

# TYLER 1<sup>st</sup>

*Building our future, together*



## 5. North End Revitalization

DRAFT



## Chapter 5 :: NORTH END REVITALIZATION

The intent of this document is to detail amendments from the 2014 and 2020 updates while continuing to memorialize the original text. Items updated through the 5-year update process will be accompanied with a Tyler 1<sup>st</sup> logo within the original Tyler 21 document. The text from the original document begins after the Tyler 21 logo appears in the text.



GOALS	POLICIES FOR DECISION MAKERS
Increase the number of homeowners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support expansion of credit counseling, homebuyer and landlord-tenant counseling.</li> <li>• Support new housing types and first-time homebuyer and similar programs.</li> </ul>
Add 3,000 more households to North Tyler and downtown in the next 20 years to create mixed-income neighborhoods.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As needed, target public investments, regulations and incentives to attract new households without pushing out existing households.</li> <li>• Continue efforts to fill in vacant lots and facilitate land assembly.</li> <li>• <u>Prepare property to be sold by the City for quality and innovative development using planned development zoning and deed restrictions.</u></li> <li>• <u>Establish a task force to address affordable housing.</u></li> </ul>
Focus commercial development around targeted mixed-use intersections.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Replace commercial corridor zoning with commercial focus areas.</li> <li>• Consider tax incentives for commercial development.</li> </ul>
Create new major open space amenities and upgrade existing parks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support funding and grant proposals for nature preserves, and park upgrades.</li> <li>• <u>Increase the number of trails, pocket parks and green space around new development.</u></li> </ul>
Maintain and upgrade neighborhood infrastructure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support regular funding for infrastructure improvements.</li> </ul>
Improve crime prevention and quality of life enforcement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue and enhance community policing initiatives.</li> <li>• Continue to target code enforcement in vulnerable neighborhoods.</li> </ul>
Recognize historic structures and areas in the North End planning area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support historic recognition and preservation efforts.</li> </ul>
Improve the appearance and function of major roads.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Redesign roads to improve appearance, function and pedestrian friendliness.</li> <li>• <u>Increase lighting along major roads.</u></li> </ul>
Promote local business development and marketing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support expansion of marketing and programs for micro-lending and small business training.</li> <li>• Assist in joint marketing efforts for existing businesses.</li> <li>• Support development of home-based businesses that do not impinge on neighborhood character.</li> </ul>



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## NORTH END REVITALIZATION FACTS

### **NORTH END REVITALIZATION EFFORTS:**

- Continued partnering with several financial institutions and non-profits to assist clients with lower than average credit scores to buy a home.
- Launched a pilot Neighborhood Empowerment Zone (NEZ) to incentivize new condo/townhome development in Northchase via waiving of development related fees.
- Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone #3 (North End TIRZ) created in 2008 with participation from Smith County and Tyler Junior College.
- Completed Texas College Area Development Plan.

### **SECTION 8 TO HOMEOWNERSHIP (2014-2019):**

- Total of 4 Section 8 families assisted with homeownership.
  - 4 families currently assisted with mortgage payments.
  - 4 families assisted with buying home with City's First-Time Homebuyers Program.

### **NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES (2014-2019):**

- New Neighborhood Services building on W. Gentry purchased to establish a central information center on the affordable housing programs.
- Assisted with the rehabilitation of 52 homes in the North End.
- Improvements made to City Park, Herndon Hills Park, and Oak Grove Park including:
  - Purchase of new playground equipment
  - Installation of lighting
  - Landscaping enhancements
- 3 street improvement projects including:
  - Curb and gutter
  - Drainage improvements
- Coordinated construction of 3 new single-family homes in the North End.
- \$264,082 provided to North End homebuyers for down payment assistance.

**Sources:** American Community Survey 2011, Census 2010, Tyler Neighborhood Services; Real Estate Center at Texas A&M University

### **WHAT DOES IT MEAN?**

- Tyler has created an organized program to provide credit counseling as well as home buyer assistance in the purchase of affordable housing.
- There are many undeveloped, underutilized and abandoned properties in north Tyler which are prime candidates for development/redevelopment.
- City initiated improvement projects are not sufficient to revitalize the North End. Private development is also required.
- Developers and residents have responded to the City services and incentives provided.



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<p>Improve crime prevention and quality of life enforcement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue and enhance community policing initiatives.</li> <li>• Continue to target code enforcement in vulnerable neighborhoods.</li> </ul>
<p>Establish a neighborhood coalition with associations in all major districts to lay the groundwork for a community development corporation (CDC).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Convene groups and support start-up organizing.</li> <li>• Support future CDC development.</li> </ul>
<p>Recognize historic structures and areas in the North End planning area.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support historic recognition and preservation efforts.</li> </ul>
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## FINDINGS

- The North End planning area has experienced little housing or business investment compared to other parts of the city, with the exception of the U.S. 69 corridor towards I-20 in the city's ETJ (Extraterritorial Jurisdiction).
- There are significant amounts of vacant land and remaining boarded-up structures in North and West Tyler.
- Two-thirds of the city's African-American population and over half of the city's Hispanic population live in the planning area.
- Two-thirds of persons living in poverty in Tyler live in the North End planning area, as well as 82% of all children under 18 living in poverty.
- There are relatively few retail and service businesses in North Tyler and very few national chain businesses. The current number of households and median household incomes in North Tyler are too low to attract national retail and restaurant chains.
- Key arterial roads in North Tyler are unattractive and unnecessarily wide to serve the volume of traffic.
- The Black Fork Creek and Willow Creek basins are some of the most important natural areas in the city.
- Development is already occurring along the U.S. 69 corridor towards I-20.

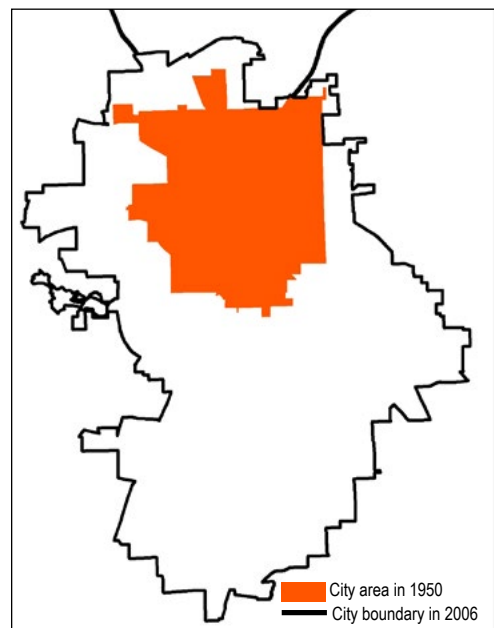
## KEY CHALLENGES

- Increasing the number of homeowners to maintain and expand stable neighborhoods.
- Improving quality of life, amenities and infrastructure to serve existing residents as well as to attract new housing development and population.
- Increasing the number of new housing units and median household income over time to revitalize the area and attract commercial development.

## THE “NORTH END” PLANNING AREA

**T**his section of the Tyler 1st Plan is an area plan for both the northern part of the city, including consideration of the ETJ connection to I-20, and much of the western part of the city within Loop 323. The Downtown Planning Area, which is the subject of a separate chapter of this plan, is not included in the North End Plan, although the success of downtown and the North End are clearly linked.

Many of the neighborhoods within this planning area have deep roots in Tyler's history. The city in 1950 had grown more or less equally around the downtown courthouse square and African-Americans lived northwest and east of downtown and in the neighborhoods of St. Louis and Butler College in West



