

## Introduction

The Central City element reflects Kerrville's historical, cultural and commercial roots. The central area includes the historic downtown, Guadalupe River, River Hills Mall, and the surrounding commercial and institutional areas. Its prosperity and integrity affect the surrounding community and, to some extent, all of Kerr County. The Central City element focuses on maintaining and improving the area's physical appearance and strengthening its role as the gathering place for the community.

The Central City element consists of three parts:

1. Issues about Central City;
2. Distinctive character areas within the Central City; and,
3. Goals, objectives, policies and action statements.



*"Welcome to Kerrville, Texas"  
gateway fountain*

## Issues

Area residents and the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee (CPAC) identified the following issues:

- 1. Relationship between development and the Guadalupe River.** The Guadalupe River has the potential to bring the community together. The natural beauty of the river combined with its historical importance to Kerrville makes its incorporation into future development plans a necessity.
- 2. An Identity for Central City.** Central City is a composition of several areas, each with a distinctly different character. Each area plays an important role in making the Central City a focal point for Kerrville. The relationship between these areas is crucial to local quality of life and the establishment of a cohesive identity.
- 3. Preserve and enhance the historic downtown.** Kerrville's history and culture should be preserved and enhanced. Efforts to enhance historic structures and culturally significant places must be expanded to ensure that those areas continue to reflect the character of the community as it evolves.
- 4. Central City as a destination.** This area represents the historic focal point for the community. The unique mix of the historic downtown, the scenic Guadalupe River, the commercial area surrounding River Hills Mall, the area along State Highway 27 (Junction Highway) from Schreiner University to the Five Points

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***Historic structures and culturally significant places** mean those areas and structures that reflect the city's history - commercially, culturally and religiously.*

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Intersection, and the area around Jefferson and Schreiner Streets east of Town Creek together represent an opportunity to create a dynamic and natural destination for both residents and visitors.

5. **Accessibility to and within Central City.** Traveling easily to and within Central City is essential to the ability to attract visitors. Because the surrounding residential areas are no longer within walking distance, an effort must be made to provide a variety of access options.
6. **Implementation.** Issues are addressed through actions. Implementation involves a number of projects and programs that serve to eliminate barriers and build upon opportunities.

## Goals, Objectives and Action Statements

Goals, objectives, policies and action statements are a reflection of the issues generated by the general public, the CPAC and through significant analysis. The following represent a summary of the goals for the Central City element:

- Goal 7.1: Preserve, protect, and enhance the natural amenities, visual identity and relationship of the Guadalupe River with Central City.
- Goal 7.2: Develop Central City as the integrated core of Kerrville with a cohesive identity that is built upon maintaining and appreciating the strengths of its various character areas.
- Goal 7.3: Preserve and enhance the historical and cultural resources of the Central City area.
- Goal 7.4: Enhance physical, economic and social characteristics of the Central City to create a unique destination for residents and visitors of Kerrville, making Central City the activity center and focal point of the community.
- Goal 7.5: Provide direct and sufficient transportation routes into and within the Central City area.
- Goal 7.6: Establish mechanisms for moving goals and objectives for Central City from vision to reality.

## Central City Character Areas

Over time, Central City has expanded from Kerrville's historic core into other adjacent areas. Each maintains its distinctive character as well as its strengths and weaknesses. To aid in developing an image for the area, individuals traveling to the area should know when they have "arrived" in Central City and when they have "left."



Displayed in **Figure 7.1, Central City Character Areas**, are the areas of the Central City that display special yet compatible physical characteristics. The following areas are denoted:

- 1. **Historic Downtown Area** – This area is generally characterized by the denser land use pattern and the uses, building types and shorter blocks found in a typical downtown. Established two-story structures, public facilities and a vibrant retail sector serve as anchors for the area. As a result of the zero-line building setback and its sidewalk orientation, pedestrian activity plays a predominant role in this area. Because this area is next to the Guadalupe River, the CPAC recommends improving public access and views to the river.



