

# Downtown Brandon Plan



From the Brandon Downtown Charrette  
September 23 - 29, 2013  
Final Draft





A successful planning charrette is a highly collaborative process requiring a high degree of team work and local support. Brandon provided both. Listed below are just a few of those who contributed to the work.

Charrette Team

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Special thanks to the Brandon United Methodist Church for providing meeting space

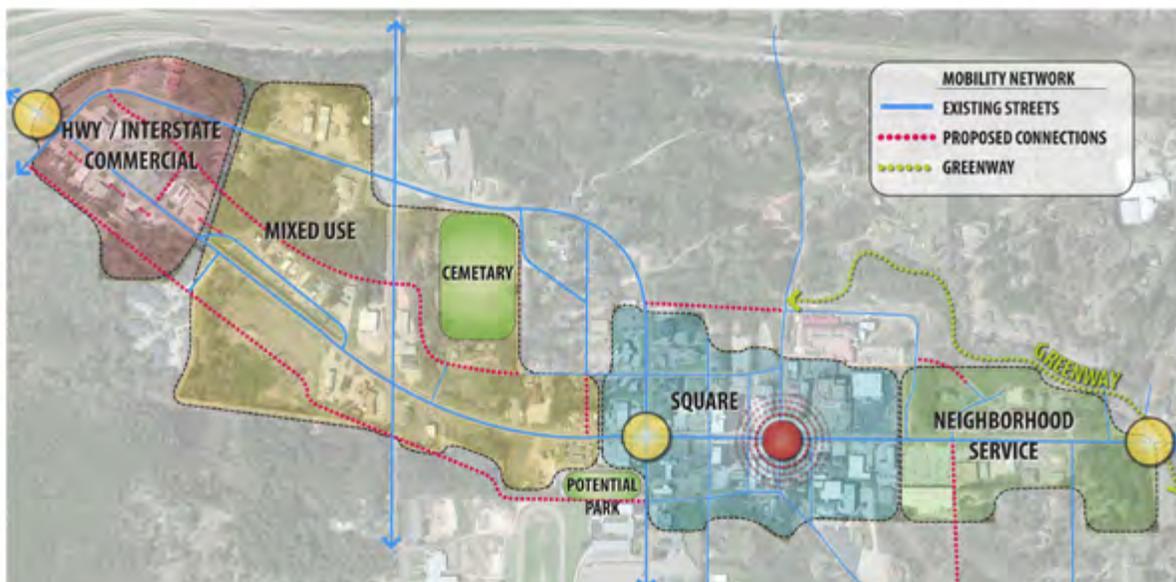
Charrette Consulting Team





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## Introduction

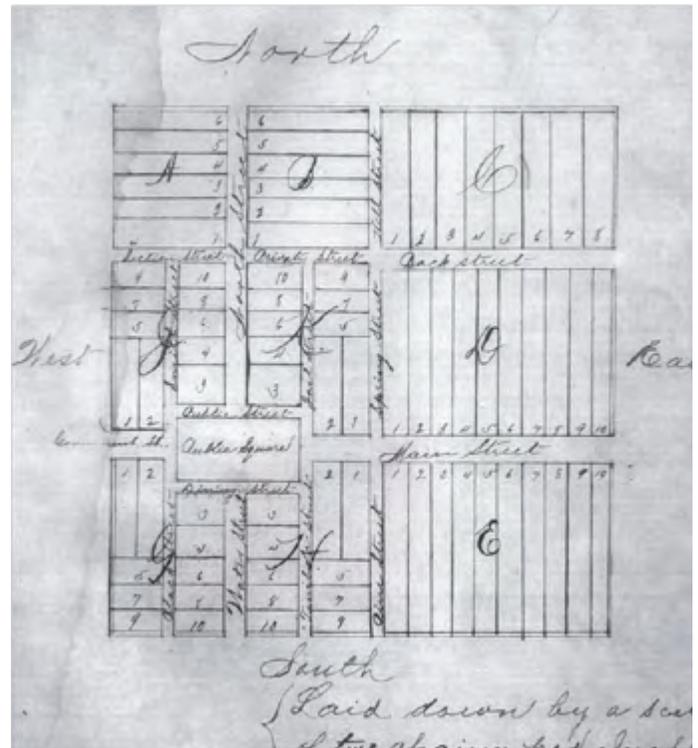
In recent months the conversation about the future of downtown Brandon has intensified. The 2007 Comprehensive City Plan identified downtown as an important element in the City's future and follow up training sessions in 2010 and 2011 reaffirmed the need to focus sustained and strategic attention on the future of downtown. Consequently, Brandon determined that a week long intensive planning charrette was the most appropriate way to create a vision and plan for downtown Brandon. The charrette was conducted the week of September 23, 2013.

