



City of Corpus Christi Northwest Boulevard (FM 624) Corridor Plan

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ASAKURA
ROBINSON



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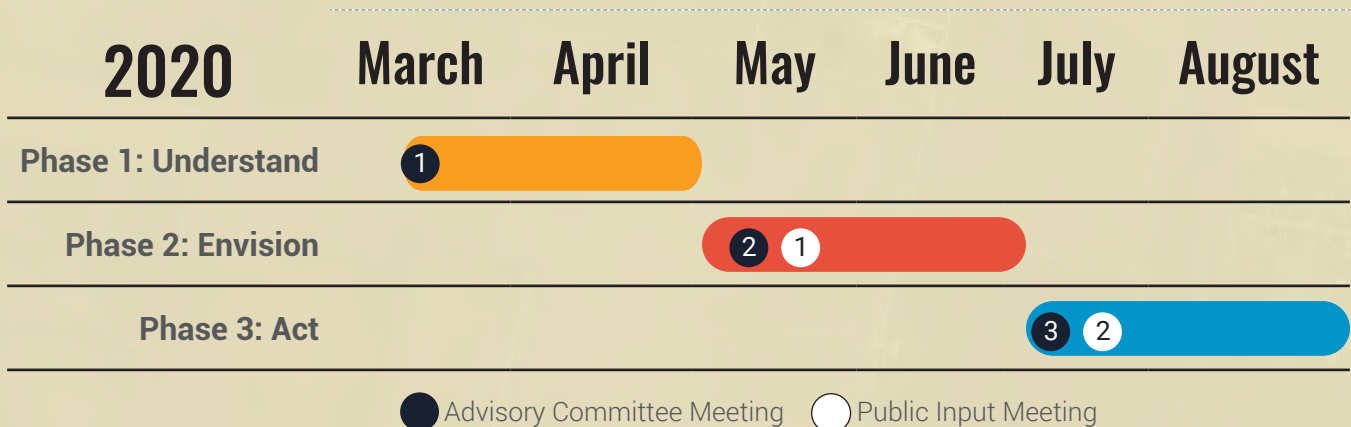
INTRODUCTION

Why a Corridor Plan?

Thanks in part to a surge of industrial development in the Corpus Christi metropolitan area in recent years, the Calallen area of far-northwest Corpus Christi has experienced new development. From oil refining and transportation to steel production, the expansion in these export industries is bringing wealth and job opportunities to the region. With this investment comes development pressure and demand grows for new homes, retailers and services. The City of Corpus Christi anticipates additional residential and commercial development, as well as a new elementary school, in the Northwest Boulevard (FM 624) Corridor. Plans to build a new steel factory in Sinton could drive additional demand for new housing and commerce in Calallen. While new development creates new opportunities for people to live, work and do business in Calallen, it also brings new challenges, such as more auto traffic, and more demands on critical infrastructure.

The Northwest Boulevard (FM624) Corridor Plan represents the City of Corpus Christi's effort to proactively plan for orderly, attractive and sustainable growth and development consistent with the community's vision.

The Northwest Boulevard Corridor lies 20 miles upriver from downtown Corpus Christi. The study area comprises a 500-foot buffer to the north and to the south from Interstate 69 to Wright Moravek Road (County Road 73) - nearly three miles. The Nueces River bounds adjacent neighborhoods to the north, while Interstate 69 presents a physical barrier to the east. To the west and south, development quickly transitions from suburban to rural conditions. The Wood River neighborhood is north of the corridor, and major anchors include one preschool, two elementary schools, one high school, River Hills Country Club, Hazel Bazemore Park, Corpus Christi Medical Center, and retail destinations including Walmart and the Five Points Shopping Center.



A Public Process

Meaningful public engagement has been essential to the development of this Plan's vision and priorities, and the Plan successfully shifted in person engagement online when COVID-19 presented itself in March 2020. Throughout the three-phase planning process - in which the project consulting team first gathered data, facilitated visioning, and refined strategies for implementation - the City of Corpus Christi provided multiple opportunities for the public to express their ideas, hopes, and concerns through numerous channels. These included:

- Two online surveys received a combined 590 responses
- One online mapping tool to identify issues and assets
- Two virtual public meetings
- Three Advisory Committee meetings
- Multiple social media announcements of surveys and public meetings
- Multiple e-newsletter mailings through City of Corpus Christi listservs
- Poster advertisements at bus stops within the study area

Throughout the planning process, the City and consultants engaged and interviewed numerous Corridor stakeholders, from TxDOT and Calallen High School leadership to developers and land owners. The City also convened an Advisory Committee composed of public agency partners, local business and neighborhood association representatives, and major employers to advise the City staff and consultants on development of the Plan's strategies and specific recommendations.

Through compilation of the ideas, aspirations, and concerns collected, several priorities emerged:

Reduce traffic congestion on Northwest Boulevard

Participants repeatedly stressed the importance that the roads should be more convenient for drivers, particularly by mitigating traffic congestion and improving roadway safety.

Preserve and enhance the business and commercial space

Participants especially desired more grocery shopping and dining options, especially family-friendly establishments. Many asked for access to businesses to be maintained, and that they want commercial development to continue to front Northwest Boulevard.

Enhance beauty and landscaping in the area

Respondents desire to improve area aesthetics with proper landscape maintenance. Many desire easy-to-maintain plantings, consistent sign regulations, and to overall improve the attractiveness to visitors.

Improve bicyclist and pedestrian safety

Participants agree the study area's roads should be safer, more accessible, and convenient for bicyclists and pedestrians. Many observed pedestrians walking along Northwest Boulevard without sidewalks.

Figure 1: Study Area Existing Land Uses and Planned Developments



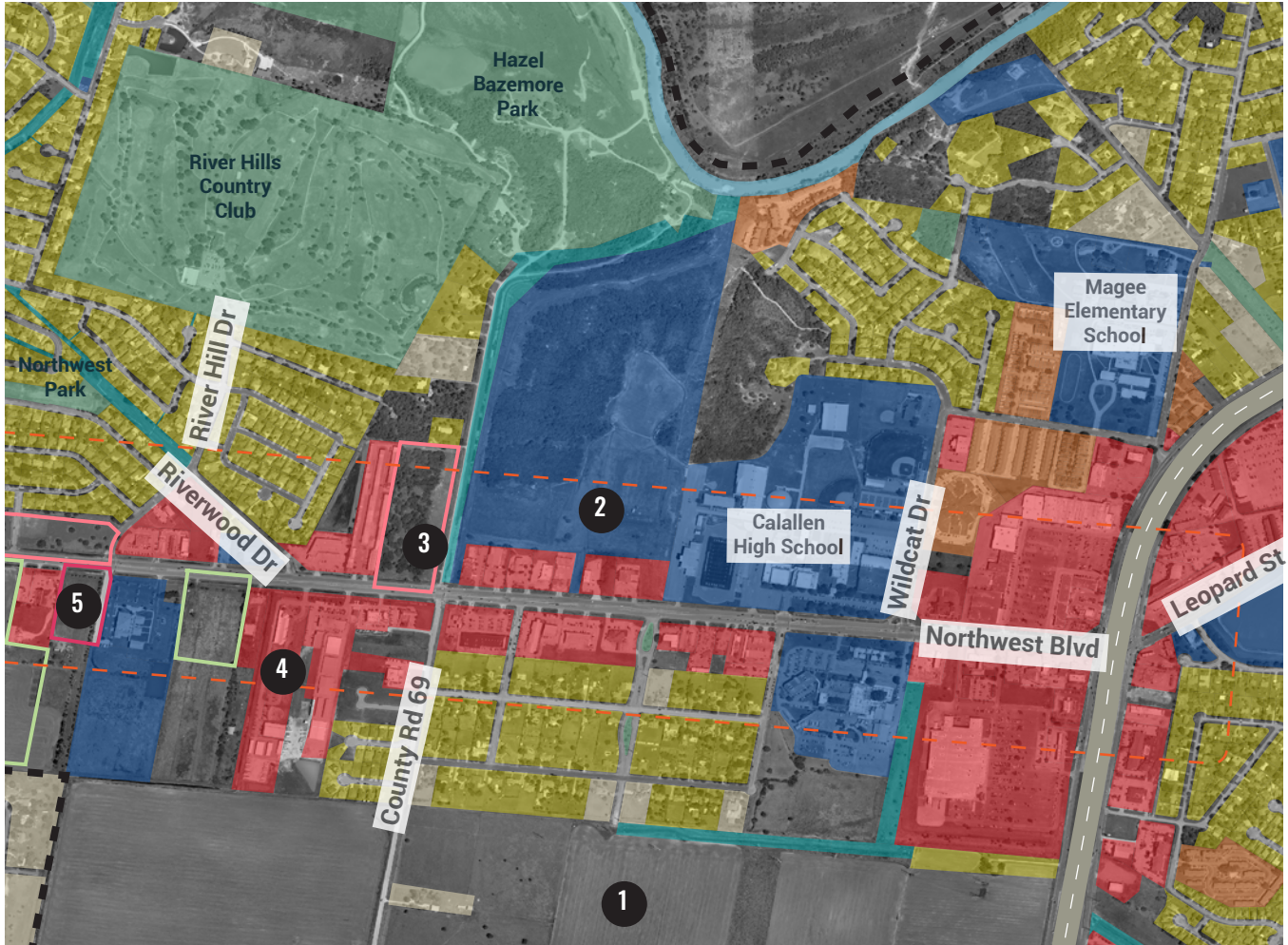
Source: Nueces County Appraisal District, 2019; City of Corpus Christi GIS Services; TXDOT

Existing Land Use

- High-density residential
- Low-density residential
- Estate residential
- Commercial
- Light industrial
- Permanent open space
- Public/Semi-Public
- Water

Zoning of Vacant Land

- Neighborhood Commercial
- General Commercial
- Farm-Rural
- Multi-family
- Single-family
- Study Area boundary
- City boundary



Planned Developments

Key	Proposed/Planned Use	Zoning	Future Land Use Designation (PlanCC)	Plat Status
1	River Ridge Unit 4	RS-6 Single-Family 6	Medium-density residential (4 to 13 units/ acre)	Under review
2	Calallen Elementary School	RS-6 Single-Family 6	Medium-density Residential (4-13 units/acre)	Recorded
3	Office/Neighborhood retail	CN-2 Neighborhood Commercial	Commercial	Pending
4	Urgent care clinic	CG-2 General Commercial	Mixed Use	Recorded
5	Office building	CG-2 General Commercial	Mixed Use	
6	Grocery, neighborhood retail, residential	CG-2 General Commercial	Mixed Use	Recorded
7	"The Lakes at Northwest" 71 single-family homes	RS-6 Single-Family 6	Medium-density Residential (4-13 units/acre)	Construction
8	West River Place Unit 2	CG-2 General Commercial	Medium-density Residential (4-13 units/acre)	Approved
9	Mesquiteville restaurant	CG-2 General Commercial	Commercial	Construction

VISION

Northwest Boulevard is Calallen’s “Main Street,” providing the amenities of a prosperous neighborhood center in a small, tight-knit community. The Boulevard is a welcoming, diverse, and family-friendly place where people go to shop, gather, invest in businesses, play and raise a family.