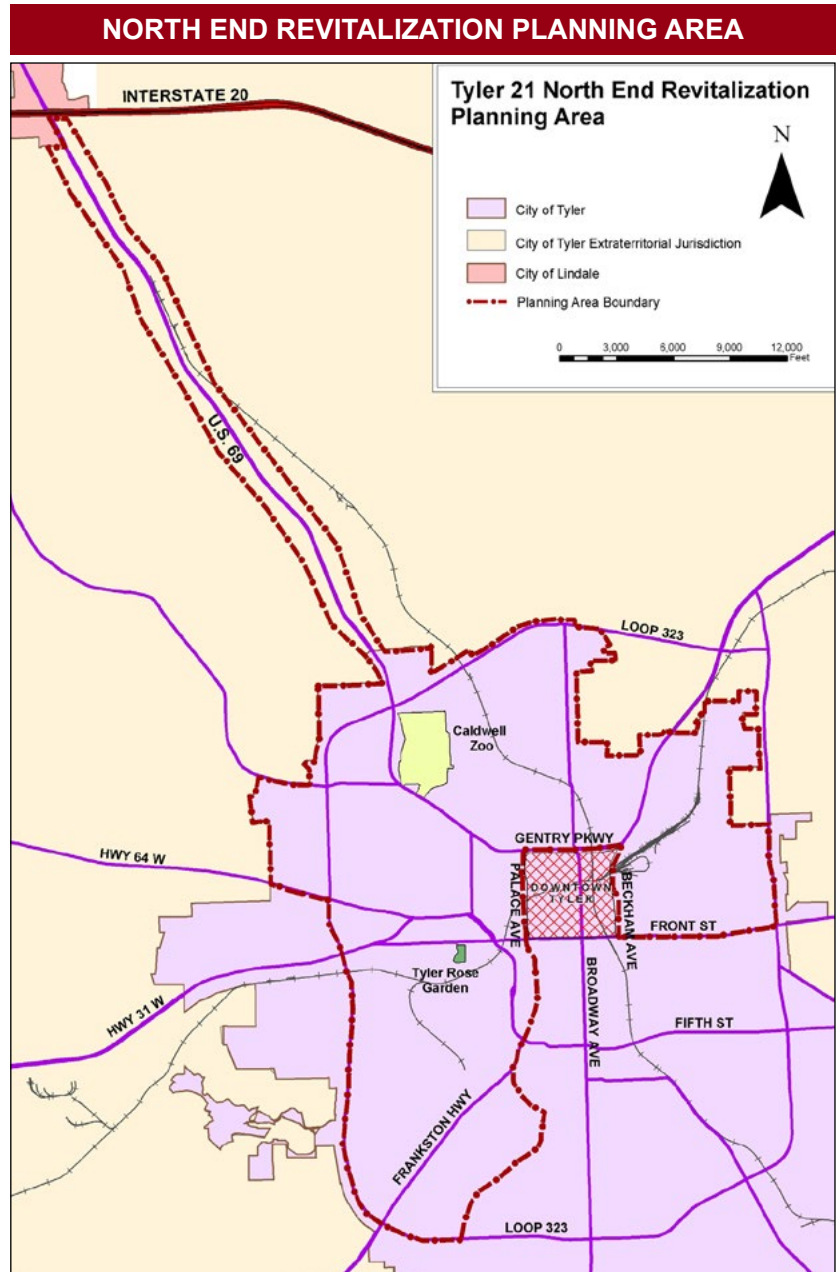
Tyler's boundaries in 1950

Tyler. In the 1970s, the anxieties created by school desegregation combined with the opening of Broadway Square Mall in 1975 helped propel population growth and investment toward the south and away from Tyler’s historic core. Despite the persistence of some stable neighborhoods, over nearly 30 years the North End and West Tyler were challenged by population decline and disinvestment while new residential and commercial development focused on growing south. This long-term trend reversed in the eastern part of the North End after 2000 with the arrival of Mexican and Mexican-American immigrants.

For the purposes of this area plan, we will consider the “North End” as composed of three sub-areas:

- North Tyler, which includes all the area north of Front Street to the city limits except for the Downtown Planning Area bounded by Front Street, Beckham Avenue, Gentry Parkway, and Palace Avenue.
- West Tyler, bounded by Front Street to the north, Loop 323, Old Jacksonville Highway, Sunnybrook Drive, and Vine Street.
- The U.S. 69 corridor from the city limits to I-20, which is part of the city’s Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ).

The North End planning area (North and West Tyler) contains about 7,700 acres, approximately 23% of the City of Tyler’s land area, and will be the focus of this chapter. The U.S. 69 corridor will be discussed here in relation to its potential impacts on the revitalization of North Tyler. It will also be considered in other parts of the Comprehensive Plan devoted to planning for development in Tyler’s Extraterritorial Jurisdiction.



## A. Community Issues

Bringing new investment to the North End and community revitalization were important elements in the community survey and the Visioning Retreat. Survey respondents and participants in the Visioning Retreat recognized the importance of encouraging growth in all parts of the city—not just the south—and, in particular, they supported revitalization of the North End of the city. This issue received especially strong support from African-Americans who responded to the survey, for whom it was the most important issue for the City to address. However, 73% of all respondents said it was very or somewhat important.

The City Council formally adopted the Tyler 1st Vision and Principles to guide the detailed work on the comprehensive plan. Elements of the Tyler 1st Vision of particular relevance to the North End include the call for “a sense of place and community in every part of the city...excellence in city design, [and] safe, interconnected neighborhoods.” The Principles explicitly include a focus on the North End as well as more generally applicable standards:

- Promote balanced growth
  - > Revitalize North Tyler
- Provide neighborhoods that are attractive centers of community:
  - > Appealing, safe, affordable and stable places to live for people with a wide range of incomes.
  - > A variety of housing types for families, singles, older persons and other kinds of households.
  - > Neighborhoods containing walkable centers with a mix of housing and shopping to serve residents.

### NORTH END PUBLIC WORKSHOP

On November 14, 2006, over 40 people participated in a Tyler 1st public workshop on North End issues. After opening remarks by Mayor Seeber, the consultant team provided an analysis of existing conditions in the planning area, including a market analysis for North Tyler. Then, three small group discussion areas were set up for several rounds of discussions by participants. The small group discussions focused on the following issues:

- Commercial and Economic Development
- Parks, Transportation and Infrastructure
- Housing and Neighborhoods

Participants were asked to discuss what they thought was working well in the North End planning area and what they thought was not working well.

### Commercial and Economic Development Group

Participants discussed the need for more retail, entertainment and job-creating businesses in the North End and expressed their frustration that new business investment consistently locates in the southern parts of Tyler. They noted that the gateways and major arterials in



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North Tyler tend to be unattractive and worried that the construction of Loop 49 would isolate the North End area more. The loss of good factory jobs for North End residents with the closing of the Goodyear plant was also seen as a setback.

Among the points that emerged from the discussion were the following:

- Growth in downtown, and the Cascades/Highway 64 area to the west will help revitalization of the North End planning area. Development occurring in the northern ETJ along U.S. 69N to I-20 may also be beneficial.
- The commercial strip zoning along Gentry Parkway should be changed to focus commercial development at key intersections, while the remaining areas should be rezoned as residential.
- Revitalization will not be led by retail or commercial investment but by attracting more households to live in the North End.



Residents discussed commercial and economic development in the North End.

Participants identified potential target areas for new commercial development, including:

- North Broadway Avenue and Loop 323
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard and North Broadway Avenue
- Boys and Girls Club area (on 32nd Street)
- Palace Avenue and Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard
- Loop 323 and Highway 64 near Wal-Mart
- U.S. 271 and Gentry Parkway



Participants identified potential areas for new commercial development.

### Housing and Neighborhoods Group

The discussions about housing and neighborhood issues identified a number of assets and opportunities in the North End as well as issues that need to be addressed. Assets and opportunities identified include the following:

- Some North End neighborhoods are among the oldest in the city and contain homes and buildings suitable for historic preservation. Among the areas noted was Palace Avenue, which is an important street in the history of Tyler's African-American community.

- National Night Out, an annual anti-crime and crime awareness event, continues to be a very successful neighborhood event in the St. Louis community. More similar events are needed.
- There are a number of areas with well-maintained homes. Hispanic immigrants who have moved into the North End are remodeling homes.
- New housing development can be seen in the Lavender Road area and scattered infill development.
- New school construction (Austin, Douglas and Ramey) is attracting positive attention.
- Caldwell Zoo, the Glass Center, Texas College, and the many churches are major assets.



Residents shared their opinions about North End housing issues.

Issues that need to be addressed include:

- Access to homeownership and housing affordability
  - > Programs are needed to help families improve credit, qualify for a mortgage, understand the responsibilities of homeownership and buy a home.
- Housing and neighborhood conditions:
  - > Many older homes are deteriorating and too many homes have low market value.
  - > Code enforcement issues include illegal dumping and poor maintenance by absentee owners.
  - > Crime, such as drugs and bootlegging, is a problem in the area.
- Housing development issues:
  - > The area's many vacant lots provide opportunities for infill housing.
  - > Many participants prefer new housing to be single family homes because of their experience with renters in apartment complexes, especially tax credit or Section 8 rentals.
  - > To make a significant difference in the number of households, some multifamily housing will be needed.
  - > Duplexes and townhouses could be a good model for market-rate housing.



Small group participants reported on the discussion.

- > Private developers do not like the requirements attached to government subsidies for affordable housing.
- > Small builders find it hard to get financing to build more than one house at a time.

### Parks/Open Space and Transportation Group

A third area of discussion focused on parks/open space and on transportation. The discussion on parks identified a number of assets in the North End planning area, including the Rose Garden and Stadium; Harvey Hall and the State Fairgrounds site; Caldwell Zoo; the Glass Center and Woldert Park; the Boys and Girls Club; and Fun Forest, Noble E. Young and other parks. The main asset of the transportation network is that there is plenty of traffic capacity on North End roads.

Among the issues that need to be addressed are the following:

#### Parks, recreation and open space:

- Heavily-used recreation areas like the Glass Center, Woldert Park pool, and playgrounds need expansion or creation of additional centers.
- Churches need to get involved.
- Greenbelt connections to parks and schools and other recreational facilities are needed.
- YMCA should be resurrected.
- Community centers are needed with activities for children, adults and the elderly.
- After-school and summer programs are needed for children and youth.
- Noble E. Young Park needs upgrades (not just to the skate park area).
- The Black Fork Creek area should include greenways like the Buffalo Bayou in Houston.
- Green connections and hike and bike trails should connect destinations in North Tyler, such as Texas College and the Glass Center, as well as connect North Tyler to the rest of the city.



A workshop participant identifies her parks/open space and transportation concerns.

#### Transportation:

- City gateways on Highways 69, 110, and 271 need improvements such as landscaped medians and street trees.
- Streetscape improvements are needed throughout, as well as correction of unpaved and dead end streets.
- Curb cuts should be limited on Gentry Parkway.
- Public transportation needs additional bus stops and more frequent buses.
- Platted thoroughfares should be completed.



A long-time resident offers his perspective at the North End Workshop.

## B. Current Conditions

### POPULATION AND SOCIOECONOMIC CONDITIONS

Based on 2000 census data, we can estimate that the North End planning area contains approximately 30% of the city's population and over one-quarter of the city's households. Two-thirds of the city's African-American population and over half of the city's Hispanic population live in the planning area. This is also where most of the lowest-income Tylerites live: two-thirds of persons living in poverty, as well as 82% of all children under 18 living in poverty.

