

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Walkable Main

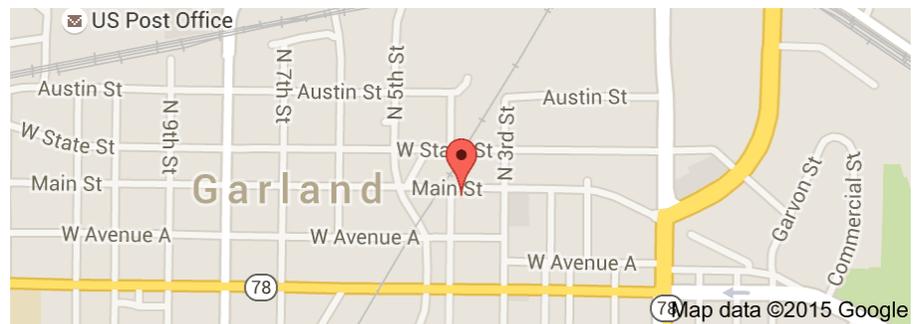
Location: MAIN STREET

Fifth to 78/First/Main

Introduction



Home of Texas Hot Spot and Wallis Welding – 316 Main Street Garland Texas—located on the other side of the tracks. This interesting building, once home to an automobile dealership is currently repurposed into two businesses: 1) a retail nonprofit shop that sells liquidated merchandise to benefit a girls home in India and 2) a regionally acclaimed welding shop.



Location of Wallis Welding on Main Street

Overview of Project Scope for Walkable Main

This ambitious project intends to transform a strip of Main Street in Garland, Texas that extends from Fifth Street to the intersection of 78/First/Main into an area that is attractive and enticing for pedestrians and that will transform this area into one that attracts visitors, promotes customers to existing businesses, grows the local economy with additions of new businesses, and even makes possible for building two residential pocket neighborhoods.

A Micro Village pocket neighborhood is proposed to be located on S. Fourth Street between Main and Avenue A. This area is proposed to contain four to five tiny homes that are no larger than 500 square feet. The other proposed pocket neighborhood, with eight to ten 1000 square foot cottages, is proposed to be located on Third Street in between State and Austin Streets (currently city-owned property).

An additional goal for this project includes connecting this area better to surrounding neighborhoods. These areas include downtown and the nearby downtown residential units near City Hall and also connections to the Garland community at large.

This is charming neighborhood is bordered on the west by a railroad track, on the north by Austin Street, on the east by First Street and on the south by Avenue A. Most of the homes in this area are small and most of them are well kept. This strip of Main Street is a currently a mix of Industrial, Residential, Commercial and Retail with a little of the Arts thrown in. A few more businesses could be added to better serve the residents in this area: perhaps a dry cleaners/laundry; a neighborhood grocery; another restaurant; and an entertainment space with a bar and music might be appropriate additions. It is also suggested three **makerspaces** be added to this area.

The proposed activities for this project focus overall on the creation of a sustainable area. As such, the activities of this project do not include tearing down or replacing existing businesses located along this strip such as are often associated with architectural efforts to gentrify a neighborhood and thus make it unaffordable for the people who currently occupy it. The goal of this project is to enhance and support what is already there. Furthermore, it is hoped that our city planners will provide for some sort of inclusionary zoning to protect our existing businesses and residents from being “gentrified” out of their place.

Project Planning Stages

The first two stages and their related activities should probably be done sequentially and in that order as first and second. These are the basic requirements for making Main Street Walkable and these steps have an existing dependency. (*Before Stage 2 can be successfully completed, Stage 1 needs to be in place.*) While planning and discussion of subsequent steps can be undertaken prior to the completion of the first two stages of the project, and while these steps may be ongoing simultaneously, it is advised that none of the related activities beyond planning begin until the completion of the first two stages of this proposed project. Each subsequent section of this proposal document is devoted to one of the following topics:

STAGE I

- Redesign this strip of Main Street in such a way as to make vehicular traffic (both bikes and autos) secondary to pedestrians. Build a walkable sustainable pathway

Materials

Materials needed are to be determined and specified for each stage of the Walkable Sustainable Main Street project.