Calallen Cats. *Source: Callalen ISD*



National Walk and Bike to School Day. *Source: pexels.com*



Trails for walking, hiking, and biking. *Source: Corpus Christi CVB*



Live, work and play. *Source: The Char Atnip Team*



Mike Cotton's BBQ. *Source: Gerald McLeod*



Hazel Bazemore Park. *Source: Flickr user birdybirdbits*

GOALS

Northwest Boulevard's Future Is:

1) Safe, accessible and easy for people of all ages and abilities to get around.

- » Congestion is less frequent, making it easier for people to get around and navigate the neighborhood
- » Traffic is calmed, making it safer for people to drive, walk across, and bike along the boulevard
- » Streets and sidewalks are accessible, and built to ADA standards

3) Healthy for people and nature, with opportunities to be active outdoors.

- » Trees and vegetation provide shade and help drain stormwater
- » Trails are easily accessible for walking, hiking and biking

“Business growth and a diverse population that reside there have made the areas around Northwest Blvd a true melting pot with its own unique sense of pride and character.”

“This area is the future of Corpus Christi and is the first impression for tourists and visitors coming here. Make it more attractive and accessible so they want to return.”

- Survey Respondants

2) Prosperous, with a strong local economy anchored by small businesses

- » A variety of neighborhood restaurants and retail outlets offer a diverse array of goods, services, and family-friendly experiences
- » Businesses can receive support and incentives from public entities to recover from loss of income

4) Attractive and orderly, with new development that fits into a cohesive whole

- » Wastewater, Water, and Storm Water is expanded to areas planned for development
- » Public art and neighborhood branding convey a sense of place and beautify the public realm
- » Wayfinding signage draws attention to neighborhood attractions and guides visitors
- » Regulation of commercial signage ensures a consistent, physical appearance along the Boulevard

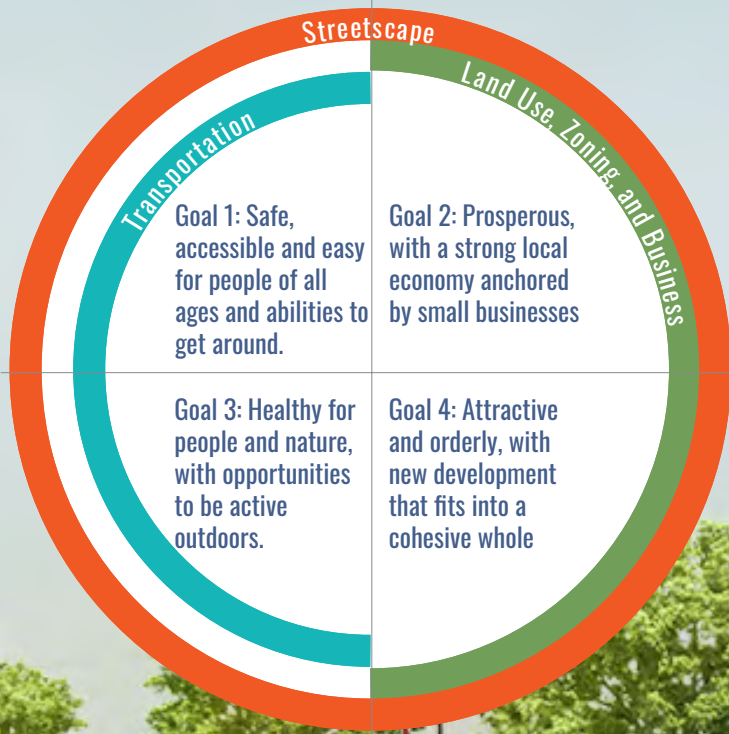
STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

Overview

The Corridor Plan's four goals and individual strategies and actions aim to fulfill the Vision by:

- » Identifying major capital and infrastructure projects along with smaller, incremental program or policy changes.
- » Leveraging public-sector actions to encourage private sector responses.
- » Encouraging new development in underutilized areas, while avoiding negative impacts on existing neighborhoods and institutions.





Strategies and Actions	Goals			
	1	2	3	4
Transportation	1	2	3	4
T1. Reduce congestion at I-69	✓		✓	
T2. Improve intersections for safety and mobility	✓		✓	
T3. Build active infrastructure along roadways	✓		✓	
T4. Coordinate with ISD to manage traffic demand	✓		✓	
Land Use, Zoning and Business	1	2	3	4
L1. Adopt Future Land Use Map Amendment		✓		✓
L2. Relax zoning and other city restrictions for businesses adapting to COVID-19		✓		
L3. Provide small businesses programs that target long-term impacts of COVID-19		✓		
Streetscape	1	2	3	4
S1. Reduce lane widths	✓	✓	✓	✓
S2. Enhance planting areas	✓	✓	✓	✓
S3. Expand and plant medians	✓	✓	✓	✓
S4. Design and install signage and banners	✓	✓	✓	✓
S5: Install Public Art	✓	✓	✓	✓

Concept Map

Many of the strategies and actions focus on specific locations within the Corridor. The map below indicates these locations and organizes them by goal. Many other strategies and actions apply more broadly to the

Corridor overall, and do not appear in this map. The strategy descriptions in the following pages and the Implementation Matrix on page 44 offer additional details about these.

Note: A comprehensive plan shall not constitute zoning regulations or establish zoning district boundaries.

Figure 2: Overall Concept Map



Source: City of Corpus Christi GIS Services

Active Transportation Enhancements

- A **one-way cycle track** is physically separated from the vehicular travel lanes that provides exclusive use by bicycles in the direction of motor vehicle travel (both sides).
- **Off-road shared use trails** are wide, raised, behind-the-curb paths that provide space for bicyclists and pedestrians to travel in both directions along the path.
- **Buffered bike lanes** are on-street bike lanes with a physical buffer, marked by pavement paint or incorporated vertical elements such as posted bollards, between automobiles and bicyclists.
- **Bike boulevards** are on-street bikeways in which bicyclists share space with automobiles on low speed and low trafficked streets.

Proposed Future Land Use

- Study area
- High-density residential (more than 13 units/ acre)
- Light industrial
- Parks and open space
- Low-density residential (up to 3 units/ acre)
- Permanent open space
- Water
- Medium-density residential (4-13 units/ acre, including two-family dwellings)
- Government
- Mixed use
- Vacant
- Commercial
- Planned development



Intersection Enhancements

- A** FM 1889 - Ped. countdown signals, crosswalks, curb extns, ped. refuge island, street lighting
- B** CR 69 - Ped. countdown sigs, raised crosswalk, curb extns, ped. refuge island, street lighting
- C** Wildcat Drive - Ped. countdown sigs, raised crosswalk, curb extns, ped. refuge island, st. light
- D** US Hwy 77 - Ped. countdown sigs; high-visibility crosswalks; ped. refuge island, street lighting

Traffic Circulation Partnerships

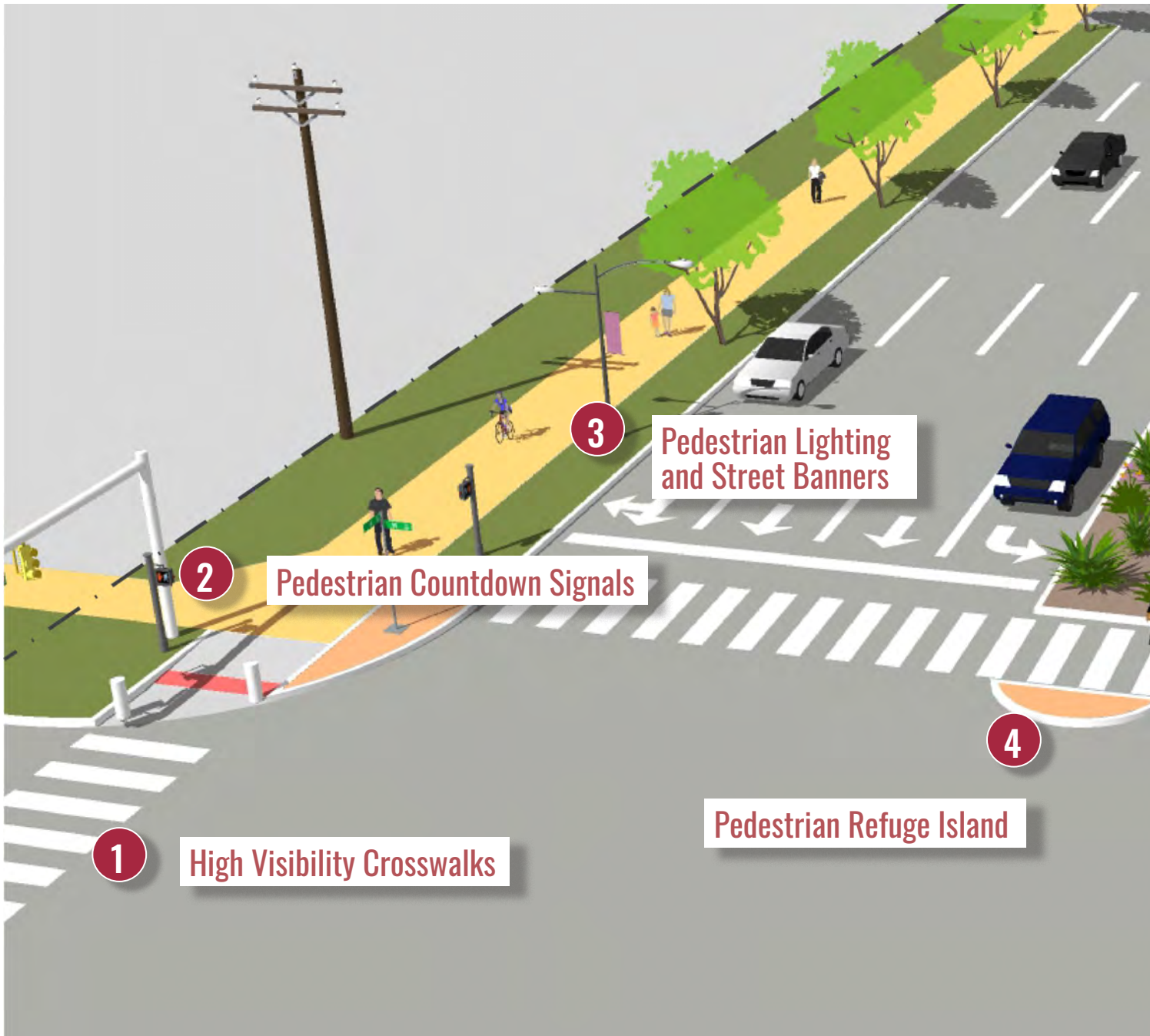
- E** Grocery and Neighborhood retail
- F** Calallen Elementary and High School

