

# Main Street Matters

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## DOWNTOWN CORPUS CHRISTI'S COLORFUL AND CAPTIVATING MURALS



*By Alyssa Barrera and Samantha Robinson,  
Corpus Christi Downtown Management*

When visiting a new city, there is always a unique culture waiting to be explored. Corpus Christi has a rich history that has only recently started to be showcased on the walls of downtown buildings with a collection of

coastal and Chicano influenced murals. These colorful and captivating murals were created by passionate local artists, in a movement led by creatives who are determined to embrace the talent that develops in our region. Here are five murals to visit when you come to downtown Corpus Christi.

Corpus Christi's mural movement began on Starr Street, with K Space Contemporary Art Gallery's Dia de los Muertos Festival. The "Dia de los Muertos" mural created in 2011 by Ricardo Ruiz, Gerald Lopez, Day Wheeler and Jimmy Pena, celebrates this cultural holiday and kicks off our list of must-see murals. It is located at the end of Starr Street, on the historic staircase that connects Lower and Upper Broadway. The mural depicts skeletons doing everyday activities, which is popular with Dia de los Muertos art.

*(Cont. on page 2)*



The tunnel at La Retama Park is covered throughout with colorful murals. The section pictured above is "Dia de los Muertos" by Ricardo Ruiz, Gerald Lopez, Day Wheeler and Jimmy Pena. Image [Source](#). Photo Credits to JoAnna Kopp.

Another important mural is “**Loteria!**” which hangs on the backside of K Space Contemporary’s building, facing Chaparral Street, just south of Starr Street. In 2015, K Space had put on its biggest show ever with 114 different artists submitting 130 different Loteria cards for an exhibit. The idea then evolved into having jurors pick out 56 of the best cards and having them displayed in the mural.



A local favorite is the “**Endless Sunset: The Colors of Our City,**” by Sandra Gonzalez, which is displayed on the side of the Caller-Times building facing Taylor Street. Our local newspaper held a contest in 2015 and selected Sandra Gonzalez’s from 19 entries. When taking a closer look, you can catch all the coastal icons and cultural elements that capture the spirit of Corpus Christi.



Another great spot to check out in downtown Corpus Christi is the Art Center, known for displaying only local art, it also has an eye-catching mural on the west side of the building facing Shoreline Boulevard. The mural is called “**Chicano Pop**” and was created in 2017 by local artist Mayra Zamora. This piece displays her artistic style and if you look close enough you might be able to decipher the hidden message she put in the mural.



The last mural you should make time for when visiting downtown Corpus Christi is the “**A Breath of Fresh Air,**” on the wall of the Braswell Office Systems building on William and Mesquite Streets. This mural is an ode to sea turtles and sea life in the Coastal Bend. It was done by local muralist Jeremy Flores who now has opened an art supply store called Cre8ive Culture on William Street. Jeremy also just created a classic “Welcome to Corpus Christi” Mural on Mesquite Street.



There you have it, a taste of our city by just looking at murals. Corpus Christi has so much to offer from our beaches and captivating wildlife to the vibrant culture and heritage. We hope you find your trip to downtown Corpus Christi a festive and colorful memory you never forget.

(Top to Bottom) “Loteria! The Mural” is located on the backside of K Space Contemporary. Image Source. Photo Credits to JoAnna Kopp; “Endless Sunset: The Colors of our City” by Sandra Gonzalez on the Corpus Christi Caller Times building. Image Source. Photo Credits to JoAnna Kopp; The 7-panel mural at the Art Center of Corpus Christi changes each year. Currently on display is “Chicano Pop” by Mayra Zamora. Photo Credits to Samantha Robinson; A Breath of Fresh Air’ by muralist Jeremy Flores on the Braswell Office Systems building depicts a Kemp’s ridley sea turtle. Image Source. Photo Credits to JoAnna Kopp.

# BUILDING A DOWNTOWN PUBLIC SPACE THAT IS OF/ BY/FOR ALL



By Nina Simon, Executive Director, Santa Cruz Museum of Art & History

*Nina Simon is the keynote speaker during Thursday's Real Places Conference 2019 lunch session. She has been called a "museum visionary" by Smithsonian Magazine, a Silicon Valley Business Journal "40 under 40," and Santa Cruz County Woman of the Year for her innovative community leadership.*

In 2013, the museum I run, the Santa Cruz Museum of Art & History (MAH), embarked on an unusual capital project. We led the creation of Abbott Square, a downtown plaza incorporating food, music, family-friendly activities, art, and history.

