

## MOVING TOWARD A MORE PROSPEROUS AND CONNECTED GARLAND WITH WALKABLE MAIN STREET



This paper provides an overview of the principles and guidelines that I believe, if followed, will create a Walkable Main Street\* that will not only serve the existing and new neighborhoods cropping up in this area, this area will serve all the citizens of Garland. Please feel free to add to them and grow our body of knowledge related to creating a more sustainable, walkable Garland. – Elizabeth Berry

*\*Walkable Main Street is that area of Main Street in Garland that stretches eastward from the railroad tracks beside Roaches Feed and Seed to the intersection of 78/First Street/Main.*

## PRINCIPLES AND GUIDELINES FOR CREATING A WALKABLE MAIN STREET

1. Create a safe, sustainable path through the area.
2. Add interesting elements to the path. [*Build around a central theme such as sustainable, urban agriculture, natural, blackberries (or a particular edible that grows well in your area.)*]
3. Create new interesting spaces in existing spaces along Walkable Main.
4. Spruce up and repurpose existing places and/or parts of them.
5. Take advantage of new spaces and lease them while you can.
6. Celebrate the existing funky areas and promote urban agriculture where possible. ***The idea in creating a Walkable Main is not to tear down and remove existing businesses. The idea is to lift them up and support them with new ideas and sustainable surroundings and to connect them better to the nearby neighborhoods as well as to the city as a whole. Walkable Main is not intended to be an exercise in slash and burn.***
7. Create new interesting portable businesses that can be linked to and shared with businesses and people in connecting neighborhoods and downtown.

# HOW TO ATTRACT PEOPLE TO WALKABLE MAIN STREET

## 1. CREATE A SAFE PEDESTRIAN WALKWAY THROUGH THE AREA.

First of all, we must make this strip of Main from the Railroad tracks on the west to the corner of First/78/Main on the east invitingly walkable. We want to create an environment where people will want to walk.

- Redesign this strip of Main to slow down and even reduce the amount of auto traffic while increasing the amount of pedestrian traffic.
- Create a path from crushed granite that extends on both sides (not in a boring straight line) of Main Street from Fifth Street on the west to the corner of First/78/Main on the East.
- Make sure the crushed granite path has branches that connect to the side streets and to the urban apartments behind City Hall. We want Walkable Main to be connected to the surrounding neighborhoods and to the downtown area.

## 2. ADD INTERESTING ELEMENTS TO THE PATH

- Add elements that are soothing and connected. We could have 15 or 20 fountains along Walkable Main. They could all be different sizes but made from the same materials. For example, terra cotta fountains with a Spanish/southwest style. These could be donated by people in memory of loved ones and also by businesses on Walkable Main.
- Add low-maintenance landscaping elements—especially to enhance the areas around the fountains and to soften the harshness of the concrete and asphalt turf that predominate this area.
- Add a special plant feature to Walkable Main such as blackberry bushes planted everywhere—at least 100 of them. You don't have to worry about any mess because believe me, at \$3.99 for 12 ounces in the Grocery store, blackberries will get picked and eaten. As I've mentioned before, this plant grows extremely well and fast in Garland. We could add an annual attraction of a month long blackberry festival centered in on Walkable Main for the entire month of June—the harvest month for blackberries. If our community became blackberry fanatics, we would see a big uptick in our local economy within a year. Blackberries are not only for eating, because of their high antioxidant content they are also used in cosmetics and medicine.

### 3. CREATE NEW INTERESTING SPACES IN EXISTING SPACES ALONG WALKABLE MAIN

- **COMMUNITY GARDEN** - Make a community garden in the green space in front of Roaches. This might be a great attraction for the residents of the new urban apartments near City Hall and it would help to strengthen a local neighborhood community

Or this space might be used as a dog park, or a dog park and a community garden.



- **BOCCE BALL COURT** - If you've never played bocce ball, it's time you learned. I found these DIY instructions for building a court and guess what—you use crushed granite and sand. It's not that expensive. In S. California where I use to live they had them at fancy Italian restaurants and people played while waiting for their tables. <http://www.diynetwork.com/how-to/outdoors/patios-and-decks/how-to-build-a-bocce-ball-court> This area might also be a good space for a small edible garden along side the bocce court.

*Where shall we put it? Well, perhaps we could put it on that vacant lot between Rose Detail and the Garland Saw & Lawnmower building.*

*HOW ABOUT HERE? Of course this vacant lot could be used for other things too. It's especially nice because there is no concrete or asphalt.*





#### 4. SPRUCE UP AND REPURPOSE EXISTING PLACES AND/OR PARTS OF THEM

##### **Garland Saw and Lawnmower:**



Looks like the right half of this building is vacant. Perhaps this might be a good space to create a place maker.

The Garland Saw and Lawnmower place fits in perfect with our urban agricultural promotion as well as sustainable living.

##### **Samson's Auto Sales**

This place has an interesting building on it that appears to be begging for a new life. The upper level of this building could easily become a teahouse, a restaurant, a pool hall, or even another place maker space.



## **5. TAKE ADVANTAGE NEW SPACES AVAILABLE AND LEASE THEM NOW WHILE YOU CAN.**

The building below on Walkable Main has a 1,800 square foot space available and a 600 square foot space available.

What can you do with it? Just about anything. This could be an art gallery, a music studio, a place maker, a graphics design company, a hair salon,



## **6. CELEBRATE THE FUNKY AND PROMOTE URBAN AGRICULTURE AND SUSTAINABLE**

For example, make Staten's Appliances with its hundreds of used white goods a Walkable Main Street Icon. Dream up new uses for appliances that no longer work. Make them into plant containers. One of the new features at Staten's might be a top-loading washer with an herb garden growing out of it.



## **7. CREATE INTERESTING NEW PORTABLE BUSINESSES**

We could have three or four portable businesses set up on Walkable Main. These would be kiosk type designs, but perhaps more along the lines of the old gypsy wagons or the stands used by sidewalk booksellers in Paris.

These portable businesses could also travel to the square. They don't have to stay on Walkable Main all the time. What could they sell?

I would definitely like to see one called LOCAL YOKEL STUFF. This would be things that are made by Garland residents. For example, we could sell food items that were made by local people at the HOUR Kitchen. We could sell artwork made by local Garland residents—all sorts of things.

Other items might be used books. Unique small antiques such as kitchen utensils and garden tools. No junk from China.