Resources

Resources needed to obtain and put to use the materials to create Walkable Main are also determined for each stage of the Walkable Sustainable Main Street project.

It is expected that most of the resources for the redesign of this strip of Main would come from community donations, volunteer labor, and grant money obtained from various urban land use/improvement offerings by various government and private foundations.

For example, at \$15 apiece, Loving Garland Green might donate 10 thornless blackberry plants for the vacant lot across from Roaches Feed and Seed as well as some of the labor for digging up and relocating the pyracantha bushes.

In addition, this project is expected to attract financial investors for some aspects of this project such as the funding and development of the two pocket neighborhoods.

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of crushed granite on both sides of Main Street from Fifth Street to the Intersection of 78/Main/First Street. Also create crushed granite pathways leading to Walkable Main from Fourth, Third, Second and Haskell Streets.

STAGE II

- Enhance and plan interesting landscaping detail to the Main Street Strip along the path.

Subsequent Project Items for Consideration

Activities associated with completing all of the bulleted items listed below may be performed simultaneously, depending upon interest and resources and funding available. As with the first two stages, each of these bulleted items will have a section in this proposal that provides more detail regarding how and why.

- Identify locations along the strip for three potential Makerspaces.
- Create an improvement plan for each existing business along Walkable Main Street that includes interesting new spaces sharing a portion of the side areas of the walkways with existing businesses. *[Each plan will be sustainable and will be designed to support the existing business by attracting people who are walking by to stop in.]*
- Make plans/designs for the few existing open spaces along the strip and work with the owners of these properties to achieve these plans and/or modifications of these plans.
- Create interesting portable businesses that can be linked to and shared with businesses and people in nearby neighborhoods.
- Create at least one or two new businesses on existing vacant lots (an old-time grocery store perhaps and perhaps a neighborhood entertainment spot) to support the needs of the people who live alongside Walkable Main. The proposed grocery is more like an old-time neighborhood grocery store—a place you could walk to if you forgot to buy toilet paper at your favorite grocery chain store—not a 7/11 or neighborhood Wal-Mart—a locally owned grocery.
- Create two pocket neighborhoods on two of the side streets connecting to Main Street: one a tiny home micro neighborhood and the other one a more traditional cottage style pocket neighborhood.

Note: Most of the WALKABLE MAIN project is a Soup Stone community involvement project whereby all participants bring “vegetables” to make the “soup.” We are working together to make our community more inviting, unique and lovable and in so doing, we are lifting up the quality of our own lives and our local economy. We are all connected and it is to all our best interests to enhance that connectivity.

Terms Related to this Document

Makerspace

A makerspace is a physical location where people gather to share resources and knowledge, work on projects, network, and build. Makerspaces provide tools and space in a community environment—a library, community center, private organization, or campus. Expert advisors may be available some of the time, but often novices get help from other users.

The makerspace—sometimes referred to as a hackerspace—is often associated with fields such as engineering, computer science, and graphic design. The concept emerges from the technology-driven “maker culture,” associated with Make magazine and the Maker Faires it promotes. <http://www.makershed.com/collections/make-magazine>

This idea of a collaborative studio space for creative endeavors has caught hold in education, where the informal combination of lab, shop, and conference room form a compelling argument for learning through hands-on exploration. On campus, the makerspace is being embraced by the arts as well as the sciences, and a new energy is building around multidisciplinary collaborative efforts. In the Garland ISD we have Makerspaces in place at some of our public schools. For example, Watson Tech has a makerspace located in their library.

There are three very good reasons for establishing makerspaces along this strip of WALKABLE MAIN.

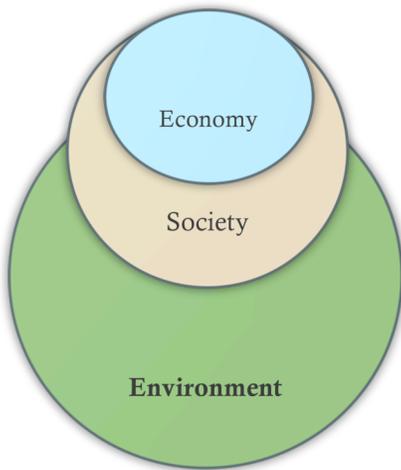
- 1) Makerspaces are great laboratories for job creation and job training.
- 2) Makerspaces will attract people to this area and give people one more reason for coming here.
- 3) Makerspaces can contribute to growing and strengthening our local economy and especially the businesses located on Walkable Main Street.