## Discovery

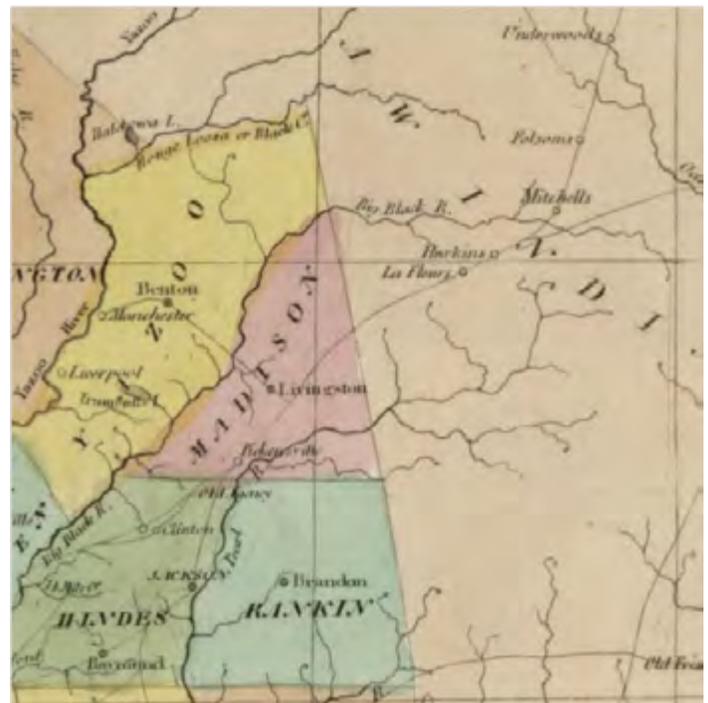
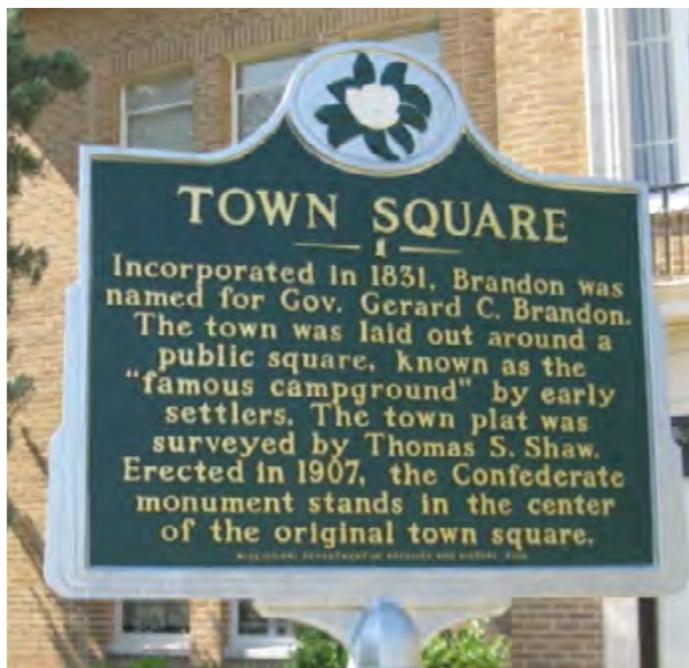
Planning for downtown Brandon began through a process of discovery. Attitudes and ideas of Brandon citizens were surveyed, the economics of downtown were assessed, existing development patterns were documented and analyzed and current development constraints and coding was assessed. Through the process of discovery the trends opportunities and development constraints for downtown were documented and analyzed. Each of these discovery areas is summarized in the next sections.

## Downtown Brandon Beginnings

In 1829 residents east of the Pearl River in Hinds County, Mississippi requested approval of the Mississippi State Legislature to separate. The Pearl River posed significant difficulty for people accessing the county seat of Jackson to conduct business. After approval, the new county was



named Rankin after a prominent politician of the time. The County seat was named Brandon for Gerard C. Brandon, the first governor born and raised in Mississippi. The town was constructed around a central town square which remains to this day serving as the center of community life for nearly 200 years.



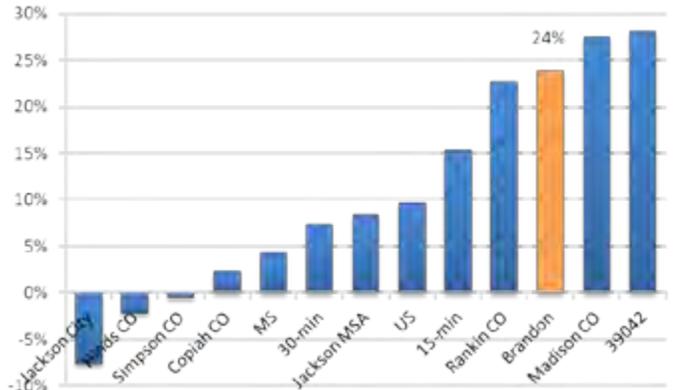
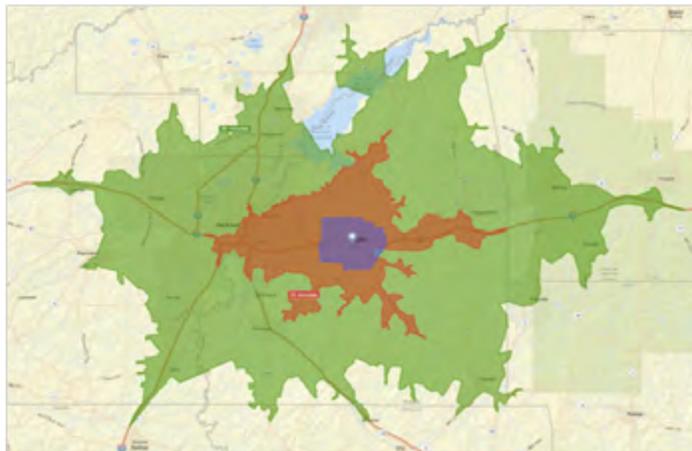


### Demographics

Brandon grew by 24% between 2000 and 2010. Brandon and the 39042 are among fastest growing areas in the in Jackson region. Brandon’s population if projected to grow by another 17% from 2010 to 2018. The number of households have doubled since 1990 from 4,244 to 8,461.

### Retail Market

For the purposes of the retail economic analysis, we must look at Brandon’s position in the larger market. The region’s commercial market is very dynamic, and many of Brandon’s retail needs are served just outside of its city limits in areas like Pearl or Flowood. Therefore, we compared Brandon’s needs with the offerings within a 15-minute and 30-minute drive time, those trade areas that will be most relevant to Brandon and its downtown. The main tool we use is a retail leakage study. “Retail Leakage” refers to the difference between the retail expenditures by residents living in a particular area and the retail sales produced by the stores located in the same area. If desired products are not available within that area, consumers will travel to other



places or use different methods to obtain those products. Consequently, the dollars spent outside of the area are said to be “leaking.” If a community is a major retail center with a variety of stores it will be “attracting” rather than “leaking” retail sales. Even large communities may see leakage in certain retail categories. Key observations are shown below:

- In 2012, the Jackson metropolitan area represented a \$9.8 billion market. While Jackson is an urban market, this is very significant.
- Brandon’s retail sales during this time were \$516 million, representing approximately 5% of the \$9.8 billion region.
- Downtown Brandon is just 2% of the City of Brandon’s market. This is indicative of downtown’s current position in the market, with more civic and service uses rather than retail.

### Retail leakage in Brandon:

Brandon’s total 2012 sales were \$516 million while resident’s expenditures were approximately \$355 million. Therefore, Brandon’s commercial offerings gained \$160 million in 2012. Similarly, the downtown study area gained \$8 million in 2012. Of course, there are limited residential areas in the study area from which to create expenditures. Still, the downtown study area saw over \$10 million in sales in the previous year. All told, Brandon and downtown are retail magnets that draw in consumers from outside their boundaries. This means that Brandon is generally serving the commercial needs of its residents. This is a positive indicator particularly



for the City of Brandon, as it is directly adjacent to its main competitive markets of Flowood, Pearl, etc.