*Sid Peterson Hospital is a cornerstone of Central City*



*Francisco's Restaurant adds to downtown charm and function*

- 2. **Urban Area** – Located on the south side of the Guadalupe River and physically separated from the historic downtown area, this area represents a typical development pattern along the urban fringe.



*River Hills Mall strengthens Central City's retail capacity*

- 3. **Highway-Oriented Commercial Area** – Access to Central City comes from two state highways - SH 16 and SH 27. This area is focused primarily upon vehicular traffic and it challenges pedestrian activity, resulting in an environment identified by surface parking and highway oriented land uses.



*The Kerr County Courthouse offers a focal point for the community*



*Homes and business along Earl Garrett Street add to mixed-use appeal of Central City*

- 4. **Residential Area** – This area is slowly transitioning to neighborhood commercial uses.

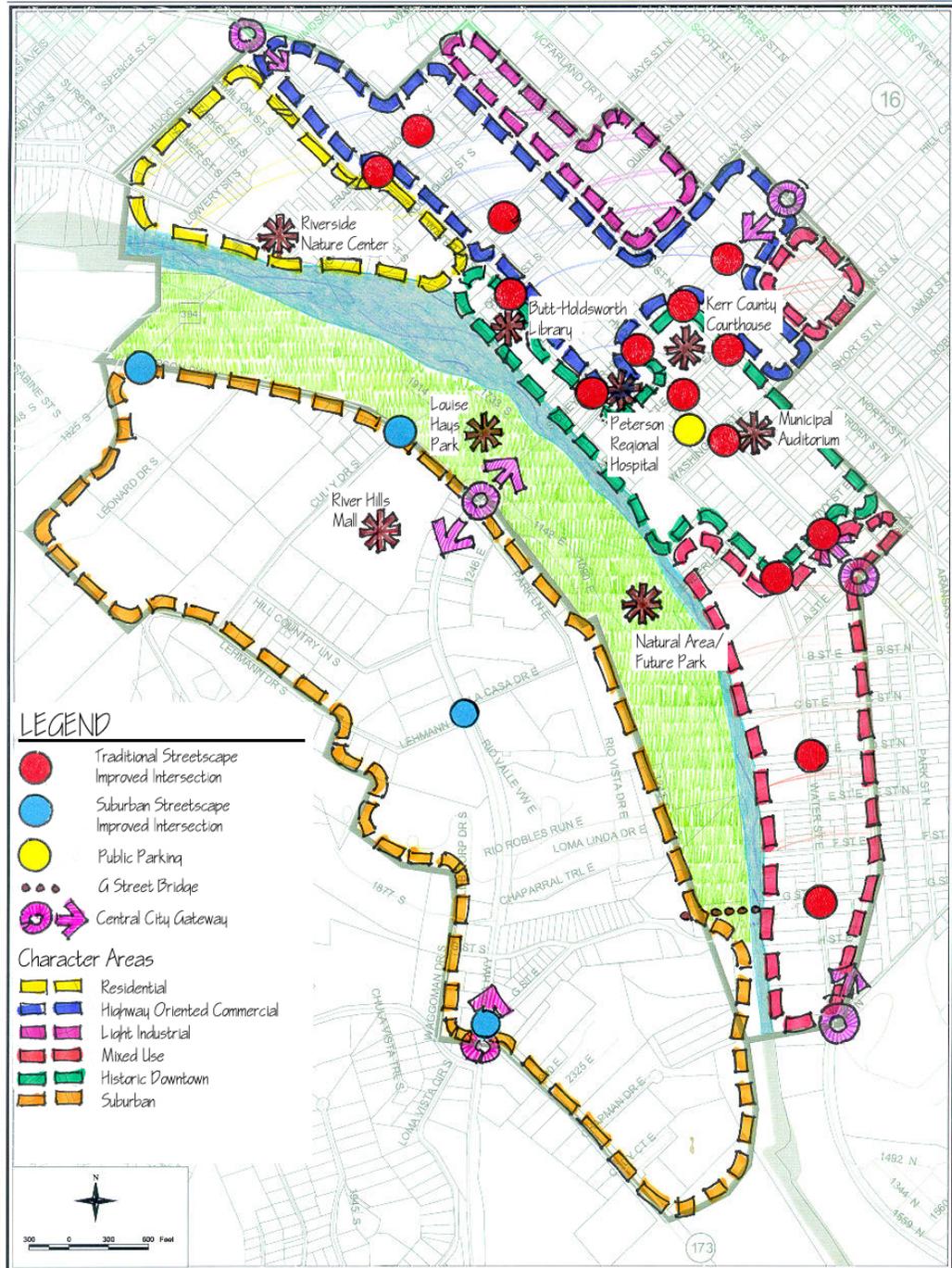
- 5. **Industrial Area** – This area is dominated by uses that contribute positively to the area economy. The impact from industrial uses has left surrounding residential areas in need of revitalization.



