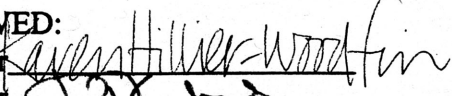
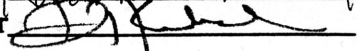


Revitalization of Main Street Texas
Brooke Bailey
University Undergraduate Fellow 1992-1993
Texas A&M University
Department of Environmental Design

APPROVED:
Fellows Advisor 
Honors Director 

The history of Main Street is the history of our society. The culture and traditions that are inherent in each region are reflected in the architecture of the downtown area. Texas has a diverse ethnic history that includes Spanish, Mexican, German, Czech, African and English influences, in addition to others. Until the twentieth century the majority of people lived in rural areas, creating areas of great historical interest. The architectural periods involving immigrants in Texas begin with the Spanish Colonial of the 1700's, followed by the Pioneer Settlements of the mid 1800's. The Greek Revival period overlapped the Pioneer Settlements from 1840 to 1870; parallel to this was the Military Period. The Victorian brought the state into the twentieth century.

There is a real danger in losing these important architectural examples of our past. Buildings with hand-carved details stand empty and rotting (see photos), or, are torn down in favor of a glass and concrete strip center with no elements to identify the geographical or cultural location. Increasingly people in rural communities no longer go downtown on Saturday to shop and visit, opting instead for urban malls or WalMart. The loss of centralized activity diminishes the economic and social web of the town. Decreased social interaction between community members of separate generations discourages the passing of tradition, history, and individual values to the members of the younger generations.

An increased awareness in nostalgia has significantly grown during the past decade. Anice Read, director of the Texas Main Street Project, has noticed a rural renaissance. More young people and businesses are seeking means for reducing stress typical of urban areas of high populations. The motivations are a return to the

perceived "simpler times" and a desire for a quality lifestyle for themselves and their children (Flory,1986). This has created many opportunities for small towns to become that new "home town". A clean and maintained downtown is a means to entice weekend visitors to become permanent members of the community.

Revitalization is not only good for the historic preservation of a town's architecture, it is also a salable commodity. A central business district that has been restored with a sense of continuity and faithfulness to the past can be used as a tool to attract businesses looking for a small town to locate in. As the downtown area fills with retailers and restaurants it is assumed that people will begin to frequent the shops on a regular basis. The layout of most downtowns dictates walking from one place to the next. The chance of seeing someone familiar and stopping to visit is increased. Social interaction in a manner that promotes commerce in this leisurely fashion becomes an enjoyable experience. This can be promoted to attract tourists from urban areas. Economic development in a non-threatening way can be accomplished in this manner. Nothing of the culture and tradition of the town is lost; the downtown is maintained, and the chance for historic preservation to gain popularity throughout the town becomes more feasible and attractive.

This paper is an examination of what revitalization is attempting to accomplish and how goals are reached successfully. Questions are raised on how communities define success. The common elements determining the difference between success and failure for downtown restoration projects are identified.

The motivation to undertake a revitalization project can be born from either an individual, a group, or some event that pulls the community together in an

effort to save their town. For Viroqua, Wisconsin the coming of a WalMart was that event (Jackson, 1992). The WalMart phenomenon is given by many rural towns as the reason for the decline of their central business district. WalMart sells everything cheaper and has plenty of parking; why would anyone shop downtown?

This was heard repeatedly throughout the downtown retail community. The people of Viroqua turned the coming of WalMart into an opportunity to upgrade the downtown. Local merchants remained competitive by researching the merchandise sold by the chain store. Based on the outcome of the research, the local merchants changed their inventories, implemented more liberal return policies, and increased open store hours to better serve their clientele. These efforts led to the town applying and being accepted into the Main Street Program, a boost that helped in assisting the restoration of the historic downtown area. This had a positive economic effect on the entire town. The townspeople have developed a new cohesiveness and sense of community that had decreased over the last few decades (Jackson, 1992).

The Main Street Program of Viroqua has become a positive model for other towns throughout the United States interested in revitalization. Many are based on the same principles of historic preservation and economic development through community involvement (Jackson, 1992).

