

# Harnessing Huntsville's Potential

HOUSING CHOICES, JOB OPPORTUNITIES AND QUALITY EDUCATION



SAC Meeting

*December 12, 2012*

DESIGNWORKSHOP



## DESIGNWORKSHOP

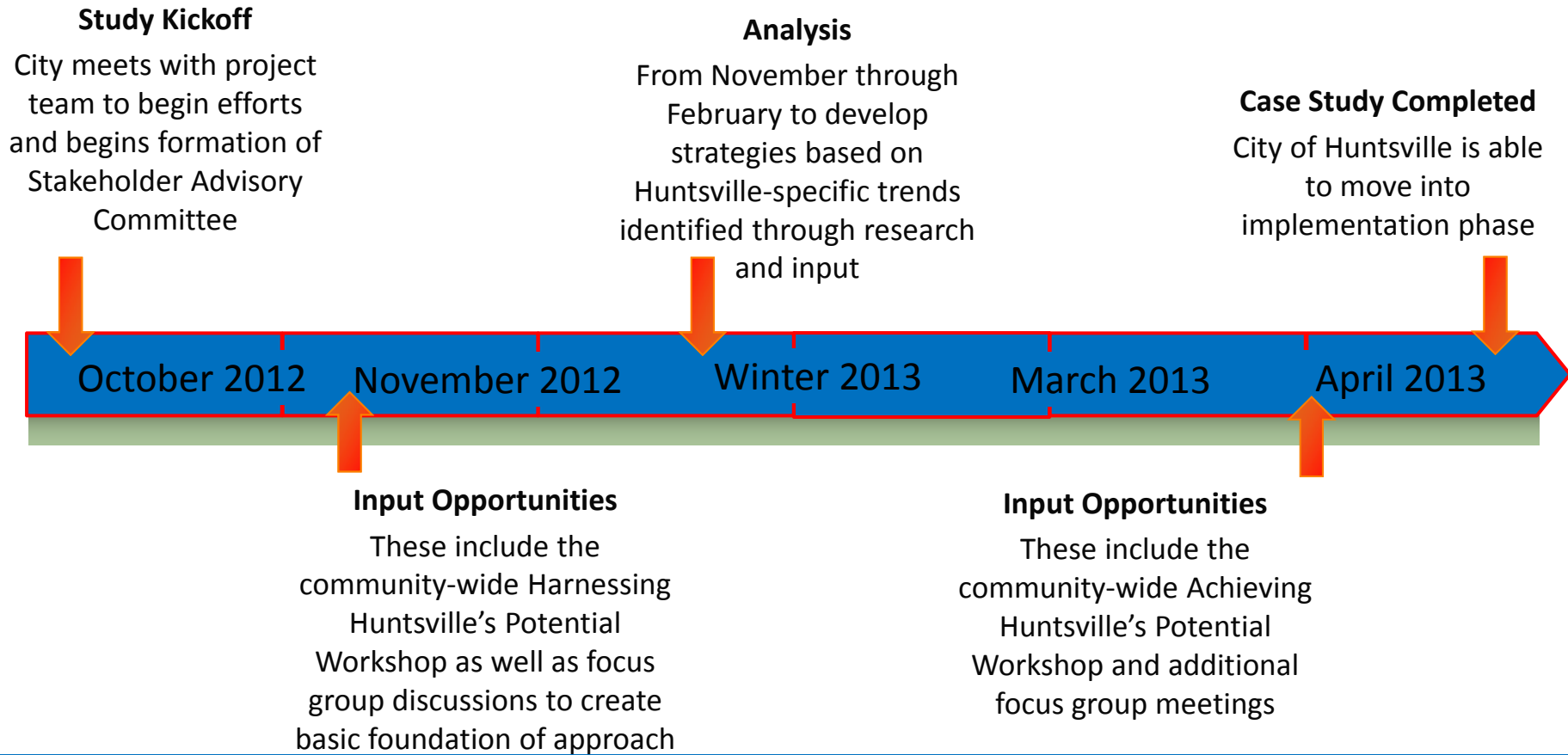


## AGENDA

- **Review previous meeting minutes**
- **Review outcomes from the workshop**
  - Focus groups
  - Challenges
  - Partnerships
- **Top-ranked projects, programs, policies and current barriers**
- **Next steps**



# TIMELINE



The overall goal of the Housing & Economic Development Case Study is to assist in developing strong, stable neighborhoods within the City of Huntsville while tying this effort to an economic development approach.

