacco Complex would revitalize downtown. Made a major \$42 million public investment to support a parking structure.
- American Tobacco Complex Developer received a \$40 million permanent New Markets Tax Credit Loan that supported Phase I of the project and received additional New Markets Tax Credit Loans for Phase II.
- Phase I (\$94 million investment) opened in 2004 with 500,000 square feet of Class A space with a few restaurants and a large public space. Phase II (\$168 million investment) opened in 2006 with 380 residential units and a total of 40,000 square feet of retail.
- Since opening in 2004, the project has won national awards for Best Mixed Use Development, Best Renovated Commercial Project, and Best Redevelopment Project.

#### **Results**

Before the redevelopment of the American Tobacco Complex there were piecemeal successful redevelopment projects in Durham, but it took the public-private partnership and investment in the major public projects such as the parking lot and the baseball field for Downtown Durham to revitalize in full.



Source: [www.ruppsdistrict](http://www.ruppsdistrict)



Source: [www.duketower.wordpress.com](http://www.duketower.wordpress.com)

**Capitol Broadcasting, Developers of the New American Tobacco Complex, Faced Incredulity:** "We were proposing to double the amount of Class A office space in Downtown Durham. We were just laughed at by the conventional loan market."  
- Michael Goodman (Source: New Markets Tax Credit Impacts: A Case Study in Durham, North Carolina)

- Over 1 million SF of mixed-use space incorporates restaurants, residences, and class A offices all situated adjacent to the Durham Bulls Triple A baseball park in the “American Tobacco Historic District”
- According to the CDFI Self Help Fund, approximately one significant development project completed each year between 1987 and 2003 in Downtown Durham. In the five years following the opening of Phase I (2005-2009), 16 major projects were completed.
- Average property sales prices increased by 115% from the period between 2002 to 2004 and 2005 to 2007. (Self Help. “New Markets Tax Credit Impacts: A Case Study in Durham, North Carolina”)
- Other cultural institutions have been added to the district, including the Durham Performing Arts Center which opened in December 2008.
- The project has spurred other major projects such as Golden Belt, a former textile mill, that was transformed into a seven-acre urban arts center with lofts, galleries, a live music space, and restaurants.
- There are 11 residential projects currently planned and proposed in Downtown Durham. Most projects are mixed use retail and residential. Where reported, each project averages 120 units per building and total more than \$530 million.
- Ongoing Reinvestment. Increased downtown revenues have been used to support additional projects in the Downtown. Durham continues to encourage its downtown to evolve.

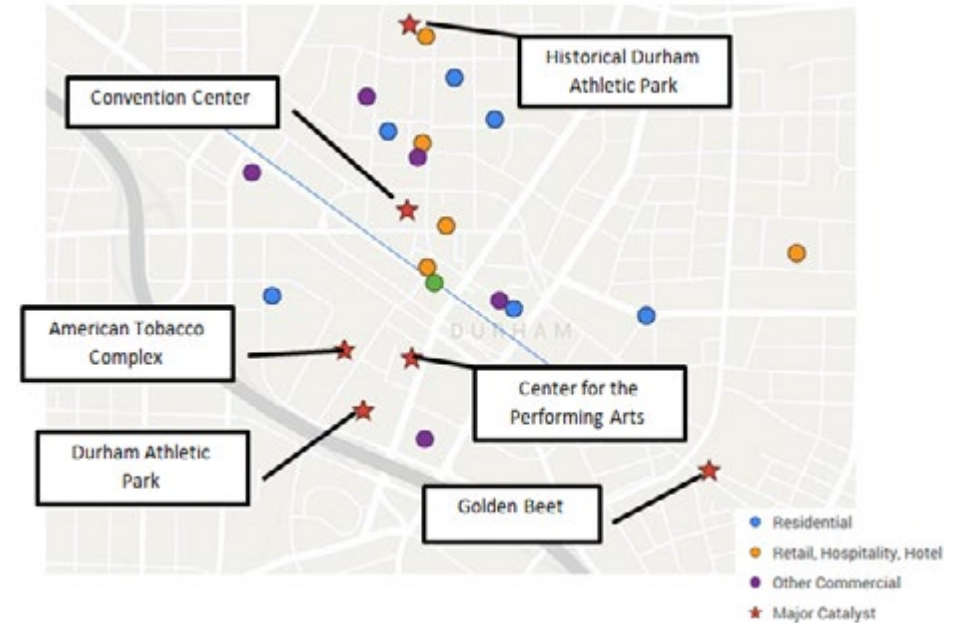


Source: Southern Mill

## Lessons for Corpus Christi

The study area has similar assets to those located in Durham before its renaissance, a MLB Park, an convention center. The elements are here, but they need the major public investment to bring the SEA and downtown district together.

- Adding a mix of uses provides more synergy than a specialized district alone.
- Public investment in shared parking can help to move the district forward.

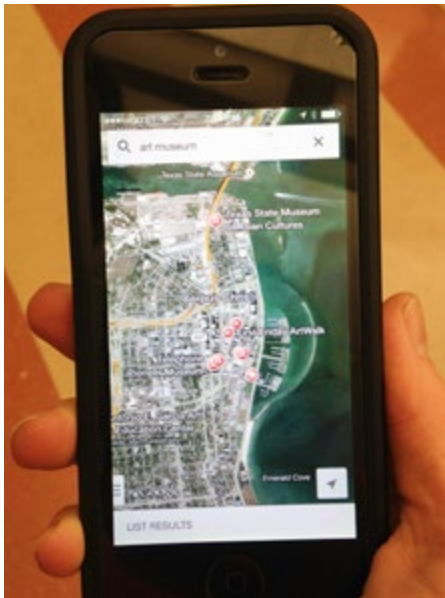


# Design & Wayfinding



## WAYFINDING IN OUR HANDS

In 2014, citizens in the biggest cities and the most rural areas alike have access to well-designed digital experiences through our phones and computers. We also have access to tools designed to facilitate well-designed real life experiences. A person with a smartphone in Corpus Christi now has access to the same exquisite mobile phone experience that a person in a design mecca has. The gestures and ease with which our increasingly digital population moves requires a new kind of wayfinding and texture on the ground in real life to direct our energies, our attention, and our dollars.



*Google maps, Yahoo Maps, Bing and others are built into smartphones and are commonly used in modern navigation*



*Many city visitors use apps like Urbanspoon, Yelp, and others to find local businesses while travelling. They may be reached this way more easily than by traditionally maps & signs.*

When a digital native user navigates a new place, the clear visible elements of that place that connect back to the first impressions on the phone or computer make a huge impression. Connecting the on-the-street experience to digital marketing and mapping can help businesses solidify their brands, make clear their appeal to customers, and speed the process of connecting with customers. The more confusing the experience becomes, the less likely anyone is to feel comfortable, to settle in, to stay awhile (in which case most people spend money).

### UPLOADING LOCAL DATA TO THE CLOUD

The phone as navigation does not require new apps or complex interfaces. By sending local data to Google and other large services, cities can plug into the information system that drives most mobile wayfinding. Information from business locations and information, traffic data, bus routes, bike routes, and other transit information all help make a more rich and nuanced experience for visitors to your city. In turn, city partners can embed Google maps back into their own home pages for more focused wayfinding pointed to their businesses. In the process, the business can outsource some of the How to Get Here work to a service with which many mobile users are already knowledgeable.

### Rock the Best of the Culture You Have Now

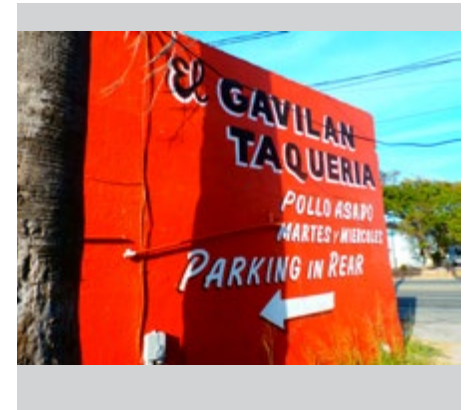
As city leaders embark on wayfinding and signage improvements, we encourage the review of existing authentic visual language embedded in the community. In particular, the historic typography

(fonts) on pre-1960s buildings and the handpainted signs on more modern structures is particularly inspirational. Much of the handpainted signage in Corpus Christi now bears a relationship to signmaking in Mexico. It has flourishes, detail, and color that draw the eye from a distance. Local barbecue joints have done well to brand their locations in large hand-painted signs that evoke Southern roots and local businesses in the North Beach area have developed a distinct and notable beach style. We did see one very high-end designed signage system downtown that was installed with the same painting method.