*Industrial activities and uses are also found in Central City*



**FIGURE 7.1**  
**Central City Character Areas**  
 Kerrville Comprehensive Plan  
 Kerrville, Texas





6. **Mixed Use Area** – Located between the historical downtown area and Schreiner University, this area is ripe for redevelopment, particularly along Broadway Avenue. Uses in the area are generally mixed, but do not currently provide a sufficient mix and density to encourage pedestrian activity.

**GOAL 7.1: Preserve, protect, and enhance the natural amenities, visual identity and the relationship of the Guadalupe River with Central City.**

**Objective A:** Revise the Guadalupe River (GR) zoning classification to more appropriately address the special design issues between the Guadalupe River and the Central City.

**Objective B:** Preserve and protect the natural features of the river as a cultural and recreational amenity of Central City.

**Policy:** *Use the Future Land Use Map to guide development in the River Corridor in Central City.*

**Action 7.1.1.** *Promote development of the river corridor within Central City in a way that builds upon the river as an amenity and improves local quality of life.*

- a. Encourage and promote commercial development along the river only to those uses that fully take advantage of the river as an amenity. Limit infringement on the river’s natural setting, including restriction of building height, design, materials, setback and density.
- b. Ensure that accessory uses, such as parking, delivery areas and commercial trash receptacles are placed away from the river corridor or appropriately screened to minimize visibility from the river, Louise Hays Park and other public areas.

**Action 7.1.2.** *Maintain and improve the natural resources of the river in a manner that draws residents to the area, while respecting the environment.*

- a. Utilize the Guadalupe River corridor to physically connect Central City to other areas within Kerrville.
- b. Continue efforts to improve the water quality and improve the overall ecosystem that exists along the Guadalupe River.



*Mixed use activity along Broadway Avenue*



*Bridge near Tranquility Island*



- c. Design entrance features and public access to the riverfront from adjacent areas of Central City, particularly the existing points of access behind the library, at the Sidney Baker Bridge, and near the bank on Water Street.
- d. Consider construction alternatives other than concrete lined drainage ditches.
- e. Enhance both sides of the waterfront, particularly near bridges and visual connections, to tie Central City together, including use of public art, landscaping, decorative lighting, gateways, streetscape, pedestrian amenities, banners, and monuments.

**GOAL 7.2: Develop Central City with a cohesive identity that maintains and appreciates the strengths of its various areas.**

**Objective A:** Use and integrate the unique combination of historic and recent traditional land uses within Central City.

**Objective B:** Transform Central City into a pedestrian-friendly area.

**Objective C:** Create an aesthetic and physically appealing character in Central City that results in a unique destination for visitors.

**Objective D:** Eliminate visual clutter caused by uncoordinated signage and street furniture, overhead utility lines, and unappealing accessory uses.

**Objective E:** Draft urban design standards consistent with Central City's existing and desired variety of architectural influences to create a cohesive identity.

**Policy:** *Design Central City to combine new and rehabilitated uses with designs that reflect the character of Kerrville.*

**Action 7.2.1.** *Encourage rehabilitation and new development projects in the Central City that abide by requirements for enhancing pedestrian activity.*

- a. Incorporate plazas, public open spaces, gathering areas, parks, street furniture and public art along heavily traveled pedestrian corridors to enhance the walking experience.