The North Tyler sub-area is estimated to have approximately 20,000 residents. In 2000, the residents were 56% African-American and 32% Hispanic/Latino. The 2000 census found 6,114 households in North Tyler. With the growth in Hispanic households during the 2000-2005 period, the 2006 number of households is estimated to be approximately 6,700. The West Tyler sub-area has a smaller population and fewer households. The 2000 census found 2,410 households, which may have increased to as many as 2,700 with the recent opening of the Southwest Pines apartment complex and construction of a few infill houses. Fifty-three percent of the population is African-American and nearly 20% is Hispanic/Latino.

Although the City of Tyler in general has had a generally stable, low crime rate since 2000, parts of the North End planning area have a higher incidence of crime than other areas of the city. This higher crime rate tends to be connected to the illegal sale of drugs and alcohol and is localized where there has been more disinvestment combined with quality of life infractions such as code violations, dumping and petty vandalism.

### LAND USE AND ZONING

#### North Tyler

##### Zoning

Most of North Tyler is zoned for single family (R-1A and R-1B) and two-family (R-2) residential uses with minimum lot sizes from 6,000 to 9,000 square feet. This corresponds to a potential density of four to eleven dwelling units per acre. As is typical throughout the city, major arterials are zoned for a continuous nonresidential corridor. Almost all of Gentry Parkway is zoned for commercial uses, with a few areas zoned for manufacturing: near the Loop 323 intersection; part of the north side of the block west of North Glenwood Boulevard; on the south side of the intersection with Beckham Avenue; and most of the area north of the intersection with East Nutbush Street. Erwin Street is mostly zoned for manufacturing, with some commercial zoning on West Erwin and residential zoning at the golf course. East and west of downtown, there are a number of blocks zoned for light manufacturing, and much of the land surrounding the railroad line south of Gentry Parkway in the east is zoned for heavy manufacturing. Several areas are zoned for neighborhood commercial uses: North Palace Avenue from Gentry Parkway to the railroad line; Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard from the North Broadway Avenue intersection to North Alfred Avenue; and a few other isolated spots.

**Land Use**

North Tyler’s zoning does not reflect current land uses. The predominant land use throughout North Tyler is single family residential. A few duplexes and scattered multi-family complexes can be found, and scattered commercial and retail uses can be found along the arterials. Actual household and population density is lower than the lot layout would imply because of vacant lots and unoccupied houses in many locations. Many areas zoned for industry are either occupied by residential or commercial uses or are vacant.



North Tyler has some stable residential neighborhoods composed of single-family houses.

One of the most striking aspects of North Tyler’s land use map is the number of vacant parcels, both residential and nonresidential. Although there are some neighborhoods which are clearly intact—for example, neighborhoods near Caldwell Zoo—many blocks in North Tyler have more than one empty lot. In addition, a number of nonresidential buildings are unused or underutilized. Approximately 25% of North Tyler parcels are vacant, accounting for 40% of the North Tyler sub-area land (including land that is not developable).



Approximately 25% of parcels in North Tyler are vacant.

Some of these vacant lots were once occupied by abandoned and blighted housing. The problem of abandoned, extremely dilapidated housing used to be much more serious, but City efforts during the last decade to identify and demolish houses in the worst condition reduced blighted conditions. City data now show 160 boarded up structures in North Tyler.



Many West Tyler parcels in the Butler College area are vacant or contain dilapidated houses.

## West Tyler

### Zoning

Like North Tyler, the majority of the land in West Tyler is zoned for single-family and two-family housing, with a very small number of multifamily areas. Most of the land east of Loop 323 from Old Chandler Highway to Old Jacksonville Highway is zoned for light manufacturing, with the exception of commercial zoning around Loop 323 intersections with major roads. Land just north of the railroad line and west of Rose Stadium is zoned for heavy industry. Much of the northern third of Frankston Highway is zoned for commercial uses, as is Glenwood Parkway from the West Houston Street intersection north.

### Land Use

Even more than in North Tyler, land uses in West Tyler do not reflect zoning. Despite the different residential densities permitted in the various neighborhoods, single-family homes overwhelmingly predominate. There are few uses classified as manufacturing in the large area zoned for manufacturing. Commercial/retail uses are more likely to occupy land zoned for industry along Loop 323 and even within the industrial park on Robertson Road.

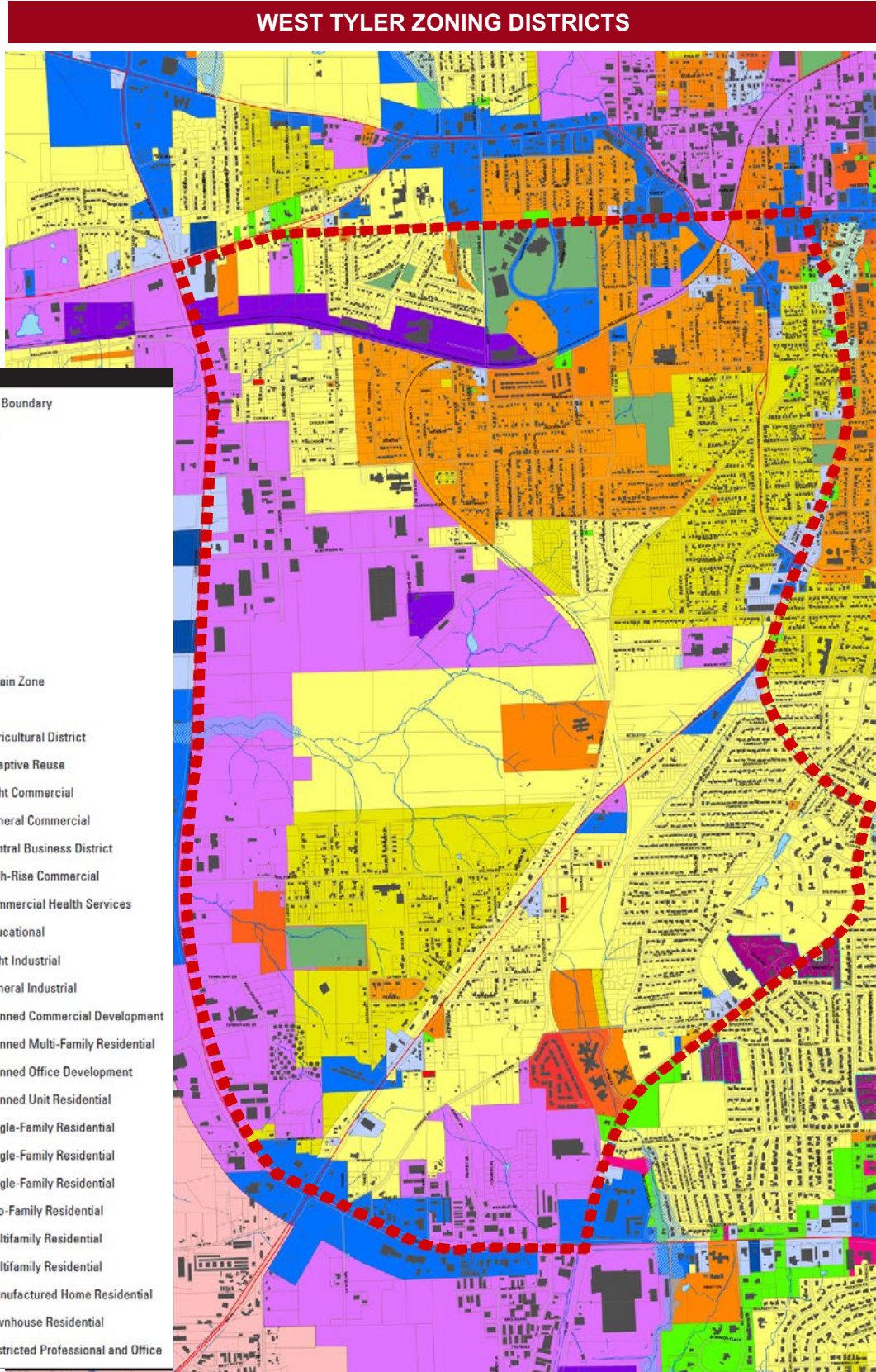
As in North Tyler, there are large areas of unoccupied land and residential neighborhoods with large numbers of vacant lots. Neighborhoods east of the railroad tracks are more intact, but St. Louis and especially Butler College have a large number of empty lots. Nearly one-third of West Tyler parcels are vacant, accounting for 53% of the West Tyler sub-area land (including land that is not developable). There are 70 boarded up structures in West Tyler, of which 36 are located in the Butler College-Duckenfield area.