Sustainable

One of the key concepts for the development of this area is the concept of sustainable. We want to ensure the development of this project supports activities that are deemed sustainable.

The [2005 World Summit on Social Development](#) identified sustainable development goals, such as economic development, social development and environmental protection. These three pillars have served as a common ground for numerous [sustainability standards and certification](#) systems in recent years.

Sustainable can be measured and it is suggested that plans for Walkable Main be subjected to measurement by established sustainability standards.



PILLARS OF SUSTABILITY

These three pillars of sustainability are often expressed as nested circles. Both economy and society are constrained by environmental limits. Ideally, sustainability will improve the quality of life while at the same time supporting eco-systems. It is founded on respect for nature, universal human rights, economic justice and a culture of peace.

Inclusionary Zoning

Communities adopt inclusionary zoning policies primarily to increase new housing opportunities for moderate-income families. However, inclusionary zoning can also help stem displacement of existing residents in neighborhoods undergoing redevelopment, where the cost of housing increases to levels that are unaffordable to current residents. In addition to increasing the overall supply of affordable homes, inclusionary zoning can play a role in alleviating the "spatial mismatch" that occurs in many high-cost areas when local housing prices rise out of reach of low-wage workers who serve the community.

It is hoped by this author that the members of the Garland City Council will carefully consider putting some sort of financial controls on the development of this area to avoid the ironic situation of redevelopment pricing current residents out of their homes and places of businesses.

Pocket Neighborhoods

Successful pocket neighborhoods start with the central idea of a limited number of dwellings gathered around a shared commons, connected by walkways. These communities are not isolated to themselves, like a gated community, but connect and contribute to the character and life of the surrounding neighborhood. It is essential that cars and traffic do not invade the shared pedestrian space. The active rooms of the homes, including front porches, face the commons

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rather than turning their back to neighbors. There is a layering of public to private space, which is accomplished through careful landscape design and careful placement of windows to ensure privacy for each dwelling. These are core design principles. *[I would think we could have easily have eight 1000 square foot cottages built on the vacant lots on South Third Street in between State and Austin Streets.]*

Read the book Ross Chapin's book for further principles, far more articulation, and examples. *Pocket Neighborhoods: Creating Small Scale Community in a Large Scale World.* By [Ross Chapin](#); [Sarah Susanka](#) (Foreword by) (Taunton Press, Hardcover, 9781600851070, 220pp.)

The developers and architects heading up these two projects for our first pocket neighborhoods here in Garland should have a thorough knowledge of pocket neighborhoods and their goals and purposes as well as their basic designs. Pocket Neighborhoods are not designed in the traditional suburban fashion of isolating neighbors from one another. They represent a return to gentler times when people had front porches and you said hello to your neighbors.

Walkable Concept

There is an increasing amount of literature available today with suggestions that address how to make urban areas more walkable. In "Walkable City", for example, Jeff Speck proposes ten key ways to creating walkability. One of his ten key ways is "Mixed Use." According to Speck, ". . . the research shows that neighborhoods with a diversity of uses – places to walk to – have significantly more walking than those that don't."

Walkability offers surprising benefits to our health, the environment, our finances and our communities.

Some communities are choosing to develop differently than they have in the past, and I am happy to see that Garland is joining in this national movement to a more walkable world. By creating a more pleasing mix of homes and businesses we can give residents an alternative to the car.

Using Photo-editing software, the visionaries of Urban Advantage have transformed pictures of communities from all over the country to show how they could become more pleasant, walkable neighborhoods. By working together with their city planners and officials, the residents of Garland can bring about similar transformations in their own community. Visit the link below to see the startling transformation to walkable.

<http://www.nrdc.org/smartGrowth/visions/default.asp>