# VALUES WORKSHOP SUMMARY

- **Focus Group Meetings**

- TDCJ
- Sam Houston State University
- Economic Development
- Primary Education
- Housing
- Quality of Life/Community
- Hospital



## TDCJ FOCUS GROUP

- **Top Projects, Programs, Policies Rankings**

1. Increase retail and restaurant opportunities
2. Start a marketing campaign
3. Promote excellence in K-12 schools
4. Broaden a range of housing types and price diversity
5. Create a green edge to the campus along Sam Houston Avenue
6. Make Bowers Boulevard the ceremonial entrance to campus
7. Focus redevelopment efforts on ability to accommodate large groups
8. Increase community health and wellness opportunities
9. Leverage the presence of TDCJ to expand economic development
10. Establish University Avenue as the pedestrian link to downtown



# TDCJ FOCUS GROUP

- **Notes**

- Believe TDCJ is the core of Huntsville – any marketing needs to not detract from history
- University Gateway – noted that the gateway location on the project card is next to the prison cemetery
- Planning for schools should accommodate private schools as well

- **Partnerships**

- TDCJ offers prisoner workforce to assist in community projects, including parks and recreation needs



# SHSU FOCUS GROUP

- **Top Projects, Programs, Policies Rankings**

1. Create a marketing campaign
2. Promote excellence in K-12 schools
3. Expand events and festivals/promote current offerings
4. Broaden a range of housing types and price diversity
5. Increase retail and restaurant opportunities
6. Create a green edge to the campus along Sam Houston Avenue
7. Re-evaluate wet/dry county lines
8. Enforce development regulations
9. Increase community health and wellness opportunities
10. Expand upon existing open space and trails system





# SHSU FOCUS GROUP

- **Notes**

- Better coordination and promotion of university and city events is needed
- Perception of Huntsville as newcomers arrive is critical

- **Partnerships**

- City-University
- City-Chamber of Commerce
- Academic Community Engagement program
- SHSU has small business development program



# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FOCUS GROUP

- **Top Projects, Programs, Policies Rankings**

1. Promote excellence in K-12 schools
2. Increase adult education/training opportunities
3. Create a marketing campaign
4. Revise and enforce development regulations
5. Re-evaluate wet/dry county lines
6. Leverage the presence of Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) to expand economic development
7. Broaden the range of housing types and price diversity
8. Establish University Avenue as pedestrian link to downtown
9. Promote private development along University Avenue and Sam Houston Avenue
10. Create a greenway to campus along Sam Houston Avenue



# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FOCUS GROUP

- **Notes**

- Bringing in new employment is critical, but the city needs a solid quality of life to enhance recruitment efforts
- Increasing quality education is important so that the available workforce is skilled
- Teachers' low pay is an issue. Neighboring cities pay teachers \$10,000 more

- **Partnerships**

- TxDOT
- University
- Hospital
- Workforce Solutions
- Lone Star College
- Private and public schools



## PRIMARY EDUCATION FOCUS GROUP

- **Top Projects, Programs, Policies Rankings**

1. Create a marketing campaign
2. Promote excellence in K-12 schools
3. Increase adult education/training opportunities
4. **NEW:** Revise and evaluate development regulations and then enforce
5. Broaden the range of housing types and price diversity
6. Leverage the presence of Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) to expand economic development
7. Increase community health and wellness opportunities
8. Re-evaluate wet/dry county lines
9. Increase restaurant and retail opportunities
10. Promote private development along University Avenue and Sam Houston Avenue



# PRIMARY EDUCATION FOCUS GROUP

- **Notes**

- A review of current zoning with a focus on infrastructure needs and city involvement in infrastructure was recommended
- Better schools need more revenue

- **Partnerships**

- Lone Star College
- SHSU
- Hospital
- Huntsville ISD promoting itself



# HOUSING FOCUS GROUP

- **Notes**

- Cost of development is high. A focus needs to be to bring residents here with higher wages to pay more taxes. This would allow the city to assist with infrastructure and not have the developer carry the entire burden
- Until Elkins and Timberwilde sell out, no one will likely build a subdivision
- City development code enforcement needs improvement
- Connect the Sam Houston statue to downtown

- **Partnerships**

- TDCJ



# QUALITY OF LIFE FOCUS GROUP

- **Top Projects, Programs, Policies Rankings**

1. Broaden the range of housing types and price diversity
2. Promote excellence in K-12 schools
3. Re-evaluate wet/dry county lines
4. **NEW:** Revise code to be more streamlined and user-friendly
5. Increase restaurant and retail opportunities
6. Focus redevelopment efforts on accommodating large groups
7. **NEW:** Create a greenway to campus along University Avenue
8. Establish University Avenue as the pedestrian link to downtown
9. Promote private development along University Avenue and Sam Houston Avenue
10. Encourage multi-modal transportation



# QUALITY OF LIFE FOCUS GROUP

- **Notes**

- Better signage is needed to direct highway traffic to downtown and historical district
- Multi-modal transit is critical, especially sidewalk improvements
- Vocational college needed
- Create a historic preservation ordinance or tool
- Need consistency on enforcement