We designed this plaza the same way we design every project; through a community process. We strive for our work to be OF, BY, and FOR everyone in our community. Here's a bit about our process. At the conference, I look forward to talking more about how you can work to make your downtown OF/BY/FOR ALL too.

When we first started talking about redeveloping Abbott Square as a community plaza for downtown Santa Cruz, we ran into some basic questions. What amenities does it need? Will it feel welcoming and inclusive for different communities? Whose vision of downtown are we designing for?

We answered these questions through four years of community conversations. We kept meeting and involving new advocates with strong and differing perspectives. The result is a project dreamed up by our community, then harnessed, honed, and taken to completion by the MAH.



Families dance and build community in Abbott Square at a free community event in September 2018. Photo Credit: MAH.

Here are three significant ways community participation influenced our project:

1. Community stakeholders made us confront the reality of divergent perspectives about downtown Santa Cruz.

Going into the project, we saw the museum's location in downtown as a huge asset to the project. MAH staff and trustees see downtown as a vibrant retail, dining, and entertainment district, packed with diverse people. We started the Abbott Square project to bring more of the people visiting downtown into the MAH.

But when we started hosting formal community visioning workshops in 2013 with the Project for Public Spaces, we heard other opinions of downtown. We heard suburban moms describe downtown as dangerous, dirty, and unappealing. Business people asked how we would keep out homeless people, drug addicts, and deviant behavior. Some people were downright incredulous that we could achieve our goals for a creative community plaza in downtown.

At first, I resisted and discounted these skeptics. I thought they had distorted perceptions of downtown. But over time, I learned to take their perceptions at face value. Their reality is not my reality, but it is real to them. And that led to two conclusions. First, that we should do what we can to address some community members' real concerns about safety, cleanliness, and signals of welcome. We started designing ways to make Abbott Square a desirable "first landing place" in downtown—especially for families with children.

And second, while we want Abbott Square to be a welcoming community plaza downtown, we have to accept the reality that some people in our county will never come downtown. We are taking concerns about cleanliness and safety seriously. But we are focusing on people who are skeptical yet open to downtown, not those for whom that door is closed shut.

2. Community stakeholders drove us to add food to the project in a big way.

When we first pitched Abbott Square to community members as a MAH project, we heard the same thing again and again; “I like the MAH. I love art and performances and family festivals. But food and drink are going to be the things to bring me back again and again.”

This community preference gave me a healthy dose of humility. A plaza rooted solely in creative practice was not going to achieve our community goals. We scaled up the food component.

We went from planning for one coffee shop and a small cafe to imagining a public market with five mini-restaurants and two bars. We invested way more time, money, and energy into adding food than we originally planned. We entered into a major new partnership to build Abbott Square Market. While Abbott Square still has art, history, and community at its heart, I accept the reality that food is what will drive most people to the plaza.

3. Community stakeholders made this a community project.



The Abbott Square incorporates food, music, family-friendly activities, art, and history. Image source.

Every step of the way, we reminded ourselves that we could only build a community plaza with our community. We found ways to engage community members in every step of the development process. Rather than engaging people in one aspect or way, we developed new forms of participation as needed. The first workshops were quite formal. They generated a fancy (and useful) report. But they were just the beginning. Here are a few other ways we involved community members in Abbott Square development:

- We created a set of coasters with the Abbott Square core components written on them: FOOD, ART, HISTORY, PLAY, COMMUNITY. Any time we met with people about the project, we invited them to sort the coasters in order of importance and discuss their rankings. And then we encouraged them to keep and share the coasters.
- We let people put their mark on the project without selling its soul. Before we tore out all the pavers, we invited people to “buy a brick” for a contribution of any amount, painting their name on it right then and there. We held a demolition party where people could draw and write their names on walls that were later destroyed. And when neighbors asked if they could take home pavers for their own construction projects, we always said yes. We also avoided selling naming rights for any part of the plaza, keeping it a community space. We honored all \$1,000+ donors together on one interactive sculpture.
- We held open design competitions for the two major public art components of Abbott Square. Community members served on juries, and we invited hundreds of museum members, donors, and visitors to weigh in on proposed designs.
- We invited Abbott Square advocates to host their own lunches or cocktail parties at the MAH to discuss the future of downtown with their friends.
- Whenever possible, we held public presentations/celebrations of the project. Most involved a fundraising ask, but we always made sure to welcome donors giving \$1 as well as those giving \$100,000. There were several events where we received gifts across that full range.

