

Why do we need a Downtown Master Plan?

While there is much to be envied about Round Rock, suburban development over the past few decades have resulted in a diminished role of downtown as the center of the community. While the two-block National Register Historic District on Main Street is charming, it's not big enough and may not have the appropriate mix of uses necessary to support a lively urban town center.

A vibrant downtown is critical if Round Rock is to attract and retain the entrepreneurs, business leaders, researchers, educators and members of the various creative professions who want to combine professional accomplishment and achievement with a culturally rich and socially diverse lifestyle. Such an urban center will provide residents and tourists with a distinctive shopping, dining and entertainment district currently not available in Round Rock.

Preserving historic areas and buildings downtown, optimizing natural areas like Brushy Creek, and building iconic structures like the new City Hall, will all serve to distinguish Round Rock and bolster that sense of place necessary to revive it as the heart of the community.

In our attempt to create a vibrant, walkable district that expresses the physical and cultural characteristics that make Round Rock unique, a comprehensive plan is needed to ensure the unique but varied neighborhoods within the area are protected from incompatible uses. The economic analysis that is a component of the plan will identify opportunities for both the public and private sector to invest in downtown to spur economic growth.

A Master Plan is needed to guide the policies and ordinances, infrastructure and open space improvements, and financing options crucial to the orderly development and economic viability of a resurgent urban core.

What happens if we don't have a Master Plan?

If we don't plan adequately for downtown, we will lose the opportunity to re-establish downtown as the heart of the community with a distinctive sense of place.

Without a plan, haphazard development will be scattered throughout the downtown with no regard to the long-term viability of each distinct neighborhood. We'll be without policies and ordinances to protect viable residential neighborhoods while supporting redevelopment where appropriate. We will be unable to ensure harmony between commercial and residential uses, and we will not have unifying design standards. Pedestrian, parking and cut-through traffic problems will get worse as those issues will go unaddressed in a comprehensive fashion. Infrastructure improvements necessary to ensure the success of the area will not be prioritized and funding options for those improvements will be limited.

There will be a lack of consensus about what to do with green spaces in the area, which will result in nothing being done to improve them, and we'll all continue to lament how Brushy Creek is an underutilized natural asset. Frustration among downtown business and property owners will build as the downtown continues to struggle without the vision and focus necessary to bring about the improvements everyone wants.

As a result, Round Rock will lose the opportunity to preserve its core and brand downtown as a destination, for shopping, dining and entertainment and lose the opportunity to compete at a regional level for tourism and economic development.

Property Rights

There is nothing in the Plan that will force anyone to sell their home to make way for new development like condos or apartments. If you want your home to stay a single-family residence as it is today, then it will stay that way. You control what happens to your property.

That said, neighboring properties may change. One of the reasons we are developing the Plan is because some downtown property owners are interested in redeveloping. The Plan is designed to provide a common vision for the area and offer some predictability to the types of redevelopment that occur.

Proposed Future Zoning

The regulating plan for Round Rock uses a “Transect System.” The Transect is a framework that identifies a range of development patterns from the most rural to the most urban.

T2 Open Space Zone consists of sparsely settled lands in open state. These include greenspace and riparian areas around the creek. Typical buildings are small-scale and public-oriented.

T3 (L/+) Sub-Urban Zone consists of low density residential areas, adjacent to higher zones with some limited mixed-use. Setbacks are relatively deep.