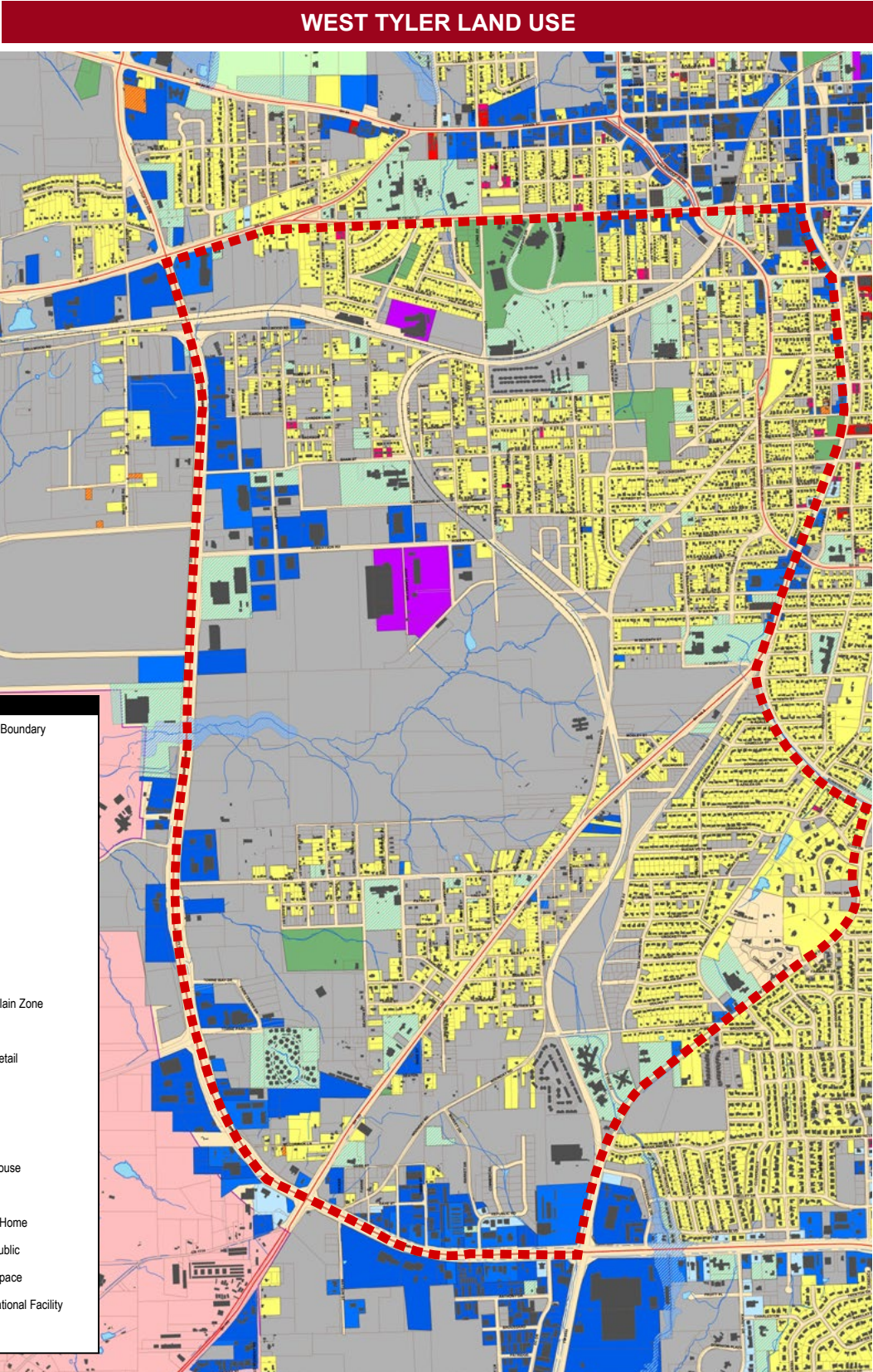
Housing at Hill and First streets



Old Noonday Road near Loop 323



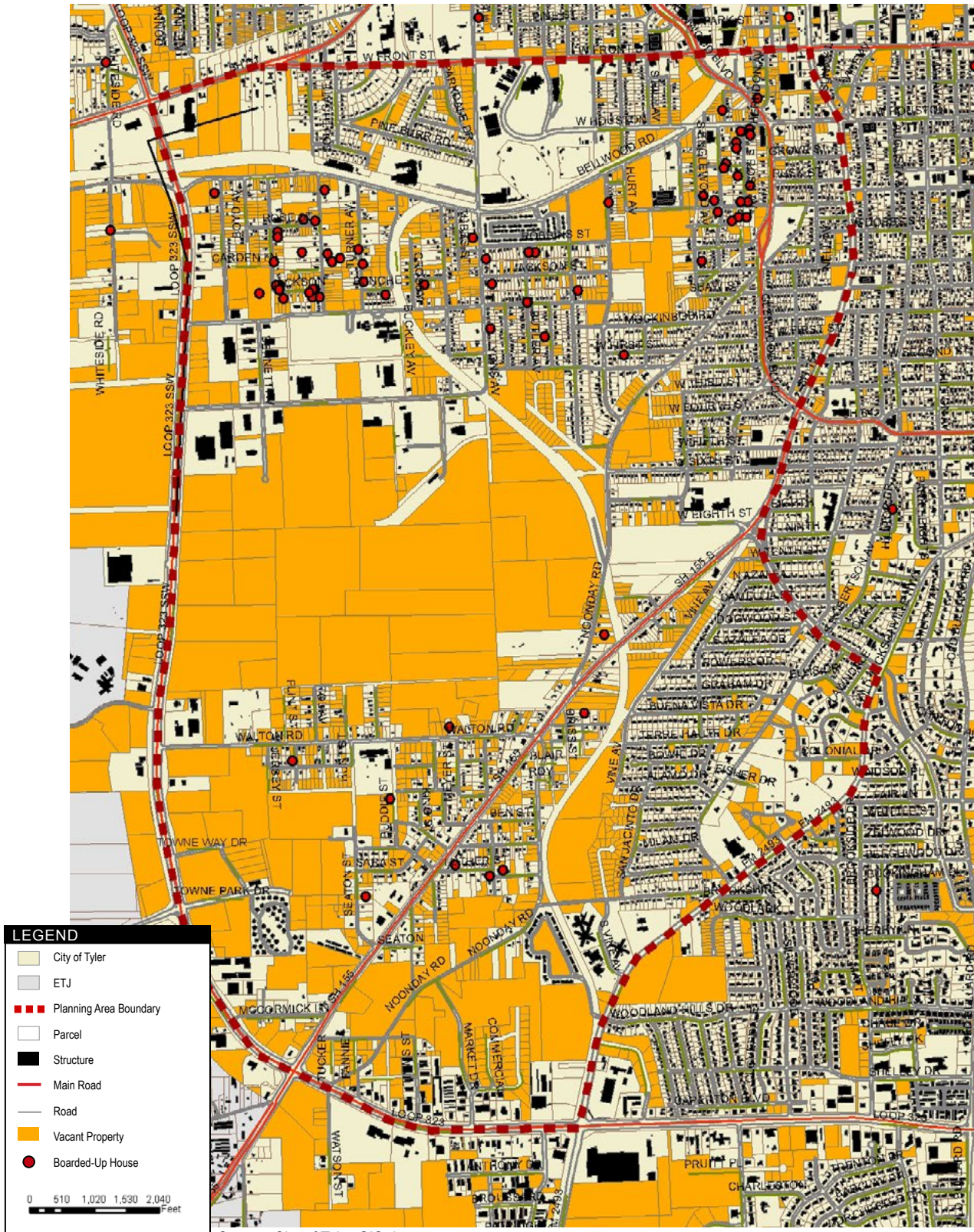
Source: City of Tyler GIS data



Source: City of Tyler GIS data



**WEST TYLER VACANT PROPERTIES AND BOARDED-UP HOUSES**



Source: City of Tyler GIS data

### U.S. 69 Corridor ETJ

There is no zoning outside the city limits, though the City reviews subdivision plans within its five-mile ETJ (Extraterritorial Jurisdiction). Between the city limits and Tyler Pipe there are developed parcels along U.S. 69 but no large subdivisions or retail activity. At the unincorporated town of Swan, a small number of houses are located across the highway from Tyler Pipe. Beyond Tyler Pipe, subdivision developments are underway.



The U.S. 69N corridor to I-20 contains low-density commercial and residential development.

## HOUSING

### Housing Types, Household Composition and Tenure

#### North Tyler

The North Tyler planning sub-area includes a variety of neighborhoods with diverse character. Nearly seventy percent of the housing units were built before 1970 and one-quarter were built before 1950, in contrast to the city as whole, where only 48% were built before 1970. Directly north of downtown, especially in the Bois d'Arc corridor and near Texas College, there are many houses with historic character. Newer neighborhoods with curvilinear streets and ranch houses dating from the late 1950s to the 1970s are located just east and west of Caldwell Zoo. These areas tend to be owner-occupied and have well-maintained housing stock. Since about 2000, many of the Mexican immigrants who moved to Tyler have settled in the neighborhoods east and northeast of downtown, where they are making improvements and rehabilitating the housing stock. According to the 2000 census, 59% of housing units in the North Tyler planning sub-area were owner-occupied and 41% were rented. This is not substantially different from the city overall, where 56% of occupied units were owner-occupied and 44% rented.



Hispanic families are investing in North Tyler housing.

#### West Tyler

West Tyler has somewhat less variety in housing types than North Tyler. Some neighborhoods are isolated by highway and railroad corridors, particularly Duckenfield, Butler College and St. Louis. In the West Tyler planning sub-area, 56% of the occupied housing units in 2000 were owner-occupied and 44% renter-occupied—the same percentages as the city as a whole. Seventy-three percent of dwelling units were built before 1970 and 25% before 1950.