- **Partnerships**

- TDCJ





## HOSPITAL FOCUS GROUP

- **Top Projects, Programs, Policies Rankings**

1. Promote excellence in K-12 schools
2. Broaden the range of housing types and price diversity
3. Increase restaurant and retail opportunities
4. Increase community health and wellness opportunities
5. Re-evaluate wet/dry county lines
6. Promote private development along University Avenue and Sam Houston Avenue
7. Develop a business park
8. Encourage multi-modal transportation
9. Establish University Avenue as the pedestrian link to downtown
10. **NEW:** Wellness and fitness facility on/near HMH property



# HOSPITAL FOCUS GROUP

- **Notes**

- Lack of housing and shopping is a barrier to recruitment of nurses and doctors
- Establish a city/hospital partnership to advance economic development in Huntsville. Marshall and Bryan have both used this model
- HMH has been listed as the “best place that no one has ever heard of for physicians to work” in Texas

- **Partnerships**

- Huntsville Memorial Hospital



## INTERESTED PUBLIC WORKSHOP

- **Top Project, Program, Policy from each group (15 total groups)**
  1. Promote excellence in K-12 schools (x5)
  2. Actively enforce development regulations (x2)
  3. Re-evaluate wet/dry county lines (x2)
  4. Broaden the range of housing types and price diversity
  5. Create a greenway to campus along Sam Houston Avenue
  6. Manage sprawl
  7. Convert property near I-45 to a recreation field complex
  8. Create a marketing campaign
  9. Connect street grids



# INTERESTED PUBLIC WORKSHOP

- **Notes**

- Schools are good – it's more about promoting them
- Need things for the youth to do in town
- Need to consider cultural aspect
- Consider bringing a vocational institution to give options to younger people



# TOP 10 PROJECTS, PROGRAMS & POLICIES



# #1

promote excellence in K-12 schools



Strategically plan for excellence in K-12 schools to attract and retain teachers and other educational personnel to the community.

economics

community

environment

aesthetics

# #2

broaden the range of housing types  
and price diversity



Encourage developers to build a range of housing types that match the range of jobs.