- We empowered a teen intern to make a video featuring MAH visitors to generate support for the project.
- We invited interested folks to attend major city and county hearings on the project and to offer testimony about the value of the project to them.
- We formed an “Operation Abbott Square” task force of business-minded volunteers to help us plan for operational changes at the MAH post-expansion into Abbott Square.

*Curious about community participation but not sure where to start? Check out OF/BY/FOR ALL, a new set of online tools for organizations of all stripes that want to involve their communities. On the site, you'll find a free five-minute self-assessment you can use to get a customized report on where your organization struggles and where it shines when it comes to being of, by, and for your community. At the Real Places Conference, I'll go deeper in unpacking this methodology and how it can work for you.*

## SEATTLE'S VIBRANT NEIGHBORHOODS



*By Cathy Wickwire, Operations Manager, Washington Trust for Historic Preservation*

*New this year, the National Main Street Center (NMSC) is offering a special discounted rate of just \$125 to local elected officials and senior local government staff from Main Street America communities and districts. Invite your Civic Leader partners to be your guest at Main Street Now 2019 to help strengthen the bond between Main Street and the municipality. Share this flyer by printing it out or by sharing it digitally with your local civic leader today! Main Street Now registration opens **November 1**.*

*Who is eligible? Mayors, county executives, city council members, elected local municipal leaders, staff at the director level and above in Main Street-related departments (i.e. economic development, planning, etc.). Must be from a Main Street America community. About the author: Cathy Wickwire is a lifelong Seattleite,*



Seattle's Chinatown-International District neighborhood Asian heritage mural. Photo credit: Rudy Willingham.

*resident of Capitol Hill, and the Operations Manager for the Washington Trust for Historic Preservation.*

Much has been made of late of Seattle's current status as the country's biggest boom-town with 114,000 residents added since 2010. As eye-popping as those numbers are, it's not the city's largest population increase in its 167-year history. That distinction goes to the first decade of the 20th century when the population almost tripled from 80,671 in 1900 and 237,194 in 1910. The 194% population increase is 10 times the increase of the last eight years, a mind-boggling number to be sure.

Where did all these new residents come from over 100 years ago? Many were new to the area, drawn by the opportunities presented by a rough, frontier town rising at the edge of a vast continent. Others were already living here in one of the independent towns or unincorporated areas that were annexed to Seattle and doubled its geographical size in the five years between 1905 and 1910. In 1907 alone, there were seven separate annexations, including Southeast Seattle, Ravenna, South Park, Columbia City, Ballard, West Seattle, and Rainier Beach. In April of 1910, Georgetown was the last independent city annexed by Seattle, which already surrounded it completely.



(Top) Restaurant in Seattle's Georgetown neighborhood. Photo Credit: Alabastro Photography. (Bottom) Seacrest Ferry Dock in West Seattle neighborhood. Photo credit: Rudy Willingham.

If these names sound familiar, it's because they live on today as vibrant neighborhoods that retain their own distinctive identities. With their starts as streetcar suburbs or satellite towns, these neighborhoods boast commercial districts that developed in much the same way as a Main Street community's downtown and continue to be the same vital center of the local community. While some travel writers would have you dash from one neighborhood hotspot to another, this lifelong Seattleite encourages you to choose one neighborhood to explore at your leisure.

A great place to start is **Georgetown** located about five miles south of Downtown Seattle. The layout of Seattle's oldest continually settled neighborhood makes no sense until you realize that there used to be a giant river bend that ran through it. What started as a small agricultural community founded by Luther

Collins in the early 1850s along the banks of the Duwamish River grew into a beer-making powerhouse by the first decade of the 20th century. The town incorporated in 1904 primarily to protect the brewery interests from a growing anti-saloon movement. By 1908, the Seattle Brewing & Malting Company claimed to be the fourth largest brewery in the United States and the sixth largest in the world by 1914.