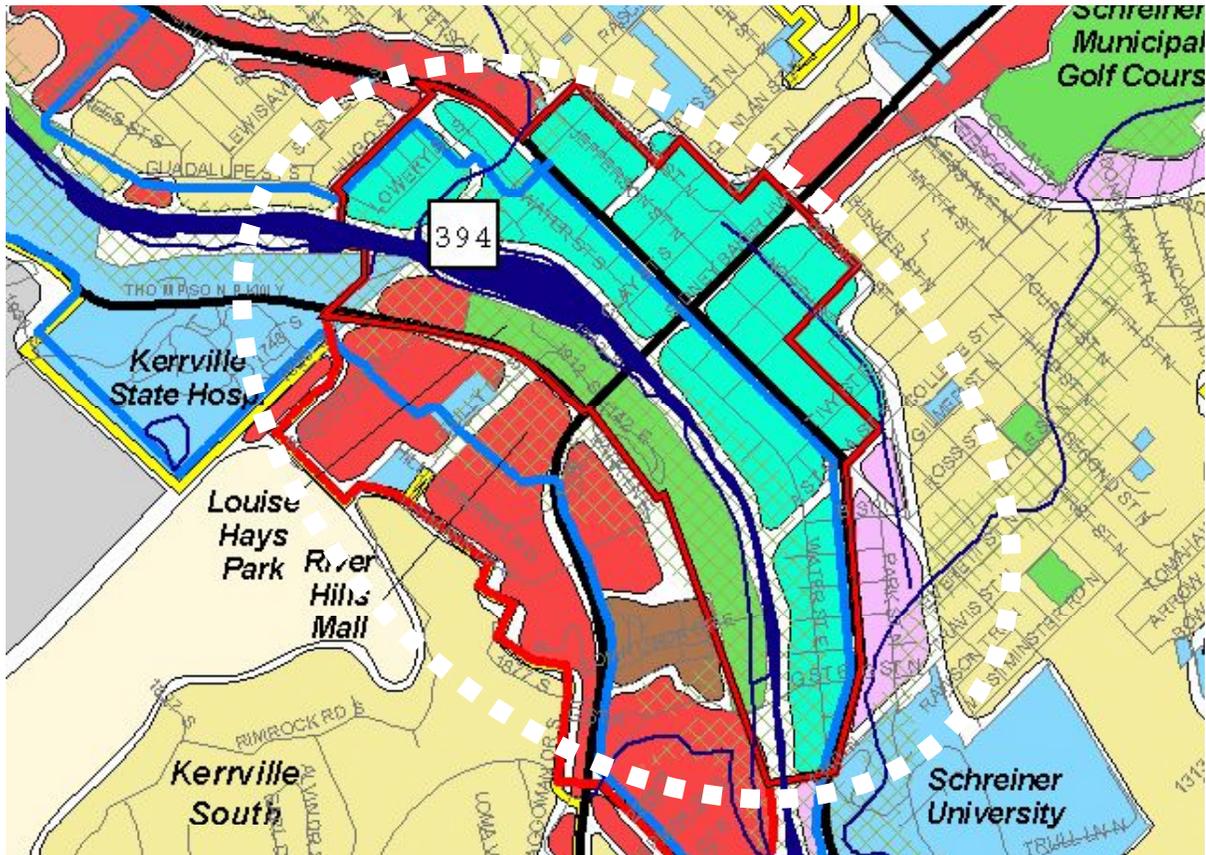


Corner of Earl Garrett Street and Main Street



- b. Design structures in a manner that is appropriate to pedestrians, including clear glass windows and building entrances that minimize potential conflicts with automobile traffic (such as crossing a parking lot to enter a building).
- c. Provide alternative means of travel within the Central City and other tourist and shopping destinations.
- d. Provide for appropriate mixed-use development in downtown Kerrville and throughout Central City. Encourage residential growth by allowing for residential and commercial space in the same building and accessory apartments on single-family properties.