The Texas Main Street Project was developed by the Texas Historical Commission in 1981, and was intended to be a guide in assisting small towns interested in revitalizing their historical downtown area. The project used as its model a pilot program of the National Trust for Historic Preservation that had been a

success in three small towns in the Midwest (Flory, 1986). The mission statement of the Main Street Program is as follows: "To assist cities in Texas in the revitalization and economic development of their central business districts and the preservation of their architecturally significant buildings". This statement of philosophy has guided revitalization efforts during the past eleven years resulting in an economically successful concept. During this time over 250 million dollars was reinvested in the central business districts of both official and self-initiated cities throughout Texas, one thousand seven hundred forty new businesses came into existence, and five thousand four hundred fifty-one jobs were created as a result of the downtown activity (Read, 1992).

Applications for participation in the Main Street Project were originally accepted from towns with a population of fewer than 50,000. However in 1989 the Texas Legislature expanded the program to include historic, commercial, neighborhood areas and downtowns of cities with populations greater than 50,000. The Texas Historical Commission allows up to five towns and three urban areas a year to be accepted into the Main Street Program as official Main Street towns (Freeman, 1990, Read, 1992).

Communities not recognized as official Main Street projects can self-initiate Main Street Programs and receive assistance on a limited basis. Once a town qualifies and hires a full time manager, assistance is offered in the following areas: training, periodic visits from the Main Street staff to consult with project participants, help in finding qualified professionals in design, marketing, help with merchandising and display, and any other required needs (Read, 1992). The Texas

Historical Commission reports at of the end of 1992, there were forty towns and urban areas designated as Main Street Program participants, including official and the self-initiated (Read, 1992).

The first activity of a town given Main Street status is an evaluation by the staff of the Texas Main Street Project. This includes a study of the community's needs, obstacles to, and potential for revitalization. The next step is a three day evaluation by a group of recognized professionals that culminates in a town meeting, at which the townspeople are presented with a report outlining short-term and long-term recommendations (Freeman, 1990).

The coordination of the efforts to carry out the recommendations of the Resource Team is the responsibility of the Main Street Manager employed by each individual community. The plans for long and short-term work to be accomplished includes four elements the Main Street Project considers to be very important to a successful project. These elements are: Organization, Promotion, Design and Economic Development (Flory, 1986).

The four elements of the Main Street Program give a good basis for any area looking to breathe new life into the central business district. The first element, organization, is the most basic to any project. Once a downtown group is organized they become a collective voice that has more clout in asking for help from city, county and state agencies. A cooperative feeling is established among merchants, professionals and business owners. Planned group promotions and activities (see photos), instead of individual efforts become an effective tool for increasing overall downtown retail activity (Flory, 1986).

Promotion, the next element, is the vehicle to getting the downtown noticed. Four types of promotion are identified as essential: promotion of the historic downtown district restorations, promotion of a cooperative and upbeat downtown image, retail promotions, and special events and celebrations (see photos) centered around the downtown area (Flory, 1986).

Design, the third element, deals with the historic buildings lining Main Street (see photos). They are a visual reminder of each town's unique heritage which can be an economic draw. Due in part to the central business district being a part of the oldest area of town, the buildings are often marred by long-term continuous usage, multiple owners and lessees (see photos). Neglect of individual and city owned properties, unrepaired sidewalks, streets and lighting, and neglect in funding by the city in favor of new projects in expanding parts of the area are also common characteristics which the designer must face in revitalization efforts (Flory, 1986).

Economic Development is the last, and the most elusive element, but vital to any town eager to boost a sagging economy through revitalization. Once the first three elements are in progress a town is able to consider the long-term goals of rebuilding the downtown economy and competing for retail and tourist dollars. These long-term goals can include plans for improving and expanding businesses already in the downtown area. Studies can be conducted to aid in adjusting the mix of retailers to suit the needs of local shoppers. Establishment of funds giving incentives to businesses to move into the empty shop spaces in the downtown area can be used in attracting retailers to the central business district (Flory, 1986).

The Main Street Program approach is an effective model, but what are

the differences between towns attempting revitalization becoming success stories or failures? Three towns were chosen to be research models for this paper. All are in Central Texas, with populations of less than fifty thousand. Each has a historic central business district. Their stories are unique. Only one is a designated Main Street town, another was a self-initiated project for a time, and the third dealt with historic preservation and revitalization without outside help. The towns are Elgin, Taylor and Fredericksburg. An analysis of these towns, their stories, and the hopes for their futures follows.