economics

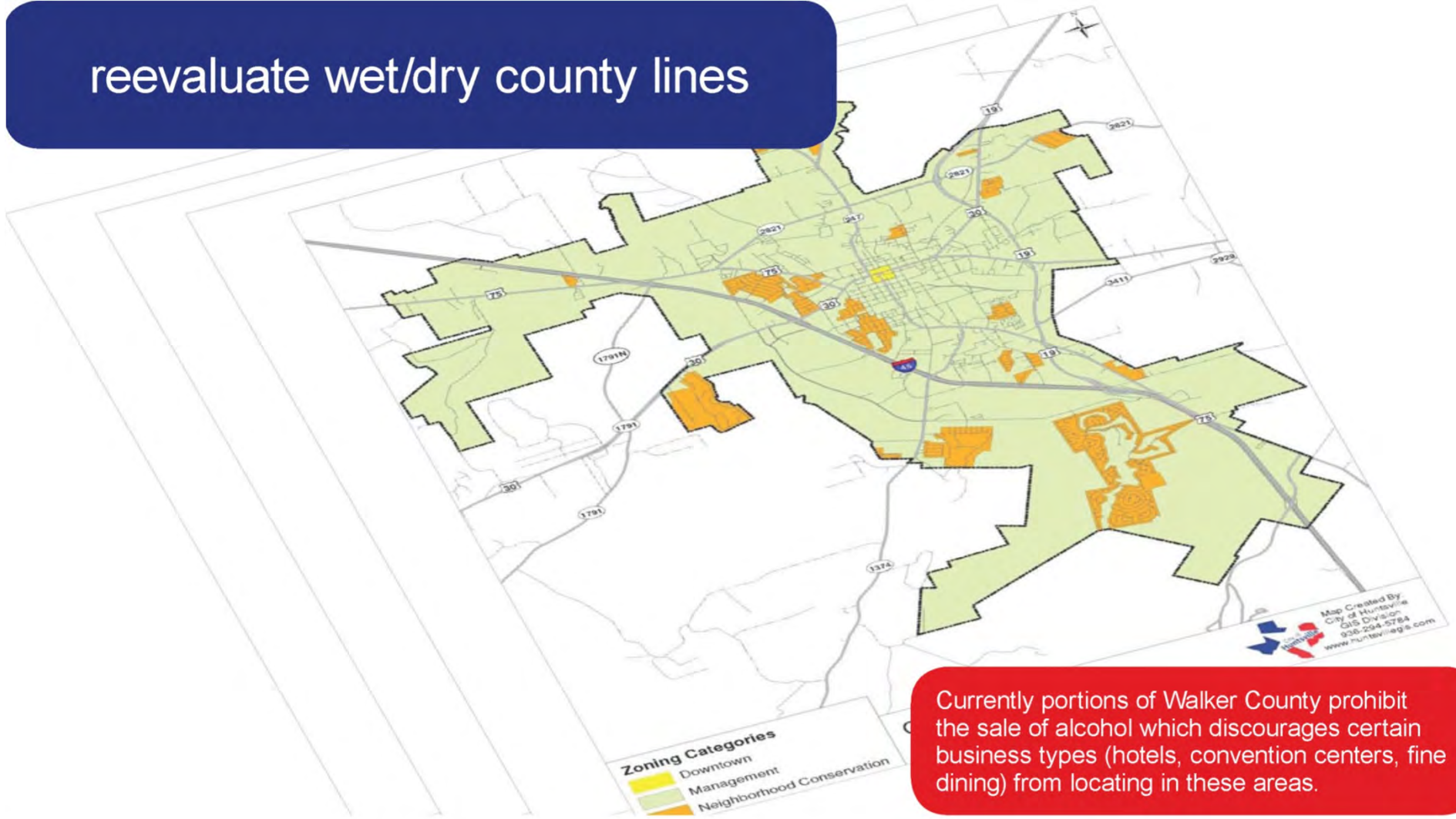
community

environment

aesthetics

# #3

reevaluate wet/dry county lines



economics

community

environment

aesthetics



# #4

## create a marketing campaign



A marketing campaign is a set of activities designed to promote Huntsville through a series of television, radio, print, or online advertisements.

economics

community

environment

aesthetics

# #5

increase adult education/training opportunities



Adult education includes learning opportunities such as obtaining a high school education, upgrading skills or special programs at community colleges.