Great local signs were found at these sample locations, though there are many more:

Railroad Seafood Station Brewing Company, Los Regios Restaurant, Braslau's, and Hoegemeyers B-B-Q.

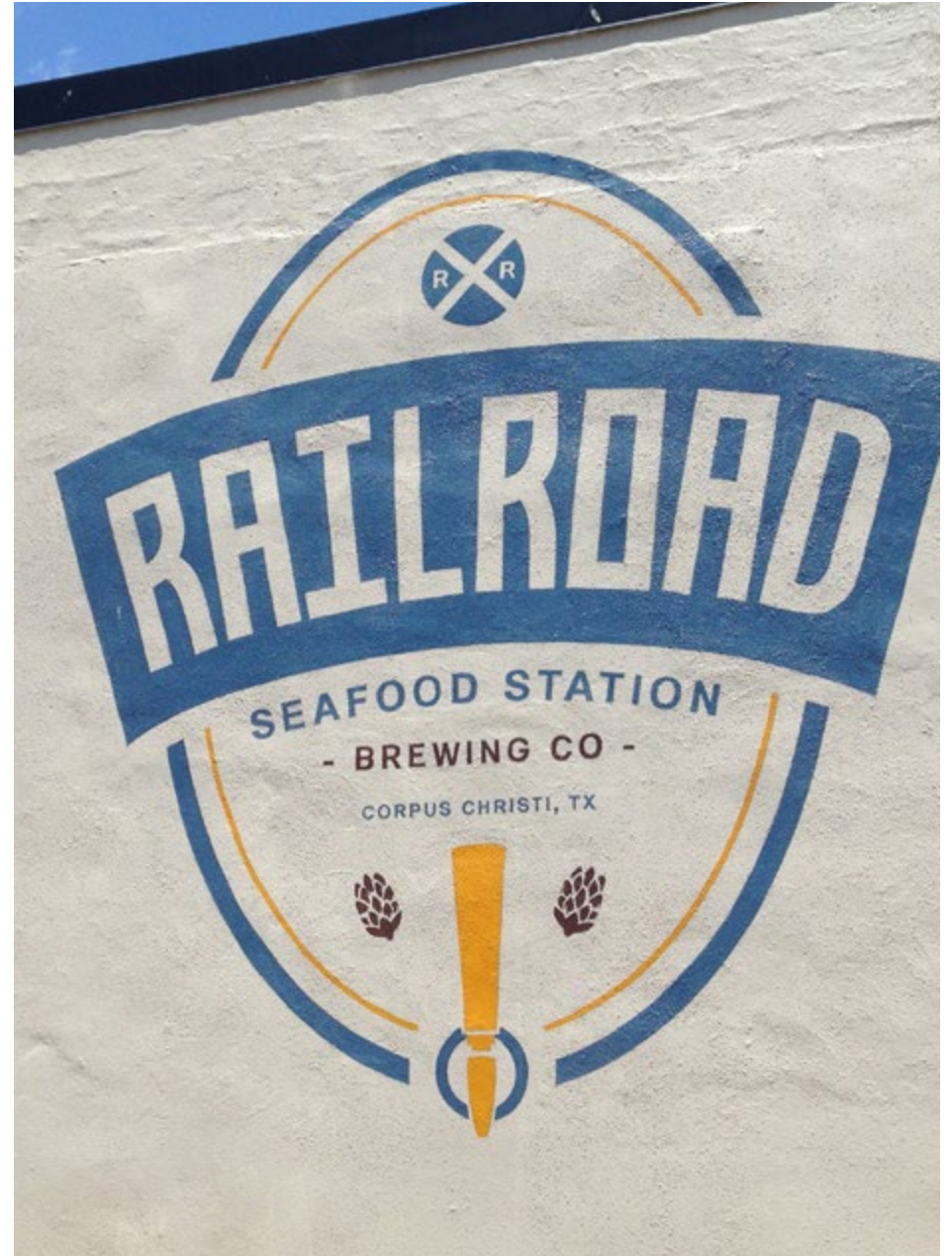
Handpainted signage in these styles and others is relatively inexpensive to install, has great impact for the business and for the community, but does require expertise in the design and painting. Artists and designers in the local community will best be able to install future signs in this manner. Helping these creatives work together through a program similar to CoSign could have a huge impact on a short timeline with a limited budget. The coordination of creatives and businesses will require some effort, but will result in a visible impact in the community that reflects the authentic local culture.



*Handpainted signs help to create an authentic local landscape and celebrate local culture.*



*Some downtown signage works as both business marker and public art display.*



*This downtown sign looks like it was carefully designed in a computer, but applied to the wall in a non-digital process, giving it a sense of both permanence and texture.*



*The Miradores frame the landscape in a unique way that captures cultural cues from Corpus Christi. This shape could be used to inspire future design and wayfinding projects.*



*Building on the success and authenticity of Buc Days, Corpus Christi has the opportunity to build a year of events that bring citizens and visitors downtown.*



Existing signage is a reference point for future systems.



Plant labels reward walking and close looking in downtown parks. Building the marking and labelling system of flora and fauna will help emphasize the natural environment that makes Corpus Christi so special.



The transit map design corresponds well with the bus stops and wayfinding in the physical environment.



These markers of place in the SEA District are useful ways of tying the parking area into the district, but they are not yet integrated into the rest of the district to create a cohesive user experience.



Signage at the ballpark is designed and executed at a very high level. It will be clear and beautiful for generations to come.



Balancing interest and clarity in signage is a challenge best met by a professional designer trained in typography and readability. These standard government signs lack interest and the sign at right is too busy for passersby to read quickly and with ease.

## FUNDING IT: Artplace grants

One of the challenges of a wayfinding system is the individual signage at each local business. Some businesses in startup mode start with low-budget low-design quality signs that are difficult for patrons to read and that do not create a strong authentic marker of place. We recommend improving the investments in signage by pairing local businesses with professional designers in a business incubator process like CoSign Cincy. This project is funded by \$500 contributions by each local business and \$200,000 in external funding from Artplace America, a national placemaking fund of foundations.

## CASE STUDY

Co Sign: “CoSign is designed to enhance economic activity in Greater Cincinnati neighborhood business districts by pairing artists, small businesses, and professional sign fabricators to design and install unique handcrafted signage for local retailers; and in the process, create an infrastructure to train the next generation of local signmakers.

CoSign will coordinate the design and installation of a critical mass of new business signage in Cincinnati’s Northside business district, an area experiencing significant redevelopment and reinvestment. The signage will be created by a unique partnership of a visual artist, a small business owner, and a professional sign fabricator, all coordinated through the leadership and expertise of the American Sign Museum.



*CoSign Cincy is a non-profit/business partnership project to help small businesses get well-designed signs to help create place.*

“The participating businesses pay \$500 towards the cost of their sign in the form of gift cards or cash. If the businesses gave us cash, we used it to buy gift cards at local Northside businesses. We distributed those gift cards to participants in the project this month to hopefully increase the amount of individuals shopping in the Northside Community. Some businesses have reported individuals using the gift cards to buy larger purchases from their business such as

a road bike. We are happy to be able to help drive economic development in the community of Northside. Some of the businesses participating in the project have noticed an increase in sales this month especially during the shop local event.”

## Designing a Responsive Wayfinding System

Because downtown, the SEA District, and North Beach will experience so much development in coming years, an expansive and responsive signage system is recommended for the next ten years. Working with an established local firm that can respond to changing conditions with professional signage is



*Walk Your City describes routes in terms of minutes to walk instead of miles to walk. WYC recently partnered with Blue Cross to roll out signage encouraging exercise in three North Carolina cities.*

recommended. The scope of work would ideally look at timelines into the next 25 years, anticipating the addition of new businesses and the changing of existing business directions as the local economy grows and changes.

As future development is imagined, designed, and built, more immediate signage will be needed to help visitors find their way. Experimental & temporary signage could help as districts are knit together over time, testing different methods of communicating.

### **CASE STUDY**

Walk Your City: “Road signage has traditionally been expensive and car-centered, leaving walkers and bikers by the wayside. Walk [Your City] lets anyone from citizens to corporations quickly and affordably promote healthy lifestyles, public safety, and human-

centered transit. Whether you’re making a few signs for your street or sponsoring a campaign for your whole neighborhood, you’re already taking steps towards a more walkable community.”

### **TO DO THIS MONTH:**

To immediately locate existing commercial, cultural, and recreational locations for visitors, we recommend using Walk Your City, a low-barrier-to-entry system designed by local people in Raleigh trying to connect institutions that seemed far. The project was originally a graduate project of Matt Tomasulo, an urban planner. He funded phases with Kickstarter and was able to attract investors. WYC also set new funding models in its recent partnership with Blue Cross Blue Shield to bring the signage encouraging exercise to 3 North Carolina communities.