Leakage does translate directly to demand, and although the City is gaining overall, there are a number of individual business categories that show potential either within Brandon or the greater region. These businesses do show varying demand, which presents recruitment opportunities for Brandon and its downtown:

- Full-Service Restaurants – There is demand for an additional \$7.2 million in full service restaurants in Brandon. While the 15-minute trade area shows limited gain, the 30-minute area shows significant demand overall.
- Specialty Foods – This includes fresh produce, meat markets, and even small specialty grocers. There is significant demand in each of the three trade areas studied, beginning with Brandon’s \$3 million. This suggests opportunity for a specialty grocer, or even a regular Farmers market.
- Clothing – a number of clothing categories show demand locally, but key opportunities in Brandon and its 15- and 30-minute trade areas include Women’s clothing and shoes.
- Nursery & Garden – With \$2.5 million in demand in Brandon, \$8 million within 15-minutes, and over \$30 million within 30-minutes, nursery and garden centers show strong potential.
- Computer & Software – Finally, there appears to be demand throughout the region for computer and software stores.
- Other Categories – Several other categories show demand locally, but the offerings within the region may be absorbing this demand. Still, these categories show local demand, and may provide an opportunity for limited growth, or even expansion of existing business offerings:
  - Furniture & Home Furnishings
  - Grocery (very limited locally)
  - Book Stores
  - Hardware Stores
  - Cosmetics & Optical Goods

All categories of Clothing

Jewelry & Luggage

Finally, there are a few categories where Brandon is performing exceptionally well when compared to the region, meaning that Brandon has a larger than normal share of sales of that particular good or service. When these categories are destination-based businesses, they may suggest an opportunity for a community to build a cluster of businesses around the category. In Brandon, this could include:

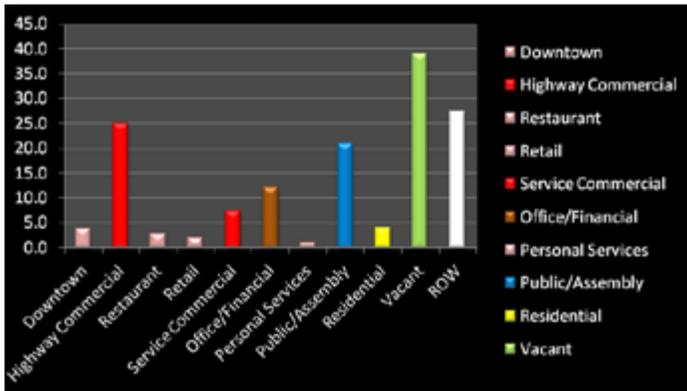
- Gift Shops
- Antiques
- Sewing & Piece Goods

Brandon does exist within a dynamic urban market which does limit its opportunities for business recruitment, either because of the competitive market overall or the fact that the particular business is adequately served elsewhere within the region. Still, the data above does show potential for business recruitment in Brandon and downtown. While demand may exist in certain areas, it is important to note that any business must have a sound business plan, should complement local and regional offerings, and must market itself within the trade areas and beyond. The table in the appendix presents the retail leakage study in detail.

### Existing Development Patterns

The designated Downtown area consists of 145 acres of developed land, approximately 39 percent of which lies vacant. Highway commercial development represents the largest developed





category followed by the public use of land.

### Existing Development Policy

The City of Brandon adopted a Comprehensive plan in 2007. This plan establishes broad development direction for the City and establishes the underlying basis for current development policy in the form of its zoning ordinance. The plan, however, does not treat the downtown area in detail or provided the detailed form and design tools needed to reenforce the historic nature of the downtown Brandon. For example, the current zoning ordinance does not permit upper floor residential units downtown and applies the C-1 downtown category to areas developed for neighborhood services, and applies the highway oriented commercial category to areas very near the Town Square. The ordinance lacks landscaping requirements and targeted design standards.

### 16th Section Lands

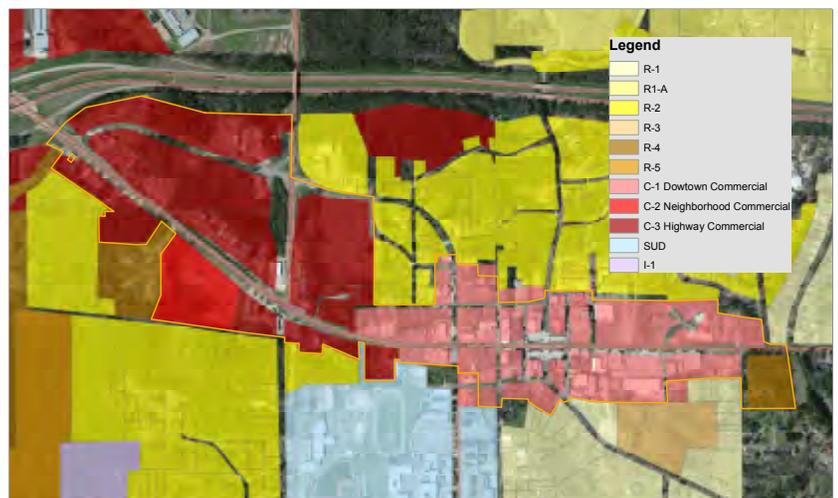
In addition to the current zoning patterns, a large section of the designated focus area is covered by 16th section land. The U. S. Land Ordinance of 1785 divided land in America into a system of square mile sections and organized the section by township and ranges of 36 sections. This law set aside Section 16 in each township for funding public schools. Congress organized de Mississippi a state in 1817 and specifically provided that 16th Section land should be for this use.

Although the State of Mississippi holds title to 16th

Section land, local school boards manage the land on a day-to-day basis. Mississippi’s Secretary of State acts as trustee of the land and oversees the school board management of the land. Section 16 lands may be leased for farming, hunting, fishing, mineral exploration and mining. Rent for these uses are set by competitive bidding and by appraisal for all other uses through a process governed by State Statute. The 16th Section lands are a unique feature of development in Brandon and pose unique challenges in the planning process.

### National and Local Historic Districts

There are four historic districts listed on the National Register of Historic Places in Brandon and one locally designated historic district. Development in these districts is governed by the Brandon Preservation Commission under





the terms of its preservation ordinance and the enabling legislation of the State of Mississippi.