economics

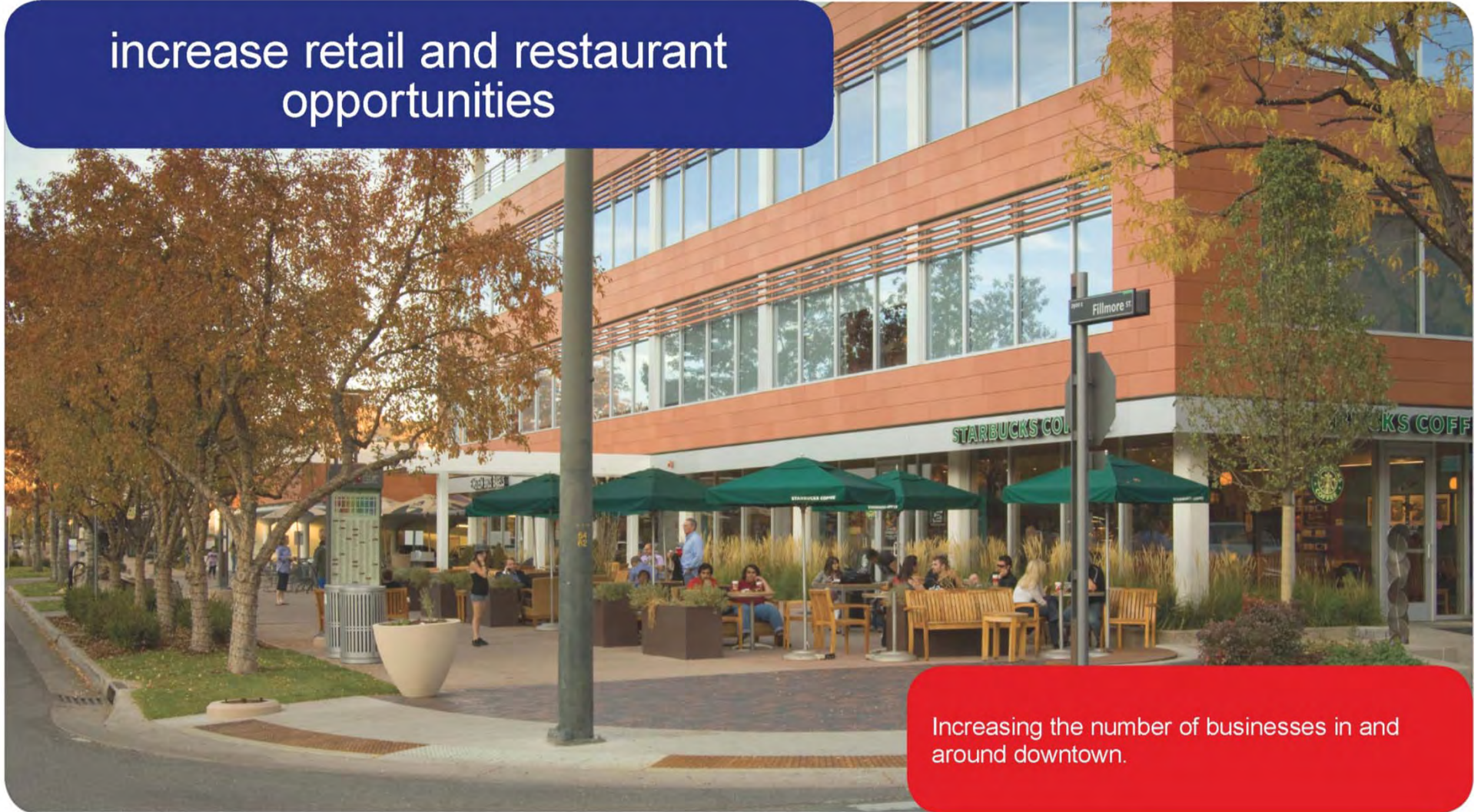
community

environment

aesthetics

# #6

## increase retail and restaurant opportunities



Increasing the number of businesses in and around downtown.

economics

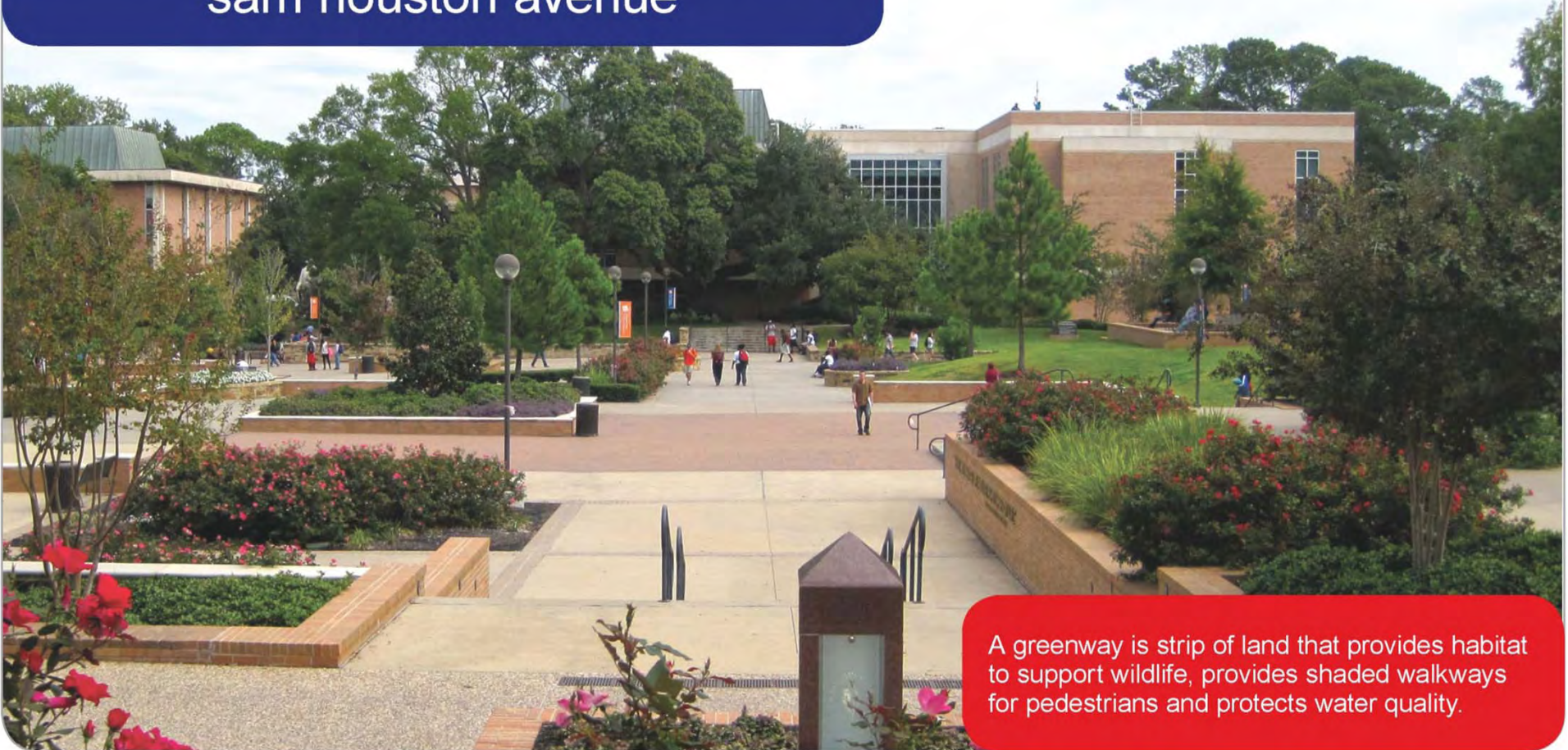
community

environment

aesthetics

# #7

create a greenway to campus along sam houston avenue



A greenway is strip of land that provides habitat to support wildlife, provides shaded walkways for pedestrians and protects water quality.