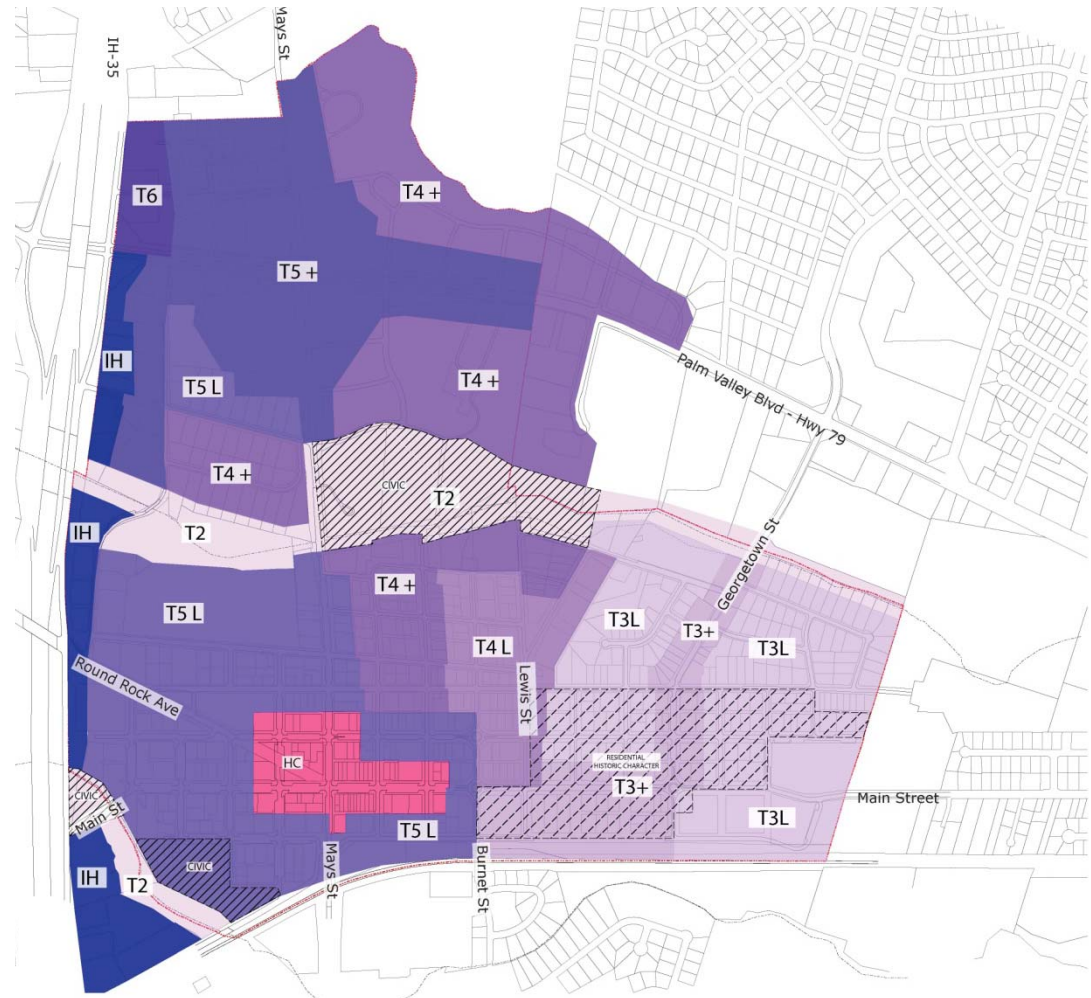
T4 (L/+) General Urban Zone consists primarily of mixed use with urban residential that supports the goal of developing a distinctive shopping, dining and entertainment district. ‘L’ signifies a smaller and less dense urban form, while ‘+’ signifies a taller, more dense form.

T5 (L/+) Urban Center Zone consists of higher density mixed use buildings that accommodate retail, offices, rowhouses and apartments. The T5 areas form the center of the entertainment, shopping and dining district. ‘L’ signifies a smaller and less dense urban form, while ‘+’ signifies a taller, more dense form.

T6 Urban Periphery Zone consists of the highest density and height, and the greatest variety of uses.

HC Downtown Historic Core Zone consists of the area immediately around the new town green and the historic Main Street. The zone maintains a scale consistent with the historic Main Street from Mays to Burnet, which contains 1- and 2-story mixed-use buildings.

IH Interstate Highway consists of the area adjacent to the Interstate because its urban form will be different from all other zones in the area. The IH area will be more auto-oriented.



Historic Residential-Character Overlay Area (HRC) is applied to areas which require special attention because of the prevalence of historical buildings. The HRC Overlay Area includes many historically-designated or potentially historic residential buildings (e.g. the Nelson-Crier House).

Development Standards Recommendations

T2	<p>T2 Example Standards</p> <p>Minimum DU/A: None Commercial FAR: 0 on a case by case basis Building Height: 1-2 stories Build-to-Line (measured from public right-of-way): n/a Frontage Occupancy: n/a</p>
T3	<p>T3L Example Standards</p> <p>Maximum Dwelling Units Per Acre (DU/A): single family, only. Minimum DU/A: None Commercial FAR: 0 Building Height: 1-3 stories (45 ft) Build-to-Line (measured from public right-of-way): n/a Frontage Occupancy: n/a</p>
	<p>T3+ Example Standards</p> <p>Maximum Dwelling Units Per Acre (DU/A): 8 units per acre Minimum DU/A: None Commercial FAR: 0.4 Building Height: 1-3 stories (45 ft) Build-to-Line (measured from public right-of-way): n/a Frontage Occupancy: n/a</p>
T4	<p>T4L Example Standards (See Exceptions, p. 2*)</p> <p>Maximum Dwelling Units Per Acre (DU/A): 18 units per acre Minimum DU/A: 10 units per acre Commercial FAR: 1.0 Building Height: 2-3 stories (45 ft) Build-to-Line (measured from public right-of-way): 5-15 feet Frontage Occupancy: 60% minimum</p>
	<p>T4+ Example Standards (See Exceptions, p. 2*)</p> <p>Maximum Dwelling Units Per Acre (DU/A): 20 units per acre Minimum DU/A: 12 units per acre Commercial FAR: 1.2 Building Height: 2-5 stories (65 ft) Build-to-Line (measured from public right-of-way): 5-10 feet Frontage Occupancy: 60% minimum</p>