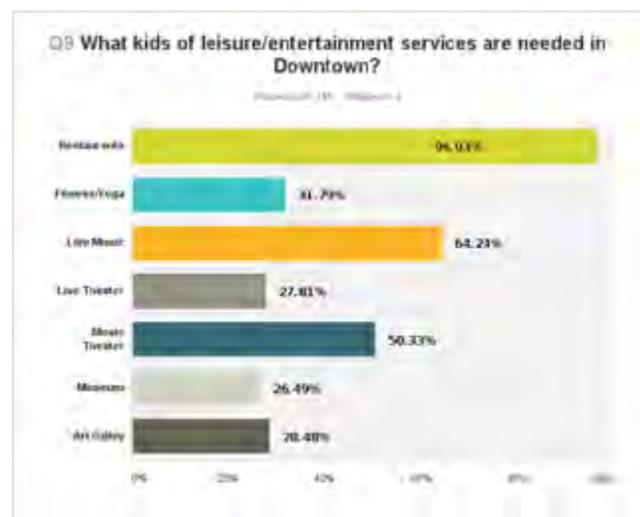
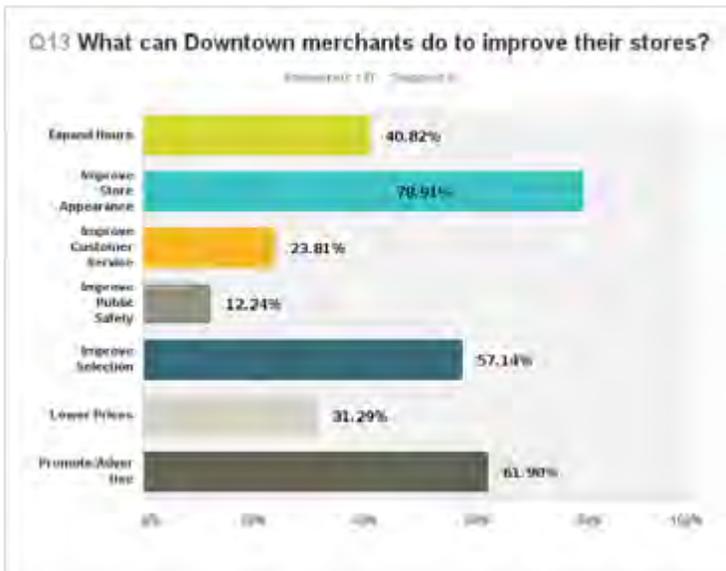
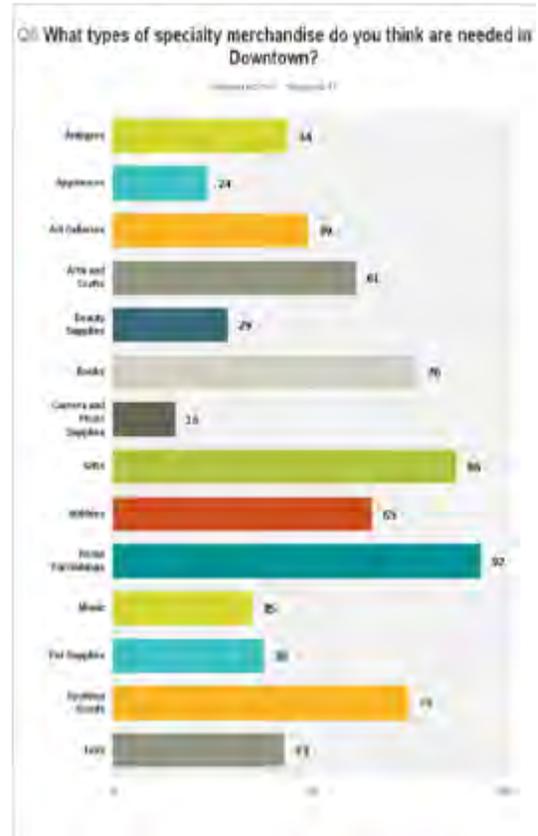
## Summary of Survey Responses

Downtown Brandon Community Vision Survey was conducted via internet from August 1 to September 15th. There were 152 respondents to the Resident’s Survey and 17 respondents to the Business Survey. The purpose of the survey was to identify the areas you consider to be “downtown” and to collect your opinions regarding destinations, traffic, transportation, parking and areas for improvement. Complete results are included in the appendix to this plan but key highlights are as follows

What prevents you from shopping downtown?

Top survey responses:

- Limited/inconvenient store hours
- Unattractive store fronts/no curb appeal
- Too many consignment/resale stores
- Too expensive/unreasonable prices
- No marketing/advertising
- Limited selection
- Lack of parking
- Not pedestrian friendly/no sidewalks





As Downtown changes, if you could keep one thing the same what would it be?

- Architecture
- Atmosphere
- Brick
- Business
- Character
- Charm
- Community
- Courthouse
- Expand
- Friendly Going
- Historic Look
- Monument
- Nice Old Town
- Quaint
- Safe
- Small Town
- Square
- Statue
- Stores

In your opinion, please explain what sets Downtown Brandon apart from other Downtown areas you may have visited.

- Atmosphere
- Businesses
- Low crime
- Historic Downtown
- Friendly
- Highway
- Hometown Looks
- Love
- Needs
- Not Attractive
- Original Quaint Shops
- Sidewalks
- Special Square
- Statue
- Traffic

What are some business challenges of Downtown?

- Lack of retail
- Not enough parking
- I hope there are none, regarding permitting, design approval, etc.
- Getting around the statue/traffic
- Very limited parking, traffic congestion, side walk access and limited shops
- No foresight, no leadership in the right direction, wrong attitude
- No available space to reasonably rent, traffic congestion and very little parking
- No Parking, No Atmosphere, Appearance of area
- Not enough storefront parking

What are some business strengths and advantages of Downtown?

- Location, good demographics and steady growth
- Established businesses
- City administrative staff has been most friendly, thank you (planning & dev office)
- A lot of people travel through downtown
- Keeping it local, friendly and meeting your neighbors
- Centrally located and all within walking distance
- Good interstate access, low crime and close to other areas that are great!
- County seat
- Traffic and location (near County government) and good visibility
- Lots of drive by traffic during school drop off/pick up and lots of traffic going to the courthouses during the week



## Charrette Process

A charrette is an intensive, multi-disciplinary workshop with the aim of developing a design or vision for a project or planning activity. Charrettes are often conducted to design such things as parks and buildings, or to plan communities or transportation systems. A team of design experts meets with community groups, developers, and neighbors over a period lasting from one day to a couple of weeks, gathering information on the issues that face the community. Charrette participants then work together to find design solutions that will address the issues that stakeholders have identified as priorities and result in a clear, detailed, realistic vision for future development.