economics

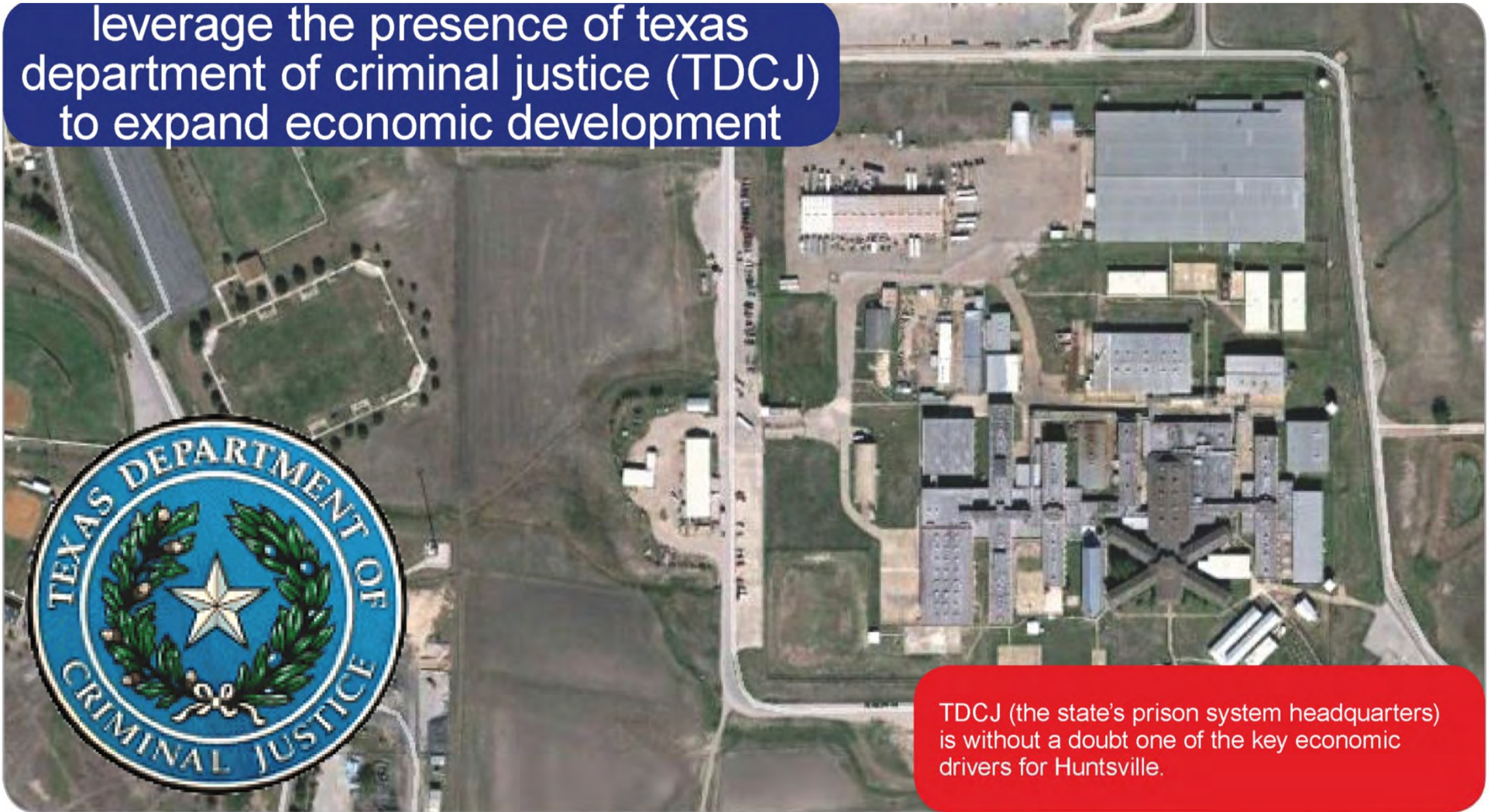
community

environment

aesthetics

# #8

leverage the presence of texas department of criminal justice (TDCJ) to expand economic development



TDCJ (the state's prison system headquarters) is without a doubt one of the key economic drivers for Huntsville.

economics

community

environment

aesthetics

# #9

## develop a business park



A business park is an area in which multiple offices or commercial businesses are grouped together.

economics

community

environment

aesthetics

# #10

## enforce development regulations



- (a) The minimum lot sizes and building setbacks are designated in Table 5-1.
- (b) There are no building setbacks from an abutting right-of-way in the Downtown District, however, buildings, signs, or other structures shall not be placed in the sight triangle specified in Section 604.3 of this Code.
- (2) Signs shall be installed according to the standards shown in Chapter 11.
- (3) Landscaping shall be provided and maintained according to the standards in Section 1201.
- (4) Buffer zone requirements shall be required where conflicts in land uses exist. Refer to Section 1202 for buffer standards.
- (5) Nonresidential lots shall front upon and have access from the following streets (see Chapter 6 for street standards): Local Commercial (L.C.), Collector (C-1), and Arterial (A-1, A-2) streets. See Table 5-1 for the specific street standards associated with each lot type.