### **Urban Trails & The User Experience**

The Corpus Christi First project seems to be knitting together many events downtown through user experiences. For art lovers, there is the ArtWalk, for music lovers a MusicWalk, and so on for the BridgeWalk, and BeachWalk. These experience-based ways of navigating the city seem visible and knowable to local insiders, but are entirely invisible to the new visitor or casual user. They are not prominent in the local media and are not easily found in maps around downtown.

In addition to monthly walks and tours, parade routes can be pioneers of walkability. They are a major draw into downtown, are an open invitation for visitors who might be hesitant to walk, and they create beauty along given routes. As the routes are chosen each year, they could be directed to create interest and shared experiences in areas

where you want to focus attention.

Coordinated sign painting can also be expanded into other placemaking projects and connected with local mural work like the art park at Agnes and Laredo Streets. Kay Thomas, a local artist, works in ceramics, sculpture, fiber and textiles. She was commissioned to make tile murals in her “Faces of Our Neighborhood” installation on the columns of Crosstown Expressway at Laredo and Agnes Streets. This example, along with the other art installed in the park under the bridge and adjacent to the Antonio E. Garcia Arts Education Center (part of Texas A&M University), creates a strong connection between transportation infrastructure, placemaking, and local creative talent. Building on the strength of this project, additional projects could be installed at other locations along the bridge to create pathways that reward walking and multimodal transportation.



*Art park under the bridge at Agnes and Laredo at 286*

The Antonio E. Garcia Arts and Education Center, located in the heart of Corpus Christi's West Side, connects Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi to the community by providing programs, art exhibits, and meeting places for community organizations.

The Garcia Center offers programs in art, dance, health and nutrition, family support, and literacy at low or no cost to community members, and it hosts widely popular annual cultural events. The Center features a gallery space with rotating exhibits, computer lab, art room, and multipurpose/dance space."

We recommend aligning public wayfinding, public art, and parks investments in projects with professional artists

and designers to create high impact corridors with existing budgets, modest fundraising, and sustained fundraising into the future.

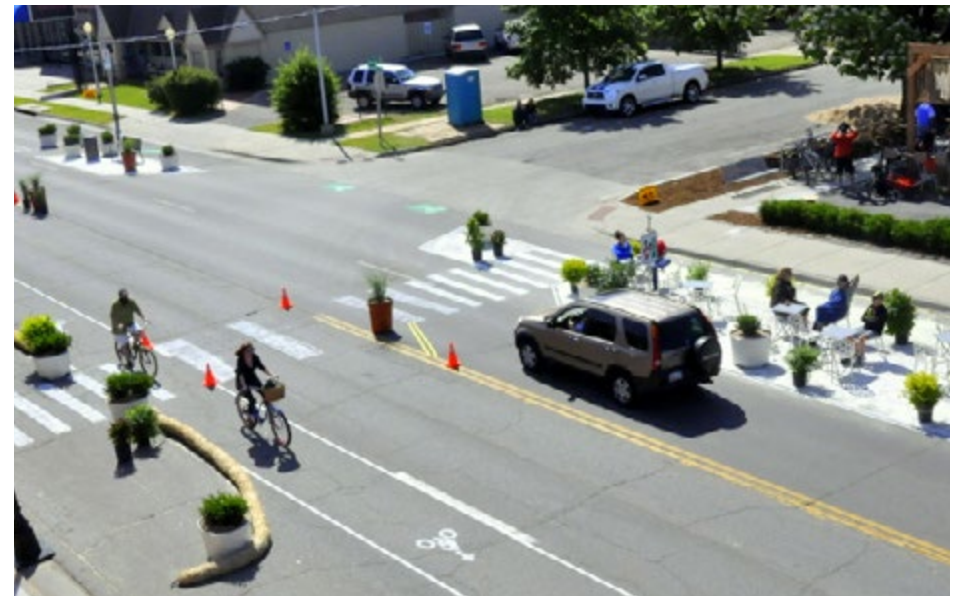
**IN THE NEXT YEAR**

We recommend that the DMD and CVB further publicize the Corpus Christi First walks in their publications, websites, and other communications.

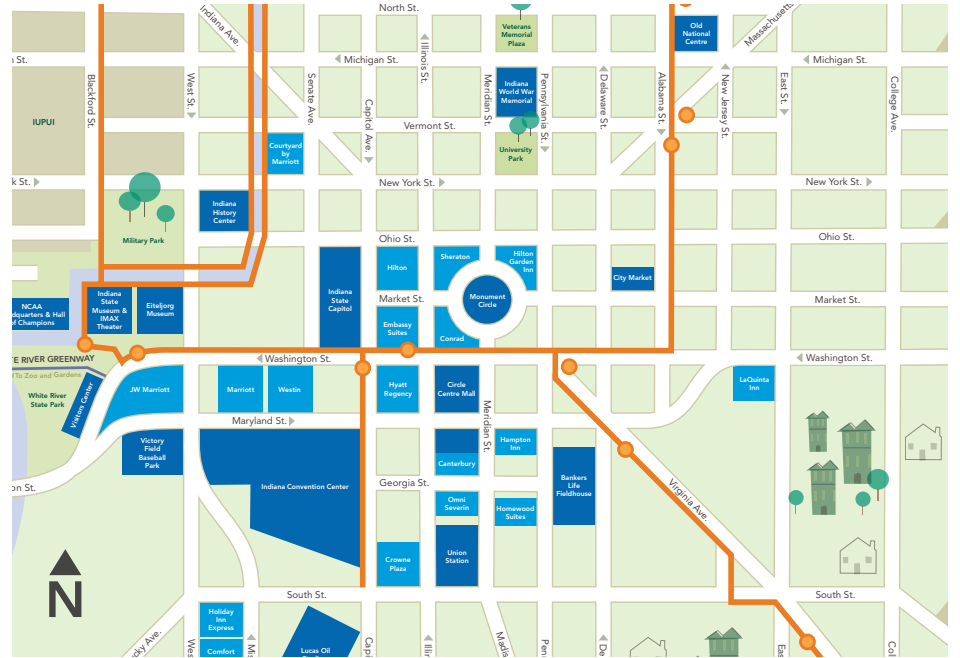
We also recommend routing the Buc Days and Fourth of July Parades through Downtown, the SEA District, and possibly North Beach to create threads of experience. These routes have history, but have also been changed in recent years to accommodate construction downtown. We can celebrate new projects downtown



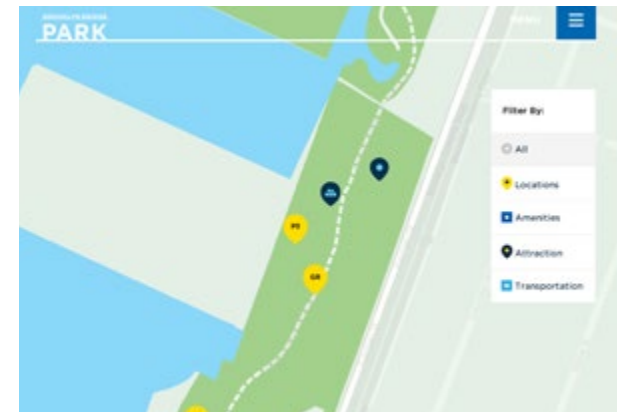
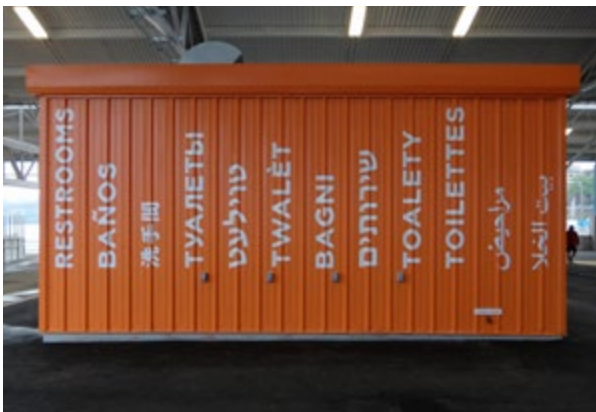
*Temporary installations and signage, including the WalkYourCity and Better Block, help cities and citizens test different configurations before committing to expensive permanent systems.*



*Better Block projects allow citizens to reconfigure the street and try new signage in an active and iterative way before permanent change is made.*