Evidence of this storied industrial past is readily apparent in the massive brick buildings that line the east side of Georgetown's main thoroughfare, Airport Way. While the Seattle Brewing & Malting Company has long ceased operations, beer is still being brewed here at the Machine House Brewery. Taking their inspiration from the Brits, the brewery has been producing authentic cask-conditioned ales since 2013 and serving them up in their taproom from traditional hand pumps. Like many of Seattle's local craft breweries, kids and dogs are welcome, and feel free to bring your own meal or order from a visiting food truck.

If these old brewery buildings remind you of Willy Wonka's factory, you're not far off the mark as it's also been the home of Fran's Chocolates since 2014. Founded in 1982, this local institution now produces its signature handcrafted truffles, salted caramels, gold bars, and other delectables in a modern production facility that's open for viewing and guided tastings.

Industrial chic is a phrase that gets bandied about a lot these days, but Georgetown is the real deal. Adaptive reuse is a theme that runs deep in the neighborhood as former industrial, commercial, and residential buildings have been re-purposed for one-of-a-kind restaurants, bars, galleries, shops, saloons, and cafes. It's the neighborhood that wouldn't die thanks to the grit and determination of those artists, bohemians, and visionaries who have made it their home.

Moving on to **West Seattle**, the city's largest neighborhood has long been known as the birthplace of Seattle although the landing point at Alki Beach was soon abandoned for the more hospitable western shore of Elliott Bay. There, the nascent community developed a settlement that grew into what is now the Pioneer Square neighborhood. West Seattle's topography and geographic isolation limited residential and commercial development for many

years after that 1851 landing and continue to give it the feel of another city altogether. The fact that you have to take a seasonal water taxi or a massive bridge to get there only reinforces that feeling, but that's the way West Seattle likes it.

Nowhere is this feeling more apparent than at Alki Beach. Although recent development has replaced most of the small beach cottages that once lined the road, it still feels like you're on vacation when you venture over to Seattle's sunshine coast. After a walk, run, or ride along Alki Avenue's beachfront, stop in one of the many small cafes, restaurants, or pubs to soak up the sun on an outdoor patio in the summer or storm watch in the winter. If you want to learn more about that early Seattle history, the Southwest Seattle Historical Society's Log House Museum is just a short walk off the main drag.

Closer to downtown, the **Chinatown-International District** reflects the diversity of Seattle's Asian-American community. The neighborhood's collection of commercial and hotel buildings took shape in the early 20th century after the Jackson Street Regrade flattened a hill and provided enough dirt to fill in nearby tide flats. In the years before World War II, it became home to Chinese, Japanese, and Filipino immigrants—mostly single men initially—who sought to create a community that shielded them from the harsh discrimination outside.

The Chinese centered their Chinatown along King Street, which became a gathering point, marketplace, and home for laborers in lumber mills, canneries, construction sites, farms, restaurants, and laundries. Emblematic of their community is the building that now houses the Wing Luke Museum of the Asian Pacific American Experience. The East Kong Yick Building was constructed in 1910 along with its twin to the west with funds pooled by 170 early Chinese pioneers and no financial backing from a bank.

The Japanese developed a Nihonmachi or *Japantown* near Main Street, just north of the new Chinatown. Of the many Japanese businesses—restaurants, bathhouses, laundries, dry goods stores and markets—that thrived before World War II, most vanished when their owners were forcibly removed to internment camps in early 1942. Built in 1910 by the first Japanese-American architect in Seattle, Sabro

# GETTING TO KNOW YOU

REBECCA BARTON,  
CELINA MAIN STREET MANAGER



## 1. What is your hometown?

Irving, Texas.

## 2. What Main Street city do you represent and how long have you been there?

Celina, Texas. I started in June 2017 and my first week on the job consisted of HR paper work and then traveling to San Angelo for new manager training and the Summer Conference. It was exhilarating but a very welcoming start from everyone in this network from around the state!

## 3. What is your favorite spot in your downtown and why?

Celina has a unique square structure considering it is not a county seat and centers around an open greenspace with a pavilion instead of a courthouse. J. Fred Smith, a visionary in Celina, paved brick streets and build brick buildings on three sides of the square which was unheard of in the area in 1911. I mostly enjoy listening to the country music playing over the speakers while watching people use this open space daily.

