

Improvement Plans 1- Vacant Lot

Location: In Front of Roaches
Fifth and Main Street
Owned by City of Garland?



406 Main Street—Across from Roaches Feed and Seed-



This vacant lot is actually just outside the area of the Walkable Main Street Village as it is located on the other side of the railroad tracks that divide Main Street Village from the downtown area proper of Garland. However since it is city property we can perhaps use some of this space to promote Walkable Main Street Village and use this area to help connect Walkable Main Street to the downtown area. This is designated as a “working document.”

Overview

Today this is a large unused green space. It has an expanse of Bermuda grass, a large clump of native grasses in the southeast corner, a clump of many pyracantha bushes and a large Loblolly Pine in the center of the pyracantha bushes. Odd landscaping to say the least. The area is wasted space that is maintained (by the city at taxpayer expense?) and no one really sees it, much less uses it.

A row of what appear to be red-tipped photinia on its north side hides the view of this area from Main Street. Red-tip photinia bushes are highly susceptible to the fungal pathogen known as Entomosporium that causes leaf spots and ultimately defoliation. The disease has all but eliminated Red-tip from the list of recommended shrubs for Southern landscapes. In fact, the disease is so widespread that one plant pathologist jokingly explained that there are two types of Red-tip, those that have the disease and those that are going to get it! "

For whom is this space maintained? There are no park benches and no paths to invite humans into this space.

Benefits of this Transformation

People and perhaps even their pets could enjoy this space. With just a few nips and tucks, it could even be showcased as an amenity to promote rentals in the downtown urban living units being built near city hall--And as one more reason for folks to come to downtown Garland. Transformation would also be good for business at Roaches Feed and Seed, which is located just across the street. *[Note: if this is owned by the railroad, we could appeal to them to be a good neighbor and help fund this.]*

Suggested Activities/Action Plan

1. Get input from nearby neighbors such as Roaches Feed and Seed and downtown residents and businesses. [Tell how you would do this.]
2. Perhaps appoint a neighborhood committee for the redesign of this plot of land to make it more people friendly. [Tell how you would do this.]

Materials

Materials needed would depend on the determination of the re-design plan for this space.

Resources

Again, the resources needed for the re-design efforts for this space would be determined by the plan.

However it is expected that most of the resources for the redesign of this space would come from community donations and volunteer labor.

Note: The entire project of WALKABLE MAIN 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.

Suggested Modifications to Existing Area

- Relocate all those Pyracantha bushes [If dwarf they could be relocated to border the Fifth Street side.]
- Plant Blackberry bushes (thornless variety because they do not invasively propagate surrounding areas via roots) to border the east side of the lot that is parallel to the tracks.
- Leave the lovely native grass.
- Make some inviting space beneath the canopy of the tree after removing the pyracantha bushes—Add a few benches or even a table or two.
- Other possibilities might include part of this space as a small urban community garden. Perhaps instead of that, use of that space as a small dog park. Perhaps instead of a full-blown dog park we could have it as a space for well-behaved dogs on leashes and owners who bring doggie Baggies with them.
- A large sculpture could be created for this area to emphasize it as the entrance to Walkable Main Street Village.

DOG PARK CONSIDERATIONS

1) Owners know their dog and its temperament. If it is not friendly with other dogs, and especially people, then they should not bring it to a dog park and then be surprised when it bites someone.

2) Dog owners who do not have full verbal command of their dog should not bring it to a dog park unless it is leashed.

3) If the dog is not very well socialized with dogs and human beings, owners should bring it to the park on a very short leash and allow it to have the experience of becoming more socialized. Gradually it may become socialized. Key word here is SHORT leash.

4) If dog owners are not willing to pick up their dog's poop, they should not take it to a public place.

REGARDING PROMOTION OF BLACKBERRY BUSHES IN GARLAND – Notes from Liz Berry

Thornless blackberry bushes thrive on neglect in the Garland area. The blackberry is one of the healthiest foods to put in your mouth. It is packed with antioxidants. Unlike strawberries, blackberries freeze well.

Blackberries have many uses—from a healthy food source to cosmetics. As a food commodity they are always at the high end of market value. The average annual price for blackberries hovers at \$4.00 for 12 ounces year round.

WALKABLE MAIN

Thus far, from May 28 to June 11, 2015 two blackberry bushes in my yard have yielded 33 pounds and 4 ounces of blackberries—a total market value of \$199.06 to date and these two bushes are not done for the season just yet. I estimate they have about 10 more pounds on them.

Not only do I propose planting 10 blackberry bushes in this vacant lot, I also propose planting them throughout WALKABLE MAIN. I propose to promote Walkable Main as also being a blackberry trail with approximately 100 blackberry bushes planted along this strip. These bushes could become one of the unifying themes for this sustainable area of our city. They could help promote urban agriculture and support increased development of a strong local plant-based economy. Furthermore, these blackberry bushes could support several of the existing businesses on Walkable Main: **Wallis Welding** (if it includes a Makerspace) could design garden tools and yard art. **HOUR Kitchen** could be used to make blackberry jam and food products from blackberries; **Garland Saw and Lawnmower's** services could sharpen blades of garden tools; a graphics design company could be added to Walkable Main to create labels and advertising materials to support blackberry sales.

Blackberry season encompasses the entire month of June in Garland. We could declare June GARLAND BLACKBERRY FESTIVAL TIME and create all kinds of activities centered on a month-long celebration of this local fruit.

Additional Ideas for Vacant Lot

[This area is reserved for the addition of other ideas and the expansion of ideas mentioned on the previous page.]

Describe how these ideas suggestions would make the vacant lot more walkable, useful and enjoyable

[This section is reserved to better explain the additional ideas for the Vacant Lot that were presented above.]

Suggested Activities/ Action Plan

[Describe what activities are needed to carry out your suggestions and an action plan with steps—at least an overview.]

Suggested Adaptations of Existing Area

- *[Describe here how you would change the existing elements in the area. For example, would you dig out those pyracantha bushes or leave them?]*

Materials

Reserved to list materials needed for suggestions

Resources

Reserved to identify related resources.