The Indianapolis Cultural Trail



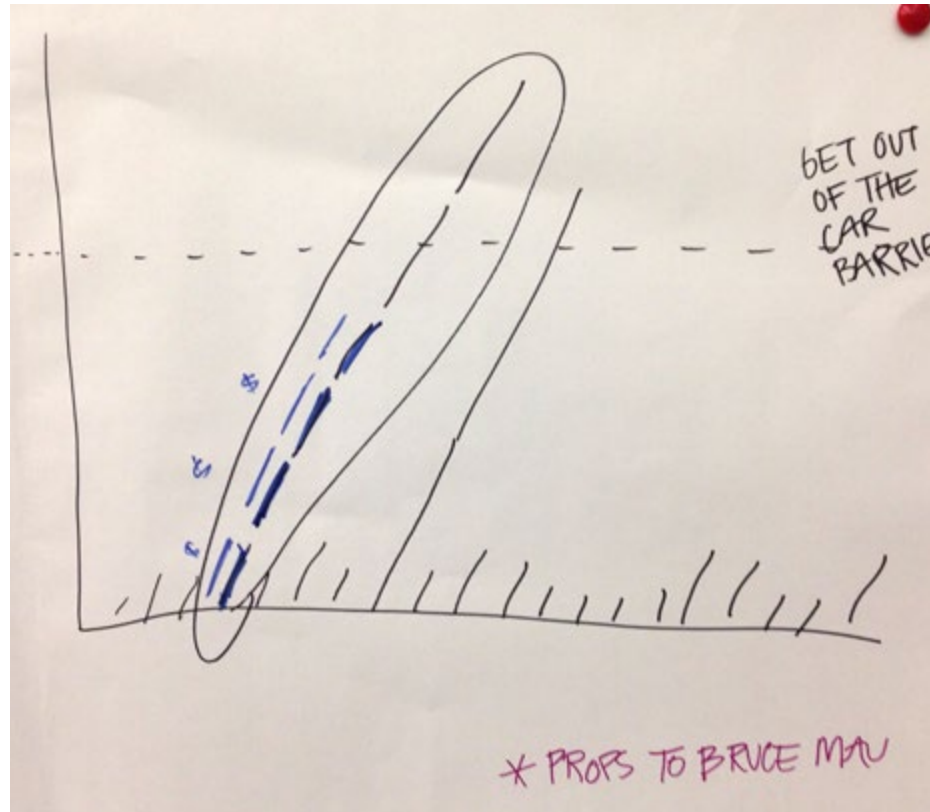
Working with the professional graphic design firm Open, the Brooklyn Bridge Park has tied its digital experience on computers and mobile devices, where people plan their time, to its physical experience and wayfinding in the park.

and create newness of experience by rerouting the parades each year, bringing pedestrians to new areas of the city.

We recommend that city leaders invent new processes for working with professional designers to coordinate the look and feel of downtown Corpus Christi. We recommend that the DMD/SEA convene a board of design and art experts to advise the organization and help it develop the best possible RFPs. The DMD can also execute design-intensive projects that city departments may not be able to execute with current staff. We recommend the development of serious professional budgets for high end execution of design for the best ROI.

In our research, we found at least one established local firm that is already working with major cultural events to help them look professional and reach broad public audiences. The firm MDR Advertising has an established track record, have demonstrated local commitment, and have graphic design expertise.

Corpus Christi has local members of the national organization to which many graphic designers belong, AIGA. This professional association for design is committed to advancing design as a professional craft, strategic advantage and vital cultural force. The local colleges and universities are also building their creative capacity as they train students in art, marketing, and architecture professions close to graphic design. The Antonio E. Garcia Arts & Education Center program works in Corpus Christi's West Side, the marketing program at Texas A&M Corpus Christi is nearby, as



*Alignment of art, wayfinding, culture, and bike infrastructure is possible to maximize impact of limmited budgets. Graphic adapted from designer Bruce Mau's work.*

is the Del Mar Community College. With expansion in education and stronger collaborations downtown, we think Corpus Christi will be better able to retain its best creative talent to work on city-making activities from wayfinding to event design to full marketing campaigns.

### FUNDING SOURCES

Our Town grants from the National Endowment for the Arts  
\$25,000–\$200,000

Art works to improve the lives of

America's citizens in many ways. Communities across our nation are leveraging the arts and engaging design to make their communities more livable with enhanced quality of life, increased creative activity, a distinct sense of place, and vibrant local economies that together capitalize on their existing assets. The NEA defines these efforts as the process of Creative Placemaking:

"In creative placemaking, partners from public, private, nonprofit, and community sectors strategically shape the physical and social character of a neighborhood, town, tribe, city, or

region around arts and cultural activities. Creative placemaking animates public and private spaces, rejuvenates structures and streetscapes, improves local business viability and public safety, and brings diverse people together to celebrate, inspire, and be inspired." –Ann Markusen, Markusen Economic Research Services; Anne Gadwa Nicodemus, Metris Arts Consulting, from Creative Placemaking

Organizations may apply for creative placemaking projects that contribute to the livability of communities and place the arts at their core. An organization may request a grant amount from \$25,000 to \$200,000.

### Questions to consider:

Public signage laws—are there limits that are keeping the signs small?

How can we best encourage big, well-designed markers of place?



*Corpus Christi has existing infrastructure that can be seen as industrial objects or a set of potential artistic canvases to be painting in a coordinated and beautiful way.*



*This tank in Portland, Maine was painted by artist Jaime Gili.*



*This tank in Boston is one of the signs of entry into the city*



## Filling up the Immediate Empties: Storefront Activation

In our time in Corpus Christi, we heard often about interest in public art, but could not discern a clear structure to implement large-scale coordinated projects and temporary public art to activate storefronts downtown.

We recommend investigation of public/private partnership options in which the city and the DMD might work together to produce 1–2 professional temporary public art projects with the help of outside public art consultants with project management expertise (are there local experts or CC-native consultants who currently live in other cities in Texas who would relish coming home to do this work?). These R&D test projects would allow the city to test new models for executing public art that builds on the strengths of the art community in catalytic ways.



*Storefront installations by professional artists and managed by professional project managers help developers create visual appeal and foot traffic near their empty storefronts. These examples from IN FLUX in Scottsdale, Arizona have led to many spaces being rented afterward.*

### CASE STUDY

IN FLUX Temporary Public Art by Scottsdale Public Art (non-profit contracted with the city) in Phoenix/Scottsdale/Tempe/Chandler/Mesa/Gilbert, Arizona:

“IN FLUX brings together art, economic development, and property management organizations throughout the greater Phoenix area to provide opportunities for Arizona artists to create site-specific temporary public art installations in a wide variety of locations.

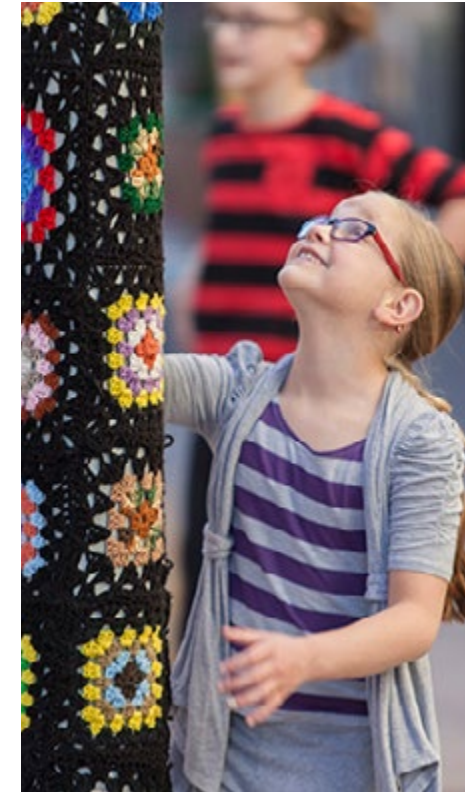
IN FLUX demonstrates a holistic approach to temporary public art projects through a showcase of Arizona artists presented within the context of

viewing the Valley as one community. IN FLUX provides unique project opportunities for artists to expand their skills, innovatively apply their creativity, and garner public recognition for their work. IN FLUX offers new perspective on the connections between community organizations, city governments, local businesses, artists, and audiences.”

In Flux budgets are generated through grants and donations from property managers and economic development companies. The funding is used to pay

the artists, to design and distribute maps, to lead tours, and to administer the program at a high professional level of execution. In the process, this program gives developers and artists a clear formal way in which to engage with one another. The process also creates jobs to keep the best creatives in town and gives developers a network of very skilled professional advisers to contribute to their design strategy.