## 4. What do you enjoy the most about the Main Street program?

I am a sucker for a good story! There is so much passion for place, history, and human experiences

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Bainbridge Island shops and restaurants.

Ozasa, the Panama Hotel serves as a physical and visual reminder of what was lost and what remains a story beautifully captured in Jamie Ford's bestselling novel, *Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet*.

In the breakneck pace that development runs these days in Seattle, some feel that we have hardly anything left to save, but an immersion in Georgetown, West Seattle, Chinatown-International District or any of Seattle's many wonderful neighborhoods acquaints you with those who remain invested in their future. As with any place, we can't stop progress and growth, but we can try to manage and guide it to ensure that Seattle still feels like Seattle to those who lived their whole lives here and to the many newcomers who now make it their home.

To explore all of Seattle's neighborhoods including Washington Main Street community **Bainbridge Island**, click [here](#).

throughout downtowns. I can't help but get caught up when I hear a firsthand account of the impact a downtown had on someone or someone on a downtown. Maybe that is why I was drawn to serve on the 2018 Presidents Awards Committee for the Texas Downtown Conference in Corpus Christi this month to help celebrate all the amazing stories!

**5. What is the best piece of advice you've ever received?**

Celebrate the small victories. You will look up three years later and see the big impact all those small victories made together.

**6. What's your favorite tip for someone in our economic development/downtown revitalization industry?**

Again, tell the stories. Tell the story through numbers, tell it through images, tell it through words about feelings and experiences. Tell the stories even if you don't think anyone is listening.

**7. If you could plan a vacation to anywhere in the world, where would it be and why?**

Greece, especially the islands. Just google pictures to know why!

**8. Who has been the most influential person in your career?**

My JV basketball coach freshmen year of high school. Coach Smith taught me the importance of understanding different personalities types and the need to approach people accordingly. This has never been more relevant than when I started working with the wide range of people in a Main Street position.

**9. Who would you switch places with for a day?**

If it was just for a day, I would want to switch places with someone in space!

**10. What's your favorite inspirational quote?**

"You have brains in your head. You have feet in your shoes. You can steer yourself any direction you choose." - Dr. Seuss, *Oh, The Places You'll Go!*

**11. What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?**

Family time! I have a daughter and another on the way. I love to take my little family out on adventures!

# A DOWNTOWN ACTION PLAN FOR CANTON



*By Emily Koller, Planner; and Riley Triggs, Architect; Town Square Initiative / Texas Main Street Program*

The Town Square Initiative (TSI) at the Texas Historical Commission holistically addresses the challenge of unoccupied and underutilized historic properties. The TSI team provides services to spur preservation-based projects so that local, small-scale, high-quality development becomes more achievable in Texas downtowns. Utilizing the Main Street principles for community-driven, historic preservation-based economic development, an interdisciplinary team with expertise in architecture, planning, and economic development provides advanced project assistance with an emphasis on:

- Conceptual design and financial feasibility studies for unoccupied and underutilized historic properties that are place-driven and market-informed;
- Increasing and influencing the market exposure of available properties in downtowns across Texas including attracting investors who value historic architecture and the special qualities of each community;
- Providing information, education, and resources on best practices that have a positive impact on local policy and decision-making;
- Coordinated downtown planning strategies to address development barriers to make it easier for local property owners and entrepreneurs to invest in their downtowns.

To support these areas of work, TSI's work focuses on two principles. The first is to increase the long-term economic sustainability of downtown by supporting small-scale, incremental development. This typically involves working closely with local business and property owners to encourage reinvestment through feasible redevelopment plans that retain the building's historic character. The second principle is to help communities understand the importance of quality of place in their downtowns. This involves working



The new Canton Town Square Park. Photo Credits: Stacy Crossley.

closely with city officials on public improvements that retain the downtown area's historic character but also adhere to recognized best practices for streetscape and public space design.