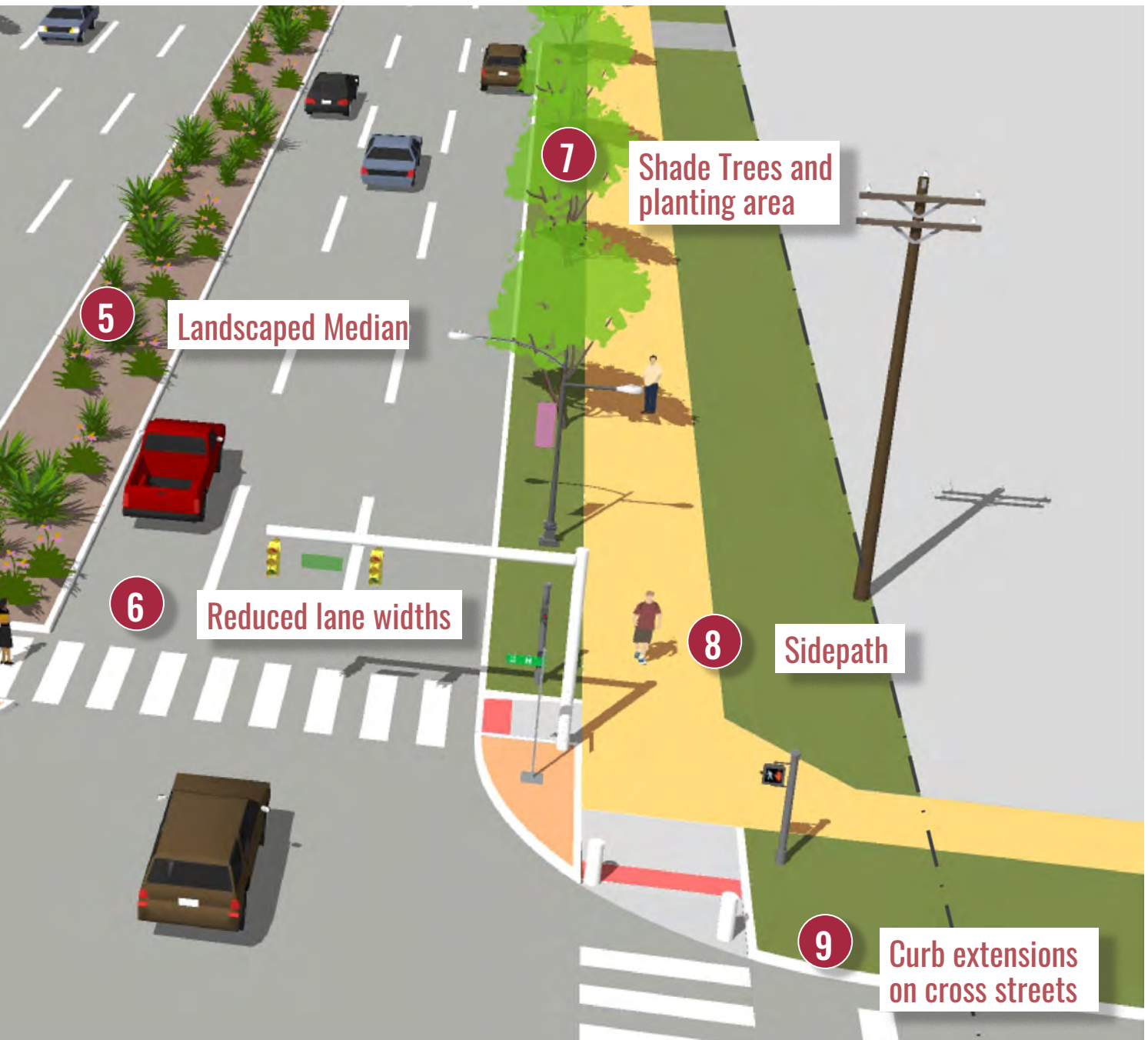
Elements of a Safe, Accessible, and Attractive Northwest Boulevard

Northwest Boulevard's wide right-of-way provides ample room for building roadway design elements that improve safety and accessibility for people driving, walking and biking on Calallen's "Main Street." The diagram below

illustrates how many such features, which are described in detail in the following pages, work together to create a comprehensive, "complete street" that meets the needs of businesses, residents, institutions, and commuters.

Figure 3: Proposed, Model Design for Northwest Boulevard





5 Landscaped Median

6 Reduced lane widths

7 Shade Trees and planting area

8 Sidepath

9 Curb extensions on cross streets

Transportation Strategies

T1: Reduce congestion at I-69

Goals:

1	2	3	4
✓		✓	

Problem:

Reducing congestion along Northwest Boulevard, particularly between Calallen High School and the IH-69 interchange, emerged as the clear top priority among participants in the planning process; 47% of all survey respondents cited traffic flow and congestion as “the one improvement you’d like to see in the Study Area,” and an additional 6% cited traffic light challenges specifically. 80% “strongly agreed” that “roads should be more convenient for auto traffic with less congestion.” People noted that long back-ups accessing the interstate on-ramps form during morning and afternoon peak periods associated with school opening and dismissal times.

Solution

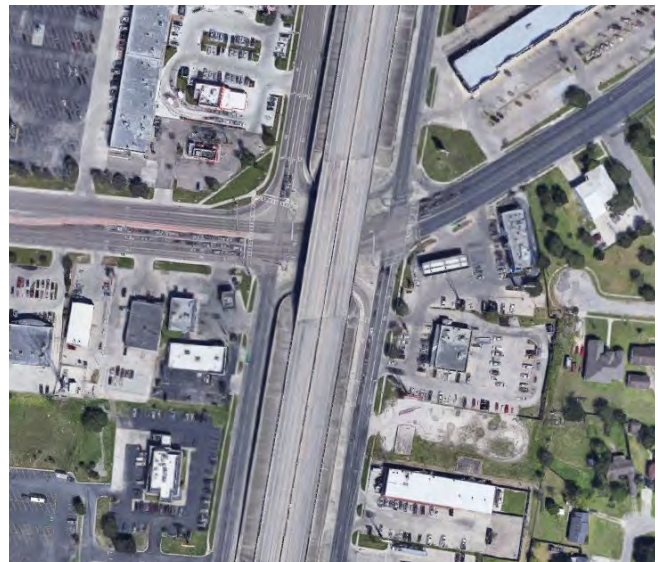
Several options are available to reduce congestion at the historic “Five Points” intersection of IH-69, Northwest Boulevard, and Leopard Street: reducing traffic demand, expanding interstate throughput capacity, and expanding surface street throughput capacity. The first option has already occurred to the extent that the COVID-19 pandemic has increased working-from-home and virtual learning. However, long-term success for the corridor relies on students returning to classrooms and shoppers returning to businesses. TXDOT is currently studying opportunities to improve traffic flow and entrance and exit movements on IH-69, which could reduce vehicles queuing on surface roads to access the interstate. In the

short term, the City can work with TXDOT to redesign and rebuild the Five Points intersection to more efficiently move traffic.

Encouraging greater use of recently improved County Road 52 could reduce demand during peak hours, particularly for traffic heading south. Effective diversion of traffic would eventually increase.

A Single Point Urban Interchange (SPUI) received broad support from survey respondents as a potential innovative solution. A SPUI condenses two signalized intersections into a single intersection with one set of traffic signals, improving efficiency and traffic flow. These are called “urban” because they consume much less right-of-way than other interchange types, such as cloverleafs.

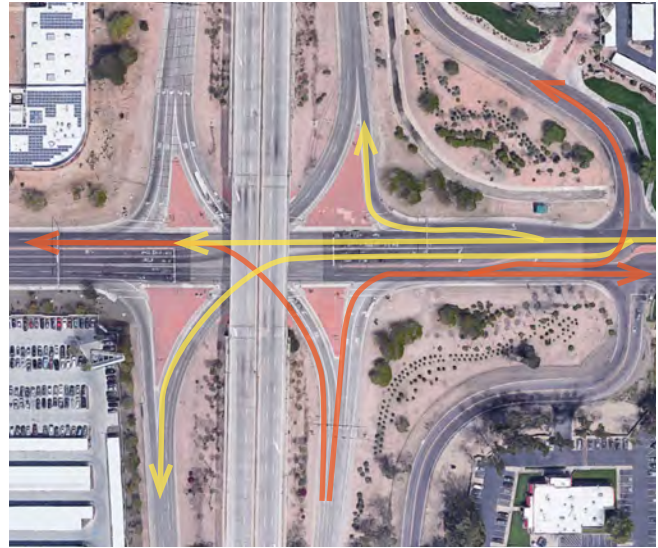
Multilane Roundabouts – unsignalized, circular intersections, offer a second alternative to the existing intersection design. Traffic travels in the same direction



FM624/I-69 Interchange. Source: Google Maps

around a central median in two or more lanes to accommodate exits from the outer lane. Advantages include the elimination of left-hand turns, which are frequent causes of vehicular crashes; reduced idling during non-peak hours; and traffic calming. However, the drawbacks make roundabouts less viable than a SPUI – they consume much more right-of-way and can be prohibitive for truck traffic. Numerous public comments also suggested that motorists would not understand how multilane roundabouts work, and that the new design could cause crashes.

Regardless of the specific design intervention, the City of Corpus Christi in the short-term should work with TXDOT and the Corpus Christi Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) to study alternatives to the existing intersection design and function, identify a preferred design, and allocate funding for design and construction.



Single-point urban interchange (SPUI), Phoenix, AZ. Source: Google Maps



51st Street Roundabout, Austin. Source: ASCE Texas



Roundabout. Source: Mobility CC

T2: Improve intersections for safety and mobility

Goals:

1	2	3	4
✓		✓	

Problem

Between 2018 and 2019, 272 crashes, resulting in 3 deaths, 4 suspected serious injuries, 12 crashes with non-incapacitating injuries, and 60 crashes involving possible injury occurred in the corridor. Three fatal collisions in the corridor between 2018 and 2019 resulted in the death of one cyclist and two pedestrians. Intersections are frequent locations for traffic crashes. Every pedestrian-vehicle collision occurred near an intersection (River Trail Drive, FM 1889, and Interstate 69E). Numerous survey respondents warned of the need to calm high-speed traffic, particularly at intersections where existing shoulders allow motorists to make turns at high speeds.

Solution

Reducing speed and improving visibility at intersections are proven methods for making roadways safer. Numerous intersection design interventions can effectively calm through-traffic and turning traffic, including high-visibility crosswalks, raised crosswalks,

curb extensions (also known as “bump-outs”), pedestrian countdown signals, street lighting, and roundabout treatments.

The concept map on pages 10-11 shows locations for recommended priority intersections for these types of traffic calming measures:

IH-69

Numerous crashes have occurred at this major intersection in recent years. The costs are measured not just in human injuries and property damage but also increased traffic congestion and use of emergency response resources.

- **Recommendation:** Pedestrian countdown signals; High-visibility crosswalk markings; Pedestrian refuge island; street lighting.

County Road 69

One mile west of IH-69, this signalized intersection is the next north-south road to extend to County Road 52 and points southward, and therefore is an important alternative route for westbound and eastbound traffic. Northward, it serves Hazel Bazemore County Park and the future Calallen Elementary School.

- **Recommendation:** Pedestrian countdown signals; High-visibility crosswalk markings; Raised crosswalks; Curb extensions; Pedestrian refuge island; street lighting.



