



2020 Year in Review – Texas Main Street reinvestments

From the Texas Main Street team

It's no secret that the pandemic of 2020 brought intense struggle to many aspects of the Main Street economy, impacting small businesses and Main Street programs everywhere. Our COVID network calls ongoing since last March confirmed the breadth of it. Many businesses in Main Street districts were prohibited from operating during certain times of closure. Others found themselves without in-person shoppers and were even more impacted if they did not have online capacity to replace or supplement in-person visitors. Revenue streams for many local programs that would have come from event fundraising or tourism dollars dried up. This was all an issue in the Main Street world across the country, not just in Texas. **However, as our just-compiled year-end reinvestments show, there were some hopeful and inspiring spots as well. It's news well worth sharing.**

The 2020 totals were, as expected, below 2019 reinvestment. The 17% decline was spread across decreases in each category (public, private, public/private partnership). However, your quarterly reinvestment reports showed that in 2020, the 88 cities in the Texas Main Street network reported about **\$260 million** in overall reinvestment! Like you know, the Texas network includes communities of all sizes across the state, and there were substantial reinvestments in all population categories.

Population	# of programs
Under 5,000	19
5,000-9,999	15
10,000-19,999	17
20,000-29,999	12
30,000-49,999	9
50,000+	17

About **\$98 million**, or just under 38% of the total, came from the **public sector**. Many of the projects assumably had been in planning stages or underway prior to COVID's arrival but were continued in 2020. This includes **Taylor's** phased traffic calming along 2nd and Main, phase 1 of a larger improvement project in **Pittsburg**; a \$700,000 TxDOT signal project in downtown **Seguin**; and a Wifi/security project in the **Waxahachie** Main Street district.



The full scope area for downtown Pittsburg's public improvement plan. Phase 1 started in 2020 with sidewalk improvements.

In **Linden**, one of our smallest Main Street communities, the City proactively pivoted during the pandemic on a city-owned building/parking lot property when negotiations with a prospective tenant fell through. In order to keep momentum up, the City/Main Street developed a plan to activate the property as much-needed parklet/market/outdoor event and recreational space for the downtown district.

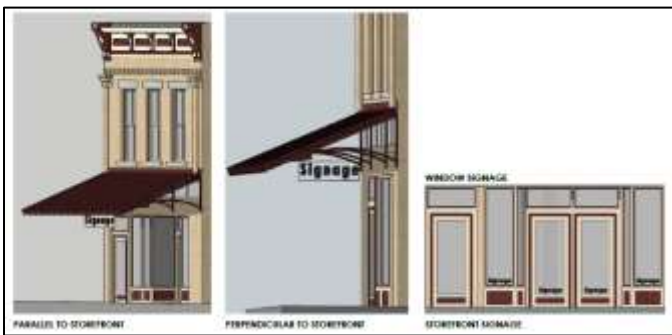
Total **Private sector** reinvestment that includes rehabilitations, new construction in your historic Main Street districts and the value of property sales – although 21% below 2019 - was still **\$125 million**. In the **Public/Private category** – that combines grants your program or city provides to help fund improvements to private owners plus their investment – **\$36 million** was reported. As discussed in the

COVID calls and in our mid-year economic overview, many of you saw existing grants, and in some cases new money, redirected toward COVID relief.

While the closure of about 200 businesses in your districts were reported, there was actually a **net gain** of 135 businesses opening during 2020!

For instance....

Foundry 42 coffee and gifts/retail is brand new to downtown **Georgetown**. Their first location is in New York and they selected the Georgetown Main Street district for their first Texas store! Texas Main Street design team assisted, and the City/Main Street awarded them a sign grant.



In **Luling**, a woman working at a local salon opened her own shop during 2020. Also during the year, a nail salon, a new antiques store, and a Salvage/Mining/Restoration shop opened as well.

Cuero...notes that there has been considerable interest in downtown, both during the height of the pandemic and now. It has included 10 prospects looking for retail space to lease and interest in buying buildings. "It's astounding, never seen anything like it since I've been here," says Cuero program manager Sandra Tague Osman.

In **Elgin**, Red Boutique Salon and Spa opened in July 2020. They were in the midst of renovations when the pandemic hit, which delayed opening. D2 Sports Bar and Grill opened in first quarter of 2020. They continue to navigate COVID19 restrictions with drive-thru, to-go options and limited seating as approved by the Governor's office. FireWild moved to downtown Elgin from Austin as a catering business, leasing space at 201 N Main Street for its commercial kitchen in 2019. When the pandemic started in 2020, they launched weekly Comfort Food to-go specials on weekends. These proved so popular they expanded the menu with brunch on Saturdays and Sundays, added sidewalk dining, and now have limited inside seating as allowed under the Governor's operating parameters.

Molcajete Cocina Mexicana in downtown **Eagle Pass** relocated within the downtown. They purchased an old home and turned it into a restaurant. The move received incentives from the City/Main Street.

In **Denison**, Cafe Blackbird opened in a newly rehabilitated building, moving from a successful restaurant in Quanah. In keeping with the new COVID world, they feature sidewalk dining.

As with the previous mid-year reinvestment snapshot done in August, we hope you will find this information helpful.