## THE CANTON ACTION PLAN PROCESS

### Project Background

The Canton Economic Development Corporation (Canton EDC) through the Canton Main Street Program applied for downtown planning assistance through the Texas Historical Commission's Town Square Initiative in late 2017. The Canton EDC recognized that downtown Canton was at a turning point and wanted to develop a more strategic vision to help the historic core of Canton - a Texas Main Street city since 2001 - reach the next level. Recommendations and outcomes of this plan will be implemented by the Canton EDC, Canton Main Street, the City of Canton, Van Zandt County, downtown property and business owners, and other leadership organizations committed to downtown's future.

During an action planning process, the TSI team spends a considerable amount of time in a community in open houses, group meetings, and one-on-one conversations with property and business owners, which are critical to shaping the understanding of the existing conditions as well as defining recommendations that are feasible and achievable. Forming relationships with community leaders and the key downtown stakeholders is critical to the team's effectiveness and the overall success of the process. The Canton process used an aggressive schedule to reach consensus on what should be included in the plan.

### Schedule

The planning process in Canton ran from January to October 16, 2018 when the Canton City Council adopted it as the official planning document for downtown Canton. The process began with a community survey that resulted in 213 responses, which is more than average for a town with a population of around 3,500. Two large public events were planned—the first, an open house during the grand opening of the farmer's market on April 21, and the second, a community presentation of the proposed ideas with voting and socializing at Val's Restaurant on August 7.

Each of these visits included a structured meeting with downtown merchants as well as one-on-one meetings with property owners. There were over 200

total attendees at these events representing 6% of the population, which provided TSI not only with a lot of information, but it fostered trust and optimism for the process as well as the action plan. At each step there were opportunities for the public to offer, prioritize, and vote for ideas to be included in the action plan.

### Interactive Opportunities

The community was asked to participate in interactive exercises throughout the process including:

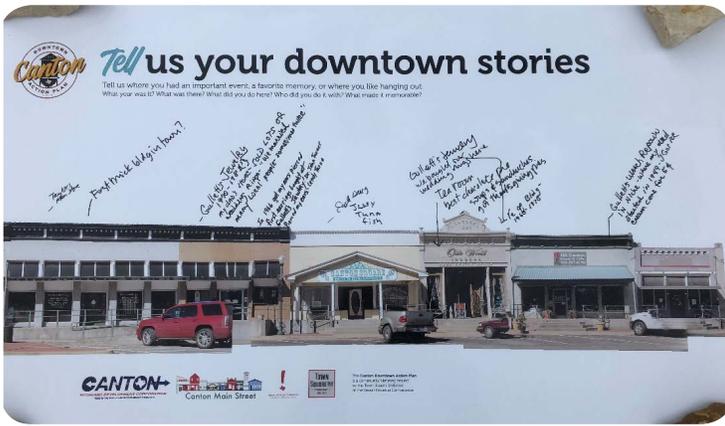
- an online survey;
- a preference activity to help define what character is desired for new uses/development;
- a voting exercise to prioritize and refine the 15 ideas for Canton, which eventually became the specific project recommendations.

The survey provided the initial context for what is positive and what is less so in downtown Canton. There was a clear indication from the beginning of the process that entertainment uses were missing from downtown and Canton in general. The term "hang-out" was used over and over. Many community members from all backgrounds noted the lack of places where friends and family can get together to socialize and relax - uses that came up included soda fountains, smoothie shops, more restaurants, restaurants with full bars, music venues, and beer gardens. People noted that they leave town regularly for movies, nightlife, and bowling, and there was a strong desire for more events in downtown especially food and family related activities.

Using the results of the survey, an activity was designed that illustrated the different character of these potential new uses: music venue, coffee shop, lodging, and residential. Attendees at the open house during the farmers market shared their thoughts on what they would like to see and then voted for the example projects that best represented the type of character that seemed appropriate to them. Clear favorites included a coffee shop with a large outdoor hang-out space and a boutique hotel as compared to a tiny house lodging or a bed and breakfast on the square. The music venue category was the most popular and there was no clear preference. "Any type of venue will be fine!" The community was lukewarm on adding new residential downtown.



The community voted with orange dots for what type of activities they want to see downtown.



(Top) Memory boards of each street were created for residents to write down their connection to the historic buildings around the town square. (Middle) Emily Koller and Alan Cox of TSI get feedback at the weekly Farmers Market.