Raised, high-visibility crosswalk. Source: Appleton Department of Public Works

Farm-to-Market Road 1889

FM1889 is the next road to the west of CR69 to provide a southern connection to CR52. The H-E-B grocery company (landowner) has installed infrastructure at the large, currently undeveloped parcel to the southeast, and neighborhood retail and new housing are also planned for the vicinity.

- **Recommendation:** Pedestrian countdown signals; High-visibility crosswalk markings; Raised crosswalks; Curb extensions; Pedestrian refuge island; street lighting.

River Trail Drive, Riverview Drive, and East Riverview Street

These three roads serve the low-density residences outside city limits to the north of Northwest Boulevard between FM 1889 and County Road 73. They are each two lane roads and their intersections with Northwest Boulevard are unsignalized. Public feedback indicated unsafe conditions making left turns from the roads onto Northwest Boulevard eastbound. A fatal pedestrian collision also occurred at this part of the corridor in recent years.

- **Recommendation:** Roundabout or signal timed to prioritize east-west traffic. street lighting.



Raised, high-visibility crosswalk in Appleton, WI. Source: Fox11 News/City of Appleton



Pedestrian refuge island Source: NACTO



Curb bump-out. Source: NACTO



Pedestrian countdown signal. Source: Maricopa Association of Governments

T3: Build active infrastructure along roadways

Goals:

1	2	3	4
✓		✓	

Problem

75% of Visioning Survey respondents “Strongly Agree” (53%) or “Somewhat agree” (22%) that “Northwest Boulevard and area roads should be safer and more accessible and convenient for people to walk or bike along (such as by adding sidewalks, crosswalks, bike lanes, and pedestrian signals).” Recent crashes involving people riding bikes could have possibly been avoided if safer facilities were in place to accommodate them.

Solution

Wide sidewalks and bikeways separated from vehicular traffic are safer and more comfortable than the existing roadway facilities, which consist of wide shoulders west of Calallen High School, and narrow sidewalks immediately adjacent to traffic lanes east of the high school. The City’s adopted Strategic Plan for Active Mobility: Phase 1 Bicycle Mobility (an amendment to MobilityCC) provides guidance for these types of facilities. **Sidepaths** are essentially wide (at least 10’) sidewalks that permit shared use by people walking or bicycling. These are recommended the entire length of the north side of Northwest Boulevard



Sidepath. Source: City’s Strategic Plan for Active Mobility: Phase 1 Bicycle Mobility

within the study area, and on the south side of Northwest Boulevard from FM1889 to IH-69. On-street bike lanes separated by a two-foot pavement marking – known as **buffered bike lanes** – are recommended for less travelled north-south collector roadways, including County Road 69, Riverview Drive, River Hill Drive, and Wood River Drive. **One-way cycle tracks** – physically separated travel lanes for people bicycling – on both sides of these streets may also be appropriate if right-of-way constraints prohibit buffered bike lanes. **Shared lane markings** (“sharrows”) are appropriate on local, low-volume, low-speed streets that are nonetheless important connectors between destinations, sidepaths and buffered bikeways. The City may pair installation of sharrows with wayfinding and regulatory signage reminding motorists that “Bicycles May Use Full Lane” (MUTCD Section 9B.06). The Concept Map on pages 10-11 illustrates recommended locations for installing each of these facilities, supplementing recommendations made by the Phase I Bicycle Mobility Plan..

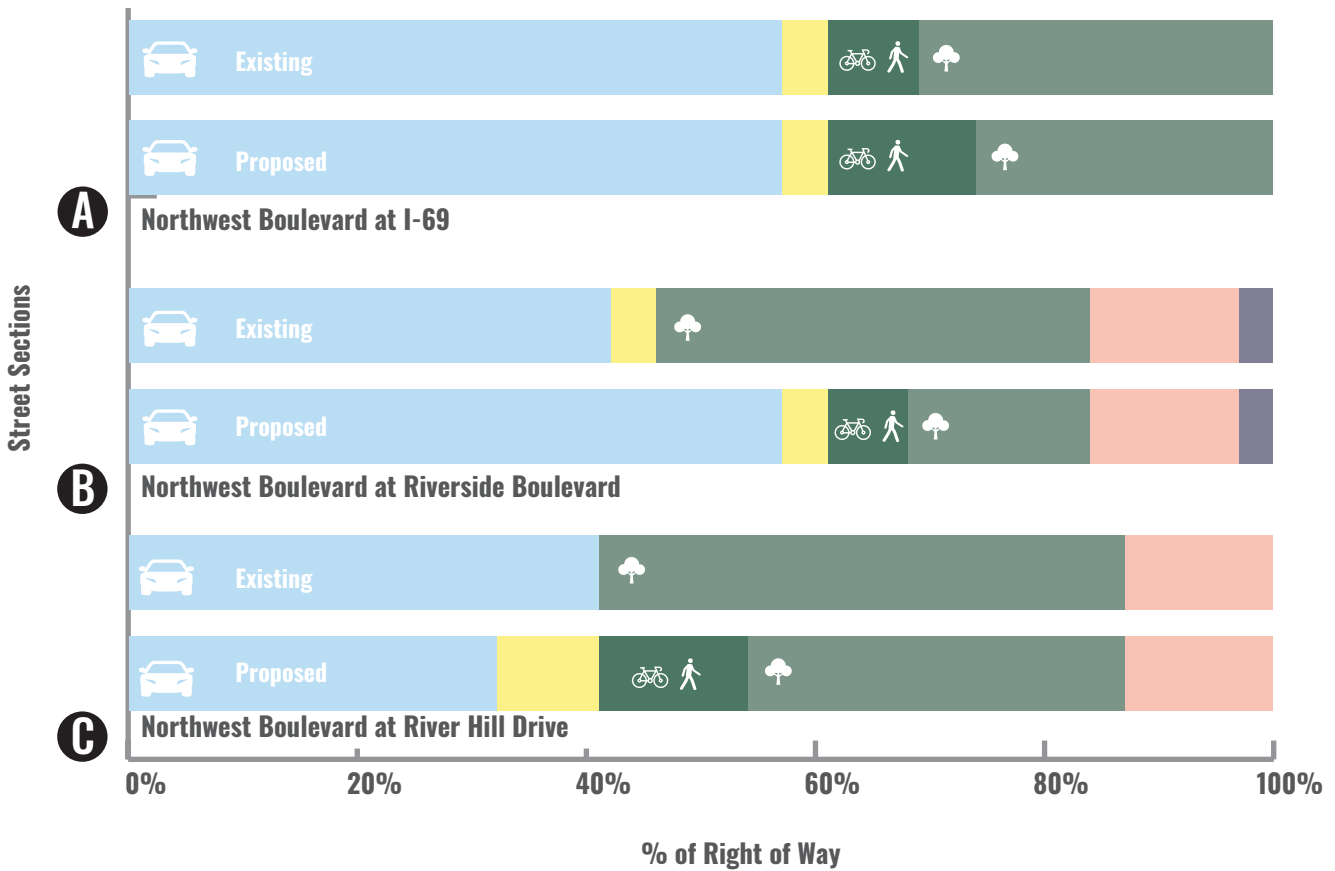
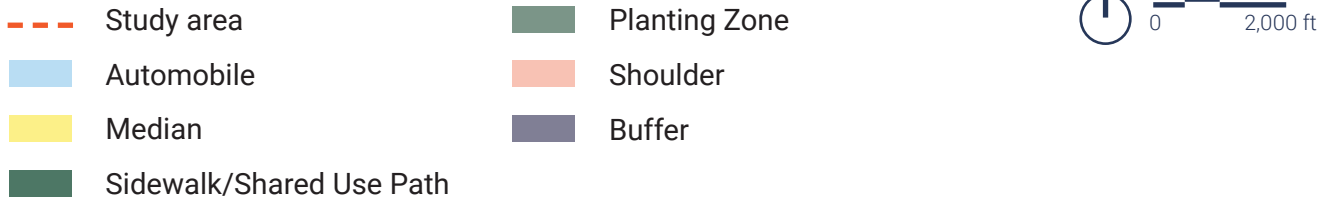
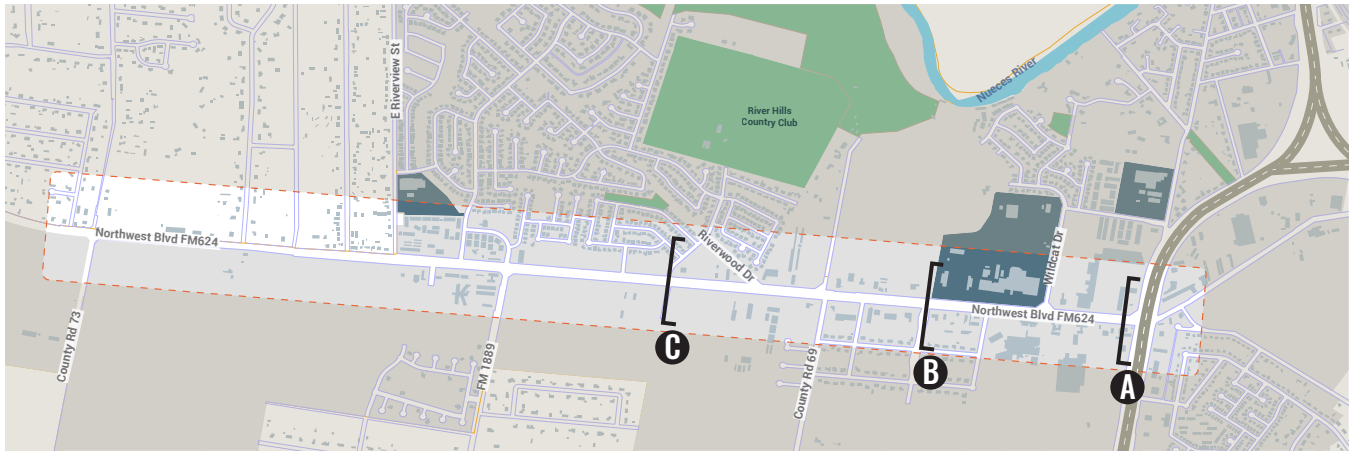


Buffered bike lane. Source: League of American Bicyclists



Shared lane markings. Source: Corpus Christi Caller Times

Figure 4: Summary of Right-of-Way Change



T4: Coordinate with ISD to manage traffic demand

Goals

1	2	3	4
✓		✓	

Traffic congestion on Northwest Boulevard tends to peak during school opening and dismissal times. Closer coordination between the City of Corpus Christi, TXDOT and Calallen ISD can help manage the flow of this traffic and reduce the number of vehicles travelling to and from campuses. This coordination began during the corridor planning process and resulted in short-term actions:

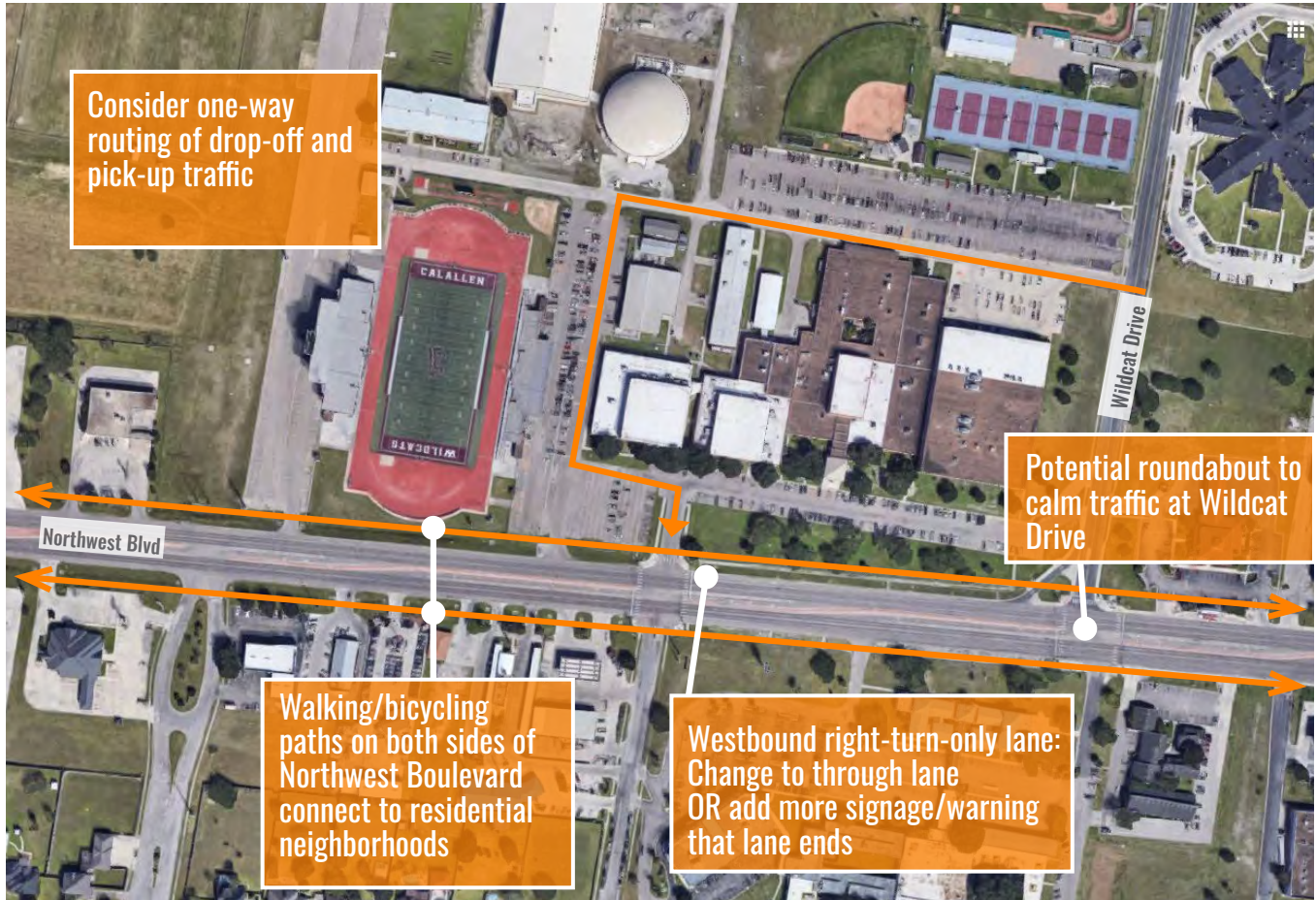
- The City, ISD, and TXDOT will review signal timing at Wildcat Drive and River East Drive for the opportunity to prioritize predominant traffic movements during peak morning and afternoon periods - particularly during the 4pm rush hour.
- TXDOT is working with Callen ISD to produce a traffic management plan designed for special events - namely, football games and the exit of hundreds of vehicles from Calallen High School at once.

Programs can reduce the number of vehicles needing to access the school site for pick-up and drop-off. For instance, parent volunteers and school officials can organize walking school busses, in which parents and guardians drop elementary school students a short distance from campus, and students walk together to school as a group. This program offers the added benefit of increasing children's daily physical activity. More information is available at: http://guide.saferoutesinfo.org/walking_school_bus/



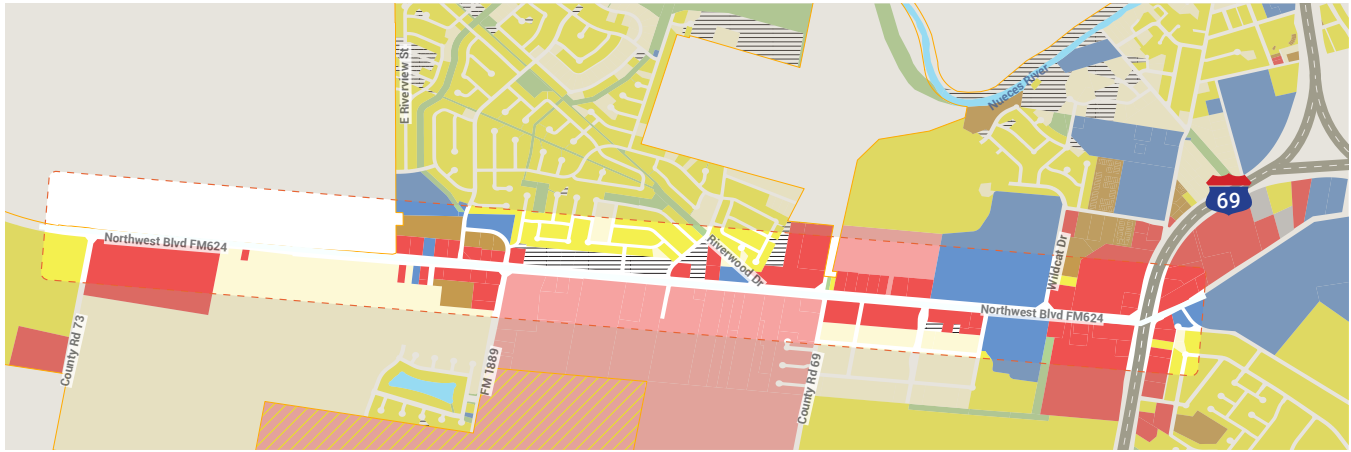
Walking School Bus. Source: New Dream blog

Figure 5: Improved Traffic Circulation



Land Use, Zoning and Business Strategies

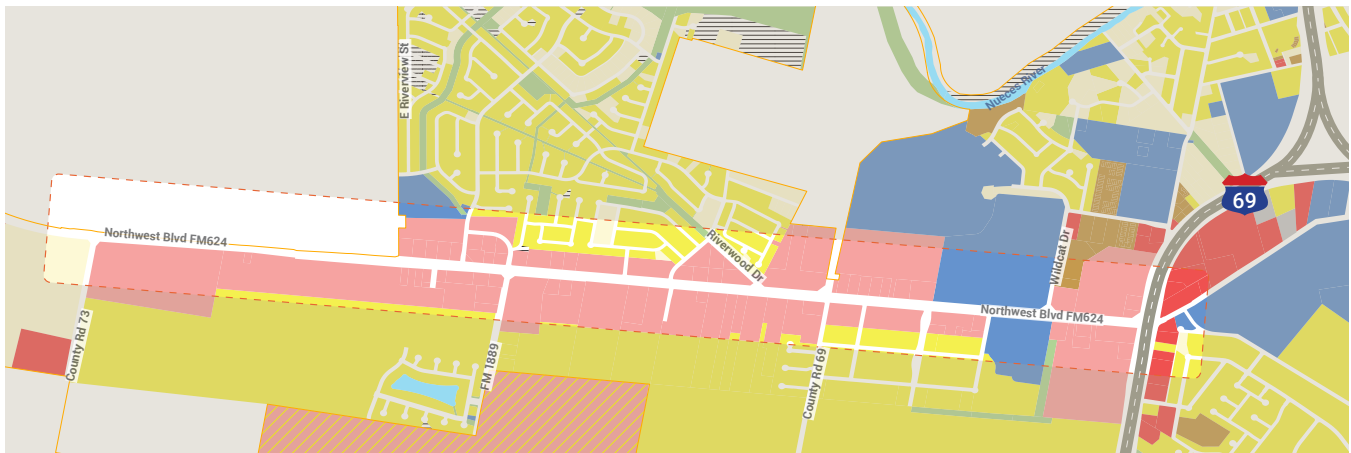
Figure 6: Existing Future Land Use Map
















Source: City of Corpus Christi GIS Services



Figure 7: Proposed Future Land Use Map



- | | |
|---|--|
|  Study area |  Commercial |
|  City Boundary |  Light industrial |
|  High-density residential (more than 13 units/ acre) |  Permanent open space |
|  Low-density residential (up to 3 units/ acre) |  Government |
|  Medium-density residential (4-13 units/ acre, including two-family dwellings) |  Vacant |
|  Mixed use |  Water |
| |  Planned development |

Note: A comprehensive plan shall not constitute zoning regulations or establish zoning district boundaries.

L1: Adopt Future Land Use Map Amendment

Goals

1	2	3	4
	✓		✓

Problem

While the properties fronting Northwest Boulevard between IH-69 and CR 69 are largely developed, large, undeveloped parcels front the roadway west of CR 69. The PlanCC Comprehensive Plan adopted in 2016 includes a Future Land Use Map for the area, but the Northwest Boulevard Corridor planning process has given the public - and the Planning Division - the opportunity to focus more closely on the Calallen study area.

Visioning survey respondents offered broad support for various principles of new development. 59% somewhat or strongly agreed that “the area should provide more compact, mixed-use development,” while 79% somewhat or strongly agreed that “the area should offer more opportunity for jobs and for opening and growing businesses. 91% said restaurants, including fast food, ice cream shops, and sit-down restaurants, are appropriate on Northwest Boulevard, and nearly 70% of respondents said they are appropriate for side streets. Attracting a full-service grocery store and more dining options was the second most popular response to the question “If you could do one thing to improve the Northwest Boulevard area, what would you do?”

In response to two alternative future land use map scenarios - in which one offers a uniform land use pattern of residential uses set behind commercial uses facing Northwest Boulevard of consistent intensity, and the other proposes a mix of uses fronting the roadway but varying from higher intensity toward the east to low intensity toward the west - survey respondents frequently cited support for commercial uses fronting Northwest Boulevard, but to limit development intensity westward in the corridor in order to mitigate traffic.