### Household Growth Trends and Housing Markets

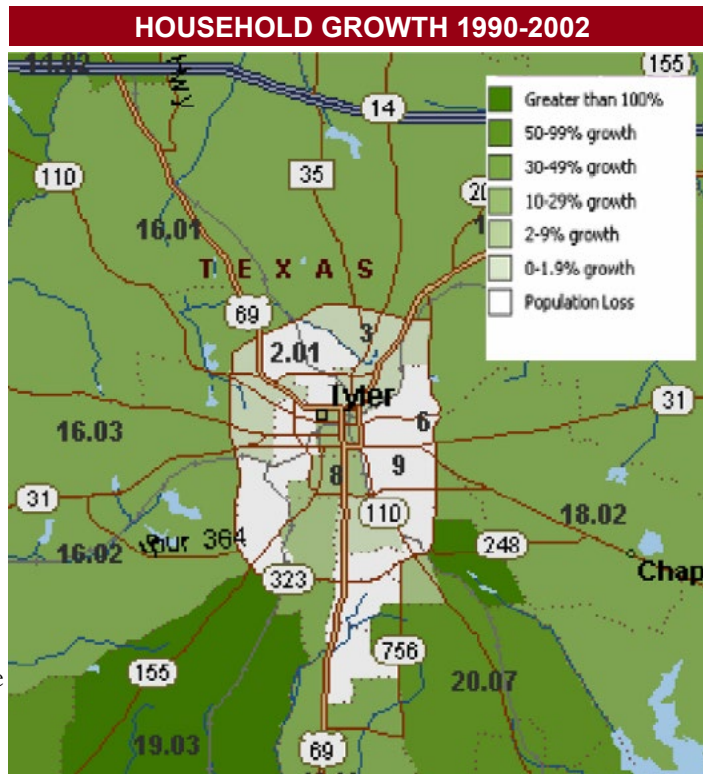
According to census data and demographic estimates, no part of the North End Planning Area experienced household growth between 1990 and 2002 comparable to the growth outside the city limits. Some parts of North Tyler and West Tyler lost population. However, as noted earlier, a detailed demographic analysis performed for the City in 2005 showed that Hispanic households had moved into the eastern parts of North Tyler.



New residents are moving into and maintaining older neighborhoods in the eastern part of North Tyler.

### Housing Sales and Housing Production

In January 2007, out of 127 homes on the MLS (multiple listing service) priced at less than \$100,000 in the Tyler area, 18 were located in zip code 75702. They ranged in price from \$37,000 to \$75,000. According to a recent study by the Texas A & M Real Estate Center, at 2006 interest rates combined with other homeowner costs such as insurance and taxes, a household with an income of \$29,000 could afford a \$75,000 home.<sup>1</sup> Realtor descriptions of the listed homes targeted both first time homebuyers and investors. There are a few small-scale builders working in both North and West Tyler building houses on single lots or in small clusters or subdivisions. New housing production is limited and new houses tend to be priced higher—\$80-90,000—than older homes.



Source: Microsoft MapPoint; ZHA, Inc.

<sup>1</sup> James P. Gaines, Homeownership Costs and Housing Affordability Sensitivity, (2006) <http://recenter.tamu.edu/pdf/1789.pdf>.

### Subsidized Housing

Most of the subsidized housing in Tyler is rental housing, and most of the subsidized rental complexes are located in the North End planning area. The newest complex is Southwest Pines on Walton Road, which is the largest subsidized complex in the city with 248 units. Overall, approximately 9% of the housing units in the North End planning area are subsidized.



Southwest Pines is Tyler's largest subsidized housing complex.

### Housing Rehabilitation

There are limited programs in Tyler to assist in rehabilitation of housing occupied by low and moderate income residents. In the CDBG target areas chosen each year, the City provides funding for homeowner rehabilitation and for demolition and reconstruction of owner-occupied units. There are also some funds available for emergency rehabilitation for disabled or handicapped owners. The Hispanic population that has moved into the eastern parts of North Tyler has been active in rehabilitating their homes. Many Hispanics work in construction, giving them the skills to do rehab work themselves, and they bring cultural traditions of making incremental improvements to housing as funds become available.

### Increasing Homeownership

A greater proportion of homeowners tends to make neighborhoods more stable, because owner-occupants stay longer, have a strong interest in maintaining their houses, and are more likely to concern themselves with overall neighborhood improvement.



Rehab project funded and managed by the City

As noted earlier, housing prices for existing housing in the North End planning area are not especially high. A modest, older house would be within the means of a household

with an income about 75% below the area median income, assuming that the potential buyer has some savings for a down payment and sufficient credit to get a mortgage.

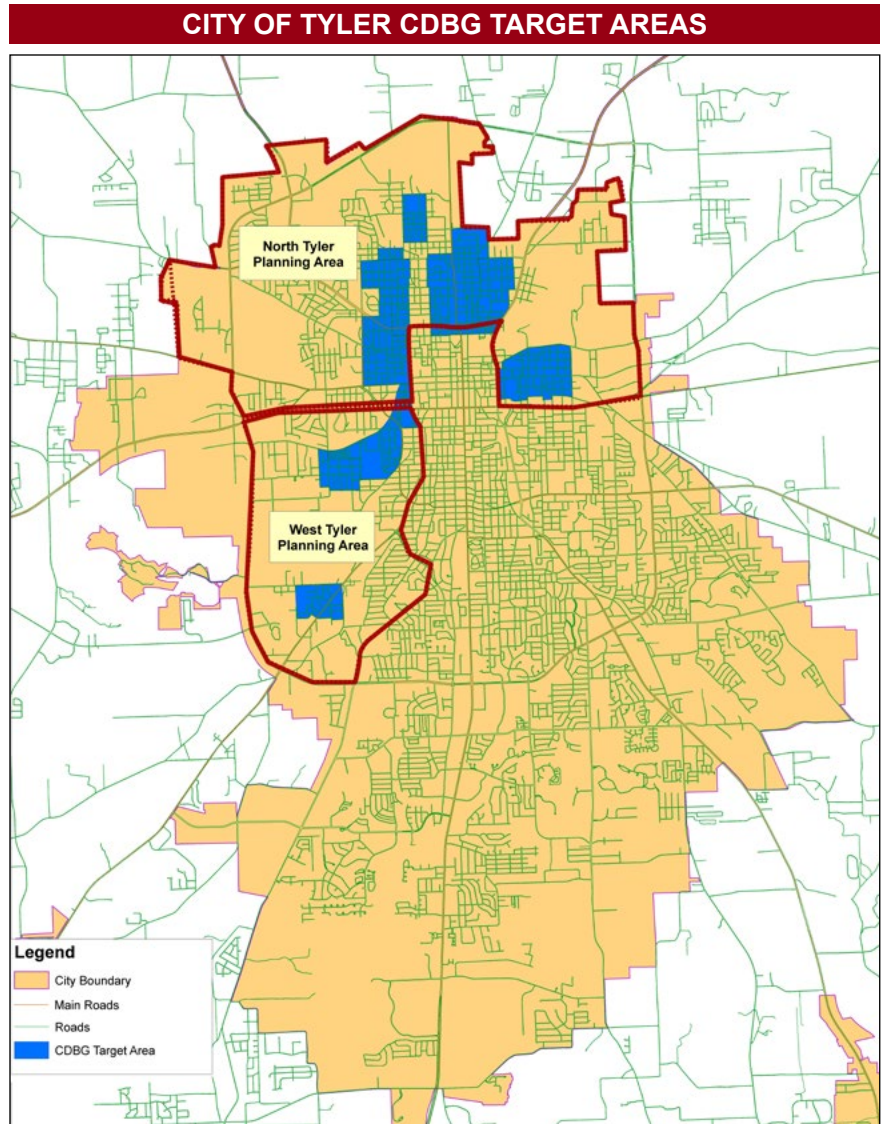
City staff and other affordable housing professionals report that the biggest obstacle to homeownership for moderate-income Tyler households is getting a mortgage. Texas in general and the Tyler area in particular show high percentages of subprime mortgages. These are mortgages offered at higher rates to borrowers perceived as more risky than average. One issue is credit-worthiness—lack of a credit history or a problematic credit history.

Programs to help prospective first-time homebuyers improve their credit exist in Tyler, but they are targeted to specific groups, such as Section 8 tenants accepted into a homebuyer preparation program and households accepted for Habitat for Humanity homes. A much greater need exists to serve working families who have stable but modest incomes and could qualify for market-rate homes in North or West Tyler with good credit and some savings.

### Neighborhood Improvements

Public investment in the North End planning area includes school construction projects, housing rehabilitation and reconstruction, the Neighborhood Empowerment Works (NEW) Program and future road construction. Three new schools are under construction in North

Tyler: Douglas, Ramey and Bonner elementary schools. When the schools are completed, the old schools will be demolished and new parks created. Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding received by the City has been expended since 1995 by annually designating an area for concentrated attention. These CDBG target areas have all been located in the North End planning area and focus on rehabilitation or demolition and reconstruction of dilapidated owner-occupied housing as well as site and infrastructure improvements. The NEW Program, begun in 2005, focuses code enforcement, clean-up and other City services in approximately ten-block target areas. Finally, the Lake Placid, Sunnybrook, and Town Park road extensions now under design and in the Master Street Plan will alleviate the isolation of the St. Louis neighborhood and provide more access to Noble E. Young Park.



Source: City of Tyler GIS data

## Business and Commercial Activities

With few exceptions, the businesses in the North End planning area are small, local enterprises. At present, the businesses at the most visible intersection in North Tyler—such as budget hotels—are not targeted to serve neighborhood residents. Two Super 1 Food Stores are located at the western and eastern edges of Gentry Parkway and new Hispanic businesses are appearing along or near Beckham Avenue. Local service businesses, especially auto repair shops and other auto-oriented businesses along with a few restaurants or take out shops, beauty salons, and similar service businesses, are scattered along the major arterials and on Palace Avenue.