The Brandon Planning Charrette was held the week of September 24, 2013 at the Brandon Methodist Church in downtown Brandon. Opening night participants answered a series of questions in participatory groups.

- What place is your favorite Downtown?
- What is the best block in Downtown?
- What is the worst block downtown?
- What's needed Downtown? Housing, new businesses, parks, etc?
- Are there barriers to getting around downtown? What are they?



The results of these table sessions informed the Charrette Team as it developed a conceptual framework and overall plan for the downtown area. Participant results are found in the Appendix.





## Community Visioning

A “brand” is a promise that is made to a consumer that speaks to the unique value and characteristics of the product. Just like a soft drink or shoe company, this would apply to a community as well. Therefore, a community brand would present the unique characteristics and values that distinguish it from others within the region. The successful implementation of a brand system will communicate these values and deliver on the brand’s promise to the community’s citizenry, visitors, and customer base.

The brand system for Downtown Brandon is a result of input derived from the community meetings during the Downtown Charrette. The brand begins with a graphic composition that defines a unified visual style that will be the basis for the system.

### We Are Downtown Brandon

The brand statement is the platform for the overall community identity. It is a narrative that connects the assets within a community or downtown, while distilling those values that make it a special place. It also presents the market position for downtown, and in the case of Brandon, outlines the overall vision of downtown. The brand statement ends with the new Tag Line for downtown.

We are Downtown Brandon.

In a region where communities are defined more by chain stores and highway development, Brandon has remained the one traditional and authentic downtown in the metro area. With our Town Square and historic architecture, quaint shops and active spaces, Downtown Brandon has become a place to emulate and recreate.

Downtown is the place that connects our people, and it the window to our community’s heart and spirit. That spirit is seen on Red Friday’s in our local shops, heard in children’s’ voices playing at our downtown school, and tasted in the home town cooking in our downtown restaurants. Most importantly, it is felt in the hospitality that our people are known for, where Boy Scouts and beauty queens once greeted visitors on the Square with a Coke and a smile.



## Christmas Parade





We strive to retain and enhance the character of our downtown. With an improved Town Square, pedestrian enhancements, mixture of uses and active spaces, Downtown Brandon will solidify its place as the heart and soul of our community and beyond. We are creating new experiences in downtown, with opportunities for living, new cultural activities and events, and more dining and shopping opportunities.

This will only grow the spirit of our downtown and community, solidifying our place as the singular quaint, small town experience surrounded by ordinary of the urban metro.

Downtown Brandon. Real Character. Genuine Charm

### Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of the Downtown Brandon Plan is composed of elements related to its development form, character and use and its supporting mobility network.

### Future Character Areas of Downtown

The area identified as Downtown Brandon has four distinct character areas. The areas, identified as Areas A, B, C and D, serve distinct roles in supporting the center point of Downtown Brandon; the Town Square.

Area A: Interstate-Oriented Commercial continues the theme of the area north of I-20 on US 80 and provides services to travelers along I-20 while also serving as the “front door”

to Downtown Brandon.

Area B: Brandon Under The Hill Mixed Use District has been proposed as a mixed use district consisting of a hotel, commercial center, open public space, and single and multi-family residential units. As this district forms the gateway into Downtown Brandon, elements such as streetscape along Government Street become critical.

Area C: Downtown Brandon and the area around the Town Square is truly the heart and soul of the Town. Brandon differs from most other towns surrounding Jackson in that it has a true Downtown with historic buildings dating back to the 1800’s and a roadway network that is based on a grid system.

Area D: Downtown East Neighborhood on Government Street east of Downtown also forms a front door for Downtown Brandon . In keeping with this theme, the areas will continue to serve the consumer and personal service needs of southeast Brandon with two specific initiatives developed to highlight this area as a gateway and to take advantage of the natural creek connection to Shiloh Park.

Each of these areas and its future characteristics are discussed individually in the sections that follow.

### Downtown Mobility Network

Downtown Brandon faces many mobility issues and





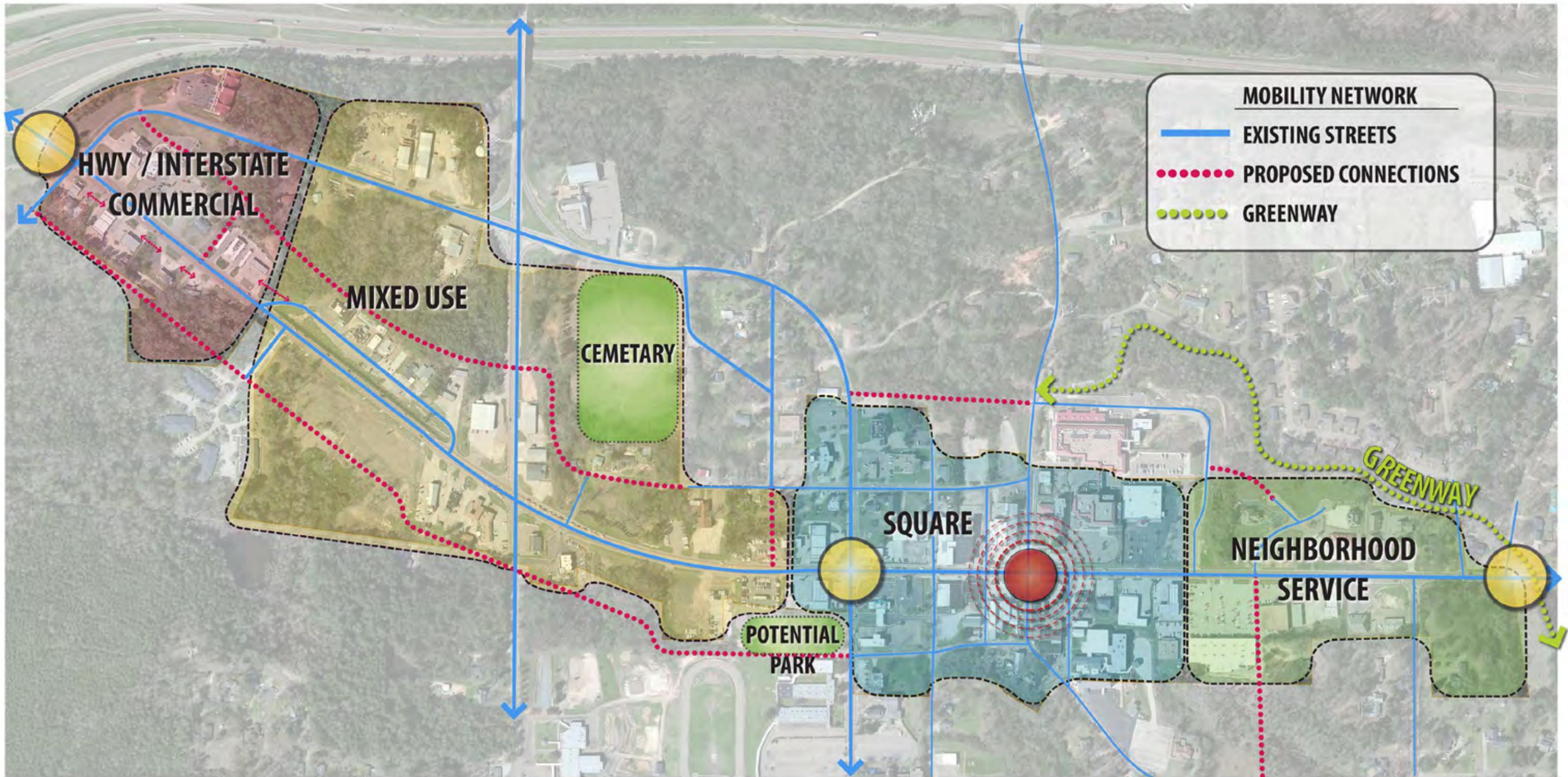
challenges as it redevelops into a vibrant, walkable downtown. Volume and speeds of vehicular traffic on Government Street (US 80), lack of connected alternate street network, lack of bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and parking are all challenges to the successful creation of a great place in Downtown. None of these challenges are insurmountable. By creating a mobility network that balances the needs of motorized and non-motorized transportation, allows for true choices in modes and routes, and creatively manages the parking resources to develop a truly “park once” downtown, Brandon can achieve the vision of a vibrant, mixed use Downtown that has “real character and genuine charm.”