Each storefront costs \$4,500–8,500 to produce. Since the program started



*IN FLUX yarn bombing project in Scottsdale.*

in downtown Scottsdale, hundreds of thousands of people have visited the area, generating foot traffic sufficient to incentivize businesses to lease the spaces around the project. The area, which once had minimal foot traffic is now a vibrant local place with a diverse ecosystem of local and national businesses. Instead of spending only on digital marketing, this placemaking initiative gives developers a way to create a great experience in real life at their location, creating a stronger sense of possibility for the empty space.



*Temporary installations with affordable materials can have huge impact for tourism and for the way citizens see their city. Pallet Pavilion in New Zealand “seeks to showcase some of the exciting possibilities temporary architecture holds for*

*Christchurch. A visually engaging, dynamic space, it is built from 3000 wooden blue CHEP pallets and hosts live music and community events. It aims to meet a need in the city given the loss of so many venues as a result of the earthquakes.*

## Going Open Source: Coordinating Culture Calendars

The coordination of calendars is complex in all our lives. Our individual calendars, our family calendars, our neighborhood, work, and community calendars are all managed in different ways at different times at different scales. Anything that makes this management easier allows us to get to the activities themselves instead of spending time managing the dates and times is a good thing.

Many organizations, including non-profits, use digital calendar systems to manage their time complexity. Google and other major services allow for the creation of calendar 'feeds' that any computer user or smartphone user can integrate into an individual device. A person interested in arts can essentially 'subscribe' to a direct feed of art events listed by an organization or service. A music aficionado can have all new concerts show up on his phone as he wanders downtown looking for a great night of listening.

The great experience made possible by these various community feeds requires some coordination and careful curation. While services do exist to have cultural institutions 'subscribe' to feed a database, we have found that most small cultural organizations are already stretched thin and are unlikely to follow through in setting up this kind of system. Instead, we recommend that the DMD, CVB, SEA District, and EDC collaborate to fund the periodic maintenance of a master calendar customized to local needs.

With an up-front investment in web

development, the DMD, CVB, SEA District, and EDC could take a leadership role in establishing master culture calendars to navigate the user experience downtown. If conventions, local festivals, road races, artwalks, music events, gallery shows, regattas and other events could all be seen from a master view for planning (within these organizations, with the City, and with the local groups), a vibrant downtown experience could be designed to match the cadence of visitor arrivals.

A master calendar would also encourage the filling in of holes in the year. Event planners and venue owners could knowingly fill in smaller-scale local events for low periods in the year, focusing on developing local talent and maintaining the cadence and energy of downtown. A similar project has been undertaken in Phoenix where 50+ community leaders, including businesses and cultural leaders, are maintaining a calendar of downtown cultural events. When two events might be able to piggy-back or build into a day with more impact, they are easily coordinated months into the future. When planners are looking at when to hold events based on student calendars

This streamlining of marketing communication has not eliminated collaboration or existing meetings, but has made them more productive and more focused on ways that events can coordinate. Previously, many meetings included conversational date management and necessary back and forth after the meeting. In the new scenario with the master calendar, everyone leaves the meeting knowing when things are happening.

## A sampling of community events that we were able to pull together into a look at the year

### Community Events That Define Place 2014–2015

#### EVERY WEEK

Monday Night	Uptown, Downtown, All Around Group Run	20 - 30 Runners
Wednesday Night	Beer Can Sailboat Races	12 - 15 Boats
Wednesday Night	Hammerfest Bike Ride	10 - 30 Riders
Saturday Morning	Group Bike Ride	20 - 40 Riders

#### EVERY MONTH

ArtWalk	First Friday of the month
MusicWalk	First Saturday of the month
Harbor BridgeWalk	First Sunday of the month
Fitness Sunday	First Sunday of the month

#### ANNUAL EVENTS

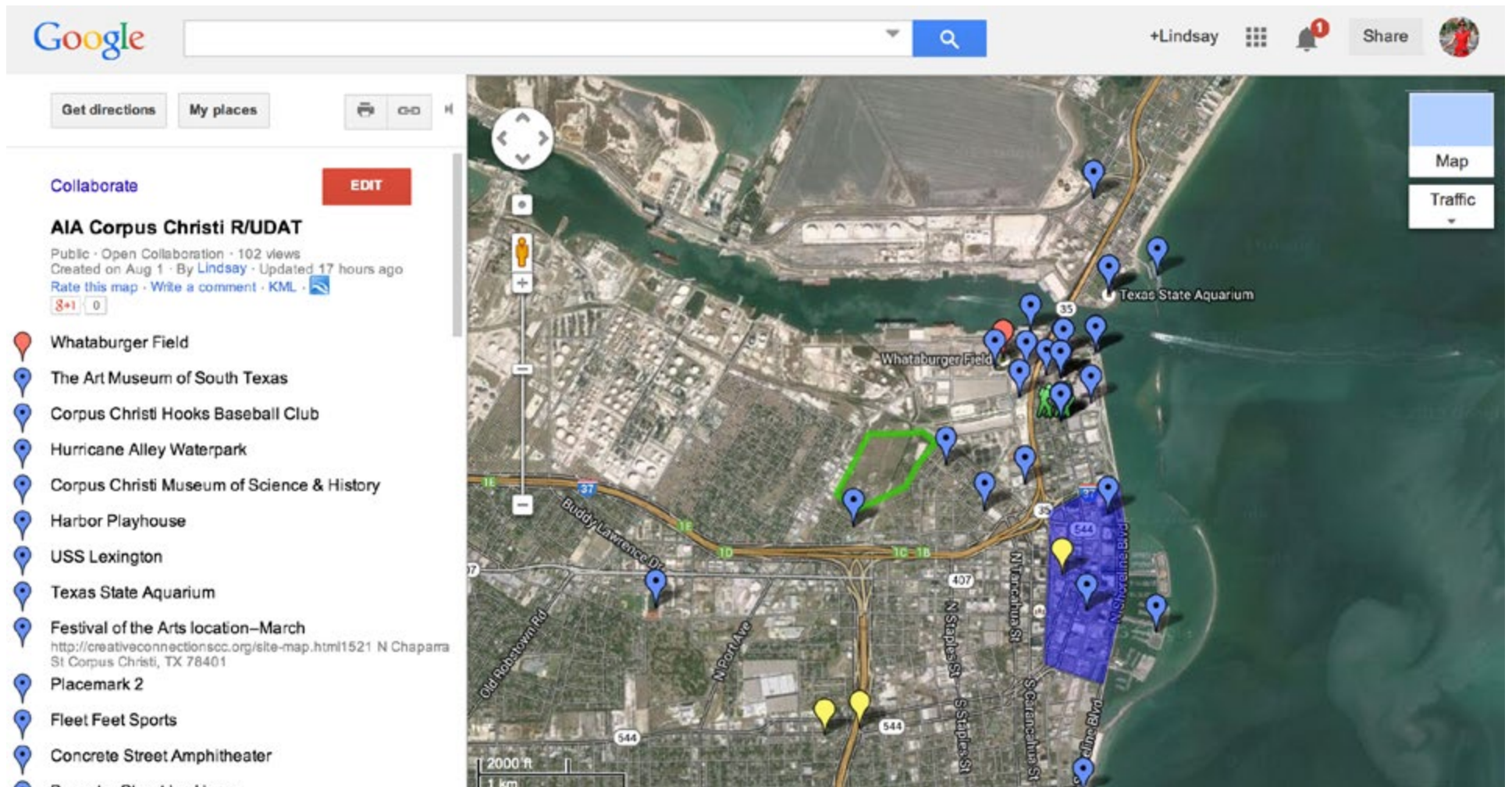
January 1, 2015	New Year's Day Swim	
January 3, 2015	American Bank Half Marathon	150 Runners
January 20, 2014	Food and Wine Classic	200-250 Connoisseurs
February 7, 2015	Rise and Shine 5K	400 Runners/Walkers
February 15, 2014	Navy Half Marathon	
February 16, 2014	Corpus Christi Boat Show	
February 19, 20, 21, 22, 2015	Celebration of Whooping Cranes in Port Aransas	
March 5-8, 2014	Fulton Oyster Fest	
March 7, 2015	Whooping Crane Strut in Rockport	
March 27-29, 2015	Festival of the Arts	
April 11, 2015	Coastal Bend Tour de Cure	~ 500 Riders
April 16–May 2, 2015	Buccaneer Days (Rodeo, Carnival, Parade)	258,000 People
April 24, 25, 26, 2015	Texas Sandfest–Sand Sculpture Festival	
May 16, 2015	Beach-to-Bay	16,000 Runners
May	BeachWalk	
June-August	Bay Jamming Concert and Cinema Series	
June 12-14, 2014	Aransas Pass Shrimporee	
June 14, 2014	Stache Dash	800 Runners/Walkers
July 4, 2014	4 For the 4th	600 Runners
August 30, 2014	Glow Run	
September 6, 2014	Run for Blood	500 Runners/Walkers
September 18–21, 2014	The Hummer Bird Festival in Rockport	
September 18-21	Classic Brew - KEDT	
September 20, 2014	Conquer the Coast	1,400 Riders
October 4, 2014	Monster Mash 5K	150 Monsters
October 17–19, 2014	Annual Texas Jazz Festival	Aprox. 70,000 People
October 19, 2014	You Go Girl 5K	100 Runners
October 25, 2014	Corpus Christi Heart Walk	~ 800 Walkers
November 1, 2014	Dia De Los Muertos Street Festival	
November 1-3, 2014	Greek Festival	
November 8, 2014	9th Annual Harbor Half Marathon	~1,300 Runners
November 22, 2014	Bill Dodge Memorial 15K and 5K Run	
November 27, 2014	33rd Annual Turkey Chase	~800 Runners
December 13, 2014	Jingle All the Way 5K	500 Runners
December 7th	Harbor Lights Parade	