Fredericksburg is located in the Hill Country west of Austin. A group of German settlers, led by John O. Meusebach, founded the town in 1846 (Black, 1992). Although German colonists spread over the Hill Country, Fredericksburg became the quintessential German town in the area (Peyton, 1961). Farming and ranching was the way of life for most in the area. In the early days the majority of families lived in the rural areas surrounding the town, coming to town during weekends for shopping, visiting and attending church. Each of these families had an in-town or "Sunday house", a very small home used only for short, weekend visits (Black, 1992). Numbers of these have been preserved as part of the downtown historical district, some have been turned into shops. Others are bed and breakfast lodging for visiting tourists. The German influence is prevalent today in business names, architecture, and general neatness of the town.

Fredericksburg has become a popular weekend getaway. There are more than 50 annual special events and festivals (Black, 1992). The hill country surrounding the town is famous for its hunting and hiking. The town attracts people

to the historic business district with shops operating in restored buildings offering unusual items made by Hill Country craftspeople. The antiques and other specialty items of these shops are not usually found in urban shopping centers.

Fredericksburg identifies the time of Lyndon B. Johnson's Presidency as the beginning of its concerted effort at realizing its downtown potential (Reeh, 1993). The people of Fredericksburg being very conservation minded, are interested in maintaining the town's German heritage. During the Johnson administration there was excessive media attention focused on Fredericksburg as the Presidential vacation spot, much like Kinnibunkport, Maine, former President Bush's retreat. There was increased effort in revitalization due to the fact the whole nation was focused on the area. This was also the beginning of Fredericksburg's tourist program. People realized the town could attract visitors who thought this a very beautiful region of Texas. The media attention supported that. Other towns have allowed tourism to overrun the native culture and traditions, whereas Fredericksburg has made use of tourism as a reason to preserve the area's heritage (Reeh, 1993).

Revitalization has happened as a natural progression over approximately twenty-five years. In the beginning it was individual shop owners upgrading their own buildings, then a few groups worked to raise money to restore designated historic buildings. The most active of these groups were the Gillespie County Historical Society and the Fredericksburg Heritage Foundation. Both of which have worked very hard to encourage historic preservation in the area (Reeh, 1993). Slowly, as more restoration took place, people became aware of the town's attractions. More and more people began coming to the region to visit. An

awareness grew of Fredericksburg being an attraction, a destination city for tourists (Reeh, 1993).

Attracting retail business to the area required little effort after Fredericksburg's reputation grew. The impact of incoming businesses on the cityscape was controlled by strong zoning ordinances that are stringently enforced (Reeh, 1993). The historic district, protected from certain types of development, includes special provisions for parking, stricter zoning requirements, landscaping ordinances, and limits on erection of new structures (Crenwelge, 1991). A strict sign ordinance bans tall, glowing signs. Any non-conforming sign existing before the ordinance must come into compliance once repair or replacement is needed (Reeh, 1993).

The city council of Fredericksburg does not use its zoning ordinances to take an anti-business stance. It does use them as leverage for controlled growth. When WalMart decided to build in Fredericksburg they were required to go through a review process with the city, in order to obtain a conditional use permit. As part of the standards requisite to being able to build, they were obligated to landscape the parking lot using islands with trees, landscape timbers, and bushes (Reeh, 1993). The signage is also very different from the typical tall, large WalMart sign. It is a low-profile sign set on a landscaped knoll. These combine to give the whole site a different appearance. The impression of a huge warehouse in the middle of a large, barren parking lot is softened considerably by the landscaping. The store is not as visible from the road as corporate headquarters would like, but it blends better with the landscape, coming more in context with Fredericksburg's image as a town.

The clean orderliness of the town extends beyond the downtown business district into the neighborhoods. Most yards are neatly maintained, many have flowering or ornamental landscaping. Penny Reeh, a lifetime resident, attributes this to the German attitude. It has always been this way; the town did not suddenly straighten up to in order to attract tourism. Neatness is a very visible appeal for a community working to revitalize and attract both retailers and shoppers. It takes considerable effort to keep a town looking pleasant, especially when the local population is seven thousand, but the annual number of visitors is approximately seven hundred fifty thousand (Reeh, 1993). This is an enormous strain on the local resources of trash removal, buildings, sidewalks and landscape. Fredericksburg has, however, managed to handle the influx of visitors and maintain its appearance. This is an obtainable goal for any town, regardless of the current appearance. Neatness takes a minimum amount of money, but maximum commitment.