- Enhance the Town Square for all modes of transportation;
- Expand and enhance the sidewalk network and crossings Downtown;
- Create gateways at the east and west ends of Downtown;
- Develop a strong non-motorized link between Downtown and Shiloh Park; and
- Manage, don't try and solve, the parking issues.
- Using these guiding principles, a series of recommended mobility initiatives were developed for each of the four districts.

At the outset of the three day charrette effort, several guiding principles were developed to drive the mobility planning process. All principles followed a prime directive that Downtown should cater to the movement of people, and not just cars. To that end, a balanced system was developed where people had true mobility choices about how they got around, and could decide whether to drive, walk, or bike and have the transition between and among the various modes be seamless. This directive led to the following guiding principles, which were used to develop the mobility system for Downtown.

- Create a parallel network of streets to offer alternative routes to Government Street;
- Develop and adopt a Complete Streets Policy and subsequent Design Guidelines;









## Area A Interstate Oriented Commercial

### Downtown/ Community Role

Provide a welcoming front door to Downtown Brandon and services goods and services to travelers and residents.

### Envisioned Activities

Interstate oriented Commerce, Vehicle Services, Restaurants, Travel Retail.

### Policies

Revise development code for enhanced building design and lush landscaping, connectivity between development sites.

### Projects

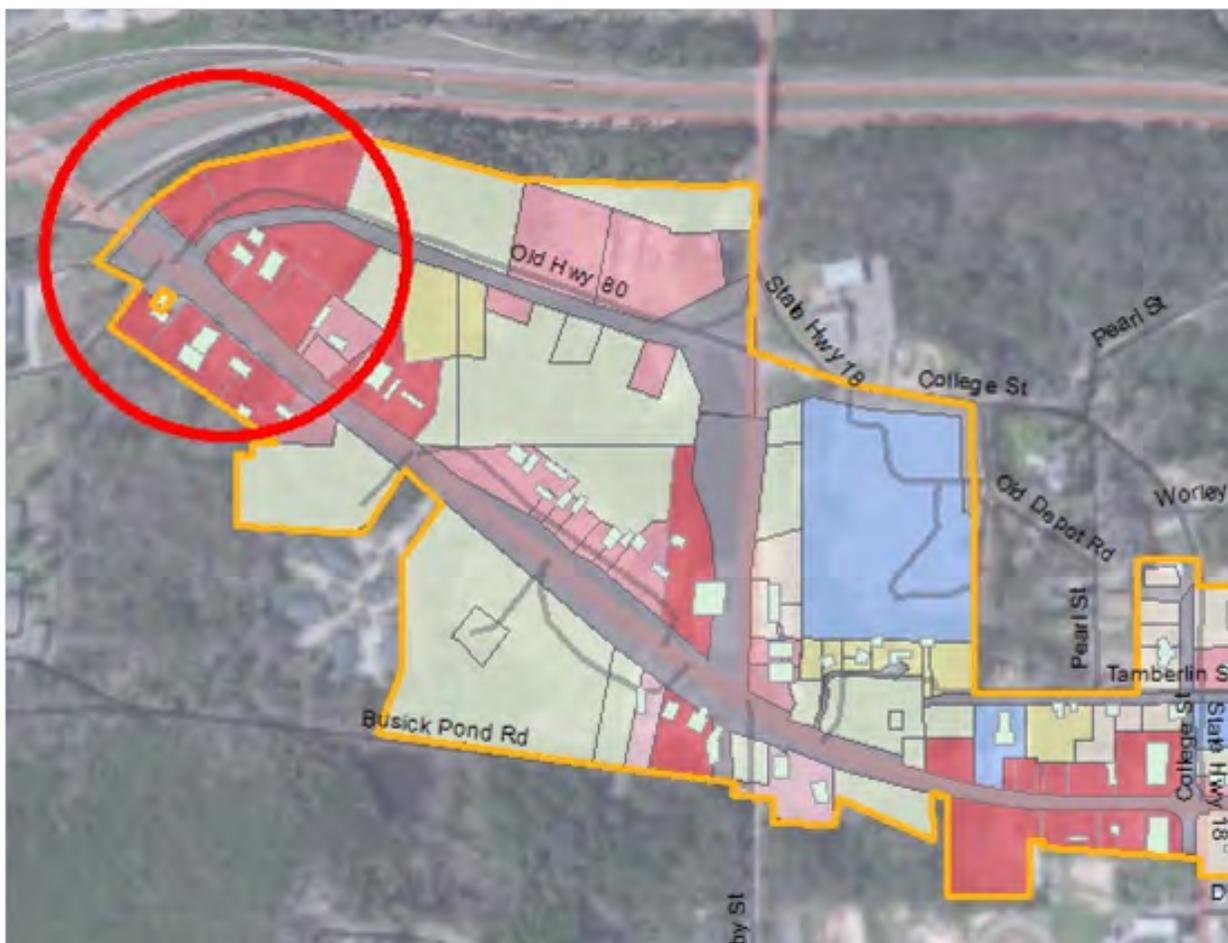
Community Identity, Gateway treatment, Wayfinding Signs, MDOT improvements.