Solution

The proposed Future Land Use Map to the left responds to each of the concerns and priorities described above to fulfill the project vision and goals. It combines elements of the two alternatives. This recommendation’s intent is to provide only for low-to-moderate intensity commercial or residential uses in the corridor west of FM 1889. However, the Future Land Use Map categories adopted in the PlanCC Comprehensive Plan do not distinguish between low- and high-intensity commercial or mixed uses. Therefore, policymakers considering any proposed changes to the zoning of parcels in this corridor should consult beyond Figure 7 for guidance. The new map proposes the following changes:

- Conversion of Commercial land east of CR 69 to Mixed Use, to incentivize and provide flexibility for redevelopment of aging commercial properties. The intent is not to encourage exclusively residential development directly fronting Northwest Boulevard.
- Conversion of low-density residential land east of CR 69 and south of Northwest Blvd. to “Medium-density residential,” consistent with surrounding residential land and more intense uses of this segment of the corridor.
- Conversion of land south of the 500’ buffer from Northwest Boulevard between CR 69 and FM 1889 designated “Mixed Use” to “Medium-density residential.” This designation is recommended over “Commercial” in order to allow flexibility to proposed, large developments that include residential uses as part of compact, mixed-use development. The intent is not to encourage exclusively residential development directly fronting Northwest Boulevard.
- Conversion of land fronting Northwest Boulevard between East Riverview Street and CR 69 currently designated “Commercial,” “High-density residential,” and “Government” and undesignated land to “Mixed Use”

These changes result in a land use plan that allows flexibility necessary for the private real estate development to respond to market demand while respecting community priorities for orderly development.

In addition to adopting the Future Land Use Map changes described above, the City should phase public investment into new site-serving infrastructure to areas south of the Northwest Boulevard that currently lack them. Property owners cited this absence of infrastructure access as a key impediment to development of this area. This should be done in coordination with planned improvements to the roadway itself to reduce impact on existing businesses and residents.

L2: Relax zoning restrictions for businesses adapting to COVID

Goal

1	2	3	4
	✓		

Challenge

COVID-19 has created unprecedented challenges for small and local business owners who, due to coronavirus restrictions, have temporarily closed or reduced services offered. Businesses may have been able to capitalize on temporary financial assistance programs to address gaps in revenue, but as COVID-19 continues to threaten any return to normal, businesses are finding it difficult to make minor, temporary adjustments to their regular operations due to City regulations, or to reduce expenses, such as rent or utility bills. Meanwhile, the study's participants hold the Northwest Boulevard businesses in high regard and value their small-town feel, while also enjoying the diversity of restaurants, retail and goods, and services the corridor offers. The area residents support strategies that would bolster existing and future businesses, especially restaurants and retail, likelihood of surviving the pandemic.

Opportunity

Allow outdoor operations in parking spaces

City Unified Development Code 7.2.2 requires a standard ratio for all commercial zoning districts; restaurants have the lowest ratio at 1 off-street parking spot per 150 square feet of gross floor area. If businesses such as restaurants and retail could extend their services to 50% of its off-street parking spaces, restaurants would be able to accommodate more customers while maintaining social distancing. The City of Houston launched their "More Space"¹ program in August 2020, where at no cost to the business owner, the owner can simply fill out an on-line form stating its intention and proposal to meet the program's requirements.

- Corpus Christi City Code 38-23² restricts no more than two food trucks on a private property. The City may consider granting permission to increase the number of food trucks in a parking lot as long as it does not conflict with the 50% rule previously mentioned.

1. <https://houstontx.gov/mayor/press/2020/more-space-program-restaurants.html#:~:text=The%20new%20program%20allows%20any,strict%20health%20and%20safety%20guidance>
 2. https://library.municode.com/tx/corpus_christi/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=PTIITHCOOR_CH38PEVEMOFOVEITMESO_ARTIINGE_S38-17VEGERE



Parking lots provide ample space for restaurant-goers to dine outdoors while socially distancing. Source: Montgomery County Planning Commission

Collaborate with business owners to transform vacant properties/storefronts into entrepreneurship incubator spaces

Businesses may be faced with vacating their leases due to reduced revenue over time. Temporary permits for pop-ups and incubator spaces can be tedious and cost prohibitive. To help facilitate temporary activations, the City of Austin created a Pop-up retail Ordinance (Section 25-1-364)³ that allows for issuance of temporary Certificates of Occupancy. Permits can be issued for up to 45 days and renewed once for a maximum of 90 days. This opportunity creates the flexibility needed for entrepreneurs while helping bridge the costs of rent and property taxes.

EXISTING PROGRAM

United Corpus Christi Chamber of Commerce Grant Program: up to \$5,000 to businesses with 3-20 employees in economically disadvantaged, vulnerable neighborhoods

3. https://library.municode.com/TX/Austin/codes/land_development_code?nodeId=TIT25LADE_CH25-1GEREPR_ART9CECOOC_S25-1-364TECEOC



Conceptual illustration showing the conversion of a parking lot and adjacent plaza into dining space. Source: Montgomery County Planning Commission

L3: When funding becomes available, continue to provide small business programs that target the long-term impacts of COVID-19

Goal

1	2	3	4
	✓		

Challenge

Available public aid for small businesses and economic opportunity has nearly all been distributed to Corpus Christi businesses and organizations. Unfortunately, the end of the pandemic is likely going to extend through 2021, which will continue to strain small businesses throughout the city.

Opportunity

Create new marketing opportunities for area businesses, such as “shop local” discounts, regular small business “festival” events, etc.

A group of organized businesses can help create an ideal condition for a successful commercial area, promoting each other and contributing to events and special discounts. Marketing and promotions can be an easy first step with a direct impact of attracting foot traffic. At minimum, the group can create a social media campaign, place similarly branded flyers on doorways, and create a discount program for frequent visitors.

EXISTING PROGRAM

United Corpus Christi Chamber of Commerce Small Business of the Day highlights a different business everyday. Local for Local's outdoor market is a local example of a successful curbside pickup and online ordering system during the pandemic with several small businesses participating

Provide grants or low/no-interest loans to physically adapt brick and mortar stores

These can help fulfill safety standards to keep employers, employees, and customers safe, including plexiglass barriers, walk-up service windows, outdoor seating and shade structures, and social distancing interior modifications.

EXISTING PROGRAM

City of Corpus Christi COVID-19 Recovery and Response Fund: PPE funds for nonprofits and the Small Business (>20 employees) Regional Pandemic Grant Program available from the United Corpus Christi Chamber of Commerce, Port of Corpus Christi, and City of Corpus Christi.

Create a Public Improvement District (PID) that raises tax revenue for local improvements

After business has returned to normal post-COVID, a PID can help the study area's businesses upkeep public infrastructure like medians and landscaping. Maintenance was raised as a major concern, but beautification of the corridor was a major priority as well. Costs of improvements are paid entirely by property owners within the PID who elect to be included- which is why the timing of this strategy needs to wait for the economic conditions to rebound after COVID-19.

EXISTING POLICY

City of Corpus Christi Resolution 032077 adopted on March 31, 2020 creates the Public Improvement District Policy.



Coordinated marketing flyers can create a cohesive business district. *Source: Steve Mellon / Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*



Businesses need to purchase PPE, such as plexiglass dividers, to protect their customers and employees during the pandemic.. *Source: zoranm/E+/Getty Images*



Other purchases may include social distancing signage. *Source: Kevin Rivoli, The Citizen*

Streetscape Strategies

Goals

1	2	3	4
✓	✓	✓	✓

Problem

Northwest Boulevard's current design is incomplete. It is characterized by multiple wide lanes in each direction, hardscaped medians that limit left turn access, few sidewalks, and few safe crossing opportunities for pedestrians. The lack of options to walk on the community's "Main Street" limits opportunities for the types of neighborhood-serving businesses for which project participants voiced support. The lack of ideal walking/biking options also results in residents using a vehicle to get around, further increasing congestion and traffic. Wide lanes in urban areas also encourage higher speeds.



FM 624 Eastbound near Riverwood Drive.

Solution

Northwest Boulevard enjoys a wide, 150-foot right-of-way, and so building roadway design elements that improve safety and accessibility for all modes of travel does not require sacrificing vehicular mobility by eliminating traffic lanes. The diagram on pages 12-13 illustrates how many such features work together to create a comprehensive, “complete street” that meets the needs of all users.

The guidance that follows should be relied upon to inform the design and engineering of future improvements to Northwest Boulevard.

S1: Reduce lane widths

Reducing lane widths discourages speeding while preserving traffic flow capacity, and creates more room for pedestrians to safely cross the street, such as at a wide median, or a curb extension.

Figure 8: Streetscape Elements Diagram



S2: Enhance planting areas

Beyond a comfortable sidewalk, shade is perhaps the next most important street feature to people walking in the Texas sun. Minimum 6' wide planting areas located between the back-of-curb and the sidewalk or sidepath are recommended to accommodate shade trees approved by the City's landscape ordinance and TXDOT. Additional trees may be planted on the outside of sidewalks and sidepaths, between them and the property line.