T5	<p>T5L Example Standards (See Exceptions, p. 2*)</p> <p>Maximum Dwelling Units Per Acre (DU/A): 60 units per acre Minimum DU/A: 18 units per acre Commercial FAR: 2 Building Height: 2-4 stories (55 ft) Build-to-Line (measured from public right-of-way): 0-5 feet Frontage Occupancy: 75% - 90%</p>
	<p>T5+ Example Standards (See Exceptions, p. 2*)</p> <p>Maximum Dwelling Units Per Acre (DU/A): 80 units per acre Minimum DU/A: 20 units per acre Commercial FAR: 2.5 Building Height: 2-5 stories (65 ft) Build-to-Line (measured from public right-of-way): 0-5 feet Frontage Occupancy: 75% - 90%</p>
T6	<p>T6 Example Standards</p> <p>Maximum Dwelling Units Per Acre (DU/A): No limit Minimum DU/A: 50 units per acre Commercial FAR: 6 Building Height: up to 16 stories (180 ft) Build-to-Line (measured from public right-of-way): 5-10 feet Frontage Occupancy: 90% - 100%</p>
IH	<p>IH Interstate Highway District Example Standards</p> <p>Maximum Dwelling Units Per Acre (DU/A): No limit Minimum DU/A: No limit Commercial FAR: 2 Building Height: up to 5 stories (65 ft) Build-to-Line (measured from public right-of-way): n/a Frontage Occupancy: n/a</p>

HC	<p>HC, Historic Core Example Standards</p> <p>Housing + Commercial FAR: 1.5 Building Height: 1-2 stories (20 ft min) Build-to-Line (measured from public right-of-way): 0-3 feet Frontage Occupancy: 90% - 100%</p>
HRC- Overlay	<p>HRC, Historic Residential- Character Area Overlay Example Standards</p> <p>All standards in this Overlay Zone reflect the standards of the Transect Zone in which the parcel lies. There are no special density, FAR, height, or build-to-line standards for buildings in the Overlay Zone. However, properties within the HRC zone need to abide by certain considerations when it comes existing historic properties. See pages 110-111 of the Master Plan for recommended historic guidelines for the area.</p>
C- Overlay	<p>C, Civic Overlay Example Standards</p> <p>All standards in this Overlay Zone reflect the standards of the Transect Zone in which the parcel lies. There are no special density, FAR, height, or build-to-line standards for buildings in the Overlay Zone. However, the Overlay Zone indicates areas where future civic uses are envisioned. Properties within the zone should be prioritized for civic uses.</p>

***Exceptions:**

For T4L, T4+, T5L, and T5+ transect zones, one story may be permitted as a Special Exception, notably for restaurant and entertainment uses. One story may also be allowed with a minimum facade height. A Special Exceptions process should be developed during the Form-Based Code creation.

Notes:

1. DU/A figures for transect zones do not require a residential component, but indicate minimum density when there is a residential component.
2. Build-to lines do not apply to Monarch Trees.
3. Build-to lines can apply to front plaza space.

Land Use Recommendations

T2 **T2 Land Uses**
Recommended: Open space and civic uses only.

T3 **T3L Land Uses**
Recommended: Predominantly single-family residential. Other recommended uses include neighborhood-scaled civic uses and bed and breakfasts. Note that the areas east of Lewis/Spring Street should be primarily single-family residential.

T3+ **T3+ Land Uses**
Recommended: Predominantly single-family residential with the possibility of low density townhomes where property is not suited for single family. Other recommended uses include neighborhood-scaled civic uses, bed and breakfasts, and very limited commercial (personal services, office). Note that the areas east of Lewis/Spring Street should be primarily single-family residential.

T4 **T4L Land Uses**
Recommended: Mixed use***, but primarily residential. Also includes small office and retail uses (<3,000 SF for entire building), including home office (<1,000 SF). Other recommended uses include those that are civic, such as schools, libraries, theaters, fire/police stations, museums and green/openspace.