Promotional Organizations in Downtown Corpus Christi and the SEA District

Organization	Funding Sources	Audience	Verb	Notes
Local community interest groups	Events, local fundraisers, local and national grants	Local community	ORGANIZE around community interests and ADVOCATE on behalf of the community	
Local community members	Events, Kickstarter		PARTICIPATE in local events	
SEA District	Membership	Public Families Mostly local reach	PROMOTE an experience district	501c3?, started by Durrill <a href="http://seadistrictcc.com/">http://seadistrictcc.com/</a>
Chambers of Commerce (CC, Hispanic CC, Black CC)	Membership Fundraisers	Local businesses of many sizes	DEVELOP leadership FOSTER growth ADVOCATE for business	<a href="http://www.corpuschristichamber.org/">http://www.corpuschristichamber.org/</a> <a href="https://sites.google.com/a/blackchambercc.org/home/">https://sites.google.com/a/blackchambercc.org/home/</a>
CVB	Hotel Motel Tax	Meeting Planners Conventions Out-of-town visitors	PROMOTE tourism and business related visits	<a href="http://visitcorpuschristitx.org/">http://visitcorpuschristitx.org/</a>
CCFirst	City \$ DMD \$	Visitors?	PROMOTE social investments for residents PROMOTE creative experience for visitors	<a href="http://corpuschristi1st.com/">http://corpuschristi1st.com/</a>
DMD	TIF \$	Membership Specific area - live/work/visit	ENCOURAGE redevelopment	<a href="http://cctexasdmd.com/">http://cctexasdmd.com/</a>
EDC	Local \$ County \$	Out-of-City businesses Out-of-State businesses	RECRUIT and PROMOTE Investment	<a href="http://www.ccredc.com/">http://www.ccredc.com/</a>
City of Corpus Christi	Taxes	Citizens Businesses Visitors	DELIVER municipal services SUSTAIN and IMPROVE welfare, health, and quality of life of residents	<a href="http://www.cctexas.com/index">http://www.cctexas.com/index</a>

Table information compiled from local interviews

Compiled by Austin Jurica



*This Google map, created by the R/UDAT team and local collaborators, can be edited by anyone to take an inventory of assets and a sketch of possibilities  
<https://maps.google.com/maps/ms?msid=216174592724925062574.0004ff9616f89eb44d818&msa=0&ll=27.787435,-97.409656&spn=0.005771,0.009109>*

## Build the Business Case for Community Art & Design

In order for What If temporary projects to blossom and grow and to keep the best creatives in town to execute projects, a place needs to secure funding. Creative placemaking is a part-time or full-time job for dozens to thousands of people in any given city. We can find benevolent benefactors or we must tie the design strategy to the business goals of the place. Having projects that support overall city growth goals that will support future funding to keep creative placemaking projects going into the future.

## Invite a culture of What If Why Not

Asking What If and Why Not in a big initial brainstorm will help collaborators think big.

We recommend also adding a monetary limit at the end of the What if...

ex: What if we test this urban design idea for one day for \$500 before we design a capital project around a need that is not yet fully understood?

Failing faster and testing ideas is counterintuitive in a build-it culture, but offers a much better ROI and helps prevent the building of projects that the public does not fully adopt. It gives members of the public time to change their thinking about what the city could be and helps answer detractors before major opposition builds, as the process allows for the integration of responses to their concerns.



*The D:hive storefront in Detroit "is a physical storefront and welcome center in Detroit's Central Business District where you will find help with anything Detroit: places to live, great work opportunities, community events, and how to BUILD your business in the city."*

This process can lead to: What if we do a \$5000 one-time event to test public interest? What if we put on a \$50,000 festival to attract new visitors? What if we build a \$500,000 infrastructure project to support our previous investments in events and community-building?

## The Social Network to Support Place

We heard the following statements:

'Our creative kids leave.'

'Even when the economy is down, architects and other creatives would rather wait tables in Austin than work in their fields here.'

Creatives around the country have congregated in big cities since relocation became possible. Now with internet connectivity to national networks, easy travel, and increasingly organized professional groups, many creatives from smaller cities are finding that they are able to move to their hometowns while staying connected to precedent in the national design network. Smaller cities that invite their creatives to come home can join the ranks of smaller cities that are emerging hotbeds of experimentation feeding a national dialogue about the future of cities.

We recommend that you work to identify and cultivate the next generation of leaders now before the coming energy boom. By lifting up the emerging leaders who are already here and by inviting home the ones who have moved away, you have the opportunity to foster a city-building culture that evens out the boom-bust cycle and harnesses both the institutional knowledge of current leaders and the energy of the emerging leadership.

## The Way Forward is to Start Today

Almost every city feels like it doesn't have enough money to start on a new path toward a vision of its best possible future. The only way to start building toward your vision of rich cultural fabric and a robust local economy in Corpus Christi is to start today. We have made an effort to give free and very affordable action suggestions that can begin immediately while community dialogues unfold and larger plans are drawn.

# **DAT Lessons & Final Thoughts**



## LESSONS FROM THE DESIGN ASSISTANCE PROCESS

The team was asked to provide some comparable cases that might offer lessons for Corpus Christi, and the preceding report contains numerous examples of design interventions, policy models, and other best practices that can be applied to many components of the community revitalization process. However, the team felt it would also be instructive to offer a couple case studies from the design assistance experience which can help inform the design of an implementation process for Corpus Christi. Each case reinforces the preceding framework described for Corpus Christi, as each community has overcome challenges with scarce public resources by engaging the whole community in the process of revitalization and development successfully.

### Port Angeles, Washington (pop. 17,000)

#### *Building Community Pride through a Public Revitalization Process*

Port Angeles, Washington provides an example of how to inspire pride in change by creating a truly public revitalization process. Their success has been built around involving everyone in the process. In 2009, Port Angeles hosted an SDAT to focus on downtown revitalization and waterfront development. Port Angeles had suffered declining fortunes as the result of mill closures and reduced productivity from natural resource industries. The three-day charrette process created enormous civic energy to pursue a vision for the city's future. "Just two weeks after the SDAT presented more than 30 recommendations, the Port Angeles Forward committee unanimously agreed to recommend 10 of those items for immediate action," said Nathan West, the City's Director of Community and Economic Development. "Public investment and commitment inspired private investment, and, less than a month later, the community joined together in an effort to revamp the entire downtown, starting with a physical face-lift. Community members donated paint and equipment, and residents picked up their paintbrushes to start the transformation."

During the first summer of implementation, over 43 buildings in the downtown received substantial upgrades, including new paint and other improvements. This effort led to a formal façade improvement program that extended the initiative exponentially. The city dedicated \$118,000 in community development block grants (CDBG) for the effort, which catalyzed over \$265,000 in private investment. The city also moved forward with substantial public investment in its waterfront, which had a dramatic impact in inspiring new partnerships

and private investment. Three years later, the city had over \$75 million in planned and completed investments and had turned the corner by producing huge civic momentum across the community. In June 2012, Port Angeles was recognized with a state design award for its waterfront master plan, designed by LMN Architects. The city will break ground on construction in the fall.

As West concluded, "The City of Port Angeles SDAT experience was far more than just a planning exercise. This opportunity for our community was a catalyst for action, implementation and improvement. Three years after the SDAT team arrived, the progress and excitement continue. A primary outcome has been that the process awakened community pride and inspired a "together we can" attitude. Today the inspiration remains and the elements and recommendations of the program continue to be the driver for publicly endorsed capital projects and investments in our community. More importantly this sustainable approach has tapped into the core values and priorities of our citizens to ensure a better and more balanced future for our City."