Shade trees enhance sidewalk comfort. *Source: Duplantis Design Group*

Figure 9: Streetscape Elements Diagram

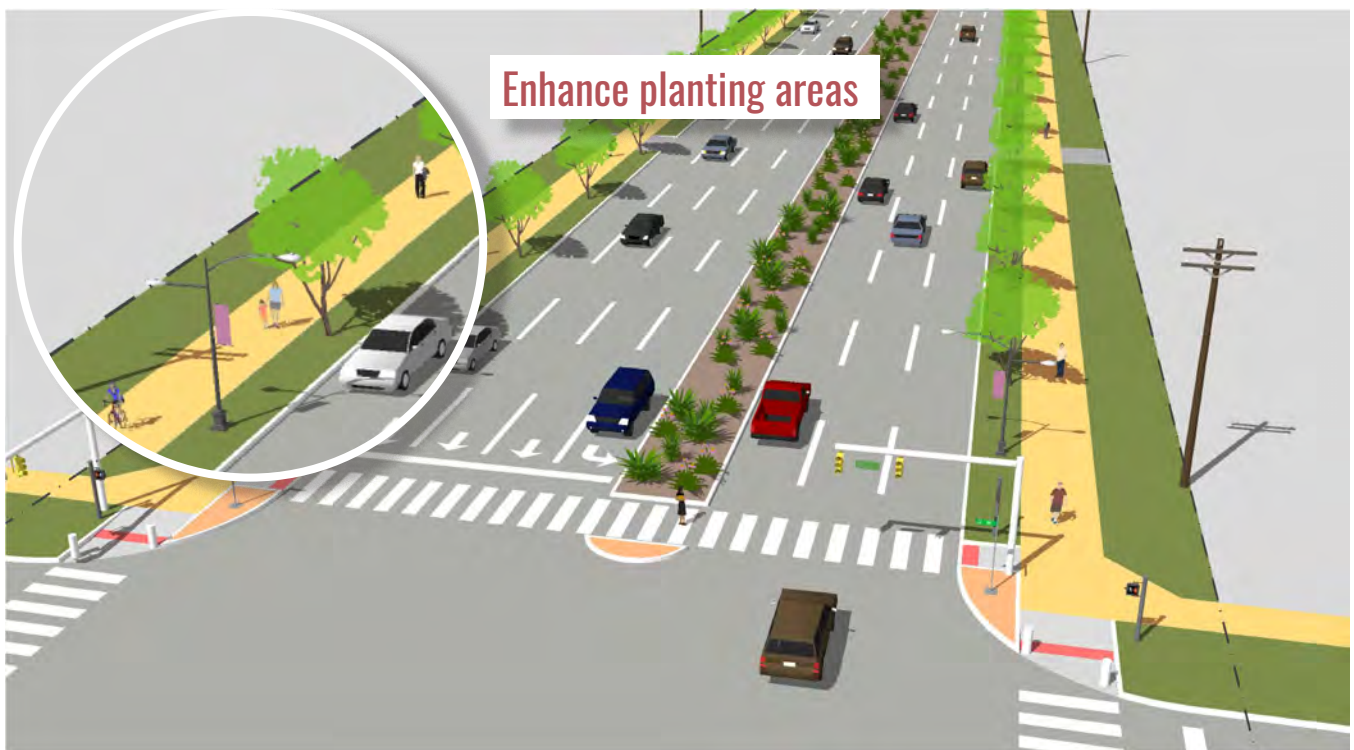


Figure 10: Northwest Boulevard Native Plant Palette



Anacua
Ehretia anacua
Water Use: Low



Texas Mountain-Laurel
Sophora secundiflora
Water Use: Low/Medium



Retama
Parkinsonia aculeata
Water Use: Low/Medium



Little bluestem
Schizachyrium scoparium
Water Use: Low



Inland Sea Oats
Chasmanthium latifolium
Water Use: Medium



Bushy bluestem
Andropogon glomeratus
Water Use: High



Texas Sage
Leucophyllum frutescens
Water Use: Low



Dwarf Wax Myrtle
Agave americana
Water Use: Low



Fire Bush
Hamelia patens
Water Use: Medium

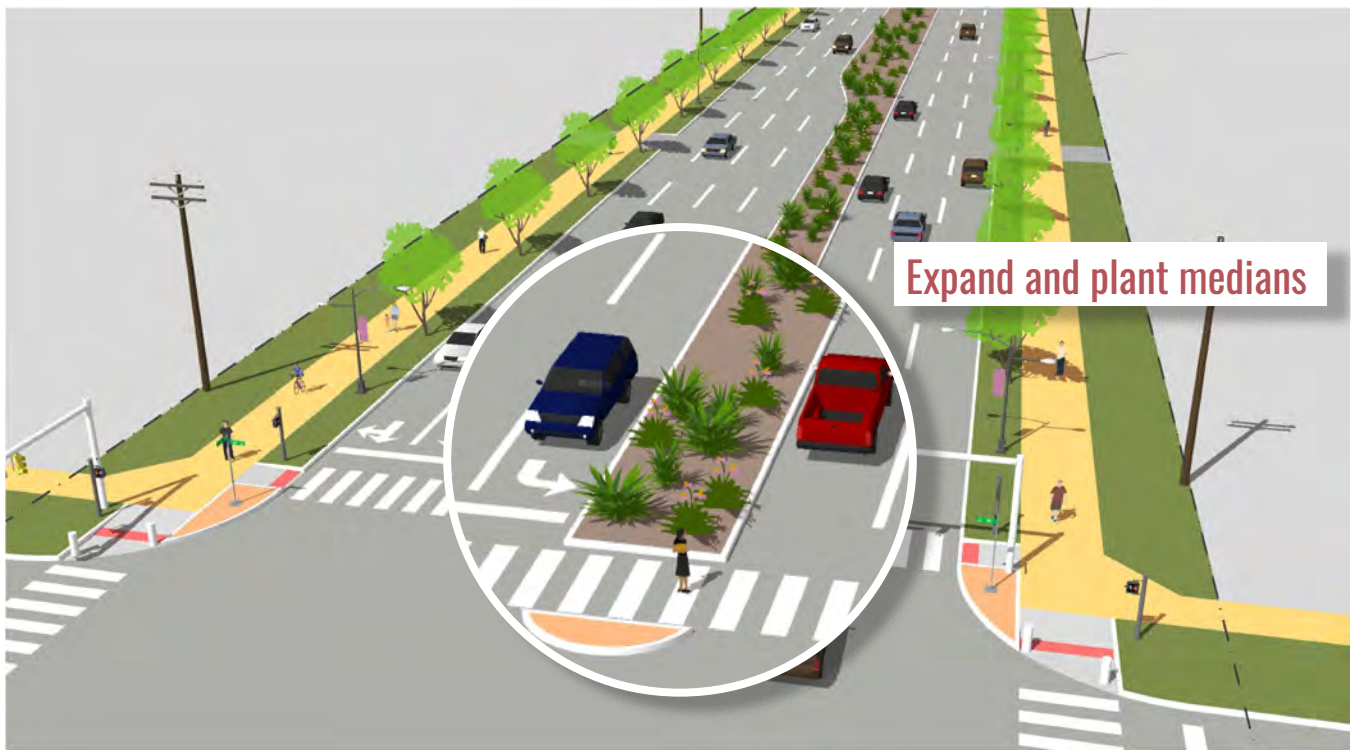
S3: Expand and plant medians

Current medians serve access management purposes, but could be reconfigured to provide safer crossings and a more attractive streetscape. The U.S. Access Board's Public Rights-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG) require a minimum six-foot wide median to accommodate people crossing each direction of roadway travel. Eliminating the existing striped buffers provided for turning lanes, or narrowing lane widths, can provide the space needed to widen existing medians and build new ones that meet this width requirement. Such medians should be designed with a curbed end cap to better protect the pedestrian from head-on and U-turn traffic while in the area of refuge. PROWAG standards require detectable warning surfaces on each side of the pedestrian refuge to assist the visually impaired or those with disabilities..

Public attitudes toward medians are mixed. Many participants in the first public meeting and respondents to the Visioning Survey warned against investing in median landscapes that the City and State are unable to maintain. Others expressed desire to beautify the roadway by adding plantings along the roadway sides and medians. In response to review of three different median treatments - "Shade," "Ornamental," and "Limited," - a near majority (70 of 144, 49%) preferred Shade, followed by 44 (31%) who preferred the Limited treatment.

Given funding constraints for maintenance, the City should work with TXDOT to at a minimum plant drought-resistant ornamental grasses, perennials, and wildflowers, which absorb stormwater, beautify their environment, and require minimal maintenance.

Figure 11: Streetscape Elements Diagram





Structured plantings on medians with trees. *Source: Jimbo.info*

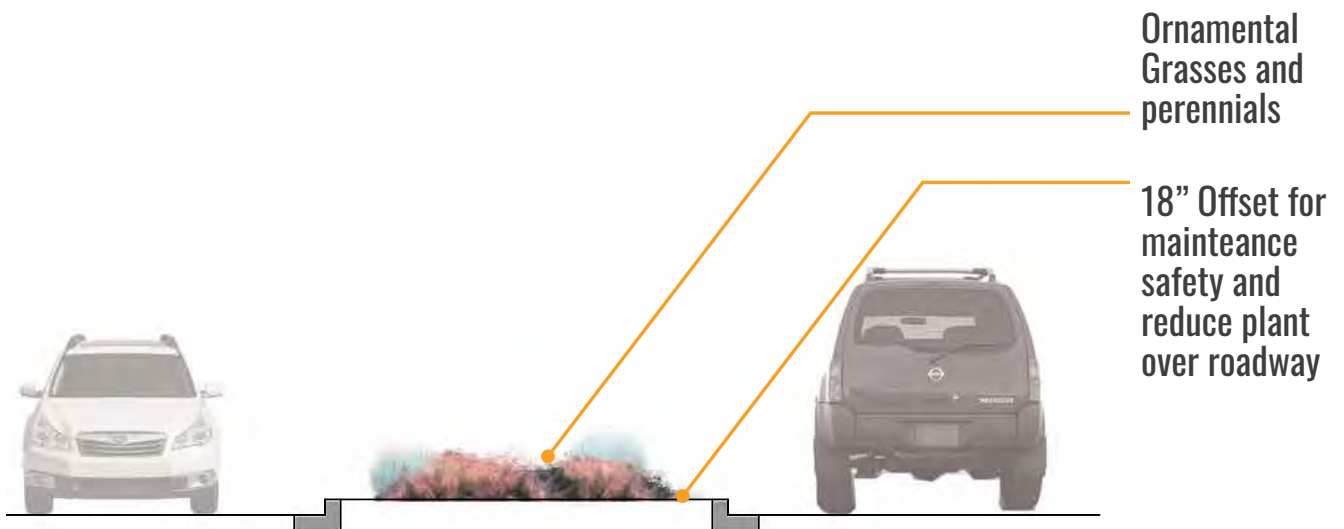


Structured plantings on medians. *Source: King of Prussia District*



Wildflower plantings on medians. *Source: Prairie Restorations, Inc.*

Figure 12: Limited Median Landscaping



S4: Design and install signage and banners

Custom branded street signs, wayfinding signage and banners help create a sense of place and distinguish a district. Respondents to the Concepts Survey overwhelmingly supported (101 of 144, 70%) conceptual designs for unique street signage that’s consistent with the identity of the Callalen Independent School District.

Street banners, which typically adorn individual streetlights or may be hung between separate fixtures, even across a street, can supplement branded signage, and be replaced more frequently to mark or advertise seasonal occasions and events, such as festivals or

football games. 90 of 143 Concept Survey respondents (63%) supported this concept.

To support the long-term health and cohesion of the Corridor as a distinct place to live, work and learn, the City should work with the ISD, TXDOT, and community to develop and produce a family of street signage and banner typologies. Initial signage and banner installations should occur toward the eastern side of the Corridor, at intersections with IH-69 southbound, Wildcat Drive, and County Road 69.