### 503.3 Recreation vehicle parks

It is the intent of this section to provide standards for the location and development of parks for recreation vehicles (RVs). Such parks are designed specifically to allow temporary living accommodations for recreation, camping, or travel use. Although the recreational vehicle park has some similarities to residential developments, it is categorized as a heavy commercial use when intended for temporary use.

- The developer who creates a recreation vehicle park shall design the park so that:
- (1) The net density shall not be more than twenty-five (25) rental sites per acre.
  - (2) Each rental site shall be a minimum of one thousand two hundred (1,200) square feet in area.
  - (3) A recreation area shall be provided and shall equal five (5) percent of the gross site area.
  - (4) A central service building shall be provided containing the necessary toilet and other plumbing fixtures. Service buildings shall be located to serve rental sites within four hundred (400) feet of each building.
  - (5) All standards applying to general subdivision development regarding utilities (see Chapters 8 and 9), public and/or private streets (see Chapter 6) and fire protection shall apply to the design and development of a recreation vehicle park.
  - (6) Maximum rental period per unit per space shall not exceed ninety (90) days.
  - (7) All recreational vehicles shall be separated from each other and from all other structures by at least ten (10) feet.

Development codes establish performance standards for built projects; including the type, distribution, and intensity of allowable development within the City.

economics

community

environment

aesthetics

# LOWER RANKED PROJECTS, PROGRAMS AND POLICIES





establish university avenue as the pedestrian link to downtown



Pedestrian links are established through the use of well-placed street furniture, wider sidewalks, quality lighting, clearly marked crosswalks and slower traffic speeds.

economics

community

environment

aesthetics

convert property near I-45 to a recreation field complex



A recreational field complex could be made up of various types of sport arenas.

economics

community

environment

aesthetics

promote private development  
along university avenue and sam  
houston avenue



Encourage new, student-oriented redevelopment along University Avenue and Sam Houston Avenue to transform downtown Huntsville into a "University village".

economics

community

environment

aesthetics

increase community health and wellness opportunities



Preventative health measures and recreational activities can decrease diabetes, asthma, heart disease, cancer and other physical and emotional ailments.

economics

community

environment

aesthetics

## manage regional stormwater detention



Controlling stormwater runoff to reduce erosion, water quality degradation, and flooding is an important tool for mitigating the adverse effects of development.

economics

community

environment

aesthetics

## expand events and festivals



Huntsville has some great events, but adding more cultural and seasonal festivals to the City's calendar would draw tourists and increase spending in the City.