**FIGURE 7.2**  
**Central City Planning Area**  
Kerrville Comprehensive Plan  
Kerrville, Texas





- e. Promote redevelopment through appropriate zoning provisions and development incentives throughout Central City to add density to areas surrounding historic downtown.

*Action 7.2.2. Coordinate design across all of the character areas into a cohesive, desirable theme that is recognizable as unique to Central City.*

- a. Establish gateway treatments, monuments, banners and entrance signage at the five primary entrance points to the Central City, as displayed in Figure 7.1.
- b. Create an incentive-based program to promote a civic-based architectural design of the Central City. Rehabilitate and/or adaptively reuse vacant and underutilized structures in Central City.
- c. Develop consistent lighting, signage and landscaping requirements to use throughout Central City.
- d. Require street trees and other landscaping, where possible, along streets and within medians.
- e. Improve the appearance of parking lots through increased setbacks (where feasible), and require buffer landscaping, tree islands and usable pedestrian access ways.
- f. Continue to install special sidewalk paving treatments such as stone or brick pavers that also meet accessibility standards.
- g. Develop an improvement program throughout the Central City including resurfacing and re-striping the streets, and streetscape improvements. Consider brick pavers at key intersections.
- h. Encourage the installation of public art throughout Central City, including murals on blank walls and the Sidney Baker Bridge columns, fountains and monuments similar to the new monument adjacent to the hospital at the intersection of State Highways 16 and 27.



*Parking lot along Main Street*



*Special design elements enhance the Central City streetscape*



- i. Install decorative entrances to the Louise Hays Park, the Riverside Nature Center and other sites of significant interest to residents and visitors.
- j. Install decorative themed signage that gives directions to important landmarks and public parking facilities to orient and direct tourists and visitors to the community.
- k. Consider a "boardwalk" along the north side Guadalupe River bluff that links and ties the river access points to the theater, shops, restaurants, the hospital, the waterfront, and extends across the bridge to the Southside commercial area.



*Potential exists for a Boardwalk along the Guadalupe River*

*Action 7.2.3. Coordinate public and private efforts to reduce elements that negatively impact the appearance of Central City.*

- a. Relocate utilities to other, less visible areas when possible and, where feasible, bury remaining lines.
- b. Amend the sign ordinance to mitigate on-site signage that is highway-oriented and replace with lower profile, monument style signs.

*Action 7.2.4. Establish reasonable design standards that are used to direct decisions concerning specific issues for new construction and rehabilitation projects, such as orientation, setbacks, scale, and the use of Hill Country building materials.*

- a. Establish standards with sensitivity to both the desire to construct a cohesive identity and the need to appreciate the differences in development styles throughout the character areas of Central City.
- b. Consider use of an architectural study or series of design charrettes to determine community character, desirability and proposed standards.
- c. Ensure that Central City stakeholders, civic leaders, business and property owners, and elected officials participate in preparation of design standards.

## **GOAL 7.3: Preserve and enhance the historical and cultural resources of the Central City.**

**Objective A:** Use the necessary tools to preserve the historic integrity of the Central City.



*Mosty's Garage is an example of a unique, older structure preserved amid a growing city*



*The Schreiner Museum is a monument to Kerrville's rich heritage*

*The **CLG Program** is a partnership that promotes historic preservation at the grassroots level. The CLG program seeks to develop and maintain local historic preservation programs that will influence the zoning and permitting decisions critical to preserving historic properties, and to ensure broad participation of local governments in the national historic preservation program.*

**Policy:** *Encourage the reuse of buildings and in-fill of vacant lots to enhance the entire area.*

**Action 7.3.1.** *Seek out opportunities for development and reinvestment in Central City that respect the historic integrity of the area.*

- a. Rehabilitate historic structures that are in disrepair, to the extent practical.
- b. Modify building codes and other regulatory mechanisms so that they do not hinder historic preservation efforts. Enforce local regulations necessary to reasonably ensure public safety, circulation and the integrity of public right-of-way.
- c. For new construction or rehabilitation, encourage historical architectural elements.
- d. Continue to support incentives for enhancing the appearance of public and privately owned buildings.