### A.1 Existing Development of Interstate Oriented Commercial

### A.2 Interstate Oriented Commercial Area



A.1



A.2



- A.3 Generic Convenience Store Design
- A.4 Gas pump canopy with design standards applied
- A.5 Older parking lot retrofitted with landscaping
- A.6 Wayfinding sign directing visitors to downtown



A.3



A.5



A.4



A.6

Illustration



## Area B Mixed Use District

### Downtown/Community Role

Provide a vibrant urban scale, mixed use neighborhood complimenting Brandon and supporting downtown.

### Envisioned Activities

Community scale retail, offices, townhome residential, entertainment, shopping, and restaurants.

### Policies

Create a mixed use district with design standards. Successfully address the challenges of 16th Section Land.

### Projects

Market the vision, Monitor DOT 471 for Bike lane construction, Enhance signalization, create the parallel network.

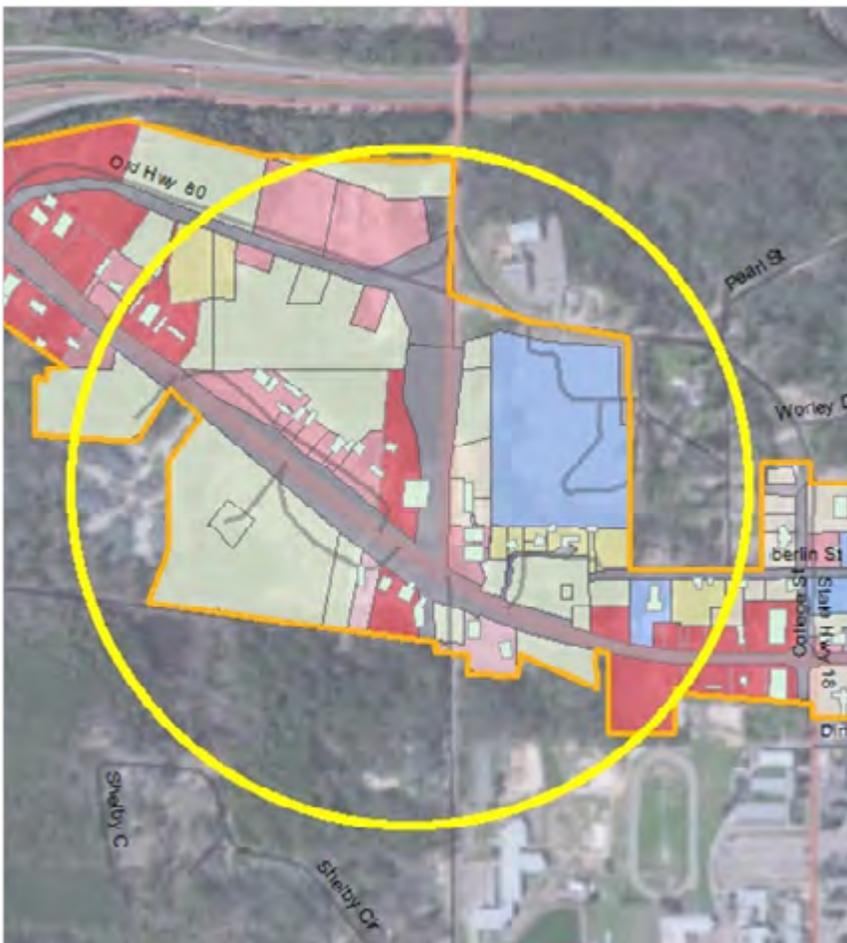
**B.1** Urban Mixed Use District

**B.2** Image of existing conditions

**B.3** Lighting and banner



B.2



B.1



B.3



**B.4** Before image of existing conditions

**B.5** After redevelopment of mixed use center



B.4



B.5





- C.4 Western Downtown Gateway Buildings
- C.5 Building frontage, gas pumps in rear
- C.6 & C.7 Before and after corner redevelopment
- C.8 Redeveloped Downtown Block



C.4



C.5



C.6



C.7



C.8



- C.8 Redeveloped Downtown streetscape perspective
- C-9 Pedestrian friendly complete street



C.8

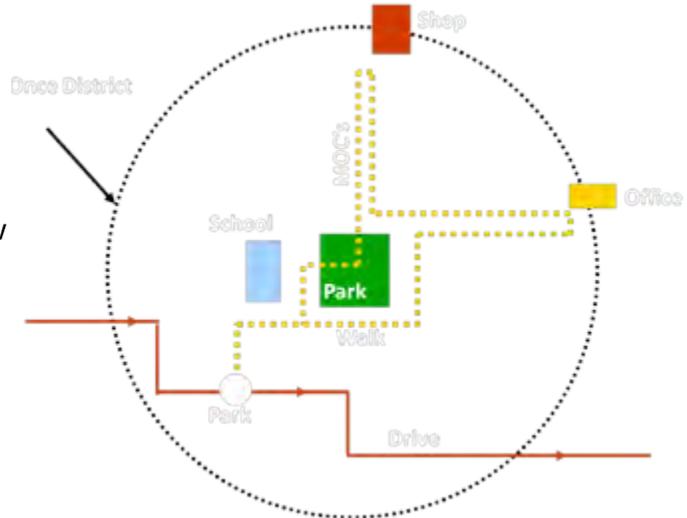


C.9



## Park Once Strategy

- Well-placed and connected parking
- Reallocate side street width to provide one or two sides of parallel parking
- Implement “shared parking” policy and strategy
- Reinforce premium nature of Main Street spaces with 2 hour time limit
- Enhance off-Main lots with amenities and wayfinding for long-term parkers; seek new opportunities
- Enhance walking environment