Small business on Palace Avenue

West Tyler includes the Tyler Industrial Park, which is an important job center for the city. There are scattered retail uses along Loop 323 and at intersections of Glenwood Boulevard and Frankston Highway, but overall, there is little neighborhood-serving retail in West Tyler.

## Parks and Open Space

The North End planning area includes very significant park and open space resources. There are twelve city parks, not including the Rose Garden Center, as well as the Caldwell Zoo. In addition to small neighborhood parks, there are parks of citywide importance such as the Glass Center in Woldert Park, and Fun Forest Park. Many of the city parks allow for a variety of activities and are easily accessible on foot or by bicycle. The large flood plains of Black Fork Creek, Willow Creek and the creek in the area south of Robertson Road are natural greenways. The railroad corridor in West Tyler could eventually be used for a multi-use trail helping to connect city destinations for



North Tyler has park and recreation resources that serve neighborhoods and the entire city: (clockwise from top left) Caldwell Zoo, Fun Forest Park, Glass Recreation Center, and W. E. Winters Park.

pedestrians and bicyclists. The older parts of the North End planning area have retained the mature trees and landscape of the historic city.

### Transportation and Infrastructure

The major arterials and railroad corridors in the North End planning area create barriers between neighborhoods. The major roads are too wide for the traffic they carry, visually dominate the small residences located along them, and are unattractive, particularly at gateway intersections. The planning area is served by three bus routes, but the citywide bus system has limited schedules.



Gentry Parkway, eight lanes in some areas, has evolved into an unattractive corridor that creates a barrier between North End neighborhoods.

### MARKET ANALYSIS

A market analysis of North Tyler makes it clear that revitalization will not be led by national retail businesses but by attracting new residents and promoting independent local retailers. North Tyler's approximately 6,700 households today fall short of the 10,000 households that investors generally expect to support a community shopping center. In addition, the median household income is only 70-75% of the 100% of the median income that, for example, chain restaurants look for to locate a new restaurant.



Sign advertising new development at North Broadway Avenue and Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard

From an investment point of view, the good news is that North Tyler has been growing. In the near term, opportunities are greatest for entrepreneurial local retailers, specialty stores, a drug store, and miscellaneous retail. A longer-term plan should focus on getting at least 10,000 households in the North Tyler area and raising the median income to at least 80% of the median income of the city as a whole. Building new housing units and attracting new residents can bring large changes in median income. Then North Tyler could attract apparel and accessories stores, general merchandise stores, and some restaurants.

North Tyler has many intersections where new housing and retail could be located, but it is important to zone for focus areas so that investments can build critical mass instead of dissipating their impact in low-density, random locations along arterial corridors. Demographic groups that could be attracted to new housing in North Tyler include young couples, ethnic households desiring urban services, single-parent households, and, eventually, cosmopolitan empty nesters. Market analysts divide the population into lifestyle categories with certain economic and demographic characteristics. In the Tyler MSA, one out of five households is part of the “striving singles” category. These are low-and moderate-income singles. They make up a much higher percentage of households in the Tyler MSA than in the state as a whole, so they could be a large market for North End revitalization.

Although rehabilitation of existing housing is important, it is crucial to create new housing and new types of higher-density, market-rate housing such as townhouses and multi-family units. The intent is that these units would attract households whose incomes would help bring up the overall median income of the area. This new housing development is not intended to be subsidized housing. There must be a parallel track of housing rehabilitation and new scattered site infill housing so that the neighborhood continues to offer housing at prices that lower-income families can afford. Upgrades to the appearance and function of North End infrastructure and amenities will play an essential role in attracting developers and new homebuyers and tenants to the North End.

## **BENEFITS OF DOWNTOWN AND U.S. 69N CORRIDOR DEVELOPMENT**

One of the keys to North End revitalization will be the recreation of downtown as a residential, cultural and entertainment center. Attention to downtown will attract new investment that will spill over into the North End. By the same token, the development that is already beginning to appear in the U.S. 69N corridor can benefit the North End by bringing national retail closer to North End residents. In both cases—downtown and U.S. 69N development—new activity away from South Tyler will help the North End capture some growth.



## C. Recommendations

There is no one action or catalyst development that will revitalize the North End planning area. Success will result from coordinated activities over time. Most investment decisions are made by individuals: homeowners, businesses and developers. There must be adequate marketing of the area to potential investors, so they understand the potential. City government can help promote investment by creating a framework, supporting citizen and nonprofit activities, providing incentives, and investing in the public realm and infrastructure, but it will not by itself make revitalization happen. What happens around the North End—in downtown and along the U.S. 69N corridor—will inevitably affect opportunities in the North End. Public, private, nonprofit and community efforts will be needed to achieve the goals and implement the actions recommended in this plan.

### **GOAL:**

#### **1. Increase the number of homeowners.**

### **ACTIONS:**

#### **1a. Create a marketing program for all first-time homebuyer programs available in the city.**

There are several first-time homebuyer programs available to Tyler residents, but they are not well-marketed. The City's Department of Neighborhood Services Housing Division should serve as a central information center on the affordable housing programs available in the city. Information should be consolidated in a brochure, to be distributed widely to organizations and individuals around the city, and it should also be posted on the City's web site. A project of this type could be completed in a summer by an intern. It would have to be updated regularly, which would provide an additional opportunity for collaboration between the Housing Division, banks, and other providers of programs to first-time homebuyers. In addition to the brochure and web page, there should be personal outreach through presentations to community groups, such as church congregations, or first-time homebuyer fairs.

#### **1b. Expand credit counseling programs for first-time homebuyers.**

Housing professionals working with Tyler's low and moderate income residents all report that lack of good credit is the most important barrier to homeownership. Small credit counseling programs currently exist that are connected to specific programs for households needing subsidy, but the city needs programs that can help working families who have enough income to afford a market-rate home in the North End cure their credit problems and qualify for a mortgage.

There has been discussion about forming a community development corporation (CDC) in order to provide these services. However, CDCs usually have a broader mission and work to develop affordable housing and/or jobs. An effective CDC requires an active community board, experienced staff, and continuing fund-raising activity. It is not necessary to create a new, complex nonprofit just for credit counseling.

A simpler approach to expanding these services is for the City or another government or nonprofit entity to seek funding from foundations, banks (as Community Reinvestment Act activities) or other donors and then issue a request for proposals (RFP) to identify a nonprofit service provider for credit counseling. The target population would be working families and not the lowest-income households. The city's colleges and university could also be approached to help provide credit counseling classes. The proposed system might include the following:

- A marketing program;
- Quarterly and annual reports by the provider;
- Measurement of outcomes to include outreach numbers, participant numbers, tracking of participants who become homeowners; and
- Small payments to be made by the clients, as a token of seriousness and also to contribute to program funding.

**1c. Explore community land trust and limited-equity models for below-market ownership housing.**

Community land trusts are nonprofit organizations that buy land, build housing and then sell or rent only the housing unit, while retaining ownership of the land. Increased values return to the trust so that the housing can continue to be affordable. Community land trusts get their income from management fees, loan fees and interest, developer fees, grants, and donations. Another affordable ownership model is the limited-equity cooperative. Residents of a limited-equity cooperative own shares in a corporation or trust that owns the building or buildings that make up the cooperative. Residents pay monthly fees, like rent, to underwrite their share ownership. A limited equity cooperative limits the amount of increased value that an owner can capture on sale of his unit (the shares), in order to preserve affordability. This system allows low-income households to gain some ownership equity without having to provide a down payment or qualify for a mortgage.

**GOAL:**

**2. Add 3,000 more households to North Tyler and downtown to create mixed-income neighborhoods.**

**ACTIONS:**

**2a. Pursue efforts to make it easier to assemble vacant properties for redevelopment, potentially including tax forgiveness or donating lots for appropriate housing projects.**

Assembly of vacant lots for redevelopment can be complex in older neighborhoods. Many of the easy purchases have already been made by the few developers working in the North End. The City can help by working with the Smith County appraisal office to gain control of tax title properties, as well as providing assistance in locating and working with absentee owners. An incentive for housing development could be forgiveness of taxes on tax title properties, donation of lots, or forgiveness of mowing and demolition liens.

Utilize the Affordable Housing Task Force recommendations for the waiving of development fees relating to affordable housing in the North End Revitalization area (building permits, taps, platting, zoning, etc.). Affordable Housing would be defined as Single Family, Attached and Detached- R-1, R-2, R-1D or a building of 4 or less multi-family. The

house or unit will be limited to 1500 square feet of heated and cooled space. Removing requirement of curb and gutter improvements or escrow for new affordable housing in the North End (ownership or rental and same requirement of 1500 square foot heated and cooled).

**2b. Organize revolving loan pools to write down interest rates for scattered site housing rehabilitation and new housing development.**

Tyler area banks should be approached to contribute to revolving loan pools for low-interest loans to low and moderate income owner-occupants; for landlords who agree to rent to households making 80% or below the area median income; and for soft second loans for first-time homebuyers of new market-rate homes.

**2c. Provide tax incentives for market-rate rental and condominium housing development in the North End.**

To reduce the risk to for-profit developers entering the North End market, the City, in partnership with the County and the TJC district, could provide a ten-year tax abatement for market-rate rental and condominium housing developed in the North End.