The types of uses and their character was taken into consideration as the TSI team formulated the concepts, or 15 ideas. After consultation with the Canton EDC and Main Street project leaders, TSI presented these 15 ideas to the downtown merchants and at a larger public meeting on August 7. Received favorably overall, the most popular ideas included: the entertainment hub in the former Quality Furniture building, walkability improvements that would prioritize downtown as a place for people, returning the historic plaza theater back into a theater, and incentives for historic rehabilitation work and building stabilization.

**Place Assessment**

During the community polling and public meetings, TSI did their own place assessment (see below) of the town looking for areas of strength and improvement including Safety, Historic Integrity, Interest, Gateways, Appeal, Comfort, Access, and Security. This helped to identify what assets could be built upon and what liabilities needed to be purposefully addressed in future projects.

**A Vision for Downtown**

A clear vision is necessary to get everyone headed in the same direction to effectively achieve tangible results. An action plan moves from understanding of the existing conditions and agreeing on the preferred outcomes to translating that into actionable items. This often involves moving past assumptions and objectively looking at each city’s unique situation. Canton is known for its First Monday Trade Days when thousands of people come to town once a month, but few of those visitors venture past the Trade Day grounds into downtown. The original impetus behind the planning project was to capture more of these visitors so that the permanent downtown merchants could benefit from the visitor traffic. But creating a town for tourists is not necessarily desirable nor sustainable. So, throughout the process careful attention has been given to making sure focus is kept on working to make Canton a good place for locals first, then in turn, that makes it a good place for visitors.

*One thing is certain: If you do it for the local, the visitor will come; if you do it for the visitor, you will lose the local and, eventually, the visitor because it is the local who gives a place character. - Roberta Brandes Gratz*

Combining the community feedback with TSI’s assessment and the Canton project team’s desired outcomes, a vision was developed highlighting streets and public space improvements, catalyst projects, historic preservation activities, and public/private partnerships.

The plan up above represents the community’s desire to return downtown to its place as the heart of Canton once again. There is a strong emphasis on adding new entertainment uses for the community to enjoy as well as enhancing streets and public spaces so that downtown becomes a comfortable, appealing, and memorable place. Projects address the connection to Trade Days, but the emphasis remains on making downtown the place to be for locals. If done well, this will naturally draw Trade Days visitors seeking the local experience.

These principles are articulated in the following vision statement:

- Downtown will be lively and feel like the heart of the community once again — it will be the

place people come together to socialize, relax, and hang out.

- Downtown will support a sustainable mix of businesses that utilizes local talent and serves the community.
- Residents will not have to leave Canton unless they want to for entertainment, goods, and services.
- The momentum from these efforts will help Canton create a separate identity beyond Trade Days, while at the same time enhancing the Trade Days experience for visitors, encouraging return trips beyond First Mondays.

A mix of simpler, immediately actionable items along with longer-term more complex initiatives were developed from the action planning elements to provide guidance on selecting and prioritizing effective means of carrying out the plan.

### **Implementation Phase**

The Canton Downtown Action Plan is a thoughtful result of several months of research, observations, community input, and at the core of it, passionate conversations between the TSI team and many earnest individuals of the Canton EDC, city staff and officials, business and property owners, and engaged citizens. The Action Plan is the beginning of an exciting, deliberate reawakening of the physical, cultural, historical, and economic downtown heart of a proud, vibrant, and spirited community.

### **Next Steps**

After the adoption of the action plan, the next step for Canton is to begin implementing the individual projects needed to achieve the goals of the plan. An implementation matrix was developed that includes estimated length, estimated cost, and role of each member of the team. TSI is continuing to work with the city on individual projects that include a Texas Department of Agriculture Main Street Improvement Grant for rebuilding a block of new accessible and walkable sidewalk, parking management, identity development, wayfinding system, preservation stewardship incentives, residential infill guidelines, theater renovation, entertainment hub, parklet program, and painted crosswalks. This matrix will inform the individual work plans for the Main Street program, Canton EDC, and the City of Canton. The projects from the plan are the first steps toward a rejuvenated Canton downtown, and TSI will

## **TMSP STAFF SPOTLIGHT**

### **DANIELA CANTU**



#### **1. What is your hometown?**

Born and raised in Corpus Christi.