Community effort is probably the most important element in Fredericksburg's ability to grow as an attraction to tourists while maintaining its cultural integrity and small town attitudes, including a sense of community. An example of community spirit is the pari-mutuel racetrack outside of town at the Gillespie County Fairgrounds. Horses have been racing here for over one hundred years. The track has been continuously managed by the Gillespie County Fair Association, a non-profit organization. The association applied for a Type-III racing permit when pari-mutuel wagering was legalized in Texas. The intent was for a community project with no private interests involved. All renovations and upgrades to the racetrack were done by members of the community with untold hours

of volunteer time. All materials for the work were donated (Reeh, 1993). Any event held is also a community effort with no one getting paid for their time. As a result, a portion of the profit from the track is donated to a school fund that has been able to award some substantial scholarships in the last few years. This group effort allows the track to remain profitable, even though they race only a few times a year (Reeh, 1993).

Fredericksburg, as a model for revitalization, may, on the surface, seem like the exception. Located in a beautiful setting in the Hill Country, the town had never been allowed to deteriorate. The German architecture already in place is very distinctive. These characteristics and the intense publicity of the Johnson years made this a win-win situation in terms of revitalization and economic development in a historic context. Most people feel fortunate if they have one or two of these elements as a start. But one must examine more closely to find the true reasons for the continued success that Fredericksburg enjoys.

City planners with long-reaching goals enacted zoning laws to protect and improve the historic aspects of the area. This was accomplished in the past through high standards for incoming businesses, required beautification through landscaping ordinances, limits on signage, and strict enforcement of zoning laws. Without strict enforcement zoning would be useless (Reeh, 1993). If the WalMart had been allowed to build in the manner they typically do, other exceptions would soon follow. The appearance of the area altered by intrusive signs and shopping centers without landscaping would be unappealing to the visitor expecting a pristine Hill Country town.

Community effort and support has to be the most important and enduring reason for the continued success of Fredericksburg. Involvement in projects transcends all economic, social, and age barriers; **everybody** helps out. No person or group is excluded, any help is appreciated by all. The most telling statement that Fredericksburg is a united community came from Penny Reeh, Director of Fredericksburg's Visitor and Convention Bureau. She stated that most people here don't mind spending a little more to shop at a local merchant, as opposed to a big discount store or urban mall, because the local merchant is someone you will see donating time and money to local causes. You may spend ten percent more, but the town will probably receive fifteen percent in benefits from having a retailer in the community involved on a local level. The larger retailers, conversely, are not involved in a community-minded way. This shows a strong infrastructure of support that cannot be entirely attributed to cultural traditions.

Zoning and community involvement are elements other towns can take notice of when they study Fredericksburg as a model of success.

Another Central Texas town self-initiating downtown revitalization was Taylor. Taylor has a history that dates back to the 1700's, when a priest and seventy-five men decided to establish a mission in the area (Mantor, 1983). There would be three missions at the site. Each failed due to weather, disease, mismanagement, and hostile Indians. The missions were followed by two attempts at installing a fort to protect the region. The last came to an end in 1844 (Mantor, 1983).

In 1876 the International and Great Railroad was building tracks that would pass through the present site of Taylor. The townsite was purchased and lots

sold in anticipation of the coming railroad. The town was originally called Taylorsville after one of the owners of the International and Great Railroad (Mantor, 1983). Like most railroad towns Taylorsville grew rapidly. The population swelled, new businesses opened, churches were established. A cotton gin, grain elevator, and stockyards expanded the economic base (Mantor, 1983).

Taylor became an important rail shipping center with the Missouri, Kansas and Texas extending its rail line to the town in 1882. The influence of the railroad on local culture has lasted until present day, with many railroad workers making their home here (Mantor, 1983). The railroad also meant cultural diversity. People from diverse backgrounds were able to reach Taylor with relative ease, though Germans and Czechoslovakians made up the bulk of the population. Taylor had become a prosperous town, and the blackland around it yielded the leading cotton harvests in the state (see photos) (Mantor, 1983).