## Newport, Vermont (pop. 5,000)

### *The Power of Leveraged Actions*

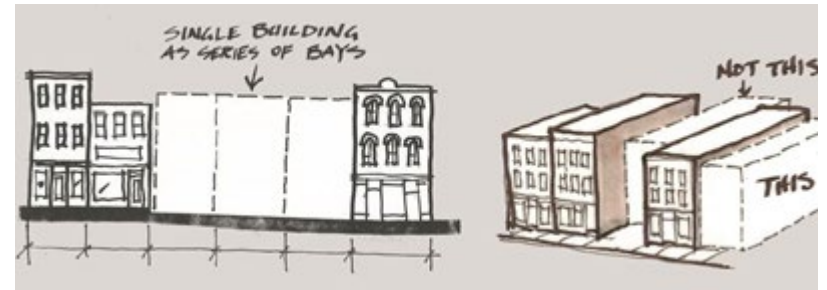
In 2009, Newport, Vermont brought a Regional and Urban Design Assistance Team (R/UDAT) to town to help build a revitalization strategy. Patricia Sears, the Executive Director of the Newport Renaissance Corporation, described the town's dilemma a few years ago: "We were the last city in Vermont to achieve downtown designation from the state. We had some of the highest unemployment in the state. We decided we were done being last. We decided, 'we are going to be first.'" Newport hosted the first R/UDAT in state history. Hundreds of residents and stakeholders participated in the process. As Mayor Paul Monette said, "it wasn't the usual political process. Everyone was heard during the R/UDAT."

Within two years of the project, the R/UDAT had built so much momentum that the town had over \$250 million in new and pending investment, including 2,000 new jobs in a town of just 5,000 – an incredible achievement in the midst of a severe national recession. Like Port Angeles, Newport was able to achieve success through broad partnership and involvement. It also leveraged small actions to build momentum for larger investments. For example, the R/UDAT team included a recommendation to create a community garden downtown, something that has been suggested for Springfield as well. Newport created a community garden with over 32 organizational partners. They took advantage of existing capacity – a downtown parking lot that was donated – and not only created a garden, but programmed it to have a transformational impact.

Out of the community garden, the "Grow a Neighborhood" program was created, teaching neighborhood residents about urban agriculture, providing space for family plots, and engaging local restaurants in a farm to table initiative. Six new restaurants opened in the downtown during the first two years of implementation. Newport also took advantage of widespread community participation in the R/UDAT to engage citizens in code changes, designing a participatory process to create the first form-based code in the state. New investments include boutique hotels, a tasting center featuring regional agriculture, and a waterfront resort. The city also created the state's first foreign trade zone, attracting a Korean biotechnology firm and other businesses.

The City has undergone a fundamental shift in its thinking since the R/UDAT process. In 2009, the public dialogue was dominated by nostalgia about the city's past. As one resident exclaimed, "I've seen

Newport come, and I've seen it go." Two years later, the R/UDAT team conducted a follow up visit to assess progress in the community. As the Mayor stated, "I attribute our success to the successful R/UDAT in 2009 followed by the great public/private partnerships which have developed." The sense of change reaches all levels of the community. A citizen described the civic "attitude adjustment" that had occurred: "When you have people working together, things can happen and do happen. That's the most important change that has occurred – a change in attitude. All of a sudden, nothing is impossible." Today, communities across New England are visiting Newport to learn the 'secrets' of its success.



## CONCLUSION

The Harbor Bridge was constructed in the late 1950s, and it defined the area's physical character for over 50 years. Removing the bridge provides nothing short of an opportunity to re-define this area for at least a half-century to come. This is a community that is equal to the historic opportunity in front of it. By engaging the whole community in this effort, Corpus Christi can become part of a proud Texas tradition of remarkable urban transformations and achievement.

The R/UDAT team found Corpus Christi to be an impressive community. This is not a community that should ever struggle to think big or act big. In fact, the team found that Corpus Christi has the capacity to create whatever physical character and sense of community it can collectively aspire to attain. You are capable of great things. Corpus Christi has already proven that it knows how to build innovative cross-sector collaborations to achieve incredible outcomes. The City was recognized with an All-America City Award in 2003 – the "Olympics of Community." Unlike most jurisdictions, Corpus Christi already has billions of dollars in new investment coming as a result of the spike in production from the energy industry. While many communities struggle to overcome challenges in resources and capacity, Corpus Christi is presented with a rare opportunity to act from a position of incredible civic strength. The community's economic growth is providing an unprecedented opportunity to engage the entire community in both the creation of a clear vision for the future, and in the actions necessary to realize its citizens' collective aspirations. Corpus Christi has remarkable assets, institutions, and citizens.

During the R/UDAT process, the sense of excitement across the community was evident. There was remarkable clarity and consensus exhibited by citizens regarding what aspects of the community they most value here, and what they want it to be in the future. The stage is set to build the broad partnerships necessary to achieve these dreams. While much work lies ahead, the citizens of Corpus Christi are clearly ready. Broad civic leadership exists to move the public agenda forward. Now is the time to leverage community excitement into action, and build momentum for a dramatic transformation in Corpus Christi.



# Team Roster & Thanks



### **CHERYL MORGAN, FAIA – R/UDAT TEAM LEADER**

Cheryl is a licensed architect and Emerita Professor of Architecture in the School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape Architecture of Auburn University. In thirty years of teaching she worked with architectural programs at Georgia Institute of Technology, Oklahoma State and California College of Arts and Crafts. For the last 12 years of her teaching career she was the Director of Auburn’s Urban Studio in Birmingham, Alabama. Under Cheryl’s leadership, the

Urban Studio’s Small Town Design Initiative Program worked with over 75 small towns and neighborhoods in Alabama.

Morgan practiced architecture and urban design in the San Francisco Bay Area. She worked with a number of firms including Environmental Planning and Research, Gensler, and the Gruzen Partnership. Before coming to Auburn in 1992 she was an associate with the Berkeley firm of ELS/Elbasani and Logan. Morgan’s professional practice now focuses on urban design, community planning and graphic design. She is also an experienced facilitator.

Cheryl holds two degrees from Auburn University: a Bachelor of Architecture and a Bachelor of Arts (Sociology). Her Master of Architecture degree is from the University of Illinois, Champaign/Urbana. She is certified by the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards and is a member and Fellow of the American Institute of Architects.

In 2011 she was presented with the Alabama Chapter of the American Planning Association’s Distinguished Leadership Award recognizing her as a “Friend of Planning.” In 2012 she received Auburn University’s Achievement in Outreach Award.



### **VICTOR L. SALEMANN, PE**

Mr. Salemann is known for his ability to present complex traffic and transportation issues in terms that decision-makers and the public can understand and respond to. Mr. Salemann provides program administration, traffic signal design, roundabout design, travel demand forecasting, roadway design, comprehensive transportation planning, development review, and design for trails and paths. He has worked directly with the city councils of Lynnwood, Sammamish, Issaquah, Maple Valley, Gig Harbor

Poulsbo, Covington, and Woodinville on urban/suburban transportation planning and

traffic engineering issues including the impacts of regional through-traffic on new and established communities. He has also assisted communities in the development of policies and implementing procedures to address specific transportation goals and objectives. Throughout his career in transportation planning and engineering, Mr. Salemann has demonstrated an ability to connect with and commit teams and organizations to projects, as well as identify and address the challenges faced by municipal staff and diverse stakeholders. Mr. Salemann also specializes in roundabout design and has been involved in roundabouts since visiting "Roundabout Valley" in Vail/Avon, Colorado in 1998. He gained much of his roundabout knowledge by participating in the Washington State Department of Transportation's Process Involvement Team that developed Chapter 915 of the WSDOT Design Manual.



### **LINDSAY KINKADE**

Lindsay Kinkade is the Founder and the Creative Director of Design RePublic, a Phoenix design firm that builds tools for dialogue on public issues. She is focused in particular on placemaking in downtown Phoenix and transportation issues. Working with Downtown Phoenix Inc., Design RePublic has built a pop-up studio framework to rebrand the organization while engaging broad public audiences, emerging leaders, and established stakeholders in the reinvention of the city built for the car. Her work with Reinvent

Phoenix, Phoenix Urban Design Week, Roosevelt Row, the Phoenix Center for the Arts, Artlink, ASU's School of Sustainability demonstrate her collaboration, leadership, visioning, strategy, visualization, content development, tool-making, and facilitation skills for city-building. She has worked on teams building new models for corporate collaboration in research & development with The Epic Decade and has designed dialogue tools with CEOs for Cities on the USInitiative to support their work on city futures.