**Action 7.3.2.** *The City should build upon existing resources and successes through incorporation of new programs that expand the role of historic preservation.*

- a. Encourage the establishment of a locally adopted historic overlay district.
- b. Study the possibility of a designated national historic district.
- c. Develop and adopt design guidelines and district boundaries.
- d. Establish Kerrville as a member of the Certified Local Government (CLG) Program with the Texas Historical Commission.

**GOAL 7.4:** **Enhance physical, economic and social places of the Central City to attract more residents and visitors of Kerrville, making Central City the activity center and focal point of the community.**

**Objective A:** Attract more entertainment and recreation uses to Central City by emphasizing art galleries, studios and restaurants.

**Objective B:** Celebrate Central City through special events and annual festivals to focus attention on the area.



**Objective C:** Encourage residential uses on the upper floors of commercial buildings within the Central City as well as high-density residential uses.

**Policy:** *Promote multiple uses within Central City to strengthen the area as a destination for visitors and residents.*

**Action 7.4.1.** *Actively seek out entertainment uses to the Central City area.*

- a. Encourage location of additional entertainment and recreational establishments such as sidewalk cafes, theaters, galleries, museums, bakeries, coffee shops, artist shops, studios and nighttime entertainment venues.
- b. Promote and partner in the reuse of the Arcadia Theater.

**Action 7.4.2.** *The City should seek creative public/private partnerships within the community to sponsor and/or facilitate festivals, concerts, and other civic activities within the Central City.*

- a. Encourage more Central City events in addition to the Harvest Moon Dance, the July 4<sup>th</sup> event, and Homecoming and Holiday parades.
- b. Continue support of the Kerrville Main Street Program, the Hill Country Museum, the Convention and Visitor's Bureau and other organizations that promote commerce and tourism downtown, including Kerrville Arts Cultural Center (KACC).
- c. Expand the opportunities for a market that features vegetables, fruits and produce, flowers and nursery goods to create additional public gathering areas and plazas in the central downtown area.
- d. Provide multi-story public parking with retail at the street-level.

**Action 7.4.3.** *Encourage public institutions to locate or play a role in Central City.*

- a. Encourage more hotel space and bed and breakfasts in Central City.



*Arts festivals and other special events draw residents and visitors into Central City throughout the year*





- b. Recognize and reinforce Central City's role as a major location for churches and related religious schools.
- c. Continue to promote the downtown as a regional center for government activities.

*Action 7.4.4. Encourage residential uses in existing buildings.*

- a. Implement requirements and/or an expanded incentive program for residential dwelling units in new/rehabilitated buildings either on upper floors of existing buildings or new buildings.
- b. Consider the feasibility of townhouse development within and adjacent to the Central City.
- c. Evaluate the opportunities to revitalize neighborhoods in or near downtown through reinvestment in public infrastructure and the provision of assistance for housing rehabilitation.

**GOAL 7.5: Provide direct and sufficient transportation access into and within the Central City area.**

**Objective A:** Encourage pedestrian circulation throughout Central City.

**Objective B:** Encourage and promote alternative forms of transportation to downtown destinations and areas around the Central City.

**Objective C:** Provide for adequate parking to meet the current peak demand and future needs of the Central City.

**Policy:** *Establish a variety of ways to and through Central City including walking, biking, transit and automobile.*

*Action 7.5.1. Develop alternate transportation systems through Central City in order to encourage walking, reduce the amount of land dedicated to automobiles and enhance the city experience on a pedestrian scale.*

- a. Identify, improve and mark bicycle routes throughout the community and tie them into downtown (refer to Link 8 – Parks and Recreation).
- b. Install bicycle racks as part of an effort to provide consistent street furniture throughout Central City



and to encourage bicycling as a convenient and reliable transportation option.