Taylor today is still a large farming community with several small industries. The downtown is comprised of historically significant buildings. There is, however, an overall feeling of apathy from members of the community towards the downtown area. There are many empty storefronts, the sidewalks need repair, and the buildings need restoration (see photos).

In the early eighties Taylor decided to initiate a revitalization effort. They hired a Main Street manager, initiated some successful promotional events (see photos), and restored twenty-one buildings. Taylor gained status as a self-initiated Main Street town. There was optimism regarding successful revitalization. Within a few years most of the events had fizzled out. Restoration came to a halt. There were

conflicts of interest with people in decision making positions. Additionally Taylor had been turned down three times as an official Main Street Project (Ryan, 1992). According to sources at the Main Street office and Molly Alexander, Main Street manager for Elgin, Taylor had all the basic elements, but never the right attitude.

Preservation of historic buildings in Taylor has not been promoted as adamantly as in some towns (see photos). If there is a historical society they are not providing guidance in restoration. This has led to the restoration of buildings in a manner that is historically incorrect. For example black marble and glass facades were used in revitalizing a nineteenth century building. One building owner spent so much on one of these "modern upgrades" that nothing was left to spend on his other buildings in great need of repair (White, 1993). The town has also had little success in raising money to help finance preservation efforts (White, 1983).

Those citizens concerned with historic preservation considered the building of an overpass in the middle of downtown a disastrous decision (Ryan, 1992). Several railroad tracks crossing Main Street in the center of downtown caused a major traffic problem. The solution was an overpass which blocks from view some of the most historically significant buildings of the downtown area. The overpass made access to these buildings so difficult most of the tenants left. Consequently they have fallen into great disrepair (see photos). This is the same block of buildings that the Historical Commission chose for its Main Street Project logo to represent revitalization efforts throughout Texas.

Another transportation liability is the loop running around the outskirts of Taylor. It diverts all through traffic away from the downtown (Ryan, 1992). There

are no signs to entice visitors to drive through town instead of around, though the driving time is the same. This is a significant loss to downtown retailers giving them little incentive to repair their buildings and sidewalks to entice visitors to stop and shop (see photos).

Taylor subsequently hired a Main Street manager to help organize events and get the town re-energized. There were several successful events including a Spooktacular and a Main Street Fair. The Spooktacular was such a success that the Main Street Handbook, published by the Historical Commission, cites it as a positive example of a promotion. Superficially these seemed like steps forward for downtown retailers. The retailers, however, were being left out of the decision making process. The events were not sponsored by a downtown association. They were being managed by the chamber of commerce, an organization that dealt with businesses throughout the Taylor area (White, 1993). The downtown businesses were no longer given priority status. Additionally, as WalMart began contributing to the chamber, more and more events began to be held in the WalMart parking lot. The monetary support from city organizations and government for the downtown events stopped (White, 1993). Soon thereafter the two events that had been so successful, fizzled out. This led to many downtown merchants leaving the chamber, as their interests were not being served by the current management.

A beautification program was also initiated for the downtown area. Though planters were placed along the sidewalk, there was no explicit designation of who was to be responsible for their upkeep. They soon became an eyesore and had to be removed (White, 1993). There is no evidence of any support for zoning laws to

protect the historical district or encouragement to clean up the downtown (see photos).

Many in Taylor seem to feel that the attention was paid to Georgetown, and not to them. Concurrently Georgetown was turning into a success story. They had initiated their revitalization efforts about the same time as Taylor, and with similar resources. Instead of being motivated by the nearby town's success, Taylor had the attitude of a spurned child (Headrick, 1993). Georgetown was organized and committed, Taylor's townspeople were not.

These repeated failed attempts and unsuccessful projects can be traced to lacking key elements which resulted in Fredericksburg's success. The lack of strong zoning by the city shows a absence of direction and long-term planning, leading to failed communication. Long term goals were not clearly established; plans could not be made to reach them.

More importantly than lack of zoning was the absence of community support. There was little cohesion or unification. Communication between groups was either hostile or non-existent. Self-interest seemed to be the motivation for most actions. Additionally, through talking to the "domino players", a group of older black gentlemen (see photos), it was evident that the minority community had been ignored and excluded (see photos). Instead of using the diverse cultural base as an asset, the decision makers selected enterprises projecting a certain "image". The value all groups bring in the form of volunteer work and community support to generate a positive self-image for the entire town was overlooked.