Lindsay has been an adjunct faculty member at the Rhode Island School of Design where she worked with the Office of Government Relations to start Making It Understandable, a public policy+design course and helped to found NSF EPSCoR at RISD, a climate change design research project in the state of Rhode Island. She is currently teaching graduate studio courses in The Design School at Arizona State University.

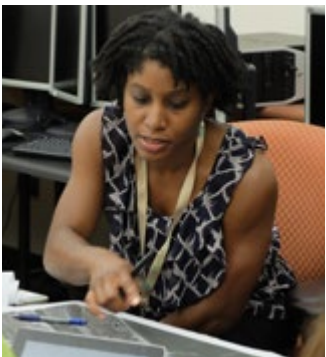


## **RICHARD ROARK, RLA, ASLA, LEED® AP BD+C**

Richard Roark's work spans a range of scales and typologies, focused on expanding the civic capacity of the landscape. Projects such as the Presidential Sustainability Initiative: Rebuild by Design, the new U.S. Embassy in London; Dilworth Plaza in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; exemplify a practice focused on sustainable, economical and well crafted public design. Most recently, Richard has completed a vision plan for a three-mile linear park and recreation path in Philadelphia, connecting many neighborhoods and cultural institutions to Fairmount Park along the historic elevated Reading Viaduct and City Branch rail lines. He is recognized as an active participant in public design advocacy as a member of as an outstanding member of the Philadelphia Community Design Collaborative (CDC) for his work on the Palumbo Park Concept Plan and the Growing Minds volunteer initiative, a design-build project realized in collaboration with the students of Richard Allen Preparatory Charter School in southwest Philadelphia.

Richard began his studies in landscape architecture at Auburn University, where he earned a Bachelor of Environmental Design and then a Master of Landscape Architecture. He first joined OLIN in 2001 upon receiving his Master of Community Planning. He has served as an invited guest juror at Arizona State University, Auburn University, Temple University and University of Pennsylvania, and is a past member of Auburn University's Landscape Advisory Council.

Richard began his studies in landscape architecture at Auburn University, where he earned a Bachelor of Environmental Design and then a Master of Landscape Architecture. He first joined OLIN in 2001 upon receiving his Master of Community Planning. He has served as an invited guest juror at Arizona State University, Auburn University, Temple University and University of Pennsylvania, and is a past member of Auburn University's Landscape Advisory Council.



## **JUDITH TAYLOR**

Judith Taylor brings 10 years of experience in the fields of land use consulting and community development, with an emphasis on providing land use economic analyses to inform community plans, specific plans, revitalization and land use strategies, and the entitlement process.

Judith joined HR&A as a Principal in our Los Angeles office in October 2013. Judith has a breadth of experience providing customized analysis for her clients

and has worked with public agencies such as the City of San Diego, the City of Los Angeles, and the City of Seattle, and private developers, such as Sudberry Properties, Pardee Homes and Hines over the last 10 years. Judith's specialties include fiscal impact analysis, economic impact analysis, real estate market analysis, and economic developing and funding strategy.

Judith often guides multidisciplinary teams to determine the appropriate scale and type of development for community plans, specific plans, and transit-oriented development. While working at Pro Forma Advisors, Judith's work included economic analysis of the Expo Light Rail Phase II Transit Neighborhood Plans for the City of Los Angeles and preliminary economic studies for the Crenshaw/LAX Light Rail Transit for Metro during its planning phases. Judith's market analysis work includes analysis to help revitalize aging suburban corridors and support placemaking. Judith has worked with cities, such as the City of Indio and Cathedral City, to help focus existing piecemeal development along underperforming corridors into viable nodes and districts.

Judith has also analyzed and completed economic development studies in historically disinvested neighborhoods. While at Economics Research Associates, she provided economic analysis to support community outreach visioning processes in the Watt's Central Avenue area and the Crenshaw Avenue area in South Los Angeles. Judith led the analysis for the \$1 billion Jordan Downs Public Housing Redevelopment Masterplan for the City of Los Angeles Housing Authority.

Judith is a graduate of Stanford University with a Bachelor's of Arts in Economics, and holds a Master's in Public Policy and Urban Planning from the Harvard Kennedy School. Judith is an active member of ULI and APA.

## **Erin Simmons (AIA Staff)**

Erin Simmons is the Director of Design Assistance at the Center for Communities by Design at the American Institute of Architects in Washington, DC. Her primary role at the AIA is to provide process expertise, facilitation and support for the Center's Sustainable Design Assistance Team (SDAT ) and Regional and Urban Design Assistance Team (R/UDAT ) programs. In this capacity, she works with AIA components, members, partner organizations and community members to provide technical design assistance to communities across the country. Through its design assistance programs, the AIA has worked in 200 communities across 47 states. In 2010, the Center was named Organization of the Year by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) for its impact on communities and contributions to the field.

Erin is a leading practitioner of the design assistance process. Her portfolio includes work in over 70 communities across the United States. A frequent lecturer on the subject of creating livable communities and sustainability, Erin contributed to the recent publication "Assessing Sustainability: A guide for Local Governments". Prior to joining the AIA, Erin worked as historic preservationist and architectural historian for an environmental and engineering firm in Georgia, where she practiced preservation planning, created historic district design guidelines and zoning ordinances, conducted historic resource surveys, and wrote property nominations for the National Register of Historic Places. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in History from Florida State University and a Master's degree in Historic Preservation from UGA.

## Joel Mills (AIA Staff)

Joel Mills is Director of the American Institute for Architects' Center for Communities by Design. The Center is a leading provider of pro bono technical assistance and participatory planning for community sustainability. Its processes have been modeled successfully in the United States and across Europe. The Center has been the recipient of a numerous awards recognizing its impact. In 2010, the Center was named Organization of the Year by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) for its impact on communities and contributions to the field. In 2013, the Center received a Power of A Award from the Center for Association Leadership, and a Facilitation Impact Award, given by the International Association of Facilitators.

Joel's 20-year career has been focused on strengthening civic capacity and civic institutions around the world. This work has helped millions of people participate in democratic processes, visioning efforts, and community planning initiatives. In the United States, Joel has worked with over 100 communities, leading participatory initiatives and collaborative processes that have facilitated community-generated strategies on a host of issues. During the past five years, this work has catalyzed over \$1 billion in new investment. His past work has been featured in over 1,000 media stories, including ABC World News Tonight, Nightline, CNN, The Next American City, Smart City Radio, The National Civic Review, Ecostructure Magazine, The Washington Post, and dozens of other sources. He has served on numerous expert working groups, boards, juries, and panels focused on civic discourse and participation, sustainability, and design. He has also spoken at dozens of national and international conferences and events, including the World Eco-City Summit, the Global Democracy Conference, ational Conference on Citizenship, and many others.



**SPONSORING ORGANIZATION:**

Corpus Christi Metropolitan Planning Organization

**STEERING COMMITTEE:**

Tom Niskala - Metropolitan Planning Organization

Joe Adame - Joe Adame & Associates

Pat Veteto - RVE Engineering, Inc.

Bill McCord - WKMC Architects

David Krams - Port of Corpus Christi Authority

Dave Michaelsen - Port of Corpus Christi Authority

Dan Biles - City of Corpus Christi Jamie Pyle - City of Corpus Christi

Rocco Montessano - Lexington Museum

Tom Schmid - Texas State Aquarium

Lamont Taylor - Transit Consultant

Bob Schulte - SEA District Marcia Kelly - SEA District

Bill Durrill - Durrill Properties

**DONORS:**

Corpus Christi Metropolitan Planning Organization

Joe Adame & Associates

RVE Engineering, Inc.

WKMC Architects

Port of Corpus Christi Authority

City of Corpus Christi

Lexington Museum

Regional Transit Authority

SEA District

Durrill Properties

Devary Durrill Foundation

**VENUE HOST: Del Mar College - Emerging Technologies Center**

Laura Bennett, AIA; Jacqueline Carlson; & Dr. Lee Sloan

**AIA CORPUS CHRISTI CHAPTER COORDINATORS:**

Sheldon Schroeder, AIA

Connie Rivera, AIA

**SPECIAL THANKS TO:**

Durrill Foundation for providing financial management.

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Corpus Christi Regional Transit Authority for providing buses to tour the study area.

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The Corpus Christi R/UDAT offers particular thanks to the students and local design professionals who assisted the team throughout the project.

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Kaitlin Ramos

Jacqueline A. Fuentes

Albert Delgado, Jr.

Patricia Polastri

Robert Cavanaugh

Jim Glusing

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