T4+ **T4+ Land Uses**
Recommended: Same as T4L (scale is increased, but uses are the same).

T5 **T5L Land Uses**
Recommended: Higher density mixed use with retail, offices, rowhouses, and apartments. Uses in this area should be pedestrian oriented. Recommended uses include larger office and retail uses (> 3,000 SF for entire building) and larger residential use configurations, including multi-family and live-work. Hotels are another recommended use, along with a wider variety of civic uses. Civic uses in the zone are more urban than those in the T4 zones. Parking structures and more substantial green and open/spaces are also appropriate.

T5+ **T5+ Land Uses**
Recommended: Same as T5L (scale is increased, but uses are the same).

T6 **T6 Land Uses**
Recommended: A variety of more intense uses such as larger office and retail (>3,000 SF for entire building). Hotels are another recommended use because of the location near the Interstate. Larger civic uses can also be located in the zone, along with some larger residential use configurations, such as multi-family, mixed-use, and condominiums. Parking structures are also appropriate.

IH **IH Interstate Highway District Land Uses**
Recommended: A variety of more auto-oriented uses, given location near the Interstate, including shopping centers, gas stations, service stations, and various commercial configurations.

*** "Mixed use" refers to some combination of residential, commercial and/or other use in one building. Usually commercial or retail uses are on the ground floor.

HC **HC, Historic Core Land Uses**
Recommended: Pedestrian-oriented mixed-uses for both existing and new buildings, which include retail or pedestrian-oriented commercial uses on the ground floor, and residential, hotels, inns, office, and other uses above. Civic uses are also appropriate for the Historic Core, including live theaters, movie theaters, libraries, information kiosks, green/openspace and other uses that activate the public realm.

HRC-Overlay **HRC, Historic Residential- Character Area Overlay Land Uses**
Land use is governed by the underlying zone, rather than the overlay. Therefore buildings within the HRC Overlay, should be compatible with the uses prescribed by the applicable zone. Note, however that the HRC Overlay is a *Residential Character* area and as such, while building uses may vary, buildings themselves should respect the historical residential character that exists in the area.

C-Overlay **C, Civic Overlay Land Uses**
Land Use is governed by zone, rather than the overlay. Therefore buildings within the C Overlay, should be compatible with the uses prescribed for each zone. Note, however that the C Overlay is a *Civic* area and as such, new buildings should be considered especially for civic uses, in order to support the visions of this Master Plan.

Proposed First Phase of Zoning Implementation



The boundary of the first phase of implementation of the Form Based Code was created to ensure urban development in the historic core and southwest downtown areas, as well as along key future pedestrian corridors from Main Street to Brushy Creek.

When adopted, the Form Based Code will apply to individual properties when a renovation or new construction is proposed such that the proposed new construction and/or renovations on the property adds more than 20 percent to the existing building square footage.

We are recommending allowing adaptive reuse of single family homes to office uses in the T4 transect zones.

The new zoning will not force anyone to change the use of their property. (See Property Rights exhibit)

East Main Street Ball Fields

The old Main Street ball fields property, owned by the Round Rock Community Foundation, should be designed for a combination of open space and family-oriented social service facilities and administrative offices. The property should be comprehensively planned to effectively integrate those uses. A special zoning district (PUD) will be required to develop this property, which will include public input.

Brushy Creek Trail

Concerns brought up by residents who live on Vista Drive regarding the trail planned for Brushy Creek are understandable and legitimate. Issues related to safety, impact to creek views and division of property will be addressed during the design process for the trail, which will occur at some point in the future. There is no funding currently identified for the trail project.

Catalytic Project Update



1. Main Street extension to IH 35 frontage road. Design work should be complete by summer 2010. Construction, when approved, should take 12-16 months.
2. Main Street street-scape from San Saba Street to Blair Street. Bid for construction expected in February 2010. Construction should take 8-12 months.
3. Round Rock Avenue-Main Street-Liberty Street realignment. Design work should be completed by summer 2010. Construction, when approved, should take 12-14 months.

Catalytic projects refer to projects which have the potential to stimulate economic development and growth in downtown, activating the public realm, bringing tourists, improving quality of life for residents, and attracting business.

Next Steps

- Feb. 3 – Public hearing, recommendation vote at Planning and Zoning Commission meeting
- Winter-Spring – City Council consideration and approval of Master Plan
- Spring-Summer – Development and approval of Form Based Code

Other Input/Comments

- If you have any other thoughts or questions on the Downtown Master Plan, please note them here.