Taylor is by no means a "dead" town, but it will take changes in attitudes

to help it achieve its potential as a revitalized town.

Elgin, like Taylor, has railroad beginnings. It was established in 1872 as a stop on the Houston and Texas Railroad. Located twenty-five miles east of Austin, the town today has a strong agricultural foundation. It is known as the "Brick Capital of the Southwest" due to the hand-pressed bricks manufactured in the area (Freeman, 1990). The current population of approximately five thousand is rich in cultural and ethnic diversity. Elgin is the largest city in Bastrop County (Main Street Elgin, 1992), with a city government annual operating budget of \$1,919,885 (TU Electric, 1991). The town has a stable and diversified economic base and a positive outlook for future development.

Elgin began a self-initiated Main Street program in 1988 (Freeman, 1990). In the first two years it established a low-interest loan program, a Historic District Ordinance and Landmark Commission, and a tax abatement program for the restoration of buildings in the historic district (Freeman, 1990). In 1990 Elgin applied to, and was accepted as an official Main Street town. When the Main Street resource team evaluated Elgin, what excited them the most was the buildings in the downtown area had rarely been altered from their original state. Due to modest financial resources, the buildings received minimum upkeep. While this may be bad news to some, to the Historical Commission it was like finding an uncut jewel (Headrick, 1993).

After the initial excitement waned, revitalization began to slow down. An apathetic attitude began to develop among members of the community. There were no visible signs of progress. Then, in 1991 Elgin hired a new Main Street

Manager, Molly Alexander. She was a woman with a purpose and unlimited amounts of energy. She worked to rebuild the community's faith in the Main Street Project. She is also a tough recruiter of volunteers. Using the town motto of "an old town with a new spirit" to motivate, the townspeople have initiated several promotions and festivals, including Hog-eye Festival in the fall and Western Days in the summer (see photos).

The townspeople are finally getting involved. During the past year the visible changes in the downtown have been significant. As of March, 1993 there were ninety-nine projects with unprecedented estimated expenditures of \$393,032 (Alexander, 1993). Eleven buildings have been sold, with an expenditure of \$788,000. Private sector reinvestment is approximately \$1,164,251. There have been forty-six business starts, relocations and expansions for a net job gain of sixty-seven (Reinvestment Summary, 1992). A recent innovative promotion has led to a dramatic increase in building facade renovations. The promotion offers free paint to anyone wanting to repaint the exterior of their business. The previous promotion offering twenty percent of restoration costs received little enthusiasm, but the response to the free paint has been phenomenal. The result has been very visible in the form of freshly painted buildings, at a lower cost to the city. Whereas twenty percent of a renovation can run into the thousands of dollars, the paint program cost approximately \$200 per building. Higher participation at a lower cost, a definite success.

Although there have been major achievements, there have also been setbacks. The biggest came within the last two months. A large grocery chain with a

store on the highway outside of town bought out and closed the downtown neighborhood grocery store that had been a part of the community for generations. The economic loss was great, twenty-three jobs and approximately \$200,000 per month in revenue for the city. The community also felt a great loss. The outcry and anger led the Austin American Statesman to carry the story on the front page of the neighborhood section. Downtown businesses also are suffering. The grocery store, formerly located in the middle of the downtown business district, generated significant walk-in traffic for retailers. The move was sudden, the downtown groups and the Main Street manager have not yet had time to develop a plan to overcome the loss. The grocery store chain that closed down the small store has been surprised at the anger directed at them. They are working to become better community citizens by offering their support to a number of projects and promotions in order to regain the respect and the business of local townsmen (Alexander, 1993).

Elgin is in the middle of its downtown revitalization project. They have accomplished a number of positive things, made their share of mistakes, and have high hopes for the future. The basic outlines of the Main Street Program have been beneficial in helping to organize and promote successful projects. The city has not been exclusionary in recruiting either volunteers or new businesses. The first minority-owned business opened downtown this past year, and the minority community is starting to become involved. It will be a slow process to change some of the entrenched, small town bias towards minorities, but there has been a beginning. The town has enacted zoning ordinances to protect the historical district, and is in the process of developing long-range planning goals to preserve and

upgrade Elgin as a whole.