- c. Provide public or private transit opportunities between major destinations in Central City and strategic locations throughout the community and region.
- d. Create innovative public-private partnerships with Kerrville/Greyhound Bus Terminal and Louis Schreiner Field to attract arrivals to the downtown and Central City area.

*Action 7.5.2. Parking must be addressed in such a way that it does not negatively impact downtown's unique qualities while satisfying current and projected parking demands.*

- a. Conduct a comprehensive downtown parking study to identify the accumulation and turnover of the available parking supply and to recommend common parking areas and a downtown-parking program. Design parking in a manner that is easy to find and is architecturally compatible with the vision for Central City.
- b. Continue to encourage shared parking agreements between churches, businesses, government institutions, and other major downtown land uses.
- c. Construct more parking including publicly owned common parking areas.
- d. When practical, provide access points and locate vehicular parking areas at mid block openings and behind buildings.
- e. Acquire a sufficient amount of property within the traditional downtown or fringe to provide adequate garage parking to meet the demand for the primary stakeholders as well as convenient parking for downtown residents, business owners and customers.



**GOAL 7.6: Establish mechanisms for moving goals and objectives for Central City from vision to reality.**

**Objective A:** Utilize one or more of several development districts permitted by the State of Texas to assist in enhancement and maintenance of special areas.

**Objective B:** Seek out funding sources for implementation of projects and programs within Central City.

**Objective C:** Alter existing zoning regulations to better address the issues of Central City, including reduction in number and revision of existing zoning districts within Central City and establishment of a Historic Overlay District.

**Objective D:** Expand grant and incentive programs offering financial assistance and technical expertise to commercial property owners within the Central City for upgrading and renovating building facades.

**Policy:** *Determine and act upon projects and programs that will aid in enhancing Central City.*

**Action 7.6.1.** *Take advantage of the series of special districts permitted through the State of Texas that allow for development and improvement of an area.*

- a. Establish a Public Improvement District (PID) encompassing Central City that will allow for development of improvements geared toward revitalization efforts.
- b. Establish a Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone or Tax Abatement Reinvestment Zone in coordination with the PID to further bolster revitalization.

**Action 7.6.2.** *In coordination with public, private and nonprofit partners, utilize the various grants and loans available to assist in economic development, historic preservation, protection of natural resources, improvement of recreation areas, creation of quality housing and other issues related to Central City.*

- a. Consider use of transportation enhancement funds to improve the transportation system and streetscape within Central City.



- b. Utilize Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Funds (administered through the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs), which are available on a competitive basis for small cities to utilize for purposes of revitalizing areas of a community through historic preservation, job development, infrastructure and facility development, revolving loan funds, elimination or rehabilitation of decaying or underutilized structures.
- c. Improve parks and recreational activity areas along the Guadalupe River through the Texas Parks and Wildlife funds.

*Action 7.6.3. Revise zoning regulations to more appropriately reflect the vision for Central City, to improve efficiency of regulations related to the area, and to urge appropriate development activities.*

- a. Reduce the number of zoning districts and revise the zoning boundaries in Central City into broader districts based upon relationship to the overall area, in concert with the character areas displayed in Figure 7.1.
- b. Expand the range of uses within Central City to those that provide a unique and dynamic atmosphere while eliminating uses that impede such activity, including vehicle sales and repair, fuel sales, and detention facilities.
- c. Create a historic overlay district to protect the unique character of downtown Kerrville that includes the ability to rehabilitate and adaptively reuse structures or implement new, infill development in downtown while maintaining architectural integrity. The district should include provisions for building bulk, scale and height; property setback, building articulation, architectural character, and signage and building materials.

*Action 7.6.4. Establish or expand programs to assist property/business owners with facade improvements and other physical improvements in the Central City.*



- a. Evaluate the package of incentives offered, such as tax abatement, signage grants, etc. and determine new incentive offers that will entice new development and redevelopment of buildings in the Central City area.
- b. Recommend expanding the involvement of local financial institutions to maintain a low-interest loan program for the revitalization of commercial buildings.