**2d. Build more single-family attached buildings instead of single-family attached homes.**

Duplexes are a well-known housing type in Tyler but are often thought of only as rental properties. Building more attached, rather than detached, single-family homes will increase the new housing stock in the North End more rapidly. Ownership of a duplex building can also be a strategy to bring more families into homeownership because they can rent out the other unit. (For best results, it is important to include information on landlord-tenant relationships and rights in homeownership counseling programs.)



Single-family attached and duplex homes can be designed to resemble single-family homes.

**2e. Locate multifamily housing as part of mixed-use centers, rather than in isolated pods.**

Existing multifamily developments in the North End tend to be located as isolated pods rather than being well-integrated into neighborhoods. New market-rate multifamily housing should be built as part of mixed-use centers at important intersections. The new residents will then help to support new neighborhood-serving retail.



In a mixed-use development in Frisco, TX, residents in multifamily housing units (top) help support retail below.

**2f. Work with for-profit and non-profit developers to ensure that design of new below-market housing is compatible with existing neighborhood character rather than an identifiable, “subsidized” model.**

Neighborhood residents, especially owner-occupants, are wary of more subsidized housing because the materials and design often telegraph that it is subsidized. This is true not only of rental apartment complexes but also of homeownership projects like Habitat for Humanity houses. It benefits everyone—existing residents, new residents of subsidized housing, and the City’s overall revitalization project for the North End—to promote designs that are compatible with neighborhood character and that integrate housing into the neighborhood rather than isolating it from surrounding areas.

**2g. Create new development opportunities through annexation.**

Pursuing annexation of areas along the U.S. 69 corridor north to I-20 and inside Loop 323 in northeastern Tyler will require extension of infrastructure to these areas. Annexing these key areas will provide opportunities for new residential and commercial development that can benefit the North End and the city as a whole.

**2h. Prepare property to be sold by the City for quality and innovative redevelopment.**

Consider utilizing planned development zoning and/or overlay districts to establish development parameters that encourage the development of quality mixed housing types. Also consider other restrictions that can be placed on the property to encourage affordable housing development.



Affordable housing can be designed to be compatible with neighborhood character and look like market-rate housing.





***2i. Establish a task force to address affordable housing.***

Convene stakeholders including community representatives, bankers, realtors, builders and housing advocates to address affordable housing issues in the community.

**GOAL:**

***3. Focus commercial development around targeted mixed-use intersections.***

**ACTIONS:**

***3a. Promote mixed-use higher-density development at key intersections.***

As noted earlier, the dispersed, low-density development that currently exists along the major arterials in the North End provides an easy opportunity for rezoning. Commercial corridor zoning should be replaced with mixed-use, higher-density zoning including design standards at key intersections:

- U.S. 69N and Loop 323 with an emphasis on multi-family living as an important component
- Gentry Parkway from Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard to North Glenwood Boulevard
- Gentry Parkway and Bergfeld Avenue
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard between Broadway and Palace avenues
- Glenwood Boulevard and Vine Avenue
- Glenwood Boulevard and Houston Street
- Loop 323 and major intersections



Vacant land at important intersections, such as North Broadway and Loop 323 (above) and North Broadway at Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard (below), provides opportunities for the creation of mixed-use centers.

Loop 323 should have a highway overlay district that promotes better site design, access management, and appearance as existing properties redevelop over time. In the neighborhoods, small corner stores should be allowed by special permit. Increase the number of transit routes.

***3b. Consider tax incentives for commercial redevelopment in the North End.***

Commercial redevelopment in the designated mixed-use centers should be considered for tax incentives on a case-by-case basis if it meets the



Rail beds no longer in use can become pedestrian and bicycle trails.



goals of the revitalization plan. Small Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Districts may also be suitable to fund infrastructure improvements to help attract new investment.

**GOAL:**

**4. Create new major open space amenities and upgrade existing parks.**

The North End planning area contains some of Tyler's most promising opportunities for the creation of new greenways, pocket parks, and nature preserves. The success of the Glass Center and Woldert Park in drawing residents from all over the city to recreation programs shows that these kinds of amenities are attractive. In the community participation elements of the planning process, many people made clear their desire to see more opportunities for walking trails and greenways in the city. The attractiveness of walking trails has been noticed by developers, who increasingly are trying to include pedestrian or multi-use paths within their developments. The recommendations of the Parks and Open Space Working Group focus on preserving the important natural drainage basins in the city for nature-based recreation and greenways. Two of the most important of these areas are located in the North End planning area. Creation of greenways in these areas can help attract new investment in housing, bringing more households to North and West Tyler.

**ACTIONS:**

**4a. Create Black Fork Creek and Willow Creek Nature Preserves and Greenways with walking and biking trails.**

Creation of nature preserves and greenways in Tyler's creek corridors and floodplains is one of the key recommendations of Tyler 1st's park and open space component. Two of the most important locations are in North Tyler (Black Fork Creek) and West Tyler (Willow Creek). Creation of nature preserves with walking and biking trails can become important attractions in the North End planning area and amenities that increase the value of new housing.

**4b. Renovate parks associated with school building projects and housing development focus areas and include a neighborhood participation process.**

In contrast to South Tyler, the North End is fortunate to have a number of neighborhood parks that are reachable on foot and several important larger parks. The success of the Glass Center and Woldert Park shows how park renovation and programming can attract residents from all over the city. Investment in a high standard of maintenance, design and programming for the North End's parks will add to the positive effect of current school building projects, sending a message about an improving quality of life in the North End.

The school projects include an opportunity for renovation and recreation of adjacent parks in North Tyler. A public participation process associated with the design of these parks should be included in order to build and strengthen community in these neighborhoods. Similarly, development of clusters of new housing should include a focus on renovating nearby parks and recreation areas.

**4c. Partner with private interests for the promotion of a new Tyler First Tee program at Woldert Park.**

The First Tee of Tyler has been formed and land has been donated adjacent to Woldert Park. This land, together with land from existing Woldert Park, is intended to be the home

for this new sports program.

**4d. Increase the number of trails, pocket parks and green space around new development.**

Encourage developers to consider green space amenities in new projects in order to provide recreation and active health opportunities.

**GOAL:**

**5. Maintain and upgrade neighborhood infrastructure.**

**ACTIONS:**

**5a. Survey streets, drainage and other infrastructure in the North End for improvements such as paving, sidewalks, street trees and street lights.**

Some of the infrastructure in the North End needs upgrades. As part of the City’s asset management planning, existing assets in the North End should be evaluated for maintenance needs. In addition, locations where sidewalks are discontinuous, street lights are lacking, and street trees are needed should be inventoried. Lighting is especially important to enhance a feeling of safety and security.



Infrastructure needs in the North End should be assessed and prioritized.

**5b. Create a priority list coordinated with downtown revitalization, housing development activity, parks and other improvements.**

Because there are many needs, improvements must be coordinated with other revitalization activities, so that infrastructure investments can contribute to a critical mass of revitalization. The first two priority areas to be considered should be the North Bois d’Arc-North Broadway area because of its proximity to downtown and the Texas College area, which has diverse existing housing and many opportunities for new housing.

**5c. Establish a Safe Routes to School Program.**

Many schoolchildren walk or bike to school in the North End, but streets without sidewalks or safe intersections can be dangerous. The federal *Safe Routes to School Program* provides funding for both infrastructure projects and activities such as education, enforcement, and promotion. In FY2007 Texas will receive \$9.4 million to fund *Safe Routes to School*. Administered by TxDOT, the program is competitive and requires no local matching funds.

**GOAL:**

**6. Improve crime prevention and quality of life enforcement.**

Throughout the country, communities have found that a combination of community-



Improved code enforcement can remedy problems—such as illegal dumping—that detract from the North End’s quality of life.

based policing, targeted intervention, and strong enforcement of quality of life violations (the “broken window syndrome”) can be very effective in combating crime and improving neighborhood conditions. If the North End planning area is to attract new investment and new residents, consistent efforts to reduce crime and upgrade the image and physical conditions of the area will be essential. Where public facilities are poorly maintained, code violations are ignored, and dumping and petty vandalism are permitted to persist, neighborhoods are seen to have less value. Some residents treat them with less care and outsiders conclude that they can use them for dumping and other illicit activities. Crime in the North End planning area is primarily linked to drug and alcohol sales, both the direct commission of those crimes and the robberies and assaults that can arise as a result.

The City has recently begun focusing efforts on new initiatives. The Police Department has been developing a community policing program that includes assigning two officers to beats in the planning area. They focus on getting to know the community, forming new neighborhood crime watch groups, and on drug crimes. Intensive, week-long targeting of identified drug houses has also been effective. Tyler’s NEW Program is a positive step in proactive enforcement of quality of life and safety regulations, but focused enforcement must continue in NEW target areas even after the program has moved on to another location.

**ACTIONS:**

**6a. Enhance code and anti-dumping enforcement through intensive outreach and marketing to North End residents, social services agencies, and City departments about City enforcement services and creation of an easy reporting mechanism.**

Most city governments inevitably depend on residents to inform them about conditions that may require enforcement actions. In the North End, some residents may not be aware of their ability to call on the City to improve conditions and tenants may not be aware of their rights to code-compliant housing. A marketing program, including visits to church congregations, other neighborhood organizations, and social services agencies, can raise public awareness. City staff who may observe code issues should also be alerted about reporting offenses. Once a neighborhood coalition has been formed (see below), it can help gather information on enforcement needs.

Making it easy to report potential offenses is also important. A telephone answering machine can record reports, as can forms on the City’s web site. Staff needs to be designated to collect the information and assign enforcement officers.