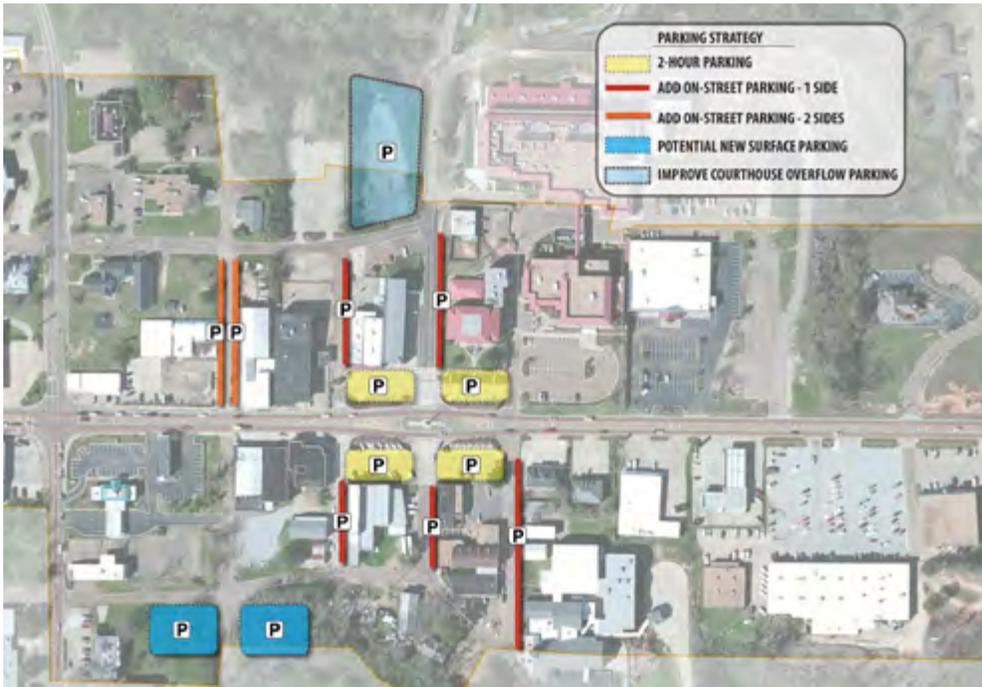


C.10

C.10 Park Once Diagram

C.11 Reconfigured Downtown Parking

C. 12 Directional sign for parking



C.11



C.12



## Area D Downtown East Neighborhood Services

### Downtown/Community Role

In addition to providing the eastern gateway to Downtown, this area primarily serves the personal and household needs of south east Brandon.

### Envisioned Activities

Groceries, household consumer goods and merchandise, personal services, restaurants, small scale offices, insurance and finance. Walking and biking between Shiloh Park and Downtown.

### Policies

Amend code for higher design character and landscape.

### Projects

Community Identity, Gateway creation, Wayfinding Signs, Shiloh Walk Greenway.

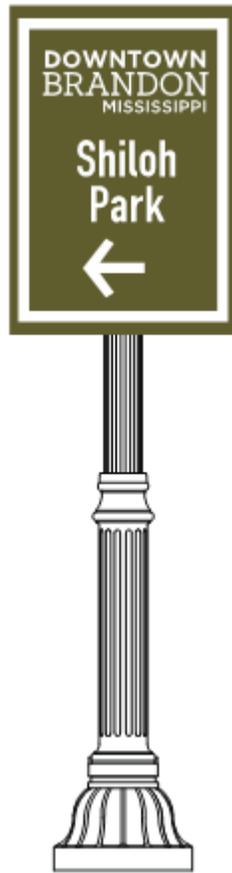
D.1 Eastern Downtown Gateway at Bridge

D.2 Downtown East Neighborhood Services Area

D.3 Wayfinding Sign



D1



D3



D2



- D.4 Shiloh Park Greenway
- D.5 Eastern Gateway with stone bridge facing
- D.6 Existing sewer easement near Shiloh Park
- D.7 Shiloh greenway using sewer easement



D.4



D.5



D.6



D.7



## Recommendations and Implementation

The Matrix Below sets out the actions related to development policy and projects required to implement the plan. Implementation actions are the responsibility of a number of Brandon organizations and entities including the Mayor and Board of Aldermen, Community Development, Economic

Development, the Brandon Downtown Association, Engineering, the Preservation Commission, the community at large and others. When implemented, this plan will facilitate the future of Brandon, Mississippi as a community of excellence. Supporting data and implementation detail are found in the unattached appendix to this plan.

Brandon Downtown Plan Implementation				
POLICIES	Area	Action	Illustration	Lead
1	A	Amend C-3 Highway Commercial	A.4, A.5	Planning/ M & B
2	A, B	16th Section Strategy	-	Planning/ M & B/E.D.
3	A, B, C, D	Adopt Downtown Plan	Document	Mayor and Board
4	A, D	Amend C-2 Neighborhood Commercial	D.1, D.2	Planning/ M & B
5	B	Create Mixed Use District	B.5	Planning/ M & B
6	B, C	Review Preservation Ordinance	-	Planning/Presv.
7	B, C, D	Amend C-1 Downtown District	C.4, C.5, C.7, C.8	Planning/M & B
8	C	Shared Parking Policy	C.11	M&B
9	C	2 hr. Parking	C.11	M&B
10	C	Paralle Parking on Side Streets	C.11	M&B
11	C	Parking @ Black Rose	C.11	Owners
12	C	Enhance Lot west of Court house	-	M&B
13	n/a	Update Brandon Comprehensive Plan	-	Planning/ M & B
14	A,B,C,D	Illustrated sign design standards	-	Code update phase
15	A,B,C,D	Site and building design standards	B.5	Code update phase
PROJECTS	Area			Lead
1	A	Network additions concurrent with redevelopment	Page 12	M&B, Developer
2	A,B,C,D	Deploy Community Identity	Appendix	DBA, M&B
3	B	SR 471-Concurrent with MDOT improvements	-	Engineering
4	C	Amend MDOT Enhancement for Crosswalks	C.9	Engineering
5	C	Develop Downtown Park	Page 13	Better Brandon
6	C	Develop Downtown Brandon Assn.	-	City E. D.
7	C	Rename Government Street	-	M&B
8	D	Shiloh Walk	D.4, D.7	Planning, M&B
9	D	Eastern Gateway Bridge	D.5	Engineering