The towns chosen for this research project are examples of differing levels of success in revitalization with common lifestyles. Through informal interviews with residents of Taylor, Elgin, and Fredericksburg came new hypotheses and unexpected answers. An insight was gained on rural towns and their future possibilities for revitalization.

The basic finding of this paper is that a town doesn't have to be part of a program to be successful in revitalization. If it is part of one, that fact alone does not ensure success. Success is also not found in seeking the most money. Whether it be retail or tourist dollars, monetary goals must come later. Organizing into groups, although positive, only works if the groups communicate with each other, and have more than self-interest driving their actions. Long-range goals are imperative, but need to be obtainable, and have short-term milestones to show progress.

An important aspect of a downtown historic revitalization project is the actions of the city planning department. How is the city divided? Is there incompatible development in process? Is the historic district protected? What is the overall appearance of the city to the casual observer (is it neat or neglected)? These issues can be addressed by a comprehensive, long range zoning plan that is strictly enforced. Advice from Penny Reeh of Fredericksburg to any town attempting revitalization is to have a strong zoning ordinance in place. This allows for clear goals and limits, and clearly states who is responsible for maintaining a certain standard within the town. Zoning can also ensure the success of beautification projects by backing them as city ordinances, punishable by fines if violated.

Variations to current ordinances must be granted in only the most extreme of cases. The city cannot lower its established standards due to pressure from businesses willing to move to their town. By adhering to the standards set forth in the zoning laws, the city becomes more attractive and is able to select the types of businesses it will encourage to locate in the area.

An underlying principle that must be in place for any project that involves community support is; **every ethnic and economic group in the community must be included** in order to have the broad-based support necessary for a project as expensive and far-reaching as downtown revitalization. Everyone must feel they are a part of the project. This leads to a unified community that has the confidence to make changes and the volunteer power to accomplish goals. Towns like Fredericksburg having a single common culture from which to build have an easy, identifiable common thread. While others, like Elgin must look at the cultural diversity of their townspeople as an asset. All groups have something to offer, even if it is not apparent at first glance. No group can be ignored. Independent of how nice the downtown becomes, if one street over there has been neglect because the inhabitants have been excluded, then the entire town looks neglected. One can look to Fredericksburg to see what can be accomplished when pride and cohesiveness are instilled in the community. This is an obtainable goal for any town, including one like Taylor.

Once a community begins to act as a single body work is accomplished because it is a community effort with no one person or group carrying the load. Visitors to the area will experience the positive attitude and will return. Economic

development will follow. The community's prosperity can be measured by the good self-image projected. This will, hopefully, lead to a decline in young people wanting to leave as soon as they are able. The cultures and traditions will not be lost, but will be passed to the next generation.

The Main Streets of our small towns reflect our history. They are also our future, and need to be preserved in a way that maintains their architectural integrity and social importance. They become a living history lesson to any person who visits a small town and feels nostalgic for the simpler way of life exhibited therein.

Bibliography

Alexander, Molly. Economic and Community Development Director. Elgin, Texas. Personal Interviews, October 1992–April 1993.

Black, B. (1992). Scenic driving tours. Heart of the hills visitors guide. 5–6.

Crenwelge, T., Harper, B., Langerhans, L., Perry, J.H., and Roches, L. (1990). City of Fredericksburg zoning ordinances. Fredericksburg: Fredericksburg City Council.

Headrick, J. Administrative Coordinator, Texas Historical Commission. Personal Interview. April 1993.

Flory, L. (1986). Texas main street handbook. Austin: Texas Historical Commission.

Jackson, D.D. (1992). It's wake-up time for main street when Wal-Mart comes to town. Smithsonian. Oct. 36–47.

Main street Elgin: old town new spirit. (1992). Elgin: Main Street Elgin.

Mantor, R. (1983). Our town: Taylor. Taylor: Taylor Heritage Society.

Morales, R. (1990). Resource team report for Elgin, Texas. Austin: Texas Historical Commission.

Peyton, G. (1961). The face of Texas. New York, Bonanza Books.

Ryan, D. Architect, Texas Main Street Project. Personal Interview. September 1992.

Webster, W. F. Personal Interview. March 1993.

White, J. Personal Interview. March 1993.