economics

community

environment

aesthetics

encourage multimodal transportation



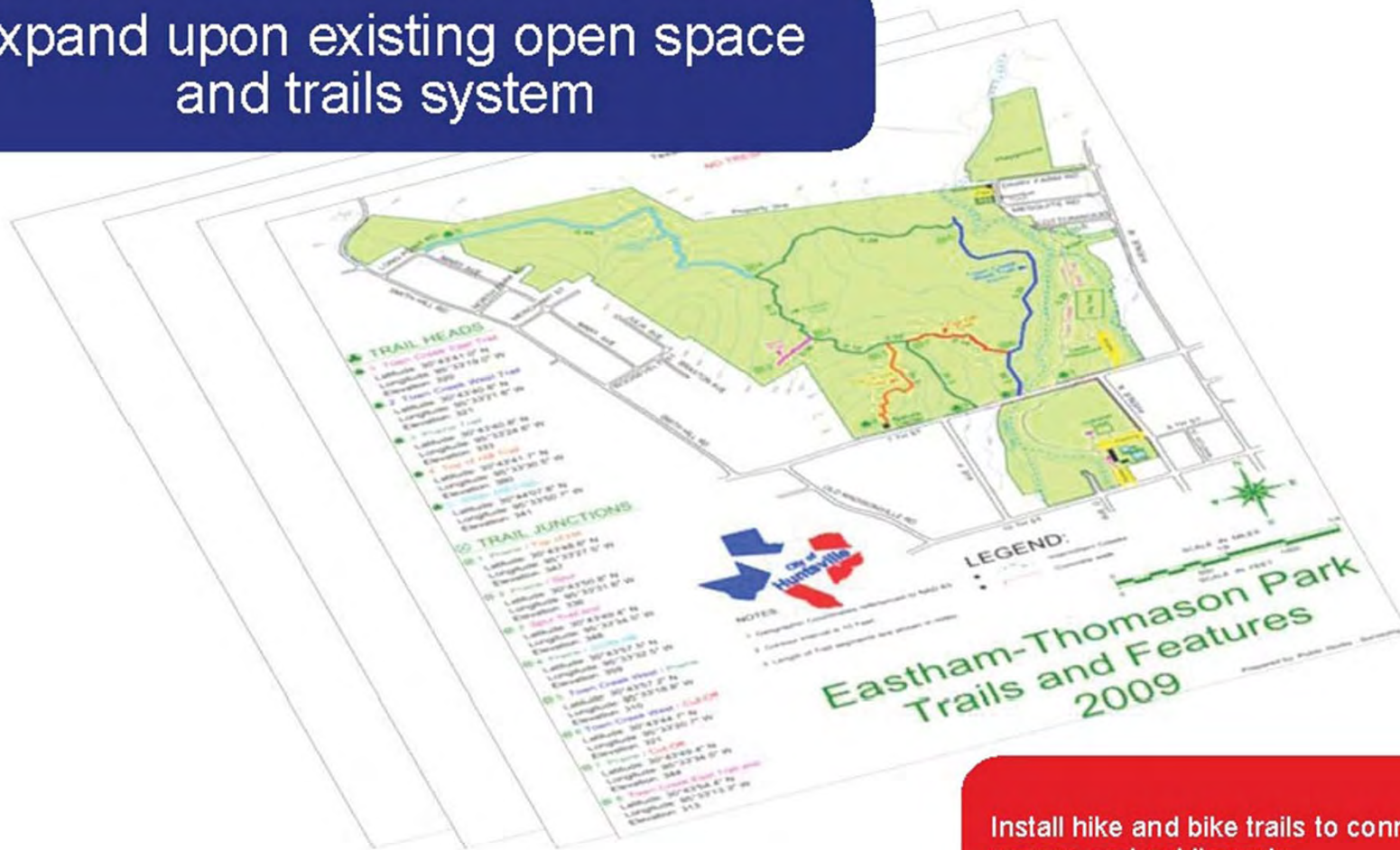
economics

community

environment

aesthetics

expand upon existing open space  
and trails system



Install hike and bike trails to connect open spaces and public parks.

economics

community

environment

aesthetics



## manage sprawl



Statutory law is set by the legislature and grants Huntsville specific types of authority to manage development within City boundaries.

economics

community

environment

aesthetics

focus redevelopment efforts on  
accommodating large groups



Examples of redevelopment efforts that involve large groups could be a convention center, hotel district or new community center.

economics

community

environment

aesthetics

## connect street grids



economics

community

environment

aesthetics

create an entry gateway to campus at  
bowers boulevard



A ceremonial entrance serves as a welcome point and gateway marking important campus entry ways, announcing the University to all who might pass by.

economics

community

environment

aesthetics

## COMMUNITY GOALS

- **Maintain Downtown** as an economic activity center and focal point.
- Transform downtown Huntsville into a "**university village**".
- **Protect established neighborhoods** and reinvigorate older neighborhoods.
- **Manage growth** around Huntsville.
- **Broaden the range of housing types and prices** to meet affordability needs.
- **Promote** Huntsville's excellent quality of life
- Create a safe **pedestrian and bicycle connections** to adjacent neighborhoods.
- Connect people to **food** sources
- Employ regulations that are more **effective in meeting community goals**.



## ECONOMIC GOALS

- Retain and expand **existing businesses**.
- **Encourage private market** to produce desired outcomes with incentives and flexible regulations.
- Make Huntsville more **competitive** in recruiting new businesses.
- **Manage incompatible** land uses.
- Promote **development opportunities** near Sam Houston State University (especially along University and Sam Houston Avenues).
- Increase local **economic impact** of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice.



## ENVIRONMENT GOALS

- Create streets that accommodate **street trees, sidewalks, bicycle lanes, and transit** where appropriate.
- Use the City's development regulations to directly prevent and/or mitigate adverse impacts on Huntsville's **natural features and assets**.



## AESTHETIC GOALS

- Focus attention on more effective management of **development quality, impacts and aesthetics** along Huntsville's major roadway corridors.
- Use the community's official Development Code and associated regulations to **encourage development practices** and outcomes more consistent with Huntsville's desired character.





# NEXT STEPS



## NEXT STEPS

- Next SAC meeting: January 9<sup>th</sup>
- Benchmarking
  - What are other cities of comparable characteristics doing?
  - What targets should we set for goals?