#### **2. What excites you most about your Texas Main Street staff position?**

As a Project Designer, I enjoy assisting building owners to rehabilitate and preserve the character of their building through design and technical preservation recommendations.

#### **3. What is your favorite thing about historic downtown districts?**

With their irreplaceable buildings and urban characteristics, every historic downtown district provides the community with a sense of place, which differentiates one downtown from another. This distinct experience and character are what I appreciate most in historic downtown districts.

#### **4. What's your favorite tip for someone in our economic development/downtown revitalization industry?**

Patience. What may seem like a simple façade rehabilitation project will likely become a rigorous process in restoring and repairing other areas of the historic structure.

#### **5. What do you enjoy doing in your free time?**

Whether it's cycling, running on the Barton Creek Greenbelt or discovering new areas to photograph, I enjoy spending my free time outdoors.

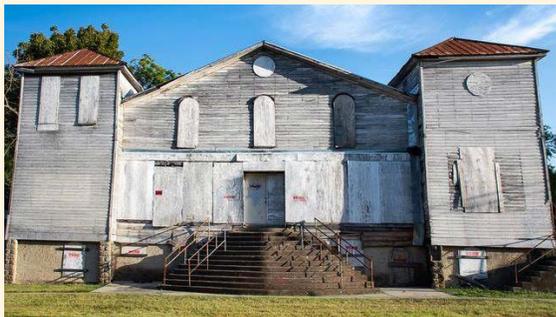


continue to assist over the course of the next 2-5 years supporting their implementation.

It is important to keep the community informed and engaged throughout the realization of these projects. Including as many members of the community as possible is essential to keep up interest, foster personal connections to the vision, and ensure continued high levels of enthusiasm and support for a better Canton. Setting realistic expectations, meeting them, and celebrating the successes of each step along the way is essential to maintaining project momentum and credibility.

TSI has no doubt Canton is about to transform downtown into an even better version of itself. The process of creating the Canton Downtown Action Plan has already had positive effects in the community, and a renewed optimism and energy is already present. Since beginning the planning process in January, a new pocket park has been completed, two new businesses fitting into the action plan are under construction, and a major vacant building has sold with the intent of fulfilling one of the plan's recommendations. From this action planning process, it is clear that Cantonians are ready for a better downtown, and more importantly, they are ready to make it happen!

## CONGRATULATIONS



In 1873, the First Baptist Church of San Marcos, a fixture of the African-American community, was burned to the ground by the KKK. Years later in 1908, the church was rebuilt from the painful ashes by its loyal parishioners. This once grand place of worship has been vacant since 1986, and the San Marcos Main Street Program of Downtown San Marcos is proud to announce that the Historic First Baptist Church will receive \$150,000 in grant funding towards preservation!

The funding came from the 2018 Partners in Preservation campaign presented by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, American Express, and Main Street America. Image [Source](#).

## VALUABLE MAIN STREET VOLUNTEERS



*By Beth Duke, MS Manager, Amarillo Main Street Program*

Not one, but a team of 10 volunteers at Center City's Amarillo Community Market deserve a volunteer high five. These beautiful young people are missionaries from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, and as part of their two-year mission, they are encouraged to perform community service. The sisters and elders have adopted our Amarillo Community Market as one of their projects. Who else would show up every Saturday morning in the summer and fall at 7 a.m. with a cheerful heart and help us install pop-up tents, a sound system, and market gear? Then, they happily help all our vendors build their booths and merchandise their products before market opens at 9 a.m. We treat them to breakfast burritos before they leave for their church duties. Then, they return at 1 p.m., and the market goes back in storage for a week. The vendors love them—often treating them to baked goods and snacks. We love them with donuts, pizza, t-shirts, a potluck dinner, hugs, and handshakes! They are a treasure. I'm so proud that these young people adopted Center City and our market. We couldn't make our magic happen without them!



The volunteer team for Amarillo Community Market includes missionaries from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints Sister Mitchell, front row from left; Sister Treadway, Sister Stevenson, Sister Shirley, Sister Loveland with Center City Executive Director Beth Duke, Market Coordinator Lindsay Vannozi and Assistant Coordinator Tammy Perkins. Back row from left; Junior Greene, vendor representative; Sister Kittering, Elder Ferguson, Elder Swaney, Elder McKinzie and Elder Collins.



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