Figure 13: Street Signage Options

Street Signs



Street Overhead Signage

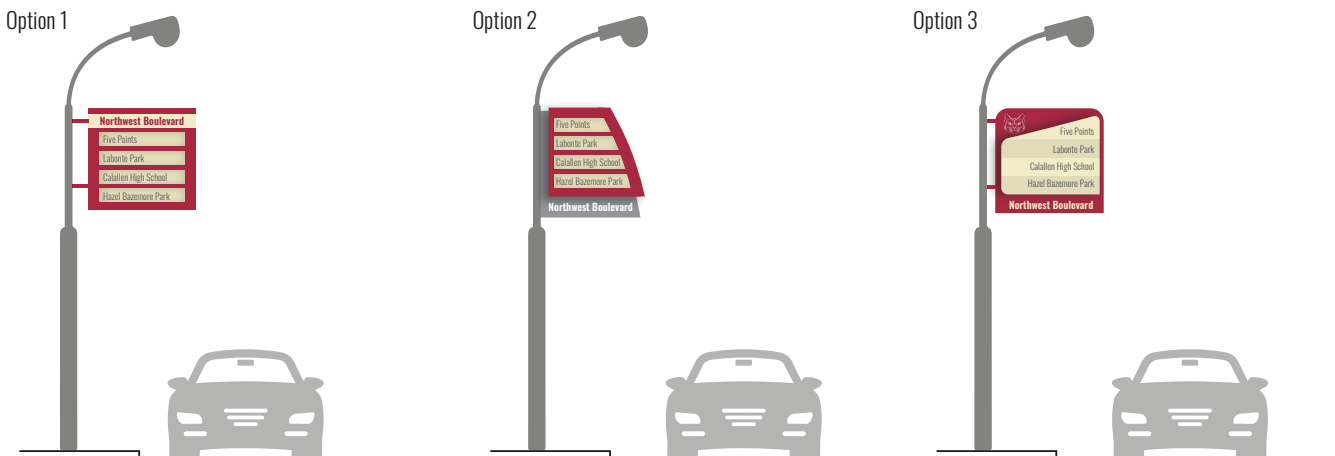


Figure 14: Monument Signage Options



Figure 15: Gateway Options

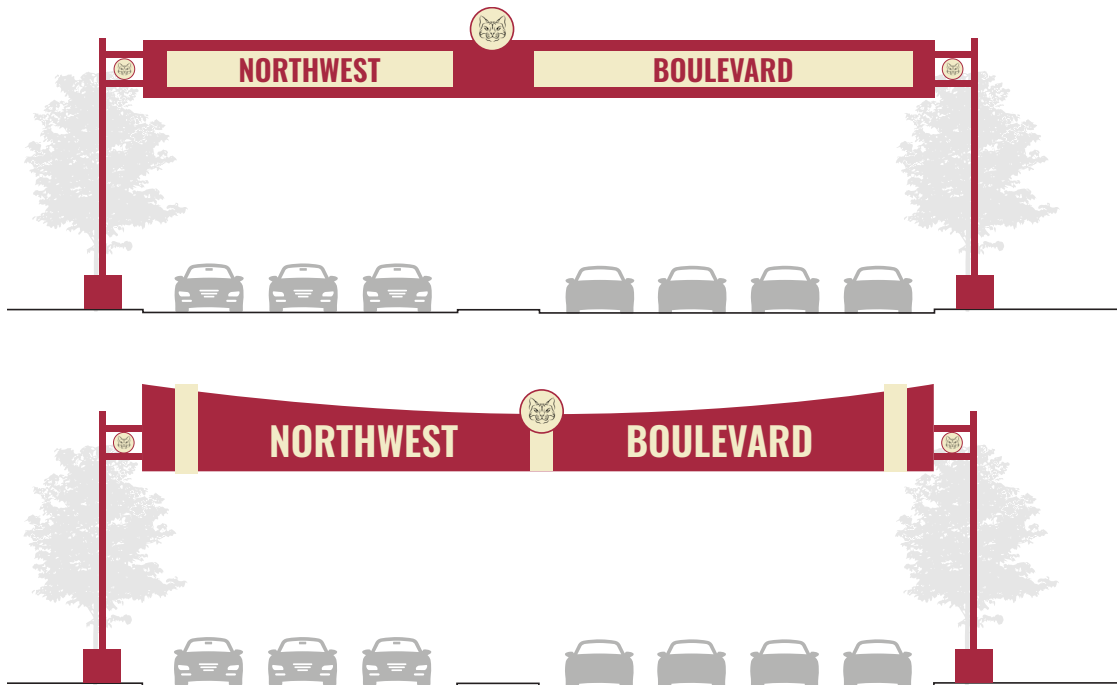


Figure 16: Street Banner Options



S5: Install Public Art

Public art is a way to bring creativity and interest to the Calallen study area, and solidify its identity as a small, tight-knit and family-friendly community. Public art should be made by local artists that reflects local culture and traditions. Blank walls on commercial structures make excellent opportunities for murals, while prominently located, publicly owned land is appropriate for sculptures. 75 of 142 Concept Survey respondents (53%) supported this idea. Art locations are suggested at a variety of strategic locations in the district in the concept map on pages 10-11.

Underpass Art



Toronto Underpass Park.
Source: Justin + Lauren



Existing Underpass Conditions, potential site for a gateway art.
Source: Google Maps

Crosswalk Art



Crosswalks in Lima.
Source: Carlos Cruz-Diez



Crosswalks near Calallen High School, potential site for crosswalk art.
Source: Google Maps

Mural



Historic Walker Lake Mural.
Source: Zakcq Lockrem



Existing Hobby Lobby Wall, potential site for a mural.
Source: Google Maps

Sculpture Installation



Glass totems in Cathedral Square.
Source: Danny Mingledorff Flickr



Riverwood Drive, potential site for an art attraction.
Source: Google Maps



IMPLEMENTATION

An aerial photograph of a commercial corridor, likely Northwest Boulevard in Corpus Christi, Texas. The image shows a multi-lane road with a median, a parking lot filled with cars, and several commercial buildings. Visible signs include 'CVS', 'FROST BANK', and 'FROST BANK'. There are palm trees and a traffic light pole in the foreground. The overall scene is a typical urban commercial district.

Overview

If implemented successfully, the strategies detailed in this report will contribute significantly to achieving the community's vision for Northwest Boulevard.

This responsibility rests not just on the City of Corpus Christi, but also its government, nonprofit and business partners who participated in the planning process. The Implementation Matrix that follows organizes all of the Plan's recommended strategies in one place.

Each strategy includes recommended actions and responsible actors, supportive partners, and phasing.

Implementation Matrix

Strategy	Actions	Timeframe	Cost	Potential Funding Sources	Responsible and Partner Entities
Transportation					
1. Reduce congestion at I-69	Study alternatives to existing design, identify preferred design	1 year	Less than \$500,000	FHWA funds allocated through the CCMPO; Local match paid by local tax revenue	City of Corpus Christi, TXDOT
	Allocate/identify funding for design and construction	2 years	None	N/A	City of Corpus Christi, TXDOT
	Complete construction	4 years	Up to \$5 million	FHWA funds allocated through the CCMPO; Local match paid by local tax revenue/capital improvement plan	TXDOT; CCMPO
2. Improve intersections for safety and mobility	Incorporate traffic-calming, street lighting, and pedestrian facilities into designs for prominent intersections	5 years	Less than \$500,000 per intersection	FHWA funds allocated through the CCMPO; Local match paid by local tax revenue/capital improvement plan	City of Corpus Christi, TXDOT; CCMPO

Strategy	Actions	Timeframe	Cost	Potential Funding Sources	Responsible and Partner Entities
3. Build active infrastructure along roadways	Construct sidepaths as recommended along Northwest Boulevard	5 years	Up to \$5 million	FHWA funds allocated through the CCMPO; Local match paid by local tax revenue/capital improvement plan	City of Corpus Christi, TXDOT; CCMPO, CCRTA
	Install buffered bike lanes along recommended roadways	3 years	Less than \$250,000	City Capital Improvement Plan	City of Corpus Christi, TXDOT
	Install shared-lane markings and signage along recommended roadways	3 years	Less than \$100,000	City Capital Improvement Plan	City of Corpus Christi, TXDOT
4. Coordinate with ISD to manage traffic demand	Review signal timing at Wildcat Drive and River East Drive to prioritize predominant traffic movements during peak morning and afternoon periods - particularly during the 4pm rush hour.	1 year	None	N/A	City of Corpus Christi, TXDOT, Calallen ISD
	Produce and execute a traffic management plan designed for special events	1 year	None	N/A	City of Corpus Christi, TXDOT, Calallen ISD
	Organize a walking school bus program and other activities to encourage walking and biking to school	2 years	None	N/A	Calallen ISD

Strategy	Actions	Timeframe	Cost	Potential Funding Sources	Responsible and Partner Entities
Land Use, Zoning and Business					
5. Adopt Future Land Use Map Amendment	Hold necessary Planning Commission and City Council hearings to approve adoption of updated Future Land Use Map (Figure 7, page 22)	1 year	None	N/A	City of Corpus Christi
	Phase investment into new water, wastewater, and drainage planning and infrastructure in areas south of Northwest Boulevard	1-10 years	Up to \$7 million to be determined through engineering assessment and negotiation of shared costs with developers.	City Capital Improvement Plan	City of Corpus Christi; Nueces County

Strategy	Actions	Timeframe	Cost	Potential Funding Sources	Responsible and Partner Entities
6. Relax zoning and other city restrictions for businesses adapting to COVID-19	Request City staff to explore a temporary program to expand businesses' outdoor operations into off-street parking. Seek City Council approval.	1 year	None	N/A	City of Corpus Christi
	Request City staff to create a temporary Certificate of Occupancy program for entrepreneurs in vacant properties. Seek City Council approval.	1 year	None	N/A	City of Corpus Christi

Strategy	Actions	Timeframe	Cost	Potential Funding Sources	Responsible and Partner Entities
7. Provide small businesses programs that target long-term impacts of COVID-19	Encourage Northwest Boulevard businesses to organize and create marketing opportunities for the area. The City will provide ombudsman services.	1 year	None	N/A	Northwest Boulevard businesses; City of Corpus Christi
	Continue to provide small and local business resources for low/no-cost loans	1 year	None	Federal and State grants, Philanthropic grants	City of Corpus Christi Small Business Recovery Program
	Request City staff to determine if the Northwest Boulevard area would benefit from a new Public Improvement District.	2 years	None	N/A	City of Corpus Christi and property owners

Strategy	Actions	Timeframe	Cost	Potential Funding Sources	Responsible and Partner Entities
Landscape/Streetscape					
8. Reduce lane widths	Design and build enhancements to existing and future conditions of Northwest Boulevard to include narrower lane widths	5 years	Less than \$100,000	FHWA funds allocated through the CCMPO; Local match paid by local tax revenue/capital improvement plan	City of Corpus Christi, TXDOT; CCMPO
9. Enhance planting areas	Design and build enhancements to existing and future conditions of Northwest Boulevard to include street trees	5 years	Less than \$500,000	FHWA funds allocated through the CCMPO; Local match paid by local tax revenue/capital improvement plan	City of Corpus Christi, TXDOT; CCMPO
10. Expand and plant medians	Design and build enhancements to existing and future conditions of Northwest Boulevard to include minimally landscaped, expanded medians	5 years	Less than \$1 million	FHWA funds allocated through the CCMPO; Local match paid by local tax revenue/capital improvement plan	City of Corpus Christi, TXDOT; CCMPO
11. Design and install signage and banners	Allocate/identify funding for design and construction	5 years	Less than \$100,000	FHWA funds allocated through the CCMPO; Local match paid by local tax revenue/capital improvement plan	City of Corpus Christi, TXDOT; CCMPO
12. Install public art	Allocate/identify funding for design and construction	5 years	Less than \$100,000	FHWA funds allocated through the CCMPO; Local match paid by local tax revenue/capital improvement plan	City of Corpus Christi, TXDOT; CCMPO

Funding the Plan

MPO/TXDOT Funds

A combination of local, state, federal and even philanthropic funding sources will be necessary to fully implement the Northwest Boulevard Corridor Plan. As of the report's writing, funding has not been allocated to support all of the improvements and programs recommended in the Corridor Plan.

TXDOT and the CC Metropolitan Planning Organization have programmed \$18 million in the regional Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) to expand Northwest Boulevard from four to six lanes with a median, from CR 69 to FM 73, citing traffic volumes and the roadway's designation as a Hurricane Evacuation Route. The prospective timeframe for this \$18 million programming is 2031.

This Plan has documented several reasons to prioritize funding for roadway improvements outside of capacity expansion, including public desire to mitigate new traffic to the corridor, and to fix existing safety and accessibility problems.