**6b. Expand a ticketing system for quality of life infractions such as junk cars.**

A ticketing system for quality of life infractions, perhaps with an initial warning followed by fines if the warning to correct the matter is not respected, can be effective in attracting attention to enforcement.

**6c. Continue and enhance community policing initiatives and consider creation of a North End Crime Task Force, including representatives of neighborhood associations, social services groups, churches and other community-based groups, to**



***strengthen crime prevention.***

In addition to supporting the Police Department's community policing program that is focused on the North End area, the Texans Against Crime program (formerly National Night Out), and other citywide citizen-police programs, creation of an explicit partnership with community organizations in the North End planning area could be effective in enhancing communication between the police and residents, and helping to solve problems before they become crimes. Community meetings on North End crime issues have been held from time to time, typically in response to a particular event, but an ongoing partnership with citizen groups would provide more continuity and give more confidence to prospective residents or developers. Neighborhoods with a local reputation for crime often are much less dangerous in reality than in popular perception, and it is difficult to turn those perceptions around. A strong crime prevention partnership can help deter crime and publicize improvements.



***6d. Continue to encourage voluntary demolition of old substandard vacant houses as an effort to reduce crime in the area.***

Neighborhood Services will continue to utilize the voluntary demo program to expedite the demolition process when possible. If the owner of the property refuses, action will be taken through the Neighborhood Revitalization Board.

***GOAL:-***

***~~7. Establish a neighborhood coalition with associations in all major districts to lay the groundwork for a community development corporation (CDC).~~***

Effective community-based organizations are essential elements in any revitalization effort. Neighborhood leadership is needed to help mobilize residents. At the same time, these organizations often need assistance from government or other outside institutions to build capacity and attract resources.

There has been repeated discussion about creating a CDC for the North End. CDCs are nonprofit organizations that typically focus on producing affordable (below market-rate) housing using financing from a variety of sources; economic development activities such as development of commercial space, micro-lending to beginning entrepreneurs, small business incubators, and enterprises designed to provide job training and placement; open space and park programs; youth development and child care programs; and community organizing such as tenant organizing and advocacy for neighborhood improvements such as parks and infrastructure. They manage residential and commercial real estate and loan funds and get their income from a variety of sources including management fees, developer fees, leases, interest payments, government funding programs, grants and donations. Effective CDCs have a clear mission, strong boards made up of community residents, and professional staff. All CDCs need to be entrepreneurial and savvy about attracting resources from a variety of sources. CDCs cannot and do not depend on one source of funding. Working with this "basket" of resources often means adhering to different requirements for how funds can be used and how they must be accounted for.

Previous efforts to create a CDC in Tyler have not been successful. Working Group discussion about what the mission of a CDC in the North End should be focused

GOAL 7  
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on credit counseling, and, as noted earlier, this goal could be accomplished in a less complicated way by seeking a provider through an RFP process. The traditional development role of CDCs—creating below-market rate affordable housing—is less central to the revitalization plan for the North End. Existing housing is relatively inexpensive and the main issue is to upgrade and rehab this housing and to help working families qualify for mortgages. New market-rate housing on scattered sites is slightly more expensive than existing housing, but still within the means of many working households. Tyler also has some of the small business services that some CDCs provide. The Metropolitan Black Chamber of Commerce has training and micro-lending programs. More outreach and effective marketing of these programs is needed.

In the short term, it does not seem necessary for Tyler to create a CDC. However, in the medium and long term, a CDC could become an important partner in assuring the creation of a sustainable, mixed-income neighborhood in the North End. In order to pave the way for future decision on whether a strong CDC is needed to advance North End revitalization, community capacity-building is needed.

**ACTIONS:**

***7a. Work with existing associations, social services groups, churches and others to promote a North End coalition.***

The City or another organization should convene meetings of community-based groups to develop a coalition for North End revitalization. An essential contribution which the City is best positioned to make would be to provide staff support for meetings (outreach, calling meetings, creating contact lists, organizing volunteer committees, grant-writing assistance and so on) and providing meeting space. The City could provide these services for a defined period so that there would be a deadline for the community coalition to find a way to take over the support role.

The initial purpose of this group would be to build organizational capacity on a district-wide scale. Just as the National Night Out annual anti-crime event has been very successful in Tyler, the North End community coalition could organize activities for North End improvement. Potential short-term activities could be neighborhood festivals and children's activities, clean-up campaigns, distribution of information on credit counseling and other opportunities, and so on. As this group develops a mission and activities, it can evaluate whether and when a CDC might be beneficial for the North End.

**GOAL:**

**8. Recognize historic structures and areas in the North End planning area.**

Just as efforts to recognize the historic character of today's National Register districts in Tyler stabilized those neighborhoods and made them attractive to homeowners, recognition of the historic elements of North End neighborhoods can also assist in the revitalization process.

**ACTIONS:**

**8a. Seek to uncover, restore, and maintain brick streets north of downtown to enhance historic character.**

Bois d'Arc Avenue north of Gentry Parkway is a brick street with attractive, historic homes. This street should be carefully maintained. Where intersections or abutting blocks are covered over with asphalt, efforts to uncover brick streets and maintain them can help create a defined area of historic neighborhood character.



Many of the city's historic brick streets have been paved over.

**8b. Promote creation of a Neighborhood Conservation District around North Bois d'Arc Avenue.**

After passage of an enabling act to create Neighborhood Conservation Districts, the Historical Preservation Board should work with property owners and residents to promote creation of a NCD centered on Bois d'Arc Avenue from Gentry Parkway to Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard.



A neighborhood conservation district could preserve the character of North Bois d'Arc Avenue.

**8c. Promote Tyler Historic Landmark status and installation of historic markers and plaques at North End locations important to city history, including the history of the African-American community.**

The North End contains some of the city's older residential neighborhoods and has long been the home of Tyler's African-American community. Many historic homes and institutional buildings remain, some of which have been designated as landmarks on the local, state, and federal levels. The City should encourage the designation of other properties in the North End as Tyler Historic Landmarks and the identification of important sites as candidates for state historic markers (see the Historic Preservation chapter). Properties that could be considered include homes along North Bois d'Arc Avenue and North Moore Street and sites along Palace Avenue, Ross Avenue, and Confederate Street.

**GOAL:**

**9. Improve the appearance and function of major roads.**

**ACTIONS:**

**9a. Make Gentry Parkway, Glenwood Boulevard and Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard into real parkways or boulevards.**

Gentry Parkway, Glenwood Boulevard and Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard can be reconfigured to provide more pleasant conditions for drivers, pedestrians and bicyclists. Parkway can include a planted median, street trees and sidewalks, and on-street parking. Implementation of the zoning recommendations discussed below will focus commercial development and higher density housing development in defined centers, leaving the remainder of these roads residential. Boulevard

Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard at Bois d'Arc Avenue today and future potential.



configurations separate local and through traffic lanes and also involve attractive plantings and streetscape conditions. Many communities experiment with temporary barriers to reconfigure traffic lanes and evaluate the current and future impacts of changing road design. These temporary experiments must be accompanied with broad public outreach so that the public understands why they are being done and can participate in the evaluation of the impacts. This is particularly important when the changes appear to narrow the road or reduce the number of lanes because members of the public almost always assume that this will increase traffic congestion (which is not always the case).

**9b. Improve the appearance and function of the U.S. 69N gateway and Loop 323 in the northern and western parts of the city through a highway overlay district with design guidelines.**

Because development along the northern and western Loop 323 is still relatively spotty, establishment of design guidelines, combined with rezoning to focus commercial development in centers, can be relatively easy. At the U.S. 69N/Loop 323 gateway to the city, design guidelines for redevelopment will have an effect over time as properties change.

**9c. Promote a program to plant pine trees along the major entrance corridors into Tyler.**

Pine trees are symbols of East Texas and the trees grow quickly. A program to plant pine trees along Highway 64, U.S. 69 and other entrance corridors would give them a distinctive appearance that screens somewhat the current landscape typified by low-density metal buildings. It might be possible to organize this as a volunteer program in which seedlings are donated for planting according to specified standards by abutting property owners or groups such as the Boy Scouts.



A potential new look for the southwest corner of U.S. 69 and Loop 323.

**9d. Increase street lighting along major roads.**

Coordinate with Oncor for the installation of additional street lights along the major roads within the North End Revitalization Planning Area.

**GOAL:**

**10. Promote local business development and marketing.**

**ACTIONS:**

**10a. Support expansion of marketing and programs for micro-lending and small business training.**

As noted earlier, the Metropolitan Black Chamber of Commerce sponsors programs to assist people who wish to open new small businesses. The Chamber needs assistance in expanding public awareness of these programs. In addition, Spanish-language programs should be offered through Hispanic business organizations.

**10b. Assist in joint marketing efforts for existing businesses.**

Although North End residents sometimes feel that all the retail and service businesses are in South Tyler, during the Working Group discussions participants realized that the lack of chain businesses in the North End has potential as a marketing tool. There are unique businesses that serve the neighborhood--sometimes from people's homes--that are not sufficiently known in the North End or the rest of Tyler. Joint marketing efforts for these businesses that highlight their local roots could be effective in helping them survive and expand. There are a number of communities where merchants in neighborhood commercial districts have banded together in "Buy Local" campaigns with brochures that identify the locally-owned businesses, joint advertising, and special events.



The City can assist small North End businesses with joint marketing projects and "Buy Local" campaigns.